The social reality behind ancient religious texts

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Whether taking into account the social reality of the word 'knowledge', through the method of pragmatics, attributes something to its meaning that lexical semantics alone cannot?

Master thesis

Master Program: Religious Roots of Europe

University of Bergen

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1.0   Introduction

Religious texts are essential for understanding the social reality of communities in ancient times. Textual sources and archeological excavations are the only means in providing access to these ancient religious communities. However a problem occurs when one wishes to understand the social reality of a community through a textual study. In order to interpret an ancient text in an accurate manner one needs to understand the corresponding social reality. It too is thus the object of one's research. But it is difficult to grasp the social reality through a text, because texts do not clearly describe these aspects. The author's motive to write a particular text is often not to describe their social reality, but lies in other reasons such as the promotion of his religious worldview. In addition and unfortunately, excavations cannot complement this lack of knowledge sufficiently. Thus, we find ourselves in a difficult position. In order to understand a text in an accurate and satisfying way, we need to take into account its social reality. But the only way to come to understand the social reality at the time of the texts birth is through the text. To meet this problem, it is important to search for methods that bring more clarity to both text and social reality. According to Peter Cotterell and James Turner the social reality in which a text was written can be found inside a text.[1] To reveal the social reality behind a text, for purposes of understanding a text as good as possible, the method of pragmatics is first choice. I am of the opinion that pragmatics can be of assistance in both the search for the social reality behind the text as when explaining the text itself it concerned. This because pragmatics is designed to reveal the context of a text and thus reveals both text and social reality.

I am not the only one who has come to think of the translation of religious texts in this way. Nowadays, it is common to think an accurate interpretation of a text depends on both lexical semantics and pragmatics of a text. In these theories, lexical semantics concentrates on the meaning of the written word based on grammar and vocabulary. Pragmatics, as a second pillar, focuses on the context of the text by discussing questions like: 'What did the author mean by writing X?'. The lexical semantics of a word, sentence or complete text are relatively easy to comprehend compared to the pragmatics of a text. Sufficient knowledge of the language (grammar and vocabulary) will result in a textual understanding of the text. However, in order to understand the context of a text, one needs to understand the social

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[1] I will return to the theory of pragmatics by Cotterell and Turner in chapter 2.

reality behind the text. This social reality relates to the purpose of writing, the social environment of the author, how the text developed to its final stage, how it was perceived by the audience, the plot of the text, its characters, its situation, its circumstances, the context and so forth. If we do not want to depend solely on archeological excavation in order to reach the places and centuries in which a text was written and in which the author(s) lived, we need turn to pragmatics.

In this paper I will examine whether the theory of pragmatics can indeed reveal the social reality behind a text, and the extent to which it succeeds. I will do so by concentrating on the meaning of the word 'knowledge' in texts of different traditions. I wish to make out 'whether taking into account the social reality of the word 'knowledge', through the method of pragmatics, attributes something to its meaning that lexical semantics alone cannot?'. Thus, the theory of pragmatics will be used in order to understand how the concept of 'knowledge' was comprehended within ancient Judaism and Gnosticism. To present my research with some structure, I have distinguished nine types of context relating to the concept of 'knowledge'. These types of context will help to organize the meaning of the word 'knowledge' within each text. I will focus on four different texts from two religious traditions; that is *Isaiah, Proverbs* and *Daniel* from the Jewish tradition and *the Apocalypse of Adam* from the Gnostic tradition. Within each text the meaning of the word 'knowledge' will be analyzed according to the nine types of contexts.[2] These analyses will result in a particular understanding of the word 'knowledge' for each text. From these understandings we can obtain the social realities behind the texts relating to the concept of 'knowledge'.

My first chapter will present the theory of semantics and pragmatics of Biblical texts and appoint the nine types of context with some content. In the next four chapters, I will discuss the meaning of the word 'knowledge' in relation to respectively *Daniel, Apoc. Adam, Proverbs* and *Isaiah* according to the nine types of context. Finally, I will try to meet the main question of this paper, namely whether the method of pragmatics has brought us closer to the social reality behind the concept of 'knowledge' and if this attributes something to its meaning.

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[2] These nine types of context will be described in chapter 2.

2.0　　Method

The aim of this chapter is to embed the search for the meaning(s) of the word 'knowledge' in a theoretical framework. This is needed if we care to discuss the meaning(s) of 'knowledge' in a structured manner. I will organize the meaning of the word 'knowledge' by regarding each of the four texts, beginning with *Daniel, the Apocalypse of Adam, Proverbs* and concluding with *Isaiah*. Each text will be considered not only on its own but as well in relation to the other texts. Throughout the search the emphasis lies on the meaning of the word 'knowledge'. In order to make an accurate comparison, each text needs to be discussed in a similar manner. To serve this purpose, several types of contexts, based on the pragmatics of the texts, have been constructed. This chapter will present these types of contexts in the final paragraph. To start off I will discuss the theory of pragmatics and its advantages for Biblical semantics.

2.1　　The pragmatics of a text[3]

James Barr describes in *Semantics of Biblical Language* the pragmatics of a text as the 'Hebrew mind' or 'Hebraic thought', i.e. a distinctiveness in concepts and thoughts in the religious traditions of the Jews in ancient times. In other words, there exist a world of thoughts and concepts behind the Biblical text, belonging to the Hebrew nation. This world needs to be considered in relation with the actual text in order to understand the text properly.[4] In my opinion, the idea of *a* world behind a text is convincing, because it shows that various realities behind a text have existed depending on such factors as genre, social environment, author and time of writing. Indeed, this reality or world needs to be considered in order to understand a text as good as possible. Yet, the idea of a general Hebrew mind or thought appears to be fixed. It gives the impression as if many realities could fit within one mode of thought. However there exist many modes of thought behind the Biblical Text. Hence we need to find a way to expose these modes of thoughts existing during ancient times in the Hebrew literal environment.

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[3] This paragraph is based on a former paper 'Biblical Semantics: Semantic understanding through the pragmatics of a Biblical text'.
[4] Barr 1961, 1; 10-14; 61

This brings us to another theory based on pragmatics in *Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation,* by Peter Cotterell and James Turner. Here semantics is said to be the aspect of linguistics that deals with meaning in language.[5] They consider semantics as part of the study of linguistics (i.e. the study of language), as well as part of the study of semiotics (i.e. the study of signs, including language). Semiotics, in turn, is divided into two areas, namely semantics and pragmatics. Semantics reviews the actual language as used by humans, while pragmatics deals with the circumstances accompanying the use of human language, such as gestures, clothing and settings.[6]

In traditional Biblical exegesis, studies concentrate mainly on the meaning of written words, i.e. lexical semantics. According to Cotterell and Turner, in the search for the meaning of words, pragmatics is not often consulted. In their view, this should be changed. They argue that one could use pragmatics to clarify written language, because pragmatics is not only visible in spoken language but in written language as well.[7] Thus, this entails that within Biblical semantics one should not only study the vocabulary, but also the pragmatics. This is not only regarded desirable by their argumentation, but even necessary. Only if a study of a particular Biblical text focuses on both lexical semantics and pragmatics, can the proper meaning of a particular word be understood. While semantics ask 'What does X mean?', pragmatics considers a question such as 'What did Y mean by X?'.[8]

Pragmatics answers the question 'what did Y mean by X?' by referring to the context of an utterance in a text. Cotterell and Turner find utterances in written language. An utterance refers to a sequence of real language (both written and spoken) conceived within a context.[9] An utterance within a text could and should be seen as a unique sentence that is located within a unique setting, i.e. it is surrounded by a unique context. This theory of pragmatics does not only apply to utterances but to individual words as well. For a word, according to Cotterell and Turner may have several meanings depending on the context (Y) surrounding each word. Cotterell and Turner show us that the meaning of a word stays variable depending on the context. This theory of pragmatics complements Barr's view on a Hebrew mode of thought because it demonstrates the diversity of this 'Hebrew thought'.

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[5] Cotterell & Turner 1989, 37
[6] Cotterell & Turner 1989, 13
[7] Cotterell & Turner 1989, 13
[8] Cotterell & Turner 1989, 16
[9] Cotterell & Turner 1989, 16

An example that concerns the importance of pragmatics is described as follows; the setting or the clothing of figures within a text can tell us a lot about the described situation. In the book of Ester (Ester 5:1) it is written: 'On the third day, Ester puts on her royal robes'[10]. She does this when she seeks to meet with her husband the king.[11] The description of Ester putting on her royal robes is probably not written to describe the queen's desire for fashion nor to illustrate her morning routine. Ester's dress can more naturally be argued to signify her royal status and the formal nature of the event[12]. By putting on her royal robes she gives the meeting a formal nature, therefore she will more likely impress her husband. A good impression with the king will improve her chances to achieve what she has in mind, namely to save the Jewish people.

I regard this theory of pragmatics constructive because it shows that multiple social realities exist behind the Biblical text. According to this theory, each sentence or word has a unique context, i.e. a potentially unique reality behind each word. With the help of pragmatics we will be able to understand the social realities behind the texts more properly while also improving our understanding of words. I will illustrate this by searching for the meaning(s) of the noun 'knowledge' throughout several Biblical texts and a Gnostic text, namely *Proverbs, Isaiah, Daniel* and *the Apocalypse of Adam*. These texts have been chosen because they belong to different genres and traditions. They are therefore more prone to give us a diverse meaning of the word 'knowledge'. *Proverbs* belongs to the wisdom literature of the Hebrew Bible, *Isaiah* to prophetic literature and *Daniel* to apocalyptic literature. The *Apocalypse of Adam* can be included within the apocalyptic genre together with *Daniel.* It has been chosen because it is believed to be influenced by Jewish apocalyptic and apocryphal writing, although it does not belong to the Hebrew Bible.

An analysis of the word 'knowledge' concerning each text will be made according to the method described by Cotterell and Turner. This method aims to understand Biblical utterances as accurately as possible by determining the individual semantic value of an utterance through the lexical semantics and pragmatics of a text. In order to do so, one needs to consider three steps. First, one needs to understand what is written grammatically and semantically. Hence,

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[10] All Biblical translation in this paper derive from the New Revised Standard Version 2007, except if mentioned otherwise.
[11] Cotterell & Turner 1989, 16
[12] Cotterell & Turner 1989, 16

one should ascertain the use of grammar and vocabulary. Second, one needs to understand and determine the accompanying text. This entails that sentences, paragraphs and chapters should be considered in order to determine the relation between text and surrounding text. Third, one needs to verify and understand the sociological and historical settings of the text.[13] I will follow these three steps in my search for the meaning of the word 'knowledge', because this method is systematic and thorough, giving an excellent framework for determining the different meanings of 'knowledge'. In the chapters discussing each of the four texts I will continue as follows. First I will discuss the sociological and historical setting of a text. Secondly, the grammar and semantic meaning will be ascertained by giving a translation of the sentence or verse containing the word 'knowledge'. The accompanying text will be considered when placing every single word 'knowledge' in a certain type of context.

I have made an analysis of several types of context of 'knowledge' in the second half of this chapter. These type of contexts will help us to reveal the pragmatics of the text. They will make it possible for us to distinguish between diverse meanings of 'knowledge' and bring us closer the social reality behind each noun 'knowledge'. This study will focus on the Hebrew noun דעת (knowledge), the Greek word γνωσις (knowledge), and the Coptic word ⲥⲟⲟⲩⲛ while leaving out the verb 'to know'. I will not discuss the verb 'to know' because, to give an example, 'to know' does not necessarily relate to gaining knowledge. The verb 'to know' can be used in a wide variety of manners. *I know* can be uttered in order to express two meanings: *I agree* or *I observed*. In both utterances, it is not knowledge which is the prime object of the verb 'to know'. The meaning of 'knowledge' will only be indentified through occurrences of the noun and not through the occurrences of the verb. Otherwise the meanings of 'knowledge' would entail an excessive amount of possibilities. For this reason I will only focus on the Hebrew noun דעת, the Greek noun γνωσις and the Coptic noun ⲥⲟⲟⲩⲛ and not on the verb *to know*.

2.2   Types of context

The former section discussed the advantages of pragmatics for text interpretation and the exposure of social realities behind a text. In this segment a distinction will be made between

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[13] Cotterell & Turner 1989, 16

various types of context in which the word 'knowledge' is used. These types of contexts include among others the source of knowledge or the method of gaining knowledge. A distinction between the various types of context is needed in order to discuss the overall meaning of 'knowledge' in a structured manner. This analysis will be concluded by creating as much as nine types of context concerning the meaning of 'knowledge' for each book. In the end, the different types of context will help us to understand the social realities behind the text and show us diverse meanings of the noun 'knowledge'.

(1) Social moral conduct and (2) Religious moral conduct
In the above, we have already hinted at the fact that the context of 'knowledge' may consist in ideas about social[14] and religious moral conduct. These notions relate to aspects concerning social rules and expectations of how to behave, act and perform within certain social environments, such as the roles of males and females in family life. Because ideas of social moral conduct are often interwoven with ideas of religious moral conduct, I will discuss these types of context together in this section.

The fact that social and religious moral conduct are often interwoven can be illustrated by the well know decree 'one should not steal from ones neighbour'. This notion may have emerged from the social wish of upholding tribal life. By combining the physical forces of several families, it becomes easier to protect the tribe's territory and therefore survival chance and economy will increase. The theft of a neighbour's cattle will result in quarrels and fights that will weaken the strength of the tribe. In this sense, prohibiting stealing can be easily understood as a moral rule promoting social welfare. However, the prohibition of theft may at the same time be understood as a religious moral rule. The prohibition of theft is frequently mentioned in the Hebrew Bible. In this context it makes up a religious commandment. In Exodus it is even presented as a divine rule 'You shall not steal' (*Exodus* 20:15).

To make matters more complex, in certain contexts moral behaviour can be promoted on both social and religious grounds. In these cases, theft is prohibited on social moral grounds (in order to protect the community), but on religious grounds too. For instance in *Proverbs* 10:2 it is written that 'Treasures gained by wickedness do not profit, but righteousness delivers from evil'. In this sentence, a reference is made both to a social economical element such as profit,

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[14] From here on social moral conduct will also be referred to as *moral conduct,* not to be confused with religious moral conduct.

as well as the religious element of righteousness from evil. Whether the social rule against theft was applied before the religious idea of righteousness, or the other way around, is not clear in this text. Thus, one must be aware of an overlap between these two types of contexts, i.e. religious and social moral conduct.

(3) Method of gaining knowledge

Another type of context relates to the method of gaining knowledge. This method refers to a particular kind of behaviour, i.e. 'what one should, or should not do' in order to gain knowledge. Knowledge can be acquired in several ways: through studying, rituals or by listening to oral testimonies of teachers, wise men and others. Furthermore, knowledge could be obtained through a revelation or prophecy. In the latter, knowledge is received by an individual through sensory perception caused by a celestial being.

An important distinction between the first means of acquiring knowledge and the latter (study and ritual acts versus prophecy and revelation) is that the former is more publically attainable. Revelation and prophecy are often revealed to individuals rather than groups of people. Others need to rely on the reproduction of this revelation (hopefully an accurate and trustworthy one) in order to gain revealed knowledge. Knowledge through study and the performance of rituals is more universally achievable because the recipient does not depend on the trustworthiness and accuracy of a given revelation or prophecy. The individual has access to knowledge. However, one should note that even rituals are restricted to a certain group of people. To give an example, in an orthodox synagogue, participation in the service is only granted to males above the age of thirteen. Females and younger children are allowed to observe the service, but will not participate in the rituals of the service.

(4) The source of knowledge

The source of knowledge constitutes a further type of context. Sources of knowledge may be a wide variety of things. Today one can find existing knowledge in books, encyclopaedia's, the internet, in lectures or conversations. Besides existing knowledge one can also find new knowledge by way of experiments and new argumentations. In antiquity many sources of knowledge were available as well, perhaps on a different scale and through different means and technologies, but knowledge and information were accessible to those who searched for it. To us knowledge of antiquity is only available through texts, excavations and art. Through the study of these sources we find that knowledge can be found in texts or oral testimony; it

can derive from a heavenly authority (e.g. the God from the Hebrew Bible) or from worldly beings, such as kings. It can be revealed by God through another divine being, like Jesus Christ in the New Testament and the Illuminator in *Apoc. Adam*. This type of context will include the instances that describe or mention possible source(s) of knowledge.

(5) The aim of knowledge

The aim of knowledge can be almost anything. Knowledge may be gained in order to graduate or simply because one is interested in chemistry. Here the reason for gaining knowledge lies in graduating or pleasure. Another aim of gaining knowledge may lie in the contents of knowledge. It is knowledge itself that is the reason for gaining knowledge. A different aim of knowledge lies in craftsmanship e.g. how to build a house, make pottery, how to ride a horse, how to cook deliciously and so forth. Pursuing knowledge could aim at less practical or worldly things such as to apprehend the cosmology of the world, salvation or gain ultimate wisdom. The texts we will discuss below describe a wide variety of aims which can be achieved by gaining knowledge.

(6) Educational context of knowledge

Today gaining knowledge is institutionalized. In order to learn children and adults go to schools, universities and other educational institutions. However, these institutions are a modern trend. Education in Biblical times did not have this national and organised character. According to the Hebrew Bible (1 *Kings* 4:1-6), it was the kingdom of Israel that, during the reign of Solomon, introduced professional scribes who could read and write. Altogether, not many people could read and write in the ancient world. Scribes were educated men functioned as record keepers, advisors, diplomats, teachers and tutors to the ruling class. Scribes became an integral part of the higher society of Israel even before the Babylonian exile. They created the beginning of a literate world in which knowledge could be stored and retrieved.[15] Nevertheless, knowledge does not limit itself to reading and writing. Knowledge can also be passed on through an oral tradition of education. For instance it can be taught from father to son, from mother to daughter. This educational type of context will focus on how and to whom knowledge has been taught. Was this indeed from father to son or from priest to believer, at royal scribes, or maybe even at public schools?

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[15] Murphy 2002, 33

(7) Domestic context of knowledge

This type of context discusses how knowledge relates to family life. It partly overlaps with the educational context of knowledge because an important aspect of family life is the conveyance of knowledge from one generation to another. The contents of this knowledge could relate to almost anything; making food, performing religious rituals, craftsmanship, how to tend cattle, how to behave, what religion to believe and which values are important. Family life and above all the upbringing of children is closely related to transmitting knowledge. This occurs from one generation to another, from parents to children, from brothers to sisters etc. The transmission of knowledge was probably more common in antiquity in relation to family than through education, because the education system was not accessible for the vast majority.

(8) The nature of knowledge

This type of context concerns the character of knowledge. On many occasions the word 'knowledge' in a text links with an adjective or combines 'knowledge' with an additional feature or phenomenon. These adjectives or combinations tell us something about the nature of knowledge. To give an example, the adjective 'true' combined with the noun 'knowledge' informs us about the quality of knowledge. A certain value is attached to the noun, giving the noun 'knowledge' a different disposition than for instance 'false knowledge'. Knowledge can also be combined with the phenomena 'vision' leading to a different nature of knowledge than for instance knowledge combined with the word 'documentary'. A vision can be understood as a method of communication, but the fact that the information is transmitted through a vision from God to a human grants a special status to it. Thus, the person receiving the vision possesses knowledge which is extraordinary, simply because it was conveyed through a distinctive medium.

