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The Wisdom Encomium and Its Persuasive Function in the Book of Wisdom¹

Abstract: The Book of Wisdom is considered a coherent text characterised by genre syncretism. This article aims to examine the praise of wisdom in the Book of Wisdom for its persuasive functions. The encomium was used in the analysis as a typical genre of epideictic rhetoric. The text of the praise was analysed from the perspective of the features distinguishing this genre and determining its underlying structure. The analysis led to the conclusion that the author used the possibilities of the genre to teach the recipients what wisdom they should seek and to encourage them to take actions to achieve it. The encomium in the Book of Wisdom was subordinated to advisory rhetoric and is an essential element in the work's structure.

Keywords: Wisdom of Solomon, encomium, praise of wisdom, epideictic rhetoric, deliberative rhetoric

One of the important passages in the Book of Wisdom is the praise contained in its central part, which brings out the beauty and value of wisdom. The author's ambition is not only to define what he understands by wisdom, but also repeatedly uses exhortations to the audience to encourage them to consider this wisdom as the key value that will govern their decisions and choices.

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The work demonstrates the author's literary and rhetorical mastery. He used a number of modes of expression familiar and readable to his contemporary audience – one of which is the encomium. Although it is a typically epideictic genre, in the tradition of Greek literature and rhetoric it was also frequently used in the other two types of persuasion, advisory and judgmental. The purpose of this article is to show how the author used this form to achieve his goals: to persuade his audience to choose an attitude of continually seeking God's Wisdom and to make it the point of reference for their decisions and conduct in life.

1. The problem of the rhetorical genre of the Book of Wisdom

The dominant of the rhetoric employed in the Book of Wisdom is a topic to which scholars who examined the book have paid little attention. There is still a lack of in-depth studies examining and describing in detail the persuasive sphere of the work as a whole, both in terms of its argumentative layer and the elocution used to construct the argument. Noticing the persuasive qualities of the Book of Wisdom usually takes place on the margins of research into the structure of the work and the literary genres or style of the author.² Research into the genology of the Book of Wisdom has also yielded interesting insights into its rhetorical content. First, in assessing the genre of the work as a whole, most scholars consider it to be a protreptic.³ This is a type of exhortatory literature, growing

² Important works in this area are: J.M. Reese, "A Semeiotic Critique," 229–242; L.G. Perdue, "Rhetoric and the Art of Persuasion," 341–371. Perdue outlines the problem in a broader perspective – the functioning of rhetoric in Hellenistic society, its influence on literature and the manner of discourse, and therefore also the possibility of reception and interpretation of this work mainly among Hellenized Jews. The monograph by J.R. Dodson, which deals with the rhetoric of the Book of Wisdom from a narrower perspective, providing arguments in favor of the deliberative rhetoric of the Book of Wisdom and describing the ways in which it is used in the work, is also important – *The 'Powers' of Personification*.

³ The most important work addressing the problem of the literary genre and type of the Book of Wisdom as a coherent unified work is J.M. Reese's monograph,

out of philosophy and rhetoric. *Protreptikos logos* was used in equal measure by philosophers and orators. It is characterised by a combination of symbuleutic (deliberative) and epideictic rhetorical types, with epideictic features subordinated to advisory purposes.⁴ Secondly, this research has drawn attention to the more complex, syncretic nature of the work, in which the author has used a number of mutually complementary forms.⁵ The genres distinguished here are: protreptic, encomium, eulogy, panegyric, epitaph, exemplum, diatribe, syncrisis, accusation and defence (*kathegoria* and *apologia*).

The very genres of literary utterance used in the text indicate that we are dealing with different types of persuasion, because, for example, the encomium, panegyric and epitaph are characteristic of epideixis, the exemplum is characteristic of symbuleutic rhetoric, and the accusation and defence are characteristic of judicial rhetoric. If we also take into account that some of the speech genres used by the author of the Book of Wisdom, such as syncrisis or protreptic, are by definition forms combining different types of persuasion, the conclusion about the heterogeneous rhetoric in this Book seems to be most justified.

The genres that comprise the Book of Wisdom, however, do not constitute a loose anthological construction, but form a sublime, harmonious structure of proportionally distributed stanzas linked by inclusions, a structure based on the concept of the golden mean in

Hellenistic Influence on the Book of Wisdom, 117–121, where he advocates for *protreptikos logos*. His opinion was preceded, among others, by A. Dupont-Sommer (cf. “De l’immoralité astrale,” 80), who saw the features of protreptic in Wis 1–10. The opinion of J.M. Reese that the whole work can be treated as a protreptic was followed by D. Winston (*Wisdom of Solomon*, 18), G.W.E. Nickelsburg (*Jewish Literature*, 175), S.J. Tanzer (“The Wisdom of Solomon,” 293–294), B. Poniży (*Księga Mądrości*, 54).

⁴ Cf. T.Ch. Burgess, *Epideictic Literature*, 112–113; M. Jordan, “Ancient Philosophic,” 309–333.

⁵ More on this, see for example B. Poniży, *Księga Mądrości*, 51–55. On the influence of literary and rhetorical traditions on the text of the Book of Wisdom, see J.M. Reese, *Hellenistic Influence on the Book of Wisdom*.

Greek lyrical poetics.⁶ It would be difficult to argue that with such an intricately constructed utterance, the author left its persuasive forces and accents to chance since his aim was to instruct his audience on the role of wisdom. This is all the more so because even on first reading, one can see in this work the peculiar presence of a speaker who, though anonymous, also speaks to the audience by the force of his ethos, which clearly confirms the author's intended action. The Book of Wisdom is obviously not a record of a typical rhetorical speech but mature literature, and one should consider its persuasive features in terms of literary rhetoric. The multiplicity of genres, their different provenance and purpose, and the rhetorical features inherent in them clearly indicate that the Book of Wisdom, in rhetorical terms, cannot be a genre monolith, which is not to say that the present multi-rhetoric excludes the dominance and purposefulness of one type of persuasion.

Due to the sapiential nature of the work, it can be assumed in advance that we are dealing with advisory rhetoric in the Book of Wisdom. It is the nature of didactic literature to advise what is right and to discourage what is wrong, regardless of whether that literature is of theoretical character and considers what and when is right (decent) and what is wrong (shameful), or whether it is practical and belongs to the current of protreptic and apotreptic. However, it should be remembered that ascribing sapiential literature features, characteristic of deliberative persuasion, does not necessarily mean only one kind of rhetoric appears in the didactic works. This kind of "sapiential" rhetoric should be based on the qualification of what is decent, useful and beneficial – what is recommended to the recipients, and what is vile, useless and unfavourable – what is discouraged to the recipients. Moreover, in a well-constructed advisory genre, there should, by definition, appear modes of utterance proper both to judicial rhetoric (especially when dealing with a doubt or a disputed issue) and to demonstrative rhetoric (when we evaluate and amplify or depreciate an object by praise and its

⁶ See in particular: H.S.J. Thackeray, "Rhythm in the Book of Wisdom," 232–237; L. Maries, "Remarques sur la forme poétique," 251–257; P.W. Shekan, "The Text and Structure," 1–12; A.G. Wright, "Numerical Patterns," 524–538; E.D. Reymond, "The Poetry of the Wisdom," 385–399.

opposite, the reprimand). All the rhetorical devices inherent in judicial or demonstrative rhetoric are then subordinated to the overriding purpose of the instruction being presented in order to exploit the full range of possibilities for inducing the audience to make the right decision and the associated action that the speaker expects.

