

**A Linguistic and Historical Analysis of Sacrificial Offerings Presented to a Deity in
the Old Greek Version of Sirach**

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Abstract

Sirach is a Hebrew-language Jewish religious text that was likely written between 195-175 BC; it was later translated into Greek in Egypt after 132 BC. This investigation studies statements found in Greek Sirach about offerings presented to a deity within the book's polytheistic historical and social context, namely, late 2nd century BC Ptolemaic Egypt.

In chapter 1 I introduce the subject of my study which is the presentation of an offering to a recipient in the Greek version. I then introduce the state of the question of cultic imagery in Sirach. My study contributes to new information to this field in three major ways: (a) my study highlights the unique message and of the Greek version in its historical context of Ptolemaic Egypt, (b) my use of lexical semantics reproducibly links lexemes that participate in the same semantic field of offerings or sacrifices presented to a recipient (which in most cases was a deity), and (c) I employ some of the linguistic categories of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) to organize my historical study which includes the imposition of repeatable exegetical questions to each passage. This approach provides new grammatically informed information about the authoritative interpersonal relationship between the teaching sage and his reader.

In chapter 2 I introduce the method of my study which includes two linguistic tools of lexical semantics and Systemic Functional Linguistics. SFL will provide me with a linguistic rubric by which I can organize historical and linguistic information about my investigation. First, SFL provides me with the impetus to examine the historical environment which contributes to Sirach's context of culture (this will be chapter 3). Second, a lexical semantic componential analysis will allow me to reproducibly highlight lexemes that share a semantic field of offerings provided to a recipient in Sirach itself (this will be in chapter 4). Third, once I have identified passages in Greek Sirach that contain sacrificial statements, I will engage in a historical-exegetical examination of these passages that is informed by the linguistic rubric of a SFL register. This study will include aspects of a text that contribute to Sirach's context of situation (i.e. field, tenor, mode) and metafunctions (this will be in chapter 4). These tools will work together to guide my analysis while outlining linguistic and historical observations. The semantic goal of my study will be to understand the meaning of offerings presented to a recipient in the context of Ptolemaic Egypt from a semantic perspective.

In chapter 3 I examine Greek Sirach's statements about offerings presented to a deity within its polytheistic historical and social context of Ptolemaic Egypt after 132 BC. This social and cultic environment is part of SFL's context of culture which will contribute to the field, tenor, and mode of Sirach. The context of culture is the historical world within which linguistic features occurred and can be observed. This information will describe the polytheistic context of Ptolemaic Jews which will inform why and for what purpose a book like Sirach was used. The Jewish community was a numerical minority that was surrounded by demotic and non-Jewish Greek culture. Some of their primary distinctives were their exclusive monotheism and exclusive material cult offerings to the God of Israel in the Jerusalem Temple. This exclusive religion clashed with the surrounding inclusive and polytheistic demotic and non-Jewish Greek religion

that provided offerings to multiple deities in ubiquitous shrines and temples. Because of this social context, in order to combat assimilationist and syncretistic trends, traditional monotheistic Jews needed to affirm traditional exclusive monotheistic Jewish religion and cultic practices. They maintained and formed their community through educational and societal formation. This *paideia*-formation occurred in prayer-houses and through the instruction of their youth. Jewish religious communities used texts like Sirach to instruct young Greek-speaking upper-class youths in the practical embodiment of Jewish religion. As such, the religious context of Ptolemaic Egypt provides a crucial societal backdrop of Sirach's cultic statements. Attention to the social and cultic context of contemporary Ptolemaic Egypt allows me to see how the cultic teachings in Sirach may have functioned to shape and reinforce exclusive monotheistic cultic practice in a given historical moment.

In chapter 4 I analyze the text of Greek Sirach by applying carefully chosen linguistic tools. First, I identify historical features of Sirach that contribute to SFL's situational elements. I identify aspects of the field, tenor, and mode of the book. An important new observation is that the linguistic and historical aspects of the book created an authoritarian environment of learning and submission between the teaching sage and his student/reader. First I use a lexical semantic componential analysis to identify lexemes that share a semantic field of an offering or sacrifice. Then, I narrow my analysis to only include lexemes that explicitly highlight a recipient of an offering in its immediate context. This analysis permits me to narrow my study to nine passages in Greek Sirach. Finally, I analyze nine passages that describe offerings presented to a recipient. I do so using a historical-exegetical analysis indebted to the linguistic categories of SFL. I identify aspects of each passage that contribute to their ideational and interpersonal meanings. The analysis of these nine passages reveals information about the sage's portrayal of these offerings. There are only three possible recipients of offerings: the God of Israel, idols, and priests who are given a portion of an offering that was first offered to God. The sage only describes offerings that are potentially acceptable or successful as those which a worshiper presents to the God of Israel. The presentation of offerings to other deities is pointless because they are impotent gods and cannot receive an offering. This emphasis or absence of mention reveals the sage's belief that offerings ought only to be presented to the God of Israel. The sage notes that the God of Israel can accept or reject an offering. The offeror must accompany an offering with a consistent moral lifestyle so that God accepts it. The sage mentions both material offerings as well as offerings of piety such as repentance or a thanksgiving offering. The sage also states that the purpose of an offering is to acquire forgiveness, create a memory before God, as well as to receive reciprocal benefit from God.

In chapter 5, my study provides a synthesis of conclusions as well as some potential theological implications arising from the conclusions. Within the polytheistic context of the Jewish community in Ptolemaic Egypt, Sirach's teaching instructed and formed an uncompromising cultic worldview for elite Ptolemaic Jewish youths. Since many of the sage's students might have assimilated or been tempted to assimilate cultic beliefs from their demotic and Greek neighbours, they might also easily have jettisoned certain exclusivist cultic practices for the sake of acceptance, social harmony, and personal advancement in Ptolemaic culture. The authoritarian sage instructs his students

in the correct Jewish religion. The sage thus reinforces the exclusivist Jewish monotheistic religious identity which separated his readers from their polytheistic neighbours. He enjoins both the importance of Jerusalem's cultic worship as well as the ability to participate in offerings of piety that could be performed in the Diaspora.

This study concludes with some theological implications that arise from the conclusions. Sirach provides a witness for how theological leaders and texts engaged in the spiritual and theological formation of their readers/students in multicultural environments. Early Christians employed similar forms of engagement as they taught their students faithfully to emulate the instruction and way of life of the God of Israel in a pluralistic society. Sirach's cultic teaching was itself used to inform the social and theological environment of early Christians, thus providing them with guidance in adhering to exclusivist monotheistic beliefs and cultic practices, providing offerings of piety mediated through the cultic system oriented toward and around their high priest Jesus, and encouraging a consistent moral life to present pleasing offerings.

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Abbreviations¹

AAW	Armies of the Ancient World
AB	Anchor Bible
ABRL	The Anchor Bible Reference Library
AGSU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Spätjudentums und Urchristentums
AJEC	Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity
AnBib	Analecta biblica
<i>Anton</i>	<i>Antonianum</i>
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
<i>APF</i>	<i>Archiv für Papyrusforschung</i>
<i>ArztChr</i>	<i>Arzt und Christ</i>
ATAT	Arbeiten zu Text und Sprache im Alten Testament
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
<i>AThR</i>	<i>Anglican Theological Review</i>
ATS	Approaches to Semiotics
<i>BAGS</i>	<i>Biblical and Ancient Greek Linguistics</i>
BAT	Die Botschaft des Alten Testaments
<i>Bijdr</i>	<i>Bijdragen tijdschrift voor filosofie en theologie</i>
BCAW	Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World
BEHE	Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études Sciences Religieuses
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologiarum lovaniensium
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BEHS:SSR	Bibliothèque de l'École des hautes études: Section des sciences religieuses
BHP	Bibliothèque d'histoire de la philosophie
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
BibInt	Biblical Interpretation Series
BibSem	The Biblical Seminar
<i>BJRL</i>	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester</i>
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BLG	Biblical Languages: Greek
BM	Biblioteca Midrásica
<i>BN</i>	<i>Biblische Notizen</i>
<i>BRev</i>	<i>Bible Review</i>
BRS	Biblical Resource Series
<i>BT</i>	<i>The Bible Translator</i>
<i>BVC</i>	<i>Bible et vie chrétienne</i>
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
CAM	Collection l'atelier méditerranéen
CBC	Cambridge Bible Commentary
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>

¹ Abbreviations of Second Temple Jewish and biblical primary source titles have been used following the format of the Patrick Alexander et al., eds., *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999).

CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
CCS	Cambridge Classical Studies
<i>CdE</i>	<i>Chronique d'Égypte</i>
<i>CHJ</i>	<i>Cambridge History of Judaism</i>
CHSC	Center for Hellenic Studies Colloquia
CJA	Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity
CLFS	Classe di lettere, filosofia e BB.AA.: Supplementi
CLDP	Collection "Les Dix Paroles"
ConBNT	Coniectanea Biblica: New Testament
ConBOT	Coniectanea Biblica: Old Testament
CRINT	Compendia rerum iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum
<i>CRIPEL</i>	<i>Cahiers de recherches de l'institut de papyrologie et d'égyptologie de Lille</i>
CSJH	Chicago Studies in the History of Judaism
CSCT	Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition
CUASCA	The Catholic University of America Studies in Christian Antiquity
<i>CurBR</i>	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>
DCLS	Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Studies
DCLY	Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Yearbook
<i>DHA</i>	<i>Dialogues d'histoire ancienne</i>
DHSAT	Die Heilige Schrift des Alten Testaments
DMAHA	Dutch Monographs on Ancient History and Archaeology
<i>DSS</i>	<i>Dead Sea Discoveries</i>
EAE	Encounters with Ancient Egypt
<i>ÉetC</i>	<i>Études et Commentaires</i>
EHAT	Exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament
<i>EI</i>	<i>Eretz-Israel</i>
<i>EJJS</i>	<i>European Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
Elec	Electrum
EnAC	Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique
ÉPRO	Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'empire romain
<i>EstBib</i>	<i>Estudios bíblicos</i>
ETS	Erfurter theologische Studien
<i>ExpTim</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
EyE	Estudios y Ensayos
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
<i>FilNeot</i>	<i>Filología Neotestamentaria</i>
FJCD	Forschungen zum jüdisch-christlichen Dialog
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GAP	Guides to Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha
GHS	Groningen-Royal Holloway Studies on the Greek City after the Classical Age
<i>Greg</i>	<i>Gregorianum</i>
HAW	Handbuch der altertumswissenschaft
HCS	Hellenistic Culture and Society
<i>Hen</i>	<i>Henoch</i>
HerBS	Herders biblische Studien
HSLE	Die Heilige Schrift für das Leben erklärt
HTKAT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament

<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>HTS</i>	<i>Hervormde theologiese studies</i>
<i>HUCA</i>	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
IOSOTC	International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament Congress
IUO	Istituto universitario orientale. Dipartimento di studi asiatici. Series minor
<i>JAH</i>	<i>Journal of Ancient History</i>
<i>JAJ</i>	<i>Journal of Ancient Judaism</i>
<i>JANER</i>	<i>Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JJS</i>	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>JNSL</i>	<i>Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages</i>
<i>JQR</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
<i>JRitSt</i>	<i>Journal of Ritual Studies</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
<i>JSJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism</i>
JSJSup	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>KBAJCL</i>	<i>Kleine Bibliothek der antiken jüdischen und christlichen Literatur</i>
KSG	Königtum, Staat und Gesellschaft früher Hochkulturen
KTAH	Key Themes in Ancient History
<i>Ktèma</i>	<i>Ktèma: Civilisations de l'Orient, de la Grèce et de Rome antiques</i>
<i>KUSATU</i>	<i>Kleine Untersuchungen zur Sprache des Alten Testaments und seiner Umwelt</i>
<i>L&S</i>	<i>Letter & Spirit</i>
LBS	Linguistic Biblical Studies
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LES	Lexham English Septuagint
<i>Linacre Q</i>	<i>The Linacre Quarterly</i>
LLS	Los Libros Sagrados
LPTB	Linzer philosophisch-theologische Beiträge
LSB	La Sacra Bibbia
LSTS	Library of Second Temple Studies
LumVie	Lumière et vie
MBPF	Münchener Beiträge zur Papyrusforschung und antiken Rechtsgeschichte
MNTSS	McMaster New Testament Studies Series
MPIL	Monographs of the Peshitta Institute Leiden
MRLLA	Magical and Religious Literature of Late Antiquity
NEB	Die neue Echter Bibel
NETS	New English Translation of the Septuagint
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
NPNF	Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NTM	New Testament Monographs
NTOA	Novum testamentum et orbis antiquus

NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
ÖBS	Österreichische biblische Studien
OBT	Opolska Biblioteka Teologiczna
OCM	Oxford Classical Monographs
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta
OTM	Old Testament Message
PCPS	<i>Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society</i>
PEQ	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>
PIBA	<i>Proceedings of the Irish Biblical Association</i>
PFAP:	NS Publication des Annales de la Faculté des lettres, Aix-en-Provence: Nouvelle Série
PLAL	Perspectives on Linguistics and Ancient Languages
PSV	<i>Parola, Spirito e Vita</i>
PVTG	Pseudepigrapha Veteris Testamenti Grace
RB	<i>Revue biblique</i>
RechBib	Recherches bibliques
REJ	<i>Revue des études juives</i>
RevQ	<i>Revue de Qumrân</i>
RTLi	<i>Revista Teológica Limense</i>
SAIS	Studies in the Aramaic Interpretation of Scripture
Salm	<i>Salmanticensis</i>
SAM	Studies in Ancient Medicine
SAOC	Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization
SBA	Schweizerische Beiträge zur Altertumswissenschaft
SBB	Stuttgarter biblische Beiträge
SBG	Studies in Biblical Greek
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBLRBS	Society of Biblical Literature Resources for Biblical Study
SBLSCS	Society of Biblical Literature Septuagint and Cognate Studies
SBLStBL	Society of Biblical Literature Studies in Biblical Literature
SBLSymS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
SC	Sources chrétiennes
ScEs	<i>Science et esprit</i>
ScrVict	<i>Scriptorium Victoriense</i>
SDSS	Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature
Sem	<i>Semitica</i>
SESJ	Suomen Eksegeettisen Seuran Julkaisuja (Publications of the Finnish Exegetical Society)
SFSMD	Studia Francisci Scholten memoriae dicata
SH	Studia Hellenistica
SHC	Studies in Hellenistic Civilization
SJOT	<i>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</i>
SKKAT	Stuttgarter kleiner Kommentar: Altes Testament
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SPhiloA	Studia Philonica Annual
SR: SB	Studi e ricerche: Sezione biblica

SSN	Studia semitica neerlandica
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
StPB	Studia Post-Biblica
SUNT	Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments
TAPA	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>
TBA	<i>The Biblical Annals</i>
TCAAS	<i>Transactions of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences</i>
Te'uda	Te'uda: The Chaim Rosenberg School of Jewish Studies Research Series
Theo	Theologia
ThLZ	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i>
TICP	Travaux de l'Institut catholique de Paris
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum
TThSt	Trierer theologische Studien
TynBul	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
TZ	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
UBSHS	United Bible Society Handbook Series
Vigiliae	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
WCB	World Christian Books
WD	<i>Wort und Dienst</i>
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
YCS	<i>Yale Classical Studies</i>
ZAH	<i>Zeitschrift für Althebraistik</i>
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZKT	<i>Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie</i>

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A thesis in theology acknowledges the God by whom and for whom all were created. I give thanks to this God who is known in Jesus: “o Domine Jesu, veni, veni ad me ut ad patrem venire possim” (Johann Gerhard, *Homiliae XXXVI*, 5). Finally, I pray with the sage “Ἐξομολογήσομαί σοι, κύριε βασιλεῦ, καὶ αἰνέσω σε θεὸν τὸν σωτῆρά μου” (Sir 51:1).

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. The General Subject of My Study

My intention in this study is to provide an examination of passages in the book of Greek Sirach that describe sacrifices and offerings provided to a deity. This investigation will contribute to a better historical understanding of the cultic contents and function of the book in its original environment. In this first chapter, I introduce the subject of my study generally and highlight the state of the question which will summarize major research relevant to the study. I provide a general introduction to Greek Sirach that will help us to understand the historical environment and moment within which the text was written, thus enabling me to understand better its cultic statements and how they were interpreted by their original audience in their cultural moment. Once I have summarized major research done so far on Greek Sirach in the second part of chapter 1, I will be able to identify how I can contribute to new information in this subject area. In chapter 2 I will introduce the linguistic and historical method that I will use to study this text, while in chapters 3 and 4 I will apply this method to Greek Sirach and will show the role that cultic passages describing offerings presented to a deity in Greek Sirach played in religious formation and education in order to preserve monotheistic cultic beliefs. My study will conclude with a summary and a theological synthesis in chapter 5. This study will thus contribute new information about offerings and sacrifices presented to a deity in Greek Sirach and help us understand better its place within its historical and polytheistic context.

1.2. The Date and Versions of Sirach

Sirach, as is now well known, is a piece of Jewish wisdom literature that was originally written in Hebrew sometime during or after the reign of Simon II (c. 218-192 BC) and before 175 BC.¹ Internal details of the prologue suggest that the Greek translation of this text was completed in 132 BC or later in Ptolemaic Egypt by Ben Sira's grandson. Specifically, even though one cannot know the precise date of the text, a *terminus a quo* is likely to be 132 BC, while a *terminus ad quem* is likely to be 115 BC.² For this reason, I will examine this text as arising from within the Ptolemaic Jewish community in the last half of the 2nd century BC.

The oldest versions of Sirach exist in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and Syriac. Though sharing a common message, each version adapted and extended the message of Sirach in

¹ Otto Mulder, *Simon the High Priest in Sirach 50: An Exegetical Study of the Significance of Simon the High Priest as Climax to the Praise of the Fathers in Ben Sira's Concept of the History of Israel*, JSJSup 78 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 345–47. Marko Marttila, *Foreign Nations in the Wisdom of Ben Sira: A Jewish Sage between Opposition and Assimilation*, DCLS 13 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), 3–4. Di Lella and Skehan, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 550. Bradley Gregory, *Like an Everlasting Signet Ring: Generosity in the Book of Sirach*, DCLS 2 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2010), 7. One notable exception is James VanderKam who argues that the seeming eyewitness details provided in Sir 50-51 come from a pre-existent source. This means that the Simon mentioned in Sirach is Simon I (Cir. 300 BC). James VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas: High Priests after the Exile* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2004), 147–57.

² The grandson states that he “arrived in Egypt in the thirty-eighth year of King Euergetes [τοῦ Εὐεργέτου βασιλείᾳ]” (Sir Prologue). There were two kings of Egypt called Euergetes, either Ptolemy III Euergetes I (Cir. 246-221 BC) or Ptolemy VII Euergetes II (Cir. 170-116 BC). Deciding which Euergetes Greek Sirach refers to in his work is not difficult because Euergetes I did not reign for 38 years; this means that the grandson was in Egypt during the reign of Euergetes II. Euergetes II began his reign in 170 BC, thus the 38th year of his reign was 132 BC. Helge Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter: eine Untersuchung zum Berufsbild des vormakkabäischen Sofer unter Berücksichtigung seines Verhältnisses zu Priester-, Propheten- und Weisheitslehrtum*, WUNT 2.6 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1980), 1–2. Arthur Forster, “Date of Ecclesiasticus,” *ATHR* 41.1 (1959): 6–8; Richard Coggins, *Sirach*, GAP (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 18–20; Benjamin Wright, *No Small Difference: Sirach's Relationship to Its Hebrew Parent Text*, SBLSCS 26 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1989), 1. Leo Perdue, *The Sword and the Stylus: An Introduction to Wisdom in the Age of Empires* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 259. Some argue that it was not completed until 117 BC. Alexander Di Lella and Patrick Skehan, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, AB 39 (New York: Doubleday, 1987), 8–9; David S. Williams, “The Date of Ecclesiasticus,” *VT* 44.4 (1994): 563. Jeremy Corley, *Ben Sira's Teaching on Friendship*, BJS 316 (Providence, RI: Brown Judaic Studies, 2002), xv, 13.

light of its own socio-linguistic community's beliefs.³ These differences require that a scholarly reading attend to the specifics and not mix them together *au hasard*.⁴ A few examples can illustrate the challenges in studying the various linguistic versions of Sirach. Whereas in the past, it was commonly thought that there was only one original Hebrew version that other translations stemmed from, recent studies have indicated that there are significant enough differences between the existent Hebrew manuscripts to indicate that there were multiple intentionally different Hebrew versions of Sirach, even if some of the differences are only slight. For instance, differences between Hebrew Manuscripts B and C have different verbal forms for various verses as well as sequences of verses. Because of these differences, scholars have argued that Manuscript C is a reorganization and recontextualization of an earlier version of Sirach.⁵ This has led some scholars such as Frank Ueberschaer, Jeremy Corley, and Pancratius Beentjes to propose that Manuscript C has its own unique version and message.⁶ This diversity of Hebrew

³ Maurice Gilbert, "Methodological and Hermeneutical Trends in Modern Exegesis on the Book of Ben Sira," in *The Wisdom of Ben Sira: Studies on Tradition, Redaction, and Theology*, ed. Angelo Passaro and Giuseppe Bellia, DCLS 1 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 7–13; Pancratius Beentjes, "Some Major Topics in Ben Sira Research," in *Happy the One Who Meditates on Wisdom (Sir. 14,20): Collected Essays on the Book of Ben Sira*, ed. Pancratius Beentjes, CBET 43 (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 6.

⁴ Beentjes, "Some Major Topics in Ben Sira Research," 6.

⁵ Ueberschaer and Corley note the versification reorganization between Manuscript B and Manuscript C: "the manuscript is divided into leaves that display passages and verses mainly from Sirach 3–7, on the one hand, and into leaves that mainly display verses from Sirach 18–26 and 36, on the other. The middle part of the manuscript is still missing, so he stresses that any effort to describe the work as a whole is rather uncertain. Nevertheless, it is quite clear that <= C excerpts and re-sequences the book of Sirach" Frank Ueberschaer, "Sirach Ms C Revisited," in *Sirach and Its Contexts: The Pursuit of Wisdom and Human Flourishing*, ed. Samuel Adams, Greg Goering, and Matthew Goff, JSJSup 196 (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 95. Jeremy Corley, "An Alternative Hebrew Form of Ben Sira: The Anthological Manuscript C," in *The Texts and Versions of the Book of Ben Sira*, ed. Jean-Sébastien Rey and Jan Joosten, JSJSup 150 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 3–21. Hebrew Manuscript B has an additional psalm after 51:12 which is not present in the Greek or other Hebrews versions. Eva Mroczek, *The Literary Imagination in Jewish Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 109–10.

⁶ Beentjes notes that "the manuscript, known as Ms. C, is an anthological collection of passages from the 'original' Book of Ben Sira. The compiler of manuscript C has collected this traditional material in a number of subject-oriented clusters." Pancratius Beentjes, "Hermeneutics in the Book of Ben Sira. Some Observations on the Hebrew Ms. C," in *Happy the One Who Meditates on Wisdom (Sir. 14,20):*

versions complicates the study of translations of Sirach because a scholar must verify which Hebrew version of Sirach is an appropriate *Vorlage* for a translation. The fragmentary manuscript evidence limits the results of translation studies because one can only fully study the translation of a text if one knows the translation technique, the competence of the translator, and the exact *Vorlage* used to make a copy, otherwise one cannot be sure that the translator didn't use a *Vorlage* that is different than the ones we currently have access to.⁷ A comparison between the versions of Sirach and translation practices is beneficial and possible, but nevertheless challenging because of the lack of manuscripts and indications that multiple Hebrew versions with unique emphases circulated.

Sirach's textual format has also made the study of translation challenging. Scholars such as Eva Mroczek and Judith Newman have noted the differences between the versions and also noted that the genre of Sirach was one of textual fluidity and adaption: "One of the major principles of modern scholarly editing, the idea of "final authorial intent, becomes meaningless: some authors' "intent" was precisely *not* final. In addition to books that were conceptualized as "open" by their authors, there were also books that were "opened" by later readers who adapted the texts for their own needs. This model of an open project seems to hold for Ben Sira: as Judith Newman writes,

Collected Essays on the Book of Ben Sira, ed. Pancratius Beentjes, CBET 43 (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 333. "Unlike other Hebrew manuscripts of the book of Sirach that consist of various fragments of the whole book, C instead presents an anthology of deliberately arranged portions and single verses. This situation leads to many questions: can C be read as a coherent wisdom text?" Ueberschaer, "Sirach Ms C Revisited," 91, 96.

⁷ "In my view, what is essential and what I have tried to make clear on several occasions is that it is only after an investigation of the translation technique, the competence of the translator, the *Vorlage* of his translation, that one is in a position to discuss theological influences seriously." Staffan Olofsson, *Translation Technique and Theological Exegesis: Collected Essays on the Septuagint Version*, ConBOT 57 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 197.

“[t]he question of who has the last word is something of a trick question because the book seems to have invited others to add to the collection upon attaining their own wisdom. If Ben Sira is an “open book,” was it born open or opened up by its readers? It seems, based on both Ben Sira’s own imagery and the manuscript history of the text, that it may be both.”⁸ In a sense, while there are differing degrees of this openness, each translation or version contains its own unique interpretation of Sirach.⁹ For this reason and in this sense only, throughout this study I normally refer to the translator/grandson as the author. For while the grandson did not pen a new literary work, the translation remains his unique transmission of that text which created a unique linguistic meaning in Ptolemaic Egypt.

Why does each of the linguistic traditions possess slightly different theological nuances and shifting textual forms? These numerous textual forms and versions of Ben Sira can be explained in part by understanding how Sirach was received within Judaic and Christian communities that copied, supplemented, applied, clarified, and transmitted the text from one cultural and linguistic area to another. The variety has been argued to result from the fact that many Jewish communities may not have considered Sirach to be a scriptural text.¹⁰ It could also be the result of scribal obedience. Sirach itself

⁸ Mroczek, *The Literary Imagination in Jewish Antiquity*, 107–8; Judith Newman, “Liturgical Imagination in the Composition of Ben Sira,” in *Prayer and Poetry in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature: Essays on Prayer and Poetry in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature in Honor of Eileen Schuller on the Occasion of Her 65th Birthday*, ed. Jeremy Penner, Ken Penner, and Cecilia Wassen, STDJ 98 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 337.

⁹ “The commonplace statement that every translation is an interpretation could be given a sharper edge: Even a translation that aims at literalism offers the translator an opportunity to introduce something of his personal thoughts and beliefs.” Benjamin Kedar, “The Latin Translations,” in *Mikra: The Literature of the Jewish People in the Period of the Second Temple and the Talmud*, ed. Martin-Jan Mulder, vol. 1 of *CRINT* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 313.

¹⁰ Maurice Gilbert, “The Book of Ben Sira: Implications for Jewish and Christian Traditions,” in *Jewish Civilization in the Hellenistic-Roman Period*, ed. Shemaryahu Talmon (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1991), 88.

commands its audience to emulate, embody, and pass down wisdom like the literary sage presented in the text; scribes, might have contributed to this task by becoming sages themselves and adding snippets of their wisdom.¹¹ The textual evidence indicates that "the expanded text of Ben Sira grew little by little. We must not imagine only one official second edition, revised and expanded, but rather a long process of expansion."¹² As a result of the different textual emphases in different language traditions, rather than speaking of a single text of Sirach, "we may instead affirm the multiform state of the textual witnesses to Ben Sira."¹³ Sirach's genre encouraged its readers and copiers to apply and recontextualize its message to different environments. This further complicates the study of its translation since it was a recontextualization in new contexts.

The variegated nature of Sirach has resulted in various scholars finding value in studying the message of each linguistic version instead of studying the original Hebrew version exclusively. As well-stated by Maurice Gilbert, « Il faut tenir compte, me semble-t-il, du principe de cohérence de chaque tradition; il me paraît préférable de ne pas homogénéiser les traditions.»¹⁴ In my case, an analysis of all the versions would be impossible, while an attempt to homogenize the versions based on any one text, even a supposed Hebrew original, would make the study of a particular version in its own, local

¹¹ Judith Newman, *Before the Bible: The Liturgical Body and the Formation of Scriptures in Early Judaism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 45.

¹² Gilbert, "The Book of Ben Sira," 88.

¹³ Jason Gile, "The Editions to Ben Sira and the Book's Multiform Textual Witness," in *The Texts and Versions of the Book of Ben Sira*, ed. Jean-Sébastien Rey and Jan Joosten, JSJSup 150 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 256.

¹⁴ Maurice Gilbert, "Où en sont les études sur le Siracide," in *Ben Sira: recueil d'études = Ben Sira: Collected Essays*, BETL 264 (Leuven: Peeters, 2014), 356.

setting equally impossible.¹⁵ The essential coherence that we can observe between the Hebrew and later versions indicates that, while we can still hear the voice of Ben Sira, the author of the first Hebrew version, through the copies of his work,¹⁶ nevertheless we must recognize that Ben Sira's words were regularly adapted and extended in light of current beliefs as it was transmitted.¹⁷ Nor should one privilege the Hebrew fragments, or any other version, as somehow uniquely authentic, since such privileging would result in the loss of the way in which the message of Ben Sira was transmitted in different language communities. For this reason, following scholars such as Johannes Marböck and Renato De Zan who have engaged in scholarly studies to determine the message expressed in the Greek version alone (see Appendix 3 for the use of the Greek version in Sirach studies),¹⁸ I will limit my study to the message that can be discerned in the Greek textual version (GI) within its own identifiable historic setting.¹⁹ Because my study works from the language of the Greek text and how it was read in its particular setting of Egypt, I don't attempt to enter the mind of the translator (who must have understood both Hebrew and Greek); rather, through the linguistic tools I have chosen to use, my

¹⁵ Gilbert, "Methodological," 16.

¹⁶ Gilbert, "Methodological," 7. The question of whether the Greek or Hebrew version should be the basis of the translation used in the Roman Catholic Church has been a live and debated question, see Louis Hartman, "Sirach in Hebrew and Greek," *CBQ* 23.4 (1961): 443. Some have argued that both versions should be understood to be "canonical," see Maurice Gilbert, "L'ecclésiastique quel texte? Quelle autorité," in *Ben Sira: recueil d'études = Ben Sira: Collected Essays*, BETL 264 (Leuven: Peeters, 2014), 32, 34.

¹⁷ Gilbert, "Methodological," 13. For instance the Old Latin version contains hopeful eschatological statements, and the Syriac version contains Christian statements, not found in the Hebrew or the GI versions.

¹⁸ Johannes Marböck, *Jesus Sirach 1-23*, HTKAT (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder Verlag GmbH, 2010), 24–25; Renato De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce: studio del "Trattato sulle offerte" di SirGr 34,21-35,20*, AnBib 190 (Rome: Gregorian & Biblical Press, 2011).

¹⁹ Gilbert, "Où en sont les études sur le Siracide," 356; Gilbert, "Methodological," 16; Beentjes, "Some Major Topics in Ben Sira Research," 6.

study examines the message that is grammaticalized through specific linguistic choices in Greek and how those choices created meaning in its Ptolemaic Context.

In fact, an analysis of this nature has a significant advantage: the earliest and only fully extant version of Ben Sira currently available is the grandson's Greek translation, identified throughout as Greek version I (GI).²⁰ Because of a lack of manuscript evidence, we cannot reconstruct the Hebrew *Urtext* of the GI version in its entirety. Studies of the extant Hebrew and Greek manuscripts indicate that there are differences among the texts. A few examples when it comes to cultic themed material can demonstrate this. For instance, Heb MS B 46:13 calls Samuel a priest [ימכרן] and prophet whereas in Gr. Sir 46:11 he is only called a prophet. Similarly Gr Sir 14:11 mentions offerings [προσφορὰς] presented to God whereas Heb MS A Sir 14:11 does not speak at all about cultic activity. There are many more examples of small differences when speaking about cultic activity.²¹ What we see is that a section of cultic discourse in

²⁰ An amended Greek version I along with a Greek version II in a distinguishably smaller font, is the text displayed in Ziegler's *Sapientia Iesu Filii Sirach*. See Joseph Ziegler, *Sapientia Iesu Filii Sirach* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965). This critical edition differs from Alfred Rahlfs and Robert Hanhart, eds., *Septuaginta: SESB Edition* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006) which uses an unamended diplomatic Greek text form which only interacts with the major Greek codices, see Ueberschaer, *Weisheit aus der Begegnung*, 32. This Greek version I is slightly different from a later, not fully extant Greek version II (GII), which is either the result of copying mistakes, contextualized copying, or scribal emendations. Gile, "The Editions," 237, 239. Severino Bussino, *The Greek Additions in the Book of Ben Sira*, AnBib 203 (Rome: Gregorian & Biblical Press, 2013), 21, 410–11.

²¹ Another reason for an analysis based on one version alone is that there are significant differences in the wording between the Greek I and Hebrew version(s). These differences make it difficult to study the two versions conjointly. In the Greek text there is slight updating of information, such as the statement that Ben Sira came from Jerusalem (Gr Sir 50:27) which is not in the extant Hebrew versions. In contrast, comments about the priesthood of Simon (Hb Sir 50:23-24) are removed in the Greek. Some exegetical problems occur when one tries to merge an investigation of both Hebrew and Greek in Sirach. There are passages where sacrificial terminology appears in Hebrew that is not present in Greek. In Heb Sir 46:1 Joshua is called a "priestly servant [משרת] of Moses in prophecy." Joshua is described with the *piel* substantival participle of the verb שרת which is normally associated with sacrificial actions. Elsewhere in Heb Sirach this same cultic designation משרת is translated as the Greek cultic associated term "λατρουργός" (Gr Sir 7:29-30). Nevertheless, in the case of Sir 46:1, what was a sacrificial designation of משרת in Hebrew is translated as the non-cultic term "successor [διάδοχος] of Moses in prophecy" (Gr Sir 46:1). Likewise Gr. Sir 7:9 mentions offerings whereas this verse does not exist in any Hebrew version.

a Hebrew version is not always so in the Greek version (or vice versa). This means that the lexical fields and the subsequent exegetical study of these passages would be different for the Greek version (GI) than the Hebrew version (HI).

The Greek version (GI) presents itself as a translation of a Hebrew version of Sirach along with a brief introduction and conclusion by the translator who identifies himself as Ben Sira's grandson. So not surprisingly, the translator appears to have sought ways to enable the voice of the grandfather, Ben Sira, to be heard in the Greek version, including *Hebraisms* that are maintained in the translation. However, the translation technique and literary freedom of the grandson also suggest that a full reconstruction of that voice is impossible. Thus the translator does not translate Hebrew words slavishly using the same Greek glosses throughout his work, suggesting that the original, specific Hebrew words or their narrowly identifiable meanings on the basis of the Greek version cannot be as conclusive as we might like. Rather, he attempts to make the Hebrew meaning understandable and relevant to Greek-speaking readers.²² This process of actualizing a Hebrew text for a Greek-speaking audience is somewhat

Regarding sacrificial terms there are changes in the content translated. In Heb MS B 38:11 a memorial [אזכרה] is translated as a memorial of fine flour [μνημόστυνον σμιδάλεως] in Gr. Sir 38:11. Heb. Sir 45:11 describes a “soothing aroma that I might remember [ריח ניחח ואזכרה]” which is translated as “incense and a sweet smell as a memorial [θυσίαμα καὶ εὐωδίαν εἰς μνημόστυνον]” in Gr. Sir 45:11, with the addition of the word “incense.” Likewise “an offering of your hand [תרומת יד]” in Heb MS A Sir 7:31 is translated as “the gift of thighs [καὶ δόσιν βραχιόνων]” in Gr Sir 7:31. Suzanne Daniel, *Recherches sur le vocabulaire du culte dans la Septante*, *ÉtC* 61 (Paris: Klincksieck, 1966), 110; Núria Calduch-Benages, “El servicio cultural en el Sirácida: estudio del vocabulario,” *EstBib* 57 (1999): 157; Renate Egger-Wenzel, “The Change of Sacrificial Terminology from Hebrew into Greek in the Book of Ben Sira,” *BN* 140 (2009): 74, 90; Friedrich Reiterer, “Gott und Opfer,” in *Ben Sira's God: Proceedings of the International Ben Sira Conference Durham Ushaw College 2001*, ed. Renate Egger-Wenzel (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2002), 132.

²² James Aitken, “The Literary Attainment of the Translator of Greek Sirach,” in *The Texts and Versions of the Book of Ben Sira*, ed. Jean-Sébastien Rey and Jan Joosten, JSJSup 150 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 108; Benjamin Wright, “Translation Greek in Sirach in Light of the Grandson's Prologue,” in *The Texts and Versions of Ben Sira*, ed. Jean-Sébastien Rey and Jan Joosten (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 75–94; Gilbert, “Methodological,” 4.

analogous to contemporary Old Greek Midrashic and targumic techniques that contextualize and actualize a text.²³ In fact, the identification of clarifications as well as contextual actualizations in Greek Sirach with some Old Greek translations has led to the conclusion that the grandson uses some common targumic-midrashic literary techniques.²⁴ Here, then, is another reason for a focus on a single version. Accordingly, in what follows, I regularly use the versification found in the Greek version. For the English, I will cite translations of Greek Sirach in the *Lexham English Septuagint (LES)* and the *New English Translation of the Septuagint (NETS)*.²⁵

Finally it is important to note that for the Greek-speaking Jewish community that used Greek Sirach, this text likely functioned as their authoritative understanding of

²³ Antonio Minissale, *La versione greca del Siracide: confronto con il testo ebraico alla luce dell'attività midrascica e del metodo targumico*, AnBib 133 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1995), 3, 15–19.

²⁴ "Postulare l'influsso del metodo midrascico-targumico nel nipote di Ben Sira, nella seconda metà del II sec. a. C. ad Alessandria, è legittimo, perché egli doveva essere imbevuto dell'ermeneutica allora già dominante non solo in Palestina ma anche nel centro egiziano, e non solo nella sinagoga ma anche nell'istruzione scolastica, nel cui ambito è più confacente l'uso del nostro libro" in Minissale, *La versione greca del Siracide*, 29.

²⁵ All citations of English Sirach will be from the LES unless I note otherwise. Most English readers are familiar with translations of Sirach in modern bibles such as the *Revised Standard Version*, the *New Revised Standard Version*, or the *New Jerusalem Bible*. These translations of Sirach are not translations from the Greek version, rather they are eclectic translations of both Greek and Hebrew Sirach used in tandem where the Hebrew is preferred over the Greek whenever possible. Differences include both the content as well as the structure. The chapter and verse structure is slightly different between the Greek and Hebrew versions. In the Greek version the numeration of 30:25-33:13 and 33:13-36:16 "have exchanged places, probably due to the transposition of leaves." The different pagination means practically the versification of chapters 30-36 is different in the Greek version than most English translations of Sirach. Citation from John Collins, "Ecclesiasticus, or The Wisdom of Jesus Son of Sirach," in *The Oxford Bible Commentary*, ed. John Barton and John Muddiman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 668–69; Gregory, *Like an Everlasting Signet Ring*, 15–16; Friedrich Reiterer, "Review of Recent Research on the Book of Ben Sira (1980-1996)," in *Alle Weisheit stammt vom Herrn ...* *Gesammelte Studien zu Ben Sira*, ed. Renate Egger-Wenzel, BZAW 375 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 61–62. English translations that follow the GI structure are Rick Brannan et al., eds., *The Lexham English Septuagint* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012); Henry Swete, *The Old Testament in Greek: According to the Septuagint* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909). Benjamin Wright, "Wisdom of Iesous Son of Sirach," in *A New English Translation of the Septuagint*, ed. Benjamin Wright and Albert Pietersma (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 715–62. Thomas Nelson, *New Revised Standard Version* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989). Wright provides an accessible introduction to the Greek version of Sirach in pp. 715-719.

Sirach since many of its readers would have had no access to the Hebrew version or did not understand Hebrew. Even if the Hebrew was the original, the Greek version provided what was understood. The Greek version provided the content of Sirach through its presentation and use.²⁶ Though the translator is not an author who penned a completely new composition, the translation nevertheless functioned as a stand-alone text independent of the Hebrew version for many, or most, or even all of its readers. The Greek version created a socio-linguistically unique text that coherently presented information in its context. The goal of this study is to study the information expressed in this Greek version alone and to examine how its readers encountered and understood this text.

1.3. A Definition of Sacrifice

Since the subject of this study is the examination of sacrificial imagery in Sirach, specifically offerings presented to a deity in Greek Sirach in its historical context, I first need to define what I mean by a cult or sacrifice. Though sacrifice is a recognizable behaviour that appears in most human cultures, there is no universally agreed-upon definition of what it entails.²⁷ Some scholars define sacrifice as exclusively the destruction of a living creature for a deity and use the word or idea of offering to

²⁶ Paul Flesher and Bruce Chilton comment on the similar phenomenon of Aramaic translations “Its status and treatment are the same as the Hebrew text. But although the Hebrew is the original, the Aramaic provides what is understood. Since the *targum* appears identical to the original Scripture, there is no hesitation in the minds of those in the service that the translation is equivalent to the original. Thus the *targum*’s meaning gives the actual content of Scripture according to its ritual presentation, even when it is manifest that the Aramaic and Hebrew version are not literally equivalent” Paul Virgil Flesher and Bruce Chilton, *The Targums: A Critical Introduction* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2011), 6.

²⁷ Daniel Ullucci, “Sacrifice in the Ancient Mediterranean: Recent and Current Research,” *CurBR* 13.3 (2015): 394.

designate gifts that do not involve the killing of a creature for a deity.²⁸ In this theory, the core significance of offering is that it denotes the brutal violence imposed on an animal's life as a substitute for one's own.²⁹ Unfortunately, this definition excludes too many examples from a broad range of texts in which non-life extinguishing offerings are described as sacrifices.

As such, I prefer a broader action-oriented definition that highlights sacrifice as “a typed pattern of action which transfers a (sacrificial) object into the realm of the sacred or the possession of a deity.”³⁰ This definition not only addresses the problem noted in the previous paragraph but also does not exclusively focus on the communicative and communitarian aspects of sacrifice, including communication with a deity, group ritual identity formation, and the identity of the actual item offered (i.e. whether an animal, vegetable, or prayer). A still fuller understanding of sacrifice understood in this way can arise from a study of individual cases to see how a word or concept functioned in a specific culture.³¹ Such a study is precisely what I propose to do in the case of Sirach as I highlight passages in which an item is offered to a deity as a sacrifice or an offering and in which the recipient is clearly defined in a direct context.

1.4. An Introduction to Sacrifice in Judaism, in Ptolemaic Egypt, and in Sirach

²⁸ Jean Pierre Vernant, “A General Theory of Sacrifice and the Slaying of the Victims in the Greek *Thusia*,” in *Mortals and Immortals: Collected Essays*, ed. Froma Zeitlin (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 291.

²⁹ Vernant, “A General Theory of Sacrifice,” 293.

³⁰ Andreas Bendlin et al., “Sacrifice,” in *Brill's New Pauly: Encyclopaedia of the Ancient World*, ed. Hubert Cancik, Gerhard Schneider, and Christine Salazar (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 832. Even more broadly I could also define sacrifice as a type of ritualized behavior presented to a deity. In this definition, both the action as well as the intention of the worshiper/community are preserved. Ullucci, “Sacrifice in the Ancient Mediterranean,” 392.

³¹ Ullucci, “Sacrifice in the Ancient Mediterranean,” 399, 424–25. Bendlin et al., “Sacrifice,” 836.

Sacrifice, as I have suggested it be understood, was a common everyday experience in the ancient world, one shared by most human populations. The Jewish tradition, informed by both its Scriptures and contemporary documents, had conditions and rules about what constituted a correct and acceptable offering. A Jewish believer could not present a sacrifice to other gods than the God of Israel in clearly defined ways. For the Jews living near the Jerusalem Temple or within its range, it was not difficult to teach and inculcate proper sacrificial practice. A Jewish offeror in the Levant was for the most part surrounded by people who shared her or his cultic beliefs and practices. If an offeror wanted to adopt other cultic practices, this required almost an intentional choice since it was not the normative practice.

However, this dynamic changed for Jews living in regions where they were not the dominant ethnic group. In Ptolemaic Egypt, for example, Jews were a small minority community. Most of the people who surrounded them did not share many of their religious beliefs and practices. To further complicate matters, within Ptolemaic Egypt there were at least two prominent traditions of sacrifice and cultic practice, in addition to the Jewish minority practice, namely, Greek and demotic (i.e. native Egyptian). Within this pluralistic context, Jews were clearly not the majority culture, though they frequently “rubbed shoulders” with those who had radically different beliefs about gods and cultic practices. As a result, all the communities participated regularly in their own cultic actions, some of which shared similarities, as well as some differences, with each other.

This was true even among Jews. Whether they wanted to or not, Jews constantly saw the gods, cultic offerings, and their worshiping neighbours at the countless shrines and local temples throughout Egypt. Sacrifice was one of the central visible ways that

devotees practiced their religion. In fact, unless Jews were intentional about the religious and spiritual education and formation of their communities' members, their young could easily intentionally or unintentionally adopt the cultic and religious beliefs and practices of their neighbours. As I will show, there were Jews who did assimilate cultic practices from their gentile neighbours to the chagrin of many more traditional Jews. It is within this pluralistic context that Greek Sirach's teaching about offerings occurred.

1.5. The Status Quaestionis of Cultic Language in Greek Sirach

Having introduced my interest in a study of offerings presented to a recipient and my intention to focus on such offerings as they are found in the GI version of Sirach in the pluralistic context of Ptolemaic Egypt, here I will introduce the present state of research into cultic language in Greek Sirach.

1.5.1. A Survey of Major Studies of Sacrificial Activity in Sirach

The topic of sacrificial offerings in Sirach has received the attention of numerous smaller articles, as well as a few in-depth studies of select passages. Various studies have surveyed aspects of sacrifice, cultus, temple, and the priesthood in Sirach. The three major works on cultic imagery in Sirach have been the published doctoral theses of Renato De Zan, Helge Stadelmann, and Maria Palmisano, each of which included exegetical discussion of major cultic passages in Sirach.³² While these studies

³² De Zan only examined Sirach 31:21-32:20 (34:21-35:20); Stadelmann studied four different larger passages (7:29-31; 31:21-32:20; 38:9-11; 45:23-26); Palmisano only studied one passage (31:21-32:13). Renato De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce: studio del "Trattato sulle offerte" di SirGr 34,21-35,20*, AnBib 190 (Rome: Gregorian & Biblical Press, 2011); Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter*, 48-176; Maria Palmisano, "*Salvaci, Dio dell'universo!*": *Studio dell'eucologia di Sir 36H, 1-17*, AnBib 163 (Roma: Pontificio Istituto biblico, 2006), 69-96.

sometimes default to the Greek when no earlier language version is available, they all seek to establish the state of the text of Sirach across multiple language versions in order to reconstruct the earliest text. They do so, however, by limiting their examination to some of the larger passages dealing with sacrifice. However, significantly they did not attempt to show the method by which they came to choose these passages and not others.

There have also been numerous smaller survey articles or sections in books that have sought to explore Ben Sira's attitude toward offerings or have attempted to summarize his theological views. Judith Newman notes that Sirach provides an idealized or romanticized description of cultic worship.³³ Robert Hayward provides a limited accessible summary of Ben Sira's theology concerning offerings.³⁴ Friedrich Reiterer outlined the Old Testament Hebrew cultic terms used in Sirach.³⁵ Renate Egger-Wenzel, Otto Mulder, N ria Calduch-Benages and Reiterer compared the available sacrificial terms in Hebrew Ben Sira with their translations into Greek.³⁶ A section in Leo Purdue's doctoral dissertation provides a rather extensive survey of sacrifice and its relationship

³³ Newman, "Liturgical Imagination," 324.

³⁴ Robert Hayward, "Sacrifice and World Order: Some Observations on Ben Sira's Attitude to the Temple Service," in *Sacrifice and Redemption: Durham Essays in Theology*, ed. S.W. Sykes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 22–34.

³⁵ Friedrich Reiterer, "Gott und Opfer," in *Ben Sira's God: Proceedings of the International Ben Sira Conference Durham Ushaw College 2001*, ed. Renate Egger-Wenzel (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2002), 136–79;

³⁶ Egger-Wenzel, "The Change of Sacrificial Terminology"; Calduch-Benages, "El servicio cultural en el sir cida." Otto Mulder, "Worship in the Restored Second Temple in Sirach 50: The Context of the Feast: Yoma or Tamid or Rosh Hashanah?," in *Various Aspects of Worship in Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature*, ed. G za Xeravits, J zsef Zsengeller, and Ibolya Balla, DCLY 2016/2017 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2017), 150; Friedrich Reiterer, "Opferterminologie in Ben Sira," in *Ben Sira's God: Proceedings of the International Ben Sira Conference Durham Ushaw College 2001*, ed. Renate Egger-Wenzel (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2002), 371–74.

to the Torah-Wisdom framework within Hebrew language wisdom literature.³⁷

Similarly, Greg Goering, Andrew Schmidt, Michael Knibb, Ari Mermelstein, Saul Olyan, Leo Perdue, Maurice Gilbert, Hayward, and Newman have noted the connection between Wisdom and cult: cultic worship is part of Sirach's paradigm of practical expressions of Torah-wisdom that is embodied by righteous worshipers, and the instructing sage regularly makes commands concerning cultic piety that he desired the reader of Sirach to emulate and model.³⁸ József Zsengellér, Benjamin Wright, Bradley Gregory, Gabriele Boccaccini, Jeremy Corley, Knibb, Mermelstein, Hayward, and Mulder all emphasize Sirach's respect of the Jerusalem Temple and its priesthood as the location of God's presence.³⁹

³⁷ Leo Perdue, *Wisdom and Cult: A Critical Analysis of the Views of Cult in the Wisdom Literatures of Israel and the Ancient Near East*, SBLDS 30 (Missoula, MO: Scholars Press for the Society of Biblical Literature, 1977), 188–211.

³⁸ The Torah leads to wisdom which enacts itself in offerings (Sir 32:7 (35:4); 32 (35):1-2). Maurice Gilbert, "Wisdom and Cult According to Ben Sira," in *Ben Sira: recueil d'études = Ben Sira: Collected Essays*, BETL 264 (Leuven: Peeters, 2014), 281–97. Hayward, "Sacrifice and World Order," 28–29; Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter*, 88; Greg Goering, *Wisdom's Root Revealed: Ben Sira and the Election of Israel*, JSJSup 139 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 183–84. Andrew Schmidt, *Wisdom, Cosmos, and Cultus in the Book of Sirach*, DCLS 42 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2019), 425. Wisdom is the embodiment of the Divine Law who offers sacrifices (Sir 24:1, 10, 23). For Sirach, wisdom is embodied in material sacrifices that are performed in the Jerusalem Sanctuary by holy priests (50:14-15). Saul Olyan, "Ben Sira's Relationship to the Priesthood," *HTR* 80.3 (1987): 266. Michael Knibb, "Temple and Cult in Apocryphal and Pseudepigraphal Writings from Before the Common Era," in *Temple and Worship in Biblical Israel*, ed. John Day, JSOTSup 422 (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 404. Leo Perdue, *Wisdom Literature: A Theological History* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 244–45, 259. Schmidt, *Wisdom, Cosmos*, 373. Ari Mermelstein, *Creation, Covenant, and the Beginnings of Judaism: Reconceiving Historical Time in the Second Temple Period*, JSJSup 168 (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 42, 59. Hayward, "Sacrifice and World Order," 23–26. Robert Hayward, *The Jewish Temple: A Non-Biblical Sourcebook* (London: Routledge, 1996), 80. Caldach-Benages, "El servicio cultural en el sirácida," 158. Goering, *Wisdom's Root Revealed*, 177. Perdue, *Wisdom and Cult*, 189–90. Newman argues that the identification of wisdom with cultic offerings (Sir 24:10), permitted the acquisition of cultic like wisdom outside of the Jerusalem complex. Newman, "Liturgical Imagination," 330.

³⁹ Knibb, "Temple and Cult." József Zsengellér, "Does Wisdom Come from the Temple? Ben Sira's Attitude to the Temple of Jerusalem," in *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*, ed. Géza Xeravits (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 129; Benjamin Wright, "Fear the Lord and Honor the Priest: Ben Sira as Defender of the Jerusalem Priesthood," in *The Book of Ben Sira in Modern Research Proceedings of the First International Ben Sira Conference 28-31 July 1996 Soesterberg, Netherlands*, ed. Pancratius Beentjes, BZAW 255 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1997), 190. Gregory, *Like an Everlasting*

In the case of Sirach's specific statements about offerings themselves, and in sharp contrast to previous attitudes that assumed that Sirach had a negative view of material offerings, Stadelmann, Calduch-Benages, Perdue, Gregory, Goering, and Wright have noted that Sirach values both material sacrifices in the Jerusalem Temple as well as engaging in ethical offerings of piety.⁴⁰ Johannes Marböck, Gary Anderson, Gregory, Otto Kaiser, and Roland Murphy noted that Sirach attributes cultic effects, such as forgiveness, to acts of piety such as almsgiving, repentance, prayer, and fasting.⁴¹ Knibb and Kaiser observe that Sirach synthesizes various emphases of Judaism which allow Sirach to affirm both the centrality of the Jerusalem Temple while also

Signet Ring, 224–29; Gabriele Boccaccini, *Roots of Rabbinic Judaism: An Intellectual History, from Ezekiel to Daniel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 134; Benjamin Wright, "Sirach and 1 Enoch: Some Further Considerations," *Hen* 24 (2002): 179–80; Mermelstein, *Creation, Covenant*, 55–56. Robert Hayward, "Sirach and Wisdom's Dwelling Place," in *Targums and the Transmission of Scripture into Judaism and Christianity*, SAIS 10 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 357–59; Mulder, "Worship in the Restored Second Temple," 146; Jeremy Corley, "Elements of Jewish Identity in Ben Sira," *BN* 164 (2015): 6–7.

⁴⁰ Calduch-Benages, "El servicio cultural en el sirácida," 150; Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter*, 47. Wright, "Fear the Lord and Honor the Priest," 194. Gregory, *Like an Everlasting Signet Ring*, 227–38. Goering, *Wisdom's Root Revealed*, 171–72. Perdue, *Wisdom and Cult*, 199. In the past, it was common for writers to state that Sirach had a negative view of material Levitical offerings. For instance Marböck claims that Ben Sira did not find cultic offerings rather important; he claims that for Ben Sira they were secondary to real offerings of piety: "Das Kultgesetz spielt bei Sira trotz seiner persönlichen Vorliebe für Zeremonien im Tempel eine sehr untergeordnete Rolle" in Johannes Marböck, *Weisheit im Wandel: Untersuchungen zur Weisheitstheologie bei Ben Sira*, BZAW 272 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1999), 87. Likewise von Rad states "One can see that Sirach's approach to cultic institutions is a very limited one. For him it is the moral or spiritual element which is the all important one" in Gerhard von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1981), 280 n. 28. James Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom: An Introduction* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1981), 151. John Snaith, "Ben Sira's Supposed Love of Liturgy," *VT* 25.2 (1975): 171, 174; Robert H. Pfeiffer, *History of New Testament Times: With an Introduction to the Apocrypha* (New York: Harper, 1949), 375. More examples of this attitude are listed in Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter*, 44, n. 1.

⁴¹ Marböck, *Jesus Sirach 1-23*, 76, 83, 255; Johannes Marböck, "Sündenvergebung bei Jesus Sirach: eine Notiz zur Theologie und Frömmigkeit der deuterokanonischen Schriften," *ZKT* 116.4 (1994): 480–86; Otto Kaiser, "Kultische und sittliche Sühne bei Jesus Sirach," in *Vom offenbaren und verborgenen Gott: Studien zur spätbiblischen Weisheit und Hermeneutik*, ed. Otto Kaiser, BZAW 392 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 100–118. Gary Anderson, *Sin: A History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 149; Gary Anderson, "Redeem Your Sins by the Giving of Alms: Sin, Debt, and the 'Treasury of Merit' in Early Jewish and Christian Tradition," *L&S* 3 (2007): 55–56. Gregory, *Like an Everlasting Signet Ring*, 233–38; Kaiser, "Kultische und sittliche Sühne bei Jesus Sirach." Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter*, 136–37. Roland Murphy, "Sin, Repentance, and Forgiveness in Sirach," in *Der Einzelne und Seine Gemeinschaft bei Ben Siras*, ed. Renate Egger-Wenzel and Ingrid Krammer, BZAW 270 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1998), 268–69.

permitting supplemental alternative ethical or non-physical sacrificial actions by a worshiper.⁴² Robert Wright, Schmitz, and Gregory mention that offerings of piety do not replace temple cultic worship in a way that makes the latter unnecessary.⁴³ John Collins and Kaiser note that offerings of piety functioned as a substitute for temple sacrifice for Diaspora worshipers who could no longer easily travel to Jerusalem to enact the necessary sacrifice.⁴⁴ A. Büchler, Murphy, Marböck, and Kaiser observe that Sirach believed that material and ethical sacrifices affected forgiveness, atonement, and purification for the offeror.⁴⁵ Víctor Moria Ascenio, Schmitz, Stadelmann, and Boccaccini mention that Sirach believes that the fulfillment of moral laws was a requirement of successful offerings.⁴⁶ Calduch-Benages indicates that acceptable offerings are described as “sweet-smelling” or providing a “pleasing odour.”⁴⁷ In various small studies P. Kraft, John Snaith, Moria Ascenio, De Zan, Hayward, Wright, Perdue, Gilbert, Goering, and Wright note that the offerings of the unrighteous are unsuccessful

⁴² Knibb, “Temple and Cult,” 402–9. Kaiser, “Kultische und sittliche Sühne bei Jesus Sirach,” 101–2.

⁴³ Robert Wright, “Sacrifice in the Intertestamental Literature” (The Hartford Seminary Foundation, PhD diss., 1966), 17; Otto Schmitz, *Die Opferanschauung des späteren Judentums und die Opferaussagen des Neuen Testaments: eine Untersuchung ihres geschichtlichen Verhältnisses* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1910), 61. Gregory, *Like an Everlasting Signet Ring*, 239.

⁴⁴ John Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age*, OTL (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 90. Kaiser, “Kultische und sittliche Sühne bei Jesus Sirach,” 103.

⁴⁵ Murphy, “Sin, Repentance,.” A. Büchler, “Ben Sira’s Conception of Sin and Atonement,” *JQR* 13.3 (1923): 303–35. Kaiser, “Kultische und sittliche Sühne bei Jesus Sirach”; Marböck, “Sündenvergebung.”

⁴⁶ Schmitz, *Die Opferanschauung*, 67. Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter*, 128–29. Víctor Moria Asensio, “Sabiduría, culto y piedad en Ben Sira,” *SerVict* 40 (1993): 126. Boccaccini, *Roots of Rabbinic Judaism*, 141.

⁴⁷ Núria Calduch-Benages, “Aromas, perfumes y fragancias en el Sirácida,” in *Treasures of Wisdom: Studies in Ben Sira and the Book of Wisdom*, ed. Núria Calduch-Benages and J. Vermeulen, BETL 143 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999), 19–20.

and are not accepted by God because they do not embody the holy lifestyle taught in Torah-wisdom.⁴⁸

In spite of the extensive nature of these studies, I believe that there is clear value in further study. Except for the three detailed exegetical studies by Stadelmann, De Zan, and Palmisano, all the other studies that touch on cultic actions in Sirach have generalized from only brief exegetical discussions of only a few exemplary passages.

I would suggest that there are at least three areas where I can offer a more detailed analysis. First, none of these studies has shown how they have identified different texts that speak about the same topic of offerings. How can one know that they have studied related passages? How can one know that they did not omit some passages that might invalidate their results? Second, all these studies have looked in tandem at both Greek and Hebrew versions without attempting to summarize the unique voice expressed in each text according to its historical context. Thus, none of them have examined how cultic statements in Greek Sirach had a specific meaning in the social and linguistic environment of Ptolemaic Egypt in contrast to the Seleucid context of Hebrew Sirach. Third, none of the studies has described in detail the exegetical method used to study passages in Sirach. For this reason, my chapter 2 presents at some length a defined, linguistic and historical method that will better answer questions raised regarding offerings in Greek Sirach within its specific historical context. The use of the method will enable this study to contribute to new information of Greek Sirach.

⁴⁸ Hayward, "Sacrifice and World Order," 30–31; Wright, "Fear the Lord and Honor the Priest," 193; Kaiser, "Kultische und sittliche Sühne bei Jesus Sirach," 102–7; Perdue, *Wisdom and Cult*, 198; Moria Asensio, "Sabiduría, culto," 137; De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 520; Goering, *Wisdom's Root Revealed*, 170; Gilbert, "Wisdom and Cult According to Ben Sira," 283–84; P. Kraft, "Justicia y liturgia: la maravillosa síntesis de Sirácida," *RTL* 30.3 (1996): 311–13; Wright, "Sacrifice," 13; Snaith, "Ben Sira's Supposed Love of Liturgy," 169–70.

1.6. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have introduced the subject of my study. This has included a brief survey of the date and versions of Sirach and the rationale for my intention to study Greek Sirach in its pluralistic Ptolemaic Egyptian context. Additionally, I surveyed major cultic studies performed in the field of Sirach studies. This survey permits me to identify not only what has been studied and what is known, but also where I believe that I can contribute to new knowledge.

Specifically, my literature review has shown me that this study can contribute to new historical information by (a) using a clearly defined tool to identify passages that speak about the same topic, (b) restricting my study to the unique cultic theology of the Greek version in the historical context of Ptolemaic Egypt, and (c) using that defined tool also to guide my historical-exegetical examination. In my next chapter, I will introduce the two linguistic tools that I believe are most useful for this purpose, namely, lexical semantics and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). These tools will permit this study to link passages in Sirach that are semantically related and to have a concrete rubric of reproducible questions by which to examine the text. The use of SFL will also outline information about the relationship between the sage and his hypothetical reader as expressed through the linguistic choices of the book as he engages in cultic instruction.

Chapter 2: Methodology

2.1. Introduction

So far in my study, I have made clear that Greek Sirach's statements about an offering presented to a deity need to be examined within the historical context of a Jewish community in Ptolemaic Egypt. In order to explore these statements more adequately I have turned to semantics, and specifically to two tools within the semantic methodological framework, namely, lexical semantics and Systemic Functional Linguistics.¹ I suggest that the use of both tools enables me to create reproducible outlines for understanding the meaning of references to offerings presented to a deity in Greek Sirach within its socio-historical context. Specifically, lexical semantics can help this study to identify words in Sirach that are related through their shared cultic patterns, while certain aspects of a Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL) will enable it to survey more carefully the social and historical environment and linguistic features that contribute to Sirach's cultic statements. As this study will show, the utilization of these two complementary semantic approaches will allow it to reach a more accurate synthetic analysis of what the book states about various questions concerning Greek Sirach's concepts concerning offerings and sacrifices presented to a deity.

2.2. The Semantic Goal of this Investigation

How will these tools work together complementarily to allow this study to reach this study's goal of identifying the meaning of cultic statements? How can they work

¹ The order that I present them here is more clearly separated than how I will use them in the investigation since SFL will be used to create the pattern of chapters 3-4 and lexical semantics will be used at the beginning of chapter 4.

together to allow it to arrive at conclusions regarding these statements? As this study will show in this chapter, these two semantic tools used together to compile and examine the meaning of Greek Sirach understood semantically. Accordingly, what it describes here is the semantic goal of this two-pronged approach within the unified methodological framework of semantics.

If someone were to ask what semantics is, the simplest answer would be to state that semantics “is the part of linguistics concerned with meaning.”² A fundamental assumption of semantics as a linguistic method is that meaning is encoded or grammaticalized in a text’s grammar and sentence structure.³ Linguistic analysis is interested in the meaning expressed and represented in the text, sometimes called the obvious or literal meaning.⁴ Meaning is the significance or value associated with words, actions, or statements. My examination attempts to reconstruct the meaning of specific information regarding offerings as communicated within these texts.⁵

But semantics is much more than this because it presupposes that linguistic meaning makes sense in a context of communication. Thus Anthony Thiselton more carefully and thus more helpfully states that “[s]emantics is the study of meanings; but

² Sebastian Löbner, *Understanding Semantics* (London: Routledge, 2002), 3. See a similar definition in Stanley Porter, “Discourse Analysis Introduction and Core Concepts,” in *Linguistic Analysis of the Greek New Testament: Studies in Tools, Methods, and Practice* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015), 140.

³ William Frawley, *Linguistic Semantics* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 1992), 1. Mark Q. Gardiner and Steven Engler, “Semantics,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Study of Religion*, ed. Michael Stausberg and Steven Engler (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 196–97. James Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 149–50, 206–19. Moisés Silva, *Biblical Words and Their Meaning: An Introduction to Lexical Semantics*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994); D. A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1984).

⁴ Thomas Ede Zimmermann and Wolfgang Sternefeld, *Introduction to Semantics: An Essential Guide to the Composition of Meaning* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2013), 1–3.

⁵ Frawley, *Linguistic Semantics*, 15. John Lyons, *Semantics: Volume I* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 1–3.

not simply the meanings of words...[but the meanings] which belong both to words and to sentences as they occur within a context that is both linguistic and extra-linguistic.”⁶

Verbal and written exchanges are part of social interactions between a speaker or author and a recipient. In an exchange, I ask “what does the speaker intend with the utterance, in particular, [and] what does the speaker want from me?”⁷ The parts in such an exchange are defined in communication theory as the transmitter, channel, and receiver as seen in the following simplified diagram.⁸

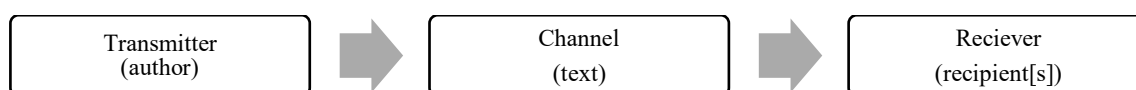


Image 1: Communication Theory

For the purpose of studying a written document, one can situate the text as a component part of a communicative act between its author and its audience.⁹

But because texts are written by authors who write from their viewing point within history, every text must contain a representation of actions, events, and ideas from the author’s historical and ideological vantage point. Accordingly, there can be no purely objective or, we might say, purely linguistic text without a consideration to the

⁶ Anthony Thiselton, “Semantics in New Testament Interpretation,” in *New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Principles and Methods*, ed. I. H. Marshall (Exeter: Paternoster, 1977), 75. Löbner, *Understanding Semantics*, 3. Zimmermann and Sternefeld, *Introduction to Semantics*, 1. This is a reaction against misunderstandings caused by diachronic word-oriented exegesis.

⁷ Löbner, *Understanding Semantics*, 9.

⁸ Lyons, *Semantics: Volume I*, 36. Often the channel is divided into two categories of “transmitted signal” and “received signal” since they could be disrupted. For the simplicity of the diagram, I did not include them. D. A. Cruse, *Meaning in Language: An Introduction to Semantics and Pragmatics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 5–6.

⁹ This model of communication, albeit with a change of terminology, is like speech-act theory, see Löbner, *Understanding Semantics*, 10. Speech act-theory divides communication into categories like the diagram above. It divides communication into locutionary (“an act of saying”), perlocutionary (“an act performed in saying something”), and illocutionary (“an act performed by means of saying something”) acts. John Lyons, *Semantics: Volume II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 730; Thiselton, “Semantics,” 76.

extra-linguistic context to which Thiselton made reference:¹⁰ the representation found in the text will always be contextual and perspectival, especially but uniquely so when it is misinformed or idealized. The goal of semantic analysis is, of course, not to determine the historical reality being invoked but rather to examine and recreate the meaning encoded in language's structure from the text's vantage and interpretive position.

For my purposes, this means that this study will seek to identify the world represented in Greek Sirach but as it is expressed by the interpretive vantage point provided in the text. This is Greek Sirach's semantic world, even if the statements in the text are idealized or unrepresentative of the actual historical reality. This is an important caveat and limitation imposed by semantic analysis, even when ancient texts are the only available witnesses to particular social and cultural historical contexts. My investigation of Greek Sirach, using aspects of lexical semantics and Systemic Functional Linguistics, will uncover Sirach's encoded semantic world evidenced by the text itself, which finds its home within the larger historical world outside of the text.

2.3. The Tool of Lexical Semantics

One of the challenges that I have already identified in the study of sacrifice in Greek Sirach is the question of how one arrives at identifying passages that speak about this topic. To arrive at the semantic goal of this study, which is to understand better the sacrificial statements in the Greek version of Sirach, I need to be able to identify those

¹⁰ For example, the linguistic semantic value of "Tom bought some rice" will identify the situation in the world or the state of the affairs identified in this statement. Its literal meaning is the act of Tom purchasing the food of rice. It could be that Tom did not buy rice and that this was a lie, but this implication is not verified in a linguistic analysis. Frawley, *Linguistic Semantics*, 2. N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992), 34–36.

passages that speak about the topic. A structural lexical-semantic analysis allows me to do so by identifying words employed in the text that share a semantic field, that is, a grouping of various words that are related because they share similar features of meaning. By identifying these field-based features, I can show how they speak about the same topic of offerings and sacrifices presented to a deity.

2.3.1. The Theory of Lexical Semantics

The beginning of structural lexical semantics is associated with the work of Ferdinand de Saussure which became increasingly popular in the 1930s and onward.¹¹

Three basic principles are relevant to my study. First, a linguistic sign (i.e. a word)

psychologically associates a concept (i.e. a tree) with its impact on

my senses: a “linguistic sign unites, not a thing and a name, but a

concept and a sound image. The latter is ...the psychological

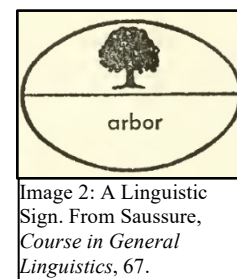
imprint of the sound, the impression that it makes on our

senses.”¹² A structuralist lexical-semantic analysis is rooted in a

framework that examines the mental impression associated with a word. Yet the

meaning of words does not occur in isolation from other words, for example words that

surround it in its discourse.¹³ As such lexical semantics studies the relationship among



¹¹ Peter Matthews, *A Short History of Structural Linguistics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 118; Dick Geeraerts, *Theories of Lexical Semantics: A Cognitive Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 47.

¹² De Saussure designates the linguistic sign as a whole a sign [*signe*], the concept as a signified [*signifié*], and sound-image as signifier [*signifiant*]. Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. Wade Baskin (New York: Philosophical Library, 1959), 66. Lyons, *Semantics: Volume I*, 239.

¹³ “The central idea is the notion that language has to be seen as a system, and not just as a loose bag of words.” Geeraerts, *Theories*, 48. This is sometimes called a synchronic analysis. Lyons, *Semantics: Volume I*, 243.

linguistic units in a language system.¹⁴

Logically, this understanding of language leads to the study of linguistic signs used in a text within the broader context of language in a certain given historical moment, thus enabling us to study an ancient text by an author to whom we do not have living access.

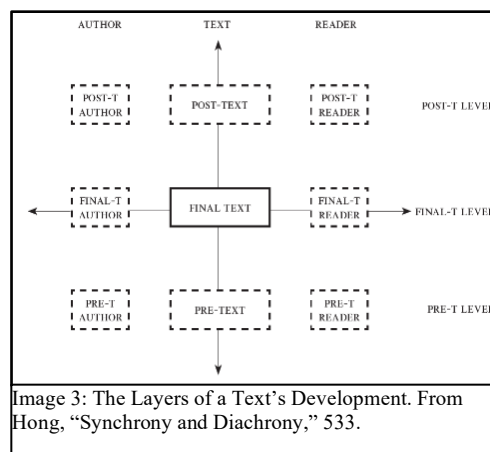


Image 3: The Layers of a Text's Development. From Hong, "Synchrony and Diachrony," 533.

Lexical semantics has been used in this way in recent biblical studies and is frequently paired with a historical investigation to avoid ahistorical linguistic investigation.¹⁵

As is clear, a lexical-semantic analysis highlights how a word functions synchronically within its immediate context.¹⁶ The structuralist framework that

¹⁴ De Saussure labels these relationships as both paradigmatic (a common pattern shared between words) and syntagmatic (the relation between a word and other words in its direct literary context) associations. Lyons, *Semantics: Volume I*, 240.

¹⁵ Recent studies include Gregory P. Fewster, *Creation Language in Romans 8: A Study in Monosemy*, LBS 8 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 19–39; Francesco Zanella, *The Lexical Field of the Substantives of "Gift" in Ancient Hebrew*, SSN 54 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 15, 19, 53; Milton Eng, *The Days of Our Years: A Lexical Semantic Study of the Life Cycle in Biblical Israel*, JSOTSup 464 (New York: T&T Clark International, 2011), 15. Pelio Fronzaroli, "Componential Analysis," *ZAH* 6.6 (1993): 85; James Aitken, "Lexical Semantics and the Cultural Context of Knowledge in Job 28, Illustrated by the Meaning of Haqar," in *Job 28: Cognition in Context*, ed. Ellen van Wolde, *BibInt* 64 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 127–28, 135. Susanne Grillmayr-Bucher, *Die Psalmen im Spiegel der Lyrik Thomas Bernhards*, SBB 48 (Verlag katholisches Bibelwerk GmbH: Stuttgart, 2002), 98–110. The use of a purely structuralist system of linguistics without any examination of its social or historical culture has been criticized and generally abandoned. Horst Geckeler, "Strukturelle Wortfeldforschung Heute," in *Studien zur Wortfeldtheorie*, ed. Peter Lutzeier (Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 1993), 11; Matthews, *A Short History of Structural Linguistics*, 142; Marilyn E. Burton, *The Semantics of Glory: A Cognitive, Corpus-Based Approach to Hebrew Word Meaning*, SSN 68 (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 9–10, 17–19; Geeraerts, *Theories*, 132. Zanella, *The Lexical Field*, 52.

¹⁶ The emphasis on highlighting how a word functions in its immediate context is a reaction against the previous trend of identifying the meaning of a word in isolation from its literary context, often leading to misunderstandings. Anachronism can occur when the meaning of a word is incorrectly derived from the use of the same or similar words within another cultural or historical context. For instance the complimentary adjective "nice" comes from the Latin *nescius* which means "ignorant," but its meaning has nothing to do with its etymological root. Likewise, only in context can it be outlined if the word "bar" refers to a "rod," "tavern," or "law exam." Silva, *Biblical Words*, 25–38, 106; Stanley Porter, "Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation," in *Linguistic Analysis of the Greek New Testament: Studies in Tools, Methods, and Practice* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015), 87; Peter Cotterell and Max Turner,

examines the meanings of words is “in its most basic sense, . . . a synchronic analysis that describes a word’s usage within a specific context at a given point in history.”¹⁷

This focus on how a word participates in a system of other words signifies that the meaning of a word is not first of all extralinguistic but rather is mediated and formed in the structure of a given language and that it has possible extra-linguistic implications.¹⁸ For necessarily a linguistic analysis must understand the sense features of words in a certain historical period since words have different types of referentiality. For example, some words have a specific historical referent in mind (i.e., Hannibal) whereas others are vaguer (i.e., good, beautiful).¹⁹ This study will examine lexemes synchronically but consider them also as eventually having necessary relevance to their socio-historical context.²⁰

2.3.2. Lexical Semantics as Used in this Thesis

Lexical semantics defines a word according to its function and use. Thus, rather than refer to a “word,” scholars who use lexical semantics prefer to use the term

Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1989), 130; Thiselton, “Semantics,” 78–79; Eugenio Coseriu, “El estudio funcional del vocabulario (compendio de lexemática),” in *Gramática, semántica, universales: estudios de lingüística funcional*, EyE 280 (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1978), 209.

¹⁷ Daniel Kroeze, “A Semantic Study of the Lexical Field of Fear in the Hebrew Bible” (University of Wisconsin Madison, PhD diss., 2004), 2. Koog Hong, “Synchrony and Diachrony in Contemporary Biblical Interpretation,” *CBQ* 75.3 (2013): 522–24. James Barr, “The Synchronic, the Diachronic, and the Historical: A Triangular Relationship?,” in *Synchronic or Diachronic?: A Debate on Method in Old Testament Exegesis*, ed. Johannes C. de Moor, *OtSt* 34 (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 1–6. The diachronic pre-history can be part of a synchronic analysis. Thiselton, “Semantics,” 82; Barr, “The Synchronic,” 1–8.

¹⁸ Coseriu, “El estudio funcional del vocabulario,” 207, 216.

¹⁹ The same word “dog,” depending on its social context, can refer to either a domestic companion (i.e. a house pet in Mk. 7:27) or a dangerous evil creature (i.e. a begging stray dog in Rev. 22:15). Johannes Louw, *The Semantics of New Testament Greek* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 55–57; Michael Stubbs, *Words and Phrases: Corpus Studies of Lexical Semantics* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 13–15; Silva, *Biblical Words*, 107.

²⁰ Geeraerts, *Theories*, 56; Gerrit van Steenberg, “Componential Analysis of Meaning and Cognitive Linguistics: Some Prospects for Biblical Hebrew Lexicology (II),” *JSNL* 28.2 (2002): 111–12.

“lexeme,” which is understood to mean a “word as it is used.”²¹ A lexeme may possess the identical morphological form of another lexeme but still be a different lexeme because the two function differently. For instance, “bank¹” [financial institution] is different from “bank²” [river bank] and “bank³” [a right or left airplane movement] although the words are spelled the same way. Thus, even though they are homomorphous and homophonous, they are in fact different lexemes because they function differently: each word communicates a different semantic meaning.²²

Lexical semantics claims that the meaning of a lexeme is “the result of the sum and the interaction of single semantic features.”²³ Rarely are all the features of one lexeme the same as that of another lexeme, which means that lexemes can be compared and contrasted according to their features. A tool which is rooted in the linguistic framework of lexical semantics is a componential analysis. This analysis engages in a comparative study of the features of various lexemes. A componential analysis uses reproducible questions that are posed to lexemes to demonstrate the differences and similarities between a list of cultic lexemes.²⁴ A componential analysis begins with the gathering together of various lexemes that are potentially related. Once they are grouped into a cluster they can be analyzed by (a) specifying their shared features, (b)

²¹ John Lyons, *Language, Meaning and Context* (London: Fontana, 1981), 75; Cotterell and Turner, *Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation*, 155.

²² The assumption is that normally there is only one lexical sense intended in a certain context by an author. Cotterell and Turner, *Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation*, 137, 164. Identical morphological words that possess different meanings is polysemy. Eng, *The Days of Our Years*, 31.

²³ Francesco Zanella, “The Contribution of Componential Analysis to the Semantic Analysis of a Lexical Field of Ancient Hebrew: Some Concrete Examples from the Lexical Field of the Substantives of Gift,” *EJJS* 2.2 (2008): 190.

²⁴ Eugene Nida, Johannes Louw, and Rondal Smith, “Semantic Domains and Componential Analysis of Meaning,” in *Current Issues in Linguistic Theory*, ed. Roger Cole (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977), 144. The parts of a componential analysis are described in Eugene Nida, *Componential Analysis of Meaning: An Introduction to Semantic Structures*, ATS 57 (The Hague: Mouton, 1975), 54–56.

determining what features separate them from each other, (c) outlining their crucial core shared features, and (d) highlighting the relations between the lexemes.²⁵ Once one has identified lexemes that have shared features, one can state that they possess a paradigmatic relationship of senses among the others. Lexemes that share certain sense features participate in a semantic domain/lexical field, that is, “the set of lexemes in any one language-system which cover the conceptual area and...give structure to it is a lexical field (*Wortfeld*).”²⁶ Even though it can be difficult to distinguish the exact border between semantic fields, componential analysis can concretely outline criteria by which lexemes can be differentiated.²⁷ As a result, the use of lexical semantics will allow this study to identify lexemes that share the same semantic field of offerings presented to a deity.

2.3.3. Conclusion

²⁵ Eugene Nida and Johannes Louw, *Lexical Semantics of the Greek New Testament*, SBLRBS 25 (Atlanta, GA: Scholarly Press, 1992), 86; Nida and Louw, *Lexical Semantics of the Greek New Testament*, 83–84; Geckeler, “Strukturelle Wortfeldforschung Heute,” 14. Ida Zatelli, “The Study of Ancient Hebrew Lexicon: Application of the Concepts of Lexical Field and Functional Language,” *KUSATU* 5 (2004): 133; Francesco Zanella, “Componential Analysis of Meaning,” in *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 511; Cotterell and Turner, *Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation*, 170–71.

