3-7-2014

The Sages and Philosophers: Reevaluating the Interaction Between Ancient Israel and Greece

Mike Tolliver
University of Missouri-St. Louis, miketolliver4@gmail.com

The Sages and Philosophers:
Reevaluating the Interaction Between Ancient Israel and Greece

Michael M. Tolliver
Th.M., Covenant Theological Seminary, 2013
M.Div., Covenant Theological Seminary, 2010
B.S., Business Administration, Truman State University, 2005

A Thesis Submitted to The Graduate School at the University of Missouri – St. Louis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters in Philosophy

August 2014

Advisory Committee

Jon D. McGinnis, Ph.D.
Chairperson

David Griesedieck, Ph.D.

C. John Collins, Ph.D.

Abstract:

The previously assumed late development of the Jewish sacred writings led many to conclude that the Hellenistic world greatly influenced both the content and worldview of the Hebrew authors. Though the evidence for the historical reconstruction that required the Jewish texts to develop late has been called into question, scholars have yet to reconsider the implications this has for the antiquity of the ideas contained within the Jewish writings and their influence on surrounding cultures. Whereas it was once taken for granted that the Jews borrowed form and content from their Greek neighbors, it is now possible, even probable, that the reverse is true. This paper aims to evaluate the level of that interaction in the literature and the socio-political context which produced that literature.

I. **Knowing is Half the Battle**

The modern day pursuit of knowledge owes much to those who lived before the Common Era. The Western world places great emphasis on the questions asked and the answers given by the Ancient Greek philosophers. Indeed our system of logic, language of ethics, and discussion of metaphysics are all couched in Greek categories and definitions. The ancient world, however, did not begin with Greece. Many ancient cultures not only predate Greece, but also appear to have contributed far more to the language of philosophy than previously realized.[1] Egypt and Mesopotamia, for instance, are increasingly shown to have possessed not only their own brand of inquisition into the world around, but also the genesis of many ideas that were once regarded as originally Greek.

Part of the reason for the ignorance of other ancient cultures is the lack of data from the time before the Common Era. Few original sources depicting major events, stories, and ideas prior to the Common Era exist, and the original sources that do exist are often agenda-driven or mythologized. Other sources mediate original works, providing commentary about the original or reformulating the original source as they thought 'it should have been.' This mediation makes reconstructing a consistent chronology of events, literary works, and intellectual exchange very difficult. Though reconstruction is not impossible, the level of confidence placed in such reconstructions only ever approaches the level of 'probable.'

---

[1] "Yet it is not altogether accurate to suggest that the books of Ecclesiastes and Job required a wedding of Hebrew faith and Hellenic skepticism to come into being. There is evidence in the recently rediscovered literature of Mesopotamia and of Egypt that skeptical attitudes occurred among other people besides the Greeks." See Joseph L. Blau, *The Story of Jewish Philosophy* (New York, NY: Random House, 1962), 35-36.

Lack of data mired previous inquiry into the worldview of ancient Judaism. This lack of information caused biblical scholars to posit a composition history for many of the biblical texts existing today. The assumed history, in turn, was imagined to interact with the surrounding cultures in a manner consistent with the thoughts and events contemporary with that time period (Neo-Babylonian, Persian, or Greek). While this scholarly endeavor may have been well intentioned, the limited amount of data available could neither confirm nor deny these historical reconstructions.

New insights into the reliability of the biblical witness have caused scholars to revisit their assumed history of ancient Israel.[2] Now possibly, and even probably, far more of the biblical history appears to accurately represent events and ideologies of antiquity. Thus, the belief that the worldview and literature of the older kingdom of Israel was borrowed and adapted by the later cultures of the Mediterranean is now possible to consider. This possibility contradicts the past assumption that many ideas and attitudes originated by the famous Greek thinkers and were then borrowed by later Jewish thinkers. The position of this paper is that the history of dialogue between Greek and Jew predates the Golden Age of Athens, and that prior to this Golden Age the Greek worldview more closely resembled its Jewish counterpart.

To demonstrate the likelihood of the above scenario, it will be crucial first to recount the geo-political history of the Mediterranean and Levant. Then, in an effort to

[2] A recent study of inner-biblical exegesis within the Hebrew bible confirms the broad historical outline attested by the implied authors of the texts, see Michael A. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985). Additionally, the availability and origins of ancient Near Eastern parallels contemporary with the implied authors corroborates the biblical timeline, see James B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts: Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969). Lastly, assessment of the archaeological evidence from the Levant and beyond demonstrates the high degree of accuracy with which the biblical witness describes its world, see K. A. Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2003).

demonstrate the antiquity of the ideas and concepts central to orthodox Jewish belief, the textual history of the Hebrew Bible must be considered. Next, the method and manner of intellectual transmission between the Israelite and Greek cultures will be assessed. Once this groundwork is laid, the nature of the Israelite worldview and its reception to the Greek audience can be evaluated. From here, a likely reconstruction can be crafted that can be evaluated by later literary evidence from such notable figures of antiquity as Aristotle, Josephus, Philo, and Celsus.

II. Painting the Historical Picture

As the inquiry into the conversation between Jewish sage and Greek philosopher begins, a brief survey of the Mediterranean and Near Eastern geo-political landscapes between roughly 1000 B.C.E. and 200 C.E. will provide an adequate context for the study. To ensure that this task is most effective, the survey will focus primarily on the rise and fall of major kingdoms, major military conflicts that defined the balance of power between those kingdoms, and the major authors and writings of the sages and philosophers during that time period.

Levantine Antiquity

The time period of 1000 B.C.E. and 200 C.E. poses many difficulties for reconstructing a relevant timeline. Over the last two centuries, doubting the historicity of the timeline presented in the Hebrew Bible has become fashionable. In the last thirty years, some scholars have even gone so far as to pronounce the "death of biblical history."[3] Furthermore, there is scant explicit or implicit archaeological and literary

[3] Iain W. Provan, V. Philips Long, and Tremper Longman, *A Biblical History of Israel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 3-35.

evidence corroborating the biblical narrative for at least 1040 and 853 B.C.E.[4] This need not to threaten the success of this paper's inquiry, however. As has been demonstrated elsewhere, if the grounds for rejecting the biblical history were consistently applied to any historical work of antiquity, there would be precious little knowledge of events prior to the Common Era.[5] Likewise, an absence of corroborating evidence is not the same as evidence to the contrary, and on the whole there is possession of more data in favor of the biblical timeline than against it.[6]

Of those who discuss ad nauseam the issue of biblical chronology, there are three main camps: high, low, and middle chronology. At least for the purposes of this paper, middle chronology is the preferred view, holding to the reliability of the data concerning the United Kingdom on down through the return from exile.[7] This description of events details a United Kingdom (1040-930 B.C.E.), a Divided Kingdom (930-722 B.C.E.), a Southern Kingdom (722-597 B.C.E.), an exilic community (597-538 B.C.E.), and the gradual return of exiles (538-400 B.C.E.).[8]

In addition to the status of the ancient Israelite kingdoms during this time period, there were several relevant military conflicts in the Levant that impacted the condition of its Israelite inhabitants. First, there is the initial split of the United Monarchy in the Northern and Southern Kingdoms (930 B.C.E.). The Northern Kingdom maintained its sovereign status until the Southern Kingdom made a treaty with Assyria, who happily destroyed its neighboring nation (722 B.C.E.). The politically tenuous situation the

---

[4] Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*, 156.
[5] Provan, Iain, V. Philips Long, and Tremper Longman, *A Biblical History of Israel*, 36-104.
[6] Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*, 7-158.
[7] Halpern, Baruch "The State of Israelite History." *Reconsidering Israel and Judah: Recent Studies on the Deuteronomistic History* ed. Gary N. Knoppers and J. G. McConville, (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2000).
[8] Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*, 7-158.

Southern Kingdom faced after this conflict continued until Babylon ascended to Near Eastern dominance and began several waves of deportation and destruction (597 B.C.E.). Persia's decisive victory over Babylon led to Cyrus' proclamation allowing the Israelite exiles to return home (538 B.C.E.). This amiable, vassal relationship of roughly two hundred years was interrupted by Alexander's conquest of the known world (333 B.C.E.). After his death, the Ptolemy's provided a peaceful and prosperous atmosphere for the Jewish vassal state (301-202 B.C.E.), but the Seleucid conquering of Ptolemaic Palestine signaled a dramatic change of lifestyle for Jews living in the Levant (202 B.C.E.). Antiochus' ill-advised pagan sacrifice in the Jerusalem Temple instigated the Maccabean revolt, the successful campaign of which provided Jerusalem and its surrounding territory with its first taste of freedom since the Assyrian assault on the Northern Kingdom (167 B.C.E.). This brief period of independence ended when the Roman general Pompey conquered Palestine (63 B.C.E.). The relevant timeline for the ancient Israelite state ends with the two revolts against the Roman Empire, beyond which Israelite power and influence in Palestine did not return nearly two millennia later (70-135 C.E.).[9] Putting all of this data together yields this rough geo-political sketch:

[9] The conflicts noted from the United Monarchy down through the exile come from biblical sources. Details of Persia's influence on down through the Seleucid control of Palestine are taken from Donald E. Gowan, *Bridge between the Testaments: A Reappraisal of Judaism from the Exile to the Birth of Christianity* (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications, 1986). Finally, the content pertaining to Rome's impact on the region is taken from Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1987). See also James C. VanderKam, *An Introduction to Early Judaism* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2001).

