

# SOLOMON THE EXEMPLARY SAGE: THE CONVERGENCE OF HELLENISTIC AND JEWISH TRADITIONS IN THE *WISDOM OF SOLOMON*

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## Abstract

The *Wisdom of Solomon* presents itself as a book of instruction written by Solomon for the purpose of teaching wisdom. Although it developed out of the Jewish wisdom tradition, it is deeply familiar with the ideals of Hellenistic philosophy. This article will explore the figure of Solomon as the authorial voice behind the narrative and his characterization as both a Jewish wise king and an exemplary and immortal sage. It is through the convergence of the Jewish and Hellenistic traditions that it becomes possible for Solomon to remain an authoritative voice. Moreover, it is the construction of Solomon as an exemplary sage that ensures the authority of this book in late Second Temple Jewish communities.

**Keywords:** King Solomon, sage, exemplarity, perfection, *Wisdom of Solomon*, Hellenistic philosophy, Wisdom literature, Jewish proverbial tradition, Stoicism, Platonism.

## Introduction

The *Wisdom of Solomon* (hereafter *Wisdom*) is a Jewish Wisdom book concerned with teaching the pathway to immortality, the deeds of the righteous, and the benefits of acquiring wisdom. Despite its early first century C.E. dating,<sup>1</sup> *Wisdom*

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<sup>1</sup> For a comprehensive account of the debate over the date of composition see David Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon*, AB 43 (Garden City: Doubleday, 1979), 20–25. Although, not all scholars agree, see for example: Devorah Dimant, “Pseudonymity in the Wisdom of Solomon,” in *La Septuaginta en la Investigacion Contemporanea*. V Congreso de la IOSCS, ed. Natalio Fernández Marcos (Madrid: Instituto Arias Montano, 1985), 243. Dimant argues for an earlier dating (first century B.C.E.) on the basis that she does not see any evident connections between *Wisdom* and the writings of Philo of Alexandria.

presents itself as a book of instruction written by King Solomon. While problematic for those with modern preconceptions of authorial integrity, this practice of authorial self-effacement and pseudonymous attribution was ubiquitous and even praiseworthy in the ancient world.<sup>2</sup> By writing under the pseudonym of King Solomon, the author was able to secure its authoritative status through its ascription to an esteemed figure of the past.<sup>3</sup> However, the presented author of *Wisdom*, King Solomon, is not only characterized as the wise king from Israel's monarchic period (based on the narrative in 1 Kings). Instead, the figure of Solomon is transformed in *Wisdom* into a paragon of exemplarity and virtue, one who has attained perfection and immortality. In this article, I will focus on three interrelated questions surrounding the transformation of the figure of Solomon in *Wisdom*: Who is the authorial figure of Solomon? How does Solomon remain an authoritative voice despite his transformation of character? And how is *Wisdom* able to claim Solomonic attribution as late as the first century C.E.?

My discussion will begin by providing the methodological framework for the study of a pseudonymous text and then move into an analysis of different conceptions of the sage in both Jewish and Hellenistic literature. This will uncover certain characteristics and features which may have influenced the book of *Wisdom* in its construction of Solomon the sage. Next I will explore four passages from the book of *Wisdom* which demonstrate the interaction between Jewish and Hellenistic traditions that are apparent within the figure of Solomon. Through this analysis, I will show how the study of the construction of the authorial voice—in this case the figure of Solomon—can illuminate the interaction between Judaism and Hellenism—or religion and reason—not only in the book of *Wisdom*, but also in the Hellenistic-Jewish Wisdom literature of the late Second Temple period.

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<sup>2</sup> For examples and discussions of the Jewish Pseudepigrapha, see James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, (New York: Doubleday, 1985); and James R. Davila, *The Provenance of the Pseudepigrapha: Jewish, Christian, or Other?* (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

<sup>3</sup> A forthcoming volume edited by Mladen Popović, *Authoritative Scriptures in Ancient Judaism*. JSJSS (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming), addresses the issues of gaining and conferring authority in ancient Jewish writings. Particularly relevant are the discussions by Florentino García Martínez (“Rethinking the Bible—Sixty Years of Dead Sea Scrolls Research and Beyond”), Hindy Najman (“Text and Figure in Ancient Jewish *Paideia*”), George H. van Kooten (“Ancestral, Oracular, and Prophetic Authority: ‘Scriptural Authority’ According to Paul and Philo”), and Mladen Popović (“Prophet, Books, and Texts: Ezekiel, Pseudo-Ezekiel, and the Authoritativeness of Ezekiel Traditions in Early Judaism”).

## Pseudonymity in *Wisdom*

Most scholarship written on *Wisdom* has highlighted the relationship between Judaism and Hellenism within the text.<sup>4</sup> While several have approached *Wisdom* from the standpoint of the Hellenistic influences upon the biblical narratives,<sup>5</sup> others have chosen to focus on the influences upon the book as a whole.<sup>6</sup> In each of these approaches, the authorial claims have been largely ignored in the quest for uncovering arguably more concrete facts about the narrative, such as: cosmology, the figure of *Sophia*, dating, context of the Jewish Diaspora, and theology. As a result, *Wisdom*'s pseudonymous claims have been largely ignored.<sup>7</sup>

In her article, *How Should We Contextualize Pseudepigrapha?*, Hindy Najman discusses the importance of taking authorial claims seriously.<sup>8</sup> She argues that “pseudonymous attribution should be seen as a metaphorical device, operating at

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<sup>4</sup> Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter in Palestine During the Early Hellenistic Period* 2 vols (London: SCM Press, 1974); Martin Hengel, “Judaism and Hellenism Revisited” in *Hellenism in the Land of Israel*, ed. John J. Collins and Gregory Sterling (Notre-Dame, Ind.: Snow Lion Publications, 2001), 6–37; John J. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2000); Erich S. Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Erich S. Gruen, *Diaspora: Jews amidst Greeks and Romans* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002).

<sup>5</sup> Peter Enns, *Exodus Retold: Ancient Exegesis of the Departure from Egypt in Wis 15-20 and 19:1-9* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997); Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem*; Dimant, “Pseudonymity in the Wisdom of Solomon,” 243–55.

<sup>6</sup> James M. Reese, *Hellenistic Influences on the Book of Wisdom and its Consequences* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1970); Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon*.

