

Francis M. Macatangay
The Wisdom Instructions in the Book of Tobit

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Francis M. Macatangay

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Preface

The Book of Tobit has always enjoyed great popularity among the deuterocanonical books. Perhaps this is due to the figure of the angel Rafael, one of the most venerated of angels in the Catholic Church, and to the novelistic style of storytelling that is filled with fine and subtle touches of irony. The story of Sarah and her seven husbands, all killed on their wedding night and her subsequent marriage to Tobias comes to mind. In terms of content, the book seems to address a wide variety of teachings and themes (patience in tribulation, the importance of interior worship, family-related virtues, the value of almsgiving, the cult) but the main purpose seems to highlight the loving providence of God in favor of the just.

Over the past thirty years, the interest of scholars in this book has grown as publication of numerous commentaries, monographs, and articles attests. To cite as examples, Géza G. Xeravits – József Zsengellér (eds.) *The Book of Tobit: Text, Tradition Theology* (JSJSup 98), Leiden – Boston, Brill, 2005; Jeremy Corley – Vincent Skemp (eds.), *Intertextual Studies in Ben Sira and Tobit. Essays in Honor of Alexander A. Di Lella, O.F.M.* (CBQ.MS 38), Washington D.C., Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2005 (half of the volume is dedicated to Tobit); Mark Bredin (ed.), *Studies in the Book of Tobit: A Multidisciplinary Approach* (LSTS 55), London – New York, T&T Clark, 2006 and the most recent commentary in Italian by Marco Zappella, *Tobit. Introduzione, traduzione e commento* (Nuova versione della Bibbia dai testi antichi 30), Cinisello Balsamo (MI): San Paolo, 2010. It is worth noting that the first of the cited works are the acts of the first international conference on the Book of Tobit held at Shime'on Centre for the Study of Hellenistic and Roman Age Judaism and Christianity in the Hungarian city of Pápa in May of 2004.

The present work of Francis M. Macatangay, a young priest of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston in Texas, USA, and who currently teaches Scriptures at the University of St. Thomas School of Theology at St. Mary's Seminary, belongs to this group of researches on the Book of Tobit. It is a very interesting study that will certainly become a point of reference for all those interested in this deuterocanonical text. This is a monograph on a subject so far touched upon only in some commentaries and essays, that is, the sapiential tradition in the Book of

Tobit, which is concentrated on the wisdom instructions of chapter 4 (also known as the Testament of Tobit) and to which Tob 12:6-10 and 14:8-11 can be added.

By using a synchronic method, the author succeeds in establishing the significance and function of these sapiential texts in the narrative thread of the book. The purpose, however, goes beyond the analysis of the importance of the instructions for the narrative. The author also proposes to establish the importance of the sapiential instructions for the Jews who lived in the Diaspora. To quote the author's own words, "The wisdom perspective became the most accessible avenue for teaching Jews in the Diaspora how to survive by remaining faithful to their religious tradition. Using the medium of an entertaining narrative, the author desired to educate those living in the dispersion on how to preserve their identity as members of God's chosen and on how to maintain a personal relationship with God" (p. 298).

I am very honoured to present this volume on the Book of Tobit. I cannot emphasize enough its unquestionable originality, academic rigor, and profound theological reflection. I warmly thank Francis M. Macatangay for his contribution and I hope that his work as teacher and scholar of the Scriptures continue to bear much fruit.

Núria Calduch-Benages

Rome, Feast of St. John the Evangelist, December 27, 2010

Acknowledgements

This volume is a slightly revised and updated version of the S.T.D. dissertation I presented to the Department of Biblical Theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome in June of 2010. Prof. Dr. Núria Calduch-Benages served as my advisor. During the process of research and writing, she was more than a sage who provided me with wise advice and profound questions to consider. She was like the angel Rafael whose meticulous and efficient but gentle guidance kept me from stumbling or being devoured by ominous fishes and demons along the way. To her, no amount of thanks would be enough. Moltes gràcies! Thanks are also due to Prof. Dr. Bruna Costacurta, my second reader, for her helpful and insightful suggestions, and to Prof. Dr. Michael Maier for his gracious facilitation of the defense.

On Holy Saturday of 2006, Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, the Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, informed me that he was sending me to study Biblical Theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. My heartfelt and profound gratitude goes to him for releasing me from pastoral duties in the archdiocese and granting me the opportunity to study the inspired word of God in a city that, even after four years of residency, continues to mystify me. Before and during this time of academic endeavor, I have deeply appreciated the constant support and encouragement of Archbishop Joseph A. Fiorenza, Bishop Vincent M. Rizzotto, Bishop Joe S. Vasquez, Msgr. Chester L. Borski, Frs. Leon Strieder, Sean Horrigan, John Rooney, Steve Nguyen and Brendan Cahill, and Dr. Sandy Magie. My classmates Fr. Wayne Wilkerson and Fr. Kirby Hlavaty also deserve thankful notices, the former for allowing me a relaxing stay in his rectory during my Houston visits, and the latter for sending me selections of fiction which, oftentimes, saved my sanity.

Helpful librarians are important to befriend when doing research. In this regard, I would like to offer my thanks to the library personnel of the Pontifical Biblical Institute and the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. Fr. Robert Young of the Casa Santa Maria Library of the Pontifical North American College was also unstinting in his assistance. I would be remiss, however, if I do not mention in a special way Ms. Laura Olejnik, Ms. Joanne Yantosca and the staff of the

Cardinal Beran Library at St. Mary's Seminary in Houston, Texas for fulfilling every article and book request I made across the miles in the process of research and writing.

The present form and shape of this research is due to the patience, kindness and generosity of a number of good friends. Fr. Andrew Robinson SSL has been a tireless reader from the word go and his insightful comments and editorial help are much appreciated. Fr. Peter Groody and Ms. Teresa Stevenson charitably lent me their expert editorial hands. The computer-savvy Fr. Peter Dugandzic provided liberal assistance in formatting the entire document into a presentable one. Mr. Rodrigo Yepes also offered generous technical help. For their invaluable gifts of time and talent, I am deeply thankful.

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In the kind of work that is predominantly solitary, ascetic even ("a lonely and eremitic occupation," in the words of the British novelist David Lodge), it is always a source of great comfort to experience the care and thoughtfulness of friends and family. I am grateful to my brother priests at the Casa Santa Maria, my home away from home in Rome, especially to Msgrs. Francis Kelly and Joseph Goering, Frs. Thinh Pham, Pablo Gadenz, Mark Ott and Gerald Goodrum, for their support and prayers. The many wit-laced and levity-infused conversations delighted me to no end. I also thank my very kind, generous and faithful friends from around the globe, especially those from Houston, Texas, whose material and moral support never ceased during my studies.

Lastly, I would like to offer a from-the-bottom-of-the-heart thank you to my parents, Ben and Medy, τὸ φῶς τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν μου, and the first to instruct me in the ways of wisdom; to my siblings Marizel, Ferdinand, Mylene, and Marites; and in-laws Al, Marion, Jerieme, and Gabby, for the gift of home, for steadfast love, for abiding prayers, and for their constant concern and support. Perhaps more than anything else, it was my dad's and brother-in-law's invariable questioning about when I would finish my writing over our weekend Skype conversations that constantly reminded and prompted me to try to reach for the finish line. It is to them that I dedicate this work.

In the course of writing, I often invoked the intercession of the Seat of Wisdom before the Throne of the Most High and asked for guidance from the archangel Rafael. They both took me by the hand, and never let go.