Important Events	
United Monarchy	1040-930 B.C.E.
Divided Mondarchy	930-722
Destruction of Israel by Assyria	722
Destruction of Judah by Babylon	597-587
Fall of Babylon by the Persians	538
Rebuilding of Jerusalem Temple	520-516
Darius/Xerxes vs the Greeks	500-450
Alexander Defeats the Persians	333
Ptolemy's Gain Control of Palestine	301
Seleucid's Gain Control of Palestine	202-199
The Maccabean Revolt	167
Rome Conquers Palestine	63
Jerusalem Rebels	70 and 135 C.E.

The First Philosophers

In addition to the major events in the Levant, the growth of philosophical interest in Greece should be considered. The earliest Greek philosophers, referred to as the Presocratics, came onto the scene shortly after the Southern Kingdom of Judah was carried off into exile by Babylon. As will be seen, this timing is intriguingly coincidental. For this study, a list of the pertinent figures and the rough dates for when the Presocratics were active will be sufficient. This list also includes some of the earliest sources that attest to the life and work of these philosophers. Study of the Presocratics is every bit as vexing a study as it is for the history of the Jews. The literary evidence for these philosophers is fragmentary and frequently mediated. The list below is as good a place to start as any, and even though there may be arguments over the specific dates by a year or two, this broad sketch will suffice here. Therefore, this will be the working timeline for the earliest Greek philosophers:

Presocratics and Sophists	Date BCE	Sources
Thales	580	
Anaximander	570	
Anaximenes	550	
Xenophanes, Pythagoras	530	
Heraclitus	500	
Parmenides	490	
Anaxagoras	470	
Zeno	460	
Empedocles	450	Herodotus
Melissus, Protagoras, Leucippus	440	Ion of Chios
Philolaus, Diogenes, Gorgias	430	
Democritus, Prodicus, Hippias	420	
Antiphon, Euthydemus	410	
	380	Plato
	350	Aristotle
	330	Theophrastus

These two chronologies provide context for what was going on in the Levant during the beginnings of Greek philosophy. By the time Alexander swept through Palestine, there was already a long tradition of Presocratic thought such that it had begun to receive critical evaluation by those who followed chronologically after them. Plato and Aristotle's interactions with the material of their predecessors preserves not only the Presocratics' work, but also insight into how these original thinkers were received by subsequent generations of philosophers. These shifts in Greek thought may tie into the broader geo-political picture, motivating the rejection of Jewish ideology.

The Development of the Jewish Texts

Before successfully evaluating that interaction, there must be and outline of the development of the Jewish texts that would have conveyed their distinct worldview to their Mediterranean neighbors. While the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible did not come into existence until roughly 250 B.C.E., the antiquity of the source material must be established to have any profitable discussion about the Septuagint's influence on Greek

thought.[10] The necessity of this step owes to the scholars who, in addition to dismantling the Jewish chronology, would deny the implied authorship of the biblical texts.[11]

Some of this denial stems from observable phenomena, such as redaction within the text.[12] The major motivation for rejecting the implied authorship of the texts, however, comes from the hypothetical existence of sources underlying many of the foundational books in the Hebrew canon and their late purported origins.[13] To try and recapitulate the arguments for and against the existence of these sources would derail the project of this paper long before it had begun. Suffice it to say that even if one remains committed to the source theory, it does not require a late dating of the material within those sources.[14]

As a study of inner-biblical exegesis demonstrates, the basic structure assumed by the implied authorship of the respective books within the Hebrew bible is reliable.[15] In other words, at the very least, the *Torah* can be reliably said to pre-date the Prophets. The third group, known as the Writings, is a collection of books that present themselves as

---

[10] Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*. See also VanderKam, *An Introduction to Early Judaism*. See also John J. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub., 2000).

[11] The implied author of a text is the individual identified by the text as its own author. For further discussion on this point, see C. John Collins, *Genesis 1-4: A Linguistic, Literary, and Theological Commentary* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Pub., 2006), 36.

[12] Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*.

[13] Provan, Iain, V. Philips. Long, and Tremper Longman, *A Biblical History of Israel*, 54-62

[14] While he does not identify dates for each source, Milgrom determines the traditionally regarded latest source, the Priestly text, is as antique as the traditionally regarded earliest Elohist and Yahwist sources. Milgrom, Jacob, *Numbers* JPS Torah Commentary (Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society, 1990), xxxii.

[15] Implicit allusions from the book of Amos predict doom to Israel on the basis of their practice of oppression (Amos 4:1, 8:4; Deut. 24:14; Ex. 22:20-21; Lev. 19:13), their extortion (Deut. 23:20; Ex. 22:24) their perversions of justice and taking bribes (Amos 2:7, 5:7, 10, 12; Deut. 16:19; Exod. 23:1-3), their manipulation of weights and measures (Amos 8:5 and Deut. 25:13-14), and their misuse of security deposits (Amos 2:8; Deut. 24:17). While these are mostly implicit and lack lexical support, "this lack of explicit references is not sufficient to gainsay the strong impression made by the sources that Amos was aware of ancient Israelite legal traditions, and that he made use of them in the course of his diatribes and forecasts of doom." See Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, 295.

collections of episodic units. This is most obvious with books like Psalms or Proverbs, but even a narrative like Daniel or Song of Songs appears to be a sum of many parts. The authorship of each episodic unit in the Writings occurred over the entire history of the United Monarchy on down through the return from exile, its collection into a textual unit, however, likely occurred after Malachi (457 B.C.E.) and prior to the Septuagint (250 B.C.E.). The initial survey of the Hebrew Bible, then, yields the following picture:[16]

The Torah:	The Nevi'im:	The Ketuvim

• Genesis
• Exodus
• Leviticus
• Numbers
• Deuteronomy
	• Joshua
	• Judges
	• Samuel (I & II)
	• Kings (I & II)
	• Isaiah (740-681)
	• Jeremiah (640-585)
	• Ezekiel (597-560)
	• The Book of the Twelve:
	  • Hosea (752-724)
	  • Joel (*)
	  • Amos (767-753)
	  • Obadiah (*)
	  • Jonah (760-740)
	  • Micah (739-686)
	  • Nahum (626-612)
	  • Habakkuk (640-628)
	  • Zephaniah (640-625)
	  • Haggai (520-516)
	  • Zechariah (520-480)
	  • Malachi (477-457)
		• The Sifrei Emet:
		  • Psalms
		  • Job
		  • Proverbs
		• The Five Megillot:
		  • Ruth
		  • Song of Songs
		  • Ecclesiastes
		  • Lamentations
		  • Esther
		• The rest of the "Writings":
		  • Daniel
		  • Ezra-Nehemiah
		  • Chronicles (I & II)

Points of Contact: Trade and War

With a broad outline of major events in the Levant, dates associated with relevant Greek thinkers, and a rough working knowledge of the development of the Jewish sacred texts, assessing possible points of contact between the Greek and Jewish cultures is now ready to begin. While there exists manifold examples of interaction after the Hellenistic period, as of now precious little explicit evidence supports, though none denies, any sort of cross-pollination between Israel and Greece from roughly 600 and 300 B.C.E.

[16] Because each writing prophet (with the noted exceptions of Joel and Obadiah) dates their text to the year of a given king's reign, these dates provide a rough chronology of the latter prophets. This scheme is not without issue. Some scholars, for instance, will assign two or three time periods to the book of Isaiah, only one of which coincides with the time Isaiah was alive.

The expectation, then, for Greek and Israelite interaction is that the interaction occurred in the context of either trade or war, and that the majority of the evidence for this cross-pollination of ideas would be largely inferential.[17] As early as the first wave of exiles left Jerusalem for Babylon, if not earlier, a strong contingent of Jews lived in Egypt.[18] They took refuge at a fort of Psammetichus I, which was established as a garrison for Greek mercenaries.[19] When Cambyses I led Persian forces against Egypt (525 B.C.E.), he respected the Jewish temple at Elephantine and left it standing. Likewise, Darius II encouraged Jewish worship to continue in Egypt, although he fell short of aiding them in rebuilding their temple when it was destroyed (410 B.C.E.).[20] The Elephantine Papyri (late 400-early 300 B.C.E.) simultaneously describe these events while confirming Jewish presence in Egypt during this time frame.[21] "From early Hellenistic times Jews served in the Ptolemaic army and bureaucracy, and in Alexandria they were at some point given their own quarter of the city."[22] Under Ptolemy II the *Torah* was translated from Hebrew to Greek, the translation of which represented the first sacred text of any religion to be copied in another language.[23] There was thus a strong Jewish influence in Egypt from roughly 600 B.C.E. on down through at least 200 B.C.E. This consistent and prominent position in Egypt would afford itself plenty of exposure to Greek culture in a largely positive light.