²⁶ Lyons, *Semantics: Volume I*, 254. Although some structuralists differ in how they define terms, for the sake of my study the terms “lexical field,” “semantic field,” and “word field (*Wortfeld*)” are synonyms. Geeraerts, *Theories*, 57. Alinei uses a “linguistic taxonomy [tassonomia linguistica].” Mario Alinei, “Metodologia per la costruzione di un lessico tematico,” in *Atti del I Seminario di studi sui lessici tecnici greci e latini (Messina, 8-10 marzo 1990)*, ed. Paola Radici Colace and Maria Caltabiano, CLFS 1 (Messina: Accademia Peloritana dei Pericolanti, 1991), 36, 39. A field consists of the linguistic members that participate in a language within a certain historical moment of that language. “Feld heißt die sprachliche Gliederung, die man in einem bestimmten Zustand einer Sprache...antrifft” in Hans Schwarz, “Zwölf Thesen zur Feldtheorie,” in *Wortfeldforschung: zur Geschichte und Theorie des sprachlichen Feldes*, ed. Lothar Schmidt (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1973), 428.

²⁷ Geeraerts, *Theories*, 67; Gerrit van Steenberg, “Componential Analysis of Meaning and Cognitive Linguistics: Some Prospects for Biblical Hebrew Lexicology (I),” *JSNL* 28.1 (2002): 20; Ryder A. Wishart, “The Future of New Testament Lexicography: Remodeling Relational Semantics and Componential Analysis through Distributional Corpus Analysis,” in *Linguistics and the Bible: Retrospects and Prospects*, ed. Stanley Porter, Christopher Land, and Francis Pang, MNTSS 9 (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2019), 91–95..

I have introduced the basic components of lexical semantics. The essential components, lexemes, are identified in relation to sense features that can be shared by other lexemes that are morphologically and acoustically different. Lexeme sense features can be defined and compared using a componential analysis that utilizes the linguistic system of lexical semantics. A componential analysis determines if lexemes share the same sense features, as a result, lexemes can be shown to be paradigmatically (i.e. on the basis of a similar pattern) related and be part of a shared semantic field.

However, because of the synchronic nature of lexemes, a linguistic study of lexemes must be accompanied in some way by a description of their meaning in a particular, historical context in order to provide an understanding of the lexeme's meaning within its historical and cultural moment. In order to achieve this result, I will undertake an examination of the lexemes that I identify in their literary context and historical environment through an investigation of the passages that contain these lexemes using an historical-exegetical study informed by the categories of Systemic Functional Linguistics.

2.4. The Tool of Systemic Functional-Linguistics

To understand cultic lexemes more fully in Sirach, a lexically informed structuralist study must be accompanied by an investigation that describes the function of cultic lexemes within their historical environment. This is because “[l]anguage is not created in a vacuum; it is created in a context... To a large extent, language depends on the context in which it comes into existence; it could not exist without that context and

in a different context the language would be different.”²⁸ The need to situate a text in its historical world is the reason why I will use a second tool in my study which will allow me to examine and assess the lexemes synchronically. Accordingly, the second linguistic tool this study will use is aspects of the linguistic system of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) which I will introduce here.

2.4.1. The Theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics

Delving into the vast specialist literature of SFL handbooks and manuals can be daunting. Rather than introducing the theory and use of Systemic Functional Linguistics as a comprehensive linguistic system, I will introduce here only the parts of the SFL that I will use for my study. My presentation can be further nuanced for more specialized investigations in other, related areas.

The origin of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is primarily associated with the writings of the linguist Michael Halliday beginning in the 1960s.²⁹ At its most basic level, SFL examines texts as products of those social interactions that are “considered in relation to the cultural and social context in which they are negotiated.”³⁰ Thus, the term “functional” implies answers to questions like “how do people use language?” and “how is a piece of text structured for use?”³¹ The connection to the broader field of semantics,

²⁸ David Banks, *A Systemic Functional Grammar of English: A Simple Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2019), 4–5.

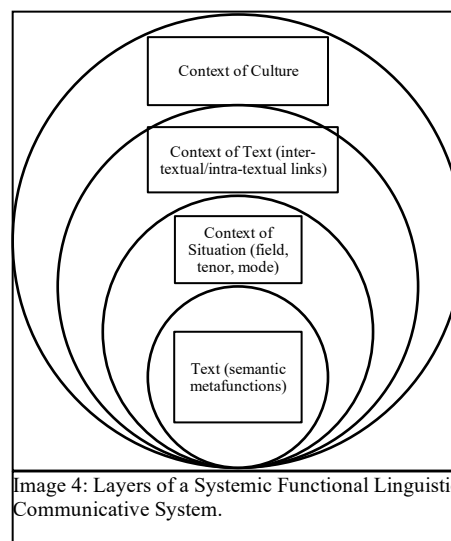
²⁹ Michael Halliday and Christian Matthiessen, *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*, 3rd ed. (London: Routledge, 2014); Michael Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan, *Language, Context, and Text: Aspects of Language in a Social-Semiotic Perspective* (1989; repr., Victoria, AU: Deakin University Press, 1993).

³⁰ Suzanne Eggins, *An Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics*, 2nd ed. (New York: Continuum, 2004), 2.

³¹ Eggins, *An Introduction*, 3; Halliday and Hasan, *Language, Context, and Text*, 17. Halliday and Hasan, *Language, Context, and Text*, 17.

in which I ask “how are texts...structured so that meanings can be made?”³² is clear since any text understood as a public linguistic moment or artifact occurs within a social setting. In order to grasp its meaning, one must see how people understood such a text in a certain social and cultural moment.

SFL also recognizes that a text functions as part of a system of choices within an historical context: “each choice in the system acquires its meanings against the background of the other choices which could have been made.”³³ For example, A baby will not stop crying for its mother at 4:00 AM. The language (i.e. text) of crying functions at a high volume. The infant’s



semantic goal is to communicate discomfort and hence a need. The social setting is a mother’s relationship with her infant in a home. The infant chooses her or his volume or sound made (i.e. happily cooing vs. wailing); each sound communicates a different meaning.³⁴ As such, attention to choices can help us to see how language functions as part of a social process and interaction.

³² Eggins, *An Introduction*, 3.

³³ Eggins, *An Introduction*, 3.

³⁴ Eggins, *An Introduction*, 4 ff.

SFL thus expands our understanding of the three-dimensional communicative exchange outlined above. SFL understands texts to occur within a more multi-dimensional system consisting of the context of culture, the context of text (co-text), the context of situation, and the text itself. The context of culture is

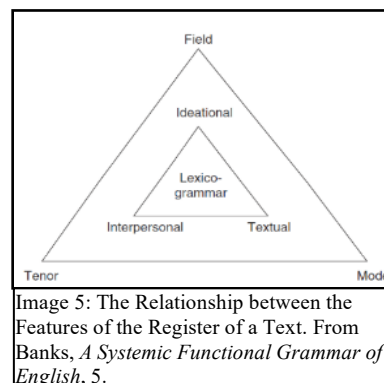


Image 5: The Relationship between the Features of the Register of a Text. From Banks, *A Systemic Functional Grammar of English*, 5.

the social and ideological environment that most broadly gives shape and meaning to a text.³⁵ The context of text provides a more narrowly defined framework for understanding the text. It includes the intertextual relationships between other texts in a culture and the intra-textual coherence of ideas within a text.³⁶ The context of situation uses three categories to describe features of the text itself: the field (i.e. what-ness), tenor (i.e. who-ness), and mode (i.e. how-ness).³⁷ The field describes what happens in a text and where it occurs; the tenor describes the relationships between the characters in a text; and the mode highlights the format of the text (i.e. oral or written). Fourth and finally, SFL identifies the passages within a text itself, which are composed of metafunctionally organized ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings enacted in

³⁵ Halliday and Hasan, *Language, Context, and Text*, 48–49; Jeffrey Reed, *A Discourse Analysis of Philippians: Method and Rhetoric in the Debate Over Literary Integrity*, JSNTSup 136 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 58. This is “the generically shared body of stable knowledges coded in the lexicon carried by all members of a speech community or culture.” Helen Leckie-Tarry, *Language and Context: A Functional Linguistic Theory of Register*, ed. David Birch (London: Pinter Publishers, 1995), 20.

³⁶ Halliday lists inter-textual and intra-textual relationships as separate layers. I recognize that this is a simplified model, but for the sake of simplicity I am combining them into one layer by following the model provided by Colin Toffelmire, *A Discourse and Register Analysis of the Prophetic Book of Joel*, SSN 66 (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 26. The similarities between the Context of Text of SFL and form criticism (i.e. the similar genre) are noted by Toffelmire, *A Discourse and Register Analysis*, 36–37.

³⁷ Stanley Porter, *The Letter to the Romans: A Linguistic and Literary Commentary*, NTM 37 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2015), 25; Leckie-Tarry, *Language and Context*, 23.

lexical-grammatical sentences.³⁸ The ideational, interpersonal, and textual meaning examine how each individual passage contributes to the field, tenor, and mode of the book as a whole.

While SFL was originally created to be used to study the English language, it has been adapted to examine various modern and ancient languages. SFL has been adopted and increasingly applied to the field of Greek language biblical studies by various scholars.³⁹ My study will use the categories and patterns of some of these previous Greek SFL studies. Because linguistic studies cannot in and of themselves describe the historical referents of a text, this study will pair linguistic analysis with comments on the meaning and

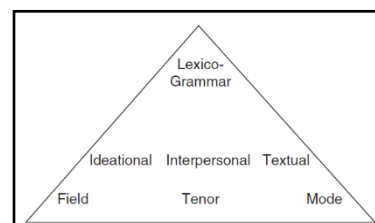


Image 6: The Situational Elements and their Metafunctional Counterparts. From Banks, *A Systemic Functional Grammar of English*, 6.

³⁸ Halliday and Hasan, *Language, Context, and Text*, 49.

³⁹ Some major studies include Todd Klutz, *The Exorcism Stories in Luke-Acts: A Sociostylistic Reading*, SNTSMS 129 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); David A. Lamb, *Text, Context, and the Johannine Community: A Sociolinguistic Analysis of the Johannine Writings*, LNTS 477 (London: Bloomsbury, 2014); Cynthia Long Westfall, *A Discourse Analysis of the Letter to the Hebrews: The Relationship Between Form and Meaning*, LNTS 297 (London: T&T Clark, 2005); Gustavo Martín-Asensio, *Transitivity-Based Foregrounding in the Acts of the Apostles: A Functional-Grammatical Approach to the Lukan Perspective*, JSNTSup 202 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000); Christopher Land, *The Integrity of 2 Corinthians and Paul's Aggravating Absence*, NTM 36 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2015); Reed, *A Discourse Analysis*; Fewster, *Creation Language*; Toffelmire, *A Discourse and Register Analysis*; Xiaxia Xue, *Paul's View on God, Israel and the Gentiles in Romans 9-11: An Intertextual Thematic Analysis of Romans 9-11* (Carlisle: Langham Monographs, 2015); Barry Bandstra, *Genesis 1-11: A Handbook on the Hebrew Text* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2008); David Fuller, *A Discourse Analysis of Habakkuk*, SSN 72 (Leiden: Brill, 2019); David Fuller, "Joseph's Dialogue with the Egyptians in Genesis 47,13-26: From Grammar to Social Dynamics," *SJOT* 32.2 (2018): 247-70. Porter has written multiple methodological articles on the use and benefit of SFL in the field of biblical studies. Stanley Porter, "The Ideational Metafunction and Register," in *Linguistic Analysis of the Greek New Testament: Studies in Tools, Methods, and Practice* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015), 145-58; Stanley Porter, "Dialect and Register in the Greek of the New Testament: Theory," in *Rethinking Contexts, Rereading Texts: Contributions from the Social Sciences to Biblical Interpretation*, ed. M. Daniel Carroll, JSOTSup 299 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000); Porter, "Discourse Analysis Introduction and Core Concepts"; Stanley Porter, "Recent Developments in Systemic Functional Linguistics: A Review Article," *BAGS* 8 (2019): 5-32; Stanley Porter, "Studying Ancient Languages from a Modern Linguistic Perspective: Essential Terms and Terminology," *FilNeot* 2.2 (1989): 147-72; Stanley Porter, "Linguistic Criticism," in *Dictionary of Biblical Criticism and Interpretation*, ed. Stanley Porter (London: Routledge, 2007), 199-202.

functions of linguistic statements in their historical environment following the lead of other scholars who have employed this approach.⁴⁰

For my study of Greek Sirach, I will only use some of the aspects of SFL. While SFL provides a system by which historical and linguistic features can be organized, its primary benefit in this project will be its use in identifying linguistic categories within the polytheistic social and cultic environment of Greek Sirach. SFL will thus enable this study to identify more accurately the specifically linguistic aspects of the text using the linguistic categories of the context of situation and metafunctions.

Since, as I have already noted, my study cannot hope to be an exhaustive study of the entirety of linguistic features found in Greek Sirach, I will only describe the context of situation (field, tenor, and mode) of the book as a whole but then use two of the available metafunctions of ideational and interpersonal meanings to organize my analysis of cultic passages. Though at first glance appearing limited, this use of SFL will allow me to engage in a more robust synchronic analysis of the specific semantically related cultic lexemes, identified using lexical semantics, at a certain historical moment. As such, it will yield a methodologically clearer and more reproducible historical analysis of sacrifices and offerings in Sirach. This analysis will reveal how the world of the text of Greek Sirach manifests and at the same time helps to reconfigure the world within which Greek Sirach functions.

2.4.2. Systemic Functional Linguistics as Used in this Thesis

⁴⁰ Porter writes a historical commentary through an analysis of the discourse of a text using the criteria provided by SFL. Porter, *The Letter to the Romans*, 24.

As stated earlier, the SFL “field is the ongoing activity of which the language is a part. Tenor is the relationship between the person who is communicating and those he is communicating with. Mode is the form through which the message is communicated, that is, basically, spoken or written.”⁴¹ SFL recognizes that the context of situation (i.e. field, tenor, and mode) and their metafunctions highlight different facets of a text; nevertheless, these different pieces all work together to create meaning.

The combination and simultaneous function of all of these meanings together creates the register of a text.⁴² In the case of Greek Sirach there is one register that is informed by situational elements of the book (field, tenor, mode), as well as metafunctional elements (ideational, interpersonal, textual) of each passage. The field/tenor/mode describe these aspects of a whole text as a whole, whereas the metafunctional elements describe the features of individual passages that make up part of the whole.

A few examples drawn from present-day discourse will make this approach clear. Since the field is the activity within which language occurs, the phrase “you are out” in a game of baseball occurs within the field of a baseball game. A speech given by a political candidate normally occurs within the field of a political rally.⁴³ As such, the field identifies what kind of activity is described in a text (i.e. a speech, an educational presentation, a love song, an instruction manual) and notes the physical location where a text occurs (i.e. a gym, a church classroom, a lecture hall, a dinner table). These aspects

⁴¹ Banks, *A Systemic Functional Grammar*, 5, 103–5; Halliday and Hasan, *Language, Context, and Text*, 12; Eggins, *An Introduction*, 90.

⁴² Leckie-Tarry, *Language and Context*, 6; Porter, “Dialect and Register,” 197; Halliday and Hasan, *Language, Context, and Text*, 24–26.

⁴³ Banks, *A Systemic Functional Grammar*, 103.

inform how the words in a text create meaning. The mode highlights the formal context or format of a text. For example, attention to the mode helps identify if the language is written or oral, face to face or distant, a letter or a book. In other words, analysis of the mode reveals the medium by which language functions contributes to its meaning.⁴⁴ The tenor shows the relationship among the participants, often in the case of oral or written texts between the speaker and his addressees. It identifies a relationship between a teacher and her students, a religious minister and his congregation, or a politician and her audience. Clearly, for example, the tenor of a politician who presents a televised speech can change depending on those who hear it, whether journalists, the studio audience, or those who hear it through the television.⁴⁵ SFL thus attempts to identify the various elements of a situational context in order to see how they contribute to the register of a communicative event since they all contribute to its holistic meaning.⁴⁶

But the field, tenor, and mode also each have a functional counterpart in ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings. It is easiest to think of these metafunctions as the field, tenor, and mode in action in a specific text. “The ideational metafunction deals with the actions, events and states which occur in the world...The interpersonal metafunction concerns the relationships established between the speaker and his addressee...The textual metafunction concerns the way in which the message is put together.”⁴⁷ SFL linguistics have created categories to identify ideational,

⁴⁴ Eggins, *An Introduction*, 92–93; Banks, *A Systemic Functional Grammar*, 108.

⁴⁵ Banks, *A Systemic Functional Grammar*, 103–4.

⁴⁶ Michael Halliday, “Language as Social Semiotic: The Social Interpretation of Language and Meaning,” in *Discourse Studies Reader: Main Currents in Theory and Analysis*, ed. Johannes Angermüller (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2014), 263–66; Halliday and Hasan, *Language, Context, and Text*, 38–39.

⁴⁷ Banks, *A Systemic Functional Grammar*, 26. See also Porter, “The Ideational Metafunction and Register,” 145–58.

interpersonal, and textual features of sentences and texts which this study will use. For instance, it can identify the ideational features of Sirach 4:1-5 which contribute to the field of Sirach as a whole (i.e. the sum of the ideational features of all the passages in Sirach 1-51).⁴⁸

SFL helpfully provides a rubric to identify the ideational, interpersonal, and textual aspects of each passage, not by creating rigid categories, but rather by presenting helpful vocabulary that can be used to explore a text semantically. In my case, this study will only examine the ideational and interpersonal features of certain passages of Greek Sirach;⁴⁹ however, if the analysis proves useful, it can helpfully show the way for further studies employing SFL in other areas of Greek Sirach and related literature.

Ideational Features

An ideational description of a clause consists in the identification of the processes (i.e. verbal action, event, state), participants (i.e. nominal actors), and circumstances (i.e. adverbial or prepositional modifier) of the utterance.⁵⁰ This study utilizes five processes: material, mental, relational, verbal, and existential, following Banks:

⁴⁸ SFL Linguists sometimes may use different names for the categorization of ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions, but they maintain the same general principles and divisions. My categories have been primarily drawn from Banks, *A Systemic Functional Grammar*; Eggins, *An Introduction*.

⁴⁹ Because of space limitations I will not be examining the textual meaning. This follows the example of Eric Reeves, "The Clause in Biblical Hebrew Narrative: A Functional Linguistic Analysis of Judges 3:12-30" (New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, MA Thesis, 2018), 6.

⁵⁰ Banks, *A Systemic Functional Grammar*, 26; Jae Hyun Lee, *Paul's Gospel in Romans: A Discourse Analysis of Rom 1:16-8:39*, LBS 3 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 54. Commonly within biblical studies they are identified as subject and predicate (participants), predicate (process), adjunct (circumstance). Since they are essentially other terms for the same terms of participants, process, and circumstance, I have decided to not use these terms so that I do not introduce further specialized linguistic language. See Matthew Brook O'Donnell et al., "Clause Level Annotation Specification," *OpenText.Org*, 2004, <http://opentext.org/model/guidelines/clause/0-2.html>.

Material processes express physical actions and events. Mental processes express events of a cerebral nature. Relational processes express a relationship between two entities or between an entity and its characteristics. Verbal processes are processes of communication. Existential processes express the existence of an entity.⁵¹

For instance, in the sentences “the girl ate an apple” and “the girl thought about an apple,” the verb “ate” is a material process whereas “thought about” is a mental process. As summarized in the following chart, it is clear that each type of process has different types of participants (most commonly the subject, direct object, or indirect object of a sentence), while the circumstances identify subordinate or dependent clauses in relation to the main actor (i.e. subject) and the process (i.e. verb) and also help to answer questions concerning how, where, when, and what, often in the form of a prepositional phrase or an adverb.⁵²

⁵¹ Banks, *A Systemic Functional Grammar*, 39.

⁵² My ideational categories come from Banks, *A Systemic Functional Grammar*, 26–46; Eggins, *An Introduction*, 222–23. Reed, *A Discourse Analysis*, 70–76. See a slightly different categorization in Klutz, *The Exorcism Stories in Luke-Acts*, 40–41; Porter, “The Ideational Metafunction and Register,” 151. The point here is that the categories are slightly flexible as defined differently in each study.

Ideational Features		
Process (verbal action)	Participants (actors)	Circumstances
material	actor (i.e. animate subject) instrument (i.e. a non-conscious agent that needs another conscious agent) force (i.e. a non-conscious agent that does not need another conscious agent) affected (i.e. modified direct object) result range (i.e. unmodified direct object) recipient beneficiary oblique participant (i.e. passive)	extent cause (i.e. cause; reason; behalf) location (i.e. temporal) matter manner (i.e. means; quality; comparison) role accompaniment
mental	sensor phenomenon	
relational	carrier attribute	
verbal	sayer recipient verbiage	
existential	existent	

Table 1: Rubric of Ideational Features

The following analytical examples show the identification of ideational aspects of a sentence.

Paul	gives	her	flowers	at the beach.
part. (actor, i.e. subject)	process (material)	part. (recipient)	part. (affected)	cir. (location)

Her boyfriend	survived	because of the ambulance
part. (actor)	process (material)	cir. (cause)

A study of the ideational features will permit me to identify and differentiate the verbal process, participants, and circumstances in a passage. These categories, while not intended to exhaust the meaning of every text, provide this study with vocabulary that will more accurately describe aspects that contribute to the ideational meaning of a text.

As a result, it will be able to present reproducible linguistic categories to analyze specific sections of Sirach.

Interpersonal Features

Every text contains aspects that contribute to an interpersonal meaning that “focuses on how the speaker/author interacts with the listener/reader. Particularly, [interpersonal meaning] concerns the pattern of how the grammatical subject delivers the exchange of the speech role between speaker/author and listener/reader in communication.”⁵³ The interpersonal meaning is sometimes called the mood of a text because it examines the relationship between the participants.⁵⁴ For instance, in English a different interpersonal meaning is communicated by saying “Let’s eat dinner (1st person plural cohortative)” instead of “Eat your dinner! (2nd person imperative).” The use of an inclusive 1st person cohortative instead of a direct 2nd person imperative is more polite and gentle.

As used in this thesis, this study will first identify interpersonal aspects of the text by identifying the persons involved in a text and then identify how the verbs in the passage portray their relationship. The persons will necessarily be both the author and the audience if they are mentioned, as well as the characters described in the text itself. Once it has identified the persons present, it can identify how the verbs in the text portray the relationships among these persons.

For the purposes of this study, this study will limit itself to a verbal analysis that will identify interpersonal features that contribute to what SFL refers to as modality and

⁵³ Lee, *Paul’s Gospel in Romans*, 57.

⁵⁴ Lee, *Paul’s Gospel in Romans*, 29; Porter, “Dialect and Register,” 205.

speech acts.⁵⁵ Identification of person, number, voice, verbal aspect, of the verbs present in a text contribute to establishing the modality of a passage, that is, “the way in which a speaker expresses his relationship with his message,”⁵⁶ while identification of the mood, also called a speech-act, highlights the type of verbal action (i.e. assertion, direction, projection, expectation) in a passage.⁵⁷

Verbal interpersonal aspects in koine Greek can be shown through an examination of the number, person, voice, grammatical mood, and verbal aspect of verbs in the text.⁵⁸ The number (whether singular or plural; she vs. they), as well as the person, tell me much about the addresser and audience: the first person is used to identify the participant as actively engaging in the action,⁵⁹ the second person “is used by the speaker to refer to the hearer (or hearers), whether the person is real or imagined (for the sake of discussion),”⁶⁰ and the “third person is used by the speaker to refer to people and things other than the speaker and hearer.”⁶¹ A verb’s voice depends on the verb employed but nearly always describes the relationship between a sentence’s subject and action:⁶² in the active voice, the agent (i.e. actor), is the grammatical subject of the verb;⁶³ in the passive voice, “the object or recipient of the action takes the agent's place

⁵⁵ I will not identify the interpersonal “mood” and “residue” which could also be studied in an examination of an interpersonal metafunction. The choice to not examine these features is in order to restrict the amount of things that this study will need to identify in each passage. This will allow this analysis to concisely center on interpersonal features that are easily derived from the verbal grammar choices in each passage.

⁵⁶ Banks, *A Systemic Functional Grammar*, 50.

⁵⁷ Banks, *A Systemic Functional Grammar*, 51–52; Land, *The Integrity of 2 Corinthians*, 62–63.

⁵⁸ Lee, *Paul’s Gospel in Romans*, 57.

⁵⁹ Stanley Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed., BLG 2 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 76.

⁶⁰ Porter, *Idioms*, 77.

⁶¹ Porter, *Idioms*, 77.

⁶² Porter, *Idioms*, 62.

⁶³ Porter, *Idioms*, 63.

as [the] grammatical subject;”⁶⁴ in the Greek middle voice, there is “more direct participation, specific involvement, or even some form of benefit of the subject doing the action.”⁶⁵ Verbal aspect identifies the completion, or lack thereof, of an action from the perspective of the author: perfective aspect (i.e. aorist) is viewed as a completed action, imperfective aspect (i.e. imperfect, present) an ongoing action in progress, and a stative aspect (i.e. perfect, pluperfect) identifies an action that is a given state of affairs.⁶⁶ Finally, the grammatical mood highlights not time but rather the perspective of the subject to reality: “the grammatical mood forms indicate the speaker's 'attitude' toward the event.”⁶⁷ In terms of grammatical mood, then, a speaker uses an indicative (i.e. active) grammatical mood to create assertions that are believed to be a reality,⁶⁸ and uses a non-indicative grammatical mood (i.e. subjunctive, imperative, future optative) to project a world for consideration as configured in the mind of the speaker or author.⁶⁹ The imperative is used to direct someone’s action, whether the audience of the text or an actor in the narrative.⁷⁰ Both the subjunctive and optative (although slightly vaguer)

⁶⁴ Porter, *Idioms*, 64.

⁶⁵ Porter, *Idioms*, 67.

⁶⁶ Porter, *Idioms*, 21–22. While grammarians agree that tense does not equate the temporality of an action, some scholars have a separate type of verbal aspect identified with each tense. While this is an important debate, the interest of my study is merely to be consistent with my identification. Another classification of verbal aspect is seen in Buist M. Fanning, *Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek*, OTM (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); Daniel Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996).

⁶⁷ Porter, *Idioms*, 50.

⁶⁸ Porter, *Idioms*, 51.

⁶⁹ Porter, *Idioms*, 52–53.

⁷⁰ Both second and third-person imperatives (i.e. let him be crucified) are essentially forceful in Greek, while some note that the use of the third person indicates politeness. Porter, *Idioms*, 53, 55. Joseph D. Fantin, *The Greek Imperative Mood in the New Testament: A Cognitive and Communicative Approach*, SBG 12 (New York: Peter Lang, 2010), 267. The addressee of a second person or third person imperative is normally either the audience of a text or an actor in the text. Within texts that were meant to be read in a community, the use of the third person imperative can be an intentional literary device intended to address the readers of the text. For example, “let your boast be in the fear of the Lord [ἐν φόβῳ κυρίου ἔστω τὸ καύχημά σου]” (Sir 9:16). Fantin, *The Greek Imperative*, 275.

create a projected realm that is considered.⁷¹ I will categorize the mood (i.e. speech acts) as assertion (i.e. indicative), projection (i.e. subjunctive/optative), direction (i.e. imperative), or expectation (i.e. future).⁷²

This study's identification of the verbal aspect and mood will be especially important in this study since they will allow it to compare the interpersonal relationship expressed among participants in a passage. Understanding these relationships will allow it to understand better the interpersonal meaning present in the text.

Interpersonal Features				
Person and Number	Number	Voice	Verbal Aspect	Mood (Speech Acts)
First Second Third	Singular Plural	Active Passive Middle	Perfective Imperfective Stative	assertion (indicative) projection (subjunctive/optative) direction (imperative) expectation (future)

Table 2: Aspects of a Verbal Analysis. Diagram inspired by Lee, *Paul's Gospel in Romans*, 59.

2.4.3. Conclusion

SFL allows this study to engage in a methodologically clear historical synchronic analysis of lexemes identified using lexical semantics. SFL will thus allow it to identify some components of the meaning of a text, specifically sacrificial lexemes, using a more identifiable and at the same time a broader set of criteria. Having identified aspects of the historical environment that contribute to the text's context of culture, it will be in a

⁷¹ The subjunctive and optative create "a projected realm which may at some time exist and may even now exist, but which is held up for examination simply as a projection of the writer or speaker's mind for consideration." Porter, *Idioms*, 57, 59–60.

⁷² Porter, *The Letter to the Romans*, 33. Slightly different categorizations occur in Land, *The Integrity of 2 Corinthians*, 63; Reed, *A Discourse Analysis*, 81–83; Bandstra, *Genesis 1-11*, 37. Moods/speech acts are described in English as a statement, question, command, offer, answer, acknowledgement, acceptance, or compliance. Eggs, *An Introduction*, 147.

position to identify features of a passage that contribute to its ideational and interpersonal meanings as well as the situational elements of the book of Sirach as a whole (i.e. field, tenor, mode).

One area where I think the use of this tool will be particularly useful in examining the way that the sage teaches his student about sacrifices presented to a deity is through the identification of the book's tenor. As a result, my use of a precise verbal analysis to describe aspects of Sirach's tenor will provide new information about the relationship between the sage and his student.

2.5. Conclusion and Implications of the Methodological Decisions

Within this chapter I surveyed the methodology I will use to examine Greek Sirach. I selected two complementary linguistic tools that will inform my historical-exegetical examination of this text. The tool of lexical semantics provides this study with the capacity to show the relationship and semantic connections between various words (see Appendix 1 to see how related texts have been identified in Sirach in the past). This tool is complemented with the linguistic rubric of SFL that permits this study to reproducibly highlight linguistic features of various passages (see Appendix 2 for information about exegetical methods previously used in Sirach studies). Together they will inform the semantic purpose of my historical examination which is to arrive at a better understanding and synthesis of offerings presented to a deity within Greek Sirach in the context of Ptolemaic Egypt.

Since the use of SFL requires an examination of the historical environment that contributes to Sirach's context of culture, this study will present aspects of the minority Jewish Community's situation in a polytheistic context which will help explain why the

Ptolemaic Jewish community used books like Sirach to instruct their young in religious formation (ch. 3). Having done so, this study turns in chapter 4 to the use of SFL's situational elements in order first to identify elements of Sirach that contribute to its field, tenor, and mode which contribute to the register of the book. It will then use the tool of a structuralist componential analysis of lexical semantics to highlight words in Greek Sirach that share cultic features. As a result of this analysis, it will be able to identify lexemes that share a semantic field of sacrifice and offerings presented to a deity. Subsequently, having identified passages in Greek Sirach that contain sacrificial statements, it will be able to return to the historical context in order to undertake an historical-exegetical examination of the passages that it has identified using lexical semantics and will do so using the linguistic rubric of SFL. This study will identify the features of cultic passages that contribute to their ideational and interpersonal meanings. This analysis will result in a semantically grounded understanding of these cultic lexemes by examining them synchronically in an historical moment.

Using an established method, my study will confirm results about the relationship between the sage and student and the function and significance of this text among its author and readers. These two tools of my historical-exegetical method will permit this study to arrive at the semantic value of these cultic passages by identifying the significance and intention encoded in their linguistic structure. This will permit it to better describe the beliefs and claims concerning offerings and sacrifices presented to a deity represented in Greek Sirach and identify how and why they functioned and made certain cultic claims in their historical context.

Chapter 3: Greek Sirach's Monotheistic Sacrifice in its Social and Cultic Context of Ptolemaic Egypt

3.1. Greek Sirach's Context of Culture

At the broadest level, and as noted in the previous chapter, the use of SFL for understanding any text requires attention to the context of culture within which that text has its function, that is, the literary, social, and cultural environments.¹ And though it is true that within this larger context there are the more specific contexts and metafunctions for a text's specific passages, it nevertheless remains the case that all the layers of meaning in all of the passages are ultimately informed by the external layer of the context of culture, which is the social and ideological environment.²

Accordingly, before this study can examine offerings presented to a deity in Greek Sirach itself, it is necessary to identify aspects of the social and religious environment of its original readers. This is especially important for this study of cultic offerings since, as this chapter will demonstrate, the Jewish readers of Greek Sirach were part of a minority religion who lived in a polytheistic culture where they were constantly exposed to material offerings to pagan deities but who also appear to have sought to maintain their exclusive monotheism and its cultic requirements. Therefore, in order to engage in a proper Systemic Functional Linguistic study of specific passages that describes offerings presented to a deity in Sirach, I will first present aspects of the

¹ Writing about wisdom literature, of which Sirach is generally understood to be an example, Leo Perdue notes that "[t]he wisdom tradition cannot be understood apart from the larger social history of the cultures in which it took root and flourished." Perdue, *The Sword and the Stylus*, 1.

² Halliday and Hasan, *Language, Context, and Text*, 48–49; Reed, *A Discourse Analysis*, 58. Leckie-Tarry, *Language and Context*, 20. For instance, one can understand better features of the interpersonal metafunction of Sirach 50:22-24 (i.e. Sirach addresses "you" in the text) if one understands features of the tenor of the whole book (i.e. who are the "you" addressed in this passage and how are they described elsewhere?).

polytheistic environment within which these cultic statements concerning sacrifices presented to a deity were made.

This study of aspects of the context of culture will describe the situation of many of the Jewish readers of Greek Sirach in their polytheistic cultic context as well as their response to this unavoidably confrontational environment. This information will contribute in different ways to the field, tenor, and mode of the book which will provide the literary context for its cultic statements. For instance, the tenor will be informed by information about the intended audience and Jewish community that used similar literary documents in Ptolemaic Egypt (i.e. who were the people that read this document and how would they have been addressed by Sirach). Critically, the text's field will be informed by the polytheistic context of offerings in Ptolemaic Egypt which will explain why a book like Sirach was written and its purpose to reinforce exclusive Jewish monotheism.³ As a result, this information will much better inform the semantic value of Sirach's cultic statements about offerings presented to a deity in their historical moment.

³ There will also be some information that informs the tenor (who used, read, and learned from texts?) and mode (what was the role/format of documents?).

3.2. *The Jewish Community of Ptolemaic Egypt*

The semantic tenor and field of Greek Sirach as described in the previous chapter are informed by an understanding of who the people were who read and learned from Greek language religious documents in Ptolemaic Egypt between 132-100 BC and specifically the Jewish community or communities within Egypt at that time. Unfortunately, because Greek Sirach does not describe the Egyptian community(s) that used it, one cannot know

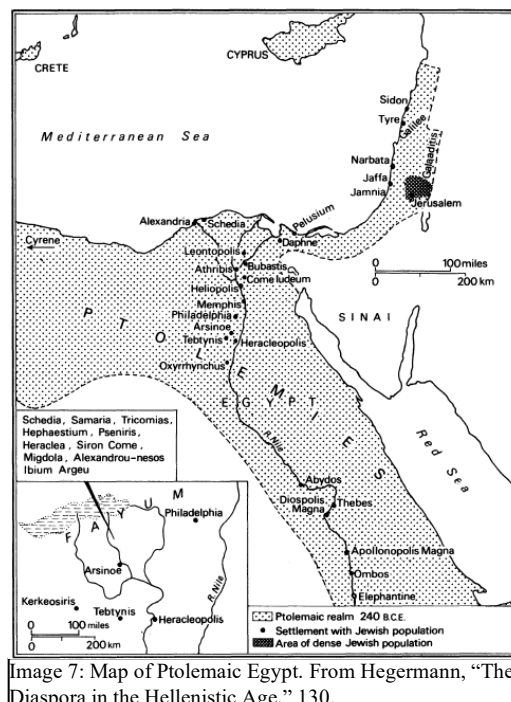


Image 7: Map of Ptolemaic Egypt. From Hegermann, "The Diaspora in the Hellenistic Age," 130.

with precise certainty the distinct characteristics of the original Jewish community.

However, even though Ptolemaic Judaism was expressed by diverse regional groupings and thus different communities, there were certain identity features that the many different Jewish communities held in common.⁴ This study's reconstruction of these commonalities, along with an awareness of diversity, will provide an adequate understanding that will particularly inform the tenor of Sirach.

3.2.1. The Demographics of the Jewish Community of Ptolemaic Egypt

Following the conquests of Alexander the Great (334-324 BC) "Jewish communities everywhere found themselves subjects of a new world empire ruled by

⁴ I will avoid the simplistic and false assumption that all Jewish communities had homogenous religious and cultural practices. Sylvie Honigman, "Jewish Communities of Hellenistic Egypt: Different Responses to Different Environments," in *Jewish Identities in Antiquity: Studies in Memory of Menahem Stern*, ed. Lee I. Levine and Daniel R. Schwartz, TSAJ 130 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 118–20.

Macedonians and connected with Greek culture."⁵ Even before the Seleucid Greek Empire had seized the Levant in 198 BC, over half of the Jews in the world lived in the Greek-speaking Ptolemaic Empire whose economic and cultural center was Alexandria,⁶ whence most extant Jewish literary documents with an Egyptian provenance have come to us, even though Jews lived in other urban and non-urban, rural settlements throughout the rest of Egypt.⁷

Although the Jewish community of Ptolemaic Egypt appears originally to have consisted primarily of slaves and soldiers, it eventually grew to include an educated, aristocratic, and socially elevated class which included not only field workers, servants, shepherds, and guards, but also wealthy tax-collectors, artisans, scribes, administrators, and political officers.⁸

⁵ Chris Seeman, "Jewish History from Alexandria to Hadrian," in *The Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism*, ed. John Collins and Daniel Harlow (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), 25.

⁶ Seeman, "Jewish History," 28.

⁷ There are most likely hyperbolic statements by Philo who stated that there were one million Jews in Alexandria alone (*Flaccus* 43) as well as Josephus who stated that ca. AD 66 50,000 Jews were slain in Alexandria (*J.W.* 2.497). These figures, particularly Philo's, seem hyperbolic because later grain dole records indicate that there were only 300,000 Alexandrian adult residents total who received this benefit; including children, this would make the population closer to 500-600,000. Closer to the truth appears to be Josephus's claim that there were 7.5 million total residents in Egypt (excluding Alexandria) (*J.W.* 2.385). Diana Delia, "The Population of Roman Alexandria," *TAPA* 118 (1988): 284-87. Aryeh Kasher, *The Jews in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt: The Struggle for Equal Rights*, TSAJ 7 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1985), 24-25. Kreuzer, "Origin and Development of the Septuagint," 14-16. Joseph Modrzejewski, *The Jews of Egypt: From Rameses II to Emperor Hadrian* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 73-74. Manning identifies the Greek Hellenes as only 5-10% of the population, Joseph Manning, "The Ptolemaic Governmental Branches and the Role of Temples and Elite Groups," in *A Companion to Greco-Roman and Late Antique Egypt*, ed. Katelijn Vandorpe, BCAW (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc, 2019), 105. Katelijn Vandorpe, "The Ptolemaic Period," in *A Companion to Ancient Egypt*, ed. Alan Lloyd, vol. 1 of *BCAW* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 176. Other scholars have studied agriculture and irrigation in Egypt and concluded that the land could only have supported 3-4 million people under the Ptolemaic Era. D. W. Rathbone, "Villages, Land and Population in Graeco-Roman Egypt," *PCPS* 36 (216) (1990): 123-24.

⁸ John M. G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE - 117 CE)* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 22-24, 42. Kasher, *The Jews in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt*, 38-74; Erich Gruen, *Diaspora: Jews Amidst Greeks and Romans* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 127. Erich Gruen, "The Letter of Aristeas and the Cultural Context of the Septuagint," in *Die Septuaginta - Texte, Kontexte, Lebenswelten*, ed. Martin Karrer and Wolfgang Kraus, WUNT 219 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 137.

Given this diversity, it is not easy to calculate with precision how many Jews there were and where precisely they lived in Hellenistic Egypt. In fact, the best, and yet still tentative, data unfortunately come from the century after Greek Sirach and during the early Roman rule of Egypt. For this early Roman period, some scholars estimate that there were approximately 8 million people living in Egypt, of which approximately 6.5 million were native Egyptians and 1.5 million were non-natives who spoke primarily Greek. Of the latter probably 300,000 were Jews. The Jews were therefore a very small proportion of the population of Egypt during the Roman period, slightly less than 4% of the total population. No evidence yet requires this study to conclude that the situation was significantly different a century earlier. This study may thus conclude for the present that from the end of the Hellenistic period to the beginning of the Roman period the Jews were likely a very small minority group who had begun to be associated with the ruling Greek upper class.⁹

The connection with the upper class is important for our understanding of the linguistic place of Jews in Ptolemaic Egypt since ethnic groups appear to have defined themselves by language. For a semantic study, this observation is crucial since language marks a person as belonging to a certain social class and lifestyle that frequently coincides with ethnic descent.¹⁰ In the case of Ptolemaic Egypt there were Greek-speaking Hellenes, which included ethnic Greeks, Thracians, and Judeans, and there

⁹ Modrzejewski, *The Jews of Egypt*, 73–74, 82, 84.

¹⁰ Willy Clarysse, “Ethnic Identity: Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans,” in *A Companion to Greco-Roman and Late Antique Egypt*, ed. Katelijn Vandorpe, BCAW (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc, 2019), 300. Christelle Fischer-Bovet, “Social Unrest and Ethnic Coexistence in Ptolemaic Egypt and the Seleucid Empire*,” *Past & Present* 229 (2015): 5. There are examples of demotic upper class families becoming fully “Greek,” but normally the ethnic divisions were not so fluid that one could easily move from one to another. Clarysse, “Ethnic Identity,” 303–4. Fischer-Bovet, “Social Unrest,” 7. Philippa Lang, “Medical and Ethnic Identities in Hellenistic Egypt,” *Apeiron* 37.4 (2004): 118–19.

were native Egyptians who spoke the demotic language.¹¹ For purposes of this study, I will identify the three major distinct ethnicities linguistically in Ptolemaic (i.e., Hellenistic) Egypt as Greek-speaking Jewish, non-Jewish Greek-speaking, and demotic communities.¹²

The Ptolemaic population would have easily recognized these divisions along the socio-linguistic categories of Greek/Hellene or Egyptian/demotic.¹³ For this reason tensions among communities would have been not only for ethnic and economic reasons,¹⁴ but also because of linguistic differences, arguably because the latter led to the former. Knowledge of Greek would have been required to work in many upper-class positions and thus many non-bilingual native Egyptians would have been unable to enter

¹¹ These categories were not necessarily racial/ethnic but described people's status in a social hierarchy. Judeans and Egyptians could be Hellenes if they embraced Greek culture and language. Sylvie Honigman, "The Ptolemaic and Roman Definitions of Social Categories and the Evolution of Judean Communal Identity in Egypt," in *Jewish and Christian Communal Identities in the Roman World*, ed. Yair Furstenberg, AJEC 94 (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 29. Dorothy Thompson, "Hellenistic Hellenes: The Case of Ptolemaic Egypt," in *Ancient Perceptions of Greek Ethnicity*, ed. Irad Malkin, CHSC 5 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 306, 310–11. Koen Goudriaan, *Ethnicity in Ptolemaic Egypt*, DMAHA 5 (Amsterdam: J.C. Gieben, 1988), 8–10, 117–19. Csaba La'da, "Encounters with Ancient Egypt: The Hellenistic Greek Experience," in *Ancient Perspectives on Egypt*, ed. Roger Matthews and Cornelia Roemer, EAE (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 161. Werner Huß, "Ethnizität und Kulturalität im ptolemäischen Ägypten. Die Frage der Macht," *APF* 59.2 (2013): 376. Anne-Emmanuelle Veïsse, "Être grec, être égyptien dans l'égypte ptolémaïque," in *Les formes de l'échange: communiquer, diffuser, informer, de l'antiquité au XVIIIe siècle*, ed. François Brizay (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2012); Philippa Lang, *Medicine and Society in Ptolemaic Egypt*, SAM 41 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 28–30. Anne-Emmanuelle Veïsse, "Pour situer le débat: l'identité ethnique en égypte aux époques perse, ptolémaïque et romaine," *DHA* 10 (2014): 211.

¹² Fischer-Bovet, "Social Unrest," 3.

¹³ Thompson, "Hellenistic Hellenes," 303; Koen Goudriaan, "Les signes de l'identité ethnique en Égypte ptolémaïque," in *Valeur et distance: identités et sociétés en Égypte*, ed. Christian Décobert, CAM (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2000), 40.

¹⁴ Huß, "Ethnizität und Kulturalität," 359–60. Lang, *Medicine and Society*, 31. Vandorpe, "The Ptolemaic Period," 172. Jean Bingen, "Graeco-Roman Egypt and the Question of Cultural Interactions," in *Hellenistic Egypt: Monarchy, Society, Economy, Culture*, ed. Roger S. Bagnall, HCS 49 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 243. Ludwig Koenen, "The Ptolemaic King as a Religious Figure," in *Images and Ideologies: Self-Definition in the Hellenistic World*, ed. Anthony Bulloch et al., HCS 12 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 34–38. Fischer-Bovet, "Social Unrest," 32, 35. Philippe Collombert, "Religion égyptienne et culture grecque: l'exemple de Διοσκούριδης," *CdE* 75.149 (2000): 57.

socially elite positions.¹⁵ The same would have been true for Jews, most of whom had positive interactions with their gentile neighbours and had also begun to serve in many high-ranking positions during the Ptolemaic Period.¹⁶

Accordingly, we may ask, what, if anything, distinguished a Greek-speaking Jewish minority within the majority non-Jewish Hellenistic and demotic world of Ptolemaic Egypt?¹⁷ This is a crucial question since this is the social context within which Greek Sirach seems to have arisen and was used.

3.3. *The Greek and Demotic Polytheistic Environment of Ptolemaic Judaism*

As a minority ethnic group, Jews were surrounded by peoples who practiced different religions and who expressed themselves with different cultic practices. The

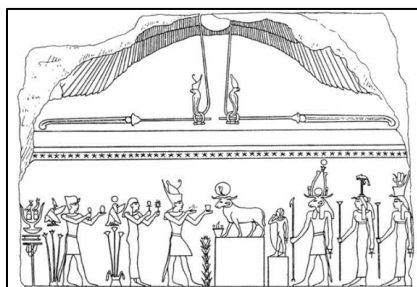


Image 8: Mendis Stele: A Ptolemaic Pharaoh Presents an Offering. Image from Hölbl, *A History of the Ptolemaic Empire*, 84.

non-Jewish Greek and demotic communities were characterized by beliefs and practices that were manifested in polytheistic cultic practices in shrines and temples across the Egyptian landscape and that

¹⁵ La' da, "Encounters with Ancient Egypt," 163–67.

¹⁶ Anti-Jewish sentiment did exist in the Ptolemaic Period, see *SB VI 9564*. Original text in Roger Bagnall and Peter Derow, *The Hellenistic Period: Historical Sources in Translation* (Malden: Blackwell, 2004), 283–84. Modrzejewski, *The Jews of Egypt*, 155–57. Sylvie Honigman, "Ethnic Minority Groups," in *A Companion to Greco-Roman and Late Antique Egypt*, ed. Katelijn Vandorpe, BCAW (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc, 2019), 322. Harald Hegermann, "The Diaspora in the Hellenistic Age," in *The Hellenistic Age*, ed. William Davies and Louis Finkelstein, vol. 2 of *CHJ* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 136–37, 143. Violence flared during the pogroms of the later Roman Rule in AD 38 and 68. Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 2.65. Gruen, *Diaspora*, 54; Kasher, *The Jews in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt*, 22–23.

¹⁷ Gruen, *Diaspora*, 69, 78; Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age*, 143, 150, 157. John Collins, "Anti-Semitism in Antiquity? The Case of Alexandria," in *Jewish Cult and Hellenistic Culture: Essays on the Jewish Encounter with Hellenism and Roman Rule*, JSJSup 100 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 182–83, 191.

were themselves the result of a long evolution, both within Egypt, as well as within the larger Mediterranean world.

Traditional Egyptian worship had long been characterized by cult worship of various types of sacred animals or in some cases humans representing immortal deities. The animals included “bulls, cows, ibises, rams, jackals, cats, and crocodiles – but not pigs.”¹⁸ The rationale for the cultic presentations was due to a belief that gods manifested themselves in living animals,¹⁹ or, in some cases, deified humans.²⁰

Demotic sacrificial worship was generally non-exclusive, although there were competitive feuds, such as between falcon and crocodile worshippers,²¹ and between different local populations because deities were frequently associated with a certain location. As a result, sometimes local worshippers claimed that their preferred deity was the creator god.²² Antagonists did not believe that the other animal gods were fictitious but rather, much like modern sports fans, that their deity was “better.” So, while people might prefer the deities of their local town or origin, no sense of exclusivity prohibited

¹⁸ Katelijjn Vandorpe and Willy Clarysse, “Cults, Creeds, and Clergy in a Multicultural Context,” in *A Companion to Greco-Roman and Late Antique Egypt*, ed. Katelijjn Vandorpe, BCAW (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc, 2019), 423. Adolf Erman, *La religion égyptienne*, trans. Charles Vidal (Paris: Librairie Fischbacher, 1907), 306. A traditional Greek deity that had some widespread acceptance among demotic culture was Demeter, see Dorothy Thompson, “Demeter in Graeco-Roman Egypt,” in *Egyptian Religion: The Last Thousand Years: Studies Dedicated to the Memory of Jan Quaegebeur*, ed. Willy Clarysse, vol. 1 of *OLA* (Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 699–707.

¹⁹ Animal deities were a major difference from traditional Greek religion which generally associated gods with humanoids and not creatures. Vandorpe and Clarysse, “Cults, Creeds, and Clergy,” 423.

²⁰ Franziska Naether, “New Deities and New Habits,” in *A Companion to Greco-Roman and Late Antique Egypt*, ed. Katelijjn Vandorpe, BCAW (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc, 2019), 441; Willy Clarysse, “Egyptian Temples and Priests: Graeco-Roman,” in *A Companion to Ancient Egypt*, ed. Alan Lloyd, vol. 1 of *BCAW* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 278.

²¹ Vandorpe and Clarysse, “Cults, Creeds, and Clergy,” 424.

²² Naether, “New Deities and New Habits,” 440. Egyptians did not see any incongruity with the existence of multiple creator gods, see Denise Doxey, “Egyptian Religion,” in *The Cambridge History of Religions in the Ancient World: From the Bronze Age to the Hellenistic Age*, ed. Michele Salzman and Marvin Sweeney (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 177.

them from engaging in sacrifice to other Egyptian, or eventually even to the new, conquering Greek deities. Classical Greek religion as it had developed throughout the Iron Age into the Hellenistic period was one of the primary distinctives that was exported to and adapted in an Egyptian context during the Hellenistic period.²³



Image 9: Demotic-Greek Goddess Isis. Image from Erman, *La religion égyptienne*, 305 (Berlin 7502).

Greek sacrifice had long been directed to a pantheon of gods, demi-gods, and mystical figures.²⁴ Each god or figure represented a major

theme experienced or valued in Greek culture understood broadly, whether warrior strength, wisdom, drunken orgies, the sea, fertility, or chastity. For the Greeks, the gods were a different type of being who, though they inhabited the same universe as men and women, were worshipped by men and women and not vice-versa.²⁵

There were several parallels between Greek and demotic religion. In Greek religion, as in demotic religion, a devotee's god was also often associated with her or his hometown and functioned like a supernatural mascot for the population. No sense of exclusive worship prohibited a devotee from worshiping multiple deities.²⁶ Like demotic religion, too, classical Greek religion was characterized by religious rituals that

²³ Greek religion in Egypt was a new synthesis of both Classical Greek and demotic religions which did not view itself as mutually exclusive. Greek religion was supplemented and expanded through its inclusion of new deities and practices of its conquered lands. While there was a diversity of practices, there existed substantial similarities that allow me to speak of common aspects of Greek sacrifice and religion. Greek sacrifice did not change so substantially from classical Greece to its practice in the Greek Diaspora that it became completely unrecognizable. Robert Muth, *Einführung in die griechische und römische Religion* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1998), 184. Royden Yerkes, *Sacrifice in Greek and Roman Religions and Early Judaism* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1953), 90. Sarah Hitch, Fred Naiden, and Ian Rutherford, "Introduction," in *Animal Sacrifice in the Ancient Greek World*, ed. Sarah Hitch and Ian Rutherford (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 1. Fred Naiden, "Recent Study of Greek Religion in the Archaic through Hellenistic Periods," *CurBR* 11.3 (2013): 389. Simon Price, *Religions of the Ancient Greeks*, KTAH (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 7.

²⁴ Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion*, trans. John Raffan (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 11–13; 119–89.

²⁵ Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 189.

²⁶ Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 216.

expressed the collective identity of members of a local community. It functioned as a civic event and duty where the members of a community honoured their patron god whom they hoped would in turn protect them. Monotheism may have been a feature of some elite worship and for particular, social reasons, but it certainly did not inhibit the much more widespread practice of polytheistic worship throughout the Greek-speaking world.²⁷

Greek religion, as it was adopted and adapted within the Hellenistic world, retained these characteristics. Throughout the Hellenistic world following Alexander's conquest, Greeks from very diverse cities and backgrounds synthesized their own traditional gods and practices with each other and with the local, conquered populations.²⁸ In the Greek Diaspora, including Ptolemaic Egypt, Greeks from many different regions lived together in diverse communities where a synthesis of various Greek cultures, as well as demotic religion in the case of Egypt, took shape. In this context, various groups worshiped patron deities simultaneously: Greeks worshiped ancestral deities, occasionally other Greek gods, and even occasionally local demotic deities.²⁹ The adoption of demotic deities into their pantheon, a practice called

²⁷ A sort of monotheism was practiced by some Greek philosophers beginning in the 5th century BC. This monotheism did not eliminate polytheism but rather understood all lesser deities to be subservient to this one supreme god. Examples include the Stoic Philosophers Zeno and Cleanthes (*Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* I 152, 499, 503, 540–543) as well as Chrysippus (Cicero, *On the Nature of Gods* II 17). Stewart Moore, *Jewish Ethnic Identity and Relations in Hellenistic Egypt: With Walls of Iron?*, JSJSup 171 (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 224–25. Modrzejewski, *The Jews of Egypt*, 48–49. John Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in Hellenistic Diaspora*, 2nd ed., BRS (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 158. Martin Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion*, vol. 2 of HAW 5 (München: C. H. Beck, 1950), 546–52.

²⁸ A. J. Festugière, “Le fait religieux à l'époque hellénistique,” in *Études de religion grecque et hellénistique*, BHP (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1972), 115–16.

²⁹ Alexander the Great provided an offering to the Egyptian Apis Bull. (Arrian, *Anabasis* 3.1.4). He also visited Egyptian Oracles (Strabo, *Geography* 17.1.43; Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History* 17.50–51). Some Greek women replaced Artemis, the goddess of childbirth, with the equivalent Egyptian god Bastet whom they called Bubastis. Festugière, “Le fait religieux à l'époque hellénistique,”

interpretatio graeca,³⁰ meant that the Greek population maintained not only many of their traditional Greek deities and constructed temples for them,³¹ but they also welcomed foreign deities as participants in an all-encompassing religious system.³² In fact, the synthesis of classical Greek religion that had begun to take shape as Hellenistic religion, with traditional demotic religion in Egypt, appears in both the *interpretatio graeca*, that is, the Greek worship of local, traditional (e.g., Egyptian) deities, and eventually in the *interpretatio indigena*, that is, the Egyptian worship of Greek deities.³³ Thus, just as Greek immigrants had adopted traditional Egyptian deities, demotic residents began to call Egyptian deities by the Greek name of the similarly functioning Greek deity.³⁴

127. Vandorpe and Clarysse, “Cults, Creeds, and Clergy,” 408, 418. Günther Hölbl, *A History of the Ptolemaic Empire*, trans. Tina Saavedra (London: Routledge, 2001), 81. Muth, *Einführung*, 188–89. Vandorpe, “The Ptolemaic Period,” 171–72. Alexandra von Lieven, “Translating Gods, Interpreting Gods: On the Mechanisms behind the Interpretatio Graeca of Egyptian Gods,” in *Greco-Egyptian Interactions: Literature, Translation, and Culture, 500 BC–AD 300*, ed. Ian Rutherford (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 62–82. The Ptolemaic pharaohs supported, restored, and built temples to local Egyptian deities as a way to promote solidarity with and loyalty from the native Egyptian population. Anne-Emmanuelle Veisse, “The Last Pharaohs: The Ptolemaic Dynasty and the Hellenistic World,” in *A Companion to Greco-Roman and Late Antique Egypt*, ed. Katelijn Vandorpe, BCAW (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc, 2019), 42. Hölbl, *A History of the Ptolemaic Empire*, 85–88. Christelle Fischer-Bovet, *Army and Society in Ptolemaic Egypt*, AAW (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 333.

³⁰ Naiden, “Recent Study of Greek Religion,” 411. von Lieven, “Translating Gods,” 62.

³¹ The traditional Greek gods celebrated most frequently by Ptolemaic Greeks were surprisingly not Zeus, Apollo, or Artemis, but rather Dionysius (the god of Wine), Aphrodite (the god of love), and Demeter (who was associated with the Egyptian god Isis). Festugière, “Le fait religieux à l’époque hellénistique,” 125. Vandorpe and Clarysse, “Cults, Creeds, and Clergy,” 418. Source documents for the Dionysian cult are found in Bagnall and Derow, *The Hellenistic Period*, 261–62. Werner Huß, *Die Wirtschaft Ägyptens in hellenistischer Zeit*, MBPF 105 (München: C. H. Beck, 2014), 68–71.

³² Luther H. Martin, *Hellenistic Religions: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 10.

³³ Naiden, “Recent Study of Greek Religion,” 411. Jan Quaegebeur, “Cultes égyptiens et grecs en Égypte hellénistique: l’exploitation des sources,” in *Egypt and the Hellenistic World*, ed. E. van ’T Dack and P. van Dessel, SH 27 (Leuven, 1983), 318–22.

³⁴ For example, Re became Helios, Thoth became Hermes, and Hathor became Aphrodite. This syncretism was not a universally standardized system as seen with the identification of multiple Egyptian deities with the same Greek god. The combination of Greek and Egyptian religious traditions allowed their sacred stories to be easily merged and even mixed up. Vandorpe and Clarysse, “Cults, Creeds, and Clergy,” 419–21. Walter Burkert, *Babylon, Memphis, Persepolis: Eastern Contexts of Greek Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 72–74; Erman, *La religion égyptienne*, 312.

There was also an important socio-political context to this blended worship since both Greek and demotic communities worshiped and sacrificed to their rulers as deities. In pre-Ptolemaic Egypt the pharaohs were designated the sons of the gods, but starting with Alexander the Great and Ptolemy I, Ptolemaic Kings and Queens became gods who received cultic offerings during their lifetimes and after their deaths.³⁵ In 243 BC, royal decrees required that a statue of the Ptolemaic ruler be placed in the shrine of every temple of Egypt.³⁶ A ruler cult, consisting of offerings, praise, and other rituals directed to the mortal god pharaoh who had entered the superhuman world and was identified with existent deities, thus became yet another crucial feature of the religious landscape.

The result of this synthesis was the creation of a Hellenistic national religion in Egypt. This cult possessed its temples, altars, and priests and was part of a dialectical relationship between the ruler and her or his subjects.³⁷ Like interactions with other

³⁵ Starting in the third century BC the Pharaonic kings were called savior gods [θεοί σωτήρες]; later titles included Theos Philometer [θεός φιλομήτερ] and for queens manifest goddess [θεά ἐπιφανής]. Ptolemy I was first venerated as a god in Rhodes which later spread to Egypt (Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History* 20.100.3-4). Plutarch, *Demosthenes* 10.3-4. Veisse, “The Last Pharaohs,” 39. Stefan Pfeiffer, “A Successful Ruler and Imperial Cult,” in *A Companion to Greco-Roman and Late Antique Egypt*, ed. Katelijjn Vandorpe, BCAW (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc, 2019), 430–32. Vandorpe, “The Ptolemaic Period,” 163. Hans Hauben, “Aspects du culte des souverains à l’époque des Lagides,” in *Egitto e storia antica dall’ellenismo all’età araba: Bilancio di un confronto*, ed. L. Criscuolo and G. Geraci (Bologna: Clueb, 1989), 458. Muth, *Einführung*, 194. Hölbl, *A History of the Ptolemaic Empire*, 93, 167, 172, 286–87. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion*, 146–56. J. Evans, “A Social and Economic History of an Egyptian Temple in Graeco-Roman Period,” *YCS* 17 (1961): 150.

³⁶ “To establish for King Ptolemy, God Manifest (and) Gracious (born) of King Ptolemy and Queen Arsinoe, the Father-Loving Gods, a statue and a golden shrine [in each of the] temples and to set them up in the inner sanctuaries with other shrines, and for the [shrine] of the God Manifest (and) Gracious” (Rosetta Stone; *OGIS* 90). Citation from Bagnall and Derow, *The Hellenistic Period*, 272. Pfeiffer, “A Successful Ruler,” 433; Evans, “A Social and Economic History of an Egyptian Temple,” 155; Muth, *Einführung*, 195.

³⁷ Pfeiffer, “A Successful Ruler,” 429–30. Egyptian priests fused the worship of the divine Greek ruler and Egyptian pharaoh whose statue was placed in every Egyptian temple. They translated the Greek cult into demotic and hieroglyphic language understandable to the average people. The priests also functioned as priests of this king. “Be it resolved by the priests of the country: to increase the already existing honors (paid) in the temples to king Ptolemy and queen Berenice, the Benefactor gods, and to their parents the Sibling gods, and to their grandparents the Saviour gods” (The Canopus Decree; *OGIS* 56) in Bagnall and Derow, *The Hellenistic Period*, 266. Pfeiffer, “A Successful Ruler and Imperial Cult,”

deities, there was a *do ut des* relationship where the offeror presented sacrifices to the pharaoh with the intent that the pharaoh would reciprocate and benefit the offeror's welfare.³⁸ The pharaoh was also in a strict sense the official offeror, but because the Ptolemaic pharaohs were now gods in every Greek and demotic temple in Egypt, every priest was also a priest of the king.³⁹ The authority and function of local priests and cults performed on altars and temples across Egypt only became possible through this delegation and authority.⁴⁰

As a result, though Egypt was for the most part a multicultural haven, cultural and ethnic diversity were only permitted as long as minorities were loyal to the governing establishment.⁴¹ In Ptolemaic Egypt, all people were expected to participate in offerings to their national leader who was their patron protector. The cult functioned as a type of nation-building propaganda that legitimized the Pharaoh's rule over the people.⁴²

433-35. Clarysse, "Egyptian Temples and Priests," 278. Hölbl, *A History of the Ptolemaic Empire*, 308. Stefan Pfeiffer, *Herrscher- und Dynastiekulte im Ptolemäerreich: Systematik und Einordnung der Kultformen*, MBPF 98 (München: C. H. Beck, 2008), 116. Gaëlle Tallet, "Religion, Greco-Roman Egypt," in *The Encyclopedia of Ancient History*, ed. Roger S Bagnall et al. (Chichester: Blackwell, 2013), 5775. Koenen has argued that the Ptolemaic King was associated with an image of a deity, but had a slightly lower divine status among the demotic cult than in the Greek Egyptian cult, see Koenen, "The Ptolemaic King," 58, 70. Evans, "A Social and Economic History of an Egyptian Temple," 154–56.

³⁸ Pfeiffer, "A Successful Ruler," 429.

³⁹ Pfeiffer, "A Successful Ruler," 433. Temples were even built in other countries such as Greece by the Ptolemies in exchange for their own cult worship and the consolidation of their own power. Hölbl, *A History of the Ptolemaic Empire*, 98.

⁴⁰ Veisse, "The Last Pharaohs," 41. Hölbl, *A History of the Ptolemaic Empire*, 89. Werner Huß, "Le basileus et les prêtres égyptiens," in *Le décret de Memphis: colloque de la Fondation Singer-Polignac à l'occasion de la célébration du bicentenaire de la découverte de la Pierre de Rosette*, ed. Dominique Valbelle and Jean Leclant (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1999), 121.

⁴¹ Dorothy Thompson, "Ethnic Minorities in Hellenistic Egypt," in *Political Culture in the Greek City after the Classical Age*, ed. Onno van Nijf, Richard Alston, and C. Williamson, GHS 2 (Leuven: Peeters, 2011), 112–13. Giles Gorre, "Identités et représentations dans l'Égypte ptolémaïque," *Ktèma* 32 (2007): 239. Goudriaan, "Les signes de l'identité," 45.

⁴² Vandorpe, "The Ptolemaic Period," 164. Koenen, "The Ptolemaic King," 48. Pfeiffer, *Herrscher- und Dynastiekulte*, 7–9. Fischer-Bovet, *Army and Society*, 355. Werner Huß, "Some Thoughts on the Subject 'State' and 'Church' in Ptolemaic Egypt," in *Life in a Multi-Cultural Society: Egypt from Cambyses to Constantine and Beyond*, ed. Janet H. Johnson, SAOC 51 (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago, 1992), 159–60.

Citizens and cities established royal cults to show their gratefulness and loyalty to their divine ruler.⁴³ The adoption of the royal cult in both Greek and demotic people groups created a unifying practice that was shared by both ethnic groups.⁴⁴ The royal ideology created “Einheit von Herrschaft und Heil.”⁴⁵

Ptolemaic Jews were constantly exposed to Greek religion. It was impossible to avoid being a witness since Greek sacrifice occurred in ubiquitous shrines, houses, and temples across the land. Sacrifices were most frequently offered at temples or sanctuaries where an altar was dedicated to a respective deity.⁴⁶ As such, these temples

⁴³ Hölbl, *A History of the Ptolemaic Empire*, 93.

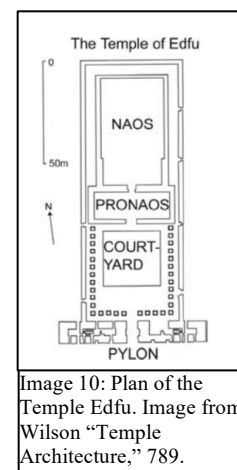
⁴⁴ Bingen, “Graeco-Roman Egypt and the Question of Cultural Interactions,” 250. Pfeiffer argues that this unifying action of both groups was not necessarily always practiced because citizens were not required to offer to the living ruler, rather they could offer to a deceased pharaoh. However, the practice of the Ptolemaic cult, whether in Greek or demotic, by nature created a shared national practice. Pfeiffer, *Herrscher- und Dynastiekulte*, 220–21. Despite the adoption of the royal cult, sometimes it was rejected or only tacitly practiced within demotic circles, see Hauben, “Aspects du culte des souverains,” 455–56. Huß, “Some Thoughts,” 160–61. Pfeiffer, *Herrscher- und Dynastiekulte*, 117.

⁴⁵ Huß, “Le basileus et les prêtres,” 118.

⁴⁶ Antione Hermary and Martine Leguilloux, “Les sacrifices dans le monde grec,” in *Thesaurus cultus et rituum antiquorum*, ed. J. Balty and Vassilis Lambrinoudakis (Los Angeles, CA: Getty Publications, 2004), 105–9. Naiden, “Recent Study of Greek Religion,” 390.

“were a vital part of local and regional economies and administrative centers, and were ‘centers of public life,’”⁴⁷ used simultaneously for a cult of various gods.⁴⁸

Likewise demotic sacrifice occurred in temples across the land. The ancient Egyptian word for temple is translated as “god’s house”:⁴⁹ “[t]emples were the houses and center of the estates of gods. As such, they provided a protective environment on earth for the divine beings in their spiritual form.”⁵⁰ Demotic temples were expensive, clean, and ornate stone buildings that were present in



⁴⁷ Temples were economic centers of their cities both through their buying and selling of goods as well as their location as a place where buying and selling occurred. Manning, “The Ptolemaic Governmental Branches,” 116. Jan Quaegebeur, “Documents égyptiens et rôle économique du clergé en Égypte hellénistique,” in *State and Temple Economy in the Ancient Near East*, ed. Edward Lipiński, vol. 2 of *OLA* 6 (Leuven: Departement Oriëntalistiek, 1979), 717. Véronique Chankowski, “Divine Financiers: Cults as Consumers and Generators of Value,” in *The Economies of Hellenistic Societies, Third to First Centuries BC*, ed. Zosia Archibald, John Davies, and Vincent Gabrielsen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 142–48. During the Ptolemaic Period, temples and shrines were constructed throughout the land. More temples were built during the reigns of Ptolemy VI-VII (180-116 BC) than any other time under the Ptolemaic dynasty. Veisse, “The Last Pharaohs,” 47. Some were large, but the majority of these temples were modest buildings decorated with traditional Egyptian hieroglyphics and dedicated to the local deity of the particular town. Vandorpe and Clarysse, “Cults, Creeds, and Clergy,” 410–11. Some traditional demotic temples were renovated through support by the Ptolemies. Some temples were financed by the government whereas others were co-financed by both Greek and demotic people in the community. The construction of a temple showed loyalty to a local deity as well as the Ptolemaic political establishment. Françoise Laroche-Traunecker, “Les restaurations et transformations d’époque gréco-romaine du temple de khonsou à karnak,” in *Egyptian Religion: The Last Thousand Years: Studies Dedicated to the Memory of Jan Quaegebeur*, ed. Willy Clarysse, vol. 2 of *OLA* (Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 903–16. Vandorpe and Clarysse, “Cults, Creeds, and Clergy,” 413–14; Fischer-Bovet, *Army and Society*, 329–362. Ragnhild Finnestad, “Temples of the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods: Ancient Traditions in New Contexts,” in *Temples of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Bryan Shafer (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), 233–34.

⁴⁸ Lucian, *On Sacrifices* 11. Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 88. Emily Kearns, “Archaic and Classical Greek Religion,” in *The Cambridge History of Religions in the Ancient World: From the Bronze Age to the Hellenistic Age*, ed. Michele Salzman and Marvin Sweeney (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 293. Gregory Stevenson, *Power and Place: Temple and Identity in the Book of Revelation*, BZNV 107 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2001), 44–45. Muth, *Einführung*, 143.

⁴⁹ Doxey, “Egyptian Religion,” 188.

⁵⁰ Penelope Wilson, “Temple Architecture and Decorative Systems,” in *A Companion to Ancient Egypt*, ed. Alan Lloyd, vol. 2 of *BCAW* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 781. Finnestad, “Temples of the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods,” 204.

most towns and villages in Egypt.⁵¹ Despite the many changes implemented under Greek rule, the temples maintained pre-Ptolemaic structure and rituals as they were synthesized with Greek names and deities.⁵² The deities were represented by a statue or in some cases living animals.⁵³ The statue functioned as a body for the deity so that he or she could receive food and incense offerings.⁵⁴

Besides large and sometimes ostentatious temples, small shrines were constructed throughout the countryside. Their deities were easily accessible to all people who sacrificed there without the mediation of a priest.⁵⁵ Various deities were also made accessible through figurines which were found in people's houses and graves.⁵⁶ Besides cultic actions, these temples had economic roles, were educational and cultural schools, and were health care centers.⁵⁷ Demotic temples, shrines, and household worship spaces

⁵¹ Wilson, "Temple Architecture," 782. The building frequently faced to the east to face the sunrise, and through the decorative hieroglyphics that covered its wall, its structure was intended to be a microcosm of the world. Clarysse, "Egyptian Temples and Priests," 275. Wilson, "Temple Architecture," 794. The temple's construction as a microcosm exhibited a theological belief that the various material elements of the world (i.e. sun, moon, stars) were part of the god's house and world which the devotees participated in. See Finnestad, "Temples of the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods," 217.

⁵² Clarysse, "Egyptian Temples and Priests," 286–87. Filip Coppens and Réne Preys, "Les dieux: les temples traditionnels à l'époque gréco-romaine," in *Les Empereurs du Nil*, ed. Harco Willems and Willy Clarysse (Leuven: Peeters, 2000), 110.

⁵³ Clarysse, "Egyptian Temples and Priests," 274.

⁵⁴ These statues were the center of the temple in a shrine. Egyptian religions believed that their deities were incorporeal, but they needed a physical form to interact with their worshippers. Doxey, "Egyptian Religion," 179; Clarysse, "Egyptian Temples and Priests," 275.

⁵⁵ Clarysse, "Egyptian Temples and Priests," 278. David Frankfurter, "Religion in Society: Graeco-Roman," in *A Companion to Ancient Egypt*, ed. Alan Lloyd, vol. 1 of *BCAW* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 532; Mark Depauw, "The Isonomos or In-Wwy," in *Egyptian Religion: The Last Thousand Years: Studies Dedicated to the Memory of Jan Quaegebeur*, ed. Dorothy Thompson, vol. 2 of *OLA* (Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 1131; Wilson, "Temple Architecture," 782; Alan Bowman, *Egypt after the Pharaohs 332 BC-AD 642: From Alexander to the Arab Conquest* (Berkeley, CA: California University Press, 1986), 171.

⁵⁶ Frankfurter, "Religion in Society," 524–26.

⁵⁷ Although probably exaggerated, it was said that 1/3 of all land belonged to temples. They generated income from the land which was farmed. There existed a reciprocal relationship where the temples were given land by the Pharaoh, provided various tax-free benefits, and provided a monetary stipend from the king, and in return, they collected taxes from the people for him. Clarysse, "Egyptian Temples and Priests," 279–83. Finnestad, "Temples of the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods," 191, 228.

were all houses for deities where their needs were met by their worshipers as well as critical political and economic centers.

A Jew, living in late Hellenistic Ptolemaic Egypt would then have been surrounded by Greek and demotic religious practice, practice resulting from the synthesis of various deities engaged in a variety of forms of cultic worship. As a matter of national unity, both groups provided offerings to each other's deities and together provided offerings to the divine Pharaoh in temples and shrines across the land. The religious landscape was profoundly pluralistic and expansively inclusive as long as a devotee was willing to engage in an honorific cult-ritual of other deities, including the Pharaoh. Jews were exposed to these offerings as they visited their neighbours' houses and when they needed to enter temples for tax or business reasons; they were impossible to avoid. Within this polytheistic context, Jews, who were a demographic minority, would have been seriously challenged to find ways to maintain their distinct religion with its unique and exclusive cultic claims without becoming disloyal.

3.4. The Distinctive Religious and Cultic Identity of Ptolemaic Judaism

Because this polytheistic landscape would have been found throughout the land, it would have been impossible for Ptolemaic Jews not to encounter it in the multitude of

Katelijjn Vanderpe, "Agriculture, Temples and Tax Law in Ptolemaic Egypt," *CRIPPEL* 25 (2005): 165–71; Evans, "A Social and Economic History of an Egyptian Temple," 212–13; Quaegebeur, "Documents égyptiens," 717, 728. Egyptian education in temples included the study of subjects such as mythology, liturgy, math, medicine, geography, astronomy, Egyptian history and language, and other topics. Temples were also financially supported by their local community members, this created a bonding effect between community members who were linked through a social network of mutual support, shared values, community, and worship. Martin Stadler, "Egyptian Cult: Evidence from Temple Scriptoria and Christian Hagiographies," in *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Egypt*, ed. Christina Riggs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 459–60. Andrew Monson, "The Ethics and Economics of Ptolemaic Religious Associations," *Ancient Society* 36 (2006): 237–38.

temples, shrines, and homes, especially of the wealthy. Because temples and wealthy homes were also economic and political centres, many Jews likely entered both to engage in business and tax transactions. In these cases, Jews would have been unable to avoid being witnesses of physical offerings to various deities by their neighbours. In this polytheistic and ubiquitous cultic scenario, what separated Jews from their neighbours?

As we have seen, Hellenistic Jews did not differ from other Greek-speaking inhabitants of Ptolemaic Egypt on the basis of language, clothing, or physically identifiable racial looks: “Jews and gentiles in antiquity were corporeally, visually, linguistically, and socially indistinguishable.”⁵⁸ Jews, though classed among Hellenes linguistically, and among Mediterranean peoples in most physical and indumentary respects, were, however, distinct from other, non-Jewish Greeks because of their religion.⁵⁹ In spite of the fact that both demotic and Greek communities did not possess an exclusivist religion, certain Jewish beliefs and resulting practices assuredly were crucial in establishing distinctions between Jews and anyone else.⁶⁰ These would have included adherence to monotheism and the resulting unwillingness to sacrifice to local deities, as well as the use of a Hebrew/Aramaic name, circumcision, Sabbath

⁵⁸ Shaye Cohen, “‘Those Who Say They Are Jews and Are Not’: How Do You Know a Jew in Antiquity When You See One?,” in *Diasporas in Antiquity*, ed. Shaye Cohen and Ernest Frerichs, BJS 288 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1993), 10.

⁵⁹ Elias Bickerman, *The Jews in the Greek Age* (Skokie, IL: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1988), 83. Goudriaan, “Les signes de l’identité,” 42. Ptolemaic Jews primarily used Greek and were associated with the Hellenes. Modrzejewski, *The Jews of Egypt*, 77, 80. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem*, 67. Honigman, “Ethnic Minority Groups,” 317. Hegermann, “The Diaspora in the Hellenistic Age,” 133–35; Barclay, *Jews*, 30–31.

⁶⁰ Carl Holladay, “Jewish Responses to Hellenistic Culture in Early Ptolemaic Egypt,” in *Ethnicity in Hellenistic Egypt*, ed. Per Bilde, SHC 3 (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1992), 145. Kasher, *The Jews in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt*, 5–6, 32. Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age*, 137–138. John Collins, “Cult and Culture: The Limits of Hellenization in Judea,” in *Jewish Cult and Hellenistic Culture: Essays on the Jewish Encounter with Hellenism and Roman Rule*, JSJSup 100 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 23.

observance, and *kashrut* practices.⁶¹ And in that demotic Egyptians also practiced circumcision and had distinct food practices,⁶² it seems likely that the primary publicly distinguishing feature of Ptolemaic Jewish identity was an exclusive monotheism and the resulting presentation of offerings exclusively to this unique God⁶³ and the consequent refusal to honour local deities.⁶⁴

Because exclusive monotheism was likely the essential feature of Jewish identity throughout Second Temple Judaism everywhere,⁶⁵ this tenet resulted in an exclusive temple cult: “In contrast to the pagan world, with its multiplicity of deities, the singular focus on one God who had but one Temple in one particular city was completely distinctive.”⁶⁶ Because Jews believed that the God of Israel was the supreme God who alone was worthy of worship, their offerings would have to be restricted to the God of Israel alone in a place of that God’s choosing, while other gods were false deities who

⁶¹ Josephus, *Ant.* 14.114-18. Perdue, *Wisdom Literature*, 270. Moore, *Jewish Ethnic Identity*, 43, 255–56.

⁶² Sometimes Greeks mixed up Jews and demotic Egyptians. Strabo, *Geography* 16.2.37; 16.4.9; 17.2.5. Papyrus Cairo Zenon IV 59762. Theodotus (Cir. 1-3 cen. BC) in Eusebius, *The Preparation of the Gospel* 9.22.5. Philo, *Embassy* 23.155. Philo pejoratively describes Jews who interpret ethnic laws in a literalistic manner, signifying that ethnic laws were practiced to some degree by many if not most Egyptian Jews (*Dreams* 1.102). Moore, *Jewish Ethnic Identity*, 138–40, 201. Perdue, *Wisdom Literature*, 275. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem*, 58–59; Cohen, “Those Who Say,” 26–28. Dorothy Sly, *Philo’s Alexandria* (London: Routledge, 1996), 135. Modrzejewski, *The Jews of Egypt*, 112.

⁶³ Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem*, 160.

⁶⁴ Strabo, *Geography* 16.2.35. Apollonius Molon (1st cent. BC) in Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 2.148; 2.258. Moore, *Jewish Ethnic Identity*, 149; Perdue, *Wisdom Literature*, 273–74.

⁶⁵ For example, *Sib. Or.* 3:564–567; *Let. Aris.* 134-135; Philo, *Virtues* 65; *Embassy* 115-116; *Decalogue* 52-81; *Jos. Asen.* 10.13; 11.7-9; 11.16; 12.5; 13.11; *Wis* 10:15; 13:1-15:19, esp. 14:17; 3 *Macc* 6:18-29.

⁶⁶ Lee Levine, *Jerusalem: Portrait of the City in the Second Temple Period (538 B.C.E.-70 C.E.)* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2002), 133. Wright, *The New Testament*, 247–48.

required no worship.⁶⁷ As a result, with only few exceptions,⁶⁸ the center of the Jewish religion was the holy city of Jerusalem which housed the Jewish Temple: “[There is] one temple for one God... This temple ought to be common to all men, because he was the common God of all men” (Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 193).⁶⁹

This sentiment of exclusive loyalty to the Jerusalem

Temple was widely shared by Diaspora Ptolemaic Jews who lived abroad.⁷⁰ The

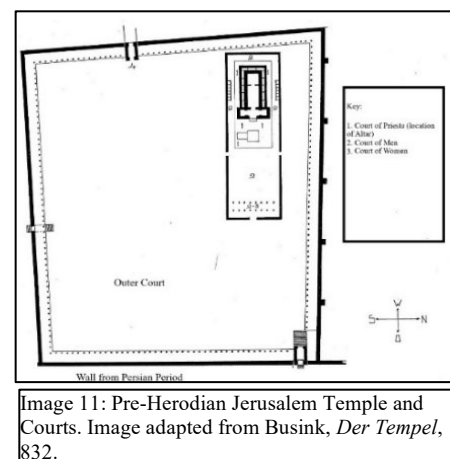


Image 11: Pre-Herodian Jerusalem Temple and Courts. Image adapted from Busink, *Der Tempel*, 832.

