

DID ST. PAUL USE THE BOOK OF WISDOM IN HIS WRITING OF THE LETTER TO THE ROMANS? ARGUMENTS FROM ROM 2 IN SUPPORT OF THE HYPOTHESIS OF HYPERTEXTUAL REWORKING

*(Summary)*

The article, comprising three parts, discuss the possibility whether St. Paul used the Book of Wisdom in his writing of the Letter to the Romans. Firstly, in a concise way author's hypothesis of a hypertextual relation between the Book of Wisdom and the Letter to the Romans is presented. Secondly, the article evaluates the possibility of the use of the Book of Wisdom by St. Paul in the Letter to the Romans. It points out to some of the difficulties that a scholar encounters during the scrutiny of the subject and, most importantly, provides a series of textual arguments in favour of the hypothesis. The arguments are based on the chapter 2 of the Letter to the Romans. They consist of a series of similarities, both on lexical and ideological level, between the Book of Wisdom and the Letter to the Romans, as well as possible reworking of the Wisdom material in Romans. Thirdly, the article concludes with the answer to the main question: Did St. Paul use the manuscripts of the Book of Wisdom in his writing of the Letter to the Romans?

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## 1. Hypertextual relations of the books

### 1.1. G. Genette and his definition of hypertextuality

In the world in which one can actually ascribe many different meanings to the word “intertextuality”, it is indispensable to provide a clear definition of what is meant in this article as “the hypertextual relation” of the Book of Wisdom and of the Letter to the Romans. In my work, rather than following closely the thought of Julia Kristeva and her linguistic, or semiotic, research, I use the terminology of another scholar: Gérard Genette.

In his book “*Palimpsestes. La littérature au second degré*”<sup>1</sup>, Genette enumerates five different types of transtextuality: intertextuality (which is understood by him in a very simple and narrow, or even restrictive way, as if almost no contact with Kristeva’s thought and definitions have been made here), paratextuality, metatextuality, architextuality and, lastly, hypertextuality.<sup>2</sup> By the latter he means a deliberate use, by the author, of one text in the process of creation of another text, which involves not only the borrowing of some motives, but often a close following of the sequence of the events of the earlier text. Hence, we can describe one of the texts as a hypo-text (the text which is under), and the second as a hyper-text (the text which is above). By reading the hyper-text, the reader – if provided with certain literary education – should be able to see and distinguish the features of the hypo-text. The most commonly used example, and the one used by Genette himself, is the “Ulysses” by James Joyce, which is a reworking of Homer’s “Odyssey”.<sup>3</sup>

Using Genette’s terminology, I am putting forth the hypothesis according to which the Letter to the Romans is a hyper-text of the Book of Wisdom. In other words, having in mind the complexity of Genette’s hypertextual reworking and without constricting it to the mere ‘quest for sources’, I am asking a question whether St. Paul used the manuscripts of the Book of Wisdom (the so-called Wisdom of Solomon) in his writing of the Letter to the Romans?

## 2. Possibility of the use of the Book of Wisdom by St. Paul in the Letter to the Romans

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<sup>1</sup> Genette, G. *Palimpsestes : la littérature au second degré*. Paris, 1982.

<sup>2</sup> In this article a Polish translation of G. Genette’s publication has been used: Genette, G. *Palimpsesty: Literatura Drugiego Stopnia*, trans. Tomasz Stróżyński and Aleksander Milecki. Gdańsk, 2014, 7–13.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 11–13.

## 2.1. Introductory arguments

The first question one could ask is: How can we prove that St. Paul, while writing the Letter to the Romans, used the manuscripts of the Book of Wisdom? Is it possible at all to prove that point?

As it has been shown, a hypertextual relation can only exist if one of the texts is earlier than the other, and it is known to the author of the later text. Let us examine in brief three arguments, that could establish the mere possibility of Pauline use of the text of Wisdom: the manuscript evidence (2.1.1.), the dating of the Book of Wisdom and the Letter to the Romans (2.1.2.) and the Old Testament citation in the New Testament (2.1.3.).

### 2.1.1. The argument from manuscripts evidence

The manuscripts *could* provide a strong argument for such hypothetical use. It would be very useful for a scholar to find a manuscript of the Book of Wisdom, dating from before the redaction of the Letter to the Romans, preferably at the place of the composition of Pauline writing. In the commentary of Charles Kingsley Barrett we read: “It is thus overwhelmingly probable that Romans was written from Corinth (conceivably from Cenchreae) during the three months before Paul left Greece for Jerusalem”<sup>4</sup>, and concerning the designation of the said ‘three months’: “The chronology of Paul’s movements cannot be settled beyond dispute, but on the whole no view meets with fewer difficulties than that which places the ‘three months’ of Acts xx. 3 in or about January-March 55. We have seen reason to think that the Epistle to the Romans was written in this interval”.<sup>5</sup> As the theme of the date and place of the composition of Romans concerns us in this article only in an introductory way, let us confine ourselves to the two quotations cited above, which seems to be accepted by other scholars.<sup>6</sup> One would need then a manuscript dating from before late winter 54 CE or spring 55 CE, found in the ruins of ancient Corinth.

The investigation of the earliest accessible papyri of the Book of Wisdom goes as follows:

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<sup>4</sup> Barrett, C.K. *The Epistle to the Romans*. Grand Rapids, Mich., 2011, 3.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Fitzmyer, J.A. *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (=The Anchor Yale Bible). New Haven, London, 2008, 87.