In rhetorical analysis, using Aristotle's temporal determiner concerning the intended object of speech, we can assess which type of rhetoric dominates. Generally speaking, we can recognise the type of persuasion used in an existing text by which time the object of speech refers to past, present or future. Referring to the past, deciding and making judgements are characteristics of the juridical type of rhetoric. When the object of speech and its qualification are set in the present, the object is made visible to the recipient – this is the showcase, epideictic rhetoric. If, on the other hand, the addressee's future choice and decision are assumed, then the subject matter refers to the future, as it shows the addressee the consequences of their hypothetical decisions. This is equivalent to using advisory, deliberative rhetoric.⁷ If we apply this criterion to the Book of Wisdom, we can conclude the presence of all three types of rhetoric.⁸ Following the opinions of most scholars and assuming the three-part structure of the work, it is possible to assign the rhetorical type to individual parts. A simplified scheme would be as follows:⁹

Part of the work	Author's purpose	Type of rhetoric
The Book of Eschatology 1:1–6:21	Giving the audience a future perspective	Deliberative rhetoric
The Book of Wisdom 6:22–9:18	Praise for wisdom and the attitudes of seeking it	Demonstrative rhetoric

⁷ Aristotle, *Rhetorica* 1.1358b.

⁸ Cf. L.G. Perdue, "Rhetoric and the Art of Persuasion," 360–361.

⁹ The scheme distinguishing the three books in the Book of Wisdom (eschatology, wisdom and history) taken from B. Poniży, *Księga Mądrości*, 98. For more on research into the complex issues surrounding the structure of a work, see M. Gilbert, "The Literary Structure of the Book of Wisdom," 19–32.

<p>The Book of History 10–19</p>	<p>Evaluation of human events and attitudes from the beginning of creation to the events of <i>Exodus</i></p>	<p>Juridical rhetoric</p>
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Such assignment of rhetorical types, on the one hand, suggests that none of them predominates in the work as a whole; on the other hand, it strongly indicates the dominant presence of the chosen rhetorical type in the different parts of the Book of Wisdom. However, this is very schematic and does not fully reflect the reality of the text. For example, in the “Book of History,” one can see elements typical of syncretism or advisory rather than juridical narration (*narration*). Events are juxtaposed there not to make them visible to the viewer as a judge, so that a correct judgement can be made on the basis of facts. The events presented have already been judged and are presented as such – bringing benefit and good to some (those who obey God) and affliction and destruction to others (those who oppose God). It is thus either a sophisticated construction of comparison, serving to advise the audience to take the same side as those who made the right choice at the time, or a composition of narrative epideixis, in which events are shown at once from the perspective of praise and rebuke, but not so much the events themselves, which are neutral as such, as the attitudes of the people who participated in them. Thus, although we have in this part of the Book of Wisdom an evocation of past events, they are not the real object of reference in the speech. The recipient is not supposed to decide about them, even though they are an essential matter of evidence. However, this epideictic narrative does not merely serve to praise some and reprove others, although it reflects the familiar eulogies and reprimands of nations or city-dwellers in rhetorical literature.¹⁰ The narrative here acts as an exemplum, guiding the audience to adopt the right attitude, so ultimately it remains closer to the stream of symbuleutic rhetoric.

Even such a generalised analysis of the types of rhetoric employed in the Book of Wisdom prompts greater scrutiny in their

¹⁰ See for example Dio Chrysostom, *Orationes*.

evaluation – especially when we consider that the individual elements of argumentation and the genres of speech used, while having their original persuasive capacity, often acquire a new rhetorical quality when they are part of a larger whole, and should ultimately be evaluated in this perspective.

2. Encomium as a literary genre and its persuasive potential

The encomium belongs to the forms of speech that developed on the basis of epideictic rhetoric, oscillating around praise and reprimand.¹¹ The terminology related to the encomium is also used in a broader sense: encomiastic literature, i.e., praise, and to designate the laudatory style. In the strict sense, encomium is considered a genre of speech of a laudatory nature. It can be realised both in poetic and prose form. Originally, the encomium appeared in poetry as a song of praise in honour of someone, evolved in meliki. This genre was used by Simonides, Pindar, Bacchylides and other poets. It is related to the hymn, in which the gods were the subject of praise, to the epitaph (gr. *epitaphios*) – a funeral speech praising the life and deeds of the deceased, and it is also similar to the *epinikion*, which is a song of praise in honour of the victors, differing from the encomium in terms of rhythm and musicality, because the epinicion was a choral lyric.¹² The subject of the encomium could be whatever is worthy of praise (e.g., people and their deeds, virtues, values, lands, cities, ports, animals, plants, events).¹³ As a rule, this genre was not used in poetry in a pejorative

¹¹ Two important monographs on epideictic rhetoric are considered here: the extremely valuable study *Epideictic Literature* (1902) by T.Ch. Burgess, who presented the various forms of epideictic speech in antiquity, their persuasive functions and the practice of their use, and the monograph of L. Pernot, *Epideictic Rhetoric. Questioning the Stakes of Ancient Praise* (orig. from 1993), who took a different methodological approach from Burgess, aiming to show the development of epideictic forms, nevertheless relied mostly on the studies of theorists, which constitutes a methodological gap.

¹² On the origins of encomium development see L. Pernot, *Epideictic Rhetoric*, 1–28.

