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The Wisdom of Jesus Sirach in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7)

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The use of the Old Testament in the New Testament has been the subject of intensive research. Writings other than the books of the Old Testament have also received attention, such as the Wisdom of Jesus Sirach. This study focuses on several texts in the Gospel of Matthew that have been linked to Sirach in the past, studying intertextual relations between the different versions in different languages by using a comparative textual critical approach. The relevant texts from Matthew 5–7 and Sirach were listed, followed by a brief description of the textual history of Sirach in Hebrew, Greek, Latin and Syriac. The texts of Matthew in the Greek New Testament were analysed and compared with their translations in Latin and Syriac. The texts in Sirach that Matthew may have alluded to were studied, with attention to the original Hebrew and the translations of Sirach. The two translations of Matthew usually follow the Greek closely. In Matthew 6:12, the issue of forgiveness was a common one in Jewish circles. Granting forgiveness and receiving it are linked. This is also the case in Sirach 28:2. The Latin version of Sirach differs only stylistically from the Greek. The Syriac does not mention the neighbour, but has a general statement directed at a person's heart. In Matthew 6:13, the reference to temptation or trial, and to evil or the evil one, was discussed. The Syriac version of Sirach 23:1 probably followed a different Hebrew Vorlage than the Greek version. Sirach 33:1 is the only text where the Hebrew is extant. The Greek follows the Hebrew closely, as does the Syriac. The Latin differs regarding the plural of evil, and it makes the Lord the subject of deliverance. This points to a deliberate revision in the Latin to make the mention of the Lord explicit. In Matthew 6:20, the only important issue is the translation of *erugo* in Latin. It is the word for the rust on copper. The Syriac translated the word with 'worm'. The idea of treasures links Sirach 29:11 to Matthew 20. The Latin follows the Greek closely. The reference to almsgiving and love in Sirach could be the result of a different Vorlage.

Contribution: This study throws new light on the intertextual relation between Sirach and Matthew, dealing with the different old translations of the two texts.

Keywords: Matthew; Sirach; quotations; Greek New Testament; Vulgate; Peshitta; Genizah; Sermon on the Mount.

Introduction

The use of the Old Testament in the New Testament has been the subject of intensive research over the last three decades (and even longer). Many monographs and articles have been published on this and related subjects. Some studies deal with the subject as a whole, while others deal with the use of a specific Old Testament book in the New Testament as such, or with the use of the Old Testament (or a part thereof) in a specific New Testament book, or group of books. In past research, writings other than the books of the Old Testament have also received attention, such as the Wisdom of Jesus Sirach. This study focuses on several texts in the Gospel of Matthew that have been linked with Sirach in the past. The relevant texts from Matthew 5–7 and Sirach are listed, followed by a brief description of the textual history of Sirach in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and Syriac. The texts of Matthew are then analysed, with attention to the Greek New Testament and its translation into Latin and Syriac. This is followed by a discussion of the different texts in Sirach that may have been alluded to in Matthew, with attention to the original Hebrew, as well as the Greek, Latin, and Syriac translations of Sirach. The question is whether the allusions are also evident in the different translations of the passages in Matthew. The different texts will be discussed in the order they appear in Matthew.

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Allusions to Sirach in Matthew 5–7

Moyise (2002:419) says that traditionally, the distinctions, quotations, allusions, and echoes have been used in describing the use of the Old Testament in the New Testament. Quotations introduce words from a different context, with a break in the style of the author. An allusion is woven into the text, while an echo is only a faint trace. Moyise prefers to use the term *intertextuality*. In his article, he discusses five kinds of intertextuality: intertextual echo, narrative intertextuality, exegetical intertextuality, dialogical intertextuality, and postmodern intertextuality. The examples in Matthew could be regarded as intertextual echoes, although the traditional term, *allusion*, is still especially useful for the examples discussed below. Jefford (2016:12) is correct, although in stating that, identifying allusions is not always truly clear.

Jones (2009) gives a list of quotations and allusions to the Old Testament in the New Testament. This list contains 21 texts from Sirach, some of them linked to more than one text in the New Testament. Five references to Sirach are related to Matthew 5–7: Sirach 23:1 (Mt 6:13), 27:6 (Mt 7:16), 28:2 (Mt 6:12), 29:11 (Mt 6:20) and 33:1 (Mt 6:13). Pistone (2008:309) says that of 104 references to Sirach in the New Testament, 24 are found in Matthew. In some way or another, Matthew was indeed influenced by or in contact with Sirach. Pistone discusses many points of contact between Sirach and Matthew–too many to be touched upon in this article. He concludes that Matthew 'is the bearer of a heritage which guards with care the effort and the teaching of the sage [...]' (p. 350). He follows Sirach in the forms of speech as well as far as words are concerned.

Not one of the Sirach texts is quoted in Matthew. They are at most allusions to Sirach. Jefford (2016:12) says that in Matthew, the most use is made of Sirach of all the Gospels. He distinguishes between the primary and secondary uses of Sirach. Of prime importance for him are those instances where the author had a specific passage in mind. Secondary, he says, the author had a text not from Sirach in mind, but the text from Sirach can be seen as subordinate to the other text. He sees at least nine primary and at least 25 secondary usages in Matthew (p. 13). He has a list of all these instances – among them are some texts from Sirach linked to Matthew 6 and 7 (Sirach 27:6; 28:2 and 29:11 – all as primary; p. 14).

The textual history of Sirach in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and Syriac

Although each of the versions has a long and indeed complex textual history (see Skehan & Di Lella 1987:59–60), a level of consensus has developed regarding each of them.

