

# Teaching Morality in Antiquity

Edited by  
T.M. OSHIMA

*Orientalische Religionen  
in der Antike*



**Mohr Siebeck**

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29





# Teaching Morality in Antiquity

Wisdom Texts, Oral Traditions, and Images

Edited by

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## Preface

The eighteen articles collected in this volume are the results of the international workshop, “Teaching Morality in Antiquity: Wisdom Texts, Oral Traditions, and Images,” held at the Bibliotheca Albertina of the University of Leipzig between November 29<sup>th</sup> and December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 with the generous financial support of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft. During the workshop, we had fruitful discussions on diverse issues related to the theme “wisdom texts and morality”: biblical wisdom texts and their parallels from the ancient Egypt, ancient Mesopotamia, and the ancient Levant; moral messages and rhetoric in wisdom texts; the dissemination of wisdom teachings; teachings about the divine realm as the core of moral principles or human social order; visualization of divine authority; questions of theodicy; and modern analyses of ancient morality through the eyes of cognitive science.

The first two articles by Jan Dietrich and Jan Assmann in Chapter I serve to introduce the volume and discuss broader issues of wisdom texts and their roles in moral teaching in antiquity. Three essays in Chapter II survey ancient Near Eastern wisdom genres of particular regions while another three essays in Chapter III look into the issue of the dissemination of wisdom teachings in the ancient world. Chapter IV is dedicated to the biblical Book of Job, and the articles in Chapter V discuss questions of theodicy in ancient Egypt and ancient Mesopotamia. Because of the low literacy, iconography played a significant role in the transmission of ideas in the ancient world; the two essays in Chapter VI discuss visual presentations of divine authority. The last chapter (VII) examines the roles of spiritual beings in the formation of human morality through the perspective of cognitive science. While the cognitive science of religion is usually not seen as a natural ally of biblical studies or theology, in recent years Ara Norenzayan and his colleagues have demonstrated the growing interest in the roles of religions in the formation of large societies. The studies by Yitzhaq Feder and Karolina Prochownik in this volume are not only justified by this work but contribute to this newer area of scholarly inquiry and conversation. We basically follow the abbreviation system of the SBL Handbook of Style. The abbreviations not listed in the SBL Handbook are found after the bibliography of each essay.

As the workshop organizer, I would first like to thank the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft for financing the workshop. Thanks are also due the University of Leipzig, the Institute for Old Testament Studies – Theological Faculty, and the Bibliotheca Albertina for hosting our workshop and allowing us to use their facilities. I am also grateful to Prof. Angelika Berlejung, Dr. Judith Filitz, Mrs. Susanne Kohlhaas, and Mr. Tilmann Gaitzsch for their assistance and support during the preparation and the workshop itself. I am also grateful to all the participants of the workshop. I also want to note my gratitude to Dr. Noga Ayali-Darshan for sending her essay.

Mrs. Susanne Kohlhaas assisted me in editorial work and preparation of the indexes. Her work is greatly appreciated. Mr. Tilmann Gaitzsch, Ms. Lisa Kunze, and Ms. Sonja Wiedermann are also thanked. The ORA series editors, Professors Angelika Berlejung, Joachim Quack, and Annette Zgoll, are also thanked for their critical reading of the manuscripts and comments. Last but not least, I would like to thank Dr. Henning Ziebritzki and Prof. Angelika Berlejung for their kind invitation to publish this volume in the series *Orientalische Religionen in der Antike*.

Leipzig, February 2018  
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# I: Wisdom and Gods as the Foundation of Morality in Ancient World



# Wisdom in the Cultures of the Ancient World

## A General Introduction and Comparison

*Jan Dietrich*\*

In this article, I aim to present different aspects of wisdom typical for most ancient wisdom traditions, and I wish to compare these traditions across the cultures of the ancient Near East, including Greece. Such a comparison should be possible since wisdom is arguably a “global player” that can be found in the entire ancient world and beyond. I will focus on the most important strands of wisdom in the ancient world up to the Hellenistic period and the similarities between them. It falls beyond the scope of this article to examine wisdom in the Roman and late antiquity periods or to present historical developments within and differences between single wisdom traditions.