¹³ See for example Aristotle, *Rhetorica* 1.1367a–1368b; Theon of Alexandria, *Progymnasmata* 110–112; Aphthonius the Sophist, *Progymnasmata* 35–36.

function (e.g., for the purposes of irony or apology). Only later in comedies and in rhetoric was praise used to achieve the effect of ridicule (the so-called *paradoxa enkomia*).¹⁴

Encomium as a form of rhetorical speech underwent changes and development with the practice of its use in social, private and public life. As the form developed, it became the object of interest and description for rhetorical theorists. Of course, it is difficult to assume that the forms of the encomium, which are best described in works much later than the potential dating of the Book of Wisdom, such as Quintilian, Hermogenes, Pseudo-Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Menander the Rhetor, Aphthonius the Sophist, Nicholas of Myra, Libanius and others, could have had any influence on its author. Therefore, while referring to their works in this study, the author is conscious of this methodological caveat, but with the assumption that much of the theory they put forward was already practised in an earlier period, as can be seen in the speeches of Isocrates, Demosthenes, in Plato, and in theoretical studies such as Anaximenes of Lampsacus' Rhetoric for Alexander and Aristotle's Rhetoric.¹⁵ In particular, the two works mentioned above and the treatment of epideixis and encomiums in Theon and Cicero (especially the moral potential of praise and reprimand, cf. *De oratore*, 69–70), as a continuation of an earlier tradition, are here indicative of a reference to the understanding of encomium persuasion in the Book of Wisdom, whereby we understand Aristotle's "showcase" as focusing the attention of the recipient on the object of praise rather than as a space for oratorical display.¹⁶

¹⁴ Some (e.g., Isocrates) ruled out such features in encomiums altogether, while some held that it was dictated by the situation, but should not be the purpose of encomiastic utterance as such and should always be well explained in the course of speech so as not to leave the recipient in doubt. For more on this subject see. T.Ch. Burgess, *Epideictic Literature*, 118–119, on the topic *paradoksa enkomia* 157–166.

¹⁵ Cf. C. Pepe, *The Genres of Rhetorical Speeches*, 41–55, 61–78, 243–384.

¹⁶ This understanding of epideixis often attributed to Aristotle's views is rather the result of an overly schematic interpretation. Although Aristotle in his rhetorical theory did not devote as much attention to it as to the other rhetorical types he distinguished, which is undoubtedly a shortcoming of this study, this does not mean that he reserved this form in the public space for struggles in oratorical competitions

Effective for us is Aristotle's treatment of epideictic rhetoric as a form of literary expression,¹⁷ and to a much lesser extent of oral practice, which in relation to the Book of Wisdom as an extended literary work has its justification. The change that takes place in the late imperial era, after the crisis of the third century, and the flowering of new forms of epideictic expression, have little relevance for the understanding of the encomium in the Book of Wisdom. Instead, Quintilian's insights into the evaluative function of epideixis and, therefore, its great pedagogical potential and applicability in both didactics and public social life may be relevant. This is not because these insights constituted a *novum*, but because his theoretical elaboration – which can largely be regarded as the result of the popularity of rhetorical forms of demonstrative oratory in the life of Roman society, especially of the early imperial period – is, in fact, a kind of reception of earlier traditions, linked above all to courtly Hellenistic epideictic rhetoric. The latter develops with the Alexandrian era, in which the didactic potential of demonstrative rhetoric, instilling certain values in the recipients, was practised not only in encomiums in honour of rulers.¹⁸

Like many other poetic forms, the encomium was borrowed from the lyric and transferred to and developed within rhetorical prose. In defining the encomium as a genre of rhetorical speech, many

in which the role of the audience was to judge the effect. Rather, the attribution of epideixis to oratorical display should be taken in Aristotle's theory as an indication of what constitutes a model for such persuasion, analogous to the fact that judgmental rhetoric is grounded in a court hearing and advisory rhetoric in a political, public assembly. This is not to say that Aristotle reserved the use of persuasion only to situations such as a court of law, a political debate, or an oratorical contest. The discussion among scholars on this subject is presented, for example, by C. Pepe, *The Genres of Rhetorical Speeches*, 140–159.

¹⁷ See Aristotle, *Rhetorica* 3.1413b–1414a.

¹⁸ Not entirely justified seems to be the claim of L. Pernot, who believes that it is only during the Roman imperial period that a breakthrough occurs in epideictic rhetoric, due to the considering of various circumstances related to the creation of praise (time, place, recipients, purpose). Encomium ceased to be treated then as a simple, universal form, fitting to many occasions. See L. Pernot, *Epideictic Rhetoric*, 19–20. While it is correct to note that there is then the development of new genres of eulogy, often governed by their own rules dictated by purpose, their becoming independent, to consider that earlier encomiums are ossified in form due to limitations in the understanding of epideictic function is an oversimplification.

theorists refer strictly to what it originally meant in the lyric. Hence also in rhetoric, it has been classified as an elaborate statement having the character of a more extended argument of the epideictic type.¹⁹

The *principium* for encomiastic speech is to evoke pleasure in the recipient, but it can also lead to negative emotions such as jealousy. A similar risk is inherent in any speech that is specifically oriented towards the recipient.²⁰ It does not mean, however, that the *delectare* function is the result of the mere sound of words, stylistic devices and the skill of the speaker. It is also born out of a predilection for the noble, the good, the beautiful – and thus has a much broader reference than mere beauty of words.²¹ This predilection creates a space for influencing the recipient, shaping their views, and making certain decisions. In the space of discourse on persuasion, the greater possibilities of the encomium were immediately noticed, as it can remain an independent speech of praise (mainly concerning man, his qualities and works), but can also be part of another utterance, as an element of argumentation, in which praise is used to achieve persuasive goals other than laudation. In Demosthenes' *De corona*, we find the use of encomium in forensic rhetoric, in political demegoria, where the praise of one person (Demosthenes' self-praise) actually becomes an attack on the opponent (Aeschines), who becomes the defendant by demonstrating his slanders.²² In Isocrates' *Panegyric*, the praise of Athens serves above all the purposes of symbuleutic (i.e. deliberative) rhetoric; it is used to demonstrate the validity of Athens' right to hegemony and the benefit derived from it.²³ Because of a kind of alternative inherent also in epideictic rhetoric, through its characteristic juxtaposition of praise and reprimand, even when only praise appears in the argument, the recipient will read it as an argument in favour of the thesis or choice proposed to him, because implicitly the

¹⁹ Such understanding of encomium can be seen in Aristotle and Anaximenes. See *Rhetorica* 1368a and *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* 1440b, but also in Cicero, *De oratore* 42 and in Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* 3.4.6; 8.3.11.

²⁰ Cf. L. Pernot, *Epideictic Rhetoric*, 111–112.

²¹ Cf. Aristotle, *Rhetorica* 1366a; Cicero, *De oratore* 2.341.

²² See for example Demosthenes, *De corona* 246–247, 257, 268–269.

