

Cultural stereotyping of the lady in 4Q184 and 4Q185

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Wisdom and wickedness as a 'Woman' have always attracted much discussion, especially in the ways images of the female are employed in wisdom literature. This article focuses on two Qumran texts that fall into the category of wisdom literature, namely 4Q184 and 4Q185, and the metaphorical appropriation of the woman as a figure of wisdom or a figure of wickedness. By combining a number of traditions in certain forms, sages tried to establish an education for their learners on how to obtain wisdom with the ultimate purpose of creating harmony. The ultimate purpose of the wisdom teachings of the sages was to confirm the harmony in the universe, and these teachings were also conveyed to their learners. In their instructions, they often employed binary opposites such as 'wise' and 'fool' according to which someone was characterised, or rather stereotyped. The result of such binary stereotyping was that the 'whore' and the 'holy one' represented opposite poles, and became fixed images in Judaism. According to feminist exegetes, these images typify the concept of *cultural stereotyping*. This article aims to illustrate that two Qumran texts, 4Q184 and 4Q185, regarded as wisdom texts, employ the female stereotypes that were known in the wisdom literature of Judaism.

Introduction

Wisdom and wickedness as a 'Woman' have always attracted much discussion, especially in the ways that images of the female are presented in wisdom literature.¹ The Qumran texts of 4Q184 and 4Q185, regarded as wisdom texts, also make use of these images, and employ them in a metaphorical manner. In this article, I will analyse these texts by looking at a concept that originates from the side of feminist exegetes, namely the concept of *cultural stereotyping*. Therefore, it is necessary to begin with an explanation of the theoretical background of what may be understood as *cultural stereotyping*.

The theoretical background of cultural stereotyping

The idea of *cultural stereotyping* originates from feminist circles. Christl Maier (2014) draws connections between *cultural stereotyping* and wisdom literature. She (Maier 2014:77) combines the approaches of feminist criticism and ideology criticism and notes the tendency in wisdom literature to generate types of human characters, which she calls *cultural stereotypes*.² Maier (2014:78) then refers to Lippmann's (1898–1974) definition of stereotyping: '[stereotyping is] an ordered, more or less consistent picture of the world, to which our habits, our tastes, our capacities, our comforts and our hopes have adjusted themselves'. According to Maier (2014:78–79), people need stereotyping in order to cope with the complexities of society, but stereotyping also tends towards 'othering' people, 'that is, distinguishing individuals or a group from oneself through negative assessments ... and reduces people to those characteristics' (Maier 2014:78).

Newsom (1989:148) mentions the patriarchal discourse in which the self is male; the logical consequence is then that the woman becomes the typical 'other'. The figure of the female functions pretty well for defining the significant 'other' because of her ambivalence: '... both frightening and attractive. Her words are described as "smooth," a term that suggests both pleasure and danger'. Thus, the woman as the 'other' functions not only to indicate borders but also to detect what must be suppressed and what must be excluded in a particular culture.

Fontaine (2002:12) refers to female stereotypes in the wisdom texts. Women in the wisdom books are stereotypical representations who are: 'good wives, devoted mothers, wicked prostitutes, slick adulteresses, hard-working slaves and lusty daughters to be controlled'. These stereotypes of women were the topic of conversation among the sages who presumably composed most of the book of Proverbs by gathering and editing oral traditions into a collection of wisdom instructions

1. See *inter alia* Baumann (1996, 2014); Baumgarten (1991); Crawford (1998); Fontaine (1998, 2002); Ilan (2011); Lesley (2012); Maier (1995, 1998, 2012, 2014); Newsom (1989); Tan (2008).

2. See also Karre (1976).

for young men (cf. Fontaine 2002:12). She (Fontaine 2002:24) then asks the following question: 'Did our Sages ever recognize their own role – and that of their fellows – in creating the very stereotyped predatory female behaviors that they later decry?' Words are important, says Fontaine, because we live by words. With words we inflict meaning and construct worlds, and a saying like 'words do not have meaning' is only used when someone is desperate in an argument.

