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Death and the Garden:
An Examination of Original Immortality, Vegetarianism, and Animal Peace in
the Hebrew Bible and Mesopotamia

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in

History

by

Joshua John Van Ee

Committee in Charge:

Professor William H. C. Propp, Chair
Professor Anthony T. Edwards
Professor David Goodblatt
Professor Thomas E. Levy
Professor Patrick H. Patterson

2013

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Chair

University of California, San Diego

2013

DEDICATION

To my wife

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANE	Ancient Near East
<i>ANET</i>	<i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament</i> , 3d ed., Pritchard, ed.
<i>BHS</i>	<i>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia</i> , 4th ed., Elliger and Rudolph, eds.
<i>CAD</i>	<i>The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago</i> , Oppenheim et al., eds.
<i>COS</i>	<i>Context of Scripture</i> , Hallo and Younger, eds.
<i>DDD</i>	<i>Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible</i> , 2d rev. ed., Toorn et al., eds.
ELA	Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta
ETCSL	<i>The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature</i> , Black et al., (http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/).
EWO	Enki and the World Order
frg.	fragment
GKC	<i>Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar as Edited and Enlarged by the Late E. Kautzsch</i> , 2d English ed., Gesenius et al.
H	Holiness source of the Pentateuch
<i>HALOT</i>	<i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> , Köhler and Baumgartner, eds.
<i>IBHS</i>	<i>An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax</i> , Waltke and O'Connor.
J	Yahwist source of the Pentateuch
Joüon	<i>A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew</i> , Rev. English ed., Joüon and Muraoka.
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LSJ	<i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> , Liddell et al., eds.
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
n.	note
NJPS	<i>Tanakh: The New Jewish Publication Society Translation</i> .
<i>OTP</i>	<i>The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha</i> , Charlesworth, ed.
P	Priestly source of the Pentateuch
RSV	Revised Standard Version of the Bible
<i>TDOT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> , Botterweck et al., eds.

<i>TLOT</i>	<i>Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> , Jenni and Westermann, eds.
<i>TWOT</i>	<i>Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament</i> , Harris et al., eds.
UET	Ur Excavations: Texts

LIST OF SYMBOLS AND CONVENTIONS

[]	Brackets enclose restorations.
''	Half-brackets enclose partially destroyed signs.
//	Two dashes indicate parallel lines
()	Parentheses enclose additions to the translation.
(?)	A question mark follows an uncertain sign.
X	An unidentified sign.
.....	Five periods indicate a gap in the text or untranslatable word(s).
. . .	Three periods indicate that text was omitted.

LIST OF HISTORICAL PERIODS

Neo-Sumerian	2100-2000 B.C.E.
Old Babylonian	2000-1600 B.C.E.
Middle Babylonian	1600-1200 B.C.E.
Middle Assyrian	1250-900 B.C.E.
Neo-Assyrian	900-609 B.C.E.
Neo-Babylonian	750-539 B.C.E.
Persian	539-330 B.C.E.

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FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: The History of Israel in the Biblical Period

Minor Field: The History of Syro-Palestine in the Late Bronze Age
Professor William H. C. Propp

Minor Field: The History of the Jewish People in Antiquity
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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Death and the Garden:
An Examination of Original Immortality, Vegetarianism, and Animal Peace in
the Hebrew Bible and Mesopotamia

by

Joshua John Van Ee

Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of California, San Diego, 2013

Professor William H. C. Propp, Chair

The notion of a primeval paradise is often associated with the absence of death for both humans and animals. Humans are envisioned as immortal, both humans and animals are restricted to a vegetarian diet, and all live

together in perfect peace. This dissertation is an examination of whether texts in Mesopotamia and the Hebrew Bible portray the initial created state as characterized by immortality, vegetarianism, and animal peace. In other words (using the familiar image from Gen 2-3), was there death in the garden?

An analysis of the relevant texts indicates that such a view of the original created state is not present in Mesopotamian literature or the Hebrew Bible. Neither describe humans as created immortal, although in the Hebrew Bible the presence of the tree of life complicates the picture since it provides for the possibility of living forever. Neither restrict original human or animal diets to vegetation. And neither portray a time of perfect peace between humans and animals or among animals themselves. The level and nature of the conflict may change, but it was always present.

Mesopotamian literature is studied first, followed by the Hebrew Bible. A general examination of the initial created state precedes the study of particular relevant texts and provides necessary background material. The texts are then extensively analyzed in their specifics and their context. The Mesopotamian texts include sections from The Gilgamesh Epic, Atrahasis, The Death of Bilgames, Enki and Ninhursaga, and Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta. The texts from the Hebrew Bible include Gen 1:28-30, 2-3, 6:1-4, 9:1-7, and Isa 11:1-9. There is also an appendix on meat-eating in ancient Israel and an appendix on Greco-Roman literature relevant to original vegetarianism and animal peace.

I. Introduction

The Hebrew Bible begins with descriptions of humans in a blessed state. In Gen 1, humans are created to inhabit a world that God has declared very good. In Gen 2-3, they are placed in a well watered garden, a place of plenty. The Septuagint translates the Hebrew word for garden, גֶּן, as παράδεισος, a paradise, and this designation has remained throughout the history of interpretation.¹

Yet, what does it mean to call the primeval state a paradise? The concept of paradise is too easily filled with content that does not derive from the actual text in question.² Other texts act as a lens, coloring the interpretation. Current judgments, hopes, and yearnings are imputed to the text. Various interpretations are excluded because they don't fit with the commentator's concept of paradise. The paradise of the text is easily overrun by the paradise of the reader. Thus, the description of the initial chapters of Genesis as paradisiacal needs to be carefully nuanced.

¹ Jean Delumeau, *History of Paradise: The Garden of Eden in Myth and Tradition* (trans. Matthew O'Connell; New York: Continuum, 1995). παράδεισος is a Persian loan word first used by Xenophon (ca. 430 – 354 B.C.E.) that referred to the enclosed parks of Persian kings and nobles ("παράδεισος, ὁ," LSJ). See also פֶּרְדִּיָּם in Qoh 2:5, Song 4:13, and Neh 2:8.

² For example, Genovese argues that paradise has "some basic and important motifs . . . paradise is different from man's experience inasmuch as it lacks conflict . . . paradise is timeless . . . it exists without change" (E. N. Genovese, "Paradise and the Golden Age: Ancient Origins of the Heavenly Utopia," in *The Utopian Vision: Seven Essays on the Quincentennial of Sir Thomas More* [ed. E. D. S. Sullivan; San Diego, Calif.: San Diego State University Press, 1983], 12). Both of these "motifs" will be questioned with regard to Mesopotamian and biblical descriptions of the created state.

This dissertation is seeking to address these concerns in part by focusing on one issue that for many is non-paradisiacal, death. Can there be a paradise where death is present? What kind of death? Many commentators do not find a role for death in the early chapters of Genesis. What does the text describe?

The focus is not death in the abstract, but the forms of death that are experienced by humans. The most obvious question to address is human death. In Gen 1-3, are humans created mortal or immortal? But humans also experience the death of other living species, namely the death of animals. Animals are killed and used for food by humans and other animals. They also die because of conflicts with humans and other animals. Thus, in this study, animal death will be examined through the notions of original vegetarianism and animal peace. In Gen 1-3, are humans and animals described as coexisting without any strife and without eating each other?

In order to answer these questions, it is necessary to examine not only Gen 1-3 but other texts that have been influential in its interpretation. The present investigation began as an examination of Isa 11:6-8, seeking to better understand the imagery of the wolf dwelling with the lamb. Many questions can be asked: what is meant by the description, how does it function in the context? But the one that became of most interest was the question of origins: where did the imagery come from, is it related to the beginning of

Genesis? Over the course of time, the background study for Isa 11 became the focus of this dissertation. It became clear that present scholarship needed to be challenged and nuanced on the question of how death relates to the created state. The images from various texts, including Isa 11:6-8, were exerting undue influence upon the interpretation of Gen 1-3.

Thus, this dissertation will include sections of Gen 1-3 and other relevant texts from the Hebrew Bible and Mesopotamia. These texts are analyzed to understand what they describe and how they relate to the questions of original immortality, vegetarianism, and animal peace. The conclusions reached are then brought to bear upon Gen 1-3. This procedure will help to more carefully define the original state of humans as depicted not only in the Hebrew Bible but also in Mesopotamia.

Texts from elsewhere in the ANE could have potentially been included in the present study. There are two main reasons to limit it to Mesopotamia. The first is practical: some boundaries must be set in order to make the project feasible. The second deals with content: the Mesopotamian material is the most relevant to the study of Gen 1-3. While Mesopotamian texts are in general important for comparative purposes, the ties between the beginning chapters of Genesis and Mesopotamian literature are especially numerous.³

³ See W. G. Lambert, "A New Look at the Babylonian Background of Genesis," in *I Studied Inscriptions from before the Flood: Ancient Near Eastern Literary and Linguistic*

Also a few key Mesopotamian texts have been frequently cited by commentators to bolster their claims about the presence of original immortality, vegetarianism, and animal peace in the Hebrew Bible.⁴ These comparisons need to be evaluated.

When studying the Mesopotamian literature, no strict separation will be made between Sumerian and Akkadian texts. The two languages and the peoples that used them were closely associated for a long period of time. Therefore, it is appropriate to take Sumerian and Akkadian texts together as representative of a common but not uniform Mesopotamian culture.⁵ Such unity is especially true for texts from the 2nd millennium B.C.E., which include

Approaches to Genesis 1-11 (ed. Richard S. Hess and David Toshio Tsumura; trans. David W. Baker; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 96–113; A. R. Millard, "A New Babylonian 'Genesis' Story," *Tyndale Bulletin* 18 (1967): 3–18; Russell E. Gmirkin, *Berosus and Genesis, Manetho and Exodus: Hellenistic Histories and the Date of the Pentateuch* (LHB/OTS 433; New York: T & T Clark, 2006), 89–139; Richard S. Hess, "One Hundred Fifty Years of Comparative Studies on Genesis 1-11: An Overview," in *I Studied Inscriptions from before the Flood: Ancient Near Eastern Literary and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1-11* (ed. Richard S. Hess and David Toshio Tsumura; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 3–26; David Toshio Tsumura, "Genesis and Ancient Near Eastern Stories of Creation and Flood: An Introduction," in *I Studied Inscriptions from before the Flood: Ancient Near Eastern Literary and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1-11* (ed. Richard S. Hess and David Toshio Tsumura; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 27–57.

⁴ Greco-Roman literature is also frequently cited by commentators on the Hebrew Bible to support original vegetarianism and animal peace. However, the connections with Gen 1-3 are not nearly as compelling as with Mesopotamia. For a survey, see appendix II. Texts from elsewhere in the ANE are not commonly used to argue for original immortality, vegetarianism, and animal peace, although some will be mentioned in the discussion when appropriate.

