

meteorological, natural and cultural phenomena.⁶⁵ Therefore they could teach the secrets about how to get access to this hidden knowledge.⁶⁶ When these divinities rebelled, they caused such damage to the world that God had to make an end to it. Behind this adaptation of a central motif from the ancient flood story lies an experience and interpretation of the world that tells that the cosmos is out of divine control. The myth does not only function as an etiology of evil, it is also meant as a paradigm of evil. If the first end was necessary, a second end will be necessary to put an end to all evil and to set the cosmos in a new order. Thus there are two different beginnings in the Enochic writings, both resting on Babylonian traditions about primeval time and the role models given there. The one, as found in the Astronomical Book, is the scientific, the drive to discover the laws of cosmos; the other, as found in the Watchers Story, is a radical vision of a world in chaos, out of divine control. As the Enoch traditions develop the two notions could be held together in various ways. We have examined one way in the Apocalypse of Weeks, where history became the scene of the rivalry of the two visions of cosmos. We already see the need to reconcile the two visions in the introduction to the Book of the Watchers (1 En 1–5). Here we find the same attempt to reconcile the radical vision of a world gone astray with the conviction of the stability of the cosmic order.

1 ENOCH AND BEN SIRA: WISDOM AND APOCALYPTICISM IN RELATIONSHIP

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Scholars have usually treated the categories of wisdom and apocalypticism as separate systems of thought, worldviews or literary types, but recently they have devoted quite a bit of energy to demonstrating the inadequacy of earlier definitions and to breaking down the wall of separation between them.¹ In one of the earliest attempts to relate wisdom and apocalypticism, Gerhard von Rad argued that Jewish apocalypticism grew out of wisdom.² Although scholars by and large have not accepted von Rad's arguments without modification, he highlighted what seems more and more apparent—that Jewish wisdom and apocalypticism are much closer to one another than we might have thought not too long ago. Indeed, the recent publication of the wisdom texts discovered at Qumran, particularly 4QInstruction, has brought this entire issue into even bolder relief and has blurred the boundaries even further.³

¹ A large proportion of the studies cited in this paper have contributed to that enterprise. Building on and extending the results of previous scholarship, the work of the Wisdom and Apocalypticism in Early Judaism and Christianity Group of the Society of Biblical Literature over the last decade has narrowing the divide between wisdom and apocalypticism as an explicit goal.

² G. von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1972). The importance of von Rad's work is apparent in the number of studies that have used it as a framework for asking questions about wisdom and apocalypticism. See, for example, J. J. Collins, "Wisdom, Apocalypticism, and Generic Compatibility," in L. Perdue, B. B. Scott, and W. J. Wiseman (eds.), *In Search of Wisdom. Essays in Memory of John G. Gammie* (Louisville: Westminster, 1993) 165–85 and M. E. Stone, "Lists of Revealed Things in the Apocalyptic Literature," in F. M. Cross Jr., W. E. Lemke, and P. D. Miller (eds.), *Magnalia Dei: The Mighty Acts of God. Essays on the Bible and Archaeology in Memory of G. Ernest Wright* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1976) 414–52.

³ For the most recent accounting of those Qumran texts considered "wisdom," see A. Lange, "Die Weisheitstexte aus Qumran: Eine Einleitung," in C. Hempel, A. Lange, and H. Lichtenberger (eds.), *The Wisdom Texts from Qumran* (BETL 159; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2002) 3–30. For 4QInstruction in particular, see J. Strugnell and D. Harrington, *Qumran Cave 4.XXIV: Sapiential Texts, Part 2. 4QInstruction (Musrar Le Mevin): 4Q415ff. With a re-edition of 1Q26* (DJD 34; Oxford: Clarendon, 1999). On wisdom and apocalypticism in 4QInstruction, see M. J. Goff, *The Worldly and Heavenly Wisdom of 4QInstruction* (STDJ 50; Leiden: Brill, 2003). For 1 Enoch and the Qumran wisdom texts, see the article by E. J. C. Tigchelaar in the present volume.

⁶⁵ See their names in 4Q201 iii 5–13; 4Q202 ii 15–7; 4Q204 ii 24–29 = 1 En 6:7–8. See the discussion in Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 179–81.

⁶⁶ See 4Q201 iv 1–5; 4Q202 iii 1–5 = 1 En 8:1–3.

In particular, two early Jewish works, 1 Enoch and the Wisdom of Ben Sira, have been at the center of this scholarly conversation. Whereas some studies have singled out particular features of these works as exemplary of the relationship between wisdom and apocalypticism, others have suggested a closer relationship, one that extends to the people who composed and used them. In this paper I want to argue, based on some of the scholarly work that has argued for a relationship between these works, that the converging lines of evidence allow us to suggest not only literary similarities and connections, but also a social connection between the people responsible for them. While Ben Sira is perhaps the quintessential early Jewish wisdom book, 1 Enoch is a composite work, and in this paper I will draw on three of 1 Enoch's constituent parts, two that are clearly apocalypses, the Book of the Watchers (1 En 1–36) and the Astronomical Book (1 En 72–82), and a third that certainly contains an apocalyptic eschatology but that is formally somewhat different from the literary genre “apocalypse,” the Epistle of Enoch (1 En 91–104).⁴ I will focus on three possible connections among these works that have different implications for assessing their relationships. The first, and probably most easily demonstrated, are shared literary themes, forms and vocabulary. These features show that certain common ideas were prevalent in the worlds of these writers, and, while they do not give any necessary indication that Ben Sira and the Enochic authors knew each other, they indicate some of the issues that concerned Jews in the period when these works were composed. Second, and more difficult to discern, is social location, that is, the possible places in the social landscape of Second Temple Judaism where these works might have originated and been used. In the same way that a literary relationship does not assure connections between people in a social context, arriving at some conclusions about social location in this sense does not necessarily allow reconstructing a social world in which these people directly engaged each other. The third and most difficult question, which is a variant on the problem of social location, concerns whether the texts provide any evidence of exactly who their authors/redactors and readers were and whether they were aware of or responding to each other. Do the relationships between their

