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THE CHARACTERIZATION OF TOBIT IN THE LIGHT OF *TOBIT* 1:1-2

A dissertation by

Emmanuel Kabamba Nshimbi, S.J.

presented to

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Jesuit School of Theology
of Santa Clara University
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Committee Signatures

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0. INTRODUCTION

The character Tobit intrigues readers and hearers of the *Book of Tobit*.¹ He becomes an orphan at a tender age in Israel, when his father, Tobiel, dies. Thus, his grandmother, Deborra, instructs him in religious ways of truth and righteousness. When the rest of his tribe secedes from all the tribes of Israel to worship idols, he continues to exercise truth and righteousness. In exile in Nineveh, he risks summary execution by burying Israelites whom the king of Assyria murders. Misfortune befalls Tobit on the night when he buries yet another abandoned dead body of an Israelite. Droppings of a bird fall into his eyes, while he lies down with his face up in his courtyard, resulting in unclear vision. Healers try to remedy his situation but in vain, as he becomes totally blind.

Tobit's wife, Hanna, finds employment to support Tobit and Tobiah, their son, because Tobit cannot be employed due to his blindness. One day, Tobit's wife brings a goat with her to her household, in addition to her wages from her employers. That does not go well with Tobit because he thinks that his wife has stolen that goat from her employers. A domestic quarrel that ensues between Tobit and his wife—who fends for the challenged household—highlights his constricted space to exercise truth and righteousness, due to the experience of

1. This dissertation concerns the character after whom the book is named. Thus, I distinguish between the character and the book in this dissertation by using 'Tobit' in non-italics to refer to the character under inquiry, and '*Tobit*' in italics to refer to the narrative.

the exile. He turns to God in prayer, after which the mercy and glory of God gradually manifest themselves in his troubled situation.

Unlike many other names in Tob 1:1, Tobit has no *–el* ending in his personal name. In Hebrew, *–el* means God. This dissertation characterizes Tobit in the *Book of Tobit*, specifically in the light of Tob 1:1-2. The entry question is the following: What does the name ‘Tobit’ signify amidst other personal names ending in *–el* in Tob 1:1-2?

A situated reason for this dissertation involves my interest in meanings or significances of personal names in a family or society. A personal name can characterize a person as well as his or her family. As an example, the name ‘John,’ which in Hebrew can mean ‘Graced by Yahweh,’ characterizes its bearer and his family in Anglophone and European countries generally as Christian. In Zambian society, the name *Mutinta* characterizes its bearer as a male born between or after two female siblings, or a female born between or after two male siblings. Thus, the name *Mutinta* reveals not only something about himself/herself but also something about his or her family. I suggest that the name ‘Tobit’ in Tob 1:1-2 cannot be an exception.

1.1. Scope and Nature of the Dissertation

Schüngel-Straumann, Moore, and Fitzmyer, to mention but a few scholars, noted the peculiarity of the name ‘Tobit’ in Tob 1:1.² Tobit’s name lacks an *–el*

2. Helen Schüngel-Straumann, *Tobit*, Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2000), 52; Carey A. Moore, *Tobit: A New Translation*

ending amidst many names with –e/ endings. According to Moore, we should consider the name ‘Tobit’ as a hypocoristicon or an apocope similar to the lexeme ‘Hanani’ in 1 Kgs 16:7, which is “the abbreviated form of Hananiah of Jer 28:5.”³ Like Moore, Schüngel-Straumann suggested that we should understand the lexeme ‘Tobit’ as a shortened form of ‘Tobiyahu’ because of the narrative’s overture which characterizes Yahweh as good, given the meanings of the names ending in –e/ in Tob 1:1.⁴ These scholars presumed that Tobit’s name, as literarily presented, does not have any significance, because it just stands for a shorter form of a complete name.

According to Fitzmyer, names with –e/ endings in Tob 1:1 represent Tobit’s ancestors in pre-exilic northern Israel and serve to punctuate the God-centered nature of the narrative.⁵ Those ancestors represent orthodox Israelites, because they bear –e/ elements in their names.⁶ These elements represent something more than pre-exilic orthodox religious practitioners and the narrative’s theocentric thrust.

with *Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible 40A (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 99-100; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2003), 92.

3. Moore, *Tobit*, 99; Henry Bosley Woolf et al., *Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, MA: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1981), 559, 52, define hypocorism, from which comes hypocoristicon, as “the use of pet names,” and apocope as “the loss of one or more sounds or letters at the end of a word (as in *sing* from Old English *singan*),” respectively.

4. Schüngel-Straumann, *Tobit*, 52-53.

5. Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 92.

6. Marco Zappella, *Tobit: Introduzione, traduzione e commento*, Nuova versione della Bibbia dai testi antichi 30 (Cinisello Balsamo: San Paolo, 2010), 37.

Like the name 'Tobit,' names ending in *-el* in Tob 1:1 reappear, indirectly or directly, as *Leitwörter* in the narrative. A *Leitwort* refers to a word or root of a word that recurs in a text, whose repetition enables the reader or hearer of a narrative to decipher a meaning of the text.⁷ Tob 1:8 echoes the word 'Tobiel,' Tobit's father, because it states that he dies, leaving Tobit as an orphan at a tender age. His father's death highlights the alienation that Tobit faces from his own religious family due to the experience of the exile. His name, which shares the same root with his father's name, and yet has no *-el* ending, reveals a lack that pertains to his religious family and the experience of the exile in Tob 1:1-2. Tobit, together with Tobiel (Tob 1:1a), constitutes what I have termed as the 'initial Tobit,' who faces alienation from members of his religious family, like his father, and who desires an end to the experience of the exile.

The names 'Hananiel' and 'Adouel' (Tob 1:1b) follow immediately after 'Tobit' and 'Tobiel.' The narrative does not make any explicit reference to Hananiel after Tob 1:1. However, it witnesses to names that have the same word-root as Hananiel. The names 'Hanna,' Tobit's wife, and 'Hananiah,' Azariah's father (Tob 5:13), share the same word-root as Hananiel in Tob 1:1b. Hanna prompts Tobit to turn to his deity in prayer, after which his prayer receives attention before the glory of the great Raphael, whom God sends to restore Tobit. The word-roots for Hananiel, Hanna, and Hananiah, and Adouel, which

7. Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, rev. ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2011), 117.

signifies the deity's glory,⁸ highlight the deity's response to the 'initial Tobit' with grace and glory. The names 'Hananiël' and 'Adouël' in Tob 1:1b characterize what I have termed as the 'middle Tobit,' to whom the deity responds with grace and glory. If the rupture in Tobit's name only represents his traditional family which strays from the Jewish religion, the names in Tob 1:1 do not form a part of that rupture.⁹

Gabael and Asiel (Tob 1:1c) follow Hananiël and Adouël. The name 'Gabael' serves as a narrative device to push the story of *Tobit* forward. After Tob 1:1c a bearer of that name keeps the silver or money, which Tobit entrusts with him before Tobit becomes blind. After he becomes blind and poor, Tobit sends his son to go and recover the silver or money from Gabael. This journey enables Tobiah not only to marry Sarra, his kinswoman, and free her from Asmodeus the demon, but also to restore his father's sight.

The name 'Asiel' does not explicitly occur in the narrative, but it proves to be pertinent for the context of the exile in Tob 1:1-2 because it echoes the deity's allocation of land to Tobit.¹⁰ For Tobit, an allocation of land signifies an end to exile, which results from his dropping-off from the land of Israel. The proximity of the names 'Gabael' and 'Asiel' in Tob 1:1c indicates that they can be understood

8. Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament: Study Edition*, ed. and trans. M. E. J. Richardson (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 1:791; see also Schüngel-Straumann, *Tobit*, 53.

9. Cf. Elena Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu: Lecture narrative du livre de Tobie*, eds. Didier Luciani and Jean-Pierre Sonnet, *Le livre et le rouleau* (Paris: Lessius, 2014), 15-16, 19. This book consists of two parts. The first part comprises a commentary of the entire *Book of Tobit* (GI) by Elena Di Pede et al., and the second part has articles written by individual authors.

10. Koehler and Baumgartner, *HALOT*, 1:893.

in the light of each other. They draw a relationship between Tobit's restoration, which the word 'Gabael' evokes, and an allocation of a portion of land to Tobit as the end of his exilic experience, which the word 'Asiel' echoes. Gabael and Asiel comprise the 'final Tobit,' who experiences restoration and an end of the exile.

1.2. Thesis

A careful analysis of key texts in the *Book of Tobit* reveals that names ending in *-el* in Tob 1:1-2 characterize Tobit, as they drive the narrative from the 'initial Tobit,' who experiences exile and alienation from his religious family, through the 'middle Tobit,' who turns to God in prayer, to the 'final Tobit,' who reunites with his religious family and experiences an end of the exile.

1.2.1. Method

Before the discovery of the Long Greek Recension of *Tobit* (GII) in the library of St. Catherine's monastery at Sinai in 1844, Christians used the Short Greek Recension (GI).¹¹ Today, some Christian Bibles contain the text of GI (e.g. *KJV*), while others have the GII text (e.g. *NABRE*). The discovery of the *Tobit* fragments at Qumran, four in Aramaic and one in Hebrew, has bolstered *Tobit*

11. Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 4. Codices Vaticanus (4th century), Alexandrinus (5th century), and Venetus (10th century) preserve GI; and Codex Sinaiticus (S) (4th century) preserves GII. Robert Hanhart, ed., *Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum: Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis editum*. Vol. VIII, 5, *Tobit*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983, contains the critical text of the *Book of Tobit*.

studies. Evidently, the fragments argue for Hebrew or Aramaic as the language of the most ancient text of *Tobit*.¹² These fragments constitute only one fifth of the book.¹³

Unlike the Vulgate (VG) that calls both father and son by the same name 'Tobias' in the *Tobit* narrative, the Qumran fragments witness to the father's name as 'Tobi,' and the son's name as 'Tobiah.'¹⁴ The Qumran fragments thus agree with and bolster the witness of ancient texts of GI and GII on the naming of the two heroes in the narrative. Additionally, unlike VG, Qumran fragments witness to an intradiegetic narrator in Tob 1:3-3:6, like GI and GII. Thus, VG witnesses to a different ancient tradition than GI, GII, and the Qumran fragments. The Qumran Aramaic and Hebrew fragments agree more with GII than with GI.¹⁵ However, in some instances, GI agrees more with the Qumran fragments than with GII.¹⁶ For example, GII lacks Tob 4:7-18,¹⁷ but GI and the Qumran fragments witness to those verses.¹⁸

12. Moore, *Tobit*, 34.

13. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "Tobit," in *The Apocrypha*, ed. Martin Goodman, The Oxford Bible Commentary (Oxford: University Press, 2012), 13.

14. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "Tobit," in *Qumran Cave 4*, vol. 14, *Parabiblical Texts, Part 2*, ed. Emanuel Tov, Discoveries in the Judaean Desert 19 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 8, 51, 68. The VG of *Tobit* is in the critical edition of Monachorum Abbatiae Pontificiae Sancti Hieronymi in Urbe Ordinis Sancti Benedicti, *Biblia Sacra: iuxta Latinam Vulgatam Versionem Ad Codicum Fidem Iussu PII PP. XII*, vol. 8, *Libri Ezrae Tobiae Iudith* (Romae: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1950), 153-209.

15. Fitzmyer, "Tobit," in *Qumran Cave 4*, 2.

16. Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 9-10.

17. Zappella, *Tobit*, 65.

18. Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 170.

I acknowledge the complexity of the textual situation of *Tobit*, and appreciate the availability of at least two ancient traditions of the *Book of Tobit*, which the Qumran Hebrew and Aramaic fragments on *Tobit* as well as GI and GII witness. Textual diversities signal conversational traces with their respective audiences in the history of textual transmission.¹⁹ I regard the origins of these diverse ancient textual traditions as analogous to the origins of different languages at the tower of Babel (Gen 11:1-9), to the effect that the question of priority holds little significance than the convenience of the text to the current study.²⁰

Thus, this dissertation prioritizes GI. Besides GI's character as an ancient text amongst others, it does not offer sturdy clues for characterization, because of its reservations to utilize other Biblical traditions for characterizing Tobit. In that vein, GI proves to be an interesting and enjoyable text for exploring Tobit's character. Nonetheless, I highlight significant textual similarities and diversities from Qumran fragments, VG, and GI, which prove to be relevant for the characterization of Tobit.

I now turn to the narrative aspect of this dissertation. Di Pede et al. conducted a thorough narrative analysis of the *Book of Tobit*.²¹ They noted that

19. Jean-François Racine, "The Edition of the Greek New Testament: A Plea and a Challenge," in *Studies on the Text of the New Testament and Early Christianity: Essays in Honor of Michael W. Holmes On the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*, eds. Daniel M. Gurtner, Juan Hernández Jr. and Paul Foster, New Testament Tools, Studies and Documents 50 (Boston: Brill, 2015), 84.

20. See Ibid.; 84, 88-89.

21. Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 13-137.

the lack of an –el ending in ‘Tobit’ highlights his ancestors’ withdrawal from the tribes of Israel to worship idols.²² I examine that conclusion by studying the narrative function of names ending in –el in Tob 1:1-2. In the process, I characterize Tobit in the *Book of Tobit*. As the title of this dissertation implies, I employ narrative criticism with a focus on characterization. I utilize a combination of the following narrative elements, some of which I briefly highlight in the following paragraphs: sequence, proper names, plot and setting, dynamic functions of character, character relations with others and oneself, trauma, space, and other theories which prove to be relevant for the study.

I treat proper names ending in –el in Tob 1:1-2 as ordered details, whose functions I analyze for the characterization of Tobit, because characterization is sensitive to sequence in a narrative.²³ The proper name ‘Tobit’ distinguishes itself from other names in the narrative, such as Tobiah, Tobiel, Hananiel, Adouel, Gabael, and Asiel, to mention but a few of them. As such, this dissertation appreciates his name as Tobit proper, and not an apocope or a shortened form for Tobiah or Tobiel or Tobiyahu.²⁴ I examine the significance of the proper name ‘Tobit’ for his characterization, because proper names offer clues to character.²⁵

22. Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 15-16, 19.

23. John A. Darr, *On Character Building: The Reader and the Rhetoric of Characterization in Luke-Acts*, Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 42.

24. Cf. Moore, *Tobit*, 99-100.

25. Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 124.

As such, Docherty earlier observed that a name comprises a deposit of traits and qualities, which facilitate characterization.²⁶

A character functions within margins of a plot in a particular setting. The link between plot and character is necessary in a narrative because a plot without characters is like an umbrella without a canopy.²⁷ In characterizing Tobit, I analyze narrative units or plots, which are linked to the –e/ names in Tob 1:1-2 and to Tobit himself. Characterization exhibits dynamism in its construction of character.²⁸ It involves an assessment and successive construction of character as the reader reads along a narrative. Thus, characterization pays attention to changes in character in a narrative. I pay attention to any changes in Tobit's character, as the narrative unfolds, in order to have a whole image of his character.²⁹

Relations with others build character.³⁰ As such, characters in the *Tobit* narrative like Tobiah, Tobit's son, Hanna, his wife, and Raphael, the angel who comes to restore Tobit, to mention but a few, contribute to the characterization of Tobit, because they interact with him. I pay attention not only to what the others say about Tobit in the narrative, but also to what Tobit says about himself. If what he says cannot be taken at face value, I consider the effects of his troubled

26. Thomas Docherty, *Reading (Absent) Character: Towards a Theory of Characterization in Fiction* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 74.

27. Daniel Marguerat and Yvan Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1999), 58.

28. Darr, *On Character Building*, 42.

29. Bal, *Narratology*, 126.

30. *Ibid.*, 127.

situation or trauma on what he says.³¹ The constriction or expansion of space to live fruitfully also factors on the characterization of Tobit, because of the exilic setting in which he finds himself.³²

1.3. Outline of the Dissertation

This dissertation contains seven chapters, including the current introduction. Chapter Two deals with the textual situation of the *Book of Tobit*, and it has three sections: the significance of the Qumran fragments of *Tobit*, a comparison of GI, GII, and VG, and apparent lacunae in GII. Chapter Three suggests a function of theophoric names in Tob 1:1-2, and it comprises four sections: delineation and analysis of the text of Tob 1:1-2, the characterization of the 'initial Tobit' in the light of the same Tobit and Tobiel (Tob 1:1a, 2), the characterization of the 'middle Tobit' in the light of Hananiel and Adouel (Tob 1:1b), and the characterization of the 'final Tobit' in the light of Gabael and Asiel (Tob 1:1c).

In Chapter Four I elaborate on the 'initial Tobit' in Tob 1:1a, 2, with the support of three key texts, in three different sections. In the first section I delineate and analyze Tob 1:3-9, in which Tobit looks back to his life in Israel before the exile, and then I characterize Tobit from the same text, in a subsection. In the second section, I delineate and analyze Tob 1:10-22, in which

31. Bal, *Narratology*, 150.

32. See *Ibid.*, 136.

Tobit shares his experiences in Nineveh during the exile, and then I characterize Tobit from the same text in a subsection. In the third section, I delineate and analyze Tob 2:1-10, in which Tobit loses his sight, and I characterize Tobit from the same text in a subsection.

In Chapter Five I elaborate on the ‘middle Tobit’ in Tob 1:1b by using two key texts from the narrative, in two different sections. In the first section, I delineate and analyze Tob 2:11-14, in which Tobit and Hanna have a domestic misunderstanding, before I characterize Tobit from the same text in a subsection. In the second section, I delineate and analyze Tob 3:1-17, in which Tobit and Sarra pray to their deity, and I characterize Tobit in that same text, in a subsection.

In Chapter Six, I elaborate on the ‘final Tobit’ in Tob 1:1c in four sections, by utilizing three key texts and experiences of a journey from the narrative. In the first section I delineate and analyze *Tobit* 4, which Tobit presents as a testament to Tobiah, his son, although Tobit does not die at the end of it. In a subsection that follows, I characterize Tobit in *Tobit* 4. In the second section, I consider how Tobiah’s journey to recover money or silver from Gabael in Rages of Media serves to restore the theophoric rupture in Tobit’s name. I delineate and analyze Tob 12:6-20, which comprises Raphael’s last words to Tobit and Tobiah, in the third section; and I characterize Tobit from the same text, in a subsection. In the fourth section, I delineate and analyze Tob 14:3-11, in what can be termed as his second or last testament, after which he really dies; and in a subsection which follows, I characterize Tobit in that last testament.

Chapter Seven concludes this dissertation, in which I present its summary and significance.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0. TEXTUAL SITUATION OF THE BOOK OF TOBIT

In this chapter, I argue for the Short Greek Recension of the *Book of Tobit* (GI) as the base text for this study, because of its antiquity, and its unique constraints to explicitly characterize Tobit as a righteous man. This makes GI, unlike other ancient versions of *Tobit*, enjoyable and unpredictable or open to surprises. That choice proves pertinent, because I point out that the *Book of Tobit* exists in at least two contemporaneous ancient versions.¹

I also prove that Tobit lacks an *-el* or *ah* ending in his name, unlike his ancestors in Tob 1:1, thereby rendering credible the quest of this dissertation, which focuses on that theophoric lack in Tobit's name. Such an endeavor requires witnesses from ancient texts, because later translations tend to embellish some names or words, especially if they consider them insignificant to the interpretation of the text. Alter observed that "the operation of the *Leitwort*, of course, will not be so evident in translation as in the original."² In the Greek texts of *Tobit*, the translation of the main character's name as 'Tobit' or 'Tobith'

1. See also D. C. Simpson, "The Chief Recensions of the Book of Tobit," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 14, no. 3 (July 1913): 529. This article has no privileged knowledge of the Qumran Aramaic and Hebrew fragments of the *Book of Tobit*.

2. Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, rev. ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2011), 117.

embellishes the name 'Tobi,' which does not witness to the final 't' or 'th.'³ This quest may prove to be more complex in the Vulgate (VG) of the *Book of Tobit*, which calls both father and son by the same name, Tobias, because VG represents a different tradition than GI.

Ancient versions of *Tobit* known to us exist in Greek, Latin, Aramaic and Hebrew, among others.⁴ The existence of several ancient versions of the book shows the relevance of the book in the history of its users and transmission. The story of the tower of Babel (Gen 11:1-9) sheds light on the existence of those versions, which resemble the different languages of the world that spring from the tower of Babel.⁵ The tower of Babel also sheds light on the plausibility of a contemporaneous circulation of at least two different ancient versions of *Tobit*, just as at least two languages simultaneously come into existence at the tower of Babel.

Different languages should be appreciated for their characteristics, as a reflection of the people's worldview, just as ancient versions of *Tobit* should be valued for their conversational traces with their respective audiences. Depending

3. See Robert Hanhart, ed., *Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum: Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis editum*, vol. VIII, 5, *Tobit* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983), 59.

4. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2003), 1-14.

5. See Jean-François Racine, "The Edition of the Greek New Testament: A Plea and a Challenge," in *Studies on the Text of the New Testament and Early Christianity: Essays in Honor of Michael W. Holmes On the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*, eds. Daniel M. Gurtner, Juan Hernández Jr. and Paul Foster, New Testament Tools, Studies and Documents 50 (Boston: Brill, 2015), 84.

on the outcomes of those diversities, which exhibit characteristics of a given language or version, one can engage a language or version, as one deems appropriate. Thus, my choice for the base text in this dissertation results from a comparison of ancient versions. I choose GI because it offers convenience, elegance, surprises, and enjoyment, given a wider choice of contemporaneous ancient texts or versions.⁶

Textual elegance, as much as inelegance, affects ancient texts. It enables readers and hearers of the Biblical text to appreciate and enjoy it. As such, no scribe seeks to complicate what s/he intends the hearers or readers to comprehend. Neither does s/he necessarily write difficultly and incomprehensively for the readers. S/he can make mistakes, just as we make mistakes when we write articles. However, we do not leave those mistakes to be read by others as the more credible work, and let others try to make sense out of them. We edit our works and correct our mistakes in order that our targeted audiences might enjoy reading and listening to what we present to them.

I employ textual critical principles of external and internal evidence to demonstrate GI's suitability for the characterization of Tobit in the light of Tob 1:1-2.⁷ I hinge external evidence on manuscripts that make up and support the ancient versions of *Tobit*, because the manuscripts' ages or dates affirm the contemporaneity of some ancient versions of *Tobit*. For internal evidence in the

6. Racine, "The Edition of the Greek New Testament," 92, 94.

7. Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994), 10-15.

ancient versions, I pay attention to omissions, which prove to be “contrary to pious belief.”⁸ I also pay attention to differences in the versions, which border on their use of Biblical traditions, so that I highlight GI’s surprises, and constraints to explicitly characterize Tobit as a righteous man.

I elaborate on what I outline in the previous paragraphs, in the following three sections: (a) the significance of the Qumran fragments of *Tobit*, (b) a comparison of GI, GII, and VG, and (c) apparent lacunae in GII. In the process, I also highlight the relevance of the same sections for the characterization of Tobit.

2.1. The Significance of the Qumran Fragments of the *Book of Tobit*

The discovery of fragments of the *Book of Tobit* in 1952 in Qumran Cave 4, five years after the initial discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947, proved significant for *Tobit* studies.⁹ As far back as 1958, Milik had discovered that in ancient times, the *Book of Tobit* existed not only in Aramaic but also in Hebrew.¹⁰ The discovery proved the existence of a Hebrew version of *Tobit*, besides Aramaic forms. Milik suggested that, of the two languages discovered at Qumran, Aramaic appeared to be the original language of the *Book of Tobit*.¹¹

8. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 13.

9. Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 8.

10. Milik, *Ten Years of Discovery in the Wilderness of Judaea*, trans. J. Strugnell, *Studies in Biblical Theology* 26 (Naperville, IL: Alec R. Allenson, 1958), 31.

11. *Ibid.*; see also Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 25

The search for the most ancient language of the *Book of Tobit* still vexes scholars. The Qumran fragments of *Tobit*, which Fitzmyer initially dated from ca. 100 BCE to 25 CE, show that Hebrew and Aramaic comprise the most ancient languages of the book.¹² Not long ago, Fitzmyer revised the dates of the texts of the fragments to range “from mid-first century BCE to mid first century CE.”¹³ These texts prove that at least five earlier texts of *Tobit*, four in Aramaic and one in Hebrew circulated contemporaneously prior to GI and GII.

Even after the discovery of Qumran fragments of *Tobit*, Deselaers proposed Greek as the most ancient language of *Tobit*, and GI as the most ancient version of the book extant to us.¹⁴ I suggest that the use of Hebrew or Aramaic personal names in the Greek texts shows their reliance on Hebrew or Aramaic texts. The Qumran Aramaic and Hebrew texts of the *Book of Tobit* buttress that argument. They witness to טובי, (Tobi), the character named after the *Book of Tobit*.¹⁵ Both Aramaic and Hebrew attest to the root of that name,

12. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, “Tobit,” in *Qumran Cave 4*, vol. 14, *Parabiblical Texts, Part 2*, ed. Emanuel Tov, Discoveries in the Judaean Desert 19 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 1-76.

13. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, “Tobit,” in *The Apocrypha*, ed. Martin Goodman, The Oxford Bible Commentary (Oxford: University Press, 2012), 13.

14. Paul Deselaers, *Das Buch Tobit: Studien zu seiner Entstehung, Komposition und Theologie*, Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 43 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982), 19.

15. Fitzmyer, “Tobit,” in *Qumran Cave 4*, 51, 68.

with the same meaning.¹⁶ Also, both Aramaic¹⁷ and Hebrew¹⁸ attest to the first person singular suffix at the end of the name. In addition, the Qumran Hebrew and Aramaic fragments on *Tobit* witness to the name טוביה (Tobiah), Tobit's son.¹⁹ These names do not reveal the most ancient language of the narrative, but they show that the book existed in both Aramaic and Hebrew. In any case, 'Tobit' in the Greek versions translates 'Tobi,' and not Tobiah or Tobiel.

Milik added that the Qumran Aramaic and Hebrew texts agree with the Long Greek Recension (GII), which Codex Sinaiticus preserves, and the Vetus Latina (VL).²⁰ Fitzmyer published the Qumran fragments of the *Book of Tobit* in 1995 in the "Discoveries in the Judaean Desert" (DJD) series, already cited previously,²¹ although J.T. Milik made some initial reports, as shown in the previous paragraphs. Like Milik, Fitzmyer argued for Aramaic as the original

16. Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament: Study Edition*, ed. and trans. M. E. J. Richardson (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 1:367, 2:1882.

17. Franz Rosenthal, *A Grammar of Biblical Aramaic*, 7th ed., Porta Linguarum Orientalium 5 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006), 30.

18. P. Joüon and T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, 2nd ed., Subsidia Biblica (Roma: Gregorian & Biblical Press, 2006), 263.

19. Fitzmyer, "Tobit," in *Qumran Cave 4*, 8.

20. Milik, *Ten Years of Discovery in the Wilderness of Judaea*, 31. A critical edition of VL *Tobit* for the Vetus Latina Institute in Beuron, Germany, is still under preparation by Jean-Marie Auwers. In the meantime, one can use the edition of A. E. Brooke, N. McLean, and H. St J. Thackeray, *The Old Testament in Greek*, vol. 3/1, *Esther, Judith, Tobit* (Cambridge: University Press, 1940), 123-144.

21. Fitzmyer, "Tobit," in *Qumran Cave 4*, 1-76.

language of *Tobit*,²² and agreed that the Qumran fragments agree more with GII and VL than with any other text.²³

The latter suggestion has made GII the preferred text for Bible translations and scholarly work, because of its affinities to the 'original' text. It fails to appreciate the agreements of the Short Greek Recension (GI) with the Qumran texts against GII. As an example, GII differs from the Qumran fragments on *Tobit*, because it does not contain verses 7-18 of *Tobit* 4. GI contains those verses and shows more closeness to Qumran fragments than GII in this matter of content.

Fitzmyer cited a striking example of a difference between the Qumran fragments of *Tobit* and S/GII in Tob 14:2, by stating that,

a better example of the agreement of both the Aramaic texts and the Hebrew text with the Vetus Latina would be Tob 14:1 (2), which mentions Tobit's age as fifty-eight, when he was blinded, שנין חמשין ותמנה (4QTob^a ar 18:13), which agrees with the Vetus Latina, *quingquaginta autem et octo annorum erat cum oculis captus est*, where S has ἐξήκοντα δύο ἐτῶν ἦν, "he was sixty-two years old."²⁴

S/GII clearly diverges from Qumran fragments and VL. Fitzmyer did not mention that in this same example which he gave, GI also agrees with Qumran fragments against GII. GI Tob 14:2a states that Καὶ ἦν ἐτῶν πεντήκοντα ὀκτώ, ὅτε ἀπώλεσεν τὰς ὀψεις, "And he was fifty-eight years (old), when he destroyed

22. Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 25.

23. Ibid., 9-10, see also Fitzmyer, "Tobit," in *Qumran Cave 4*, 2.

24. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Christian Origins*, Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2000), 140.

the eyes.” In addition, both GI and VL lack two of Tobit’s ancestors in Tob 1:1, Raphael and Ragouel, thereby agreeing with each other against GII. Qumran fragments offer no support here. GI and VL also witness to Hanna, Tobit’s wife, in Tob 1:9, whereas GII does not.²⁵ Further, both GI and VL Tob 1:14 witness to ‘Rages,’ against GII.²⁶ They also add the noun ‘king’ to Sennachereim, which GII does not (Tob 1:18).²⁷

One may, therefore, reconsider the opinion that GI abridges or redacts GII, because of instances where GI agrees with Qumran fragments and/or VL against GII.²⁸ GI also exercises a form of independence from GII, which proves that it does not abridge GII. For instance, GI shows that all the maidservants in Tob 3:8 reproach Sarra, whereas GII reports a single maidservant, who reproaches Sarra. I suggest that GI and GII represent two different traditions, whose priority cannot be adjudicated, because they share different traditions witnessed in the Qumran Hebrew and Aramaic texts. In addition, GI and GII come to existence at about the same time (fourth-fifth century). These diversities should not be detested but embraced, just like linguistic differences from the tower of Babel.²⁹

25. Vincent T. M. Skemp, *The Vulgate of Tobit Compared with Other Ancient Witnesses*, SBL Dissertation Series 180 (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 46.

26. *Ibid.*, 50.

27. *Ibid.*, 57.

28. Cf. Simpson, “The Chief Recensions of the Book of Tobit,” 518-525.

29. See Racine, “The Edition of the Greek New Testament,” 84.

In that vein, a reason other than affinity to the Qumran texts on *Tobit* can be proposed, for the preference of one Greek text of *Tobit* over another. It should also be noted that the combined Qumran Hebrew and Aramaic texts of the *Book of Tobit* constitute only one fifth of the book.³⁰

In sum, the Qumran fragments of the *Book of Tobit* highlight at least three significant propositions. 1. The quest for the most ancient language reveals that the text existed in at least five different texts in Hebrew and Aramaic, prior to GI and GII. 2. It points to the plausibility of GI and GII as representatives of different traditions from the Qumran texts, which circulated contemporaneously. 3. The Qumran fragments clarify some Hebrew or Aramaic names that this dissertation employs from GI.

2.2. A Comparison of the Short Greek Recension (GI), the Long Greek Recension (S/GII), and the Vulgate (VG) of the *Book of Tobit*

The age range (fourth-fifth century) and textual differences exhibited by GI, GII, and VG render the suggestion that they existed contemporaneously, from diverse textual parents, plausible. This section also demonstrates that GI exhibits more constraints than GII and VG, to explicitly characterize Tobit as a righteous man. Before I compare these ancient versions, I briefly describe them.