Fontaine (2002:97) then touches upon the matter of gender, and remarks that '... gender matters for interpretive work because it constitutes a category in those things being interpreted'. 'Woman Wisdom' and 'Woman Stranger' are such categories. Although they are literary constructs, they also originate from an oral tradition 'with its tales, lullabies, love songs and proverbial teachings about gender. We should not be inordinately surprised then to find that Wisdom's 'story' is fleshed out along the lines of traditional storytelling, and told largely from the perspective of the male hero!' (Fontaine 2002:99).

Cultural stereotyping develops from concepts in a particular culture. Fontaine (2002:150) refers to folklore studies and says that the way certain folk genres were used in 'proverbs, riddles, jokes, legends, etc.,' portrays true values and ideologies of that culture. She says both the large and small folk genres give an idea of a culture's way of imposing and giving meaning to their society.

Carol Newsom considers the influence of ideology upon cultural stereotyping. Ideology 'recruits subjects', says Newsom (1989:143). Stereotypes are construed by means of a specific ideology. She adds that a specific ideology addresses someone and the moment that that person responds to being addressed, he or she becomes the subject of that ideology. The same applies to a text developed from a specific ideology. She then refers to the symbolic way in which women are portrayed to represent a certain construct in a patriarchal discourse and she emphasises that this construct is confirmed as long as only men carry the society's discourse. The moment that women enter the discourse, the symbolic representation becomes confused because a woman cannot have 'the same symbolic relation to herself that she does to a man' (Newsom 1989:155).

Personified wisdom and wickedness as a form of cultural stereotyping

These images of women appear in all wisdom texts and are covered by studies on *personified wisdom*³ but also its counterpart, namely wickedness or folly.

According to Baumann (2014:57–58), personified wisdom appears in three Old Testament writings, namely Proverbs 1–9, Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) and the Wisdom of Solomon. According to her, Job 28⁴ and Baruch 3:9–4:4 do not qualify as examples of personified wisdom, because in these texts, wisdom appears as an entity without personal characteristics

3. See inter alia Baumann (1996, 2014), Maier (1995), and Collins (2004:497–502).

4. See also Crawford (1998:357).

whilst the former texts portray wisdom as a person who can speak and act. The grammatical gender for wisdom in both Hebrew and Greek is feminine, and because of the feminine personification of Wisdom, she is often called 'Lady Wisdom'. Baumann (2014) says:

The expansion of an earlier image of God, dominated by masculine aspects, to include the missing feminine side may help account for this feminine portrayal of Wisdom. Personified Wisdom appears in different social and literary contexts and can be viewed as one of the most fascinating literary creations of the Bible, especially in relation to the question of a feminine image of God. (p. 57)

Personified wisdom that presents negative images of women seems to occur more frequently in androcentric texts. Baumann (2014:75) then cautions:

Today's female readers of these androcentric texts should not allow themselves to be pushed into the less attractive alternative of either identifying themselves with the male addressees or with the devalued and even demonized women in the texts.

Maier (1998:99) agrees that an androcentric stance of a text becomes obvious when the woman is depicted as an adulteress, because in the mind of the (androcentric) author, the woman only belongs (like an item or possession) to one man, first her father and then her husband. Maier (2012:264) also refers to the 'other' woman in Proverbs 7 and Proverbs 9 and says that she does not only symbolise a woman who is ethnically different. The reference to adultery as a crime may indicate that the 'other woman' characterises every woman who does not keep to social teachings. That '[o]ther as a *chiffre* connotes something mysterious and at the same time nonnormative' (Maier 2012:264).

Thus, evidently, these androcentric texts originated in an androcentric society where men played a dominant role. Newsom (1989:145–146) concurs with this observation in her discussion of personified wisdom (*Hokmot*) as it appears in Proverbs 1 and 8. She considers this wisdom to be the expansion and consequence of the 'cultural voice'. The authoritative voice in the family is the father, and personified wisdom is the matching feminine voice in the public sphere (streets, public squares). The places that she resides in (entrance of gates and city) are representative of 'collective authority and power' (Newsom 1989:146). In Newsom's opinion, however, personified wisdom as characterised by a woman is not necessarily destructive. On the more positive side, she also has the power to prevent ruination (Proverbs 1:26–33).