⁴ For the most widely accepted definition of the genre apocalypse, see J. J. Collins, “Introduction: Towards the Morphology of a Genre,” in J. J. Collins (ed.), *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre* (Semeia 14; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1979) 1–20, esp. 9.

literary products indicate that these individuals or groups were directly addressing one another through them? Even though this third avenue of investigation presents the greatest obstacles, it holds out the possibility of connecting some of the disparate dots and envisioning some aspects of the social and religious context of Second Temple Judaism.

COMMON LITERARY THEMES, FORMS AND DEVICES

A number of scholars, most notably Michael Stone, George Nickelsburg, Randal Argall and Gabriele Boccaccini, have presented arguments that parts of 1 Enoch employ sapiential forms, language and ideas, even if the Enochic authors frequently invest them with content and meaning different from their parallels in wisdom literature. All four scholars to various extents invoke Ben Sira as one of the wisdom texts to which 1 Enoch might be compared.

Stone analyzes the broad literary connections between wisdom and apocalypticism. In his article, “Lists of Revealed Things in the Apocalyptic Literature,” he argues that the lists appearing in a number of apocalypses, including several in 1 Enoch, have a common function and content. Their characteristics convince him that “[t]hese lists must be associated with certain types of interrogative lists. These lists take their origin apparently in the interrogative Wisdom formulations such as Job 38 and Ben Sira 1:3ff.”⁵ Based on the observation that the individual elements in the apocalyptic lists are not often represented in those found in wisdom books, he concludes, “The lists in the apocalypses are not merely inherited units of Wisdom material; they comprise rather catalogues of actual subjects of speculative investigation, study, and perhaps even of the contents of ecstatic experiences of the apocalyptic authors.”⁶ So, while these lists reveal a clear literary relationship between wisdom and apocalypticism, one cannot claim that the apocalyptic authors simply borrowed them from the wisdom tradition. The situation is clearly much more complex and fluid than that, and Stone notes that the specific avenues and mechanisms of transmission “may prove difficult to trace.”⁷ Despite our inability to draw precise lines between

⁵ Stone, “Lists of Revealed Things,” 434–5.

⁶ Stone, “Lists of Revealed Things,” 435–6.

⁷ Stone, “Lists of Revealed Things,” 438.

wisdom and apocalypticism on the issue of these lists, Stone argues persuasively that some relationship is assured.

George Nickelsburg, looking specifically at 1 Enoch, has concluded that all of the work's major constituent parts employ sapiential ideas and forms in such a way that "the Enochic authors presented their material as revealed Wisdom that provided an alternative or rival to the Mosaic Torah."⁸ Indeed, this revealed wisdom "is a comprehensive category that includes revelations about God's will expressed in commandments and laws, about blessings and curses that will come to those who obey or disobey, and about the world in which these are enacted."⁹ For example, Nickelsburg argues that fundamental to the way that 1 Enoch construes Law and the interpretation of it is the idea that Wisdom originated in the heavenly realm and that it can only be acquired through revelation. For the Enochic authors, Enoch received this revelation when he ascended to heaven and brought back wisdom with him, which he subsequently wrote down in books to be transmitted to later generations. Nickelsburg sees in this construction the myth of the descent of wisdom, an idea found in Proverbs 8, but interpreted in Sirach 24 and Baruch 4 as referring to the Mosaic Torah.¹⁰ Since 1 Enoch identifies Wisdom with the Enochic corpus, the Enochic authors do more than place these works on a par with the Mosaic Torah. The Enochic writings constitute a much more ancient and authentic revelation than the Mosaic Law, since Enoch received and descended with heavenly wisdom well before Moses received the tablets of the Law. Ben Sira's and Baruch's claims that this descended Wisdom is embodied in the Law essentially get trumped by 1 Enoch in which Enoch has already in primordial times ascended to heaven to receive it.

The most important element in this comparison of Ben Sira and 1 Enoch is that while the use to which Sirach (and Baruch) puts this myth of wisdom descended from heaven differs from that of 1 Enoch, their authors appeal to the same myth, if a bit differently constructed, to argue that they possess the embodiment of divine Wisdom and thereby God's will for humankind. Nickelsburg concludes, "Thus, in contrast to the received paradigm of a Judaism centered around the

⁸ G. W. E. Nickelsburg, "Enochic Wisdom: An Alternative to the Mosaic Torah?" in J. Magness and S. Gitin (eds.), *HESED VE-EMET: Studies in Honor of Ernest S. Frerichs* (BJS 320; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988) 123–32, esp. 124.

⁹ Nickelsburg, "Enochic Wisdom," 128.

¹⁰ Nickelsburg, "Enochic Wisdom," 127.

