

Copenhagen International Seminar

PLATO'S *TIMAEUS* AND THE BIBLICAL CREATION ACCOUNTS

**COSMIC MONOTHEISM AND TERRESTRIAL
POLYTHEISM IN THE PRIMORDIAL HISTORY**

Russell E. Gmirkin



Plato's *Timaeus* and the Biblical Creation Accounts

Plato's Timaeus and the Biblical Creation Accounts argues that the creation of the world in Genesis 1 and the story of the first humans in Genesis 2–3 both draw directly on Plato's famous account of the origins of the universe, mortal life and evil containing equal parts science, theology and myth.

This book is the first to systematically compare biblical, Ancient Near Eastern and Greek creation accounts and to show that Genesis 1–3 is heavily indebted to Plato's *Timaeus* and other cosmogonies by Greek natural philosophers. It argues that the idea of a monotheistic cosmic god was first introduced in Genesis 1 under the influence of Plato's philosophy, and that this cosmic Creator was originally distinct from the lesser terrestrial gods, including Yahweh, who appear elsewhere in Genesis. It shows the use of Plato's *Critias*, the sequel to *Timaeus*, in the stories about the Garden of Eden, the intermarriage of "the sons of God" and the daughters of men, and the biblical flood. This book confirms the late date and Hellenistic background of Genesis 1–11, drawing on Plato's writings and other Greek sources found at the Great Library of Alexandria.

This study provides a fascinating approach to Genesis that will interest students and scholars in both biblical and classical studies, philosophy and creation narratives.

Russell E. Gmirkin is an independent researcher specializing in Greek sources used in the Hebrew Bible. He is best known for his 2006 book *Berosus and Genesis, Manetho and Exodus* and his 2017 book *Plato and the Creation of the Hebrew Bible*.

Copenhagen International Seminar

General Editors: Ingrid Hjelm, University of Copenhagen, Denmark, and Emanuel Pfoh, National Research Council, Argentina

Editors: Niels Peter Lemche and Mogens Müller, both at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark

Language Revision Editor: Jim West, Ming Hua Theological College, Hong Kong

The Emergence of Israel In Ancient Palestine

Historical and Anthropological Perspectives

Emanuel Pfoh

Syria-Palestine in the Late Bronze Age

An Anthropology of Politics and Power

Emanuel Pfoh

Plato and the Creation of the Hebrew Bible

Russell E. Gmirkin

Archaeology, Heritage and Ethics in the Western Wall Plaza, Jerusalem

Darkness at the End of the Tunnel

Raz Kletter

Jeremiah in History and Tradition

Edited by Jim West and Niels Peter Lemche

Hellenism and the Primary History

The Imprint of Greek Sources in Genesis – 2 Kings

Robert Karl Gnuse

John the Baptist as a Rewritten Figure in Luke-Acts

Christina Michelsen Chauchot

Plato's *Timaeus* and the Biblical Creation Accounts

Cosmic Monotheism and Terrestrial Polytheism in the Primordial History

Russell E. Gmirkin

For more information on this series, please visit: <https://www.routledge.com/Copenhagen-International-Seminar/book-series/COPSEM>

Plato's *Timaeus* and the Biblical Creation Accounts

Cosmic Monotheism and
Terrestrial Polytheism in the
Primordial History

Russell E. Gmirkin

First published 2022
by Routledge
4 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10158

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© 2022 Russell E. Gmirkin

The right of Russell E. Gmirkin to be identified as author of this work has been asserted in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Trademark notice: Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Names: Gmirkin, Russell E., 1954- author.

Title: Plato's Timaeus and the biblical creation accounts : cosmic monotheism and terrestrial polytheism in the primordial history / Russell E. Gmirkin.

Description: Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY : Routledge, 2022. | Includes bibliographical references and indexes.

Identifiers: LCCN 2021054200 (print) | LCCN 2021054201 (ebook) | ISBN 9781032020822 (hardback) | ISBN 9781032020846 (paperback) | ISBN 9781003181774 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Bible. Genesis--Criticism, interpretation, etc. | Bible. Genesis--Comparative studies. | Creation--Biblical teaching. | Creation in literature. | Biblical cosmology. | Cosmogony, Ancient. | Plato--Influence. | Plato. Timaeus.

Classification: LCC BS1235.52 .G56 2022 (print) | LCC BS1235.52 (ebook) | DDC 222/.1106--dc23/eng/20220204

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2021054200>

LC ebook record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2021054201>

ISBN: 978-1-032-02082-2 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-1-032-02084-6 (pbk)

ISBN: 978-1-003-18177-4 (ebk)

DOI: 10.4324/9781003181774

Typeset in Times New Roman
by MPS Limited, Dehradun

To Thomas L. Thompson, a true original

Without whom this book would not have been possible



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

Contents

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xiii
<i>Abbreviations</i>	xiv
1 Comparative Methodology and Genesis 1–11	1
1.1 <i>Overview of Methodology</i>	2
1.1.1 <i>Comparative Studies</i>	2
1.1.2 <i>Source Criticism</i>	4
1.1.3 <i>Application of Method</i>	5
1.2 <i>An Overview of Scholarship on the Primordial History</i>	6
1.2.1 <i>The Pre-Critical Research Paradigm (ca. 200 BCE–ca. 1600 CE)</i>	7
1.2.2 <i>The Pre-Hellenistic Research Paradigm (ca. 1600 CE–Present)</i>	7
1.2.2.1 <i>Higher Criticism (ca. 1600–ca. 2000)</i>	8
1.2.2.2 <i>Comparative Studies: Ancient Near East</i>	9
1.2.2.3 <i>Comparative Studies: Classical Greece</i>	11
1.2.2.4 <i>Limitations of the Pre-Hellenistic Research Paradigm</i>	12
1.2.3 <i>The Hellenistic Research Paradigm (1993–Present)</i>	14
1.2.3.1 <i>The Old Testament—A Hellenistic Book?</i>	14
1.2.3.2 <i>Berosus and Genesis</i>	16
1.2.3.3 <i>Argonauts of the Desert</i>	18

1.2.3.4	<i>Plato and the Creation of the Hebrew Bible</i>	18
1.3	<i>The Current Volume</i>	20
1.4	<i>Final Remarks on Methodology</i>	23
	<i>Notes</i>	23
	<i>Bibliography</i>	24
2	Genesis 1 and Creation Myths	29
2.1	<i>Introduction</i>	29
2.2	<i>Creation Myths</i>	33
2.2.1	<i>Theogonies</i>	34
2.2.2	<i>Theomachies</i>	35
2.2.3	<i>Palatial World-Myths</i>	36
2.2.4	<i>Local Palatial Myths</i>	37
2.3	<i>Conclusions: Genesis 1 and Mythical Cosmogony</i>	38
	<i>Notes</i>	44
	<i>Bibliography</i>	46
3	Genesis 1 and Greek Cosmogonies	48
3.1	<i>Introduction</i>	48
3.2	<i>A Survey of Greek Scientific Cosmogonies</i>	49
3.2.1	<i>Thales of Miletus</i>	51
3.2.2	<i>Anaximander of Miletus</i>	51
3.2.3	<i>Anaximenes of Miletus</i>	52
3.2.4	<i>Xenophanes of Colophon</i>	52
3.2.5	<i>Heraclitus of Ephesus</i>	53
3.2.6	<i>Parmenides of Elea</i>	53
3.2.7	<i>Empedocles of Akragas</i>	53
3.2.8	<i>Anaxagoras of Clazomenae</i>	54
3.2.9	<i>Archelaus of Athens</i>	55
3.2.10	<i>Diogenes of Apollonia</i>	56
3.2.11	<i>Leucippus of Miletus and Democritus of Abdera</i>	56
3.2.12	<i>Socrates of Athens</i>	57
3.2.13	<i>Plato of Athens</i>	57
3.2.14	<i>Aristotle of Stagira</i>	60
3.2.15	<i>Philippus of Opus</i>	60
3.2.16	<i>Epicurus of Samos</i>	61
3.2.17	<i>Polemo of Athens</i>	61
3.2.18	<i>Zeno of Citium</i>	61

3.3	<i>Plato's Timaeus, Critias and Genesis</i>	62
3.4	<i>Rhetorical Analysis</i>	64
3.4.1	<i>Scientific Discourse</i>	65
3.4.2	<i>Revealed Myth</i>	66
3.4.3	<i>Myth as Discourse (Enchantment)</i>	67
3.4.4	<i>Education (Belief)</i>	68
3.4.5	<i>Laws (Compliance)</i>	70
3.4.6	<i>Philosophy (Knowledge)</i>	72
3.4.7	<i>Reform (Compliance)</i>	74
3.5	<i>Conclusions</i>	75
	<i>Notes</i>	76
	<i>Bibliography</i>	82
4	Genesis 1 as Philosophy	84
4.1	<i>Plato's Timaeus and Genesis 1 (LXX)</i>	84
4.2	<i>When Was Genesis Written?</i>	88
4.3	<i>Timaeus Literary Parallels with Genesis 1–3</i>	90
4.3.1	<i>Prologue to the Cosmogony</i>	91
4.3.2	<i>Plato's Theological Cosmogony</i>	92
4.3.3	<i>Plato's Scientific Cosmogony</i>	92
4.3.4	<i>Plato's Scientific-Theological-Mythical Cosmogony</i>	93
4.4	<i>Timaeus Conceptual and Philosophical Parallels</i>	95
4.4.1	<i>Scientific Content</i>	96
4.4.2	<i>Teleology</i>	97
4.4.3	<i>The Demiurge</i>	97
4.4.4	<i>Mythical Dialogue</i>	97
4.4.5	<i>Platonic Diairesis</i>	98
4.4.6	<i>Platonic Etymologies</i>	99
	<i>Notes</i>	100
	<i>Bibliography</i>	100
5	Genesis 1 as Science	103
5.1	<i>The Prologue</i>	104
5.1.1	<i>Gen 1:1 as Act of Creation</i>	104
5.1.2	<i>Gen 1:1 as Title</i>	105
5.1.3	<i>Gen 1:1 as Prologue</i>	106
5.2	<i>The Primordial Chaos and Plato's Timaeus</i>	107
5.2.1	<i>Cosmogony</i>	109
5.2.2	<i>Stratification of the Elements</i>	113

- 5.2.3 *The Divine Wind* 116
- 5.2.4 *Ontology* 119
- 5.2.5 *Conclusions* 123
- 5.3 *The Creation of the Kosmos* 124
- 5.4 *The Seven Days of Creation* 125
 - 5.4.1 *The First Day* 125
 - 5.4.2 *The Second Day* 129
 - 5.4.3 *The Third Day* 130
 - 5.4.4 *The Fourth Day* 131
 - 5.4.5 *The Fifth Day* 133
 - 5.4.6 *The Sixth Day* 134
 - 5.4.7 *The Seventh Day* 137
- 5.5 *Conclusions* 139
- Notes* 141
- Bibliography* 146

6 Genesis 2–3 as Myth

150

- 6.1 *The Gods in Plato's Timaeus* 150
 - 6.1.1 *The Forms* 151
 - 6.1.2 *The Demiurge* 151
 - 6.1.3 *The Kosmos* 151
 - 6.1.4 *The Celestial Gods* 151
 - 6.1.5 *The Younger Gods* 152
 - 6.1.6 *Divine Heroes, Ordinary Humans, and Animals* 152
- 6.2 *Plato's Second Creation Account* 153
- 6.3 *Yahweh as a Terrestrial God* 157
 - 6.3.1 *The Philosopher's God* 158
 - 6.3.2 *The Celestial and Terrestrial Greek Gods* 158
 - 6.3.3 *The Terrestrial Gods of the Ancient Near East* 159
 - 6.3.4 *The Terrestrial Gods of the Ancient Levant* 160
 - 6.3.5 *The Terrestrial Gods of the Bible* 160
- 6.4 *The Second Biblical Creation Account* 162
- 6.5 *The Garden of Eden* 171
- 6.6 *Humanity's Fall* 176
- 6.7 *Plato on the Knowledge of Good and Evil* 182
- 6.8 *The First and Second Creation Accounts Compared* 186
- Notes* 189
- Bibliography* 193

7	Genesis 2–11 and Plato’s <i>Critias</i>	199
7.1	<i>The Garden of Eden and Mesopotamian Parallels</i>	201
7.2	<i>The Garden of Eden and Plato’s Atlantis</i>	204
7.3	<i>Genesis 2–3 and the Age of Kronos</i>	206
7.4	<i>Genesis 4 and the Age of Zeus</i>	208
7.5	<i>Genesis 5 and Berossus</i>	211
7.6	<i>Genesis 6:1–13 and Critias</i>	213
7.6.1	<i>The Allotment of the Earth</i>	214
7.6.2	<i>The Sons of God and the Daughters of Men</i>	215
7.6.3	<i>Critias and the Children of the Gods</i>	218
7.6.4	<i>Excursus: Mortal Demigods and Mortal Humans</i>	221
7.6.5	<i>Critias and the Corruption of the Earth</i>	223
7.6.6	<i>Critias and the Divine Judgment of Humanity</i>	225
7.6.7	<i>Critias and the Destruction by Flood</i>	226
7.6.8	<i>Platonic Theology and the Flood</i>	228
7.7	<i>Critias and the Post-Flood World</i>	230
7.8	<i>Critias, Exodus and Deuteronomy</i>	235
	<i>Notes</i>	238
	<i>Bibliography</i>	241
8	Cosmic Monotheism and Terrestrial Polytheism in Plato and the Bible	246
8.1	<i>The Emergence of Yahwistic Monotheism</i>	247
8.1.1	<i>First Temple Yahwistic Polytheism</i>	247
8.1.2	<i>Between the First and Second Temples</i>	248
8.1.3	<i>The Persian Period</i>	248
8.1.4	<i>Hellenistic Era Cosmic Monotheism</i>	248
8.1.5	<i>Combative Yahwistic Monolatry</i>	249
8.1.6	<i>Yahwistic Terrestrial Monotheism</i>	249
8.2	<i>The Three Types of Greek Theologies and Gods</i>	250
8.2.1	<i>Civic Theology</i>	251
8.2.2	<i>Mythic Theology</i>	252
8.2.3	<i>Philosophical Theology</i>	253
8.2.4	<i>Monotheism, Polytheism and the Three Theologies</i>	255
8.3	<i>The Greek Invention of Monotheism</i>	256
8.3.1	<i>Xenophanes of Colophon (ca. 570-475 BCE)</i>	257
8.3.2	<i>Heraclitus of Ephesus (ca. 544-484 BCE)</i>	257

8.3.3	<i>Anaxagoras of Clazomenae (ca. 500-427 BCE)</i>	257
8.3.4	<i>Socrates of Athens (ca. 469-399 BCE)</i>	258
8.3.5	<i>Plato of Athens (429-347 BCE)</i>	259
8.4	<i>Plato's Theology</i>	260
8.4.1	<i>Plato's Natural Theology</i>	260
8.4.2	<i>Plato's Mythic Theology</i>	262
8.4.3	<i>Plato's Civic Theology</i>	265
	8.4.3.1 <i>Civic Authorities</i>	266
	8.4.3.2 <i>Cultic Authorities</i>	269
8.5	<i>Plato's Theology and the Hexateuch</i>	272
8.6	<i>The Platonic Theology of Genesis</i>	273
8.7	<i>The Anti-Platonic Theology of Exodus-Joshua</i>	277
	8.7.1 <i>Anti-Platonic Cultic Theology in Exodus-Joshua</i>	277
	8.7.2 <i>Anti-Platonic National Theology in Exodus-Joshua</i>	279
	8.7.3 <i>Anti-Platonic Mythic Theology in Exodus-Joshua</i>	280
	8.7.4 <i>Anti-Platonic Natural Theology in Exodus-Joshua</i>	281
8.8	<i>Yahweh's New Cosmic Status in Exodus-Joshua</i>	282
	8.8.1 <i>The Conflation of Yahweh and the Creator</i>	282
	8.8.2 <i>The Decalogue: The Second Commandment</i>	285
	8.8.3 <i>The Decalogue: The Fourth Commandment</i>	286
	8.8.4 <i>From Monolatry to Monotheism</i>	286
8.9	<i>Initial Successes and Setbacks of the Platonic Agenda</i>	287
8.10	<i>The Collapse of the Platonic Agenda</i>	292
	<i>Notes</i>	294
	<i>Bibliography</i>	302

Copenhagen International Seminar Series

309

Index

312

Acknowledgments

Many thanks to all those who helped at every stage in the writing of this book: to Thomas L. Thompson, who encouraged me to write this book, and all the ones that preceded it; to my lovely, talented wife, Carolyn Tracy, for her creative input as a fellow writer; to Philippe Wajdenbaum and Yaakov Kupitz for their many valuable insights into Plato's *Timaeus*; to Philippe, Yaakov and Greg Doudna for their critical comments and editorial suggestions during the peer review and proofing of my manuscript; to my reviewers at Routledge for their invaluable recommendations for improving my manuscript; to the learned Platonic and biblical scholars who participated in a discussion of a pre-print of a key chapter at Academia.edu; to the employees at Starbucks, to Shadow and Sidekick the friendly crows, and to Little One the Dark-Eyed Junco, for providing a pleasant and always entertaining outdoor setting for writing; to my editor, Ingrid Hjelm, for her many helpful suggestions; and to Ingrid Hjelm, Emanuel Pfoh and Routledge for accepting this long-awaited study as part of the Copenhagen International Series.

Abbreviations

<i>AJA</i>	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
<i>AJP</i>	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
<i>BA</i>	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
<i>BAR</i>	<i>Biblical Archaeology Review</i>
<i>BASOR</i>	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
<i>BibSac</i>	<i>Bibliotheka Sacra</i>
<i>BibThBul</i>	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
<i>BICS</i>	<i>Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies</i>
<i>BIOSCS</i>	<i>Bulletin of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies</i>
<i>BZAW</i> ca	<i>Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i> <i>circa</i>
<i>CBET</i>	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>CIS</i>	Copenhagen International Series
<i>CJ</i>	<i>The Classical Journal</i>
<i>CPh</i>	<i>Classical Philology</i>
<i>CQ</i>	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
<i>CUSAS</i>	Cornell University Studies in Assyriology and Sumerology
<i>DSD</i>	<i>Dead Sea Discoveries</i>
<i>FAT</i>	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
<i>FGrH</i>	Felix Jacoby, <i>Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker</i> . 15 vols. Berlin: Wiedmannsche Buchhandlung, 1923–1969.
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>HTS</i>	<i>Hervormde Theological Studies</i>
<i>HUCA</i>	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
<i>HUTH</i>	Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie
<i>IEJ</i>	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
<i>JAOS</i>	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JEA</i>	<i>Journal of Egyptian Archaeology</i>
<i>JHI</i>	<i>Journal of the History of Ideas</i>
<i>JHM</i>	<i>Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences</i>

<i>JHS</i>	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>JNSL</i>	<i>Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages</i>
<i>JQR</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
<i>JSJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Period</i>
<i>JSJSup</i>	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
<i>JSOTSup</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, Supplement Series</i>
<i>JSPSup</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Pseudepigrapha, Supplement Series</i>
<i>LCL</i>	Loeb Classic Library
<i>LICS</i>	<i>Leeds International Classical Studies</i>
<i>OTL</i>	Old Testament Library
<i>PAS</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society</i>
<i>PCPhS</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society</i>
<i>PhR</i>	<i>The Philosophical Review</i>
<i>RMeta</i>	<i>The Review of Metaphysics</i>
<i>SAA</i>	State Archives of Assyria
<i>SANE</i>	Sources of the Ancient Near East
<i>SBLDS</i>	SBL Dissertation Series
<i>SHR</i>	Studies in the History of Religions
<i> SJOT</i>	<i>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</i>
<i>STDJ</i>	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
<i>TAD</i>	<i>Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt: Newly Copied, Edited and Translated into Hebrew and English.</i> Edited by B. Porten and A. Yardeni. 4 Volumes (A–D). Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1986–1999.
<i>TAPA</i>	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>
<i>TAPhA</i>	<i>Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association</i>
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
<i>VC</i>	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
<i>VTSup</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum, Supplement Series</i>
<i>WMANT</i>	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
<i>ZPE</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

1 Comparative Methodology and Genesis 1–11

The Primordial History of Genesis 1–11 stands as a clearly defined sub-document within Genesis, an account of the origins of the cosmos, of life, of humanity, of wickedness and toil, of the technological arts, of the destruction of earthly life, of its rebirth after the biblical flood, and of the origin of the nations, including the ancestors of the Abrahamic peoples. The remainder of Genesis, containing stories about the biblical patriarchs, forms a second distinct sub-document, to which the Primordial History forms a preface. It is widely acknowledged today that the Primordial History was an independent composition, added after the completion of the Patriarchal Narratives of Genesis 12–50, and integrated with the latter by a few transitional verses that bridged the two otherwise independent compositions (Crüsemann 1981; Westermann 1984; with a dissenting opinion at Van Seters 1992: 99, 191–3). The Ancient Near Eastern literary antecedents of Genesis 1–11 have been thoroughly explored in secondary literature since the first translation of the Atra-Hasis flood story (Smith 1976; cf. Lambert and Millard 1969: 1–4). Greek parallels to specific episodes in the Primordial History have also been noted from time to time (Niesiołowski-Spanò 2007; Bremmer 2008; Wajdenbaum 2011: 92–112; Loudon 2013; Gnuse 2017). The objective of the present study is to demonstrate the systematic use of Plato's *Timaeus* and *Critias* in the Primordial History as a whole. Perhaps the most important conclusion is the essential unity of Genesis 1–3, which closely follows *Timaeus* in the fashioning of the *kosmos* by a supreme cosmic creator god and the subsequent creation of mortal life forms by his offspring, the pantheon of Greek gods, in what amounted to a second creation story. Another key conclusion is that the god Yahweh Elohim of Genesis 2–3, along with the sons of God in Genesis 6:1–4, were originally written to be understood as the terrestrial offspring of the creator God Elohim of Genesis 1. A further implication is that the origin of Jewish monotheism is to be traced to Plato's *Timaeus*, a theological development facilitated by the conflation of the local god Yahweh with the cosmic Creator in later biblical texts starting in Exodus.

1.1 Overview of Methodology

This book pursues a deductive approach to identifying the antecedent literary and intellectual influences on Genesis 1–11 by means of the well-known academic disciplines of comparative studies and source criticism. These intersecting disciplines have been fruitfully applied to the Primordial History in the past, primarily in the context of Ancient Near Eastern studies.

Perhaps the most famous example is the biblical flood story. Typological parallels to the flood story are known from around the world, but most are excluded from serious consideration due to separations in time, language or geography that preclude any credible possibility of direct or indirect influence on the biblical tale. Flood stories in which a survivor was spared from a global or regional deluge by preservation in a boat or floating chest are known from both Greek and Mesopotamian literature. These are sufficiently close in geography and time to the biblical story to be considered viable candidates for comparison. The specific motif of the flood hero releasing birds from the ark is known primarily from Genesis and the Atra-Hasis flood story preserved in the Gilgamesh Epic Tablet XI. This literary motif is so strikingly similar as to render virtually certain that the biblical story derives, directly or indirectly, from that found in the Gilgamesh Epic. How specifically this Mesopotamian flood story came to the attention of the biblical authors is an outstanding question that has not been satisfactorily answered, but the identification of the story in Gilgamesh Epic Tablet XI as a literary antecedent of the biblical tale of Noah and the ark is a major achievement that has stood the test of time. This example illustrates the means by which comparative studies can provide a deductive pathway into source criticism.

1.1.1 Comparative Studies

The premise underlying comparative studies is that a culture that is in direct or indirect contact with another culture can exert influence upon that culture in various ways and that the nature of this influence can be investigated by means of comparison. Virtually any aspect of culture that is an expression of its intellectual life is capable of investigation by means of comparison with other interconnected cultures. Subjects of comparison include architecture, material culture, language, religious and civic institutions, literature, folk lore and customs, to name a few. The focus in the present volume will be on literature: more specifically, comparing the mythical, theological, philosophical, scientific and narrative content in Genesis 1–11 with the ideas and literatures of the Ancient Near Eastern, Greek and Hellenistic worlds.

A well-executed comparative study typically takes place in five stages that broadly correspond to those of the modern scientific method.

- 1 Selection of topic. In the hard sciences, a topic of investigation usually emerges out of observation of new phenomena or problematic data that

is unexplained by current models. In comparative studies, there are usually inciting observations on cultural similarities that are suggestive of interesting potential influence of one culture upon another that leads to the selection of a topic for comparative investigation. Examples include the close structural similarities of Greek and Ancient Near Eastern literature,¹ of a royal hierarchy of the gods in Ancient Near Eastern and archaic Greek mythologies (Launderville 2003), the similarities of Greek and Hittite myths regarding the succession of the chief gods (West 2003: 278–9), similarities of biblical and Ancient Near Eastern laws (Malul 1990; Gmirkin 2017), and similarities of biblical and Greek laws.² All of these observations of interesting cultural commonalities led to comparative studies involving the Ancient Near Eastern and Greek worlds and biblical literature.

- 2 Identification of candidates for comparison. In order to investigate the origin of an intellectual feature of a given culture by means of comparative study, the identification of suitable candidates for comparison becomes crucial. The researcher should cast neither too wide nor too narrow a net in their selection of other times and cultures, which might have had an influence on the target culture. Early comparative studies, such as the 12-volume study of mythology and religion relating to the periodic sacrifice of a sacred king in Frazer 1911–1915, explored typological parallels from around the world in order to draw conclusions, which are now considered of doubtful validity. Samuel Sandmel criticized this overly broad approach as “parallelomania” (Sandmel 1962). Modern comparative studies limit candidates for comparison to cultures within the same “historical stream,” that is, societies in geographical proximity and sufficiently close in time to allow for a direct or mediated flow of ideas (Malul 1990: 13–18, 89–91, 99–101; Talmon 1991: 386). Meir Malul called this the “historical comparative approach,” in contrast to the “typological comparative approach” that cataloged parallels without considering the historical connections between the cultures being compared (Malul 1990). The historical comparative approach was thought to impose a higher degree of rigor in the selection of comparative materials, although in some instances it has resulted in excessively narrow comparisons to be made, undermining the validity of the results (see §1.1.3 below).
- 3 Inductive collection of data. The next step typically consists of the selection and gathering of relevant comparanda, that is, materials suitable for comparison. Selection of data for comparison is generally governed by the choice of research topic. For instance, an investigation into architectural influences might involve standing remains, archaeological excavations, building inscriptions and, in a period well populated by literature, books or other written references to architecture, all of which might provide specific data on architectural practices transmitted to one culture by its neighbors down through time. This

4 *Comparative Methodology and Genesis 1–11*

selection of comparative materials is subject to the constraint that the cultures belong to the same historical stream.

- 4 Deductive testing of hypotheses. Next, the data is systematically compared for both common and divergent features within the historically proximate cultures. An analysis is performed as to whether the commonalities are sufficiently unique or distinctive as to demonstrate the transmission of intellectual traditions between the cultures being compared. In some cases, where there are two-way cultural interactions, establishing the direction of cultural influence may also require supporting evidence and argumentation. This phase of comparison tests whether the hypothesized influence of one culture upon another can in fact be confirmed and suggests the character and limits of that intellectual influence. In cases where potential influences from several candidate cultures are being tested, this phase may help select among competing hypotheses.
- 5 Establishing mechanisms of transmission. Having established that a transfer of knowledge or practices took place, an effort should then be undertaken to identify the mechanism of transmission, which may be direct, mediated or diffuse. For instance, conquest often directly imposes many cultural features of the new rulers on the subject people and its territory. By contrast, similar pottery styles may be the result of diffuse trading networks with no direct contacts between those originating and those copying those styles. Sometimes a specific identifiable class of educated elite that is in possession of specialized knowledge acts as mediator in the transmission of knowledge, such as in the dissemination of the results of Mesopotamian observational astronomy to the Greek world in the late Classical and early Hellenistic Eras. The study of such social interconnections as a mechanism for the transmission of knowledge falls under the category of network theory. In other cases, transmission of knowledge takes place through mediation by literature transmitted from one culture to another, sometimes long after its original authorship. In all cases, the ultimate objective of comparative studies should include specifying the temporal, historical and socio-logical context of the transmission of intellectual traditions from one culture to another, to the extent that this is possible. This enriched understanding of the dynamics of cultural interactions goes beyond the limited minimal objective of establishing that some sort of influence took place.

1.1.2 Source Criticism

Source criticism can be viewed as a specialized form of comparative study that seeks to identify the interrelationship between a given text and antecedent intellectual traditions or sources of information known to the author, where such sources may represent other written texts, oral reports or

firsthand experiences. The underlying premise is that the author or authors of a given literary work, in areas where they do not possess firsthand experiential knowledge of their subject, can often be shown to have utilized other written or oral traditions available to them within their cultural context, and drew on such texts and traditions in a manner specifically suited to their distinctive literary and rhetorical purposes. Discovering an author's sources helps to identify their intellectual milieu and their interactions with it, allowing the source critic to make inferences about the author's time and place, their social status, and the intellectual and cultural traditions they drew upon or competed with.

The same principles broadly apply to source criticism as to comparative studies with respect to the selection of other literatures for comparison. A given text's literary antecedents must necessarily be sought within other cultures and literatures to which the author plausibly had access and for which, if in another language, the authors had the means to translate. This roughly corresponds to the notion of belonging within the same historical stream.

One element of source criticism that governs the selection of candidate texts for comparison is that an antecedent text must be older than the target text under study, a judgment that requires a preliminary assessment of the date of both texts. However, it may be the case that the absolute or even relative dates of the texts in question are not known. In this case, source criticism becomes an important tool for dating the texts involved. If one of the two texts can be demonstrated to use the other as source, it follows that the source text is the older of the two, establishing their relative dates. If a relative sequence can be established among three texts, and if the earliest and latest of the three possess absolute dates established by other means, then they serve as *post terminus* and *ante terminus* for the middle text, establishing its absolute date within a confined date range. One of the main uses of source criticism is for dating texts in this manner. This dating technique is particularly applicable in periods well populated with texts, such as the Greek and Roman periods, and is thus commonly used in classical studies.

1.1.3 Application of Method

The present volume applies the disciplines of comparative studies and source criticism to the study of the Primordial History in a standard manner, as described previously. A departure from virtually all other scholarly studies of Genesis 1–11 down to the end of the twentieth century is made in one respect only, by taking into account Greek and Hellenistic literature and culture as well as that of the Ancient Near East. The novel conclusions drawn in the present study are primarily due to this broader comparative base.

Under the research paradigm that prevailed in various forms down to the end of the twentieth century, the Pentateuch was assumed to have achieved its final form no later than the Persian Era. The Pentateuch was accordingly

viewed as a wholly Ancient Near Eastern literature, predating the arrival of Alexander the Great in the east, and effectively isolated and immune from potential direct influences from Greek literature.

We may call this for convenience's sake the pre-Hellenistic paradigm of Pentateuchal research. Although the thesis that the Pentateuch was authored in its entirety prior to the Hellenistic Era was a scholarly construct lacking in objective external corroboration, this working hypothesis was accepted by consensus throughout scholarship and attained the status of reified fact. This in turn profoundly affected prevailing opinions regarding the historical stream of the Pentateuchal writings. If these texts were written no later than ca. 450 BCE then they were influenced primarily by the literature and cultural influences of the Ancient Near East, with Greek influences necessarily early, indirect and tenuous at best. It followed that classical Greek literature, known in the east only after the conquests of Alexander the Great, could have had no direct effect on biblical writings, while Greek and Hellenistic Era writings of the 300s BCE or later were positively excluded from consideration. The effects of requiring comparative materials to be part of the same historical stream thus effectively excluded considering direct influence on the Pentateuch from Greek and Hellenistic literature under the then-prevailing pre-Hellenistic research paradigm. By inappropriately enforcing the criterion that compared materials must belong to the same historical stream, the application of historical comparative methodology to biblical studies worked at cross purposes to its intended aim of improved standards of academic rigor.

Studies since the 1990s have allowed for the theoretical possibility of a Hellenistic Era date of composition for the Pentateuch in what may be termed the Hellenistic Era paradigm of Pentateuch research. Under this research paradigm, both comparative studies and source criticism cast a wider net, accommodating both Greek and Ancient Near Eastern literature and culture. The new results argued in the present volume, and other twenty-first-century studies that have compared biblical, Greek and Hellenistic texts, are a result of traditional comparative and source critical methods applied to a larger comparative base. Such results are often unknown or seen as controversial by scholars still operating under the older paradigm. The section that follows will discuss how the pre-Hellenistic research paradigm came into existence and achieved a dominance that lasted uncontested until the final decade of the twentieth century, and how Pentateuchal research has changed under the new Hellenistic Era paradigm.

1.2 An Overview of Scholarship on the Primordial History

Scholarship on the Primordial History of Genesis 1–11 has taken place in five more-or-less distinct phases, each with its own characteristic research questions and methodology, corresponding to five successive paradigms for understanding the Pentateuch, its date(s) of composition and its cultural

antecedents. A brief survey of these five paradigms for understanding the Primordial History will prove useful in situating the present study within the history of scholarship. Topics of special interest will be the growing rise in interest in comparative studies and the development of the twentieth-century consensus on the date of the Pentateuch and the cultural influences that acted on its authors.

1.2.1 The Pre-Critical Research Paradigm (ca. 200 BCE–ca. 1600 CE)

In the Hellenistic and Roman eras, the antiquity and Mosaic authorship of the Torah was universally acknowledged by Jews, Christians and “pagan” authors alike (Droge 1989; Gmirkin 2014: 56–7; 2017: 271). This fact was not particularly remarkable given the times. While pseudepigraphical texts attributed to venerable figures of the past abounded among those same Jews, Christians, Greeks and Romans, their antiquity and authorship was rarely questioned. Comparisons of Greek and biblical literature by the Church Fathers—such as found in discussions Genesis 1–11 (Louth 2001) or the biblical law codes (Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospels* 12.4–5, 36–42, 47)—presumed the inspiration, authority and great antiquity of the Books of Moses, far older than all of Greek literature, which consequentially must have borrowed their ideas from the Hebrew Bible (Gmirkin 2014: 56–57, 59). The notion that the biblical authors might have utilized Greek literature rather than the reverse never entered into the discussion. From the Roman period into the Early Modern Era, theological forces ensured that the Mosaic authorship of the “Books of Moses” remained virtually unquestioned, except in certain circles of Jewish scholarship in which Pentateuchal anachronisms were cryptically noted as “mysteries” (Schachter 2003: 1–2), an uncomfortable fact that would later give birth to the new approach to biblical scholarship known as Higher Criticism.

1.2.2 The Pre-Hellenistic Research Paradigm (ca. 1600 CE–Present)

One may define an academic paradigm as an implicit or explicit theoretical and factual framework that is agreed upon by consensus by a body of professionals within a discipline. Paradigms are typically perpetuated within academic institutions of learning in preparation for professional life within that field. As an axiomatic intellectual framework enforced by revered teachers and respected peers, paradigms tend to be conservatively preserved and are difficult to change except in the face of both deconstruction by new facts that run counter to the accepted paradigm and the construction of a competing paradigm with greater explanatory power (Kuhn 1996).

The transition from the pre-critical paradigm of biblical studies to the new paradigm that came to be known as Higher Criticism illustrates the dynamics of paradigm shift. Prior to the revolution that was Higher Criticism, biblical studies were for the most part the special province of rabbis and

church theologians who accepted that the texts of the Hebrew Bible were ancient and authored under divine inspiration by their biblically named authors. This axiomatic intellectual framework for biblical studies was undermined by anachronisms that pointed to the Pentateuch, in particular, as having been authored long after the lifetime of Moses. The challenge to the pre-critical theological reading of the Hebrew Bible by the learned treatises of the earliest biblical critics initially excited great controversy and opposition. Higher Criticism only attained respect and acceptance over time as a legitimate research paradigm as it was shown to explain various literary phenomena inexplicable under a pre-critical reading of the biblical text. Although a pre-critical exegetical tradition persists to the present, the Pentateuch and Hebrew Bible as literatures are now more commonly studied within the various sub-disciplines of biblical criticism such as textual criticism, form criticism and redaction criticism.

The focus of the present section is not biblical criticism as such, but a secondary research hypothesis that arose in the early development of Higher Criticism. It achieved a consensus among scholars in the field, and persisted as an unchallenged foundational axiom closely associated with biblical criticism until the last decade of the twentieth century. This secondary hypothesis attached to biblical criticism held that the Pentateuch evolved over several centuries to achieve its final form during the Persian Era no later than ca. 450 BCE. Although this hypothesis was in no way intrinsic to the discipline of biblical criticism, until recently it was accepted as an established result by universal consensus among both literary critics and those engaged in Ancient Near Eastern and Greek comparative studies. As such it may be considered its own academic paradigm, which we will call the pre-Hellenistic paradigm. In the current section, I will discuss how the pre-Hellenistic research paradigm developed and became entrenched. The section that follows will discuss the Hellenistic Era research paradigm that has since emerged in the 1990s and 2000s.

1.2.2.1 Higher Criticism (ca. 1600–ca. 2000)

A major thrust of Higher Criticism from the seventeenth to the late nineteenth century was the identification of authorial sources within the Pentateuch by analysis of their characteristic vocabulary, distinctive theological perspectives, literary style and connected narrative threads running through the Pentateuchal text. A provisional dating of these sources was accomplished by means of analyzing biblical texts within a newly developed branch of biblical criticism called historical criticism, which sought to correlate textual developments with historical events extracted from the so-called Deuteronomistic History. Wilhelm de Wette believed that the date of Deuteronomy was fixed by the biblical account of the purported discovery of an ancient scroll of the law in the temple in 621 BCE during the reign of Josiah, which prompted righteous Josiah to institute a series of Deuteronomistic cult reforms (de Wette 1843: 2.153–4,

158, 189). A second chronological linchpin was the return of Ezra the priest from Babylon in ca. 458 BCE, which Julius Wellhausen proposed as the historical background for the introduction of P (Wellhausen 1885: v, 105–6, 111, 405–9). The affinities of the Josiah reforms of 621 BCE with the legal content of Deuteronomy and the affinities of the story of Ezra’s reading of the law with priestly materials seemed to secure the dates of key textual developments in the evolution of the Pentateuch, correlating these literary developments with events narrated in biblical historiographical texts. By the close of the nineteenth century, there was a rough agreement on the existence of five distinct Pentateuchal sources: the Yahwist (J), thought to have been authored in Judea ca. 900 BCE; the Elohist (E), thought to have been authored in Samaria ca. 800 BCE; the Deuteronomist (D), thought to have been authored in Judea in 621 BCE during the reign of Josiah; the Priestly Code (P), thought to have been authored in Babylonia and brought to Judea by Ezra ca. 450 BCE; and the Holiness Code (H), closely related to P in subject matter and time. This division into J, E, D, P and H was known as the Documentary Hypothesis.

In the twentieth century, a new literary critical model appeared called the Supplementary Hypothesis, which differed from the Documentary Hypothesis mainly in viewing E and P as bodies of supplemental Pentateuchal additions that never circulated as independent works. Towards the end of the twentieth century, analysis of failings of both the Documentary and Supplementary Hypotheses (notably in the influential work by Whybray 1987) led to a decline in their popularity among biblical critics. In the aftermath of the effective deconstruction of Documentary and Supplementary Hypotheses, a third competing model for the formation of the Pentateuch was proposed, the Fragmentary Hypothesis, which saw the Pentateuch as a compilation of several shorter, independent narratives (Rendtorff 1990).

Remarkably, all these schools of biblical criticism adopted the same chronological horizons for the development of the Pentateuch, a centuries-long process understood as having begun in Iron II Judah and Samaria and ending in the Persian Era. The origins and lasting popularity of the pre-Hellenistic paradigm can be traced to the extraordinary success of the Documentary Hypothesis at the end of the nineteenth century as well as the continued acceptance of the methods of historical criticism that sought to date Pentateuchal sources by means of chronological inferences drawn from later historiographical and prophetic texts.

1.2.2.2 Comparative Studies: Ancient Near East

The discovery and translation of cuneiform texts with Pentateuchal parallels in the late 1800s led to a new approach to Pentateuchal studies that sought to identify antecedent Ancient Near Eastern sources that influenced the biblical text. The Primordial History seemed especially dependent on ancient Mesopotamian textual traditions, including the tradition of ten long-lived generations before the flood in *The Sumerian King List* (Genesis 3–6) and the

flood story of the *Gilgamesh Epic* Tablet XI (Genesis 6–9). A major source for the Mosaic law code was the Laws of Hammurabi (LH) of ca. 1750 BCE, since several of its laws appeared in Pentateuchal law collections. Other ancient legal sources with Pentateuchal parallels included the Laws of Eshnunna (LE) of ca. 1770 BCE and the Middle Assyrian Laws (MAL A) of ca. 1075 BCE. Ancient Near Eastern laws appeared in both the Covenant Code (J or E), the Priestly law code (P) and the Deuteronomic law code (Dtn). It was also theorized that Hittite suzerainty treaties (ca. 1450–1200 BCE) or the widely distributed Vassal Treaty of Esarhaddon (672 BCE) might have influenced the covenantal relationship between Yahweh and his people in Exodus and Deuteronomy. The lack of geographical and temporal connection made Hittite influence on the biblical tradition problematic. The Vassal Treaty of Esarhaddon was plausibly within the same historical stream with the vassal state Iron II Judah, but parallels with biblical materials were significantly weaker.

An important question that this research paradigm sought to address was when and how such Ancient Near Eastern literary traditions were transmitted and came to the attention of the biblical authors. In the Primordial History, the Mesopotamian flood story, with its survival of Utnapishtim and his family and servants in a boat, had undeniable literary parallels to both the J and P versions of the Noachian flood. An early hypothesis claimed that the Pentateuchal authors had inherited Ancient Near Eastern legal and mythological traditions from the Old Babylonian Period, when Babylonia briefly ruled the southern Levant, long before the J, E, D and P sources (Lambert and Millard 1969: 24; Lambert 1994: 96–109). It was thought that these traditions were passed down orally within the region with the local Bronze Age Canaanite population as intermediaries. Serious difficulties were posed both by the great accuracy and detail preserved within this hypothetical oral tradition and by the lack of discernible Canaanite traditions within the Primordial History, despite the Canaanites having been proposed as the channel by which such traditions were transmitted to the Jewish authors of J, D and P (Lambert 1994: 96–100). These difficulties were overcome to some extent by proposals in the late twentieth century that down-dated J to the Babylonian period. The biblical authors were hypothesized to have had direct access to Mesopotamian legal and mythological traditions during the Jewish exile in Babylonia. Jewish access to esoteric Akkadian and Sumerian texts housed in Babylonian temples and Jewish acquisition of cuneiform reading skills posed new difficulties under this proposed solution. Access to Ancient Near Eastern legal sources during the Babylonian period also remained problematic, along with the motivation for the Jewish authors to have adopted these Mesopotamian laws as their own.

A significant aspect of comparative studies between Ancient Near Eastern literature and the Pentateuch in the twentieth century was the limitation of its chronological horizon to the Persian Era or earlier as posited by past and contemporary biblical critics. This has resulted in what might be described

as tunnel vision, in which significant parallels with later literature were overlooked, including some originating in Mesopotamia. Claus Westermann (1984: 350–1), for example, was forced to discount a connection between the ten long-lived generations of the antediluvian world in Genesis 5 and *The Sumerian King List*, since most pre-Hellenistic copies of the latter (other than WB 62 from Larsa, ca. 2000 BCE) had seven, eight or nine long-lived kings before the flood. But lists of ten long-lived kings ending with the flood hero are found in both the Greek translation of *The Sumerian King List* in the *Babyloniaca* of Berossus (*FGrH* 60 F3b) of ca. 280 BCE and the *Uruk Apkalla List* (W 20 030, 7) of 165 BCE, showing that striking literary parallels do in fact exist, but only in the Hellenistic Era (Gmirkin 2006: 107–8).

The assumed connection between Hittite or Assyrian vassal treaties and the divine covenant Yahweh made with his people in Exodus and Deuteronomy constitutes another cautionary tale. A few limited parallels between the two resulted in a consensus among biblical scholars regarding the Ancient Near Eastern background of the covenant ceremonies associated with the ratification of the Mosaic law codes (Mendenhall 1954; Weinfeld 1972; Otto 1999, 2012, 2016). This has been viewed as one of the major achievements of Ancient Near Eastern comparative studies, one that has reinforced the pre-Hellenistic Ancient Near Eastern background of the Pentateuch. But Mesopotamian treaties have profound differences with the covenants in Exodus and Deuteronomy enforcing the biblical law codes, including vassal treaties' literary form, contractual parties (a king and subordinate king, not a god and a people) and stipulations (loyalty to the overlord, but never obedience to a body of adopted laws). The Mesopotamian law collections themselves profoundly differ from the biblical law collections in terms of royal sources, commemorative purpose, framing structure, legal content, collective ratification and periodic recitation and lack of prescriptive force. Greek law codes, by contrast, have striking parallels in terms of legal forms and content, divine sources, programmatic reforms, public display, educational utility and oaths and rituals associated with their ratification (Gmirkin 2017: 186–99). The quest for comparative parallels with the Ancient Near Eastern literature of pre-Hellenistic times has thus arguably obscured the actual Greek cultural antecedents for the Mosaic law codes and their covenantal ratification.

1.2.2.3 Comparative Studies: Classical Greece

In the late twentieth century there was a growing awareness among scholars of Greek legal and literary influences on the Pentateuch. Two important and influential studies by John Van Seters were *In Search of History* (1983), which identified Greek historiographical elements in the Primary History, and *Prologue to History* (1992), which identified further such elements in Genesis, including the use of genealogies as a chronological framework, the frequent appearance of eponymous ancestors for ancient peoples and nations, etiologies and stories about inventors. Several authors pointed out

various Greek parallels to biblical myths and stories, including parallels between Pandora and Eve (Genesis 3) and sexual intercourse between beautiful human women and Greek gods and the biblical Elohim in Gen 6:1–4 (e.g. Teggart 1947; Nickelsburg 1977; Bremmer 2008: 19–34). Homeric parallels to stories in Genesis, Judges and 1 and 2 Samuel were also commonly adduced.³ Moshe Weinfeld noted a complex of striking parallels between Greek foundation stories and both the patriarchal stories of divine land promises in Genesis and in the conquest stories of Joshua (Weinfeld 1993; cf. Gmirkin 2017: 225–31). Baruch Halpern noted various parallels between biblical cosmogonies and Greek natural science, primarily from philosophers of the Miletan tradition (Halpern 2002, 2009: 427–78). Otto Kaiser noted striking parallels between Deuteronomy and Plato’s *Laws* (Kaiser 2003: 39–104). Evangelika Dafni noted parallels between Genesis 2, Euripides and Plato’s *Symposium* (Dafni 2006, 2010). Raymond Westbrook and Anselm Hagedorn noted parallels between biblical and Greek legal traditions (Hagedorn 2004; Wells and Magdalene 2009). A difficulty common to all these detections of classical Greek influences on the biblical text was how to explain the penetration of Greek scientific, legal, mythical and historiographical traditions during the Classical Greek Era (600–323 BCE) when such traditions circulated in the Greek world, but when Jews and Greeks had no direct intellectual contact. In comparative legal studies this was overcome by postulating a common Eastern Mediterranean cultural tradition in which common legal traditions circulated in the Greek world and the coasts of Asia Minor and the northern and southern Levant. A similar diffusion of mythical and historiographical tradition was also assumed, with various peoples, including Phoenicians and Philistines, proposed as intermediaries between Greek traditions that had washed up on the Levantine shores and the relatively isolated inland regions of Judea and Samaria. A persistent difficulty in this theory was the lack of direct historical or archaeological evidence for such a common East Mediterranean culture or for mechanisms for the communication of Greek traditions into the coastal interior of the Levant in the time frame proposed, but the manifest influence of Classical Greek legal and literary traditions on the biblical text was considered sufficient evidence that some such cultural communication must have taken place in the sixth to fourth centuries BCE.

1.2.2.4 Limitations of the Pre-Hellenistic Research Paradigm

To summarize, by the end of the nineteenth century, a consensus emerged that the Pentateuch had been written over a process of centuries, stretching from as early as ca. 900–450 BCE. Despite being the product of inner-biblical literary analysis without external corroborating evidence, this chronological framework continued essentially intact as the agreed upon paradigm of biblical criticism throughout most of the twentieth century. This paradigm encouraged comparative studies with the Ancient Near East, which was

thought to be the primary influence on biblical literature. It also allowed for some indirect Greek influences to have arrived in the pre-Hellenistic Era. Under this approach, it was thought safe to ignore direct influences from Greek literature, especially from texts post-dating ca. 450 BCE, as well as influences from Hellenistic Era culture and literature, as such materials were viewed as being outside the historical stream of the authors of the Pentateuch.

While the introduction of the notion of historical stream into twentieth-century comparative studies was intended to add an element of methodological rigor, its application to biblical studies was problematic, reinforcing a narrow and unproven theoretical perspective that excluded possible influences from literature and culture in the east during Hellenistic times. This rendered the later Greek and Hellenistic comparative data invisible. By arbitrarily excluding consideration of Hellenistic Era comparative data that might demonstrate cultural and literary influences at a time later than hypothesized, these historical assumptions were reinforced in what amounted to an implicit circularity of reasoning on a fundamental level.

In addition to such theoretical considerations, the pre-Hellenistic paradigm also entails difficulties on a basic empirical level. As a subjective scholarly construct grounded in literary criticism, it has failed to achieve objective corroboration by extra-biblical literary sources or contemporary epigraphic materials, even when such evidence is available and relevant. The Elephantine papyri and ostraca of ca. 450–400 BCE, which Gard Granerød described as “the elephant in the room,” are especially problematic. Although these documents are dated after the time when the Pentateuch was thought to have been finished under the pre-Hellenistic paradigm, they provide no evidence for biblical writings (Granerød 2016: 17, 340), despite the military colonists being in close communication with the priests of Jerusalem and Samaritan authorities, who knew of the temple of Yah at Elephantine and sanctioned its rebuilding, with no Deuteronomistic backlash from Jerusalem (TAD A4.7; cf. Granerød 2016: 38–44, 81, 88–92). It is apparent that the religious authorities in Jerusalem accommodated the existence of other temples servicing polytheistic Jewish communities abroad. While Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread are attested as agricultural festivals, their observance featured neither Moses nor the Exodus (TAD A4.1; cf. Cowley 1923: xxiii; Porten 2003: 70–2). In one ostrakon an employer threatened to kill a worker if he did not complete a task on the seventh day, demonstrating the existence of a seven-day week but no sabbath (TAD D7.16; cf. Granerød 2016: 193–5, 204–6). This trove of documents contains no direct or indirect indication of the existence of any biblical writings that discouraged any of the historical practices at Elephantine that scholars once discounted as heterodox. Rather, there is every indication that the practices of the military colony at Elephantine was representative of prosaic Yahwist religion throughout the Persian Era that

knew nothing of the biblical writings hypothesized under the pre-Hellenistic research paradigm (Granerød 2016: 17, 204–6, 340; 2019).

1.2.3 The Hellenistic Research Paradigm (1993–Present)

Despite its theoretical and empirical shortcomings, the pre-Hellenistic research paradigm remained basically unchallenged until the final decade of the twentieth century. The current section will discuss the deconstruction of the pre-Hellenistic paradigm by the Copenhagen school of biblical criticism, its proposal for a new framework for biblical research that included possible Hellenistic dates of composition, and the subsequent exploration of biblical sources and dating under the Hellenistic paradigm in the twenty-first century, including contributions by the present author.

1.2.3.1 The Old Testament—A Hellenistic Book?

Niels Peter Lemche inaugurated the modern study of the Pentateuch as a Hellenistic Era composition in his influential 1993 article, noting that external evidence for the biblical text in the form of preserved manuscript fragments or references in extra-biblical texts of known date appear only in the third century BCE and later. In light of this, Lemche questioned whether common assumptions regarding the antiquity of the biblical text were correct and proposed that the Hebrew Bible might conceivably have been composed as late as the Hellenistic Era, after the conquests of Alexander the Great and the penetration of Greek culture into the east, when empirical evidence for biblical writings first appears.

A key contribution of Lemche 1993 was the deconstruction of historical criticism, by which biblical critics sought to date the Pentateuch and other texts by means of inner-biblical literary criticism. Lemche pointed out that this process was dependent on a credulous reading of biblical historiographical texts of unknown date or historical value, including the stories of the introduction or discovery of new Pentateuchal legal content under Josiah (1 Kings 22–23) and Ezra (Nehemiah 8–10). While earlier biblical critics had accepted these stories as written close in time to the purported events they recounted and substantially conveying historical fact, Lemche pointed out that biblical historiographies were of highly uncertain date and contained prominent theological content that undermined their value as historical sources. Consequently they were of no direct bearing to the dating of Pentateuchal writings to which they alluded. The major substantial contribution of the Copenhagen school of biblical criticism has been the deconstruction of historical criticism's methodologically unsound approach to dating biblical texts, with its overreliance on an uncritical reading of the biblical historiographical narratives (Davies 1992; Thompson 1994, 1999; Lemche 1998, 2008). A major theme of the Copenhagen school is that historical facts regarding ancient Israel should be secured by demonstrably

contemporary archaeological, inscriptional and epigraphical evidence rather than externally uncorroborated biblical accounts.

The second major contribution of Lemche 1993 was laying the groundwork for a new theoretical framework for biblical criticism. Lemche observed that biblical criticism had a historical tendency to date texts as early as possible, taking into account anachronisms, dating all but a few biblical texts to Iron II, Babylonian and Persian Era dates. But Lemche pointed out that the first extra-biblical evidence for biblical writings of any sort were the fragments of biblical texts among the Dead Sea Scrolls, for the most part dating to the second century BCE or later. Nor did the LXX translation of the early Hellenistic Era significantly impact that observation, since “there is really no reason to believe that the Hebrew versions must perforce have been much older than their translations into Greek” (Lemche 1993: 189). There was thus no real evidentiary basis for assuming that the biblical writings predated the Hellenistic Era as commonly assumed by Lemche’s contemporaries. A reappraisal of the cumulative extra-biblical evidence thus led to the conclusion that a Hellenistic Era date for biblical writings could not be excluded on objective grounds.

The removal of the assumed pre-Hellenistic context for the production of biblical literature changed the basic paradigm of biblical criticism. For comparative studies, this meant broadening the chronological horizons to include both Ancient Near Eastern and Hellenistic literature for potentially relevant comparanda. For source criticism, this meant including not only Ancient Near Eastern literature but other literature known in the east during the Hellenistic Era, including Greek literature known to the Jews and later Hellenistic texts. This broader approach to comparative and source critical studies is what is here termed the Hellenistic research paradigm, in contrast to the pre-Hellenistic research paradigm that excluded Hellenistic Era materials from consideration.

A side issue raised by the emergence of the Hellenistic research paradigm that caused controversy at the time was the relative weight to be assigned to the *terminus a quo* and *terminus ad quem*, the earliest and latest possible dates, in seeking out the likeliest date of composition for a biblical text. According to Lemche (1993), although a biblical text might draw on earlier sources (cf. Lemche 2011), the proper starting point for assigning a date to a biblical text was its latest possible date, when there was definite knowledge that the text in question existed, rather than seeking hypothetical contexts in biblical times, under a Solomon, a Josiah, or an Ezra, when our only source of information is that of biblical historiography. This approach led to the labeling of the Copenhagen school of biblical criticism as “Minimalist,” in contrast to the “Maximalist” approach that routinely assigned biblical texts significantly earlier dates. The relative merits of the arguments of the Minimalist versus Maximalist debate need not concern us here, since the methodology adopted in the present study gives preferential weight to neither the earliest nor latest possible date, collecting comparative and source

critical evidence across the whole allowable date range before drawing inferences.

1.2.3.2 *Berosus and Genesis*

In Gmirkin 2006 I undertook to date the composition of the Pentateuch, building on Lemche 1993, using source-critical techniques. In doing so, I sought to move beyond Lemche's deconstruction of pre-Hellenistic paradigm to a full construction of a Hellenistic research paradigm with tangible working results.

I first sought to establish a *terminus ad quem* for the creation of the Pentateuch with greater precision. At that time, the earliest evidence for the Pentateuch was thought to be a passage in Diodorus Siculus, *Library* 40.3.1–8, which referred to Mosaic writings, which was widely believed to represent an excerpt from the *Aegyptiaca* of Hecataeus of Abdera, written for Ptolemy I Lagus in 320–315 BCE (Grabbe 2001). I found that this passage actually derived from Theophanes of Mytilene in 62 BCE,⁴ removing that passage as an early witness to the Pentateuch (Gmirkin 2006: 34–67, 2014: 61–83).⁵ This left the Septuagint translation of ca. 270 BCE as the first evidence for a Pentateuch in either Hebrew or Greek (Gmirkin 2006: 81–8): datable external witnesses that might establish an earlier date for the creation of the Pentateuch simply do not exist.

Establishing ca. 270 BCE as *terminus ad quem* for the creation of the Pentateuch suggested the need to reevaluate literary texts of the period 325–270 BCE that were widely viewed as exhibiting a connection to Pentateuchal traditions. This included well-known Greek, Babylonian, and Egyptian texts of the early Hellenistic Era. Under the earlier pre-Hellenistic research paradigm, the biblical affinities of the Hellenistic Era texts necessarily implied that they could only have drawn on the Pentateuch: literary influence in the opposite direction was perceived as impossible, due to assumptions regarding the antiquity of the Pentateuchal text. But allowing for the theoretical possibility that the Pentateuch was created as late as ca. 270 BCE, the situation was not so clear. It was conceivable that these extra-biblical literary traditions could have arisen independently from the biblical text, and that the Pentateuch drew on them rather than the reverse. The only way to determine the direction of literary influence was to examine each of these extra-biblical texts from a source critical perspective to determine if the commonly assumed dependence on the Pentateuch was supportable, a task not thought necessary, and thus not carried out, in earlier studies.

- The fictional account of the colonization of Judea in authentic fragments of Hecataeus of Abdera (320–315 BCE) was an entirely stereotypical Greek foundation story that drew on Plato for many details (cf. Jaeger 1938). Hecataeus claimed that Moses was an Egyptian who led a peaceful colonizing expedition to the uninhabited region of

Judea where he founded the capital city of Jerusalem; constructed its temple; divided the land among the colonists; and established their constitution, laws and way of life. This contradicted the biblical account in numerous key respects and showed no acquaintance with biblical traditions, despite containing the first extra-biblical mention of a figure named Moses (Gmirkin 2006: 62–6). It thus appeared that the Pentateuch drew on Hecataeus of Abdera, rather than the reverse.

- Sumerian and Akkadian texts thought to underlie Genesis 1–11, such as *The Sumerian King List* and the flood story in the Gilgamesh Epic Tablet XI, were all conveniently paraphrased or translated into accessible Greek in a single Hellenistic Era text, the *Babyloniaca* of Berossus (ca. 180 BCE). In some instances, authentic passages from the *Babyloniaca* more closely resembled the biblical texts than the cuneiform originals. Some of these Akkadian and Sumerian texts were of only local Babylonian interest and not likely to be found outside temple libraries (Heidel 1951: 10–17; Lambert 1994: 100, 104; Gmirkin 2006: 90–1). This suggested that the *Babyloniaca* was the proximate source for these Mesopotamian influences on Genesis (Gmirkin 2006: 89–139). Moreover, the often-noted parallel between the ten antediluvian generations in Genesis and in *The Sumerian King List* only appeared in the version known to Berossus, not older versions of this text (Westermann 1984: 349–51), further supporting the likely use of Berossus by the Pentateuchal authors.
- The *Aegyptiaca* of Manetho (ca. 485 BCE) reported an expulsion of the wicked “Shepherd Kings” (the Hyksos) from Egypt to Judea and their subsequent foundation of Jerusalem and its temple. Manetho also reported a second expulsion of Osarseph the priest of Seth-Typhon and his followers into Judea in the time of Ramesses and commented that some of his contemporaries equated Osarseph with Moses (Gmirkin 2006: 170–214). I was able to demonstrate that both accounts in Manetho drew exclusively on local native Egyptian literary traditions regarding the periodic expulsion of wicked Asiatics into Syria and that the slander equating Moses with Osarseph showed awareness of Hecataeus of Abdera rather than the biblical tradition. I concluded that Manetho was unaware of the biblical Exodus story, which responded to the negative traditions in Manetho rather than the reverse (Gmirkin 2006: 170–214).

Reevaluating the relationship of Pentateuchal materials with Hecataeus of Abdera (320–315 BCE), the *Aegyptiaca* of Manetho (ca. 285 BCE), the *Babyloniaca* of Berossus (ca. 280 BCE), the writings of Ariston (278–276 BCE), Cleitarchus (after 278 BCE) and others led to a more precise likely date of composition in 273–272 BCE,⁶ roughly contemporary with the Septuagint translation made in the time span of 273–269 BCE. This led me to infer that the same body of Jewish scholars whom later tradition credited with translating the Pentateuch into Greek for the Great Library of Alexandria ca. 270 BCE was responsible for writing the Pentateuch in Hebrew on the

same occasion, drawing on the Greek historiographical texts found in the Great Library (Gmirkin 2006: 245–56). These powerful tangible results pointed to the viability of the pre-Hellenistic research paradigm made possible by Lemche 1993.

1.2.3.3 *Argonauts of the Desert*

In 2011, Philippe Wajdenbaum made an important contribution to the Hellenistic Era research paradigm in the form of “an anthology of similarities, many of them unpublished, between Greek and biblical literatures” (Wajdenbaum 2011: 11). His main focus was the Primary History of Genesis–Kings, progressing through the biblical text book by book, with Greek parallels listed or quoted in full. Although acknowledging Ancient Near Eastern parallels in Genesis 1–11 and some of the Mosaic laws (Wajdenbaum 2011: 2, 5, 11), he viewed the major influence to be that of the Greek classics, including works by Plato, Homer, Hesiod and others. Wajdenbaum saw this as necessarily pointing to the creation of these biblical texts in the Hellenistic Era, as supported by the late dating recently advocated by Philip Davies, Niels Peter Lemche and Thomas L. Thompson (Wajdenbaum 2011: 32–6). He suggested that Jews could have gained access to Greek classics at Alexandria and interacted with scholars there, drawing on this Greek learning to create the biblical books in Hebrew, which were later translated into Greek (Wajdenbaum 2011: 28–9; cf. Gmirkin 2006: 245–56).

Wajdenbaum’s approach to proving his case was to systematically list the numerous parallels with Greek literature and rely on the cumulative force of the evidence (Wajdenbaum 2011: 11–2, 91). Some of the parallels adduced were unconvincing, such as similarities between certain Greek and Hebrew names (Wajdenbaum 2011: 75–6, 102–3, 134–5), but others were quite striking, such as the extensive parallels between the recognition scenes in the Joseph novella and in Homer’s *Odyssey* (Wajdenbaum 2011: 136–42), the parallels to Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in the books of Samuel (Wajdenbaum 2011: 74, 244–9, 252–3), and Greek sources including Platonic dialogues (*Timaeus*, *Statesman* and *Protagoras*) and Genesis 1–3 (Wajdenbaum 2011: 92–101). His comparison of Plato’s *Laws* with the biblical law collections was especially significant (Wajdenbaum 2011: 146–206, *passim*), parallels first cataloged by Eusebius in *Preparation for the Gospels* 12.35–47 (Wajdenbaum 2011: 67–70). Wajdenbaum’s survey of the Greek evidence pointed to the rich possibilities of research under the Hellenistic Era paradigm.

1.2.3.4 *Plato and the Creation of the Hebrew Bible*

Wajdenbaum 2011 was brought to my attention by Thomas L. Thompson, and I found its material on Plato’s *Laws* especially significant and compelling. While Wajdenbaum’s exclusive focus was on finding Hellenistic Era

parallels to biblical materials, I thought a broader, more systematic comparative approach was called for with respect to the Mosaic law collections, one that took into account the full range of Ancient Near Eastern and Greek legal traditions.

My chapter on legal institutions (Gmirkin 2017: 9–72) systematically compared the substantial Mosaic constitutional materials with Greek constitutional law: the genre of constitution was completely unknown in the Ancient Near East (cf. Gmirkin 2016). I found significant correlations with Athenian constitutional features and in particular with the ideal constitution described in Plato's *Laws*, which dealt with founding the constitution, laws and other institutions of a new nation.

My chapter on individual laws (Gmirkin 2017: 73–182) included systematic comparisons of biblical, Ancient Near Eastern and Greek laws. While a few Ancient Near Eastern laws still provided a more compelling legal parallel, a host of constitutional provisions and civic laws were found to draw on Athenian legal traditions, and often specifically on Plato's *Laws*.

My chapter on law collections as a whole (Gmirkin 2017: 183–219) compared the Mosaic, Old Babylonian, Middle Assyrian and Greek law collections. Neither Ancient Near Eastern law collections for vassal treaties were found to correspond to the Mosaic law codes with respect to sources (i.e., royal initiative), purpose, framing structure, legal content, legal form, divine promulgation, historical contextualization, public recitation, collective ratification, prescriptive force, or programmatic implementation, or, in the case of vassal treaties, either literary form, contractual parties or stipulations. By contrast, Greek law collections closely correspond in all these areas, as well as in divine authorship of laws, oaths and rituals at their establishment, publication and educational utility. Some elements in biblical law collections, especially those associated with Deuteronomy, had special affinities with Plato's *Laws*.

Another chapter compared biblical and widespread Greek integration of legal content with historiographical narrative, a literary phenomenon entirely absent in the Ancient Near East (Gmirkin 2017: 220–49; cf. Gmirkin 2016). Greek constitutions and law codes were often discussed in conjunction with foundation stories, as in Exodus–Joshua.

The final chapter compared the creation of the Hebrew Bible as a whole with the systematic program for the creation of an ethical national literature of approved texts laid out in Plato's *Laws*, the only extra-biblical example of an approved national literature in the entirety of the Ancient Near Eastern and Greek worlds (Gmirkin 2017: 250–99).

Gmirkin 2017 thus prominently utilized both broad comparative techniques, extensively analyzing both Greek and Ancient Near Eastern legal and literary traditions, and source criticism. The latter showed reliance on Plato's *Laws*, both for legal content in the Pentateuch and for the impetus to create an authoritative national literature, the Hebrew Bible.

1.3 The Current Volume

An extensive use of Plato's writings as suggested in Wajdenbaum 2011 and validated in Gmirkin 2017 suggested an investigation of Plato's influence on other, non-legal parts of the Hebrew Bible. In Gmirkin 2020, I noted Plato's influence on certain themes in the Prophets, especially on the literary stereotype of the persecuted prophet, which has no Ancient Near Eastern parallel but derives from Greek literary traditions by way of Plato's depiction of Socrates. The present study turns to the opening chapters of Genesis.

Niesiolowski-Spanò (2007) and Wajdenbaum (2011: 92–6) both noted the likely literary influence of *Timaeus* on Genesis 1. Using the same comparative and source critical methodologies applied in Gmirkin 2006, 2016, 2017 and 2020, the present study examines the influence of Plato's *Timaeus* and *Critias* on the primordial history of Genesis 1–11. My approach is to first undertake a systematic comparison of Genesis 1 with Ancient Near Eastern creation myths and Greek scientific cosmogonies before concluding that Genesis uniquely corresponds in terms of genre to a single literary text, Plato's *Timaeus* (Chapters 2–3). Thereafter I turn to source criticism, noting systematic literary dependence on both the *Timaeus* and its sequel text, *Critias* (Chapters 4–7).

Chapter 2: Genesis 1 and Creation Myths. Past studies of the creation account in Genesis 1 have been dominated by the assumption that it represents an Ancient Near Eastern tradition and that all such traditions fall into the category of myth rather than science, although it is frequently maintained that this creation myth has been “demythologized” (von Rad 1973: 63–4; Cassuto 1989: 21). The present study questions whether the creation account in fact belongs to the Ancient Near Eastern genre of creation myth, a proposition that has not been adequately tested by comparative analysis. After discussing the basic typologies of both Ancient Near Eastern and Greek creation myths, I arrive at the conclusion that Genesis 1 has none of the distinctive qualities of creation myth, despite being cast in a narrative format. This raises a new possibility that has not previously been explored in a systematic way: that Genesis might instead represent a scientific rather than mythological discourse.

Chapter 3: Genesis 1 and Greek Cosmogonies. This chapter begins with a systematic survey of the scientific theories on cosmogony by all the Greek natural philosophers from Thales to Aristotle and Zeno. I then compare the Genesis 1 cosmogony to see if it conforms to the Greek literary genre of scientific cosmogony. I determine that Genesis 1 addresses the same basic questions as scientific cosmogonies, proposes many of the same physical mechanisms featured in Greek cosmogonies and is phrased in a similar parsimonious manner that sets apart scientific cosmogonies from Ancient Near Eastern and Greek creation myths. At the same time, Genesis 1 also incorporates narrative story elements with theological content in the same novel fashion as Plato's *Timaeus*. I conclude that the Genesis 1 cosmogony,

like the cosmogony in the first half of Plato's *Timaeus*, is of a hybrid scientific-theological-mythical variety otherwise previously known only from Plato.

Chapter 4: Genesis 1 as Philosophy. In the previous two chapters, comparative studies of Ancient Near Eastern and Greek creation myths and distinctively Greek cosmogonies led to the identification of Plato's *Timaeus* as the only known source text to possess a mixture of scientific, theological and mythological content comparable to the cosmogony of Genesis 1. The current chapter reinforces the biblical reliance on this specific text, justifying a transition from comparative studies to source criticism. I first show that the two creation accounts in Genesis 1–3 both show a profound influence from Plato's *Timaeus*, not only in the LXX, as recognized by Septuagint scholars, but in the Hebrew (Masoretic Text) as well. I demonstrate that the parallels in the order of events in Genesis 1–3 and *Timaeus* are much more systematic than previously believed. I also demonstrate that the theological elements in Genesis 1–3 show marked Platonic philosophical influence, especially from *Timaeus*: the divine teleology that marks every stage of creation, the creator as craftsman, the goodness of the creation and the creator, craftsmanship in the likeness of a model, the presence of mythical dialogue, and Platonic dialectic in the classification of genus and species of life forms. The extensive Platonic influences, both in the order of events and in the previously unrecognized philosophical content, supports a model in which the authors of Genesis, having read *Timaeus* and absorbed its ideas, wrote Genesis in Hebrew, then immediately translated it back to Greek, with additional influence from *Timaeus* detectable in the Septuagint of Genesis 1–3. This is consistent with the Pentateuch having been both authored and translated at Alexandria ca. 270 BCE, as I argued in Gmirkin 2006, 2017.

Chapter 5: Genesis 1 as Science. Here I undertake a verse-by-verse exposition of the First Creation Account of Genesis 1 against the background of Greek natural science and Plato's *Timaeus*. I identify the scientific substratum of the biblical cosmogony and show its compatibility with the scientific explanations of the Greek natural philosophers (especially Zeno) as well as with the first half of Plato's *Timaeus*. I also identify the theological super-stratum in which the biblical authors emphasized the divine guidance or steering of the physical ordering of the universe and God's divine purpose at every stage of this ordering process, in line with the tenets of Plato's theology, sometimes directly drawing on Plato's *Timaeus*.

Chapter 6: Genesis 2–3 as Myth. Here I continue my verse-by-verse commentary with the anthropogony and zoogony of the Second Creation Account and the tale of Adam and Eve in Genesis 2–3. I show the essential unity of Genesis 1–3 by the systematic influence of Plato's *Timaeus* throughout. In specific, I note that in *Timaeus* the cosmic, philosophically depicted god that Plato called the Demiurge created the entire *kosmos* and then retired from the scene as in Genesis 1, leaving the creation mortal life to the ordinary terrestrial gods of Greek myth, as in the creation of animals

and humans in Genesis 2 by Yahweh Elohim, who is best understood as one of the offspring of the cosmic Creator of Genesis 1. The *Timaeus* thus portrays the *kosmos* and mortal life as having been created in two distinct stages as in Genesis 1–3. *Timaeus* is also greatly concerned with the problems of theodicy and death, exonerating the Plato's cosmic god from responsibility for human wickedness and from the mortality of created life forms by delegating the creation and oversight of humanity to the lesser gods.

Chapter 7: Genesis 2–11 and Plato's *Critias*. Here I study the biblical influence of *Critias*, Plato's mythical tale of Atlantis that was the immediate sequel to *Timaeus*. *Critias* described the earliest civilized world, its descent into corruption and violence, and the necessity to punish the wicked rulers of Atlantis by earthquake and flood. I first undertake a comparison of the description of the Garden of Eden with Ancient Near Eastern and Greek forerunners and show that it most closely resembles the mythical paradise of Atlantis, where the god Poseidon dwelled among the humans in his domain. I also discuss *Critias* as the source underlying the story of marriages between terrestrial gods and human women, the heroic demigods that were their offspring, and the diminution of the divine element and rise of human violence through time, provoking God's just punishment. Among all the flood stories of the Ancient Near Eastern and Greek worlds, only in Plato's *Critias* is divine judgment on the rise of violence the reason a wicked race is extinguished in a flood in a tale with explicitly ethical dimensions. I conclude that the Primordial History of Genesis 1–11 was composed with Plato's *Timaeus* and *Critias* in mind, and I also trace further influence of *Critias* in Genesis, Exodus and Deuteronomy.

Chapter 8: Cosmic Monotheism and Terrestrial Polytheism in Plato and the Bible. A significant implication of the present study is the biblical co-existence of cosmic monotheism, based on Plato's conception of a single supreme creator of the *kosmos*, with terrestrial polytheism, in which the creation of life and rule of the earth was delegated to traditional anthropomorphic local deities. Not only Plato but some of his Greek philosophical predecessors inferred the existence of a single cosmic god present at the creation of the *kosmos*, a deity superior to the later ordinary gods of Greek myth and cult. Plato harmonized this primordial single supreme god with the polytheism of the Greeks by portraying the Greek pantheon as the beloved offspring of the cosmic Creator. A peaceful coexistence of a supreme creator and his earthly divine offspring is found in *Timaeus*, the Primordial History, and arguably throughout Genesis, in line with Plato's contention that the gods were all by nature good and lived together harmoniously. In this final chapter, I argue that the peaceful coexistence of the multiplicity of national gods in Genesis was superseded in Exodus–Joshua by a new theology inimical to Plato's divine ethics. Under this new theological agenda, the ideal of harmony between the gods was undermined by two significant developments: the conflation of the supreme Creator of Genesis 1 with the local terrestrial deity Yahweh and the insistence on a strict cultic

monolatry that was hostile to benevolent polytheism. The elevation of the local cultic deity Yahweh to cosmic status eventually led to a true Jewish monotheism by ca. 150 BCE in some circles that disallowed not only the worship but the existence of other gods.

1.4 Final Remarks on Methodology

The deductive framework of comparative method and source criticism allows the origins of the biblical notion of a supreme cosmic deity to be traced to the god of the eternal realm hypothesized in Plato's *Timaeus* and provides insights into the agendas and conflicts of authorial groups involved in the creation of the Pentateuch. An important side consequence of this research is to demonstrate the basic robustness of the model argued in Gmirkin 2006, 2017 in which the Pentateuch was created by a multiplicity of authors present in Alexandria ca. 270 BCE. An early Hellenistic Era dating of the Pentateuch utilizing Greek literary sources is corroborated by the use of *Timaeus* in Genesis 1–3 (Chapters 3–6) and *Critias* in Genesis 2–11 (Chapter 7). The use of *Timaeus* in both the Hebrew Vorlage and Greek translation of Genesis 1–3 (Chapter 4) supports a model in which the authors of Genesis were present at Alexandria ca. 270 BCE and had some involvement in the process of translation. Finally, detecting the use of Plato by the authors of the Primordial History compliments the identification of Platonic influences in the Mosaic law codes in Wajdenbaum 2011 and Gmirkin 2017, and the creation of a national literature—the Hebrew Bible—in Gmirkin 2017: 250–99. Given the reinforcement the present work gives to the theories of date, authorship and provenance I have extensively argued elsewhere, I will refrain from needlessly engaging and critiquing alternate theories on the Pentateuch that seek to date its creation in pre-Hellenistic times.

Notes

- 1 Gordon 1955; Walcot 1966; Burkert 1992; Penglase 1994; Morris 1997; Loudon 2011.
- 2 Hagedorn 2004; Knoppers and Harvey 2007; Wells and Magdalene 2009; Wajdenbaum 2011; Gmirkin 2017.
- 3 Specialized discussions of parallels between Homer and the Ancient Near East or the biblical text include Gordon 1955; Astour 1967; Morris 1997; West 2003; Brodie 2001; Yadin 2004; Loudon 2006, 2011; Wajdenbaum 2011; Kupitz 2014.
- 4 Theophanes of Mytilene, Pompey's biographer, drew on his own personal observations in their visit to Judea in 62 BCE, where he learned about Jewish Mosaic writings. Theophanes also drew on earlier traditions from Hecataeus of Abdera, Manetho and Poseidonius. For a source critical analysis of Diodorus Siculus, *Library* 40.3.1–8, see Gmirkin 2006: 34–71; 2014: 66–74.
- 5 This conclusion was disputed by Grabbe (2007, 2008), but his arguments, which involved several inaccuracies regarding Gmirkin 2006, were systematically countered in Gmirkin 2014.

6 Gmirkin 2006: 240–5. Ariston explored the Red Sea on behalf of Ptolemy II Philadelphus in 278–276 BCE. The place names in Gen 10:6–7 likely derive from this expedition (Gmirkin 2006: 161). The likely modeling of Moses the magician on Nectanebos (Gmirkin 2006: 215–21) arguably drew on the *Alexander Romance* thought to have been written by Cleitarchus in Alexandria shortly after 278 BCE.

Bibliography

- Astour, Michael C. *Hellenosemitica: An Ethnic and Cultural Study in West Semitic Impact on Mycenaean Greece*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1967.
- Bremmer, Jan N. *Greek Religion and Culture, the Bible, and the Ancient Near East*. Leiden: Brill, 2008.
- Brodie, Thomas L. *Genesis as Dialogue: A Literary, Historical, and Theological Commentary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Burkert, Walter. *The Orientalizing Revolution: Near Eastern Influence on Greek Culture in the Early Archaic Age*. Revealing Antiquity 5. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992.
- Cassuto, Umberto. *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis: Part I, From Adam to Noah*. Translated by Israel Abrahams. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1989.
- Cowley, Arthur Ernest. *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923.
- Crüsemann, Frank. “Die Eigenständigkeit der Urgeschichte. Ein Beitrag zur Diskussion um den ‘Jahwisten’,” in *Die Botschaft und die Boten. Festschrift für Hans Walter Wolff zum 70. Geburtstag* J. Jeremias and L. Peritt (eds.), 11–29. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1981.
- Dafni, Evangelika E. “Genesis 1–11 und Platos Symposion Überlegungen zum Austausch von hebräischem und griechischem Sprach und Gedankengut in der Klassik und im Hellenismus.” *Old Testament Essays* 19 (2006): 584–632.
- Dafni, Evangelika E. *Genesis, Plato und Euripides: Drei Studien zum Austausch von Griechischem und Hebräischem Sprach- und Gedankengut in der Klassik und im Hellenismus*. Biblisch-Theologische Studien 108. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchen Verlag, 2010.
- Davies, Philip R. *In Search of Ancient Israel*. SJOT, 148. Sheffield, Eng.: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992.
- Droge, Arthur J. *Homer or Moses? Early Christian Interpretations of the History of Culture*. HUT 26. Tübingen: Mohr, 1989.
- Frazer, James. *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*. 12 vols. London: MacMillan, 1911–1915.
- Gmirkin, Russell E. *Berosus and Genesis, Manetho and Exodus: Hellenistic Histories and the Date of the Pentateuch*. Library of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 433. CIS 15. New York: T & T Clark, 2006.
- Gmirkin, Russell E. “Greek Evidence for the Hebrew Bible,” in *The Bible and Hellenism: Greek Influence on Jewish and Early Christian Literature*. Thomas L. Thompson and Philippe Wajdenbaum (eds.), 56–88. Durham, UK: Acumen Publishing, 2014.
- Gmirkin, Russell E. “Greek Genres and the Hebrew Bible,” in *Biblical Interpretation Beyond Historicity*. Ingrid Hjelm and Thomas L. Thompson (eds.), 91–102. Copenhagen International Seminar. Changing Perspectives 7. London: Routledge, 2016.

- Gmirkin, Russell E. *Plato and the Creation of the Hebrew Bible*. Copenhagen International Seminar. London: Routledge, 2017.
- Gmirkin, Russell E. "Jeremiah, Plato and Socrates: Greek Antecedents to the Book of Jeremiah," in *Jeremiah in History and Tradition*. Jim West and Niels Peter Lemche (eds.), 21–48. Copenhagen International Seminar. London: Routledge, 2020.
- Gnuse, Robert K. "Greek Connections: Genesis 1–11 and the Poetry of Hesiod." *BibThBul* 47 (2017): 131–143.
- Gordon, Cyrus. "Homer and the Bible: The Origin and Character of East Mediterranean Literature." *HUCA* 26 (1955): 43–108.
- Grabbe, Lester L. "Jewish Historiography and Scripture in the Hellenistic Period," in *Did Moses Speak Attic?: Jewish Historiography and Scripture in the Hellenistic Period*. Lester L. Grabbe (ed.), 129–155. JSOTSup 317. European Seminar in Historical Methodology 3. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001.
- Grabbe, Lester L. "Review of Gmirkin, Berossus and Genesis, Manetho and Exodus." *JSOT* 31 (2007): 117.
- Grabbe, Lester L. "Hecataeus and the Jewish Law: The Question of Authenticity," in *Berührungspunkte: Studien zur Sozial und Religionsgeschichte Israels und seiner Umwelt; Festschrift für Rainer Albertz zu seinem 65. Ingo Kottsieper, Rüdiger Schmitt and Jakob Wöhrle* (eds.), 613–626. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2008.
- Granerød, Gard. *Dimensions of Yahwism in the Persian Period: Studies in the Religion and Society of the Judaean Community at Elephantine*. BZAW 488. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2016.
- Granerød, Gard. "Canon and Archive: Yahwism in Elephantine and Āl-Yāhūdu as a Challenge to the Canonical History of Judean Religion in the Persian Period." *JBL* 138 (2019): 345–364.
- Hagedorn, Anselm C. *Between Moses and Plato: Individual and Society in Deuteronomy and Ancient Greek Law*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004.
- Halpern, Baruch. "Assyrian and Presocratic Astronomies and the Location of the Book of Job," in *Kein Land für sich allein: Studien zum Kulturkontakt in Kanaan, Israel/Palästina und Ebir-nāri für Manfred Weippert zum 65. Geburtstag*. Manfred Weippert, Ulrich Hübner and Ernst Axel Knauf (eds.), 255–264. Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 2002.
- Halpern, Baruch. "The Assyrian Astronomy of Genesis 1 and the Birth of Milesian Philosophy," in *From Gods to God: the Dynamics of Iron Age Cosmologies*. Matthew J. Adams (ed.), 427–442. FAT 63. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009.
- Heidel, Alexander. *The Babylonian Genesis*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1951.
- Jaeger, Werner. "Greeks and Jews: The First Greek Records of Jewish Religion and Civilization." *Journal of Religion* 18 (1938): 127–143.
- Kaiser, Otto. *Zwischen Athen und Jerusalem. Studien zur griechischen und biblischen Theologie, ihrer Eigenart und ihren Verhältnis*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003.
- Knoppers, Gary N. and Paul B. Harvey Jr. "The Pentateuch in Ancient Mediterranean Context: The Publication of Local Lawcodes," in *Pentateuch as Torah: New Models for Understanding Its Promulgation and Acceptance*. Gary N. Knoppers and Bernard M. Levinson (eds.), 105–141. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007.

- Kuhn, Thomas S. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.
- Kupitz, Yaakov S. “Stranger and City Girl: an Isomorphism between Genesis 24 and Homer’s *Odyssey* 6-13,” in *The Bible and Hellenism: Greek Influence on Jewish and Early Christian Literature*. Thomas L. Thompson and Philippe Wajdenbaum (eds.), 117–145. Copenhagen International Seminar. Durham, NC: Acumen, 2014.
- Lambert, Wilfred G. “A New Look at the Babylonian Background of Genesis,” in *I Studied Inscriptions from before the Flood”: Ancient Near Eastern, Literary, and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1-11*. Richard S. Hess and David Tsumura (eds.), 96–113. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994.
- Lambert, Wilfred G. and Alan R. Millard. *Atra-Hasis: The Babylonian Story of the Flood*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969. 24.
- Launderville, Dale Francis. *Piety and Politics: The Dynamics of Royal Authority in Homeric Greece, Biblical Israel, and Old Babylonian Mesopotamia*. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2003.
- Lemche, Niels Peter. “The Old Testament – a Hellenistic Book?” *SJOT* 7 (1993): 163–193.
- Lemche, Niels Peter. *Prelude to Israel’s Past: Background and Beginnings of Israelite History and Identity*. Translated by E.F. Maniscalco. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998.
- Lemche, Niels Peter. *The Old Testament Between Theology and History: A Critical Survey*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008.
- Lemche, Niels Peter. “Does the Idea of the Old Testament as a Hellenistic Book Prevent Source Criticism of the Pentateuch?” *SJOT* 25 (2011): 75–92.
- Louden, Bruce. *The Iliad: Myth, Structure and Meaning*. Baltimore, The John Hopkins University Press, 2006.
- Louden, Bruce. *Homer’s Odyssey and the Near East*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Louden, Bruce. “Iapetus and Japheth: Hesiod’s Theogony, Iliad 15.187-93, and Genesis 9-10.” *Illinois Classical Studies* 38 (2013): 1–22.
- Louth, Andrew (ed.). *Genesis 1-11. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture 1*. Downers Grove, IN: InterVarsity Press, 2001.
- Malul, Meir. *The Comparative Method in Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical Legal Studies*. AOAT 227. Neukirchener: Verlag Butzon & Bercker Kevelaer, 1990.
- Mendenhall, George E. “Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition.” *BA* 17 (1954): 50–76.
- Morris, Sarah. “Homer and the Near East,” in *A New Companion to Homer*. Ian Morris and Barry B. Powell (eds.), 599–623. Leiden: Brill, 1997.
- Nickelsburg, George W. E. “Apocalyptic and Myth in 1 Enoch 6-11.” *JBL* 96 (1977): 383–405.
- Niesiołowski-Spanò, Łukasz. “Primeval History in the Persian Period?” *SJOT* 21 (2007): 106–126.
- Otto, Eckart. *Das Deuteronomium. Politische Theologie und Rechtsreform in Juda und Assyrien*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1999.
- Otto, Eckart. *Deuteronomium 1–11*. Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament. Stuttgart: Herder, 2012.
- Otto, Eckart. *Deuteronomium 12–34*. Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament. Stuttgart: Herder, 2016.

- Penglase, Charles. *Greek Myths and Mesopotamia, Parallels and Influences in the Homeric Hymns and Hesiod*. London: Routledge, 1994.
- Porten, Bezalel. "Elephantine and the Bible," in *Semitic Papyrology in Context: A Climate of Creativity. Papers from a New York University Conference Marking the Retirement of Baruch A. Levine*. Lawrence Schiffman (ed.), 51–84. Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 14. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2003.
- Rad, Gerhard Von. *Commentary on Genesis. Old Testament Library*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1973.
- Rendtorff, Rolf. *The Problem of the Process of Transmission in the Pentateuch*. Translated by John J. Scullion. JSOTSup 89. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990.
- Sandmel, Samuel. "Parallelomania." *JBL* 81 (1962): 1–13.
- Schachter, Jay F. *The Commentary of Abraham Ibn Ezra on the Pentateuch: Volume 5, Deuteronomy*. Hoboken, NJ: KTAV Publishing House, 2003.
- Smith, George. *The Chaldean Account of Genesis: containing the description of the creation, the deluge, the tower of Babel, the destruction of Sodom, the times of the Patriarchs, and Nimrod, Babylonian fables, and legends of the Gods, from the cuneiform inscriptions*. New York: Schribner, Armstrong & Co, 1976.
- Talmon, Shemaryahu. "The 'Comparative Method' in Biblical Interpretation—Principles and Problems," in *Essential Papers on Israel and the Ancient Near East*. Frederick C. Greenspahn (ed.), 381–419. New York: New York University, 1991.
- Teggart, Frederick J. "The Argument of Hesiod's Works and Days." *JHI* 8 (1947): 45–77.
- Thompson, Thomas L. *Early History of the Israelite People: From the Written and Archaeological Sources*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994.
- Thompson, Thomas L. *The Mythic Past: Biblical Archaeology and the Myth of Israel*. New York: Basic Books, 1999.
- Van Seters, John. *In Search of History: Historiography in the Ancient World and the Origins of Biblical History*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983.
- Van Seters, John. *Prologue to History: The Yahwist as Historian in Genesis*. Louisville, KY: Westminster / John Knox Press, 1992.
- Wajdenbaum, Philippe. *Argonauts of the Desert: Structural Analysis of the Hebrew Bible*. Sheffield: Equinox Publishing, 2011.
- Walcot, Peter. *Hesiod and the Near East*. Cardiff: University of Wales, 1966.
- Weinfeld, Moshe. *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1972.
- Weinfeld, Moshe. *The Promise of the Land: The Inheritance of the Land of Canaan by the Israelites*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.
- Wellhausen, Julius. *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel*. Translated by J. Sutherland Black and Allan Mendies. Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black, 1885.
- Wells, Bruce and F. Rachel Magdalene (eds.). *Law From the Tigris to the Tiber: The Writings of Raymond Westbrook*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009.
- West, Martin Litchfield. *The East Face of Helicon: West Asiatic Elements in Greek Poetry and Myth*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003.
- Westermann, Claus. *Genesis 1-11: A Commentary*. Translated by J. Scullion. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984.

28 *Comparative Methodology and Genesis 1–11*

- de Wette, Wilhelm. *A Critical and Historical Introduction to the Canonical Scriptures of the Old Testament*. Translated by Theodore Parker. 2 vols. Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1843.
- Whybray, R. Norman. *The Making of the Pentateuch: a Methodological Study*. JSOTSup 53. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987.
- Yadin, Azzan. "Goliath's Armor and Israelite Collective Memory." *VT* 54 (2004): 373–395.

2 Genesis 1 and Creation Myths

2.1 Introduction

The book of Genesis opens with a cosmogony that describes the creation of the cosmos by God over the course of six days. The aim of this cosmogony was to give a concise account of the formation of the heavens and earth and all that they contained—the sun, moon and stars; the seas; dry land and atmosphere and all the life forms found therein—as well as the cosmological features that governed the passage and measurement of time—night and day, months and seasons. The cosmogony of Gen 1:1–2:3 presented a full, though not very detailed, accounting of the causes that brought the present cosmos into existence. The *material cause* of the universe (to use the terminology of Aristotle as commonly rendered¹) was earth and water, from which all other substances and forms emerged. The *effective causes* were God and his Spirit, who acted on the cosmos in various ways. Several *formal causes* were named in the description of the processes by which the cosmos was ordered. These included a series of separations (day from night, waters above from those below, dry land from sea); divine declarations (“Let there be X”); the fashioning and placing of the heavenly bodies in the skies; the fashioning of humans; and the blessings whereby God invested the life forms he created with reproductive capabilities. The detailed manner in which separations, fashioning and positioning of the various elements of the cosmos took place was left to the imagination. The *final cause* was emphasized throughout the cosmogony in statements about God’s active purpose, his intelligent accomplishment of his aims, and his approval of the results achieved. The account of the material, effective, formal and final causes of the universe in Gen 1:1–2:3 was remarkably concise. This cosmogony also included within its scope a zoogony or account of the origins of life. The cosmogony in Gen 1:1–2:3 forms a distinct literary unit from Gen 2:4–25’s zoogony that presuppose the prior creation of the heavens and earth.

The first question considered here is the question of genre. Broadly speaking, Gen 1:1–2:3 falls into the classification of cosmogony, but what type of cosmogony was it? There are four fundamental choices available. The two most important categories of cosmogony encountered from distant antiquity to the present are those of mythical cosmogony (or creation story)

and scientific cosmogony. Additionally, one occasionally finds cosmogonies that lay between mythical and scientific cosmogonies. These hybrid forms empirically fall into two additional categories: what may be termed mythical-scientific cosmogonies, in which a substratum of creation myth is superficially overlaid with a secondary layer of scientific discourse, and what may be termed scientific-theological-mythical cosmogonies, in which a scientific account of the origin of the cosmos is overlaid with a secondary layer of theology and myth. In the current chapter, the differences between scientific and mythical approaches to cosmogony will be discussed in order to decide how best to categorize Gen 1:1–2:3. This in turn will help to evaluate whether the series of claims made in Gen 1:1–2:3 were intended in antiquity to be interpreted as narrative elements within a story or as scientific assertions of fact.

In the Ancient Near East, cosmogonies universally took the form of myth. Under the Maximalist dating paradigm the major biblical texts were once assumed to have been written in pre-Hellenistic times under exclusively Ancient Near Eastern cultural and literary influences. Within that research paradigm, it necessarily followed that Gen 1:1–2:3 was viewed as a creation myth: the possibility that Genesis 1 might be a scientific cosmogony was not even raised for consideration (although Van Seters 1983: 26 noted that the biblical creation account has similarities to “the demythologized cosmology of Ionic philosophy”). But under the Hellenistic Era research paradigm proposed in the 1990s, it was entirely possible to view Genesis 1 as scientific in its fundamental character, in line with the writings of the Greek natural philosophers. A scientific approach to the world that sought to explain natural phenomena—including the cosmos as a whole—by means of observation and analysis was a Greek intellectual development innovated by Thales and his students in Miletus ca. 575–525 BCE. The natural philosophers of the Miletan School and those who later arose elsewhere in the Greek world down to the time of Plato were all known for their scientific cosmogonies. While it is difficult to picture how knowledge of Greek scientific cosmogonies could have penetrated the coastal interiors to Samaria and Judea in pre-Hellenistic times—much less exerted a decisive intellectual influence on the biblical authors—no such obstacles to the dissemination of Greek scientific learning in the east existed after the conquests of Alexander the Great. The newly founded city of Alexandria quickly superseded Athens as the preeminent center of Greek learning. It is certain that Alexandria’s Great Library housed a significant collection of writings on philosophy, including natural philosophy. Aristotle’s private library contained texts by all the previous natural philosophers, as demonstrated by the copious references to these works in Aristotle’s various books on cosmogony and natural science. The acquisition of this library at the founding of the Great Library of Alexandria will have resulted in the completeness of its collection of texts on cosmogony. All of Plato’s texts, which included several that dealt with cosmogony, were also found in the Great Library, as corroborated by

papyrus finds (Gmirkin 2017: 148 n. 16). It seems highly probable that the biblical authors were aware of Plato's speculations concerning cosmogony, since it is now known that Plato had a significant influence on the biblical text.² Given the strong possibility that the Pentateuch's authors were acquainted with Greek cosmogonies through their access to the Great Library of Alexandria—and especially through their reading of Plato's writings—the influence of the Greek genre of scientific cosmogony on Genesis 1 merits serious consideration.

Under the Hellenistic Era research paradigm, the question thus naturally arises whether Genesis 1 contains features characteristic of mythical cosmogonies, scientific cosmogonies, or both. In order to answer this question, one must first delineate the features that are characteristic for mythical and scientific cosmogonies. Biblical studies on Genesis have not hitherto sought to explore and define the features that distinguish mythical from scientific cosmogonies, owing to the assumed mythical background of Genesis 1, but this subject has been thoroughly explored in classical studies in order to understand the transition from mythical to scientific cosmogony among the Greeks. It is universally and uncontroversially agreed that the cosmogony in Hesiod's *Theogony* should be classified as mythical and that the cosmogonies of the natural philosophers were scientific. Subsidiary questions that were considered by twentieth century classical scholars were whether the mythical cosmogony of Hesiod had pre-scientific elements and whether the first scientific cosmogonies had features borrowed or prefigured in earlier myth. The debate over such questions served to clarify the essential differences between scientific and mythical approaches to cosmogony that drew a bright line between the first natural philosophers and earlier Greek mythographers. It is now widely agreed that the first school of philosophy at Miletus represented by Thales and his intellectual successors consciously rejected the traditional mythological approach to cosmogony of Hesiod and other such writers³ in favor of a new approach that sought to deductively reconstruct the origins of the present cosmos by observations of operational principles in the natural world without recourse to divine or mythical explanations. In doing so, they laid the foundations of modern science in general, and in the process invented scientific cosmogony as a distinctively Greek literary genre.

Broadly speaking, mythical cosmogonies described the origins of the existing cosmos within a narrative framework of complex and colorful stories about the gods. Such stories typically featured a multiplicity of gods who possessed human characteristics and essentially served as characters in the story, which narrated a series of episodes in the course of which a god or gods, through various personal actions, fashioned the present world, life, humans and sometimes also created the institutions of civilization and religion. The action in mythical cosmogonies often had an arbitrary or anecdotal nature, with rich and dramatic details befitting events in a well-told story. The source of such stories was the reservoir of tradition and beliefs

about the gods, which was used to provide etiological explanations that posited a divine origin for both phenomena in nature such as the heavens, earth and humanity, and for existing social and religious institutions. Examples in Section 2.2 will illustrate the storybook character of mythical cosmogonies.

Scientific cosmogonies, by contrast, sought to explain the origins of the cosmos as a result of ordinary physical processes. Under the new methods of Greek natural philosophy, the universe as a whole was treated as a natural phenomenon. Consequently, the starting point for such cosmogonies was the investigation and observation of processes in nature, and such cosmogonies were often accompanied by systematic theories on physics and natural phenomena. Although scientific cosmogonies did not seek to explain the origin of the cosmos by means of stories about the gods, they sometimes gave the divine, in the form of an abstract cosmic intelligence, a role in guiding otherwise natural processes. But neither gods nor traditional stories were invoked to bolster the authority of the cosmogonies developed by the natural philosophers. Instead, reconstructions of the origins of the cosmos sought support in rational argument based on observation and common-sense knowledge of nature. Although the proposed development of the cosmos was conceived as an ordered sequence of events, these were not presented as narration or story with arbitrary actions by the gods as in mythical cosmogonies. The focus of scientific cosmogonies was not the gods but the progressive emergence of the observed characteristics of the natural world. The account given of the development of the cosmos tended to be parsimonious (Gregory 2011: 13, 18, 24) and focused on phenomena of nature such as the earth and sky, oceans and dry land, the celestial bodies, day and night and the progression of the seasons, plant and animal life and reproduction. Natural philosophers sometimes also discussed how language and social and political features of human life arose, again invoking common sense instead of mythical etiologies or the actions of the gods.

Besides mythical cosmogonies and Greek scientific cosmogonies, there also existed hybrid cosmogonies that do not fall neatly into a single category of thought, combining Greek science with elements of myth, philosophy or theology.

Scientific-theological-mythical cosmogonies started with a scientific cosmogony as substrate and added a layer of extra-scientific philosophical or theological explanation and philosophically grounded myth. In the period under consideration, this approach to cosmogony is exemplified by the writings of Plato, which subsequently exerted considerable influence on the later cosmogonies found in Stoicism, Middle Platonism, Philo's writings, the Church Fathers, and Neoplatonism, all of which actively engaged in Plato's scientific-theological-mythical cosmogony as presented in the *Timaeus* and other dialogues. For Plato, theology (a Platonic neologism) consisted of the philosophical exploration of the necessary nature of God, so that theology and philosophy were to a large extent formally equivalent. Plato's scientific-theological-mythical

approach to cosmogony is most evident in the first half of Plato's *Timaeus* that dealt with the ordering of the universe by the Demiurge or Creator.

Other hybrid cosmogonies combined features of both mythical and scientific cosmogonies, displaying a knowledge and positive evaluation of both genres. Such hybrid cosmogonies attempted to give a scientific explanation of the universe, but also sought to integrate or accommodate contemporary traditions about the gods, giving deities a role in the physical processes that created the present cosmos. We may classify hybrid forms as either mythical-scientific or scientific-theological-mythical cosmogonies, based on whether myth or science is the substratum for the account.

Mythical-scientific hybrid cosmogonies started with a traditional mythical cosmogony as substrate and added a Euhemerizing layer of scientific explanation in order to render traditional myths more reasonable to Greek-speaking audiences knowledgeable in natural philosophy. Examples of this type include Hellenistic Era works in Greek to be discussed later, namely the *Babyloniaca* authored by the Babylonian priest Berossus and the *Phoenician History* purportedly authored in the thirteenth century BCE by the legendary Phoenician Sanchunthion. In both of these works, local mythical cosmogonies were given superficial scientific explanations.⁴

Scientific-theological-mythical cosmogonies started with a scientific cosmogony as substrate and added a layer of theological explanation with elements of traditional mythology in order to render a scientific theory theologically acceptable and compatible with existing myths about the gods. The main example of this approach is the second half of Plato's *Timaeus*, in which a scientific account of the origin of man and other life forms was given a superficial mythological framework in which these life forms were created by the traditional Greek gods.

The differences between these various categories are best illustrated by concrete examples of mythical and scientific cosmogonies as well as hybrid accounts. The current chapter catalogues examples of mythical cosmogonies and hybrid mythical-scientific cosmogonies from Ancient Near Eastern, Greek, Hellenistic and biblical literature. It should become clear after this survey that Gen 1:1–2:3 (unlike mythical cosmogonies underlying other biblical and pseudepigraphical textual materials) does not conform to either the mythical or mythical-scientific rubrics, but instead displays strong affinities with Greek scientific natural philosophy, the character of which will be examined in subsequent chapters.

2.2 Creation Myths

A mythical cosmogony explains the origin of the cosmos by means of a creation myth, a story about the activities of the gods that led to and included the creation of the world. Creation myths (surveyed in Van der Sluijs 2011) are a widespread phenomenon that has been extensively studied by anthropologists and historians. While creation myths generally share many

themes or narrative threads, it is not sound methodology to attempt a global synthesis of these myths based solely on such common story elements, since it is certain that parallel motifs have independently arisen at many times and in many societies around the world. It is only possible to argue a direct connection between similar creation myths if the societies that produced them can first be shown to have been geographically, temporally and culturally proximate. By this criterion, comparative studies of mythical cosmogonies of possible relevance to the biblical tradition may reasonably be limited to the myths of the Ancient Near Eastern and Greek worlds. Within this restricted cultural context, creation myths appear to fall neatly into a handful of distinct literary tropes. Discussing the features of the creation myths in each of these tropes will prove useful in my evaluation of whether the cosmogony in Gen 1:1–2:3 can be considered a creation myth.

2.2.1 *Theogonies*

A theogony was a text that dealt with myths about the origin of the gods. The gods were pictured as a multiplicity of divine beings related by family, with the youngest gods the offspring of the elder gods. A theogony sought to organize the familial relations among the gods by tracing lines of descent. The earliest, most famous, authoritative Greek theogony preserved in written form was Hesiod's *Theogony* of ca. 700 BCE.⁵ In the Ancient Near East, gods were also pictured in anthropomorphic family groups (see especially López-Ruiz 2010) in Egypt (see Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris*), Babylonia (in the *Enuma Elish*), Assyria (in the Assyrian redaction of the *Enuma Elish*, where Ashur replaces Marduk), among Hurrians and Hittites (in the epic of Kumarbi), the Phoenicians (on evidence of Philo of Byblos) and in the "Canaanite" Ugaritic texts of Ras Shamra (implicitly in the Baal Cycle).⁶ The "Canaanite" tradition of El and his 70 sons was directly reflected in the biblical text, where the god of the children of Israel was identified with either El, the ruler of the divine council (Smith 2001: 41–66; Smith and Pitard 2009: 2.48), or one of his sons (Deut 32:8–9; Ps 29:1; 82:1, 6; 89:6–7; cf. Smith 2001: 41–66, 156–7).

In Hesiod's *Theogony*, the eldest gods were identified with observable features in nature. The first god was Chaos (*Theogony* 116). After Chaos there arose Gaia (the Earth) (*Theogony* 117), and from Gaia came Ouranos (the Sky) (*Theogony* 126). These gods were pictured not merely as ruling over the heaven and the earth, but as sky and earth themselves, which the Greeks considered divine. In Hesiod's *Theogony*, other gods who descended from Chaos and Gaia included such deities as Hemera (Day), Erebus (Darkness) or Nux (Night), Helios (the Sun), Selene (the Moon), Okeanos (the World-Stream or Ocean), Pontus (the Sea) and others. In Hesiod's mythical account of the origins of the gods and of the world, cosmogony was thus presented as an aspect of theogony and the generation of the world mapped into activities of the gods, which included taking of consorts and

engendering offspring. Natural phenomena were explained in terms of the activities of the gods. Life itself received such an explanation (though not explicit in the *Theogony*), in which the life-giving rain was understood as *spermata* from Ouranos, the heavens, that impregnated Ge, the earth, causing her to bring forth plant-life after the showers.

2.2.2 *Theomachies*

A theomachy was a war between the gods, which often had catastrophic terrestrial consequences. The defeat of one supreme god and succession by another god is called a Succession Myth, a type of story about the gods which likely originated with the replacement of one ruling cult by another such as might historically occur as a result of conquest or migration. Succession Myths were sometimes depicted in terms of a succession of ages. When a succession of the gods was accomplished as a result of theomachy, the division between the ages was sometimes marked by a catastrophe of cosmological proportions. Among the Greeks, the Age of Ouranos came first, during which the cosmos came into existence; then the Age of Kronos, when the first Golden Race of man was created; and finally the Age of Zeus, which saw four successive races of humankind, namely the Silver Race, the Bronze Race, the race of Heroes that ended around the time of the Trojan War and finally the current Iron Race.⁷ The transition from the Age of Ouranos to the Age of Kronos was marked by a simple parricide without a theomachy,⁸ but the transition from the Age of Kronos to the Age of Zeus was marked by theomachy in the form of the Titanomachy, or War of the Titans. The destruction of the Bronze Age of Man by Zeus was also seemingly marked by cataclysm, but none of the Greek upheavals involved cosmogony *per se*.

In the Ancient Near East, the *Enuma Elish* featured a theomachy in which the god Marduk defeated Tiamat, the primordial dragon of watery chaos. This theomachy had explicit elements of mythical cosmogony. After Marduk and his forces slew Tiamat and her forces, Marduk cut Tiamat's body in two parts and propped it open, with the upper part forming the sky and the lower part forming the earth. Marduk subsequently formed humanity from the blood of a slain, beheaded god, and founded Babylon as his home. In the *Babyloniaca*, Berossus first recounted the original myth of Marduk's triumph, and then repeated it in the form of a mythical-scientific cosmogony. In this allegorical interpretation aimed at a scientifically educated Greek speaking audience, Tiamat was interpreted as representing the original primordial "darkness and water" before the present cosmos; Marduk was interpreted as the Sun or light, and the winds, which were Marduk's weapons of war in the *Enuma Elish*, likely represented the atmosphere between the heavens and the earth. Berossus allegorized the fashioning of humans out of blood from a slain god to signify that man partook of the divine wisdom of the gods.⁹ However, it may be noted that

most Akkadian theomachies did not feature elements of cosmogony (Walton 2011: 10, 72–4).

No cosmogony has been preserved that featured the gods of “Canaan.” But in the Ugarit (“Canaanite”) Baal Cycle, Baal defeated Yamm, the sea, as well as Mot and Lotan (Cross 1973: 333–4; Smith 1994: 1.79), suggesting the existence of a tradition in which the origins of the world was seen in terms of theomachy (Smith 1994: 1.85). The conquest of Rahab and Leviathan in the biblical text appears to draw on older “Canaanite” traditions. This battle between Yahweh and Rahab (Job 9:13) or Yahweh and Leviathan is thought to preserve traces of an old mythical cosmogony that saw the origin of the world in terms of theomachy (cf. Day 1985). A common denominator between the battle of Marduk and Tiamat, the battle of Baal and Yamm, and the battles between the biblical God and Rahab or Leviathan is a theomachy between a conquering god and a sea creature representing the forces of watery chaos. The battle between God and Rahab is alluded to in several biblical texts (notably in Psalms and in Job; cf. Day 1985: 18–49), but a cosmic battle motif is nowhere visible in Gen 1:1–2:3 (Day 1985: 49–54).

2.2.3 *Palatial World-Myths*

In this type of mythical cosmogony, the world as a whole was envisioned in architectural imagery as a palace or temple laid out and constructed by a god pictured as a king who ruled the cosmos (Nickelsburg 2001: 284; Walton 2011: 100–10). Such cosmogonies typically featured mythical geography on a world scale that mapped features of the visible and invisible world to architectural features of a royal construction (Walton 2011: 86–99). In the book of Job, the portrait of God as divine designer and architect of the world, plumb line in hand, is explicit.¹⁰ The foundations of the world-palace were laid deep in the invisible underworld.¹¹ The earth itself was the interior of the palace, its roof of ceiling the sky above. The heavens might be conceived as a solid surface constructed out of beaten brass or iron¹² or as a tent-like fabric spread out across the skies,¹³ depending on the form of construction envisioned. The pillars that held up the sky were usually conceived as distant mountains located at the ends of the earth.¹⁴ As ruler of the universe, the king of the gods was usually pictured as dwelling in a throne room in the heavens. Consequently, the heavens were sometimes pictured as the floor of the celestial throne room, constructed of jeweled crystals.¹⁵ As was typical of royal palaces, the divine palace (or temple) contained numerous storerooms for its treasures. In both the Hebrew Bible and in 1 Enoch these divine treasuries were pictured as storehouses containing the elements such as rain, snow and hail.¹⁶ In this mythical conception of the physical world, various windows were opened in the sky to allow servants of the divine ruler to allow in rain, snow, hail or winds.¹⁷ Gates in the east were opened to allow the entry of the sun, moon and stars, which were

transported across the heavens by the angels to whom they were entrusted, and other gates in the west allowed their departure from the sky.¹⁸ Other gates or stairways allowed passage between the heavenly realm and earth.¹⁹ In the palatial world-myth, the ruler of the universe was often pictured as presiding over a divine bureaucracy of lesser gods²⁰ or angels²¹ who acted as royal servants, scribes and bureaucrats. Divine royal servants were pictured as having been charged with supervising the natural elements and ensuring the orderly operation of the cosmos according to the king's directions. Such cosmological speculations assumed an earlier mythical cosmogony in which the world-palace was constructed and its bureaucracy put in place, even when the antecedent story of the architectural design and building of the cosmos has not been preserved.

2.2.4 Local Palatial Myths

A closely related literary trope featured mythical geography on a local scale. In the form of localized cosmogony, a god was pictured as ordering and ruling not the entire cosmos, but a specific region, the nation over which he presided in his local temple or earthly palace. The supreme deity typically presided over all the gods from a palace in heaven or on a tall mountain such as Mount Olympus, home of the "Olympian gods" of the Greeks (West 1966: 171), or Mount Saphon, home of El and his divine council of gods (KTU² 1.10.14). Subservient national gods were pictured as dwelling in local palaces or temples where they were attended by human servants. Examples of such local palatial myths are found across the Ancient Near Eastern and Greek worlds. In the Hebrew Bible, Jerusalem's Mount Zion was often described in mythical terms as the dwelling place of Yahweh.²² Among the Samaritans, Mount Gerizim and its temple served a similar function. In Genesis 2–3, a mythical mountain from which the Tigris, Euphrates, Phasis and Nile rivers spring appears to have been pictured as God's dwelling place, and Eden as his palace garden, reminiscent of the famous paradises of the Assyrian and Babylonian kings and Persian aristocracy.²³ The Samaritans directly equated Eden with Mount Gerizim and its temple.²⁴ Although these myths of regional national gods were local, they sometimes had cosmological overtones, especially when the local god was identified with the supreme ruler of the universe. In Babylonian myth, when Marduk became the ruler of the gods and defeated Tiamat, and fashioned the earth and sky from Tiamat's body, he established the city of Babylon and its temple to serve as his earthly dwelling place (*Enuma Elish* 5.117–30). In the *Poem of Erra*, a temporary absence of Marduk from Babylon in the post-flood world led to destruction and cosmic catastrophe, a local Babylonian tradition that was preserved in the Hebrew Bible as the story of the Tower of Babel (Gmirkin 2006: 124–33). In biblical writings, the absence of Yahweh brought about a destruction of the land similarly described in mythical cosmological terms.²⁵ The restoration of Yahweh to his land in the day of

the Lord was also seen as a cosmological upheaval in the Prophets (Isa 13:9–11; Joel 2:30–31; 3:14–15; cf. Rev 6:12–14, etc.). In Greek, Persian, biblical, pseudepigraphical and Christian literature, predicted apocalyptic upheavals were often portrayed in cosmological terms, sometimes in conjunction with a world conflagration or destruction that would result in a new heavens and new earth.²⁶ In these prophetic accounts of the future, theories of cyclic cosmogony, in which the universe periodically underwent destruction and renewal, were fused with either local or cosmic myth.²⁷ In Jewish, Christian and Zoroastrian traditions, the cosmic renewal was equated with the triumph of the local god over his adversaries.²⁸

The previous examples illustrate the essential characteristics of mythical cosmogonies. The origin of the present cosmos was explained in terms of the activities of the gods. The deities conceived as having created the existing world were described in highly anthropomorphic terms, functioning within the creation myth as characters on which the storytellers projected humanlike qualities, motivations and interactions. The pantheon of the gods was pictured within a family structure mapped out in a genealogical framework. Along with the intimate institution of family, the divine realm also featured broader social and political institutions modeled on those of human experience. God was pictured as a king with palace, territory, servants and heavenly armies. Rivalries among the gods were pictured in terms of theomachy or divine warfare. Interactions between the gods and other gods, between gods and humans, or between gods and the world were conveyed by means of story. Male gods took female goddesses (and sometimes human women) as their consorts and had offspring. Encounters and conversations were reported as having taken place between friendly or rival gods or between gods and humans. Alliances were formed among the gods, rebellions fomented and wars recounted. The cosmos was seen as the setting for narratives that featured the actions of the gods that might result in the creation, upheaval or destruction of the earth. The universe was described in terms of sacred geography. The location of god's dwelling place was a common feature in these narratives, whether the supreme god's palace-temple in the heavens, the earthly palace of a local national deity or the underworld palace of a chthonic deity. The stories often pictured gods arriving in a land, departing from a land or returning to a land they had abandoned. The audiences for such stories were the local peoples who participated in the cults associated with such gods. The mythical cosmogonies often were presented within a larger story framework that accounted for the origin of the nation, human kingship or local cultic institutions and practices.

2.3 Conclusions: Genesis 1 and Mythical Cosmogony

It appears certain that the biblical authors were familiar with the genre of mythical cosmogony. Traces of all the above tropes of mythical cosmogony are found in various books of the Hebrew Bible.

- As noted, several biblical passages alluded to a supreme god (either El Elyon or Yahweh) who presided over a divine council of his sons,²⁹ showing that the biblical authors had inherited the old “Canaanite” tradition of El and his 70 sons with its implied theogony.³⁰ At the same time, extensive polemics against Asherah as a goddess rejected the notion of the supreme god having a consort, despite Iron II archaeological discoveries of inscriptions that mentioned Yahweh and his consort. This seems to imply a deliberate distancing from the usual Ancient Near Eastern notion of a family of gods in favor of a monotheism with Yahweh, El or Elohim as the single supreme god.
- As also noted, various passages in Psalms and Job alluded to a theomachy in which Yahweh defeated a sea dragon named Rahab or Leviathan, another “Canaanite” tradition with overtones of mythical cosmogony.
- The book of Job is explicit in portraying God as a master architect who designed the cosmos, laying the foundations under the earth, setting up pillars at the ends of the earth, and fashioning a *raqia* or vault of beaten metal to form the sky above. The book of Job also alluded to a divine bureaucracy that included the angels of creation and a divine council of the sons of Elohim (one of whom was named as satan; that is “adversary”).
- Local sacred geography was also featured in the Garden of Eden, in Mount Zion as God’s dwelling, perhaps also in Mount Gerizim, and in the Promised Land as the possession of Yahweh. The story of the Garden of Eden was integrated with a zoogony that recounted the origins of animal and human life, a conventional element of mythical cosmogonies.

It is thus evident that the authors of the Hebrew Bible had inherited a body of older traditions that included all the usual tropes of mythical cosmogony. Yet it is striking that Gen 1:1–2:3 conforms to none of these tropes. The cosmogony found there was not framed as a story with a god as protagonist who interacted with other gods or humans as secondary characters. Monologue appears, directed at the world (Gen 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 22, 24), the divine council (Gen 1:26), or created humankind (Gen 1:28–30), but no dialogue such as appears in Genesis 2–3. The sons of God appear in only a single verse and there is no mention of a divine bureaucracy or of angels of creation. There is no primordial struggle with Rahab or Leviathan or any other traces of the old “Canaanite” theomachy (contra von Rad 1973: 49–50; Cassuto 1989: 37–8). There is no royal ideology in the description of God or any comparison of the cosmos with a divine palace or world-building. Heaven is not created as a place for God to live in (Westermann 1984: 119), and there is no mention of God’s dwelling place, either in the heavens or on earth. The notion of sacred geography, where God was pictured in a special relationship to a specific earthly region, is entirely absent. This absence of mythical tropes within what was assumed to have originated as an Ancient Near Eastern creation myth led to a frequent assertion that

the cosmogony of Genesis 1 had been demythologized by its priestly authors (von Rad 1973: 63–4; Cassuto 1989: 21; Sarna 1989: 3).