---

[17] Robin Waterfield, *The First Philosophers: The Presocratics and Sophists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 3. Although this reference specifically credits trade with the transmission of ideas, we must acknowledge that we have evidence of war being as fluid a conduit for cross-pollination of ideas, as the Rabshakeh demonstrated in 2 Kings 18.
[18] Jer. 41:16-43:7.
[19] Kitchen notes that this fort was well known to Herodotus as Daphnai. See Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*, 70.
[20] Ibid., 77.
[21] VanderKam, *An Introduction to Early Judaism*, 8.
[22] Ibid., 50.
[23] Ibid., 13-14.

Transmission of Israelite culture through Persian influence, however, would likely be received in a much more negative light. The Jews in Babylonian exile found several advocates in the Persian kings, even if the basis for their advocacy was cleverly concealed manipulation.[24] In 538 B.C.E., Cyrus decreed that all stolen sacred artifacts be returned to Jerusalem, where the temple was to be restored.[25] This endeavor continued in earnest with Darius I's blessing, and Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Haggai, and Zechariah saw the restoration through to completion in 520 B.C.E.[26] By the time Ezra journeyed to Jerusalem in 458 B.C.E, the Israelite temple had already enjoyed a long period of Persian patronage.[27] From 445 and 433 B.C.E. Nehemiah received royal support from Artaxerxes to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.[28] These hundred years of Persian favoritism secured the loyalty of the Judeans, and in return they provided a crucial bridge between Mesopotamia and Egypt.[29]

While the Israelites received this level of support from Atraxerxes with open arms, the Greeks reacted differently to their Persian neighbors. Initially, the Greek aristocracy seemed to envy their Asian neighbors.[30] Some historians have even gone so far as to suggest that the first Greek philosophers were actually raised within the Persian Empire.[31] However, even though certain Greek cults received patronage from the Persians, popular Greek opinion maintained their own cultural superiority.[32] As Greek

---

[24] Tom Holland, *Persian Fire: The First World Empire and the Battle for the West* (New York: Doubleday, 2005), 147.
[25] VanderKam, *An Introduction to Early Judaism*, 2.
[26] Ibid., 2-3.
[27] Ezra 7:14-24; See also VanderKam, *An Introduction to Early Judaism*, 3.
[28] VanderKam, *An Introduction to Early Judaism*, 5.
[29] Holland, *Persian Fire: The First World Empire and the Battle for the West*, 147.
[30] Ibid., 148.
[31] Ibid., 149.
[32] Ibid., 148, 150.

and Persian tensions mounted into the 5th Century B.C.E., the defeat of the Persian armies at Marathon (490 B.C.E.), Thermopylae (480 B.C.E.) and Salamis (480 B.C.E.) cemented the popular Athenian hubris and later enshrined it with the building of the Parthenon (447 B.C.E.).[33] Thus, while the Israelites flourished under and enjoyed the Persian Empire, the Greeks flourished in spite of and in enmity with the Persian Empire. As these events transpired, the Greeks would have received Jewish ideology with a guilt-by-association mentality. It is no coincidence that the Presocratic rejection of the Jewish sapiential worldview occurred during this period.

After this assessment of the relevant historical and geo-political landscape, evaluation on the interplay between the Jewish sages and Greek philosophers can begin. The Jewish worldview, focusing primarily on their metaphysic, epistemology, and ethic, will provide a foundation for comparison. Next, a survey of the earliest Greek philosophers from Thales to Parmenides will demonstrate, even though they do not speak with a unified voice, the similarities in thought that can be compared and contrasted with the Jewish worldview. Lastly, there will be a verification of the likelihood of this historical reconstruction against later sources like Josephus, Philo, and Celsus.

III. The Sage and the Philosopher

At the beginning of the United Monarchy, it was the unification of Israelite life around the three offices of priest, prophet, and king that allowed for the creation of an ancient Israelite orthodoxy. Members of these three offices were responsible for the keeping of their respective sphere of divine revelation: *Torah*, the former and latter

[33] Ibid., 368.

Prophets, and the Writings.[34] As indicated in the previous section, all three collections in the Hebrew canon were either completed or nearly complete by the time of the exile (587 B.C.E.) Even though ample work has been done demonstrating a history of heterodoxy among the Israelite laity (and occasionally even the religious elite!), this is consistently reflected upon as a deviation from appropriate religion.[35] For the purposes of this study, then, every book of the Hebrew canon with the exceptions of Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, select Psalms, Esther, Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, and Chronicles will be assessed for signs of an orthodox Israelite philosophy that could have been communicated across the Mediterranean prior to the earliest Greek philosophers.

Prior to Alexander's conquest there are precious few explicit descriptions of interaction between Greece and Israel, but significantly Aristotle apparently met with some Jewish sages and regarded them as philosophers in their own right.[36] Additionally, the Hebrew canon contains a handful of references to Greece, indicating a clear knowledge of its people and, to some degree, their practices.[37]

While many Presocratic philosophers were active in the 6th and 5th centuries B.C.E., the interest of this study lies in the earliest of these Greek thinkers. Precisely, the focus of this paper is the message and manner of the Milesians (≈580-550 B.C.E.),

---

[34] Jer. 18:18; Ezek. 7:26. "The idea of revelation as a word from God to communicate with humanity was a fundamental presupposition of Israel's existence. There were essentially three media of revelation: Torah, prophecy, and wisdom…It was the crisis of the exile and beyond that probably caused all of these authoritative words to be brought together from the temple [Torah], the court [wisdom], and the prophetic circles [former/latter prophets]." "Torah, Torah, Torah: The Emergence of the Tripartite Canon." See Craig A. Evans, Emanuel Tov, and Stephen G. Dempster, *Exploring the Origins of the Bible: Canon Formation in Historical, Literary, and Theological Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 92, 97.
[35] Richard S. Hess, *Israelite Religions: An Archaeological and Biblical Survey* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007).
[36] "Clearchus – in his account of the meeting of his teacher Aristotle with a Jewish sage – as well as Theophrastus, describes the Jews as a kind of philosophic sect; Hecataeus and Strabo interpreted the Jewish idea of God in the spirit of Stoic pantheism." See Waterfield, *The First Philosophers: The Presocratics and Sophists*, 22.
[37] Dan. 8:21, 10:20, 11:2; Zech. 9:13; Joel 3:6. These texts potentially range from 520-250 B.C.E.

Xenophanes (≈530 B.C.E.), Pythagoras (≈530 B.C.E.), and Heraclitus (≈500 B.C.E.). Each of these philosophers represents a distinct stream of early Greek thought, however analyzing the form and content of these philosophers will show that they had as much in common with the early Jewish sages as they did with their later Greek followers.

Israelite Philosophy

While early Jewish theology is rarely regarded as philosophy in a technical sense, Joseph Blau acknowledges that,

> The Bible is a work of philosophic interest in a more general sense. It is an interpretation of the meaning of life as this meaning was understood by the children of Israel. The Bible contains, in the form of legends, explanations of how the universe and all that is in it, including man himself, came to be. A number of legal codes, dating from various periods in the history of the Hebrew people, give expression to the moral ideas that were current and reflect the social ideals of those who made the laws. The works of the prophetic writers give evidence of a changing understanding of the meaning of history. Folk wisdom, in all its inconsistency, is exhibited in the book of Proverbs. In addition, the Bible approaches the border of technical philosophy, speculation grounded in doubt rather than in faith, in two books, Ecclesiastes and Job.[38]

Even where biblical texts look as though they might borrow from Greek ideology, recent work in Mesopotamian and Egyptian texts, as well as further study into the Dead Sea Scrolls, has demonstrated that the ancient Israelite writings can predate Greek philosophy while still offering their own version of reflection on the world.[39] Thus, Jewish theology can be regarded as a form of proto-philosophy in its own right.

---

[38] Blau, *The Story of Jewish Philosophy*, 8.

[39] "It is not altogether accurate to suggest that the books of Ecclesiastes and Job required a wedding of Hebrew faith and Hellenic skepticism to come into being. There is evidence in the recently rediscovered literature of Mesopotamia and of Egypt that skeptical attitudes occurred among other people besides the Greeks." See Ibid., 35-36.

