The Wisdom of Solomon contains three full chapters (7-9) which have, lying behind them, the events of 1 Kings chapters 1-10 and the almost parallel account in 2 Chronicles 1-9: i.e. the succession of Solomon (1 Kings 1:1-2:12); the request for wisdom (1 Kings 3:1-15); the building of the Temple and its dedication (1 Kings 5:1-8:66); Solomon’s knowledge of the world and considerable wealth (1 Kings 9:15-10:29); and the visit of the Queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10:1-13) who came to test his wisdom. These are the basic strands out of which the author of Wisdom has woven his own composition. His Solomon, pre-eminently, makes a request for the divine gift of wisdom. In the Wisdom of Solomon this gift does not come alone: it brings with it riches and happiness, but it does so because wisdom also subsumes reason, the possession of the virtues, long pursuit of education, and an inclination for the good. These latter qualities of kingship have emerged as a consequence of Plato’s political thought that the best kingship required a philosophical education. Middle Platonism was a strong emphasis of the Greco-Roman thought world in which Wisdom’s author moved.¹ Requirements for kingship had become a practical matter. The relative security and intimacy of the polis, for which Plato had written, was long gone, replaced by the Hellenistic kingdoms in the years after Alexander’s death, and later by Roman imperial ambition. Real power lay with the rulers, and the succession of kingship tracts which emanated from the Hellenistic courts were often no more than

¹ I would like to express my gratitude to Professor John Barclay of Durham University for reading and commenting on this paper.

¹ M. McGlynn, Divine Judgement and Divine Benevolence in the Book of Wisdom (WUNT 2/139, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2001) 13-15. This does not contradict Angelo Passaro’s carefully detailed paper in this volume. It has long been agreed by scholars that Middle Platonism was a fusion of Platonist and Stoic ideas. See J. Dillon, The Middle Platonists: a Study of Platonism -80 BC to AD 220 (London: Duckworth 1977) 118.
propaganda for the reigning monarch, and not a real dialogue on freedoms and government. Nevertheless they existed, and as such provided a marker by which qualities of kingship, political decisions and military and economic progress could be measured.

There is little doubt that for the author of Wisdom, the reign of Solomon epitomised the ideal of kingship. The textual tradition which provided the basis for this interpretation of Solomon is most likely to have been LXX, already to some extent adapted to new cultural circumstances. Even the Hebrew text of 1 Kings has been extensively edited to present a particular theological narrative, that of covenant kingship imposed upon an earlier royal ideology. In reading the account of 2 Chronicles, a new emphasis is revealed. For the Chronicler, it is the Davidic dynasty which is significant, and especially for the achievement of the Temple’s construction. Times of adversity in the reigns of both David and Solomon are omitted from Chronicles, and the chief concentration of David’s reign is to enable Solomon to build the Temple. David, as well as Solomon, has lost some of his more vivid characterisation and the range of Solomon’s activities as portrayed in 1 Kings has been curtailed. Importantly, the idealisation of David and Solomon which occurs in Chronicles is linked to hopes of messianic rule. However, it is apparent that we are contending with a process of revisiting and re-interpreting the Davidic and Solomonic traditions, depending upon the theological perspectives of author and editor. The LXX must, to some extent, be a continuation of this process.

The historical books were translated into Greek more than a century before the time of Wisdom’s author, and the LXX version of 1 Kings also reflects a degree of hellenisation, most notably in the religious and philosophical understanding of wisdom, Solomon’s gift. The words

\[2\text{ J.G. Gammie, “The Sage in the Hellenistic Royal Courts,” in The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near-East (eds. J.G. Gammie and L.G. Perdue, Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns 1990) 148. Gammie has noted that no mark left by the great civilisations on the Hellenistic kingdoms can be compared to the effect on these kingdoms of “accumulated Hellenic institutional experience.” Persaeus of Citium, a pupil of Zeno, founder of the Stoics, accepted a post at the court of Macedonia and wrote a treatise “On Kingship.” Philosophers were frequently invited to take up court posts in the new kingdoms. See note 30 below.}

\[3\text{ P. Torijano, Solomon the Esoteric King: From King to Magus: Development of a Tradition (Leiden: Brill 2002) 15. Torijano takes for granted the fact that omissions and interpolations in 1 Kings (LXX) are evidence of editorial activity and enculturation.}

\[4\text{ Torijano, Solomon, 15.}

\[5\text{ 1 Chron 22:1 indicates where the Temple will be sited, and the succeeding verses deal with materials for the Temple construction.}

\[6\text{ Translation of the prophetic books was obviously complete, and most of the “Writings” by the visit of Ben Sira’s grandson to Egypt in 132 BC. See R.T. Beckwith, The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church (London: SPCK 1985) 4.} \]