Mosaic Torah, we find an Enochic corpus, presented as Sacred Scripture, embodying the divine wisdom necessary for the salvation of those who live in the last times."¹¹

Randal Argall in his book *1 Enoch and Sirach: A Comparative Literary and Conceptual Analysis of the Themes of Revelation, Creation and Judgment* makes the most extensive arguments for a literary relationship between 1 Enoch and Ben Sira. Succinctly, Argall summarizes his thesis this way:

A close reading of 1 Enoch and Sirach brings them much closer together on the literary and conceptual spectrum. These two texts represent roughly contemporary Jewish writings that not only describe themselves as wisdom in competition with other wisdom, they do so when explicating the same themes. Moreover, in the explication of these themes, we can recognize both a shared conceptual framework and a common fund of literary forms [i.e. the prophetic woe-oracle and exhortation] and vocabulary.¹²

Argall isolates the three major themes enumerated in his title because "it appears that these themes were subjects of learned inquiry in the late-third and early-second centuries BCE."¹³

In various ways, both 1 Enoch and Sirach engage these ideas, demonstrating some similarities and differences. So, for example, Argall explains that both the authors of 1 Enoch and Ben Sira claim that the order and makeup of the cosmos teach an ethical lesson. The way that the astronomical bodies obey God's will in their regular and predictable travels through the sky provides a lesson that people must also obey God. The authors of the Epistle of Enoch (1 En 100–102) and the Astronomical Book (1 En 80–82) employ this ordered regularity as the basis for warnings to those who violate what they understand to be an ethical or calendrical order that God has ordained. Ben Sira also touts the orderly nature of God's created order, especially in the movement of the celestial bodies and the appearance of weather phenomena (43:1–22). Through his doctrine of the syzygies (42:24–25), Ben Sira claims that God has embedded a basic plan in the cosmos

¹¹ Nickelsburg, "Enochic Wisdom," 127.

¹² R. A. Argall, "Competing Wisdoms: 1 Enoch and Sirach," in Gabriele Boccaccini (ed.), *The Origins of Enochic Judaism: Proceedings of the First Enoch Seminar* (Turin: Zamorani, 2002) 169–78, esp. 169.

¹³ R. A. Argall, *1 Enoch and Sirach: A Comparative Literary and Conceptual Analysis of the Themes of Revelation, Creation and Judgment* (SBLJL 8; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995) 3. See below for the implications of this statement for social location and group identification.

that humans can observe. For Ben Sira, the elements of creation also become instruments with which God can bless those who obey and punish those who do not (39:22–31).¹⁴ Similarly for the themes of revelation and judgment, Argall isolates the many elements that 1 Enoch and Sirach share as well as those that separate them. His study is most successful in showing that the conventional labels “apocalypticism” and “wisdom” applied to these two works obscure rather than illuminate the complex relationship between them at the level of literary themes, forms and vocabulary.

Using a broader approach to the categories of wisdom and apocalypticism, Gabriele Boccaccini has also argued for a relationship between works like Ben Sira and 1 Enoch.¹⁵ Boccaccini understands the relationship between apocalypticism and wisdom to be one of confrontation, although primarily a literary confrontation, originating out of the different answers given in wisdom and apocalypticism to essentially the same questions. As Boccaccini reconstructs the situation, Ben Sira writes at a very critical time in the history of Jewish thought, one in which “[t]he characteristic tension of ancient Jewish thought—a tension never completely resolved between the ideas of covenant and promise, in other words, between an idea of salvation that rests on human forces and one that rests on the hope of God’s intervention—was by that time [the time of Ben Sira] definitely in crisis.”¹⁶

By the time Ben Sira arrived on the scene, the Book of the Watchers and the Astronomical Book had already articulated a view that “individual responsibility is gravely compromised. Salvation is entrusted to an extraordinary intervention by God and the idea of covenant is emptied of all substance.”¹⁷ Wisdom tradition, particularly as embodied in Ben Sira’s wisdom, was obliged to confront this challenge. Boccaccini finds “traces” of this confrontation in Job and Qoheleth, but it reaches its most intense moment in Ben Sira’s response. For Boccaccini, this debate is a “bitter” one, the questions “urgent,” and the answers boil down to two crucial themes, the problem of knowledge and the issue of salvation with its constituent conundrum of the origins of evil.¹⁸

¹⁴ For Argall’s discussion, see Argall, *1 Enoch and Sirach*, 99–164.

¹⁵ G. Boccaccini, *Middle Judaism: Jewish Thought 300 BCE to 200 CE* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991).

¹⁶ Boccaccini, *Middle Judaism*, 78.

¹⁷ Boccaccini, *Middle Judaism*, 79.

¹⁸ Boccaccini, *Middle Judaism*, 80–1.

Boccaccini’s reconstruction of the relationship, then, differs from Argall’s. Whereas at many points Argall claims that, despite undeniable differences, Ben Sira’s and 1 Enoch’s answers to some questions are not all that far apart, Boccaccini seems to suggest that while the questions are the same and thus held in common because they lie at the heart of what constitutes Judaism in this period, their answers, that is their claims about what makes up true Judaism, could not be more different—hence the confrontational nature of Boccaccini’s reconstruction. As we shall see below, however, despite their diverging assessments of the situation, both Argall and Boccaccini think that the literary relationship between 1 Enoch and Sirach suggests a social and religious confrontation.

A final literary commonality between 1 Enoch and Ben Sira is the way in which Enoch himself gets represented. Stone notes that as the originator of certain learned arts, like astronomy, and as a recipient of wisdom, the figure of Enoch must have accumulated wisdom characteristics very early and that this ancient sage appears in the Book of the Watchers and the Astronomical Book already as a fully developed character.¹⁹ Although Ben Sira’s references to Enoch are meager and somewhat enigmatic, Stone has also argued that Ben Sira’s claim that Enoch was אֱלֹהֵי דַעַת (44:16 Gk. ὑπόδειγμα μετανοίας) recognizes the wisdom characteristics attached to Enoch by his time.²⁰ Similarly, Argall claims that this verse reveals Ben Sira’s awareness of extra-biblical traditions about the predeluvian patriarch, like those found in 1 Enoch, that present him as a revealer figure.²¹ Whatever nuance one wants to give it, Enoch’s character as a wisdom figure seems shared by both works.

