

Preface

This volume is a slightly reworked version of my Ph.D. dissertation, which I submitted to the School of Theology and Religious Studies at the Catholic University of America in December of 2017. Despite the rather broad title that I have given this work, I see it as being focused on one simple theme: Ben Sira's teaching about the created order of the universe. Of course, this teaching has many points of application, ranging from the order reflected in the natural world to the order reflected in the cultic liturgy of the Temple. In this regard, the present study can also be described as an analysis of Ben Sira's recourse to the created order as a fundamental category in his instructions about wisdom and wise behavior.

I extend my deepest thanks to Dr. Bradley Gregory who served as the director of my dissertation. His hiring at the Catholic University of America certainly was, I dare say, a providential event since it came just as I was beginning to search for a topic for my dissertation. His seminar on Sirach afforded me the tools to access the wisdom of this wonderful book and convinced me that it would be a fitting area of research for the remaining years of my doctoral work and beyond. I would also like to thank Dr. Gregory for his availability and for the many immensely helpful conversations we had; they always seemed to come at the right time.

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