Assessing the presuppositions of this proto-philosophy is a task that Thorlief Boman has undertaken.[40] Boman indicates that the metaphysic, epistemology, and ethic of ancient Israel are all discernible features of the Hebrew Scriptures. As his methodology is applied to this study, there will be focus on the presuppositions of the *Torah* and then there will be an evaluation on how these presuppositions were supported, extended, or reversed throughout the various stages of Israelite history.[41]

Metaphysics

The oldest purported material in the Hebrew bible also happens to be collected at the beginning of *Torah*. Genesis (1:1-2:4) describes the basis for the Jewish metaphysic in one simple truth: God is the sole creator, and the creation is utterly distinct from him.[42] Israel's God alone was God, and this claim in the Hebrew mind derived its authority from God's role as creator (Is. 45:18). The creator God is due glory from all of his creation (Ps. 24:1-2), and in turn he bestows his own glory on those who bear his image (Ps. 8:3-8; Gen. 1:26-28). Not only did God create, he is also the only one with the power to continually uphold the order of that creation as its sustainer (Jer. 10:12-13). Israel's God, because he is the creator, has the power to intervene in human history on their behalf (Ps 18). When God destroys, it is so that he can create anew (Gen. 6-9). Even God's election of Israel is viewed as an act of creation "I am the Lord, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King." (Is. 43:15).

---

[40] Thorleif Boman, *Hebrew Thought Compared with Greek* (London: SCM Press, 1960), 204-210.
[41] Boman expresses a strong skepticism towards the possibility of a unified ideology throughout Israelite history. He declares this, however, prior to his analysis of the data with his own methodology. Thus, Boman reveals his own presuppositions and excludes the possibility that subsequent generations of Jewish sages would maintain the worldview of their predecessors, see Ibid., 227.
[42] Julius Guttmann, *Philosophies of Judaism; the History of Jewish Philosophy from Biblical times to Franz Rosenzweig* (New York: Shocken Books, 1964), 7.

This truth permeates Jewish thought, such that even when Israel appropriates international literary forms and content, they are thoroughly transformed through the lens of a monotheistic creator who remains apart from his creation. In both Mesopotamia and Egypt the sages applied their already divinely revealed tradition to some situations, and used magic to reveal appropriate action in other situations.[43] Israelite wisdom distanced itself from the use of magic due to the fundamental assumption of ancient orthodox Israelite belief: God is the creator.[44] The pantheistic worldview of Egypt and Mesopotamia presupposes a God who is a part of nature, and therefore can be controlled through natural means in the practice of magic. A creator God distinct from his creation cannot be controlled in such a way.[45] Thus, Israelite wisdom retains a distinctly Israelite character despite its international flavor.[46]

Epistemology

The epistemological conclusion drawn from the metaphysical reality of a creator God is that the creator possesses ultimate knowledge, and humanity's knowledge is necessarily limited.[47] The limits of human knowledge give way to the acknowledgement that

---

[43] "In the ancient Mesopotamian world…the god Enki (also called Ea) possessed wisdom and revealed it to seven primordial sages, called *apkallu*, and to postdiluvian sages, called *ummanu*, who in turn transmitted it to scholars in the Babylonian *edubba*, or tablet house…Knowledge and the sacred were therefore inseparably joined, but the academy rather than the temple was the locus of education. Egyptian Instructions, and education more generally, were closely connected with the House of Life, situated near a temple and possessing religious features. In both regions, magic was integral to the task of sages." See Ibid.

[44] "The transcendence of God as personal Creator is foreign to the doctrine of pantheism and mysticism because, according to the latter, the world is not subject to a sovereign will." See Guttmann, *Philosophies of Judaism; the History of Jewish Philosophy from Biblical times to Franz Rosenzweig*, 8.

[45] "Biblical wisdom seems not to have adopted [the magical] aspect of ancient Near Eastern wisdom 'with some possible exceptions.'" See Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom: An Introduction*, 6.

[46] Prov. 22-24 borrows from the Egyptian Instructions of Amenemope.

[47] While we may not necessarily agree with this conclusion, in the Hebrew mind God's complete work of creation meant that he was the sole possessor of perfect knowledge, see Is. 40:28 and Prov. 8:22-31. With respect to Prov. 8:22-31, "First, wisdom is what Yahweh as Creator counted primary and indispensable. Second, wisdom is both older than the universe, and fundamental to it. Not a speck of matter (26b), not a

mysteries exist which will never be comprehended but ultimately must be embraced. These mysteries are:

- God's Immanence and Transcendence - Genesis 1:1-2:4 sets the expectation that the creator God would remain transcendent, distinct, and aloof from creation. Yet Genesis 2:4-4:24 describes the consistent immanence of God. Israel's God not only creates the universe and everything in it, he also walks in the garden. Israel constantly reflects on the strangeness of God's set-apartness (his holiness), and his nearness (his glory):

> Two opposing concepts have always operated in Jewish philosophy, and their very oppositeness has stimulated and steered their course. These concepts, which we may call Holiness and Glory, never existed separately because then Hebraic thought would have expired either in a deistic frost or in a pantheistic flame. They were always intermingled, and it was all a question of dominance and emphasis. Holiness tries to lift the God-idea ever above the expanding corporeal universe, and Glory tends to bring the Creator ever nearer to man.[48]

- God's Perfection and Creation's Imperfection - Classically described as theodicy, Genesis recognizes that in a world where God created all things good, it is truly mysterious that there would be anything bad. Where we typically cast the existence of evil in the world as God's problem, Genesis puts the onus squarely on humanity. God declared one thing off limits, gave humanity the necessary resources to defend themselves against any temptation to transgression, and yet humanity chose disobedience. While this problem is first described in Genesis 3,

---

trace of order (29), came into existence but by wisdom," Derek Kidner, *Proverbs* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1964), 78.

[48] Israel Efros, *Ancient Jewish Philosophy; a Study in Metaphysics and Ethics* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1964), 7.

> Genesis 4 demonstrates that even though Cain's actions were not like his parents, the evil that began with Adam and Eve perpetuates through their kin. This evil grows over time, not lessens, as Lamech's boasting clearly illustrates.[49] Despite the fact that Genesis places responsibility for evil squarely on humanity's shoulders, Israel expects that God will fix what humanity broke. A major feature of the flood narrative in Genesis 6-9 is that God only destroys those aspects of his creation that no longer function as he has designed them.

The Israelite insistence that these seemingly incompatible concepts coexist leads some scholars to ascribe to the Hebrew worldview a unique form of logic called 'block logic.'[50] Block logic pairs two internally consistent concepts with each other in a way that they, when taken together, are entirely inconsistent.

Ethics

Like Israel's epistemology, their ethical system also derives from its belief in a creator God: because God is the creator, he determines the creation's proper function. This principle is perhaps most clearly seen in the narrative of Genesis 1:1-2:4, where God creates animate and inanimate things to "rule" (1:18), "multiply" (1:22, 28), and have "dominion" (1:26). While these roles or responsibilities are not empirically verifiable, God, as the creator, has the right to assign these functions to the sun, moon, animals of the earth generally, and humanity specifically. In the broadest sense, these form a

[49] Collins, *Genesis 1-4*, 209-211.
[50] See Marvin Wilson, *Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1989), 150-156.

rudimentary 'law' for all of God's creation to follow.[51] To obey God's law, then, is merely to act in accordance with one's intended function.

Noted above, God's election of Israel was viewed as an act of creation, and consequently God outlined a new set of functions for his new creation in the form of a covenant.[52] "Israel saw its history as rooted in a covenant between YHWH and his people Israel; the covenant was upheld by Israel through its observance of the divine commandments, and by God through the providence he extended to his people.[53]" Israel's legal codes reflect this logic at every turn. The fourth commandment, for instance, clearly connects Israel's requirement to observe a Sabbath with God's rest from creating in Genesis 2:2-3. Additionally, Israel's laws work in such a way that the Ten Commandments act as apodictic laws, from which the casuistic laws derive their justification.[54] So even if these four laws were the only laws to explicitly connect to God's role as creator, they would be in, with, and under every other law that described God's relationship to Israel. Notably, Psalm 19 reflects on this intimate relationship between God's role as creator and lawgiver.

---

[51] Gen. 1:1-2:4. As Balentine shows, this principle extends beyond humanity's function to include the whole of creation. See Samuel E. Balentine, *The Torah's Vision of Worship* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 237-254.

[52] Ex. 20:2-11. The preamble to the Ten Commandments in 20:2 appears to provide the reason for all of the commandments, namely that God has chosen them and re-created them.

[53] Guttmann, *Philosophies of Judaism; the History of Jewish Philosophy from Biblical times to Franz Rosenzweig*, 12.

[54] Christopher Wright J.H., *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 2004), 289.

Typically considered one of several 'wisdom' psalms, the connection between wisdom literature and ethical behavior is well established. This literature frequently focused on practical matters because an ethically good action must also be the one appropriately suited for a given situation.

