

# WAS WISDOM TRANSFORMED TO TORAH IN SECOND TEMPLE JUDAISM?

## THE RECEPTION OF THE TORAH IN AND BEYOND ISRAELITE AND JEWISH WISDOM LITERATURE

20–21 March 2020  
Université de Lausanne, Amphipôle 3174  
13:00-18:00 (20<sup>th</sup>, Friday); 09:15-18:30 (21<sup>st</sup>, Saturday)

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# Introduction

Research on the association between “Wisdom” and “Torah” has been undertaken by scholars who study the reception history of the Torah in the Second Temple wisdom texts inside and outside the Hebrew Bible. Scholars (Von Rad, Hengel, Schnabel, Sheppard, Blenkinsopp, Collins, Sanders, etc) have debated over the identification of Wisdom as (the) Torah in the Second Temple Judaism; whether Wisdom is torahised or Torah is sapientialised. Nonetheless, although the combination of priestly and non-priestly Pentateuchal sources already occurred in the Persian period, the Pentateuch, as a collection of Mosaic laws, might not gain authority until the Maccabean revolt (167 BCE), and Hellenistic wisdom texts such as Sirach and the Wisdom of Solomon did not seem to be dominated by the ideology of the Pentateuch in a canonical consciousness. Furthermore, while the term *hokmah* has been defined as having unified elements and historical contexts as a literary tradition, an increasing number of interpreters have doubted the existence of the cohesive Israelite/Jewish wisdom tradition that has been transmitted and composed by “sages”/“wise men”. If the long-standing framework of “torahized” wisdom in Israel and early Judaism makes substantial misconceptions in understanding the nature of wisdom literature, it is necessary to re-examine and rethink assertions in terms of the transformation of Jewish wisdom texts from the Achaemenid period to the Hellenistic period. In order to challenge the conventional paradigm, the identification of Wisdom as the Torah, we ask: “Was Israelite Wisdom finally transformed into and by the Mosaic Torah in the Hellenistic period?” This conference, thus, focuses on how one can reformulate the model of the Wisdom-Torah identification, confluence, or the paradigm of transformation in Jewish wisdom texts.

## Specific Questions

- Is the notion/term of “torah” in biblical and non-biblical wisdom texts in the Second Temple period identified as the Mosaic Torah/the Pentateuch, or broad Jewish laws and their interpretation beyond the Mosaic Torah (esp. Sirach, Baruch 3:9-4:4)?
- Is the supposition, that Wisdom was transformed and converted to Torah in the Second Temple Judaism, appropriate to the understanding of wisdom texts? Is “Wisdom” finally subjugated to a Torah-centred Judaism or ideology? If “yes”, when and how did the identification of Wisdom as the Torah happen? If “no”, why did not it happen?
- Do authors of the biblical wisdom corpus (generally Proverbs/Job/Ecclesiastes), deuterocanonical wisdom literature (e.g., Sirach, the Wisdom of Solomon, Baruch, etc), Qumran wisdom texts (4Q525, 4Q184-5, 4QInstruction, 4Q424, the Book of Mysteries), and other related texts refer to specific languages in the Mosaic Torah or simply share prevalent expressions and themes in Judaism as well as in the ancient Near Eastern literature?
- Can we find evidence of certain theological and ideological changes in the Persian and Hellenistic wisdom texts that scribal culture(s) in the corresponding period produced?

- Other secondary issues may be discussed; e.g., the notion of “authority”, “authoritative”, or “authorization” within Israelite/Jewish texts; the “canon-consciousness” in wisdom corpus.
- In terms of Israelite and Jewish wisdom texts as “dynamic modes of cultural discourse” in the relationship with the Mosaic discourse including Pentateuchal narrative, laws, and diverse interpretations.

### **Suggestions about Concepts and Assumptions as a Theoretical Challenge**

#### *Definitions of “Wisdom” and “Wisdom Tradition”*

In the study of the mutual influence between “Torah” and “Wisdom”, it would be significant to define the concept of “Wisdom”. Though James Crenshaw made a great effort to define the term “wisdom”, the use of the term *hokmah*, unfortunately, has still been misused. Further, one can identify the social setting behind wisdom literature—the majority of scholars have pointed to a wisdom school and a professional circle of sages, in particular, the possibility of a royal advisory group as its social location—but theories about the professional group of “sages” and “wise men” either in religious institutions or in the national government in Jerusalem have been less persuasive. Nonetheless, for the sake of discussion in our scholarly debates, it might be useful to understand “wisdom” as a grouping of texts that display genealogical similarities (or family resemblances), for instance when speaking of ancestral and divine instructions for a successful life by observing human life and nature, or of authoritative teachings as shown in ancient instructional genres. Rather than adopting the theory of form-criticism which subscribes to a static and external taxonomy, it might be useful to denote the wisdom genre and tradition as dynamic and functional, not as restrictive.