<sup>7</sup> With the exception of Devorah Dimant and Judith Newman (Dimant, “Pseudonymity in the Wisdom of Solomon,” 243–55; and Judith Newman, “The Democratization of Kingship in Wisdom of Solomon,” in *The Idea of Biblical Interpretation: Essays in Honor of James L. Kugel*, ed. Hindy Najman and Judith H. Newman [Leiden: Brill, 2004], 309–28).

<sup>8</sup> Hindy Najman, “How Should We Contextualize Pseudepigrapha?” in *Dead Sea Scrolls and other early Jewish studies in Honor of Florentino García Martínez*, ed. Anthony Hilhorst, Émile Puech, and Eibert Tigchelaar (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 529–36. In her earlier monograph (*Secoding Sinai: The Development of Mosaic Discourse in Second Temple Judaism*, JSJSS 77 [Leiden: Brill, 2003], esp. 1–40) she builds on the conceptual framework of Michel Foucault as she argues for understanding pseudonymous texts as participating in a discourse tied to a founder. Specifically, she focuses on texts which make a claim to Mosaic authorship which she called participation in “Mosaic Discourse.” This method of grouping texts challenges current literary generic categorizations which seeks to define texts by their literary features. Alternatively, Najman organizes texts around their authorial claims.

the level of the text as a whole, whereby the actual author emulates and self-identifies as an exemplar.”<sup>9</sup> According to Najman, it is by interrogating the presented authorial figure that this practice of pseudonymous attribution can be better understood. Benjamin G. Wright and Annette Y. Reed have both built upon her work and have examined the figures of Jesus Ben Sira and Abraham respectively.<sup>10</sup> Wright argues that the self-presentation of Jesus Ben Sira should not be taken for granted because it betrays a deliberate attempt to portray something significant about what the author was trying to convey.<sup>11</sup> In a more recent publication, Reed considers the exemplarity of the figure of Abraham against the *exempla* in Hellenistic education and Roman historiography.<sup>12</sup> It is through her work on the figure of Abraham that a better understanding of the construction and subversion of patriarchal perfection can be attained. Thus, the focus on self-presentation and the construction of the exemplar within Second Temple literature has been illuminated by these scholars and will be particularly valuable for a study of Solomon in the book of *Wisdom*.

Returning to *Wisdom*, only two scholars have taken a serious look at the practice of Solomonic attribution within this book. Devorah Dimant analyzes the pseudonymous figure of Solomon presented throughout the literary structure of *Wisdom* and highlighted comparisons with other biblical texts.<sup>13</sup> She argues that *Wisdom* employs the same type of pseudonymity—she identifies only two types—as can be applied to most of the Jewish Pseudepigrapha. This type is “organic to the original framework and thus constitutes an integral part of the work.”<sup>14</sup> Despite her intention to understand pseudonymity in *Wisdom*, her classification of the book into one of her two types of pseudepigraphic literature is problematic and obscures rather than illuminates the practical functions that this text may have served within its Hellenistic Jewish context.<sup>15</sup> In contrast to Dimant’s strictly literary approach,

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<sup>9</sup> Najman, “How Should We Contextualize Pseudepigrapha?”, 535.

<sup>10</sup> Benjamin G. 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*, ed. Benjamin G. Wright (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 165–82; Annette Y. Reed, “The Construction and Subversion of Patriarchal Perfection: Abraham and Exemplarity in Philo, Josephus, and the *Testament of Abraham*,” *JSJ* 40 (2009): 185–212.

<sup>11</sup> Wright, “Ben Sira on the Sage as Exemplar,” 169.

<sup>12</sup> Reed, “The Construction and Subversion of Patriarchal Perfection,” 188. She seeks to contextualize the portrait of Abraham as an exemplary figure within the broader cultural context of Hellenistic Judaism in the Greco-Roman period.

<sup>13</sup> Dimant, “Pseudonymity in the *Wisdom of Solomon*,” 243–55.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 245.

<sup>15</sup> In another work by Devorah Dimant, “Old Testament Pseudepigrapha at Qumran,” in *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls. Vol. 2: The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Qumran Community*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2006), Dimant made a

Judith Newman centered her discussion of *Wisdom* on the democratization of kingship and universalizing of wisdom through the figure of Solomon. She argued that it is through the lack of mention of Solomon's name, his prayer in chapter nine, and his discourse on kingship in chapter six that the understanding of kingship has become democratized and wisdom been made accessible for all who practice righteousness. The changing focus of Solomon's ascension to the throne, from a physical restoration to the elevation of prayer, helped to provide the authorization of the text and further exemplified how Solomon's transformed character remained authoritative centuries after his reign.

In this article, I will build upon Dimant's work on the characterization of the figure of Solomon as drawing upon earlier authoritative texts and Newman's understanding of the role of kingship. I will seek to provide a different way of thinking about the development of the Jewish Hellenistic body of Wisdom literature, through the authorial voice of the figure of Solomon the sage.

### **The Hellenistic Sage and his Quest for Perfection**

The sage in Greek philosophical writings was a model of exemplarity, virtue, and perfection. While different philosophical schools carried diverse views on the exact nature and role of the sage, there were several general features. Pierre Hadot's Hellenistic sage in *What is Ancient Philosophy?*, is summarized as one who always:

- i. Remains identical to himself, in perfect equanimity of soul: he is happy no matter the circumstances.
- ii. Finds his happiness within himself, and so is independent . . . with regard to external things and events.
- iii. Remains identical to himself and is self-sufficient . . . because external things cannot disturb him.<sup>16</sup>

These characteristics mark the ideals of the sage, which served as a guide for the philosopher in his life; they were intimately connected with the Hellenistic conceptions of the soul and the quest for its perfection. This perfection of the soul

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distinction between the apocryphal and pseudepigraphal literature. For a critique of her narrow definition of what is traditionally called "Pseudepigraphic," see Eibert Tigchelaar, "Forms of Pseudepigraphy in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion in frühchristlichen Briefen*, ed. J. Frey, J. Herzer, J. Janssen, and M. Rothschild (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 85–101, esp. 87, 90.