Instead of possessing elements of mythical cosmogony, the First Creation Account displays a systematic concern with the origin of natural features of the cosmos: day and night, earth and sky, sea and dry land, the celestial bodies and life in its various manifestations. The origin of divine kingship, political institutions or cultic institutions are notably absent from the account. The few faint traces of mythical cosmogony that some have detected in Gen 1:1–2:3 appear to be primarily linguistic in nature:

- The word for the primordial ocean, *tehom* (Gen 1:2) appears to be linguistically related to Tiamat, the Babylonian primordial dragon defeated by Marduk (von Rad 1973: 50; Day 1985: 49–51). But it is now widely agreed that Gen 1:1–2:3 contains no direct references to the Marduk-Tiamat theomachy and was not adapted from the mythical account of their battle found in the *Enuma Elish* (Day 1985: 49–50). While *tehom* may have derived from the Tiamat, by the time Genesis was written the word had lost its original mythical connotations and now prosaically referred to the deep.
- The sky that separated the waters above from the waters below was called *raqia* (Gen 1:6–8), a word that conveys the notion of a beaten flat surface. But Gen 1:6–8 did not describe God hammering out such a surface as in Job 37:18, where the sky was compared to a crafted brass mirror. In Ps 18:11; 19:4; 104:2, the sky was hung like a curtain, a second biblical usage of *raqia*, but neither does this imagery appear in Genesis 1. Since Genesis 1 made no story connection between the fashioning of the sky as a *raqia* and God as architect or builder of the cosmos, in Genesis 1 the word *raqia* is best understood as a simple reference to the dome of the sky.
- The separation of the sea from the dry land was once sometimes understood as an allusion to Yahweh defeating the sea personified by the figures of Yamm in the Baal cycle or as Rahab or Leviathan in old “Canaanite” myths alluded to in the Psalms and Job (Cassuto 1989: 37–8). But this tenuous theory no longer has supporters (cf. Day 1985: 49–54; Tsumura 1989: 62–6).
- Finally, at Gen 1:26, “God (Elohim) says, ‘Let us make man in our image.’” This striking passage is reminiscent of the old “Canaanite” polytheism inherited by the biblical authors of ca. 270 BCE. But it is also consistent with Greek polytheism as well as with the mythical-scientific content of Plato’s *Timaeus* in which a multiplicity of gods participated in the creation of mortal life (see Chapter 6).

In short, Gen 1:1–2:3 may contain a few isolated verbal echoes of the mythical cosmogonies that were the cultural heritage of the authors of ca. 270 BCE, but these older traditions did not significantly shape the cosmogony found there,

and it is possible to attribute other mythical elements to Greek influences of a later period.

It is important to note that the role assigned to the biblical God in the cosmogony of Gen 1:1–2:3 does not necessarily imply that this cosmogony was based on myth and not on science. Several Greek scientific cosmogonies allowed for the role of a divine intelligence that steered the natural processes by which the present cosmos came into being. The divine presence in scientific cosmogonies tended to be highly abstract, as opposed to the gods of mythical cosmogonies in both Greece and the Ancient Near East who were portrayed as anthropomorphic beings invented in the image of humanity³¹ and who served essentially as characters in a story. Additionally, the divine presence is prominently featured in the scientific-theological-mythical cosmogony found in Plato's writings, although the creator is mostly described in abstract theological terms appropriate to Plato's philosophy rather than as a story figure such as found in the popular Greek myths.³² The mention of God in Gen 1:1–2:3 thus does not by itself serve as a marker to identify the cosmogony as mythical. Instead, the characteristics of the biblical God in Gen 1:1–2:3 must be analyzed to determine whether they conform to the anthropomorphic treatment of the gods in mythical cosmogonies. God is indeed portrayed with limited anthropomorphic characteristics in Gen 1:1–2:3, but these anthropomorphisms appear to have been carefully circumscribed to support the otherwise scientifically-oriented narrative.

God's humanlike characteristics and actions in Gen 1:1–2:3 include:

- Intentionality. At several points in the cosmogony, God declared his intentions prior to the description of a creative act (Gen 1:3, 6). The most explicit of such statements was Gen 1:26, "Let us make man in our image."
- Proclamation of Intent. In several instances, creative acts were preceded by or seemingly took place by means of a proclamation or command, including the famous, "Let there be light" (Gen 1:3; cf. 1:6, 14, 20). Whether this set in motion certain actions or physical processes that had the intended result or whether the command itself was sufficient in some instances was left to the reader's imagination (Gen 1:3). In Gen 1:6–7, the proclamation, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters" was followed by a statement that God crafted the firmament and caused it to divide the waters above and below. In Gen 1:14–17, the proclamation, "Let there be lights in the firmament" was similarly followed by statements that God fashioned these lights and placed them in the sky, and similarly at Gen 1:20–21, 24–25, 26–27. It follows that these proclamations were statements of intent or teleological purpose rather than creative acts in and of themselves.
- Creation by Craftsmanship. In several instances, God was portrayed as a craftsman who created items of workmanship for the cosmos. For instance, God made the heavens and earth (Gen 1:1), fashioned the

firmament (Gen 1:7), fashioned sun and moon and placed them in their proper positions in the sky (Gen 1:16–17), fashioned the sea creatures and fowls (Gen 1:21) and the gods fashioned men and women in their image (Gen 1:26–27). The details by which such elements of the cosmos were crafted were once again left to the reader's imagination.

- Creation by Blessing. After God caused fish, fowl, animals to emerge from the sea, air and land, along with the humans he fashioned, God was said to have blessed them (Gen 1:22, 28), which appears to signify God having endowed them with reproductive capabilities (cf. Sarna 1989: 13).
- Teleological Approval. In several passages, after the execution of his creative acts (“and it was so,” Gen 1:7, 9, 11, 24), God expressed approval of the results he had achieved (“and God saw that it was good,” Gen 1:10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31).

The portrait of God and his creative acts thus possessed definite anthropomorphic elements that at first glance appear to be indicative of a mythological narrative approach. But several factors militate against classifying Gen 1:1–2:3 as a mythological cosmogony, despite its depiction of a God with humanlike characteristics.

First, Gen 1:1–2:3 contained several instances in which physical elements in the cosmos came into existence by purely physical processes. The emergence of the familiar present cosmos was described mainly as the result of a series of physical separations: the separation of light from dark, of earth from sky and of sea from dry land. The emergence of life forms from the sea and land appears to be initially described as a process of spontaneous generation (Gen 1:20, 24), a phenomenon that was widely accepted as an observable natural occurrence in Greek scientific and medical literature; in what appears to be a distinct literary strand, doublets also contradictorily assert that God made these same life forms (Gen 1:21, 25). The combination of scientific and mythological content calls into question whether Genesis 1 falls into the category of mythological cosmogony.

Second, although God appeared with human-like qualities in Gen 1:1–2:3, God does not seem like a storybook figure, in contrast to Yahweh's or Yahweh-Elohim's encounters with Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, Moses and others.

Third, it is important to note the many opportunities for storytelling missed in the narrative of Gen 1:1–2:3. Although God issued a series of proclamations or commands, these constituted what might be described as creative monologue, not a dialogue as one would normally expect within a mythological cosmogony. Such commands were not addressed to the angels of creation or other agencies within a divine bureaucracy, like a royal figure issuing orders to others who carry out his directives. Again, God is said to have been the craftsman who fashioned heavens and earth (Gen 1:1), the firmament (Gen 1:7), all the celestial bodies (Gen 1:16) and all the various

forms of life (Gen 1:21, 25, 27), but this role was not supported by a story or tradition that can be recognized as myth. One may contrast the parsimonious and relatively austere account of Gen 1:1–2:3 (as noted in Sarna 1989: 3) with the mythical cosmogony implicit in Job, where God also appeared as a craftsman, an architect who laid out the earth's foundations (Job 38:4–6), set up pillars at the ends of the earth (Job 26:11; cf. Ps 75:3; 1 Sam 2:8), beat out the dome of the sky like a polished brass mirror (Job 37:18) and set boundaries for the sea (Job 38:8–10). Compared with Job, the absence of story in Gen 1:1–2:3 is striking. God's sparse expressions of teleological approval (“and God said, ‘It is good’”) are also strikingly lacking in comparison with Job 38:7, where the angels of creation all shouted of joy (cf. Ps 148:2, 5). The only instance in which God spoke to an audience other than himself was Gen 1:29–30, where God told the humans he had created to reproduce and rule over all the other living creatures in the earth and sea. Yet even here story opportunities were passed over: a geographical setting was omitted, the humans were not given names nor was there any sort of dialogue between humans and God or humans and animals such as found throughout the mythical account in Genesis 2–3.

The emphasis on physical processes in Gen 1:1–2:3, the many missed opportunities for storytelling, and the lack of conformity to the usual literary tropes of mythical cosmogony are all striking indications that the biblical cosmogony was fundamentally concerned with science rather than myth. Nor is the description of God in human terms inconsistent with viewing Gen 1:1–2:3 as an attempt to describe the origins of the cosmos in scientific terms. Rather, the anthropomorphic characteristics of God in the biblical cosmogony suggest that Gen 1:1–2:3 be classified as a hybrid scientific–theological–mythological cosmogony in which a mythological superstructure is imposed on an underlying substructure of science. The first and most influential scientific–theological–mythological cosmogony was that detailed in Plato's *Timaeus*, which appears to have been the prototype or inspiration for the cosmogony of Gen 1:1–2:3. Plato rejected the genre of purely scientific cosmogony of the Greek natural philosophers as not having attributed a sufficient causative role to the divine (*Phaedo* 97b–99c). Plato's aim in the *Timaeus* was to provide a scientific and phenomenological account of the origin of the universe in which a single supreme, benevolent god steered the formation of the *kosmos* and acted as craftsman for those features of the visible universe whose cause Plato considered inexplicable by means of purely natural processes alone. Plato's cosmogony very prominently featured a single supreme god whose *telos* or purpose was evident in every aspect of the formation of the *kosmos*, both in steering natural processes and by crafting both the celestial bodies in the skies and man on earth. Plato's *Timaeus*, like Gen 1:1–2:3, thus told a version of the scientific origin of the universe in the form of a myth or story in which his creator-god was the active force and efficient cause of each stage in the development of the *kosmos*. It follows that the proper starting point for understanding Gen 1:1–2:3 is to compare this account with the

scientific cosmogonies of the Greek world and the scientific-theological-mythical cosmogony of Plato, not the mythological cosmogonies of the Ancient Near East.

Notes

- 1 Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 5.1013a. Aristotle listed four types of “causes” or “explanations” (*aitia*) of any given phenomena: the material cause, or substance from which something is fashioned; the formal cause, or the motions or actions by which it is brought to be; the efficient cause, or agency that initiated those actions, such as a builder; and the final cause, or ultimate purpose.
- 2 See Gmirkin 2017. Plato’s *Laws* was used extensively in creating the law collections of the Pentateuch. Indeed, the Hebrew Bible as a whole was created according to the program found in Plato’s *Laws*, one phase of which was the construction of a national literature of approved texts consistent with the constitution and law code. The extensive use of Plato’s *Laws* in the creation of the Pentateuch and the Hebrew Bible in ca. 270 BCE is significant for the current discussion, since ontology and cosmogony predominate the discussion of theology in Plato, *Laws* 10.
- 3 Gregory 2011: 21–4, 51–4. See Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1.983b–984a on the rejection of mythical explanations in Greek cosmogonies.
- 4 See Baumgarten 1981: 104–39 on the Hellenistic Era interpretation of Sanchunthion’s creation myth in terms of Greek cosmogony. See Gmirkin 2006: 96–100 on the allegorical interpretation of the *Enuma Elish* in terms of Greek cosmogony in Berossus. See Haubold 2013 on Stoic elements in the cosmogony of Berossus.
- 5 Martin West (1966: 14) plausibly theorized that theogonies existed in oral form long before Hesiod, inherited from Mycenaean times. Hesiod wrote ca. 700 BCE, shortly after the Greek alphabet was invented modeled on Phoenician letters.
- 6 While no theogony appears in Canaanite cuneiform texts (Smith 1994: 1.78), family relations are implicit and explicit in El and his divine council (Smith and Picard, 2009: 2.46–52).
- 7 The scheme of Five Ages of Man was first found in Hesiod’s *Works and Days*. The successive Ages of Ouranos, Kronos and Zeus were subsequently found throughout Greek and Roman literature (Lovejoy and Boas 1935).
- 8 It is generally agreed that the castration of Ouranos by Kronos was based on the Hurrian succession myth in which Kumarbi came to power by similar means; cf. West 1966: 20–1, 211–3.
- 9 See Gmirkin (2006: 96–100). The original “darkness and water” in the *Babyloniaca*, which differed from the primordial water (only) of the *Enuma Elish*, may have influenced the primordial “darkness and water” of Gen 1:2.
- 10 Job 22:14; 26:10; 38:4–6; Prov 8:27–28; Isa 40:22; 44:13; cf. West 1997: 144.
- 11 Job 37:6; 38:6; Ps 18:16; 82:51; Prov 8:29; Isa 24:18; 40:21; Jer 31:37; Mic 6:2; 1 En. 11.12–14; 18.1–2.
- 12 Ex 39:3; Job 37:18; Jer 10:9; Homer, *Iliad* 5.504; 17.425; idem, *Odyssey* 3.2; 15.329; Pindar, *Pythian Odes* 10.27; idem, *Nemean Odes* 6.3; cf. West 1997: 139.
- 13 Job 26:7; 36:29; Ps 18:11; 19:4; 102:25–26; 104:2; Isa 40:22; cf. Nickelsburg 2001: 285.
- 14 1 Sam 2:8; Job 9:6; 26:11; Ps 75:4; 1 En. 18.3; cf. West 1997: 148–9 on Greek traditions.

- 15 The floor of the divine throne room is made of icy jewels in Ezek 1:22. The stars are thought to consist of glittery icy crystals in Empedocles (Aetius 2.13.2, 11; Pseudo-Plutarch, *Stromateis* 10; cf. West 1997: 139–40).
- 16 Deut 8:12; Job 38:22; Ps 135:7; Sir. 43.14; 1 En. 14.9–23; 18.1–2; 41.4–5; 60.12, 15, 19–20; cf. Nickelsburg 2001: 259–63, 281.
- 17 Gen 7:11; 8:2; 1 Kgs 8:35; 2 Kgs 7:2; Ps 78:23–24; Isa 24:18; Mal 3:10; 1 En. 76.1–14; KTU² 1.4.5.61–7.35; cf. West 1997: 142.
- 18 1 En. 72.2–31; 74.1–9; 75.1–2, 4–9; cf. Nickelsburg and VanderKam 2012: 416–26, 440–9, 457–60, 463–81; West 1997: 141–3; Ben-Dov 2008: 184–5.
- 19 Gen 28:17; Homer, *Iliad* 5.749–50; 8.393–94; cf. West 1997: 141; Horowitz 1998: 252–8.
- 20 For the hierarchy of the Ugaritic gods, see Smith 2001: 41–66. For the hierarchy of the Mesopotamian gods, see Foster 2007: 172–9.
- 21 One sees a hierarchy of angels ruling over celestial phenomena in the Astronomical Book of Enoch (1 En. 72–82); cf. Ben-Dov 2008: 22–30. Mul.Apin has a closely related hierarchy of stars (Ben-Dov 2008: 25–7). The Watchers were also organized hierarchically in 1 En. 6.1–8; 69.1–3. Named archangels presided over heavenly hosts in Dan 10:13, 21; 12.1; 1 En. 9.1; 20.1–7, and in the Qumran texts (Davidson 1992).
- 22 See especially the Zion Psalms (Psalms 46, 48, 76, 84, 87, 122, 132).
- 23 The Septuagint renders the *gan* (garden) of Gen 2:9 as *paradeisos*. For a discussion of Assyrian and Babylonian royal gardens, see Tuplin 1996: 82–8. For Persian royal gardens, mainly as described in Greek sources, see Tuplin 1996: 89–131; Bremmer 1999. The cherubim as guardians of the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:24) suggest a Mesopotamian source.
- 24 “[Mount Gerizim:] Its name was formerly *The Mountain of the East* (Gen. x. 30). The reason for the name *The Mountain of the East* is simply that it and the Garden of Eden are twins...” *Memar Marqah* 2.10 in MacDonald 1963: 2.73–77; cf. Montgomery 1968: 237.
- 25 The relationship between the phrase *tohu wabohu* in Gen 1:2 and in Jer 4:23, where it refers to desolation of the land, is discussed at Tsumura 1989: 36–40.
- 26 Stoic *ekpyrosis* or conflagration (Lapidge 1978); Zoroastrianism (Boyce 1984: 90–5); Isa 65:17; 66:22; *SibOr* 4.171–79; 2 Pet 3:12–13; Rev 20; 21:1.
- 27 Empedocles (Minar 1963; O’Brien 1969); Plato (*Statesman* 269c–270d); Stoics (Lapidge 1978); Zoroastrianism (Boyce 1984: 20–1, 96–7).
- 28 1 En. 90.13–36; Revelation 18–21; Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris* 46.191–95 (on the cosmic war Horomazes [Ahura-Mazda] and Areimanius in Zoroastrian tradition; cf. Boyce 1984: 90–5).
- 29 In the biblical text, El appears to have been known as Elyon (“the Most High”) or El Elyon in his capacity as leader of the divine council (Deut 32:8–9; Ps 82:1, 6; cf. Smith 2001: 48–9, 156–7). The biblical god also commonly appeared under the name Elohim. In some passages Elohim was clearly distinguished from El, notably in Ps 82:1, 6, where Elohim was counted as one of the sons of El in the divine council. Another biblical deity, Yahweh, also appeared as a member of the divine council at Ps 29:1; 89:6–7. At Deut 32:8–9, where the sons of God were allotted the nations to rule by the supreme god Elyon, Yahweh was named as the god to whom Israel had been assigned by Elyon, much as Chemosh was assigned to the people of Moab at Num 21:29; cf. Smith 1990: 7–8; 2001: 143.
- 30 See KTU² 1.4.6.46 on the 70 sons of El with his consort Athirat. The “sons of God” to whom Elyon allotted the nations at Deut 32:8 were interpreted as a divine council of 70 angels in 1 En. 89.59; 90.22–25 and rabbinic sources (Smith 1990: 7–8; 2001: 143; Smith and Picard 2009: 48). The Table of Nations in

Genesis 10 lists 70 nations, supporting an interpretation of Deut 32:8 that takes it as a reference to the 70 sons of El.

- 31 Gregory 2011: 18–24. Note the entertaining criticism of Greek anthropomorphic gods by Xenophanes quoted at Clement, *Miscellanies* 5.109.3; 7.22.1.
- 32 Plato's Demiurge or Creator is described in mostly abstract terms in the section of cosmogony in *Timaeus* 29d–47e. In *Timaeus* 41a–d, a passage strongly reminiscent of Gen 1:26, the Demiurge is portrayed as a storybook character who addresses his sons and daughters, the traditional Greek gods, on how to create man and other mortal life forms.

Bibliography

- Baumgarten, Albert I. *The Phoenician History of Philo of Byblos: A Commentary. Etudes Preliminaires aux Religions Orientales dans l'Empire Romain* 89. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981.
- Ben-Dov, Jonathan. *Head of All Years: Astronomy and Calendars at Qumran in their Ancient Context*. STDJ 78. Leiden: Brill, 2008.
- Boyce, Mary. *Textual Sources for the Study of Zoroastrianism*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1984.
- Bremmer, Jan N. "Paradise: From Persia, Via Greece, into the *Septuagint*," in *Paradise Interpreted: Representations of Biblical Paradise in Judaism and Christianity*. Gerard P. Luttikhuisen (ed.), 1–20. Leiden: Brill, 1999.
- Cassuto, Umberto. *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis: Part I, From Adam to Noah*. Translated by Israel Abrahams. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1989.
- Cross, Frank. *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973.
- Davidson, Maxwell J. *Angels at Qumran: A Comparative Study of Enoch. 1-36, 72-108 and Sectarian Writings from Qumran*. JSPSup 11. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992.
- Day, John. *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea: Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament*. Cambridge: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 1985.
- Foster, Benjamin R. "Mesopotamia," in *A Handbook of Ancient Religions*. John R. Hinnels (ed.), 161–213. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Gregory, Andrew. *Ancient Greek Cosmogony*. Bristol: Bristol Classic Press, 2011.
- Gmirkin, Russell E. *Berosus and Genesis, Manetho and Exodus: Hellenistic Histories and the Date of the Pentateuch*. Library of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 433. CIS 15. New York: T & T Clark, 2006.
- Gmirkin, Russell E. *Plato and the Creation of the Hebrew Bible*. Copenhagen International Seminar. London: Routledge, 2017.
- Haubold, Johannes. "The Wisdom of the Chaldeans": Reading Berosus, *Babyloniaca* Book 1," in *The World of Berosus: Proceedings of the 4th International Colloquium on "The Ancient Near East between Classical and Ancient Oriental Traditions."* Hatfield College, Durham 7th–9th July 2010. Johannes Hanbold, Giovanni B. Lanfranchi, Robert Rollinger and John Steele (eds.), 31–45. *Classica et Orientalia* 5. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2013.
- Horowitz, Wayne. *Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1998.
- Lapidge, Michael. "Stoic Cosmology," *The Stoics*. John M. Rist (ed.), 161–186. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978.

- López-Ruiz, Carolina. *When the Gods were Born: Greek Cosmogonies and the Near East*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010.
- Lovejoy, Arthur O. and George Boas. *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1935.
- MacDonald, John. *Memar Marqah: The Teaching of Marqah*. 2 vols. Berlin: Verlag Alfred Töpelmann, 1963.
- Minar, Edwin L. "Cosmic Periods in the Philosophy of Empedocles." *Phronesis* 8 (1963): 127–145.
- Montgomery, James Alan. *The Samaritans: The Earliest Jewish Sect; Their History, Theology and Literature*. Reprint. New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1968.
- Nickelsburg, George W.E. *1 Enoch 1: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 1–36*. Hermeneia. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001.
- Nickelsburg, George W.E. and James C. VanderKam. *1 Enoch 2: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 37–82*. Hermeneia. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2012.
- O'Brien, Denis. *Empedocles' Cosmic Cycle. A Reconstruction from the Fragments and Secondary Sources*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969.
- Rad, Gerhard Von. *Commentary on Genesis. Old Testament Library*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1973.
- Sarna, Nahum M. *Genesis. JPS Torah / Bible Commentary*. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989.
- Smith, Mark S. *The Early History of God: Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990.
- Smith, Mark S. *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle, Volume I*. VTSup 55. Leiden: Brill, 1994.
- Smith, Mark S. *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel's Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Smith, Mark S. and Wayne T. Pitard. *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle, Volume II*. VTSup 114. Leiden: Brill, 2009.
- Tsumura, David Toshio. *The Earth and the Waters in Genesis 1 and 2: A Linguistic Analysis*. JSOTSup 83. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989.
- Tuplin, Christopher, "The Parks and Gardens of the Achaemenid Empire," in *Achaemenid Studies*. Chapter 2, 80–131. *Historia Einzelschriften* 99. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1996.
- Van der Sluijs, Marinus Anthony. *Traditional Cosmology: The Global Mythology of Cosmic Creation and Destruction*. 4 vols. London: All-Round Publications, 2011.
- Van Seters, John. *In Search of History: Historiography in the Ancient World and the Origins of Biblical History*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983.
- Walton, John H. *Genesis 1 as Ancient Cosmology*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2011.
- West, Martin Litchfield. *Hesiod, Theogony: Edited with Prolegomena and Commentary*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966.
- West, Martin Litchfield. *The East Face of Helicon: West Asiatic Elements in Greek Poetry and Myth*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Westermann, Claus. *Genesis 1-11: A Commentary*. Translated by J. Scullion. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984.

3 Genesis 1 and Greek Cosmogonies

3.1 Introduction

The Presocratic natural philosophers whose scientific theories sought to give a scientific account of the history of the universe from its earliest origins to the world of the present were the first Greek prose writers. The philosophical works they authored fell into the literary category of *historia peri phusis* or “history of nature.” The subject matter of the Pre-Socratic philosophers falls broadly into the topics of cosmogony (the origin of the universe), zoogony (the origin of life), anthropogony (the origin of humankind), sociogony (the origin of society) and politogony (the origin of politics).¹ Unlike a theogony that described the earliest universe in terms of a genealogy of the gods, the scientific cosmogony found in a *peri phusis* first presented a hypothesis and supporting arguments regarding the material character of the earliest universe and the physical forces and processes that led to the collection of matter into the earth, moon, sun and stars and, on earth, into sea, land and air, along with the seasons. The *peri phusis* next considered the origins of life, including sea creatures, land animals, birds and humans. Finally, the *peri phusis* sought to explain the origins of human institutions: the nations, language, the alphabet, civilization, technology, government and laws.

Cosmogonies dealt with three basic questions: (1) What were the original constituents of the universe from which the *kosmos* arose? (2) What forces acted on these constituents to cause the *kosmos* and how did such forces arise? (3) How did the action of these forces cause the present ordered structure of the *kosmos* to come into existence?

The methods employed in these inquiries were scientific, although Greek science was based mainly on observation and inference without the added element of experimentation that is basic to modern science. One object of Greek scientific investigation was to determine the basic material constituents of the universe. A very popular early scientific model proposed that the primary constituents of matter were earth, water, air and fire (roughly corresponding to solids, liquids, gases and plasma in modern physics). Observing that these forms of matter transformed into each other through heat or by condensation, some natural philosophers proposed that only one

of these four was primary, such as water (Thales), air (Anaximenes) or fire (Heraclitus). Later on, the Atomists claimed that these four types of matter were formed by interactions of smaller primary particles that combined in various ways (roughly corresponding to the atoms and molecules of modern chemistry). All natural philosophers agreed that the primary substances that constitute all matter must have existed from the beginning of the universe and must have somehow developed into the organized *kosmos* of the present world. The natural philosophers also paid special attention to the types of forces found in the natural world and how they affected the arrangement of matter. Examples of the rearrangement of matter by natural forces included floating, the rising of hot air and sinking of cold, dense objects, the separation of matter into strata of different densities under the action of a vortex (like the modern centrifuge) or by shaking as in the winnowing of wheat. The natural philosophers sought to explain how such forces and motions could have arisen in the earliest universe and caused the primordial matter to create such present-day objects and phenomena as the sun, moon, stars and earth, the cycle of day and night, the rotation of the celestial bodies around the earth, the separation of dry land and sea and the sprouting of plants and the emergence of animal life. A number of different hypotheses or models were developed, but all shared a common methodology: inferences based on observation of the natural world and argumentation that sought to validate each step of the reconstruction by rational discourse without recourse to the traditional myths.

The section that follows will describe the scientific cosmogonies proposed by each of the major Greek natural philosophers down to the time of Plato and Aristotle and their early successors. This will prove useful for identifying which of these scientific cosmogonies may have influenced the biblical account. Such a comparative study will prove invaluable for understanding the scientific underpinnings of the cosmogony in Gen 1:1–2:3 that sought to address many of the same questions and proposed the same sorts of answers as the cosmogonies of the Presocratic natural philosophers, as discussed in detail in Chapter 5. The theological and mythological superstructure that Plato imposed on his scientific theories in *Timaeus* (Chapter 4) is also of great relevance to interpreting Gen 1:1–2:3. The objective of these inquiries into Greek scientific and scientific-theological-mythical cosmogonies aims at understanding the relationship between the cosmogony of Gen 1:1–2:3 and its scientific antecedents and competitors in the Greek world, of which the biblical authors were keenly aware.

3.2 A Survey of Greek Scientific Cosmogonies

A few words are appropriate regarding the data presented in the survey of Greek scientific cosmogonies presented below. Only rarely, as in the cases of Parmenides, Plato and Aristotle, have cosmogonies of Classical and Hellenistic Era philosophers survived intact. More often, their cosmogonies

are reconstructed from fragmenta and testimonia preserved in passages found in later authors. The most reliable of these are direct quotes attributed to philosophers, especially when the author referenced their source. Not all fragmenta meet this standard. Collections of fragmenta often disagree regarding which later quotations can reliably be attributed to a given philosopher and considerable secondary literature exists on virtually every fragment in regard to its authenticity and correct attribution, which often depends on analyzing the later context in which the quote or paraphrase is found.

Additionally, some later sources have recognized systematic problems in their discussion of earlier philosophers. Aristotle, for instance, although a goldmine of information on early natural philosophers from Thales to Plato, sometimes adapted his description of their theories to fit into his own systematic presentation rather than presenting them fully accurately on their own terms. Sources such as the *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* by Diogenes Laertius and the various Hellenistic and Roman Era doxographers also present special difficulties, especially when the tenets of a given philosopher are confounded with those of their successors within the school of thought they founded.² Where complete source texts are lacking, fragmenta and testimonia may thus sometimes reflect how later generations understood these philosophers rather than their actual historical theories, which are subject to critical debate.

The survey below thus ultimately represents a cumulative collection of traditions in Greek, Hellenistic and Roman antiquity about the scientific cosmogonies of the early natural philosophers rather than a certifiably accurate representation of their theories derived from unimpeachable sources. Indeed, their classification as philosophers itself involves a terminological anachronism: although later sources labeled them philosophers, the earliest authors of Greek scientific cosmogonies did not refer to themselves by this name. Aristotle preferred to call them *physiologoi*, or writers on the natural sciences (Flannery 2010: 83). For each of the philosophers surveyed, I have provided reference to major collections or prominent discussions of the fragmenta as a pathway for further investigation for interested readers. Otherwise, as a rule I will simply cite the ancient sources attesting to specific features in a given philosopher's cosmogony. With these caveats, and taking into account the limitations and difficulties inherent in reconstructing ancient sources, the aggregate evidence paints a reasonably clear and for the most part uncontroversial picture of the outlines of the theories of the early Greek natural philosophers regarding the origins of the *kosmos*, certainly sufficient for our limited purposes, namely to identify the key topics and themes of Greek scientific cosmogonies as a genre for our subsequent comparison of these with the biblical creation accounts.

3.2.1 Thales of Miletus

Thales (ca. 625–546 BCE),³ the first natural philosopher (Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1.3.983b), and founder of a school of philosophy in Miletus that included Anaximander and Anaximenes,⁴ is not thought to have left any writings,⁵ but his teachings were described by later authors. Thales believed that the universe began as water,⁶ from which other substances, such as air, fire, mud and earth derived. Thales' hypothesis regarding the primacy of water as *arche* or first principle⁷ was based on natural observations.⁸ Even life came from water and was nourished by water (Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1.3.983b). It is not certain whether Thales developed a cosmogony *per se* or whether his comments on the primary character of water was intended only as an explanation of the makeup of the physical universe (Gregory 2011: 27–8). Although he declared water to be the fundamental cause of all things, no account stemming from Thales presented a sequence of events by which the current structures of the *kosmos*, such as the earth, sun and stars, emerged out of the primordial waters. Thales believed that the earth floated on water, in similar fashion to a floating piece of wood or a ship (Aristotle, *On the Heavens* 2.13.294a; Seneca, *Natural Questions* 3.14), but it cannot be confirmed that this cosmological claim was made in conjunction with a cosmogony.

Thales held that the *kosmos* was impregnated with soul or life (*psyche*)⁹ and that the divine was present in everything.¹⁰ Thales claimed that motion was a manifestation of the soul.¹¹ According to late testimony, Thales claimed that the divine intelligence (i.e., *psyche*) acted on water in order to fashion the *kosmos*.¹² However, since Thales claimed a single *arche*, namely water, and not two *archai*, namely water and *psyche*, it is unwise to speculate whether Thales believed that *psyche* was a quality found in water or whether (as the later Stoics claimed) that *psyche* was a divine immaterial substance co-present with water. Thales' most important contribution to cosmogony was arguably his genuinely scientific mode of philosophical reasoning based on observation.¹³

3.2.2 Anaximander of Miletus

Anaximander (ca. 610–547 BCE),¹⁴ a student of Thales, wrote a work called *Peri Phusis* (*On Nature*),¹⁵ in which he claimed that the universe began as *apeiron*, the infinite or unlimited, an immense expanse that was uncreatable, indestructible, deathless and imperishable.¹⁶ This began to separate or differentiate into opposites, in which the hot and light (fire) separated from the cold and heavy, which in turn separated into the wet (the seas) and the dry (the earth).¹⁷ Moisture rising from the earth rarefied and became the fire that made up the celestial bodies (Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 1.75). The earth, shaped like a cylindrical drum (Pseudo-Plutarch, *Stromateis* 2; Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 1.6), was situated at the center of the

universe (Aristotle, *On the Heavens* 2.13.295b). Anaximander pictured the skies as containing three concentric rings of fire, with apertures through which the fire and light shone through. The sun occupied the outermost ring, the moon the central ring and the stars the innermost ring.¹⁸ The seas emerged through evaporation of the moisture surrounding the earth, which was responsible for the formation of winds and rainclouds.¹⁹ Life spontaneously emerged under the action of the sun's heat in the moist primordial slime, first in the oceans and later migrating to dry land.²⁰ The first generation of humans grew inside fish, where they were nourished until puberty, and after emerging and taking to the land became the first man and woman (Pseudo-Plutarch, *Stromateis* 2; cf. Naddaf 2005: 88–92). Anaximander was also interested in ethnogenesis, or the origin of the nations, and created the first world map,²¹ which was accompanied by commentaries titled *Tour of the Earth* and *Genealogies*, whose contents may have included the origins of the various nations and the migrations whereby they arrived at their present location.²² There are some indications that Anaximander also discussed the origins of language groups and alphabetic systems.²³

3.2.3 *Anaximenes of Miletus*

Anaximenes (ca. 585–525 BCE),²⁴ the last of the Milesian natural philosophers, believed that air (*aer*) was the primordial substance or *arche* of the universe²⁵ and was divine (Aetius 1.7.3; Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 1.10.26). Anaximenes believed that the earth was flat²⁶ and probably that it was supported by air.²⁷ The heavenly bodies came about through evaporation from the earth that turned into the rarefied fire of the sun and stars (Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 1.7.1–3, 5; Aetius 2.13.10).

3.2.4 *Xenophanes of Colophon*

Xenophanes (ca. 570–475 BCE)²⁸ wrote a *Peri Phuseos* (*On Nature*) in verse. He criticized the traditional stories and anthropomorphic representations of the gods,²⁹ but claimed instead that there was only a single, greatest god (*megistos theos*) (Clement, *Miscellanies* 5.109.1; Aristotle, *Meteorology* 1.5.986b; cf. Naddaf 2005: 116) who was omniscient and omnipresent and controlled the universe through the thoughts of his mind.³⁰ Like Anaximenes, Xenophanes appears to have believed that the primordial universe was alive, divine and eternal (Aetius 2.4.11). Xenophanes believed that the earth was unlimited in extent, both in breadth, width and depth, and covered with air above.³¹ He believed the sun was made of fiery clouds (Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 1.14.3; Pseudo-Plutarch, *Stromateis* 4; Aetius 2.20.3). Xenophanes held that all things came from earth and water,³² and that humans originated in a primordial mixture of earth and water (Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Mathematicians* 10.34). Xenophanes was also interested in the origin of human knowledge and the various arts.

3.2.5 Heraclitus of Ephesus

Heraclitus (ca. 544–484 BCE)³³ wrote a book called *Peri Phuseos* (*On Nature*) with three sections dealing with cosmogony, politics and theology.³⁴ Heraclitus took fire to be the fundamental constituent of the universe.³⁵ The soul was composed of fire.³⁶ Heraclitus believed that *Logos*, manifested in fire, governed the universe.³⁷ According to later Stoic traditions, Heraclitus believed that the *kosmos* originated in fire and would end in fire in an endless cycle, through a process of successive rarefaction and condensation (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 9.1.8). The sun and heavenly bodies were bowls of fire (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 9.1.9–10). The sky was a region of fire, and the water and earth below were viewed as condensations of fire.³⁸ Heraclitus claimed that life, in turn, arose out of water and earth.³⁹

3.2.6 Parmenides of Elea

Parmenides (ca. 515–450 BCE),⁴⁰ said to be a Pythagorean (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 9.3.21; Strabo, *Geography* 6.1.1), wrote a poem *On Nature* that addressed the origin of the skies, the sun, moon, earth, planets and stars.⁴¹ The first part of the poem dealt with what could be established by reason, the second part recorded popular opinion,⁴² citing the authority of “the goddess who steers the course of all things.”⁴³ Parmenides famously formulated the Eleatic principle, that nothing can be generated from non-existence, nor pass into non-existence (Parmenides, *On Nature* 95–109; Simplicius, *Physics* 117.4; 145.1; Plato, *Parmenides* 163c), an ancient expression that roughly corresponds to the modern notion of the conservation of mass and energy. Parmenides posited two primary powers in the universe: the fire and light that filled the skies, and the dense heavy night, which he associated with the earth (Parmenides, *On Nature* 114–35; Aristotle, *Physics* 1.5.188a; Simplicius, *Physics* 30.14; 180.9). Parmenides claimed that the earth was a sphere.⁴⁴ The different regions of the heavens and the various celestial bodies were composed of differing mixtures of fire and night,⁴⁵ separated by compression and rarefaction (Parmenides, *On Nature* 117–20; Aetius 2.7.1). Parmenides wrote about the origins of animals and humans, although the specifics of his theories have not been preserved.⁴⁶

3.2.7 Empedocles of Akragas

Empedocles (ca. 495–435 BCE)⁴⁷ wrote two lengthy poems, *On Nature* and *On Purifications*.⁴⁸ Like Parmenides, Empedocles asserted that there can be no generation from nothing, no *creation ex nihilo* (Aristotle, *On Generation and Corruption* 1.1.314b). Empedocles postulated four primordial substances, namely earth, air, fire and water, from which all things originated.⁴⁹ These immortal substances formed the substratum of everything that

existed. Empedocles held that the universe was a sphere (Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 7.29; Simplicius, *Physics* 1184.2) in which all the primordial ingredients were uniformly mixed. Empedocles claimed that the motion in the universe that caused these mixed substances to be separated was caused by two motion-causing forces that he called Love and Strife.⁵⁰ First air (Aetius 2.6.3; Philoponus, *Commentary on Aristotle's Physics* 261.17–18; Pseudo-Plutarch, *Stromateis* 10), then fire were separated out (Aetius 2.6.3; Pseudo-Plutarch, *Stromateis* 10) and carried upwards (Aristotle, *Physics* 2.4.196a; *idem*, *Generation and Corruption* 2.6.334a; Pseudo-Plutarch, *Stromateis* 10), where they together began to swirl in a vortex (Aristotle, *Physics* 2.1.284a; 13.295a), causing the day and night (Pseudo-Plutarch, *Stromateis* in Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel* 1.8.10). The outermost periphery of the vortex froze. The moon was a ball of frozen air, like a hailstone, and the stars were frozen fire (Aetius 2.13.2, 11; Pseudo-Plutarch, *Stromateis* 10). The composition of the sun is not clear from surviving fragments, but its light was reflected from some other source, and the moon's light was in turn a reflection of the sun (Aristotle, *Meteorology* 369b; Pseudo-Plutarch, *Stromateis* 10). The earth settled at the center of the vortex, and the rotational forces caused the water to emerge from the earth.⁵¹ Spontaneous generation from the earth began with the chance emergence of parts of plants and animals,⁵² which progressively combined into various forms until the present life forms came into being.⁵³ These possessed reproductive capabilities such that spontaneous generation was no longer required. Empedocles may have discussed the progress of human society through the discovery of technical arts (Naddaf 2005: 146).

3.2.8 *Anaxagoras of Clazomenae*

Anaxagoras (ca. 500–427 BCE),⁵⁴ nicknamed *Nous* or Mind, was one of the most famous Greek astronomers. Anaxagoras was the first to explain the eclipse.⁵⁵ Anaxagoras is said to have been the first to understand the moon as reflected light,⁵⁶ but perhaps got this from Parmenides (Simplicius, *Physics* 157.5; 179.3). He also gave explanations for various meteorological phenomena such as clouds, wind, thunder and lightning and rainbows (see Curd 2010: 206–34 on Anaxagorean science).

The cosmogony of Anaxagoras took for granted the Eleatic principle that nothing comes into existence or passes away.⁵⁷ Anaxagoras held that there had always existed two types of basic entities: the ingredients that made up the universe and *Nous* (Mind or Intelligence).⁵⁸ He did not postulate a finite number of substances underlying matter in the universe, such as fire, air or water,⁵⁹ but instead viewed the primordial *apeiron* (the “infinite” or “unlimited”) as having begun with an unlimited number of ingredients mixed together.⁶⁰ He saw the organization of the *kosmos* as a process of separation whereby similar ingredients aggregated together and were differentiated from other ingredients.⁶¹ The ingredients for air and the fiery aether⁶² existed

in the greatest quantity⁶³ and consequently formed the largest part of the *kosmos* when they separated from the rest. Anaxagoras held that the universe was infinite in extent (Simplicius, *Physics* 155.23, 30; 164.14–22).

Anaxagoras held that *Nous* was present in all sentient beings and was the primary component of the human *psyche* or soul (Simplicius, *Physics* 34.18–20, 27; 156.13; 157.17; 164.24). Philosophers thought the soul had kinetic properties and that self-induced motion was evidence of a rational, purposeful soul. For instance, humans and other animals moved from place to place due to self-directed souls inside them. Thales pointed to magnetic lodestone as evidence that even rocks possessed souls (Aristotle, *On the Soul* 1.2.405a; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 1.24). Thus, the divine *Nous* or *psyche* was commonly invoked as the source of motion in the earliest universe.

According to Anaxagoras, the primordial undifferentiated matter of the universe was set into motion by *Nous* (Mind)⁶⁴ at the beginning of the *kosmos*.⁶⁵ The universe began rotating in a vortex (Simplicius, *Physics* 35.15; 156.13; 164.24), causing the heavier cold dark substances to collect at the center as the earth and the lighter fiery substances such as air and *aether* to be pushed to the periphery as the sky.⁶⁶ The “force and speed” (Simplicius, *Physics* 35.15) of the vortex’s rotation was such that large rocks from the earth were hurled into the sky, where they ignited in the fiery sky to become the sun, stars, moon and planets.⁶⁷ The earth was flat, with the stars rotating around it.⁶⁸ The sun’s heat caused the sea to form and collect and for the dry land to emerge.⁶⁹ Plants, animals and humans possessing souls⁷⁰ were initially spontaneously generated from seeds (*panspermia*) (Aristotle, *On Generation and Corruption* 1.1.314a–b, discussed at Curd 2010: 149–52) present throughout the universe⁷¹ that germinated in moist, hot earth (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 2.9; Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 1.8.12); later animals reproduced by sex.⁷² The superior portion of *nous* that humans possessed allowed them to rule the animals and invent the technical arts by which civilization developed (Simplicius, *Physics* 35.15; cf. Curd 2010: 44–5; Naddaf 2005: 150). The impiety laws (the Decree of Diopieithes) in 438/437 BCE aimed at Anaxagoras made it illegal to teach astronomy,⁷³ and Anaxagoras was charged and convicted of atheism in 437/436 BCE, but escaped execution by fleeing into exile (Mansfeld 1979, 1980; Curd 2010: 131).

3.2.9 Archelaus of Athens

Archelaus (fl. 450 BCE),⁷⁴ a student of Anaxagoras,⁷⁵ differed from his teacher mainly in believing that *nous* was not distinct from other forms of matter, but mixed together with them. Additionally, Archelaus attributed the origin of motion in the universe, not to *nous*, but to the natural separation of hot and cold (Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 1.9.1–3). Archelaus also abandoned the notion of seeds present everywhere, instead

favoring spontaneous generation from the moist earth under the action of heat, nourished by mud (Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 1.9.4–5), and later by normal reproduction (Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 1.9.5). Although all animals partook of *nous*, man's superior intellect enabled him to create politics, laws, technology and cities (Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 1.9.6).

3.2.10 *Diogenes of Apollonia*

Diogenes (fl. 440–423 BCE),⁷⁶ a follower of Anaximenes of Miletus, wrote a book *On Nature* among other works (Simplicius, *Physics* 25.1; 151.20). Diogenes claimed that the universe was composed of air (Simplicius, *Physics* 25.1; 151.20; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 9.9.57), which took other forms through rarefaction or condensation that took place due to rotation (Simplicius, *Physics* 25.1; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 9.9.57). Air, possessing *nous*, was said to be both intelligent and divine⁷⁷ and the essence of life for humans and other creatures (Simplicius, *Physics* 152.18, 22). Diogenes believed in multiple *kosmoi* or universes, each formed through condensation (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 9.9.57; Pseudo-Plutarch, *Stromateis* 12). He believed the earth was a sphere (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 9.9.57). The earth formed due to density and cold, while the lighter, hot elements rose and formed the sun (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 9.9.57) and other fiery celestial bodies (Aetius 2.13.5, 9). He believed that *nous* played an important role in the formation of the universe.⁷⁸

3.2.11 *Leucippus of Miletus and Democritus of Abdera*

Democritus (ca. 460–420 BCE), the student of Leucippus (fl. 440 BCE),⁷⁹ developed the theory of atomism, in which the substratum of matter was postulated to consist of atoms of different sizes, shapes and weights that combined by different arrangements into the substances found in the universe, including water, air, earth and fire.⁸⁰ By chance or random motion,⁸¹ a vortex eventually developed, in which the heavier atoms collected at the center and the lighter atoms in the periphery, separated by a spherical membrane.⁸² The atomic shapes aggregated according to the principle of like-to-like and became intertwined to form larger bodies.⁸³ The matter at the center formed into the earth, while the outer matter, dried and ignited by friction, formed the stars and celestial bodies (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 9.6.32–33; Aetius 2.7.2). On earth, humans and other animals were spontaneously generated from water and earth (Naddaf 2005: 156). Animals of the same kind grouped together, like with like.⁸⁴ According to Democritus, humans first lived like the animals, but banded together for

protection from wild animals and developed speech, learned to store food, make clothes, build houses and utilize fire.

3.2.12 Socrates of Athens

Socrates (ca. 469–399 BCE)⁸⁵ was said to have studied under Anaximenes, the student of Anaxagoras.⁸⁶ Socrates left no writings, and his views on philosophy and cosmogony are known primarily through the writings of Xenophon and Plato. Since Plato's Socrates is to a large extent a literary vehicle for expressing the ideas of Plato himself, greater historical uncertainty attaches to the representation of Socrates' teachings in Plato's writings. According to Xenophon, Socrates did not develop his own cosmogony, since he considered theories about the physical origins of the universe such as that of Anaxagoras to detract from the role of the divine (Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 4.7.6–7). According to Plato, Socrates showed some initial enthusiasm for the theory of Anaxagoras that *Nous* (Mind) was the force that moved and organized the material universe, but was disappointed that after setting the universe into motion, *Nous* seemingly had no further role, since mechanical or physical forces explained the subsequent structure of the earth and heavens (Plato, *Phaedo* 97b–98a). Socrates therefore abandoned the study of cosmogony (Plato, *Phaedo* 98a–b).

3.2.13 Plato of Athens

Plato (429–347 BCE)⁸⁷ was unique among Greek philosophers for developing a cosmogony that synthesized science, theology and mythology into a narrative that chronicled the origin of the *kosmos*, the gods, mortal life and the first political institutions of the mythological past. His discussion of cosmogony and politogony was the main topic of two dialogues named *Timaeus* and *Critias*, but his thoughts on God, the origins of the universe and rise of human society are also found scattered in various other Platonic texts.

Plato's scientific content included the origin of the elements (*Timaeus* 31b, 32b–c, 48b–c, 49b–d, 53c–56c, 69b–c); the origins of orderly motion (*Timaeus* 30a, 34a, 36c–d, 52e–53c, 57d–e); the migration of the elements into the separate regions of earth, ocean, air and heavens (*Timaeus* 52e–53b); the orbits of the stars and planets (*Timaeus* 36d, 38d–39e); the character of physical phenomena such as heat and cold, solid, liquid, vapor and fire (*Timaeus* 56d–57c, 58c–64a); of sensations such as sight, taste and smell, pleasure and pain (*Timaeus* 43a–d, 45b–46c, 47a–c, 64d–68e); the anatomy of the human body and its various functions (*Timaeus* 44d–45b, 69e–71d, 72b–77a, 77c–81e); the nature of health, disease and death (*Timaeus* 81c–88e); and sexual reproduction (*Timaeus* 90e–91d).

Scientific mechanical processes dominated the earliest, purely material universe. The universe began in chaos, subject only to irrational chance that

brought about a restless, discordant and intrinsically disordered motion that allowed no formation of recognizable substances of any sort (Plato, *Timaeus* 30a; 53a, 69c; cf. *idem*, *Statesman* 273e; *idem*, *Philebus* 64e). The random physical motion of the material world created a shaking, winnowing effect (Plato, *Timaeus* 52e–53a) that allowed the precursors of fire, water, earth and air to collect together into different regions in the *kosmos* by the principle of like-to-like.⁸⁸ The disorder of the purely physical world precluded the emergence of truly orderly phenomena, including time itself, before the arrival of the presence of God (*Timaeus* 53a–b).

Plato's cosmogony was also guided throughout by theological considerations. According to Plato's view, the purely physical mechanical processes invoked by earlier philosophers could result only in chaos, whereas order, harmony and beauty signified the presence of the rational and the divine. Like his teacher Socrates, Plato criticized the theories of the natural philosophers—especially Anaxagoras—for attributing the origins of the universe to nature (*phusis*) and chance (*tyche*), excluding the role of divine intelligence, intentionality and craftsmanship in the fashioning of the *kosmos* (Plato, *Laws* 10.889b). In the theory of Anaxagoras, *Nous* or divine intelligence was the source of movement in the primordial universe, which took the form of a swirling vortex that ejected the sun, moon and other celestial bodies into the sky and sent the heavens spinning (Simplicius, *Physics* 156.13; 164.24; cf. Naddaf 2005: 148), but *Nous* played no role thereafter. In Plato's cosmogony, divine intelligence was manifest throughout every stage of the creation of the *kosmos*. Through careful philosophical reasoning, Plato deduced that the present universe could only have come into existence as a result of careful planning and craftsmanship by an eternal, perfect divine being older than the sensible universe itself, a god that embodied *Nous* or intelligence.

Plato called this cosmic god the Demiurge or Craftsman. (See Menn 1995 and Hackforth 1936 for *Nous* as *Demiourgos*, a divine entity prior to and distinct from *psyche*, in Plato's *Philebus*, *Timaeus* and *Laws*.) The Demiurge created the *kosmos* in his own image and ordering it according to a carefully thought-out plan. As an artist, the Demiurge fashioned the *kosmos* out of already existing raw materials, namely the irrational, disordered material universe described earlier, subject to the chaotic random motion of physics and chance (Plato, *Timaeus* 30a, 48a–69a). The Demiurge first introduced order into the *kosmos* at the most elementary level, allowing the full emergence of fire, water, earth and air (*Timaeus* 53a, 69c). The Demiurge combined the primary substances of fire, water, air and earth in proper proportion to devise “a universal seed-stuff for every mortal kind” and invested this *panspermia* with *psyche* or soul (*Timaeus* 73a–c). The ensouled universe took the form of a sphere, the most perfect geometric shape (*Timaeus* 33b). The Demiurge fashioned the celestial bodies with fiery bodies and divine souls, placed the stars in the rotating heavens, established the orbits of the sun, moon and planets and sent them on their orderly journeys

across the skies (*Timaeus* 38d; cf. Menn 1995). According to Plato's theological reasoning, the eternal Demiurge conferred on everything he created similar qualities of divinity (*Timaeus* 41c–d, 69c), immortality (*Timaeus* 32c, 33a, 37a,d, 41a–d, 69c) and goodness (*Timaeus* 29a,e, 30a–e, 37a, 46c–d, 53b, 68e). Having completed the creation of the perfect Heavens and Earth, and having generated the immortal gods, his offspring, the Demiurge retired from his artistic labors, leaving the lesser tasks of creating mortal life and ruling the earth to his sons and daughters (*Timaeus* 41b–d, 42d–e, 69c, 71d–e).

With the creation of mortal life in second stage of creation, Plato introduces an explicit element of mythology into his cosmogony. The mythic and story elements found here, paradoxically, were a product of Plato's careful theological and philosophical reasoning. Plato found it inconceivable that mortal life could have been fashioned by the eternal cosmic god of Creation (*Timaeus* 41b–c). Nor could that supremely good deity have created humans, with their capacity for both goodness and wickedness (*Timaeus* 30a, 42a–d, 71d–e; cf. 69d–e). By the Demiurge delegating the task of created mortal life to his sons and daughters, the ordinary Greek gods of myth, Plato was thus able to exonerate the supreme eternal Creator from responsibility for mortality and wickedness in a neat philosophical solution to the problem of theodicy.

The Demiurge or Craftsman was already cast as a mythic character possessing conscious purpose, who engaged in creative action (*Timaeus* 28a, 29a,c, 36a, 37c, 38c), rejoiced over his creation (*Timaeus* 37c–d), and entered into dialogue with his sons and daughters (*Timaeus* 41a–42d). The cosmic creator was cast as the father of the traditional anthropomorphic Greek gods, including Ouranos and Ge, Heaven and Earth, who were not only the physical creations of the Demiurge, but also his offspring (*Timaeus* 40a,c,e, 41a, 92c). Belief in the traditional polytheistic gods was accommodated and encouraged in Plato's writings, with the philosophical stipulation that the gods as such were ethical creatures only capable of goodness, like their Father and Maker, the eternal cosmic god of creation. In *Timaeus*, the lesser gods received instructions from the Demiurge regarding the creation of mortal life forms (*Timaeus* 41c–d). The detailed anatomical description of the fashioning of humans (*Timaeus* 69e–71d, 72b–77a, 77c–81e) and placing within them a divine soul was presented as a form of intelligent design (*Timaeus* 43a–b, 69c, 72d, 73c, 90a). The creation of the other plant and animal forms were also attributed to the younger gods (*Timaeus* 41c–d, 77a–c, 80e, 91d–92b), who acted as a host of lesser terrestrial *demiourgoi* (*Timaeus* 41c, 42e–43a, 69c) carrying out the will of the one cosmic Demiurge (*Timaeus* 41a–c, 42e, 69c). In Plato's *Critias*, the mythical narrative continued with an account of the assignment of the lesser gods to their respective nations (*Critias* 109b–c, 113b), their establishing laws and ruling over the humans they created (*Critias* 109b–d), the marriage of Poseidon, god of Atlantis, to a beautiful woman in his realm (*Critias* 113c–d), the line

of semi-divine rulers who were the offspring of this union (*Critias* 113e–114d), their degeneration over time as the divine element diminished through intermarriages with humans (*Critias* 120d–121b), their war with the Mediterranean lands, led by the heroic Athenians, and the divine judgment that ended that world in earthquake and flood, causing Atlantis to sink beneath the sea (*Critias* 108e; cf. *Timaeus* 24e–25d).

Plato was unique among Greek philosophers in integrating a scientific and theological account of the creation of the *kosmos* with a mythical account of the earliest gods and humans. He also gave thought to the natural development of social and political institutions, a process which according to Plato recurred several times in Greek experience, owing to interruptions by periodic cataclysms such as the floods of Ogygus and Deucalion,⁸⁹ but which occurred only once in Egypt, which had an unbroken history that stretched at least 9,000 years before Plato's time (*Timaeus* 21e–22a, 22e–23a, 23e, 27b).

3.2.14 Aristotle of Stagira

Aristotle (ca. 384–322 BCE)⁹⁰ wrote extensively about the origins of the universe in *Metaphysics*, *On Physics*, *On Meteorology*, *On the Heavens*, *On the Generation and Corruption* and other texts. Aristotle argued that what is indestructible cannot have been generated at some beginning point in time (Aristotle, *On the Heavens* 1.12.281a–b; 283a). He also denied that there could be an origin of motion or of time (Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 12.6.1071b; *idem*, *Physics* 8.1.251b, cf. Gregory 2011: 164–5). His theories therefore argued for the eternity of the universe and of life and thus rejected the need to develop cosmogonies or zoogonies (Aristotle, *On the Heavens* 2.2.283b).

Besides the usual four elements earth, water, air and fire, Aristotle postulated the existence of a divine fifth element (thought to be aether, although unnamed by Aristotle) that existed in the uppermost starry heavens and had the property of rotating in a perfect circular motion (Aristotle, *On the Heavens* 1.2.269a–b; cf. Hahm 1982).

3.2.15 Philippus of Opus

Philippus (fl. ca. 360–340 BCE)⁹¹ was a student during Plato's later years and undertook to edit and publish Plato's *Laws*. Philippus composed an appendix to Plato's *Laws* called the *Epinomis* that dealt with the astronomical training and research appropriate to the philosophical ruling class in Plato's theoretical ideal *polis*. In addition to the usual four Platonic elements of earth, water, air and fire, Philippus (like his contemporary Aristotle) identified a fifth element, aether, the rarest form of air, which existed in its own zone in the heavens (Philippus of Opus, *Epinomis* 981b–e; 984b–c; cf. Dillon 2003: 193–4). Perhaps drawing on Plato's latest thinking, Philippus presented the World Soul, residing in the outer circle of the heavens (*ouranos*),

as the supreme god and intelligence who was the original active principle endowed with self-motion that was the cause of all other things (Philippus of Opus, *Epinomis* 977a–b; cf. Dillon 2003: 183–94).

3.2.16 Epicurus of Samos

Epicurus (ca. 342–270 BCE),⁹² the founder of the Epicureans, developed a cosmogony that was explicitly anti-teleological, rejecting any divine providential role in the origin of the *kosmos* (as propounded by Plato), instead attributing everything to pure necessity and chance, that is, mechanical physical processes (Dillon 2003: 176–80). His views on atomism largely followed those of Leucippus and Democritus, with a few differences (Dillon 2003: 173–5). Epicurus postulated an infinite number of *kosmoi*, randomly seeded in time and space. Like Empedocles, Epicurus put forward a proto-evolutionary theory in which life developed randomly, with many extinctions of failed forms unable to find food or reproduce (Dillon 2003: 179–81).

3.2.17 Polemo of Athens

Polemo (fl. 314–276 BCE),⁹³ the third successor of Plato, headed the Academy for almost forty years. Like Philippus of Opus, Polemo identified the supreme deity with the World Soul that resided primarily among the stars in the outer circle of the heavens, but pervaded the universe (Dillon 2003: 166–8) and was the dynamic principle that acted on passive matter to form the *kosmos* (Dillon 2003: 168–72).

3.2.18 Zeno of Citium

Zeno (ca. 332–262 BCE),⁹⁴ who studied under Polemo (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.2, 20, 25), was founder of the philosophical school of Stoicism. Fully demythologizing Plato's *Timaeus*, and drawing on some of the ideas and terminology of Heraclitus, Zeno held that all forms of matter derived from fire (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.136, 142; Gregory 2011: 187–9), which he viewed as intelligent, purposeful and divine.⁹⁵ The Stoic god, as an intelligent fire, thus constituted a particular form of energized matter (Aetius 1.7.33; Origen, *Against Celsus* 4.14), fire with an indwelling intelligent divine power (Long and Sedley 1987: 1.278). This creative fire, as *logos*, generated the present world (see Witt 1931 and primary sources cited there). The universe was said to undergo a periodic conflagration, during which the *kosmos* was regenerated (Hahn 1977: 33, 185–99; Long and Sedley 1987: 1.279; Gregory 2011: 193–5, 197–8).

Later cosmogonies such as those of the Middle Platonists, Neoplatonists and the Church fathers will not be discussed here.

3.3 Plato's *Timaeus*, *Critias* and *Genesis*

From the above survey of natural philosophy down to the time of Aristotle, it is readily seen that Greek scientific and scientific-theological-mythical cosmogonies followed the same basic outline. Greek cosmogonies sought to give a complete explanation of the origin and development of the physical universe. All of them had the universe begin in an initial state of disorganized material chaos (with the exception of Aristotle's steady-state theory, which saw the present *kosmos* as having existed through all time). Greek cosmogonies all sought to identify the material cause or *arche* of the present *kosmos*, which was variously pictured as: water (Thales); air (Anaximenes); fire (Heraclitus and Zeno); earth, water, air and fire (Empedocles and Plato); the *apeiron* or infinite (Anaximander, Anaxagoras); all substances (Anaxagoras); or atoms (Leucippus and Democritus). Greek cosmogonies all sought to identify the source of the motion that acted on the primordial chaos to separate, stratify and organize the original matter into the present *kosmos*. The kinetic mechanism for the formation of the early universe was a common scientific theme in Greek cosmogonies. All of them addressed the question of an original divine intelligence and the extent of its involvement as initiator of motion in the primordial chaos and as the active steering principle that guided the organization of the *kosmos*. Greek cosmogonies all sought to give a geometrical description of the *kosmos* and how geometry and motion arranged the visible elements within it. All sought to explain how the basic structures of the present *kosmos* came to be, such as the earth, sky, the celestial bodies, dry land and seas. All sought to explain how life originated and how some creatures were endowed with intelligence. Some natural philosophers went on to explain the origins of basic features of human society such as language, technology, social groupings, cities and laws. Both scientific and scientific-theological-mythical cosmogonies followed this same basic outline, a trope whose shape was determined by the scientific questions that all Greek science and natural philosophy sought to answer.

A key difference between the scientific and scientific-theological-mythical cosmogonies lay in the areas of methodology and epistemology. In purely scientific cosmogonies, theories were grounded in observations of the natural world. Claims to likelihood or actual knowledge were based on argumentation from such observations. Plato's scientific-theological-mythical cosmogony took a different approach to investigation and argumentation. Theological axioms regarding the active, purposeful role of a benevolent creator who fashioned the world supplemented scientific theory, combined with philosophical arguments based on such axioms. Such theological reasoning was considered equal or superior to scientific arguments based on observation. Whereas Greek science required rational argumentation for every proposed stage of the origin and development of the *kosmos*, Plato substituted it with theological and philosophical argumentation. Both Greek

natural science and Platonic philosophy thus addressed the same basic issues regarding cosmogony, but with differing theories of knowledge that affected their respective reconstruction and argumentation regarding the origins of the *kosmos*. Another prominent difference was Plato's use of myth, accommodating Greek stories about the gods and telling tales of primordial times. At several points in *Timaeus*, Plato acknowledges that his reconstruction of the origins of the *kosmos* is a "likely myth" (*Timaeus* 29c–d, 30b–c, 44d, 48d–e, 72d, 90e), that is, a plausible tale informed by scientific and theological reasoning. His story of Atlantis is of course pure myth, although he claimed it was grounded in fact (*Timaeus* 20d, 24e, 25e–26e, 27b).

Like Plato's cosmogony in *Timaeus*, the creation account in Genesis 1 and its sequel in Genesis 2–3 combine elements of science, theology and myth.

It is not difficult to see that the biblical cosmogony at Gen 1:1–2:3 was concerned with the same basic set of questions addressed by both Greek scientific cosmogonies and Plato's scientific-theological-mythical cosmogony: the material cause or *arche* of the universe, the geometric arrangement of the universe, the physical and kinetic processes by which the visible features of the present cosmos emerged from the primordial chaos, the origins of animal and human life and the manner and degree in which the process of organizing the *kosmos* was guided by a divine intelligence. According to William Brown (1993: 223), the rational content of Genesis 1 was unlike Ancient Near Eastern cosmological myths, but most closely resembled *Timaeus*. The biblical cosmogony's central preoccupation with the origins of the physical phenomena of the world shows familiarity with the Greek genre of scientific cosmogony, as does the parsimonious literary style and absence of dramatic story elements usual in mythical cosmogonies. The scientific elements in Gen 1:1–2:3 are extensively discussed in Chapter 5. The relatively modest scientific content found in Gen 2:4–25 is discussed in Chapter 6.

At the same time, there are strong theological overtones in Gen 1:1–2:3 in which God actively guided the creation of the present universe, a narrative layer that shows tremendous affinity with Platonic philosophical theories of divine purpose in the shaping of the universe. The theological content of Gen 1:1–2:3 is extensively discussed in Chapter 4.

In addition, elements of myth or story are found throughout the primordial history of Genesis 1–11. Gen 1:1–2:3 contains a relatively subdued storyline, with modest mythical elements already cataloged in Chapter 2: the Creator's proclamations of intention, which are theological expressions of divine teleology expressed in a mythic monologue seemingly addressed to the world of Creation; creation by craftsmanship, closely analogous to the actions of the Demiurge in Plato's *Timaeus*; creation by blessing; statements of teleological approval ("and God saw that it was good"), also mirrored in *Timaeus*; a dialogue among the gods at Gen 1:26, paralleled by the Demiurge's instructions to his assembled divine offspring (*Timaeus* 41a–d);

and God's instructions to the humans he created, paralleled by the instructions the lesser gods would give to the humans they would create and rule (*Timaeus* 41e–42b). The creation of mortal life by the terrestrial god Yahweh Elohim in Genesis 3, discussed in Chapter 6, closely corresponds to the creation of mortal life by the lesser gods in *Timaeus* intended to exonerate the cosmic Demiurge from responsibility for human mortality and potential wickedness. And the account of the primordial world and its descent into wickedness, ending in the biblical flood, has important parallels with the account of Plato's Atlantis in *Timaeus* and *Critias*, as discussed in Chapter 7. In Genesis 1–11, as in Plato's writings, mythical content always expresses strong theological and ethical themes.

The scientific, theological and mythical content of Genesis 1–11 all point to Plato's *Timaeus* and *Critias* as important sources. Before our detailed analysis and comparison of these texts in Chapters 4–7, a short excursus will situate Plato's writings within the mode and rationale of the ancient Greek education system and academia.

3.4 Rhetorical Analysis

One may classify Genesis 1–3 as a hybrid scientific-theological-mythical cosmogony, with its scientific content concentrated in the account of the creation of the *kosmos* in Gen 1:1–2:3, and mythical content more prominent in the account of the creation of mortal life and humanity in the sequel beginning with Gen 2:4. As such, Genesis 1–3 presents subject matter with close parallels to the scientific-theological-mythical cosmogony in *Timaeus*, while the account of mythical times in Genesis 4–11 contains important parallels with Plato's sequel account in *Critias*. But whereas both Genesis 4–11 and *Critias* are simple narratives of similar literary genre, *Timaeus* contains a much higher level of scientific and philosophical reasoning throughout that distinguishes it from the storybook format of Genesis 1–3. This contrast is most dramatic in Genesis 1, in which the scientific and theological content has great affinities with Plato's writings on cosmogony in *Timaeus*, but its unencumbered narrative format contrasts sharply with the extensively reasoned scientific and philosophical presentation in *Timaeus*. Why the authors of Genesis chose to present their theories on cosmogony in a story format and how this fits in with the literary and rhetorical strategies laid out in Plato's writings requires an investigation that goes beyond the scientific content of the biblical and Greek cosmogonies to explore their respective modes of discourse on this subject matter.

By means of rhetorical criticism, this section analyzes the following interactional elements: the author or speaker and the capacity in which they spoke; the content of their presentation, whether prose discourse, poetry, comedy, theater, song or any other form of directed communication; the audience to which the presentation was directed; the intended effect on the audience, which coincides with the author's motivation for presenting

material, whether entertainment, education or persuasion; and the means utilized to achieve the intended effect on the audience.

There existed seven distinct modes of Greek discourse on cosmogony, two modes originated by natural philosophers before Plato and five modes first found in Plato's writings. Each had a distinct audience, mode of expression, intended reception and characteristic tools of persuasion. A reception analysis of these seven modes of discourse will help situate the cosmogony of Genesis 1 within its Greek context.

3.4.1 *Scientific Discourse*

By far the most common mode of discourse on cosmogony in the classical Greek world was the scientific discourse. In written form such a discourse was most commonly titled *Peri Phusis* ("On Nature") or something similar. The authors of such discourses were natural philosophers, whom Aristotle called *physiologoi*. Several of these natural philosophers taught their theories on physics and nature at universities, most notably the school of Miletus founded by Thales, where Anaximander and Anaximenes also taught, and the Lyceum of Aristotle. Some of these presentations were oral, such as the earliest theories on cosmogony taught by Thales, but they were often recorded in written form. These discourses were primarily aimed at other intellectual elites engaged in the pursuit of science, and secondarily at students in universities. There may have been some lectures open to the public, and with the growth of the book-selling industry, any wealthy interested individual might have gained access to the scientific discourses of the natural philosophers, although this was not their intended audience. Ignoring this wider, secondary reception of the theories of natural science by the broader reading public, discourses on cosmogony were aimed at a rational audience of university colleagues and students who comprised the contemporary scientific community. The specific content of the cosmogonies included implicit or explicit discussions of epistemology and scientific methodology, arguments about the materials and processes at work in the beginnings of the *kosmos*, which extrapolated from observations of natural phenomena resulted in reconstructions of how the natural order of their present day had come into being. One objective of these discourses by the natural philosophers was to educate their students on the proper methods and arguments of science. Another objective was to persuade their colleagues that their methods and arguments, and consequently their model of cosmogony, was correct, or at least reasonable.

Science at a university level was a democratic social enterprise in pursuit of knowledge about the natural world. Debate among competing sets of arguments was anticipated in the democratic environment of the Greek world, where an open discussion of ideas was the norm, albeit with some exceptions. The method used by natural philosophers to convince their contemporaries and educate their students about their scientific theories was

the use of rational arguments grounded in the observation of natural processes. The set of proper arguments—*orthos logoi*⁹⁶—by each natural philosopher was presented and entered in the scientific community’s debate. The presentation of these scientific *orthos logoi* in book form by the natural philosophers was also helpful in educating university students and perpetuating the scientific enterprise to future generations.

The dissemination of scientific theories in book form had unforeseen consequences when these ideas received a wider audience. Several natural philosophers were charged with atheism in Athens, where their rejection of the received myths about the gods was seen, rightly or wrongly, as a rejection of traditional popular civic gods of the Greeks. Natural philosophers charged with atheism included Anaxagoras, Socrates and Aristotle, among others. The political friendships of Anaxagoras and Socrates undoubtedly played into these accusations of atheism. Anaxagoras and Aristotle chose to flee Athens, but Socrates chose to remain, faced trial, was condemned to death and died by drinking hemlock. These examples illustrate the potential discrepancy between intended and actual reception.

3.4.2 *Revealed Myth*

The poem *On Nature* by the natural philosopher Parmenides of Elea articulated two distinct modes of discourse on cosmogony. The first approach, which Parmenides called the *Way of Truth*, dealt with what could be established by reason, and corresponded with the normal mode of scientific discourse just discussed above. The second approach, which Parmenides called the *Way of Opinion*, presented cosmogony in the form of a myth disseminated under divine authority in the person of the goddess Justice or Necessity. While both approaches were described and used by the same author, namely Parmenides, the *Way of Opinion* appears to have addressed a different audience: not fellow-philosophers or university students with well-developed and trained critical faculties capable of achieving true knowledge through rational arguments, but the less intellectually sophisticated general public, who were more likely to be convinced by appealing to the gods. In this mode of discourse, the aim was not to achieve knowledge but to induce belief in the theories being presented. Here Parmenides appears to have anticipated Plato, who advocated implanting beliefs in the citizenry as a necessary precursor to achieving true knowledge in a select few (see below). It appears that Parmenides (like Plato) saw a social utility in presenting theories of cosmogony to the general public under divine authority, since he named the appropriate goddess as Necessity or Justice, “who steers the course of all things,” suggesting that a mythical account on cosmogony that recognized a divine steering principle was needed to ensure a pious and just citizenry. It appears that the populace was induced to believe not only that this account of the origins of the universe was divine, but also had the

endorsement of the scientific educated elites. The poetic form of the discourse may have been intended to enhance its appeal to the masses.

3.4.3 Myth as Discourse (Enchantment)

Plato's writings, culminating in Plato's *Laws*, developed a theory of ideal government in which the educated elites—the philosophers—would preside over all aspects of the education and moral development of the citizenry through state-supervised child-rearing, formal education and the dissemination of laws. Myth or story was an essential component of education at all three phases of development. The use of myth instilled beliefs by the parental, divine or didactic authority of those telling the myth, and by the pleasurable, enchanting and entertaining content of the story itself. Myth was the primary vehicle of education for infants and youths who had not yet developed a rational faculty. Plato recognized the importance of delightful, enchanting myths and songs used by mothers and nursemaids in the nurturing of infants. A key element of Plato's system of government was the strict censorship of literature, right down to children's songs and nursery rhymes, so that nothing negative about the gods would ever enter a child's consciousness, especially with the approval of the parents. Plato therefore asserted that in an ideal government all myths must meet the approval of the censors (*Republic* 2.377b–c, 383c; cf. 3.401b) or “legislators of the arts” (*Laws* 7.802b–c, 811b–d), who would draw up a list of approved myths for mothers and other caregivers of infants (*Republic* 2.377b–c, 383c; cf. Brisson 1998: 56–7). Although the traditional Greek theogonies, such as that composed by Hesiod, were false on a factual level (*Republic* 3.414b–c; *Laws* 2.663b–d; 3.664a; 10.886c–d) and definitely required extensive censorship (*Republic* 2.376d–398b; 10.595a–608b; *Laws* 9.858e), they were still useful and could be permitted for mothers to teach their children, since they imparted a socially desirable belief in the gods (*Laws* 10.886c–d, 887d). Censorship of Hesiod's *Theogony* and other ancient myths focused on removing all negative portrayals of the gods (*Republic* 2.377e–3.398b; *Laws* 10.886c–d). The goodness of the gods in the censored myths of ancient times made belief in the gods a consistent vehicle for instilling simple ethical norms in even the youngest children.

Plato did not detail what aspects of cosmogony might be appropriate for infants, but it is clear he thought it important to believe that a god or gods fashioned the *kosmos*, life and everything on the earth. Myths that incorporated such a picture of the present universe as the result of divine providence by benevolent deities would have met Plato's theological requirements. Only such myths would have passed scrutiny by the legislators of the arts for incorporation into the approved national literature for students in schools and for public performances at festivals attended by the citizenry of the *polis*. In this mode of discourse on cosmogony (and theogony) by means of myth, the ruling class philosophers and the

legislators of the arts who censored and approved all myths and literature must be considered the authors, although the actual presentation of myths, in either oral or written form, was by mothers, teachers, or singers and performers and speakers at festivals, who acted as the agents of the ruling class. The aim and intended reception of discourse by myth was to induce belief, and thereby implement societal conformity to theological and ethical norms. Myth, whether in the form of song, story or theatrical performance, was chosen as the medium for inducing belief, due to the pleasant, entertaining, enchanting character of the myth and its accessibility across the whole spectrum of citizenry, from infant to senior citizen. Myth was thus the chosen rhetorical tool to condition the emotions and convey theological and ethical truths on a pre-rational level to intellectually unsophisticated audiences.

In Genesis 1, the biblical authors presented their theories on cosmogony in the form of an authoritative story or myth. This was not a pure mythical cosmogony like those current before the advent of Greek science, but scientifically and philosophically informed myth, a simple narrative with neither rhetorical appeals nor scientific and philosophical argumentation compatible with contemporary Greek theories on cosmogony in the early Hellenistic Era. A story format was highly suitable for instilling beliefs about God's fashioning of the universe for audiences of all ages and was easily understood by school children and even the youngest children, important target audiences under Plato's system of education. The Second Creation Account—technically, a zoogony and anthropogony rather than a cosmogony—relied even more heavily on storytelling and myth. There is even a hint of a genealogical arrangement of the traditional gods as found in Hesiod's and Plato's writings. Gen 2:4, which introduced the Second Creation Account, references the genre of theogony in its title, "The generations [תולדות] of the heavens and earth": Heaven (Ouranos) and Earth (Ge) also appeared as the earliest gods in the theogonies of both Hesiod (*Theogony* 116–27, after Chaos) and Plato (*Timaeus* 40e), as discussed in Chapter 6 §6.4.

3.4.4 Education (Belief)

In addition to the use of myth, Plato allowed for the rudiments of astronomy and cosmogony to be presented in a formal educational setting. In Plato's *Laws*, there was to be universal mandatory education by teachers approved by the Minister of Education, the most important magistrate in the polis (*Laws* 6.765d–766b; 7.811d; 12.951e). Both the curriculum and texts used in the state-run schools were under the control of the *nomophylakes* or Guardians of the Laws (*Laws* 7.799b, 801c–802b, 809a–b, 811b–e). Astronomy was among the list of approved topics, but only insofar as it promoted belief that the visible celestial bodies were divine (*Laws* 7.821b–822c; 10.886a,d). According to Plato, the sun, moon and stars were divine beings with souls, as demonstrated by their purposeful, orderly

motion in circles across the sky. They were, in fact, visible gods (*Laws* 7.821b–822c; 10.886d); the most important cult in Plato’s proposed polis was that of Helios, the sun (*Laws* 12.945e, 946b–c, 947a).

Plato’s proposed classroom instruction in astronomy was accordingly limited in two important aspects. First, the atheistic scientific theories of the natural philosophers such as Anaxagoras and others were excluded from the classroom, since their theories claimed that the celestial bodies were ordinary material objects comprised of rock or fire, instead of gods, and explained their origins and their motion across the sky in terms of physical processes (*Laws* 10.886a,d–e, 889a–c; cf. 7.819a, 821a) rather than understanding them as divine beings (*Laws* 7.821a–c; 10.886d–e, 887e) who consciously traveled in their celestial circuits under the impulse of the soul they each possessed (*Laws* 10.893b–899b), a soul that Plato understood as the source of all self-initiated motion (*Laws* 10.895b–896b). Plato thus firmly rejected instruction on cosmogony or astronomy that allowed for the possibility of purely natural or physical explanations for astronomical phenomena, asserting that it was better for students to receive no instruction in astronomy at all than to be taught the atheistic theories of the natural philosophers (*Laws* 10.886a,d; cf. 7.821c). In a similar vein, Plato apparently excluded from the curriculum any discussion of the problematic “wandering stars,” that is, the five known planets, whose seemingly erratic paths in the sky differed observationally from the orderly circular motion of the ordinary stars. Plato held that perfect, rational motion under the influence of an ethical soul always took the form of a circle: the supreme being and the universe that was created in its image thus took the form of a sphere, the only body that could move and yet remain in the same place (*Laws* 10.893b–895b; *Timaeus* 34a, 36e). Random, non-circular motion, conversely, was an expression of chaos and of a disordered, evil soul (*Timaeus* 30a, 42a–b, 43a–44a, 53a–b, 69b–c; cf. 37b–c; Vlastos 1939). Plato believed that the planets must actually travel in circles, despite this hypothesis’s aberration from empirical observation, and that the proper starting point of astronomy was not scientific observation (*Republic* 7.527d–e, 529a–c, 530a–c), but rather philosophical thought, which demanded that all divine beings, including the planets, must travel in perfect circles, though perhaps in a path not yet fully understood.⁹⁷ Plato thus subordinated astronomy to theology and philosophy.

In a classroom context, astronomy was to be a vehicle for theological indoctrination in a precursor to what is now commonly called creation science. In terms of reception analysis, the authors of this mode of discourse on astronomy and creationist cosmogony belonged to the ruling class of philosophers, for whom the classroom instructors acted as agents. The content of the presentation was theologically and philosophically informed classroom instruction, what might be called astronomy and cosmogony “lite,” in which these topics were discussed in the form of orthodox claims about the origin and workings of the universe that illustrated and supported Plato’s theological tenets about the divine character of the celestial realm and the purposeful ordering and operation of the *kosmos* subject to the

divine intelligence that ruled the universe. This classroom content laid out theologically laden opinions about the nature of the visible universe presented as fact: as true opinions (*orthos doxa* or “orthodoxy”) offered for acceptance by the rational faculty within each listener, but without the proper arguments (*orthos logoi*) required to raise these opinions or beliefs to the level of actual knowledge (*episteme*). The desired audience reception was the students’ adoption of these opinions as their own, which would promote the desirable civic quality of piety, inoculate youth against the atheistic scientific theories of the *physiologoi*, and prepare the brightest students for later induction into the ranks of the philosophers. The means utilized to achieve the acceptance of Plato’s theological theories on astronomy and cosmogony are best understood as rhetorical. One key aspect of rhetoric, or the art of persuasion, was the authority of the speaker, which included both expertise in the subject matter and personal ethical stature (Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 2.1.1377e–1378a). In a classroom, the instructor has presumptive expertise in the subject being taught, the wisdom of age and institutional authority (which in antiquity could be enforced through corporal punishment). In addition, the theological presentation of creation science gave the instruction an extra aura of divine authority. Plato advised that all the qualities of eloquence—that is, the highest level of persuasive rhetoric—be exercised in the presentation of astronomy and cosmogony (Plato, *Laws* 10.885e, 887c, 890c, 902a–b), by which those being taught would be enchanted as well as instructed.⁹⁸ In the classroom, the instructional content was not limited to the enchantment of stories, but in the presentation of orthodox claims offered as rational beliefs.

The level of discourse found in the cosmogony of Genesis 1 corresponds closely with Plato’s curriculum of instruction on astronomy and cosmogony in a classroom setting. There is a high level of scientific content (see Chapter 5), but without the scientific or philosophical reasoning found in university level discussions. Rather, Genesis 1 is presented for simple belief as an authoritative myth that conveys both scientific assertions about the origins of the *kosmos* and substantial theological content (as discussed in Chapter 4) appropriate to lower education which, in early Judaism, included both synagogue aimed at the community as a whole and biblically mandated instruction of youths in a family setting. Reference to the sanctification of the seventh day at Gen 2:2–3 indicates that the presentation of the creation account was intended to figure in connection with private or public gatherings in observance of the sabbath. The predominance of mythical content suggests that Genesis 2–3 was written with a younger and less sophisticated target audience in mind, although scientific content is not completely absent (see Chapter 6).

3.4.5 *Laws (Compliance)*

Plato’s law on impiety in *Laws* 10.884e–910d contained an extensive discussion of astronomy and cosmogony. This law, which not only treated the

public or private worship of any god not officially recognized in the polis as an act of treason, but also enforced Plato's central tenets on theology, is the first known example of legislation that criminalized thought (cf. Drury 2017: 42). Plato held that all citizens of the polis must adhere to three fundamental theological tenets (*Laws* 10.885b–d, 886b, 907b; cf. *Republic* 2.379a–383c): that the gods existed; that they cared for humanity; and that they were only capable of good and could not be bribed by the prayers and sacrifices of the wicked (*Laws* 10.888a–903a; cf. *Republic* 3.390e). The law of impiety and its persuasive prelude were authored by Plato and recommended for adoption by the philosophical ruling class of his ideal state in order to instill a pious and docile spirit in the subjects of the state (cf. *Laws* 4.718c–d on legal preludes). Plato argued for the necessity of this law for the smooth administration of the polis, since if the citizenry did not believe that the gods existed, or did not pay attention to humanity, or could be bribed by the wicked, then they might be encouraged to perform lawless and wicked deeds, in public or in private, without the fear of divine punishment (*Republic* 3.392a–c; *Laws* 10.904c–905b). The aim of Plato's law on impiety and the persuasive prelude attached to it was to instill proper theological beliefs in the populace, in compliance with the theological legislation of the philosophical ruling class.

To further these aims, Plato's impiety law contained an extensive preamble (*Laws* 10.888a–907c), the longest and according to Plato the most important prelude of any statute in Plato's *Laws* (see *Laws* 10.886e–887c, 891a). Plato uniquely held that the laws of the polis, to be effective, must contain not only a commandment and the punishment to be imposed for disobedience, but preludes (*prooemia* or *paramuthia*) designed to educate and persuade the citizenry of the benefits of compliance. Plato's prelude to the law against impiety contained several major sections designed to persuade the citizenry of the truth of Plato's tenets of theology, with arguments specially targeting those youths who had somehow been exposed to the atheistic scientific theories of the natural philosophers (*Laws* 10.886d–e, 890a, 891c–d; cf. 7.819a, 820e–822a, 12.966e–967a).

The first section (*Laws* 10.888a–899d) contained extensive argumentation for the existence of an eternal divine intelligence that had guided the creation of the *kosmos* (*Laws* 10.889a–e, 893b–897b; cf. 12.966e–968a). This argument explicitly counteracted the atheistic scientific theories of the natural philosophers who claimed that necessity and chance, not a divine intelligence, had shaped the present form the universe (*Laws* 10.886a,d–e; cf. 7.819a, 821a). Plato also pointed to the celestial bodies of the heavens as visible gods who possessed souls that provided the conscious purpose and kinetic impulse that moved them in their perfect, beautiful circuits across the sky. This section further argued that the divine intelligence that had fashioned the universe, as well as the visible gods seen above in the heavens, were good by nature (*Laws* 10.897b–899b). One of these arguments was cosmological: that the perfect orderly circular motion of the sun, moon and stars

around the earth was evidence of their innate goodness and self-regulation (*Laws* 10.897b–898d).

The second section (*Laws* 10.899d–901c) argued that the divine intelligence who had fashioned the *kosmos* cared for humanity. A principal argument here was that all humans possessed a *psyche* or soul that was divine, a part of the immortal soul of the supreme divinity, who therefore must care for every human being with whom the supreme being had shared its divine nature.

In the final section (*Laws* 10.901c–903a), Plato set forth a series of rhetorical arguments that a good deity could never be bribed or swayed by the sacrifices and prayers of the wicked, since this would imply that the deity sanctioned and took part in the wicked deeds of humankind (cf. *Laws* 10.906c–d, 909b).

The audience for these philosophical and rhetorical arguments was the adult citizen body, especially the youth who had been swayed by the arguments of natural science. These youths and adults were citizens for whom the childhood myths had not taken hold (*Laws* 10.886b–d, 887d), and who had developed an adult's rational faculty. The content of this mode of discussion sought to persuade the citizenry on an adult, rational level to adopt the theological beliefs promulgated by Plato's theological state, in compliance with the law against impiety.

The Mosaic law codes contain extensive legal preambles and persuasive content modeled on Plato's *Laws* (Gmirkin 2017: 200–3), but were not aimed at dissuading the citizenry from atheism or scientific materialism. Rather, in Exodus–Joshua polemics were leveled at impiety in the form of polytheistic rejection of Yahwistic monolatry (see Chapter 8 §§8.7–8.8). Astronomy accordingly does not figure in Mosaic legal rhetoric, except in Deut 4:19, where the children of Israel were cautioned against observing the heavens, lest they be seduced into worshipping the celestial bodies as gods. Although this had been traditionally interpreted as polemics against Assyrian astral gods (von Rad 1961: 53–4; Westermann 1984: 127; Milgrom 2004), this appears to be based on a pre-Hellenistic dating of Deuteronomy. Deut 4:19 is more plausibly interpreted as reflecting opposition to Plato's description of the celestial bodies as visible gods (*Timaeus* 40a–c, 41a; *Laws* 7.821b; 10.886a,d; *Cratylus* 397c–d).

3.4.6 *Philosophy (Knowledge)*

Another Platonic mode of discourse on cosmogony was philosophical. According to Plato's theories on epistemology and education, the first step in achieving true philosophical knowledge was to instill orthodoxy, or proper beliefs, by means of myths used to enchant the very young, supplemented by rhetorical arguments addressed to the rational faculties of youths approaching adulthood in secondary school and ongoing rhetoric to the citizen body as a whole. Investing the rational faculty with proper beliefs

was a precursor or prerequisite to philosophical knowledge, which was achieved by supplementing correct belief (*orthos doxa*) by correct arguments (*orthos logoi*). Only a few youths possessed the innate intelligence and mental agility to master the arguments of philosophy and thereby convert their beliefs into true knowledge (*episteme*). Plato's definitive presentation of philosophical arguments on cosmogony was the *Timaeus*. There Plato enlisted various philosophical and theological arguments to construct what he described as a likely story or myth (*Timaeus* 26c–d, 48d–e) about how the universe might have been fashioned in the hands of a divine craftsman whose purpose was to fashion the most perfect, beautiful *kosmos* possible in his own image.

The author of the *Timaeus* was a philosopher and the audience for *Timaeus* was other philosophers or philosophers-in-training (*Timaeus* 19e–20a; cf. Vlastos 1939: 79). It was not a text intended for the general populace—Plato explicitly stated that the arguments presented there were above the comprehension of the masses (*Timaeus* 28c, 51e, 53d; Runia 1986: 413)—but to educated elites engaged in advanced education and reasoning on the university level, whether contemporary or future instructors of philosophy or university students receptive to advanced training in cosmogony. Plato's *Timaeus* presented carefully reasoned scientific philosophical arguments for every reconstructed stage in the divinely guided fashioning of the *kosmos* by the Demiurge or Craftsman in the *Timaeus*. In doing so, Plato presented his conclusions about the likely course of events in the creation of the present *kosmos*, a reconstruction Plato characterized as only tentative, a myth (*Timaeus* 29d, 54b, 69b) or a plausible account (*Timaeus* 29c, 30b, 48d–e). But more importantly, Plato also conveyed his novel methodology whereby the course of events by which the present *kosmos* came into existence could be divined by means of the theological presupposition of the existence of a divine creator whose purpose was to create excellence, beauty, goodness and life. Plato did not claim absolute certainty for his theories, only likelihood, but allowed for the possibility that other future theorists of the natural sciences who recognized Plato's theological axioms might use them to develop their own creationist models of cosmogony (*Timaeus* 29b–d, 55d).

It is apparent that *Timaeus* was intended in part to lay out the theological and philosophical methodology for such future studies in cosmogony. The environment in which such research would be carried out by philosophically trained educated elites would be a university setting such as Plato's Academy. Such a university environment was indeed envisioned in Plato's *Laws*, where the Nocturnal Council, the highest ruling body in the *polis*, closely resembled Plato's Academy (Morrow 1993: 506–7, 509). Members of the Nocturnal Council included past and present Ministers of Education, current and past high priests, and the senior members of the Guardians of the Laws (*Laws* 12.951d–e), all of whom were expected to have an educational background that featured intensive study of the divine, including

mastering the arguments on cosmogony and astronomy (*Laws* 7.817e–818a; 12.966b–968b; cf. 10.886b–c, 898c–899b). Their primary civic duties were to conduct ongoing research into international practices on nurture, education and laws (*Laws* 12.951d–952c), but they were also expected to conduct research on cosmogony (Philippus of Opus, *Epinomis* 990c–992e). The duties of the Nocturnal Council included supervising and enforcing the orthodox beliefs of the citizenry by means of child-rearing (through the regulation of approved myths), education (through approved curriculum and texts) and laws (through the rhetoric incorporated into the precludes to the laws). These three forms of education all featured as modes of discourse on cosmogony, as discussed previously. In addition, each senior member of the Nocturnal Council nominated one junior member whose education he personally supervised on a variety of university-level topics (*Laws* 12.961b, 968c–e), including philosophy, theology, law, educational theory, astronomy and cosmogony (*Laws* 12.966b–968b). The Nocturnal Council was also responsible for supervising the university education of the next generation of philosophical rulers by helping them to master the proper arguments or *orthos logoi* by which their beliefs could be converted into knowledge, preparing them for future leadership roles in the theocratic government Plato had invented. Plato's *Laws* was envisioned as the key text that contained the proper arguments on child-rearing, education and laws for the philosophical training of the ruling class, although further research into international practices in these areas was also encouraged. Plato undoubtedly envisioned *Timaeus* as the key text containing proper philosophical arguments on astronomy and cosmogony, although he did not mention this text in *Laws*.

3.4.7 Reform (Compliance)

One final mode of discourse on cosmogony found in Plato's writings was aimed at reforming the beliefs of those charged under the law of impiety. Those guilty of impious beliefs or practices might be subject to a variety of punishments, such as fines, beatings, imprisonment, exile or execution, depending on the severity of the offense (*Laws* 10.890b–c, 908e–909c; cf. Morrow 1993: 510) and the likelihood of the offender's communicating unacceptable beliefs to others. Those charged with having atheistic beliefs were to be imprisoned for five years in a special prison close to the building on the acropolis where the Nocturnal Council held its meetings, so as to provide easy access to those imprisoned by the members of the Nocturnal Council who were to supervise their reeducation (*Laws* 10.888a–d, 908e–909c). In Plato's *Laws*, it was assumed that these atheists were youths who had somehow been exposed to the scientific theories of the natural philosophers (*Laws* 10.886d–e, 888a–c; cf. 10.887d–888c on the presumed youthfulness of such disbelievers). It was a major concern to Plato that these youthful offenders had rejected the myths sung to them by their mothers (*Laws* 10.887d; cf. 886b–d) and the education that should have

reinforced belief in the divine (*Laws* 7.817e–818a, 819a, 820e–822a; 10.886a–e, 887e) and had broken the law of impiety with their atheistic scientific claims to knowledge in contradiction to the proper approved beliefs of the state (*Laws* 10.890a). The members of the ruling class were to pray for divine guidance and the proper eloquence to dissuade these youths from their dangerous beliefs (*Laws* 10.885e, 887c, 891a, 893b). The members of the Nocturnal Council were to exert every effort to reeducate these prisoners to adopt the approved theological beliefs so that they could be readmitted into society. The prelude to the law of impiety in Plato, *Laws* 10.885b–907d detailed the rhetorical arguments the philosophical elites were to use on the youthful offenders to persuade them that the gods existed, that the gods cared for humanity, that the gods had fashioned the universe to benefit humans and that the gods were just and could not be bribed by prayers and sacrifices. It was essential that all members of the Nocturnal Council master the arguments on cosmogony and theology in order to be able to cure those influenced by atheistic scientific theories (*Laws* 12.966b–968b). If, after five years, those subjected to these efforts at reeducation were not convinced or if they reoffended after their release, they were to be executed (*Laws* 10.908e–909d); presumably so that they would not influence others with their dangerous and harmful beliefs.

3.5 Conclusion

The cosmogony in Genesis 1 does not resemble the mythical cosmogonies of the Ancient Near East, but addresses the fundamental scientific questions characteristic of Greek scientific cosmogonies. Genesis 1 has accordingly been classified here as a scientific-theological-mythical cosmogony. It is reasonable to propose that the authors of the cosmogony of Genesis 1 were educated elites with a strong background in science, philosophy and theology. Plato's writings, including Plato's *Laws*, envisioned theologically trained educated elites ruling the nation and creating a national literature to shape the beliefs and character of the ordinary citizenry, both youths and adults (Gmirkin 2017: 255–61). The creation of the cosmogony of Genesis 1 should be understood as part of just such a national literary enterprise under the direction of the ruling class elites. Genesis 1 may thus be viewed as part of a wider educational program for the nation initiated by the ruling class educated elites for the benefit of the citizenry. Although containing sophisticated scientific and theological content, Genesis 1 took the form of authoritative teachings unaccompanied by supporting philosophical and scientific argumentation aimed at fellow educated elites. Rather, the aim of this authoritative account was to promote simple orthodox belief in a supreme cosmic deity as benevolent creator of the *kosmos* among an intended audience of youths and ordinary citizens of the community. Its method for accomplishing this was to present theories on cosmogony in the form of a scientifically and theologically informed myth, a story authoritatively

presented as fact. The mythical content both in Genesis 1 and in the less scientific Genesis 2–3 contributed to the ethical and theological indoctrination of the target audience which included children, for whom stories were the best mode of education.

Notes

- 1 This categorization is approximately that of Naddaf (2005: 2).
- 2 See Hahm 1977, *passim*, for examples of such issues in connection with accurately reconstructing the origins of Stoic cosmology under Zeno of Citium, Cleanthes and Chrysippus.
- 3 Gregory 2011: 26–30; Kirk and Raven 1957: 74–98.
- 4 Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1.3.983b; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 1.13 (Anaximander); 2.2 (Anaximenes).
- 5 Some sources say he wrote a Nautical Star-Guide, but others attributed this guide to Phokos of Samos; cf. Kirk and Raven 1957: 84–6.
- 6 Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1.3.983b; Simplicius, *Physics* 23.21–22; cf. Naddaf 2005: 66.
- 7 “That from which all things come to be is their first principle” (Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1.3.983b).
- 8 “That [water] which is exhaled becomes air, and the finest part of this is kindled into aether [fire], and when water collapses it changes into mud and land. Therefore of the four elements Thales declared water to be basic and, as it were, the cause” (Heraclitus Homericus, *Homeric Questions* 22; cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1.3.983b).
- 9 Aristotle, *On the Soul* 1.2.411a; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 1.24; Aetius 1.7.11; cf. Gregory 2011: 27–9; Naddaf 2005: 66.
- 10 “All things are full of gods” (Aristotle, *On the Soul* 1.5.411a; cf. Plato, *Laws* 10.899b).
- 11 “Thales supposed the soul to be capable of generating motion, as he said the magnet had soul because it moves iron” (Aristotle, *On the Soul* 1.2.405a; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 1.24).
- 12 Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 1.10.25; cf. Gregory 2011: 27–8. Whether Thales believed a god consciously guided the fashioning of the universe from water, as Cicero maintained, is doubted by most scholars. It seems possible that Thales limited the action of the divine *psyche* on the primordial water to setting it in motion, similar to the role that Anaxagoras later attributed to *Nous* (Mind); cf. West 1978: 175.
- 13 For instance, Thales observed that exhaled moisture became air, and that air transformed into fire, and that water transformed into salt and earth by sedimentation and evaporation (Heraclitus Homericus, *Homeric Questions* 22; Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1.3.983b). He also observed the relationship between water and life (Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1.3.983b). His conclusion that *psyche* was present everywhere was an inference based on his observation of the motion of magnetic lodestones (Aristotle, *On the Soul* 1.2.405a).
- 14 Gregory 2011: 30–46; Kirk and Raven 1957: 99–142.
- 15 Suda s.v. *Anaximandros Praxiadou Miletios*. Other titles listed there included *Tour of the Earth* and *On the Fixed Stars*.
- 16 Simplicius, *Physics* 24.13, 24; Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 1.6; Pseudo-Plutarch, *Stromateis* 2; cf. Naddaf 2005: 66–7. According to Aristotle, *Physics* 3.4.203b, “The *apeiron* ... is divine, for it is immortal and indestructible, as Anaximander and most of the *physiologoi* say.” Some believe that Anaximander

- originated the use of the word *arche* (“beginning” or “source”) to describe the *apeiron* as the original material constituent of the universe; cf. Kirk and Raven 1957: 107–8.
- 17 Simplicius, *Physics* 24.21; Aristotle, *Physics* 3.4.187a; Pseudo-Plutarch, *Stromateis* 2–3, 12; Aetius 2.11.5; cf. Naddaf 2005: 72–4.
 - 18 Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 1.6; Aetius 2.13.7, 20.1; 21.1; Pseudo-Plutarch, *Stromateis* 2; cf. Naddaf 2005: 75–6.
 - 19 Aristotle, *Meteorology* 2.1.353b; Alexander, *Commentary on Aristotle’s Meteorology* 67.11; Aetius 3.16.1; Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 1.6–7; cf. Gregory 2011: 38–9.
 - 20 Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 1.6; Aetius 5.19.4; cf. Gregory 2011: 44–6; Naddaf 2005: 89–90.
 - 21 “Anaximander of Miletus, the pupil of Thales, was the first to picture the inhabited world on a chart. After him Hecataeus of Miletus, a much-traveled man, made it more precise so as to be a thing of wonder.” Agathemerus 1.1–2; Strabo, *Geography* 1.1.11 (citing Eratosthenes). The world map created by Hecataeus of Miletus (ca. 550–490 BCE), probably alluded to at Herodotus, *Histories* 4.36, and the two-volume *Description of the Earth* that Hecataeus wrote, are both thought to have been inspired by the earlier efforts of Anaximander.
 - 22 Naddaf 2005: 92–112. Naddaf believed that *Tour of the Earth* and *Genealogies* were sections within Anaximander’s book titles *Historia Peri Phusis*.
 - 23 Naddaf (2005: 102) noted a tradition that stated a certain Anaximander—perhaps Anaximander of Miletus—“declared that the alphabet was brought from Egypt to Greece by Danaus before the time of Cadmus.”
 - 24 Gregory 2011: 46–50; Kirk and Raven 1957: 143–62.
 - 25 “Anaximenes declared air to be the *arche* of existing things. From it all things came to be and into it all things are dissolved. He says as our soul, being air, holds us in order, so wind and air envelop the whole *kosmos*.” Aetius 1.3.4; cf. Aristotle, *Meteorology* 1.3.984a; Simplicius, *Physics* 24.26; Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 1.7.1; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 2.3.
 - 26 Aristotle, *On the Heavens* 2.13.294b; Pseudo-Plutarch, *Stromateis* 3. The other heavenly bodies were also flat (Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 1.7.4; Aetius 2.22.1).
 - 27 Pseudo-Plutarch, *Stromateis* 3. See the discussion in Gregory 2011: 50. Gregory noted theories that the earth and all the heavenly bodies were flat and supported by air mentioned at Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 1.7.4.
 - 28 Jaeger 1936: 45–54; Kirk and Raven 1957: 163–81; Gregory 2011: 128–9.
 - 29 Xenophanes criticized the bad behavior of the Greek gods in Homer and Hesiod (Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Mathematicians* 3.193; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 9.18; cf. Naddaf 2005: 115–6). He also criticized their resemblance to Greeks in appearance, speech and dress, noting that Ethiopians depicted their gods as “snub-nosed and black,” the Thracians as “blue-eyed and red-haired,” and hypothesized that if a horse had a god, it would look like a horse. Clement, *Miscellanies* 5.109.3; 7.22.1.
 - 30 Simplicius, *Physics* 23.11, 20; Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Mathematicians* 9.144; cf. Jaeger 1936: 45; Most 2003: 307; cf. Flannery 2010: 84.
 - 31 Achilles Tatius, *Isogoge* 4.34.11; Aristotle, *On the Heavens* 2.13.294a; cf. Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 1.14.3; Aetius 2.11.2.
 - 32 Simplicius, *Physics* 189.1; Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Mathematicians* 10.34; Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 1.14.3. Xenophanes cited fossil evidence of fish, shells and of impressions of leaves to show that the sea was once at a much higher level, and that the earth, once covered in mud, was gradually drying up (Hippolytus).

- 33 Jaeger 1936: 109–27; Kirk and Raven 1957: 182–215; Gregory 2011: 57–69.
- 34 Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 9.1.5. According to Gregory (2011: 57), Heraclitus had no cosmogony, despite the testimony of Aristotle and Diogenes Laertius.
- 35 “All things are composed of fire, and into fire they are again resolved” (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 9.1.7).
- 36 Stobaeus, *Anthology* 3.5.7; Clement, *Miscellanies* 6.17.2; cf. Kirk and Raven 1957: 205–7. Death was the transformation of the dry or fiery soul into water.
- 37 Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* 10.7; cf. Naddaf 2005: 128–9. According to Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 9.10.6, “The thunderbolt steers all things.” Taking the thunderbolt to represent fire, this seems to indicate that fire was the steering principle of the *kosmos*.
- 38 “For fire by contracting turns into moisture, and this condensing turns into water; water again when congealed turns into earth. This process he calls the downward path. Then again earth is liquefied, and thus gives rise to water, and from water the rest of the series is derived. He reduces nearly everything to exhalation from the sea. This process is the upward path. Exhalations arise from earth as well as from sea; those from sea are bright and pure, those from earth dark. Fire is fed by the bright exhalations, the moist element by the others.” Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 9.1.9; cf. Clement, *Miscellanies* 5.104.1, 3. Fire, earth and water maintained a balance in the universe by transforming into each other in an equal exchange.
- 39 “For souls it is death to become water, for water it is death to become earth; from earth water comes-to-be, and from water, soul.” Clement, *Miscellanies* 6.17.2.
- 40 Gregory 2011: 70–7; Kirk and Raven 1957: 263–85.
- 41 Naddaf 2005: 137. Most of the poem was preserved by Simplicius.
- 42 Parmenides distinguished the two approaches to cosmogony as the Way of Truth and the Way of Opinion.
- 43 Simplicius, *Physics* 31.13; 39.14; Aetius 2.7.1. According to Aetius, the goddess was Justice and Necessity.
- 44 “He [Parmenides] was the first to declare that the earth is spherical and is situated in the centre of the universe.” Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 9.3.21.
- 45 Parmenides, *On Nature* 120–25; Simplicius, *On the Heavens* 559.26; Aetius 2.7.1; Plutarch, *Against Colotes* 1114b.
- 46 It is known that Parmenides claimed that humans and animals arose through the action of heat and cold (*On Nature* 150–55); cf. Naddaf 2005: 140.
- 47 Gregory 2011: 78–101; Kirk and Raven 1957: 320–61; Wright 1981.
- 48 Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 8.2.77. *On Purifications* appears to have dealt with the Pythagorean doctrine of the transmigration of souls.
- 49 Simplicius, *Physics* 25.21; Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1.4.915a; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 8.2.76; cf. Naddaf 2005: 141–2. Empedocles viewed fire as active, while earth, water and air were viewed as passive (Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1.4.985b; cf. Wright 1981: 24).
- 50 Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 3.4.1000a; *idem*, *Physics* 8.1.252a; Simplicius, *Physics* 25.21; 158.1, 6, 13; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 8.2.76; cf. Plato, *Sophist* 242d.
- 51 “Empedocles held that first aether was separated off, secondly fire and after this, earth, from which water sprang out because of the tight constriction due to the speed of the rotation. From this water came air, by evaporation, and the generation of the heavens was from aether, of the sun from fire and by compression of the others came the things around the earth.” Aetius 2.6.3; cf. Aristotle, *On the Heavens* 2.13.295a.

- 52 Aetius 5.19.5; Aelian, *On the Nature of Animals* 16.29; Aristotle, *Physics* 2.8.198b; *idem*, *On the Heavens* 3.2.300b; Simplicius, *Physics* 32.6.
- 53 Aetius 5.19.5; Aristotle, *On the Heavens* 3.2.300b; *idem*, *Physics* 2.8.198b; Simplicius, *Physics* 300.21; 381.31; Aelian, *On the Nature of Animals* 16.29.
- 54 See generally Curd 2010; Gregory 2011: 102–16; Kirk and Raven 1957: 362–95. Anaxagoras was the first philosopher to teach at Athens. He is said to have written a single book (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 1.16; contra Plato, *Apology* 26c–d which referred to “books” by Anaxagoras) that dealt with “a wide range of topics, including metaphysics and epistemology, cosmogony and cosmology, the stars, sun, moon and meteorological and geological phenomena in the sublunary world (clouds, rainbows, rain, snow, earthquakes, rivers), perception, embryology, and so on” (Curd 2010: 137).
- 55 Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 1.8.9 (“The moon is eclipsed when the earth blocks the sun’s light ...; an eclipse of the sun occurs in the time of the new moon when the moon blocks the light”); Aetius 2.30.2; cf. Curd 2010: 211.
- 56 Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 1.8.8 (“The moon does not have its own light, but that of the sun”); Plutarch, *On the Face of the Moon* 16.929b (“The sun places the light in the moon”); Plato, *Cratylus* 409a–b (“The moon gets its light from the sun”); cf. Curd 2010: 211).
- 57 Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1.3.984a; *idem*, *Physics* 1.4.1872a; Simplicius, *Physics* 156.9; 164.14–22; Plutarch, *On the Face of the Moon* 16.929b; cf. Curd 2010: 23, 43, 53–4.
- 58 “Anaxagoras posits two kinds of basic entities: the ingredients of the original mixture and Mind (*Nous*)” (Curd 2010: 141; cf. Simplicius, *Physics* 27.2, quoting Theophrastus: “Anaxagoras claims that there are two principles, the nature of the unlimited and Mind”).
- 59 Anaxagoras observed that air, fire, water, earth and stone all transform into each other, and that none of them could therefore be primary (Simplicius, *Physics* 460.4).
- 60 “Before there was separation off, because all things were together, there was not even any color evident, for the mixture of all things prevented it, of the wet and the dry and of the hot and the cold and of the bright and the dark, and there was much earth present and seeds unlimited in number.” Simplicius, *Physics* 34.20–27. See also *ibid*, 155.23; 164.14–22; Scholium on Gregory of Nazianzus, *Patrologia Graeca* 36.911 [Migne]; cf. Curd 2010: 46.
- 61 “This revolution caused them to separate off. The dense is being separated off from the rare, and the warm from the cold, and the bright from the dark, and the dry from the moist.” Simplicius, *Physics* 156.13. See also Simplicius, *Physics* 34.18–20, 27; 157.17; 164.24; Scholium on Gregory of Nazianzus, *Patrologia Graeca* 36.911 [Migne].
- 62 “What is rare and fine is hot, while the dense and thick is cold, exactly as Anaxagoras defines aether and air” (Theophrastus, *On the Senses* 59; cf. Aetius 2.13.3, Aristotle, *Meteorology* 2.9.369b. According to Aristotle, *On the Heavens* 1.2.270b; 3.3.302a, Anaxagoras conflated fire (*pur*) and *aether*).
- 63 Simplicius, *Physics* 155.23, 30. “Aether is the upper layer of the atmosphere, the light upper air. Air (*aer*) itself is dark, dense and mist-like, while aether is less dense and brighter.” Curd 2010: 35.
- 64 Simplicius, *Physics* 156.13; 164.24; cf. Naddaf 2005: 148. *Nous* was the only substance not mixed together with other substances. The cosmic *Nous* was apparently conceived as immortal, all-knowing and all-powerful (Curd 2010: 59–63), suggesting that Anaxagoras conceived of *Nous* as a single original divine intelligence. Creatures with *psyche* or soul, which included humans, animals, and perhaps plants, also had *nous* dwelling in them (Simplicius, *Physics* 34.18–20, 27;

- 156.13; 157.17; 164.24). Aristotle may have been correct when he said Anaxagoras failed to distinguish between soul and mind (*On the Soul* 1.2, [testimonia A55, A100]; cf. Curd 2010: 55).
- 65 “Anaxagoras, Archelaus, and Metrodorus of Chios seem to claim that the world-order arose at the beginning of time. They assert that motion, too, had a beginning. For, while things were previously at rest, they claim that motion—on account of which the world-order has arisen—was initiated by *Nous*.” Simplicius, *Physics* 154.29; cf. 185.9, where Anaxagoras stated “that motion began at a certain time and that it did not exist before then.”
- 66 “And *Nous* also ordered this revolution, in which the things being separated off now revolve, the stars and the sun and the moon and the air and the aether.” Simplicius, *Physics* 156.13; 300.27; cf. Curd 2010: 56; Naddaf 2005: 149.
- 67 Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 2.8; Pliny, *Natural History* 2.149; Josephus, *Apion* 2.265; Plato, *Apology* 26c-d; Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 1.8.1; Aetius 2.20.6; Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 4.7.7; cf. Naddaf 2005: 149. Anaxagoras deduced the rocky character of heavenly bodies from rocks that fell from the sky (Pliny, *Natural History* 2.149). The heavenly bodies were “held in place by the cosmic whirl” (Curd 2010: 132); meteors and comets were rocks that fell to earth (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 2.9, 12; Plutarch, *Life of Lysander* 12; cf. Curd 2010: 209), and that shooting stars were sparks falling from the aether (Aetius 3.2.9; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 2.9). Anaxagoras believed it was possible that there were multiple *kosmoi*, each with its own earth, sun, moon and life, just like ours (Simplicius, *Physics* 34.18–20, 27; 157.17). These *kosmoi* basically corresponded to a multiplicity of other solar systems, each created by rotation in the *apeiron* (cf. Curd 2010: 44–5), much as conceived in modern astronomy. Since life was a basic ingredient in the *apeiron*, for Anaxagoras it necessarily followed that life would exist in every *kosmos*.
- 68 Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 2.8–9; Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 1.8.3, Aristotle, *On the Heavens* 2.13.294b; Simplicius, *On the Heavens* 511.23.
- 69 Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 1.8.4. Rivers came partly from rain and partly from subterranean waters in the hollows of the earth (*ibid.*, 1.8.5).
- 70 All animals had *nous* and *psyche* (Simplicius, *Physics* 34.18–20, 27; 156.13; 157.17; 164.24). Anaxagoras viewed plants as a form of animal rooted in the earth (Plutarch, *Natural Questions* 1.911d). Like Empedocles, Anaxagoras claimed that plants possessed intellect, sensation and emotions (Aristotle, *On Plants* 1.1.815a–b). Anaxagoras argued to the falling of the leaves in autumn as evidence that plants felt sadness (Aristotle, *On Plants* 1.1.815a).
- 71 Simplicius, *Physics* 34.18–27; 157.17; cf. Scholium on Gregory of Nazianzus, *Patrologia Graeca* 36.911 [Migne]. Anaxagoras believed that seeds of plants were found in the air and brought down by rain (Theophrastus, *On Plants* 3.1.4; Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 2.14.2), a scientific theory presumably based on observing the spontaneous growth of plant life after a rainstorm.
- 72 Both animal and plant seeds originally came down in rain (Theophrastus, *On Plants* 3.1.4; Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 2.14.2), where the moist earth provided the proper conditions for these seeds to germinate and come to life. In normal reproduction, the female of the species provided an environment with similar conditions amenable to the growth of the seeds implanted by the male. “Animals first came to be from moist, hot, and earthy stuffs, but later from one another [i.e. through sex].” Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 2.9; cf. Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 1.8.12; Aetius 2.8.1.

- 73 Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 2.12–13; Plutarch, *Life of Perikles* 32; *idem*, *Life of Nicias* 23; Josephus, Apion 2.265.
- 74 Gregory 2011: 132–3; Kirk and Raven 1957: 395–9.
- 75 Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 10.12; Clement, *Miscellanies* 1.63; Galen, *History of Philosophy* 3. Socrates was in turn the student of Archelaus.
- 76 Gregory 2011: 133–6; Kirk and Raven 1957: 427–45.
- 77 “It seems to me that that which has intelligence is what men call air, and that all men are steered by this and that it has a power over all things. For this very thing seems to me to be a god and to have reached everywhere and to dispose all things and to be in everything.” Simplicius, *Physics* 152.22; cf. 153.19–20.
- 78 Simplicius, *Physics* 152.13. Diogenes thought there was an atomic substance responsible for the order of the seasons and other natural phenomena.
- 79 Gregory 2011: 117–27; Kirk and Raven 1957: 400–26.
- 80 Simplicius, *Physics* 28.4; *idem*, *On the Heavens* 242.18; 712.27; Aristotle, *On Generation and Corruption* 1.8.326a; Theophrastus, *On the Senses* 61; Aetius 1.3.18; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 9.7.44. The weight of an atomic substance was thought to be a function of its size.
- 81 Aristotle, *Physics* 2.4.196a; Simplicius, *Physics* 327.24; Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel* 14.2.3; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 9.7.45; Aetius 1.25.4.
- 82 Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 9.6.31–2; 7.44; Simplicius, *Physics* 327.24; *idem*, *On the Heavens* 712.27; Aetius 1.4.1–4.
- 83 Simplicius, *On the Heavens* 242.21; 295.11. See the discussion at Kirk and Raven 1957: 419–20.
- 84 “There is an old view which, as I said previously, has long been prevalent among the *phusikoi*, that like recognizes like. Democritus confirmed this opinion and Plato spoke of it in his *Timaeus* ... For animals, [Democritus] says, flock with animals of the same kind—doves with doves, cranes with cranes, and so with the other irrational animals. Similarly in the cause of inanimate things, as can be seen from seeds that are being winnowed and from pebbles on the seashore.” Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Mathematicians* 7.116–18; cf. Gregory 2011: 121–2.
- 85 Sedley 2007: 78–92.
- 86 “According to some authors he [Socrates] was a pupil of Anaxagoras, and also of Damon, as Alexander states in his Successions of Philosophers. When Anaxagoras was condemned, he became a pupil of Archelaus the physicist; Aristoxenus asserts that Archelaus was very fond of him.” Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 2.5.19. See also note 113 above.
- 87 Gregory 2011: 140–62.
- 88 Plato, *Timaeus* 53a; cf. Gregory 2011: 140–3 on the principles of like-to-like and the separation of substances by shaking or winnowing in Plato’s writings. In the absence of an ancient theory of gravitation, like-to-like was invoked to explain why heavy (dense) objects fall to the earth, which is also heavy, and light things float into the air: “It is the motion of each towards its own kind that makes the moving thing heavy, and the place to which it moves ‘down’” (*Timaeus* 63e; cf. 81a).
- 89 Plato, *Timaeus* 20e, 22b–23c; *idem*, *Critias* 109d–110a; *idem*, *Laws* 3.677a–e, 702a; cf. Aristotle, *Politics* 2.1269a.
- 90 Gregory 2011: 163–72.
- 91 Dillon 2003: 179–99; ancient sources on Epicureanism are found at Long and Sedley 1987: 1.25–157; 2.18–162.
- 92 Gregory 2011: 173–86.
- 93 Dillon 2003: 156–77.

- 94 Gregory 2011: 187–202; ancient sources on Stoicism are found in Arnim 1903–1905; Long and Sedley 1987: 1.158–438; 2.163–431.
- 95 Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.142, 147; Aetius 1.7.33; Alexander, *On Fate* 191.30–192.28; Gregory 2011: 189, 196–7.
- 96 For a discussion of the Greek phrase *orthos logoi* as commonly used by Plato to designate a proper, convincing set of arguments, see Moss 2014; Tian 2017.
- 97 Plato’s geometrical intuitions were partially validated in modern times, since it was discovered that the planets all traveled elliptical paths with one focus centered on the sun. Plato was wrong in several details: an ellipse is not a perfect circle—a circle is, however, a type of ellipse in which the two foci of the ellipse coincide; the sun and not the earth was the center of the planetary system; celestial bodies do not possess souls that provide them with impulse or kinetic motion, but are controlled by the law of universal gravitation; and the celestial bodies are obviously not gods, but inanimate objects subject to the ordinary laws of physics. Nevertheless, Plato’s notion that geometry and kinematics would explain the motions of the planets was correct and ultimately led to modern mathematical astronomy.
- 98 Plato, *Laws* 10.887d, 888a–d, 891a, 903a–b; cf. Belfiore 1980: 134. Enchantments, such as mothers’ songs and stories that taught children to believe in the gods, were primarily aimed at the very young to train their emotions prior to the development of reason (*Laws* 10.887d–e).

Bibliography

- Arnim, Hans Von. *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*. 3 vols. Lipsiae: In Audibus B. G. Teubneri, 1903–1905.
- Belfiore, Elizabeth. “*Elenchus, Epode, and Magic: Socrates as Silenus.*” *Phoenix* 34 (1980): 128–137.
- Brisson, Luc. *Plato the Myth-Maker*. Translated by Gerard Naddaf. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1998.
- Brown, William P. *Structure, Role and Ideology in the Hebrew and Greek Texts of Genesis 1:1–2:3*. SBLDS 132. Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1993.
- Curd, Patricia. *Anaxagoras of Clazomenae: Fragments and Testimonia, a Text and Translation with Notes and Essays*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010.
- Dillon, John. *The Heirs of Plato: A Study of the Old Academy (347–274 BC)*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Drury, Shadia B. *The Bleak Political Implications of Socratic Religion*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.
- Flannery, Kevin L. “Ancient Philosophical Theology,” in *A Companion to Philosophy of Religion*. Charles Taliaferro, Paul Draper and Philip P. Quinn (eds.), 83–90. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.
- Gmirkin, Russell E. *Plato and the Creation of the Hebrew Bible*. Copenhagen International Seminar. London: Routledge, 2017.
- Gregory, Andrew. *Ancient Greek Cosmogony*. Bristol: Bristol Classic Press, 2011.
- Hackforth, Reginald. “Plato’s Theism.” *CQ* 30 (1936): 4–9.
- Hahn, David E. *The Origins of Stoic Cosmology*. Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1977.
- Hahn, David E. “The Fifth Element in Aristotle’s *De Philosophia*: A Critical Re-Examination.” *JHS* 102 (1982): 60–74.