⁵ Richard J. Clifford, *Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible* (The CBQMS 26; Washington, D.C: Catholic Biblical Association, 1994), 14–15.

the majority of the texts to be analyzed.⁶ In this period, Sumerian was most likely only a literary language and no longer spoken.⁷ Thus the language is not reflective of cultural differences but scholarly practice.⁸

In many ways, the overall thrust of the following argument is negative. It is calling for previously held ideas about the lack of death in the original created state to be reexamined. However, the polemics used are not meant to disparage earlier scholarship. Instead, this study is built on the insights of previous commentators, but rearranges the paradigm.

This dissertation joins with a recent trend in Mesopotamian scholarship that questions the existence of a primeval paradise for humans. What is more unique is the reevaluation of the material from Genesis. There has been a shift in recent scholarship to view humans as originally mortal, but there is still an almost unanimous consensus on some form of original vegetarianism and animal peace. More recently, these issues have been raised in debates concerning biblical views on the environment. This study will seek to provide an alternative to the majority view. While the beginning chapters of Genesis

⁶ The great majority of the Sumerian texts that have been found date from the Old Babylonian period although some, at least, were probably composed during Neo-Sumerian times (Marie-Louise Thomsen, *The Sumerian Language: An Introduction to Its History and Grammatical Structure* [CSA 10; Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1984], 17).

⁷ Thomsen, *The Sumerian Language*, 15–19. However, Edzard argues that Sumerian was still spoken at the beginning of the 2nd millennium B.C.E. (Dietz Otto Edzard, *Sumerian Grammar* [HdO 1.71; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003], 171–178).

⁸ The use of Latin in Europe was similar.

may be a paradise, it was not one characterized by animal peace or vegetarianism.

The heart of this study will be the analysis of individual texts. These texts will be examined in detail and thus elements not immediately relevant to the question of death will be included. The purpose of this procedure is to allow the texts to be understood on their own before conclusions relevant to original immortality, vegetarianism, and animal peace are reached. The Mesopotamian texts will come first followed by those from the Hebrew Bible. This procedure will allow the biblical passages to be engaged in a comparative perspective, highlighting the similarities and differences.

Before looking at the specific texts, it is helpful to provide a background and context that will aid in the later examinations. Thus, both the Mesopotamian and Hebrew portions of this dissertation begin with a more general look at the descriptions of humans as first created titled "Paradise and Civilization" (sections II.A and III.A). They examine whether the primeval period is viewed as a perfect ideal, a primitive state, or something in-between. These chapters are of interest on their own, but their purpose in this study is to help connect the issue of death with the broader picture of humans as created. The Mesopotamian section will include a wide variety of Sumerian and Akkadian literature. The Hebrew section will focus on Gen 1-3.

In the Mesopotamian portion, sections from The Gilgamesh Epic, Atrahasis, and The Death of Bilgames will be studied with regard to original mortality (section II.B). Following is an investigation of the beginning of Enki and Ninhursaga and whether it portrays a paradise characterized by original immortality, vegetarianism and animals peace (section II.C). The last text, often called the Spell of Nudimmud, is a portion of Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta that is relevant to original vegetarianism and animal peace (section II.D).

For the Hebrew Bible, the issue of original immortality is investigated in Gen 2-3 and 6:1-4 (section III.B). The questions of vegetarianism and animal peace are most relevant to Gen 1:28-30. These verses will be extensively studied in conjunction with the parallel blessing in Gen 9:1-7 (section III.C). They will then be compared with other texts in Gen 2-8 and Leviticus (section III.D). Lastly, Isa 11:6-8 is analyzed to understand its imagery and whether it is connected with descriptions of a creation paradise (section III.E).

Both the Mesopotamian and Hebrew Bible portions end with conclusions (sections II.E and III.F). For the Hebrew Bible, the conclusions will not only comment on the biblical passages but also engage the comparative evidence from Mesopotamia. An epilogue follows that offers some concluding thoughts on the history of interpretation focused on the issue of animal death (section IV). Two appendices are located at the end.

One describes the depiction of meat-eating in the Hebrew Bible and what is known archaeologically about meat-eating in ancient Israel (section V). The second surveys relevant Greco-Roman material related to original vegetarianism and animal peace (section VI).

A few comments are necessary on the method of textual examination used. First, the analysis involves a close reading of the texts. There is an emphasis on philology, involving in-depth study of the lexical terms used and the syntax. Textual criticism is also important and often influences the overall interpretation.

Second, the analysis is literary. Plots, themes, characterization, and structure are important not only for the particular passages, but for situating them within the larger work in which they occur. One potential problem for the present study is that normal narrative logic does not always apply to mythical texts.⁹ However, this caution does not mean that narrative logic

⁹ Liverani states, in realistic narratives every single act performed by a character must find a motivation in the character himself (including even the unreasonable conduct of the mentally insane or the erratic behaviour of the absentminded). In myths or fairy tales, on the other hand, any single act can be unmotivated and unreasonable in itself, provided it is effective in setting up the explanation of the ensuing acts. The characters accomplish (or undergo) without any surprise the most improbable and strange things, which are impossible to predict or justify. But there is a coherent line that runs throughout the narrative and culminates at its conclusion. The explanation of behaviour is therefore to be understood after the fact: the behaviour that leads to the desired conclusion is coherent.

never applies. More importantly, the texts analyzed below display a significant amount of narrative development, especially those from the Hebrew Bible.¹⁰ Thus, the analysis has been approached assuming a high degree of narrative consistency.

Third, the analysis is contextual. Evidence gleaned from archaeology, geography, and history is included where appropriate. Also, these texts are taken as part of a larger body of literature and compared with it to aid in their interpretation.

In the use of the relevant literature, the interpreter is always trying to maintain a balance: the literary context needs to inform the analysis, but a particular text must also be allowed to express a unique voice. It is the line between a forced rigid conformity and a removal of all contextual controls. This concern is relevant for both Mesopotamia and Israel as the Mesopotamian concept of "X" or the Israelite view of "Y" are invoked in the interpretive process. Cultures and the texts they produce are not monolithic.

(Mario Liverani, "Adapa, Guest of the Gods," in *Myth and Politics in Ancient Near Eastern Historiography* [ed. Zainab Bahrani and Marc Van de Mieroop; London: Equinox Publishing, 2004], 6).

¹⁰ On the development of narrative in Mesopotamian and Israel, see David Damrosch, *The Narrative Covenant: Transformations of Genre in the Growth of Biblical Literature* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987); Richard E. Averbeck, "The Sumerian Historiographic Tradition and Its Implications for Genesis 1-11," in *Faith, Tradition, and History: Old Testament Historiography in Its Near Eastern Context* (ed. A. R. Millard, James Karl Hoffmeier, and David W. Baker; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 79–120.

And this concern is even more relevant as the context is expanded, especially in the comparative method.

Nevertheless, with these concerns in mind, it is proper and even necessary to inform the analysis of texts by their contexts. Such a procedure is perhaps most needed in passages that are ambiguous, uncertain, or fragmentary. It is best to read them in line with what is known from elsewhere, rather than to take them as novel and unique. In the following pages, this principle will be invoked on more than one occasion. Such an argument from context does not assume that there cannot be contradictions and tensions between texts within a larger body of literature, but it does reason that the interpreter has no right to introduce them unnecessarily.

In the analysis of texts from the Hebrew Bible, source criticism will not be emphasized beyond an argument for the unity of the text under discussion. However, in the Pentateuch reference is made to whether a text is recognized as Priestly (P) or non-Priestly (non-P), and such divisions are factored into the arguments.¹¹ Also, while the present analysis is not immune to issues of dating or authorship, they do not impact the main thrust of the argument.

¹¹ These identifications follow those found in Richard Elliott Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1987); Richard Elliott Friedman, *The Bible with Sources Revealed: A New View into the Five Books of Moses* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2003).

Thus they have been purposely avoided as much as possible to free the interpretation from unnecessary encumbrances.

II. Mesopotamia

A. Paradise and Civilization

Before examining the main Mesopotamian texts relevant to original immortality, vegetarianism, and animal peace; it is helpful and even necessary to examine in general how primeval times are described in Mesopotamian literature. This background is essential since ancient texts can too easily be misunderstood by the contemporary reader, especially without a larger context. Mesopotamian literature is by no means monolithic in either a diachronic or synchronic sense, yet it is possible to speak of a common cultural heritage that is found in the texts that have been recovered. The texts surveyed will contribute some to the specific issues of immortality, vegetarianism, and animal peace; but their primary purpose is to provide background for the later, more extensive assessment of a few key texts. This context does not answer all the questions the interpreter would like to ask, but it does give a firmer basis for later conclusions.

In the analysis, two main questions need to be kept in mind. First, is the primeval period portrayed as ideal, better than the present? Second, is it described as complete or in need of development? The answers to these questions will help in understanding the imagery found in the later texts relevant to original immortality, vegetarianism, and animal peace. They will

provide the larger context to determine whether a description is more likely portraying a static ideal or an inchoate state, whether certain elements are positive features or indications of needed growth.

A common motif in Mesopotamian literature is that humans were created as substitute workers for the gods. This role is not viewed as pleasant and does not create any ideal state for humanity in the primeval period. In fact no distinct initial state of human existence is entailed. Instead, humans were made as workers for the gods and continue in that task.

The basic story line is quite simple. The gods are depicted as a two-tiered society with the lower gods doing the hard manual labor. The lower gods grow tired of their labors and revolt. The higher gods form a plan in consultation with Enki (Sumerian)/Ea (Akkadian) to create humans to do the hard labor.

In Sumerian literature, this motif is most clearly seen in Enki and Ninmah.¹² After the gods have multiplied:

the senior gods oversaw the work, while the minor gods were bearing the toil. The gods were digging the canals and piling up

¹² Tablets of an Old Babylonian and a Neo-Assyrian version have been found (Herbert Sauren, "Nammu and Enki," in *The Tablet and the Scroll: Near Eastern Studies in Honor of William W. Hallo* [ed. Mark E. Cohen, Daniel C. Snell, and David B. Weisberg; Bethesda, Md.: CDL Press, 1993], 199).

the silt in Īarali. The gods, crushing the clay, began complaining about this life.¹³

Enki's mother Namma comes and reports this to her sleeping son.

"Are you really lying there asleep, and not awake? The gods, your creatures, are smashing their My son, wake up from your bed! Please apply the skill deriving from your wisdom and create a substitute (?) for the gods so that they can be freed from their toil!"¹⁴

Enki then comes up with a plan.

And after Enki, the fashioner of designs by himself, had pondered the matter, he said to his mother Namma: "My mother, the creature you planned will really come into existence. Impose on him the work of carrying baskets. You should knead clay from the top of the *abzu*; the birth-goddesses (?) will nip off the clay and you shall bring the form into existence."¹⁵

A fragmentary description of humankind's creation follows.

In Akkadian literature, the theme of humans as substitute workers is most clearly found in Atrahasis.¹⁶ The text begins with a description of the toil of the lower gods and their revolt as they burn their tools and surround the house of Enlil.