The original book was composed in Hebrew by Jeshua ben Eleazer ben Sira, as mentioned by his grandson, who translated the original Hebrew into Greek. The author was a teacher, and the contents of the book could have been typical of the instruction given to the youth in the time before the Maccabean revolt. The book was written between 200 and 175 BCE. The author's grandson[1] translated it into Greek in the last quarter of the 2nd century BCE, in Egypt (cf. Collins 2012:68–69; Lemmelijn 2014:456; Skehan & Di Lella 1987:8–9), after 117 BCE according to Skehan and Di Lella (p. 9). The Hebrew version of Sirach has not been preserved in its entirety Except for a few rabbinic citations, nothing was known to have been preserved up to the discovery of parts of the book among the manuscripts from the Cairo Genizah. The authenticity of these medieval manuscripts has been disputed. However, the discovery of different fragments of the book among the manuscripts from Qumran and Masada has shown that the manuscripts from the Genizah preserved a text from antiquity (Skehan & Di Lella 1987:54). About two-thirds of the Hebrew Sirach has now been discovered (Coggins 1998:34–37; Collins 2012:70; Corley 2011:3; Lemmelijn 2014:453–455; Skehan & Di Lella 1987:53; Van Peursen 2007:14; Wright 2009:715). Skehan and Di Lella (1987:51–53) provide a survey of the different manuscripts, their contents, and a timeline of their discovery (see also Corley 2011:3). Corley (2011:3) indicates that five of the six Genizah manuscripts contain parts of a continuous tradition, while manuscript C only contains extracts of the book, often with a different sequence. Puech (2008:80–86) discusses all the manuscripts from Qumran and the Genizah in detail. He also discusses quotations, points of contact and allusions to Sirach in other manuscripts from Qumran (p. 87–95). The book was well-known in these circles.

Two Hebrew recensions of the text are often distinguished, usually called Hebrew I and II (Van Peursen 2007:14). The manuscripts from Masada and Qumran are close to Hebrew I, while the Genizah manuscripts contain about 90 additions when compared to Hebrew I (Van Peursen 2007:15). The second edition has additions not found in the primary Greek manuscripts (Collins 2012:70). The primary Greek manuscripts are the *codex alexandrinus*, *codex vaticanus*, *codex Ephraemi Syri rescriptus*, *codex sinaiticus*, and *codex venetus* (Ziegler 1980a:7; 1980b:7–8). The text in the edition of Sirach (Ziegler 1980a) contains Greek I and II. Greek I is regarded as a translation of Hebrew I, while Greek II contains additions to Greek I. In the edition of Ziegler (1980a), Greek I is printed in a normal size and Greek II in smaller letters. In the translation of Sirach by Wright (2009:716), the distinction of Ziegler is followed by placing Greek II in square brackets and printing it in italics. All the texts in the Greek Sirach that Matthew 5–7 may allude to are part of Greek I, with no additions or expansions. The relevant Hebrew texts of Sirach can thus also be regarded as part of Hebrew I.

1.Wright (2011) discusses the aims of the grandson for his translation of the Greek.

The notion of a Hebrew II, as a revised and expanded version of Hebrew I, is supported by the additions in the Genizah fragments, the additions in some Greek manuscripts and the Syriac translation. It is, however, possible that such a revised version did not exist, but that the additions were the result of an ongoing process of expanding the text (Skehan & Di Lella 1987:57–58; Van Peursen 2007:15). It is also possible that the Genizah manuscripts contain some retroversions from Syriac and Greek (Skehan & Di Lella 1987:58). None of these are relevant for the texts of Sirach studied here.

Greek I is the translation made by the grandson of Sirach, while at the same time, it contains about 300 additional colas as well as some minor additions (Van Peursen 2007:15). Greek II was not a new translation. The scribe of Greek II used Greek I and added from Hebrew II only what he regarded as necessary (Skehan & Di Lella 1987:55).

Gilbert (2008a) presents a survey of the research done on the book of Ben Sira, focusing on methodological and hermeneutical trends. As far as the Hebrew text is concerned, he says that the text is not totally reliable. There may have been retroversion from the Syriac in the Genizah Hebrew manuscripts. He accepts the idea of a Hebrew II (p. 3) as well as the idea of a Greek II based on an enlarged Hebrew text (p. 4–5). However, the complete Hebrew II does not exist at present. It would be better to understand the history of the book as a slow and progressive evolution (p. 11).

Gilbert (2008b:1–3) has done an extensive survey of research on the Old Latin (*Vetus Latina*) translation of Ecclesiasticus. He says that the Old Latin translation became part of the Vulgate at the end of the 5th century or the beginning of the 6th (p. 2). He discusses several texts in the Old Latin. Based on his research, he makes several important points regarding this translation. He says that the Old Latin translation was based on a Greek manuscript (p. 3). This Greek text was, however, different from the text in all extant Greek manuscripts (p. 4). The additions in the Old Latin text of Ecclesiasticus are of Jewish origin and were part of the manuscript translated for the Old Latin (p. 6). The translated Greek text belonged to Greek II and the additions were translated into Greek from Hebrew II (p. 7). His final statement is as follows:

> Therefore, the Vetus Latina of Ecclesiasticus was done based on a Greek text already enlarged. This was partially closer to the Hebrew text of Ben Sira than to the classical Greek version, and partially with early mistakes of translation. (p. 10)

The original Old Latin translation did not contain the Prologue as well as chapters 44–50. These were added later, and this translation became part of the Vulgate, as can be seen in Vulgate manuscripts from the 5th or 6th centuries (Skehan & Di Lella 1987:57). As the Sirach text of the Vulgate may contain additions or expansions, comparison with the other versions is important.

Giles (2011) also presents an extensive discussion of the history of scholarship on the variant forms of Sirach. He accepts the existence of Greek I and II (pp. 241–243). He points out that all the additions in Greek II and the Latin occur in Sirach 1–24 (p. 243). He is, however, critical of the idea of a Hebrew II underlying additions in Greek II and the Latin (pp. 244–249). It could, however, be possible to see a Hebrew II as underlying the Syriac translation (p. 250). He does not accept the theory that the additions in Sirach go back to a systematic reworking of the Hebrew text (p. 253). He does not see the Syriac translation as a witness to a Hebrew II (p. 254).