- i. The papyri 928 (Antinoopolis Papyri) which contains small fragments of the Book of Wisdom, namely: Wis 11:19-22; 12:8-11 (P. Ant. I 8 + III 210); [Sackler Library, Oxford, Great Britain]. The papyri is dated to the 3rd c. C.E. The Antinoopolis Papyri is presumably the oldest fragment of the manuscripts of the Book of Wisdom to be found, though the origin of the sapiential texts (Hebrew or Christian) is disputed.
- ii. The papyri 856 (P.Oxy. 4444), Sap. 4:17-5:1; 4th c. (Oxyrhynchus).
- iii. The papyri 859 (P.Colon. Inv. 5849), Sap. 17:5-20; 4th c. (Kolonias, Germany).
- iv. The papyri 889 (P.Oxy. 2073), Sap. 4:12(?); 11:19; 4th c. (Oxyrhynchus).
- v. The papyri 950 (P. Vindob. G 39770), Sap. 1:1-2.6-8 (4-5th c.) (Vienna, Austria).

As for the uncial codices including Sofia Salomonos in their folios, we have to go to even later time:

- i. (B) Vaticanus (4th c.)
- ii. (S) Sinaiticus (4th c.)
- iii. (A) Alexandrinus (5th c.)
- iv. (C) Ephraemi (5th c.)
- v. (V) Venetus (8th c.)

As it was said before: It *would* be very useful for a scholar to find a manuscript of the Book of Wisdom, dating from before the redaction of the Letter to the Romans, preferably at the place of the composition of Pauline writing. But, at least for now, it is not the case.

Nevertheless, even if we could put our hands and eyes on such a manuscript, it would not yet prove, that St. Paul did use it in the redaction of the Letter to the Romans. It would only constitute an argument important for the possibility of such an use.

### 2.1.2. The argument from the dating of the Book of Wisdom and the Letter to the Romans

As it was mentioned before: “described hypertextual relation can arise only if one of the texts is former to the other”. In this case, the answer concerning the mere possibility of the hypertextual use of the Book of Wisdom by St. Paul in Letter to the Romans can be solved by referring to the dating of Wisdom and Romans. The dating cannot be confirmed by manuscript material, but has to be drawn out mainly from the content of the texts themselves or the texts together with other written sources and archaeological material. In example the text of the Acts of the Apostles with its account

of Paul's apostleship and the evidence concerning proconsul's Gallio tenure, as it is in case of dating of Romans.

One can admit, if not with certainty, then at least a very high probability, that one of the texts – in this case the Book of Wisdom – is former to the other, namely to the Letter to the Romans. It is agreed amongst scholars that Letter to the Romans has been composed in or around year 55 (presumably spring) in Corinth. As for the date of the Book of Wisdom, most commonly it is stated that year 30 BC and the fall of the Ptolemaic dynasty in Egypt is the *terminus ad quem* of the composition of the text. There are scholars who tend to demonstrate on the basis of some fragments of Book of Wisdom, that it may be more likely that Book of Wisdom was written during the Roman rule over Egypt (cf. i.e. David Winston who points out in his commentary to the reign of Caligula, 37-41 CE, as the time in which the text has been composed<sup>7</sup>). Even if we consider the doubts of some scholars whether the text of Sophia Salomonos has been written before or after “the fullness of the time had come” (Gal 4:4), as St. Paul states in the Letter to the Galatians and take into consideration the second case – namely, Book of Wisdom being written after the birth Christ – we cannot stretch out the *terminus ad quem* after the year AD 55.

### 2.1.3. The argument from the Old Testament citation in the New Testament

If the text of the Book of Wisdom functioned at the time as a part of the group of texts which we call Septuagint, it could be supposed, that it has been read by New Testament writers. LXX is considered, we know that from the extensive use of quotations, the Bible of the New Testament. If St. Paul quotes in Letter to the Romans many passages from the Greek translation of the Bible (i.e. Is, Psalms), why couldn't he refer also to another book of the collection – namely Wisdom of Solomon?

### 2.2. The arguments from the texts of the Book of Wisdom and the Letter to the Romans

Having considered in brief three introductory arguments: from the manuscript evidence (2.1.1.), the dating of the Book of Wisdom and the Letter to the Romans (2.1.2.) and from the Old Testament citation in the New Testament (2.1.3.), we can acknowledge that despite the first one failing to provide any legitimisation of the hypertextual hypothesis, the latter two may confirm its possibility.

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<sup>7</sup> Winston, D. *The Wisdom of Solomon: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (=Anchor Bible. T. 43). Garden City, N.Y., 1981, 23.

Nevertheless, presented arguments can only be called introductory arguments, as they only establish the ground of possibility of use, not its necessity.

Hence, the arguments which are of most importance, and at the same time the most accessible, for the inquiry of the hypertextual relation between the texts are the ones which we can draw out from the texts of Wisdom and Romans themselves.

### 2.2.1. Attested relation between the text of the Letter to the Romans and the Book of Wisdom

William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, already in 1895, stated: “In two places in Epist. to Romans, ch. i and ch. ix., there are clear indications of the use by the Apostle of the Book of Wisdom”<sup>8</sup>, and “St. Paul must have bestowed upon the Book of Wisdom a considerable amount of study”<sup>9</sup>, the authors stressed further concerning the use of Wisdom that: “The particular resemblance of special passages and of the general drift of the argument combined with similar evidence from other parts of the Epistle seems to suggest some definite literary obligation”.<sup>10</sup>