## Social Settings and Images of Wisdom

### *Scribal Family Schooling and the Image of the Father*

One of the main social settings of ancient wisdom is the family. Recent studies on Akkadian scribal schooling have shown that scribes usually came from scribal families and were educated in a familial context. This could either mean that the scribe was educated by the father or that the father sent his son to a scribe’s house to be educated there. In either case, the familial context of education in private houses is one of the main social settings of ancient wisdom; in regard to the Hebrew Bible, examples of this are the scribal families of Sheva (2 Sam 20:25; 1 Kings 4:3) and Shaphan (2 Kings 22:3; Jer 26:24; 36:11–12.20–21; 40:9; cf. 1 Chr 2:55).<sup>1</sup> In Ugarit, the most important archives containing schooling material and wisdom texts were not found within the palace or temples but in private houses, such as the House of Yabninu, the House of Rašap-abu, the House of Rapānu, the House of Urtenu, and other residential buildings, such as the Lamaštu Archive, the *Maison aux tablettes*, or the private houses of the high priest and the Hurrian priest.<sup>2</sup> As Alster (2008, 50) claims, regarding ancient Mesopotamia, it is “reasonable, therefore, to conclude that a much larger group than had access to the schools, not only temple officials and royal administrators, but also children of tradesmen, artisans and perhaps land owning farmers, although scribal art basically remained an urban phenomenon.” In connection to this, most Akkadian and

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\* I wish to thank Sarah Jennings (Aarhus) for improving my English.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. LUX 1992, 66.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. COHEN 2013, 43–50.

Egyptian wisdom instructions formulate their words within a framework that presents the fiction of an old father figure<sup>3</sup> teaching his wise words to his “son,” the son being either a biological son or a pupil.

### *The Royal Court and the Images of Counselor and King*

As well as the temples, which also fostered scribal education, the wisdom tradition and the image of the wise was particularly connected with the royal court, the royal archives and the images of counselor and king as wise men; famous examples of this include the wise counselors Ahiqar and Ahitophel at Sennacherib’s and David’s courts respectively. It is possible that the collection of maxims also took place at the royal court. Prov 25:1 “These are other proverbs of Solomon that the officials of King Hezekiah of Judah copied”<sup>4</sup> suggests that the recording and collecting of proverbs was conducted at the king’s court. The king needed his wise counselor since “in abundance of counselors there is victory” (Prov 24:6b).<sup>5</sup> At the king’s court, the wise counselor belongs to the urban elite and can afford leisure – an elite view against the assumption that wisdom is craftsmanship and can be found among people of handicraft:

<sup>24</sup> The wisdom of the scribe depends on the opportunity of leisure; only the one who has little business can become wise. <sup>25</sup> How can one become wise who handles the plow, and who glories in the shaft of a goad, who drives oxen and is occupied with their work, and whose talk is about bulls? (...) <sup>34b</sup> How different the one who devotes himself to the study of the law of the Most High! (...) <sup>4</sup> He serves among the great and appears before rulers; he travels in foreign lands and learns what is good and evil in the human lot. (Sirach 38:24–25.34b; 39:4)<sup>6</sup>

The wise counselor or king is also appreciated in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia. The Instruction of Merikare tells us:

If you are skilled in speech, you will win,  
The tongue is [a king’s] sword;  
Speaking is stronger than all fighting,  
The skillful is not overcome. (Merikare 32–33)<sup>7</sup>

In Mesopotamia, like in the Hebrew Bible with Solomon, the king himself may be termed a “wise ruler” (*rubû emqu*).<sup>8</sup> Most famously, Ashurbanipal claims he has been bestowed with great wisdom by the gods:

[Mardu]k, the sage of the gods, granted me broad understanding and far-reaching wisdom as a gift;  
Nabû, the scribe of everything, bestowed on me the precepts of his craft as a present;  
Ninurta and Nergal endowed my body with power, virility, and unparalleled strength.  
I learnt [the c]raft of the sage Adapa, the secret lore of all of the scribal arts.

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<sup>3</sup> Lux (1992, 60–63) presents arguments for the social setting of the Old Testament wisdom tradition, namely the gate’s council. For the institutional context of education in ancient Egypt, cf. BRUNER 1957; QUACK 2002. For ancient Mesopotamia, cf. CHARPIN 2010, esp. 25–33.

<sup>4</sup> NRSV.

<sup>5</sup> NRSV.

<sup>6</sup> NRSV; cf. LANG 1991, 187–88. I return to this idea below.

<sup>7</sup> LICHTHEIM 1997, 62.

<sup>8</sup> Regarding Nabonidus, cf. RÖLLIG 2003, 41–42.