Van Peursen (2011:143–146) presents a survey of all the manuscripts of Sirach in Syriac. The number of manuscripts makes it clear that the book was quite popular in the Syriac traditions, as can be seen from the commentaries written on the book in eastern and western circles (pp. 148–152). Three of the four complete Bibles up to the 12th century also included Sirach. The Syriac translation was made from a Hebrew Vorlage which has fused the two Hebrew recensions according to Skehan and Di Lella (1987:57) and Van Peursen (2007:22–23). It is, however, exceedingly difficult to reconstruct the Hebrew underlying the Syriac version of Sirach (Van Peursen 2007:16). The Syriac also is a free translation of the original Hebrew (Van Peursen 2007:17). It is also evident that the Syriac translation often agrees with Greek II, as indicated by Van Peursen (2007:32).

Van Peursen (2007:37–40) summarises the relationship between the different versions of Sirach in an exhaustive conclusion, including a particularly good diagram (p. 38). Rizzi (2008) discusses the different theories about the background of the translation of the Syriac Sirach. He places the origin of the Syriac Sirach in a Christian background at about the beginning of the 4th century CE (p. 307). For this study, the following remarks will suffice:

The original Hebrew version of Sirach (Hebrew I) was translated into Greek by Sirach's grandson (Greek I). The Hebrew version was expanded during transmission, according to some scholars (Hebrew II). No manuscript containing the whole of the proposed Hebrew II is among the extant Hebrew sources. Greek I was also expanded (Greek II), partly due to influence from an expanded Hebrew version. The Old Latin was translated from a Greek text close to Greek II. This version was incorporated in the Vulgate, but expansions or corrections happened along the way, from the side of the Greek I and the Syriac. The Syriac was translated from a Hebrew original containing parts not in Hebrew I, with perhaps minor influence from the Greek (see also Rizzi 2008:278–279).

Matthew 6:12 is part of the Lord's prayer and is linked to Sirach 28:2. The version in the Greek New Testament, the Vulgate and the Peshitta will be discussed firstly, followed by a discussion of the relevant part of Sirach in the different versions.

The Matthew text and allusions to Sirach

Matthew 6:12

Regarding the Greek New Testament (Box 1), the aorist indicative (ἀφήκαμεν) can be noted. The NRSV translated it with a present perfect (have forgiven), and not as a simple past tense. The use of the personal pronoun before the inflected verb can also be noted.

The Vulgate (Box 1) follows the Greek closely, also regarding word order. The aorist of the Greek is translated by a *perfectum*. It also follows the Greek with the personal pronoun before the inflected verb. The Peshitta (Box 1) also follows the Greek in the same way as the Latin. The nouns for debt and debtors, from the root *ḥyb*, reflect the possible Aramaic root behind the Greek of Matthew.

The prayer of verse 12 must be read together with verses 14 and 15. Those two verses state the principle behind the prayer positively and negatively: If you forgive others, you will be forgiven. However, if you do not forgive others, you will not be forgiven. France (2007:250) notes that the prayer for forgiveness is the only one commented on later in verses 14 and 15. Forgiveness is a reciprocal principle. It is hypocritical to ask for forgiveness while not willing to grant it.

Strack and Billerbeck (2002:470) say that a prayer for forgiveness of sins appears often in Jewish prayer, such as the Prayer of Eighteen Benedictions. They link the second part of the prayer in Matthew 6:12 to Sirach 28:2 (p. 471). They also link the prayer in Matthew 6:12 to Matthew 6:14, saying that the link to Sirach is even more evident in that verse. Luz (2007:322) says that there is no other passage where human actions are as central in a prayer in the New Testament. When one prays the Lord's prayer, one must remember that Christians still sin and therefore need forgiveness. Hagner (1993:150) says that the idea of sin as guilt had an Aramaic background. The Aramaic word, *ḥwb'*, points to the idea of sin as guilt (see Nolland 2005:290; also footnote 331). Judaism saw forgiveness by God as a basic human need (p. 290).

Davies and Allison (2004:609) say that the Eighteen Benedictions had a prayer for forgiveness, but without a condition attached. God's forgiveness must be earned, but this cannot happen if one is not willing to forgive others. Morris (1992:147) says that the second part of the prayer should be seen as an aspiration rather than as a limitation.

In Matthew 6:12, the Vulgate and Syriac follow the Greek closely, with no (important) deviation.

BOX 1: Comparison of Matthew 6:12 in Greek New Testament, Vulgate, and Peshitta New Testament.

Greek NT[2]	καὶ ἄφες ἡμῖν τὰ ὀφειλήματα ἡμῶν, ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀφήκαμεν τοῖς ὀφειλέταις ἡμῶν·	And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors (NRSV).
Vulgate[3]	*et dimitte nobis debita nostra sicut et nos dimisimus debitoribus nostris*	And forgive us our debts, as we also forgave our debtors.
Peshitta NT[4]	ܘܫܒܘܩ ܠܢ ܠܚܘܒܝܢ ܕܝܠܢ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܦ ܚܢܢ ܫܒܩܢ ܠܚܝܒܝܢ ܕܝܠܢ wšbwq ln ḥwbÿn ‘ykn’ d’p ḥnn šbqn lḥÿbyn	And forgive us our debts as we also forgave our debtors.

2.For the Greek New Testament, the text of Aland et al. (2000) is used.

3.For the Vulgate, the text of Weber and Gryson (1969) is used.

4.For the Peshitta New Testament, the text of Pusey and William (1901) is used. This text was compared with the two versions of the Syriac New Testament in Logos (*Leiden Peshitta* 2008; Peshitta Institute Leiden; Kiraz 2002). In all instances, the three texts agree, apart from the placement of vowels and punctuation. For the readers who do not know the Syriac alphabet, the text is transcribed, without vowels and punctation, except for a *seyame* indicating a plural form (above the relevant consonant in the transcription). The transcription follows the order of the Syriac (and Hebrew) consonants: ‘b g d h w z ḥ ṭ y k l s ᶜ p ṣ q r š t’. The Syriac does not have a *sin*.

Sirach 28:2

We often see Sirach 28:2 cited in relation to Matthew 6:12 (Box 2).