#### *The Status of “Torah” in the Second Temple Period and the Authority of the Pentateuch*

Before looking at textual links between Pentateuchal materials and wisdom texts, it is worthwhile to mention the category and the extent of the term “torah”. As using the “confluence” model that Torah and Wisdom ultimately became one innovative in the Hellenistic period, scholars do not correctly identify the meaning of “torah” in its nature. Does מצוה/תורה in given texts mean the Pentateuch, the five books of Moses as a canonical division or is it in a narrow sense equal to Deuteronomy or to Deuteronomi(sti)c laws? Does it indicate cultic and ritual Torah in Priestly materials from Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers? Otherwise, does it mean either the broad legal tradition and narratives in Pentateuch including Mosaic laws or all the commandments, moral rules, and ethics including authoritative and religious interpretations in Pentateuchal/Non-Pentateuchal materials in the Second Temple period? Otherwise, does it indicate no more than parental or divine “instruction”, just as the proverbial instruction in Proverbs and Job?

# Information

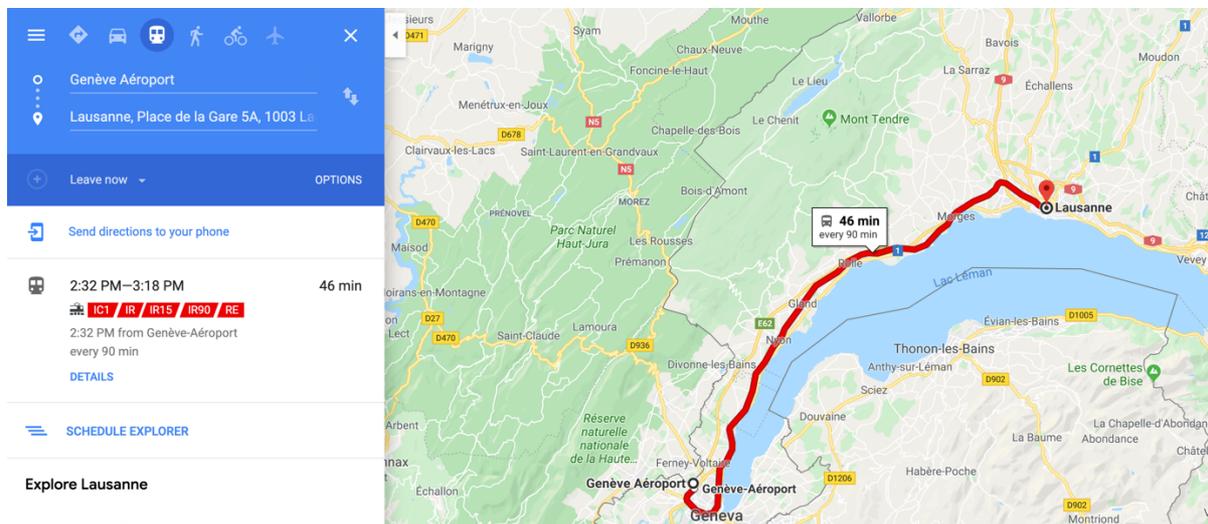
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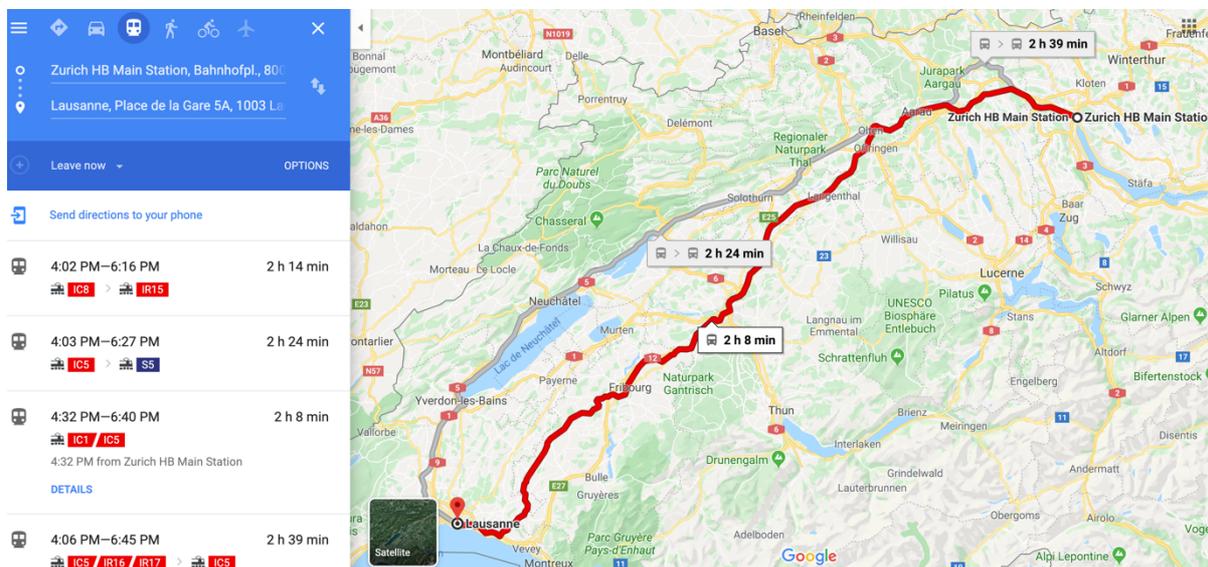
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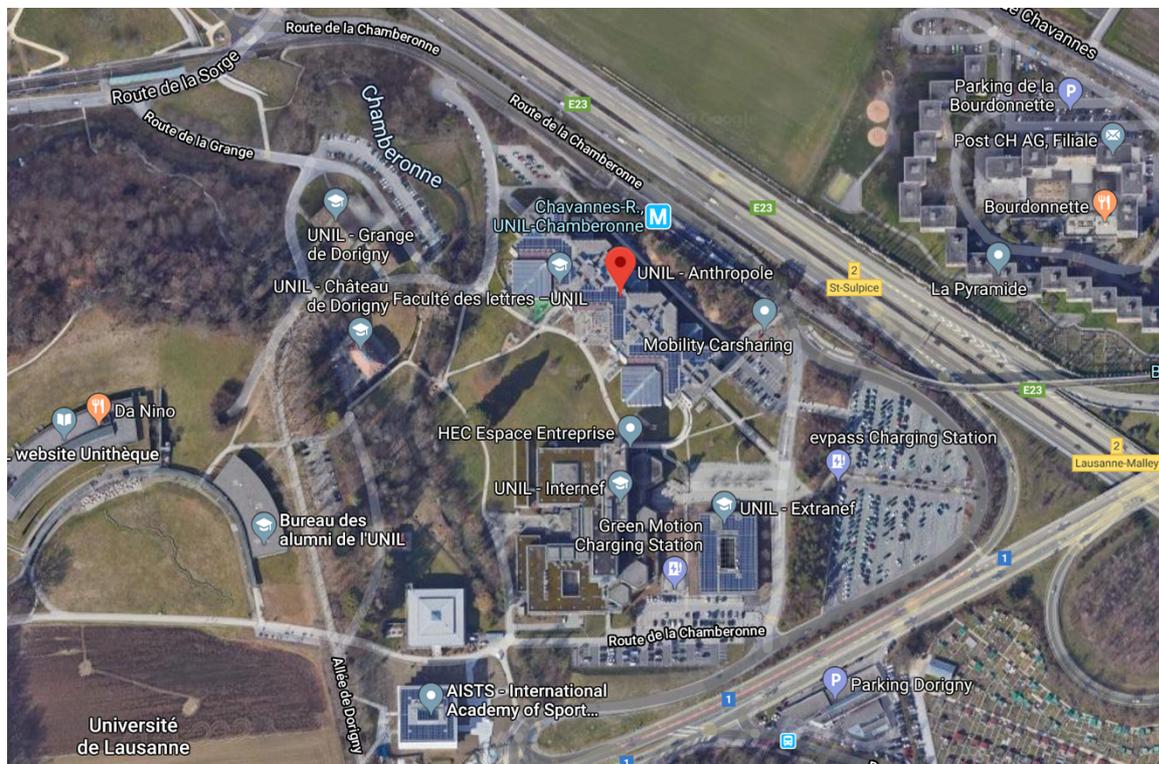
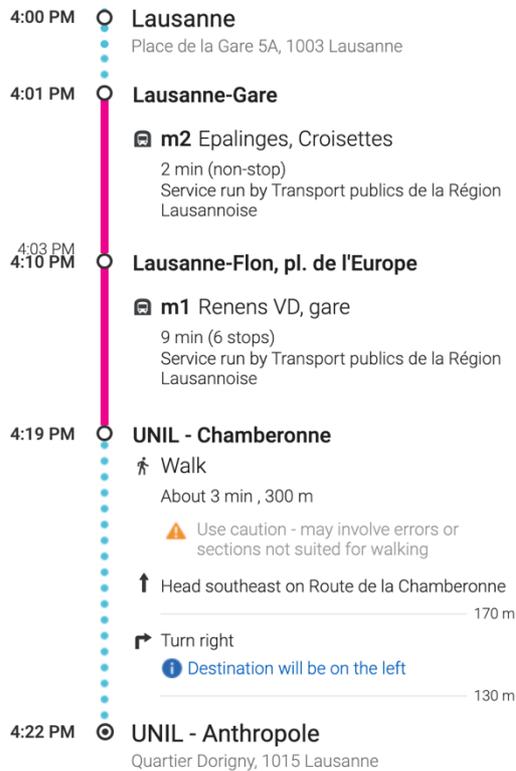
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Address: Université de Lausanne, Institut romand des sciences bibliques (IRSB), Unithèque, CH-1015 Lausanne Switzerland.