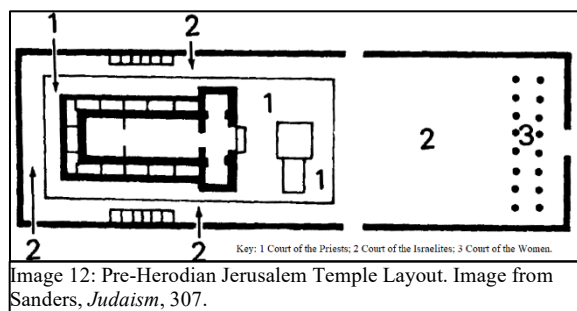
⁶⁷ Examples of Jewish exclusive monotheism include *Sib. Or.* 3:564–567; *Let. Aris.* 134-135; Philo, *Virtues* 65; *Embassy* 115-116; *Decalogue* 52-81; *Jos. Asen.* 10.13; 11.7-9; 11.16; 12.5; 13.11; *Wis* 10:15; 13:1-15:19, esp. 14:17; 3 Macc 6:18-29.

⁶⁸ A description of physical Jewish Temples in Second Temple Judaism that provided material offerings outside of Jerusalem is found in Appendix 5: Second Temple Jewish Temples Outside of Jerusalem.

⁶⁹ For instance: “Concerning the holy city I must now say what is necessary. It, as I have already stated, is my native country, and the metropolis, not only of the one country of Judaea, but also of many, by reason of the colonies which it has sent out” (Philo, *Embassy* 281). Timothy Wardle, *The Jerusalem Temple and Early Christian Identity*, WUNT 2:291 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 13–14. Maria-Zoe Petropoulou, *Animal Sacrifice in Ancient Greek Religion, Judaism, and Christianity, 100 BC-AD 200*, OCM (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 106.

⁷⁰ Jews in Alexandria were identified as Jerusalemites, highlighting their dedication to the city of Jerusalem and its religion despite their geographical dwelling in Egypt (Josephus, *Ant.* 13.74-79). Philo describes Jerusalem as the mother city [μητρόπολις] of Jews who lived in the colonies, indicating their attachment to Jerusalem (*Flaccus* 46; *Embassy* 281-282). Daniel Schwartz, “Temple or City: What Did Hellenistic Jews See in Jerusalem?,” in *The Centrality of Jerusalem: Historical Perspectives*, ed. Marcel Poorthuis and Ch. Safrai (Kampen: Kok Pharos Publishing House, 1996), 116. Daniel Schwartz, “Temple and Desert: On Religion and State in Second Temple Period Judaea,” in *Studies in the Jewish Background of Christianity*, WUNT 60 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1992), 31–34. Andrea Lieber, “Between Motherland and Fatherland: Diaspora, Pilgrimage and the Spiritualization of Sacrifice in Philo of Alexandria,” in *Heavenly Tablets: Interpretation, Identity and Tradition in Ancient Judaism*, ed. Lynn LiDonnici and Andrea Lieber, JSJSup 119 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 196–97. Jehoschua Amir, *Die hellenistische Gestalt des Judentums bei Philon von Alexandrien*, FJCD 5 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1983), 52–53; Sarah Pearce, “Jerusalem as Mother City in the Writings of Philo of Alexandria,” in *Negotiating Diaspora: Jewish Strategies in the Roman Empire*, ed. John Barclay, LSTS 45 (London: T&T Clark International, 2004), 19–23. Hans-Josef Klauck, “Die Heilige Stadt: Jerusalem bei Philo und Lukas,” *Kairos* 28 (1986): 134–35. Lee Levine, “Second Temple Jerusalem: A Jewish City in the Greco-Roman Orbit,” in *Jerusalem: Its Sanctity and Centrality to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, ed. Lee Levine (New York: Continuum, 1999), 54–55. “[T]he Jews of the Diaspora regarded themselves as partners of their fellow-Jews in the homeland in their daily struggles and in all that happened in the Land of Israel.” Shemuel Safrai, “Relations Between the Diaspora and the Land of Israel,” in *The Jewish People in the First Century: Historical Geography, Political History, Social, Cultural and Religious Life and Institutions*, ed. Shemuel Safrai and M. Stern, vol. 1 of *CRINT* 1 (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1974), 185. The

importance of this building was because they believed that their God dwelt there.⁷¹ Ptolemaic Jews knew about and encountered Jerusalem Temple cultic worship through personal experience as



well as written documents. Though it was impossible for Ptolemaic Jews to be in Jerusalem with any regularity,⁷² they, like other Diaspora Jews, undertook a pilgrimage to Jerusalem where they could offer sacrifices, even if it were only once in a person's lifetime.⁷³ The occasion of these pilgrimages would likely have taken place at yearly

Jerusalem Temple also had economic and military functions. *Let. Aris.* 100-104; Philo, *Ag. Ap.* 2.106; *Spec. Laws* 1.76-78; *Embassy* 156; Josephus, *Ant.* 4.205; 14.110-12, 185-267; 15.408; 18.311-13; 20.220; *J.W.* 6.160-78, 390; 2 Macc 3:6-14; Tob 1:7; *Jub.* 32:11; Matt 17:24; 27:6; Mark 12:41-44; Luke 21:1-4. Wardle, *The Jerusalem Temple*, 24-27. E. P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief, 63 BCE-66 CE* (London: SCM Press, 1992), 52, 82-83 105. Shaye Cohen, "The Temple and the Synagogue," in *The Early Roman Period*, ed. John Sturdy, W. Davies, and William Horbury, vol. 3 of *CHJ* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 311. Levine, *Jerusalem*, 137-38. Stevenson, *Power and Place*, 147-49. Safrai, "Relations," 188-89, 201-3. Kåre Fuglseth, *Johannine Sectarianism in Perspective: A Sociological, Historical, and Comparative Analysis of Temple and Social Relationships in the Gospel of John, Philo, and Qumran*, NovTSup 119 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 200.

⁷¹ For this reason, the Jerusalem Temple was called the "house of God": "The temple was holy not simply because the holy God was worshipped there but also because he actually was there." Citation from Sanders, *Judaism*, 70. Some examples in the Hebrew Bible include Isa 2:3; Jer 27:21; Ezek 10:19; Dan 1:2; 5:23; Joel 1:13; 2 Chron 2:5-6). Cohen, "The Temple and the Synagogue," 299. The assumption that God's presence was in the Jerusalem Temple was maintained in Second Temple writings. When describing the high priest Josephus states that "God was present at their sacrifices" (*Ant.* 3.215; cf. Matt 23:21). God built "a temple on [his] . . . holy mountain and an altar in the city of [his] . . . habitation" (Wis 9:8; *LES*). Likewise he was "pleased to establish a temple for [his] . . . dwelling among us" (2 Macc 14:35; *LES*). Sanders, *Judaism*, 70. Schwartz, "Temple or City," 121-23. The LXX Pentateuch describes God dwelling, being able to be seen, and meeting with his people in the Sinai tabernacle which would later become the Jerusalem Temple: "I will make myself known to you from there, so as to talk with you" (LXX Exod 29:42; cf. 25:7; 30:6; *LES*). Robert Hayward, "Understandings of the Temple Service in the Septuagint Pentateuch," in *Temple and Worship in Biblical Israel*, ed. John Day, JSOTSup 422 (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 386-88, 394.

⁷² Josephus, *Ant.* 4.203. Wardle, *The Jerusalem Temple*, 19. Sanders, *Judaism*, 129-30.

⁷³ Josephus, *J.W.* 5.199; Philo, *Spec. Laws* 1.68-70. "I was on my journey towards the temple of my native land for the purpose of offering up prayers and sacrifices therein" (*Providence* 2.64). This included women and children (Josephus, *J.W.* 5.199; Acts 8:27; *P.T. Hagigah* 1.75d; *M. Sukkah* 5.2). Benjamin Ribbens, *Levitical Sacrifice and Heavenly Cult in Hebrews*, BZNW 222 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2016), 36. Sanders, *Judaism*, 130; Lieber, "Between Motherland and Fatherland," 198-200. Paul Heger, *Cult as the Catalyst for Division: Cult Disputes as the Motive for Schism in the Pre-70 Pluralistic*

festivals that would have attracted Jews from throughout the land of Israel, as well as from across the Levant and the Diaspora, to engage in sacrifices in Jerusalem.⁷⁴

Pilgrimages would have been easier for wealthy elite Jews; however, many Jews who could not participate in a pilgrimage because of financial or other reasons sent a half shekel tax/offering to the temple by way of pilgrims.⁷⁵ Despite the fact that not everyone could afford pilgrimage, temple participation, whether regular, occasional, or only a one-time experience, was regarded as the ideal.⁷⁶

Jews who were unable to undertake a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, or who had not yet done so, would have been aware of Jerusalem and its temple from texts and from word-of-mouth. Pilgrimages provided a regular opportunity for Jews who had gone on pilgrimage and returned to Ptolemaic communities to report on what they had visually witnessed at the temple. Ptolemaic Jews also learned about and knew the Jerusalem Temple through written texts.⁷⁷ Even when mediated only through textual media, most Jews would have likely become conversant with at least some of the primary physical activities of the Jerusalem Temple and the meanings associated with them. As a result,

Environment, STDJ 65 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 334. Goodman notes that there are not references to mass pilgrimages before the time of the Herodian temple, this means that potentially previously Diaspora Jews only sent their tithes, although it is possible they likewise participated in pilgrimages in the time of Greek Sirach, Martin Goodman, "The Pilgrimage Economy of Jerusalem in the Second Temple Period," in *Jerusalem: Its Sanctity and Centrality to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, ed. Lee Levine (New York: Continuum, 1999), 70–71. Safrai, "Relations," 198–200.

⁷⁴ The Jewish Scriptures clearly expressed that Jews should gather three times a year for different festivals which, by the post-Exilic period, had become inextricably linked to the Jerusalem Temple (Exod 23:17; 34:23; Deut 16:16; Ezra 3:1-4; 2 Chron 8:12-13; 30:13, 21).

⁷⁵ Josephus, *Ant.* 18.312-313. Goodman, "The Pilgrimage," 72–73.

⁷⁶ Christopher Rowland, *Christian Origins: From Messianic Movement to Christian Religion* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1985), 40.

⁷⁷ Examples of Greek speaking Diaspora written descriptions of the temple are in LXX 2 Chron; 4 Kgdms; Ezek 40-44; 1 Macc 10-11; 2 Macc 14; Tob 14; *Pss. Sol.* 2; Philo, *Spec. Laws* 1-2; *Let. Aris.* 88-95. Diaspora Jewish communities engaged in collective discussions of their religious teaching, which included descriptions of the Jerusalem Temple (Philo, *Moses* 2.216; cf. *Hypothetica* 7.12-13; *Embassy* 156; Acts 13:14-15; 17:2-3, 19:8-9). This study will further discuss these educational tactics in section 3.6.

most Ptolemaic Jews, either through personal experience or from oral or written sources, affirmed and were familiar with the process of material offerings in the Jerusalem Temple which they affirmed as the sole correct location of these cultic practices to their true God alone. Exclusive Ptolemaic-period Jewish material offerings in the Jerusalem Temple were a visible factor that differentiated Jews from their neighbours. Their unique cultic offerings were a result of their exclusive monotheism as opposed to the polytheism of their gentile neighbours.⁷⁸

Although Ptolemaic Egypt at the time does not appear to have enforced religious conformity and does appear to have sought to include all national deities in its communal worship,⁷⁹ the Jewish refusal to present offerings to local deities would have naturally made them appear to be antisocial and politically suspect, sometimes resulting in violence.⁸⁰ The latter was especially serious in that many Jews refused to provide

⁷⁸ “All the rest of mankind [“except ourselves,” as he said] believe that there are many gods... they make images of stone and wood” (*Let. Aris.* (Cir. 2nd cent. BC) 134-135; cf. 139-140); cf. *Sib. Or.* 3:564–567; Pseudo-Phocylides (Cir. 30 BC–AD 40); Philo *Virtues* 65; *Embassy* 115-116; *Decalogue* 52-81; *Moses* 2.216; *Cherubim* 95-96; *Virtues* 182; 2 Macc 6:6; 3 Macc (Cir. 1st cent. BC) 2:27-29, 3:4, 6:18-29; *Jos. Asen.* (Cir. 100 BC-AD 38) 7.1, 8.10-11, 10.13; 11.7-9; 11.16; 12.5; 13.11, 21.1-9; *Wis.* (Cir. 100 BC-AD 50) 10:15, 13:1-15:19, esp. 14:17. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem*, 39, 42, 87, 135, 164, 168–69; Moore, *Jewish Ethnic Identity*, 199–201, 224. Perdue, *Wisdom Literature*, 276–77. Holladay, “Jewish Responses,” 145–48. Ellen Birnbaum, “Portrayals of the Wise and Virtuous in Alexandrian Jewish Works: Jews’ Perceptions of Themselves and Others,” in *Ancient Alexandria between Egypt and Greece*, ed. William V. Harris and Giovanni Ruffini, CSTC 26 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 132, 135–47. Perdue, *Wisdom Literature*, 278. Sly, *Philo’s Alexandria*, 122. Citation from R. Shutt, “The Letter of Aristeas,” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Volume Two*, ed. James Charlesworth (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985), 7–34. Modrzejewski, *The Jews of Egypt*, 67–68, 142; Edith Humphrey, *Joseph and Aseneth*, GAP (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 30–31. Stefanie Holder, *Joseph und Aseneth: ein Roman über richtiges und falsches Handeln*, KBAJCL (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017), 28. William Horbury, “The Wisdom of Solomon,” in *The Oxford Bible Commentary*, ed. John Barton and John Muddiman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 652–53. H. Anderson, “3 Maccabees,” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Volume Two*, ed. James Charlesworth (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985), 512. Kasher, *The Jews in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt*, 213–14, 229.

⁷⁹ Dorothy Thompson, *Memphis Under the Ptolemies*, 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 92, 96.

⁸⁰ Collins, “Cult and Culture: The Limits of Hellenization in Judea,” 22–25. Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 1.309. Gruen, “The Letter of Aristeas,” 142–43; Barclay, *Jews*, 45. Goudriaan, “Les signes de l’identité,” 48. Some authors have suggested that defining Jewish features were food laws, sabbath, and synagogue worship, Cohen, “Those Who Say,” 32. Perdue, *Wisdom Literature*, 285.

offerings to the dynasty cult of Ptolemaic Egypt. In fact, the Jews may have been the only major ethnic group who refused sacrifice to the pharaohs. While Jews were not socially ostracized or refused various employment positions in Ptolemaic society as a result of this refusal, their refusal would easily have made them appear unsocial, separatist, and possibly disloyal.⁸¹ It is not surprising, therefore, that some Ptolemaic Jews wanted to assimilate or disregard their traditional beliefs as evidenced in extant texts.⁸² However, whenever Jewish literary documents of the period allude to this practice, they chastise these Jews for abandoning proper Jewish religious practices,⁸³ and they remind their co-religionaries that exclusive monotheism is the sole, correct belief and unique Jewish cultic offerings the only acceptable practice.⁸⁴ Therefore while some Jews appear to have developed a syncretistic faith by combining Judaism with their

⁸¹ They did provide other honors to the Pharaoh. Paul-Eugène Dion, “Synagogues et temples dans l’Égypte hellénistique,” *ScEs* 29.1 (1977): 57. Hegermann, “The Diaspora in the Hellenistic Age,” 151–52. Steven Fine, *This Holy Place: On the Sanctity of the Synagogue during the Greco-Roman Period*, CJA 11 (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), 26–27.

⁸² Although there is not much primary evidence for such a practice, there are examples of Ptolemaic Jews who maintained their Jewish identity while presenting thanksgivings to pagan deities or speaking positively of other gods. Unfortunately, this evidence primarily comes from inscriptions without much description of the context of these actions. Two inscriptions from the Temple of Panat El-Kanais near Edfu, Egypt in the Ptolemaic period describe thanksgivings (i.e. votive offerings) by Jews to Pan. In other places, the Jew Moshes sets up a stele at the altar of the god Amphiaraus in Greece (cir. 3rd cent. BC) and the Jew Niketas presents financial support of a Dionysiac festival in Anatolia (cir. 2nd cent. BC). Likewise the high priest Jason presented money for a pagan offering (2 Macc 4:18-20). Similarly in other places there are positive descriptions of gentile gods. Artapanus (ca. 250-100 BC) believed that the God of Israel was supreme, but the animal gods were useful inventions for the sake of the Egyptians in Eusebius, *The Preparation of the Gospel* 9.27.10-13, 21-27. The Letter of Aristeas, while critiquing idolatry, states that Greeks can worship the true God they call Zeus (*Let. Aris.* 16). Erich Gruen, “Hellenism and Judaism: Fluid Boundaries,” in *Constructs of Identity in Hellenistic Judaism: Essays on Early Jewish Literature and History*, DCLS 29 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2016), 115–24; William Horbury and David Noy, *Jewish Inscriptions of Graeco-Roman Egypt: With an Index of the Jewish Inscriptions of Egypt and Cyrenaica* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 121–22; David Noy, Alexander Panayotov, and Hanswulf Bloedhorn, eds., *Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis: Eastern Europe Band I*, TSAJ 101 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 177–80; Walter Ameling, ed., *Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis: Kleinasien Band II*, TSAJ 99 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 127–29.

⁸³ Philo, *Virtues* 182; *Migration* 89-94; *Dreams* 1.102; 2 Macc 4:18-20; 3 Macc 1:3, 7:10-16. Sly, *Philo’s Alexandria*, 123. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem*, 129–32. Joseph Modrzejewski, “How to Be a Jew in Hellenistic Egypt?,” in *Diasporas in Antiquity*, ed. Shaye Cohen and Ernest Frerichs, BJS 288 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1993), 83.

⁸⁴ Modrzejewski, *The Jews of Egypt*, 56–61.

surrounding demotic and Greek religions, most texts indicate that the majority of the Jews living in Ptolemaic Egypt believed that faithfulness to their Jewish identity signified that they needed to maintain the essential tenets and practice of their religion, in particular exclusive monotheism and sacrificial practices.

Toward that end, many Jewish communities worked hard to find ways to ensure the few religious beliefs and practices that did distinguish them from their gentile neighbours so that the community, in particular their young, would retain its specific, identifying beliefs and practices. Greek Sirach's statements about offerings presented to a deity occurred, took shape, and were first publicized within this cultural/religious environment and were likely directed to this very audience with this intent.

3.5. Ptolemaic Jewish Identity Formation Through Education

Jewish communities educated their members, especially their youth, as a way of forming their linked religious and social identity. Whether within the land of Israel or in the Diaspora they sought to do so with a view to maintaining a common identity and one that was also linked to the land of Israel itself. Beginning

in pre-Exilic Israel and continuing into the Second Temple period, education likely took place within family networks; either in homes or public spaces under the instruction of teachers who were often their family relations. Groups of elite men, perhaps members of one family, were trained together in an environment of close community and religious

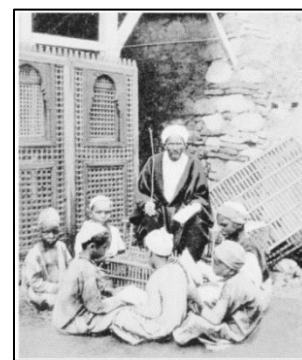


Image 13: A pre-1870 Egyptian Primary School. From Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Brain*, 66.

texts.⁸⁵ In the case of tutoring, the educational style was more like tutoring or apprenticeship in writing, rather than a formal curriculum and classroom-based learning experience.

Diaspora Jews appear to have undertaken education of youth largely in association with synagogues. Communal meeting places were ubiquitous across Diaspora Judaism and had multiple names such as prayer-house [προσευχή] or synagogue [συναγωγή] (LXX Dan 13:28; 3 Macc 7:20; Acts 16:13).⁸⁶ Most notably for our purposes, it is significant that from as early as the third century BC archaeological inscriptions and literary fragments have highlighted the existence of prayer houses across Egypt (3 Macc 2:28; Philo, *Moses* 2.216; *Flaccus* 41-53).⁸⁷ In fact, it is likely that

⁸⁵ Prov 4:3-4 1 En. 81; 92:1; Jub. 4:17-19; 7:34-39; 32:21-26; David Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 202-5. James Crenshaw, "Education in Ancient Israel," *JBL* 104.4 (1985): 601-3, 614. Samuel Adams, *Wisdom in Transition: Act and Consequence in Second Temple Instructions*, JSJSup 125 (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 74-75. There are no direct descriptions of a formal scribal school building in the pre-exilic period. William Schniedewind, *A Social History of Hebrew: Its Origins Through the Rabbinic Period* (New Haven, MA: Yale University Press, 2013), 117-20. An exhaustive discussion of references to learning in the Jewish Scriptures is found in Ueberschaer, *Weisheit aus der Begegnung*, 88-101. Lester L. Grabbe, *Priests, Prophets, Diviners, Sages: A Socio-Historical Study of Religious Specialists in Ancient Israel* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1995), 172-74. J. Olivier, "Schools and Wisdom Literature," *JSNL* 4 (1975): 58. Samuel Adams, *Social and Economic Life in Second Temple Judea* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014), 64.

⁸⁶ These titles derive from the actions of prayer and gathering together (cf. 1 Macc 2:42; 7:12) which occurred at these locations. Other names across the Diaspora include *sabbateion* [a Sabbath meeting place] (Josephus, *Ant.* 16.164); *hieron* [sanctuary] (3 Macc. 2.28; Josephus, *J.W.* 7.44-45); *euxeion* [a place of prayer] (*CPJ*, II, no. 223); *didaskaleion* [a place of instruction] (Philo, *Spec. Laws* 2.62). Erich Gruen, *Diaspora: Jews Amidst Greeks and Romans* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 113, 305 n. 56. Lee Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 23. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, 23. The leadership of these communities also possessed different titles depending on the location such as leaders [ἄρχωντες], chief [προστάτης], elder [πρεσβύτερος], priest [ιερεὺς], among others, see Gruen, *Diaspora*, 114-15.

⁸⁷ Gruen, *Diaspora*, 107; Andrew R. Krause, "Diaspora Synagogues, Leontopolis, and the Other Jewish Temples of Egypt in the Histories of Josephus," *JAH* 4.1 (2016): 99; Anne Fitzpatrick-McKinley, "Synagogue Communities in the Graeco-Roman Cities," in *Jews in the Hellenistic and Roman Cities*, ed. John R. Bartlett (London: Routledge, 2002), 56-57. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, 82-96. Donald Binder, *Into the Temple Courts: The Place of the Synagogues in the Second Temple Period*, SBLDS 169 (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 1999), 233-252. An exhaustive description of synagogue sources in Egypt appears in Anders Runesson, Donald D. Binder, and Birger Olsson, *The Ancient Synagogue from Its Origins to 200 C.E.: A Source Book*, AJEC 72 (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 171-217.

these prayer houses, or synagogues, actually arose in Egypt as Jewish religious and educational alternatives to demotic and non-Jewish Greek temples where gentiles engaged in teaching, education, and the religious formation of their believers.⁸⁸ As a minority culture, Ptolemaic Jews imitated the temple forms and structures of the dominant model of the surrounding gentile society through their synagogues by which they reasserted their unique religious identity.⁸⁹ From Egypt, synagogues likely spread to the rest of the Diaspora.

Though we don't know what the first synagogues were like, eventually synagogues were stylized to look like a miniature Jerusalem Sanctuary. While not attempting to replace the Jerusalem Temple, the synagogue thus acted as an *imitatio templi* where believers engaged in similar worship activities.⁹⁰ However, they were not

⁸⁸ Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, 27. Honigman, "Ethnic Minority Groups," 319. Jewish synagogues were in some sense analogous to contemporary Greek voluntary associations, see Anders Runesson, *The Origins of the Synagogue: A Socio-Historical Study*, ConBNT 37 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2001), 128–32. Fine, *This Holy Place*, 26; Gruen, *Diaspora*, 105. Literary education occurred in demotic temples. Herwig Maehler, "Die griechische Schule im ptolemäischen Ägypten," in *Egypt and the Hellenistic World*, ed. E. van 'T Dack and P. van Dessel, SH 27 (Leuven, 1983), 192–93. Teresa Morgan, *Literate Education in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds*, CCS (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 274.

⁸⁹ Morrow notes the tendency of minority cultures to imitate the prestige and structures of a dominant culture that surrounds them while subversively asserting their own cultural identity. William Morrow, "Resistance and Hybridity in Late Bronze Age Canaan," *RB* 115.3 (2008): 335–36.

⁹⁰ The physical setup of many synagogues was constructed to resemble the pattern of the Jerusalem Temple layout. There were existing levels of holiness: on the outside was an outer gate, followed by a courtyard, which possessed on the inside a sacred cultic hall. There existed similar architectural features of pylons (pillars), and exedras (seats). Jonathan Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple: Symbolism and Supersessionism in the Study of Ancient Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 172. Steven Fine, "Did the Synagogue Replace the Temple?," *BRev* 12.2 (1996): 21–22. It is striking that there has been discovered the remains of a synagogue in walking distance to the Jerusalem Temple. The members of this synagogue saw no incongruity between engaging in worship and learning in the synagogue as well as offering sacrifices in the temple, see Fine, *This Holy Place*, 30. Philo, *Flacc.* 48. See Jewish inscriptions 9, 24, and 28 in Horbury and Noy, *Jewish Inscriptions*. Binder, *Into the Temple Courts*, 223–26, 484. Wardle, *The Jerusalem Temple*, 22. Just like in the Jerusalem Temple, as Jews entered synagogues, they engaged in ritual washings of purification in specially constructed baths or with bodies of water in the course of their worship at a synagogue. Many acts of worship performed in the temple (i.e. ritual washings, scripture/religious education, prayer) could be performed in the synagogue. Binder, *Into the Temple Courts*, 389–414. *Aristeas* mentions Ptolemaic Jews who washed their hands before their prayers: "Following the custom of all the Jews, they washed their hands in the sea in the

substitutes for the temple: through the title prayer-house, Ptolemaic Jews highlighted the purpose of these buildings as prayer. The title also differentiated the synagogue from surrounding demotic and Greek temples which housed material offerings.⁹¹ Synagogues (with perhaps a few exceptions) did not possess an altar nor were material sacrifices offered there nor were they staffed by Levitical priests who officiated such offerings.⁹²

course of their prayers to God” (*Let. Aris.* 305). Philo mentions purifications before he enters into temples to worship (temple is sometimes used to refer to a synagogue in Egypt): “For it is foolishness to imagine, that it is unlawful to enter into temples, unless a man has first washed his body and made that look bright” (*God* 8). Jews engaged in ritual purification at the city of Adullum, presumably at a synagogue (2 Macc 12:38). While I don’t know the exact way that purifications happened, they were happening in the synagogues to some degree. Binder, *Into the Temple Courts*, 393–99. Ritual washings were not necessarily exclusively reminiscent of the temple, since it appears that purifications could occur in many locations (*Jdt* 12:6-10; *Sib. Or.* 3:591-93; 4:162-66; *Let. Aris.* 305-306). John Poirier, “Purity beyond the Temple in the Second Temple Era,” *JBL* 122.2 (2003): 249–56.

⁹¹ Honigman, “The Ptolemaic and Roman Definitions,” 41.

⁹² Barclay, *Jews*, 26; Binder, *Into the Temple Courts*, 414. Cohen, “The Temple and the Synagogue,” 301. This view is disputed by Runesson who argues that the use of the term temple and sacrifice to describe synagogue worship indicates that most synagogues offered cultic material sacrifices, see Runesson, *The Origins of the Synagogue*, 413–14, 430. Synagogues could be led by elders who were merely leaders in the local Jewish community. Cohen, “The Temple and the Synagogue,” 306. Jews did not believe their synagogues were unique sacred dwelling places of their God in the same way as the Jerusalem Temple. Jews fought to the death to defend the Jerusalem Temple from pollution and impurity because their God dwelled there. The temple, as God’s dwelling, was guarded against impurity through boundaries and courts. The entrance into a synagogue was not comparably protected because there was not an equivalently felt sense of God’s presence. Philo, *Embassy* 191; Josephus, *J.W.* 2.285-91; Dio Cassius, *Roman History* 66.6.3. Cohen, “The Temple and the Synagogue,” 301. Martin Goodman, “Sacred Space in Diaspora Judaism,” in *Studies on the Jewish Diaspora in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods*, ed. Benjamin Isaac and Aharon Oppenheimer, Te’uda 12 (Tel-Aviv: Ramot Publishing, 1996), 2–5. Stevenson, *Power and Place*, 140–42, 172. Joan Branham, “Vicarious Sacrality: Temple Space in Ancient Synagogues,” in *Ancient Synagogues: Historical Analysis and Archaeological Discovery*, ed. Dan Urman and Paul Flesher, vol. 2 of *StPB* 47 (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 330. As a result, the synagogue functioned as a substitute for, but not a replacement of the Jerusalem Temple; at the synagogue, they engaged in their necessary acts of piety, including alternative forms of sacrifice such as non-material offerings of piety, when they were unable to personally present offerings at the Jerusalem cultus. Therefore, it is no surprise that descriptions of synagogue prayer and worship are outlined as offerings of piety: “when it is necessary for her to go to the temple . . . performing her vows and her sacrifices in tranquility, so as to avert evils and to receive blessings” (Philo, *Spec. Laws* 3.171). In their synagogue the Sardinian community was permitted to “offer, as did their forefathers, their prayers and sacrifices to God” (Josephus, *Ant.* 14.260). Josephus states that he entered into a “the Proseucha [prayerhouse] . . . And while we were engaged in the duties of the day, and had betaken ourselves to our prayers” (*Life* 293-295; cf. *Ag. Ap.* 1.209-211; Philo, *Flaccus* 122-124), Binder, *Into the Temple Courts*, 406–13. Stevenson, *Power and Place*, 168. Wardle, *The Jerusalem Temple*, 23; Barclay, *Jews*, 26–27. Robert J. Daly, *Christian Sacrifice: The Judaeo-Christian Background Before Origen*, CUASCA 18 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1978), 160–61. While “the sacrificial cult could be supplemented by ‘democratic’ modes of piety, . . . the temple could not.” Cohen, “The Temple and the Synagogue,” 313. Synagogues acted as a supplemental location of religious formation and practice alongside loyalty to the Jerusalem Temple:

Yet it is in just such locations that Ptolemaic Jews engaged in alternative forms of worship as well as in the educational formation of their community. Descriptions of synagogue life from the Ptolemaic and early Roman periods show that this worship and education consisted primarily in the gathering of the Jewish community for listening and teaching about the Jewish religion and wisdom.⁹³ In a community with few written texts, a synagogue was the ideal location where people could gather together and be exposed to texts such as the divine scriptures read orally.⁹⁴ They were likely staffed by teachers

“Even for Diaspora Jews, the temple remained central to their self-identification and religious life.”
Stevenson, *Power and Place*, 177.

⁹³ The “houses of prayer in the different cities, what are they, but schools of wisdom, and courage, and temperance, and justice, and piety, and holiness, and every virtue, by which human and divine things are appreciated” (Philo, *Moses* 2.216; cf. *Hypothetica* 7.12-13; *Embassy* 156). Josephus states that the Jewish Law “commands us to bring those [our] children up in learning and to exercise them in the laws, and make them acquainted with the acts of their predecessors, to their imitation of them, and that they may be nourished up in the laws from their infancy, and might neither transgress them, nor yet have any pretense for their ignorance of them” (*Ag. Ap.* 2.204; cf. *Life* 7-9; 198; *Ant.* 16.43; *J.W.* 2.289). The educated elite’s idealized descriptions of synagogue learning are not indicative of all Egyptian Jews, but they witness to the presence of teaching and learning in Ptolemaic Jewish synagogues. The description of non-elite early Christians reading and discussing the scriptures with people in Diaspora synagogues confirms the common motif of synagogues being a place of Jewish culture and learning (Acts 13:14-15; 17:2-3, 17; 18:4, 19; 19:8-9). Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, 90; Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart*, 244-45; Gruen, *Diaspora*, 116. All English citations of Philo and Josephus unless otherwise noted are from Philo, *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged*, trans. Charles Yonge (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995). Josephus, *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged*, trans. William Whiston (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1987).

⁹⁴ Tessa Rajak, “Synagogue and Community in the Graeco-Roman Diaspora,” in *Jews in the Hellenistic and Roman Cities*, ed. John R. Bartlett (London: Routledge, 2002), 23. The study of Jewish Scripture appears to be a predominant occupation of synagogue life. Fitzpatrick-McKinley, “Synagogue Communities,” 60. Martin S. Jaffee, *Torah in the Mouth: Writing and Oral Tradition in Palestinian Judaism, 200 BCE - 400 CE* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 16.

who taught texts like Sirach to the community, and probably more specifically to smaller groups of students,⁹⁵ especially males of various ages.⁹⁶

Though this context was unique, this Jewish education, which took place in Greek,⁹⁷ was actually modelled after or in association with non-Jewish Greek educational curriculum. Within the Hellenized Ptolemaic world, schools of rhetoric instructed students according to their social rank using handbooks that contained rules for their profession and personal life choices.⁹⁸ A Greek education started when a child

⁹⁵ This could have occurred in a regular building or even in the house of one of the students. Lindsey Askin, “Scribal Culture in Ben Sira (Sir 38:1-15; 41:1-15; 43:11-19; 44-50)” (University of Cambridge, PhD diss., 2016), 14; Raffaella Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 18–19, 25. In some cases teachers instructed students in synagogues. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, 144, 155–57. Siegfried Kreuzer, “Entstehung und Entwicklung der Septuaginta im Kontext Alexandrinischer und Frühjüdischer Kultur und Bildung,” in *Septuaginta Deutsch: Erläuterungen und Kommentare zum griechischen Alten Testament*, ed. Martin Karrer and Wolfgang Kraus (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2011), 9–11. Education may have coincided with the athletic education of a gymnasium, but they appear to have frequently been separate institutions. Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 36. Morgan, *Literate Education*, 29. The older more common view that equated a gymnasium with a school is found in Henri Irénée Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, trans. George Lamb (London: Sheed and Ward, 1956), 104; Maehler, “Die griechische Schule,” 197. A detailed description of the various rooms in a Hellenistic gymnasium is found in Ueberschaer, *Weisheit aus der Begegnung*, 128-131. Later rabbinical Jewish describe the existence of schools (*Baba Bathra* 21a; *Kethuboth* 8.32c). This study does not use them as primary sources because it is difficult to prove that they accurately depict life during Ptolemaic times, Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age*, 35.

⁹⁶ Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 16. Morgan, *Literate Education*, 33. J. Gwyn Griffiths, “Egypt and the Rise of the Synagogue,” *JTS* 38.1 (1987): 11–12.

⁹⁷ Many Ptolemaic Jews received advanced levels of Greek instruction. Ptolemaic Egypt also possessed Greek language schools that Jews could and did attend. The widespread use of the written Greek language for all sorts of administrative and economic affairs indicates that the Hellenistic world was a profoundly literate society even if many people could not personally read and write. The ability to read in Ptolemaic Egypt has been estimated to only include 7-10% of the total population (approx. 245,000–350,000 depending on the assumed total size of the population). Joseph Manning, *The Last Pharaohs: Egypt under the Ptolemies, 305-30 BC* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 146. Morgan, *Literate Education*, 2, 22–23. Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 35. Maehler, “Die griechische Schule,” 195; Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age*, 151; A. H. M Jones, *Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 308–10. Ueberschaer, *Weisheit aus der Begegnung*, 123. Maehler, “Die griechische Schule,” 195–96. Greek education was a way for non-ethnic Greek to join the necessary Greek linguistic and social culture of the ruling class, see Morgan, *Literate Education*, 74.

⁹⁸ Perdue, *The Sword and the Stylus*, 42. Despite diversity, there are regular consistent patterns to Greek education, see Morgan, *Literate Education*, 51. It is argued that Proverbs 1-9 functioned as a rhetorical training handbook for young men, see Glenn Pemberton, “The Rhetoric of the Father in Proverbs 1-9,” *JSOT* 30.1 (2005): 82.

was seven years old and included instruction in various subjects such as rhetoric, philosophy, literature, and science which they learned to paraphrase, imitate, and model.⁹⁹ Jewish education followed this format while supplementing it with Greek language religious texts that were taught to Jewish students.¹⁰⁰

Education in association with synagogues thus was crucial to Jewish identity formation. Within a polytheistic context, by engaging in education in synagogues and other venues, Ptolemaic Jews correctly informed their young in their religious beliefs. As a result, this religious formation reinforced Jewish monotheism and exclusive material cultic offerings to the God of Israel in the Jerusalem Temple in contrast to their neighbours who engaged in ubiquitous material offerings in temples across Egypt. It is

⁹⁹ In these schools, the students were assigned curriculum and exercises by their teachers. They were assigned the task of copying and writing out Greek Literature, such as Homer. These functioned as model texts that they attempted to imitate. Students advanced to paraphrase and rearticulate in their own words the texts which they had previously learned back to their teacher. The climax of the learning process occurred when the students advanced to imitate the knowledge that they had learned. Advanced students obtained their copies of schoolbooks by making a copy of a model text presented by the teacher. Plato, *Protagoras* 325-326; Xenophon, *Symposium* 4.27. Tesch, *Weisheitsunterricht bei Ben Sira*, 30. Maehler, "Die griechische Schule," 197. Benjamin Wright, "Greek Paideia and the Jewish Community of Alexandria in the Letter of Aristeas," in *Second Temple Jewish "Paideia" in Context*, ed. Jason M. Zurawski and Gabriele Boccaccini, BZNW 228 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2017), 99; Bikerman, *The Jews in the Greek Age*, 171; Ueberschaer, *Weisheit aus der Begegnung*, 126–31. Criore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 132, 140, 146. Morgan, *Literate Education*, 14, 204–7, 224, 251–55.

¹⁰⁰ The *Letter of Aristeas* (Cir. 282-246 BC) describes elite Egyptian Greek-speaking Jews who used Greek language Jewish Scriptures. By 200 BC the LXX Pentateuch was being used because some Jews no longer understood Hebrew. These documents demonstrate the presence of Jews in Ptolemaic Egypt who desired both the liturgical and instructional of holy texts in the Greek language. The works of Ps. Aristeas, Demetrius the Chronographer, Ezekiel the Tragedian, Philo, and others, all witness to Jews who were well acquainted with their national Jewish national literature but had also received a thorough education in the finest Greek rhetorical and writing techniques (cf. Philo, *Spec. Laws* 2.230; *Providence* 2.44-46). Wright, "Greek Paideia," 96. Kreuzer, "Origin and Development," 20. Siegfried Kreuzer, "Entstehung und Publikation der Septuaginta im Horizont frühptolemäischer Bildungs- und Kulturpolitik," in *The Bible in Greek: Translation, Transmission, and Theology of the Septuagint*, SBLSCS 63 (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2015), 53, 60. Ernst Würthwein, *The Text of the Old Testament: An Introduction to the Biblia Hebraica* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 53–54; Wright, "Greek Paideia," 110–11; Barclay, *Jews*, 68, 160; Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age*, 41; Gruen, *Diaspora*, 124; Perdue, *The Sword and the Stylus*, 79. Gruen, "The Letter of Aristeas," 139–40. Lester L. Grabbe, *Judaism from Cyrus to Hadrian: Volume One the Persian and Greek Periods* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992), 236–38.

for just such a religious formation that Greek language religious texts like Sirach were used.¹⁰¹

3.6. Conclusion

I have introduced in this chapter aspects of the social and cultic environment of Ptolemaic Egypt which contribute to the context of culture of Greek Sirach. This contextual environment (i.e. context of culture) informs the reason why, where, and by whom books like Sirach were used (i.e. field and tenor).

Jews belonged to a minority exclusivist religion far from their religious homeland who were under constant social and political tension to assimilate to the inclusive polytheistic religion of their surrounding communities. Ptolemaic Jews were regularly exposed to non-Greek and demotic cultic practices. Because Ptolemaic Jews were constantly surrounded by worshipers of other religions, there was a regular tension within the Ptolemaic Jewish community to assimilate to inclusive cultic practices that included the presentation of material offerings to multiple deities in ubiquitous temples across Egypt. Jewish monotheism, and the resulting offering of sacrifices to their national deity alone, would have created some form of social separation from their neighbours. As I have shown in the case of those Jews who adopted the practice of offerings to gentile deities, many Jews were socially and politically tempted to dilute or syncretize their beliefs with demotic and Greek cultic practices because devotees of

¹⁰¹ While there is no explicit record of Sirach being used in a Ptolemaic Jewish curriculum, which is of no surprise since there does not exist information about many educational details, the genre of a religious text such as Greek Sirach indicates that it was used in educational formation as one component of ancestral religious and cultural formation. Sauer and Newman believe that Sirach was read in a synagogue setting, Georg Sauer, "Ben Sira in Jerusalem und sein Enkel in Alexandria," in *Studien zu Ben Sira*, ed. Siegfried Kreuzer, BZAW 440 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2013), 34; Newman, "Liturgical Imagination," 328.

those religions easily mixed and inclusively worshiped various deities through cultic offerings and because it would have been expected of them within the social and cultural world in which they found themselves. Furthermore, because Jews lived as a minority culture far away from Jerusalem, many could have easily forgotten or never learned traditional Jewish cultic beliefs and practices.

Because of the threat of the loss of their religious identity, Ptolemaic Judaism developed means of resistance to the dominant surrounding culture through regular educational formation. Within the pluralistic context of Ptolemaic Egypt, Jews developed this resistance precisely through the use of Greek and the educational tools provided by the Hellenistic educational system. In doing so they were able to reinforce a Jewish religious identity in contrast to their neighbours.

Greek Sirach fits this pattern of teaching and reinforcing a traditional Jewish religious identity well. As I will argue in the following chapter, Greek Sirach did so in part by enforcing Jewish cultic separatism through its stress on aspects of proper Jewish cultic practice. These aspects, as already noted, were grounded in the central tenet of monotheism and specifically the notion that the God of Israel is the only, true God, requiring unique cultic practices and beliefs which included the presentation of offerings to the God of Israel alone.

Chapter 4: A Linguistic and Historical Analysis of Offerings Presented to a Recipient in Greek Sirach

4.1. Introduction

Now that this study has identified this context in which Ptolemaic Jews needed to reinforce their unique Jewish cultic identity through religious formation with books such as Sirach, it will turn to an examination of Sirach itself using the linguistic tools of SFL and lexical semantics. First, it will identify the situational elements of Sirach using SFL. This will provide the literary context within which the specific passages that describe offerings presented to a deity expressed their teaching. Next, it will engage in a lexical-semantic analysis of cultic language in Sirach. This analysis will identify lexemes that share a common feature of being an offering or sacrifice presented to a recipient. This tool will show which passages this study will examine. This study will then return to SFL in order to study linguistic features of ideational and interpersonal meanings of passages that contain cultic lexemes identified with lexical semantics alongside a description of their historical elements.

4.2. The Situational Elements of Greek Sirach

A prerequisite to a semantic examination of specific passages of Greek Sirach will be to highlight the situational aspects that contribute to the register of the book as a whole. These elements will provide a clear context for those passages in Greek Sirach that can be properly identified that describe or refer to offerings presented to a deity.

4.2.1. Field

Identifying the field of Greek Sirach will highlight the environment and cultural context where this text was used in Ptolemaic Egypt and what it was talking about. Picking up on the general presentation in chapter 3, this study will discuss here the location of its use, the social condition of its audience, and the purpose of its use.

Elements of Situation	'tends to determine...'	Meta-Functions
Field ('what is going on')		Ideational>
Tenor (participants)	<REGISTER> A context-specific, function-based language variety.	Interpersonal>
Mode (medium and function)		Textual>

Image 14: Parts of a Register Analysis. From Martín-Asensio, *Transitivity-Based Foregrounding in the Acts of the Apostles*, 36.

Integral to the field of the message is the location where it was conveyed in Ptolemaic Egypt. We cannot know precisely in which city or cities Greek Sirach arose or was used, but we can know that it was likely developed for and used in locations where there was a sufficiently large Greek-speaking Jewish population to desire written education in Greek. Studies of Jewish demographics have argued that most Ptolemaic Jews, as Hellenes, were urban dwellers, living in larger or smaller cities, within which they lived in small ethnically defined neighbourhoods but in proximity with their Greek and demotic neighbours. The use of Greek thus conforms to this identification and suggests that Sirach was likely intended for and probably used in a Greek-speaking urban center by an elite that sought or was offered Jewish religious instruction in Greek. Within a pluralistic religious context where members of the Jewish community were constantly exposed to alternative religions, deities, cultural, and cultic practices, Greek Sirach very plausibly functioned to teach and reinforce the distinctive Jewish religious worldview within Ptolemaic Jewish communities.

This larger context for a Jewish community setting within Ptolemaic Egypt is entirely congruent with the internal descriptions found in Greek Sirach itself and support this study's contention that it was used as an educational text. While teaching at times occurred in some type of physical building, the sage's teaching is portrayed as group-

tutoring with multiple pupils together.¹ The sage briefly mentions a house of instruction [οἶκος παιδείας] (51:23, 28), which may refer to a specific building or even a physical school.² What is most important, however, is that in both traditional Jewish and Greek contexts education involved the instruction of students by a teacher, sage, or religious leader, wherever that instruction took place. Because education was associated not with a building but with a teacher, the sage could have taught in a Jewish synagogue, his home, or in proximity with a gymnasium.³ This study therefore suggests at this point that Greek Sirach presents itself as a text that was used in association with a teacher in a Greek-speaking Jewish community, likely located in an urban, religiously pluralistic

¹ Samuel Adams, “Reassessing the Exclusivism of Ben Sira’s Jewish Paideia,” in *Second Temple Jewish “Paideia” in Context*, ed. Jason M. Zurawski and Gabriele Boccaccini, BZBW 228 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2017), 41; Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age*, 38; Tesch, *Weisheitsunterricht bei Ben Sira*, 38. Crenshaw compares the Sage’s teaching method with that of a Greek tutor who taught his pupils at his home in James Crenshaw, “The Primacy of Listening in Ben Sira’s Pedagogy,” in *Wisdom, You Are My Sister: Studies in Honor of Roland E. Murphy, O. Carm., On the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday*, ed. Michael L. Barré, CBQMS 29 (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1997), 184. Perhaps they studied together in either the student’s house, the house of the sage, or the place normally frequented by the sage for teaching (Prov 15:31; Sir 51:23). Perdue, *The Sword and the Stylus*, 71.

² This is described in the Hebrew version as a בית מדרש, Perdue, *The Sword and the Stylus*, 263, 277–79; Di Lella and Skehan, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 12; Siegfried Kreuzer, “Der soziokulturelle Hintergrund des Sirachbuches,” in *Texts and Contexts of the Book of Sirach / Texte und Kontexte des Sirachbuches*, ed. Gerhard Karner, Frank Ueberschaer, and Burkard Zapff, SBLSCS 66 (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2017), 48; Friedrich Reiterer, “The Sociological Significance of the Scribe as the Teacher of Wisdom in Ben Sira,” in *Scribes, Sages, and Seers: The Sage in the Eastern Mediterranean World*, ed. Leo Perdue, trans. Robert Bernard, FRLANT 219 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008), 235; Frank Ueberschaer, “Jewish Education in Ben Sira,” in *Second Temple Jewish “Paideia” in Context*, ed. Jason M. Zurawski and Gabriele Boccaccini, BZBW 228 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2017), 44; Ueberschaer, *Weisheit aus der Begegnung*, 108; Christine Schams, *Jewish Scribes in the Second-Temple Period*, JSOTSup 291 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 99; Pamela A. Foulkes, “‘To Expound Discipline or Judgement’: The Portrait of the Scribe in Ben Sira,” *Pacifica* 7.1 (1994): 80. Perdue notes that this school may have been associated with a synagogue Perdue, *Wisdom Literature*, 222. Scholars must be careful to not anachronistically interpolate modern forms of education in physical buildings with classrooms, desks, and whiteboards. Andrew Montanaro, “The Sage in Relation: Familial Descriptions of the Sage in the Scribal Circles of Ben Sira and Cognate Literature” (Catholic University of America, PhD diss., 2019), 41; Beate Ego, “Im Schatten hellenistischer Bildung Ben Siras Lern- und Lehrkonzeption zwischen Mündlichkeit und Schriftlichkeit,” in *Die Textualisierung der Religion*, ed. Joachim Schaper, FAT 62 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 216.

³ Perdue, *The Sword and the Stylus*, 71, 263. Sauer, “Ben Sira in Jerusalem und sein Enkel in Alexandria,” 24; Newman, “Liturgical Imagination,” 328; Schniedewind, *A Social History of Hebrew*, 167.

area of Ptolemaic Egypt after 132 B.C. The location and content thus inform the book's field.

The content of Greek Sirach is linked to the audience it was written for. What was the condition of their lives? The prologue states that it was written for those living abroad (in the *παροικία*; Sir Prologue).⁴ The numerous injunctions described through the book suggest that the intended readership is formed from a range of economic conditions that highlight the social and educational class of the intended audience.⁵ This emphasis on service to the governing elite likely means that a good portion of his audience was being prepared for the retainer class.⁶ As Balla noted, the sage instructs “young men of relative wealth and good social standing about everyday life issues, on how to prepare for the opportunities and challenges of life, how to lead it successfully without getting into trouble, which includes leading a successful career.”⁷ This intended audience is not surprising since in Ptolemaic Egypt literacy and formal education were limited to the

⁴ The term *παροικία* is used elsewhere to indicate those living in Egypt (Wis 19:10). Aitken, “The Literary Attainment,” 101; Henry J. Cadbury, “The Grandson of Ben Sira,” *BT* 7.2 (1956): 78. Ego, “Im Schatten hellenistischer Bildung Ben Siras Lern- und Lehrkonzeption zwischen Mündlichkeit und Schriftlichkeit,” 220.

⁵ They can ask for a loan (Sir 29:1-2), lend money (29:2-3), financially aid the poor (4:10), pay wages (7:32-33), attend a banquet (34:12-18), possess a servant/slave (30:39), serve in courts and before kings (4:6-7, 27; 7:4-6), and engage in public courtly or administrative service (8:8; 11:1). Walter Houston, “The Scribe and His Class: Ben Sira on Rich and Poor,” in *Writing the Bible: Scribes, Scribalism and Script*, ed. Thomas Römer and Philip Davies (London: Routledge, 2014), 111; Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter*, 35–36; Goering, *Wisdom's Root Revealed*, 126; Perdue, *The Sword and the Stylus*, 273. Benjamin Wright, “Wisdom, Instruction, and Social Location in Sirach and 1 Enoch,” in *Things Revealed: Studies in Early Jewish and Christian Literature in Honor of Michael E. Stone*, ed. Esther Chazon, David Satran, and Ruth Clements, JSJSup 89 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 119.

⁶ Mark Sneed, *The Social World of the Sages: An Introduction to Israelite and Jewish Wisdom Literature* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015), 286–87; Montanaro, “The Sage in Relation,” 6.

⁷ Ibolya Balla, *Ben Sira on Family, Gender, and Sexuality*, DCLS 8 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2011), 35; Montanaro, “The Sage in Relation,” 43; Sneed, *The Social World of the Sages*, 293, 365; Robert Gordis, “The Social Background of Wisdom Literature,” *HUCA* 18 (1944): 84; Corley, *Ben Sira's Teaching on Friendship*, 17; Tesch, *Weisheitsunterricht bei Ben Sira*, 40–41; Otto Kaiser, “Erziehung und Bildung in der Weisheit des Jesus Sirach,” in *Vom offenbaren und verborgenen Gott: Studien zur spätbiblischen Weisheit und Hermeneutik*, ed. Otto Kaiser, BZAW 392 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 121; Perdue, *The Sword and the Stylus*, 605.

elite classes.⁸ The socio-economic realities indicate that there was an essential continuity of Jews in Egypt at the elite class level who desired or were deemed to need religious education. If so, then we may tentatively conclude that Greek Sirach's intended audience was primarily literate, religious, upper-class Greek-speaking Jews, being most commonly men, who lived in Diaspora Egypt.

A second aspect for determining the field of Greek Sirach requires that this study identify what the book addresses generally and why. In other words, what is the author talking about? The field overlaps in many ways with the literary description of the genre.⁹ Greek Sirach possesses speech and literary forms that readers or hearers would have immediately recognized as wisdom literature. Greek Sirach presents sayings about different aspects of life in a similar structure to what we find in Proverbs or Ecclesiastes.¹⁰ Furthermore, it is a wisdom that is derived from the Jewish Scriptures and a distillation and adaptation of Torah-wisdom (Sir Prologue).¹¹ The proverbs it contains have been helpfully named "didactic poems [Lehrgedichten]," in other words, instruction through proverbial statements.¹² These statements confirm that, while there

⁸ Jaffee, *Torah in the Mouth*, 15, 22.

⁹ Toffelmire, *A Discourse and Register Analysis*, 36–37.

¹⁰ Adams, *Wisdom in Transition*, 153, 158; Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age*, 44; Collins, "Ecclesiasticus," 667.

¹¹ Friedrich Reiterer, "The Interpretation of the Wisdom Tradition of the Torah within Ben Sira," in *The Wisdom of Ben Sira: Studies on Tradition, Redaction, and Theology*, ed. Angelo Passaro and Giuseppe Bellia, DCLS 1 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 210; Collins, "Ecclesiasticus," 668; Sneed, *The Social World of the Sages*, 369; Adams, *Wisdom in Transition*, 199; Reiterer, "The Interpretation," 211. John Snaith, *Ecclesiasticus*, CBC (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 1; Di Lella and Skehan, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 40.

¹² The praise of the fathers' section (ch. 44–49) is a unique contribution through its recounting of exemplars who model the wisdom that is to be imitated. Corley, *Ben Sira's Teaching on Friendship*, 22; W. Baumgartner, "Die literarischen Gattungen in der Weisheit des Jesus Sirach," *ZAW* 34.3 (1914): 164; Adams, *Wisdom in Transition*, 159; Sneed, *The Social World of the Sages*, 184; Gerald Sheppard, *Wisdom as a Hermeneutical Construct: A Study in the Sapientializing of the Old Testament*, BZAW 151 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1980), 13.

are many secondary topics that the book addresses, the overall purpose of the book, as described in the title and prologue, is to inculcate wisdom [σοφία] and instruction [παιδεία] and “to live according to the customs in the law” (Sir Prologue).¹³

The study of wisdom resulted in *paideia* [παιδεία], which in the Hellenistic world was the educational and cultural formation and development of a student.¹⁴ Following Harrington’s lead, we can say that Sirach, a *paideia*-forming text, functioned as “a handbook of personal and spiritual formation” which shaped its student's thoughts, beliefs, and conduct.¹⁵ Using the proverbial statements or *Lehrgedichten*, the various topics covered throughout the book, made up a *Lehrcurriculum* [teaching curriculum] that its students needed to embody.¹⁶ It is likely that books like Sirach and Proverbs were used as manuals of proverbial statements by which the scribal profession and Jewish ethics were taught to young students.¹⁷ This curriculum included teaching about

¹³ Adams, *Wisdom in Transition*, 155; Johannes Marböck, “Schrift und Buch, Lehre und Leben bei Jesus Sirach,” in *Geistes-Gegenwart: vom Lesen, Denken und Sagen des Glaubens: Festschrift für Peter Hofer, Franz Hubmann und Hanjo Sauer*, ed. Franz Gruber, Christoph Niemand, and Ferdinand Reisinger, LPTB 17 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2009), 89. Prologues, such as the one found in Greek Sirach, were a common Hellenistic literary device that provided relevant information about the origin and intention of a text. Siegfried Kreuzer, “‘Object of Great Care’: The Prologue to the Wisdom of Jesus, Son of Sirach, in the Context of Its Genre,” in *The Bible in Greek: Translation, Transmission, and Theology of the Septuagint*, SBLSCS 63 (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2015), 102–3.

¹⁴ Elisa Uusimäki, “Spiritual Formation in Hellenistic Jewish Wisdom Teaching,” in *Tracing Sapiential Traditions in Ancient Judaism*, ed. Hindy Najman, Jean-Sébastien Rey, and Eibert Tigchelaar, JSJSup 174 (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 58–59, 63; Elisa Uusimäki, “The Formation of a Sage According to Ben Sira,” in *Second Temple Jewish “Paideia” in Context*, ed. Jason M. Zurawski and Gabriele Boccaccini, BZNW 228 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2017), 68. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, 98–99. Morgan, *Literate Education*, 34–35. Ueberschaer, *Weisheit aus der Begegnung*, 132. Perdue, *The Sword and the Stylus*, 11–12. The climax of a *paideia* learning process would occur when the student could rearticulate and personally imitate the knowledge and stories that he had learned. Morgan, *Literate Education*, 204–7, 251–55.

¹⁵ Daniel Harrington, *Jesus Ben Sira of Jerusalem: A Biblical Guide to Living Wisely* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2005), 101.

¹⁶ Tesch, *Weisheitsunterricht bei Ben Sira*, 151–53.

¹⁷ Perdue, *The Sword and the Stylus*, 56–57; Crenshaw, “Education in Ancient Israel,” 610.

exclusive monotheism and cultic worship as topics, among others, that were the products of the sage's divine wisdom and were taught to students with a view to *paideia*.

As this study suggested, Ptolemaic Jewish communities likely formed their students in Jewish thought and practice using Greek language educational texts. If so, Greek Sirach would have functioned as one of these educational vehicles. We can easily identify Hellenistic teaching techniques in Sirach. To cite only one, obvious example, the teaching of rhetoric in the Hellenistic and later Greco-Roman world included praising the deeds of one's ancestors, something that would lead to the imitation of those deeds. The literary model of the encomium or epic poem provides exemplary heroes to emulate. A similar model can be seen in the "Praise of the Fathers" section found in Sirach.¹⁸

Greek Sirach can thus be seen to have outlined how the Torah-wisdom of the Jewish God could be applied within Ptolemaic Egypt to produce the student's spiritual progress and formation in a context where many of its members could easily forget, never learn, or assimilate surrounding demotic and Greek cultic practices.

4.2.2. Tenor

The persons described in the text and the relationship between them contribute to the tenor of Greek Sirach. On a literary level, the primary characters in Sirach are (a) the literary sage or teacher who presents himself as instructing his students as well as (b) the implied reader or child who learned from and emulated the literary sage.

¹⁸ Perdue, *The Sword and the Stylus*, 64, 269; John G. Gammie, "The Sage in Sirach," in *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, ed. John G. Gammie and Leo G. Perdue (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 369; Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age*, 100.

As we have long known, within the wisdom tradition, an idealized wisdom teacher, or sage, addresses and instructs his students: the "sages depicted a world of beauty, insight, and bounty in which they invited their proteges to enter, take up residence, and dwell."¹⁹ Because the depictions are part of a persuasive literary technique, they may be hyperbolic or idealized to make a point.²⁰ In Sirach, the sage [σοφὸς; συνετὸς] (18:26-27; 20:13; 20:27) is presented as an honoured elite member of society, a wise man because of his knowledge, wisdom, reading, and writing expertise.²¹ The role of the sage according to Sirach was to pass on divine teachings and wisdom to the people of God. These sages possessed the important role of interpreting and applying divine teachings to the people (39:1-11).²²

The teaching relationship of sage to implied readers, perhaps children, but almost certainly males, is woven throughout the pattern of the book. The sage presents himself as the students' father who conveys instruction to them: "Listen, my child, and accept my judgment" (6:23; cf. 16:24-25). Because parents send their children to be taught by a sage, the sage takes them into an adoptive relationship where he teaches them as sons.²³

According to Wright, the sage

constructs his students as his children and thereby claims the authoritative leverage with them that a father has with his sons. The student, who is on

¹⁹ Perdue, *The Sword and the Stylus*, 5.

²⁰ This study does not assume that they form a biographical portrait of the life and actions of the historical author. Benjamin Wright, "Ben Sira on the Sage as Exemplar," in *Praise Israel for Wisdom and Instruction: Essays on Ben Sira and Wisdom, the Letter of Aristeas and the Septuagint*, JSJSup 131 (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 165–66, 181; Schmidt, *Wisdom, Cosmos*, 9–10; Ueberschaer, "Jewish Education in Ben Sira," 42. Jan Liesen, "First-Person Passages in the Book of Ben Sira," *PIBA* 20 (1997): 24–25.

²¹ Schams, *Jewish Scribes in the Second-Temple Period*, 102–5; Perdue, *The Sword and the Stylus*, 54.

²² Perdue, *The Sword and the Stylus*, 53, 273; Johannes Marböck, "Sir., 38,24-39,11: Der schriftgelehrte Weise. Ein Beitrag zu Gestalt und Werk Ben Siras," in *La sagesse de l'Ancien Testament: Nouvelle édition mise à jour*, ed. Maurice Gilbert, BETL 51 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990), 298.

²³ Montanaro, "The Sage in Relation," 19.

the receiving end of the construct, is subtly coerced into the role of the submissive child. ‘I am not merely a teacher to whom you should listen,’ says the sage, ‘I am your father to whom you must listen.’²⁴

By claiming to be the students’ father, the sage claims that his students should emulate and internalize his values as they would their real-life fathers.²⁵ The use of the metaphor of sage-as-father is a persuasive topic found throughout wisdom literature.²⁶ The family metaphor portrays the one who learns as "youth" or "son" whereas the teacher is a "father" (sometimes, a "mother") or "instructor."²⁷ While Sirach frames its teaching as a familial discussion, the readers, who are addressed as children, never have the chance to respond to the father/teacher in the text. The result is a literary technique that conveys wisdom teaching as instruction in such a way that the student must accept and internalize it without dialogue or nuance.²⁸

The sage’s readers are his plural children [τέκνα] (Sir 3:1; 23:7; 41:14) and sons [υἱοὶ] (39:13). He also addresses in the singular a young man [νεανίσκος] (35:7), a son [υἱός] (4:11), and a child [τέκνον] (2:1; 3:12,17; 4:1; 6:18, 23, 32, 10:28; 11:10; 14:11;

²⁴ Benjamin Wright, “From Generation to Generation: The Sage as Father in Early Jewish Literature,” in *Praise Israel for Wisdom and Instruction: Essays on Ben Sira and Wisdom, the Letter of Aristeas and the Septuagint*, JSJSup 131 (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 25.

²⁵ Wright, “Ben Sira on the Sage as Exemplar,” 169.

²⁶ This includes Proverbs 1-9 (specifically 3:1-4, 21-26), *Testament of Job*, *Aramaic Levi*, *1 Enoch* 82:1-4, *Tobit* 4:3-19, and 4Q185, 4Q412, 4Q525 and 4QInstruction. Wright, “From Generation,” 26, 30, 42; Maurice Gilbert, “À l’école de la sagesse. La pédagogie des sages dans l’ancien Israël,” *Greg* 85.1 (2004): 21; Baumgartner, “Die literarischen Gattungen in der Weisheit des Jesus Sirach,” 164–65; Pemberton, “The Rhetoric of the Father in Proverbs 1-9,” 66–67; Michael Stone, “Ideal Figures and Social Context: Priest and Sage in the Early Second Temple Age,” in *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross*, ed. Patrick Miller, Paul Hanson, and Samuel McBride (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 578–79. Michael Fox, “The Social Location of the Book of Proverbs,” in *Texts, Temples, and Traditions: A Tribute to Menahem Haran*, ed. Victor Hurowitz et al. (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 231.

²⁷ Perdue, *The Sword and the Stylus*, 10, 56, 82. References to "wise women" also occur (2 Sam 14:1-24; 20:16-22). The sage’s reference to learning wisdom in his house (Sir 51:23) contributes to a family-oriented pedagogy where the sage assumes the role of a parent teaching his children in his domicile

²⁸ Wright, “From Generation,” 28; Montanaro, “The Sage in Relation,” 17–18.

16:24; 18:15; 21:1; 26:19; 34:22; 37:27; 38:9; 38:16; 40:28).²⁹ At other times he addresses a man in old age as "elder" [πρεσβύτερος] (35:3) as well as the public male leaders of the people in a court [μεγιστᾶνες λαοῦ; οἱ ἡγούμενοι ἐκκλησίας] (30:27).

As this study has noted, despite some broader references, the sage prescribes domestic wisdom to his son who is a hypothetical young man whom he prepares for family life. While there are positive examples of female wisdom, the book expresses itself from a male perspective. The social realities of his day as well as the descriptions used throughout his book indicate that the sage's audience is predominantly if not exclusively male.³⁰ The sage provides wisdom that will guide his reader as a future

²⁹ Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter*, 35. In Greek Sirach child [τέκνον] is normally translated from the more gender specific my son [בְּנִי]. Normally the Hebrew phrase בן is translated as υἱός in LXX Proverbs, but in Greek Sirach the grandson chooses to translate this as a more general τέκνον. Could this be to address a gender mixed audience including daughters, or did he intend τέκνον to be a synonym of υἱός? Unfortunately, we do not know at this point. Montanaro, "The Sage in Relation," 31 n. 35; Thomas Ellsner, "'The Wisdom Teaches Their Sons' (Sir 4:11). And the Daughters? - Sons of Ben Sirach," in *Family and Kinship in the Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature*, ed. Angelo Passaro, DCLY 2012/13 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2013), 173–174; Pancratius Beentjes, "Daughters and Their Father(s) in the Book of Ben Sira," in *Family and Kinship in the Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature*, ed. Angelo Passaro, DCLY 2012/13 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2013), 185.

³⁰ Women are described as embodying wisdom through their virtue, support, and domestic actions (Sir 25:8; 26:1-4; 36:27-29; 40:23). The sage provides some teaching roles to mothers and feminine figures. Mothers have the right of judgment over their sons (4:2) and Wisdom, which is portrayed as a feminine figure, has sons whom she teaches (4:11, 15, 18; 14:20, 15:2). The sage could have included daughters when he addressed his audience as children [τέκνα] (3:1-2; 23:7; 41:14). Children [τέκνα] can refer to a group of mixed-gender people which may have contained daughters (cf. LXX Gen 33:7; 34:1; cf. Sus 1:3). Nevertheless, daughters are never once directly addressed. The centrality of raising daughters is not nearly as prominent as the instruction of young men: "θυγάτηρ occurs 9 times, as opposed to 42 times for υἱός, and 46 times for τέκνον." While women could embody wisdom through their actions and even teach their children, because of educational realities of this time they are not described as acquiring literary wisdom. Montanaro, "The Sage in Relation," 37, 60; Jacques Vermeulen, "Occasions When Wisdom Replaces the Mother as Educator in Sirach and the Related Literature," in *Family and Kinship in the Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature*, ed. Angelo Passaro, DCLY 2012/13 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2013), 208–13; Claudia Camp, "The Female Sage in Ancient Israel and in the Biblical Wisdom Literature," in *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, ed. John G. Gammie and Leo G. Perdue (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 194–97; Beentjes, "Daughters," 185, n. 10. James Crenshaw, *Education in Ancient Israel: Across the Deadening Silence*, ABRL (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 130–32; Ellsner, "The Wisdom Teaches Their Sons," 176–79; Balla, *Ben Sira on Family*, 34. Kaiser, "Erziehung und Bildung," 141. Women's cadre of demanding tasks ranged from wine production, spinning, textile production, baking, clay vessel production, household management, and other tasks, Adams, *Social and Economic Life*, 41–51, 66.

husband and father. In his application of wisdom, the sage states "your wife" (7:26; 9:1; 33:20), "your children" (7:23; 42:5), "your son" (30:13; 30:30) and "your daughter" (7:25; 22:3-5; 42:11).³¹ These references highlight that the educational task will prepare the candidate not just for public life but also to fulfill his role in a family. The implied reader is a young man preparing to be the leader of his family. The literary constructs, as well as the social realities of that time, indicate that the sage's audience consists of male students who either are being trained to be part of a retainer class or are themselves from wealthy aristocratic families.

The hierarchical relationship between the sage and his children is not intended to be ongoing because the children who are being taught will themselves become sages who teach their children. The sage-fathers had once been sons, but their acquired wisdom had formed them into fathers who passed their inheritance down to their sons.³² Once students had mastered the necessary wisdom, they together with the sage pass on the history of Israel: "Now, let *us* praise esteemed men and *our* fathers by lineage" (Sir 44:1; emphasis added; cf. 30:2-6).

This interweaving of persons is achieved, however, not simply through the identification of persons, but semantically also through the use of pronouns within the text itself. The discourse primarily contrasts the sage as a first-person subject "I" who

³¹ Maurice Gilbert, "Ben Sira et la Femme," in *Ben Sira: recueil d'études = Ben Sira: Collected Essays*, BETL 264 (Leuven: Peeters, 2014), 249; Hilaire Duesberg, *Les scribes inspirés: introduction aux livres sapientiaux de la Bible: Proverbes, Job, Ecclésiaste, Sagesse, Ecclésiastique*, rev. ed. (Maredsous, Belgique: Éditions de Maredsous, 1965), 605; Balla, *Ben Sira on Family*, 33.

³² The sage himself gives thanks to "the one who gave me wisdom" [τῷ δίδόντι μοι σοφίαν] (51:17; author's translation), making reference to his father sage from whom he acquired wisdom. Wright, "From Generation," 47. Reiterer, "The Sociological Significance," 234. Tesch, *Weisheitsunterricht bei Ben Sira*, 156.

addresses the reader with frequent uses of second person “You” imperatives and pronouns.

A verbal analysis confirms not only the social and historical information concerning the participants and their location in society, but also the role of first- and second-person verbs in our text.³³ Within Greek Sirach, including the prologue, there are 2748 verbs (excluding verbal nouns, i.e. participles and infinitives).³⁴ In the following charts, we can see that with few exceptions, the second-person verbs inform us of the relationship between the sage and his student/reader. The sage addresses his reader(s) 796 times. Of those 796 times, 622 of them, or 78% of the times that the student or audience is addressed, is through a mood (i.e. speech act) of direction (i.e. imperatival verbs).³⁵ In fact, a similar pattern appears in an analysis of third person imperatives that passively address the readers.³⁶ Within the concluding section of the book, the sage describes in the third person his children as part of a larger father to son hierarchy of relationships that pass on the teaching of Israel from one generation to another. Once the students have learned and embodied wisdom as emulated in their teacher sage, they can behave like and become themselves sages who convey this teaching as fathers to their

³³ To describe all the dynamics of the various relationships, I would need to engage in a comparison of the mood of all the verbs in Sirach, which is beyond the scope of my study at this moment.

³⁴ My verbal analysis was conducted using the morphological search feature of Logos Bible Software 8.0.

³⁵ Second-person imperative verbs are 23% of the total verbs of the book. There are 818 second-person verbs in Sirach. There are 22 places where second person verbs are used to address characters beside the reader: reported speech (24:8 (x2)); odes to heroes (47:13, 14 (x2), 15, 16, 18 (x2), 19 (x2), 20 (x2), 48:4; prayers to God (51:2 (x3), 3, 8 (x2), 12 (x2)). Of the 796 verbs that address the reader, 104 indicative; 453 imperative; 3 optative; 236 subjunctive. The subjunctive and optative can be further divided because 166 of them are negated with μή, μηθὲν, μήποτε, or μηδέ, which means that they function as negative imperatives.

³⁶ There are 28 third person imperatives. Of these 28, seven passively incite God’s action (23:6, 33:3, 33:5, 10, 11; 36:21; 50:24) and the remaining 21 passively demand the reader(s) action.

children in the next generation.³⁷ The literary relationship between the sage and his reading children in Greek Sirach instructs them to likewise emulate and become sages who pass down this divine sapiential tradition to their progeny.

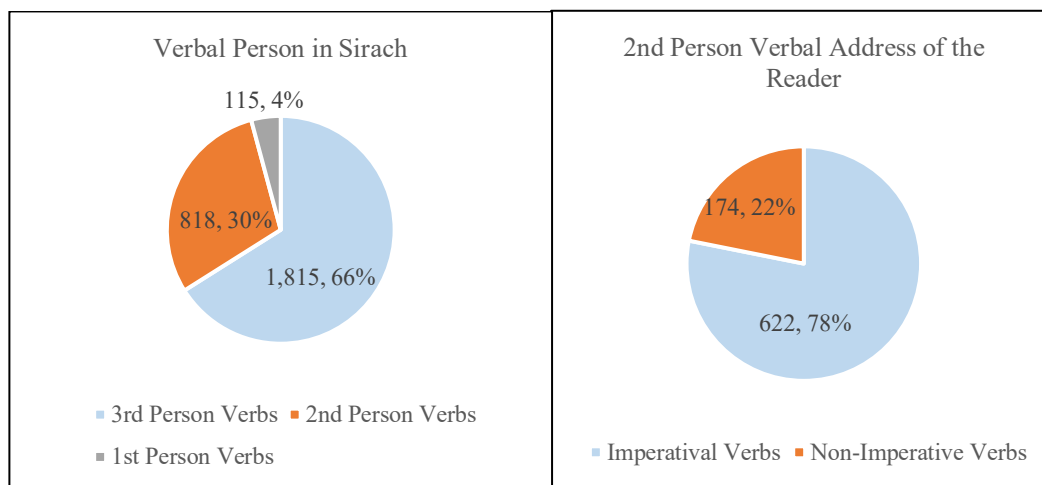


Table 3: Verbal Analysis of Person in Greek Sirach

Before concluding, it is important to note two further features about the semantic relationships in Greek Sirach. The first is that the first-person address of the sage as we find it in Greek Sirach actually achieves considerably more than just the representation of an historical context for teaching of sage and pupil in Ptolemaic Egypt. The first-person address of the sage in Greek Sirach also becomes the address of the author who draws the second-person implied reader of the whole text of Sirach into a parental relationship with himself, even as the sage has done in assuming parental authority over

³⁷ Wright, “Ben Sira on the Sage as Exemplar,” 181–82; Benjamin Wright, “Jubilees, Sirach, and Sapiential Tradition,” in *Enoch and the Mosaic Torah: The Evidence of Jubilees*, ed. Gabriele Boccaccini and Giovanni Ibba (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 118–20; Gilbert, “À l’école de la sagesse,” 38; Wright, “From Generation,” 33–34, 42–45. A similar rhetorical shift from third person exemplars to first person participation occurs elsewhere (*Jub.* 20:2-3; cf. 1 Enoch 82:1-2; *Aramaic Levi* 4Q213 1 i9-10; *Testament of Qahat* 4Q5421 ii 9–13).

his presumably historical charges: “Children, listen to me, your father (Sir 3:1).”³⁸ The text thus portrays the implied reader as the metaphorical children or offspring of the implied author. This larger address helps again to establish the semantic field for our text as a text that is grounded historically but also that transcends its immediate grounding as it is published for a wider readership.

And that grounding is clear from the second element regarding first-person address in Sirach. The first-person address achieves yet another goal since the first-person speeches conveys not only the voice of the father/sage and the implied author (39:12-13, 32-35; 50:27), but at other times these first-person speeches present the voice of personified wisdom: “Yet I will make instruction shine like the dawn, and I will reveal them to afar. Still I will pour out discipline like prophecy” (24:32-33). In this way the use of the first person thus becomes a deliberate move of self-presentation by the sage which conveys a continuity between eternal prophetic wisdom and the teaching of the sage which is transmitted by the translator.³⁹ As noted astutely by Liesen, the “first-person is a device by which the implied author very effectively informs the real reader, namely, us, what *Weltanschauung* we are to adopt.”⁴⁰ In both ways, then, the words of the teaching father-sage which are transmitted by the translator are presented as the words of true wisdom conveyed as parental instruction to a beloved child in space and time but also beyond any particular space or time to reflect true wisdom. For subsequent readers, including those who bring a theological interest to Sirach, this insight is crucial for carrying my conclusions over into theological reflection.

³⁸ Wright, “From Generation,” 27.

³⁹ Wright, “Ben Sira on the Sage as Exemplar,” 172–75.

⁴⁰ Liesen, “First-Person Passages,” 44.

In summary, these verbal observations indicate that the relationship between the sage and his student portrayed in the text is characterized by persuasion, instruction, and obedience. The main characters who contributed to the tenor of Greek Sirach were the literary sage and the learning child/son, but also the author and wisdom herself. The text historically likely informed men who prepared for various upper-class careers. The literary descriptions as well as the verbal indicators indicate that the social dynamic between a teacher and his students is one of formal persuasion. My verbal analysis reproducibly demonstrates how they related to each other.

In what follows, we will need to explore how Sirach's commands about sacrifices presented to a deity contribute to this relationship between the sage and his student, and what role, if any, they play in the larger drama of author and audience, and wisdom and all wisdom's true children. This authoritative relationship served historically to form students in correct Jewish cultic practices so that they would not forget or assimilate incorrect cultic ideas. Through his submission to the sage's commands concerning offerings presented to a deity, such students were taught to submit to the sage's authoritative and instructive role. The same submission, achieved through the book and the teaching of wisdom herself, will ultimately be the focus of any theological fruits of this discussion.

4.2.3. Mode

The form in which the message of Greek Sirach is communicated contributes to its mode. This form contributed to how the message about sacrifices presented to a deity was received by its reader. There are both written and oral levels of the mode of Greek Sirach. Greek Sirach was a physical document that was penned with the intention that it

be processed by its audience as a written text. Nevertheless, in educationally religious contexts, a teacher read texts orally to an audience. As a result, although Greek Sirach would have functioned as an inscribed document in Ptolemaic Egypt, some of its audience would have received it as an oral text. This oral performative context of instruction is encoded in the textual form of the book.⁴¹ The regular commands to “listen!” or “hear!” are not just literary devices but also highlight the oral teaching context of a sage surrounded by his students.⁴² According to Jaffee, “[p]recisely because texts were composed under the assumption that they would be read in the setting of oral performance, their compositional styles drew deeply upon habits of speech and rhetorical traditions that had their living matrix in oral communication.”⁴³ The oral teachings codified in Greek Sirach were copied and likely spread throughout some Egyptian Jewish communities, before eventually gaining a significantly wider reading in the Diaspora and in the land of Israel. The result was an ever-increasing number of students and sons of the sage as the readership of the text expanded to a much wider audience.⁴⁴ When read aloud, the mode of Greek Sirach’s oral presentation to students naturally would have re-created an atmosphere of adherence and submission where tutees were persuaded of the truth of its message.

Greek Sirach’s status as a written document also conveyed the importance of its message. In Ptolemaic Egypt, literacy and formal education were limited to the elite

⁴¹ Newman, “Liturgical Imagination,” 328.

⁴² Ueberschaer, “Jewish Education in Ben Sira,” 33; Gilbert, “À l’école de la sagesse,” 32; Crenshaw, “The Primacy of Listening,” 182–84.

⁴³ Jaffee, *Torah in the Mouth*, 18; Ueberschaer, “Jewish Education in Ben Sira,” 34. Examples of oral dictation appear in 4 Ezra 14:23-25; 2 Bar 50:1.

⁴⁴ Ueberschaer, “Jewish Education in Ben Sira,” 31.

classes who were only 7-10% of the total population,⁴⁵ of which an even smaller portion would be Jews. The high cost of written documents in a handwritten culture meant that a lengthy book such as Greek Sirach was of significant monetary value and would naturally possess inherent authority precisely because of the cost of its production and ownership within upper classes. In plain terms, because so few people were educated or wealthy enough to be able to read or create written documents, if something were written down, it had to have been valuable.

In summary, some features of Sirach indicate that it was in some cases read aloud orally. Its status of being read aloud in a public forum, as well as existing in a written format, bequeathed to it an inherent authority, value, and persuasive power. Therefore, the written format of Sirach's cultic teachings contributed to its authority and a desire on the part of readers or hearers to adhere to. As a result, when Sirach's cultic teachings were read aloud and conveyed to its readers, they naturally were understood to be wise, educated, and authoritative statements about how to understand and enact the Jewish faith faithfully and piously. Resultantly, most readers would not have questioned or contradicted his cultic teaching with their own preferences or personal beliefs.

4.2.4. Conclusion

I have summarized here some basic elements that contributed to the contextual situation of Greek Sirach (i.e. situational elements of the register). Greek Sirach was an instructive religious manual used in Jewish communities, whether a synagogue or another teaching location, shortly after 132 B.C. in the largely polytheistic culture of

⁴⁵ Approx. 245,000–350,000 depending on the assumed total size of the population. Manning, *The Last Pharaohs*, 146. Morgan, *Literate Education*, 2, 22–23. Jaffee, *Torah in the Mouth*, 15, 22.

Ptolemaic Egypt. It informed and reinforced how elite young Jewish men should practically live out divine Torah-wisdom in a context where they were surrounded by different religions and lifestyles (i.e. field). It acted as an authoritative and persuasive document between a teacher and his students, normally young wealthy men, where they were charged and cultivated to embody this teaching (i.e. tenor). As a written document that was at times received orally, its message naturally possessed a formal value that expressed authority (i.e. mode). This study will show that Sirach's statements about offerings presented to a deity are part of this authoritative dynamic where the sage persuades his metaphorical child to practically embody Torah-wisdom.