Summary

According to Maier (2014:78), wisdom literature was part of a cultural tradition in the ancient Near East that aimed at establishing harmony and order in creation. The sages appropriated a number of literary traditions in their education in order to convey this wisdom to their learners. Maier notes a certain peculiarity in these writings, namely the tendency to make use of binary pairs, 'such as "wise" and "fool"'. In describing certain deeds and thoughts of a 'wise' or a 'foolish' person, the proverbial sayings characterise them

as types or rather as stereotypes (Maier 2014:78). Such stereotypes become permanent or fixed images in a culture, which Maier (2014:79) defines as *cultural stereotypes*. She (Maier 2014:92) also refers to the reception history of female characters and says that binary stereotyping and the cultural stereotyping of women eventually led to the polarisation of the 'whore' and the 'holy one'.

It is clear that such standard images existed in the wisdom literature of Judaism. The wisdom writers employed cultural stereotyping to teach or to express a certain message to the readers. Much has been published on the personification of wisdom and/or folly and furthermore the ways in which biblical wisdom literature made use of cultural stereotyping to create metaphors of 'Lady Wisdom' or 'Madame Folly' with which the readers could associate or disassociate received attention as well. In this article, I want to examine two Qumran texts (4Q184 and 4Q185) that also employed these female figures.

The image of the woman in 4Q184 (this text is commonly known as: 'the wiles of the wicked woman') is a very negative image, inclining towards Madame Folly, while the woman in 4Q185 is in general portrayed more positively. 4Q185 is a fairly longer work than 4Q184, with three columns of the text preserved, but for the argument of this article, only 4Q185 Fragments 1–2, II: 8–15 will be discussed. Because the attempt of identifying cultural stereotyping depends very much on the wording of the text, I consider it necessary to start by determining the appropriate text and also giving a translation of it.

4Q184 and 4Q185⁵

Both these texts form part of the wisdom corpus at Qumran, even though they are not part of the collection that was named *4QInstruction*.⁶ Therefore, it may help to refer briefly to the broad characteristics of the wisdom literature at Qumran in general.

4Q184 and 4Q185 as part of Qumran wisdom

4Q184 and 4Q185 are both reckoned as wisdom literature in the Qumran corpus. They do differ from *4QInstruction*, but they also share some general characteristics. The wisdom literature of Qumran shares features with apocalyptic literature as well as with biblical wisdom (Collins 1997a:118).^{7,8} 'These include supernatural revelation, eschatological judgment and a deterministic conception of the cosmos' (Goff 2009:308).

5. Both texts are from Abegg (2001, as obtained from Bibleworks 9). I have compared these texts with the texts of García Martínez and Tigchelaar (1999:376, 378). I have marked in grey the places where they differ and have given the differences in a footnote. In the translation, I have specified in the footnotes where I have chosen the text versions of García Martínez and Tigchelaar. Unless otherwise specified, I have chosen the text variant that serves the context the best.

6. See Tigchelaar (2001) and Goff (2013) for an in depth discussion on *4QInstruction*.

7. See Collins (1997b:112–131) for a comparison between Qumran wisdom and biblical wisdom.

8. See Harrington (1996:15) for a list of the fragments of biblical wisdom literature (Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes, Sirach) that were found at Qumran.

The wisdom of Qumran, just like any other wisdom literature, is a combination of practical advice, and theoretical and theological reflections. For example, family relations are based on order, and believed to be God-given. Parents are honoured because they revealed the mysteries to their children. However, these insights are augmented with perspectives from apocalypticism and eschatology. A key concept in which both notions of wisdom and apocalypse are contained is *raz niyeh*. This concept is used not only in *4QInstruction* but also in the *Book of Mysteries* (1Q27) (Harrington 1996:48, 71). Although this term is not used in 4Q184 and 4Q185, it is necessary to reckon it as a fundamental feature of Qumran wisdom thoughts. Collins (1997a:118) also refers to this concept and says that the addressee in the wisdom texts is repeatedly told to 'gaze at the mystery to be' (*raz niyeh*). Collins (1997b:128, 131, 228) emphasises the fact that wisdom literature from Qumran seems to be a combination of apocalyptic literature and wisdom literature. It seems that the addressee in these texts is poor, but unlike 1 Enoch 92–105, there is no anger towards the rich.