(9) Owner of knowledge

The owner of knowledge refers to an individual or a group that is believed to be in possession of knowledge different from the knowledge of another group or individual. Often this knowledge is believed to have more value than the knowledge of the 'other(s)'. For instance, this knowledge is understood to be 'true' or 'eternal'. In the book of *Proverbs* we will see a distinction between 'the fools' and 'the righteous' based on the possession of true knowledge. *Apoc. Adam* also makes a distinction between 'the seed of Seth' and 'the seed of Noah' based

on the possession of eternal knowledge. Thus, rival groups can be made according to whom owns knowledge.

In view of these types of context, a detailed account of the meaning of the noun 'knowledge' will be made. I will start with the book of *Daniel* in the next chapter. Next I will continue with *Apoc. Adam, Proverbs* and *Isaiah*. I can say in advance that there are some difficulties concerning the texts and the additional types of context. First because some types have the tendency to overlap. Second, not every type of context can be found in each individual text. Third, some verses can be argued to fit within more than one type of context. However, if such a difficulty occurs, its implications to the meaning of the word 'knowledge' will be discussed.

3.0   The Book of Daniel

3.1   A general introduction to the book of Daniel

The book of *Daniel* is a Biblical apocalyptic text. Contrary to what one might reason at first in the Hebrew Bible it is placed under the section Writings (Ketuvim) and not under the section Prophets (Nevi'im). The reason for this can probably be found in the late appearance of Daniel, around the second quarter of the second century BCE. During this time the corpus had already been closed with the dead of Malachi, a prophet from the end of the fifth century BCE. Therefore, it could not be included in the prophetic corpus anymore.[16]

Internal historical setting

The internal historical framework of the book of *Daniel* presents four succeeding kingdoms, namely the Neo-Babylonian, Median, Persian and Greek kingdoms. When one reads the book of *Daniel* one comes to think these four kingdoms followed each other in time; that is, one kingdom had come to an end before the second could start. However, according to contemporary historical research, the Neo-Babylonian and Median kingdom existed at the same time. The Median kingdom was destroyed in 550 BCE, a decennia before the Neo-Babylonian king was captured by Cyrus in 539 BCE thereby making an end to this kingdom. The inconsistency regarding the sequences of kingdoms reminds us of the fact that the book of *Daniel* was not written in the sixth century BCE, nor was written in order to give an historical account of reality. The authors of the book used an historically incorrect [17] framework for the purpose of presenting their narratives and apocalyptic visions.[18]

Structure of the book

There are two positions among scholars about the unity or disunity of the book of *Daniel*. A minority among scholars argues in favor of a unity of *Daniel*. They point towards a unitary origin, namely one author, by referring to the coherence of substance and style within the book. In opposition, the majority argues in favor of the book of *Daniel* as entailing a collection of narratives written by multiple authors. They claim first that because the book has two parts, six midrashic or edifying stories and four apocalyptic visions two or more authors

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[16] Hartman & Di Lella 1978, 25

[17] A theory as to why the authors would use a erroneous historical framework can be found in Swain, J. W. *The Theory of the Four Monarchies: Opposition History under the Roman Empire*, 1940.

[18] Hartman & Di Lella 1978, 29-31

must have been involved. Second, they indicate the use of both the Hebrew and the Aramaic language in the text. This, they argue too points out to multiple authors.[19] Thirdly, the fact that one can read the ten episodes independently of each other signifies a disunity. Thus, this position does not only argue two or even more authors to be responsible for the book of *Daniel* and for the text as a disunity, they also indicate towards the book as a complex editing process.[20]

Daniel literature

According to this 'more than two authors approach', the canonical book as we know it from the Hebrew Bible represents a crystallization of several stories about Daniel and his companions taking place at a particular time and place. The book was probably composed around Jerusalem in 165 BCE. Some scholars argue that the individual stories of chapters 2 to 6 belong to the early Hellenistic or the Persian period.[21] The book of *Daniel* belongs to a wider group of *Daniel* literature, which also comprises books from Qumran (4Q242-46) and Additions to the Greek Book of *Daniel*. From the Qumran texts it becomes apparent that some of the Qumran texts presuppose the existence of a Daniel tradition and even the Book of *Daniel* itself.[22] This is why these are regarded as part of the *Daniel* literature. There are three so called Additions to the Greek Book of *Daniel*. These Additions are made in three parts; the Prayer of Azariah, a prose narrative (vv. 24-25, 46-50) and the Song. Both the Prayer and the Song are most likely Greek translations of a Semitic model, which origin is said to perhaps have been in Hebrew. The prose narrative was composed in Greek.[23]

Social setting

The discussion about the social setting of the author or authors of the book of *Daniel* has not found consensus among Biblical scholars. Some regard the author(s) of *Daniel* as an educated scribe, trained in the exegesis of prophetic literature while at the same time belonging to the upper-class of an urban society. Others consider, based on the court-tales of chapters 1-6, the authors to be wise men professed in mantic wisdom, who returned in the second century BCE from the Babylonian diaspora to Jerusalem, while belonging to a well-educated upper class. A third opinion is held by another group of scholars. They relate the author of *Daniel* to the

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[19] Daniel 1:1-21
[20] Hartman & Di Lella 1978, 9; Wesselius 2001, 291-292
[21] Knibb 2001, 16
[22] Knibb 2001, 19-24
[23] Knibb 2001, 24-25

Hasidim, as is stated in the books of the Maccabees. They argue that the author(s) belonged to a poor group of pious men who were very much in opposition to the well-educated upper class of Jerusalem.[24] Thus, the social setting of the book of *Daniel* is still a widely discussed subject.

The court tales of *Daniel* have similarities with other stories in the Hebrew Bible. In the book *Exodus* the leading figure Moses is a Jewish resident of the Egyptian court. Moses opposes the Egyptian magicians in order to save the Jewish people. Here the superiority of Moses lies in the notion that Moses received his knowledge and abilities from God. This is similar to the book of *Daniel*. Daniel is also more superior to the Babylonian wise men because his knowledge derives from God. In addition, the story of Joseph, the son of Jacob and Rachel, describes Joseph explaining the pharaoh's dreams. Joseph becomes an important figure at the Egyptian court. Similar to Joseph, Daniel gains a prominent position at the Babylonian court because of his knowledge and abilities to explain king Nebuchadnezzar's dreams. These similarities with Genesis and Exodus show that the authors of *Daniel* were familiar with other books from the Hebrew Biblical canon.

3.2   The meaning of דעת in Daniel

The book of *Daniel* is set in motion with a chapter about the conquest of Jerusalem by the king of Babylon Nebuchadnezzar. He orders both noble and wise young men from Jerusalem to be trained and educated in the language and literature of the Chaldeans. In the widest acceptation, the Chaldeans were the inhabitants of Babylonia. The king's motivation is to train and educate them to serve at the kings palace. One can read this in the first verse I quote, namely verse 1:4.

(1:3-4) ויאמר המלך לאשפנז רב סריסיו להביא מבני ישראל ומזרע המלוכה ומן־הפרתמים: ילדים אשר אין־בהם כל־מאום וטובי מראה ומשכילים בכל־חכמה וידעי דעת ומביני מדע ואשר כח בהם לעמד בהיכל המלך וללמדם ספר ולשון כשדים:

Then the king commanded his palace master Ashpenaz to bring some of the Israelites of the royal family and of the nobility, young men without physical defect and handsome, versed in every branch of wisdom, endowed with knowledge and insight, and competent to serve in the king's palace; they were to be taught the literature and language of the Chaldeans.[25]

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[24] Albertz 2001, 171-173

[25] All translations from the Hebrew Biblical texts are from the New Revised Standard Version 2007, except if otherwise mentioned. The NRSV translation and my own are based on the Masoretic Text.

Thus, these good-looking and noble men need to have understanding in every branch of wisdom, and should possess knowledge and insight. Nebuchadnezzar's main goal with these men is to educate them and profit from their knowledge and counsel at his court in Babylon. It is more profitable for the king to educate literate, wise and knowledgeable men in contrast to illiterate and unintelligent men. One of these men is Daniel. The description of these men being wise and having knowledge and therefore belonging to the maskilim[26] is essential for the role of the maskilim in chapter eleven[27]. Of course, Daniel is going to be one of these men. In the verse above the word 'knowledge' can be placed within an educational type of context. We can see that knowledge is something that can be acquired through learning. Here the noun דעת is used in combination with the verb ידע or 'to know'. Literally, it translates as "they knew knowledge".

The chapter continues with a second story about the employment of the noble and wise men at royal court. At court the men are supposed to eat a royal menu and drink wine every day. Daniel and his companions (Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah) do not wish to defile themselves with the food and wine of the king and ask permission from the chief of the palace to eat vegetables and drink only water instead. The chief in charge of deciding this request is said to have been moved by God and grants them permission on one condition. Daniel should test if they stay as healthy as the other men. After ten days of this diet Daniel and his companions look even healthier and better fed than the other men. The conclusion drawn from this second story is that the good health of the youngsters must be due to God and not the diet[28].

(1:17) והילדים האלה ארבעתם נתן להם האלהים מדע והשכל בכל־ספר וחכמה ודניאל הבין בכל־חזון וחלמות:

To these four young men God gave knowledge and skill in every aspect of literature and wisdom; Daniel also had insight into all vision and dreams.

In this verse we can see that God gave knowledge to these four young men. Therefore this verse relates to a type of context where the source of knowledge is important. The knowledge in this verse cannot be educated, but is granted by God. Thus, it stands in contrast to the context of knowledge mentioned in verse 1:4, where knowledge was learned.

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[26] Wise men
[27] Collins 1984, 44
[28] Collins 1984, 44

The second story in *Daniel* is told in the verses 2:1-49. Verse 2:21 is part of a smaller unit, containing a prayer (2:20-23) to God by Daniel. Daniel engages in this prayer after God revealed the details of the king Nebuchadnezzar's dream to Daniel. This story is classified as a court legend, dealing with one of the miraculous events occurring in the book of *Daniel*[29]. It teaches the Jews that the wisdom of the pagans is inferior to the Jewish wisdom. The superiority of Jewish wisdom lies in the fact that only the God of Israel can foretell centuries of histories. For instance, only God can foresee the events from the reign of Babylonian to the Greeks as is written down in verses 2:18-23, 28 and 47. The internal date of this fragment is the second reign of king Nebuchadnezzar or 603 BCE. In this narrative, king Nebuchadnezzar is troubled because of his dream and the lack of sleep caused by the dream. He wishes to know the meaning of it, but seems to distrust the Chaldeans. He orders them to foretell the dream and then give its interpretation. However, the Chaldean wise men are not up to the task and the king orders all wise men living in the kingdom to be executed.

When the news comes to Daniel, he goes to see the king and requests for time. Extra time is granted by the king and Daniel and his friends go into a state of religious contemplation, thereby making Daniel prepared to receive God's vision. In the same night a vision is revealed to Daniel, explaining the king's dream and its meaning. After this, Daniel prays to God with the following words:

(2:20-23) ענה דניאל ואמר להוא שמה די־אלהא מברך מן־עלמא ועד־עלמא די חכמתא וגבורתא די לה־היא: והוא מהשנא עדניא וזמניא מהעדה מלכין ומהקים מלכין יהב חכמתא לחכימין ומנדעא לידעי בינה: הוא גלא עמיקתא ומסתרתא ידא מה בחשוכא ונהירא עמה שרא: לך אלה אבהתי מהודא ומשבה אנה די חכמתא וגבורתא יהבת לי וכען הודעתני די־בעינא מנך די־מלת מלכא הודעתנא:

Daniel said: 'Blessed be the name of God from age to age, for wisdom and power are his. He changes times and seasons, deposed kings and sets up kings, he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who having understanding. He reveals deep and hidden things, he knows what is in the darkness, and light dwells with him. To you, God of my ancestors, I give thanks and praise, for you have given me wisdom and power, and have now revealed to me what we asked of you, for you have revealed to us what the king ordered.

After this prayer Daniel goes to see the king in order to foretell and explain the dream. The dream is enlighten as a dream foretelling the end of days, explaining the defeat of the kingdoms of this world by the eternal kingdom of the Heavens. Next, the king asks him if it is by his own powers that Daniel knows and interprets the dream. Daniel lets the king know that only God is able of such mysteries. The chapter in which this tale is recorded, namely chapter

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[29] Collins 1984, 49

two in *Daniel*, is in my opinion very relevant for the meaning of 'knowledge'. To explain this I will first look at the mentioning of the word 'knowledge' within the vision. The vision itself however can also be understood as a remarkable sort of knowledge.

First, verse 2:21 speaks of knowledge that is given by God to those who have understanding, thereby immediately making the source of knowledge apparent, namely God. Verse 2:21 clearly fits within a type of context discussing the source of knowledge. Daniel is in search of particular information, namely the content of the dream and its meaning. He does this in order to save the group of wise men. The information or knowledge Daniel looks for cannot be found or argued by him alone. Instead, he needs God's knowledge and God's willingness to give knowledge in order to achieve his goal. Daniel trusts God to provide him with the information needed and enters a state of contemplation. The vision reveals information of an apocalyptic nature, its content relating to the end of days and what will happen afterwards.

Thus, the vision of Daniel itself, in this case sheds light on the nature of knowledge. The vision gives specific and exceptional knowledge about the Nebuchadnezzar's dream and its interpretation. It is specific because it relates to one dream and for that reason makes the interpretation of the dream unique. The knowledge is exceptional because of the circumstances in which the information is revealed. We can say that it is not common for humans to receive information from God on such a direct basis. The vision relates to knowledge in the sense of information rather than skill. Although one could argue that Daniel needs certain skills in order to attain the information needed, such as a certain level of trust and concentration in contemplation, the emphasis in the vision lies in the information gained. The vision does not stress and nor goes into detail about the way in which Daniel acquires knowledge, but on the content and nature of knowledge. It is the meaning of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar that is important in this context.

The fifth chapter of *Daniel* tells another legend. The son of Nebuchadnezzar, king Belshazzar, throws a state banquet for al his thousand grandees. Under the influence of wine he orders the silver and gold his father brought from the temple of Jerusalem to be brought out for use. It is not the first time these cups for wine or vessels are mentioned; they are brought up already in verse 1:2. It is argued that this verse 1:2 has probably been inserted after the diet story in the

first chapter was finished, in order to provide an introduction to the other chapters in *Daniel*[30]. While drinking wine from the cups and praising their gods, the fingers of a man's hand appear and write a certain text on the plastered wall of the palace where king Belshazzar and his guests are assembled. This event frightens Belshazzar to such an extent that he asks all the enchanters, Chaldeans and diviners to explain the writing. However, again his advisers are not capable of understanding the writing on the wall. The queen therefore reminds Belshazzar of the existence of Daniel, who is said to have brilliant insight and godlike wisdom.

Daniel is summoned and explains that God gave his father a great kingdom and a glorious majesty. It was because of God that Nebuchadnezzar was feared by all people. After some time Nebuchadnezzar's heart became proud and his spirit hardened into insolence. As God's punishment, Nebuchadnezzar was deprived of his kingdom while his mind became like that of an animal. He was driven away from human society and had to live like an animal in the field.[31] Daniel reproofs Belshazzar of knowing what happened to his father but in spite of this making the same mistakes. Daniel says: 'And you, Belshazzar his son, have not humbled your heart, even though you knew all this! You have exalted yourself against the Lord of heaven.'[32] Daniel explains the words "mene", "teqel" and "peres" on the wall, referring to the king's doom. During the night following this evening, king Belshazzar is killed and Darius the Mede succeeds his kingdom. Hence this story describes the fall of Babylon, but should not be understood as an eyewitness account of this event[33]. The author uses the historical event of the fall of Babylon to frame his story.

The word דעת is mentioned twice in this story; it is stated in verses 5:12 and 5:22. The first appears in verse 5:12 when the queen speaks to Belshazzar of Daniel. She says to him:

(12-5:11b) השתכחת בה ומלכא ובכדנצר אבוך רב חרטמין אשפין כשׂדאין גזרין הקימה אבוך מלכא: כל־קבל די רוח יתירה דמנדע ושכלתנו מפשר חלמין ואחוית אחידן ומשרא קטרין השתכחת בה בדניאל די־מלכא שׂם־שׁמה בלטשאצר כען דניאל יתקרי ופשׂרה יהחוה:

Your father, king Nebuchadnezzar, made him chief of the magicians, enchanters, Chaldeans and diviners, because an excellent spirit, knowledge, and understanding to interpret dreams, explain riddles, and solve problems were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Belshazzar. Now let Daniel be called, and he will give the interpretation.

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[30] See more in Collins 1984, 44
[31] This story about Nebuchadnezzar illness and punishment refers to the fourth chapter of *Daniel*.
[32] *Daniel* 5:22-23a
[33] Collins 1984, 68

In this passage the nature of Daniel's knowledge is mentioned. He is said to have the knowledge to interpret dreams, explain enigmas and solve difficulties. According to Hartman and DiLella, two scholars reviewing the book of *Daniel*, Daniel's knowledge here can be seen as comparable to the kind appearing in former stories in chapter 2 and 4. Daniel's knowledge is regarded as superior to the knowledge of the diviners, enchanters and Chaldeans. They argue that its superiority lies in the fact that Daniel has true knowledge whereas the knowledge of the Babylonian is of a false nature.[34]

What can we say is the source of Daniel's knowledge in this story. Although one could argue that this verse discusses God as the source of Daniel's knowledge, I do not agree. In my opinion, the source of knowledge in this chapter is not certain to be God, because the method of arriving at this knowledge is different from the second chapter. Although it is written in verses 5:11 and 5:14 that Daniel is endowed with God's spirit, we can see that in contrast to the second chapter of *Daniel*, Daniel does not need to enter a state of contemplation in order to receive information about the writing from God. Daniel instantly gives the interpretation of the writing and condemns the king. In this particular passage, the knowledge to interpret the writing and its sentence seems to come from Daniel himself and not directly through God as we have seen before. Hence the source of knowledge according to this story could also be Daniel himself.

(5:22) ואנתה ברה בלשאצר לא השפלת לבבך כל־קבל די כל־דנה ידעת:

And you, Belshazzar his son, have not humbled your heart, even though you knew all this.

The second time the word דעת is mentioned is in verse 5:22. In this passage the word 'knowledge' refers not to knowledge possessed by Daniel but to knowledge of king Belshazzar. Belshazzar is said to possess knowledge regarding the proper behavior of a king. He has witnessed what pride did to his father and is expected to know that God will punish him if he acts conceited. In this context, the word 'knowledge' refers to the aim of knowledge. It signifies that knowledge should be used in order to please God. If this aim is respected it leads to a prosperous life and leaves a life of punishment or death behind.

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[34] Hartman & DiLella 1978, 186

To conclude this chapter, we can make the following remarks. The first chapter of *Daniel* relates to an educational context of knowledge, that is; a knowledge which can be studied and achieved by men alone. However, in addition to educational knowledge this chapter also relates to divine knowledge; namely a kind of knowledge where God plays a decisive role. In this context the source of knowledge becomes important. A few times in *Daniel*, God is mentioned as the source of knowledge. Chapter two of *Daniel* too refers to God as the source of knowledge, but also brings about a new type of context, namely the nature of knowledge. It is Daniels vision that refers to this. The vision given by God reveals unique and specific information about the end of days. In the fifth chapter the source of knowledge is mentioned again, but here it can be argued not to come from God, but from Daniel. Finally, I brought up two other passages. In the first one we can see that the aim of knowledge, has two aspects. Firstly to please God and secondly to live a prosperous life. Thus, four types of contexts have been distinguished in the book *Daniel*. I will continue with the analyses of the *Apoc. Adam* in the next chapter.