Each of the scholars whose positions I have outlined above recognizes in Ben Sira and 1 Enoch a literary relationship of some sort. Whether it is a particular type of literary device like the lists that Stone studied or the common use of wisdom forms and vocabulary like those

¹⁹ M. E. Stone, “Enoch, Aramaic Levi and Sectarian Origins,” *JSS* 19 (1988) 159–70, esp. 163.

²⁰ Stone, “Enoch, Aramaic Levi,” 167. *idem*, “Apocalyptic Literature,” in M. E. Stone (ed.), *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period* (CRINT 2.2; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1984) 383–441, esp. 395.

²¹ Argall, *1 Enoch and Sirach*, 9–13. Some scholars maintain that 44:16 is not original to Ben Sira (Th. Middendorp, P. L. Skehan and A. A. Di Lella) or that it does not belong here in the book (Y. Yadin). Although I earlier accepted Yadin’s argument, I have since come to think, along with Argall, Stone and others that the verse belongs right where it is. B. G. Wright, “Fear the Lord and Honor the Priest: Ben Sira as Defender of the Jerusalem Priesthood,” in P. C. Beentjes (ed.), *The Book of Ben Sira in Modern Research* (BZAW 255; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1997) 189–222, esp. 214–7.

highlighted by Nickelsburg or broader themes like those Argall examined or even basic questions of the tradition as Boccaccini has proposed, clearly these works share commonalities that the traditionally exclusive categories of “wisdom” and “apocalypticism” mask. The work that these scholars have done has contributed to a breaking down of that mutual exclusivism, but a difficult obstacle remains, one that Stone highlights in his recognition that even though the apocalypticism lists probably derive ultimately from wisdom contexts “the lines of connection may prove difficult to trace.”²² Each of these studies has inherent in it this same difficulty. Can we, and if so how can we, trace those connecting lines? We can begin to look for some answers by looking at the possible social locations of these texts.

THE SOCIAL LOCATION OF 1 ENOCH AND BEN SIRA

The phrase “social location” can mean different things to different people. In some cases it might refer to identifying particular social groups who compose and use pieces of literature. But as numerous scholars have pointed out, to begin with a piece of literature and to posit from it the existence of a social group is problematic at best and dangerous at worst.²³ But the search for a work’s social location might also have as a goal to indicate the *place* within the social landscape into which a text might fit. So, for example, one might identify the social location of texts that come from cultures that have low levels of literacy among the elite groups who would be literate and in the institutions where they flourish. In addition, specific thematic interests and content might point to some of the places out of which works of literature come, and *shared* background and interests might well point to a *common* place or institution in the social landscape. So while identifying groups behind texts, especially previously unattested groups, might seem a daunting task, perhaps asking in what places and among what groups these texts are likely to have arisen will provide another avenue for inquiring about their possible connections and social worlds.

²² Stone, “Lists of Revealed Things,” 438.

²³ M. E. Stone uses the term “danger” in “The Book of Enoch and Judaism in the Third Century BCE,” in M. E. Stone and D. Satran (eds.), *Emerging Judaism* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989) 61–75, esp. 65 (originally in *CBQ* 40 (1978) 479–92).

Several factors point to the wisdom school as a likely social location for both Ben Sira and 1 Enoch.²⁴ By the phrase “wisdom school” I do not mean to suggest something analogous to the modern institution of a school, but rather simply some formal pedagogical context in which a teacher/sage instructs students. The Wisdom of Ben Sira would certainly fit that description as well as any ancient Jewish text that we know. The book indicates that Ben Sira was a scribe-sage who trained young men to follow him in public service as scribe-sages. The topics that he addresses are quite diverse. He treats everyday social situations that his trainees might face, such as attending a banquet or going into a court of law, but he also teaches about matters that might be considered more traditionally intellectual or even speculative, such as his doctrine of the syzygies. Even though he makes critical remarks about some kinds of speculative interests, particularly about matters like trying to understand the secrets of the inner workings of the universe (cf. 3:22–24) or interpreting dreams (34:1–8), he displays interest in the functions of the various celestial bodies and cosmic phenomena (cf. 43:1–26).²⁵ If any text would seem to come from a “school” context, Ben Sira would certainly qualify.

But what about 1 Enoch? The situation might not be as straightforward as with Ben Sira, but a case still can be made for locating 1 Enoch in a wisdom school setting. Most significantly a number of clues can be marshaled to suggest that 1 Enoch has instruction as one of its primary purposes.²⁶ Both Nickelsburg and Argall have made good cases that the corpus as we have it, particularly the Astronomical Book and the Epistle of Enoch, is presented as a book of revealed wisdom.²⁷ Among the Enochic books, the Astronomical Book is probably the clearest example of instruction. It contains primarily data, a detailed compendium of various sorts of cosmological, astronomical and meteorological information. Yet, these data are presented as revealed knowledge intended to instruct the reader in proper calendrical practice

²⁴ For a more detailed argument, see B. G. Wright, “Wisdom, Instruction and Social Location in Ben Sira and 1 Enoch,” in E. G. Chazon, D. Satran, and R. A. Clements (eds.), *Things Revealed: Studies in Early Jewish and Christian Literature in Honor of Michael E. Stone* (JSJS 89; Leiden: Brill, 2004) 105–21.

²⁵ On this problem, see Wright, “Fear the Lord.”

²⁶ Wright, “Wisdom, Instruction.”