Skehan and Di Lella (1987:363) say that the poem of 28:2–7 deals with the duty to forgive others and not to hold on to grudges. In verse 2, Sirach links the duty to forgive others to the Lord's forgiveness. This idea also appears in other Jewish writings, as indicated above. If you keep a grudge, you cannot expect forgiveness (p. 364). The verb used at the beginning of the verse in Sirach is the same one as in Matthew 6:12. In the Greek, when you pray for forgiveness, it is a condition that you must forgive others. The principle is the same as in Matthew (see Lemmelijn 2014:461).

The Vulgate has the Old Latin version, as discussed above. It was translated from the Greek, a Greek text close to Greek II. However, Sirach 28:1 was part of Greek I, so that the texts should be close to one another. The Greek uses a noun (wrong), but the Latin uses a participle (your neighbour who has harmed you). The *you* as object, is not in the Greek, but the addition makes good sense following on the participle. The Vulgate uses an ablative absolute for the Greek genitive absolute. For the command to forgive, the Latin uses *relinque*, and not *dimitte* as in Matthew. The Latin uses *sins*, and not *your sins*. This is on account of the *you* that is already there as the object of the participle.

The Peshitta was translated from a Hebrew text that has not survived. Verses 1 and 3 are close to the Greek. One must

BOX 2: Sirach 28:2 cited in relation to Matthew 6:12.

Greek[5]	ἄφες ἀδίκημα τῷ πλησίον σου, καὶ τότε δεηθέντος σου αἱ ἁμαρτίαι σου λυθήσονται.	Forgive your neighbour a wrong, and then, when you petition, your sins will be pardoned. (NETS)[6]
Vulgate	*relinque proximo tuo nocenti te et tunc deprecanti tibi peccata solventur*	Forgive your neighbour who has harmed you, and then, when you pray, the sins will be forgiven.
Peshitta[7]	ܫܒܘܩ ܒܥܝܢ ܕܒܠܒܟ ܘܒܬܪܟܢ ܨܠܘ ܘܟܠ ܚܛܗܝܟ ܢܫܬܒܩܘܢ ܠܟ *šbwq m’ dblbk wbtrkn ṣl’ wkl ḥṭhÿk nštbqwn lk*	Forgive what is in your heart, pray thereafter, and your sins will be forgiven for you.

5.Ziegler (1980a).

6.NETS is the abbreviation used for the translation of Wright 2009.

7.Peshitta Institute (2008).

expect that verse 2 is also close to the original it was translated from. The Syriac begins with the command to forgive and ends with the forgiveness of the sins of the one praying. The rest differs from the Greek and Latin. It does not address the neighbour's actions but has a general statement about forgiveness directed at the person's heart. This is followed by the command to pray. Prayer will result in forgiveness. The same word is used for *to forgive* in Matthew and Sirach, but the noun for *sins* is a general one, and not the one with the connotation of guilt, as in Matthew.

Sirach 28:3–4 continues the thought of verse 2. Verse 3 asks how you, as a person, can petition when you bear a grudge against somebody else. Verse 4 asks how you, when you do not show mercy to a person, can petition about your sins. The parallel between Sirach and the prayer is especially related to the verb to forgive (ἄφες) in Sirach and the prayer. For the rest, the similarity is not related to the words, but rather to the principle.

Collins (2012:94) refers to the section 27:30–28:11 in the Greek Sirach. He says that Sirach is close to the spirit of the Gospels by linking forgiveness to prayer. Nolland (2005:290) thinks that the link between human and divine forgiveness is even closer in Sirach than in Matthew. The Peshitta is different from the Greek and Latin versions, due to a different Hebrew Vorlage. It stresses the attitude of the one praying and does not mention the one to be forgiven. Tabb (2023:37) thinks that the parallel between Sirach 28:2–4 and Matthew 6:14–15 is the most plausible example of the influence of Sirach on Matthew. He thinks that the text of Sirach was available to Jesus and Matthew. The parallel regarding extending forgiveness and receiving forgiveness from God is quite striking (Tabb 2023:37). However, the same principle appears in other Jewish sources. It is very clear in Sirach and in Matthew, underscoring Tabb's idea.

Matthew 6:13

Matthew 6:13 is linked to Sirach 23:1 and 33:1 (Table 1). The parallel deals especially with the first part of the verse (NRSV: 'And do not bring us to the time of trial'). Firstly, the Greek and the two translations of Matthew 6:13.

TABLE 1: Matthew 6:13 linked to Sirach 23:1 and 33:1.

Language	Original text	English translation
Greek	καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν, ἀλλὰ ῥῦσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ	And do not bring us to the time of trial but rescue us from the evil one. (NRSV) And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one. (NIV)
Latin	*et ne inducas nos in temptationem sed libera nos a malo*	And do not lead us into temptation but deliver us from evil/from the evil one.
Syriac	ܘܠܐ ܬܥܠ ܠܢ ܠܢܣܝܘܢ ܐܠܐ ܦܨܢ ܡܢ ܒܝܫ *wl' t'ln lnsywn' 'l' pṣn mn byš*[7]	And bring us not into temptation (a trial) but deliver us from evil.

8.This is followed by the doxology that became part of the Lord's prayer.

In Matthew, the Greek and Latin use a subjunctive for the negative command, while the Syriac uses an imperfect.

One of the prominent issues regarding this prayer is the meaning of the noun πειρασμός. The NRSV translated it 'the time of trial', while the NIV has the more traditional 'temptation'. Luz (2007:322) thinks that the word points to temptation in everyday life, while Hagner (1993:151) thinks that it points to severe testing that could even lead to apostasy. Davies and Allison (2004:613–614) mention the view that the Greek word points to eschatological affliction. They prefer a general application to all afflictions, which would indeed include the final affliction. Morris (1992:148) says that the basic meaning of the noun is *test* but thinks that in this context, *temptation* would fit better. France (2007:251–252) prefers relating the word to the tribulations believers experience every day (see also Nolland 2005:291–293).