²³ See Isocrates, *Panegyrikos* 21–100.

alternative will be what deserves to be reprimanded. Encomium in argumentation thus often has a supporting function for proof and persuasion. Moreover, this is not only a means of evoking desired emotions in the audience. It is the easiest to achieve pathos effects through praise, moving the emotions of recipients and allowing to win them over for the reasons presented to them due to the fact that amplification is a typical way of expression in encomium.²⁴ However, the argumentative potential of the encomium is much stronger, because it also makes use of logical persuasion and references to ethos, shaping opinions and consolidating life attitudes.²⁵ It is particularly evident in the later forms of encomiums, especially in the imperial period, when it became a widely used form of expression associated with the style of social life and when encomiums were also frequently used for didactic purposes.²⁶

Rhetors recommended several characteristic *disposito* elements of encomium and its proper *topoi*, which made it possible to achieve the intended effect of this form of utterance conceived in a model way as praise of a person. The framework consisted of an introduction (*prooimion*) and an ending (*epilogos*), the function of which could be fulfilled by a prayer. The model of praise was filled in with such elements as: *genos* – what is related to origins (such as nation, homeland, ancestors, parents), *anatrophē* – what is related to upbringing (such as worthy teachers, practising the virtues one acquired, learned skills, customs, respect for laws), and *praxeis*, that is actions or achievements. They were ordered according to the goods of the soul (such as reason, justice, moderation, bravery, courage, perseverance, self-control), the goods of the body (such as beauty, height, strength, speed, agility), and external goods, connected with success, happiness, fate (such as wealth, friends, opportunities to demonstrate outstanding deeds). Before the epilogue, it was also recommended to use comparisons with the achievements of others (*synkrisis*). These recommendations formed a kind of model, leaving the authors of praise free to use

²⁴ Cf. Aristotle, *Rhetorica* 1.1368a.

²⁵ Cf. C. Pepe, “(Re)discovering a Rhetorical Genre,” 26.

²⁶ More on the development of encomiums during the Roman imperial period see for example L. Pernot, *Epideictic Rhetoric*, 20–28.

particular elements and the extent to which they were used, as this was determined by the rhetorical situation, determining the purpose of creating the encomium and the very subject of praise. The arrangement of the commendations undertaken in speech could vary. *Dispositio* did not constitute a rigid scheme. Sometimes the praise was constructed using a ring, chiasmic or sometimes concentric structure, where the most important virtue or the most praiseworthy deed was placed in the central part.²⁷

3. *Dispositio* and the persuasive capacity of the wisdom encomium in the Book of Wisdom

There is no consensus among commentators on the Book of Wisdom concerning the limits of the praise of wisdom.²⁸ This results from the different assumptions that scholars make when dividing this work into particular structural elements. The term “praise of wisdom” is most often applied to the textual unit of Wis 6:22–9:18 because of the lyrical subject appearing there, speaking in the first person as a wise man, a ruler endowed with divine Wisdom.²⁹

Some, however, also include other passages in praise of wisdom, marking its beginning with the exhortation to the rulers to learn wisdom in Wis 6:9 or starting from Wis 6:12, when speaking of the inalienable qualities of wisdom, considering these verses as an introduction to the subsequent first-person praise.³⁰ Still, others regard the verses of Wis 6:22–25 as a typical *transitus* – a passage which summarises the previous exhortations, being at the same time a link to the next part of the praise, but not constituting its fully integral part.³¹

²⁷ On the subject of topical proposals, schemes of the *dispositio* of encomium and rules for their use submitted by various ancient authors, see T.Ch. Burgess, *Epideictic Literature*, 120–142; L. Pernot, *Epideictic Rhetoric*, 31–42.

²⁸ J.M. Reese, *Plan and Structure*, 391–399; A.G. Wright, *The Structure of the Book of Wisdom*, 165–184.

²⁹ Cf. e.g., J. Vilchez, *Wisdom*, 754.

³⁰ Cf. e.g., U. Offerhaus, *Komposition und Intention*, 52–53; M. McGlynn, *Divine Judgment*, 22–23.

³¹ Cf. e.g., A.G. Wright, *The Structure of the Book of Wisdom*, 175; P. Bizzeti, *Il libro della Sapienza*, 168–169; M.F. Kolarcik, *The Ambiguity of Death*, 22–24.

The situation is similar to the determination of the end of the praise of wisdom. For example, the passage from Wis 10:1–11:1 is treated either as a part of the praise of wisdom, as its conclusion, or as a *transitus*, serving on the one hand as a summary of the praise and on the other as an introduction to the narrative showing the action of divine wisdom in the Egyptian history of the Israelites in the past.³²

Sometimes it is only a short passage from Wis 7:22 to 8:1 or to 8:21 that is called the praise of wisdom. It contains a laudation of the twenty-one qualities of wisdom and is the central part of the wise man's speech and prayer, but the term is usually not used in a technical sense or in the sense of a specific element of the structure of the work, but more because of the dominant theme here. With regard to the criteria of the encomium genre, such a limitation is not justified.

Applying the categories of the properties of encomium to the text from the Book of Wisdom that interests us, it would be difficult to insist unequivocally on marking the beginning of the encomium only at Wis 6:22, as most commentators advocate. In the *proemia* of the encomiums, the rhetors allowed themselves great freedom, but the general idea was a short introduction, in the form of a direct address to the audience with a call to listen and a remark that the subject of praise is such that no words can fully express it. Such an introductory amplification immediately emphasised the importance of the subject taken up and all the more encouraged the audience to listen to the speech, but also anticipated the correction of any type of imperfection in the process of praise. The shape of the introduction was determined mainly by the situation in which the praise was delivered, so if the encomium served an advisory or judgmental purpose, it often demanded more than a brief attention to the object of the praise.³³

If we take this into account, the declaration of the lyrical subject in Wis 6:22, concerning the revelation of the secrets of wisdom and the display of the truth about it, corresponds well with the *proemium*

³² Cf. eg. A.G. Wright, *The Structure of the Book of Wisdom*, 173; D. Dimant, *Pseudonymity in the Wisdom of Solomon*, 246.

³³ Cf. e.g., Nicolas of Myra, *Progymnasmata* 8, 50.

of the epideictic encomium. However, the conjunction “while” (*de*) indicates that we are dealing with a continuation of thought and a reference to something that was said earlier, so we can look for the beginning of the *proemium* of this encomium earlier. A typical apostrophe to the audience directly connected with the theme of wisdom is found in Wis 6:9, where the author addresses those in authority (*tyrannoi*), exhorting them to learn wisdom. However, this apostrophe is immediately accompanied by warnings and advice announcing the benefits of taking such an attitude: if they learn wisdom – they will not be lost, they will find defence, they will be sanctified. The repetition of the apostrophe to those in authority (*tyrannoi laōn*) is found again in 6:21, which can be seen as a proemic inclusion and, as in the initial exhortation, we have here an encouragement to show reverence for wisdom and an assurance that such an attitude will guarantee dominion for ever, which is an obvious indication of the attainment of a unique benefit in the future. The reference to the bringing of benefit is also found in 6:25. Thus, after the typically epideictic anticipation of verse 6:22 concerning the demonstration of what wisdom is, in 6:25 we have a kind of clarification of the real purpose of the statement, the justification for which is found in the preceding verse: “A multitude of wise men is the salvation of the world, and a sensible king is the stability of his people” (Wis 6:24). The above aspects indicate that the purpose of the exhortation addressed to the audience is to know wisdom, to learn it and to be guided by its principles (which presupposes an effort on the part of the audience that exceeds the time of the speech itself), since this is of benefit rather than merely proclaiming admiration for the virtue of wisdom. The purpose of the wisdom encomium, then, does not appear to be purely epideictic here, but it cannot be overlooked that also in typically epideictic encomiums, especially those dealing with intangible things such as ideas, values, or skills, for the proper implementation of praise in matters of detail the authors of the *progymnasmata* recommended that the students point out what advantages and benefits it might bring to people, because for this reason too the object of praise was beautiful and admirable.