<sup>16</sup> Pierre Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?* trans. Michael Chase (London: Harvard University Press, 2002), 221–22.

was only possible when one lived in accordance with the four virtues, originally conceptualized by Plato and Aristotle. Plato taught that the four virtues consisted of: self-control, prudence, justice, and courage. It was the one who structured his life according to these virtues who was able to maintain order and harmony within his universe. As an example, concerning the just man Plato wrote that “he puts himself in order, is his own friend, and harmonizes the three parts of himself like three limiting notes on a musical scale—high, low, and middle. . . . When he does anything . . . he believes that the action is just and fine that preserves this inner harmony” and “regards as wisdom the knowledge that oversees such actions.”<sup>17</sup> It is the emphasis on the virtues and the order that their attainment brings that mark the philosopher’s way of life. This creation and maintenance of order is also articulated in later Stoic writings. The popular Stoic writer, Marcus Aurelius, understood the pursuit of perfection to be about knowing one’s place in the world: “He who does not know what the world is, does not know who he is.”<sup>18</sup> For him, it was about being in balance with the universe and living in accordance with nature.

This ordered living can further be seen in Plato’s conception of the cosmos, which was considered orderly and perfectly harmonious. Plato understood the human soul as a microcosm of the cosmic soul.<sup>19</sup> In this way, the human soul was intimately connected to that of the cosmos, which was further developed in later traditions of Stoicism and Platonism. See, for example, in the writings of Seneca:

The mind possesses the full and complete benefit of its human existence only when it spurns all evil, seeks the lofty and the deep, and enters the innermost secrets of nature. Then, as the mind wanders among the very stars it delights in laughing at the mosaic floors of the rich and at the whole earth with all its gold. When the mind looks down upon earth from above, it says to itself: “Is this that pinpoint which is divided by sword and fire among so many nations? How ridiculous are the boundaries of mortals!” (Seneca, *Nat. 1*, Preface 6–9)<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Plato, *Republic*, trans. G. M. A. Grube (Indianapolis; Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1992), 443E (119).

<sup>18</sup> Marcus Aurelius. *Meditations*, trans. George Long. Loeb Classical Library (Mineola, N.Y.: Dover Publications, 1997), 8.51

<sup>19</sup> John Dillon, *The Middle Platonists: A Study of Platonism 80 B.C. to A.D. 220* (London: Duckworth, 1977), 6.

<sup>20</sup> Seneca. *Naturales quaestiones*, trans. Thomas H. Corcoran. Loeb Classical Library. (London: W. Heinemann, 1971), 1 Preface 6–9. See also the notes on this passage and its relation to the figure of the sage in *Wisdom* in David Winston, “Sage and Super-Sage in Philo of Alexandria,” in *The Ancestral Tradition: Hellenistic Philosophy in Second Temple Judaism*. Studia Philonica Monographs 4, ed. Gregory E. Sterling (Providence: Brown Judaic Studies, 2001), 173.

It is by living in accordance with the virtues which are in complete balance with the cosmos that one is enabled to become a sage. However, for the Hellenistic philosophers, this virtuous life was not only achievable through the virtues; it was also necessary that one deal with the passions. The passions included fear, lust, mental pain, and pleasure. In Platonism, it was taught that the passions must be moderated, while in Stoicism extirpation was necessary. This was because they were considered undesirable, impractical, and caused one to live at odds with nature.<sup>21</sup>

To summarize, the sage was described in Hellenistic philosophy as one who lived in harmony with the cosmos, according to the virtues, and was rid of or in control of the passions. However, much of the Greek literature describing the sage was idealistic<sup>22</sup>—even unrealistic—and made use of hypothetical accounts and figures, or reflected on wisdom as an abstract concept.<sup>23</sup> Hadot stated that the concept of the sage “is offered to the philosopher as an ideal described by philosophical discourse more than as a model incarnate in a living human being.”<sup>24</sup> As a result, becoming a sage was extremely rare. As Hadot points out, “the only universally recognizable sage was Socrates” and he was not even aware that he was a sage!<sup>25</sup> If being a sage was such a rare occurrence, what was the motivation for pursuing wisdom and perfection? Was it really attainable? For Hadot, it was not the end, but the journey towards that end that made it a praiseworthy endeavor for the ancient philosophers. It was the spiritual exercise of training for perfection that made it a viable goal for the philosophers to strive towards. This lifelong pursuit of wisdom characterized Hellenistic philosophical discussions on the figure of the sage. But what about Jewish Hellenistic literature? Were there parallels between

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<sup>21</sup> Martha Nussbaum, “The Stoics on the Extirpation of the Passions,” in *Apeiron* 20 (1987): 129–77; Sandbach, *The Stoics* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1975), 59–60: Sandbach notes that the passions should not be confused with the emotions. Sandbach: “It is sometimes said that the Stoics wished to eradicate the emotions; and this, it is argued, is as undesirable as it is impractical, for without emotion man would lose the mainspring of his action” (Sandbach, *The Stoics*, 59).

<sup>22</sup> Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?* 220–33, esp. 231.

<sup>23</sup> See for example, Cicero’s hymn to philosophy: “O Philosophy, though guide of life, O though explorer of virtue and expeller of vice! Without thee what could have become not only of me but of the life of man altogether? . . . thou hast been the teacher of morality and order: to thee I fly for refuge, from thee I look for aid, to thee I entrust myself, as once in ample measure, so now wholly and entirely” (Cicero. *Tusculanae disputationes*, trans. J. E. King. Loeb Classical Library. 2d ed. rev. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1945) 5.5).

<sup>24</sup> Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?*, 224.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. The exception was the Epicureans who venerated “Epicurus as the sage *par excellence*.”

this philosophical conception of the sage and the Jewish sage of the late Second Temple period?

### **The Evolution of the Jewish Wise Man**

The Jewish Wisdom traditions developed their own conception of the sage prior to the interaction with Greek philosophy.<sup>26</sup> The Jewish sage was characterized by having *הכמה* (“wisdom”) and was called a *החכם* (“wise man”). The wisdom received by the *החכם* was divine wisdom and could not be attained apart from God. The *החכם* was righteous, divinely inspired, and a teacher of wisdom.