Seesemann (1964) discusses the use of the word in secular Greek, the Old and New Testament. He does not want to subscribe to the idea of a test, but rather a plea to God to protect them against temptation by ungodly powers. He is in favour of the idea of general affliction, not affliction at the end of time (p. 31).

The Latin has translated the noun as *temptation*. The Syriac uses *nsywn'*. It could indicate temptation and trial. Sokoloff (2009:925) gives the lemmas *temptation* and *sickness*, while Payne Smith (1999b:2390, 2392) uses trial (*tentatio*) and test (probation), with reference to Matthew 6:13.

The word πειρασμός is also used in Sirach 33:1. According to Lust, Eynikel and Hauspie (2003), the word can mean *test*, *trial* or *temptation* in the LXX. Muraoka (2009:543) describes it as follows: 'putting of a character to a test'. Seesemann (1964:26) thinks that the word in Sirach refers to *testing*. It is, however, related to the Greek idea of *education*. The life of the righteous remains a *test*, while God *educates* his children.

Davies and Allison (2004:614) discuss the issue of whether the prayer is intended to deliver one from evil or from the evil one. They say in the West that the usual translation is *evil*, but they prefer the Eastern view of *the evil one*. They refer to Matthew 13:19 and 38 (see also France 2007:230, note 14). Luz (2007:323) prefers the more general *evil* (see also Morris 1992:148). Strack and Billerbeck (2002:471–472) discuss the problem in detail. They think it is difficult to decide between the two options, referring to Rabbinical sources that would support both options. The Latin form could also be masculine or neuter. For the Syriac word, Sokoloff (2009:143–114) also mentions *the Evil One* as a reference to the devil, with the word then being a masculine noun. Payne Smith (1999a:440) says that the word refers to the devil in Matthew 6:13.

Sirach 23:1 and 33:1[9]

These two verses are both linked to Matthew 6:13 (see Tables 2 and 3).

Sirach 33:1 is the only one of the texts discussed in this article where the Hebrew still exists. In Table 3 the reading is from manuscript F of the Cairo Genizah, with the abbreviation for the tetragrammaton the same as that from manuscript B. In manuscript F, the abbreviation has a *jod supralinear*, and it has a *qamets* underneath the abbreviation. The first edition of manuscript B was published in 1904 by Lévi, with his reconstruction of this verse (Lévi 1904:35):

ירא ייי לא יפגע רע כי אם בניסוי ש[ב ומ]ל[ט].

In the synopsis of the different manuscripts, Beentjes (1997:151) gives the reading of manuscript B without a reconstruction. Of the last two words, he has only the *lamed*, leaving the rest open. Manuscript E does not have the first three words of the verse, as well as the yod of יפגע. The rest of the verse is as follows:

פגע רע כי אם בניסוי ישוב ונמלט.

Regarding Sirach 22:27–23:27, Collins (2012:88) says that a prayer of petition does not occur often in this book. For him, the most important part of this section is that God is addressed as Father. The Lord is never addressed in this way by an individual in the Old Testament. Skehan and Di Lella (1987:322) say that addressing God as Father speaks of the confidence of the faithful in praying and the willingness to obey the Lord's instructions.

TABLE 2: Comparison of Sirach 23:1 in Greek, Latin, and Syriac.

Language	Original text	English translation
Greek	κύριε πάτερ καὶ δέσποτα ζωῆς μου, μὴ ἐγκαταλίπῃς με ἐν βουλῇ αὐτῶν, καὶ μὴ ἀφῇς με πεσεῖν ἐν αὐτοῖς.	O Lord, Father and Master of my life, do not abandon me to their design, and do not let me fall among them. (NETS)
Latin	*domine pater et dominator vitae meae non relinquas me ne sinas me cadere in illis*	O Lord, Father and master of my life, do not abandon me,[8] do not let me fall between those people.
Syriac	ܡܪܝ ܐܒܐ ܘܡܪܐ ܕܚܝܝ ܠܐ ܬܫܒܩ ܠܝ ܠܡܚܫܒ ܒܗܘܢ ܠܐ ܬܗܒ ܠܝ ܠܡܦܠ ܒܗܘܢ *'lh' 'by wmrhwn dḥyy l' ttqlny mṭlthwn*	O Lord, my Father and Lord of my life. Do not make me fall because of them.

TABLE 3: Comparison of Sirach 33:1 in Greek, Latin, and Syriac.

Language	Original text	English translation
Hebrew	ירא ייי לא יפגע רע כי אם בניסיון ישוב ונמלט	The one who fears the Lord – no evil will fall [*upon him*], but in a test he will escape again.
Greek	Τῷ φοβουμένῳ κύριον οὐκ ἀπαντήσει κακόν, ἀλλ' ἐν πειρασμῷ καὶ πάλιν ἐξελεῖται.	NETS: No evil will befall him who fears the Lord, but in a test, he will also be delivered in turn.
Latin	*timenti Dominum non occurrent mala sed in temptatione Deus illum conservat et liberabit a malis*	No evil [*plural*] will happen to him who fears the Lord, but in temptation God will keep him and will deliver him from evil [*plural*].
Syriac	ܡܢ ܕܕܚܠ ܡܢ ܕܡܠܟ ܠ ܢܓܥ ܒܗ ܒܝܫܬܐ ܐܠܐ ܒܢܣܝܘܢ ܗܘ ܢܫܬܙܒ ܘܢܦܠܛ ܠܗ ܕܡܢ ܕܕܚܠ ܡܢ ܕܡܠܟ *ddḥl l'lh' l' npgʿ bh byš' 'l' 'n bnsywn' wnhpwk wntplṭ*	He who fears the Lord, evil will not befall him, but in temptation/a trial, he will again be delivered.

9.Some late manuscripts and the Clementine edition add 'in their council'.

