

BEN SIRA – ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY 2024

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Editions of the Hebrew text:

Beentjes, Pancratius C. *The Book of Ben Sira in Hebrew: A Text Edition of all Extant Hebrew MSS and A Synopsis of all Parallel Hebrew Ben Sira Texts*. Vetus Testamentum Supp. 68. Leiden: Brill, 1997. Sets out the Hebrew text of each of the nine manuscripts, before listing in parallel columns the texts that are parallel in two or three manuscripts. The introduction notes the first publications of the manuscripts. Does not have the fragments recently published by Elizur.

Ben-Ḥayyim, Ze'ev, ed. ספר בן סירא: *The Book of Ben Sira: Text, Concordance, and an Analysis of the Vocabulary*. Jerusalem: Academy of the Hebrew Language and Shrine of the Book, 1973 [Hebrew]. Gives the Hebrew from eight manuscripts in canonical sequence, printing each line successively where two or three manuscripts have the same verse. Lacks MS F and newly-found leaves of MSS C and D. Includes a concordance of Hebrew words, grammatically analyzed. In Hebrew except for English introduction.

Cowley, Arthur E., and Adolf Neubauer, eds. *The Original Hebrew of a Portion of Ecclesiasticus*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1897. Early edition of Sir 39:15-49:11 in MS B.

Di Lella, Alexander A. "The Newly Discovered Sixth Manuscript of Ben

Sira from the Cairo Geniza.” *Biblica* 69 (1988), pp. 226-238. Critical edition of Hebrew MS F.

Egger-Wenzel, Renate. *A Polyglot Edition of the Book of Ben Sira with a Synopsis of the Hebrew Manuscripts*. Contributions to Biblical Exegesis & Theology 101. Leuven: Peeters, 2022. Presentation in parallel columns (one colon per line) of the four major textual witnesses for Ben Sira, arranged left to right: Latin, Greek, Hebrew (where extant), and Syriac. The volume’s final pages offer a synoptic edition of the Hebrew MSS, tabulated in parallel columns (one bicolon per line). Footnotes record divergent transcriptions of individual Hebrew words proposed by scholars. An essential resource for careful study of Ben Sira.

Elizur, Shulamit. קטע חדש מהנוסח העברי של ספר בן סירא. *Tarbiz* 76 (5767 = 2006-2007), pp. 17-28. First publication of some recently identified leaves of the anthological Hebrew Ben Sira MS C (see also next entry).

Elizur, Shulamit. “Two New Leaves of the Hebrew Version of Ben Sira.” *Dead Sea Discoveries* 17 (2010), pp. 13-29. The first English-language publication of some recently identified leaves of the anthological Hebrew Ben Sira MS C (see also previous entry).

Elizur, Shulamit, and Michael Rand. “A New Fragment of the Book of Ben Sira.” *Dead Sea Discoveries* 18 (2011), pp. 200-205. The first English-language publication of a new leaf of Hebrew MS D of Ben Sira.

Sanders, James A. *The Psalms Scroll of Qumrân Cave 11 (11QPs^a)*.

Discoveries in the Judaean Desert 4. Oxford: Clarendon, 1965. This scholarly edition of the great Cave 11 Psalms Scroll includes part of

the final acrostic in Sirach 51:13-20, 30 (pp. 79-85).

Schechter, Solomon, and Charles Taylor. *The Wisdom of Ben Sira: Portions of the Book of Ecclesiasticus from Hebrew Manuscripts in the Cairo Genizah Collection Presented to the University of Cambridge by the Editors*. Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1899. Early edition of much of MSS A and B.

Smend, Rudolf. *Die Weisheit des Jesus Sirach, hebräisch und deutsch*. Berlin: Reimer, 1906. The best early edition of the medieval Hebrew Ben Sira texts found 1896-1906.

Yadin, Yigael, revised by Elisha Qimron. "The Ben Sira Scroll from Masada." In *Masada VI: The Yigael Yadin Excavations 1963-1965: Final Report*. Ed. Shemaryahu Talmon, pp. 151-231. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1999. Republication of Yadin's 1965 edition of the important 1st-century BCE Masada Ben Sira scroll, containing much of Sir 39:27-44:17. Adds a useful bibliography of works from 1965-1997, compiled by Florentino García Martínez.

Commentaries on the book:

Corley, Jeremy. *Sirach*. New Collegeville Bible Commentary, Old Testament, vol. 21. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2013. Concise commentary, based on the 2010 revised translation of the New American Bible.

Crenshaw, James L. "The Book of Sirach." In *The New Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 5, pp. 601-867. Nashville: Abingdon, 1997. Accessible and well-informed modern commentary.