All the lectures will take place in **Anthropole Building 3174**.



## Accommodation

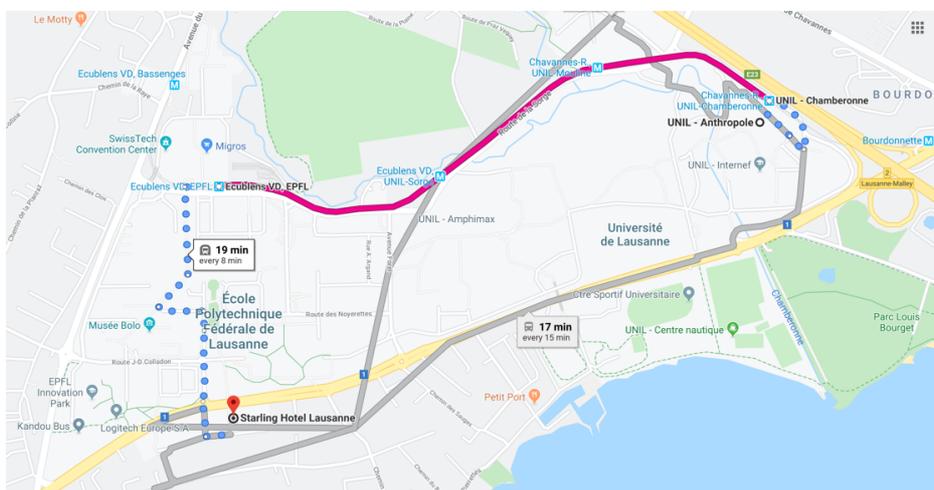
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# Program

**Friday, 20 March**

## **Wisdom and Torah in Hellenistic Jewish Writings**

<b>13h00:</b>	Welcome Coffee
<b>13h20:</b>	Greeting and Address of Welcome: Thomas Römer (Collège de France, France; University of Lausanne, Swiss)
<b>13h25:</b>	Introduction of Theme: JiSeong J. Kwon (Université de Lausanne, Swiss)
<b>13h45:</b>	Lecture 1: Hindy Najman (University of Oxford, UK) Between Wisdom and the Law: Practices of reading in Hellenistic Jewish Texts (30') Discussion (15')
<b>14h30:</b>	Lecture 2: Pancratius C. Beentjes (Tilburg University, Netherlands) Ben Sira and His Grandson on Torah: Similar or Divergent Views? (30') Discussion (15')
<b>15h15:</b>	Short Break
<b>15h45:</b>	Lecture 3: Jean-Sébastien Rey (Universititz of Lorraine, France) Torah and Wisdom: Ben Sira and 4QInstruction (30') Discussion (15')
<b>16h30:</b>	Lecture 4: George Brooke (University of Manchester, UK) Wisdom and Torah in the Hodayot and the Great Psalms Scroll: The Place of Prayer in Understanding Some Early Jewish Pedagogy (30') Discussion (15')
<b>17h15:</b>	Lecture 5: Alma Brodersen (Universität Bern, Swiss) Does Torah mean Pentateuch? (30') Discussion (15')
<b>18h00:</b>	End of the Day Dinner