¹³ ETCSL 1.1.2 lines 9-11.

¹⁴ ETCSL 1.1.2 lines 19-23.

¹⁵ ETCSL 1.1.2 lines 28-32.

¹⁶ Tablets dating from the Old Babylonian and Neo-Assyrian periods have been found along with a few fragments from the Middle and Neo-Babylonian periods (Wilfred G. Lambert and A. R. Millard, *Atra-Ḫasis: The Babylonian Story of the Flood* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969], 31–41).

When gods were man,¹⁷ they did forced labor, they bore drudgery. Great indeed was the drudgery of the gods, the forced labor was heavy, the misery too much: the seven (?) great Anunna-gods were burdening the Igigi-gods with forced labor . . . [They were com]plaining, denouncing, [mut]tering down in the ditch: "Let us face up to our [foreman] the prefect, he must take off (this) our [he]avy burden upon us!" . . . They put fire to their spaces, and flame to their workbaskets. Off they went, one and all, to the gate of the warrior Enlil's abode.¹⁸

Enlil then summons the other gods to an assembly at which Enki offers a solution.

"[Belet-ili, the midwife], is present, let the midwife create a human being, let man assume the drudgery of god."¹⁹

With Enki's further help, humans are created from clay mixed with the flesh and the blood of a slaughtered god. The birth-goddess then declares:

"You ordered me the task and I have completed (it)! You have slaughtered the god, along with his inspiration. I have done away with your heavy forced labor, I have imposed your drudgery on man. You have bestowed (?) clamor upon mankind. I have released the yoke, I have [made] restoration."²⁰

¹⁷ The interpretation of this line has been much discussed (Stephanie Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia: Creation, the Flood, Gilgamesh, and Others* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991], 8 and 36 n. 1; Dahlia Shehata, *Annotierte Bibliographie zum altbabylonischen Atramḫasīs-Mythos Inūma ilū awīlum* [Göttingen: Seminar für Keilschriftforschung der Universität Göttingen, 2001], 23–25).

¹⁸ Lines 1-6, 39-42, and 64-68; translated by Benjamin R. Foster (*COS* 1.130:450).

¹⁹ Lines 189-191, translated by Foster (*COS* 1.130:451).

²⁰ Lines 237-243, translated by Foster (*COS* 1.130:451).

Humans were created for the benefit of the gods. They were made to work in order to provide what is needed by the gods.²¹

In contrast, some Mesopotamian texts do describe a distinct primeval period in human history. However, humankind's initial state is explicitly described as anything but idyllic. Humans lack the necessities of a good life, usually the various forms of civilization, especially kingship.²² The gods then provide what is needed for a well ordered state. These texts highlight humankind's development from a non-ideal primitive state to that of contemporary society.

A few texts depict humans as animal-like until the gods granted the gifts of civilization. *Ewe and Grain* is a Sumerian disputation that begins with a short cosmological introduction.²³ It describe a time before grain or sheep existed, when humans went around naked, eating grass and drinking from ditches.

²¹ One of the key themes of Atrahasis is the dependence of the gods upon human offerings. The gods grow hungry during the flood and then eagerly circle the sacrifice of Atrahasis afterward (III.iii.31 and v.34-36; cf. Damrosch, *The Narrative Covenant*, 127–128; Clifford, *Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible*, 149).

²² Kingship was an essential element of civilization. Note that in both *The Rulers of Lagaš* and *The Sumerian Flood Story* the solution to humankind's need was not just a city, but a king to lead the people in the city (cf. ETCSL 5.3.5 lines 1-12). This point is also made in the beginning of *Etana* where the gods, after designing and building the city of Kish, are looking for a worthy king to lead the people (cf. *The Debate between Bird and Fish*, lines 1-12).

²³ A number of Old Babylonian copies of *Ewe and Grain* have been found (Bendt Alster and Herman L. J. Vanstiphout, "Lahar and Ashnan: Presentation and Analysis of a Sumerian Disputation," *ASJ9* [1987]: 12–13).

There was no *muš* grain of thirty days; there was no *muš* grain of forty days; there was no *muš* grain of fifty days; there was no small grain, grain from the mountains or grain from the holy habitations. There was no cloth to wear; Uttu had not been born -- no royal turban was worn; Lord Niĝir-si, the precious lord, had not been born; Šakkan had not gone out into the barren lands. The people of those days did not know about eating bread. They did not know about wearing clothes; they went about with naked limbs in the Land. Like sheep they ate grass with their mouths and drank water from the ditches.²⁴

The gods then fashion sheep and grain and give them to humankind to provide for both humans and the gods, resulting in a more blessed life.²⁵ The account then continues with the disputation between grain and sheep over who was greater, in which grain prevailed.

A similar description is seen in the Sumerian work How Grain Came to Sumer. Only the beginning of the text has survived, and it contains a short cosmological introduction relating how humans ate grass since cultivated cereals were not known.

Men used to eat grass with their mouths like sheep. In those times, they did not know grain, barley or flax. An brought these down from the interior of heaven.²⁶

In the rest of the extant text, An and Enlil bring grain down from heaven but pile it on the mountain. Then a couple of minor deities decide to enlist Utu's help to introduce it to Sumer.

²⁴ ETCLS 5.3.2 lines 12-25.

²⁵ ETCLS 5.3.2 lines 26-42.

²⁶ ETCLS 1.7.6 lines 1-3. The extant text only contains 32 lines.

These descriptions of primitive humans focus not only on what they ate and drank but how. The word translated as grass, *u₂*, can refer to vegetation or food in general.²⁷ Thus the key is not that humans were eating grass in particular, but that they were eating some uncultivated vegetation and not grain. Also, they were not dining properly but were eating in an uncivilized way, with their mouths like grazing sheep.²⁸ The same would be true for their drinking, consuming water from a ditch instead of beer from a container.

An important text on humankind's initial state, especially for the following discussion of lines 136-140 of Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta, is the small Sumerian fragment UET 6.61.²⁹ It describes humans in a pre-civilized state, when they were animal-like in their actions but did not as yet have natural rivals.

²⁷ As a metaphor, eating grass like a sheep could be used in a positive way. Line 35 of The Lament for Nibru mourns for a better, former state: "For how long would Enlil neglect the Land, where the black-headed people ate rich grass like sheep?" (ETCSL 2.2.4 line 35; cf. ETCSL 2.5.6.1 line 26; Bendt Alster, *Proverbs of Ancient Sumer: The World's Earliest Proverb Collections* [Bethesda, Md.: CDL Press, 1997], 3.134:102).

²⁸ A helpful parallel is seen in a letter to the king in which a citizen describes his deplorable condition. He has lost two marks of civilization, proper eating and hygiene: "Like a sheep I use my mouth for eating grass and I am unfamiliar with washing with soap" (ETCSL 3.3.02 line 6).

Westermann argues for a Mesopotamian tradition of early vegetarianism using the examples of primitive humans eating grass (Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1-11: A Commentary* [trans. John Scullion; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984], 162–163). Dequeker rightly rejects Westermann's Mesopotamian examples, noting that the examples of grass eating are used to describe "the state of agricultural underdevelopment" and not "a vegetarian *versus* a carnivorous diet" (Luc Dequeker, "'Green Herbage and Trees Bearing Fruit' [Gen. 1:28-30; 9:1-3]: Vegetarianism or Predominance of Man over the Animals," *Bijdragen* 38 [1977]: 123).

²⁹ The fragment was found at Ur and dates to the Old Babylonian period (Thorkild Jacobsen, "The Eridu Genesis," *JBL* 100 [1981]: 513–514).

In those days no canals [were opened],
 [no dredging was done] at dikes and ditches on dike tops,
 the seeder plough and ploughing [had not yet been instituted for
 the countless overwhelmed people].
 No (one of) all the countries [was planting in furrows],
 mankind of (those) [distant days]
 since Shakan (the god of flocks) [had not (yet) come out on the
 dry land],
 did not know arraying [themselves in prime cloth],
 mankind [walked about naked].
 In those days, there being no snakes, [being no scorpions],
 being no lions, [being no hyenas],
 being no dogs, [no wolves],
 mankind [had no opponent],³⁰
 fear [and terror did not exist].³¹

The lack of dangerous animals is the most unique element of this text
 and the most difficult to interpret. Is it a positive feature as it seems at first or

³⁰ A better translation of this line would be "humankind had no equal." See the discussion below on line 140 of Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta.

³¹ The translation is by Jacobsen, "The Eridu Genesis," 516-517 n. 7. The form of the translation comes from Alster who helpfully indicates the reconstructed portions of Jacobsen's translation (Bendt Alster, "Dilmun, Bahrain, and the Alleged Paradise in Sumerian Myth and Literature," in *Dilmun: New Studies in the Archaeology and Early History of Bahrain* [ed. Daniel T. Potts; BBVOB 2; Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1983], 56-57). Jacobsen based most of his reconstructions on the descriptions of primitive times seen in The Rulers of Lagaš, Ewe and Grain, Ninurta's Exploits, and Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta (Jacobsen, "The Eridu Genesis," 516-517 n. 7). Kramer argues that many of the verbs should be read as positive and not negative forms and that they "probably depict mankind's prosperity and well-being." He bases this reading on his understanding of the final 5 lines, which parallel lines 136-140 in Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta, as describing a "Golden Age" (Samuel Noah Kramer, "The Sumerian Deluge Myth: Reviewed and Revised," *AnSt* 33 [1983]: 116 n. 2). For discussion on these lines in Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta, see below. While the fragmentary state of the text precludes any certainty, Jacobsen's analysis appears more firmly grounded in extant parallels.

does the imagery communicate something more nuanced?³² What can be said is that the focus is on animals that are dangerous to humans in some way. It does not describe a vegetarian state or a time of animal peace. Instead, it mentions that animals that presently rival or cause humans fear of harm were absent. Does that indicate a more ideal time for humankind's initial state?

Alster understands the lack as a positive and argues that this text indicates that the present negative elements of life, such as the fear of wild animals, are necessary consequences of civilization, consequences which are outweighed by their benefits.

this text teaches us an elementary lesson about the concept of life as seen by the Sumerians: Of the two possibilities: barbarism or civilization, the latter is much to be preferred, but mankind has to pay a high price for civilization, in this case the appearance of dangerous animals.

This conclusion is in perfect agreement with what can be learnt from other Mesopotamian myths: Progress is a result of an act which violates the ordinary rules of conduct, and therefore inevitable entails disadvantages, diseases or the like, but the alternative to civilization is barbarism, and never paradise.³³

³² In his earlier article, Jacobsen understands the lack of beasts as a positive: "On the credit side, though, was one fact. There were no dangerous beasts" (Jacobsen, "The Eridu Genesis," 516). For his later views, see the discussion below on lines 136-140 in Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta (Thorkild Jacobsen, "The Spell of Nudimmud," in *Shaarei Talmon: Studies in the Bible, Qumran, and the Ancient Near East Presented to Shemaryahu Talmon* [ed. Michael A. Fishbane, Emanuel Tov, and Weston W. Fields; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1992], 415–416).