30. Fitzmyer, "Tobit," in *The Apocrypha*, 13.

MSS A (Codex Alexandrinus), B (Codex Vaticanus), V (Codex Venetus), and 990 (Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 1594) witness mainly to G1.³¹ The British Museum in London houses the fifth century manuscript of Codex Alexandrinus, and the Vatican library in Rome keeps the fourth century manuscript of Codex Vaticanus, while the Marciana library in Venice houses the eighth century manuscript of the Codex Venetus. The university library in Cambridge, England, preserves the third century fragment of Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 1594, which proves significant for Tob 12:14-19. Hanhart mentions many other miniscule manuscripts of later centuries, too many to mention here, that bear witness to G1.³² Elegant Greek and brevity, plus some differences outlined below, distinguish G1 from Codex Sinaiticus of GII.³³

The discovery of Codex Sinaiticus (S) in 1844 by C. von Tischendorf in the monastery of St. Catherine at Mt. Sinai brought GII to light.³⁴ MS S of GII consists of two parts, in two different places. The Leipzig University Library in Germany houses one part, which contains Tob 1:1-2:2; and the British Museum in London keeps the other part, which contains Tob 2:2 up to the end.³⁵ The entire fourth century MS, nonetheless, “appeared only in *Bibliorum Codex Sinaiticus Petropolitanus* (1862).”³⁶ A sixth century papyrus fragment MS 910,

31. Hanhart, *Tobit*, 7-10.

32. Ibid., 8-9.

33. Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 4.

34. Ibid.

35. Hanhart, *Tobit*, 7.

36. Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 4n8.

also known as Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 1076, resident at the John Rylands University Library of Manchester in England, witnesses to GII Tob 2:2-5, 8.³⁷ According to Fitzmyer, an eleventh century fragmentary miniscule MS 319, housed at Vatopedi monastery on Mt. Athos in Greece, contains GII from Tob 3:6-6:16.³⁸ However, S/GII does not contain verses 7-18 of chap. 4; and for a large part, MS 319 agrees with GI, which also contains verses 7-18 of chap. 4.³⁹ VG contains those verses, and thus agrees with GI and the Qumran fragments on *Tobit* against GII.

VG came about in the fourth century after Pope Damasus asked Jerome to make a revision of the Latin Bible, because he desired to have a unified version of the VL.⁴⁰ In this vein, “all commentators maintain some use of VL of Tobit by Jerome, but the textual situation of VL at the time of Jerome was probably just as confused as it is today.”⁴¹ Jerome also utilized an Aramaic text of the *Book of Tobit*, in his redaction of VG *Tobit*, although he did not understand Aramaic. He used the services of someone who understood both Aramaic and Hebrew, so that what he heard in Hebrew from the Aramaic, he rendered into

37. Hanhart, *Tobit*, 9-10.

38. Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 4.

39. Ibid., 4n6.

40. Ibid., 6-7.

41. Skemp, *The Vulgate of Tobit*, 25.

Latin.⁴² That may explain the considerable differences between VG *Tobit* and the Qumran Aramaic fragments on *Tobit*.⁴³

VG *Tobit* differs considerably from GI and GII. Both GI and GII witness to an intradiegetic narrator from Tob 1:3-3:6, and an extradiegetic narrator in Tob 1:1-2, and 3:7 and following, whereas VG *Tobit* witnesses to an extradiegetic narrator all throughout the narrative. By using GI, the current study draws more fruit from the characterization of Tobit by both the intradiegetic and extradiegetic narrators than by relying solely on an extradiegetic narrator, because of their different points of view. Roughly, an intradiegetic narrator narrates a story from within the story world, and an extradiegetic narrator narrates it from outside.⁴⁴

Unlike GI and GII, VG *Tobit* names both father and son 'Tobias,' as if to present the son as his father's double.⁴⁵ In effect, both father and son in VG *Tobit* bear theophoric endings to their names, whereas only the son bears a theophoric ending to his name in both GI and GII. In this vein, the son accomplishes for his father, what his father cannot accomplish because of blindness. A reason why I do not employ VG *Tobit* as the base text for this study subsists in its lack of witness to the theophoric rupture in Tobit's name, which this dissertation

42. Jacques Paul Migne, *Patrologia Latina* (Paris: Migne, 1846), 29:25-26.

43. Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 19-21.

44. Daniel Marguerat and Yvan Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1999), 27.

45. Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 6.

investigates. In addition, unlike GI and GII, VG *Tobit* does not witness to Tobit's ancestors in Tob 1:1, on which this dissertation relies.⁴⁶

Although both GI and GII witness to Tobit's ancestors, they exhibit differences. GII adds Raphael and Ragouel to Tobit's ancestors. Intrinsic probability suggests that the names find space in Tob 1:1 because they appear in the narrative as characters, like a couple of other names such as Tobit and Gabael. Transcriptionally, a scribe could add two more names to Tobit's ancestors in GII to make it seven,⁴⁷ a perfect number in Jewish circles, in which case, GI makes for a difficult reading, "but on more mature consideration proves itself to be correct."⁴⁸ The two ancient texts need not agree, because they can be likened to diverse languages that sprung from the tower of Babel.⁴⁹

VG Tob 1:5 agrees more with GII Tob 1:5 than with GI Tob 1:5. In these texts, both VG and GII mention the 'calf' motif, and 'Jeroboam, the king of Israel.'⁵⁰ They allude to the Biblical traditions in 1 Kgs 12:29, which associate Jeroboam with calves in Bethel and Dan. This hints at VG's and GII's tendency to align their narratives with other Biblical traditions, most likely in response to questions of their audiences. GI Tob 1:5 neither refers to the 'calf' motif nor to

46. Carey A. Moore, *Tobit: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible 40A (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 62-63.

47. See Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 92.

48. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 12-13.

49. Racine, "The Edition of the Greek New Testament," 84.

50. Skemp, *The Vulgate of Tobit*, 40.

‘Jeroboam, the king of Israel.’ It represents a much more diverse tradition which refers to ‘Baal the young cow.’

GII and VG Tob 1:8 characterize Tobit as an adherent of the law of Moses and the law of God, respectively. The latter, Skemp noted, reflects Jerome’s view that the observance of the law of Moses for Christians was outmoded.⁵¹ That proves to be problematic in the light of Jerome’s reference to the law of Moses, later in the text, in VG Tob 7:14. Rather, VG Tob 1:8 reflects traces of conversation that pertain to questions of its audiences, which were influenced by the traditions that Jerome utilized for the VG of *Tobit*.⁵² VG Tob 1:8 responds to a question about Tobit’s character, because it implies that the law of God motivates his religious deeds, as a youth: “As a boy, he used to observe these and similar things according to the law of God.”⁵³ The law of God in VG Tob 1:8 differs significantly from human ordinances in GI Tob 1:8.

Likewise, GII Tob 1:8 reflects conversational traces that align themselves with the Mosaic law traditions, as a response to concerns of its audiences. I translate GII Tob 1:8, as follows:

And I used to give these things to the orphans and the widows and proselytes who were attached to the sons of Israel, I brought in and gave them in the third year, and we ate them according to the ordinance commanded about them in the law of Moses and according to the commands, which Debbora, the mother of Hananiel our father, commanded, because the father left me as an orphan and died.

51. Skemp, *The Vulgate of Tobit*, 67.

52. See Racine, “The Edition of the Greek New Testament,” 84.

53. Skemp, *The Vulgate of Tobit*, 33.

Like GII, GI Tob 1:8 also refers to Debbora's commands, but says nothing about the law (νόμος) of God or Moses. The law of Moses in GII Tob 1:8 betrays conversational traces that highlight the limitedness of Tobit's religious practice to Debbora's commands. GII's appeal to the law of Moses, besides Debbora's commands, characterizes Tobit as an adherent of God's law, which Moses mediates.

GI Tob 1:8, unlike GII and VG, does not refer to any law. Such diversities may hardly be attributed to abridgement, because they reflect the concerns of their diverse audiences.⁵⁴ GI reflects audiences that do not necessarily require explicit Biblical allusions to characterize Tobit as an observer of the Mosaic law or the law of God. In other words, GI does not show traces of conversations, which betray its audiences' concern about the characterization of Tobit as a major issue. In this vein, the question of the characterization of Tobit remains more open to surprises in GI than in GII and VG.

'Fearing God,' a common Hebrew Biblical theme, runs through texts that VG (Tob 1:10; 2:2; 2:9; 3:18) can claim as unique to it, in comparison to GII and GI.⁵⁵ Such also reflects conversational traces that VG traditions had with their audiences.⁵⁶ Moore noted a significant variation in VG Tob 2:12-18, which GI and GII do not witness, as "the narrator speaks of the example of Job."⁵⁷ "Verses 12-

54. Cf. Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 151-152.

55. Skemp, *The Vulgate of Tobit*, 83, 120.

56. Racine, "The Edition of the Greek New Testament," 84; cf. Skemp, *The Vulgate of Tobit*, 120.

57. Moore, *Tobit*, 23.

18 of Vg do not correspond to the other versions. This lengthy plus explains Tobit's suffering, lit., 'trial,' theologically in an anaphoric comparison with 'holy Job'.⁵⁸ This characterization of Tobit by VG echoes GII's understanding of Tobit's plight in Tob 12:14a, which states that "I [Raphael] was sent to tempt you," just as Job faced temptation. The Latin noun *temptatio* in VG Tob 12:13-14 echoes its counterpart in VG Tob 2:12, where the narrator likens Tobit to the righteous Job.⁵⁹

GI does not witness to the Biblical traditions associated with Job in GII Tob 5:10b and its corresponding text in VG Tob 5:12.⁶⁰ These verses in GII and VG refer to Tobit's incapacity to rejoice, because he cannot see the light of heaven, except darkness. GII Tob 5:10b addresses Tobit's reference to 'darkness,' as dwelling amongst the dead, better than VG: "I am a disabled man to the eyes and I do not see the light of heaven, but I lie in the darkness just as the dead who no longer see the light. I am living among the dead, I hear a sound of men but I do not see them." The theme of 'darkness' in relation to death echoes OT Job 10:20-21 and 14:12.⁶¹ The absence of these Biblical traditions in GI Tob 5:10 reveals conversational traces that do not face the urgency of

58. Skemp, *The Vulgate of Tobit*, 86.

59. *Ibid.*, 371.

60. *Ibid.*, 172-173.

61. *Ibid.*, 172.

narrating the story of Tobit to its audiences in the light of the Biblical Job traditions.⁶²

Like VG, GII shows more concern for the righteous characterization of Tobit than GI. As an example, the extradiegetic narrator characterizes Tobit as righteous, through the words of Ragouel to Tobiah in GII Tob 7:7: “And he (Ragouel) spoke and said to him (Tobiah), ‘A blessing be to you, child, the son of a good and sound father. What a miserably evil thing that a righteous man and one who practices almsgiving has been made blind!’ He fell upon the neck of his kinsman Tobiah and wept.” Thus, Ragouel reiterates Tobit’s practice of almsgiving as he characterizes him as righteous, good, and sound.⁶³

Compare GII Tob 7:7 with GI Tob 7:7, which I translate as follows: “And he (Ragouel) blessed him (Tobiah) and said to him, ‘Oh son of a good and sound man!’ And when he heard that Tobit destroyed the eyes, he was grieved and cried.” GI 7:7 does not explicitly refer to Tobit as righteous. Neither does it talk about his practice of almsgiving. Like GI Tob 7:7, VG Tob 7:7 refers to neither Tobit’s righteousness nor his practice of almsgiving.⁶⁴

Gabael, in GII Tob 9:6, also explicitly characterizes Tobit as a righteous man:

^{6a}And they (Raphael and Gabael) jointly rose early in the morning and went to the wedding. ^{6b}And they came into (the house of) Ragouel and

62. See Racine, “The Edition of the Greek New Testament,” 84.

63. Francis M. Macatangay, *The Wisdom Instructions in the Book of Tobit*, Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Studies 12 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 82.

64. Skemp, *The Vulgate of Tobit*, 245-246.

found Tobiah reclining at table, and he stood up and greeted him (Gabael), ⁶⁵and he (Gabael) wept and blessed him (Tobiah) and said to him, 'Good and sound boy, son of a good and sound father, righteous and almsgiver, may the Lord give you and your wife and the father and mother of your wife, a blessing of heaven. Blessed be God, because I have seen the likeness of my cousin Tobit.'

He characterizes both Tobit and his son Tobiah as good and sound in the text above. However, righteousness and the practice of almsgiving separate Tobit from his son, because Gabael characterizes Tobit alone as righteous and an almsgiver in GII Tob 9:6.

Unlike GII, GI Tob 9:6 says nothing about Tobit's righteousness and almsgiving. It reads: "And they (Gabael and Raphael) jointly rose early in the morning and went to the wedding. He (Gabael) blessed Tobiah and his wife." In this regard, GII shows closeness to VG Tob 9:9 (=GI Tob 9:6), which also characterizes Tobit as righteous and an almsgiver.⁶⁵ In addition to the characterization of Tobit as righteous and an almsgiver, VG also overtly characterizes him as a God fearer.⁶⁶ As I insinuated previously, GI tends to remain silent, where the other versions explicitly characterize Tobit as a righteous man. The reader or hearer of GI has to pay more attention to the text, to perceive Tobit's righteous character than the reader or hearer of GII and VG, which explicitly suggest Tobit's righteousness.

In VG Tob 12:13-14 (=GII Tob 12:14), temptation tempts Tobit. Thus, VG takes away Raphael's responsibility of tempting Tobit in GII Tob 12:14, and

65. Skemp, *The Vulgate of Tobit*, 303.

66. Ibid., 304.

“depicts Raphael declaring that the temptation was necessary (*necesse*) because Tobit was acceptable to God.”⁶⁷ In either case, these texts characterize Tobit as a righteous man, because he triumphs over the challenges, which Raphael (GII) or temptation (VG) places before him. GI Tob 12:14 does not mention temptation in connection to Tobit’s plight. In this regard, it offers its readers or hearers more avenues for the characterization of Tobit, and renders the text of *Tobit* more enjoyable and open to surprises, because it does not easily answer the question of Tobit’s character.

To summarize, the examined verses shed light on questions that might have been asked, at the time, concerning the character of Tobit in the narrative. They show that VG and GII characterize Tobit as righteous, more than GI, which does not exhibit much pressure to prove Tobit’s righteousness. Thus, unlike VG and GII, GI leaves ample space for the reader or hearer of the narrative to work through Tobit’s character, uninterrupted by iterative justifications of his righteousness, because his character poses no major concern for the audiences.

2.3. Apparent Lacunae in GII

Fitzmyer and Littman, among others, used MS 319 to replace the missing verses 7-18 of *Tobit* 4 in S/GII because it agrees with Tob 3:6-6:16.⁶⁸ Schüngel-

67. Skemp, *The Vulgate of Tobit*, 371.

68. Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 4-5, 166; Robert J. Littman, *Tobit: The Book of Tobit in Codex Sinaiticus*, Septuagint Commentary Series (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 89.

Straumann simply took GI Tobit 4 and placed it into the GII text.⁶⁹ These scholars denied the independence of S/GII, which simply does not have Tob 4:7-18, by imposing the same verses on it from elsewhere, thereby creating an entirely different text. As Zappella stated, each manuscript or recension has its own logical narrative, which should be respected and unaltered by extraneous elements or texts.⁷⁰ The witness of Tob 4:7-18 in GI or VL or VG does not guarantee the presence of the same verses in S/GII, because each text reflects its own conversational traces with its respective audiences.⁷¹

To appreciate the apparent lacuna in GII *Tobit* 4, I translate the entire text of S/GII *Tobit* 4, excluding the disputed verses 7-18, as follows:

¹On that day, Tobit remembered the silver, which he had entrusted with Gabael in Rages of Media. ²And he said in his heart, 'Look, I have asked for death. Why don't I call Tobiah my son and point out to him about this silver before I die? ³And he called Tobiah his son, and he came to him. And he said to him, "Bury me well, and honor your mother, and do not abandon her all the days of her life, and do what is pleasing before her, and do not grieve her spirit in every deed. ⁴Remember her, child, because she has seen many dangers on the basis of you in her womb, and when she dies, bury her beside me in one grave. ^{5a}And all your days, child, remember the Lord and do not desire to sin and transgress his commands. ^{5b}Practice righteousness all the days of your life and do not walk in the ways of unrighteousness: ^{6a}Because those who practice truth will prosper in their works. ^{6b}And to all those who practice righteousness, ^{19a}the Lord will give to them good counsel. ^{19b}And whoever the Lord desires, he humbles to the lowest part as far as Hades. ^{19c}And now, child, remember these commands, and let them not be erased from your heart. ²⁰And now, child, I should indicate to you that ten talents of silver which I entrusted with Gabael the son of Gabri in Rages of Media. ²¹And do not

69. Helen Schüngel-Straumann, *Tobit*, Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2000), 97.

70. Marco Zappella, *Tobit: Introduzione, traduzione e commento*, Nuova versione della Bibbia dai testi antichi 30 (Cinisello Balsamo: San Paolo, 2010), 41.

71. Racine, "The Edition of the Greek New Testament," 84.

fear, child, that we have become poor. There exist many good things for you, if you fear God and flee from every sin and do good things before the Lord your God.'

Prior to Tob 4:6a-b, Tobit instructs his son Tobiah in the singular, using the second person personal pronoun 'you.' Thus, Tobit's directive to his son to practice righteousness all the days of his life and not to walk in the ways of unrighteousness (Tob 4:5b) precedes the initial plural clause in Tob 4:6a: "Because those who practice truth will prosper in their works." This plural clause serves as a reason for Tobit's instruction to Tobiah in Tob 4:5b. Noteworthy, Tob 4:6b coheres with the next verse, Tob 4:19a, and results in the following comprehensive translation: "6bAnd to all those who practice righteousness 19athe Lord will give to them good counsel." Such rendering appears to be repetitive in the light of "to them" (αὐτοῖς) in verse 19a. However, the verb of giving — "he will give" — (δώσει) in verse 19a necessitates the use of the dative "to them" as the object. Roughly, the Lord will give good counsel to all those who practice righteousness. As such, hearing or reading Tob 4:6b along with Tob 4:19a makes sense.⁷²

Macatangay attributed the lack of Tob 4:7-18 in S/GII to a scribal accident or even carelessness.⁷³ He argued that S/GII must have had those collections of wisdom sayings in Tob 4:7-18 because MS 319 and VL have them. It cannot be overstated that such an approach does not do justice to S/GII because it clearly

72. Zappella, *Tobit*, 65.

73. Macatangay, *The Wisdom Instructions in the Book of Tobit*, 50-51.

does not have those verses. That approach fails to appreciate diversity, which opens the possibility of novel texts that can coexist within the ancient world.⁷⁴

Macatangay argued for Tob 4:7-18 in S/GII when he stated the following:

In a possible instance of *homoioleuton*, it is likely that the copyist got confused and his eyes mistakenly jumped from one verse to another, since εὐδωθήσονται is in Tob 4:6 and the same verb εὐδωθῶσιν is in Tob 4:19. In the same way, the scribe could have simply associated the objective fact stated in καὶ πᾶσιν τοῖς ποιούσιν δικαιοσύνην in Tob 4:6 with the subjective reason for such act expressed in δώσει κύριος αὐτοῖς βουλήν ἀγαθήν in verse 19. Such may explain why vv. 7-19 dropped and disappeared from the *Sinaiticus* text.⁷⁵

In the first place, εὐδωθήσονται and εὐδωθῶσιν come from the same verb, εὐδοόμαι, which means to prosper, and they agree in person, which is third, and number, which is plural, and voice, which is passive. However, the two verbal forms differ in mood and tense. εὐδωθήσονται is in the indicative mood and a future tense, while the mood of εὐδωθῶσιν is subjunctive and its tense is aorist.

The two verbs have similar beginnings but different endings, which a scribe cannot easily confuse. In an instance of *homoioarcton*, which Macatangay implies, we would all expect the words immediately after εὐδωθῶσιν to be extant in GII. However, nothing like διότι πᾶν ἔθνος οὐκ ἔχει βουλήν (because every nation does not have counsel), which comes immediately after εὐδωθῶσιν in GI Tob 4:19, VL and MS 319, appears in GII.⁷⁶ The argument for

74. See Racine, "The Edition of the Greek New Testament," 84.

75. Macatangay, *The Wisdom Instructions in the Book of Tobit*, 51.

76. Littman, *Tobit*, 12.

homoioarcton for unavailable verses in S/GII *Tobit* 4 should be treated with suspicion.

Macatangay also suggested, along the same lines of *parablepsis*, that the scribe could have easily associated Tob 4:6b with Tob 4:19a. That defeats his entire argument on *homoioarcton*, because the verb in question no longer gets involved. Above all, the verses which Macatangay assumed have been lost due to *parablepsis* are too many to warrant *homoioteleuton* or *homoiarcton*, to be precise. His argument can be appreciated more if the disputed verses involved only a couple of lines. However, there is almost a page long of contents at stake in the current discussion.

The omission of Tob 4:7-18 in GII renders the text cohesive, because the narrative does not need to deal with other themes, such as giving food to the dead, which the Hebrew religion may also consider unorthodox.⁷⁷ Moore observed in his commentary on GII *Tobit* 4, that, “to be sure, vv 7-18 actually impede the movement of the plot (i.e., Tobit’s telling Tobiah about the money at Ráges [vv 1, 20].”⁷⁸ These factors shed light on “why S neglected to copy this section.”⁷⁹ They lead me to suggest that scribal scissors performed their task for verses 7-18 of *Tobit* 4, because they undermine GII’s religious practice, besides impeding the flow of the plot.⁸⁰

77. Moore, *Tobit*, 173.

78. Ibid., 165.

79. Littman, *Tobit*, 89.

80. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 13.

Above all, the omission of Tob 4:7-18 in GII characterizes Tobit as an adherent of orthodox Jewish practices, which do not recommend giving food to the dead. It reflects traces of GII's conversations with its audiences, which the narrative addresses.⁸¹ GI's witness to these verses prompts the hearer or reader of the narrative to ponder on Tobit's character, without sturdy answers.

GI has another apparent lacuna in Tob 13:6-9, which, for Hanhart, results from parablepsis, due to homoioteleuton.⁸² I translate GI Tob 13:6-10, to show and analyze what GII *Tobit* 13 (in italics) misses:

^{6a}If you turn to him with all your heart and with all the soul to practice truth before him, ^{6b}then he will turn to you, ^{6c}and he will never hide his face from you. ^{6d}And see what he will do with you, ^{6e}and praise him with all your mouth, ^{6f}and bless the Lord of righteousness, ^{6g}and exalt the **king of the ages**. ^{6h}*I praise him in the land of my captivity and I will show his strength and majesty to the sinful nations.* ⁶ⁱ*Turn back, sinners, and practice righteousness before him;* ^{6j}*who knows if he will desire you and have mercy on you?* ⁷*I exalt my God and my soul exalts the king of heaven and his majesty.* ⁸*Let all speak and praise him in Jerusalem.* ^{9a}*O Jerusalem, holy city, he will scourge (you) for the works of your sons,* ^{9b}*but again he will show mercy to the sons of righteousness.* ^{10a}*Give praise to the good Lord, and bless the **king of the ages**,* ^{10b}in order that his tabernacle may be built again for you with joy. ^{10c}And may he cheer the captives within you ^{10d}and love the miserable within you to all the generations of ages.

GI *Tobit* 13 does not witness to Tob 13:6h-10a. It seems that the scribe saw the word αἰώνων (ages) at the end of Tob 13:6g and mistook it for the similar word at the end of Tob 13:10a. Similarly, the scribe might have mistaken the entire phrase βασιλέα τῶν αἰώνων (king of the ages) at the end of Tob 13:6g, for

81. See Racine, "The Edition of the Greek New Testament," 84.

82. Hanhart, *Tobit*, 170.

the same phrase at the end of GI Tob 13:10a.⁸³ Thus, Tob 13:6h-10a does not appear in GII. The explanation for the omission due to homoioteleuton raises a couple of assumptions. It assumes that the scribe of GII depended on GI, which can show that GI did not redact GII.⁸⁴ This assumption raises a pertinent question of how an abridged or redacted text can contain verses that its parent text does not have. I do not argue that GII copied from GI or vice-versa, but suggest that GI and GII represent two different traditions, which respond to the concerns of their audiences.

The omission of Tob 13:6h-10a, due to homoioteleuton, also assumes that the text of GI, which apparently abridges GII, literally equals the text of GII. However, a quick comparison of the peritext of the apparent lacuna in GI and GII reviews significant differences, which cannot guarantee an argument for homoioteleuton. GI Tob 13:6a begins with ἐὰν (if), but GII begins with ὅταν (when). GII adds an article, τῇ (the), before ‘heart,’ and a personal pronoun, ὑμῶν (you), after ‘soul,’ which GI does not have. Unlike GII, GI Tob 13:6c neither witnesses to ἀπό (from), after the personal pronoun αὐτοῦ (his), nor to οὐκέτι (no longer), after the personal pronoun ὑμῶν. Further, GI Tob 13:6d does not witness to νῦν (now), before θεάσασθε (see), which GII witnesses. In the same verse, GI uses a verb ‘to do’ (ποιέω) in the future tense, but GII cites it in the aorist tense.

Thus, we cannot ascertain GII’s witness to αἰώνων (ages) or βασιλέα τῶν αἰώνων (king of the ages), at the end of Tob 13:10a, because the text of GII does

83. Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 304.

84. *Ibid.*, 5.

not literarily equal the text of G1. I should reiterate that G1 and GII represent two different textual traditions, whose integrities need due respect, just like the different languages that arose from the tower of Babel.⁸⁵

Fitzmyer argued for the inclusion of Tob 13:6h-10a in GII, when he stated that these verses “are crucial to the understanding of the prayer, especially of vv. 10-12, where the singular ‘you’ would be unintelligible, if ‘Jerusalem’ were not addressed in v.9, at the beginning of the second part of the hymn.”⁸⁶ He makes a helpful suggestion that the singular ‘you’ in Tob 13:10b-12 refers to Jerusalem. The mention of the ‘tabernacle’ (temple) alongside the singular ‘you,’ in Tob 13:10b, I suggest, facilitates the audiences’ knowledge of the same singular ‘you,’ as referring to Jerusalem, the location of the temple.

In addition, GII makes an explicit reference to rebuilding Jerusalem in Tob 13:16b, so that it makes clear what the singular ‘you’ refers to. The following statement proves significant also for the differences between G1 and GII in Tob 13:6-10, that, “textual diversity shows the traces of conversations that these foundational texts held with their audiences through the centuries and how they share in different world views.”⁸⁷ These texts invite us to appreciate their differences, rather than to impose what they should be.

GII omits the contents of G1 Tob 13:6h-10a, because they hold prospects for living forever in the land of captivity, among other reasons.⁸⁸ Tob 13:6h

85. See Racine, “The Edition of the Greek New Testament,” 84.

86. Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 304.

87. Racine, “The Edition of the Greek New Testament,” 84.

88. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 13.

highlights Tobit's recommendation to praise his deity in the land of captivity and show the deity's strength to the sinful nations. This verse expresses a possibility of creating a home within the land of captivity, where the captives may exercise freedom to practice their religion. This possibility also comes as a 'surprise' to the reader or hearer of the narrative, because it assaults the traditional concept of the end of exile as a return to Israel.⁸⁹ GI Tob 13:6h-10a offers a response to its audiences, which concerns the experience of exile and an end to it. God's mercy (see Tob 13:6j, 9b) brings about an end to Tobit's experience of the exile, within the land of captivity. Thus, his soul exalts or rejoices in his deity, the king of heaven, even as he remains in the land of captivity (Tob 13:7).

GI also shows a possibility of an experience of exile for citizens in their homeland (Tob 13:9a). In this vein, the deity's chastisement of those in Jerusalem highlights an exilic experience, which implies an incapacity or lack of space to exercise truth and righteousness. Tob 13:10b hints at the end of that exilic experience within Jerusalem, because the tabernacle will be rebuilt with joy. Rebuilding the tabernacle in Jerusalem with joy implies the restoration of space to exercise truth and righteousness, or the end of the exilic experience.

As we can see, Tobit's prospects of an end of the exilic experience in GI do not dispel the possibility of going back to the land of Israel, in Jerusalem. He suggests that an exilic experience can arise both at home and abroad; and an end of it, as a capacity to rejoice in the Lord and experience his mercy, can also be experienced both at home and abroad. Tob 13:10c-d—"10cAnd may he cheer

89. See Racine, "The Edition of the Greek New Testament," 92.

the captives within you⁹⁰ ^{10d}and love the miserable within you to all the generations of ages”—elucidates an end of the exilic experience for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who dwell in Israel.

GII offers a ‘traditional’ solution to the end of exile, as going back to the land of Israel. In this regard, it surprises its reader or hearer less than GI. I translate GII Tob 13:6-10, without the missing verses, to determine its cohesion, and to appreciate its response to the exilic experience:

^{6a}When you turn to him with all your heart and with all your soul to practice truth before him, ^{6b}then he will turn to you, ^{6c}and he will no longer hide his face from you. ^{6d}And now, see what he *did* with you, ^{6e}and praise him with all your mouth; ^{6f}and bless the Lord of righteousness, ^{6g}and exalt the king of the ages. ^{10a}And your tabernacle will be built for you again with joy.

GII Tob 13:6a-g, 10a exhibits cohesion, without the apparently missing verses (Tob 13:6h-10a), because it makes prominent the theme of the end of exile as only returning to the promised land.⁹¹ The use of the aorist for the verb ‘to do’ (ποιέω), in Tob 13:6d, reveals GII’s audiences’ hope to return to Israel, which begins with Tobit’s restoration.⁹² For that reason, the audiences should praise Tobit’s deity of righteousness (Tob 13:6e-6g), because the tabernacle will be built again (Tob 13:10b) in Jerusalem, with joy. As such, GII’s audiences do not appreciate the exercise of joy—which signifies an end of the experience of exile—in the land of captivity or a strange land, because the end of the exilic experience implies repatriation to Israel.

90. Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 304, noted that this singular ‘you’ refers to Jerusalem.

91. See Racine, “The Edition of the Greek New Testament,” 96.

92. Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 122.

In sum, GII contains two apparent lacunae in Tob 4:7-18 and Tob 13:6h-10a. That assumption results from the fact that the other ancient texts witness to the mentioned verses. Interestingly, GII coheres without the lacunae, because it reflects conversational traces with its audiences, which border on the characterization of Tobit as a righteous man, and an understanding of the end of the exilic experience as repatriation to Israel.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0. A FUNCTION OF TOB 1:1-2 IN THE *TOBIT* NARRATIVE

In this chapter, I argue that the lack of an –e/ ending in Tobit’s name, amongst his ancestors’ names with –e/ endings in Tob 1:1-2, characterizes him as alienated from them and exiled. Thus, Tobit requires familial or religious consolidation and an end to the same exile to experience restoration. His ancestors’ names in Tob 1:1-2 constitute narrative devices which highlight a solution to his lack.

To realize a narrative function of Tob 1:1-2, I employ name theories proposed by Searle, because of their pertinence to the issue of characterization.¹ He outlined two theories of proper names: the no-sense and sense theories.² In the no-sense theory, names just stand for objects, without characterizing or describing them. Searle stated that “proper names simply stand for objects, without having any sense or meaning other than standing for objects.”³ In that regard, a person can bear a name, such as John Kennedy, without any qualities of the given name attached to him.

1. John R. Searle, “Proper Names and Descriptions,” in *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Paul Edwards (New York: The MacMillan Company and the Free Press, 1967), 6:487-488.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., 487.

Unlike the no-sense theory, the sense theory of proper names characterizes or describes the bearer of the name.⁴ Hearers or readers of the proper or personal name can tell one's family background, tribe or language, age, circumstances surrounding one's birth, etc. Thus, the proper or personal name signifies a lot about the person who bears it, because it reveals the same person's social and natural and familial circumstances.

In the Tonga traditional culture of southern Zambia in Africa, personal names play a very significant role. They do not merely serve to distinguish one individual from another, but to characterize individuals and their families. By considering personal names of a given family, one can tell, roughly speaking, a history or narrative of that family. The names given to traditional family members signify different life events, such as birth and death, and cosmological events such as drought, flood, war, or natural seasons. As such, the Tonga cultural personal names characterize individual members of a family and their families not only from within but also from without.