4.3. A Lexical Semantic Analysis

Before this study can turn to an analysis of specific cultic passages in Sirach, it must identify what these passages are. Previously I introduced the basic linguistic framework provided by a lexical-semantic analysis. I will look here at how this method can be applied to identify cultic lexemes in Greek Sirach. I will then perform a componential analysis of these lexemes so that I can see what paradigmatic features (i.e. common pattern) they share. Using this information, I will be able to identify lexemes that share a common pattern of being an offering or sacrifice presented to a deity before then turning to use SFL to examine the passages containing those lexemes.

4.3.1. Cultic Lexemes in Greek Sirach

In this section, this study will exhaustively identify cultic lexemes in Greek Sirach using the tool of lexical semantics. The application of this tool will allow me to note the shared and different sense features of these lexemes. This analysis will allow

this study to reach its goal of concretely identifying cultic lexemes generally in Greek Sirach that are part of a shared semantic domain. From this information, this study will narrow down my results to a semantic domain of offerings and sacrifices presented to a deity.

To identify lexemes that share a semantic field, Nida recommends that we begin by tentatively selecting words that appear to be related.⁴⁶ This study will begin by using the relevant semantic domain category of “offering, sacrifice” created in Louw and Nida’s *Greek Semantic Lexicon of the New Testament*.⁴⁷ Once a preliminary grouping has been identified, it will highlight the components of these lexemes. The component analysis will verify if the lexeme belongs to the tentative grouping.⁴⁸ This study will also include in my tentative list all other cultic lexemes traditionally associated with the so-called Septuagint.⁴⁹ It has used the Greek glosses available from pre-existing lexicons. So as not to skew my initial results, it has listed non-cultic morphological uses of a word in Sirach, even though they are technically different lexemes because they possess separate sense features.⁵⁰ The major shared sense feature between these cultic lexemes,

⁴⁶ Nida, *Componential Analysis*, 54–55.

⁴⁷ It is categorized under 53.16-53.27, Johannes Louw and Eugene Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1988), 1:151–54. This field does not include instruments or locations where offerings take place, such as temple or altar, because this widens my field too much to include temple worship and religious activity in general. It would increase the semantic field beyond the functional activity of offerings and sacrifices. Louw and Nida have used paradigmatic relations to categorize lexemes that share common features. Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 1:xvii. Another forthcoming Greek lexicon that will use semantic field theory is Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta et al., eds., *Diccionario Griego-Español del Nuevo Testamento* (Córdoba: Ed. El Almendro, 2000).

⁴⁸ Nida, *Componential Analysis*, 55–56.

⁴⁹ See the LXX lists in Daniel, *Recherches*, 403–4, 415–16. Gilles Dorival, “Le sacrifice dans la traduction grecque de la Septante,” *Annali di storia dell’esegesi* 18.1 (2001): 70.

⁵⁰ Sometimes a morphological word refers to a cultic action in one context, but a secular and non-sacrificial action in another context. For instance, the word *μνημόσυνον* can mean a cultic memorial offering (Sir 38:11) but in other contexts, it means the memory of a person (10:17). The second group of non-cultic uses which are different lexemes will later be removed from my list since they are not part of a

whether verbs or nouns, is that they are used in the cultic worship of a deity, whereas in secular usage the lexeme is not directed to the cultic worship of a deity.

cultic semantic field. Lemma searches have been conducted during April 2020 using the search features of Logos Bible Software 8.0's morphologically tagged version of Ziegler, *Sapientia Iesu Filii Sirach*.

Preliminary Cultic Words in Greek Sirach⁵¹

Cultic Usage	Non-cultic Usage
αἴνεσις: “praise offering” (Sir 32:4).	“praise” (title of ch. 24).
ἀπαρχή: “the first portion of something which has been set aside and offered to God before the rest of the substance or objects can be used - ‘first portion, first offering’” (7:31; 32:10; 45:20).	
δόσις: “gift” (7:31; 32:11).	“a giving, gift” (1:10, 12; 2:9; 4:3; 11:17; 18:15,16, 18; 20:10, 14; 26:14; 41:19, 21; 42:3,7).
δουλεύω: “to perform the duties incumbent upon oneself” (2:1).	“to serve” (3:7; 25:8).
δώρημα: “that which is presented: cultic offering” (31:22 (34:18)).	
δῶρον: “gift...cultic offering” (7:9).	“gift” (1:18; 20:29; 40:12).
ἐξιλάσκομαι: “to perform the rite of the atonement of sins” (3:3; 3:30; 5:6; 20:28; 28:5; 31:23; 45:16; 45:23).	“appeased” (16:7).
ἐξιλασμός: “atonement: w. ref. to the yearly Day of Atonement” (5:5; 16:11; 17:29; 32:5 (35:3)).	“forgiveness” (18:12; 18:20).
εὐωδία: “fragrance...of a cultic offering” (24:15; 32:8; 38:11; 45:16; 50:15).	
θυμίαμα: “incense offering” (45:16; 49:1).	
θυσία: “that which is offered as a sacrifice - ‘sacrifice’” (7:31; 31:23; 31:24; 32:9,15; 45:14; 45:21).	
θυσιάζω: “to perform the cultic task of offering sacrifices: + dat. [or] to offer as cultic offering: + acc.” (31:21; 32:2, 4).	

⁵¹ Glosses are taken from Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 1:534–35; T. Muraoka, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2009), 176, 181–82, 251, 252, 308, 335, 338–39, 364, 428, 493, 591, 600, 619. The gloss of μνημόσυνον and σωτήριον come from Daniel, *Recherches*, 230–31, 281–83. The cultic lexeme glosses for αἴνεσις and δόσις are my translation. Although not used in this study which focused on koine Greek cultic glosses, one of the best studies of classical Greek cultic language is Jean Casabona, *Recherches sur le vocabulaire des sacrifices en grec: des origines a la fin de l’époque classique*, PFAP: NS 56 (Gap: Éditions Ophrys, 1966). All chapter and verse designations follow the structure of the Greek version. Ziegler, *Sapientia Iesu Filii Sirach*; Brannan et al., *The Lexham English Septuagint*.

θύω: “to slaughter an animal in a ritual manner as a sacrifice to deity - ‘to sacrifice, to make a sacrifice’” (31:24).	
ιερεύς: "priest..engaged in cultic activities" (7:29, 31; 50:1, 12).	
ιερατεία: "priestly office" (45:7).	
ιερατεύω: "to serve as a priest" (45:15).	
ιερωσύνη: "office of priesthood" (45:24).	
κάρπωσις: “cultic offering” (30:19; 45:16).	
λειτουργέω: “to render service...public, cultic functionary” (4:14; 24:10; 45:15; 50:14).	“to serve” (8:8; 10:25).
λειτουργία: “service...cultic” (50:19).	
λειτουργός: “one who renders service...cultic” (7:30; 10:2).	
μνημόσυνον: “memorial offering” (38:11).	“memory” (10:17; 23:26; 24:20; 32:9; 38:23; 39 41:9; 41:1; 44:9; 45:1, 9, 11, 16; 46:11; 49:1, 13; 50:16).
όλοκαρπόω: “to present as a whole burnt offering” (45:14).	
προσάγω: “to bring...cultic offering” (14:11; 31:24; 45:16).	“to bring, to draw near” (12:13).
προσφέρω: “to bring...+ acc. (cultic offering)” (7:9; 32:3).	“to bring” (Prologue 30, 31).
προσφορά: “to offer up someone or something as a sacrifice (a technical term in the sacrificial system) - ‘to offer, to offer up, to make an offering’” (14:11; 31:21, 23; 32:1, 8; 38:11; 46:16; 50:13, 14).	
σεμίδαλις: “the finest wheat flour...cultic offering” (32:3; 38:11).	“flour” (39:26).
σπένδω: “pour out an offering as an act of worship or ritual observance - ‘to pour a libation, to pour out an offering’” (50:15).	
σωτήριον: “peace offering” (32:2; 47:2).	“salvation” (39:18).

Table 4: Preliminary Cultic Words in Greek Sirach

This study has introduced here a list of possible cultic lexemes that appear in Sirach which it derived from the semantic field of sacrifices and offerings in Louw and Nida’s New Testament lexicon. Building from Nida’s list, it supplemented this field

with other potentially related cultic words found in the LXX which appear in Sirach. Before it can state that they share similar patterns of action and are part of a semantic field, it will need to show that they are related. As noted above, a componential analysis identifies the paradigmatic features that various lexemes share, and concludes that, if they share these features, they are part of a shared semantic field.

4.3.2. A Componential Analysis of Cultic Greek Lexemes in Sirach

A componential analysis uses reproducible questions to demonstrate differences and similarities. An application of a componential analysis to my preliminary list of cultic lexemes will identify what they share and how they differ from each other. The application can be visualized in the following table of eight columns, starting with the left column, which contains the preliminary cultic lexemes. Each of the remaining columns poses a question of the lexeme that can be answered positively (+), negatively (-), or sometimes (+/-). The questions are listed at the bottom of the table. While this study admits that this is not an exhaustive list of questions, these questions begin to show where the lexemes differ from one another and where they are similar. Ultimately, its goal is to arrive at a conclusion where it can confidently state that they participate in a common semantic domain.

A Componential Analysis of Preliminary Cultic Lexemes

Cultic Lexemes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
αἶνεςις	+	+	-	-	-	-	-
ἀπαρχή	+	+	+	-	-	-	-
δόσις	+	+/-	+	-	-	-	-
δουλεύω	+/-	-	+	+/-	-	+/-	-
δώρημα	+	+	+	-	-	-	-
δῶρον	+	+	+	-	-	-	-
ἐξιλιάσκομαι	+	-	+/-	+	+/-	+	-
ἐξίλασμός	+	+	+/-	-	-	-	-
εὐωδία	+	+	+/-	-	-	-	-
θυμίαμα	+	+	+/-	-	-	-	-
θυσία	+	+	+	-	-	-	-
θυσιάζω	+	-	+	+	+	+	-
θύω	+	-	+	+	+	+	-
ἱερεύς	+	-	+	-	-	-	+
ἱερατεία	+	-	+	-	-	-	+
ἱερατεύω	+	-	+	+/-	+/-	+/-	-
ἱερωσύνη	+	-	+	-	-	-	+
κάρπωσις	+	+	+	-	-	-	-
λειτουργέω	+	-	+	+/-	+/-	+	-
λειτουργία	+	-	+	+/-	+/-	-	-
λειτουργός	+	-	+	-	-	-	+
μνημόσυνον	+	+	+	-	-	-	-
όλοκαρπώω	+	-	+	+	+	+	-
προσάγω	+	-	+	+/-	-	+	-
προσφέρω	+	-	+	+/-	-	+	-
προσφορά	+	+	+	-	-	-	-
σεμίδαλις	+	+	+	-	-	-	-
σπένδω	+	-	+	+	-	+	-
σωτήριον	+	+	+	-	-	-	-

Key: + = Yes. - = No. +/- = Sometimes.

1. Associated with sacrificial activity performed for the sake of a deity (excluding instruments and locations).
2. An item that is offered to a deity as a sacrifice or offering.
3. A physical item or action (as opposed to a spiritual, invisible, or metaphorical occurrence).
4. The verbal action of presenting an offering to a deity.
5. The verbal action of slaughtering or burning an item to a deity.
6. A verbal action associated with cultic service.
7. A religious minister who presents cultic offerings to a deity.

Table 5: A Componential Analysis of Preliminary Cultic Lexemes

All the lexemes included in Table 5 are either the cultic minister, verbal action, or object offered to a deity in Sirach. As a result, this study can conclude that all these lexemes, whether verbal or nominal, are related through their association with some sacrificial activities performed for the sake of a deity (i.e. column 1).⁵² What this first componential analysis has shown is that these lexemes share a sense feature by being related through their association with sacrificial activities performed for the sake of a deity; therefore, they can be shown to be semantically related words that participate in a semantic field of sacrifice and offerings. These lexemes participate in a broad semantic field of “sacrifices and offerings”; to narrow this analysis, they can be subdivided into categories (i.e. semantic fields) with more precisely related sense features. While all the passages which contain the lexemes in column 1 could be exegetically investigated to comprehensively study all aspects of this broad semantic field of offerings and sacrifices, this would be a much larger investigation than this study could adequately provide at this point. Accordingly, this study will perform another componential analysis through which it will narrow its results to a more specific semantic field of sacrifices and offerings presented to a highlighted recipient (Table 6). As a result, this study will be able to have a focused study on sacrifices presented to a deity

⁵² Some lexemes have vaguer cultic features, such as *προσάγω* or *λειτουργέω*, which do not define what is being offered, to whom, or what exact verbal action is being performed. This is less specific than *ἀπαρχή* or *θυσία* which refer to specific types of offerings. Despite their different etymological roots, all the lexemes identified share features through paradigmatic relationships of a similar pattern of being associated with cultic activities performed for the sake of a deity. This is the broadest level of my semantic field by which all these lexemes are related. This analysis also shows me that some lexemes differ from one another. Some differences include being a verb that describes the action of presenting an offering or the noun itself which is offered. Some items presented to a deity such as a “praise offering [*αἴνεσις*]” are immaterial whereas others such as a “cultic offering [*δῶρημα*]” are exclusively material.

4.3.3. A Componential Analysis of Items Offered that Specifically Identify a Recipient of an Offering

This study will engage in a second componential analysis in Table 6 using some of the data from the componential analysis in Table 5. In this componential analysis this study will only examine lexemes that are “an item that is offered to a deity as a sacrifice or offering (excluding instruments and locations)” (column 2 in Table 5; column 1 in Table 6) and will then add another sense feature to this analysis that will only consider the uses of a lexeme where “the recipient of the offering is clearly stated in the direct context of the lexeme” (column 2 in Table 6). There are many places in Sirach where offerings are presented but the recipient is not stated, and it is assumed from the context of the book that the intended recipient is the God of Israel; however, these passages will not be considered in this focused study.⁵³ In Table 6 this study notes in parentheses the versification of passages in Greek Sirach where the uses of a lexeme with this sense occur. These lexemes are part of larger passages about various topics covered throughout the book of Sirach. Many of them are part of the same passages, narrowing which ones this study will examine.

⁵³ These passages are also important to understanding the greater semantic field of sacrifices and offerings in Sirach, but I will refrain from examining them since I am limiting my investigation to passages that clearly define the recipient who will receive these offerings. These other passages could be studied in a larger more expansive investigation, but I am attempting here to limit my study to a more specific semantic field.

A Componential Analysis of Items Offered that Identify a Recipient of the Offering

Cultic Lexemes (Location of Lexeme)	1	2
αἴνεςις (32:4)	+	+
ἀπαρχή (7:31; 32:10; 45:20)	+	+
δόσις (7:31; 32:11)	+/-	+
δῶρημα (31:22)	+	+
δῶρον (7:9)	+	+
ἐξίλασμός (32:5)	+	+
εὐωδία (32:8; 38:11; 45:16; 50:15)	+	+
θυμίαμα (45:16)	+	+
θυσία (7:31; 31:23; 31:24; 32:9, 15; 45:14; 45:21)	+	+
κάρπωσις (30:19; 45:16)	+	+
μνημόσυνον (38:11)	+	+
προσφορά (14:11; 31:21, 23; 32:1, 8; 38:11; 46:16; 50:13, 14)	+	+
σεμίδαλις (32:3; 38:11)	+	+
σωτήριον (32:2)	+	+
Key: + = Yes. - = No. +/- = Sometimes.		
1. An item that is offered to a deity as a sacrifice or offering.		
2. The recipient of the offering is clearly stated in the direct context of the lexeme (I will highlight the recipient in Table 7).		
Table 6: A Componential Analysis of Items Offered that Identify a Recipient of the Offering		

The componential analysis in Table 6 outlines a narrowed semantic field which will be the focus of this study. It highlights a semantic field which includes lexemes that share the same features of being “an item that is offered to a deity as a sacrifice or offering” which also “specifically define the recipient of the lexeme in its direct context.” These two sense features define the boundaries of the semantic field concretely and reproducibly. This study will now outline the parameters of these passages and highlight the recipient of these offerings. From this information, this study can turn to an investigation of these passages.

Cultic Passages and Their Recipients

The Parameter of the Passages that Contains these Lexemes	The Outlined Recipient
7:9 - A Multitude of Gifts for the Most High God	θεῷ ὑψίστῳ (v. 9)
7:29-31 - Offerings for the Priesthood	δὸς τὴν μερίδα αὐτῷ (antec. ἱερέα) (v. 31)
14:11 - Offer to the Lord Generously while You Can	κυρίῳ (v. 11)
30:17-20 - Offerings to an Idol	εἰδώλῳ (v.19)
31:21-32:15 - Righteous and Unrighteous Offerings to the Most High	οὐκ εὐδοκεῖ ὁ ὑψιστος ἐν προσφοραῖς (v. 23), ἔναντι ὑψίστου (v. 8), ὑψίστῳ (v. 12)
38:9-11 - Offerings to the Lord when Sick	κυρίῳ (v. 9)
45:14-16, 20-22 – The Offerings of Aaron to the Lord	κυρίῳ (v. 16), θυσίας κυρίου (v. 21), αὐτῷ...καὶ τῷ σπέρματι αὐτοῦ (v. 21)
46:14-16 - Samuel's Sacrifice to the Lord	ἐπεκαλέσατο τὸν κύριον...ἐν προσφορᾷ (v. 16)
50:11-15 - The Offering of Simon and of the People to the Lord, the Most High, the Almighty	προσφορὰ κυρίου (v. 13), προσφορὰν ὑψίστου παντοκράτορος (v. 14), ὑψίστῳ παμβασιλεῖ (v. 15)

Table 7: Cultic Passages and Their Recipients

4.3.4. Conclusion

Through the tool of a structural lexical semantic componential analysis, this study has identified the cultic vocabulary that shares a semantic field in Greek Sirach in Tables 4 and 5. This analysis identified all the lexemes in this book which speak generally about the motif of offerings and sacrifices. Using a componential analysis in Table 6, it narrowed the semantic field of lexemes to only those which are “an item that is offered to a deity as a sacrifice or offering” that also “explicitly define the recipient of the lexeme in its direct context.” From this information, this study identified the passages that these lexemes are part of in Table 7. To gain a fuller synchronic study of a text within its historical cultural moment, this study will proceed to an examination of these lexemes in their literary context and historical environment.

4.4. A Historical-Exegetical Analysis Guided by Linguistic Observations from Systemic Functional Linguistics

This study will now continue to an examination of passages identified with lexical semantics where an item is presented as an offering or sacrifice to a specific deity in Greek Sirach. The tool this study will use to examine these passages is a rubric informed by SFL ideational and interpersonal metafunctions to guide its examination of specific cultic passages.

4.4.1. The Pattern of My Analysis

I will present here the pattern of the analysis that I will use in this study. This study examines numerous cultic passages that are not grouped in one literary section but are dispersed throughout the book. This study will limit its analysis to only passages that investigate this cultic motif that were identified using lexical semantics. While this study identifies methodologically cultic lexemes, how can it identify the beginning and end of a passage that contains these lexemes? Sirach is a piece of wisdom literature, which means that most of its passages that contain cultic lexemes are part of individual, pithy, proverbial statements, or mini-narratives. Internal criteria such as its genre, subject matter, and style highlight the beginning and end of passages.⁵⁴ Sometimes the cultic teaching is nestled in a larger section that needs to be briefly summarized, but for this investigation, its guiding principle will be to limit its analysis to the direct passage which contains the cultic lexeme.

⁵⁴ Some of the stylistic criteria that delineate pericopes include “repetition of key words, *inclusio*, nonalphabetic acrostics, opening and closing rhyme, chiasm, a closing refrain, and favorite concluding themes.” Corley, *Ben Sira’s Teaching on Friendship*, 24–25.

As noted earlier, I want to organize my historical-exegetical study using the rubric of the ideational and interpersonal metafunctions. This study will include most of my historical-exegetical comments under its discussion of the ideational meaning because that element focuses on the interaction present in the text itself; it will follow a sequential verse by verse historical exegetical approach for each of these areas of meaning.⁵⁵ This study has presented here a simplified and accessible examination that uses aspects of an SFL analysis. Some SFL linguistics would further nuance or sub-categorize various aspects of this analysis; nevertheless, this study is constructed using recognizable aspects of this tool.⁵⁶ In the following chart, I have provided a summary of the major categories which I will use to guide my investigation of features of ideational and interpersonal metafunctions.

⁵⁵ Abbreviations used: part. = participant; proc. = process; circum. = circumstance. Tense: P = Present; Imp = Imperfect; F = Future; Aor = Aorist; Per = Perfect; PPer = Pluperfect. Tense: A = Active; M = Middle; P = Passive; M/P = Middle or Passive; Dep = Deponent. Mood: I = Indicative; Imp = Imperative; Sub = Subjunctive; O = Optative. Inf = Infinitive; Par = Participle. Person: 1 = 1st Person; 2 = 2nd Person; 3 = 3rd Person. Number: S = Singular; P = Plural. Gender: M = Masculine; F = Feminine; N = Neuter.

⁵⁶ I have used an easily understandable set of linguistic criteria that will guide my examination of cultic passages. I have avoided further categorization out of the desire to make this study accessible to non-linguists and biblical exegetes who are not specialists in linguistic studies.

Rubric of Metafunctions to Guide My Analysis

Ideational Features		
Process (verbal action)	Participants (actors)	Circumstances
material	actor (i.e. animate subject) instrument (i.e. a non-conscious agent that needs another conscious agent) force (i.e. a non-conscious agent that does not need another conscious agent) affected (i.e. modified direct object) result range (i.e. unmodified direct object) recipient beneficiary oblique participant (passive)	extent cause (cause; reason; behalf) location (temporal) matter manner (i.e. means; quality; comparison) role accompaniment
mental	sensor phenomenon	
relational	carrier attribute	
verbal	sayer recipient verbiage	
existential	existent	

Interpersonal Features (i.e. Mood: What type of relationship)	
persons (author and audience)	Verbal analysis: person number voice verbal aspect mood*
	mood subcategories (i.e. speech acts) assertion (indicative) projection (subjunctive/optative) direction (imperative) expectation (future)

Table 8: Rubric of Metafunctions to Guide My Analysis

4.4.2. A Linguistic and Historical Analysis of Passages that Contain Offerings Presented to a Recipient

My componential analyses identified the lexemes that contain semantically related passages. It did so in order to subsequently show that those passages functioned within the larger semantic field of items offered as sacrifices or offerings to a recipient

within the polytheistic environment of the Jewish community in Ptolemaic Egypt. For each passage, this study will introduce each of those passages, followed by a historical verse-by-verse commentary of the features of the passage that contribute to its ideational and interpersonal meanings.⁵⁷ This analysis will be followed by a conclusion of some of the unearthed meanings conveyed in this passage.

⁵⁷ This examination of each passage using a two category format is similar to that used by Westfall, *A Discourse Analysis of the Letter to the Hebrews*, 89–99. Toffelmire, *A Discourse and Register Analysis*, 83–102; Reeves, “The Clause in Biblical Hebrew Narrative.” My introduction of both history and linguistic elements is indebted to the model of Porter, *The Letter to the Romans*.

7:9 A Multitude of Gifts for the Most High God

<p>⁹ μὴ εἴπῃς Τῷ πλήθει τῶν δώρων μου ἐπόψεται καὶ ἐν τῷ προσενέγκαι με θεῷ ὑψίστῳ προσδέξεται</p>	<p>⁹ Do not say, “He will have regard for the multitude of my gifts, and when I bring a gift to the Most High God, he will accept it.”</p>
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Sirach 7:9 is the shortest passage that this study will discuss and is not found in many studies of sacrifice in Sirach because it is not extant in any Hebrew version.⁵⁸ Following a discussion of wisdom and its value (6:18-37), the sage turns in chapter 7 to how wisdom looks practically.⁵⁹ Sirach 7:1-17 is a collection of negative prohibitions of different sins that the sage wants his student to avoid. This passage is followed by a discussion of social relationships in vv. 18-36.⁶⁰ These prohibitions are loosely related and can be studied individually since they are not directly part of a larger narrative. Vv. 7-8 warn the student not to engage in sin: “Do not sin against the multitude of the city, and do not throw yourself down among the crowd. Do not bind up a sin twice, for you will not go unpunished for even one.” This verse is directly followed by a warning in v. 9 not to engage in presumption when presenting an offering, and then a positive

⁵⁸ Georg Sauer, *Jesus Sirach/Ben Sira*, ATD: Apokryphen 1 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 89; Josef Schreiner, *Jesus Sirach 1-24*, NEB: Kommentar zum Alten Testament mit der Einheitsübersetzung 38 (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 2002), 49; Di Lella and Skehan, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 198; Marböck, *Jesus Sirach 1-23*, 126–27. Beentjes believes that 7:9 was originally in the Hebrew version but was later lost. Pancratius Beentjes, “Jesus Sirach 7:1-17, Kanttekeningen bij de structuur en de tekst van een verwaarloosde passage,” *Bijdr* 41 (1980): 256–57.

⁵⁹ Schreiner, *Jesus Sirach 1-24*, 48.

⁶⁰ This basic division is reflected in R. Spicq, “Ecclésiastique,” in *La Sainte Bible: texte latin et traduction française d’après les textes originaux avec un commentaire exégétique et théologique*, ed. Louis Pirot and Albert Clamer (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1946), 603–6; R. MacKenzie, *Sirach*, OTM 19 (Wilmington, DE: MGlazier, 1983), 46–48; Schreiner, *Jesus Sirach 1-24*, 49–54; Helmut Lamparter, *Die Apokryphen: das Buch Jesus Sirach*, BAT 25.1 (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1972), 43–47; Marböck, *Jesus Sirach 1-23*, 124–30; Beentjes, “Jesus Sirach 7:1-17,” 251–52. While still seeing 7:1-17 as a unit, some authors make a division between household duties (vv. 18-28) and religious duties (vv. 29-36). Schreiner, *Jesus Sirach 1-24*, 49–54; Sauer, *Jesus Sirach/Ben Sira*, 48–54.

reminder to pray and give alms (v. 10).⁶¹ If v. 9 is linked to the ideas expressed in vv. 7-8, it reminds the student, that when he has sinned, he should not possess a presumptive attitude to his offerings.

Ideational Features

V. 9 “Do not say [μὴ εἴπῃς] (part. sayer; proc. verbal), ‘He will have regard for the multitude of my gifts, and when I bring a gift to the Most High God, he will accept it [Τῷ πλήθει τῶν δώρων μου ἐπόψεταί καὶ ἐν τῷ προσενέγκαι με θεῷ ὑψίστῳ προσδέξεται] (part. verbiage).” In this passage the sage tells his student how he should engage in an offering. The sage’s command to his student to not say that God will regard the great amount of his offerings informs the student to not think that this offering will be effective merely because of its quantity.⁶² In the first stanza, God is the assumed subject who will observe the offering of the student.⁶³ The verb ἐφοράω, while not used elsewhere in Sirach, refers generally to observe or watch over, and is used in the LXX to describe God’s observance of a cultic offering (LXX Gen 4:4; Zach 9:1?).⁶⁴ To observe an offering, indicates God’s favour and acceptance of this offering. The object that God will observe is a multitude of gifts. The word δῶρον, while not used elsewhere in Sirach to refer to an offering, can refer to cultic offerings presented to God as a gift (LXX Gen

⁶¹ MacKenzie, *Sirach*, 47.

⁶² “Τῷ πλήθει τῶν δώρων μου (part. phenomenon) ἐπόψεταί (part. sensor; proc. mental), καὶ ἐν τῷ προσενέγκαι (proc. material) με (part. actor) θεῷ ὑψίστῳ (part. recipient) προσδέξεται (part. actor; proc. material).”

⁶³ Unlike English, in my analysis frequently a Greek verb will not have an explicitly stated subject. This subject will need to be inserted in English because it is assumed in Greek. I will still identify this subject as a participant even though it is not technically a separate word in the text.

⁶⁴ Johannes Lust, Erik Eynikel, and K. Hauspie, *Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*, Rev. ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2003), 192.

4:4; Lev 1:2-3, 10, 14; 2:1, 4, 5, 7, 7:13; 9:7; 21:6; Num 7:3; Job 20:6).⁶⁵ Normally one would assume that God would be pleased with a multitude of offerings, but if the offeror has engaged in sinful actions (Sir 7:7-8), then, the sage warns, the offeror must not presume that God would look on it favourably.

In the second stanza, the sage states another hypothetical scenario that will not function. Because the student brings a gift in a scenario where he does not have the requisite moral piety, the sage clarifies here that God will not accept it. The infinitive to offer [προσενέγκαι] is governed by the accusative subject “me” or the reader addressed by the sage [με].⁶⁶ The direct object which the reader will present to God is assumed from the previous stanza to be the cultic gifts. The recipient of these offerings is the Most High God [θεῶν ὑψίστῳ]. He is the one to whom the sage assumes that he and his student will present their offerings. When the reader presents his offerings to God, if they are accompanied by immoral actions, the sage states that God will not receive them [προσδέξεται]. This verb is also used elsewhere in Sirach negatively to warn that God will not accept bribes (32:14) and so also in the LXX to warn that God will not accept certain offerings (LXX Hos 8:13; Amos 5:22; Mic 6:7; Mal 1:8, 10, 13; 2 Macc 1:26; Wis 3:6). An outsider, who observed the reader presenting a multitude of offerings, might have easily assumed that the offeror was pious and approved of by God; however, in these two stanzas, the sage warns his student not to presume that his sacrifice will be accepted or that he is somehow pious through the multitude of offerings. While not explicitly stated in the context, the reason his offerings are not accepted is likely because

⁶⁵ Muraoka, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*, 181–82; Daniel, *Recherches*, 119–30.

⁶⁶ Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 192, 611. The use of the prepositional construction ἐν with an infinitive highlights this action as happening simultaneously with the indicative προσδέξεται. Porter, *Idioms*, 201.

he did not live a life of consistent moral virtue (Sir 7:7-8; cf. 31:21-31). The continued presence of an immoral lifestyle was a symptom of ungentle repentance.⁶⁷ God would not be impressed or accept the religious ritual of someone whose life did not exhibit genuine change.

Interpersonal Features

There are three persons described in the interaction in this scene: the sage, the student/child, and the Most High God. The sage does not name himself, but he is the one who addresses the student in the second-person. In the hypothetical statement, the student speaks in the first-person [με]. An analysis of the verbs in this verse highlights the relationship between these persons. The first verb is a negative second-person aorist subjunctive [μὴ εἴπῃς] which is followed by a third-person future indicative [ἐπόυεται]. The speech acts of these verbs are direction and expectation. This means that the student should not expect God's positive perception of his offering.⁶⁸ The sage only addresses the student using an imperative, this creates a mood of submission and direction that need to be adhered to. This environment is consistent with Sirach 7:1-17 which is a series of commands for the student to follow. This authoritative cultic command is consistent with how the sage addresses his student/implied reader throughout the text as

⁶⁷ Sauer, *Jesus Sirach/Ben Sira*, 89; Schreiner, *Jesus Sirach 1-24*, 49. Others believe that they were not accepted because they were not accompanied by genuine internal repentance. Spicq, "Ecclesiastique," 605; Di Lella and Skehan, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 200; Andreas Eberharter, *Das Buch Jesus Sirach oder Ecclesiasticus*, DHSAT 6.5 (Bonn: Peter Hanstein, 1925), 36; Leo Krinetzki, "Das Buch Jesus Sirach," in *Das Alte Testament: eine theologische Lesehilfe* (Freiburg: Herder, 1967), 231. Others believe that it is the presumption that one could enact a ritual sacrifice that provided forgiveness with the intention of committing a sin again. Charles Mopsik, *La sagesse de ben sira*, CLDP (Lagrasse: Verdier, 2004), 104, n. 6; V. Ryssel, "Die Sprüche Jesus', des Sohnes Sirachs," in *Die Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen des Alten Testaments*, ed. Emil Kautzsch (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1900), 279.

⁶⁸ The aorist active infinitive προσενέγκαι does not describe temporality, its action is contemporaneous with the third-person singular future indicative προσδέξεται.

seen in its tenor. In a one-way communicative relationship, the sage imperatively reminds the student how he should correctly present offerings.

Conclusion

Sirach 7:9 is a short pithy command that reminds the sage's student of his need to not presume that the offerings that he presents will be accepted by God. This student should accept and submit to this instruction. These offerings would be offered to the God of Israel who would accept or reject them depending on his view of the offeror. The mood of the relationship between the persons expressed in this passage is that of the sage teaching on one hand and the student's learning and submitting on the other. In this context, offerings are not the primary focus but rather function as a kind of indicator of the student's adherence to the sage's words and thus as an indicator of the student's piety or lack thereof.

7:29-31 Offerings for the Priesthood

<p>29 ἐν ὅλῃ ψυχῇ σου εὐλαβοῦ τὸν κύριον καὶ τοὺς ἱερεῖς αὐτοῦ θαύμαζε.</p>	<p>²⁹ With your whole soul, revere the Lord, and admire his priests.</p>
<p>30 ἐν ὅλῃ δυνάμει ἀγάπησον τὸν ποιήσαντά σε καὶ τοὺς λειτουργοὺς αὐτοῦ μὴ ἐγκαταλίπῃς.</p>	<p>³⁰ With your whole might, love him who made you, and his ministers do not neglect.</p>
<p>31 φοβοῦ τὸν κύριον καὶ δόξασον ἱερέα καὶ δὸς τὴν μερίδα αὐτῷ, καθὼς ἐντέταλταί σοι, ἀπαρχὴν καὶ περὶ πλημμελείας καὶ δόσιν βραχιόνων καὶ θυσίαν ἁγιασμοῦ καὶ ἀπαρχὴν ἁγίων.</p>	<p>³¹ Fear the Lord, and honor a priest, and give him his portion, as it has been commanded of you: first fruits and concerning error and gift of forearms and sacrifice of sanctification and first fruits of holy things. (NETS)</p>

In these verses, the sage addresses his audience with social commands for how his students must treat various members of their society. Most commentators note that verses 29-31 consist of a natural subsection that describes proper conduct toward God and the priesthood.⁶⁹ Less commonly noted is that this section of care for God's priests (vv. 29-31) is nestled between a larger section that highlights the social duties of the student toward his family (vv. 18-28) as well as the poor and the other needy (vv. 32-25).⁷⁰ The placement of this teaching thus emphasizes that care for the Lord's priests is among several social duties, including the care of the poor and the proper treatment of family members. In other words, the truly pious reader has duties toward all sectors of society, including those most clearly charged with divine offerings.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Marböck, *Jesus Sirach 1-23*, 132–33; Sauer, *Jesus Sirach/Ben Sira*, 92–93; Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter*, 58; Rudolf Smend, *Die Weisheit des Jesus Sirach erklärt* (Berlin: Verlag von Georg Reimer, 1906), 68.

⁷⁰ See section divisions by Sauer, *Jesus Sirach/Ben Sira*, 90–95; Di Lella and Skehan, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 203–4; Schreiner, *Jesus Sirach 1-24*, 51–54; Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter*, 57–58; Smend, *Die Weisheit des Jesus Sirach*, 68; Eberharter, *Das Buch Jesus Sirach*, 38; MacKenzie, *Sirach*, 49; Lamparter, *Die Apokryphen*, 47; Spicq, "Ecclesiastique," 608–9; Othmar Schilling, *Das Buch Jesus Sirach*, HSLE 7.2 (Freiburg: Herder, 1956), 49.

⁷¹ Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter*, 63–64; Marböck, *Weisheit im Wandel*, 87; Eberharter, *Das Buch Jesus Sirach*, 39; Goering, *Wisdom's Root Revealed*, 169–70.

The sage concludes this section with a call for the reader to embody these traits so that he acts wisely before his death: “In all your words, remember the end, and you will not ever sin [ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς λόγοις σου μιμήσκου τὰ ἔσχατα, καὶ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα οὐχ ἁμαρτήσεις]” (v. 36; *NETS*). In other words, the sage’s commands concerning the proper care of all of those who require care, including the priesthood, underscore the grave importance and eternal consequences that these actions, or failure to undertake them, have. Eschatology, theology, and human responsibility here merge as all of mankind’s actions will be considered at the end of time.⁷²

Ideational Features

V. 29 “With your whole soul [ἐν ὅλῃ ψυχῇ σου] (circum. manner), revere [εὐλαβοῦ] (proc. mental) the Lord [τὸν κύριον] (part. phenomenon), and admire [θαύμαζε] (proc. mental) his priests [καὶ τοὺς ἱερεῖς αὐτοῦ] (part. phenomenon).” The first six commands in this three-verse section describe mental attitudes that the child should have as he approaches both God and God’s servants, the priests. Each of the verses begins with an attitude that the sage commands his student to have. The student should have a certain attitude towards God that will result in an attitude or action toward those who deal with Lordly offerings. V. 29, then, not inappropriately first commands the student to have fear of the Lord, a command that is followed in the second stanza by the command to be in awe of his priests. The value of the priests is not in their merit, but because they are the Lord’s [αὐτοῦ]. Nor is the merit in the student’s relationship to the offerings themselves, but rather to those who offer them to the Lord.

⁷² Marböck, *Jesus Sirach 1-23*, 133–34.

The command in vv. 29-31 to revere the Lord with soul and mind have suggested to many scholars that this passage makes a textual allusion to LXX Deuteronomy 6:5 where the Israelite is commanded to love the Lord God with his heart, soul, and strength.⁷³ This may be the case, but here the spiritual, mental, and even physical reverence that the student directs toward God is followed by a clear statement of attitudes and actions required toward the priesthood: the son is to be in awe of the priests, not neglect the priests; he is to honour the priest and provide him with his due portion. If an inter-textual allusion is intended here, however, the posture of reverence associated with the Shema may have been intended to strengthen the sage's commands concerning the care of the Lord's ministers.

V. 30 The physical and social reverence associated with the Shema are underscored in v. 30: “With your whole might [ἐν ὅλῃ δυνάμει] (part. manner), love [ἀγάπησον] (proc. mental) him who made you [τὸν ποιήσαντά σε] (part. phenomenon), and his ministers [καὶ τοὺς λειτουργοὺς αὐτοῦ] (part. phenomenon) do not neglect [μὴ ἐγκαταλίπῃς] (proc. mental).” Following a similar pattern, v. 30 in the first stanza commands the love of the student's creator. This is followed by the necessity to not neglect the Lord's ministers.

V. 31 Like the previous two verses, v. 31 begins with a command to fear God: “Fear [φοβοῦ] (proc. mental) the Lord [τὸν κύριον] (part. phenomenon), and honor [καὶ δόξασον] (proc. mental) a priest [ἱερέα] (part. phenomenon), and give [καὶ δός] (proc.

⁷³ The same three expressions of heart, soul, and strength surround the commands in Sir 7:27, 29, 30. This could be an allusion to καὶ ἀγαπήσεις κύριον τὸν θεόν σου ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας σου καὶ ἐξ ὅλης τῆς ψυχῆς σου καὶ ἐξ ὅλης τῆς δυνάμεώς σου (Deut 6:5; LXX). Wright, “Fear the Lord and Honor the Priest,” 193; Marböck, *Jesus Sirach 1-23*, 132; Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter*, 58; Mopsik, *La sagesse de ben sira*, 112, n. 1; Eberharter, *Das Buch Jesus Sirach*, 38. Nevertheless some scholars think that this is an allusion to the 10 Commandments. Roger Bullard and Howard Hatton, *A Handbook on Sirach*, UBSHS (New York: United Bible Societies, 2008), 169.

material) him [αὐτῷ] (part. recipient) his portion [τὴν μερίδα] (part. affected), as it has been commanded of you [καθὼς ἐντέταλταί σοι] (circum. manner): first fruits and concerning error and gift of forearms and sacrifice of sanctification and first fruits of holy things [ἀπαρχὴν καὶ περὶ πλημμελείας καὶ δόσιν βραχιόνων καὶ θυσίαν ἁγιασμοῦ καὶ ἀπαρχὴν ἁγίων] (part. affected).” This is followed by a mental command to glorify the priest. There is a third stanza which adds a material command to provide physically for God’s priests by providing them with a portion [μερίς].

As is clear from the fact that the antecedent of the masculine singular dative αὐτῷ (v. 31) is ἱερεύς; this designates the priest as the recipient of the portion of these offerings,⁷⁴ these verses are intended to show that the student gives offerings to God and from among them he designates a portion to the priest. Elsewhere in Sirach, μερίς is also used to refer to the portion of the Lord’s sacrifice directed to his priesthood (45:22).⁷⁵ The sage thus maintains an indissoluble unity between the fear and love of God and the recognition and provision for priests.⁷⁶ The respect for the ministers does not come from any personal merit or worth but from the fact that they are divinely appointed: they are the Lord’s ministers [ἱερεῖς αὐτοῦ; λειτουργοὺς αὐτοῦ; vv. 29-30] and God commanded that they be provided for (v. 31). “As it was commanded to you” (v. 31) is a subordinate clause that seems to identify the way (i.e. manner) in which the student must have known his responsibility to the priests. It assumes that the student had access to God’s Torah-wisdom which stated that priests must be cared for. In summary, offerings here

⁷⁴ Bullard and Hatton, *A Handbook on Sirach*, 171.

⁷⁵ The portion [μερίς] was the part of the offering reserved for the priests in the Old Testament (Lev 6:10; Deut 18:1). Marböck, *Jesus Sirach 1-23*, 132; Spicq, “Ecclésiastique,” 609.

⁷⁶ Marböck, *Jesus Sirach 1-23*, 132; Krinetzki, “Das Buch Jesus Sirach,” 232; Goering, *Wisdom’s Root Revealed*, 121, 167–68; Gregory, *Like an Everlasting Signet Ring*, 225–26.

are directly understood as the work of the priests as representatives of the divine realm (*Repräsentanten des göttlichen Bereiches*) and who therefore must be supported by God's people.⁷⁷

Historically the offerings from which the priests received a portion were taken from animal and grain offerings. They included a first-fruit offering [ἀπαρχή] (Sir 45:20), an offering for sin [περὶ πλημμελείας] (cf. LXX Lev 7:5; 4 Kdgm 12:17), the firstfruit of the sanctuary [ἀπαρχὴ ἁγίων] (LXX Lev 22:12; Ezek 45: 6, 7; 48:10, 21) as well two sacrifices that are not mentioned elsewhere: a sacrifice for one's sanctification [θυσία ἁγιασμοῦ] and the arm portion of an animal offering [δόσιν βραχιόνων].⁷⁸ The Greek version of Sirach describes various types of temple sacrifices using generic broad sacrificial terms that mix more specific categories in Hebrew.⁷⁹ This passage, however, is not exhaustive. It lists offerings of which priests needed to receive only a portion and was thus a sampling of the types of offerings presented at the Jerusalem Temple.⁸⁰ As a result, this list is a synecdoche and stands as exemplary of all the offerings presented in the Jerusalem Temple. The purpose of the offerings is linked to the removal of sin [περὶ πλημμελείας] and the acquisition of personal holiness [θυσία ἁγιασμοῦ].

But what would have been the rationale for including even this partial list for a child or reader in Ptolemaic Egypt, distant from the Jerusalem Temple? The student is commanded not just to fear and love God to honour the priesthood and clergy of the

⁷⁷ Marböck, *Jesus Sirach 1-23*, 132.

⁷⁸ A discussion of the cultic words in the Hebrew version and their use in the Old Testament is found in Reiterer, "Gott und Opfer," 143–45.

⁷⁹ He confuses between a wave offering for the temple [שְׂרֵפֶת קֹדֶשׁ] (cf. Exod 36:6; Lev 22:12) which is translated as a first-fruit offering [ἀπαρχὴν ἁγίων] (Gr Sir 7:31). Egger-Wenzel, "The Change of Sacrificial Terminology," 87–88.

⁸⁰ Bullard and Hatton, *A Handbook on Sirach*, 171; Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter*, 59–60; Snaith, *Ecclesiasticus*, 46–47.

Jerusalem Temple. As I described earlier, the honour and prestige of the Jerusalem Temple, cultus, and clergy were shared and applauded by Jews in the Diaspora as a symbol of their religious and ethnic identity. While many could not go to Jerusalem on pilgrimage, the sage assumes that if and when some of his readers did go to Jerusalem, they must not only honour the priests, but also materially support them with the deserved parts of their sacrifice.⁸¹ While the God of Israel was the one to whom offerings were originally presented, the priests were secondary recipients who received a portion of these offerings after they were presented to God. The consistent two-part parallel pattern within each verse is a textually created argument that resolutely maintains that the honour of and provision for priests is derived from the fear and love of God.⁸² For Sirach the love of God and his priests are inseparable.⁸³ Again, the sage commands the child to honour and worship God and in tandem honour and materially provide portions of their offering to the Lord's priests. Offerings are not themselves the focus of his attention as much as the student's piety and righteousness.

Interpersonal Features

The tenor of this passage identifies the participants in this passage and the nature of their relationship (i.e. mood) expressed through the verbal syntax of this passage. The participants in this passage are the sage, the child or student, the Lord, and the Lord's priests. As previously noted, there is the authoritative teaching sage who addresses the

⁸¹ Schreiner, *Jesus Sirach 1-24*, 53. MacKenzie, *Sirach*, 49; Schilling, *Das Buch Jesus Sirach*, 50.

⁸² Marböck, *Jesus Sirach 1-23*, 132; Wright, "Fear the Lord and Honor the Priest," 193; Olyan, "Ben Sira's Relationship to the Priesthood," 264; Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter*, 65.

⁸³ Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter*, 66.

reader/student through various imperatives. While the sage is not named, he has been introduced earlier as the metaphorical father of the reader who teaches his children (Sir 3:1). The second actor is the recipient of his teaching who is addressed as “you [σου (7:29); σε (v. 30); σοι (v. 31); 2MS].” This recipient has been introduced earlier as the metaphorical child of the sage [τέκνον; 6:18, 23]. There is a one-way relationship expressed in this passage. One never hears what the child thinks, how the learning child responds, or any objections he might have. The sage expects the child to reciprocate and obey the teaching given to him. The child or student is directed to think and act in certain ways toward two other participants: God and priests. The sage describes the God of Israel as the Lord [κύριος; 7:29; 31; cf. 1:8] and “your Maker” [ὁ ποιῶν σε; v. 30; cf. 35:13; LXX Isa 43:1; 44:2; 51:13]. These titles implicitly affirm the common Second Temple Jewish belief that the God of Israel was the Lord while other gods were not. He alone was the only supreme deity who was also the maker of all creation, including the child. The clerical servants of the Lord are identified as priests [ιερεῖς; Sir 7:29, 31; cf. 50:1, 12] and ministers [λειτουργοί; v. 30; cf. LXX Isa 61:6; 2 Esd 7:24; 20:40]. These terms designate clerical workers in the Jerusalem Temple.⁸⁴

There are eight verbs total in this passage. The sage addresses the learning child with six active imperatives [εὐλαβοῦ; Θαύμαζε; ἀγάπησον; φοβοῦ; δόξασον; δός] and one negated aorist subjunctive which functions as a negative imperative [μὴ ἐγκαταλίπης]. There is only one indicative verb which qualifies where the student was informed [ἐντέταταί]. The use of the second-person imperative (as opposed to the third-

⁸⁴ The term *ιερεύς* highlights the action of cultic action and divine mediation, whereas *λειτουργός* functions more generally to describe participants in liturgical worship activities.

person) forcefully addresses the learning child/reader.⁸⁵ While on the one hand, this literary device addresses a symbolic literary child learning from the sage, the use of the second-person imperative is meant to address the physical audience and readers reading the text, in this case in a Jewish community in Ptolemaic Egypt.⁸⁶ These seven imperatives create a mood of direction. The use of active and deponent verbs likewise contributes to a sense of immediacy that is directed to the reader.

In summary, the person and verbal forms used in this passage develop a certain attitude between the literary teacher and the learning student. There exists a one-way apprentice relationship where the sage continually exhorts the Ptolemaic Jewish reader to embody the attitudes and practices commanded.

Conclusion

The numerous repeated second-person imperatives accentuate the implied pupil and reader of the literary sage in Ptolemaic Egypt. The student is forcefully ordered to both honour and reverence God as well as respect God's clergy, which includes the provision of his offering and sacrifices for their material sustenance. These cultic commands contribute to the sage's authoritative interpersonal relationship with his student (i.e. tenor). The priests and other ministers were secondary recipients of offerings presented at the Jerusalem Temple. The sage of Greek Sirach assumes that his students are likewise to reverence and support the cultic worship in the faraway land of Judea. Again, offerings function to sustain the sage's relationship with the pupil, a

⁸⁵ Fantin, *The Greek Imperative*, 267.

⁸⁶ Fantin, *The Greek Imperative*, 275.

relationship that we now learn is in a way modeled on the relationship between the Temple and its personnel and all of Israel, including Jews in the Diaspora.

14:11 Offer to the Lord Generously while You Can

¹¹ Τέκνον, καθὼς ἐὰν ἔχης, εὖ ποίει σεαυτόν καὶ προσφορὰς κυρίῳ ἀξίως πρόσαγε	¹¹ Child, even as you have, treat yourself well, and bring offerings to the Lord worthily. (NETS)
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Sirach 14:11 is a pithy exhortation found in a larger section of proverbial commands concerning the proper use of wealth in order to avoid greed (13:24-14:10). Additionally, the sage teaches how to act properly because death comes quickly and cannot be avoided (14:12-19). Disagreement about the exact borders of this passage makes it hard to define if there is one specific topic that all these commands contributed to or if they are merely a collection of loosely related wisdom imperatives.⁸⁷

Furthermore, while Greek Sirach 14:11 speaks about the presentation of offerings to God, the Hebrew version does not speak about sacrifices at all.⁸⁸ As a result, most commentaries, which focus on the Hebrew version, and most writings on cultic practices in Sirach, have not included this verse in their analyses because it is only present in the Greek version.⁸⁹ Whatever the provenance of this statement,⁹⁰ it is nestled between a command to avoid greed (“The eye of the greedy person is not satisfied with

⁸⁷ Scholars disagree about whether the section is primarily interested in talking about the need to act before death or about the dangers of greed. This has also led scholars to disagree concerning the exact boundaries of where the section ends and begins. Those who see this section stretching from 13:24-14:19 are Schreiner, *Jesus Sirach 1-24*, 80; Marböck, *Jesus Sirach 1-23*, 180. Di Lella divides it at 14:3-19 and Sauer at vv. 1-10 and vv. 11-19. Di Lella and Skehan, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 257; Sauer, *Jesus Sirach/Ben Sira*, 123–25. Gilbert divides it from 13:25-14:19. Maurice Gilbert, “Qohelet et Ben Sira,” in *Qohelet in the Context of Wisdom*, ed. A. Schoors, BETL 136 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1998), 171–72. I am following Marböck’s division although I recognize this is fluid and that many of the commands are only loosely related.

⁸⁸ “My son, use freely whatever you have, and enjoy it as best you can” (Hebrew Sir 14:11). Translation from Di Lella and Skehan, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 257.

⁸⁹ The only commentaries that have noted the textual discrepancy between the Greek and Hebrew and/or commented on its meaning are Marböck, *Jesus Sirach 1-23*, 182–83; Spicq, “Ecclesiastique,” 639–40; Ryssel, “Die Sprüche Jesus,” 302; Bullard and Hatton, *A Handbook on Sirach*, 288. The follow commentaries mention offerings present in the Greek and Latin versions, but do not discuss the text critical difference or its meaning. Snaith, *Ecclesiasticus*, 73; Hilaire Duesberg and Irénée Fransen, *Ecclesiastico*, LSB 24 (Torino: Marietti, 1966), 155; MacKenzie, *Sirach*, 68.

⁹⁰ Marböck thinks that the Greek version’s change was the result of a misunderstanding of two Hebrew cultic words Marböck, *Jesus Sirach 1-23*, 182. Bullard thinks that it is a creative idiomatic translation, Bullard and Hatton, *A Handbook on Sirach*, 288.

his share” (v. 9)) and the command to act properly before you die (“Remember that death does not tarry, and the decree of Hades has not been shown to you” (v. 12)). This verse is a practical enactment of how to act properly, including how to use your wealth in the realm of offerings before your death.

Ideational Features

V. 11a “Child [Τέκνον] (part. actor), even as you have [καθώς ἐὰν ἔχῃς] (circum. manner), treat [ποιεῖ] (proc. material) yourself [σεαυτόν] (part. affected) well [εὖ] (circum. manner).” In the first stanza of this verse, the sage addresses imperatives to his metaphorical child [τέκνον (part. actor)] whom he addresses vocatively (11a). Before he inserts his command to treat himself well, he qualifies how he should do this through an awkward Greek circumstantial clause “even as you have [καθώς ἐὰν ἔχῃς].” The conjunction καθώς denotes in this clause the degree to which the main verbal imperative ought to be done; it can be translated as “to the degree that.” This awkward clause qualifies how much the student should treat himself, “to the degree that he has,” or more idiomatically “according to the amount that he has.”⁹¹ In the main imperative, the sage commands his student: do good [εὖ...ποιέω] to the direct object of himself [σεαυτοῦ]. To do good [εὖ...ποιέω] to another person signifies the doing of good deeds or kindness to the pious, humble, or friend (Sir 12:2, 5; 14:13). In the context of his discussion of wealth (13:24-14:10) and acting wisely before death (14:12-19), it makes sense to see

⁹¹ While the exact combination of καθώς ἐὰν and ἔχω does not appear elsewhere in the LXX, the combination of καθώς with ἔχω describes temporally the possession of an opportunity “just as you have today” (LXX Deut 4:38). ἐὰν and ἔχω appear elsewhere in Sirach to describe if someone has an item (13:11). Bullard and Hatton, *A Handbook on Sirach*, 288; Ryssel, “Die Sprüche Jesus,” 302. Walter Bauer et al., eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 493.

here the sage's command to his child to use his possessions for himself. He is stating that his son can use his wealth for himself and that this doing good to himself must not be foolishly overextended but must be done in accordance with what he possesses.

V. 11b “and bring [καὶ... πρόσαγε] (proc. material) offerings [προσφορὰς] (part. affected) (to the Lord [κυρίῳ] (part. recipient) worthily [ἀξίως] (circum. manner).” The second stanza (11b) connects the use of wealth for enjoyment with the presentation of offerings to God. The sage clarifies that while wealth can be used for enjoyment, some of it must also be presented to God. The verb προσάγω is used elsewhere to describe the presentation of offerings to God (Sir 31:24; 45:16). Likewise, προσφορά is frequently used elsewhere in a more generic way to describe offerings presented to God (31:21, 23; 32:1, 8; 38:11; 46:16; 50:13, 14). The sage prescribes here the presentation of offerings. The recipient of these offerings is the Lord [κύριος], a title used throughout Sirach to describe the supreme God of Israel (1:8; 23:1; 51:1, 8). The deity to whom these offerings are presented is the God of Israel. The offeror must offer them worthily [ἀξίως] (cf. Wis 7:15; 16:1),⁹² that is, in a way that corresponds to what is suitable or proper for their presentation to God.

Interpersonal Features

Within this passage, there are three persons: the speaking sage, the child [τέκνον], and the Lord [κύριος]. There are only three verbs in this verse. There are three second-person verbs: a present subjunctive [ἔχῃς] and two present imperatives [ποίη,

⁹² Lust, Eynikel, and Hauspie, *Greek-English*, 43.

πρόσαγε]. In the present moment, the sage compels the child to treat himself well and present offerings to the Lord through a mood of assertion.

If we can assume that 13:24-14:19 is a collection of loosely related verses that are meant to be read as a unit, we can see that all the verbs from 13:24 through 14:10 are found in the third-person as the sage describes the dangers of wealth. This verb form changes in 14:11 as the sage addresses his student/child through the two second-person imperatives as he relates how one can positively use this wealth.⁹³ The dynamic created by these verbs is followed in vv. 12-19 with ten second-person imperative and indicative verbs (vv. 12-17) that are intermixed with third-person verbs, all of which guide the hearer how to live taking into account one's impending death. V. 11 is thus part of a larger section where the son is directly addressed by the sage to respond with certain actions in light of his teaching. The mood portrayed throughout the passage indicates that the sage expects the child to submit and enact this instruction presented.

Conclusion

This verse highlights practical ways of how to use wealth in light of one's mortality. The presentation of offerings figures here as part of the religious duties that need to be enacted before death.⁹⁴ Wealth, therefore, should be appropriately used to care for one's self as well as to present offerings to the God of Israel. This passage highlights the importance of using one's possessions to present offerings to the God of

⁹³ Spicq, "Ecclesiastique," 639.

⁹⁴ Marböck, *Jesus Sirach 1-23*, 183. Elements of Sir 14:11-19 indicate that he wants his son to seize the day [*carpe diem*] and enjoy good things in life that he will not be able to do when he is dead. Otto Kaiser, "Carpe diem und Memento mori bei Ben Sira," in *Dubsar anta-men: Studien zur Altorientalistik*, ed. Manfred Dietrich and Oswald Loretz, AOAT 253 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1998), 191-92; Gilbert, "Qohelet et Ben Sira," 178.

Israel because this would no longer be possible after death. Cultic commands, then, here again contribute to establishing the sage's authoritative relationship with his student and the author's rhetorical ethos with his audience.

30:17-20 Offerings to an Idol

<p>¹⁷ κρείσσων θάνατος ὑπὲρ ζωὴν πικρὰν καὶ ἀνάπαυσις αἰῶνος ἢ ἀρρώστημα ἔμμονον.</p>	<p>¹⁷ Better death than a bitter life, and eternal repose than chronic sickness.</p>
<p>¹⁸ ἀγαθὰ ἐκκεχυμένα ἐπὶ στόματι κεκλεισμένῳ θέματα βρωμάτων παρακείμενα ἐπὶ τάφῳ.</p>	<p>¹⁸ Good things poured out on a mouth that is shut are offerings of food set on a grave.</p>
<p>¹⁹ τί συμφέρει κάρπωσις εἰδώλῳ; οὔτε γὰρ ἔδεται οὔτε μὴ ὀσφρανθῆ· οὔτως ὁ ἐκδιωκόμενος ὑπὸ κυρίου.</p>	<p>¹⁹ Of what use is a fruit offering to an idol? For it will neither eat nor smell. (²⁰) So is he who is banished by the Lord.</p>
<p>²⁰ βλέπων ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς καὶ στενάζων ὥσπερ εὐνοῦχος περιλαμβάνων παρθένον καὶ στενάζων.</p>	<p>²⁰ Whoever sees with the eyes and groans is like a eunuch who embraces a maiden and groans. (NETS)</p>

Sirach 30:14-24 is a loose collection of small pithy sayings that speak about the benefits of good health and cheerfulness: “Health and fitness are better than any gold, and a strong body than immeasurable wealth” (v. 15) and likewise “Merriment of heart is the life of a person, and the rejoicing of a man is length of days” (v. 22).⁹⁵ These poems negatively warn against conditions or attitudes that inherently prevent a person from enjoying the good things of life: “remove sorrow far from you; for sorrow has killed many, and there is no profit in it” (v. 23). Verses 17-20 describe conditions that impede the good things of health and life. Vv. 17-18 describe death as a condition within which one cannot receive or enjoy the good things of food. Similarly, vv. 19-20 describe the status of being an idol, a condition where a deity, because of its impotent nature, cannot receive or enjoy offerings. This study will limit its analysis to vv. 17-20 because they are the direct context for vv. 19-20 which describe offerings presented to idols. The

⁹⁵ This section has been identified as such by Sauer, *Jesus Sirach/Ben Sira*, 190–93; Burkard Zapff, *Jesus Sirach 25-51*, NEB: Kommentar zum Alten Testament mit der Einheitsübersetzung 39 (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 2002), 190–93; Bullard and Hatton, *A Handbook on Sirach*, 621–29; Snaith, *Ecclesiasticus*, 149–50; Lamparter, *Die Apokryphen*, 134–35; MacKenzie, *Sirach*, 117–18. Some divide this into two separate poems on good health (30:14-20) and cheerfulness (vv. 21-25), see Di Lella and Skehan, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 381.

sage's comments concerning offerings to idols function as an ancillary example within his teaching concerning the value of good health and cheerfulness.

Ideational Features

V. 17 “Death [θάνατος] (part. carrier) is (assumed verb; proc. relational) better than a bitter life [κρείσσων...ὕπερ ζωῆν πικρὰν] (part. attribute), and eternal repose [καὶ ἀνάπαυσις αἰῶνος] (part. carrier) is better than (assumed verb; proc. relational) chronic sickness [ἡ ἀρρώστημα ἔμμονον] (part. attribute)” (author’s trans.). In this verse and many future passages, there is no explicit verb present in the Greek text. The verb “is” must be assumed to make sense of the text in English.⁹⁶ In each stanza, one item is related to another: those who experience death and eternal rest are described as being better off than those who experience a bitter life or illness. This verse (v. 17) thus presents a relation in which the sage highlights the status of death as better than lingering agony, either in life or leading to death.⁹⁷ That death is preferable does not mean that the sage believes in an afterlife. The term ἀνάπαυσις αἰῶνος does not imply an afterlife, rather it acts as a functional synonym for death.⁹⁸ For the sage a life worth living must be accompanied by a certain quality of life; otherwise, one should prefer death.⁹⁹

V. 18 “Good things poured out on a mouth that is shut [ἀγαθὰ ἐκκεχυμένα ἐπὶ στόματι κεκλεισμένῳ] (part. carrier) are (assumed verb; proc. relational) offerings of food set on a grave [θέματα βρωμάτων παρακείμενα ἐπὶ τάφῳ] (part. attribute).” Still, as

⁹⁶ The assumption of equative verbs is common in Koine Greek. Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 39.

⁹⁷ Zapff, *Jesus Sirach 25-51*, 191.

⁹⁸ Bullard and Hatton, *A Handbook on Sirach*, 624; Snaith, *Ecclesiasticus*, 150.

⁹⁹ Snaith, *Ecclesiasticus*, 150; Zapff, *Jesus Sirach 25-51*, 191.

the sage goes on to note in v. 18, death frustrates the enjoyment of life. The good things that are poured out on a closed mouth are no better than food set before a grave in the form of an offering. The good things poured out upon a closed mouth refer to a situation where someone is so ill that she or he cannot open her or his mouth to eat.¹⁰⁰ It is a situation that is analogous to the placing of deposits of food [θέματα βρωμάτων παρακειμένα] upon a grave, a reference to an increasingly common Second Temple practice of the placement of food upon a grave for the dead to eat (cf. Tob 4:17).¹⁰¹ Without condemning the practice, the sage simply points out the obvious: dead people cannot eat the food that is placed on their graves. His argument seems to be that gravely ill people, or perhaps embittered people who refuse to eat, cannot or will not eat food, in the same way that the dead cannot, even if they wanted to do so.¹⁰² Throughout his argument (vv. 17-20), the sage will compare a sick person to a dead person (i.e. grave) trying to eat food, to an idol trying to receive an offering, and to a eunuch trying to embrace a woman.¹⁰³ Just as in these undesirable circumstances, the sage believes that it is better to be dead than living an embittered life or gravely ill because in both cases one cannot enjoy the good things of life.

V. 19 “Of what [τί] (part. result) use is [συμφέρει] (proc. material) a fruit offering [κάρπωσις] (part. instrument) to an idol [ειδώλω] (part. recipient/beneficiary)? For it will neither eat [οὔτε γὰρ ἔδεται] (assumed part. actor; proc. material) nor smell

¹⁰⁰ Di Lella and Skehan, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 381; Schilling, *Das Buch Jesus Sirach*, 130.

¹⁰¹ See the condemnation of this practice in Deut 26:14 and its implicit condemnation in LXX Dan 14:1-22 (cf. Ovid, *Fast.* 2.566; Lucian, *On Funerals* 9). The grave [τάφος] is a metonymy for death where the dead person is indicated by his grave. Snaith, *Ecclesiasticus*, 150; Mopsik, *La sagesse de ben sira*, 180; Di Lella and Skehan, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 382; Spicq, “*Ecclésiastique*,” 716; Ryssel, “*Die Sprüche Jesus*,” 383.

¹⁰² Sauer, *Jesus Sirach/Ben Sira*, 218.

¹⁰³ Bullard and Hatton, *A Handbook on Sirach*, 625.

[οὔτε μὴ ὀσφρανθῆ] (proc. material). So is he who is banished [οὕτως ὁ ἐκδιωκόμενος] (part. affected; proc. material) by the Lord [ὑπὸ κυρίου] (circum. agent; part. oblique participant).” The futility is again expressed in vv. 19-20. These verses compare the futility of an offering presented to an idol to a eunuch desiring a woman. The subject of the first two stanzas of v. 19 is a burnt offering [κάρπωσις], an unconscious agent which is presented by an unnamed conscious agent. Interestingly, the text does not say who presents this offering, whether a gentile or a Jew. Although most English translations gloss κάρπωσις as a fruit offering, its use elsewhere suggests that it refers to a generic burnt offering offered to a deity (cf. Sir 45:16).¹⁰⁴

The idol [εἶδωλον] is the recipient or beneficiary of this offering. The word idol refers to the statue, often in a temple or sanctuary, that represents a deity. In this context, it again functions as a metonymy, here invoking the deity that the statue represents. In this way the sage employs a pejorative term to denote a deity other than the God of Israel. The verb that connects offeror to idol by means of the offering (to be profitable [συμφέρω]) underscores the notion of benefit or profitability of an offering (Sir 37:28; LXX Jer 33:14; Prov 19:10), though in this case that benefit is negative. It does not state how an offering might benefit an idol, though it is likely that it would possess the ability to be a token of homage or source of energy for the idol to consume. The interrogative τί highlights the futile result of the offering. This construction of the stanza as a question to the reader assumes that the reader will agree in negatively affirming that an offering will not be profitable or of use to an idol. The next stanza further develops the futility of providing a sacrifice to an idol.

¹⁰⁴ See LXX Job 42:8; Lev 4:10, 18. Lust, Eynikel, and Hauspie, *Greek-English*, 229.

Assuming the subject of an idol from the previous stanza, this participant is unable to complete two material processes. The idol will not eat [οὔτε ἔδεται] and it cannot smell [οὔτε μὴ ὀσφρανθῆ]. The direct objects of what is eaten or smelled are not stated. It is assumed from the previous stanza to be the type of sacrifice [κάρπωσις] (part. affected) presented to the idol. Within the Ptolemaic environment where Greek Sirach was read, demotic and Greek deities received food as well as burnt offerings which they were understood to eat. The consumption of the offering empowered and pleased the deity, increasing her or his favour toward the offeror. While the notion of God eating a sacrifice for nourishment may have been present in pre-Exilic Judaism, within Second Temple Judaism this was no longer the way that Jews spoke about God receiving an offering. The sage ridicules the claim that a foreign deity will eat an offering. The assumption, which he shares with his Jewish audience, is that the foreign deity will not eat because it is not a real god.

As is clear from both Jewish as well as non-Jewish cultic texts, smell is a crucial action in sacrifice. A deity paid attention to or accepted an offering by smelling [ὀσφραίνομαι] and thus approving it. Jewish texts commonly highlight when God is pleased with and receives an offering by indicating that it was a pleasing smell to him. This description signified not only that God was pleased with the sacrifice but also with the offeror, that God maintained a covenantal relationship with the individual, and in some cases that God cared for the offeror.¹⁰⁵ In a polemical description of cultic sacrifices to the non-Jewish god, the sage claims that when an offeror places a material offering before a non-Jewish deity, it is not smelled. For the sage, the foreign deity does

¹⁰⁵ A full discussion of God smelling offerings is in Appendix 6.

not accept the offering because this god is impotent. In contrast, a deity, such as the God of Israel, could receive and accept a sacrifice. Conversely, the reception of a sacrifice was an impossible task for a helpless idol.¹⁰⁶ The sage instructs his students that idols cannot consume and receive offerings because they are false deities. The sage thus asserts that it is as important that the student follow his words regarding true offerings as it is that the student avoid false offerings; the former indicates piety, while the latter indicates impiety.

The final stanza of verse 19 provides yet further descriptions of the terrible condition of being so embittered or gravely ill that one cannot enjoy the good things of life. Such is the person [οὕτως] who is judged by God. The subject and the verb are combined in Greek in the participle ὁ ἐκδιωκόμενος. The process is a material process of being afflicted [ὁ ἐκδιωκόμενος] by the Lord [ὑπὸ κυρίου] (circum. agent).¹⁰⁷ The sage claims that just as a dead person cannot eat and idols cannot enjoy offerings, so it is with one whom God afflicts. While it is not clearly stated what it is with which God afflicts the person, the context of v. 17 makes clear that the God of Israel can burden people with chronic illness.¹⁰⁸ Second Temple Jews held that sometimes sickness was the result of divine anger or judgement because the God of Israel, as an omnipotent deity, was the master of the life, death, healing, and illnesses of his people. God's affliction with sickness was, however, not arbitrary; sickness was the result of moral failings of the

¹⁰⁶ The incapacity of idols to eat or smell is a common motif throughout the Jewish Scriptures (Deut 4:28; Ps 115:4-7; Isa 44:9). Zapff, *Jesus Sirach 25-51*, 192; Sauer, *Jesus Sirach/Ben Sira*, 218; Schmitz, *Die Opferanschauung*, 67; Duesberg and Fransen, *Ecclesiastico*, 229; Perdue, *Wisdom and Cult*, 211; Corley, "Elements of Jewish Identity," 10.

¹⁰⁷ The circumstance can be further subcategorized where κυρίου is an oblique participant. Banks, *A Systemic Functional Grammar*, 37.

¹⁰⁸ Di Lella and Skehan, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 382; Spicq, "Ecclésiastique," 716.

people or in some cases testing.¹⁰⁹ Though the sage does not explain the reason, clearly in this passage chronic illness is the result of divine affliction, while in other contexts, sickness is attributed to natural causes such as overeating (34:19-22; 37:30-31).¹¹⁰

V. 20 “Whoever sees with the eyes and groans [βλέπων ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς καὶ στενάζων] (part. carrier) is (assumed verb; proc. relational) like a eunuch who embraces a maiden and groans [ὥσπερ εὐνοῦχος περιλαμβάνων παρθένον καὶ στενάζων] (part. attribute).” In continuity with his argument that the reader should avoid conditions that might incur divine wrath, including chronic illnesses, the sage also depicts the kind of life that characterizes one who lives in such a condition when he compares such a person with a eunuch who desires a woman. In the first stanza of v. 20, there are two participles whose subject is assumed from the previous verse to be a sick man.¹¹¹ The sage teaches that the sick man observes and yearns for food, but like an idol (v. 19) and now a eunuch (v. 20) he cannot enjoy it.

The sage compares [ὥσπερ] the sick man with a eunuch who yearns for a woman. In this stanza, the subject is a eunuch [εὐνοῦχος] who embraces [περιλαμβάνων]

¹⁰⁹ God is pictured in the Old Testament as afflicting disease on people (Exod 15:16; Deut 7:15-16). Sin is seen as a cause of illness which God can heal if the person turns in repentance (Ps 38: 1, 3, 5, 7, 17-18; 41:1-5; Jer 30:12-13). God is seen as one who can afflict people for his own purposes, sometimes without understanding the reason why (Tob 3:1-6; 11:14). Sirach affirms both the value of a physician and medicine for illness, but also believes that God is involved in the process (38:1-15). Of course there were many other reasons for illness such as natural causes and evil spirits. Larry P. Hogan, *Healing in the Second Temple Period*, NTOA 21 (Freiburg, Schweiz: Universitätsverlag, 1992), 3–26; 302–5; Ida Fröhlich, “Demons and Illness in Second Temple Judaism: Theory and Practice,” in *Demons and Illness from Antiquity to the Early-Modern Period*, ed. Siam Bhayro and Catherine Rider, MRLLA 5 (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 79–96.

¹¹⁰ Hogan, *Healing in the Second Temple Period*, 38–48.

¹¹¹ This relational process can be further subcategorized. The sick man is seeing [βλέπων] (proc. material) with his eyes (ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς) (circum. manner) and groaning [στενάζων] (proc. mental). To see is a verbal expression of a mental process which in this case is not mentioned but is implied to be the food (part. range) from vv. 18-19. The second verbal expression which expresses verbal action, groaning, is also mental because it identifies the sick man’s status of complaining and signing after his thwarted meal. Di Lella and Skehan, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 382.

(proc. material) a virgin [παρθένον] (part. affected). This is a material process where the eunuch engages in some form of initial physical sexual activity with a woman through his embrace or touch of her. Eunuchs were castrated men whose sexual organs were modified so that they were no longer able to engage in sexual activity with women; they thus were entrusted as guards for women in royal households.¹¹² In this verse, the eunuch sexually desires a woman when he is in physical contact with her, but he is unable to physically reciprocate because of his modified sexual organs (cf. Sir 20:4). He is unable to gratify his sexual urge and this unfulfilled desire becomes a condition of pain for him. The ordinary man possesses this ability, but the lovesick eunuch does not.¹¹³ The sage implicitly compares the eunuch to a healthy male's sexual ability to highlight his dysfunction.¹¹⁴ Like the previous stanza, the eunuch responds by groaning or complaining [στενάζων]. He desires a woman but is unable to engage in a physical sexual relationship with her. As a result, he groans and complains about this condition. Through this final example, the sage finishes his saga concerning the terrible condition of being chronically sick. For the sage, it is better to die than to be eternally sick because one cannot enjoy the good things of life such as eating. This condition is compared to a dead person trying to eat, a false god receiving sacrifices, and a eunuch desiring a woman.

What audience setting could have influenced how this analogy was interpreted, particularly in relation to its comments concerning sacrifices presented to a deity? This

¹¹² Bauer et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 409; Helena Bolle and Stephen Llewelyn, "Intersectionality, Gender Liminality and Ben Sira's Attitude to the Eunuch," *VT* 67.4 (2017): 555.

¹¹³ Bullard and Hatton, *A Handbook on Sirach*, 400–401, 626; Bolle and Llewelyn, "Intersectionality, Gender Liminality," 552.

¹¹⁴ Bolle and Llewelyn, "Intersectionality, Gender Liminality," 548.

study claims that this passage's statements about idols had a certain impact in the Ptolemaic cultural environment. As I noted in my previous chapter, Ptolemaic Jews were a very small percentage of the total population in Egypt. Their neighbours worshiped a plethora of goddesses, gods, and the Ptolemaic royal family from their regions and beyond. The worship of patron deities was a crucial part of ethnic identity, a way to demonstrate support and respect for one's local city, and a way to show allegiance to the ruling pharaonic royal family. Both the demotic and Greek communities, most of the population in Egypt, happily worshiped and presented offerings to their deities as well as the deities of their neighbours. In contrast, exclusive monotheism was a staple belief of most Second Temple Jews. In Egypt, it is likely that the primary visible defining mark of the Jewish community from their neighbours was their refusal to worship or engage in cultic offerings to their neighbours' gods. Their refusal to engage in such actions made them appear aloof if not arrogant to the rest of the population. As a result of this theological environment of being a minority religion in a polytheistic environment, the message of Sirach 30:19 reinforced the Ptolemaic Jewish reader's belief that their God was the only true deity who could receive offerings.¹¹⁵ Offerings to other deities were not just wrong, according to Sirach they did not even do anything because these gods were impotent. This message informed readers that even if they presented offerings to their local demotic or Greek gods, nothing would happen because these gods were powerless.

¹¹⁵ In the Greek version the sage does not explicitly mention idols again, but he does pejoratively describe characters associated with idolatry. Among the judges, the sage excludes the primary figures of Samson and Gideon who worshiped idols (Judg 8:27; 13-16). King Solomon is condemned for acquiring wives, which in the Jewish tradition was associated with idolatry (Sir 47:19-20; 1 Kgs 11:4-8). Teresa Brown, "God and Men in Israel's History: God and Idol Worship in Praise of the Fathers (Sir 44-50)," in *Ben Sira's God: Proceedings of the International Ben Sira Conference Durham Ushaw College 2001*, ed. Renate Egger-Wenzel, BZAW 321 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2002), 215-18.

Interpersonal Features

In this passage, the relationship of the sage to a student is assumed, though the teacher does not directly mention the student. However, the assumption that the sage is speaking true statements about reality which the student should recognize and agree with is evidenced by a question: “What benefit is a sacrifice to an idol? [τί συμφέρει κάρπωσις ειδώλω;].” Given the context, it is safe to assume that the implied author and the sage have a reader and student in mind, one who hears this statement from the sage and rhetorically agrees with his teacher’s claim. There is no dialogue or nuance in the teaching of this passage where the student responds and provides his point of view. The question is thus rhetorical: the sage addresses the student with a question about a life situation that the sage then proceeds to answer.

The verbal forms in this passage, all of which are in the third-person, suggest that the sage views them as illustrations of situations or examples, ones from which the student can learn. They point to commonplace realities that can be observed but they are all also cautionary: the student should not participate in them. From the perspective of verbal aspect, vv. 17-18 describe the present preferred reality of death and the futility of eating in the grave as a present reality.¹¹⁶ This continues in v. 19 where the verb συμφέρει describes a temporally present situation of a sacrifice presented to an idol that

¹¹⁶ V. 17 does not possess any explicitly stated verbs, this study must assume the verb to be from the context. V. 18 possesses three participles [έκκεχυμένα; κεκλεισμένω; παρακειμένα]. While temporality is not expressed outside of the indicative, the use of a passive participle to be placed [έκκεχυμένα; κεκλεισμένω] highlights the sage’s belief that the food has been placed there by someone or that the mouth has been closed by illness. The deponent verb παρακειμένα functions actively to state food sitting before a grave. A perfect or aorist participle generally indicates through verbal aspect (not temporality) antecedent events that occurred before the main indicative verb, which is assumed from v. 17 to be a present verb. Whereas a present participle is simultaneous with the main verbal action. Fanning, *Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek*, 407.

is unprofitable. The verbal aspect of a present verb is imperfective, namely, the sage here describes an ongoing reality of offerings being not profitable to idols. This is followed by the impossible contingent subsequent actions of the idol's eating and smelling the offering. The idol will be unable to consume or accept this offering.¹¹⁷ As a result, the passive participle *ὁ ἐκδιωκόμενος*, indicates a simultaneous affliction of the idol by the Lord.¹¹⁸ The futile acceptance of an offering by an idol is compared in v. 20 with the simultaneous reality of a sick man desiring food and groaning after it just as a eunuch touches a woman and groans after her.¹¹⁹

In conclusion, in this text there are 12 verbs total, 9 participles, 2 indicative verbs, and one subjunctive verb. There is a general mood of assertion. This mood, the use of the third-person, and the present and future tense indicate that the sage describes an ongoing situation to his student that he wants him to agree with and learn from. He wishes the student to embody this worldview about sickness as well as the secondary assumed shared beliefs. As a result, the student would understand that the present and future presentation of offerings to an idol were futile because of the inability of such a deity to receive and accept offerings.

¹¹⁷ The verb *ἔδετα* highlights the future action of the false deity eating with benefit for itself as a subsequent action to an offering being profitable to an idol. This is a contingent reality that will not happen because it cannot be profitable to the idol nor can the idol consume it. The idol will not be able to eat nor smell/accept the offering. The use of the verb *μὴ ὀσφρανθῆ* (AorDepSub3S) does not indicate indicative temporality, but in continuity with the previous future indicative verb, highlights the shared future inability of an idol to consume or accept an offering.

¹¹⁸ The passive nature of the participle highlights the agent of the action of burdening to be the Lord.

¹¹⁹ In v. 20 the sick man and a eunuch are the subjects of four active participles *βλέπων*, *στενάζων*, *περιλαμβάνων*, and *στενάζων*. The use of present participles indicates that these situations happen simultaneously just as the sick man with chronic illness (v. 17-18) cannot enjoy good things such as food.

Conclusion

In this section, the sage teaches that illness is to be avoided at all costs. To be chronically ill means that one cannot enjoy the good things of life such as eating. He implicitly claims that if one have good health, you can enjoy these good things.¹²⁰ This condition is like a dead person trying to eat, a false god trying to receive an offering, and a eunuch physically desiring a woman. These are all realities where a person's or deity's status indicates that they cannot enjoy things that they wish they could. For my study, it reveals the implicit belief that statues of non-Jewish deities were understood to be false gods that could not even receive an offering. For the sage in Ptolemaic Egypt, there was no benefit to present them an offering because they were not just weaker gods than the God of Israel; they were impotent gods. These gods could not receive (i.e. eat) or accept (i.e. smell) the sacrifices or offerings that their worshipers presented to them. As a result, it would be futile to present them offerings.

¹²⁰ Sauer, *Jesus Sirach/Ben Sira*, 218.