³³ Alster, "Dilmun, Bahrain, and the Alleged Paradise in Sumerian Myth and Literature," 57.

Batto's understanding is similar although he reasons that the main point is not that these animals didn't exist, but that they were not yet opponents of primitive humans, "humans had nothing to fear from the 'wild beasts' because humankind and animalkind were as yet indistinguishable . . . With the advent of civilization necessarily came a mutual hostility between animalkind and humankind."³⁴

Both Alster and Batto are helpful in showing how the lack of dangerous animals can be understood as an indicator of an early stage in human development. Since increased conflict is a normal consequence of progress and change, a lack of rivalry characterizes a time before such progress and change. The description of a lack of dangerous animals and whether it is best to call it a positive feature will be discussed more below in conjunction with its occurrence in Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta 136-140.

³⁴ Batto continues,

The introduction of agricultural practices automatically put animals and humans in competition for the same territory; the land plowed up for cultivation was the former grazing range of the wild animals. Moreover, the domestication of animals required that humans subdue animals which formerly ran wild. With domestication the tamed animals lost the ability to hold their own against their untamed cousins, such that human protection was now required. And humans themselves, having given up their former animalistic ways, took to driving away and even killing the 'wild beast' which threatened their new way of life.

(Bernard Frank Batto, "Paradise Reexamined," in *The Biblical Canon in Comparative Perspective* [ed. K. Lawson Younger, William W Hallo, and Bernard Frank Batto; SC 4; Lewiston, N.Y.: E. Mellen Press, 1991], 48; cf. "Creation Theology in Genesis," in *Creation in the Biblical Traditions* [ed. Richard J. Clifford and John J. Collins; Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1992], 20).

Jacobsen suggests that UET 6.61 may be part of the initial section of The Sumerian Flood Story.³⁵ The tablet containing The Sumerian Flood Story is missing about 36 lines from the beginning. The extant account starts with a description of humankind's poor state before the founding of cities and the institution of kingship. In this section a god is relating how humans are suffering in a nomadic existence and how the god plans to rescue them and establish for them a civilized urban existence.

"I would [halt?] the perishing of my mankind,
 I would restore there to Nintur the of my creatures,
 We would return the people from their (dispersed) habitations.
 Let them build there the *me*-endowed cities, I would refresh
 myself in their shade,
 Let them lay the bricks of the *me*-endowed cities in holy places,
 Let them erect the *me*-endowed *ki-eš* in holy places,
 I have directed there the fire-quenching holy (?) water,
 I have perfected there the divine rites (and) noble *me*,
 I have watered the earth, I would establish well-being there."³⁶

The following sections go on to describe kingship descending from heaven and the founding of cities. In this context, it seems most probable that these cities

³⁵ The source for the text is a single tablet from Nippur that is most likely Old Babylonian. A couple small fragments are possibly related (Miguel Civil, "The Sumerian Flood Story," in *Atra-ḫasis: The Babylonian Story of the Flood* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969], 138; Jacobsen, "The Eridu Genesis," 513–514). The Sumerian of The Sumerian Flood Story is rather unusual and may be a translation from an Akkadian original (Nick Veldhuis by private correspondence). All line numberings will follow the edition of Civil, "The Sumerian Flood Story," 140-145.

³⁶ Lines 38-46, translated by Kramer, "The Sumerian Deluge Myth," 117. Kramer argues that Enki was speaking (Kramer, "The Sumerian Deluge Myth," 116), while Jacobsen argues for Nintur (Jacobsen, "The Eridu Genesis," 515).

are the first cities, especially since they align with the pre-diluvian cities recorded in later forms of The Sumerian King List.³⁷

Unfortunately, without the beginning of the text there is no way to know for certain why humans were in this state. Jacobsen argues that humankind's misery was not caused by some catastrophe but by a lack of civilization. He suggests that UET 6.61 should be joined with The Sumerian Flood Story since it provides the missing description.³⁸

The idea that civilization is a gift of the gods is also encountered in non-creation texts. While these are not as relevant since they are not describing humans as first created, they do help illustrate the deplorable state of humans before they are fully civilized. The ones presented here describe how the gods bring about cultural progress as seen in agricultural technology.³⁹

³⁷ The order in both is Eridu, Badtibira, Larak, Sippar, and Shuruppak. Jacobsen argues that the antediluvian section of The Sumerian King List was not an original part of the document, but a later addition (Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Sumerian King List* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939], 55–68). He notes the correspondence with The Sumerian Flood Story and argues that the two sections show "a close literary relationship" but not direct borrowing (Jacobsen, *The Sumerian King List*, 59–60 n. 113 and 64–65 n. 119). The Sumerian King List originated in Neo-Sumerian times, but there are a number of later editions of it (Kenton L. Sparks, *Ancient Texts for the Study of the Hebrew Bible: A Guide to the Background Literature* [Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 2005], 345).

³⁸ Jacobsen, "The Eridu Genesis," 516.

³⁹ See also The Song of the Hoe; Westermann, *Genesis*, 57–60.

A section in Ninurta's Exploits describes a time before irrigation when the mountain waters did not reach the Mesopotamian plain.⁴⁰ Ninurta remedies this situation and brings about blessing in the land. Note that the people at that time still planted fields, but their labors did not result in the bounty provided by irrigation.

At that time, the good water coming forth from the earth did not pour down over the fields . . . The Tigris did not bring up its flood in its fullness . . . The famine was hard, as nothing had yet been born. No one yet cleaned the little canals, the mud was not dredged up. No one yet drew water for the fertile fields, ditch-making did not exist. People did not work in furrows, barley was sown broadcast. The lord applied his great wisdom to it . . . He made a pile of stones in the mountains . . . He blocked the powerful waters by means of stones. Now the waters will never again go down from the mountains into the earth . . . He poured carp-floods of water over the fields. Now, today, throughout the whole world, kings of the Land far and wide rejoice at Lord Ninurta. He provided water for the speckled barley in the cultivated fields, he raised up the harvest of fruits in garden and orchard. He heaped up the grain piles like mounds. The lord caused trading colonies to go up from the Land of Sumer. He contented the desires of the gods. They duly praised Ninurta's father.⁴¹

⁴⁰ This Sumerian work is probably a combination of three stories about Ninurta that dates from slightly before the Neo-Sumerian period (Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Harps That Once-
-: Sumerian Poetry in Translation* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987], 233–235).

⁴¹ ETCSL 1.6.2 lines 334-367.

The Rulers of Lagaš tells of humans living after the flood who did not have the benefits of irrigation agriculture but instead relied on rain.⁴² The gods then bestow the technology necessary for irrigation.

After the flood had swept over and brought about the destruction of the countries; when mankind was made to endure, and the seed of mankind was preserved and the black-headed people all rose; when An and Enlil called the name of mankind and established rulership, but kingship and the crown of the city had not yet come out from heaven, and Ninĝirsu had not yet established for the multitude of well-guarded (?) people the pickaxe, the spade, the earth basket and the plough, which mean life for the Land . . . In those days, because the water of Lagaš was held back, there was famine in Ĝirsu. Canals were not dug, the levees and ditches were not cleaned . . . there was no water to irrigate abundantly all the cultivated fields: the people relied on rain; Ezina did not make dappled barley grow, furrows were not yet opened, they bore no yield; the high plain was not tilled, it bore no yield . . . In order to dig canals, to clean the levees and ditches, to the large arable tracts, to all the cultivated fields, he established for the people the pickaxe, the spade, the earth basket, and the plough, which mean life for the Land.⁴³

⁴² Sollberger dates the text to the Old Babylonian period and suggests that it is "a politico-satirical work written by a Lagaš scribe in answer to the author(s) of the Sumerian King List who had ignored the rulers of Lagaš" (Edmond Sollberger, "The Rulers of Lagaš," *JCS* 21 [1967]: 279–280).

⁴³ ETCSL 2.1.2 lines 1-13, 20-31, and 50-55. Jacobsen interprets lines 14-19 (not quoted above) as describing humankind's slow development from childhood to adulthood in that age, an idea that would accord with humankind's overall lack of development: "In those days a child spent a hundred years in diapers, after he had grown up he spent a hundred years without being given any task (to perform), he was small, he was dull witted, his mother watched over him, his straw-bedding was laid down in the cowpen" (Jacobsen, "The Eridu Genesis," 520–521). Moran suggests that a similar primitive idea may be implied in the early generations of The Sumerian King List: "Among the pre-Etana, pre-kingship rulers, the name of the second, Kullassina-bel, 'All of them (the people) are lord' (?), and the animal names of

Deprivation of the elements of civilization is common in descriptions of distress and hardship in Mesopotamian history, confirming that Mesopotamia did not have a primitive ideal. For example, Lugalbanda is probably using a common motif when he describes (falsely) his wilderness experience, stating that he acted like various animals to survive.⁴⁴ The Curse of Agade compares the destruction of Mesopotamia to the time before cities were established.⁴⁵ Similar descriptions are also used for various people groups whose lifestyle was viewed with disdain, especially the Amorites.⁴⁶

others, are perhaps meant to suggest a period of anarchy and savagery" (William L. Moran, "Ovid's Blanda Voluptas and the Humanization of Enkidu," *JNES* 50 [1991]: 127 n. 25).

⁴⁴ "The highland streams, though mothers of plenty, have *very steep* banks. Lying on my side, I drank as from a waterskin; I *growled* like the wolf, I grazed the water-meadows; I pecked the earth like the wood-pigeon, I ate *wild acorns*" (Lugalbanda II 239-243, translated by Herman L. J. Vanstiphout, *Epics of Sumerian Kings: The Matter of Aratta* [ed. Jerrold S. Cooper; SBLWAW 20; Atlanta Ga.: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003], 149). The Lugalbanda Epics belong to the group of Sumerian stories involving Aratta originating in the Neo-Sumerian period. For more, see below on Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta.

⁴⁵ "(For the first time) since cities were built and founded, the great agricultural tracts produced no grain, the inundated tracts produced no fish, the irrigated orchards produced neither syrup nor wine, the gathered clouds did not rain, the *mašgurum* did not grow" (lines 171-175, translated by Jerrold S. Cooper, *The Curse of Agade* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983], 59). The Curse of Agade is a Sumerian work from the Neo-Sumerian period with many copies found from the Old Babylonian period (Cooper, *The Curse of Agade*, 41-49).

⁴⁶ For example, The Marriage of Amurru states:

Now listen, [the Martu's] hands are destructive and their features are those of monkeys; he is one who eats what Nanna forbids and does not show reverence. They never stop roaming about, they are an abomination to the gods' dwellings. Their ideas are confused; they cause only disturbance. He is clothed in sack-leather, lives in a tent, exposed to wind and rain, and cannot properly recite prayers. He lives in the mountains and ignores the places of gods, digs up truffles in the foothills, does not know how to bend the knee, and eats raw flesh. He has no house during his life, and when he dies he will not be carried to a burial-place.