- Jaeger, Werner. *Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936.
- Kirk, Geoffrey S. and John Earle Raven (eds.). *The Presocratic Philosophers: A Critical History with a Selection of Texts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957.
- Long, Anthony A. and David N. Sedley. *The Hellenistic Philosophers*. 2 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- Mansfeld, Jaap. "The Chronology of Anaxagoras' Athenian Period and the Date of His Trial." *Mnemosyne* 32 (1979): 39–69.
- Mansfeld, Jaap. "Part II. The Plot against Pericles and His Associates." *Mnemosyne* 33 (1980): 17–95.
- Menn, Stephen. *Plato on God as Nous*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1995.
- Migne, Jacques-Paul (ed.). *Patrologia Cursus Completus: Series Graeca*. 161 vols. Paris: Migne, 1857–1866.
- Milgrom, Jacob. "The Alleged 'Hidden Light,'" in *The Idea of Biblical Interpretation: Essays in Honor of James L. Kugel*. James L. Kugel, Judith H. Newman and Judith Hood Newman (eds.), 41–44. Leiden: Brill, 2004.
- Morrow, Glenn Raymond. *Plato's Cretan City: A Historical Interpretation of the Laws*. Princeton, MA: Princeton University Press, 1993.
- Moss, Jessica. "Right Reason in Plato and Aristotle: On the Meaning of 'Logos.'" *Phronesis* 59 (2014): 181–230.
- Most, Glenn W. "11. Philosophy and Religion," in *The Cambridge Companion to Greek and Roman Philosophy*. David Sedley (ed.), 300–322. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Naddaf, Gerard. *Greek Concepts of Nature*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2005.
- Rad, Gerhard Von. *Genesis: A Commentary*. OTL. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1961.
- Runia, David T. *Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus of Plato*. *Philosophia Antiqua* 44. Leiden: Brill, 1986.
- Sedley, David. *Creationism and its Critics in Antiquity*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007.
- Tian, Jie. *The Orthos Logos in Aristotle's Ethics*. PhD Dissertation. Berlin: Humbolt University, 2017.
- Vlastos, Gregory. "The Disorderly Motion in the Timaios." *CQ* 33 (1939) 71–83.
- West, Martin Litchfield. *Hesiod, Works and Days: Edited with Prolegomena and Commentary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978.
- Westermann, Claus. *Genesis 1–11: A Commentary*. Translated by J. Scullion. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984.
- Witt, Rachel E. "The Plotinian Logos and Its Stoic Basis." *CQ* 25 (1931): 103–111.
- Wright, M.R. *Empedocles: The Extant Fragments*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981.

4 Genesis 1 as Philosophy

From Chapter 3, it has emerged, based on comparisons with Greek and Ancient Near Eastern cosmogonies, that the biblical account in Genesis 1 belongs to the category of hybrid scientific-theological-mythical cosmogonies, a genre Plato invented in the *Timaeus*, perhaps the most famous, widely read and influential philosophical text in Graeco-Roman antiquity (Runia 1986: 57). This opens up the possibility that the cosmogony in Genesis 1 drew directly on Plato's *Timaeus* (as proposed in Niesiołowski-Spanò 2007; Wajdenbaum 2011: 92–6), a hypothesis whose plausibility is enhanced by the extensive use of Plato's *Laws* elsewhere in the Pentateuch (Wajdenbaum 2011; Gmirkin 2017). The current chapter will examine various lines of evidence that indicate that Genesis 1 did in fact draw on the *Timaeus*, including: a similar sequence of creational events; many strikingly similar details in the two accounts; a closely comparable theological presentation of the role of the Creator in fashioning the present universe; several uniquely Platonic philosophical concepts and themes that appear prominently in Genesis 1; the recognized use of the *Timaeus* in the LXX translation of Genesis 1; and a current consensus among scholars that the LXX was a literal translation from its non-MT *Vorlage*. These considerations individually and collectively indicate that the *Timaeus* had a profound influence on the cosmogony of Genesis 1 in both its Hebrew and Greek versions and suggest the usefulness of the LXX translation for understanding the underlying Hebrew text.

4.1 Plato's *Timaeus* and Genesis 1 (LXX)

Several recent studies, mostly dealing with matters pertaining to textual criticism (see below), have brought out important new evidence supporting the direct influence of the philosophical text *Timaeus* on both the Greek and (more controversially) Hebrew texts of Genesis, although the significance of this new evidence has typically gone unrecognized, even by the authors themselves. Three categories of evidence indicate that the biblical authors and translators have drawn on the *Timaeus*. First, the LXX displays many signs of influence from *Timaeus*, both in unusual translation of Hebrew

terms, in various deviations from the MT, and in additional passages, found in the LXX but not in the MT, that reflect Platonic themes. Second, several scholars think the LXX reflects a non-MT *Vorlage*, which raises the possibility that the Hebrew original also drew on the *Timaeus*. Third, the *Timaeus*, the MT and the LXX all share significant parallels in sequence and structure, suggesting that the Greek LXX translation of the biblical account and the Hebrew original behind LXX were both influenced by the *Timaeus*. That the *Timaeus* should influence both Hebrew and Greek versions of Genesis is consistent with the compositional model I have argued elsewhere (Gmirkin 2006: 253–6, 2017: 261–9) in which the Pentateuch was authored in Hebrew at Alexandria ca. 270 BCE by the same team of Jewish and Samaritan educated elites who produced the LXX translation for the Great Library.

While affinities between Genesis 1 and the *Timaeus* have long been noted (cf. Pelikan 1997: 23–43 and literature cited there), the use of Plato's *Timaeus* in the LXX was first systematically studied in Rösel 1994. Martin Rösel pointed out a number of translated terms and expressions in the LXX that resonate with the *Timaeus* (Table 4.1).¹

While some individual Greek word choices are within the range of conventional translations for the corresponding Hebrew terms,² there appears to be a systematic correlation with vocabulary taken from *Timaeus*, especially with respect to such Platonic themes as the goodness of God as reflected in his creation and the fashioning of a beautiful *kosmos* in the image and likeness of divine prototypes. Further, some word choices are strikingly Platonic, such as the translation of *tohu wabohu* (without form and void) as ἀόρατος καὶ ἀκατασκεύαστος (invisible and unfashioned) in Gen 1:2, which has elicited extensive commentary (Rösel 1994: 42, 48–9; van der Meer 2017: 179–81) and can hardly be explained other than as reflecting the language of *Timaeus* (van der Meer 2016: 42). The cumulative effect of these correspondences between the vocabulary of Genesis 1–2 (LXX) and Plato's *Timaeus* is to render it virtually certain that the translator had been familiar with that particular dialogue, either at first or secondhand.

According to the thesis put forward in Rösel 1994, the differences between the LXX and the MT can be attributed to the translators, who exercised considerable freedom in changing and adapting an MT *Vorlage* to conform to the cosmogony in Plato's *Timaeus*, which Rösel believed was known to and approved by the Hellenistic Jewish community in Alexandria. This historical model reflected Rösel's assumptions regarding the antiquity of the Hebrew text, exemplified by MT, in line with the prevailing views of biblical scholars and text critics. Rösel took it as a given that MT reflected an ancient and authoritative textual tradition that long predated the LXX translation or indeed the *Timaeus*. Although Rösel noted a number of parallels in the sequence of creative acts in the *Timaeus* and Genesis 1–2 (in both Hebrew and Greek versions), Rösel assumed that MT was an ancient product of local Jewish cultural traditions and that its

Table 4.1 LXX and *Timaeus* Parallels (Martin Rösel)

<i>MT</i>	<i>Genesis</i>	<i>LXX</i>	<i>Timaeus</i>
“without form and void” (תהו ובהו)	Gen 1:2	“invisible and unformed” (ἀόρατος καὶ ἀκατασκευάστος)	<i>Timaeus</i> 51a
“let there be” (יהי) host (צבא)	Gen 1:3 Gen 2:1	<i>genesis</i> (γενηθήτω) <i>kosmos</i> (κόσμος)	<i>Timaeus</i> 27d–29e <i>Timaeus</i> 24c, 27a, 28b, 29a,e, 30b–c, 31b, 32c, 40a, 42e, 48a, 55c, 62d, 92c
goodness, beauty (טוב) of creation dome (רקיע) of the firmament (four-footed) beasts (בהמה)	Gen 1:25 Gen 1:6 Gen 1:24	<i>kalos</i> (καλά) <i>stereoma</i> (στερέωμα) <i>tetrapodes</i> (τετράποδα)	<i>Timaeus</i> 29a, 87c, 92c <i>Timaeus</i> 31b, 43c; cf. 33b <i>Timaeus</i> 92a
“kind” (מין)	Gen 1:11–12, 21, 24–25; 6:20	<i>genos</i> (γένος)	<i>Timaeus</i> 91d; cf. 92b <i>phylon</i> (φῶλον)
“likeness” (דמות) “image” (צלם) “create” or “fashion” (יצר)	Gen 1:26 Gen 1:26–27 Gen 2:7	<i>omoiotos</i> (ὁμοιότητα) <i>eikon</i> (εἰκόνα) <i>plasso</i> (ἐπλασεν) unusually, instead of <i>poieo</i> (ποιέω)	<i>Timaeus</i> 30c, 39e <i>Timaeus</i> 29b–c, 37d <i>Timaeus</i> 42d, 73c; cf. 78c
“completion” (כלה) of creation the soul (נפש) of moving beings	Gen 2:2 Gen 1:21	<i>sunteleo</i> (συντελέσεν) <i>psyche</i> (ψυχήν)	<i>Timaeus</i> 92c <i>Timaeus</i> 42e

structural parallels with *Timaeus* were a matter of mere coincidence. Rösel assumed that the LXX was created to serve the needs of the Alexandrian Jewish community, who were largely unfamiliar with Hebrew. He posited that learned members of this Hellenized Jewish community would have been familiar with the *Timaeus*, given the popularity of that text in educated circles, and would have been struck by the parallels in *Timaeus* and the biblical account. Inspired by the striking parallels in the two texts, the translator of Genesis effectively harmonized the biblical cosmogony with that of *Timaeus*, according to Rösel’s well-reasoned proposal.

Rösel’s theory of the LXX as an extremely free translation of a proto-Masoretic Hebrew text, attractive as it was at the time, has not survived critical scrutiny. According to virtually all current scholars involved in Septuagint studies and textual criticism, the LXX was not a free translation of the underlying Hebrew text, as Rösel (1994, 1998) maintained, but rather a literal translation of a non-MT text of Genesis (Hendel 1998: 15–17, 20, 24; van der Louw 2007: 122–6; Tov 2015). At least three arguments support this position.

First, there are a number of textual features that serve as objective criteria by which a literal translation can be distinguished from a free translation: word-by-word correspondences between source text and translation; lexical consistency; preservation of sentence structure and order, even when this renders the translation awkward; preservation of puns that make sense in the source language (e.g. Hebraisms) but not the target language; wooden translation of phrases; common or characteristic phrases in the source language that do not carry over well into the target language; and so forth (van der Louw 2007: 119–20; Tov 2015: 18–30). By all these criteria, the LXX can be shown to be a predominantly literal translation, conforming to the Hebrew even at the cost of awkwardness. This faithfulness of the LXX to the Hebrew text conflicts with Rösel's theory of the LXX as a free paraphrase, but points instead to a different, non-MT *Vorlage* for the LXX translation.

Second, in some instances where the LXX diverges from the MT, other textual traditions, such as the Samaritan Torah or the Peshitta, preserve a variant that is close to the LXX (Tov 2015: 88).

Third, a fragment of the Hebrew text of Gen 1:9 found at Qumran that agrees with the LXX against the MT (Davila 1990: 8–11, 1994: 60–1; cf. Cook 2016: 3–4) has been taken as direct and conclusive evidence that the LXX reflects a textual tradition that differs from the MT.

As a result of such considerations, a consensus now exists that the LXX was based on a non-MT *Vorlage*. Furthermore, on the basis of the evidence from Qumran, it is now agreed that the LXX parent text was not a local Alexandrian or Egyptian text, but should be classified, along with the MT, as Palestinian (Tov 2012: 186–7, 2015: 201–4).

The prevailing historical model among current text critics for the origin of the LXX may be summarized as follows. It is generally supposed that both proto-MT and proto-LXX Hebrew textual traditions long predate the Septuagint translation of the early Hellenistic Era. Whether the older of the two texts was MT (Rösel 1994; Hendel 1998: 20, 24) or LXX (Brown 1993: ix–x; Tov 2015: 221, 223 n. 46) is debated, but current thinking holds that the divergence between the two textual traditions took place prior to the Septuagint translation. It is also agreed that neither the MT nor the LXX Hebrew *Vorlage* could have reflected Plato's *Timaeus*, but it is generally conceded that some elements of the LXX translation of the third century BCE were influenced by *Timaeus* (notably Gen 1:1–2).

This historical reconstruction of the textual background of the Septuagint translation raises new problems of its own. The MT is widely assumed to have been held in special regard by the temple, based on rabbinic references to a temple copy that was used as an exemplar for correcting manuscripts (Tov 2012: 220 n. 37). The LXX parent text is thus assumed to represent a competing textual tradition held in regard in certain non-temple circles. The question arises as to why the LXX parent text was brought to Alexandria for translation into Greek in preference to the MT. This problem becomes acute

in light of the tradition found in *The Letter of Aristeas* that the exemplar text on which the LXX was based was sent from Jerusalem to Alexandria by the high priest, who also played the decisive role in selecting the elders from Jerusalem who were authorized to make this translation. Emanuel Tov resolves this dilemma by rejecting as legendary the tradition of the temple's involvement in providing the text of the Pentateuch for translation, since in his opinion they would have sent a manuscript based on the MT (Tov 2012: 221–2). Tov offers no concrete proposal as to where the LXX parent text might have emanated.

4.2 When Was Genesis Written?

New light is shed on these issues by the simple observation that the first evidence for Pentateuchal writings in any language is the Septuagint translation itself. Prior to the appearance of the Septuagint translation in ca. 270 BCE (Gmirkin 2006: 81–8) there exist no external sources that drew on the biblical text. The first texts that quoted or alluded to biblical writings are the *Book of Watchers* (ca. 250 BCE), *Demetrius the Chronographer* (ca. 220 BCE), and the book of *Jubilees* (ca. 200–165 BCE). The first physical remains of biblical writings are biblical fragments from Qumran dating to the late third century BCE. It thus goes beyond the evidence to assume that the Hebrew Bible in any form, whether MT or proto-LXX, significantly predates the Septuagint translation. Further, recent studies (Gmirkin 2006, 2016, 2017; Wajdenbaum 2011) have suggested that the Pentateuch drew on a variety of Greek sources that come increasingly close to the time of the Septuagint itself (Table 4.2).

According to the model first proposed in Gmirkin 2006: 240–56, ruling class elites who created the Pentateuch in ca. 270 BCE drew on Greek historiographical, legal and literary writings found at the Great Library of Alexandria, including the writings of Plato (also Gmirkin 2017). These educated Jewish and Samaritan educated elites both authored the Pentateuch in its Hebrew original and translated it into Greek (the Septuagint). In Gmirkin 2017, I extensively documented the use of Plato's *Laws* as a key source for the Laws of Moses. In the current text, Plato's *Timaeus* is argued as a key source for Genesis 1–11 as a whole and for the cosmogony of Genesis 1 in particular. The proposed

Table 4.2 Greek Pentateuchal Sources

Homer, <i>Odyssey</i>	ca. 750 BCE	Genesis 24, 42–46 ³
Plato, <i>Laws</i>	ca. 350 BCE	Genesis–Deuteronomy ⁴
Hecataeus of Abdera	320–315 BCE	Exodus–Joshua (Gmirkin 2017: 222–3)
Manetho, <i>Aegyptiaca</i>	ca. 285 BCE	Exodus 1–15 (Gmirkin 2006: 170–214)
Berosus, <i>Babyloniaca</i>	278 BCE	Genesis 1–11 ⁵
Ariston	278–276 BCE	Genesis 10 (Gmirkin 2006: 160–4)
Cleitarchus	after 278 BCE	Exodus 1–15 (Gmirkin 2006: 215–21, 244)

circumstances of authorship at the Museum and Great Library of Alexandria provide a context in which Jewish scholars knowledgeable in both Greek and Hebrew could reasonably have had access to Plato's *Timaeus* and other Greek scientific writings. It follows that the proto-LXX Hebrew *Vorlage* for the Septuagint translation at Alexandria was the original text of the Pentateuch created ca. 270 BCE. The MT family of texts appears to have been a later textual phenomenon, first documented in Qumran fragments of ca. 200 BCE or later and not standardized to conform to an authoritative temple version until the first century CE, according to evidence assembled in Young 2002; cf. Tov 2015: 220 n. 37.

If, as proposed here, the authors of Genesis 1–2 also supervised its translation, and if that translation shows systematic dependence on Plato's *Timaeus*, this points to the likelihood that the Hebrew parent text composed at Alexandria was also informed by *Timaeus*. Although the authors were bilingual, one may infer from their choice to compose the text in Hebrew and then translate it into Greek that Hebrew was their primary language. (In this respect, they resembled Josephus, who composed *Wars of the Jews* in Hebrew or Aramaic before producing a second edition in Greek; cf. *War* 1.1.)

The actual process of translation may be visualized as follows (van der Louw 2008). The translator, who we posit was a member of the authorial team who collaborated on the writing of Genesis at Alexandria, will have worked with a scribe or *amanuensis* to whom he dictated the translation. The translator would have been in possession of a copy—perhaps even an autograph copy—of the newly composed Hebrew text of Genesis, which he would have orally translated, approximately word by word, a sentence at a time as the scribe recorded his dictation on a parchment. Some sentences show signs of irregularity at the ends of the sentences that point to the difficulty routinely experienced by scribes in retaining the entire sentence accurately in their minds as they wrote (van der Louw 2008: 222). Although the translation of Genesis is very literal and contains numerous Hebraisms attesting to the original language, there are occasional Egyptianisms and Aramaisms that were presumably introduced by the scribe, who may be inferred to have been of Egyptian Jewish heritage (Joosten 2010). Of perhaps the greatest interest for our purposes are the many echoes of the vocabulary of *Timaeus* in Genesis 1–2 (LXX). One may admit the possibility that the translator had participated in writing Genesis 1–2 in its Hebrew original and had consulted *Timaeus*. It seems apparent that the translator was familiar with *Timaeus*. In light of his expertise in Greek cosmogony, it seems a fair inference that the translator had participated in writing Genesis 1 in its Hebrew original. His choices in translation using terminology taken from *Timaeus* thus likely reflects his prior reading of this text in his capacity as author.

4.3 *Timaeus* Literary Parallels with Genesis 1–3

The current section examines shared literary motifs and examines parallels that suggest a direct biblical literary dependence of Genesis 1–3 on *Timaeus*. Rösel undertook to catalogue structural parallels between Genesis 1–2 and the *Timaeus* in connection with his theory of the LXX cosmogony as a Platonic interpretation of MT. Unfortunately, Rösel appears to have been unduly influenced by the Platonic interpretation of Genesis 1–2 found in the writings of Philo of Alexandria (cf. Cook 2001: 323, 326–7). In Philo’s *On the Creation of the Cosmos*, Philo interpreted Genesis allegorically, taking key elements of the first creation account in Gen 1:1–5, 26–27 to refer to Plato’s *noetic* world (cf. Runia 1986: 159–69, 2001: 132–71)—the κόσμος νοητός or intelligible world of Forms—and other elements in Genesis 1–2 to refer to the creation of the material world and corporeal life. Rösel adopted this same basic scheme to guide his detection of parallels between the *Timaeus* and Genesis 1–2 in both Hebrew and Greek versions. Plato’s *Timaeus* did in fact contain more than one account of the origin of the *kosmos*, which Rösel sought to correlate with the Genesis creation accounts. Rösel believed the LXX translators (like Philo) interpreted Gen 1:1–2, 25–26 as an account of the *noetic* world of forms, perceptible only by the mind (cf. *Timaeus* 30c–d, 36e–37a). Rösel believed the LXX translators (like Philo) interpreted Genesis 2 as an account of the sensate world (Rösel 1994: 72–87). Rösel saw no actual direct literary dependence of MT on *Timaeus*, but believed that the LXX translators were sufficiently impressed by the perceived structural parallels that they believed the biblical account could be understood as reflecting the same events as found in *Timaeus* and created the LXX in such a way as to harmonize the two, anticipating Philo’s treatment of Genesis by over 200 years. Rösel catalogued parallels between Genesis and *Timaeus*, as follows (Rösel 1994: 81) (Table 4.3).

Unfortunately, Rösel’s extremely limited catalogue of structural parallels between Genesis 1–2 and *Timaeus* involved a misunderstanding of both the *Timaeus* and LXX. To begin with, *Timaeus* contained not two but three distinct discussions of cosmogony and related topics, the first a cosmogony as the expression of divine reason (*Timaeus* 29d–47e), the second a

Table 4.3 Genesis and *Timaeus* Parallels (Martin Rösel)

Dome of firmament	Gen 1:6–8	<i>Timaeus</i> 33b
Days, months and years	Gen 1:14–19	<i>Timaeus</i> 38b
Creation of sea creatures and birds	Gen 1:20–25	<i>Timaeus</i> 40a
Creation of humankind (the soul)	Gen 1:26–28	<i>Timaeus</i> 41d
Creation of first man (the body)	Gen 2:7	<i>Timaeus</i> 69a
Mention of plants	Gen 2:8	<i>Timaeus</i> 77a
Creation of animals	Gen 2:18–20	<i>Timaeus</i> 91a
Rejoicing in goodness of creation	Gen 1:21	<i>Timaeus</i> 37c
God rests from creation	Gen 2:3	<i>Timaeus</i> 42e

stoichogony or account of the origins of matter as the expression of Necessity or physics (*Timaeus* 48a–69a) and the third a zoogony on the exercise of divine reason in shaping the human body and other life forms (*Timaeus* 69a–92c). Rösel understood Gen 1:1–2, 25–26 in the first cosmogony to refer to the creation of the *noetic* world of Forms (as in Philo’s treatment), and conflated the second and third as an account of the creation of the material world (as in Philo), but in actuality all three cosmogonies dealt with the ordering of the material universe. In addition, Rösel interpreted LXX Genesis 1 to include acts of creation as taking place within the world of Forms, suggesting (with Philo) that the creation of humankind in Gen 1:26–27 referred to the creation of the human soul in the image of the gods, and (with Philo) that the second creation of humans in Gen 2:7 referred to God’s infusion of the soul of Genesis 1 into the material human body. Contrary to Rösel’s interpretation, it is obvious that both the LXX and MT versions of Genesis 1 described the fashioning of the material universe. Rösel’s catalogue of parallels is thus not satisfactory and a new analysis of the structural parallels between *Timaeus* and Genesis 1–2 brings out many detailed correspondences that Rösel overlooked. In the following, parallels will be listed for Plato’s prologue and for each of Plato’s three cosmogonies in *Timaeus*.

4.3.1 Prologue to the Cosmogony

In the *prooem* or introduction (*Timaeus* 27d–29d), Plato presented carefully reasoned philosophical arguments that pointed to the *kosmos* or heavens not belonging to the realm of the Eternal, but necessarily having a genesis at a specific point in time when it was fashioned by its Father and Maker. This closely corresponds to the opening line in Genesis, with the beginning of God’s fashioning of the heavens and earth (Table 4.4).

Terminological overlap between Gen 1:1 and *Timaeus* include the following (Table 4.5).

Table 4.4 Prologue Thematic Parallels

Genesis of the universe	Gen 1:1	<i>Timaeus</i> 27c–29d
-------------------------	---------	------------------------

Table 4.5 Prologue Linguistic Parallels

ἀρχῆ (LXX)	Gen 1:1	<i>Timaeus</i> 27a, 28b, 29b,e, 31b, 48a–c, 69a, 79c, 90e
ἐποίησεν (LXX)	Gen 1:1	<i>Timaeus</i> 28a, 31b, 34b, 35b, 36c, 37d, 38c, 40a, 41a
οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν (LXX)	Gen 1:1	<i>Timaeus</i> 40c,e, 52b

4.3.2 *Plato's Theological Cosmogony*

Plato's first cosmogony (*Timaeus* 29d–47e) contained a philosophically and theologically plausible account of the creation of the *kosmos* by the supreme deity, whom Plato referred to here and elsewhere as *Nous* or Reason. This deity was described as a Craftsman (*Demiourgos*) who fashioned the universe in the most excellent manner. Like an artist, he used all his *techne* to produce a creation of supreme beauty, in his own image, using himself as a model. The Demiurge crafted the universe as a living being that possessed both body or physicality and soul, and invested the universe with reason, order, beauty and goodness. This creative process took place in a number of successive stages, beginning with the creation of time itself; the placing of the divine soul within the body of the universe; the confining of the universe into a perfect, rotating sphere, the only geometric shape to possess both motion and stable position; the creation of light, of the rotation of day and night; the separation of earth and sky; the creation of the stars, divine beings that moved under their own power in perfect circles in the heaven; the creation of sun and moon and their positioning within the day and night skies, respectively, to render the world visible; and arranging for the creation of all other classes of life forms. According to this well-reasoned reconstruction of the fashioning of the *kosmos* by a supreme divine intelligence, the universe and all which the Demiurge had created possessed, like the deity itself, qualities of immortality, excellence, order and goodness conferred upon them by their Creator. A problem was posed by the mortality of earthly life and even more so by the human capacity for evil. In the zoogony that concluded Plato's first cosmogony (*Timaeus* 40d–47e), Plato attributed the creation of mortal life forms in the terrestrial world, not to the Demiurge himself, but to his offspring, the traditional Greek gods.

This first, theological cosmogony has many points of contact with the account of God's acts of creation in the first biblical cosmogony of Gen 1:1–2:3. A detailed discussion of the parallels with *Timaeus* 48a–92c will appear later in the chapter. For now, it is sufficient to note the striking parallels of the sequence of creative acts, mostly unnoticed by Rösel (Table 4.6).

4.3.3 *Plato's Scientific Cosmogony*

In a second cosmogony (*Timaeus* 48a–69a), Plato's fictional astronomer and philosopher Timaeus began a new account of the creation of the *kosmos* that took into account Necessity and Chance, that is to say, ordinary mechanical physics. The Demiurge, like any craftsman, had to fashion his artistic creation out of existing materials. This was true of the *kosmos* itself, which was formed out of the primordial chaos that constituted the body of the universe prior to its organizing and refashioning by the divine Creator. The second cosmogony focused almost exclusively on this material body of the

Table 4.6 Parallel Sequence of Creative Acts

Beginnings in chaos and darkness	Gen 1:2	<i>Timaeus</i> 30a
Introduction of light	Gen 1:3–4	<i>Timaeus</i> 31b, 39b
Introduction of day and night	Gen 1:5	<i>Timaeus</i> 39c–d
Separation of earth and skies	Gen 1:6–7	<i>Timaeus</i> 32b, 53a
Dome of firmament	Gen 1:6–7, 14–15	<i>Timaeus</i> 33b
Separation of earth and seas	Gen 1:9–10	<i>Timaeus</i> 53a
Creation of plants	Gen 1:11–12	<i>Timaeus</i> 77a–b, 80a
Days, months and years	Gen 1:14	<i>Timaeus</i> 37d–e, 38b,e, 39b
Creation of celestial bodies	Gen 1:14–18	<i>Timaeus</i> 38c–39b, 40a
Creation of sea creatures and birds	Gen 1:20–25	<i>Timaeus</i> 40a
Creation of land animals	Gen 1:24–25	<i>Timaeus</i> 40a
Creation of humankind	Gen 1:26–28	<i>Timaeus</i> 41c–d, 42a,c
Completion of the <i>kosmos</i> and the Creator at rest	Gen 2:2–3	<i>Timaeus</i> 42e
Creation of mortal life by the gods	Gen 2:4–25	<i>Timaeus</i> 40d–47e

universe, prior to the first activity of the Demiurge or Creator. While the Creator of the universe was described as its Father or Maker, the preexisting material universe was described (in a highly sexist Platonic analogy) as female, a passive womb-like receptacle for the Maker's creative actions. The matter within this receptacle of being was said to be in constant chaotic motion, a mechanical winnowing or shaking by which four types of substances were separated, like attracting like, into the fiery sky above, the airy atmosphere, and the seas and the earth below, according to the usual physical theories of the natural philosophers. Yet this division into different regions was neither orderly nor beautiful, prior to the intervention of the Creator. Plato's second cosmogony, from the perspective of physics or "necessity," mainly influenced the description of the primordial chaos in Gen 1:2. Plato extended his theory of physics by describing how the residue of the irrational primordial chaos of matter confuses the senses and untamed appetites of mortal beings and leads to dissolution and death, topics not directly addressed in Genesis (Table 4.7).

4.3.4 Plato's Scientific-Theological-Mythical Cosmogony

In yet a third distinct discussion of cosmogony (*Timaeus* 69a–92c), Plato began again with an account of how the divine Reason of the Creator described in his first cosmogony acted upon the irrational material realm of his

Table 4.7 The Primordial Material Realm

Beginnings in chaos and darkness	Gen 1:2	<i>Timaeus</i> 52a–53b, 69b–c
----------------------------------	---------	-------------------------------

second cosmogony by means of Persuasion, by which the unruly material realm was brought into beautiful order, insofar as this was possible. This ordering of the *kosmos* was accomplished by the divine *techne* or arts by which the chaotic constituents of the universe were “persuaded” to take a regular and esthetically perfect form. The random motion of the primordial elements, attributed to their irregular shapes, was tamed by confining them into four well-proportioned symmetrical geometrical shapes that constituted fire, air, water and earth (*Timaeus* 53b–57d).

The irrational chaos of the primordial universe was thus persuaded to take on characteristics of order, rationality, ethics and beauty in the image of the divine creator and ruler of the *kosmos*, who subjected the universe to divine law like a king who exercises persuasion and the *techne* of statesmanship to impose ethics, excellence, reason and order on an obedient nation, to the extent that this is possible. The goodness of the *kosmos* was thus attributed to the goodness of the Craftsman or Creator and to the perfect soul that pervades the body of the *kosmos*; but the Creator and the divine World Soul could only operate by persuasion on the underlying irrational chaos of the physical universe, which always has within it the potentiality for disorder, due to the intrinsic limitations of materiality.

In this third cosmogony, Plato did not revisit the creation of the celestial realms, already fully described in the first cosmogony. Instead, Plato here focused exclusively on the creation of mortal life forms by the lesser gods in what may perhaps be better described as a zoogony rather than cosmogony. This third account has special parallels with the Second Creation Account in Gen 2:4–25 (Table 4.8).

In addition, this third cosmogony has imagery that was reused in the account of Adam and Eve in the garden (Table 4.9).

Table 4.8 Parallels in the Creation of Mortal Life

Creation of first man	Gen 2:7	<i>Timaeus</i> 69a–80e
Fashioning of bones, flesh, and respiration system	Gen 2:7, 21, 23	<i>Timaeus</i> 73e–75c, 77c–79e
Mention of plants	Gen 2:9	<i>Timaeus</i> 77a–b, 80e (food)
Creation of animals	Gen 2:18–20	<i>Timaeus</i> 91a
Creation of woman	Gen 2:21–23	<i>Timaeus</i> 91a–c
Origins of sex	Gen 2:24; 3:16; 4:1	<i>Timaeus</i> 90d–91e

Table 4.9 Parallel Imagery Garden of Eden

Eating from the fruit of the tree	Gen 3:2–3, 6	<i>Timaeus</i> 91c
The legless serpent as the lowest of all animals	Gen 3:14	<i>Timaeus</i> 92a

Besides the previously noted motifs and themes, other motifs run through all three cosmogonies: the creation of the *kosmos* by the Creator, but the creation of humanity by the lesser gods (Gen 1:26; 2:7, 22; cf. *Timaeus* 40b–42e); the creation of the universe and/or humans in the divine image (Gen 1:26; cf. *Timaeus* 41c, 42e–43a); the anxiety of the gods about human immortality (Gen 3:22; cf. *Timaeus* 41c; Loader 2008: 218; Wajdenbaum 2011: 94); and the problem of theodicy or how to exonerate God from human wickedness and flaws in the created order (Gen 3; cf. *Timaeus* 42d–e). These various literary parallels between Genesis 1–2 and Plato’s *Timaeus* are not restricted to the Septuagint translation but are equally valid for the MT, indicating that the original Hebrew text of Genesis 1–2 drew extensively on the *Timaeus*.

4.4 *Timaeus* Conceptual and Philosophical Parallels

The preceding section examined structural parallels between Genesis 1–2 and *Timaeus* that point to a direct literary dependence. The current section examines conceptual parallels. The purpose is to determine to what extent, if any, the cosmogony in Genesis 1 reflects Plato’s distinctive philosophical ideas.

We may reject from the outset the notion put forward by Philo (and Rösler 1994) that part of the creation account in Genesis 1, either in its Hebrew original or in the LXX translation, took place within the world of Forms. Rösler (and Philo) believed that the LXX’s “invisible” primordial world of Gen 1:2 alluded to the ideal world of Forms, which could be comprehended, not through the senses, but only by the mind; that the creation of humans in God’s image in Gen 1:26 alluded to the soul; and that the creation of mortal humans in Gen 2:7 referred to placing the created soul of Gen 1:26 into a mortal body. This interpretation will be set aside in favor of an interpretation of the cosmogony of Genesis 1 as a description of the origins of the physical universe.

The present section will seek to identify and isolate the scientific and theological elements in Genesis 1 and correlate the theological content with Plato’s theological treatment of cosmogony in *Timaeus*. This separation of scientific and theological literary elements is most efficiently done by means of form criticism.

It has long been recognized that the account of creative acts in Gen 1:3–2:3 follows a regular pattern with standard literary formulae (cf. Cook 1987, 2001: 317, 2016: 3). These literary elements may be identified as follows.

- A. “And God said ...”
- B. “And it was so.”
- C. Creative act performed by God
- D. “And God beheld, and it was good.”
- E. “And evening and morning were day X”
- F. Naming of created entities
- G. Blessing on (MT) or command to (LXX) created entities

Of these seven literary elements, A–E were standard to each day and A–D to each individual divine creative act (including each of the two creative acts on days 3 and 5). A chart of the nine creative acts in Gen 1:2–2:3 listing their respective literary elements is as follows, noting differences between MT and LXX in the last column (Table 4.10).

It is noteworthy that the LXX contains a closer conformity to the standard format, including elements missing from MT on Day 2 (D), the first creative act of Day 3 (C) and Day 5 (B). Conversely MT contains one element missing from LXX Day 2 (B), but this has been explained as having dropped out of the earliest text of LXX due to *homoioarkton* (Hendel 1998: 30; cf. van der Louw 2007: 368–71). The reason why LXX better conforms to the standard format has usually been explained by either a harmonizing tendency in LXX that added these expected elements for the sake of internal consistency (Hendel 1998: 81–92; cf. Rösel 1998: 65), or by LXX representing a *Vorlage* that had a more complete implementation of this standard format (Hendel 1998: 120–1), some of which later fell out of the MT. It is my position that LXX more closely conforms to the Hebrew original composed in ca. 270 BCE that may have fully implemented the standard format.

Within the structural pattern charted out above, one may correlate scientific, theological and philosophical elements with specific recurring structural elements.

4.4.1 *Scientific Content*

This appears exclusively in elements A (“And God said ...”) and C (divine creative acts). The actions narrated in C as a rule mirror the divine commands in A. These commands and actions often relate to phases in the organization of the *kosmos* as described by Greek natural philosophers (including Plato), such as the separation of light and dark, earth and sky, earth and sea, the emergence of life forms and so forth.

Table 4.10 Literary Elements in Creative Acts

Day 1	Gen 1:3–5	MT: ACDCFE	LXX: ACDCFE	
Day 2	Gen 1:6–8	MT: ACBFE	LXX: ACFDE	MT: B vs. LXX: D
Day 3	Gen 1:9–10	MT: ABFD	LXX: ABCFD	LXX: C
Day 3	Gen 1:11–13	MT: ABCDE	LXX: ABCDE	
Day 4	Gen 1:14–19	MT: ABCDE	LXX: ABCDE	
Day 5	Gen 1:20–23	MT: ACDGE	LXX: ABCDGE	LXX: B
Day 6	Gen 1:24–25	MT: ABCD	LXX: ABCD	
Day 6	Gen 1:26–31	MT: ACGBDE	LXX: ACGBDE	
Day 7	Gen 2:1–3	MT: CG	LXX: CG	

4.4.2 Teleology

The recurring assertion of divine purpose (*telos*) occurs in elements A (“And God said ...”), B (“and it was so”), C (divine creative acts), D (the goodness of creation) and G (the blessing upon creation). According to Presocratic Greek natural philosophers, the *kosmos* emerged largely as a result of physics (necessity or chance), but Plato’s unique contribution was to posit a divine purpose and guidance at every stage of creation. This is systematically expressed through the standard assertions of God’s divine forethought and intention (A), the execution of that purposeful intention (B and C), and the beauty and perfection of the result (D and G). In *Timaeus*, Plato claimed that the Creator’s purpose in making the *kosmos* was to fashion something of exceeding goodness and excellence, like the Creator himself (*Timaeus* 29a, 30a–b, 68e; cf. Mikalson 2010: 216–7). Plato famously had the Creator rejoice in the goodness of his creation (*Timaeus* 37c; cf. Plutarch, *Lycurgus* 29.1). Genesis 1 systematically expositis the same themes of divine purpose and goodness expressed in the created *kosmos*.

4.4.3 The Demiurge

In the *Timaeus*, God is both Creator (Demiurge or Craftsman) and Father of the *kosmos*. In Genesis 1–2, God is portrayed as a Craftsman or Creator in the prologue (Gen 1:1), in literary element C (divine creative acts), and in Gen 2:4, 7–8, 18–19; 3:1. The verbs for God’s creative work in Gen 2:7–8, 19 (Hebrew: יצר; Greek: ἐπλασεν) are appropriate to craftsmen such as potters (van der Meer 2016: 46). In Plato, craftsmanship involved three essential elements: raw materials to work with, an image or model for the artisan to reproduce, and an excellence or goodness in the created artwork (Plato, *Gorgias* 500e–501c, 503d–504a; cf. Sedley 2007: 107–8). Such elements were all prominent in *Timaeus*, including the primordial chaos that formed the raw materials from which the *kosmos* was formed, God (the Demiurge) as the model in whose perfect image the *kosmos* was fashioned, and the goodness or excellence of the universe so created. These elements were also prominent in the cosmogony of Genesis 1, including the primordial chaos from which the heavens and earth were fashioned (Gen 1:2), humanity created in the image and likeness of the gods (Gen 1:26), each type of plant and animal reproducing their own kind (Gen 1:11–12, 21, 24–25) and *omoiatata* or likeness (Gen 1:11–12 [LXX only]; cf. 1:26),⁶ and the goodness of God’s creation.

4.4.4 Mythical Dialogue

Although *Timaeus* is primarily concerned with science and philosophy, the anthropomorphic image of the Creator is given a full mythical expression in the Creator’s speech to his offspring and descendants, the lesser gods, in

Timaeus 41b–d. Genesis 1 also contains mythical speech by the Creator in structural elements A (“And God said ...”), F (the naming of created entities) and G (divine blessings of created life forms). The conversation among the gods in Gen 1:26 forms an especially significant parallel to *Timaeus*.

4.4.5 Platonic *Diairesis*

Elements of Plato’s system of classification of life forms are present in structural elements A (“And God said...”) and C (divine creative acts). Plato developed a unique methodology for classifying, analyzing and organizing concepts and entities that is illustrated in many of his dialogs, notably in *Sophist* 219a–221a and *Statesman* 258b–267c. This method of classification was the immediate forerunner of Aristotle’s biological taxonomy, which later developed into the modern system of biological classification known as Linnaean taxonomy. Plato’s method of systematically organizing entities and phenomena used *diaphora* (*differentia*) to generate a *diairesis* (division) into two or more groups that separated them into *genos* (kind) and *eidos* (form or species) according to their common characteristics. Plato believed every such kind and species of entity in the real world had a corresponding ideal image in the divine world of Forms whose nature could be comprehended through reason by the correct application of classification. Plato held that each such group of entities and the Form on which they were based had a proper name by which it was known, and that etymological speculation involving that name could reveal aspects of the divine Form. These elements of classification are all prominent in Genesis 1, especially in respect to the various types of created life forms: the existence of an ideal image or likeness that is the prototype of every type of created being (Gen 1:11–12 [LXX], 26); the characteristic Platonic division or categorization of life forms by *genos* and species (Gen 1:11–12, 21, 24–27); the identification of characteristics that set off and distinguished the various species (grasses and fruit trees with self-contained seeds [Gen 1:11–12, 30], sea monsters, reptiles and fish of the sea [Gen 1:21, 26, 30], feathered birds of the air [Gen 1:21–22, 28, 30], four-footed domestic animals, wild beasts and crawling reptiles of the earth [Gen 1:24–25, 28–30]). Plato’s method of *diairesis* was applied to animals in *Statesman* 264a–266b. Plato’s *Timaeus* identified five types of ensouled beings: the stars of the heaven, which he claimed were divine (*Timaeus* 40b; *Laws* 10.899b); the birds of the air, the fish of the sea and the animals of the earth (*Timaeus* 91d–92b), which possessed varying degrees of intelligence; and besides these, plants, which possessed a soul with sensations and appetites but no reason (*Timaeus* 77b). Other than the category of heavenly stars, the basic divisions of life forms in *Timaeus* are in striking correspondence with Genesis 1 (including the description of fish, birds and animals as living souls [ψυχὴν ζῶσαν], along with plants). The biblical description of life forms each reproducing after their own distinctive kind (γένος) and likeness (ὁμοιότητα) is a significant expression of Platonic

biological classification; see *Statesman* 285a–b on classification into different species (εἶδος) on the basis of similarity (ὁμοιότητος).

Aristotle rejected Plato’s method of *diairesis* for animal classification as simplistic. Plato used single *differentia* to break a class into two equal parts whenever possible. For instance, Plato’s *Statesman* divided animals into aquatic and land, land animals into walking and non-walking, walking into two-footed and four-footed, four-footed into cloven-hooved and non-cloven-hooved, two-footed into feathered and non-feathered (i.e., men). Other divisions included those of tame and wild animals. Aristotle found such divisions largely artificial and he grouped animals by using multiple differentials. For instance, birds constituted a distinct class of animals by virtue of possessing feathers, beaks, warm blood and laying eggs with hard shells (Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics* 2.642b–644a).

The division of animals into clean and unclean in Leviticus 11 and Deut 14:3–20 by complex criteria show a greater affinity with advanced criteria of biological taxonomy found in Aristotle’s writings. For instance, clean fishes must have both fins and scales (Lev 11:9) and clean beasts of the earth must be cloven-hooved and chew the cud (Lev 11:3). Lev 11:6, like Aristotle, *Natural History* 9.50, noted the hare as an animal that chewed its cud.

The mention of clean and unclean animals in Gen 7:2–3 suggests an underlying awareness of the Aristotelian classifications in Leviticus. An important question is to which degree, if any, Genesis 1 also displays awareness of Aristotelian taxonomy. An indicator might be the mention of great sea monsters (LXX κήτη) of the ocean (Gen 1:21), which appears to reflect Aristotle’s class of cetaceans (which included whales and dolphins); but the omission of other Aristotelian classes such as crustaceans and cephalopods militates against the use of Aristotle here. Instead, Genesis 1 closely conforms to Platonic groupings in *Timaeus*, not only in the division into creatures of the air, water and land, but the division of vegetation into trees, grasses and plants with seeds (cf. *Timaeus* 77a), and the division of land animals into (LXX four-footed) cattle, wild animals and creeping creatures (cf. the similar taxonomy in *Timaeus* 92a).

4.4.6 Platonic Etymologies

Plato’s interest in names and etymologies appears primarily in structural elements F (naming of created entities). The biblical preoccupation with names is another expression of Platonic influence: day and night (Gen 1:5); heaven (Gen 1:8); earth and seas (Gen 1:10); the first man Adam (Gen 2:7, implied); every type of domestic and wild animal and bird, named by Adam (Gen 2:19–20); the first woman, named by Adam (Gen 2:23) and later re-named Eve (Gen 3:10). Platonic etymological speculations (Plato, *Cratylus* 385e–427d) based on phonetic similarity (resembling puns) are present in the naming of the first man (“Adam, earth”) and woman (“Eve or Zoe, the

mother of all living”; cf. *Cratylus* 414a, “The word γυνή [woman] seems to me to be much the same as γονή [birth]”).

From the above analysis, it is evident that elements of Platonic theology and philosophy may be detected in all the structural elements of Genesis 1. The scientific content of Gen 1:1–2:3 is concentrated in structural elements A (“And God said ...”) and C (divine creative acts). In the running commentary on Genesis 1 in the next chapter, the scientific content will be of special interest, since it is possible to detect both Platonic and non-Platonic (notably Stoic) influences, demonstrating that the biblical authors did not derive their cosmogony exclusively from Plato, but also took into account other Greek ideas about the origin of the *kosmos*.

Notes

- 1 See Rösel 1994 *passim*. *Timaeus* references and quotes in this book are taken from the standard Loeb edition (Bury 1929).
- 2 See van der Meer 2016: 67, 73–4 and van der Louw 2007: 95 on *psyche* in Gen 2:7; van der Meer 2016: 72–3 on *proa* at Gen 2:7; van der Meer 2016: 64 and van der Louw 2007: 95 on *plasso* at Gen 2:7.
- 3 The scene at the well in Genesis 24 contains numerous points of contact with the encounter of Odysseus and Nausica in *Odyssey* 6–13 (Kupitz 2014). The story of the revelation of Joseph’s identity to his family in Genesis 42–46 contains a cluster of shared motifs with the return of Ulysses in *Odyssey* books 17–24, as discussed in Wajdenbaum 2011: 138–41; Louden 2011: 57–194; cf. Brodie 2001: 447–94 surveying Homeric parallels in Genesis.
- 4 Literary dependence of some Pentateuchal laws on Plato’s *Laws* was first argued by Wajdenbaum (2011: 159–63, 175–8, 192–205). See now extensively Gmirkin 2017.
- 5 Gmirkin 2006: 89–139. Scholars of the past have typically discounted one especially striking parallel between the *Babyloniaca* and the biblical text, namely the world’s origin in “darkness and water” in both texts, as a Jewish interpolation to the *Babyloniaca*. This passage was shown to be authentic and indicative of likely biblical literary dependence on the *Babyloniaca* at Gmirkin 2006: 96–100.
- 6 The reproduction of plants after their likeness in Gen 1:11–12 is present in the LXX (*omoiatata*) but not the MT, suggesting that the original Hebrew *Vorlage* of the LXX was closer to Plato than the later MT.

Bibliography

- Brodie, Thomas L. *Genesis as Dialogue: A Literary, Historical, and Theological Commentary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Brown, William P. *Structure, Role and Ideology in the Hebrew and Greek Texts of Genesis 1:1–2:3*. SBLDS 132. Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1993.
- Bury, Robert Gregg. *Plato: Timaeus, Critias, Cleitophon, Menexenus, Epistles*. LCL 234. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1929.
- Cook, Johann. “The Exegesis of the Greek Genesis,” in *VI Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies, Jerusalem 1986*. Claude E. Cox (ed.), 91–125. Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1987.

- Cook, Johann. "The Septuagint of Genesis: Text and/or Interpretation?" *Studies in the Book of Genesis: Literature, Redaction and History*. André Wénin (ed.), 315–329. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2001.
- Cook, Johann. "The Text-Critical and Exegetical Value of the Dead Sea Scrolls." *HTS* 72 (2016): 1–6. 10.4102/hts.v27i4.3280.
- Davila, James R. "New Qumran Readings for Genesis One," in *Of Scribes and Scrolls: Studies on the Hebrew Bible, Intertestamental Judaism, and Christian Origins Presented to John Strugnell*. Harold W. Attridge, John J. Collins and Thomas H. Tobin (eds.), 3–11. College Theology Resources in Religion 5. Lanham, NY: University Press of America, 1990.
- Davila, James R. "4QGenh1," in *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert XII, Qumran Cave 4 VII, Genesis to Numbers*. E. Ulrich, F.M. Cross, J.R. Davila, N. Jastrum, J.E. Sanderson, E. Tov and J. Strugnell (eds.), 60–61. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994.
- Gmirkin, Russell E. *Berosus and Genesis, Manetho and Exodus: Hellenistic Histories and the Date of the Pentateuch*. Library of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 433. CIS 15. New York: T & T Clark, 2006.
- Gmirkin, Russell E. "Greek Genres and the Hebrew Bible," in *Biblical Interpretation Beyond Historicity*. Ingrid Hjelm and Thomas L. Thompson (eds.), 91–102. Copenhagen International Seminar. Changing Perspectives 7. London: Routledge, 2016.
- Gmirkin, Russell E. *Plato and the Creation of the Hebrew Bible*. Copenhagen International Seminar. London: Routledge, 2017.
- Hendel, Ronald S. *The Text of Genesis 1–11: Textual Studies and Critical Edition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Joosten, Jan. "The Aramaic Background of the Seventy." *BIOSCS* 43 (2010): 53–72.
- Kupitz, Yaakov S. "Stranger and City Girl: An Isomorphism between Genesis 24 and Homer's *Odyssey* 6–13," in *The Bible and Hellenism: Greek Influence on Jewish and Early Christian Literature*. Thomas L. Thompson and Philippe Wajdenbaum (eds.), 117–145. Copenhagen International Seminar. Durham, NC: Acumen, 2014.
- Loader, William R.G. "Sexuality and Ptolemy's Greek Bible: Genesis 1–3 in Translation '... Things which they Altered for King Ptolemy' (Genesis Rabbah 8.11)," in *Ptolemy II Philadelphus and his World*. Paul R. McKechnie and Philippe Guillaume (eds.), 207–232. Leiden: Brill, 2008.
- Louden, Bruce. *Homer's Odyssey and the Near-East*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Mikalson, Jon D. *Greek Popular Religion in Greek Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Niesiołowski-Spanò. Łukasz. "Primeval History in the Persian Period?" *SJOT* 21 (2007): 106–126.
- Pelikan, Jaroslav. *What Has Athens to Do with Jerusalem: Timaeus and Genesis in Counterpoint*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1997.
- Rösel, Martin. *Übersetzung als Vollendung der Auslegung: Studien zur Genesis Septuaginta*. BZAW 223. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1994.
- Rösel, Martin. "The Text-Critical Value of Septuagint-Genesis." *BIOSCS* 31 (1998): 62–70.
- Runia, David T. *Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus of Plato*. Philosophia Antiqua 44. Leiden: Brill, 1986.

- Runia, David T. *On the Creation of the Cosmos According to Moses: Introduction, Translation and Commentary*. Philo of Alexandria Commentary Series 1. Leiden: Brill, 2001.
- Sedley, David. *Creationism and its Critics in Antiquity*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007.
- Tov, Emanuel. *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2012.
- Tov, Emanuel. *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research*. Jerusalem Biblical Studies 8. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015.
- van der Louw, Theo A.W. *Transformations in the Septuagint: Towards and Interaction of Septuagint Studies and Translation Studies*. CBET 47. Leuven: Peeters, 2007.
- van der Louw, Theo A.W. "The Dictation of the Septuagint Version." *JSJ* 39 (2008): 211–229.
- van der Meer, Michael N. "Anthropology in the Ancient Greek Versions of Gen 2:7," in *Dust of the Ground and Breath of Life (Gen 2:7): The Problem of a Dualistic Anthropology in Early Judaism and Christianity*. Jacques T.A.G.M. van Ruiten and George H. van Kooten (eds.), 36–57. Themes in Biblical Narrative 20. Leiden: Brill, 2016.
- van der Meer, Michael N. "The Greek Translators of the Pentateuch and the Epicureans Torah and Tradition," in *Torah and Tradition: Papers Read at the Sixteenth Joint Meeting of the Society for Old Testament Study and the Oudtestamentisch Werkgezelschap*. Klaas Spronk and Hans Barstad (eds.), 176–200. Leiden: Brill, 2017.
- Wajdenbaum, Philippe. *Argonauts of the Desert: Structural Analysis of the Hebrew Bible*. Sheffield: Equinox Publishing, 2011.
- Young, Ian. "The Stabilization of the Biblical Text in the Light of Qumran and Masada: A Challenge for Conventional Qumran Chronology?" *DSD* 9 (2002): 564–590.

5 Genesis 1 as Science

The preceding Chapters 2–4 have laid the foundations for a more detailed exposition of Genesis 1–11 in Chapters 5–7. In the current chapter Gen 1:1–2:3, commonly called the First Creation Account, will be analyzed verse by verse in light of Plato’s *Timaeus* and other Greek scientific writings.

Plato’s *Timaeus* and *Critias* present four distinct accounts of the origin of the world set in primordial times. These represent four successive phases in the development of the present world (the first two presented out of order in *Timaeus*).

1. Plato’s scientific stoichogony (*Timaeus* 48a–69a). Since every *demiourgos* or craftsman uses existing material, Plato thought it appropriate to describe how the supreme Demiurge prepared the materials out of which he fashioned the *kosmos*. This preexistent material universe was a primordial chaos ruled by what we would today describe as Physics, but which Plato described as Chance and Necessity. His object was to describe how the original elements (*stoichaeae*) of fire, air, water and earth emerged out of the primordial material chaos. This phase closely corresponds to the description of the primordial chaos at Gen 1:2.
2. Plato’s theological cosmogony (*Timaeus* 29d–47e). Plato here described the origin of the *kosmos* as order and adornment guided by the divine purpose and intelligent action of the Demiurge or Creator (*Timaeus* 29d–40d). This phase closely corresponds to the cosmogony of Gen 1:3–2:3. Plato concluded with the creation of mortal life created by the offspring of the Demiurge, namely the traditional anthropomorphic gods of the Greeks (*Timaeus* 40d–47e). This zoogony closely corresponds to the zoogony and tale of primordial paradise in Genesis 2–3.
3. Plato’s mythical-scientific zoogony (*Timaeus* 69a–92c). The Demiurge instructed the traditional Greek gods to place a rational soul in mortal man in order to tame the blind chaos and appetites of the material body. The gods also had to create the lesser life forms, including women. Echoes of this phase also appear in Genesis 2–3.
4. Plato’s mythical politogony (*Critias*). In this phase, early humanity tried to abide by the divine laws of the gods who ruled the various nations of

the primordial world. A war broke out between the excellent Athenians and the wicked Atlantians which ended with a flood sent by Zeus against the primordial world that destroyed all but a small remnant. This polytomy corresponds closely to the history of primordial world down to the biblical flood story in Genesis 4–11.

The detailed commentary that follows will assume the possibility and even likelihood that the First Creation Account of Genesis 1 was influenced by Plato's *Timaeus* and invoke the LXX translation on points where it is possible that the Greek clarifies the meaning of the Hebrew. I will also consider the possibility that textual additions in the LXX, which clearly echo the vocabulary and concepts of *Timaeus*, reflect the original *Vorlage* of the Hebrew text composed at Alexandria in ca. 270 BCE. The aim of this commentary is to identify Greek mythical and scientific descriptions of the earliest universe and illustrate the biblical authors' use of Plato and other Greek natural philosophers in the scientific-theological-mythical cosmogony in the First Creation Account. The theological elements in Genesis 1 are almost wholly reliant on Plato's philosophy and have been adequately discussed in Chapter 4. The scientific elements are thus the main focus of the present chapter. Although the overall sequence of events in Genesis 1 broadly conforms to those found in Plato's *Timaeus*, some of the specific scientific explanations for the development of the *kosmos* drew on other Greek natural philosophers, pointing to the advanced education of the Hellenized biblical authors in contemporary science.

5.1 The Prologue

The First Creation Account in Genesis begins as follows.

(1:1 MT) When God began to create the heavens and the earth.¹

The interpretation of the opening line of Genesis down through the centuries has mostly centered around two possibilities: that it describes the first act of creation, bringing the heavens and earth into existence *ex nihilo*, or that it represents a title or superscript for the First Creation of Gen 1:1–2:3. Based on Plato's *Timaeus*, there exists a third possibility that has not previously been explored, that it constitutes a prologue or introduction to what follows.

5.1.1 *Gen 1:1 as Act of Creation*

Gen 1:1 as act of creation. If one takes Greek cosmogonies as our guide, one may reject an interpretation of Gen 1:1 as referring either to the genesis of the universe as a whole or to God bringing the heavens and earth into existence out of nothing. As Parmenides argued, “nothing comes from nothing” (Parmenides, *On Nature* 95–109; Simplicius, *Physics* 117.4; 145.1;

Plato, *Parmenides* 163c). The notion of the universe having been created *ex nihilo*, out of nothing, does not appear in Greek cosmogonies, nor, it would seem, in the Hebrew Bible. The first evidence potentially supporting a developing notion of *creation ex nihilo* in Hellenistic Judaism, namely 2 Macc. 7.28, is notoriously ambiguous (May 1994: 6–8, noting similar language for parents creating offspring out of nothing in Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 2.2.3; cf. Anderson 2018: 16), and in Philo (May 1994: 9–21; Sterling 2018). May (1994) suggests that an explicit doctrine of *creation ex nihilo* may have originated as late as the writings of the Church Fathers, who contrasted their notion of God’s creation of the universe out of non-being with Greek cosmogonies that viewed the universe as eternal.

That Gen 1:1 does not itself describe a creative act, whether *ex nihilo* or from some material coeternal with God (i.e., the chaos of Gen 1:2), is indicated by several considerations. First, an actual creation of the heavens was not narrated until Gen 1:6–8, and of the earth not until Gen 1:9–10. Second, as discussed in Chapter 4, throughout Genesis 1 divine creative acts were narrated using the formulas “And God said, ‘Let there be X’” (Gen 1:3, 14) or “Let X do Y” (Gen 1:6, 9, 11, 20, 24, 26). No such formulas appear in Gen 1:1. Third, the anticipatory character of Gen 1:1 appears indicated by its mirror statement in the later conclusion of Gen 2:1, “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude.” The creation of the heavens and earth and its multitude was the topic of the entire narrative of Gen 1:2–31, in between “the beginning of the creation of the heavens and the earth” at Gen 1:1 and “the completion of the heavens and the earth” at Gen 2:1.

5.1.2 Gen 1:1 as Title

Two observations at first tend to support Gen 1:1 as a title to the cosmogony of Gen 1:2–2:3 that follows. First, titles or superscripts appear throughout Genesis to introduce new topics or blocks of narrative, although these typically used a *toledot* formula (Gen 2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10; 11:27; 25:14; 36:1; 37:2). Such titles or superscripts provided an introductory identification of subject matter. If Gen 1:1 was not a title, the cosmogony of Gen 1:1–2:3 would constitute virtually the only block of text in Genesis with no antecedent title. Second, Gen 1:1 appears to closely parallel the title of Book 1 of the *Babyloniaca* by Berossus written ca. 280 BCE.² The significance of this parallel is strengthened by the occasional literary dependence of the primordial history of Genesis 1–11 on the *Babyloniaca* of Berossus.³ Nevertheless, if Gen 1:1 was a title, one would expect the mandatory presence of the word *toledot*, reading something like “the generations of the heavens and the earth” (Gen 2:4 MT) or perhaps “the book of the origins of the heavens and the earth” (Gen 2:4 LXX). This argues against Gen 1:1 as a title or superscript. Note that the discourse on cosmogony in *Timaeus* lacks a formal title, but begins with an informal introduction to the topics to

follow: “[Timaeus] should speak first, beginning with the origin of the Cosmos and ending with the generation of mankind” (*Timaeus* 27a; cf. 27c, 48e, 90e, 91c). Given that Gen 1:1 conforms to neither other titles in Genesis nor a titular formula in *Timaeus*, some other explanation should be sought.

5.1.3 *Gen 1:1 as Prologue*

A new possibility suggested by comparison with Plato’s *Timaeus* is that Gen 1:1 constitutes a short introduction or prologue, such as also appears at *Timaeus* 27d–29d, prefacing Plato’s first cosmogony. This hypothesis of a formal structural parallel between Gen 1:1 and *Timaeus* 27d–29d can be tested by comparing the content of these two passages. The paragraphs immediately following below will first summarize Plato’s prologue, which is interesting in its own right and relevant to the concepts underlying Genesis 1. Then specific parallels between Plato’s prologue and Gen 1:1 will be catalogued and discussed.

Plato’s prologue is a formal philosophical dialectic argument on the nature of existence (Runia 1997: 113). Plato here argued that there were two basic realms of existence: Being and Becoming (*Timaeus* 27e, 28a,c; Runia 1997: 108). Those things in the sensible realm of Becoming were necessarily corporeal, visible, tangible, generated at some point in time, and subject to dissolution (*Timaeus* 28a,c). The visible heavens and earth and all that existed therein were part of the sensible realm of Becoming, and as such were changeable, physical, and must necessarily have been generated at some definite point in time (*Timaeus* 28a–c, 29a). According to Plato’s argument, all things generated, including the present ordered universe, must have some Cause outside itself (*Timaeus* 28a,c). There must therefore exist beyond the temporal changeable world of Becoming another transcendent realm, that of Being, where that Cause must be sought.⁴

Those things in the invisible realm of Being were eternal, unchanging, neither generated nor passing into dissolution (*Timaeus* 27d–28a, 36e–37a). Such eternal entities, which included Ideas or Forms (εἶδος), could only be comprehended by Reason, not by the senses (*Timaeus* 28a, 51a,d, 52a–b). Plato identified the ultimate cause of the present universe as a divine Craftsman or Demiurge (*Timaeus* 28a) who resided in the eternal realm of Being, outside and beyond the sensible universe, the Father and Maker (*Timaeus* 29a; cf. Runia 1997: 110–1) and supreme Architect of the visible world (*Timaeus* 29a). Plato held that this Demiurge or Craftsman, the Creator of the universe, must have brought the *kosmos* into its current ordered state at some definite beginning point (*Timaeus* 28b–c), its ἀρχή (*Timaeus* 28b; cf. Runia 1997: 111) and genesis (*Timaeus* 29c). It was this preliminary philosophical deduction that laid the groundwork that justified the detailed cosmogony that followed.

The ideas found in Plato’s prologue are conveyed with great density and brevity in Gen 1:1, in both its Hebrew and Greek versions.

- Plato claimed that the present ordered world—whether one called it the Heavens or *kosmos* or preferred some other name (*Timaeus* 28b)⁵—had a definite beginning point in the past. Gen 1:1 likewise held that the heavens and earth were not eternal, but came into existence at a definite beginning point in the past. Both Genesis 1 and *Timaeus* sought to give an account of the genesis of the present world.
- Both *Timaeus* and Gen 1:1 also dealt with ultimate causes. This is especially prominent in the Greek.

(1:1 LXX) ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν

The word ἀρχῇ has two possible senses, either beginning or cause. Which meaning of ἀρχῇ applied in Gen 1:1 was a topic of considerable debate in Roman antiquity.⁶ In Plato’s cosmogony, the visible *kosmos* had a beginning (*Timaeus* 28b–c) and αἴτιος or cause (*Timaeus* 28a,c, 29a,d, 40b; cf. 44c, 46c–e, 47b, 48a, 68e, 76d), both meanings conveyed by the Greek word ἀρχῇ, which appears in inflected forms five times in *Timaeus* 49d–e alone (Runia 1997: 111). The use of ἀρχῇ in Gen 1:1 (LXX) resonates with both usages, accounting for both the beginning of the heavens and earth and their ultimate cause, namely the Creator.

- The god of Genesis 1, like the Demiurge of Plato’s *Timaeus*, existed prior to and outside the created sensible universe. Indeed, the eternal god of Genesis 1 existed prior to time itself, which was created with the *kosmos* as in *Timaeus*.⁷
- Gen 1:1 depicted God as a craftsman who “fashioned” the heavens and earth, a role virtually identical to that of Plato’s Demiurge or Craftsman. In the theories of earlier Greek natural philosophers, the divine presence at the origins of the universe played an impersonal physical role, if any. But Plato gave an active, purposeful “creationist” role to the Demiurge as Craftsman in *Timaeus* (cf. Sedley 2007: 93–102), postulated on philosophical grounds in the prologue in *Timaeus* 27d–29d. The purposeful activities of God as divine Craftsman in Genesis 1 closely correspond to those of the Demiurge in *Timaeus*.

The basic conclusions of the philosophical prologue to the cosmogony in *Timaeus* were conveyed with great accuracy and economy in Gen 1:1, in which the genesis or “becoming” of the present world had a definite beginning point and cause when the Creator began to fashion the heavens and the earth. This set the stage for the subsequent detailed narrative about the fashioning of the *kosmos* that followed.

5.2 The Primordial Chaos and Plato’s *Timaeus*

The biblical cosmogony began with a description of the primordial universe as it was before God introduced order into it through subsequent acts of creation.

(1:2 MT) The earth was waste and empty⁸ (*tohu wabohu*) and darkness covered the face of the deep (*tehom*) and a divine wind (*ruach*) swept over the face of the waters (*mayim*).

(1:2 LXX) But the earth (γῆ) was invisible and unformed (ἀόρατος καὶ ἀκατασκεύαστος); and darkness was upon the abyss (ἀβύσσου). And God's spirit (πνεῦμα θεοῦ) bore upon the waters (ὑδατος).

1 En. 21.1–2: “I traveled to where it was chaotic. And there I saw a terrible thing. I saw neither heaven above, nor firmly founded earth, but a chaotic and terrible place.”

Gen 1:2 describes the universe as formless, lifeless and bathed in perpetual darkness, in approximate correspondence with Greek mythical and scientific descriptions of the earliest universe (*pan*) as “Chaos,”⁹ utterly lacking in the structure and order of the present *kosmos*. Gen 1:2 may thus be understood as a description of the primordial chaos out of which God fashioned the present world (an understanding reflected in 1 En. 21.1–2, quoted above). Most Greek mythical cosmogonies also claimed that the universe began in darkness:¹⁰ a combination of chaos and darkness and water was featured in the creation myth found in Hesiod, *Theogony* 123–34; the Hellenistic Era creation myth in the *Babyloniaca* of Berossus;¹¹ and the Hellenistic Era cosmogony found in the Phoenician History of Sanchunthion.¹² Among the Greek natural philosophers, Thales and Zeno had cosmogonies in which the universe began with a watery phase (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.136; Seneca, *Natural Questions* 3.13.1; Gregory 2011: 188).

The description of the formless early universe at Gen 1:2 shows direct influence from two Greek philosophers, Plato and Zeno. The influence of Plato's *Timaeus* on Gen 1:2 is especially prominent in the Greek. The LXX description of the earth as “invisible and unformed” (ἀόρατος καὶ ἀκατασκεύαστος) directly and unmistakably echoes the chaotic earliest material universe as “invisible and unshaped” (ἀνόρατον καὶ ἄμορφον) in *Timaeus* 51a–b, as is commonly noted.¹³ Nevertheless, as discussed below, there are aspects of Gen 1:2 in both Hebrew and Greek versions that do not fully conform to Plato's description, but also appear to draw on the latest scientific theories on cosmogony by Zeno.

Zeno of Citium (ca. 332–262 BCE) founded the philosophy of Stoicism, named after the Stoa, the university Zeno founded at Athens. Zeno's primary philosophical influences were the works of Plato and Aristotle (Hahn 1977).¹⁴ Stoicism was very systematic and comprehensive in its organization (Long and Sedley 1987: 1.158–62). It aimed to achieve a rigorous scientific understanding of both god and humans (Aetius 1, Preface 2; Seneca, *Letters* 89.4–5) and was marked by its rational theology (Long and Sedley 1987: 1.267).

Zeno's physical conception of the universe was very similar to Plato's. Both had the same cosmological structure, with an immobile earth and oceans at the center, then a layer of air, followed by the heavens with the orbits of the planets and the rotating outermost circuits of the stars in the distant aether.¹⁵ Both had a similar theology that viewed God as intelligent, eternal and wholly good (Aetius 1.7.23; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.147; Gregory 2011: 189). Both viewed the universe as a living creature animated by a divine World Soul that primarily resided in the outmost fiery aetherial reaches of the heavens, but which also permeated the *kosmos*.¹⁶ Both viewed the celestial bodies as ensouled fiery divinities that moved under their own intelligence and self-direction (Stobaeus, *Extracts on Physics and Ethics* 1.25.3 [Arius Didymus]; Lapidge 1973: 268–9). In addition, both viewed the universe as originating in chaos (Lapidge 1973: 259–60; Mondy 1989: 2) from which a divine intelligence ordered the present *kosmos*.

But there were also key differences between Plato and Zeno regarding God's role in the creation of the universe, some prominently illustrated in Gen 1:2. In the sub-sections that follow, comparisons will be made between the biblical text, Plato's description of the early chaotic material universe and the competing theories by Zeno of Citium. It will be argued that Gen 1:2 retains features of both, retaining Plato's anthropomorphic portrayal of the Creator as Craftsman, but presenting a more intelligible scientific account of the separation of earth, water and heavens modeled on the recent writings of Zeno, whose influence may be detected also in other passages of Genesis 1.

5.2.1 *Cosmogony*

In the First Creation Account of Gen 1:1–2:3, God is portrayed as a divine Craftsman who fashioned the present orderly world out of the chaos of Gen 1:2. This agrees well with Plato's *Timaeus*, which has the Demiurge fashion the present beautiful *kosmos* using the precursors of earth, water, air and fire found in the primordial chaos of the preexisting material world. Yet the chaos of Gen 1:2 is not quite as complete as in *Timaeus*, but seems to exhibit a degree of structure already present in the unfashioned world. Indeed, how could the primordial chaos be a "formless void" if one could already distinguish earth from water or detect the wind-blown surface of the waters of the deep? In addition, Gen 1:2 mentions only earth, water and air (in the form of darkness and wind): fire goes unmentioned, and its absence is seemingly implied by the darkness that covered the face of the deep. But Zeno's cosmogony has a phase in which earth, ocean and air are well defined, while fire is only implicitly present. This suggests that Gen 1:2 incorporated features from both Plato's and Zeno's cosmogonies.

Plato's cosmogony in *Timaeus* was governed by his understanding of the Creator as an artist. The Creator was pictured as supremely good, intelligent, purposeful and active, an artistic Craftsman intent on creating the

kosmos as a thing of beauty. But every artist needs raw materials, and these materials, such as gold used by a jeweler (*Timaeus* 50a–c), are necessarily formless or blank, a passive medium awaiting the artist to shape and mold it into the form of something beautiful. But this necessarily raised the question: out of what materials did the Demiurge fashion the *kosmos*? And a second question: in what place did the raw materials of the universe exist? To answer such questions, Plato postulated a third form of existence: not the eternal, perfect realm of Being (οὐσία), where the supreme god of Creation resided; nor yet the present, ordered realm of Becoming (γένεσις), the *kosmos* fashioned by the Creator; but a primordial, chaotic material realm, which he called the Receptacle or Place (χώρα), where the Demiurge found all the raw materials he required, an amorphous swirl of proto-elements that comprised the universe prior to the arrival of the God (*Timaeus* 53b).

The formlessness of the Receptacle was desirable, even essential to Plato's cosmogony, entirely suitable for the purpose of the divine Craftsman. In Plato's *Timaeus*, precursors of the four elements of earth, water, air and fire were all present in the Receptacle or Place. This primordial chaotic world was invisible, enshrouded in darkness, since fire has not yet fully emerged or ignited to illuminate the *kosmos* (*Timaeus* 31b; cf. 49c), yet fire as a proto-element was mentioned on a par with the precursors of earth, water and air.

Plato did indeed describe the world of Being, where the eternal Forms resided, as invisible and apprehensible only by Reason (*nous*), and not by the senses. Martin Rösel, who adhered to Philo's theory of Genesis 1 as reflecting Plato's Forms rather than his Physics (Rösel 1994: 72–87, 2001: 132–71, 222–35; Philo, *On the Creation of the Cosmos* 15–35, 69), failed to grasp that Plato also described the Receptacle or Mother as invisible, due to the absence of fiery light as a distinct substance in the primordial chaos. Yet there was nothing so utterly material as the random physical chaos of the Receptacle prior to the presence of the Father and the investing of the material realm with the generative World Soul. Although Rösel, like Philo (*On the Creation of the Cosmos* 12, 29), took the invisibility of the Receptacle of *Timaeus* 51a–b and Gen 1:2 (LXX) as an indication that Genesis 1 took place within the invisible world of Forms, *Timaeus* 51a stated that the chaotic Receptacle was utterly lacking in Forms, which were only introduced into the physical realm at a later stage at the Demiurge's creation of the *kosmos*. We may thus dismiss Rösel's discussion of the influence of *Timaeus* on Genesis 1–2 (LXX) as fundamentally misguided (Runia 2001: 150, 165), anachronistically shaped by the later reception history of Genesis rather than a firsthand understanding and analysis of *Timaeus*. There was indeed influence from *Timaeus*, but not in the way Rösel posited. The invisibility and formlessness of the world in Gen 1:2 reflected the material chaos of the Receptacle, not the noetic world of Forms.

As discussed at the beginning of §5.2, most Greek natural philosophers pictured the primordial chaos of the universe as containing certain raw materials such as earth, water, fire, air, or sometimes all four, out of which

the present structured *kosmos* came into existence. Thales viewed air and fire as rarefactions of water, and earth as a condensation of water, based on various observations and arguments (Heraclitus Homericus, *Homeric Questions* 22; cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1.3.983b). Thales thus identified water as the substratum of all matter. For Thales, water was the ἀρχή or original cause of all that existed, leading him to conclude that the primordial universe was composed of water. By similar types of arguments, the authors of other Greek cosmogonies claimed that the single ἀρχή of the universe was fire (Heraclitus, Zeno), air (Anaximenes), the limitless *apeiron* (Anaximander, Anaxagoras), or that fire, air, water and earth together at the start of the universe and constituted four distinct substrata to matter (Empedocles). Under all these theories, the primordial ἀρχή, whether composed of one or several substances, was originally formless, mixed together, undifferentiated and without structure. In the later words of Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.1, the universe was “an undigested mass of matter.”

Thales, Anaximenes, Heraclitus and Zeno all held that the four elements or *stoicheia* of fire, air, water and earth were capable of transforming into each other by condensation or rarefaction. For these natural philosophers, it was simply a matter of deciding which of these four elements was the single original ἀρχή from which the other elements derived. Plato agreed that the elements were capable of transforming into each other, and constantly did so in the primordial chaos prior to the arrival of God, but did not settle on one element as primary or original. According to Plato, the material ingredients of the universe, such as earth and air and fire and water, all existed implicitly within the Mother or Receptacle of Being, but were mingled together in a chaotic unstable mixture subject to random, purposeless motion (*Timaeus* 30a, 49b–50a, 52e–53a, 57e–58a). Although the later sensible material realm of Becoming was necessarily both visible and tangible (*Timaeus* 30a), the pre-sensible primordial chaos lacked these qualities. Plato posited that the primordial material universe was not yet visible (*Timaeus* 51a), since fire as a distinct substance or entity had not yet fully emerged to illuminate the nascent universe (*Timaeus* 31b). Nor did the universe yet possess a solid form (*Timaeus* 51a), such as characterized things that can be said to truly exist, since earth had not yet emerged as a distinct substance (*Timaeus* 31b). Yet earth, fire, air and water were all present in material potential within paradoxical preexistent universe, partaking of the intelligible in a “baffling” way (*Timaeus* 49a, 51a).

Before that time, in truth, all these things were in a state devoid of reason or measure, but when the work of setting in order this Universe was being undertaken, fire and water and earth and air, although possessing some traces of their own nature, were yet so disposed as everything is likely to be in the absence of God; and inasmuch as this was then their natural condition. *Timaeus* 53a–b.¹⁷

Although the primordial chaos of the Receptacle contained the precursors of the four elements postulated by Empedocles—namely earth, air, fire and water—these substances could not fully emerge in the absence of the divine presence, the ultimate cause of order, beauty and harmony throughout the universe. Without the formation of fire, neither light nor visibility was possible (*Timaeus* 31b), nor solidity without earth (*Timaeus* 31b, 51a).

If we describe her [the Receptacle] as a Kind invisible (ἀνόρατον) and unshaped (ἀμορφον), all-receptive, and in some most perplexing and most baffling way partaking of the intelligible, we shall describe her truly. *Timaeus* 51a–b.

Plato thus held that earth, water, fire and air did indeed exist within the chaotic disorder of the Receptacle, but were unstable and constantly morphing into each other due to random motion and collisions, such that their distinctive properties, including solidity, fluidity or light, could not emerge (*Timaeus* 48b, 49b–50a, 52d, 69b). This is problematic as an exact parallel to Gen 1:2, where distinct regions were found containing earth, water and air, and where fire as a distinct substance or region was seemingly not present, ignited or otherwise. These dissonant details may suggest that the biblical authors have supplemented Plato's cosmogony with that of Zeno of Citium.

According to the usual Greek reasoning, the matter of the universe was eternal and indestructible, since if it had a beginning, it followed that it would also have an end, and the universe would someday necessarily pass out of existence. This was the argument of Parmenides and the Eleatic school.¹⁸ Zeno, along with most Greek natural philosophers, held that the matter that comprises the universe is necessarily eternal, but Zeno proposed that the *kosmos* went through periodic cycles of creation and destruction.¹⁹ At the end of each cycle, a conflagration or *ekpyrosis* of destructive fire consumed all matter, so that fire was all that remained as both the physical body and divine soul of the universe.²⁰ At this point, the universe underwent a renewed creation or regeneration under the active intelligent direction of god in the form of creative fire (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.136; Aetius 1.7.33).

Like Thales, Heraclitus, Plato and other philosophers, Zeno held that the four elements of fire, air, water and earth were capable of transforming into each other.²¹ According to Zeno, the process of renewal began when the creative fire left over from the previous cycle fully transformed itself into air, and then into water.²² Zeno equated this watery stage with the *Xaos* of Hesiod, *Theogony* 116, 123.²³ Sediment then settled out of the water and sank to form earth (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.136, 142; Hahn 1977: 57) which was both formless and immobile (Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Professors* 9.76), like the chaos of Gen 1:2. These two layers of shapeless earth and chaotic water at the center of the universe

formed its stationary central core (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.137; Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Professors* 9.75–76; Long and Sedley 1987: 1.297), as yet unlit by the fiery aether, and so blanketed in dark gloom (cf. Plutarch, *On the Principle of Cold* 948d–e, 949b), as in Gen 1:2. In Zeno’s cosmogony, God then caused a layer of air to evaporate and rise above the waters, which was evidently still enshrouded in darkness. From atmospheric air, aether rose yet higher to form the tenuous outermost reaches of the universe, as the four elements finally became fully differentiated. The initial stage of renewal came to completion when the aether of the heavens ignited (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.137, 142; Stobaeus, *Extracts on Physics and Ethics* 1.25.3 [Arius Didymus]; Lapidge 1973: 268)—perhaps by the motion of wind (see §5.2.3 below)—and the *kosmos* was illuminated. Sometime after this, the sun, moon and planets were set in their courses and the stars began to orbit the skies, burning with the divine creative fire (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.137). Below, on earth, there occurred spontaneous generation and the beginnings of life under the active divine guidance of the πῦρ τεχνικόν (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.142; Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 2.47; Gregory 2011: 190).

In certain crucial respects, Gen 1:1–2 conforms closely to Plato’s cosmogony. The Creator was depicted as a Craftsman who fashioned the present heavens and earth out of primordial chaotic materials, formless and lifeless. The wording in LXX points to a direct literary dependence on *Timaeus*, describing the preexistent universe as amorphous and invisible. In addition, and in contrast to Zeno’s cosmogony, the biblical creation story posits a single creation. Despite adhering to the basic storyline in *Timaeus*, the description of a chaotic phase of earth, water and air enshrouded by darkness in Gen 1:2 lies closer to Zeno than to Plato, suggesting that the biblical authors drew on both of these two accounts.

5.2.2 Stratification of the Elements

The description of the primordial chaos in Gen 1:2 contains several details of a paradoxical and incongruent nature, seemingly contradicting the timeline of the biblical narrative itself.

- First, Gen 1:2 mentions both earth (*aretz*) and the waters (*mayim*) or deep (*tehom*),²⁴ suggesting that these entities existed in some primitive state prior to the arrival of God on the scene. Yet neither the earth nor the ocean deeps emerged as distinct entities within the developing *kosmos* until later in Gen 1:9–10. The earth and watery deeps (*tehom*) or abyss (LXX) of Gen 1:2 are precursors to the present earth and seas (*yammim*) as later fashioned by the Creator. Similarly, the wind from God that stirred the face of the waters presupposes air, yet a layer of air to separate the firmament above from the earth and seas below was only

created in Gen 1:6. The mention of darkness covering the face of the deep or face of the waters in Gen 1:2 is another incongruous detail, since darkness was not separated from light until Gen 1:4 and atmospheric waters were not separated from the oceans until Gen 1:6.

- Second, Gen 1:2 contains clear indications of a stratification of the elements. The first region was that of earth. The watery abyss evidently lay above the earth, submerging it, for there is mention of the water's top surface, the *panim* (פני) or face of the deep. The word *panim* designates a surface, such as the surface of the waters (Gen 1:2; 7:18) or the surface of the earth (Gen 1:29; 2:6; 4:14; 6:1, 7; 7:3–4, 23; 8:8–9, 13). The description in Gen 1:2 corresponds exactly with the flood waters breaking forth from the deep (Gen 7:11), rising up to completely submerge and cover the earth (Gen 7:17), with the ark riding upon the face of the waters (Gen 7:18). The geometrical regularity indicated by the use of *panim* in Gen 1:2, which implies both a defined surface and a sense of up and down, suggests a degree of order even within the primordial chaos. The chaotic primordial world of Gen 1:2 thus paradoxically depicted earth, water and air in stratified regions.
- Third, fire is notable in its absence from Gen 1:2. Above the face of the deep was darkness, enshrouded in perpetual night (cf. the equation of darkness and night in Gen 1:5), a region of air that God stirred with a wind. Light had not yet penetrated and illuminated the region of air from above, as in the present world. Although Gen 1:1 promised an account of the creation of heaven and earth, the heavens do not feature in Gen 1:2. The darkness and invisibility of the primordial realm implies that the fiery light-producing character of the heavens had not yet emerged. This darkness was not a mere absence of light (Sarna 1989: 6) but some form of material substance. Plato said there were different forms of air, including translucent aether and opaque “mist and darkness” (*Timaeus* 58d),²⁵ and described nighttime air as air “devoid of fire” (*Timaeus* 45d). The darkness that covered the face of the deep likely referred to a form of opaque air, devoid of fire's luminosity.

The cosmology of this unformed, invisible world was thus strikingly similar to the present, despite the absence of life, order or light, with concentric regions of earth, water, air, but not fire. The stratification of earth, water and air within the primordial chaos contradicts both the emergence of these distinct regions in Gen 1:6, 9–10 and the formlessness emphasized in Gen 1:2. This suggests that the original conception of Place as derived from Plato's *Timaeus* has been modified in light of a secondary source, namely Zeno.

A key concern of Greek cosmogonies was to account for the organization of the present world into distinct regions of earth, ocean, air and the fiery heavens. This involved an explanation both of the emergence of earth, water, air and fire as elements and the manner by which they migrated into

the stratified regions in which they are found today. The structuring of the universe thus required an auxiliary explanation for what first stirred the primordial universe into movement.

In virtually every Greek cosmogony, the primordial universe not only originally lacked structure, but lacked movement, or, if movement existed, it was utterly random and chaotic (as in Plato's model; cf. Vlastos 1939). The decisive event that initiated the formation of the existing *kosmos* was the introduction of movement into the primordial universe. Most natural philosophers held that the primordial chaos began to take on definite structure as a result of a divinely caused rotational movement that caused the elements to swirl in a vortex, causing the heavier elements, earth and water, to sink to the center, and throwing the lighter elements, air and fire, into the heavens. Plato proposed a different form of movement, not a rotation, but rather a shaking or vibration. Plato delicately describes the initiation of motion in the Mother-Receptacle in sexual terms:

The Nurse of Becoming, being liquefied and ignified and receiving also the forms of earth and of air, and submitting to all the other affections which accompany these, exhibits every variety of appearance; but owing to being filled with potencies that are neither similar nor balanced, in no part of herself is she equally balanced, but sways unevenly in every part, and is herself shaken by these forms and shakes them in turn as she is moved. *Timaeus* 52d–e.

The motion of the Receptacle or Place was also compared to the shaking of a sieve, by which the heavy was separated from the light:

Just as the particles that are shaken and winnowed by the sieves and other instruments used for the cleansing of corn fall in one place if they are solid and heavy, but fly off and settle elsewhere if they are spongy and light. So it was also with the Four Kinds when shaken by the Recipient: her motion, like an instrument which causes shaking, was separating farthest from one another the dissimilar, and pushing most closely together the similar; wherefore also these [Four] Kinds [i.e. earth, water, air and fire] occupied different places even before that the Universe was organized and generated out of them. *Timaeus* 52e–53a.

Plato thus held that the constant motion of the Receptacle distributed the primitive elements to some extent, creating regions in which earth or water or air or fire predominated, despite their incomplete formation (*Timaeus* 52e–53e, 57c). Yet Plato does not lay out an explicit description of the location of regions in relation to each other as in Genesis. While Plato does not plainly describe those regions, he elsewhere indicates that substances move up or down according to their relative size (*Timaeus* 58b–c), air “rising” to its own region (*Timaeus* 60b). The relative size of the constituent

particle determined its heaviness, ranging from earth to fire. (See *Timaeus* 55d–56b for the relative ranking of the elements earth, water, air and fire from large and heavy to small and light.) *Timaeus* 62c–d, 63c–e indicated that light materials such as fire rise up and heavy materials sink down, with the caveat that up and down actually mean towards a more peripheral or a more central position, the *kosmos* being a sphere. Plato thus appears to have assumed a general frame of reference in which the heaviest particles, namely earth, gravitated to the center of the spherical universe, with progressively lighter elements (water, air) occupying less central regions culminating in the outermost fiery realm of the aether.

Although Plato did claim a primitive gravitation of earth, water, air and fire into their own respective domains, even within the chaos of the Receptacle, he did not present this stratification of the early universe in a concise, coherent description such as found in Gen 1:2. Further, he held that earth, water, fire and air were unstable and constantly morphing into each other due to random motion and collisions, such that their distinctive properties, including solidity, fluidity or light, could not fully emerge within the chaotic disorder of the Receptacle (*Timaeus* 48b, 49b–50a, 52d, 69b).

By contrast, in Zeno's more rigorously scientific cosmogony the elements of earth, water, air and fire fully emerged in distinct strata within the primordial chaos by the mechanisms of condensation and rarefaction, and it was by this very process of separation and segregation that the four elements emerged. At first the pure fire of the *ekpyrosis* cooled and transformed into air, and then into water, the same phase of watery *xaos* proposed centuries earlier by Thales. Zeno posited that the heavier earth settled out of this watery *xaos*, followed by an evaporation of air and then of rarified aether, which finally ignited, bathing the heavens in light (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.142; Gregory 2011: 187–8). Prior to the separation and ignition of the aether, Zeno's cosmogony thus envisioned a stage in which earth, water and air were fully emergent within their respective stratified regions, highly consistent with the description in Gen 1:2. It would appear that the formless, invisible chaos of Gen 1:2, which was not entirely consistent with either Plato's *Timaeus* or the succeeding narrative of Genesis 1, incorporated elements from Zeno's cosmogony that introduced an element of primitive order and geometric stratification into the earliest stages of the emerging universe.

5.2.3 *The Divine Wind*

Of the three elements present in Gen 1:2, air has a special status. Whereas earth and water are depicted as passive and inert, air in the form of a wind from God set the primordial waters into motion (MT) and pressed down upon their surface (LXX). The biblical identification of a divine wind as the source of movement in the early universe arguably reflects scientific interest in accounting for the origins of motion, a topic that formed an essential element of Greek cosmogonies, as discussed in Chapter 3.

An important question is whether the biblical authors understood this divine wind that animated the universe as a spiritual or strictly physical phenomenon. Both *ruach* (רוח) and *pneuma* (πνεῦμα) have a range of possible meanings, including wind, breath and life, sometimes rendered as spirit. The common thread that unites these three lexical usages is *ruach* or *pneuma* as air in motion.

- The *ruach* of Gen 1:2 is best understood as a physical wind sent by God. Its location pressing down on the face of the ocean deep and its physical effect of shaking or stirring the waters reinforce that this was a simple wind sent by God. The use of *ruach* as an evening “breeze” in Gen 3:8 is consistent with an interpretation as air in motion. *Ruach* frequently appears as wind in the Hebrew Bible.²⁶ *Pneuma* also frequently appears in the sense of wind in Greek literature.
- The biblical text also uses *ruach* in the sense of breath.²⁷ The animating “breath of life” (Gen 6:17; 7:15; Job 7:7; 27:3) was viewed as a divine gift from God (Gen 2:7). Greek literature also used *pneuma* to refer to breath. Hippocratic medical treatises of ca. 425–350 BCE characterized *pneuma* as a combination of air and heat (cf. *Timaeus* 77a), elements necessary for life, and pointed to coldness and lack of respiration as cardinal signs of death (Gundert 2002; Bartoš 2020).
- Since life could not exist without breath, the biblical text, sometimes used *ruach* with a meaning of spirit or life force (Gen 6:17; 7:15, 22). *Ruach* as life force represented the animating breath of life, possessed by animals and humans alike. Although this breath of life was considered a gift from God (cf. Gen 2:7; Job 7:7; 27:3), it was a purely physical phenomenon, the warm animating air that was required to sustain life, and which ceased at death. In many biblical passages *ruach* refers to an animated spirit, inspiration or temperament, whether positive or negative.²⁸ This usage seems to associate *ruach* with both human and divine life force, but not with the notion of an immortal soul, which does not appear in the writings of the Hebrew Bible.

In early Greek literature and Hippocratic medical texts, *pneuma* referred to the animating breath of living creatures.²⁹ In Hippocratic texts, *pneuma* came to be associated with the *psyche* or soul, which was understood as the life principle and mental component that disappeared with death (Bartoš 2020; Betegh 2020; Gundert 2002: 15–20). Consistent with the biblical use of *ruach* as spirit, intelligence (wisdom), emotions (both healthy and disturbed), sensations and movements were attributed to the soul or *psyche* as heat present in the blood and air circulating in the body in Hippocratic medical literature (Gundert 2002: 20–31). In Plato’s writings, however, *pneuma* is used for wind, air or breath, and does not interchange with *psyche*.³⁰ In the writings of Zeno of Citium, *pneuma* appears as wind or breath (Lapidge 1973: 274; Hahn 1977: 159; Frixione 2013: 506, 512), consistent with early

Greek usage, and not as an equivalent of *psyche* or soul. Zeno's first successor at the Stoa, Cleanthes of Assos (ca. 330–230 BCE), began to develop the notion of *pneuma* as an animating life force, and this was fully developed in the innovative idea of an all pervading divine *Pneuma*, a combination of fire and air, by the Stoic Chrysippus of Soli (ca. 279–206 BCE). But such notions of *Pneuma* as a divine World Soul were not present in Zeno's writings (Lapidge 1973: 274–5; Hahm 1977: 157–74).

That the *ruach* or *pneuma* in Gen 1:2 is best understood as a divine wind rather than soul or spirit is reinforced by considering the role of the World Soul—or lack thereof—in the cosmogonies of Plato and Zeno. Plato described the first creative act of the Demiurge or Father as creating a soul—the “World Soul”—to animate the material body of the universe (*Timaeus* 30b, 34b, 36e), turning the universe into a living being. Given the biblical associations of *ruach* or *pneuma* with the divine gift of life, a comparison might be tempting. But Plato's word for the World Soul was *psyche*, not *pneuma*.³¹ Further, neither Plato's first creation account nor his description of the Receptacle gave the World Soul a role in creation. The Demiurge alone, and not the World Soul, is the agency of creation in *Timaeus*. Plato thus gives no role for air or wind in either the Receptacle or in the creation of the *kosmos* such as appears in Gen 1:2. In a similar vein, Zeno's cosmogony did not refer to the World Soul as a divine *pneuma*. While Zeno held that God was present throughout the universe as an all-pervading creative fire, he did not label this divine fire as God's *pneuma* or spirit.

One arrives at the important preliminary conclusion that *ruach* signified an ordinary wind in Gen 1:2 (MT), as did *pneuma* in Gen 1:2 (LXX), in Plato, and in Zeno. This wind was an active divine agency, stirring the primordial universe into motion. How does this relate to the description of the material chaos of Plato's and Zeno's cosmogonies, if at all?

In Plato's *Timaeus*, the active force in the universe was the Demiurge, the transcendent god from the realm of Being, while the Receptacle or Place, by its nature, was entirely passive and receptive. Such also were all four elements present as precursors in the Receptacle, awaiting the active rational presence of the Demiurge to become ordered and sensible. Yet in Gen 1:2, seemingly only earth and water are passive, while air is portrayed as active. The privileged role of the divine wind as an active agency in Gen 1:2 thus stands in contrast to Plato's *Timaeus*, in which wind played no such role, but motion was initiated by the shaking of the Receptacle itself. Plato gave no special status to wind or air among the four prototypical elements in the Receptacle. Plato viewed all four material elements—earth, water, air and fire—as equally passive, but attributed constructive causal activity exclusively to the divine Demiurge.

By contrast, air was given a key role in Zeno's cosmogony: specifically, air in motion. The two passive forms of matter, namely earth and water, dry and wet, were heaviest and most stable.³² The two active forms of matter, namely fire and air, hot and cold (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent*

Philosophers 7.137), were the lightest of the four elements and possessed intrinsic qualities of motion, due to the expansive character of fire and the contractive character of cold air (Galen, *On Natural Faculties* 106.13–17; Plutarch, *On Common Conceptions* 1085c–d). In Zeno’s cosmogony, the fire left over from the previous *ekpyrosis* first cooled and condensed into air and then into water, and then earth settled out of water, creating a gloomy world of entirely passive, motionless elements. Then air evaporated out of the water, the first active element within the *xaos*. Rarefied aether then emerged out of the air into the highest heavens and ignited into fire, the most active and divine element.

The surviving fragments of Zeno’s writings do not explain how the aether was ignited. But significantly Zeno is known to have given *pneuma* in the form of wind a scientific role in the ignition of lightning. According to Zeno, lightning was a form of aether ignited when the wind tossed the clouds together.³³ Indeed, wind was viewed by the Greeks as air in motion in its most active form (Frixione 2013: 512). Zeno’s classification of active and passive matter as the two *archai* responsible for the generation of the universe (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.134; Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Professors* 9.75–76; Seneca, *Letters* 65.2), and his classification of fire and air as the two active and hence divine forms of matter (Nemesius 164.15–18; Galen, *On Natural Faculties* 106.13–17; *idem*, *On Bodily Mass* 7.525.9–14) suggest that Zeno assigned air in its most active form—that is, as wind—a significant role in the formation of the *kosmos*. It seems likely that this role was precisely that of wind clashing the clouds together and thereby igniting the aether of the heavens, bringing light to the universe. Zeno may indeed have cited the example of wind igniting the aetherial fire in the form of lightning as scientific support for the crucial role played by wind as active air in his cosmogony.

The parallels between Zeno’s cosmogony and Gen 1:2 appear significant. Both had a phase prior to the ignition of the fiery aether of the heavens in which the universe consisted of passive earth and water together with the active element of air that possessed the divine quality of motion, that is, air as wind. In Zeno’s cosmogony it was likely this motion of wind clashing together the clouds that ignited the heavens, providing a scientific explanation for the fiery aetherial skies. Although the formless, invisible chaos of Gen 1:2 was based on the Receptacle of *Timaeus* 48a–69b, it arguably incorporated modifications that reflected the earliest Stoic cosmogony from Zeno of Citium.

5.2.4 *Ontology*

The Hebrew Bible makes various claims about God’s ontological status and where he resides. In Genesis 2–3 he is a terrestrial deity residing in the exotic, semi-mythical land of Eden. In other passages God is a fully terrestrial deity who has encounters with humans in ordinary geographical locales

(Gen 4:3–12; 18:1–15; 32:24–32). In Exodus–Joshua and Kings, he is a fiery being who descends from the heavens to reside in an earthly tabernacle or temple. Elsewhere, he typically resides in the heavens—still within the material realm, yet far removed from earth. In Gen 1:1, God seemingly exists outside the material realm, prior to the creation of heaven and earth. Yet in Gen 1:2 he is active within the lifeless, formless chaos of the primordial world. While he is depicted as a Craftsman in Gen 1:1 (as also in Gen 1:7, 16–18, 21, 25–27, 31; 2:1, 7), language pertaining to craftsmanship does not appear in Gen 1:2.

Throughout his writings, Plato posited a fundamental ontological distinction between the present transient material world and the eternal, perfect, transcendent realm of Forms. This novel world of Forms, first proposed in Plato’s writings, was a divine realm of pure goodness beyond the prosaic material world. In *Timaeus*, Plato called the divine transcendent realm the world of Being, where his supreme eternal god resided, while the present *kosmos* was called the World of Becoming. As discussed in §5.1, the prologue in *Timaeus* 27d–29d laid out the proposition that the Demiurge or Craftsman, the eternal god from the perfect realm of Being, created the Universe or Heavens and everything contained therein within the sensible world of Becoming. *Timaeus* 29d–47e subsequently described the creation of the *kosmos* by the Demiurge, in an account closely paralleled by Gen 1:3–2:3 in structure, themes and theological content (see Chapter 4). But in a new discussion of the origins of the universe in *Timaeus* 48a–69a, Plato conceded that his earlier analysis was incomplete (*Timaeus* 48a): that in between the eternal form of Being and the ever-changing transient sensible world of Becoming there existed a third form, that of Place (*Timaeus* 52a–b,d), which provided the location and materials for Becoming, that is, for the present *kosmos*. Plato analogized these three distinct forms of existence as Father, Mother and Offspring (*Timaeus* 48e–49d).

Plato’s conception of the realms of Being, Place and Becoming was a brilliant philosophical blend of theology and physics. The perfect realm of Being, home to the eternal Demiurge, was ruled by the divine. The Receptacle or Place was ruled by pure material physics, which Plato called Chance and Necessity. Becoming was the present material *kosmos*, as beautifully ordered and adorned by the Creator, and infused with a divine rationality in the form of a World Soul.

- The Father and Maker of the present world (*Timaeus* 28c, 41a) was the Demiurge or Craftsman, the generative force behind the creation of the visible *kosmos*. He resided in the perfect, eternal, divine realm of Being (*Timaeus* 29e, 30c–e, 37a,d).
- The Mother was the Receptacle, “as it were the nurse of all becoming” (*Timaeus* 49a), the womb-like primordial void, whose role was to be acted upon by the Demiurge and be a vehicle for Becoming.
- The Offspring was the visible body of the *kosmos* in the realm of Becoming, grown within the matrix or womb of the Mother, and born as a copy and

living image created in the likeness of the Father. The beautiful *kosmos*—the word can mean either “order” or “adornment”—was created by the transformation of the purely physical by the divine.

The plot of Genesis 1 is the same as that of *Timaeus*: God acting as divine Craftsman (Gen 1:1), using the chaotic raw materials of the primordial universe (Gen 1:2), and fashioning the perfect and beautiful *kosmos* of the present world (Gen 1:3–2:3).

By positing an ontological distinction between the transcendent, divine realm of Being and the passive material realm of the Receptacle, prior to its fashioning into the present beautiful *kosmos*, Plato was forced to contemplate a literally godless state of existence. Plato’s description of the second form, Place, as chaotic and disordered represents the Universe “as everything is likely to be in the absence of God” (*Timaeus* 53b). Place transformed by Plato’s supreme eternal God would later be ruled by divine reason and goodness, but these qualities pertaining to the present *kosmos* were as yet lacking in the godless primordial chaos. This strikes a somewhat discordant note with Gen 1:2, which appears to depict God as active within the primordial chaos itself. While the eternal Craftsman of both Genesis 1 and *Timaeus* is able to fashion matter into objects and position them within the *kosmos* (such as the celestial bodies in Gen 1:16–18 and *Timaeus* 38c), neither cosmic deity appear to reside within the material realm or venture into it to achieve their aims. More pertinent to an understanding of Gen 1:2, God is explicitly said to be absent from the disordered chaos of the Receptacle at *Timaeus* 53b. This is difficult to reconcile with Gen 1:2, in which the ontological state of the formless primordial world does not exclude the presence of God in the form of the divine wind.

The most significant difference between Zeno and Plato was ontological (Long and Sedley 1987: 1.163). Zeno dismissed Plato’s model of a divine realm of Forms distinct from the present world (Hahm 1977: 6–8; Long and Sedley 1987: 1.163) as well as Plato’s notion of a material Place that was devoid of a divine presence (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.147; Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 1.39; cf. Long and Sedley 1987: 1.271), and indeed rejected any separation or division between the material and the divine.³⁴ Rather, Zeno held that everything that exists is tangible and corporeal (Alexander of Aphrodisias, *On Aristotle’s Topics* 301.19–25, Long and Sedley 1987: 1.268), including God.³⁵ As proof that God was necessarily corporeal, Zeno observed that only bodies affected other bodies, and that for God to interact with material bodies, God must exist within the material realm.³⁶

According to Zeno, the world was a composite of two fundamental *archai*, god and matter, of which god acted and matter was acted upon.³⁷ As discussed in §5.2.3, Zeno categorized matter into two types, passive and active, of which active matter, in the form of fire and air, exhibited the divine presence by virtue of their active nature.³⁸ Fire was in turn divided into two

types, divine and material, creative and destructive (Stobaeus, *Extracts on Physics and Ethics* 1.25.3 [Arius Didymus]; Lapidge 1973: 267–8). Destructive fire was the ordinary fire known to humans that required fuel to consume for nourishment, while the divine creative fire burned without consuming fuel and indeed nourished whatever it dwelled within (Stobaeus, *Extracts on Physics and Ethics* 1.25.3 [Arius Didymus]; Lapidge 1973: 268). This creative fire, or πῦρ τεχνικόν, which burned in the sun, moon and stars and in the aether of the highest heavens, Zeno directly identified with God (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.138; Stobaeus, *Extracts on Physics and Ethics* 1.25.3 [Arius Didymus]; Lapidge 1973: 240–1, 253, 257–8, 268). The divine was thus a distinctive form of matter, the creative fire, intelligent, sentient, creative, eternal, omniscient, omnipresent, “the fiery mind of God” (Aetius 1.7.23; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.147; Lapidge 1973: 253). Whereas Plato interpreted the fiery aether as the visible World Soul created by the Demiurge (*Timaeus* 34b, 36e), Zeno identified this same aether as God—the Demiurge—in the visible form of creative fire.³⁹ He held that God was most fully existent in the pure fire of the aether of the outermost heavens,⁴⁰ but penetrated all matter, to a greater or lesser extent, in the form of heat. God animated all living creatures by means of *pneuma* or breath, which Zeno described as a combination of the active elements of air and heat or fire (Alexander of Aphrodisias, *On Mixture* 224.14–17; Lapidge 1973: 274).

Zeno’s theological and ontological innovation, the identification of God with the πῦρ τεχνικόν, led to a new, more scientifically detailed account of the emergence of the *kosmos* and of the four constituent elements that comprised matter, a cosmogony purged of Plato’s non-scientific mythological content. This cosmogony fully allowed for the presence of God within the earliest *chaos*, first in the form of air and then of fire; indeed, Zeno held that God was always present in the world throughout the entire recurrent cycle of *ekpyrosis* and regeneration. The eternal omnipresence of God in Zeno’s cosmogony thus poses no conflict with Gen 1:2.

An important question is how we are to understand the mention of God in Gen 1:2 as an active agent, present within the primordial chaos, whose wind stirred the waters (and perhaps ignited the aether of the heavens above). In Zeno’s cosmogony, the active *archai* are represented by air and fire, while in Gen 1:2 they are represented by air and God. For the correspondence to be complete, one would need to hypothesize a relationship between the θεός (*theos*) of Gen 1:2 and Zeno’s demiurgic πῦρ τεχνικόν.⁴¹ Zeno explicitly identified the creative fire with *theos*.⁴² The active elements of air and fire as *theos* in Zeno’s cosmogony thus map directly to *ruach* and *Elohim* (MT), *pneuma* and *theos* (LXX), although Gen 1:2 stops short of endorsing the Stoic notion of God as a divine fire.

Nevertheless, one may point to numerous other biblical passages that describe God as a fiery being.⁴³ Indeed, God is so defined in Deut 4:24: “God is a devouring fire.” In Ex 3:2–3, Moses encountered God in the form

of a burning bush, where the fire blazed mightily, yet “the bush was not consumed.” This arguably reflects the distinctive Stoic notion—advanced by Zeno, but abandoned by his successors (Lapidge 1973: 273–6)—that God was a creative fire which, like the sun and stars, was able to burn without consuming its fuel. While it has often been suggested that the biblical description of God’s fiery character, clothed in a *kabod* of cloud and fire, harkens back to Assyrian and Babylonian traditions about the *melammu* or radiant garments of the gods (e.g., Oppenheimer 1943; Cross 1973: 152 n. 30; Weinfeld 1995: 22–38), it now appears this model is supported by neither the Akkadian nor biblical evidence (Aster 2012; cf. Grant 2015: 144 n. 23). The biblical association—and occasional equation—of God and divine fire may instead point to Stoic theories of the physical character or material substance of God. If it is possible to detect a connection between the fiery God of the Hebrew Bible and Stoic scientific speculations, then Gen 1:2 may indeed reflect the existence of all four elements within the primordial chaos, the passive elements of earth and water together with the active elements of windy air and—implicitly—God as a divine fire.

5.2.5 Conclusions

It is now possible to make a detailed comparison between the primordial chaos in Gen 1:2 and Plato’s Receptacle. Plato’s description of primitive matter as “invisible and unformed” (*Timaeus* 51a–b) is clearly echoed in the LXX description of the earth of “invisible and unformed.” In conjunction with the many other indications of influence from Plato’s *Timaeus* in Genesis 1–3, in both Hebrew and Greek editions, this appears to show a decisive relationship between the texts. In addition, Plato held that the mechanical physical processes, namely the winnowing effect of the random motion of the Receptacle, caused the precursors of earth, water, air and fire to emerge and to migrate to their own regions, even before the divine ordering of the *kosmos*.

Although Genesis 1–3 adhered closely to Plato’s theology and mythology in *Timaeus*, the biblical authors appear to have preferred the scientific explanations advanced by Zeno the Stoic. In particular, the description of the primordial chaos of Gen 1:2, although partially indebted to Plato’s Receptacle—especially in its description as unformed and invisible (LXX)—more closely conforms to Zeno’s cosmogony in key respects. First, as noted earlier (§5.2.2), Gen 1:2 has a more detailed and orderly description of the stratification of the elements, with formless earth below, covered by the abyss, and air blowing on the face of the waters. This closely conforms to Zeno’s cosmogony. Second (§5.2.3), one has a division between passive elements below (earth and water) and active elements above (air and God). Third, and most importantly (§5.2.4), God is seemingly present within the primordial unformed world, in contradiction to Plato’s description of the Receptacle as “the universe in the absence of God” (*Timaeus* 53b). Virtually

all that is lacking is the ignition of the aether, which might be understood as taking place in Gen 1:3's "Let there be light."

While the biblical authors adopted the Stoics' attractive scientific conception of God as a divine fire, they disagreed with Stoic positions on three important theological issues. First, they rejected Zeno's contention that all of existence was material, including God. Instead, they endorsed Plato's novel vision of the Demiurge as a supreme transcendent, incorporeal being who existed prior to and beyond the material heavens and earth. Second, like Plato, the biblical authors acknowledged not only the supreme cosmic god of Creation, but also the host of ordinary terrestrial gods who were his offspring, the sons of God (Gen 1:26; 6:2, 4; see Chapters 6 and 7). By contrast, Zeno and the Stoics who succeeded him were strict monotheists who rejected the Greek gods, except as symbolizing aspects of the divine fire.⁴⁴ Third, the biblical authors retained Plato's essentially mythological portrait of the supreme Creator and his offspring as storybook characters portrayed in human terms. Like Plato's anthropomorphic Demiurge or Craftsman, the Creator of Genesis was able to see and speak, actively fashioned the celestial bodies and placing them in the sky, and rejoiced in the goodness and beauty of his creation. (In *Timaeus* 34c, the Demiurge rejoiced over the creation of the *kosmos* like a father rejoicing over his offspring, a thoroughly anthropomorphic image.) This stands in stark contrast to Zeno's explicit rejection of describing the divine creative fire in anthropomorphic terms, beyond assigning it abstract qualities such as intelligence, purpose and goodness.

The biblical authors thus stopped short of depicting God as a mere material substance, Zeno's divine creative fire. Instead, the biblical God was portrayed in traditional anthropomorphic terms, yet possessed of a fiery body. This conception of God's fiery character, informed by the latest Stoic scientific theories, may shed light on Gen 1:2, where God appeared as a character in anthropomorphic guise, but took on the role assigned to the creative fire of Zeno's cosmogony.

5.3 The Creation of the *Kosmos*

An interpretation of the heavens and earth as created from pre-existing materials is reinforced by Plato's designation of the Creator who brought the *kosmos* into being as the Demiurge or supreme Craftsman (*Timaeus* 28a, 29a, 41a, 42e, 68e, 69c, 75b). Plato understood craftsmanship or artistry to be comprised of three basic elements (Sedley 2007: 107–8; *Gorgias* 503d–504a).⁴⁵ First, one had the person of the craftsman or creator, one knowledgeable in *techne* or arts (cf. *Timaeus* 28a, 30c, 32c, 37c). Second, the craftsman had to have materials to work with, whether clay or paints or stone (cf. *Timaeus* 32c). Third, the craftsman required a model to imitate (cf. *Timaeus* 28a,c, 29a–c, 31a, 37d, 39e, 49a, 50c–d). The aim of the creator was to fashion as beautiful and excellent a similitude of their model (*Timaeus*

28a–b, 29a) as possible out of the materials at their disposal, using all their *techne* or arts to mold and persuade the materials into the desired shape (*Gorgias* 503e; *Timaeus* 29b–c, 30c, 39e, 49a, 50c–51a). The existence of order and artistic excellence implied both purpose (*telos*) and reason (*episteme*) in the conscious application of *techne* to produce the item so created.

Plato's explanation of the elements of craftsmanship fully played out in the cosmogony of *Timaeus*. Center stage was the figure of the Demiurge or Craftsman, a divine figure who possessed supreme artistic sensibilities and skills. The raw materials out of which he fashioned his creation were described at length in the scientific stoichogony of *Timaeus* 48a–69a. Gazing on the form or paradigm of life itself in the eternal realm of Being (*Timaeus* 29a), his intent was to create the world as the beautiful and perfect image and likeness of this divine model (*Timaeus* 28a–29c, 30b–31b, 37d), insofar as this was possible with the materials at hand (*Timaeus* 30a, 37d, 42a–d, 46c–d, 48a, 53b, 69d). Indeed, the *kosmos* as living being was an image or reproduction of his own divine goodness (*Timaeus* 29a–b,e, 37a,d, 39d–e, 68e, 69c, 91c) over which he celebrated as a Father rejoices over the birth of a child (*Timaeus* 37c–d). Plato considered the order and beauty of the *kosmos* to demonstrate the existence of a Creator who applied *techne* and reason to fashion the world from the chaotic materials he found at hand, such as they were (*Timaeus* 30a, 42d–e, 69b).

Plato's notion of a creator God thus did not envision creation *ex nihilo*, but the application of knowledge and technical skills to produce an article of workmanship out of the materials of his or her trade: in this case, the fashioning or creation of the *kosmos* out of the existing materials of the physical universe. The Hebrew word for create in Gen 1:1, *bara*, similarly carried the connotation of craftsmanship. (See Smith 2010: 11 for Hebrew terms in Genesis 1 associated with technology.) Gen 1:1 thus promised an account, not of the creation of the universe *ex nihilo*, but of God's fashioning the heavens and the earth out of the materials of the primordial, eternal universe. The crafting of the heavens and the earth described in the remainder of Genesis 1, the Seven Days of Creation, corresponds closely with Plato's account of the creation of the *kosmos* by the Demiurge in *Timaeus* 29d–40d.

5.4 The Seven Days of Creation

5.4.1 The First Day

(1:3 MT) Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.

The statement does not convey a scientific explanation of how light came into being. In Plato's first cosmogony, the first act of the Demiurge was the creation of light (*Timaeus* 31b, 39b), but with no accompanying scientific explanation. In Plato's second cosmogony, the means by which the

Demiurge created light was explained, by separating out the four elements of earth and fire and air and water (*Timaeus* 53b–56c), thereby allowing fire to emerge in its special region in the heavens (*Timaeus* 52e–53a) to shine down and illuminate the *kosmos* and make it visible (*Timaeus* 31b). Plato held that light (φῶς) was a mild form of fire (πῦρ) that did not burn but only illuminated (*Timaeus* 45b), so that the emergence of light and fire were equivalent phenomena.

The idea that God creates by means of command is not found in Plato's writings. The divine command was not addressed to an object and thus does not appear to be magical in nature, as magic was practiced in the Ancient Near East (Westermann 1984: 111–2). The best parallel is perhaps provided by the natural philosopher Xenophanes, who held that the omnipotent supreme being effortlessly set all things into motion by the thoughts of his mind alone (Simplicius, *Physics* 23.11, 20; Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Mathematicians* 9.144; cf. Jaeger 1936: 45; Flannery 2010: 84), an idea that later influenced Aristotle's theory of the unmoved mover.

The claim that light emerged as a consequence of God's command lays special emphasis on God's purposefulness. This brief statement contains an emphatic declaration of divine teleology or purpose, the first of many that identify God as the active steering principle that initiated the ordering of the universe. Its content is primarily theological, and is comparable to many statements in Plato's *Timaeus* that expressed the divine purpose of the Creator in actively crafting and ordering the *kosmos* (*Timaeus* 29d–e, 30b,d, 37c, 38c, 39d).

(1:4 MT) And God saw that the light was good (LXX καλόν); and God separated the light from the darkness.

The Hebrew word טוֹב, like the Greek word καλόν, signifies both goodness and beauty. The assertion that God saw the light was good or beautiful (like similar declarations in Gen 1:10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31), is paralleled by statements in Plato's *Timaeus* regarding the goodness or beauty of the *kosmos* the Creator was fashioning (*Timaeus* 29d–e, 30b,d, 37c, 39d). As such, it also belongs to the theological superstratum of Genesis 1. The second part of Gen 1:4, in which God initiated a separation of light from darkness, conveys scientific content. The word אִוֶּר in Hebrew signifies both fire and light (depending on vocalization), corresponding to Plato's fiery light (*Timaeus* 45b), the hot fiery brightness of the uppermost sky. The notion conveyed by the separation of light and darkness at Gen 1:4 is the same found in many Greek cosmogonies, that once motion was initiated in the primordial chaos then the light fiery element (sometimes called *aether*) separated from the dark, heavy, cold waters by the principle of like attracting like, and by the tendencies of fire and heat to rise and the cold and heavy to sink. In the primordial chaos, the ἀρχῆν or fundamental substances were all mixed together, but literally separated out of each other once a kinetic element was introduced

into the chaos. While many of the natural philosophers explained this as a purely scientific phenomenon, the inevitable result of the initial motion of the universe, the biblical account asserts that God actively steered this physical process.

(1:5 MT) God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

An important theme in Platonic philosophy was understanding the name of a phenomenon. This was one of the four steps in Plato's system of dialectic or philosophical reasoning. Plato often engaged in etymological speculation about words and their meaning (e.g., Sedley 1998), such as when he linked *nous*, intelligence, with *nomos*, law (*Laws* 4.713a, 713e–714a; 7.799e–800a; 12.957c), or when he linked *paramuthia*, exhortations, with *muthos*, story (*Laws* 11.927c). Plato frequently resorted to etymological exposition in *Timaeus*. (Bury 1929 notes wordplays and etymologies in *Timaeus* 37c, 40a, 43c, 44b, 55d, 59d, 62a, 80b, 90c.)

In Plato's writings, as in Genesis, the first act of the divine Craftsman was the orderly rotation of Night and Day (*Timaeus* 37e, 39c).⁴⁶ Plato held that time itself was created, simultaneous with the creation of the heavens, by creation of the "days and nights and months and years, which existed not before the Heaven came into being" (*Timaeus* 37e). The measurement of time required orderly motion, which was not previously present. The genesis of the *kosmos* thus also constituted the beginning of time (Vlastos 1939).

The succession of day and night, of evening and morning, in the present passage, envisions the rotation of the skies. This seems to imply that the initial motion that God induced in the primordial chaos through his spirit set the universe into a spinning whirl or vortex, as also held by Anaxagoras and other natural philosophers. In Plato's writings, the rotation of the universe was an expression of intelligence. Plato postulated that the universe was a perfect sphere (*Timaeus* 33b, 34a–b), the only shape that could move (rotate) yet maintain its position and shape at the same time.

The differentiation of light and darkness, day and night, here preceded the creation of the sun, moon or other celestial luminaries, which did not take place until the fourth day (Gen 1:14–19). This raises the question of the biblical authors' scientific understanding of the nature of night and day and the origin of the fiery brightness that constitutes daylight in Gen 1:4.

There were two theories put forward by Greek philosophers as to the cause of daylight.