²⁷ Nickelsburg, “Enochic Wisdom” and Argall, *1 Enoch and Sirach*.

while at the same time trying to counteract “the sinners” who adhere to a different calendar.²⁸

The Epistle of Enoch’s condemnation of false teachers and their lying words indicates some conflict over proper teaching. In this work, the foolish do not possess knowledge or wisdom (98:3), nor do they obey the teaching of the wise (98:9). The author of the Epistle employs a number of traditional sapiential forms, such as “two-ways” material, but he also directs prophetic woes against his opponents. Thus, the instruction presented by the Epistle is reminiscent of the Torah-oriented teaching we find in Ben Sira.

Yet, Ben Sira and the Enochic authors differ dramatically when it comes to the purpose for offering their instruction. Ben Sira wants his students to heed his instruction so that they might have happiness and security in their lives—a good job, a well ordered family, honor in the eyes of the community. The tradent of the Astronomical Book wants to inculcate proper religious behavior, specifically the use of a proper calendar, in contrast to the “sinners” who reckon their calendar incorrectly. The author of the Epistle, in light of what he sees as an impending judgment, desires that those whom he teaches follow his instruction so that they will avoid eschatological judgment and receive an eschatological reward.

The other major point of division is the mechanism by which the teachers have acquired their wisdom. Ben Sira has studied the Law, has learned the traditions of the sages and has observed the way that the world works. This wisdom is available to anyone who can devote the requisite time to mastering it. By contrast, the Enochic authors received their wisdom handed down from Enoch who got it directly from God and who transmitted it to Methuselah through whom it came ultimately to them. These differences, however, should not obscure what I think to be a fundamental aspect of these works—their authors offer instruction that, if heeded, will enable the student/learner to achieve the right goal, to follow God’s will properly and thereby to achieve the good that awaits those who are faithful.

If one likely social location for I Enoch and Ben Sira is formal pedagogy, then the complementary question arises of who typically would be teaching in such circumstances. Several considerations become

important factors in trying to resolve this problem. As we saw above, both I Enoch and Ben Sira reveal interest in similar themes and questions, such as the makeup and working of the universe, even if they evaluate differently the extent of what one can or should try to know. Michael Stone, speaking of I Enoch, writes, “It is of course impossible to know whether these people [i.e. those represented in Book of the Watchers and the Astronomical Book] formed a group that was distinct from all those already mentioned. At the very least, however, they reflected an intellectual tradition and the likely relationships of that tradition can be studied. Its bearers must have been well-educated men and may possibly have been associated with the traditional intellectual groups, the wise and the priests.”²⁹ In some cases, the wise may even *be* priests. Another group of educated experts, the scribes, are often connected with Israelite wisdom, and more and more scholars have situated apocalypticism in learned, scribal circles. Jonathan Z. Smith, for example, in a study based on Babylonian and Egyptian texts, concludes, “[W]isdom and apocalypticism are related in that they are both essentially scribal phenomena. It is the paradigmatic thought of the scribe—a way of thinking that is both pragmatic and speculative—which has given rise to both,” and “Apocalypticism is a learned rather than a popular religious phenomenon.”³⁰ As learned men, the scribes also have a close connection with both of the groups whom Stone identifies as intellectual. While there are still many unanswered questions about how sages, priests and scribes may have been related to one another, in many cases, they have at a minimum closely converging agendas.

When looking at Second Temple Judea, Richard Horsley and Patrick Tiller use the hyphenated term scribe-sage to speak of Jewish wisdom teachers like Ben Sira.³¹ The description given by Ben Sira in 38:24–39:11 of his own vocation contrasts the work of the scribe (Heb. סופר, Gk. γραμματέυς) with other occupations, like the farmer, the artisan and the smith. 38:24 begins by pointing out that the

²⁹ Stone, “The Book of Enoch,” 73.

³⁰ J. Z. Smith, “Wisdom and Apocalyptic,” in J. Z. Smith (ed.), *Map is Not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions* (SJLS 23; Leiden: Brill, 1978), 67–87, esp. 74 and 86.

³¹ R. A. Horsley and P. Tiller, “Ben Sira and the Sociology of the Second Temple,” in P. R. Davies and J. M. Halligan (eds.), *Second Temple Studies III: Studies in Politics, Class and Material Culture* (JSOTS 340; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002) 74–107, esp. 99–103. On scribes generally, see A. J. Saldarini, *Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees in Palestinian Society: A Sociological Approach* (Wilmington: Michael Glazer, 1988).

²⁸ For the Astronomical Book as an instructional text, see Wright, “Wisdom, Instruction.”

scribe-sage needs leisure time to “become wise,” whereas other trades take up all of one’s time. 39:1 essentially sums up 38:24–34: “How different is the one who devotes himself to the Law of the Most High.” Ben Sira’s identification of the scribe with one who can acquire wisdom indeed warrants the designation scribe-sage for Ben Sira. As a wise teacher, he prepares young scribes-in-training for careers in public service by conveying to them the wisdom that he has both inherited and developed. According to Horsley and Tiller, men like Ben Sira would have worked as retainers of the aristocratic priestly class from whom they had probably been ceded some of the responsibility for teaching the Jewish Law, a responsibility that Ben Sira ascribes originally to Aaron in 45:17. “In Second Temple Judea the (high) priesthood must have, in effect, over a period of generations, delegated that authority [i.e. to teach the Law] and function to the sages, both with regard to the people generally (37:23), and with regard to the exercise of their own governmental authority (8:8; 9:17–10:5; 38:32–33; 38:34–39:4)”³² These men were powerful and learned, and, according to Horsley and Tiller, dependent on the priestly aristocracy for their livelihood. This situation created a rather delicate position for scribe-sages like Ben Sira. They were vulnerable because they were politically and economically dependent, but in their own estimation their professional roles of teaching and administration should accord them high status and independence from their priestly superiors. In this circumstance lies the potential for conflict, as we shall see below.³³

As a scribe-sage, Ben Sira would have had close connections to and a vested interest in the priests for whom he worked. Indeed, some have argued that Ben Sira was actually a priest himself.³⁴ Even if he was not a priest, he is certainly an outspoken proponent of the Jeru-

³² Horsley and Tiller, “Ben Sira,” 100.