31:21-32:15 (34:21-35:15) Righteous and Unrighteous Offerings to the Most High

<p>31 ²¹ Θυσιάζων ἐξ ἀδίκου προσφορά μεμωμημένη,</p> <p>²² καὶ οὐκ εἰς εὐδοκίαν δωρήματα ἀνόμων.</p> <p>²³ οὐκ εὐδοκεῖ ὁ ὕψιστος ἐν προσφοραῖς ἀσεβῶν οὐδὲ ἐν πλήθει θυσιῶν ἐξιλάσκειται ἁμαρτίας.</p> <p>²⁴ θύων υἱὸν ἔναντι τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ ὁ προσάγων θυσίαν ἐκ χρημάτων πενήτων.</p> <p>²⁵ ἄρτος ἐπιδοσμένων ζωῆ πτωχῶν, ὁ ἀποστερῶν αὐτὴν ἄνθρωπος αἱμάτων.</p> <p>²⁶ φονεύων τὸν πλησίον ὁ ἀφαιρούμενος ἐμβίωσιν,</p> <p>²⁷ καὶ ἐκχέων αἷμα ὁ ἀποστερῶν μισθὸν μισθίου.</p> <p>²⁸ εἷς οἰκοδομῶν, καὶ εἷς καθαίρων· τί ὠφέλησαν πλεῖον ἢ κόπους;</p> <p>²⁹ εἷς εὐχόμενος, καὶ εἷς καταρώμενος· τίνας φωνῆς εἰσακούσεται ὁ δεσπότης;</p> <p>³⁰ βαπτιζόμενος ἀπὸ νεκροῦ καὶ πάλιν ἀπτόμενος αὐτοῦ, τί ὠφέλησεν ἐν τῷ λουτρῷ αὐτοῦ;</p> <p>³¹ οὕτως ἄνθρωπος νηστεύων ἐπὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτοῦ καὶ πάλιν πορευόμενος καὶ τὰ αὐτὰ ποιῶν· τῆς προσευχῆς αὐτοῦ τίς εἰσακούσεται; καὶ τί ὠφέλησεν ἐν τῷ ταπεινωθῆναι αὐτόν;</p>	<p>31 ²¹ When one sacrifices from someone unjust, it is a blameworthy offering,</p> <p>²² and the gifts of lawless persons are not for approval.</p> <p>²³ The Most High is not pleased with the offerings of impious persons, nor by a multitude of sacrifices does he forgive sins.</p> <p>²⁴ One who slaughters a son in front of his father is he who brings a sacrifice from the property of the needy.</p> <p>²⁵ Bread is life for the poor when they are destitute; he who withholds it is a person of blood.</p> <p>²⁶ One who murders his fellow is he who takes away a way of living,</p> <p>²⁷ and one who pours out blood is he who deprives the wages of a hired worker.</p> <p>²⁸ One builds, and one tears down— what did they gain more than hard labors?</p> <p>²⁹ One prays, and one curses— to whose voice will the master listen?</p> <p>³⁰ When one bathes due to a corpse and when one touches it again— what did he gain by his washing?</p> <p>³¹ So is a person when he fasts for his sins and goes again and does the same things; who will listen to his prayer, and what did he gain by humbling himself?</p>
<p>32 ¹ Ὁ συντηρῶν νόμον πλεονάζει προσφοράς,</p> <p>² θυσιάζων σωτηρίου ὁ προσέχων ἐντολαῖς,</p> <p>³ ἀνταποδιδούς χάριν προσφέρων σεμίδαλιν,</p> <p>⁴ καὶ ὁ ποιῶν ἐλεημοσύνην θυσιάζων αἰνέσεως.</p> <p>⁵ εὐδοκία κυρίου ἀποστῆναι ἀπὸ πονηρίας,</p>	<p>32 ¹ He who keeps the Law multiplies offerings.</p> <p>² One who makes a sacrifice for deliverance is he who pays heed to the commandments.</p> <p>³ One who repays a kindness is one who offers the finest flour,</p> <p>⁴ and he who does an act of charity is one who makes a sacrifice of praise.</p> <p>⁵ A good pleasure to the Lord it is to withdraw from wickedness,</p>

καὶ ἐξίλασμός ἀποστῆναι ἀπὸ ἀδικίας.	and it is atonement to withdraw from injustice.
⁶ μὴ ὀφθῆς ἐν προσώπῳ κυρίου κενός·	⁶ Do not be seen empty in the presence of the Lord,
⁷ πάντα γὰρ ταῦτα χάριν ἐντολῆς.	⁷ for all these things are for the sake of a commandment.
⁸ προσφορά δικαίου λιπαίνει θυσιαστήριον, καὶ ἡ εὐωδία αὐτῆς ἔναντι ὑψίστου.	⁸ An offering of a righteous person enriches the altar, and its pleasing odor is before the Most High.
⁹ θυσία ἀνδρὸς δικαίου δεκτὴ, καὶ τὸ μνημόσυνον αὐτῆς οὐκ ἐπιλησθήσεται.	⁹ A righteous man's sacrifice is acceptable, and its memorial will not be forgotten.
¹⁰ ἐν ἀγαθῷ ὀφθαλμῷ δόξασον τὸν κύριον καὶ μὴ σμικρύνῃς ἀπαρχὴν χειρῶν σου.	¹⁰ With a good eye glorify the Lord, and do not belittle the first fruit of your hands.
¹¹ ἐν πάσῃ δόσει ἰλάρωσον τὸ πρόσωπόν σου καὶ ἐν εὐφροσύνῃ ἀγίασον δεκάτην.	¹¹ With every act of giving brighten your face, and with gladness consecrate a tithe.
¹² δὸς ὑψίστῳ κατὰ τὴν δόσιν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐν ἀγαθῷ ὀφθαλμῷ καθ' εὔρεμα χειρός·	¹² Give to the Most High according to his giving and with a good eye according to that found at hand,
¹³ ὅτι κύριος ἀνταποδιδούς ἐστίν καὶ ἑπταπλάσια ἀνταποδώσει σοι.	¹³ because the Lord is the one who repays, and he will repay you sevenfold.
¹⁴ Μὴ δωροκόπει, οὐ γὰρ προσδέξεται,	¹⁴ Do not offer a bribe, for he will not accept it,
¹⁵ καὶ μὴ ἔπεχε θυσία ἀδίκῳ· ὅτι κύριος κριτὴς ἐστίν, καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν παρ' αὐτῷ δόξα προσώπου.	¹⁵ and do not be intent on an unrighteous sacrifice, because the Lord is judge, and with him there is no reputation of person. (NETS) ¹²¹

Within the book of Sirach, this is the longest section that is dedicated to the presentation of offerings. Within this section of the book, the sage provides wisdom about various social topics. He talks about dreams (31:1-8), journeys (32:9-21), offerings (31:21-32:15), and God's response of justice for the oppressed (32:16-26). While scholars agree that the beginning of a thematic section about sacrifice begins at 31:20, they disagree whether it ends at 32:13, 32:15, 32:20, or 32:26.¹²² The difference

¹²¹ I have defaulted to using *NETS* in my discussion of this passage unless otherwise stated.

¹²² The following authors divide this section between 31:21-32 and 32:1-13. Di Lella and Skehan, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 416; Duesberg and Fransen, *Ecclesiastico*, 248-51; Bullard and Hatton, *A Handbook on Sirach*, 704; John Snaith, "Biblical Quotations in the Hebrew of Ecclesiasticus," *JTS* 18.1

of opinion about where this passage ends is because the sage “läßt sich allerdings nicht sicher bestimmen, wo der Opfertraktat zu Ende kommt und wo der Übergang beginnt.”¹²³ This vagueness is because the end of the sacrificial tract speaks about God receiving the offerings of the poor without preference for the rich (32:14-15) and then turns to God’s care for and justice for the poor generally (vv. 16-21). While my analysis will end at 32:15, I recognize that its statements about God’s character are linked to God’s actions in the following section.

Generally, this passage can be divided into two sections: the first describes unrighteous sacrifices (31:21-31) and the second delineates righteous and acceptable offerings (32:1-15). The structure of the first passage can be divided into a three-part argument which describes the futility of offerings that are not accompanied by a corresponding morally upright life: first, the offerings of the unrighteous are fundamentally worthless (31:21-23); second unholy offerings are compared to amoral social actions (vv. 24-27); and finally unholy offerings are compared to profitless or futile social actions (vv. 28-31).¹²⁴ Structurally, the discussion of righteous offerings (32:1-15) is divided into two parts: first, the person who follows the law is one who

(1967): 170; Luis Alonso Schökel, *Proverbios y Eclesiástico*, LLS 14 (Madrid: Ediciones Cristiandad, 1968), 268–70. Those that end at 32:15 are: Sauer, *Jesus Sirach/Ben Sira*, 244–47. Those who end at 32:20 or 32:21 are Zapff, *Jesus Sirach 25-51*, 229; Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter*, 70; De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 21; Spicq, “Ecclesiastique,” 739, 744; Schilling, *Das Buch Jesus Sirach*, 143–44. Those who end at 32:24 are Palmisano, *Salvaci, Dio dell’universo!*, 72–73; Lamparter, *Die Apokryphen*, 150–52; Krinetzki, “Das Buch Jesus Sirach,” 260–61; MacKenzie, *Sirach*, 132–35.

¹²³ Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter*, 70. I have chosen to end at 32:15 instead of 32:13 because 32:15 explicitly mentions a sacrifice of the poor even though it appears to be thematically related to the following section.

¹²⁴ This three part schema is shared with Zapff, *Jesus Sirach 25-51*, 225; Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter*, 70–83.

presents sacrifices (vv. 1-5),¹²⁵ second, the sage provides advice for how to present an acceptable offering (vv. 6-15).

This longest and most in-depth passage on the topic of offerings is intended to inform the sage's child or student how he ought not to engage in offerings and how he should present a successful offering. Consistent with what we have seen thus far, the sage highlights the centrality and necessity of a virtuous lifestyle so that God would accept his offering, whether material sacrifices or an offering of piety (32:5), the latter being especially important since the sage's students in Ptolemaic Egypt had limited access to direct participation in material offerings in the Jerusalem Temple.

Throughout this passage, verses are divided into two or three stanzas. This structure created a type of synonymous parallelism where the same idea was restated or rearticulated in the following stanza.¹²⁶ The structure serves as a vehicle to convey the necessity of holistic moral behaviour presenting an offering, whether at the Jerusalem Temple or an offering of piety apart from the Jerusalem complex. The description of an offering of piety permitted Jewish readers in Ptolemaic Egypt or elsewhere in the Diaspora to engage in sacrificial worship. This passage is thus another crucial one for helping us to see why the focus in Sirach is less on the offerings themselves than on the status of the offeror.

Ideational Features

32:21 “when one sacrifices [Θυσιάζων] (part. actor; proc. material) from unrighteousness ἐξ ἀδίκου (circum. manner), this is (assumed part. carrier; assumed

¹²⁵ Palmisano, *Salvaci, Dio dell'universo!*, 93.

¹²⁶ Palmisano, *Salvaci, Dio dell'universo!*, 78–79.

proc. relational) a mocked offering [προσφορὰ μεμωμημένη] (part. attribute)” (author’s trans.). In v. 21 there are two movements in the stanza where one action is compared to another item using somewhat choppy Greek. The first half of the stanza depicts a generic worshiper engaged in sacrifice in an unrighteous way though we are not told how the offeror engaged in an unrighteous offering. The second part of the stanza states that this offering is ridiculed or mocked,¹²⁷ though again the text does not say who is ridiculing the offering. As we shall see from the context, it becomes clear that the recipient who mocks the offering is God (v. 23).

V. 22 parallels the message found in v. 21: “The gifts of lawless persons [δωρήματα ἀνόμων] (part. carrier) are (assumed verb; proc. relational) not for approval [οὐκ εἰς εὐδοκίαν] (part. attribute)” (author’s trans.). The word δῶρημα normally refers generally to a gift, but in this context (vv. 21-23) it describes cultic offerings that are presented to God as gifts.¹²⁸ The source or owner of these offerings are lawless ones [ἀνόμων], presumably those who are not followers of the Law of the Jews as the examples provided in the following verses demonstrate. Their gifts are not approved.¹²⁹

V. 23 restates and summarizes God’s rejection of offerings by unvirtuous persons: “The Most High [ὁ ὕψιστος] (part. sensor) is not pleased [οὐκ εὐδοκεῖ] (proc. mental) with the offerings of impious persons [ἐν προσφοραῖς ἀσεβῶν] (part. phenomenon) nor by a multitude of sacrifices [οὐδὲ ἐν πλήθει θυσιῶν] (circum. manner)

¹²⁷ Lust, Eynikel, and Hauspie, *Greek-English*, 312; Palmisano, *Salvaci, Dio dell’universo!*, 76–77.

¹²⁸ Similarly the word nominal cognate δῶρον, which describes a gift generally, is used to describe offerings presented to God elsewhere in Greek Jewish literature (LXX Gen 4:4; Lev 1:10, 14; 2:1, 4, 5). Muraoka, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*, 181.

¹²⁹ The phrase εἰς εὐδοκίαν is a rare expression which likely means with the result of approval. Cf. LXX Ps 18:15. I understand εἰς to be resultative. Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 369; Zapff, *Jesus Sirach 25-51*, 226.

does he atone [ἐξιλάσκειται] (proc. material) sins [ἀμαρτίας] (part. affected)” (author’s trans.). The Most High, that is, the God of Israel, has a negative perception of the offerings of the unrighteous, lawless, and impious offerors who presume to present offerings to God. Their offerings are not successful or accepted not because of flaws in the offerings but because of their character attributes.¹³⁰

The second stanza of v. 23 provides greater detail concerning the response of God to these offerings. This verse echoes other Second Temple writings in which an impious person presents offerings with the result that God ignores them, or even despises them, and they do not atone for sins nor does God forgive the offeror’s sins.¹³¹ V. 23 here does not state whose sin is not atoned but the immediate context indicates that unatoned sins are those of the impious one who presented an offering.

Vv. 21-23 reveal important assumptions about cultic offerings present in Sirach. Jews present offerings to their God who responds by atoning for their sin. The purpose of these offerings is the removal of the sin or guilt of the offeror. Finally, God does not respond to the offerings of immoral people, even if they present many offerings.¹³² The sage here explicitly reiterates an implicit attribute of offerings as we have discussed them thus far: acceptable offerings require both a correct ritual enactment and moral uprightness for them to please the Most High God of Israel.

V. 24 “One who slaughters a son in front of his father (part. attribute) [θύων υἱὸν ἔναντι τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ] is (assumed verb; proc. relational) he who brings a sacrifice from the property of the needy (part. carrier) [ὁ προσάγων θυσίαν ἐκ χρημάτων

¹³⁰ Palmisano, *Salvaci, Dio dell’universo!*, 80–81.

¹³¹ Cf. Sir 3:3. Zapff, *Jesus Sirach 25-51*, 226.

¹³² Sauer, *Jesus Sirach/Ben Sira*, 243.

πενήτων].” While vv. 21-23 express general statements about sacrifices of the impious, vv. 24-27 compare these offerings to visibly immoral actions that the sage’s readers were familiar with. Each verse possesses a relational process between two stanzas. These stanzas can be sub-categorized and describe a different situation.¹³³

The first stanza depicts a person who offers a son as a sacrifice before his father’s eyes: Child sacrifice was terrible in its own right; the offeror who presented the sacrifice must have manipulated or stolen the child from the parent. To sacrifice the child in front of his parent would have been excruciatingly cruel and painful for the father to watch.¹³⁴ The second stanza describes someone who presents a sacrifice derived from the possessions of the poor: in the second stanza, the article *ὁ* marks the subject, namely he who brings. The thief who steals this bread is equated by the sage with the one who sacrifices a son before his father mentioned in v. 24.¹³⁵ Through equating these actions, the sage teaches that the presentation of offerings, most abominably by a rich person from the goods of the poor, is as terrible as child-sacrifice before the child’s parent. Even though the act of sacrifice is in and of itself a good thing, if it takes place through immoral and unethical presentation, then God does not accept it because of its association with an impious agent.

V. 25a “The bread of those in need [*ἄρτος ἐπιδομένων*] (part. carrier) is (assumed verb; proc. relational) the life of the poor [*ζωὴ πτωχῶν*] (part. attribute)”

¹³³ *θύων* (part. actor; proc. material) *υἶόν* (part. affected) *τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ* (circum. location). *ὁ προσάγων* (part. actor; proc. material) *θυσίαν* (part. affected) *ἐκ χρημάτων πενήτων* (circum. location).

¹³⁴ Di Lella and Skehan, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 417.

¹³⁵ Within this verse and many of the following verses there are two clauses which each have a substantival participle [*θύων* and *ὁ προσάγων*]. Both clauses are part of one sentence where one is the subject (i.e. carrier) and the following is the predicate (i.e. attribute). The use of the article on only one of the participles indicates that that clause is the subject which is differentiated with its predicate which does not have an article. Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 241–43.

(LES).¹³⁶ Vv. 25-27 continue a description of social evils that are comparable to immoral offerings (vv. 20-23). Since the primary pursuit of poor people was the acquisition of bread or food which they needed for their sustenance,¹³⁷ the well-being of the poor [πενήτων; ἐπιδεομένων; πτωχῶν] is consistently threatened.¹³⁸ The sage warns that this bread is necessary for the poor, implicitly noting that it could be stolen and used as a sacrifice (v. 24).

V. 25b the sage continues the parallels as he not only condemns the thievery of v. 25a but now rebukes the thief directly: “The one who robs it [ὁ ἀποστερῶν αὐτήν] (part. carrier) is (assumed verb; proc. relational) a man of blood [ἄνθρωπος αἱμάτων] (part. attribute)” (LES).¹³⁹ The connection to 25a is clear since the antecedent of αὐτήν cannot be bread but the life [ζωή] of the poor. The “man of blood” is rebuked not simply as one who has acted rashly but as one whose character is defiled: the use of the plural αἵματα designates bloodshed or murder.¹⁴⁰ In summary, the one who steals food from the poor has not simply committed theft but is a murderer who steals life. Any offering from such a one is vitiated from the start.

V. 26 carries on the parallel pattern: “One who murders his fellow [φονεύων τὸν πλησίον] (part. attribute) is (assumed verb; proc. relational) he who takes away a way of

¹³⁶ Palmisano, *Salvaci, Dio dell'universo!*, 84.

¹³⁷ Bullard and Hatton, *A Handbook on Sirach*, 700; Zapff, *Jesus Sirach 25-51*, 227. Bullard and Hatton, *A Handbook on Sirach*, 700; Zapff, *Jesus Sirach 25-51*, 227.

¹³⁸ Palmisano, *Salvaci, Dio dell'universo!*, 83.

¹³⁹ The carrier phrase could be further subcategorized ὁ ἀποστερῶν (part. actor; proc. material) αὐτήν (part. affected).

¹⁴⁰ See LXX 2 Kgdms 16:7, 8; Est 8:12; 2 Macc 8:3; 14:18; Ps 5:7; 25:9; 138:19; Prov 29:10; Nah 3:1. Lust, Eynikel, and Hauspie, *Greek-English*, 11. Those who did not defend the poor are covered in blood in Isa 1:15-17. Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter*, 78.

living [ὁ ἀφαιρούμενος ἐμβίωσιν] (part. carrier).”¹⁴¹ The article ὁ marks the second stanza as the main clause or carrier who takes a way a way of living; this one is equated with the shedding of blood. Ἐμβίωσις is a rare word that denotes the way or maintenance of life (3 Macc 3:23; Sir 38:14). The taking away of the ἐμβίωσις likely refers to the taking away of food from the poor to present it as an offering (cf. vv. 24-25). As a result, the one who takes away the way of life is the one who murders a friend. The theme of bloodshed surfaces again. In a normal social relationship, you would not murder your friend or neighbour [πλησίος], rather you would want to support and help them. The murdering of one’s neighbour is the opposite way you would expect to treat your friend. In conclusion, to take away the maintenance of living is as terrible as murdering your friend.

Similarly, v. 27 expands the comparisons noted thus far to suggest that all social injustice is comparable to murder: “and one who pours out blood [καὶ ἐκχέων αἷμα] (part. attribute) is (assumed verb; proc. relational) he who deprives the wages of a hired worker [ὁ ἀποστερῶν μισθὸν μισθίου] (part. carrier).” Cultural expectation dictated that when you employ a hired worker, it was expected that you would remunerate him after his work as he deserved. The use of ἀποστερέω, the same verb used in v. 25 to describe robbery or fraud, suggests that not to remunerate the work is equivalent to stealing wages from the hired worker. Such a person is no better than the thief, the murderer, the

¹⁴¹ Each dependent clause could be sub classified as its own material process. φονεύων (part. actor; proc. material) τὸν πλησίον (part. affected) ὁ ἀφαιρούμενος (part. actor; proc. material) ἐμβίωσιν (part. affected).

one who sacrifices his own son.¹⁴² All who pour out blood can thus have no part in pure offerings that are poured out on any holy altar (vv. 21-23).¹⁴³

V. 28 “One [εἶς] (part. actor) builds [οἰκοδομῶν] (proc. material), and one [εἶς] (part. actor) tears down [καθαίρων] (proc. material)— what [τί] (part. result) did they gain [ώφελησαν] (part. actor; proc. material) more than hard labors [πλεῖον ἢ κόπους] (circum. manner)? In vv. 21-27 God rejects the offerings of those who engage in immoral deeds elsewhere in their lives. Now in vv. 28-31 the sage compares the futile nature of such offerings to fruitless actions.

The first stanza describes two chronological situations where first someone builds, presumably some structure or physical edifice, which is followed by someone who breaks it down: there are a pair of scenarios where the second cancels out the first.¹⁴⁴ In the next stanza, there is a rhetorical question where the sage asks if they benefited in this building project more than hard labours? The answer is negative because in this scenario the beneficial goal of creating a building was cancelled out. The implicit conclusion is that one who offers immoral sacrifices is like one who builds something but has his work cancelled out because it is broken down by another, implicitly his immorality.

V. 29 describes a similar scenario where a bad deed cancels out a seemingly good action: “One [εἶς] (part. actor) prays [εὐχόμενος] (proc. material), and one [εἶς]

¹⁴² LXX Gen 9:6; 37:22; Deut 19:10; 1 Kgdm 25:31; 1 Macc 1:37; 2 Macc 1:8. The construction of the verb ἐκχέω with the anarthrous noun αἷμα is an idiom to denote the murder of a human.

¹⁴³ In vv. 21-23 the sage states that immoral sacrifices are not pleasing or acceptable to God. In vv. 24-27 the offering of extorted goods from the poor, the theft of a neighbour’s livelihood, and the stealing of wages are all compared to murder. In God’s eyes, the fraud of the vulnerable is as harmful as their slaughter.

¹⁴⁴ Bullard and Hatton, *A Handbook on Sirach*, 701.

(part. actor) curses [καταρώμενος] (proc. material)— to whose voice [τίνος φωνῆς] (part. phenomenon) will the master [ὁ δεσπότης] (part. sensor) listen [εἰσακούσεται] (proc. mental)?” In this verse interpreters disagree about the identification of who is the prayer and curser and if both their actions are cancelled out or just one. Most commentators believe that the one who prays is the same person who is pictured as the immoral protagonist elsewhere in this section whose action is cancelled out. This interpretation contrasts the interpretation that both actions of praying and cursing are cancelled out as futile actions.¹⁴⁵ The futility of the outward moral action of prayer is likely because throughout this passage a religious practitioner regularly engages in outwardly pleasing actions when he offers immoral sacrifices (vv. 21-23), builds (v. 28), and fasts for his sins (v. 31); in all of these examples his good action is futile because of his impiety. The master, who here denotes the Lord [δεσπότης], is the one who perceives this prayer or curse. The normal expectation is that the one who prays will be answered by the Lord who will hear him in contrast to the curser who would be rejected. Despite the correct external form, the sage asks whose prayer will be heard. If consistent with the negative portrayal of the exploiter throughout the passage so far, God does not respond to the hypocritical prayer.¹⁴⁶ In this interpretation, because of an inconsistent moral lifestyle, the oration of an impious practitioner is ineffective and futile.

V. 30a underscores the notion of futility of religious acts, showing again how one deed can cancel out another: “When one bathes [βαπτίζόμενος] (part. actor; proc.

¹⁴⁵ Di Lella and Skehan, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 417; Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter*, 80; De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 285–87.

¹⁴⁶ Palmisano, *Salvaci, Dio dell'universo!*, 85; Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter*, 80; Zapff, *Jesus Sirach 25-51*, 227. Bullard believes that both of these actions cancel each other out like the construction of a building that is torn down making it pointless (v. 28). Through a similar pattern a prayer is canceled out by a curse where the Lord hears neither. Bullard and Hatton, *A Handbook on Sirach*, 702.

material) due to a corpse [ἀπὸ νεκροῦ] (circum. cause) and when one touches [ἀπτόμενος] (part. actor; proc. material) it [αὐτοῦ] (part. affected) again [πάλιν] (circum. manner).” To touch a corpse within Second Temple Judaism created ritual impurity that needed to be washed away before you could have the required ritual purity to engage in certain religious actions such as entering into the Jerusalem Temple (cf. Num 19:9-12).¹⁴⁷ When you washed because you had touched a ritually impure thing, you wanted to maintain your ritual purity; however, this same person touches the ritually impure corpse again.¹⁴⁸ To touch the corpse is the opposite action expected for someone who has just ritually washed himself.

In the second stanza (v. 30b), the sage now poses the central question regarding any futile action, though here it is specific to the action of 30a: “what [τί] (part. result) did he gain [ὠφέλησεν] (part. actor; proc. material) by his washing [ἐν τῷ λουτρῷ αὐτοῦ] (circum. manner)?” He repeats the same verbal question with ὠφελέω used in vv. 28 and 31.¹⁴⁹ The circumstance of the man’s washing [ἐν τῷ λουτρῷ αὐτοῦ] in context refers to his act of washing himself for the sake of ritual purity. What was the benefit of his washing from impurity if he returned and defiled himself again? The question is assumed to be answered; he gained nothing. He was impure again and could no longer engage in certain actions. Even though his ritual washing was a good thing performed correctly, its benefits were cancelled out by his other activities. So, too, implies the sage, is it with all offerings.

¹⁴⁷ Di Lella and Skehan, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 417; Alonso Schökel, *Proverbios y Eclesiastico*, 268–69.

¹⁴⁸ The verb ἄπτω in the middle takes a genitive direct object [αὐτοῦ; antec. of νεκρός].

¹⁴⁹ Lust, Eynikel, and Hauspie, *Greek-English*, 528; De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 297.

As he continues to drive the point home, in v. 31a the sage describes in another religious action that a contradictory deed cancels out, making a good act a futile one: “So [οὕτως] (circum. manner) is a person [ἄνθρωπος] (part. actor) when he fasts [νηστεύων] (proc. material) for his sins [ἐπὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτοῦ] (circum. cause (i.e. purpose)) and goes [πορευόμενος] (proc. material) again [πάλιν] and does [ποιῶν] (proc. material) the same things [τὰ αὐτὰ] (part. affected).” The first two stanzas note two acts that conflict with each other. The adverb οὕτως connects the statement of this phrase as being of the same manner as the other futile situations (vv. 28-30) and ultimately back to ineffectual offerings (vv. 21-23).¹⁵⁰ There is a conclusive sense to its use. Instead of a substantival participle and article (i.e. ὁ νηστεύων), the first actor is explicitly named ἄνθρωπος which indicates any man in general.¹⁵¹

The choice of the act here is significant. Fasting was a physical way to humble oneself before God. Its action signified repentance and the seeking of his attention and aid (cf. LXX 58:3-5; 2 Kgd 12:16-20; Est 4:16).¹⁵² Furthermore, here the act is even more profound, since to fast [νηστεύω] with the preposition ἐπί is used to indicate fasting, not as a form of penitence because of a past action, but to fast on behalf of an act or person of significance for the faster.¹⁵³ If this is a correct understanding of the verbal phrase, the faster fasts not as a form of repentance to receive forgiveness for past sins, but fasts before God so that he would not engage in sins in the future.¹⁵⁴ In this case, the

¹⁵⁰ Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 675; De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 294.

¹⁵¹ De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 294.

¹⁵² De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 292; Sauer, *Jesus Sirach/Ben Sira*, 243.

¹⁵³ LXX 2 Kgd 1:12; Est 4:16. De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 292.

¹⁵⁴ Most commentators do not note the specific use of νηστεύω with ἐπί and assume that fasting is a form of repentance for past sins. Di Lella and Skehan, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 417; Bullard and Hatton, *A Handbook on Sirach*, 403; Zapff, *Jesus Sirach 25-51*, 228.

man fasts on behalf of his sins, presumably to seek God's attention and ask for aid so that he would not engage in such sins again in the future. These likely are immoral actions that he feels tempted to engage in because he has done them in the past. The term ἁμαρτία does not highlight a specific immoral action but describes unrighteous deeds generally.¹⁵⁵

Yet contrary to his desire expressed in the act of fasting, "He goes again and does the same things." Although somewhat unexpectedly, the antecedent of the neuter plural τὰ αὐτὰ is the feminine plural ἁμαρτίαι from the previous stanza. The man who took the time to fast for his sins so that he would not engage in them, immediately returns and does them again. His action of fasting and seeking God's help was rendered pointless if he immediately engaged in these same immoral actions once again.

In the same pattern seen in vv. 28-30, in the last two stanzas of v. 31 the sage rhetorically asks two questions whose unstated negative answers are intended to highlight the futility of the man's fasting: "who [τίς] (part. sensor) will listen [εἰσακούσεται] (proc. mental) to his prayer [τῆς προσευχῆς αὐτοῦ] (part. phenomenon), and what [τί] (part. result) did he gain [ὠφέλησεν] (proc. material) by humbling himself [ἐν τῷ ταπεινωθῆναι αὐτόν] (circum. matter)?" Using the same verb pattern from v. 28, the sage asks who will listen to the prayer uttered by the man who fasts. Though the text does not say what this prayer is for, the Lord is assumed to be the one who would perceive the man's prayer (v. 28). But clearly the Lord will not hear his prayer because the one who fasts and prays does not live a morally consistent lifestyle.

¹⁵⁵ De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 294–95.

Accordingly in the fourth stanza the sage asks what was the use of his humiliation? His humbling is described using the verb *ταπεινῶω*, which appears in conjunction with fasting elsewhere (cf. LXX Isa 58:3, 5), and refers to the physical abasement associated with the man's act of fasting.¹⁵⁶ For the third time, the sage repeats the verb *ὠφελέω* to ask what the man benefited from in his religious practice. The sage consistently uses this term with an assumed negative result. The man who did the outwardly good religious practice of fasting, benefited nothing from the practice because he did not accompany it with a moral and righteous lifestyle. If he engaged in religious practices but then repeated his immoral actions in other areas of his life, God would not respond to him, and he had wasted his effort.

The goal of Sir 31:20-31 is to outline the futile nature of sacrifices to God that are not accompanied by consistent moral virtue in other areas of life. Vv. 24-27 compare this hypocritical sacrifice to murder and theft while vv. 28-31 compare them to futile and pointless activities. Even if an offeror presents offerings according to the proper ritual, God will not respond to them.¹⁵⁷ Together these examples highlight the importance of engaging in sacrifices that are accompanied by consistent moral virtue so that they are effective.

Whereas 31:20-31 described negative examples of offerings, in a marked shift 32:1-15 positively portrays offerors and their sacrifices.¹⁵⁸ In vv. 1-5, the sage highlights offerings as integral to a law-abiding way of life, and in vv. 6-15 the sage provides

¹⁵⁶ De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 292–93.

¹⁵⁷ Palmisano, *Salvaci, Dio dell'universo!*, 92; Mulder, "Worship in the Restored Second Temple," 149.

¹⁵⁸ Palmisano, *Salvaci, Dio dell'universo!*, 92. Various scholars have divided this section differently. Most divided it between vv. 1-5 and vv. 6-13. Gregory, *Like an Everlasting Signet Ring*, 237–38. Stadelmann divided it between vv. 1-7 and vv. 8-13. Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schrifgelehrter*, 93.

advice for how to positively present an offering. In the past, it was common to state that 32:1-5 referred to non-material offerings of piety such as law-keeping. According to this view, material offerings are in view only in vv. 6-9.¹⁵⁹ In contrast, recent studies have noted that it makes better sense to understand these verses to be a description of righteous law-abiding people who as a result of their consistent morality are engaging in material offerings (vv. 1-4a), though, even in this view vv. 4b-5 seem clearly to evidence a praise offering and an ethical action as cultic functions.

This latter interpretation makes better sense of the immediate context of chs. 31-32. These chapters do not contrast material and immaterial sacrifices but rather unholy offerings (31:21-31) and holy offerings (32:1-15). There is a difference between the quality not the type of sacrifice.¹⁶⁰ Thus in 32:1-4 the sage points out the characteristics of a morally virtuous lifestyle of law abiders which results in successful offerings; this contrasts with the immoral lifestyle of the lawless ones [ἀνόμων] described in 31:21-31. The passage turns to the righteous worshiper who presents material offerings at a

¹⁵⁹ Kaiser, "Kultische und sittliche Stühne bei Jesus Sirach," 104. Wright, "Sacrifice," 15–17; De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 311, 318–19; Di Lella and Skehan, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 418; Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age*, 90; Spicq, "Ecclésiastique," 741; Schilling, *Das Buch Jesus Sirach*, 145–47; Duesberg and Fransen, *Ecclesiastico*, 250. In this view, there was sometimes the assumption that prophetic offerings (i.e. spiritual offerings) were opposed in antithesis to a priestly (i.e. material offerings). These verses were often pointed to as a place where it was claimed that the sage was making an ethical/spiritual critique of material offerings. This view has changed as most commentators agree now that Sirach presents positive descriptions of material temple worship alongside ethical actions. Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter*, 85–88; Zapff, *Jesus Sirach 25-51*, 229; Knibb, "Temple and Cult," 403.

¹⁶⁰ Gregory, *Like an Everlasting Signet Ring*, 238–39; Goering, *Wisdom's Root Revealed*, 171–72; Sauer, *Jesus Sirach/Ben Sira*, 245; Wright, "Fear the Lord and Honor the Priest," 193; Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter*, 90–91; Zapff, *Jesus Sirach 25-51*, 229. I find this position to be more convincing than the previously mentioned "ethical sacrifices" position because it fits in the flow of the argument that contrasts between two different ways to go about a sacrifice from 31:21-35:15 without introducing a secondary topic of a different type of offerings. The goal of the sage is to convince his student to be like the righteous law-abiding offering who presents pleasing offerings.

physical altar (32:6-9).¹⁶¹ This passage makes it clear that the offerings described in vv. 1-4 are physical offerings presented by law-abiding worshipers. The wise student is therefore encouraged to be both righteous (i.e. law following) and cultically observant. Sirach does not urge replacing material offerings with “spiritual” acts of piety. Rather, the sage states that ethical actions are just as important as the sacrificial ritual itself: “he elevates the ethical demands of the Torah to the same level to show that the importance of the cult system cannot be allowed to eclipse the need for the ethical treatment of the poor.”¹⁶²

Sirach 32:1: “He who keeps the Law [Ὁ συντηρῶν νόμον] (part. actor) multiplies [πλεονάζει] (proc. material) offerings [προσφοράς] (part. affected).”¹⁶³ The actor in this verse is a person who keeps the law. The combination of the verb συντηρέω and νόμος is used elsewhere in Sirach to describe the keeping of the divine law of God (Sir 44:20; cf. LXX Ezek 18:9; Dan 3:30). The keeping of God’s law, which was a reference to the Mosaic law, within Sirach was the embodiment of wisdom and moral virtue.¹⁶⁴ The wise and moral person who keeps God’s law overflows with sacrifices. This person lives differently than the lawless ones [ἀνόμων; Sir 31:22] who presented hypocritical offerings. Πλεονάζω is used elsewhere in Sirach to highlight numerical abundance

¹⁶¹ Gregory, *Like an Everlasting Signet Ring*, 239; Olyan, “Ben Sira’s Relationship to the Priesthood,” 266.

¹⁶² Gregory, *Like an Everlasting Signet Ring*, 239–40; Goering, *Wisdom’s Root Revealed*, 171–72; Perdue, *Wisdom and Cult*, 199; Hayward, “Sacrifice and World Order,” 23, 31. Stadelman argues that the ethical law keeping is elevated to the same level as the actual cult itself: “derjenige, der das sittliche Gebot hält, damit vor Gott ein 'Opfer' bringt, so daß die 'kultisierte' Sittlichkeit über ein gewisses Äquivalenzdenken nicht mehr nur streng metaphorischen, sondern auch wohl schon 'realen' Kultcharakter erhält.“ Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter*, 95.

¹⁶³ The actor phrase can be further subcategorized: Ὁ συντηρῶν (part. actor; proc. material) νόμον (part. affected)

¹⁶⁴ De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 325–27.

(20:8; 23:3).¹⁶⁵ The stingy immoral tendency is to offer as little as necessary, but a law-abiding Jew presents generously of his offerings to God. The term προσφορά refers to a generic general offering and does not have a specific material offering in mind.¹⁶⁶ For the sage, the law keeper is an avid participant in and material supporter of physical offerings whose life also embodies virtue.

V. 2 follows a repeated structural pattern where an anarthrous substantival participle is compared to a definite substantival participle (cf. Sir 31:24, 26-27): “One who sacrifices a peace offering [θυσιάζων σωτηρίου] (part. attribute) is (assumed verb; proc. relational) he who pays heed to the commandments [ὁ προσέχων ἐντολαῖς] (part. carrier)” (author’s trans.).¹⁶⁷ The use of the article on the second participle identifies that phrase as the subject which is equated with the first clause (i.e. predicate). Sirach uses the phrase προσέχω with ἐντολή elsewhere to describe attention given to the law (23:27; 35:24).¹⁶⁸ This expression describes a person who takes meticulous care to observe the commandments of God, in this case presenting a peace offering.¹⁶⁹ It was understood to be a peace or deliverance offering (LXX 1 Chron 16:1, 2, 21:26; Sir 47:2; Ezek 45:15).¹⁷⁰ The word σωτήριον is used once elsewhere in Sirach cultically (Sir 47:2) and

¹⁶⁵ De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 336–37.

¹⁶⁶ Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter*, 94.

¹⁶⁷ Each of the clauses could be subclassified: θυσιάζων (part. actor; proc. material) σωτηρίου (part. affected) and ὁ προσέχων (part. actor; proc. material) ἐντολαῖς (part. affected).

¹⁶⁸ De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 327–28.

¹⁶⁹ Normally after the verb θυσιάζω, one would expect there to be an accusative direct object, not the genitive σωτηρίου. Frequently in the Jewish Scriptures, the accusative term θυσίαν was placed before the modifying genitive σωτηρίου (cf. LXX Exod 24:5; 32:6; Lev 3:1; 4:26, 31). This word became such a commonly recognized technical religious term, that θυσίαν was removed, leaving only σωτηρίου.

¹⁷⁰ Daniel, *Recherches*, 281–83, 295–97; Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter*, 94; De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 338–39.

also refers to a peace offering presented to God (cf. LXX Lev 3:1, 3, 6, 9).¹⁷¹ The context of enumerating different sacrifices in Sir 35:1-4 indicates that there is likely not a specific meaning tied to each offering, but rather the sage links material offerings in the Jerusalem Temple with the observance of the Jewish law. He binds together law-observance and cultic piety.¹⁷²

As in the negative comparisons earlier, so here, too, in v. 3 the sage continues the comparisons of law-observance and cultic piety: “One who repays a kindness [ἀνταποδιδούς χάριν] (part. carrier) is (assumed verb; proc. relational) one who offers the finest flour [προσφέρων σεμίδαλι] (part. attribute).”¹⁷³ The use of the verb ἀνταποδίδωμι with χάρις is a unique expression which in the LXX is found elsewhere only in Sirach (3:31; 30:6).¹⁷⁴ The parallel format with 32:4 where a law follower does a good deed for another human, and the consistent use of ἀνταποδίδωμι and χάρις to describe favours directed to one’s neighbour elsewhere in Sirach, strongly suggests that this wording is intended to describe a good deed performed by an observer of the Law.¹⁷⁵ But it is not just any good deed as the second clause also suggests by reference

¹⁷¹ Daniel, *Recherches*, 281, 295–97. Some believe that the two Greek words peace offering [σωτήριον] and deliverance [σωτήριος] are the same word. For these reasons some have translated σωτηρίου as deliverance. Wright, “Wisdom of Iesous Son of Sirach,” 747; Muraoka, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*, 668.

¹⁷² Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter*, 94.

¹⁷³ Each clause could be subclassified: ἀνταποδιδούς (part. actor; proc. material) χάριν (part. affected) and προσφέρων (part. actor; proc. material) σεμίδαλι (part. affected). Because neither substantival participle possesses an article marking it the subject (i.e. carrier), I am allowing the word order to denote the first participle as the subject.

¹⁷⁴ In Sirach, it is used to describe the repaying of a favour or the giving of a favour to friends. The recipient of the favour is another human, not God. Within the LXX ἀνταποδίδωμι is used almost exclusively to describe the Lord’s repayment or a human’s repayment of another human. There is only one example where a human repays God by calling on his name (Ps. 114:3-4). De Zan believes that here the Sage describes the law followers’ repaying of grace, or giving thanks to the Lord. De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 329–31.

¹⁷⁵ Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter*, 96.

to fine flour. The word used here σερμίδαλις refers to a fine flour offering that was burnt on the altar (Sir 38:11; LXX Lev 2:1-3; 2 Macc 1:8).¹⁷⁶ In summary, the one who engages in acts of kindness or charity is someone who provides offerings to God for himself and for others, and does so in an unsparing way in both cases.

V. 4 follows a similar topic and format as v. 3: “and he who does an act of charity [καὶ ὁ ποιῶν ἐλεημοσύνην] (part. carrier) is (assumed verb; proc. relational) one who makes a sacrifice of praise [θυσιάζων αἰνέσεως] (part. attribute).”¹⁷⁷ The article on the first participle identifies it as the subject (i.e. carrier). The combination of ποιέω with ἐλεημοσύνη is, however, difficult to decipher in terms of the specific action that is carried. In some cases, the noun refers to general acts of mercy (LXX Gen 47:29; Ps 102:6; Tob 1:3, 16) whereas sometimes it refers to the specific act of almsgiving (Tob 4:7, 9, 16; 12:8, 9; 13:8).¹⁷⁸ Sirach elsewhere uses the same expression to mean either an act of charity or almsgiving (7:10).¹⁷⁹ In either case, it seems clear that either meaning expresses the action of good deeds that characterize a morally upright person.

Again, however, the sage stresses the link between morality and cultic propriety. He who does an act of charity is one who sacrifices a praise offering. The combination of θυσιάζω with the genitive αἰνέσεως follows the same pattern as 32:2 where there is an

¹⁷⁶ De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 340–42; Daniel, *Recherches*, 222; Di Lella and Skehan, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 418.

¹⁷⁷ Each clause could be subclassified: καὶ ὁ ποιῶν (part. actor; proc. material) ἐλεημοσύνην (part. affected) θυσιάζων (part. actor; proc. material) αἰνέσεως (part. affected).

¹⁷⁸ De Zan leaves open either interpretation. Stadelman thinks this refers to a general good deed. Gregory thinks this refers to the act of almsgiving. De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 335–36; Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter*, 96; Gregory, *Like an Everlasting Signet Ring*, 238.

¹⁷⁹ Greek Sirach uses ἐλεημοσύνη elsewhere to indicate mercy (Sir 16:14; 17:29). Without recourse to the Hebrew version or Tobit which seem to more clearly describe almsgiving, many examples in the Greek version do not clearly highlight that the event mentioned is almsgiving and not an act of charity (3:14; 30; 12:3; 29:12). For an audience that did not have recourse to the Hebrew version, it is not clear that they would have understood Greek Sirach to explicitly delineate almsgiving and not an act of mercy.

assumed accusative θυσίαν to indicate an offering of praise [θυσίαν αινέσεως].¹⁸⁰ Sirach elsewhere uses αἴνεσις to describe praise generally (Sir 39:15; 51:29). This usage coheres well with the meaning of the phrase in this context. A sacrifice of praise [θυσία αινέσεως] is a relatively common expression that describes an offering of praise or gratitude (LXX Lev 7:12, 13, 15; Ps. 49:14, 23; 106:22; 115:8).

However, a sacrifice of praise was not a type of physical sacrifice, rather it was an audible cry of praise, gratitude, or veneration provided by an offeror that accompanied a material sacrifice at the temple (cf. LXX 2 Chron 29:31; Ps. 49:14, 23).¹⁸¹ As such, we have here a first clear example of a non-physical offering of piety within this investigation. Whereas in 32:1-2, the one who keeps the Law provides a material sacrifice, in vv. 3-4, the one who does virtuous deeds, a fruit of following the law, offers both material offerings and offerings of piety. The sage thus seems to engage all forms of cultic action with the adherence to the Law and the lifestyle that both grounds it and stems from it.¹⁸²

Significantly v. 5 turns from a discussion of law-keepers who present offerings (vv. 1-4) to a theological principle: “Turning away from wickedness [ἀποστῆναι ἀπὸ πονηρίας] (part. carrier) is (assumed verb; proc. relational) the approval of God [εὐδοκία κυρίου] (part. attribute), and turning away from unrighteousness [ἀποστῆναι ἀπὸ πονηρίας] (part. carrier) is (assumed verb; proc. relational) atonement [ἐξιλασμός] (part.

¹⁸⁰ Interestingly θυσιάζω is used with both σωτηρίου and αινέσεως in LXX 2 Chron 33:16 1 Macc 4:56 like in Sir 32:2, 4).

¹⁸¹ De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 339–40.

¹⁸² Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter*, 96–97.

attribute)” (author’s trans.).¹⁸³ Unlike the wicked offerors (31:21-31), those who turn from unrighteousness are pleasing to God. Their repentance itself possesses sacrificial functions.¹⁸⁴ The expression “the good pleasure of the Lord [εὐδοκία κυρίου],” which is not found elsewhere in the LXX, finds a parallel in “the εὐδοκία ὑψίστου (41:4)” and “εὐδοκία αὐτοῦ” (where the referent of αὐτοῦ is κυρίου 1:27; 2:16; 11:17) elsewhere in Sirach. In these contexts, it refers to the pleasure or approval of God which is consistent not only with its meaning in 32:5,¹⁸⁵ but also with the notion that a pleasing offering to God is grounded in the offeror’s moral status.

In contrast, the word πονηρία refers to both internal immoral thoughts and external immoral actions against others (3:28; 25:13; 34:24). Both types of evil are likely intended in 34:5.¹⁸⁶ In the first stanza, by use of a relational process, the movement away from sin is equated with the approval of God. To turn away from sin is pleasing to God. The second stanza of v. 5 makes a similar statement. Depending on the context, the word ἐξιλασμὸς can mean either forgiveness (cf. Sir 16:11; 17:29; 18:12, 20) or an atonement/propitiation sacrifice that acquires the forgiveness of sins (16:11). The cultic context of describing different types of sacrifice in 32:1-4 makes it likely that this also refers to a sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins.¹⁸⁷ The noun ἀδικία in Sirach refers to an unjust or sinful action (cf. 14:9; 17:20, 26). In this verse, it functions

¹⁸³ In my translation, I have assumed that the infinitive ἀποστῆναι is the subject in each clause which is equated with a predicate. I recognize that there are not any clear contextual clues which means that the order could not be reversed making the infinitive the predicate. Unfortunately the Greek is not clear. Porter, *Idioms*, 195–96. This agrees with the translation of Zapff, *Jesus Sirach 25-51*, 230. Both of these stanzas have parallel constructions and use the infinitive verb ἀφίστημι with ἀπό, which means to remove or move away from (7:2; 10:12; 23:11-12; 27:22; 27:24; 48:15). De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 345–47; Lust, Eynikel, and Hauspie, *Greek-English*, 73.

¹⁸⁴ De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 343.

¹⁸⁵ De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 344–45.

¹⁸⁶ De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 347–48.

¹⁸⁷ De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 350–51; Spicq, “Ecclésiastique,” 741.

synonymously with *πονηρία* as it describes the acting out of an internal evil attitude.¹⁸⁸

Following the same pattern as the first stanza, the turning away [*ἀποστῆναι*] from unrighteousness is equated with an atonement offering. Repentance or turning away from sin is described with the same cultic abilities and terminology as a material offering. In Second Temple Judaism pious actions have the same effect as a material offering. Accordingly, to turn away from sin can be understood to be an offering of piety.

Vv. 6-7 turn to a positive discussion of attitudes and postures recommended for an offeror: “Do not be seen [*μὴ ὀφθῆς*] (part. sensor; proc. mental) empty in the presence of the Lord [*ἐν προσώπῳ κυρίου κενός*] (part. phenomenon), for all these things [*πάντα γὰρ ταῦτα*] (part. carrier) are (assumed verb; proc. relational) for the sake of a commandment [*χάριν ἐντολῆς*] (part. attribute).”¹⁸⁹ In v. 6 the sage employs a second-person imperative which addresses the student directly.¹⁹⁰ The address is formed through pairing the passive *ὀράω* with *κενός*, a commonly used expression to describe being before God without a material offering (cf. LXX Exod 23:15; 34:20; Deut 16:16).¹⁹¹ The text has no subject for the passive verb (i.e. oblique participant), but this likely is meant to be God himself, since God is the one who would be offended by the offeror who did not present an offering when the offeror came in God’s presence. The sage assumes that the offeror should have an offering, material or not, when he is in the presence of God.

¹⁸⁸ De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 348–50.

¹⁸⁹ The phrase could be further subcategorized *ἐν προσώπῳ κυρίου* (circum. location).

¹⁹⁰ De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 355.

¹⁹¹ De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 355–57; Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter*, 98.

Sir 32:7 states that this condition holds “because of the commandment.” The expression χάριν ἐντολῆς is used elsewhere in Sirach to describe a good action prompted by the Jewish law (29:9). While the word ἐντολή is singular, it does not describe merely one commandment. It stands here collectively for the things that have been taught [πάντα...ταῦτα], that is, God’s law and the commandments regarding sacrifices.¹⁹² The sage thinks that both law and commandments are all rooted in God’s teaching and that they include the unacceptability of the offerings of the unrighteous (31:21-31), the description of approved offerings (32:1-5), and the need to present an acceptable offering (v. 6).¹⁹³

In v. 8 the sage describes the positive effects of an offering of a righteous man: “An offering of a righteous person [προσφορά δίκαιου] (part. actor) enriches [λιπαίνει] (proc. material) the altar [θυσιαστήριον] (part. affected), and its pleasing odor [καὶ ἡ εὐωδία αὐτῆς] (part. carrier) is (assumed verb; proc. relational) before the Most High [ἐναντι ὑψίστου] (part. attribute).” Previously the sage had noted that God is not pleased with the offering [προσφορά] of the unrighteous (Sir 31:21, 23); in contrast, here the sage underscores how pleased God is with the offering of the righteous.¹⁹⁴ The δίκαιος, an explicit identification of a righteous man [cf. ἀνδρὸς δίκαιου in 32:9; cf. 9:16], is a foil to the unrighteous, unlawful, and impious [ἄδικος; ἄνομος; ἀσεβής] (31:21-23). Unlike unrighteous offerors, a righteous man’s life is characterized not just by external offerings but by demonstrable faithfulness to God’s law.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹² De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 358–59.

¹⁹³ De Zan limits the referent of πάντα γὰρ ταῦτα to 32:1-5. Since this is all one section beginning with 31:21, I see no reason that it could not refer to all of the sage’s statements about sacrifices. De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 358.

¹⁹⁴ De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 404–5.

¹⁹⁵ De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 405–8.

The sage describes the acceptable offering of a righteous man as making fat [λαπαίνω] the altar. The verb λαπαίνω often refers to the pouring of oil (LXX Ps 22:5; 140:5; Prov 5:3) and sometimes to the making fat of a sacrifice (LXX Hab 1:16; Sir 38:11). Fat was viewed positively and was considered the best part of a sacrifice. In the context of this verse, this refers to the physical act of pouring oil on an offering or metaphorically to the presentation of the best offerings to God.¹⁹⁶ The altar [θυσιαστήριον] itself would not have been prepared as an offering and anointed with oil, although it could have been anointed with oil to highlight its consecration as a place of offering. However, the word altar is likely a metonymy for the conceptually linked item that is placed on the altar, namely a sacrifice. A righteous person makes a good sacrifice first of all because the ethical state of the offeror means that his offering is of the highest quality.¹⁹⁷ The positive ethical state of the offeror is linked to the positive character of the offering.

The second stanza of v. 8 describes the quality of this offering: “Its pleasing odor of the offering is before the Most High.” The antecedent of αὐτῆς is the προσφορά of the first stanza. The term εὐωδία originated in the literal smell of an offering on an altar. The presence of this smell signified that the offering was successful and pleasing to the ὕψιστος, a title that connotes that the God of Israel is supreme above all other deities.¹⁹⁸ In a context where pagan deities were called the Most High [ὕψιστος], this passage

¹⁹⁶ De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 408–11. Bullard thinks that this could refer to the fat itself from the sacrifice that burned when it was on the altar Bullard and Hatton, *A Handbook on Sirach*, 707.

¹⁹⁷ Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter*, 114.

¹⁹⁸ On “sweet smelling” offerings see Gen 8:21; Exod 29:18; Lev 1:9, 13.

reinforced the belief that the God of Israel was the supreme being.¹⁹⁹ Within the cultic worldview, as the offering was burned, its smoke rose to this God's presence; however, as we have already noted, the offering does so because it is the offering of a righteous man. The offering is sweet-smelling before God not simply because of the offering itself, however, but because of the offeror's moral character.

This conclusion is made explicit in v. 9, which highlights the successful nature of a righteous man's offering: "A righteous man's sacrifice [θυσία ἀνδρὸς δικαίου] (part. carrier) is (assumed verb; proc. relational) acceptable [δεκτή], and its memorial [καὶ τὸ μνημόσυνον αὐτῆς] (part. phenomenon) will not be forgotten [οὐκ ἐπιλησθήσεται] (oblique part. sensor; proc. mental)." In the first stanza the subject, as in v. 8, is the sacrifice of a righteous man. Like v. 8, the important characteristic of this sacrifice is that it is made by a righteous man as opposed to the θυσία of the unrighteous man (31:23-24). As noted earlier, θυσία is a catch-all word that is used to describe various types of physical offerings in Sirach (c.f. 7:31; 31:23-24; 45:14, 21). What makes this sacrifice different is found in the attribute of acceptability [δεκτός]. The adjective δεκτός is used throughout the Jewish Scriptures to describe offerings that God approves or accepts (LXX Lev 1:3, 4; 17:4; 22:29; 23:11; Isa 56:7; 60:7; Jer 6:20).²⁰⁰ Significantly to state that the offering is acceptable signifies that it is also effective. The purpose of the

¹⁹⁹ De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 412–15; Dorival, "Le sacrifice," 72–73. Sir 38:11; 45:6; 50:15; Lev 26:31; Amos 5:21; Jud 16:16; Jub. 6.3; 7.5; 16.23; 21.7, 9; 32.4; Pseudo-Philo, *L.A.B.* 3.8 See Hayward, *The Jewish Temple*, 76; De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 415–18. Cf. *Jub.* 20:9; 21:22, 23; 22:19. The title ὑψιστος was frequently used in the Greek Pantheon to describe Zeus as deity with supreme and universal authority. Pindarus, *Nemean* 1.60; 11.2. Aeschylus, 28; Sophocles, *The Philoctetes of Sophocles* 1289; Pausanias, *Pausaniae Graeciae Descriptio* 9.8.5.

²⁰⁰ Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter*, 114; De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 421–22.

offering, which was frequently described as the acquirement of forgiveness, is actually attained by a righteous man.²⁰¹

The second stanza further describes the character of this offering as a memory that will not be forgotten. In the expression its memory [τὸ μνημόσυνον αὐτῆς], the antecedent of αὐτῆς is the θυσία of the first stanza. While the word μνημόσυνον in some Jewish literature does refer to a memorial offering, within Sirach, when it is not modified by a genitive construct which defines what type of offering it is, it always refers to a memory as a mental action.²⁰² Elsewhere in Sirach, the presentation of an offering creates a memory before God (45:16; 50:16), making it likely that here the sacrifice of a righteous man created a memory before the Lord, or a mental action in God. God took notice of it but did not despise it or ignore it. The translator underscores this memorialization in a parallelism “will be forgotten [ἐπιλησθήσεται]” (cf. the oblique participant in v. 6): God will remember and will not forget the offering.²⁰³ It is possible that both the righteous person and his offering will remain in God’s mind, but it is also possible that the sacrifice is more the vehicle for ensuring that the righteous man always remains in God’s mind.

In v. 10 the sage turns again to his student with a series of imperatives: “With a good eye [ἐν ἀγαθῷ ὀφθαλμῷ] (circum. manner) glorify [δόξασον] (part. actor; proc. material) the Lord [τὸν κύριον] (part. range), and do not belittle [καὶ μὴ σμικρύνῃς]

²⁰¹ Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter*, 114.

²⁰² μνημόσυνον refers to a memorial offering in Lev 2:2, 9, 16; 5:12. In Sir 38:11 μνημόσυνον σεμιδάλεως refers to a memorial offering of wheat, but in every other case the unmodified μνημόσυνον refers to a memory (10:17; 23:26; 24:20; 32:9; 38:23; 39 41:9; 41:1; 44:9; 45:1, 9, 11, 16; 46:11; 49:1, 13; 50:16). I disagree with De Zan and Spicq who believe this is a memorial offering. De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 423–25; Spicq, “*Ecclésiastique*,” 742.

²⁰³ Palmisano, *Salvaci, Dio dell’universo!*, 94.

(part. actor; proc. material) the first fruit of your hands [ἀπαρχὴν χειρῶν σου] (part. affected).” The call to glorify the Lord with a good eye [ἐν ἀγαθῷ ὀφθαλμῷ], an expression found only in Sirach (32:12), contrasts with the bad or wicked eye, which the sage does mention elsewhere (14:10; 34:13). The meaning of the phrase in this context can be determined on the basis of the antithesis with inadequate giving of the following stanza.²⁰⁴ In other words, inadequate giving would be to vilify the Lord with a bad eye, while abundant giving glorifies the Lord. Having a good eye means knowing how to glorify the Lord with abundance.

Specifically, the second stanza warns the reader not to diminish the first fruit of his hands. The verb συμκρύνω means to reduce or diminish (cf. Sir 17:25; LXX 1 Chron 16:19; 17:17; Ps 88:46; 106:38).²⁰⁵ The sage may assume that one may at some point in his life be tempted to reduce the quality or number of his sacrifices. Accordingly, the sage cautions against this and implicitly urges his student to increase the offering of the firstfruits [ἀπαρχή], namely the best part, of his produce. Throughout Sirach, there are various references to a portion of the first fruits to be given to the Levitical priests for their nourishment (Sir 7:31; 45:20; cf. LXX Deut 12:11, 17).²⁰⁶ This offering was not just for the benefit of God but, as we have seen above, would also support his ministers. Through both stanzas here the sage reminds his student, who might be tempted to not give the required offerings, not simply to give what is required as offerings to God but to

²⁰⁴ De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 433–36; Spicq, “Ecclésiastique,” 742.

²⁰⁵ Lust, Eynikel, and Hauspie, *Greek-English*, 432; De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 439–41.

²⁰⁶ Cf. Deut 26:2. De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 441–43; Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter*, 115; Snaith, *Ecclesiasticus*, 171. Sauer thinks that this refers to a specific yearly first fruit offering Sauer, *Jesus Sirach/Ben Sira*, 245.

do so abundantly and generously, actions that will demonstrate a law-abiding and virtuous character.

V. 11: “With every act of giving [ἐν πάσῃ δόσει] (circum. location (i.e. temporal)) brighten [ἰλάρωσον] (part. actor; proc. material) your face [τὸ πρόσωπόν σου] (part. affected), and with gladness [καὶ ἐν εὐφροσύνῃ] (circum. manner) consecrate [ἀγιάσον] (proc. material) a tithe [δεκάτην] (part. affected).” Not surprisingly then, in v. 11 the sage turns to his student and reminds him explicitly of the importance of the proper internal attitudes when he presents his offerings. Though the expression ἐν πάσῃ δόσει appears elsewhere in Sirach (Sir 18:15), most of the time δόσις refers to a generic gift (1:10; 4:3); it is sometimes narrowed to a cultic gift as we discern for its use here from the context (7:31; 32:12; cf 1 Esdr 2:4).²⁰⁷ Here the offering is not only to be abundant and generous but is to be given with a particular attention to the physical expression of the offeror: the combination of ἰλαρώω with πρόσωπον refers to the physical action of brightening the face (Sir 7:24).²⁰⁸ In other words, when the student presents the extravagant offering to God, he must do so with a joyful and cheerful expression that evidences the state of the heart.²⁰⁹ The opposite state of being unjoyful and glum, which might suggest an offering given grudgingly, should be avoided when presenting an offering.

The second stanza presents a similar message about the importance of an offeror’s disposition. The phrase ἐν εὐφροσύνῃ designates a state of being joyful or merry (cf. 34:31; 37:4). The sage uses gladness [εὐφροσύνῃ] elsewhere to describe the

²⁰⁷ De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 443–45.

²⁰⁸ ἰλαρώω when used intransitively means to refresh (Sir 43:22). Lust, Eynikel, and Hauspie, *Greek-English*, 214.

²⁰⁹ De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 445–46.

attitude which a worshiper should have before God (1:11, 12; 2:9).²¹⁰ The noun δέκατος refers to the tithe of goods or money that worshipers presented at the Jerusalem Temple. Part of this would be used for the temple sacrifice and the nourishment of the temple personnel (LXX Lev 27:30, 32; Tob 1:6, 7; 5:14; Jdt 11:13; 2 Esd 20:38, 39; 22:44; 23:5, 12). This tithe was consecrated [ἀγιάζω]; this meant that devotees dedicated it exclusively for the sake of God (cf. LXX Lev 27:30, 32; Jdt 11:13).²¹¹ The student must present his tithe in gladness, freely, not grudgingly or wishing that he could do otherwise. The student ought to joyfully contribute to the material support of the Jerusalem Temple and its cultic worship of God. In both stanzas, the sage reminds his student of the importance of his internal attitude and outlook when he presents his sacrifices in order that the sacrifices be acceptable to God rather than rejected because of a false disposition. Mere participation in the cult was not enough.

In v. 12 the sage continues the imperatival instruction concerning offerings to God: “Give [δός] (part. actor; proc. material) to the Most High [ὑψίστῳ] (part. recipient) according to his giving [κατὰ τὴν δόσιν αὐτοῦ] (circum. manner) and with a good eye [καὶ ἐν ἀγαθῷ ὀφθαλμῷ] (circum. manner) according to that found at hand [καθ’ εὔρεμα χεῖρός] (circum. manner).” Three circumstances, that describe how his giving should be carried out, modify the action of giving [δίδωμι] of cultic offerings (Sir 7:31; 38:11). First of all, the recipient is clearly identified not simply by the generic “God” but as the Most High [ὑψιστος]. The proposition κατὰ indicates the standard that the giving should correspond to if the recipient is the Most High.²¹² Throughout the book of Sirach God is

²¹⁰ De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 446–47.

²¹¹ De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 448–50.

²¹² Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 377.

presented as the one who provides gifts [δόσεις] in the form of material prosperity and blessings for his people (11:17; 26:14); here, however, the sage reminds the student that his giving should correspond to what God had given him. In other words, his gifts and offerings should not be the minimal amount required but should correspond to the rich generous gifts that God has given him.

The sage qualifies how the offering to God should be made with two other clauses. The offeror must give with a good eye [ἐν ἀγαθῷ ὀφθαλμῷ], which as I discussed in 32:10, contrasts with a bad or wicked eye (14:10; 34:13). Here, it reinforces my conclusion in 32:10 that what is prescribed by the sage is giving generously as opposed to being stingy and offering a minimal amount.²¹³

In what might almost seem to limit the generosity and abundance noted earlier, the final clause qualifies the amount that should be given in an offering. The word εὑρεμα describes an item that is found or discovered (20:9; 29:4, 6). Its modification by χειρός indicates that you must give according to what you have in your hand, essentially according to what you possess.²¹⁴ The sage clarifies that the amount which must be given must be in accordance with the offeror's wealth. Thus, rather than limiting the abundance to be given, the sage here qualifies the statement only by noting that some people will give more or less of their abundance depending on what abundance they actually possess. The poor cannot give the same as the rich, but both can give of their abundance. In summary, this passage provides three qualifications for how to give to

²¹³ De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 452–53.

²¹⁴ De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 453–54; Di Lella and Skehan, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 419; Spicq, “*Ecclésiastique*,” 742.

God, namely, to give in correspondence to what God has given, generously, and in correspondence to what you own.

The sage provides a clear rationale for his assertion why the student should give generously in v. 13 “because the Lord [ὅτι κύριος] (part. carrier) is [ἐστίν] (proc. relational) the one who repays [ἀνταποδιδούς] (part. attribute), and he will repay [ἀνταποδώσει] (proc. material) you [σοι] (part. recipient) sevenfold [ἑπταπλάσια] (circum. manner).” Beginning with the explicative conjunction ὅτι, the sage argues that the Lord is one who repays what is given to him. The sage uses the verb ἀνταποδίδωμι elsewhere to specify the Lord’s repayment of people’s deeds (17:23; 32:23, 24; cf. LXX Isa 66:6).²¹⁵ The predicate participle ἀνταποδιδούς highlights the Lord as one who will repay the sage’s student. In this case, the good deed of presenting offerings at the temple will be recompensed.

The second stanza reiterates the Lord’s repayment: repeating the same verb used in the first stanza [ἀνταποδίδωμι], the sage’s student [σοι] is reminded that he is the one who will receive the Lord’s recompense. He is, however, also informed that his extravagant giving will not go unnoticed by an equally extravagant God who will repay him sevenfold [ἑπταπλάσια] for his generosity and abundant giving.²¹⁶ The use of the number seven in the LXX conveys an intensifying quality and not necessarily a numeral (cf. Sir 20:12; 40:8; LXX Prov 6:31; Isa 30:26). In this verse, the number seven indicates that the Lord will super-abundantly and overly generously repay what is given to him, as long as the offering is acceptable.²¹⁷ There is, thus, an element here of *do ut*

²¹⁵ De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 454–56.

²¹⁶ De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 457–59.

²¹⁷ Bullard and Hatton, *A Handbook on Sirach*, 709; Snaith, *Ecclesiasticus*, 171.

des, where a worshiper who presents a proper offering to God accompanied by moral virtue, will be reciprocated with material blessings.²¹⁸ However, what this text stresses is that the Most High God does not limit himself in the repayment, even as the offeror did not: the Most High goes beyond the *des* if the offeror goes beyond the *do*.

V. 14: “Do not offer a bribe [Μὴ δωροκόπει] (part. actor; proc. material), for he will not accept it [οὐ γὰρ προσδέξεται] (part. actor; proc. material).” After describing positive offerings in vv. 1-14, the sage turns to final cautions regarding offerings. The sage reminds the student that he must not bribe [δωροκοπέω].²¹⁹ The sage does not say to whom the student offers a bribe, but v. 15 (see below) clarifies that the recipient of the bribe would be the Lord. Here the sage astutely notes the way in which an abundant gift might be construed as an attempt to bribe God. It raises an interesting question: when is an abundant offering a bribe? A bribe through excessive gifts or offerings would be a way to try to influence or corrupt God.²²⁰ But a bribe would seem clearly to be offensive to God. As such, the only way to know the difference between an abundant gift that is a bribe and one that is not would be to know the offeror’s heart and that can only be determined by the offeror’s practice of consistent moral virtue in his life. As a result, an abundant offering is pleasing to God when it comes from a pious worshiper who desires to generously give to God without manipulative intentions.

The second stanza, beginning with the explicative conjunction γὰρ, makes explicit the conclusion that were a worshiper to offer a bribe, God would not receive it.²²¹ The subject of προσδέχομαι is not explicitly stated, but in the context of v. 15, it

²¹⁸ Zapff, *Jesus Sirach 25-51*, 232.

²¹⁹ This is a rare word that only appears here and in 3 Macc 4:19 in the LXX.

²²⁰ De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 459–60.

²²¹ De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 673.

must be the Lord since this verb depicts the acceptance of gifts from God.²²² By stating what will not create a successful offering, the sage implicitly reminds his student, that a requirement of an offering that the Lord will accept, is the offeror's consistent ethical virtue by explicitly stating that an offering, even an abundant offering, with false motives will be rejected.

V. 15: “and do not be intent on [καὶ μὴ ἔπεχε] (part. sensor; proc. mental) an unrighteous sacrifice [θυσία ἀδίκω] (part. phenomenon), because the Lord [ὅτι κύριος] (part. carrier) is judge [κριτής] (part. attribute), and with him there is [καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν] (proc. existential) no reputation of person [παρ' αὐτῷ δόξα προσώπου] (part. existent).” In v. 15 the sage reminds his student to not engage in an unrighteous sacrifice. Though the meaning of the verb ἐπέχω is tricky to translate and its meaning in this verse is disagreed on by scholars because the negative imperative of this verb elsewhere means to trust (Sir 5:1,8; 16:3?), to expect (13:11?; 16:3?), or to hold out/continue (13:11?; 37:11),²²³ in the context of 32:15 it likely means to trust one's self to an unrighteous sacrifice or to expect it to function. As such, the sage reminds the student that the student should not be under a false impression that an unrighteous sacrifice would work. Because the sacrifice is unrighteous (cf. Sir 31:21-31), he should know that God will not accept it, even if it is presented properly according to cultic ritual or is characterized by its opulence or abundance.

Beginning with the explicative conjunction ὅτι, in the final two stanzas, the sage again provides a rationale why his offeror should not trust in an unrighteous offering: the

²²² Sir 7:9; LXX Ps 6:10; Ezek 20:40, 41; Dan 3:39; Hos 8:13; Amos 5:22; Mic 6:7; Mal 1:8, 10, 13; 2 Macc 1:26; Wis 3:6. De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 460–62.

²²³ Both Stadelman and De Zan believe that it describes the act of trust. De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 463–64; Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter*, 116.

Lord, the one who receives these unrighteous offerings, is a judge.²²⁴ But, in the same way that God is a super-abundant and thus non-human giver, so this judge is more than a human judge. As clarified in the third stanza this judge is characterized by a combination of δόξα and πρόσωπον. The combination is not found elsewhere in the LXX. The word glory [δόξα], when possessed by a human in Sirach (Sir 3:10, 11; 7:4; 11:4; 29:6, 27; 30:31), refers to the honour or reputation of that person.²²⁵ In similar literary contexts, a judge is commanded to not have πρόσωπον (LXX Deut 1:17; 16:18-19; 2 Chron 19:6-7). Not to have a πρόσωπον denotes the need for a judge to be impartial and to make a fair and unbiased decision that does not change based on the person before the judge.²²⁶ The phrase παρ' αὐτῷ represents attributes that are with or from God (Sir 5:6; 16:11). The antecedent of αὐτῷ is κύριος from the first stanza. This final stanza, therefore, means that with God there is no partiality because of the fame of a person.²²⁷ Stated positively, God is a fair and just judge. But such qualities are rare in human judges. In fact, when they do occur the judge is deemed to be divinely endowed. Here, too, then, an offeror is reminded that he is offering his gift to a supremely just judge who cares not for an abundance of gifts given by the rich if these are less in proportion to the fewer gifts given more abundantly by the poor. In conclusion, in vv. 14-15 the sage teaches that the recipient of offerings is unbiased and cannot be influenced by bribes or an offeror's social fame. This passage highlights that the offeror's moral virtue remains the primary quality that is essential for a successful offering.

²²⁴ Sirach uses κριτής elsewhere to describe a human judge (7:6; 8:14; 10:1, 2, 24; 41:18; 46:11). Elsewhere in the LXX it is used as a divine title (LXX 1 Sam 24:16; 2 Macc 12:6; Ps 7:12; 49:6; 67:6; 74:8; Isa 30:18; 33:22; 63:7). De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 264–65.

²²⁵ De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 468–69.

²²⁶ De Zan, *Il culto che Dio gradisce*, 465–68.

²²⁷ Bullard and Hatton, *A Handbook on Sirach*, 711.

Interpersonal Features

The main characters in this lengthy passage are God (31:23, 29; 32:5-6, 8, 10, 12-13, 15), the unrighteous offeror (31:21-24), the immoral example (31:24-27), the futile example (31:28-31), the righteous offeror (32:1-4, 8-9), and the sage's student/child/reader (32:6, 10-15). Whereas the passage begins with a third-person description of past events, at the end, the sage instructs his student or reader in the second-person [σου; σοι]. The third-person examples are instructive to his student whom he commands with imperatives derived from his observation of others.

Since there is an abundance of verbs in this section — 53 in total — I will condense my analysis of them for space purposes. In 31:21-31, there are a series of substantival participles that compare unrighteous offerors with negative examples. The sage narrates this section completely in the third-person except for two rhetorical questions to the reader. The third-person chronicles events that do not directly involve the sage or his second-person reader.²²⁸ Interestingly, throughout this section, the subject of all the indicative verbs is God or the writing sage who presents a hypothetical question. There is a pattern where the sage narrates a scenario using participles which then turns to an indicative judgement of that reality by God or the sage. V. 21 possesses two present participles that portray negative offerors [Θυσιάζων; μεμωμημένη]. The use of a present participle indicates that these actions occur simultaneously with the indicative verbs in v. 23.²²⁹ The first present active indicative verbs appear in v. 23 where God is not pleased with and does not forgive such offerors [εὐδοκεῖ;

²²⁸ Porter, *Idioms*, 77.

²²⁹ Fanning, *Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek*, 407.

ἐξιλάσκειται]. God is not presently pleased with such offerings that he receives. The same pattern occurs with present participles that describe negative offerors and examples of impiety in vv. 24-28 [θύων; προσάγων; ἐπιδομένων; ἀποστερῶν; φονεύων; ἀφαιρούμενος; ἐκχέων; ἀποστερῶν; οἰκοδομῶν; καθαιρῶν]. These actions are simultaneous with the indicative verb in v. 28. In v. 28 the discourse turns to the sage's rhetorical question about the efficacy of such actions using an aorist indicative verb [ὠφέλησαν]. He asks his audience if these actions had any benefit? The use of the aorist indicative indicates that the various negative actions of vv. 24-28 are completed events that had no benefit. V. 29 has two present participles [εὐχόμενος; καταρώμενος]. These participles are simultaneous with the following future verb where the sage states a rhetorical question that asks about the Lord's responsive listening [εἰσακούσεται]. The use of the future tense indicates that the dependent participial actions of praying and cursing as well as the Lord's listening are portrayed as prospective events.²³⁰ This same pattern of v. 29 occurs in v. 30 where two present participles [βαπτίζόμενος; ἀπτόμενος] are followed by an aorist indicative verb [ὠφέλησεν]. The use of the aorist indicates that these actions are completed examples that are judged as non-beneficial. Finally, in v. 31 there are two active participles [νηστεύων; πορευόμενος] followed by a future indicative verb [εἰσακούσεται]. Like v. 29, these actions are viewed as prospective possibilities; if this situation happens, God will not listen! In the final stanza, there is a final rhetorical question: what benefited [ὠφέλησεν] when he was humbled [ἐν τῷ ταπεινωθῆναι αὐτόν]? The infinitive [ταπεινωθῆναι] is governed by the accusative subject αὐτόν. It does not say what he was humbled by; although in the context, it refers to penitential

²³⁰ Porter, *Idioms*, 44.

actions. The use of the prepositional construction ἐν with an infinitive highlights this action as simultaneous with the indicative ὠφέλησεν.²³¹ Essentially, when he was humbled, how did it benefit him? In 31:21-31, the use of the third-person allows the sage to describe events for his student and himself to observe. Unrighteous offerors and their exemplars are portrayed as (a) completed events that did not benefit themselves, (b) ongoing or future events that are not pleasing to God, and (c) as a result they will not be responded to. When classifying the mood, the use of the indicative indicates that these events are primarily assertive whereas the two future verbs describe expectative situations.

When we turn to 32:1-15, we find the opening vv. 1-5 following a similar pattern of using third-person discourse as well as present participles and present indicative verbs. There are a series of present participles which portray positive offerors [συντηρῶν; θυσιάζων; προσέχων; ἀνταποδιδούς; προσφέρων; ποιῶν; θυσιάζων]. There are several assumed equative verbs in these verses that are temporally simultaneous with the one present indicative verb [πλεονάζει] (v. 1). The sage portrays all the non-indicative actions (i.e. participles, infinitives) as occurring simultaneously with the indicative ongoing action. He asserts them as ongoing realities. The mood changes in v. 6 where the sage begins to address his reader using second-person imperatives and the negated subjunctive.²³² The aorist passive subjunctive μὴ ὀφθῆς functions as a negative command to the reader. The subject of the passive verb, who sees the reader, in the context is God. Although this is an aorist verb, because it is in the subjunctive mood, its temporality is present (see the present indicative in vv. 1, 8). V. 8 turns back to the verb

²³¹ Porter, *Idioms*, 201.

²³² Palmisano, *Salvaci, Dio dell'universo!*, 72, 94.

λιπαίνει which describes the ongoing reality of a righteous offering. Using the indicative, the sage makes the expectation that it will not be forgotten [ἐπιλησθήσεται]. God is the passive subject who will not forget this offering. In vv. 11-12 the sage addresses his second-person reader with five imperatives which direct how he should positively present his offerings [δόξασον; μὴ σμικρύνῃς; ἰλάρωσον; ἀγιάσον; δός]. V. 13 turns back to third-person indicative assertions about God's character that explain why these offerings should be presented [ἐστίν; ἀνταποδώσει]. The sage asserts the present and ongoing reality of God's character of repayment and the expectation that he will repay. Vv. 14-15 turn back to a mixture of second-person imperatives directed to his student [δωροκόπει; ἔπεχε] as well as third-person indicative verbs that describe God's person and actions [προσδέξεται; ἐστίν; ἐστιν].

It is possible to make some summary statements regarding the mood in this section. As noted, there are 53 verbs total, of which we find 27 participles; 3 infinitives; 8 directives (either imperatives or negative subjunctives); and 15 indicative verbs. Of the indicative verbs, in two examples the positive offeror or offering is the subject (32:1, 8), three times the sage asks a rhetorical question (31:28, 30-31), and 10 times God is the subject (31:23; 29, 31; 32:9, 13-15). What this suggests is that in the interpersonal dynamic between God and the righteous offerors, God is consistently described as the main actor using an indicative verb and the actions of the righteous occur simultaneously with his approval or rejection. Between the sage and his reader, the reader is only ever addressed with a second-person directive, highlighting his subservient status and need to submit to the sage's teaching. In conclusion, the interpersonal dynamics in this passage indicate that it focuses on God's activity to certain actions and the need for the reader who associates himself with the student to respond by living righteously.

Conclusion

Within this passage, the sage instructs his student about sacrifice and offerings. Offerors who engage in immoral lifestyles do not present pleasing offerings to God (31:21-31) whereas those who follow God's law do live morally consistent lives that produce pleasing offerings (32:1-5). The sage turns to his student and commands him to be a righteous offeror and present offerings himself (32:6-15). The sage depicts both material sacrifices as well as offerings of piety. He generally expected that the reader in Egypt would participate in Jerusalem worship. The persuasive commands contribute to the sage's authoritative role over his student. The sage mentions offerings of piety such as repentance that could be practiced wherever the worshiper was. The stated purpose of an offering was for God to respond with forgiveness and reciprocal repayment. The recipient of these offerings was the God of Israel alone who was concerned with the moral lifestyle of his worshipers. He would only accept an offering that was accompanied by an offeror who maintained consistent moral virtue with his neighbours. The sage thus inseparably linked ritual and lifestyle.

38:9-11 Offerings to the Lord when Sick

⁹ Τέκνον, ἐν ἀρρωστίματί σου μὴ παράβλεπε, ἀλλ' εὖξαι κυρίῳ, καὶ αὐτὸς ἰάσεται σε·	⁹ Child, do not be negligent in your illness, but pray to the Lord, and he will heal you.
¹⁰ ἀπόστησον πλημμέλειαν καὶ εὐθνον χεῖρας καὶ ἀπὸ πάσης ἀμαρτίας καθάρισον καρδίαν·	¹⁰ Stay away from error and direct your hands, and cleanse your heart from every sin.
¹¹ δὸς εὐωδῖαν καὶ μνημόσυνον σεμιδάλεως καὶ λίπανον προσφορὰν ὡς μὴ ὑπάρχων.	¹¹ Give a sweet smelling offering and a memorial of the fine flour, and pour the offering like one who does not exist.