Wright (2008:171) says, regarding Sirach 23:1, that first-person speech is rare in Sirach. The first-person speech in Sirach 22:25–26 forms a bridge between the preceding poem on friendship to the prayer of petition in 22:27–23:6. Some issues are important in this prayer. It deals with speech, which is important in the book. It addresses God twice as *Father*. In 23:1 he asks the Lord to protect him from sins in word and thought, lest he increases his faults and fall before his enemies on account of this. First-person prayer occurs only here and in 51:1–12.

The link between Sirach 23:1 and Matthew is rather tenuous. The idea of falling among the wrong people can be linked to the request in Matthew to not lead them into temptation or a trial. The link with Sirach 33:1 is more evident, especially regarding the word πειρασμός.

Collins (2012:99) says that Sirach 32:14–33:6 is a poem emphasising observance of the Torah, linked to the fear of the Lord. Skehan and Di Lella (1987:398) say that the expression 'the one who fears the Lord' in 33:1, stands in synonymous parallelism to the reference in 32:24a (the last verse of the previous chapter): the one who has faith in the Lord and to the one who trusts the Lord (32:24b). Those who trust the Lord will not be harmed by evil. They will remain safe through repeated trials (p. 399; see also Gregory 2010:77).

The idea of temptation or a trial links Sirach 33:1 to the prayer in Matthew 6:13. The Latin and Syriac translations can also indicate either a trial or a temptation.

The Greek is a good translation of the Hebrew. It uses an adverb (*again*) for the Hebrew expression with the verbs (literally: He will return and will escape + he will escape again). The Syriac uses the same kind of expression as the Hebrew (he will turn and be delivered). The use of this expression makes it quite clear that the Syriac was translated from a Hebrew Vorlage, and not from the Greek.

The addition in Latin is interesting. While the Greek and the Syriac use passive constructions for the delivery of the one who fears the Lord, the Latin makes the Lord the subject of the action. The addition also says that he will be delivered from evil, agreeing with what Matthew 6:13 states. Le Grand (2011:221) says that 33:1b is one of the more instances where the presence of intervention of the Lord is introduced explicitly in verses that evoke classical themes of wisdom literature. He also points to the Latin in 33:1c, making an expression clearer or more complete (pp. 222–223, also note 45 on p. 223). The explicit mention of the Lord delivering the supplicant may be an influence from the side of the Latin version of Matthew.

Matthew 6:20

Matthew 6:20 is linked to Sirach 29:11 (Table 4)

Matthew 6:19 and 20 belong together, as the two sides of the same coin. Verse 19 deals with literal treasures on earth, while verse 20 deals figuratively with treasures in heaven.

TABLE 4: Comparison of Matthew 6:20 in Greek New Testament, Latin, and Syriac.

Language	Original text	English translation
Greek	θησαυρίζετε δὲ ὑμῖν θησαυροὺς ἐν οὐρανῷ, ὅπου οὔτε σὴς οὔτε βρῶσις ἀ φανίζει καὶ ὅπου κλέπται οὐ διορύσσουσιν οὐδὲ κλέπτουσιν	But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. (NRSV)
Latin	*thesaurizate autem vobis thesauros in caelo ubi neque erugo neque tinea demolitur et ubi fures non effodiunt nec furantur*	But store up for you treasures in heaven, where neither rust nor moth destroys and where thieves do not break through nor steal.
Syriac	ܐܠܐ ܙܕܘ ܠܟܘܢ ܐܘܨܪܐ ܒܫܡܝܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܬܟܠ ܘܠܐ ܣܪܤܝܐ ܡܚܒܠ ܘܠܐ ܓܢܒܐ ܡܦܠܚ ܘܓܢܒ ܠܐ *'l' symw lkwn sȳmt' bšmy' 'yk' dl' ss' wl' 'kl' mḥblyn w'yk' dgnb' (plural) l' plšyn wl' gnbyn*	But place for your treasures in heaven where neither moth nor worm destroy and where thieves do not break through and steal.

The NRSV translates the Greek words σὴς and βρῶσις with *moth and rust*. The Vulgate has *rust and moth*, while the Syriac has *moth and worm*. The word translated as *moth* is unproblematic in the three versions, but the word translated as *rust* in the Greek and Latin is problematic. The Syriac has a word generally translated as *worm* (Sokoloff 2009:42) or *weevil* (Payne Smith 1999a:180, *tinea*, *curculio*). The noun in the Syriac comes from the root *'kl* (to eat). The NRSV and many other modern translations follow the Latin with the translation 'rust' (*erugo* in the text above, usually *aerugo*, the rust of copper). Arndt et al. (2000:184) say that the Greek word refers to *eating* or *consuming*, and that it cannot be seen as *rust*. Hagner (1993:157) prefers *rot* or *decay*. Luz (2007:332) thinks of a *wood beetle*, pointing to the destruction of wooden chests. France (2007:256, note 19) renders it with *vermin*, pointing out that the basic meaning of the root is *eating*.

The word for treasures [θησαυρός] in the New Testament usually occurs in contexts where there is a contrast between earthly and heavenly treasures (Hauck 1964:137). Treasures in this world could be goods or money kept at home or in a safe place. These goods could decay or be stolen. They could be stockpiled for later use (Nolland 2005:298). As far as the heavenly treasures are concerned, France (2007:258) says that their exact nature is not spelt out, but it could be eternal life or some provision for the future with a focus not on this world. The heavenly treasures could also be assembled by good actions in this world (Hauck 1964:137). For the remainder of the verse, the Greek, Latin, and Syriac are not problematic.

Sirach 29:11 (Table 5)

Owens (1989:52–53, also note 28) wants to understand *zdyqwt'* as *almsgiving*. This is a possibility mentioned by Payne Smith (1989b:1085). Sokoloff (2009) translates *zdqt'* with *charity* or *alms* and *zdyqwt'* with 'justice, honesty, benefit or kindness'. In the light of the whole of Sirach 29:1–20, almsgiving is the best possibility.

The Vulgate differs from the LXX in this chapter regarding the sequence of verses, with verse 14 corresponding to verse 11 in the Greek.