I am able to recognize celestial and terrestrial [om]ens and can discuss (them) in an assembly of scholars.  
 I am capable of arguing with expert diviners about (the series) “If the liver is a mirror image of the heavens”.  
 I can resolve complex (mathematical) divisions and multiplications that do not have a(n) easy solution.  
 I have read cunningly written text(s) in obscure Sumerian and Akkadian that are difficult to interpret.  
 I have carefully examined inscriptions on stone from before the flood that are sealed, stopped up, and confused. (Asb. L<sup>A</sup> i 15–22)<sup>9</sup>

### *The Wisdom Canon and the Image of the Wise*

Another main context in which ancient wisdom literature appears is the canon. Of course, a religious canon of unalterable wisdom books that exclude others can only be found in the Old Testament. In the Hebrew Bible and the Apocrypha, the following poetic books focus on the theme of wisdom and employ a broad semantic field of wisdom words:

Proverbs  
 Job  
 Ecclesiastes  
 Jesus Sirach  
 Wisdom of Solomon

These books are all written in poetic form and represent collections of proverbs, instructions and laments. They are all poetic writings that employ the so-called *parallelismus membrorum* as their main means of expression.

An “educational canon”<sup>10</sup> of wisdom books can also be found in ancient Egypt. Here, pChester Beatty (19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty; twelfth century B.C.E.) presents a list of highly appreciated instructions and laments which are ascribed to “wise men” (*rḥw-jḥt*):<sup>11</sup>

Is there one here like Hardedef?  
 Is there another like Imhotep?  
 None of our kin is like Neferti,  
 Or Khety, the foremost among them.  
 I give you the name of Ptah-emdjehuty  
 Of Khakheperre-sonb.  
 Is there another like Ptahhotep?  
 Or the equal of Kaires?

(...)

Death made their names forgotten  
 But books made them remembered!

(pChester Beatty IV vs. 2:5–3:11)<sup>12</sup>

Like in the Hebrew Bible, this “didactic literature”<sup>13</sup> is mainly an anthology of maxims and proverbs, instructions and laments that also employ the *parallelismus membrorum*

<sup>9</sup> NOVOTNY 2014, 96. Cf. LIVINGSTONE 2007, 100.

<sup>10</sup> For this term, cf. J. ASSMANN 1991b, 476–77.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. BRUNNER 1988.

<sup>12</sup> LICHTHEIM 2006b, 177.

as their main means of poetic expression. In both the Hebrew Bible and Egyptian literature, the texts are typically ascribed to wise persons from former times, either to Solomon in the Hebrew Bible or to wise men and kings in Egyptian literature.

Regarding ancient Mesopotamia, an educational canon of wisdom texts is more difficult to grasp. Here, different approaches to defining Mesopotamian wisdom literature have been undertaken. W.G. Lambert (1960, 1), for example, terms wisdom a “misnomer” when applied to Mesopotamian literature. B. Alster (2008, 52–57), on the other hand, distinguishes between traditional and critical wisdom literature. This distinction is very similar to that offered by Hebrew Bible scholar M. Fox (2011), who distinguishes between positive wisdom (Proverbs) and negative wisdom (Ecclesiastes as “critical wisdom”). While these are distinctions according to key themes,<sup>14</sup> they can be complemented by a “canonical” and contextual approach.<sup>15</sup> Y. Cohen (2013, 14) argues that library catalogues and commentaries provide us with groupings of particular Mesopotamian texts, among them wisdom compositions: “By piecing this information together, it can be demonstrated that wisdom literature as such was understood by Mesopotamian scholars to be a select corpus (like other textual corpora such as omens).”<sup>16</sup> In this way, “wisdom” may not be a misnomer when applied to Mesopotamian literature. In the next part of this article, I will aim to further define ancient wisdom, according to its main topics and contents.

## Topics and Contents of Wisdom

There seems to be a general consensus in folk philosophy about what wisdom is and how it is received. However, scholars disagree about the precise definition of wisdom and which aspects of wisdom are relevant to wisdom literature. The idea that folk philosophy could be wrong in its view of wisdom was already assumed by Socrates when he methodically disillusioned people who thought of themselves or others as wise. In my attempt to adopt a scholarly view and define ancient wisdom and ancient wisdom literature, I consider the following 10 topics and contents relevant.

*Wisdom is an expression of common morals.*

Instead of solving riddles and untying “knots,”<sup>17</sup> proverbs usually express common insights and morals known and appreciated by all. This may sound strange to modern

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<sup>13</sup> In order to avoid the term “wisdom literature”, Miriam Lichtheim (1996) refers to Egyptian wisdom texts as “didactic literature.”

<sup>14</sup> For a focus on themes in ancient Near Eastern studies, cf. BUCCELLATI 1981.