Tembo observed that "in fundamental linguistic terms, the Tonga names fall into four broad characteristics: nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs."⁵ The different forms of Tonga names characterize their bearers and their families through descriptions, limitations, or qualities, in accordance with contemporary or historical settings.⁶ The Tonga personal name, *Mutinta*, characterizes its bearer

4. Searle, "Proper Names and Descriptions," 488.

5. Mwizenge S. Tembo, *What does your African Name Mean?: The Meanings of Indigenous Names among the Tonga of Southern Zambia*, University of Zambia Institute for African Studies (Lusaka: Institute for African Studies, 1989), 4.

6. Ibid., 5.

as born of a different sex, between or after two siblings of the same sex.⁷ Thus, a male child, born between or after two female siblings, bears the name, just like a female child, born between or after two male siblings.

That sense name characterizes its bearer as well as its bearer's family. The reader or hearer of the name can know, at the outset, that its bearer comes from a family of at least three siblings, two of whom have a different sex from the name bearer. Another sense name, *Nchimunya*, in Tonga traditional culture, describes a family member born of the same sex as two members who come immediately before the bearer of the same sense name.⁸ Its bearer can be a male or female child, who shares the same sex as two precedent siblings. The sense name means 'the same thing,' and it characterizes both its bearer and his/her family as the younger amongst three siblings of the same sex in a family.

Some Tonga personal sense names have less to do with birth placement in the family than current affairs or historical circumstances at the time of birth. The sense name, *Cheelo*, which literally means ghost, characterizes its bearer as born at a time of bereavement in a family.⁹ Like the previous names, its bearer can be either male or female. It also characterizes its bearer's family as having experienced death or bereavement in its history.

Besides death, Tonga sense names can signify natural or human calamities, outside a family setting. The name *Cilala* characterizes its bearer,

7. Tembo, *What does your African Name Mean?*, 35.

8. Ibid., 39.

9. Ibid., 8.

male or female, as born during a period of drought. This name characterizes not only its bearer, but also the region of its bearer's provenance, which the drought affects. The name *Makondo* characterizes a male or female born during a time of war.¹⁰ Like the name *Cilala*, *Makondo* characterizes both its bearer and its bearer's region or provenance, which war or conflict affects. These sense names can remind and inform their readers or hearers about periods of their bearers' births and circumstances surrounding their births. In most cases, their collective descriptions provide family narratives.

As we can see, Tonga sense names characterize individuals not only from their family perspectives but also from their social contexts or settings. Like characters in a narrative, those individuals operate from settings, within a given environment, time, and place.¹¹ In narratives, the setting can also have a factual or metaphorical value. The metaphorical value of a narrative setting builds on the factual or given setting of the narrative, to point beyond what the eye beholds. "The setting from then on is part of the symbolic understanding of the action."¹² I should add that narrative setting helps readers and hearers of a narrative to understand the nature of their literature as historical facts or fiction. In this vein, I highlight contrasts between narrative criticism and historical criticism, in its

10. Tembo, *What does your African Name Mean?*, 25.

11. Daniel Marguerat and Yvan Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1999), 77.

12. Ibid.

attempts to restore names, which, otherwise, constitute narrative language or word-play in Tob 1:1-2.¹³

The following sections corroborate the issues highlighted in the previous paragraphs. I delineate and analyze the text of Tob 1:1-2, characterize the ‘initial Tobit’ in the light of Tob 1:1a, 2, the ‘middle Tobit’ in the light of Tob 1:1b, and the ‘final Tobit’ in the light of Tob 1:1c, respectively. These stages punctuate the dynamism of character that appears to be static in a personal name. As Docherty observed, “character escapes the labelling effect of the name by always being ‘more’ than the name’s significance is allowed to encapsulate.”¹⁴

3.1. Delineation and Analysis of Tob 1:1-2

This section demonstrates at least three issues: (a) the unity of Tob 1:1-2, (b) the Assyrian setting of the narrative, and (c) word/name plays as an indicator of the religious fictional aspect of the book.

I begin with my own translation of Tob 1:1-2: “^{1a}The book of the words of Tobit, son of Tobiel, ^{1b}son of Hananiel, son of Adouel, ^{1c}son of Gabael, from the seed of Asiel, from the tribe of Naphtali, ²who was led captive from Thisbe, which is South of Kudios of Naphtali in Galilee above Aser, in the days of Enemessaros, the king of Assyrians.”

13. David M. Gunn, “Narrative Criticism,” in *To Each Its Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and their Application*, 2nd ed., eds. Steven L. McKenzie and Stephen R. Haynes (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 201.

14. Thomas Docherty, *Reading (Absent) Character: Towards a Theory of Characterization in Fiction* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 50.

The verb αἰχμαλωτεύω (to lead captive) in Tob 1:2 connects it with Tob 1:1, because the latter verse has no verb. The third person singular verb, ἡχμαλωτεύθη, refers to Tobit alone, a major character in the narrative. Tob 1:1-2 forms a complete unit within the narrative, because Tob 1:3 begins a different section. In other words, the extradiegetic narrator in Tob 1:1-2 gives way to the intradiegetic narrator in Tob 1:3. The noun 'Naphtali,' which appears in both verses of Tob 1:1-2, augments the unity of the text. It appears as Tobit's tribe in Tob 1:1, and it describes the location of Thisbe, Tobit's city, in Tob 1:2.

Tob 1:1-2 reads like a descriptive title, in the light of the verb αἰχμαλωτεύω, which the singular, masculine, nominative, relative pronoun 'who,' precedes. Thus, Fitzmyer observed that Tob 1:1-2 acts as the narrative's title, because it lacks a main verb.¹⁵ At the outset, the reader or hearer of the narrative gets preliminary information about Tobit, whom King Enemessaros in Assyria holds captive from Thisbe, which lies in the South of Kudios of Naphtali in Galilee above Aser.

Tob 1:1-2 does not mention the year of the exile, but refers to the exile of the tribe of Naphtali in Galilee, by the king of Assyria, whose name can be transliterated as Enemessaros (Tob 1:2).¹⁶ The OT's שלמנאסר and the LXX's Σαλ(α)μανασ(σ)άρ present a clear relationship between them.¹⁷ However,

15. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2003), 91.

16. The NABRE, the NRSV, and the NJB all refer to Shalmaneser instead of a name similar or closer to Enemessaros, which Tob 1:2 witnesses.

17. Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 95, stated that "in the OT the name is given as שלמנאסר (2Kgs 17:3; 18:9), and otherwise in the LXX as Σαλ(α)μανασ(σ)άρ."

רשומלמנא or Σαλ(α)μανασ(σ)άρ and Ἐνεμεσσαρος of GI *Tobit* do not present that clear relationship. Understandably, Bible translations render him as Shalmaneser, because of his OT connection with Assyria, where he appears as “the king of the Assyrians” (LXX 4 Kings 17:3, 18:9). He takes the Israelites to Assyria as captives, after defeating Samaria (2 Kgs 18:9-11).

However, 2 Kgs 18:9-11, unlike Tob 1:1-2, does not mention the city of Thisbe in upper Galilee or the tribe of Naphtali, but Samaria. If the *Tobit* narrative involves Shalmaneser in Tobit’s exilic experience, it should be noted that, that king has nothing to do with the exile of the land of Naphtali, because 2 Kgs 15:29 associates the exile of Naphtali with Tiglath-Pileser, the king of Assyria, who conquers Kedesh, Hazor, Gilead, and Galilee, among other captured regions. As such, the *Tobit* narrative either records misinformation or intends to inform the hearers or readers of the narrative that Tobit experiences exile under Shalmaneser, who conquers Samaria (2 Kgs 18:9-11). “The latter explanation is only a possibility, and the former is the more likely.”¹⁸

It appears that the narrator of the *Book of Tobit* mixes-up facts, by confusing events of one king with another. Such judgments occur more so when we treat Scriptures as a history text book. I suggest that the key to appreciate and enjoy these initial verses of the *Book of Tobit* subsists in a realization that the narrative has little interest in narrating history. The *Book of Tobit* exhibits its

18. Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 95.

non-historical factual interest, by its rendition of the king of Assyria as Ἐνεμεσσαρος, instead of the popularly acclaimed Σαλ(α)μανασ(σ)άρ.¹⁹

The nominal form Ἐνεμεσσαρος in Tob 1:2, which only *Tobit* records, highlights the narrative's creativity. The uniqueness of the name also exhibits the narrative's employment of word play, which indicates the fictional aspect of the narrative to its readers or hearers. That explains the apparent confusion of the name of the Assyrian king in the text of Tob 1:2.²⁰ In its lack of interest in historical facts or accuracy, the narrative of the *Book of Tobit* also displays an artistic interest in word-play, beginning with personal names ending in –el in Tob 1:1, while depriving the hero of the book of the said ending.

Tob 1:2 evinces another word-play on Kudios (Κυδιῶς).²¹ The narrator's play on Kudios emerges in the light of Kades/Kedes in the LXX (See Joshua 12:21; 19:36 (A and B); 20:7). The latter pair sounds closer to the OT קדש (see Josh 12:22; 20:7) than the former, which buttresses *Tobit's* non-interestedness in historical facts and precision. The reader beholds and the hearer hears the narrator's twist on supposedly historical names in the narrative, and acknowledges it as religious narrative, not to be confused with historical annals.

19. Noteworthy, LXX *Tobit* maintains Ἐνεμεσσαρος instead of Σαλ(α)μανασ(σ)άρ as in LXX 4 Kgs (2 Kgs).

20. Marco Zappella, *Tobit: Introduzione, traduzione e commento*, Nuova versione della Bibbia dai testi antichi 30 (Cinisello Balsamo: San Paolo, 2010), 36-37.

21. Contemporary Bible versions like NABRE, NJVB, and NRSV render the name as Kedesh, after the Hebrew Bible OT form קדש; see Frank Zimmermann, *The Book of Tobit: An English Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Jewish Apocryphal Literature (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958), 45.

Thus, the extradiegetic narrator does not narrate ‘misinformation’ to the hearers and readers.

Thisbe (Θισβη) in Tob 1:2 exhibits unfamiliarity to any supposedly similar counterpart in the OT or LXX. Biblical versions of *Tobit* transliterate it from the Greek, because it does not have a suitor in the Hebrew OT or elsewhere in the LXX. Towns of Naphtali in Josh 19:32-39, bear no witness to a resemblance of the name ‘Thisbe.’²² In the *Book of Tobit*, which habitually introduces twists to supposedly historical names, checking for historical precisions yields little fruit, just as well as looking for pieces of Noah’s ark today would end up in vain. In the last century, Zimmermann also noted Thisbe’s lack of identification with a known Biblical town.²³ Perhaps it needs not to be identified.

Last but not the least, a word on Aser (Ἀσήρ) in Tob 1:2 should suffice. This word’s counterpart lies in Josh 19:36, where the Hebrew OT renders it as חצור, and LXX Josh 19:36 renders it as Ασωρ. The orthographic difference between the name in Tob 1:2 and Josh 19:36 reveals *Tobit*’s consistency in twisting names from the OT for the narrative. This trend betrays the narrative’s creative propensity to play with names, in order to render them as no-sense names. Thus, Enemessaros, Thisbe, Kudios, and Aser signify no-sense names, because they point to nothing else other than themselves in the narrative.²⁴

22. See Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 96.

23. Zimmermann, *The Book of Tobit*, 45.

24. Searle, “Proper Names and Descriptions,” 487.

Unlike Tobit's name, which lacks an *-el* ending, all names of his ancestors in Tob 1:1 have *-el* endings. Fitzmyer observed that these *-el* endings highlight the narrative's focus on the deity.²⁵ I add that those names ending in *-el* drive the story of *Tobit* in different phases, from his initial alienation from his religious family, punctuated by exile, to reunion with his family, and an end to an experience of the exile. As sense names, they describe Tobit's troubled situation and suggest a solution, as I show in the sections that follow.²⁶

To summarize, Tob 1:1-2 forms a comprehensive narrative unit, which comprises the title of the *Book of Tobit*. Tob 1:2 contains no-sense names, which evoke Hebrew OT and LXX counterparts that prove to be similar enough to allude to the Assyrian setting of the narrative, while they punctuate the narrative's fictional perspective.

3.2. The Characterization of the 'Initial Tobit' in the Light of Tob 1:1a, 2

In this section, I show at least two significant aspects of Tobit's lack of an *-el* ending in his name. The first one involves his initial alienation from his religious ancestors, who possess theophoric names, because he alone lacks a theophoric name. The second aspect encompasses the notion that he alone experiences the exile in Tob 1:1-2, and not his ancestors. This can be seen from

25. Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 92.

26. Searle, "Proper Names and Descriptions," 488.

verses 1a and 2 put together: “^{1a}The book of the words of Tobit, son of Tobiel,
²who was led captive from Thisbe, which is South of Kudios of Naphtali in Galilee
above Aser, in the days of Enemessaros, the king of Assyrians.”

The reader or hearer of Tob 1:1a-2 acknowledges a rupture in Tobit’s name, because it does not end in *–el*, like Tobiel’s name. The narrative further singles out Tobit as the only one who experiences exile from his city and tribe. In this vein, the rest of Tobit’s ancestors in Tob 1:1 do not form a part of Tobit’s plight. So far, the reader has two facts about Tobit: (a) His name has a theophoric rupture, unlike its counterpart Tobiel, in the text, and (b) unlike Tobiel and the others unmentioned here in Tob 1:1, he alone experiences exile from his city, tribe, and land.

The narrative draws a link between the name ‘Tobit’ and his setting of the exile in Tob 1:1a, 2. The theophoric rupture in his name highlights the rupture from his own people and land, due to the exile. In that regard, he desires solidarity with his people and an end to the Assyrian exile. That calls for a mending of that rupture in his name, in order that he may be complete again. His restoration comes through his ancestors in Tob 1:1, whose names’ meanings, as we shall see, point to that effect.

Suffice it to state the meaning of Tobit’s name, before considering the meaning of the name of one of his ancestors, Tobiel, in Tob 1:1a. The name Tobit or טובי, (Tobi), as the Qumran fragments of *Tobit* show, means ‘my goodness.’²⁷ The name ‘Tobiel,’ which means ‘God is my goodness,’ comes after

27. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, “Tobit,” in *Qumran Cave 4*, vol. 14, *Parabiblical Texts, Part 2*, ed. Emanuel Tov, Discoveries in the Judaean Desert 19 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 51, 68.

Tobit's name in Tob 1:1a, 2. These names share the same Hebrew or Aramaic word-root, which means "good."²⁸

The name 'Tobit' echoes the goodness of its bearer, while the name 'Tobiel' highlights the goodness of God in the narrative. Tobit's situation or setting of the exile and alienation from his own ancestors render it necessary for him to highlight his own goodness. Tobit needs to mend that rupture in his name to share in the heritage of his ancestors like Tobiel, by being like them and having his native city and land restored to him. For the moment, he experiences deprivation of the glory of his deity, religious family, and land.

Moore stated that,

Ṭwby is evidently a hypocoristicon, or apocope, for either Tobiah, his son's name (*ṭwbyh*, 'Yah-is-my-good,' as in Ezra 2:60; Neh 2:10) or Tobiyah[u] (*ṭwbyhw*, 'Yahu-is-my-good,' as in 2 Chr 17:8; Zech 6:10) or Tobiel (*ṭwby'l*, 'El [the chief god]-is-my-good,' as in Tobit's father's name according to Tob 1:1). For an example of apocope elsewhere, see 1 Kgs 16:17, where Hanani is the abbreviated form of Hananiah of Jer 28:5.²⁹

Thus, he suggests that readers or hearers of the *Tobit* narrative should think of the name Tobit, in Tob 1:1a, as a pet or nickname, because it does not have an *-el* element, like Tobiel. This suggestion fails to appreciate the seriousness of the *Tobit* narrative, because it intends to call a major character, after whom the narrative gets its name, by a nickname. It also takes lightly the plight of Tobit. In addition, the concept of the nickname does not pay attention to

28. Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament: Study Edition*, ed. and trans. M. E. J. Richardson (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 1:367, 2:1882.

29. Carey A. Moore, *Tobit: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible 40A (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 99-100.

the observation that the descriptions of those names in Tob 1:1, as sense names, match their functions in the narrative. Tobit has no –e/ at the end of his name because he alone, among those with –e/ endings to their names, experiences exile. The rupture in Tobit's name acts as a narrative device to highlight his alienation from Israel, because he has been cut off from the land and his ancestors.

It can be argued that Tobit makes for an apocope because the –e/ element or whatever drops from the end of his name equals his dropping off from the land of Israel and his religious family, through exile. That notion renders the apocope a sense name. However, Moore adds no significance or description for Tobit's name as an apocope, beyond harmonizing it with other names in the OT. In brief, apocope as a dropping of some letters from a name, with time, due to lack of use, does not adequately respond to Tobit's lack of a theophoric ending.

The narrative does not show that Tobit's name marks an apocope, especially in the light of Tobiel, his father, in Tob 1:1a. In that light, readers or hearers of the narrative cannot justify how the ending of Tobiel's name remains intact, despite age, when the younger Tobit's name does not. The narrative's play on names in Tob 1:1-2 cannot be overstated.³⁰ The narrative places Tobit's ruptured name right next to an unruptured counterpart, Tobiel, in Tob 1:1a. That suggests that if Tobit had a fuller name, it would read like 'Tobiel.'³¹

30. See Gunn, "Narrative Criticism," 201.

31. See Elena Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu: Lecture narrative du livre de Tobie*, eds. Didier Luciani and Jean-Pierre Sonnet, *Le livre et le rouleau* (Paris: Lessius, 2014), 15.

In the same vein, Fitzmyer noted that Tobit's ancestors' names that end in *-el* situate them in pre-exilic northern Israel.³² Tob 1:1a, 2 echoes that situation, because it states Galilee, in northern Israel, as Tobit's provenance. One would therefore expect Tobit to bear the name Tobiel. However, he does not have a name formed with *-el*, because he no longer forms a part of the said heritage, due to the experience of the exile. In the narrative, 'Tobiah' and 'Tobiel' exhibit complete forms of the name 'Tobit.'³³ In principle, his name can become either of the two. These names make for sense names because they echo what awaits Tobit in the narrative.³⁴ Tobit experiences wholeness through Tobiah, his son, whose name, like that of Tobiel, bears a theophoric ending. His restoration consists of mending the rupture in his name.

Di Pede et al. wondered if the lack of an *-el* element in Tobit's name would refer to his father's generation's apostasy prior to the exile.³⁵ The question raised proves to be interesting, because the theophoric rupture in Tob 1:1-2 occurs immediately after Tobiel. However, the narrative does not specify that Tobiel's generation falls short of Jewish religious practices prior to Tobit's exile. The question also fails to appreciate the collective role of the theophoric names in Tob 1:1 to restore Tobit, by singling out Tobiel, from the rest of Tobit's ancestors.

32. Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 92.

33. Ibid.

34. Cf. Ibid., 92-93.

35. Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 15.

As noted previously, Tobit's father in Tob 1:1a, 2 echoes the manifestation of the deity's goodness that awaits Tobit, and his restoration. Thus, the literary representation of the rupture in Tobit's name does not highlight his father's generation's apostasy, but a lack pertinent to Tobit, because he alone lacks an *-e/* element in his name. For that reason, he alone, amongst his ancestors in Tob 1:1-2, faces exile.

In sum, the lack of an *-e/* ending in Tobit's name, amongst names with *-e/* endings in Tob 1:1-2, highlights his alienation from them, and the exile, which he alone, amongst them, experiences. Thus, he needs familial or religious consolidation and an end to the exilic experience, which implies mending the rupture in his name. His father's name, Tobiel, in Tob 1:1a, 2 echoes Tobit's impending restoration and desire to share in the inheritance of his religious ancestors.

3.3. The Characterization of the 'Middle Tobit' in the Light of Tob 1:1b

In this section, I demonstrate that the names 'Hananiel' and 'Adouel' in Tob 1:1b constitute narrative devices, which respond to the situation of the 'initial Tobit,' because they express God's compassion and glorious care for Tobit.

Hananiel means 'God has favored me.' Favor can be understood as help given to someone in need. It constitutes an act of kindness or compassion, which God shows to Tobit, in the context of Tob 1:1b. The Hebrew root *pn* can mean

either favor or grace,³⁶ which *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* defines as “unmerited divine assistance given man for his regeneration or sanctification.”³⁷

In Tob 1:1-2, the name ‘Tobit’ highlights its bearer’s need for regeneration or/and sanctification for at least two reasons: (a) he lacks an –e/ element in his name, and (b) he has been cut off from his usual habitation.

On the one hand, the name Tobiel in Tob 1:1a shows the potential of the name Tobit, along with its bearer, to have the deity’s attribute or an –e/ ending, which it lacks. On the other hand, the name Hananiel in Tob 1:1b echoes the deity’s favor or kindness in store for Tobit, who needs restoration. The situation or setting of the exile in Tob 1:1-2, marked by Tobit’s alienation from his religious family, makes concrete what needs to be restored or regenerated or resolved in the narrative to make Tobit whole again.

The name ‘Hananiel’ ushers in the ‘middle Tobit,’ who, unlike the ‘initial Tobit’ that highlights his goodness in Tob 1:1a, can now rely on God’s favor, mercy or compassion, all of which come as free or gracious gifts from God. Fitzmyer noted that the personal name ‘Hananiel’ has no witness in the Hebrew OT.³⁸ Thus, like Tobiel, the personal name ‘Hananiel’ proves significant for Tobit’s restoration in the narrative. It runs as a *Leitmotif* in the Book of Tobit to show God’s responsive favor, which characterizes the ‘middle Tobit,’ to the plight of Tobit.

36. Koehler and Baumgartner, *HALOT*, 1:334-335.

37. Woolf et al., *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*, 491.

38. Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 93.

Zimmermann suggested that the personal name ‘Adouel’ refers to the Biblical עדיאל (see 1 Chr 9:12; 27:25).³⁹ The Hebrew root for this word, עדי, refers to a collective term for ornaments for adorning the body.⁴⁰ Thus, עדיאל can mean “an ornament is Ēl.”⁴¹ In the same vein, Schüngel-Straumann renders the name ‘Adouel’ as ‘God is glory.’⁴² This glory comprises the deity’s outward expression, which has a restorative impact on human beings like Tobit. In the *Book of Tobit*, the angel Raphael, whom God sends to restore Tobit (see Tob 3:17), constitutes the outward expression of God’s glory (Adouel) and favor (Hananiel). Thus, when Tobit prays to God regarding his devastating situation, the glory of God finds expression in the glory of the great Raphael (see Tob 3:16).

Fitzmyer raised an implicit objection to the view that Adouel can be linked to the glory of God.⁴³ He observed that the name Ἀδουήλ has no witness in the OT apart from the *Book of Tobit*, and that it has been mistaken for עדיאל, (Adiel), in 1 Chr 4:36, which the LXX renders as Ἐδιήλ. As such, he concluded that the two names—Ἀδουήλ from Tob 1:1b and עדיאל, (Ἐδιήλ), from 1 Chr 4:36—cannot be the same. I agree with Fitzmyer that the name ‘Adouel’ may be attested nowhere else. This highlights the narrative’s creative presentation of names to its

39. Zimmermann, *The Book of Tobit*, 44.

40. Francis Brown, S.R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907), 725.

41. *Ibid.*, 726.

42. Helen Schüngel-Straumann, *Tobit*, Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2000), 53.

43. Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 94.

readers and hearers, because it does not pretend to replicate characters in the OT for its title in Tob 1:1-2.

Nonetheless, the narrative employs word-play with names from the OT to give them subtle modifications, which, on a mature consideration, befit religious literature.⁴⁴ In this regard, the modification of Ἐδιήλ to Ἀδοιήλ in the current text does not surprise the reader or hearer of the narrative, because the text of Tob 1:1-2 does the same thing for other names, such as Shalmanassar, Kedesh, and Asher, as we noted previously. In any case, sense names, like Adouel, in Tob 1:1 prove to be pertinent to the narrative.⁴⁵

The Koehler and Baumgartner lexicon has an entry for עדיאל, Adouel, which means “God is adornment.”⁴⁶ This meaning poses no meaningful linguistic distinction from ‘God is an ornament’ or ‘an ornament is God,’ because both highlight Tobit’s lack in Tob 1:1-2, which God addresses in the narrative. Tobit needs to be adorned with an –e/ ending in his name, which, ultimately, implies reunion with his religious family and an end to the exile. One can hardly go beyond stating that Adouel, in Tob 1:1-2, means ‘God is adornment,’ because it is now clear. The meaning of ‘Adouel’ roughly agrees with its rendering as ‘God is glory.’

It serves to bring to Tobit the glory that he falls short of, through his alienation and an experience of the exile, which the lack of a theophoric element

44. Gunn, “Narrative Criticism,” 201.

45. Searle, “Proper Names and Descriptions,” 488.

46. Koehler and Baumgartner, *HALOT*, 1:791.

in his name represents. Names ending in –e/ in Tob 1:1, which we have considered so far in sequence, not only characterize Tobit but they also highlight solutions to his lack. This sequence characterizes Tobit as a dynamic, and not a static, character.⁴⁷ Roughly, the names examined so far characterize Tobit as follows: (a) he desires to be like his immediate counterpart, Tobiel, whose name has an –e/ ending, (b) God shows him favor or compassion or grace (Hananiel), (c) and takes initiative to clothe him with glory (Adouel).

In sum, the ‘middle Tobit’ in Tob 1:1b emerges as a solution to the implied desire of the ‘initial Tobit’ in Tob 1:1a. In other words, the names ‘Hananiel’ and ‘Adouel’ (Tob 1:1b) highlight God’s gracious response to restore Tobit in the narrative, by uniting him with members of his religious family, who bear theophoric names, like Tobiel, and ending his exilic experience (Tob 1:1a).

3.4. The Characterization of the ‘Final Tobit’ in the Light of Tob 1:1c

In this section, I argue that personal names in Tob 1:1c realize the solution to Tobit’s plight in Tob 1:1a, 2, which Tob 1:1b proposes.

Tob 1:1c reads: ‘son of Gabael, from the seed of Asiel, from the tribe of Naphtali.’ The name Gabael comprises a noun, גא, which means “god, deity,” and a verb גבה, which means “to collect (money, debts).”⁴⁸ Gabael, therefore,

47. John A. Darr, *On Character Building: The Reader and the Rhetoric of Characterization in Luke-Acts*, Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 42-43.

48. Koehler and Baumgartner, *HALOT*, 1:48, 170.

means ‘God has collected (money, debts).’ If Tob 1:1a-b comprises sense names, which highlight the plight and impending restoration of Tobit, how does the name ‘Gabael’ (Tob 1:1c) and its meaning fit into Tobit’s restoration? I suggest that the name ‘Gabael’ (Tob 1:1c) echoes the realization of the solution (Tob 1:1b) to Tobit’s plight (Tob 1:1a, 2).

The name ‘Gabael’ occurs in the narrative at least eight times (Tob 1:1 (1x), 14 (1x); 4:1 (1x), 20 (1x); 5:6 (1x); 9:2 (1x), 5 (1x); 10:2 (1x)). The name echoes the silver or money that Tobit entrusts with Gabael in Rages of Media, before he loses his sight (Tob 1:14). The frustrations that accompany his loss of sight prompt him to ask his deity for death. He remembers to instruct his son Tobiah to go and recover the silver or money from Gabael in Rages of Media, because of his conviction about his approaching death (Tob 4:1-2). Besides, Tobit and his family have become poor (Tob 4:21).

Tobiah sets out on the journey for the recovery of silver or money from Gabael, with Raphael—an angel disguised as an Israelite—as his guide, because he does not know the way (see Tob 5:6). Tobiah does not reach Rages of Media because of marriage obligations that he needs to fulfil in Ecbatana. Thus, he asks Raphael to go and recover the silver or money from Gabael in Rages of Media (Tob 9:2-3). Just as the name ‘Gabael’ means ‘God has collected (money, debts),’ Raphael, God’s glory, collects the same money or silver on Tobiah’s behalf for his father Tobit (Tob 9:5). This journey, which the name ‘Gabael’ evokes, not only leads to recover Tobit’s silver, but it also leads to his restoration. Tobiah accomplishes familial or religious consolidation for his

father, through marriage to his kinswoman, and he also restores his father's sight (11:11-13). These acts mark an end to Tobit's exilic experience.

Zimmermann stated that, Gabael, "if transmitted correctly, would be on the analogy of Raphael. The name does not seem to exist elsewhere."⁴⁹ In other words, both Gabael and Raphael comprise similar verbal forms, גבה, whose final ה can appear as א, and רפא, whose final א can appear as ה, respectively. The latter verb means 'to heal,' so much that the name Raphael means "El 'God' has healed."⁵⁰ Noteworthy, Gabael, from whom money or silver should be collected, prompts the physical entrance of Raphael into the narrative. He enters when Tobit sends Tobiah to go and look for a guide to accompany him to Gabael's residence in Media. As God's overarching glory in Tobit's troubled situation, in Tob 1:1a, Raphael draws implicit connections with Hananiel and Adouel, in Tob 1:1b, as well as Gabael, in Tob 1:1c.

Like Zimmermann, Fitzmyer observed that the name 'Gabael' does not appear outside the *Tobit* narrative, and added that the name may mean "God has lifted up."⁵¹ The meaning that Fitzmyer gave to the name 'Gabael' does not differ much from that of Schüngel-Straumann, 'God is exalted,' because it also involves an upward movement.⁵² The word גבה can mean "to be high" (so Fitzmyer) or "to be exalted" (so Schüngel-Straumann).⁵³ These meanings do not fully appreciate

49. Zimmermann, *The Book of Tobit*, 44.

50. Koehler and Baumgartner, *HALOT*, 2:1275.

51. Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 94.

52. Schüngel-Straumann, *Tobit*, 53.

53. Koehler and Baumgartner, *HALOT*, 1:170-171.

the sense-names in Tob 1:1-2, although to translate 'Gabael' as 'God has lifted up' or 'God is exalted,' apparently makes better sense than to translate 'Gabael' as 'God has collected (money, debts).' However, the latter rendering of 'Gabael' describes what happens in the narrative more accurately and meaningfully than the former dual. As noted previously, Raphael, a manifestation of God's glory on earth, collects the money for Tobit on Tobiah's behalf; and the journey to recover the same money leads to Tobit's restoration.

Asiel, the last of the names ending in *-el* in Tob 1:1c, distinguishes itself from other names, because the formulaic 'son of ...' does not precede it, but the phrase, 'from the seed of,' precedes it, as a way of closing the list of names ending in *-el* in Tob 1:1-2. The name 'Asiel' can mean 'God heals.' It comes from the Jewish Aramaic 'ox, which means "to heal."⁵⁴ The name may signify the healing of Tobit after Tobiah's journey to go and recover money or silver from Gabael in Rages of Media. However, Tob 1:1-2 lacks an explicit suggestion that Tobit needs healing from an illness. Besides, the name 'Raphael,' which means 'God has healed,' already exists in the narrative, so much so that the Jewish Aramaic meaning of 'ox marks a rare coincidence.

Fitzmyer stated that, the LXX's Ἀσιήλ (Asiel) corresponds to the Hebrew לַחֲצִיֵּל.⁵⁵ He observed that Gen 46:24, Num 26:48, and 1 Chr 7:13 record him as one of the sons of Naphtali, although 1 Chr 7:13 renders him as Ἰασιήλ. In addition, only Asiel, amongst Tobit's ancestors in Tob 1:1-2, appears in other OT

54. Koehler and Baumgartner, *HALOT*, 1:73.

55. Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 94.

books as a member of the tribe of Naphtali. Fitzmyer also noted a name, עשיאל, in 1 Chr 4:35, which the LXX renders as Ἀσιήλ.⁵⁶ This name has no immediate connection with the tribe of Naphtali. עשיאל expresses a wish such as “May God act.”⁵⁷ As a sense name, it can correspond to God’s responsive action to Tobit’s need, which the narrative inscribes in his name. However, God’s action, which the name עשיאל implies, proves to be vague for the current text, whose sense names all imply God’s action.