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Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
ABE	Asociación Bíblica Española
ABD	Freedman, <i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> .
ABRL	The Anchor Bible Reference Library
ABJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
ALGHJ	Arbeiten zur Literatur und Geschichte des Hellenistischen Judentums
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
ANET	Pritchard, <i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts relating to the Old Testament</i> .
AnGreg	Analecta Gregoriana
APOT	Charles, <i>The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament</i> .
Aug	<i>Augustinianum</i>
BB	Anderson, <i>The Books of the Bible</i> .
BDB	<i>The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon</i>
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniensium
Bib	<i>Biblica</i>
BLit	<i>Bibel und Liturgie</i>
BN	<i>Biblische Notizen</i>
BTB	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
BTW	Bauer/Marböck/Woschitz, <i>Bibeltheologisches Wörterbuch</i> .
BVC	<i>Bible et vie chrétienne</i>
BZ	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche
CBC	The Cambridge Bible Commentary
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>

CBQMS	The Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
CEJL	Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature
CHJ	Davies/Finkelstein, <i>The Cambridge History of Judaism</i> .
CivC	<i>La Civiltà Cattolica</i>
CJA	Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity
CR:BS	<i>Currents in Research: Biblical Studies</i>
CRINT	Compendia rerum iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum
DBCI	Porter, <i>Dictionary of Biblical Criticism and Interpretation</i> .
DBI	Hayes, <i>Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation</i> .
DCH	Clines, <i>The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew</i> .
DCLS	Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Studies
DCLY	Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Yearbook
DJD	Discoveries in the Judean Desert
DSD	<i>Dead Sea Discoveries: A Journal of Current Research on the Scrolls and Related Literature</i>
EB	Cheyne/Black, <i>Encyclopaedia Biblica</i> .
EBR	Klauck, <i>Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception</i> .
ECB	Dunn, <i>Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible</i> .
EDB	Freedman, <i>Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible</i> .
EDSS	Schiffman/Vanderkam, <i>Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls</i> .
EJ	Skolnik/Berenbaum, <i>Encyclopaedia Judaica</i> .
EpTheoLov	<i>Ephemerides theologicae lovaniensis</i>
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FOLT	Forms of the Old Testament
FoSub	Fontes et Subsidia ad Bibliam pertinentes
FzB	Forschung zur Bibel
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
HALOT	Koehler/Baumgartner, <i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> .
HBC	Mays, <i>Harper's Bible Commentary</i> .
HBIS	History of Biblical Interpretation Series
HeythJ	<i>The Heythrop Journal</i>
HSS	Harvard Semitic Studies
HTR	<i>The Harvard Theological Review</i>

HTS	Harvard Theological Studies
HUCA	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
IBT	Interpreting Biblical Texts
IDB	Buttrick et al., <i>The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i> .
Int	<i>Interpretation</i>
JAAR	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
JAL	Jewish Apocryphal Literature
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JJS	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
JNSL	<i>Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages</i>
JQR	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
JSJ	<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	Supplements to JSOT
JSP	<i>Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha</i>
JSPSup	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha: Supplement Series
LHB	Library of Hebrew Bible
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
LSTS	Library of Second Temple Studies
NBE	Nueva Biblia Española
NEBAT	Neue Echter Bibel Altes Testament
NIB	Keck, <i>The New Interpreter's Bible</i> .
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIDOTTE	van Gemeren, <i>New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis</i> .
NJBC	Brown/Fitzmyer/Murphy, <i>The New Jerome Biblical Commentary</i> .
NovT	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OBS	Österreichische Biblische Studien
OTL	The Old Testament Library
OTM	Old Testament Message
OTS	Old Testament Studies

OTP	Charlesworth, <i>The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha</i> .
PdV	<i>Parole di Vita</i>
PSV	<i>Parola spirito e vita</i>
QD	Quaestiones Disputatae
RB	<i>Revue biblique</i>
RevQ	<i>Revue de Qumran</i>
RivBib	<i>Rivista Biblica</i>
RHPR	<i>Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses</i>
RSR	<i>Recherches de Science Religieuse</i>
RStB	<i>Ricerche Storico-Bibliche</i>
RTL	<i>Revue Théologique du Louvain</i>
SANT	Studien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
SB	<i>Scripture Bulletin</i>
SBFLA	<i>Studium Biblicum Franciscanum Liber Annuus</i>
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SCS	Septuagint and Cognate Studies
SFSHJ	South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism
SJOT	<i>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</i>
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
StPat	<i>Studia Patavina</i>
TBT	<i>The Bible Today</i>
TDNT	Kittel/Friedrich. <i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> .
TDOT	Botterweck/Ringgren/Fabry, <i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> .
TLOT	Jenni/Westermann, <i>Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> .
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Supplements to <i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VWGTh	Veröffentlichungen der Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft für Theologie
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament

WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZWT	<i>Zeitschrift für die wissenschaftliche Theologie</i>

Introduction

The Book of Tobit tells the uplifting story of a pious man who lived a precarious existence while exiled with his wife Anna and son Tobias in Nineveh. Despite his exilic fate, Tobit walks in the ways of truth and righteousness, performing almsgiving for his deported and departed contemporaries. After burying the corpse of a dead fellow Israelite, a tangible and paradigmatic deed of mercy in the narrative, Tobit rests in the courtyard under a tree and bird droppings fall upon his eyes, causing incurable blindness. Tobit is unable to work, suffers financial hardship and after a mocking reproach from his wife, turns desolate. At the height of his despair, he turns to God and prays that God would send him to his everlasting home. With death imminent and a desire to secure his family, Tobit recalls a large sum of money he entrusted to a cousin in Media. He sends his son Tobias to retrieve the deposit. Before Tobias departs, Tobit prepares his son for the journey by giving him a set of practical wisdom counsels and by asking him to find a knowledgeable and experienced traveling companion. Tobias finds his guide in the angel Rafael under the guise of a distant kinsman named Azariah.

From the angel Rafael, Tobias discovers another reason for the journey. With angelic prodding, Tobias has become “as if a blind boy who had been turned so gently in a different direction that he did not know his destination had been changed.”¹ Tobias learns about Sarah, a kinswoman, whose fate is as bad as his father’s: the lovely Sarah has had seven dead husbands, pushing her to wit’s end and despair. Asmodeus, the demon obsessively in love with Sarah, killed all of them on their wedding night. Tobias finds out that he is to marry Sarah, as this has been decided in heaven.

As the two travel along, Tobias encounters a giant fish that almost devours him. With Rafael’s instructions, Tobias gets hold of the fish, draws it to the riverbank, guts it and saves the fish heart, liver and gall per Rafael’s orders. Rafael tells Tobias that these parts will help cure

1 The phrase comes from Flannery O’Connor’s short story entitled “Parker’s Back.”

his father's blindness as well as banish the demon Asmodeus from the bed chamber on his wedding night.

Tobias's journey ends in success: he comes home married to Sarah and doubly enriched. Placing the fish gall on his father's eyes, Tobit is cured. Rafael then reveals both his own identity and mission as well as the divine design that underlines the events in the story. Before the interpreting angel departs, he gives them a series of admonitions that echo those of Tobit. He commands Tobit and Tobias to praise God and to acknowledge all his works, to which Tobit responds by singing a long canticle of praise that speaks of a future return and the glorious rebuilding of Jerusalem.

The story ends on a happy note, with more given to Tobit and his family and almost everything restored – *almost*, as the problem of exile remains yet to be resolved.

The story of the reception and interpretation of the Book of Tobit is equally colorful.² Despite Tobit's disputed canonical status, the book has found favor and popularity among readers and interpreters for the artistry of its storytelling, for its wisdom counsels, and for its consoling message. Jewish interest in the book was strong from early Judaism to the medieval period.³ The presence of Tobit at Qumran shows that the book was indeed well-regarded at an early stage. As part of the rise of Jewish nationalism and 'the secularist rebellion against rabbinic authority' in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Book of Tobit and other *Sefarim Hitzoniyim*, or 'the outside books,' were then reclaimed as essential texts of the Jewish literary heritage.⁴

In the Christian tradition, the early church fathers mined the book for its themes, practical instructions and moral lessons as biblical warrants for catechetical, polemical and doctrinal claims. The patristic writers presented Tobit as a worthy example and symbol of the Christian life.⁵ The patristic references to Tobit also gave the book a role in the early church's attempt to define its relationship with the Old Testament. Later Christian authors such as Isidore of Seville and Venerable Bede interpreted the Book of Tobit not in historical but in

2 For a survey of interpretation of the Book of Tobit, see POEHLMANN, Tobit, Book of, 2:577-581. For a recent survey of studies on Tobit, see SPENCER, The Book of Tobit in Recent Research, 147-180.

3 Cf. SIMPSON, The Book of Tobit, 1:198. Cf. also DE LANGE, Apocrypha, 103.

4 Cf. GOLDMAN, Tobit and the Jewish Literary Tradition, 90-98.

5 Cf. GAMBERONI, Die Auslegung des Buches Tobias, 56-72; DRUSSI, Il libro di Tobia nella letteratura cristiana antica, 59-98; 171-191.

allegorical terms.⁶ In fact, iconographic representations of Tobit from the third to the fifth centuries match and parallel the symbolic reading of the book.⁷ Found on frescoes in catacombs and on sarcophagus reliefs, the portrayal of Tobias holding a fish became rich 'types' or representations of Christ and the sacramental life in Christ in the Eucharist and in baptism. This figurative approach resulted in the wisdom sayings of Tobit 4 and 12, once a favorite source of citations, yielding to reflection on particular details and sequences of the story.