Torawisheit is also considered to be a key aspect of Qumran wisdom,⁹ as well as *ye'ser* or human inclination.¹⁰ Harrington (1996) summarises Qumran wisdom as follows:

Perhaps the most striking contribution of the Qumran wisdom texts is their insistence on wisdom as a gift from God and on the need for understanding the 'mystery that is to be/come'. According to Psalm 154, 'wisdom is given to make known the glory of God'. According to 4Q185, 'God gave her to Israel, and with a good measure He measures her out'. (p. 83)

4Q184 Text¹¹ and translation

¹הוון² תוציא הבל וב[...]. א תועות תשחר תמיד [ל שנגד דבריה]. ¹⁴...
²וקלס תחל[י] ק ולהליץ יחד בש[וא] ¹⁵עול . לבה יכין פתוח¹⁶ וכליותיה מק[...]. ¹⁷...
³בעול געלי הוה¹⁸ תמכו שוח . רגליה להרשיע ירדו וללכת באשמות [פשע¹⁹...].
⁴מוסדי חושך רוב²⁰ פשעים בכנפיה [ה תועפות לילה . ומלבשיה] ...
⁵מכסיה אפלות נשף ועדיה נגועי שחת . ערשיה [יצועיה] יצועי שחת[...].
⁶מעמקי בור . מלונותיה משכבי חושך ובאישיני ליל[ה] מ[ש]לותיה²¹ . ממוסדי אפלוז

9. See Harrington (1996:82) and Goff (2009:392) for a discussion of this aspect.

10. See Collins (1998:36) for a discussion of *ye'ser* in the Scrolls.

11. See also Tigchelaar's (2012:12–13) poetically reconstructed text of 4Q184.

12. García Martínez and Tigchelaar (1999:376) don't have הוון[...]. If one has a look at PAM 43.432, it is clear that the beginning of the text is ruined so much that only a ה remained of the last part of the word. I think that it will not make sense to read any word in this lacuna, except if it can be qualified verbatim by another similar text.

13. García Martínez and Tigchelaar (1999:376) have it as שגן [וי]. The *pi'el* infinitive constructus of שגן fits the best into this context.

14. García Martínez and Tigchelaar (1999:376) have it as [פיה...] דבר . Lesley (2012) has it as לשוניה . In this context, both words, 'mouth' or 'tongue', will fit.

15. García Martínez and Tigchelaar (1999:376) have it as [תו]עיל בש[וא] ו[תו]עיל.

16. García Martínez and Tigchelaar (1999:376) have it as פתחן.

17. García Martínez and Tigchelaar (1999:376) have it as [שות עיניה] מק[...].

18. García Martínez and Tigchelaar (1999:376) have it as נגעלי ידיה.

19. García Martínez and Tigchelaar (1999:376) don't have שפחע.

20. García Martínez and Tigchelaar (1999:376) have it as רובו.

21. García Martínez and Tigchelaar (1999:376) have it as [אשלותיה] ליל[ה].

7 תאהל שבת ותשכון באהלי דומה בתוך מוקדי עולם . ואין נחלתה בתוך בכול
 8 מאזר²² [{}] בוגה . והיאה ראשית כול דרכי עול היו הוה לכל נוחליה ושדדה לכן[ל]
 9 תומכי בה כיא דרכיה דרכי מות ואורחותיה שבילי חטאת מעגלותיה משגות
 10 עול ונתיבן[ת]ה אשמות פשע . שעריה שערי מות בפתח ביתה תצעד . שאז[לה]²³
 11 כן[ל] [..] ישובון²⁴ . וכול נוחליה ירדו שחת . וה[י]א במסתרים תארוכו [..]
 12 כול[..] ברחובות עיר תתעלף ובשער קריות תתיצב ואין להרג[יעה] .
 13 מה[] ת[ה] עיניה הנה והנה ישכילו ועפעפיה בפחו תרים לראו[ת] לא[יש]
 14 צדיק ותשיגו ואיש[ע] צום ותכשילוהו ישרים להטות דרך ולבחור צדק
 15 מנצור מצוה סמוכי [..] להביל בפחו והולכי ישר להשנות ח[וק] להפשיע
 16 עניים מאל ולהטות פעמיהם מדרכי צדק להביא זד[ו]ן [..] ב[מ]ה בל ערוכין [..]²⁸
 17 במעגלי יושר להשגות אנוש בדרכי שוהה ולפתות בחלקות בני איש .