The *proemium* features of the wisdom encomium we deal with here do not determine the classification of the purpose of the

persuasion assigned to it. It seems that the author uses here the persuasive power of both praise and encouragement in equal measure. If we take the apostrophe from Wis 6:9 as its beginning, then to a much greater extent the *proemium* emphasises the advisory purpose of the praise, which the speaker is about to present to the audience. If, on the other hand, we take verses 6:22–25 as the introduction of the encomium, the praise that is to follow can be recognised as epideictic speech. These actions, however, are not mutually exclusive, and may induce the recipient to take a broader perspective and go beyond the purpose of *delectare*, all the more so since the encomium is not the beginning of the Book of Wisdom. It is preceded by a long argument advising of some behaviours and discouraging others, mainly by showing the consequences of a certain way of thinking, decisions one makes and attitudes resulting from them.³⁴ Therefore, the transition here to the praise of wisdom as a virtue desirable and worthy of all endeavours can be seen in terms of the next step of the advisory argumentation, while retaining the features of epideictic persuasion and the aims of symbuleutic persuasion, which is clear to the recipient.³⁵

A problem may appear when trying to identify the object of praise. Both the advisory proemium of Wis 6:9–25 and the shorter, more epideictic one of 6:22–25 clearly indicate that the object of the speech is wisdom. This suggests, therefore,

³⁴ Cf. R.J. Clifford, *Wisdom*, 29.

³⁵ It is worth noting that later encomium was associated with parenesis, noting its didactic potential. This does not, of course, mean that every encomium is a parenesis, but it often displays parenetic features. However, it does not seem that what was noted by later theorists was not reflected much earlier in practice. The classification of parenesis as epideictic rather than symbuleutic remains a matter of dispute. Pseudo-Libanius in his discussion of style makes a clear distinction between the two, putting it down to the context of the utterance. According to him, we are dealing with counselling when there is a matter of dispute and a need to choose between one thing and another, while parenesis involves encouragement, in a situation where there is no doubt about its object, nor about the alternative choice. See Pseudo-Libanius, *Epistolimaioi characteres* 5. Taking into account that in the *Rhetoric for Alexander* by Anaximenes of Lampsacus, which could be known by the author of the Book of Wisdom, which cannot be said about the writings of Libanius, the encouragement is clearly attributable to counselling and no alternative is necessary, such a distinction does not seem justified. See Anaximenes, *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* 1423ab, 1439b–1440a.

primarily a consideration of its aspects, manifestations, effects and the like. And in the speech which begins in Wis 7:1 and extends to 9:18, attention is largely focused on the person of the speaker himself, who presents himself as a wise man, as one who has been endowed with reason (*phronēsis*), with the spirit of wisdom (*pneuma sophias*) and has loved wisdom (*ephilēsa*). Are we then dealing in the Book of Wisdom with the encomium of the person of the sage rather than the intangible thing – a value – that is wisdom?

As stated above, rhetors recommended that the characteristic *topoi* in encomiums be chosen and presented in a certain way. The first suggested theme after the proemium was the praise of origins. Of course, in accordance with the general art of *topoi*, we praise what deserves praise and pass over in silence or marginalise what is common, average and not worthy of distinction. In a typical encomium in honour of wisdom, we should expect first of all pointing to the sources of wisdom, which themselves testify to the extraordinary nature of this virtue. In the case of the encomium of a person, we should find, for example, praise for the extraordinary circumstances of one's birth, praise for one's family, homeland, ancestors.

In the passage from Wis 7:1–7, where the lyrical subject makes his presence known and begins to speak in the first person, taking on the role of the sage speaker, we have a specific, condensed narrative about the beginnings of life up to the moment of the bestowal of the spirit of wisdom. However, it is surprising that when the speaker talks about his origin, birth and growth, he presents these realities as quite common, ordinary and shared by all people, which does not fit at all into the convention of the encomium. Paradoxically, this is what highlights the extraordinary nature of his person and his experience because this speaker is characterised by an awareness of the insignificance of human nature, which leads him to turn to God and to prayer. It is the attitude of a humble petition to God that is the speaker's first source of pride because it has made him heard and given him the reason (*phronēsis*) and the spirit of wisdom (*pneuma sophias*).³⁶

³⁶ M. Zieliński points to the special meaning of prayer as a way to receive the gift of wisdom, “‘Przyszedł mi z pomocą duch mądrości’ (Mdr 7,7),” 38–40.

It may be a strategy of praising origins (*genos*) that is a bit risky, but extremely sophisticated and undoubtedly perfectly in line with the aims of epideictic rhetoric. The speaker's focus is not to praise himself, and he even seemingly depreciates his person, so that through this contrast, which surprises the recipient, he can bring out what is the aim of the author's persuasion – to show the recipients the truth about the real origin of the wisdom, he intends to speak to them about and to convince them to this very wisdom, which he had previously announced to them. Thus, in this part of the encomium, he defines it primarily as a gift given by God, or even as a gift of God himself, who reveals himself in this way, because such metonymic connotations of meaning are carried by the expression “spirit of wisdom” (*pneuma sophias*), which the author uses here, by analogy with what we find in Isa 11:2, where the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Wisdom are synonymous.³⁷ In this way, the speaker achieves the objectives of the encomium of wisdom, pointing unequivocally to the absolute best source of Wisdom, which, like wisdom itself, is worthy of reverence and desire. The text of the verse Wis 8:3, “She glorifies her noble birth by living with God, and the Lord of all loves her,” could also be included in praise of origin, but it appears far enough from the proemium that it could also be a deliberate repetition, being either a summary of a section or an introduction to a new one.