2.2.1.1. Most commonly attested Pauline references to the text of the Book of Wisdom Sanday and Headlam have reflected upon the resemblance of the texts from Romans chapter 1 and 9 with Wisdom by putting them together in a synopsis. Their conclusions, cited above, are quoted by many scholars, including recent publications concerning the subject, i.e. the work of Jonathan A. Linebaugh published in 2013.<sup>11</sup> The strongest argument consist of the similarities, both in subjects and in language, of the passages from Rom 1:18-32 to numerous fragments of Wis 12-14. Common themes include: (a) so called natural knowledge of God (one can get to know God, by admiring His creation; Wis 12:27-13:9; Rom 1:18-32), (b) judgement over idolatry (Wis 13:6; Rom 1:20), (c) relation between immortality and idolatry (Wis 14:12.22ff; Rom 1:24) and (d) catalogue of human vices (Wis 14:23-26; Rom 1:29-31). Those themes have been investigated by scholars and we will not reflect upon them here.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Sanday, W.–Headlam, A.C. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (5th ed., =The International Critical Commentary). Edinburgh, 1902, 51.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 268.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 51–52, 267–69; Cf. i.e. Larcher, C. *Études Sur Le Livre de La Sagesse* (=Études Bibliques). Paris, 1969), 15; Linebaugh, J.A. *God, Grace, and Righteousness in Wisdom of Solomon and Paul's Letter to the Romans* (=Supplements to Novum Testamentum. T. 152). Leiden, 2013, 14.

<sup>12</sup> For the discussion see i.a.: Lesêtre, H. *Le Livre de la Sagesse* (=La Sainte Bible). Paris, 1884, 104–5; Cerfaux, L. *Le chrétien dans la théologie paulinienne* (=Lectio divina. T. 33). Paris, 1962, 31; Larcher, *Études Sur Le Livre de La*

Apart from the subjects mentioned above, there is yet another example of Pauline reference to the Book of Wisdom which is useful to note, as it is stressed by many scholars as a deliberate loanword, and hence can provide a strong argument for the hypothesis concerning the hypertextual reworking of Wisdom by St. Paul in the Letter to the Romans. Namely, the texts from Wis 2:24 reflected in Rom 5:12:

But by the envy of the devil, death entered the world, and they who are allied with him experience it.  
(Wis 2:24)<sup>13</sup>

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned (Rom 5:12)<sup>14</sup>

The resemblance of those two texts is uncanny and constitute an exception in biblical tradition. This is why many scholars consider the text from Rom 5:12 not only an allusion, but even states, that it consist of a literary dependence.<sup>15</sup>

#### 2.2.2. New arguments for the textual reference of the Letter to the Romans to the Book of Wisdom on the basis of Rom 2

This, what may appear a small portion of the arguments remarked by scholars, is the core of the argumentation, which leads to the notion of St. Paul having read the Wis (cf. i.e. the statement made already in 19th c. by Sanday and Headlam). As I have discussed briefly, the arguments from the texts themselves, rather than manuscript evidence or archaeological material, can constitute a way of

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*Sagesse*, 15–17; Romaniuk, K. *Księga Mądrości*. Poznań; Warszawa, 1969, 254; Romaniuk, K. *List Do Rzymian*. Poznań; Warszawa, 1978, 90, 93, 296; Dunn, J.D.G. *Romans 1-8* (=Word Biblical Commentary. T. 38A). Dallas, Tex., 1988, 53; Byrne, B. *Romans* (=Sacra Pagina Series. T. 6). Collegeville, Minn., 1996, 64–65; Dunn, J.D.G. *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*. Grand Rapids, Mich., 1998, 85; Gilbert, M. *Mądrość Salomona* (vol. 1, =Myśl Teologiczna. T. 37). Kraków, 2002, 17; Engberg-Pedersen, T. *Cosmology and Self in the Apostle Paul*. Oxford; New York, 2010), 217.

<sup>13</sup> In the quotations from the text of the Book of Wisdom I will use the following English translation: *The New American Bible with Revised New Testament and Revised Psalms, and with Roman Catholic Deutero-Canon (NAB)*. Washington, D.C., 1991, BibleWorks, v.9.

<sup>14</sup> The quotations from the Letter to the Romans are taken from the English translation of: *The New King James Version (NKJ)*. Nashville, 1982, BibleWorks, v.9.

<sup>15</sup> Thomas Aquinas. *Wykład listu do Rzymian = Super Epistolam S. Pauli Apostoli ad Romanos*, ed. and trans. Jacek Salij. Poznań, 1987, 83; Lyonnet, S. *Le péché originel en Rom 5, 12 et le concile de Trente*. Rome, 1961, 8, 25; Romaniuk, *Księga Mądrości*, 252; Romaniuk, *List Do Rzymian*, 137; Larcher, C. *Le Livre de La Sagesse Ou La Sagesse de Salomon* (vol. 1, =Etudes Bibliques. Nouvelle Série T. 1). Paris, 1983, 271; Poniży, B. *Księga Mądrości: Od Egzegezy Do Teologii*. Poznań, 2000, 225; Poniży, B. *Księga Mądrości* (=Nowy Komentarz Biblijny. T. 20). Częstochowa, 2012, 70–71; Thiselton, A.C. *Discovering Romans : Content, Interpretation, Reception*, 2016, 136.

verifying whether St. Paul did or did not use the Book of Wisdom. In the following part of the article, I will present the results of my research concerning possible additional references to the text of Wisdom in Rom 2.