³³ “Ben Sira,” 101–2. See also on the issue of the difficult social position of these scribe-sages, B. G. Wright and C. V. Camp, “Who Has Been Tested by Gold and Found Perfect? Ben Sira’s Discourse of Riches and Poverty,” *Henoch* 23 (2001) 153–74, esp. 162–72.

³⁴ On Ben Sira’s possible priestly status see especially, H. Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter: Eine Untersuchung zum Berufsbild des vor-Makkabäischen Sofer unter Berücksichtigung seines Verhältnisses zu Priester- Propheten- und Weisheitslehretum* (WUNT 2/6; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1981) and S. Olyan, “Ben Sira’s Relationship to the Priesthood,” *HTR* 80 (1987) 261–286. Although Horsley and Tiller do not argue that Ben Sira was a priest, it is clear that some scribes were priests (see below) and nothing would seem to prevent a scribe-sage like Ben Sira from belonging to a priestly family, but one that perhaps did not belong to the elite that controlled the cultic apparatus in Jerusalem.

salem priesthood.³⁵ In the light of Horsley’s and Tiller’s analysis, this unequivocal support should not be surprising coming from someone who is dependent on the high priestly aristocracy. One example should suffice at this juncture.³⁶ We find Ben Sira’s views about the priesthood articulated most succinctly in 7:29–31. In this passage he adapts the language of Deut 6:5 in order to encourage that the priests get their due. He says, “With all your heart (בכל לבך) fear the Lord and regard his priests as holy (הקדש). With all your might (באזרך) love your maker and do not forsake his servants. Give glory to God, honor the priest, and give them their portion as you are commanded.” It is striking here that each action intended for God has a parallel one for the priests. Ben Sira employs Deuteronomy to give significant symbolic and rhetorical weight to how important honoring the priests is. Loving and serving God and honoring his priests are equated in this passage. Consequently, one gives God proper honor by performing one’s cultic obligations and giving the priests their portion.

The two strands that I have set out above for wisdom and apocalypticism—a social location connected with learned sages, priests and/or scribes and pedagogy—entwine into a single cord. These “schools” transmit various types of wisdom, the most prominent being practical wisdom of the sort we see Ben Sira dispensing to his budding public servants, and speculative wisdom, such as that found in both 1 Enoch and Ben Sira, which, among other things, tries to apprehend the rationale hidden in the workings of the created order. Those who cultivate, preserve and transmit this wisdom are most likely scribe-sages, perhaps connected with the priesthood. They might claim that their wisdom ultimately derives from different sources—from studying the Law, from observation of the world, or from revelation—but, as Horsley and Tiller put it, “[F]rom a sociological perspective, the differences between Enochic, mantic wisdom and traditional, ‘proverbial’ or ‘educational’ wisdom do not imply differences in social position or role. One group

³⁵ M. Himmelfarb (“The Book of the Watchers and the Priests of Jerusalem,” *The Origins of Enochic Judaism*, 131–5, esp. 134) argues that Ben Sira, rather than being “an apologist for the priestly establishment,” was an internal critic employing an ideal picture and arguing for a royal priesthood. In my view, these are not mutually exclusive positions. A royal high priest might well be an innovation, but that is the situation in Jerusalem. While other Jews, like those responsible for the *Book of the Watchers*, might be more conservative on this issue, Ben Sira nevertheless advocates the position of those who hold power in Jerusalem.

³⁶ For a more detailed look see, Wright, “Fear the Lord.”

of sages cultivated both kinds of wisdom; another only educational.”³⁷ That is, despite the clear and obvious differences between works like 1 Enoch and Ben Sira, especially in their content, they may well have their origins in a common location in the social landscape of Second Temple Judaism, in circles of scribe-sages and priests who preserve and teach their special wisdoms to their disciples. Common social location, however, might not imply common cause.

PRIESTLY CONFLICT BETWEEN 1 ENOCH AND SIRACH?

Perhaps the most intriguing question about the relationship between 1 Enoch and Ben Sira is whether their common literary themes and forms together with what looks like a common social location provide any window into the relationships between the people who produced and used these works. Argall and Boccaccini both think they do, and they use the language of conflict and debate to suggest that these works represent groups of Jews who are in active opposition. Argall notes that the differing views about the themes he recognizes in the works “are the stuff of conflict” and Boccaccini refers to a “bitter debate.”³⁸ In two articles, I have tried to bring some of the circumstantial evidence together, and I think that one can reasonably conclude that Ben Sira and the Book of the Watchers and possibly the Astronomical Book (in its present form) represent groups of Jews who, at the least, know each other’s arguments and who are indeed engaged in active polemic over some central issues, most specifically the behavior of and thus the legitimacy of the priests who have control over the Jerusalem cultic apparatus.³⁹ Since I have made and then summarized these arguments elsewhere, I will not do so in detail. My basic conclusion is most germane here. “In general, Sirach, 1 Enoch and Aramaic Levi

³⁷ Horsley and Tiller, “Ben Sira,” 105. 4QInstruction contains *both* practical/educational wisdom and an eschatological wisdom, the רַב־דַּבָּר , which the addressee is supposed to study. Furthermore, the practical wisdom is grounded in the eschatology and revelation. See Goff, *Worldly and Heavenly Wisdom*, 51–79.