**Saturday, 21 March (Morning)**  
**Wisdom and Torah in Biblical Writings I**

<b>09h15:</b>	Lecture 6: Thomas Römer (Collège de France, France; University of Lausanne, Swiss) The Question of Wisdom Influence in the Composition of the Joseph Narrative (30') Discussion (15')
<b>10h00:</b>	Lecture 7: Eckart Otto (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, Germany) The Amalgamation of 'Wisdom' in the Post-Deuteronomistic Deuteronomy of the Persian and Hellenistic Period (30') Discussion (15')
<b>10h45:</b>	Short Break
<b>11h15:</b>	Lecture 8: Bernd U. Schipper (Universität Berlin, Germany) Proverbs 28 and the Discourse on Wisdom and Torah in the Book of Proverbs (30') Discussion (15')
<b>12h00:</b>	Lecture 9: JiSeong J. Kwon (Université de Lausanne, Swiss) Re-examining the Relation between Wisdom and Torah in Proverbs 1-9 (30') Discussion (15')
<b>12h45:</b>	Lunch Break

**Saturday, 21 March (Afternoon)**  
**Wisdom and Torah in the Biblical Writings II**

<b>14h15:</b>	Lecture 10: Schwienhorst-Schönberger Ludger (Universität Wien, Austria) The Interpretation of the Torah in the Light of Wisdom: Some selected examples from the Wisdom Literature (30') Discussion (15')
<b>15h00:</b>	Lecture 11: Stuart Weeks (University of Durham, UK) Failing to Be Wise: The Case of Qohelet (30') Discussion (15')
<b>15h45:</b>	Short Break
<b>16h15:</b>	Lecture 12: Markus Saur (Universität Bonn, Germany) Ūbetōrātō Yæhgæh Yōmām Wālāylāh (Psalms 1,2): Wisdom and Torah in the Psalter (30') Discussion (15')
<b>17h00:</b>	Lecture 13: Tobias Häner (Universität Wien, Austria) Creation under Debate: Reading Job 38–39 against the Background of Gen 1:1–2:4a (30') Discussion (15')
<b>17h45:</b>	Conclusion and Discussion (35): Publication (10): Thomas Römer and JiSeong J. Kwon
<b>18h30:</b>	End of the Meeting Dinner

# Abstracts

1. Prof. Hindy Najman (University of Oxford, UK): *Between Wisdom and the Law: practices of reading in Hellenistic Jewish texts*

This paper explores how texts in the Hellenistic period exhibit an intertwining relationship between Wisdom and the Law. They illuminate each other through explanation and authorization. Texts such as Wisdom of Solomon 7-9, Psalm 119, Ecclesiastes 12, 4QInstruction, exemplify a dynamic that inextricably links Wisdom and Torah. This paper will argue that this dynamic is created through practices of reading and interpretation. It is a dynamic that generates new text and exhibits new thinking. These practices of reading and composition presuppose knowledge of both how to read the Torah and how to acquire Wisdom. These texts need to be understood as an extension of Israelite Wisdom and Torah, but we must also recognize that there is a distinctive Hellenistic dimension to this integration which will contribute to Hellenistic Jewish concepts of law and wisdom.

2. Prof. Pancratius C. Beentjes (Tilburg University, Netherlands): *Ben Sira and His Grandson on torah. Similar or Divergent views?*

Ben Sira was a Jewish sage living in Jerusalem, who between 190-180 BCE published a book of wisdom ('training in wise conduct', 50:27). Since we almost exactly know the date on which the Hebrew text of Ben Sira has been translated into Greek by his grandson, viz. either 132 BCE or 117/116 BCE, it is worth investigating in what way –after a two generations' interval – the notion תורה from the grandfather's Hebrew text is rendered in the grandson's Greek translation or meanwhile has seen changes as to content and meaning as compared to its Hebrew parent text.