#### 2.2.2.1. Continuity of thought: δίο (Rom 2:1)

The first point of contact of Rom 2 with the text of Wisdom which should be pointed out is the very beginning of Rom 2, verse 2:1: “Διὸ ἀναπολόγητος εἶ (...)” . It is possible to argue, that Rom 2 it is not a new part of the text. On the contrary, it is closely related to the precedent one (concerning, generally speaking, the natural cognition of God, idolatry and human vices). The connection is shown already by the conjunction δίο which can be translated as ‘therefore, for this reason’<sup>16</sup> or ‘wherefore, on which account’<sup>17</sup> or ‘for this reason, therefore, wherefore’.<sup>18</sup>

If we acknowledge, as the majority of scholars do, the connection of Rom 1:18-32 with Wis 12-14, then the conjunction δίο used after this part of the text could indicate not only that the thought following it in Rom 2 has certain connection to Rom 1:18-32, but also that the allusion to the Book of Wisdom may be continued as well.

In editor’s footnotes to John Calvin’s Commentary to the Letter to the Romans, we can find a contradictory argument. John Owen, Calvin’s commentary editor, states that in case of the conjunction δίο in Rom 2:1 we should speak about a Hebraism, and that δίο is related rather to the text that follows the conjunction than to the preceding verses: “It is confessed by most that the illative, διὸ, at the beginning of the verse can hardly be accounted for. The inference from the preceding is not very evident. It is, in my view, an instance of Hebraism; and the reference is not to what has preceded, but to what is to come”.<sup>19</sup> However, this point of view is fairly isolated and should not be convincing.

#### 2.2.2.2. Textual reference: ὁ κρίνων (Rom 2:1 cf. Wis 1:1)

Secondly, I would argue that in the same verse (Rom 2:1) we can find an allusion to the very beginning of the Book of Wisdom (namely, Wis 1:1). The allusion consist both of (a) formal and (b)

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<sup>16</sup> Bauer, W. *A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature*, ed. Frederick W Danker, 3rd ed. Chicago, 2000.

<sup>17</sup> Liddell, H.G.–Scott, R. *A Greek-English lexicon*, ed. Henry Stuart Jones, 9th ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.

<sup>18</sup> Strong, J. *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. Peabody, MA, 2012.

<sup>19</sup> Jean Calvin. *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans*, ed. and trans. John Owen. Grand Rapids, 2005, 84.

lexical similarity of the texts, as well as of (c) context of Rom 2:1 coherent with the thought of Wisdom.

Διὸ ἀναπολόγητος εἶ, ὃ ἄνθρωπε πᾶς ὁ κρίνων (...)<sup>20</sup>

Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge (...) (Rom 2:1)

Ἀγαπήσατε δικαιοσύνην οἱ κρίνοντες τὴν γῆν

Love righteousness, you who judge the earth (Wis 1:1 )

As for the (a) formal similarity, in both chapters (Wis 1 and Rom 2) the authors begin their texts with an apostrophe. Moreover, the subject of the apostrophe is identified alike. The ones to whom the authors are addressing are in Rom 2:1: πᾶς ὁ κρίνων, and in Wis 1:1: οἱ κρίνοντες, those ‘who judge’, as we can translate it into English. The (b) lexical similarity is observed, though different in number (singular in Rom 2:1 and plural in Wis 1:1) the same word is employed: *participium presenti activi* in the *nominative* case of the verb κρίνω. Hence, we can speak here about the same addressees or at least the addressees named in the same way. Although, one could say that there is a difference between the subjects behind the word ὁ κρίνων in Book of Wisdom and that from Romans. In the case of Book of Wisdom the reference in the first place would be to the understanding as it is suggested by other Old Testament writings, i.e. in the Book of Judges (Jdg), where the judges (ὁ κρίνων ἧὶ οἱ κρίνοντες) are those who rule. In the Letter to the Romans the accent would be more juridical, as the verse and the context of Rome would suggest, or moral/ethical, as issued from Jesus’ teaching.

Nevertheless, and without denying the possibility of some differences, the word used in both places remains the same, which allows to draw textual reference. Moreover, the “distance” – both in time and in culture – between the Book of Wisdom and the Letter to the Romans is far smaller than this between Book of Wisdom and Jdg (8th c. BCE). Hence, it is justifiable to consider the reference probable.

Finally, the (c) context of the apostrophe in Rom 2:1 is coherent with the thought of Wisdom. Rom 2:1 has for its preceding context the text of Rom 1:18-32, which subjects, as it has been noted above (natural knowledge of God, judgement over idolatry, relation between immortality and the catalogue of human vices) are similar to the ones discussed in the Book of Wisdom. Thus, one could argue that

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<sup>20</sup> In this article, the Greek texts from the Book of Wisdom and the Letter to the Romans are quoted from the following version of the Bible: *Greek New Testament and LXX Database (BGT)*. Norfolk, 1999, BibleWorks. v.9.

St. Paul, by placing his apostrophe: Διὸ ἀναπολόγητος εἶ, ὃ ἄνθρωπε πᾶς ὁ κρίνων..., in proximity of the subjects considered extensively in the Book of Wisdom, tends to revoke in his reader's mind the similar apostrophe from Wis 1:1.

2.2.2.3. Similarity of the motif of God's actions leading to repentance (Rom 2:4 cf. Wis 11:23.26; 12:2.10.19)

The next verse from Rom 2, in which we can trace the shades of the Book of Wisdom, is Rom 2:4. It is possible to observe there an ideological reference or, in other words, a similar motif: God's actions leading to repentance.

ἢ τοῦ πλούτου τῆς χρηστότητος αὐτοῦ καὶ τῆς ἀνοχῆς καὶ τῆς μακροθυμίας καταφρονεῖς,  
ἀγνοῶν ὅτι τὸ χρηστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς μετάνοιάν σε ἄγει;  
Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the  
goodness of God leads you to repentance? (Rom 2:4)

This text from the Letter to the Romans reflects very clearly the idea of divine clemency towards men, present in Book of Wisdom in the third part of the book (usually divided in three parts: Wis 1-5; Wis 6-9 and Wis 10-19). In this section, the author depicts the 'Wisdom in the history'. We can find there a lot of traces concerning, precisely, the clemency of God – not only towards the Israelites, but towards Egyptians and Canaanites a well<sup>21</sup>; clemency inscribed in the context of the universalising thought of Wis.