³⁸ Argall, *1 Enoch and Sirach*, 250; Boccaccini, *Middle Judaism*, 80.

³⁹ B. G. Wright, “Putting the Puzzle Together: Some Suggestions Concerning the Social Location of the Wisdom of Ben Sira,” in B. G. Wright and L. M. Wills (eds.), *Conflicted Boundaries in Wisdom and Apocalypticism* (Atlanta: SBL, 2005) 89–112, and “Fear the Lord.” See my summary of the argument in B. G. Wright, “Sirach and 1 Enoch: Some Further Considerations,” *The Origins of Enochic Judaism*, 179–87. In these articles I also examined the Aramaic Levi Document.

reflect people and communities that care about the priesthood primarily because all apparently were priests or were closely connected with them. The most contentious issues seem to be the legitimacy of marriages contracted by the priestly class in Jerusalem and the use of varying calendars. We are presented then in these works with competing groups/communities who most likely know about each other, who don’t really like one another, and who actively polemicize against one another.”⁴⁰ The priests and their scribal supporters who composed and used 1 Enoch and Aramaic Levi, then, were opposed to people like Ben Sira who was a partisan of those in power in Jerusalem (if he was not a priest himself).

I do want to think a little more about one piece of the argument, however. Martha Himmelfarb has issued a caution against the view “that the arguments implied by our texts were of interest only to priests.”⁴¹ She argues that the central importance of temple and priesthood was such that “all Jews, or rather, all members of the literate elite who have left us their thoughts, were likely to have ideas about how priests should behave.”⁴² This caution is well taken, and I do not want to insist that these people must have been priests; my conclusion actually is not really at odds with Himmelfarb’s in that I suggest that it was priests and the scribes who supported them that were responsible for these criticisms. Yet, I think that the nature of the evidence presented in the previous two sections of this paper provide sufficient warrant for the suggestion that priests were some of the central players in this debate.

In the case of Ben Sira, I noted how scholars have recognized his advocacy of the priesthood in Jerusalem. Whether or not Ben Sira was himself a priest by descent, the relationship between him, as a scribe-sage, and the priesthood was a close, indeed a dependent one, as Horsley and Tiller have argued.⁴³ I am not speaking here about local village scribes who might be called upon to write down a petition of some sort. If Ben Sira is typical of the scribe-sage who acts as a retainer for the aristocratic priests, he not only is literate, but he is also trained in the wisdom traditions of Israel. He teaches and interprets the Law, activities that are connected with priests not only in the Bible, but in Ben Sira’s own book where God chooses Aaron to perform the

⁴⁰ Wright, “Fear the Lord,” 218.

⁴¹ Himmelfarb, “The Book of the Watchers,” 134–5.

⁴² Himmelfarb, “The Book of the Watchers,” 135.

⁴³ Horsley and Tiller, “Ben Sira.”

sacrifices and “to teach Jacob the testimonies, and to enlighten Israel with his Law” (45:16–17). While some of the functions attributed to the scribe overlap with those of priests, and although Horsley and Tiller note that over some generations scribes must have taken over some of the priests’ teaching function, there is no reason to think that a priest could not be a scribe, especially since one becomes a scribe by training not by heredity.⁴⁴

Turning to the figure of Enoch, the Book of the Watchers and the Astronomical Book (in its present form) ascribe to him both priestly and scribal functions.⁴⁵ He is explicitly called “scribe of righteousness” (15:1), and in his bearing of the Watchers’ petition he acts as a scribe. In addition, he also takes on the role of the sage who hands down written wisdom to subsequent generations (82:1–4). But Enoch also possesses priestly characteristics. He has extraordinary access to the heavenly Temple (1 Enoch 14), and he not only writes and communicates the Watchers’ petition, he intercedes for them, acting as a priest on their behalf. In 1 Enoch, then, the converging relationship of the roles of priest and scribe in the figure of Enoch calls to mind the close social connection between the two groups that we see in Ben Sira, and it may be representative of the people behind the Enochic texts.⁴⁶

The cases of Ben Sira and the figure of Enoch are not isolated ones in Second Temple Judaism. Steven Fraade has argued that scribes did not constitute a separate class of *lay* specialists in Second Temple times, but that “[t]o the extent that the scribes represent the rise of a new intellectual class, they remain within the priestly orbit and not apart from or opposed to it.”⁴⁷ Ezra, of course, is the model priest-scribe whose activities “were not functions simply of pedigree or politics but of *prophetic* inspiration” (Ezra 7:6, 28).⁴⁸ Ben Sira, the model scribe-sage,

⁴⁴ A fact noted by M. Himmelfarb, “A Kingdom of Priests: The Democratization of the Priesthood in the Literature of Second Temple Judaism,” *The Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 6 (1997) 89–104, esp. 102 and Horsley and Tiller “Ben Sira,” 100.

⁴⁵ On the figure of Enoch generally in Second Temple Judaism, see J. C. VanderKam, *Enoch: A Man for All Generations* (Studies on Personalities of the Old Testament; Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1995).

⁴⁶ For additional arguments about Ben Sira and Enoch as scribes and/or priests, see Himmelfarb, “A Kingdom of Priests” and *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish & Christian Apocalypses* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) 23–5. See also S. Fraade, “They Shall Teach Your Statutes to Jacob: Priests, Scribes and Sages in Second Temple Times” (unpublished paper; my thanks to Prof. Fraade for making the paper available to me).

⁴⁷ Fraade, “They Shall Teach.”