- The most common theory was that daylight was somehow causally related to the presence of the fiery sun in the sky. This theory was endorsed by Plato in *Timaeus* 39b, which refers to the Demiurge "kindling" the sun, and *Timaeus* 38d, 40a, where the Demiurge fashioned the celestial deities (including the sun) with bright fiery bodies and placed them in their proper

orbits in the skies. The fiery character of the celestial bodies is also prominent in Gen 1:14–18, which stated that the sun and moon, placed in the sky on the fourth day of the Creation Week, were fiery “lamps” that shed light on the earth and “separated” the light of day from the darkness of night. But in Gen 1:4–5, night and day were already “separated” on day one.

- The second theory goes back to Hesiod, *Theogony* 123–25, in which Chaos (*Xaos*), the oldest of the gods, gave birth to Darkness (*Erebus*) and Night (*Nyx*), and these in turn gave birth to Brightness (*Aether*) and Day (*Hemera*). This passage strikingly corresponds to Gen 1:5, which also listed darkness and night, light and day. Although these pairs are reversed in Gen 1:5a (“God called the light Day and the darkness he called Night”), Gen 1:5b preserves the same order as Hesiod (“and there was evening and there was morning, the first day”).

Under the explanation put forward by Hesiod, the light of day emanated, not from the sun, but from the bright fiery element high in the sky. Daylight was not explained in terms of the diffusion of sunlight scattered in the upper atmosphere, as in our modern scientific understanding, but as direct rays of light coming from the fiery “aether” of the sky.⁴⁷ This theory was later endorsed by Empedocles of Akragas, although presented as science rather than mythology.⁴⁸ It may at first seem counterintuitive that the fiery aether should be confined to the daylight portion of the sky and not found—or found in smaller proportion, as Empedocles held—in the night. Yet this was the natural consequence of the observable succession of night and day and was therefore an undeniable empirical scientific fact, within the context of what was understood as science in classical antiquity. A difficulty intrinsic to the theory of Empedocles was the nature of the sun. If the fiery light of the day emanated from the sky itself and not the sun, then what accounted for the brightness of the sun? Empedocles claimed that neither the sun nor moon themselves emanated their own light, but reflected the light of the day and night skies (Pseudo-Plutarch, *Stromateis* in Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel* 1.8.10). Under the mythological account of Hesiod and the scientific theory of Empedocles, it was thus possible for day and night to have existed prior to and independent of the sun and moon. This Greek scientific theory may explain the introduction of night and day on the first day of creation. Here, God has apparently assigned the bright fiery aether (אור) to one portion of the sky and set the skies into a whirling motion, allowing for a succession of night and day. Only later, in the fourth day, would the sun be fashioned and placed in the daylight portion of the sky, and the moon in the night sky. This oddly staged creation of day and night across days 1 and 4 of the Creation Week was perhaps suggested by a careless reading of Plato’s *Timaeus*, which said that light and time and the revolution of the skies were introduced at the very outset of the divine fashioning of the *kosmos* (*Timaeus* 37e, 38b), but

omitted any initial mention of the sun, moon or stars, which Plato first introduced into the cosmogony slightly later, at *Timaeus* 38c–e, 39c. This sequence of events of creation found in Plato’s *Timaeus* could have suggested to the biblical authors that the orderly rotation of day and night skies was instituted prior to the fashioning of the sun, moon and stars. But it seems more likely that the authors simply preferred the sequence of events in Empedocles, in which the rotating bright day and dim night skies were formed prior to the sun and moon. This is not the only instance in Genesis 1 in which *Timaeus* was supplemented by the writings of other Greek natural philosophers.

5.4.2 The Second Day

(1:6 MT) And God said, “Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” (7) So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. (8) God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

This passage repeats some of the same theological themes found in Gen 1:3–5: divine *telos* or purpose, God as the Craftsman or Creator who fashioned the present world, the importance of names. The scientific content of this passage is confined to the separation of the waters above and below by a dome or firmament. The existence of waters in the cloudy atmosphere, created by a process of evaporation, was a phenomenon well known to Greek science. So likewise was the idea of a region of air (*aer*), distinct from the fiery aether of the upper sky. The formation of a region of air, on which the watery clouds were carried, was attributed to the separation of the hot and light, which tended to rise upwards, from the cold, wet, dark and heavy, which tended to sink downward.⁴⁹ The air, which was lighter and warmer than the earth and seas, but not as light or hot as the tenuous realm of fiery aether, formed an intermediate zone between the earth and upper skies. It is evident that this airy region is designated in Genesis 1 as the expanse of the heavenly dome or firmament (*raqia*), since it is given the name Sky (Gen 1:8) and it is in this same sky that the fowl were later said to fly and in which the sun, moon, and stars were placed (Gen 1:17, 20). Elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, the word *raqia* designates a metallic vault or dome above the earth, supported by the highest mountains, and as firm as a brazen mirror,⁵⁰ and having doors and windows through which the rain and snow fell (Gen 7:11; 28:17; Ps 78:23), as in the Ancient Near Eastern mythical cosmogony. But no such meaning attaches to the term *raqia* here. Rather, *raqia* here appears as a simple legacy from the older, pre-scientific language usage, an old term for the sky familiar to the intended audience of Genesis 1, but used there without its mythical linguistic baggage. Rather, *raqia* is best understood as a simple reference to the dome of the sky.

5.4.3 *The Third Day*

(1:9 MT) And God said, “Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so.⁵¹
 (10) God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.

Here there are the usual theological statements of divine purpose, of the naming of earth and sea, and the approval of the results of divine intention as good. Greek cosmogonies also described the separation of earth and sea, typically invoking one or both of two physical phenomena: the gathering of like to like, in this case water to water and earth to earth; and the heating and drying action of the sun and daylight, which caused the earth to congeal and settle out of the water, first forming mud, and then solid, dry land.⁵² A similar process was likely envisioned here, but in Genesis 1 the divine guidance of process of separating the comingled earth and water into oceans and dry land was emphasized.

(1:11 MT) Then God said, “Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.” And it was so. (12) The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. (13) And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

The LXX adds:

(1:11 LXX) ... Let the earth grow pasturage of grass sowing seed according to type (γένος) and according to likeness (ὁμοιότητα), and fruitful trees producing fruit with the seed in it, according to type (γένος) ... (12) And the earth brought forth pasturage of grass sowing seed of every kind (γένος) and according to likeness (ὁμοιότητα)...

Note that while the LXX describes fishes, birds and animals as living creatures, ψυχῶν ζωσῶν (Gen 1:20–21, 24, 30), plants are not accorded a similar status in Gen 1:11–12, 30. This contrasts with Plato (*Timaeus* 77b–c; *Phaedo* 70d, 105c; cf. Skemp 1947) and Aristotle (Bos 2010), both of whom viewed plants as ensouled creatures, due to their (limited) ability to move. But Zeno viewed only animals as possessing a soul or *psyche* (ψυχήν), which gave them intelligent purposeful, self-directed motion. The purposeless movement of plants was attributed, not to a soul, but to their *phusis* (φύσις) or nature (Long and Sedley 1987: 1.319). Gen 1:11–12 (LXX) thus corresponds more closely with Stoic scientific theories than with Plato’s *Timaeus*.

Gen 1:11–12 asserted that the creation of vegetation on the earth was an expression of God’s *telos* or purpose, and that this was good. In addition to

these theological assertions, a scientific explanation was also provided, namely that “the earth put forth” all forms of plant life and vegetation. The earth is described as having generative powers which God activates by his command (Sarna 1989: 9). This statement makes the claim, common in Greek science, that the first plant life sprung up from the earth by spontaneous generation.⁵³ According to theories proposed by several natural philosophers, the seeds of life were present throughout the mixture of elements in the primordial chaos. Under this theory of *panspermia*, the seeds of life were brought down by the rain and germinated in the moist earth under the action of heat from the sun as the land gradually dried up, the earth bringing forth the first plant life much as Gen 1:11–12 states. Most plant forms then subsequently reproduced by ordinary seeds (and elsewhere the Hebrew Bible has sprouts spring forth from the earth, as at Num 17:23; Ps 104:14; Isa 61:1; 65:9; Hag 1:11; cf. Westermann 1984: 125–6), but some forms of plant life were thought to continue to grow by spontaneous generation, such as mushrooms or grasses that sprung up after a rain. Today, such notions are considered primitive and unscientific, even laughable, but in antiquity spontaneous generation was believed to be observable in nature, and thus an objective scientific phenomenon.

Gen 1:11–12 noted that the first vegetation included plants that yielded seeds, like grains, and fruit trees that contained seeds within their fruit. (Compare the classification of vegetation at *Timaeus* 77a, which also mentioned “cultivated trees and plants and seeds.”) This scientific detail addressed the subsequent generation of plant life by seeds that fell to the ground or were planted, since most plants grew from seeds rather than by spontaneous generation. Gen 1:11–12 appears to indicate two main categories or *phylae* of plant life: plants with seeds and fruit trees. Within these major *phylae*, each type of plant and tree reproduced after its own kind (*genos*), reflecting Platonic *diairesis* (see Chapter 4 §4.4).

Gen 1:11–12 may show specific influence from Empedocles. According to Aetius 5.26.4 (translated in Betegh 2020: 42),

Empedocles says that trees were the first animals to grow up from the earth, before the sun was unfolded around it and before night and day were separated... They grow by being raised out by the heat in the earth, so that they are parts of the earth just as embryos in the abdomen are part of the womb.

Significantly, Empedocles had plants spring from the earth prior to the sun’s appearance in the sky and the separation of day from night. This is the exact sequence of days 3 and 4 in Gen 1:11–19.

5.4.4 The Fourth Day

(1:14 MT) And God said, “Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for

seasons and for days and years. (15) And let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.” And it was so. (16) God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. (17) God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth (18) to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. (19) And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

There are three main scientific elements in the description of the celestial lights. The first is the description of the heavenly bodies as lights or lamps (*maor*), a term also used for clay lamps and candlesticks (Ex 25:6; Num 4:9, 16; Ps 64:16). This indicates that the sun, moon and stars were viewed as vessels containing fire, an idea also advocated by several noted philosophers (Anaximenes, Empedocles, Heraclitus), but contrary to the theory of Anaxagoras that these bodies were rocks that were flung into the sky by the force of the whirling vortex and there caught fire.

The second scientific claim was that the sun, moon and stars were positioned in the dome of the firmament, that is, the airy atmosphere of the sky (Gen 1:14, 17) where the birds are said to fly (Gen 1:20). This also accords well with the claims of Greek scientists.

The third scientific claim was that the celestial luminaries were useful “for signs and for seasons and for days and years,” that is, for calendrical calculations.⁵⁴ This implies the existence of astronomy-based calendars that incorporated information about solar, lunar and stellar (probably zodiacal) motions. Gen 1:14–19 contains considerable technical terminological overlap with the scientific treatise known as the *Astronomical Book of Enoch* (VanderKam 2004: 93–7; Nickelsburg and VanderKam 2012: 345, 383–4, 411, 424–5, 460, 553) and will be discussed in a planned sequel volume on Babylonian and Samaritan scientific and mythical traditions in the *Primordial History*.

The theological content of Gen 1:14–19 is particularly interesting. There are the usual general statements about God’s *telos* or purpose, but there are also several specific claims about the benefits of the celestial luminaries to further separate day and night (Gen 1:14, 18), to shed light on the earth (Gen 1:15, 17), and to serve as the basis for human calendrical calculations (Gen 1:14). God is portrayed here as a craftsman, like the Demiurge of Plato’s *Timaeus*. In the biblical account, the Creator Elohim fashioned the sun and moon, pictured as lamps (containing fire). Elohim positioned the sun and the moon in the sky, the sun in the fiery half of the sky that constituted the day, and the moon as ruler over the dark portion of the sky that constituted night. This clearly corresponds with *Timaeus* 38c–d and 40a, where the Demiurge also fashioned the fiery celestial luminaries and placed them in their proper orbits in the sky:

“And when God made [ποιήσας ὁ θεὸς] the bodies of each of them [i.e., the sun and moon and planets] He placed them in the orbits” (*Timaeus* 38c); “God kindled a light which now we call the Sun, to the end that it might shine, so far as possible, throughout the whole Heaven” (*Timaeus* 38b).

God’s actions as celestial Craftsman or Creator in both Genesis and *Timaeus* took place in a purposeful fashion not dictated by nature or chance, but as required to fashion a perfect *kosmos*. This reflects arguments put forward by Plato for the existence of God and for his benevolence, goodness and purposefulness. Plato criticized the theories of Anaxagoras that claimed that the divine universal intelligence that both Anaxagoras and Plato called *Nous* or Intellect had set the universe into motion, but then, according to Anaxagoras, played no further active role, allowing physics or necessity to determine subsequent events. Anaxagoras claimed that the sun and moon were rocks hurled into the sky and ignited by chance. Plato, through the character of Socrates, expressed disappointment that Anaxagoras did not detail further actions of *Nous* in guiding the creation of the *kosmos* (*Phaedo* 97b–99c). In Plato’s scientific-theological-mythical cosmogony, as argued at length in *Timaeus*, Plato claimed that the Creator placed the sun and moon in the sky and kindled the sun in just such a manner as to benefit the living forms that inhabited the earth (*Timaeus* 38c, 39b). Arbitrary observable features in the natural world proved God’s existence, in Platonic reasoning (*Timaeus* 38c; *Laws* 10.886a; *Phaedo* 99b–c), and the benefit in such phenomena for life on earth further proved the intelligence of the Creator who organized the universe (*Timaeus* 39b). Plato’s argument was that the position of the sun and moon in the sky could not be explained by physics and chance, but only by the purposeful actions of a Creator who ordered the *kosmos* in this precise fashion due to his care for humanity. The author of Gen 1:14–19 appears to have shaped his comments in order to mirror this same Platonic argument.

5.4.5 The Fifth Day

(1:20 MT) And God said, “Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures (LXX ψυχῶν ζωσῶν), and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.” (21) So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. (22) God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” (23) And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

Here there are the usual statements about God’s *telos* or purpose (Gen 1:20–21). A division of water creatures into winged fowls and fish also

appears in Plato, *Sophist* 220b; Aristotle, *History of Animals* 6.559a. Scientific claims were made that fish were “brought forth” by spontaneous generation from the waters (Gen 1:20), presumably the ocean (cf. Gen 1:22), and that fish subsequently reproduced by ordinary reproductive means in the seas that were their home (Gen 1:22). Gen 1:20 left unanswered how the first birds of the air came into existence, but Gen 1:22 noted that they subsequently reproduced on land. Note that the fowl of the air were first spontaneously generated from the earth in Gen 2:19. It seems likely that the assignment of birds to the oceans here and to the lands in Genesis 2 reflects the Greek distinction between waterfowl and ordinary birds (Plato, *Statesman* 264d; Aristotle, *History of Animals* 1.487b; 8.714a–b; cf. Brown 1993: 168–70). The scientific claim that the seas spontaneously brought forth fish was contradicted by the assertion that God fashioned both fish and birds in Gen 1:21, illustrating competing scientific and mythical-theological themes in the First Creation Account.

The assertion that life sprang forth from the waters (Gen 1:20) and earth (Gen 1:24) implicitly endorsed the Greek theory of *panspermia* in which the seeds of life, both plant and animal, were found everywhere in the primordial ingredients of the universe. While the first generation of life was created by spontaneous generation in a watery environment, Gen 1:22 took note of the subsequent propagation of fish and birds by the usual mode of the present, by producing and fertilizing eggs. Throughout the Hebrew Bible, God’s blessing was actively sought in order to obtain fertility and engender offspring.⁵⁵ Although Gen 1:22 (MT) used the usual Hebrew word for blessed, in Gen 1:22, 28 LXX uses the neologism εὐλόγησεν or praised. This divine “blessing” actually reads as a command, “be fruitful and multiply” (van der Louw 2007: 86–7). Here, God’s blessing of the fish of the sea and the fowl of the air to be fruitful and multiply constituted the divine inauguration of reproduction by sexual means rather than the spontaneous generation by which the animal life initially came into existence. Each type of sea monster and fish and bird contained in itself reproductive powers designed for that specific kind, powers that God brought into being and activated by his blessing.

5.4.6 *The Sixth Day*

(1:24 MT) And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle (LXX τετράποδα) and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.” And it was so. (25) God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

Here the spontaneous generation of every kind of land animal from the earth is scientifically described, each with reproductive powers to generate

offspring “after their kind (γένος).” Compare the enumeration of various kinds of animals in Plato, *Timaeus* 40a, 91d–92b. In Gen 1:25, the usual theological claim is contradictorily made that God fashioned these same land creatures (cf. Gen 1:21, similarly, for the creatures of sea and air). The spontaneous generation of other animal life forms is also found elsewhere in the biblical text, such as in ten plagues in Egypt, where three plagues consisted of the spontaneous generation of frogs from the Nile (Ex 8:1–15), and of lice (Ex 8:16–19) and swarms of locusts (Ex 10:1–20) from the dust of the earth. Such theories were also commonly encountered in Greek science (see McCartney 1920 for an extensive discussion of the Greek primary sources on spontaneous generation), such as the interesting account in Diodorus Siculus, *Library* 1.7.1–6, where the moist earth, gently warmed by the rays of the sun, produced life of every form, those who had received the most heat flying upwards as birds, those who had received the most water becoming fish and those who had received the most earth becoming crawling reptiles.

The division of animal life into creatures found in the water, the air (Gen 1:20–22) and the earth (Gen 1:24–25)—a classification not found in mythical creation accounts of the Ancient Near East—closely corresponds to the classification of life into four *phylae* in *Timaeus* 40a, “one the heavenly kind of gods (i.e. the immortal stars); another the winged which traverse the air; thirdly, the class which inhabits the water; and fourthly, that which goes on foot and dry land.” The correspondence between sea, air and land animals in Genesis 1 and *Timaeus* was also noted by Wajdenbaum (2011: 94). The three mortal life forms are mentioned again in *Timaeus* 91d–92b. Land animals are subdivided into four footed (τετράπους) and many footed (*Timaeus* 92a); Gen 1:24 [LXX] closely corresponds to *Timaeus* by rendering “cattle” as τετράποδα, while those that creep upon the ground correspond to Plato’s “many footed” (although LXX renders this as ἐρπετὰ, meaning either four-footed creature or creeping creature such as reptile or insect, differing from *Timaeus* 92a). The division of land animals into tame (cattle) and wild in Gen 1:24–25 also appears in the *diairesis* or classification of animals into tame and wild in Plato, *Statesman* 263d–264a (cf. the mention of domesticated and wild plants and animals in *Timaeus* 77a–b, 91e; *Critias* 114e, 115b).

(1:26 MT) Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image [LXX εἰκόνα], according to our likeness [LXX ὁμοίωσιν]; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.” (27) So God created humankind in his image [LXX εἰκόνα], in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

Here, humanity was created, male and female, in the divine image (εἰκόνα) and likeness (ὁμοίωσιν) of the gods, the culmination of God’s work as Creator.⁵⁶ Differentiation into male and female is mentioned only in

connection with humans, not other living creatures (Sarna 1989: 13), as also in *Timaeus* 42a–b, 76d–e, 91a,e (as pointed out to me by Yaakov Kupitz in personal correspondence). The creation of humanity in the image and likeness of the gods has close verbal parallels to earlier passages in Gen 1:11–12, 21, 24–25, as well as Gen 5:1–2 on the offspring of Adam, suggesting that humans belonged to the *genos* of the gods (Loader 2004: 28; cf. Plato, *Hippias Major* 289a–c, *Charmides* 173c). The language employed here, which points to some form of gathering of the gods, who state their intention to create humans in their image, implicitly recognizes older, polytheistic traditions. The announcement of their collective decision to make humankind suggests the divine council as narrative context (Westermann 1984: 144). Creation in the divine image is distantly reminiscent of Mesopotamian regnal imagery, where the king was created in a god’s image (Clines 1968; Sarna 1989: 12; Tsumura 1994: 34), but here it was all of humanity that was created in the image of the gods. It is likely that both male and female gods were here envisioned, since humans were created “in the image of the Elohim... male and female” (Gen 1:27). Unlike the structure of other passages (Gen 1:14–16, 20–21, 24–25) where God’s creation by action is preceded by God’s creation by command, here the gods directly fashion humans without first issuing a command, suggesting an originally independent narrative source according to some biblical critics (Westermann 1984: 143, 156–7). The intrusive mention of a multiplicity of gods within the cosmogony of Genesis 1, whose main focus is the activities of the supreme divine Creator, is striking and has long been considered problematic (and indeed Gen 1:27 appears to revert to a singular god, consistent with the rest of the First Creation Account). In light of Plato’s *Timaeus*, the appearance of a multiplicity of gods becomes entirely comprehensible. In the first stage of Plato’s theological cosmogony (*Timaeus* 29d–40d), the single supreme god of creation, the Demiurge or Creator, made the entire *kosmos* in his own image, perfect and immortal. But in a second stage of Plato’s cosmogony, the Demiurge delegated the creation of mortal and imperfect terrestrial life forms to his offspring, the traditional Greek gods (*Timaeus* 40d–47e), who dwelt on earth in the most distant mythical times. These anthropomorphic deities, mimicking the Demiurge, fashioned humans in their own image (as readily inferred from *Timaeus* 41c, 42c–43a) in obedience to a speech from the Demiurge in *Timaeus* 41b–d, 42d–e. In *Republic* 6.501b, philosophers were said to try to refashion the citizenry of the ideal *polis*, like an artist imitating an ideal model, into the image and likeness of God, borrowing language from Homer, *Iliad* 1.131. Gen 1:26–27 is thus rife with parallels from Plato’s writings, especially *Timaeus*: the sudden appearance of the divine offspring of the supreme deity, the delegation of the creation of mortal humanity to the lesser gods, and a fictional, imagined divine speech on the subject of the creation of humans.

(1:28 MT) God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the

fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.”

This begins the mythical speech by the gods in Gen 1:28–30. Here, the first generation of humans, directly created by the gods, were given the power of reproduction by the gods (cf. Gen 4:1–2, discussed in Bokovoy 2013). Although humanity is exceptionally portrayed as the divine handiwork of a craftsman rather than the product of spontaneous generation, in Gen 1:28 one has God’s blessing of the men and women he created, so that future generations could be born and multiply through ordinary sexual means, like the other animals. In addition, humans have the unique, godlike ability to domesticate and rule over the animals, both fish and birds and land animals. The domestication of animals was an important stage in human progress noted by Greek philosophers (Naddaf 2005: 150; Campbell 2008) and poets (Sophocles, *Antigone* 343–53; Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound* 464–5). The domestication of fish and birds was uniquely noted by Plato, who mentions fishponds in Egypt and Persia as well as goose and crane farms of Thessaly (Plato, *Statesman* 264c).

(1:29 MT) God said, “See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. (30) And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life [ψυχῆν ζωῆς], I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. (31) God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Gen 1:29–30 concludes the mythical speech by the god(s) of creation to the first humans, a literary element foreshadowed by the speech by the Demiurge to the lesser mortal gods in *Timaeus* 41b–d, 42d–e in which he gave them dominion over the terrestrial world. Here, however, it is the *genos* of humans, the offspring of the gods, who are given dominion over the terrestrial world. A common element in these two speeches was providing plants for food for the mortal life forms of the earth (*Timaeus* 41d, 77a–c, 80d–e; Gen 1:29–30).

5.4.7 The Seventh Day

(2:1 MT) Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. (2) And on the seventh day God had finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. (3) So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

(2:1 LXX) And the heaven and the earth were completed (συντετέλεσθησαν), and their whole orderly furnishing (κόσμος). (2) And God completed, on the sixth day, his works that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his works that he had done. (3) And God praised (εὐλόγησεν) the seventh day and sanctified it, for in it he ceased from all his works, that God had started to do.

The text of Gen 2:1 (MT) appears defective, since “all their multitude” or hosts, while perhaps appropriate to the heavens, is inappropriate as applied to the earth (van der Louw 2007: 84). It thus appears likely that the completion of the heavens and earth and “their whole orderly furnishing” or adornment (κόσμος) in the LXX better reflects the sense of the original. It may be noted that Plato described the stars of the heavens as an adornment (*Timaeus* 40a–b; *Republic* 7.529c–e). In the *Astronomical Book of Enoch*, which was used in Gen 1:14–18, the stars are portrayed as an army in orderly arrays under their commanders, which perhaps suggested the word צבא or hosts in the Hebrew version.

Gen 2:2–3 contains an etiology of the Sabbath as a day of rest, as alluded to in Ex 20:11; 31:15–17; Deut 4:12–14 (Sarna 1989: 14), although God’s work on the seventh day in MT is problematic. The LXX has the heaven and earth completed on the sixth day, as does the Samaritan Pentateuch (van der Louw 2007: 85; Tov 2015: 88). This arguably represents the original text, since the works of God completed in six days and cessation on the seventh day provide a more compelling analogy to the work-week and Sabbath of rest in the Decalogue. The etiology is reinforced by the pun in which on the seventh day (וַיִּשְׁבֹּת) God “ceased” (שבת) from all the work he had performed. The Hebrew of Gen 2:2 indicates a cessation of activity, not rest, although in Ex 20:10–11 God is said to have ceased (שבת) and rested (נוח) (Tsumura 2018: 225). Gen 2:3 continues with the statement that God blessed and sanctified the seventh day, which is a further reference to the Sabbath. It is likely that this etiology of the Sabbath was the motive behind the seven days of creation in Genesis 1.

Although *Timaeus* does not contain the idea of a seventh-day Sabbath of rest, a Jewish-Samaritan innovation ultimately derived from Mesopotamian hemerologies, the *Timaeus* does put forward rest as a divine ideal. *Timaeus* described the beautiful *kosmos* completed by the Demiurge as being in a state of perfect rest, an orderly peaceful divine state that formed a contrast to the preceding chaos (cf. *Timaeus* 30a, 49b–50e, 57e–58a). And indeed the super-lunar world of the heavens continued to the present in a state of peaceful perfection, with stars completing their orderly circuit of the skies (*Timaeus* 38d–39e).

The claim that God ceased from all his works on the seventh day is striking. There is no biblical tradition in which God resumed his labors on the eighth day. Rather, Gen 2:1–3 supports the thesis that the God who created the world, having completed the creation of a perfect and beautiful

kosmos, retired from further activity and essentially disappeared from view. The trope in which *Nous* or the divine intelligence initiated the movement that began the formation of the *kosmos*, and then retired, was found as early as the cosmogony of Anaxagoras. This picture was also explicit in *Timaeus* 41b–42e, where the Demiurge, having created a perfect *kosmos* in his own image, turned over the task of creating imperfect, mortal life forms to his divine offspring, the traditional anthropomorphic gods and goddesses of the Greeks, and also turned over to them the administration and rule of the sub-lunar, terrestrial world in which they dwelled. While the invisible Demiurge was the sole actor in the theological cosmogony of *Timaeus* 29d–40d, he disappeared as active agent in the zoogony that immediately followed in *Timaeus* 40d–42e, where his visible generated sons and daughters took over the creation and rule over mortal life. The supreme power exercised by the Demiurge in the creation of the *kosmos* at the dawn of time was viewed as a singular act of such perfection that there was no reason for continued actions in the present that could only serve to disturb the perfect regularity of nature (Vlastos 1975: 61; Flannery 2010: 85).

In both *Timaeus* and Genesis, we have the same striking sequence of concluding transitional events: the Creator’s work of ordering the perfect *kosmos* is completed (*Timaeus* 42e; Gen 2:1); the Creator, his work finished, retires from the scene as the administration of the sub-lunar world, including the task of creating mortal life forms, is delegated to the Creator’s offspring, the generated gods (*Timaeus* 41b–42a; Gen 2:4–25). The eternal, incorporeal Creator disappears from the narrative, his sole ongoing activity in the present to ensure the continued existence of the *kosmos* (*Timaeus* 42e; cf. Sedley 2007: 106; Runia 1986: 255–7), as the story shifts to the mortal terrestrial gods. As discussed in the next chapter, the so-called “second creation account” in a new literary unit beginning in Gen 2:4 has a shift in perspective to narrate stories about the terrestrial gods and the mortal life forms they created.

5.5 Conclusions

As discussed in earlier chapters, the cosmogony of Gen 1:1–2:3 is not a creation myth similar to the creation stories of the Ancient Near East, but is a scientific-theological-mythical hybrid. It combines elements of science, for the most part dependent on Greek scientific theories, with other elements of theology and mythology that are directly dependent on Platonic philosophical ideas on cosmogony and Plato’s philosophically vetted myths. The scientific elements drew on a variety of early Greek philosophers as illustrated by Table 5.1.

It is important to distinguish between theological and scientific content in Genesis 1 for the purpose of source criticism. The creationist theological content, in which the Craftsman divinely guided the process of creation, drew exclusively on Plato. So likewise the occasional mythological content,

Table 5.1 Greek Scientific Sources in Genesis 1

Primordial chaos with four elements and regions	Gen 1:2	Zeno the Stoic, Plato, <i>Timaeus</i> 52e–53a
Wind as an active element	Gen 1:2	Zeno the Stoic
The creation of light and dark, night and day, time	Gen 1:3–5	Hesiod, Empedocles, Plato, <i>Timaeus</i> 37e, 39c
Separation of earth and sky	Gen 1:6–8	Plato, <i>Timaeus</i> 32b
Separation of earth and seas	Gen 1:9–10	Various Greek philosophers
Spontaneous generation of life forms	Gen 1:11–12, 20, 24	Various Greek philosophers
Life forms classified by genus and species	Gen 1:11–12, 21, 24–26	Plato, <i>Timaeus</i> , <i>Sophist</i> , <i>Statesman</i>
Plant life appears before the sun and before separation of day and night	Gen 1:11–18	Empedocles
Astronomy	Gen 1:14–18	Astronomical Book of Enoch
Sun, moon and stars appear later than light	Gen 1:14–18	Empedocles, Zeno the Stoic
The resting of the Creator	Gen 2:2–3	Anaxagoras, Plato, <i>Timaeus</i> 42e

such as divine speeches by a god (Gen 1:27–30) or gods (Gen 1:26) regarding the creation of humans. But the biblical authors also drew on contemporary Greek science to describe terrestrial formative events that Plato either neglected (such as the emergence of dry land) or gave idiosyncratic mythological explanations that the biblical authors found unconvincing (such as the emergence of plants and animals, which Plato explained in terms of reincarnation). The authors of Genesis 1 appear to have preferentially drawn on Zeno’s writings on such scientific matters.

The supplementation of Plato’s account of the origin of the *kosmos* with Stoic scientific theories does not undermine the use of Plato for the theological and mythological content in Genesis 1. Plato acknowledged his cosmogony was unproven and unproveable (*Timaeus* 29c–d), only “a likely myth” (*Timaeus* 29d, 59c, 68d) or “likely account” (*Timaeus* 30b, 48d, 55d, 56a, 57d, 90e), and might someday be superseded by a more scientifically plausible model (*Timaeus* 55d, 59c–d). His only point of insistence was that the Creator was a divine being of supreme goodness (*Timaeus* 29a–b,e, 30b, 68e), a theological verity that all future cosmogonies must fully take into account (*Timaeus* 29a). This requirement was fully met in Genesis 1, which endorsed Plato’s basic theological outlook while incorporating some of the latest scientific theories in areas where Plato’s cosmogony was lacking.

Although steeped in Plato’s *Timaeus* and written by authors adept at philosophy and science, the Genesis 1 cosmogony contains no explicit philosophical, scientific and theological argumentation as in the *Timaeus*. This was due to the target audience, as shown by a rhetorical analysis of Genesis

1, compared to other presentations of cosmogony by Plato and other Greek philosophers (see Chapter 3 §3.4 above). Plato himself presented material in five different rhetorical contexts, each tailored to the rhetorical requirements of the intended audience. Rhetorical analysis of a written or oral presentation seeks to identify the status of the author or speaker, their intended audience, their rhetorical objectives, and the means by which they sought to achieve those objectives. From a rhetorical analysis of Genesis 1, three major conclusions emerge.

- First, the cosmogony in Genesis 1 was created by a ruling class of educated elites who were steeped in Greek science and had developed their own theories on cosmogony that plausibly incorporated the best of contemporary Greek science but also incorporated the philosophical and theological ideas found in Plato's *Timaeus*.
- Second, the educational aim of the authors was to promote pious beliefs in the young and the unsophisticated ordinary citizens for whom Genesis was written.
- Third, this guided their choice of format as a simple myth, an authoritative story set in distant antiquity that inoculated its audience against materialistic science by promoting belief in Elohim as the deity who fashioned the universe.

Genesis 1 is thus to be understood as myth authoritatively presented as fact, cutting-edge Greek science overlaid with theology, as in Plato's writings. The mythical story content becomes ever more prominent in Genesis 2 and the rest of the Primordial History.

Notes

- 1 Translations from the Hebrew are taken from NRSV. Translations from the Greek are taken from NETS, except where indicated otherwise.
- 2 "The history of the sky and the sea, of creation, and of the kings and of their deeds," Berossus *FGrH* 680 F1b (Syncellus, *Chronological Excerpts* XXVIII [Mosshammer]); "Stories about the sky, the earth, and the sea, about the ancient history of the kings and their deeds," Berossus *FGrH* 680 T8b (Syncellus, *Chronological Excerpts* XIV [Mosshammer]). Books 2 and 3 of the *Babyloniaca* narrated "the ancient history of the [Babylonian] kings and their deeds." Book 1 narrated "the history of the sky, the earth, and the sea." The first book was succinctly referred to in Latin as "*Procreatio (The Creation)*" (Berossus *FGrH* 680 F17 [*Commentary on Aratus* 142–43 (Maass)]), which is thought to translate the Greek title *Genesis* (Burstein 1978: 6, 13; Verbrugghe and Wickersham 1996: 15), a proposal supported by the Greek for "creation" in Berossus *FGrH* 680. See generally the discussion at Gmirkin 2006: 93–4.
- 3 See the extensive discussion in Gmirkin 2006: 89–139. Influence of Berossus on the Primordial History can be seen in the creation account of Gen 1:1–2:3 (especially at Gen 1:1–2), the ten long-lived generations before the flood, the flood story, the description of the tower of Babel and of the cataclysm that destroyed it. The use of Babylonian and older Sumerian cuneiform traditions as

- sources for the Primordial History has long been acknowledged: significantly, these specific sources, such as the *Enuma Elish*, the *Sumerian King List*, and the *Poem of Erra*, were all translated or paraphrased by Berossus in Book 1 of the *Babyloniaca*, and in some cases the version in the *Babyloniaca* is closer to the text of Genesis than the cuneiform originals.
- 4 Plato held that the *kosmos* came into existence at a definite point in time—indeed, at the beginning point of time—but would continue to exist into eternity. Plato thus paradoxically held that both the universe and traditional pantheon of Greek gods were generated, yet immortal (see Chapter 6 §6.2 below). Plato argued that the eternity of the universe, like that of the mortal gods, was not intrinsic to their nature, but was a product of the goodness of the Creator, who could never will the dissolution of any of his creations (*Timaeus* 32c, 41a–b). Plato’s student Aristotle believed that the notion of an eternal universe with a finite past was unsustainable. Instead, Aristotle held that the *kosmos* had no beginning point, no Creator and no ultimate cause (*Metaphysics* 12.6.1071b; *On the Heavens* 2.2.283b), but had always existed and would exist into eternity. Since Aristotle held the *kosmos* had no genesis, he therefore thought it unnecessary to write a cosmogony.
 - 5 Plato referred to the universe (*pantos*) (*Timaeus* 27c, 28c, 30a, 41a, 88d–89a, 90e, 92c) as *kosmos* (*Timaeus* 24c, 27a, 28b, 29a,e, 30b–c, 31b, 32c, 40a, 42e, 48a, 55c, 62d, 92c) or Heavens (*Timaeus* 28b, 31a–b, 34b, 36e, 37d–e, 38b, 52d, 92c). The Hebrew Bible typically used the phrase “Heavens and Earth” (Gen 1:1; 14:19, 22; 24:3; Ex 31:17; Deut 4:39; 10:14; 30:19; 31:28; Josh 2:11) or “Heavens and Earth and Sea” (Ex 20:4, 11; Ps 146:6).
 - 6 It is outside the scope of the present work to discuss the Platonic–Philonic background of John 1:1–10, in which Jesus was portrayed as the preexistent *Logos* that played a prominent role in the creation of the world. John 1:1 entered into discussions by the Church Fathers on the meaning of ἀρχῆν in Gen 1:1; cf. van Winden 1963.
 - 7 According to Plato, time itself, as measured by the orderly motion of the sun, moon and stars, was a sensible phenomenon and therefore must itself have a beginning, brought into existence by the Creator simultaneously with the *kosmos* (*Timaeus* 37e, 38b, 39b–c). Genesis 1 conveys a similar model in which Elohim brought time into existence with the orderly sequence of night and day in the seven days of creation (cf. Wajdenbaum 2011: 93–4).
 - 8 Here I follow the translation in Tsumura 2012: 11–18.
 - 9 Hesiod, *Theogony* 116; Orpheus F13 = Damascius, *Problems and Solutions Concerning the First Principles* 3.162–64 in Ahbel-Rappe 2010: 417; cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 12.6.1071b; 1091b. The Chaos of Hesiod, *Theogony* 116 is best understood as a chasm or “yawning space... stuffed with darkness” (West 1966: 192).
 - 10 An exception was Heraclitus, whose primordial universe was composed of fire.
 - 11 The watery origin of the universe was a feature common to the biblical cosmogony, the cosmogony of Thales, and the Babylonian creation myth of the *Enuma Elish*, where this water was personified in the gods Tiamat and Apsu. Although Berossus for the most part followed the *Enuma Elish*, he differed by having the universe begin in both water and darkness, like the biblical account; cf. Gmirkin 2006: 92–100.
 - 12 In a Phoenician cosmogony from the Hellenistic Era, “the *arche* of the universe was a dark windy air and an eternal dark chaos” (Sanchroniathon F16=Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospels* 1.12). In this cosmogony, the attractive force of the Spirit (evidently identified with the windy air) caused a mixing to occur that was the beginning of all things. See Darshan 2019 for a comparison with Gen 1:2.

- 13 Tsumura 2012: 227; 2016: 11–18; Hendel 1998: 19; van der Meer 2016: 42; Rösel 1994: 42, 48–9.
- 14 Zeno studied under Polemo, Plato’s successor at the Academy (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.2).
- 15 Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.155; Long and Sedley 1987: 1.297; Lapidge 1973: 255, 257; Hahm 1977: 91–2, 108–17, 139; cf. Plato, *Timaeus* 58d, 62d–63e; idem, *Phaedo* 108e–109a; idem, *Phaedrus* 109b–c, 111a–b.
- 16 Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.137, 139, 142–43; Hahm 1977: 42; Todd 2001: 77; Scade 2010: 165; Long and Sedley 1987: 1.297; cf. *Timaeus* 34b, 36d–e.
- 17 All quotes from Plato or other classical Greek sources are from LCL, unless stated otherwise.
- 18 Gregory 2011: 70–1, 79–80, 150; cf. Parmenides, *On Nature* 95–109; Simplicius, *Physics* 117.4; 145.1; Plato, *Parmenides* 163c; Aristotle, *On the Heavens* 1.12.281a–b; 283a; *Metaphysics* 1.983b. The Greek notion of the indestructibility of the material universe has been viewed as a precursor to modern scientific notions of the conservation of matter and energy, whereby matter and energy can neither come into existence nor pass out of existence, but only change form (Gregory 2011: 70–1). The theory of quantum vacuum fluctuation allows for the possibility of energy fluctuations in empty space over an extremely short time frame, governed by the equation $\Delta E \Delta t = h/2\pi$.
- 19 Aristotle noted that some natural philosophers held that the universe, having a beginning, must pass out of existence, while others held that the universe was cyclical (cf. *On the Heavens* 1.12.281a–b; 283a). At *Statesman* 269c–274a, Plato adhered to a cyclical model of the *kosmos*, but in *Timaeus* he argued that since the Creator was eternal and the universe was created in his image, then the universe and all he created was eternal. Although Plato held the *kosmos* had a beginning, the chaotic materials from which the *kosmos* was created had no beginning, but were literally older than time (*Timaeus* 37e–38e, 39d–e; cf. Vlastos 1939: 74, 76).
- 20 Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.136; Seneca, *Natural Questions* 3.13.1; Plutarch, *On Stoic Self-Contradictions* 1053b; Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel* 15.14.2 [Aristocles]; 15.18.2; Hahm 1977: 33, 106, 185, 264; Gregory 2011: 187–8; cf. Alexander of Aphrodisias, *On Mixture* 226.10, “Only matter and god survive *ekpyrosis*.”
- 21 Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.136, 142; Gregory 2011: 187–9; Long and Sedley 1987: 1.277–78; cf. *Timaeus* 49b–50a.
- 22 Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.136, 142; Alexander of Aphrodisias, *On Mixture* 226.10; Lapidge 1973: 259, 265–6; Hahm 1977: 57; Gregory 2011: 188.
- 23 Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 1.36; Lapidge 1973: 259–60; Hahm 1977: 79; Mondì 1989: 2.
- 24 The “face of the deep” and “face of the waters” are equivalent here (as in the “waters of the deep” in Gen 7:11; 8:2). The watery depths (*tehom*) were not the salty seas (*yammim*) of Gen 1:10 (cf. Tsumura 2018: 228), but rather fresh water from sources deep underground. The existence of such underground sources was postulated by Plato (*Phaedo* 111c–d, 112a–d), but criticized by Aristotle (*Meteorologica* 355b–356a; cf. Brown 1993: 162).
- 25 Anaxagoras had a similar classification: “Aether is the upper layer of the atmosphere, the light upper air. Air (*aer*) itself is dark, dense and mist-like, while aether is less dense and brighter” (Simplicius, *Physics* 155.23, 30; cf. Curd 2010: 35).
- 26 Gen 1:2; 3:8; 8:1; Ex 10:13; 14:21; 15:10; Num 11:31; 2 Sam 22:11; 1 Kgs 18:45; 19:11; 2 Kgs 3:17; Job 1:19; Ps 55:8; 83:13.

- 27 Gen 6:17; 7:15; Ex 15:8; 2 Sam 22:16; Job 4:9; 7:7; 12:10; 15:30; 27:3; Ps 18:15; 33:6.
- 28 Gen 26:35; 41:8, 38; 45:27; Ex 6:9; 28:3; 31:3; 35:21, 31; Num 5:14, 30; 11:17, 25–26, 29.
- 29 Frixione 2013; Bartoš 2020; Betegh 2020; King 2020.
- 30 For *pneuma* as wind in Plato's writings, see *Timaeus* 43c; *Laws* 5.747d; 7.797d; 8.845d; *Republic* 3.394c; 6.488d, 496d; *Phaedo* 77e, 112b; *Cratylus* 410b–c; *Statesman* 295d; *Theaetetus* 152b; *Phaedrus* 229b–c, 255c; *Philebus* 29a. For *pneuma* as air, see *Timaeus* 76b, 77a, 78b. For *pneuma* as breath, see *Timaeus* 33c, 49c, 66e, 70c, 79b–c, 80d, 82e, 83d, 84d–e, 85a, 91a,c; *Laws* 9.865b; *Republic* 3.405d; *Phaedo* 70a, 112b.
- 31 Indeed, Plato said the universe, although a Living Creature (*Timaeus* 30b–e, 33b, 34b, 36e, 39d–e, 91c), was entirely self-sufficient, with no need for *pneuma*, that is, respiration (*Timaeus* 33c).
- 32 Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.134, 139, 150; Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Professors* 9.75; Plutarch, *On Common Conceptions* 1085c–d; Long and Sedley 1987: 1.137.
- 33 Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.154. For early scientific theories on the origin of thunder and lightning, see Frisinger 1965, 1971, 1983. According to the natural philosophers Anaximander and Anaximenes, thunder was due to air smashing against clouds, which also kindled lightning (Seneca, *Natural Questions* 2.17–18). Anaxagoras held that lightning was aetherial fire from the upper atmosphere that broke through into the lower atmosphere, and thunder the sound of its hissing as it was quenched (Seneca, *Natural Questions* 2.19). Plato also mentioned the ignition of air (*Timaeus* 49b–c; cf. Hahm 1977: 59). A parallel phenomenon noted by Stoics was the ignition of a spark kindled when stones were stuck together (Long and Sedley 1987: 1.314).
- 34 Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.148–49; Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel* 15.14.1 [Aristocles]; Alexander of Aphrodisias, *On Mixture* 225.1–2; Long and Sedley 1987: 1.266–68, 278.
- 35 Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.134; Alexander of Aphrodisias, *On Mixture* 225.1–2; Lapidge 1973: 247; Hahm 1977: 3–10, 14–15, 20–1; Long and Sedley 1987: 1.162–64.
- 36 Cicero, *Academy* 1.39; Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Professors* 8.263; Nemesius 78.7; Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel* 15.14.1 [Aristocles]; cf. Long and Sedley 1987: 1.272–74; Hahm 1972: 3–10, 14–15, 20–1.
- 37 Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Professors* 9.75–76; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.134; cf. Long and Sedley 1987: 1.271; Hahm 1977: 29–56. According to Zeno's scientific logic, all causes have bodies, since only bodies can act or be acted upon (Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Professors* 9.211; cf. Long and Sedley 1987: 1.272–73, 333). God was thus the active aspect of matter.
- 38 Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.134, 139; Nemesius 164.15–18; Galen, *On Bodily Mass* 7.525.9–14; Lapidge 1973: 240–1; Hahm 1977: 29; Bobzien 2005: 490; cf. Seneca, *Letters* 65.2.
- 39 See Long and Sedley 1987: 1.319 on the Stoic rejection of Plato's World Soul having been created by the Demiurge or distinct in any way from God.
- 40 While Aristotle viewed the aether as a divine fifth element that constituted the bodies of the gods (Bodéus 2000: 44–8, 70, 118–9), Zeno equated the aether in the outer reaches of the heavens with the conventional element of fire (Long and Sedley 1987: 1.286–87), albeit creative fire.
- 41 See Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Professors* 9.75–76, Chalcidius, *Commentary on Timaeus* 292; Long and Sedley 1987: 1.271, 277 on Zeno's intelligent creative fire as demiurge.

- 42 Heraclitus of Ephesus had earlier identified God with fire, and Diogenes of Apollonia had identified God with air. See Chapter 3.
- 43 Ex 3:2–3; 13:21; 19:18; 24:27; Lev 9:23–24; 10:1–2, 12; Num 11:1; Deut 4:12, 15, 24, 33; 5:4, 20, 22, 24, 26; 9:10; 10:4; 33:2; cf. Judg 6:21; 2 Sam 22; 1 Kgs 18:38; 2 Kgs 2:11; Isa 66:15; cf. Grant 2015.
- 44 Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.147. Zeno, and the Stoics who came after him, were strict materialists and monotheists who contended that all of existence was material, including God (Cicero, *Academy* 1.39; Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Professors* 8.263; Nemesius 78.7–79.2; Alexander of Aphrodisias, *On Mixture* 225.1–2; Long and Sedley 1987: 1.272). Their scientific understanding of *theos* as creative fire precluded an anthropomorphic depiction of God (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.147) or the worship of lesser, terrestrial gods, although they allowed for the worship of the traditional Greek gods as symbolic aspects of the creative fire (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.135, 147; Long and Sedley 1987: 1.275).
- 45 Aristotle, *Physics* 2.3 later held to four types of causes: the material cause (the raw materials used), the moving or efficient cause (the craftsman), the formal cause (the form to be imposed), and the final cause (the purpose or objective).
- 46 Interestingly, *Timaeus* 39c has the same order of night and day in common with “evening and morning” comprising the first day (Gen 1:5), although *Timaeus* 37e has “days and nights.” Athenians (like the ancient Jews) counted days from sunset to sunset (Pliny, *Natural History* 2.79.188).
- 47 In the cosmogony of Zeno of Citium, a key event was the ignition of the aether of the outermost heavens (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.137, 142; Stobaeus, *Extracts on Physics and Ethics* 1.17.3 [Arius Didymus]; Lapidge 1973: 265; Hahn 1977: 58–9). The creation of the fiery sun, moon and stars took place later (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.137). Unfortunately, surviving fragments of Zeno do not address whether day and night were due to the aether or to presence of the sun in the sky.
- 48 According to the cosmogony of Empedocles of Akragas, first air and fire rose upwards into a swirling vortex whose revolution caused day and night. “There are, he says, two hemispheres revolving round the earth, one consisting entirely of fire, the other of a mixture of air with a little fire; this latter he supposes to be night” (Pseudo-Plutarch, *Stromateis* in Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel* 1.8.10).
- 49 So Anaxagoras, in conjunction with his idea of a primordial vortex (Simplicius, *Physics* 156.13; 300.27 cf. Curd 2010: 56), Archelaus of Athens (Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 1.9.1–3), Diogenes of Apollonia (Aetius 2.13.5, 9) and Plato (*Timaeus* 63e; cf. 81a).
- 50 Ex 24:10; 2 Sam 22:8; Job 37:18; Prov 8:27.
- 51 LXX adds, “And the water under the heaven was gathered together to their places and the dry land appeared.”
- 52 See Chapter 3: discussions of Anaximander of Miletus and Anaxagoras of Clazomenae. See also Aristotle, *Meteorologica* 353b, who broadly refers to earlier natural philosophers on this topic.
- 53 See McCartney 1920 on spontaneous generation in Greek and Roman sources. As noted in Brown 1993: 166–7, Greek natural philosophers typically posited the need for both earth and moisture (and sometimes heat) in muddy combination for the production of life. The Greek descriptive term earthborn used for some creatures (including humans) points to the emphasis on earth as an ingredient for life, especially for land animals.
- 54 Statements somewhat similar to Gen 1:14 appears at *Timaeus* 37e, 38c,e, 39b–c, where the sun, moon and planets were said to be required for the measurement of

time. “For simultaneously with the construction of the Heaven He contrived the production of days and nights and months and years, which existed not before the Heaven came into being (*Timaeus* 37e). The biblical text, influenced by the *Astronomical Book of Enoch*, emphasized the importance of the regular motion of the celestial bodies for calendrical purposes. *Timaeus* 38c also notes that God brought the heavenly bodies into existence “for the determining and preserving of the numbers of time.”

- 55 God’s fructification is implied in the divine blessing to “Be fruitful and multiply” in passages traditionally assigned to the Priestly source P (Gen 1:22, 28; 9:1; 17:16, 20; 22:17; 26:24; 28:3; cf. Deut 7:3; Ps 107:38). This is also seen in passages where God gives offspring to Israel (Lev 26:9; Deut 28:11) or individual families (Ps 113:9; 127:3–5) or children to barren women (Gen 17:15–21; 18:9–15; 25:21; 30:22, 24; Judg 13:3; 1 Sam 1; 2:21; 2 Kgs 4:8–17; Luke 1) or otherwise plays a role in conception (Ruth 4:13) or development within the womb (Jer 1:4–5). Conversely, barrenness was viewed as a divine curse (Gen 20:17–18; Ex 23:26; Lev 20:20–21; Deut 7:14; 2 Sam 6:23; Jer 22:30). The first generation of humanity, Adam and Eve, is created by the god Yahweh Elohim from earth and the divine breath (Gen 1:26–27; 2:7, 21–22), but the subsequent generation of offspring through sex and childbirth is also viewed as an act requiring divine participation to be successful, as in Gen 4:1, “I have procreated a man with Yahweh” (Bokovoy 2013).
- 56 The tradition of humans created in the image of the gods is often said to echo the Ancient Near Eastern notion of the king as the image of the gods (Clines 1968), but here all humans are made in the image of the gods, not only the king; cf. Tsumura 2018: 230.

Bibliography

- Ahbel-Rappe, Sara. *Damascius’ Problems and Solutions Concerning First Principles: Translated with Introduction and Notes*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Anderson, Gary A. “Creatio ex nihilo and the Bible,” in *Creation ex nihilo Origins, Development, Contemporary Challenges*. Gary A. Anderson and Markus Bockmuehl (eds.), 15–36. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2018.
- Aster, Shawn Zelig. *The Unbeatable Light: Melammu and its Biblical Parallel*. AOAS, 384. Munster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2012.
- Bartoš, Hynek. “Heat, *Pneuma*, and Soul in the Medical Tradition,” in *Heat, Pneuma, and Soul in Ancient Philosophy and Science*. Hynek Bartoš and Colin Guthrie King (eds.), 21–32. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020.
- Betegh, Gábor. “Fire, Heat, and Motive Force in Early Greek Philosophy and Medicine,” in *Heat, Pneuma, and Soul in Ancient Philosophy and Science*. Hynek Bartoš and Colin Guthrie King (eds.), 35–60. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020.
- Bobzien, Susanne. “Early Stoic Determinism.” *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale* 4 (2005): 489–516.
- Bodéüs, Richard. *Aristotle and the Theology of the Living Immortals*. Translated by Jan Edward Garrett. New York: State University of New York Press, 2000.
- Bokovoy, David E. “Did Eve Acquire, Create, or Procreate with Yahweh? A Grammatical and Contextual Reassessment of קנה in Genesis 4:1.” *VT* 63 (2013): 19–35.
- Bos, Abraham P. “Aristotle on the Differences between Plants, Animals, and Human Beings and on the Elements as Instruments of the Soul (De Anima 2.4.415b18).” *RMeta* 63 (2010): 821–841.

- Brown, William P. *Structure, Role and Ideology in the Hebrew and Greek Texts of Genesis 1:1–2:3*. SBLDS 132. Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1993.
- Burstein, Stanley Mayer. *The Babyloniaca of Berossus*. SANE vol. 1 fasc. 5. Malibu, CA: Undena Publications, 1978.
- Bury, Robert Gregg. *Plato: Timaeus, Critias, Cleitophon, Menexenus, Epistles*. LCL 234. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1929.
- Campbell, Gordon. “‘And Bright was the Flame of their Friendship’ (Empedocles B130): Humans, Animals, Justice, and Friendship, in Lucretius and Empedocles.” *LICS* 7 (2008): 1–23.
- Clines, David J.A. “The Image of God in Man.” *TynBul* 19 (1968): 80–85.
- Cross, Frank Moore *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973.
- Curd, Patricia. *Anaxagoras of Clazomenae: Fragments and Testimonia, a Text and Translation with Notes and Essays*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010.
- Darshan, Guy. “Ruah’Elohim in Genesis 1:2 in Light of Phoenician Cosmogonies: A Tradition’s History.” *JNSL* 45 (2019): 51–78.
- Flannery, Kevin L. “Ancient Philosophical Theology,” in *A Companion to Philosophy of Religion*. Charles Taliaferro, Paul Draper and Philip P. Quinn (eds.), 83–90. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.
- Frisinger, H. Howard. “Early Theories on the Cause of Thunder and Lightning.” *Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society* 46 (1965): 785–787.
- Frisinger, H. Howard. “Meteorology before Aristotle.” *Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society* 46 (1971): 1078–1080.
- Frisinger, H. Howard. *The History of Meteorology: to 1800*. Boston, MA: American Meteorological Society, 1983.
- Frixione, Eugenio. “Pneuma–Fire Interactions in Hippocratic Physiology.” *JHM* 68 (2013): 505–528.
- Gmirkin, Russell E. *Berossus and Genesis, Manetho and Exodus: Hellenistic Histories and the Date of the Pentateuch*. Library of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 433. CIS 15. New York: T & T Clark, 2006.
- Grant, Deena A. “Fire and the Body of God.” *JSOT* 40 (2015): 139–161.
- Gregory, Andrew. *Ancient Greek Cosmogony*. Bristol: Bristol Classic Press, 2011.
- Gundert, Beate. “Soma and Psyche in Hippocratic Medicine,” *Psyche and Soma: Physicians and Metaphysicians on the Mind-Body Problem from Antiquity to Enlightenment*. Paul Potter, John P. Wright (eds.), 13–36. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002.
- Hahm, David E. *The Origins of Stoic Cosmology*. Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1977.
- Hendel, Ronald S. *The Text of Genesis 1–11: Textual Studies and Critical Edition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Jaeger, Werner. *Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936.
- King, Colin Guthrie. “Ancient Philosophy and Science at the Crossroads of Metaphysics and Medicine,” in *Heat, Pneuma, and Soul in Ancient Philosophy and Science*. Hynek Bartoš and Colin Guthrie King (eds.), 3–28. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020.
- Lapidge, Michael. “ἀρχαί and στοιχεῖα: A Problem in Stoic Cosmology.” *Phronesis* 18 (1973): 240–278.

- Loader, William R.G. *The Septuagint, Sexuality and the New Testament: Case Studies on the Impact of the LXX in Philo and the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2004.
- Long, Anthony A. and David N. Sedley. *The Hellenistic Philosophers*. 2 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- Louw, Theo A.W. van der. *Transformations in the Septuagint: Towards and Interaction of Septuagint Studies and Translation Studies*. CBET 47. Leuven: Peeters, 2007.
- May, Gerhard. *Creatio ex Nihilo: The Doctrine of "Creation out of Nothing" in Early Christian Thought*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994.
- McCartney, Eugene S. "Spontaneous Generation and Kindred Notions in Antiquity." *TAPhA* 51 (1920): 101–115.
- Mondi, Robert. "Χαοσ and the Hesiodic Cosmogony." *HSCP* 92 (1989): 1–41.
- Naddaf, Gerard. *Greek Concepts of Nature*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2005.
- Nickelsburg, George W.E. and James C. VanderKam. *1 Enoch 2: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 37–82*. Hermeneia. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2012.
- Oppenheimer, Adolf L. "Akkadian *pul(u)ḥ(t)u* and *melammu*." *JAOS* 63(1943): 31–34.
- Rösel, Martin. *Übersetzung als Vollendung der Auslegung: Studien zur Genesis Septuaginta*. BZAW 223. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1994.
- Runia, David T. *Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus of Plato*. Philosophia Antiqua 44. Leiden: Brill, 1986.
- Runia, David T. "The Literary and Philosophical Status of Timaeus' *Prooemium*," *Interpreting the Timaeus-Critias: Proceedings of the IV Symposium Platonicum*. Tomás Calvo and Luc Brisson (eds.), 101–118. Sankt Augustine: Academia Verlag, 1997.
- Runia, David T. *On the Creation of the Cosmos According to Moses: Introduction, Translation and Commentary*. Philo of Alexandria Commentary Series 1. Leiden: Brill, 2001.
- Sarna, Nahum M. *Genesis. JPS Torah / Bible Commentary*. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989.
- Scade, Paul. "Stoic Cosmological Limits and Their Platonic Background." *BICS* 107 (2010): 143–183.
- Sedley, David. "The Etymologies in Plato's 'Cratylus'." *JHS* 118 (1998): 140–154.
- Sedley, David. *Creationism and its Critics in Antiquity*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007.
- Skemp, Joseph B. "Plants in Plato's Timaeus." *CQ* 41 (1947): 53–60.
- Smith, Mark S. *The Priestly Vision of Genesis 1*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2010.
- Sterling, Gregory E. "'The Most Perfect Work': The Role of Matter in Philo of Alexandria," in *Creation ex nihilo Origins, Development, Contemporary Challenges*. Anderson, Gary A. and Markus Bockmuehl (eds.), 99–118. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2018.
- Todd, Robert B. "Cleomedes and the Problems of Stoic Astrophysics." *Hermes* 129 (2001): 75–78.
- Tov, Emanuel. *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research*. Jerusalem Biblical Studies 8. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015.

- Tsumura, David Toshio. "Genesis and Ancient Near Eastern Stories of Creation and Flood," in *"I Studied Inscriptions from before the Flood": Ancient Near Eastern, Literary, and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1–11*. Richard S. Hess and David Toshio Tsumura (eds.), 27–57. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994.
- Tsumura, David Toshio. "The Doctrine of creatio ex nihilo and the Translation of tōhū wābōhū," in *Pentateuchal Traditions in the Late Second Temple Period: Proceedings of the International Workshop in Tokyo, August 28–31, 2007*. Akio Moriya and Gohei Hata (eds.), 3–21. JSJSup 158. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2012.
- Tsumura, David Toshio. "Rediscovery of the Ancient Near East and Its Implications for Genesis 1–2," in *Since the Beginning: Interpreting Genesis 1 and 2 Through the Ages*. Kyle R. Greenwood (ed.), 215–238. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2018.
- VanderKam, James C. "Scripture in the Astronomical Book of Enoch," in *Things Revealed: Studies in Early Jewish and Christian Literature in Honor of Michael E. Stone*. E. Chazon, D. Satran and R. Clements (eds.), 93–97. JSJSup 89. Leiden: Brill, 2004.
- van der Meer, Michael N. "Anthropology in the Ancient Greek Versions of Gen 2:7," in *Dust of the Ground and Breath of Life (Gen 2:7): The Problem of a Dualistic Anthropology in Early Judaism and Christianity*. Jacques T.A.G.M. van Ruiten and George H. van Kooten (eds.), 36–57. Themes in Biblical Narrative 20. Leiden: Brill, 2016.
- van Winden, Jacobus C.M. "In the Beginning: Some Observations on the Patristic Interpretation of Genesis 1:1". *VC* 17 (1963): 105–121.
- Verbrugghe, Gerald P. and John M. Wickersham. *Berosos and Manetho, Introduced and Translated: Native Traditions in Ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1996.
- Vlastos, Gregory. "The Disorderly Motion in the Timaios". *CQ* 33 (1939): 71–83.
- Vlastos, Gregory. *Plato's Universe*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1975.
- Wajdenbaum, Philippe. *Argonauts of the Desert: Structural Analysis of the Hebrew Bible*. Sheffield: Equinox Publishing, 2011.
- Weinfeld, Moshe. "Kabod". *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. 15 vols. 7: 22–38. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995.
- West, Martin Litchfield. *Hesiod, Theogony: Edited with Prolegomena and Commentary*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966.
- Westermann, Claus. *Genesis 1–11: A Commentary*. Translated by J. Scullion. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984.

6 Genesis 2–3 as Myth

Gen 2:4–25 famously contains a second creation account that markedly differs from the scientific-theological-mythical cosmogony of Gen 1:1–2:3. While Gen 1:1–2:3 used the divine name Elohim, the subsequent narrative used Yahweh Elohim [MT] or κύριος ὁ θεός [LXX]. This has commonly been taken to signify a change from Priestly authorship in Gen 1:1–2:3 to Yahwistic authorship starting in Gen 2:4. This identification of authorship, inherited from the Documentary Hypothesis of the nineteenth century, does not appear particularly useful in the present discussion, since Gen 1:1–2:3 manifests scientific rather than priestly concerns with minor exceptions. The contrast between Gen 1:1–2:3 and Gen 2:4–25 is better characterized as a break between scientific-theological-mythical cosmogony and pure myth or storytelling.

The change in style starting in the Second Creation Account is extreme. While Genesis 1 contains a sparse, parsimonious narrative dominated by scientific and theological considerations, in Genesis 2–3 Yahweh Elohim appears as a story character in dialogue with both humans and animals in a narrative dominated by mythical concerns. Genesis 2 does not constitute a mythical cosmogony, since it contains no account of the origins of the physical universe. Instead, Genesis 2 is better identified as a mythical zoogony, since its subject matter is restricted to the origins of life.

The current chapter will first discuss the zoogony of Genesis 2 and the myth of the Garden of Eden in Genesis 2–3 and analyze their relationship to the cosmogony of Genesis 1. It will be argued that both the creation of the *kosmos* in Genesis 1 and the local myths regarding the creation of life and the Garden of Eden in Genesis 2–3 were contemporaneous and indeed inter-related literary accounts. Both were dependent on Plato's *Timaeus*, which also contained both a philosophical and a mythological creation account with striking parallels to those of Genesis.

6.1 The Gods in Plato's *Timaeus*

Before discussing the Second Creation Account in Genesis 2, it will prove useful to first briefly discuss Plato's gods, as described in *Timaeus*, and how

Plato brought them into relation to his two creation accounts. Plato described six distinct levels of divinity, from the realm of Forms down to the divine soul placed in humans and animals.

6.1.1 The Forms

This represents the highest, purely metaphysical realm, above even that of the gods. The Forms were models or paradigms of everything that would come into existence. The highest form was the Form of Good, by which all other forms came to be. The gods and all of existence were subordinated to the Form of Good. The invisible realm of Forms was unknowable by humans except through the divine faculty of reason (*nous*).

6.1.2 The Demiurge

This cosmological god by whom the *kosmos* was fashioned was also known in Plato's writings as *Nous* or intellect. The Demiurge existed separately from the realm of Becoming, as well as from the Receptacle from which the sensible corporeal realm was generated. One must accordingly view the Demiurge as an invisible god composed of pure Being (*Timaeus* 35a), eternal (*Timaeus* 29a, 34a–b), older than time (*Timaeus* 37c–d) and the epitome of goodness (*Timaeus* 29a, 30a,d, 46c–d, 68e). Existing in the invisible eternal realm of Being, without a material body, the Demiurge was thus unique among the gods.¹

6.1.3 The Kosmos

According to Plato, the Demiurge first created the World Soul and then fashioned the Body of the universe out of the chaotic material Receptacle to create the new realm of Becoming. The Demiurge united and bound together the World Soul and the Body of the universe to create the *kosmos*, a living being and a god fashioned after the perfect model or paradigm of Living Creatures in the metaphysical realm of Forms. The *kosmos* was created as a perfect, rotating sphere whose motion was governed by its intellect that was located in the World Soul.

6.1.4 The Celestial Gods

The very purpose for the existence of the Demiurge was to fashion the most beautiful and excellent world, and central to this task was to create the sun, moon and stars that adorned the sky. The Demiurge fashioned these “visible gods” from souls placed into fiery bodies. The celestial gods were psychokinetic beings endowed with intellects that expressed themselves by their orderly motion across the sky. Ouranos, or the Heavens, was a perfect divine realm of goodness and rationality whose order was a visible demonstration of the existence of the gods.

6.1.5 *The Younger Gods*

Beneath the celestial gods there existed another order of generated gods, “the younger gods,” the ordinary lesser gods of Greek myth. In Plato’s *Timaeus*, the Demiurge was portrayed as their Maker and Father (*Timaeus* 28c, 31b, 37c, 41a, 42e, 71d; cf. 42d, 50d), the God of gods (*Timaeus* 41a). These were the gods of Hesiod’s *Theogony*, including the gods of nature such as Heaven (Ouranos) and Earth (Ge), and the anthropomorphic terrestrial gods such as Zeus, Hera, Athena, Hephaestus and Poseidon.² In mythical times the gods dwelled among humans and sometimes still appeared to humans in legendary times. These gods, who possessed a pure divine soul within a mortal (yet undying) body, were, according to Plato, only capable of beauty and goodness, subordinate as they were to the Form of Good (van Riel 2013: 103–6). While the lesser gods once dwelled on earth, Zeus and the entire race of gods now dwells in the heavens (Plato, *Phaedrus* 246d) where they travel borne aloft on chariots drawn by winged steeds (*Phaedrus* 246a–247e). Having pure souls (*Phaedrus* 246a,e), they were capable of reaching the highest outer reaches of the heavens, where they were carried around the circuit of the skies and could look out directly on the World of Forms beyond (*Phaedrus* 247b–c). Afterwards, they could descend, when they so chose, back to the heavenly abode where they dwelled (*Phaedrus* 247e).

6.1.6 *Divine Heroes, Ordinary Humans and Animals*

Lowest in Plato’s hierarchy of divinity was mortal terrestrial life, created by the lesser gods, and thus fully mortal. Unlike the pure souls of the gods, human souls were composed of a mixture of spirit and dross (*Timaeus* 42e–43a). This implied that man was capable of choosing either good or evil, depending on the degree to which his soul mastered his physical senses and appetites. Mortal life was not capable of becoming god: the best mortals could hope for was to become like gods (Sedley 1997; Armstrong 2004; cf. *Timaeus* 29e, 42a, 51e, 68e–69a). There was nevertheless a spectrum of divinity in the mortal realm. Highest were the heroes who were the offspring of terrestrial gods and mortal humans. Next came man, then woman, and then the animals: birds, four-legged animals, legless animals and water creatures, in that order. A good life would lead to reincarnation in the next life at a higher level, the ultimate reward being the permanent ascent of the soul to the stars, while a poorly lived life would lead to reincarnation further down the scale of divinity.

According to Plato’s definition in *Phaedrus* 246c–d, a living being was a soul joined to a body, and a god was defined as an immortal living being (Bodéüs 2000: 101, 114). All the gods—the *kosmos*, the visible celestial gods and the terrestrial gods—were generated by a soul implanted in a visible body,³ with the exception of the cosmic Demiurge, who existed as an invisible, eternal god in the realm of Being. All the gods with the exception of

the supreme cosmic god of creation were thus generated gods with mortal bodies, but possessed conditional immortality by virtue of the goodwill of the Demiurge, who could never let one of his creations fall into dissolution, even though they possessed mortal bodies ordinarily subject to dissolution and death (*Timaeus* 41a–b). The universe, the stars and other celestial bodies, and the terrestrial gods all thus possessed conditional immortality stemming from the goodness of the Creator (much as the angels, created beings of Jewish and Christian myth, also possessed conditional immortality). Humans and lesser life forms, the creations of the terrestrial gods, were fully mortal.

It is important to recognize the extent to which the authors of the Hebrew Bible adopted or rejected the Platonic hierarchy of divine beings. There is no evidence that the biblical authors subscribed to Plato's theory of Forms, although Ex 25:9 has God revealing to Moses the divine model or paradigm (LXX) of the tabernacle (Wajdenbaum 2011: 166–9; Sanders 2014: 86–7). The biblical authors, the author of Genesis 1 included, also rejected the celestial bodies of sun, moon and stars as divinities.⁴ Furthermore, the Platonic idea of an immortal soul was also rejected—although it later resurfaced in Christian doctrine. Metempsychosis (reincarnation) also failed to achieve acceptance in either Judaism or Christianity, except through the idea of a resurrection at the return of the Messiah, when righteous souls would be revived within reconstituted physical bodies.

The biblical authors of the Primordial History did fully embrace other elements of Platonic theology. This included the existence of a cosmic, eternal Creator of the *kosmos* (Genesis 1), as well as the offspring of that Creator, the terrestrial gods of Genesis 2–11 (cf. Gen 1:26). Finally, Gen 6:1–4 accepted the notion of intermarriage between terrestrial gods and mortal women, which resulted in semi-divine heroic offspring. Foreshadowed in Gen 1:26, the story of the terrestrial gods begins at Gen 2:4, focusing on the god Yahweh who would later become the patron god of the children of Israel.

6.2 Plato's Second Creation Account

Plato's First Creation Account described in detail how the Demiurge or creator used divine intelligence (*Nous*) to fashion the primordial chaos of *Timaeus* 48a–69a into the orderly *kosmos* of *Timaeus* 29d–40d in his own perfect image. This account mentions in passing the creation of birds, fish, land animals and plants (*Timaeus* 39e–40a) as a necessary part of the Demiurge's plan to have life throughout every part of the *kosmos*. Yet, in the second creation account of *Timaeus* 40d–47e we learn that the creation of mortal life, including humanity, was not performed by the Demiurge himself but was delegated to the lesser gods, his sons and daughters, the ordinary civic gods of the Greeks.

Plato thus makes the single supreme eternal god the philosophers called *Nous* (Intellect) or the Demiurge (Craftsman) the Creator of the *kosmos*, but

later resorted to the myths and gods of Greek tradition in order to explain the origins of life. The Greeks had various stories that varied from place to place about gods creating the very first humans in different localities, such as the first Athenians having been born from the earth of Attica as children of Hephaestus and Athena (*Timaeus* 23d–e); the first earth-born residents of Atlantis as creations of the sea-god Poseidon (*Critias* 113b); the first Spartans springing up from dragons teeth sown by Cadmus (Apollodorus, *Library* 3.4.1); and the Titan Prometheus fashioning the first humans out of mud and Athena breathing life into them (Apollodorus, *Library* 1.7.1; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.81; Pausanias, *Guide to Greece* 10.4.3). Plato appears to have shown great indifference to the traditional stories about the origins of the first humans in mythical times—even when he endorses them—or indeed in Greek stories about the earlier origin of the gods. Such stories were first systematically recorded in Hesiod’s *Theogony*, a venerated poem about the genesis of the gods written in ca. 640 BCE, shortly after the time of Homer. Plato acknowledged Hesiod’s *Theogony* as having canonical authority through long tradition and some value for inculcating piety towards the gods in toddlers and youths (McPherran 2014: 74), despite its highly dubious content and the need for some censoring. Plato displays a fundamentally dismissive attitude towards such popular traditions in Plato, *Laws* 10.886b–d:

(886b) We at Athens have accounts preserved in writing (though, I am told, such do not exist in your country, owing to the excellence of your polity), (886c) some of them being in a kind of meter, others without meter, telling about the gods: the oldest of these accounts [notably Hesiod’s] relate how the first substance of Heaven and all else came into being, and shortly after the beginning they go on to give a detailed theogony, and to tell how, after they were born, the gods associated with one another. These accounts, whether good or bad for the hearers in other respects, it is hard for us to censure because of their antiquity; but as regards the tendance and respect due to parents, I certainly would never praise them or say that they are either helpful or wholly true accounts. (886d) Such ancient accounts, however, we may pass over and dismiss: let them be told in the way best pleasing to the gods.

Plato shows a similar apathetic attitude towards the truth of Greek myths when he turns from cosmogony to theogony or the origin of the gods in *Timaeus* 40d–e:

(40d) Concerning the other divinities, to discover and declare their origin is too great a task for us, and we must trust those who have declared it aforetime, they being, as they affirmed, descendants of gods and knowing well, no doubt, their own forefathers. (40e) It is, as I say, impossible to disbelieve the children of gods, even though their statements lack either probable or necessary demonstration; and

inasmuch as they profess to speak of family matters, we must follow custom and believe them.⁵

Plato then paraphrased the standard account from Hesiod's *Theogony* on the origin of the gods in *Timaeus* 40e–41a, starting with the gods Earth (Ge) and Heaven (Ouranos), and ending with Zeus and Hera and their brethren, that is, the traditional Olympian gods:

(40e) Therefore let the generation of these gods be stated by us, following their account, in this wise: Of Ge and Ouranos were born the children Oceanus and Tethys; and of these, Phorkys, Cronos, Rhea, and all that go with them; (41a) and of Cronos and Rhea were born Zeus and Hera and all those who are, as we know, called their brethren; and of these again, other descendants.

Plato portrayed the Demiurge as the “god of gods” and the Father of all the gods and goddesses of the Greeks, his offspring (*Timaeus* 40d–41a). (Note that Plato made the Demiurge the father of Ge and Ouranos, instead of Chaos as in Hesiod, *Theogony* 116–37.) The traditional Greek gods, being sensible and hence material, must necessarily have been generated (*Timaeus* 28a–c, 31b, 34b, 37c, 40a,d, 41a–b), and, indeed, generated from the Demiurge their Father. Unlike the eternal, incorporeal Demiurge, the traditional gods were born and came into existence at some point in the mythical past, in Plato as in Hesiod. (See Philo, *On the Eternity of the World* 5.17, on the world as both created and indestructible in Hesiod and Plato; cf. Sedley 2010: 24.) Like all things generated, the lesser gods of Greek myth were thus subject to dissolution and destruction (*Timaeus* 28a–c, 40d–41d), and were thus intrinsically neither immortal nor indestructible (*Timaeus* 41b; cf. Capra 2010: 210). The eternal life of these mortal gods was instead due to the perfection and goodness of their Creator, whose will was that they persist forever (along with the *kosmos*, which was also generated, yet eternal). As the Demiurge told his offspring in a fictionalized speech in *Timaeus* 41a–b:

(41a) “Gods of gods, those works whereof I am framer and father are indissoluble save by my will. For though all that is bound may be dissolved, (41b) yet to will to dissolve that which is fairly joined together and in good case were the deed of a wicked one. Wherefore ye also, seeing that ye were generated, are not wholly immortal or indissoluble, yet in no wise shall ye be dissolved nor incur the doom of death, seeing that in my will ye possess a bond greater and more sovereign than the bonds wherewith, at your birth, ye were bound together.”

The gods, though possessing corporeal mortal bodies, were conditionally immortal as a result of their creation by the Demiurge, who willed that nothing he created would ever die. As for ordinary mortal life, the Demiurge

desired for it to be generated. Yet if he himself created ordinary life forms, they would of necessity be equal to the gods and immortal. The Demiurge therefore delegated the task of fashioning the material bodies of terrestrial life forms to his offspring, the lesser gods, for reasons the Demiurge explained at *Timaeus* 41c–d:

(41c) But if by my doing these creatures came into existence and partook of life, they would be made equal unto gods; in order, therefore, that they may be mortal and that this World-all may be truly All, do ye turn yourselves, as Nature directs, to the work of fashioning [*plasso*] these living creatures, imitating the power showed by me in my generating of you. Now so much of them as it is proper to designate “immortal” ... that part [the soul] I will deliver unto you when I have sown it and given it origin. (41d) For the rest, do ye weave together the mortal with the immortal, and thereby fashion and generate living creatures, and give them food that they may grow, and when they waste away receive them to yourselves again.

In this mythical speech in *Timaeus* 41a–d, life’s creation was thus assigned to the popular civic gods of the Greeks, anthropomorphic deities whom Plato identified as the offspring of the Demiurge, the eternal supreme god of the *kosmos*. These lesser gods, the children of the eternal Demiurge, were also described as *demiourgoi* or craftpersons (*Timaeus* 41c, 42e, 69c, 75b), like their Father, but operating on a lesser scale. After the perfect *kosmos* had already come into existence, the creative activities of the lesser gods were limited to fashioning mortal life forms. By separating the creation of the *kosmos* from the generation of mortal life, Plato thus gave the primary role to the eternal cosmic god introduced in *Timaeus*, while also accommodating popular Greek polytheism and its myths. Plato thereby also solved the philosophical problem of how a perfect, immortal god could create imperfect, mortal life.

Finally, Plato addressed the tricky philosophical problem of theodicy. *Theodicy* was a term invented by Gottfried Leibnitz (1710), signifying the attempt to exonerate God from responsibility for evil, a concern Leibnitz found both in Genesis and in the writings of Plato. According to Plato, it was inevitable that the nature of mortal existence would lead to wickedness in some for whom the rational soul did not overcome the chaotic impulses and appetites of the material body. The Demiurge therefore decreed that a soul that led a perfect life would go to dwell with the stars, while those souls who led imperfect lives would come back as men, women, birds, animals or fish, depending on their degree of wickedness (*Timaeus* 42b–c). Plato held that this form of divine judgment allowed justice to prevail in the *kosmos* and absolved the supreme god from responsibility for human wickedness.

(42d) When He had fully declared unto them all these ordinances, to the end that He might be blameless in respect of the future wickedness of

any one of them ... He delivered over to the young gods the task of molding mortal bodies, and of framing and controlling all the rest of the human soul which it was still necessary to add, together with all that belonged thereto, (42e) and of governing this mortal creature in the fairest and best way possible, to the utmost of their power, except in so far as it might itself become the cause of its own evils.

Plato's Second Creation Account, a myth-based zoogony, thus served three basic rhetorical and philosophical functions: to accommodate the popular religion of the Greeks, with all its anthropomorphic gods; to give a philosophical explanation for mortality; and to absolve the supreme cosmic god from responsibility for human wickedness.

6.3 Yahweh as a Terrestrial God

It is striking that both Plato's *Timaeus* and the book of Genesis divide their account of the creation of the world into two parts, the first narrating the creation of the present universe as a whole, the second the creation of humans and other mortal life forms. In *Timaeus*, the creation of the *kosmos* was performed by the supreme eternal god, the Demiurge, while the creation of mortal life was performed by his offspring, the terrestrial gods and goddesses of traditional Greek myth. In the biblical text, the activities of the Creator of Genesis 1 (Elohim) appear highly compatible with those of the novel philosopher's god of *Timaeus*. This leads us to consider the possibility that the god who fashioned mortal life in Genesis 2, who went by a different name (Yahweh Elohim), was not the same god known by a different name, but was originally intended to be understood as a lesser terrestrial god, distinct from the cosmic creator of Genesis 1.

In the current section, it will first be argued that there was an essential qualitative difference between the transcendent philosopher's god of Plato's *Timaeus* and the various celestial and anthropomorphic terrestrial gods of the Greeks, the Ancient Near East and the Levant. The novel supreme eternal god of Platonic philosophy was unique in being situated prior to and outside of the physical universe occupied by the anthropomorphic gods of myth.

Building on these observations, it will then be argued that Yahweh, the national god of Iron II Samaria and Judah, was traditionally understood as a local terrestrial god, one of the 70 sons of El, the supreme Canaanite deity, creator of heaven and earth. The figure of Yahweh Elohim in Genesis 2–3 should accordingly be understood as one of the sons of the Creator of Genesis 1, whether that Creator is identified with Plato's Demiurge or as an echo of the older Canaanite god El. It is only in the later reception history of Genesis 1–3 (starting in Exodus–Joshua; see Chapter 8 §8.7) that the Creator of Genesis 1 and the terrestrial god Yahweh of Genesis 2–3 were conflated.

6.3.1 *The Philosopher's God*

Plato's *Timaeus* portrayed the Demiurge, the creator of the *kosmos* (*Timaeus* 28a, 29a), as a unique divine being whose nature could only be discovered by reason based on philosophical inquiry (*Timaeus* 28a, 52a). He was an eternal being (*Timaeus* 29a, 34a–b), beyond time itself (*Timaeus* 37c–d), ungenerated (*Timaeus* 27d–28c, 31b, 52a–b), unchanging (*Timaeus* 28a, 35a, 36e), intrinsically immortal (*Timaeus* 27e–28a, 34a–b, 41a, 52a), intrinsically good (*Timaeus* 29a, 30a,d, 46c–d, 68e), invisible (*Timaeus* 28a, 29b–c, 31b, 36e, 52a), insensible (*Timaeus* 28a–c, 52a) and incorporeal (*Timaeus* 28b–c, 31b). Self-similar (*Timaeus* 29a, 35a, 52a), unique (*Timaeus* 31a–b) and supreme in every sense (*Timaeus* 29e, 35a, 37a, 40d–41a, 68e), this singular transcendent god of the realm of Being was monotheistic in essential conception, being the only god present at the dawn of time and the sole god of the eternal realm. As such, the philosopher's god of Plato was the forerunner of the true monotheistic god later envisioned by Judaism.⁶

6.3.2 *The Celestial and Terrestrial Greek Gods*

Plato also envisioned a host of lesser gods of whom the Demiurge was Father and Maker. These younger gods, who existed in the sensible realm of Becoming, came into existence when the Demiurge fashioned the *kosmos* (itself a sensible god) or shortly thereafter. First were the gods Ouranos and Ge, Heaven and Earth. Next, the Demiurge fashioned the celestial deities, namely the sun, moon, planets and stars. Finally, the Olympians and other civic gods of the Greeks were generated, the corporeal, anthropomorphic gods who populated the earth in mythic and legendary times. The Demiurge was responsible for fathering and fashioning all the celestial and terrestrial gods of the temporal realm, as well as the divine immortal portion of the human soul. The gods generated by the Demiurge existed in the sensible realm of Becoming, both visible and corporeal, and within the bounds of time, having come into existence within the physical *kosmos* in the finite past. As generated creatures with a finite past (cf. Broadie 2008: 6), the *kosmos* and all the gods therein were by their nature mortal, since all things generated were also perishable, yet they possessed a contingent immortality by virtue of the will of the Demiurge, who would never allow anything he created to pass into dissolution. The civic gods of the Greeks thus paradoxically had both a finite past and an eternal future.

This view of the civic gods as having been born in the finite past and dwelling within the physical universe was not unique to Plato. Hesiod, too, charting the genealogies of the gods in his *Theogony*, portrayed the immortal gods as having come into existence in the finite though distant mythical past. Homer, Hesiod and all the Greeks also assigned physical domains to the gods. The gods of the Greeks all dwelled within the physical *kosmos*: the celestial deities in their orbits in the sky;⁷ the terrestrial gods living on

Mount Olympus or ruling over the territories and people allotted to them on earth; and other gods said to dwell in subterranean realms. According to Homer, *Iliad* 15.189–93, Zeus ruled the sky, Poseidon the sea and Hades the underworld, the earth held in common by all three. The Greek gods were thus all assigned definite physical realms within the *kosmos*, though some might be described as belonging to mythical geography—Mount Olympus, Tartaros, the Islands of the Blessed—beyond the conventional travels of mortal men. The Greeks—Plato aside—thus envisioned the immortal gods as anthropomorphic beings who dwelled in definite physical locations in the skies, on earth, or in subterranean realms, eating, drinking, engaging in sexual relations, both with each other and with humans, and bearing divine and semi-divine offspring.⁸

It was Plato alone who postulated a truly eternal god that dwelled beyond the plane of sensible existence, beyond time, in the world of Being. This essentially monotheistic conception of a supreme transcendent god existing beyond the sensible universe was a major Platonic innovation, found neither in popular Greek myth nor in the writings of the pre-Socratics, though a commonplace belief today in the religions that are Plato's intellectual heirs. Earlier natural philosophers who postulated a monotheistic deity, such as Xenophanes of Colophon, Heraclitus of Ephesus and Anaxagoras of Clazomene, did not localize the supreme god outside the realm of sensible existence, but rather as an intelligence pervading the physical universe. Plato's view of this god as one, eternal and without bodily form, appears to most closely echo the views of Xenophanes. But Plato, by postulating a separate eternal realm of Being distinct from the temporal realm of Becoming, gave a novel ontological basis for the existence of a divine realm where both Forms and the Demiurge could have an abiding existence separated from the sensible physical *kosmos*.

6.3.3 *The Terrestrial Gods of the Ancient Near East*

As a result of cultural exchanges between the Greeks and the Ancient Near East in archaic times (Burkert 1992), there existed broad parallels between the anthropomorphic gods in the east and west and their myths.⁹ The gods of the Assyrians, the Babylonians and the Hittites were grouped by families with well-defined genealogies. Male gods typically had goddesses as wives or consorts by which they had other divine offspring (although sexual liaisons of gods with humans seem to have been exclusive to Greek mythology). The gods of the Ancient Near East, having been engendered and born, thus came into existence at some definite point in the past—what we might call the mythical past, yet still the finite past. Even Marduk, who created the earth and skies, and was thus older than the portion of the physical world that humans inhabited, was the son of Ea and Damkina, and thus had a finite if indeterminable past. The *Enuma Elish* goes further in projecting the anthropomorphic character of the gods, positing their mortality: Marduk

slew the divine monster Tiamat and fashioned earth and sky from her carcass (*Enuma Elish* 4.93–145), and made man from the blood of the slain god Qingu (*Enuma Elish* 6.29–33). Other references to the “dead gods” appear in *Enuma Elish* 4.120; 6.153; 7.6.

Again, like the Greeks, the peoples of the Ancient Near East situated their gods within the physical realm, although this larger cosmology included mythical lands beyond the bounds of the ordinary world of humans. The battle between Marduk and Tiamat took place within this greater quasi-geographical context within which the earth and skies were created. Gods were assigned to the regions of sky, earth and subterranean world (see generally Horowitz 1998). Gods were often pictured as founding and dwelling in specific cities in the mythical past, and living in their temple-palaces into the present. Marduk came to dwell within Babylon, the city he established directly after having created the heavens and earth. Indeed, the Babylonians calculated the age of the heavens and earth by means of king-lists that stretched back into legendary times to the founding of Babylon and its first dynasty.

6.3.4 The Terrestrial Gods of the Ancient Levant

Similar ideas about divine theogony and cosmology also prevailed in the ancient Levant, as illustrated in the Baal Epic from Ugarit. The Bronze Age “Canaanite” gods, like those of Mesopotamia, were fully anthropomorphic (or monstrous) and terrestrial. They were also mortal, and the Baal Cycle details the wars in which various rival gods were vanquished and slain.¹⁰ The most important god of the Ugaritic pantheon was El, the creator of heaven and earth (Cross 1962: 241–4). In what manner El fashioned heaven and earth, and out of what preexisting materials, is unknown, since surviving Ugaritic literature lacks a cosmogony (Smith 1994: 75–87; Smith and Pitard 2009: 44–5). El appeared in Genesis as the ancestral god (Gen 33:20; 46:3; cf. Cross 1962: 232 n. 27; 1973: 46 n. 13) and elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, although in later texts he was sometimes conflated with Yahweh (Josh 22:22; Ps 10:12; 50:1). In his capacity as the oldest of the gods, El appears with the title Olam or Ancient One and was pictured in anthropomorphic form as a bearded old man.¹¹ El and his consort Athirat were the parents of the “seventy gods” who comprised the divine council of the gods, over whom El presided. El and Athirat dwelled on Mount Saphon, at the source of two streams (Smith 1994: 225–34; Smith and Pitard 2009: 452), while the other gods of the Ugaritic pantheon, their offspring, dwelled in various other earthly abodes (Smith and Pitard 2009: 42–4).

6.3.5 The Terrestrial Gods of the Bible

While the Hebrew Bible contains extensive polemics against Baal, it records many positive references to El and preserves several titles and liturgical

formulas associated with El, such as El Elyon (El Most High), El Olam (El the Ancient One), El Shaddai (El Almighty) and El as the creator of heaven and earth (Cross 1962, 1973: 46–69; Day 2000: 16–21). In the biblical text, El appears to have been known as Elyon (“the Most High”) in his capacity as leader of the divine council (Deut 32:8–9; Ps 82:1, 6; cf. Smith 2001: 48–9, 156–7), a title of El also known since the Bronze Age (Cross 1962: 241–4, 1973: 50–2; Day 2000: 21; Smith 2001: 135–7). From the description of the “Most High God” as creator of heaven and earth (Gen 14:19, 22), it would appear that the biblical authors equated or identified the local Canaanite deity El Elyon with the Creator of Genesis 1 (see further §6.4).

Various passages in the Pentateuch and Psalms preserve the ancient Ugaritic conception of El as the leader of a divine council of terrestrial gods.¹² These same passages distinguish El Elyon from both Elohim and Yahweh. In Ps 82:1, 6, Elohim appears as one of the sons of El. Interestingly, in Psalm 82 the gods of the divine council were portrayed as mortal,¹³ like the 70 sons of Athirat who comprised the divine council in the Baal Cycle of Ugarit.¹⁴ In Ps 29:1 and 89:6–7, Yahweh also appeared as one of the assembled gods of the divine council, while Deut 32:8–9 identified Yahweh as one of the (70) sons of Elyon:

When Elyon gave the nations their inheritance, when he separated humanity, he fixed the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of sons of God.¹⁵ For Yahweh’s portion is his people, Jacob his allotted heritage.

Here, Elyon was pictured as the father of the gods who apportioned the various nations to be ruled by his offspring, including Yahweh (Smith 1990: 7, 2001: 48), who was assigned Jacob (Israel) as his heritage (Smith 1990: 7–8, 2001: 143). The sons of God to whom Elyon allotted the nations were interpreted as a divine council of 70 angels in 1 En. 89.59; 90.22–25 and rabbinic sources (Smith 1990: 7–8, 2001: 143; Day 2000: 23–4; Smith and Pitard 2009: 48), where the 70 nations were evidently understood as those listed in the Table of Nations of Genesis 10 (Day 2000: 24). But the interpretation of the sons of God in Gen 6:1–2 and Deut 32:8–9 as angels properly belongs to the reception history of Genesis and Deuteronomy. In Deut 32:8–9, the sons of God are now conventionally understood as the 70 gods of Canaanite myth, that is, the 70 sons of El known from the Baal Cycle of Ugarit (Day 2000: 23–4). This passage thus attests to the fact that the biblical authors understood Yahweh, the biblical god of the Israelites, as one of the gods of the divine council, the 70 sons of El Elyon.

The observation that the god of the Israelites, whether going by the name Yahweh or Elohim, was one of the offspring of the creator god El leads to a new interpretation of the gods of Genesis 1 and 2–3 as distinct as originally presented by the biblical authors of Genesis. The creation of heaven and earth by Elohim in Genesis 1, although presented in scientific rather than

mythological terms, closely corresponds to the role assigned to El in the older Canaanite myth, as well as to El Elyon in Gen 14:19, 22. The god of Genesis 2–3 arguably represents a different god, Yahweh (Yahweh Elohim), named as one of the (70) sons of Elyon in Deut 32:8–9, the terrestrial deity worshipped in Samaria and Judah since the Iron II. This distinction between the cosmic Creator in Genesis 1 and his terrestrial offspring in Genesis 2–3 (and Gen 6:1–2) was consistent with the ancient Canaanite heritage of the biblical authors, which they sought to strategically incorporate into the biblical writings to give the account of the gods an aura of antiquity (Gmirkin 2017: 262–3). The careful mapping of the Demiurge and his terrestrial offspring to El and his 70 sons facilitated the introduction of the novel god of Platonic philosophy in the familiar guise of the supreme Canaanite god El.

6.4 The Second Biblical Creation Account

As discussed previously, Plato's *Timaeus* contains two separate creation accounts: the first (*Timaeus* 29d–40d) is a universal cosmogony in which the Demiurge fashioned a beautiful, perfect *kosmos* (seemingly including all earthly forms of life); and the second (*Timaeus* 40d–47e) is a zoogony in which the generation of mortal life was assigned to a plurality of lesser gods, the offspring of the Demiurge. Although the First Creation Account attributed to the Demiurge an intent to create life throughout the *kosmos* (*Timaeus* 39e–40a), it was only in Plato's Second Creation Account that the reader learned that this task was delegated by the Demiurge to his offspring, the terrestrial gods.

Genesis 1–3 has a virtually identical structure, with a universal cosmogony in Genesis 1 and a zoogony and etiology of the sexes, mortality and evil in Genesis 2–3. Whereas the First Creation Account in Genesis 1, like Plato's First Creation Account in *Timaeus* 29d–40d, left the impression that all life was fashioned by the Creator as part of the creation of the heavens and earth, the Second Creation Account of Genesis 2–3, like Plato's Second Creation Account in *Timaeus* 40d–47e, claimed that the mortal life forms that populated the earth were actually fashioned and animated by a lesser terrestrial god, the ruler of the land of Eden and seemingly also one of a plurality of gods (cf. Gen 1:26; 2:18 [LXX]; 3:5 [LXX]; 3:22; 6:2, 4; 11:7). Like Plato's Second Creation Account, Genesis 2–3 sought to answer, through the mechanism of story or myth, the deep philosophical questions of the origins of mortality and human wickedness.

This new interpretation of the narrative structure of Genesis 1–3 undermines the old diachronic model that viewed Genesis 1 and Genesis 2–3 as doublets, two distinct creation accounts authored by P and J respectively, dated centuries apart and clumsily combined by the final redactor of Genesis. Rather, these two creation accounts are complementary and with

differing purposes. The first is a true cosmogony, cosmic in scope, and the second a terrestrial zoogony. As noted by David Tsumura (2018: 221), only Genesis 1 was a true creation account, while Gen 2–3 didn't even mention the sun, moon or stars. The appearance of God under two different names in these contemporary accounts does not reflect different diachronic sources P and J. Instead, two distinct deities are named; namely the cosmic Demiurge or Creator Elohim (LXX ὁ θεός) of Gen 1:1–2:3, and the earth-bound terrestrial god Yahweh Elohim (LXX κύριος ὁ θεός) of Gen 2:4–3:24, in later biblical narrative the patron god of the children of Israel.

This initial authorial distinction between the Demiurge named Elohim in Genesis 1 and the terrestrial god Yahweh Elohim in Genesis 2–3 (later, simply Yahweh) was deliberately obscured by the authors of Exodus–Joshua (see Chapter 8 §7). As a result, the distinction was lost at an early date among the non-philosophical readers of the Hebrew Bible who identified Yahweh with the Creator Elohim of Genesis 1 in line with later portions of the Hexateuch. This conflation of the supreme eternal God with the local patron god Yahweh was arguably reflected in corruptions in the textual transmission of Genesis 2–3, in which the MT has Yahweh Elohim instead of Elohim in Gen 2:4 (whereas LXX has ὁ θεός). There are, indeed, several discrepancies between MT and LXX (and in Gen 3:1–5 internal discrepancies within the narrative itself) that indicate textual problems in one or both.

The dominant tendency is for LXX to read ὁ θεός where κύριος ὁ θεός is expected based on the MT's consistent use of Yahweh Elohim throughout Gen 2:5–3:24 (except in Gen 3:3, 5). In Gen 3:3, 5 both MT (Elohim) and LXX (ὁ θεός) appear faulty, based on MT's Yahweh Elohim in Gen 3:1. When and how these inconsistencies in the divine name were introduced are the proper subject of textual criticism, but it seems reasonable to posit that the original text of Genesis 1–3 was consistent in its use of Elohim and Yahweh Elohim in the First and Second Creation Accounts respectively.

The Second Creation Account, in which the figure of Yahweh Elohim was introduced in MT (but arguably not in proto-LXX), begins as follows:

Table 6.1 Divine Names in Genesis 2–3

<i>Passage</i>	<i>MT</i>	<i>LXX</i>
Gen 2:4	Yahweh Elohim	ὁ θεός
Gen 2:5, 7–9	Yahweh Elohim	ὁ θεός
Gen 2:19		ὁ θεός
Gen 3:1	Yahweh Elohim	κύριος ὁ θεός
Gen 3:3, 5	Elohim	ὁ θεός
Gen 3:11		ὁ θεός
Gen 3:22	Yahweh Elohim	ὁ θεός

(2:4 MT) These are the generations [תולדות] of the heavens and the earth when they were created. In the day that the Lord God [Yahweh Elohim] made the earth and the heavens.

(2:4 LXX) This [is] the book of origin of heaven and earth [βιβλος γενέσεως οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς], when it originated in the day God [ὁ θεὸς] made the heaven and the earth.

Here, we have the title of a new section in Genesis, “The Generations of the Heavens and the Earth” (MT) or “The Book of the Genesis of Ouranos and Ge” (LXX). In all other biblical examples of the use of *toledot* in a section title (Gen 5:1 [Adam]; 6:9 [Noah], 10:1 [Noah, Shem, Ham and Japheth]; 11:10 [Shem]; 11:27 [Terah]; 25:19 [Isaac]; 37:2 [Jacob]; Num 3:1 [Aaron]; Ruth 4:18 [Ruth]), the section goes on to list the descendants of the named figures (except for Gen 25:19; 37:2) and record various stories about them. Taking these other parallels into consideration, it appears that the biblical authors drew on a tradition in which heavens and earth were taken as living beings—gods—who originated in a “succession of begettings” (Westermann 1984: 16). Taking heaven and earth here as living gods, the natural interpretation of the title of this section is that it comprised a form of theogony, an account of the gods and their descendants. Given that Genesis 2–3 has as its exclusive focus on stories featuring the god Yahweh Elohim, it follows that Yahweh Elohim was understood as belonging to this genealogy of the gods.

In the older Canaanite tradition, El bore the title “creator of heaven and earth” (Cross 1962: 241–4; Habel 1972: 336; Day 2000: 20–1), a phrase mirrored in Gen 14:19, 22, and later applied to Yahweh in Ps 115:15; 121:2; 124:8; 134:3; 146:5–6 (cf. Habel 1972). The root קנה, in the present context meaning create, also frequently signifies procreation.¹⁶ El Elyon was thus portrayed as the procreator of heaven and earth, like Plato’s Demiurge (*Timaeus* 37c, 41a), and like Elohim here in Gen 2:4.

The interpretation of heaven and earth as gods may be supported by the Sefire Treaty, which lists as witnesses “El and Elyon, Heav[en and Earth], [Ab]yss and Sources, Day and Night.”¹⁷ In a fragment of the Phoenician History of Philo of Byblos, quoted in Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospels* 1.10.15, it is stated that “Elioun (that is, Elyon)¹⁸ was said to have been the father of Ouranos and Ge, who in turn had many other offspring.” Ouranos and Ge, Heaven and Earth, also appear in Gen 2:4 LXX, where they can be understood as cosmological gods, the same Greek gods that stood at the head of the divine genealogies in Hesiod’s *Theogony* and Plato’s *Timaeus*. Gen 2:4 thus makes excellent sense in the Greek as a reference to the generation or procreation of the gods, which provides an interpretive context for understanding the “Toledot of the Heavens and Earth” in Hebrew as theogony. That the LXX sheds such important light on the obscurities of the underlying Hebrew text points to literary dependence on a Greek source, easily identified as Plato’s *Timaeus*.

Plato's Demiurge was not only the creator of the *kosmos*, but the father of the pantheon of Greek gods, starting with Ge and Ouranos. The short theogony that appears in *Timaeus* 40e–41a was not narrated for its own interest, nor did it comprise an exhaustive catalogue of the gods. Instead, this theogony reflected Plato's broader concerns with theodicy. Plato claimed that the traditional visible Greek gods, starting with Ouranos and Ge, were the offspring of the invisible Demiurge or Creator, and that these semi-mortal, corporeal gods in turn created mortal life, which exonerated the eternal Demiurge from having created mortals with their potential for evil.¹⁹ Likewise, in Gen 2:4 Ouranos and Ge appear as the first two offspring of the Creator of Genesis 1, and an account of their descendants is projected. In Genesis 2–3 the narration shifts from the Creator to the creation of mortal life by Yahweh Elohim, a visible god who is one of the descendants of the Creator of Genesis 1, alongside the other terrestrial gods alluded to in Genesis. Yahweh Elohim in turn created mortal life, like the lesser gods in *Timaeus*.

Although Gen 2:4 refers to a Creator fashioning the heavens and earth, Gen 2:4–25 otherwise contains no content suitable to a cosmogony as such (Cassuto 1989: 90; Sarna 1989: 17). Gen 2:4 thus seemingly alludes to and takes for granted some earlier creation account (Cassuto 1989: 90), presumably the preceding cosmogony of Gen 1:1–2:3. Yet it will soon become apparent that the author of Gen 2:4–25 did not directly consult Gen 1:1–2:3, since the two accounts contradict each other at key points. One such contradiction was the time it took to create the *kosmos*, which was specified as six days in Gen 1:1–2:3 but a single day in Gen 2:4 (Cassuto 1989: 88). It does not seem useful to ask which of the two accounts was earlier if, as I have argued elsewhere, the Pentateuch was the product of a collaborative authorial project by multiple contemporary authors present at Alexandria in ca. 270 BCE. Instead, one may merely note that either the storytellers of Gen 2:4–25 or the editor that united Gen 1:1–2:3 and 2:4–25 acknowledged that the stories of Genesis 2 presumed the earlier cosmogony of Genesis 1.

An important question for interpreting Gen 2:4 and for understanding the relationship between the First and Second Creation Accounts is the identity of the Creator in Gen 2:4. Gen 2:4 MT explicitly identifies Yahweh Elohim as the god who fashioned the heavens and earth. But Gen 2:4 LXX does not have κύριος ὁ θεός, the usual translation of Yahweh Elohim, as the Creator, but rather simply ὁ θεός, Elohim, the same deity who appears throughout the First Creation Account of Gen 1:1–2:3. Indeed, LXX diverges from MT by having ὁ θεός (Elohim) instead of κύριος ὁ θεός (Yahweh Elohim) throughout Gen 2:4–7; κύριος ὁ θεός makes his first LXX appearance in Gen 2:8. This suggests that the authors of Gen 2:4–25 knew that the creator of the *kosmos* was the supreme god ὁ θεός (Elohim), not the lesser, anthropomorphic storybook god Yahweh Elohim.²⁰ In the Second Creation Account, Elohim arguably made an appearance only in Gen 2:4, as the creator of the *kosmos*. In the remainder of the story the focus completely shifts to Yahweh Elohim, who is portrayed as the creator of mortal life. This

is highly consistent with *Timaeus* 40d–47e, where the Demiurge first appears in a brief adaptation of Hesiod’s *Theogony* as the Father of the Greek gods, after which the narrative shifts to the creation of mortal life by the lesser gods, the offspring of the Demiurge.

Heaven and Earth thus appear in two roles in Gen 2:4—as in *Timaeus*—both scientific and mythical. On the one hand, it is stated that Elohim (emended from MT’s Yahweh Elohim, supported by the LXX reading of ὁ θεός) created the heavens and the earth, a reference to the preceding scientific creation account in Genesis 1. On the other hand, heaven and earth also appear in a new mythical capacity, as gods, and as ancestors of the gods. This exactly corresponds to the appearance of these two deities in *Timaeus*. On the one hand, Plato’s Demiurge is the Maker who fashioned the heavens and earth, Ouranos and Ge, in the First Creation Account, the scientific-theological-mythical cosmogony of *Timaeus* 29d–40d. On the other hand, in the Second Creation Account of *Timaeus* 40d–47e, Plato’s Demiurge is the Father of the Heaven and Earth, of Ouranos and Ge, where these two figures now appear as gods. Ouranos and Ge were thus introduced in a new mythical capacity as the firstborn of the gods, and ancestors of the entire pantheon of the gods.²¹ Plato tacitly endorsed the *Theogony* of Hesiod²² in *Timaeus* 40e–41a, but unenthusiastically referred the reader to such widely available traditional accounts, which he reluctantly acknowledged as a concession to credulous customary beliefs (*Timaeus* 40d–e). Although Plato showed little interest in the details of the theogony of the gods, he found it useful to portray the traditional gods of Greek myth as descendants and offspring of the Demiurge, his transcendent philosophical god of Creation.

In a compromise between myth and science, Plato thus named the Demiurge as both Father and Maker of the terrestrial gods in *Timaeus*, and the same duality appears in Gen 2:4, where the heavens and earth are to be understood as both the handiwork and children of the eternal Creator of Genesis 1. Much as Ouranos and Ge are the first two children of the Demiurge in *Timaeus*, and (following Hesiod’s *Theogony*) the ancestors of the rest of the Greek gods,²³ so heaven and earth may be understood as the offspring of the God of Genesis 1, and ancestors of all the other many gods known to the biblical readers, including Yahweh, patron god of the children of Israel. Like Plato, the philosophical authors of Gen 2:4 were not particularly interested in tracing the details of this theogony beyond asserting that the terrestrial gods were the conditionally immortal offspring and descendants of the transcendent god of Genesis 1. Genesis does not expand upon the *toledot* of the heavens and earth, but later broadly refers to the sons of God (Gen 6:1–2, 4). Much like Plato mentioned Ge (*Timaeus* 23d), Helios (*Timaeus* 22c), Hephaestus (*Timaeus* 23c; *Critias* 109c), Athena (*Timaeus* 21e, 24b–d; *Critias* 109c; 112c), Poseidon (*Critias* 113b–e, 116c, 117b, 119c–d) and Zeus (*Critias* 111d, 121b) without having traced in detail their descent (except incidentally for Zeus in *Timaeus* 40e–41a), so Genesis

later mentions Yahweh Elohim as one of these terrestrial sons of God without charting the genealogical connections. Yet the vocabulary of theogony in Gen 2:4 allows us to understand Yahweh as a descendant of the Heavens and Earth, Ouranos and Ge, the first offspring of the Creator god.

(2:5 MT) when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up—for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground.

(2:5 LXX) and every green of the field, before it originated upon the earth, and all grass of the field, before it grew, for God did not send rain upon the earth, and a human being was not there to till the earth,

The earth as initially fashioned by God was described as lifeless, since there was neither rain nor any man to till the earth. These two explanations are somewhat discordant. The first explanation, that life required rain, was essentially scientific. Greek natural philosophers beginning with Thales recognized that life required water and could neither germinate nor be sustained in water's absence.²⁴ Gen 2:5a appears to understand that plant life would begin to appear by spontaneous generation once the world began to be watered by rain showers. (See Sedley 2007: 14–19 on Greek belief in spontaneous generation through seeds spread throughout the universe.) The second explanation, that plant life required agricultural effort, may be somewhat indebted to the Mesopotamians, who lived in an arid land where agricultural produce was created only by labor-intensive canal construction, planting, irrigation and harvesting. The foreshadowed actions attributed to God in Gen 2:5 were largely administrative rather than creative, appropriate to a terrestrial god in command of the sub-lunar world: sending rain upon the earth, assigning humans to agricultural activities. The reading Yahweh Elohim [MT] is thus to be preferred over ὁ θεός [LXX] starting in Gen 2:5 (and thereafter).

The cosmic incorporeal Creator of Genesis 1 never appears in a terrestrial context, but the god of Genesis 2–3 appears throughout as an earthly deity in a terrestrial locale. Gen 2:5–6 sets the narrative on an earthly stage, before the rains had fallen, plants sprung up, or humans appeared as agriculturists. Yahweh Elohim is clearly portrayed as an earth-bound deity later on in Gen 2:7, where he is physically present to fashion man out of the wet earth and to breathe life into his nostrils, and subsequently in Gen 2:7–3:24, where Yahweh Elohim was localized in the Garden of Eden.

It is significant that Yahweh Elohim, despite being a terrestrial god, is here pictured as possessing power to send rain upon the earth, a power that he will exert later when he sends a flood upon the earth (Gen 6:17; 7:4, 21–23). In this aspect, Yahweh Elohim resembles Zeus, the chief of the mortal gods (*Critias* 121b), who was traditionally portrayed as a storm god that controlled the rains (Cook 1940: 3.282–505; cf. *Critias* 111d, where Zeus

sent yearly rains upon the earth). Plato also gave Zeus similar powers in *Critias* when Zeus passed judgment on the Atlantians and sent earthquakes and a world flood that sank the continent of Atlantis. Yahweh Elohim was given a preeminent status comparable to Zeus as chief of the younger gods, with control over terrestrial phenomena. Yet neither Zeus, within and outside Plato's writings, nor Yahweh Elohim, appeared as a cosmic creator of heavens or earth, despite both Zeus and Yahweh Elohim presiding over the sub-lunar world.

(2:6 MT) But a mist would rise from the earth, and water the whole face of the ground.

(2:6 LXX) but a well sprang up from the earth and watered the whole face of the earth.

This is an elementary scientific explanation of the cycle of evaporation, cloud formation and rain storms (cf. Job 36:27–28).²⁵ Gen 2:6 is sometimes understood to refer to a “stream” that arose from the earth to water the land, but the watering action on “the whole face of the earth” is indicative of rain showers. Gen 2:6 [MT] appears to imply that the beginning of the cycle of evaporation and rain allowed the appearance of plant life on the earth (cf. Gen 2:5). Gen 2:6 LXX rather suggests that a wellspring was the first source of water, perhaps from which sprang the river that watered Eden in Gen 2:10.

(2:7 MT) Then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being.

(2:7 LXX) And God formed (ἔπλασεν) the human being from dust from the earth and blew upon his face the breath of life (πνοὴν ζωῆς), and the human being became a living soul (ψυχὴν ζῶσαν).

The terrestrial god Yahweh Elohim here appears as a craftsman, in a capacity similar to the cosmic creator Elohim in Genesis 1. In Plato's *Timaeus* (41c, 42e, 69c, 75b) the mortal offspring of the supreme Creator were also described as *demiourgoi* or craftsmen who carried out activities similar to their Father, the cosmic Demiurge. Whereas the Demiurge was responsible for the creation of the entire *kosmos*, he delegated the task of fashioning mortal life to his offspring, the same task carried out by Yahweh Elohim in Genesis 2.

The use of verbs pertaining to creation in Genesis 1–2 in both Hebrew and Greek delineate the roles of the eternal creator of the *kosmos* and the lesser gods who fashioned mortal life. The verb ברא, translated in the LXX by *poiew* (ποιέω), was reserved for the cosmic Creator of Genesis 1. The verb יצר, translated in the LXX by *plasso* (ἔπλασεν), was reserved for the

Table 6.2 Hebrew and Greek terms for Creation

ברא	<i>poiew</i> (ποιέω)	create	Demiurge	Gen 1:1, 21, 27; 2:3–4; 5:1–2; 6:7
עשה	<i>poiew</i> (ποιέω)	make		Gen 1:7, 11–12, 16, 25–26, 31; 2:2–4, 18; 3:1, 7, 13–14, 21; 4:10; 5:1; 6:6–7, 14–16, 22; 7:4–5; 8:6, 21; 9:6, 24; 11:4, 6
יצר	<i>plasso</i> (ἔπλασεν)	fashion	Lesser Gods	Gen 2:7–8, 19

terrestrial god Yahweh Elohim who created mortal life in Genesis 2. The verb עשה, consistently translated by *poiew* (ποιέω), was used in a variety of contexts, with both human and divine actors, and is not useful as a marker in the present context.

Martin Rösel (1994: 60) observed that the translation of יצר as *plasso* (ἔπλασεν) in Gen 2:7–8, 15 (LXX)²⁶ corresponds to the unusual use of *plasso* in *Timaeus* 42d, where the Demiurge instructed his children, the terrestrial gods, to fashion man and other mortal life forms. Rösel noted that the earlier creative acts of the Demiurge in *Timaeus* were elsewhere rendered as *poiew* (ποιέω). Rösel thus inferred that the cosmogony of *Timaeus* guided the LXX translation of Genesis 1–2, where the translators connected the cosmic creative activities of the Demiurge and the fashioning of material mortal life by his offspring with the two well-known biblical creation accounts. Yet Rösel failed to note that this division of labors in *Timaeus* was reflected, not only in the choice of verbs in the LXX, but also in the underlying Hebrew, where ברא is associated with the acts of the cosmic creator Elohim in Gen 1:1–2:4, and יצר with the fashioning of mortal life by his terrestrial offspring Yahweh Elohim in Gen 2:7–8 (as well as the reconstructed Hebrew proto-LXX Vorlage of Gen 2:15). This implies that the influence of *Timaeus* was present in both the LXX translation and its Hebrew original, and that the creation of man from the dust of the earth at Gen 2:7 was modeled on the creation of mortal life by the lesser gods.

From Gen 2:7, 21, 23 we learn that humans were constructed from earth with a body of bone and flesh and animated with the breath of life. This resonates with the account of the construction of man's body from bones made from earth (*Timaeus* 73e–74c; cf. 64c) and covered with attached flesh made from earth combined with water and fire (*Timaeus* 74c–75c). Since “its life consisted in fire [heat] and air” (*Timaeus* 77a), the gods then fashioned the blood system and respiratory system and digestive tracts (*Timaeus* 77c–79e, 80d–81a), channeling out the body to allow the intake of food and air (*Timaeus* 79a–e) via the mouth and nose and nostrils (*Timaeus* 78c, 79c, 79e; cf. the animating breath in man's nostrils in Gen 2:7). These anatomical and physiological concerns are broadly reflected in the Second Creation Account.²⁷

This account of man's creation from earth and air differs from the zoogony incorporated into the cosmogony of Gen 1:1–2:3. There plants,

fish, fowl and land animals all came to life before the Elohim fashioned humankind, both man and woman together. But in Gen 2:7, man alone was created as the very first living earthly creature. All the other plants and living creatures, including woman, were subsequently fashioned for man's benefit. This appears to mirror Plato *Timaeus* 42b, 91a, in which man was the first and most important of the life forms fashioned by the gods.

Greek natural philosophers held that life spontaneously arose from a combination of moisture and warm earth (Brown 1993: 166–7). In Greek mythology, Hephaestus molded Pandora from wet clay (Hesiod, *Works and Days* 61, 70). Prometheus similarly crafted the first human out of earth and water (Apollodorus, *Library* 1.7.1; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.81). In a similar manner, Yahweh Elohim was portrayed as a craftsman who fashioned man, not by spontaneous generation, but from dust or soil (עפר, χούβ) taken from the earth (קמח, γη). According to Theo van der Louw (2007: 94), *xous* (χούβ) means dust, not soil, but Michael van der Meer (2016: 52–4) has convincingly shown that *xous* should be rendered as mud, not dust, based on several examples from early Ptolemaic documents in which *xous* clearly referred to wet earth. This strengthens the parallel with Prometheus's creation of humans from earth and water, as well as Greek scientific claims that earth, water and heat were required for life.

The significance of the divine animating breath of life (cf. Job 33:4) breathed into the first man's nostrils [MT] or blown upon his face [LXX] was subject to various interpretations in both ancient and modern times. According to Philo's novel interpretation of Genesis 1–2, which was heavily influenced by his reading of Plato's *Timaeus*, Gen 1:1–5 described the biblical god as Demiurge creating the universe within the noetic invisible world of Forms; Gen 1:26–27 described the creation of the human soul; and Gen 2:7 described God implanting this divine, immortal soul into the mortal body of man (Philo, *On the Creation of the Cosmos* 29, 69, 134–35; cf. Runia 1986: 258–66, 2001: 132–71, 222–35, 321–9). According to Rösel (1994: 72–87), the LXX translation of Genesis 1–2 was based on an interpretation of *Timaeus* virtually identical to Philo's. Rösel understood the breath of life in Gen 2:7 as a reference to the immortal soul created earlier in Gen 1:26 [LXX]. But van der Louw (2007: 95) noted that in this case Gen 2:7 would have used the Greek word *pneuma* (πνεῦμά) rather than *pnōa* (πνοήν). Additionally, the word soul (*nephesh*, ψυχήν) at the conclusion of Gen 2:7 is used to refer to life of animals in Gen 1:20–21, 24, 30; 2:7, and so does not imply an immortal soul. Further, *psyche* appears as roughly synonymous with life in Greek Hippocratic texts of ca. 450–350 BCE (Gundert 2002), and is used to refer to various forms of life in prosaic early Ptolemaic usage (van der Meer 2016: 55–6). There thus appears to be no reference to an immortal soul in Gen 2:7, a conclusion supported also by the consensus of the articles found in van Ruiten and van Kooten (2016) on this issue.