4.0 The Apocalypse of Adam

4.1. A general introduction to the Apocalypse of Adam

Together with three other texts, namely *the Revelation of Paul*, *the First Revelation of James* and *the Second Revelation of James*, *the Apocalypse of Adam* is found on the Nag Hammadi Codex V. All these texts belong to the apocalyptic genre, an eminent genre in apocryphal and pseudepigraphical Jewish literature. *Apoc. Adam* can also be placed in the testamentary genre[35]. A characteristic feature of an apocalypse is the motif of an instruction given by an angel in a dream. Another feature is the transmission of revelation from a parental figure to a son or disciple. The Apocalypse of Adam is translated from Greek original into Coptic and belongs to the Sethian tradition within Gnosticism. Sethian Gnosticism is a school of thought containing its own traditions and sacred texts.[36] In the Nag Hammadi library several tractates can been found showing the idea of an elect group who regard themselves as the spiritual seed of Seth. Eleven tractates show various thematic or literary interdependencies regarding the elect seed of Seth. Together they form the literary tradition of Sethian Gnosticism in the Nag Hammadi library. A few other texts outside the Nag Hammadi library can also be placed within this Sethian Gnostic tradition.[37] Concerning the dating of *Apoc. Adam,* there is no scholarly agreement at the moment. Some date it to the first century BCE and others date it to the third century CE.[38]

Authors

The issue of authorship is often very complicated with ancient religious texts. Names of authors and exact dates are often unclear. The *Apoc. Adam* is no exeption. A scholar called Charles Hedrick created a theory about the authorship of *Apoc. Adam.* He considers this work to be an arrangement of two sources by one redactor. For instance, Hedrick believes the *Setting* (one of the five units comprising the *Apoc. Adam*) to consist of two separate units: Section A: 64:6 - 65:23 and 66:12 – 67:12; Section B: 65:24 – 66:12 and 67:12 – 67:21. He is convinced that these units form separate narratives based on different scenes with different actors. Section A mentions both Adam and Eve as the prime subjects of the story, while

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[35] Pearson 2007, 70
[36] Scopello 2007, 343-345
[37] Pearson 2007, 60
[38] Pearson 2007, 74

section B only refers to Adam as the prime subject of the story.[39] Thus according to Hedrick, at least two authors and one redactor produced this work. Apart from the outlook of the two authors, the redactor inserted his own statements as well. Hedrick derives eight different statements concerning the redactor's theological position in *Apoc. Adam*. For instance, Hedrick reveals the redactors antipathy to water baptism. In the redactors' opinion, true baptism can only occur through gnosis and must be transmitted by the mythological figures Yesseus, Mazareus and Yessedekeus, not by water. Baptism by water implies that one submits oneself to the worldly powers of the demiurge; this would be in contrast with the Gnostics antipathy to the material world.[40]

Structure

The text can be structured into five units.

1. Introduction   verses 64: 1-5
2. Setting   verses 64:5 - 67:21
3. Revelation   verses 67:22 – 85:18
4. First conclusion   verses 85:19-22
5. Second conclusion and title   verses 85:22-32[41]

Social setting

The social setting of the text can be approached from the third part of the text, describing the revelation by Adam to his son Seth. Its main theme is the salvation of the elect seed of Seth. The Gnostics will be saved from three critical events namely; the great flood (69:2-73:29), fire and brimstone (73:30-76:7) and the final destruction of evil and the salvation of the elect seed of Seth by the Illuminator of knowledge (76:8-85:18). The second event, fire and brimstone, contains references to Sodom and Gomorra in *Genesis* 19: 25, 25. From the *Apoc. Adam* one could argue that an elect group of people, considered themselves to be the spiritual seed of Seth. The community believed itself to be in the possession of gnosis, and for that reason distinct from others. However, it stays unclear whether *Apoc. Adam* was entirely created by this community, or whether certain individuals from the community gradually developed and edited different stories into the *Apoc. Adam*. The second option would be in line with Hedrick's theory about two sources and an editor.

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[39] Hedrick 2005, 21-22
[40] Hedrick 2005, 17; 185-201
[41] Pearson 2007, 71

4.2   The meaning of γνωσις in the Apocalypse of Adam

The Apocalypse of Adam tells the story of the seed of Seth (son of Adam and Eve) and their special status in this world granted by God. The concept of 'knowledge' in this text is fundamental to the special status of the seed of Seth because it is used to create a division between two races, namely the descendents of Seth and those of Noah. I will discuss all occurrences of the word 'knowledge' from *Apoc. Adam* in this upcoming paragraph. In total *Apoc. Adam* mentions the word 'knowledge' 19 times.

(64:12-13) ⲁⲥⲧⲁⲙⲟⲓ ⲉⲩϣⲁϫⲉ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲟⲩⲅⲛⲱⲥⲓⲥ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲡⲓϣⲁ ⲉⲛⲉϩ.

She taught me a word of knowledge of the eternal God.[42]

The first page of *Apoc. Adam* tells its reader how Adam taught his son Seth 700 years after Seth's birth[43] that he, Adam was created out of the earth together with Eve, Seth's mother. It is written that Adam and Eve were two angels that stood above their creator because of the knowledge they possessed. The text distinguishes immediately between the higher transcendent God and the lower creator god or Demiurge.[44, 45] The knowledge Adam and Eve have allows them to stand higher on the cosmological ladder. In the passage just quoted Eve teaches Adam knowledge of the eternal God. Hence, it is Eve who teaches Adam and subsequently Adam who teaches Seth about the knowledge of the eternal God. The verb used for teaching is TAME in both sentences (64:2-3, 12). These verses relate to an educational context of knowledge, because it explicitly states that knowledge of the eternal God can be taught from one being to another. Knowledge in this passage becomes transmittable, in the same way as you can teach your brother how to write his name. It is interesting to perceive that divine knowledge can be taught between humans. In my opinion this stands in contrast with the material status of men. How is it possible that a worldly being can teach divine knowledge? The answer lies in the special status of the Gnostics, they seem have a different status than the men from the generation of Noah.

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[42] All translations from the text *the Apocalypse of Adam* derive from MacRae 1979 except if mentioned otherwise.
[43] Pearson 2007, 70
[44] From here on the lower god will be written with a normal g and the higher God with a capital G.
[45] Other names for this lower god in Sethian tradition are demiurge, the god who created, god the ruler of aeons and powers, god of the aeons, god the almighty and Sakla.

(64:24-28) ⲁⲩⲱ ⲁϥⲕⲁⲁⲛ ⲛⲥⲱϥ ⲛϭⲓ ⲡⲓⲉⲟⲟⲩ ⲉⲧϩⲙ ⲡⲉⲛϩⲏⲧ ⲁⲛⲟⲕ ⲙⲛ ⲧⲉⲕⲙⲁⲁⲩ ⲉⲩϩⲁ ⲙⲛ ϯⲅⲛⲱⲥⲓⲥ ⲛϣⲟⲣⲡ ⲉ[ⲧ]ⲉ ⲛⲉⲥⲛⲓϥⲉ ⲛϩⲏⲧⲛ.

And the glory in our hearts left us, me and your mother Eve along with the first knowledge that breathed within us.

In the context of this passage the lower God divides Adam and Eve out of anger and instead of being one aeon Adam and Eve become two aeons. The separation of the original androgynous state is something we can understand as the fall of Adam-Eve.[46] After Adam and Eve as androgynous being[47] are created, they stay in the presence of the transcendent God. It is after they lose their knowledge and glory that they become two separate beings. At the same time they start becoming victims of their carnal desires. From that moment on they cannot live in the presence of God. As a created androgynous being, the combination of Adam-Eve is perfect. Hedrick calls this state of Adam-Eve even similar to how Adam and Eve walked with God in paradise.[48]

Let us return to the context of the meaning of 'knowledge' in this passage. The glory and first knowledge that exists within the joined Adam-Eve departs them at the time of their separation and returns to the great aeons (65:4), thus leaving Adam and Eve behind and under the power of the demiurge. After the fall of Adam-Eve they receive a son named Seth.[49] Seth becomes the savior figure in this text. He is the spiritual forefather of a race which is destined to be saved, by possessing knowledge that will be revealed to him by Adam[50]. Thus this text relates to is something concerning the source of knowledge. It tells us how knowledge makes an entrance into this world and how it is Seth's task to recover the spiritual knowledge dispersed in matter (65:5-9). The eternal knowledge originates in the transcendent God, is casted out from this world by the lower god and will be Seth's to recapture.

(65:9-16) ⲙⲛⲛⲥⲁ ⲛⲓϩⲟⲟⲩ ⲉⲧⲙⲙⲁⲩ ⲁⲥⲟⲩⲉ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲙⲙⲟⲓ ⲁⲛⲟⲕ ⲙⲛ ⲧⲉⲕⲙⲁⲁⲩ ⲉⲩϩⲁ. ⲛϭⲓ ϯⲅⲛⲱⲥⲓⲥ ⲛϣⲁ ⲉⲛⲉϩ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲧⲙⲉ ϫⲓⲛ ⲡⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ ⲉⲧⲙⲙⲁⲩ ⲁⲛ ϫⲓ ⲥⲃⲱ ⲉϩⲉⲛϩⲃⲏⲩⲉ ⲉⲩⲙⲟⲟⲩⲧ ϩⲱⲥ ϩⲉⲛⲣⲱⲙⲉ.

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[46] In *Apoc. Adam* the act of creation itself is not a negative deed. This is in contrast with *the Apocalypse of John* where the act of creation by Sophia is a negative deed.

[47] Adam and Eve as an androgynous being is presented as *Adam-Eve*, as separate beings they are presented as *Adam and Eve*.

[48] This is even held as one of the reasons that *Apoc. Adam* is regarded close to the Jewish tradition of creation (Hedrick 2005, 81-82).

[49] Seth as the third son (besides Cain and Abel) of Adam and Eve derives from Midrashic restatements of Genesis 4:25 and 5:3 (Pearson 1981: 478).

[50] Pearson 2007, 51

After those days the eternal knowledge of the God of truth withdrew from me and your mother Eve. Since that time we learned about dead things like men.

This passage explains that the eternal knowledge left Adam and Eve after they were divided into two aeons. It tells us something both about the source and about the nature of knowledge. Knowledge is described as coming from God and is said to have an eternal nature. The second part of this passage explains that after Adam-Eve lost their knowledge, they learned about dead things. In other words, before the division or wrath came upon them, Adam and Eve were only acquainted with the concept of life and not with death. This implicates that the eternal knowledge or first knowledge did not include information about the finiteness of human existence.

(67:4-14) ⲧⲟⲧⲉ ⲁⲥⲧⲁⲕⲟ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲛ̅ϩⲏⲧⲛ̅ ⲛ̅ϭⲓ ⲧⲁⲕⲙⲏ ⲛ̅ⲧⲉ ⲡⲉⲛⲥⲟⲟⲩⲛ ⲛ̅ϣⲁ ⲉⲛⲉϩ ⲁⲩⲟ ⲁⲥⲣ̅ⲇⲓⲱⲕⲉ ⲛⲥⲱⲛ ⲛ̅ϭⲓ ⲟⲩⲙⲛ̅ⲧϭⲱⲃ. ⲉⲧⲃⲉ ⲡⲁⲓ ⲁⲩⲣ ⲕⲟⲩⲉⲓ ⲛ̅ϭⲓ ⲛⲉϩⲟⲟⲩ ⲛ̅ⲧⲉ ⲡⲉⲛⲱⲛϩ. ⲁⲓⲉⲓⲙⲉ ⲅⲁⲣ ϫⲉ ⲁⲓϣⲱⲡⲉ ϩⲁ ⲧⲉⲝⲟⲩϭⲓⲁ ⲛ̅ⲧⲉ ⲡⲙⲟⲩ.

Then the vigor of our eternal knowledge was destroyed in us, and weakness pursued us. Therefore the days of our life became few. For I knew I had come under the authority of dead.

These verses explain how the lives of Adam and Eve were shortened, because they lost the strength or vigor of their eternal knowledge. Instead of living eternally, Adam and Eve became mortal beings. Thus once more, knowledge in *Apoc. Adam* is connected to an eternal faculty; if one is in possession of eternal knowledge one will have access to an eternal life.[51] We can understand this as a reference to two types of context. The word 'knowledge' firstly refers to the nature of knowledge because of the adjective 'eternal'; in this way it gives us details about the contents of knowledge. Second, these sentences explain something about the aim of knowledge, namely that it can be found in eternal life. It is believed by the Gnostics that possessing eternal knowledge leads to an everlasting life of the soul.

Up unto this point, *Apoc. Adam* describes the experiences of Adam and Eve and does this from the viewpoint of Adam. The author of *Apoc. Adam* used the book of Genesis as a source for his writing and made in particular the biblical creation of Adam and Eve and the story

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[51] For the first time in *Apoc. Adam* the word knowledge is not written with the Greek word γνωσις as is customary, but with the Coptic word ⲥⲟⲟⲩⲛ. In verse 67:7 and 72:9 we find two indications of the Coptic word for knowledge ⲥⲟⲟⲩⲛ. To the reason why these words for knowledge were not written with the Greek word γνωσις I am not certain. I am not under the impression that they refer to a different kind of knowledge than the other 17 Greek indications of knowledge, γνωσις. Thus we should not look for a variation in meaning. We could find a possible explanation in the suggestion that these passage were inserted after the translation from Greek to Coptic.

about the Ark and the flood as his main resources. From these references to the Genesis one can conclude that the demiurge in *Apoc. Adam* can be identified with the God Yahweh from the Hebrew Bible. The demiurge is described as an angry god (64:20-22) who demands fear and slavery (65:20-21), while teaching dead things (65:15) such as ignorance (65:21-23), desire (66:17-18) and mortality (12-14). The transcendent God is to be understood as the good God, also referred to as the eternal God (64:12-14), the God of truth (65:10-11) and being He who is the God of gnosis (64:12-14).[52]

The text continues with describing three critical events, first the great flood (69:2-73:29), second fire and brimstone (73:30-76:7) and finally the destruction of the reprobate and the saving of the elect seed of Seth thereby marking the end of times (76:8-85:18). Each catastrophe ends by an intervention of the divine. After the flood, the seed of Seth is rescued by great angels of light and brought to a safe place were the spirit of life is. Three angelic beings named Abrasax, Sablo and Gamaliel save the Gnostics from the destruction of fire and brimstone[53]. During this catastrophe, the elect seed is brought to the higher aeons. At the end of times the elect seed of Seth is saved from the day of death by the Illuminator. The salvation of the elect seed of Seth from the catastrophe's show that the text is not concerned with the salvation of the individual, but with the salvation of a complete Gnostic community[54].

(69:11-17) ϩⲓ ⲛ[ⲓⲉⲃ]ⲟⲗ ϩⲛ ⲧ̄ⲥⲡⲟⲣⲁ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲛⲓⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲛⲏ ⲉⲧⲁ[ϥⲟⲩ]ⲱⲧⲃ ⲉϩⲣⲁⲓ ⲉⲣⲟⲟⲩ [ⲛ̄ϭⲓ ⲡⲓ]ⲱⲛϩ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲧ̄ⲅⲛⲱⲥⲓⲥ [ⲡⲁ]ⲉⲓ ⲉⲧⲁϥⲉⲓ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲛϩⲏⲧ ⲙ[ⲛ] ⲉⲩϩⲁ ⲧⲉⲕⲙⲁⲁⲩ.

Along with [those from] the seed [of] the men to whom passed the life of the knowledge which came from me [and] Eve, your mother.

This verse 69 recounts a fragment of Noah and the ark during the great flood. According to *Apoc. Adam* the flood is caused by the demiurge, who wants to destroy all people who do not submit to his power. This includes the Gnostics, since they do not live in the glory of god (69:8-10, 71:5-8). Contrary to the wishes of the demiurge, the Gnostics are saved by unnamed angels and are brought to a save place (69:19-24). Again, this passage refers to the source of knowledge, because it explains where the knowledge from the seed of Seth comes from, namely from Adam and Eve.

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[52] Hedrick 2005, 79
[53] Reference to Sodom and Gomorrah (*Genesis* 13:11-12)
[54] Hedrick 2005, 83

(71:11-15) ⲚⲎ ⲈⲦⲀⲨⲚⲞϪⲞⲨ ⲈⲂⲞⲖ ϨⲚ ϮⲄⲚⲰⲤⲒⲤ ⲚⲦⲈ ⲚⲒⲚⲞϬ ⲚⲚⲈⲰⲚ ⲘⲚ ⲚⲒⲀⲄⲄⲈⲖⲞⲤ ⲤⲈⲚⲀⲀϨⲈⲠⲀⲦⲞⲨ Ⲙ ⲠⲈⲘⲦⲞ ⲚⲚⲰϨⲈ ⲘⲚ ⲚⲒⲈⲰⲚ.

Those men will come who have been cast out from the knowledge of the great eons and the angels.

The demiurge's ambitions were to save only Noah, his wife, his sons and their wives in order to cleanse the earth (70:5-6) from those who did not follow him. He promised Noah that he would rule over the world as long as Noah did not produce an offspring that would undermine god's glory (71:4-8). In spite of his threats, the demiurge was soon challenged by the seed of Seth, who were saved before the flood (69:19-24). They descended to the earth and made themselves visible to Noah and the aeons (71:14-15). The sentence just quoted relates to the aim of knowledge. The knowledge mentioned is knowledge that aims to save or bring salvation to those who possess it.

After the seed of Seth have shown themselves to the demiurge, the story continues with illustrating how the Gnostics are led to a proper land and are to build themselves a holy place to live (72:1-5). The occurrence of the word 'knowledge' takes place in verse 72:1. However, due to a lacuna in the manuscript the sentences surrounding the word 'knowledge' here are missing. Therefore the meaning and context of this word γνωσις is unclear. The next incidence of 'knowledge' occurs in verse 72:5. In this passages 72:5-9 the text describes that only the Gnostics will live in a state of knowledge and imperishability.

(72:5-9) ⲀⲨⲰ ⲤⲈⲚⲀⲘⲞⲨⲦⲈ ⲈⲢⲞⲞⲨ ϨⲘ ⲠⲒⲢⲀⲚ ⲈⲦⲘⲘⲀⲨ ⲚⲤⲈϢⲰⲠⲈ ⲘⲘⲀⲨ ⲚⲤⲞⲞⲨ ⲚϢⲈ ⲚⲢⲞⲘⲠⲈ ϨⲚ ⲞⲨⲤⲞⲞⲨⲚ ⲚⲦⲈ ϮⲀⲫⲐⲀⲢⲤⲒⲀ.

And they will be called by that name and dwell there 600 years in knowledge of imperishability.

The word 'knowledge' here is accompanied by the word 'imperishability'. This word 'imperishability' initially describes the nature of knowledge because it presents knowledge as being eternal. However, it also describes something concerning the aim of knowledge. In my opinion, the aim of the Gnostics' quest for knowledge is about the possibility to gain eternal life. In the end, it is this eternal life that will distinguish them from those who do not possess the knowledge mentioned.

(72:10-14) ⲀⲨⲰ ⲤⲈⲚⲀϢⲰⲠⲈ ⲚⲘⲘⲀⲨ ⲚϬⲒ ϨⲈⲚⲀⲄⲄⲈⲖⲞⲤ ⲚⲦⲈ ⲠⲒⲚⲞϬ ⲚⲞⲨⲞⲈⲒⲚ. ⲚⲚⲈⲖⲀⲀⲨ ⲚϨⲰⲂ ⲚⲂⲞⲦⲈ ϢⲰⲠⲈ ϨⲘ ⲠⲈⲨϨⲎⲦ ⲈⲂⲞⲖ ⲈϮⲄⲚⲰⲤⲒⲤ ⲞⲨⲀⲀⲤ ⲚⲦⲈ ⲠⲚⲞⲨⲦⲈ.