יחצאל appeals more as an accurate rendition of Ἀσιήλ than עשיאל, because it specifies what sort of action Tobit’s deity takes for his restoration. It also appears in other OT books amongst the sons of Naphtali, which Tob 1:1-2 mentions. יחצאל—which combines the noun אל and the verb חצה—means ‘God will allocate.’⁵⁸ The name implies that God will reallocate land to Tobit, which he loses due to exile. It comes at the end of the personal names ending in –el in Tob 1:1-2 as an ultimate resolution to Tobit’s initial situation.

In sum, Tob 1:1c captures the deity’s practical response to the plight of Tobit in Tob 1:1a, 2 and the proposed solution to Tobit’s situation in Tob 1:1b. The name ‘Gabael’ serves as a narrative trigger for Tobit to send his son Tobiah to go and collect silver or money from Gabael in Rages of Media. Tobiah’s journey realizes two needs for Tobit: 1. Religious or familial consolidation through marriage to his kinswoman, and 2. The restoration of his father’s sight, which, as

56. Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 94.

57. Koehler and Baumgartner, *HALOT*, 1:893.

58. *Ibid.*, 407; see also Schüngel-Straumann, *Tobit*, 53.

we shall see, occurs as a metaphor of the exilic experience. The end of Tobit's exilic experience implies a reallocation of the land, which the name 'Asiel' highlights. Thus, Gabael and Asiel in Tob 1:1c constitute the situation of the 'final Tobit.'

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0. 'INITIAL TOBIT'—NARRATIVE ELABORATION OF TOB 1:1A, 2

In this chapter, I elaborate on the characterization of the 'initial Tobit,' envisaged by Tob 1:1a, 2, using Tob 1:3-2:10. I argue that the characterization of Tobit as truthful and righteous suffers because of the exilic experience, which constricts his space for exercising truth and righteousness, culminating with his blindness. I divide Tob 1:3-2:10 into three units (Tob 1:3-9, 10-22, and 2:1-10), based on different criteria, for the characterization of the 'initial Tobit.' These criteria include an appearance of a new character on the scene, change of the narrator's voice, time, place, and change of location, such as movement into a house, to mention but a few.¹

Within these units, I explore stylistic techniques and their effects on the characterization of the 'initial Tobit.' This venture involves drawing connections between the same narrative units and Tob 1:1a, 2, which summarily and literarily portrays the 'initial Tobit.' I consider the significance of narrative frames, which may have nothing to do with internal content, for the characterization of Tobit. Forward symmetrical structures are of great importance, because they can serve to intensify an already known condition, given that they are not concentric but ex-centric. When they occur, asymmetrical structures also strike the readers or hearers of a narrative as outstanding anomalies, attracting them to inquire about

1. Daniel Marguerat and Yvan Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1999), 30-33.

the significance of a flaw, in an otherwise symmetrical narrative pattern, for the characterization of Tobit.²

I also employ the narrative plot, with its basic components of exposition, complication, climax, and resolution. I have found it helpful to consider a character's desire as a starting point in a plot, because a plot generally unfolds from a desire.³ I pay attention to what Tobit says about himself, whom he interacts with and how, and what the narrator and others in the narrative say about him.⁴

The plot plays a major role in the identification of type-scenes, which are thematically related microplots within a plot. Type-scenes, when examined analogously, do not just present a model or schema, but can foreshadow events, while shedding light on the character under consideration.⁵ It would be an ambitious enterprise to characterize Tobit in every aspect, small and large. I mainly focus on his challenges, inconsistencies or contradictory statements, opposition toward others and from others, because the way he faces these moments of crisis characterizes him.

2. Jerome T. Walsh, *Old Testament Narrative: A Guide to Interpretation* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 110-117.

3. David M. Gunn, "Narrative Criticism," in *To Each Its Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and their Application*, rev. ed., eds. Steven L. McKenzie and Stephen R. Haynes (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 214.

4. Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 131.

5. See Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, rev. ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2011), 61-63.

The experience of exile *per se* comes with restrictions of space.⁶ It proves to be traumatic for individuals, who never thought that they could find themselves in it, but so much more when they speak about their experiences, because they have memory lapses.⁷ Thus, this chapter also explores the role of space or confinement, distress, and memory in the characterization of the 'initial Tobit.'

Each of the three sections below, comprising the three narrative units mentioned above, has two parts: 1. Delineation and analysis of a given narrative unit, and 2. Characterization of Tobit in that unit.

4.1. Delineation and Analysis of Tob 1:3-9

I begin this section by presenting my own translation of Tob 1:3-9.

³I, Tobit, walked in ways of truth and righteousness all the days of my life, and I practiced much almsgiving to my brothers and to the people, who came with me, in the country of Assyria in Nineveh. ⁴And when I was in my country in the land of Israel, being a youth, all the tribe of my father, Naphtali, withdrew from the house of Jerusalem. The place was chosen from all the tribes of Israel for all the tribes to sacrifice; and the temple of the Most-High was sanctified and built for all the generations of age. ⁵And all the tribes that fell off, together with the house of my father, Naphtali, sacrificed to Baal the young cow. ⁶And I alone went often to Jerusalem at the feasts, just as it has been written for all Israel in an eternal ordinance, having the first-fruits and the tenths of the products and the first shearing. ⁷And I gave them to the priests, who are sons of Aaron, at the altar; I gave the tenth of all the products to the sons of Levi, who serve in Jerusalem. And the second tenth I sold and went and spent them in Jerusalem each year. ⁸And the third (tenth) I gave whomever it is fitting, just as Debbora, the mother of my father, commanded, because I was left an orphan by my father. ⁹And when I became a man, I took Hanna as wife, from the seed of our fathers and I bore Tobiah from her.

6. See Bal, *Narratology*, 136-138.

7. Ibid., 150.

Tob 1:3 begins the narrative proper as the intradiegetic narrator talks about Tobit's ways of truth and righteousness. It also presents the setting of the narrative. It occurs in Nineveh in the country of Assyria.⁸ The specification comes after the extradiegetic narrator in Tob 1:1a, 2 informs the readers or hearers about the general setting of Assyria for the narrative. Thus, a clear connection between Tob 1:1a, 2 and Tob 1:3ff exists, because both texts share the Assyrian setting. In Assyria, Tobit practices almsgiving, which concretizes truth and righteousness (Tob 1:3). His practice caters for his kin or tribe or religion, and all who come with him to Assyria in exile. This detail elaborates on Tobit's life in Assyria. Israel, as an unmentioned setting in Tob 1:3, spills over to Nineveh in Assyria, because Tobit "walked in ways of truth and righteousness *all the days of my life*."⁹ Tobit spends part of 'all the days of his truthful and righteous life' in Israel, as the following paragraphs show.

Tob 1:4 recalls Tobit's days as a youth in the land of Israel, from the vantage point of Nineveh in Assyria. He relies on his memory to recount those days, because he has grown up. Naphtali, the tribe of Tobit and his forefathers, links Tob 1:4 to Tob 1:1a, 2. In addition, Tob 1:4 introduces Jerusalem, alongside the tribe of Naphtali, for the first time in the narrative. An implicit connection between Tob 1:1a, 2 and Jerusalem in Tob 1:4 exists because of Jerusalem's link with the tribe of Naphtali, which withdraw's from its temple.

8. Elena Di Pedè et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu: Lecture narrative du livre de Tobie*, eds. Didier Luciani and Jean-Pierre Sonnet, Le livre et le rouleau (Paris: Lessius, 2014), 16.

9. Cf. Marco Zappella, *Tobit: Introduzione, traduzione e commento*, Nuova versione della Bibbia dai testi antichi 30 (Cinisello Balsamo: San Paolo, 2010), 38.

Tob 1:5 reiterates the tribe of Tobit's father, Naphtali, which Tob 1:4 mentions as well as Tob 1:1a, 2. The repetition of the word Naphtali in Tob 1:4-5 intensifies Tobit's memories of the land of Israel. Tobit informs his hearers and readers about events prior to the exile, which Tob 1:1a, 2 implies, such as the secession of the house of his father from communion with the temple of the Most-High, by sacrificing to Baal the young cow.¹⁰ Thus he draws a connection between the deeds of his tribe and the exile. In the context of Tob 1:5, "the house of my father, Naphtali," means the tribe of Tobit's father, Naphtali, as Tob 1:1-2 also witnesses.

Naphtali counts amongst the other tribes which fall-off from the house of the Most-High in Jerusalem to sacrifice to Baal the young cow. The inclusive function of the second *kaì* in Tob 1:5, which can be rendered as "together with," also supports this interpretation.¹¹ As such, I have rendered Tob 1:5 as follows: "And all the tribes that fell-off, *together with* the house of my father, Naphtali, sacrificed to Baal the young cow." All the fallen tribes of Israel include the tribe of Naphtali. This detail proves interesting in the light of Tob 1:4, which records Naphtali as the only tribe that secedes from all the tribes of Israel. Tob 1:5 suggests otherwise, by including Naphtali amongst other tribes that break-off from the house of Jerusalem. Needless to state, both Tob 1:4 and 1:5 come from the same intradiegetic narrator, through the mouth of Tobit. Bal noted the

10. Unlike GII, GI does not refer to a 'calf' associated with Jeroboam in 1 Kgs 12:28-29. It represents a diverse tradition.

11. F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans/ed. Robert W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 228.

unreliability of memory in traumatic experiences, such as Tobit's, which leads him to release information bit by bit.¹²

Tob 1:5, nonetheless, focuses on the tribe of Naphtali, because it singles it out from many other tribes, which remain nameless. In that way, the narrative keeps its readers or hearers focused on the foundational frame of the initial Tobit in Tob 1:1a, 2, which refers to the tribe of Naphtali alone. I note that Tob 1:5 does not single out any individual as offering sacrifice to Baal the young cow, not even Tobiel, Tobit's father, except for his tribe, Naphtali.

Tob 1:6 repeats Tobit's 'I' (ἐγώ), with which the narrative begins in Tob 1:3. Just as the initial ἐγώ focuses on his ways of truth and righteousness in exile, the second focuses on his ways of truth and righteousness in Israel, as a young man. Tobit's 'I's in Tob 1:3 and 1:6 react to the Assyrian exile (see Tob 1:1a, 2) and Naphtali's secession from the house of Jerusalem (Tob 1:4-5), respectively. Thus, the narrative draws an implicit connection between Naphtali's secession from the house of Jerusalem and the Assyrian exile.

Tob 1:7 mentions the recipients of Tobit's acts of loyalty to the house of Jerusalem: priests and the sons of Levi. This verse mentions Jerusalem twice, after a couple of other references in Tob 1:4, 6. Jerusalem not only portrays Tobit's loyalty to it, a factor which distinguishes him from the rest of his tribe of Naphtali, but it also marks its contrast with Naphtali. That distinction proves to be novel to the hearer or reader, who might not perceive the difference between

12. Bal, *Narratology*, 150.

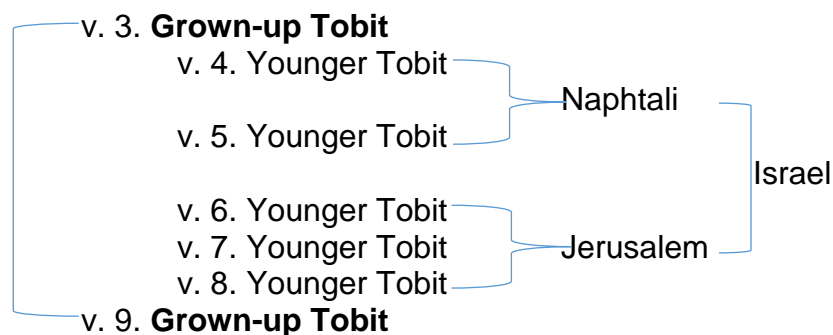
Tobit and Naphtali, his tribe, in Tob 1:1a, 2. It sheds light on the rupture in Tobit's name, because, at the outset, he breaks away from his religious family.¹³

Tob 1:8 continues with the theme of temple offerings mentioned in verses 6 and 7. The list of recipients extends to whomever it fits, so long as one deserves an act of charity. Tob 1:8 also informs the reader or hearer of the narrative that, Tobit receives religious instruction from his grandmother, Debbora, because his father dies and leaves him as an orphan, long before Tobit receives religious instruction.

Tob 1:9 brings the text of Tob 1:3-9 to a close, as it shifts focus from Tobit the youth in Tob 1:4-8, to Tobit the full-grown man, whom Tob 1:3 also portrays. Thus, Tob 1:3 and 1:9 form an inclusion through the full-grown frame of Tobit. The full-grown Tobit marries Hanna, from the seed of his fathers, and she bears him a son, Tobiah, whose name resembles his, except for the theophoric ending.

4.1.1. Characterization of Tobit in Israel (Tob 1:3-9)

Roughly, a structure of Tob 1:3-9 can be drawn as follows:



13. Cf. Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 19.

The 'grown-up Tobit' frame in Tob 1:3, 9 characterizes Tobit as an ardent follower of truth and righteousness, exemplified by his practice of almsgiving and endogamy. As Di Pede et al. observed, Tobit's exile from Israel to Nineveh does not seem to radically affect his ways of truth and righteousness, because he continues to do in Nineveh what he has always done in Israel.¹⁴ The 'grown-up Tobit' frame in Tob 1:3, 9 also reminds readers or hearers that the words in Tob 1:4-8 come from a truthful and righteous grown-up man.

The core of Tobit's youth, in Tob 1:4-8, exhibits a tension between Naphtali and Jerusalem, which arises from the exercise of truth and righteousness. Naphtali (Tob 1:4-5) represents the lack of truth and righteousness in Israel, while Jerusalem (Tob 1:6-8) represents the presence of truth and righteousness in Israel. The narrative aligns Tobit with Jerusalem, which it presents as an axis of Tobit's memory and hope.¹⁵ As such, it characterizes him as truthful and righteous, as well as torn apart from Naphtali, his people, who secede from Jerusalem. The tension between Naphtali and Jerusalem foreshadows Tobit's diminution of space to live truthfully and righteously, because it culminates with an experience of the Assyrian exile.

A couple of Tobit's lacks, which form the rupture in his name, call for identification at this point: (1) he lacks communion with his religious tribe or family, and (2) he lacks communion with the land of Israel because of the exile.

14. Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 17.

15. Beate Ego, "The Book of Tobit and the Diaspora," in *The Book of Tobit, Text, Tradition, Theology: Papers of the First International Conference on the Deuterocanonical Books, Pápa, Hungary, 20-21 May, 2004*, eds. Géza G. Xeravits and József Zsengellér, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 98 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 43.

For Tobit to be complete again, he needs to reunite with his religious tribe or family, which should abandon its idolatrous practices, and he also needs an end to the experience of the exile.

Perhaps the theophoric rupture in Tobit's name cannot highlight a desire for reunion with his religious family, because Tob 1:3 shows that he experiences the exile with his religious family.¹⁶ As such, some sort of religious unity already exists in exile. I suggest that Tobit desires religious or familial unity, which his ancestors' theophoric names in Tob 1:1 exhibit. That religious or familial unity implies no tolerance for idolatrous worship or unrighteousness, which triggers Tobit's initial alienation from his tribe.

Tob 1:3-9 also characterizes Tobit as one who highlights his goodness, as his personal name, which means 'my goodness,' implies. Tobit uses the nominative personal pronoun 'I' (ἐγώ) twice in Tob 1:3-9 (1:3,6), not only to emphasize his good deeds, but to justify himself against the idolatrous tribe of Naphtali and the dreadful experience of exile.¹⁷ One needs not to argue against his characterization as a righteous man at this point, because the extradiegetic narrator permits the intradiegetic counterpart to do that. Moreover, the internal focalizer focuses upon Tobit's righteousness, so much so that viewers behold only that and nothing else.¹⁸ Tobit needs to highlight his deity's goodness, to share in the heritage of his ancestors, whose names highlight their deity.

16. See Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 17.

17. Blass and Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar*, 145.

18. Bal, *Narratology*, 149-150.

Tobit highlights his goodness in Tob 1:3-9 for at least two reasons. First, he considers the experience of the exile, which he talks about, alongside *ḥyṯ*, in Tob 1:3, as an injustice.¹⁹ In this regard, he has walked in ways of truth and righteousness in Israel, but ends up experiencing exile in Assyria. Second, his religious family or tribe deviates from its deity to worship Baal the young cow (Tob 1:5), prompting him to highlight his goodness in Tob 1:6, where he uses the emphatic *ḥyṯ* once more.²⁰ These preliminary observations show that Tobit characteristically highlights his goodness in the face of perceived evil or injustice.

Di Pede et al. questioned Tobit's knowledge of his sole irreproachability in Israel, given that he perceives himself as the only truthful and righteous one of his tribe.²¹ They wondered that perhaps the extradiegetic narrator holds out the 'microphone' for an intradiegetic narrator to speak, because the extradiegetic narrator implicitly disagrees with what Tobit recounts. In other words, the intradiegetic narrator might be unreliable. Accordingly, Zappella, using the text of GII, which GI witnesses, observed that Tobit readily corrects himself in Tob 5:14, when he acknowledges that other members from his religious family or tribe used to go to Jerusalem for religious obligations.²²

I agree with Zappella that in the current text Tobit mentions two other characters, Hananiah and Jathan, with whom he used to go to Jerusalem.

19. Elena Di Pede, "Enquête sur l'identité du narrateur du livre de Tobit," in *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu: Lecture narrative du livre de Tobie*, eds. Didier Luciani and Jean-Pierre Sonnet, *Le livre et le rouleau* (Paris: Lessius, 2014), 143.

20. Blass and Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar*, 145.

21. Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 19.

22. Zappella, *Tobit*, 39.

However, whether Tobit corrects himself from an earlier mistake in Tob 1:3-9, in which case the intradiegetic narrator exhibits unreliability, remains arguable. I suggest that the narrative in Tob 1:3-9 shows reliability, because it just presents the situation of the 'initial Tobit,' who highlights his goodness due to challenges that encompass him. That perception changes in Tob 5:14, as his trauma subsides and memory gets the better side of him.²³

Still on the question of Tobit's irreproachability in Tob 1:6, Portier-Young suggested that Tobit characterizes himself as a man buried in his own myth of self-sufficiency, which blinds him to see God's workings in his life.²⁴ If Tobit does not see God's workings in his life, the harsh reality of the exile explains his oversight. In this vein, God appears to be distant from Tobit's situation, and this could be a reason why Tobit refers to his deity by the 'Most-High' epithet in Tob 1:4.

Tob 1:8 brings the 'initial Tobit's' alienation from his religious family to light, because his father dies and leaves him as an orphan. Thus, Tobit has had no privilege of receiving religious instruction from his father. Tobit's religious instructions to his son in *Tobit* 4 and 14 confirm the father's responsibility to offer religious instruction to his son in the *Book of Tobit*. The absence of Tobiel from Tobit's life punctuates his alienation from his religious family to which he longs to

23. Bal, *Narratology*, 150.

24. Anthea Portier-Young, "'Eyes to the Blind': A Dialogue Between Tobit and Job," in *Intertextual Studies in Ben Sira and Tobit: Essays in Honor of Alexander A. Di Lella*, eds. Jeremy Corley and Vincent Skemp, Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series 38 (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2005), 19.

be united. That alienation shows on Tobit's name, because he lacks a theophoric ending.

Di Pede et al. suggested that the intradiegetic narrator's evocation of Tobit's grandmother underlines an aspect of Tobit's alienation from his religious family or tribe.²⁵ They stated that the idea of Tobit's grandmother giving him religious instruction highlights Tobit's generation that had already fallen into idolatry, which might explain the absence of a theophoric element in Tobit's name. This idea bolsters the argument that Tobit's ancestors mentioned in Tob 1:1 do not form a part of that generation which secedes from the house of Jerusalem, because the name of Tobit, together with its bearer, looks up to them for wholeness. I should add that the name Tobit characterizes both its bearer and his religious family, as some sense names do.²⁶ It characterizes Tobit as having fallen away from his religious family, and it characterizes his family as having fallen away from the house of Jerusalem.

Not all gets lost for Tobit's religious instruction, because, Debbora, Tobit's grandmother, fills in for Tobit's deceased father, Tobiel, to give Tobit religious instruction (Tob 1:8).²⁷ This shows the deity's overarching presence in Tobit's troubled situation, because Tobit's grandmother instructs him in ways of truth and righteousness. In addition, Tobit bears a child, Tobiah, whose name has an

25. Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 19.

26. Mwizenge S. Tembo, *What does your African Name Mean?: The Meanings of Indigenous Names among the Tonga of Southern Zambia*, University of Zambia Institute for African Studies (Lusaka: Institute for African Studies, 1989), 35.

27. Zappella, *Tobit*, 41, noted that examples of female religious instructors can be found in both the OT (Prov 31:1; 2 Macc 7) and NT (2 Tim 1:5, 3:14-15).

abbreviated *-ah* ending for YHWH (Tob 1:9). Unlike Tobit, who highlights his goodness, amidst tensions of exile and separation from his religious family, Tobiah's name highlights the goodness of YHWH. YHWH's goodness ultimately prevails in Tobit's situation, as Tobiah sets out on a journey that brings about Tobit's well-being. In other words, Tobiah plays a major role in mending the religious and exilic rupture engraved in Tobit's name.

Di Pede et al. made a helpful observation that the name of Tobiah, Tobit's son, joins the onomastic tradition of Tobit's ancestors.²⁸ I would like to add that Tobiah's name suggests Tobit's desire to be like his ancestors, whose names end in *-'el*, especially Tobiel, his father, whose name shares the same word-root as Tobit's and Tobiah's. Understandably, Tobiah's name does not end in *-'el*, because he is just a son and not an ancestor of Tobit, who cannot be placed on the same religious plane as Tobit's ancestors in Tob 1:1-2. In any case, the theophoric name of Tobit's son proves significant, because Tobit experiences the goodness of YHWH through his son.

To summarize, Tobit's tendency to highlight his goodness, in the face of his idolatrous tribe and the Assyrian exile, characterizes him as a righteous man, who experiences alienation from his own people. The experience of the exile traumatizes him, because he views himself as a righteous man who does not deserve it. The rupture in his name characterizes him as having fallen away from his religious family and land; and it also characterizes his religious family as having fallen away from the house of Jerusalem into the Assyrian exile.

28. Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 20.

4.2. Delineation and Analysis of Tob 1:10-22

I translate Tob 1:10-22 as follows:

¹⁰And when I was taken captive into Nineveh, all my brothers and the [people] from the race ate from the bread of the gentiles. ¹¹But I kept myself from eating, ¹²because I remembered God with all my soul. ¹³And the Most-High gave (me) grace and form before Enemessaros, and I was his purveyor. ¹⁴And I went into Media and I entrusted ten talents of silver with Gabael, the brother of Gabriah, in Rages of Media. ¹⁵And when Enemessaros died, Sennachereim, his son, reigned for him, and his ways were unsettled, and I was no longer able to go into Media. ¹⁶And in the days of Enemessaros, I practiced much almsgiving to my brothers. ¹⁷I gave my bread to the hungry, and garments to the naked, and if I saw anyone from my race, dead and thrown off behind the wall of Nineveh, I buried him. ¹⁸And if Sennachereim the king killed anyone, when he came fleeing from Judea, I buried them secretly; for he killed many in his wrath; and the bodies were sought by him and they were not found. ¹⁹But one of the (men) in Nineveh pointed out to the king, concerning me, that I bury them, so I hid. But when I came to know that I was being sought for to be put to death, I departed in fear. ²⁰And all my property was plundered, and nothing was left to me except Hanna my wife and Tobiah my son. ²¹And fifty days did not pass before which two of his sons killed him; and they fled into the mountain of Ararat, and Sacherdonos, his son, reigned for him. And he appointed Achiacharos, the son of my brother Hanael, over all the accounts of his kingdom and over all the administration. ²²And Achiacharos interceded for me, and I came into Nineveh. And Achiacharos was the cupbearer, and keeper of the signet, and administrator, and accountant; and Sacherdonos appointed him second (to himself). And he was my nephew.

Having spoken about his experience as a youth in Israel in Tob 1:3-9, Tobit shifts focus to talk about his experiences as a grown-up man in Nineveh in Tob 1:10ff. Unlike Tob 1:1a, 2, which does not specify Tobit's locus in Assyria, Tob 1:10 does specify it as Nineveh. The use of related verbs αἰχμαλωτεύω (to lead captive) in Tob 1:1a, 2 and αἰχμαλωτίζω (to lead captive) in Tob 1:10, places the two texts in direct conversation, because they refer to the same geographical setting of exile in Assyria.

In exile, Tobit's brothers or kinsmen and the people from his race or other tribes of Israel eat the bread of the gentiles (Tob 1:10), an act which Tobit considers as unrighteous.²⁹ The use of the personal pronoun, ἐγὼ, in Tob 1:11, continues to serve as a mark of Tobit's righteousness against his brothers or kinsmen and other members of Israel, with whom he experiences exile in Niniveh of Assyria.³⁰ Eating gentile food in exile amounts to forgetting God or rather transgressing his precepts (Tob 1:12). Tobit does not eat the bread of the gentiles like his fellow men in exile because he remembers God with all his soul. Tobit refers to the deity as θεός for the first time in Tob 1:12, after referring to him as the 'Most-High' in Tob 1:4. He mentions God in line with God's precepts, which Tobit observes, even in exile.³¹ Thus, the narrative manifests God's eminent presence in Tobit's religious observances, even though the deity's presence appears to be transcendent in Tobit's situation of the exile and religious or familial isolation.

In Tob 1:13, Tobit uses his deity's epithet, 'Most-High,' once again instead of θεός, which he mentions in the previous verse. The 'Most-High' gives him grace and good appearance, which wins him Enemessaros's favor, who makes Tobit his purveyor. Tobit's reference to the 'Most High' accompanies the context of the exile, where the deity appears to be transcendent; and his reference to 'God' points to his realization of God's precepts, which serve him favorably to get

29. Ego, "The Book of Tobit," 47.

30. See also Di Pedé et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 20.

31. Ibid., 21.

employed as a purveyor.³² In other words, Tobit's deity manifests both eminence and transcendence in his situation. Enemessaros in Tob 1:13 forms a direct link with Tob 1:1a, 2, where he, as king of Assyria, realizes Tobit's exile.

The use of the imperfect of πορεύομαι in Tob 1:14 suggests Tobit's habitual visits to Media during the reign of Enemessaros, under whom he serves as purveyor. That enables him to entrust ten talents of silver or money with Gabael. Di Pede et al. wondered why Tobit talks about money at this point, given that until now, he has been speaking about his generosity or almsgiving to others.³³ Could he have saved money in view of the end of the Assyrian exile, a precaution which would characterize him as a prudent and wise man? I suggest that Tob 1:14 is proleptic, because it echoes the situation of the 'final Tobit.' The ten talents of silver associated with Gabael will prompt Tobit to tell his son Tobiah to go and recover them from Gabael in Rages of Media. As Zappella put it, this narrative element serves to give a reason for Tobiah's journey.³⁴

The death of Enemessaros in Tob 1:15 intensifies the situation of the 'initial Tobit' in Tob 1:1a, 2, because it disenables him to fulfil his functions as the king's purveyor. He can no longer travel to Media; as such, he cannot practice almsgiving to his kinsmen as he used to "in the days of Enemessaros" (see Tob 1:16-17). Nonetheless, he still manages to bury those of Israelite descent, whom Sennachereim, the king who replaces Enemessaros, kills and throws behind the

32. Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 21.

33. Ibid.

34. Zappella, *Tobit*, 43.

wall of Nineveh (Tob 1:17). A wall confines people to the space within its boundaries, and its mention here proves significant for the context of the Assyrian exile.³⁵

As the exile progresses, the 'initial Tobit' feels the burden of the wall, which highlights his limitation to exercise truth and righteousness, especially after the death of Enemessaros, because he can no longer go into Media. Tobit's practice of almsgiving diminishes during Sennachereim's reign, so much so that only the burial of the dead Israelites remains as a righteous act under his exercise. Thus, as the exilic experience progresses, the 'initial Tobit' experiences less space to exercise truth and righteousness. If Tobit points a finger at Sennachereim as a murderer, whose unsuccessful mission in Judea fuels his anger (Tob 1:18),³⁶ it shows that Enemessaros's reign records few or no murders.

Sennachereim functions as a narrative device that accentuates Tobit's troubles in exile, which begin with Enemessaros. Tob 1:19 threatens Tobit's righteous practice, because his acts of burying the dead enrage Sennachereim to the extent that he seeks to put Tobit to death; and Tobit flees. The readers or hearers of the narrative do not know where he flees to, but they know of the confiscation of all his property, and the safety of his wife Hanna and his son Tobiah (Tob 1:20). At this point, Tobit enjoys no space for his exercise of

35. Bal, *Narratology*, 136.

36. Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 22.

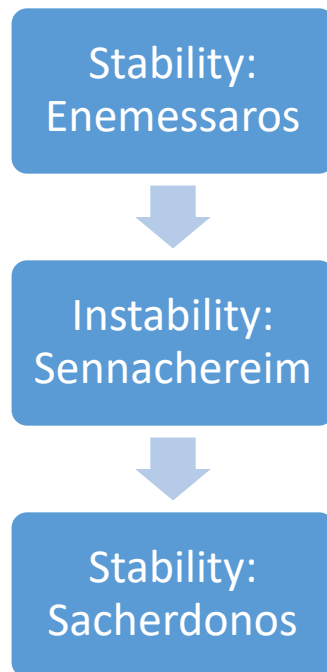
righteousness in the narrative, as his troubles intensify under Sennachereim. Tobit becomes an exile within exile.

Scarcely fifty days pass when two of Sennachereim's sons kill him and flee. His death marks a new dawn for Tobit, because, Sacherdonos, Sennachereim's son, becomes king, and Achiacharos, the son of Tobit's kinsman, Hanael, gets a job as accountant and administrator over the Assyrian kingdom (Tob 1:21). Achiacharos requests from the king for Tobit's return to Nineveh, and the king grants his request (1:22). This gesture hints at familial or religious unity that Tobit desires. The name of Hanael, Achiacharos's father, echoes the deity's gracious presence in the troubled situation of the 'initial Tobit.'

This sub-narrative, which begins with Tobit in Nineveh, in Tob 1:10, ends with Tobit's return to public life in Nineveh, in Tob 1:22, after a brief stay in hiding, in between.

4.2.1. Characterization of Tobit in Nineveh (Tob 1:10-22)

Three Assyrian kings—Enemessaros, Sennachereim, and Sacherdonos—provide helpful lenses for the characterization of Tobit in Nineveh. In a rough narrative structure, they can be presented as 'stability, instability, stability,' respectively.



The structure shows that Tobit desires stability, above all, within the diaspora. It constitutes a different understanding of the exile, because Tobit now views the exile proper as instability, which limits his exercise of truth and righteousness. That comprises the effect of a forward symmetrical structure, in the light of the structure of Tob 1:3-9, because the intensification of Tobit's trouble in exile prompts him to desire survival within the exile, before he can think of his homeland.³⁷

The narrative characterizes Tobit as righteous under the reign of Enemessaros. He wins his favor, becoming the royal purveyor; this can be viewed as God's reward for his righteousness. That righteousness pits Tobit against his unrighteous kinsmen and the rest of the Israelites in Nineveh, who consume gentile bread. Tobit uses an emphatic 'I,' in Tob 1:11, to highlight his

37. Walsh, *Old Testament Narrative*, 114.

righteousness against the unrighteousness of his people, as the 'initial Tobit' characteristically responds in the face of injustice or unrighteousness. This opposition foreshadows Tobit's diminishing space to exercise truth and righteousness, or an intensification of his exilic experience.

Enemessaros's appointment of Tobit as royal purveyor creates space for Tobit to practice almsgiving in exile.³⁸ Tobit recalls the practice after the death of Enemessaros, because of the little space for Tobit to practice righteousness under the reign of Sennachereim. Sennachereim's reign constitutes an injustice, which prompts Tobit to highlight his goodness. Unlike the injustice that comes from Tobit's people in the reign of Enemessaros, the injustice in the reign of Sennachereim comes from the king himself, who kills Israelites, after he flees from Judea. Tobit undertakes to bury Israelites whom the king murders.