<sup>15</sup> As well as themes, canon, and context, a fourth approach should also be added, namely the analyses of vocabulary and semantic fields, cf., e.g., WHYBRAY 1974.

<sup>16</sup> See also Y. Cohen’s contribution in this volume, pp. 41–59.

<sup>17</sup> Yet, the ancient Egyptian term for a proverb is “knot” (*ts*). For this, cf., e.g. JUNGE 1984; BRUNNER 1988, 62.

ears – given that we encounter aspects of wisdom that differ from common sense<sup>18</sup> – but a main aspect of the ancient wisdom tradition is the expression of common morals. These common morals seem to be natural, accessible to the people, written down for practical use, presented immethodically to the hearer, and ‘thin’ in the sense that they express already well-known morals.<sup>19</sup> Virtues of decency such as diligence, modesty, and loyalty play a major role in daily work life and are therefore appreciated by common maxims.<sup>20</sup> Although the concept of secret knowledge is present in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia (secrecy is denoted by the terms *št3* in Egyptian or *pirištu* and *niširtu* in Akkadian),<sup>21</sup> this concept of secret knowledge does not apply to the instructions and laments, which are, in principle, neither secret nor dependent on a mediator but instead, like the Hebrew wisdom scriptures, taught “democratically” to all people.<sup>22</sup>

*Wisdom is skillful craftsmanship.*

It is important to consider that Pre-Socratic wisdom in all high cultures of the ancient world regarded specialized handicraft as well as ritual proficiency and divinatory skills as wisdom.<sup>23</sup> It was not only judges and kings, scribes and counselors but also astronomers, architects, diviners, healers, and magicians who were regarded as being wise men and wise in their art of craftsmanship.<sup>24</sup> Even Aristotle regarded wisdom as the perfection of skill (*areté technēs*; Arist. e.N. 1141 a 12).<sup>25</sup> In the Hebrew Bible, the workmen on the tabernacle, for example, are identified as wise men:

And Bezalel and Oholiab and every man wise of heart in whom the Lord has put wisdom and understanding to know (how) to do the whole work in the construction of the sanctuary shall work in accordance with all that the Lord has commanded. (Exod 36:1)<sup>26</sup>

Wisdom, therefore, is an art that can be learned and achieved through practice, endurance, and rich life experience. This said, the image of wisdom as craftsmanship often forms the basis of the other topics of wisdom to follow.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, modern distinc-

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<sup>18</sup> Claiming that wisdom builds upon common sense does not imply that wisdom cannot reflect critically on common opinions. Although, in Greek philosophy, Isocrates insists that philosophy keep to common sense (*dóxa*), Socrates instead insists that philosophy reflect critically on common and often false opinions (*pseudēs doxa*). Cf. KRANZ 1989, 575 and 579; PIETSCH 2007, 317. In the following sections, we will see that ancient Near Eastern wisdom traditions are also able to reflect critically on common sense.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. GEERTZ 2000; LANG 1991, 178–85.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. BOLLNOW 1962; LANG 2008, 182–83.

<sup>21</sup> For Mesopotamia, cf., e.g., LENZI 2008, 23.

<sup>22</sup> For the Old Testament, cf. SCHELLENBERG 2015, 126–30.

<sup>23</sup> Cf., e.g., Homer *Ilias* 15:410–12; Plato *Hipp. Minor* 368b–d. See PIETSCH 2007, 316–17.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. CURNOW 2010, 108–44.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. FIGAL 2005, 1362.

<sup>26</sup> My translation. Cf., e.g., MÜLLER 1977, 936.

<sup>27</sup> For example, wisdom as encompassing knowledge: Since arts are performed skillfully only when relying on encompassing knowledge connected to the field of study concerned, encompassing knowledge is also included in any field of craftsmanship. This also applies to the other topics that follow in this article, namely wisdom as deep knowledge, wisdom acquired by hardship and life

tions between craftsmanship, ritual and magical acts, deep wisdom, and rational science do not apply to ancient wisdom conceptions, which use wisdom terms such as Greek *sophía*, Hebrew *ḥokmāh*, Akkadian *nēmequ* or Egyptian *rḥ* to denote all of these “sub-systems of wisdom.” In Mesopotamia, the term *ummānu* not only means scholar but also craftsman, and, as well as the *ummānu* “specialists of various types including the *āšipu* (exorcist who recites incantations), *kalû* (lamentation singer), *ṭupšarru* (scribe or astronomer), *bārû* (diviner, haruspex), and *asû* (physician)” were also regarded as wise men.<sup>28</sup>