Sickness was an everyday reality in Ptolemaic Egypt. As I discussed in relation to 30:17-20, Jews believed that sickness had multiple causes, such as evil spirits, natural causes (e.g., overeating), and divine punishment. In 38:1-15 the sage provides advice for dealing with illness.²³³ He portrays natural remedies provided through a physician or druggist (vv. 1-8), an appeal to the Lord through offerings (vv. 9-11), and the entrustment of oneself to the physician whom God guided (vv. 12-15). Before the Second Temple Period, Jews' access to medicine was very limited and medical practices were often portrayed negatively because of their association with witchcraft, foreign deities, and because some believed that the use of a physician was a lack of faith in God to heal.²³⁴

²³³ Most commentators see there to be natural section in 38:1-15, see Bullard and Hatton, *A Handbook on Sirach*, 756–57; Snaith, *Ecclesiasticus*, 183–85; Sauer, *Jesus Sirach/Ben Sira*, 260–63; Daniel Sulmasy, “The Covenant within the Covenant: Doctors and Patients in Sirach 38:1-15,” *Linacre Q* 55.4 (1988): 14–24; Brendan McConvery, “Ben Sira’s ‘Praise of the Physician’ (Sir 38:1-15) in the Light of Some Hippocratic Writings,” *PIBA* 21 (1998): 62–86; Sijbolt Noorda, “Illness and Sin, Forgiving and Healing. The Connection of Medical Treatment and Religious Beliefs in Ben Sira 38, 1-15,” in *Studies in Hellenistic Religions*, ed. Maarten Jozef Vermaseren, ÉPRO 78 (Leiden: Brill, 1979); Di Lella and Skehan, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 441; Hogan, *Healing in the Second Tempel Period*, 41–42. Some identify a natural subsection of religious duties in 38:9-11, Zapff, *Jesus Sirach 25-51*, 255; Burkard Zapff, “Sir 38,1-15 als Beispiel der Verknüpfung von Tradition und Innovation bei Jesus Sirach,” *Biblica* 92.3 (2011): 358, 362; Alois Stöger, “Der Arzt nach Jesus Sirach (38,1-15),” *ArztChr* 11 (1965): 8; Eberharter, *Das Buch Jesus Sirach*, 126–27.

²³⁴ The most common pattern was for Jews to turn to God himself for healing (Exod 15:25; Deut 32:39) although there were some rudimentary medicines used (Jer 8:22; 2 Kgs 20:7-27; Isa 38:21; Tob 11:12). Physicians are frequently portrayed negatively. LXX Isaiah 26:14 negatively states that physicians will not rise in the resurrection: “But the dead certainly will not see life, and healers will by no means rise up [ἰατροὶ οὐ μὴ ἀναστήσωσιν].” King Asa was apparently chastised for visiting a physician (2 Chron 16:12-13; cf. Job 13:4). Surprisingly Philo describes the use of physicians negatively: “For when any thing

In the poem of the physician and healing found in Greek Sirach, the sage takes a very different approach and notes the compatibility between a faith in God as a healer as well as the ability of newly acquired medicinal practices as a process by which God heals people: “Honor a physician for his services with honors, for the Lord created him also. For healing is from the Most High” (38:1-2).²³⁵ The ultimate cause of healing was the God of Israel because only through him could the doctor and medicine cure an illness (vv. 8, 14). Because God is the ultimate cause, he must be petitioned in prayer and offerings by both the sick person (vv. 9-11) and the doctor (v. 14): “For they, too, will pray to the Lord, that he might prosper them with rest and healing for the sake of preserving life” (v. 14).²³⁶ The centrality of God as the omnipotent agent concludes this passage in v. 15 where the sage states a warning that if someone defies God, he will end up in the hands of a physician, because he will be afflicted with illness: “He who sins before him who made him, may he fall [ἐμπέσοι] into a physician’s hands” (v. 15; *NETS*).²³⁷ Patients and doctors have responsibilities to God and one another to successfully remove an illness.²³⁸ Since offerings and prayer directed to God are part of

unexpected befalls them, inasmuch as they did not previously believe firmly in God the Saviour, they take refuge in the assistance of created things, of physicians, of herbs, of the composition of drugs...And if any one were to say to them, “Flee, O ye wretched men, to Him who is the only physician for the diseases of the soul, and discard all this falsely called assistance which ye are seeking to find in the creature who is subject to the same sufferings as yourselves” (*Sacrifices* 70). Medicine is part of divination and the worship of pagan gods in Homer, *Odyssey* 4.225-235. Sulmasy, “The Covenant within the Covenant,” 16–17; McConvery, “Ben Sira’s ‘Praise of the Physician,’” 63–64; Zapff, “Sir 38,1-15,” 349–50; Stöger, “Der Arzt nach Jesus Sirach,” 5–6; Noorda, “Illness and Sin,” 220, n.17; Marco Adinolfi, “Il medico in Sir 38,1-15,” *Anton* 62.2/3 (1987): 175; Dieter Lührmann, “Aber auch dem Arzt gib Raum (Sir 38,1-15),” *WD* 15 (1979): 55–57; Johannes Marböck, “‘Auch dem Arzt gewähre Raum...’ (Sir 38,12). Schöpfer, Wissenschaft und Frömmigkeit in Sir 38,1-15,” in *Ästhetik, sinnlicher Genuss und gute Manieren*, ed. Melanie Peetz and Sandra Huebenthal, ÖBS 50 (Bern: Peter Lang, 2018), 416–17.

²³⁵ Revelation and reason are synthesized in the sage’s teaching. Sulmasy, “The Covenant within the Covenant,” 19; McConvery, “Ben Sira’s ‘Praise of the Physician,’” 72; Stöger, “Der Arzt nach Jesus Sirach,” 3, 11; Marböck, “Auch dem Arzt gewähre Raum,” 421.

²³⁶ Hogan, *Healing in the Second Tempel Period*, 44–45.

²³⁷ Hogan, *Healing in the Second Tempel Period*, 46–47.

²³⁸ Sulmasy, “The Covenant within the Covenant,” 22.

the sage's worldview, it is not surprising that he instructs his student that a patient must enact his religious duties that are part of his covenantal relationship so that God could cure him.²³⁹

Jewish communities would have read this passage within the context of Ptolemaic Egypt where they lived in proximity to Greek culture and new forms of Greek learning, which included rudimentary medicinal practices. Egypt, as early as the fifth century BC, was renowned within the Greek-speaking world for the number of its doctors and medical specialists.²⁴⁰ The practice of using drugs or the employment of a physician originated outside of Jewish culture and may have seemed foreign if not threatening to some within that community. Speaking to this context, the sage reaffirms his methodological commitment to include and synthesize useful aspects of foreign cultures within the religious worldview of a faithful Jew. This passage affirms the value of medicine that originated outside of Israel as an instrument by which God providentially cares for his people. For those reading Sirach within a culturally pluralistic context, it demonstrated an irenic attitude toward foreign knowledge and the good it could provide. Jews could incorporate Greek medicinal practices into their religious response to illness. In vv. 9-11, the sage encouraged his students to engage in repentance and prayer, which they easily performed in Egypt, and to present material offerings to God, which encouraged the visitation of and cultic performance in the Jerusalem Temple.

²³⁹ Zapff, "Sir 38,1-15," 362.

²⁴⁰ Herodotus, *The Histories* 2.84. McConvery, "Ben Sira's 'Praise of the Physician,'" 75; Adinolfi, "Il medico in Sir 38,1-15," 175; Snaith, *Ecclesiasticus*, 184.

Ideational Features

V. 9a “Child [Τέκνον] (part. sensor), do not be negligent [μὴ παράβλεπε] (proc. mental) in your illness [ἐν ἀρρωστίματί σου] (circum. location (i.e. temporal).” In the first stanza of verse 9, the literary sage, although not named, addresses the student as a child [τέκνον] who receives his instruction. As a mental process, he commands the child not to overlook [μὴ παράβλεπε] his own illness.²⁴¹ The sage thus attempts to convince the student to avoid ignoring a potentially debilitating reality.²⁴²

In the second stanza (v. 9b), however, the student is encouraged to pray to one who will receive his prayers: “but pray [ἀλλ’ εὕξαι] (proc. material) to the Lord [κυρίῳ] (part. recipient), and he [καὶ αὐτὸς] (part. actor) will heal [ιάσεταιί] (proc. material) you [σε] (part. affected).” While prayers are not concretely visible like material offerings, to pray is a material process where the child presents verbal acknowledgements and petitions to God. That prayers function like offerings is clear from the second clause in which the Lord [αὐτὸς], who is the subject, will respond to the prayers: the Lord will heal [ιάσεταιί] you [σε], the ill student.

V. 10: “Stay away [ἀπόστησον] (proc. material) from error [πλημμέλειαν] (part. affected) and direct [καὶ εὐθύνον] (proc. material) your hands [χεῖρας] (part. affected), and cleanse [καθάρισον] (proc. material) your heart [καρδίαν] (part. affected) from every sin [καὶ ἀπὸ πάσης ἁμαρτίας] (circum. matter).” After turning to God in prayer,

²⁴¹ The verb *παρὰβλέπω* refers to the act of looking aside so as not to see. Bauer et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 757; Bullard and Hatton, *A Handbook on Sirach*, 762.

²⁴² The categorization of the clause *ἐν ἀρρωστίματί σου* hinges on whether *ἐν* functions temporally to describe the circumstance (during your sickness) or the direct object (i.e. phenomenon) of the mental process (concerning your sickness). Likely *ἐν* functions temporally and refers to a situation of sickness when the sage wants his child to not be negligent (see the current situation of needing care in vv. 7-8). Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 372.

the sage then directs the child to turn from evil deeds to prayer in v. 10.²⁴³ Returning to the ground for acceptable offerings previously, here the sage notes that if the healing of illness required a turning from moral impurity, the child needed not just to turn to God but also to change his manner of life. This verse contains three imperative verbs which are all material processes that outline actions that the child is to undertake. First, he must depart from sin or trespass [ἀπόστησον πλημμέλειαν]. The verb ἀφίστημι could be better glossed as remove, outlining the active nature of the child removing not himself from the situation, but the object of sin itself from his life.²⁴⁴ Second, his hands [χεῖρας] must be made straight, a symbolic statement intended to encourage the student to seek honesty, purity, and innocence.²⁴⁵ Thus the sage calls for the student to turn from evil and to be morally upright.²⁴⁶ Finally, the sage calls the student to cleanse [καθάρισον] the heart [καρδίαν], modified by the prepositional phrase from all sin [ἀπὸ πάσης ἀμαρτίας]. The object that the student must cleanse is his heart from the sin that had dirtied it. Heart likely stands as a metonymy, where the participant of the heart, symbolizing the center of the person, functions to represent the whole person. If this heart is laden down or stained with sin or transgression, then the sage charges the student to cleanse himself entirely from sin!

This verse addresses a strong sense of personal sin that has been or could be committed by the student, understood as a sick patient. The sickness must be remedied by personal repentance, which gets at the actual cause. This passage (38:1-15) outlines

²⁴³ Zapff, *Jesus Sirach 25-51*, 255.

²⁴⁴ Lust, Eynikel, and Hauspie, *Greek-English*, 73.

²⁴⁵ In contrast, to have your hands crossed was a symbol of impurity or dishonesty. Spicq, “*Ecclésiastique*,” 759. McConvery understands straight hands to refer to a protest to show one’s status of moral innocence, McConvery, “Ben Sira’s ‘Praise of the Physician,’” 74.

²⁴⁶ Zapff, *Jesus Sirach 25-51*, 256.

both natural and spiritual steps to remedy that sickness. It reveals the sage's assumption concerning what could have spiritually harmed his reader. Like many other Second Temple texts, moral impurity, described as sin or trespass, was the dominant category used to describe the human condition caused by immoral actions. The sage assumes that sin could be a cause of the illness, therefore a sick person needs to remove this sin if he wants to be cured.²⁴⁷ At the end of this verse, this passage does not say how he ought to cleanse his heart from his sin, but only that he must cleanse it.

The sage links this command to the following verse (v. 11) which states how his student can remove this sin. It is here in the first stanza (11a) that we find our reference to offering: "Give [δὸς] (proc. material) a sweet smelling offering and a memorial of the fine flour [εὐὸδίαν καὶ μνημόσυνον σεμιδάλεως] (part. affected)." This final verse in this section includes two more imperatives for the student to follow. The sage links these commands to the previous stanza, where he displays how he can cleanse his heart and remove his sin through sacrifice.²⁴⁸ Prayer and repentance (v. 10) find their visible cultic expression in offerings (v. 11).²⁴⁹ In the first stanza, he commands the child to give [δὸς] two different types of material offerings. He must present a sweet-smelling offering [εὐὸδίαν] and a memorial offering of flour [μνημόσυνον σεμιδάλεως]. These offerings refer to a sweet-smelling incense offering and a grain offering that was normally

²⁴⁷ The centrality of sin as a cause of illness appears at the end of this section: "May the one who sins before his maker fall into the hands of a physician" (v. 15). J. Nelis, "Sir 38,15," in *Von Kanaan bis Kerala*, ed. J. Ploeg et al., AOAT 211 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1982), 181; Noorda, "Illness and Sin," 223; Israel Levi, *L'Ecclésiastique, ou, La Sagesse de Jésus, fils de Sira*, vol. 2 of *BEHS:SSR* 10 (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1901), 198, n. 10; Lührmann, "Aber auch dem Arzt gib Raum," 65.

²⁴⁸ Zapff notes that in v. 10 "aktives kultisches Handeln, das Sühne bewirkt," Zapff, "Sir 38,1-15," 362; Eberharter, *Das Buch Jesus Sirach*, 127.

²⁴⁹ Stöger, "Der Arzt nach Jesus Sirach," 8.

presented in temple worship.²⁵⁰ Sweet-smelling [εὐωδία] was originally a characteristic of an incense offering in which by metonymy a part of the offering refers to the whole. A memorial [μνημόσυνον] of a grain offering indicated the portion of a wheat offering placed on the altar. The priests received the rest of the wheat offering for their nourishment.²⁵¹

The second stanza (v. 11b) further describes the presentation of offerings: “and pour [καὶ λίπανον] (proc. material) the offering [προσφορὰν] (part. affected).” In this second stanza, the sage commands his child to anoint or enrich [λίπανον] an offering [προσφορὰν]. The meaning of this stanza is unclear because the verb λιπαίνω could be understood to “make fat or enrich (Sir 32:8)” or “anoint (LXX Ps 22:5).”²⁵² Depending on this word’s meaning, it changes the meaning from metaphorically improving an offering (i.e. make it fatty) to specially anointing an offering with oil. If the sage intended the metaphorical usage, because that culture highly valued animal fat or oil, the use of oil symbolized the presentation of the best offering possible.²⁵³ If the cultic language of LXX Lev 2:1-3 was in mind, this could refer to the pouring of oil on an

²⁵⁰ After the destruction of the Second Temple, there exists positive evidence of Jewish synagogues that offered incense. While it is possible that Second Temple synagogues offered incense, there is not sufficient data to currently state this. The mention of both a grain and incense offering here makes it clear that this referred to temple worship since grain offerings were not presented in a synagogue. Abraham Shemesh, “Those Who Require ‘[...] The Burning of Incense in Synagogues Are the Rabbinic Jews’: Burning Incense in Synagogues in Commemoration of the Temple,” *HTS* 73.3 (2017): 1–3.

²⁵¹ Many scholars see an allusion to the events described in LXX Lev 2:1-3. Bullard and Hatton, *A Handbook on Sirach*, 763; Snaith, *Ecclesiasticus*, 185; Zapff, *Jesus Sirach 25-51*, 256; Mopsik, *La sagesse de ben sira*, 220, n. 6. Others see an allusion to personal expiation in Leviticus 5, Hilaire Duesberg, “Le médecin, un sage? (Eccl. 38, 1-15),” *BVC* 38 (1961): 47.

²⁵² Lust, Eynikel, and Hauspie, *Greek-English*, 282–83.

²⁵³ Di Lella and Skehan, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 440; Lührmann, “Aber auch dem Arzt gib Raum,” 66.

offering to make it as rich as possible.²⁵⁴ The precedence of pouring oil on an offering elsewhere indicates that the sage likely indicates the latter meaning.

The final stanza (v. 11c) states “like one who does not exist [ὡς μὴ ὑπάρχων] (circum. manner)” proves difficult to understand. There is confusion about the meaning of this stanza in the available Hebrew versions, which means that likely the Greek translation reflected this unclarity.²⁵⁵ The Greek version introduces a comparative clause “like the one who does not exist [ὡς μὴ ὑπάρχων].”²⁵⁶ Spicq has suggested that this is an early textual error that originally read as ὡς τὸ ὑπάρχων, which would indicate according to your possession (cf. LXX 1 Kdgm 9:7). This spelling would mean that this comparative statement (circum. matter) notes that the offering must be in accordance with the wealth of the offeror. A wealthy person should not give a lesser offering out of his excess whatever his wealth level, a worshipper always needed to present the best.²⁵⁷ The sage does not state the recipient of these offerings, but if one looks at v. 9, one will see that the recipient of the prayer is the Lord [κυρίῳ]. Whereas in v. 10, the child is instructed to change himself and his actions, in vv. 9 and 11, he must present his transcendent actions of prayer and offerings to the God of Israel. Both actions, in tandem with his own decision to modify his behaviour, are part of his spiritual responsibility to ensure his moral rectitude so that God could heal his illness.

²⁵⁴ Bullard and Hatton, *A Handbook on Sirach*, 763; Zapff, *Jesus Sirach 25-51*, 256; Spicq, “*Ecclésiastique*,” 759.

²⁵⁵ The later Latin version removed this stanza because it was not understood. Wright, “*Wisdom of Iesus Son of Sirach*,” 750; Di Lella and Skehan, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 440; Bullard and Hatton, *A Handbook on Sirach*, 763; Noorda, “*Illness and Sin*,” 220, n. 16.

²⁵⁶ Duesberg has interpreted μὴ ὑπάρχων to signify giving an offering “come se non fosse fatto da te [as if it were not made by you; author’s translation],” Duesberg and Franssen, *Ecclésiastique*, 264, n. 11.

²⁵⁷ Spicq, “*Ecclésiastique*,” 759. A similar observation is seen in Levi, *L’Ecclésiastique vol. 2*, 198.

Within the context of Ptolemaic Egypt, this passage outlines important cultic assumptions. A successful offering to the God of Israel, which would remove illness, required that the offeror not just present a worthy offering (v. 11) but that he also personally remove his sin and change his behaviour (v. 10). This passage subtly reveals the assumption present in many Second Temple Jewish writings that the God of Israel required holistic moral uprightness in all areas of life and true repentance so that material offerings at the Jerusalem Sanctuary are successful. This text also depicts an aspect of worship in the Jerusalem Temple, which supports this study's view that Diaspora Jews were expected to demonstrate mental respect for Jerusalem's cultic worship and even participate in it themselves when possible.

Interpersonal Features

Within the text, there are three literary participants. First, the teaching sage provides words of wisdom that he imparts. Second, the recipient of this teaching is the student or child whom he addresses using the vocative child [τέκνον], as well as two personal pronouns [σου; σε (v. 9)], and seven second-person imperatives. The third participant is the Lord (v. 9), who as a third person, receives prayers and offerings as well as heals the repentant child. An authority dynamic is clearly present in this text: the child never presents his thinking or circumstances; the sage expects that he will obey the commands of his superior and give of himself to the Lord. If the student does not submit to this structure, he will remain affiliated with his illness. On the literary level, the reader/audience is the child who receives this instruction from the teaching sage. This suggests that Sirach also expects the reader in Ptolemaic Egypt to submit to the sage's taught propositions concerning the means of removing illness.

When we turn to the verbal analysis of this passage, we note that there are nine verbs present within this three-verse section: seven are second-person imperatives, there is one third-person indicative denoting the Lord's future action, and there is a final substantival participle. The use of the present and aorist imperatives, which are atemporal, directly address the learning child and consequently the reader of the text [μὴ παράβλεπε; εὔξαι; ἀπόστησον; εὔθυνον; καθάρισον; δός; λίπανον]. The use of the imperative directs the actions of the learner, creating a mood of direction. He must conform to these actions and worldview. The future middle deponent verb *ιάσεται* is not strictly temporally future. The use of the future tense is prospective or looking toward the future.²⁵⁸ From the perspective of verbal aspect, God's act of healing will occur after the reader follows these commands. In response to the actions of the child, God's act of healing is a potential reality that can occur.

The final participle is either a present singular masculine participle *ὑπάρχων* or a present singular neuter participle *ὑπάρχον*. The use of the present tense in the participle indicates that the action of existing or being a possession is simultaneous with the two imperatives of giving and anointing (v. 11).²⁵⁹ This action of not being existent must accompany the presentation of these offerings. Perhaps here, too, we can see the authoritarian relationship in which the sage's command to the student for a remedy to his spiritual faults applies whether a student exists or not or whether the student who does exist follows through on the command.

Conclusion

²⁵⁸ Porter, *Idioms*, 44.

²⁵⁹ Porter, *Idioms*, 188.

This study has examined in this passage how God heals sick people through natural means and by their religious piety. Sin and transgression are potential causes of an illness. God's cure for an ill person is contingent upon the sick person seeking moral virtue and forgiveness. If the spiritual sickness of sin or transgression has set in, the patient must pray, turn away from sinful actions, and offer sacrifices.

For my study of offerings, the analysis of this passage helps to highlight various assumptions about cultic offerings presented to a deity. The sage affirms the value of material offerings in the Jerusalem Temple to the God of Israel. The only stated purpose of these offerings is the removal of the debt or stain of sin. The removal of sin presumably repaired the relationship between the individual and God so that God would heal him. The authoritative sage teaches this cultic worldview to an audience in Ptolemaic Egypt which they are expected to agree to and practice. Their obedience to his commands contributes to his authoritative status but also ultimately to their well-being if they choose to adhere to them.

45:14-16, 20-22 - The Offerings of Aaron to the Lord

<p>¹⁴ θυσίαι αὐτοῦ ὀλοκαρπωθήσονται καθ' ἡμέραν ἐνδελεχῶς δίς.</p>	<p>¹⁴ His sacrifice shall be completely burned each day, twice, continuously.</p>
<p>¹⁵ ἐπλήρωσεν Μωσῆς τὰς χεῖρας καὶ ἔχρισεν αὐτὸν ἐν ἐλαίῳ ἁγίῳ· ἐγενήθη αὐτῷ εἰς διαθήκην αἰῶνος καὶ ἐν τῷ σπέρματι αὐτοῦ ἐν ἡμέραις οὐρανοῦ λειτουργεῖν αὐτῷ ἅμα καὶ ιερατεῦειν καὶ εὐλογεῖν τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι.</p>	<p>¹⁵ Moses ordained him and anointed him with sacred olive oil; it became an eternal covenant with him and with his seed, as long as the sky endures, to minister to him together and to serve as a priest, and to bless his people by the name.</p>
<p>¹⁶ ἐξελέξατο αὐτὸν ἀπὸ παντὸς ζῶντος προσάγαγεῖν κάρπωσιν κυρίῳ, θυμίαμα καὶ εὐωδίαν εἰς μνημόσυνον, ἐξιλάσκεσθαι περὶ τοῦ λαοῦ.</p>	<p>¹⁶ He chose him from all who are living, to offer burnt offerings to the Lord, incense and a sweet smell as a memorial, to make atonement for your people.</p>
<p>²⁰ καὶ προσέθηκεν Ααρων δόξαν καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ κληρονομίαν· ἀπαρχὰς πρωτογενημάτων ἐμέρισεν αὐτῷ, ἄρτον ἐν πρώτοις ἡτοίμασεν ἐν πλησμονῇ·</p>	<p>²⁰ And he added glory to Aaron and gave him an inheritance; he allotted them the firstfruits of the first products; he prepared bread in abundance at the first.</p>
<p>²¹ καὶ γὰρ θυσίας κυρίου φάγονται, ἃς ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ τε καὶ τῷ σπέρματι αὐτοῦ.</p>	<p>²¹ For they also will eat the sacrifices of the Lord, which he gave to him and to his seed.</p>
<p>²² πλὴν ἐν γῆ λαοῦ οὐ κληρονομήσει, καὶ μερίς οὐκ ἔστιν αὐτῷ ἐν λαῷ· αὐτὸς γὰρ μερίς σου καὶ κληρονομία.</p>	<p>²² Moreover, he will receive no inheritance in the land of the people, and there is no allotment for him among the people, for he is your allotment, an inheritance.</p>

Unlike the previously discussed sections whose literary genre was didactic poetry or direct imperatives, the last three of the passages for analysis occur within a narrative section of the book. The first of these three passages is, as I noted in my introduction to Sirach, the praise of the fathers' saga (ch. 44-50), a didactic narrative. It retells the exemplary heroes and deeds of the great Jewish tradition. The sage draws on past events for the sake of the enlightenment and formation of his present audience.²⁶⁰ These mini stories provide models of men and some unnamed women who embodied the divine wisdom upon which the sage drew in instructing the student in the previous part

²⁶⁰ Robert Siebenack, "May Their Bones Return to Life!—Sirach's Praise of the Fathers," *CBQ* 21.4 (1959): 414.

of the book (ch. 1-43).²⁶¹ As a result, the praise of the fathers acted as a series of examples [*Beispielreihe*] who actualized virtues that the reader ought to emulate.²⁶² The sage engages in “canonical assimilation” as he summarizes for his hearers the stories of the Jewish Scriptures.²⁶³ The student is meant to hear and imitate the stories of these heroes who lived out this divine wisdom.

For example, in 44:23-45:26, the sage exalts the three exemplary priests Moses, Aaron, and Phineas.²⁶⁴ In the story of Aaron (45:6-22), the sage portrays different aspects of Aaron’s person and duties: God exalts the holy man Aaron (v. 6), God gives him an eternal covenant to be a priest (7a), he is clothed with stunning priestly garments (7b-13), he presents sacrifices to the Lord (vv. 14-16), he teaches the people (v. 17), rebels oppose him (vv. 18-19), and he receives an inheritance and a portion of the Lord’s sacrifices (vv. 20-22).²⁶⁵ Through Moses, God granted Aaron and his descendants the

²⁶¹ The paucity of references to women (46:13, 47; 48:19, 49:7) may be due to Sirach’s intention to be used as a handbook to instruct young men as well as because throughout the poem it lauded those who embodied sage like qualities who were normally men because of the educational conditions of that time period. Núria Calduch-Benages, “El silencio sobre las heroínas de Israel en el ‘Elogio de los Antepasados’ (Sir 44-50),” *Salm* 62.1 (2015): 25–42; Jolanta Pudełko, “The (Apparent) Absence of Women in the Praise of the Ancestors (Sir 44–49),” *TBA* 6.63/1 (2016): 107–26.

²⁶² See similar forms in 1 Macc 2:51-60; 3 Macc 2:3-8; 4 Macc 16:15-23; 18:9-19. Thomas Lee, *Studies in the Form of Sirach 44-50*, SBLDS 75 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1986), 32–33, 242; Renzo Petraglio, *Il libro che contamina le mani: Ben Sirac rilegge il libro e la storia d’Israele*, Theo 4 (Palermo: Augustinus, 1993), 17–18; Siebeneck, “May Their Bones Return to Life!—Sirach’s Praise of the Fathers,” 414. I disagree with Mack who does not believe that this narrative provides exemplars of personal piety Burton Mack, *Wisdom and the Hebrew Epic: Ben Sira’s Hymn in Praise of the Fathers*, CSJH (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 71–73.

²⁶³ Jeremy Corley, “Canonical Assimilation in Ben Sira’s Portrayal of Joshua and Samuel,” in *Rewriting Biblical History: Essays on Chronicles and Ben Sira in Honor of Pancratius C. Beentjes*, ed. Jeremy Corley and Harm van Grol, DCLS 7 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2011), 57–58.

²⁶⁴ Di Lella and Skehan, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 506.

²⁶⁵ Most scholars see there to be a natural poem about Aaron in vv. 6-22. Sauer, *Jesus Sirach/Ben Sira*, 308–11; Snaith, *Ecclesiasticus*, 221–23; Zapff, *Jesus Sirach 25-51*, 327–33; Krinetzki, “Das Buch Jesus Sirach,” 268; MacKenzie, *Sirach*, 172–73; Norbert Peters, *Das Buch Jesus Sirach oder Ecclesiasticus*, EHAT 25 (Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1913), 385. There are disagreements about how to subdivide the poem. Focusing on the *wayyiqtol* verbs (in Hebrew), Reiterer divides it into six sections (vv. 6-7a; 7b-14; 15; 16; 17; 18-22). Beentjes divides it into two sections (vv. 6-14; 15-22). Friedrich Reiterer, “Aaron’s Polyvalent Role According to Ben Sira,” in *Rewriting Biblical*

status of being the priests of the people [ἱερατεῖαν λαοῦ] (v. 7). Aaron is the prototype priest who represents the source and pattern of sacerdotal functions.²⁶⁶ His is also “a poetically designed model-story.”²⁶⁷

How is the story of Aaron relevant to a study of Jewish offerings within the context of Ptolemaic Egypt? The verses in Sirach promote a Jewish cultic worldview in which God chose priests who mediate between the people and God through material offerings presented to him on their behalf. These offerings were pleasing to God, atoned for the people, and a portion of them was given to provide materially for the priests. This religious worldview impressed upon Greek-speaking Jews in the Diaspora the historical precedence and necessity for them to affirm material cultic offerings in Jerusalem, whether they had ever been to Jerusalem or not. Jews living in Israel or in the Diaspora were meant to understand that sacrifice was the means of atonement. Second Temple Jews may have argued about whether the high priesthood ought to be descended from the Zadokite family (Ezek 44:15-16; cf. 2 Chron 31:10) or from the family of Aaron (Ezra 7:1-5),²⁶⁸ but they did not argue about the existence of a priesthood. Still, they may easily have been confused by what the priesthood actually was. In the time of

History: Essays on Chronicles and Ben Sira in Honor of Pancratius C. Beentjes, ed. Jeremy Corley and Harm van Grol, DCLS 7 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2011), 28–29; Pancratius Beentjes, “Jesus Sirach en Tenach: een onderzoek naar en een classificatie van parallellen, met bijzondere aandacht voor hun functie in Sirach 45:6-26” (Amsterdam, Katholieke theologische Hogeschool, PhD diss., 1981), 177. Sauer sees there to be natural subdivisions in vv. 14-16 and vv. 20-22 which I follow in this investigation. Sauer, *Jesus Sirach/Ben Sira*, 310–11. Similarly, Calduch-Benages and Serafini make a division between functions (vv. 14-17) and heritage (vv. 20-22). Núria Calduch-Benages, “Le vesti di Aronne, simbolo culturale (Sir 45,6-22),” *PSV* 60 (2009): 73; Filippo Serafini, *L'alleanza levitica: studio della berit di Dio con i sacerdoti leviti nell'Antico Testamento*, SR: SB (Assisi: Cittadella, 2006), 381.

²⁶⁶ Reiterer, “Aaron’s Polyvalent Role According to Ben Sira,” 47.

²⁶⁷ Reiterer, “Aaron’s Polyvalent Role According to Ben Sira,” 28.

²⁶⁸ Lester L. Grabbe, *Judaic Religion in the Second Temple Period: Belief and Practice from the Exile to Yavneh* (London: Routledge, 2000), 145; Deborah Rooke, *Zadok’s Heirs: The Role and Development of the High Priesthood in Ancient Israel*, OTM (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 115–16; Alice Hunt, “The Zadokites: Finding Their Place in the Hebrew Bible” (Vanderbilt University, PhD diss., 2003), 181.

Hebrew Sirach, the office of high priest was held by a Levitical Zadokite priest and was separate from the office of the King; however, when this passage was translated into Greek (post-132 BC), the Hasmonean King John Hyrcanus held both the office of king and high priest.²⁶⁹ Who Aaron's descendants from Levi were (Sir 45:6) and what the promise of the priesthood to his descendants would have been (v. 15) doubtless was the subject of debate in the minds of Jews, including those who read Sirach. They were likely also raising the question: does the sage have an opinion about the non-Aaronide or Zadokite Hasmonean high priest? Though most Ptolemaic Jews were likely supportive of the Jerusalem Temple establishment, this passage would have entered into the debate and added further contours to the messiness occurring in the temple complex.

Ideational Features

²⁶⁹ Tessa Rajak, "The Jews under Hasmonean Rule," in *The Cambridge Ancient History. Volume 9, The Last Age of the Roman Republic, 146-43 BC*, ed. J. A. Crook, Andrew Lintott, and Elizabeth Rawson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 305–6; Edward Dąbrowa, *The Hasmoneans and Their State: A Study in History, Ideology, and the Institutions*, Elec 16 (Kraków: Jagiellonian University Press, 2010), 110–11; Lester L. Grabbe, *An Introduction to Second Temple Judaism: History and Religion of the Jews in the Time of Nehemiah, the Maccabees, Hillel and Jesus* (London: T&T Clark, 2010), 18; Rooke, *Zadok's Heirs: The Role and Development of the High Priesthood in Ancient Israel, 254–56*, 280–82. They attempted to justify their priestly role by appealing to Phineas' priesthood (1 Macc 2:54), but this did not convince some. The Hebrew Sirach fragments possess a pro Zadokite priesthood colon: "Give thanks to him who has chosen the sons of Zadok to be priests" (Heb Sir 51:12 Manus. B; *NRSV*). It also contains a reference to an eternal covenant with the high priest Simon and his descendants to rule: "Abiding is his mercy towards Simon and the covenant with Phinehas will stand firm for him, which shall not be broken for him and for his descendants as long as the days of the heavens endure" (Heb Sir 50:24). The pro-Zadokite colon in Sirach 51:12 is not existent in the Greek. More strikingly there is a completely changed verse in 50:24 where there is no longer a reference to an eternal covenant with the high priest Simon and his descendants: "for him to entrust his mercy with us, and may he redeem us in his days" (Gr Sir 50:24; *LES*). This is assumed by scholars to be a deliberate change by the grandson. This likely occurred because Greek Sirach was written during a period when there was no longer a Zadokite or Aaronide high priest in Israel. At that time, the high priest was a Hasmonaean king. Hebrew citation from Mulder, *Simon the High Priest*, 261, 303. See Otto Mulder, "New Elements in Ben Sira's Portrait of the High Priest Simon in Sirach 50," in *Rewriting Biblical History: Essays on Chronicles and Ben Sira in Honor of Pancratius C. Beentjes*, ed. Jeremy Corley and Harm van Grol, DCLS 7 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2011), 281; Zsengellér, "Does Wisdom Come from the Temple?," 127–31; Hayward, *The Jewish Temple*, 40, 81–82; Schmidt, *Wisdom, Cosmos*, 436–37.

The grammatical subjects of v. 14 are sacrifices [θυσίαι]: “his sacrifices [θυσίαι αὐτοῦ] (part. affected) shall be offered as a burnt offering [ὀλοκαρπωθήσονται] (oblique participant; proc. material), each day, twice, continually [καθ’ ἡμέραν ἐνδελεχῶς δίς] (circum. location (i.e. temporal)).” The possessive pronoun αὐτοῦ clarifies that these are Aaron’s sacrifices (v. 6).²⁷⁰ The passive verb does not state who is presenting this offering: this unnamed person (part. oblique participant) may be either Aaron himself or those priests who served under Aaron’s leadership. The use of θυσία, which normally denotes a physical sacrifice, in combination with the verb ὀλοκαρπύομαι, indicates that whole burnt animal sacrifices are the object of this passage (cf. 4 Macc 18:11).

In the second stanza of v. 14, a dependent clause of the first stanza, the preposition κατά introduces the temporal circumstances of Aaron’s offerings. This preposition describes the occasion of Aaron’s offerings and that, they occurred twice daily, morning and evening.²⁷¹ The emphasis on the continual nature of Aaron’s offerings highlights both his importance as well as his holy character. V. 14, while describing cultic duties, is linked logically to the previous description of Aaron in his sacerdotal vestments (vv. 7b-13). Beautiful vestments and the presentation of sacrifices were integral priestly duties that together highlight Aaron as an exemplary priest.

The description of Aaron as the ideal priest continues in v. 15: “Moses [Μωυσηῆς] (part. actor) fills [ἐπλήρωσεν] (proc. material) the hands [τὰς χεῖρας] (part. affected) and anointed [καὶ ἔχρισεν] (proc. material) him (i.e. Aaron) [αὐτὸν] (part.

²⁷⁰ See the use of ὀλοκαρπύομαι in 4 Macc 18:11. See Lexham Press, *The Lexham Analytical Lexicon to the Septuagint* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012). Spicq sees this as a fruit offering Spicq, “Écclésiastique,” 808.

²⁷¹ See Exod 29:39, 41; Num 28:4; 1 Chron 16:40. Reiterer, “Aaron’s Polyvalent Role According to Ben Sira,” 45.

affected) with holy oil [ἐν ἐλαίῳ ἁγίῳ] (circum. manner)” (author’s trans.). The awkward expression in 15a “to fill the hands” is a wooden *Hebraism* that describes the act of ordination.²⁷² The immediate context indicates that the hands are Aaron’s and thus that Moses ordained Aaron to the priesthood. The depiction continues in the second stanza, which highlights that part of the ordination ceremony in which oil was poured on the head of the ordained.²⁷³

The next stanzas (v. 15b) continue the depiction of Aaron’s ordination: “It became [ἐγενήθη] (proc. material) for him [αὐτῷ] (i.e. Aaron) (part. beneficiary) an eternal covenant [εἰς διαθήκην αἰῶνος] (part. range) and for the sake of his offspring [καὶ ἐν τῷ σπέρματι αὐτοῦ] (dat.) (circum. cause (i.e. on behalf)) for all the days of heaven [ἐν ἡμέραις οὐρανοῦ] (circum. location (i.e. temporal))” (author’s trans.). The third stanza is again awkward because of the use of *Hebraisms* but clearly indicates that the office of priesthood occurred or came to pass for the sake of Aaron as a never-ending covenant, while the fourth stanza modifies the office of the priesthood covenant given to Aaron: just as the promise of the office of priesthood and covenant accrue to Aaron for his sake [αὐτῷ], so also it will accrue to his offspring [σπέρματι αὐτοῦ] forever.²⁷⁴ The

²⁷² See this usage in LXX Exod 32:29; 2 Chron 29:31. Bullard and Hatton, *A Handbook on Sirach*, 919; Lust, Eynikel, and Hauspie, *Greek-English*, 381; Zapff, *Jesus Sirach 25-51*, 331; Mopsik, *La sagesse de ben sira*, 285, n. 5; Reiterer, “Aaron’s Polyvalent Role According to Ben Sira,” 45; Benjamin Wright, “The Use and Interpretation of Biblical Tradition in Ben Sira’s Praise of the Ancestors,” in *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*, ed. Géza Xeravits, JSJSup 127 (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 195.

²⁷³ Holy oil within the Jewish tradition was specially prepared olive oil for the ordination of priests. See LXX Exod 30:25, 31; 38:25; Lev 21:12; Num 35:25; Ps 88:21. Bullard and Hatton, *A Handbook on Sirach*, 919; Di Lella and Skehan, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 512; Friedrich Reiterer, “Urtext” und Übersetzungen: Sprachstudie über Sir 44, 16-45, 26 als Beitrag zur Siraforschung, ATAT 12 (St. Ottilien: EOS Verlag, 1980), 178–79; Serafini, *L’alleanza levitica*, 385.

²⁷⁴ As the days of heaven [ἐν ἡμέραις οὐρανοῦ] refers to a never-ending period (cf. LXX Deut 11:21; Ps 88:30). Di Lella and Skehan, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 512; Reiterer, “Urtext” und Übersetzungen, 181; Beentjes, “Jesus Sirach en Tenach,” 185.

eternal promises and heritage given to Aaron, are also made to his descendants, who exercise their priestly office.²⁷⁵ For the student in Egypt, this reinforced his support of the divine right of the established Jerusalem priesthood and their ritual offerings to the God of Israel.

The fifth and sixth stanzas of this verse (v. 15c) provide further information about this priestly office and role and bring us to the priestly action of offering: “to minister [λειτουργεῖν] (proc. material) to him [αὐτῷ] (i.e. God) (part. beneficiary) and to be a priest [καὶ ἱερατεύειν] (proc. material) and to bless [εὐλογεῖν] (proc. material) his people [τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ] (part. affected) in the name [ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι] (circum. manner)” (author’s trans.). Three verbal actions characterize Aaron’s service: as a representative of the people toward God, the priest ministers [λειτουργέω] in cultic and worship [ἱερατεύω] activities toward God,²⁷⁶ and as a representative of God to the people, the priest blesses [εὐλογέω] God’s people with the instrument of God’s name.²⁷⁷

According to verse 16a: “He [God] chose [ἐξελέξατο] (proc. material) him [αὐτὸν] (part. affected) from all the living [ἀπὸ παντὸς ζῶντος] (circum. location) to offer [προσαγαγεῖν] (proc. material) a burnt offering [κάρπωσιν] (part. affected) to the Lord [κυρίῳ] (part. recipient), incense [θυμίαμα] (part. affected) and a sweet-smelling offering [εὐωδίαν] (part. affected) for the purpose of a memorial [εἰς μνημόσυνον] (circum. cause)” (author’s trans.). Here Greek Sirach makes explicit what Aaron’s

²⁷⁵ Di Lella and Skehan, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 514.

²⁷⁶ Zapff, *Jesus Sirach 25-51*, 331.

²⁷⁷ To bless in God’s name refers to the priestly duty of declaring the promises and provision of God over his people (cf. Deut 10:8; Num 6:23-27). Di Lella and Skehan, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 512; Snaith, *Ecclesiasticus*, 225; Mopsik, *La sagesse de ben sira*, 285, n. 6; Sauer, *Jesus Sirach/Ben Sira*, 310; Duesberg and Fransen, *Ecclesiastico*, 302. The possessive pronoun αὐτοῦ could refer to the Lord or Aaron, but because the pronoun αὐτῷ in the fourth stanza describes the Lord, it likely here refers to the priest’s action of blessing God’s people.

priestly duties include in presenting an offering to God on behalf of the people. Though this verse does not state who chose Aaron, whether the agent be Moses or the Lord, the Lord is more probable because the antecedents of the two closest personal pronouns [αὐτῷ and αὐτοῦ] refer to the Lord.²⁷⁸

The Lord's choice of Aaron for this certain purpose is developed in the two following dependent clauses that describe the offerings that he presents. Though scholars disagree about whether *κάρπωσις* refers to a general burnt offering or a specific fruit offering,²⁷⁹ it is clear that Aaron presents the offering to the God of Israel who would receive it [κυρίῳ]. This offering, placed on the altar, was accompanied by an incense offering and a sweet-smelling offering (cf. 38:11), which may refer to the same offering or to two separate types of offerings. Likely, *εἰς* functioned here to describe the purpose or result of these three offerings together.²⁸⁰ The purpose of this offering was to act as a memorial or memory before God, understood in the way that I have described it above (p. 160): when Aaron represented the people by presenting their offerings to God, mentally God would see or smell these offerings and remember his people, their needs, and his promises to them (cf. 45:9, 11).²⁸¹

In the final stanza (v. 16b), by means of another dependent clause, the translator notes that Aaron mediates from the other direction the relationship as he atones for the people and actually provides God's forgiveness to them: "God chose Aaron "to make atonement [ἐξιλάσκεσθαι] (proc. material) on behalf of the people [περὶ τοῦ λαοῦ]

²⁷⁸ Di Lella and Skehan, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 512; Bullard and Hatton, *A Handbook on Sirach*, 920.

²⁷⁹ For the reference of a fruit offering see Wright, "Wisdom of Iesous Son of Sirach," 756; Spicq, "Ecclésiastique," 808. For more discussion see Reiterer, "*Urtext*" und *Übersetzungen*, 185–86.

²⁸⁰ Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 369.

²⁸¹ Hayward, *The Jewish Temple*, 68; Petraglio, *Il libro che contamina le mani*, 125.

(circum. cause (i.e. on behalf of))” (author’s trans.). The verb ἐξιλάσκομαι, in combination with the preposition περί, depicts a way by which the burden or debt of sin owed to God is removed from the person or people. Although the word sin is not mentioned directly in this verse, its common use alongside ἐξιλάσκομαι indicates that the removal of sin was what was likely what was occurring.²⁸² The action of atonement here does not have a specific sacrifice in mind, but rather the general action of atonement enacted by the priesthood.²⁸³ This clause brings to a profound conclusion the entire section depicting Aaron’s duties as it describes how the people of Israel, God’s people, are those whose sins are removed through the priestly offerings.

In vv. 17-19, the poem of Aaron portrays Aaron’s teaching ability and God’s protection against disruptive rebels, but in vv. 20-22, the poem turns to God’s material provision for Aaron, a passage that is directly relevant to my study. The text does this by connecting what follows (beginning with 20a) with the depiction in vv. 16 and prior, examined above: God “added [προσέθηκεν] (part. actor; proc. material) to Aaron [Ααρων] (part. recipient) glory [δόξαν] (part. range) and gave [ἔδωκεν] (proc. material) to him [αὐτῷ] (part. recipient) an inheritance [κληρονομίαν] (part. range)” (author’s trans.). God’s provision for the priesthood is a past gift of glory and an inheritance that informs God’s care for the priesthood in the present.²⁸⁴ The author then shows what his inheritance looks like in the following stanzas.

²⁸² For a few examples of the use of ἐξιλάσκομαι and περί see LXX Exod 32:15-16; 32:30; Lev 1:4; 4:26, 35; 5:6, 13 9:7; Num 15:25. With a human subject, the verb ἐξιλάσκομαι can be used without a preposition to describe intercession or prayer (LXX Ps. 105:30). C. H. Dodd, “Ἰλασκεσθαι, Its Cognates, Derivatives, and Synonyms, in the Septuagint,” *JTS* 32.128 (1931): 355–56.

²⁸³ Wright, “The Use and Interpretation of Biblical Tradition,” 199, n. 45. Some think that this is a reference to the day of atonement ritual Calduch-Benages, “Le vesti di Aronne,” 75; Serafini, *L’alleanza levitica*, 388–89.

²⁸⁴ Reiterer, “Aaron’s Polyvalent Role According to Ben Sira,” 50.

In v. 20b Aaron’s reception of portions of offerings is depicted. God “allotted [ἐμέρισεν] (part. actor; proc. material) to him [αὐτῷ] (part. recipient) first fruits of the first products [ἀπαρχὰς πρωτογενημάτων] (part. range), bread [ἄρτον] (part. range) with first things [ἐν πρώτοις] (circum. matter) he prepared [ἠτοίμασεν] (proc. material) in abundance [ἐν πλησμονῇ] (circum. manner)” (author’s trans.). The first fruits, or best portion of the people’s harvest,²⁸⁵ were given to Aaron for his nourishment. Why? As vv. 21 explains, the people give the first fruits and portions of offerings to the priest so that the people themselves and their families could eat:²⁸⁶ “For they will eat [φάγονται] (proc. material) the sacrifices of the Lord [θυσίας κυρίου] (part. affected) which [ἃς] (part. affected) he gave [ἔδωκεν] (proc. material) to him [αὐτῷ] (i.e. Aaron) (part. recipient) and to his offspring [τῷ σπέρματι αὐτοῦ] (part. recipient)” (author’s trans.). After all, this physical provision came from God because these offerings were the Lord’s sacrifices [θυσίας κυρίου].²⁸⁷ The offerings were thus not actually the people’s own offerings that they presented to the priests; rather, they were the people’s offerings presented to God (cf. v. 16) and which now belonged to God. It was from offerings received by the Lord that the Lord gave to Aaron and to his descendants as priests of Israel. The people could only offer what they had received from the Lord! As such, the translator makes clear that the people’s offerings to the priests are actually offerings to God and that God himself gives a portion of the very best that has been offered by the people to the priests.

²⁸⁵ Bullard and Hatton, *A Handbook on Sirach*, 922; Israel Levi, *L’Ecclésiastique, ou, La Sagesse de Jésus, fils de Sira*, vol. 1 of *BEHS:SSR* 10 (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1898), 103–4, n. 20.

²⁸⁶ Di Lella and Skehan, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 513.

²⁸⁷ A discussion of the use of the technical religious phrase in the LXX is found in Reiterer, “*Urtext*” und *Übersetzungen*, 209–10.

V. 22 makes clear why this relationship is so important: Aaron “will not have an inheritance [οὐ κληρονομήσει] (proc. material) in the land of the people [ἐν γῆ λαοῦ] (circum. location) and a portion [καὶ μερίς] (part. range) is not [οὐκ ἔστιν] (proc. material) αὐτῷ (part. beneficiary) in the people [ἐν λαῷ] (circum. location)” (author’s trans). As a priest, Aaron does not have a portion of land in Judah, whereby he and his family could be nourished.²⁸⁸ Aaron’s portion is thus not land, but as v. 22b makes clear, it is God himself: “For he [αὐτὸς γὰρ] (part. carrier) is (assumed verb; proc. relational) your portion and inheritance [μερίς σου καὶ κληρονομία] (part. attribute).” The antecedent of αὐτὸς is almost certainly the Lord, since it makes no sense to say that Aaron receives himself.²⁸⁹ What modern readers often mistake merely for some kind of relational proximity to God, Aaron’s special status of being a priest in close physical proximity with the Lord’s presence in the sanctuary suggests that Aaron and his offspring actually share the Lord’s house or sanctuary. Instead of receiving a place in the land of Judah, Aaron received the Lord himself and the Lord’s dwelling.

Interestingly the sage does not state that the Lord is his (i.e. Aaron’s) portion [αὐτοῦ], which would be expected in this context; rather, he states in the second-person that the Lord is your portion [μερίς σου] which addresses the reader. Some scholars think this is a textual mistake.²⁹⁰ However, could it also be that this was an intentional, rhetorical move on the part of the translator by means of which the sage addresses his

²⁸⁸ Cf. Num 18:20; Deut 18:2. Zapff, *Jesus Sirach 25-51*, 333; Ryssel, “Die Sprüche Jesus,” 455. The second awkward Greek stanza is a *Hebraism*, where the verb to be [ἔστιν] with a dative describes possession. In light of the first stanza, λαός is likely a metonymy where people stands for the location where the people lived.

²⁸⁹ Bullard and Hatton, *A Handbook on Sirach*, 924.

²⁹⁰ Bullard and Hatton, *A Handbook on Sirach*, 924; Levi, *L’Ecclesiastique vol. 1*, 104–5, n. 22. Reiterer argues that this is an intentional allusion to LXX Num 18:20 “ἐγὼ μερίς σου καὶ κληρονομία σου ἐν μέσῳ τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραηλ,” Reiterer, “*Urtext*” und *Übersetzungen*, 215.

student, a potential future priest? If so, then the sage states that the Lord would be that student's provision and inheritance as one of the offspring of Aaron.²⁹¹

Interpersonal Features

As I have discussed previously, at the literary level of the book of Sirach, there is a relationship between the teaching sage and his student or child whom he addresses in the second-person. Through this presumed relationship, the sage instructs his student through the exemplary story of Aaron.

Not surprisingly, given the focus on Aaron and his offspring, the poem is narrated almost exclusively in the third-person which describes events other than the speaker or the hearer.²⁹² The sage narrates the poem of Aaron to his student and in so doing highlights his exemplary action that ought to be emulated. In v. 14 the verb *όλοκαρπωθήσονται* is prospective, it looks to the regular reality of offerings being presented to God by Aaron because of Aaron's priesthood. In v. 15, through two aorist active indicative third-person singular verbs [*έπλήρωσεν*; *έχρισεν*; mood. assert.], Moses ordained Aaron. These verbs are followed by the deponent verb *έγενήθη*, which is modified by three complementary infinitives which each begin with the present infinitive verb to minister, to serve as a priest, and to bless [*λειτουργεῖν*; *ιερατεύειν*; *εὐλογεῖν*].²⁹³ The use of a complementary infinitive indicates that his priestly actions are

²⁹¹ The telling of Aaron's origin and priestly duties (vv. 6-17) is followed by the story of his opposition by rebels who are pictured as rebelling not against the priesthood but God himself (vv. 18-19), this is followed by the reminder to materially support the current priesthood who are Aaron's descendants (vv. 20-22). The structure reminds the reader that they should not rebel against the priesthood by not providing for them, less they likewise rebel against God himself. Reiterer, "Aaron's Polyvalent Role According to Ben Sira," 50-51.

²⁹² Porter, *Idioms*, 77.

²⁹³ Porter, *Idioms*, 196.

derived from the covenant given to him by God. From the perspective of verbal aspect, the use of three aorist indicative verbs indicates that Aaron's ordination and charge to serve priestly functions are completed events.

Verse 16 begins with God's choice of Aaron [ἐξελέξατο; mood. assert.]. This verb is modified by two complementary infinitives to present an offering [προσαγαγεῖν] and to atone for the people [ἐξιλάσκεσθαι]. God's choice of Aaron led directly to his priestly duties of presenting an offering to God and mediating for the people's sin before God. The use of the aorist indicative ἐξελέξατο designates these as completed actions which God and Aaron performed in the past.

When we come to v. 20 and following we immediately note four aorist active indicative verbs used to express how God grants different items to Aaron [προσέθηκεν; ἔδωκεν; ἐμέρισεν; ἠτοίμασεν, v. 20; mood. assert.]. God's provision to Aaron is a completed action. Most of the poem has used aorist indicative verbs so far to designate completed actions that have occurred to Aaron and his descendants. In the last two verses, there appear present and future verbs whose subject is Aaron and his priestly descendants. The tense change indicates that these realities have present and ongoing implications. In v. 21, the priests will eat the sacrifices of the Lord [φάγονται; mood. expect.]. The subject of this verb is not Aaron, but Aaron's descendants. The sage intentionally did not highlight Aaron as the one who will eat the sacrifices alone, but through a third-person plural verb highlighted all his descendants. The use of the plural and the future tense indicates that the Levitical priests' action of eating and being provided by the Lord's offerings is a prospective situation that ought to and will occur. They are followed by an explanatory clause which turns back to the aorist as it explains that the Lord gave them these offerings [ἔδωκεν; mood. assert.]. The Lord's provision of

these offerings occurs before they consume them. The poem turns back to the present and future situation of Aaron and his progeny. Aaron will not inherit in the land [κληρονομήσει; mood. expect.]. There is [ἔστιν; mood. assert.] not to him a portion, but the Lord is (assumed verb; mood. assert.) your portion and inheritance.

From the perspective of verbal aspect, there are ongoing and prospective realities for Aaron and his descendants. Aaron will not inherit in the land, but the use of the present tense indicates the ongoing action of God being himself the portion of Levitical readers of Sirach. Unlike the many events previously narrated in the poem of Aaron's offerings, which are completed events, the priests' consumption of God's offerings and special relationship with God, are contemporaneous realities to the present moment in Ptolemaic Egypt. Through this poem, the sage highlights the need to provide ongoing care and support of the priesthood in Jerusalem. He teaches about their divine origin from God's actions and commands in history, which legitimizes their present role.²⁹⁴ In vv. 6-20 most of the verbs are in the aorist tense, which means that they are viewed as completed actions, whereas in vv. 21-22 there are present and future tense verbs. This same pattern is found in the directly following poem of Phineas which begins with past aorist events (vv. 23-25) and concludes with present implications in the optative and subjunctive (v. 26). This pattern indicates a structure in the sage's teaching where he begins a poem by describing past events that he views as completed and finishes the

²⁹⁴ Snaith, *Ecclesiasticus*, 223–24; Bernhard Lang, *Anweisungen gegen die Torheit: Sprichwörter, Jesus Sirach*, SKKAT 19 (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1973), 86. Aaron's priesthood is portrayed using the same structure as the High Priest Simon's priesthood in ch. 50. The divine origin of Aaron's priesthood is a foil that legitimizes the divine origin of the current priesthood in Jerusalem, Wright, "The Use and Interpretation of Biblical Tradition," 195, 201; Thierry Maertens, *L'éloge des Pères (Ecclésiastique XLIV-L)*, LumVie 5 (Bruges: Éditions de l'Abbaye de Saint-André, 1956), 97–98.

poem by describing its present and future effects or implications. In summary, the story of priests had present ramifications for his student.

As one looks at Aaron's poem in its entirety, there is strikingly almost no example where Aaron is himself the subject of a verb. Most verbal subjects throughout the narrative are the Lord or Moses. While Aaron is implicitly the passive subject of the actions of offering a sacrifice or possessing a covenant (vv. 14-15), he is not actively stated to be such. The only example of Aaron as the subject of a verb is in v. 22 where it states that he will not inherit the land. Rhetorically, this literary technique enforces the reality that Aaron's achievements are primarily gifts from God. God is pictured as the main agent and actor throughout Aaron's history.

There is one second-person singular reference to the student in the last stanza of v. 22 where the Lord is your [σου] portion and inheritance. Just a few verses later in the third-person ode of Phineas, the sage once again addresses a participant in the second-person: "An inheritance for Aaron and his seed. May he give you wisdom in your heart [δῶη ὑμῖν σοφίαν ἐν καρδίᾳ ὑμῶν]" (vv. 25-26). In this passage, the sage also addresses in the second-person plural the priestly Aaron and his descendants.

Who are the σε and ὑμεῖς that the sage turns to? The "you" addressed in this stanza is the literary child/student(s) addressed throughout the previous narrative. As noted throughout my thesis, the intended audience of this text was likely to have been elite educated young men who were formed to serve in the upper tiers of Jewish society in Ptolemaic Egypt and perhaps eventually elsewhere in the Diaspora or even the land of Israel. The choice to use the second-person instead of the third-person suggests to me that the rhetorical sage assumes that some of his students will themselves be descendants of Aaron and will have priestly functions. If so, then the sage's statements about historic

priests were not ancient irrelevant stories; they were directed to some of his students. We should not find this surprising since in my previous study of the Jewish population of Ptolemaic Egypt, I noted that there were Jews of Levitical descent who lived and served as leaders in Jewish communities, making it entirely plausible for Greek Sirach to address youths of Levitical descent in the Diaspora.²⁹⁵ If so, then, the sage communicates and reinforces God's promises of provision and cultic duties and blessings to his students who might themselves have been of priestly descent. As an authoritative figure, the sage informed his students about the priestly duties of providing offerings to God for the people as well as God's material care of them and his special presence that they experienced. For students of Levitical descent in Ptolemaic Egypt, even if they never presented offerings in the Jerusalem Temple, their special role in leadership and reception of a divine commission in the Diaspora was highlighted.

Conclusion

This poem lauds the person of Aaron, God's promises to him, his priestly duties, and the ongoing role of this story. The sage told the story in such a way that he showed his belief that Aaron's past cultic office actions had present significance for believing Jews. God's historic selection and care for Aaron and his priestly duties signified that Second Temple Jews likewise possessed obligations toward Aaron's Levitical descendants. Along with most Second Temple writings, priests present material

²⁹⁵ The leaders of synagogues were sometimes priests. *Let. Aris.* 310; Philo, *Hypothetica* 7.12-13; Theodotos Inscription. Sometimes priests had roles outside the temple in teaching and in courts (Ezra 7:1-10; 2 Chron 17:8-9; 2 Chron 19:5-11). Matthew Grey, "Priests, Judean Community Assemblies, and Synagogue Development in the Second Temple Period," in *The Synagogue in Ancient Palestine: Current Issues and Emerging Trends*, FRLANT 279 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2020), 97-132; Gruen, *Diaspora*, 114-15; Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, 57-59, 89; Tessa Rajak and David Noy, "Archisynagogoi: Office, Title and Social Status in the Greco-Jewish Synagogue," *JRS* 83 (1993): 79-80.

sacrifices to the Lord of Israel along with incense and other sweet-smelling offerings. While it does not clarify how this worked, these offerings created a memorial or memory before God of his people and worked to remove the sin of the people as they atoned for the people. The priests presented offerings not for themselves alone, but for all the people of Israel. The sage expected that a portion of these offerings, even to the present day, was designated to priests who served in the Jerusalem Temple for their nourishment. The use of the present and future tense indicates that the sage believed that there was a continuity between what Aaron did in the past and what happens now in Jerusalem. Aaron's atonement offerings are continued presently by his descendants, the Levitical Jerusalem priests, whom the student must likewise support. The use of the second person at the end of the story highlights some of the sage's students as Levitical descendants who benefited from these divine blessings in the Ptolemaic Diaspora.

46:16-18 Samuel's Sacrifice to the Lord

<p>¹⁶ καὶ ἐπεκαλέσατο τὸν κύριον δυνάστην ἐν τῷ θλίψαι ἐχθροὺς αὐτοῦ κυκλόθεν ἐν προσφορᾷ ἀρνὸς γαλαθινοῦ·</p>	<p>¹⁶ And he called on the sovereign Lord when his enemies oppressed all around, with an offering of a baby lamb.</p>
<p>¹⁷ καὶ ἐβρόντησεν ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ κύριος καὶ ἐν ἤχῳ μεγάλῳ ἀκουστὴν ἐποίησεν τὴν φωνὴν αὐτοῦ</p>	<p>¹⁷ And the Lord thundered from the sky, and he made his voice heard with a great sound.</p>
<p>¹⁸ καὶ ἐξέτριψεν ἡγουμένους Τυρίων καὶ πάντα ἄρχοντας Φυλιστιμ.</p>	<p>¹⁸ And he rubbed out the leaders of the Tyrians and all the rulers of Philistines.</p>

As previously noted, the praise of the fathers' narrative is a didactic narrative that highlights exemplary heroes of the story of Israel. The structure of the hymn follows the chronological history presented in the Jewish Scriptures. The story of Moses (45:1-15) turns to the priesthood of Aaron and Phineas (45:6-26), the judges Joshua and Caleb (46:1-12), the prophet Samuel (46:1-12), and the prophets Nathan and David (47:1-11).

Samuel, the subject of this portion of Greek Sirach that is relevant to my analysis, is intentionally placed between the judges and the prophets because he is both (46:13-20, cf. 1 Sam 7:15):²⁹⁶ he is a founder of God's kingdom, judge, and intercessor, but also a prophet.²⁹⁷ First, the sage enumerates Samuel's origins as a founder of the kingdom, a prophet, and a judge (vv. 13-15): "Having received glory of human beings, beloved by his Lord was Samuel; a prophet of the Lord, he established a kingdom and anointed rulers over his people. By the law of the Lord he judged a gathering" (vv. 13-

²⁹⁶ Jeremy Corley, "The Portrait of Samuel in Hebrew Ben Sira 46:13–20," in *Biblical Figures in Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature*, ed. Hermann Lichtenberger and Ulrike Mittmann-Richert, DCLY 2008 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 32. A chart describing the stories presented throughout this praise of the ancestors' epic is found in Mack, *Wisdom and the Hebrew Epic*, 38.

²⁹⁷ MacKenzie, *Sirach*, 177; Lamparter, *Die Apokryphen*, 199; Corley, "The Portrait of Samuel," 38; Mack, *Wisdom and the Hebrew Epic*, 34. In the Hebrew version, Samuel is called a priest, but this is not found in the Greek version. Corley argues that this is because perhaps the grandson was uncomfortable with the Hasmonean priesthood, but as I noted previously it is very difficult to methodologically demonstrate that a translation was changed because of theological reasons because there is no access to the Hebrew textual version used by the grandson. Jeremy Corley, "No Small Difference When Introducing Samuel in Sirach 46:13," in *Figures Who Shape Scriptures, Scriptures That Shape Figures: Essays in Honour of Benjamin G. Wright III*, DCLS 40 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2018), 35, 51.

14; *NETS*). Secondly, as a prophet, Samuel calls on the Lord when surrounded by enemies and invokes the Lord for protection (vv. 16-18). Finally, the results of Samuel's prophetic ministry appear before and after his death (vv. 19-20).²⁹⁸ Samuel's story as a prophet has multiple facets throughout this pericope, but I will limit my study to the story of his prophetic invocation of the Lord through a sacrifice in vv. 16-18.²⁹⁹

As in the presentation of Aaron in ch. 45, the story of Samuel is part of a didactic narrative whereby the sage instructs his student through the retelling of Samuel's story. By the time of Greek Sirach, prophets were deemed to be historical figures who no longer played a role in the current religious establishment; however, there still existed the hope that a prophet or prophets would arise again.³⁰⁰ This situation was thus quite different from the priesthood, since there were living descendants of the priests who continued Aaron's cultic work. Ptolemaic readers would have been addressed as those who understood that the prophetic office was not a regular feature of Jewish life; nevertheless, they likely also knew that the traits of Samuel's faithfulness and invocation

²⁹⁸ Most scholars see 46:13-20 as a natural unit, Spicq, "Ecclésiastique," 314; Bullard and Hatton, *A Handbook on Sirach*, 937; MacKenzie, *Sirach*, 177. I am following the division of this pericope into three sections (vv. 13-15; 16-18; 19-20) as proposed by Johannes Marböck, "Samuel der Prophet: sein Bild im Väterlob Sir 46,13-20," in *Ein Herz so weit wie der Sand am Ufer des Meeres: Festschrift für Georg Hentschel*, ed. Susanne Gillmayr-Bucher, Annett Giercke-Ungermann, and Christina Niessen, ETS 90 (Würzburg: Echter, 2006), 208; Corley, "The Portrait of Samuel," 32. The division of vv. 16-18 as its own thematic section is also noted by Zapff, *Jesus Sirach 25-51*, 341, 343; Sauer, *Jesus Sirach/Ben Sira*, 318; MacKenzie, *Sirach*, 177; Andrzej Demitrów, *Quattro oranti nell'elogio dei padri (Sir 44-49): studio dei testi e delle tradizioni*, OBT 124 (Opole: Redakcja Wydawnictw Wydziału Teologicznego Uniwersytetu Opolskiego, 2011), 143, 182.

²⁹⁹ V. 15 ends with the claim that Samuel was a faithful prophet: "By his faithfulness he was proven to be a prophet, and by his faithfulness, he became known to be faithful with a vision." The subsequent story of Samuel calling upon the Lord (vv. 16-18) highlights an episode of Samuel's exemplary prophetic ministry.

³⁰⁰ 1 Macc 9:27; 1 Macc 14:41. The sage mentions a true succession of prophets including Samuel which seem to end after the post-Exilic period. Leo Perdue, "Ben Sira and the Prophets," in *Intertextual Studies in Ben Sira and Tobit: Essays in Honor of Alexander A. Di Lella, O.F.M.*, ed. Jeremy Corley and Vincent Skemp, CBQMS 38 (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2005), 145.

of the Lord were to be emulated, even in the way described by the sage. The sage of Greek Sirach therefore describes Samuel's presentation of offerings to the Lord, implicitly revealing how he understood offerings to function. The story modelled attributes that were to be imitated by the student as much as possible. While his students were not prophets and would likely not engage in battles with the ancient nations of Tyre or Philistia, they could, like Samuel, call upon the Lord, present sacrifices, appeal for his protection, and trust that God would intervene in history to redeem his people.

Ideational Features

In the first stanza of the sage's presentation in v. 16, the subject Samuel (who is assumed from v. 13), is depicted as calling upon the sovereign Lord: "And he called on [ἐπεκαλέσατο] (assumed part. sayer; proc. verbal) the sovereign Lord [κύριον δυνάστην] (part. recipient) when his enemies oppressed all around [ἐν τῷ θλίψαι ἐχθρούς αὐτοῦ κυκλόθεν] (circum. location (i.e. temporal)), with an offering of a baby lamb [ἐν προσφορᾷ ἀρνὸς γαλαθινοῦ] (circum. manner)." The text does not state what Samuel said to God, though two circumstantial clauses modify this invocation of God. In the first clause, we read that Samuel called upon God when his enemies surrounded him. The activity of Samuel centres not on his fighting or deeds, but on his intercessory invocation of the Lord who enters the story of his people.³⁰¹ The Lord is the recipient of Samuel's prayer and invocation who within the context of the praise of the fathers' narrative is the only deity who hears prayers and actively responds in history.³⁰²

³⁰¹ Almost the same formula is used in Joshua's invocation of the Lord: "ἐπεκαλέσατο τὸν ὕψιστον δυνάστην" (46:5). Demitrów, *Quattro oranti*, 190–91.

³⁰² "Ma anche il contesto dell'Elogio dei padri (Sir 44-49)...vuole dimostrare che l'unico degno di lode è il Signore, che agisce nella storia e attraverso gli uomini," Demitrów, *Quattro oranti*, 194.

The second stanza clarifies why Samuel calls upon God. The situation of Samuel's enemies surrounding him precedes his choice to call upon God. This passage is likely an allusion to the episode of the Philistines' army surrounding the army in Israel where Samuel intervened on behalf of the people (1 Sam 7:7-10).³⁰³ The sage describes these as Samuel's enemies [ἐχθροὺς αὐτοῦ], although they were presumably a threat to the whole people. If the latter, then, the text highlights Samuel's role of representing all the people as their prophet.

The second circumstantial clause is found in the third stanza, and it modifies Samuel's appeal to the Lord: he called upon the Lord "with the offering of a suckling lamb." How Samuel called upon God was not just with his voice but with a material offering of a lamb. While normally the sage restricts the presentation of burnt offerings throughout Sirach to priests within the temple, in this historical scenario, Samuel who was primarily a prophet, although perhaps he received priestly training from Eli (1 Sam 3; 7:17), presented a burnt offering to God outside of a sanctuary. Within biblical history this occurred before the construction of a permanent temple. A prophet acted as a priest.³⁰⁴ The recipient of this offering is the Lord [τὸν κύριον] whom Samuel petitions. What Samuel presents is clarified as an offering [προσφορά] which is a suckling lamb [ἄρνός γαλαθνοῦ].³⁰⁵ The offering of a young lamb [Γαλαθηνός] to God was a common sacrificial practice expressed throughout the Jewish Scriptures which resulted in God's

³⁰³ Mopsik, *La sagesse de ben sira*, 294. n. 5; Di Lella and Skehan, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 521; Eberharter, *Das Buch Jesus Sirach*, 150.

³⁰⁴ Spicq, "Ecclesiastique," 814; Mopsik, *La sagesse de ben sira*, 293, n. 5.

³⁰⁵ Γαλαθηνός is an adjective used to describe a nursing or young lamb. ἄρνός γαλαθνοῦ is a genitive construct of apposition, Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 95. There is likely here a direct allusion to the offering of 1 Samuel 7:9 because the same construct suckling lamb [ἄρνός γαλαθνοῦ] is used to describe Samuel's offering of a suckling lamb [ἄρνα γαλαθηνόν] in 1 Kingdoms 7:9: "καὶ ἔλαβεν Σαμουὴλ ἄρνα γαλαθηνόν ἓνα καὶ ἀνήνεγκεν αὐτὸν ὀλοκαύτως σὺν παντὶ τῷ λαῷ τῷ κυρίῳ." Lust, Eynikel, and Hauspie, *Greek-English*, 86. Demitrów, *Quattro oranti*, 191; Peters, *Das Buch Jesus Sirach*, 398–99.

attention and presence.³⁰⁶ The righteousness and wisdom embodied in Samuel allowed him to intercede to the Lord through a vocal invocation and a material offering which together constituted a cultic act.³⁰⁷

In response, God answers Samuel's offering, as narrated in v. 17 "And the Lord [καὶ κύριος] (part. sayer) thundered [ἐβρόντησεν] (proc. verbal) from the sky [ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ] (circum. location), and he made [καὶ ἐποίησεν] (proc. material) his voice [τὴν φωνὴν αὐτοῦ] (part. affected) heard [ἀκουστήν] (part. result) with a great sound [ἐν ἤχῳ μεγάλῳ] (circum. manner)." The Lord here is the agent, who when he speaks, emits the sound of thunder. For the sage, the natural phenomenon of thunder is not a tool that God uses; rather, the sage depicts here the crash of thunder as the very voice of God.³⁰⁸ The location where the Lord thundered from was the skies, a place where he dwelled. In both this stanza and the next one, the thunder is God's voice which he makes to be audibly perceived through a large noise.³⁰⁹ The thunder itself could have been all that was audible, but the text leaves open the possibility that it was accompanied by a theophany of God's presence.³¹⁰ But neither stanza makes it clear who the recipient is or who hears this verbal exchange of the Lord. Contextually, however, this must be Samuel and his enemies.

The Lord's audible thundering in the sky is followed in v. 18 by God's destruction of the enemies of Samuel: "And he wiped out [καὶ ἐξέτριψεν] (proc.

³⁰⁶ Cf. Exod 29:38-43; Lev 23:12; Num 6:14, Spicq, "Ecclésiastique," 314.

³⁰⁷ "L'intercessione di Samuele, ossia il suo grido e l'offerta dell'agnello, che potrebbero essere compresi nel loro insieme come un unico atto di culto, si è rivelata efficace anzitutto perché Samuele stesso si presenta, nella prospettiva sapienziale del Siracide, come uomo giusto la cui offerta è gradita al Signore," Demitrów, *Quattro oranti*, 192.

³⁰⁸ Marböck, "Samuel der Prophet: sein Bild im Väterlob Sir 46,13-20," 210.

³⁰⁹ Corley, "The Portrait of Samuel," 47.

³¹⁰ See Sir 45:5. Demitrów, *Quattro oranti*, 193.

material) the leaders of Tyre [ἡγουμένους Τυρίων] (part. affected) and all the Philistine rulers [καὶ πάντα ἄρχοντας Φυλιστιμ] (part. affected).” While technically the subject of v. 17 could be Samuel or the Lord, the Lord’s role as the subject in v. 17, indicates that he is likely the active agent also of v. 18 as portrayed in biblical history (cf. 1 Sam 7:13).³¹¹ The verb ἐκτρίβω fits well with its usage elsewhere to indicate that the enemies were rubbed out or destroyed (cf. LXX Gen 19:13, 14, 29; 34:30; 41:36).³¹² the Lord destroyed the rulers and princes of Samuel’s enemies; the Lord of Israel devastated the best of the opposition.³¹³

The historical enemies of Samuel were the Philistines who opposed the people of Israel (cf. 1 Sam 7:11).³¹⁴ The Tyrians are not found as enemies in the Samuel episode described in the Jewish Scriptures and are not in the Hebrew *Vorlage* of Sirach 46:18.³¹⁵ Whatever the provenance of the expression Tyre in the Greek version, Tyre, while sometimes spoken of positively, was often depicted in Jewish texts as a wealthy city that was opposed to the God of Israel (cf. Isa 23:1, 17; Ezek 26:2-29:18; Amos 1:9). During the Hellenistic period, Tyre was an economic and political rival of Israel. It was often depicted as characterized by the worship of other gods. The heterodox high priest Jason even sent money to Tyre to support sacrifice at a pagan temple (2 Macc 4:19).³¹⁶ Tyre

³¹¹ Spicq, “Ecclésiastique,” 814.

³¹² Lust, Eynikel, and Hauspie, *Greek-English*, 142.

³¹³ Demitrów, *Quattro oranti*, 195.

³¹⁴ For examples of Israel’s historic war with the Philistines, see 1 Sam 5:8-11; 6:4-18; 29:2. Zapff, *Jesus Sirach 25-51*, 343; Demitrów, *Quattro oranti*, 196.

³¹⁵ Some scholars think that this was a mistake in understanding the existing Hebrew “chiefs of the enemy [נְצִיבֵי צָר]” for “chiefs of Tyre [נְצִיבֵי צֹר],” Duesberg and Fransen, *Ecclesiastico*, 309, n. 18; Spicq, “Ecclésiastique,” 815; Snaith, *Ecclesiasticus*, 232; Levi, *L’Ecclésiastique vol. 1*, 119; Petraglio, *Il libro che contamina le mani*, 211; Corley, “The Portrait of Samuel,” 47.

³¹⁶ 1 Macc 11:59; 2 Macc 4:18-20; 8:11; Josephus, *Ant.* 14.298-299. Edwards Douglas, “Tyre in the Greco-Roman Period,” in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Freedman (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1992), 690–91.

would have been associated with idolatry and syncretism for many Second Temple Jews. By naming the cities of both Philistia and Tyre, the sage thus portrays the God of Israel as annihilating intimidating enemies both of Samuel and of the subsequent people of Israel who follow other gods. As such God's audible thundering and the extinction of Samuel's enemies in response to Samuel's calling upon God both verbally and through the physical offering of a lamb demonstrates to the reader the power of the God of Israel uniquely to overcome the threat of death.³¹⁷ Writing in the context of a polytheistic environment in Ptolemaic Egypt, the sage thus presents a three-part argument: Samuel calls on God when surrounded by enemies (v. 16); God answers through a natural phenomenon (v. 17); and God destroys the enemies (v. 18).³¹⁸

Interpersonal Features

In these verses, the persons who verbally interact in the third-person are Samuel, the Lord, and the enemies who are the Philistines and Tyrians. In v. 16 the translator writes that Samuel invoked [ἐπεκαλέσατο] the Lord. The use of the middle indicative of the verb ἐπικαλέω indicates that Samuel's act of calling on God provides some benefit for himself. The translator also provides a reason why Samuel called upon the Lord: because his enemies had oppressed or afflicted him [ἐν τῷ θλιῦναι ἐχθρούς]. The construction of ἐν τῷ with an infinitive designates time. The infinitive to oppress or to press upon [θλιῦναι] is governed by the accusative subject "enemies" [ἐχθρούς].³¹⁹ The use of the aorist tense indicates that Samuel's invocation and presentation of a sacrifice

³¹⁷ Sauer, *Jesus Sirach/Ben Sira*, 318.

³¹⁸ Zapff, *Jesus Sirach 25-51*, 343. Demitrów sees this as a two part sequence of Samuel's intercession and God's response Demitrów, *Quattro oranti*, 182–83.

³¹⁹ Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 192, 611; Lust, Eynikel, and Hauspie, *Greek-English*, 206.

as well as his enemies pressing upon him are viewed as completed events in the past.

The address was answered, and the emergency intimated by the narrative has therefore ended.

The response is made explicit in vv. 17-18: the Lord thundered [ἐβρόντησεν], made his voice heard [ἐποίησεν], and destroyed [ἐξέτριψεν] the enemies. The expression “leaders” [ἡγούμενοι] of Tyre is grammatically a substantival participle, but its common use indicates that it is understood as a stock term or reference for a commander or chief (cf. LXX Sir 9:17; 10:2; 17:17; 49:15; Gen 49:10; 1 Sam 22:2). The use of the aorist active indicative highlights these as actions as completed past actions. In fact, in the whole poem of Samuel, all the indicative verbs are either aorist or perfect. There are no verbs in the imperfect, present, or future indicative tenses or the subjunctive and imperative mood. From the perspective of verbal aspect, the sage presents the story of Samuel’s rule, his invocation of God, and death as completed past actions which he expresses through a mood of assertion. For the present audience in Ptolemaic Egypt, the perspectival past destruction of the city of Tyre highlighted the destruction of those who opposed the people of God.

Conclusion

The poem of the prophet Samuel teaches the effectiveness of the manner and effects of an offering. When enemies confronted the prophet Samuel, he responded by invoking God and presenting an animal sacrifice. As a genuine deity, the God of Israel responds to his worshiper’s offering and acts in history to grant his request for deliverance. The characterization of this past event spotlighted for the present Ptolemaic

audience the willingness of their God to respond to his people's needs and his power to defend them from their opponents.

50:11-15 The Offering of Simon and of the People to the Lord, the Most High, the Almighty

<p>¹¹ ἐν τῷ ἀναβάλλειν αὐτὸν στολὴν δόξης καὶ ἐνδιδύσκεσθαι αὐτὸν συντέλειαν καυχήματος, ἐν ἀναβάσει θυσιαστηρίου ἁγίου ἐδόξασεν περιβολὴν ἀγιάσματος·</p>	<p>¹¹ when he put on the robe of glory and clothed himself in perfect honor, in the ascent of the holy altar he glorified the garment of the sanctuary.</p>
<p>¹² ἐν δὲ τῷ δέχεσθαι μέλη ἐκ χειρῶν ἱερέων, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐστὼς παρ' ἐσχάρᾳ βωμοῦ, κυκλόθεν αὐτοῦ στέφανος ἀδελφῶν ὡς βλάστημα κέδρω ἐν τῷ Λιβάνῳ καὶ ἐκύκλωσαν αὐτὸν ὡς στελέχη φοινίκων,</p>	<p>¹² And when he received the members from the hands of the priests, and he was standing beside the hearth of the altar, he was a crown of brothers all around, like a shoot of cedar in Lebanon, and they encircled him like the trunks of palm trees.</p>
<p>¹³ καὶ πάντες υἱοὶ Ααρων ἐν δόξῃ αὐτῶν καὶ προσφορὰ κυρίου ἐν χερσὶν αὐτῶν ἔναντι πάσης ἐκκλησίας Ἰσραηλ,</p>	<p>¹³ And all the sons of Aaron in their glory, and the offerings of the Lord in their hands before the whole assembly of Israel,</p>
<p>¹⁴ καὶ συντέλειαν λειτουργῶν ἐπὶ βωμῶν κοσμηῆσαι προσφορὰν ὑψίστου παντοκράτορος,</p>	<p>¹⁴ and ministering a conclusion upon the altars, to arrange the offering of the Almighty Most High.</p>
<p>¹⁵ ἐξέτεινεν ἐπὶ σπονδείου χεῖρα αὐτοῦ καὶ ἔσπεισεν ἐξ αἵματος σταφυλῆς, ἐξέχεεν εἰς θεμέλια θυσιαστηρίου ὄσμην εὐωδίας ὑψίστῳ παμβασιλεῖ.</p>	<p>¹⁵ He stretched out his hand for the offering cup and poured out an offering from the blood of the grape; he poured out a sweet odor at the foundations of the altar to the Most High King of all.</p>

The praise of the fathers eulogy climaxes with the liturgical worship of the high priest Simon and the praise of the people of Israel in the Jerusalem Temple.³²⁰ Most scholars have identified this high priest as Simon II Onias who served as the high priest in Jerusalem from approximately 218-192 BC.³²¹ My interest here is to examine Simon's cultic and priestly functions in this story. While the figure and significance of Simon are a fascinating study in and of themselves, this study will limit its investigation to the section that describes his sacrificial activities (vv. 11-15) in order to maintain the focus of this study. It will provide here a short introduction to the context of this passage and then turn to its analysis.