Indeed, the Platonic doctrine of an immortal soul is not found in the Hebrew Bible. The description of Yahweh fashioning man in Gen 2:7

conforms more closely to Zeno than to Plato in important aspects. Plato considered the investing of the human body with a divine soul to be the most important aspect of man’s creation, connecting humans to the divine realm, whereas Zeno rejected the notion of a transcendent immortal soul. Zeno did indeed refer to *pneuma* in more than one context, namely *pneuma* or wind as air in motion (Lapidge 1973: 274; Frixione 2013: 512), and *pneuma* within living creatures as breath or respiration that gave humans life (Hahm 1977: 159). In common with Greek medical theories, with Aristotle, and with a nod to Plato, Zeno described *pneuma* as warm breath, a combination of air and heat.²⁸ While the divine fire that constituted the soul of the universe was indestructible, the human soul as the material animating “breath of life” was perishable (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.156). Life was also found in the fiery blood that coursed through veins and arteries.²⁹ While breath and blood gave (only) life, Zeno described the mind as the fiery expression of the divine (Aetius 1.7.23; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.147; Lapidge 1973: 253). The biblical conception of the “breath of life” that animated the body at (Gen 2:7; 6:17; 7:15, 22; Job 12:9; 27:3; 33:4) thus coheres with early Stoic philosophy (as does the idea of life found within an animal’s blood), but is inconsistent with Plato’s theory of a divine, immortal human soul.³⁰

6.5 The Garden of Eden

In the Second Creation Account of Genesis 2, we have a terrestrial deity—arguably one of many sons of Elohim—as a mythical storybook character dwelling in a strictly earthly setting, consistent with Plato’s *Timaeus*, whereas the incorporeal cosmic Creator of Genesis 1 existed prior to the creation of the heavens and earth, existing outside but acting upon the visible universe. The god of Genesis 2 is firmly localized within the terrestrial world. In Gen 2:8–3:24, the biblical authors described Yahweh Elohim’s terrestrial dwelling place—the Garden of Eden—as well as the plants, animals and humans who lived there. The current section will first discuss the biblical account of Eden, passage by passage, and then the next section will seek to identify the literary source behind the description of Eden and its garden.

(2:8 MT) And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. (9) Out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

(2:9 LXX) And God caused to spring up further from the earth every tree, beautiful to the sight and good for eating, and the tree of life in the middle of the park (παράδεισον), and the tree of knowing what is knowable of good and evil.

Throughout Gen 2:8–3:24, Yahweh Elohim appears in a series of encounters with the first humans in the Garden of Eden. The land of Eden appears to represent the dwelling place of Yahweh Elohim. Eden seems to have included the earthly palace or temple of Yahweh Elohim, from which he strolled in the adjoining garden (ἄρ) or paradise (παράδεισον) at eventime (Gen 3:8). Adam and Eve and their offspring were excluded only from the garden itself to prevent their access to the tree of life (Gen 3:23–24), but not necessarily from the whole land of Eden, and the story indicates that their line remained in contact with Yahweh Elohim in Eden (Gen 4:3–4, 6, 9–16). Gen 4:3–4 later described offerings brought by Cain and Abel before Yahweh, which may have taken place at his temple dwelling place in Eden. The Garden of Eden was envisioned as a “holy region enclosing God’s presence” (von Rad 1973: 77), the earthly dwelling place of Yahweh Elohim. It was only after Cain’s murder of Abel that Cain was expelled from the presence of God in Eden to the land of Nod (Gen 4:16).

The description of the primordial world in Gen 2:4 thus pictured Yahweh Elohim living together with the first generations of human in the land of Eden, likely including a palace or temple where sacrifices were periodically offered, and containing a special garden of delights. First Yahweh fashioned man (Gen 2:7), “planted” a garden in Eden (Gen 2:8) and then placed the first man as groundskeeper and arborist (Gen 2:15). The positive evaluation of the plants as beautiful and good for food is reminiscent of Plato’s statement that a benevolent, purposeful creator god crafted all things to be beautiful and good like himself (*Timaeus* 28b, 29a, 29e–30b, 30d, 31a–b, 37c–d). The statement that “God planted a garden in Eden” (Gen 2:8) with every tree that was “good for food” (Gen 2:9) is strongly reminiscent of *Timaeus* 80e, which said humans were nourished from fruits and cereals “which God planted for us for the express purpose of serving as food.”³¹

Mythical geography and other mythic story elements figure prominently in the account. Eden is introduced as a mythical locale, a garden of delights planted by Yahweh Elohim that was also the first home of the man he had fashioned. But the land of Eden is given an exact, if exotic, geographical location:

(2:10 MT) A river flows out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four branches. (11) The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; (12) and the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. (13) The name of the second river is Gihon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Cush. (14) The name of the third river is Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

This so-called “little geography” of Gen 2:8–14 located Eden at the sources of the Phasis, Nile, Tigris and Euphrates Rivers in the Taurus Mountains

south of Mount Caucasus and north of Mesopotamia (Gmirkin 2006: 266–70). The Pishon refers to the Phasis that goes through the land of Colchis, famous for its gold.³² The Phasis, Tigris and Euphrates Rivers have sources that are remarkably close together in this vicinity, and some Greek geographers also speculated that the Nile (or Gihon; cf. Stordalen 2000: 281) also came from this region bordering the Caucasus, connected to the Phasis by means of the river Oceanus (Gmirkin 2006: 266–70). This geographical excursus is remarkable within a mythological narrative, as are the comments about mineralogy. The composite character of this narrative, combining mythical events with a prosaic terrestrial description such as might be found in a Greek geographical text, is striking.

(2:15 MT) The Lord God took the man (LXX whom he shaped) and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. (16) And the Lord God commanded the man, “You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; (17) but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.”

The passage resumes the earlier story elements that were seemingly interrupted by the “little geography” of Gen 2:10–14. The first man here appears in the role of gardener and groundskeeper (Gen 2:15) rather than as a farmer who tills the soil (Stordalen 2000: 223; van der Kooij 2010: 15–16). The contrast between the arable farmland outside the garden and the lush garden itself is maintained throughout Genesis 2–4. According to Gen 2:5, the “plants of the field” and “grasses of the field” had not yet sprung up, prior to Yahweh Elohim’s ordering rain upon the earth, nor was there a human to “till the earth.” Gen 2:5 is filled with allusions to farmland and agriculture, tilling the soil and harvesting the plants and cereals of the field. Gen 2:15–17, by contrast, referred to neither fields nor earth, and the responsibilities of the first man in the garden, “to till it [LXX ἐργάζεσθαι, work it] and keep it,” appear to refer to the activities of cultivating an orchard or garden.

Seemingly in return for his mild duties, the first man was allowed to eat of every tree in the garden, with the exception of the tree of knowledge and (as explicit in Gen 3:1–5, implicit in Gen 2:9, 16–17) the tree of life. This begs the question, who was allowed to eat from these two trees, whose fruit gave the eater godlike qualities of wisdom and immortality (Gen 3:5, 22)? The answer, clearly, is that these trees were reserved for the gods (Gen 3:22). Note that in Greek myth ambrosia and nectar, the food of the gods, conferred immortality on those who dined upon them (Pindar, *Pythian Odes* 9.63; Theocritus, *Idylls* 15.106–8; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 14.606–8). Something similar is conveyed in the biblical story, in which it appears that Yahweh Elohim possessed only conditional immortality sustained by his eating from the tree of life. One might also suppose that the mortal god Yahweh Elohim also possessed limited wisdom, enhanced by his consuming the fruit of the tree of knowledge. Certainly, throughout this tale Yahweh Elohim was not portrayed as possessing

omniscience. As a very humanlike terrestrial deity, Yahweh Elohim possessed only conditional immortality and limited knowledge contingent on senses and reason, a living immortal occupying a mortal body and a mortal's sensory awareness.

(2:18 MT) Then the Lord God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will [LXX let us] make him a helper as his partner.”

It is remarkable that Gen 2:18 (LXX) has gods in the plural, consistent with Gen 1:26 (MT) and 3:22 (MT). This plurality of gods, is obviously problematic within a monotheistic environment (van der Louw 2007: 111), but not within a polytheistic cultural context. In all three passages (Gen 1:26; 2:18; 3:22; cf. 10:6–7), God is speaking in the plural to an unidentified audience. These speeches are best understood as taking place within the divine council of the gods. These can be interpreted to represent either a statement by the entire divine council (Gen 1:26) or by one god—their leader Yahweh Elohim—to the other convened gods (Gen 2:18; 3:22; 10:6–7).

(2:19 MT) So out of the ground the Lord God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. (20) The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper [LXX βοηθός] as his partner [LXX ὁμοιος ἀνθρώπου or similar to him].

Here all the animals and birds were fashioned by Yahweh Elohim from the ground as companions for the man he had earlier fashioned. This diverges from Gen 1:20–27, where animals and fowl came into existence prior to Elohim fashioning humans, both man and woman, in the image of the gods. Instead, the first emergence of animals and birds from the ground in Gen 2:18–20 fits the sequence in Plato's second creation account (*Timaeus* 41d–42c).

The Presocratic philosopher Empedocles, who exerted an important though unacknowledged influence on Plato's *Timaeus*,³³ also put forward the idea of animals, both birds and beasts, as friends and tame companions of humans in the golden age.³⁴ Vegetarianism, which was also a feature of the primordial age in *Timaeus* 77a–c and in Gen 1:29–30; 2:16; 3:17–19, was advocated by Empedocles due to the bonds of friendship and pact of kinship between humans and animals (Campbell 2008: 7–9). The cluster of commonalities in the treatment of animals in Empedocles and Genesis 2 raises the possibility that the biblical author was familiar with both Empedocles' poem and Plato's *Timaeus*. The issue of companionship was also raised in *Timaeus* 34b, which noted that the *kosmos*, being perfect within itself, required no companion.

The origin of language was a topic of interest to Greek philosophers.³⁵ Acquiring knowledge of a thing's name and its etymology, origin and deeper significance was also a prominent feature in Plato's theory of dialectic reasoning (cf. Sedley 1998). As a giver of names, Adam closely resembled Plato's "Giver of Names" (*Timaeus* 78e, as noted in Bury 1929: 208 n. 1), a primordial figure who invented language and words. Plato's theory of language is the topic of *Cratylus*, a dialog containing a fictional discussion among Hermogenes, Cratylus and Socrates about the nature and source of language and words (Baxter 1992; Barney 2001; Ademollo 2011). Socrates argued that words were not attached to objects arbitrarily, but meaningfully described the things to which they were attached, as could be demonstrated by etymological investigation. Socrates proposed etymologies for many words of a divine or philosophical significance, including names of Homeric heroes, the Greek gods, terms relating to cosmology, to body and soul, ethics and more (Plato, *Cratylus* 390e–427d). Socrates claimed that these names were invented with great expertise by a mythical figure he calls the Giver of Names or Lawmaker (*Cratylus* 388e–389a, 389d, 390a–d, etc.). Socrates dates the origin of words to their ancestors in the earliest times (*Cratylus* 418b–c) living when the first men were created in the age of the gods (*Cratylus* 402a,d, 404b–c, contemporary with Kronos, Poseidon, Hera and Hades). Here Adam appears in the Platonic role of Giver of Names.

(2:21 MT) So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh.³⁶ (22) And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made [LXX *ῥκοδόμησεν*] into a woman and brought her to the man. (23) Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken." (24) Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh.

Note that Plato referred to the Greek myth of Phoroneus and Niobe, the "first man" and woman (*Timaeus* 22a), the counterparts of Adam and Eve.

The secondary creation of woman to be man's companion diverges from Gen 1:27, where the Elohim created man and woman together as equals. The secondary creation of woman was also a feature in Hesiod, *Works and Days* 60–80 and in Plato, *Timaeus* 42a–b, 91a. The etymological speculation on the name Woman reflects Platonic interests.

Describing the construction of woman using an architectural term (בנה, *ῥκοδόμησεν*), elsewhere applied to building houses, cities and altars (van der Louw 2007: 116), is reminiscent of Plato's description of the Demiurge as architect (*Timaeus* 28c).

In some later interpretations of Gen 2:21–22, in Eusebius and in rabbinical sources,³⁷ Adam was viewed as originally androgynous, and the operation as a separation of his male and female anatomy, which is in turn

comparable to Aristophanes' comedic account of the origin of the sexes and sexual attraction in Plato, *Symposium* 189c–193e (cf. Wajdenbaum 2011: 96). But the translation of rib as *πλευρῶν* and the parallelism between rib and flesh (*πλευρῶν* and *σάρκα*) in Gen 2:21 with bone and flesh (*ὀστέων* and *σάρκος*) in Gen 2:23 militates against the interpretation of “rib” as a reference to female anatomy.

Although the biblical author did not portray Adam as androgynous, other aspects of Gen 2:21–24 appear to display acquaintance with Plato's *Symposium*. Plato's *Symposium* 190d–191a refers to a surgical operation performed by Zeus to separate humans into two parts (cf. Gen 2:21). And much as God closed up the excised rib with flesh (Gen 2:21), *Symposium* 190e–191a described Apollo closing over the incisions in order to heal the wound and to make the humans sightlier. *Symposium* 191a–e speaks of the separated halves yearning to reunite as the origin of sexual desire (cf. Gen 2:24). The uniting of man and woman into “one flesh” (Gen 2:23) closely echoes Plato's *Symposium*:

(191d) ... endeavoring to combine two in one ...

(192e) ... that from being two you may be made one; that so long as you live, the pair of you, being as one, may share a single life ... to be so joined and fused with his beloved that the two might be made one.³⁸

(2:25 MT) And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.

A comparison between paradisiac life in the Garden of Eden and the idyllic Golden Age of Kronos has often been made. In both, the gods coexisted with the first generation of humanity and the earth brought forth abundant food without toil (Hesiod, *Works and Days* 109–20; Lovejoy and Boas 1935: 27). But several features in the account of the garden of Eden point more directly to literary dependence on Plato's *Statesman* (cf. Wajdenbaum 2011: 97–8), which gave an account of the Golden Age of Kronos that differed from Hesiod's in several respects. In common with Hesiod's account, humans lived side by side with the god Kronos (*Statesman* 268e–272d), and “men ... had fruits in plenty from the trees and other plants, which the earth furnished them of its own accord, without help from agriculture” (*Statesman* 272a; cf. Gen 2:16). In addition, Plato stated that in the Age of Kronos, humans went about naked (*Statesman* 272a; cf. Gen 2:25) and conversed freely with animals (*Statesman* 272b–d; cf. Gen 3:1–5). These extra commonalities suggest biblical acquaintance with Plato's *Statesman*.

6.6 Humanity's Fall

(3:1 MT) Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God say,

‘You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?’” (2) The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; (3) but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.’” (4) But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not die; (5) for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil is problematic, since such a tree is not known in either the literature or artwork of the Greek or Ancient Near Eastern worlds. Greek mythology does provide at least two examples of serpents who guarded trees in sacred gardens: the serpent which guarded the Golden Apples of the Hesperides in a sacred garden in the kingdom of Atlas, and the serpent which guarded the Golden Fleece hanging off a branch of a sacred oak in the garden of the Temple of Ares at Colchis on the Black Sea.³⁹ Perhaps these well-known myths inspired the literary motif of the serpent and the tree,⁴⁰ although in the biblical tale the serpent encouraged access to the tree rather than guarding it.⁴¹

A more immediate antecedent of the biblical tale appears to have been the Greek story of Pandora. In the tale as narrated by Hesiod in *Works and Days* 47–105, Zeus became angry that the Titan Prometheus (“Forethought”) had stolen the secret of fire and revealed it to humanity. He therefore assembled a team of divine assistants, including the crafty god Hermes, to play a trick on man by creating woman, adorned seductively, sent as a gift to Epimetheus (“Afterthought”), Prometheus’ dim-witted brother. Although Prometheus had warned Epimetheus not to accept any gift from Zeus, Epimetheus welcomed Pandora, who opened a jar that unleashed on humanity all the joys and woes of the world.

This story is often compared to the tale of Adam and Eve and the tree of knowledge in the Garden of Eden.⁴² The well-known parallels between Hesiod’s story of Pandora’s jar and the story of Adam and Eve in Genesis 3 strengthens the inference that the Hellenized author of Genesis 2–3 was well acquainted with Hesiod’s *Works and Days*, a classic text that was a staple of Greek education. In Genesis, the serpent plays the role of the crafty trickster Hermes; stupid Epimetheus corresponds to the unthinking, unschooled Adam; the seductive and irresistible Pandora to Eve; and Pandora’s box, containing every joy and sorrow, to the forbidden tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The story has also been aptly compared to the myth of Adapa, in which the god Ea plays a role similar to the serpent by tricking Adapa into refusing the food and water of life (Hjelm 2020: 161–6).

(3:6 MT) So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. (7) Then the eyes of both

were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths (LXX περιζώματα) for themselves.

In Hesiod’s story, crafty Hermes and other artful allies of Zeus worked together to adorn Pandora seductively, with beautiful clothes and jewelry, coiffed hair and other charms, to make her irresistible to Epimetheus, overwhelm his senses, and make him forget the wise counsels of Prometheus. This motif does not entirely carry over to the tale in Genesis, since first humans wore clothes only in the aftermath of eating the forbidden fruit, nor were these outer garments such as in the tale of Pandora. The Greek word for loin cloth was *perizoma* (used here in the LXX) or *diazoma*, a garment designed for modesty purposes to cover the sexual organ (Bonfante 1989: 544).

In both misogynistic tales—Hesiod’s story of Epimetheus and Pandora, and the biblical story of Adam and Eve—the seductive woman created to be man’s companion was blamed for his downfall. An overt sensual element also appears in the biblical story of temptation in the Garden of Eden. The eyes opened and the resulting shame of nakedness shows the strong sexual undercurrent in the biblical tale. Significantly, in the passage on the origin of sexual reproduction in *Timaeus* 91c–d, male sexuality was compared to a tree that constantly produced fruit (καρπὸν; cf. Gen 3:2–3, 6 LXX καρποῦ), and female sexuality as a longing to receive that fruit, and the act of sex metaphorically described as “eating the fruit of the tree” (cf. Loader 2008: 223).

(3:8 MT) They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. (9) But the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?”

The anthropomorphic character of Yahweh Elohim, an earthbound god little different from mortal humans, is highlighted in this passage. Here Yahweh Elohim dwells on earth—presumably in a palace or temple, although it does not explicitly appear in Genesis 3—and walks about like an ordinary human in the cool evening breeze of the pleasure garden, in imagery influenced by the temperate breezes of the Islands of the Blessed (Homer, *Odyssey* 4.560–565; Pindar, *Olympian Odes* 2.55–85; Strabo, *Geography* 3.2.13). Yahweh Elohim is the opposite of omniscient, calling out to find man’s whereabouts, questioning him on his suspected disobedience, and querying the first woman as well. This depiction of Yahweh Elohim as possessing knowledge limited to the senses, like ordinary mortals, also appears in Gen 4:9, where Yahweh questions Cain on the whereabouts of his brother. Marcion would later point out these details as proof that the biblical god Yahweh was not the supreme god of the universe, but belonged to a lesser order of deity (Harnack 1990: 67–92). Similarly, the lesser gods of

Plato's *Timaeus*, unlike the Demiurge, appear neither omnipotent nor omniscient.⁴³

(3:10 MT) He said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." (11) He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" (12) The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate." (13) Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent tricked me, and I ate."

The psychological aspects of this story, which drew heavily on Platonic themes of shame and guilt, will be discussed in §6.7 below.

(3:14 MT) The Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you among all animals and among all wild creatures; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. (15) I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel."

God's punishment of the serpent, to crawl on its belly, the lowest of all the animals, has its antecedent in *Timaeus* 92a, which identified the serpent as the lowest form of land animal, lacking legs. Philo brought this same passage from *Timaeus* to bear on his exegesis on the serpent in the Garden of Eden (Runia 1986: 349, 355).

(3:16 MT) To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pangs in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."

Here, as in *Timaeus*, the serpent is the lowest of the animals (*Timaeus* 92a), the animals are of a lower order than a woman (*Timaeus* 91d–92b) and a woman is of a lower order than man (*Timaeus* 91a).

The previous passage also gives an etiology to childbirth. In virtually all Greek cosmogonical and mythological accounts, the first generation of animals and humans either initially arose by spontaneous generation from earth and water or (in mythological accounts of humans) were directly fashioned by the gods (as in *Timaeus* 41b–d, 42d–e, 69c). Subsequent generations were produced by ordinary processes of sexual intercourse and birth (cf. *Timaeus* 90e–91d). So likewise in Genesis, where the first plant and animal life forms appeared by spontaneous generation (Gen 1:11–12, 20, 24) and the first humans were fashioned by the gods as full-grown adults (Gen 1:26–27; 2:7), whereas future generations would be produced by means of sex (Gen 3:7, 10–12) and childbirth (Gen 3:16).

(3:17 MT) And to the man he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree about which I commanded you, “You shall not eat of it,” cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; (18) thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. (19) By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

This corresponds closely to the end of the primordial Age of Kronos, an age of leisure and abundance, when all sorts of plants sprung from the ground without labor. During the new age, the Age of Zeus, humanity suffered a life of toil and misery, requiring the arts of agriculture, house building and other technologies in order to survive.

The statement that humanity was taken from the ground and would return to the ground (Gen 3:19; cf. 2:7) echoes *Timaeus* 42e–43a, where humans were said to have been borrowed from the four elements (i.e., earth, water, fire and air) and would return to the elements after their death.

(3:20 MT) The man named his wife Eve [LXX Ζωή], because she was the mother of all who live [LXX ζώντων].

Compare *Cratylus* 414a: “The word γυνή (woman) seems to me to be much the same as γονή (birth).”

It was only in Gen 3:20 that Eve was named. Her name reflected the new means of reproduction via sexual intercourse and childbirth, instead of being fashioned by the gods.

(3:21 MT) And the Lord God made garments of skins (LXX χιτῶνας δερματίνους) for the man and for his wife, and clothed them.

This leather apparel refers to an outer garment (the Greek *chiton*). Although there are 99 occurrences of the word for skin or leather in the Hebrew Bible, this is the only reference to leather garments. The most obvious quality of such garments was their protective warmth. One can likely see here (with Wajdenbaum 2011: 98) an echo of Plato, *Protagoras* 321a–c, where Epimetheus created the animals “[clothed] with thick-set hair and solid hides (στερεοῖς δέρμασιν), sufficient to ward off winter yet able to shield them also from the heat,” whereas humans were created “naked, unshod, unbedded, unarmed,” requiring Prometheus to teach defenseless humanity the technological arts in order to enable their survival, including “dwellings, clothes, sandals, beds, and the foods that are of the earth” (*Protagoras* 322a). Among all the ancient sources on Prometheus as the benefactor who provided humans with technology, only Plato noted his introduction of clothing. In Greek mythology, the Age of Kronos was seen as an idyllic

paradise when humans lived with the gods, having no need for technology or toil—or clothing (*Statesman* 272a)—whereas humans required technology, including the ability to fashion protective clothes, to survive in the Age of Zeus that followed. In Gen 3:21, Yahweh Elohim plays the role of Prometheus as provider of technology, showing humans how to clothe themselves.

(3:22 MT) Then the Lord God said, “See, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever”—

Here, as in Gen 1:26 and 2:18 (LXX), there is a plurality of gods, of whom Yahweh Elohim is but one. These appear to be mortal yet undying gods, like those in *Timaeus* 41b, since it appears that the gods sustain their immortality by eating from the tree of life: were humanity also to eat from the tree of life, they would become wholly like the gods. The idea that the immortality of the gods was a result of the special foods they ate was common in Greek literature, in which the Olympian gods were both ageless (ἀγήρωες) and deathless (ἀθάνατοι) due to their diet of nectar and ambrosia (Clay 1982 and literature cited there). This motif appears in Plato, *Phaedrus* 247e, where the immortal winged steeds who drew the sky chariots of the gods fed on nectar and ambrosia. In the earliest texts, nectar and ambrosia primarily imparted the quality of agelessness, but later texts also added the divine gift of immortality (Clay 1982).⁴⁴

Throughout Genesis 2–3, Yahweh Elohim appears as an anthropomorphic, terrestrial, storybook character, human-like in virtually every aspect save his wisdom and his immortality. It appears that the punishment of death for eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Gen 2:16–17; 3:1–5) was effected by denying humans access to the tree of life that made the mortal gods ageless and contingently immortal. Old age and death (whose causes were extensively discussed in *Timaeus* 81c–88e) were thereby introduced to mortal humans.

The jealousy of the gods in respect to the potential immortality of humanity in Gen 3:22 appears to draw directly on *Timaeus* 41c, where humans were made mortal to prevent them from being like the gods (cf. Wajdenbaum 2011: 94–5): “But if by my doing these creatures came into existence and partook of life, they would be made equal unto gods; in order, therefore, that they may be mortal ... do ye turn yourselves ... to the work of fashioning these living creatures, imitating the power showed by me in my generating of you.”

(3:23 MT) Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken. (24) He drove out the man; and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim, and a sword flaming and turning to guard the way to the tree of life.

Adam was expelled from Yahweh Elohim's garden located in Eden to work the ground as an ordinary agriculturalist in the flatlands where he had originated (Gen 2:5–7; cf. van der Kooij 2010: 15). In the sequel (Gen 4:1–16), it appears that humans still dwelled in Eden and had contact with Yahweh, but were merely excluded from the sacred grove where the tree of life grew.

In various Greek myths, including Hesiod's description of the Age of Kronos, humans and gods coexisted in the most ancient mythical times, directly after the creation of humans by the gods. So also in *Timaeus* 42e, where the lesser gods founded the first kingdoms and acted as their law-givers, and *Timaeus* 24a–d, where Athena and Hephaestus established the first constitution and laws of the ancient residents of the Athenian nation, and *Critias* 113e–114c, 118e–120d, where Poseidon likewise established laws for the realm of Atlantis. In Hesiod's myth, the transition from the Age of Kronos to the Age of Zeus was marked by the departure of the gods. Kronos, overthrown by Zeus, henceforth ruled only in the Islands of the Blessed, a semi-mythical terrestrial locale beyond the Straits of Gibraltar (Hesiod, *Works and Days* 167–69). The Greek notion of paradise was to be able to live in the Eden-like Islands of the Blessed, with their cool breezes (Homer, *Odyssey* 4.560–65; Pindar, *Olympian Odes* 2.55–85; Strabo, *Geography* 3.2.13), where the heroes there transported lived forever (Pindar, *Olympian Odes* 2.79–84; Plato, *Republic* 540b–c; Lovejoy and Boas 1935: 30), eating the ambrosia and drinking the nectar of the gods (cf. Plato, *Phaedrus* 247e). Greek myths claimed the wickedness of humans prompted the departure of the gods to their own realm (Lovejoy and Boas 1935: 30–1). The expulsion of humans from the presence of the terrestrial gods in Gen 3:23–24 expresses a similar notion. Extra-biblical myths had Enoch return to Eden to dwell with God (Jub 4.21–24; cf. 1 En 12.1–3; 20.7). During the Age of Zeus, gods and humans led separate existences, with humans left to their own resources.

6.7 Plato on the Knowledge of Good and Evil

The above discussion of the story of the temptation and fall bypassed the profound ethical and psychological elements in the story dealing with human consciousness of good and evil and the emergence of shame and guilt. These are prominent Platonic themes that surface in several of his dialogues. The theological and mythological context of Genesis 2–3 masks the underlying philosophical and psychological aspects of the biblical tale.

Gen 2:25 (“And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed”) foreshadows the story in Genesis 3, where the nakedness of Adam and Eve figure prominently. While there did exist an ancient and primitive taboo against nakedness among the Greeks (the Greek word for sexual organs, αἰδοῖα, means “shameful things”; cf. Bonfante 1989: 545), Greeks accepted male and sometimes female nakedness in a number of

social contexts, including athletic practice and competition, religious initiations and *symposia* or drinking parties (Bonafante 1989). Greeks contrasted their own acceptance of nakedness, especially in athletics, with barbarian attitudes that saw nudity as shameful (Herodotus, *Histories* 1.10.3; Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.5–6). Besides the depiction of naked gods and goddesses, “heroic nudity” often appeared in Greek statuary in depictions of warriors and *kuoroi* or young male aristocrats (Spivey 1996: 105–21; Osborne 1997; Hurwit 2007). Nor did Plato’s writings condemn nakedness. In his stories of the idyllic Age of Kronos, there was simply no need for clothing due to the temperate climate (*Statesman* 272a), and Prometheus later provided humans with the technology to fashion clothes to protect them from the elements in the Age of Zeus (*Protagoras* 321a–322a). In Plato’s idyllic city of Kallipolis, male and female guardians or warrior class would exercise together naked in the palaestra, young and old together, despite the ridiculousness of the scene (*Republic* 5.452a–b; note that male and female athletes and gymnasts exercised together naked in Sparta). While Plato noted that barbarians thought it disgraceful for men to appear naked, Greeks accepted nakedness in conjunction with athletics (*Republic* 5.452c–d, 457a). Gen 2:25 thus accurately reflects the shame attached to nakedness in the world of the Jews and Samaritans, but not the contemporary Greeks. The later episode of Noah’s nakedness in Gen 9:21–23 may contain polemics against the nakedness and sexual activity that sometimes occurred at Greek *symposia* or drinking parties (cf. Bonafante 1989: 554; Topper 2012).

While Plato did not consider nakedness shameful, he did discuss prominently shame as a proto-virtue, a primitive feeling or impulse to avoid public censure and dishonor for wrongdoing closely akin to fear, in essence an emotional internalization of the threat of punishment (Tian 2017: 95–107; cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachian Ethics* 1179b). Instilling a sense of shame was the first stage in training for youth in virtue, prior to the rational comprehension of good and evil that constituted true virtue (Tian 2017: 105). Gen 2:25 thus described Adam and Eve in a pre-virtuous state, in common with the animals, possessing not even the emotional capacity to feel shame.

The senses and appetites figure prominently in the biblical psychological explanation of the temptation of Adam and Eve, with its emphasis on physical appetites (Gen 3:1–3), hunger (Gen 3:6) and visual delight (Gen 3:6) that led to disobedience to Yahweh Elohim’s command. This etiology of evil in terms of sensory influences and human passions appears to directly reflect Platonic motifs regarding the origin of evil, which Plato also attributed to the material body, the senses and the physical appetites (*Timaeus* 42a–b, 43b–d).

Significantly, similar themes appear in connection with Plato’s retelling of the story of Prometheus and Epimetheus in *Protagoras* 320c–322d. This story differs considerably from the version found in Hesiod’s *Works and Days*—for instance, Pandora and her box of woes do not appear in

Protagoras—but Plato’s version contains other elements that appear to have influenced the biblical account. After the gods created the first mortal creatures from a mixture of earth and fire and their various compounds (*Protagoras* 320c–d), Epimetheus provided the animals with natural defenses (*Protagoras* 320d–321c), Prometheus provided humans with the technological arts (*Protagoras* 321c–322a) and Zeus provided humans with cities, social life, laws governing mutual respect and justice and penalties for disobedience (*Protagoras* 322c–d). Thus, humans came to participate together in civic life and were instructed in good citizenry throughout their lives by parents, educators and lawgivers (*Protagoras* 322d–328d), as well as sophists like Protagoras, who gave this speech on the origins of civic virtue. Yet Socrates questioned whether virtue could be taught, in light of the wicked, foolish and intemperate deeds sometimes done by those given such instructions (*Protagoras* 328d–332c). Mere knowledge of virtue did not guarantee goodness. A lengthy philosophical discussion led to twin propositions: that goodness ultimately leads to pleasantness and that evil ultimately leads to discomfort, pain and death (*Protagoras* 332c–352a), Socrates subsequently argued at length that mere knowledge of good and evil does not guarantee virtue, but that pleasure is a force more powerful than knowledge, and many people fall victim to evil when they are “overcome by pleasure” (*Protagoras* 352e, 353c, 354e, 355d, 357c,e), “overpowered by the pleasantness of food or drink or sexual acts, and doing what he does though he knows it to be wicked.” Although evil is pleasant in the moment, it later causes diseases and poverty other ills (*Protagoras* 353c–d). Quoting one illustrative passage among many:

(355a) It is often the case that a man, knowing the evil to be evil, nevertheless commits it, when he might avoid it, because he is driven and dazed (355b) by his pleasures; while on the other hand you say that a man, knowing the good, refuses to do good because of the momentary pleasures by which he is overcome ... Let us call them by two names—first, good and evil, and then later on, pleasant and painful. Let us then lay it down as our statement, (355c) that a man does evil in spite of knowing the evil of it.

The narrative in Gen 3:1–6, in which Eve is overcome by sensual pleasure to disobey God, appears to display significant influence from Plato’s *Protagoras*. The psychological aspect of the biblical story with its emphasis on senses and human appetites is also characteristically Platonic. The phrase “knowledge of good and evil” itself reflects Platonic dialectic theory, in which the knowledge of one thing entails knowing its opposite (cf. *Protagoras* 332a–e, in which the example of good and evil is mentioned in 332c). It is interesting that the biblical author drew on both Hesiodic and Platonic versions of the Prometheus story to create his tale, using myth to illustrate philosophical themes, as Plato himself often did.

The story of the temptation of Adam and Eve, though aiming at ethical rather than philosophical instruction, both illustrates and appears to display some acquaintance with Plato's theory of the tripartite human soul as found in the *Republic*, *Timaeus*, *Phaedrus* and elsewhere. According to this theory, the soul of mortal humans has three components: divine reason or intellect, the physical appetites, and passions or impulses ("spirit"). The appetites do not understand reason and logic, but are "enticed" or tempted by attractive images and transitory needs and longings (*Timaeus* 70d–e), such as desires for food or sexual pleasure (*Timaeus* 42a, 69d, 70d–e, 91b–c). In a godly human, reason rules both the appetites and passions, like a charioteer controlling two unruly horses (Plato, *Phaedrus* 246a–b). But the appetites often by themselves overpower reason, even in a person inclined to do good, as in Eve's temptation. Reason must therefore sometimes enlist spirit as an ally against the physical appetites. According to Plato, the spirit-component of the human soul is motivated by honor before one's peers, and this sense of honor can assist reason in overcoming the appetites, out of fear of honor's opposite, the social consequence of giving in to wicked human appetites, namely shame (Moss 2005). In the story of Adam and Eve and the serpent, these Platonic themes all play out. We see the serpent's crafty persuasion undermining Eve's rational faculty, Eve giving in to her physical appetites, and Adam succumbing to the bad counsels of his helper, with the net result of fear and shame. This episode illustrates many of Plato's penetrating insights into the psychological and social aspects of humans' bad choices.

The same is true for the immediate sequel to this episode in Gen 4:1–15, the story of Cain and Abel. Here the psychological cause for a wicked human act—Cain's murder of Abel—was not the appetites, as in Gen 3:1–6, but the competitive spirit that Plato described as seeking honor and prone to impulsivity and anger. The inciting event was the sacrificial offerings Cain and Abel presented to God, presumably in a sacred setting such as an altar or temple in Eden (Gen 4:3–4). God had greater respect for Abel's offering, and Cain, out of disappointment and anger at not receiving the greater honor, slew his brother in a fit of rage (Gen 4:5–8). As in Gen 3:9–13, Yahweh only learns of these events by questioning Cain (Gen 4:6, 9–10), and Cain is expelled from Eden (Gen 4:14) like Adam and Eve had been expelled from Eden's garden (Gen 3:23). Most interesting for our purposes is Yahweh's remark to Cain:

(4:6 MT) Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen? (7)
If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is lurking at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it.

This is mirrored in many Platonic passages that describe how humans should master human appetites and passions, instead of being mastered by them (Moss 2008). One such passage with close parallels to Genesis appears

in *Timaeus* 42a–b: “desire mingled with pleasure and pain; and besides these, fear and anger and all such emotions ... And if they shall master these they will live justly, but if they are mastered, unjustly.”⁴⁵

Plato’s theory of psychology and the origins of human misconduct thus depict a constant war among the three elements of the human psyche or soul: reason, appetites and impulse. Even those who possess knowledge of good and evil are often compelled to bad ethical choices due to overwhelming desires and impulses. The divine element in the soul, namely *nous* or intellect, when carefully nurtured and developed, endows humans with the ability to govern their unruly passions, but if this ability is not exercised, the blame belongs to humans, not the perfect gods. Plato’s model thus both explicates the human condition and exonerates the gods. While Plato’s deep philosophical and psychological theorizing is implicit throughout Genesis 3–4, it is conveyed through *mythos* rather than *logos* in simple stories aimed at the philosophically unsophisticated audience.

6.8 The First and Second Creation Accounts Compared

The transition between the Creation Accounts in Genesis 1 and 2 show a dramatic shift from the scientific-theological-mythical to the primarily mythological, from universal to local, and from cosmogony to zoogony and anthropogony. In the first, the narrative is dominated by Elohim, the Craftsman or Creator of the Universe. In the second, a new character is introduced, Yahweh Elohim, an anthropomorphic deity who created animal and human life forms to dwell with him in his terrestrial paradise, the Garden of Eden.

Various differences between the Creation Accounts of Genesis 1 and 2 demonstrate that they were not authored by the same individuals. Well-known contradictions are listed in Table 6.3.

The differences between the First and Second Creation Accounts have traditionally been explained as caused by conflicting viewpoints between the priestly source P in Genesis 1 and the storyteller J in Genesis 2–3, reflecting different authorship in different eras, and a historical progression and religious evolution from primitive story (J) to demythologized priestly

Table 6.3 Contradictions Genesis 1 and 2

<i>Genesis 1</i>	<i>Genesis 2</i>
Animals then man	Man then animals
Fowls and fish from water	Animals and fowl from the ground
Man and woman created together	First man created and then woman
Multiple gods create humans	A single creator of humans in Eden
All plants good for food	Certain trees were forbidden

theology (P). A major flaw of the Documentary Hypothesis is that the various proposed Pentateuchal sources JEDPH were all assumed, without adequate argumentation, to have been written at different times. Another problem inherent to this intellectual artifact of the old nineteenth- and twentieth-century history of religions scholarship is explaining why the final authors of Genesis incorporated the mythological narratives of J in conflict with the demythologized P, which is believed to have superseded it.

The traditional contrast between a hypothetical priestly authorship of Genesis 1 and the primitive storytelling found in Genesis 2–3 is also undermined by the fact that, aside from the formula “be fruitful and multiply” used in Gen 1:22, 28, there is no detectable priestly content in all of Genesis 1. While the content of Genesis 2–3 is indisputably mythological, the cosmogony of Genesis 1 is better characterized as scientific and philosophical instead of priestly. It is possible that certain members of the priestly class were also conversant with Plato’s philosophy, but participation in the authorship of Genesis 1 would have been in the capacity of one educated in philosophy, not as a priest.

The authorship of Genesis 2–3 has traditionally been assigned to J, who is characterized as a storyteller by almost all biblical critics who recognize this Pentateuchal source except for John Van Seters. Although Van Seters (1983, 1992) noted the parallel between Pandora and Eve, he oddly failed to acknowledge the equally obvious parallels between the Garden of Eden and the idyllic Age of Kronos in Hesiod’s *Works and Days*. Van Seters appeared reluctant to associate the J source of Genesis 2–3 with Greek mythology due to his characterization of J as a historian who did *archaeologia* in ancient sources. Van Seters failed to note that research in ancient sources described as *historia* embraced both historiography and mythography (cf. Fowler 2011), and that what he characterized as “historical” research in ancient sources such as *The Catalog of Women* (Van Seters 1992: 89–90) would have been understood as mythographical research in the early Hellenistic Era, when the term *mythographia* came into use (Polybius, *Histories* 3.91.7; 4.40.2; Strabo, *Geography* 1.2.35; 8.3.9; the term was first encountered in Pseudo-Aristotle, as discussed in Fowler 2000a, 2011: 50). It may be questioned whether the early passages of Genesis traditionally assigned to J even qualify as mythography, since these stories do not represent the result of the research, collection and repetition of ancient myths (Fowler 2000b: 1.xvii–xxxviii, 2013: 2.xiv–xvii). Rather, the J texts as traditionally identified under biblical criticism reflect active creation of original new myths, literary activity which constitutes mythopoesy rather than mythography (much less historiography).

The extensive new mythological content found in Genesis 2–3 thus marks it as having been written by storytellers, the class of literati the Greeks called poets. It is evident from the use of Hesiod’s *Works and Days* and Plato’s *Timaeus*, *Critias* (see Chapter 7 §7.2), *Statesman* and *Protagoras* that these poets were well read in Greek classics and acted under philosophical

guidance. This coordination between philosophers and poets should not be surprising: Plato held that the philosophical ruling class should construct new myths set in ancient times useful to the nation, but should commission skilled poets for the task rather than writing such myths themselves (*Republic* 2.377c, 378d–379a, 382d). While Genesis 1 can be directly ascribed to ruling class elites knowledgeable in Plato’s writings, their influence in Genesis 2–3 was mediated by myth-writers acting under their direction.

Furthermore, it is evident that the mythology of Genesis 2–3 bleeds over into Genesis 1, where there are speeches both by the cosmic creator god and by the lesser gods, whose creation of humans is anticipated in Gen 1:26–27. Likewise, the predominantly scientific outlook of Genesis 1 bleeds over into the discussion of the evaporation cycle in Gen 2:6 and in the little geography of Gen 2:10–14. These commonalities suggest that the authors of Genesis 1 and 2–3 were contemporary and shared a common intellectual and cultural frame of reference.

Most importantly, there is a common thread of philosophical and theological thought taken from *Timaeus* that runs throughout Genesis 1–3, pointing to the close coordination and contemporaneity of the two creation accounts. The close reliance of Genesis 1 on *Timaeus* 29d–69a was already extensively discussed in Chapters 4 and 5. Similar use of *Timaeus* appears in Genesis 2–3, as detailed in Table 6.6.

In the model here proposed, Genesis 1 and 2–3 were contemporary literary compositions written by different authorial contributors to the Pentateuch created through a collaborative effort of the team of Jewish and Samaritan scholars present at Alexandria ca. 270 BCE. This model explains both the differences and commonalities in the two Creation Accounts, as

Table 6.4 Parallels *Timaeus* and Genesis 2-3

God as Craftsman	Gen 2:4, 7; cf. <i>Timaeus</i> 28a,c, 29a, 41a, 42e, 68e, 69c, 75b
Divine Legislation of the Gods	Gen 2:16–17; cf. <i>Timaeus</i> 24a–d, 41e, 42d–e
Classification of Life Forms	Gen 2:19–20; cf. <i>Timaeus</i> 40a, 91d–92b
Dialectic Emphasis on Names	Gen 2:19–20, 23; cf. <i>Timaeus</i> 43c, 59d, 62a; <i>Cratylus</i> 390e–427d
Etymological Speculation and Wordplay	Gen 2:19, 23; 3:20; cf. <i>Cratylus</i> 390e–427d; <i>Timaeus</i> 37c, 40a, 43c, 45b, 55d, 59d, 62a, 80b, 90c.
Woman Created After Man	Gen 2:21–24; cf. <i>Timaeus</i> 91a
Woman between Animals and Man	Gen 2:18–20; cf. <i>Timaeus</i> 41d–42d, 91a,d–e
Eating the Fruit of the Tree	Gen 3:2–3, 6; cf. <i>Timaeus</i> 91c–d
The Lowly Status of the Serpent	Gen 3:14; cf. <i>Timaeus</i> 92a
The Jealousy of the Gods	Gen 3:22; cf. <i>Timaeus</i> 41c
The Origin of Evil	Gen 3:1–19; cf. <i>Timaeus</i> 42d–e

well as their interrelationship and their mutual literary dependence on Plato's *Timaeus*.

The process by which the two Creation Accounts of Genesis 1 and 2 were produced can be envisioned as follows. First, it is evident that the authors who collaborated to write the opening chapters of Genesis were all familiar with Plato's *Timaeus*, as shown by literary dependence and philosophical echoes found throughout Genesis 1–3. Second, the team of authors was also well aware of the multiple creation accounts in *Timaeus*, notably the creation of the perfect *kosmos* from the primordial chaos by the Demiurge, the supreme Creator of the present universe, and the creation of imperfect life by the lesser gods, the terrestrial offspring of the Creator. The creation account in two phases found in *Timaeus* became the basis or outline for the literary activities of the biblical authors at Alexandria. Third, it is evident that the task of writing the dual creation accounts was divided up between two distinct authorial groups: the philosophically adept, scientifically expert authors of the cosmogony of Genesis 1, and the storytellers or mythographers of Genesis 2–3, who were tasked with telling the tale of the creation of terrestrial life forms, including man and woman, by the lesser gods. Both authorial groups roughly knew the assignment of their contemporaries, dictated and governed by the account in *Timaeus*, but neither of these two authorial groups possessed the completed work of the other to refer to. Both worked independently, and the two resulting literary products, Genesis 1 and Genesis 2–3, were neither directly reliant one on the other nor fully harmonized. The differences between the First and Second Creation Accounts are thus not attributable to developmental changes in religious perspectives over the centuries, but instead reflected different contemporary authors with different literary and intellectual skills, each working independently on their own writing assignment, drawing on the two stages of creation in Plato's *Timaeus*.

Notes

- 1 Plato's *Timaeus* does not explicitly state whether the Demiurge had a body, and, oddly, this question has seemingly not been discussed in scholarly literature. Yet the Demiurge was ungenerated (*Timaeus* 27d–28c, 31b, 52a–b) and eternal (*Timaeus* 29a, 34a–b), and all things ungenerated were invisible, while all things visible were generated and corporeal (*Timaeus* 27d–28c, 31b, 52a–b). Contrariwise, material bodies existed only within the sensible, perishable realm of Becoming. It directly follows that the Demiurge necessarily existed as pure eternal Being without a body, unlike the lesser gods, his offspring, who possessed material bodies and only conditional immortality.
- 2 Aristotle rejected the traditional Greek storied descriptions of the gods as eating and drinking like humans (albeit ambrosia and nectar) or having human-like passions, but viewed them instead as rarefied beings of pure intellect (Bodéüs 2000: 196, 198). In *Metaphysics* 8.1074b, Aristotle expressed the cynical opinion that anthropomorphic gods “were added to persuade the majority and serve the laws or [common] interest.” In *Phaedrus* 246c–d, Plato attributed anthropomorphism to

- primitive human imagination: “It is without having seen a god and when our thoughts do not suffice, that we imagine a living immortal with a soul and a body naturally united forever in time.”
- 3 Aristotle accepted Plato’s definition of the gods as immortal beings with a soul united with a corporeal body (Bodéüs 2000: 117–8), but criticized Plato for supposing the gods had bodies composed of the same stuff as humans (fire, air, earth and water). Instead, Aristotle proposed the existence of a fifth corporeal substance from which the gods were made (Bodéüs 2000: 70, 118–9).
 - 4 Von Rad 1961: 53–4; Westermann 1984: 127; Cassuto 1989: 43; Milgrom 2004; cf. Deut 4:19; 17:3.
 - 5 Cf. Wajdenbaum 2011: 95. Plato here appears to sarcastically refer to Hecataeus of Miletus who claimed descent from the gods (Herodotus, *Histories* 2.143).
 - 6 See van Riel 2013: 87 on the unique ontological status of the Demiurge.
 - 7 Among Greek philosophers, Plato alone claimed that the sun, moon and stars were gods (*Timaeus* 39e, 40a,d; *Laws* 10.899b), but popular Greek religion granted godhood to the sun (Apollo Helios), moon (Artemis) and the five observable planets, Mercury (Hermes), Venus (Aphrodite), Mars (Ares), Jupiter (Zeus) and Saturn (Kronos).
 - 8 The fragments of Xenophanes of Colophon contain many criticisms of the anthropomorphic character of the Greek gods (Lesher 1992: 78–119). “One god (is) greatest among gods and humans, not at all like humans in body or thought ... But mortals suppose that gods are born, wear their own clothes, and have a voice and a body” (Fragments 23+14, from Clement, *Miscellanies* 5.109).
 - 9 Gordon 1955: 43–108; Walcot 1966; Penglase 1994; Morris 1997; Loudon 2006, 2011; Gmirkin 2017: 2.
 - 10 Cf. Machinist 2011. For instance, Ba’al went to war against Yamm the son of El and slew and dismembered him and scattered his remains (KTU² 1.2.1.16, 33, 36). In a subsequent war, Mot killed Baal (KTU² 1.5.6.8–10, 23–24; 1.6.1.6–7), who was buried by his sister Anat (KTU² 1.6.1); Mot was in turn slain and his ashes scattered by Anat (KTU² 1.6.2.30–35). At KTU² 1.3.3.38–47, Anat destroyed various gods and monsters. There is some indication that Baal subsequently returned to life (KTU² 1.6.3.2, 8, 10; cf. Smith 2001: 104–34).
 - 11 Both the “Canaanite” god El of Ugaritic literature and the biblical Yahweh were depicted as bearded old men on thrones. A Yehud coin of Persian Era date depicts a bearded god on a throne, possibly Yahweh. See Smith (1990: 9).
 - 12 Deut 32:8–9 (Elyon); Ps 82:1, 6 (El); cf. Day 2000: 24–6; Smith 2001: 48–9, 156–7; Mullen 1986.
 - 13 “I said, ‘You are gods’; you are all sons of the Most High [Elyon]. But you will die like mere mortals; you will fall like every other ruler.” (Ps 82:6–7, discussed at Smith 2001: 48). See the discussion of divine mortality in Psalm 82 compared to other Ancient Near Eastern traditions in Gordon 2010; Machinist 2011.
 - 14 In KTU² 1.4.2.12–26, Athirat, the consort of El, saw Ba’al and Anat approaching and wondered whether they had come to slay her sons.
 - 15 MT Deut 32:8 has בני ישראל (“sons of Israel”), 4QDt^b בני אלהים, and 4QDt^d has בני אֱלֹהִים (“sons of God”, cf. Gen 6:1–2), supported by some texts of LXX (“according to the number of the angels of God” or “the sons of God”; cf. Heiser 2001: 52–3; Tov 2012: 248–50). The “sons of God” also appear in Deut 32:43 (LXX and 4QDt^d). It is widely recognized that “sons of Israel” (MT), which is unintelligible in the present context, reflects a textual modification intended to counter the polytheistic “sons of God” of the original Hebrew text (Day 2000: 23; Smith 2001: 49).
 - 16 Gen 4:1; Deut 32:6; Ps 139:13; Prov 8:22, 24; cf. Gammie 1971: 386.
 - 17 KAI 222.A.11; Cross 1973: 49–51. Another Phoenician text also refers to heaven and earth as gods (Cross and Saley 1970: 44). Compare heaven and earth as

- witnesses in the Deuteronomic covenant at Deut 4:26; 30:19; 32:1 (Baumgarten 1981: 188).
- 18 Philo of Byblos is considered an important witness to Elyon as a Phoenician god (Cross 1962: 241; 1973: 51; Baumgarten 1981: 188; Day 2000: 23).
 - 19 In Plato, *Republic* 6.506e, 508b–c, the sun was the divine offspring of the Form of the Good. In *Timaeus* the Demiurge has replaced the Form of the Good as the father of the lesser gods.
 - 20 See Hamori 2008 on anthropomorphism in the Ancient Near East and the Bible, including the notion that gods had physical bodies.
 - 21 See *Timaeus* 29c, 41c; *Critias* 105b on “the story of the birth of the gods” generated by the Demiurge. “Timaeus delivers the first one, which may be described as a cosmo-theogony recounting the birth and nature of the world, the gods and mankind” (Capra 2010: 203).
 - 22 Zeno also viewed God, in the form of the divine creative fire, as the Father and Maker of the *kosmos* (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.147), which he viewed as a sensible animate living being (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.139, 142–43). Indeed, Zeno equated nature (*physis*), or the universe, with God (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.148, 156; Lapidge 1973: 253). Zeno incorporated contemporary scientific theories on reproduction into his cosmogony, which had elements of cosmobiology, in which the divine creative fire, united with the moisture of the watery chaos, constituted a sort of fiery sperm or soul that pervaded and impregnated the universe (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.135–36; Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel* 15.14.2 [Aristocles]; cf. Long and Sedley 1987: 1.277, 279; Hahm 1972: 82, 137, 139). Zeno’s purely scientific outlook, which integrated biological theories of reproduction with the notion of the universe as a divine living being, was incompatible with the notion of a polytheistic theogony that recognized lesser gods different from the divine universe itself, since Zeno acknowledged no other gods besides the creative fire that pervaded and animated the universe.
 - 23 Plato diverged from Hesiod’s *Theogony* by omitting Chaos as the father of Ouranos, substituting the Demiurge as the ancestor of the pantheon of Greek gods. Hesiod’s Chaos appears implicitly in *Timaeus* as the Receptacle of *Timaeus* 48a–69b, out of which the Demiurge fashioned heaven and earth (cf. Sedley 2010; Pender 2010: 240 n. 32).
 - 24 So Anaxagoras (Aristotle, *On Generation and Corruption* 1.1.314a–b), among others; cf. Kirk and Raven 1957: 29, 87, 98. The idea is implicit at Plato, *Timaeus* 73a–c.
 - 25 Stoic scientific interest in the evaporation cycle and other aspects of meteorology is evident in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.152–53.
 - 26 Gen 2:15 LXX reads, “The Lord God took the man whom he shaped (ὃν ἔπλασεν) and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.” MT is missing the phrase “whom he shaped,” which was presumably found in proto-LXX, where the word יצר would have appeared, referring back to Gen 2:7–8.
 - 27 I owe much of this analysis to Yaakov Kupitz, personal correspondence.
 - 28 Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.157; Lapidge 1973: 274; Todd 2001: 77; Bobzien 2005: 490; Frixione 2013: 506; Bartoš 2020: 27.
 - 29 Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 2.9; cf. Gen 9:4; Lev 17:11; Deut 12:23.
 - 30 Later Stoic philosophy, under Cleanthes and Chrysippus, would give greater prominence to *pneuma* as the divine soul and introduce the idea of *Pneuma* as the World Soul animating and binding together the entire universe (Hahm 1972: 156–60; Lapidge 1973: 273–74; Long and Sedley 1987: 1.287–88), but Zeno’s conception of *pneuma* as simple human breath, modeled on the medical theories

of Hippocrates and others, gave no such cosmic or divine role to *pneuma*. Zeno's sole surviving reference to *pneuma* outside the human body is the wind that blows the clouds, and within the human body to human respiration, in line with the original meaning of *pneuma* in Greek sources starting in the sixth century BCE (Frixione 2013: 506).

- 31 This important parallel was brought to my attention by Yaakov Kupitz in personal correspondence.
- 32 Gmirkin 2006: 267 and n. 8; McClintock and Strong 1867–1887 s.v. Havilah, Pison and literature cited there. Colchis, at the outflow of the Phasis river, and famous in ancient times for its gold (Strabo, *Geography* 11.2.19), is imprecisely rendered in Hebrew as Havilah (חַוִּילָה). The reference to bdellium and onyx stone in Gen 2:12 appears to conflate with another location named Havilah (Gen 10:7, 29; 25:18; 1 Sam 15:7), probably home to the Arabian tribe of Avilitae near the Nabateans (Pliny, *Natural History* 6.157). Bdellium was a resin or gum found in Arabia (Pliny, *Natural History* 12.19; cf. Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae* 17.8.6; Dioscorides, *De Materia Medica* 1.80). Arabia was also known for its onyx and sardonyx (Pliny, *Natural History* 37.23–24).
- 33 Cf. Hershbell 1974. The belief in the transmigration of souls from different animals to humans and finally to a god-like state in *Timaeus* 42b–d, 91d–92c has close similarities to Empedocles (Inwood 1992: 52–65, 137–40), as was Plato's many references to the four elements of fire, air, water and earth.
- 34 “All creatures, both animals and birds, were tame and gentle to man, and bright was the flame of their friendship” (Empedocles, quoted in Scholion to Nicander's *Theriaca* line 452; cf. Inwood 1992: 136–7; Campbell 2008: 8).
- 35 See most explicitly Diodorus Siculus, *Library* 1.8.2–4, which perhaps derived from Democritus (Cole 1967; Cartledge 1997).
- 36 Gen 2:21 LXX: “And God cast an unconsciousness upon Adam and he slept, and he took one of his ribs, and supplied flesh in its place.” The LXX appears to reflect a Vorlage that differed from MT in its description of the operation by which Eve was fashioned (van der Louw 2007: 128).
- 37 Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospels* 12.12, quoting Plato, *Symposium* 189d, 190d; Genesis Rabbah 8.1; Leviticus Rabbah 14.2; cf. Hasan-Roken and Yuval 2017: 252–6.
- 38 Many of the points from this paragraph come from Kupitz, personal correspondence. He also noted the parallel between Gen 2:24 (“Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife”) and Plato, *Laws* 6.776a (“The man who marries must part from his father and mother”); see also Wajdenbaum 2011: 96–7.
- 39 Hercules stole the Golden Apples of the Hesperides as one of his Labors; Jason of Argonaut fame stole the Golden Fleece. Both treasures were found in sacred gardens tended by priestesses and guarded by a sleepless dragon. These may have been two variations of the same original myth, the word for Golden Apple and Golden Fleece being the same, *chrysomallon* (Gmirkin, unpublished).
- 40 The Golden Fleece was located in Colchis, the ancient kingdom of Aetes at the outflow of the Phasis River into the Black Sea. The mention of the Phasis and the gold of Colchis (Havilah) in Gen 2:11 suggest that the biblical authors were acquainted with this story.
- 41 According to Pherecydes, Hera planted trees bearing golden apples in the garden of the gods by Mount Atlas. But since the Hesperides, the daughters of Atlas, kept picking the golden apples, Hera placed a fearsome dragon there to guard the fruit. Pseudo-Hyginus, *Astronomica* 2.3.

- 42 Origen, *Against Celsus* 4.38; Lovejoy and Boas 1935: 428–9; Van Seters (1983: 26, 1992: 125, 127); Wajdenbaum 2011: 98–101; 2018: 97; Gnuse 2017: 136–7; Bremmer 2008: 19–34.
- 43 “Far from the supreme beings of Hesiod’s *Theogony*, the gods are not even immortal in their own natures (*Timaeus* 41b), and they need directions from a superior” (Capra 2010: 210).
- 44 The human Tantalus, who stole the food of the gods and sought to smuggle some to his drinking buddies, was condemned forever to Tartaros, where he was punished with the eternal task of trying to roll a boulder up a mountain (Pindar, *Olympian Odes* 1.60–64; cf. Nagy 1986: 84).
- 45 This passage was noted by Neil Godfrey at <https://vridar.org/2010/05/11/god-taught-cain-the-wisdom-of-plato/>.

Bibliography

- Ademollo, Francesco. *The ‘Cratylus’ of Plato: A Commentary*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Armstrong, John M. “After the Ascent: Plato on Becoming Like God.” *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 26 (2004): 171–183.
- Barney, Rachel. *Names and Nature in Plato’s Cratylus*. New York: Routledge, 2001.
- Bartoš, Hynek. “Heat, *Pneuma*, and Soul in the Medical Tradition,” in *Heat, Pneuma, and Soul in Ancient Philosophy and Science*. Hynek Bartoš and Colin Guthrie King (eds.), 21–32. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020.
- Baumgarten, Albert I. *The Phoenician History of Philo of Byblos: A Commentary*. Etudes Préliminaires aux Religions Orientales dans l’Empire Romain 89. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981.
- Baxter, Timothy M.S. *The Cratylus: Plato’s Critique of Naming*. Leiden: Brill, 1992.
- Bobzien, Susanne. “Early Stoic Determinism.” *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale* 4 (2005): 489–516.
- Bodéüs, Richard. *Aristotle and the Theology of the Living Immortals*. Translated by Jan Edward Garrett. New York: State University of New York Press, 2000.
- Bonfante, Larissa. “Nudity as a Costume in Classical Art.” *AJA* 93 (1989): 543–570.
- Broadie, Sarah. “Theological Sidelights from Plato’s ‘Timaeus’.” *PAS* 82 (2008): 1–17.
- Bremmer, Jan N. *Greek Religion and Culture, the Bible, and the Ancient Near East*. Leiden: Brill, 2008.
- Brown, William P. *Structure, Role and Ideology in the Hebrew and Greek Texts of Genesis 1:1–2:3*. SBLDS 132. Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1993.
- Bury, Robert Gregg. *Plato: Timaeus, Critias, Cleitophon, Menexenus, Epistles*. LCL 234. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1929.
- Burkert, Walter. *The Orientalizing Revolution: Near Eastern Influence on Greek Culture in the Early Archaic Age*. Revealing Antiquity 5. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992.
- Campbell, Gordon. “‘And Bright was the Flame of their Friendship’ (Empedocles B130): Humans, Animals, Justice, and Friendship, in Lucretius and Empedocles.” *LICS* 7 (2008): 1–23.
- Capra, Andrea. “Plato’s Hesiod and the will of Zeus: Philosophical Rhapsody in the *Timaeus* and the *Critias*,” in *Plato and Hesiod*. G.R. Boy-Stones and J.H. Haubold (eds.), 200–218. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

- Cartledge, Paul. *Democritus*. London: Routledge, 1997.
- Cassuto, Umberto. *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis: Part I, From Adam to Noah*. Translated by Israel Abrahams. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1989.
- Cole, Thomas. *Democritus and the Sources of Greek Anthropology*. Cleveland, OH: Western Reserve University Press, 1967.
- Cook, Arthur. 1925, 1940. *Zeus: A Study in Ancient Religion*. 3 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914.
- Clay, Jenny Strauss. "Immortal and Ageless Forever." *CJ* 77 (1982): 112–117.
- Cross, Frank Moore. "Yahweh and the God of the Patriarchs." *HTR* 55 (1962): 225–259.
- Cross, Frank Moore. *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973.
- Cross, Frank Moore and Richard J. Saley. "Phoenician Incantations on a Plaque of the Seventh Century B. C. from Arslan Tash in Upper Syria." *BASOR* 197 (1970): 42–49.
- Day, John. *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan*. JSOTSup 265. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000.
- Fowler, Robert L. "P.Oxy. 4458: Poseidonios." *ZPE* 132 (2000a): 133–142.
- Fowler, Robert L. 2013. *Early Greek Mythography*. 2 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000b.
- Fowler, Robert L. "Mythos and Logos." *JHS* 131 (2011): 45–66.
- Frixione, Eugenio. "Pneuma–Fire Interactions in Hippocratic Physiology." *JHM* 68 (2013): 505–528.
- Gammie, John G. "Loci of the Melchizedek Tradition of Genesis 14:18–20." *JBL* 90 (1971): 385–396.
- Gmirkin, Russell E. *Berosus and Genesis, Manetho and Exodus: Hellenistic Histories and the Date of the Pentateuch*. Library of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 433. CIS 15. New York: T & T Clark, 2006.
- Gmirkin, Russell E. *Plato and the Creation of the Hebrew Bible*. Copenhagen International Seminar. London: Routledge, 2017.
- Gnuse, Robert K. "Greek Connections: Genesis 1–11 and the Poetry of Hesiod." *BibThBul* 47 (2017): 131–143.
- Gordon, Cyrus. "Homer and the Bible: The Origin and Character of East Mediterranean Literature." *HUCA* 26 (1955): 43–108.
- Gordon, Robert P. "The Gods Must Die: A Theme in Isaiah and Beyond," in *Isaiah in Context: Studies in Honour of Arie van der Kooij on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*. Michael van der Meer, Percy van Keulen, Wido van Peurson and Bas ter Haar Romeny (eds.), 45–62. VTSup 138. Leiden: Brill, 2010.
- Gundert, Beate. "Soma and Psyche in Hippocratic Medicine," in *Psyche and Soma: Physicians and Metaphysicians on the Mind-Body Problem from Antiquity to Enlightenment*. Paul Potter and John P. Wright (eds.), 13–36. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002.
- Habel, Norman C. "'Yahweh, Maker of Heaven and Earth': A Study in Tradition Criticism." *JBL* 91 (1972): 321–337.
- Hahn, David E. *The Origins of Stoic Cosmology*. Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1977.
- Hamori, Esther J. *"When Gods Were Men": The Embodied God in Biblical and Near Eastern Literature*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008.

- Harnack, Adolph. *Marcion: The Gospel of an Alien God*. Translated by John E. Steely and Lyle D. Bierma. Eugene, OR: Baker Books, 1990.
- Hasan-Roken, Galit and Israel Jacob Yuval. "Myth, History and Eschatology in a Rabbinic Text on Birth," in *Talmudic Transgressions: Engaging the Work of Daniel Boyarin*. Charlotte Fonrobert, Ishay Rosen-Zvi, Aharon Shemesh and Moulie Vidas (eds.), 243–273. Leiden: Brill, 2017.
- Heiser, Michael S. "Deuteronomy 32:8 and the Sons of God." *BibSac* 158 (2001): 52–74.
- Hershbell, Jackson P. "Empedoclean Influences on the Timaeus." *Phoenix* 28 (1974): 145–166.
- Hjelm, Ingrid. "The Food of Life and the Food of Death in Texts from the Old Testament and the Ancient Near East," in *Biblical Narratives, Archaeology and Historicity: Essays in Honour of Thomas L. Thompson*. Łukasz Niesiołowski-Spanò and Emanuel Pfoh (eds.), 159–175. Library of Hebrew Bible / Old Testament Studies series. London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2020.
- Horowitz, Wayne. *Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1998.
- Hurwit, Jeffrey M. "The Problem with Dexileos: Heroic and Other Nudities in Greek Art." *AJA* 111 (2007): 35–60.
- Inwood, Brad. *The Poem of Empedocles*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992.
- Kirk, Geoffrey S. and John Earle Raven (eds.). *The Presocratic Philosophers: A Critical History with a Selection of Texts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957.
- Kooij, Arie van der. "The Story of Paradise in the Light of Mesopotamian Culture and Literature," in *Genesis, Isaiah, and Psalms: A Festschrift to Honour Professor John Emerton for His Eightieth Birthday*. Katharine Julia Dell, Graham I. Davies and Yee Von Koh (eds.), 3–22. Leiden: Brill, 2010.
- Lapidge, Michael. "ἄρχαί and στοιχεῖα: A Problem in Stoic Cosmology." *Phronesis* 18 (1973): 240–278.
- Leibnitz, Gottfried Wilhelm. *Essais de Théodicée sur la bonté de Dieu, la liberté de l'homme et l'origine du mal*. Amsterdam: Isaac Troyel, 1710.
- Leshner, James H. *Xenophanes of Colophon: Fragments: A Text with Translation and Commentary*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992.
- Loader, William R.G. "Sexuality and Ptolemy's Greek Bible: Genesis 1-3 in Translation '...Things which they Altered for King Ptolemy' (Genesis Rabbah 8.11)," in *Ptolemy II Philadelphus and His World*. Paul R. McKechnie and Philippe Guillaume (eds.), 207–232. Leiden: Brill, 2008.
- Louden, Bruce. *The Iliad: Myth, Structure and Meaning*. Baltimore, The John Hopkins University Press, 2006.
- Louden, Bruce. *Homer's Odyssey and the Near East*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Louw, Theo A.W. van der. *Transformations in the Septuagint: Towards and Interaction of Septuagint Studies and Translation Studies*. CBET 47. Leuven: Peeters, 2007.
- Lovejoy, Arthur O. and George Boas. *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1935.

- Machinist, Peter. "How Gods Die, Biblically and Otherwise. A Problem of Cosmic Restructuring," in *Reconsidering the Concept of Revolutionary Monotheism*. Beate Pongratz-Leisten (ed.), 189–240. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011.
- McClintock, John and James Strong. *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*. 12 vols. New York, NY: Harper & Bros, 1867–1887.
- McPherran, Mark. "Socrates and Plato," in *Ancient Philosophy of Religion*. Graham Oppy and N.N. Trakakis (eds.). New York: Routledge: 53–78, 2014.
- Meer, Michael N. van der. "Anthropology in the Ancient Greek Versions of Gen 2:7," in *Dust of the Ground and Breath of Life (Gen 2:7): The Problem of a Dualistic Anthropology in Early Judaism and Christianity*. Jacques T.A.G.M. van Ruiten and George H. van Kooten (eds.), 36–57. Themes in Biblical Narrative 20. Leiden: Brill, 2016.
- Milgrom, Jacob. "The Alleged 'Hidden Light,'" in *The Idea of Biblical Interpretation: Essays in Honor of James L. Kugel*. James L. Kugel, Judith H. Newman and Judith Hood Newman (eds.), 41–44. Leiden: Brill, 2004.
- Morris, Sarah. "Homer and the Near East," in *A New Companion to Homer*. Ian Morris and Barry B. Powell (eds.), 599–623. Leiden: Brill, 1997.
- Moss, Jessica. "Shame, Pleasure, and the Divided Soul." *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 29 (2005): 137–170.
- Moss, Jessica. "Appearances and Calculations: Plato's Division of the Soul." *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 34 (2008): 35–68.
- Mullen, E. Theodore, Jr. *The Assembly of the Gods: The Divine Council in Canaanite and Early Hebrew Literature*. Harvard Semitic Monographs No. 24. Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1986.
- Nagy, Gregory. "Pindar's Olympian 1 and the Aetiology of the Olympic Games." *TAPA* 116 (1986): 71–88.
- Osborne, Robin. "Men Without Clothes: Heroic Nakedness and Greek Art." *Gender and History* 9 (1997): 504–528.
- Pender, Elizabeth E. "Chaos Corrected: Hesiod in Plato's Creation Myth," in *Plato and Hesiod*. G.R. Boy-Stones and J.H. Haubold (eds.), 219–245. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Penglass, Charles. *Greek Myths and Mesopotamia, Parallels and Influences in the Homeric Hymns and Hesiod*. London: Routledge, 1994.
- Rad, Gerhard von. *Genesis: A Commentary*. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1961.
- Rad, Gerhard von. *Commentary on Genesis. Old Testament Library*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1973.
- Riel, Gerd van. *Plato's Gods*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013.
- Rösel, Martin. *Übersetzung als Vollendung der Auslegung: Studien zur Genesis Septuaginta*. BZAW 223. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1994.
- Ruiten, Jacques T.A.G.M. van and George H. van Kooten (eds.). *Dust of the Ground and Breath of Life (Gen 2:7): The Problem of a Dualistic Anthropology in Early Judaism and Christianity. Themes in Biblical Narrative 20*. Leiden: Brill, 2016.
- Runia, David T. *Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus of Plato*. Philosophia Antiqua 44. Leiden: Brill, 1986.

- Runia, David T. *On the Creation of the Cosmos According to Moses: Introduction, Translation and Commentary*. Philo of Alexandria Commentary Series 1. Leiden: Brill, 2001.
- Sanders, Seth L. “‘I Was Shown Another Calculation’ (חשבון אחרון אחרית): The Language of Knowledge in Aramaic Enoch and Priestly Hebrew,” in *Ancient Jewish Sciences and the History of Knowledge in Second Temple Literature*. Jonathan Ben-Dov and Seth L. Sanders (eds.), 69–101. New York: New York University Press, 2014.
- Sarna, Nahum M. *Genesis. JPS Torah / Bible Commentary*. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989.
- Sedley, David. “‘Becoming like God’ in the *Timaeus* and Aristotle,” in *Interpreting the Timaeus-Critias: Proceedings of the IV Symposium Platonicum*. Tomás Calvo, Tomás Calvo Martínez and Luc Brisson (eds.), 327–339. International Plato Studies 9. Sankt Augustin: Academia Verlag, 1997.
- Sedley, David. “The Etymologies in Plato’s ‘Cratylus.’” *JHS* 118 (1998): 140–154.
- Sedley, David. *Creationism and its Critics in Antiquity*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007.
- Sedley, David. “Hesiod’s *Theogony* and Plato’s *Timaeus*,” in *Plato and Hesiod*. G.R. Boy-Stones and J.H. Haubold (eds.), 246–258. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Smith, Mark S. *The Early History of God: Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990.
- Smith, Mark S. *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle, Volume I*. VTSup 55. Leiden: Brill, 1994.
- Smith, Mark S. *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel’s Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Smith, Mark S. and Wayne T. Pitard. *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle, Volume II*. VTSup 114. Leiden: Brill, 2009.
- Spivey, Nigel. *Understanding Greek Sculpture: Ancient Meanings, Modern Readings*. Thames & Hudson, 1996.
- Stordalen, Terje. *Echoes of Eden: Genesis 2–3 and Symbolism of the Eden Garden in Biblical Hebrew Literature*. CBET 25. Leuven: Peeters, 2000.
- Tian, Jie. *The Orthos Logos in Aristotle’s Ethics*. Berlin: Humbolt University, 2017.
- Todd, Robert B. “Cleomedes and the Problems of Stoic Astrophysics.” *Hermes* 129 (2001): 75–78.
- Topper, Kathryn. *The Imagery of the Athenian Symposium*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Tov, Emanuel. *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2012.
- Tsumura, David Toshio. “Rediscovery of the Ancient Near East and Its Implications for Genesis 1–2,” in *Since the Beginning: Interpreting Genesis 1 and 2 Through the Ages*. Kyle R. Greenwood (ed.), 215–238. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2018.
- Van Seters, John. *In Search of History: Historiography in the Ancient World and the Origins of Biblical History*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983.
- Van Seters, John. *Prologue to History: The Yahwist as Historian in Genesis*. Louisville, KY: Westminster / John Knox Press, 1992.

- Wajdenbaum, Philippe. *Argonauts of the Desert: Structural Analysis of the Hebrew Bible*. Sheffield: Equinox Publishing, 2011.
- Wajdenbaum, Philippe. “Job, Prometheus Bound and the Embassy to Achilles.” *Rihao* 19 (2018): 93–109.
- Walcot, Peter. *Hesiod and the Near East*. Cardiff: University of Wales, 1966.
- Westermann, Claus. *Genesis 1–11: A Commentary*. Translated by J. Scullion. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984.

7 Genesis 2–11 and Plato's *Critias*

An analysis of Genesis 1–3 demonstrates that the biblical Primordial History was closely modeled on Plato's *Timaeus*, both in terms of basic structure and philosophical themes: the origin of the elements from the preexisting primordial chaos (Gen 1:2; *Timaeus* 53c–57d); the origins of the *kosmos*, fashioned by the supreme Craftsman or Creator (Gen 1:3–2:3; cf. *Timaeus* 29d–40d); the origin of mortal life, created by the lesser gods (Genesis 2; cf. *Timaeus* 40d–47e); and the origin of death and human wickedness (Genesis 3; cf. *Timaeus* 42d–e, 69d, 81c–87b, 91b–c).

The current chapter shifts the focus to *Critias*, Plato's sequel to *Timaeus*. The use of *Critias* as a model for the antediluvian world in Genesis has not previously been proposed by biblical critics. While *Timaeus* was concerned with the origins of the *kosmos*, of life and death, and of human moral sensibilities and failings, *Critias* presented a tale set in earliest mythical times that laid out the devolution of ideal political institutions, established by the gods, into a spiral of ambition and violence divinely punished by cataclysmic earthquake and flood that ended the Age of Heroes and overflowed the mythical continent of Atlantis. Specific biblical echoes of *Critias* may be found in the description of the paradisiac Garden of Eden, the temporal setting a few thousand years before the author's present, the intermarriage of gods and the daughters of men, the engendering of a heroic race of demigods, their corruption through time and the continued intermarriage with ordinary humans, the resulting state of pervasive injustice and violence and God's punishment in the form of an all-consuming flood, which gives the world a fresh start.

Timaeus and *Critias* were the first two of a planned trilogy of texts, the last being *Hermocrates*. *Timaeus* was a stoichogony, cosmogony, theogony, zoogony and anthropogony, describing the intelligent creation of the universe, life and humanity. *Critias* was a politogony set in the legendary Age of Heroes, when gods and humans coexisted on earth and when the first divine governments were established by the children of the gods. According to Plato's tale, the Athenians were first created from the earth of Attica by the gods Ge and Hephaestus (*Timaeus* 23e). In line with traditional Greek mythography, the land of Attica was allotted to Hephaestus and his sister

Athena (*Timaeus* 23d, 24c–d). It was Athena who gave the Athenians their primordial constitution and laws (*Timaeus* 24a–d), which, by a “strange piece of fortune” (*Timaeus* 25e), exactly corresponded to the constitutional provisions laid out in Plato’s *Republic* (*Timaeus* 17c–18b, 25e). Plato’s proposed system of government in the *Republic*, with philosopher-kings and a military class of Guardians who ruled over and protected the lower classes of artisans and farmers, thus laid claim to being the divine constitution and laws of the Athenians in mythical times (*Timaeus* 17c–18b, 24a–b, 25e). Plato also related how Poseidon created another race of humans on the island kingdom of Atlantis, outside the straits of Gibraltar, and, consorting with a daughter of the first man and woman of his realm, engendered a line of semi-divine kings and governors to rule the Atlantian realm (*Critias* 113d–114d). Poseidon also established righteous laws for his kingdom, inscribed on pillars. The ten rulers of Atlantis swore obedience to these divine laws amid blood sacrifices, under the penalty of destruction should they or their descendants ever violate the covenant (*Critias* 119d–120b). For several generations, both Athenians and Atlantians lived justly in their respective kingdoms, but as the divine element of the Atlantian kings became attenuated through their marriages with ordinary mortals (*Critias* 120e, 121b), their government became evil and they sought to acquire all the territory lying within the Mediterranean (*Critias* 108e; cf. *Timaeus* 24e–25c). In the fierce war that ensued, the courageous Athenians led a coalition of Greeks to vanquish the violent Atlantians and save the primordial world from enslavement (*Critias* 108e); and Zeus, ruler of the gods, punished the Atlantians for their wickedness, sending earthquakes and a worldwide flood that sank the continent of Atlantis forever (*Critias* 108e, 121b; cf. *Timaeus* 25c–d) and incidentally destroyed the valiant civilization of the righteous Athenians (*Critias* 112a; cf. *Timaeus* 21d, 25d). But a remnant of the Athenians survived the deluge to re-found Athens and restore its greatness (comparing *Timaeus* 21d, 25d and 23a–c). All records and memory of that former age perished, except among the Egyptians, who had also survived the flood and who transmitted the written record of these stories to the Athenian lawgiver Solon, from whom Solon’s grandson Critias learned the tale (*Timaeus* 21d–22a, 23d–25e; cf. *Critias* 108d, 110b, 113a). In this fabulous story presented as history in the Platonic dialogues *Timaeus* and *Critias*, an origin myth was provided for Plato’s system of government in the *Republic* and an etiology was also given for political virtue and vice. The best system of government was established by the gods in primordial times, but human ambition and disobedience to divine laws led to violence, imperial aggression and the downfall of nations. The ancient Athenians were upheld as a noble example of both righteousness and courage in the face of unjust aggression. It is thought that the final installment in this literary trilogy, *Hermocrates*, which Plato planned but never wrote, would have been a scathing account of Athens in contemporary historical times, in which Athenian imperialism and its economic oppression of other Hellenic states would be described as a parallel to the ancient Atlantians,

not the noble Athenians who had once saved the civilized world (Lampert and Planeaux 1998).

Timaeus was concerned with using scientific and philosophical arguments to construct a plausible account of the origins of the *kosmos*, resorting to myth mainly in the account of the origin of the semi-mortal terrestrial gods (*Timaeus* 40d–41d, 69c). *Critias*, by contrast, was from start to finish a mythical narrative (although one that illustrated theological and ethical themes). *Timaeus* received its name from its principal speaker, the historical philosopher and astronomer Timaeus of Locris. *Critias* received its name from the historical figure of Critias of Athens, grandson of the famed lawgiver Solon, whom Critias claimed as authority for this mythical tale of Atlantis and its fall. In these twin fictitious dialogues, set a few decades in the past, Socrates, Timaeus and Critias engaged in pleasant conversation, Timaeus talking about the origins of the world from a scientific perspective, Critias from purported mythological traditions. This friendly conversation between scientific philosopher and fanciful mythographers is strikingly mirrored in the scientific account of the creation of the *kosmos* in Genesis 1 and the predominantly mythic narrative of Genesis 2–11. While Plato's *Timaeus* and *Critias* differed in subject matter, style and fictional authorship, the two texts were intertwined with mutual references and contained unifying Platonic theological and ethical themes. So likewise the First and Second Creation Accounts are textually intertwined and contain a unifying thread of themes taken directly from *Timaeus* (see Chapters 5 and 6). The stylistic differences between the two Creation Accounts, one phrased as authoritative science, the other as pure story, appear to consciously mimic Plato's *Timaeus* and *Critias*. The following sections trace the story elements in Genesis 2–11 taken from *Critias*, as well as indirect influences and echoes from *Critias* in the remainder of Genesis, in Exodus's covenant ceremonies, and in the Deuteronomist's theory of history in which the fortunes of the Israelites reflected their adherence to the ancestral covenant.

7.1 The Garden of Eden and Mesopotamian Parallels

Since the decipherment of cuneiform texts with parallels to biblical laws and stories in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, biblical critics have almost universally sought to explain the Garden of Eden in terms of Mesopotamian literature and culture. The validity of this comparative approach was circularly reinforced by the assumed antiquity of the story of the Garden of Eden in the Persian Era or earlier. Influence of Assyrian, Babylonian and Persian royal parks on the depiction of Eden as a garden of delights has long been argued, a possibility enhanced by the LXX terming Eden a παράδεισον (Tuplin 1996: 80–131; Bremmer 1999; van der Kooij 2010: 10). The tree of life has commonly been interpreted as imitating a widespread Ancient Near Eastern artistic motif (Widengren 1951; Parpola 1993; Giovino 2007).

Despite the claimed parallels, a Mesopotamian background for the Garden of Eden myth still remains highly problematic. The belief in pervasive “Garden of God” or “Tree of Life” motifs in Mesopotamian and Levantine iconography is now recognized as having been unduly influenced by biblical motifs and in actuality reflects a wide variety of cultic and divine themes (such as vegetation deities located in streams and mountains) that cannot be brought into relationship with the account of the Garden of Eden (Stordalen 2000: 139–61). The influence of Greek literature on Genesis 1–2, and Plato in specific, suggests that an exclusive focus on Ancient Near Eastern precedent to the Garden of Eden myth may be unwarranted.

Preliminary to a discussion of specific literary and thematic antecedents, it is useful to first list the narrative and descriptive elements present in the biblical presentation of the Garden of Eden.

- The temporal setting is in earliest primeval times—long before the flood story—when the first generation of humans lived together with the gods who fashioned them (Gen 2:7–8; 3:8).
- The land of “Eden” represents a “luxuriant” land that was home to a terrestrial god (Gen 2:7–8). Although not directly mentioned in Genesis, one may presume that the deity lived in a temple or palace. Other biblical texts suggest that Eden was viewed as the primordial site of Mount Zion and its temple (Stordalen 2000: 367, 376–7; cf. Jub. 8.19), while Samaritan traditions equated Eden with Mount Gerizim and its temple (*Memar Marqah* 2.10, 73–77).
- Although Eden was an exotic, semi-mythical land, the narrative specified its geographical location at the sources of the Phasis, Tigris, Euphrates and Nile, which Classical Era geographical sources located high in the mountains of Armenia (Gmirkin 2006: 266–70). The Garden of Eden was said to be located on the Mountain of God in Ezek 28:14, 16, attesting to a mountainous locale (cf. Day 2000: 30–1).
- The river that arose in Eden was said to have watered a garden of delights the deity planted with trees pleasant to the sight and good for food (Gen 2:8–10; 3:6), as well as all sorts of animals and birds (Gen 2:18–20).
- The garden also contained two special trees, the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. These trees featured prominently in the story of Genesis 2–3. It is not clear whether their presence in the narrative was more closely associated with the Garden of Eden as a literary topos or with the story of Adam and Eve.

One can find evidence for three types of gardens in Assyrian, Babylonian and Persian inscriptions and related iconography that have been proposed as possible literary prototypes of the Garden of Eden, none of them satisfactory: temple gardens, royal parks, and wooded locations in Mesopotamian myths.

- Temple gardens of the Ancient Near East (extensively discussed in Stordalen 2000: 111–6; cf. Dalley 1993: 6) existed primarily for economic purposes, to support the temple, its offerings and its personnel (Stordalen 2000: 111–2). Temple gardens were not known for their variety of plants, nor for their animals. Such gardens did not possess a cosmic or mythic dimension and were not associated with primordial times.
- Royal parks attached to palaces, such as those created by Ashurbanipal, Esarhaddon, Merodach-Baladan II, Nebuchadnezzar and various Persian kings (Dalley 1993; Stordalen 2000: 94–104; van der Kooij 2010: 9–10) are an attractive possibility in terms of their profusion of exotic plants. Ancient Near Eastern kings such as Tiglath-pileser III, Ashurbanipal and Sennacherib were also known for collecting exotic wild animals placed in hunting parks (Dalley 1993: 3–5), where kings most famously hunted and slew lions. But such royal parks have properly been discounted as convincing parallels due to their strictly historical character without any mythical dimension (Stordalen 2000: 104; cf. van der Kooij 2010: 10). And why would a king's hunting park become the model or paradigm of the Garden of the Gods in the primordial world?
- The search for Mesopotamian mythical stories featuring gardens in primordial times often centers on the Gilgamesh Epic, which is set after the flood of Utnapishtim. Gilgamesh and Enkidu had one adventure in the Cedar Forest, located according to various traditions either in the Zagros Mountains or Mount Lebanon (Dalley 1993: 11–12), where they slew the monster Huwawa and felled seven sacred cedar trees. But rivers do not feature in this story, nor did the Cedar Forest contain a profusion of plants or animals, nor was it a divine abode (Stordalen 2000: 146–53). Gilgamesh, in his quest for immortality, later traveled through a jeweled garden, a mythical location at the edge of the world, approaching the dwelling of the flood hero Utnapishtim. But there are no hints of a divine presence in the jeweled garden, nor indeed earthly plants or animals (Stordalen 2000: 153–5). The story of Utnapishtim itself, though part of a quest for immortality, did not feature plants or a garden (Stordalen 2000: 154–5).
- Another myth, the Sumerian story of *Enki and Ninhursag*, has been compared to the story of the Garden of Eden (Kramer 1945), but the setting better corresponds to Gen 2:4–5, at the creation of the heavens and the earth, when the land was arid, and before the appearance of the first humans. The characters of the tale are gods and it centers on Enki's endeavor to bring up subterranean waters and sexually fructify the land so it produces the first plants, and the origin of the sexes (among the gods). The parallels with Genesis are slight if any (e.g. Hartman 1946; Stordalen 2000: 140–1; Dickson 2007).

In summary, the various attempts to find a Mesopotamian parallel to the Garden of Eden have all proved highly problematic on close inspection. The search for comparative examples from ancient Mesopotamia, to the exclusion of Greek comparative materials, was largely premised on the assumed antiquity of the Garden of Eden story. The recognition that this story may have dated as late as the early Hellenistic Era, along with the rest of the Pentateuch (Chapter 4), opens up new possibilities for comparative study. The pervasive Platonic influences in Genesis 1–3 suggest Plato’s writings might provide the literary background of the description of the Garden of Eden.

7.2 The Garden of Eden and Plato’s Atlantis

As discussed in the present chapter, Greek literary motifs run throughout Genesis 2–3, many of them taken from Plato’s writings, especially *Timaeus*. Myths of paradise run throughout the writings of Plato. The idyllic Golden Age of Hesiod, when the first humans lived in close contact with the gods under the supreme rule of Kronos, appears frequently as a metaphor for the ideal of divine government (Dillon 1992; Gmirkin 2017: 285 n. 78). Another favorite topic in Platonic writings was the Islands of the Blessed, still ruled by the god Kronos in the present age, where the righteous dwelled after death as demigods in immeasurable happiness alongside the heroes of the Trojan War.¹

In *Phaedo*, Plato speculated on the existence of regions of the earth unknown to the Greeks, lands full of jewels and precious metals, with beautiful trees and fruits, and purifying breezes, where humans lived extraordinarily long lives, free from diseases, among sacred groves and temples where the gods really dwelled and communicated with the blessed humans who lived there (*Phaedo* 108c–111c). The mythological geography in *Phaedo* is notoriously difficult and exotic, with surveys of ideal lands viewable from the summit of the earth and other subterranean lands in the depths of Tartaros, and the regions known to the Greeks somewhere in the middle. The *μῦθος* of a paradisiacal “ideal earth” described at *Phaedo* 108c–111c, where the righteous dwelled, has close affinities with the Islands of the Blessed (Annas 1982: 125–9), the mythical land beyond the Pillars of Hercules, the idyllic realm of the god Kronos. Specific points of contact between *Phaedo* 108c–111c and the Islands of the Blessed include the description of the ideal lands that included islands (*Phaedo* 111a) with temperate climate (*Phaedo* 111b) and healthful breezes (*Phaedo* 110e), “a sight to make those blessed who look upon it” (*Phaedo* 111a), with long-lived, “blessed” inhabitants (*Phaedo* 111b–c), free from disease (*Phaedo* 110e), with “sacred groves and temples of the gods, in which the gods really dwell, and they have intercourse with the gods by speech and prophecies and visions” (*Phaedo* 111b). Readers could not have failed to see in *Phaedo* rich allusions to the Islands of the Blessed, ruled by Kronos, and home to the Trojan heroes and the souls of the righteous.²

Affinities between *Phaedo* and the Garden of Eden include the coexistence of gods and humans in an idyllic blessed land subject to cool breezes with groves and temples. However, it may be questioned whether the influence was direct. The description of the mythical continent of Atlantis, with its gardens and temples and palaces, where the gods coexisted with first humans in Plato's *Critias*, expanded upon the earlier description of mythical lands in *Phaedo*.³ The influence of *Phaedo* on the Garden of Eden account appears to have been indirect, mediated by *Critias*, the sequel to *Timaeus*.

The Garden of Eden in Genesis 2 is best understood as having been systematically drawn upon literary descriptions of Atlantis in *Critias* because of the many parallels between these stories.

One may first point to a similar temporal and mythological setting, with the terrestrial deity Poseidon, one of the generated gods who were offspring of the Demiurge, dwelling in his allotted land (*Critias* 113b–c) with the first generation of earthborn humans (*Critias* 113c). Poseidon's allotment was the island of Atlantis, located beyond the Pillars of Hercules (i.e., the Straits of Gibraltar), together with the Libyan (i.e., African) coast as far as Egypt and the European lands as far as Tuscany (*Timaeus* 25b–c; *Critias* 109a, 112d–e, 114a–b). But within this vast western realm, Poseidon chose Atlantis as the fairest locale. It was there that he situated his palace and temple (*Critias* 116d–e). Plato, in the person of *Critias*, gave an extensive detailed geographical description of the region, of the island of Atlantis, and of the dwelling place of Poseidon (*Critias* 113c–d, 114a–c, 118a–e; cf. Gen 2:10–14).

Poseidon dwelled with his mortal wife, Cleito, in a temple constructed on a low mountain (*Critias* 113c–d) that gave rise to two springs, one hot and one cold (*Critias* 113e, 117a; cf. Gen 2:10–14). Streams came down from the mountains and circled the plains (*Critias* 118d; cf. Gen 2:11). "And the outflowing water they conducted to the sacred grove of Poseidon, which contained trees of all kinds that were of marvelous beauty and height because of the richness of the soil" (*Critias* 117b).⁴ This description directly compares with Gen 2:10, "And a river goes forth from out of Eden to water the paradise."

The exotic realm of Atlantis was a fair and fertile land (*Critias* 113c) for a god to dwell at ease (*Critias* 113e). It was filled with gardens (*Critias* 117c) and plantations of trees (*Critias* 117a–b) "producing out of the earth all kinds of food in plenty" (*Critias* 113e; cf. Gen 2:8–9). Atlantis had forests full of timber and animals, both tame and wild (*Critias* 114e–115a, 118b; cf. Gen 2:19–20). The ground held all sorts of metals to be mined, including "orichalcum which sparkled like fire," the most precious metal other than gold (*Critias* 114e, 116c; cf. Gen 2:12). The fertile land of Atlantis had two harvest seasons a year, receiving rains from heaven (*Critias* 118e; cf. Gen 2:5). From the mention of cultivated plants (*Critias* 115a–b; cf. Gen 2:5) and orchards (*Critias* 115a–c; cf. Gen 2:9, 15–16; 3:1–2) and domesticated animals (*Critias* 114e; cf. Gen 2:20), it is apparent that the inhabitants of the

land included agriculturalists and herders. Prominent in Atlantis were the gardens, with every type of fragrant tree, good for food and beautiful in appearance, as Plato eloquently described in *Critias* 115a–b, 117b:

(115a) In addition to all this, it produced and brought to perfection all those sweet-scented stuffs which the earth produces now, whether made of roots or herbs or trees, or of liquid gums derived from flowers or fruits. The cultivated fruit also, and the dry, which serves us for nutriment, and all the other kinds that we use for our meals—the various species of which are comprehended under the name “vegetables”—(115b) and all the produce of trees which affords liquid and solid food and unguents, and the fruit of the orchard-trees, so hard to store, which is grown for the sake of amusement and pleasure, and all the after-dinner fruits that we serve up as welcome remedies for the sufferer from repletion,—all these that hallowed island, as it lay then beneath the sun, produced in marvelous beauty and endless abundance.... (117b) And the outflowing water they conducted to the sacred grove of Poseidon, which contained trees of all kinds that were of marvelous beauty and height because of the richness of the soil.⁵

In this settlement of Poseidon (*Critias* 115c), the Atlantians also constructed over time magnificent temples for sacrifices at periodic gatherings of the divine kings descended from the god (*Critias* 113b–c, 115c,e, 117c, 119d–120b), and a city laid out with royal palaces, docks and quarters for soldiers, built up over time until Atlantian arrogance brought on cataclysmic destruction by rain and flood and earthquake (*Timaeus* 25c–d; *Critias* 108e, 119c–120b; cf. Gen 7:4, 11–12; 8:2). Plato’s extensive description of the primordial world, when the terrestrial gods dwelled among humans, set the stage for his main story, the war between Athens and Atlantis and the destruction of the world by flood.

From the survey, it should now be apparent that the beautiful Garden of Eden in Genesis 2 drew extensively on Plato’s description of Atlantis in *Critias*, the sequel to Plato’s *Timaeus*. The general mythological setting, in a garden of the terrestrial gods in primordial times, resonates with Plato’s extensive description of Poseidon’s earthly realm.

7.3 Genesis 2–3 and the Age of Kronos

Although the description of the Garden of Eden in Genesis 2–3 was largely modeled on Atlantis, the stories of Eden and Atlantis had different temporal settings, the former in the biblical version of the Greek’s idyllic Age of Kronos and the latter in the technological Age of Zeus. The paradise of Eden is often compared to the Greek myth of the Age of Kronos that first appears in Hesiod’s *Works and Days* (Lovejoy and Boas 1935: 428–9; Wajdenbaum 2011: 97–8). The Age of Kronos, also called the Golden Age in

Hesiod's myth of the Five Ages of Humanity (*Works and Days* 109–20), closely conforms to the idyllic life in the Garden of Eden in many respects: gods and humans coexisted; disease and death were unknown; the earth spontaneously produced food in abundance; and human life was blissful (Hesiod, *Works and Days* 90–92, 112–20).⁶ The parallels with Eden are even stronger in Plato's version of Hesiod's myth in *Statesman* 268e–272d. There was no need for clothing (*Statesman* 272a) and humans conversed with both the gods and animals (*Statesman* 272b–d). The correspondences with the Garden of Eden stories are extensive (Wajdenbaum 2011: 97–8 and Chapter 6 §6.5 above).

The chronological setting in *Critias*, however, is the Age of Zeus, which began at the end of the Golden Age of Kronos. In this age, the earth no longer spontaneously brought forth its fruit as food, and humans were required to toil and provide for themselves. Technology and the arts of civilization that emerged during the Age of Zeus were prominent in Plato's description of Atlantis: city-building (*Critias* 115c, 116a–c), road-building (*Critias* 115c), metal-working and wood-working (*Critias* 114e), quarrying and stonework (*Critias* 116a–b), architecture (*Critias* 115c), statuary and ornamentation (*Critias* 116d–e), ships (*Critias* 116e), commerce (*Critias* 114e, 117e), agriculture (*Critias* 115b), herding (*Critias* 118c–119a), horsemanship (*Critias* 117b–c), the military arts (*Critias* 117c–d, 118e). The Athenians were also well versed in technology, through their father Hephaestus the god of metallurgy (*Timaeus* 23e; *Critias* 109c), as well as the other arts and crafts, including war-craft and statecraft, from their mother Athena (*Timaeus* 23d, 24a–d; cf. Mikalson 2010: 221). A setting in the Age of Zeus is evident in *Critias* 121b–c, where it was Zeus who viewed the deeds of mortal humankind, passed judgment on their corruption and violence, and (as it is implied, before the text breaks off) caused earthquake and flood to fall upon the primordial world (cf. *Timaeus* 25c–d; *Critias* 108e).

It is important for our purposes to note that the idyllic abode of the gods is always described as a lush paradise of streams, gardens and palaces, whatever the era. The paradise where the righteous coexisted with the gods in *Phaedo* 110b–111c is full of lush imagery. The pre-technological Age of Kronos was described by Hesiod as a temperate era when plant life spontaneously sprang forth from the earth to nourish humans and animals (*Works and Days* 113, 117–18). The Islands of the Blessed, where an exiled Kronos still ruled in the Age of Zeus, was a paradise cooled by ocean breezes (Homer, *Odyssey* 4.560–565; Pindar, *Olympian Odes* 2.55–85; Strabo, *Geography* 3.2.13). Atlantis, too, where Poseidon lived among his people, was a lush paradise of animals and fragrant trees, streams and gentle rains. What sets Plato's description of Atlantis apart was the additional element of technology: beautiful palaces and temples with fine architecture; incredible statuary and sculpture, rivaling the finest known to the Greek world; industries, including agriculture and mining, of which the latter produced the fabled gleaming metal orichalcum along with abundant gold and silver; port

facilities and fleets of ships; armed soldiers with training grounds and weaponry; in short, the pinnacle of all the technological arts appropriate to the Age of Zeus.

In Genesis 2–3, the paradisiac aspects of the mythical land of Atlantis are given full expression, but the technological aspects are suppressed. The palace-temple of Yahweh-Elohim is hinted at, but not given explicit description. Technology is present only in the cherubim's flaming metallic sword that protected access to the tree of life (Gen 3:24), an intrusive narrative element likely taken over from a Mesopotamian rather than Greek source (Hendel 1985). In the broader narrative scheme of Genesis 1–11, human technology was purposely omitted from Genesis 2–3, which contained conscious echoes of the idyllic Age of Kronos, and introduced only in Genesis 4, which corresponded to the later Age of Zeus.

7.4 Genesis 4 and the Age of Zeus

Hesiod's description of life during the Age of Zeus (*Works and Days* 49, 95, 100–5, 176–8, 299–303) broadly corresponds with life after the Fall and the expulsion of the first humans from the Garden of Eden: an ever-shortened life span, a life of toil and suffering, the birth of technology and the arts of civilization. Hesiod incorporated the Age of Zeus into his famous poetic account of the Five Ages of Humanity (*Works and Days* 109–201): during the Golden Age, the world was ruled by Kronos (*Works and Days* 109–120), while in the subsequent Silver, Bronze, Heroic and present-day Iron Ages, the world was ruled by Zeus (*Works and Days* 127–201). Broad correlations of the Ages of Kronos and Zeus are obvious. Indeed, Josephus modified his account of the primordial world in order to make the biblical story more closely conform to the Five Ages of Hesiod (Feldman 1968; Droge 1989: 36–42). Yet there is a poor correspondence in specifics between the Silver, Bronze, Heroic and Iron Ages with the account of the antediluvian world and flood in Genesis 4–9 (Van Seters 1983: 26). While one may detect a definite influence of the Age of Kronos on Genesis 2–3 and the Age of Zeus with human suffering and toil after the expulsion from paradise starting in Genesis 4, there is no convincing detailed relationship between the Five Ages of Humanity and Genesis 2–11.

Genesis 4–6 contained three effectively independent accounts of the antediluvian world. The first, found in Gen 4:1–23, narrates the murder of Abel and the rise of the line of Cain. The second, found in Genesis 5, contains a divergent account of the line of Seth, with no cross references to the earlier account in Gen 4:1–23. The only connection is Gen 4:24–26, which claimed that Adam and Eve begat Seth as a replacement for murdered Cain, but this appears to be a secondary addition intended to harmonize the two originally independent accounts of Genesis 4 and 5 (cf. Westermann 1984: 323). The third account is that found in Gen 6:1–13, which closely corresponds to the mythological tale of earliest humankind found in *Critias*.

It has no literary connections with Genesis 4, and the only point of contact with Genesis 5 is the figure of Noah. The role of Noah in the second and third accounts differ somewhat, but may be connected: in Gen 5:29 Noah was predicted to reverse the curse Yahweh placed on the ground (cf. Gen 3:17; 8:21 post-flood), while in Genesis 6 Noah appears in the role of flood hero.

Of these three accounts of the antediluvian world, the current section is concerned with Gen 4:1–23. The basic plot is this: Adam and Eve, expelled from the Garden of Eden (but not the land of Eden) and excluded from access to the tree of life (Gen 3:22–24), have two sons, Cain and Abel (Gen 4:1–2). Cain murders Abel in a fit of jealousy and is punished by expulsion from Yahweh's presence in the land of Eden to wander the face of the earth (Gen 4:12–16). Cain represents the first of seven generations descended from Adam and Eve, the last being Lamech, another murderer (Gen 4:23–24). The theme appears to be the prevalence of human violence in the antediluvian world, whose universality is further illustrated by the perceived threat of violence against both the fugitive Cain and his descendant, Lamech (Gen 4:14–15, 24), by those living beyond the bounds of Eden, a fearful threat ameliorated by a sign of divine protection placed by Yahweh upon Cain (Gen 4:15) but not Lamech (Gen 4:24).

Two important features stand out in this account. The first is the limited geographical territory assigned to Yahweh Elohim. Yahweh ruled only the land of Eden. Yahweh is portrayed as neither omnipotent nor omnipresent. When Cain is expelled eastward from Eden into exile, he is hidden from God's face (Gen 4:14), sent "from the presence of Yahweh" (Gen 4:16). Contrast this with the claim in Ps 139:7–10 that it is impossible to escape the presence of God, whether in the heights of heaven or the depths of Sheol or the uttermost parts of the sea, a thesis also expressed in Amos 9:3–4 (cf. Westermann 1984: 310). Contrast this also with Jonah's futile attempt to escape the presence of God by sailing to distant Tarshish (Jon 1:3), perhaps famous Tartessos at the Straits of Gibraltar. In Gen 4:16, Cain's expulsion from Eden into the land of Nod ("Wandering") put him beyond the presence of Yahweh into other lands with other peoples (Gen 4:14–15) and (one must infer) other gods. The picture is that of the world apportioned among a multiplicity of gods, each ruling their own (created) people within their own allotted terrestrial domain.

Yahweh may perhaps be the chief of the terrestrial gods (although this is directly asserted nowhere within Genesis 2–5), but he is not the only terrestrial god, nor do Adam and Eve represent the only humans. Cain's fear at being banished from Eden that he would be slain by whomever he encountered presumes that, although the sole surviving offspring of Adam and Eve, those presumed to live in the lands in which he wandered would represent a constant threat (Westermann 1984: 310–1). This seeming paradox is usually explained by postulating that Cain was afraid of future offspring of Adam and Eve seeking him out in exile to execute vengeance upon him

(Cassuto 1989: 195, 225; Sarna 1989: 35), but such a fanciful scenario is nowhere indicated within the text. Rather, the episode assumes a well-populated earth, as does Gen 4:17, where Cain founds a city (cf. Cassuto 1989: 194). Another famous biblical paradox, where Cain obtained his wife (Gen 4:17), amplified by the later mention of Lamech's wives (Gen 4:19–20), is no paradox at all: he obtained a wife from one of the numerous peoples living in the lands outside Yahweh's small domain. One cannot accept the contrived explanation that Cain married one of his sisters, as in Cassuto (1989: 229) or Sarna (1989: 36), with reference to Adam's "sons and daughters" in Gen 5:4. These later offspring were engendered after the birth of Seth, who was in turn born after Cain's murder of Abel according to Gen 4:25. Cain could not have brought a sister as wife with him into exile. Nor can we imagine a daughter of Adam being sent into exile to marry Cain at some later date.

The second notable feature of Genesis 4 is the rise of technology and civilization. The first foreshadowing of technology appears in God's fashioning clothes for Adam and Eve (Gen 3:21) and in the flaming whirling metallic sword held by the cherubim east of Eden guarding the pathway to the tree of life (Gen 3:24). In both cases the technology was possessed or introduced by the divine. There is an inference that working the soil by the sweat of one's brow—presumably with the assistance of primitive technology such as the introduction of oxen and plow often mentioned in biblical texts—was not yet a feature of life in Eden (Gen 3:17–19; 4:2, 12), but was necessitated only with the advent of the biblical parallel to the Age of Zeus. Human technology first explicitly appears with the mention of culture heroes in Gen 4:17 (the first city), 20 (tents and cattle), 21 (musical instruments) and 22 (metal working⁷). Lists of inventors were popular in both the Greek world and the Ancient Near East, and such lists may have influenced Genesis 4 (cf. Westermann 1984: 57–9; Van Seters 1983: 23–7, 1992: 83–6, 98). Given the scant information in Genesis 4, it is impossible to identify the immediate literary antecedents of the culture heroes of the line of Cain and their inventions. Westermann (1984: 324–35) connects the seven generations of the line of Cain with the seven *apkallu* of Mesopotamian culture-bringers of the pre-flood world. Nevertheless, it is apparent that the antediluvian world saw the rise of true civilization, both in the first cities (Gen 4:17) and in nomadic life (Gen 4:20). The cities necessarily imply an existence of some form of politics and rulership, whether by kings or on a smaller scale by elders. If Irad, the son of Enoch (Gen 3:18), is connected with Eridu, one of five cities built before the flood in Sumerian mythology (Jacobsen 1994), then the authors may have envisioned kings ruling city-states of the pre-flood world, much like in *The Eridu Genesis* and *The Sumerian King List*. The proliferation of cities, kings and technology broadly conforms to the rise of civilization and self-sufficiency in the Age of Zeus in Greek sources from Hesiod to Plato.

7.5 Genesis 5 and Berossus

Genesis 5 records a second version of the history of the antediluvian world presented in genealogical terms, “The Book of the Generations of Adam” (Gen 5:1). There are close connections with Gen 1:26, where the gods created humanity, both male and female, in their own image and likeness. This is echoed in Gen 5:1–2, where God creates humans, both male and female, in his likeness, and called them Adam. Similar language also appears in Gen 5:3, where Seth is begotten in the image and likeness of Adam. Gen 5:1–3 draws on vocabulary and ideas ultimately deriving from Plato's *Timaeus* (see Chapter 5 §5.4.6) and reinforces humanity as belonging to the *genos* of the anthropomorphic terrestrial gods, in some sense their mortal offspring.

Genesis 5 accurately recorded the chronology of the ten generations from Adam to Noah, who would later appear in Genesis 6–9 as the flood hero. Noah's three sons, Shem, Ham and Japhet, were also mentioned (Gen 5:32), and resurfaced later in Gen 6:10; 9:18–27 and Genesis 10. Despite several of the same or similar names appearing in Genesis 4 and 5, in a different order (Westermann 1984: 348–9), it is noteworthy that no narrative connections were made with the seven generations of the line of Cain in Genesis 4, nor any attribution of important inventions to Seth's descendants, nor any anecdotes regarding the growing violence of the pre-flood world. Genesis 4 and 5 thus appear to be independently authored narratives of the antediluvian world, linked only by the artificial coordination of these two accounts at Gen 4:25–26 (cf. Westermann 1984: 338). The names common to the two genealogies suggest they both made use of related antecedent source material whose character cannot now be recovered.

The narrative objective of Genesis 5 appears to be extremely limited: to give a detailed chronological framework for the antediluvian world. The life span of each of Noah's ancestors was listed, along with the age at which they had their firstborn, providing an exact chronology of the pre-flood world. Sourced biblical historiographical data first appears in Kings and the numbers given in Genesis 5 (like those throughout Genesis–Samuel) are manifestly fictional. Yet there is a literary antecedent to the ten long-lived patriarchs of Genesis 5, namely the antediluvian rulers in Berossus (Westermann 1984: 349–50; Cassuto 1989: 254), which in turn draws upon *The Sumerian King List* (Jacobsen 1939: 60, 70–6, 87–8). In the late version of *The Sumerian King List* transmitted by Berossus, these long-lived kings were ten in number, ending with a flood hero, like the line from Adam to Noah in Genesis 5 (VanderKam 1984: 27; Westermann 1984: 350). The relationship is strengthened by studies that show a strong parallel between Enoch, the seventh from Adam, and Enmerduranki, the seventh of the ten antediluvian kings, who ascended to heaven and received divine revelations.⁸

An important question is how *The Sumerian King List* came to the attention of the biblical authors. In Gmirkin (2006: 107–8) I argued that the immediately antecedent text was the *Babyloniaca* of Berossus (ca. 280 BCE),

in which there appeared a list of ten antediluvian kings and their respective ages taken from a late version of *The Sumerian King List* and rendered into easily accessible Greek. In Berossus, there were ten antediluvian kings, the seventh being Enmerduranki (Cassuto 1989: 303), unlike older versions of *The Sumerian King List* in which only eight appeared. This is a key indication of the late date of Genesis 5 and its use of Berossus (contra Westermann 1984: 350–1, 358, whose early dating of Genesis forced him to discount *The Sumerian King List* as an antecedent source).

The *Babyloniaca* gave an account of the entire history of Babylonia from its creation by Marduk in mythical times, across the flood, and down to the fall of Babylonia to the Persians (and the fall of Persia to Alexander the Great), in a highly sourced chronological framework derived from documents found in the temple of Marduk at Babylon, where Berossus served as a priest (Berossus *FGrH* 680 T9 [Seneca, *Questions About Science* 3.29.1]). The Primary History of Genesis–Kings was intended to compete with the *Aegyptiaca* of Hecataeus of Abdera (320–315 BCE), the *Aegyptiaca* of Manetho (ca. 185 BCE), and the *Babyloniaca* of Berossus (ca. 180 BCE) in the “war of books” (Murray 1970) of the early Hellenistic Era in which the native kingdoms of the east presented tendentious nationalistic accounts of the past glories of the civilizations of the past (Gmirkin 2006: 255). The use of the *Babyloniaca* is seen both in Genesis 1–11 (Gmirkin 2006: 89–139) and in 2 Kings (Gmirkin 2020: 39–40). The biblical chronological notices that extended from Genesis to Kings were designed to give the *Judaica* (as I call it) an apparent historical authority comparable to the *Babyloniaca*, although the numbers in mythical and legendary times in Genesis–Samuel were entirely fictional, whereas the numbers in Berossus were based on genuine documentary sources (however factually questionable they may be) such as *The Sumerian King List*. The chronologically exact genealogy in Genesis 5 thus drew, in an imitative sense, on the *Babyloniaca* and its translation of material that derives from *The Sumerian King List*.

There is, indeed, a key difference between Genesis 5 and *The Sumerian King List*: while the ages of the antediluvian patriarchs in Genesis 5 numbered in the hundreds, totaling 1656 (MT) or 2242 (LXX), ages in *The Sumerian King List* were in the tens of thousands of years, totaling 432,000 altogether in Berossus (Westermann 1984: 352–3). The latter number was broadly in line with Classical Era traditions that claimed that Babylonian astronomical science was based on hundreds of thousands of years of observations.⁹

Since the Greeks universally believed that humans could not exist without technology, it was thought that the genesis of the *kosmos* and human life was immediately followed by the rise of civilization.¹⁰ This led to various estimates of the age of the world in the low thousands of years (beginning from 6984 to 3616 BCE as exhaustively cataloged in Curtis 1829: 5.683–85). Plato gave the highest estimate of the age of the world, dating the civilization of the Egyptians 8,000 years before the time of Solon (ca. 600 BCE), and the

civilization of Atlantis a thousand years before that (*Timaeus* 23e). In the broad chronological scheme of Genesis–Kings, creation was approximately 4000 BCE, a figure also in the low thousands of years before the biblical author's present. This figure is not found in the Primordial History or Pentateuch, however. Chronological data in Genesis ends with the 400 or 430 years sojourn in Egypt (Gen 15:13; Ex 12:40–41), which is only loosely connected via the book of Judges and 1 Kgs 6:1 to the later historical monarchies of Judah and Israel in Kings. Only by an extended calculation can the biblical date of Creation be determined, and various figures for this date were given by different ancient Jewish chronographies, no two of them in agreement (Wacholder 1968). The most that can be inferred from Genesis itself is that the Primordial History is set a few thousand years in the past, approximately in line with contemporary Greek theories. Although Genesis 5 also adopted a scheme of ten long-lived patriarchs before the flood, under the influence of the *Babyloniaca* of Berossus (Gmirkin 2006: 107–8), its chronological scheme is more in line with Greek than Mesopotamian estimates of the age of the world.

7.6 Genesis 6:1–13 and *Critias*

The third account of the antediluvian world was found in Gen 6:1–13. Unlike Genesis 4, which appears to be a fictional narrative, wholly original to the biblical authors of Genesis 5, which closely paralleled *The Sumerian King List* as transmitted by Berossus, Gen 6:1–13 contains systematic parallels with the account of earliest mythical times in *Critias*. Gen 6:1–4, with its marriages between gods and mortal women and their resulting gigantic offspring, is considered one of the strangest passages in all of the Pentateuch (Cassuto 1989: 291; Sarna 1989: 45).

In Plato's *Timaeus* and *Critias*, the contact between gods and humans was politicized in line with Plato's ideas of ideal government and its degeneration into decadence and injustice. At the direction of the Demiurge, the lesser gods not only created mortal humans, but established laws for them (*Timaeus* 24a–d; *Critias* 109d, 119c–120b) and ruled over them through divine kings who were the offspring of the gods (*Timaeus* 23d; *Critias* 110b, 113e–114d, 120d–121b). The whole of the earth was peacefully divided up and allotted to the gods (*Critias* 109b, 112b; cf. *Statesman* 271d, 272e, which saw the whole universe divided up among the gods to rule). Hephaestus and Athena received the land of Attica (*Critias* 109c–d). After creating the earliest Athenians from the earth of Athens—the Athenians held great pride in being an autochthonous or earthborn people (*Critias* 109d)—Hephaestus and Athena established their divine constitution (*Critias* 109c–d), dividing up the mortals into a ruling guardian class, a military class, agrarians and craftsmen in the exact same arrangement Socrates (Plato) had envisioned for ideal government in the *Republic* (*Timaeus* 24a–25e; *Critias* 110c–d). In similar fashion, Poseidon arranged the government over his allotted realm of

Atlantis (*Critias* 113e–114c, 118e–120d) and its earthborn people (*Critias* 113c–d). The story of Atlantis and the Athenians, summarized in *Timaeus* 24e–25d and more fully developed in *Critias*, thus constituted a politogony or account of the origins of human government (Naddaf 1997: 28–9). The legend of Atlantis was also intended to illustrate the heroic state at war (*Timaeus* 19c–d, 20b,e, 23c, 24d–e, 25b–c) by describing the defense of the civilized world by the noble Athenian warrior class against the wicked barbarian invasion and onslaught of Atlantis. An incidental theme, characteristically Platonic, was the origin of evil in the political realm. The story of the divine origins of the kingdoms of Athens and Atlantis and the devolution of the latter into wickedness and violence addressed the question of theodicy in the political realm: how could a constitution and social order established by the gods fall from righteousness to evil? Plato's answer was that the original line of demigods whom the gods set as rulers over ordinary humans gradually lost its divine character through continued intermarriage with humans, ending in a world wracked by injustice and violence that required punishment by Zeus in earthquake and flood.

7.6.1 *The Allotment of the Earth*

The story in *Timaeus* 23e–25d and in *Critias* was set deep in mythical times when the gods were apportioned lands, created humans, and founded nations. According to Plato's theology, all the gods must be consistently portrayed as good, and all poetic accounts of battles and strife among the gods—notably the venerated tales by the poets Homer and Hesiod, despite their high literary value—must be strictly banished by a panel of censors in order to promote virtue among the citizenry. In contrast to the conflicts between rival gods Zeus and Poseidon in Homer's *Iliad*, Plato's *Critias* 109b–d described a peaceful apportionment of the world among the gods.

(109b) Once upon a time the gods were taking over by lot the whole earth according to its regions—not according to the results of strife: for it would not be reasonable to suppose that the gods were ignorant of their own several rights, nor yet that they attempted to obtain for themselves by means of strife a possession to which others, as they knew, had a better claim. So by just allotments they received each one his own, and they settled their countries; and when they had thus settled them, they reared us up.¹¹ (109c) Now in other regions others of the gods had their allotments and ordered the affairs, but inasmuch as Hephaestus and Athena were of a like nature, being born of the same father, and agreeing, moreover, in their love of wisdom and of craftsmanship, they both took for their joint portion this land of ours as being naturally congenial and adapted for virtue (109d) and for wisdom, and therein they planted as native to the soil men of virtue and ordained to their mind the mode of government ... Even so Poseidon

took for his allotment the island of Atlantis and settled therein the children whom he had begotten of a mortal woman in a region of the island.

Although the world was filled with various earthborn peoples ruled by the gods, the story in *Timaeus-Critias* focused on only two: the Athenians under Hephaestus and Athena, and the Atlantians under Poseidon. So likewise the Primordial History was arguably set in a world filled with various peoples and gods, but Genesis 2–9, with the exception of Gen 6:1–7 (discussed later), focused primarily on a single terrestrial deity, Yahweh Elohim, god of the land of Eden, and on the fortunes of the humans he created. Why the national god of the Jews and Samaritans was localized in the Garden of Eden is inherently problematic: perhaps Samaritan traditions that associated Eden with Mount Gerizim holds a clue.¹² Adam and Eve and their progeny continued to live in the presence of God (Gen 4:1–16), except for Cain and his descendants who dwelt east of the land of Eden in the land of Nod outside the presence of Yahweh (Gen 4:16). It is apparent from Cain's story that the rest of the world outside Eden was governed by other gods and populated by other humans, although Genesis 4 did not take explicit notice of the existence of other gods or narrate the creation of the humans in the lands over which they presided. Nevertheless, a polytheistic broader context and a wider picture of humans living across the face of the earth is implicit in Genesis 4. This picture comes into sharp focus in Gen 6:1–13, which contains an account of the terrestrial gods in their various lands, the civilizations they founded, and the demigods who ruled over them.

7.6.2 *The Sons of God and the Daughters of Men*

In *Critias*, the story of Atlantis begins with Poseidon wedding a beautiful young Atlantian girl named Cleito, as follows:

(113c) Poseidon took for his allotment the island of Atlantis and settled therein the children whom he had begotten of a mortal woman in a region of the island ... Thereon dwelt one of the natives originally sprung from the earth, Evenor by name, (113d) with his wife Leucippe; and they had for offspring an only-begotten daughter, Cleito. And when this damsel was now come to marriageable age, her mother died and also her father; and Poseidon, being smitten with desire for her, wedded her.