The sage *par excellence* in the Jewish wisdom tradition was King Solomon. The book of 1 Kings describes Solomon’s attainment of wisdom:

At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, “Ask, what shall I grant you?” . . . [Solomon replies] Grant, then, Your servant an *understanding mind* to judge Your people, to *distinguish between good and bad*; for who can judge this vast people of Yours? . . . [God replies] Because you asked for this—you did not ask for long life, you did not ask for riches, you did not ask for the life of your enemies, but you asked for discernment in dispensing justice. I now do as you have spoken. I grant you a *wise and discerning mind*; there has never been anyone like you before, nor will anyone arise again. (1 Kgs 3:4–14)<sup>27</sup>

The wisdom granted to Solomon was wisdom to rule and judge his kingdom. It primarily served a social function within the community. In later chapters of 1 Kings, his ability to judge difficult situations—such as the dispute between the two prostitutes over the newborn baby—further demonstrated his sagacity (1 Kgs 3:16–27). His wisdom was also exemplified in the construction of the temple and the visits of foreign kings and nobles, who came to see his great understanding and wealth (1 Kgs 4:29–34; 10:1–29).

While the figure of Solomon has long been associated with the attainment of wisdom, it was only after Solomon’s death that the Solomonic corpus of Wisdom

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<sup>26</sup> For a background on the sage in ancient Israel, see Ben Witherington III, *Jesus the Sage: The Pilgrimage of Wisdom* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 5, esp. 1–74. Other helpful resources include: John G. Gammie and Leo G. Purdue, eds., *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990); and Leo G. Purdue, ed., *Scribes, Sages, and Seers: The Sage in the Eastern Mediterranean World* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008).

<sup>27</sup> Michael D. Coogan, ed., *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, 3d ed., NRSV (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). All subsequent passages—unless otherwise noted—of the canonical and apocryphal texts will be taken from this volume.

literature began to expand, solidifying and furthering his characterization as a חכם. Solomon was also famous for his writing of proverbs and psalms: “He composed three thousand proverbs, and his songs numbered a thousand and five.”<sup>28</sup> The details of exactly what writings he composed are not made explicit in Kings. However, this mention of “proverbs” and “songs” provided the opportunity for later interpreters to ascribe the writing of a variety of compositions to King Solomon, even after his death.<sup>29</sup> As a result, his characterization of a חכם developed and expanded over time. He became one who: excelled in wisdom (2 Chr 9:22–23); was endowed with righteousness (Ps 72:1); had the fear of the Lord (Prov 1:7); taught wisdom and discernment (Prov 1:5); did not live a life of duplicity (Prov 2:12; 6:14; 8:13); kept good company (Prov 13:20); set his mind to learning (Qoh 8:16); and revered God and followed his commandments (Qoh 12:12–14). Thus, the sage *par excellence* was wise, lived in accordance with the laws of God, and was worthy of emulation through his righteous living.

If Solomon was the ultimate sage in the Jewish tradition, was it possible for others to become sages too? Was it the attainment of wisdom or being on the pathway to wisdom that was significant for ancient Jewish audiences? One answer can be found in the book of Proverbs. In this book, written as a father to son discourse, becoming a sage is attainable only when one lives with the fear of the Lord. The opening verses betray the purpose of the book and its audience:

The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel: For learning about wisdom and instruction, for understanding words of insight, for gaining instruction in wise dealing, righteousness, justice, and equity; to teach shrewdness to the simple, knowledge and prudence to the young—let the wise also hear and gain in learning, and the discerning acquire skill, to understand a proverb and a figure, the words of the wise and their riddles. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction. (Prov 1:1–7)

In the case of Proverbs, the sage (who is presented as Solomon) makes wisdom accessible to his audience. He presents his book as a guide to learning wisdom, not only for those who are not wise, but also for those who are already wise and wish to “gain in learning.” Thus, wisdom is not an end goal. Rather, it is a method of living. It is, as Hadot has said in regard to Hellenistic philosophy, “a way of life,”<sup>30</sup> but in the case of Proverbs, a way of life that was attainable and accessible for the

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<sup>28</sup> Cf. 1 Kgs 4:32.

<sup>29</sup> These writings have included the books of Proverbs, Qoheleth, and Song of Solomon, but also the *Psalms of Solomon*, the *Wisdom of Solomon*, and the *Testament of Solomon*. These books have all been associated with the figure of Solomon (at least to some extent) and have expanded on and developed new understandings of Solomon as a Jewish wise man.

<sup>30</sup> Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?* 220.

Israelite people. A similar account of the accessibility of wisdom is given in the later wisdom book, the *Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira*. Here, the ideal sage is described:

He will seek out the wisdom of all the ancients, and he will be occupied with prophecies. He will preserve the narrative of famous men, and he will penetrate into the twists of illustrations. He will seek out the obscurities of proverbs, and he will be engaged with the riddles of illustrations. . . . He will devote his heart to rise early towards the Lord who made him, and he will petition in front of the Most High, and he will open his mouth in prayer, and concerning his sins he will petition. If the Lord wants, he will be filled with a spirit of understanding. He will pour forth words of his wisdom, and in prayer he will acknowledge the Lord. (Sir 39:1–3, 5–6)

This meditation on the sage continues for several verses, but an understanding of the sage is evident from these few verses. The sage lives in accordance with the divine will; he cannot live apart from it. This introduction is followed in chs. 44–50 by a list of ancestors who are also described as sages. These sages serve as exemplars for the audience of Ben Sira. As Ben Wright argues concerning the sage in Ben Sira, he is “one who embodies Wisdom, and the student can also embody Wisdom only inasmuch as he regards the sage as exemplar to be emulated.”<sup>31</sup> Another demonstration of the emulation of the sage and the possibility of attaining wisdom is through the presented author, Ben Sira, who promotes himself as a sage by **portraying** himself in the same terms he uses to describe the sages in this account of Israelite history (chs. 44–50). Thus, Ben Sira also claims that it is possible to become a sage in the Jewish tradition. This possibility of becoming a חכם stands in sharp contrast to the Hellenistic conception of the sage, where it is nearly impossible to attain perfection.