(1) [29...] She produces futility and in [...] perversions she seeks diligently continually to teach diligently³⁰ the words of [her mouth³¹ (2)] and derision and she smoothens and she derides (the) community³² with worthless iniquity. Her heart prepare his traps and her kidneys [nets. Her eyes³³] (3) are defiled with iniquity. Her hands³⁴ take hold of the pit, her feet go down to act wickedly and to walk in crimes [Transgression ... (4) ...] (are) foundations of darkness,³⁵ and a lot of transgressions are in her wings. Her [...] are gloom of night and her cloths [...] (5) Her veils are shadows of the twilight and her adornments are plagues of the pit. Her beds {her couches} are couches of the pit [...] (6) depths of the cistern. Her lodging places are couches of darkness, and in the midst of night is her realm. From the foundations of darkness (7) she pitches to dwell and she dwells in tents of silence in the midst of eternal fire. She has no inheritance among all (8) those who shine³⁶ { } bright light. And she is the beginning of

22.García Martínez and Tigchelaar (1999:376) have it as באירי. In the context of Qumran ('sons of light'), I think that 'those that shine' is a better reading than 'those who are girded'.

23.García Martínez and Tigchelaar (1999:376) have it as שאז[ל]. See Tigchelaar's (2008:378) discussion on why it is better to read *Sheol* here as a subject: 'at the entrance of her house Sheol treads'

24.García Martínez and Tigchelaar (1999:376) have it as ישובון בל [באיה]

25.García Martínez and Tigchelaar (1999:376) have it as ינונת תמיד

26.García Martínez and Tigchelaar (1999:376) have it as הלב

27.García Martínez and Tigchelaar (1999:376) have it as לב במה

28.García Martínez and Tigchelaar (1999:376) have it as ידרכו

29.Tigchelaar (2012) refers to the amount of words that was suggested for the first word of the fragment: 'Several suggestions have been given for the first word of the fragment of which only the final *he* remains, such as הוונה (the harlot), האשה (the woman), נכריה (the strange woman) or מפיה (from her mouth)' (p. 6). Considering the fact that there is no consensus, I will rather not use any of the suggestions for this translation.

30.In this context, I do believe that 'teach/speak diligently' is the correct translation and not 'sharpen' as in most translations. The other Qumran texts in which it is used as 'sharpen' are most of the time in conjunction with a sword.

31.According to the text of García Martínez and Tigchelaar (1999:376).

32.Reading of ימד in line 2 as 'the *Yahad*' has been widely adopted as it is common self-reference of the Qumran community, even though reference to the community is usually with an article(ה), Tigchelaar (2015:3) explicates it as the poetical feature and also as typical of the text of 4Q184 which has a non-article use.

33.According to the text of García Martínez and Tigchelaar (1999:376).

34.According to the text of García Martínez and Tigchelaar (1999:376).

35.According to the text of García Martínez and Tigchelaar (1999:376).