⁴⁸ Fraade, “They Shall Teach.”

makes these same claims of prophetic inspiration on his own behalf (cf. 24:30–34), and in 1 Enoch the predeleuvian patriarch-scribe-priest also receives prophetic inspiration. In addition, employed in both Ben Sira and 1 Enoch we also find such prophetic forms as the woe-oracle. While Fraade does not deny the existence of a lay elite, he argues that the functions of teaching and interpretation remain primarily a priestly prerogative and responsibility.

Scholars who have seen in 1 Enoch, particularly the Book of the Watchers, a criticism of the priests in Jerusalem have generally avoided identifying those critics as priests themselves, but I do not think it a long jump from recognizing the literary relationships and the common social locations of Ben Sira and 1 Enoch together with the close association of scribe and priest in both works to postulating that the people responsible for the Enochic works were priests and their scribal retainers.⁴⁹ I am not suggesting here that we see behind the Enochic works some new and previously unknown Jewish group. As I noted earlier, many scholars have pointed out the difficulty, even futility, of such identifications.⁵⁰ I am trying to make an altogether different point. It is true that identifying criticisms of priests does not necessitate concluding that the critics were themselves priests. In the first two sections of this paper, we have seen that Ben Sira and 1 Enoch share literary themes and forms, albeit with differing approaches and interpretations. These shared literary elements and interests might reflect some common place in the Second Temple social landscape. I have argued that the wisdom “school” is a probable place to look for the creation, preservation and transmission of such interests. Other scholars have noted the possible connections between these intellectual traditions, apocalyptic literature and a scribal or priestly milieu. If we bring all these diverse pieces of evidence together, then, I think it quite likely that the criticisms of priestly marriage behavior in the Book of the Watchers or the calendrical problems articulated in the Astronomical Book originate in priestly contexts.

If Ben Sira indeed intended certain passages in his book to address some of these priestly criticisms, then we can reconstruct plausibly a

⁴⁹ D. Suter (“Fallen Angel, Fallen Priest: The Problem of Family Purity in 1 Enoch 6–16,” *HUCA* 50 [1979] 115–35) does make the suggestion that the criticisms should be connected with priests.

⁵⁰ See, for example, Stone, “The Book of Enoch,” 66, and L. L. Grabbe, “The Social Setting of Early Jewish Apocalypticism,” *JSP* 4 (1989) 27–47.

social context in which we see reflected in Ben Sira and 1 Enoch different factions of priests and their partisans finding fault with others over various aspects of priestly practice and behavior. They expressed their grievances over and responded to the problems differently, but they also preserved and handed down their views to those whom they or their surrogates taught. Such inner-priestly conflict would, of course, be nothing new in ancient Judaism. One of the best examples comes in the last chapters of Ezekiel, who is both priest and prophet, in which the author represents the Levites as committing idolatry, and, as a consequence, he announces that God has demoted them to the status of cultic janitors.⁵¹ The hereditary nature of the priesthood and the differing views as to who makes up the legitimate priesthood must have resulted in an ongoing struggle for power and control of such a central institution. While I do not want to minimize the differences between Ben Sira and 1 Enoch, they share enough in common to convince me that they do provide evidence of a polemical relationship between groups of priests and their scribal retinues whose divergent attitudes toward those who held the reins of cultic power resulted in contrasting assessments of how dangerous the present was and how God would respond to his people and the times in which they lived.

WISDOM AND COUNTER-WISDOM IN 4QINSTRUCTION, MYSTERIES, AND 1 ENOCH*

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At present, it is universally acknowledged that there are significant parallels between the sapiential text 4QInstruction and the early apocalyptic Enoch literature.¹ Elgvin initially suggested that “4QInstruction draws upon the Enoch tradition,”² but a direct dependence between both texts and corpora has been questioned from different perspectives.³ For the present discussion several aspects are of importance. First, with regards to the question of literary dependence, there are no explicit references in either corpus to the other, and there is no certainty as to when exactly one should date either 4QInstruction or specific Enochic

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¹ See the summary by J. J. Collins, “The Eschatologizing of Wisdom in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *Sapiential Perspectives: Wisdom Literature in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. J. J. Collins, G. E. Sterling, and R. A. Clements; STDJ 51; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 49–65, esp. 62.

² See, e.g., T. Elgvin, “The Mystery to Come: Early Essene Theology of Revelation,” in *Qumran between the Old and New Testaments* (ed. F. H. Cryer and T. L. Thompson; JSOTSS 290; Copenhagen International Seminar 6; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 113–50, esp. 146.

³ E. J. C. Tigchelaar (*To Increase Learning for the Understanding Ones: Reading and Reconstructing the Fragmentary Early Jewish Sapiential Text 4QInstruction* [STDJ 44; Leiden: Brill, 2001], 212–17) questions some purported correlations between 4QInstruction and the Epistle of Enoch, as well as the directions of dependence. L. T. Stuckenbruck (“4QInstruction and the Possible Influence of Early Enochic Traditions: An Evaluation,” in *The Wisdom Texts from Qumran and the Development of Sapiential Thought* [ed. C. Hempel, A. Lange, and H. Lichtenberger; BETL 159; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2002], 245–61) questions both a direct literary dependence, as well as a sociologically continuous group. M. J. Goff (*The Worldly and Heavenly Wisdom of 4QInstruction* [STDJ 50; Leiden: Brill, 2003], 185–88) does not claim a literary dependence, but accepts that “the author of 4QInstruction was familiar with Enochic texts.”

⁵¹ On these chapters, see J. D. Levenson, *Theology of the Program of Restoration of Ezekiel 40–48* (HSM 10; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976) 129–58.