> The fundamental assumption, taken for granted in every representative of biblical wisdom, consisted of a conviction that being wise meant a search for and maintenance of a stable society, in a word, a just order. Propriety, then, is an essential ingredient in wisdom – the right time and place for each deed or word. It follows that the good act constitutes the appropriate one for a given situation. In truth, 'for everything there is a time.' [55]

The ability to discern an appropriate time for right action was viewed in the ancient Near East as a divine gift passed down from generation to generation of sages. Judges throughout the land of Israel were responsible for wisely applying their law to specific situations, and the king was considered judge *par excellance*.[56] In light of these considerations, it make sense why the historical narrative concerning Solomon spends so much time developing the divine gift of wisdom bestowed upon him.[57]

A Word on Wisdom

Israel's wisdom literature, though retaining its own distinctive worldview, employed commonly utilized forms and themes. While the content of their sapiential literature has been discussed above, it is now relevant to illustrate the forms most

---

[55] "The fundamental assumption, taken for granted in every representative of biblical wisdom, consisted of a conviction that being wise meant a search for and maintenance of a stable society, in a word, a just order. Propriety, then, is an essential ingredient in wisdom – the right time and place for each deed or word. It follows that the good act constitutes the appropriate one for a given situation. In truth, 'for everything there is a time.'" See Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom: An Introduction*, 6.

[56] "The laws presented in Deuteronomy-indeed, the laws of the Torah as a whole-are not a complete, systematic code that could have sufficed to govern the entire life of ancient Israel...One gains the impression that only a part of the existing laws have been selected, perhaps to illustrate certain ideal principles of social justice and religious devotion." Jeffrey H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy = The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation*, Ed. Nahum M. Sarna and Chaim Potok (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996), xvi.

[57] 1 Kings 3:1-28; 4:29-34

characteristic to Israel's wisdom literature: terse aphorism and didactic narrative.[58] The aphorisms would frequently be arranged in parallel lines, the second line of which would repeat, extend, or oppose the first. Occasionally these aphorisms would extend into composite lists with a structure of their own.[59] Likewise, the didactic narratives found many different expressions.[60]

These stylistic and thematic forms of Israel's sapiential works were both antique and international. As noted above, Egypt and Mesopotamia had their own well-developed use of the wisdom genre, and it could be said that Israelite use of wisdom literature was a method of communicating their own unique worldview in a medium that was well accepted and widely used by its neighbors. It is precisely this format that the earliest Greek thinkers used to convey their own messages. The likelihood of the Milesian's familiarity with and affinity for the Ancient Near East has long been posited, and for good reason:

> If it is wondered why Miletus should have been so important in the history of philosophy, an adequate answer is given by considering its importance as a trade-route with links to the older cultures of Babylon, Egypt, Lydia, and Phoenicia. Ideas always travel with trade. The old civilizations had world-pictures and creation myths vastly different to anything the Greeks had come across. These startling and visionary ideas led a few Milesians to speculate for themselves.[61]

To this list of older cultures the Israelite culture must be added, as it has already been demonstrated that Israel had a strong presence in both Egypt and Babylon during

---

[58] Crenshaw categorizes these categories slightly differently, but with the same basic breakdown. "In general two types of texts are reckoned among Wisdom literature: (1) experiential wisdom, chiefly in the form of brief pragmatic sayings and longer instructions; and (2) theoretical wisdom, either as philosophical probing of life's inequities or as personal reflection on life's meaning in the light of death's inevitability." See James L. Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom: An Introduction*, 6.
[59] Numerical lists and acrostics are two examples.
[60] Extended metaphor, repeated warning, character study, etc.
[61] Waterfield, *The First Philosophers: The Presocratics and Sophists*, 3.

this time period, if not also their native Levant. While the Milesians would have connected to a world-picture/creation myth such as that found in Proverbs 8, their own message was not necessarily crafted in a sapiential format. Pythagoras, however, "was a teacher of perennial wisdom, rather than a Presocratic philosopher in the Milesian mould."[62] In addition to Pythagoras, Xenophanes delivered his own message as a traveling bard, whose poetry was filled with pithy sayings in various meters and genres, thus earning him the status of a well-known sage.[63]

Heraclitus' teaching also resembles the Jewish wisdom literature. The parallel lines of Hebrew poetry, frequently used to represent the whole of human existence or experience, pair two opposites (the wise/the fool, the righteous/the wicked, light/darkness, etc.). In the same way, Heraclitus pairs opposites and meditates on the connection between them.[64] "It is even possible that Heraclitus did not write a coherent treatise, but a series of longer and shorter aphorisms, suitable for an oral culture, which frequently rely on metaphor and paradox…there are several recurring themes."[65]

The terse and memorable nature of wisdom literature makes it a likely candidate for accurate oracular transmission, such that written texts need not be consulted or translated for the content to be communicated. This does not exclude the possibility of other literary forms from crossing international borders, but the evident similarities between the extant literature demonstrates an affinity for this particular category. Thus,

---

[62] Ibid., 88.
[63] Ibid.
[64] "Each pair of opposites thus forms both a unity and a plurality. Different pairs are also found to be inter-connected." See G. S. Kirk, J. E. Raven, and Malcolm Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers: A Critical History with a Selection of Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 190.
[65] Waterfield, *The First Philosophers: The Presocratics and Sophists*, 32-33.

the earliest Greek thinkers either imbibed or modeled their own work after the common medium of wisdom literature.

Greek Sages

Pythagoras

This survey of early Presocratics begins with Pythagoras not only because his message reflects a particularly distinct stream of Presocratic thought, but also because the doxographical literature attributes to him more direct and indirect connections with the ancient Near East than any other Presocratic. It has been said of Pythagoras that he "was a philosopher only to the extent that he was a sage."[66] His sagacity can be seen in the *acusmata* attributed to him:

- 'Step not over a balance,' i.e. be not covetous;
- 'Poke not the fire with a sword,' i.e. do not vex with sharp words a man swollen with anger;
- 'Pluck not the crown,' i.e. offend not against the laws, which are the crowns of cities.
- 'Eat not heart,' i.e. vex not yourself with grief;
- 'Sit not on the corn ration,' i.e. live not in idleness;
- 'When on a journey, turn not back,' i.e. when you are dying, cling not to life.
- 'What are the isles of the blessed? Sun and moon.'
- 'What is the oracle at Delphi? The *tetractys*: which is the *harmonia* in which the Sirens sing.'[67]

These *acusmata* make ethical and metaphysical judgments about the order of the world based on relational observations. For instance, his ethical conclusion concerning the 'corn ration' comes from the observation that it only serves its purpose if it doesn't waste away, therefore one ought not sit idly by. Likewise, his observation that the *tetractys* (1, 2, 3, and 4), like the oracle at Delphi, must be interpreted to understand the

[66] Kirk, J. E. Raven, and Malcolm Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers: A Critical History with a Selection of Texts*, 238.
[67] Ibid., 231-232.

harmonia produced in the universe, moves from physical observation to metaphysical conclusion.[68]

Pythagoras and his alleged teacher, Pherecydes (approx. 600-580 B.C.E.), had a strikingly similar biography as a miracle working sage with connections to the older cultures of the Near East. Most notably, Pherecydes was thought to have access to the 'secret books of the Phoenicians.'[69] The Phoenicians were Canaanites who, as a Western Semitic people group spreading their language throughout the Mediterranean through maritime trade, would have had the ability to share any number of ideas from the ancient Near East.[70] If, in fact, the Greeks did possess the ability to read the Phoenician alphabet, this would open up the possibility that they would be able to, given the opportunity, easily transition into reading ancient Hebrew.[71] In turn, this would explain the numerous similarities in the Pythagorean School's practices with those of a culture like ancient Israel's. Perhaps this is why Josephus boldly declares:

> Indeed, Pythagoras of Samos, being ancient, and considered to have excelled those who had philosophized in wisdom and respect for the divine, clearly not only knew our [Jewish] affairs, but also was a very great admirer of them. Well then, no composition is agreed to be his, but many have investigated the things about him, and most outstanding of these is Hermippus, a man careful with regard to all research…Then Hermippus adds after this the following as well: "And Pythagoras used to do and say these things imitating and transferring to himself the opinions of the Jews and the Thracians." For that man is in fact said to have transferred many of the customs among the Jews to his own philosophy.[72]

---

[68] Ibid., 233.
[69] Ibid., 52-58.
[70] Herodotus, Robert B. Strassler, and Andrea L. Purvis, *The Landmark Herodotus: The Histories* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2007).
[71] See Appendix 1, taken from "Phoenician and Hebrew Alphabets," Bible History Online, section goes here, accessed June 16, 2014, http%3A%2F%2Fwww.biblehistory.com%2Fibh%2FScrolls%2Band%2BTexts%2F Alphabets%2F Phoenician %2Band%2BHebrew%2BAlphabets.
[72] Joseph. Cont. Ap. 1:162-165

Lastly, the practices of the Pythagorean School were relatively unique, and certainly distinct from other Presocratic streams of thought:[73] they focused on ritual purity, placed an emphasis on blood sacrifice, practiced a restricted diet, and considered the effect that these things had on the final destiny of the soul.[74] While many of these practices have traditionally been connected with the Orphic mystery cult, it is just as likely that these practices originated in the Orient and were then adapted by Pythagoras' followers. Certain Jewish practices such as a kosher diet, observance of a ritual calendar with an emphasis on cultic purity, and the ethical import of the strict observance of those practices so closely aligns with the apparent Pythagorean worldview that Origen agrees with Josephus stating "Pythagoras brought his own philosophy from Jews to Greeks."[75] This borrowing may very well have been what motivated Heraclitus to accuse Pythagoras of plagiarism.[76]

The Milesians

Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes, though not representative of any school of thought in a technical sense, share a generally similar approach to creating a systematic account of reality.[77] For instance, whether a substance is from water, fire, or air, the Milesians believed that all substance "Y" comes from "X." For this reason, the Milesians were classically regarded in the doxographical literature as material monists.