And angels of the great light will dwell with them. No foul deed will dwell in their heart(s), but only the knowledge of God.

When it comes to this passage we do not need much material to work out the context. This unit describes the men who possess knowledge as a pure race, devoid of any sins and full of knowledge, whilst also being protected by angels. It gives us insight into the nature of the men possessing this kind of knowledge and presents them as a moral community that is full of goodness. This sentence therefore corresponds with a religious moral type of context, because it implies that knowledge of God will produce a pure heart.

(73:10-12) ⲁⲗⲗⲁ ⲥⲉⲛⲁϣⲙϣⲉ ϩⲛ ⲟⲩⲑⲃⲃⲓⲟ ϫⲱϥ ⲙⲛ ⲟⲩϩⲟⲧⲉ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲛⲉⲩⲉⲓⲙⲉ.

But it will worship in humility and fear of its knowledge.

This particular sentence warns against disregarding the wishes of the demiurge.[55] It emphasizes that the descendents of Noah need to stay with the demiurge, worshipping him in humility and fear of god's knowledge. The reference of this word 'knowledge' is unique because it refers to the knowledge of the demiurge instead of the knowledge of God. What the exact substance of this knowledge stays uncertain because a detailed description of this 'knowledge' is not given. But one could regard is as a pseudo knowledge, a knowledge of material matters instead of spiritual ones. Consequently, the nature of this knowledge stands in opposition to the eternal knowledge of God.

(73:13-20) ⲧⲟⲧⲉ ⲉⲣⲉϩⲉⲛⲕⲟⲟⲩⲉ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϩⲙ ⲡⲥⲡⲉⲣⲙⲁ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲭⲁⲙ ⲙⲛ [ⲓ]ⲁⲫⲉⲑ ⲉⲩⲉⲃⲱⲕ ⲛϭⲓ ϥⲧⲟⲟⲟⲩ ⲛϣⲉ ⲛϣⲟ ⲛⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲛϭⲉⲃⲱⲕ ⲉϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲕⲉⲕⲁϩ ⲛⲥⲉϭⲟⲉⲓⲗⲉ ⲉⲛⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲉⲧⲙⲙⲁⲩ ⲛⲏ ⲉⲧⲁⲩϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϩⲛ ϯⲛⲟϭ ⲛⲅⲛⲱⲥⲓⲥ ⲛϣⲁ ⲉⲛⲉϩ.

Then others from the seed of Ham and Japheth will come, four hundred thousand men, and enter into another land and sojourn with those who came forth from the great eternal knowledge.

The context of this passage is quite straightforward; it describes how 40.000 of the descendants of Noah join the men of knowledge. In this section of *Apoc. Adam* the division between the seed of Noah , the descendants of Noah who worship the creator god, and the seed of Seth, those who are in the possession of eternal knowledge worshipping the transcendent higher God, is explicitly made. The word 'knowledge' in this part refers to the

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[55] 4 lines are missing previously to this passage, therefore making it unclear which characters are talking.

nature of knowledge; this because 'knowledge' here is portrayed as having an eternal disposition.

(76:8-24) ⲡⲁⲗⲓⲛ ⲟⲛ ϥⲛⲁⲥⲓⲛⲉ ⲙⲡⲙⲉϩ ϣⲟⲙⲉⲧ ⲛⲥⲟⲡ ⲛϭ ⲡⲓⲫⲱⲥⲧⲏⲣ ⲛⲧⲉ ϯⲅⲛⲱⲥⲓⲥ ϩⲛ ⲟⲩⲛⲟϭ ⲛⲛⲉⲟⲟⲩ ϩⲓⲛⲁ ϫⲉ ⲉϥⲉϣⲱϫⲡ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϩⲙ ⲡⲓⲥⲡⲉⲣⲙⲁ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲛⲱϩⲉ ⲙⲛ ⲛⲓϣⲏⲡⲉ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲭⲁⲙ ⲙⲛ ⲓⲁⲫⲉⲑ ϫⲉ ⲉϥⲉϣⲱϫⲡ ⲛⲁϥ ⲛϩⲉⲛϣⲏⲛ ⲛⲣⲉϥϯ ⲟⲩⲧⲁϩ. ⲁⲩⲱ ϥⲛⲁⲥⲱⲧⲉ ⲛⲛⲉⲩⲯⲩⲭⲏ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϩⲙ ⲡⲉϩⲟⲟⲩ ⲙⲡⲙⲟⲩ ϫⲉ ⲡⲓⲡⲗⲁⲥⲙⲁ ⲧⲏⲣϥ ⲉⲧⲁϥϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϩⲙ ⲡⲓⲕⲁϩ ⲉⲧⲙⲟⲟⲩⲧ. ⲥⲉⲛⲁϣⲱⲡⲉ ϩⲁ ⲧⲉϫⲟⲩⲥⲓⲁ ⲙⲡⲙⲟⲩ ⲛⲏ ⲇⲉ ⲉⲧⲙⲉⲉⲩⲉ ⲉϯⲅⲛⲱⲥⲓⲥ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲓϣⲁ ⲉⲛⲉϩ ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ϩⲙ ⲡⲉⲩϩⲏⲧ ⲛⲥⲉⲛⲁⲧⲁⲕⲟ.

Once again, for the third time, the illuminator of knowledge will pass by in great glory, in order to leave (something) of the seed of Noah and the sons Ham and Japheth to leave for himself fruit-bearing trees[56]. And he will redeem their souls from the day of death. For the whole creation came from the dead earth will be under the authority of death. But those who reflect upon the knowledge of the eternal God in their heart(s) will not perish.

This fragment describes the third catastrophe; the destruction of the reprobate and the salvation of the elect seed of Seth. In it, the Illuminator of knowledge is presented, thereby suggesting the Illuminator to be in possession of knowledge.[57] *Apoc. Adam* understands the knowledge of the Illuminator to derive from the eternal God. Thus, this sentence (76:10) refers to the source of knowledge, namely God. Furthermore, knowledge in this passage is said to lead away from mortality (76:21-24). According to the text, the Illuminator comes down to earth in order to grant knowledge to the descendants of Seth[58]. He passes by in great glory, implanting gnosis in those individuals that belong to the seed of Seth. It is this knowledge that will lead to salvation; it is said to redeem their souls from the day of death.[59] According to this fragment, knowledge is foremost aimed at salvation.[60]

The final redemption, described in verse 76, is interrupted by a reflection about thirteen kingdoms presenting different and erroneous ideas about who the identity of the Illuminator.

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[56] The term 'leaving behind fruit bearing trees' according to Hedrick means; those who stay behind in the world producing converts to Gnosticism (Hedrick 2005, 125).

[57] In the Sethian Gnostic tradition, the four aeons and illuminators of Autogenes are Harmozel, Oroiael, Daveithe and Eleleth. Autogenes being a member of the divine triad as the Son of the Father (Invisible Spirit) and the Mother Barbelo. This concept of 'the Illuminators' is also prominent in the *Apocalypse of John* and the *Gospel of the Egyptians* (King 2003, 157). In the *Apoc. Adam* Seth functions more as the repository of knowledge than the revealer. This is conform the Jewish apocryphal writings (Filoramo 1990, 112).

[58] The *Apoc. Adam* is often unclear as to whether knowledge is already available to the seed of Seth, or continuously supplied.

[59] Compare *Apoc. Adam* 76: 16-18.

[60] Salvation has a diverse meaning. In the Hebrew Bible the word may refer to deliverance by God from almost any kind of evil, whether it would be temporal, material or spiritual. The Israelites first thought salvation to be a deliverance in material sense and deliverance of their nation. But as their sense of moral evil developed, salvation received an ethical meaning. Later on, when the idea of a Messiah developed, a deliverance from sin was interwoven with the Messianic Age (Douglas 1974, 874).

These ideas are rooted in pagan mythology or biblical traditions[61]. It is only the fourteenth generation, a kingless generation, who is said to know the true nature of the Illuminator and to understand the knowledge that he brings.

(82:19-25) ϯⲅⲉⲛⲉⲁ ⲇⲉ ⲛⲛⲁⲧⲣ ⲣⲣⲟ ⲉⲅⲣⲁⲓ ⲉⲭⲱⲥ ⲭⲱ ⲙⲙⲟⲥ ⲭⲉ ⲁⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲥⲱⲧⲡ ⲙⲙⲟϥ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϩⲛ ⲛⲓⲉⲱⲛ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ. [ⲁ]ϥⲧⲣⲉ ⲟⲩⲅⲛⲱⲥⲓⲥ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲓⲁⲧ[ⲭ]ⲱϩⲙ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲧⲙⲉ ϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲛ[ⲍⲏⲧ]ϥ.

But the generation without a king over it says that God chose him from all the aeons. He caused a knowledge of the undefiled one of truth to come to be [in] him.

This passage explains how the kingless generation was aware of the Illuminator and understood his knowledge, very much unlike the thirteen kingdoms preceding it. According to this text, it is the eternal God who gave the Illuminator true knowledge, thereby making the eternal God the source of knowledge. Thus, this passage can be grouped under the context of the source of knowledge.

(83:8-23) ⲧⲟⲧⲉ ϭⲉⲛⲁⲱϣ ⲉⲃ[ⲟ]ⲗ ϩⲛ ⲟⲩⲛⲟϭ ⲛⲥⲙⲏ ⲛϭⲓ ⲛⲓⲗⲁⲟⲥ ⲉⲩⲭⲱ ⲙⲙⲟⲥ ⲭⲉ ⲛⲁⲓⲁⲧⲥ ⲛⲧⲯⲩⲭⲏ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲛⲓⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲉⲧⲙⲙⲁⲩ ⲭⲉ ⲁⲩⲥⲟⲩⲱⲛ ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ϩⲛ ⲟⲩⲅⲛⲱⲥⲓⲥ ⲛ[ⲧ]ⲉ ⲧⲙⲉ. ⲥⲉⲛⲁⲱⲛϩ ϣⲁ ⲛⲉ[ⲱ]ⲛ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲛⲉⲱⲛ ⲭⲉ ⲙⲡⲟⲩⲧⲁⲕⲟ ϩⲛ ⲧⲉⲩⲉⲡⲓⲑⲩⲙⲓⲁ ⲙⲛ ⲛⲓⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲙⲡⲟⲩⲭⲉⲕ ⲛⲓϩⲃⲏⲩⲉ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲛⲓ ϭⲟⲙ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲁⲗⲗⲁ ⲁⲩⲁϩⲉⲣⲁⲧⲟⲩ ⲙⲡⲉϥⲙⲧⲟ ϩⲛ ⲟⲩⲅⲛⲱⲥⲓⲥ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲛⲑⲉ ⲛⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ ⲉⲁϥⲉⲓ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϩⲛ ⲟⲩⲕⲱϩⲧ ⲙⲛ ⲟⲩⲥⲛⲟϥ.

Then the peoples will cry out with a great voice saying 'Blessed is the soul of those men because they have known God with knowledge of the truth! They shall live forever because they have not been corrupted by their desire along with the angels, nor have they accomplished the works of the powers, but they have stood in his presence in a knowledge of God like light that has come forth from fire and blood.

This unit makes a clear-cut distinction between the seed of Seth and those of Noah during the apocalyptic times. It is not the seed of Seth that has been corrupted by a desire for material matters. Quite the opposite, they stand in presence of knowledge deriving from the eternal God; they understand this spiritual knowledge and act accordingly. Hence, it is only the Gnostics that possess true knowledge, resulting in a blessed situation in which their souls will live forever. The text does not speak of the soul's removal from this earth to another place. Thus, this passage informs us again about the aim of knowledge; eternal life for the soul.

What can we remark about the meaning of the sentence 'But they stood in his presence in a knowledge of the God like light that has come forth from fire and blood'. The meaning of this sentence is puzzling because of the words 'light that has come forth from fire and blood'.

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[61] Scopello 2007, 344

How should we understand this light? Is it better, clearer, warmer than light from fire and or wood? Light deriving from fire and blood initially does not give the impression of a Gnostic connotation, because fire and blood are material elements whilst Gnostics regard the spiritual as far more essential than the material. However, what if the word 'blood' has another meaning than the sticky liquid fluid in a human body? What if blood refers to a state of hardship or perseverance in order to emphasize the moral contrast between the seed of Seth and the seed of Noah? If we follow this explanation, the sentence makes far more sense. It would imply that the seed of Seth is more superior on moral grounds than the seed of Noah. The interpretation of blood as a state of hardship or perseverance puts the sentence in an interesting perspective.

(85:12-22) ⲉⲧⲃⲉ ⲡⲁⲓ ⲥⲉⲛⲁϯ ⲣⲁⲛ ⲉⲣⲟⲟⲩ ϫⲉ ⲛⲓϣⲁϫⲉ ⲛⲧⲉ ϯⲁⲫⲑⲁⲣⲥⲓⲁ [ⲙⲛ ϯ]ⲙⲛⲧⲙⲉ ⲛⲛⲏ ⲉⲧⲥⲟⲟⲩⲛ [ⲙ]ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲛϣⲁ ⲉⲛⲉϩ ϩⲛ ⲟⲩ[ⲥ]ⲟⲫⲓⲁ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲟⲩⲅⲛⲱⲥⲓⲥ ⲙⲛ ⲟⲩⲥⲃⲱ ⲛⲧⲉ ϩⲉⲛⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ϣⲁ ⲉⲛⲉϩ ϫⲉ ϥⲥⲟⲟⲩⲛ ⲛϩⲱⲃ ⲛⲓⲙ.

Therefore they will be named, "The Words of Imperishability [and] Truth, for those who know the eternal God in wisdom of knowledge and teaching of angels forever, for he knows all things.

When it comes to the context of this word 'knowledge' we can be concise. The word 'knowledge' refers to those who have knowledge of the eternal God; i.e. the Gnostics themselves. Hence the context of this gnosis refers to the owner of knowledge. This is a type of context we have not encountered so far.

There is another aspect of this sentence that is interesting. It states an ambiguity towards the exact nature of the revelation. Within the sentence given above, it is unclear what 'the words of imperishability and truth' are supposed to refer to. Are these 'words' as in the words from which the whole revelation of Adam is written? Or do these 'words' refer to previous preceding passage (85:1-9) where it reads: 'Their fruit does not wither. But they will be known up to the great aeons, because the words they have kept, of the God of the aeons, were not committed to the book nor were they written. But angelic [beings] will bring them, whom all the generations of men will not know'.[62]? This passage speaks of the Gnostics[63] and of 'words of the God and the aeons' which have not been written. It appears as if this passage opposes the revelation presented in *Apoc. Adam*. The opposition lies in the notion that the passage in 85:1-9 relates to words that have not been written down. These words can therefore

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[62] *Apoc Adam* 85:1-9
[63] Their fruits, referring to the Gnostics. See about fruit bearing trees in Hedrick 2005, 125

not be the words in *Apoc. Adam* because we have just read these words. It could be that verses 85:1-9 should be understood as referring to an additional revelation; one besides *Apoc. Adam* that is unwritten and unknown.[64]

(85:19-32) ⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲉ ⲛⲓⲁⲡⲟⲕⲁⲗⲩⲯⲓⲥ ⲉⲧⲁ [ⲁ]ⲇⲁⲙ ϭⲁⲗⲡⲟⲩ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲛⲥⲏⲑ ⲡⲉϥ ϣⲏⲣⲉ. ⲁⲩⲱ ⲁⲡⲉϥϣⲏⲣⲉ ⲧⲁⲙⲉ ⲧⲉϥⲥⲡ[ⲟ]ⲣⲁ ⲉⲣⲟⲟⲩ. ⲧⲁⲓ ⲧⲉ ϯⲅⲛⲱⲥⲓⲥ ⲛⲛⲁⲡⲟⲕⲣⲩⲫⲟⲛ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲁⲇⲁⲙ ⲉⲧⲁϥⲧⲁⲁⲥ ⲛⲥⲏⲑ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲡⲓϫⲱⲕⲙ ⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲁⲃ ⲡⲉ ⲛⲛⲏ ⲉⲧⲥⲟⲟⲩⲛ ⲛϯⲅⲛⲱⲥⲓⲥ ⲛⲉⲛⲉϩ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϩⲓⲧⲟⲟⲧⲟⲩ ⲛⲛⲓⲗⲟⲅⲟⲅⲉⲛⲏⲥ ⲙ[ⲛ] ⲛⲓⲫⲱⲥⲧⲏⲣ ⲛⲁⲧⲧⲁⲕⲟ ⲛⲏ [ⲉⲧⲁⲩ] ⲉⲓ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϩⲛ ϯⲥⲡ[ⲟ]ⲣⲁ ⲉⲧⲟⲩ[ⲁⲃ] ⲓⲉⲥⲥⲉⲩⲥ ⲙⲁ[ⲍ]ⲁⲡⲉⲩⲥ [ⲓⲉⲥⲥⲉ]ⲇⲉⲕⲉⲩⲥ [ⲡⲓ]ⲙⲟⲟⲩ ⲉⲧⲟ[ⲛϩ] ⲧⲁⲡⲟ[ⲕⲁⲗⲩ]ⲯⲓⲥ ⲛⲁⲇ[ⲁⲙ].

These are the revelations which Adam made known to Seth his son. And his son taught his seed about them. This is the hidden knowledge of Adam, which he gave to Seth, which is the holy baptism of those who know the eternal knowledge through those born of the word and the imperishable illuminators, who came from the holy seed: Yesseus, Mazareus, Yessedekeus, [The Living] Water. The Apocalypse of Adam.

These sentences mark the final page of *Apoc. Adam*, emphasizing the revelatory nature of these words and the relation between Adam and Seth.[65] *Apoc. Adam* is regarded as the ultimate realization of knowledge 'this is the knowledge of the Apocalypse of Adam'. This final passage relates to the nature of knowledge for the reason that it explains what the knowledge entails; it is the revelation of Adam to his son Seth. Again, the text seems to refer to another type of knowledge than the knowledge given in *Apoc. Adam*. The passage initially states that 'this is the knowledge of the Apocalypse of Adam'. It continues by stating that 'this knowledge is the holy baptism for those who know the eternal knowledge'. The latter statement implies that there are two kinds of knowledge, first the knowledge from *Apoc. Adam* that functions as the holy baptism, and second, the eternal knowledge.

To conclude my search for the different contexts in which the word 'knowledge' is used in the *Apoc. Adam*, I can say the following. The word 'knowledge' in *Apoc. Adam* mostly refers towards the contexts of source, nature and aim of knowledge. To present our study with some numbers we can see that a context wherein the source of knowledge is referred to occurs five times. It is once described as coming through God, Eve, Adam and Seth to the Gnostics. In the remaining references to the source of knowledge is identified with the eternal God. To summarize what is said about the nature of knowledge, we can conclude that it is understood to imply information about life, the eternal, or specifically refers to the text *Apoc. Adam*. The

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[64] As interesting as the idea of another unwritten revelation besides *Apoc. Adam* may be, it needs study beyond the scope of this paper in order to be well-founded.
[65] The term 'holy baptism' should not be understood as material baptism with water, but as baptism by the spirit (Hedrick 2005, 17; 185-201).

text also hints at the nature of the demiurge's knowledge: in this case the nature of knowledge is being evil. Concerning the context of the aim of knowledge, we have seen that both eternal life and salvation from death are mentioned.