In this preliminary sketch, it is obvious that the sage functions differently in the Jewish and Hellenistic traditions. First, the divine is intimately connected with the sage in the Jewish tradition, which does not occur in Hellenistic philosophy where the sage is self-sufficient.<sup>32</sup> Second, the sage in both Proverbs and Ben Sira demonstrate that it is possible to become a sage; it is not as difficult to attain this title as Hadot would argue is the case with the Greek philosophers. Third, the ideal sages in each tradition are very different. Socrates is primarily remembered as a Greek philosopher, one who devoted his life to attaining and teaching wisdom. In contrast, Solomon is remembered for his role as an Israelite King, one who was given wisdom to serve a particular social function.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Wright, “Ben Sira on the Sage as Exemplar,” 181.

<sup>32</sup> See earlier discussion on Hadot’s description of the sage on page 5.

<sup>33</sup> Here I am contrasting the role of philosopher with king, however, they are not mutually exclusive or necessarily opposed to each other. Oftentimes, the ideal philosopher is

This section has touched upon some—though by no means all—of the features surrounding the conception of the sage in Hellenistic and Jewish traditions. I mainly focused on texts which expounded the ideals of perfection, emulation, and virtuous living associated with the role of the sage in both traditions. I will now move into a discussion of how the figure of the sage is functioning in *Wisdom*, bearing in mind the conceptions of the sage in Hellenistic and Jewish writings.

### **The Sage in *Wisdom*: Four Moments of Interaction**

It is difficult to make distinctions between Judaism and Hellenism—or religion and reason—in the book of *Wisdom*. This is because they are artfully woven together throughout the narrative. This book was not written in a vacuum of Jewish thinking. Rather, most scholars believe that it was written in Alexandria, which became a hub for Hellenistic Jewish writers during the late Second Temple period.<sup>34</sup> In this section, I will examine the features of Hellenism and Judaism within the book of *Wisdom* in four different passages. These passages will each shed light on the function of the figure of Solomon within the narrative and the construction of his authoritative authorial voice as a sage.

#### **A. Solomon’s Attainment of Wisdom: *Wisdom* 7:1–9**

This passage introduces the reader to the figure of King Solomon. Although Solomon is not named explicitly, it clearly draws upon the narrative in 1 Kings.<sup>35</sup> When viewed in this light, it is possible to see a development in the understanding of Solomon and his attainment of wisdom. Here, Solomon is speaking in the first person:

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described in terms of an ideal ruler. For a discussion of the role of the sage as a king, see Sandbach, “Stoics and Politics,” in *The Stoics*, 140–48; and Reese, *Hellenistic Influence*, 71–89.

<sup>34</sup> Like the writings of Philo of Alexandria and Aristobulus, most scholars believe the book of *Wisdom* to have been composed in the city of Alexandria. See for example Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon*, 3. For a discussion on the Alexandrian Jewish community in the Hellenistic period, see John Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 136–40; and Erich S. Gruen, “The Jews in Alexandria,” in *Diaspora*, 54–83.

<sup>35</sup> The features in *Wisdom* which make explicit Solomon’s characterization as King Solomon from 1 Kings include: his role as king (7:5; 8:14; 9:7), his association with wisdom (7:7; 8:19–21), the prayer for wisdom (9:1–18), and his role in the building of the temple (9:8).

I myself also am mortal like everyone, and a descendant of the first-formed individual born on earth, and in the womb of a mother I was molded into flesh . . . . And I myself, when I was born, drew in the common air and fell upon the kindred earth, with the same first sound crying like everyone. In swaddling clothes I was nursed, and with care. For no king has had a different beginning of existence, but there is for all one entrance into life and the same way out. Therefore I prayed, and understanding was given to me; I called on God, and a spirit of wisdom came to me. I preferred her to scepters and thrones, and wealth I considered nothing in comparison with her. (*Wisdom 7:1–9*)<sup>36</sup>

Solomon presents himself as a model to be emulated, an ideal sage, and ruler. In his opening appeal that he is “mortal like everyone,” the human side of his royalty is stressed. J. M. Reese understands this to be functioning like the Hellenistic kingship tracts concerning the status of the king.<sup>37</sup> These tracts “advised kings to make humble admission of their humanity as a means of avoiding pride.”<sup>38</sup> One such Jewish tract about kingship can be found in the *Letter of Aristeas* when the king of Egypt questioned the Jewish wise men visiting from Jerusalem: “How can a man avoid giving way to arrogance?” and they replied: “By maintaining impartiality, and by reminding himself in the case of each individual that he is a ruler of men and still a man himself.”<sup>39</sup> This resonates with the impartiality found in the first line of the passage from *Wisdom* which emphasizes that Solomon is no different than any other man. Philo similarly states: “In his material substance, the king is just the same as any man, but in the authority of his rank he is like the God of all. For there is nothing on earth more exalted than he.”<sup>40</sup> Solomon is thus both human and king, humble yet exemplary. This humility is further noted in his claim to have “[drawn] in the common air.” Marcus Aurelius, both a Roman Emperor

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<sup>36</sup> All translations of *Wisdom* are taken from the following translation: Michael A. Knibb, “Wisdom of Solomon,” in *A New English Translation of the Septuagint, and the Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included Under that Title*, ed. Albert Pietersma (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

<sup>37</sup> Reese, *Hellenistic Influences*, 71–89, esp. 76: He argues that “his presentation must be understood against the background of the widespread anthropological speculation of religious inspiration devoted to elaborating the kingly ideal in the hellenistic world from the time of Alexander the Great. Formulated in the new literary genre of tracts ‘On Kingship,’ this speculation played an important educative and propaganda role in the various kingdoms that sprang up in the Greek-speaking world after the death of Alexander” (72).

<sup>38</sup> Reese, *Hellenistic Influence on the Book of Wisdom*, 80: Ecphantus also makes a similar admonition (cf. n. 213).

<sup>39</sup> *Letter of Aristeas*, 263 (Translation by R. J. H. Shutt in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*. Vol. 2., in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 30).