The figure of Enkidu in The Gilgamesh Epic is very important for the present study.⁴⁷ In some respects, the notion of an initial animal-like state is at odds with the portrayal of humans as replacement workers for the gods. Any period of animal-like existence would imply a temporal gap between humankind's creation and their service to the gods. And yet these themes are combined with Enkidu. He is created by the gods for the specific purpose of confronting Gilgamesh, and yet he first lives for a time like an animal.⁴⁸

The terminology used for Enkidu is connected with Mesopotamian creation texts. In The Gilgamesh Epic I.178, the Akkadian noun for primeval humans, *lullû*, is used as a designation of Enkidu: "(Then) Šamḫat saw him, the man-savage (*lullû amēlu*)."⁴⁹ *lullû* is used in Atrahasis I.195, "Create *Lullû*

(ETCSL 1.7.1 lines 127-138). This Sumerian text dates to the Neo-Sumerian period (Sparks, *Ancient Texts for the Study of the Hebrew Bible*, 312).

⁴⁷ In Akkadian, there is a Standard Babylonian form of the epic that dates from the last part of the 2nd millennium and was preserved on many 1st millennium tablets. There are also earlier Middle and Old Babylonian forms. A number of Sumerian stories about Gilgamesh have also been preserved that date back at least to the Neo-Sumerian period (Andrew R. George, *The Epic of Gilgamesh* [PC; London: Penguin Books, 2003], xxiv–xxvii and lx–lxi; Sparks, *Ancient Texts for the Study of the Hebrew Bible*, 275–276). The Standard Babylonian form is used unless noted and the line numbering follows that of Andrew R. George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic: Introduction, Critical Edition, and Cuneiform Texts* (2 vols.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

⁴⁸ The closest parallel is found in Ewe and Wheat in which humans become workers for the gods when the gods grant them civilization and not at their creation. While humans are in his animal-like state, the gods create sheep and grain but are not satisfied. Therefore the gods give sheep and grain to humans not only for human sustenance but for the benefit of the gods, "For their own well-being in the holy sheepfold, they gave them to mankind as sustenance" (ETCSL 5.3.2 line 36).

⁴⁹ George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 549. In line I.185 (and its parallel in I.192) *lullû* is used alone, "treat the man to the work of a woman," although George suggests that

that he may bear the yoke,"⁵⁰ and in *Enuma Elish* VI.6-7, "Let me set up primeval man (*lullû*): Man shall be his name. Let me create a primeval man (*lullû*)." ⁵¹ It seems likely that *lullû* in The Gilgamesh Epic denotes Enkidu's primitive animal-like state. Once Enkidu eats bread, drinks beer, and is groomed, he is declared a man: "Enkidu ate the bread until he was sated, he drank the ale, a full seven goblets. His mood became free, he started to sing, his heart grew merry, his face lit up. The barber groomed his body so hairy, anointed with oil he turned into a man."⁵² It is possible that the other occurrences are also alluding to humankind's original animal-like state through their use of *lullû*.⁵³

the form in these lines could possibly be the adjective "sensuous" (George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 549 n. 31 and 34).

CAD defines *lullû* as "man," following the arguments of Wilfred G. Lambert, "Review of AHW Fascicules 5 and 6," *JSS* 12 (1967): 105 ("*lullû*," *CAD*). *lullû* is borrowed from Sumerian *lu₂-ulu₃* which can refer to humankind in general, but in Akkadian *lullû* seems to have a more specific reference to primeval humans since it is only used of those newly created (Jeffrey H. Tigay, *The Evolution of the Gilgamesh Epic* [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982], 202).

⁵⁰ Translation by Lambert and Millard, *Atra-ḫasis*, 57. See also the parallel passages in other textual versions of Atrahasis: G ii.9, "Let her create *Lullû*-[man]," and V.2 and 4, "Let the birth-goddess [create] *Lullû* . . . Let her create *Lullû*-[man]" (translated by Lambert and Millard, *Atra-ḫasis*, 55 and 57).

⁵¹ Translation by Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia*, 260–261. *Enuma Elish* is an Akkadian work from the mid to late 2nd millennium, although all the extant tablets are from the 1st millennium (Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia*, 228–230; Sparks, *Ancient Texts for the Study of the Hebrew Bible*, 315–316).

⁵² This passage is only preserved on an Old Babylonian tablet (George, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, 14 and 104–105; cf. Batto, "Paradise Reexamined," 48).

⁵³ Of the uses listed in *CAD*, only the occurrence in The Gilgamesh Epic X.318 has not been included, and it will be discussed below. Another use has been found in a creation context where it is contrasted with *maliku-amēlu*, "You have created *lullû*-man: form now the king, the thinking-deciding man!" (as translated in Clifford, *Creation Accounts in the Ancient*

Enkidu's creation and early life are modeled on earlier creation accounts and descriptions of primitive humans.⁵⁴ George aptly summarizes,

Enkidu is created from clay as the first men were: fully grown and without a mother's cries, in silence (99-104). He lives in an animal state: hairy and unclothed, ungoverned by thoughts of family (or, an important variant, gods) and wider social identity, feeding with the gazelles on grass and water (105-12). In these particulars, too, he is a replica of the first men, dwelling far removed from civilization, both in space and in behavior.⁵⁵

Near East and in the Bible, 70; cf. W. Mayer, "Ein Mythos von der Erschaffung des Menschen und des Königs," *Orientalia* 56 [1987]: 56–57).

⁵⁴ For a good overview see Tigay, *The Evolution of the Gilgamesh Epic*, 192–213; Batto, "Paradise Reexamined," 48–49. Note especially Tigay's observation that the creation of Enkidu is similar to the creation of humans in other creation texts because he is created in "response to an outcry of oppressed subjects" and for the purpose of "relieving their suffering. This pattern, culminating in the creation of a new character who relieves or brings relief to the victims, is unique to *Gilgamesh* and creation texts, of which *Atrahasis* and its Sumerian forerunner *Enki and Ninmah* are the loci classici" (Tigay, *The Evolution of the Gilgamesh Epic*, 196). Tigay also rightly rejects the comparison of Enkidu with contemporary semi-nomadic groups, such as the Amorites, in favor of the comparison with primitive man: "Enkidu needed to become, not simply civilized, but first humanized" (Tigay, *The Evolution of the Gilgamesh Epic*, 202).

This theme seems unique to the Akkadian version, "There is no sign . . . in any of the Sumerian poems of the notion of Enkidu as a wild man, born outside civilization and succored by wild animals" (George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 142; cf. Aage Westenholz and Ulla Koch-Westenholz, "Enkidu - the Noble Savage?," in *Wisdom, Gods and Literature: Studies in Assyriology in Honour of W. G. Lambert* [ed. Andrew R. George and Irving L. Finkel; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2000], 438–439 n. 7). Fleming and Milstein argue that within the Akkadian tradition Enkidu was first portrayed as a herdsman and only later as a wild man (Daniel Fleming and Sara J. Milstein, *The Buried Foundation of the Gilgamesh Epic: The Akkadian Huwawa Narrative* [Boston: Brill, 2010], 19–42).

⁵⁵ George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 450. To some extent, Enkidu never fully loses these distinctives as the narrative progresses. For example, Wasserman shows that "Enkidu's insatiable yearning for tangible parental origins appears to be a forceful drive throughout the epic" (Nathan Wasserman, "Offspring of Silence, Spawn of a Fish, Son of a Gazelle . . . : Enkidu's Different Origins in the Epic of Gilgameš," in *An Experienced Scribe who Neglects Nothing: Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Honor of Jacob Klein* [ed. Yitzhak Sefati et al.; Bethesda, Md.: CDL Press, 2005], 598).

Enkidu's transition from animal-like to civilized is also instructive. As with primitive humans, Enkidu's development comes from outside influences. Primitive humans needed the intervention of the gods to leave their animal-like state. Similarly, Enkidu does not one day walk out of the woods into Uruk, but he must be seduced into society by Shamhat and then instructed by her.

However, the move is not without its complications. As was suggested for primitive humans above, cultural development leads to new benefits but also new conflicts.⁵⁶ After his sexual encounter with Shamhat, Enkidu becomes estranged from the animals, defiled, and in some way diminished; and yet he gains understanding.⁵⁷ Almost immediately after becoming civilized, Enkidu also comes into conflict with wild animals as he fights off wolves and lions for

⁵⁶ In at least one way, Enkidu was in conflict with civilization before his encounter with Shamhat. He would regularly fill in the pits and tear out the snares of the trapper (I.130-131 and 157-158).

⁵⁷ "The gazelles saw Enkidu and they started running, the animals of the wild moved away from his person. Enkidu had defiled his body so pure, his legs stood still, though his herd was on the move. Enkidu was diminished, his running was not as before, but he had *reason*, he was wide of understanding" (I.197–202, translated by George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 55).

Shamhat's speech to Enkidu after their sexual encounter (I.207–208) has often been compared with Gen 3:5 and 22; "Thou art [wi]se, Enkidu, art become like a god! Why with the wild creatures dost thou roam over the steppe?" (translated by E. A. Speiser, *ANET* 75). However, there is a textual issue. Speiser reconstructs the initial word as [en]-qa-ta from the root emēqu "to be wise" (*ANET* 75). Based on the parallel in a Middle Babylonian tablet from Boğazköy, George reconstructs it as [dam]-qa-ta from the root damāqu "to be good" that can refer to physical appearance. Thus he translates, "You are handsome, Enkidu, you are just like a god, why do you roam the wild with the animals?" (George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 55 and 799). An Old Babylonian tablet reads, "As I look at you, Enkidu, you are like a god" (George, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, 103).

the shepherds.⁵⁸ The biggest change is his engagement in the strife of humans and gods, which ultimately leads to his death. As he is dying, Enkidu curses the hunter and the harlot who made him civilized, wishing for his former life among the beasts: "Because you made me weak, me who was pure! And me who was pure, you made me weak when I was in the wild."⁵⁹ However, he is rebuked by the god Shamash who declares to him the benefits of civilization that he now experiences, causing Enkidu to reverse his curse to a blessing.⁶⁰ Enkidu has seen the cost of civilization and its benefit.

That these ideas about primitive humans endured to some extent in the ANE can be seen in the Babylonian history written by Berossos, a Babylonian priest, in the early 3rd century B.C.E.⁶¹ He describes humans as

⁵⁸ II.60. However, note that he may have had conflicts with lions while living with the animals (II.237-238).

⁵⁹ VII.130–131, translated by George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 640.

⁶⁰ VII.92-161. Kirk suggests that Enkidu curses the hunter and the harlot "because they enticed him into a world of disease and slow death, away from the world of the steppe in which death tends to come suddenly and before the onset of old age and corruption" (Geoffrey S. Kirk, *Myth: Its Meaning and Functions in Ancient and Other Cultures* [SCL 40; Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1970], 149; cf. Westenholz and Koch-Westenholz, "Enkidu - the Noble Savage?," 444).