---

[73] This list is taken from Waterfield, *The First Philosophers: The Presocratics and Sophists*, 87-88. To be fair, it seems that the evidence is mixed on the practice and opinion of Pythagoras' followers regarding blood sacrifice.
[74] Herodotus connects the Pythagorean views of the immortal soul with those of Egypt. While this is certainly incorrect, there is at least one early source who believes this content to belong to an older, non-Greek culture. See Barnes, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 103.
[75] Origen Cont. Cels. 1:15
[76] Waterfield, *The First Philosophers: The Presocratics and Sophists*, 87.
[77] Kirk, J. E. Raven, and Malcolm Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers: A Critical History with a Selection of Texts*, 75.

As Aristotle points out, the belief that "Y comes from X" can take several technical forms. The Milesian form of "Y comes from X" seems to indicate, "Y is made **of** X."[78] The Hebrew form of "Y comes from X," outlined in Genesis 1, would most certainly be "Y is made **by** X," a form which has its precedents in Egyptian and Near Eastern mythology. Recalling the discussion of wisdom literature above, the primary difference between the Israelite and Egyptian/Mesopotamian worldview was the creator/creation distinction. Thus, we are presented with three subtly distinct interpretations of the "Y comes from X" formula:

1. Babylonian/Egyptian – "Y is made by X" where Y is in some way a part of X & there are many X[79]
2. Israelite – "Y is made by X" where Y is distinct from X & there is one X
3. Milesian – "Y is made of X" where Y is in some way a part of X & there is one X

The Milesian version retains the panentheistic aspects of the Babylonian/Egyptian formula, but finds a home for its monistic worldview in the monotheistic Israelite formulation.[80] The Milesian search for a single ordering principle found a precedent in Israel's monotheism, even if they did not embrace monotheism itself. This connection with the ancient Jewish metaphysic is a small and subtle step towards the more holistic embrace of the Israelite ideology by Xenophanes.

---

[78] Jonathan Barnes, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (London: Routledge and Paul, 1979), 38-44.
[79] There is of course the notable and idiosyncratic exception of Egyptian Pharaoh Akhenaten (d. ca. 1335 B.C.E.) who was at least henotheistic, certainly monolatrous, and possibly even monotheistic, see Dominic Montserrat, *Akhenaten: History, Fantasy, and Ancient Egypt* (London: Routledge, 2003), 36-37.
[80] This contribution of early Greek thought is ambiguous enough that some even think Thales retained the more ancient Near Eastern conception of "Y is made by X", see Waterfield, *The First Philosophers: The Presocratics and Sophists*, xiii.

Xenophanes

Chronologically following the Milesians and roughly contemporary with Pythagoras, Xenophanes stands apart as another stream of early Greek thought.[81] Regarded as the founder of the Eleatic school and Parmenides' master, Xenophanes exerted tremendous influence as an early Greek thinker.[82] Rather than being regarded as an outright philosopher, however, some prefer to consider Xenophanes more of a critical theologian.[83] This appellation results from both his content and the form in which it was delivered. In one short passage, Xenophanes strongly rejected the Greek anthropomorphic panentheism current in his day:

> Homer and Hesiod have attributed to the gods everything that is a shame and reproach among men, stealing and committing adultery and deceiving each other. But mortals consider that the gods are born, and that they have clothes and speech and bodies like their own. The Ethiopians say that their gods are snub-nosed and black, the Thracians that theirs have light blue eyes and red hair. But if cattle and horses or lions had hands, or were able to draw with their hands and do the works that men can do, horses would draw the forms of the gods like horses, and cattle like cattle, and they would make their bodies such as they had themselves.[84]

In its place, Xenophanes favored the idea of a single God whose abilities and dispositions are so similar to the Jewish metaphysic and epistemology as to be synonymous with them:

> One god, greatest among gods and men, in no way similar to mortals either in body or in thought. Always he remains in the same place, moving not at all; nor is it fitting for him to go to different places at different

---

[81] Kirk, J. E. Raven, and Malcolm Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers: A Critical History with a Selection,* 163-164.
[82] While it remains doubtful that Xenophanes actually taught Parmenides, the connection in the doxographical literature between these two figures declares both their preeminence in early Greek thought as well as a superficial connection in their message. See Ibid., 165, 171.
[83] Xenophanes' extended discussion on his outright rejection of Homeric religion earns him this title, see Waterfield, *The First Philosophers: The Presocratics and Sophists*, 22-23.
[84] See Kirk, J. E. Raven, and Malcolm Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers: A Critical History with a Selection*, 168-169 for summary translation.

> times, but without toil he shakes all things by the thought of his mind. All of him sees, all thinks, and all hears.

In addition to recognizing the all-knowing nature of God, he also reflected on the limitations of human knowledge. "Having conceived of the divine as super-intelligent, the traditional contrast between the powers of gods and those of men" caused Xenophanes to belittle men's knowledge and intelligence.[85] One classic example Xenophanes referred to was the reality of a God who could be both corporeal and non-corporeal.[86] This is almost exactly the first mystery classically embraced by orthodox Judaism, and to a certain extent Xenophanes' rejection of gods who engage in shameful activity could be seen as a touch point with both the second mystery (theodicy) and the Israelite ethic. No other Presocratic demonstrates as strong an affinity with Israelite philosophy as Xenophanes, and it is a matter of some irony that it would be Xenophanes' own student, Parmenides, who presented the argument that ultimately provided the reasoning necessary to reject the Jewish worldview in the Greek mind.

Heraclitus

Unlike Xenophanes who appears to have almost entirely subsumed Jewish philosophy, Heraclitus retains the same logical connections between metaphysic, epistemology, and ethic while making his own substantive changes. For Heraclitus, the unifying principle of the universe isn't the monism of the Milesians, but rather the *logos* that is "the unifying formula or proportionate method of arrangement of things."[87] The

---

[85] Waterfield, *The First Philosophers: The Presocratics and Sophists*, 25.
[86] Aristotle was not shy in hiding his frustration on this point particularly, see Kirk, J. E. Raven, and Malcolm Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers: A Critical History with a Selection of Texts*, 171.
[87] Kirk, J. E. Raven, and Malcolm Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers: A Critical History with a Selection of Texts*, 187.

logos described by Heraclitus acts like an "impersonal Intelligence, similar to the *nous* of later Greek philosophy; a somewhat anthropomorphized way of explaining the apparent orderliness of the world."[88] This *logos* governs the process of flux between opposites, and it was precisely this process that defined his metaphysical worldview.[89] While Heraclitus' *logos* acts as an architect of the universe and connects with Jewish monotheism in this sense, it differs from the Jewish metaphysic in one important way: the process of flux appears to be a continual process with no beginning or end. Thus, Heraclitus rejected the created origins of the universe that was the very building block of the Jewish worldview.[90] Yet even though he rejected this metaphysical cornerstone, he functionally agreed with every conclusion of the Israelite philosophy.

Heraclitus' use of opposites to frame a worldview is precisely in line with the Israelite understanding of the great mysteries that mark the human experience.[91] He readily embraces the apparent opposites that work in concert with one another, frequently couched in a format that was common currency in wisdom literature:

- Sea is the most pure and the most polluted water; for fishes it is drinkable and salutary, but for men it is undrinkable and deleterious.
- The path up and down is one and the same.
- Disease makes health please and good, hunger satiety, weariness rest.[92]

---

[88] Ibid.
[89] Barnes acknowledges that these observations are disputed, see Barnes, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 60.
[90] Barnes, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 62.
[91] "[concerning what] Heraclitus calls 'the *logos*,' and people's incomprehension of it…These first fragments reveal Heraclitus in prophet mode, castigating people for their failure to wake up to reality. Like Xenophanes and Philolaus, Heraclitus draws a line between the truth, which is accessible only to divine understanding, *qua* eternal, and mere human comprehension." See Waterfield, *The First Philosophers: The Presocratics and Sophists*, 32-33. See also Barnes, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 57. See also Ibid., 58-59.
[92] Kirk, J. E. Raven, and Malcolm Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers: A Critical History with a Selection of Texts*, 188.