We have also seen a few passages in which a reference to an educational and religious moral context of the word 'knowledge' is made. For instance, the religious moral context indicated that Gnostics have a sinless and pure heart. Concerning the educational context of knowledge, fragments from *Apoc. Adam*s pointed out that knowledge was taught from Eve, to Adam, to Seth. Knowledge being taught from Seth to the Gnostics is however not an understanding arising from the text. We have seen that Gnostics receive knowledge, but how exactly this proceeds remains uncertain. Finally, we saw that the text specifies the owners of knowledge; these are the Gnostics.

5.0   Proverbs

5. 1   A general introduction to the book of Proverbs

The book of *Proverbs* is included in the section Writings of the Hebrew Bible. Together with *Ecclesiasticus* (Qoholeth) and *Job*, *Proverbs* belongs to the Wisdom literature of the Hebrew Bible. 'Wisdom literature embodies knowledge' and is therefore valuable for this investigation.[66] In the first part of this chapter I will present a brief overview of the composition of the book of *Proverbs*. Date of composition, authors, audience and social setting of *Proverbs* will be among the topics that will be discussed. The second part of this chapter will give an extended discussion of the meaning of the noun דעת (knowledge) in *Proverbs*. In order to attain a well-balanced meaning of the noun 'knowledge', I will proceed by firstly singling out all those verses in *Proverbs* containing the noun דעת (knowledge). Next, I will refer to the several types of context that have been distinguished in the previous chapter. These types of context will be used to discuss several aspects about the meaning of 'knowledge' in this particular text. Every type of context comprises a number of verses. All the verses will be discussed in relation to the type of context they belong to. Whereas some verses can be fitted within one or more types of contexts, others will not match any contexts. My discussion will only include those verses that relate to at least one type of context.

Dating Proverbs

The notion that *Proverbs* was composed and written in the tenth century B.C.E. by king Solomon, according to *Proverbs* 1:1, was already dismissed at the end of the nineteenth century. C.H. Toy instead suggests that the oldest parts of *Proverbs* can be dated back to 400 B.C.E. while *Proverbs* as a complete work is presumed to be dated around 200 B.C.E..[67] Others, like Franz Delitzsch, argue that some parts of *Proverbs* are pre-exilic material, although he doubted whether these parts could be attributed to Solomon himself.[68] Michael Fox holds that dating *Proverbs* is not 'quite germane' to its content; for *Proverbs* is a collection of sayings, written by an indefinite number of authors and collected over different generations. Fox argues in favor of a writing and editing process that began before 587 B.C.E., arguing that some verses refer to kingship as a present reality. Furthermore, because

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[66] Perdue 2000, 4
[67] Toy 1899, xxvi
[68] Delitzsch 1891, ix-x

Ben Sira[69] was strongly influenced by *Proverbs*, the writing/editing process came to an end before the early second century BCE. This final date of the editing process is similar to Toy's view.[70] To be brief, the exact time of origin is hard to indicate, but the final process of editing lay probably roughly around 200 BCE.

The authors of Proverbs

King Solomon is mentioned twice (1:1 & 10:1) as the author of *Proverbs* in the text itself. Besides Solomon an indefinite number of *wise men* or *sages* are said to be responsible for the sayings in *Proverbs* (Proverbs 22:17 & 24:23). Two sages are explicitly named, Agur son of Jakeh in *Proverbs* 30:1 and king Lemuel's Mother in *Proverbs* 31:1. Scholarly discussion concerning the authors of *Proverbs* has focused on the possibility of foreign influences. For instance, parallels between the Egyptian text *The teaching of Amenope* and *Proverbs* have been widely discussed. Although an agreement concerning the foreign influences in *Proverbs* will probably never be reached, we can safely say that *Proverbs* was part of an international intellectual milieu and literary genre. This milieu not only thrived in Egypt, but also in Mesopotamia and parts of the Semitic world.[71]

The social setting of the authors of Proverbs

The idea that *Proverbs* was a product of the royal court and a scribal class was introduced by G. von Rad. This scholar held the opinion that the development of the social realities of Israel followed those of Egypt and Mesopotamia. Hence similar to Egypt and Mesopotamia, the privileged social classes had to be responsible for the production and editing process of the wisdom literature, including *Proverbs*.[72] Besides the mention of Solomon (1:1 ; 10:1), who is presumed to be a more mythical figure than a historical one ,[73] there is only one other explicit reference to a royal court which occurs in *Proverbs* verse 25:1. This verse refers to the "men of Hezekiah"[74] as the author and editors of the subsequent verses 25-29. Due to the lack of evidence supporting the role of the royal court and a scribal class in the development of *Proverbs*, the notion arose that *Proverbs* was the product of the royal court but the product of

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[69] *Ben Sira* is a Wisdom book which was written in Hebrew around 180 BCE. Greek and Syriac translations are available to us now.
[70] Fox 2000, 6
[71] Whybray 1995, 6-14
[72] Whybray 1995, 19
[73] Whybray 1995, 19
[74] According to the Hebrew Bible, Hezekiah was king of Judah approximately between 715-686 BCE.

a diverse authors.[75] However, this suggestion is not sustained by strong evidence either, though the work of R.N. Whybray gives some support to the latter view. He examined the range of meanings of the terms *wisdom* and *to be wise* in the Old Testament. Whybray pointed out that these terms included a wide range of connotations including a general sense of skill, ability or intelligence. These words were not used in order to refer to a membership of a particular profession. Based on the meaning of the terms *wisdom* and *to be wise*, Whybray suggest that *Proverbs* was not likely the product of a single scribal class, but derived from a wider range of authorships. Therefore we can conclude that it cannot be argued that terms like *wise men* in *Proverbs* refer to a special class.[76]

The audience and their social setting

Parental teaching is seen as the normal method of education during the Old Testament period. In addition it is considered likely that priests, prophets and wise men could have supplemented parental teaching. Again the lack of sufficient evidence concerning the existence of schools makes assumptions regarding this topic very uncertain. Even though the existence of a literary product like *Proverbs* suggests that some school or scribal tradition existed, there is not enough proof to support any particular theory regarding the details of the audience of *Proverbs*.[77]

The Structure of Proverbs

Proverbs can be divided into six different parts according to the different histories of compositions. Some parts can also be subdivided in relation to different subjects or preferred proverb types.[78]

1a.   Introduction (1:2-7)

1b.   The proverbs of Solomon, the son of David, King of Israel (1:1-9:18)

2.   The proverbs of Solomon (10:1-22:16))

3.   The words of the wise (22:17-24:22)

4.   These also are of the wise (24:23-34)

5.   These also are the proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah, King of Judah transmitted (25:1-29:27)

6.   Appendices (30:1-31:31)

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[75]Murphy 1981, 8
[76]Whybray 1974, 135
[77]Whybray 1995, 22-27
[78] Fox 2000, 5; Perdue 2007, 47

6a.   Words of Agur son of Yapeth the Massaite (30:1-14)

6b.   Numerical epigrams (30:15-33)

6c   The words of Lemuel, King of Massa, which his mother taught him (31:1-9)

6d   The Excellent Woman (31:10-31)

5.2   The meaning of דעת in Proverbs

Before we turn to the analyses of the meaning of the word 'knowledge' in the book of *Proverbs* in the following paragraph it is good to know that the book of *Proverbs* does not present a continuous story. On the contrary, it is a collection of sayings, poems and guiding principles written and collected by several persons. The main purpose of this collection is to make its readers seek for a higher morality, while offering guidance towards knowledge, piety and discipline. In short, one can read it as an instruction, containing short sayings about life.[79]

In this paragraph I will group the verses mentioning the word דעת according to the different types of context we have already encountered in the previous chapter. Grouping all these verses according to context is necessary because it will help us differentiate and analyse the meaning of the word 'knowledge' in a structured manner. The analyses in the previous chapters have specified six types of context. I will first relate those verses in *Proverbs* that fit within these types of context. Next I will discuss the resuming verses in *Proverbs* and their types of context.

Religious moral context
In *Apoc. Adam* we have seen that 'knowledge' associates with religious moral conduct. Knowledge can for instance imply that a Gnostic individual has a no foul deed in his heart. In other terms, the individual has not been corrupted by his physical desires. The possession of knowledge in *Apoc. Adam* is a condition for proper religious behaviour. Proper behaviour is defined by a Gnostic community in relation to their religious values and rules. These religious values concerning behaviour have been placed in the text. In *Proverbs*, the search for a higher morality is essential. However, the search for a higher morality does not always have to be brought in relation with a religion. One can value the notion of honesty to a high degree

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[79] Perdue 2000, cover

without being religious. In line with this type of reasoning, knowledge may be a precondition for religious moral conduct, but for social moral conduct as well. Hence, I will make a distinction between religious moral context and social moral context below.

From the total of 38 verses containing the noun דעת eight verses can be placed under the type of context called religious moral conduct. These verses have been chosen because they explicitly refer to a divine ruler and contain a verb referring to some kind of behaviour. Within these eight verses, the tetragrammaton יהוה is mentioned six times, the Lord אלהים once, and godless man חנף once. In verse 3:20 the third singular possessive pronoun is used, indicating Gods wisdom.

(1:7) יראת יהוה ראשית דעת חכמה ומוסר אוילים בזו

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, fools despise wisdom and instruction.

(1:29) תחת כי-שנאו דעת ויראת יהוה לא בחרו

Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the LORD.

(2:5) אז תבין יראת יהוה ודעת אלהים תמצא

Then you will understand the fear of God, and find the knowledge of the LORD.

(2:6) כי יהוה יתן חכמה מפיו דעת ו תבונה

For the LORD gives wisdom, from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.

(3: 20) בדעתו תהומות נבקעו ושחקים ירעפו טל

By his knowledge the deeps broke open, and the clouds drop down the dew.

(9: 10) תחלת חכמה יראת יהוה ודעת קדשים בינה

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge Holy One is insight.

(11: 9) בפה חנף ישחת רעהו ובדעת צדיקים רנה

With their mouths the godless would destroy their neighbours, but by knowledge the righteous are delivered.

(12: 22) עיני יהוה נצרו דעת ויסף דברי בגד

The eyes of the LORD keep watch over knowledge, but he overthrows the words of the faithless.

The context of the term 'knowledge' in the verses above refer to religious moral conduct. There are several actions described that will bring individuals closer to knowledge. Fear of the Lord is mentioned six times. It is the action 'fear of God' that will lead to knowledge דעת. Knowledge is not the only property one can gain through fear of the Lord. Wisdom חכמה, instruction מוסר, understanding תבונה and insight בינה are also qualities which can be gained. Such properties prove the moral conduct of human beings. However, knowledge, wisdom, instruction, understanding and insight do not necessarily have a religious character; to be wise

does not necessarily mean to be wise in a religious sense. However, because the method to gain these qualities is the fear of God, these qualities have a religious character, aiming at religious desirable conduct. According to R.N. Whybray the fear of the Lord, written in verse 1:7 is the main theme of the first eight chapters of *Proverbs*[80].

Two verses have not been discussed so far, namely verses 11:9 & 22:12. The superiority of knowledge is stressed in verse 11:9. One can understand this verse to mean two things. First, through knowledge the righteous can save himself from destruction, or second, through knowledge the righteous one can save his fellow-citizens.[81] Both interpretations give knowledge a prominent place regarding the salvation of the self and men's fellow-citizens. However, this sentence does not give any specifics on the aim of salvation. Does one need salvation from bad habits, unmoral behaviour, or maybe from physical life? Perhaps the aim of salvation will become clearer in verse 22:12. God is perceived as the guardian of knowledge in this verse. God will protect those who speak of knowledge and wisdom, while punishing those who slander wisdom and knowledge[82]. It appears that knowledge will lead to protection from God, although it is not specified in this verse from what or whom one needs protection.

We can approach the aim of salvation[83] by viewing the thematic contrast which is prominent in *Proverbs*. Within *Proverbs* a contrast is made between the righteous wise and the wicked fool, this results largely in antithetical sayings of all sorts. The practices and virtues of the wise will lead to the well-being of the individual and their social order. In contrast, the practices and vices of the wicked will result in abomination and destruction.[84] As a result the aim of salvation seems to lie in the well-being of the individual and their social order. Knowledge will lead to proper behaviour; making one live a virtues life. This life full of virtues will be rewarded by God by ensuring the well-being of the individual and the social order. From the religious moral context of knowledge we will now proceed to the moral religious context of knowledge below.

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[80] Whybray 1994, 23
[81] Whybray 1994, 179
[82] Whybray 1994, 321
[83] By salvation I mean deliverance from material evil, leading to general well-being of the individual and the community (based on Douglas 1974, 874).
[84] Perdue 2000, 166-167

Social moral context

The ethics described in *Proverbs* do not only relate to Judaism, but may also relate to more general notions of a group's social reality, without specifically mentioning a God or religion. Five verses can be placed within the social moral conduct type of context. These verses can be distinguished from the other verses by their intention to order or motivate the audience to behave in a certain manner. The sentences describing a command or instructions are easily recognized as the imperative is used to indicate an order. Accordingly, the imperative* construction is used in *Proverbs* verses 8:10; 14:7; 19:27 and 23:12. The infinitive constructus in verse 5:2 (לשמור) indicates that this verse is a suggestion rather than an order because it does not use the imperative, but it still contains a wish for the audience to behave in a certain way.

(5:2) לשמור מזמות ודעת שפתיך ינצרו

So that you may hold on to prudence and your lips may guard knowledge.

(8:10) קחו* מוסרי ואל כסף ודעת מחרוץ נבחר

Take my instruction instead of silver and knowledge rather than choice gold.

(14: 7) לך* מנגד לאיש כסיל ובל ידעת שפתי דעת

Leave the presence of a fool, for there you do not find words of knowledge.

(19: 27) חדל* בני לשמע מוסר לשגות מאמרי דעת

Cease straying, my child, from the words of knowledge, in order that you may hear instruction.

(23: 12) הביאה* למוסר לבך ואזנך לאמרי־דעת

Apply your mind to instruction and your ear to words of knowledge.

Desired moral conduct can be found among all the verses described above. I will consider them briefly below and give a more detailed discussion about the relation between moral conduct and knowledge afterwards. Verse 5:2 describes upholding prudence will lead to knowledge.[85] One is asked to value instruction and knowledge above silver and gold in verse 8:10. Thus, people are commanded to stop chasing material wealth and to pursue knowledge instead. Verse 14:7 directs the audience to move away from foolish people because they are not likely to give you knowledge. In addition verses 19:27 and 23:12 contain two other commands in favour of knowledge, namely to cease straying and to perceive knowledge.

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[85] Whybray 1981, 85

Acquiring knowledge is essential to moral conduct, because it is implied that by listening to knowledge and speaking of knowledge, one is able to behave in a moral way. These sentences do not emphasize whether actions are right or wrong. Instead it is stressed that perceiving knowledge will lead to good conduct. The human senses are extremely important in this process, because it is through the mind, ears and lips that knowledge is known.

The idea of moral conduct is also present in a more practical form. There are many practical suggestions mentioned in *Proverbs* regarding living a moral life. Warnings against impurity and infidelity are frequently mentioned (5:1-23). These warnings are directed against the company of a 'loose woman', who seduces men to impurity and infidelity. Many other practical moral rules can be found in verse 6:1-35. For instance, it is expected of men to work like an ant (6:6), keep from lying or testifying falsely (6:17-19). These practical aspects of Proverbs complement the more philosophical nature of *Proverbs*. By providing practical instructions on how to behave, it becomes easier to live according to the moral ideals of *Proverbs*. In other words, the moral message is more accessible for people by introducing a practical instructions on 'how to behave properly'.

To sum up, in *Proverbs* knowledge plays an important role in the proper moral behavior of the individual. But how does knowledge relate to the community? According to Leo Perdue the social function of the instructions regarding moral conduct in *Proverbs* lies primarily in socialization. The pupil is initiated into the social reality of the teacher. Once the socialization comes to an end, or in other words, the student has learned enough, a 'generalized other' has been created.[86] Thus, the teacher emphasizes what sort of conduct is moral and what is immoral. In addition, these two groups of behavior, moral and unmoral, are linked with the individual properties of knowledge and ignorance. From here, the opposition of the righteous and the wicked can be created. Thus, to label a group as 'having the knowledge to behave ethically' creates an in-group and an out-group based on knowledge. An interesting comparison can be made between *Proverbs* and *Apoc. Adam* on creating an in- and out-group based on knowledge. However, we will leave this for the comparison in chapter seven and resume with the source of knowledge in *Proverbs*.

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[86] Perdue 2000, 13

The source of knowledge

This type of context raises questions such as whether *Proverbs* mentions a source of knowledge, whether it is hidden or public, whether knowledge derives from a Godlike or an angelic figure, or from humans, dreams, oracles or writings. Three verses relate to the source of knowledge in *Proverbs*. We have encountered the source of knowledge already in *Daniel* and in *Apoc. Adam*. In these two texts the source of knowledge refers mostly to the highest being, namely God in their cosmology. In *Proverbs* we will perhaps find more various sources of knowledge, because *Proverbs* belongs to a more general type of wisdom literature in contrast to the apocalyptic literature in *Daniel* and *Apoc. Adam*.

(2:6) כי יהוה יתן חכמה מפיו דעת ו תבונה

For the LORD gives wisdom, from his mouth come knowledge and understanding

(9:10) תחלת חכמה יראת יהוה ודעת קדשים בינה

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the holy one is insight

(30: 3) ולא־למדתי חכמה ודעת קדשים אדע

I have not learned wisdom, nor have I learned knowledge of the holy ones.

The first part of verse 2:6 states that God offers wisdom to mankind. In order to provide men with wisdom, God must also be the logically possessor of wisdom. For being able to give away wisdom, one needs to possess it. The latter part of verse 2:6 literally translates as 'from his mouth - knowledge and understanding'. This sentence contains an ambiguous meaning. It can be understood as God uttering knowledge and understanding, but it can also indicate that God offers knowledge and understanding to mankind, just as he provides wisdom. The latter interpretation is more plausible because it is in line with the first part of verse 2:6. Such as God bestows wisdom to mankind, so does He provide knowledge and understanding. Hence, this line of reasoning makes God not only the owner of wisdom, but also the possessor of understanding and knowledge.

In verses 9:10 and 30:3 דעת קדשים can be understood as 1) knowledge of sacredness, 2) knowledge possessed by the holy ones and 3) knowledge of the Holy One. In verse 9:10 יהוה is mentioned in the first part of the verse. Thus one could interpret דעת קדשים to mean the knowledge of the Holy One, which makes God the source of knowledge. In verse 30:3 דעת קדשים could refer to all three meanings, because they all fit with the context of the verse. In

verse 30:3 knowledge derives from something or someone sacred, but one cannot determine one of these options for certain.[87]

In conclusion, *Proverbs* does not mention the source of knowledge explicitly. However, from verses 2:6 and 9:10 one could argue that knowledge derives from God and that God is therefore the possessor of knowledge. Verse 30:3 does not present a clear picture of the source of knowledge except that it derives from a holy entity. *Proverbs* does not give us the variety of sources of knowledge we hoped to find.