A few quotations should support this statement. In the context of the plagues sent upon the Egyptians and afoot with the praise of the omnipotence and goodness of God we read in Wis 11:23:

But you have mercy on all, because you can do all things; and you overlook sins for the sake of  
repentance. (Wis 11:23)

The notion of universalism from the Book of Wisdom finding its reflection in the New Testament writing has been noted i.e. by Chrysostome Larcher in his commentary to Wisdom: "Les parallèles

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<sup>21</sup> It is worth noting that although the author does not use any names in his writing, it is possible to associate with precision the described events with specific nations from the history of Israelites. The rhetoric function of antonomasia in this case is to make the thought more universalistic.

les plus précis, avec une même ouverture universaliste, se rencontre dans le N.T.”<sup>22</sup>, where Larcher points to Rom 2:4 alongside with Acts 17:30 and 2Pe 3:9.<sup>23</sup> This shows us that not only the main thought (God’s actions leading to repentance) is similar both in Wisdom and in Romans, but also its universalistic context.<sup>24</sup>

Another place in the Book of Wisdom shows its closeness with the thought present in Rom 2:4 – Wis 11:26:

But you spare all things, because they are yours, O Ruler and Lover of souls, (Wis 11:26)

Or yet another verse, Wis 12:2:

Therefore you rebuke offenders little by little, warn them, and remind them of the sins they are committing, that they may abandon their wickedness and believe in you, Lord! (Wis 12:2)

Concerning the last example, it may be important to mention that the Book of Wisdom puts forward the idea, which will become crucial also for the Pauline theology in general, including the Letter to the Romans – the idea of the faith, which is not restricted to Israel (once again the universalising thought of Book of Wisdom comes to light). It may be that the reason why Wisdom was used by Paul in his writing of the Letter to the Romans is because of its theology, which in various ways meets the needs of Christianity.

We can find more similar verses in the Wis, which stress God’s clemency towards people. Also concerning Canaanites<sup>25</sup> (cf. Wis 12:10):

But condemning them by degrees, you gave them space for repentance. You were not unaware that their origins were wicked and their malice ingrained, And that their dispositions would never change;  
(Wis 12:10)

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<sup>22</sup> Larcher, C. *Le Livre de La Sagesse Ou La Sagesse de Salomon* (vol. 3, =Etudes Bibliques. Nouvelle Série. T. 5). Paris, 1985, 692.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Some other scholars note in their works the connection between Rom 2:4 with Wis 11:23, but often their note consists only of a mere reference in the footnotes, without a longer comment. Cf. i.a. Romaniuk, *Księga Mądrości*, 254–55; Romaniuk, *List Do Rzymian*, 101; Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 235.

<sup>25</sup> The name ‘Canaanites’ is not mentioned here, as antonomasia is still employed, though it is possible to determine the nation on the basis of clear hints from the text.

The purpose of goodness, forbearance and longsuffering in God's actions, as presented in Wisdom, is to "gave your children [the people of Israel] reason to hope that you would allow them to repent for their sins" (Wis 12:19). The focus shifts abruptly, from Egyptians and Canaanites, towards Israel as the God's People. Despite of the universalising thought of the divine mercy and clemency, the author stresses that they lead to no repentance nor faith amongst Egyptians nor Canaanites. This shift may surprise the reader. Sanday and Headlam concludes this kind of authors changing of mind in the following manner: "Occasionally we find wide universalist sentiments, but he always comes back to a strong nationalism."<sup>26</sup> We read in Wis 12:19:

You taught your people, by these deeds, that those who are righteous must be kind; And you gave your children reason to hope that you would allow them to repent for their sins. (Wis 12:19)

And furthermore, in the next verse:

For these were enemies of your servants, doomed to death; yet, while you punished them with such solicitude and indulgence, granting time and opportunity to abandon wickedness, (Wis 12:20)

With what exactitude you judged your children, to whose ancestors you gave the sworn covenants of goodly promises! (Wis 12:21)

There cannot be doubt, that the idea of God's actions leading to repentance in Rom 2:4 and in the Book of Wisdom is similar. Moreover, as we have noted, the context of universalising thought binds the texts together even more. The question whether the in Wisdom the universalisation is really universal, which was doubted by Sanday and Headlam<sup>27</sup>, is here of minor importance.

#### 2.2.2.4. The dichotomy Israelite-Egyptian/Canaanite from Wisdom and its reworking in Romans (Rom 2:7-16.14-16 cf. Wis 12:10)

The texts presented above (in the section 2.2.2.3.) show very clearly another mutual feature for both the Book of Wisdom and the Letter to the Romans – the dichotomy Israelite-Egyptian/Canaanite or, as it will be reworked by St. Paul, Jew-Greek. Although stressing the universalisation of the possibility of repentance granted by God, the authors nonetheless oppose the two groups by pointing out that one of them do not repent.

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<sup>26</sup> Sanday and Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 268.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

There is not only a similarity but a reworking as well: firstly, Jews are presented as those who do not repent in the Letter to the Romans (Rom 2:4-5.17-24); secondly, in Pauline thought Gentiles can repent (Rom 2:7-16.14-16). If we look closely at the text of the Book of Wisdom, both features were described conversely: on the one hand, despite God's clemency, repentance was not possible for Gentiles in the eyes of the author of Wisdom (cf. Wis 12:10), on the other hand, Israelites are those who can change their behaviour.