In addition to his belief in a single ordering principle and the requirement for humans to embrace and try to accept the mystery of these opposites, Heraclitus' discussed the connection between politics and ethics, physics and metaphysics:[93]

> In a political context, one should obey the one leader; in a cosmic context, one should hearken to the one, the *logos*. By relating politics and perhaps ethics to his larger, metaphysical framework, Heraclitus earns a place as the first systematic moral philosopher.[94]

Thus, despite rejecting the cornerstone of Israelite philosophy, the similarities between Heraclitus' conclusions and those found in ancient Judaism is likely the very reason that early Christian writers saw within Heraclitus' writings a kernel of Judeo-Christian truth, so much so that Clement of Alexandria declared Heraclitus to be a prophet of the Final Judgment.[95]

Thus, the similarities between the early Presocratics with the form and content of Jewish wisdom literature, though certainly mediated through a Greek worldview, are self-evident. These thinkers were in a position to interact with international ideas, and apparently did so without reservation. As such they were described as sages, taught in aphoristic style, and championed accounts of the world that either interacted with or required a monotheistic worldview.[96] This trend abruptly halted with the work of Parmenides.

---

[93] Kirk, J. E. Raven, and Malcolm Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers: A Critical History with a Selection of Texts*, 190.
[94] Waterfield, *The First Philosophers: The Presocratics and Sophists*, 37.
[95] Barnes, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 57.
[96] The idiosyncratic and sudden emergence of this monotheism should not be lost on us. Although to be certain this Greek monotheism still retained the pantheistic flavor of typical Greek religion. See John Oswalt, *The Bible among the Myths: Unique Revelation or Just Ancient Literature?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009).

Parmenides (approx. 490 B.C.E.)

It has been said that Parmenides' contribution to Greek philosophy marked a turning point.[97] He critically evaluated the Presocratic fathers of the century before, and overturned their logic at a foundational level. Plato certainly regarded Parmenides and Unitarians like him as the ideal foil for Heraclitus' teaching.[98] For this reason, Parmenides is widely regarded as having shaped all Presocratic thought after him:

> It remains true that Parmenides' influence on later Presocratic thought was all-pervasive."[99] Chief among his observations is the logical argument that nothing which currently exists can be created or destroyed.[100]

Utilizing an early form of what would become Aristotle's Principle of Non-Contradiction, Parmenides rejected the idea of a created world and, by extension, the possibility of a creator. This had the effect of removing all influence the Jewish proto-philosophy might have had on their Greek neighbors. Additionally, Parmenides arrived at this conclusion on the purely logical grounds of a brief proof.[101] While Heraclitus rejected the idea of a created universe, he retained the conclusions Israelite philosophy drew from this principle. Parmenides, on the other hand, single-handedly demonstrated the folly, at least in the Greek's mind, of accepting a creator God that is utterly distinct from his creation and any conclusion drawn from that principle. Perhaps this is why

---

[97] Barnes, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 155.
[98] Waterfield, *The First Philosophers: The Presocratics and Sophists*, 33-34.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Kirk, J. E. Raven, and Malcolm Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers: A Critical History with a Selection of Texts*, 249-250. See also Barnes, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 184-185.
[101] "Whereas Xenophanes' conclusion about the nature of God resulted from theological conclusions about the impossibility of Homeric religion, Parmenides "arrived at the sphere of Being by logical inference from a purely existential axiom." See Ibid.

Aristotle so ridicules Heraclitus' idea of flux, claiming that it breaks the law of non-contradiction.[102]

Beyond the work of Parmenides, affinities with Jewish wisdom drop off rapidly. To be certain, some Greeks thinkers continued to replicate, adapt, and modernize the teaching of the Presocratic Greek sages long after it was fashionable to do so. The majority of Greek philosophers, however, preferred to move past anything that reflected the creation theology underlying Israelite philosophy.

IV. A Possible Reconstruction

As noted, the presuppositions of the orthodox ancient Jewish worldview were both well defined and consistently applied to their religious texts. Additionally, the earliest Greek thinkers demonstrated an extraordinary affinity with the form and content of the Israelite sages. Also, Parmenides permanently diverted the currents of Greek philosophical reflection away from the Jewish worldview. Combining this information together with the geo-political landscape, the impact that both trade and war likely had in shaping the interaction between the sage and the philosopher is evident.

With the Israelite exilic community rooting themselves in Egypt around 600 B.C.E., there would have been ample opportunity for positive interaction through trade between Greece and Egypt. The most likely medium for transmitting the Jewish worldview would have been through their wisdom literature, as it already had a strong international character, a traditional connection with Egyptian wisdom, and an apparent appeal to the Presocratic philosophers. Even if the orthodox Jewish worldview had been watered down by the Elephantine community's tendency for a less than orthodox

[102] Waterfield, *The First Philosophers: The Presocratics and Sophists*, 33.

expression, reading from the wisdom texts themselves would have comprehensively communicated the presuppositions listed earlier. Whether this was transmitted in an oracular nature or the Greek familiarity with the Phoenician alphabet allowed for some reading of the Hebrew texts, in either case the ability to interact with orthodox Israelite ideas and concepts appears to be within reach of the early Greek thinkers by this time.[103]

Seen in the surviving literature of the Presocratics, there was a philosophic affinity for the format and presuppositions of the Israelite sapiential works for roughly 100 years. Bracketing off the unique character of Pythagoras, an arc of initial acceptance and eventual rejection can be seen in the Milesians, Xenophanes, Heraclitus, and finally Parmenides. The Milesians only borrowed aspects of the Jewish metaphysic insofar as it bolstered their argument for monism. Xenophanes appears to have gone significantly farther and adopted wholesale the metaphysic, epistemology, and ethic of the Jews. Heraclitus also demonstrates an affinity for the conclusions of each category in the ancient Israelite philosophy, sans the fundamental creator/creation distinction. Parmenides, the frequently contrasted opposite of Heraclitus, then goes to show that the conclusions of Jewish philosophy have no value without the cornerstone of their creation theology.

Parmenides' rejection of the creator God around 490 B.C.E., however, is far from coincidental. The favorable position that Jewish thought had in the Greek mind, as mediated by Egypt, shifted to an altogether negative view as it was linked to the increasing Persian aggression. The multiple military conflicts between Greece and Persia (499-451 B.C.E.) coincides with Parmenides' work such that his denial of the lynchpin

[103] See Appendix 1

Jewish presupposition could easily have been politically motivated. In essence, he was cleansing Greek philosophy from Eastern influence. A 'pure' Greek ideology certainly would have appealed to the Greeks who, after their defeat of the Persian armies, were now convinced of their own superiority.

While there is certainly the possibility of interaction between Jews and Greeks from 450 and 332 B.C.E., there is nothing that would give cause to infer that this interaction had influence on either culture.[104] When Alexander approached Jerusalem to conquer it, the people in Jerusalem opened their gates in surrender and showed Alexander how he was a fulfillment of prophecy in Daniel.[105] Thus, by the time Alexander conquered the Levant, the attitude of the Greeks to the Jews and vice versa appears to be one of respectful disagreement. Egypt, however, received Alexander with open arms and hailed him as a liberator.[106] In Egypt Alexander would establish his token city, Alexandria, whose impact on Judaism and Christianity cannot be understated. The intersection of these three great cultures is what led to a renewed dialogue between the Greek's and Jews.

The Greek management of the Egyptian territories led by the Ptolemy's ushered in a period of peace and prosperity for the Alexandrian and Palestinian Jews. Though the taking of Jerusalem and subsequent deportation of Jews to Alexandria by Ptolemy I

---

[104] Recall the description of Aristotle's regard for the Jews as philosophers. He was, however, clearly not swayed by their presuppositions.

[105] Josephus' account only tells of the book, but it was likely Daniel 8 that was referred to here. If this is in fact the passage that Alexander was shown and he was equated with the Goat, this is not an entirely flattering fulfillment of scripture. Compare this to Cyrus' fulfillment of Isaiah and Jeremiah's prophecy in Is. 45:1-13; Jer. 25:11-12, 29:10-14; see Ezra 1:1. See Flavius Josephus and Allen Paul Wikgren, *Josephus Jewish Antiquities*, vol. XI (Cambridge, Mass. ; London: Harvard University Press, 1998), 337, [viii, 5].

[106] Paul E. Schellinger et al., *Asia and Oceania: Eds.: Paul E. Schellinger; Robert M. Salkin* (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publ., 1994-1996).

wasn't exactly voluntary, it was bloodless.[107] During this time in Palestine, the sapiential works of Sirach and Tobit were written.[108] Wisdom literature continued to be the medium of intellectual exchange amongst the Jews primarily, but also secondarily to the Greeks and Romans. It is precisely this climate of exchange and intellectual opportunity that likely yielded the collection and codification of the Writings. The early dating of the content, the episodic nature of the books themselves, and the sapiential overtones of each work all point to the likelihood of this time period as the locus for the Writings. They would serve as the intellectual witness to the truths contained in the *Torah* and Prophets.