The aim of knowledge

The previous two texts were quite specific concerning the aim of knowledge. *Apoc. Adam* refers explicitly to the salvation of the soul, while *Daniel* regards a prosperous life on earth as the aim of knowledge. Thus, this type of context describes the benefits of knowledge once it is secured. In the book of *Proverbs* many suggestions are made regarding the importance of gaining knowledge, but the aspect of 'what the aim of knowledge is' seems at first to be neglected. There are three sentences that discuss the aim of knowledge.

(2:10) כי תבוא חכמה בלבך ודעת לנפשך ינעם

For wisdom will come into your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul.

(9 :11) בפה חנף ישחת רעהו ובדעת צדיקים רנה

With their mouths the godless would destroy their neighbours, but by knowledge the righteous are delivered.

(24: 4) ובדעת חדרים ימלאו כל־הון יקר ונעים

By knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches.

The three verses above show a highly favorable account of knowledge. Once in the possession of knowledge, knowledge will have a pleasant effect on your soul (2:10). This sentence is rather imprecise as to the character of pleasantness. Pleasantness in this case may refer to acting righteousness, because ethics are an essential part of true knowledge in *Proverbs*. Verse 11:9 refers to the 'delivery of men' as the aim of knowledge. If the latter part of this verse is interpreted in relation with the former part, one could argue that the aim of knowledge is the 'righteous' being able to save themselves from an impious man. In addition, other verses in chapter eleven of *Proverbs* also mention the delivery of men, specifically from death (11:4) and general trouble (11:8).

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[87] Fox 2000, 855

Verse 24:4 should be read together with verse 24:3. From these verses it becomes clear that according to *Proverbs*, wisdom is precious. Wisdom is precious not only as a single entity, but also because it accompanies good sense and knowledge. Thus, true prosperity does not come from material wealth such as silver, gold and jewels (see also 8:10, 20:15, 24:4), but from wisdom, good sense and knowledge. Consequently, the aims of knowledge according to the verses above are true prosperity, safety from danger and acting righteously.

Another aim of knowledge can be found in the frequent use of antonyms in *Proverbs*. For instance, righteousness and knowledge all have particular antonyms in *Proverbs*, namely foolishness, wickedness and ignorance. The antonyms of wisdom versus foolishness, righteousness versus wickedness, knowledge versus ignorance, are an important characteristic of *Proverbs*. Therefore, I would like to suggest that another aim of knowledge is to prevent a 'specific state of not being' i.e. to *not* be ignorant or to *not* be stupid, as opposed to being wise or knowledgeable per se. Gaining knowledge guides a person away from wickedness, ignorance and foolishness, without making this person immediately a wise person, i.e. being one of the wise men. Consequently, knowledge has the aim of improving a person's moral behavior the concept of the 'wise men' could be argued to function as an example.

The educational and domestic context of knowledge.
Knowledge can be taught through several methods. In the previous chapters we have come across an educational type of context. This context implies that knowledge can be taught between persons. In *Proverbs* the transmission of knowledge from one generation to another overlaps with the domestic context of knowledge. The transmission of the offspring occurs moreover in a familial environment. I will discuss the domestic relation between the teacher and pupil below.

The domestic relations between teacher and pupil are apparent in *Proverbs* for instance in the instructions in chapters 1-9. Each instruction is introduced by the words 'my son' or 'my sons' in the first two or four lines. These terms indicate to the existence of actual sons or pupils.[88] Furthermore the warnings against loose woman or a wicked woman, are directed towards a masculine student. The instructions in *Proverbs* are aimed toward the education of

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[88] See for instance *Proverbs* 1:8, 1:10, 2:1, 3:1 and 4:1.

the community's sons and directing their lives. In *Proverbs* the father is understood to be the teacher or tutor giving the instructions. His teachings are referred to as his instruction, his teaching, his wisdom, his commands or his words (1:8, 2:1, 3:1 and 4:1). The relationship between father and son is also idealized with the words: 'for the Lord reproves the ones he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights'. By comparing the father-son relationship with such a high valued relation as the God-man relationship, the importance of the former is emphasized. Furthermore, it is not only the father who can function as a tutor, but the mother as well. In verse 1:8 it is written: 'Hear, my child, your father's instruction, and do not reject your mother's teaching'. Although the son-mother relationship is not as prominent as the father-son relationship in the context of education, it plays some role in the education of Israel's sons.[89]

Parents and especially fathers according to *Proverbs* play an important role in the education of their offspring. Education is an important feature in gaining knowledge. However, this is not the only way. We have seen in *Daniel* and *Apoc. Adam* that knowledge can also be granted by God. Whether knowledge is granted or produced by education depends often on the nature of knowledge, and we will return to the nature of knowledge later on. Besides educational and God-given knowledge, there are other methods as well. Sometimes education alone does not fulfill the task, but knowledge has to be learned through experience, intuition, or initiation. Several methods of acquiring knowledge will be presented below. This type of context will be named 'the method of gaining knowledge'.

Method of gaining knowledge
The verses expressing 'a method of gaining knowledge' describe the manners in which knowledge could be attainable. These verses can be distinguished from the other verses by asking 'how should I proceed in order to gain knowledge?'. Hence, if a verse answers this question satisfactorily, it should be grouped under this type of context. We can already say that the answer will probably refer to a particular kind of behaviour, i.e. what one should or should not do. Concerning this type of context we have much material to work on, a total of twelve verses will be discussed.

(7 :1) יראת יהוה ראשית דעת חכמה ומוסר אוילים בזו

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[89] See for more information about 1) village society based on kinship and 2) how much folk wisdom taken into the literary tradition in Perdue 2000, 23-24.

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, fools despise wisdom and instruction.

(1: 29) תחת כי-שנוא דעת ויראת יהוה לא בחרו

Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the LORD.

(2: 5) אז תבין יראת יהוה ודעת אלהים תמצא

Then you will understand the fear of LORD, and find the knowledge of God.

(2: 5) לשמור מזמות ודעת שפתיך ינצרו

So that you may hold on to prudence and your lips may guard knowledge.

(12: 1) אהב מוסר אהב דעת ושנא תוכחת בער

Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but those who hate to be rebuked are stupid.

(14:7) לך מנגד לאיש כסיל ובל ידעת שפתי דעת

Leave the presence of a fool, for there you do not find words of knowledge.

(15: 14) לב נבון יבקש דעת ופני כסילים ירעה אולת

The mind of one who has understanding seeks knowledge, but the mouths of fools feed on folly.

(17: 27) חושך אמריו יודע דעת וקר רוח איש תבונה

One who spares words is knowledgeable, and who is cool in spirit has understanding.

(18: 15) לב נבון יקנה דעת ואזן חכמים תבקש דעת

An intelligent mind acquires knowledge and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.

(19: 27) חדל בני לשמע מוסר לשגות מאמרי דעת

Cease straying, my child, from the words of knowledge, in order that you may hear instruction.

(22: 17) הט אזנך ושמע דברי חכמים ולבך[90] תשית לדעתי

The words of the wise: incline your ear and hear my words, and apply your mind to my knowledge[91].

(23: 12) הביאה למוסר לבך ואזנך לאמרי-דעת

Apply your mind to instruction and your ear to words of knowledge.

Fearing the Lord is the most common method of gaining knowledge in *Proverbs*. Verse 1:7 describes that 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge'. In addition, verse 2:5 mentions that, fearing the Lord will give knowledge of God. Verse 1:29 is less clear about the method of gaining knowledge. It only describes that 'they did not choose to fear the Lord'. It stands to reason that the notion of 'fearing the Lord' should be obtained from this presentation of a negative version of verses 1:7 and 2:5. These three verses teach that fear of the Lord is a condition for knowledge. However, it does not mean that by fearing the Lord one will have

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[90] לב can be translated as heart, mind, inner man and will. According to BDB it should be translated in 22:17 and 23: 12 as inner man. But 'inner man' is not a modern expression, thus I translated it as mind.
[91] Tr. NRSV: teaching. Tr. MK: knowledge.

access to a complete kind of knowledge. Fear functions solely as a precondition. Thus, other steps ought to follow this first one, in order to attain and maintain knowledge.[92]

Verses 1:7, 1:29 and 2:5 refer to the fear of God as the means to acquire knowledge. Only through God can humans reach knowledge (2:6). According to these sentences, fear of God is *the* method of gaining knowledge. It is not entirely clear what the term fear entails in *Proverbs*. Is it the fear of punishment for misbehaving, is it an anxiety for the divine, or does it refer to some kind of respectable attitude towards God? Although this is unclear, it seems that a more progressive stage of fear is achievable. Through the state of simply fearing the Lord, a person can develop a certain understanding towards this fear (2:5), which will lead to knowledge. If knowledge is accessible through God, it gains a divine character. According to these verses, knowledge and the spiritual are related.

The other verses can be divided into two categories; first, the actions that will lead to knowledge, and, second, the actions from which one should refrain if one is to advance in knowledge. The verses belonging to the first category maintain that knowledge is achievable by loving discipline (12:1), following prudence (5:2), applying one's mind and ear to knowledge (22:17 & 23:12) and seeking knowledge with one's ear and mind (15: 14 & 18:15).

The main idea behind מוסר (discipline[93]) in verse 12:1 is to correct a moral fault.[94] Those who strive for morality will strive for knowledge. Even though people make moral faults and are rebuked accordingly, it is stated that they should make every effort towards discipline and thus towards knowledge. According to verse 12:1, knowledge is achievable through moral discipline. Verse 5:2 is rather straightforward: by keeping discretion one will be able to speak knowledgeable words. To apply one's mind to the knowledge of the wise is required in 22:17. To apply one's ears to knowledge is required in verse 23:12. Both verses 22:17 and 23:12 function as attention calls for the following verses. In verse 15:14 the intelligent mind seeks knowledge, and in verse 18:15 it is the intelligent mind that acquires knowledge and the ears of the wise that seek knowledge. Consequently, the ears seek for it, but it is the intelligent mind that obtains knowledge; it makes knowledge part of the individual.

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[92] An elaborate discussion on this subject can be found in Fox 2000, 69-71.
[93] Discipline is understood here as instruction or training in order to behave in a moral way (Clines, *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew.* Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2001, 177).
[94] Fox 2000, 546

The second category advises the reader against certain actions. In verse 14:7 the audience is persuaded to refrain from the company of foolish men, because they are said to express no knowledge. Verse 17:27 teaches that it is knowledgeable to be in command of one's speech, even if one is angry. It is better to maintain a cool spirit instead of being a hot-head or temperamental full. The first part of verse 19:27 does not seem to correspond with the second part of the same verse. It is therefore common to regard the first part as either an ironic question, or as an textual error[95]. The second part is, however, clear; it exhorts people not to wander off from knowledge, but to keep it in view.

The verses above can also be viewed from a more practical perspective. One of the best methods of gaining knowledge is to act good and wise. To give an example, in the fifth chapter it becomes clear that prudence leads to knowledge. In everyday life this means that men should stay away from a loose woman, that they should be happy with the woman whom they married (5:15-22). Furthermore, acting properly will not only lead you away from folly; and thus towards knowledge, but it will also give you life. Thus acting righteously will bring you towards knowledge, adultery and folly will lead you away from knowledge and wisdom. The practical aspect of gaining knowledge in *Proverbs* is essential because it supports the more conceptual ideas about morality and righteousness. In the passage below one can see how it is emphasized in *Proverbs* that if one does not listen to the instructions given, utter ruin will follow.

And now, my child, listen to me, and do not depart from the words of my mouth. Keep away from her, and do not go near the door of her house; or you will give your honor to others, and your years to the merciless, and strangers will take their fill of your wealth, and your labors will go to the house of an alien; and at the end of your life you will groan, when your flesh and body are consumed, and you say, "Oh, how I hated discipline, and my heart despised reproof! I did not listen to the voices of my teachers or incline my ear to instructors. Now I am in the point of utter ruin in the public assembly."[96]

In conclusion, we can say that in *Proverbs* knowledge is available to human beings through several methods. Fear of the Lord is the most frequently mentioned method. But other ways are also possible, such as loving discipline, following prudence, and avoidance from foolish men. In these verses several techniques are given. It is remarkably that all these verses present these methods of obtaining knowledge as universally achievable. They do not distinguish between people who can and cannot gain knowledge; they only distinguish between the

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[95] Fox 2000, 661
[96] *Proverbs* 5: 7-14

people who do and those who do not. Possessing knowledge, according to these verses, seems to be a matter of individual commitment rather than it being fixed beforehand. It is probably for this reason that those who do not choose knowledge are referred to as being foolish. Thus, an in-group and out-group distinction are based on people's individual choices rather than the (religious) community they belong to.

The nature of knowledge

The type of context which we have not considered in *Proverbs* to this point is the nature of knowledge. What does 'knowledge' refer to, what does it imply in *Proverbs*. We do not have much verses to work on. Two verses have been found relating to the nature of knowledge.

(9:10) תחלת חכמה יראת יהוה ודעת קדשים בינה

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the holy one is insight

(14: 6) בקש לץ חכמה ואין ודעת לנבון נקל

A scoffer seeks wisdom in vain, but knowledge is easy for one who understands.

Verse 9:10 reveals the nature of knowledge to be 'insight' and verse 14:6 only states that knowledge is 'easy to understand' for the righteous. However, this is not the only information we can extract from *Proverbs*. Throughout the whole book ethics are essential. These ethics are often crystallized in oppositions; the righteous versus the wicked, morality versus immorality, wisdom versus folly and so forth. From these particulars I would say that the nature of knowledge can be found within the ethics of a community. The nature of knowledge cannot be fixed, there is no fixed definition of 'knowledge' in *Proverbs*, because the ethics of a community require flexibility. A community is always changing; its social, cultural, economical, and natural environment alters. Thus, one cannot give a definition of 'knowledge', because this knowledge could become obsolete, resulting in a disintegration of the community. The nature of knowledge needs to be indistinct, otherwise it will not be beneficial to the community. Thus knowledge is maintained in changing situation by keeping the definition unclear. *Proverbs* does not explicitly describe what knowledge is, but emphasizes on proper behaviour and how this leads to knowledge. For instance by fearing the Lord or acting righteously. In *Proverbs* the process towards knowledge seems more valued than the knowledge itself.

A Summary

To sum up, the meaning of 'knowledge' is considered from several perspectives accroding to the types of context. The meaning of the word 'knowledge' according to the book of *Proverbs* can be described in the following way. In a religious moral context, it is the fear of the Lord that will lead to a desired conduct. Having knowledge, but also being wise, having understanding and insight will guide the individual to behave in a certain manner. This manner is said in *Proverbs* to be desired by God. In addition this conduct will lead to salvation. Thus, fearing the Lord will help the individual in gaining certain qualities, such as knowledge. It is this knowledge that will lead to the desired conduct and thereby to salvation. The religious aspect is frequently mentioned in the first part (1:1-9:18) of *Proverbs*, which serves as an introduction to the *Proverbs* collection and was added later[97].

The social moral context of knowledge can be described without explicit religious connotations. Knowledge in this context is essentially focused on the practical aspect of morality, i.e. 'how to behave' and 'what not to do'. For instance, by avoiding the company of foolish men, following prudence or by disregarding material wealth. This social context of knowledge exists out of a desired moral conduct without a religious aspect per se. Specific conduct will lead to knowledge, but this knowledge will not lead to salvation, in contrast to the religious moral context of knowledge.

The source of knowledge is not explicitly mentioned in the verses discussing knowledge. From the two verses 2:6 and 9:10 it could be argued that because knowledge derives from God, God is also the possessor of knowledge. In addition verse 30:3 presents knowledge as deriving from a holy entity, but the specifics of this entity are unclear. The aim of knowledge is -according to *Proverbs*- true prosperity, safety from danger and a security relating to pleasantness. In addition, knowledge can also be argued to function as a means to get away from wickedness, ignorance and foolishness, without making this person immediately a wise person. In this sense, knowledge has the aim of improving a person's moral behavior to an acceptable degree and the 'wise men' could be argued to function as an example.

Besides education within the domestic area and God-given wisdom, the most outstanding method of gaining knowledge is having fear of the Lord. Together with additional methods

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[97] Fox 2000, 6

such as, loving discipline, following prudence and refraining from interactions with foolish men. These methods of knowledge are presented in *Proverbs* as universally achievable. Gaining and therefore possessing knowledge becomes a matter of individual choice. This idea is in line with the absence of any concern with Israel or the Israelites in *Proverbs*[98]. Therefore it is believed that *Proverbs* has a variety of international sources and was not written for the Israelites alone. Finally, the nature of knowledge in *Proverbs* lies within the ethics of a community.

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[98] Whybray 1995, 1

6.0   The book of *Isaiah*

6.1   A general introduction to the book of *Isaiah*

The book of *Isaiah* is one of the prophetic books of the Hebrew Bible. In this chapter I will start out relating to the date and structure of the book. Next, I will discuss the meaning of the word 'knowledge' in the book of *Isaiah*. This will be done according to the types of context presented in the first chapter. Fourteen verses in *Isaiah* present the noun דעת. All these verses will be discussed in relation to one or more types of context.

Dating the book of Isaiah

The editing and writing process of *Isaiah* is a much debated subject and several approaches have been considered. From the book *Isaiah* verse 10:24 but also from other passages[99] it becomes clear that this text was written after Judea was defeated by Assyria. Therefore it is concluded that the text probably refers to the eighth century BCE. In the last decades of the twentieth century it has become common to perceive *Isaiah* as a compilation of several literary works. The notion of the prophet Isaiah as the only author of the text has thus been rejected. According to modern critics, the headings of the chapters mentioned in verses 1:1, 2:1, and 13:1 which refer to *Isaiah*'s testimony, were inserted at a later date than the time of composition of the core text.[100] Joseph Blenkinsopp argues that the first segments of *Isaiah* have been composed during the Persian period, and thus between the sixth and fourth century BCE.[101] Mathijs de Jong however argues that parts of *Isaiah* were already written in the eight century BCE.[102] His argument is in line with the time-references within the text, such as verse 10:24 and other passages.[103]

The final date of the writing and editing process can be derived from *Ben Sira* and the book of *Chronicles*. *Ben Sira* (180 BCE) was familiar with some chapters of *Isaiah* (*Ben Sira* 48:22-25). In addition, the author of *Chronicles* too refers to *Isaiah* in 32:32 'Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and his good deeds, are written in the vision of the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel'. As *Chronicles* was probably written in

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[99]*Isaiah* 2:1-5; 4:2-6; 10:20-27; 11:10-16
[100]Blenkinsopp 2000 I, 84
[101]Blenkinsopp 2000 I, 73-74
[102] De Jong 2007, 53
[103]*Isaiah* 2:1-5; 4:2-6; 10:20-27; 11:10-16

the second half of the fourth century, the editing process of *Isaiah* is believed to have ended during the fourth century BCE.[104]

Structure of Isaiah

The book of *Isaiah* has been divided by Bernard Duhm into three major parts that relate to the authors of the respected parts. *Isaiah* chapters 1-39 are thought by Duhm to have been written by the historical prophet *Isaiah* during the pre-exilic period. *Isaiah* chapters 40-55 he argues have been written by an anonymous prophet whom has been referred to as Deutero-Isaiah. He lived in Babylon around 540 BCE. The final part of *Isaiah*, chapters 56-66, is thought to be the work of a disciple from Deutero-Isaiah. He has come to be called Trito-Isaiah and is considered to live in Jerusalem between 538-515 BCE.[105] Duhm is not the only one to pose some order to the book of *Isaiah*. Several other divisions by other authors have been proposed as well. For instance Menahem Haran states that chapters 40-66 have been written by one author, he thinks this to be Deutero-Isiaiah, and not by two different ones. The only fluctuating factor accounting for a change in character was a change in environment, namely the move from Babylon to Jerusalem, which he argues to be responsible for the latter chapters 56-66 of *Isaiah*. By change in character Haran means the absence of references in chapters 49-55; there are no references to Babylon and Chaldea. This is in opposition to the chapters 40-48, where such a reference is definitely apparent. Haran thus concludes that the chapters 40-48 must have been proclaimed in Babylon whereas chapters 49-55 where written after the return of the Jews (including the author Deutero-Isaiah) to Palestine.[106]

Brevard Childs concludes that some structural divisions are clearly intentional and not – as is often thought – historical. He writes that 'it is a modern anachronism to require a clear and rational reason for every structural division'.[107] Furthermore, Childs states that early critics of prophetic literature emphasized on structural and editorial processes, while more modern scholars recognize 'the force of textualization of the oral tradition into a written corpus'[108]. In other words, early scholars believed that an oral shaping period preceded the writing and editing period. The text was thus already fixed before it was written down. According to a more modern view, this creative process did not stop at the moment the text was written

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[104] Blenkinsopp 2000 I, 73-74, 84
[105] Duhm 1922, 3; Holladay 1997, 193
[106] Holladay 1997, 193
[107] Childs 2001, 7
[108] Childs 2001, 2

down, but continued afterwards, making it much harder and maybe even impossible to determine the precise stages of composition in a historical accurate manner.