With its persistent theme of divine assistance in the midst of pain, Tobit has enjoyed a special place in the religious piety of the Christian believer. In Florentine Renaissance, Tobit and its motif of divine guidance on a danger-ridden journey inspired a number of artistic works commissioned for liturgical and devotional purposes.⁸ In liturgical celebrations, various prayer books for the rite of matrimony often referred to the marriage of Tobias and Sarah as a model.⁹ In fact, an extract from the Book of Tobit is still one of the proposed readings for celebrating the sacrament of marriage in the Roman Catholic Church. In any case, the wisdom instructions seemed to have declined in appreciation as the wonderful episodes of the story became more ingrained in the imagination of readers and believers.

The last thirty years have seen a growing scholarly attention to the Book of Tobit. One can no longer say these days that interest in the Book of Tobit is primarily disinterest,¹⁰ as Paul Deselaers did in introducing his extensive source-critical study of the book in 1982. In his monograph of 1994, Merten Rabenau critically revisits the work of Deselaers by employing a similar diachronic analysis but proceeding

6 Cf. GAMBERONI, *Die Auslegung des Buches Tobias*, 103-122. Driussi points out that trinitarian and christological interpretations of Tobit, considered as an historical book, started to appear in the works of Clement and Origen of Alexandria. DRIUSSI, *Il libro di Tobia nella letteratura cristiana antica*, 95-98.

7 For a discussion on how Tobit's fish evolved from funerary symbolism to sacramental catechesis, see DOIGNON, *Tobie et le poisson dans la littérature et l'iconographie occidentales*, 113-126. On the early representations of Tobit, cf. DRIUSSI, *Il libro di Tobia nella letteratura cristiana antica*, 219-233.

8 Cf. HART, *Tobit in the Art of the Florentine Renaissance*, 72-89. For a survey of other artistic works and musical compositions inspired by the Book of Tobit, see BAYER, *Tobit, Book of: In the Arts*, 20:13-14. Rembrandt also drew inspiration from the Book of Tobit, illustrating almost every event in the story with drawings, etchings and paintings. HOEKSTRA, *Rembrandt and the Bible*, 164-195.

9 Cf. METZGER, *An Introduction to the Apocrypha*, 40-41. For the use of Tobit in the liturgy, see COMIATI, *Il libro di Tobit nell'odierna liturgia*, 227-231.

10 DESELAERS, *Das Buch Tobit*, 15: "Das Interesse am Buch Tobit ist weithin ein Disinteresse."

from a different textual assumption. Both scholars have argued for a core story that was later redacted in a number of literary stages.

From the other side of the Atlantic, scholarly interest in Tobit favors a synchronic approach. Irene Nowell uses narrative criticism in her 1983 study of Tobit, investigating the literary technique of the book and showing how such artistry conveys the book's theological concerns. In 1984, Patrick Griffin focused on the six prayers in Tobit, analyzing how they contribute to the theology and the narrative movement of the book. Recently, in 2007, Geoffrey Miller combined historical-critical and literary methods of biblical interpretation to explain the view of marriage in Tobit.¹¹ Alexander Di Lella, who stressed the textual influence of Deuteronomy on Tobit, directed all these dissertations at the Catholic University of America in Washington DC.

In light of the discovery of the Tobit fragments at Qumran, a couple of recent works on the texts of Tobit have also been published. Under the direction of Joseph Fitzmyer, Vincent Skemp compared the Vulgate of Tobit with its other ancient textual witnesses. Michaela Hallermayer, in her detailed 2008 study of the textual traditions of Tobit under Armin Schmitt, concluded, among other things, that Tobit's original language is Semitic and that the *Sinaiticus* is closer but not equivalent to its Semitic *Urtext*.

Major commentaries by John Craghan, Heinrich Groß, Carey Moore, Beate Ego, José Vilchez, Helen Schüngel-Straumann, Joseph Fitzmyer, Robert Littman and Marco Zappella also appeared during this period. Scholars such as George Nickelsburg, Will Soll, Helmut Engel, Amy-Jill Levine, and Devorah Dimant published seminal articles on Tobit. Lawrence Wills, Erich Gruen and David McCracken recently emphasized the role of humor in the Tobit narrative. In 2004, the First International Conference on the Deuterocanonical Books devoted its study to Tobit. Various papers, treating themes such as the afterlife, food, prophecy and marriage in the book were published under the title *The Book of Tobit: Text, Tradition, Theology* (eds., G.G. XERAVITS – J. ZSENGELLÉR). In 2005, a number of scholars honored the noted scholar of intertextuality Alexander A. Di Lella on the occasion of his 75th birthday with a festschrift entitled *Intertextual Studies in Ben Sira and Tobit* (eds., J. CORLEY – V.T.M. SKEMP). As the title indicates, half of the volume are articles on Tobit that examine the book's intertextual relationship with other biblical passages. Finally in 2006, a book

11 Miller's doctoral work is being published as a volume in the series Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Studies. The references in this work are to his dissertation.

entitled *Studies in the Book of Tobit: A Multidisciplinary Approach* (ed. M. BREDIN) collected twelve essays using a variety of perspectives and methodological approaches, resulting often in fresh and interesting readings of Tobit.

Despite this emergent interest in the Book of Tobit, the wisdom instructions of Tobit 4 have remained largely ignored for one reason or another. The wise sayings of Tobit 4 are certainly treated in various commentaries on Tobit, but no extensive study of them exists. In an essay, Manfred Oeming uses Tobit 4, along with Job 31, as starting points for exploring the shape of ethics in later Judaism. Rabenau does devote the second chapter of his monograph to the wisdom instructions. For the most part, however, his analysis mostly compares the instructions in Tobit 4 with similar admonitions found in Jewish-Hellenistic wisdom literature to show redactional work and Hellenistic influence on the said chapter. There remains still some disinterest in this key passage in Tobit. In light of the lack of an extensive treatment of such an important section in the Book of Tobit, the present study is a humble attempt to fill in the lacuna.

The exegetical method used for examining the instructions in Tobit 4 is, for the most part, synchronic, which is particularly conducive for investigating narrative texts, of which Tobit is a prime example. With insights from narrative criticism, the research attempts to understand the significance and function of the wisdom instructions, or the *Didache*, in the book's narrative world. The study proposes to read Tobit's wisdom discourse as a vital component in the literary expression of the author. Moreover, the organic role of the wisdom instructions in the author's literary design is a pointer to their important function in the socio-historical world that the narrative supposes, which is the world of Diaspora living. Put simply, the study situates the instructions within the social realities of Second Temple Judaism, providing a glimpse into how the wisdom tradition of Israel became an essential avenue for shaping the identity of those outside the land during the postexilic period. The Book of Tobit, with its lengthy series of wisdom counsels, reflects some particular realities of such a milieu.

The study is articulated in five chapters. The first chapter argues for the narrative integrity of the Book of Tobit. In chapter 2, the focus shifts to a detailed study of the instructions in Tobit 4 and a structure for the wisdom sayings is proposed. The third chapter investigates the function of the wisdom instructions in the narrative, after which, the tradition of wisdom and its validity in Tobit is examined in the fourth chapter. The final chapter assesses the importance of the wisdom

discourse of Tobit 4 for the Diaspora as it is viewed from the inside looking out.

There are certainly episodes and passages in the Book of Tobit that would satisfy the searching curiosity and interest of readers far more than Tobit's long wisdom lecture that reflects the defining moral and religious code that Tobit wants Tobias to acquire and put into practice. However, if the symmetrical structure of the narrative is any indication, then the role of the wisdom discourse cannot be but significant. As Tobit's canticle of praise at the end of the story shows, a truly perfect happy ending for the suffering people of God will happen only in the *kairós* of time. In the meantime, as the story begins to march from chaos towards that promised plenitude of a glorious and paradisiacal future, Tobit's sapiential discourse in the beginning of the narrative hints at the belief that Wisdom is a steady hand, a sure companion, and an unfailing guide and compass along the journey.