There are two leads that substantiate this investigation. First, halfway through both dates, the campaign of Antiochus Epiphanes IV and the religious rejuvenation caused by the Maccabean revolt against the Seleucid Empire (167 BCE) took place. These events might have influenced the grandson's translation. Therefore, the Hebrew Book of Ben Sira, dating before this period, and its Greek translation, dating after this event, offer ample opportunity to investigate the use and meaning of the noun תורה and its rendering(s) in Greek.

Second, Ben Sira's document originated in a Jewish context (Jerusalem), the grandson's translation was realized in a Hellenistic society (Egypt, most probably Alexandria). In Part I, some Ben Sira passages will be discussed in which the Hebrew noun תורה is found. In Part II, the claim by Eckhard J. Schnabel will be investigated that 'In seven passages we find a clear and direct identification of wisdom and law' (Schnabel, *Law and Wisdom*, 69).

3. Prof. Jean-Sébastien Rey (Universitz of Lorraine, France): *Torah and Wisdom: Ben Sira and 4QInstruction*

In this paper, we will endeavor to put into perspective the relationship between Torah and Wisdom in two ancient Jewish texts from the second century BCE: 4QInstruction and Ben Sira. The paper will begin with a short Status Quaestionis. The question of the relationship between Wisdom and Torah in Ben Sira has been discussed at length by scholars in recent decades. The case of 4QInstruction is more complex, as the word "Torah" is not attested in the preserved fragments. Despite this absence, the link between Wisdom and Torah in this

text has been the subject of constant debate among researchers (see recently B. Wold, *4QInstruction: Divisions and Hierarchies*). We will then proceed, on the basis of several examples, to examine how both texts compose or recompose the formulation of this relationship. More specifically, we will examine how these two authors use old literary motifs to compose new representations of this relationship.

4. Prof. Geroge Brooke (University of Manchester, UK): Wisdom and Torah in the Hodayot and the Great Psalms Scroll: The Place of Prayer in Understanding Some Early Jewish Pedagogy

This paper will describe some of the dynamics of the presentation of Wisdom and Torah in the various manuscripts of the Hodayot, in the Great Psalms Scroll, and in some other compositions from the Qumran caves. The paper will seek to address how the integrative juxtaposition of Wisdom and Torah in early Jewish pedagogy is facilitated by and reflected in poetry and prayer.

5. Dr. Alma Brodersen (Universität Bern, Switzerland); Does Torah mean Pentateuch?

For Second Temple Judaism (6th century BCE to 1st century CE), Torah and Nomos (the Hebrew and Greek words for “law”) are often identified with the Pentateuch (the first five books of today’s Hebrew Bible and its Greek Septuagint translation). However, such an identification of Torah and Pentateuch may be anachronistic for centuries before the Common Era. Material evidence in the form of manuscripts is scarce but available for Second Temple Judaism: the earliest extant manuscripts of texts today included in the Pentateuch date to the 3rd and 2nd centuries BCE. However, not a single manuscript from the Second Temple Period contains parts of every book of the Pentateuch, let alone the entire Pentateuch. In addition, the textual plurality shown by manuscripts from the Second Temple Period is not usually taken into account when identifying Torah and Pentateuch. The terms Bible and Canon have been shown to be anachronistic for the Second Temple Period. While written texts may have been regarded as authoritative “scriptures”, this may have included texts which are not found in the Pentateuch or Hebrew Bible today. In addition, the role of oral transmission has to be recognized. In texts from Second Temple Judaism, the terms Torah and Nomos do not necessarily refer to the Pentateuch: there are examples where the reference may instead be to an oral judgement, or to writings outside the Pentateuch. Overall, neither the material nor the textual evidence allows for a simple identification of Torah and Pentateuch in the Second Temple Period. Instead, the use of Torah has to be examined in each ancient source in its contemporary context of oral and scribal culture.

6. Prof. Thomas Römer (Université de Lausanne, Switzerland): The Question of Wisdom Influence in the Composition of the Joseph Narrative.

Gerhard von Rad has qualified the Joseph narrative as a "weisheitliche Lehrerzählung". Its aim would have been to instruct young people from the upper class in order to teach them the right behavior at the court. The theory of von Rad does not hold anymore in regard to the date of the Joseph story and its sociological setting. However, there is some influence of wisdom tradition in the Joseph story, especially in Genesis 39, which is probably a later addition. The paper will investigate of the meaning of the wisdom influence in the context of a late Persian period setting of the Joseph narrative.