Marböck, Johannes. *Jesus Sirach 1 - 23*. Herders Theologischer

- Kommentar zum Alten Testament. Freiburg i.B.: Herder, 2010. After a brief introduction, Marböck offers translation and commentary (with short bibliography) for each passage in the first half of Ben Sira's book. The textual criticism often favours the Greek text, but with many helpful references to the Hebrew and Syriac forms of the text.
- Mopsik, Charles. *La sagesse de Ben Sira*. Lagrasse: Verdier, 2005. Modern French commentary, based on the surviving Hebrew text.
- Morla Asensio, Víctor. *Eclesiástico*. El mensaje del Antiguo Testamento 20. Estella, Navarra: La Casa de la Biblia, 1992. Modern Spanish commentary.
- Morla Asensio, Víctor. *Eclesiástico. Un sabio en la trinchera*. Estella, Navarra: Editorial Verbo Divino, 2024. Longest commentary on Ben Sira ever written (1776 pages). Full of detailed text-critical information, carefully comparing the Hebrew with the ancient versions and noting parallels with earlier biblical material.
- Muraoka, Takamitsu. *Wisdom of Ben Sira*. Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 302. Leuven: Peeters, 2023. Substantial philological commentary by a veteran lexicographer and grammarian. His original translation of the Greek text is accompanied by text-critical and grammatical observations on selected points. Available as Open Access volume.
- Palmisano, Maria Carmela. *Siracide. Introduzione, traduzione e commento*. Cinisello Balsamo, Milano: Edizioni San Paolo, 2016. Gives the Greek text and Italian translation on facing pages, with brief text-critical notes and useful commentary.

- Peters, Norbert. *Das Buch Jesus Sirach oder Ecclesiasticus*. Exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament 25. Münster: Aschendorff, 1913. German commentary that considers the poetry of Ben Sira's text.
- Sauer, Georg. *Jesus Sirach: Übersetzt und erklärt*. Das Alte Testament Deutsch Apokryphen 1. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000. Modern German commentary.
- Segal, Moshe Zvi. ספר בן סירא השלם (The Complete Book of Ben Sira). 3rd ed. Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1972 [Hebrew]. This Hebrew commentary (1st ed. 1933; 2nd ed. 1958) offers a useful *vocalized* text of all Ben Sira's book. When no Hebrew text has survived, Segal creates a Hebrew reconstruction, mainly from the Greek. The commentary offers text-critical observations and references to similar vocabulary in the Hebrew Bible.
- Skehan, Patrick W., and Alexander A. Di Lella. *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*. Anchor Bible 39. New York: Doubleday, 1987. Standard scholarly English-language commentary. For each Sirach passage, there is an English translation (usually from the Hebrew), followed by text-critical notes and then commentary. The introduction considers textual problems, especially in the medieval Hebrew MSS. Includes an extensive bibliography up till 1985 (pp. 93-127).
- Smend, Rudolf. *Die Weisheit des Jesus Sirach erklärt*. Berlin: Reimer, 1906. The most detailed German commentary to come from the decade following the rediscovery of the medieval Hebrew manuscripts of Sirach. Full of acute text-critical observations.
- Wilson, Walter T. *The Wisdom of Sirach*. Eerdmans Critical Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2023. The commentary is based on the

Greek text rendered in the NRSV and notes many parallels with ancient Jewish, Greek and Egyptian literature.

Editions of the Greek text:

Hart, John H. A., *Ecclesiasticus. The Greek Text of Codex 248 edited with a Textual Commentary and Prolegomena*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909. Edition with textual commentary of an important MS for the expanded Greek text.

Rahlfs, Alfred, ed. Robert Hanhart, *Septuaginta: Id Est Vetus Testamentum Graece Iuxta LXX Interpretes*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006. Convenient hand edition of the Greek version.

Swete, H. B., *The Old Testament in Greek According to the Septuagint*, vol. 2. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1907. Pp. 781-814. Edition of the Vaticanus Greek text.

Ziegler, Joseph. *Sapientia Iesu Filii Sirach*. Septuaginta 12/2. 2nd ed. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980. Standard critical edition of the Greek text, including the later expansions in smaller print and with full critical apparatus.

Modern translations of the Greek text:

Becker, Eve-Marie, Heinz-Josef Fabry, and Michael Reitemeyer, “Sophia Sirach,” *Septuaginta Deutsch*, ed. Wolfgang Kraus and Martin Karrer. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2009. Pp. 1090-1163.

Wright, Benjamin G., “Sirach,” *A New English Translation of the Septuagint*, ed. Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright. New York: Oxford

University Press, 2007. Pp. 715-762. Available online at:
<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/nets/edition/30-sirach-nets.pdf>.