The tripartite canon, first evidenced in Sirach, also excludes contemporary wisdom writings, favoring instead the more historical works of David and Solomon.[109] These texts would have been viewed as the most likely candidates for successfully communicating the Jewish worldview, if only they could now be categorized in a manner accessible to the Greeks. The completed tripartite canon would then promptly be translated into Greek for Hellenistic ideological consumption.[110]

Even after Seleucid control of Palestine, the Maccabean revolt, and the advent of the Roman Empire, Jews continued to craft their ideology in wisdom literature. The tone of these documents took a decidedly more pejorative tone, however. For example, the Wisdom of Solomon was a Jewish wisdom text, written in Alexandria around the turn of

---

[107] Josephus and Allen Paul Wikgren, *Josephus Jewish Antiquities*. See VanderKam, *An Introduction to Early Judaism*, 12. See also Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 404.
[108] Regarding Tobit, see David Arthur DeSilva, *Introducing the Apocrypha: Message, Context, and Significance* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 63, 69. DeSilva indicates that Ben Sira likely wrote Sirach between 196 and 175 B.C.E., see also Ibid., 158. Additionally, the Greek version of Sirach was translated by Jews living in Egypt around 132 B.C.E., see also Ibid., 156.
[109] Stephen G. Dempster, *Exploring the Origins of the Bible* ed. Craig A Evans and Emmanuel Tov (Grand Rapids, MI:Baker Academic, 2008), 112.
[110] Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 432-436; 444-445.

the era (0 C.E.), that contained a rather antagonistic stance toward both the Egyptians and the Greeks and Romans.[111]

The Jewish voice at this time was not universally negative, however. Philo, a prolific and well-educated Jew of Alexandrian origin, was eloquently seeking reconciliation between Greek philosophy and Jewish sacred texts.[112] His attempt at reconciling the two now distinct ideological streams wrestled primarily with the issue of creation. Creation was, as he saw it, central to an appropriately Jewish worldview, and yet considerable effort on his part was required to reconcile this central tenant with the current assumptions of Greek philosophy. He was apparently unsuccessful because later Greek scholars like Celsus lambasted Jews and Christians for their adherence to the idea of a created universe and a God who created it.[113] Thus, the gap between Judeo-Christian creation theology and Greek philosophic inquiry was proven to be too wide to bridge. This reconstruction demonstrates the significant points of contact between Jewish ideology and Greek philosophy. Due to the influence the Jewish sages had on the Greek Presocratics, the Greek rejection of Jewish thought had an equal impact on the Jewish sages.

---

[111] DeSilva, *Introducing the Apocrypha: Message, Context, and Significance,* 132-133.
[112] "With the aid of the allegorical method evolved by the Stoics, Philo succeeded in preaching a philosophical reinterpretation of both the historical and the legal parts of the Pentateuch; he was sincerely convinced that he was not misrepresenting Judaism but revealing its deepest meaning." See Guttman, *Philosophies of Judaism; the History of Jewish Philosophy from Biblical times to Franz Rosenzweig,* 26.
[113] While specifically lambasting Christians for this belief, Celsus notes that they are inheritors of the worst parts of Judaism, see Celsus, *On the True Doctrine: A Discourse against the Christians*, Trans. R. Joseph. Hoffmann (New York: Oxford UP, 1987)*,* 40-41.

Appendix 1:

		Hieroglyphic.	Hieratic.	Phœnician (Moabite stone).	Phœnician (Siloam Inscription).	Hebrew (square character).
a	eagle					
b	crane					
g	bowl					
d	hand					
h	plan of house?					
f, v	cerastes					
t′(tch,z)	duck					
χ(kh)	sieve					
th	tongs; loop					
i	leaves					
k	throne					
l	lioness					
m	owl					
n	water					
s	door bolt					
ā	weapon					
p	door					
t(ts)	snake					
q	knee?					
r	mouth					
š(sh)	field					
t(tu)	arm with cake in hand					

PLATE I.

PHŒNICIAN AND HEBREW ALPHABETS, as derived from the Egyptian hieratic characters.

The Phœnicians, in order to form an alphabet, appear to have selected certain Egyptian letters from a type of the Hieratic character (a cursive form of Hieroglyphic), as found in papyri of about B. C. 2500.

Bible History Online

Bibliography

Balentine, Samuel E. *The Torah's Vision of Worship*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999. Print.

Barnes, Jonathan. *The Presocratic Philosophers*. London: Routledge and Paul, 1979. Print.

Blau, Joseph L. *The Story of Jewish Philosophy*. New York, NY: Random House, 1962. Print.

Blenkinsopp, Joseph. *Sage, Priest, Prophet: Religious and Intellectual Leadership in Ancient Israel*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1995. Print.

Boman, Thorleif. *Hebrew Thought Compared with Greek*. London: SCM, 1960. Print.

Celsus. *On the True Doctrine: A Discourse against the Christians*. Trans. R. Joseph. Hoffmann. New York: Oxford UP, 1987. Print.

Collins, C. John. *Genesis 1-4: A Linguistic, Literary, and Theological Commentary*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Pub., 2006. Print.

Collins, John J. *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub., 2000. Print.

Crenshaw, James L. *Old Testament Wisdom: An Introduction*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2010. Print.

Dempster, Stephen G. *Exploring the Origins of the Bible: Canon Formation in Historical, Literary, and Theological Perspective: Eds: Craig A. Evans; Emanuel Tov*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008. Print.

DeSilva, David Arthur. *Introducing the Apocrypha: Message, Context, and Significance*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002. Print.

Efros, Israel. *Ancient Jewish Philosophy; a Study in Metaphysics and Ethics*. Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1964. Print.

Ferguson, Everett. *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1987. Print.

Fishbane, Michael A. *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1985. Print.

Gowan, Donald E. *Bridge between the Testaments: A Reappraisal of Judaism from the Exile to the Birth of Christianity*. Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications, 1986. Print.

Guttmann, Julius. *Philosophies of Judaism; the History of Jewish Philosophy from Biblical times to Franz Rosenzweig*. New York: Shocken, 1964. Print.

Hakham, Amos. *The Bible Psalms with the Jerusalem Commentary: Psalms 1-57: Trans.: Israel V. Berman.* Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook, 2004. Print.

Halpern, Baruch. *Reconsidering Israel and Judah: Recent Studies on the Deuteronomistic History*: *Eds: Gary N. Knoppers ; J. G. McConville*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2000. Print.

Herodotus, Robert B. Strassler, and Andrea L. Purvis. *The Landmark Herodotus: The Histories*. New York: Pantheon, 2007. Print.

Hess, Richard S. *Israelite Religions: An Archaeological and Biblical Survey*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007. Print.

Holland, Tom. *Persian Fire: The First World Empire and the Battle for the West*. New York: Doubleday, 2005. Print.

Josephus, Flavius, and Allen Paul Wikgren. *Josephus Jewish Antiquities*. Vol. XI. Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard UP, 1998. Print.

Kidner, Derek. *Proverbs*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1964. Print.

Kirk, G. S., J. E. Raven, and Malcolm Schofield. *The Presocratic Philosophers: A Critical History with a Selection of Texts*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983. Print.

Kitchen, K. A. *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2003. Print.

Long, V. Philips. *The Art of Biblical History*. Grand Rapids, MI: ZondervanPublishingHouse, 1998. Print.

Milgrom, Jacob. *Numbers = : The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1990. Print.

Montserrat, Dominic. *Akhenaten: History, Fantasy, and Ancient Egypt*. London: Routledge, 2003. Print.

Oswalt, John. *The Bible among the Myths: Unique Revelation or Just Ancient Literature?* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009. Print.

"Phoenician and Hebrew Alphabets." *Bible History Online*. N.p., n.d. Web. 16 June 2014. <http%3A%2F%2Fwww.biblehistory.com%2Fibh%2FScrolls%2Band%2BTexts%2FAlphabets%2FPhoenician%2Band%2BHebrew%2BAlphabets>.

Pritchard, James B. *Ancient Near Eastern Texts: Relating to the Old Testament*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1969. Print.

Provan, Iain W., V. Philips. Long, and Tremper Longman. *A Biblical History of Israel*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2003. Print.

Quinn-Miscall, Peter D. *1 Samuel: A Literary Reading*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1986. Print.

Schellinger, Paul E., Robert M. Salkin, Trudy Ring, and K. A. Berney. *Asia and Oceania: Eds.: Paul E. Schellinger ; Robert M. Salkin*. Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publ., 1994-1996. Print.

Sparks, Kenton L. *Ethnicity and Identity in Ancient Israel: Prolegomena to the Study of Ethnic Sentiments and Their Expression in the Hebrew Bible*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1998. Print.

Tigay, Jeffrey H. *Deuteronomy : The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation*. Ed. Nahum M. Sarna and Chaim Potok. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996. Print.

VanderKam, James C. *An Introduction to Early Judaism*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2001. Print.

Waterfield, Robin. *The First Philosophers: The Presocratics and Sophists*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000. Print.

Wenham, Gordon J. *Genesis 1-15*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1987. Print

Wenham, Gordon J. *Psalms as Torah: Reading Biblical Song Ethically*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012. Print.

Wright, Christopher J. H. *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God*. Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 2004. Print.