⁶¹ Berossos is best understood in light of the strong antiquarian movement seen in the middle first millennium B.C.E. Older traditions and artifacts were sought out and then restored as, at least partly, a reaction against the changing culture and political situation. Thus, Berossos is most likely not preserving a tradition that was widely known in his time. See Paul-Alain Beaulieu, "Antiquarian Theology in Seleucid Uruk," *ASJ* 14 (1992): 47–75; Paul-Alain Beaulieu, "Antiquarianism and the Concern for the Past in the Neo-Babylonian Period," *BCSMS* 28 (1994): 37–42; Alan Lenzi, "The Uruk List of Kings and Sages and Late Mesopotamian Scholarship," *JANER* 8 (2008): 137–69; Alan Lenzi, *Secrecy and the Gods: Secret Knowledge in Ancient Mesopotamia and Biblical Israel* (SAAS 19; Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2008). Sterling designates Berossos as an example of "apologetic historiography" to promote the prestige of Babylon (Gregory E. Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition:*

originally uncivilized, like the animals, but then a fish-man, Oannes, came and taught humankind all the skills needed for a better life.

In Babylonia there was a large number of people of different ethnic origins who had settled Chaldea. They lived without discipline and order, just like animals.

In the very first year there appeared from the Red Sea (the Persian Gulf) in an area bordering on Babylonia a frightening monster, named Oannes . . . It has the whole body of a fish, but underneath and attached to the head of the fish there was another head, human, and joined to the tail of the fish, feet, like those of a man, and it had a human voice. Its form has been preserved in sculpture to this day. Berossos says that this monster spent its days with men, never eating anything, but teaching men the skills necessary for writing and for doing mathematics and for all sorts of knowledge: how to build cities, found temples, and make laws. It taught men how to determine borders and divide land, also how to plant seeds and then to harvest their fruits and vegetables. In short, it taught men all those things conducive to a settled and civilized life. Since that time nothing further has been discovered.⁶²

Berossos goes on to mention a total of seven monsters like Oannes who were associated with antediluvian kings. Earlier second and first millennium B.C.E. Mesopotamian literature mention seven sages (*apkallu*), often fish-like, which

Josephos, Luke-Acts, and Apologetic Historiography [NovTSup 64; New York: Brill, 1992], 104–117).

⁶² Berossos is only preserved in fragments as he is quoted in later works. This section is from Syncellus' *Ecloga Chronographica* 50–53 as translated in Gerald P. Verbrugge and John M. Wickersham, *Berossos and Manetho, Introduced and Translated: Native Traditions in Ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 44.

are associated with antediluvian kings and were used by the gods to introduce civilization to humanity.⁶³

In the texts surveyed for this Mesopotamian background, there is no evidence of a creation paradise. The initial state is not portrayed as better than 'normal' life. Instead, humans were made to work, to bear the oppressive labors that caused the gods to revolt. They were also made in need of cultural development. When a distinct created state is described, humans are depicted as animal-like. The gods must intervene and grant the gifts of civilization. Thus, the primeval state of humans is far from a static ideal. Nevertheless, development does not come without consequences as it increases conflicts with the world roundabout, especially the animals, and even with the gods. The blessings of culture, though, outweigh these less than positive aspects.

⁶³ See for example Verbrugge and Wickersham, *Berosos and Manetho, Introduced and Translated*, 17 and 71; E. Reiner, "The Etiological Myth of the 'Seven Sages,'" *Orientalia* 30 (1961): 1–11; Jonas C. Greenfield, "The Seven Pillars of Wisdom (Prov. 9:1): A Mistranslation," *JQR* 76 (1985): 15–18.

Oannes is a Greek variant of Sumerian Uan, "the light of An," another name for the sage more commonly known as Adapa (Shlomo Izre'el, *Adapa and the South Wind: Language Has the Power of Life and Death* [MC 10; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2001], 1–3; W. G. Lambert, "A Catalogue of Texts and Authors," *JCS* 16 [1962]: 74; Lenzi, "The Uruk List of Kings and Sages and Late Mesopotamian Scholarship," 140–142). The name of the flood hero in Berosos, Xisouthrus, is also derived from the Sumerian form, Ziusudra.

B. Human Mortality in The Gilgamesh Epic, Atrahasis, and The Death of Bilgames

1. The Question of Mortality

In Mesopotamian literature, mortality is highlighted as one of the characteristics that distinguishes humans from the gods. The distinction, however, is not that humans can die and the gods cannot, for there are rare examples of gods being killed.⁶⁴ Instead, the focus is on the inevitability of death for humans, that all will eventually die of old age if nothing else. In his helpful study on death in Mesopotamia, Lambert concludes, "while both Sumerian and Akkadian had one word and synonyms only for 'death' they do in fact distinguish two kinds: death that comes naturally to mankind at the end of his days, and violent death, from which even the gods were not necessarily exempt."⁶⁵

Interpreters are divided, nevertheless, on whether Mesopotamian literature as a whole teaches that humans were always subject to natural death, that humans were created doomed to die. Could it be that mortality is one of the negative results of cultural development, a divinely instituted change to stabilize a civilized world? Some Mesopotamian texts seem to

⁶⁴ For examples, see W. G. Lambert, "The Theology of Death," in *Death in Mesopotamia: Papers Read at the XXVI^e Rencontre assyriologique internationale* (ed. Bendt Alster; CSA 8; Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1980), 64–65.

⁶⁵ Lambert, "The Theology of Death," 65.

assume human mortality from the beginning. For example, The Sumerian King List records the reigns of various kings before the flood.⁶⁶ Their reigns are extraordinarily long, but each does come to an end, presumably by natural or unnatural death.

Also, in the beginning of the Akkadian myth Adapa, Enki is described as giving the antediluvian Adapa what he needed to be the sage for humankind, but he does not give him eternal life.⁶⁷

He perfected him with great intelligence, to give instruction about the ordinance of the earth. To him he gave wisdom, he did not give him eternal life (*napišta[ZI-ta^m] da-rí-ta^m*).⁶⁸

Later in the account, Adapa has to appear before Anu because he broke the wings of the south wind. Ea advises Adapa on how to gain favor with Anu, but also counsels him not to eat the food and water offered to him by Anu because it is the food and water of death. Adapa does not eat the food and water offered, but it turns out to be the food and water of life! Because of his

⁶⁶ The Sumerian King List originated in Neo-Sumerian times, but there are a number of later editions of it (Sparks, *Ancient Texts for the Study of the Hebrew Bible*, 345). Jacobsen argues that the antediluvian section of The Sumerian King List was not an original part of the document, but a later addition (Jacobsen, *The Sumerian King List*, 55–68).

⁶⁷ Six fragments have been found, one from Amarna in the Middle Babylonian period and the rest from Neo-Assyrian times. A Sumerian version from the Old Babylonian period was reportedly found but remains unpublished (Izre'el, *Adapa and the South Wind*, 5–7).

⁶⁸ Fragment A obverse i:3-4, translated by Izre'el, *Adapa and the South Wind*, 9–10.

refusal, Anu says that he shall not live (*la ba-al-ṭa-ta*), that is, have eternal life.⁶⁹

Anu looked at him; he laughed at him: "Come, Adapa, why did you not eat or drink? Hence you shall not live! Alas for inferior humanity!"⁷⁰

In contrast, many commentators argue that a few texts portray humans as immortal before the flood, immortal in the sense that they did not die of natural causes but could be killed by unnatural ones (e.g. disease, famine, or a flood). Lambert is a key proponent of this view.⁷¹ The following analysis will question such a position.

Lambert argues that according to Mesopotamian literature human mortality was introduced by the gods after the flood as one of the means of

⁶⁹ Izre'el argues that Anu's speech may be understood as referring to life at a more mundane level, just physical well-being, but that it also certainly has a deeper reference to immortality (Izre'el, *Adapa and the South Wind*, 31–32 and 120–125). Stordalen suggests that Anu's offer of the food was actually a test of Adapa's ambition to encroach on the divine which he passed by refusing to eat (Terje Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden: Genesis 2-3 and Symbolism of the Eden Garden in Biblical Hebrew Literature* [CBET 25; Leuven: Peeters, 2000], 246).

Adapa is often compared with Gen 2-3 since it deals with the themes of wisdom and immortality. Batto argues that the name Adapa means "human" like Hebrew Adam (Batto, *Slaying the Dragon: Mythmaking in the Biblical Tradition* [Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1992], 194 n. 23). However, Izre'el offers other suggestions including "wise" (Izre'el, *Adapa and the South Wind*, 1).

⁷⁰ Fragment B reverse 66-68, translated by Izre'el, *Adapa and the South Wind*, 21.

⁷¹ For examples of Lambert's influence, see Clifford, *Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible*, 78 and 147; Batto, "Creation Theology in Genesis," 24; Ronald S. Hendel, "Of Demigods and the Deluge: Toward an Interpretation of Genesis 6:1-4," *JBL* 106 (1987): 18; Helge S. Kvanvig, "Gen 6,1-4 as an Antediluvian Event," *SJOT* 16 (2002): 97; André LaCocque, *The Trial of Innocence: Adam, Eve, and the Yahwist* (Eugene, Ore.: Cascade Books, 2006), 101; Damrosch, *The Narrative Covenant*, 68.

population control.⁷² He bases his argument mainly on a statement of Utnapishtim, the flood survivor, to Gilgamesh in The Gilgamesh Epic X.318b-322.⁷³ Here is his reconstruction and translation of the relevant text:

316 šal-lu ù mi-tum ki-i pí a-ḥa-meš-ma
 317 šá mu-ti ul iṣ-ṣi-ru ṣa-lam-šú
 318 lú.u₁₈.lu-ú amēlu e-dil
 ul-tu ik-ru-bu [x (x)]
 319 ^da-nun-na-ki ilānu^{meš} rabûtu^{meš} paḥ-ru
 320 ^dma-am-me-tum ba-na-at šim-ti
 itti-šú-nu ši-ma-tú i-šim-[me]
 321 iṣ-tak-nu mu-ta u ba-la-ṭa
 322 ša mu-ti ul ud-du-ú ūmī^{meš}-šú

316 The prisoner and the dead are alike,
 317 Death itself cannot be depicted,
 318 But *Lullû* - man - is incarcerated.
 After they had pronounced the blessing on me,
 319 The Anunnaku, the great gods, were assembled,
 320 And Mammītum, creatress of destiny,
 Decreed destinies with them.
 321 They established life and death.
 322 Death they fixed to have no ending.⁷⁴

Lambert argues that line 318b "certainly refers" to the events described in The Gilgamesh Epic XI.202 and its context, a section which contains

⁷² Lambert, "Death in Mesopotamia," 58.