Why did the author of the Book of Wisdom use the unusual form of encomium, resorting to a blend of forms that may make it difficult for the recipients to remain focused on the actual object of praise? In order to understand this strategy, it is necessary to pay attention to another crucial rhetorical device that we are dealing with here. The speaker-sage does not introduce himself directly in the speech. Even though he suddenly begins to speak in the first person in Wis 7:1, it is not at all evident that he is the subject, albeit undisclosed, of the other utterances in the book. However, what and how this speaker-sage speaks of himself during the eulogy is, at least for some of the audience, easily recognisable and entails his identification with King Solomon. This is a deliberate procedure of pseudonymity possible to interpret by the author's assumed

³⁷ Cf. B. Poniży, *Księga Mądrości*, 244.

audience. It was used in rhetoric to build the authority of a speaker who emulated someone worthy of emulation. Reaching for the ideal of the sage in the figure of King Solomon is a typical procedure. Firstly, this ideal is firmly rooted in the biblical text; secondly, such imitation of a recognised authority was not only known in Greek literature and used as a rhetorical device but was also characteristic of sapiential Near Eastern literature. It is well attested in numerous didactic texts, for example in Egyptian instructions, where the teacher speaking instruction to the pupils appears in the role of a king who became famous during his reign for securing prosperity for the state and the nation and passes on his experience to his descendants so that they can repeat his successes.³⁸

Contrary to appearances, this sage speaker is not anonymous to the audience the moment he begins to speak. The author of the Book of Wisdom makes use of numerous allusions from other books of the Bible where God's gift of wisdom is mentioned in connection with Solomon, in order to construct an autobiographical eulogy (*periautologia*) which serves to illustrate the ways in which God's Wisdom works on the example of Solomon's life (cf., e.g., 1 Kgs 3:5–14; 5:17–21; 8:32; 2 Kgs 1:8–12; 6:10). Allusions that help to reveal the various manifestations of divine wisdom, which were also made evident in the life of King Solomon, do not appear only in the encomium. They can also be found in the chapters preceding it.³⁹ In this way, the author prepares the audience. The moment the speaker reveals himself and it is possible to identify him, the earlier argumentation begins to “work,” and the recipients can easily relate it to the example from Solomon's life, while at the same time they receive a deeper reflection on the nature of Wisdom,

³⁸ For more on the use of deliberate pseudonymy in rhetoric and techniques of *mimesis*, see L.G. Perdue, *Pseudonymity and Greco-Roman Rhetoric*, 27–59. The author points out that pseudonymy was used deliberately by the creators of the sapiential corpus in the Bible, and this applies not only to the Book of Wisdom. He analyses the various ways in which *mimesis* is realised in the Book of Wisdom, both in relation to pseudonymy, the genres of speech used, and the value of the example of imitating Solomon's virtues.

³⁹ On the deliberate procedure of attributing to the speaker/sage the qualities of King Solomon as a way of building the author's authority, see for example D. Dimant, *Pseudonymity in the Wisdom of Solomon*, 245–252.

which they have so far been encouraged to acquire. The use of such a two-pronged encomium thus increases the persuasive possibilities and provides support for the advisory argument. In particular, in the introduce elements of praise of a person performs functions typical of the exemplum in symbuleutic rhetoric, where the example of a person, a character is used as a model to emulate.⁴⁰ Additionally, the strategy of “revealing” Solomon as a sage-speaker makes it possible to use the persuasive power that can be gained from appealing to the ethos of the speaker, which goes beyond the boundaries of the encomium itself and extends this *ethos* to the entire Book of Wisdom. This justifies the choice of praising the sage in the first person, which is not typical of epideictic encomiums and characterises praise in judicial rhetoric, where it has the function of apologetic speech.

In the continuation of the praise, one can notice the maintenance of its two-pronged form. This results in the fact that we do not always encounter the above-referenced and most often recommended scheme of ordering individual issues. The ongoing narrative interweaves the speaker’s and wisdom’s praise elements. This does not diminish the readability of the speech and even makes it more attractive, although it requires greater involvement of the recipient. Let us look at the *topoi* selected by the author of the encomium, which form the core of the praise.

Another recommended element in the encomium *dispositio*, after the already presented *proemium* and praise of origin, was the praise of education (*anatrophē*). In the praise of the speaker-sage, one would expect a presentation of the respectable and famous teachers under whom he studied, the skills and knowledge he acquired, in the acquisition of which he grew and which he was able to use usefully, and in the praise of wisdom the ways in which it was acquired and the benefits it could bring.

First of all, the verses of Wis 7:15–17a can be considered the reference to the fame of teachers, since the speaker-sage speaks of

⁴⁰ On the function of periautology as a positive example and its potential to influence the audience see for example Isocrates, *Antidosis* 6–8; Demosthenes, *De corona* 3; Cicero, *Epistulae ad familiares* 5.12.8; *De inventione* 1.16.22; Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* 11.1.15–18.

God, whom he had earlier called the giver of the spirit of wisdom. Now he develops this thought by showing God as the true guide of the sage, as it is from God that the right words, reason, the knowledge of things and the acquisition of skill come. The speaker's education is thus worthy of the highest praise on account of the Teacher Himself. Wisdom itself, too, as an already accepted divine gift, became the master (*technitis*) of his education, for it helped him to know all that is visible and all that is hidden (7:21). Therefore, the knowledge he acquired about the world, the elements, the stars, plants, animals, drives, people and their thinking becomes praiseworthy and of the highest quality (7:18–20).

The speaker's own attitude to the Wisdom given to him is also a reason for his pride. First of all, it is so because he was able to appreciate the value of this gift. He considered it more valuable than anything that could be acquired – all riches – both material and spiritual (Wis 7:8–9). Thus, along with wisdom, he acquired all other gifts, though he did not expect this. Moreover, it is a cause for praise that he does not wish to keep the truth he has grasped only to himself. The sage speaker makes it clear that his profound knowledge of the nature of Wisdom gave rise to his desire to share sincerely with all (the recipients of the speech) the fullness of this wealth.

With regard to the praise of the gift of wisdom in *anatrophē*, we encounter a kind of ambiguity. Without any doubt, we can include in this *topos* the praise of the fact that wisdom brings knowledge and all other gifts that are considered good (Wis 7:11.21). Wisdom is presented as one who teaches, bestows, and is a mother (7:12). The fecundity of wisdom is expressed not only in the fact that she brings to the recipient and gives birth to other goods in him, but also in the fact that she makes him fruitful – willing to share the good he has received. The most incredible benefit wisdom can bring is the friendship of God (7:14). It is the wisdom given by God that is also the maker of such a precious relationship. The practice of such

wisdom also ensures the continuance of the relationship of friendship with God.⁴¹