As Zappella noted, the Most-High does not reward Tobit for his righteous acts of burying the dead under Sennachereim, and Tobit's space for righteousness shrinks even more, because Sennachereim seeks to murder him.³⁹ This shows that the text focuses less on God's reward and punishment for his people, than the constriction of Tobit's space to exercise truth and righteousness in exile, over which the deity ultimately prevails. Tobit's troubles worsen in sequence, beginning with the injustice of his people, culminating in the injustice of the forces of the Assyrian kingdom, the king himself, against whom he highlights his goodness.

38. See Bal, *Narratology*, 138.

39. Zappella, *Tobit*, 45.

Tobit relives his experience of the exile within the Assyrian exile when he flees from Sennachereim's wrath. The plundering of all his property as he flees from Sennachereim reinforces his primary loss of land. Achiacharos, Hanael's son's recalling of Tobit to public life in Nineveh, under Sacherdonos, highlights the familial or religious unity that Tobit desires, and an end to the exilic experience.

Tob 1:10-22 comprises at least four type-scenes that correspond to Tob 1:3-9: (1) a polemic against Tobit's tribe or/and Israelites, (2) a remembrance of his righteous acts in a previous situation, in view of the (3) current situation, and (4) relative stability allowing righteous deeds.⁴⁰

Tobit has a difficulty with his tribe along with all those who break-off from the house of Jerusalem to worship an idol in Tob 1:4-5, whereas in Tob 1:10, he has problems with his kinsmen and other Israelites who eat bread of the gentiles. In Tob 1:6, he recalls his sole observance of religious obligations for the house of Jerusalem, whereas in Tob 1:11-12, he recalls his sole non-partaking of gentile bread during the reign of Enemessaros. He speaks in the light of the troubled situation of the Assyrian exile in Tob 1:3-9, whereas he speaks in the light of the troubled situation ushered in by Sennachereim's reign in Tob 1:10-22. At the end of all the commotion, relative stability exists in exile, implied by Tob 1:3 on the one hand, and Tob 1:10-13, 21-22 on the other hand.

Tob 1:3-9 informs Tob 1:10-22 about Tobit in at least three ways: (1) Tobit recounts his time under Enemessaros as a preamble to the exile, which

40. See Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 61.

compares to his time in Israel, when his tribe broke away from Jerusalem; (2) he views Sennachereim's reign as the Assyrian exile proper because Sennachereim wants to kill him, and so he flees for safety; (3) he views his readmission to public life in Nineveh as a possibility to live peacefully in exile, and continue with his works of truth and righteousness.⁴¹

To summarize, Tobit seeks peace within the Assyrian exile, as he re-conceptualizes the meaning of exile in the diaspora. Exile proper implies lack of space to exercise truth and righteousness, wherever one finds oneself. Tobit exercises truth and righteousness during the reign of Enemessaros, because he enjoys space to exercise them. He does not exercise his religious obligations under the reign of Sennachereim, because he lacks space for exercising them, as he hides for fear of murder. If the diaspora grants space to exercise truth and righteousness, that itself constitutes an end to exile, because it offers a durable solution to Tobit's troubled exilic experience.

Sennachereim's death seems to recreate Tobit's space in exile; and now, can Tobit exercise truth and righteousness once again, under Sacherdonos, as he does under Enemessaros?

4.3. Delineation and Analysis of Tob 2:1-10

I render Tob 2:1-10 as follows:

¹When I came down to my house, and Hanna my wife, with Tobiah my son, was given back to me, on the feast of Pentecost, which is a holy (feast) of seven days, a good meal was prepared for me, and I reclined to

41. See also Zappella, *Tobit*, 45.

eat. ²And I saw much food and I said to my son, 'Go and bring whatever poor man of our brothers you should find, who remembers the Lord, and look, I will wait for you.' ³But he came back and said, 'Father, one of our race has been strangled and thrown in the market place.' ⁴And I, before I tasted (the food), I stood up and took him into a certain room, until the sun set. ⁵And when I returned, I bathed and ate my bread in grief. ⁶And I remembered the prophecy of Amos, just as he said, 'Your feasts shall turn into mourning, and all your gladness into lamentation.' ⁷And I wept. And when the sun set, I went and dug (a grave) and buried him. ⁸And the neighbors laughed, saying, 'He is no longer afraid to be killed concerning this same deed; and he had run away, and look, he is burying the dead again.' ⁹And on the same night, I returned from burying him, and having been defiled, I slept by the wall of the courtyard, and my face was uncovered. ¹⁰And I did not know that there were sparrows on the wall, and my eyes being open, the sparrows discharged warm excrement in my eyes, and white fumes formed in my eyes. And I went to physicians, and they did not profit me; but Achiacharos nourished me until he went to Elymais.

Narrative motifs of the number '50' (Tob 1:21; 2:1), the remembrance of the Lord (Tob 1:12; 2:2), Hanna and Tobiah (Tob 1:20; 2:1), and Achiacharos (Tob 1:21-22; 2:10) place Tob 1:10-22 and 2:1-10 in direct conversation, and form a basis for an analogical examination of the two texts.

The criteria of time and place mark the closure of the text of Tob 2:1-10.⁴² It begins with a temporal clause, which marks a lapse of time between events, and a beginning of a new unit. The events between the lapsed time comprise Tobit's 'exile' from within the Assyrian exile, and his return to public life in Nineveh. His house in Nineveh, to which he returns after fleeing, forms the setting of this text (Tob 2:1).

The reader or hearer learns that Tobit goes alone into hiding, leaving Hanna and Tobiah behind, because he receives them after his restoration in

42. Marguerat and Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, 32.

Nineveh (Tob 2:1). This detail adds more information to Tob 1:20, which states that Tobit remains with Hanna, his wife, and Tobiah, his son, after the confiscation of all his property.⁴³ Tobit reveals some fresh information in Tob 2:1 because his memory serves him better this time around, after his traumatic experience of running for life.⁴⁴ He flees alone because he alone faces danger of death by Sennachereim, for burying the dead. Achiacharos could have taken care of Tobit's wife and son, in his absence, because he shows concern for Tobit's welfare from Tob 1:22. This necessitates his intercession before the king, for Tobit's return to public life, in order that Tobit reunites with his family.

Tob 2:2 shows Tobit's concern for the poor or hungry, which he also shows in Tob 1:17, because he sends his son to go and invite any poor man from Israel to the meal set before him. Whichever poor man Tobiah invites should be one who "remembers the Lord" (Tob 2:2). Tobit characterizes himself as such in Tob 1:12, when he says that he "remembered God," by avoiding gentile food. Di Pede et al. opined that Tobit invites a poor man like him, because the narrative does not mention that he receives back the property earlier confiscated from him.⁴⁵

The setting in his house, on the contrary, which shows stability with sumptuous food served at table, does not signal poverty. Thus, Tobit desires to share his food with someone from his country, who cannot afford what he has.

43. See also Zappella, *Tobit*, 47.

44. Bal, *Narratology*, 150.

45. Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 23-24.

The sought-for-poor-man does not come because Tobiah returns with news of the murder of one of the Israelites (Tob 2:3). Tobit leaves the table to secure the body, in readiness for burial after sunset, and then returns to his home (Tob 2:4). If Tobit acts like this to wait for the festive holiday to pass, before he can bury the corpse at sunset, he can as well wait for the evening to secure the corpse.⁴⁶ Waiting for the sun to set implies waiting for darkness, and the reader or hearer of the narrative at this point can expect bad tidings to follow.⁴⁷

At night, Tobit goes to bury the body (Tob 2:7). This narrative setting recalls the secrecy with which he buries bodies under Sennachereim, to the point that one of the men of Nineveh notices and reports him (Tob 1:18-19). Interestingly, neighbors see him in the night, burying the dead man, in the current text (Tob 2:8). They do not report him, but they laugh at this act of his righteousness. He risks punishment by death, bearing in mind what happens to him under Sennachereim.⁴⁸

When he returns from the burial, he sleeps outside because of his religious observance, following contact with a dead body (see Tob 2:9).⁴⁹ The reader or hearer of the narrative becomes alert to the danger which Tobit exposes himself, because he remains outside his house at night. Droppings of

46. Cf. Frank Zimmermann, *The Book of Tobit: An English Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Jewish Apocryphal Literature (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958), 56.

47. See Marguerat and Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, 77.

48. Zappella, *Tobit*, 49.

49. Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 26. Num 19:11-12 states that anyone who touches a dead body shall be considered unclean for seven days, and should purify oneself with water on the third and seventh day.

sparrows produce white films in Tobit's eyes, and he becomes completely blind, after physicians' attempts to restore his sight. These sparrows, which a demonic adversary probably controls in the narrative, represent a literary figure to indicate the cause of Tobit's blindness.⁵⁰ Just as Tob 1:10-22 ends with Achiacharos's restoration of Tobit, Tob 2:1-10 ends with Achiacharos's care for Tobit. Achiacharos's decision to leave for Elymida renders Tobit's situation precarious, because no one seemingly remains to offer that kind of care, which he has given to Tobit.⁵¹

4.3.1. Characterization of Tobit in an Event leading to his Blindness

The sketch below suggests a rough narrative structure based on Tobit's religious or familial relationships in Nineveh in Tob 2:1-10.

50. Zappella, *Tobit*, 51.

51. *Ibid.*, 52.

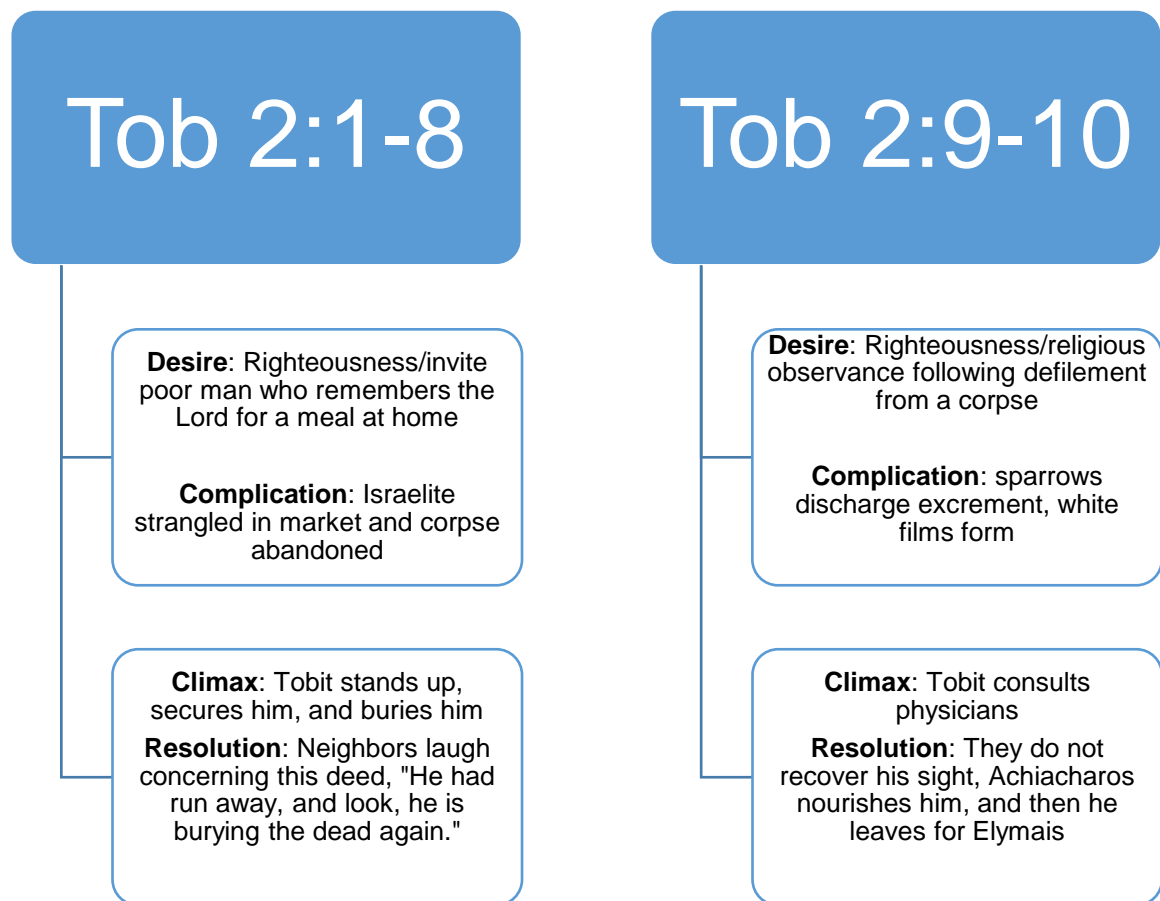


The two outer rings show Tobit's desire to be with members of his religious family. However, instability in exile lies at the center of Tobit's desires and impedes their realization. Achiacharos's departure accentuates Tobit's need to be with his religious family, just as the Israelite who remembers the Lord and never makes it to table fellowship with Tobit.

Broken familial or religious bonds and displacement from a permanent residence punctuate Tobit's 'exile' within the Assyrian exile, just as they punctuate his exile from Israel to Assyria. His homecoming in Tob 2:1 and reunion with his nuclear family demonstrate Tobit's aspiration for the end of exile and his desire to reunite with his religious family. The stability of a family in a home, with a sumptuous meal before it, which the setting of Tob 2:1 expresses, echoes security in one's homeland of plenty, with loved ones. As Di Pede et al. observed, the numeral '50' recalls the assassination of the king who persecutes Tobit, and the enthronement of his successor who permits his restoration to

public life on the Jewish feast of Pentecost.⁵² Stability marks this fresh beginning for Tobit. His space to exercise truth and righteousness expands once again.

Two identifiable microplots in Tob 2:1-10 enlighten the characterization of Tobit below.



Tob 2:2 characterizes Tobit as a righteous man, who worries about the welfare of the hungry.⁵³ He looks for a person who remembers the Lord to share his food with, at the same table in his home, because he longs for unity with his

52. Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 24.

53. Ego, "The Book of Tobit," 48.

God-centered religious family. Tobit desires to reunite himself with fellow kinsmen or Israelites, who remember the Lord, such as those who bear theophoric names in Tob 1:1-2 imply, because he too remembers the Lord in his acts of charity (Tob 1:12).

Tobiah's report to his father about a strangled Israelite suggests that he expects his father to undo the complication which the murder of a fellow Israelite brings about. He thus indirectly characterizes Tobit as a righteous man, who responds with an emphatic 'And I' (καὶ ἐγώ), turning to himself to stress the enormity of unrighteousness at hand, with which he contrasts himself. Tobit meets Tobiah's expectations, because he secures the dead man's corpse, to await its burial when the sun sets. He chooses the night time to bury the corpse, when people cannot see him, because he fears for his life. He buries the man, but prompts his neighbors, who see him, to laugh at him, in the final analysis.

Tobit's neighbors characterize him in a couple of ways. They characterize him as a fearless man, to make fun of him, because they laugh at him as they characterize him thus.⁵⁴ Tobit's space for exercising truth and righteousness constricts from the time he first asks Tobiah to go out and invite a righteous Israelite to a meal at his table, because he can hear his neighbors laugh and make fun of him.⁵⁵ They consider his actions as suicidal, while the reader or hearer of the narrative acknowledges Tobit's truth and righteousness, which drive

54. Cf. Zimmermann, *The Book of Tobit*, 57.

55. Bal, *Narratology*, 136.

him into burying the dead. Tobit acts prudently in burying the dead secretly, just as he does during the reign of Sennachereim.

Tobit's neighbors recall his escape from Nineveh, when they mention that "he had run away" (Tob 2:8). The act of burying the dead causes Tobit's previous experience of a 'micro-exile' in Nineveh, within the 'macro-exile' in Assyria. An analogous deduction from the two 'resolution' scenes in the previous figure from Tob 2:1-8 and 9-10 proves that Tobit's blindness constitutes an exilic experience, which compares to his fleeing within Assyria. Tobit's blindness denotes a total loss of space to exercise truth and righteousness in exile, which the little space between him and his neighbors foreshadows.

After burying the strangled man at night, Tobit sleeps outside his house, because he considers himself unclean. Zappella stated that Tobit's righteous act does not earn him any fortune, because he becomes blind after sparrows excrete in his eyes.⁵⁶ I do not call Tobit's sleeping outside his house a righteous act, but a desire for righteousness, because he does not realize anything in the microplot of Tob 2:9-10, apart from lying down by the wall, which punctuates his constricting space for truth and righteousness.

In the microplots of Tob 2:1-10, Tobit's righteous acts pertain to the 'climax' scenes. In the first (Tob 2:1-8), he realizes his righteous act of securing the corpse and burying it, because he has ample space to do so. In the second (Tob 2:9-10), he does not realize any righteous act, because he turns to physicians for remedy. Here lies an instance of asymmetry, which catches the

56. Zappella, *Tobit*, 51.

eye.⁵⁷ It reveals that the second microplot (Tob 2:9-10), unlike the first (Tob 2:1-8), lacks space for Tobit's exercise of truth and righteousness, because the constriction of Tobit's space reaches its heights.

Indeed, he does not turn to the deity of Israel at this crucial point in the narrative, when one would expect him to. Zappella observed that Tobit's recourse to physicians, who fail to restore his sight, shows that only YHWH, towards whom Tobit should turn, can come to his remedy.⁵⁸ However, Zappella has jumped the trigger, because Tobit's experience of going blind overwhelms him. He faces an incapacitating experience of the exile, which deprives him of space and memory to turn to God in truth and righteousness.

Di Pede et al. suggested that Tobit's blindness, which results from the physicians' failure to heal him, refers to Tobit's interior blindness.⁵⁹ They argued that, although he characterizes himself as faithful to the law, he isolates himself from others, through his righteousness, without openness to reality and confidence in others, as the following scene in Tob 2:11-14 implies. In other words, his blindness interiorly characterizes him as a man at the center of his world, who needs to consider others and entrust himself to them.

I do not fully agree with Di Pede et al. for at least two reasons. First, I do not see any connection between Tobit's righteousness, which constitutes a positive characteristic, and the suggested interior blindness, which constitutes a

57. Walsh, *Old Testament Narrative*, 117.

58. Zappella, *Tobit*, 51-52.

59. Di Pede et al., 26-27.

negative characteristic. As such, Di Pede et al. fall short in the honor of the narrative's characterization of Tobit as a righteous man. Second, they fail to appreciate Tobit's desire for religious or familial unity, which comprises all the truthful and righteous of Israel. In this regard, Tobit invites one of the Israelites, who remembers the Lord, for table fellowship, and he also entrusts himself to Achiacharos's care, until the latter leaves Nineveh.

Zappella also saw a symbolic dimension to Tobit's blindness, because he faces punishment for an unknown sin.⁶⁰ He suggested that the truly blind consist of those who have an incorrect perception of reality, or, in short, the unrighteous. His insight attracts attention, because it respects Tobit's integrity as a truthful and righteous man. However, a similarity between Tobit's blindness and the incorrect perceivers of reality in the narrative proves difficult to reconcile, because only he experiences blindness proper and not the others in the narrative.

The resurgence of Achiacharos during Tobit's blindness sheds light on its interpretation as an experience of the exile, which eventually ends. He shows up only at crucial moments of Tobit's exilic experiences, which culminate in his blindness and restoration. He first appears on the scene, when Tobit hides from Sennachereim to help him to return to social life in Nineveh. In the current text, he appears on the scene of Tobit's blindness to sustain him, and his departure heightens Tobit's desire for familial or religious solidarity. He then appears at Tobiah's homecoming in Nineveh and at Tobit's restoration of his sight (Tob

60. Zappella, *Tobit*, 52.

11:18-19),⁶¹ to mark an end to Tobit's exilic experience. His roots can be traced back to Hanael, Tobit's kinsman, whose name echoes God's gracious omnipresence in Tobit's situation from exile to restoration.

In sum, Tob 2:1-10 elaborates on the 'initial Tobit' in Tob 1:1a, 2. It highlights the constriction of Tobit's space to exercise truth and righteousness in exile, which culminates in his blindness. An analogous examination of two microplots drawn from Tob 2:1-10 shows that Tobit's blindness compares to his experience of the 'micro exile' within the Assyrian exile. Thus, the narrative implicitly suggests that Tobit's blindness constitutes an experience of the exile.

Achiacharos's availability at Tobit's blindness recalls his availability for Tobit's restoration to society in Nineveh after he flees for his life. He presents himself in another troubled situation in Tob 2:1-10 when Tobit becomes blind. His presence here foreshadows Tobit's restoration just like his presence at Tobit's experience of the 'micro-exile' realizes its end. His departure, at a time when Tobit still needs him, punctuates Tobit's alienation from members of his religious or familial group, with whom he seeks consolidation.

61. See also Jonas C. Greenfield, "Ahiqar in the Book of Tobit," in *De la Tôrah au Messie: Études d'exégèse et d'herméneutique bibliques offertes à Henri CAZELLES pour ses 25 années d'enseignement à l'Institut Catholique de Paris (Octobre 1979)*, eds. Maurice Carrez, Joseph Doré, and Pierre Grelot (Paris: Desclée, 1981), 331.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0. 'MIDDLE TOBIT'—NARRATIVE ELABORATION OF TOB 1:1B

In this chapter, I argue that Hanna prompts Tobit to highlight less his righteousness, and to turn to his deity for grace or mercy and glory, in order to end the exile and alienation from his religious family. In the process, the intradiegetic narrator characterizes Tobit as less righteous, while Sarra, his kinsman's daughter, whom the extradiegetic narrator juxtaposes with Tobit in prayer, preserves his righteousness.

"There is something ominous behind the silence," says Uchendu, one of the characters in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*.¹ He links the phrase to a story of a mother, who sends her daughter to look for food. When her daughter returns home with a duckling, the mother asks her what the duckling's mother says when her daughter takes its child. The daughter tells her mother that it says nothing. Her mother tells her to return the duckling to its mother. Her daughter later comes back home with a chick. When her mother asks her what the chick's mother says when her daughter takes its chick away, she tells her that it cries and raves and curses her. At that point, the mother tells her daughter that they can have the chick for food, because "there is nothing to fear from someone who shouts."²

1. Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, 50th Anniversary ed. (New York: Anchor Books, 1994), 140.

2. Ibid.

Uchendu's story shows that silence or the lack of it can be a harbinger of a significant event. This story proves helpful to understand the confrontation between Tobit and his wife Hanna (Tob 2:11-14), which plays a role in the characterization of Tobit, in the first part of this chapter. This part concentrates on not only what the narrator or character says about Tobit, and what Tobit says about himself, but also what nuances like silence and other spoken words in the text show or reveal about Tobit's character. In other words, both telling and showing prove themselves as vital categories for characterization.

Roughly, showing dramatizes an event and telling reports on the story.³ The role of a reader or hearer of a narrative can be likened to the mother in Uchendu's story, whose task involves inferring what mother duck's silence, or mother chicken's crying and raving and shouting, reveals. I highlight Tobit's contradictory characteristics in this part of the chapter, as much as I do in the second part, because contradictions are relevant for characterization.⁴ I also find the categories of flat and round characters, especially the latter, to be helpful tools in the pursuit of characterizing Tobit, in both parts of this chapter.⁵

The second part of this chapter focuses on the prayer of Tobit and Sarra (Tob 3:1-17). This prayer characterizes them as round and flat, respectively,

3. Peter J. Rabinowitz, "Showing Vs. Telling," in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, eds. David Herman, Manfred Jahn, and Marie-Laure Ryan (London: Routledge, 2005), 530.

4. Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 127.

5. Daniel Marguerat and Yvan Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1999), 59.

because Tobit has multiple traits, whereas Sarra has a single one. I note with interest that the Gospels' rendering of Jesus's disciples as round characters, with contradictory traits, occasions Jesus's correction of their attitude.⁶ Tobit's round character enables him to focus less on his righteousness and turn to his deity.

Overall, I accomplish the above tasks by delineating and analyzing the text that matters first, and second, I characterize Tobit proper. In delineating a text, I point out the indicators of closure such as time, place, characters, and theme.⁷ In text analysis, I highlight some tensions surrounding Tobit and other characters, which I elaborate on in the characterization section. I also pay attention to the category of space, which the narrative's setting of the exile brings forth, in addition to what I have stated in the previous paragraphs.⁸

5.1. Delineation and Analysis of Tob 2:11-14

I translate Tob 2:11-14, before I delineate and analyze it:

¹¹And my wife Hanna served in weaving clothes. ¹²And she sent (them) to the masters, and they paid her the wages, and they also gave (her) a young goat. ^{13a}But when she came towards me, it began to bleat; ^{13b}and I said to her, 'Where is the goat? ^{13c}Is it not a stolen (goat)? ^{13d}Give it back to the masters, for it is not a righteous act to eat a stolen (goat).' ^{14a}But she said, 'It was given to me as a gift in addition⁹ to the wages.' ^{14b}And I did not believe her, ^{14c}and I told (her) to give it back to the masters, ^{14d}and

6. Marguerat and Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, 65.

7. Ibid., 32.

8. Bal, *Narratology*, 136-138

9. F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans/ed. Robert W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 123.

I blushed at her; ^{14e}but answering, she said to me, 'Where are your alms and your righteousness? ^{14f}Look, all things with you are known.'

Achiacharos's departure from Nineveh to Elymaida in Tob 2:10 gives way to the next narrative unit, which begins at Tob 2:11. The unit presents two characters, Hanna and Tobit; and its theme, which can be dubbed as the confrontation between Tobit and his wife, differs from the previous one, where Tobit becomes blind.¹⁰ The current unit concerns Hanna's goat. As Schüngel-Straumann observed, the 'goat' motif holds Tob 2:11-14 together.¹¹ The motif appears at least twice in the current text (Tob 2:12, 13b).

The setting of the current narrative unit points to Tobit's residence in Nineveh. From there, Hanna tends for Tobit's household because the latter becomes blind, and therefore physically challenged to provide for the family. She engages in textile works, from which she gets income to support the family.¹² All goes well until Hanna brings a goat to her home, in addition to her wages (Tob 2:12). Tobit does not see the goat, because of his blindness. He hears it bleat, as his wife draws near to him (Tob 2:13a). The questions that Tobit asks upon hearing the goat bleat show that he does not expect his wife to bring a goat.¹³ "Where is the goat?" (Tob 2:13b), turns out as the question with which he greets his wife, as she approaches him.

10. Marguerat and Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, 32.

11. Helen Schüngel-Straumann, *Tobit*, Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2000), 70.

12. Marguerat and Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, 27.

13. Rabinowitz, "Showing Vs. Telling," 530.

Tobit wants to be sure that the sound which he hears comes from a goat. By the time when he asks the next question— “Is it not stolen?” (Tob 2:13c) — Tobit expresses conviction of the goat’s presence in his residence, because of its proximity to him. Hanna’s silence up to this point can surprise the reader or hearer of the narrative, as Tobit charges that she should return the goat to its masters because righteousness does not support eating a stolen item (Tob 2:13d). He has no evidence that Hanna has stolen it, because of his confinement to his home. In addition, the narrative does not characterize Hanna as a kleptomaniac. If she has her shortcomings, the narrative shows nothing “to suggest that larceny was among them.”¹⁴

Tobit highlights his goodness when he questions his wife, because he perceives her goat as a proceed of unrighteousness (Tob 2:13d). Her initial silence shows that Tobit does not perceive the current affairs correctly.¹⁵ He needs to focus less on his righteousness, which he can no longer exercise, and focus more on the grace of God, which will free him from his bondage. The deity’s grace finds echoes in Hanna’s initial response to Tobit: “It was given to me as a gift in addition to the wages” (Tob 2:14a).

The narrative reveals Tobit’s mistake *a posteriori*, because he acknowledges the goat as a gift in addition to the wages, without stating the preceding theft.¹⁶ In this regard, Hanna’s initial words invite Tobit to focus less on

14. Carey A. Moore, *Tobit: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible, 40A (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 134.

15. Rabinowitz, “Showing Vs. Telling,” 530.

16. Elena Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu: Lecture narrative du livre de Tobie*, eds. Didier Luciani and Jean-Pierre Sonnet, Le livre et le rouleau (Paris: Lessius, 2014), 28.

his righteousness, which sets him in opposition against the rest of his people. However, Tobit does not believe his wife (Tob 2:14b), even after he drops theft charges against her, because he tells her “to give it back to the masters” (Tob 2:14c). Tobit uses the verb “to give back” at least twice in the current narrative (Tob 2:13d, 14c). This repetition highlights Tobit’s shift from accusing his wife of theft to acknowledging her innocence, because Tob 2:13d includes the theft clause, “for it is not a righteous act to eat a stolen goat,” whereas Tob 2:14c excludes it, after Hanna explains herself (Tob 2:14a).¹⁷

Tobit shifts from accusing his wife of theft, to his incapacity to receive help from others, because he still insists that the goat should be taken back to her wife’s masters (Tob 2:14c), even if it is not stolen. He refuses to have others do to him what he has done to others. This shows that he has not yet completely turned outside himself to his deity’s mercy, although his consideration of Hanna’s innocence points to that process (see Tob 2:14c). In his view, no one can exercise righteousness but he himself.¹⁸

Tobit’s proximity to his wife enables her to read his facial expression (Tob 2:14d), after he tells her to return the goat to her masters. This makes her question Tobit, “^{14e}...Where are your alms and your righteousness? ^{14f}Look, all things with you are known.” These words send Tobit to weep and pray, marking a thematic change beginning at Tob 3:1. Di Pede et al. noted that Hanna responds

17. Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, rev. ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2011), 121-122.

18. Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 28.

ad hominem to Tobit's reaction to her goat, because she sees more clearly than the blind Tobit, whose belief in his own righteousness renders him unjust.¹⁹ The fact that Hanna responds *ad hominem* shows that Tobit should have nothing to fear.²⁰ Her words constitute less of an attack than an implicit invitation to Tobit to highlight less his righteousness, and turn towards the grace of God for restoration. They punctuate the situation of the 'middle Tobit,' who needs God's grace for the alleviation of his suffering.

What comprises all things known about Tobit (Tob 2:14f), and by who? The reference to Tobit's alms and righteousness (Tob 2:14e) before Tob 2:14f suggests that they comprise the known things about him.²¹ However, 'all things' about Tobit have a neuter gender, whereas his alms and righteousness have feminine genders. Thus, all things refer not only to Tobit's alms and righteousness, but also to a totality of his experiences in the narrative, which include the exile. Tobit's alms and righteousness disappear because of the exilic confinement, which his blindness represents. His deity knows his predicament, and at Hanna's implicit invitation (Tob 2:14e-f), he needs to turn towards his deity for restoration.

19. Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 28.

20. Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, 140.

21. See also Anatheia Portier-Young, "Alleviation of Suffering in the Book of Tobit: Comedy, Community, and Happy Endings," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 63, no. 1 (January 2001): 42. She added that Tobit's wife "implies that his acts of mercy and justice have gotten him nothing, and that he has misdirected his compassion to the neglect of his near and extended family."

The things known about Tobit remind him of something significant, such as the words of the prophet Amos in Tob 2:6—“And I remembered the prophecy of Amos, just as he said, ‘Your feasts shall turn into mourning, and all your gladness into lamentation’”—which lead Tobit to weep. Grief, punctuated by the words of the prophet, prompts Tobit to weep (Tob 2:7), just as the words of Hanna do (Tob 3:1).²² A relationship can thus be drawn between the narrative function of Hanna in Tob 2:14, and the function of the prophet Amos in Tob 2:6. Tobit weeps, and highlights his righteous deeds in Tob 2:7; and he weeps, and highlights his deity’s righteousness and mercy in Tob 3:1-2.

5.1.1. Characterization of Tobit in Tobit’s Confrontation with Hanna

The name Hanna in Tob 2:11 shares the same word-root, חנן, as the name of Tobit’s grandfather, Hananiel, in Tob 1:1b. The word-root means “gracious” in both Hebrew and Aramaic, and in the current text, it elucidates the grace or mercy that Tobit is yet to experience from God.²³ This grace will help Tobit not to turn toward his good deeds but toward the goodness of his deity. The situation of the ‘middle Tobit’ involves just that: Tobit’s turning outside himself, in his predicament, to engage his deity more actively in prayer. As such, the meaning of Hanna’s name can help the reader or hearer of the narrative to appreciate her

22. Portier-Young, “Alleviation of Suffering in the Book of Tobit,” 42.

23. Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament: Study Edition*, ed. and trans. M. E. J. Richardson (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 1:332, 335, 2:1878.

role in her confrontation with Tobit. She facilitates that grace that Tobit is so much in need of, in his troubled situation. She acts as the midwife that delivers Tobit from his focus on his good deeds, in the face of challenging situations, to focus on the Lord's grace or mercy.