So, likewise the account of primordial times in Gen 6:1–13 began with humans bearing fair daughters who were taken as brides by the gods.

(6:1 MT) When people began to multiply on the face of the ground, and daughters were born to them, (2) the sons of God saw that they were fair

[LXX καλαί, good, beautiful]; and they took wives for themselves of all that they chose.

This tradition describes the antediluvian world in terms wholly independent of the earlier story of Adam and Eve and their descendants. There is no synchronization between this tradition and the genealogies or chronologies of Genesis 4–5. Rather, this is simply situated in a time when the earth was populated with many inhabitants (von Rad 1973: 113), similar to the world described in *Critias*. In Gen 6:1–2 humanity has multiplied across the face of the earth, in coexistence with a multiplicity of terrestrial gods. Gen 6:2 acknowledges a multiplicity of lesser gods (cf. Gen 1:26; 3:22) who lived on earth and interacted intimately with humans. These lesser gods are here called the sons of God, the בני האלהים. Key questions to understanding this tradition are the identity of these sons of God and their cultural or literary antecedents. One obvious possibility must be *Timaeus* and *Critias*. In *Timaeus* 40d–41a, the familiar gods of Greek myth were called the “younger gods,” the sons and daughters of the Demiurge, who included in their number Hephaestus, Athena and Poseidon. Gen 6:1’s expression “the sons of God,” taken as signifying the tribe of gods descending from the cosmic Creator of Genesis 1, thus has *Timaeus–Critias* as an obvious source, but it is also worthwhile discussing other possibilities.

One attractive possibility is that they should be identified with the sons of El in “Canaanite” (Ugaritic) tradition (cf. Westermann 1984: 369; Cassuto 1989: 293), where El was portrayed as the father of the 70 gods of the divine council (KTU² 1.4.6.46). This is supported by biblical traditions that appear to identify the gods of the (70) nations as sons of El Elyon (Deut 32:8–9, according to some manuscript traditions). While there is an Ugaritic tradition that El seduced two mortal women, their offspring were not giants but either the twin gods of Dawn and Dusk, Shahar and Shalim (Ginsberg 1935) or the seven gods of fertility (Tsumura 1973). No Ugaritic tradition has either the 70 offspring of El taking mortals as consorts or a parallel to the semi-divine Nephilim of Genesis.

Later Enochian Watcher traditions (and much of scholarship down to the present; cf. von Rad 1973: 114; Westermann 1984: 365, 371; Sarna 1989: 45) interpreted the sons of Elohim as fallen angels descended to earth from their heavenly dwelling place to cohabit with human women, an act that was depicted as a sinful transgression of boundaries. These secondary, post-biblical Enochian traditions, although interesting in their own right, constitute a later phase of reception history that arose no earlier than ca. 250 BCE. Consequently, these traditions should not be allowed to affect our interpretation of Gen 6:1–2 in its original cultural and intellectual context, as its authors wrote it and intended it to be understood.

Contrary to the Enochian Watcher traditions, there is no indication from the biblical text itself that the sons of God were angelic beings or arrived on earth from some other divine realm. Rather, Gen 6:1–2 portrayed the sons

of Elohim as gods who lived alongside humans in primordial times in various regions around the world, just as at *Critias* 109b. There is no intrinsic negativity attached to the intermarriage of gods and human in Gen 6:2. The sons of God were not said to have been driven by lust nor to have taken their wives by force (Cassuto 1989: 295; contra Sarna 1989: 45). The MT description of the daughters of men as fair uses the word טוֹב, often rendered into English as “fair” or “beautiful,” but equally translatable as “good,” as throughout Genesis 1 (Westermann 1984: 166–7; Cassuto 1989: 294). The LXX uses καλαί, which carries positive connotations of beauty, nobility and goodness, especially in Plato’s writings, such as in *Timaeus*, where κάλλιστον (the most beautiful) is used interchangeably with ἀγαθός (the good) and ἄριστον (the most excellent).¹³ Neither the daughters of men nor the sons of God who mated them appear under a cloud of moral condemnation in Gen 6:1–2 (Cassuto 1989: 295), reception history aside.

In Greek myths, the intermarriage of gods and ordinary mortal humans was a common literary feature. The Hesiodic *Catalog of Women* listed many such unions and the lines of their descendants. These matings were common in stories set in mythical and legendary times, when there were direct encounters between gods and humans and when human offspring of the gods ruled ancient kingdoms or performed heroic deeds. Ancestors of Greek tribes were often demigods, such as those listed in the *Catalog of Women*. Some prominent Greeks in the Archaic and Classical eras still traced their ancestral lines back to the gods. Well known examples included Hecataeus of Miletus (Herodotus, *Histories* 2.143), and the kings of Sparta (Herodotus, *Histories* 8.114), Lydia (Herodotus, *Histories* 1.7) and other nations who claimed descent from Heracles, and through him back to Zeus. Offspring of gods and mortal women were thus held in high regard in Greek myths and often stood at the head of a prestigious royal line in genealogies that extended back to legendary times, legitimizing later royal houses.

Gen 6:1–2 has close affinities to the *Catalog of Women* (González 2010: 379; cf. Van Seters 1992: 155–6), an early poetic text that most ancient Greeks and Romans (but few modern scholars) attributed to Hesiod. This text, which constituted a sequel to Hesiod’s *Theogony*, organized the eponymous ancestors of the tribes and nations known to the Greek world by means of genealogical structure that Van Seters (1992: 89–90, 176–7) cogently compared to the Table of Nations in Genesis 10.¹⁴ *The Catalog of Women* also recorded numerous episodes in which Greek gods mated with beautiful human women and had offspring. This is strongly reminiscent of the matings between the sons of God and the daughters of men in Gen 6:2, 4. Van Seters (1992: 155–6) suggested *The Catalog of Women* as an early Greek source for this motif, but also noted that the offspring of such couplings were not described there as giants as in Gen 6:4. Nor were the semi-divine descendants of the gods said to be violent, although a papyrus fragment of the conclusion to *The Catalog of Women* makes tantalizing mention of devastating storms, perhaps sent by a god, at the end of the

Age of Heroes (West 1985: 120–1), but lacks a credible connection with the biblical flood story, or indeed with any Greek flood story.

A key question is whether better parallels to biblical materials are provided by *Critias* or by the *Catalog of Women*. It is worth noting at the outset that, much as *Timaeus* made considerable use of Hesiod's *Theogony* (Capra 2010; Regali 2010; Sedley 2010), so likewise *Critias* drew heavily on motifs found in the pseudo-Hesiodic *Catalog of Women* (Capra 2010: 214–5; Regali 2010: 260). Not surprisingly, a number of striking details are shared by *Critias*, the *Catalog of Women*, and the biblical account in Genesis 6. In all three accounts, humans and gods coexisted in close proximity in early legendary times. The opening lines of the *Catalog of Women* tell of a time when gods and humans feasted together and sat together in council (Clay 2005: 26; González 2010: 386). All three featured a setting in the Age of Heroes, intermarriage of gods and mortals, divine punishment of the world and a cataclysm precipitated by earthquakes and flood in *Critias* and Genesis, and accompanied by storms in the *Catalog of Women*, that brought the Age of Heroes to an end.

Biblical studies on the Primordial History have focused strongly on the *Catalog of Women* and have so far ignored *Critias* (Van Seters 1992: 89–90, 155–6, 176–7; Darshan 2013). The reason is not that the *Catalog of Women* provides better parallels: it does not. Rather, prevailing assumptions that the authorship and editing of Genesis 1–11 should be assigned to the Persian Era or earlier effectively precluded the possibility of influence from Plato's *Critias* written ca. 375–350 BCE. But *Critias* contains strong parallels with Gen 6:1–13, including many narrative features not found in the *Catalog of Women*. The influence of the *Catalog of Women* is thus at best mediated by *Critias*.

7.6.3 *Critias and the Children of the Gods*

After narrating the marriage of the god Poseidon with the maiden Cleito, *Critias*—much like Genesis 6—went on to describe the descendants of this union.

(113e) And he begat five pairs of twin sons and reared them up; and when he had divided all the island of Atlantis into ten portions, he assigned to the first-born of the eldest sons and the others to be rulers, granting to each the rule over many men and a large tract of country. (114a) And to all of them he gave names, giving to him that was eldest and king the name after which the whole island was called and the sea spoken of as the Atlantic, because the first king who then reigned had the name of Atlas. And the name of his younger twin-brother, (114b) who had for his portion the extremity of the island near the pillars of Heracles up to the part of the country now called Gadeira after the name of that region, was Eumelus in Greek, but in

the native tongue Gadeirus,—which fact may have given its title to the country ... (114c) So all these, themselves and their descendants, dwelt for many generations bearing rule over many other islands throughout the sea ...

This mythical account of the earliest semi-divine rulers of Atlantis was illustrative of Plato's political theories. It was Plato's contention that ordinary humans, being subject to appetites, passions and unruly ambition, were constitutionally incapable of ruling themselves justly (*Republic* 5.473b–c; 6.487e, 492e–493a; *Laws* 1.625e; 3.689a–e; 9.863e–864a, 875b–c; 12.962e; cf. *Epistles* 7.326a–b) but must be ruled by those who were their spiritual superiors, either the gods themselves or kings of superior souls who acted as representatives and intermediaries of the gods (*Laws* 7.818c). Plato's conception of the ideal form of government was theocratic, the rule of God through semi-divine mortals possessing superior godlike rationality, the philosophers. The idealized philosopher-kings of Plato's *Republic* and *Laws* were portrayed as semi-divine, with the full attributes of godlike wisdom and ethics that marked his philosophical ruling class as superior to the ordinary citizenry they governed and protected (*Republic* 4.432a; 5.473b–c, 474b–c; *Laws* 3.689d–e, 690b–c; 4.713d; 12.951b; cf. *Republic* 4.431e–432a).

Plato incorporated this ideal rule by philosopher-kings into various stories he told about mythical times. During the Age of Kronos, the gods at first ruled the humans they created, as in Hesiod's Golden Age. But in a metaphor for rule by philosopher-kings, Plato claimed that the gods appointed the semi-divine golden-souled race of *daimones* as rulers over a second, lesser order of humanity, the silver-souled race of ordinary humans who were tended by the golden race as shepherds govern their sheep (*Laws* 4.713c–e; 6.766a; *Critias* 109b–c; cf. Mikalson 2010: 222). So, likewise in the mythical early years of the Age of Zeus, the gods protected and tended to the sheep-like humans (*Critias* 109c) through the rulership of the heroic semi-divine children of the gods (in Athens: *Timaeus* 23e, 24d; cf. *Critias* 110c; in Atlantis: *Critias* 113c–114d). This line of demigods, whose souls possessed a disproportionately large share of the divine, ruled like the gods themselves in benevolence and justice, and, when necessary, as in the example of the Athenians, displayed courageous heroism and martial valor in protecting their nation in war against those who would aggress against them (*Timaeus* 19b–c, 20b, 24d–e, 25b–c; *Critias* 112c–d). The earliest Age of Zeus was thus for Plato an Age of Heroes, when the entire world was wracked with war in the tale of Atlantis, intended to display the military valor of the ideal state at war as an example for future generations (*Timaeus* 19c, 20b, 20e, 21d, 23c,e, 24b,d–e, 25b–c).

So, likewise, Gen 6:4 described the primordial world in heroic terms as a time when the offspring of the gods performed mighty deeds.

(6:4 MT) The Nephilim [LXX γίγαντες] were on the earth in those days—and also afterward—when the sons of God [LXX continually] went in to the daughters of humans, who bore children to them. These were the heroes [LXX γίγαντες] that were of old, warriors of renown.

The primordial world was described as an Age of Heroes, as especially brought out in the LXX, which referred to the giants “of that age (οἱ ἄν’ αἰῶνος).” In the Hesiodic tradition (*Works and Days* 159–60), the Age of Heroes was peopled by a generation “nobler and more righteous, a god-like race of hero-men who are called demigods, the race before our own.” While Greek tradition, following Hesiod, usually placed the Age of Heroes in the postdiluvian world leading up to the Trojan War (*Works and Days* 156–69), in Plato’s *Timaeus* and *Critias* the Age of Heroes was given a much earlier setting and came to an end with the flood that destroyed Atlantis.¹⁵

The current passage gives a vivid description of the race of superhuman demigods (Westermann 1984: 369; Cassuto 1989: 299) created through the intermarriage of the sons of God with the fair daughters of men. The offspring of the sons of God and mortal women are called Nephilim in Hebrew, γίγαντες in Greek. The Nephilim were a race of warlike giants (Num 13:33), one of several.¹⁶ In Greek myths, the human offspring of the gods, such as the hero Heracles, the child of Zeus and the mortal woman Alcmene, were portrayed as possessing extraordinary size and strength and doing mighty deeds. In *Critias*, the stature of the race of demigods is suggested by Atlas being listed as the firstborn of the ten sons of Poseidon (*Critias* 113e–114c). It seems likely that the traditional understanding of the Nephilim as storybook giants (as attested at Num 13:13) and the similar role of the mighty Titan Atlas in Greek myths converged to influence the translation of Nephilim as *gigantes* in Gen 6:4 (LXX).

Nevertheless, neither Gen 6:4 nor *Critias* emphasize the stature of the race of demigods as their distinctive or peculiar characteristic. Rather, both singled them out as mighty warriors and men of renown. Both Nephilim (Num 13:33; Ezek 32:27) and *gibborim* (2 Sam 10:7; 20:7; 23:9, 16–17; Cant 4:4; Jer 46:9; Joel 3:9) frequently appeared as mighty warriors in the biblical text. The giants of Greek myth were similarly described as warriors in Homer (*Odyssey* 7.56–60, 206; 10.118–20) and Hesiod (*Theogony* 185–86, “the great Giants with gleaming armor, holding long spears in their hands”). In the *Catalog of Women*, none of the demigods are described as possessing gigantic stature. Archaic and Classical Era artistic depictions showed the Giants as hoplites of ordinary human size and form. The Giants of early Greek tradition were thus generally depicted as a race of mighty warriors rather than beings of extraordinary size (Gantz 1996: 446–7).

The children of the gods were also portrayed primarily in their martial character in *Timaeus* and *Critias*. Both the earliest Athenians and Atlantians were offspring of the gods (*Timaeus* 24d; *Critias* 113c–114c, 116c, 120e–121a; cf. Capra 2010: 203). Both possessed a vigorous, well-armed military class (*Timaeus* 17d, 18b, 23c, 24d, 25b–c; *Critias* 110c–d, 112b,

117c–d, 119a–b), and the clash of armies in which the virtuous Athenians defeated the violent Atlantians was considered a paradigm of the heroic state at war. Indeed, the intent of the story of Atlantis was to chronicle the war between the heroic Athenians and the mighty invasion forces of Atlantis, to provide a stirring example to inspire the nation's youth to martial courage (*Timaeus* 20e, 21d, 23b–c, 24d–e, 25b–c; *Critias* 112e). This evokes the depiction of the race of demigods as mighty warriors and men of renown in Gen 6:4. Although a political context is not explicit, the picture is that of the gods occupying various lands and bearing semi-divine offspring of great might, reputation and military valor, in Genesis as in *Critias*.

A key consideration in understanding Gen 6:4 is properly evaluating its original ethical context. Later reception history would depict the sons of God as sinful Watchers, fallen angels who transgressed the divine boundaries by intermarrying with humans (1 En. 6.1–5; 7.1; 9.7–9; 10.9, 11; 11.9, 11; 12.4–6; 15.3–6; 106.14; Jub. 5.1; cf. Suter 1979), and their offspring as wicked, ravenous giants who filled the world with violence and precipitated the biblical flood (1 En. 9.1–3, 9–10; 10.1–2; 11.9, 11–12; 12.4–6; 15.8–12; 16.1–3; 54.10; 106.14–15; Jub. 5.1–4), but one sees no such condemnation of either the sons of God or the Nephilim in Gen 6:1–2, 4. By all indications, the race of demigods was noble and virtuous, at least initially. Gen 6:2 describes the daughters of men as beautiful and good—the words טַרְבִּי (MT) and καλαί (LXX) convey both meanings—presenting such divine marriages in only positive terms. There is nothing in the text to suggest that the offspring of such marriages would not be equally good (cf. *Critias* 113c–114d).

Nor are the Nephilim or mighty *gibborim* that the sons of God sired subsequently described in negative terms, but are characterized as “men of name,” that is, men of renown and reputation, a race of heroes. This appears to indicate, if anything, a positive ethical evaluation of the first generation of demigods, although they would later devolve into violence (Gen 6:11–13). This was also the case for the offspring of Poseidon, who were initially described as distinguished (*Critias* 114c), noble (*Critias* 120e) and law-abiding (*Critias* 120e), ruling in virtue and peace over their allotted lands within Poseidon's realm (*Critias* 114d). In Plato's story, the Athenians, too, were noble offspring of the gods (*Timaeus* 24d), but remained a heroic race, true to their divine origins, while the Atlantians later turned to unjust aggression and violence (*Critias* 120b–121b). The race of demigods in Gen 6:4, like their counterparts in *Timaeus* and *Critias*, were thus initially portrayed in wholly positive terms, heroic and noble. Only later did the primordial world devolve into injustice and violence, ending in a catastrophic world flood.

7.6.4 Excursus: *Mortal Demigods and Mortal Humans*

While Gen 6:1–2, 4 closely followed the plot line in *Critias*, Gen 6:3 interrupts the narrative of Gen 6:1–4 (Westermann 1984: 366) with a verse in which Yahweh set limits on the life span of humanity.

(6:3 MT) Then the Lord said, “My spirit [LXX πνεῦμά] shall not abide in mortals [LXX τοῖς ἀνθρώποις] forever, for they are flesh; their days shall be one hundred and twenty years.”

It is omitted in the paraphrased retelling in 1 En. 6.6–11, suggesting that it might be a secondary insertion in an original text that contained only Gen 6:1–2, 4 (Kvanvig 2011: 274–93, 373–94). Gen 6:3 should not be read in light of the chronology of long-lived descendants of Adam and Eve in Genesis 5, that is, as a foreshortening of human life to a mere 120 years as some sort of punishment, as is often interpreted (see survey of ancient sources in Grypeou and Spurling 2013: 152–7, 176–9). Indeed, the figure of 120 years is less than the age of any descendant of Adam in Genesis 5 and cannot be intelligibly coordinated with that distinct storyline (although perhaps later alluded to at Deut 31:1; 34:7). Nor does Gen 6:3 echo *Critias*, although it is consistent with *Timaeus* 75c–d, where the gods debated the allotted life span of the mortals they created and decided a short and superior life was to be preferred over a long and inferior life. Gen 6:3 thus represents a sort of excursus or comment regarding the divine determination of the proper limits of human mortality, perhaps secondarily inserted in its present position. The use of Yahweh instead of Elohim may also point to a different authorship from the verses that surround it.

Who were the mortals referred to in Gen 6:3? In its present position, the designation appears to include both ordinary humans and the demigods sired by the sons of God from the daughters of men. Gen 6:3 thus incidentally clarified and defined the mortal status of the semi-divine offspring of the sons of God and mortal women. According to *Timaeus* 28c–29a, 34a–b, only the Demiurge possessed intrinsic immortality. But anything the Demiurge created, such as the universe (*Timaeus* 33a) or his divine offspring, the lesser gods (*Timaeus* 41b–d), possessed contingent immortality by virtue of having been created by the Demiurge. As visible, generated creatures, both the universe (which Plato pictured as an ensouled, living being) and the lesser gods were intrinsically mortal and perishable (*Timaeus* 41c–d, 42d), but could only be dissolved by the Demiurge himself (*Timaeus* 41d); yet their continuation into eternity was guaranteed by the Demiurge’s goodness, which prevented his destroying any of his perfect, beautiful creations (*Timaeus* 41a–b). The immortality of the universe and the lesser gods was thus not intrinsic, but contingent on the good will of the Creator. The terrestrial life forms mortals created by the lesser gods had no such immortality, contingent or otherwise, but were fully mortal (*Timaeus* 41c–d, 42d). This raised a question about the status of the demigods, the offspring of the immortal gods and mortal humans. Was the contingent immortality of the gods conferred on their children, or were the demigods wholly mortal? As Gen 6:3 expressed it, the divine *pneuma* could not remain forever in a perishable mortal fleshly body—not even in the mortal offspring of the demigods, as all humans must return to the mud from which they came. So,

likewise in *Critias*, where the early Athenians and Atlantians were portrayed as mortal children of the gods (*Timaeus* 24d; *Critias* 113c–114c, 116c, 120e–121a). The mortality of demigods alongside other humans in Gen 6:3 is thus consistent with their status in *Critias*.

7.6.5 *Critias and the Corruption of the Earth*

Critias passes from the marriage of Poseidon and Cleito (*Critias* 113c–d) to an account of their ten sons who ruled over their respective domains in Atlantis (*Critias* 113e–114d), both they and their descendants for many generations (*Critias* 114c–d, 120d–121b), followed by a lengthy description of the Eden-like island of Atlantis and its incredible civilization (*Critias* 114e–120d). The narrative plot then resumes with a description of the gradual corruption of the line of semi-divine kings into increasing wickedness, ending with events that prompted Zeus to intervene with divine judgment in the form of earthquake and flood.

The details in *Critias* that have important parallels with Genesis are as follows. When Poseidon first founded the kingdom of Atlantis, with his ten sons ruling as governors over the ten divisions of the kingdom, Poseidon established a set of divine laws that were inscribed on pillars of orichalcum (*Critias* 119c), and the ten sons swore amidst solemn sacrifices to obey them, both they and their descendants down through time (*Critias* 120a–b). In a festival alternating every five and six years, this divine covenant was renewed amidst dire curses invoked against those who disobeyed the ancestral laws (*Critias* 119d–120b). And so for a long time the kingdom of Atlantis continued in prosperity and righteousness with the laws established by Poseidon and under the rule of his semi-divine descendants, until continued intermarriage with ordinary mortals diluted the divinity of the rulers and their human character began to fully assert itself (Mikalson 2010: 226).

(120d) ... For many generations, (120e) so long as the inherited nature of the God remained strong in them, they were submissive to the laws and kindly disposed to their divine kindred. For the intents of their hearts were true and in all ways noble, and they showed gentleness joined with wisdom in dealing with the changes and chances of life and in their dealings one with another ... (121a) ... But when the portion of divinity within them was now becoming faint and weak through being oftentimes blended with a large measure of mortality, (121b) whereas the human temper was becoming dominant, then at length they lost their comeliness... filled as they were with lawless ambition and power. And Zeus, the God of gods, who reigns by Law, inasmuch as he has the gift of perceiving such things, marked how this righteous race was in evil plight ...

Here, as in Genesis 6, the reigning god perceived the increasing evil of humanity, which culminated in the divine decision to send a flood upon the

world. The parallel biblical passage is Gen 6:11–13, which contains a description of the time of Noah, when the world had degenerated into a state of continual violence, despite its good beginnings.

(6:11 MT) Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence. (12) And God saw that the earth was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted its ways upon the earth. (13) And God said to Noah, "I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence because of them; now I am going to destroy them along with the earth."

An important theme common to Gen 6:11–13 and Plato's *Critias* is the devolving of humans and their political institutions into injustice and violence, from an idyllic initial Age of Heroes to a new era when wickedness prevailed, prompting divine intervention into human affairs. Gen 6:11–13 appears to acknowledge that humankind started out well, but over time turned to wickedness and violence, requiring divine intervention to set the world aright. In Gen 6:11–12 the earth and all flesh are said to have become corrupt (נשחטה). As a result, God determined to bring an end to all flesh and destroy them (משחיתם) with the earth (Gen 6:13). The pun is clear in the Hebrew: it was because of human corruption of all flesh, which filled the earth with violence, that God would destroy the earth. This corruption, which culminated in the decision to destroy the earth in the time of Noah, manifestly took place over time through the Age of Heroes. In specific, Gen 6:13 points to the spread of violence across the face of the earth; this presumably took the form of warfare, given the preceding description of the race of Nephilim in martial terms as *gibborim*. What is striking, and requires explanation, is that corruption by violence affected even the Race of Heroes, the semi-divine rulers of that age. How is it that the demigods themselves had become corrupted by violence?

The same increase in wickedness was seen in the kingdom of Atlantis (but not among the righteous Athenians) in *Critias*. The reason for this downward spiral into injustice and violence in *Critias* is fully explicated: it was due to the dilution of the divine element in the ruling demigods of Atlantis through their continued intermarriage with ordinary humans through time. It is worth reiterating an important point from *Critias* that may shed light on the narrative strand of Gen 6:11–13: it was not the initial intermarriage of the immortal gods with mortal women that was the problem. Indeed, Plato describes the demigods who descended from Poseidon as a "righteous race" (*Critias* 121b). The sons of the Demiurge were intrinsically good, and their offspring comprised an excellent, righteous race (elsewhere in Plato's writings, the Golden Race) of divine rulers over the ordinary mortal human race placed under their protection and care (*Critias* 109b–c, 110c–d, 113e–114d, 120d–121a). It was, on the contrary, the attenuation of the divine element within the righteous rulers through constant intermarriage through time that

led to the characteristically human “lawless ambition and power” in the later generations. Through this continued diminution of the divine portion within the race of demigods, the material fleshly portion gradually gained dominance as the demigods came more and more to resemble ordinary humans (Mikalson 2010: 226). Similarly, the sons of God “continually” created offspring with the daughters of men in Gen 6:4 [LXX], in which the divine element was halved in each successive generation. In Gen 6:3 there is an indication that the divine element, God’s “spirit,” was in continual contention with the flesh (בשר) or body (σάρκα), and the decision to destroy all flesh from the face of the earth (Gen 6:11–13) implicitly reinforces the culpability of the mortal flesh as a source of human wickedness, a prominent Platonic theme.

One thus sees a similar progression in *Critias* and Genesis 6. Both *Timaeus-Critias* and Genesis 6 picture a mythical past in which gods took human wives, the subsequent rise of a ruling race of Heroes, an attenuation of the divine element among the demigods due to their continued intermarriage with ordinary humans, a rise of unjust violence that affected the whole world, and divine judgment in the form of earthquakes and flood. In Genesis, this led to the extinction of all terrestrial life created by Yahweh (Gen 6:17; 7:4, 21–23), except for the humans and animals preserved in the ark.

This generally corresponds with the destruction of the world by flood at the climax of the story of Atlantis (*Timaeus* 20e, 21d, 23c, 25c–d; *Critias* 108e, 112a). The *Catalog of Women* also concludes with a passage—unfortunately preserved only in fragmentary form—that appears to discuss a cataclysmic event initiated by Zeus and involving storms (West 1985: 120–1) and possibly, but not certainly, a flood. Various other flood stories existed in pre-Roman antiquity—Greek stories of the floods of Ogygus and of Deucalion, Mesopotamian stories with a flood hero named Utnapishtim, Ziusudra or Atrahasis—but only in the biblical flood story and in *Timaeus-Critias* was there an ethical deterioration into wickedness and violence that precipitated the flood as divine judgment. It was not until the early first century CE, in the poetic version of the Ages of Humanity in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* 1.68–312, that another literary tradition would claim that the wickedness of the human race caused the gods to send a flood to destroy them (cf. Lovejoy and Boas 1935: 48–9).

7.6.6 *Critias and the Divine Judgment of Humanity*

Critias ended abruptly at the point where Zeus convened a divine assembly of the gods on Mount Olympus, “that abode which they honor most,” to announce his impending judgment on the Atlantians:

(121b) And Zeus, the God of gods, who reigns by Law, inasmuch as he has the gift of perceiving such things, marked how this righteous race

was in evil plight, and desired to inflict punishment upon them, to the end that when chastised they might strike a truer note. (121c) Wherefore he assembled together all the gods into that abode which they honor most, standing as it does at the center of all the Universe, and beholding all things that partake of generation and when he had assembled them, he spake thus: ... [end]

Consistent with the Demiurge’s charge for the lesser gods to establish law over the mortal realm (*Timaeus* 41a–d), Zeus “reigned by law” over “all things that partake of generation” (i.e., mortal life), beholding all and administering justice over all, consistent with his position of chief of the earthly gods (*Critias* 121b; cf. *Timaeus* 41a).¹⁷ The assembling of the gods and the judgment scene on Mount Olympus, a vantage point from which Zeus could view all the deeds of humanity, is the first mention of Zeus in *Critias*.

A similar judgment scene appears in Genesis 6. After the favorable description of the Age of Heroes in Gen 6:1–4, the next passage abruptly jumps forward in time to a description of the wickedness of humanity during the generation of the flood.

(6:5 MT) The Lord saw that the wickedness of humankind was great in the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually. (6) And the Lord was sorry that he had made humankind on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. (7) So the Lord said, “I will blot out from the earth the human beings I have created—people together with animals and creeping things and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.” (8) But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.

The scene of the divine judgment by Yahweh in Gen 6:5–7 has close parallels to *Critias* 121b–c. It is the first time that Yahweh appears in his Zeus-like capacity as supreme god of the entire primordial world and judge of humanity. Like Zeus in *Critias* 121b–c, Yahweh surveys the entire terrestrial world and administers justice on all mortal life. Genesis does not identify the addressee of Gen 6:7, to whom Yahweh declared his intent to destroy the terrestrial life forms he had created, but the biblical authors may have pictured a divine assembly like that in *Critias* and similar to the divine assemblies implied in Gen 1:26 and 11:6–7. The cluster of shared motifs appears to demonstrate direct literary dependence of Gen 6:5–7 on *Critias* 121b–c.

7.6.7 *Critias and the Destruction by Flood*

The story of Atlantis was a cautionary tale, one that dealt with the origins of evil in the political realm and the necessity for divine intervention into human affairs. Plato recorded that the destruction of Atlantis in earthquake and flood was punishment from Zeus for Atlantian violence and injustice in breach of

their blood covenant with Poseidon (*Critias* 108e, 119c–120b; *Timaeus* 25c–d; cf. Wajdenbaum 2011: 164–5, 2016: 82–3).

Critias 121a indicates that the evil that Zeus sought to purge was the territorial aggressions during the final days of the Atlantian kingdom was a manifestation of “lawless ambition and power.” The main theme in the story of *Timaeus-Critias* was the unlawful invasion of the Mediterranean world by fleets of barbaric invaders from Atlantis, who spilled out across the divinely allotted boundaries of their ancestral land to subjugate the entire civilized world. It thus seems likely that this aggression against the Greeks and Egyptians and other peoples of the Mediterranean was what Plato referred to as the expression of “lawless ambition and power” that brought about Zeus’s divine judgment. The fact that the deluge occurred just after the climax of this war, when the brave Athenians defeated the Atlantian warrior fleet (*Timaeus* 20d, 21d), points to this violent military aggression as the wickedness that brought on Zeus’s wrath. It is perhaps noteworthy that in Hesiod’s Five Ages of Humanity, the Bronze Race was a warrior race that destroyed itself through its own violence (*Works and Days* 144–56).

As Plato made clear in *Critias* 121b, the judgment of Zeus was not motivated by an unrighteous intent to destroy humanity, but rather, by “chastising” the world and purging it of the wicked in order to strengthen the righteous, giving them a fresh start, free from the violence instigated by the lawless ambition of their rulers who had become corrupted over time.¹⁸ The punishment Zeus was determined to inflict upon the Atlantians (*Critias* 121b–c) was to send earthquakes and flood upon them (*Timaeus* 25c–d; *Critias* 108e, 112a; cf. Gen 7:11¹⁹) that would cause Plato’s mythical continent of Atlantis, located outside the Straits of Gibraltar, to sink beneath the ocean (*Timaeus* 25d; *Critias* 108e). An unfortunate consequence of this catastrophic event was the destruction of the triumphant heroes of Athens, the children of the gods (*Timaeus* 24d) who had fought off the Atlantian invasion (*Timaeus* 20e, 21d, 23c).²⁰ At Athens, only a small remnant of those ordinary humans who escaped into the mountains would survive to restart civilization anew (*Timaeus* 22d–23c; *Critias* 109d; *Laws* 3.677a–c).

A similar plot line appears in the flood story of Gen 6:14–9:2. This story was not taken from *Critias*. Indeed, *Critias* breaks off with the judgment of Zeus on humanity. The readers knew that this judgment was precipitated by the unjust war of conquest by which the Atlantians sought to enslave the world, but Plato did not write his promised account of the war between Atlantis and Athens (*Timaeus* 24d–25c; *Critias* 108e), nor of the earthquake and flood that sank Atlantis forever and covered much of the Greek world (*Timaeus* 25c–d; *Critias* 108e–109a). Genesis similarly omitted the specifics of the martial violence that prompted God’s judgment on the world, nor did its flood story imitate that of *Timaeus* and *Critias*, save for the detail that the disaster involved both earthquake, flood and rain (Gen 7:4, 6, 10–12; cf. *Timaeus* 25c–d; *Critias* 112a).

Instead, Gen 6:14–8:19 for the most part reverted to its Mesopotamian source material, namely that found in the *Babyloniaca* of Berossus. *The*

Sumerian King List, rendered into Greek by Berossus, joined a section describing the ten long-lived generations of the antediluvian world with a flood story. So, likewise, Genesis 5 gave a chronologically structured account of the ten generations from Adam to Noah, the flood hero of the biblical tale. Gen 6:14 resumed the narrative interrupted by the account of the primordial world in Gen 6:1–13 that drew on Plato’s story in *Critias*. Gen 6:15–8:19 famously mirrored the flood story of the Gilgamesh Epic Tablet XI, also found in the *Babyloniaca* of Berossus. An influence from Plato is perhaps detected in the renewal of the world after the flood. Much like the purging of wickedness and refreshing of civilization in a new beginning after the deluge that ended Atlantis (*Timaeus* 22c–23a; *Critias* 121b; cf. *Laws* 3.677a–c), the Noachian flood ultimately constituted a similar return to righteousness, like a new creation (Gen 8:17, 21; 9:1–2; cf. Nickelsburg 2001: 167).

7.6.8 *Platonic Theology and the Flood*

The account of God’s judgment on the wicked inhabitants of the primordial world has similar motifs to later episodes of divine judgment narrated in the Pentateuch.

- In the story of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18–19), Yahweh decreed utter destruction on the wicked inhabitants of these cities, but spared righteous Lot and his daughters, who escaped the divine wrath and became the ancestors of the peoples of Moab and Ammon (Gen 19:30–38).
- In Exodus–Deuteronomy, God repented from creating a chosen nation out of the rebellious children of Israel, plotted their destruction, and was dissuaded from carrying out his plan only by prayerful appeals by Moses (Ex 32:8–14; Num 14:11–19; Deut 9:7–14). Even then, God determined to destroy that whole wicked generation in the wilderness, save for righteous Joshua and Caleb: not even Moses was spared from God’s divine wrath.
- Similar themes played out in the Deuteronomic prophecies about the future wrath of God on the children of Israel, who were prophesied to someday rebel and be exiled from the Promised Land, leaving the land utterly depopulated (Deut 4:25–27; 28:58–68; 29:20–28). Later, a righteous remnant would arise in the foreign land of their exile and return to the Promised Land to start over again with a new covenant (Deut 4:29–31; 30:1–10).

The biblical motif of a cataclysmic destruction and the preservation of a righteous remnant reflects Plato’s cyclic view of history. According to Plato, the world underwent periodic cataclysms by flood or fire (*Timaeus* 22c–23a; *Laws* 3.677a–c) by which humanity was “purged” of wicked elements (*Timaeus* 22d) and given a new start among the virtuous survivors; a divine ethic expressed in

both the biblical flood story (Gen 8:21–22; 9:1–17) and the story of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire from heaven (Genesis 18–19).

There is, however, an important distinction in the presentation of this literary motif in Plato and in biblical writings, Gen 6:5–8 included. According to *Timaeus* 41a–b, the gods, being good, could never seek the destruction of what they had created. The motivation of Zeus in sending a flood upon the world in *Critias* was not to destroy all mortal life. Rather, his aim was to purge the world of wickedness and to give the world a new, positive start (*Critias* 121b; cf. Gen 8:21). Much like a physician sometimes had to purge a patient in order to save them and set them on a path to health (*Laws* 5.735d–736c), so a good ruler sometimes had to purge the citizenry by drastic means, either by mass executions or by the expulsion and exile of wicked factions, according to a frequent analogy found in Plato's writings (Gmirkin 2017: 278 n. 25). Whereas Hesiod's Zeus was a source of both good and bad things, under Plato's theology the Demiurge and the gods brought about nothing but good (Capra 2010: 210). According to Plato's logic, then, even the harsh punishment meted out by Zeus as ruler of the gods—in this instance, the sinking of Atlantis by earthquake and flood—was ultimately an expression of divine benevolence, not wrath. Given that Poseidon was well known as the god of the sea, storms and earthquakes, one might infer that Plato envisioned the judgment of Zeus to destroy Atlantis by earthquake and flood as having been carried out by Poseidon against his own kingdom. This is reinforced by the fact that the sin of the rulers of Atlantis was their violation of the ancestral blood covenant with Poseidon (*Critias* 108e, 119c–120b).

In the biblical account, however, the God of the primordial world repented of creating humans and other forms of mortal life and planned how to bring his own creation, namely terrestrial life, to dissolution (Gen 6:6–7, 13, 17; cf. 7:4, 21–23), contrary to Plato's divine ethics in *Timaeus*. Note that throughout Genesis 2–9 God appeared as neither creator nor ruler of the *kosmos*. That is to say, the supreme God of the terrestrial realm appeared in a role comparable to Zeus, but not that of the Demiurge, which is an important distinction, because God's desire to destroy his own creation was limited to terrestrial life and could not comprise the entire *kosmos*. Nevertheless, even as the lesser ruler of the terrestrial realm, God's repentance for having fashioned life was inconsistent with Platonic themes elsewhere prevailing in Genesis, and is thus problematic, despite ultimately being resolved by the preservation of terrestrial life in the ark.

The discrepancy is perhaps explicable due to the close literary relationship of Genesis 6 with *Critias* rather than *Timaeus*. The bad intent of the biblical god of the primordial world runs contrary to Platonic theology, in which the gods were entirely virtuous and incapable of wishing destruction of the good things they had created. This expression of divine ethics was articulated in *Timaeus* 41a–b, but was not restated in *Critias*. A casual reading of the scene of divine judgment in *Critias* 121b–c, in which Zeus determined to punish

the kingdom of Atlantis for its wicked lawlessness, might miss the benevolent divine intent to give righteousness a fresh start (*Critias* 121b) and understand this as a divine expression of wrath. The storyteller who authored Gen 6:5–7 apparently did not fully grasp the profoundly philosophical divine ethics laid out in *Timaeus* and imputed in the biblical god a desire to utterly destroy his own creation of mortal life; an action Plato would have rejected as incompatible with the goodness of the gods.

Yet God ultimately sought to preserve righteous Noah and his family (Gen 6:9, 18, 22; 7:1, 5, 23; 9:1) along with every form of terrestrial life he created (Gen 6:19–21; 7:2–3, 14–15; 8:1, 17–19), safeguarding them in the ark (Gen 6:18–21; 7:13–15; 8:1). In the end, God thus sought to preserve all the mortal life forms he had generated. In this manner, both *Timaeus-Critias* and Genesis exonerated the gods, depicting them as agents of goodness, even in their periodic catastrophic purging the evil from the world.

7.7 *Critias* and the Post-Flood World

The preceding section explored significant parallels that display influence of the Atlantis story on the account of the pre-flood world in Genesis 4–9 and especially so in Gen 6:1–7: the intermarriage of the sons of God and mortal women; the siring of the demigods, a semi-divine race of heroes; a spiraling down into wickedness and violence; and the punishment carried out by a Zeus-like god by cataclysmic earthquakes and flood.

Genesis 10 saw the renewal of humanity and civilization among the sons of Noah, the flood hero. The survival of humans and animals in an ark owes more to Mesopotamian than Greek antecedents, but the division of the known world into 70 nations in Genesis 10 follows Greek patterns of the genealogical organization of nations descending from eponymous founders (Van Seters 1992: 89–90, 176–7). In the background we may imagine an apportionment of the world among the gods, in line with *Critias* 109b–c. The idea of dividing the world among the gods was familiar to the biblical authors, appearing in explicitly in some versions of Deut 32:8–9. The translation of MT appears tendentious (Day 2000: 23; Smith 2001: 49; Tov 2012: 248–50), reading innocuously as follows:

(32:8 MT) When the Most High apportioned the nations, when he divided humankind, he fixed the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of the sons of Israel (בני ישראל); (9) The Lord's (Yahweh's) own portion was his people, Jacob his allotted share

But other textual witnesses (discussed at Tov 2012: 248–9) indicate the original text likely read “the sons of God.”

(4QDt^j) ... according to the number of the sons of Elohim (בני אלהים)

(4QDt^q) ... according to the number of the sons of El (בני אל[ים])

LXX ... according to the number of the angels of God (ἀγγέλων θεοῦ)

LXX ... according to the number of the sons of God (υἱῶς θεοῦ)

This biblical division of humankind into nations, each assigned their own god, took place in the pre-flood world in *Critias*, where national and political institutions existed from the start, established by the gods at the creation of the first humans. These national divisions had strong continuity across the flood, under a model in which a few survivors of primordial catastrophes re-founded civilization in their own locality and under the same gods. Plato thus lists the same nations and peoples in the periods on either side of the flood event: Egypt, Athenians, the Hellenes or Greeks and such peoples of the eastern Mediterranean as the Libyans and Tuscans and Gadeirans (*Timaeus* 25b–c; *Critias* 109a, 112d–e, 114a–b).²¹ But in the biblical account, the only flood survivors were Noah and his family, and the division of the world into nations was thus necessarily postponed until the Table of Nations in Genesis 10. The regions and respective nations ruled by the terrestrial gods before the flood were thus omitted in the biblical text, other than the land of Eden ruled by Yahweh Elohim. The apportionment of lands to the gods after the flood is indeed only implicit in Genesis 10, where we first encounter specific nations and peoples whose gods are later referred to in biblical writings: Babylon (Bel-Marduk, Nebo, Tammuz), Mizraim or Egypt (the Queen of Heaven), the Canaanites (Baal and Asherah), the Arameans (Hadad) and Sidon (Ashtoreth).²² Later in Genesis we encounter other nations whose gods appear in later biblical books: the Philistines (Dagon), Moab (Chemosh) and Ammon (Molech or Milcom).²³ The division of the world into exactly 70 nations (Genesis 10), “according to the number of the sons of Elohim” (Deut 32:8), corresponds to the 70 sons of El in Ugaritic myth (Day 2000: 24).²⁴ The Table of Nations thus reflects a mythical division of the world into 70 nations, each (as we learn elsewhere) with its own god, much along the lines of *Critias* 109b–c, 113b.

In the etiology of the origins of languages in the story of the Tower of Babel in Gen 11:1–9, we read about the threat posed by humanity’s speaking a common language, and the decision of the gods to confuse the languages of the children of men in the land of Shinar and scatter them across the face of the earth. The use of the plural in Gen 11:7 (“Let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other”), reminiscent of Gen 1:26 (Day 2000: 22), appears to reflect a speech or verdict within the divine council of the gods (von Rad 1973: 149; Day 2000: 22), and attests to the polytheistic cultural context presupposed in Genesis 1–11 (contra Westermann 1984: 563). The connection between the table of 70 nations in Genesis 10 and the scattering of humanity across the earth in different language groups by the gods in Gen 11:1–9 reinforces the connection between the gods and their allotted nations, consistent with Deut 32:8–9.

Greek scientific interests resurface in the Table of Nations in Genesis 10. The scientific writings of the Pre-Socratic Greek natural philosophers dealt

with cosmogony, zoogony, anthropogony and politogony (the origins of civilization and political institutions, including the present distribution of nations). The writings of the philosopher Anaximander of Miletus included the book *Genealogies*, which cataloged nations and migrations of peoples, supplementary to his creation of the first map of the world (Naddaf 2005: 116).

While it is now widely acknowledged that the genealogical structure of Genesis, and especially the division of nations in Genesis 10, is broadly indebted to Greek antecedents (Van Seters 1988, 1992: 89–90, 176–7; Darshan 2013: 59–96; Louden 2018: 60–93), a specific indebtedness to *Critias* and *Timaeus* has generally escaped consideration. Eponymous ancestors of nations figure prominently in *Critias*. *Critias* 113e–114d, which listed the ten sons of Poseidon and Cleito who became the rulers of the various lands of the Atlantian empire, prominently included Atlas, the mythical king of the Atlas Mountains region in North Africa, and Gadeira, the eponymous founder of the colony of Gadeira on the European side of the Gibraltar Straits. The eponymous national heroes in *Critias* 114a–b may have been the specific literary inspiration for the Table of Nations in Genesis 10. One may also take note of *Timaeus* 22a–b, which noted how the Greeks traced the family trees of the descendants of Deucalion, the Greek flood hero, and used such genealogies for the purpose of chronological calculations of the distant past. Genealogies serve similar purposes in Genesis, where the chronological framework of mythical and legendary times is closely associated with the repetitive *Toledot* framing structure.

Platonic literary influences can also be detected in later episodes in Genesis. The story of Abram's military defeat of the coalition of Mesopotamian kings in Genesis 14 has motif and themes that are highly reminiscent of the conflict between the Athens and Atlantis in *Critias*. The kings of Atlantis were portrayed as ruling righteously within their borders many years, until they engaged in a war of territorial aggression to enslave the peoples within the Mediterranean (*Timaeus* 24e, 25b; *Critias* 120d, 121b; cf. Gen 14:1–3). All would have been lost (*Timaeus* 25b–c; cf. Gen 14:4–12) had not the Athenians valiantly engaged the Atlantians in war and defeated them (*Timaeus* 25c; *Critias* 112e; cf. Gen 14:13–15). Abram similarly rose to the occasion, leading a small band that included Amorite allies (Gen 14:13–14) to rescue his nephew Lot from slavery, defeat the unjust invaders and liberate the local kings, much as the Athenians took the leadership of the Hellenes and defeated the invading forces of the Atlantians against overwhelming odds, liberating Egypt and the Greek world (*Timaeus* 25b–c). Abram prosecuted this just defensive war, not for personal gain (Gen 14:16, 20–24), but as a virtuous, fierce champion and natural leader, like the Athenian warriors, celebrated as the foremost in justice and valor in Plato's fictional account (*Timaeus* 19c–e, 20b,e, 21d, 23b–c, 24a–e, 25b–c; *Critias* 112e). Broadly speaking, Genesis 14 fulfills the stated purpose of *Critias*, namely to portray the state at war (*Timaeus* 19c–e, 20b, 24b,d, 25b–c;

Critias 112e), and specifically display the martial courage of the ancestral generation as an inspiring noble example to later generations (*Timaeus* 20e, 21d, 23b–c, 24d–e, 25b–c; *Critias* 112e). It seems apparent that the authors of the tall tale in Genesis 14 wanted to promote a similar noble example of ancestral military valor for their readers.

The story of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 18–19 also reflects Platonic mythical motifs, as noted in §7.6.8. According to Plato, the world underwent periodic cataclysms by flood or fire (*Timaeus* 22c–23a; *Laws* 3.677a–c). Although the story of the destruction of the unrighteous by fire sent from the heavens in Gen 19:24–29 was localized to the regions adjacent to the Dead Sea, there are many echoes of Plato's *Critias*: Yahweh's portrayal as a terrestrial deity who dined and counseled with Abraham and Sarah (Genesis 18); the ethical decline of the residents of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 18:20; 19:4–13), precipitating judgment from God (cf. *Critias* 121b–c); a cataclysm of fire from heaven (Gen 19:24–29; cf. *Timaeus* 22c–d); the saving of a righteous few (Gen 18:17–33; 19:14–23); and the re-founding of civilization (Gen 19:30–38, locally, in Moab and Ammon). One also sees echoes of the catastrophe that ended the pre-flood world: the evocative comparison of the Jordan plain with the Garden of Eden (Gen 13:10); the wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 18:20; 19:4–13; cf. Gen 6:6–7); the survival of a righteous few (Gen 19:14–23; cf. 6:14–18; 7:1; 9:1); new tribes descending from the survivors of the cataclysm (Gen 19:31–38; cf. Genesis 10).²⁵ These echoes point to the re-use of story motifs from *Timaeus-Critias* in both the biblical flood story and the story of Lot's rescue from Sodom.

It thus appears that the literary influence of *Critias* extended beyond the Primordial History *per se* into later parts of Genesis. The Primordial History acknowledged the existence of the sons of Elohim who married human wives and arguably—based on the Greek parallels—dwelled in their various allotted terrestrial realms. In the divine ethics proposed by Plato, the gods justly administered their respective realms, living together in harmony and goodness as terrestrial images of their supremely good Father and Maker. As noted above, the peaceful division of the world into 70 nations in Genesis 10 appears to reflect the harmonious world view of *Critias*, where the gods each received their own allotted land to dwell in, populate with humans, and rule. A similar picture appears in Deut 32:8–9, where there was a divine council of gods (cf. Ps 29:1; 82:1), each having their own nation, corresponding also with the divine council of 70 sons of El in Ugaritic literature (KTU² 1.4.6.46; cf. Smith and Pitard 2009: 48).

Genesis 11–50 mention a number of local gods, such as El Shaddai, with an altar at Bethel or Luz (Gen 17:1; 28:3, 19; 43:14; 48:3; 49:25); El Olam, with a grove at Beersheba (Gen 21:33); El Elyon, with a temple at Salem (Gen 14:18–20, 22); and Yahweh, with altars at Bethel (Gen 12:8; 35:1, 3, 7) and Hebron (Gen 13:18); the god Bethel (Gen 28:17; cf. Cross 1973: 47 n. 14); cf. Baal Berit (Judg 8:33; 9:4) or El Berit (Judg 9:46), the god of

Shechem (cf. Smith 1990: 6; Cross 1973: 39, discussing the Hurrian El Berit). Most of these are thought to be local titles or manifestations of the Canaanite deity El (Cross 1962, 1973: 6–69; Day 2000: 13–43). Yahweh was another local god, worshipped in Iron II Hamath (Dalley 1990), Samaria and Judah, alongside Baal, El, Bethel and other Canaanite gods. Far from being inimical towards their polytheistic religious heritage, the pantheon of Canaanite gods was carried over into the present text of Genesis as local divinities associated with numerous ancient altars and holy sites. In Ex 6:3, El Shaddai was explicitly assimilated with Yahweh, but the identity of the two deities is not evident in the text of Genesis itself.

Many of the old traditional Canaanite gods and their local altars are thus acknowledged in Genesis. It is uncertain whether the authors of Genesis understood the traditional Canaanite gods El Shaddai, El Olam, El Elyon and Bethel as distinct deities or as local titles of El, but their worship at old altars and holy sites scattered across Judah and Samaria was evidently considered compatible with Yahweh worship. The acknowledgment of multiple altars to these gods is remarkable, and inconsistent with a monolithic Yahweh worship centered in the temples at Jerusalem and Mount Gerizim. According to Plato, it was important for those establishing a new nation to research ancient local gods, oracles, altars and priesthoods and to integrate them into the official religion in order to give the newly founded government an aura of antiquity and divinity. The appearance of local cult sites in Genesis appears to reflect this strategic concern. (See *Laws* 5.738c–d; 6.759b; cf. Gmirkin 2017: 255, 263.)

At some point the various gods mentioned in Genesis 12–50 were conflated with Yahweh, most likely only at the time the Pentateuch was written in the early Hellenistic Era. In Genesis they were understood as traditional local gods, distinguishing Yahweh from the rest as the particular patron god of Abraham and his descendants. Abraham's titular description of Yahweh as god of heaven and earth in Gen 24:3, 7 casts him in a Zeus-like role as the supreme terrestrial deity, but nowhere in Genesis 12–50 is Yahweh characterized as the Creator. This description was reserved for El Elyon, who is described as creator of heaven and earth in Gen 14:18–22. Elyon was also a title associated with El in the Sefire Treaty literature.²⁶ Genesis 14 is an idiosyncratic narrative, assignable to neither J, E nor P sources. It appears evident that the authors of Genesis 14 considered the old Canaanite god El Elyon to be the closest approximation to the novel Creator of Genesis 1 and invoked the traditional worship of El Elyon as a means of connecting the new god with ancient local practices, as Plato recommended (Gmirkin 2017: 262–3). What is most interesting for our purposes is that the prestigious cult and temple of El Elyon, creator of heaven and earth, was patronized not only by Abraham but other kings of the patriarchal age. It is by no means evident that El Elyon was meant to be identified with Yahweh, the god of Abraham.²⁷ Rather, Gen 14:17–22 appears to claim that the Canaanites who were present in the land long before Abraham's arrival already knew and

honored Elyon, the creator of heaven and earth, and possessed a venerable temple dedicated to his worship, presided over by his priest Melchizedek.

What is especially striking and significant is that Genesis 12–50, like the Primordial History, nowhere condemned the local gods of Canaan or the gods of the nations. Although Genesis 12–50 mentioned many other local peoples of Canaan and Transjordan, neither they nor their gods are condemned. Nor, indeed, do we find condemnation of the ancient empires such as Babylonia or Egypt, except for the territorial aggressions of the Mesopotamian confederacy in Genesis 14. One otherwise sees harmonious relations between the families of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and Babylonians (Genesis 24, 29–31), Egyptians (Gen 12:10; 42:1–5; 45:10–11; 46:28, 34; 47:1–6), Philistines (Gen 26:1–31) and Hittites (Gen 23:3–20). Both Egyptians and Philistines give refuge to Abrahamic peoples during times of famine (Gen 12:10; 26:1; 42:1–3; 45:11; 47:4). In the only episodes in which cities (Sodom and Gomorrah, Shechem) or royal individuals (Pharaoh, Abimelech) are portrayed in a negative light, ethical responsibility is always placed on individuals, never on foreign gods or religious practices, and Yahweh is never portrayed as being at war with the nations.

There is, in short, no foreshadowing of the later evil character of the Egyptians as oppressors in the Exodus story, nor the hostility towards the Canaanite, Amorite, and Hittites and their gods. Quite the contrary, aside from isolated episodes, there is harmonious coexistence between the family of Abraham and other peoples and kings they encounter. Abraham even goes so far as to liberate the Anakim, Amorites, Amalekites and kings of Sodom, and to pay homage to the priest (and perhaps king) of Salem. One sees Abraham confederate with Amorites (Gen 14:13), entering into peaceful negotiations with Hittites (Gen 23:3–20) and Philistines (Gen 26:1–31). Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites and Ishmaelites are all acknowledged as basically friendly relatives of the children of Israel. Abraham, Joseph and Israel are all safeguarded and even honored by the rulers of Egypt. The picture throughout Genesis is that of the gods and peoples of all lands living together in harmony as their usual state. There is a consistent theodicy in which evil has its origin, not in bad gods or bad deeds by the gods, but in unjust or violent acts by humans (Gen 6:5–7, 11–13; 8:21; 13:7–11; 14:1–7; 18:20–32). In these stories set in mythical ancient times, earthbound gods and their angels still have encounters with humans, eating and conversing with them (Genesis 2–3; 4:9–12; 9:1–17; 12:1–4; 17:1–22; 18:1–36; 19:1–17; 32:24–32). This is still the storybook setting of *Critias*, a world in which humans coexisted with the gods and when the terrestrial gods are all viewed as good, like the supreme god of Creation.

7.8 *Critias*, Exodus and Deuteronomy

The influence of *Critias* is also prominent in a later Pentateuchal episode, the establishment of the nation of the children of Israel by blood covenant in Ex

24:4–8 and sequel accounts renewing the covenant in Deuteronomy 29–32 and publishing the laws and covenant in Josh 8:30–34. Exodus–Joshua contains an extended politogony, the myth of the creation of the children of Israel as a new nation and migration to a new land under the leadership of the *oikist* or expedition leader Moses, drawing on the common Greek genre of *ktisis* or foundation story (Gmirkin 2017: 225–31). The extensive discussion of the new nation's constitution and laws (extensively discussed in Gmirkin 2017: 9–182) marks it as a politogony.

As discussed previously, *Critias* belonged to the literary genre of politogony (Naddaf 1997), describing the origins of a nation and its political institutions, in this case the nations of Athens (*Timaeus* 24a–d; *Critias* 109c–112e) and Atlantis (*Critias* 113e–120d). The kingdom of Atlantis was an alliance of ten princes, the ten sons of Poseidon by his beautiful mortal wife, Cleito (*Critias* 119c). Each prince acted as king or governor over his own smaller realm, establishing laws and administering justice (*Critias* 119c), but were united by alliance within the larger kingdom of Atlantis, ruled by Atlas and his descendants. The princes were bound by the precepts of Poseidon to render each other mutual aid in case of local rebellion against any one of the ten princes, and to follow a common policy in war and other matters (*Critias* 120c–d). This arrangement, which Plato modeled on the league of Hellenic states under the leadership of Athens, also bears a close resemblance to the 12 (or sometimes ten) tribes of Israel (cf. Gmirkin 2017: 15–24). The precepts of Poseidon and other laws and writings were inscribed on a sacred pillar of orichalcum in the temple of Poseidon (*Critias* 119c). The ten kings swore by mighty oaths accompanied by the sacrifice of Poseidon's sacred bulls to observe these laws in a ceremony often compared to the blood covenant in Exodus.

(119e) And whatsoever bull they captured they led up to the pillar and cut its throat over the top of the pillar, raining down blood on the inscription. And inscribed upon the pillar, besides the laws, was an oath which invoked mighty curses upon them that disobeyed. When, then, they had done sacrifice according to their laws and were consecrating (120a) all the limbs of the bull, they mixed a bowl of wine and poured in on behalf of each one a gout of blood, and the rest they carried to the fire, when they had first purged the pillars round about. And after this they drew out from the bowl with golden ladles, and making libation over the fire swore to give judgment according to the laws upon the pillar and to punish whosoever had committed any previous transgression; and, moreover, that henceforth they would not transgress any of the writings willingly, nor govern nor submit to any governor's edict (120b) save in accordance with their father's laws. And when each of them had made this invocation both for himself and for his seed after him, he drank of the cup and offered it up as a gift in the temple of the God

This ritual was described at the divine establishment of the kingdom of Atlantis, and repeated every five or six years at a recurring assembly of the ten princes (*Critias* 119d–120d), shares many motifs with the blood covenant described in Ex 24:3–8.

(24:3 MT) Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord and all the ordinances; and all the people answered with one voice, and said, “All the words that the Lord has spoken we will do.” (4) And Moses wrote down all the words of the Lord. He rose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and set up twelve pillars, corresponding to the twelve tribes of Israel. (5) He sent young men of the people of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed oxen as offerings of well-being to the Lord. (6) Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he dashed against the altar. (7) Then he took the book of the covenant, and read it in the hearing of the people; and they said, “All that the Lord has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient.” (8) Moses took the blood and dashed it on the people, and said, “See the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words.”

Common motifs include: a literary setting at the creation of a new nation; the participation of the assembled constituent tribes; the ceremonial sacrifice of bulls representing the tribes; an altar with a pillar (*Critias* 119c, 120a) or pillars (Ex 24:40); blood splashed about to consecrate the place of sacrifice, as well as poured into ceremonial vessels (*Critias* 119e–120a; Ex 24:6, 8; Wajdenbaum 2011: 164–5, 2016: 82); laws inscribed upon the pillar (*Critias* 119c, 120a) or altar (Deut 27:2–8; Josh 8:31–32; cf. Hagedorn 2004: 74–5; Wajdenbaum 2011: 164–5);²⁸ a solemn oath and covenant to obey all the words of the law (*Critias* 119e–120b; Ex 24:3, 7–8; Deut 27–28; 29:1); strong curses invoked in the case of disobedience to the laws or covenant (*Critias* 120a–b; Deut 27:13–26; 28:15–68; 29:20–21; Josh 8:34); the binding nature of this pledge not only on those present but on their descendants (*Critias* 120b; Deuteronomy 28).

Such strong and systematic literary parallels exist between Exodus 24 and no other passage in Greek literature.²⁹ Conversely, no literary parallels exist between Exodus 24 and Ancient Near Eastern literature or inscriptions, where there is no example of citizens entering into a covenant to obey a law collection, and where indeed the laws carried no prescriptive force (Gmirkin 2017: 183–90).

It is striking that the foundation ceremonies of the politogony in *Critias*, set in the earliest mythical times, appear in literary motifs as late as Exodus. In Plato's mythological setting, the gods established divine governments for Athens (Hephaestus and Athena) and Atlantis (Poseidon) at the same time as when they created humanity from the earth of the lands they had been allotted. But the politogony prominently found in the Pentateuch, narrating

the origins of the children of Israel as Yahweh's people and nation, was set in later Mosaic times, long after the flood.³⁰ This necessitated a postponed usage of Atlantian themes in Israel's foundation story. The story of the Exodus, Sojourn, and Conquest indeed constitute an effective transfer of mythical times to the post-flood world. In the Exodus story, Yahweh is a terrestrial god who makes appearances at Mount Sinai and is physically transferred via the Tabernacle to a new dwelling place in the land of Canaan. Yahweh speaks face-to-face with Moses, revealing a divine constitution and laws to govern his nation. Humans feast with the deity with sacrifices offered at the Tabernacle. Yahweh interacts directly with the mortals he dwells among in various ways, sometimes intervening on their behalf to win them victories over the gods of Egypt, of enemy peoples encountered during their wanderings, sometimes destroying rebels with divine fire or earthquake, or on occasion repenting his adoption of the people and threatening their destruction, which persuaded by Moses is postponed to an unknown future. All of these personal interactions between Yahweh as a terrestrial deity and his chosen people that he dwelt among constitute an imagined transfer of mythical times into the "historical" postdiluvian era.

This transfer of mythical motifs into an imagined history of Jewish and Israelite origins allowed for the use of other Platonic themes taken from *Critias*. Joshua's conquests of the Promised Land may have had a similar literary purpose as the story of Atlantis in *Critias*, whose aim was to create an inspiring account of the ideal state at war as an example to stir the patriotism of later generations (*Timaeus* 19c–d, 20b,e, 23c, 24d–e, 25b–c; cf. *Republic* 3.386a–389a). A more profound use of *Critias* was the literary account of promises by the founding generation to obey divine laws in perpetuity, sealed by a blood covenant and oaths, and invoking fearful curses for disobedience on them and all their descendants into perpetuity, a theme running throughout virtually all of biblical historiography, from Exodus to Kings and even Ezra-Nehemiah. The idea of Yahweh as "god of history," intervening in events to bless his people when they were obedient, or punish them when they rebelled, directly echoes *Critias*. The punishment Yahweh inflicted on Israel and Judah for disobedience to the divine covenant is ultimately taken from the punishment Zeus imposed on Atlantis for identical reasons.³¹ The mythical establishment of a nation by the gods, the revelation of a divine constitution and laws to the founding generation and the pronouncement of dire curses for straying from the divine statutes all formed a mythical basis for history as an ethical fable.

Notes

- 1 Plato, *Apology* 40e–41c; idem, *Gorgias* 523a–526c; idem, *Meno* 81a; idem, *Phaedo* 113d–114c; idem, *Theaetetus* 176a; idem, *Republic* 5.468e–469b; 7.540b; idem, *Symposium* 179e–180b.

- 2 Homer, *Odyssey* 4.561–65; Hesiod, *Works and Days* 155–73; Pindar, *Olympian Odes* 2.51–85; Virgil, *Aeneid* 6.628–897; Strabo, *Geography* 3.2.13; Pliny, *Natural History* 4.36.
- 3 The use of *Phaedo* in Plato's idealized description of Atlantis in *Timaeus* and *Critias* was already noted in Gegenschatz 1943: 48–57; cf. Cherniss 1947: 251–7. *Phaedo* is widely accepted as one of Plato's middle dialogues, while *Timaeus* and *Critias* were among his late dialogues, so the direction of intellectual development is clear.
- 4 As noted earlier in this section, the gods also dwelled among humans in Hesiod's Golden Age of Kronos, and the Greeks claimed Kronos still dwelled among also the heroes and the righteous in the mythical Islands of the Blessed. Kupitz noted in personal correspondence that a close parallel to both the Atlantis story and the Garden of Eden also appears in Plato's *Phaedo* 111b, "And they have sacred groves and temples of the gods, in which the gods really dwell, and they have intercourse with the gods by speech and prophecies and visions."
- 5 Compare also Plato, *Phaedo* 110d, "And in this fair earth the things that grow, the trees, and flowers and fruits, are correspondingly beautiful." Kupitz, personal correspondence, noted out the parallel between *Phaedo* 110d and Gen 2:9, "every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food."
- 6 Beginning in the Archaic Era, Athenians celebrated the Kronia, a yearly festival dedicated to the god Kronos after the completion of the fall harvest, when workers would rest from their labors. This cultic institution appears to have influenced the description of the Age of Kronos in Hesiod, *Works and Days* 109–20, where humans lived a life of leisure, free from toil or sorrow, and in which humans and the gods coexisted; cf. West 1978: 179. Only in the later mythical Age of Zeus did the earth stop spontaneously giving forth its fruits, requiring humans to fend for themselves, toiling at agriculture and other crafts. For a comprehensive discussion of the myth of the ages of man in Hesiod's *Works and Days* and in later Greek and Roman literature, see Lovejoy and Boas 1935.
- 7 Josephus (Ant. 1.64–65) connected this metal working with the Bronze Age of Hesiod and the manufacture of weapons of war, but this is not present in either MT or LXX.
- 8 von Rad 1973: 71; VanderKam 1984:39–45, 49–50; Kvanvig 1988: 185–90, 230; Cassuto 1989: 303.
- 9 Astronomical records went back 432,000 years according to Berossus *FGrH* 680 F4b; cf. Gmirkin 2006 131 n. 308. Cicero, *On Divination* 1.19.30, gives a similar figure of 470,000. Classical references claiming to have drawn on Babylonian traditions are exhaustively discussed in Cramer 1954: 18.
- 10 Wolfson 1966: 356–7; McDiarmid 1940; Runia 1986: 83; Philo, *On the Eternity of the World* 117, 145–49.
- 11 Compare Deut 32:8–9, which may have been indebted to *Critias* 109b.
- 12 The Samaritans located Eden at Mt. Gerizim, which they also called the Mountain of the East. "[Mount Gerizim:] Its name was formerly *The Mountain of the East* (Gen x. 30). The reason for the name *The Mountain of the East* is simply that it and the Garden of Eden are twins..." *Memar Marqah* 2.10 in MacDonald 1963: 2.73–77; cf. Montgomery 1968: 237.
- 13 *Timaeus* 53b (God created the elements to be as "beautiful and excellent as possible"), 87c ("The good, of course, is always beautiful"); *Lysis* 216d ("I claim that the good is beautiful"); cf. Gkatzaras 2017: 75, 82 n. 17.
- 14 The genealogical organization of the Table of Nations reflects political divisions of ca. 270 BCE into Seleucid (Shem), Ptolemaic (Ham) and independent countries (Japhet) (Gmirkin 2006: 140–64). Some of the nations bordering the Red Sea

appear to reflect knowledge gained by Ptolemaic expeditions of trade and exploration from the 270s BCE (Gmirkin 2006: 161–2).

- 15 The story of Atlantis can be read as a politicized revision of the Hesiodic metallic ages, with the Athenians as the Race of Heroes and later Atlantis described in terms of the Bronze Race that Hesiod described as bringing about their own utter destruction through their violence (*Works and Days* 143–55). The race of Atlantians in *Critias*, though starting out (like the Athenians) as a noble Race of Heroes, gradually began to acquire characteristics of militancy and violence more compatible with Hesiod’s Bronze Race. This suggests that Plato envisioned the clash between Athenians and Atlantians as a war between Hesiod’s Race of Heroes and violent Bronze Race, despite Hesiod portraying the Bronze Age and Age of Heroes as successive. Elsewhere, Plato similarly made Hesiod’s successive Golden and Silver Ages contemporary, with the enlightened divine Golden Race ruling over the pliant citizenry of the Silver Race in a utopian myth set in the Age of Kronos.
- 16 Gen 14:5; Deut 2:9–10, 20–21; 3:11, 13; 9:2; 2 Sam 21:16, 18, 20; Amos 2:9.
- 17 Designated the “god of gods” (*Critias* 121b), Zeus was the earthly image of the Demiurge, who, as Father of the younger gods, was also termed “god of gods” in *Timaeus* 41a.
- 18 Plato also famously addressed the issue of political corruption at *Republic* 8.544b–9.587d, where he discussed how noble aristocracy, the best form of government, eventually devolved into tyranny through the rise of unbridled human ambition.
- 19 In Gen 7:11, the flood was caused by breaking open (פָּרַק) the fountains of the deep and opening the windows of heaven. While the latter implies a torrential downpour, the former implies earthquakes that caused waters deep in the earth to spring forth (cf. Num 16:31; 1 Kgs 1:40; Ps 78:15; Isa 48:21; Zech 14:4). The same combination of earthquakes and storms—both of which were associated with Poseidon—caused the flood in which Atlantis sank into the sea.
- 20 The epic war with Atlantis thus constituted a sort of twilight of the gods. Plato’s story of the Athenian defeat of Atlantis was envisioned as competing with Homer’s epic tale of the Trojan War in the *Iliad* (*Timaeus* 21d). In Hesiod’s account of the Five Ages of Humanity, the Trojan War marked the end of the legendary Age of Heroes and the transition to the prosaic Iron Age with the heroic victors in the Trojan War transported to the Isles of the Blessed in the Atlantic (*Works and Days* 170–72). The insertion of the Age of Heroes after the Golden, Silver and Bronze Ages and before the Iron Age is widely believed to show influence from Homer’s *Iliad* (Most 1997). If the story of Atlantis was indeed modeled on the Trojan War, this suggests that the downfall of Atlantis was similarly intended to mark the end of the Age of Heroes, a mythical time when gods and demigods still coexisted with humans. According to Aratus (ca. 315–240 BCE), the goddess Astraeus, called Justice, who mingled with humans during the Golden and Silver Ages, was the last of the gods to dwell on earth, departing to the heavens in response to the wars and cruel bloodshed of the Bronze Age (*Phaenomena* 96–136; cf. Lovejoy and Boas 1935: 34–6).
- 21 The same was also true in Mesopotamian accounts, in which the kingdoms of Babylonia originated prior to the flood and were reestablished by the flood survivors. See especially the pre-flood cities with their kings in the Sumerian King List as well as the *Babyloniaca* of Berossus, which presents a slightly different list of kingdoms.
- 22 Bel-Marduk (Isa 46:1; Jer 50:2; 51:44), Nebo (Isa 46:1), Tammuz (Ezek 8:14), the Queen of Heaven (Jer 7:18; 44:17–19), Baal (Num 25:3; Josh 13:17; Judg 2:11, 13; 3:7; 6:25, 28, 30–32; 8:33; 10:6, 10; 1 Sam 7:4; 12:10; 2 Sam 13:23; 1 Kgs 16:31–33;

- 18:18–40; 19:18; 22:53; 2 Kgs 3:2; 10:18–28; 17:16; 21:3; 23:4–5), Asherah (Ex. 34:13; Deut 7:5; 12:3; 16:21; Judg 3:7; 6:25–30; 10:6; 1 Sam 7:4; 12:10; 1 Kgs 14:15, 23; 15:13; 16:33; 18:19; 2 Kgs 13:6; 17:10, 16; 18:4; 21:3, 7; 23:4–7, 14–15; Isa 17:6; 27:9; Jer 17:2; Mic 5:14), Hadad (Gen 36:35–36, 39; 1 Kgs 11:17, 19, 21, 25 as a theophoric), Ashtoreth (Gen 14:5; Judg 2:13; 1 Kgs 11:5, 33; 2 Kgs 23:13).
- 23 Dagon (Josh 19:17; Judg 16:23; 1 Sam 5:3–4), Chemosh (Num 21:29; Judg 11:24; 1 Kgs 11:7, 33; 2 Kgs 23:13; Jer 48:7, 13, 46), Molech (Lev 18:21; 20:2–5; 1 Kgs 11:7; 2 Kgs 23:10; Jer 32:35; Amos 5:26), Milcom (1 Kgs 11:5, 33; 2 Kgs 23:13; Zeph 1:5).
- 24 The “70 sons of Athirat” in KTU² 1.4.6.46; Athirat was El’s consort.
- 25 The shared story motif of forbidden sexual acts facilitated and excused by drunkenness (Gen 19:30–36; cf. 9:21–25) was arguably introduced by the same storyteller. This literary topos has no connection with *Critias* or with Plato, but does serve to link the two stories of the flood and of Sodom and Gomorrah.
- 26 Cross 1962: 241–4. There is some dispute as to whether El was identical with Elyon. Both are described elsewhere as creators, and the two are paired together in the Sefire Treaty. Day (2000: 20–1) opines that El Elyon of Gen 14:19, 22 is an authentic reminiscence of the name of an ancient Canaanite deity.
- 27 While it is true that later biblical texts claimed that Yahweh was creator of heaven of earth (Neh 9:6; Ps 96:5; 102:25; 115:15; 134:3; 121:2; 124:8; 146:5–6; Isa 42:5; Jer 27:5), and that El Elyon also carries the name Yahweh in Gen 14:22 MT, Yahweh is thought to be a secondary addition here in light of Gen 14:22 LXX and S, in which Yahweh was omitted (Cross 1962: 232 n. 25, 1973: 46 n. 12).
- 28 In Exod 24:4, 7, the words of the laws and covenant were written down in a book, not inscribed on a permanent altar as in Deuteronomy and Joshua.
- 29 A minor difference is that in Exodus 24 and Deuteronomy, it was the entire assembled children of Israel who were enjoined to obedience to the laws and who were entered the covenant, whereas in *Critias* it was the ten princes who ruled in the kingdom of Atlantis.
- 30 This late setting was necessitated by the biblical authors’ use of the fictional Greek foundation story of Judea as an Egyptian colony by Hecataeus of Abdera (ca. 315 BCE), parts of which were preserved in an excerpt from Theophrastus at Diodorus Siculus, *Library* 40.3.1–8; cf. Gmirkin 2006: 34–71; 2014: 63–83; 2017: 222, 225–31.
- 31 “[The] biblical state is condemned and destroyed because of the successive generations of royal neglect of the divinely given laws, which the ancestors had sworn to respect forever, much as the cause of the destruction of Plato’s Atlantis” (Wajdenbaum 2016: 82–83; cf. 2011: 27, 55–6, 73, 164–5, 274–5). While I agree with this broad thematic assessment, I do not detect any passages in Judges–Kings that show a direct literary dependence on *Critias* like the description of the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2), the narratives about the antediluvian world (Genesis 6–9, especially Gen 6:1–13), or the covenant ritual in Ex 24:3–8.

Bibliography

- Annas, Julia. “Plato’s Myths of Judgment.” *Phronesis* 27 (1982): 119–143.
- Bremmer, Jan N. “Paradise: From Persia, Via Greece, into the *Septuagint*,” in *Paradise Interpreted: Representations of Biblical Paradise in Judaism and Christianity*. Gerard P. Luttikhuisen (ed.), 1–20. Leiden: Brill, 1999.
- Capra, Andrea. “Plato’s Hesiod and the Will of Zeus: Philosophical Rhapsody in the *Timaeus* and the *Critias*,” in *Plato and Hesiod*. G.R. Boy-Stones and J.H. Haubold (eds.), 200–218. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

- Cassuto, Umberto. *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis: Part I, From Adam to Noah*. Translated by Israel Abrahams. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1989.
- Cherniss, Harold. "Some War-Time Publications concerning Plato. II." *AJP* 68 (1947): 225–265.
- Clay, Jenny Strauss. "The Beginning and End of the Hesiodic Catalogue of Women and its Relation to Hesiod," in *The Hesiodic Catalogue of Women: Constructions and Reconstructions*. Richard Hunter (ed.), 25–34. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Cramer, Frederick H. *Astrology in Roman Law and Politics*. Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1954.
- Cross, Frank Moore. "Yahweh and the God of the Patriarchs." *HTR* 55 (1962): 225–259.
- Cross, Frank Moore. *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973.
- Curtis, Thomas (ed.). *London Encyclopaedia; Or, Universal Dictionary of Science, Art, Literature and Practical Mechanics: Comprising a Popular View of the Present State of Knowledge*. 22 vols. London: Thomas Tegg, 1829.
- Dalley, Stephanie. "Yahweh in Hamath in the 8th Century BC: Cuneiform Material and Historical Deductions." *VT* 40 (1990): 21–32.
- Dalley, Stephanie. "Ancient Mesopotamian Gardens and the Identification of the Hanging Gardens of Babylon." *Garden History* 21 (1993): 1–13.
- Darshan, Guy. *Stories of Origins in Biblical and Greek Genealogical Writings: The Documents of the Book of Genesis in the Light of Greek Genealogical Literature and Other Ancient Eastern Mediterranean Traditions*. PhD Dissertation (Hebrew). Jerusalem: Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2013.
- Day, John. *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan*. JSOTSup 265. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000.
- Dickson, Keith. "Enki and Ninhursag: The Trickster in Paradise." *JNES* 66 (2007): 1–32.
- Dillon, John. "Plato and the Golden Age." *Hermathena* 153 (1992): 21–36.
- Droge, Arthur J. *Homer or Moses? Early Christian Interpretations of the History of Culture*. HUT 26. Tübingen: Mohr, 1989.
- Feldman, Louis H. "Hellenizations in Josephus' Portrayal of Man's Decline," in *Religions in Antiquity: Essays in Memory of E. R. Goodenough*. J. Neusner (ed.), 336–353. SHR 14. Leiden: Brill, 1968.
- Gantz, Timothy. *Early Greek Myth: A Guide to Literary and Artistic Sources*. 2 vols. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.
- Gegenschatz, Ernst. *Platons Atlantis*. Zürich: Ernst Lang, 1943.
- Ginsberg, H.L. "The Birth of the Gracious and Beautiful Gods." *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 1 (1935): 45–72.
- Giovino, Maria. *The Assyrian Sacred Tree: A History of Interpretations*. Fribourg: Academic Press Fribourg, 2007.
- Gkatzaras, Thanassis. "The Form of the Good in Plato's Timaeus." *Plato Journal* 17 (2017): 71–83.
- Gmirkin, Russell E. *Berosus and Genesis, Manetho and Exodus: Hellenistic Histories and the Date of the Pentateuch*. Library of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 433. CIS 15. New York: T & T Clark, 2006.

- Gmirkin, Russell E. "Greek Evidence for the Hebrew Bible," in *The Bible and Hellenism: Greek Influence on Jewish and Early Christian Literature*. Thomas L. Thompson and Philippe Wajdenbaum (eds.), 56–88. Durham, UK: Acumen Publishing, 2014.
- Gmirkin, Russell E. *Plato and the Creation of the Hebrew Bible*. Copenhagen International Seminar. London: Routledge, 2017.
- Gmirkin, Russell E. "Jeremiah, Plato and Socrates: Greek Antecedents to the Book of Jeremiah," in *Jeremiah in History and Tradition*. Jim West and Niels Peter Lemche (eds.), 21–48. Copenhagen International Seminar. London: Routledge, 2020.
- González, José M. "The Catalogue of Women and the End of the Heroic Age (Hesiod fr.204.94–103 M–W)", *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 140/2 (2010): 375–422.
- Gonzalez, Francisco J. "The Hermeneutics of Madness: Poet and Philosopher in Plato's Ion and Phaedrus," in *Plato and the Poets*. Pierre Destrée and Fritz-Gregor Herrmann (eds.), 93–110. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2011.
- Grypeou, Emmanouela and Helen Spurling. *The Book of Genesis in Late Antiquity: Encounters between Jewish and Christian Exegesis*. Leiden: Brill, 2013.
- Hagedorn, Anselm C. *Between Moses and Plato: Individual and Society in Deuteronomy and Ancient Greek Law*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004.
- Hartman, Louis F. "Review of *Enki and Ninhursag* by Samuel N. Kramer." *CBO* 8 (1946): 470–471.
- Hendel, Ronald S. "'The Flame of the Whirling Sword': A Note on Genesis 3:24." *JBL* 104 (1985): 671–674.
- Jacobsen, Thorkild. *The Sumerian King List*. Assyriological Studies 11. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939.
- Jacobsen, Thorkild. "The Eridu Genesis," in "*I Studied Inscriptions from before the Flood*": *Ancient Near Eastern, Literary, and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1–11*. Richard S. Hess and David Toshio Tsumura (eds.), 129–142. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994.
- Kramer, Samuel N. *Enki and Ninhursag: A Sumerian "Paradise" Myth*. BASOR Supplementary Studies 1. New Haven, CT: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1945.
- Kvanvig, Helge S. *Roots of Apocalyptic: The Mesopotamian Background of the Enoch Figure and of the Son of Man*. WMANT 61. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1988.
- Kvanvig, Helge S. *Primeval History: Babylonian, Biblical, and Enochic: An Intertextual Reading*. Leiden: Brill, 2011.
- Lampert, Laurence and Christopher Planeaux. "Who's Who in Plato's 'Timaeus-Critias and Why'." *The Review of Metaphysics* 52 (1998): 87–125.
- Louden, Bruce. *Greek Myth and the Bible*. Routledge Monographs in Classical Studies. London: Routledge, 2018.
- Lovejoy, Arthur O. and George Boas. *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1935.
- MacDonald, John. *Memar Marqah: The Teaching of Marqah*. 2 vols. Berlin: Verlag Alfred Töpelmann, 1963.
- McDiarmid, John Brodie. "Theophrastus on the Eternity of the World." *TAPhA* 71 (1940): 239–247.

- Mikalson, Jon D. *Greek Popular Religion in Greek Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Montgomery, James Alan. *The Samaritans: The Earliest Jewish Sect; Their History, Theology and Literature*. Reprint. New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1968.
- Most, Glenn W. "Hesiod's Myth of the Five (or Three or Four) Races." *PCPhS* 43 (1997): 104–127.
- Murray, Oswyn. "Hecataeus of Abdera and Pharaonic Kingship." *JEA* 56 (1970): 141–171.
- Naddaf, Gerard. "Plato and the *Peri Physis* Tradition," in *Interpreting the Timaeus-Critias: Proceedings of the IV Symposium Platonicum*. Tomás Calvo and Luc Brisson (eds.), 27–36. Sankt Augustine: Academia Verlag, 1997.
- Naddaf, Gerard. *Greek Concepts of Nature*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2005.
- Nickelsburg, George W.E. *1 Enoch 1: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 1–36*. Hermeneia. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001.
- Parpola, Simo. "The Assyrian Tree of Life: Tracing the Origins of Jewish Monotheism and Greek Philosophy." *JNES* 52 (1993): 161–208.
- Regali, Mario. "Hesiod in the *Timaeus*: The Demiurge Addresses the Gods," in *Plato and Hesiod*. G.R. Boy-Stones and J.H. Haubold (eds.), 259–275. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Runia, David T. *Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus of Plato*. *Philosophia Antiqua* 44. Leiden: Brill, 1986.
- Sarna, Nahum M. *Genesis*. JPS Torah / Bible Commentary. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989.
- Sedley, David. "Hesiod's *Theogony* and Plato's *Timaeus*," in *Plato and Hesiod*. G.R. Boy-Stones and J.H. Haubold (eds.), 246–258. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Smith, Mark S. *The Early History of God: Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990.
- Smith, Mark S. *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel's Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Smith, Mark S. and Wayne T. Pitard. *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle, Volume II*. VTSup 114. Leiden: Brill, 2009.
- Stordalen, Terje. *Echoes of Eden: Genesis 2–3 and Symbolism of the Eden Garden in Biblical Hebrew Literature*. CBET 25. Leuven: Peeters, 2000.
- Suter, David. "Fallen Angel, Fallen Priest: The Problem of Family Purity in 1 Enoch 6–16." *HUCA* 50 (1979): 115–135.
- Tov, Emanuel. *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2012.
- Tsumura, David Toshia. *The Ugaritic Drama of the Good Gods: A Philological Study [of UT 52 / KTU 1.23]*. PhD dissertation, Brandeis University. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1973.
- Tuplin, Christopher. "The Parks and Gardens of the Achaemenid Empire," in *Achaemenid Studies*. *Historia Einzelschriften* 99. 80–131. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1996.
- VanderKam, James C. *Enoch and the Growth of an Apocalyptic Tradition*. Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1984.

- Van Seters, John. *In Search of History: Historiography in the Ancient World and the Origins of Biblical History*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983.
- Van Seters, John. "The Primeval Histories of Greece and Israel Compared." *ZAW* 100 (1988): 1–23.
- Van Seters, John. *Prologue to History: The Yahwist as Historian in Genesis*. Louisville, KY: Westminster / John Knox Press, 1992.
- van der Kooij, Arie. "The Story of Paradise in the Light of Mesopotamian Culture and Literature," in *Genesis, Isaiah, and Psalms: A Festschrift to Honour Professor John Emerton for His Eightieth Birthday*. Katharine Julia Dell, Graham I. Davies and Yee Von Koh (eds.), 3–22. Leiden: Brill, 2010.
- von Rad, Gerhard. *Commentary on Genesis*. Old Testament Library. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1973.
- Wacholder, Ben Zion. "Biblical Chronology in the Hellenistic World Chronicles." *HTR* 61 (1968): 451–481.
- Wajdenbaum, Philippe. *Argonauts of the Desert: Structural Analysis of the Hebrew Bible*. Sheffield: Equinox Publishing, 2011.
- Wajdenbaum, Philippe. "From Plato to Moses: Genesis–Kings as a Platonic Epic," in *Biblical Interpretation Beyond Historicity*. Ingrid Hjelm and Thomas L. Thompson (eds.), 76–90. *Changing Perspectives in Old Testament Studies* 7. London: Routledge, 2016.
- West, Martin Litchfield. *Hesiod, Works and Days: Edited with Prolegomena and Commentary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978.
- West, Martin Litchfield. *The Hesiodic Catalogue of Women: Its Nature, Structure and Origins*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985.
- Westermann, Claus. *Genesis 1–11: A Commentary*. Translator J. Scullion. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984.
- Widengren, Geo. *The King and the Tree of Life in Ancient Near Eastern Religion*. Uppsala Universitets Arsskrift 4. Uppsala: A.-B. Lundequistka, 1951.
- Wolfson, Harry A. "Patristic Arguments against the Eternity of the World." *HTR* 59 (1966): 351–367.

8 Cosmic Monotheism and Terrestrial Polytheism in Plato and the Bible

This current chapter discusses the implications of the use of *Timaeus–Critias* in Genesis on the history of the rise of Jewish monotheism in the early Hellenistic Era. It will be argued that the text of Genesis documents an attempt to introduce Platonic philosophical notions of cosmic monotheism and benevolent terrestrial polytheism to the Jewish and Samaritan peoples, but that this benevolent polytheism was rejected by the authors of Exodus–Joshua in favor of an aggressive Yahwistic monolatry that was in turn the forerunner of true Yahwistic monotheism that begins to be documented in the second century BCE.

The thrust of the argument of this book has been the pervasive, systematic influence of Plato’s *Timaeus* and *Critias* on Genesis, especially on the Primordial History. In earlier chapters it was argued that the cosmogony of Genesis 1 did not belong to the category of creation myths found in Ancient Near Eastern literature (Chapter 2), but rather has key characteristics of Greek scientific cosmogonies (Chapter 3) and can be more specifically identified as belonging to the hybrid genre of scientific-theological-mythical cosmogonies of which *Timaeus* was the first and foremost example in Greek literature (Chapter 3). It was further argued that the two creation accounts in Genesis 1–3 display systematic dependence on the theology and sequence of creative acts in Plato’s *Timaeus* (Chapter 4); that the First Creation Account of Genesis 1 was based on the creation of the perfect *kosmos* from the primordial chaos of *Timaeus* 48a–49a by Demiurge in *Timaeus* 29d–40d (Chapter 5); that the Second Creation Account in Genesis 2–3 was based on the creation of mortal life by the lesser terrestrial gods in *Timaeus* 40d–47e (Chapter 6); that the Garden of Eden and the account of the primordial world and flood were based on Plato’s *Critias* (Chapter 7); and that the rest of Genesis also reflected Plato’s views on the peaceful coexistence of the gods and nations in *Critias* (Chapter 7). The storyline and sequence of materials in Genesis 1–11 thus closely follows that found in the cosmogony, zoogony and politogony Plato’s account of the origins of the world in *Timaeus* and *Critias*.

Timaeus–Critias thus appears crucial to understanding the Primordial History, providing insights into its narrative structure, themes and theology

and shedding light on numerous points of interpretation. Various otherwise perplexing narrative details, small and large, attain a new clarity when interpreted in light of Platonic parallels. Most significant are those relating to a directly polytheistic mythical narrative context that complements (and in small details contradicts) the cosmic monotheism of Genesis 1: the appearance of a multiplicity of gods in both the First Creation Account (Gen 1:26) and the tale of the Garden of Eden (Gen 2:18 [LXX], 3:22); the contrast between the portraits of Elohim as supreme Creator in Genesis 1 and Yahweh as a storybook terrestrial god introduced in Genesis 2–3, and the marriages between gods and mortal women (Gen 6:1–4). The book of Genesis, like Plato's *Timaeus*, promoted two complementary visions of the divine realm of the gods: a transcendent philosophical monotheism manifested in the creation of the perfect *kosmos* at the dawn of time, and a conventional terrestrial polytheism that accommodated the popular beliefs and cults of tradition. Both of these carefully balanced Platonic theological elements were highly innovative: that a single supremely good eternally existent god created the heavens and earth, and that the pantheon of well-known terrestrial gods, his sons and daughters, were also universally good and worthy of honor.

8.1 The Emergence of Yahwistic Monotheism

If these conclusions are accepted, this suggests that Jewish monotheism was first introduced at a relatively late date, in the early Hellenistic Era, under the influence of Plato's *Timaeus* (cf. Wajdenbaum 2011: 86); and that the transcendent monotheistic god of Creation introduced in Genesis 1 was not initially identified with Yahweh, the local patron god of the Jews and Samaritans. In light of this we need to fundamentally reevaluate the history of Jewish and Samaritan monotheism and the eventual emergence of true Yahwistic monotheism. The transition from the original polytheistic cultural matrix of Iron II Judah and Samaria to the reimagining of Yahweh in monotheistic terms in the late Hellenistic and Roman Eras can be traced through six stages, two of which can be documented from evidence in the Pentateuch itself.

8.1.1 First Temple Yahwistic Polytheism

At least as early as during the dynasty of the Omrides (884–842 BCE; cf. Finkelstein 2013: 83), Yahweh was the national god of Bit-Humri (Samaria or Israel), with satellite temples constructed in Samaritan territories at Kuntillet 'Ajrud,¹ Nebo in Moab (Mesha Stele 17–18) and Jerusalem.² A critical appraisal of early evidence suggests that neither in Samaria nor in Judah was the existence of a local Yahweh cult incompatible with the worship of other traditional regional gods in the Iron II.³ Remains at Kuntillet 'Ajrud attest to worship of Yahweh and his consort Asherah

within a polytheistic cultural environment, alongside El, Baal and other regional deities. Jerusalem's temple also accommodated the worship of Baal and various other deities alongside Yahweh and Asherah.⁴

8.1.2 *Between the First and Second Temples*

With the emergence of Judah as an independent kingdom in the 730s BCE and the fall of Samaria in the 720s BCE, Jerusalem attained a new importance as an autonomous local center of Yahweh worship. The exact location and ultimate fate of the Iron II temple of "Yahweh of Samaria and his Asherah" remains obscure. Its destruction at the fall of Samaria seems a likely possibility in light of Assyrian inscriptions.⁵ The destruction of Jerusalem's temple by Nebuchadnezzar is better documented.⁶ In any case, neither Samaria nor Jerusalem possessed a temple to Yahweh in the Neo-Babylonian period. Contemporary inscriptional evidence tells us nothing of the local religion of Samaria and Judah under Babylonian rule. Archaeological continuity in both Samaria and Judah across the Neo-Babylonian period⁷ suggests that the local culture (including its polytheistic religion) remained fundamentally unchanged. The prosaic polytheism found in the exilic Judean communities in Babylonia, where Yahwism accommodated the worship of Babylonian deities, shows no indication of hostility towards other gods, corroborating this picture.

8.1.3 *The Persian Period*

A modest new temple to Yahweh was constructed ca. 516 BCE at Jerusalem, with imperial permission, and a larger temple ca. 450 BCE on Mount Gerizim (Magen 2007). It is possible that these two temples, unlike the earlier Iron II cultic installations, were dedicated exclusively to Yahweh,⁸ but it goes beyond the evidence to suggest that these temples displaced or abrogated the local worship of other gods. It appears certain that Yah (Yahweh) was worshipped alongside other gods in a prosaic polytheistic cultural environment in Babylonia,⁹ Egypt,¹⁰ Idumea,¹¹ Samaria,¹² and, arguably, Judah,¹³ especially on evidence of the Elephantine papyri.¹⁴ The old idea that monotheism emerged as a result of Persian influences thus lacks credible contemporary evidence and should be abandoned (cf. the critique by Mark Smith [2001: 165–6]).

8.1.4 *Hellenistic Era Cosmic Monotheism*

While Greek natural philosophers of the Classical Era had developed the notion of a single eternal, incorporeal god active at the formation of the *kosmos*, the appearance of monotheism in Judah and Samaria lacks support from archaeological or epigraphical finds from pre-Hellenistic times. The earliest evidence for monotheism among Jews and Samaritans is found in

the Pentateuch and other biblical literary texts that are best understood as having been authored in the early Hellenistic Era (Lemche 1993; Gmirkin 2006: 240–56, 2016: 91–102, 2017: 261–9). Specifically, the Primordial History of Genesis 1–11 draws on Plato’s account of the eternal creator of the *kosmos* and his terrestrial offspring in *Timaeus* and *Critias*, adapting them to an audience of biblical readers in a simple story format authored by educated elites present at Alexandria ca. 270 BCE. The cosmic monotheism of Genesis 1 arguably represents the earliest expression of monotheism among the Jews and Samaritans, alongside the equally novel benevolent terrestrial polytheism of the rest of Genesis.

8.1.5 Combative Yahwistic Monolatry

In both the stories and legal content of Exodus–Joshua one sees the rejection of benevolent terrestrial polytheism in favor of a Yahwistic monolatry that equated the local patron god of the Jews and the Samaritans with the creator of the universe and which opposed the gods of the nations and their cultic practices. Given that Exodus–Joshua was arguably written contemporaneously with Genesis (Gmirkin 2016: 240–56, 2017: 261–9), yet from a radically different perspective, this suggests a fundamental clash in philosophy and agenda between authorial groups involved in the creation of the Hexateuch ca. 270 BCE.

8.1.6 Yahwistic Terrestrial Monotheism

Within the Hebrew Bible, a true monotheism that denied the existence of other gods is found only in Second Isaiah (Smith 2001: 179–94), written sometime in the period ca. 270–185 BCE.¹⁵ Monotheistic claims with respect to the Jewish God appears in various texts of the Jewish Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha starting as early as ca. 175–150 BCE.¹⁶ The Hellenistic Era thus witnessed the emergence of true Yahwistic monotheism for which the Jewish nation became known (Tacitus, *Histories* 5.4). This novel, post-biblical monotheism sometimes sought to accommodate enlightened philosophical monotheism found in the Greek world (cf. *Letter of Aristeas* 15–16, which identified the Jewish god with the supreme god of the Greeks), but more often entailed the rejection of the gods of the nations as actual gods, replaced by a new characterization as fallen angels or wicked demons (both the Enoch literature and the Dead Sea Scrolls). This was not the philosophical monotheism of Plato and the Greeks, which gave recognition to a pantheon of benevolent lesser gods beneath the supreme cosmic deity, but a combative and nationalistic monotheism that rejected the existence of the gods, other than the patron god Yahweh.

The study of the Primordial History thus directly illuminates the earliest history of Jewish monotheism, which came about as a result of the philosophical agenda of Platonic circles among the authors of the Pentateuch,

and Jewish monolatry, which originated as a conservative reaction to the subordination of Yahweh to the new cosmic god of Creation. The remainder of this chapter will explore in closer detail the original theological program of the philosophical authors of Genesis and how it came to be derailed by the proponents of traditional Yahwism whose theological views prevailed in the creation of the Mosaic foundation myth of Exodus–Joshua.

8.2 The Three Types of Greek Theologies and Gods

This section will discuss the three distinct categories of gods in the Greek world in their social context: the gods of nation and cult, the gods of poetry and literature and the gods of the philosophers. This will prove useful in understanding the emergence of cosmic monotheism in Greek thought, the dangers that this entailed for philosophers (§8.3), and how these real and present dangers influenced Plato's theology (§8.4). These observations directly carry over to our understanding of the Pentateuch, both in its implementation of Plato's theology in Genesis (§8.6) and its hostile reception of Plato's ideas in later books (§§8.7–8.8). One sees the same three categories of gods and theologies evidenced in the interplay between Yahweh as local god of cult and nation, Yahweh as literary figure in the stories of the Pentateuch and the novel cosmic god first introduced in Genesis 1.

Both Greeks and Romans recognized distinct categories of theological traditions in ancient times that shaped their knowledge of the gods (Mikalson 2010: 213–4). The most explicit surviving formulation was that of the prolific Roman scholar Marcus Terentius Varro (116–27 BCE), as quoted in Augustine, *City of God* 6.5. Varro identified three distinct kinds of theology (*genera theologiae*): mythic (*theologia fabularis*), political (*theologia civilis*), and philosophical (*theologia naturalis*). His contemporary Quintus Mucius Scaevola, Pontifex Maximus of Rome in 89–82 BCE, presented a comparable analysis: the three types of gods, he said, were those promoted by poets, statesmen and philosophers (Augustine, *City of God* 4.27). Similar tripartite divisions of theology were found explicitly in Aëtius (Pseudo-Plutarch), *De Placita Philosophorum* 1.6.9 and Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospels* 4.1 and implicitly in the writings of many others (Lieberg 1979). The picture in all these sources was the same. Mythic theology was that found in the writings of the poets and performed in the theater. Civic theology was that recognized in the laws of each *polis* of the ancient world and upheld by city officials and priests. Natural theology reflected the universal god whose existence and nature was the subject of study by the philosophers. The aim of mythic theology was the amusement of the populace, the aim of civic theology to promote public piety through the enforcement of religious laws, and the aim of philosophical or natural theology was to uncover and teach the true nature of the gods (Augustine, *City of God* 6.6). Theology, broadly understood as traditions regarding gods and religion, thus fell into distinct

categories with distinct spheres of operation and characterized by recognizable intellectual and social divides.

While Varro's distinction among mythic, civic and philosophical theologies was perhaps the best known formulation, it is not thought to have been the first. Varro, writing in Latin, probably drew on some earlier Hellenistic source, as evidenced by his use of the Greek noun *theologia* and Greek adjectives *mythicon*, *politicon* (perhaps) and *physicon* (Jaeger 1936: 3; Lieberg 1979: 30–1). The Stoics are the favorite candidates for having originated this classification, although insufficient evidence exists to identify a specific Stoic philosopher (Jaeger 1936: 3). Whoever identified the three forms of theology likely took the writings of Plato into account. Plato's dialogues extensively addressed the views of the gods as propounded by the poets (notably in *Republic*) and by the Greek civic cults (notably in *Euthyphro*), besides extensively developing his own philosophical ideas about the nature of the supreme universal god of creation (notably in *Timaeus*). Indeed, it was Plato who originated the term “theology” (literally, “the study of god”) as a neologism in *Republic* 2.379a to describe traditions about the gods recorded by such revered poets as Homer and Hesiod. Although Plato did not formally categorize theology into civic, mythic and philosophical—and indeed, like Aristotle, applied the term *theology* primarily to the tales about the gods in poetic literature (Jaeger 1936: 4; Most 2003: 311–2)—he did discuss the gods and religion through these three distinct lenses in his various dialogues (Mikalson 2010: 17, 219–28, 236–41). These three categories will therefore be usefully imposed on Plato's ideas about the gods and their various advocates in society, despite the terminological anachronism involved. The same will be true for our later discussion of the gods as presented in biblical literature and the Jewish and Samaritan cults.

8.2.1 Civic Theology

The oldest of the three forms of theology was the civic or political theology found in the Greek city-states. Every Greek city and land had its own gods supported by local cultic institutions, often of great antiquity. Many Greek city-states and perhaps the majority of the major Greek gods and goddesses traced back to the Bronze Age, centuries before the earliest Greek poetic writings of the late Archaic and early Classical eras, and before the first of the Greek natural philosophers. Civic theology had both national and cultic aspects. Local cults were associated with priesthoods, sacred calendar and festivals, and distinctive sacrifices and rites. The rules governing these religious practices constituted a body of *nomoi* or sacred laws and customs. In earliest times these were termed unwritten laws, a special oral tradition handed down among religious specialists such as priests and exegetes (Gmirkin 2017: 137–8). These previously unwritten laws were written down and published for public display in Athens around 400 BCE, from which time

they also appear in inscriptions in other Greek city-states (Gmirkin 2017: 137–8, 200, 212 n. 62). (The process is analogous to the transition from oral law to written biblical laws in the Pentateuch; cf. Gmirkin 2017: 137–8, 174 n. 350.) Whether unwritten or written, these sacred laws governing local cultic practices were recognized and enforced by the civic authorities in each *polis*. Hence descriptions of civic theology state that this form of discourse about the gods was the special domain of statesmen and priests (Augustine, *City of God* 4.27; 6.5) and embodied in the *nomoi* or laws of every city (Augustine, *City of God* 6.5–7; cf. Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospels* 4.1; Pseudo-Plutarch, *Placita Philosophorum* 1.6). The overlap of the nationalistic and the cultic in civic theology will play prominently in the discussion of the theology of Exodus–Joshua in §8.7.

Cults, with temples, priests, oracles and rituals, existed to a large degree to serve the *polis* in which they were established. (See Mikalson 2010: 221–7 on *polis* gods.) Civic theology, aimed at promoting public piety by means of enforcing the special religious laws peculiar to every city-state, was the only one of the three theologies with forced participation and legal consequences for non-participation. The civic laws of Athens that were an expression of this civic theology’s regulation of religion primarily aimed to enforce the religious rites associated with the 12 gods of the Acropolis. The civic gods were guardians of the state and were consulted for guidance on various important matters in order to ensure that the gods favored and protected the nation. Universal participation in the cult of the *polis* was therefore mandatory and deemed an essential element of civic life. Acts of impiety were widely considered a serious danger to the state. An outstanding example of this was the impious mocking rites and the public mutilation of the statues of Hermes by the rowdy associates of Alcibiades in 415 BCE. Athens was at war with Sicily at the time and these acts of sacrilege were thought to have resulted in the destruction of the Athenian fleet at Syracuse (Gmirkin 2017: 132–3, 171 nn. 320–6 and literature cited there). By undermining the recognized gods of the *polis*, the introduction of new gods, especially foreign gods, was considered not only theologically subversive, but an act of overt hostility against the state. Like the biblical laws of Deuteronomy, impiety laws at Athens took the worship of unauthorized foreign gods as an act of political rebellion (cf. Gmirkin 2017: 129–33). Atheism, the failure to recognize the pantheon of traditional gods, could also be charged as an act of civic subversion.

8.2.2 *Mythic Theology*

The mythical past, as told by poets, gave a rich storied history to the ancient doings of the gods. Significant overlap existed between the gods of myth and the *polis* gods, who were naturally a favorite topic for Greek myth and legend, although the stories about the gods in Greek literature also included those not worshipped in local cults or formally celebrated in the civic calendar.

Greek myths conveyed theological traditions in a variety of forms. Homer's *Iliad* recounted the participation of the gods on both sides of the Trojan War. Hesiod gave a comprehensive family lineage of the gods in his *Theogony*. Greek tragedies by Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides often featured the gods and their intervention in human affairs in legendary times. References to the gods in ancient times ornamented the poetry of Homer, Pindar and many others. Such literary traditions about the gods, performed on stage in theatrical productions, composed for public events as the Olympic competitions, recited in poetry competitions, read and memorized in schools or told by mothers for entertainment of their children, provided a pathway for the religious enculturation of the populace, a form of education that was earlier, more ubiquitous, and arguably more influential than the limited formal view of the gods presented within the rites of the civic cult.

Despite their cultural influence, mythological traditions were the least regulated of the three theologies. The stories told by poets and playwrights were recognized as entertaining fiction, a permitted form of lie. There were tacit rules surrounding fiction-writing that ennobled the lies poets told about both gods and heroic figures from the Greek mythical and legendary past. Tragedies (that is, dramatic theatrical works of serious subject matter) were almost always set in ancient times undocumented by historical records. As such, poetic tales set in legendary and mythical times were unfalsifiable. The poets could give free rein to their imagination, with the only constraint that the stories they told were basically compatible with accepted Greek oral and religious traditions. Thus, well-known Greek myths were dramatized with familiar characters (including gods) taken from the original tradition engaging in staged scenes with invented dialogue, a sort of noble visual and auditory reimagining of the tale, like a modern period piece or historical novel. Plato characterized such tales about gods and heroes set in ancient times as "noble lies" and noted that such myths, though false, might still be used to convey divine or ethical truths useful for inculcating piety and obedience in the citizenry.¹⁷ Plato's student, Aristotle, additionally observed the cathartic value of serious tragedy, which allowed audiences to vicariously experience the intense emotional scenes enacted on stage (*Poetics* 6.1449b), frequently including the horrors that proceeded from impious moral decisions. The Greeks thus recognized the value of theater and poetry as entertaining and cathartic as well as ethically and culturally educational, and consequently gave poets great freedom of expression. Theater and cult were viewed as important aspects of *polis* life, and poetic imaginative expression was a valued complement to rigorously enforced religious laws and customs.

8.2.3 Philosophical Theology

The third category of theology was that of the natural philosophers. Natural theology or philosophical theology (the two are interchangeable as applied

to the Greeks; cf. Gerson 1990: 1–4) was a relatively late development that arose from scientific inquiries into the origins, the ultimate *arche*, of the *kosmos*. As a rule, most natural philosophers arrived at two types of *arche* or cause for the present universe. The first *arche* was the material cause in the form of the elements present at the birth (or cyclic birth) of the *kosmos*, whether water (Thales), fire (Heraclitus and Zeno) the four elements of earth, water, air and fire (Empedocles) or other such primordial elements. The second *arche* was the organizing principle that set the elements into motion and steered the organization of primordial elements into the present ocean, land, air, heavens and the celestial bodies. Since self-initiating, self-directed motion was regarded by the Greeks as a manifestation of living, intelligent *psyche* or soul, the natural philosophers often deduced the presence of a cosmic, divine intelligence at the *genesis* of the *kosmos*. It was thought that scientific, rational inquiry might shed light on the nature of this cosmic god discovered by the philosophers. Some claimed that this universal god was one of the primordial elements, such as fire (Heraclitus, Zeno) or air (Anaximenes, Diogenes of Apollonia). Others claimed the god was an intelligence distinct from the material elements, yet all-pervasive throughout the universe. This intelligence was given the name *Nous* (Xenophanes, Anaxagoras, Socrates, Plato) or *Logos* (Heraclitus), which was understood as either disembodied (Anaxagoras, Plato) or having the whole universe as its body (Xenophanes, Heraclitus, Zeno). Other particulars about the cosmic god imagined by the philosophers were offered in respect to its thoughts, its powers, its relationship to and consideration for humans and other life forms, and its ongoing role in the governing of the *kosmos*, if any. Such theories on the ultimate nature of the divine, justified by scientific arguments, and usually presented in the context of a cosmogony, constituted what Varro termed natural theology.

It is important to note the intrinsically hypothetical character of the philosopher's god. The inferred existence of a cosmic god present at the formation of the *kosmos* is an example of abductive reasoning in which a plausible cause is inferred from an observed effect (Gerson 1990: 2–11), a type of reasoning often used to generate hypotheses in science. In this instance, the phenomenon to be explained was the *kosmos* itself. Since every effect must trace back to a cause, the present universe must be explicable in terms of some ultimate cause that acted on the disordered primordial matter in existence at the *genesis* of the *kosmos*. The natural philosophers posited a divine cosmic intelligence as that ultimate cause and offered various competing hypotheses as to the specific nature of this supreme creative intelligence. Such scientific hypotheses were presented in written prose or poetic treatises or presented as lectures to their students or colleagues. The novel philosopher's god was not offered as the basis for a new form of religion, but as a hypothesized offshoot of science.

8.2.4 Monotheism, Polytheism and the Three Theologies

The discussion of the three theologies of the Graeco-Roman world will help clarify exactly what is meant by cosmic monotheism and terrestrial polytheism in the present volume. Terrestrial polytheism refers to the many deities recognized by civic and religious authorities in their cities and temples, sanctioned by the state and celebrated in public festivities, each god operating with its own domain and special sphere of action in the present *kosmos*, as specified by civic theology. Terrestrial polytheism also refers to the gods of the myth and legend as told by poets, embodying both the city's oral and written traditions of the past and ongoing literary creativity in the present. Cosmic monotheism, by contrast, refers to the supreme intelligent deity who existed prior to the present *kosmos* and its terrestrial gods, the universal god of creation hypothesized under natural theology. The philosopher's god is not an example of henotheism, as typically found in the Greek and Ancient Near Eastern worlds, of a chief god who is the first among equals. The cosmic philosopher's god was of a different order, both prior to and vastly more powerful than the lesser gods of terrestrial polytheism. The gods of Greek religion and myth were not credited with the creation of the *kosmos*, nor did they exist eternally in the past, but were generated or born into their respective families in distant mythical times, each having their own *genesis*, as narrated in Hesiod's *Theogony*. *Xaos* alone was perhaps without a beginning. The "terrestrial" gods (the term is here used loosely) each had their own specified domain within the world, residing on earth in seas, streams, woodlands, mountains, temples or *polis* (if the god of a local city-state); or living on Mount Olympus, the Isles of the Blessed, or some other mythical yet terrestrial realm; or in the lands of dawn and sunset, or traversing across the heavens in fiery chariots; or ruling the gloomy, dark realms of the underworld; but always imagined as dwelling within the present physical realm, active within the terrestrial material past, present and future, in the company of the other gods. The philosopher's god, by contrast, existed before the present *kosmos*, alone and in that sense monotheistic, either entirely separate from the material realm or all-pervasive throughout it, a cosmic consciousness whose thoughts and intelligence single-mindedly directed all matter. Unlike the terrestrial gods, who possessed immortal bodies, but bodies nevertheless (Plato, *Phaedrus* 246c–d; cf. Bodéüs 2000: 101, 117–9), and which could be imagined by means of statues and paintings that helped promote belief in them (Plato, *Laws* 11.930e–931a; cf. Mikalson 2010: 210–1), the cosmic god, as a universal presence, was necessarily aniconic (*Timaeus* 28a,c, 31b, 37a, 52a). This universal, all-powerful god of the Greek philosophers' imagination corresponds closely with modern conceptions of monotheism, despite the later population of the earth by the gods of Greek religion and myth, subsequent to the creation of the *kosmos*. The universality of the philosopher's god is indicated by the formulation of the gods' respective domains in Varro's

Antiquities: the civic gods pertained to every city, and the gods of the poets pertained to the stage, while the god of the philosophers pertained to the whole world (Augustine, *City of God* 6.5–6).

Finally, it is useful to consider the three social domains in which civic, mythic and natural theologies were operative. The three competing theological views each had their own authorities and operated within their own distinct social sphere (Most 2003: 308). Of the three, only the civic cult, with its magistrates, legislators and religious officials, had the full authority and power of the state. The poets, whose aim was only artistic excellence and public entertainment with their brilliant noble fictions about the past, ruled the theater but had no real authority, their imaginative, lyrical storytelling inspiring admiration, but laying no claim to truth. The philosophers, interestingly, had free rein to criticize the poets for the bad doings of the gods portrayed in their poems and theater productions; both Xenophanes and Plato criticized them freely, with no repercussions. The civic gods were another matter. Natural philosophy was normally confined to the universities as an advanced subject of learned lectures, with virtually no impact on the citizens of the *polis* outside the bounds of the academy. But to the extent that philosophical monotheism was seen as displacing or undermining the civic gods, the philosophers were subject to being charged with atheism, a crime carrying the penalty of death under Athenian impiety laws. Socrates fell victim to such accusations of atheism despite his protestations of loyalty to the civic gods. Plato worked hard to ensure that his philosophy both privately promoted the study of the cosmic philosopher's god and publicly supported the traditional civic gods in order to avoid prosecution. This conflict between the philosophers and the civic authorities will be discussed in the section that deals with the Greek invention of monotheism and the dangers it posed to the natural philosophers; a topic that will prove relevant to the later discussion of cosmic monotheism and the civic theology in the Pentateuch.

8.3 The Greek Invention of Monotheism

The Greek natural philosophers were the inventors of monotheism. Greek monotheism did not evolve from Greek polytheism in a process of gradual enlightenment, as was once posited (Taylor 1871; Frazer 1911–1915). Rather, monotheism was introduced suddenly and controversially into the Greek world by a few brilliant, highly educated individuals, the first natural philosophers. In conjunction with their theories on cosmogony, these philosophers introduced the idea of an omnipresent cosmic divine force that helped shape the present universe. Several of the Presocratic natural philosophers (discussed in Chapter 3) postulated the existence of a single god, the divine intelligence present at the dawn of the *kosmos*, who set the universe into motion and thereby initiated the organization of the world.

8.3.1 *Xenophanes of Colophon (ca. 570-475 BCE)*

Xenophanes criticized the traditional stories about the anthropomorphic gods, but posited the existence of a single, supreme god who ruled the universe by his omniscient, omnipresent intelligence (Most 2003: 307). With his abstract philosophical arguments regarding the nature of the supreme universal god, Xenophanes was arguably the first natural theologian (Gerson 1990: 17)—unless one assigns that honor to Plato (Naddaf 2004)—and the first “Greek philosophical monotheist” (Gerson 1990: 5). The existence of Xenophanes’ supreme god, “the greatest among gods and men,” did not, however, rule out the existence of lesser gods (Jaeger 1936: 43–4), since Xenophanes also appeared to acknowledge the traditional gods of city and cult. While Xenophanes rejected some of the absurdities of mythic theology, his cosmic philosopher’s god thus seemingly coexisted peacefully with the conventional lesser gods of civic theology: as Gerson (1990: 18) observed, the categories of monotheism and polytheism were not mutually exclusive among the Greeks. Despite his famous criticism of the anthropomorphic gods of mythology, his accommodation of ordinary civic polytheism apparently protected him from the repercussions his cosmic monotheism might have otherwise entailed.

8.3.2 *Heraclitus of Ephesus (ca. 544-484 BCE)*

Heraclitus called the divine intelligence that ordered the *kosmos* and governed the present universe *Logos*, which he equated with the divine element of fire. His opinions on mythic theology are unknown. While Heraclitus appeared to accommodate the notion of gods and demigods, he criticized sacrifices for misdeeds and prayers to anthropomorphic statues of the gods as misguided (Aristocritus, *Theosophia* 68; cf. Kirk and Raven 1957: 211–2).

8.3.3 *Anaxagoras of Clazomenae (ca. 500–427 BCE)*

Arguably the greatest of the natural theologians prior to Plato, Anaxagoras inferred the existence of a cosmic intelligence present at the formation of the *kosmos*. Anaxagoras held that there had always existed two types of basic entities: the ingredients that made up the universe and *Nous* (Mind or Intelligence). Anaxagoras viewed *Nous* as a supreme and seemingly eternal god, a divine intelligence that infused the universe with life and set it into motion. In his cosmogony, Anaxagoras claimed that the form of the present *kosmos*, once set into motion, could thereafter be attributed to purely physical processes, as the vortex of swirling matter ejected the celestial bodies of sun and moon and fiery stars into the rotating heavens, with the earth and seas settling into the center. The theories of Anaxagoras were arguably the most scientifically advanced of the Presocratic philosophers, a triumph in terms of presenting a theory of the nature of God and his role in

the origins of the present *kosmos* within a purely scientifically deductive framework.

Although the genius of the Greek natural philosophers gave rise to the modern scientific view of the world, this accomplishment was not achieved without considerable personal risk. Philosophy, astronomy and science were not safe pursuits in Athens of the fifth and fourth centuries BCE. The cosmic, primordial monotheism of the philosophers, inextricably bound up with scientific theories on cosmogony, introduced a novel god to the Greek world and caused a backlash from contemporary religionists and politicians who viewed the new natural theology as posing a serious challenge to the conservative religious traditions of the civic cults of Athens. So profoundly were the Greeks attached to their *polis* gods that monotheism was branded a dangerous form of atheism or impiety prosecutable under a new Athenian law—the Law of Diopites—passed within the life time of Anaxagoras around 438 BCE (Plutarch, *Perikles* 32.1; cf. Gmirkin 2017: 131–3).

Anaxagoras, despite being the first scientific creationist (Sedley 2007: 8–9), was branded a materialist and atheist. The most famous and respected voice of philosophical monotheism in his day, he was prosecuted as an atheist for denying the existence of the ordinary Olympian gods worshipped at Athens. His philosophical writings and lectures stimulated the introduction of the first law against impiety in Athens, which specifically targeted scientific theories on cosmogony as atheistic (Gmirkin 2017: 131, 170 n. 309). This attack on Anaxagoras and his theories is thought to have been motivated, in part, by his close friendship with Pericles (Plutarch, *Perikles* 32.1; cf. Gmirkin 2017: 170 n. 316; Mansfeld 1979, 1980), so that both politics and religious conservatism played their parts in his prosecution. It was only Anaxagoras's flight from Athens before his trial that prevented his execution.

8.3.4 *Socrates of Athens (ca. 469–399 BCE)*

Socrates, following Anaxagoras, also gave *Nous* the role of creator of the *kosmos*. But Socrates was dissatisfied with the limited role Anaxagoras gave his new cosmic deity. Socrates believed that this supreme cosmic god must have played a more extensive, active role at creation, and that his purpose should have been visibly evident in the organization of the *kosmos* (Plato, *Phaedo* 97b–99c), and in particular creations such as man (Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 1.4; 4.3). But Socrates did not pursue these ideas to any extent.