The view that *Isaiah* is a compilation rather than single text is also supported by the fact that there is an intertextual overlap between *Isaiah* and the Book of the Twelve. It is such that close similarities in text can be found between *Isaiah* 2:2-5 and Micah 4:1-5, and between Micah 1:8 and *Isaiah* 20:1-6. This intertextual overlap suggests that the editors of the prophetic material were allowed to attribute prophetic sayings to specific authors.[109] Again the occurrence of intertextual overlap suggests that the book of *Isaiah* is a compilation of texts rather than a single text.

6.2   The meaning of דעת in *Isaiah*

In previous chapters we found nine types of context for the meaning of the word 'knowledge'. These types of context involve religious moral conduct, social moral conduct, method of gaining knowledge, source of knowledge, educational context of knowledge, domestic context of knowledge, nature of knowledge, the aim and owner of knowledge. In this chapter I will first use these types of context to study the meaning of the word 'knowledge' in *Isaiah*. Before I begin with the religious moral context of knowledge, let me first make some general remarks about the book of *Isaiah* and the occurrence of the word 'knowledge'.

Within the book of *Isaiah*, the noun דעת or דעה[110] occurs twelve times. The analysis of the meaning of דעת in *Isaiah* demands a somewhat different approach from our earlier one in relation to Proverbs. This is because Proverbs and *Isaiah* belong to different genres; Proverbs belongs to wisdom literature whereas *Isaiah* to prophetic literature. A difference between wisdom literature and prophetic literature can in my view be found in the matter of (attributed) origin. Wisdom literature derives from a group of wise and educated men, while prophetic literature is said to derive from a single prophet and stands moreover in relation to a specific religion and God (in this case Judaism and their God). Most verses in Proverbs have an independent character, and can therefore often be understood individually. In contrast to Proverbs, the verses in *Isaiah* often belong to a larger unit. It is therefore that the verses of *Isaiah* will be discussed, to a larger degree, in relation to the surrounding verses.

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[109]Blenkinsopp 2000 I, 73-74
[110] דעה is a different spelling of דעת

To make some general remarks about the book of *Isaiah*, we can say that the book is attributed to the Jewish prophet and son of Amos called Isaiah. In general the book highlights the figure Isaiah and the prophetic message he brings forward. Its major themes are sin, judgment and possible salvation.[111] To give an example, Isaiah frequently urges the nation of Judah to repent their sins and to return to God, because of the fact that it is only God who can bring salvation. What is more, Isaiah predicts the coming of the Messiah and foretells the restoration of Israel and the future kingdom of God. Concisely, the book *Isaiah* presents a complicated relation between the Jewish nation and God, leading to salvation and the coming of a new heavenly kingdom. In this, Isaiah functions as its mediator.

Religious moral conduct

Ethics are an important theme in *Isaiah*. Israel's sinful status is already made apparent in the first chapter of *Isaiah* where it reads: 'Ah sinful nation, people laden with iniquity, offspring who do evil, children who deal corruptly, who have forsaken the Lord, who have despised the Holy One of Israel'[112]. Later on in this chapter Israel is asked by God: 'cease to do evil, learn to do good, seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphans, plead for the widow'[113]. Within *Isaiah* morality is also brought in relation to the concept of 'knowledge'. Three indications of דעת in *Isaiah* refer to religious moral conduct.

(5:13) לכן גלה עמי מבלי־דעת וכבודו מתי רעב והמונו צחה צמא

Therefore my people go into exile without knowledge, their nobles are dying of hunger, and their multitude is parched with thirst.

This verse 5:13 is part of the woe-series in *Isaiah* and is best to be understood in the context of verse 5:8-12. The woe-series are a series of complaints against the Judean people that occur often in *Isaiah*. In addition, they focus on the moral failure of the people and turn against the political leaders of Israel. These sentences often start with the word ´woe´. Verse 5:13 is directed against the Judean people as a whole. There it reads that it is the unmoral behavior (drinking alcohol, partying and ignoring God's wishes) of the people that makes God take their knowledge away and drive them into exile. This verse belongs to religious moral conduct because the preceding verses (5:8-12) exemplify to the reader what kind of moral behavior

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[111] Childs 2001, 16
[112] *Isaiah* 1:4
[113] *Isaiah* 1:16-17

will be rewarded by God, and what will be punished. The punishment is given in verse 5:13 saying that Israel will go into exile without knowledge.

(11:2) ונחה עליו רוח יהוה רוח חכמה ובינה רוח עצה וגבורה רוח דעת ויראת יהוה

The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

Verse 11:2 is part of a poem reaching back to verses 11:1-9. This poem proclaims the arrival of a royal family from the ancestry of Jesse (Samuel 16:1) and refers to king David and his descendants. King David is said to be gifted with the spirit of the divine, including wisdom, understanding, counsel, strength, knowledge and fear of God. With these qualities he will overturn the present world. Within the new world the poor and powerless will have the same rights as the wealthy and the powerful. Thus, righteousness will follow upon David's reign. We can say that this verse refers to the religious moral conduct because king David possesses these qualities wisdom, knowledge, understanding and fear of the Lord by the endowment of a divine ruler. David's behavior needs to be congruent with the religious outlook of moral conduct. In a future world, king David will use these qualities in order to act and rule justly; making sure that his behavior is in line with what is expected of him by God.[114]

(58:2) ואותי יום יום ידרשון ודעת דרכי יחפצון כגוי אשר־צדקה עשה ומשפט אלהיו לא עזב ישאלוני משפטי־צדק קרבת אלהים יחפצון

Yet day after day they seek me, and delight in my ways of knowledge[115], as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God; they ask of me righteous judgments, they delight to draw near to God.

This passage is embedded in a larger one. For purposes of discussing the context of the word 'knowledge' in this passage, I need to quote the larger one. By taking into account this larger

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[114] Leo Perdue suggests that the instructions on moral conduct in *Proverbs* is primarily due to the wishes of the conservative sages to uphold their own static worldview (Perdue 2000, 12). *Proverbs* is in my opinion on this aspect different from the book of *Isaiah.* In *Isaiah* there is no mentioning of upholding the present world order. In contrast, the present world order needs to be overthrown and a new one inserted. A new world in which righteousness will rule instead of wickedness. However, this concept of righteousness against wickedness is also prominent in *Proverbs* but without referring to an imminent world. Apparently there was no wish for a new world, the sages were convinced that moral didactics alone would bring the world within the reach of their ideals. It is the task of knowledge in *Proverbs* to be understood. By acting accordingly did an ideal world come into view. Besides this the transmission of this knowledge, knowledge in *Proverbs* is also important in order to reach the coming generations. This concept of a static worldview is also interesting because this supports the idea that *Proverbs* was not written within one nation and for one, but that it developed gradually through time and space.

[115] Tr. NRSV: and delight to know my ways. Tr. MK: And delight in my ways of knowledge

passage, I can argue that the knowledge referred to in 58:2 belongs to a religious moral context.

1) Shout out, do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet! Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins. 2) Yet day after day they seek me and delight in my ways of knowledge, as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God; they ask of me righteous judgments, they delight to draw near to God. 3) "Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?" Look, you serve your own interest on your fast days, and oppress all your workers. 4) Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist. Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high.[116]

As we can read, in verse 58:1 God orders the prophet to command Israel to be aware of their sins. This commandment is followed by the verse 58:2 in which the religious attitude of Israel is praised. But next, in verses 58:3-4 a references is made to a complaint of Israel concerning this commandment of fasting. Next, one can read that according to God, Israel does not acknowledge its fasting in the right way. God responds that when Israel does fast it pursues its own interests, even oppresses their workers and uses violence. One can clearly see a discrepancy between Israel's goodwill in verse 58:2 and Israel's sins in verse 58:1 and verses 58:3-4. It refers to a conflict between Israel's outward behavior and their internal piety.[117]

In other words, it is written that Israel's behavior does not match their inner attitude or thoughts, hence making their actions in life presumptuous and insolent. Isaiah verses 58:1-4 makes a division between ability of acting and the ability of thinking, between behavior and thoughts. This entails that the notion of religious moral conduct has become more complex; demanding more than behavior alone. A proper way of thinking becomes essential as well. A scholar called Brevard Child agrees with this line of thought. According to Child's interpretation, the people of Israel in this passage should not only act according to God's moral rules, but think accordingly as well. This brings us back to our main topic, the meaning of 'knowledge' and the context in which we should place this meaning. One of God's rules asks Israel to strive for knowledge of God's ways (58:2). For this rule it is relevant that it is pursued by each individual through behavior and intention. This is why we can argue that 'knowledge' in this passage fits within the religious moral conduct. It is because the knowledge of God's ways can be pursued not only by upholding the religious commandments such as fasting in verse 58:4, but by their intentions as well. In order to make religious moral conduct genuine, the intentions of this religious behavior need to be consciously done,

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[116] *Isaiah* 58: 1,3-4
[117] Childs 2001, 477

otherwise a ritual such as fasting would be meaningless. The instructive character of the religious commandments can be found in the social moral context of knowledge as well. We will proceed to this type of context below.

Social moral conduct

Isaiah does not only relate to the religious moral context of knowledge, but includes social moral conduct as well. Concerning the social moral conduct type of context we have one verse we can relate to. This verse 32:4 is part of a larger unit, namely the verses 32:1-8. But let me first quote the verse 32:4 wherein the word 'knowledge' occurs.

(32:4) ולבב נמהרים יבין לדעת ולשון עלגים תמהר לדבר

The minds of the rash will understand knowledge[118] and tongues of stammers will speak readily and distinctly.

To introduce the larger passage, we can observe that it has a didactic and reflective character that informs its reader how essential something like good government is for the right social order.[119]. A common discussion resolves around the question whether this passage contains a messianic message that proclaims the coming of a royal ruler. The argument used to support this claim regards this passage in line with verses 9:6 and 11:1-2 of *Isaiah*.[120] I will show that verse 32:4 does not have a messianic character, but instead argues for good conduct by government and nation. We should come to see this passage as referring to a social moral context. Verses 9:6 and 11:1-2 of the book of *Isaiah* read as follows:

9:6 For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.[121]

11:1-2 A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of its roots. The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.[122]

Why is it that these verses are related to the one in *Isaiah*? One of the scholars taking this position, namely Duhm, argues as follows. He writes that this passage is messianic like verses

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[118] Tr. NRSV: *will have good judgement*. Tr. MK: *will understand knowledge.*
[119] We can remark that the verses 32:1-8 have similarities in language with *Proverbs* verses 8:15-18. See for more parallels between *Proverbs* and *Isaiah*, Blenkinsopp 2000 I, 429-430
[120] Childs 2001, 237; 239
[121] *Isaiah* 9:6
[122] *Isaiah* 11:1-2

9:6 and 11:1-2 because it is derived from the same final period of Isaiah's ministry. Not everyone agrees with this particular vision. Others think this message may not have come from Isaiah himself. However, they too argue that we should understand the verses 32:1-8 to be messianic. They base their argument on the idea that the royal figure could be identified with king Josiah or Hezekiah. What about the scholars who disagree with the complete argument? How do they compose their argument? The group of scholars who oppose the messianic character of verses 32:1-8 claim that it differs too much in style from verses 9:6 and 11:1-2. They argue that the passage may also be referring to the coming of an eschatological ruler, instead of a royal argument.[123] I have come to think that another, stronger argument can be introduced against the messianic character of verses 32:1-8.

Verse 32:1 mentions a king and a princess. According to my perspective, the king and princess do not necessarily relate to a Messiah, but are mentioned in order to introduce the concept of good government. I would say that the sentence in which it is written that 'when a king reigns in righteousness and a princess govern with justice', simply states that such a situation will be beneficial to the whole society. In other words, when good government and a rightful social order are attained, 'Then the eyes of those who have sight will not be closed, and the ears of those who have hearing will listen.[124] The minds of the hasty will understand knowledge and tongues of stammerers will speak freely[125], a fool will no longer be called noble, nor a villain said to be honorable'[126]. It forms a political statement instead of a messianic statement.

This passage should be understood as a critical call against the political government and the present social order. It stresses the importance of good government for the right social order while criticizing its present social order. By doing so, it expects good government of the political leaders, but also expects good behavior, i.e. good moral behavior from the nation (32:5-8). Thus, this passage should be understood as referring to the social moral conduct type of context, because it asks the whole society, both government and citizens of a nation to act morally.

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[123] Childs 2001, 239
[124] *Isaiah* 32:3
[125] Tr. MK *Isaiah* 32:4
[126] *Isaiah* 32:5

The source of knowledge

Besides social moral and religious moral conduct another type of context is prominently visible in *Isaiah* namely the source of knowledge. There are a lot of interesting passages which refer to this type of context, they will be discussed below.   When we look through the different relevant passages, we can see that the source of knowledge can refer to a wide variety of things. For instance, one could understand knowledge to come from books or grandparents, teachers or divine beings too exist as sources of knowledge. A total of six verses can be said to refer to the source of knowledge in the book of *Isaiah*.

(11:2) ונחה עליו רוח יהוה רוח חכמה ובינה רוח עצה וגבורה רוח דעת ויראת יהוה

The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

Whether the word דעת in verse 11:2 refers to a divine source or not is unclear. From reading verse 11:2 alone 'the spirit of God' and 'the spirit of knowledge' can be understood as separate entities; making it undecided whether the source of David's knowledge is divine or not. However, when one looks at the context in which this passage is written one can conclude that David's knowledge comes from God. Verse 11:2 becomes more meaningful if we read it with *Isaiah* verses 11:1-9 in background. This text as a whole describes the coming of a righteous king, chosen by God and pointing towards the Davidic lineage. It is said that David will be a king and will possess the knowledge and capacity to rule righteously. In this sense, David is heavenly endowed; he will be a king who knows how to act according to God's rule. Thus, David's knowledge can be understood as having a divine character, because the driving force behind the coronation of David is set up by God himself.

(28:9) את־מי יורה דעת ואת־מי יבין שמועה גמולי מחלב עתיקי משדים

Whom will he teach knowledge, and to whom will he explain the message? Those who are weaned from milk, those taken from the breasts.

This verse 28:9 belongs to a larger part of *Isaiah* (28:1-13). The chapter opens with woe-sayings (28:1-4). The complaints are directed towards Samaria and its political leaders. Verses 28:5 and 28:6 are linked to the restored Israel of the future and the rule of a just God. The following two verses 28:7-8 are an accusation against the drunken festivities of the political and religious leaders. This accusation functions as a prophetic attack against the

present rulers, already found in Amos (2:9; 6:4-7).[127] The position of verses 9 and 10 is less clear because of the absence of quotation and questioning marks in ancient Hebrew. It is uncertain whether it is the prophet or someone else speaking in these verses. If the prophet is speaking, these verses should be interpreted as a rhetorical question against the incapacity of the religious leaders in teaching.[128] This interpretation, one that is followed by Blenkinsopp, implies that knowledge is not available to those religious and political leaders, who do not answer to the true God (יהוה). It is simultaneously implied that knowledge is only accessible to the ones answering to God, namely the Jews.

(40:14) את־מי נועץ ויבינהו וילמדהו בארח משפט וילמדהו דעת ודרך תבונות יודיענו

Whom did he consult for his enlightenment, and who taught him the path of justice? Who taught him knowledge and showed him the way of understanding.

Verse 40: 14 too is embedded in a larger fragment; verses 40:12-31 and 41:6-7. This part of *Isaiah* presents a dispute about the power of Israel's God. In this, the omnipotence of God is emphasized against the weakness of the Babylonian imperial deity Marduk.[129] In verses 11-14 the prophet launches rhetorical questions against his assumed opponent. For instance, the prophet asks: 'who taught him [God] knowledge?'. The obvious answer lies in the notion that men could not have created the world, nor have thought infinite wisdom, nor knowledge. It is only God who is capable of these things.[130] According to this interpretation of verse 40:14, the source of knowledge is God.

(44:18-19) ולא ישיב אל־לבו ולא דעת ולא תבונה לאמר חציו שרפתי במו־אש ואף אפיתי על־גחליו לחם אצלה בשר ואכל ויתרו לתועבה אעשה לבול עץ אסגוד

They do not know, nor do they comprehend; for their eyes are shut, so that they cannot see, and their minds as well, so that they cannot understand. No one considers, nor is there knowledge or discernment to say, "Half of it burned in the fire; I also baked bread on its coals, I roasted meat and have eaten. Now shall I make rest of it an abomination? Shall I fall down before a block of wood?"

Verses 44:18 and 44:19 are parts of *Isaiah* verses 44:9-20. These verses form a polemic against idolatry, its makers and its users (44:9). This polemic against idolatry is typical for the verses 40-48 in the book of *Isaiah*.[131] In verses 44:18-19 it is said that idols have no

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[127]Blenkinnsopp 2000 I, 387-388
[128]Blenkinsopp 2000 I, 388-389
[129] Blenkinsopp 2000 II, 191
[130] Childs 2001, 309-310
[131] Blenkinsopp 2000 II, 240

knowledge or understanding, because God did not grant them knowledge. According to these verses, knowledge is given by God; again making God the source of knowledge.

(44:25) מפר אתות בדים וקסמים יהולל משיב חכמים אחור ודעתם ישכל

Who frustrates the omens of liars, and makes fools of diviners, who turns back the wise, and makes their knowledge foolish.

This verse 44:25 is part of 44:24-28. Its content is directed towards a Judean audience.[132, 133] Verse 44:24 begins with a reference to the redemptive nature and activity of God. I understand verse 44:25 to discuss knowledge in opposition to folly. All the people who believe in other Gods and omens and who stray from the true God are punished for their ignorance. The knowledge they acquire will be regarded as folly. God himself will see to that. Thus, it is the power of God to decide what is knowledge and what folly. Thus, again verse 44:25 presents God as the source of knowledge because it is God who can declare knowledge to be folly.

(47:10) תבטחי ברעתך אמרת אין ראני חכמתך ודעתך היא שובבתך ותאמרי בלבך אני ואפסי עוד

You felt secure in your wickedness; you said, "No one sees me." Your wisdom and your knowledge led you astray, and you said in your heart, "I am, and there is none beside me."