The sense of hearing plays a significant role in determining Tobit's space in Tob 2:13a. The sound of a bleating goat that he hears not only demonstrates his closeness to it, but also the increasing confinement or reducing space that is available to him.²⁴ As Moore observed, Tobit exhibits helplessness because he now relies on other senses such as hearing, and not sight, and he depends on his wife for a living.²⁵ In other words, Tobit has no space to exercise truth and righteousness because of his physical confinement or blindness, which represents his experience of the exile.

Dimant suggested that the narrative about Hanna's goat cannot be understood without attributing "sexual overtones" to it.²⁶ Two issues point to Dimant's attribution of sexual overtones evoked by Hanna's goat. First, the goat reminds one of Judah's gift to Tamar after their encounter in Genesis 38. Second, Hanna's employment away from her marital house promotes infidelity. Surprisingly, of the many occurrences of the word 'goat' in the Bible, Dimant chose the one associated with Tamar and Judah to understand the differences

24. Bal, *Narratology*, 136.

25. Moore, *Tobit*, 134.

26. Devorah Dimant, "Use and Interpretation of Mikra in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha," in *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. Martin Jan Mulder, *Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 419.

between Tobit and his wife. In addition, a woman who struggles to support her household, because of her physically challenged husband, need not to be viewed with suspicion, as if resignation to misfortune should count as her natural response to troubled situations.

The narrative hardly characterizes Hanna as a base woman simply because she brings a goat for home consumption. That qualifies as a righteous thing to do under the circumstances. Tobit's accusations signal not only his unwillingness to receive charity from others (Tob 2:14b), but also his incapacity to exercise truth and righteousness, because of blindness, as the bleating goat highlights.²⁷ Thus, he implicitly longs for space or freedom to exercise truth and righteousness. As Moore pointed out, all this "prompted Tobit to lash out against Hannah with an unjustified (albeit understandable) attack."²⁸ The attack may be understandable, because Tobit's experience of the exile, and ultimately, blindness, has encroached upon his space for exercising truth and righteousness.

We noted in the previous chapter that Tobit highlights his righteousness in the face of what he considers unrighteous. Hanna's goat causes Tobit to highlight his goodness, because he supposes that it proceeds from crime.²⁹ A question remains as to why Tobit should initially suppose that his wife steals the

27. Rabinowitz, "Showing Vs. Telling," 530.

28. Moore, *Tobit*, 134.

29. See also Renzo Petraglio, "Tobit e Anna: un cammino difficile nella crisi di una coppia," *Rivista Biblica* 52, no. 4 (October-December 2004): 390-391.

goat (Tob 2:13c-d), before he later changes his mind (see Tob 2:14c).³⁰ At this point, I suggest that the narrative presents Tobit as a round character, with multiple traits, to make him worthy of the mercy or grace and glory of his deity.³¹

Bertrand suggested that Hanna's goat illustrates Passover ritual observances for Tobit's household because of at least three reasons: 1. Tobit observes sacred feasts in the narrative, prior to and during the exile 2. Hanna's employees' gesture show their concern for the poor, just as Tobit invites a poor man at his Pentecost meal 3. Tobit speaks of eating the goat.³² The differences between Tobit and his wife ultimately concern the purity of the goat to be eaten at the Passover meal. Tobit suggests that if the goat proceeds from crime, it remains defective for a Passover meal.

Bertrand's interpretation of the passage of Hanna's goat accounts for Tobit's righteousness. However, the current text in GI hardly mentions any religious feast to associate with the goat. In addition, Bertrand's interpretation does not account for Tobit's round character, which he requires, to receive the Lord's mercy and glory. We have suggested that the goat punctuates Tobit's constrained experience of the exile, which incapacitates him to exercise truth and righteousness.

Tobit remains silent when Hanna asks him a difficult question, followed by a statement: "...Where are your alms and your righteousness? Look, all things

30. Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 28.

31. Marguerat and Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, 59, 65.

32. Daniel A. Bertrand, "Le chevreau d'Anna. La signification de l'anecdote dans le livre de Tobit," *Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses* 68, no. 3 (1988): 270-271.

with you are known” (Tob 2:14e-f). The narrative invites its hearers and readers to look retrospectively to Tobit’s life in Israel and Assyria, where he exercises righteousness and practices almsgiving (Tob 1:3). That exercise and practice disappear with Tobit’s blindness. Thus, Hanna reminds Tobit of his incapacity to exercise righteousness and practice almsgiving, because of his blindness. The reader or hearer of the narrative can also understand better Tobit’s accusations and unbelief surrounding his wife’s goat, because he has no space to exercise righteousness and practice almsgiving. His silence shows a development of an awareness of his troubled reality of ‘all things known about him,’ which only his deity can redeem (see Tob 2:14f; 3:1).³³

To summarize, Hanna’s name echoes the situation of the ‘middle Tobit’ in Tob 1:1b, because of the name Hananiel, which has the same word-root as her name. Her goat highlights the level of Tobit’s incapacity to give alms and exercise righteousness, because of his blindness. Her words in Tob 2:14a, e-f comprise an invitation to Tobit to acknowledge his troubled situation and highlight less his righteousness, to experience his deity’s mercy or grace. The narrative presents him as a round character to prepare his reception for the deity’s mercy or grace. If the ‘initial Tobit’ resists this grace in Tob 2:6, by weeping and turning to his good deeds, the ‘middle Tobit’ receives an invitation to embrace the same grace, by not only weeping and highlighting personal righteousness, but highlighting the deity’s goodness (Tob 3:1-2).

33. Rabinowitz, “Showing Vs. Telling,” 530.

5.2. Delineation and Analysis of Tob 3:1-17

I render Tob 3:1-17 as follows:

¹And grieving, I wept and prayed with sorrow, saying, ²'You are righteous, Lord, and all your works and all your ways are mercy and truth, and you judge true and righteous behavior forever. ³Remember me and look on me; do not avenge me for my sins and sins of my ignorance and my ancestors, who sinned before you; ^{4a}because they refused to listen to your commandments, ^{4b}and you gave us into booty and exile and death and a parable of reproach to all the nations, in which we have been scattered. ^{5a}And now your many judgments to do with me concerning my sins and my ancestors are true, ^{5b}because we did not practice your commandments; ^{5c}for we did not walk in truth before you. ^{6a}And now as is pleasing before you, deal with me; ^{6b}order to take up my spirit, in order that I may be released and become earth; ^{6c}because it is better for me to die than to live, for I heard false reproaches, and grief is much in me; ^{6d}order now that I be released from distress to the eternal place, do not turn your face from me.'

⁷On the same day, it happened to Sarra, the daughter of Ragouel in Ecbatana of Media, and she was reproached by her father's maidservants, ⁸because she had been given to seven husbands, and Asmodaios the evil demon killed them before they were with her as a wife. And they said to her, 'Do you not understand your choking the husbands? Already you had seven and have not enjoyed favor from anyone of them. ⁹Why are you scourging us? If they are dead, go with them; may we not see your son or daughter forever.' ¹⁰When she heard these things, she was exceedingly grieved, with the result that she could hang herself. And she said, 'I am the only daughter of my father; if I do this, it is a disgrace to him, and I will bring down his old age with sorrow into Hades.' ¹¹And she prayed by the window and said, 'You are blessed, Lord my God, and blessed is your holy and honored name forever; may all your works bless you forever.

¹²And now, Lord, I have turned my eyes and my face toward you.

¹³Command that I be released from the earth and that I no longer hear a reproach. ¹⁴You know, Lord, that I am clean from every sin of man ¹⁵and I did not stain my name or the name of my father in the land of my captivity. I am the only begotten child to my father, and he does not have a child to him, who will inherit him, or a near kinsman having a son to him, in order that I should keep myself for him as a wife. Already seven (husbands) to me have perished; Why should I live? And if it does not seem appropriate for you to kill me, order to look on me and have mercy on me and that I no longer hear a reproach.'

¹⁶And the prayer of both was heard before the glory of the great Raphael,

¹⁷and he was sent to heal the two, to remove the white films of Tobit and to give Sarra the daughter of Ragouel to Tobiah the son of Tobit as a wife, and to bind Asmodaios the evil demon, because it was laid upon Tobiah to

inherit her. At the same time, Tobit turned to go into his house and Sarra the daughter of Ragouel came down from her upper room.

Tob 3:1 begins a new unit, signaled by a thematic shift, which Tobit's prayer marks, after his encounter with Hanna, his wife.³⁴ Tobit grieves and weeps because of his wife's words in Tob 2:14, and his grieving, weeping, and sorrow give way to prayer.³⁵ Tobit prays for the first time in the narrative, suggesting that without Hanna, whose name comes from the Hebrew and Aramaic root חן, which means "gracious," Tobit could not have been prompted to pray.³⁶

Tobit refers to his deity as Lord, and he characterizes him as righteous, an attribute which he earlier associates himself with in the narrative. Tobit also refers to the Lord's ways as mercy and truth. He further attributes truth and righteousness to the Lord when he states that the Lord judges true and righteous behavior forever (Tob 3:2). I should note that, earlier on, Tobit refers to his own ways as truthful and righteous. Thus, he recalls his past ways of truth and righteousness in the current text.³⁷

After attributing truth and righteousness to the Lord, the narrative reveals something new to its readers or hearers in Tob 3:3. Tobit talks about his sins for the first time in the narrative: the ones which he commits knowingly, and those

34. Marguerat and Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, 32.

35. Alexander A. Di Lella, "Two Major Prayers in the Book of Tobit," in *Prayer from Tobit to Qumran: Inaugural Conference of the ISDCL at Salzburg, Austria, 5 – 9 July 2003*, ed. Renate Egger-Wenzel and Jeremy Corley, Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Yearbook 2004 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2004), 98.

36. Koehler and Baumgartner, *HALOT*, 1:332, 335, 2:1878.

37. Petraglio, "Tobit e Anna: un cammino difficile nella crisi di una coppia," 192.

which he commits out of ignorance. This comes as a surprise to the reader or hearer of the narrative, who knows Tobit as the only righteous character amongst his tribe (Tob 1:6).

Tobit also prays that his deity not avenge his ancestors for their sins. He excludes himself from their disobedience to the Lord's commandments in Tob 3:4a, after asking the Lord not to avenge him for his sins, known and unknown, in Tob 3:3. He states that he and his people meet with plunder, captivity, death, and reproach in the diaspora, because of the sins of his ancestors (Tob 3:3-4). He thus brings to the fore the experience of the exile that continues to bother him.³⁸ Tob 1:1-2 implies this troubled situation of the exile, which Tobit desires to end. Interestingly, he does not mention his blindness but the captivity, which the sins of his ancestors bring about.³⁹ This suggests that Tobit's exilic experience serves as a metaphor for his blindness.

Tobit goes back on his word in Tob 3:4a, where he suggests that his ancestors do not follow the Lord's commandments, because in Tob 3:5b he states that he and his ancestors do not follow the Lord's commandments. The theme of walking in truth in Tob 3:5c recalls Tob 1:3, except that in the latter, Tobit himself walks in truth, whereas in the former, he and his ancestors do not walk in the truth of his deity. The latter period refers to Tobit's time as a youth

38. Sabine Van Den Eynde, "Prayer as Part of Characterisation and Plot: An Analysis of Its Narrative Function in Tobit 3," In *Analyse narrative et Bible: deuxième colloque international du RRENAB, Louvain-la-Neuve, avril 2004*, eds. Camille Focant and André Wénin, Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 191 (Leuven: University Press, 2005b), 529.

39. Beverly Bow and George W. E. Nickelsburg, "Patriarchy with a Twist: Men and Women in Tobit," in *Women Like This: New Perspectives on Jewish Women in the Greco-Roman World*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine, Society of Biblical Literature: Early Judaism and its Literature (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1991), 131.

who habitually goes to Jerusalem for religious obligations, when the rest of his tribe secedes from the house of Jerusalem.

In Tob 3:6 Tobit abstains from association with his own people to focus on himself. He asks the Lord to take up his spirit so that he may become earth. In other words, Tobit prays for his own death. He desires to die because he hears false reproaches, and grief also abounds in him. Tob 3:4 constitutes the source of Tobit's false reproaches, "because they refused to listen to your commandments, and you gave us into...a parable of *reproach* to all the nations, in which we have been scattered." One cannot help but think of Tobit's neighbors, who laugh at him when he buries the dead in the night, as channels of reproaches amongst the nations (Tob 2:8).

Petraglio made a timely observation that Tobit's prayer not only responds to Hanna's words, but also to the environment in which Hanna and Tobit live, which promotes sadness, such as Tobit's neighbors who reproach him.⁴⁰ Tobit begs to die because he loses prospects of restoration, in a way that mends the rupture in his name. His troubled situation cannot be overstated as he ends his prayer, saying, "order now that I be released from distress to the eternal place, do not turn your face from me" (Tob 3:6d).

"On the same day" (Tob 3:7) refers to the very day of Tobit's prayer in Tob 3:1-6. Although the words "on the same day" introduce Sarra and the extradiegetic narrator in the narrative, those words require the readers and hearers of the narrative to take Sarra's and Tobit's story or prayer as a single

40. Petraglio, "Tobit e Anna: un cammino difficile nella crisi di una coppia," 392.

unit.⁴¹ The 'reproach' motif, which highlights Tobit's troubles (Tob 3:4b, 6c), also highlights Sarra's challenge in Tob 3:7. That Sarra's father's maidservants' wish for Sarra's death shows how much they wish for total discontinuation of her family lineage, because of the implied lack of descendants for her and from her.⁴²

Di Pede et al. drew an analogy between Sarra's father's maidservants and Hanna, Tobit's wife, because both parties hold their accused responsible for their predicaments, just as their reproaches drive their accused to pray.⁴³ I find it hard to appreciate this analogy, because the narrative calls Hanna by name (Tob 2:11), unlike Sarra's father's maidservants (Tob 3:7-8), whom the narrative renders as anonymous. These anonymous characters find their suitable counterparts in Tobit's neighbors (Tob 2:8), who, besides their anonymity, properly reproach Tobit, because they laugh at him as he meets his religious obligations. In this vein, Portier-Young rightly related the reproaches that Sarra hears from her father's maidservants (Tob 3:7-8) to those which Tobit hears from his neighbors (Tob 2:8).⁴⁴ In addition, I suggest that these camps of anonymous characters belong to 'the nations' and not to the Israelites (Tob 3:4b), like the anonymous man of Nineveh, who reports Tobit to the king for his righteous deeds (Tob 1:19).

41. Cf. Marguerat and Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, 32.

42. Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 33.

43. Ibid.

44. Portier-Young, "Alleviation of Suffering in the Book of Tobit," 45.

Tobit's decision to pray also results from a realization that only the deity, not even his own righteousness, can deliver him from his troubled situation, given that, among other reasons, physicians fail to restore him. His recourse to prayer hardly escapes from addressing Hanna's observations.⁴⁵ His grieving in Tob 3:1 gives way to prayer in Tob 3:2, just as Sarra's grieving in Tob 3:10 gives way to prayer in Tob 3:11. Only the deity can remedy her situation, like that of Tobit. She prays from an enclosed location as she faces out through the window. Her position at the window gives her a vantage point to turn her eyes and face toward the Lord (Tob 3:12). The setting near the window permits her to begin her prayer with a triple blessing for the Lord.⁴⁶ Praise characterizes her prayer, just like Tobit's.⁴⁷

Also like Tobit (3:6), Sarra prays that the Lord release her from the earth, and that she should no longer hear a reproach. Sarra wants the Lord to take her away from the earth because of her father's maidservants, who reproach her after she scourges them. She believes that she does not deserve any reproach because of her innocence and cleanliness from any sin of man (Tob 3:14). Her claim for purity continues in Tob 3:15, because she states that she has neither stained her name nor that of her father in the land of exile.

45. Cf. Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 29.

46. Claude Lichtert, "Analyse rhétorique des cinq prières et bénédictions du livre de Tobit," in *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu: Lecture narrative du livre de Tobie*, eds. Didier Luciani and Jean-Pierre Sonnet, *Le livre et le rouleau* (Paris: Lessius, 2014), 185-186.

47. Moore, *Tobit*, 138.

Like Tobit, Sarra dwells in the land of captivity, where familial or religious bonds suffer (Tob 3:15). She laments over being the only begotten daughter of her father, who has no son to perpetuate the familial or religious lineage. The 'only begotten child' motif also characterizes Tobiah, Tobit's son, who intends to avoid marrying Sarra, because he does not want to perish, and discontinue any familial or religious obligations (Tob 6:15).⁴⁸ Sarra further claims that neither does her father have a near kinsman, who has a son to marry her. Most of all, seven of her potential husbands have perished, and she does not know the cause of their death.⁴⁹

These factors accompany Sarra's reproach, which highlights the stifling of familial or religious integration in the narrative. The 'reproach' motif proves important for the current text because it holds it together. Tobit's prayer ends with that motif (Tob 3:6), just like Sarra's prayer (Tob 3:15). It occurs at least 4x (Tob 3:4b, 6c, 13, 15) as a noun in the current text, with one verbal form in Tob 3:7. If Sarra should live, she asks the Lord to look upon her, have mercy on her, and spare her the reproach that she has heard from others. Her evocation of mercy from her deity shows that she needs the same grace that Tobit needs for his troubled situation. Her call for mercy or grace echoes the name Hananiel in Tob 1:1b.

The reader or hearer of the narrative also learns that the prayer of Tobit and Sarra is *one* because Tob 3:16 states that "And the *prayer* of both was heard

48. Di Lella, "Two Major Prayers," 112.

49. Ibid.

before the glory of the great Raphael.”⁵⁰ Thus, the narrative invites its readers or hearers to treat the prayer of Tobit and Sarra as a single unit.

The word ‘glory’ in Tob 3:16 recalls the name ‘Adouel,’ which implies the deity’s glory in Tob 1:1b.⁵¹ God’s glory finds expression in the great Raphael, a name which means “God has healed,” because the deity sends him to heal the two.⁵² The divine passive, ἀπεστάλη (he was sent), in Tob 3:17 shows that the deity sends Raphael to heal Tobit and Sarra.⁵³ The deity’s action involves granting grace or mercy to Tobit and Sarra, and availing glory to both, just as the names Hananiel and Adouel in Tob 1:1b attest. Interestingly, the text begins with the deity’s mercy (Tob 3:2) and ends with the deity’s glory (Tob 3:16), which characterize the ‘middle Tobit.’

The deity’s mercy and glory find expression in Raphael’s healing mission, which consists of removing white films from Tobit’s eyes, and ensuring that Tobiah marries Sarra, after binding the evil demon Asmodaios. The current text mentions Asmodaios’s possession of Sarra explicitly (Tob 3:8), but it does not say anything about Tobit’s white films or blindness, prior to Tob 3:17. Instead, it addresses Tobit’s experience of the exile (Tob 3:4b) that he laments about in his prayer. The narrative’s mention of healing Tobit’s eyes in Tob 3:17, as a response to his prayer, shows that the same narrative renders Tobit’s experience

50. See also Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 36-37.

51. Schüngel-Straumann, *Tobit*, 53.

52. Koehler and Baumgartner, *HALOT*, 2:1275.

53. Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 38.

of exile as an experience of his blindness, which the deity shall resolve. Tob 3:17 also consists of the closure of the current unit, because Tobit and Sarra simultaneously shift from their locations.⁵⁴ Tobit enters his house, which indicates that he has been outside all along, and Sarra descends from her upper room.

In the current unit, Tobit and Sarra resemble a diptych, comprising “two hinged components of equal size which close upon one another.”⁵⁵ Tobit and Sarra close onto one another like a book. She comes down from her room in Ecbatana of Media, and he turns to enter his house in Nineveh, as if to meet her at the entrance. Thus, the prayer of Tobit and Sarra which occurs “on the same day” (Tob 3:7), ends “at the same time” (Tob 3:17). This act of synchronization permits the two prayers to be one before the deity.⁵⁶

5.2.1. Characterization of Tobit in his Prayer with Sarra

Tobit weeps in Tob 2:7, after he remembers the words of the Prophet Amos, “Your feasts shall turn into mourning, and all your gladness into lamentation” (Tob 2:6). The verbal form ἔκλαυσα, “I wept,” which both Tob 2:7 and 3:1 employ, invites the reader or hearer of the narrative to draw a connection between the words of the prophet Amos and the words of Hanna (Tob 2:14),

54. Marguerat and Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, 32.

55. Ivan Gaskell, “Diptychs—What’s the Point?,” in *Essays in Context: Unfolding the Netherlandish Diptych*, eds. John Oliver Hand and Ron Spronk (Cambridge: Harvard University Art Museums, 2006), 207.

56. Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 39.

which precede Tobit's weeping in both texts. Tobit's reaction to the two different voices remains pertinent for characterizing him. The 'initial Tobit' in Tob 2:7 highlights his righteousness after weeping, by going out to dig a grave and bury a strangled man. In our current text, Tobit prays after weeping, and thus, he highlights the truthfulness and righteousness of the Lord (Tob 3:2). These highlights characterize the 'middle Tobit,' who does not only focus on his goodness but on the goodness of the Lord. As Priero observed, tribulation puts the righteous person to trial and makes that person invoke the name of the Lord.⁵⁷ Tobit qualifies as such a righteous person, because he turns to his deity in a time of distress.⁵⁸ This situation elaborates on the 'middle Tobit,' because he begins to rely on the grace of his deity to experience healing or wellbeing.

To be complete, Tobit should focus not only on his goodness but the goodness of his deity. Tobit implicitly alludes to his truthfulness and righteousness (Tob 1:3) when he speaks of his deity's righteousness and truthfulness (Tob 3:2). The inclusion of mercy, to the Lord's true and righteous judgments, shows that Tobit needs the Lord's mercy and fair judgment, because he has lived up to his religious obligations in the past. Now he hopes for the Lord's mercy and fair judgment, as Di Lella observed.⁵⁹ I should add that Tobit focuses not only on his goodness, but also on the righteousness and mercy of his deity, which resounds in the name 'Hananiel' in Tob 1:1b.

57. D. Giuseppe Priero, ed., *Tobia*, La Sacra Bibbia (Torino: Marietti, 1963), 40.

58. Van Den Eynde, "Prayer as Part of Characterisation and Plot," 529.

59. Di Lella, "Two Major Prayers," 103.

Tobit's acknowledgement of sinfulness also moves him outside himself to look up to the grace of his deity (Tob 3:3). The 'initial Tobit' associates more with righteous people than those who do not fear the Lord, but the 'middle Tobit,' in the current text, recognizes his need for association with the entire nation in exile, by acknowledging his shortcomings.⁶⁰ Di Lella suggested that one of Tobit's known or unknown shortcomings subsists in his mistrust of his wife, Hanna, over the goat, which she receives as a gift in addition to the wages.⁶¹ We have shown that Tobit knows that shortcoming.⁶² A clue to Tobit's known offences in the current text finds expression in the notion that "...we did not practice your commandments; for we did not walk in truth before you" (Tob 3:5b-c). Tobit's admission of sin in the current text proves his round character, which makes it possible for him to focus not only on his righteousness, but also on the righteousness and mercy of his deity.⁶³

Like Tobit, the readers or hearers of the narrative can find it difficult to know Tobit's unwitting sins. I suggest that the 'initial Tobit' does not know that he needs to highlight not only his goodness or righteousness, but also his deity's goodness and righteousness, to experience wellbeing. That process of attaining wellbeing or completeness for Tobit involves turning outside himself, to highlight the Lord's righteousness or goodness and mercy, as he does in Tob 3:2.

60. Di Lella, "Two Major Prayers," 104.

61. Ibid.

62. Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 28-29.

63. Marguerat and Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, 60, 65.

In his admission of sin, Tobit includes his ancestors' sin against the Lord "because they refused to listen to your commandments" (Tob 3:4a). Although he characterizes himself as a sinful man, he does not participate in his ancestors' sin of refusing to listen to the Lord's commandments. That refusal leads them "into booty and exile and death and a parable of reproach to all the nations, in which we have been scattered" (Tob 3:4b). Tobit's round character also serves to merge him with the rest of his people, as their "representative."⁶⁴ Thus, the problem of Tobit becomes the problem of his people in exile.

Tobit accepts the deity's judgments for himself and his people, because of his sins and those of his people (Tob 3:5a). His blindness constitutes an unmentioned judgment pertaining to him, and the exile constitutes a mentioned judgement for his people, including him (Tob 3:4). The narrative's juxtaposition of the sins of Tobit and his people shows a direct relationship between the judgments (Tob 3:5a).⁶⁵ Thus, the same narrative draws a relationship between Tobit's blindness and all the people's experience of the exile. In other words, Tobit's blindness may be perceived as the Israelites' experience of the exile.

Tob 3:5b-c buttresses the argument for Tobit's representation of Israel in exile, because he speaks in the first-person plural: "^{5b}...we did not practice your commandments; ^{5c}for we did not walk in truth before you." Tobit embraces his sinful people of Israel, because he, like them, desires the Lord's mercy or grace to his predicament. Effectively, he turns away from the 'initial Tobit,' who

64. Van Den Eynde, "Prayer as Part of Characterisation and Plot," 529.

65. Rabinowitz, "Showing Vs. Telling," 530.

highlights his goodness, to the ‘middle Tobit,’ who turns toward the grace or mercy of his deity, to help him and his people (Tob 3:2). As we can see, the current text affirms divine justice, but also places “greater emphasis on a very different aspect of God’s relationship with humanity, namely, divine mercy and healing grace.”⁶⁶

Tobit requests for death in Tob 3:6b, because he hears false reproaches, coupled with feelings of grief and distress. His request highlights his righteousness, because it has nothing to do with his sinfulness. Put another way, his death would not constitute punishment from the deity, to whom he submits, but an act of righteousness, which concerns the persecution of a righteous person.⁶⁷ Roughly, his death would constitute martyrdom. As such, his death request highlights Tobit’s troubled situation of the exile, to which he desires an end. The false reproaches that Tobit hears, coupled with grief and distress, mark his lack of space to exercise truth and righteousness in exile.⁶⁸

Di Pede et al. did not find joy in linking the two occurrences of the word ‘reproach’ in Tobit’s prayer (Tob 3:4b, 6c), because the link exhibits confusion in Tobit’s character.⁶⁹ In that regard, the first use of the word reproach in Tobit’s prayer (Tob 3:4b) characterizes Tobit, along with Israel, as unrighteous, hence the reproach serves as the deity’s punishment of Tobit, together with Israel, for

66. Portier-Young, “Alleviation of Suffering in the Book of Tobit,” 40.

67. Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 30.

68. Bal, *Narratology*, 136.

69. Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 30.

his sins. But the second use of the word 'reproach' in Tobit's prayer (Tob 3:6c) has a different sense, because Tobit uses it to justify his innocence, and he no longer considers it to be a consequence of his manner of being.

The apparent confusion in Tobit's character from the above analysis stems from viewing the word 'reproach' as divine punishment for Tobit's sins or the sins of the people of Israel in the narrative. The word 'reproach' in the current narrative does not entail any punishment for sins, because it comprises words of speech used against righteous or innocent people. As an example, it is used in the current text to describe Sarra's false accusers (Tob 3:7), and she uses it to show her innocence (Tob 3:13-15). Similarly, it describes Tobit's false accusers (Tob 3:4b), because he does not participate in the disobedience of his ancestors (Tob 3:4a), which leads to the exile (Tob 3:4b); and like Sarra (Tob 3:13-14), Tobit uses it to prove his innocence (Tob 3:6c). Needless to state, the type of reproach implied by Tob 3:4b lies with Tobit's neighbors, who laugh at him, as he carries out his religious obligations, outside the current text.⁷⁰ Tobit's prayer to be released to "the eternal place" (Tob 3:6d) implies a cry for freedom to have space, which reproaches constrict, to exercise truth and righteousness.

A comparison of Tobit's and Sarra's episode occasions the characterization of the former, because his episode happens on the same day as the latter's (Tob 3:7). The two episodes may as well be treated as one event, because the narrative calls them "the prayer of both" (Tob 3:17).⁷¹ In this vein, an

70. Petraglio, "Tobit e Anna: un cammino difficile nella crisi di una coppia," 392.

71. Cf. Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 31.

individual's prayer or characterization can only be fully understood in the light of the other, as we may understand two hinged panels of a diptych. Priero hinted at this link, when he observed that Sarra and Tobit resemble each other not only in simplicity of heart but also in trials and afflictions and prayer.⁷² For the characterization of Tobit, I highlight the differences between Tobit and Sarra, because characterization employs "semantic axes," which "are pairs of contrary meanings."⁷³

The narrative suggests that its reader or hearer should take the prayers of Tobit and Sarra as one prayer because "the *prayer* of both was heard before the glory of the great Raphael" (Tob 3:16). This implies that Tobit and Sarra should be taken as a single unit, because the problem of Tobit is the problem of Sarra, and the prayer of Tobit is the prayer of Sarra.⁷⁴ Two differences between Tobit and Sarra in their prayer can be highlighted: (1) unlike Tobit, Sarrah does not confess any sin, and (2) she does not assume any national role as he does.⁷⁵ These differences demonstrate at least two significant aspects for the characterization of Tobit: (a) His confession of personal sin enables him to focus less on his righteousness, as the 'middle Tobit,' so that he identifies with the rest of his nation in exile, which he desires to end, by the grace or mercy and glory of his deity; (b) Sarra's innocence preserves the righteousness of the 'initial Tobit,'

72. Priero, *Tobia*, 39.

73. Bal, *Narratology*, 127.

74. Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 37.

75. Di Lella, "Two Major Prayers," 110.

who does not assume any national role when the intradiegetic narrator characterizes him as a righteous person against the rest of his tribe.⁷⁶

Another difference between Sarra and Tobit in their prayer concerns their attitude towards death. Sarra's concern for her father differs from Tobit's unconcern for those close to him, whom he never mentions, as he asks for death.⁷⁷ We should not expect two hinged panels of a diptych to be identical, but complementary. The question to ask is what Tobit's and Sarra's approaches to death bring to the narrative. I suggest that Sarra highlights the importance of familial or religious unity, which is at stake in the diaspora, whereas Tobit highlights the problem of the exile, which he desires to come to an end. Thus, Tobit seems not to care about his family, because Sarra covers that concern. We might also wonder why Sarra seems to be content with the exile (see Tob 3:15), yet she is not, because Tobit covers that concern in their prayer.

If Tobit's problem is an incapacitating experience of the exile, that is Sarra's problem as well. Similarly, if Sarra's problem constitutes a lack of familial or religious unity, that constitutes Tobit's problem as well. In short, Tobit desires at least two things to be complete: 1. An end to the exile, which his blindness represents, and 2. Familial or religious unity. These two requirements suffice to mend the rupture in Tobit's name, because an end to the exile implies

76. George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah: A Historical and Literary Introduction* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), 30, limits Tobit's piety, which begins at Tob 1:3, to Tob 2 :1-7, in its relationship with Sarra's innocence in her prayer.

77. Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 33-34.

reattachment to the land of Israel, and familial or religious unity implies communion with the faithful men and women of Israel.

Without Tobit's and Sarra's knowledge, the reader or hearer of the narrative learns that their deity hears their prayer before the glory of the great Raphael (Tob 3:16). Tobit and Sarra will both experience healing; the former will no longer be blind and the latter will marry Tobiah, Tobit's son, whose name has a theophoric ending (Tob 3:17). These healings comprise Tobit's two major desires to be complete: an end to the exile, which suggests an end to his blindness, and familial or religious unity, which Tobiah's marriage to Sarra, Ragouel's daughter, will bring about. Bow and Nickelsburg hinted at the latter desire by noting that Raphael's healings unite "the two families through marriage."⁷⁸ Roughly, Raphael's mission involves creating space for the afflicted to exercise truth and righteousness.