Chapter 1

The Integrity of the Book of Tobit

The Book of Tobit¹ is a rich tapestry of a story woven from various threads of traditions and influences. “Dark and lighthearted humor, serious theological reflection, cross-cultural borrowing, and a creative appropriation of Israel’s sacred traditions”² mesh and intertwine to form the warp and woof of a narrative that pivots on the stories of two exilic families³ afflicted with misfortunes which are all later resolved thanks to God’s providential orchestration of events. The author weaves together Jewish and non-Jewish literary elements to craft an entertaining, encouraging and edifying story about Jewish life in the Diaspora, demonstrating that God always responds to the righteousness of his people, albeit sometimes in ways not immediately evident. Given the presence of several types and sources of materials for the story, it is little wonder that literary critics have questioned the integrity of Tobit.

Some scholars are convinced that the book achieved its present shape only after a long process of interpolations.⁴ Along its literary course, the core narrative grew and accrued from a variety of sources

1 In this study, I will use the Greek-derived name Tobit as most modern translations of the book render it. In G¹, the *Sinaiticus* recension, the name of Tobit is spelled Τωβιθ and Τωβιτ in G¹, the *Vaticanus/Alexandrinus/Venetus* recension. It is a translation of the Semitic name טובי which is a hypocoristicon, a shortened or pet name for either טוביה which means “Yahweh is my good,” or טוביאל which means “God is my good.” MOORE, Tobit, 99-100; VÍLCHEZ, Tobías y Judit, 56; FITZMYER, Tobit (CEJL), 92-93. Cf. also PIKE, Names, Hypocoristic, 1017-1018. In the *Vetus Latina*, the name appears as Thobis and Tobias in the *Vulgate*. Milik may well be the first to mention that in the Qumran fragments of Tobit the name of the father is טובי while the son is called טוביה. MILIK, La patrie de Tobie, n.2, 522.

2 NICKELSBURG, Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah, 30.

3 That the story does not gloss over domestic crises exhibits a dose of realism. For a discussion of the familial tensions in Tobit, see CALDUCH-BENAGES, El Libro de Tobías, una historia de familia, 49-60; PETRAGLIO, Tobit e Anna: Un cammino difficile nella crisi, 385-402.

4 In the estimation of Kaiser, the diachronic analyses of Deselaers and Rabenau, whose works are discussed below, have clearly shown that Tobit, as it currently is, reflects an extensive literary development. KAISER, The Old Testament Apocrypha, 35.

and traditions as redactors worked and reworked the story for specific purposes. The apparent incongruities in the narrative are alleged to be the natural consequence of such redaction history. Had the Second Temple period Jewish author of Tobit employed the postmodern practice of thorough footnoting, the matter would have been easily settled. As it stands, there does initially seem to be some validity to the claim that Tobit underwent significant accretions and expansions. In other words, whether Tobit is a product of considerable additions by an assortment of redactors or essentially a work of one author will be the concern of the chapter.

1.1 Indications of Redaction

Certain elements in the narrative, such as the eschatological tone of Tobit 13–14, the references to Ahīqar (cf. Tob 1:22; 11:18 and 14:10), the change in narrative voice, the intrusion of two cases of speeches and extensive proverbial admonitions in Tobit 4 and 12, formal instances of religious prayer, an angelic character in a folktale that is about a journey and a marriage, along with the textual pluriformity of Tobit, have all provided grounds for source critics to question the original integrity of the book.⁵ Narrative inconsistencies, such as the opposing claims of Tob 2:1 and Tob 1:20, and the sequentially awkward episode involving Anna and her goat in Tob 2:11–14,⁶ are also alleged to reveal minor rips and tears in the fabric of the story, thereby demonstrating a later redactional work. We now examine some of the substantial evidence for such an assertion.

1.1.1 Tobit 13 and 14

An oft-cited argument for additional layers in the narrative is the presence of Tobit 13 and 14. With the concluding banquet in Tobit 11 and the angelic revelation in Tobit 12, the plot at this point has stirred the reader to expect Tobit's personal praise and thanksgiving for sight

5 FITZMYER, Tobit (CEJL), 42. Zimmermann also points out elements that seem to indicate the evolution of a long process of storytelling. ZIMMERMANN, *The Book of Tobit*, 11.

6 Cf. AUNEAU, *Écrits didactiques*, 358. ZAPPELLA, Tobit, 14–15, notes that the lack of attention to narrative details is intentional. The false notes make for a charming story.

restored and salvation received. Yet the reader encounters an ostensibly anti-cathartic exhortation to national confession of sins in the hopes of receiving God's mercy. Tobit also predicts the majestic rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple and the restoration of the Dispersed to the homeland. As such, these chapters are probably "mere appendices."⁷ Furthermore, the hymnic praise of chapter 13 seems to address practically nothing of the personal experiences of Tobit and his family as recounted in the narrative.⁸ At the same time, the rest of the story does not echo or refer to this eschatological orientation which dominates the psalm. The said chapters stand out for their apocalyptic imagery and Zion theology.⁹ Thus, its link to the rest of the narrative that is so personal is difficult to ascertain.¹⁰ In fact, David Flusser dismisses the relevance of chapter 13 to Tobit, classifying it as the 'earliest evidence' of a Second Temple period eschatological psalm, a genre that arose from Israel's yearning for release from the shackles of foreign rule and from Israel's end-time hopes tied to Jerusalem.¹¹

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- 7 ROST, *Judaism outside the Hebrew Canon*, 62-63. The author, however, notes that the style of chapter 14 conforms to the rest of the narrative.
 - 8 Groß suggests that since the psalm goes far beyond the experiences of Tobit and his family and reflects some literary affinity with 1 Sam 2:1-10, 2 Sam 22:8-51, Jon 2:3-10 and Jud 16:1-17, it probably existed independently and was later inserted into the story. GROSß, *Tobit/Judith*, 51. Cf. also RABENAU, *Studien zum Buch Tobit*, 67-93, where he reconstructs the psalm's possible formation history and insertion in Tobit. Gamberoni has also expressed surprise that the eschatological element of hope for return after the exile found in Tobit 13 is not mentioned even in passing earlier in Tob 4:12. GAMBERONI, *Das 'Gesetz des Mose' im Buch Tobias*, 231.
 - 9 Wikgren states that the chapter contains an "incipient apocalypticism." WIKGREN, *Tobit, Book of*, 661. NICKELSBURG, *Stories of Biblical and Early Post-Biblical Times*, 46, notes some parallel apocalyptic motifs in Tobit. With the psalm's allusion to Isaiah's apocalyptic imagery (cf. Isa 2:2-5; 54:11-13; 55:5; 62:2), Feldman thinks that Tobit speaks of the apocalyptic act of Gentile conversion in the time of times when there is no need for Jewish missionary activity. FELDMAN, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World*, 290. For a contrary view, see DONALDSON, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 42-45.
 - 10 Cf. DESELAERS, *Das Buch Tobit*, 42-45; 413-417.
 - 11 FLUSSER, *Psalms, Hymns and Prayers*, 556. For the author, the main content of such a psalm is the eschatological vision of the New Jerusalem using several biblical passages. Other instances of eschatological psalms include Bar 4:5-5:9 and Sir 36:1-17. Fitzmyer, however, dismisses Flusser's judgment. FITZMYER, *Tobit (CEJL)*, 26-27. Whybray thinks that Tobit's writing of a psalm of praise and thanksgiving represents "a kind of substitute for a *sacrifice* of thanksgiving which he was unable to offer" in exile, making it "more likely to have been intended from the first simply to be devotional poetry to be read by individuals." WHYBRAY, *The Wisdom Psalms*, 157-158. For Goettmann, Tobit 13 is a royal and prophetic hymn that echoes Isaiah 54 and 62 and which completes the cycle of seven prayers in Tobit. GOETTMANN, *Le chant de joie du prophète Tobie*, 19.

Frank Zimmermann, considering the chapters from a narrative point of view, asserts that a later editor added chapter 13 as a suitable hymn of praise that is in sync with Tobit's character and history, and appended chapter 14 to provide a pleasing finale to the simple story in Tob 1–12.¹² Lawrence M. Wills has pronounced a more severe judgment on the presence of Tobit 13 and 14 in the narrative, claiming that the difference in narrative mood along with redactional inconsistencies, when compared with the spirited core story of the family's adventures and misadventures in chapters 2–12, reveals the hand of a clumsy redactor.¹³

John J. Collins likewise believes that the frame of the story – chapter 1 with its accent on Tobit's piety towards Jerusalem, and chapters 13 and 14 with their eschatological emphases – are subsequent accretions to the foundational narrative because the Jerusalem-oriented concerns evident in these passages are not pertinent to the main story and are unnecessary for its conclusion.¹⁴ In other words, the basic storyline, which centers on the Tobit clan and its righteous suffering, can stand on its own without further elaboration or narrative brackets. Tobit is a very personal story and communal or national colorations in the narrative are nothing other than glaring signs of subsequent additions.