³²⁰ Mack, *Wisdom and the Hebrew Epic*, 196.

³²¹ Mulder, *Simon the High Priest*, 345–47. One notable exception is James VanderKam who argues that the seeming eyewitness details provided in Sir 50-51 come from a pre-existent source. This means that the Simon mentioned in Sirach is Simon I (Cir. 300 BC). VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas*, 147–57.

The praise of the fathers begins with the ancient story of Abraham (ch. 44) and continues to the present worship of the people of God in the temple directed by the high priest Simon: “Simon the high priest, son of Onias” (50:1). The ode of Simon (vv. 1-24) can be divided into the following sections: Simon as a builder (vv. 1-4), Simon as high priest (vv. 5-10), Simon as sacrificer (vv. 11-15), the praise and worship of the people (vv. 16-19), Simon’s blessing of the people (vv. 20-21), and the sage’s resultant blessing and prayer (vv. 22-24).³²² The story of wisdom which is embodied by exemplars of the faith extends into the cultic worship practiced by contemporaneous worshipers (vv. 22-24). Scholars disagree about whether the passage describes the events of the annual day of atonement offering or a daily whole offering officiated by the high priest. The events described in the liturgy in 50:1-21 do not necessarily portray the ceremonies of the day of atonement.³²³ It seems more likely that the praise of the fathers’ narrative ends with a

³²² I am following the divisions proposed by Mulder, *Simon the High Priest*, 279; Otto Mulder, “Two Approaches: Simon the High Priest and YHWH God of Israel / God of All,” in *Ben Sira’s God: Proceedings of the International Ben Sira Conference Durham Ushaw College 2001*, ed. Renate Egger-Wenzel, BZAW 321 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2002), 224. Others who see a natural division in vv. 11-15 are Zapff, *Jesus Sirach 25-51*, 375; Spicq, “Ecclésiastique,” 831. The Greek version has an additional verse concerning libation offerings (v. 15) that is not existent in the Hebrew version, which means that many scholars make the division at vv. 11-14 because they comment on the Hebrew textual form. For example Armin Schmitt, “Ein Lobgedicht auf Simeon, den Hohenpriester (Sir 50,1-24),” in *Gott und Mensch im Dialog: Festschrift für Otto Kaiser zum 80. Geburtstag*, ed. Markus Witte, BZAW 345 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), 889.

³²³ Those who identify this event as the day of atonement offering are Snaith, *Ecclesiasticus*, 251; Bullard and Hatton, *A Handbook on Sirach*, 993; Spicq, “Ecclésiastique,” 831; Petraglio, *Il libro che contamina le mani*, 392; Hayward, *The Jewish Temple*, 50. They believe that the mention of the high priest or the house of the curtain (v. 5) describe the high priest’s entrance into the holy of holies during an atonement offering. This same phrase could have described other curtains between temple courts. Those who think this is a daily whole offering are Fearghas Ó Fearghail, “Sir 50,5-21: Yom Kippur or the Daily Whole-Offering?,” *Bib* 59.3 (1978): 301–16; Di Lella and Skehan, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 550. Mulder believes that the mention of trumpets in (50:15) indicates that this is the new year celebration. Mulder, *Simon the High Priest*, 169–71; Mulder, “New Elements,” 284–86; Mulder, “Worship in the Restored Second Temple,” 156. This debate centers around the description of the ceremony in the Hebrew version and its comparison with late rabbinic descriptions. Along with Sauer, I think that the ceremony described in Greek Sirach 50 was not intended to describe a certain historical ceremony, but the general action of cultic worship in the Jerusalem Temple presided over by Simon. This cultic worship indicated that God was guiding his people throughout time and was present with them in the temple. Georg Sauer, “Ben Sira 50 – eine Festliturgie?,” in *Studien zu Ben Sira*, ed. Siegfried Kreuzer, BZAW 440 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2013), 124.

generic description of daily cultic worship in the temple that the people participated in. For purposes of this study, I will now turn to a discussion of Simon's offerings (vv. 11-15).

Ideational Features

Before Simon presents offerings to God, v. 11 narrates how he is clothed in beautiful priestly garments (Sir 50:5-10). The first two stanzas of v. 11 are circumstantial clauses that depict his antecedent actions of putting on a robe of glory and clothing himself: “when he put on the robe of glory [ἐν τῷ ἀναβάλλειν αὐτὸν στολὴν δόξης] (circum. location (i.e. temporal)) and clothed himself in the perfection of a boast [ἐνδιδύσκεσθαι αὐτὸν συντέλειαν καυχήματος] (circum. location (i.e. temporal)), in the ascent of the holy altar [ἐν ἀναβάσει θυσιαστηρίου ἁγίου] (circum. location) he glorified the garment of the sanctuary [ἐδόξασεν] (proc. material) the walled enclosure of the sanctuary [περιβολὴν ἁγιάσματος] (part. affected)” (author's trans.). The second stanza, mirroring the structure of the first, assumes the ἐν τῷ prepositional modifier of the infinitive ἐνδιδύσκεσθαι. Together these state that when Simon put on his priestly robe, he looked perfectly splendid.³²⁴ The sage thus portrays Simon with the same imagery as lady Wisdom (Sir 24) by illustrating him as someone who actualizes Torah-wisdom.³²⁵

³²⁴ Bullard and Hatton, *A Handbook on Sirach*, 992; Hayward, *The Jewish Temple*, 55.

³²⁵ Wisdom is compared to a cedar (Sir 24:13), cypress (v. 13), palm tree (v. 14), rose (v. 14), olive tree (v. 14), incense [λίβανος] (v. 15). Simon is like a cedar (50:12), cypress (v. 10), surrounded by palm trees (v. 12), rose (v. 8), olive tree (v. 10), and incense [λίβανος]. Wisdom and Simon both ministered before God: “I ministered in the holy tent before him [ἐν σκηνῇ ἁγίᾳ ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ ἐλειτούργησα]” (24:10); “he was ministering a conclusion upon the altars [συντέλειαν λειτουργῶν ἐπὶ βωμῶν]” (50:14; *NETS*). Hayward, “Sacrifice and World Order,” 24–26; Goering, *Wisdom's Root Revealed*, 175–77; Gregory, *Like an Everlasting Signet Ring*, 227–28; Knibb, “Temple and Cult,” 402.

The third stanza informs the reader that the vesture of Simon occurred during his ascension of the holy altar.

During these circumstances described in stanzas 1-3, Simon actively glorified the enclosure of the sanctuary.³²⁶ The περιβολή refers to an enclosing wall that separated the courts in the sanctuary or temple [ἁγίασμα]. This word likely indicated the wall that separated the inner court where the altar stood from the outer court itself.³²⁷ The reference to a wall likely is a metonymy where the wall of the court refers to the court itself.³²⁸ Simon, clothed in his priestly garments, glorifies the temple court as he walks toward the altar of sacrifice. Simon is the active agent, who by his presentation of an offering in his priestly robes, glorifies the temple.

The narrative continues in v. 12 as Simon stands by the altar and receives offerings along with other priests to present to God: “And when he received the members from the hands of the priests [ἐν δὲ τῷ δέχεσθαι μέλη ἐκ χειρῶν ἱερέων] (circum. location (i.e. temporal)), and he [αὐτὸς] (part. actor) was standing [ἑστῶς] (proc. material) beside the hearth of the altar [παρ’ ἐσχάρα βωμοῦ] (circum. location).” The accusative subject of Simon of the infinitive δέχεσθαι is not stated, but it is assumed from the previous verse and the following stanza. The first stanza portrayed Simon’s reception of portions [μέλη] of offerings from his fellow priests that they brought him. The priests were assistants who aided Simon by handing him different items.³²⁹ These portions were pieces of an animal sacrifice which were laid upon pieces of cut-up wood

³²⁶ Translation of περιβολὴν ἁγιάσματος taken from Mulder, *Simon the High Priest*, 289.

³²⁷ Mulder, *Simon the High Priest*, 290; Spicq, “Ecclesiastique,” 831; MacKenzie, *Sirach*, 190.

³²⁸ Bullard and Hatton, *A Handbook on Sirach*, 992.

³²⁹ Mulder, *Simon the High Priest*, 291; Bullard and Hatton, *A Handbook on Sirach*, 993; Snaith, *Ecclesiasticus*, 252.

upon the altar where they would be burned.³³⁰ The second stanza describes Simon's active position by the altar. Simon was standing at the side of the altar when he received offerings from his fellow priests to present to God.

The final three stanzas poetically describe the fellow priests who surround Simon as he prepares to present an offering: “A garland of brothers [στέφανος ἀδελφῶν] (part. carrier) is (assumed verb; proc. relational) around him [κυκλόθεν αὐτοῦ] (part. attribute) as a growth of cedars in Lebanon [ὡς βλάστημα κέδρωσ ἐν τῷ Λιβάνῳ] (circum. manner) they surround [ἐκύκλωσαν] (part. actor; proc. material) him [αὐτὸν] (part. range) like the trunks of palm trees [ὡς στελέχη φοινίκων] (circum. manner).” The brothers who surrounded Simon are the priests described in the first stanza. As Simon prepares for an offering, multiple priests cluster around him. The sage compares the numerous priests metaphorically to a luscious growth of trees in the agriculturally rich country of Lebanon.³³¹ Through another agricultural metaphor in the final stanza, the trunks of strong palm trees surround Simon. In the garland, cedar, and palm tree metaphors, Simon is always the one in the centre whom the others support. The strength of those around him, as he prepares to present offerings, indicates his prestige and importance.

In v. 13 the translator further describes the priests as they prepare to present an offering: “And all the sons of Aaron [καὶ πάντες υἱοὶ Ααρων] (part. carrier) are (assumed verb; proc. relational) in their glory [ἐν δόξῃ αὐτῶν] (part. attribute (attribute as circum.

³³⁰ Zapff, *Jesus Sirach 25-51*, 380.

³³¹ Calduch-Benages thinks that στέφανος describes a metaphorical crown instead of a metaphorical agricultural cluster. The context makes it difficult to ascertain which is the correct usage. Núria Calduch-Benages, “Gli ornamenti sacerdotali nel Siracide: studio del vocabolario,” in *Studi sul vicino Oriente antico dedicati alla memoria di Luigi Cagni*, ed. Simonetta Graziani, vol. 3 of *IUO* 61 (Naples, 2000), 1326.

manner)), and the offerings of the Lord [προσφορὰ κυρίου] (part. carrier) are (assumed verb; proc. relational) in their hands [ἐν χερσὶν αὐτῶν] (part. attribute (attribute as circum. location)) before the whole assembly of Israel [ἔναντι πάσης ἐκκλησίας Ἰσραηλ] (part. attribute (attribute as circum. location))” (author’s trans.).³³² The sons of Aaron, or the Levitical priests, are in their glory, or greatest splendour, as they officiate in the temple. This passage depicts their officiation while wearing their splendid vestments.³³³ The subject changes from the priests to the offerings in the second stanza. The offerings of the Lord refer to the portions of the offerings introduced in v. 12. The designation προσφορὰ does not highlight what type of offerings these are, only that they are some type of material offering. The genitive κυρίου likely indicates the destination or purpose of the offerings, namely that they are “offerings for the Lord.”³³⁴ These material offerings are in the hands of the priests as they surround Simon.

The third stanza describes the location of the priests. The priests’ handling of the offering occurs in the presence of the assembly of Israel.³³⁵ The ἐκκλησία Ἰσραηλ is a reference to the collective people of God as the assembled for the cultic activity mentioned throughout the Jewish Scriptures.³³⁶ The presence of the people indicates that the cultic activity of Simon and the priests had implications for all the people. The sage portrays Simon (50:5-12) as continuing the service of the archetypal high priest Aaron

³³² The same phrase can be generally described as the attribute of a relational process but can also be further categorized to describe it as a type of circumstance. Eggins, *An Introduction*, 251.

³³³ Bullard and Hatton, *A Handbook on Sirach*, 994; Di Lella and Skehan, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 553.

³³⁴ Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 100–101.

³³⁵ Cf. 1 Kgs 8:22. Mopsik, *La sagesse de ben sira*, 316, n. 10.

³³⁶ LXX 2 Chron 6:3; Deut 23:2. Lust, Eynikel, and Hauspie, *Greek-English*, 136.

(46:6-14). This verse reminds the reader that Simon and the current priesthood in Jerusalem continue God's priestly covenant and service which began with Aaron.³³⁷

V. 14 turns back to the service of Simon: “and [he was] ministering [λειτουργῶν] (part. actor; proc. material) a conclusion [συντέλειαν] (part. affected) upon the altars [ἐπι βωμῶν] (circum. location) to arrange [κοσμησαι] (proc. material) the offering of the Almighty Most High [προσφορὰν ὑψίστου παντοκράτορος] (part. affected).” In the first stanza, Simon, presumably the subject of the singular participle,³³⁸ has been engaged in the actual presentation of an offering on the altar. The verb λειτουργέω refers broadly to different forms of cultic activity. It depicts here the actions that Simon was engaged in at the altar, such as placing the material offering on the altar and letting it be burned. The use of the plural βωματα indicates that this sacrificial activity occurred in multiple places.³³⁹

The second stanza depicts his final arrangement of the offerings. The verb κοσμέω refers to Simon's action of setting in order, arranging, or furnishing the offering

³³⁷ The sons of Aaron who are promised an eternal inheritance in 45:20-22 are mentioned again serving with Simon in 50:12-13. The priestly covenant established with Aaron and Phineas is actualized in the liturgy and service of Simon. Zapff, *Jesus Sirach 25-51*, 378; Wright, “The Use and Interpretation of Biblical Tradition,” 195, 201; Schmitt, “Ein Lobgedicht auf Simeon,” 893; Johannes Marböck, “Der hohepriester Simon in Sir 50: ein Beitrag zur Bedeutung von Priestertum und Kult im Sirachbuch,” in *Treasures of Wisdom: Studies in Ben Sira and the Book of Wisdom*, ed. N. Calduch-Benages and J. Vermeylen, BETL 143 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999), 216–17; Johannes Marböck, “Die ‘Geschichte Israels’ als Bundesgeschichte” nach dem Sirachbuch,” in *Gottes Weisheit unter uns: zur Theologie des Buches Sirach*, ed. Johannes Marböck and I. Fischer, HerBS 6 (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1995), 118; Hayward, *The Jewish Temple*, 53, 78. The Greek version does not possess the reference to an eternal covenant with Phineas (Heb Sir 50:24). The Greek version is written so that it supports the current Jerusalem establishment during the Maccabean era which possessed a non-Levitical high priest. The only priests described are pan-Aaronide priests as opposed to Zadokite priests. Hayward, *The Jewish Temple*, 82; Mulder, “New Elements,” 281. Sauer, *Jesus Sirach/Ben Sira*, 338.

³³⁸ Both the genitive plural and the masculine singular participle of the verb λειτουργέω have the same morphology of λειτουργῶν. This means that the subject of the participle could be the priests, but it seems more likely that this is a singular participle because the subject who presents an offering in v. 15 is Simon. Bullard and Hatton, *A Handbook on Sirach*, 994; Mulder, *Simon the High Priest*, 291.

³³⁹ Mulder, *Simon the High Priest*, 291. Others think that βωματα is idiomatic and refers to a singular altar Bullard and Hatton, *A Handbook on Sirach*, 994.

upon the altar (cf. Sir 29:26; 42:21; 47:10).³⁴⁰ This verb likely refers to the placement of wood on the altar with the meat offerings on it so that they would properly burn.³⁴¹ He is setting up the final part of the physical offering on the altar. The genitive ὑψίστου παντοκράτορος designates the recipient as the almighty Most High God. In conclusion, Simon here completes his animal offering to the God of Israel.

In v. 15 Simon finishes his presentation of sacrifices on the altar with the offering of a libation offering: “He extended [ἐξέτεινεν] (proc. material) his hand [χεῖρα αὐτοῦ] (part. affected) to the bowl [ἐπὶ σπονδείου] (circum. location), He poured out [ἔσπεισεν] (proc. material) the offering [assumed direct object of the offering in the cup] (part. affected) from grape blood [ἐξ αἵματος σταφυλῆς] (circum. matter)” (author’s trans.). Simon grasps a bowl filled with a drink offering that he will offer. The next stanza portrays his presentation of a drink offering that was in the cup previously mentioned. The libation offering is of the blood of a grape, a term used to designate red grape juice or wine (cf. Sir 39:26).³⁴²

The third stanza clarifies that he poured out the drink offering at the base of the altar where priests present animal sacrifices, while the fourth depicts the result of Simon’s presentation of offerings (15b): “He cast [ἐξέχεεν] (proc. material) it (assumed direct object of an offering; part. affected) at the foundations of the altar [εἰς θεμέλια θυσιαστηρίου] (circum. location), an odor of fragrance [ὄσμην εὐωδίας] (part. result) to

³⁴⁰ Hayward, *The Jewish Temple*, 79.

³⁴¹ Cf. Gen 22:9; Judg 6:26; 1 Kgs 18:23. Mopsik, *La sagesse de ben sira*, 316, n. 5; Spicq, “*Ecclésiastique*,” 832.

³⁴² Bullard and Hatton, *A Handbook on Sirach*, 995; Sauer, *Jesus Sirach/Ben Sira*, 340; Hayward, *The Jewish Temple*, 80.

the Most High King of All [ὕψιστῳ παμβασιλεῖ] (part. recipient)” (author’s trans.).³⁴³

The term a sweet-smelling odour [ὄσμῃ εὐωδίας] is a significant feature of the sensorium of this text and originates in the literal smell of an offering on an altar; it portrays a successful sacrifice that is pleasing to God.³⁴⁴ While the sage places the designation of a sweet-smelling odour directly after the presentation of the libation offering, it likely references both of Simon’s animal and drink offerings. This odour indicates that God was pleased with and accepted Simon’s sacrifices. The ode to Simon highlights his deeds for God and glory (vv. 1-10), this presents him as having the necessary character to present an acceptable offering.

The recipient of this offering is clearly designated as the Most High King of All. In a context where pagan deities were called the Highest [ὑψιστος], this passage reinforced the belief that the God of Israel was the supreme being. The title King of All [παμβασιλεύς] highlighted the Jewish God’s universal kingship overall. He was not just the King over Israel, he was the ruler of all.³⁴⁵ The choice to use this term to describe God indicated “the universal authority of the God of Israel, especially over against idols.”³⁴⁶ And though the text is not explicitly polemical, these titles portrayed the God

³⁴³ This is like the description in Josephus where the wine is poured around the altar. Josephus, *Ant.* 3.233. Hayward, *The Jewish Temple*, 81.

³⁴⁴ Cf. Lev 26:31; Amos 5:21; Jud 16:16; Jub. 6.3; 7.5; 16.23; 21.7, 9; 32.4; Pseudo-Philo, *L.A.B.* 3.8. H. Box and W. Osterley, “The Book of Sirach,” in *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English*, ed. R. Charles (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), 509.

³⁴⁵ Cf. Jub. 22:10, 27; 30:19; 31:13, 32. Hayward, *The Jewish Temple*, 74–76. Marböck, “Der hohepriester Simon,” 226; Mulder, *Simon the High Priest*, 314; Zapff, *Jesus Sirach 25-51*, 381. The title παμβασιλεύς is likely coined by Greek Sirach, or is at least the earliest known use of it. It highlights the God of Israel as the all-powerful and all ruling deity. See Christian Wagner, *Die Septuaginta-Hapaxlegomena im Buch Jesus Sirach*, BZAW 282 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1999), 263.

³⁴⁶ Cf. Jub. 20:9; 21:22, 23; 22:19. The title ὑψιστος was frequently used in the Greek Pantheon to describe Zeus as deity with supreme and universal authority. Pindarus, *Nemean* 1.60; 11.2. Aeschylus, 28; Sophocles, *The Philoctetes of Sophocles* 1289; Pausanias, *Pausaniae Graeciae Descriptio* 9.8.5. Hayward, *The Jewish Temple*, 76.

of Israel as the true all-powerful God in contrast to the powerless deities of the Jews' neighbours in Ptolemaic Egypt. This was the God to whom Simon presented his successful offering.

Interpersonal Features

The persons described in the narrative and their relationship are both the sage and his students as well as the explicitly mentioned characters of Simon, his fellow priests, the assembly of Israel, and God.³⁴⁷ The sage and his learning student are not explicitly mentioned in 50:11-15, but they are described in the immediate context.

Throughout vv. 1-21 the story is told in the third-person using aorist indicative verbs to indicate the perspective of completed events enacted by participants other than the sage or his student. This situation changes in vv. 22-23, where the sage addresses his readers through a second-person verb, first and second-person pronouns, and verbs in the imperative, subjunctive, and optative moods: “And now, bless [εὐλογήσατε] God, everyone...[who] acts with us [μεθ’ ἡμῶν] according to his mercy. May he give you [δῶν ὑμῖν] merriment of heart, for there to be peace in my days [ἐν ἡμέραις ἡμῶν] in Israel according to the days of eternity, for him to entrust his mercy with us [ἐμπιστεῦσαι μεθ’ ἡμῶν], and may he redeem us [λυτρωσάσθω ἡμᾶς] in his days” (vv. 22-24).³⁴⁸ The switch from the aorist indicative to the imperative, subjunctive, and optative moods

³⁴⁷ Mulder, “Worship in the Restored Second Temple,” 152–53.

³⁴⁸ In these verses the sage commands his readers in the first and second-person to praise God. Krinetzki, “Das Buch Jesus Sirach,” 272; Eberharter, *Das Buch Jesus Sirach*, 159; Peters, *Das Buch Jesus Sirach*, 432–33; Petraglio, *Il libro che contamina le mani*, 408–9; Mulder, *Simon the High Priest*, 301–4; Mulder, “Two Approaches: Simon the High Priest,” 230.

engages the sage’s learning devotees in Ptolemaic Egypt.³⁴⁹ The sage enjoins them to bless the Lord like the many other wisdom embodying heroes. He prays that the Lord will protect them in the future in their own lives and historical circumstances. The sage’s readers join the long story of Simon and all those before him. The turn from the past event of worship by Simon and the people (vv. 11-21), to present commands and prayers (vv. 22-24), creates a link between the past and present. The verbal changes imply that faithful Torah-wisdom can be currently embodied by worshipers in the temple who imitate Simon and the people. In summary, the description of Simon’s offerings (vv. 12-16) serves as an exemplar and a challenge for the student of how to present a successful offering which propels the student to worship the Lord.

There are, however, other persons mentioned in this passage. In v. 11, Simon is the subject of two infinitives and an active verb. The infinitive “put on [ἀναβάλλειν]” is governed by the accusative subject αὐτὸν. The following stanza follows the same infinitival pattern: to clothe [ἐνδιδύσκεσθαι] is governed by the accusative subject αὐτὸν. The use of the middle voice emphasizes that his adornment was for his benefit. While the use of the aorist or present tense in the infinitive does not indicate temporality, the use of the prepositional construction ἐν with an infinitive verb highlights these infinitives as simultaneous actions that Simon engaged in as he actively glorified [ἐδόξασεν] the court.³⁵⁰ The use of the aorist tense highlights Simon’s glorification of the courtyard as a completed event that occurred at the same time when he clothed himself.

³⁴⁹ Zapff notes that there is a change in tense from the past to the present context in this section Zapff, *Jesus Sirach 25-51*, 384.

³⁵⁰ Porter, *Idioms*, 201.

Like the structure of the previous verse, v. 12 begins with the infinitive to receive [δέχεσθαι] governed by an assumed accusative subject αὐτὸν. Simon's reception of the portions of the offerings occurred when he was standing [ἑστῶς] before the altar. In the final stanza, the priests encircled [ἐκύκλωσαν] him. The participle's tense does not indicate temporality, but its placement before the active verb indicates that its verbal action precedes that of this verb.³⁵¹ Simon's action of standing before the altar and his reception of offerings occurred before the priests clustered around him. All these events from the perspective of verbal aspect are completed.

In v. 13, the verb "to be" must be assumed from the context.³⁵² While conjectural, the equative verb they were [ἦσαν] was likely implied because it matches the tense of the last active verb in v. 12. The priests were in their glory before the people of Israel. The same verb is also implied in the second stanza where the offerings were [ἦσαν] in their hands. The priests' presence before the people with the offerings for the Lord is presented as completed events.

In vv. 14-15, the subject of the verbal activities turns from the priests in v. 13 back to Simon himself. Simon ministers [λειτουργῶν] a conclusion to arrange [κοσμησάι]. Simon's action of ministering is depicted using a participle. This action is pictured as antecedent to the aorist active verbal actions described in v. 15. The infinitive κοσμέω is complementary, indicating that as Simon ministered, his action of arranging the offering was what he was finishing. V. 15 contains three aorist, third singular active verbs [ἐξέτεινεν; ἔσπεισεν; ἐξέχεεν]. Simon's extension of his hands, his pouring of the wine, and his casting it around the altar are all pictured as sequentially

³⁵¹ Porter, *Idioms*, 188.

³⁵² The assumption of equative verbs is common in Koine Greek Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 39.

completed actions. In vv. 11-15, there are five third-person aorist indicative verbs which created a sequence of completed actions by persons other than the author or reader. As I mentioned earlier, this changes in vv. 22-24 where the sage and the reader are invoked with the assumption that this past narrative has present and future implications for them.³⁵³ The same God whom Simon worshiped was not restricted to the past but could be worshiped presently by the sage's students who "now worship God [Καὶ νῦν εὐλογήσατε τῷ θεῷ]" (50:22).

Conclusion

The climax of the book of Sirach is Simon's worship, along with an idealized worship by the people of God, in the Jerusalem Temple. In this passage the high priest Simon leads the people in worship by presenting material offerings at the Jerusalem Temple while assisted by various priests. This ritual ceremony is poetically depicted throughout the text as it is accompanied by the singing and prayers of the lay people to God. The recipient of these offerings is the God of Israel who is the all-powerful, supreme deity over all creation, worshiped uniquely in Jerusalem. This is not merely locked into the past as a completed historical event but is participated in by the present reader whom the sage directly instructs to worship God after narrating the conclusion of Simon's sacrifice. This indicates that from the perspective of the sage, the ritual worship in Jerusalem continues in the present prayers and blessings of his readers.

4.5. Conclusion

³⁵³ Mack, *Wisdom and the Hebrew Epic*, 41.

Within this chapter, I have sought to show how the use of SFL could helpfully frame an investigation regarding offerings presented to the deity. I have identified how features of the book contributed to the field, tenor, and mode of this document. This enables us to see why Greek Sirach was written and how it was used. I then used a lexical-semantic componential analysis to identify passages that share a semantic field of lexemes. This tool has permitted me to identify the semantic field of lexemes of an item or offering presented to a deity. I have narrowed this semantic field to lexemes that explicitly described a recipient of this offering in its context.

I have then continued to an analysis of nine different passages that contained the cultic lexemes that I had identified using ideational and interpersonal aspects of these passages. My discussion of these passages has provided me with a series of observations of Greek Sirach's statements about offerings presented to a recipient in the context of Ptolemaic Egypt. This analysis has allowed me to provide new and more methodologically precise information about offerings presented to a recipient in Greek Sirach.

I can summarize my findings as follows. The sage expresses his cultic teaching to his student(s) using a directive mood that reveals his authoritative status. The analysis of these nine passages reveals information about offerings presented to a recipient. There are three possible recipients of offerings: the God of Israel, idols, and priests who are given a portion of an offering that was first offered to God. The sage only describes offerings that are potentially acceptable or successful as those which a worshiper presents to the God of Israel (7:9; 14:11; 32:8, 12; 38:9; 45:16; 46:16; 51:13-15). The presentation of offerings to other deities is pointless because they are impotent gods and cannot receive an offering (30:17-20). Worshipers can present a portion of offerings to

God's priests who are secondary benefactors and recipients of these offerings (7:29-31; 45:21-22) but who are actually recipients of the benefit offerings from God himself.

It is not surprising, therefore, that all of these statements reveal the sage's belief that offerings ought only to be presented to the God of Israel who is the Most High, the supreme deity, and king of all (51:14-15). For this reason, he encourages his student to make a presentation of offerings to the God of Israel while his student has the chance (14:11; 32:1-15). The sage notes that the God of Israel can accept or reject an offering. The offeror must accompany an offering with a consistent moral lifestyle so that God accepts it (7:9; 31:21-31; 32:14-15). These offerings may consist of material offerings (7:29-31; 31:21-23; 32:1-3, 6-15; 45:14-16; 46:16; 51:12-14), as well as offerings of piety such as repentance or a thanksgiving offering (32:4-5). The sage chronicles the presentation of material offerings in the Jerusalem Sanctuary (7:29-31; 50:12-15). The purpose of an offering may be to acquire forgiveness (31:23; 35:5; 38:10-11; 45:16), to create a memory before God (32:9; 45:16; 50:16), as well as to receive reciprocal benefit from God (32:13). But in all of these cases, Sirach expresses his understanding of what offerings to the deity signified and how they ought to be properly conducted.

When this study examines how these teachings occur within the context of culture, it finds that within the context of the Jewish community in Ptolemaic Egypt, the teaching informed the cultic worldview of elite Jewish, Ptolemaic youths. Many of the sage's students could have assimilated non-exclusive cultic beliefs from their demotic and Greek neighbours who sacrificed to their many deities in various temples and shrines. They also could have easily failed to learn proper Jewish cultic beliefs since they were not immersed in a society that shared that worldview. Greek Sirach provided the Jewish community with a means of shaping the unique cultic beliefs of the

population so that their youth did not purposely or accidentally mix them with those of their neighbours. There may have been an internal struggle for some students as they desired to assimilate to their neighbours' cultic and theistic worldviews. The authoritarian sage positively instructed his students in the correct Jewish religion. He reinforced the exclusivist Jewish monotheistic religious identity which separated his readers from their polytheistic neighbours. He enjoined both the importance of Jerusalem's cultic worship as well as the ability to participate in offerings of piety that could be performed in the Diaspora. These offerings provided various spiritual benefits for the offeror from God. The sage taught and promulgated these beliefs to his readers/students whom he hoped would learn and embody these teachings.

Chapter 5: Concluding Synthesis and Theological Implications

In this final chapter, this study will summarize the major contents of each of its chapters and provide a synthesis of their information. This summary will allow me to show the steps of this investigation as well as how the historical context of Judaism in Ptolemaic Egypt informed this study's historical-linguistic study of specific passages in Greek Sirach. I will follow this with some theological implications of this study.

5.1. Concluding Synthesis

In chapter 1 I introduced the subject of my study which was the presentation of an offering to a recipient in the Greek version. I then introduced the state of the question of cultic imagery in Sirach. After a survey of the major studies of cultic imagery in Sirach, I suggested three ways that my study could contribute new information to this field: (a) my study investigated the unique message of the Greek version in its historical context of Ptolemaic Egypt, (b) my use of lexical semantics reproducibly linked lexemes that participated in the same semantic field of offerings or sacrifices presented to a recipient (which in most cases was a deity), and (c) I employed some of the linguistic categories of Systemic Functional Linguistics to organize historical and linguistic information about my study.

In chapter 2 I introduced the method of my study. I presented the linguistic tools that would guide my historical analysis. The semantic goal of my study was a better understanding of the meaning of offerings presented to a recipient in the context of Ptolemaic Egypt. First, SFL would provide this study with the impetus to examine the polytheistic historical environment which contributed to Sirach's context of culture and

an identification of features of the field, tenor, and mode of the book. Second, a lexical semantic componential analysis, would reproducibly highlight lexemes that share a semantic field of offerings provided to a recipient in Sirach itself. Third, once this study had identified passages in Greek Sirach that contained sacrificial statements, it would engage in a historical-exegetical examination of these passages that was informed by the linguistic rubric of features of SFL's ideational and interpersonal metafunctions. This study chose to use SFL because it would provide me with a reproducible linguistic rubric by which it could organize its historical-exegetical study of the text.

In chapter 3 I introduced the intention of my study to examine Greek Sirach's statements about offerings presented to a deity within its polytheistic historical and social context of Ptolemaic Egypt after 132 BC. This social and cultic environment contributed to SFL's context of culture within which a text could be examined. Ptolemaic Jews were an ethnic minority whose religious and ethnic identity was defined by their distinctive worship and cultic practices. Their demotic and non-Jewish Greek neighbours engaged in non-exclusive polytheistic worship and cultic practices to multiple deities. Demotic and Greek traditions venerated each other's deities, which included the divine Pharaoh. In contrast to this inclusive milieu, most Jews exclusively worshiped the God of Israel and presented material cultic offerings in the Jerusalem Sanctuary alone. Because they were surrounded by different cultic practices, some Jews assimilated inclusive cultic and religious practices from their neighbours. This was partly out of a desire to assimilate and be accepted by their neighbours because at times Jewish exclusive monotheism made them appear aloof, potentially rude, and unpatriotic. While the adoption of inclusive cultic actions was condemned by more traditional Jews, it demonstrates that traditional Jews struggled to make sure that members of their

community did not forget correct cultic instruction and did not assimilate incorrect cultic beliefs. In fact, their members could easily never learn or assimilate the cultic practices of their neighbours. In response to this threat, traditional monotheistic Jews needed to maintain and form their community in traditional cultic beliefs. As a response, in order to correctly transmit their religious and cultic beliefs, Jews engaged in educational formation. This *paideia* occurred in prayer houses and through the instruction of their youth. The genre of Greek Sirach indicates that Jewish religious communities used this text to instruct young Greek-speaking upper-class youths in the practical embodiment of Jewish religion. The social and cultic context of culture allowed this study to highlight how the cultic teachings of Sirach functioned to shape and reinforce exclusive monotheistic cultic practice in a historical moment when some of its readers were tempted to adopt polytheistic cultic practices.

In chapter 4 this study analyzed the text of Greek Sirach itself using a linguistic and historical method. First, it utilized aspects that contribute to the SFL situational elements of Sirach. It identified aspects of the field, tenor, and mode of the book. This information provided the textual context within which passages that describe offerings presented to a deity occurred. Sirach was used in Ptolemaic Jewish communities to educate Jewish youths with their religious beliefs (i.e. field). The linguistic and historical realities of the book created an environment of learning and submission between the teaching sage and his student/reader (i.e. tenor). This study's consistent verbal analysis confirmed results about the sage and student's authoritative relationship. The text outlined a teaching relationship between the historical sage and his Ptolemaic student; however, through the literary structure of the book, the literary sage also addressed the implied reader. Through the reading of the book, the metaphorical sage, who was

himself an embodiment of wisdom, taught and exhorted his reader in how he ought to live the wise life. The book's cultic teachings were statements that the implied reader was expected to submit to. Its status as a written document naturally imbued it as a source of authority that should be trusted and adhered to as it was used in Jewish religious settings (i.e. mode). After this, this study used a lexical semantic componential analysis to identify lexemes that shared a semantic field of an offering or sacrifice. Next, this study narrowed its analysis to only include lexemes that explicitly highlighted a recipient of an offering in its immediate context. The componential analysis narrowed the study to nine passages in Greek Sirach.

Next, this study analyzed the nine passages of offerings presented to a recipient using a historical-exegetical analysis indebted to the linguistic categories of SFL. It identified aspects of each passage that contributed to their ideational and interpersonal meanings. Consistent with his mood throughout the book, the sage frequently addressed his student(s) with commands that he expected him to obey and submit to. Cultic commands contributed to the sage's authoritative status over his reading student. The analysis of these nine passages revealed information about the sage's portrayal of these offerings. There were three possible recipients of offerings: the God of Israel, idols, and priests who were given a portion of an offering that was first offered to God. Successful and acceptable offerings were only those which a worshiper presents to the God of Israel (Sir 7:9; 14:11; 32:8, 12; 38:9; 45:16; 46:16; 51:13-15). The presentation of offerings to other deities was pointless because they were impotent gods (30:17-20). God's priests were secondary benefactors who could receive a portion of an offering (7:29-31; 45:21-22). Offerings ought to only be presented to the God of Israel. The God of Israel could accept or reject an offering depending on the moral lifestyle of the offeror. The sage

mentioned both material offerings at the Jerusalem Sanctuary (7:29-31; 31:21-23; 32:1-3, 6-15; 45:14-16; 46:16; 51:12-14) as well as offerings of piety that could be presented anywhere (32:4-5).

The sage instructed his student that his offerings must correspond in part to the blessings and gifts that God has provided to him. God consistently provided gifts [δόσεις] to his people (11:17; 26:14) which they reciprocated by providing offerings to him (32:12). Worshipers needed to resist the temptation to give the minimal offerings required, but to give generously to God as he had graciously provided to them. God responded to these offerings by blessing the offeror (32:13). As a result, thus, there was an element here of *do ut des*, where God responded with material blessings to a worshiper who presented a proper offering to him.

The positive response of the God of Israel to these offerings could not be manipulated by trickery or an abundance of gifts (7:9; 32:14). The God of Israel could not be capriciously influenced by a great offering. In contrast, the most important characteristic of a successful offering was not the quality of the item presented, but the heart and consistent moral conduct of the offeror. The correct ritual presentations of offerings by worshipers who lived inconsistent immoral lives were not accepted and were futile (7:9; 31:21-31; 32:14-15). The sage taught that the God of Israel looked at the heart and lifestyle of the individual who presented an offering.

These offerings provided various spiritual benefits for the offeror from God. An offering could acquire forgiveness (31:23; 35:5; 38:10-11; 45:16), create a memory before God (32:9; 45:16; 50:16), and result in reciprocal benefit from God (32:13). Individual Jews provided offerings to the Jerusalem Temple that through the Jerusalem sacerdotal system procured forgiveness for the corporate people of God (45:16). The

sage taught that through the mediation of God's priesthood, God graciously forgave his people's faults and brought them into his holy presence (50:13-24). For the sage, the God of Israel actively desired that his people dwell in his presence. These offerings created a memory before God and brought his people to his attention. For these purposes, offerings were part of a system by which the people could commune with and worship God.

When this study interprets this instruction within the polytheistic context of Ptolemaic Egypt, it uncovers Sirach's lack of compromise with pagan religions or cultic practices. Within the context of the Jewish community in Ptolemaic Egypt, it instructed and formed the cultic worldview of elite Ptolemaic youths. Many of the sage's students could have assimilated cultic beliefs from their demotic and Greek neighbours. It would have been incredibly easy for many of the sage's students to slowly jettison certain exclusivist cultic practices for the sake of acceptance, social harmony, and personal advancement in Ptolemaic culture. Many students perhaps had an internal struggle as they desired to assimilate to their neighbours. The authoritarian sage positively instructed his students in the correct Jewish religion. He reinforced the exclusivist Jewish monotheistic religious identity which separated his readers from their polytheistic neighbours. He enjoined both the importance of Jerusalem's cultic worship as well as the ability to participate in offerings of piety that could be performed in the Diaspora.

My use of a comprehensive clear linguistic method to guide my historical analysis contributed in certain new ways to the field of Sirach studies. Unlike most previous studies of Sirach, it did this through the pioneering use of linguistic tools. It provided the first reproducible analysis of lexemes that described offerings presented to

a recipient, thereby definitively highlighting lexemes that shared a semantic field of sacrifices and offerings in Sirach through a componential analysis. This tool reproducibly outlined passages in Sirach that spoke about the same topic of offerings presented to a deity. The study is also the first to use aspects of SFL to organize an exegetical study of Sirach. SFL provided a pattern that began with a survey of the cultic and social environment which contributed to its context of culture. I then identified aspects of the book which contributed to its context of situation (field, tenor, and mode). My exegetical analysis of these passages used standardized categories to identify information that contributed to their ideational and interpersonal metafunctions. A central value of this thesis is not only the information it provided about the cult, but also its rigorous and linguistically oriented mode of analysis that framed and furnished its results.

This study also opened new pathways for further historical and theological research. For those interested in the use of linguistic methods to furnish new historical information, a particularly fruitful area of this investigation was its study of the tenor which highlighted features of the relationship through reproducible grammatical categories between different participants in a text. The use of a reproducible method to describe the relationship between participants in a text is not an area that has been highly explored in biblical studies generally, and particularly not in the study of the Apocrypha/Deuterocanonical Books. This tool will allow future scholars to better understand how a text addresses its implied reader or how it portrays the relationships between persons in a text. Another fruitful avenue of future research is the use of a componential analysis to reproducibly highlight lexemes that share a semantic field. For those interested in the study of themes or topics in a specific book, or across various

books as in the case of canonical biblical theology, this study provided a concrete tool by which a relationship between words can be confirmed. A common critique of systematic theologians by exegetical theologians is that they do not show how various scriptural passages or doctrinal canons speak about the same issue or topic; they merely state this without providing a reproducible method to validate this claim. By showing that lexemes, and the passages which contain them, are related or not related, a componential analysis provides the foundation for a better synthesis of ideas expressed in various passages. The use of this tool can provide the first steps toward a more careful and reproducible biblical theology which then can provide systematic theological conclusions.

This study must also note some of the limitations of these linguistic tools. SFL and lexical semantics can ascertain the past historical meaning of Greek Sirach, but as linguistic and historical tools their results cannot arrive at the theological implications for modern Christian communities about Sirach's current meaning. To arrive at modern theological implications will require a pairing of Sirach's historical meaning with a reading of the wisdom tradition in light of the whole canon of Scripture and the early Christian tradition which centres on the revelation of Jesus. The following theological implications will open the door to some of these areas which can be explored through further studies.

5.2. Theological Implications

This study has explored in a new way how an ancient believing Jewish community adapted a religious text to form their cultic and worship practices. In this way, my study can also be useful for all of those Christian confessions that use Sirach,

for example Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Lutheran, and Anglican traditions. True, within the Christian Tradition the nature of Sirach's authority has functioned differently throughout time within various communities: Within the early Patristic period, on the one hand, often church leaders who studied in the East, Athanasius (ca. 367), the Synod of Laodicea (ca. 360), Amphilochius of Iconium (ca. 395), Jerome (ca. 390-393) and Gregory Nazianzus (ca. 390) do not include Sirach in the Old Testament canon but include it in a list of other non-canonical books "appointed by the Fathers to be read by those who newly join us, and who wish for instruction in the word of godliness."¹ In contrast in the West, Augustine (ca. 397) and the Third Council of Carthage (397) include Sirach within the canonical books of the Old Testament itself. Generally, the Latin speaking West, the Latin Vulgate, and subsequent Roman Catholic tradition continued this trajectory of affirming Sirach to have the same status of Scripture as the other books of the Old Testament.² At the time of the Reformation, the Lutheran and Anglican churches understood themselves to be engaging in *ressourcement* but only of certain patristic fathers and so never identified Sirach as Scripture like the other 39 books of the Old Testament. Nevertheless, even in the Lutheran and Anglican traditions, Sirach was part of regular lectionary readings and was

¹ Athanasius of Alexandria, *Festal Letter 39* (NPNF¹ 4:552); cf. Jerome, *Prologus Galeatus*. See also Daniel Harrington, "The Old Testament Apocrypha in the Early Church and Today," in *The Canon Debate*, ed. Lee Martin McDonald and James Sanders (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2002), 199; Elias Oikonomos, "The Significance of the Deuterocanonical Writings in the Orthodox Church," in *The Apocrypha in Ecumenical Perspective*, ed. Siegfried Meurer (Reading, UK: United Bible Societies, 1992), 20–22; Edmon Gallagher and John Meade, *The Biblical Canon Lists from Early Christianity: Texts and Analysis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 198–203. For a comparison of various early canon lists, see Gallagher and Meade, *The Biblical Canon Lists*. A version of this paragraph appeared in Peter Beckman, "Ben Sira's Canon Conscious Interpretive Strategies: His Narrative History and Realization of the Jewish Scriptures," *Themelios* 46.3 (2021): 562–73.

² *Breviarium Hipponense* 36; Augustine, *Doctr. chr.*, 2.8.12.24-13.29. Gallagher and Meade, *The Biblical Canon Lists*, 223–30; Hans Peter Rieger, "Le Siracide: un livre à la frontière du canon," in *Le canon de l'Ancien Testament: sa formation et son histoire*, ed. Jean-Daniel Kaestli and Otto Wermelinger (Genève: Labor et fides, 1984), 56; Harrington, "The Old Testament Apocrypha," 198–99.

historically included in their editions of Scripture.³ In these evangelical traditions, although the Apocrypha was not Scripture, Bibles without the Apocrypha were deficient. Because these Christian communities use Sirach as (a) a model or exposition of what is spoken in Scripture or (b) as Scripture itself, Christians today can develop and inform their theological beliefs when the Apocrypha are read as part of a symphony of voices that center on the revelation of Jesus. And most importantly for our purposes, when they do so, they most often are doing so by using a conflation of the Hebrew and Greek texts of Sirach. This means that frequently the passages that I have analyzed in this study are used in these churches.

For Christian communities that use Sirach in their spiritual and theological formation, the rhetorical sage that I have identified continues to exercise his role of imperatively instructing his readers as they read his book and adhere to his message. Sirach is primarily an example of prescriptive teaching that can provide a model and exposition not only for teaching Jewish students in Ptolemaic Egypt but also for teaching

³ The 6th Article of the Anglican 39 Articles states that the Apocrypha (including Sirach) should be read “for example of life and instruction of manners”; Article 35’s Book of Homilies cites the Apocrypha about 80 times. Bruce Metzger, *Introduction to the Apocrypha* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957), 181–204; Gordon Campbell, *Bible: The Story of the King James Version, 1611-2011* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 157–58. Early Lutheran and Anglican Bibles such as the *Lutherbibel*, the Froschauer Bible, and the King James Version (1611) include the Apocrypha in a separate section after the Old Testament. Likewise the Lutheran *Calendarium* of the Elector’s Bible (1736), and the Anglican Lectionary in the Book of Common Prayer (1662) included Sirach in their regular Bible reading plans. David Chyträus, *Sententiae Iesv Syracidae: Qvae Svnt Vera Et Sacra Christianorum Ethica: Illustratae explicatione* (Wittenberg: Johannes Crato, 1573); Valerius Herberger, *Erklärung des Haus- und Zucht-Buchs Jesus Sirach* (Frauenstadt: Leidenfrost, 1739); Eve-Marie Becker, “Jesus Sirach und das Luthertum des 16. Jahrhunderts: Über Inhalt und Funktion eines schlesischen Katechismus von 1561,” in *Ben Sira’s God: Proceedings of the International Ben Sira Conference Durham Ushaw College 2001*, ed. Renate Egger-Wenzel, BZAW 321 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2002), 353–55; Klaus Fricke, “Apocrypha in the Lutheran Bible,” in *The Apocrypha in Ecumenical Perspective*, ed. Siegfried Meurer (Reading, UK: United Bible Societies, 1991), 58–67; Ernst Koch, “Die Himmlische Philosophie des heiligen Geistes. Zur Bedeutung alttestamentlicher Spruchweisheit im Luthertum des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts,” *ThLZ* 115 (1990): 705–20; William Daubney, *The Use of the Apocrypha in the Christian Church* (C.J. Clay, 1900).

Christians who read Sirach in light of the revelation of Jesus.⁴ In my study, we saw how the book of Sirach models the way that a community can shape religious identity in a pluralistic world through the study of persuasive texts presented by teachers to students. Both texts and teachers taught their students to faithfully emulate the instruction and way of life of the God of Israel while surrounded by peoples who believed and acted differently. Through the process of reading and encountering teachers, the reader/student was formed to likewise embody this divine wisdom teaching and spread it to others. Through the modern reading of Sirach, the rhetorical sage still addresses his rhetorical audience through various commands and instructions about how to live a wise life informed by the teaching of God. Readers today can learn from the sage of Sirach as they listen to his teaching about divine wisdom in their own personal study as well as when they hear him read in worship. Worshipers today can learn and receive wisdom from God which can inform how they live their lives today. In what follows, I would like to suggest some specific ways in which that can happen.

We have seen how the textual and wisdom-oriented educational context of Sirach was part of the social matrix that informed early Hellenistic Jewish spiritual formation. But early Christians also encountered similar circumstances as a minority religion among a myriad of faiths. In the first two centuries of Christianity in any known

⁴ Christians read books by various historical authors from a new epistemic perspective in light of the revelation of Jesus. While not discounting the different historical layers and senses of different books, they understand that they can be read as a unified narrative as Scripture. Jesus is the supreme revelation of God who is the lens through which they understand these books as Scripture. Luke 24:27, 44-45; 2 Cor 3:13-16; 4:6; *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 112; Martin Luther, *Praefatio Jesu Christi*; John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 9. Daniel Metzger, "Christ in the Psalms: A Consideration of Luther's 'Preface of Jesus Christ,'" *Logia: A Journal of Lutheran Theology* (2008).

location of the Roman Empire Christians were less than 5% of the local population.⁵ Like the early communities that used Greek Sirach, they had to be intentional so that their followers did not assimilate the religions and beliefs of the cultures around them. They used various strategies to instruct their communities. Their communities were shaped by the use of religious texts that formed their beliefs and actions. The leadership of these communities included apostles, presbyters, overseers, deacons, scribes, prophets, teachers, and others who transmitted, paraphrased, taught, and modelled the teaching of the Christian Scriptures to other believers with them much as the rhetorical sage in Sirach does.⁶ Like the goal of the sage in Sirach, the goal of this formation was for Christian students not to acquire knowledge in a merely passive way but for them to embody this teaching and to become themselves instructors who modelled and spread this divine teaching.

Modern Christians can join in the pattern outlined in Sirach and replicated in early Christianity as they learn to encounter God through the Scriptures that are presented to them by teachers and instructors. Strikingly, most modern Christian communities actually still do form their members by means of similar patterns of educational and theological formation that are rooted in religious texts and embodied in leaders who emulate and instruct from them, even if they are not always aware of explicit models like the one provided in Greek Sirach. The goal of this formation,

⁵ In the early Second Century Christians were only 1% of the population of Rome. There were likely less than 50,000 Christians total in the Roman Empire which consisted of 60 million. In Egypt, the tracking of Christian names of Papyri has noted that in AD 239 0% of the population was Christian whereas in 274 it was 2.4%. In all regions Christians were a small minority surrounded by peoples who worshiped different Gods for the first few centuries of their existence. Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 6–13.

⁶ Matt 13:52; Rom 16:1; Eph 4:11; Phil 1:1; 1 Pet 5:1; Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 3, 6, 53.

however, is similar to the one that we find in Sirach: the reader/learner is to follow the rhetorical sage and to emulate and reproduce his teaching by instructing others. My study can help modern Christian teachers and theologians to identify patterns and strategies that we already find within this crucially important text in the Bible.

Embodied faith can also help to remind Christians that their faith is not merely the acquisition of abstract data. Rather their faith is an encounter with a living God who shapes and forms their actions, beliefs, desires, and purpose. As we have seen in relation to the question of offerings, the rhetorical sage of Sirach highlights ways in which faith can be lived out. Christians understand that this living out takes shape in light of the climax of history, which occurs in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, who in himself bears God's presence and renewal. In Jesus, worshipers learn and are transformed through modeling the kind of wisdom that the rhetorical sage sought to communicate to his students. Christian believers turn to the one we believe to be the true sage, Christ, through the process of exercising repentance, faith, being baptized and receiving the forgiveness of sins and the Spirit (Acts 2:38-41; 8:12-13, 17; 8:36-37; 10:46-48). This learning is anything but abstract. Christ's followers, being born into the sinful realms of "Adam," "sin," and the "flesh," are plunged into Christ's life, death, and resurrection through baptism (Rom 6:1-11; 1 Cor 15:21-22) and are subsequently freed to live according to God's original purpose for creation. A believer is unable to adequately obey God and effect his renewal on his own, therefore believers are holy in Christ and empowered to do works of obedience (2 Cor 5:21; Rom 3:21-31). The Christian is now part of the new creation, the kingdom of God, by being in Christ (Acts 8:12; 1 Cor 12:13; 2 Cor 5:17; Gal 3:27). And while worshipers await the full restoration of all things in the eschaton (Rev 21:1-9; 1 John 3:2), this new life in Jesus consists of a

modeling and practical living out of this faith here and now (Jas 2:20; Eph 2:8-10; 1 Cor 11:1). Following the precedent set by the sage of Sirach to live out the wisdom of God in everyday life, Christians can learn new ways to embody their faith, empowered by their Lord Jesus who says: “I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing” (*NRSV*; John 15:5).

Though my study of religious formation in Sirach focused narrowly on the sage’s beliefs concerning offerings presented to a deity and used a specific method to achieve these results, there are nevertheless multiple theological implications resulting from my study of cultic observations. Greek Sirach was written for a community that was a religious minority in a society dominated by other religions and belief systems. Generally, Ptolemaic Egyptians and Greeks found the Jews intriguing at best, and at worst weird, aloof, arrogant, or traitorous. They found them thus because Jews refused to honour or provide offerings to local deities, including the national patron of the Pharaoh. The sage in Sirach continually reinforces the belief that unique cultic practices of his students are required but could be easily forgotten or the readers could assimilate the beliefs of their neighbours. Sirach reinforced the common Jewish belief that the God of Israel exclusively should be worshiped and presented with offerings.

In several contexts, including Alexandria and Rome, early Christians struggled with similar misunderstandings and with the struggle to assimilate or not. They were often viewed as aloof, arrogant, subversive, or unpatriotic because they refused to honour or worship local deities or kings with prayers or offerings. They were pressured

by Roman authorities to engage in offerings to their Gods.⁷ They did this because of their confession that in the ascension and enthronement of their Messiah Jesus, God had begun his new kingdom to which they owed supreme allegiance.⁸ These beliefs manifested themselves in early Christians' exclusive worship and presentation of offerings to this God and his ruling Messiah because of their belief that other deities were impotent or false gods.⁹ Many Christians struggled with the assimilation of inclusive cultic beliefs from their surrounding environment. Whether influenced directly by Sirach or not, like the sage many early Christian leaders consistently taught and reinforced their exclusive monotheistic practices so that their students would not abandon them.

Although increasingly unpopular in the modern pluralistic western world, Christians today who seek a continuity with the practices promoted by Sirach and this early stream of Christianity must resist the cultural *Zeitgeist* to worship all deities or engage in religious relativism that views all religions as equally valid paths to God.¹⁰ Likewise believers must call all humans to an active faith and confession of God in

⁷ Tacitus, *Annals* 15.44; Pliny, *Ep.* 10.96-97; Certificate of Having Sacrificed to the Gods, AD 250. Under the Decian persecution Christians were pressured to sacrifice to Roman gods, but as we see they did not ultimately compromise their monotheism. William Stearns Davis, ed., *Readings in Ancient History; Illustrative Extracts From the Sources* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1912), 2:289.

⁸ Acts 2:32-36; Phil 2:9-11; Col 2:10, 15; 1 Cor 15:24-26.

⁹ Acts 19:27; 1 Cor 10:14-22; 1 Thess 1:9; *Diogn.* 2.1-3.5; *Mart. Pol.* 8.2; Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.41.11. Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament's Christology of Divine Identity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009); Larry W. Hurtado, *Destroyer of the Gods: Early Christian Distinctiveness in the Roman World* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016).

¹⁰ Within Canada the exposure to other religions in the late 1800s was one of the principle causes of secularization among many clergy as they became unsure about the exclusive claims of their faith. David Marshall, *Secularizing the Faith: Canadian Protestant Clergy and the Crisis of Belief, 1850-1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 99-126. This reality has led to many mainline Protestants and some Roman Catholics to call for a more relative understanding of God where Jesus is merely "a" path among many to the sacred. Marcus Borg, *The Heart of Christianity: Rediscovering a Life of Faith* (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 207-26; Peter Phan, *The Joy of Religious Pluralism: A Personal Journey* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2017).

Jesus.¹¹ Exclusive monotheism, then as now, results in exclusive worship. Christians must be careful to reinforce their beliefs through the correct worship of their God.¹²

Sirach can be a useful element that informs the worship of Christian sages today. Greek Sirach was used in a pluralistic society where it was easy to turn aside or relativize the exclusive claims of Jewish worship. Its reminders to maintain exclusive worship in an environment of immense religious diversity reminds believers today that they are not the first to struggle to maintain exclusive worship. It also informs us of the importance of maintaining exclusive Christian worship today despite the incredulity of many in our society.

In their day, Ptolemaic Jews experienced God through the cultic structure of the Jerusalem Temple complex with its priests and offerings. Sirach's monotheism extended itself to the material offerings presented exclusively at the Jerusalem Temple while simultaneously encouraging supplemental forms of non-material offerings for those who dwelt elsewhere. Through this sacerdotal system and its offerings, I have shown how the

¹¹ While perhaps the Christian God is operative in all religions and he reveals himself sufficiently to all those who desire God, the certainty by which some Roman Catholic theologians make such statements easily leads to a loss of evangelistic mission (*Lumen gentium* 16; *Ad gentes* 3; Commission for Interreligious Dialogue, "Presence and Action of the Holy Spirit in the World and Other Religions"). This theological trajectory seemingly results in the conclusion that all religions are the result of God's will. "El pluralismo y la diversidad de religión...son expresión de una sabia voluntad divina" in Pope Francis, *Fraternidad Humana* (2019). Gerald O'Collins, *The Second Vatican Council on Other Religions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 117–27. This perspective is challenged by the clear call to the proclamation of Jesus by other recent Roman Catholic encyclicals (Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii nuntiandi* 26–27; Pope Benedict, *Dominus Iesus* 2–4). This positive view of other religions is contradicted by early Christian Statements that the worship of other deities was the result of human disobedience and turning away from the true God (1 Cor 10:20; Eph 4:17–18). Similarly the Second Council of Orange (AD 529) denies that mankind can turn to God through one's own desire apart from God's special revelation through the Holy Spirit (6–7). Active faith and confession of Christ were critical in early Christianity (Acts 10:43; Athanasian Creed; Cyril of Jerusalem, *The Catechetical Lectures* 17.36).

¹² Acts 4:12; 1 Tim 2:5. Stephen Neill, *Crises of Belief* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1984), 30–33.

sage taught his students that they would receive forgiveness and participate in the divine presence as they modeled and emulated such cultic actions.

This worldview was also critical to the foundation of early Christianity. Early Christians also continued to participate in the Jerusalem Temple until its destruction by the Romans in A.D. 70 (Acts 21:26). However, after this they were prevented from further engagement in material offerings. In fact, once the Jerusalem Temple was destroyed, even Jews were denied the ability to make such offerings. Early Christians began to conclude that the Temple cultic system had been fulfilled in the supreme sacrifice of Jesus who had acted as their high priest in a definitive way.¹³ They did, however, continue to believe in the practice of supplemental offerings of piety and, like Sirach as well, that forgiveness was still mediated through God's priestly structure. As a symbolic extension of the Jerusalem Temple and high priesthood, Christians believed that Jesus was their high priest and supreme offering who mediated their access to God the Father. This high priest mediated divine forgiveness to them through the sacrificial offering of himself as their sacrifice.

But in Sirach, as I have shown, the sage taught that the source of forgiveness was God who mediated this benefit through the sacerdotal system of offerings and sacrifices in the Jerusalem Temple. A reinterpretation if not rupture with this approach to sacerdotal offerings occurs in early Christianity where the person of Jesus himself declares forgiveness on the basis of his own authority (Mark 2:5-10), a capacity which surpasses even that normally reserved for divine representatives who declared forgiveness not on their own authority but on God's behalf (2 Sam 12:13). This story

¹³ Heb 3:1; 7:27; *1 Clem.* 36.1; *Barn.* 2.1-10; Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 118.

spotlights the unique sin-removing and forgiveness-granting character of Jesus who understood himself to be an offering (Mark 10:45) and who was understood by early Christians in his life and death to act as the supreme high priest. While the cultic worldview of early Christianity was clearly rooted in the concepts of Second Temple Judaism, many of these symbols were reinterpreted and combined in light of the shocking revelation of Jesus (Rom 3:25; Eph 2:1-10), a worldview maintained and promulgated by modern Christians who seek and receive forgiveness from their high priest Jesus. In this regard, theological reflection requires an exploration of how such a worldview can best be worked out in light of the particular Christian confession.

We have also seen that a fundamental theological implication rooted in Sirach's cultic teaching is that believers must give to God generously. I have shown that while God is understood to be the quintessential giver in Sirach, his people must respond by giving back to him generously in proportion to what they have received from him. We have seen clearly that the sage's warnings not to attempt to bribe or cheat God through a large gift indicate that in Sirach God cares about the heart and moral lifestyle of the giver.

Though there is no evidence that early Christian teaching directly draws on Sirach on this point, nevertheless, Sirach was part of the religious milieu out of which Christianity emerged and was and is part of the tradition of Jewish writings that early and modern Christians read that informs their beliefs. This value does appear in early Christian stories such as the widow's mite (Mark 12:41-44), where the quantitatively small gift of the widow is much greater than the larger monetary gift of the wealthy man. In this story, believers are encouraged to give generously in correspondence to what they own, not merely the minimal amount. This teaching is challenging for modern western

Christians who statistically consume the majority of natural resources in the world and often live in material abundance despite their small percentage of the overall world population.¹⁴ Nevertheless, despite this material abundance and struggle to give generously to many worthy causes, many Christians often give only a small percentage of their money away.¹⁵ The sage reminds believers that they should give generously to others because of all that God has given to them.

Furthermore, as we saw, the sage also taught that God would respond with blessings in response to offerings provided to Him. Early Christians also believed that when they presented offerings, whether material or more importantly to them, offerings of piety such as prayers that God would respond with good gifts and blessings (Matt 6:3-6; 7:7-12; Jas 5:16-18). This framework for understanding the role of offerings and eventually prayer is maintained in modern Christianity. While there are many qualifications to this belief, Christians understand that they can pray and petition God who blesses his people with both material and spiritual gifts. In a modern post-enlightenment world where it is difficult to discern or believe in the active role of supernatural beings in day-to-day life, the sage's words can help to remind modern believers to offer prayers and ask that God respond.

Very significantly, I believe that, like the supplemental offerings of piety of Ptolemaic Jews as reflected in my study of Sirach, Christians throughout the ages have also followed the pattern found in Sirach of undertaking supplemental offerings of piety.

¹⁴ Craig Blomberg, *Neither Poverty nor Riches: A Biblical Theology of Material Possessions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 17–20.

¹⁵ For instance recent statistics in 2012 of charitable donations in Canada indicate that a weekly attender of religious services only gives on average \$1,004 away per year. Martin Turcotte, "Charitable Giving by Canadians," *Component of Statistics Canada Catalogue* 11.008 (2012): 23.

Early Christians emulated cultic actions through supplemental offerings of piety in their assemblies and lives. Like Sirach, but unlike devotees of Graeco-Roman religion, Christians did not generally engage in offerings in order to manipulate God or in order to procure forgiveness transactionally; rather, they responded in gratitude and thanksgiving to a God who had provided them forgiveness and new life in Jesus.¹⁶ Again, it is important to note that for them these sacrifices were offered not first by themselves but rather through their high priest Jesus and by them as responses of gratitude and thanksgiving: “Through him [Jesus], then, let us continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name” (*NRSV*; Heb 13:15).¹⁷ As one modern evangelical theological has noted: “Christian fellowship is possible only through sacrifice; it is based on our Lord’s death on our behalf, and it is characterized by our sacrificial love for one another.”¹⁸ This study of Sirach has shown clear ways in which the same pattern can be intuited in the rhetorical sage’s teaching, though it has not sought to speculate that early Christians may have developed these ideas directly from their reading of Sirach. Sirach informed the Second Temple Jewish religious culture out of which early Christians formulated their beliefs about offerings of piety that they presented through their high priest Jesus.

¹⁶ “Sunt autem Sacrificii species proxime duae, nec sunt plures. Quoddam est Sacrificium propitiatorium, videlicet opus, quod meretur aliis remissionem culpae et poenae aeternae, seu opus reconcilians Deum et placans iram Dei pro aliis, et satisfactorium pro culpa et poena aeterna. Altera species est Sacrificium εὐχαριστεῖν, quod non meretur remissionem peccatorum aut reconciliationem, sed fit a reconciliatis, ut pro accepta remissione peccatorum et pro aliis beneficiis Deo gratias agamus.” Philipp Melancthon, *Loci Communes [1535]*, Corpus Reformatorum: Philippi Melanthonis Opera quae supersunt omnia 21 (Brunsvigae: Schwetschke et Filium, 1854), 480.

¹⁷ 1 Pet 2:5; Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 116.3; Irenaeus, *Haer.* 4.17.6

¹⁸ Allen Ross, *Recalling the Hope of Glory: Biblical Worship from the Garden to the New Creation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2006), 505; Marva Dawn, *Truly the Community: Romans 12 and How to Be the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 11–18; Hughes Oliphant Old, *Themes and Variations for a Christian Doxology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992), 71–72.

The evidence throughout the New Testament and early Christian writings for numerous examples of offerings of piety which Christians present to God is evident. Believers' faith is an ethical sacrifice (Phil 2:17). The believers' financial support to Paul is a sweet smelling offering (Phil 4:17-18).¹⁹ Believers' care and presentation of their bodies themselves is an offering presented to God as spiritual worship (Rom 12:1). Paul even presents the gentile believers as an offering to God (Rom 15:16). Likewise all believers are pictured as a holy priesthood who present spiritual sacrifices to God (1 Peter 2:5). Finally doing good deeds and sharing are encouraged as acceptable offerings presented to God (Heb 13:16). Parallels to the same kind of teaching that my study of Sirach reveals are equally patent, though there is no explicit mention of Sirach in these passages. I believe that these parallels reveal not so much intertextual connections, but that Sirach informed the Jewish religious culture out of which Christian offerings arose.

When we move into the patristic period we find that these offerings of piety continue to be practiced and include specific references to prayer, songs, teaching, martyrdom, and fasting: "His sacrifices are prayers, and praises, and readings in the Scriptures before meals, and psalms and hymns during meals and before bed, and prayers also again during night."²⁰ It is a connection that carries through into the present day, as well. Because God has given himself to us in Jesus, believers can give themselves to others.²¹ For example, Evangelical churches have often been at the

¹⁹ Christian Eberhart, "Sacrificial Practice and Language," in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Ritual*, ed. Risto Uro (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 474.

²⁰ Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 7.7 (NPNF¹ 2:537); *1 Clem* 40-41; 51.1-3; Herm. *Sim.* 5.3.8; *Mand.* 10.3.2; Ign. *Rom.* 4.1; Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 7.6; Irenaeus, *Haer.* 4.17.6. Daly, *Christian Sacrifice*; Everett Ferguson, "Spiritual Sacrifice in Early Christianity and Its Environment," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, ed. Haase Wolfgang, 2.23.2 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1980), 1151-89.

²¹ "Gott selber schenkt uns, damit wir schenken können." Joseph Ratzinger, *Gott ist uns nah: Eucharistie: Mitte des Lebens* (Augsburg: Sankt Ulrich, 2005), 38.

forefront of examples of giving praise, worship, and prayer as sacrifices that can be given to God. While not always using sacrificial language, they engage in ritual actions that echo that language, in the form of prayer and worship such as the raising of hands, kneeling, and genuine extemporaneous prayer (Ps 95:6; 1 Tim 2:8). Following New Testament examples, these churches also commonly use words involving sacrifice to highlight their need to serve their community through various activities. “Our sacrificial service begins when we first bring to him the sacrifice of a broken heart, that is, when we surrender our wills to him so that we may properly dedicate our lives to him, offer our gifts to him, and share our possessions with those in need.”²² While they often lack the ornate tradition and formal ritual aspects of many churches, they carry on Sirach’s call to present offerings in a temple now understood to be quite different but no less a temple. In fact, the materiality endorsed by Sirach can be found here, too, since these communities are frequently filled with people who metaphorically sacrifice their time and money to Christian service and worship.²³ This is certainly a sacrifice!

Particularly in post-Christian countries where there is much cultural pressure to turn away from Christianity and there are increasing shortages of ministers, these churches may not always be able to offer the divine service/liturgy and the practice of the sacraments in accessible, physical manner. This is due to the fact that even if there are Christians, their sparsity of numbers often means that they often cannot afford to have a paid minister leading to irregularities in preaching and the practice of the

²² Ross, *Recalling the Hope of Glory*, 505; Dawn, *Truly the Community*, 11–18.

²³ Allen Ross notes “Worship cannot remain a private, individual act of devotion. It was designed to be sacrificial service. To give thanks to God, no matter how sincere, and yet ignore social injustice, poverty, hunger, and abuse is a travesty of worship itself.” Ross, *Recalling the Hope of Glory*, 509.

sacraments.²⁴ Yet like the Ptolemaic Jews they are able to practice their faith in their own Diaspora by presenting both spiritual and material offerings of piety even though they are isolated from a larger Christian community. As such, they become for other Christians a new kind of rhetorical sage, as they provide impetus and examples for all Christians. Following their lead, as they follow implicitly, even if not explicitly, the lead of Sirach, we are encouraged to present offerings to God in our everyday lives through prayer, songs, and good deeds, reminding ourselves that all of our lives wherever they are can be lived in grateful response to our creator and redeemer.

Perhaps most significantly in relation to my study, we find that the earliest Christian texts suggest that believers frequently mentioned their sacrifices by referring to prayer, thanksgiving, or good deeds. True, in time the Lord's Supper became the primary (if not exclusive) Christian offering. Yet even the earliest Christian documents describe the Lord's Supper as an offering and refer to the process of the presentation of the elements along with prayer as an offering.²⁵ From the earliest days, prayer, which is unquestionably an early Christian offering, was just as integral as the presentation of the bread and wine. Thus, when approaching the practice of the Lord's Supper, early Christians applied cultic purity practices to the ritual that was analogous to cultic worship in the Jerusalem Temple. They encouraged a proper approach to the Lord's Supper because of its holiness, discouraged those who engaged in idol worship from participating (1 Cor 10:15-22), required discernment before approaching (1 Cor 11:27-

²⁴ In 2013 in Canada only 13% of Canadians attended religious services weekly, including all religions. Much lower numbers of attendance are in younger generations signaling a decline in numbers in the years to come as older generations pass away. Rick Heimstra and Karen Stiller, "Religious Affiliation and Attendance in Canada," *Trust Center for Theological Schools* (2016), <http://www.intrust.org/Magazine/Issues/New-Year-2016/Religious-affiliation-and-attendance-in-Canada>.

²⁵ Ferguson, "Spiritual Sacrifice," 1182-83; Daly, *Christian Sacrifice*, 335, 354.

31; *Did.* 14.2), and restricted it to those who had undergone purification through baptism (*Did.* 9.5).²⁶ Already within the Gospels, the Lord's Supper has cultic undertones because it occurs during the Passion week, when Jesus himself dies as an offering, and it alludes explicitly to sacrificial imagery of the most physical kind through Jesus' flesh and blood,²⁷ rather than the fresh killing of an animal. In the Lord's Supper, the early Christians, followed the example of Jesus and took the elements of bread and wine, prayed over them, spoke the words of Christ, broke them, and distributed them to worshipers.²⁸ They followed aspects of the familiar pattern of cultic sacrifice by taking an offering, breaking it, and distributing it to worshipers.

However, within the Christian practice of the Lord's Supper there is a reversal of what is commonly practiced in Graeco-Roman Religion. Instead of worshipers transactionally presenting an offering to God so that he gives to them [*do ut des*] as commonly practiced in Graeco-Roman religion, in the taking and the eating God gives himself to the worshiper. Jesus takes bread, breaks it, and says "this is my body" (1 Cor 11:24), he gives his blood "for the forgiveness of sins" (Matt 26:28), Jesus gives his presence to be participated in through the bread and the wine (1 Cor 10:16). Instead of worshipers manipulating God to come down to them, in the Lord's Supper, God comes

²⁶ Moshe Blidstein, *Purity, Community, and Ritual in Early Christian Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 139–41; Huub van de Sandt, "Why Does the Didache Conceive of the Eucharist as a Holy Meal?," *Vigiliae* 65.1 (2011): 18–19.

²⁷ Matt 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:15-20; 1 Cor 11:23-25. van de Sandt, "Why Does the Didache," 3.

²⁸ "The breaking of bread, the prayer of blessing and thanksgiving accompanied by the words of consecration of bread and wine." Joseph Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth: Holy Week, from the Entrance into Jerusalem to the Resurrection* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2011), 139; Christian Eberhart, "Sacrificial Practice and Language," in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Ritual*, ed. Risto Uro (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 470–71. See this identification of the whole eucharistic ritual (including prayer along with the bread and wine) as a sacrifice in some early patristic writers *Did.* 14.1; Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 117;

and gives himself to mankind. Jesus himself, who atones for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2), gives himself to believers.²⁹ “The eucharist is a sacrifice: the re-presentation of Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross” to believers.³⁰ While the sage spoke of atonement sacrifices at the Jerusalem Temple and of offerings of piety in the Ptolemaic Diaspora, early Christians see these streams converge in the person of Jesus who is their atonement offering presented to them in the Lord’s Supper and through whom they present offering of piety.

Many Christians engage in cultic ritual today as they practice the Lord’s Supper. Many of these actions are extensions or expansions of early Christian practice. Despite some differences between traditions, there exists elaborate and reverent piety around the Lord’s Supper in many Christians churches. This piety includes the purifying private or communal confession of sins before reception and the kneeling of the worshiper or bowing as one approaches and receives the Lord’s Supper.³¹ In some churches the officiants demonstrate reverence between approaching the Lord’s Supper; there are various procedures to highlight this which include the ritual purification of washing of hands before preparing the Lord’s Supper or the wearing of particular vestments which highlight the putting on of Christ’s righteousness. While many evangelical and charismatic churches have lost certain ritual aspects in their worship and practice of faith, they maintain the early Christian concern that believers discern their spiritual state

²⁹ Philip Melanchthon reminds us that the climax of the Lord’s Supper is that Jesus gives himself to us. Christians are part of Christ’s body and receive this spoken in the words of Christ and received in the bread and wine: “Christus enim testatur ad nos pertinere beneficium suum, cum nobis impertit suum corpus, et nos sibi adiungit tanquam membra... Testatur item se in nobis efficacem fore, quia ipsa est vita; dat sanguinem, ut testetur se nos abluere.” Melanchthon, *Loci Communes* [1535], 477.

³⁰ “Die Eucharistie ist Opfer; Vergegenwärtigung des Kreuzesopfer Jesu Christi.” Ratzinger, *Gott ist uns nah*, 37.

³¹ Ratzinger, *Gott ist uns nah*, 85–88.

and not cause defilement before they receive the Lord's Supper. Many evangelical churches possess a high goal and expectation that Christians engage in genuine repentance, holy living, and spiritual practices and formation as a requirement for worship and participation of the Lord's Supper. While not being formal for formality's sake, Christians must maintain practices that teach the need for purity and forgiveness before approaching the Lord's Supper because of its holiness where Christ presents himself to us. At the same time these external practices must be paired with an encouragement to express genuine faith, repentance, and a pursuit of piety and discipleship.

While these offerings do not replace Christ's supreme offering and are not required by God to acquire forgiveness transactionally, believers express them as manifestations of worship and piety in response to the mediation of their high priest Jesus wherever they are. This practice of supplemental offerings is particularly relevant to modern Christians who worship God as dispersed communities throughout the world through various offerings of piety such as prayer and good deeds. As a result, modern Christian worship practices are rooted in the same cultic worldview of Second Temple Judaism that we find in Sirach. The sage, in light of the Christian tradition, might equally exhort Christians today to present offerings to God in lives and worship.

Finally, and most poignantly, the sage taught that the pleasing nature of offerings was contingent upon the offeror's consistent moral actions in all areas of her or his life. The sacrifices of immoral offerors were not accepted by God or successful. Early Christian teaching noted that an acceptable offering of piety or act of worship was not just the enactment of a proper ritual to the correct God but also the necessity of genuine

repentance and holy life.³² The emphasis on consistent holy living alongside the performance of ritual worship and offerings of piety have been and remain integral to the Christian tradition. Modern churches can implement this by encouraging worshipers to consistently follow the commands of Jesus in their personal lives in how they treat their families, co-workers, and neighbours. This discipleship encapsulates all areas of life including the way that a believer manages finances, pride, lust, possessions, anger, envy, and comfort. Modern Christians must continually reinforce the necessity of a rigorous personal pursuit of the way of Jesus in concert with the performance of ritual acts of worship.

In conclusion, this study has both summarized the major aspects of historical and linguistic examination of Greek Sirach and outlined some of its theological implications. This study has explored the meaning of cultic religious formation concerning offerings presented to a deity in Ptolemaic Egypt. It has shown that aspects of this tradition were part of the interpretative, social, scribal, and theological matrix of early and contemporary Christianity which speaks to believers today. In light of the revelation of Jesus, worshipers can listen as the sage as he teaches us to embody wisdom here and now. As instruction climaxes with doxology, the sage teaches us today that at the end of the study and practice of wisdom, we must fall I worship before our creator: “I will give thanks to you, Lord King, and I will praise you as God my savior; I confess your name” (Sir 51:1).

³² Matt 5:23-24; Luke 18:9-14; Rom 12:1; 15:16; Phil 4:18; 1 Pet 2:5; Herm. *Sim.* 5.1.3-5; 5.3.5-8; *Mart. Pol.* 14.1; Minucius Felix, *Oct.* 32; Irenaeus, *Haer.* 4.18.1-4.

Appendix 1: The Identification of Related Texts in Previous Sirach Studies

When this study talks about a motif such as cult, or sacrifice, how does it methodologically identify passages that speak about the same topic? The identification of pertinent passages is not only one of the more difficult aspects of this project but is a major problem that my thesis seeks to address. While this study recognizes that the following studies have engaged in thoughtful and helpful theological examinations of motifs in Sirach, it hopes to show that there has not been a clear identification of passages that share a common concept as might be desired. Several writers have attempted to investigate theological themes in Sirach in the past. Historically, such as in the work of J. Haspecker, this type of analysis took the form of a morphological analysis which identified nominal and verbal cognates with the same morphological root; in this example every example of φόβος or φοβούμαι was identified in the text, thus allowing Haspecker to outline passages that were conceptually related because the same word was repeated.³³ The strength of this method is that on the one hand it does clearly outline texts that are related conceptually, but its weakness is that there may be other passages that also speak of the same motif but do not use a word with the same root. Therefore, in the example above, when using a purely morphological model, this study could omit passages that do not use the word φόβος but that nevertheless also speak about this concept. For instance, the words chair and stool are conceptually related even though the morphology of their words has little in common.

Other Sirach studies have engaged in thematic examinations without a clearly defined method. Authors such as Greg Goering, Bradley Gregory, Stephen Long, and

³³ J. Haspecker, *Gottesfurcht bei Jesus Sirach: Ihre religiöse Struktur und Ihre literarische und doktrinäre Bedeutung*, AnBib 30 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1967), 48–50.

Marko Marttila have explored the theological themes of election, generosity, charity, and foreign nations in Sirach. All of them have produced valuable syntheses of Sirach's thoughts on these topics, but they have not sufficiently outlined how they identified passages that are relevant to their theological questions.³⁴ In a similar vein, the author Reinhold Bohlen, who writes about the honouring of one's parents, has limited his study to two principal sections in Sirach that address this question.³⁵ Bohlen's study is a methodologically precise option, but as a result of only describing a few central passages, one cannot arrive at a synthesis of the book's thought or describe why these passages were chosen instead of others. If it is not clearly shown by the use of some tool that every passage that speaks about a motif has been addressed, then possibly a passage could be omitted or improperly included. Unfortunately, the results of such an investigation could be skewed. Two authors who have used a linguistics tool to identify semantically related texts are Werner Urbanz and Michael Reitmeyer. They investigated prayer and wisdom instruction using the tool of lexical semantics to identify semantically related passages.³⁶ Following their example, this study used the tool of lexical semantics to highlight culturally related passages in Sirach.

³⁴ Goering, *Wisdom's Root Revealed*; Gregory, *Like an Everlasting Signet Ring*; Stephen Long, "A God Who Repays": Dynamics of Charity and Reciprocity in the Book of Sirach" (University of Notre Dame, PhD diss., 2018). Marttila, *Foreign Nations in the Wisdom of Ben Sira*. They do not clearly outline how they choose which texts relate to "election" or "generosity" or "foreign nations."

³⁵ Reinhold Bohlen, *Die Ehrung der Eltern bei Ben Sira: Studien zur Motivation und Interpretation eines familienethischen Grundwertes in frühhellenistischer Zeit*, TThSt 51 (Trier: Paulinus-Verlag, 1991).