According to Xenophon, Socrates did not develop his own cosmogony, since he considered theories about the physical origins of the universe such as that of Anaxagoras to detract from the role of the divine (Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 4.7.6–7). According to Plato, Socrates showed some initial enthusiasm for the theory of Anaxagoras that *Nous* (Mind) was the divine force that moved and organized the material universe, but was disappointed that after setting the universe into motion, *Nous* seemingly played no further role, since mechanical or physical forces explained the subsequent structure

of the earth and heavens (Plato, *Phaedo* 97b–98a). Socrates therefore abandoned the study of cosmogony (*Phaedo* 98a–b). Nevertheless, when Socrates was arrested (like Anaxagoras) on charges of atheism, part of the evidence presented against him at trial was his support for the theories of Anaxagoras (Plato, *Apology* 26d). Socrates chose not to flee Athens but rather to face his accusers at trial. Convicted in large part for his perceived atheistic belief in the novel god of the philosophers whose existence was seen as a challenge to the ordinary gods of civic religion, Socrates was executed by administration of the poison hemlock.¹⁸ The trial and execution of Socrates is the foremost historical illustration of the potential conflict between natural and civic theology.

8.3.5 Plato of Athens (429–347 BCE)

Plato, along with other students of Socrates, was forced to abandon Athens in the aftermath of Socrates' conviction and execution for impiety in 399 BCE. In the Golden Age of Classical Greece, despite the unprecedented flourishing of the life of the mind, philosophy was still a dangerous profession, and the promotion of monotheism on a cosmic scale was viewed as an atheistic assault on ordinary religious institutions of civic theology.

Returning to Athens ca. 389 BCE after a decade in exile abroad, Plato later founded the Academy, a new school of philosophy. Plato viewed inquiries into the philosopher's god *Nous* to be central to philosophical studies at the Academy, and speculations about this supreme transcendent deity ran throughout his dialogues, including *Timaeus*, where *Nous* was envisioned in concrete mythological form as the Demiurge or Craftsman (Menn 1995; cf. Gmirkin 2017: 278 n. 30). A serious ongoing concern was how he and his students at the Academy could safely pursue philosophical investigation into a supreme cosmic deity within the polytheistic, storied social context of fourth century BCE Athens, yet avoid prosecution under Athenian impiety laws. Plato devised two well-thought-out long-term strategies to promote a free environment for university-level intellectual and scientific pursuits while simultaneously neutralizing the threat posed by prevailing conservative Athenian religious beliefs: the incorporation of popular polytheistic religion into his philosophical theories, and the invention of a new form of government in which the university would rule the nation and administer its religious beliefs.

Several of Plato's dialogues refer to the divine origin of the *kosmos* by a Creator that he called *Nous* (Anaxagoras's term) or the Demiurge. According to Plato, the god of creation was the very essence of intelligence, goodness and beauty, invisible, separate from the visible *kosmos* he created as a living ensouled creature in his own image. Everything he created, like him, was good, perfect and beautiful. His visible handiwork was the rotating starry heavens, proof of the beauty, purpose and intelligence inherent in the universe and its Creator. Plato held that the supreme god of creation and

maker of the starry celestial realm could only be known by means of careful scientific investigations in astronomy and cosmogony (*Timaeus* 47a–c; 68e–69a, 90a–c; *Laws* 7.821c–d; 12.966e–967e; cf. Morrow 1993: 347–8, 445, 506), a philosophical pursuit best conducted in a university setting by theologically sophisticated philosophers, such as those he trained at Plato’s Academy in Athens. Varro later observed that natural theology’s home was the university, where philosophers could discuss their theories about God without impinging on the cultic life of the city (Augustine, *City of God* 6.5).

The incorporeal, eternal philosopher’s god, the subject of natural theology, was thus the supreme god of creation, maker of the starry celestial realm, and subject to investigation by philosophers, primarily by means of astronomy and cosmogony. Yet many Greek philosophers, including both Socrates and Plato, were willing to also acknowledge the existence of the traditional Greek gods of the *polis*. Despite his commitment to the study of the incorporeal eternal god of Creation as the highest task of philosophy, Plato actively promoted the corporeal, anthropomorphic civic gods of the Greeks in *Timaeus*, *Critias*, *Laws* and other dialogues. While Plato’s *Timaeus* further developed the idea of *Nous* or Demiurge as creator and supreme ruler of the *kosmos*, Plato also postured as the champion of the traditional Olympian gods. Plato’s *Timaeus* was the first text to combine a cosmic monotheism based on philosophy with a terrestrial polytheism based on civic religion and popular myth. In *Timaeus* 40e–41a, Plato endorsed the gods listed in Hesiod’s *Theogony* as the sons and daughters of the Demiurge. In Plato’s *Laws*, he mandated the worship of the ordinary civic gods of the Greeks on pain of death under an impiety law that mirrored and even strengthened the one in Athens (*Laws* 10.909d–910c; 11.932e–933e; cf. Gmirkin 2017: 132). By accommodating the traditional gods and goddesses and incorporating them into his cosmogony and his political theories, Plato countered potential accusations of impiety and atheism leveled so effectively against Anaxagoras, Socrates and others (cf. Wajdenbaum 2011: 57), safeguarding the practice of philosophy with its speculations about a supreme cosmic deity responsible for the creation of the universe.

8.4 Plato’s Theology

In the current section, it is convenient to analyze Plato’s philosophy from the perspective of natural theology, mythic theology and civic theology, dividing the last into his theories on government and religion, both of which displayed pronounced theological concerns. All these issues will later be presented as mirrored, in one way or another, in the Hexateuch.

8.4.1 Plato’s Natural Theology

In many respects Plato’s natural theology was in line with his predecessors, the Presocratic philosophers. He accepted the eternity of matter and held

that the distribution of that matter in earth, seas, sky and heavens within the present *kosmos* was a phenomenon that required a scientific explanation, an effect that required an ultimate cause. In agreement with many of the Presocratics, Plato held that the beautiful, orderly arrangement of matter in the observed world could only have come into existence through the agency of a singular supreme eternal divine intelligence. Like Xenophanes and Anaxagoras, he even gave that cosmic all-powerful presence the name *Nous* or Intellect. Nevertheless, Plato (by means of the fictionalized voice of his teacher, Socrates) criticized his philosophical predecessors in two key respects: that Anaxagoras, in particular, failed to attribute an active purpose to *Nous* in guiding the organization of the *kosmos* (Plato, *Phaedo* 97b–99c); and that the common emphasis on purely impersonal, mechanical and physical processes in the ordering of the *kosmos* amounted to atheism (Plato, *Laws* 10.886d–e). Instead, Plato envisioned his philosopher’s god as an active, purposeful intelligence involved in every stage of the ordering of the *kosmos*, like a Craftsman (*Demiourgos*) fashioning a beautiful work of art (*Timaeus* 28a–b, 30c,e, 37c).

Like his philosophical predecessors, Plato utilized abductive reasoning to infer the nature of the hypothetical god who fashioned the *kosmos*. Plato was explicit that his Demiurge was hypothetical and his reconstruction of the sequence of creation “a likely story” for which certainty could not be claimed, only plausibility (*Timaeus* 28c, 29c–d, 30b–c, 48d–e, 72d, 90e). According to Plato’s abductive reasoning, the ultimate cause for the *genesis* of the *kosmos* was not only divine and supremely intelligent, but also supremely good and purposeful (*Timaeus* 29a,e, 30a–d, 37c, 41a–b, 46c–e, 53b, 68e, 71d–e). Plato inferred this from the beauty and order of the *kosmos*, especially from the ornamentation and rational orderly rotational movement of the stars in the farthest heavens (*Timaeus* 40a–b, 47a–c; *Republic* 7.529a–530b; *Laws* 10.886a,d–e; 12.966e–967e; cf. Morrow 1993: 347–8, 445, 506). A profound philosophical innovation (Most 2003: 311), Plato postulated that the central quality of the cosmic god was his goodness (*Timaeus* 29a,e, 30a–e, 41b, 46c–d, 68e; cf. Flannery 2010: 86). The cosmic god’s driving purpose was closely related: to bring rational order to the material universe, insofar as this was possible (*Timaeus* 30a–c, 42e, 46c–e, 48a, 53b, 56c, 69b, 71d–e), and thereby to fashion the *kosmos* as a living, perfect image of his own goodness (*Timaeus* 29a,e, 30c,e, 37c–d).

The exploration of the goodness of the supreme deity was a central feature of Plato’s philosophy. In studying the essential goodness of the divine realm, as inferred by reason, Plato’s philosophy revealed its profound interest in natural theology, a subject that permeates his discussion of cosmogony, astronomy, ethics, education, law and government. In Plato’s natural theology, the philosopher’s god was not only supremely intelligent and powerful, but ethical, just, and the fountainhead of all goodness. The goodness of god and his offspring in Plato’s philosophy was at odds with the mythic and civic theologies of his contemporaries, both of which

accommodated bad behaviors by the gods. The essential goodness of the cosmic god of the universe was also a profound advance over Plato's philosophical predecessors, who failed to single out the intrinsically ethical nature of the supreme god as a divine characteristic (Most 2003: 311). God's concern for justice as an expression of divine goodness, rewarding human goodness and punishing wickedness, was another uniquely Platonic innovation (Mikalson 2010: 203–6).

Having established that God's most essential quality was his goodness (*Timaeus* 29e; *Phaedrus* 247a; *Republic* 2.381b–382e), and that God desired the universe to partake in that divine goodness, Plato claimed that humanity's aim, on both an individual and a societal level, should be to become like God (*Theaetetus* 176b; cf. Flannery 2010: 86): intelligent, orderly, just and good. Since philosophers, not poets, and not cultic officials, were the true experts on the nature of God and ethics, it followed that the philosophers should take a leading role as an active social force in guiding humanity to fulfill its divine purpose. Much as the Demiurge transformed the primordial chaos of the preexisting material world, imposing order by means of divine "persuasion" (*Timaeus* 48a, 56c), insofar as this was possible, so it was the obligation of philosophers as human agents of divine rationality to promote goodness, rationality and order throughout society by means of every available persuasive tool. Plato's dialogues can be viewed as transformative persuasive essays that philosophically explored the nature of art (*Ion*), beauty (*Greater Hippias*), love (*Phaedrus*), self-control (*Charmides*), holiness (*Euthyphro*), virtue (*Laches*), justice (*Republic*), statesmanship (*Statesman*) and the ideal form of government (*Laws*), bringing rationality and order to these important subjects. One may see both *Republic* and *Laws*, in particular, as part of Plato's ambitious philosophical agenda to reform society by persuasive, rational means, carefully outlining the constitution, laws and other social institutions by which this might be achieved. Plato's understanding of philosophy as a transformative reforming force mirrored his unique natural philosophy that viewed the divine as a force of good active throughout the material universe.

8.4.2 *Plato's Mythic Theology*

Plato held that the poets, like prophets, lawgivers and lovers, were inspired by the gods,¹⁹ but that their divine gift was not under their own rational control.²⁰ Philosophers alone were both divinely inspired and in full command of their rational faculties.²¹ Plato held that the writings of the philosophers (and his writings in particular) were every bit as inspired as the poets (Gaiser 1984; Gmirkin 2017: 284 n. 68). Much like the poets famously prayed to the Muses for inspiration (such as the invocation of the Muses in Homer and Hesiod²²), Plato likewise had the fictionalized natural Locrian philosopher Timaeus pray to the gods for inspiration (*Timaeus* 27b–c, 47d–e) in narrating his "plausible myth" about the origins of the *kosmos*

(*Timaeus* 29c–d, 30b–c, 44d, 48d–e, 72d, 90e); Critias also prayed to the gods before telling the tall tale of Atlantis (*Critias* 106a–b), which Plato hoped might rival Homer’s epic myths (*Timaeus* 21d).

Plato noted that there was “from of old a quarrel between philosophy and poetry” (*Republic* 10.607b; cf. Mikalson 2010: 18, 213; Most 2011). Plato understood that whoever tells the stories has the power to shape souls, especially in the impressionable young (*Laws* 2.653b, 659d–e; 664a–c; Brisson 1998: 75–86; cf. *Protagoras* 325c–326a). Plato recognized the power of myth to fashion beliefs and condition behaviors and believed that myths about the gods in ancient times, properly told, could be quite useful for inculcating positive beliefs in the young and in ordinary citizens (Plato, *Laws* 10.886c–d; cf. Gmirkin 2017: 279 n. 36, 287 n. 103), bringing them to virtue and inspiring loyalty to their national laws and institutions. But Plato also argued that bad character and deeds were encouraged by poetic tales of the gods performing wicked deeds, or human wickedness being forgiven and going unpunished due to sacrifices offered as bribes to the gods. Like the philosopher Xenophanes before him, Plato thus criticized the mythic theology of the poets as profane and contended that the bad behavior of the gods depicted in poetry and plays was harmful to life in the *polis*. In several dialogues, Plato voiced grave concerns about the way the Greek storybook gods were portrayed, engaging in various forms of bad behavior (*Euthyphro* 6a–c, 7e–8a; *Republic* 2.365e, 377b–379a; 3.386a–389a, 391d–392c; *Laws* 2.660a,e, 661c; 7.801b–c, 817b–c; 9.858e; 12.941b). In *Republic*, Plato pointed out many such examples from Homer and Hesiod and other poets. Plato said such poets should be censored or banned, despite their high literary value (*Republic* 2.377b–398b; 10.595a–608b). Yet Plato held that the tribe of poets should not be entirely abolished, and that their stories and songs could be allowed if they were made to conform to certain theological rules whereby their inspired creations could be brought under philosophical control. Plato listed three criteria by which current myths about the gods should be reformed (*Republic* 2.377c–3.392c; cf. Mueller 1936: 462; Mikalson 2010: 214):

- First, that stories about the gods must portray them as uniformly virtuous, banishing all bad behavior, such as strife, jealousy, deceit and battles between the gods, such as were common in both Greek myths and epic poetry (*Republic* 2.377d–378e, 379a–383c; 3.391d–e). In a similar vein, literary heroes must be portrayed as courageous, never fearing death or succumbing to anger or other unworthy emotions, but standing as noble examples for emulation by youths and soldiers (*Republic* 3.391a–d).
- Second, that the gods must be portrayed as caring about humanity, overseeing their affairs and justly rewarding both good and evil deeds, both in this life and the afterlife, so that the citizens would fear the gods and seek their approval through obedience and piety (*Republic* 3.392a–c).

- Third, that it was forbidden to suggest that the gods could be bribed by prayers or sacrifices to allow or forgive any wicked human act, whether public or private, since this could only encourage citizen disobedience towards the divine laws in the expectation that they could escape punishment (*Republic* 3.390d–e).

Plato's rules for poets insisted that myths about the gods must conform to the tenets of his natural theology as discovered by philosophy: that the gods were supremely good, cared for humanity and would never countenance evil. Plato considered all literature that did not embody these truths about the goodness of the gods to be unholy (*Republic* 2.378b–d, 380b–c; 3.391a,d–e; *Laws* 10.903a), detrimental to the development of moral character (*Republic* 2.376e–377c, 378a–b; 3.401b–d; *Laws* 7.801c–d; 9.858e; Gmirkin 2017: 252, 256), and requiring strict censorship by the authorities for the good of the *polis* (*Republic* 2.377b–c, 378a–d; *Laws* 7.801c–d; 9.858e). In *Republic*, the reform of poetry by the philosophical ruling class took the form of revising or in some cases banning existing literary texts, whether poetry or prose (*Republic* 2.380c; 10.607d), that represented the gods in an unholy way (*Republic* 2.378b–d, 380b–c; 3.391d–e; cf. 10.607c), creating a list of approved myths theologically suitable for infants and school children (*Republic* 2.377a–c, 378c–e, 383c; cf. Brisson 1998: 56–7), and commissioning the creation of new foundation myths with suitable theological and patriotic content to “shape the souls” of the citizen body (*Republic* 2.377c). In Plato's utopian “Beautiful City” of Kallipolis, this program of poetic reforms would be carried out by the ruling “guardian” class of philosopher-kings (*Republic* 2.378c–d; 3.410b–d; 10.607b–c). Plato said it would be advantageous for such enlightened rulers to create “noble lies” about the divine foundation of the *polis* and its laws in the distant past as aids in instilling piety, ethics and civic pride in the citizens (*Republic* 3.414b–415d; *Laws* 2.663b–d; 664a; 10.886c–d). Such “noble lies” included the creation of golden, silver, bronze and iron-souled races of philosophers, warriors, farmers and craftsmen by the gods of Athens in mythical times (*Republic* 3.415a–c); the epic tale of the war between Athens and Atlantis (*Timaeus* 24e–25d; *Critias*); the “myth” of the Demiurge or Craftsman who created the *kosmos* (*Timaeus*);²³ and various myths regarding divine judgment in the afterlife,²⁴ punishment of the wicked (Plato, *Laws* 4.716a, 717d; 5.727d; 9.870d–e, 872e–873a, 881a; 10.904c–905b; Klosko 2006: 248) and rewards for the righteous in the afterlife.²⁵ Plato thus allowed for the creation of a body of inspired myths for the instruction and inspiration of the citizen body by poets working in close conjunction with the ruling class of philosophers.

In *Laws*, Plato presented a detailed and systematic agenda for the creation of a sacred national literature. Whereas *Republic* simply laid out the broad principles whereby philosophy could reform the poetry, in *Laws* Plato fully integrated this desirable goal into his overall program of nation-building. Plato assigned the task of drawing up an approved list of myths and creating

a carefully censored national literature to a body of philosophically educated officials called *nomophylakes* or “guardians of the laws,” who are commonly referred to in secondary literature as the “legislators of the arts” in conjunction with their literary activities. As in *Republic*, Plato’s *Laws* portrayed the gods as supremely good (*Laws* 10.887b, 899b, 902c, 903a) and condemned as “unholy” any portrayal of the gods to the contrary (*Laws* 10.903a). The “legislators of the arts” were tasked with reviewing the entire existing body of literature, both poetry and prose, to ensure it conformed to the nation’s theological standards (*Laws* 7.802b–c, 811c–e; cf. 9.858c–e; 12.957c–d; Nightingale 1993: 288–9). The nation’s laws were already presumed to be divine and its legal literature sacred (Nightingale 1993: 289, 1999: 102, 113). Other texts of all genres were approved or rejected in accordance with their compatibility with the nation’s divine legislation (*Laws* 7.802b–c, 811c–e; 9.858c–859a). Some works were rejected in their entirety, while others had passages deleted or revised by poets working in close coordination with the “legislators of the arts” (*Laws* 7.802b–c). Poets were also commissioned with creating new literary pieces, as appropriate (*Laws* 2.663d–664a; 7.799e–801d; cf. *Republic* 2.378d–379a). The result was an approved national literature that promoted the divine ethics and laws of the founding generation for exclusive use in schools (*Laws* 7.802b–c, 809c, 811b–812a), and indeed in every context, public or private: importing or reading any book that was not part of the approved national literature was deemed a serious crime (*Laws* 7.799b, 802b, 809b; cf. Morrow 1993: 354–5).

In summary, it is evident that Plato’s literary agenda, first in the program of censorship in *Republic*, and later in the creation of an approved national literature in *Laws*, was intended to bring mythic theology under the control and direction of the philosophers (Mikalson 2010: 214). By making mythic theology subject to natural theology, Plato was not only intent on reforming the tribe of poets, ridding the nation’s literature of all he considered unholy, but in a sense reforming and refashioning the traditional storybook gods themselves to conform to higher philosophical and ethical ideals.

8.4.3 *Plato’s Civic Theology*

As discussed in §8.2.1, civic theology had to do with knowledge about the gods conveyed in the official religion of the *polis*. Civic theology had both national and cultic aspects, in that religious matters were under the direct control and administration of cultic personnel such as priests and prophets, but were enforced by civic laws. The subject matter of civic theology thus typically dealt with laws relating to the official gods of the *polis*: the list of recognized civic gods and their temples and authorized cultic officials, the official festive calendar and public religious rites and the legal penalties for crimes of impiety against the national gods or their shrines and statues. The *polis* otherwise played virtually no role in theological matters, and neither *polis* law nor the nation’s official religious cults were involved in private

ethics or matters of individual sanctity and piety, which were beyond their professional competence.

Such limitation of the roles of civic and cultic officials to being strictly administrative was contrary to Plato's agenda, which held that philosophy and natural theology should reach into every aspect of life, both national and religious, both public and private. The next two sections will contain discussions of Plato's views on how philosophy should reshape and reform both the civic and cultic organization and daily life of the *polis*.

8.4.3.1 *Civic Authorities*

For Plato, theology was not incidental, but central to ethical, philosophically enlightened government. In *Laws*, Plato developed a profoundly innovative civic theology in which the gods ruled the nation through divine laws and literature and an endless stream of religious holidays, all administered by a ruling class elite who possessed advanced training in philosophy, ethics and natural theology (Gmirkin 2017: 251–61). Plato called this new form of government *Nous* or Intellect, after “the god who is the true ruler of rational men” (*Laws* 4.713a); Josephus, later drawing on this same passage, would give it a new name, theocracy.²⁶ Much as the cosmic philosopher's god had imposed rationality, order, goodness and beauty on the *kosmos*, so Plato's theocratic government would instill similar qualities on the nation.

Plato's conception of theocratic rule was based on two closely related notions: that a new aristocratic ruling class of philosophers should be viewed as semi-divine spiritual beings corresponding to the golden race of rulers in the mythical Age of Kronos; and that these aristocratic rulers should be empowered to introduce and administer a body of divinely inspired laws for the *polis*, namely those described in Plato's *Laws*.

The Platonic ideal of philosophical rule was promoted in both his *Republic* and *Laws* through the construction of persuasive myths set in the earliest past and depicting the gods' creation of a golden race of demigods of superior intelligence and goodness to rule over ordinary simple-minded humans.²⁷ Plato described the golden race as a divine form of beings called *daimones* or spirits (*Laws* 4.713d; *Republic* 5.468e–469a, drawing on Hesiod, *Works and Days* 123), halfway between gods and ordinary mortals (Plato, *Symposium* 202e). According to Plato, this golden race had been created by the gods to act as rulers over the silver race of humankind, a virtuous, obedient people who lived an idyllic existence of blissful happiness (*eudamonia*) like herds of docile sheep tended by the golden, divine rulers of the Age of Kronos.²⁸ But in the present Age of Zeus, the care by the gods was withdrawn, and humanity was left weak and unprotected, *aphylaktoi* or “without guardians” (Plato, *Statesman* 274b). In *Republic*, this void was filled by the divine ruling class of philosopher-kings, also called the Guardian class or *phylakes* (*Republic* 5.473d–e, 474b–c; 6.497b–c, 499b–c,

502a, 503b; 7.519c–521b, 540b). In *Laws*, these reappeared as the philosophically trained *nomophylakes* or Guardians of the Laws who constituted a major component of the divine ruling council of the *polis*.²⁹ Theocratic government in the present Age of Zeus was modeled on the Age of Kronos, with golden-souled philosophers acting in the place of Kronos' demigods as rulers over the simple ordinary citizens of the nation (*Laws* 4.713c; Dillon 1992; cf. *Republic* 4.440d on loyal auxiliary warriors as domesticated dogs). The divine ruling class would act as a sort of surrogate intelligence for those lacking in *nous*.³⁰ While all the citizens would acquire some aspects of divinity, there would still exist a natural stratification of society, like the golden and silver races in the Age of Kronos, into the godlike rulers who possessed divine *nous* and the willing subjects who would be under their care (Plato, *Laws* 4.713d, 715a; cf. 3.689e–690c; 7.818c), whose divine qualities would be limited to the civic justice, moderation and pious obedience to the inspired laws.³¹ The “noble race” of philosophers were born to be leaders and rulers, while those of lesser intelligence were born to be followers and subjects (*Republic* 4.431e–432a; 5.458c, 473b–c, 474b–c; cf. *Laws* 4.713d; 9.875c–d), but the philosopher-kings would rule by persuasion and not by force, with the common citizens acknowledging their superior nature and willingly agreeing to obey the laws and institutions the divine ruling class established (*Republic* 4.431e–432a; 5.458c, 474b–c; 6.502b; cf. *Laws* 4.689e–690c). While government by divine laws was best for keeping the masses docile and outwardly virtuous, those who possessed true knowledge should not be subject to law, although these were currently few in number (*Laws* 9.875c–d). Plato thus stratified society under a theocracy into the divine few of the ruling class, who possessed reason and were above the law, and the ungifted majority who at best possessed virtuous beliefs and were made subject to law (cf. Klosko 1988).

For Plato, philosophy was a lifelong pursuit, a spiritual *theoria* or journey whose aim was to comprehend and commune with the divine (Nightingale 2004: 73–186). The pursuit of reason was the philosophical pathway for initiation into the divine, like an initiation into the mysteries,³² and the philosopher, as a result of his attaining a knowledge of the divine, became a sort of semi-divine being, like a member of the golden race of spirits in the myth of Kronos. Among all humans, philosophers most closely resembled the gods.³³ Divinely led by God, philosophers as a class were the most qualified to exercise rule over the nation (Jaeger 1943: 2.126–59; Gmirkin 2017: 251; at *Timaeus* 19e–20a, Timaeus was both a philosopher and statesman). Their resemblance to the gods gave them a natural status as rulers and indeed an obligation to act as divine guardians and caretakers over the unenlightened, simple-minded masses (Armstrong 2004) as the modern counterpart of the demigods appointed to rule over humanity in mythical times (Plato, *Laws* 4.713a–714a; Hesiod, *Works and Days* 122–26; 252–55; Gmirkin 2017: 258, 285 n. 78). Plato disingenuously claimed that philosophers (like himself!), despite their natural inclination towards a life of

contemplation, should therefore be compelled to rule the nation (*Republic* 6.499b–c; 7.519c–521b, 540b).

The second central feature of Plato's novel theocratic form of government was the creation of a body of divine laws accompanied by a suitable foundation myth. Plato recognized that the Greek nation-states that had survived the longest without change to their form of government all possessed the belief in the ancient divine origin of their founder's constitution and laws, such as the divine laws of Minos of Crete, dictated to him by Zeus, or the divine laws which Lycurgus of Lacedaemon received from Apollo (Gmirkin 2017: 283–4 n. 67 and literature cited there). Plato held it to be essential that the citizens of a new nation or colony be convinced "by whatever means possible" that their laws, too, had been given to the ancestral founding generation by the gods, so that this legislation would be revered as divine and preserved unchanged down through the generations by the new colonists (Plato, *Laws* 7.798a–b) and its constitution thereby protected from *stasis* or revolt. The divine origin of the nation's constitution and laws in the distant past would be enshrined in the new national literature containing the approved myths about ancient times (Gmirkin 2017: 261–9). With only this restricted set of approved texts available to the citizenry for use in their schools and festivals and all other events, public and private (Plato, *Laws* 7.799b, 801c–802b, 809b; cf. Morrow 1993: 354–5), a new national memory of their ancient divine origins would be implanted after a single generation.³⁴

In Plato's *Laws*, the divine philosophical ruling class elite exercised its power through an institution called the Nocturnal Council to accord with its meetings in the pre-dawn hours (*Laws* 12.951d, 961b). Although *Laws* never explicitly mentions philosophers, "the members of the Nocturnal Council are philosophers in all but name" (Hull 2019: 217).³⁵ The major function of the Nocturnal Council was to control the internal affairs of the nation. The ruling class elites of this "divine council" (*Laws* 12.969b; cf. the "divine polity" of 12.965c) would administer the nation's new laws (*Laws* 7.809b; 12.951d, 952a–b) and education (*Laws* 7.811c–812a; 12.951d, 952a–b, 964b–c) from the earliest age on (*Laws* 12.952b), approve and strictly control its literature (*Laws* 7.802b–c, 811c–e) and enforce its religious beliefs (*Laws* 10.908e–909d), controlling the beliefs, and even the collective national memory of the populace, who would come to regard their constitution and way of life as established since time immemorial by their patron gods (*Laws* 7.798a–b). Through this new theocratic form of government in which the people believed they were under divine rule, the whole of national life would come under the perpetual control and guidance of philosophers, with the willing cooperation of the people who believed their leaders to be the divine agents of the supreme god.

The authority of the Nocturnal Council also extended to international affairs. Under Plato's civic theology, international relations must be governed by ethics and justice, or else the nation would be under constant threat

of war in reprisal for their bad behavior. Just as the gods lived together in harmony, without jealousy or aggression,³⁶ so nations should live together in peace, without inner or outer strife caused by unbridled ambition and unjust aggression (*Laws* 9.863e–864a; 12.950c–d, 962e; cf. *Laws* 1.625e–626b; *Republic* 5.469c). Plato deemed a repudiation of territorial ambition and the cultivation of positive international reputation for justice and virtue as crucial for the long-range survival of the nation.³⁷ Plato held that the supreme goodness of the gods was manifested in their justice and that humans should seek to imitate that justness, both in private and national dealings, as a matter of religious piety (Mikalson 2010: 203–6). Plato held an international reputation for peacefulness and justice as important for national security as military might, both working together to ensure positive and tranquil relations with neighboring states based on mutual honor and respect. The establishment of a divine national life, with reason, wisdom and restraint controlling unruly ambition, was only possible through a grasp of the essential nature of goodness that was the primary aim of philosophy (Gmirkin 2017: 257, 282 n. 56). Indeed, Plato viewed the pursuit of ethics and justice as the highest national aim.³⁸ Plato accordingly held that a commitment to philosophical ideals at the highest level of government was essential to the survival of the nation throughout time (*Laws* 4.704d, 705e, 714a–b, 715d; 5.742d; 12.960b–961a, 961c, 962a–963b, 964e–965a, 968a, 969c; cf. Klosko 2008: 4). Plato thus sought to create a climate of peace, harmony and justice both in international relations and in the civic life of the nation by subordinating impulses and passions to the divine on every level.

While the exoteric function of the Nocturnal Council was the administration of the state and its beliefs through control of its legislation, literature, education and religion, its even more important esoteric function was the continued pursuit of philosophical and scientific studies, thought to be essential to the proper administration of the *polis*. The Nocturnal Council thus functioned both as the ruling body of government and as a university for the continued study of theology, astronomy, ethics and international law, like Plato's Academy (Morrow 1993: 509; Hull 2019: 228). Investing the nation's highest educational institution with the full power of government not only ensured wise philosophical rule in the present but allowed the perpetuation of training in the arts of enlightened government from one generation to the next (*Laws* 12.960d–961b, 965a–b).

8.4.3.2 *Cultic Authorities*

In *Timaeus–Critias*, Plato divided up the universe between the rational eternal philosopher's god, *Nous*, present at the creation of the *kosmos*, and the lesser storybook gods of the Greeks. The partitioning of the universe had temporal, physical and ethical elements that allowed *Nous* and the Olympian gods to operate within their assigned spheres, each without infringing on the

other. In Plato's novel philosophical scheme, the supreme god's role was restricted to the creation of the perfect magnificent ordered celestial realm, while the sub-lunar, terrestrial world was completely ceded to the traditional anthropomorphic gods of Greek myth. There was, in effect, an early monotheistic phase of the universe as studied by philosophers, and a later polytheistic phase of the present ordinary world. While Plato's eternal, transcendent Creator reigned alone and supreme at the dawn of time in the perfect starry heavens, rule over the imperfect terrestrial realm was delegated to the Olympian gods who oversaw the creation of mortal life in subsequent mythical ancient times. By so assigning this division of divine labors, Plato was free to pursue his scientific, astronomical and philosophical inquiries into the role of *Nous* in the creation of the *kosmos*, while the traditional stories of the Olympian gods were given a mythical setting in the later aftermath of creation. Plato thus envisioned both a cosmic monotheism, of primary interest to philosophers, and a traditional civic polytheism for the masses, with divine ethics reigning in both.

Plato's ideal theocratic government in *Laws* closely resembled the divine division of labors in *Timaeus-Critias*, with separate cultic institutions and personnel for the cosmic god worshipped by philosophers and the traditional Greek civic gods worshipped by the masses. The Nocturnal Council was the center for the continued study of the supreme philosopher's god, with daily sessions held in the pre-dawn hours that featured discussions of theology and astronomy alongside ethics, philosophy, law and education (*Laws* 12.951d-952b).

Plato's theocratic system of government also actively promoted the worship of all the traditional Greek gods by the general populace. The official public system of religious worship involved all the traditional institutions of temples, priesthoods and religious rites accepted by Greek society. Plato considered it absolutely essential that the laws and institutions of the theocratic government be perceived as ancient and divine (*Laws* 7.798a-c). A key strategy for achieving this was to actively investigate the land's local gods, temples and altars, and incorporate local priesthoods, religious laws and festivals into the national life of the *polis*, in order to enhance the aura of antiquity and divinity of the newly founded nation (Gmirkin 2017: 262-3). In what amounted to a strategic alliance between the philosophical ruling class and the traditional cultic officials of the land, the priesthoods and lesser temple personnel of the ancient religions of the land would lend their support to the new theocratic government and foundation myths of the nation in return for the continued support and protection of existing religious institutions. Local traditional polytheistic religion, myths and cultic institutions were thus enlisted in service of the state, subject only to the requirement that they conform to certain theological restrictions in regard to the depiction of the gods in literature and myth.

The philosophical ruling class, while dedicated to the esoteric study of the eternal cosmic god in a university setting, thus simultaneously posed as

conservative defender of the traditional civic gods within the *polis* and its temples. Indeed, Plato enforced the religious monopoly of the nation's existing cultic institutions by banning the introduction of competing gods as a criminal form of political subversion carrying the penalty of death, like current Athenian impiety laws; private magic rites were also banned.³⁹ In this manner, Plato was able to promote the study and worship of the cosmic philosopher's god by the educated ruling class, yet appear to champion the continued worship of the Olympian pantheon, engineering a civic détente that allowed for the peaceful coexistence of philosophy and popular religion.

Plato's theocracy assigned all the usual duties to traditional Greek categories of civic religious authorities, such as the consultation of exegetes on matters of sacred law such as purification rites (*Laws* 6.759c–e; 6.774e–775a; 8.828b, 845e; 9.865b–d, 871a–d, 873d; 11.916c; 12.958d, 964b), the consultation of prophets (including those of the oracle of Delphi) on matters requiring decisions by the gods (*Laws* 5.738c; 6.759c; 8.828b; 9.871c–d) and the administration of temples and supervision of sacred rites and public prayers by priests (*Laws* 6.759a–c; 7.799a–b, 800a; 8.828b). Yet the administration of public religious institutions and promulgation of sacred laws by these various figures made them experts on neither the gods nor ethics nor holiness, since according to Plato these crucially important topics could only be properly comprehended by philosophers.

Plato explored the thorny issues of divine ethics and holiness in the dialogue *Euthyphro*, in which Socrates entered into a fictionalized discussion of these topics with the Athenian exegete Euthyphro. In this dialogue, Socrates consulted Euthyphro as a religious expert, asking his opinions on a profound question that had been troubling Socrates: is everything a god says or does by definition holy and good, or do the gods themselves conform to some higher standard or goodness? This question is known today as the Euthyphro paradox. The first impulse for Euthyphro was to answer that everything a god does is intrinsically good, but the Greek myths frequently depicted the gods in conflict, as Socrates pointed out (*Euthyphro* 6a–c, 7b,e, 8a,c; cf. *Republic* 2.377e–379a). How, then, can two opposing gods both be good? How can one obey the demands of two warring gods? Must not one of the two gods in contention desire and do and call upon his followers to do that which is wicked? Would not blind, pious obedience to the gods lead to human acts that one god considered holy, but another unholy (*Euthyphro* 7b–8e, 9c–e, 15b–d)? Euthyphro, unable to respond, fled the conversation, and the questions were left unanswered (*Euthyphro* 15d–e).

It thus emerged that traditional Greek religion and its experts were unable to answer the most basic questions regarding the nature of ethics, holiness and the goodness of the gods. While these difficult theological matters were left unresolved in *Euthyphro*, later dialogues pointed a way out. Plato's solution to the Euthyphro paradox was based on his novel conception of an eternal, ideal world of Forms or Ideas. The realm of Forms existed beyond and above even the divine heavenly realm occupied by the gods (Plato,

Phaedrus 247c–e, 249c, 250d), the supreme Form being the Form of the Good (*Timaeus* 46d; *Republic* 6.508e–509b; van Riel 2013: 105–6; cf. Plato, *Phaedrus* 249c, 250d). The Form of the Good was to the rest of the Forms as the sun was to the visible world (*Republic* 6.508a–509c; cf. Gerson 1990: 57) and was the ultimate cause of existence, both in the world of Forms and in the lower realms (Gerson 1990: 57–65, 80–1). Not only the lesser gods, but even Plato’s supreme cosmic deity, the Demiurge, were subject to the Form of the Good (cf. *Timaeus* 28a–b, 29a,e, 30a–d, 37a, 46c–d, 68e). The goodness of the gods was thus not an arbitrary or intrinsic property of their status as gods, but was a result of the gods’ alignment to a higher, transcendent standard of goodness. Since ethics derived from the world of Forms, true knowledge of ethics was not obtained by means of exposure to religious tradition, but from the contemplation of the Form of the Good (in some dialogues, the transcendent Form of the Beautiful), a noble activity shared by both gods (Plato, *Phaedrus* 246e–247e) and philosophers.⁴⁰ It followed that philosophers were the true experts on holiness and ethics, whereas cultic officials were at best experts on matters of traditional religious practices.

Plato’s natural theology and investigations into the ultimate transcendent nature of goodness became the basis for the systematic reform of popular religion. Plato sought to reform and domesticate Greek cultic life by limiting the permitted depiction of the gods in the holy national literature requiring that the gods be portrayed as uniformly good and eliminating any suggestion that the gods could be appeased or bribed by the prayers and sacrifices of the wicked (Mikalson 2010: 237–9). Since these texts contained the only myths approved for use in any context, secular or religious, public or private (*Laws* 7.799b, 801c–d, 802b, 809b; cf. Morrow 1993: 354–5), this placed philosophical constraints on religious teachings about the gods. In addition, Plato held that all prayers and hymns designed for public performance should first be reviewed and approved by the “legislators of the arts” according to the same theological standards that governed the sacred national literature (*Laws* 7.799e–801d, 802b–c; 11.936a; cf. Gmirkin 2017: 256–7, 260).

For Plato, the ultimate goodness of the divine realm was more important than the traditional polytheistic gods, or even the novel god of Creation. By subordinating the traditional gods to a superior ethical standard, Plato sought to effectively domesticate the gods, transforming them from unruly and unrestrained beings into noble examples of goodness (Mueller 1936). For Plato, the essential issue was the ethical nature of the universe, the goodness of the divine realm in its entirety, no matter which gods inhabited it.

8.5 Plato’s Theology and the Hexateuch

It is evident that, although Plato’s writings had a profound influence on the Hexateuch, a full implementation of Plato’s theology was not always successfully realized.

Plato's natural theology, which emphasized the goodness and justice of the supreme god and his offspring, was most vividly expressed in the divine goodness of the Creator and his creation in Genesis 1 (*Timaeus*), the issues of mortality and theodicy in the creation of humans by the lesser gods in Genesis 2–3 (*Timaeus*) and the ethical judgment and divine punishment on the antediluvian world in Genesis 6 (*Critias*). Plato's divine ethics was also visible in the rest of Genesis, which contained no trace of bad behavior or conflict among the gods (see §8.6). Yet the essential goodness of the gods and their consequential harmonious relations was set aside in Exodus–Joshua, which did not incorporate the divine ethics that was central to Plato's natural theology (see §8.7).

Plato's mythic theology envisioned a national literature of approved texts that satisfied carefully enforced standards of holiness with respect to the depiction of the goodness of the gods. However, in major respects the Hexateuch failed to consistently adhere to Plato's positive standards for the depiction of the gods, starting in Exodus (see §8.7).

It is evident that the legislators of ca. 270 BCE who authored the legal portions of Exodus–Deuteronomy and established a new theocratic form of Jewish government in the early Hellenistic Era systematically implemented Plato's program for nation-building in *Laws* (Gmirkin 2017). Yet Plato's civic theology, too, was only imperfectly implemented. Although the Pentateuch outwardly adhered to the program in Plato's *Laws* for the creation of a divine constitution, laws and accompanying foundation myth set in antiquity, Platonic ethics regarding the peaceful coexistence of the nations and their gods is nowhere evident in Exodus–Joshua (see §8.7), and the *gerousia* of elders led by a high priest became an agency for theocratic rule but not for continuing philosophical studies as Plato envisioned (see §8.9).

The picture that emerges is that of two contemporary groups with competing ideologies: one whose agenda was ethical and philosophical, whose influence was most pronounced in Genesis, and another whose agenda was cultic and nationalistic, whose influence dominated Exodus–Joshua. The sections that follow will examine the literary evidence for the existence of these two competing groups (§§8.6–8.7) and how the conflation of the cosmic philosopher's god with the local terrestrial god Yahweh ultimately led to a transition from the aggressive Yahwistic monolatry of Exodus–Joshua to true Yahwistic monotheism in the late Hellenistic Era.

8.6 The Platonic Theology of Genesis

The broad influence of Plato's *Laws* on the Pentateuchal constitutional, civic and religious laws of ca. 270 BCE and on the creation of the Hebrew Bible as an authorized national literature has been extensively discussed elsewhere (Wajdenbaum 2011; Gmirkin 2017). The current book deals primarily with the influence of Plato's *Timaeus* and *Critias* on Genesis, especially in the

Primordial History. Whereas the biblical text is indebted to Plato's *Laws* primarily in the legislative sphere, the impact of Plato's *Timaeus* and *Critias* is seen mainly in the scientific, philosophical and theological content of Genesis. This includes both the introduction of a novel god present at the creation of the *kosmos* and the benevolent rule of the terrestrial realm by his divine offspring, including the local god known to the Jews and Samaritans as Yahweh. Later, in Exodus–Joshua, Yahweh would be conflated with the supreme Creator and the 12 tribes of Israel would be subject to monolatrous legislation, but Genesis is almost entirely free from these subsequent literary developments. Instead, Genesis displays remarkably consistent Platonic philosophical and ethical values that accommodated a multiplicity of benevolent terrestrial gods and a harmonious coexistence of the nations of early times, with a few instructive exceptions.

This new analysis significantly advances our knowledge of the Hellenistic Era authors of these biblical tales of earliest times, who are now revealed as extraordinarily well read in Plato's philosophy along with other Greek scientific and literary writings. The most explicitly philosophical content is the cosmogony in the opening chapter of Genesis, in which a new cosmic Creator god was introduced by the biblical authors based on their reading of *Timaeus*. This transcendent eternal deity, for whom the biblical authors chose the familiar name Elohim, was intended to be understood by these authors as distinct from the host of gods mentioned in Gen 1:26 or the storybook terrestrial god Yahweh introduced in Genesis 2. After Elohim's creative activity at the dawn of the *kosmos* described in Genesis 1, this novel philosopher's god essentially disappeared into a retirement of restful contemplation, like the Demiurge of *Timaeus*, his work of creation complete. Thereafter the cosmic deity virtually disappeared from Genesis, except as the father of the gods in Gen 6:1–4 and in the description of El Elyon as creator of heaven and earth in Gen 14:18–19, 22 (see Chapter 7 §7.7).

In the Primordial History of Genesis 1–11, the distinction between cosmic and terrestrial gods is fairly clear against the interpretive backdrop of *Timaeus* and *Critias*. In Genesis 2–11, Yahweh appears for the most part as an explicitly terrestrial deity. A plurality of gods appears in Gen 1:26; 2:18 [LXX]; 3:5 [LXX]; 3:22, where their role as the creators of human and animal life directly reflects the role of the sons and daughters of the Demiurge in *Timaeus* 41b–d. In Gen 6:1–2, 4, the sons of God reappear as terrestrial deities who intermarry with mortals, as in *Critias*. And in Gen 11:6–7 the gods confused the languages in Babel and scattered humanity across the earth. This all seems to reflect a polytheistic mythological world that was still the norm among the Jews and Samaritans of ca. 270 BCE.

It is significant that Yahweh Elohim is given no cosmic dimension in Genesis 2–3 or in most subsequent episodes in the Pentateuch, such as Yahweh's encounter with Abraham and Sarah in Gen 18:1–15. Omniscience is obviously lacking in Genesis 3, and an ethical dimension is also absent. While the cosmic god of Genesis 1 is supremely good, as is everything he

created, in Genesis 2–3 there is no such pronouncement of good on the animal and human life forms created by Yahweh Elohim, and no blessings of the Creation—but merely curses in Gen 3:14–19; 4:11–12.

In the division of literary labors in the book of Genesis, the philosophical authors of the so-called First Creation Account portrayed their vision of an ethical, monotheistic Creator creating a beautiful *kosmos* in his image at the dawn of time, but assigned the account of the creation of humans by the anthropomorphic traditional gods to co-authors conversant with *Timaeus* but more adept as storytellers. In terms of Varro's tripartite theology, one may view Elohim as Creator in Genesis 1 as essentially philosophical and Yahweh of Genesis 2–3 as mythological. The virtual disappearance of a cosmic god from the Hebrew Bible after Genesis 1, replaced by a visible storybook terrestrial god, mirrors the contrast between cosmic monotheism and terrestrial polytheism in *Timaeus*, where the Demiurge disappears from the account immediately after the creation of the rational universe, with his visible handiwork present in the perfect celestial realms, but with the Demiurge himself absent as an active force in the universe, delegating the administration of the terrestrial world to the lesser gods and goddesses, his offspring. Genesis shows a remarkable implementation of Plato's conception of a perfect supreme cosmic god active at creation and a host of lesser mythological gods, his offspring, the traditional pantheon recognized by popular religion in the *Timaeus*, demoted to a lesser position of mortal visible gods below the invisible cosmic Demiurge.

The biblical scheme consisted of a single supreme cosmic god together with his offspring, the lesser mortal gods, who included Yahweh in their number. In Greek myths, the gods occasionally returned to earth where they had encounters with humans, much as Yahweh met and conversed face-to-face with Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Abraham and Jacob. Zeus was chief god in the present age and the one who dispensed justice to humans. Yahweh was assigned a similar preeminent position in Genesis 6–9, sending rain, earthquakes and a flood on humanity just as Zeus did at the end of Plato's *Critias*. Yet neither Zeus nor Yahweh was portrayed as the god of creation, a role reserved in Plato's writings for the eternal, incorporeal Demiurge. One thus obtains a picture in Genesis of a supreme philosophical god active at creation, superseded by a pantheon of visible anthropomorphic gods who lived among humans in mythical times before the flood, and who persisted as the national gods of later times.

Plato's ideal of benevolent polytheism seems to underlie the stories of Genesis, where the gods of the nations are never in conflict, nor any god criticized. On the contrary, Abraham joins the kings of the Canaanites in pious worship of the supreme god El Elyon at the temple of his priest Melchizedek at Salem (Gen 14:18). Joseph marries the daughter of an Egyptian priest of On, with not a word of criticism directed at the gods of Egypt (Gen 41:45, 50). Criticism of foreign cults nowhere appears, and Rachel's theft of her father's teraphim is not condemned as an act of

idolatry (Gen 31:17–35). Nor, when Jacob enjoined his household servants to put away their foreign gods and worship Yahweh at Bethel, were those foreign gods condemned (Gen 35:2–4). Yahweh was the special patron god of the family of Abraham, intervening on his behalf with rulers of Egypt and of the Philistines, communicating with them in visions, but nowhere condemning their gods (Gen 12:18; 20:1–19). The gods are never seen in conflict or competition, as in later books of the Hexateuch. Instead, Genesis consistently reflects the divine ethics of benevolent polytheism developed in Plato's theology.

So likewise the nations in Genesis are almost never seen at war: Abraham and his descendants coexisted with Canaanites, Philistines and Egyptians, negotiating peaceful relations whenever conflicts arose (Gen 12:10–20; 23:3–20; 26:1–31; 42:1–5; 45:10–11; 46:28, 34; 47:1–6). One sees neither divine wickedness nor wars between the gods, nor, consequently, wars between the nations. In a single exception, the unjust invasion of Canaan by Mesopotamian armies was condemned, their forces defeated and their captives rescued by Abraham and his Canaanite allies, to the gratitude of the kings of Sodom and other cities (Genesis 14). Where there is violence between humans (Genesis 14, 18–19; 34:1–31), it is always of human origin, neither mandated or sanctioned by the divine. Cain, in his impulsiveness and pride, killed Abel (Gen 4:1–15). The nations before the flood, at first ruled by semi-divine heroes, the offspring of the gods and human women, at first coexisted in harmony. Only later, when the divine element of the rulers before the flood was gradually diluted and diminished, did human violence and wickedness prompt Yahweh to send a flood upon the land and purge the world of unrighteousness (Gen 6:5–7, 11–17). Divine justice also demanded the destruction of wicked Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18–19), yet this wickedness was of a purely human dimension. Other gods were never condemned, nor were the nations (except at Gen 15:16, which condemned the “iniquity of the Amorites,” in a passage that is recognized as intrusively Deuteronomistic; cf. Anbar 1982; Rendtorff 1990: 85, 194–7). The picture is one of a Platonic ideal of peace and harmony among the nations and their gods. Significantly, other than Genesis 14, the single example of villainy carried out by one people against another saw Simeon and Levi slaughter the Shechemites. This act of genocidal violence was condemned by Jacob, lest their names “become a stench among the Canaanites” (Gen 34:30)—an irony indeed in light of the Hexateuch's later mandate to eradicate the Canaanites from the land. In Genesis, by contrast, the gods and nations live in a natural state of harmony and mutual respect, with the just punishment of humans reserved for the gods alone, and that only for human wickedness and violence.

The book of Genesis thus arguably has a surprisingly positive philosophical outlook towards the gods and the nations consistent with Plato's natural theology. Genesis 1 introduced the novel god of Creation, a supremely good deity who fashioned a perfect *kosmos*, and who was father to a

host of children, the *beni Elohim*. Ideally, the nations were justly ruled by semi-divine offspring of the gods, but as the human element began to dominate, strife and violence came to the forefront, unleashing divine wrath. In Plato's political ideal, articulated in the *Republic* and in *Laws*, the nations would best be ruled by semi-divine philosopher-kings who would make international peace and harmony a supreme value, in part by a benevolent polytheism that disavowed rivalries and violence among gods and nations. Although the philosophical content of Genesis is most prominent and explicit in Genesis 1–3, it appears that the entirety of Genesis was written, under the oversight of these Jewish and Samaritan students of Greek philosophy, with a consistent tone that is compatible with Platonic ideals in theology and international relations. One may thus state that as a whole the mythological theology of Genesis is compatible with its underlying natural or philosophical theology.

8.7 The Anti-Platonic Theology of Exodus–Joshua

As the preceding chapters have shown, one may detect Platonic influences throughout the Pentateuch, showing that its authors were broadly aware of the Platonic corpus of writings. The influence of *Timaeus* is profound in Genesis 1–11 and the patriarchal stories are broadly seen consistent with Plato's mythic theology as well as his divine ethics regarding the ideal of peace and harmony among the gods and their assigned nations.

In the legislation of Exodus–Deuteronomy the major source of influence is from Plato's *Laws* (Gmirkin 2017). The narrative focus shifts dramatically to the mythic foundation of the children of Israel as a nation, with its divinely revealed Mosaic constitution, laws and religious institutions. It is evident that the legislators and cultic officials of ca. 270 BCE had a dominant role in the creation of Exodus–Joshua, in which Platonic ethics are strikingly absent, despite closely following the exoteric script for nation-building found in Plato's *Laws*. The current section will discuss the anti-Platonic themes that are present in the civic, cultic, mythic and natural theologies of Exodus–Joshua and illustrate the lack of profound understanding and commitment to Platonic philosophy by the authors of these specific texts, despite their pragmatic adoption of the legislative strategies found in *Laws*.

8.7.1 Anti-Platonic Cultic Theology in Exodus–Joshua

In contrast to the benevolent polytheism implicit in Genesis, a strict combative monolatry was central to the Mosaic foundation story in Exodus–Deuteronomy and the conquest story in Joshua. The national foundation story effectively began with Yahweh revealing himself to Moses, who was to act as Yahweh's prophet and deliverer of Yahweh's people, to reveal Yahweh to the children of Israel, to rescue the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, to fashion them into a nation, and to lead them on a

colonizing expedition to the land of Canaan, which had been promised to their ancestors (literary tropes typical of Greek foundation stories; cf. Gmirkin 2017: 225–31). The foundation of Israel as a nation under the leadership of Moses was inextricably connected to Yahwistic monolatry in the biblical text. The exclusive worship of Yahweh was the most prominent element in the Decalogue (Ex 20:2–3; Deut 5:7), in the terms of the national covenant that created the children of Israel as a distinctive political entity (Ex 34:10–17; Deut 4:23; Josh 24:19–25), and as a theme that ran throughout their national legislation (Deut 4:15–19, 23, 25; 6:12–15; 7:1–9). The successful conquest and continued occupation of the Promised Land was conditioned primarily on Israel’s exclusive worship of their newly revealed national God Yahweh. The worship of other gods alongside Yahweh was the single evil that would cause Yahweh to reject his people and remove them from the land (Ex 32:8–10; Lev 20:2–6; 26:30–33; Deut 4:23–26; 5:9; 6:14–15; 8:18–20; 11:16–17; 18:9–12; 29:16–21, 28; 31:16–18; 32:16, 21). Worshipping other gods was a crime that called for summary execution.⁴¹

Cultic and religious considerations dominate Exodus–Joshua. The creation of a priestly cult dedicated to Yahweh occupy virtually all of Exodus 25–31, 35–40 as well as the entire book of Leviticus. A rebellion against Yahweh (Num 14:1–39; 21:4–6), struggles for priestly control (Num 16:1–35), and the worship of other gods (Num 25:1–9) became central literary elements in cautionary tales in Numbers. Yahweh himself traveled with the children of Israel and directly assisted in the conquest of the Promised Land under Joshua. The most important task of the conquering Israelites was to eradicate the worship of all the gods of the peoples who dwelled in the land (Ex 23:23–24; 32:12–17; Num 33:51–53; Deut 7:1–5; 12:1–7; 13:1–2, 6–16; 17:5–7). It is apparent that promoting the cult of the patron god Yahweh to the exclusion of all other gods constitutes the dominant theme in Exodus–Joshua, despite its complete absence from the book of Genesis.⁴² Hand in hand with the theological promotion of Yahweh as the sole, supreme deity was the promotion of the children of Israel as the people singled out from all the nations as Yahweh’s special possession (Ex 19:5; Deut 7:6; 14:2; 26:17–19).

Given that the first indisputable evidence for Judean or Samaritan monolatry is the Torah of ca. 270 BCE (see Gmirkin 2006: 81–8 on date), one may plausibly propose that a prosaic accommodation of polytheism continued as the social norm down to Yahwistic reforms of ca. 270 BCE when Exodus–Joshua first endorsed a depiction of Yahweh as warring against the gods.⁴³ The sudden and shocking introduction of monolatry in Exodus–Joshua has a jealous Yahweh at war with the gods of Egypt (Ex 12:12; cf. the battle against Pharaoh’s magicians at 7:10–12, 22; 8:5–7, 16–19; 9:11); the condemnation of the gods of Canaan (Ex 23:24, 33; 34:13, 15–16); the promotion of Yahweh as the sole deity worthy of worship in the midst of a host of hostile local deities (Ex 20:3–5; 23:23–24, 32–33; Deut 7:1–9);⁴⁴ and the call for genocidal violence against the worshippers of those gods within Israel’s borders

(Deut 7:1–5; 20:16–18; Josh 11:11–14; see Weinfeld 1993: 76–98 on the traditions about the expulsion, dispossession or extermination of the Canaanites by the conquering Israelites). It seems self-evident that this monolatrous, monopolistic promotion of Yahwism against all the other gods originated with personnel that adhered to the Yahweh cult.

8.7.2 *Anti-Platonic National Theology in Exodus–Joshua*

The books of Exodus–Joshua did not merely conserve and endorse this traditional ideology of local national gods at war, but went far beyond it. The books of Exodus–Joshua disallowed the possibility of establishing even what might be called a benevolent monolatry in which Yahweh, as patron god of Judah and Samaria, was accorded an exclusive cultic status within the national borders, but giving honor and respect also to the gods of other nations. Although the existence of other gods was acknowledged, Yahweh and his people were pictured as engaged in perpetual “holy” war against the gods, their cults, and those who worshipped them. The Exodus was portrayed as a battle between Yahweh and the gods of Egypt,⁴⁵ in striking contrast to Genesis, where Joseph married into an Egyptian priestly family (Gen 41:45; 46:20). In Num 21:29, the God Chemosh, who had been allotted the land of Moab (Smith 1990: 7–8, 2001: 143), also came under divine condemnation. The other gods were wicked, and their cults abominable (Ex 34:13–17; Lev 17:7; 18:24–30; 19:31; 20:2–6; Deut 7:25–26; 12:30–31; 13:13–14, 17; 17:3–7; 20:18; 27:15). All the sacred temples and altars of the gods of Canaan were to be destroyed, their worshippers slaughtered. (Later, in 1 Kgs 18:17–40, Yahweh would engage in competition with Baal, and Yahweh’s prophet Elijah would slay Baal’s priests.) The conquest of the Promised Land was envisioned as accompanied by a ruthless genocide against all the indigenous people who did not accept Yahwism.⁴⁶

Nor was this new combative monolatry confined to the historical borders of Judea and Samaria, but Numbers laid additional claim to significant portions of Transjordan (Numbers 32; cf. Deut 3:14–17), while Joshua extended the Promised Land far north and west, including unconquered Philistine, Phoenician and “Canaanite” territories, slated for eventual conquest and annexation into the Yahwistic domains.⁴⁷ The fusion of religion and nationalism reflected territorial ambitions already current in the early Hellenistic Era that sought to expand the monopolistic power of the Yahwistic cult within the national borders of Judah and Samaria and to impose it through conquest on non-Yahwistic neighbors when the opportunity presented, giving a cosmic sanction and mandate for territorial aggression.⁴⁸ That the combative monolatry of Exodus–Joshua was inconsistent with the benevolent polytheism of Plato and with his warnings against expansionist territorial aggressions requires little comment. His major philosophical aim was to project a theological ideal of divine ethics in the goodness of the cosmic Creator and the harmonious coexistence of his

sons and daughters as a model to be mirrored in both the political and personal realms in order to counteract destructive human tendencies towards ambition, competition and violence (Mueller 1936). While Plato's inclusive, benevolent ideals are evident throughout the literary context of Genesis, along with his condemnation of unjust violence and aggression, it is evident that these ethical ideals were rejected in the literary production of Exodus–Joshua.

One may contrast the combative monolatry in Exodus–Joshua with the scene in Genesis 14 in which Abraham and the kings of Canaan joined in worship of the supreme god El Elyon. It is apparent that radically different ethical values are expressed in Genesis and Exodus–Joshua, with Genesis emphasizing pacifistic norms of good relations and common values among all ethnic groups in the patriarchal era (Lind 1980: 36–46), and the stories of Moses and Joshua postulating an intractable hostility between the nations and their gods. While Genesis proclaimed the goodness of the gods, both cosmic and terrestrial, in Exodus–Joshua we see a series of tales about gods behaving badly and a resulting inherent intransigent animosity between nations.⁴⁹

In the Greek world, the gods occasionally weighed in on wars, such as famously described in Homer's *Iliad*, but the fact that the Greeks as a whole worshipped the same pantheon generally militated against this, and historical conflicts between Greek states, or even between Greeks and barbarians, were not cast as holy wars between their respective gods. In the Ancient Near East, by contrast, the system of local patron gods encouraged the notion of national gods in conflict. During times of peace, the gods coexisted harmoniously, but wars between nations were represented ideologically as wars between their respective gods. The triumph of one nation at war was deemed to demonstrate the power and superiority of the victorious god, and the vanquishing of one nation by another often entailed the destruction of temples and “kidnapping” of the statuary of the gods (Cogan 1974: 9–41). While the various local cultures of the Ancient Near East were broadly polytheistic, international rivalries thus promoted the notion of the gods at war. This Ancient Near Eastern conception of national gods at war was an integral part of the cultural heritage of the Jews and Samaritans and permeated biblical narratives about the Israelites at war.⁵⁰ The aggressive nationalism of Exodus–Joshua, closely allied with the Yahweh cult, appears to represent a conservative preservation of the old Ancient Near Eastern ways of thinking against the new philosophical ideals of the Platonists who held it possible for all nations and religions to live together in peace.

8.7.3 *Anti-Platonic Mythic Theology in Exodus–Joshua*

The ancestral land promises in Genesis 12–50 and the story of the later colonization of the Promised Land in Exodus–Joshua represent two coordinated stages of a typical Greek *ktisis* or foundation story (Gmirkin

2017: 225–31; cf. Weinfeld 1993), a literary unity (contra Rendtorff 1990; Schmid 2012, 2018) which contains various cross references that point to the employment of the same contemporary storytellers throughout Genesis–Joshua (cf. Gmirkin 2020c). Yet the formulation of the national and religious charter in the foundation story of Exodus–Joshua involved a full rejection of Platonic theology and divine ethics present in Genesis. Plato’s central theological tenet was that goodness prevailed throughout the divine realm. The rejection of Plato’s divine ethics, in which the gods lived together without jealousy or strife, is perhaps most vividly illustrated in the remarkable assertion in Ex 15:3, “Yahweh is a warrior.” Far from exonerating the gods from evil, the theology of Exodus–Joshua characterized all the gods as wicked, save for Yahweh alone, and portrayed Yahweh as mandating a war against all the rival gods and their universally abominable religious rites. Whereas Plato understood evil in terms of disruptive irrational human appetites and ambitions and their resulting acts of unjust violence, the books of Exodus–Joshua redefined non-Yahwism as the new standard of evil and attached virtue to zealous acts of violence directed against the other gods and their worshippers within the boundaries of the Promised Land (Ex 17:14, 16; 23:23–24; 34:13; Num 25:7–13; 34:51–52; Deut 7:1–5, 16, 21–26; 12:2–3; 13:6–17; 20:13–18).

8.7.4 Anti-Platonic Natural Theology in Exodus–Joshua

Plato’s natural theology was grounded in the supreme goodness of the gods, postulating that the gods could never enter into animosity and strife with each other, as they occasionally did in both Greek and Ancient Near Eastern myths. The book of Genesis consistently adhered to this vision of the divine.

Plato’s theory of ethics held that goodness was a supreme ideal that existed in the world of Forms, a standard to which even the gods themselves were subject.⁵¹ By contrast, Exodus–Joshua epitomizes “command ethics” in which the gods were not subject to a superior ethical standard, but in which ethics consisted of whatever the gods subjectively commanded (Idziak 2010), and in which acts of violence, if done with divine sanction and mandate, thus attained an acquired status of goodness. Goodness was, indeed, virtually equated with the monolatrous worship of Yahweh the patron god of the children of Israel in Exodus–Joshua, and the worship of another god as the defining act of evil (Ex 34:11–17). Monolatry was thus introduced as the central criteria of ethics in the new national life established under Mosaic Law. In the words of the Decalogue’s first commandment, Yahweh was a “jealous god” who would not allow other gods to be worshipped in his presence.⁵² This stands in stark contrast to Plato’s divine ethics in which the gods were not jealous and never engaged in rivalry and strife.

In Exodus–Joshua, one thus sees the emergence of a combative polytheism in which a local god was portrayed at war with the other gods, and in which his people resorted to genocidal violence against other peoples.

According to Platonic ethics, such bad behavior of the gods should be banished from the nation's literature, which should portray the gods as epitomizing pure goodness. Plato never intended for his ideal state to promote the ethical superiority of a local god over all others, or to promote a terrestrial god to cosmic dimensions, or to put the gods of the *polis* in conflict with the local, terrestrial deities of other nation-states. To the contrary, Plato's divine ethics was inconsistent with such competition among the gods (*Timaeus* 29e; *Phaedrus* 247a; cf. Philippus of Opus, *Epinomis* 988b). The Jewish and Samaritan embrace of a combative Yahwistic monolatry thus undermined the Platonic philosophical agenda that understood the cosmic creator god as transcending regionalism and nationalism.

Plato saw good and evil as a contrast between the divine realm, where pure goodness ruled supreme, and the material realm, where unenlightened humans were subject to appetites and impulses that could entice them to evil. To the extent that Plato may be considered an ethical dualist, this was seen as a contrast between divine goodness and human fallibility. By contrast, Exodus–Joshua allowed for ethical dualism within the divine realm itself in a struggle between good and evil gods, the former represented by Yahweh, the patron god of the children of Israel. This ethical dualism would later be expressed in the Watcher literature, in which wickedness in the terrestrial realm was attributed to fallen angels, and in Christian literature that portrayed constant warfare between God and his angels against Satan and demonic forces.

8.8 Yahweh's New Cosmic Status in Exodus–Joshua

A profound conflict exists between the theologies of Genesis and Exodus–Joshua. In Exodus–Joshua, a new and hostile monolatry was introduced in which the Yahwistic religion was weaponized against other cults and nations. Gone was the earlier benevolent polytheism under a supreme God in which Yahweh and the other sons of God lived in harmonious co-existence. Instead, a single minor terrestrial god was now promoted in status over all the other gods, with no room even for acknowledging the supremacy of the benevolent cosmic god of the universe. The present section discusses the manner in which Yahweh's elevation above all the gods took place by the simple means of conflating the local patron god of the Israelites with the creator of the universe, thereby raising Yahweh to cosmic status.

8.8.1 The Conflation of Yahweh and the Creator

Historically, both Jews and Samaritans had worshipped numerous local gods who appeared in Genesis (and elsewhere) under various names, including Yahweh, Elohim, El Elyon, El Olam, El Shaddai and others (Cross 1962). In Exodus, this polytheistic tradition was replaced by a monolatrous worship of

Yahweh by the simple expedience of conflating all these local deities with the principal national god Yahweh. (A similar strategy was employed by the Stoics, who interpreted the traditional Greek gods as different aspects of their monotheistic deity.⁵³) This strategic conflation of the gods is evident in Ex 6:2–3, where God told Moses he was formerly called El Shaddai, but henceforth would be known as Yahweh. Although some biblical passages clearly distinguish El from Elohim (Ps 82:1, 6) and El from Yahweh (Deut 32:8–9), other passages conflate these same deities.⁵⁴ What is most interesting for the current discussion is the conflation of the local terrestrial god Yahweh with the cosmic god of Creation, an identification that allowed for the creation of a monolatrous religious system in Exodus–Joshua by effectively erasing the supreme philosopher’s god of Genesis 1.

In Genesis, the Creator appears under two different names. In Gen 1:1–2:3, he appears as Elohim, the supreme eternal deity present at the creation of the *kosmos*, portrayed primarily from the imagery in Plato’s *Timaeus*. But the Creator also appears in Genesis 14 under a different name, El Elyon. The title “creator of heaven and earth” was a liturgical formula closely associated with the Canaanite god El in ancient texts and inscriptions (Cross 1962: 241, 244; Habel 1972). El Elyon, a deity distinct from Abraham’s god Yahweh, was described by the same title as “creator of heaven and earth” in Gen 14:19, 22. El Elyon, the Most High God, likely possessed this title in his capacity of leader of the divine council (Deut 32:8–9; Ps 82:1, 6; cf. Smith 2001: 48–9, 156–7). In the Baal Cycle from Ugarit, El’s divine council consisted of his 70 sons and daughters (KTU² 1.4.6.46). El Elyon appears in a similar role in the Hebrew Bible, perhaps most notably in Deut 32:8–9, where El Elyon distributed the nations to the sons of God, his offspring, with Yahweh receiving Jacob (Israel). El Elyon, both in his capacity as creator of heaven and earth and as father of the lesser gods, the *beni Elohim*, fulfills the same roles as the Creator in Genesis 1.

One may thus recognize a commonality between El of the Ugaritic tradition, El Elyon of the biblical tradition, and the cosmic god Elohim who fashioned the *kosmos* in Gen 1:1–2:3. All three were Creators, all three had offspring and all three were the supreme, “Most High” God. Both El and El Elyon are representative of what modern scholarship refers to as henotheism (the term was invented by Friedrich Schelling in 1842 [Schelling 1943]), in which there existed among the gods one who was superior, often possessing the title of king. This was common among many ancient cultures. In Ugarit there was a divine council of 70 gods, the sons and daughters of El and his consort Athirat; in Babylon Marduk was leader of the gods; in the Greek world, Zeus was the chief of the Olympian gods; and the biblical Elyon occasionally appears as leader of a divine council of gods (Deut 32:8; Ps 82:1, 6). Yet all these cultures, although acknowledging one god as ruler, were polytheistic, with honor and worship broadly accorded all the gods of the pantheon, despite occasional wars between the gods in myth. This polytheism was intrinsic to the characteristic form of henotheism, in which the chief god possessed the same order of divinity as his

offspring and other gods, possessing superior rank but identical fundamental constitution, the first among equals.

Not so in *Timaeus* and (according to the present argument) the cosmic Creator of Genesis 1, both of whom possessed an order of divinity higher than their terrestrial offspring, including Yahweh, patron god of the children of Israel. Whereas the Creator god of Genesis 1 was ungenerated and eternal, older than the heavens and earth themselves, Yahweh was originally understood as one of the sons of El, a terrestrial god, like the lesser gods of Plato's *Timaeus* (see Chapter 6 §6.3). The picture of Yahweh as a finite, generated god, a descendant of the Most High god El, and indeed possessing a consort Asherah according to ancient inscriptions (Hadley 2000: 84–155; Meshel 2012: 3.1, 3.6, 3.9, 4.1.1), appears to have been the original Iron II version of Yahweh as son of El Elyon, which arguably persisted among the Samaritans and Jews into early Hellenistic times. This belief only came to be replaced or merged with a depiction of Yahweh as eternal Creator in the the Hexateuch beginning with Exodus.

In Genesis 1–3, the Creator god Elohim and his offspring Yahweh Elohim were originally distinct. Yet in later, post-Pentateuchal biblical texts, Yahweh was identified as creator of heaven and earth⁵⁵ and given the title Elyon in Psalmic compositions (2 Sam 22:14; Ps 7:17; 9:1–2; 18:13; 21:7; 47:2; 73:11; 77:10; 83:18; 91:1, 9; 92:1; 97:9; Lam 3:35, 38), showing that the patron god of the Jews and Samaritans had now begun to be understood in cosmic terms that properly belonged to El, his father.

This eventual conflation of Yahweh with the cosmic Creator of Genesis 1 took place in two distinct phases. It is evident that the authors of Genesis 14 identified or equated the new philosopher's god of Genesis 1 with the ancient Canaanite god El Elyon, that is, El in his capacity as creator and father of the lesser gods. This identification was fully in line with the Platonic strategy of recognizing the traditional gods of the land in order to portray the new nation and its divine laws as having ancient mythic and cultic roots (*Laws* 5.738b–c; 8.848c–d; cf. Gmirkin 2017: 255, 279 nn. 34–36). The ancient local worship of El Elyon, the god of Creation, was emphasized in the tradition of Melchizedek as priest at El Elyon's temple in Salem. This cult of El Elyon was already present in Canaan prior to the arrival of Abraham to the Promised Land at the direction of Yahweh. El Elyon, the Most High God, was seemingly the object of universal worship, by both Abraham and the Canaanite king of Sodom in Gen 14:17–24. This reflected El Elyon's status as the supreme god, worshipped alongside and above the local gods of the nations (including Abraham's god). This identification of El Elyon with the Creator of Genesis 1 by implication raised El Elyon to cosmic status—equal with the Demiurge of *Timaeus*—but did not do the same with his offspring.

The second phase took place with the conflation of Yahweh with the Creator of Genesis 1 and his elevation to cosmic status in Exodus–Joshua (see §8.8). This dual character as both patron god of the Israelites and the supreme cosmic Creator allowed for Yahweh's position in the Mosaic national charter as the

sole deity to be worshipped by the children of Israel. As this secondary religious tradition became the conventional view, it subsequently came to affect the MT textual tradition, in which Yahweh Elohim replaced Elohim (LXX *theos*) as creator in Gen 2:4,⁵⁶ and in which Yahweh was inserted into the passage on Melchizedek and El Elyon in Gen 14:22 (Cross 1962: 232 n. 25, 1973: 46 n. 12; see also Chapter 6 §6.3 and Chapter 7 §7.7). Yet this conflation of the creator of the *kosmos* in Genesis 1 with the lesser terrestrial deity of Genesis 2–3, despite its later enshrinement in the MT textual tradition, arguably did not reflect the polytheistic views of the original authors, and thus properly belongs to the reception history of Genesis.

8.8.2 *The Decalogue: The Second Commandment*

The Decalogue consistently referred to God as either Yahweh (יהוה) or as Yahweh your God (יהוה אלהיך), the latter expression alluding to Yahweh as the national god of the children of Israel. Although a local patron god like the gods of the other nations (cf. Deut 32:8–9), the promotion of the god Yahweh to cosmic status in the books of Exodus–Joshua appears to be indirectly attested in the second commandment. The prohibition of statues or images can be plausibly interpreted as supporting the Platonic idea of the Demiurge as invisible (*Timaeus* 28a–b), and enhancing the identification of the local god Yahweh with the supreme cosmic god of Genesis 1.

The second commandment's apparent understanding of Yahweh as formless and invisible contrasts with the storybook portrait of Yahweh as a visible, fully anthropomorphic god in Genesis. Plato held that everything visible must necessarily be generated and therefore mortal, including the *kosmos* and the mortal terrestrial gods (*Timaeus* 28a–c), although both the *kosmos* and the gods had a sort of contingent immortality by virtue of having been generated by the Demiurge (*Timaeus* 32c, 41a–b). Genesis 2–3 supports this same viewpoint by portraying Yahweh as a visible, terrestrial god who was only immortal by virtue of his access to the tree of life (Gen 3:22). Genesis reaffirms Yahweh's terrestrial, anthropomorphic essential character in his various face-to-face encounters with Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Abraham and Jacob, to the point of sharing a meal with Abram and Sarai in their tent (Gen 18:1–15) and engaging in a wrestling match with Jacob (Gen 32:24–32).

But the Pentateuch elsewhere insisted that no one had ever seen Yahweh face-to-face, nor could they and survive (Ex 3:6; 33:20–23; Deut 4:12; 5:26; *contra* Ex 24:9–11). Whereas Yahweh is an anthropomorphic terrestrial god in Genesis, in Exodus he was a fiery being⁵⁷ dwelling in heaven (Ex 20:22; 34:5; Num 11:25; Deut 4:36), who descended to earth at Sinai amidst terrifying thunder, earthquakes and clouds in the theophany of Ex 19:16–20; 20:18; Deut 10:14; cf. Deut 4:11; 5:22. No mere anthropomorphic being, his presence was described as a *kabod* or glory, and divine fire shot out from his presence to consume any who would dare see him, or who would provoke

his wrath (Lev 10:1–2; Num 11:1; 16:35; Deut 5:25). Yahweh took on cosmic qualities in Exodus–Joshua and traveled with Moses and the children of Israel, not as a god walking the landscape as in Genesis 2–3; 4:9–12; 9:1–17; 12:1–4; 17:1–22; 18:1–33; 32:24–32, but as a divine *kabod* descended to earth at Sinai (Ex 24:16–17) and filling the wilderness tabernacle (Ex 33:9–10; 40:34–38)—and later the temple (1 Kgs 8:10–11)—with fiery glory as the god of the universe dwelling among his special people. Yahweh thus took on a dual role as a terrestrial god who was at the same time also the cosmic creator and god of the entire universe.

8.8.3 *The Decalogue: The Fourth Commandment*

The fourth commandment contains the first explicit biblical equation or identification of Yahweh with the cosmic god of Creation. While Gen 2:2–3 gave an etiology for the Jewish-Samaritan Sabbath in which the cosmic Creator Elohim “blessed” and “sanctified” the seventh day (יום שביעי) as the day on which Elohim “ceased” (שבת) the work of creation, Yahweh played no role in the institution of the Sabbath in Gen 2:2–3 or indeed anywhere in Gen 1:1–2:3. But the god who “in six days ... made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day” and “blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it” was referred to as Yahweh in Ex 20:11. This effectively constituted a retroactive insertion of the god Yahweh into the First Creation Account and amounts to a commentary or interpretation on Genesis 1 (and as such properly belongs to the reception history of Genesis⁵⁸). The conflation of Elohim and Yahweh suited the interests of the authors of the Decalogue, who insisted on a single, monolatrous cult within the national boundaries of Judah and Samaria. By promoting the terrestrial god Yahweh to the status of god of the universe, monolatry was legislated and enforced at the expense of the recognition of the novel monotheistic god of Creation innovated by the philosophical authors of Genesis 1.

8.8.4 *From Monolatry to Monotheism*

In the preceding sections, evidence was presented for a transition from the cosmic monotheism and benevolent terrestrial polytheism of Genesis to a monolatry centered on the local god Yahweh in Exodus–Joshua, facilitated by the conflation of Yahweh with the Creator of Genesis 1. Yahweh, the national god of the Jews and Israelites, was thereby raised to cosmic status as the god of the entire universe, a god who nevertheless paradoxically chose to dwell among the children of Israel, first in the wilderness tabernacle and later in Jerusalem’s temple. The leaders of Yahweh’s temple cult did not merely praise Yahweh as their nation’s patron god and author of their laws, but rejected all the other gods and their idols as wicked and false. The Hebrew Bible would later portray the gods of the nations as mere lifeless idols, although cuneiform ritual texts show that Babylonians believed that

magical rites animated their statues with a splendid divine presence analogous to the *kabod* said to inhabit the tabernacle and the temple (Walker and Dick 1999). It was but a small step from the biblical criticism of religions that centered on lifeless idols to denying the existence of the gods that were said to inhabit these idols.⁵⁹

By this logic, there soon arose a true monotheism among the Jews that claimed that they alone worshipped a real god, Yahweh, creator of the universe, while all other religions worshipped gods who were in some sense false. Much as Exodus–Joshua depicted a combative monolatry in which a single good deity waged war against all the wicked gods of the nations, by the second century BCE there similarly emerged a combative monotheism in which the one “true” existent deity waged war against all the false gods and religions (Kirsch 2004).

8.9 Initial Successes and Setbacks of the Platonic Agenda

From the preceding sections §§8.6–8.8, it has emerged that the Hexateuch was authored under the direction of two different contemporary groups with contradictory ethics and competing agendas. Identifying these two groups who left marks of their intellectual and ideological conflict throughout the text of the Hexateuch is relatively straightforward. The first was a cadre of highly educated elites who sought to reform Jewish and Samaritan national life in conformance with Platonic theology, ethics and political theory. The second group was composed of conservative contemporary Yahwistic priests and national leaders who sought to preserve and expand the monopolistic power of the Yahweh cult and undermine the influence of the Platonic philosophical circles in the process. This latter group accepted the implementation of Plato’s political, legislative and literary agenda that served the practical purpose of effective nation-building (Gmirkin 2017: 250–99), but rejected the subsequent theological and ethical constraints on government and religion. The Hexateuch is best understood as a compromise text with literary contributions from both of these two competing groups (and perhaps others), skillfully combined by editors (cf. Gmirkin 2020c).

The creation of the Hexateuch at Alexandria ca. 270 BCE (and the translation of the Pentateuch into Greek⁶⁰) inaugurated a political and theological revolution in the national life of Judea and Samaria, replacing traditional national institutions with a novel theocratic form of government, new laws and a new national literature, in accordance with the political and literary agenda outlined in Plato’s *Laws* (Gmirkin 2017: 261–9). For the most part, the Platonic political agenda was successfully implemented in the reinvention of Jewish and Samaritan national life (cf. Gmirkin 2017: 261–9). Instead of the former rule under a governor during the Neo-Babylonian, Persian and early Hellenistic Era, there was now a new theocratic form of government under a high priest and *gerousia* (senate) closely modeled on

Plato's Nocturnal Council (Gmirkin 2017: 36). Incorporating Plato's *Laws* and other Greek laws researched at Alexandria's Great Library and retaining a few Old Babylonian and Neo-Assyrian laws preserved among the Samaritans (Gmirkin 2017: 144, 175 n. 366, 263, 2020b: 87), a new constitution and law code was created. These laws were given a divine origin in the Torah's foundation story, much as Plato had prescribed, in which Yahweh had revealed them to Moses. This new law code recognized existing priesthoods and temples and incorporated local religious customs, as Plato also advised, in order to enhance the aura of antiquity and divinity associated with the new legislation (Gmirkin 2017: 254–5, 262–3). The Pentateuchal foundation story and laws authored and translated into Greek at Alexandria ca. 270 BCE were supplemented in Jerusalem shortly thereafter by the creation of an entire national library of approved literary texts, also following Plato's agenda in *Laws* (Gmirkin 2017: 261–9). The sacred texts of the Hebrew Bible formed the basis of the Jewish educational system, especially as reflected in the proliferation of synagogues in the third century BCE in Egypt and later in Palestine (Gmirkin 2017: 268–9). By ca. 200 BCE, according to all available literary and historical evidence, Jews and Samaritans had come to fully accept the Mosaic foundation story as actual history, and the new constitution and laws of ca. 270 BCE as their ancient foundational heritage, much as Plato might have predicted (*Republic* 3.415c–d). As an external program of nation-building, the creation of the new national life in ca. 270–200 BCE under the agenda laid out in Plato's *Laws* must be viewed as extremely successful.

At the conclusion of Plato's *Laws*, Plato expressed concern that the establishment of the corpus of laws was not sufficient to secure the "salvation" or preservation of the nation through time (*Laws* 12.968a). Long-range success also required the proper selection and philosophical training of the crucial first generation of magistrates in the ruling Nocturnal Council (*Laws* 12.968a–969d), the "divine council" (*Laws* 12.969b) to which the new nation would be entrusted (*Laws* 12.968e–969c). The Nocturnal Council, the supreme governmental body in Plato's *Laws*, was intended to serve as "the special repository of wisdom" for the state (Bury 1934: 1.xiv–xv), the embodiment of *nous* or reason (*Laws* 12.962b–c), governing and protecting the *polis* as the divine saviors of the state by means of their superior intellect, training and virtue (*Laws* 7.811c–d; 12.945c–e, 951d–e, 961a–b, 963a–966d; cf. Morrow 1993: 503–5). Its membership consisted of the leading priests who had received an award of merit for their superior virtue, the ten senior-most Guardians of the Laws, and the current and past Ministers of Education and others of outstanding excellence (*Laws* 12.951d–e, 961a–b; cf. Morrow 1993: 503–5). These senior members were required to possess a thorough understanding of philosophy, theology, and ethics, as laid out in Plato's *Laws*,⁶¹ which served as an advanced textbook for the theory of the proper rational aims and methods of government.⁶² Philosophical training of this initial body of magistrates was of crucial importance, since, once

selected and installed in office, the nation would thereafter be under their sole power and care (*Laws* 12.969b–c).

The reinvention of Jewish national life ca. 270 BCE as a Platonic theocracy was only partially successful, much for the reasons Plato predicted as potentially problematic: the lack of adequate qualifications and training of the ruling class entrusted with the new government. Plato's *Laws* appears to have been instrumental in the introduction of a hierocratic form of government in Judea in the early Hellenistic Era under a high priest and *gerousia*.⁶³ The Jewish senate or *gerousia* of 70 elders led by a high priest appears to have been directly modeled on Plato's Nocturnal Council (Gmirkin 2017: 27–28, 36, 39, 261), at least outwardly. Both ruling bodies took the form of a *gerousia* or council of elders.⁶⁴ A striking commonality was the civic authority granted the high priest in both Jewish and Platonic theocracies. The Jews of Jerusalem's temple had an office of high priest (*rab cohen*) at least as early as ca. 400 BCE who exercised power in the religious sphere (TAD A4.7.17–18), but it was only in the later Hellenistic Era that he became head of the *gerousia* and civic leader of the nation. In the Greek world, the office of "high priest" (*archheireon*) was unknown outside of Plato's *Laws* until ca. 250 BCE (Morrow 1993: 417–8). Plato's *Laws* was unique both in investing the office of priest with an aura of virtue and in assigning priests civic duties.⁶⁵ The high priest and college of priests associated with him as civic leaders in Plato's *Laws* thus correspond strikingly to the Jewish high priest and chief priests who figured prominently in the *gerousia* (and later Sanhedrin). Both senates also historically included non-priests with a reputation for legal expertise,⁶⁶ but the position of high priest as civic leader was considered a uniquely Jewish phenomenon throughout the period ca. 270–ca. 40 BCE.⁶⁷

While the structure and composition of the Nocturnal Council was formally reproduced in the Jewish high priest and *gerousia* as the ruling body of the new theocratic government of Judea, there existed one essential difference: the high priesthood of the Jewish temple was hereditary rather than elected. In Plato's *Laws*, those occupying the highest priestly offices were chosen by popular vote by virtue of their "divine qualities" of excellence and virtue (*Laws* 12.945b–946a) and other educational qualifications (*Laws* 12.963a–966a). By contrast, priesthood among the Jews was exclusively hereditary, and the office of high priest was handed down within a single powerful priestly family. The Platonic theocracy under enlightened philosophical direction was thus implemented as a Yahwistic theocracy under the direct control of the Yahweh cult as the high priest became, for the first time, the leader of the Jewish nation.

The circumstances by which the Yahwistic priesthood obtained a rulership position over the *gerousia* of ca. 270 BCE is historically obscure. It is perhaps significant that the chief authorities in Jerusalem in the late 400s BCE were named as "Jonathan the high priest and his brothers the priests who are in Jerusalem" along with "Ostanes brother of Anani and the nobles of

the Jews,” both groups subservient to Bagavahya, the Persian-appointed “governor of Judah” (TAD A4.7.1, 17–19). The *gerousia* of ca. 270 BCE appears to have conserved the power of these same influential priestly and non-priestly ruling class elites, the primary change being the replacement of the civil governor by the high priest as the leader of the nation. The newly formed Jewish government thus preserved the outward form of Plato’s theocracy, including a *gerousia* that externally resembled the ruling Nocturnal Council of Plato’s *Laws*, but maintained continuity with the ruling class of earlier generations, with an enhancement of the powers of the traditional hereditary high priest who used his newly elevated position to promote Yahweh’s temple and cult in Judea. It appears that Jewish ruling circles at Jerusalem rejected Plato’s novel idea of aristocracy based on virtue and education in favor of the entrenched Ancient Near Eastern dynastic privilege.⁶⁸ The original mandate of the high priest and the Nocturnal Council to wisely administer the nation according to well-considered philosophical principles was thus replaced by the conservative cultic and nationalistic interests of the old ruling class.

The installation of priests in high ruling positions who possessed no qualifications other than that of ancestry was not the only misstep in the reinvention of Jewish national life. In addition, it is apparent that the priests and legislators of the new theocracy of ca. 270 BCE did not undergo sufficient philosophical training to prepare them for their leadership positions. Plato thought it essential that the members of the newly constituted Nocturnal Council first receive proper training in philosophy, theology, ethics and government (*Laws* 12.967e–968a). Properly forming the Nocturnal Council would require teaching in prolonged conferences, if the new government were to have any chance of success (*Laws* 12.968c). Yet it was difficult to teach oneself these topics or to find a knowledgeable teacher (*Laws* 12.968d), nor was it possible to predict how long a new magistrate should be instructed before the subject matter would be internalized “within his soul” (*Laws* 12.968d–e). In the end, those forming the government must hand the newly founded nation over to this “divine council” of magistrates (*Laws* 12.969a), a bold gamble with considerable risk of failure, but would win the framers great renown, whether or not the enterprise met with success (*Laws* 12.969b–c).⁶⁹ In order to give the project the best chance to succeed, “the Athenian” of Plato’s *Laws* agreed to serve as philosophical consultant in realizing the establishment of the new nation and to try to find other assistants with similar legislative knowledge and experience (*Laws* 12.969b–c), which is often taken to refer to the political experts of Plato’s Academy (Klosko 1988: 78); Plato and the educated elites of the Academy were known to have assisted in writings constitutions and laws for various nation-states around the Mediterranean (Morrow 1993: 5).

The extent of philosophical training provided to the magistrates of the new Jewish theocracy of ca. 270 BCE is unknown, nor whether members of Plato’s Academy were consulted at the formation of the new Mosaic

constitution, laws and other institutions. Yet it is evident that whatever training the members of the fledgling Jewish senate of ca. 270 BCE received was inadequate, as demonstrated by the philosophical failings manifest in Exodus–Joshua. In addition, there is no historical evidence to suggest that the Jewish ruling class studied or perpetuated the philosophical ideas of Plato after the initial generation of leaders of ca. 270 BCE. The Nocturnal Council was conceived as a university of continued legal, educational and philosophical studies in order to perpetuate the principles of good government down through time. Plato recognized that proper training was required, not just for the first generation of legislators and magistrates, but for each succeeding generation (*Republic* 6.497c–d). Before dawn each day, members of the Nocturnal Council convened in an assembly room on the Acropolis (*Laws* 10.908a; 12.969c) to hold learned symposia on political theory, international law and education, drawing on knowledge obtained from covertly studying legal systems from around the world, in order to improve the administration of the nation (*Laws* 12.951d–952b). The members of the Nocturnal Council also passed on their knowledge in governmental studies to select junior leaders-in-training under their tutelage. Each member of the Nocturnal Council was expected to nominate an intellectually promising junior colleague to attend the daily symposia and receive instruction in education, law and ethics in order to groom them for future leadership positions (*Laws* 12.951d–e, 961b, 965a). Education in advanced philosophical topics was reserved for the senior members of the Nocturnal Council (*Laws* 12.964d–966d). It was expected that the initial founding members of the Nocturnal Council would be trained in the essential elements of Plato’s philosophy (*Laws* 12.963a–966d). Using Plato’s *Laws* as their main educational text, it was expected that the magistrates of the Nocturnal Council would be well versed in government (*Laws* 12.962b–e), law and education (*Laws* 12.951d–952b), philosophy (*Laws* 12.963a–966a), natural theology (*Laws* 12.966c–d), astronomy (*Laws* 12.966e–967e) and ethics (*Laws* 12.963a–964d, 965c–e, 966b). Further, it was expected the magistrates would continue to “labor at the divine” (*Laws* 12.966c–d) by their studies in these subjects throughout their tenure in office (*Laws* 12.951d–952b, 965a–d; cf. *Republic* 7.519b). The Nocturnal Council was thus envisioned not only as the supreme ruling body of Plato’s theocracy, but as a university for the divine ruling class elites and a training center for future leaders (*Laws* 12.965a–b; Morrow 1993: 509; Hull 2019: 228). Plato considered this perpetuation of knowledge from one generation to the next as absolutely essential for the preservation of the nation (*Laws* 12.960c–e, 962b–d, 964d–965a; cf. *Republic* 6.497c–d). Yet the Jewish *gerousia* under the leadership of the high priest, intended as the implementation of Plato’s divine Nocturnal Council, does not appear to have functioned as an institution of higher learning.

The implementation of Plato’s agenda for nation-building also suffered an additional setback in the failure to establish Plato’s *Laws* as the key educational document of the new nation. The inspired text of Plato’s *Laws*

(*Laws* 3.702b–c; 4.712b, 722c; 7.811c, 799e; 12.968b; cf. 11.921c) was the most important educational text of the nation; the Minister of Education was to make it mandatory reading for all teachers, who were required to praise it and use it (along with similar approved texts) for instructing their students (*Laws* 7.811c–812a). The magistrates of Plato’s theocracy were required to master the text of Plato’s *Laws*, the most important text in their possession (*Laws* 12.957c–d). Most of the populace, lacking the requisite intellectual facility, could only grasp Plato’s *Laws* at a superficial level, but the divine magistrates who labored at this text would find it invaluable. If the national literature created under the supervision of the “legislators of the arts” was the Bible of the ordinary citizenry, designed to promote desirable beliefs, then Plato’s *Laws* was the Bible of the philosophical ruling class aimed at leading them to a profound reasoned knowledge of all essential aspects of creating and perpetuating a genuinely virtuous nation.

There was certainly an attempt to install Plato’s *Laws* as a guiding philosophical document in the theocracy of ca. 270 BCE by some elements of that new government. This is demonstrated by the extensive use of Plato’s *Laws* as a source for the outward constitutional and legislative content in the Pentateuch (Gmirkin 2017). Yet the conservative faction did not adopt Plato’s *Laws* as a foundational ethical and educational document for themselves or for the nation. Instead, the higher education of the Jewish ruling class, like that of the general populace of the nation, focused exclusively on the Torah.⁷⁰ It would appear that conservative elements in the new theocratic government proved unwilling either to be trained in or to perpetuate the principles of Plato’s philosophy.

8.10 The Collapse of the Platonic Agenda

As shown in the present study, the Platonic agenda promoted by the Jewish and Samaritan philosophers of ca. 270 BCE experienced significant setbacks. The Platonic philosophy and ethics on full display in Genesis 1–3 and implicit throughout the rest of Genesis were rejected in the legislation and accompanying mythic narratives of Exodus–Joshua, which implemented Plato’s external instructions for nation-building but failed to internalize the underlying Platonic ethical principles. Instead of a benevolent polytheism under the supreme cosmic god of the universe, the theocracy of Exodus–Joshua incorporated a national policy of Yahwistic monolatry in which the patron god of the Israelites was elevated over all the other terrestrial gods and claimed a new status as the god of creation. This hostile new monolatry had both cultic and nationalistic elements involving religious aggression against competing gods of the land and militant territorial ambitions grounded in the greatly expanded theoretical borders of the Promised Land in Numbers and Joshua.

A key element in the Platonic agenda was the domestication and oversight of the nation’s religion by a new philosophical elite. Plato’s *Timaeus* sought

to reform the Olympian gods by transforming them into the mortal terrestrial sons and daughters of the Demiurge, but it is evident that the religious leadership of ca. 270 BCE resisted a similar domestication of Yahweh or his demotion as the terrestrial patron god of the children of Israel to second class status underneath the supreme god of the universe (despite this being precisely the original historical status of Yahweh as a son of El). Newly empowered as both cultic and political leaders of the reinvented nation, the priests of Yahweh's temple used their new offices to preserve and expand the Yahweh cult and to enhance the prestige of Yahweh in the process. Instead of Yahweh being portrayed as one benevolent god among many, Yahweh was portrayed in cosmic terms in Exodus–Joshua at the expense of all the other gods of the nations, who were depicted as powerless and their cults as wicked. This rejection of Plato's benevolent model of inclusive polytheism in favor of a model in which Yahwism was at war with other gods both inside and outside Israel's borders may be understood as an initiative to promote the monopolistic power of the temple cult against polytheistic competitors.

In this manner, the cosmic transcendent god of Genesis, the philosophical example of goodness, was effectively subjugated and overthrown by the authors of Exodus–Joshua to become the terrestrial voice of petty nationalistic and cultic interests. The rejection of the philosophical monotheism of Genesis 1 in favor of the terrestrial monolatry of Exodus–Joshua in essence constituted a *stasis* led by an entrenched priesthood resistant to any limitation of their traditional religious offices and political leaders seeking to expand the national boundaries. Although philosophy provided the impetus for the reinvention of Jewish and Samaritan national life and the creation of the Pentateuch ca. 270 BCE, the Torah thus also bears witness to the overthrow of philosophy by the first generation of priests and legislators appointed to rule the fledgling theocratic state. The *gerousia*, headed by the high priest, modeled on Plato's Nocturnal Council and intended as a refuge for Platonic philosophers, instead became an agency for the extinction of philosophy as a vital force in Jewish life. The original Platonic idea of theocracy under an enlightened philosophical elite was replaced by an aggressive Yahwistic monolatry freed of constraints to philosophical goodness and subject to unruly territorial ambitions. Philosophical rule was effectively decapitated.

Evidence is lacking for a continued later study of Plato by the Jewish ruling class in a university-like setting after the creation of the Pentateuch, a signal failure of the Platonic agenda that had sought to create a state which guaranteed the pursuit of philosophy at the highest level into perpetuity. Instead of philosophers ruling a divine state through a carefully crafted and monitored religion and national traditions, religion itself became the driving force of Judean national life in the Hellenistic Era, as Judaism became a belief system perpetuated through its literature alone, untethered from philosophy. Empowered with its own autonomous beliefs and written traditions, the Jewish and Samaritan religions thus came into implicit conflict

with the philosophical system that had given them birth. Rather than the first nation under philosophical rule, Judea became known as the first nation under priestly religious rule, and Judaism as the first belief system. With its divine laws and approved national literature, Judaism remarkably survived the downfall of its temple and ancient nation, effecting the eternal perpetuation of its religious traditions and beliefs down to present times, much as Plato had predicted (Gmirkin 2017: 270–4). Yet the philosophy that gave birth to the novel Jewish theocratic state was, ironically, extinguished at the outset.

The original philosophical intentions of the biblical authors are most pronounced in Genesis 1–3 and its translation into Greek. It is here that these Platonic philosophers introduced their readers to the idea of cosmic monotheism, in an account closely modeled on Plato’s *Timaeus*, where a perfect Creator fashioned the *kosmos* in the image of his own goodness. It was also here that the conditionally immortal offspring of that Creator in turn created mortal life, subject to the conflicting impulses of good and evil. Genesis 4–11, modeled on Plato’s *Critias*, continued with an account of the mythical primordial world where the sons of God bore mighty, heroic offspring by the daughters of men. When the dilution of the divine element through time led to the rise of unbridled violence among the nations, the world was purged of evil by earthquake and flood. Yet in a fresh beginning, the nations and their gods lived together in a renewed era of peace that saw the propitious birth of the ancestors of the children of Israel who were destined someday to become a great nation under the benevolent divine guidance of their patron god Yahweh. Such was the biblical prelude to the story of the children of Israel as laid out in Genesis, a literary artifact of a brief era that saw a bold attempt to reinvent the nation of the Jews and Samaritans as a utopian nation enlightened and governed by philosophy.

Notes

- 1 References to “Yahweh of Samaria and his Asherah” at Kuntilet ‘Ajrud (Meshel 2012) suggest the existence of a cultic installation in Samaria not yet discovered by archaeologists. The prominent association of the Yahweh cult with Omri of Israel in the Moab Stele suggests that the temple of Yahweh of Samaria was constructed by Omri or Ahab.
- 2 The flattened acropolis at Jezreel, Samaria, Gezer, Hazor, Tell el-Rumeith in Gilead and Jahaz and Ataroth in Moab, is judged a distinctive feature of Omride city architecture of ca. 900 BCE and later (Finkelstein 2013: 85–104; cf. Wightman 1993: 29–31; Ussishkin 2003: 535, 2011: 18–21; Finkelstein and Silberman 2006: 105). The construction of Jerusalem’s temple on the artificially flattened Temple Mount points to its likely construction by Ahab of Israel (cf. 2 Kgs 21:3, discussed in Gmirkin 2020b).
- 3 For elements of older local deities and cultic practices in the authorized religion of the biblical text and in Iron I and II archaeological remains from the territories of biblical Judah and Samaria, see Cross 1973; Day 2000; Miller 2000; Smith 1990, 2001; Dever 2008.
- 4 See 2 Kgs 21:3–7, which appears to ultimately draw on authentic Iron II source material from the Royal Annals of Judah (Gmirkin 2020b). Despite later literary

- accounts that characterized Jerusalem's temple as dedicated solely to the worship of Yahweh (1 Kings 8; 2 Kgs 18:1–6; 23:1–24), the polytheistic practices condemned in 2 Kings 21 appear to reflect Jerusalem's temple from its foundation ca. 850 BCE to its fall in 586 BCE; cf. Gmirkin 2020b.
- 5 An inscription of Sargon II that reports the fall of Samaria (Nimrud Prism 4.25–41) states, "I counted as spoil 27,280 people, together with their chariots, and gods, in which they trusted." This has been understood to mean that Sargon II carried off the statues of the Samarian gods (Gadd 1954: 181; Becking 1992: 31, 1997), presumably from Samaria's temple (or, less likely, tabernacle; cf. Anderson 1991; Pummer 1998 [see Smith and Pitard 2009: 338–39, 350 on tent-shrines in the Ancient Near East]). See Becking 1997: 167–71; Na'aman 1999: 398–401 for discussions of the possible depiction of Sargon II carrying off the gods of Samaria in the reliefs from Dur-Sharrukin.
 - 6 2 Kgs 25:1–21. The account of Jerusalem's fall, which conforms to the Babylonian Chronicle (Van Seters 1983: 79–82, 294–5) and to Ancient Near Eastern conquest accounts (Younger 1990: 72–9; Fried 2003), and is dated in terms of Nebuchadnezzar's regnal years (2 Kgs 24:12; 25:8; Jer 25:1; 32:1; 52:12, 28–30), arguably derives from Berossus (cf. Gmirkin 2020a: 39–40).
 - 7 While there is no evidence of destruction layers in Samaria during the Neo-Babylonian period, the archaeological record shows significant destruction layers and reduced population in Judah. There was little change of material culture in the Neo-Babylonian period in either Samaria (Knoppers 2013: 37–8) or Judah (Stern 1982: 229).
 - 8 No gods other than Yahweh are attested in epigraphical finds at Mount Gerizim in either the Persian or Hellenistic era. While similar contemporary epigraphic evidence is lacking for Yehud in the Persian Era, the book of Haggai associates Jerusalem's temple with Yahweh. Virtually all the major and minor prophets fall under the category of literary prophecy, that is, a prophetic text that originated in written form (Nissenen 2004; Lange 2006), a form of prophetic composition known from pseudepigraphal Hellenistic Era pseudo-Persian and Egyptian texts as well as pseudepigraphal Greek prophecies attributed to Bakis or to the Sibyls known in the east in the early Hellenistic Era (Gmirkin 2020a: 37–9). The late literary genre of the Prophets as well as their frequent Pentateuchal references mark them as Hellenistic Era compositions. The sole exception is the book of Haggai, which belongs to the genre of oracle collections known from the Assyrian royal archives of Esarhaddon. See Parpola 1997 and Nissinen 2000, 2004 on characteristics of Assyrian oracle collections. Comparative studies with Assyrian oracle collections by Nissenen and others have focused exclusively on the so-called pre-exilic biblical prophets and have ignored Haggai. Nevertheless, it seems to me that the book of Haggai may be an authentic, though lightly edited, oracle collection of ca. 520 BCE, and as such constitutes valuable contemporary to the exclusive association of Jerusalem's temple with Yahweh in the Persian Era.
 - 9 An analysis of theophoric elements in names from the Judahite exilic community in Babylonia documents polytheism in the Jewish exilic community where Yah was worshipped alongside the chief Babylonian gods (Granerød 2019: 357–62, especially 361–2, drawing on Pearce and Wunsch 2014) and demonstrates the prosaic worship of Babylonian deities alongside Yahweh throughout the Neo-Babylonian and Persian periods.
 - 10 The Elephantine Papyri of ca. 450–400 BCE reflect a casual polytheism in which Yah was worshipped alongside various other Babylonian and Syrian gods such as Herembethel, Eshembethel and Anathbethel (TAD B7.2–3; C3:127–28; Granerød 2016: 31, 244–56, 2019: 352–3, 357). There is no indication in the corpus of papyri

- and ostraca from Elephantine, Syene and Memphis that the polytheistic culture that thrived in the Jewish-Aramean military colonies of Egypt was in any way unusual or unorthodox (Granerød 2016: 324–40, 2019: 351–7).
- 11 A fourth century BCE ostraca from Idumea mentions temples both of Yaho and the Arabian god 'Uzza, suggesting Yahwism thrived within a polytheistic environment in Judah's southern neighbor (Lemaire 2004, 2006).
 - 12 Iconography on Persian Era coinage from Samaria shows a remarkable continuity with that of the polytheistic cultic installation at Kuntillet 'Ajrud (ca. 750 BCE), demonstrating a strong continuity with Samaria's polytheistic heritage (Leith 2014: 275–84) and incidentally showing that Samaria's religious culture was by no means aniconic.
 - 13 Ephraim Stern (1999, 2001, 2006) argued that archaeological remains from Persian Era Judah demonstrate a remarkable aniconography and absence of pagan cultic objects, in contrast with regional neighbors, but his analysis was disputed in the collection of articles in Frevel, Psychny and Cornelius (2014). See Grabbe 2014, Wyssmann 2014 and Leith 2014 on imagery, including foreign gods, on Samaritan and Judean coins. A bearded god seated on a throne on Samaritan coinage and on a winged chariot on a "Yehud" coin (Wyssmann 2014: 230–2, 246–7) is sometimes interpreted as representations of Yahweh; cf. Smith 1990: 9; Shenkar 2007–2008; de Hulster 2009. See Grabbe 2014: 34 on Persian Era incense altars and figurines in Judah, contra Stern 1999: 250–5 2001: 478–9, 488.
 - 14 The evidence from the Elephantine Papyri shows that the religious authorities in Jerusalem accommodated the existence of other temples servicing polytheistic Jewish communities abroad. The priests of Elephantine were in close communication with the priests in Jerusalem and the Samaritan authorities, both of whom sanctioned the rebuilding of their temple of Yah: not only was there no Deuteronomistic backlash from Jerusalem, there is no indication of the existence of any biblical writings that discouraged any of the historical practices at Elephantine that scholars once discounted as heterodox (Granerød 2016: 17, 204–6, 340).
 - 15 The extensive use of the Pentateuch, especially Exodus imagery in Second Isaiah, indicates a date after ca. 270 BCE. Since all 66 chapters of Isaiah were found in the Great Isaiah Scroll of Qumran, Second Isaiah certainly pre-dates 125 BCE. All the prophets were known to Sirach ca. 185 BCE, including Isaiah (Sir. 48.23–25), and the definition of the Prophets as a literary corpus alongside the Law in Sirach suggests that the Prophets had already taken definite form. Sir. 18.2–3, which contains monotheistic claims, is present in only some manuscripts, so is of uncertain date.
 - 16 Monotheistic language appears in Jub. 12.19 (ca. 175–160 BCE); Judith 5.8 (ca. 160 BCE); *Letter of Aristeas* 132, 140 (ca. 150 BCE); 2 Macc. 1.24–25; 3.22, 24; 6.26; 7.9, 35 (ca. 100 BCE); *SibOr* 3.48–49, 693, 717–8, 760 (ca. 165–45 BCE). See Mach 1999 on monotheism as evidenced by Jewish literary sources in the Hellenistic Era. The textual evidence cannot demonstrate universal Jewish monotheism during the times these books were written, but only that of the authors and their social circles. But given the prominence and wide authority of many of these texts, a broad support of monotheism can be inferred.
 - 17 Plato, *Republic* 2.376e–377a, 382a–d; 3.389b–d, 414b–415d; 5.459c–d; idem, *Protagoras* 320b–c; Gmirkin 2017: 276 n. 14; Belfiore 1985; Brisson 1998: 91, 113.
 - 18 See Gmirkin 2017: 131–3 on the Athenian law against atheism. Later, when true Jewish monotheism arose in the second century BCE, the Jews would come under similar accusations of atheism and impiety (Josephus, *Apion* 2.148 [Apollonius Molon]; Diodorus Siculus, *Library* 34/35.1.1; cf. Gmirkin 2006: 285–93).

- 19 Plato, *Phaedrus* 244a–245b, 248d–e; idem, *Ion* 533d–534e; idem, *Meno* 99c–d; idem, *Apology* 22b; idem, *Laws* 4.719c; cf. Gonzalez 2011; Scott 2011.
- 20 Plato, *Ion* 532c, 533e, 536d; idem, *Apology* 22b–c; idem, *Meno* 99c–d; idem, *Phaedrus* 245a; idem, *Laws* 4.719c; cf. Gonzalez 2011.
- 21 Plato, *Phaedrus* 254b, 249d; idem, *Symposium* 210a–212a; cf. Gonzalez 2011; Scott 2011.
- 22 Homer, *Iliad* 2.484–93, 761–62; 11.218–20; 14.508–10; 16.112–13; Hesiod, *Works and Days* 1–12; idem, *Theogony* 105–15, 965–68, 1021–22; cf. Minton 1960, 1962; Wheeler 2002.
- 23 The creation of the *kosmos* by Plato’s Demiurge, whose depiction at times shared characteristics with the traditional anthropomorphic gods (*Timaeus* 41a–42e), was described as a likely story or myth (*Timaeus* 28c, 29c,d, 30b–c, 48d–e, 72d, 90e). Plato’s philosophical tale of creation at the dawn of time by a supremely good deity (cf. *Timaeus* 29a,e, 30a–d, 37a, 46c–d, 68e) thoroughly conformed to Plato’s rules for the construction of theologically acceptable myths in *Republic* 2.377c–3.392c.
- 24 Plato, *Republic* 10.614a–621d; idem, *Laws* 12.959b; idem, *Gorgias* 523a–b; idem, *Phaedo* 63c.
- 25 Plato, *Laws* 5.727d; idem, *Republic* 2.363c–e; 7.540b; 10.614a–621d; cf. Morrow 1993: 455; Brisson 1998: 9–11; Gmirkin 2017: 277 n. 19.
- 26 Josephus, *Apion* 2.165. See discussion in Gmirkin 2017: 271–4 on the systematic allusions to Plato’s *Laws* in *Apion* 2.145–295, including the passage on theocracy. Plato’s novel system of government was described as a theocracy in Bury 1934: 1.xiv; Solmsen 1942: 163; Klosko 2006: 249–50; Annas 2010: 89.
- 27 In Plato’s *Republic*, this idea was presented in the myth of the metals, in which the gods created a race of golden-souled philosophers divinely endowed to act as kings and guardians over the silver-souled race of warriors and the bronze and iron-souled races of farmers and craftsmen (*Republic* 3.415a–c). In Plato’s *Laws* a similar idea was presented in the myth of the Age of Kronos, when a golden race of demigods was created to rule over the simple-minded silver race of ordinary humans in earliest mythical times (*Laws* 4.713c–e).
- 28 The imagery of humanity as herds of tame sheep, oxen or goats tended by the divine rulers in the Age of Kronos was used by Plato in *Statesman* 271e–272b, 275a–b; *Critias* 109b–c; *Laws* 3.766a; 4.713c–e.
- 29 The Nocturnal Council of Plato’s *Laws* Book 12 has often been interpreted as a revamped version of the Guardians or philosopher-kings of the *Republic*; cf. Morrow 1993: 512, 573; Klosko 1988: 76; 2006: 252–3. Aristotle also claimed that Plato’s *Laws* eventually arrives at the same form of government as *Republic* (*Politics* 2.1265a), that is, rule by philosopher-kings. For the guardians as saviors, see Plato, *Republic* 4.421a–b. In *Laws* 12.964b–e, 965b–c, 966a–b, 969c, Plato referred to the Nocturnal Council, not as *nomophylakes* (“Guardians of the Laws”), but simply as *phylakes* (“guardians”). Conversely, *Republic* 6.484b–c characterizes the *phylakes* as “guardians of the law.”
- 30 Cf. Armstrong 2004: 180. The notion was explicit in Plato, *Republic* 9.590c–d, where those with insufficient reason for self-rule should be “the slave [*doulon*] of that best person who has a divine ruler within himself ... on the ground that it is better for everyone to be governed by the divine and the intelligent, preferably indwelling and his own, but in default of that imposed from without.”
- 31 Service to the laws fashioned by divine reason constituted service to the gods themselves (Plato, *Laws* 6.762e) and obedience to the divine part of the soul (*Laws* 4.713e–714a; 12.966c–d). The citizens “are required by law to believe not only that the gods exist and are good, but that the laws are the product of divine *nous*” (Nightingale 1999: 121).

- 32 Plato, *Symposium* 209e–210a, 210d–e; in idem, *Phaedrus* 249c–250e, the pathway of initiation was the philosophical apprehension of the beautiful.
- 33 According to Plato’s distinctive teachings, Hesiod’s golden race of guardians sometimes still took mortal form as divine men of exceptional goodness and wisdom (*Laws* 1.645a; cf. 4.713c–714a, where Hesiod’s golden race of rulers was invoked). See Plato, *Cratylus* 398a–c on men in the present age of exceptional goodness and wisdom who could rightly be called spirits, whether living or dead. See idem, *Symposium* 202e–203a, 204a–b on “followers of wisdom” (that is, philosophers) as spiritual men, godlike beings of the “intermediate sort,” halfway between mortals and gods (*Symposium* 202e).
- 34 Plato, *Republic* 3.415c–d; cf. Gmirkin 2017: 252–3, 255–6. See Plato, *Phaedrus* 274c–275b, especially 275a, on authoritative written records eliminating the need for memory and erasing oral traditions; cf. Burger 1978.
- 35 Plato’s *Laws* Books 1–11 describe government by law, where even the magistrates are subject to the laws of the theocracy. In Book 12 Plato introduces the Nocturnal Council, which he makes clear is above the law (Klosko 1988: 84–7).
- 36 Plato, *Timaeus* 29e; *Phaedrus* 247a; *Critias* 109b–c; cf. Phillipus of Opus, *Epinomis* 988b;. In a rewrite of the traditional Athenian foundation myth in which Poseidon and Athena contended over the city of Athens (Herodotus, *Histories* 8.55; Apollodorus, *Library* 3.14.1; cf. Plato, *Menexenus* 237c–d), in *Critias* the gods cast lots over which lands they would rule (*Critias* 109b–c), peacefully and democratically (Stegman 2017). When the ancestral generation under its first king, Cecrops, chose Athena as their patron deity and named their city Athens in her honor, Poseidon responded in anger by sending a flood against Attica and the nearby Thessalian plain (Apollodorus, *Library* 3.14.1). Plato kept the traditional flood motif, which he relates is sent as just punishment sent by Zeus (*Critias* 121b) against the land of Atlantis ruled by Poseidon (*Timaeus* 24e–25d; *Critias* 108e), but which also inundated the vicinity of Athens (*Timaeus* 21d, 23c, 25d; *Critias* 112a).
- 37 Plato, like other writers in antiquity, viewed territorial aggression as incompatible with a positive international reputation that was necessary for the long-range salvation and preservation of the *polis* (Plato, *Laws* 12.950c–d, 969b; cf. 950e–951a). See the implicit critiques of Athenian imperialist policies by Plato in *Menexenus*, *Timaeus* and *Critias*; cf. Morgan 1998: 101–18; Collins and Stauffer 1999; Dušanić 2002: 65–6. The critique of Spartan military culture in Plato’s *Laws* was mirrored by harsh comments about Sparta in Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War* 1.10.2; 84.3; 90.1–2; 5.74.3; cf. Morrow 1993: 44. According to Polybius, *Histories* 6.50, Sparta’s ambitions to amass power and territory ultimately led to their loss of liberty; cf. Tigerstedt 1965: 271; 1974: 121–2.
- 38 Plato, *Laws* 12.950e–951a. The legislator and leaders of the nation should not aim at territorial enlargement (*Laws* 12.962e), like Sparta and Crete (*Laws* 1.625e–626c). “Wars and revolutions and battles are due simply and solely to the body and its desires; for all wars are undertaken for the acquisition of wealth, and we are compelled to acquire wealth for the sake of the body, because we are slaves to its service” (Plato, *Phaedo* 66c–d). For the nation to be good and happy (*Laws* 5.742d), it must instead dedicate itself to the pursuit of virtue (*Laws* 12.963a; cf. Aristotle, *Politics* 7.1324a, 1325b).
- 39 Plato’s *Laws* allowed for only the worship of the civic gods recognized by the ideal state (Gmirkin 2017: 132); condemned the establishment of rival private cults on penalty of death (Plato, *Laws* 10.909c–910c; cf. Gmirkin 2017: 170 n. 315) in a law modeled on Athenian impiety laws (Morrow 1993: 475; Gmirkin 2017: 170 n. 315); and condemned magical practices that involved other deities (Plato, *Laws* 10.909d–910c; 11.932e–933e; cf. Gmirkin 2017: 132). Such measures

were intended to suppress political subversion commonly associated with the establishment of secret cults (Gmirkin 2017: 133–6; cf. Deut 13:1–18), as well as to counter the idea that the gods could be bribed and bent to private purposes by prayers, invocations, rituals and sacrifices (Gmirkin 2017: 171 n. 327, 264; cf. Deut 18:9–14). These legislative measures were not aimed at gods worshipped in other lands, but were designed to maintain full theocratic control over the nation’s religious institutions.

- 40 Plato, *Phaedrus* 247b–d, 249b–c; idem, *Symposium* 210a–e, 211e–212a; idem, *Republic* 6.486d, 487d–489e, 506a–b; 7.529a–b; cf. Nightingale 2004: 73–90.
- 41 Ex 22:20; Lev 20:2–5, 27; Num 25:2, 7–8; Deut 13:1–2, 5–6, 8–10, 13–15; 17:1–7; Josh 7:25.
- 42 Although polytheism was not a visible concern anywhere in Genesis, this benevolent attitude towards the gods was revised in Josh 24:2, 14, where a wicked worship of other gods was attributed to Terah and to the Israelites in Egypt.
- 43 Manetho’s *Aegyptiaca* of ca. 280 BCE contained tales about the Hyksos overthrowing the Egyptian gods, and Osarseph, the later Ramesside priest of Seth-Typhon, also attacking the native gods. Manetho noted a slanderous oral tradition current in his day that identified Moses with Osarseph and the Jewish god with Seth-Typhon, the god of destruction who overthrew the gods of Egypt. Remarkably, the biblical Exodus story appears to endorse some elements in this hostile oral tradition found in Manetho; cf. Gmirkin 2006: 192–214.
- 44 Later passages in the Primary History have similar condemnation of foreign gods and cults (1 Kgs 11:5–7, 33; 12:28–33; 14:22–24; 19:18; 2 Kgs 17:7–17, 29–31), a competition between Elijah and the prophets of Baal in which Yahweh decisively defeated his divine rival (1 Kgs 18:17–40), and a war between the gods of Assyria and other gods, including Yahweh (2 Kgs 19:10–13).
- 45 Ex 12:12; Num 33:4; cf. Isa 19:1; 46:1–2; Jer 46:25; 50:2; 51:44; Zeph 2:11.
- 46 Gen 15:18; Ex 23:31; Num 34:3–12; Deut 1:7; 11:24; Josh 1:4; 15:63; 16:10; 17:11–18; 18:1–3; Judg 1:19, 21, 27–36; 2:1–5.
- 47 See note 49. For divine territorial promises to Hercules as a justification for later Spartan imperialistic conquests, see Tigerstedt 1965: 28–36; Malkin 1994: 15–45. For Spartan prophetic condemnation of the nation’s failure to conquer all divinely promised lands, see Gmirkin 2017: 229, 244 n. 77.
- 48 Compare the later territorial aggressions of Alexander Jannaeus and his sons (Strabo, *Geography* 16.2.28, 37, 40; Josephus, *Ant.* 13.324–34, 356, 358–62, 374–76, 393–97; 14.43, 46–48) that may have been internally justified by appealing to the Hexateuch. Complaints of Hasmonean aggressions from Judea’s neighbors gave Pompey a pretext to abolish the Hasmonean monarchy and impose Roman rule in 63 BCE (Josephus, *Ant.* 14.73–74, 77–78; Diodorus Siculus, *Library* 40.2; cf. Gmirkin 2006: 261–2). See note 38 for Plato’s advice for creating an international reputation for peace and justice as necessary for the long-term survival of the nation.
- 49 The competitiveness of the gods in Exodus–Joshua would later escalate with the identification of the “place where Yahweh would place his name” in Deuteronomy with Jerusalem’s temple (1 Kgs 5:5; 8:17–20), despite textual indications that the original intended referent was likely Mount Gerizim (Deut 11:29; 12:1–18; 27:12–13; Josh 8:30–34; cf. Kratz 2007; Nihan 2007).
- 50 Weippert 1972; Lind 1980; Kang 1989; Crouch 2009. The destruction of Jerusalem’s temple, in particular, was remembered long afterwards in the writings of the Prophets as Yahweh abandoning his nation to the destructive wrath of the other gods.