<sup>40</sup> Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon*, 163: See the translation quoted from Frags., Mangey, 2:673.

and prominent Stoic philosopher in the second century C.E. made a similar observation:

I go through the things which happen according to nature until I shall fall and rest, breathing out my breath into that element out of which I daily draw it in, and falling upon that earth out of which my father collected the seed, and my mother the blood, and my nurse the milk; out of which during so many years I have been supplied with food and drink; which bears me when I tread on it and abuse it for so many purposes. (*Meditations* 5.4)<sup>41</sup>

It is again the concept that all men have the same experiences in their lives that is present here; all are born, all live, and all die. This is not only a Hellenistic observation, it can also be seen in Ben Sira: “a heavy yoke is on Adam’s sons from the day of their exit from their mother’s womb until the day of return to the mother of all.”<sup>42</sup> The purpose of this universalizing of the human condition helps the author of *Wisdom* make the claim that wisdom is attainable for all. It is not only reserved for kings.<sup>43</sup> Unlike the view of Hadot that in Greek philosophy the possibility of becoming a sage was highly unlikely, *Wisdom* takes the opposite view, that wisdom is attainable for all.

A final note to make on this passage is the development of the pursuit of wisdom, which betrays a new interpretation of the 1 Kings narrative. Instead of the divine initiating, Solomon is the one who is in active pursuit of wisdom. This shift shows the influence of Stoic philosophy, which stresses the individual pursuit of wisdom through the extirpation of the passions in order to live according to nature and thus to become a sage. It is this personal pursuit, which every individual must make in Stoic philosophical traditions, that resonates with Solomon’s pursuit in *Wisdom*. No longer is the pursuit merely a result of God’s benevolence: one must be righteous, worthy of receiving wisdom, and be in active pursuit of her.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* 5.4 (Long, LCL).

<sup>42</sup> Translation taken from Benjamin G. Wright, “Sirach,” in *A New English Translation of the Septuagint, and the Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included Under that Title*, ed. Albert Pietersma (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

<sup>43</sup> Michael Kolarcik, “The Wisdom of Solomon,” in *The New Interpreters Bible*. Vol. 5, ed., R. J. Clifford et al. (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 1997), 497: “Solomon’s egalitarian status could very well be an explicit critique of the divine status attributed to Egyptian pharaohs and to the kings of the Hellenistic period. But the author’s purpose in stressing Solomon’s commonality with humans has a more immediate aim. Solomon does not have a status separate from other humans that guarantees special wisdom. The wisdom that Solomon will seek and attain is open to everyone.”

<sup>44</sup> This presents a somewhat paradoxical position of the sage in wisdom. While Solomon is described as perfect and wise, in the book of Kings he is a flawed king. These flaws are

## B. The Knowledge of the Things that Exist: *Wisdom* 7:17–22

Solomon received wisdom. But what constituted this wisdom? This next passage reveals what was included within his divinely bestowed knowledge. This wisdom is slightly different than that described in the book of Kings and other Solomonic compositions and betrays an integration of traditions. Here, in this list of wisdoms, the emphasis is on the things that exist in the natural world:

17 For he himself gave me an unerring knowledge of the things that exist, to know the constitution of the world and the activity of the elements, 18 the beginning and end and middle of times, the alterations of the solstices and the changes of the seasons, 19 the cycles of the year and the constellations of the stars, 20 the natures of animals and the tempers of wild animals, the violent forces of spirits and the thoughts of human beings, the varieties of plants and the powers of roots, 21 and all things, both what is secret and what is manifest, I learned, 22 for she that is the fashioner of all things taught me, namely wisdom. (*Wisdom* 7:17–22)

This list of the knowledge received by Solomon includes a full range of human sciences and philosophies. David Winston notes that this full range included: ontology, cosmology, physics, astronomy, biology, botany, and esoteric knowledge.<sup>45</sup> Michael Kolarcik adds to the list the study of chronology, zoology, demonology, the human psyche, and pharmacology.<sup>46</sup> This list of different wisdoms is filled with Greek philosophical vocabulary and Aristotelian technical terms.<sup>47</sup> Although this new vocabulary sheds light on its Hellenistic influences, several of the phrases maintain continuity with the traditional wisdom of King Solomon. In the Kings narrative, God gave Solomon “very great wisdom, discernment, and breadth of understanding as vast as the sands on the seashore” (1

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simply non-existent in the *Wisdom* narrative which allows Solomon to be described as the exemplary sage.

<sup>45</sup> Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon*, 172.

<sup>46</sup> Kolarcik, “The Wisdom of Solomon,” 502.

<sup>47</sup> Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon*, 173: The word “ἐνέργειαν” was used by Aristotle to denote action, operation, and energy. The term “στοιχείων” was first used by Plato to designate the elements. These words are found together in *Wisdom* 7:17 which refers to the “operation or activity of the elements” in the natural world. Furthermore, another word that was borrowed from Hellenistic philosophy was the term “δυνάμεις” which was also used by Plato to refer to power, faculty, or capacity. The phrase in *Wisdom* 7:18 says “δυνάμεις ῥιζῶν” which has been translated as “powers of roots” (*A New English Translation of the Septuagint* ed. Albert Pietersma) or “virtues of roots” (*New Oxford Annotated Bible*, ed. Michael D. Coogan; and Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon*).

Kgs 4:29). It goes on to say that “He would speak of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop that grows in the wall; he would speak of animals, and birds, and reptiles, and fish” (1 Kgs 4:32–33). In 3:12, Solomon is given a discerning mind, which *Wisdom* could have been drawing upon when it described Solomon’s understanding of human nature (cf. 7:20 “the thoughts of human beings”). Kolarcik notes that ordinarily it is God who is able to discern the thoughts of man, but here this knowledge is being passed on to Solomon. It can be concluded that any type of knowledge that is mentioned in *Wisdom* in connection with Solomon was either an interpretation of the original biblical conception of Solomon and thus developed alongside the conceptions of the idealistic Jewish “wise man” or that the book of *Wisdom* drew heavily upon other sources for its conceptions of wisdom and the sage.

Further evidence of Hellenistic influence can be seen in the phrase “the beginning and end and middle of times” (7:18) which was a “common collocation in Classical and Hellenistic literature . . . [for one example, in] Orphic theogony, Zeus, having created all things anew, becomes ‘beginning, middle, and end of all’”<sup>48</sup> The Pythagoreans also used this phrase in their conception of the world in terms of threes: “for end, middle, and beginning give the number for the four cosmic operations, since each has a beginning, a middle, and an end.”<sup>49</sup> The significance of the division of the times into threes was also used in Ps-Aristotle, Plutarch, Sallustius, and Ezekiel the Tragedian.<sup>50</sup>

The teaching of what is secret and what is manifest is nothing unique to the book of *Wisdom*. This resonates with several other Jewish texts such as *1 Enoch*, Daniel, and *4 Ezra*.<sup>51</sup> Each of these books teach that wisdom will be given to those who live righteously and keep the divine commandments. It is this secret knowledge revealed to the sage that demonstrates the familiarity with the revelation of divine esoteric wisdom in the Jewish tradition.