⁷³ In Akkadian, there is a Standard Babylonian form of the epic that dates from the last part of the 2nd millennium and was preserved on many 1st millennium tablets. There are also earlier Middle and Old Babylonian forms. A number of Sumerian stories about Gilgamesh have also been preserved that date back at least to the Neo-Sumerian period (George, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, xxiv–xxvii and lx–lxi; Sparks, *Ancient Texts for the Study of the Hebrew Bible*, 275–276). The Standard Babylonian form is used unless noted.

⁷⁴ The transliteration and translation are from Lambert, "Death in Mesopotamia," 54–55. The line numbering comes from George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 696–699. Lambert numbers this section X.iv.27-32.

Utnapishtim's account of being blessed with immortality by Enlil after the flood.⁷⁵ Based on this reading, human mortality would not have been established by the gods until after they blessed Utnapishtim and thereby after the flood. The problem, as Lambert admits, is that the context of The Gilgamesh Epic XI.202 "does not in fact tell of the gods' instituting death."⁷⁶ Therefore Lambert seeks to find a more explicit reference to the institution of mortality in Atrahasis since the account of the flood in The Gilgamesh Epic is based upon it.⁷⁷ He first notes that death is not mentioned at the creation of humans, leaving open the question of when humankind became mortal. He then proposes a reconstruction of some fragmentary lines after the flood that records the decree of the gods to institute death for humans. These lines are in the context of the gods' discussion on how to limit the human population.

[at-ti sa-a]s-sú-ru ba-ni-a-at ši-ma-ti
 [mu-ta šu-uk-ni] a-na ni-ši
 . . .]i-li
 . . .]i-ib-ši

[You], birth-goddess, creatress of destinies,
 [Assign death] to the peoples
 . . .]

⁷⁵ Lambert, "Death in Mesopotamia," 57. This allusion was first proposed by von Soden and has been widely adopted (Wolfram von Soden, "Beiträge zum Verständnis des babylonischen Gilgameš-Epos," *ZA* 53 [1959]: 231; cf. George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 876).

⁷⁶ Lambert, "Death in Mesopotamia," 57.

⁷⁷ Tablets dating from the Old Babylonian and Neo-Assyrian periods have been found along with a few fragments from the Middle and Neo-Babylonian periods (Lambert and Millard, *Atra-ḫasīs*, 31–41).

. . .] let there be⁷⁸

Lambert concludes by noting the similarity with the Genesis account, "in each case man was first created without any limit being fixed on his life-span. As a result of misdemeanor death was laid upon him."⁷⁹

There are good reasons to question Lambert's interpretations of these texts and his conclusions regarding humankind's immortality. The analysis will begin with The Gilgamesh Epic and then proceed to Atrahasis. Finally another relevant text, The Death of Bilgames, will be examined.

2. The Gilgamesh Epic

Lambert's interpretation of The Gilgamesh Epic rests on a questionable textual reconstruction. Lambert interprets X.318b as a reference to Enlil's blessing of Utnapishtim. However, the object of blessing, translated by Lambert as "on me," is not present in the text.⁸⁰ Lambert has reconstructed it based on a hypothetical allusion to Enlil's blessing of Utnapishtim in XI.202. Nevertheless, there are no other indicators in the context that substantiate such an allusion. Utnapishtim's speech before X.318 is very generic, talking about the universal destiny of death for all humans. Also, there is nothing in

⁷⁸ III.vi.47-50, text and translation from Lambert, "Death in Mesopotamia," 58. Lambert tries to strengthen the ties between this passage and The Gilgamesh Epic X.316-322 by noting that in both the mother goddess is given the title *bānāt šīmti*, creatress of destinies, which she bears only one other place in Atrahasis (Lambert, "Death in Mesopotamia," 58).

⁷⁹ Lambert, "Death in Mesopotamia," 58.

⁸⁰ The text is damaged where the object would be, *ul-tu ik-ru-bu [x (x)]*.

his description of the gods' assembly that ties it to the gathering after the flood. Therefore, the more likely object in X.318b is the person just mentioned, primitive man (*lullû amēlu*), "Primitive man was imprisoned. After they blessed [him] . . ." Such a reading would place the assembly right after the creation of humans and fit with the normal use of *lullû* for primeval humans.⁸¹ It would also accord with the ale-wife's words that will be mentioned below. Based on this reading, Utnapishtim in X.318 moves from describing death to explaining its origin. He starts by noting that even primitive humans were imprisoned by death and then elaborates how it came about in the assembly of the gods.

George offers another option. He argues that based on the textual and contextual evidence a variant reading for X.318 should be followed. In the variant, line 318 is read as a single clause which is not connected grammatically to what follows.⁸²

316 šal-lu ù mi-tum ki-i pî a-ḥa-meš-ma
 317 šá mu-ti ul iṣ-ṣi-ru ṣa-lam-šú
 318 lullâ mītu ul ik-ru-ba ka-ra-bi ina māti
 319 ^da-nun-na-ki ilū^{meš} rabûtu^{meš} paḥ-ru
 320 ^dma-am-me-tum ba-na-at šim-ti itti-šú-nu ši-ma-tú i-ši[m-
 ma]
 321 iṣ-tak-nu mu-ta u ba-la-ṭ[a]

⁸¹ Interpreters have often taken *lullû amēlu* here as a general reference to humankind (Lambert, "Death in Mesopotamia," 56; George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 697). However, it would be the only example of such a use. See the discussion above on *lullû*.

⁸² George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 876. Lambert notes these variants but argues they are corruptions (Lambert, "Death in Mesopotamia," 55–56).

322 ša mu-ti ul ud-du-ú ūmī^{meš}-šú

316 The abducted and the dead, how alike they are!
 317 They cannot draw the picture of death.
 318 The dead do not greet man in the land.
 319 The Anunnaki, the great gods, were in assembly,
 320 Mammītum, who creates destiny, made a decree with them;
 321 death and life they did establish,
 322 the day of death they did not reveal.⁸³

Note the important change in line 318 from *ul-tu* "when" to *ul* "not." If this reading is accepted, no time reference for the assembly of the gods is given in the text. Both of the above options are more likely than Lambert's and remove the main support for his overall interpretation.

Another problem with Lambert's reading of X.318b-322 is that it does not fit the narrative flow of The Gilgamesh Epic. First, the episode of blessing by Enlil (XI.202-205) does not mention establishing death and life but only the deification of Utnapishtim, as Lambert admits.⁸⁴ Second, a reference to Enlil's blessing in X.318b would be out of sequence since in tablet XI Gilgamesh is still ignorant of how Utnapishtim gained immortality. He knows that it involved an assembly of the gods, but he was ready to beat the rest of the details out

⁸³ George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 696–699. Parpola adopts a similar form of this reading in his critical text (Simo Parpola, *The Standard Babylonian Epic of Gilgamesh: Cuneiform Text, Transliteration, Glossary, Indices and Sign List* [SAACT 1; Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1997], 106).

⁸⁴ George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 876–877. Lambert offers no explanation for this lack (Lambert, "Death in Mesopotamia," 57).

of Utnapishtim.⁸⁵ The account of how Utnapishtim received life is the "secret of the gods" promised by Utnapishtim in XI.9-10 and the climax of the flood story.⁸⁶ Third, the blessing of Enlil in XI.203-204 does not make sense if humans were previously immortal. Enlil bestows a change upon Utnapishtim that contrasts with Utnapishtim's former state, not with the state of the rest of humankind.⁸⁷ Also, Utnapishtim is relating this account to Gilgamesh to show that the immortality he seeks can only be conferred by an assembly of the gods, as was done for him.⁸⁸ Fourth, an Old Babylonian form of the text has the ale-wife try to dissuade Gilgamesh from his journey by stating that the gods made humans mortal at their creation.

1 ^dGIŠ e-eš ta-da-a-al
 2 ba-la-ṭám ša ta-sa-aḥ-ḥu-ru la tu-ut-ta
 3 i-nu-ma ilū(dinger)^{meš} ib-nu-ú a-wi-lu-tam
 4 mu-tam iš-ku-nu a-na a-wi-lu-tim
 5 ba-la-ṭám i-na qá-ti-šu-nu iṣ-ša-ab-tu

⁸⁵ See IX.75-77 and XI.1-7.

⁸⁶ George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 876. Note that the same phrase, the "secret of the gods," is used before Utnapishtim's mention of the secret plant (XI.281-282).

⁸⁷ "In the past Ūta-napišti was (one of) mankind, but now Ūta-napišti and his woman shall be like us gods!" (translated by George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 717). George states, "the plain implication of these words is that Ūta-napišti was formerly mortal but, as of the moment Enlil spoke, became immortal" (George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 508; pace Clifford, *Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible*, 78 n. 41). Noort reaches the same conclusion in his narrative analysis (although he overlooks that the wife of Utnapishtim was also made immortal): "The only possibility for Enlil to accommodate both his original plan and the fact that an individual has survived is to make that individual into a god. Consequently, Utnapishtim is absolutely the only human who is excepted from mortality and granted eternal life" (Ed Noort, "The Stories of the Great Flood: Notes on Gen 6:5-9:17 in Its Context of the Ancient Near East," in *Interpretations of the Flood* [ed. Florentino García Martínez; Leiden: Brill, 1999], 25).

⁸⁸ "But now, who will bring the gods to assembly for you, so you can find the life you search for?" (XI.207-208, translated by George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 717).

1 O Gilgamesh, where are you wandering?
 2 You cannot find the life that you seek:
 3 when the gods created mankind,
 4 for mankind they established death,
 5 life they kept for themselves.⁸⁹

Without a clear rejection or correction of her statement, it is best taken as representative of the view set forth in *The Gilgamesh Epic*.⁹⁰

3. Atrahasis

In the Akkadian myth of Atrahasis, no extant text deals explicitly with the question of human mortality before the flood. There is no statement about an assembly of the gods making humans mortal at creation or elsewhere. Also, it is unclear if humans died of natural causes before the flood. Thus, Lambert's proposed reconstruction of III.vi.47-48, "[You], birth-goddess, creatress of destinies, [Assign death] to the peoples," is certainly possible, not being in conflict with the greater narrative. It also fits with the population control measures spoken of in this context.

Nevertheless, it must be emphasized that Lambert's reconstruction is just that, a proposal to fill a gap in a text. Thus it should be approached with

⁸⁹ OB VA+BM, iii.1-5, text and translation from George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 278–279.

⁹⁰ Lambert offers the ingenious if ultimately unconvincing explanation that the alewife is only giving the opinion of a post-diluvian, "Sābītum has telescoped all the events from the first creation of man to his reaching his present state" (Lambert, "Death in Mesopotamia," 58).

some degree of skepticism unless there are compelling reasons for its adoption. Lambert argues that in Atrahasis the gods' discussions about limiting humans after the flood "must have dealt with death" since it was not addressed when humans were created.⁹¹ Unfortunately, there are sizable gaps in tablet I, leaving uncertainty about what was addressed at humankind's creation. Also, the narrative may in fact address the issue of death in that human mortality is implied in their creation from clay.⁹² But more importantly, there is no necessity for the narrative to record when the gods instituted death.