1.1.2 The References to Ahikar

Within the aforementioned narrative frame, there are references to Ahikar.¹⁵ Some scholars have posited that the appearance of Ahikar's name in both the opening (cf. Tob 1:21–22; 2:10) and concluding sections (cf. Tob 14:10) of the Tobit narrative, argues for later expansion.¹⁶ Lothar Ruppert suggests that the final redactor of Tobit brought the

12 ZIMMERMANN, *The Book of Tobit*, 24–27; 112. The author further makes the now dubious claim that these chapters were added to the core story as late as 70 C.E. after the destruction of the Jerusalem temple.

13 WILLS, *The Jewish Novel in the Ancient World*, 86. According to him, the addition of themes such as Jerusalem, piety and persecution was made in order to configure Tobit to such wisdom heroes like Daniel and Joseph.

14 Cf. COLLINS, *The Judaism of the Book of Tobit*, 25, who notes that the opening and closing sections of the story reflect a Judean editing.

15 For the Story of Ahikar, cf. LINDENBERGER, *Ahikar*, 479–507 and VANDERKAM, *Ahikhar/Ahikar*, 113–115.

16 That Ahikar has an absolutely new image or profile in Tobit demands explanation. DESELAERS, *Das Buch Tobit*, 25; 438–448. Cf. also the comments of PRIERO, *Tobia*, 26–27; TOLONI, *Tobi e Ahikar*, 157; KOTTSIEPER, *Ahikar*, Book of, 658–662.

renowned Story of Ahiqar into the core story of Tobit to stir in the reader or listener some sort of reminiscence of the Joseph story. After the editor had interpolated Ahiqar, the configured traditional Tobit materials generated similarities to the story of Joseph in Genesis 37, 39–50.¹⁷ By transforming the sage and statesman Ahiqar into a nephew of Tobit, the redactor intended to strengthen the aspect of *Heilsgeschichte* in the transmitted narrative, actualizing, as it were, the lesson extracted from the original experience of the people: as God had shown in the figure of Joseph, God would produce a leader who would save his people from the folly of Diaspora existence.¹⁸

It is also possible that the insertion of Ahiqar into the story is designed to stress the value of compassion and mercy.¹⁹ The reference to Ahiqar is a way of exhorting those in high and influential administrative positions to help their fellow Jews in the Diaspora in a manner akin to Ahiqar's commitment to help Tobit in a time of need.²⁰ Similarly, Paul Desaelers asserts that the redactor viewed and defined the

17 The parallelism between Ahiqar and Joseph is more pronounced if the reading is based on 4QTob196 than in the Greek or Old Latin versions. NAB and NRSV translate the problematic Greek expression 'κατέστησεν αὐτὸν ὁ Σαχερδονος ἐκ δευτέρου' as "Esarhaddon reappointed him." Fitzmyer says that Ahiqar's status is more clearly described in 4QTob196: Ahiqar is not simply confirmed or appointed a second time but is actually next or second to the king, that is, as the prime minister. FITZMYER, Tobit: 196-200, 8-9; IDEM, The Aramaic and Hebrew Fragments of Tobit, 674-675. Against the Old Latin and Greek textual readings, 4QTob196 is clearly a better reading from a narrative angle: Esarhaddon remunerated the excellence of Ahiqar under Sennacherib's reign with an even higher office in his own administration, making Ahiqar second to him. WISE, A Note on 4Q196, 568-569. Thus, just as Joseph was second in command to Pharaoh (Gen 41:43), so was Ahiqar second to the Assyrian king. CORLEY, Rediscovering Tobit, 25. Just as Joseph provided for his family in time of famine and poverty, so did Ahiqar provided for his kinsman Tobit in hard times. According to Niditch and Doran, however, the stories of Ahiqar and Joseph are not exactly alike. Although both follow the typological pattern of "the success story of the wise courtier," there is nevertheless a difference between the two stories on account of the theological nuance in Joseph: "whereas the wise man usually succeeds as a result of his own wisdom, Joseph says that he is able to find an answer to Pharaoh's problem only because of the help of God." NIDITCH/DORAN, The Success Story of the Wise Courtier, 187.

18 Cf. RUPPERT, Zur Funktion der Achikar-Notizien, 236-237. Moore, however, dismisses as erroneous Ruppert's claim that the Ahiqar references are from the hand of a later redactor. MOORE, Scholarly Issues in the Book of Tobit, 75.

19 Cf. ERBT, Tobit, 4:5111-5117. For Ego, the function of the Ahiqar story in Tobit is to illustrate the validity of the theory of retribution. EGO, Buch Tobit, 894.

20 Cf. SCHMITT, Die Achikar Notiz bei Tobit, 31. The author also notes that the example of the wise Ahiqar demonstrates that a Jew is capable of serving pagan rulers in the Diaspora without losing Jewish identity.

relationship of Ahikar to Tobit in terms of his act of solidarity in Tobit's time of adversity, a major theme in the narrative.²¹ Finally, to the degree that the story emphasizes family and Tobit's relative success at court, enough to accumulate a large sum of money, there may be validity to the claim that the story of Ahikar was brought in to underscore the familial rather than the personal aspect of Tobit's success in the royal court.²²

The story also contains passing references to Ahikar's nephew, Nadab. In Tob 11:19, the text describes Nadab as a beloved cousin who enjoyed the wedding festivities. However, in his dying speech in Tob 14:10, Tobit characterizes him as a villain who betrayed his uncle, a textual reference that agrees with the original Story of Ahikar. The discrepancy in the descriptions may indicate the editorial work of separate authors.²³

1.1.3 The Shift in Narrative Point of View

The sudden narrative switch from Tobit's own voice in Tob 1:3 to an omniscient, third person point of view in Tob 3:7, has also led to suspicions of significant redactional activity.²⁴ Some suspect that, at the time the present text was produced, there may have been several versions of the story that were available as a whole or in part. Since the pseudepigraphic and autobiographical text was deemed more valuable, the redactor utilized and combined it with the third person story by providing a bridge. Thus, in crafting a bi-narrative text of Tobit, the redactor revealed signs of drawing from multiple sources.²⁵

In fact, a noticeable narrative discrepancy in Tobit may be due in part to "split narration" or change in narrative perspectives. In Tob

21 Cf. DESELAERS, *Das Buch Tobit*, 428, where the author identifies the following chiasmic structure in the passage where Ahikar is introduced:

1. Achikars Verwandschaft mit Tobit (1:21b)
2. Achikars Stellung bei Asarhaddon (1:21b)
3. Achikars Intervention zugunsten Tobits (1:22a)
- 2'. Achikars Stellung bei Asarhaddon (1:22b)
- 1'. Achikars Verwandschaft mit Tobit (1:22b)

22 GRABBE, *Tobit*, 737. See also TOLONI, *Tobi e Ahikar*, 153-157.

23 Cf. WILLS, *The Jewish Novel in the Ancient World*, 87-88.

24 Although Bertrand maintains the narrative coherence of Tobit, he nonetheless subscribes to the view that this shift in narrative point of view is attributable to redaction. BERTRAND, *Le chevreau d'Anna*, 272.

25 Cf. MILLER, *The Redaction of Tobit and the Genesis Apocryphon*, 54-56.

1:6,²⁶ Tobit describes himself as a pious Jew who often goes *alone* to Jerusalem to worship. In Tob 5:14, recounted by the omniscient narrator, Tobit mentions that kinsmen Ananias and Jathan accompany him when he goes to Jerusalem. It is also somewhat odd that when speaking in the first-person in Tob 1:10-11, Tobit failed to mention the fact that his wife and son were with him when he was deported, considering that both his wife and son have such a substantial role to play in the third person section of the narrative.²⁷ Careless redaction from separate sources may well explain such narrative incongruities.