7. Prof. Eckart Otto (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, Germany): The Amalgamation of 'Wisdom' in the Post-Deuteronomistic Deuteronomy of the Persian and Hellenistic Period

Gabriele Boccaccini advocated for an amalgamation of the priestly theology of the Zadokite in the pentateuchal Torah with a layman's theology of wisdom in the books of Tobit and Ben Sira. This paper intends to show that such an amalgamation happened already earlier within the pentateuchal Torah as the postexilic Book of Deuteronomy shows significantly. The paper asks for the beginning of the correlation of Torah and wisdom in the redactions of legal material in the Pentateuch and for the sapiential influence on the interpretation of Moses as scribal exegete of the Sinai-Torah in the Book of Deuteronomy. The observations in the literary history of the Pentateuch demand to ask for the institutional background of these processes of literary amalgamation of Torah and wisdom.

8. Prof. Bernd U. Schipper (Universität Berlin, Germany): Proverbs 28 and the Discourse on Wisdom and torah in the Book of Proverbs

Prov 28 is one of the most remarkable chapters in the book of Proverbs. Even scholars who argue that the term torah in Proverbs is not to be understood as "law" admit that in Prov 28 the term bears a nomistic meaning. This paper evaluates Prov 28 with regard to both its position within the book of Proverbs and in view of Proverbs' reception of Deuteronomy. On the one hand, the chapter draws on passages in Prov 1–27. On the other hand, it points to the final chapters of the book of Proverbs. It is argued that Prov 28 presents a distinct perspective on the discourse on Wisdom and torah, which nuances the meaning of wisdom from that found in the previous chapters by developing a new framework throughout which Prov 30 and 31 can be read. Essentially, Prov 28 alters the book's leitmotif of wisdom and prepares the groundwork for a new theological dimension in which the divine word, as imbued in the concept of torah, becomes the sole guide for human conduct and the foundation of sapiential behavior.

9. Dr. JiSeong J. Kwon (Université de Lausanne, Switzerland): Re-examining the Relation between Wisdom and Torah in Proverbs 1-9

Among biblical wisdom books, Proverbs (esp. chs. 1-9) has been deliberated as indicating the contiguous correlation of wisdom with the Deuteronomic Torah, because Proverbs typically emphasises the need to listen to and obey laws, and presents the metaphor of two paths—blessings/life for those who obey its teachings and curses/destruction for those who do not follow them (e.g., Prov 3:1-35). It would be highly probable that the author of Proverbs was aware of Deuteronomy and the Pentateuchal materials, and the Midrashic interpretation in late biblical texts such as Proverbs 1-9 is so popular in the later Jewish interpretation.

Representatively, the approach of Michel Fishbane is to regard Proverbs 1-9 as an aggadic exegesis reusing the earlier material of Deuteronomy.

Nevertheless, the fact that there is the word תורה with cognate expressions in wisdom texts cannot confirm that its author would have referred to the Torah or Deuteronomy in a canonical formula from those terms. Indeed, collections of proverbs in oral or literary performance could have been functioned for various purposes in individuals discourses such as narratives, laws, poems, and prophetic oracles. It should not be noted that the meaning of תורה in Proverbs is identical as the Mosaic Torah in a canonical formula or as specific texts of Deuteronomy. Therefore, this presentation will focus on examining the claim that the concept of "Torah" or related terms in the compositional process of Proverbs is interconnected to the

Torah of Moses in Deuteronomy or Deuteronomy. I will evaluate theories about the reception of the Torah in Proverbs mostly argued by Bernd Schipper. Before this, I will briefly reconsider the meaning of תורה in the book of Proverbs and the meaning of Torah as Law.

10. Prof. Ludger Schwienhorst-Schönberger (Universität Wien, Austria): The Interpretation of the Torah in the Light of Wisdom: Some selected examples from the Wisdom Literature

Concerning the observance of the Torah, Qohelet warns against exaggeration in both directions: „Be not just to excess, and be not overwise. Why work your own ruin? Be not wicked to excess, and be not foolish. Why should you die before your time?“ (Eccl. 7:16-17). Qoheleth represents a balanced interpretation of the Torah as *via media*. The question is whether there are similar interpretations of the Torah in other wisdom books.