In sum, the 'mercy' or 'grace' and 'glory' motifs in Tob 3:2, 16 link Tob 3:1-17 to the 'middle Tobit' in Tob 1:1b, because of the names 'Hananiël,' and 'Adouel,' which mean 'God has graced me,' and 'God is glory,' respectively. Mercy and glory come after Tobit turns away from highlighting his goodness only, to highlighting the righteousness of his deity. Effectively, the narrative renders Tobit as a round character, to enable Tobit to embrace his people's sinfulness, and to bring out the deity's mercy and glory through healing.

The juxtaposition of the prayers of Tobit and Sarra, which form a single prayer, shows that Tobit's troubled situation is Sarra's troubled situation, and one

78. Bow and Nickelsburg, "Patriarchy with a Twist," 129.

cannot be fully understood without the other. On the one hand, Tobit highlights the experience of the exile. On the other hand, Sarra highlights the experience of familial or religious disintegration. The deity answers the single prayer of both Tobit and Sarra, which essentially promises to meet Tobit's desire for familial or religious unity and an end to exile in Tob 1:1-2, which the narrative also renders as Tobit's blindness in Tob 3:17.

CHAPTER SIX

6.0. 'FINAL TOBIT'—NARRATIVE ELABORATION OF TOB 1:1C

In Tob 1:1c, 'Gabael' alludes to the silver motif which drives the narrative to Tobit's restoration, and 'Asiel' echoes an end to the experience of the exile. This chapter argues that Tobit experiences restoration, which comprises familial or religious consolidation and an end to the exilic experience, after he highlights his deity's righteousness more than his own goodness.

In Poe's *William Wilson*, William Wilson discovers at school that there exists another William Wilson who stands out as his competitor.¹ He realizes that he looks like his namesake, besides sharing a birthday. William Wilson hates his namesake, because he constantly whispers pieces of advice to him, which, as he realizes later, could have been better to follow. Tired of his namesake's interventions, whom he perceives as better than himself, William Wilson stabs him, only to realize that he stabs himself. Poe's *William Wilson* exemplifies a *Doppelgänger*, which means, "double of a living person."²

The *Book of Tobit* narrative has a couple of commonalities with Poe's *William Wilson*. First, Tobit and Tobiah share the same name, despite the lack of a theophoric ending in the former name, which can enable the reader or hearer

1. Edgar Allen Poe, *William Wilson* (San Bernardino, CA: Rise of Douai, 2013), 12-18, 33-36.

2. Frank R. Abate, ed., *The Oxford American Dictionary and Language Guide* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 284.

of the narrative “to decipher or grasp a meaning of the text.”³ Second, like the William Wilsons in *William Wilson*, Tobit and Tobiah look alike, as Ragouel proves in Tob 7:2. Unlike the William Wilsons, Tobit and Tobiah understand each other well, because Tobiah executes his father’s instructions, which lead to his father’s restoration.

In this chapter, I pay attention to the narrator’s choice of words and their repetition, as an aid to the interpretation of the text and the characterization of Tobit.⁴ Some repetitions “can point to...some unexpected, perhaps unsettling, new revelation of character.”⁵ As in previous chapters, I pay attention not only to what Tobit says about himself, but also how others in the narrative characterize him. I consider contradictory axes in the text for characterizing Tobit, including personal transformations.⁶ I also employ categories of memory and space to characterize Tobit.⁷ Each section of this chapter begins with delineation and analysis of a given text, followed by the characterization of Tobit in the same text, except the third section, which simply characterizes Tobit through Tobiah’s journey.

3. Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, rev. ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2011), 117.

4. Ibid., 117-123; David M. Gunn, “Narrative Criticism,” in *To Each Its Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and their Application*, 2nd ed., eds. Steven L. McKenzie and Stephen R. Haynes (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 224-225.

5. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 123.

6. Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 127.

7. Ibid., 136-138, 150.

6.1. Delineation and Analysis of *Tobit* 4

I begin with my translation of *Tobit* 4.

¹On that day, Tobit remembered about the silver, which he had entrusted with Gabael in Rages of Media. ²And he said within himself, 'I have asked for death: why don't I call Tobiah my son, in order that I show him before I die?' ^{3a}And he called him and said, 'Child, if I die, bury me; ^{3b}and you should not disregard your mother, honor her all the days of your life and do what is pleasing to her and do not grieve her. ⁴Remember, child, that she has seen many dangers on the basis of you in the womb; when she dies, bury her beside me in one tomb. ^{5a}All the days, child, remember the Lord our God and do not desire to sin and transgress his commands; ^{5b}practice righteousness all the days of your life and do not walk (in) the ways of the unrighteous; ^{6a}because if you practice truth there will be prosperities in your works. ^{6b}And to all those who practice righteousness, ^{7a}from what you have, practice almsgiving, ^{7b}and let your eye not be jealous when you practice almsgiving; ^{7c}you should not turn away your face from any poor man, ^{7d}and the face of God shall never turn away from you. ⁸As there is to you, according to the quantity, practice almsgiving from them; if there is a little thing to you, according to the little thing, do not fear to practice almsgiving. ⁹For you store a good treasure for yourself in the day of necessity; ¹⁰because almsgiving delivers from death and does not permit (one) to enter into darkness. ¹¹For almsgiving is a good gift for all those who practice it before the Most-High. ^{12a}Guard yourself, child, against all fornication and first take a woman from the seed of your fathers and you should not take a foreign woman, who is not from the tribe of your father, because we are sons of prophets. ^{12b}Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, our fathers from eternity, remember, child, that all these took women from their kinsmen and they were blessed through their children, and their seed will inherit land. ^{13a}And now, child, love your kinsmen and do not behave too arrogantly in your heart before your kinsmen and sons and daughters of the people to take for yourself a woman from them, ^{13b}because in arrogance there is destruction and much instability, and in worthlessness, loss and great lack; for worthlessness is the mother of hunger. ¹⁴Let the pay of every man who works for you not spend the night, but pay him immediately, and if you serve God, he will give back to you. Pay attention to yourself, child, in all your works and be disciplined in all your conduct. ^{15a}And what you hate, you should do to no one. ^{15b}You should not drink wine to drunkenness, and let drunkenness not go with you on your way. ^{16a}Give some of your bread to the hungry and some of your clothing to the naked. ^{16b}Whatever should abound to you, give all as alms, ^{16c}and let your eye not be jealous when you practice almsgiving. ¹⁷Pour your bread on the tomb of the righteous men and you should not give to the sinful men. ¹⁸Seek counsel of every wise man and you should not despise any useful

counsel. ^{19a}And in every time, bless the Lord your God and ask from him that your ways should become straight ways and all the paths and counsels should prosper; because every nation does not have counsel, but the Lord himself gives all good things and whoever he wishes, he humbles, just as he determines. ^{19b}And now, child, remember my commands, and let them not be erased from your heart. ²⁰And now I should indicate to you the ten talents of silver, which I entrusted with Gabael the son of Gabriah in Rages of Media. ²¹And do not fear, child, that we have become poor; there are many things for you, if you fear God and depart from all sin and do what is pleasing before him.

Tobit's frequent use of the singular personal pronoun 'you,' for Tobiah, in the current text, proves that Tobit highlights not only his goodness, but the goodness of others and the deity. That disposition leads to the unveiling of his implicit desires, which include religious or familial consolidation, and an end to the exile.

Tob 4:1-2 introduces Tobit's testament, and presumes the preceding unit, where Tobit prays for his own death.⁸ Tob 4:1 begins a new unit marked by the phrase "on that day." That day refers to the day of the prayer of Tobit and Sarra (Tob 3:1-17). The prayer ends with Tobit and Sarra changing their locations, as Sarra comes downstairs from her upper room and Tobit turns to enter his house. Thus, Tobit's house comprises the setting of the current unit. Divine mercy drives him not only into his house, but also to concrete considerations about his life and future.⁹

This unit has three characters, Tobit, his wife, and his son Tobiah, although the latter two observe silence all throughout the discourse. The

8. Elena Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu: Lecture narrative du livre de Tobie*, eds. Didier Luciani and Jean-Pierre Sonnet, *Le livre et le rouleau* (Paris: Lessius, 2014), 40-41.

9. *Ibid.*, 41.

narrative informs its readers or hearers that “Tobit remembered the silver, which he had entrusted with Gabael in Rages of Media” (Tob 4:1). The name Gabael means ‘the deity has collected money or debts,’ and it echoes the situation of the ‘final Tobit’ in Tob 1:1c, where the name occurs.¹⁰ This name indicates that Raphael, the Lord’s glory, collects the silver on Tobiah’s behalf, while he engages in the narrative’s pertinent task of religious or familial consolidation through marriage (Tob 9:5-6).

That consolidation cannot be overemphasized, because Gabael travels from Rages of Media to show solidarity with Tobiah, in his promotion of religious or familial unity. In the current text, the name ‘Gabael’ occurs at the beginning and end of the unit, alongside the word ‘silver’ (Tob 4:1, 20). Like in Tob 1:14, Gabael holds the silver in Tob 4:1, 20, for which Tobit will send his son Tobiah to collect. The name ‘Gabael,’ which links with Tobit’s silver, foreshadows Tobit’s reunion with his religious family and restoration of sight.

The narrative’s words for Tobit in Tob 4:2 —“I have asked for death; why don’t I call Tobiah my son, in order that I show him before I die?”— express Tobit’s interior knowledge, because he speaks within himself. Tobit sees his death approaching, because he asks for it in his prayer with Sarra. Thus, he intends to tell (show) his son about the silver, which he had entrusted with Gabael. The use of the verb ὑποδείκνυμι (to show) can also mean “to teach.”¹¹

10. Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament: Study Edition*, ed. and trans. M. E. J. Richardson (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 1:170.

11. Johan Lust, Erik Eynikel, and Katrin Hauspie, *Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*, rev. ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2003), 634.

Tobit intends not only to reveal the silver which he entrusted with Gabael to Tobiah, but also to instruct him, before he dies. The reader or hearer of the narrative, nonetheless, has more knowledge than Tobit on this matter, because Tobit's deity does not consent to his request for death.¹²

Roughly, Tob 4:3-6a comprises teachings on honoring parents through proper burial, and what they entail. Tobit directs these teachings to his son. Accordingly, Tob 4:3-6a uses the singular personal pronoun 'you,' six times, in addressing Tobiah, before shifting to the plural in Tob 4:6b. The first teaching urges Tobiah to bury his father well (Tob 4:3a). Tobit's teaching does not surprise the reader or hearer of the narrative, because he himself used to bury the dead of Israel in exile.¹³ He gives his son this teaching, having challenged the royal ban not to bury members of his own religion (Tob 1:17-20), and after losing his sight following a day spent to hide and bury a poor man from his nation (Tob 2:3-10).¹⁴

Tobit also urges Tobiah to take care of his mother (Tob 4:3b). He feels the closeness of his death, and he carries the conviction that he will die before his wife. For that reason, he instructs Tobiah, his son, to take care of her, after he dies. Tobiah should not cause her mother to grieve, besides honoring her all the days of his life, and doing what pleases her. 'Grief' can be pertinent in the light of

12. Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 41.

13. Ibid., 43.

14. Marco Zappella, *Tobit: Introduzione, traduzione e commento*, Nuova versione della Bibbia dai testi antichi (Cinisello Balsamo: San Paolo, 2010), 64.

Tobit's grief in Tob 3:1, after his encounter with Hanna.¹⁵ Tobiah's obligation to care for his mother arises from the notion that she has carried him in her womb, and exposed herself to many dangers (Tob 4:4a). Impartiality takes the better side of Tobit when he instructs Tobiah to bury his mother well, as well (Tob 4:4b). Moreover, both Tobit and his wife should be gathered in one tomb.

The narrative's repetition of "all the days" (πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας) in Tob 4:3b and Tob 4:5a, b, highlights interrelationships within the text.¹⁶ It shows that Tobit's instruction on honoring one's parents (Tob 4:3a-b) lies on the same plane as remembering the Lord and not desiring to sin and transgress his commands (Tob 4:5a), and exercising righteousness (Tob 4:5b). The verb μνημονεύω (to remember) occurs only in Tob 4:5a and 19b in conjunction with the deity and the commands, respectively. This verb can be distinguished from μιμνήσκομαι (to remember), which may be used for both religious (e.g. Tob 1:12) and non-religious (e.g. Tob 4:1) objects in the narrative.

If Tobiah remembers the Lord, by practicing righteousness (honoring his parents), his works can prosper (Tob 4:6a). The narrative's use of the verb "to practice," literally "to do," in Tob 4:5b and Tob 4:6a for the objects "righteousness" and "truth," respectively, shows an analogous relationship between the two objects.¹⁷ Truth and righteousness become two sides of the same coin (see Tob 1:3).

15. See Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 117.

16. Ibid., 122.

17. Ibid.

Tob 4:6b-11 addresses almsgiving. Tobit instructs Tobiah in view of the silver that awaits him, which he should make good use of before God, through almsgiving, as an example.¹⁸ A plural clause, “and to all those who practice righteousness” (Tob 4:6b), marks off the section, followed by singular clauses, which the singular personal pronoun ‘you’ (Tob 4:7 (3x)), referring to Tobiah, punctuates. Tob 4:7 introduces the lexeme “almsgiving” (ἐλημοσύνη) for the first time in the current text. In Tobit 4 alone, the lexeme has eight occurrences, six of which occur in Tob 4:6b-11: Tob 4:7 (2x), 8 (2x), 10 (1x), 11 (1x). Tobit prescribes that almsgiving should be administered “to all those who practice righteousness” (see Tob 4:6b-7a). This prescription eliminates those who do not practice truth and righteousness.

Moore noted that “while such advice may seem less noble than an unconditional generosity, it is consistent with Tobit’s counsel in v 17 (but compare 1:3 and 8, where no litmus test is mentioned).”¹⁹ Tob 4:17 reads: “Pour your bread on the tomb of the righteous men and you should not give to the sinful men.” Although ‘no litmus test is mentioned’ in Tob 1:3, 8, it can still be implied in the same verses. Tob 1:3 and 8 show consistency with Tobit’s recommendations of almsgiving in Tob 4:6b-7a and 17. The righteous ones of Tob 4:6b-7a and 17 refer to the strangers (Israelites in exile) and orphans, implied in Tob 1:3 and 1:8, respectively.

18. Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 45.

19. Carey A. Moore, *Tobit: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible, 40A (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 166.

Tob 1:3 shows that Tobit directs alms only to members of his tribe and nation.²⁰ In other words, he directs them to strangers (Israelites) in exile, because of their vulnerability. The word ‘orphan’ in Tob 1:8 alludes to a class of special people—“whomever it is fitting”—to which Tobit has also administered alms.²¹ They, like strangers, though Israelites living in Israel, form part of the poor in society.

Tobit’s instructions in Tob 4:6b-7a, 17 show that he wants his son to be sensitive to the poor or needy in society, such as orphans, strangers, and widows. Tob 4:7c brings to light the ‘preferential option for the poor’ to receive alms, because Tobit urges Tobiah not to turn his face from any poor person. In that way, God’s face will not turn away from Tobiah (Tob 4:7d). Almsgiving proves to be important because it “delivers from death and does not permit (one) to enter into darkness” (Tob 4:10). Tobit will experience almsgiving as a good treasure on the day of necessity, even though currently he does not.²²

Tob 4:12-13 highlights endogamy.²³ The verb ‘to take,’ (λαμβάνω), which implies marriage, occurs four times in Tob 4:12-13. It occurs thrice in Tob 4:12 and once in Tob 4:13. The singular personal pronoun ‘you,’ referring to Tobiah, occurs six times in these couple of verses: Tob 4:12 (2x), 13 (4x). Tob 4:12a

20. George W. E. Nickelsburg, “Tobit,” in *Harper’s Bible Commentary*, ed. James L. Mays (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), 793.

21. Gunn, “Narrative Criticism,” 224-225.

22. Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 45.

23. Ibid., 46.

recommends marriage from amongst Tobiah's religious affiliation or kin, "the seed of your fathers." Tobiah must *take* a wife from amongst his kin; and he should *not take* a foreign woman for a wife. This duplication of the order for marriage, expressed positively and then negatively, emphasizes the vitality of endogamy.²⁴ Tobit recommends for his son what he practices since his marriage with Hanna, an Israelite woman, "from the seed of our fathers" (Tob 1:9).

Macatangay observed that endogamy "provides economic security because it prevents the inevitable hemorrhage of property to foreign families."²⁵ This observation can be supported by Tob 4:13b, which alludes to loss, great lack, and hunger resulting from exogamy (Tob 4:13a). A more pertinent reason for endogamy lies in Tob 4:12a—"...because we are *sons of prophets*"—where endogamy first appears in the current unit. Thus, the narrative highlights familial (sons and daughters) or religious (prophets) consolidation as a pertinent motive behind endogamy. "Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, *our fathers from eternity*," who exercised endogamy, buttress the familial or religious motive of endogamy, because they "...were blessed through their children" (Tob 4:12b).²⁶

Another motive behind endogamy subsists in the promise to inherit land (Tob 4:12b).²⁷ This promise affects the descendants of Noah, Abraham, Isaac,

24. Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 46.

25. Francis M. Macatangay, *The Wisdom Instructions in the Book of Tobit*, Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Studies 12 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 85.

26. See also Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2003), 172.

27. Sabine Van Den Eynde, "One Journey and One Journey Makes Three: The Impact of the Readers' Knowledge in the Book of Tobit," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 117, no. 2 (2005a): 278.

and Jacob; and the narrative insinuates that it has not yet been fulfilled, because Tobit uses the future “will inherit” (κληρονομήσει). That future inheritance of land entails an end to exile.²⁸ The ‘inheritance of land’ motif recalls the ‘final Tobit,’ in Tob 1:1c, through the name Asiel, which means ‘God will allocate.’²⁹ In this vein, Tobit expresses hope for a re-appropriation of the land of Israel, which the exile cut him from.

We can see that the narrative draws a connection between religion and/or family and inheritance of land (end of exile) as primary motives of endogamy. In that regard, endogamy has less concerns about the purity of the Jewish race in the narrative than the consolidation of religious or familial bonds and an end to the exile.³⁰ Tobiah’s endogamous practice will bring those motives to realization.

Tob 4:14-19a comprises practical instructions that Tobiah requires for the journey to recover the silver. Tob 4:14-18 has at least thirteen occurrences of the singular personal pronoun ‘you,’ which refers to Tobiah: Tob 4:14 (4x), 15 (2x), 16 (5x), 17 (1x), 19a (2x). The word ‘wage’ in Tob 4:14a echoes Raphael’s pay, which he does not receive, at the end of Tobiah’s journey.³¹ The ‘way’ motif (Tob 4:15b, 19a) indirectly points to the way that he should embark on in search of his father’s silver.³² Schüngel-Straumann considered the word ‘way’ as the first and

28. Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 47.

29. Koehler and Baumgartner, *HALOT*, 1:407.

30. Cf. Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 46-47.

31. Francis M. Macatangay, “Μισθός and Irony in the Book of Tobit,” *Biblica* 94, no. 4 (2013): 580-581.

32. Gunn, “Narrative Criticism,” 224-225.

most important in the narrative, to the extent that the *Book of Tobit* can be characterized as a way or journey narrative.³³ The word 'way' comprises a double meaning of the way of the people versus the way of life, or the way of people versus the way of God.

Accordingly, Tobit urges Tobiah not to allow drunkenness to accompany him on the way (Tob 4:15b). Instead, he should bless the Lord and ask that his ways and counsels should prosper (Tob 4:19a). Tob 4:18 insinuates that Tobiah should not despise any useful counsel, such as the one which Tobit offers;³⁴ and above all, he should seek the counsel of the wise, such as Raphael, who will accompany him on the way to Rages of Media.³⁵

Tob 4:19b-21 concludes the unit. Although Tobit continues to address his son, he no longer uses the singular personal pronoun 'you' for Tobiah. He urges Tobiah to remember always the commands, which he has received (Tob 4:19b). Tob 4:20 recaptures Tob 4:1-2 because of the mention of the silver which he has entrusted with Gabael in Rages of Media. Tobiah hears about the silver this time around, because Tobit says it out aloud. He tells Tobiah about the money, because they "have become poor" (Tob 4:21). An aura of hope for better times to come, nonetheless, drives the entire unit.

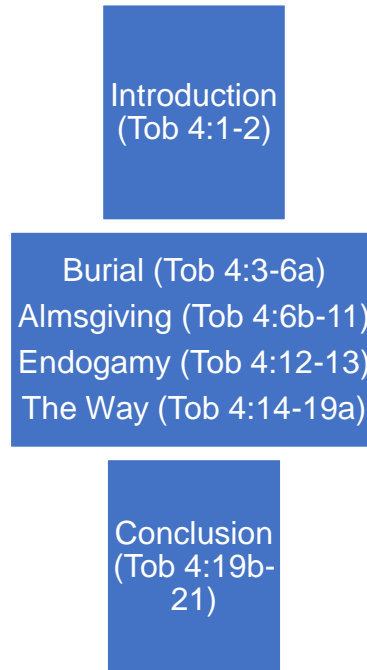
33. Helen Schüngel-Straumann, *Tobit*, Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2000), 48.

34. Cf. Poe, *William Wilson*, 18-19.

35. Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 50.

6.1.1. Characterization of Tobit in his First Testament

Roughly, a structure of Tobit 4 looks like this:



This structure shows that Tobit recommends to Tobiah what he himself has practiced in the past: burial of the dead, almsgiving, endogamy, and walking in the way of truth and righteousness.³⁶ The ‘final Tobit,’ who no longer highlights his righteousness more than that of the rest and the deity, hands over the mantle to Tobiah, to assume all practices of his righteousness.

Tobit’s entrance into his house can be symbolic, because it prefigures his and Sarra’s restoration, which the reader or hearer of the narrative knows about (Tob 3:17).³⁷ The setting inside his home (Tob 3:17) prompts his memory (Tob

36. See also Di Pedé et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 44, 51; Moore, *Tobit*, 174.

37. Daniel Marguerat and Yvan Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1999), 77.

4:1) to “trigger events that effect the healing of Tobit and Sarah and the marriage of Tobias and Sarah.”³⁸ Thus, his setting in the house, which his movement from outside precedes, characterizes him as moving away from his troubled situation of the exile to a tranquil situation of freedom.

Tobit’s words to his son (Tob 4:3a) express his receptivity to works of righteousness from others (cf. Tob 2:14c), because he asks his son to bury him when he dies, just as he used to bury others, before he became blind. As such, Tobit highlights not only his righteousness, but also the righteousness of others, such as his son, which signals the ‘final Tobit.’ Above all, he highlights the righteousness of the Lord his God in Tob 4:5.

Tob 4:5 recalls the words of the ‘initial Tobit’ in Tob 1:3. Just as Tobit walked in ways of truth and righteousness all the days of his life (Tob 1:3), he urges his son to practice righteousness all the days of his life and not to walk in the ways of the unrighteous (Tob 4:5b). The similarity and difference between the two texts proves significant for the characterization of the ‘final Tobit.’³⁹ Unlike Tob 1:3, Tob 4:5a refers to the remembrance of the Lord: “All the days, child, remember the Lord our God and do not desire to sin and transgress his commands.” The similarity and difference between Tob 1:3 and Tob 4:5a-b marks the transformation from the ‘initial Tobit’ to the ‘final Tobit,’ respectively.⁴⁰

38. Nickelsburg, “Tobit,” 796.

39. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 122.

40. Bal, *Narratology*, 127.

The 'initial Tobit' highlights his goodness or righteousness and not that of his deity, because his troubled or traumatic experience affects his memory.⁴¹ The 'final Tobit' highlights not only his goodness or righteousness, but also the righteousness of his deity, because he *remembers* the Lord his God (Tob 4:5a).

Tobit 4 clears reservations about Tobit's care for those close to him in his request for death (Tob 3:6).⁴² His concern for those close to himself manifests itself in his desire to inform his son about the silver entrusted with Gabael in Rages of Media.⁴³ Further, he exhibits care for his wife as well, because he instructs his son not to disregard his mother and to honor her all the days of her life, to please her and not to grieve her. These instructions allude to Tobit's encounter with his wife.⁴⁴ They show his concern for both his son and wife, because he desires that they live in harmony, as a religious family.

Moore noted "the greatest incompatibility" in *Tobit* 4 as consisting of Tobit's insistence on alms and service to his deity, despite his poverty and blindness, which follows his righteous practice.⁴⁵ The reader or hearer of the narrative may hardly notice that incompatibility because the extradiegetic narrator mentions Tobit's impending restoration (Tob 3:16-17). However, Tobit has no knowledge of his looming restoration, yet he recommends almsgiving and service to the deity. I suggest that 'the greatest incompatibility' highlights his

41. Bal, *Narratology*, 150.

42. Cf. Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 33-34, 43.

43. Moore, *Tobit*, 163.

44. Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 43.

45. Moore, *Tobit*, 175.

transformation from highlighting his goodness in the face of evil, to highlighting the righteousness of his deity.⁴⁶

Tobit's recommendation of endogamy for his son not only highlights his desire for familial or religious consolidation, but also an end to the experience of the exile. That desire finds expression in his instruction to his son to marry a woman from the descendants of his religious family (Tob 4:12a), just as he does, and in the promise to inherit land (Tob 4:12b). Tob 1:1-2 implies that double need for Tobit to be complete. First, he desires consolidation with his religious family. Second, he desires an end to the troubled situation of the exile, which the Assyrian setting highlights. These needs find expression in his lack of an *-e/* ending to his name, amongst names with *-e/* endings.

To summarize: burial of the dead, almsgiving, and endogamy express Tobit's truth and righteousness, which he recommends to Tobiah, because he expects to die soon. In requesting Tobiah to bury him and his wife, Tobit highlights his righteousness less, because he frees up to receive acts of charity from others. Most of all, he evokes the remembrance of the Lord amidst the exercise of truth and righteousness, because he now highlights his deity's goodness or righteousness more than his own. These conditions prove necessary for his restoration, which endogamy implicitly promises. In this manner, Tobiah sets out on a journey, which fills the rupture in Tobit's name, because Tobiah realizes religious or familial consolidation and an experience of the end of the exile for his father.

46. Bal, *Narratology*, 127.

6.2. Mending the Rupture in the Tobit *Leitwort* through Tobiah's Journey

Tobiah's journey to collect silver from Gabael in Rages of Media does not begin before he promises his father to follow his commands, and asks how to collect the silver (Tob 5:1-2), since he does not know Gabael. His father gives him a handwritten document and asks him to find someone to accompany him to go and collect the silver. Tobiah finds Raphael, an angel disguised as an ordinary man (Tob 5:3-4). The name 'Raphael' means "El 'God' has healed,"⁴⁷ and it foreshadows the mending of the rupture in Tobit's name, or his restoration (Tob 3:16-17).

When Tobit asks Raphael from which tribe and country he comes from (Tob 5:11), he responds thus:

^{12a}... 'Do you seek a tribe and a family, or a man whom you will pay to go with your son?' ^{12b}And Tobit said to him, 'I wish to know, brother, your race and name.' ¹³But he said, 'I am Azariah, son of the great Hananiah, one of your brothers.' ^{14a}And he said to him, 'You are welcome, brother; and do not be angry with me because I sought to know your tribe and family. ^{14b}And you happen to be my brother from a good and noble family. For I know Hananiah and Jathan the sons of the great Semaiah, as we used to go together to Jerusalem to worship and offer the first-borns and the tenths of the products, and they were not led astray in the error of our brothers. ^{14c}You are from a great stock, brother.'

The order of elements in Raphael's question (Tob 5:12a) shows the importance of tribe and family, for Tobit's restoration, over the wages of Tobiah's guide. Tobit's response also shows the importance of the religious family over the wages, because he does not mention them (Tob 5:12b). Tobit wishes to know Tobiah's guide's 'race and name' (Tob 5:12b), which the narrative

47. Koehler and Baumgartner, *HALOT*, 2:1275.

juxtaposes with 'tribe and family' (Tob 5:12a), because they represent related concepts.⁴⁸ These prove important for Tobit, because they constitute his restoration. He shows excitement at the idea of Azariah's relatedness to him (Tob 5:13-14), because Azariah reminds him of kinsmen of his kind, with whom he desires unity, for his name's mending. In other words, "Tobit must locate not only Raphael but also himself, so that he may re-enter life in community."⁴⁹

Tob 5:14b raises questions for Tobit's earlier statement in Tob 1:6, which states that, "And I alone went often to Jerusalem at the feasts, just as it has been written for all Israel in an eternal ordinance, having the first-fruits and the tenth of the products and the first shearing." The reader or hearer of the narrative learns of other righteous people from Tobit's tribe, besides Tobit, with whom he used to go to Jerusalem, after the rest seceded from the house in Jerusalem.⁵⁰ Tobit's excitement in his dialogue with Raphael (Tob 5:13-14) does not betray trauma or trouble arising from a vexed memory (Tob 1:6).⁵¹ His memory proves to be sounder in the presence of Azariah, whom God sends to restore Tobit. "As he begins to recover this sense of companionship (5:14), he recovers with it the experience of joy."⁵²

48. Gunn, "Narrative Criticism," 224-225.

49. Anthea Portier-Young, "Alleviation of Suffering in the Book of Tobit: Comedy, Community, and Happy Endings," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 63, no. 1 (January 2001): 49.

50. Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 57.

51. Bal, *Narratology*, 150.

52. Portier-Young, "Alleviation of Suffering in the Book of Tobit," 50.

Miller suggested that Tobit occupies himself with “peripheral matters,” such as silver (Tob 4:20-5:3) and kinship, at the expense of the safety of his son, who embarks on a dangerous journey.⁵³ To be sure, silver might not constitute the most important theme in the narrative, but it serves as an important device, to drive the narrative. The name ‘Gabriel,’ in Tob 1:1c, alludes to the same silver or money in the narrative. In addition, Tobit’s decision to mention the silver at the end of his instructions in Tob 4:20 shows that he places more importance on inculcating good values in his son than on wealth.⁵⁴ Moreover, his pending death shows that he intends to acquire the same silver for the benefit of his son and his wife, who will live after him.

I do not dismiss kinship in the text amongst “peripheral matters.”⁵⁵ Kinship, which the word ‘tribe’ (φυλή) or ‘race’ (γένος) punctuates (Tob 5:12), forms a part of the kernel of Tobit’s restoration or mending of the rupture in his name. In this vein, Raphael detours to the residence of Raguel, Tobiah’s relative, who has an only begotten daughter called Sarra (Tob 6:11). He intends to fix Tobiah’s marriage with Sarra, because Tobiah not only has the right to marry her, but also comes from her race. Her father also knows that she should not be given to any other man, as the law of Moses stipulates, or he would die (Tob 6:12-13).⁵⁶

53. Geoffrey David Miller, “Raphael the Liar: Angelic Deceit and Testing in the Book of Tobit,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 74, no. 3 (July 2012): 505.

54. Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 51-52.

55. Cf. Miller, “Raphael the Liar,” 505.

56. Cf. Thomas Hieke, “Endogamy in the Book of Tobit, Genesis, and Ezra-Nehemiah,” in *The Book of Tobit: Text, Tradition, Theology: Papers of the First International Conference on the Deuterocanonical Books, Pépa, Hungary, 20-21 May, 2004*, eds. Géza G. Xeravits and József Zsengellér, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 98 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 109,

The Mosaic law in the narrative echoes Tobit's as much as Sarra's need for familial or religious consolidation, because the dead potential husbands belong to neither his nor her race (Tob 6:12).⁵⁷ The extradiegetic narrator does not advocate for racial segregation, but familial or religious unity, which is at stake, among a diverse people in a foreign land. Thus, familial or religious consolidation foreshadows posterity (Tob 6:18d)—“and I assume that there will be to you children from her”—and inheritance of land (Tob 4:12b) or an end to the exile. As such, “Tobiah and Sarah are, in a sense, founders of a ‘new Israel’ who will enable the exiles to return to Jerusalem.”⁵⁸

Ragouel, Sarra's father, mentions how much Tobiah looks like Tobit, his cousin, before he asks where Tobiah and Raphael come from (Tob 7:2). The hearer or reader of the narrative discovers that Tobiah resembles his father not only nominally but also physically.⁵⁹ Thus, the narrative hints at Tobiah's role as Tobit's *Doppelgänger*. Through him, Tobit will experience his core desires of religious or familial consolidation and an end to the exile. Whereas Tobit unites spiritually with Sarra in their prayer, Tobiah unites physically with her in marriage, and invokes Adam and Eve (Tob 8:6) “to encourage God to be munificent toward him and his new bride.”⁶⁰ In this vein, Tobiah sustains not only Tobit's desire for

who stated that, “but neither Num 36:5-12, the passage about intra-tribal marriage, nor any other place within the Torah says anything about ‘incurring death’ for a violation of the prescription.”