36.According to the text of García Martínez and Tigchelaar (1999:376).

all the paths of injustice. Alas, she is for all that inherit her and she destroy/ruin all (9) those that grasp her because her roads are roads of death and her ways are paths of sin. Her trails lead astray (10) towards iniquity, and her pathways to the guilt of transgression. Her gates are gates of death in the entrance of her house treads Sheol.³⁷ (11) All those [who go to her will not³⁸] return and all those who inherit her, they will go down to the pit. And she lies awaiting in secret places [...] (12) [...]All [...] in the city squares she veils herself, at the gates of the city she stations herself and there is no rest for her (13) from (her) incessant [fornicat]ing³⁹ [...] [...]her eyes (goes) hither and thither (for) the wise and her eyelids with wantonness she exalts to spot a (14) just ma[n] and to overtake him and a mighty man to make him stumble; the straight to turn (from) the path; and the righteous young man/elect (15) from keeping the commandment; the ones that are steady of [mind]⁴⁰ to let those that walk straight be ridiculous with wantonness and to let them change the ordinance. To let (16) the humble/poor turn against God and to let their steps turn from the paths of justice to bring presumpt[uous]ness [in their hearts⁴¹] so that they do not walk⁴² (17) in the paths of straightness. To let go astray humanity to the paths of the pit and to deceive with smoothness the sons of man.

4Q185 (Frag 1–2, II, line 8–15) text and translation

8 מה ת⁴³ [..] לפניו תצא רעה לכל עם . אשרי אדם נתנה לו
 9 מן א [..] ואל יתהלל [ו] ישעים לאמור לא ימנה⁴⁵
 10 לי ולא [..] לישראל וממדת [ט]ב ימדה⁴⁷ וכל עמו גאל
 11 והרג ש⁵⁰ [..] אב [..] יאמר המתמ⁴⁹ בה ישאנה [..]
 12 ומצאה [..] כלה⁵² ועמה [..] מים⁵³ ורשה עינים⁵⁴ ושמת לבב ע⁵⁵ [..]
 13 וחסדיו עלמיה וישועות [..]⁵⁶ . אשרי אדם יעשנה ולא יאל על [ו] [..]⁵⁷

- 37.According to the text of García Martínez and Tigchelaar (1999:376)
- 38.According to the text of García Martínez and Tigchelaar (1999:376).
- 39.According to the text of García Martínez and Tigchelaar (1999:376).
- 40.According to the text of García Martínez and Tigchelaar (1999:376).
- 41.According to the text of García Martínez and Tigchelaar (1999:376).
- 42.According to the text of García Martínez and Tigchelaar (1999:376).
- 43.García Martínez and Tigchelaar (1999:378) has it as [...].
- 44.García Martínez and Tigchelaar (1999:378) has it as [..] עים ואל
- 45.García Martínez and Tigchelaar (1999:378) has it as נתנה
- 46.García Martínez and Tigchelaar (1999:378) has it as [..] אלהים נגה [..]
- 47.García Martínez and Tigchelaar (1999:378) has it as כובד [ט]ב זבדה
- 48.García Martínez and Tigchelaar (1999:378) has it as [..] כמ[ת]ת[..]
- 49.García Martínez and Tigchelaar (1999:378) has it as המתכבד
- 50.García Martínez and Tigchelaar (1999:378) has it as [ר]י ש[ה]
- 51.García Martínez and Tigchelaar (1999:378) has it as וק[ת]
- 52.García Martínez and Tigchelaar (1999:378) has it as ונחלה
- 53.García Martínez and Tigchelaar (1999:378) has it as [ר]י מים [..]
- 54.García Martínez and Tigchelaar (1999:378) has it as ודשן עצם
- 55.García Martínez and Tigchelaar (1999:378) has it as [ע]שן וכבוד
- 56.García Martínez and Tigchelaar (1999:380) has it as [..] וישועות [ו] [..]
- 57.García Martínez and Tigchelaar (1999:380) has it as [ר]י ע[ל]ה ובר[ח] [..]

because these images were useful for their purpose. Very subtly they referred to existing texts in the memory base of the community without quoting them verbatim. The 'Lady' (whether she is Lady Folly or Lady Wisdom) as a metaphor developed in a process of cultural stereotyping and became a standard image in Judaism. Without any doubt, the sages of both 4Q184 and 4Q185 made use of this standardised image. They adopted the method of binary opposition to stereotype particular female figures and consequently the 'whore' and the 'holy one' became polarised. Thus, existing cultural stereotypes, those images and/or symbols that were familiar to the community, served in order to convey a poignant message.

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