11. Prof. Stuart Weeks (University of Durham, UK): Failing to Be Wise: The Case of Qohelet

At least outside its epilogue, the Book of Ecclesiastes shows no interest in Torah, and its protagonist, Qohelet, has a complicated relationship with wisdom. The book does, on the other hand, show a knowledge of advice literature, and very probably of ideas about wisdom that appear in Proverbs 1-9, and later in Ben Sira. Does this mean that its more negative treatment represents a specific opposition to such ideas, and to ways in which wisdom was coming to be understood, and, if so, what is the basis of that opposition? The paper will consider the book's portrayal of wisdom in general, and of Qohelet's wisdom in particular, and will consider both in the context of its broader ideas about the place of humanity, to suggest that this is something more fundamental than a disagreement over wisdom itself.

12. Dr. Tobias Häner (Universität Wien, Austria): Creation under Debate: Reading Job 38–39 against the Background of Gen 1:1–2:4a

In the book of Job, on the one hand not only the term “torah” is almost completely absent (with the exception of 22:22), also central concepts of the Pentateuch (exodus, covenant etc.) are never mentioned. Yet, on the other hand, biblical scholarship has evidenced allusions to various parts of the Pentateuch, most prominently to Gen 22 in Job 1–2 (cf. Japhet 1994; Veijola 2002 etc.) and to Gen 1:1–2:4a in Job 3 (cf. Fishbane 1971; Beyer 2011; Balentine 2012 etc.). Regarding the latter, Job's desperate wish יהי השך (Job 3:4) that inverts God's יהי אור (Gen 1:3) gives the initial lament the appearance of a “reversal of the created order” (Pyeon 2003).

Against this background, in my paper, I focus on the creation motifs in the first divine speech (Job 38–39) and their relation to Job 3 and Gen 1:1-2:4a. Firstly, I will briefly highlight the rhetoric of irony in YHWH's rebuttal of Job's lament (in Job 3); secondly, in the light of the allusions to Gen 1:1–2:4a in Job 3, I will propose a reading of Job 38–39 that takes account of the shifts in the description of the creative order, namely the absence of man. Thirdly, I will argue that the allusive irony in Job 3 and 38–39 presupposes an authoritative function of the Pentateuch. By foregrounding the subtlety of the connections between the first divine speech and P's creation account, the paper aims at pointing out the importance of the Pentateuch as relevant background to the book of Job in its final form.

13. Prof. Markus Saur (Universität Bonn, Germany): *ūbetōrātō yəhgəh yōmām wālāylāh*  
(Psalms 1,2): Wisdom and Torah in the Psalter

In its given form, the Psalter is marked by a number of psalms oriented to the Torah: At the beginning of the Psalter, Ps 1 in V. 1–2 praises the man meditating the Torah. Thus the Psalter as a whole is preceded by a hermeneutic prelude from which the entire collection shall be read. The Torah psalm Ps 119 marks the Fifth Book of Psalms with its extensive acrostic after the Egyptian Hallel in Ps 113–118 and before the Psalms of Ascent in Ps 120–134. The correspondence between Ps 1 and Ps 119 has repeatedly led to the supposition that in the collection of Ps 1–119 an older compositional stage of the Psalter is recognizable, which theologically marks this collection by a frame oriented to the Torah.

The Psalter also contains a number of psalms that can be understood as wisdom psalms. Here Ps 49 and Ps 73 are to be mentioned first. Ps 49 completes the first collection of Psalms of the Sons of Korah, Ps 73 opens the Third Book of Psalms and the collection of Psalms of Asaph. Both, Ps 49 and Ps 73, are thematically connected to problems, which are also treated in the Book of Job and the Book of Qohelet.

At some points convergences between Torah and wisdom-oriented psalms can be noticed. Mutual influences here obviously lead to approximations. Although the lexeme *tōrāh* is missing in Ps 111–112 and the fear of Yhwh is at the centre of this *iuxtapositio*, connections between Ps 111–112 and Ps 119 can be discerned, which, read as a context, lay a frame around the Egyptian Hallel in Ps 113–118 and define a space that is equally determined by ideas of wisdom and Torah.

Ps 37, in particular, which explicitly uses the term *tōrāh* (*tōrat*) in v. 31, shows with its closeness to parts of the Book of Proverbs how wisdom and Torah converge in the moment when fundamental questions are raised concerning one of the basic topics of wisdom thinking, namely the deed-consequence nexus: To these questions an answer is sought by the increasingly stronger connection of wisdom and Torah, which characterizes the given Psalter and makes it appear as ‘Torah of David’, without it would be clear what is actually meant by this ‘Torah’. The paper will discuss the literary, compositional and theological questions outlined above.