Thus, the wisdom received by Solomon in *Wisdom* reveals the interaction between Hellenism and Judaism. Oftentimes it is impossible to know whether *Wisdom* is drawing upon Hellenistic or Jewish traditions. However, what this passage reveals is that the author drew upon both traditions and by doing so was able to construct Solomon’s wisdom in a way which remained universal, non-exclusive, yet distinctly Jewish.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon*, 173.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 174, Aristotle, *De Caelo* 268a,11.

<sup>50</sup> Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon*, 174.

<sup>51</sup> See for example: Dan 12:4, 9; *1 En.* 93:2–3; and *4 Ezra* 14:46–47.

<sup>52</sup> A similar fusion of traditions can be seen in the writings of Philo of Alexandria.

### C. The Four Virtues of the Sage: *Wisdom* 8:7

The cardinal virtues are well known in Hellenistic philosophy. They consist of self-control, prudence, justice, and courage. It is “self-control which moderates the use of pleasure; prudence, which discerns the means for ends; justice, which determines what belongs to each; and courage, which gives strength to surmount difficulties and trials.”<sup>53</sup> A variation of this list can be found in the book of *Wisdom*:

And if anyone loves righteousness, the fruits of her labors are virtues, for she teaches self-control and understanding, righteousness and courage; nothing is more useful in life than these for human beings. (*Wisdom* 8:7)

The virtues of self-control, understanding, righteousness, and courage are taught by the figure of *Sophia* (Wisdom). These are described as the epitome of learning, “nothing is more useful” the text claims. The main difference between the Hellenistic writings and the book of *Wisdom* was the role of the divine in relation to the virtues. In *Wisdom*, the virtues were given through the figure of *Sophia* who sits near the throne of God. Other Jewish parallels can be found in the writings of Philo of Alexandria and the book of 4 Maccabees, which operate under the same understanding of the virtues as being under the control of the divine. Philo describes the virtues as follows:

The first part of the soul, which is the reasoning portion, and which at the same time has its abode in the head of the body; in short it is prudence. And the second of the virtues is courage, because it is conversant about the second portion of the soul, namely, about passion, and has its abode in the second portion of the body, namely, in the chest. And the third virtue is temperance, which is placed in the stomach which is the third portion of the body, and it is conversant about the appetitive part, which has been allotted the third part of the soul, as being the subject matter. . . . the fourth virtue, namely, justice, which is most truly a productive virtue, and one which gladdens the intellect. (*Leg.* 1.71–72)<sup>54</sup>

Philo is describing the virtues in terms of the Platonic conception of the tripartite division of the soul. Although Philo is writing in Greek and relies heavily on Hellenistic philosophical traditions, he remains grounded in his understanding of the Hebrew God. It is God who is ultimately in control of the virtues and it is only

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<sup>53</sup> Kolarcik, “The Wisdom of Solomon,” 510.

<sup>54</sup> Translation taken from *The Works of Philo*, trans. C. D. Yonge (Hendrickson Publishers, 1993). Philo mentions the virtues in two other passages although the words he uses are slightly different. See for example, *Spec.* 4.147 and *Decal.* 119.

through God that they can be attained. The fourth book of Maccabees also shares a similar conception of the virtues. In its introduction, it states: “Now the kinds of wisdom are rational judgment, justice, courage, and self-control. Rational judgment is supreme over all of these, since by means of it reason rules over the emotions” (4 Macc 1:18–19).<sup>55</sup>

In the above mentioned passage from *Wisdom*, it is only by being righteous that one can become virtuous. The figure of Solomon is described as one who has become righteous and thus can be understood to have received all the fruits of his labor, which are the four virtues. In Solomon’s prayer in Chapter nine, he prays for the divine bestowal of wisdom:

God of the fathers and Lord of mercy, who made all things by your word and by your wisdom formed human beings to rule over the creatures that were made by you and to manage the world in holiness and righteousness and to pronounce judgment in uprightness of soul, give me wisdom that sits by you on your throne. (*Wisdom* 9:1–4)<sup>56</sup>

The bestowment of wisdom upon the righteous by the figure of *Sophia* is a theme which resonates throughout the *Wisdom* narrative. It demonstrates the role that the divine plays in creation, the cosmos, and in the bestowment of wisdom. Wisdom is not something which one can attain on one’s own; it must come from God.

As the process of becoming a Hellenistic sage had its benefits according to the Greek philosophers, so did the process of becoming a sage in *Wisdom*: “the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment will ever touch them” (*Wisdom* 3:1). It is the righteous who are divinely protected and will not be tormented. Moreover, it is a love of wisdom which also produces the benefits of attaining wisdom: “For [Wisdom’s] true beginning is the desire for instruction, and concern for instruction is love of her, and love of her is keeping her laws, and paying attention to her laws is confirmation of incorruption, and incorruption brings one near to God; so the desire for wisdom leads to a kingdom” (*Wisdom* 6:17–20). It is only through the divine that the virtues can be attained in the book of *Wisdom*. Therefore, there is again an acceptance of the Hellenistic conceptions of the sage, but within the interpretive framework of a text written within a Jewish community in the late Second Temple period.

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<sup>55</sup> A similar passage can be found in 4 Macc 1:2–6.

<sup>56</sup> Judith Newman argued that chapter nine (Solomon’s Prayer) transformed “the idea of Israelite kingship by retaining power of scriptural ideas associated with it, but in a way only remotely related to kingship’s historical manifestation in ancient Israel.” The process of Solomon’s elevation to the throne, she argued, is no longer tied up with the hope of a restoration of the Davidic monarchy, but rather it is “as simple as offering a prayer for wisdom” (Newman, “The Democratization of Kingship in Wisdom of Solomon,” 310).