³⁶ Werner Urbanz, *Gebet im Sirachbuch: Zur Terminologie von Klage und Lob in der griechischen Texttradition*, HerBS 60 (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2009), 20–28; Michael Reitmeyer, *Weisheitslehre als Gotteslob: Psalmentheologie im Buch Jesus Sirach*, BBB 127 (Berlin: Philo, 2000), 49–90.

Appendix 2: Exegetical Methods Previously Used in Sirach Studies

Within the last fifty years, there has been a flowering of exegetical activity in Sirach devoted to theological themes and motifs in this book. Witte has helpfully surveyed many of the smaller articles and conference presentations that have participated in this movement.¹ Goering, Gregory, and Marttila have recently explored the theological motifs of election, generosity, and foreign nations in Sirach.² Other examples include Ann Ellis's study of gender in Ben Sira and Bohlen's examination of honouring one's parents.³ All these studies have engaged in historical-exegetical examinations that attempt to reconstruct the historical world of Sirach. They assume that Sirach cannot be correctly understood apart from the Second Temple Jewish social context of its day where it was used and spoke into.⁴ As a result, they attempt to understand the historical assumptions and worldview of the author as well as the impact of his writings on a historical audience.

While these previous studies have provided helpful theological syntheses, they have frequently not always defined the exegetical questions that they ask of a text as clearly as they could have. For instance, Martilla and Stadelmann begin their study of

¹ Markus Witte, "Key Aspects and Themes in Recent Scholarship on the Book of Ben Sira," in *Texts and Contexts of the Book of Sirach / Texte und Kontexte des Sirachbuches*, ed. Gerhard Karner, Frank Ueberschaer, and Burkard Zapff, SBLSCS 66 (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2017), 23–28.

² Goering, *Wisdom's Root Revealed*; Gregory, *Like an Everlasting Signet Ring*; Marttila, *Foreign Nations in the Wisdom of Ben Sira*.

³ Teresa Ann Ellis, *Gender in the Book of Ben Sira: Divine Wisdom, Erotic Poetry, and the Garden of Eden*, BZAW 453 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2013); Bohlen, *Die Ehrung der Eltern bei Ben Sira*.

⁴ Leo Perdue, "Sages, Scribes, and Seers in Israel and the Ancient Near East: An Introduction," in *Scribes, Sages, and Seers: The Sage in the Eastern Mediterranean World*, ed. Leo Perdue, FRLANT 219 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008), 1. This is in line with a common quest to situate religious writings as actors within the context of Second Temple Judaism Sanders, *Judaism*; Wright, *The New Testament*; Wardle, *The Jerusalem Temple*, 11.

various passages in Sirach without clearly defining their exegetical method; it appears that they start with text criticism and try to identify the historical context of the original Hebrew Sirach.⁵ The observations Martilla makes are generally useful and helpful in understanding Sirach, but he never defines the exegetical questions he is regularly posing to each text. Martilla's observations could be potentially inconsistent in their questions and results. Similarly, certain exegetical studies of Sirach have merely stated that they will "engage in verse-by-verse exegesis."⁶ What does "verse by verse" exegesis mean? Am I studying the intention of the author, the text, or its impact on the audience? What questions are precisely being posed concerning the historical context or the interaction between the subjects in a passage? Normally it appears that exegetes decide, by using text criticism, which text they will use and then study a text verse by verse examining each verse as part of a connected narrative. The common trend I see is not necessarily that exegetes are operating with interpretive rules that are made *au hasard* by the interpreter, but rather that they are not defining clearly what questions they are answering when they engage in historical exegesis. This lack of clarity concerning the historical-grammatical questions posed to a text is a common trend in Sirach studies as well as biblical studies generally. Similarly, to these authors, this study engaged in a "verse by verse" analysis, but it did so by examining some of the standardized linguistic features in a text which helped it to better understand its historical meaning.

⁵ Martilla, *Foreign Nations in the Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 42–53; Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter*, 55–68.

⁶ Corley, *Ben Sira's Teaching on Friendship*, 31; Schmidt, *Wisdom, Cosmos*, 31.

Appendix 3: The Use of the Greek Version in Sirach Studies

A methodological difficulty common to thematic studies of Sirach is that many have attempted to merge the study of multiple language versions of Sirach from different historical contexts. For instance, scholars such as Gregory and Schmidt, while recognizing the difficulty of merging the study of versions, have merged the study of various language versions in their thematic studies. They have opted to prefer a Hebrew version when available, but when there is no extant Hebrew text, through text criticism, they have utilized a combination of the Old Latin, Syriac, and Greek versions.¹ Sirach scholars have focused on the form and use of Sirach within its original Seleucid Hebrew language context for the Jewish community living in Jerusalem.² I recognize the current difficulties in Sirach studies because of incomplete texts, and I am very impressed with their studies and in many aspects consider them a model for my own. Nevertheless, as I have seen, the various versions of Sirach were penned in different contexts for different audiences. While there is much essential continuity, if this study mixes their use, there may be skewed results because they were intended for different audiences in different historical moments. Specifically, there are many small differences between cultic vocabulary in the existent Hebrew version as opposed to the Greek version (GI).³

¹ Gregory, *Like an Everlasting Signet Ring*, 17–19; Schmidt, *Wisdom, Cosmos*, 30–32.

² These authors have examined the form and cultural use of Sirach. Perdue, *The Sword and the Stylus*; Oda Wischmeyer, “Die Konstruktion von Kultur im Sirachbuch,” in *Texts and Contexts of the Book of Sirach / Texte und Kontexte des Sirachbuches*, ed. Gerhard Karner, Frank Ueberschaer, and Burkard Zapff, SBLSCS 66 (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2017), 71–98; Oda Wischmeyer, *Die Kultur des Buches Jesus Sirach*, BZNW 77 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1995).

³ When Hebrew cultic words were translated into Greek, they were not consistently translated with the same Greek phrase. The Greek version conflates various types of sacrifices in Hebrew into a generic catch-all category of προσφορὰ κυρίου: The Hebrew expression burnt offering [אֵשֶׁתִּי] which appears in Hebrew Sirach 45:21 and 50:13 is translated as θυσία κυρίου in Greek Sirach 45:21 and as προσφορὰ κυρίου in 50:13. Similarly in Hebrew Sirach 14:11, a fatty olive oil offering [דָּשֵׁן] is rendered

Between these two versions, there are also modified passages about the high priesthood that reflect the changed historical situation of the Greek version.⁴ These significant differences between the versions signify that they need to be each studied as independent documents to understand their unique cultic messages. The potential pitfalls of mixing textual versions are the reason that in my discussion of the motif of cultic offerings this study is limited to the function of Greek Sirach in its original historical environment of Ptolemaic Egypt. Because it will examine Greek Sirach, which was written later for a different audience in a different place and period, this study can contribute to new knowledge by identifying how this text functioned in a Ptolemaic Greek context.

with a generic plural προσφορὰς (Gr. Sir 14:11). There are also small confusions between the type of offerings: Hebrew Sirach 7:31 mentions a wave offering for the temple [תרומת קדש] (cf. Exod 36:6; Lev 22:12) which is translated as a first-fruit offering [ἀπαρχὴν ἀγίων] (Gr Sir 7:31). These studies make clear that both the Greek and Hebrew versions cannot be conflated in a study of cultic offerings because they do not consistently translate words. Egger-Wenzel, “The Change of Sacrificial Terminology,” 72–88. Reiterer, “Gott und Opfer,” 163–64; Marböck, *Jesus Sirach 1-23*, 132.

⁴ The Hebrew fragments possess a pro Zadokite priesthood colon: “Give thanks to him who has chosen the sons of Zadok to be priests” (Heb Sir 51:12 Manus. B; *NRSV*). It also contains a reference to an eternal covenant with the high priest Simon and his descendants to rule: “Abiding is his mercy towards Simon and the covenant with Phinehas will stand firm for him, which shall not be broken for him and for his descendants as long as the days of the heavens endure” (Heb Sir 50:24). The pro-Zadokite colon in Sirach 51:12 is not existent in the Greek. More strikingly there is a completely changed verse in 50:24 where there is no longer a reference to an eternal covenant with the high priest Simon and his descendants: “for him to entrust his mercy with us, and may he redeem us in his days” (Gr Sir 50:24; *LES*). This is assumed by scholars to be a deliberate change by the grandson. This likely occurred because Greek Sirach was written during a period when there was no longer a Zadokite or Aaronide high priest in Israel. At that time, the high priest was a Hasmonaean king. The grandson needed to omit the hereditary rights given to the high priest Simon and his descendants because they no longer held that office. Like the Hebrew version, Greek Sirach wanted to maintain the support of the current temple administration and its cultic worship. For Greek Sirach, God dwelt in and received worship in the Jerusalem Temple under Hasmonaean leadership. Hebrew citation from Mulder, *Simon the High Priest*, 261, 303. See Mulder, “New Elements,” 281; Zsengellér, “Does Wisdom Come from the Temple?,” 127–31; Hayward, *The Jewish Temple*, 40, 81–82; Schmidt, *Wisdom, Cosmos*, 436–37. Some have argued that the Hebrew version of Sir 50:22–24 was actually a retroversion of the Greek and does not necessarily signify support of the pre-Hasmonaean establishment, Anssi Voitila, “The End of the High Priestly Family of Simon and the Conclusion of the Book of Ben Sira,” *BN* 179 (2018): 70, 79–80; Maria Brutti, *The Development of the High Priesthood During the Pre-Hasmonaean Period: History, Ideology, Theology*, JSJSup 108 (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 203.

In summary, while a few studies have opted to use the Greek version,⁵ they have not tried to reconstruct how it was used as a religious document in the historical environment of Ptolemaic Egypt. In most studies, there is no attempt to summarize the unique voice expressed in each language tradition. The use of various language versions opened a door for this study to engage in original research. This allowed it to engage in new knowledge concerning the function of cultic statements of Greek Sirach in their Ptolemaic context.

⁵ Notable proponents of the study of the unique theological voice of each language version are Gilbert, “Où en sont les études sur le Siracide,” 356; Gilbert, “Methodological,” 16; Beentjes, “Some Major Topics in Ben Sira Research,” 6; Marböck, *Jesus Sirach 1-23*, 24–25.

Appendix 4: Attitudes Toward the Jerusalem Sanctuary and Priesthood

In Second Temple Judaism, the location of worship was of paramount

importance. While there were some exceptions to this which I will discuss shortly, after the return from the Babylonian Exile, the majority of Second Temple Jews believed that there was one exclusive temple in Jerusalem which was the location of proper cultic worship (2 Chron 3-4; Ezra 1). There were various attitudes in Second Temple literature toward this reconstructed sanctuary.¹ There was both positive as well as critical discussion about the temple. While some Jews negatively viewed this temple as temporary or believed that its administration was hopelessly corrupt, their criticisms of its leadership did not invalidate its cultic importance: “Regardless of how the temple or the contemporary administration of sacrifices was viewed, the cult was not rejected.”²

On the negative side were Jewish communities who so furiously condemned the corruption of the temple leadership that they refused to participate in certain aspects of the Jerusalem cultus. This position was held by some members of the Qumran community.³ Some came to believe that their community was an alternative temple of

¹ Knibb, “Temple and Cult,” 401–2. The challenges, corruptions, and impurities that had an impact on the Temple and Temple worship during the Ptolemaic, Seleucid, and Hasmonean reigns in Judea made some groups discontent with the temple. This one location for one temple for the people who understood themselves as Jewish provided little room for any alternatives and required attention to even the tiniest detail of cultic worship. Wardle, *The Jerusalem Temple*, 73, 80.

² Ribbens, *Levitical Sacrifice*, 25. Wardle, *The Jerusalem Temple*, 93–97.

³ For instance, Peshar Habakkuk 1QpHab (cir. 1st cent. BC) describes the Wicked Priest of Jerusalem who abandoned divine commandments, amassed riches, and committed abhorrent deeds which led to his impurity and the defilement of the temple: “the Wicked Priest committed his abhorrent deeds, defiling the Temple of God” (1QpHab 12, 8-9; 8, 10-13). 4QMMT (cir. 2nd cent. BC) 80-82; CD (Damascus Document) 5.6-7; CD 6.13-17; Peshar Habakkuk 1QpHab 11, 4. The corruption of the Jerusalem Sanctuary led some members of the Qumran community to refuse to participate in Jerusalem Temple worship: “None who have been brought into the covenant shall enter into the sanctuary to light up his altar in vain” (CD 6, 11-12). Wardle, *The Jerusalem Temple*, 67–72, 84–85, 147. Joseph Baumgarten, “Sacrifice and Worship Among the Jewish Sectarians of the Dead Sea (Qumrân) Scrolls,” *HTR* 46.3 (1953): 143–49. Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple*, 150. There is a live debate as to whether the

God that could offer alternative sacrifices.⁴ Certain moderate texts such as Tobit and Jubilees levelled criticism against the corruption of the leadership of the temple but

Qumran community understood itself to have replaced the Jerusalem Temple completely or if they merely supplemented certain aspects of the Jerusalem Sanctuary with alternative practices. Fuglseth, *Johannine Sectarianism*, 220–22.

⁴ The community is called itself a temple: “The Yahad shall withdraw, the holy house of Aaron uniting as a Holy of Holies” (1QS 9, 6; cf. 1QS 8, 5-10). This community offered offerings of piety as atonement sacrifices (1QS 8, 9; 9, 3-5). Wise Michael, Martin Abegg, and Cook Edward, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation* (San Francisco: Harper, 1996), 126. Daly, *Christian Sacrifice*, 167. Wardle, *The Jerusalem Temple*, 139, 156–57. Levine, *Jerusalem*, 136. Lawrence Schiffman, “Community Without Temple: The Qumran Community’s Withdrawal from the Jerusalem Temple,” in *Gemeinde ohne Tempel = Community Without Temple: zur Substituierung und Transformation des Jerusalemer Tempels und seines Kults im Alten Testament, antiken Judentum und frühen Christentum*, ed. Beate Ego, Armin Lange, and Peter Pilhofer, WUNT 118 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1999), 272–73. Georg Klinzing, *Die Umdeutung des Kultus in der Qumrangemeinde und im Neuen Testament*, SUNT 7 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971), 93–106. Interestingly they even practiced ritual purification washings before they met together as a communal temple, imitating practices enacted at the Jerusalem Sanctuary (11Q19 45, 7-18; cf. 1QS 3, 10–13). Hannah Harrington, “Accessing Holiness via Ritual Ablutions in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature,” in *Sacrifice, Cult, and Atonement in Early Judaism and Christianity: Constitutions and Critique*, ed. Christian Eberhart and Henrietta Wiley, SBLRBS 85 (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2017), 78–81. This community was led by disaffected priests. 1QS 1, 18 - 2, 25; 1QS 5, 2, 9. Bertil Gärtner, *The Temple and the Community in Qumran and the New Testament: A Comparative Study in the Temple Symbolism of the Qumran Texts and the New Testament.*, SNTSMS 1 (London: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 4–5, 10, 13. Their alternative sanctuary did not indefinitely replace the Jerusalem liturgy and cultus; it was an unideal interim situation until a restored physical temple. 11Q19-20, 29, 9-10; 1QM 2.5–6; 2Q24 4; 11Q18 21. Robert Kugler, “Rewriting Rubrics: Sacrifice and the Religion of Qumran,” in *Religion in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. John Collins and Robert Kugler, SDSS (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 92. Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple*, 147, 164. Gärtner, *The Temple*, 24. Fuglseth, *Johannine Sectarianism*, 226. The Qumran community understood itself to be forced out of the Jerusalem Temple by its impurity, they did not necessarily want to leave, see Schiffman, “Community Without Temple,” 274. Dimant argues that 4Q174 (4QFlor) 6-7 describes an interim temple created in the community which would be superseded by a future eschatological temple, Devorah Dimant, “4QFlorilegium and the Idea of the Community as Temple,” in *Hellenica et Judaica: hommage à Valentin Nikiprowetzky*, ed. André Caquot, Mireille Hadas-Lebel, and Jean Riaud (Leuven: Peeters, 1986), 177. It appears that some of its members engaged in limited contact with the Jerusalem Sanctuary while permitting alternative cultic practices. The assertion that some members of the Qumran Community at one time still participated in the temple is a debated topic. On one hand the laws of the Sabbath sacrifice assume that some people still presented material offerings in the Jerusalem Temple: “No one should offer any sacrifice on the Sabbath except the Sabbath whole burnt offering” (CD 11, 17-18; cf. 19-21). Likewise, assuming that the Qumran community was part of the Essene movement, it appears that some Essenes still sent some valuable gifts to the Jerusalem Sanctuary, acknowledging its importance: “they send what they have dedicated [ἀνάθηματα] to God into the temple, they do not offer sacrifices, because they have more pure lustrations of their own; on which account they are excluded from the common court of the temple, but offer their sacrifices themselves” (Josephus, *Ant.* 18.19; cf. Philo, *Good Person* 75). Pro Wardle, *The Jerusalem Temple*, 145–49. Baumgarten, “Sacrifice and Worship,” 144–46. Lawrence Schiffman, “Temple, Sacrifice and Priesthood in the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *Echoes from the Caves: Qumran and the New Testament*, ed. Florentino García Martínez, STDJ 85 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 169. Philip Davies, *The Damascus Covenant: An Interpretation of the “Damascus Document,”* JSOTSup 25 (Sheffield: University of Sheffield, 1983), 134–40. Fuglseth, *Johannine Sectarianism*, 228–40; Dimant, “4QFlorilegium,” 186–87. *Contra* Heger rejects that the ἀνάθηματα were a type of offering (cf. 2 Macc 9:16), indicating a limited level of cultic participation. Heger argues that this

be grudgingly participated in cultic worship.⁵ Similar statements appear in 1 Enoch (cir. 200 BC-100 AD),⁶ Chapters 1-5 of the *Testament of Moses* (cir. 160 BC),⁷ the *Testament*

is a reference to the tax because the Qumran cult could not have engaged in any form of cultic offerings at Jerusalem because of purity defilement, see Heger, *Cult as the Catalyst*, 349–60. Albert Baumgarten, “Josephus on Essene Sacrifice,” *JJS* 45.2 (1994): 174–75; David Wallace, “The Essenes and Temple Sacrifice,” *TZ* 13 (1957): 335–38. Hermann Lichtenberger, “Atonement and Sacrifice in the Qumran Community,” in *Approaches to Ancient Judaism Volume II*, ed. William Scott Green, BJS 9 (Missoula, MO: Scholars Press, 1978), 163–66.

⁵ A version of this commonly believed that the Second Temple was temporary and would be replaced by an eschatological temple. Although the temple and altar were rebuilt there was “still no fire from heaven, no miracles, no Davidic king, [and] no explicit sign that God approve...[d] the doings of men” (cf. Ezra 3:12; 1 Kgs 8:10-11; 2 Chron 7:1). Cohen, “The Temple and the Synagogue,” 308. Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple*, 158; Stevenson, *Power and Place*, 120. For instance, the document Jubilees (cir. 161-140 BC) of Palestinian origin, has a provisional view of the temple. The author is critical of the corrupt temple leadership: “they will pollute the holy of holies with their pollution and with the corruption of their contamination” (*Jub.* 23:21; cf. v. 14). Despite this rather critical view of the current administration, Jubilees still claims that the Lord dwells in the sanctuary of Jerusalem (32:10; 49:21). Citation from O. Wintermute, “Jubilees,” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Volume Two*, ed. James Charlesworth (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985), 35–142. James VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees*, GAP (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 20–21. Knibb, “Temple and Cult,” 409–10; Ribbens, *Levitical Sacrifice*, 24–25. Wardle, *The Jerusalem Temple*, 60–62. George Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah: A Historical and Literary Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005), 44. Similarly Tobit (cir. 200 BC) believed that the Second Temple was temporary. He believed that it would be rebuilt in greater splendor in the eschaton when all the tribes of Israel returned. This writing surfaces a criticism of the deficiencies of the Jerusalem Temple but does not abandon it. “And they will build the house, not like the former one, until the times of the age are fulfilled. Then after these things, they will return from their captivities and build Jerusalem honorably, and the house of God will be built in it honorably” (*Tob* 14:15; cf. 13:16 *LES*). Ribbens, *Levitical Sacrifice*, 23–24. Knibb, “Temple and Cult,” 408–9. Wardle, *The Jerusalem Temple*, 50–52.

⁶ 1 Enoch makes veiled criticism of the reconstructed temple (1 *En.* 7.1; 9.8; 10.11; 12.4; 15.4). More clearly the narrative describes the offerings of the reconstructed temple as “polluted and impure” (89.73; cf. *Mal.* 1:7). This provisional temple would be replaced by an eschatological temple that would last forever (1 *En.* 90.28-29; 91.12-13). I recognize here that most scholars view 1 Enoch as a composite work from various periods, nevertheless, all of these pieces would have been written before the time of Greek Sirach and express various criticisms of the Jerusalem Temple. Knibb, “Temple and Cult,” 405–8. Wardle, *The Jerusalem Temple*, 52–56, 62–63. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 51, 84–86.

⁷ Chapters 1-5 of the *Testament of Moses* (cir. 160 BC) present a harsh critique of the Hasmonean priesthood: “They will pollute the house of their worship with the custom of the nations; and they will play the harlot after foreign gods... certain of them will pollute the high altar by [four to six letters are lost] the offerings which they place before the Lord” (5.3-4). English citation from J. Priest, “Testament of Moses,” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Volume One*, ed. James Charlesworth (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), 919–34. The Testament of Moses is a composite work which contains interpolations from after the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple, but it appears that chapters 1-5 comes from an earlier Maccabean period. Wardle, *The Jerusalem Temple*, 65–66. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 74–77. John Collins, “Testaments,” in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period: Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus*, ed. Michael Stone, vol. 2 of *CRINT* 2 (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1984), 347.

of *Levi* (cir. Pre AD 70),⁸ the Psalms of Solomon (cir. 63 BC), and the Sibylline Oracle 3 (cir. 2nd cent. BC).⁹ Despite their veiled criticism of the Jerusalem leadership and priesthood, the documents mentioned affirmed the importance of the temple.¹⁰ Like Israel's prophetic tradition, the "criticism of the cult arose not from fundamental opposition to sacrifice but as a reaction to perverse tendencies endangering Israel's worship."¹¹ With the exception of some Jews of the Qumran community, for most Jews regardless "of how the temple or the contemporary administration of sacrifices was viewed, the cult was not rejected."¹²

On the positive side were Jewish documents such as 1-2 Maccabees, 1-2 Esdras, and Judith that provided unquestioned support of the Jerusalem Sanctuary.¹³ 2 Maccabees possesses an even more positive understanding of the Jerusalem Sanctuary. The implicit theme throughout the book is that God protects his sanctuary against those

⁸ *Levi* addresses his priestly descendants: "you plunder the Lord's offerings; from his share you steal choice parts, contemptuously eating them with whores. You teach the Lord's commands out of greed for gain; married women you profane; you have intercourse with whores and adulteresses...you will be inflated with pride over your priesthood, exalting yourself not merely by human standards by contrary to the commands of God" (*T. Lev.* 14:5-8). English translation from H. Kee, "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Volume One*, ed. James Charlesworth (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), 775-828; Wardle, *The Jerusalem Temple*, 82-84. Collins, "Testaments," 341-44.

⁹ The sanctuary became defiled because of lawless acts of the priests: "the sons of Jerusalem defiled the sanctuary of the Lord, they were profaning the offerings of God with lawless acts" (*Pss. Sol.* 2.3) and "they stole from the sanctuary of God" (8.11). Another example includes *Sib. Or.* 3:702-4; 767-95. Wardle, *The Jerusalem Temple*, 85-91. Ribbens, *Levitical Sacrifice*, 25.

¹⁰ Wardle, *The Jerusalem Temple*, 94.

¹¹ Wright, "Sacrifice," 121.

¹² Ribbens, *Levitical Sacrifice*, 25.

¹³ 1 Maccabees chronicled the story of the desecration and rededication of the temple (1 Macc 4:36-59). It narrated without criticism the maintenance and support of the temple by the ruling Hasmonean dynasty (1 Macc 10:20, 31-35, 39-44; 11:34-35; 15:7, 9). Implicit support of the establishment is seen throughout this document. Knibb, "Temple and Cult," 411. A similar attitude of positive affirmation of the restored temple appears in the retelling of biblical history in 1 Esdras 2-7, see Knibb, "Temple and Cult," 414. Harold Attridge, "Historiography," in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period: Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus*, ed. Michael Stone, vol. 2 of *CRINT 2* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1984), 157-60.

who try to destroy it (2 Macc 3:1-40; 4:1-10:9; 10:10-15:36).¹⁴ A similar defensive attitude appears in Judith: they cry out to the Lord “Dash their strength by your power and destroy their might in your wrath, for they plan to profane your sanctuary, to defile the tabernacle, the resting place of your glorious name” (Jdt 9:8; cf. 4:1-3, 12; 8:21, 24; 9:13).¹⁵

Because Ptolemaic Judaism was diverse, there certainly existed a variety of attitudes toward the Jerusalem Temple and the corruption associated with it by some. Despite this reality, most Jews were supportive of the Jerusalem Temple and its worship.¹⁶ As Ptolemaic Jews instructed themselves about their religion and its cultic teachings, they normally spoke favourably of offerings in the Jerusalem Sanctuary.

¹⁴ Laudatory statements are interspersed throughout the book: “he went to the great and holy temple while the priests were offering the appropriate sacrifices” (2 Macc 14:31; *LES*). Knibb, “Temple and Cult,” 412. Robert Doran, *Temple Propaganda: The Purpose and Character of 2 Maccabees*, CBQMS 12 (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1981), 108–10.

¹⁵ A similar narrative of God protecting his temple against gentile defilement appears in 3 Macc 1:10; 7:6-9. Knibb, “Temple and Cult,” 413.

¹⁶ Wardle, *The Jerusalem Temple*, 165. Sanders, *Judaism*, 53–54.

Appendix 5: Second Temple Jewish Temples Outside of Jerusalem

Despite prohibitions, there existed three undisputed physical Jewish temples

outside of Jerusalem in Second Temple Judaism. All these temples engaged in material animal sacrifices. These temples were in Elephantine, Egypt,¹ in Gerizim, Samaria,² and

¹ The Elephantine Temple was destroyed before the time of Greek Sirach in the early 4th century BC and no longer played a role in the Jewish community. The Elephantine Temple offered material animal sacrifices at its worship. For an excellent introduction to this temple, as well as its syncretistic worship and religious function for Jewish mercenaries living abroad see Jörg Frey, “Temple and Rival Temple — The Cases of Elephantine, Mt. Gerizim, and Leontopolis,” in *Gemeinde ohne Tempel = Community Without Temple: zur Substituierung und Transformation des Jerusalemer Tempels und seines Kults im Alten Testament, antiken Judentum und frühen Christentum*, ed. Beate Ego, Armin Lange, and Peter Pilhofer, WUNT 118 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1999), 173–80; Runesson, *The Origins of the Synagogue*, 410–11.

² The Samaritans, as portrayed in biblical history, emerged as a syncretistic stream of Northern Judaism that worshiped and offered sacrifices at a different temple on Mount Gerizim (2 Kgs 17:18–41). While there are debates about its dating, the blatant distinctive of the Samaritan community was their temple constructed at Mount Gerizim which according to archaeological dating was constructed in either the Hellenistic or early Persian period (5th–4th cent. BC). There is much debate concerning the dating of the Gerizim temple structure. On the earlier side Runesson argues that the 4th century temple was built on an older rival Israelite temple originating from the 10th century BC, Runesson, *The Origins of the Synagogue*, 423–24; Frey, “Temple and Rival Temple,” 184. Some studies have concluded it was built in the Hellenistic period Wardle, *The Jerusalem Temple*, 106–11; Robert Bull, “Er-Ras, Tell (Mount Gerizim),” in *Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, ed. Michael Avi-Yonah (Jerusalem: Masada Press, 1973), 1022. Knoppers merely notes that there was a temple by the 5th century BC. Gary Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans: The Origins and History of Their Early Relations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 122. A recent archeological study claimed that a temple structure was built in the early Roman period Ingrid Hjelm, *Jerusalem’s Rise to Sovereignty: Zion and Gerizim in Competition*, JSOTSup 404 (London: T&T Clark International, 2004), 214–16. In conclusion, there was clearly a temple there, but it is not known exactly when it was built. Despite quibbles about the dating of the temple, all scholars agree that there was a cultic altar on Gerizim during the Hellenistic and likely Persian period. Wardle, *The Jerusalem Temple*, 99–102. Frey, “Temple and Rival Temple,” 180–85; Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans*, 124. Archaeological evidence indicates that this temple was modelled after the Solomonic temple pattern; however, it is questioned archaeologically if Josephus’ observations were correct. Josephus, *J.W.* 1.63; *Ant.* 11.310, 13.256; Wardle, *The Jerusalem Temple*, 116. Hjelm, *Jerusalem’s Rise to Sovereignty*, 215. Frey, “Temple and Rival Temple,” 184–85. This alternative Jewish community was viewed with some antagonism by many Jews in the later Hellenistic and Roman period. This study cannot be sure that such antagonism existed in the Persian period or early Hellenistic period since there appear to be positive interactions between the groups. Negative statements include Sir 50:25–26; *Jub.* 30:12–13; *Jdt* 5:16; *T. Levi* 7.2; Josephus, *Ant.* 11.302–47; 2 Macc 5:22–23. Earlier there were positive interactions between Jews and Samaritans (*Jer* 41:5; *Neh* 4:2; *Ezra* 4:17). James Montgomery, *The Samaritans: The Earliest Jewish Sect: Their History, Theology and Literature* (Philadelphia: John C. Winston, 1907), 45–47. Wardle, *The Jerusalem Temple*, 102–6. Stevenson, *Power and Place*, 168–69; Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans*, 121. This temple was destroyed, perhaps because of its rival status, by the Hasmonean dynasty in 138 BC, shortly before the time of Greek Sirach. Josephus, *Ant.* 13.254–56; *J.W.* 1.62–63. Wardle, *The Jerusalem Temple*, 114–15, 118. Francis Schmidt, *How the Temple Thinks: Identity and Social Cohesion in Ancient Judaism*, *BibSem* 78 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 124.

in Leontopolis, Egypt.³ While both the Elephantine and Gerizim Temples were destroyed by the time of Greek Sirach and could not have been frequented by Ptolemaic Jews, the Leontopolis Temple temporarily replaced Jerusalem cultic worship for some Ptolemaic communities. In the case of the Leontopolis Temple, however, there is no positive evidence that its users intended that their temple rival sanctuary would indefinitely replace Jerusalem Temple worship because it was created in reaction to the perceived corruption of the Jerusalem Temple. The influence of the Leontopolis Temple, as well as that of Gerizim and Elephantine, was limited to a small pocket of Jews who

³ The Leontopolis Temple [ἱερόν] was established by the priestly family of the Oniads who fled from Jerusalem during Antiochus Epiphanes' meddling in the temple leadership and placement of his priests in power (sometime before 164 BC). This temple was constructed as the result of perceived corruption in the temple in an unusual moment that required the legitimate priests to flee. Because of the political and non-Levitical tensions in Jerusalem, this temple was viewed as a legitimate cult by some because it possessed a priest from a Levitical high priestly family. As a result of the corruption of the Jerusalem Temple, it was viewed as a place where legitimate worship could occur again. There is some confusion about whether this person was Oniad III or IV, but in either case a sanctuary was built. Josephus, *Ant.* 12.9.7; 13.383-388; 2 Macc 4:34-35. Seeman, "Jewish History," 37. Grabbe, *Judaic Religion in the Second Temple Period*, 82; Abraham Wasserstein, "Notes on the Temple of Onias at Leontopolis," *Illinois Classical Studies* 18 (1993): 122; Brutti, *The Development of the High Priesthood during the Pre-Hasmonean Period*, 211. Taylor, "A Second Temple in Egypt," 310. Joan Taylor, "A Second Temple in Egypt: The Evidence for the Zadokite Temple of Onias," *JSJ* 29.3 (1998): 310; Wardle, *The Jerusalem Temple*, 132. Parente argues that a lost version of 2 Macc stated that Onias III had built the temple. Fausto Parente, "Le témoignage de Théodore de Mopsueste sur le sort d'Onias III et la fondation du temple de Léontopolis," *REJ* 154.3 (1995): 430, 435; Wardle, *The Jerusalem Temple*, 124, 129-30, 138. This temple was modelled after the Jerusalem Temple and possessed an altar and sacrificial worship which was interpreted as the fulfillment of a prophecy of Isaiah (Josephus, *Ant.* 13.62-79; *J.W.* 1.33, 7.423-32; cf. Isa 19:19). Wasserstein, "Notes on the Temple of Onias at Leontopolis," 124; Taylor, "A Second Temple in Egypt," 314. Josephus makes a parallel between this temple [ἱερόν] and other Jewish Egyptian holy places [ἱερά] whose descriptions are similar to structures which are later called synagogues. This is because ἱερόν can sometimes refer more generally to a "sacred place." Josephus also equates a synagogue with a temple [ἱερόν] in *J.W.* 7.44-45. The unique feature of the Leontopolis temple is that it is one of the only known alternative Jewish "temples" to provide physical sacrifices and an altar (perhaps another is mentioned in Sardis in *Ant.* 14.260). The Sardis synagogue may merely be describing its worship in cultic worship language familiar to a pagan audience or describe offerings of piety. Possibly the Leontopolis Temple was constructed as a local alternative similar to that found in a synagogue, albeit with the addition of material sacrifices. Krause, "Diaspora Synagogues," 90, 97, 100-101. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem*, 71. Jutta Leonhardt-Balzer, *Jewish Worship in Philo of Alexandria*, TSAJ 84 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 130-31. Rajak, "Synagogue and Community," 31; Kasher, *The Jews in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt*, 223-24. Goodman, "Sacred Space in Diaspora Judaism," 4-5. While Leontopolis appears to be an exception, other Jewish Egyptian temples [ἱερά] are only described as engaging in scripture and communal actions, not physical cultic sacrifice. Jewish synagogues are sometimes described as temples (Tertullian, *On Fasting* 16). Dion, "Synagogues et temples dans l'Égypte hellénistique," 51-52, 54.

directly participated in this movement; as a result, most Ptolemaic Jews did not consider it to be a replacement for the Jerusalem cultus.⁴ While there may have been alternative locations of material cultic worship for some minority movements in Judaism, for most, Jewish material cultic offerings were restricted to the Jerusalem Temple.⁵ As this study showed, this was the practice of most Egyptian Jews who used Greek Sirach.

⁴ While perhaps its direct community believed Leontopolis was a rival temple that had indefinitely replaced the Jerusalem Temple, nevertheless, extant contemporary Jewish documents never mention it. The fact that no extant Egyptian Jewish literature even bothers to mention the temple indicates that it was likely not very influential in most communities' minds, see Frey, "Temple and Rival Temple," 192. Safrai, "Relations," 187. Wardle, *The Jerusalem Temple*, 138. Cohen, "The Temple and the Synagogue," 301, n. 7.

⁵ Levine, *Jerusalem*, 133. Wardle, *The Jerusalem Temple*, 29–30.

Appendix 6: The Practice of Material Offerings in The Jerusalem Temple and Offerings of Piety in the Diaspora

The reconstructed “second temple” that post-Exilic Judaism knew looked in many ways like the earlier pre-Exilic Solomonic temple as presented in biblical history. This pre-Exilic Temple was divided between the innermost holy of holies which contained the ark of the covenant, the holy place which held the altar of incense, table, and a golden lampstand, and finally the outer porch where there existed an altar and basin.¹ The reconstructed, post-Exilic temple maintained these basic divisions but lacked the ark of the covenant and had a more defined system of courts.²

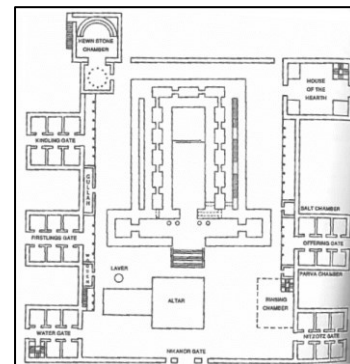


Image 10: Pre-Herodian Holy Place and Holy of Holies Reconstructed from the Mishnah and Early Rabbinic Sources. Image from Patrich, *The Location of the Second Temple*, 216.

This second, Jerusalem Temple and precincts were approximately 250 x 300 square meters. The inner sanctuary (the holy place and holy of holies) maintained a burning lampstand and lacked an image of God.³ Directly outside was the court of the priests (i.e. outer porch) where the business of sacrifice occurred. There was “a large altar, a basin, a shambles (where the animals were butchered), and cooking facilities.”⁴ By the altar there existed a water cistern where running water was pumped in with a

¹ 1 Kgs 5-7; 2 Chron 2-4. Stevenson, *Power and Place*, 118.

² The system of courts developed gradually throughout the Second Temple era. Ezra’s reconstruction only mentions the building of a temple as well as an altar (Ezra 1:2-4; 6:2-5). The court divisions seem to have been built over time. Joseph Patrich, “The Pre-Herodian Temple II: The Building Project of Simeon the Just on the Temple Mount,” *RB* 118.4 (2011): 568.

³ The lampstand likely symbolized continual worship. Philo, *Spec. Laws* 1.296; Josephus, *Ant.* 3.199; Ex. 27:21, Hayward, *The Jewish Temple*, 23, 25. Gentile authors note the lack of statue in the Jerusalem Temple (Tacitus, *Histories* 5.9; Dio Cassius, *Roman History* 37.17.2-3). Likewise, there were no groves where votive offerings were placed for an idol to a pagan deity. The lack of groves appears to be because of its association with pagan worship (cf. Philo, *Spec. Laws* 1.74-75; LXX 4 Kdms 16:4; Jer 3:6, 13; 17:8) Hayward, *The Jewish Temple*, 24. Stevenson, *Power and Place*, 124.

⁴ Sanders, *Judaism*, 55. Stevenson, *Power and Place*, 133.

water wheel to clean the blood from sacrifices.⁵ This butchery was overseen by 20-25 priests who actively engaged in sacrifices at any one time.⁶

Purity was of utmost importance in temple worship because the God of Israel was pure and holy. The temple provided a mediating point “between God and the people and facilitate[d] their access to God’s presence and power.”⁷ As the sacred house of God, the temple required a worshiper to be in a state of ritual purity when entering God’s house.⁸ As a result, there were increasing levels of purity from the entrance of the temple to the most sacred holy of holies according to levels of distinction between Jews and gentiles, male and female, and

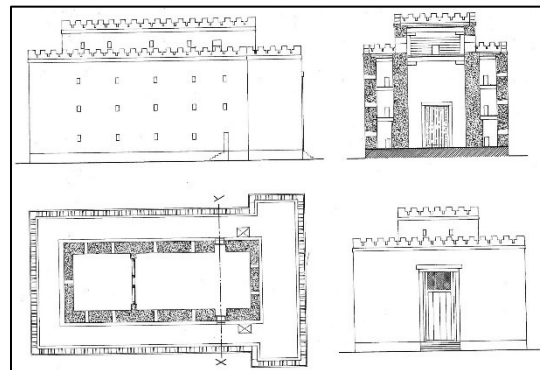


Image 15: Zerubbabel’s Reconstructed Temple. Image adapted from Busink, *Der Tempel*, 824.

according to priestly status. At the furthest remove (i.e., nearer the entrance) was the court of the gentiles, followed by a court for Jewish women, then one for Jewish men,

⁵ *Let. Aris.* 88-90. Hecataeus of Abdera (cir. 367–283 BC) in Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 1.198-199. Joseph Patrick, “The Location of the Second Temple and the Layout of Its Courts, Gates, and Chambers: A New Proposal,” in *Unearthing Jerusalem: 150 Years of Archaeological Research in the Holy City*, ed. Katharina Galor and Gideon Avni (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 211–12; G. Wightman, “Ben Sira 50:2: The Hellenistic Temple Enclosure in Jerusalem,” in *Trade, Contact, and the Movement of Peoples in the Eastern Mediterranean: Studies in Honour of J. Basil Hennessey*, ed. Stephen Bourke and Jean-Paul Descoedres (Sydney: Meditarch, 1995), 280. Hayward, *The Jewish Temple*, 18–25.

⁶ Josephus describes 20,000 priests working in rotation (*Ag. Ap.* 2.108). Although likely inflated, Aristeas states that 700 priests were involved in priestly duties at one moment in the temple (*Let. Aris.* 95). At the Jerusalem Sanctuary, there were Levites, Aaronic priests, and a high priest who were exclusively employed in the service of the temple. The Jewish law required these priests to be financially supported for their services; therefore, they seldom did other types of work (Num 18:8-13, 20; Ex 2; Ex 28:1, 41; 29:9; Lev 1:5; Num 1:47-54; 1 Chron 24). These priests sometimes wore the prescribed uniform of a tunic, sash, headgear, and breeches, but at other times it appears they wore simpler vestments. A fuller uniform is described in some authors (Josephus, *Ant.* 3.152-8; 1QM 7, 8-10; cf. Ex 28:40-42) whereas simpler garments are described elsewhere (Philo, *Spec. Laws* 1.83; *Arist.* 87). In all scenarios, it appears that they did not wear shoes. The high priest appears to have worn this same outfit with another blue tunic over it along with another sash and golden bells. Josephus, *Ant.* 3.159-78; Sir 45:9. Sanders, *Judaism*, 77–79, 92–99.

⁷ Stevenson, *Power and Place*, 122–23. Josephus, *Ant.* 8.107-114.

⁸ Wardle, *The Jerusalem Temple*, 18. Sanders, *Judaism*, 70–72, 112–16.

then one for priests, and then finally the holy of holies itself, which could only be entered by the high priest from among the priests.⁹ Before devotees could advance to their appropriate place to worship in the temple, they engaged in ritual purification from their impurities.¹⁰

While ritual impurity required the practice of external ritual purification rites to begin the cultic ritual, as worshipers continued into the temple, they were also required to possess correct internal attitudes and consistent ethical living to complete a successful and acceptable sacrifice.¹¹ Conversely, worshipers understood that God would reject

⁹ Josephus, *Ant.* 15.417–20; *J.W.* 5.190–226. Sanders, *Judaism*, 56–76. Wardle, *The Jerusalem Temple*, 18. Petropoulou, *Animal Sacrifice*, 139. In ancient Israel, women and proselyte gentiles were able to venture further into the temple complex (Ex 38:8; Num 15:14–16), but by the Hasmonean Period extra legislations designed to prevent impurity had crept into Jewish practice which limited these groups to certain designated areas in the sanctuary.

¹⁰ It is important to stress that impurity did mean primarily moral faults. Lack of purity was caused by actions or states associated with a change of status in life (i.e. childbirth, death, a corpse, a dead body, blood, sex; Lev 12–15). Because Jews believed that God was changeless and possessed an undiluted life force, God could not be contaminated by a status of death or change. Accordingly, worshipers had to be either pure as a result of abstinence from certain impurities or to engage in a type of purification in order for them to be able to advance into the temple precinct to an appropriate level (e.g., purified gentiles could advance within the court of the gentiles but no further). The Jewish God was transcendent and could not be contained by any building (1 Kgs 8:27; 2 Chron 6:18), and yet at the same time he dwelt in the Jerusalem Sanctuary (1 Kgs 8:13; 2 Chron 6:2, 41). The laws of purity in the temple did not prevent the people from approaching God, but rather provided a limited place where they could meet him. Sanders, *Judaism*, 71–72. Yerkes, *Sacrifice in Greek and Roman*, 168–70.

¹¹ LXX Isa 1:10–17; Jer 6:20; 7:21–36; Hos 6:6; 8:12; 12:11; Amos 4:4; 5:12, 21–22; Mal 1:7–8. Some previously argued that the prophetic school of ancient Judaism rejected all forms of material sacrifice; it has now has been convincingly argued that their criticism were focused on corruption and moral incongruity during specific historical circumstances; they did not necessarily reject all material sacrifices and ritual as long as it was accompanied with appropriate piety; sacrifice and righteousness needed to be combined for true religion. During Second Temple Judaism this understanding of the prophets was the dominant opinion. Aaron Glaim, “‘I Will Not Accept Them’: Sacrifice and Reciprocity in the Prophetic Literature,” in *Sacrifice, Cult, and Atonement in Early Judaism and Christianity: Constituents and Critique*, ed. Christian Eberhart and Henrietta Wiley, SBLRBS 85 (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2017), 125–49. Helmer Ringgren, *Sacrifice in the Bible*, WCB: Second Series 42 (London: Lutterworth Press, 1962), 57. Second Temple Jewish texts state negatively that the offering of the unrighteous is rejected and positively that the sacrifice of the pious is accepted. Various texts make clear that God does not accept the offerings of those who engage in unrighteous deeds or sins: “they profaned the gifts of God [τὰ δῶρα τοῦ θεοῦ] with lawless acts” (*Pss. Sol.* 2:3). Philo states “For one may almost say that no bad man can really perform sacrifices, not even if he were to bring the altar ten thousand oxen every day without intermission; for his most important and indispensable offering, namely his mind, is polluted. And it is impious for polluted things to come near to the altar” (*Planting* 164). Philo, *Moses* 2.162; *Jub.* 30:13–16; Josephus, *Ant.* 6.148; cf. 4.206; 4 Ezra 1:26, 31; 1QS 3, 4; 4 Ezra 1:26, 31. 2 Enoch

their sacrifices if their lives were immoral.¹² As a result, devotees understood that their cultic ritual needed to be combined with ethical and moral piety for it to be successful and accepted by God.¹³

As devotees continued into the temple, they brought offerings with them. The ideal offering consisted of meat, cereal, oil, and wine.¹⁴ In the original Mosaic legislation, the Jewish community was intended to offer two lambs along with cereal, oil, and wine (Ex 29:40) and to burn meat, oil, and flour while offering wine as a libation offering.¹⁵ For individual worshipers, this sacrifice was often a ram or for poorer people a bird. It is not clear if the worshiper cut the animal's throat and then gave it to the priest in the respective courtyard or if the priest slaughtered the animal himself.¹⁶ If a

insists that God does not accept gifts from those who live impure lives (45.1, 46.1). Because it is not agreed upon whether or not 2 Enoch comes from pre-Christian Judaism I will not root my argument in it. B. Metzger, "The Fourth Book of Ezra," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Volume One*, ed. James Charlesworth (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), 520. F. Anderson, "2 Enoch," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Volume One*, ed. James Charlesworth (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), 95–96. Daly, *Christian Sacrifice*, 151. Wright, "Sacrifice," 24–26. Leonhardt-Balzer, *Jewish Worship*, 236–337. Valentin Nikiprowetzky, "La spiritualisation des sacrifices et le culte sacrificiel au Temple de Jérusalem chez Philon d'Alexandrie," *Sem* 17 (1967): 101. Francesca Calabi, "Les sacrifices et leur signification symbolique chez Philon d'Alexandrie," in *Car c'est l'amour qui me plait, non le sacrifice: recherches sur Osée 6:6 et son interprétation juive et chrétienne*, ed. Eberhard Bons, JSJSup 88 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 98–99. Ribbens, *Levitical Sacrifice*, 28–29, 45.

¹² "God looks upon even the smallest offering of frankincense by a holy man as more valuable than ten thousand beasts which may be sacrificed by one who is not thoroughly virtuous" (Philo, *Spec. Laws* 1.275). God rejected the offerings of an unrighteous person: "there is no accepting of person...or taking from his hand either fruit or sacrifice or holocaust" (*Jub.* 30.16). Philo, *Unchangeable* 8; Josephus, *Ant.* 6.149; *Aris.* 170. Lieber, "Between Motherland and Fatherland," 202. William Gilders, "Jewish Sacrifice: Its Nature and Function (According to Philo)," in *Ancient Mediterranean Sacrifice*, ed. Jennifer Knust and Zsuzsanna Várhelyi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 97. Petropoulou, *Animal Sacrifice*, 172. Paul Robertson, "Toward an Understanding of Philo's and Cicero's Treatment of Sacrifice," *SPhiloA* 23 (2011): 45, cf. 54. Daly, *Christian Sacrifice*, 153.

¹³ LXX Ps 68:31-32; [MT 69:31-32]; 1 Sam 15:22; Mic 6:6-8; 4 Macc 3:13-16; Jdt 16:16; Philo, *Worse* 20-21; *Jub.* 5:16. Daly, *Christian Sacrifice*, 149–50. Leonhardt-Balzer, *Jewish Worship*, 238.

¹⁴ Num 15:1-10; Josephus, *Ant.* 3.233-236.

¹⁵ Sanders, *Judaism*, 104–5.

¹⁶ Philo states that the priest alone kills the animal whereas Josephus states that the offeror does it (*Spec. Laws* 2.145; *Ant.* 3.226). Birds or flour could be used as a more affordable substitute (Lev 5:7; 5:11; 12:8; Josephus, *Ant.* 3.230). Sanders, *Judaism*, 106–10. Jewish animal sacrifice was particularly expensive because frequently an offering was fully burned on the altar. Sanders, *Judaism*, 50.

larger animal, its throat was quickly cut while it was standing and the blood poured out as the animal eventually lost consciousness. At this point, the priests took over the rest of the operation as they took the animal into the court of the priests where the altar was located. The animal was skinned and cut up. Priests then burned or poured out the blood, fat, and part of the offerings on the altar. Depending on the offering it was burned whole, a portion of the meat was given back to the worshipers, or a portion was retained for the priests.¹⁷

The sacrifice was a combination of liturgical worship along with expert butchery.¹⁸ It was likely that it was characterized by simultaneous priestly and lay singing (including women).¹⁹ During the action of sacrifice, prayer and incense were also simultaneously offered as the devotee watched from the outer court.²⁰ At this point, the offering was accepted or rejected by God which was signalled in most circumstances

¹⁷ Lev 3:17, Sanders, *Judaism*, 79–80, 107. The priests appear to have worked quietly and efficiently. An insightful description of temple service appears in *Aristeas*: “The ministering of the priests was absolutely unsurpassable in its vigor and the arrangement of its well-ordered silence: All work hard of their own accord, with much exertion, and each one looks after his appointed task. Their service is unremitting, sharing the sacrifices, some undertaking the carrying of wood, others oil, others wheat flour, others the sweet spices, others offering burnt offerings of the parts of the flesh—all of them exerting their strength in different ways. They divide the legs of the bullocks with both hands, though they are more than two talents in weight in almost every case, and then with an upward movement rip off with each hand in an amazing way a sufficiently large portion with unerring accuracy. The sheep and the goats are similarly treated in a remarkable way, weight and fat notwithstanding. Those whose concern it is choose in every case spotless specimens outstanding for fatness: Thus the aforesaid procedure is carried out. They have a rest room set aside, where those who are resting sit down. When this happens, some of those who are rested stand up with alacrity, but no one orders the arrangements of their ministry. A general silence reigns, so that one might think that there was not a single man in the place although the number of ministers in attendance is more than seven hundred, in addition to a large number of the assistants bringing forward the animals for sacrifice” (*Let. Aris.* 92-95). The material slaughtering of an animal in ancient Judaism did not appear particularly different from animal slaughter in Greek or Roman religion. Sanders, *Judaism*, 49; Gilders, “Jewish Sacrifice,” 95.

¹⁸ Sanders, *Judaism*, 78–79.

¹⁹ Ezr 2:41, 65; Neh 7:44, 67; 1 Esd 5:57-59; 2 Kdms 19:35. Harmut Gese, “Zur Geschichte der Kultsänger am zweiten Tempel,” in *Abraham unser Vater: Juden und Christen im Gespräch über die Bibel: Festschrift für Otto Michel zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Martin Hengel, Otto Betz, and Peter Schmidt, AGSU 5 (Leiden: Brill, 1963), 222, 224.

²⁰ Ex 30:1-8; Lev 16:13; Isa 56:7; Sir 50 :16-18; Philo, *Spec. Laws* 1.97; *Moses* 2.133 Sanders, *Judaism*, 80.

by no negative interruptions: for instance “[I] made an offering on their behalf, and *the Lord* received it favorably” (*T. Job* 42.8).²¹ Accepted sacrifices were often described as sweet-smelling or providing a sweet aroma: “he offered up a sweet aroma which was pleasing before the Lord” (*Jub.* 6.3).²² At this point, the effect of the worshiper’s offering was completed. In Second Temple Judaism the effect of sacrifice was generally linked with the idea of sin-removal which could be completed through a confession of sin and an offering.²³ Sin was depicted as a debt owed to God that needed to be paid off²⁴ or an immoral action which resulted in the worshiper standing under divine anger

²¹ Jewish religion frequently provided textual indicators that highlighted if an offering was accepted or not. For instance Noah “entreated God to accept of his sacrifice” (Josephus, *Ant.* 1.98). Likewise he “rose up and brought sacrifices to the altar; and when he had filled it with unblemished victims, he most evidently discovered that God had with pleasure accepted of all that he had sacrificed to him, for there came a fire running out of the air, and rushed with violence upon the altar, in the sight of all, and caught hold of, and consumed the sacrifices” (*Ant.* 8.118; cf. 4.311). *Jubilees* describes offerings as accepted: “he offered the incense which is acceptable” (*Jub.* 4.25; cf. 7.36; 21.7). 2 *En.* 45:3; 61:4–5; 66:2. Daly, *Christian Sacrifice*, 76.

²² Because material sacrifices were burnt before God. Texts indicated that God smelt a sacrifice which demonstrated his acceptance. The verb “to smell [ריח]” on an anthropological level describes the physical actions of sensing and inhaling through one’s nose an offering. Gen 8:21; 1 Sam 26:19; Lev 26:31; Amos 5:21; Jud 16:16; *Jub.* 7.5; 16.23; 21.7, 9; 32.4; Pseudo-Philo (cir. 100 BC-AD 100) *L.A.B.* 3.8; 11Q 15,13; 16,10; 20,9; 23,17; 28,6; 34,14. Daly, *Christian Sacrifice*, 72, 80. Ribbens, *Levitical Sacrifice*, 44. Ian Ritchie, “The Nose Knows: Bodily Knowing in Isaiah 11.3,” *JSOT* 87 (2000): 60. Caldusch-Benages, “Aromas, perfumes y fragancias,” 19. Daniel Harrington, “Pseudo-Philo,” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Volume Two*, ed. James Charlesworth (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985), 299.

²³ They regularly emulate the cultic language existent in the Pentateuch. Cf. Lev 5:1-6; Num 5:7. Wright, “Sacrifice,” 118; Ribbens, *Levitical Sacrifice*, 26. Of paramount importance to Greek-speaking Jews was the Septuagint. The choice of Greek words for cultic practices in the earliest translation of the LXX Pentateuch were often those which were adopted by later Greek-speaking Jewish communities. Because translators translated Hebrew words into Greek differently, this study cannot assume that a cultic word had a universally agreed-upon meaning in Greek-speaking Judaism which idiosyncratically copied the cultic terminology used in their Scriptures. Daly, *Christian Sacrifice*, 139–41; Emanuel Tov, “The Impact of the LXX Translation of the Pentateuch on the Translation of the Other Books: Revised Version,” in *The Greek and Hebrew Bible: Collected Essays on the Septuagint*, VTSup 72 (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 183, 193. Daniel, *Recherches*, 222–31, 364–76. Gilders, “Jewish Sacrifice,” 95.

²⁴ In the Old Testament sin is more frequently described as a burden that needed to be removed (Gen 15:17; Exod 10:17; Lev 5:1; 24:15). Second Temple documents begin to use monetary debt language that could be increased or decreased or paid off (i.e. forgiven) (4Q267 (CD) 3, 10-12; 11Q13 2, 6-7; 2 Macc 6:14-15). Debt language is frequently used by early Jewish Christians to describe sin: “forgive us our debts, as I also have forgiven our debtors” (Matt 5:22; *NRSV*; cf. Luke 7:41-43; Col 2:14; 1 Thess 2:14-16; Rom 6:23). Anderson, *Sin: A History*, 12, 20–21, 34–36, 112; Gary Anderson, “From Israel’s Burden to Israel’s Debt: Towards a Theology of Sin in Biblical and Early Second Temple Writings,” in

that needed to be appeased or propitiated through atonement.²⁵ Texts often linked the effects of sacrifice to the removal of sin or the obtainment of forgiveness.²⁶ Whereas in Ancient Israel there were sharp distinctions between the effects of different offerings, whether between guilt offerings that provided forgiveness for sin (Lev 6:1-6) or purification offerings that removed ritual impurity (4:1-5:13),²⁷ in the Second Temple period Jews often conflated their effects although they were aware of various types of

Reworking the Bible: Apocryphal and Related Texts at Qumran, ed. Esther Chazon, Devorah Dimant, and Ruth Clements, STDJ 58 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 1–30.

²⁵ The religious assumption was that a worshiper had a relationship with God that had been somehow damaged by moral impurities (i.e. sin) but could be repaired through a sacrifice: atonement “served the *positive* function of making persons or things “acceptable” or “pleasing” to God and the *negative* (or apotropaic) function of interrupting or averting the course of evil set loose by sin or transgression.” *Sib. Or.* 3.625–633; Philo *Planting* 162; *Names* 233–36; Josephus, *Ant.* 7.333. This atonement is made on behalf of the people or the offeror (*Jub.* 6:14; 7:3; 16: 22; 34:18), the people of Israel (*Jub.* 50:11), or the land (*Jub.* 6:2). Robert J. Daly, “The Power of Sacrifice in Ancient Judaism and Christianity,” *JRitSt* 4.2 (1990): 182–85.

²⁶ Second Temple texts often use the verb [ἐκ]ἰλάσκομαι which is often translated as propitiate, appease, or make atonement. Its most basic meaning is the removal of impurity. Atonement led to the forgiveness of the people: “the priest will make atonement for them [ἐξιλάσεται], and the offense will be forgiven them [ἀφεθήσεται]” (Lev 4:20 *LES*). Atonement resulted in the cleansing of the people: “he will make atonement [ἐξιλάσεται] for you to purify [καθαρίσαι] you from all of your sins in the presence of the Lord; and you will be cleansed [καθαρισθήσεσθε]” (16:20 *LES*). While it is debated as to whether or not atonement was the central idea behind sacrificial offerings in ancient Israel, it was the meaning portrayed in the LXX translation of Leviticus: “For the life of all flesh is its blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your lives; for its blood will make atonement for the soul [ἀντὶ τῆς ψυχῆς ἐξιλάσεται]” (Lev 17:11; *LES*; cf. LXX Lev 4:26, 31, 35; 5:10, 13, 16, 18, 26; 19:22). A sacrifice created atonement which created the forgiveness of sins: “he took the kid of a goat, and he made atonement with its blood for all the sins of the land...and he offered up a burnt offering on the altar” (*Jub.* 6:2-3). Sirach states “who will make atonement [ἐξιλάσεται] for his sins” (28:5). “Therefore, he made atonement [ἐξιλάσμων] for those who had died to be delivered from their sin [ἀπολυθῆναι]” (2 Macc 12:45). Cf. *Jub.* 16:22; Josephus, *Ant.* 3.232-238; 3.241, 246, 247. Within the Qumran community, atonement sacrifices brought favor from God (1QM II, 5; cf. 4Q512 7, 29–32; 1QT 29, 4-6). Daniel Stökl ben Ezra, *The Impact of Yom Kippur on Early Christianity: The Day of Atonement from Second Temple Judaism to the Fifth Century*, WUNT 163 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 104. Dodd, “Ἰλασκεσθαι, Its Cognates, Derivatives, and Synonyms, in the Septuagint,” 256. Ribbens, *Levitical Sacrifice*, 26. Daly, *Christian Sacrifice*, 95, 128–31, 263. Jean Laporte, “Sacrifice and Forgiveness in Philo of Alexandria,” in *The Studia Philonica Annual: Studies in Hellenistic Judaism Volume I*, ed. David Runia, BJS 185 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1989), 39–41; William Morrow, *An Introduction to Biblical Law* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2017), 154–55.

²⁷ Gary Anderson, “Sacrifice and Sacrificial Offerings: Old Testament,” in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Freedman (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1992), 879–82; Morrow, *An Introduction*, 153–57. In the Hebrew Bible there were various streams of thought regarding sacrifice. On the one hand, sacrifice was understood as food for God, often related to blood. This was consistent with ancient Near East practice. In ancient Mesopotamia the gods ate the food sacrificed because if they did not receive a sacrifice they were hungry. In the prophets, the emphasis of sacrifice is ethics and worship. Anderson, “Sacrifice,” 871–73. Bendlin et al., “Sacrifice,” 839.

sacrifices.²⁸ Offerings are simply stated as directly enacting atonement, forgiveness, purification, or the propitiation (i.e. appeasement) of God's wrath.²⁹ Through accomplishing atonement, forgiveness, or purification, a worshiper's relationship with God which was damaged by sin or impurity of some kind was repaired. During this point, the devotee may have felt an intense personal connection with God, or it may have been relatively performative.³⁰ At the end, a portion of the sacrifice may have been given back to the worshiper who would take it home or to the campsite to be shared with the family.³¹

But how were Jews who were unable to engage in such physical sacrifice regularly if ever able to share in that centripetal draw toward the temple? If Ptolemaic Jews for the most part restricted material offerings to the Jerusalem Temple, what

²⁸ Josephus mentions a thank offering, a sin offering, and a burnt offering (*Ant.* 3.224-230). Philo divides sacrifices into three different categories: burnt offerings were intended to honor God (*Spec. Laws* 1.196), preservation offerings preserved blessings (*Spec. Laws* 1.195-97, 283), and sin offerings delivered one from evil and sin (*Spec. Laws* 1.195-96). Ribbens, *Levitical Sacrifice*, 32-33.

²⁹ The *Testament of Job* (cir. 100BC - AD100), which most likely was written in Egypt, simply states that sacrifice enacts forgiveness: "Arise and have him offer up sacrifices on your behalf so that your sin might be taken away [ὅπως ἀφαιρεθῆ ὑμῶν ἡ ἀμαρτία]...And I took them and made an offering on their behalf, and the Lord received it favorably and forgave [ἀφήκεν] their sin" (*T. Job* 42.5-8; cf. 43.4, 17 emphasis original). Philo states that a goat sin offering "is sacrificed for the forgiveness of sins [εἰς ἀμαρτημάτων ἄφεσιν]" (*Spec. Law* 1.190; cf. 1.229; 1.242; 1.193). English translation from R. Spittler, "Testament of Job," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Volume One*, ed. James Charlesworth (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), 829-68. Greek text from Sebastian Brock, *Testamentum Iobi*, PVTG 2 (Leiden: Brill, 1967). Others link purification with offerings: "But if any ruler has sinned he makes his purification [τὴν κάθαρσιν] with a kid" (Philo, *Spec. Laws* 1.233; cf. 1.241; 1.229, 234). Josephus, *Ant.* 3.273 cf. 3.224. Greek citation from Philo, *Philo*, trans. F. Colson, LCL 247, 320 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1937). Ribbens, *Levitical Sacrifice*, 26-27. Sacrifice can propitiate God: "Sacrifice to God hundreds of bulls and firstborn lambs and goats...But propitiate him, the immortal God [ἰλάσκου, θεὸν ἄμβροτον], so that he may have pity...guard against the wrath of the great God" (*Sib. Or.* 3.625-633). Similarly, the idea of sacrifice appeasing God's wrath appears in Josephus: "he performed divine service, and brought a burnt offering, and offered peace offerings also. With these God was pacified [καταπραῦνεται δὲ τούτοις τὸ θεῖον], and became gracious to them again" (*Ant.* 7.333; cf. 13.230). Philo, *Planting* 162; *Names* 233-36. English Citation from John Collins, "Sibylline Oracles," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Volume One*, ed. James Charlesworth (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), 317-471. Greek from Johannes Geffcken, *Die Oracula Sibyllina* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1902). Ribbens, *Levitical Sacrifice*, 33. Daly, "The Power of Sacrifice," 186.

³⁰ Sanders, *Judaism*, 116.

³¹ Sanders, *Judaism*, 114.

offerings could they present while in the Diaspora? While, as I noted earlier, that they could engage in a pilgrimage or send a tax offering, those who could either not give or in addition to these actions, might seek other opportunities for expressing sacrificial devotion. This devotion was possible for Jews living anywhere who could engage in supplemental offerings of piety. Offerings of piety, understood as alternative or supplemental types of sacrifice such as prayer, a pious action, or a good deed as opposed to a physical item placed on an altar,³² were of particular importance for the Diaspora Jews. The ubiquitous possibility of offerings of piety was because of the Jewish belief in God's transcendence that permitted him to be approached by worshipers in all locations.³³ Philo, for example, who encouraged Jerusalem Temple worship and denied that material sacrifices could occur outside the Jerusalem Sanctuary,³⁴ believed that

³² Ribbens, *Levitical Sacrifice*, 20–21. This action of engaging in non-material sacrifices has been called “spiritualization” by some, but I will avoid this term since it is difficult to define what is meant. What is commonly called spiritualization refers to a transference [*übertragenen Gebrauch*] or reinterpretation [*Umdeutung*] of sacrifice to refer to an ethical or pious act. Gregory calls this “cultizing” ethical commands. Wardle, *The Jerusalem Temple*, 11. Klinzing, *Die Umdeutung*, 143–47; Daly, *Christian Sacrifice*, 4; Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “Cultic Language in Qumran and in the New Testament,” *CBQ* 38.2 (1976): 161. Gregory, *Like an Everlasting Signet Ring*, 239. Hans-Jürgen Hermisson, *Sprache und Ritus im altisraelitischen Kult: zur “Spiritualisierung” der Kultbegriffe im Alten Testament*, WMANT 19 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1965), 24–25, 151–53. A pejorative understanding of material sacrifices is seen in the essentially Hegelian development from simple to more advanced forms of cultic religion throughout Scripture, see Ernst Sellin, *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, 2nd ed. (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1936), 109–16.

³³ The Jewish God was not confined to the physical precincts of the Jerusalem Temple. Solomon expresses concern that the material temple could contain God: “The house that I am building is great because great is our God compared to all the gods. Who is able to build him a house? For the sky and the sky of the sky cannot bear his glory. Who am I to build him a house, [except] to burn offerings before him?” (2 Chron 2:5-6; emphasis original; *LES*). Isa 66:1–2; 2 Macc 3:28-39; Josephus, *J.W.* 6.127. Wardle, *The Jerusalem Temple*, 16. Sanders, *Judaism*, 71. Stevenson, *Power and Place*, 122–23.

³⁴ Philo shows great reverence in his detailed explanation of different aspects of Jerusalem Temple, priests, victims, purity, and types of sacrifice (*Spec. Laws* 66-298). He also lauded the Jerusalem Temple as beautiful and the exclusive location of the Jewish God's cult (*Spec. Laws* 1.68; *Embassy* 191, 198). “He does not permit those who desire to perform sacrifices in their own houses to do so, but he orders all men to rise up, even from the furthest boundaries of the earth, and to come to this temple [in Jerusalem]” (*Spec. Laws* 1.168). Ribbens, *Levitical Sacrifice*, 35–36. Ferguson, “Spiritual Sacrifice,” 1159. Fuglseth, *Johannine Sectarianism*, 189–94. *Contra* Daly, “The Power of Sacrifice,” 189. Robertson, “Toward an Understanding,” 51. Similarly, some comment that Philo viewed Jerusalem sacrifices negatively as a necessary pragmatic form, whereas the real cult was spiritual: “Le culte véritable est donc

spiritual or celestial sacrifices in other locations and in other ways participated in the physical sacrifices of the Jerusalem Temple.³⁵ As such, he affirmed that being in the presence of the unique dwelling and worship of the Jewish God in Jerusalem could even be extended to those living abroad.³⁶ These alternative sacrifices were available for those who otherwise were unable to be present at the physical temple.

These alternative practices were actually results of the evolution of Jewish cultic practice itself, perhaps as a result of the experience of exile. Though the focus of a cultic service either in the original Mosaic legislation or in pre-Exilic Jerusalem was not prayer, post-Exilic, Second Temple writings demonstrate a gradual increase in the frequency of descriptions of individuals offering private prayers alongside their cultic offerings or at the temple sanctuary itself during a communal service.³⁷ Worshipers

pour Philon, comme pour l'Écriture et comme pour les philosophes grecs, le culte spiritual" Nikiprowetzky, "La spiritualisation," 102, see also 99, 110-111.

³⁵ For instance, the internal soul of a wise man is viewed as a type of offering: "The altar of God is the grateful soul of the wise man, being compounded of perfect numbers undivided and indivisible; for no part of virtue is useless. On this soul the sacred fire is continually kept burning, preserved with care and unextinguishable" (*Spec. Laws* 1.287-288; cf. *Worse* 21). The soul itself is able to provide a sacrifice in worship: "that which vows the vow—that which is full of gratitude—that which offers such sacrifices as are truly without spot, is one thing only, namely, the soul" (*Dreams* 7.72; *QE* 2.115). A worshiper's virtuous life was a type of sacrifice: "Let the man, therefore, who is adorned with these qualities go forth in cheerful confidence to the temple which most nearly belongs to him, the most excellent of all abodes to offer himself as a sacrifice" (*Spec. Laws* 1. 270). Robertson, "Toward an Understanding," 53. Lieber, "Between Motherland and Fatherland," 204, 208. Leonhardt-Balzer, *Jewish Worship*, 128-30. Leonhardt-Balzer, *Jewish Worship*, 238. Fuglseth, *Johannine Sectarianism*, 215-19. Nikiprowetzky, "La spiritualisation," 109. Calabi, "Les sacrifices," 100. Philo believes in a heavenly priesthood and temple which correspond to the Jerusalem Temple and priesthood that could be accessed anywhere. *Spec. Laws* 97; 1.66-67; 2.163-167; *Moses* 2.74-76; *QE* 1.10; *Dreams* 1.215; cf. 2 Bar 4:5; Pseudo-Philo, *B.A.R.* 11.15; Wis 9:8; 4Q403; Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple*, 118, 128-29, 135. Robertson, "Toward an Understanding," 47. Fuglseth, *Johannine Sectarianism*, 207-8, 218-19. Robertson, "Toward an Understanding," 50. Lieber, "Between Motherland and Fatherland," 206. Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple*, 118-19. Petropoulou, *Animal Sacrifice*, 156-57.

³⁶ Robertson, "Toward an Understanding," 61.

³⁷ Historically, worshipers likely began to offer prayers during cultic services because offerings produced a "sweet-smelling odour [ריח גיהוה]" that created a unique moment of divine attention. It was a special moment when worshipers could approach the divine presence, making it a natural time to engage in prayer. On "sweet smelling" offerings see Gen 8:21; Exod 29:18; Lev 1:9, 13. God was uniquely present with his people at the time of an offering (Lev 2:2, 9, 16; 6:8; 24:7; Exod 30:34-36). The close visual and temporal link between prayer and cultic offerings in the temple made it easy to transfer cultic

offered their spontaneous prayers during cultic worship or at a comparable liturgical time. Daniel, for example, is depicted as praying at the time of an offering: “I was speaking in my prayer...at the time of the evening offering” (Dan 9:21; *LES*).³⁸ Or again, in some Psalms prayer was equated with an incense offering and evening sacrifice: “Let my prayer be directed as a burnt sacrifice [ὡς θυμίαμα] before you, a rising of my hands as an evening sacrifice [θυσία ἑσπερινή]” (Ps 140:2; *LES*; [MT 141:2]).³⁹ By the 1st century, Philo equated prayer with the similar propitiatory effect of a sacrifice: “I have mentioned before, to seek to propitiate the mercy of God by prayers and sacrifices” (*Spec. Laws* 2.17; cf. *Moses* 2.147).⁴⁰ Clearly, prayer was a type of offering that Second Temple Jews could offer to God in the temple or wherever they were.

Cultic transference to still other pious actions such as hymns, fasting, almsgiving, possibly incense, holy living, spiritual offerings, and martyrdom also occurs in many Second Temple texts. For example, a psalm to God is equated with a first-fruit offering: “A new psalm with a song in the merriment of the heart, the fruit of lips in a

properties to prayer by some communities in the Diaspora. Jeremy Penner, *Patterns of Daily Prayer in Second Temple Period Judaism*, STDJ 104 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 41–45.

³⁸ Spontaneous individual prayer accompanied cultic worship at the temple: “At the same time [that] the incense offering of that evening was being brought into the house of God in Jerusalem, Judith cried out with a great voice to the Lord” (Jdt 9:1; *LES*; cf. Ezra 9:5; 1 Kgs 8:23-53; 1 Chron 16:4-6; Luke 1:10; Acts 3:1). Communal prayers are also said to occur at the time of sacrificial liturgical worship (2 Chron 7:12-15; 2 Macc 14:31-36; Jdt 4:11-15). Philo frequently describes prayer and sacrifice as the components of worship (*Moses* 2.146-151; *Dreams* 2.299). This sanctuary prayer was accompanied by individual prayer at home (Josephus, *Ant.* 4.212). Cohen, “The Temple and the Synagogue,” 301–4. Penner, *Patterns of Daily Prayer*, 37–46. Stevenson, *Power and Place*, 137–38. Leonhardt-Balzer, *Jewish Worship*, 132–33.

³⁹ Incense [θυμίαμα] was both physical yet transcendent as it rose to God. It was easy to correlate incense with prayers which likewise rose to God. See Penner, *Patterns of Daily Prayer*, 38, 43. Daly, *Christian Sacrifice*, 68. Gary Anderson, “The Praise of God as a Cultic Evident,” in *Priesthood and Cult in Ancient Israel*, ed. Gary Anderson and Saul Olyan, JSOTSup 125 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 17–24. Ringgren, *Sacrifice*, 67–69.

⁴⁰ Ribbens, *Levitical Sacrifice*, 34.

prepared instrument of the tongue, the first fruits [ἀπαρχὴν] of lips from a holy and righteous heart” (*Pss. Sol.* 15:3; *LES*).⁴¹ Fasting and the humiliation of one’s soul performed the cultic function of propitiation: “He made propitiation concerning ignorance with fasting and humiliation of his soul” (*Pss. Sol.* 3:9; *LES*). Almsgiving also functioned as a type of ethical offering presented to God: “Indeed, almsgiving is a good gift [δῶρον γὰρ ἀγαθόν] for all who practice it in the sight of the Most High” (*Tobit* 4:11; *LES*).⁴² The use of incense as an offering in synagogues after the destruction of the Second Temple makes it possible that it was likewise used earlier.⁴³ In other texts, ethical actions are described as offerings. For example, Azariah posits that a pure spirit coming before God is equivalent to an offering: “Now there is not at this time a ruler nor a prophet nor a leader nor a whole burnt offering [όλοκαύτωσις] nor any offering [θυσία] nor gifts nor an incense offering nor a place to give an offering before you and thus to find mercy. Yet, with a soul shattered and a spirit humbled, we might be accepted, just as though *we came* with whole burnt offerings of rams and bulls, and just as though *we came* with myriads of fat lambs. So may our offering [θυσία] be before

⁴¹ Greek citation from Rahlfs and Hanhart, *Septuaginta: SESB Edition*.

⁴² Similarly Daniel states that the repentant king could have his sins forgiven through almsgiving: “Entreat him concerning sins, and atone for all your iniquities with alms [ἐν ἐλεημοσύναις λύτρωσαι]” (*LXX Dan* 4:24(27); *NETS*). Another example is found in early Christianity: “Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial [μνημόσυνον] before God (*Acts* 10:4; *NRSV*) Gregory, *Like an Everlasting Signet Ring*, 236–37, 248–49. Anderson, *Sin: A History*, 139–42; Anderson, “Redeem Your Sins by the Giving of Alms: Sin, Debt, and the ‘Treasury of Merit’ in Early Jewish and Christian Tradition,” 43–45, 51–52.

⁴³ The archaeological discovery of small altars from the Second Temple period and earlier have led some scholars to believe that incense was also presented as an offering outside of the temple. If this did occur it would be another type of extra temple offering. Nevertheless, this conclusion is difficult to confirm because there is no literary evidence of this practice, and the provenance and use of the material altars is debated. Shemesh, “Those Who Require,” 1–3; Menahem Haran, “Altar-Ed States: Incense Theory Goes Up in Smoke,” *BRev* 11.1 (1995): 30–37; Torleif Elgvin and Stephen Pfann, “An Incense Altar from Qumran?,” *DSD* 9.1 (2002): 27–30; Seymour Gitin, “New Incense Altars from Ekron: Context, Typology, and Function,” *EI* 23 (1992): 43–49; Seymour Gitin, “Incense Altars from Ekron, Israel, and Judah: Context and Typology,” *EI* 20 (1989): 52–67.

you today, and our atonement [ἐξιλάσαι] be behind you” (LXX Dan 3:38-40; *LES*).⁴⁴ In other texts spiritual (non-physical) offerings⁴⁵ and martyrdom became types of offerings.⁴⁶ It is important to stress that none of these offerings of piety suggested the elimination of material offerings in the Jerusalem cultus. The practice of offerings of piety in most Second Temple Jews was not critical of material cultic offerings but valued both types of offerings as complementary paths of worship.⁴⁷

Nevertheless, it is true that a few Jewish groups began to practice alternative forms of sacrifice precisely because they rejected active participation in the Jerusalem Cult. This appears to have been the case with the Qumran community, at least as evidenced by the scrolls. While not rejecting the concept of animal sacrifice at Jerusalem in and of itself, authors of important scrolls appear to have believed that obedience to God’s law or prayer was equivalent to an atoning sacrifice or an offering: “I will bless Him with the offering [תרומת], the issue of my lips” (1QS 10, 14; cf. 1QS 9, 4-5; 11Q5 18, 7-9 (Syriac Psalm 2:10-11))⁴⁸ They thus appear to have drawn on the Biblical

⁴⁴ Ribbens, *Levitical Sacrifice*, 31. Ferguson, “Spiritual Sacrifice,” 1158.

⁴⁵ The *Testament of Levi* describes the offering of a spiritual (i.e. non-physical) acceptable sacrifice to God that could even be offered by angels: “Offering [προσφεροντες] to the Lord a sweet-smelling savour, a reasonable and bloodless offering [ὄσμὴν εὐωδίας λογικὴν καὶ ἀναίμακτον θυσίαν]” (*T. Levi* 3.6). Daly, *Christian Sacrifice*, 148. Ferguson, “Spiritual Sacrifice,” 1158. Wright, “Sacrifice,” 21–22.

⁴⁶ In the Maccabean chronicles, the deaths of martyrs performed the function of atonement and sin removal associated with sacrifices. “They had become a recompense for the sin of the nation. And through the blood of those pious ones and the atoning sacrifice of their death, Divine Providence rescued Israel” (4 Macc 17:22; *LES*). Similarly “Make my blood their purification, and take my soul in exchange for their life” (4 Macc 6:29). Ribbens, *Levitical Sacrifice*, 31.

⁴⁷ “[E]thics is important *just like*, not *rather than*, sacrifice. Keeping the law does not *replace* but *multiplies* sacrifice.” Ribbens, *Levitical Sacrifice*, 28.

⁴⁸ “Let him turn aside neither to the right nor the left, nor yet deviate in the smallest detail from all of his words. Then indeed will he be accepted by God, offering the sweet savor of atoning sacrifice [אז ירצה בכפורי גיהוה לפני אל]” (1QS 3,11). “They [the community] shall be an acceptable sacrifice, atoning [לרצון לכפר בעד הארץ] for the land” (1QS 8, 10). English citations from Dead Sea Scrolls are from Michael, Abegg, and Edward, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*. Hebrew from Florentino Martínez and Eibert Tigchelaar, eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* (Leiden: Brill, 1999). Daly, *Christian Sacrifice*, 165–

references to offerings of piety in their stance against the temple's corruption, though not necessarily against the sacrificial system itself. Their own ritual institutions may have been established to enable them to offer sacrifices and be pure through alternative means to those in place in Jerusalem.⁴⁹ The replacement offerings of piety of the Qumran Community were not practiced by most Hellenistic Jews. Most Ptolemaic Jews, while affirming the importance of the Jerusalem Temple, appear to have engaged in offerings of piety as supplemental to physical offerings in Jerusalem. Such an attitude explains how Sirach's descriptions of offerings of piety were understood in its affirmations of both Jerusalem material offerings as well supplemental offerings of piety.

71. Wardle, *The Jerusalem Temple*, 155–59. Daniel Green, “To “...Send up, Like the Smoke of Incense, the Works of the Law””: The Similarity of Views on an Alternative to Temple Sacrifice by Three Jewish Sectarian Movements of the Late Second Temple Period,” in *Religion in the Ancient World: New Themes and Approaches*, ed. Matthew Dillon (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1996), 166–68. Kugler, “Rewriting Rubrics,” 92. Schiffman, “Temple, Sacrifice and Priesthood,” 167. Gärtner, *The Temple*, 44–45. Jean Carmignac and J. T. Milik, “L’utilité ou l’inutilité des sacrifices sanglants dans la <<Règle de la Communauté>> de Qumrân,” *RB* 63.4 (1956): 528–29.

⁴⁹ Baumgarten, “Sacrifice and Worship,” 141–50. Green, “To “...Send up, Like the Smoke”,” 170. Schüssler Fiorenza, “Cultic Language,” 165–66.

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