We have the similar theological thought, but in the hypertextual reworking of Book of Wisdom in the Letter to the Romans the subject is changed. In Book of Wisdom God's 'goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering' do not push Egyptians nor Canaanites to the *metanoia*, everything serves in reality to show God's righteousness towards Israelites. On the other hand, St. Paul stresses in Rom 2:4-5 the hardness (σκληρότης – hardness [of heart], stubbornness) of Jews who, in their turn, are those who do not repent.

We can observe an important change also in the fact that very firm and harsh words concerning the impossibility of *metanoia* of non-Israelites ('their origins were wicked and their malice ingrained, and that their dispositions would never change' – Wis 12:10) are replaced in the following verses of the Letter to the Romans by the idea of conscience guiding those who don't have the Law to good deeds (Rom 2:14-16). Nevertheless, the idea of impossibility of repentance of some people will come back in Rom 9:22 in the words – 'What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, (Rom 9:22); σκεύη ὀργῆς κατηρτισμένα εἰς ἀπώλειαν (Rom 9:22).

At first, one could assume that St. Paul's reworking of the ideas from the Book of Wisdom concerning the repentance of Israelites and impossibility of repentance of Gentiles are merely inversed. Hence, Jews' hardness of hearts (σκληρότης) and Greeks' guidance of conscience in Romans are stressed. Nonetheless, a deeper insight into Pauline thought present in Rom 2 must reveal another reworking. In reality, while stressing the opposition Jew-Greek, paradoxically, the author of the Letter to the Romans overcome the opposition and emphasise the availability of *metanoia* for everyone. Thus, Pauline reworking does not consist of an inversion, but rather an inclusion: of the Gentiles in the group of people whose malice is not ingrained, and whose dispositions can change (cf. Wis 12:10).

In his work, J.A. Linebaugh draws a similar conclusion, though approaches the idea from a different point of view: “(...) whereas Wisdom contrasts the idolatry and immorality of the non-Jewish world with the religious and moral innocence of Israel in order to reinforce the irreducible distinction between Israel *qua* the righteous and non-Israel *qua* the ungodly, Paul situates his accusation within the apostolic and apocalyptic kerygma and introduces a series of alterations into the polemical tradition that subtly includes Israel within the human history of sin and thereby reduces the Jew-Gentile binary to a single anthropological denominator *homo peccator*”.<sup>28</sup> Thus, Linebaugh includes Israel “within the history of Adamic sin”<sup>29</sup>, whereas I think that in the light of Pauline reworking of Wisdom, it would be more accurate to state that Gentiles (Greeks in Pauline terminology) are included into humankind which is redeemed and able to repent.

#### 2.2.2.5. Textual reference: ἡ ἀφθαρσία (Rom 2:7 cf. Wis 2:23; 6:18.19)

Another close textual reference can be observed in Rom 2:7, where the word ἡ ἀφθαρσία is employed. The Greek term, most often translated into English by incorruption (incorruptibility), immortality<sup>30</sup>, or imperishability<sup>31</sup>, appears seven times in the New Testament texts: Rom 2:7; 1Cor 15:42.50.53.54; Eph 6:24; 2 Ti 1:10 and five times in Septuagint: 4Macc 9:22; 4Macc 17:12 and Wis 2:23; Wis 6:18.19.

If we consider all the occurrences of the words with the stem ἀφθαρ-, there are two more verses which should be considered in the Book of Wisdom (Wis 12:1; 18:4); four more in St. Paul’s letters (Rom 1:23; 1Cor 9:25; 1Cor 15:52; 1Ti 1:17); three in 1Pe (1Pe 1:4.23; 3:4); and one in Mk 16:8, which is mentioned here at the very end as the word with the stem ἀφθαρ- is included in one of less reliable variants of Marcan text, namely in an extension of the verse Mk 16:8<sup>32</sup> witnessed, as Bruce Metzger enumerates, “by four uncial Greek manuscripts of the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries

<sup>28</sup> Linebaugh, *God, Grace, and Righteousness in Wisdom of Solomon and Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, 229.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 114–15.

<sup>30</sup> Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English lexicon*; Bauer, *A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature*; Friberg, T.–Friberg, B.–Miller, N.F. *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament* (=Baker’s Greek New Testament Library. T. 4). Grand Rapids, Mich., 2000.

<sup>31</sup> Newman, B.M. *A Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament*. Stuttgart, 1993.

<sup>32</sup> Πάντα δὲ τὰ παρηγγελμένα τοῖς περὶ τὸν Πέτρον συντόμως ἐξήγγειλαν. Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἀπὸ ἀνατολῆς καὶ ἄχρι δύσεως ἐξαπέστειλεν δι’ αὐτῶν τὸ ἱερὸν καὶ ἄφθαρτον κήρυγμα τῆς αἰωνίου σωτηρίας. ἀμήν: “And they promptly reported all these instructions to Peter and his companions. And after that, Jesus Himself sent out through them from east to west the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation.”

(L Y 099 0112 *al*), as well as Old Latin k, the margin of the Harclean Syriac, several Sahidic and Bohairic manuscripts, and not a few Ethiopic manuscripts”.<sup>33</sup>

For the accuracy of our scrutiny, we need to acknowledge that the term was used and known in ancient philosophy. Nevertheless, on the basis of the analysis of preserved and digitalised extrabiblical sources<sup>34</sup>, it is possible to conclude, that its attestation is not broad. Moreover, amongst those ancient writers who employed the term only seven had the opportunity to create their works before the date of the composition of the Letter to the Romans: Aristotle (384–322 BCE; he uses ἄφθαρτος multiple times in his *Metaphysics*), Epicurus (341-270 BCE), Philodemus of Gadara (110-35 BCE), Diodorus Siculus (c. 90-30 BCE), Dionysius of Halicarnassus (c. 60 BCE –after 7 CE), Strabo (64/63 BCE – c. 24 BCE) and Philo of Alexandria (c. 25 BCE – c. 50 CE).

