Soteriologically interested interpretations of *Wisdom* tend to hurry from the so-called ‘Book of Eschatology’ (*Wis.* 1–5/6) to the ‘Book of History’ (*Wis.* 10/11–19), making only passing comments about the central section (the ‘Book of Wisdom’, *Wis.* 6–9/10) as they catch glimpses of the strange conceptual topography from the window of their exegetical train. In contrast to the ‘cross-cultural’ semantics of σοφία, the δίκαιο-language which dominates the first and last section of *Wisdom* provides, especially for the Pauline tourist, familiarity, a lexical home away from home. This trend, while understandable, is problematic. Although the distribution of vocabulary is indicative of the central themes of *Wisdom*’s three major units, it is not quite right to suggest that σοφία is absent from the books of eschatology and history. The prologue is peppered with the poetics of *Wisdom* (1.4–9), and she pops up again in 3.11 and 6.9. Furthermore, while it is almost true that *Wisdom* ‘only occurs twice in an incidental way in chs. 11–19 (14.2, 5)’, σοφία (10.21) is the unambiguous subject of εὐόδωσεν in 11.1. The result is a gong-like effect in which 11.1 sounds the loud note of *Wisdom*’s initiating and directing role in the Exodus events (10.15–11.1) and sends her agency, however hidden and unspoken, reverberating through the re-narration of the wilderness adventures (chapters 11–19). These exegetical observations reflect the centrality of σοφία at the sub-structural

---

3 J.R. Dodson also detects the agency of ‘Lady Wisdom’ in the activity of her synonymous personification (i.e. Lady Virtue) in *Wisdom* 4.1–2 (*The ‘Powers’ of Personification: Rhetorical Purpose in the Book of Wisdom and the Letter to the Romans* [BZNW 161; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008], 103–105).
5 Pace H. Hübner, *Die Weisheit Salomons* (ATD Apokryphen 4; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1999), 393 who argues that σοφία is absent from *Wisdom* 11–19 in order to indicate that ‘die das Heil wirkende Weisheit wirkt kein anderes Wirken als das Wirken Gottes’. 
level of Wisdom’s theology. However, because Wisdom is often read as a conversation partner for Paul, Pauline patterns of discourse are permitted to dictate what is deemed interesting and relevant—even theologically important—for Wisdom’s soteriology. The problem is that Wisdom is a central and constituent feature of Wisdom’s theological architecture and is, more foundationally, herself the architect of Wisdom’s theological universe. As will be argued below, Wisdom is both the creative instrument through whom the natural, rational and moral order coheres and the educational agent by whom a proper perception of reality is engendered. Moreover, the soteriological significance of ἁρία is evident in her action as a salvific agent, an agency which is particularly notable as Wisdom is portrayed as the divine gift (χάρις, 8.21) and as she is retrojected into the Genesis narratives (10.1–14).

SPEAKING AS SOLOMON—SINGING OF ΣΟΦΙΑ

The historical implausibility of Solomonic authorship should not distract us from the hermeneutical perspective implicit in the rhetorical association of the ‘Book of Wisdom’ with the voice of Solomon. Two points need to be emphasised. First, Solomon speaks as a king (9.7) to fellow kings (6.1, 9, 21). This rhetorical address is regularly described as a (mere) adoption of, as Reese puts it, ‘a hellenistic literary convention’, but the preponderance of ‘ruling’ language and the explicit connection between Wisdom and kingship suggests material as well as formal significance. The abrupt

---

6 The references to the speaker’s kingship and charge to build the temple (9.7–8) make the allusion to Solomon unmistakable.


8 For example: κρίνω (1.1, 3.8, 6.4), βασιλεύς (6.1, 24; 7.5; 9.7; 10.16; 11.10; 12.14; 14.17; 18.11), δικαστής (6.1), κράτησις (6.3), δυναστεία (6.3), κρατέω (3.8, 6.2), βασιλεία (6.4, 20; 10.10, 14), τύραννος (6.9, 21; 8.15; 12.14; 14.17).


10 This is further indicated by the clarifying repetition of the objects of address in 6.9, 21 in which it is explicitly the ‘rulers’ (note the σῶν in 6.9) and not the people (λαός, 6.21) whom they govern who are summoned to learn (μανθάνω, 6.9) about Wisdom from their fellow king. A notable exception to this general interpretive indifference is Roberto Vignolo, ‘Wisdom, Prayer and Kingly Pattern: Theology, Anthropology, Spirituality ofWis’, in *The Book of Wisdom in Modern Research: Studies on Tradition, Redaction, and Theology* (DCLY 2005; ed. A. Passaro and G. Bellia; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), 255–282. Setting the model of kingship expressed in *Wisdom* alongside the ‘Qoheletian model’, Vignolo argues