In the Greek and Latin Sirach 29:11, the same nouns are used as in Matthew for the treasures, but not the same verbs. The Greek Sirach has the plural of the noun. The Syriac Sirach uses the same noun as in Matthew. Matthew has the plural, and the Syriac can be singular or plural – the singular, to agree with the singular of the Greek and Latin Sirach.

TABLE 5: Comparison of Sirach 29:11 in Greek, Latin, and Syriac.

Language	Original text	English translation
Greek	θὲς τὸν θησαυρόν σου κατ' ἐντολὰς ὑψίστου, καὶ λυσιτελήσει σοι μᾶλλον ἢ τὸ χρυσίον.	Dispose of your treasure according to the commandments of the Most High, and it will profit you more than gold. (NETS)
Latin verse 14	*pone thesaurum tuum in praeceptis Altissimi et proderit tibi magis quam aurum*	Put your treasure in the precepts of the Most High, and it will benefit you more than gold.
Syriac	ܣܡ ܠܟ ܓܙܐ ܒܦܘܩܕܢܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ ܘܢܫܪܐ ܠܟ ܒܗ ܘܝܩܪ ܠܟ ܡܢ ܟܠ ܡܕܡ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܟ *sym lk' symt' bzdyqwt' wbḥwb' why ṭb' lk mn kl m' d'yt lk*	Put for you a treasure/treasures in almsgiving and in love, and it will be for you better than anything that you have.

The *Most High* in the Greek and Latin refers to God in comparison to the idols. Gregory thinks that the *Most High* can be linked to the Hebrew וּוֹלֵעָ. The use of this term is linked to God's providential care elsewhere in Sirach (Gregory 2010:190). The treasure must be used wisely and piously. The treasure is also earthly, as in Matthew 6:19.

Verse 12 in the LXX deals with treasuries – the place where the treasure is stored: NETS Store up charity in your treasuries, and it will deliver you from every affliction. Charity is equal to the treasure of the previous verse. The Syriac verse 12 is close to this: Lay out charity and put it in your treasury, and it will deliver you from all that is bad. Verse 15 is also close in the Latin: Shut up alms in the heart of the poor, and that will protect you against all evil.

Verse 11 in the Syriac Sirach also refers to treasure(s) but then states that it must be put in almsgiving and love. This will then be the best possession one can own. Gregory (2010:183) thinks that the Greek is better than the Syriac in verse 11b. Van Peursen (2007:85) says that there is a pattern in the Syriac to suppress references to the law (see also Gregory 2010:183).

Owens (1989) discusses the use of Sirach by Aphrahat. One of the examples he discusses is a passage in the Demonstrations that uses Sirach 29:11 and 12. In his quotation, Aphrahat combines the two verses, using the first part of verse 12 and the second part of verse 11. Owens (1989:52) translates the quotation as follows: 'And again it says: Store up almsgiving and [*thus*] make a treasury and it will be better for you than all treasures', He discusses this quotation also with reference to Sirach 1:20. This passage in the Demonstrations can be dated to 344 (p. 48), thus two centuries before the oldest complete manuscript containing the Syriac Sirach. The version of 29:11 and 12 in the Peshitta, differing from the Greek and Latin, can thus not be regarded as a late revision in the Peshitta on account of the use in Aphrahat. The Syrian Sirach ends verse 11 with 'than all that you have', while Aphrahat has 'than all your

treasures'. Owens thinks, however, that this could have been caused by Aphrahat quoting from memory, as 'than all your treasures' occurs in Sirach 1:20. Still, the quotation shows the authenticity of the Syriac Sirach 29:11 and 12.

Sirach 29:1–20 is discussed in detail by Gregory (2020:171:221) and by Lemmelijn (2014:461). Collins (2012:95) says the Greek Sirach 29:1–20 deals with loans, alms, and surety. Verses 8–11 deal with alms. With reference to Matthew 6:10, he states that good deeds earn credit with the Lord. The case of the poor is different from that of the unprincipled borrower (Skehan & Di Lella 1987:370). Sirach 29:10b says that it must be left under a stone, following up on the reference to silver at the beginning of the verse. It is related to the corrosion of copper (p. 369). They refer to verse 9a regarding the disposal according to the commandments, which states that one must help the poor on account of the commandment. This is linked to Deuteronomy 15:7–11 (p. 370). Such generosity is more profitable than gold. A contrast is drawn here between silver that perishes, and money invested wisely with an eye to the heavenly account (Gregory 2010:209). The idea of almsgiving, as in the Syriac, fits well in this context.

Wright (2008:77) says that 29:8–13 deals with the correct use of one's property. One must help the poor for the sake of the commandment (verse 9). The background for this poem is Deuteronomy 15:7–11.

Deuteronomy 15:10 says that if one gives freely and ungrudgingly, then the Lord will bless you in all that you do. The notion that hoarded wealth rusts (Sirach 29:10) parallels the thought of Matthew 6:20 on the perishability of wealth. Although there is thematic similarity between Matthew and Sirach regarding the treasures, the only verbal parallel is the word for *treasures*. It is not sufficient to state that Sirach influenced Jesus or Matthew (Tabb 2023:36).

Matthew 7:16 (Table 7)

Matthew 7:16 is linked to Sirach 27:6

The Vulgate and the Peshitta follow the Greek closely, also regarding the word order. In all three versions, the fruit is mentioned first.

Matthew 7:16 is part of a section dealing with false prophets (7:15–23). Luz (2007:376–-377) has an excursus about false prophets in the time of the New Testament. As he points out, the ambiguity of prophecy was a big problem. He does not think that the false prophets mentioned here were charged with propagating a false teaching, but that the problem was bad fruit, perhaps an indication of lawlessness.

TABLE 6: Comparison of Sirach 27:6 in Greek, Latin and Syriac.