57. Cf. *Ibid.*, 111.

58. Geoffrey David Miller, “A Match Made in Heaven? God's Role in Marriage According to the Book of Tobit,” *Rivista Biblica* 57, no. 2 (April-June 2009): 130.

59. See Poe, *William Wilson*, 21.

60. Miller, “A Match Made in Heaven?,” 138.

familial or religious consolidation, but also his hope for an end to the exile, because of the promise to the descendants of the patriarchs to inherit land (Tob 4:12b).

Ragouel's wife's farewell words to Tobiah in Tob 10:12b, as he heads back to Nineveh, prove significant for both Tobit and Sarra: "And Edna said to Tobiah, 'Beloved brother, may the Lord of heaven *restore* you and grant me to see your children from Sarra, in order that I may *rejoice* before the Lord: and behold, I set my daughter before you, in trust, may you not grieve her.'" The verb 'to restore' (ἀποκαθιστάνω) recalls the need of healing for both Tobit and Sarra, which their prayer expresses (Tob 3:1-17). Edna's address to Tobiah, as the one in need of restoration, proves his role as Tobit's *Doppelgänger*, because Tobit needs restoration. The verb 'to rejoice' (εὐφραίνω) foreshadows an end to the experience of the exile, as its other occurrences (e.g. Tob 13:12, 16) in the narrative show.⁶¹ In the current context, it relates to Tobiah's and Sarra's posterity, with whom lies the promise of an end of exile through inheritance of land (see Tob 4:12b).

Tobit's initial words in Tob 11:14-15a, after Tobiah restores his sight, characterize the 'final Tobit' well: "¹⁴And he wept and said, 'Blessed are you, God, and blessed is your name for ever, and blessed are all your holy angels: ^{15a}Because you scourged and had mercy on me, behold, I see Tobiah my son.'" Tobit magnifies the Lord and proclaims his mercy, because he can see. He does not mention any personal sin, but considers his temporal blindness as a form of

61. Gunn, "Narrative Criticism," 224-225.

chastisement from his deity.⁶² This makes plausible the suggestion that his restoration implies an end to the exile, because he innocently loses his sight, just like he finds himself in exile despite his innocence. I also reiterate that the narrative juxtaposes Tobit's exilic experience with his blindness (Tob 3:1-6, 17) to show their connectedness.

Just as Tobiah enters the house, rejoicing, to narrate the good tidings from Media to his father (Tob 11:15b), Tobit goes out to the gate of Nineveh, rejoicing, to welcome Sarra, as on-lookers marvel that he can see (Tob 11:16). Tobit's restored sense of sight and movement from his house to the gate of Nineveh highlight his space for exercising truth and righteousness.⁶³ His neighbors do not rebuke him, and he professes God's mercy before them (Tob 11:17a), because his world opens anew to wider relations.⁶⁴ Having realized familial or religious consolidation, he welcomes and blesses Sarra, and God "who has led you to us, and your father and your mother. And there was rejoicing among all his brothers in Nineveh" (Tob 11:17b). His words express the life that Sarra's marriage to Tobiah brings forth.⁶⁵ 'All his brothers' highlight Tobit's religious or familial consolidation, which the same marriage brings about. Unsurprisingly, Achiacharos, Tobit's nephew, shows up at the scene, along with Nasbas, his nephew. The joyful atmosphere in the current text reverses the sorrowful

62. Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 105.

63. Bal, *Narratology*, 136.

64. Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 107.

65. Ibid.

atmosphere in Tob 2:6, where Tobit weeps after remembering the words of the prophet Amos.⁶⁶ It signals an end to Tobit's experience of the exile.

A realization of his religious or familial bonds and the restoration of his sight, besides highlighting the goodness of his deity, suffice to fix the rupture in his name. Although his name does not change, we can look to his *Doppelgänger*, whose name has a theophoric ending, and who shares the same word-root as Tobit. The names 'Tobit' and 'Tobiah' in the narrative comprise a "repetition," which "need not be merely of the word itself but also of the word-root; in fact, the very difference of words can intensify the dynamic action of the repetition."⁶⁷ In this vein, Tobiah, whose name has a theophoric ending, restores Tobit, whose name has no theophoric ending, and accomplishes for Tobit what he cannot accomplish.

In sum, Tobiah's journey realizes an endogamous marriage, which meets Tobit's needs of familial or religious consolidation and an end to an experience of the exile, characterized by joy.

6.3. Delineation and Analysis of Tob 12:6-20

My translation of Tob 12:6-20 follows:

^{6a}Then calling the two secretly, he said to them, ^{6b}'Bless God and praise him, and give prominence and praise him before all the living, concerning what he did with you; ^{6c}it is good to bless God and exalt his name, point

66. Di Pedé et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 109.

67. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 117.

out valuably the words of the works of God, and do not hesitate to praise him. ^{7a}It is good to hide a secret of a king, but to uncover gloriously the works of God. ^{7b}Do good, and evil will not find you. ⁸Prayer is good with fasting and almsgiving and righteousness; a little with righteousness is better than much with unrighteousness; to give alms is better than to store up gold. ^{9a}For almsgiving delivers from death, and it will cleanse every sin; ^{9b}those who practice almsgiving and righteousness will be filled with life; ¹⁰but those who sin are enemies of their own lives. ^{11a}I will not conceal any word from you; ^{11b}I have also said 'it is good to hide a secret of a king, but to uncover gloriously the works of God.' ^{12a}And now when you prayed with your daughter in law, Sarra, I brought the memory of your prayer before the holy one. ^{12b}And when you were burying the dead, I was likewise present with you. ¹³And when you did not hesitate to get up and leave your meal, in order to go to lay out the dead man, the good deed did not escape my notice, but I was with you. ¹⁴And now, God sent me to heal you and your daughter in law, Sarra. ¹⁵I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels, who carry the prayers of holy people and enter before the glory of the holy one.' ¹⁶And the two were troubled and fell face down, because they were afraid. ¹⁷And he said to them, 'Do not be afraid, peace will be with you; but bless God for ever. ¹⁸Because I did not come through grace of myself, but the will of our God. Wherefore bless him (God) for ever. ¹⁹All the days I appeared to you, I neither ate nor drank, but you beheld a vision. ^{20a}And now, praise God, because I am ascending to the one who sent me, and write all the accomplished things in a book.'

Tob 12:6 marks a new unit, because Raphael begins to speak, after Tobit's dialogue with Tobiah, concerning his wages for guiding Tobiah on his journey, and just after Tobit tells him to take half of the property that they come with (Tob 12:1-5).⁶⁸ Raphael addresses Tobit and Tobiah collectively (Tob 12:6), and that proves Tobiah's inseparability from Tobit.⁶⁹ They both share the same emotion of fear when Raphael reveals his identity, and they fall together on a single face (Tob 12:16). He urges them to bless and praise God for what he has done with them (Tob 12:6c).

68. Marguerat and Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, 32.

69. See Poe, *William Wilson*, 15. However, Raphael addresses Tobit only, in Tob 12:12a-15, in the presence of Tobiah.

Raphael repeats verbatim a saying in Tob 12:7a in 12:11b: “It is good to hide a secret of a king, but to uncover gloriously the works of God.” The saying alludes to Tobit’s burial of the dead in the light of a king in exile, and Tobit’s deity’s participation, through Raphael, in the same burial of the dead (Tob 12:12-13), which Tobit did not know. The significance of the saying partly lies in what precedes it in Tob 12:7a, and what follows it in Tob 12:11b, because the former complements the latter.⁷⁰ In that regard, Raphael reveals to Tobit the need to praise God (Tob 12:6), which Tobit does not initially see, as a necessary complement to righteous acts such as the burial of the dead (Tob 12:12-13).

Di Pede et al. suggested that the saying concerns concealing the ability of the king, under whom Tobit served (see Tob 1:13), as he would remember, because all power belongs to God.⁷¹ I suggest that wisdom subsists in concealing a deed of a king, if its revelation can bring about harm (see Tob 1:18-20). Had Tobit, in his exercise of righteousness, highlighted the goodness of the deity, he would not have inadvertently exposed the unrighteousness of a king, from whom he fled. As such, Raphael recommends that prayer, without which an individual may not highlight the goodness of God, should accompany acts of righteousness (Tob 12:8).

The conjunction ‘for’ (γάρ) (Tob 12:9a) connects Tob 12:9 to 12:8, suggesting that prayer with righteous practice delivers from death and cleanses every sin. Accordingly, Tob 12:12a and Tob 12:12b-13 punctuate the efficacy of

70. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 121-123.

71. Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 113.

prayer alongside righteous acts, respectively, because God responds (Tob 12:14). Thus, God sends Raphael to heal Tobit (and Sarra) (Tob 12:15), because Tobit adds prayer to his works of charity. The current unit closes in Tob 12:20a-b, because Raphael ends his speech and announces his departure to the one who sent him.⁷²

6.3.1. Characterization of Tobit in Raphael's Testament

Raphael's repetition in Tob 12:7a and 12:11b—"It is good to hide a secret of a king, but to uncover gloriously the works of God"—reveals the 'initial Tobit's' lack and solution in the narrative.⁷³ The lack subsisted in his incapacity to uncover gloriously the works of his deity, because he highlighted more of his goodness, to the extent that he was blind to the presence of his deity, through Raphael, in his works of righteousness. This information surprises the reader or hearer of the narrative, who initially fails like Tobit to behold Raphael's presence in Tobit's works.⁷⁴ Tobit's lack gave way to revealing not only the shortcomings of his people, but also of a king, who ended up seeking to destroy him. He needed to highlight the glorious works of God or his goodness, to be complete, as he is now.

72. Marguerat and Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, 32.

73. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 123.

74. See also Di Pedé et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 115.

Similarly, Raphael's emphasis on prayer cannot be overstated, because the word 'prayer' (προσευχή) occurs at least three times in Tob 12:8-15—Tob 12:8 (1x), 12a (1x), 15 (1x)—with an additional verbal form 'to pray' (προσεύχομαι) in Tob 12:12a.⁷⁵ That emphasis does not undermine Tobit's previous works of righteousness, because Raphael commends Tobit for his works of righteousness (Tob 12:12b-13). It shows that, in addition to his works, Tobit needed to highlight the righteousness of his deity, to be complete, as he does later in his prayer in Tob 3:1-6.⁷⁶

In sum, Raphael does not conceal anything from Tobit (and Tobiah) (Tob 12:11a), because he reveals what Tobit lacked prior to the realization of his restoration. In addition to his righteousness, Tobit needed to highlight the righteousness of his deity.

6.4. Delineation and Analysis of Tob 14:3-11

I translate Tob 14:3-11 as follows:

^{3a}But he grew very old. ^{3b}And he called his son and his six sons and said to him, 'Child, take your sons; Look, I have grown old and I am about to depart from living. ^{4a}Go away into Media, child, because I have been persuaded by everything that the Prophet Jonah spoke concerning Nineveh, because it will be destroyed. ^{4b}But in Media there will be more peace until an appointed time, ^{4c}and because our brothers in the land will be scattered from the good land, and Jerusalem will be a desert, and the house of God in it will be burnt up and it will be a desert until a certain time. ⁵And again God will have mercy on them and he will return them into the land, and they will build the house, not such as the first, until times of

75. Gunn, "Narrative Criticism," 224-225.

76. Peter J. Rabinowitz, "Showing Vs. Telling," in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, eds. David Herman, Manfred Jahn, and Marie-Laure Ryan (London: Routledge, 2005), 530.

age are fulfilled. And after these things they will return from captivity and they will preciousy build Jerusalem, and the house of God will be built in it as a glorious building for every generation for ever, just as the prophets spoke concerning it. ⁶And all the nations will turn truly to fear the Lord God and they will bury their idols, ⁷and all the nations will bless the Lord. And his people will praise God, and the Lord will exalt his people, and all those who love the Lord God will rejoice in truth and righteousness, those who exercise mercy to our brothers. ⁸And now, child, go away from Nineveh, because, by all means, what the Prophet Jonah spoke will happen, ⁹but you keep the law and the ordinances and be merciful and righteous, in order that it should be well with you, ^{10a}and bury me well and your mother with me; and you should no longer spend the night in Nineveh. ^{10b}Child, see what Aman did to Achiacharos who nourished him, how he led him from the light into darkness, and how much he repaid him; but Achiacharos was saved, and the repayment was given to that person, and he went down into darkness. ^{10c}Manasseh practiced almsgiving and he was saved from the snare of death, which Aman set up for him, but he fell into the snare and perished. ^{11a}And now, child, see what almsgiving does, and how righteousness delivers.' ^{11b}And as he said these things, his life came to an end on the couch; and he was one hundred fifty-eight years; and he (Tobiah) buried him (Tobit) gloriously.

Tobit's testament follows his words of praise for his deity in *Tobit* 13. The narrative signals the end of Tobit's praise in Tob 14:1, and also informs the reader or hearer of the narrative that Tobit became blind at the age of fifty-eight and remained so until eight years had passed. Most noticeably, he practiced almsgiving as well as praising his deity (Tob 14:2). Thus, at the time of his final testament, Tobit had had ample space to exercise truth and righteousness, because of the restoration of his sense of sight.⁷⁷ That space implies freedom for exiles in the land of captivity. In this vein, Tobit presents his testament in a peaceful setting, having lived ninety-two more years of exercising truth and righteousness in Nineveh, after the restoration of his sight.⁷⁸

77. Bal, *Narratology*, 136.

78. Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 127.

Tobiah's six sons (Tob 14:3) echo the promise of the inheritance of land or repatriation to Israel (Tob 4:12b).⁷⁹ This promise holds, despite the local integration or freedom, which Tobit experiences in the diaspora. However, an impending threat to freedom in Nineveh, informed by a prophet, compels Tobit to advise his son to leave for Media, where more peace prevails (Tob 14:4a-b). He cannot go to Jerusalem in Israel because of its looming destruction, which will scatter the people from the good land (Tob 14:4c). The uncertainty of peace in Jerusalem requires local integration in Nineveh, and the imminent threat to Nineveh necessitates resettlement in Media for Tobiah, to create space to exercise truth and righteousness in the diaspora (Tob 14:8-9).⁸⁰ Tobit also mentions that God's mercy will facilitate the people's return to the land and the reconstruction of Jerusalem (Tob 14:5).

Tobit reiterates his own need for a decent burial as well as his wife's need for a good burial, besides urging Tobiah to leave Nineveh as soon as he accomplishes this need (Tob 14:10a). He also expresses the deliverance that comes through the exercise of almsgiving and righteousness (Tob 14:11a). Light and darkness, or life and death, comprise lifetime experiences for practitioners of truth and righteousness and non-practitioners, respectively. In this vein, Aman experiences darkness, or death, because he deals un-righteously with both Achiacharos (Tob 14:10b) and Manasseh (Tob 14:10c), who both experience

79. See also Miller, "A Match Made in Heaven?," 152; the text (GII) on which he comments has seven children instead of six.

80. Bal, *Narratology*, 136-137.

light or life. This unit ends with Tobit's exit from the narrative through his own death, at the age of a hundred fifty-eight years (Tob 14:11b).⁸¹

6.4.1. Characterization of Tobit in his Last Testament

Tobit's advanced age at the time of his testament (Tob 14:3a) shows that he lives a tranquil life in Nineveh, after the restoration of his sight; and his ability to exercise truth and righteousness (Tob 14:2) highlights the end of an exilic experience. In other words, Tobit, together with his religious family, experiences local integration in Nineveh, which implies a durable solution to his problem. God allocates (Asiel) a portion for Tobit to live truthfully and righteously within the exile (Tob 1:1c).

By the time of his last testament, Tobit recommends resettlement in Media as a durable solution for Tobiah and his family, because of the Prophet Jonah's recommendation arising from looming war in Nineveh. In Media, Tobit expects Tobiah to exercise truth and righteousness, because it will be like home, away from home, just like Nineveh has been since the restoration of his sight (Tob 14:9). He remembers his religious family in Israel and the imminent destruction of Jerusalem (Tob 14:4c), but also states that God will have mercy on them and return them to the land (Tob 14:5). Tobit draws a link between the mercy of God and an end to the experience of the exile. In this way, he relates his experience in Nineveh as a paradigm for the future exiles from Jerusalem, upon whom God

81. Marguerat and Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, 32.

will have mercy, before an end to their exilic experience. “For Tobit, his own story—and that of his extended family—is intricately connected with that of Israel.”⁸²

The repetition of the land motif from Tob 4:12b in Tob 14:5 constitutes “a new revelation of character or plot,” because Tobit makes a distinction between his religious family in the diaspora and the brothers in Jerusalem.⁸³ The brothers will go back to the land, when God grants them mercy, but his religious family will stay in the diaspora, because they have experienced the mercy of God, which constitutes an end to the experience of the exile, first in Nineveh and then in Media, where Tobiah dies.⁸⁴ Thus, the narrative resolves Tobit’s troubled situation of the exile.

In addition, Tobit foresees a time when ‘the nations,’ amongst which he dwells, will exercise truth and righteousness (Tob 14:6-7). That highlights a current peaceful coexistence between the exiles and the diaspora, such as has never existed before (e.g. Tob 2:8), and the Israelite’s local integration among ‘the nations.’ ‘The nations,’ like the ‘final Tobit,’ will not only exercise righteousness, but also praise the deity (Tob 14:7). Tobiah should go and stay in Media, amongst ‘the nations,’ as soon as he puts his father and mother to rest (Tob 14:10a), because he will continue to realize the end of the exilic experience

82. Jill Hicks-Keeton, “Already/Not Yet: Eschatological Tension in the Book of Tobit,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 132, no. 1 (2013): 103.

83. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 123.

84. Cf. Hicks-Keeton, “Already/Not Yet: Eschatological Tension in the Book of Tobit,” 116.

there. Tobit “dies ‘in peace’ after the full and prosperous life that has been the reward of his piety.”⁸⁵

To summarize: Tob 14:3-11 punctuates the mercy of Tobit’s deity as constituting an end of his experience of the exile. It reveals Tobit’s understanding of an end of the exile as an enabling peace to exercise truth and righteousness in the diaspora, without dispelling the possibility of returning to Israel.

85. Nickelsburg, “Tobit,” 802.

CHAPTER SEVEN

7.0. CONCLUSION

In Chapter One, I raise an entry question that this dissertation sets out to address. The question concerns the significance of the name ‘Tobit’ amongst many names ending in *–el* in Tob 1:1-2.¹ I respond in brief: The lack of an *–el* ending in Tobit’s name characterizes him as facing alienation from his religious family and experiencing exile in Assyria. To experience restoration, he needs to highlight the deity’s goodness more than his own goodness, just like the *–el* ending names in Tob 1:1-2 highlight the deity’s goodness or righteousness. Thus, the theophoric names in Tob 1:1-2 serve as narrative devices to meet Tobit’s needs of religious or familial consolidation and an end to the exilic experience.

The narrative highlights the ‘initial Tobit’s’ (Tob 1:1a, 2) exilic experience through a progressive constriction of space to exercise truth and righteousness (Tob 1:3-22), which culminates in his incapacity to exercise them due to physical blindness (Tob 2:1-10). The ‘middle Tobit’s’ deity responds to his situation in grace and glory, which begin with the encounter between Tobit and his wife Hanna, whose name means grace (Tob 2:11-14). This encounter prompts Tobit to pray, after which his deity’s glory manifests itself through the angel Raphael

1. See Elena Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu: Lecture narrative du livre de Tobie*, eds. Didier Luciani and Jean-Pierre Sonnet, *Le livre et le rouleau* (Paris: Lessius, 2014), 15.

(Tob 3:1-17). The ‘final Tobit’ experiences religious or familial consolidation and restoration of sight (Tob 11:10-18), as the narrative interchanges the exilic experience with Tobit’s blindness, which it resolves.

7.1. Summary of the Project

Chapter Two focuses on the textual situation of the *Tobit* narrative. The discovery of five texts of *Tobit* at Qumran, four in Aramaic and one in Hebrew, whose dates fall between 50 BCE and 50 CE, attests to the existence of at least two contemporaneous ancient texts. These texts prove the lack of a theophoric ending in Tobit’s name, and its witness in Tobiah, his son’s name.² The Short Greek Recension (GI), the Long Greek Recension (GII), and the Vulgate of *Tobit* (VG) also point to a contemporaneous ancient witness of at least two texts of *Tobit*, because their diverse textual traditions betray conversational traces with their respective audiences.³

Faced with these ancient and diverse textual traditions, I utilize GI for this study for the following reasons. First, unlike the Qumran texts of *Tobit* which represent only one-fifth of the *Book of Tobit*, GI contains the complete text of Tobit, like GII and VG. Second, unlike GII and VG that seek to align their texts

2. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, “Tobit,” in *Qumran Cave 4*, vol. 14, *Parabiblical Texts, Part 2*, ed. Emanuel Tov, Discoveries in the Judaean Desert 19 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 8, 51, 68.

3. See Jean-François Racine, “The Edition of the Greek New Testament: A Plea and a Challenge,” in *Studies on the Text of the New Testament and Early Christianity: Essays in Honor of Michael W. Holmes On the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*, eds. Daniel M. Gurtner, Juan Hernández Jr. and Paul Foster, New Testament Tools, Studies and Documents 50 (Boston: Brill, 2015), 84.

with other Biblical traditions in their presentation of Tobit, GI exhibits a considerable amount of restraint in that enterprise. Thus, GI remains open to surprises for its readers and hearers. VG also refers to both father and son by the same name, Tobias, which does not support the current study.

A function of Tob 1:1-2 in the narrative, which Chapter Three addresses, yields significant results for the characterization of Tobit. It shows that the 'initial Tobit' (1:1a, 2) experiences alienation from his religious family and exile. The name 'Tobiel,' which shares the same word-root as Tobit, expresses the latter's desire to resemble the former, whose name ends in *-el*, like other names in Tob 1:1. In this regard, Tobit experiences alienation from his religious family at the outset of the narrative. Tob 1:2 not only highlights Tobit's alienation from his land but it also presents the narrative setting of the exile. Thus, Tob 1:1a, 2 characterizes the 'initial Tobit' as needful of religious or familial consolidation and an end to the experience of the exile.

The names 'Hananiel' and 'Adouel' in Tob 1:1b serve as narrative devices in line with their meanings. Hananiel means 'God has favored me'⁴ and Adouel means "God is adornment."⁵ These names, which comprise the situation of the 'middle Tobit,' highlight the deity's favor or compassion for the 'initial Tobit,' which prompts the deity to 'adorn' Tobit, by addressing that theophoric lack which his

4. See Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament: Study Edition*, ed. and trans. M. E. J. Richardson (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 1:334-335.

5. Ibid., 791.

name engraves. The names ‘Hananiel’ and ‘Adouel’ (Tob 1:1b) characterize the ‘middle Tobit’ as responding to his deity’s grace and glory.

The names ‘Gabael’ and ‘Asiel’ (Tob 1:1c) highlight the concrete way by which the deity adorns or restores Tobit. The name Gabael means ‘the deity has collected money or debts.’ It hints to the reader or hearer of the narrative that Tobit’s restoration, which implies the deity’s allocation of land (Asiel), comes via collection of debts or money. Asiel corresponds to the Hebrew אֲשִׁי־אֵל, which means ‘the deity will allocate.’⁶ Thus, Gabael and Asiel (Tob 1:1c) characterize the ‘final Tobit’ as free from the exilic experience.

Chapter Four focuses on the elaboration of the ‘initial Tobit’ in Tob 1:1a, 2, using Tob 1:3-2:10, which I divide into the following units: Tob 1:3-9; 1:10-22; 2:1-10. These texts prove the ‘initial Tobit’s’ alienation from his religious family, and they exhibit the constriction of his space to exercise truth and righteousness. Tobit highlights his goodness—his name means ‘my goodness’—or truth and righteousness in the face of unrighteousness, which his tribesmen and members of the other tribes of Israel and the forces of the exile exercise. This exilic experience troubles the ‘initial Tobit’ so much so that he seldom remembers to highlight the goodness of his deity.⁷

In Tob 1:3, the narrative states that Tobit alone walks in truth and righteousness when the rest of his people secede from worshiping in Jerusalem

6. Koehler and Baumgartner, *HALOT*, 1:407; see also Helen Schüngel-Straumann, *Tobit*, Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2000), 53.

7. See Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 150.

to serve idols. He attributes his faithfulness to his grandmother, Deborra, who trains him in religious ways, because his father dies and leaves him as an orphan (Tob 1:8). This text echoes Tob 1:1a, 2 which mentions Tobiel, Tobit's father. Tobit's father's death implies Tobit's alienation from his religious family, which the theophoric rupture in his name highlights.

Events of the previous paragraph precede the exile proper, which the narrative addresses in Tob 1:10-22. This exile links the current text with the setting of the exile in Tob 1:2. In Nineveh, Tobit highlights his righteousness against the rest of his people who eat the bread of the gentiles (Tob 1:10-12). As such, he continues to exercise truth and righteousness in exile, as he does in Israel before the exile.⁸ The death of king Enemessaros reduces Tobit's acts of truth and righteousness to bury the dead Israelites only, whom Sennachereim, Enemessaros's successor, murders (Tob 1:16-18). This text highlights Tobit's exilic experience, which Tob 1:2 portrays, by constricting his space for exercising truth and righteousness.

The mention of the wall behind which the murderer casts dead bodies of Israelites and a Ninevite's decision to report Tobit to the king for burying the dead punctuate the constriction of Tobit's space to live uprightly in exile.⁹ In addition, the king seeks to murder him because of his acts of burying the dead. He flees, and thus, experiences 'exile' within the exile. After Sennachereim's death, Sacherdonos becomes king and he appoints Achiacharos, Tobit's nephew, in

8. Di Pede et al., *Révéler les œuvres de Dieu*, 17.

9. Bal, *Narratology*, 136-138.

administrative matters; and he restores him back to social life in Nineveh. This episode foreshadows an end of Tobit's 'exile' within the exile, which familial or religious solidarity accompanies.

An ideal situation of an end to Tobit's exilic situation comprises security, such as his house setting affords, company with family members, and the capacity to celebrate a religious feast (Tob 2:1). Tobit expresses his desire for religious or familial unity when he invites someone who fears the Lord, like him, to table fellowship in his own home. That desire does not materialize because his son returns home with news of the murder of an Israelite (Tob 2:3). This event proves to be analogous to the sparrows which soil Tobit's eyes to the point of blindness. In the former event, he highlights his goodness by securing the dead Israelite's body and burying it at night (Tob 2:4-7); and in the latter event he seeks attention from physicians, who fail to restore his sight (Tob 2:10), and not the deity. The 'initial Tobit' needs to highlight the goodness of the deity more than his own righteousness to experience restoration.

'Hanna' in Tob 2:11 shares the same word-root, *pn*, with Hananiel in Tob 1:1b. It means "gracious" in both Hebrew and Aramaic.¹⁰ That word-root highlights the grace or mercy to which Tobit responds. The domestic misunderstanding between Tobit and Hanna prompts her to challenge Tobit's focus on his own goodness, which apparently disregards others. This narrative's portrayal of Tobit as a round character enables him to turn to his deity in prayer

10. Koehler and Baumgartner, *HALOT*, 1:332, 335, 2:1878.

for grace or mercy, and to represent his people in exile as well.¹¹ Thus, he highlights the goodness and mercy of his deity more than his own goodness (Tob 3:2-5). When Tobit does this, his prayer enjoys a hearing before “the glory of the great Raphael” (Tob 3:16), whom the deity sends to restore him and Sarra (Tob 3:17); and that glory echoes the deity’s glory (Adouel) in Tob 1:1b. What interests the readers and hearers of the narrative henceforth pertains to how the deity’s grace and glory, which characterize the ‘middle Tobit,’ manifest themselves in Tobit’s troubled situation.

The repetition of the name ‘Gabael’ in Tob 4:1 puts it in direct conversation with Tob 1:1c. Just as the name means ‘the deity has collected money or debts,’ Gabael holds Tobit’s money in the narrative.¹² The need to recover this money, brings Raphael on the scene, because Tobiah needs him as a guide to Gabael’s residence in Rages of Media to recover the same money. Before Tobiah sets out on the journey, Tobit instructs him on the importance of endogamy, which sustains hope for religious or familial consolidation as well as an end of the experience of the exile (Tob 4:12a-b). The journey enables Tobiah to marry his kinswoman, Sarra (Tob 7:12-14); and it also enables him to restore his father’s sight (Tob 11:10-14).

The restoration of Tobit’s sight reestablishes Tobit’s space for exercising truth and righteousness as a virtual end of an exilic experience (Tob 13:16).¹³

11. Daniel Marguerat and Yvan Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1999), 59, 65.

12. Koehler and Baumgartner, *HALOT*, 1:170.

13. See Bal, *Narratology*, 136.

Tobiah begets children (Tob 14:3); and the repetition of the land motif from Tob 4:12b in Tob 14:5 constitutes “a new revelation of character or plot,” because Tobit highlights one more durable solution to the problem of the exile, apart from repatriation.¹⁴

In Tob 14:5, he does not include his religious family amongst his kinsmen and women who should return to Israel, because his religious family experiences the deity’s mercy in the diaspora, as he has. The deity’s mercy signifies an end of the exilic experience, which constitutes a capacity to exercise truth and righteousness in the diaspora, as Tobit recommends to his son Tobiah in Tob 14:9-11a. Thus, the deity allocates (Asiel) a domicile for Tobit’s religious family within the diaspora, as Tob 1:1c characterizes the ‘final Tobit’ as restored.

7.2. Significance of the Project

On a text critical note, this project introduces a novel idea that the *Book of Tobit* has existed in at least two contemporaneous ancient traditions. This should enable *Tobit* scholars to consider the ancient texts of *Tobit*, which reflect conversational traces with their audiences, on their own merits, and avoid rush judgments on ancient texts like G1 as simply an abridgement or reworking of GII. Here again, we draw a lesson from the story of the languages that contemporaneously come to exist in the story of the tower of Babel, because to ask which one comes prior to the others can be likened to ask which human race

14. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 123.

comes prior to the rest. In this vein, the question of the priority of those contemporaneous texts of *Tobit* does not yield good fruit.

This project speaks to the significance of personal names in Biblical narratives as well as among the Tonga-speaking people of Southern Zambia for characterization. In this regard, the Tonga people may consider themselves as witnesses to this ancient Biblical tradition of sense-name giving.¹⁵ The evaluation of the name 'Tobit' and the other names that end in *-el* in Tob 1:1-2 also offers keys to a helpful interpretation of the *Book of Tobit*, which has implications for our world today. This study is the first of its kind to dedicate itself to the characterization of Tobit in the light of those theophoric names in Tob 1:1-2.

This project also speaks to the contemporary immigration problem, by affirming local integration as a durable solution to the refugee problem. As the narrative of the *Book of Tobit* witnesses, local integration implies a capacity to live life fully in freedom in a land of asylum or captivity. The project shows that at least an individual can enjoy freedom to locally integrate into a foreign land or return home, so long as an individual's freedoms enjoy respect wherever that individual chooses to live. In this vein, the *Tobit* narrative proves to be a good companion for advocates of religious freedom, because it makes it possible for a foreign religious group to exercise its practices in a strange land and to live in harmony with its hosts.

15. See John R. Searle, "Proper Names and Descriptions," in *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Paul Edwards (New York: The MacMillan Company and the Free Press, 1967), 6:488.

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