### D. Human Perfection is Nothing: *Wisdom* 9:6

Building upon the previous passage (8:7), this next section demonstrates the supremacy of the wisdom that comes from God over all other types of wisdom. Unlike the book of Ben Sira, which claims that there is no wisdom apart from the wisdom of God,<sup>57</sup> *Wisdom* claims that there *is* other wisdom, but that humans are nothing without the proper type of wisdom, which in this case is divine wisdom:

even if someone is perfect amongst human beings, if the wisdom that comes from [God] is absent, they will be considered to be nothing. (*Wisdom* 9:6)

It is not enough to live perfectly by human standards; instead one must be perfect with the wisdom that originates from the divine. What is this wisdom that comes from the divine? Previously we discussed the human sciences which made up the wisdom received by Solomon in *Wisdom*. Here it is not the human sciences, but rather it is the attainment of righteousness which is revealed by the figure of *Sophia*. In *Wisdom* 9:9 the role of *Sophia* is further praised in Solomon's prayer to the divine: "With you is wisdom, which knows your works and was present when you made the world and understands what is pleasing in your eyes and what is right according to your commandments." It is this wisdom which Solomon asks for so that he can "learn what is well-pleasing before you" (*Wisdom* 9:10) to be certain that his "deeds will be acceptable, and I will be able to judge your people justly" (*Wisdom* 9:12).

The necessity of divine wisdom is nothing new to Jewish Wisdom literature. In the book of Proverbs, it states that: "the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth comes knowledge and understanding; he stores up sound wisdom for the upright; he is a shield to those who walk blamelessly" (Prov 2:6–7). For Proverbs, God is the source of wisdom and will bestow it upon the righteous. Philo of Alexandria similarly argues for the supremacy of divine wisdom:

For from what source is it natural for the mind that thirsts after wisdom to be filled, except from the wisdom of God, that fountain which never fails, and to which the soul that descends comes up again like a virtuous disciple? (*Post.* 136)

It is this wisdom from God which quenches the thirst of those who search for it. And as the book of *Wisdom* says, only this wisdom matters most. Therefore, it is only through Solomon's attainment of divine wisdom that he is able to be viewed

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<sup>57</sup> Sir 1:1 "All wisdom is from the Lord, and with him it exists forever."

as a sage. It is not through his exemplarity and perfection as a human or even as a king. This divine bestowment of wisdom makes him a figure worthy of emulation and thus an authoritative figure for the Jewish community in the Second Temple period.

## Conclusion

Solomon in *Wisdom* is not King Solomon from the book of Kings. Instead, he is presented as a figure of exemplarity and perfection as all of his human flaws are replaced with his virtuous attainment of wisdom.<sup>58</sup> By drawing on both conceptions of the Hellenistic sage and the Jewish wise man, the figure of Solomon is transformed into a new sage. This sage is characterized by his pursuit of wisdom, his vast knowledge of earthly sciences, virtuous living, and attainment of divine wisdom. These features of the sage described in the book of *Wisdom* demonstrate the interaction between the Hellenistic and Jewish worlds.

The interaction of cultures in the Hellenistic period has been described in many ways by a number of prominent scholars.<sup>59</sup> But how can we make sense of this interaction specifically in the book of *Wisdom*? A recent proposal for understanding the interaction of ideas has been advocated by Carol Newsom and could help illuminate this interaction in *Wisdom*. She used “conceptual integration” or “conceptual blending” in her work on the Danielic and Nabonidus traditions, a concept which she borrowed from the work of Mark Turner and Gilles Fauconnier. They defined this process as “a basic cognitive operation for creating new meanings out of old.”<sup>60</sup> The distinctiveness of this conception is that “conceptual blending” is not merely a composition of two narratives. Rather, the blend creates new meanings that were not present before. If this concept is read back into the book of *Wisdom*, the convergence of traditions of the Hellenistic Jewish sages could be understood to have been “blended” together and as a result caused new conceptions of the sage to emerge. This blended sage—a sort of new Solomon—thus emerged as one who was virtuous, perfect, immortal, and lived righteously in accordance with the divine commandments.

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<sup>58</sup> Solomon’s flaws mentioned at the end of the book of Kings are completely non-existent within the narrative of *Wisdom*.

<sup>59</sup> Hengel, “Judaism and Hellenism Revisited,” 6–37; Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem*; Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism*; idem, *Diaspora*.

<sup>60</sup> Carol Newsom, “Why Nabonidus? Excavating Traditions from Qumran, the Hebrew Bible, and Neo-Babylonian Sources” (paper presented at the Dead Sea Scrolls Conference, Toronto, On., 16 November 2009); Mark Turner and Gilles Fauconnier, “A Mechanism of Creativity,” *Poetics Today* 20 (1999): 397.

Two conclusions can be drawn from this interaction in the construction of Solomon the sage. The first is that Solomon is a blend of various traditions. The description of Solomon as a sage betrays the text's integration in both the Jewish and Hellenistic cultures of the late Second Temple period. The different conceptions of the sage merge to create a composite, or a new understanding of the sage, one who is both authoritative and can function as a figure of emulation. This is not only accomplished through the ascription to King Solomon, but by drawing on the authority of the sage (both Jewish and Hellenistic), which in turn provides the authorization for the text as a book of Wisdom instruction. The second conclusion is that Solomon is constructed as the authorial voice out of the blending of these traditions which allows the author to mould the Solomonic narrative. The construction of Solomon as the authorial voice allows the text to claim Solomonic attribution despite its late dating to the first century C.E. It is through the authority of Solomon and the authority of the sage that the author behind *Wisdom* was able to transform the figure of Solomon into a new Solomon. Moreover, it is the fluidity of traditions and the associations of Solomon to wisdom that allowed for the authoritativeness of the book of *Wisdom*.

Instead of viewing *Wisdom*'s authorial claims as false and irrelevant, I have argued that the authorial self-effacement and attribution to Solomon provides a window into the world of Hellenistic Jewish writers. As Najman states: "Instead of constituting an obstacle, authorial self-effacement should be an object of study."<sup>61</sup> Therefore, it is through the study of the authorial self-effacement of the figure of Solomon in the book of *Wisdom* that not only the practice of Pseudonymous attribution can be better understood, but also the development of the figure of Solomon in Second Temple Wisdom literature.

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<sup>61</sup> Najman, "How Should We Contextualize Pseudepigrapha?" 529–30.

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