- 51 *Timaeus* 29a,e, 46c–d, 68e; cf. Solmsen 1942: 67, 118; Gerson 1990: 80–1. According to *Republic* 6.506e, 508b–c the sun, a god, was the offspring of the Form of the Good.
- 52 Ex 20:5; Deut 4:24; cf. Ex 34:14; Deut 6:15; Josh 24:10.
- 53 Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.147. “The deity, say they, is a living being, immortal, rational, perfect or intelligent in happiness, admitting nothing evil, taking providential care of the world and all that therein is, but he is not of human shape. He is, however ... called many names according to his various powers. They give the name Dia (Δία) because all things are due to (διὰ) him; Zeus (Ζῆνα) in so far as he is the cause of life (ζῆν) or pervades all life; the name Athena is given, because the ruling part of the divinity extends to the aether; the name Hera marks its extension to the air; he is called Hephaestus since it spreads to the creative fire; Poseidon, since it stretches to the sea; Demeter, since it reaches to the earth. Similarly, men have given the deity his other titles, fastening, as best they can, on some one or other of his peculiar attributes.” It is possible that the well-known Stoic assimilation of the Greek gods to their monotheistic god, the creative fire, influenced the biblical conflation of deities associated with various titles of the ancient god El with the local patron god Yahweh.
- 54 Deut 7:9; 10:17; Josh 22:22; 2 Sam 22:31; Ps 10:12; 50:1; 85:8; Isa 42:5; Jer 32:18; cf. Smith 1990: 8.
- 55 Neh 9:6; Ps 96:5; 102:25; 115:15; 121:2; 124:8; 134:3; 146:5–6; Isa 42:5; Jer 27:5; cf. Habel 1972.
- 56 In Gen 2:4 (MT) it was Yahweh Elohim who created the heavens and the earth. It is unclear at what date this claim was made since Gen 2:4 (LXX) reads *theos* (i.e. Elohim) rather than *kurios theos* (i.e. Yahweh Elohim). Likewise, Gen 2:7 (LXX) had *theos* as man’s creator, when it is clear from Gen 2:8, 18 (LXX) that *kurios theos* (Yahweh Elohim) was understood as the deity who fashioned man. One thus sees an early confusion which identifies the cosmic Creator of Genesis 1 with the local god Yahweh, the national deity of the Jews and Samaritans.
- 57 Ex 24:27; Lev 9:23–24; 10:1–2; Num 11:1; Deut 4:12; 5:26.
- 58 Ex 20:11 altered the etiology of the Sabbath in Gen 2:2–3, not only by equating Elohim with Yahweh, but by stating that God not only “ceased” his work of creation, but was “refreshed” (קָנַח). Whereas Gen 2:2–3 asserted that Elohim’s labors came to an end with the completed creation of the *kosmos*, like Plato’s Demiurge (*Timaeus* 42e), Ex 20:11 suggested that the deity’s labors did not entirely stop, but only paused in a sort of divine observation of the Sabbath. The Decalogue thus alters the Genesis’ Sabbath tradition to conform to Jewish and Samaritan religious practices.
- 59 See Lynch 2014 on monolatrous and monotheistic rhetoric in the Hebrew Bible, such as deriding the other gods as idols, denying their divinity, or even consigning them to death. A truly monotheistic view that other gods did not exist is found only in Second Isaiah (Isa 43:10–11; 44:6, 8; 45:5–7, 14, 18, 21; 46:9; cf. Smith 2001: 179–94). The use of Pentateuchal traditions, especially extensive allusions to the Exodus, requires that Second Isaiah—indeed, all of Isaiah—was written after ca. 270 BCE.
- 60 Although the literary unity of Genesis–Joshua indicates that all six books were authored at Alexandria ca. 270 BCE, the LXX translation ends with Deuteronomy, since the primary aim of this project under Ptolemaic literary patronage was to provide the Great Library with a copy of the Mosaic law codes, stimulated by the appearance of the legislator Moses in the fictionalized Greek foundation story about the Egyptian colonization of Judea in the *Aegyptiaca* of Hecataeus of Abdera ca. 315 BCE (Gmirkin 2006: 34–71, 2017: 222, 225–31).

- 61 Specific educational requirements for membership in the Nocturnal Council included: mastering Plato's philosophical method of dialectic reasoning (Plato, *Laws* 12.965b–c; cf. *Republic* 7.537b–c); demonstrating an ability to give a verbal exposition on the nature of virtue (*Laws* 12.966b); understanding Plato's proofs for the existence of God (*Laws* 12.966c; cf. 10.887c–899d) and of the immortal soul (*Laws* 12.966e, 967c–e; cf. 10.892c–899d); possessing a knowledge of astronomy (*Laws* 12.966e–967d; cf. 10.886b–c, 898c–899b), in order to convert youthful atheists to a belief in God (*Laws* 12.966c–967a; cf. 10.887d–888c on the presumed youthfulness of such disbelievers); and a profound knowledge of government and ethics (*Laws* 12.967d).
- 62 Ruling class understanding of the *telos* or purpose of government was fragile and liable to change through time, as evidenced by the many governments that were dissolved by their own rulers. To entrust the government to ambitious and avaricious individuals whose emotions and passions were not in harmony with the noble elements of reason and who did not understand the aims of proper government would surely wreck the *polis* (Plato, *Laws* 3.688e–689d).
- 63 The civic authority vested in the office of high priest in Jerusalem was a prominent, even distinctive feature of the Jewish nation, as documented in credible sources for the third century BCE on (cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 12.156–60). A figure called Johanan the high priest (*rab cohen*) was mentioned in the Elephantine Papyri of ca. 400 BCE (TAD A4.7.17–18), but he was subservient to the Persian governor. Coinage of the late Persian Era documents the administration of Samaria under a *pechah* or governor (not high priest) until the start of the Hellenistic Era (Eph'al 1998). Names on Yehud coins from the same period include "Yehizqiyyah the governor" and "Yohanan the priest"; a third figure, "Yaddua", may be the high priest Jaddua of Josephus, *Ant.* 11.325–9 in a tale set in the time of Alexander the Great (Betlyon 1986; Eph'al 1998: 113). The coinage from the last two figures may have been associated with the monetary system of Jerusalem's temple (Eph'al 1998: 114). A survey of evidence from Babylonia, Asia Minor, Egypt and Judea in Fried 2004: 6–233 demonstrated that the autonomy of temples and the authority of temple personnel diminished across the empire in the Persian Era, leading to the conclusion that hierocratic rule of the Jewish nation under a high priest was not instituted until sometime after the end of the Persian Era (Fried 2004: 6–7, 233).
- 64 The Guardians of the Laws, led by the Minister of Education, were restricted to citizens of ages 50–70 (Plato, *Laws* 6.755a, 765d; cf. Klosko 2008: 13). Priests were between 50 and 75 years old (*Laws* 12.946a,c). Legislative discussions in Plato's *Laws* were restricted to old men, following the Spartan example (*Laws* 1.625b; 6.770a). The age requirements for senior positions of government in Plato's *Laws* was similar to the Spartan system gerontocracy, or government of old men; cf. Aristotle, *Politics* 2.1270b; Morrow 1993: 56. For early Jewish rule under a *gerousia* see 1 Macc. 12.6; 2 Macc. 1.10; 4.44; 11.27; Josephus, *Ant.* 12.138, 142; 13.166, 169; cf. Judith 4.8; 11.14; 15.8, thought to be composed in the Maccabean era. For Jewish rule under elders, see 1 Macc. 7.33; 11.23; 12.35; 13.36; 14.20, 28; Josephus, *Ant.* 13.428; cf. the 72 elders of *The Letter of Aristeas* 32, 39, 46–50, six from each tribe, who are thought to reflect a *gerousia* modeled on Greek prototypes; cf. Honigman 2003: 57–8.
- 65 The college of priests of Apollo and Helios in Plato's *Laws* had important civic duties as auditors of all the magistrates and as leading members of the Nocturnal Council, the supreme ruling body in the *polis*. For the priests as *Euthynoi* (auditors), see *Laws* 12.945b–e. For the priests in the Nocturnal Council, see Plato, *Laws* 12.951d–e. Plato did not assign the priests religious or cultic duties.

- 66 See Plato, *Laws* 12.951d–e, 961a–b on the Guardians of the Law and high priests of Apollo Helios who served as magistrates in the Nocturnal Council. A class of scribes with expertise in Mosaic law likely arose among the Jews around 185 BCE on evidence of Sirach (Sir. 39.1). Priests and legal scholars emerged as the core groups of fully distinct and opposing Jewish sects in the 160s BCE as the Sadducees and Pharisees (Neusner 1971: 1.11–23, 61–68; cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 13.171, 297–8) whose struggle over control of the *gerousia* led to the intermittent civil wars of ca. 100–63 BCE (Josephus, *War* 1.66–67, 91–92, 125–51; *Ant.* 13.399, 372–83, 422–432; 14.1–79).
- 67 Josephus, *War* 1.170; *Ant.* 14.91; Diodorus Siculus, *Library* 40.2; 40.3.5; Strabo, *Geography* 16.2.40; cf. Gmirkin 2006: 259–63.
- 68 Plato criticized the notion of aristocracy by birth (*Theaetetus* 174b–175b) and pointed out many examples of great political leaders who were not able to educate their sons in either political skills or virtue, showing that neither virtue (*arete*) nor leadership ran in families (*Meno* 93a–95a, 99b).
- 69 According to Plato, the founding of a nation was a game of chance in which success required both careful strategy and luck. See Plato, *Laws* 12.968e–969a; cf. 3.685a; 6.769a. For a survey of play and games in Plato's *Laws*, including legislation as an “old man's game,” see Jacobson 1999: 769–88. See Plato, *Laws* 6.769a on the “game of reason.”
- 70 See Deut 17:18–20 || Josh 1:7–8 on the intended use of Deuteronomy and its law code as the instructional text for rulers; cf. Sonnet 1997: 71–8.

Bibliography

- Anbar, Moshe. “Genesis 15: A Conflation of Two Deuteronomic Narratives.” *JBL* 101 (1982): 39–55.
- Anderson, Robert T. “The Elusive Samaritan Temple.” *BA* 54 (1991): 104–107.
- Annas, Julia. “Virtue and Law in Plato,” in *Plato's Laws: A Critical Guide*. Christopher Bobonich (ed.), 71–91. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Armstrong, John M. “After the Ascent: Plato on Becoming Like God.” *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 26 (2004): 171–183.
- Becking, Bob. *The Fall of Samaria: An Historical and Archaeological Study*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992.
- Becking, Bob. “Assyrian Evidence for Iconic Polytheism in Ancient Israel?,” in *The Image and the Book: Iconic Cults, Aniconism, and the Rise of Book Religion in Israel and the Ancient Near East*. Karel van der Toorn (ed.), 157–171. Leuven: Peeters, 1997.
- Belfiore, Elizabeth. “‘Lies Unlike the Truth’: Plato on Hesiod, Theogony 27.” *TAPA Association* 115 (1985): 47–57.
- Betlyon, John Wilson. “The Provincial Government of Persian Period Judea and the Yehud Coins.” *JBL* 105 (1986) : 633–642.
- Bodéüs, Richard. *Aristotle and the Theology of the Living Immortals*. Translated by Jan Edward Garrett. New York: State University of New York Press, 2000.
- Brisson, Luc. *Plato the Myth-Maker*. Translated by Gerard Naddaf. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.
- Burger, Ronna. “Socratic Irony and the Platonic Art of Writing: The Self-Condemnation of the Written Word in Plato's ‘Phaedrus’.” *The Southwestern Journal of Philosophy* 9 (1978): 113–126.

- Bury, Robert Gregg. *Plato: Laws*. Loeb Classic Library. 2 vols. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1934.
- Cogan, Morton. *Imperialism and Religion: Assyria, Judah and Israel in the Eighth and Seventh Centuries B.C.E.* Missoula, MT: Society of Biblical Literature, 1974.
- Collins, Susan D. and Devin Stauffer. "The Challenge of Plato's 'Menexenus'." *The Review of Politics* 61 (1999): 85–115.
- Cross, Frank Moore. "Yahweh and the God of the Patriarchs." *HTR* 55 (1962): 225–259.
- Cross, Frank Moore. *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973.
- Crouch, Carly Lorraine. *War and Ethics in the Ancient Near East: Military Violence in Light of Cosmology and History*. BZAW, 407. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009.
- Day, John. *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan*. JSOTSup 265. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000.
- Dever, William. *Did God Have a Wife? Archaeology and Folk Religion in Ancient Israel*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008.
- de Hulster, Izaak J. "A Yehud Coin with a Representation of a Sun Deity and Iconic Practice in Persian Period Palestine. An Elaboration on TC 242.5" / *BMC Palestine* XIX 29," in *Unity and Diversity in Early Jewish Monotheisms*. 1–16. Göttingen: Georg-August-Universität, 2009. http://www.monotheism.uni-goettingen.de/resources/dehulster_tc242.pdf (last accessed on 27th Nov. 2012).
- Dillon, John. "Plato and the Golden Age." *Hermathena* 153 (1992): 21–36.
- Dušanić, Slobodan. "The Unity of the 'Timaeus-Critias' and the Inter-Greek Wars of the Mid 350's." *Illinois Classical Studies* 27 (2002): 63–75.
- Eph'al, Israel. "Changes in Palestine during the Persian Period in Light of Epigraphic Sources." *IEJ* 48 (1998): 106–119.
- Finkelstein, Israel. *The Forgotten Kingdom: The Archaeology and History of Northern Israel*. Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013.
- Finkelstein, Israel and Neil Asher Silberman. *David and Solomon: In Search of the Bible's Sacred Kings and the Roots of the Western Tradition*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2006.
- Flannery, Kevin L. "Ancient Philosophical Theology," in *A Companion to Philosophy of Religion*. Charles Taliaferro, Paul Draper, and Philip P. Quinn (eds.), 83–90. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.
- Frazer, James. *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*. 12 vols. London: MacMillan, 1911–1915.
- Frevel, Christian, Katharina Pyschny and Izak Cornelius (eds.). *A "Religious Revolution" in Yehûd? The Material Culture of the Persian Period as a Test Case*. Göttingen: Academic Press, 2014.
- Fried, Lisbeth S. "The Land Lay Desolate: Conquest and Restoration in the Ancient Near East," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period*. Oded Lipschits and Joseph Blenkinsopp (eds.), 21–54. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003.
- Fried, Lisbeth S. *The Priest and the Great King: Temple-Palace Relations in the Persian Empire*. Biblical and Judaic Studies 10. San Diego: Biblical and Judaic Studies from the University of California, 2004.
- Gadd, Cyril John. "Inscribed Prisms of Sargon II from Nimrud." *Iraq* 16 (1954): 173–201.
- Gaiser, Konrad. *Platone come Scrittore Filosofico: Saggi Sull'ermeneutica dei Dialoghi Platonici*. Naples: Bibliopolis, 1984.

- Gerson, Lloyd P. *God and Greek Philosophy: Studies in the Early History of Natural Philosophy*. London: Routledge, 1990.
- Gmirkin, Russell E. *Berosus and Genesis, Manetho and Exodus: Hellenistic Histories and the Date of the Pentateuch*. Library of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 433. CIS 15. New York: T & T Clark, 2006.
- Gmirkin, Russell E. "Greek Genres and the Hebrew Bible," in *Biblical Interpretation Beyond Historicity*. Ingrid Hjelm and Thomas L. Thompson (eds.), 91–102. Copenhagen International Seminar. Changing Perspectives 7. London: Routledge, 2016.
- Gmirkin, Russell E. *Plato and the Creation of the Hebrew Bible*. Copenhagen International Seminar. London: Routledge, 2017.
- Gmirkin, Russell E. "Jeremiah, Plato and Socrates: Greek Antecedents to the Book of Jeremiah," in *Jeremiah in History and Tradition*. Jim West and Niels Peter Lemche (eds.), 21–48. Copenhagen International Seminar. London: Routledge, 2020a.
- Gmirkin, Russell E. "'Solomon' (Shalmaneser III) and the Emergence of Judah as an Independent Kingdom," in *Biblical Narratives, Archaeology and Historicity: Essays in Honour of Thomas L. Thompson*. Łukasz Niesiołowski-Spanò and Emanuel Pfoh (eds.), 76–90. Library of Hebrew Bible / Old Testament Studies series. London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2020b.
- Gmirkin, Russell E. "Can the Documentary Hypothesis be Rehabilitated? A New Model of the Collaborative Composition of the Pentateuch." *Journal of Higher Criticism* 15/3 (2020c): 4–48.
- Gonzalez, Francisco J. "The Hermeneutics of Madness: Poet and Philosopher in Plato's *Ion* and *Phaedrus*," in *Plato and the Poets*. Pierre Destrée and Fritz-Gregor Herrmann (eds.), 93–110. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2011.
- Grabbe, Lester L. "Religious and Cultural Boundaries from the Neo-Babylonian to the Early Greek Period: A Context for Iconographic Interpretation," in *A "Religious Revolution" in Yehûd? The Material Culture of the Persian Period as a Test Case*. Christian Frevel, Katharina Pyschny and Izak Cornelius (eds.), 23–42. Göttingen: Academic Press, 2014.
- Granerød, Gard. *Dimensions of Yahwism in the Persian Period: Studies in the Religion and Society of the Judaean Community at Elephantine*. BZAW 488. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2016.
- Granerød, Gard. "Canon and Archive: Yahwism in Elephantine and Āl-Yāhūdu as a Challenge to the Canonical History of Judean Religion in the Persian Period." *JBL* 138 (2019): 345–364.
- Habel, Norman C. "'Yahweh, Maker of Heaven and Earth': A Study in Tradition Criticism." *JBL* 91 (1972): 321–337.
- Hadley, Judith M. *The Cult of Asherah in Ancient Israel and Judah: Evidence for a Hebrew Goddess*. Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2000.
- Honigman, Sylvie. *The Septuagint and Homeric Scholarship in Alexandria: A Study in the Narrative of the Letter of Aristaeus*. London: Routledge, 2003.
- Hull, Andrew. "Sleepless in Syracuse: Plato and the Nocturnal Council," in *Plato at Syracuse: Essays on Plato in Western Greece with a new translation of the Seventh Letter by Jonah Radding*. Heather L. Reid and Mark Ralkowski (eds.). Berkeley CA: Parnassos Press, 2019.

- Idziak, Janine Marie. "Divine Command Ethics," in *A Companion to Philosophy of Religion*. Charles Taliaferro, Paul Draper and Philip P. Quinn (eds.), 585–592. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.
- Jacobson, Arthur J. "The Game of the Laws." *Political Theory* 27 (1999): 769–788
- Jaeger, Werner. *Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936.
- Jaeger, Werner. *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*. Translated by Gilbert Highet. 3 vols. New York: Oxford University Press, 1943.
- Kang, Sa-Moon. *Divine War in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East*. BZAW, 177. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1989.
- Kirk, Geoffrey S. and John Earle Raven (eds.). *The Presocratic Philosophers: A Critical History with a Selection of Texts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957.
- Kirsch, Jonathan. *God Against the Gods: The History of the War Between Monotheism and Polytheism*. New York: Penguin Books, 2004.
- Klosko, George. "The Nocturnal Council in Plato's *Laws*." *Political Studies* 36 (1988): 74–88.
- Klosko, George. *The Development of Plato's Political Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Klosko, George. "Knowledge and Law in Plato's *Laws*." *Political Studies* 56 (2008): 456–474.
- Knoppers, Gary N. *Jews and Samaritans: The Origins and History of their Early Relations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Kratz, Reinhard G. "Temple and Torah: Reflections on the Legal Status of the Pentateuch between Elephantine and Qumran," in *Pentateuch as Torah: New Models for Understanding Its Promulgation and Acceptance*. Gary N. Knoppers and Bernard M. Levinson (eds.), 77–104. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007.
- Lange, Armin. "Literary Prophecy and Oracle Collection: A Comparison between Judah and Greece in Persian Times," in *Prophets, Prophecy, and Prophetic Texts in Second Temple Judaism*. Michael H. Floyd and Robert Donel Haak (eds.), 248–275. New York, NY: T & T Clark, 2006.
- Leith, Mary Joan Winn. "Religious Continuity in Israel/Samaria: Numismatic Evidence," in *A "Religious Revolution" in Yehûd? The Material Culture of the Persian Period as a Test Case*. Christian Frevel, Katharina Pyschny and Izak Cornelius (eds.), 267–304. Göttingen: Academic Press, 2014.
- Lemaire, André. "Another Temple to the Israelite God: Aramaic Hoard Documents Life in Fourth Century B.C." *BAR* 30 (2004): 38–44, 60.
- Lemaire, André. "New Aramaic Ostraca from Idumea and their Historical Interpretation," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*. Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming (eds.), 413–456. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006.
- Lemche, Niels Peter. "The Old Testament – a Hellenistic Book?" *SJOT* 7 (1993): 163–193.
- Lieberg, Godo. "Die Theologia Tripertita als Formprinzip antiken Denkens." *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 125 (1979): 25–53.
- Lind, Millard C. *Yahweh is a Warrior: The Theology of Warfare in Ancient Israel*. Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1980.
- Lynch, Matthew J. "Mapping Monotheism: Modes of Monotheistic Rhetoric in the Hebrew Bible." *VT* 64 (2014): 47–68.

- Mach, Michael. "Concepts of Jewish Monotheism in the Hellenistic Period," in *The Jewish Roots of Christological Monotheism: Papers from the St. Andrews Conference on the Historical Origins of the Worship of Jesus*. Carey C. Newman, James R. Davila and Gladys S. Lewis (eds.), 21–42. Leiden: Brill, 1999.
- Magen, Yitzhak. "The Dating of the First Phase of the Samaritan Temple on Mt Gerizim in Light of Archaeological Evidence," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century B.C.E.* Oded Lipschits and Joseph Blenkinsopp (eds.), 157–212. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007.
- Malkin, Irad. *Myth and Territory in the Spartan Mediterranean*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Mansfeld, Jaap. "The Chronology of Anaxagoras' Athenian Period and the Date of His Trial." *Mnemosyne* 32 (1979): 39–69.
- Mansfeld, Jaap. "Part II. The Plot against Pericles and His Associates." *Mnemosyne* 33 (1980): 17–95.
- Menn, Stephen. *Plato on God as Nous*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1995.
- Mikalson, Jon D. *Greek Popular Religion in Greek Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Meshel, Ze'ev. *Kuntillet Ajrud (Horvat Teman): An Iron Age II Religious Site on the Judah-Sinai Border*. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2012.
- Miller, Patrick D. *The Religion of Ancient Israel*. Louisville, KY: Westminster / John Knox Press, 2000.
- Minton, William W. "Homer's Invocations of the Muses: Traditional Patterns." *TAPhA* 91 (1960): 292–309.
- Minton, William W. "Invocation and Catalogue in Hesiod and Homer." *TAPhA* 93 (1962): 188–212.
- Morgan, Kathryn A. "Designer History: Plato's Atlantis Story and Fourth-Century Ideology." *JHS* 118 (1998): 101–118.
- Morrow, Glenn Raymond. *Plato's Cretan City: A Historical Interpretation of the Laws*. Princeton, MA: Princeton University Press, 1993.
- Most, Glenn W. "Philosophy and Religion," in *The Cambridge Companion to Greek and Roman Philosophy*. David Sedley (ed.), 300–322. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Most, Glenn W. "What Ancient Quarrel between Philosophy and Poetry?," in *Plato and the Poets*. Pierre Destrée and Fritz-Gregor Herrmann (eds.), 1–20. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2011.
- Mueller, Gustav E. "Plato and the Gods." *PhR* 45 (1936): 457–472.
- Na'aman, Nadav. "No Anthropomorphic Graven Image: Notes on the Assumed Anthropomorphic Cult Statues in the Temples of YHWH in the Pre-Exilic Period." *Ugarit-Forschungen* 31 (1999): 391–415.
- Naddaf, Gerard. "Plato: The Creator of Natural Theology." *International Studies in Philosophy* 36 (2004): 103–127.
- Neusner, Jacob. *The Rabbinic Traditions about the Pharisees Before 70*. 2 vols. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1971.
- Nightingale, Andrea Wilson. "Writing/Reading a Sacred Text: A Literary Interpretation of Plato's *Laws*." *CPh* 88 (1993): 279–300.
- Nightingale, Andrea Wilson. "Plato's Lawcode in Context: Rule by Written Law in Athens and Magnesia." *CQ* 49 (1999): 100–122.

- Nightingale, Andrea Wilson. *Spectacles of Truth in Classical Greek Philosophy: Theoria in its Cultural Context*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, (2004).
- Nihan, Christophe. "The Torah between Samaria and Judah: Shechem and Gerizim in Deuteronomy and Joshua," in *Pentateuch as Torah: New Models for Understanding Its Promulgation and Acceptance*. Gary N. Knoppers and Bernard M. Levinson (eds.), 187–224. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007.
- Nissinen, Martti (ed.). *Prophecy in its Ancient Near East Context: Mesopotamian, Biblical and Arabian Perspectives*. SBLSymp 13. Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000.
- Nissinen, Martti. "What is Prophecy? An Ancient Near East Perspective," in *Inspired Speech: Prophecy in the Ancient Near East; Essays in Honor of Herbert B. Hoffman*. John Kaltner and Louis Stulman (eds.), 17–37. JSOTSup 378. London: T & T Clark International, 2004.
- Parpola, Simo. *Assyrian Prophecies*. SAA 9. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1997, 1997.
- Pearce, Laurie and Cornelia Wunsch. *Documents of Judean Exiles and West Semites in Babylonia in the Collection of David Sofer*. CUSAS 28. Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 2014.
- Pummer, Reinhard. "Samaritan Tabernacle Drawings." *Numen* 45 (1998): 30–68.
- Rendtorff, Rolf. *The Problem of the Process of Transmission in the Pentateuch*. Translated by John J. Scullion. JSOTSup 89. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990.
- Schelling, Friedrich. *Philosophie der Mythologie (1842)*. Reprint. München: C.H. Beck, 1943.
- Schmid, Kurt. "Genesis and Exodus as Two Formerly Independent Traditions of Origins for Ancient Israel." *Biblica* 93 (2012): 187–208.
- Schmid, Kurt. "The Sources of the Pentateuch, Their Literary Extent and the Bridge between Genesis and Exodus: A Survey of Scholarship since Astruc," in *Book-Seams in the Hexateuch I: The Literary Transitions between the Books of Genesis/Exodus and Joshua/Judges*. Christoph Berner and Harald Samuel (eds.), 21–41. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018.
- Scott, Dominic. "Plato, Poetry and Creativity," in *Plato and the Poets*. Pierre Destrée and Fritz-Gregor Herrmann (eds.), 131–154. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2011.
- Sedley, David. *Creationism and its Critics in Antiquity*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007.
- Shenkar, Michael. "The Coin of the »God on the Winged Wheel«." *Boreas* 30/31 (2007–2008): 13–23.
- Smith, Mark S. *The Early History of God: Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990.
- Smith, Mark S. *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel's Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Smith, Mark S. and Wayne T. Pitard. *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle, Volume II*. VTSup 114. Leiden: Brill, 2009.
- Solmsen, Friedrich. *Plato's Theology*. Cornell Studies in Classical Theology 27. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1942.
- Sonnet, Jean-Pierre. *The Book within the Book: Writing in Deuteronomy*. Biblical Interpretation Series 14. Leiden: Brill, 1997.

- Stern, Ephraim. *Material Culture of the Land of the Bible in the Persian Period 538–332 B.C.* Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1982.
- Stern, Ephraim. "Religion in Palestine in the Assyrian and Persian Periods," in *The Crisis of Israelite Religion: Transformation of Religious Tradition in Exilic and Post-Exilic Times*. Bob Becking and Marjo Korpel (eds.), 245–255. *Oudtestamentische Studiën* 42. Leiden: Brill, 1999.
- Stern, Ephraim. *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible, Volume II. The Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Periods (732-332 B.C.E.)*. New York: Doubleday, 2001.
- Stern, Ephraim. "The Religious Revolution in Persian-Period Judah," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*. Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming (eds.), 197–204. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006.
- Taylor, Edward. *Primitive Culture*. 2 vols. London: John Murray, 1871.
- Tigerstedt, Eugene Napoleon. *The Legend of Sparta in Classical Antiquity. Vol. I*. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1965.
- Ussishkin, David. in , *Symbolism, and the Power of the Past: Canaan, Ancient Israel and their Neighbors from the Late Bronze Age through Roman Palestine*. William G. Dever and Seymour Gitin (eds.), 529–538. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003.
- Ussishkin, David. *On Biblical Jerusalem, Megiddo, Jezreel and Lachish*. Chuen King Lecture Series 8. Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2011.
- Van Seters, John. *In Search of History: Historiography in the Ancient World and the Origins of Biblical History*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983.
- van Riel, Gerd. *Plato's Gods*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013.
- Wajdenbaum, Philippe. *Argonauts of the Desert: Structural Analysis of the Hebrew Bible*. Sheffield: Equinox Publishing, 2011.
- Walker, Christopher and Michael Brennan Dick. "The Induction of the Cult Image in Ancient Mesopotamia: The Mesopotamian Tigerstedt, Eugene *mīs pi* Ritual," in *Born in Heaven, Made on Earth: The Making of the Cult Image in the Ancient Near East*. Michael Brennan Dick (ed.), 55–122. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1999.
- Weinfeld, Moshe. *The Promise of the Land: The Inheritance of the Land of Canaan by the Israelites*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993.
- Weippert, Manfred, 'Heiliger Krieg in Israel und Assyrien: Kritische Anmerkungen zu Gerhard von Rads Konzept des Heiligen Krieges im alten Israel'. *ZAW* 84 (1972): 460–493.
- Wheeler, Graham. "Sing, Muse ...: The Introit from Homer to Apollonius." *CQ* 52 (2002): 33–49.
- Wightman, Gregory J. *The Walls of Jerusalem from the Canaanites to the Mamluks*. Mediterranean Archaeology Supplement 4. Sydney: University of Sydney, 1993.
- Wyssmann, Patrick. "The Coinage Imagery of Samaria and Judah in the Late Persian Period," in *A "Religious Revolution" in Yehūd? The Material Culture of the Persian Period as a Test Case*. Christian Frevel, Katharina Pyschny and Izak Cornelius (eds.), 221–266. Göttingen: Academic Press, 2014.
- Younger, K. Lawson Jr. *Ancient Conquest Accounts: A Study in Ancient Near*

Copenhagen International Seminar Series

Founded by Thomas L. Thompson, 1996

- 1 Mogens Müller, *The First Bible of the Church: A Plea for the Septuagint*. CIS 1. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996.
- 2 Tilde Binger, *Asherah: Goddesses in Ugarit, Israel and the Old Testament*. CIS 2. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997.
- 3 Thomas M. Bolin, *Freedom Beyond Forgiveness: The Book of Jonah Re-Examined*. CIS 3. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997.
- 4 Flemming A. J. Nielsen, *The Tragedy in History: Herodotus and the Deuteronomic History*. CIS 4. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997.
- 5 Alan Rosengren Petersen, *The Royal God: Enthronement Festivals in Ancient Israel and Ugarit*. CIS 5. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998.
- 6 Frederick H. Cryer and Thomas L. Thompson (eds.), *Qumran Between the Old and New Testaments*. CIS 6. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998.
- 7 Ingrid Hjelm, *The Samaritans and Early Judaism: A Literary Analysis*. CIS 7. London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000.
- 8 Gregory L. Doudna, *4Q Pesher Nahum: A Critical Edition*. CIS 8. London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001.
- 9 Margreet Steiner, *Excavations by Kathleen M. Kenyon in Jerusalem 1961–1967. Volume III*. CIS 9. London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001.
- 10 Glenna Jackson, *'Have Mercy on Me': The Story of the Canaanite Woman in Matthew 15.21-28*. CIS 10. London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002.
- 11 Mogens Müller and Henrik Tronier (eds.), *The New Testament as Reception*. CIS 11. London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002.
- 12 George Athas, *The Tel Dan Inscription: A Reappraisal and a New Interpretation*. CIS 12. London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003.
- 13 Thomas L. Thompson (with Salma Jayyusi), *Jerusalem in Ancient History and Tradition*. CIS 13. London: T&T Clark 2003; paperback 2003.

- 14 Ingrid Hjelm, *Jerusalem's Rise to Sovereignty: Zion and Gerizim in Competition*. CIS 14. London: T&T Clark Intl., 2004.
- 15 Russell E. Gmirkin, *Berosus and Genesis, Manetho and Exodus: Hellenistic Histories and the Date of the Pentateuch*. CIS 15. London: T&T Clark Intl., 2006.
- 16 Mogens Müller, *The Expression 'Son of Man' and the Development of Christology: A History of Interpretation*. London: Equinox Press, 2008; paperback: Routledge 2013.
- 17 Joshua A. Sabih, *Japheth ben Ali's Book of Jeremiah: A Critical Edition and Linguistic Analysis of the Judaeo-Arabic Translation*. London: Equinox Press, 2009; paperback 2016.
- 18 Emanuel Pfoh, *The Emergence of Israel in Ancient Palestine: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives*. London: Equinox, 2009; paperback 2016.
- 19 Lukasz Niesiolowski-Spano, *Origin Myths and Holy Places in the Old Testament: A Study of Aetiological Narratives*. London: Equinox Press, 2011; paperback: Routledge 2016.
- 20 John Van Seters (with Introduction by Thomas L. Thompson), *Changing Perspectives 1: Studies in the History, Literature and Religion of Biblical Israel*. London: Equinox Press, 2011.
- 21 Philippe Wajdenbaum, *Argonauts of the Desert: Structural Analysis of the Hebrew Bible*. Sheffield: Equinox Press, 2011.
- 22 Thomas L. Thompson and Thomas S. Verenna (eds.), *'Is This Not the Carpenter?': The Question of the Historicity of the Figure of Jesus*. Sheffield: Equinox Press, 2012; paperback 2014.
- 23 Thomas L. Thompson, *Biblical Narratives and Palestine's History. Changing Perspectives 2*. Sheffield: Equinox/Acumen, 2013.
- 24 Niels Peter Lemche, *Biblical Studies and the Failure of History. Changing Perspectives 3*. Sheffield: Equinox/Acumen, 2013.
- 25 Thomas L. Thompson and Philippe Wajdenbaum (eds.), *The Bible and Hellenism: Greek Influence on Jewish and Early Christian Culture*. Durham: Acumen, 2014.
- 26 Philip R. Davies, *Rethinking Biblical Scholarship. Changing Perspectives 4*. Durham: Acumen, 2014.
- 27 Frederik Poulsen, *Representing Zion. Judgement and Salvation in the Old Testament*. London and New York: Routledge, 2015.
- 28 Anne Katrine De Hemmer Gudme and Ingrid Hjelm (eds.), *Myths of Exile. History and Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible*. London and New York: Routledge, 2015.
- 29 Finn Damgaard, *Rewriting Peter as An Intertextual Character in the Canonical Gospels*. London: Routledge and New York: Routledge, 2016.
- 30 Ingrid Hjelm and Thomas L. Thompson (eds.), *History, Archaeology and the Bible Forty Years after "Historicity". Changing Perspectives 6*. London and New York: Routledge, 2016.

- 31 Ingrid Hjelm and Thomas L. Thompson (eds.), *Biblical Interpretation beyond Historicity. Changing Perspectives 7*. London and New York: Routledge, 2016.
- 32 Emanuel Pfoh, *Syria–Palestine in the Late Bronze Age. An Anthropology of Politics and Power*. London and New York: Routledge, 2016.
- 33 Russell E. Gmirkin, *Plato and the Creation of the Hebrew Bible*. London and New York: Routledge, 2017.
- 34 Keith W. Whitelam, *Revealing the History of Ancient Palestine. Changing Perspectives 8*. London and New York: Routledge, 2018.
- 35 Ingrid Hjelm, Hamdan Taha, Ilan Pappé and Thomas L. Thompson, (eds.), *A New Critical Approach to the History of Palestine. Palestine History and Heritage Project 1*. London and New York: Routledge, 2019.
- 36 Raz Kletter, *Archaeology, Heritage and Ethics in the Western Wall Plaza, Jerusalem. Darkness at the End of the Tunnel*. London and New York: Routledge, 2019.
- 37 Jim West and Niels Peter Lemche (eds.), *Jeremiah in History and Tradition*. London and New York: Routledge, 2019.
- 38 Robert Karl Gnuse, *Hellenism and the Primary History: The Imprint of Greek Sources in Genesis – 2 Kings*. London and New York: Routledge 2021.
- 39 Christina Michelsen Chauchot, *John the Baptist as a Rewritten Figure in Luke-Acts*. London and New York: Routledge 2021.
- 40 Mario Liverani, *Historiography, Ideology and Politics in the Ancient Near East and Israel. Changing Perspectives 5*. London and New York: Routledge 2021.

Index

Bible References

Hebrew Bible

Genesis

- 1**, 1, 20–2, 30–1, 40, 42, 63–5, 68, 70, 75, 84–5, 88–9, 91, 95, 97–100, 104–7, 109–10, 116, 121, 125–6, 129–30, 135–6, 138–42, 150, 153, 157, 161–3, 165–9, 171, 186–9, 201, 216–17, 234, 246–7, 249–50, 273–6, 283–6, 293, 300
- 1–2**, 85, 89–91, 95, 97, 110, 168–70, 202
- 1–3**, 1, 18, 21–3, 64, 90, 123, 157, 162–3, 188–9, 199, 204, 246, 277, 284, 292, 294
- 1–11**, 1–2, 5–7, 17–18, 20, 22, 63–4, 88, 103, 105, 208, 212, 218, 231, 246, 249, 274, 277
- 1:1**, 41–2, 91, 97, 104–7, 114, 120–1, 125, 142, 169
- 1:1–2**, 87, 90–1, 113, 141
- 1:1–5**, 90, 170
- 1:1–2:3**, 29, 30, 33–4, 36, 39–43, 49, 63–4, 92, 95–6, 100, 103–5, 109, 139, 141, 150, 163, 165, 169, 283, 286
- 1:1–2:4**, 169
- 1:2**, 40, 44–5, 85–6, 93, 95, 97, 103, 105, 107–10, 112–14, 116–24, 140, 142–3, 199
- 1:2–31**, 105
- 1:2–2:3**, 105
- 1:3**, 39, 41, 86, 105, 124–5
- 1:3–4**, 93
- 1:3–5**, 96, 129, 140
- 1:3–2:3**, 103, 120–1, 199
- 1:4**, 114, 126–7
- 1:4–5**, 128
- 1:5**, 93, 99, 114, 127–8, 145
- 1:6**, 39, 41, 86, 105, 114
- 1:6–7**, 41, 93
- 1:6–8**, 40, 90, 96, 105, 129, 140
- 1:7**, 42, 120, 169
- 1:8**, 99, 129
- 1:9**, 39, 42, 87, 105
- 1:9–10**, 93, 96, 105, 113–14, 130, 140
- 1:10**, 42, 99, 126, 143
- 1:11**, 39, 42, 105
- 1:11–12**, 86, 93, 97–8, 100, 130–1, 136, 140, 169, 179
- 1:11–13**, 96, 130
- 1:11–18**, 140
- 1:11–19**, 131
- 1:12**, 42, 126
- 1:14**, 39, 41, 93, 105, 132, 145
- 1:14–15**, 93
- 1:14–16**, 136
- 1:14–17**, 41
- 1:14–18**, 93, 128, 138, 140
- 1:14–19**, 90, 96, 127, 131–3
- 1:15**, 132
- 1:16**, 42, 169
- 1:16–17**, 42
- 1:16–18**, 120, 121
- 1:17**, 129, 132
- 1:18**, 42, 126, 132
- 1:20**, 39, 41–42, 105, 129, 132, 134, 140, 179
- 1:20–21**, 41, 130, 133, 136, 170
- 1:20–22**, 135
- 1:20–23**, 96, 133
- 1:20–25**, 90, 93
- 1:20–27**, 174
- 1:21**, 42–3, 86, 90, 97–9, 120, 126, 134–6, 140, 169
- 1:21–22**, 98

- 1:22**, 39, 42, 134, 146, 187
1:24, 39, 42, 86, 130, 134–5, 140, 170, 179
1:24–25, 41, 86, 93, 96–8, 134–6
1:24–26, 140
1:24–27, 98
1:25, 42, 43, 86, 126, 135
1:25–26, 90–1, 169
1:25–27, 120
1:26, 39–41, 46, 63, 86, 95, 97–8, 105, 124, 140, 153, 162, 170, 174, 181, 211, 216, 226, 231, 247, 274
1:26–27, 41–2, 86, 90–1, 135–6, 146, 170, 179, 188
1:26–28, 90, 93
1:26–31, 96
1:27, 43, 136, 169, 175
1:27–30, 140
1:28, 42, 98, 134, 136–7, 146, 187
1:28–30, 39, 98, 137
1:29, 114
1:29–30, 43, 137, 174
1:29–31, 137
1:30, 98, 130, 170
1:31, 42, 120, 126, 169
2, 12, 22, 90, 134, 141, 150, 157, 165, 168–9, 171, 174, 186–7, 189, 199, 205–6, 241, 274
2–3, 1, 21, 37, 39, 43, 63, 70, 76, 103, 119, 150, 157, 161–5, 167, 177, 181–2, 186–8, 202, 204, 206, 208, 235, 246–7, 273–5, 285–6
2–4, 173
2–5, 209
2–9, 215, 229
2–11, 23, 153, 201, 208, 274
2:1, 86, 105, 120, 138–9
2:1–3, 96, 137–8
2:2, 86, 138
2:2–3, 70, 93, 138, 140, 286, 300
2:2–4, 169
2:3, 90, 138
2:3–4, 169
2:4, 64, 68, 97, 105, 139, 150, 153, 163–7, 172, 188, 285, 300
2:4–5, 203
2:4–7, 165
2:4–25, 29, 63, 93–4, 139, 150, 165
2:4–3:24, 163
2:5, 163, 167–8, 173, 205
2:5–6, 167
2:5–7, 182
2:5–3:24, 163
2:6, 114, 168, 188
2:7, 86, 90–1, 94–5, 99–100, 117, 120, 146, 167–72, 179–80, 188, 300
2:7–8, 97, 169, 191, 202
2:7–9, 163
2:7–3:24, 167
2:8, 90, 165, 172, 300
2:8–9, 171, 205
2:8–10, 202
2:8–14, 172
2:8–3:24, 171–2
2:9, 45, 94, 172–3, 205, 239
2:10, 168, 205
2:10–14, 172–3, 188, 205
2:11, 192, 205
2:12, 192, 205
2:15, 169, 172–3, 191
2:15–16, 205
2:15–17, 173
2:16, 174, 176
2:16–17, 173, 181, 188
2:18, 162, 169, 174, 181, 247, 274, 300
2:18–19, 97
2:18–20, 90, 94, 174, 188, 202
2:19, 97, 134, 163, 169, 188
2:19–20, 99, 174, 188, 205
2:20, 205
2:21, 94, 169, 176, 192
2:21–22, 146, 175
2:21–23, 94
2:21–24, 175–6, 188
2:22, 95
2:23, 94, 99, 169, 176, 188
2:24, 94, 105, 176, 192
2:25, 176, 182–3
3, 12, 64, 95, 177–8, 182, 199, 274
3–4, 186
3–6, 9
3:1, 97, 163, 169
3:1–2, 205
3:1–3, 183
3:1–5, 163, 173, 176, 181
3:1–6, 184–5
3:1–19, 188
3:2–3, 94, 178, 188
3:3, 163
3:5, 162–3, 173, 274
3:6, 94, 178, 183, 202
3:6–7, 177
3:7, 169, 179
3:8, 117, 143, 172, 202
3:8–9, 178
3:9–13, 185

- 3:10**, 99
3:10–12, 179
3:10–13, 179
3:11, 163
3:13–14, 169
3:14, 94, 188
3:14–15, 179
3:14–19, 275
3:16, 94, 179
3:17, 209
3:17–19, 174, 180, 210
3:18, 210
3:19, 180
3:20, 180, 188
3:21, 169, 180–1, 210
3:22, 95, 162–3, 173–4, 181, 188, 216,
 247, 274, 285
3:22–24, 209
3:23, 185
3:23–24, 172, 181–2
3:24, 45, 208, 210
4, 208–11, 213, 215
4–5, 216
4–6, 208
4–9, 208, 230
4–11, 64, 104, 294
4:1, 94, 146, 190
4:1–2, 137, 209
4:1–15, 185, 276
4:1–16, 182, 215
4:1–23, 208–9
4:2, 210
4:3–4, 172, 185
4:3–12, 120
4:5–8, 185
4:6, 172, 185
4:6–7, 185
4:9, 178
4:9–10, 185
4:9–12, 235, 286
4:9–16, 172
4:11–12, 275
4:10, 169
4:12, 210
4:12–16, 209
4:14, 114, 185, 209
4:14–15, 209
4:15, 209
4:16, 172, 209, 215
4:17, 210
4:19–20, 210
4:20, 210
4:21, 210
4:22, 210
4:23–24, 209
4:24, 209
4:24–26, 208
4:25, 210
4:25–26, 211
5, 11, 208–9, 211–13, 222, 228
5:1, 105, 164, 169, 211
5:1–2, 136, 169, 211
5:1–3, 211
5:3, 211
5:4, 210
5:29, 209
5:32, 211
6, 209, 218, 223, 225–6, 229, 273
6–9, 10, 211, 241, 275
6:1, 114, 216
6:1–2, 161–2, 166, 190, 215–17, 221–2,
 274
6:1–4, 1, 12, 153, 213, 221, 226, 247,
 274
6:1–7, 215, 230
6:1–13, 208, 213, 215, 218, 228, 241
6:2, 124, 162, 216–17, 221
6:3, 221–3, 225
6:4, 124, 162, 166, 217, 219–22, 225
6:5–7, 226, 230, 235, 276
6:5–8, 226, 229
6:6–7, 169, 229, 233
6:7, 114, 169, 226
6:9, 105, 164, 230
6:10, 211
6:11–12, 224
6:11–13, 221, 224–5, 235
6:11–17, 276
6:13, 224, 229
6:14, 228
6:14–16, 169
6:14–18, 233
6:14–8:19, 227
6:14–9:2, 227
6:15–8:19, 228
6:17, 117, 144, 167, 171, 225, 229
6:18, 230
6:18–21, 230
6:19–21, 230
6:20, 86
6:22, 169, 230
7:1, 230, 233
7:2–3, 99, 230
7:3–4, 114
7:4, 167, 206, 225, 227, 229
7:4–5, 169

- 7:5**, 230
7:6, 227
7:10–12, 227
7:11, 45, 114, 129, 143, 227, 240
7:11–12, 206
7:13–15, 230
7:14–15, 230
7:15, 117, 144, 171
7:18, 114
7:21–23, 225, 229
7:22, 117, 171
7:23, 114, 230
8:1, 143, 230
8:2, 45, 143, 206
8:6, 169
8:8–9, 114
8:13, 114
8:17, 228
8:17–19, 230
8:21, 169, 209, 228–9, 235
8:21–22, 229
9:1, 146, 230, 233
9:1–2, 228
9:1–17, 229, 235, 286
9:4, 191
9:6, 169
9:18–27, 211
9:21–23, 183
9:21–25, 241
9:24, 169
10, 46, 88, 161, 211, 217, 230–3
10:1, 105, 164
10:3, 239
10:6–7, 24, 174
10:7, 192
10:29, 192
11–50, 233
11:1–9, 231
11:4, 169
11:6, 169
11:6–7, 226, 274
11:7, 162, 231
11:10, 105, 164
11:27, 105, 164
12–50, 1, 234–5, 280
12:1–4, 235, 286
12:8, 233
12:10, 235
12:10–20, 276
12:18, 276
13:7–11, 235
13:10, 233
13:18, 233
14, 232–5, 276, 280, 283–4
14:1–3, 232
14:1–7, 235
14:4–12, 232
14:5, 240–1
14:13, 235
14:13–14, 232
14:13–15, 232
14:16, 232
14:17–22, 234
14:17–24, 284
14:18, 275
14:18–19, 274
14:18–20, 233
14:18–22, 234
14:19, 142, 161–2, 164, 241, 283
14:20–24, 232
14:22, 142, 161–2, 164, 233, 241, 274, 283, 285
15:13, 213
15:16, 276
15:18, 299
17:1, 233
17:1–6, 276
17:1–22, 235, 286
17:15–21, 146
17:16, 146
17:20, 146
18, 233
18–19, 228–9, 233, 276
18:1–15, 120, 274, 285
18:1–33, 286
18:1–36, 235
18:9–15, 146
18:17–33, 233
18:20, 233
18:20–32, 235
19:1–17, 235
19:4–13, 233
19:14–23, 233
19:24–29, 233
19:30–36, 241
19:30–38, 228, 233
19:31–38, 233
20:1–19, 276
20:17–18, 146
21–23, 167
21:33, 233
22:17, 146
23:3–20, 235, 276
24, 88, 100, 235
24:3, 142, 234
24:7, 234

25:14, 105
 25:18, 192
 25:19, 164
 25:21, 146
 26:1, 235
 26:1–31, 235, 276
 26:24, 146
 26:35, 144
 28:3, 146, 233
 28:17, 45, 129, 233
 28:19, 233
 29–31, 235
 30:22, 146
 30:24, 146
 31:17–35, 276
 32:24–32, 120, 235, 285–6
 33:20, 160
 34:1–13, 276
 34:30, 276
 35:1, 233
 35:2–4, 276
 35:3, 233
 35:7, 233
 35:39, 241
 36:1, 105
 36:35–36, 241
 37:2, 105, 164
 41:8, 144
 41:38, 144
 41:45, 275, 279
 41:50, 275
 42–46, 88, 100
 42:1–3, 235
 42:1–5, 235, 276
 43:14, 233
 45:10–11, 235, 276
 45:11, 235
 45:27, 144
 46:3, 160
 46:20, 279
 46:28, 235, 276
 46:34, 235, 276
 47:1–6, 235
 47:4, 235
 48:3, 233
 49:25, 233

Exodus

1–15, 88
 2:3, 138
 3:2–3, 145
 3:2–23, 122
 3:6, 285

6:2–3, 283
 6:3, 234
 6:9, 144
 7:10–12, 278
 7:22, 278
 8:1–15, 135
 8:5–7, 278
 8:16–19, 135, 278
 9:11, 278
 10:1–20, 135
 10:13, 143
 12:12, 278, 299
 12:40–41, 213
 13:21, 145
 14:21, 143
 15:3, 281
 15:8, 144
 15:10, 143
 17:14, 281
 17:16, 281
 19:5, 278
 19:16–20, 285
 19:18, 145
 20:2–3, 278
 20:3–5, 278
 20:4, 142
 20:5, 300
 20:11, 138, 142, 286, 300
 20:18, 285
 20:22, 285
 22:20, 299
 23:23–24, 278, 281
 23:24, 278
 23:26, 146
 23:31, 299
 23:32–33, 278
 23:33, 278
 24, 237, 241
 24:3, 237
 24:3–8, 237, 241
 24:4–8, 236
 24:6, 237
 24:7–8, 237
 24:8, 237
 24:9–11, 285
 24:10, 145
 24:16–17, 286
 24:27, 145, 300
 24:40, 237
 25–31, 278
 25:6, 132
 25:9, 153
 28:3, 144

31:3, 144
31:15–17, 138
31:17, 142
32:8–10, 278
32:8–14, 228
32:12–17, 278
33:9–10, 286
33:20–23, 285
34:5, 285
34:10–17, 278
34:11–17, 281
34:13, 278, 281
34:13–17, 279
34:14, 300
34:15–16, 278
35–40, 278
35:21, 144
35:31, 144
39:3, 44
40:34–38, 286

Leviticus

9:23–24, 145, 300
10:1–2, 145, 286, 300
10:12, 145
11, 99
11:3, 99
11:6, 99
11:9, 99
17:7, 279
17:11, 191
18:21, 241
18:24–30, 279
19:31, 279
20:2–5, 241, 299
20:2–6, 278–9
20:20–21, 146
20:27, 299
26:9, 146
26:30–33, 278

Numbers

3:1, 164
4:9, 132
4:16, 132
5:14, 144
5:30, 144
11:1, 145, 286, 300
11:17, 144
11:25, 285
11:25–26, 144
11:29, 144
11:31, 143

13:13, 220
13:33, 220
14:1–39, 278
14:11–19, 228
16:1–35, 278
16:31, 240
16:35, 286
17:23, 131
21:4–6, 278
21:29, 45, 241, 279
25:1–9, 278
25:2, 299
25:3, 240
25:7–8, 299
25:7–13, 281
32, 279
33:4, 299
33:51–53, 278
34:3–12, 299
34:51–52, 281

Deuteronomy

1:7, 299
2:9–10, 240
2:20–21, 240
3:11, 240
3:13, 240
3:14–17, 279
4:11, 285
4:12, 145, 285, 300
4:12–14, 138
4:15, 145
4:15–19, 278
4:19, 72, 190
4:23, 278
4:23–26, 278
4:24, 122, 145, 300
4:25, 278
4:25–27, 228
4:26, 191
4:29–31, 228
4:33, 145
4:36, 285
4:39, 142
5:4, 145
5:7, 278
5:9, 278
5:20, 145
5:22, 145, 285
5:24, 145
5:25, 286
5:26, 145, 285, 300
6:12–15, 278

6:14–15, 278
6:15, 300
7:1–5, 278–9, 281
7:1–9, 278
7:3, 146
7:5, 241
7:6, 278
7:9, 300
7:14, 146
7:16, 281
7:21–26, 281
7:25–26, 279
8:12, 45
8:18–20, 278
9:2, 240
9:7–14, 228
9:10, 145
10, 46
10:4, 145
10:14, 142, 285
10:17, 300
11:16–17, 278
11:24, 299
11:29, 299
12:1–7, 278
12:1–18, 299
12:2–3, 281
12:3, 241
12:23, 191
12:30–31, 279
13:1–2, 278, 299
13:1–18, 299
13:5–6, 299
13:6–16, 278
13:6–17, 281
13:8–10, 299
13:13–14, 279
13:13–15, 299
13:17, 279
14:2, 278
14:3–20, 99
16:21, 241
17:1–7, 299
17:3, 190
17:3–7, 279
17:5–7, 278
17:18–20, 302
18:9–12, 278
18:9–14, 299
20:13–18, 281
20:16–18, 279
20:18, 279

26:17–19, 278
27–28, 237
27:2–8, 237
27:12–13, 299
27:13–26, 237
27:15, 279
28, 237
28:11, 146
28:15–68, 237
28:58–68, 228
29–32, 236
29:1, 237
29:16–21, 278
29:20–21, 237
29:20–28, 228
29:28, 278
30:1–10, 228
30:19, 142, 191
31:1, 222
31:16–18, 278
31:28, 142
32:1, 191
32:6, 190
32:8, 45, 190, 231, 283
32:8–9, 34, 45, 161–2, 190, 216, 230–1,
 233, 239, 283, 285
32:16, 278
32:21, 278
32:43, 190
33:2, 145
34:7, 222

Joshua

1:4, 299
1:7–8, 302
2:11, 142
7:25, 299
8:30–34, 236, 299
8:31–32, 237
8:34, 237
11:11–14, 279
13:17, 240
15:61, 299
16:10, 299
17:11–18, 299
18:1–3, 299
19:17, 241
22:22, 160, 300
24:2, 299
24:10, 300
24:14, 299
24:19–25, 278

Judges

1:19, 299
1:21, 299
1:27–36, 299
2:1–5, 299
2:11, 240
2:13, 240–1
3:7, 240–1
6:21, 145
6:25, 240
6:25–30, 241
6:28, 240
6:30–32, 240
8:33, 233, 240
9:4, 233
9:46, 233
10:6, 240–1
10:10, 240
11:24, 241
13:3, 146
16:23, 241

Ruth

4:13, 146
4:18, 164

1 Samuel

1, 146
2:8, 43–4
2:21, 146
5:3–4, 241
7:4, 240–1
12:10, 240–1
15:7, 192

2 Samuel

6:23, 146
10:7, 220
13:23, 240
20:7, 220
21:16, 240
21:18, 240
21:20, 240
22, 145
22:8, 145
22:11, 143
22:14, 284
22:16, 144
22:31, 300
23:9, 220
23:16–17, 220

1 Kings

1:40, 240
5:5, 299
6:1, 213
8, 295
8:10–11, 286
8:17–20, 299
8:35, 45
11:5, 241
11:5–7, 299
11:7, 241
11:17, 241
11:19, 241
11:21, 241
11:25, 241
11:33, 241, 299
12:28–33, 299
14:15, 241
14:22–24, 299
14:23, 241
15:13, 241
16:31–33, 240
16:33, 241
18:17–40, 279, 299
18:18–40, 241
18:19, 241
18:38, 145
18:45, 143
19:11, 143
19:18, 241, 299
22–23, 14
22:53, 241

2 Kings

2:11, 145
3:2, 241
3:17, 143
4:8–17, 146
7:2, 45
10:18–28, 241
13:6, 241
17:7–17, 299
17:10, 241
17:16, 241
17:29–31, 299
18:1–6, 295
18:4, 241
19:10–13, 299
21, 295
21:3, 241, 294
21:3–7, 294

21:7, 241
 23:1–24, 295
 23:4–5, 241
 23:4–7, 241
 23:10, 241
 23:13, 241
 23:14–15, 241
 24:12, 295
 25:8, 295

Nehemiah

8–10, 14
 9:6, 241, 300

Job

1:19, 143
 4:9, 144
 7:7, 117, 144
 9:6, 44
 9:13, 36
 12:9, 171
 12:10, 144
 15:30, 144
 22:14, 44
 26:7, 44
 26:10, 44
 26:11, 43–4
 27:3, 117, 144, 171
 33:4, 170–1
 36:27–28, 168
 36:29, 44
 37:6, 44
 37:18, 40, 43–4, 145
 38:4–6, 43–4
 38:6, 44
 38:7, 43
 38:8–10, 43
 38:22, 45

Psalms

7:17, 284
 9:1–2, 284
 10:12, 160, 300
 18:11, 40
 18:13, 284
 18:15, 144
 18:16, 44
 19:4, 40
 21:7, 284
 29:1, 34, 45, 161, 233
 33:6, 144
 46, 45
 47:2, 284

48, 45
 50:1, 160, 300
 55:8, 143
 64:16, 132
 73:11, 284
 75:3, 43
 75:4, 44
 76, 45
 77:10, 284
 78:15, 240
 78:23, 129
 78:23–24, 45
 82, 161, 190
 82:1, 34, 45, 161, 190, 233, 283
 82:6, 34, 45, 161, 190, 283
 82:6–7, 190
 82:51, 44
 83:13, 143
 83:18, 284
 84, 45
 85:8, 300
 87, 45
 89:6–7, 34, 45, 161
 91:1, 284
 91:9, 284
 92:1, 284
 96:5, 241, 300
 97:9, 284
 102:25, 241, 300
 104:2, 40
 104:14, 131
 107:38, 146
 113:9, 146
 115:15, 164, 241, 300
 121:2, 164, 241, 300
 122, 45
 124:8, 164, 241, 300
 127:3–5, 146
 132, 45
 134:3, 164, 241, 300
 135:7, 45
 139:7–10, 209
 139:13, 190
 146:5–6, 164, 241, 300
 146:6, 142
 148:2, 43
 148:5, 43

Proverbs

8:22, 190
 8:24, 190
 8:27, 145

8:27–28, 44
8:29, 44

Canticles

4:4, 220

Isaiah

13:9–11, 38
17:6, 241
19:1, 299
24:18, 44–5
27:9, 241
40:21, 44
40:22, 44
42:5, 241, 300
43:10–11, 300
44:6, 300
44:8, 300
44:13, 44
45:5–7, 300
45:14, 300
45:18, 300
45:21, 300
46:1, 240
46:1–2, 299
46:9, 300
48:21, 240
61:1, 131
65:9, 131
65:17, 45
66:15, 145
66:22, 45

Jeremiah

1:4–5, 146
4:23, 45
7:18, 240
10:9, 44
17:2, 241
22:30, 146
25:1, 295
27:5, 241, 300
31:37, 44
32:1, 295
32:18, 300
32:35, 241
44:17–19, 240
46:9, 220
46:25, 299
48:7, 241
48:13, 241

48:46, 241
50:2, 240, 299
51:44, 240, 299
52:12, 295
52:28–30, 295

Lamentations

3:35, 284
3:38, 284

Ezekiel

1:22, 45
8:14, 240
28:14, 202
28:16, 202
32:27, 220

Daniel

10:13, 45
10:21, 45
12:1, 45

Joel

2:30–31, 38
3:9, 220
3:14–15, 38

Amos

2:9, 240
5:26, 241
9:3–4, 209

Jonah

1:3, 209

Micah

5:14, 241
6:2, 44

Zephaniah

1:5, 241
2:11, 299

Haggai

1:11, 131

Zechariah

14:4, 240

Malachi

3:10, 45

New Testament*John*

1:1, 142
1:1–10, 142

2 Peter

3:12–13, 45

Revelation

6:12–14, 38
18–21, 45
20, 45
21:1, 45

Pseudepigrapha and Apocrypha*1 Enoch*

6.1–5, 221
6.1–8, 45
6.6–11, 222
7.1, 221
9.1, 45
9.1–3, 221
9.7–9, 221
9.9–10, 221
10.1–2, 221
10.9, 221
10.11, 221
11.9, 221
11.11, 221
11.11–12, 221
11.12–14, 44
12.4–6, 221
14.9–23, 45
15.3–6, 221
15.8–12, 221
16.1–3, 221
18.1–2, 44–5
18.3, 44
20.1–7, 45
41.4–5, 45
54.10, 221
60.12, 45
60.15, 45
60.19–20, 45
69.1–3, 45
72–82, 45
72.2–31, 45
74.1–9, 45
75.1–2, 45
75.4–9, 45
76.1–14, 45

89.59, 45, 161
90.13–36, 45
90.22–25, 45, 161
106.14, 221
106.14–15, 221

Jubilees

4.21–24, 182
5.1, 221
5.1–4, 221
8.19, 202
12.19, 296

Judith

4.8, 301
5.8, 296
11.14, 301
15.8, 301

Letter of Aristeas

15–16, 249
32, 301
39, 301
46–50, 301
132, 296
140, 296

1 Maccabees

7.33, 301
11.23, 301
12.6, 301
12.35, 301
13.36, 301
14.20, 301
14.28, 301

2 Maccabees

1.10, 301
1.24–25, 296
3.22, 296
3.24, 296
4.44, 301
6.26, 296
7.9, 296
7.28, 105
7.35, 296
11.27, 301

SibOr

3.48–49, 296
3.693, 296
3.717–18, 296

- 3.760, 296
4.171–79, 45
- Sirach*
18.2–3, 296
39.1, 301
43.14, 45
48.23–25, 296
- Patristic Literature**
- Agathemerus
Sketch of Geography
1.1–2, 77
- Augustine
The City of God
4.27, 250, 252
6.5, 250, 252, 260
6.5–6, 256
6.5–7, 252
6.6, 250
- Clement
Miscellanies
1.63, 80
5.104.1, 78
5.104.3, 78
5.109, 190
5.109.1, 52
5.109.3, 46, 77
6.17.2, 78
7.22.1, 46, 77
- Eusebius
Preparation for the Gospels
1.10, 142
1.10–15, 164
1.8.10, 54, 128, 145
4.1, 250, 252
12.4–5, 7
12.12, 192
12.35–47, 18
12.36–42, 7
12.47, 7
14.2.3, 81
15.14.1, 144
15.14.2, 143, 191
15.18.2, 143
- Hippolytus
Refutation of All Heresies
1.6, 51, 76–7
1.6–7, 77
1.7.1, 77
1.7.1–3, 52
1.7.4, 77
1.7.5, 51–2
1.8.1, 80
1.8.3, 80
1.8.4, 80
1.8.8, 79
1.8.9, 79
1.8.12, 55, 80
1.9.1–3, 55, 145
1.9.4–5, 56
1.9.5, 56
1.9.6, 56
1.14.3, 52, 77
7.29, 54
9.10.6, 78
- Irenaeus
Against Heresies
2.14.2, 80
- Isidore of Seville
Etymologiae
17.8.6, 192
- Origen
Against Celsus
4.14, 61
4.38, 192
- Scholium on Gregory of Nazianzus
Patrologia Graeca
36.911, 79–80
- Syncellus
Chronological Excerpts
14, 141
28, 141
- Dead Sea Scrolls**
4QDt^f
190, 230
4QDt^q
190, 230

Rabbinical Literature

Genesis Rabbah
8.1, 192

Leviticus Rabbah
14.2, 192

Philo

On the Creation of the Cosmos
12, 110
15–35, 110
29, 110, 170
69, 110, 170
134–35, 170

On the Eternity of the World
5.17, 155
23.117, 239
27.145–49, 239

Josephus

Against Apion
2.145–295, 297
2.148, 296
2.165, 297
2.265, 80

Antiquities

1.64–65, 239
11.325–9, 301
12.138, 301
12.142, 301
12.156–60, 300
13.166, 301
13.169, 301
13.171, 301
13.297–98, 301
13.324–34, 299
13.356, 299
13.358–62, 299
13.374–76, 299
13.393–97, 299
13.428, 301
14.43, 299
14.46–48, 299
14.73–74, 299
14.77–78, 299
14.91, 301

Wars

1.1, 89
1.170, 301

Classical Authors

Achilles Tatius
Isogoge
4.34.11, 77

Aelian
On the Nature of Animals
16.29, 78

Aeschylus
Prometheus Bound
464–65, 137

Aetius

1 Preface 2, 108
1.3.4, 77
1.3.18, 81
1.4.1–4, 81
1.7.3, 52
1.7.11, 76
1.7.23, 109, 122, 171
1.7.33, 61, 81, 112
1.13.11, 54
1.25.4, 81
2.4.11, 52
2.6.3, 54, 78
2.7.1, 53, 78
2.7.2, 56
2.8.1, 80
2.11.2, 77
2.11.5, 77
2.13.2, 45, 54
2.13.3, 79
2.13.5, 145
2.13.7, 77
2.13.9, 56, 145
2.13.10, 52
2.13.11, 45
2.20.1, 77
2.20.3, 52
2.20.6, 80
2.21.1, 77
2.22.1, 77
2.30.2, 79
3.2.9, 80
3.16.1, 77

- 5.19.4**, 77
5.19.5, 78
5.26.4, 131
- Alexander of Aphrodisias
On Aristotle's Meteorology
67.11, 77
- On Aristotle's Topics*
301.19–25, 121
- On Fate*
191.30–192.28, 81
- On Mixture*
224.14–17, 122
225.1–2, 144–5
226.10, 143
- Apollodorus
Library
1.7.1, 154, 170
3.4.1, 154
3.14.1, 298
- Aratus
Phaenomena
96–136, 240
- Aristocritus
Theosophia
68, 257
- Aristotle
History of Animals
1.487b, 134
6.559a, 134
8.714a–b, 134
- Metaphysics*
1.3.983b, 51, 76, 111, 143
1.3.983b–984a, 44
1.3.984a, 79
1.4.985b, 78
1.4.915a, 78
3.4.1000a, 78
5.1013a, 44
8.1074b, 189
12.6.1071b, 60, 142
12.6.1091b, 142
- Meteorology*
1.3.984a, 77
1.5.986b, 52
2.1.353b, 77, 145
2.1.355b–356a, 143
2.9.369b, 54, 79
- Natural History*
9.50, 99
- Nicomachian Ethics*
1179b, 183
- On Generation and Corruption*
1.1.314a–b, 55, 191
1.1.314b, 53
1.8.326a, 81
2.6.334a, 54
- On Plants*
1.1.815a, 80
1.1.815a–b, 80
- On the Heavens*
1.2.269a–b, 60
1.2.270b, 79
1.12.281a–b, 60, 143
1.12.283a, 60, 143
2.2.283b, 60, 142
2.13.294a, 51, 77
2.13.294b, 77, 80
2.13.295a, 78
2.13.295b, 52
3.2.300b, 78
3.3.302a, 79
- On the Soul*
1.2, 79
1.2.405a, 55, 76
1.2.411a, 76
- Physics*
1.4.187a, 77, 79
1.5.188a, 53
2.3, 145
2.4.196a, 54, 81
2.8.198b, 78
3.4.203b, 76
8.1.251b, 60
8.1.252a, 78

13.295a, 54

Poetics

6.1449b, 253

Politics

2.1265a, 297

2.1269a, 81

2.2180b, 301

7.1324a, 298

7.1325b, 298

Posterior Analytics

2.642b–644a, 99

Rhetoric

2.1.1377e–1378a, 70

Berosus

FGrH 680

T8b, 141

T9, 212

F1b, 141

F3b, 11

F4b, 239

F17, 141

Chalcidius

Commentary on Timaeus

292, 144

Cicero

On Divination

1.19.30, 239

On the Nature of the Gods

1.10.25, 76

1.10.26, 52

1.36, 143

1.39, 121

2.9, 191

2.47, 113

The Academy

1.39, 144–5

Damascius

*Problems and Solutions Concerning
the First Principles*

3.162–64, 142

Diodorus Siculus

Library

1.7.1–6, 135

1.8.2–4, 192

34/35.1.1, 296

40.2, 299, 301

40.3.1–8, 23, 241

40.3.5, 301

Diogenes Laertius

Lives of Eminent Philosophers

1.13, 76

1.16, 79

1.24, 55, 76

2.2, 76

2.3, 77

2.5.19, 81

2.8, 80

2.8–9, 80

2.9, 55, 80

2.12, 80

2.12–13, 80

7.2, 61, 142

7.20, 61

7.25, 61

7.44, 81

7.134, 119, 144

7.135, 145

7.135–36, 191

7.136, 61, 108, 112, 143

7.137, 113, 119, 143, 145

7.138, 122

7.139, 143–4, 191

7.142, 61, 81, 112–13, 116, 143, 145

7.142–43, 143, 191

7.147, 81, 109, 121–2, 144–5, 171,
191, 299

7.148, 191

7.148–49, 144

7.150, 144

7.152–53, 191

7.154, 144

7.155, 143

7.156, 171, 191

7.157, 191

8.2.76, 78

8.2.77, 78

9.1.5, 78

9.1.7, 78

9.1.8, 53

- 9.1.9**, 78
9.1.9–10, 53
9.3.21, 53, 78
9.6.31–32, 81
9.6.32–33, 56
9.7.44, 81
9.7.45, 81
9.9.57, 56
9.18, 77
10.12, 80
- Dioscorides
De Materia Medica
1.80, 192
- Galen
History of Philosophy
3, 80
On Bodily Mass
7.525.9–14, 119, 144
On Natural Faculties
106.13–17, 119
- Heraclitus Homericus
Homeric Questions
22, 76, 111
- Herodotus
Histories
1.7, 217
1.10.3, 183
2.143, 190, 217
4.36, 77
8.55, 298
8.114, 217
- Hesiod
Theogony
105–15, 297
116, 34, 112, 142
116–27, 68
116–37, 155
117, 34
123, 112
123–25, 128
123–34, 108
126, 34
185–86, 220
965–68, 297
1021–22, 297
- Works and Days*
1–12, 297
47–105, 177
49, 208
60–80, 175
61, 170
70, 170
90–92, 207
95, 208
100–5, 208
109–20, 176, 207–8, 239
109–201, 208
112–20, 207
113, 207
117–18, 207
122–26, 267
123, 266
127–201, 208
143–55, 240
144–56, 227
155–73, 239
159–60, 220
156–69, 220
167–69, 182
170–72, 240
176–78, 208
252–55, 267
299–303, 208
- Homer
Iliad
1.131, 136
2.484–93, 297
2.761–2, 297
5.504, 44
5.749–50, 45
8.393–94, 45
11.218–20, 297
14.508–10, 297
15.189–93, 159
16.112–13, 297
17.425, 44
Odyssey
3.2, 44
4.560–565, 178, 182, 207
4.561–65, 239
15.329, 44
- Marcus Aurelius
Meditations
10.7, 78

Nemesius

- On the Nature of Man*
78.7, 144
78.7–79.2, 145
164.15–18, 119, 144

Orpheus

F13, 142

Ovid

- Metamorphoses*
1.1, 111
1.68–312, 225
1.81, 154, 170
4.606–8, 173

Parmenides

- On Nature*
95–109, 53, 104, 143
114–35, 53
117–20, 53
120–25, 78

Pausanias

- Guide to Greece*
10.4.3, 154

Philippus of Opus

- Epinomis*
977a–b, 61
981b–e, 60
984b–c, 60
988b, 282, 298
990c–992e, 74

Philoponus

- Commentary on Aristotle's Physics*
261.17–18, 54

Pindar

- Nemean Odes*
6.3, 44
- Olympian Odes*
1.60–64, 192
2.51–85, 239
2.55–85, 178, 182, 207
2.79–84, 182
- Pythian Odes*
9.63, 173
10.27, 44

Plato

Apology

- 22b**, 296
22b–c, 296
26c–d, 79–80
26d, 259
40e–41c, 238

Charmides

173c, 136

Cratylus

- 385e–427d**, 99
388e–389a, 175
389d, 175
390a–d, 175
390e–427d, 175, 188
397c–d, 72
398a–c, 297
402a, 175
402d, 175
404b–c, 175
409a–b, 79
410b–c, 144
414a, 100, 180
418b–c, 175

Critias

- 105b**, 191
106a–b, 263
108d, 200
108e, 60, 200, 206–7, 225, 227, 229,
 298
108e–109a, 227
109a, 205, 231
109b, 213, 217, 239
109b–c, 59, 219, 224, 230–1, 297–8
109b–d, 59, 214
109c, 166, 207, 219
109c–d, 213
109c–112e, 236
109d, 213, 227
109d–110a, 81
110b, 200, 213
110c, 219
110c–d, 213, 220, 224
111d, 166–7
112a, 200, 225, 227, 298
112b, 213, 220
112c, 166
112c–d, 219
112d–e, 205

112e, 221, 232–3
113a, 200
113b, 59, 154, 231
113b–c, 205–6
113b–e, 166
113c, 205
113c–d, 205, 214–15, 223
113c–114c, 220, 223
113c–114d, 219, 221
113d–114d, 200
113e, 205
113e–114c, 182, 214, 218, 220
113e–114d, 59, 60, 213, 223–4, 232
113e–120d, 236
114a–b, 205, 231–2
114a–c, 205
114c, 221
114c–d, 223
114d, 221
114e, 135, 205, 207
114e–115a, 205
114e–120d, 223
115a–b, 205–6
115a–c, 205
115b, 135, 207
115c, 206–7
115e, 206
116a–b, 207
116a–c, 207
116c, 166, 205, 220, 223
116d–e, 205, 207
116e, 207
117a, 205
117a–b, 205
117b, 166, 205–6
117b–c, 207
117c, 205–6
117c–d, 207, 221
117e, 207
118a–c, 205
118b, 205
118c–119a, 207
118d, 205
118e, 205, 207
118e–120d, 182, 214
119a–b, 221
119c, 223, 236–7
119c–d, 166
119c–120b, 206, 213, 227, 229
119d–120b, 200, 206, 223
119d–120d, 237
119e–120a, 237
119e–120b, 236–7

120a, 237
120a–b, 223, 237
120b, 237
120b–121b, 221
120c–d, 236
120d, 232
120d–121a, 224
120d–121b, 60, 213, 223
120e, 200, 221
120e–121a, 220, 223
121a, 227
121b, 166–7, 200, 224, 226–30, 232, 240, 298
121b–c, 207, 225–7, 229, 233
121d–e, 231

Epistles

7.326a–b, 219

Euthyphro

6a–c, 263, 271
7b, 271
7b–8e, 271
7e, 271
7e–8a, 263
8a, 271
8c, 271
9c–e, 271
15b–d, 271
15d–e, 271

Gorgias

500e–501c, 97
503d–504a, 97, 124
503e, 125
523a–b, 297
523a–526c, 238

Hippias Major

289a–c, 136

Ion

532c, 296
533d–534e, 296
533e, 296
536d, 296

Laws

1–11, 298
1.625b, 301
1.625e, 219
1.625e–626b, 269
1.625e–626c, 298

- 1.645a**, 297
2.653b, 263
2.659d–e, 263
2.660a, 263
2.660e, 263
2.661c, 263
2.663b–d, 67, 264
2.663d–664a, 265
2.664a, 67, 264
2.664a–c, 263
3.677a–c, 227–8, 233
3.677a–e, 81
3.685a, 301
3.688e–689d, 300
3.689a–e, 219
3.689d–e, 219
3.689e–690c, 267
3.690b–c, 219
3.702a, 81
3.702b–c, 292
3.766a, 297
4.689e–690c, 267
4.704d, 269
4.705e, 269
4.712b, 292
4.713a, 127, 266
4.713a–714a, 267
4.713c, 267
4.713c–e, 219, 297
4.713c–714a, 297
4.713d, 219, 266–7
4.713e–714a, 127, 297
4.714a–b, 269
4.715a, 267
4.715d, 269
4.716a, 264
4.717d, 264
4.718c–d, 71
4.719c, 296
4.722c, 292
5.727d, 264, 297
5.735d–736c, 229
5.738b–c, 284
5.738c, 271
5.738c–d, 234
5.742d, 269, 298
5.747d, 144
6.755a, 301
6.759a–c, 271
6.759b, 234
6.759c, 271
6.759c–e, 271
6.762e, 297
6.765d, 301
6.765d–766b, 68
6.766a, 219
6.769a, 301
6.770a, 301
6.774e–775a, 271
6.776a, 192
7.797d, 144
7.798a–b, 268
7.798a–c, 270
7.799a–b, 271
7.799b, 68, 265, 268, 272
7.799e, 292
7.799e–800a, 127
7.799e–801d, 265, 272
7.800a, 271
7.801b–c, 263
7.801c–d, 264, 272
7.801c–802b, 68, 268
7.802b, 265, 272
7.802b–c, 67, 265, 268, 272
7.809a–b, 68
7.809b, 265, 268, 272
7.809c, 265
7.811b–d, 67
7.811b–e, 68
7.811b–812a, 265
7.811c, 292
7.811c–d, 288
7.811c–e, 265, 268
7.811c–812a, 268, 292
7.811d, 68
7.817b–c, 263
7.817e–818a, 74–5
7.818c, 219, 267
7.819a, 69, 71, 75
7.820e–822a, 71, 75
7.821a, 69, 71
7.821a–c, 69
7.821b, 72
7.821b–822c, 68–9
7.821c, 69
7.821c–d, 260
8.828b, 271
8.845d, 144
8.845e, 271
8.848c–d, 284
9.858c–e, 265
9.858c–859a, 265
9.863e–864a, 219, 269
9.858e, 67, 263–4
9.865b, 144
9.865b–d, 271

- 9.870d–e**, 264
9.871a–d, 271
9.871c–d, 271
9.872e–873a, 264
9.873d, 271
9.875b–c, 219
9.875c–d, 267
9.881a, 264
10, 44
10.866a, 68
10.866d, 68
10.884e–910d, 70
10.885b–d, 71
10.885b–907d, 75
10.885e, 70, 75
10.886a, 69, 71–2, 133, 261
10.886a–e, 75
10.886b, 71
10.886b–c, 74, 300
10.886b–d, 72, 74, 154
10.886c–d, 67, 263–4
10.886d, 69, 72
10.886d–e, 69, 71, 74, 261
10.886e–887c, 71
10.887b, 265
10.887c, 70, 75
10.887c–899d, 300
10.887d, 67, 72, 74, 82
10.887d–e, 82
10.887d–888c, 74, 300
10.887e, 69, 75
10.888a–c, 74
10.888a–d, 74, 82
10.888a–899d, 71
10.888a–903a, 71
10.888a–907c, 71
10.889a–c, 69
10.889a–e, 71
10.889b, 58
10.890a, 71, 75
10.890b–c, 74
10.890c, 70
10.891a, 71, 75, 82
10.891c–d, 71
10.892c–899d, 300
10.893b, 75
10.893b–895b, 69
10.893b–899b, 69
10.895b–896b, 69
10.897b–898d, 72
10.897b–899b, 71
10.898c–899b, 74, 300
10.899b, 76, 98, 190, 265
10.899d–901c, 72
10.901c–903a, 72
10.902a–b, 70
10.902c, 265
10.903a, 264–5
10.903a–b, 82
10.904c–905b, 71
10.904c–905c, 264
10.906c–d, 72
10.907b, 71
10.908a, 291
10.908e–909c, 74
10.908e–909d, 75, 268
10.909b, 72
10.909c–910c, 298
10.909d–910c, 260, 298
11.916c, 271
11.921c, 292
11.927c, 127
11.930e–931a, 255
11.932e–933e, 260, 298
11.936a, 272
12, 297
12.945b–e, 301
12.945b–946a, 289
12.941b, 263
12.945c–e, 288
12.945e, 69
12.946a, 301
12.946b–c, 69
12.946c, 301
12.947a, 69
12.950c–d, 269, 298
12.950e–951a, 298
12.951b, 219
12.951d, 268
12.951d–e, 73, 288, 291, 301
12.951d–952b, 270, 291
12.951d–952c, 74
12.951e, 68
12.952a–b, 268
12.952b, 268
12.957c, 127
12.957c–d, 265, 292
12.958d, 271
12.959b, 297
12.960b–961a, 269
12.960c–e, 291
12.960d–961b, 269
12.961a–b, 288, 301
12.961b, 74, 268, 291
12.961c, 269
12.962a–963b, 269

12.962b–c, 288
12.962b–d, 291
12.962b–e, 291
12.962e, 219, 269, 298
12.963a, 298
12.963a–964d, 291
12.963a–966a, 289, 291
12.963a–966d, 288, 291
12.964b, 271
12.964b–c, 268
12.964b–e, 297
12.964d–965a, 291
12.964d–966d, 291
12.964e–965a, 269
12.965a, 291
12.965a–b, 269, 291
12.965a–d, 291
12.965b–c, 297, 300
12.965c–e, 291
12.966a–b, 297
12.966b, 291, 300
12.966b–968b, 74–5
12.966c, 300
12.966c–d, 291, 297
12.966c–967a, 300
12.966e, 300
12.966e–967a, 71
12.966e–967d, 300
12.966e–967e, 260–1, 291
12.966e–968a, 71
12.967c–e, 300
12.967d, 300
12.967e–968a, 290
12.968a, 269, 288
12.968a–969d, 288
12.968b, 292
12.968c, 290
12.968c–e, 74
12.968d, 290
12.968d–e, 290
12.968e–969a, 301
12.968e–969c, 288
12.969a, 290
12.969b, 268, 288, 298
12.969b–c, 289–90
12.969c, 269, 291, 297

Lysis

216d, 239

Menexenus

237c–d, 298

Meno

81a, 238
93a–95a, 301
99b, 301
99c–d, 296

Parmenides

163c, 53, 105, 143

Phaedo

63c, 297
66c–d, 298
70a, 144
70d, 130
77e, 144
97b–98a, 57, 259
97b–99c, 43, 133, 258, 261
98a–b, 57, 259
99b–c, 133
105c, 130
108c–111c, 204
108e–109a, 143
110b–111c, 207
110d, 239
110e, 204
111a, 204
111b, 204, 239
111b–c, 204
111c–d, 143
112a–d, 143
112b, 144
113d–114c, 238

Phaedrus

109b–c, 143
111a–b, 143
229b–c, 144
244a–245b, 296
245a, 296
246a–b, 185
246a–247e, 152
246c–d, 152, 189, 255
246d, 152
246e, 152
246e–247e, 272
247a, 262, 282, 298
247b–c, 152
247b–d, 298
247c–e, 272
247e, 152, 181–2
248d–e, 296

- 249b–c**, 298
249c, 272
249c–250e, 297
249d, 296
250d, 272
254b, 296
255c, 144
274c–275b, 298
275a, 298
- Philebus*
- 29a**, 144
64e, 58
- Protagoras*
- 320b–c**, 296
320c–d, 184
320c–322d, 183
320d–321c, 184
321a–c, 180
321a–322a, 183
321c–322a, 184
322a, 180
322c–d, 184
322d–328d, 184
325c–326a, 263
328d–332c, 184
332a–e, 184
332c–352a, 184
352e, 184
353c, 184
353c–d, 184
354e, 184
355d, 184
357c, 184
357e, 184
- Republic*
- 2.363c–e**, 297
2.365e, 263
2.376e–377a, 296
2.376e–377c, 264
2.376d–398b, 67
2.377a–c, 264
2.377b–c, 67, 264
2.377b–379a, 263
2.377b–398b, 263
2.377c, 188, 264
2.377c–3.392c, 263, 297
2.377d–378e, 263
2.377e–379a, 271
2.377e–3.398b, 67
2.378a–b, 264
2.378a–d, 264
2.378b–d, 264
2.378c–d, 264
2.378c–e, 264
2.378d–379a, 188, 265
2.379a, 251
2.379a–383c, 71, 263
2.380b–c, 264
2.380b–d, 264
2.380c, 264
2.381b–382e, 262
2.382a–d, 296
2.382d, 188
2.383c, 67, 264
3.386a–389a, 238, 263
3.389b–d, 296
3.390d–e, 264
3.390e, 71
3.391a, 264
3.391a–d, 263
3.391d–e, 263–4
3.391d–392c, 263
3.392a–c, 71, 263
3.394c, 144
3.401b, 67
3.401b–d, 264
3.405b, 144
3.410b–d, 264
3.414b–c, 67
3.414b–415d, 264, 296
3.415a–c, 264, 297
3.415c–d, 288, 298
4.421a–b, 297
4.431e–432a, 219, 267
4.432a, 219
4.440d, 267
5.452a–b, 183
5.452c–d, 183
5.457a, 183
5.458c, 267
5.459c–d, 296
5.468e–469a, 266
5.468e–469b, 238
5.469c, 269
5.473b–c, 219, 267
5.473d–e, 266
5.474b–c, 219, 266–7
6.484b–c, 297
6.486d, 298
6.487d–489e, 298
6.487e, 219
6.488d, 144
6.492e–493a, 219

6.496d, 144
6.497b–c, 266
6.497c–d, 291
6.499b–c, 266, 268
6.501b, 136
6.502a, 267
6.502b, 267
6.503b, 267
6.506a–b, 298
6.506e, 191, 299
6.508a–509c, 272
6.508b–c, 191, 299
6.508e–509b, 272
7.519b, 291
7.519c–521b, 267–8
7.527d–e, 69
7.529a–b, 298
7.529a–c, 69
7.529a–530b, 261
7.529c–e, 138
7.530a–c, 69
7.537b–c, 300
7.540b, 238, 267–8, 297
7.540b–c, 182
8.544b–9.587d, 240
9.590c–d, 297
10.595a–608b, 67, 263
10.607b, 263
10.607b–c, 264
10.607c, 264
10.607d, 264
10.614a–621d, 297
10.614b–621d, 297

Sophist

219a–221a, 98
220b, 134
242d, 78

Statesman

258b–267c, 98
263d–264a, 135
264a–266b, 98
264c, 137
264d, 134
268e–272d, 176, 207
269c–270d, 45
269c–274a, 143
271d, 213
271e–272b, 297
272a, 176, 181, 183, 207

272b–d, 176, 207
272e, 213
273e, 58
274b, 266
275a–c, 297
285a–b, 99
295d, 144

Symposium

179e–180b, 238
189c–193e, 176
189d, 192
190d, 192
190d–191a, 176
190e–191a, 176
191a–e, 176
191d, 176
202e, 266, 297
202e–203a, 297
204a–b, 297
209e–210a, 297
210a–e, 298
210a–212a, 296
210d–e, 297
211e–212a, 298

Theaetetus

152b, 144
174b–175b, 301
176a, 238
176b, 262

Timaeus

17c–18b, 200
17d, 220
18b, 220
19b–c, 219
19c, 219
19c–d, 214, 238
19c–e, 232
19e–20a, 73, 267
20b, 214, 219, 232, 238
20d, 63, 227
20e, 81, 214, 219, 221, 225, 227,
 232–3, 238
21d, 200, 219, 221, 225, 227,
 232–3,
 240, 263, 298
21d–22a, 200
21e, 166
21e–22a, 60

- 22a**, 175
22a–b, 232
22b–23c, 81
22c, 166
22c–d, 233
22c–23a, 228, 233
22d, 228
22d–23c, 227
22e–23a, 60
23a–c, 200
23b–c, 221, 232–3
23c, 166, 214, 219–20, 225, 227, 238, 298
23d, 166, 200, 207, 213
23d–e, 154
23d–25e, 200
23e, 60, 199, 207, 213, 219, 221, 233
23e–25d, 214
24a–b, 200
24a–d, 182, 188, 200, 207, 213, 236
24a–e, 232
24a–25e, 213
24b, 219, 232
24b–d, 166
24c, 86, 142
24c–d, 200
24d, 219–21, 223, 227, 232
24d–e, 214, 219, 221, 233, 238
24d–25c, 227
24e, 63, 232
24e–25c, 200
24e–25d, 60, 214, 264, 298
25b, 232
25b–c, 205, 214, 219–21, 231–3, 238
25c, 232
25c–d, 200, 206–7, 225, 227
25d, 200, 227, 298
25e, 200
25e–26e, 63
26c–d, 73
27a, 86, 91, 106, 142
27b, 60, 63
27b–c, 262
27c, 106, 142
27c–29d, 91
27d–28a, 106
27d–28c, 158, 189
27d–29d, 91, 106–7, 120
27d–29e, 86
27e, 106
27e–28a, 158
28a, 59, 91, 106–7, 124, 158, 188, 255
28a–b, 125, 261, 272, 285
28a–c, 106, 155, 158, 285
28a–29c, 125
28b, 86, 91, 106–7, 142, 172
28b–c, 106–7, 158
28c, 73, 106–7, 120, 124, 142, 152, 175, 188, 255, 261, 297
28c–29a, 222
29a, 59, 86, 97, 106–7, 124–5, 140, 142, 151, 158, 172, 188, 261, 272, 297, 299
29a–b, 125, 140
29a–c, 124
29b, 91
29b–c, 86, 125, 158
29b–d, 73
29c, 59, 73, 106, 191
29c–d, 63, 140, 261, 263, 297
29d, 73, 107, 140
29d–e, 126
29d–40d, 103, 125, 136, 139, 153, 162, 166, 199, 246
29d–47e, 46, 90, 92, 103, 120
29d–69a, 188
29e, 59, 86, 91, 120, 125, 140, 142, 152, 158, 261–2, 272, 282, 297–9
29e–30b, 172
30a, 57–9, 69, 93, 111, 125, 138, 142, 151, 158
30a–b, 97
30a–c, 261
30a–d, 261, 272, 297
30a–e, 59
30b, 73, 118, 126, 140
30b–c, 63, 86, 142, 261, 263, 297
30b–e, 144
30b–31b, 125
30c, 86, 124–5, 261
30c–d, 90
30c–e, 120
30d, 126, 151, 158, 172
30e, 261
31a, 124
31a–b, 142, 158, 172
31b, 57, 86, 91, 93, 110–12, 125–6, 142, 152, 155, 158, 189, 255
32b, 93, 140
32b–c, 57
32c, 59, 86, 124, 142, 285
33a, 59, 222
33b, 58, 86, 90, 93, 127, 144

- 33c**, 144
34a, 57, 69
34a–b, 127, 151, 158, 222
34b, 91, 118, 122, 142–4, 155, 174
34c, 124
35a, 151, 158
35b, 91
36a, 59
36c, 91
36c–d, 57
36d, 57
36d–e, 143
36e, 69, 118, 122, 142, 144, 158
36e–37a, 90, 106
37a, 59, 120, 125, 158, 255, 272, 297
37b–c, 69
37c, 59, 90, 97, 124, 126–7, 152, 155, 164, 188, 261
37c–d, 59, 125, 151, 158, 172, 261
37d, 59, 86, 91, 120, 124–5
37d–e, 93, 142
37e, 127–8, 140, 142, 145
37e–38e, 143
38b, 90, 93, 128, 133, 142
38c, 59, 91, 121, 126, 133, 145
38c–d, 132
38c–e, 129
38c–39b, 93
38d, 59, 127
38d–39e, 57, 138
38e, 93, 145
39b, 93, 125, 127, 133
39b–c, 142, 145
39c, 127, 129, 140, 145
39c–d, 93
39d, 126
39d–e, 125, 143–4
39e, 86, 124–5, 190
39e–40a, 153, 162
40a, 59, 86, 90–1, 93, 127, 132, 135, 142, 155, 188, 190
40a–b, 138, 261
40a–c, 72
40b, 98, 107
40b–42e, 95
40c, 59, 91
40d, 155, 190
40d–e, 154, 166
40d–41a, 155, 158, 216
40d–41d, 155, 201
40d–42e, 139
40d–47e, 92–3, 103, 136, 153, 162, 166, 199, 246
40e, 59, 68, 91
40e–41a, 155, 165–6, 260
41a, 59, 72, 91, 120, 124, 142, 152, 158, 164, 188, 226, 240
41a–b, 142, 153, 155, 222, 229, 261, 285
41a–c, 59
41a–d, 46, 59, 63, 156, 226
41a–42d, 59
41a–42e, 297
41b, 155, 181, 192, 261
41b–c, 59
41b–d, 59, 98, 136–7, 179, 222, 274
41b–42a, 139
41b–42e, 139
41c, 59, 95, 136, 156, 168, 181, 188, 191
41c–d, 59, 93, 156, 222
41d, 90, 137, 222
41d–42c, 174
41d–42d, 188
41e, 188
41e–42b, 64
42a, 93, 152, 185
42a–b, 69, 136, 175, 183, 186
42a–d, 59, 125
42b, 170
42b–c, 156
42b–d, 192
42c, 93
42c–43a, 136
42d, 86, 152, 169, 222
42d–e, 59, 95, 125, 136–7, 156, 179, 188, 199
42e, 59, 86, 90, 93, 124, 139, 140, 142, 152, 156, 168, 182, 188, 261, 300
42e–43a, 59, 95, 152, 180
43a–b, 59
43a–d, 57
43a–44a, 69
43b–d, 183
43c, 86, 127, 144, 188
44b, 127
44c, 107
44d, 63, 263
44d–45b, 57
45b, 126, 188
45b–46c, 57
45d, 114
46c–d, 59, 125, 151, 158, 261, 272, 297, 299

- 46c–e**, 107, 261
46d, 272
47a–c, 57, 260–1
47b, 107
47d–e, 262
48a, 86, 107, 120, 125, 142, 261, 262
48a–c, 91
48a–49a, 246
48a–60b, 119
48a–69a, 58, 91–2, 103, 120, 125, 153
48a–69b, 191
48a–92c, 92
48b, 112, 116
48b–c, 57
48d, 140
48d–e, 63, 73, 261, 263, 297
48e, 106
48e–49d, 120
49a, 111, 120, 124–5
49b–c, 144
49b–d, 57
49b–50a, 111–12, 116, 143
49b–50e, 138
49c, 110, 144
49d–e, 107
50a–c, 110
50c–d, 124
50c–51a, 125
50d, 152
51a, 86, 106, 110–12
51a–b, 108, 110, 112, 123
51d, 106
51e, 73, 152
52a, 158, 255
52a–b, 106, 120, 158, 189
52a–53b, 93
52b, 91
52d, 112, 116, 120, 142
52d–e, 115
52e–53a, 58, 111, 115, 126, 140
52e–53b, 57
52e–53c, 57
52e–53e, 115
53a, 58, 81, 93
53a–b, 58, 69, 111
53b, 59, 110, 121, 123, 125, 239, 261
53b–56c, 126
53b–57d, 94
53c–56c, 57
53c–57d, 199
53d, 73
54b, 73
55c, 86, 142
55d, 73, 127, 140, 188
55d–56b, 116
56a, 140
56c, 261–2
56d–57c, 57
57c, 115
57d, 140
57d–e, 57
57e–58a, 111, 138
58b–c, 115
58c–64a, 57
58d, 114, 143
59c, 140
59c–d, 140
59d, 127, 188
60b, 115
62a, 127, 188
62c–d, 116
62d, 86, 142
62d–63e, 143
63c–e, 116
63e, 81, 145
64c, 169
64d–68e, 57
66e, 144
68d, 140
68e, 59, 97, 107, 124–5, 140, 151, 158, 188, 261, 272, 297, 299
68e–69a, 152, 260
69a, 90–1
69a–80e, 94
69a–92c, 91, 93, 103
69b, 73, 112, 116, 125, 261
69b–c, 57, 69, 93
69c, 58–9, 124–5, 156, 168, 179, 188, 201
69d, 125, 185, 199
69d–e, 59
69e–71d, 57, 59
70c, 144
70d–e, 185
71d, 152
71d–e, 59, 261
72b–77a, 57, 59
72d, 59, 63, 261, 263, 297
73a–c, 58, 191
73c, 59, 86
73e–74c, 169
73e–75c, 94
74c–75c, 169

- 75b**, 124, 156, 168, 188
75c–d, 222
76b, 144
76d, 107
76d–e, 136
77a, 90, 99, 117, 131, 144, 169
77a–b, 93–4, 135
77a–c, 59, 137, 174
77b, 98
77b–c, 130
77c–79e, 94, 169
77c–81e, 57, 59
78b, 144
78c, 86, 169
78e, 175
79a–e, 169
79b–c, 144
79c, 91, 169
79e, 169
80a, 93
80b, 127, 188
80d, 144
80d–e, 137
80d–81a, 169
80e, 59, 94, 172
81a, 81, 145
81c–87b, 199
81c–88e, 57, 181
82e, 144
83d, 144
84d–e, 144
85a, 144
87c, 86
88d–89a, 142
90a, 59
90a–c, 260
90c, 127, 188
90d–91e, 94
91a–c, 94
90e, 63, 91, 106, 140, 142, 261, 263, 297
90e–91d, 57, 179
91a, 90, 94, 136, 144, 170, 175, 179, 188
91b–c, 185, 199
91c, 94, 106, 125, 144
91c–d, 178, 188
91d, 86
91d–e, 188
91d–92b, 59, 98, 135, 179, 188
91d–92c, 192
91e, 135–6
92a, 86, 94, 99, 135, 179, 188
92b, 86
92c, 59, 86, 142
- Pliny
Natural History
2.79, 145
2.149, 80
4.36, 239
6.157, 192
12.19, 192
37.23–24, 192
- Plutarch
Against Colotes
1114b, 78

On Isis and Osiris
46.191–5, 45

Life of Nicias
23, 80

Lycurgus
29.1, 97

Lysander
12, 80

Natural Questions
1.911d, 80

On Common Conceptions
1085c–d, 119, 144

On Stoic Self–Contradictions
1053b, 143

On the Face of the Moon
16.929b, 79

On the Principle of Cold
948d–e, 113
949b, 113

Perikles
32, 80
32.1, 258
- Pseudo–Hyginus
Astronomica
2.3, 192

- Pseudo-Plutarch
De Placita Philosophorum
 1.6, 252
 1.6.9, 250
- Stromateis*
 2, 52, 76–7
 2–3, 77
 3, 77
 4, 52
 6, 51
 10, 45, 54
 12, 56, 77
- Scholion to Nicander's *Theriaca*
 line 452, 192
- Seneca
Letters
 65.2, 119, 144
 89.4–5, 108
- Natural Questions*
 2.17–18, 144
 2.19, 144
 3.13, 51
 3.13.1, 108, 143
 3.29.1, 212
- Sextus Empiricus
Against the Mathematicians
 3.193, 77
 7.116–18, 81
 9.144, 77, 126
 10.34, 52, 77
- Against the Professors*
 8.263, 144–5
 9.75, 144
 9.75–76, 113, 119, 144
 9.76, 112
 9.211, 144
- Simplicius
On the Heavens
 242.18, 81
 242.21, 81
 295.11, 81
 511.23, 80
 559.26, 78
 712.27, 81
- Physics*
 22, 56
- 23.11, 77, 126
 23.20, 77, 126
 23.21–22, 76
 24.13, 76
 24.21, 77
 24.24, 76
 24.26, 77
 25.1, 56
 25.21, 78
 27.2, 79
 28.4, 81
 30.14, 53
 31.13, 78
 32.6, 78
 34.18–20, 55, 79–80
 34.18–27, 80
 34.20–27, 79
 34.27, 55, 79–80
 35.15, 55
 39.14, 78
 117.4, 53, 104, 143
 145.1, 53, 104, 143
 151.20, 56
 152.13, 81
 152.18, 56
 152.22, 80
 153.19–20, 80
 154.29, 79
 155.23, 55, 79, 143
 155.30, 55, 79, 143
 156.9, 79
 156.13, 55, 58, 79–80, 145
 157.5, 54
 157.17, 55, 79–80
 158.1, 78
 158.6, 78
 158.13, 78
 164.14–22, 55, 79
 164.24, 55, 58, 79–80
 179.3, 54
 180.9, 53
 184.2, 54
 185.9, 79
 189.1, 77
 300.21, 78
 300.27, 80, 145
 327.24, 81
 381.31, 78
 460.4, 79
- Sophocles
Antigone
 343–53, 137

Stobaeus

Anthology

3.5.7, 78

Extracts on Physics and Ethics

1.17.3, 145

1.25.3, 109, 113, 122

Strabo

Geography

1.1.11, 77

1.2.35, 187

3.2.13, 178, 182, 207, 239

6.1.1, 53

8.3.9, 187

11.2.19, 192

16.2.28, 299

16.2.37, 299

16.2.40, 299, 301

Suidas

s.v. **Anaximandros Praxiadou**

Miletios, 76

Tacitus

Histories

5.4, 249

Theocritus

Idylls

15.106–8, 173

Theophrastus

On Plants

3.1.4, 80

On the Senses

59, 79

61, 81

Thucydides

History of the Peloponnesian War

1.5–6, 183

1.10.2, 298

5.74.3, 298

84.3, 298

90.1–2, 298

Virgil

Aeneid

6.628–897, 239

Xenophon

Memorabilia

1.4, 258

2.2.3, 105

4.3, 258

4.7.6–7, 57, 258

4.7.7, 80

Mesopotamian Texts

Enuma Elish

4.93–145, 160

4.120, 160

5.117–30, 37

6.29–33, 160

6.153, 160

7.6, 160

Gilgamesh Epic

Tablet XI, 2, 10, 17, 228

KAI

222.A.11, 190

KTU²

1.10.14, 37

1.2.1.16, 190

1.2.1.33, 190

1.2.1.36, 190

1.3.3.38–47, 190

1.4.2.12–26, 190

1.4.5.61–7.35, 45

1.4.6.46, 45, 216, 233, 241, 283

1.5.6.8–10, 190

1.5.6.23–24, 190

1.6.1, 190

1.6.1.6–7, 190

1.6.2.30–35, 190

1.6.3.2, 190

1.6.3.8, 190

1.6.3.10, 190

Nimrud Prism

4.25–41, 295

Uruk Apkalla List

W 20 030, 7, 11

Semitic Inscriptions

Mesha Stele

17–18, 247

TAD

- A4.1, 13
- A4.7, 13
- A4.7.1, 290
- A4.7.17–18, 289, 300
- A4.7.17–19, 290
- B7.2–3, 295
- C3.127–28, 295
- D7.16, 13

Samaritan Texts*Memar Marqah*

- 2.10, 45, 202, 239
- 2.73–77, 45, 202, 239

Index of Authors

- Ademollo, Francesco 175
- Ahbel–Rappe, Sara 142
- Anbar, Moshe 276
- Anderson, Gary A. 105
- Anderson, Robert T. 295
- Annas, Julia 204
- Armstrong, John M. 152, 267
- Arnim, Hans von 81
- Aster, Shawn Zelig 123
- Astour, Michael C. 23

- Barney, Rachel 175
- Bartoš, Hynek 117, 143, 191
- Baumgarten, Albert I. 44, 190–1
- Baxter, Timothy M.S. 175
- Becking, Bob 295
- Belfiore, Elizabeth 82, 296
- Ben–Dov, Jonathan 45
- Betegh, Gábor 117, 131, 143
- Betlyon, John Wilson 301
- Boas, George 44, 176, 182, 192, 206, 225, 239–40
- Bobzien, Susanne 144, 191
- Bodéüs, Richard 144, 152, 189–90, 255
- Bokovoy, David E. 137, 146
- Bonfante, Larissa 178, 182–3
- Bos, Abraham P. 130
- Boyce, Mary 45
- Bremmer, Jan N. 1, 12, 45, 192, 201
- Brisson, Luc 67, 263–4, 296–7
- Broadie, Sarah 158
- Brodie, Thomas L. 23, 100
- Brown, William P. 63, 87, 134, 143, 145, 170
- Burger, Ronna 298
- Burkert, Walter 23, 159
- Burstein, Stanley Mayer 141

- Bury, Robert Gregg 100, 127, 175, 288, 297

- Campbell, Gordon 137, 174, 192
- Capra, Andrea 155, 191–2, 218, 220, 229
- Cartledge, Paul 192
- Cassuto, Umberto 20, 39–40, 165, 190, 210–13, 216–17, 220, 239
- Cherniss, Harold 239
- Clay, Jenny Strauss 181, 218
- Clines, David J.A. 136
- Cogan, Morton 280
- Cole, Thomas 192
- Cook, Arthur 167
- Cook, Johann 87, 90, 95
- Cowley, Arthur Ernest 13
- Cramer, Frederick H. 239
- Cross, Frank Moore 36, 123, 160–1, 164, 190–1, 233–4, 241, 282–3, 285, 294
- Crouch, Carly Lorraine 299
- Crüsemann, Frank 1
- Curd, Patricia 54–5, 79–80, 143, 145
- Curtis, Thomas 212

- Dafni, Evangelika E. 12
- Dalley, Stephanie 203, 234
- Darshan, Guy 142, 218, 232
- Davidson, Maxwell J. 45
- Davies, Philip R. 14
- Davila, James R. 87
- Day, John 36, 40, 161, 164, 190–1, 202, 230–1, 234, 241, 294
- de Hulster, Izaak J. 296
- de Wette, Wilhelm 8
- Dever, William 294
- Dick, Michael Brennan 287
- Dickson, Keith 203
- Dillon, John 60–1, 81, 204, 267
- Droge, Arthur J. 7, 208
- Drury, Shadia B. 71
- Dušanić, Slobodan 298

- Eph'al, Israel 301

- Feldman, Louis H. 208
- Finkelstein, Israel 247, 294
- Flannery, Kevin L. 50, 77, 126, 139, 261–2
- Foster, Benjamin R. 45
- Fowler, Robert L. 187
- Frazer, James 3, 256
- Frevel, Christian 296
- Fried, Lisbeth S. 295, 301

- Frisinger, H. Howard 144
 Frixione, Eugenio 117, 119, 143, 171, 191
- Gadd, Cyril John 295
 Gaiser, Konrad 262
 Gammie, John G. 190
 Gantz, Timothy 220
 Gegenschatz, Ernst 239
 Gerson, Lloyd P. 254, 257, 272, 299
 Ginsberg, H. L. 216
 Giovino, Maria 201
 Gkatzaras, Thanassis 239
 Gmirkin, Russell E. 3, 7, 11–12, 16–21, 23–4, 31, 37, 44, 72, 75, 84–5, 88, 100, 141–2, 162, 173, 190, 192, 202, 204, 211–13, 229, 234, 236–7, 239, 241, 249, 251–2, 258–60, 262–4, 266–70, 272–3, 277–8, 281, 284, 287–89, 292, 294–301
 Gnuse, Robert K. 1, 192
 Godfrey, Neil 193
 Gonzalez, Francisco J. 296
 Gordon, Cyrus 23, 190
 Gordon, Robert P. 190
 Grabbe, Lester L. 16, 23, 296
 Granerød, Gard 13, 14, 295–6
 Grant, Deena A. 123, 144
 Gregory, Andrew 32, 44, 46, 51, 60–1, 76–81, 108–9, 113, 116, 143
 Grypeou, Emmanouela 222
 Gundert, Beate 117, 170
- Habel, Norman C. 164, 283, 300
 Hackforth, Reginald 58
 Hadley, Judith M. 284
 Hagedorn, Anselm C. 12, 23, 237
 Hahm, David E. 60–1, 76, 108, 112, 117–18, 121, 143–5, 171, 191
 Halpern, Baruch 12
 Hamori, Esther J. 191
 Harnack, Adolph 178
 Hartman, Louis F. 203
 Harvey, Paul B. Jr. 23
 Hasan–Roken, Galit 192
 Haubold, Johannes 44
 Heidel, Alexander 17
 Heiser, Michael S. 190
 Helen Spurling 222
 Hendel, Ronald S. 87, 96, 142, 208
 Hershbell, Jackson P. 192
 Hjelm, Ingrid 177
 Honigman, Sylvie 301
 Horowitz, Wayne 45, 160
- Hull, Andrew 268–9, 291
 Hurwit, Jeffrey M. 183
- Idziak, Janine Marie 281
 Inwood, Brad 192
- Jacobsen, Thorkild 210–11
 Jacobson, Arthur J. 301
 Jaeger, Werner 16, 77, 126, 251, 257, 267
 Joosten, Jan 89
- Kaiser, Otto 12
 Kang, Sa–Moon 299
 King, Colin Guthrie 143
 Kirk, Geoffrey S. 76–81, 191, 257
 Kirsch, Jonathan 287
 Klosko, George 264, 267, 269, 290, 297–8, 301
 Knoppers, Gary N. 23, 295
 Kooij, Arie van der 173, 182, 201, 203
 Kramer, Samuel N. 203
 Kratz, Reinhard G. 299
 Kuhn, Thomas S. 7
 Kupitz, Yaakov S. 23, 100, 136, 191–2, 239
 Kvanvig, Helge S. 222, 239
- Lambert, Wilfred G. 1, 10, 17
 Lampert, Laurence 201
 Lange, Armin 295
 Lapidge, Michael 45, 109, 113, 117–18, 122–3, 143–5, 171, 191
 Launderville, Dale Francis 3
 Leibnitz, Gottfried Wilhelm 156
 Leith, Mary Joan Winn 296
 Lemaire, André 296
 Lemche, Niels Peter 14–16, 18, 249
 Leshner, James H. 190
 Lieberg, Godo 250–1
 Lind, Millard C. 280, 299
 Loader, William R.G. 95, 136, 178
 Long, Anthony A. 61, 81, 108, 113, 121, 130, 143–5, 191
 López–Ruiz, Carolina 34
 Loudon, Bruce 1, 23, 100, 190, 232
 Louth, Andrew 7
 Lovejoy, Arthur O. 44, 176, 182, 192, 206, 225, 239–40
 Lynch, Matthew J. 300
- MacDonald, John 45, 239
 Mach, Michael 296
 Machinist, Peter 190

- Magen, Yitzhak 248
 Malkin, Irad 299
 Malul, Meir 3
 Mansfeld, Jaap 55
 May, Gerhard 105
 McCartney, Eugene S. 135, 145
 McClintock, John 192
 McDiarmid, John Brodie 239
 McPherran, Mark 154
 Meer, Michael N. van der 85, 97, 100,
 142, 170
 Mendenhall, George E. 11
 Menn, Stephen 58–9, 259
 Meshel, Ze'ev 284, 294
 Migne, Jacques–Paul 79–80
 Mikalson, Jon D. 97, 207, 219, 223, 225,
 250–2, 255, 262–3, 265, 269, 272
 Milgrom, Jacob 72, 190
 Millard, Alan R. 1, 10
 Miller, Patrick D. 294
 Minar, Edwin L. 45
 Minton, William W. 297
 Mondi, Robert 109, 143
 Montgomery, James Alan 45, 239
 Morgan, Kathryn A. 298
 Morris, Sarah 23, 190
 Morrow, Glenn Raymond 73–4, 260–1,
 265, 268–9, 272, 288–91, 297–8, 301
 Moss, Jessica 81, 185
 Most, Glenn W. 77, 240, 251, 256–7,
 261–3
 Mueller, Gustav E. 263, 272, 280
 Mullen, E. Theodore, Jr. 190
 Murray, Oswyn 212

 Na'aman, Nadav 295
 Naddaf, Gerard 52, 54–6, 58, 76–80,
 137, 214, 232, 236, 257
 Nagy, Gregory 192
 Neil Asher Silberman 294
 Neusner, Jacob 301
 Nickelsburg, George W.E. 12, 36, 44–5,
 132, 228
 Niesiołowski–Spanò, Łukasz 20, 84
 Nightingale, Andrea Wilson 265, 267,
 297–8
 Nihan, Christophe 299
 Nissinen, Martti 295

 O'Brien, Denis 45
 Oppenheimer, Adolf L. 123
 Osborne, Robin 183
 Otto, Eckart 11

 Parpola, Simo 201, 295
 Pearce, Laurie 295
 Pelikan, Jaroslav 85
 Pender, Elizabeth E. 191
 Penglase, Charles 23, 190
 Pitard, Wayne T. 34, 44–5, 160–1,
 233, 295
 Planeaux, Christopher 201
 Porten, Bezalel 13
 Pummer, Reinhard 295

 Rad, Gerhard von 20, 39–40, 72, 172,
 190, 216, 231, 239
 Raven, John Earle 76–81, 191, 257
 Regali, Mario 218
 Rendtorff, Rolf 9, 276, 281
 Riel, Gerd van 152, 190, 272
 Rösel, Martin 85–7, 90–2, 95–6, 100,
 110, 142, 169, 170
 Ruiten, Jacques T.A.G.M. van 170
 Runia, David T. 73, 84, 90, 106–7, 110,
 139, 170, 179, 239

 Saley, Richard J. 190
 Sanders, Seth L. 153
 Sandmel, Samuel 3
 Sarna, Nahum M. 40, 42–3, 114, 131,
 136, 138, 165, 210, 213, 216–17
 Scade, Paul 143
 Schachter, Jay F. 7
 Schelling, Friedrich 283
 Schmid, Kurt 281
 Scott, Dominic 296
 Sedley, David N. 61, 81, 97, 107–8, 113,
 121, 124, 127, 130, 139, 143–5, 152,
 155, 167, 175, 191, 218, 258
 Shenkar, Michael 296
 Skemp, Joseph B. 130
 Smith, George 1
 Smith, Mark S. 34, 36, 44–5, 125, 160–1,
 190, 230, 233–4, 248–9, 279, 283,
 294–6, 300
 Solmsen, Friedrich 297, 299
 Sonnet, Jean–Pierre 301
 Spivey, Nigel 183
 Sterling, Gregory E. 105
 Stern, Ephraim 295–6
 Stordalen, Terje 173, 202–3
 Strong, James 192
 Suter, David 221

 Talmon, Shemaryahu 3
 Taylor, Edward 256

- Teggart, Frederick J. 12
 Thompson, Thomas L. 14
 Tian, Jie 81, 183
 Tigerstedt, Eugène Napoleon 298–9
 Todd, Robert B. 143, 191
 Topper, Kathryn 183
 Tov, Emanuel 87–9, 138, 190, 230
 Tsumura, David Toshia 40, 45, 136, 138,
 142–3, 146, 163, 216
 Tuplin, Christopher 45, 201

 Ussishkin, David 294

 van der Louw, Theo A.W 87, 89, 96,
 100, 134, 138, 170, 174–5, 192
 Van der Sluijs, Marinus Anthony 33
 van Kooten, George H. 170
 Van Seters, John 1, 11, 30, 187, 192, 208,
 210, 217–18, 230, 232, 295
 VanderKam, James C. 45, 132, 211, 239
 Verbrugghe, Gerald P. 141
 Vlastos, Gregory 69, 73, 115, 127,
 139, 143

 Wacholder, Ben Zion 213
 Wajdenbaum, Philippe 1, 18, 20, 23, 84,
 88, 95, 100, 135, 142, 153, 176, 180–1,
 190, 192, 206–7, 227, 237, 241, 247,
 260, 273
 Walcot, Peter 23, 190

 Walker, Christopher 287
 Walton, John H. 36
 Weinfeld, Moshe 11–12, 123, 279, 281
 Weippert, Manfred 299
 Wellhausen, Julius 9
 West, Martin Litchfield 3, 23, 37, 44–5,
 76, 142, 218, 225, 239
 Westbrook, Raymond (Wells and
 Magdalene) 12, 23
 Westermann, Claus 1, 11, 17, 39, 72,
 126, 131, 136, 164, 190, 208–12,
 216–17, 220–1, 231
 Wheeler, Graham 297
 Whybray, R. Norman 9
 Wickersham, John M. 141
 Widengren, Geo 201
 Wightman, Gregory J. 294
 Winden, Jacobus C.M. Van 142
 Witt, Rachel E. 61
 Wolfson, Harry A. 239
 Wright, M.R. 78
 Wunsch, Cornelia 295
 Wyssmann, Patrick 296

 Yadin, Azzan 23
 Young, Ian 89
 Younger, K. Lawson Jr. 295
 Yuval, Israel Jacob 192