

## Preface

Twenty-five years have passed since I defended my doctoral thesis on Sir 2,1–18 under the direction of Prof. Maurice Gilbert SJ at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome. Since then, my interest in the book of Ben Sira has grown, and most of my research has concentrated on various aspects of this intriguing work.

*For Wisdom's Sake* brings together all my studies on Sirach that have been published in English from 1997 to 2018. Most have appeared in joint works or Festschriften. I have also included the translation of two texts, a Spanish article first published in the journal *Gregorianum* (1997) and one in Italian that appeared in *Ogni Scrittura è ispirata* (2013), a collection of essays by professors from the Pontifical Biblical Institute and the Pontifical Gregorian University. Thus, although the volume is basically composed of studies published previously, it also offers some novelties, at least for English-speaking readers.

In trying to organize all of the material, I have opted for the following classification: studies that deal with introductory issues such as, for example, the canon and inspiration; thematic essays presented in chronological order (on trial, authority, divorce, animal imagery, women in the praise of ancestors, polygamy, good and bad wives, garment imagery, exodal traditions); and studies that concentrate on specific passages (Sir 2,1; 6,22; 21,1–10; 22,27–23,6; 23,27; 24,22; 31(34Hb),1–8; 42,15–43,33; 43,27–33).

All of the articles in this collection faithfully reproduce the content of the original publications, but they have been carefully revised from a formal and literary point of view in order to give coherence to the volume. Some errors and inaccuracies in the original text have been corrected, some additional information has been added in footnotes between square brackets, and some outdated information has been deleted. However, repetitions concerning Sir 25,8 and 42,13 have been unavoidable. When quoting Sirach 33–36, I have followed the numbering adopted in J. Ziegler's edition. All translations of texts in French, German, Italian, and Spanish are mine. Whenever possible, I have favoured the use of gender-neutral language.

The completion of this book would not have been possible without the help and support of many people who from the beginning have encouraged and helped me to carry it out. My sincere thanks go first to Dr. Martin X. Moleski SJ, who has had the patience and generosity to read and correct most of the texts, and also to professors Michael W. Duggan, Jeremy Corley, and Dean Bechard SJ for their corrections and very helpful suggestions. I am grateful to the publishers E. J. Brill, Walter de Gruyter, Catholic Biblical Association of America, Society of Biblical Literature, and J. B. C. Mohr (Paul Siebeck) for permission to republish

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I would like to conclude this preface with a message of encouragement addressed to the new generations of Bible scholars, in particular my doctoral candidates who are working tirelessly to attain the goal. With Ben Sira, I say to you: “See that I have not worked for myself alone, but for all who seek wisdom” (Sir 24,34).

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