Studies of the Greek text:

Bussino, Severino, *The Greek Additions in the Book of Ben Sira*. *Analecta Biblica* 203. Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome, 2013.

Discussion of 136 cola or stichs of the expanded Greek text.

Minissale, Antonino. *La versione greca del Siracide: Confronto con il testo ebraico alla luce dell'attività midrascica e del metodo targumico*.

Analecta Biblica 133. Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1995.

Detailed comparison of the translation technique of the Greek in relation to the Hebrew. Includes textual criticism for ten Hebrew poems.

Wright, Benjamin G. *No Small Difference: Sirach's Relationship to Its Hebrew Parent Text*. SBLSCS 26. Atlanta: Scholars, 1989. Surveys the translation technique of the Greek version.

Wright, Benjamin G., *Praise Israel for Wisdom and Instruction. Essays on Ben Sira and Wisdom, the Letter of Aristeas and the Septuagint*.

JSJSup 131. Leiden: Brill, 2008. Essay collection including articles on the Greek version of Sirach.

Syriac version:

Calduch-Benages, Nuria, Joan Ferrer, and Jan Liesen, *La Sabiduría del escriba. Wisdom of the Scribe*. *Biblioteca Midrásica* 26. Estella,

Navarra: Editorial Verbo Divino, 2003. Standard edition of the

Syriac version currently. Presents the Syriac text from c. 600 C.E.

Ambrosian Codex, with translations in English and Spanish on facing pages. Includes an introduction in Spanish and English.

Nelson, Milward D. *The Syriac Version of the Wisdom of Ben Sira Compared to the Greek and Hebrew Materials*. Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 107. Atlanta: Scholars, 1988. Briefly compares the Syriac version with the Hebrew and Greek texts, and includes a parallel table of translations of textual traditions for Sir 39:27-44:17.

van Peursen, Wido T. *Language and Interpretation in the Syriac Text of Ben Sira: A Comparative Linguistic and Literary Study*. **Monographs of the Peshitta Institute 16. Leiden: Brill, 2007**. Careful research on translation tendencies in the Syriac version, followed by detailed analysis of Syriac grammatical features such as the structure of phrases and clauses.

Latin version:

Biblia sacra iuxta latinam vulgatam versionem, 12: Sapientia Salomonis, Liber Hiesu filii Sirach. Rome: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1964. Standard critical edition of the Latin text.

Biblia sacra iuxta vulgatam versionem, 12: Sapientia Salomonis, Liber Hiesu filii Sirach, ed. Robert Weber. 3rd ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1983. Hand edition of the Latin text.

Thiele, Walter, and Anthony J. Forte. *Vetus Latina: Die Reste der altlateinischen Bibel 11/2: Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) 1:1-33:26*. Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1987-2021. Detailed critical edition of the Old Latin text.

Studies of the book:

Aitken, James K., Renate Egger-Wenzel, and Stefan C. Reif, eds.

Discovering, Deciphering and Dissenting. Ben Sira Manuscripts after 120 Years. Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Yearbook, 2018. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2018. Includes important articles on the Genizah Hebrew manuscripts of Ben Sira.

Beentjes, Pancratius C., ed. *The Book of Ben Sira in Modern Research.*

Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 255. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1997. 10 papers from the 1996 Ben Sira conference held at Soesterberg in the Netherlands.

Beentjes, Pancratius C. "*Happy the One who Meditates on Wisdom*" (Sir.

14,20): *Collected Essays on the Book of Ben Sira.* Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology 43. Leuven: Peeters, 2006. Includes 25 essays in English and 3 in German.

Calduch-Benages, Nuria, and Jacques Vermeylen, ed. *Treasures of*

Wisdom: Studies in Ben Sira and the Book of Wisdom. Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologiarum Lovaniensium 143. Leuven: Peeters/Leuven University, 1999. Includes 20 essays on Ben Sira and 12 essays on the Wisdom of Solomon.

Collins, John J. *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age.* Old Testament

Library. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997. Surveys major theological themes in Ben Sira, as well as the Wisdom of Solomon, Qumran wisdom texts, and Pseudo-Phocylides.