This way of praising wisdom shifts emphasis from praising virtue and value to praising a person. Wisdom is personified, something that was not so prominent even in the early stages of the encomium. Encomium is thus still realised in binary form, but it has the comparative character of praising two persons. The praise of the speaker-sage and his achievements evidently serves to highlight more fully the praise of Wisdom.⁴² Obviously, in the encomiums, such means were used, because it is difficult to praise ideas, values, virtues without resorting to examples and using purely theoretical language. In demonstrative oratory, passive praise, using devices such as ekphrasis, enumeration, may be sufficient to arouse admiration and liking in the audience. However, if the speaker wants to evoke in the recipients also a permanent desire for the object of praise or imitation of it, then personifying values and ideas, such as freedom or justice, giving them active, personal features of the subject of the action gives greater persuasive possibilities. These possibilities are twofold: one can invoke exemplars of people whose lives and works were a confirmation of these ideas or values or personify these ideas. The author of the encomium in the Book of Wisdom chooses to combine both of these possibilities of demonstration, which confirms his advisory purposes of persuasion. The most epideictic passage of the encomium is the poetic ekphrasis (Wis 7:22–8:1), which describes the attributes of Divine Wisdom.⁴³ The aim of *ekphrasis* as an extended rhetorical figure was to describe something clearly and distinctly, to present it in such a way that it was made visible to the recipient. That is why it was characterised by a high degree of detailed description. With time, it evolved into an independent genre of speech. Ekphrasis included in epideictic

⁴¹ On the category of friendship as a new way of expressing a relationship with God, see B. Poniży, “Sapiencjalne przejście,” 99–120. On the semantics of the expression “friend of God” in the context of the qualities of Wisdom, see for example M. Krawczyk, “The Paradox of Purity,” 228–233.

⁴² J. Warzecha draws attention to the features of the praise of the “Lady of Wisdom” in “Personifikacja słowa i mądrości,” 31–34.

⁴³ On the use of logical and pathetic argumentative qualities in this passage see B. Poniży, “Wykład pochwalny,” 25–42 and B. Poniży, *Księga Mądrości*, 258–272.

speeches, such as encomiums, epitaphs, panegyrics, hymns, usually served to amplify the subject of praise. For example, events, characters, animals, cities, time, objects, sculptures were described. It was characteristic of the style of expression of ekphrasis to avoid excessive lengthening of the sentence or decorating it with numerous figures.⁴⁴

It is worth pointing out that the author of the Book of Wisdom puts the description of God's Wisdom into the mouth of the speaker-sage, who presents it as something he has come to know well. This ekphrasis somehow corresponds to the element of *praxeis* in the structural order of the encomium. For the attributes of Wisdom that are presented are ordered according to a specific key, as to the properties of her spirit, her "appearance," and her modes of action, of manifestation. All the attention is focused on the object of praise, and it again makes the viewer aware of its essence and helps him realise that the Wisdom in question is, on the one hand, something intangible, belonging to God, and on the other hand, immanent, capable of being known and experienced. The features of God's Wisdom are also exposed in the syllogistic soliloquies (Wis 8:5–8), in which the speaker-sage leads the recipient to the obvious conclusion that God's Wisdom is what he should seek most and desire above all kinds of riches, knowledge, gifts, virtues. These verses can also be included in the ekphrasis since it does not exclude this mode of presentation but is interrupted by an interjection in Wis 8:2, where the speaker returns to looking at Wisdom from the perspective of his own life and continues this laudatory reflection from 8:9 onwards. It also has the character of praise in terms of *praxeis*, this time in relation to the speaker-sage's self.

Actions that deserve praise and that distinguish the speaker from others include seeking, delighting in, loving, marrying and dwelling with Wisdom (Wis 8:2.9) and making decisions that bring him pride.⁴⁵ The language used here refers to personified Wisdom, who

⁴⁴ On *ekphrasis* as a rhetorical form of expression see for example R. Słodczyk, "Hypotypoza," 143–159.

⁴⁵ The metaphor of marriage with wisdom is analysed in detail by M. Zieliński, "La morte," 313–317.

is treated as a woman.⁴⁶ The speaker, having perfected the virtue of reason, was able to consider the benefits of intimacy with the Wisdom of God, such as fame resulting from knowledge and the use of the word, riches, the satisfaction of friendship, and immortality (8:16–18). For the audience, he appears above all as an example worthy of imitation. The extremely close relationship with Wisdom gives rise to admiration, ensuring intimate friendship with God.⁴⁷ The value of this eulogy lies in the fact that, although the effects are exceptional, they are not exclusive and are achievable by anyone who, with the same commitment as the sage-speaker, dedicates his or her life to building a relationship with the Wisdom that God Himself provides and directs their desires towards it. This is made real by the catalogue of the sage-speaker's glorious achievements, both those which are still given as potential and those which will take place in the future (8:10–15: glory among the people, honour among the elders, the admiration of the mighty, recognition for works and justice in judgments, eternal memory among posterity, dominion over other peoples, valour in war, fear among tyrants), as well as those which are already a fact, and are mentioned in the prayerful epilogue (9:7–8: king and judge of his people, builder of a temple to God the giver of Wisdom). Taken together, they undoubtedly elevate the speaker in the eyes of his audience, but they also amplify the action of God's Wisdom, through which he achieved all this.

Encomium ends with the speaker's prayer for Wisdom. The difficulty of determining the boundary of the ending (Wis 9:18 or 11:1) was mentioned earlier. The fact that the prayer placed in the mouth of the speaker-sage, which appears in the text, fulfils the function of the epilogue of the encomium, is suggested by the repetitions of content already contained earlier in the proemium and in the praise of the origin. The characteristic summary (*recapitulatio*) of Wis 8:18–21 signals the final phase. The speaker recalls that he has considered all that pertains to wisdom, that he has wondered how it could be obtained, that he had all the physical and spiritual conditions to succeed, but that this could in no way assure

⁴⁶ Cf. M. Zieliński, “‘Przyszedł mi z pomocą duch mądrości’ (Mdr 7,7),” 44.

⁴⁷ Cf. E.G. Clarke, *The Wisdom of Solomon*, 57.

him of having the wisdom he desired, since only God could give it, which is why he addressed his requests to Him.

If the encomium ended with a prayer, the rhetorical devices of *pathos* were usually used: lofty, affective language, direct invocations. Summarising repetitions of content from earlier praises resounded again in more solemn language. In the case of our encomium, in praise of Wisdom, which is God's gift, prayer is particularly justified.⁴⁸ It was a condition for the speaker to receive this gift. This does not mean, however, that the quotation of the words of the prayer has only the function of amplifying the praise. If the encomium is constructed properly, the ending should correspond well with the assumptions given in the introduction. When we take this into account, two basic conclusions emerge.

The first concerns the fact that the author's objective was not so much to dwell on the qualities of wisdom in order to extol its virtues and arouse momentary admiration in the recipients (*pathos*), as to convey to them what wisdom is, to "define" it in the right way, which is why the laudatory elements of the speech are subordinated to didactic aims. The speaker announces in the introduction that he wants to share the gift he has been given with others and not to keep it only for himself. Wisdom, adequately recognised, is meant to benefit the recipients. Just as earlier, the speaker prayed for wisdom and received it from God, so now the words of the final prayer include the recipients, who in this way participate in it and have a chance to be included in the action of God bestowing wisdom. The prayer in the present encomium may thus be regarded as pursuing the aims of advisory persuasion, which seeks to induce the recipients to make certain choices, decisions, actions and to consolidate desired attitudes. In itself, it is that appropriate action leading to the achievement of the goal. This thus confirms that the encomium is used here as a kind of advisory argument, persuading the desire and action aimed at receiving the gift of Divine Wisdom.