We should assume that St. Paul may have read some of the ancient texts by authors enumerated above and possibly encountered the word ἡ ἀφθαρσία. Nevertheless, if we assume that the author of the Letter to the Romans borrowed the term from one of the text he had read, it is far more probably that he used an Old Testament writing for at least two reasons. Firstly, because it is the praxis of New Testament writers – to make references to the Old Testament texts, most often through the Greek translation of the Septuagint, as noted above. Secondly, it is commonly acknowledged that St. Paul read the Book of Wisdom and “must have bestowed upon the Book of Wisdom a considerable amount of study”<sup>35</sup>, whereas we will not find similar statements concerning he works of Aristotle, Strabo or Philo. Hence, if St. Paul borrowed the term from one of the written sources we know, we can conclude with high probability, that he draws it from the Book of Wisdom.

Furthermore, in Rom 2:7:

τοῖς μὲν καθ’ ὑπομονὴν ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ ἀφθαρσίαν ζητοῦσιν ζωὴν  
αἰώνιον

eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality;

(Rom 2:7),

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<sup>33</sup> Metzger, B.M. *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*. Stuttgart, 2002, 103.

<sup>34</sup> The analysis consisted of the verification of the material gathered in Perseus Digital Library Collection (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu>):

[http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/wordfreq?lang=greek&lookup=a\)fqarsi%2Fa](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/wordfreq?lang=greek&lookup=a)fqarsi%2Fa) [access: 2017.06.29];

[http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/wordfreq?lang=greek&lookup=a\)%2Ffqartos](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/wordfreq?lang=greek&lookup=a)%2Ffqartos) [access: 2017.06.29]; together with the account in: Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English lexicon*.

<sup>35</sup> Sanday and Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 52.

St. Paul incorporates an idea that resembles the one from Wisdom. He refers to the idea of ‘immortality as the purpose of man’s life’, and places it in an eschatological context. As it is, precisely, in the Book of Wisdom:

For God formed us to be imperishable (ὅτι ὁ θεὸς ἔκτισεν τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐπ’ ἀφθαρσίᾳ); the  
image of his own nature he made us. (Wis 2:23)

then, care for discipline is love of her; love means the keeping of her laws; To observe her laws is the  
basis for incorruptibility (ἀφθαρσίας) (Wis 6:18).

Lastly, both in Rom 2:7 and in Wisdom, the idea concerning immortality is introduced quite early in the books (in both cases in the chapter 2) – which could constitute another argument strengthening the statement that in Romans St. Paul refers to Book of Wisdom.

#### 2.2.2.6. Similarity of the motif of boasting in God (Rom 2:17 cf. Wis 2:16)

Another motif from the Letter to the Romans similar to the one from the Book of Wisdom can be found in Rom 2:17: the motif of boasting in God. In Wis 2:16, in the ‘speech of the wicked’ (Wis 2:1-20), we read the following statement expressed by the wicked ones:

μακαρίζει ἔσχατα δικαίων καὶ ἀλαζονεύεται πατέρα θεόν

He calls blest the destiny of the righteous and boasts that God is his Father. (Wis 2:16)

Whereas in Romans:

Εἰ δὲ σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ἐπονομάζῃ καὶ ἐπαναπαύῃ νόμῳ καὶ καυχᾶσαι ἐν θεῷ

Indeed you are called a Jew, and rest on the law, and make your boast in God, (Rom 2:17)

The motif is very similar, though it is important to note, that the word describing the action of boasting used in Wis 2:16 and Rom 2:17 differs from one another. In the case of Wisdom, the author employs ἀλαζονεύομαι, which derives from: ἀλαζονεία. The word can translated into English by: arrogance, pretension (as in James 4:16), false pride, conceit, boasting.<sup>36</sup> Whereas in the Letter to the

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<sup>36</sup> Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English lexicon*; Popowski, R. *Wielki słownik grecko-polski Nowego Testamentu* (2nd ed., =Seria Biblijna Vocatio). Warszawa, 1995; Friberg, Friberg, and Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*.

Romans, St. Paul uses the term *καυχάομαι*, a word and an idea in which he has a liking<sup>37</sup>. When it comes to *καυχάομαι* – translated into English by: speak loud, boast, vaunt oneself, take pride in something, pride oneself, glory, brag, be proud of<sup>38</sup> – the word does not have, in majority of cases<sup>39</sup>, any negative connotations with false boasting, as it was the case of *ἀλαζονεύομαι*.

Whereas in the Book of Wisdom the subjects of the speech – the wicked ones – didn't acknowledge the right of the righteous one to 'boast in God as a Father' (cf. Wis 2:16), in the Letter to the Romans St. Paul knows, that Jews have the right to such boasting. This may be the reason, why he uses the word *καυχάομαι* instead of *ἀλαζονεύομαι*.

Having in mind the presented above differences between the two Greek verbs, we can nonetheless admit that, with slight alterations in tone, the idea of boasting in God is mutual for Wis 2:16 and Rom 2:17.

#### 2.2.2.7. Similarity of the motif of reproaching the breaking of the Law (Rom 2:13.21-23 cf. Wis 2:12)

Moreover, the 'speech of the wicked' in the Book of Wisdom (Wis 2:1-20) incorporates yet another motif: reproaching the transgression of the Law, which will constitute another point of contact between the Letter to the Romans and the Book of Wisdom.