*Wisdom has to be effective.*<sup>29</sup>

The idea that wisdom has to be effective is already clear from the idea of wisdom as craftsmanship. On a general level, then, wisdom not only has to achieve and maintain the art of handicraft but also has to be effective in a way that a successful life can be achieved. Happiness (Greek *eudaimonía*) seems to be, in one way or another, the main backbone and purpose of most ancient conceptions of wisdom. As Proverbs 13:14 claims: “The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life, so that one may avoid the snares of death.”<sup>30</sup>

This “utilitarian” way of thinking is also present in the Egyptian instructions, often by using the word *3ḥ* (“useful, utilitarian”).<sup>31</sup> In the Instruction of Amenemope, the teacher says: “Give your ears, hear the sayings, Give your heart to understand them; It profits to put them in your heart, Woe to him who neglects them!”<sup>32</sup>

On a practical level, then, wisdom is an art of problem solving, like the Greek sophists (the “wise”) who claimed to command techniques of blissful lifestyles. King Ashurbanipal boasts: “I can resolve complex (mathematical) divisions and multiplications that do not have a(n) easy solution.”<sup>33</sup> Therefore, wisdom is also eminent in the realm of law when legal disputes have to be solved. In this way, the king, being the highest judge, appears as the wisest of all men who has to enforce the law and solve legal disputes in a wise and thereby righteous way. In 1 Kings 3:28, it is said about Solomon:

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experience as well as wisdom’s effectiveness. In our modern view of wisdom (influenced by Socrates’ critique of single craftsmanship as kinds of wisdom), we may not regard handicraft, ritual skills or divinatory capabilities as wisdom; however, the ancients did regard these capabilities as wisdom, and it is therefore important to keep the image of wisdom as a skillful art in mind when considering the aspects of wisdom that follow in this article.

<sup>28</sup> HUROWITZ 2008, 66–67. In Jer 8:8, the court sages (חכמים) seem to form a separate group next to prophets and priests. For the magical aspects of the wise figure Daniel, cf. MÜLLER 2009.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. A. ASSMANN 1991, 17.

<sup>30</sup> NRSV.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. J. ASSMANN 1991b, 480–83.

<sup>32</sup> Amenemope 3:9–12. LICHTHEIM 2006b, 149.

<sup>33</sup> Asb. L<sup>4</sup> i 21. NOVOTNY 2014, 96. Cf. LIVINGSTONE 2007, 100.

All Israel heard of the judgment that the king had rendered; and they stood in awe of the king, because they perceived that the wisdom of God was in him, to execute justice.<sup>34</sup>

Likewise, in Isaiah 11, it is said that the spirit of wisdom shall rest upon the king so that he may judge with righteousness:

<sup>1</sup> A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; <sup>4</sup> but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. <sup>5</sup> Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

(Isa 11:1–5)<sup>35</sup>

*Wisdom encompasses knowledge.*<sup>36</sup>

Wisdom is not abstract knowledge of single objects but either a specialized craft or an encompassing knowledge. Gilgamesh learned “of everything the sum of wisdom” (Gilg. I 6).<sup>37</sup> King Ashurbanipal boasts: “I myself, Ashurbanipal, learned the wisdom of Nabû, the art of the scribe in its totality; I followed the teachings of all the masters, as many as there are.”<sup>38</sup> The Onomasticon of Amenope is meant to be “for learning all things that exist”.<sup>39</sup> And, at the outset of his queries (Eccl 1,14a), Qohelet claims (in the disguise of Solomon): “I saw all the deeds that are done under the sun.”<sup>40</sup> This seems to be a philosophical perspective in the sense that, according to Plato, the one who loves wisdom (the philosopher) loves knowledge in all fields of study.<sup>41</sup>

In ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt, the so-called *Listenwissenschaft* was a central part of understanding the world and the world’s order. As such, it is no wonder that the Egyptian “wisdom-term” for “instruction” (*sb3yt*) is also applied to encyclopedic listings (onomastica).<sup>42</sup> Another example is Thutmose III. (18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, fifteenth century B.C.E.), who symbolizes creation’s order by presenting plants and animals from many parts of the ancient Near East on the walls of his ballroom in Karnak.<sup>43</sup> In Mesopotamia, lexical lists could form a kind of glossary to encompass Sumerian words and their Akkadian counterparts or old and new cuneiform signs. For example, the 16<sup>th</sup>

<sup>34</sup> NRSV.