Verse 47:10 belongs to the poem presented in verses 47:1-15. In this poem Babylon is presented as a wicked queen, whose real nature will be revealed by the God of Israel. Babylon's 'real nature' is clarified in *Isaiah* verse 47:9 as being of a magical nature. In it, Babylon is said to practice magic, use sorcery and receive power out of enchantments. Besides the magical practices of Babylon, Babylon is also understood to be the possessor of magical wisdom and knowledge (47:10). But this magical knowledge will not last, nor withstand the power of the Lord. The good life of Babylon will end; her pleasures and security will be removed, regardless of her magical abilities or knowledge. In my perspective the author of this passage distinguishes between two kinds of knowledge in these verses 47:1-15 namely, magical knowledge and another kind of knowledge: one coming from the God of Israel.

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[132] Blenkinsopp 2000, 243. Whether this saying introduces the verses (45: 1-25) is uncertain.
[133] Childs 2001, 351. The secondary literature concerning these verses (44:24-28) focus especially on the relation between the first saying (44:24-28) and the latter (45:1-25).

In conclusion, we see that according to the verses discussed above, knowledge has a divine source. Again and again, it is God that is the ultimate source of knowledge. Knowledge of worldly and wicked matters can be attained without His help. Furthermore, it is only God that can grant His knowledge to certain individuals. In the next paragraph, I will discuss the aim knowledge. The aim of worldly knowledge can be guessed easily. To give an example, worldly knowledge can refer to craftsmanship or the ability to read. But what can be the aim of the knowledge that is only given by God?

The aim of knowledge

What will knowledge give you, where will it bring you, take you or lead you to? These questions relate to the aim of knowledge. If we read the whole of *Isaiah*, two verses in relate to this type of context. The first is verse 33:6:

(33:6) והיה אמונת עתיק חסן ישועת חכמת ודעת יראת יהוה היא אוצרו

He will be the stability of your times, abundance of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge; the fear of the LORD is Zion's treasure.

This verse belongs to a larger unit, the verses 33:2-6 in *Isaiah*. These verses are regarded as a literary imitation of a Psalm[134] and as having links with Proverbs verse 1:4. Verse 33:6 mentions the fear of the Lord, together with the words wisdom and knowledge. It can be translated in different ways. Beside the translation mentioned above, I will mention translations of two other scholars and myself while relating them to the aim of knowledge.

1) He will be the steadfastness of your times, the abundance of salvation, wisdom and knowledge. Fear of the LORD is his treasure.[135]

2) He will be the stability of your times, the abundance of salvation, wisdom and knowledge. Fear of the LORD is his treasure.[136]

3) He will be the stability of her times, wisdom and knowledge are riches that lead to salvation; her treasure is the fear of Yahveh.[137]

The first translation identifies God with the mentioned knowledge. It does not bring up the word salvation, or state a causal relationship between knowledge and salvation. The second

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[134] Blenkinsopp 2000 I, 437
[135] Tr. MK 2012
[136] Tr. Childs 2001
[137] Tr. Blenkinsopp 2000

translation mentions that there will be, somewhere in the future, depending on the moral behavior of Israel, an abundance of salvation, wisdom and knowledge. Thus, according to this translation, salvation and knowledge act collectively together with wisdom in the future, but there is no textual evidence of a causal relationship that exists between knowledge and salvation. The NRSV translation states that knowledge is one of the riches together with wisdom that will lead to salvation. Here the aim of knowledge is clear; the aim of knowledge is the salvation of Zion. Conclusively, depending on how you translate this verse 33:6 the aim of knowledge can be determined. Only the final translation by Blenkinsopp states that knowledge will lead to salvation.

The next verse 53: 11 fits within a wider context, extending from verses 52:13 to 53:12. This unit can be divided into three smaller units namely, verses 52:13-15 that make up the first divine speech, verses 53:1-11a, or the confession of the "we", and verses 53:11b-53:12 that comprise the second divine speech. These verses are widely discussed because of their relationship with the New Testament. When it comes to content, the first subunit portrays the exaltation of a servant by the divine oracle which continues in the third subunit. How these sentences should be understood is widely discussed, a permanent translation does not exist. Several alternative meanings for the noun דעת have been suggested; humiliation[138], rest[139], obedience[140], sweat[141] and knowledge[142].

(53:11) מעמל נפשו יראה ישבע בדעתו יצדיק צדיק עבדי לרבים ועונתם הוא יסבל

Out of his anguish he shall see light; he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge. The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.

The passage following verse 52:11, namely verses 52:13 to53:12 state a reversal of fortuneas the aim of knowledge. [143] In verse 53:12 it is said that through his knowledge the servant will bear the sins of others and will make them righteous. According to this chapter, suffering by humans, as described in verse 53:11, will be compensated. For instance, although the servant will suffer and die for others (53:8), he will be rewarded with a divine honor, raised up, and greatly exalted (52:13) and in the end his life will be prolonged (53:10). Especially verse

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[138] Thomas 1969
[139] Williamson 1978b
[140] Reicke 1967
[141] Dahood 1971, 1972
[142] Childs 2001
[143] Childs 2001, 419

53:10 makes clear that the suffering of the servant will provide him with good fortune. Thus, the knowledge of the servant that makes his obedient role possible will not only result in the forgiveness and happiness of the community Israel, but will give the individual, the servant, pleasure as well. Thus, there is a definite aim to knowledge when we read this passage.

The nature of knowledge

At the beginning of this chapter we mentioned twelve verses in *Isaiah* in which the noun דעת is mentioned. At present we have discussed a total of eleven of these verses. The final verse we will study is the one in chapter 11 of *Isaiah*; verse 11:9. This one can be placed under the heading of the nature of knowledge.

(11:9) לא־ירעו ולא־ישחיתו בכל־הר קדשי כי־מלאה הארץ דעה את־יהוה כמים לים מכסים

They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

Verse 11:9 combined with verses 11:6-8 describe describes the world in which the Messiah will rule justly. Child puts this as follows: An age of universal peace will exist, both in the animal and the human world.[144] Within this world there will be no misery as is illustrated in the following verse; 'a child will be able to play around an adder's den' (9:8). It is possible for this ideal world to exist because of the knowledge of the Lord that will cover the earth. This verse does not match with any of the types of context we have discussed so far. The word 'knowledge' here is described as an essential element in a future world. If we need to put this practice of knowledge in a type of context, I would say the context of the nature of knowledge is most adequate. The passage describes knowledge as divine; it is knowledge coming from God and is an essential element in the future world. However, we should be aware of the fact that although this verse describes the nature of knowledge as divine, it does not entail that there is only something like divine knowledge. As we have seen in the part about the source of knowledge as a context that is employed in *Isaiah*, knowledge can relate to worldly matters as well.

Up until now, we have discussed five types of contexts. These five types of context relate to the religious and social moral conduct, source, aim and nature of knowledge. However, we have encountered more types of context which we have not brought in relation with *Isaiah*.

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[144] Childs 2001, 103

These types of context cannot be grasped from the individual sentences containing the word 'knowledge', but should be understood from the internal social reality of *Isaiah*. I will discuss the remaining types of context in what follows. I will begin with the educational context.

The educational context of knowledge

According to the book of *Isaiah*, the people of Israel have a lot to learn when moral and religious behavior is concerned. They are often reprimanded in *Isaiah* for improper behavior, as for instance is described in chapters 58-59. There it is said that only if Israel learns how to behave correctly, in deeds and thoughts, they will be saved from the dominance of foreign rulers and all other evil (58:9-10). The representation of ideal behavior and thought here is given by God through his prophet Isaiah. It is Isaiah who functions as a teacher for the people, presenting God's ultimate will. The educational system in *Isaiah* functions as follows. Gods decides upon the curriculum, the prophet does the actual teaching, and all the people of Israel function as Isaiah's students.

Ethics as a context of knowledge

Furthermore, ethics are also essential to the method of gaining knowledge. When it comes to this context we do not have verses that explicitly relate to a method of gaining knowledge. However, what we can say is that it probably lies within the scope of proper moral and religious conduct. We have seen that moral conduct is a very important theme in *Isaiah* Therefore it seems reasonable to say that moral conduct can also function as a method for acquiring knowledge.

A Summary

To sum up briefly, the type of context discussing the religious moral conduct presents knowledge as a gift from God. It denoted a quality given by God on the principal condition that people in general, political leaders and even king David behave in line with the prescribed religious commandments for moral conduct. This excludes unmoral behavior such as drinking, adultery, oppressing workers and ignoring God's wishes. Furthermore, it is not only proper conduct that will be rewarded with knowledge, but proper thoughts and intentions as well. Social moral conduct as a context is not very prominent in *Isaiah*. Only verse 32:4 refers to social moral conduct.

The source of knowledge in *Isaiah* mostly refers to God, although it does not make explicit what the nature of this knowledge is. In addition, the aim of knowledge can refer to an abundance of salvation, wisdom and knowledge. The nature of knowledge is described as being divine in verse 11:9. However, knowledge can also have a human nature. An educational context of knowledge can be derived from the internal social reality within the book of *Isaiah*. Within this reality the prophet functions as a teacher, the people of Israel as students and the will of God as the curriculum. A domestic type of context relating to knowledge has not been found in the verses that were discussed in this chapter. The method of gaining knowledge lies probably in moral conduct, although this has not been explicitly mentioned.

7.0   Conclusion

In the previous chapters we have discussed four different texts concerning their perception of the word 'knowledge'. By employing the theory of pragmatics in addition to lexical semantics it becomes clear that the meaning of the word 'knowledge' varies between the different texts. We have come to see that all texts highlight different aspects of the word 'knowledge', because each text refers to an unique combination of types of context. In addition, even if they share a certain type of context, they differ when it comes to the content of the context at hand. To give an example, all four texts discuss the aim of knowledge as a context, but the exact object that is the aim of knowledge differs. In *Apoc. Adam* for instance the aim of knowledge is the salvation of the soul. This is different from the book of *Daniel* where a prosperous life is said to be the aim of knowledge. In the final chapter of my paper I will demonstrate that this shows that by taking into account the social reality of the word 'knowledge', through the method of pragmatics, something has been attributed to the meaning of 'knowledge' which lexical semantics alone cannot accomplish.

What more have we come to understand when taking into account the context of the texts discusses? I will start with *Daniel*. With our emphasis on context we have come to see that in *Daniel* a distinction is made between 'knowledge' and 'true knowledge' and what's more that this distinction depends on the source of knowledge. We have seen that regular knowledge has a worldly character whereas true knowledge comes from God himself. We have also seen that true knowledge is essential to the book of *Daniel*[145] because it explains that the book was written for a religious community. A religious community that, while trying to uphold the Jewish religion by presenting it as superior to Babylonian religion and culture, was confronted with the foreign domination of Babylon.

Daniel himself is presented as a hero inspiring his audience when the question 'how to behave according to the knowledge of God?' is at stake. According to *Daniel* one will profit from understanding knowledge of God. This for the reason that becoming acquainted with God's knowledge grants one a prosperous life. In *Daniel,* this prosperous life functions as an ideal. Again, something has arisen within our scope that is due to our pragmatic approach. These

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[145] This discussion about the social realities behind the book *Daniel* only relates to the first six chapters of *Daniel*. These chapters display heroic idealistic court narratives relating to remarkable events (such as how Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah were not consumed by the fire). These remarkable events are attributed to the Jewish God. The resuming chapters of Daniel have a more apocalyptic nature.

ethics and ideals show that life on earth was important to the authors. Furthermore, there is something else that is interesting. The idea of a spiritual afterlife is not discussed in the book of *Daniel*; this very much in contrast to the Gnostic view in *Apoc. Adam*. This too reveals a social reality; it shows that the authors were probably not familiar with the notion of a spiritual afterlife nor did they believe it to be possible.

Another interesting aspect in *Daniel* we have come to notice is how education is presented. In the first chapter we encountered the educational context of knowledge. In this chapter king Nebuchadnezzar chose handsome, literate and wise men from the Jewish nation, in order to educate them further. We can assume that education was available for the authors. In addition to this, the men presented to the audience make out an ideal a person should strive for. The type of men, men that are wise, literate and handsome function as a role model; as a social model to whom the audience can relate. This too holds for Daniel himself; the representation of Daniel as a wise, literate and handsome figure can well be thought to have prickled the imagination of the audience. Within the chapters of Daniel we noticed that certain characteristics, relating to the notions of knowledge, wisdom, ethics and piety, were attributed to the figure Daniel himself. They helped make Daniel an ethical example and gave content to the matter of how to live a good and pious life. Thus, our approach here informs us about the ideals and interests of the authors and audience.

What about *the Apocalypse of Adam*. What have we come to see when this text was subject to pragmatics and an approach with specific contexts? The social reality behind *Apoc. Adam* can partly be revealed from the type of context describing the owner of knowledge. We have become acquainted with the social realism of the Gnostic community. By taking into account the context, we have seen that this community deliberately sets itself apart from the mainstream Jews and others by proclaiming that they are the single ones in possession of God's true knowledge. They go so far as stating that even the God from the Hebrew Bible is an evil god and that this god stands in opposition to their eternal God. The Gnostics want to distinguish themselves from other communities based on religious convictions. In addition to this, we have seen that the aim of knowledge is used to emphasize this distinction even further. They claim that it is only they that have true knowledge, and that this particular knowledge will give them access to the eternal salvation of the soul. The type of context discussing the religious moral conduct also emphasizes the dominance of the Gnostics by stating that the Gnostics are superior on moral grounds. Thus, by means of a pragmatic

approach and by taking into account the different contexts of the word 'knowledge', we have come to understand how 'knowledge' is comprehended in *the Apocalypse of Adam*.

This too holds for the text *Proverbs*. When we discussed this text with the different contexts in the background, we noticed that the combination 'fear' and 'knowledge' is commonly used in the text. *Proverbs* regards fear of the Lord as a method of acquiring knowledge. In *Apocalypse Adam* this does not seem to be the case; it seems that fear is not a method of acquiring knowledge, but fear and terror are used by the demiurge in order to control his subjects. Fear of the Lord in *Proverbs* should be regarded as a method to control subjects as well. This is primarily because it pushes people to behave according to the wishes of the Lord. However, fear of the Lord in *Proverbs* is said to be rewarded with knowledge. This in contrast to *Apoc. Adam,* where fear does not give one knowledge but only saves one from the terror of the demiurge. Again, this points us to the social reality of the word 'knowledge'. Whereas the concepts of 'knowledge' and 'fear' are used in *Apoc. Adam* to distinguish good from evil, in Proverbs both these concepts point toward God and the distance between God and men.

We have discussed that the distinction between the Gnostics and the seed of Noah is based on the yes or no possession of true knowledge. In *Proverbs* we again find a distinction based on knowledge, this time between the righteousness and the wicked. This division is clearly different from the one of the Gnostics. In *Proverbs* the distinction is based on achievement of knowledge rather than possession. The Gnostics use a more exclusive kind of knowledge in which not every person can achieve knowledge. Another difference becomes visible. The educational type of context described how the seed of Seth can educate eternal knowledge to the next generation. In contrast, *Proverbs* has a more universal character, the education of knowledge does not only apply for one community. The apocalyptic nature of this text signifies the fears and hopes of this Gnostic community; namely fear of the death and the belief that they specifically will remain alive. Hence the types of contexts discussing the source, educational, nature, aim and owner of knowledge have come to relate to social differentiation based on religious ideas.

In section 5.1 of this paper I have said that *Proverbs* is part of an international and intellectual milieu and literary genre. *Proverbs* is not a product of Israel alone, but a compilation of wisdom sayings from different origins. When we approached the text with pragmatics, we have seen that the type of context discussing the method of gaining knowledge is most

prominent in *Proverbs*. This has taught us something about the meaning of the word 'knowledge' in this text. It is such that 'fear of the Lord' is frequently mentioned as the means of acquiring knowledge. Although the exact terms of fear are not made explicit, it stands to reason that this fear or respect of the Lord not only functions as a means of acquiring knowledge, but too expresses a distance between God and men. In addition the search for knowledge, social moral and religious moral conduct in *Proverbs* is essential to the method of gaining knowledge. The text does not presume true knowledge to belong to a fixed community, as is for instance the case in *Apoc. Adam*. This is demonstrated by the fact that the Jews are not mentioned by the authors of Proverbs as the only community who will have access to true knowledge.

Thus, education and instruction of knowledge play a significant role in the social reality of *Proverbs*. Moral and religious behavior is said to lead to knowledge. *Proverbs* functions as a social and religious moral instruction to its readers; it functions as a set of guidelines that will lead to knowledge. When looking at the word 'knowledge' from the viewpoint of the aim of knowledge we see that knowledge in *Proverbs* aims at a secure life on earth. *Proverbs* has many sources and was not written for the Israelites alone. It is for this reason that I do not believe this text to give that many details about the social reality of the Israelites alone. However, by including this text in the Hebrew Biblical canon, one may assume that the concepts of wisdom, knowledge, ethics and instruction were highly valued within this part of the Jewish community.

In contrast to *Proverbs*, looking at the social reality of *Isaiah* shows that it was written within and for a religious community. The authors of *Isaiah* emphasize on Israel's morality through the prophet Isaiah. He functions as a mediator between the nation Israel and God. A prophetic figure is thus used by the authors to give the message more authority.[146] The text shows that the authors were not satisfied with the moral behavior of the nation of Israel. Therefore they hoped to guide the behavior of the Israelites by convincing them that proper behavior would result in the coming of the Messiah and the future kingdom of God. Hence, our pragmatic approach show us something lexical semantics alone cannot do, namely that this text was written for a religious community who, at least according to its authors, needed guidance concerning moral and ethical behavior.

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[146] A prophetic figure in Biblical literature has contact with God, the supreme authority of the Jews.

Approaching the text from other contexts has focused our attention to other interesting matters. For instance, we have seen that ethical behavior is presented as one of the ways of achieving knowledge. The aim of this knowledge is pointed towards the coming of the Messiah and the future kingdom of God. We can say that the authors of *Isaiah* used the aim of knowledge as a future remuneration. The Israelites are urged towards proper behavior by claiming that this behavior will lead to knowledge and the future kingdom of God. When we discussed the source and nature of knowledge we saw that they are essential to the credibility of this message. Knowledge according to *Isaiah* was given by God and for that reason true. By presenting knowledge as true and divine the ethical message receives more authority and is therefore more likely to be upheld by the Jewish community.

What we can conclude from the above is that the theory of pragmatics has helped to access social realities behind texts. By creating different types of context as a means of approaching the concept of 'knowledge', we have created a method to show the different characteristics of one word within different texts, religions and traditions. However, this method did not only help us to understand the different aspects of the meaning of 'knowledge', but also made us aware of the social realities behind the texts. We can conclude that by taking into account the social reality of the word 'knowledge' through the method of pragmatics we have come to know more about the meaning of the word which lexical semantics alone could not achieve. We have not only shown that different meanings of the word 'knowledge' within each text exist, but we have also received more insight in the social realities behind the texts. The context of the word 'knowledge' has helped us to get a better understanding of both text and social reality. It thus serves a double function.

In my opinion this approach might not only be useful when the word 'knowledge' is concerned, but can be used for many other essential concepts within Biblical or other ancient texts as well. One can use the types of context to discuss the meaning of words like 'family', 'good', 'evil' or 'wealth'. This kind of discussion of concepts may give us more insight into the social realities of the authors and communities behind the text. This in turn will result in a better understanding of the text and meaning of the words themselves.

8.0   Literature

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