In addition to being narrated from a first person perspective, the tone of the first chapter differs from that of the main narrative. The first chapter exudes a level of seriousness evident in the writer's sober but sturdy attempt to connect burial of the dead, persecution and vindication, and in the legend-like veneration of the wisdom and piety of the character Tobit. This supposedly shows that a redactor different from that of the main narrative, which is dominantly folkloric, fantastic and even funny, may be at work.²⁸

1.1.4 The Textual Traditions of Tobit

The complicated textual history of Tobit makes matters worse. The differences in the surviving texts are alleged to indicate significant layers of redactional work.²⁹ From manuscript evidence, Tobit is preserved in a number of textual documents that vary from one another.³⁰ The

26 Tob 1:6 *καὶ γὰρ μόνος ἐπορεύεμην πλεονάκις* (G¹¹: *πολλάκις*) εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα ἐν ταῖς ἑορταῖς καθὼς γέγραπται παντὶ τῷ Ἰσραηλ. As the text stands, however, it is worth noting that the Greek adverb *πλεονάκις/πολλάκις* which means "frequently" or "several times" rules out the apparent inconsistency since Tobit's statement can be taken to mean that he went to Jerusalem *alone several times*, with the implication that there were some occasions when his two kinsmen accompanied him. However, DANCY, *The Shorter Books of the Apocrypha*, 14, claims that Tobit's statement to have gone alone to Jerusalem, is "not strictly true."

27 Jerome must have noticed this lack of narrative detail and smoothened it out since the Vulgate (all in third person) reads: "igitur cum captivitatem devenisset *cum uxore sua et filio* in civitatem Nineve cum omni tribu sua." See SKEMP, *The Vulgate of Tobit*, 47-48.

28 WILLS, *The Jewish Novel in the Ancient World*, 83-85.

29 Cf. for instance, WOJCIECHOWSKI, *Assyrian Diaspora as Background*, 6.

30 Cf. WEEKS/GATHERCOLE/STUCKENBRUCK, *The Book of Tobit*, which provides a compendium of the texts from the principal and medieval traditions. Cf. also WAGNER, *Polyglotte Tobit-Synopsis*, which also offers in parallel columns the main Greek, Latin, and Syriac textual traditions.

questions this raises are: which of the textual traditions better preserve the original form of the Book of Tobit? Consequently, do various versions necessarily prove significant redaction?

Before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Greek and Latin recensions or translations were the earliest evidence of textual witnesses that preserved the entire text of Tobit.³¹ G^I, the shorter Greek recension, is a text preserved in the *Vaticanus*, *Alexandrinus* and *Venetus* codices. G^{II} is the longer Greek recension found in the Codex *Sinaiticus* of the fourth/fifth century which C. von Tischendorf discovered in the library of St. Catherine's monastery in 1844. There is also an intermediate or mixed recension called G^{III}, described as "a compromise between the other two Greek recensions, but basically related to G^{II}".³² Although these categories make for academic convenience, it has to be remembered nevertheless that a few of the Greek mss of Tobit cannot be classified with facility according to the categories of G^I, G^{II}, and G^{III} due to *Sonderlesarten* or special types of readings found in them.³³

1.1.4.1 The Priority of G^{II}

Tobit scholars have long debated which textual witness better reflects the *Urtext* of Tobit. Many agree that G^I, the shorter recension, with its summarizing tendencies³⁴ and idiomatic Greek, is a reworking of G^{II}. The G^I redactor abridged G^{II} by polishing and eliminating many of the

31 A detailed discussion of the various mss and textual traditions of Tobit falls beyond the scope of the study. Fitzmyer provides a readable and easy to follow discussion of the scholarship on the textual history of Tobit in his commentary. FITZMYER, Tobit (CEJL), 3-17. Also helpful are accounts in SCHÜRER, *The History of the Jewish People*, 3:227-230; MOORE, Tobit, 53-64; OTZEN, Tobit and Judith, 60-65; LITTMAN, Tobit, xix-xxv; ZAPPELLA, Tobit, 26-29. For recent treatments, see the monographs of TOLONI, *L'originale del libro di Tobia* and HALLERMAYER, *Text und Überlieferung des Buches Tobit*.

32 FITZMYER, Tobit (CEJL), 5.

33 Cf. NICKLAS/WAGNER, *Thesen zur textlichen Vielfalt im Tobitbuch*, 141-153. The authors have compared the papyrus fragment 910, G^I and G^{II} of Tob 2:2-5, 8 and concluded that few of the Greek mss have special types of readings. For further discussions of G^{III}, cf. WEEKS, *Some Neglected Texts of Tobit*, 12-42.

34 Cf. RABENAU, *Studien zum Buch Tobit*, 7: "Die generelle Linie des Bearbeiters liegt in einer Textkürzung." Cf. also THOMAS, *The Greek Text of Tobit*, 468-469.

latter's Semiticisms.³⁵ In short, the long Greek version or G^{II} better resembles a Semitic forebear. This claim finds further support in the Qumran fragments, which generally tend to correspond with the long Greek recension.³⁶

With this in mind, it has been suggested that G^{II}, along with the *Vetus Latina* supplying the lacunae in Tobit 4 and 13 in the longer recension, can be employed to restore the *Urtext* of Tobit.³⁷ A more nuanced suggestion states that though G^{II} is closer to the Semitic *Vorlage*, it is nonetheless insufficient to reconstruct the original text of Tobit even with the help of the *Vetus Latina* and the Qumran fragments.³⁸ The difficulty in recreating the *Urtext* of Tobit may be due to the fact that G^I can equally be from a Semitic *Vorlage*. It is likely that the major Greek recensions attest to two independent textual traditions and that both

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- 35 Zimmermann enumerates instances when G^I either closely follows or contracts the *Sinaiticus* text. ZIMMERMANN, *The Book of Tobit*, 33; 39-41. Using literary analysis, Simpson gathers "overwhelming evidence" to demonstrate that G^I is a modification of G^{II}. He notes that the former reflects general presuppositions and ideas, historical conditions, religious customs and theological developments subsequent to the latter. SIMPSON, *The Chief Recensions of the Book of Tobit*, 519. Vattioni endorses similar reasons for preferring G^{II}. VATTIONI, *Studi e note sul libro di Tobia*, 241-284. Employing statistical or word-count analysis, Thomas tries to show that G^I is a revision of G^{II}. THOMAS, *The Greek Text of Tobit*, 465-471. Moore dismisses Thomas's method of argumentation as fundamentally flawed. MOORE, *Scholarly Issues in the Book of Tobit*, 70. Hanhart thinks that the priority of G^{II} is likely. HANHART, *Text und Textgeschichte des Buches Tobit*, 21-37. For scholars who base their studies on the priority of G^{II}, see VUILLEUMIER, *Le livre de Tobit*, 7; RABENAU, *Studien zum Buch Tobit*, 5-7; SCHNUPP, *Schutzengel*, 45; ENGEL, *Das Buch Tobit*, 279; MILLER, *A Study of Marriage in the Book of Tobit*, 7-12. For scholars who believe in the priority of G^I, see DESELAERS, *Das Buch Tobit*, 19-20; GROß, *Tobit. Judit*, 5; KOLLMAN, *Göttliche Offenbarung*, n.5, 290-291.
- 36 Milik first reported that the fragments generally agree with the *Sinaiticus*. MILIK, *La patrie de Tobie*, 522; IDEM, *Dix ans de découvertes dans le désert de Juda*, 29. Fitzmyer affirms this claim in his translation and publication of the Qumran Tobit fragments. FITZMYER, *Tobit (DJD)*, 19:2; IDEM, *The Aramaic and Hebrew Fragments of Tobit*, 655-675). Nicklas and Wagner argue however that "die Tobit-Fragmente aus Qumran müssen nicht als Zeugen für die Priorität von S interpretiert werden. Vielmehr lassen sich Indizien aufzeigen, die auf eine freie und vielfältige Überlieferung des Tobit-Buches bereits in der semitischen Ursprache hindeuten." NICKLAS/WAGNER, *Thesen zur textlichen Vielfalt im Tobitbuch*, 151.
- 37 Cf. BUSTO SAIZ, *Algunas aportaciones*, 53-69. Cf. also ZIMMERMAN, *The Book of Tobit*, 41, who sees the need for an eclectic text for Tobit, and DIMANT, *The Book of Tobit and the Qumran Halakhah*, 122, who notes that the *Vetus Latina* should be employed as a corrective and supplement where the *Sinaiticus* is lacking.
- 38 Cf. HALLERMAYER, *Text und Überlieferung des Buches Tobit*, 186-187. She notes that no other biblical book before Christ is as polyglot as Tobit.

preserve original readings.³⁹ Finally, certain textual differences between the *Sinaiticus* and the *Vetus Latina* indicate that the *Sinaiticus* text is not necessarily equivalent to the 'original' long Greek version.⁴⁰

1.1.4.2 The Semitic Language of Tobit

In which language was Tobit originally written? With the discovery of five Qumran fragments of Tobit, the current scholarly consensus leans toward Semitic as the original language of the book. Unfortunately, with four fragments in Aramaic (4Q196–4Q199) and one in Hebrew (4Q200),⁴¹ the finds at Qumran did not settle once and for all whether the Semitic language was Hebrew or Aramaic.