Corley, Jeremy, and Vincent Skemp, eds. *Intertextual Studies in Ben Sira*

and Tobit. Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series 38; Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2005. 5

- essays consider Ben Sira in relation to earlier biblical texts, while 7 other articles deal with various passages or themes in the book.
- Egger-Wenzel, Renate, and Ingrid Krammer, eds. *Der Einzelne und seine Gemeinschaft bei Ben Sira*. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 270. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1998. 15 essays on Ben Sira's view of the individual and the community.
- Lee, Thomas R. *Studies in the Form of Sirach 44-50*. Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 75. Atlanta: Scholars, 1986. Observes form-critical parallels between Sirach 44-50 and Greek encomia.
- Mack, Burton L. *Wisdom and the Hebrew Epic: Ben Sira's Hymn in Praise of the Fathers*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1985. Views Sirach 44-50 as a Hebrew epic.
- Morla Asensio, Víctor. *Los manuscritos hebreos de Ben Sira: traducción y notas*. Asociación Bíblica Española 59. Estella, Navarra: Editorial Verbo Divino, 2012. Spanish translation of the Hebrew texts, except the 2010 and 2011 manuscripts published by Elizur. Includes text-critical notes.
- Passaro, Angelo, and Giuseppe Bellia, eds. *The Wisdom of Ben Sira: Studies on Tradition, Redaction, and Theology*. Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Studies 1. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008. 15 papers from the Ben Sira conference held in 2004 in Palermo.
- van Peursen, Wido T. *The Verbal System in the Hebrew Text of Ben Sira*. *Studies in Semitic Languages and Linguistics* 41. Leiden: Brill, 2004. Besides investigating Hebrew grammar, includes much insightful discussion of difficult Hebrew passages within the book.

- Reiterer, Friedrich V., ed. *Bibliographie zu Ben Sira*. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 266. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1998. The fullest bibliography on Ben Sira through 1998.
- Reymond, Eric D. *Innovations in Hebrew Poetry: Parallelism and the Poems of Sirach*. Studies in Biblical Literature 9. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004. Hebrew text, English translation, and poetic analysis of the nine reasonably well-preserved poems in the Masada manuscript (40:11-44:15).
- Reymond, Eric D. "Sirach 51:13-30 and 11Q5 (= 11Q Ps^a) 21.11-22.1." *Revue de Qumrân* 23/90 (2007), pp. 207-231. Comparison of the Qumran version of the acrostic poem with the final poem in the text traditions of Ben Sira.
- Witte, Markus. *Texte und Kontexte des Sirachbuchs: Gesammelte Studien zu Ben Sira und zur frühjüdischen Weisheit*. Forschungen zum alten Testament 98. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015. A series of studies devoted to text-critical and literary-historical aspects of the book, with special attention to the larger context of early Jewish wisdom literature.
- Xeravits, Géza G., and József Zsengellér. *Studies in the Book of Ben Sira*. Journal for the Study of Judaism Supp. 127. Leiden: Brill, 2008. Papers from the 2009 Ben Sira conference, held in Pápa, Hungary.

Ben Sira's view of women

- Balla, Ibolya. *Ben Sira on Family, Gender, and Sexuality*. Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Studies 8. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011. Studies the Ben Sira passages dealing with women

and observes how they reflect the author's cultural context.

Camp, Claudia V. *Ben Sira and the Men who Handle Books: Gender and the Rise of Canon-Consciousness*. Hebrew Bible Monographs 50.

Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2013. Analyzes the dichotomy between Ben Sira's very negative view of women and the author's appropriation of Lady Wisdom from the book of Proverbs.

Ellis, Teresa Ann. *Gender in the Book of Ben Sira: Divine Wisdom, Erotic Poetry, and the Garden of Eden*. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 453. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013.

Argues that Ben Sira is not as misogynist as earlier scholars have opined, especially within the context of his Greek cultural background.

Trenchard, Warren C. *Ben Sira's View of Women: A Literary Analysis*.

Brown Judaic Studies 38. Chico, Calif: Scholars Press, 1982. Treats the passages within Ben Sira which deal with women, with an eye towards explicating the generally negative view which emerges.

The use of Ben Sira within Jewish tradition:

Dihi, Haim. "Quotations from Ben Sira in Rabbinic Literature and Their Contribution to Ben Sira Textual Criticism." *Ancient Near Eastern Studies* 52 (2015), pp. 261-271. Analyzes talmudic and midrashic Ben Sira quotations, showing how they diverge from the Hebrew text preserved in the Cairo Genizah manuscripts.

Labendz, Jenny R. "The Book of Ben Sira in Rabbinic Literature." *AJS Review* 30 (2006), pp. 347-392. Collects and surveys all the citations of Ben Sira in rabbinic literature (Talmud Yerushalmi,

Bereshit Rabba, Vayyiqra' Rabba, Talmud Bavli).

Roth, Cecil. "Ecclesiasticus in the Synagogue Service." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 71 (1952), pp. 171-178. Discusses the use of Ben Sira, ch. 50 (the panegyric of Simon the High Priest) in later Jewish liturgical texts, especially the 'Avodah service for Yom Kippur.