Language	Original text	English translation
Greek	ἀπὸ τῶν καρπῶν αὐτῶν ἐπιγνώσεσθε αὐτούς	NRSV: You will know them by their fruits
Latin	a fructibus eorum cognoscetis eos	From their fruit you will know them
Syriac	ܡܢ ܦܪܝܗܘܢ ܕܝܢ ܬܕܥ̈ܘܢ ܗܘ̈ܢ mn p'rÿhwn dyn tdʿwn 'nwn	From their fruit then you will know them

Hagner (1993:182) says that most scholars regard them as Hellenistic libertines. They can be recognised by their bad fruit, their conduct. The saying may have been more general in nature, but it is here applied specifically to false prophets (p. 183).

Davies and Allison (2004:706) refer to Sirach 27:6, where the fruit is words. Here in Matthew, it is more likely deeds in general. This could explain the use of the plural. France (2007:291) says that the lives of the true prophets reveal the righteousness of the kingdom of God. Bad teaching is reflected in bad living.

Sirach 27:6 (Table 6)

Sirach 27:6 also compares man's actions to the fruit of a tree.

Collins (2012:94) says Sirach 27:4–7 emphasises the importance of speech to indicate a person's character. He refers in this regard to Matthew 7:16–19 and 12:33. Sirach illustrates this theme in verses 11–15.

The Greek Sirach has an unusual word order. It starts with the cultivation of the tree in the accusative as the object of the verb. The tree is the subject of the verb. The translation of NETS is in order but does not follow the word order of the Greek. The second half of the verse implies the same verb as the first half. Reasoning is parallel to the tree of the first half, with the notions of a person's heart, the object.

The New Testament in all three versions formulates it differently. The addressees are the subject. They know the false prophets through their fruit. Still, the issues become clearer by way of the fruit. Sirach states a general principle, applied to a specific case in the New Testament. The Latin makes the comparison more evident by placing *sicut* at the beginning. However, the fronted object of the Greek becomes the subject of the verb. The object is plural in the Greek (notions) and singular in the Latin (contrivance). The Syriac Sirach also has the cultivation of the tree as the object, like the Latin. In addition, the Syriac has a comparative particle at the beginning of the verse.

Skehan and Di Lella (1987:356) say that the word λογισμὸς in Sirach 27:4b, 6b and 7a can mean reckoning, computation,

TABLE 7: Comparison of Matthew 7:16 in Greek New Testament, Latin, and Syriac.

Language	Original text	English translation
Greek	γεώργιον ξύλου ἐκφαίνει ὁ καρπὸς αὐτοῦ, οὕτως λογισμὸς ἐνθυμήματα καρδίας ἀνθρώπου.	NETS: Its fruit brings to light a tree's cultivation, so reasoning notions of a person's heart.
Latin (verse 7)	*sicut rusticatio de ligno ostendit fructum illius sic verbum excogitatum hominis cordis*	Like the cultivation of a tree displays its fruit, so a word is the contrivance of the human heart.
Sirach	ܟܕ ܦܘܠܚܢ ܕܐܢܫܐ ܒܡܠܠܗ ܗܟܢ ܡܚܫܒܬ ܐܢܫ ܠܡ ܕܒܪ ܐܢܫ ܒܡܚܫܒܬܗ *'yk dpwlḥn' d'yln' ʿbd p'r' (plural) hkn' ḥwšbnÿhwn ʿl trʿÿthwn dbnÿ 'nš'*	Like the cultivation of a tree makes fruit, so their reckonings are the thoughts of men.

reasoning, and reflection. Verse 6 uses an agricultural metaphor that would have been easily understood by the people of that time. The fruit demonstrates the effective cultivation of a tree. Similarly, speech shows the sentiment of a person's mind, whether he has a disciplined, trusted, and upright mind.

Conclusions

As far as the texts in Matthew are concerned, the two versions usually follow the Greek closely, even regarding word order.

The issues dealt with in the Matthew text, as the issue of forgiveness (6:12) were a common one in Jewish circles. Giving forgiveness and receiving it are linked. This is also the case in Sirach 28:2. The Latin version of Sirach differs only stylistically from the Greek. The Syriac does not mention the neighbour, but has a general statement directed at the person's heart.

Regarding Matthew 6:13, two issues are important. Does it refer to temptation or a trial? The Greek can be interpreted in both ways; the Latin has *temptation* and the Syriac *a trial*. A trial seems preferable for the Greek and Syriac. The second is whether the reference is to evil or an evil one. The three texts can be interpreted in both ways, but *the evil one* is possibly the better choice.

The link between Sirach 23:1 and Matthew 6:13 is tenuous, with only the use of Father and the idea of abandonment relevant. The Latin is close to the Greek. The Syriac is shorter and asks that the Lord should not let the supplicant fall because of the other people. This difference can be related to a different Hebrew Vorlage for the Syriac.

Sirach 33:1 is the only text where the Hebrew is extant. The Greek follows the Hebrew closely, as does the Syriac. The Latin differs regarding the plural of evil, and it makes the Lord the subject of the deliverance. This probably points to a deliberate revision by the Latin to make the mention of the Lord explicit. This verse is more closely linked to Matthew, especially regarding temptation or a trial.

In Matthew 6:20, the only important issue is the translation of *erugo* in the Latin. It is the word for the *rust of copper*. Because the meaning of the Greek was uncertain, this translation was also accepted for the Greek. As indicated above, it is better to follow the Syriac with a translation of 'moth and worm'.

The idea of treasures links Sirach 29:11 to Matthew 20. The Latin follows the Greek closely. The reference to almsgiving and love in the Sirach could be the result of a different Vorlage, perhaps linked to a presumed Hebrew II.

As for the intertextual relationship between the different texts, the Syriac and Latin translations of Matthew follow the Greek closely. The texts discussed in Enoch may have influenced the texts in Matthew, but not in direct dependence, but rather through allusion. The translations of Enoch into Latin and Syriac are related to the complex tradition history of Enoch. The Latin follows the Greek Enoch closely, especially Greek I. The Syriac deviates from the Greek (and Latin) in some instances. This may be related to a different *Vorlage* of the Hebrew influencing the Syriac translation. However, one must be careful not to make the trend(s) in these texts applicable to the whole of Matthew, as Enoch is often alluded to in the remainder of the book. All these allusions could be the subject of further research.

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