4QpapTob ^a ar 4Q196		4QTob ^b ar 4Q197		4QTob ^c ar 4Q198		4QTob ^d ar 4Q199		4QTob ^e 4Q200	
Fr	Psg	Fr	Psg	Fr	Psg	Fr	Psg	Fr	Psg
1	1:17								
2	1:19-2:2								
3	2:3								
4	2:10-11								
5	3:5	1	3:6-8					1i	3:6
6	3:9-15							1ii	3:10-11
7	3:17								
8	4:2								
9	4:5							2	4:3-9
10	4:7								
11	4:21-5:1	2	4:21-5:1					3	5:2
12	5:9	3	5:12-14						
13	6:6-8	4i	5:19-6:12						
14i	6:13-18	4ii	6:12-18						
14ii	6:18-7:6	4iii	6:18-7:10						
						1	7:11		

39 Cf. PRIERO, *Tobia*, 8-11. Cf. also TOLONI, *L'originale del libro di Tobia*, 63-83; COOK, *Our Translated Tobit*, 156-157; VELCIC, *The Significance of the Relation of 4Qtobit^e fr. 6 with Greek Texts*, 158-160.

40 Cf. WEEKS, *Some Neglected Texts of Tobit*, 23-24.

41 Milik first stated that *three* Qumran fragments were in Aramaic and one in Hebrew. MILIK, *Dix ans de découvertes dans le désert de Juda*, 29. In the latest publication of the Tobit Qumran fragments, Fitzmyer, building on the pioneering work of Milik, identifies four in Aramaic (4Q196-199) and one in Hebrew (4Q200). FITZMYER, *Tobit* (DJD), 19:1-76; IDEM, *Hebrew and Aramaic Texts of Tobit from Qumran*, 419-423. Cf. also SCHMITT, *Die hebräischen Textfunde*, 566-582; FRÖHLICH, *Tobit against the Background of the DSS*, 55-58. For an evaluation of Fitzmyer's work on the fragments, see MORGENSTERN, *Language and Literature in the Second Temple Period*, 130-140.

4QpapTob ^a ar 4Q196	4QTob ^b ar 4Q197	4QTob ^c ar 4Q198	4QTob ^d ar 4Q199	4QTob ^e 4Q200
<i>Fr</i> <i>Psg</i>	<i>Fr</i> <i>Psg</i>	<i>Fr</i> <i>Psg</i>	<i>Fr</i> <i>Psg</i>	<i>Fr</i> <i>Psg</i>
15 7:13	5 8:17-9:4			4 10:7-9
				5 11:10-14
16 12:1				
17i 12:18 - 13:6				6 12:20 - 13:4
17ii 13:6-12				7i 13:13-14
18 13:12-14:3		1 14:2-6		7ii 13:18 - 14:2
19 14:7		2 14:10(?)	2 14:10	8 (?)

There are scholars who believe that Greek Tobit descended from Hebrew Tobit.⁴² Others think that it is more likely that Aramaic is the original language of Tobit even though definitive proof for it is non-existent.⁴³ In the end, it is doubtless difficult, if not herculean, to ascertain based on lexical criteria which language first gave expression to the story of Tobit since all that the Qumran fragments confirm is the fact that Hebrew and Aramaic were the two commonly spoken languages which could have easily exerted mutual influence over each other during the time of Tobit's writing.⁴⁴

Such manuscript complexity and textual pluriformity of Tobit does not militate against the integrity and unitary composition of the book.

42 Cf. BEYER, *Die aramäischen Texte vom Toten Meer*, 134-147. Some have claimed that Tobit 13 was originally written in Hebrew while Tobit 1-12 and 14 were originally in Aramaic. HARL/DORIVAL/MUNNICH, *La Bible Grecque des Septante*, 85. Wise has also expressed doubts over Aramaic as the original language of Tobit. WISE, *A Note on 4Q196*, 566. Cf. also SIMONSEN, *Tobit-Aphorismen*, 2-4; PRIERO, *Tobia*, 10-11; ALONSO SCHÖKEL, *Rut.Tobías.Judit.Ester*, 42.

43 Cf. MILIK, *Dix ans de découvertes dans le désert de Juda*, 29; EISSFELDT, *The Old Testament*, 585; ZIMMERMANN, *The Book of Tobit*, 145-149; THOMAS, *The Greek Text of Tobit*, 471; HARRINGTON, *Invitation to the Apocrypha*, 12. Fitzmyer and Moore offer detailed arguments for the priority of Aramaic and offer specific examples. MOORE, *Tobit*, 33-39; FITZMYER, *Tobit (CEJL)*, 22-25; IDEM, *The Aramaic and Hebrew Fragments of Tobit*, 670. Cf. also MORGENSTERN, *Language and Literature in the Second Temple Period*, 139-140; TOLONI, *L'originale del libro di Tobia*, 107-120; VANDERKAM/FLINT, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 184-185.

44 Cf. HALLERMAYER, *Text und Überlieferung des Buches Tobit*, 175-179. Ego believes that though Aramaic is likely, it is still difficult, if not impossible, to determine the language of the *Urtext* of Tobit: "Eine definitive Entscheidung aufgrund rein sprachlicher Kriterien erscheint außerordentlich schwierig, wenn nicht gar unmöglich. De facto finden sich im aramäischen Text genauso hebräischen wie in der hebräischen Version lexikalische Aramaismen, so daß dies letztlich nicht als Kriterium für eine Entscheidung herangezogen werden kann. Das Aramäisch der Zeit des Zweiten Tempels war insgesamt stark vom Hebräischen beeinflusst." EGO, *Buch Tobit*, 880-881.

Despite an assortment of textual versions, the story as a whole remains intact. Indeed, there are textual variants that highlight particular theological facets or tendencies in the story,⁴⁵ but no significant narrative detail is changed, deleted or added so as to affect, or alter, the plot and the course of the entire story.⁴⁶

Three factors may in fact account for the variety or fluidity of the Tobit textual traditions: a) the different manuscripts may reflect the transmission of the story in its diverse telling and retelling, a prominent feature in an oral culture,⁴⁷ b) its non-canonical status allowed early copyists and translators to have a freer approach in translating and transmitting Tobit, perhaps similar to the attitude of Jerome when he did the Vulgate translation of Tobit,⁴⁸ and c) the variety of Greek versions may simply point to a certain dissatisfaction with the first translation.⁴⁹ No matter, the various manuscripts substantially preserved and stuck to the entirety of Tobit's story.

1.2 Diachronic Analyses of Tobit

In diachronic analysis, the main concern revolves around how a particular text has developed through time. This type of analysis involves separating the text to its constituent parts and positing certain stages of growth or periods of development in the history of the text. The interest of diachronic analysis is the origin, formation and evolution of the text. Moreover, by examining the text as a historical object, diachronic

45 Cf. for instance STUCKENBRUCK, *Angel Veneration and Christology*, 164-167; IDEM, *The Book of Tobit and the Problem of Magic*, 258-269 and EGO, *Textual Variants as a Result of Enculturation*, 371-378.

46 Cf. PFEIFFER, *History of New Testament Times*, 276: "All that can be said of the original work, now beyond recovery, is that it probably did not differ substantially from the story told in Codex *Sinaiticus*."