<sup>35</sup> NRSV.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. A. ASSMANN 1991, 15f.

<sup>37</sup> GEORGE 1999, 1.

<sup>38</sup> Prism A § 3. CHARPIN 2010, 199.

<sup>39</sup> GARDINER 1968, 2\*.

<sup>40</sup> NRSV. Like a Greek philosopher, Qohelet wishes to grasp the totality (כל-הכל), cf. MÜLLER 2000.

<sup>41</sup> “The lover of wisdom, too, we shall affirm, desires all wisdom, not a part and a part not.” (Plato Rep. 475b. Translation SHOREY 1937, 515. Cf. also KRANZ 1989, 579. Cf. also Heraclitus, Fragment 35.)

<sup>42</sup> Cf. SCHNEIDER 2008, 45.

<sup>43</sup> Cf., e.g., BEAUX 1990; KEEL/SCHROER 2008, 170 with fig. 137.

tablet of the *Urra-ḫubullu* lexical list from the Louvre presents a list of stones, while a clay tablet from the British Museum sets old and new cuneiform signs against each other.<sup>44</sup> In Genesis 2 of the Bible, Adam takes hold of the world by giving names to all the animals presented to him, and Hesiod, with the catalogues in his “Theogony,” aims to present about 300 gods, thereby giving godly names to almost all phenomena of the world.<sup>45</sup> This interest in encompassing knowledge is, therefore, an integral part of the ancient wisdom tradition.<sup>46</sup>

*Wisdom is deep knowledge.*<sup>47</sup>

Wisdom is more than isolated knowledge about isolated objects.<sup>48</sup> Wisdom requires a deeper knowledge that involves understanding the essential, basic substance of the world as well as acquiring life experience through joy and suffering. Already in the first two lines of the Gilgamesh epic, Gilgamesh is said to be “He who saw the Deep, the country’s foundation, [who] knew . . . , was wise in all matters!” (Gilg. I 1–2).<sup>49</sup> This kind of deep wisdom allows the wise to see through man’s character and understand his ways; it is expressed beautifully in the frame narrative of the Egyptian Instruction of Kagemni: “The vizier had his children summoned, after he had understood the ways of men, their character having become clear to him.”<sup>50</sup> Deep wisdom, as Bruno Snell (1924, 66; 1975a, 26) has shown, was also valued in ancient Greece. It was Heraclitus who first advocated deep wisdom and warned against acquiring isolated knowledge: “Much learning does not teach understanding (πολυμαθῆ νόον οὐ διδάσκει)” (Fragment 40 = D.L. 9.1.1).<sup>51</sup> Heraclitus also granted depth to the soul as the organ of thinking: “Of soul thou shalt never find boundaries, not if thou trackest it on every path; so deep is its cause (ψυχῆς πείρατα ἰὼν οὐκ ἂν ἐξεύροιο, πᾶσαν ἐπιπορευόμενος ὁδόν· οὐτῶ βαθὺν λόγον ἔχει)” (Fragment 45 = D.L. 9.1.7).<sup>52</sup>

*Wisdom is knowledge of the world’s order.*

The notion of wisdom as knowledge of the world’s order follows from the notion of wisdom as encompassing and deep knowledge. Although almost every god in ancient Mesopotamia can be labeled “wise,” wisdom is especially part of the god Enki/Ea and his son Asalluḫi/Marduk, who can both be called “wise of the gods” (*apkal ilī*)<sup>53</sup> or

<sup>44</sup> Cf. FINKEL/TAYLOR 2015, 16–22 with fig. 9.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. SNELL 1975b.

<sup>46</sup> Aristotle is the first to distinguish between different kinds of wisdom: theoretical “wisdom” (*sophía*) and practical “knowledge” (*phrónēsis*). Cf. FIGAL 2005, 1363.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. A. ASSMANN 1991, 16.

<sup>48</sup> Piepmeier (1989, 131) states that “Weisheit ist eine Form nichtpropositionalen Wissens.”

<sup>49</sup> GEORGE 1999, 1.

<sup>50</sup> Epilogue of the Instruction of Kagemni. LICHTHEIM 2006a, 60.

<sup>51</sup> Greek text and translation, HICKS 1972, 408–409. Cf. also GLADIGOW 1991, 66.

<sup>52</sup> Greek text and translation, HICKS 1972, 414–15. Cf. also GLADIGOW 1991, 67. Cf. Psalm 64:7 according to the “heart” as the organ of thinking.

<sup>53</sup> Cf., e.g., CAD A/2, 171–72.

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