The second conclusion is related to doubts as to the conclusion of the encomium. In Wis 6:22, in the speaker's announcement, we

⁴⁸ On the affective qualities of prayer and the function of emotions in this passage, see M. Witte, "Emotions in the Prayers of the Wisdom of Solomon," 164–173.

have a clear indication that he intends to bring out the truth about wisdom by tracing its manifestations from the beginning of creation. In the preceding content of the encomium, the speaker-sage makes mention only of the descent of wisdom through the generations upon the holy souls (7:27) and of its being initiated into the knowledge of God (8:4). It is only in the prayer that we have the statement that the Wisdom of God participated in the creation of the world, and so she knows all the works of God (9:9). The fact that it is only here that the significant information announced in the proemium of the encomium appears may raise legitimate doubts as to whether the prayer is really the conclusion of the encomium, especially since the most adequate realisation of this proemial announcement is only the speech in Wis 10:1–21, and in the prayer, this issue is just introduced. Then, it stands to reason that the speech in Wis 10:1–21 may be regarded as a continuation of the sage’s prayer.⁴⁹ The recognition that in 10:1–21, we are dealing with a continuation of the encomium is justified insofar as the demonstration of the achievements of divine Wisdom in history corresponds to the categories envisaged for *praxeis* and can be regarded as a narrative of a laudatory nature. It can also be considered *synkrisis*, a comparative evaluation, using juxtaposition with the opposite thing to bring out the essence of what is being evaluated.⁵⁰ Therefore, in this narrative, there are elements contrary to God’s Wisdom, evident in the references to the figures of Cain, the flood, the tower of Babel, Sodom and the surrounding cities and the rest, through which the author brings out the power of God’s Wisdom working to save the righteous.⁵¹ According to the recommendations of later authors of the *progymnasmata*, *synkrisis* was desirable before the epilogue of the encomium for reasons of the great persuasive power inherent in juxtapositions of opposites.⁵² It is difficult to judge whether such a practice was common earlier

⁴⁹ Cf. A.T. Glicksman, *Wisdom of Solomon 10*, 89.

⁵⁰ Like Theon of Alexandria, *Progymnasmata* 113–114, most authors of later progymnasmata referred to the comparison, discussing it usually after praise and rebuke, cf. e.g., Aphthonius the Sophist, *Progymnasmata* 42–43; Hermogenes, *Progymnasmata* 18; Nicolas of Myra, *Progymnasmata* 59–60.

⁵¹ Cf. S. Burkes, “Wisdom and Apocalypticism,” 37.

⁵² See Aphthonius the Sophist, *Progymnasmata* 36.

when the Book of Wisdom was composed, but syncrisis as a form of expression can be found frequently in Jewish writing at the turn of the eras, not necessarily linked to praise.⁵³ Perhaps because of the composition of the work as a whole, this potential element of encomium was moved beyond the epilogue, forming a bridge to the later part of the argument, which is no longer of a laudatory nature. A link has been added to the prayer (9:18) introducing the comparative narrative. It is difficult, within the framework of historical criticism, to settle this question, but the speech of 10:1–21 completely lacks the characteristics of an ending or summary and seamlessly connects with the content of the rest of the work, which, however, no longer has the characteristics typical of an encomium. So if this section is related to the encomium on the one hand, and on the other hand to the further part (chapters Wis 11–19), then it can be considered a form of connector, a structural transition.⁵⁴ Then the prayer of the speaker-sage should be regarded as the conclusion of the encomium, as a form of expression within a larger whole.

Summary

The author of the Book of Wisdom displays literary and rhetorical mastery. He uses various rhetorical devices with great ease, employing them in his persuasion centred around wisdom.

One of the genres he uses is the encomium, which is subordinated to the advisory persuasion prevalent in the Book of Wisdom. The author uses the qualities of encomium as a eulogy, but he does not limit himself to showing the audience the beauty and qualities of wisdom. Above all, he focuses his attention on encouraging his audience to seek, receive and practise the beneficial gift of wisdom, and from this angle, he chooses an appropriate strategy for reaching his audience. To this end, he concentrates above all on properly defining what wisdom he has in mind, so that it is this wisdom that becomes the object of striving for the addressees of his speech. The

⁵³ Cf. e.g., A. Kubiś, “Rhetorical Syncrisis,” 488–490.

⁵⁴ Various hypotheses as to the function of the 10th chapter in the structure of the Book of Wisdom and its literary and persuasive features are presented in the monograph by A.T. Glicksman, *Wisdom of Solomon 10*, 88–100.

choice of encomium may therefore come as a bit of a surprise due to the fact that logical argumentation does not dominate this form of speech, and this seems to be the most desirable for achieving the intended goal. However, the author's strategy is not misguided.

Firstly, the author precedes the encomium with a lengthy argument of an advisory nature, which, although not focused on wisdom, is at least clearly a preparation of the audience for further arguments. In the encomium, the author reaffirms his encouraging persuasive aims, which he also reveals to the audience. The *dispositio* of the encomium does not reflect the rigid structure of rhetorical exercises. The author executes the eulogy with significant momentum. Firstly, he uses the techniques of mimesis to put the praise of wisdom into King Solomon's mouth by appealing to the authority of the acknowledged sage. Secondly, he constructs a complex encomium in which the praise of wisdom as a desirable gift, whose only giver and source is God himself, and the praise of Wisdom personified, who is the author of all good gifts and ensures friendship with God, are interwoven with the paradox-based periautology of the speaker-sage, in whom King Solomon can be recognised. Although the encomium is put in the mouth of the speaker-sage and part of the text is devoted to praising his life, it is not he and his achievements that are the object of praise. The figure serves the purpose of advisory rhetoric, being a type of argumentation by the example of life, and also enhances the epideictic potential of the encomium to show the ways and works of the Wisdom of God. The speaker presents his life in such a way that it becomes clear to the audience that, were it not for the gift of Divine Wisdom, it would not be praiseworthy – for everything that has brought him glory is due to the prior endowment.

The author uses the characteristic elements of the encomium's disposition in accordance with the art of topics prescribed for it, such as praise of origin, praise of upbringing, praise of virtues, deeds, favourable fate, and manages the individual properties in accordance with his persuasive assumptions. The peculiar syncretism of the encomium, containing praises of wisdom presented in various scenes, gave the author the opportunity to use the argumentation of *logos*, *ethos* and *pathos*, which is conducive to persuading the

recipient to seek and live with the Wisdom worthy of all desires and aspirations, granted by God Himself to those who ask Him for it.

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