47 In his analysis of the differences between 4Q200, S and BA of Tob 13:18-14:2, Doran concludes that the difference is typical of an oral culture in which some details of the story vary in the retelling. DORAN, *Serious George, or the Wise Apocalypticist*, 259. Nicklas and Wagner also make this observation: "Ist die Textgeschichte des (literarischen) Tobit-Buches einzig anhand von Parametern schriftlicher Tradierung zu erfassen oder wirken Phänomene mündlicher Überlieferung – unter Umständen auch in Form einer „second orality“ – in der literarischen Prozess der Textüberlieferung mit hinein?" NICKLAS /WAGNER, *Thesen zur textlichen Vielfalt im Tobitbuch*, 158.

48 Cf. ERBT, *Tobit*, 4:5117. Cf. also NICKLAS/WAGNER, *Thesen zur textlichen Vielfalt im Tobitbuch*, 151.

49 Cf. WEEKS, *Some Neglected Texts of Tobit*, 24.

analysis attempts to uncover the concealed history that lies behind the text.⁵⁰ Using this type of analysis, a number of scholars have posited various layers of composition in the Tobit narrative.

1.2.1 Józef T. Milik

Following the findings at Qumran, Józef Tadeusz Milik proposed a double stage composition for Tobit. The first redaction was done in the northern region of Palestine in Samaria and the second in Jerusalem.⁵¹ Milik starts by noticing the topographic indications in Tob 1:2, which states that Tobit is a native ἐκ Θισβης ἣ ἐστὶν ἐκ δεξιῶν Κυδιῶς τῆς Νεφθαλὶμ ὑπεράνω Ασσὴρ ὀπίσω ὁδοῦ δυσμῶν ἡλίου ἐξ ἀριστερῶν Φογῶρ. Referencing the location notices made by the Anonymous Pilgrim of Bordeaux and by Eusebius in his *Onomasticon*, Milik identifies Θισβης as the present-day Tubas, a small Palestinian village that lies southwest of Teyasir (Ασσὴρ) and Wadi al-Far'a in the upper hills of Samaria and some twenty kilometers northeast of Nablus. After the first redaction, Thisbe was considered the original homeland of Tobit. That Tobit comes from the village of Thisbe reflects the hagiotopographic link of the prophet Toba to Tubas and Teyasir, which is equivalent to Aser, *Villa Tob* of the Anonymous Pilgrim of Bordeaux.

In Judg 11:3, 5, 34, Mizpah, which is located in the West Bank, is identified as the land of Tob. In 2 Sam 10:6-8, the retelling of the involvement of the people of Tob with the affairs of the Ammonites imagines the land of Tob to denote the regions of Shechem and Bethshan. However, excavations have revealed that the urban center had moved to the Transjordan territory of 'Iraq al-Amir and it is this region to which the biblical stories concerning the land of Tob may in fact refer. This territory of course became the place of origin and sphere of influence of the aristocratic Tobiad family⁵² that flourished in the Persian and the Ptolemaic empires. Milik maintains that some events the family of Tobit experiences in the story echo the traditions regarding the

50 Cf. HOLLADAY, *Contemporary Methods of Reading the Bible*, 1:128-136.

51 Cf. MILIK, *La patrie de Tobie*, 522-530. However, as Doran rightly points out, Milik "alludes to the teasing problem that Tobit is a northerner and the obvious similarity to the Tobiads, but he does not provide a satisfactory analysis of the whole work." DORAN, *Narrative Literature*, 298.

52 Cf. MAZAR, *The Tobiads*, 137-145; JI, *A New Look at the Tobiads in 'Iraq al-Amir*, 417-440. Cf. also TCHERIKOVER, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews*, 126-142.

Tobiads, the civil rulers of the area who also exerted an extensive influence in Jerusalem.

In light of this, the initial narrative was a court story produced in Samaria during the late Persian or Hellenistic period to enhance the prestige and piety of the national and aristocratic Tobiad family before an Aramean-speaking people. Later, due to the success of this simple and edifying story written for the Samaritan Diaspora, a Judean redactor revised the narrative and produced a more orthodox version, adding details oriented towards the Jerusalem cult.⁵³ A winning Samaritan story was adapted into a Judean milieu.

1.2.2 Paul Deselaers

Paul Deselaers proposes a more complex redactional history for the Book of Tobit. Employing literary criticism as a means for source analysis, Deselaers believes that the narrative tension, incoherence, contradiction, repetitions, syntactical and stylistic differences are signs of an editorial hand. According to him, the basic narrative about Jewish family life in the Diaspora, originally composed in Greek of the G¹ type⁵⁴ in Alexandria in the mid-third century BCE, underwent a literary evolution consisting of three successive stages.

The first redaction involved the addition of the sapiential instructions in Tob 4:3-19 and 12:6b-10 and the hymn in 13:1-9a, to which the following were likewise inserted later: 2:11-14; 3:6; 5:1-2, 18-23; 6:7-10, 13, 15b, 16b-18a; 7:10b-11, 15-17; 8:6, 16, 17b; 8:20-10:7; 10:12-13, 14b;

53 Nickelsburg criticizes and dismisses Milik's hypothesis as problematic. While the names Tobit and Tobias can be related to the Tobiad family, the story is self-contained and is meaningful in itself. Further, Tobit's gaze upon Jerusalem is in keeping with his character, not a prior lack or defect that needs to be addressed by a later hand. NICKELSBURG, *Tobit and Enoch*, 68. Dimant also finds Milik's analysis unpersuasive, stating that the lack of references to any Samaritan locality implies the absence of anti-Samaritan polemics as Milik has suggested. DIMANT, *Tobit in Galilee*, n.7, 349.

54 Deselaers argues that Greek is the original language of Tobit and *Vaticanus* is the best available text of the Greek recensions. Written in Egypt, Tobit has no Semitic *Vorlage*. The said recension is the basis of his source analysis. DESELAERS, *Das Buch Tobit*, 335. For this reason, Fitzmyer rejects Deselaers's effort and dismisses his theory as something "spun out of whole cloth by someone who had not seen the Semitic texts of Tobit." FITZMYER, *The Aramaic and Hebrew Fragments*, 671. In his commentary for *Geistliche Schriftlesung*, Deselaers continues to hold on to his original view. DESELAERS, *Das Buch Tobit*, 9.

11:7-9; 12:3, 6b-14; 12:19-20, 22 and 14:1-2. Most likely edited in a Wisdom school heavily steeped in the Torah and the Prophets, the purpose of the first redaction was to emphasize the figure of Tobit as sage and medium of revelation.

The second stage of literary development introduced the figure of Ahiqar in a Greek form of the *Sinaiticus* type in 195 BCE. The redactor's *raison d'être* for referencing the popular story of Ahiqar is to accentuate the need for acts of solidarity, a constant theological theme in the story.

The final redaction, dating from 185 BCE, appended texts that contained references to Jerusalem, as well as eschatological and apocalyptic materials such as 13:10b-18. In all likelihood, the Jerusalem priestly circle was responsible for the insertion of materials with apocalyptic eschatology in the hope that they would serve as propaganda for the Jews in the Diaspora against the Hellenistic tendencies of the Seleucid kings. The adjustments were intended either as a voice of warning before the religious conflict or as an encouragement to live authentic Judaism as a form of living resistance against every human rule.⁵⁵

1.2.3 Merten Rabenau

Irene Nowell rightly points out that a key defect of Deselaers's source analysis lies in his questionable assumption that the *Vorlage* of the text of Tobit is Greek, when overwhelming evidence seems to indicate that the book was originally Semitic.⁵⁶ Cognizant of this flaw, Merten Rabenau has proposed a history of the development of Tobit based on G^{II} since it reflects better the Semitic *Vorlage*.⁵⁷ Using literary criticism, Rabenau argues that a coherent core story of Tobit exists, consisting of angelic direction and guidance based on patriarchal stories and biblical

⁵⁵ Cf. DESELAERS, *Das Buch Tobit*, 374-500.

⁵⁶ Cf. NOWELL, *Review of Das Buch Tobit*, 306-307. Besides being highly speculative, Deselaers's study involves "inevitable problems of subjectivity and circular reasoning in determining the basic layer." For further comments, cf. IDEM, *Narrative Technique and Theology*, 37-39. Reiterating Nowell's point, Ego has also stated that the analysis of Deselaers is problematic by virtue of treating G^{II} as secondary. EGO, *Buch Tobit*, 890. Cf. also. GRABBE, *Tobit*, 737.

⁵⁷ If source analysis has to use the original text in order to reach valid conclusions, then Rabenau's project, although based on G^{II} considered closest to a Semitic *Urtext*, is equally questionable as Deselaers's.