ἐνεδρεύσωμεν τὸν δίκαιον ὅτι δύσχρηστος ἡμῖν ἐστὶν καὶ ἐναντιοῦται τοῖς ἔργοις ἡμῶν καὶ ὄνειδίζει ἡμῖν ἁμαρτήματα νόμου καὶ ἐπιφημίζει ἡμῖν ἁμαρτήματα παιδείας ἡμῶν  
Let us lie in wait for the righteous one, because he is annoying to us; he opposes our actions, Reproaches us for transgressions of the law and charges us with violations of our training. (Wis 2:12)

Here, the reproaching is not expressed directly, but in a way by means of reported speech. The wicked ones are reporting the reproach made by the righteous one.

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<sup>37</sup> St. Paul employs the term 28 times in 2Cor, 10 times in 1Cor, 8 times in Rom, and also in Ga, Eph, Phil, and 1Thess. The fact that outside *Corpus Paulinum* it is attested only once in Heb and 3 times in James, emphasise Pauline characteristic of this word and the idea of boasting.

<sup>38</sup> Lampe, G.W.H. *A patristic Greek lexicon*. London, 1961; Popowski, *Wielki słownik grecko-polski Nowego Testamentu*; Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English lexicon*; Bauer, *A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature*.

<sup>39</sup> Friberg, Friberg, and Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*.

As for the Letter to the Romans, the motif of reproaching the transgression of the Law is clearly visible in the whole chapter 2. Quoting two fragments, Rom 2:13 and Rom 2:21-23, will prove the point sufficiently:

for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified  
(Rom 2:13);

this phrase implies, that at least some of the Jews do not ‘observe’ the Law, but only ‘listen’ to it. Though not explicit, it may constitute Pauline reproach towards the Jews. The second, longer fragment is explicit in pointing out faults of the Jews by denoting some of the commandments of the Law, which are not being observed by them:

You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal? You who say, "Do not commit adultery," do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law?' (Rom 2:21-23)

Whereas in the Book of Wisdom reproaching was conveyed to the reader in reported speech, in the Letter to the Romans we are dealing with direct and straight accusation. In both places, though, the reproach is clearly present.

#### 2.2.2.8. Reworking of the motifs of boasting in God and reproaching the braking of the Law (Rom 2:17 cf. Wis 2:16; Rom 2:13.21-23 cf. Wis 2:12)

The supposed hypertextual relation between the Book of Wisdom and the Letter to the Romans embody not only the presence of lexical and thematic similarities. One of the key features of hypertextuality, as Genette described it, is the creative reworking of the text, to which the author of the latter writing refers. Such a reworking has been already described concerning the case of the dichotomy Israelite-Egyptian/Canaanite in Wisdom and Jew/Greek in Romans. In the last point of this article I will reflect upon the reworking of two last motifs presented above: boasting in God (Rom 2:17 cf. Wis 2:16) and reproaching the braking of the Law (Rom 2:13.21-23 cf. Wis 2:12).

St. Paul, while undertaking the motifs from the Book of Wisdom, changes them in a creative way. Whereas in Wisdom, the wicked assumed, that the boasting of the righteous is a false one, in the case

of boasting in God in Rom 2 the author of Romans knows, that Jews have all the rights to boasting. Hence, the transposition of verbs which was already mentioned: St. Paul uses the word *καυχάομαι* instead of *ἀλαζονεύομαι*. In this part of Rom 2, St. Paul places himself in the position of the wicked ones from Wisdom, who point to the boasting of the righteous. Another reworking consist of the fact, that in Romans the ones who boast – although entitled to do so – actually fail to be righteous. Hence, the roles are somehow switched, as it is St. Paul who remains righteous, not the Jews.

The transposition of characters from the speech of the wicked goes on. When reproaching the Jews for braking of the Law, St. Paul plays from the beginning the role of the righteous one. Some interpretations of the speech of the wicked point out to the Jews-apostates as *ἄσεβής*, who criticise the righteous one, the faithful Jew. We can say, that in the case of Romans, the parts are diverted. It is as it would be the reverse speech – the righteous one, Paul, speaks to the Jews-apostates, who do not obey the Law.

### 3. Conclusion

Did St. Paul use the manuscripts of the Book of Wisdom in his writing of the Letter to the Romans? The accumulation of attested similarities between the Book of Wisdom and the Letter to the Romans, as well as possible reworking of the Wisdom material in Romans, may give a reader and a scholar some clues and even a strong conviction that the hypothesis can be defended. Nevertheless, it seems impossible, at least in the terms of science, to prove it. We cannot state with certitude that St. Paul did or did not use certain – not preserved (or not yet discovered) till present times – manuscripts of the Book of Wisdom.

Sanday and Headlam wrote: “The writer of the Book of Wisdom uses broad principles without understanding their meaning, is often self-contradictory, and combines with ideas drawn from his Hellenic culture crude and inconsistent views. (...) Occasionally we find wide universalist sentiments, but he always comes back to a strong nationalism.”<sup>40</sup> The juxtaposition of the texts of the Book of Wisdom and of the Letter to the Romans is very prolific in the terms of theological thought and understanding of what happened in between the times of redaction of the Book of Wisdom and the Letter to the Romans. The events that influenced the life of St. Paul to the furthest extent possible and pushed him to rewrite what has been already written in the Book of Wisdom – this time without

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<sup>40</sup> Sanday and Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 268.

self-contradictions and ‘narrow sympathies’<sup>41</sup>, but with a deep insight and certainty of universal salvation.

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 269.