Lambert was inspired to look for the institution of death after the flood in Atrahasis because of his conclusions about The Gilgamesh Epic. However, as argued above, The Gilgamesh Epic teaches the opposite, that humans have been mortal from the beginning.⁹³ Are there other texts that align with and would thus strengthen Lambert's position?

⁹¹ Lambert, "Death in Mesopotamia," 57–58.

⁹² Bottéro argues that humans were purposely created of clay "because it implied the inevitability of death" (Jean Bottéro, *Religion in Ancient Mesopotamia* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001], 99). In contrast, Abusch argues that humans inherits the same mortality as gods since they are made from the flesh of a god; they can only die from violence and not from natural death (Tzvi Abusch, "Ghost and God: Some Observations on a Babylonian Understanding of Human Nature," in *Self, Soul, and Body in Religious Experience* [ed. Albert I. Baumgarten, Jan Assmann, and Guy G. Stroumsa; SHR 78; Leiden: Brill, 1998], 367).

⁹³ Oddly, some scholars disagree with Lambert's understanding of The Gilgamesh Epic and yet embrace his reconstruction in Atrahasis. George is one example, although he is influenced by the parallel in The Death of Bilgames which will be discussed below (George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 507).

4. The Death of Bilgames

George argues that the Sumerian work *The Death of Bilgames* found at Meturan lends support to Lambert's reconstruction in *Atrahasis*.⁹⁴ The problem is that the relevant section is too obscure to settle the issue. The passage contains a speech by Enki in the assembly of the gods as they debate whether Bilgames (the Sumerian form of Gilgamesh) has to die.⁹⁵ Enki refers to an oath, sworn at the time of the flood, that from that day on humankind would not have life. This oath was in some way related to the situation of Ziusudra (the Sumerian name for Utnapishtim/Atrahasis).⁹⁶

67//157 That was Enlil's advice that they gave to Enki.

⁹⁴ George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 507. Old Babylonian fragments were found at both Nippur and Meturan. The work probably originates in the Neo-Sumerian period (Antoine Cavigneaux and Farouk N. H. Al-Rawi, *Gilgamesh et la mort. Textes de Tell Haddad VI* [CM 19; Groningen: STYX, 2000], 10–11).

⁹⁵ The assembly of the gods appears in a dream to Bilgames. The contents of this dream are then related again later in the text, possibly as they are told to an interpreter or as they are fulfilled (Niek Veldhuis, "The Solution of the Dream: A New Interpretation of Bilgames' Death," *JCS* 53 [2001]: 133–48). The overall subject of debate in the assembly is clear enough, whether Bilgames has to die, but the particulars of the argument are less certain. The assembly begins with Enlil (based on line 67//157) reciting a list of Bilgames' accomplishments, including his visit to Ziusudra (lines 52-61//143-151). There is then a short break of 3-4 lines (lines 62-65//153-155; note that the gaps are given different lengths in Cavigneaux and Al-Rawi, *Gilgamesh et la mort*, 27 and 31). After the break, his speech (or a different short speech?) ends with a line that seems to call for special treatment for Bilgames, "now, Bilgames should not be taken away just like that" (line 66//156, translated by Veldhuis, "The Solution of the Dream," 141). The following lines are Enki's reply and decision, although it is debated where Enki's speech ends and whether he is arguing for or against eternal life for Bilgames.

⁹⁶ There is no extant copy of a Sumerian account of Bilgames' journey to Ziusudra. It has been proposed that the Sumerian composition *Bilgames and Huwawa* originally contained such an account since the opening lines mention Bilgames thinking of the Living One (lu₂.ti.la), a title more appropriate to Ziusudra than Huwawa (George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 97–98).

68//158 Enki answered An and Enlil:
 69//159 "In yonder days, in far-off days,
 70//160 in yonder nights, in far-off nights,
 71//161 in yonder years, in far-off years,
 72//162 after the assembly had made the Deluge sweep over
 73//163 so that we could destroy the seed of mankind (we said):
 74//164 "in our midst, you are the only man living,
 75//165 Ziusudra is the name of humanity living."⁹⁷
 76//166 From that day I swore by the life of heaven and earth,⁹⁸
 77//167 from that day I swore that mankind will not have
 eternal life.⁹⁹
 78//168 Now they (= An and Enlil) have set their eyes on
 Bilgames,

⁹⁷ The meaning of lines 74-75 is especially difficult to grasp. Note the ETCSL translation, "among us I was the only one who was for life (?), and so he remained alive (?) -- Zi-ud-sura, although (?) a human being, remained alive (?)" (ETCSL 1.8.1.3, A version from Me-Turan, Segment F lines 32-33). Cavigneaux and Al-Rawi comment about lines 73-77, "Dans ce passage capital, qui nous donne le Déluge dans la version des dieux et leur philosophie de l'événement, le sumérien est très difficile . . . Notre traduction est souvent incertaine!" (Cavigneaux and Al-Rawi, *Gilgamesh et la mort*, 41).

⁹⁸ It is debated whether the verb here is causative or not. Cavigneaux and Al-Rawi translate with a causative sense, "Depuis ce jour tu m'as fait jurer par le ciel et par la terre" (Cavigneaux and Al-Rawi, *Gilgamesh et la mort*, 56). The pronominal elements seem to indicate a two-participant transitive with a 1st person singular absolute pronominal suffix and a 3rd person singular pronominal prefix, /mu.n.pad₃.en.am/, "he caused me to swear". The 3rd person referent could be Enlil, the god whom Enki had to appease after the flood in all the extant editions of the flood account.

An oath sworn by gods after the flood is also seen in The Sumerian Flood Story 251-252, although its participants and content are unclear. The verb used has a 2nd person plural pronominal element that has been taken as either the absolute or ergative. Both Jacobsen and Kramer understand An and Enlil as taking the oath, probably at the prompting of Enki, to establish their relationship with Ziusudra (Jacobsen, "The Eridu Genesis," 525; Kramer, "The Sumerian Deluge Myth," 120). The ETCSL translation depicts an understanding of this passage that could be parallel to the oath in The Death of Bilgames in that An and Enlil make someone else take the oath, "They have made you swear by heaven and earth, An and Enlil have made you swear by heaven and earth," (ETCSL 1.7.4 Segment E lines 1-2).

⁹⁹ It is clear from the context that the life being talked about is immortality or eternal life even though the common verb *til*₃, to live, is used.

Cavigneaux and Al-Rawi argue that Enki's speech ends in line 77 (//167). They understand line 78 (//168) as an interpretive narrative aside, "Voilà ce qui est montré à Gilgamesh" (Cavigneaux and Al-Rawi, *Gilgamesh et la mort*, 41 and 56).

79//169 but I cannot save him because of his mother!¹⁰⁰
 80//170 Bilgames, among the spirits, dead in the underworld
 81//171 let him be the governor of the underworld, let him be
 the foremost of its spirits!"¹⁰¹

George interprets the oath as an agreement by the gods after the flood to make humans mortal by decreeing death upon them, similar to Lambert's reconstruction of Atrahasis.¹⁰² However, it is just as or more probable that the gods are here swearing that they will no longer grant eternal life to another human as they did to Ziusudra.¹⁰³ First, Enki brings up Ziusudra and not pre-flood humanity in his buildup to the description of the oath, focusing the contrast on how the gods dealt with Ziusudra versus how they will deal with humans in the future. This contrast does not solve the argument, since these lines are very difficult to understand, but it leaves open two possibilities: that Ziusudra is distinct because he alone was not made mortal or that he is distinct because he alone was made immortal. The latter is seen in other literature and thus should be given greater weight here.¹⁰⁴ Second, the larger

¹⁰⁰ The ETCSL translation of lines 78-79 (//168-169) present Enki as arguing for eternal life for Bilgames, despite the oath, based on his maternal descent, "Now, as we look at Gilgameš, could not he escape because of his mother?" (ETCSL 1.8.1.3, A version from Me-Turan, Segment F lines 36-37).

¹⁰¹ Translated by Veldhuis, "The Solution of the Dream," 141–143.

¹⁰² George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 507.

¹⁰³ It is important to note that both interpretations would be etiologies, either to explain human mortality or why the gods no longer grant immortality to deserving individuals like Bilgames.

¹⁰⁴ See The Sumerian Flood Story 257-258 and The Gilgamesh Epic XI.203-204. This argument from the larger literary context does not assume that all Mesopotamian texts must

context highlights death as the common, inevitable fate of all humans, with no distinction made concerning those before the flood.¹⁰⁵ Third, the Nippur version of the text contains a rebuke for Bilgames' sorrow in which eternal life is described as something bestowed by the gods. Mortality would seem to be the normal condition.

Great Mountain Enlil, the father of the gods, conversed in the dream with the lord Bilgames: 'O Bilgames, I made your destiny a destiny of kingship, but I did not make it a destiny of eternal life.'¹⁰⁶

Therefore, The Death of Bilgames does lend much if any support to Lambert's reading of Atrahasis.

In conclusion, it seems best to understand the Mesopotamian evidence examined so far as unified in depicting humans as subject to natural death from the beginning. The arguments for original immortality are not convincing. While it may be possible to read Atrahasis and even The Death of Bilgames in this way, it is certainly not probable and would contradict other texts including The Gilgamesh Epic. It is true that Mesopotamian texts are far from uniform in their teaching, and so Atrahasis may contain a unique view of when humans

agree, but that fragmentary and ambiguous texts are best interpreted as in agreement. Otherwise, the interpreter attributes unique ideas to a text without sufficient cause.

¹⁰⁵ The clearest example is in the rebuke of Bilgames' sorrow in lines 92-99 (//182-189). Note especially line 93 (//183), "What my cutting of the umbilical cord brings will now be brought for you" (translated by Veldhuis, "The Solution of the Dream," 142).

¹⁰⁶ N₁ v.12-14, translated by George, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, 203. Note that the reading 'til₃' da-ri₂-še₃, "eternal life," is based on a partial reconstruction (ETCSL 1.8.1.3 Segment E line 14; Cavigneaux and Al-Rawi, *Gilgamesh et la mort*, 16).

became mortal. However, in this instance there are not adequate reasons to assume such a disparity.

C. Enki and Ninhursaga and the Land of Dilmun

1. Dilmun in General

Based on the description of Dilmun in Sumerian literature, some scholars, especially earlier ones, think that ancient Mesopotamians considered Dilmun to have once been a paradise free from predation, death and disease. Dilmun has often been compared to the biblical garden of Eden. More recent scholarship questions such an interpretation although it persists among biblical commentators. The Mesopotamians may have viewed Dilmun as exotic, remote, and even prosperous, but never as the location of a primeval paradise. The main evidence comes from the initial description of Dilmun in the Sumerian myth Enki and Ninhursaga, which will be examined below.

Dilmun has been identified with the island of Bahrain in the Persian Gulf, although the referent probably varied somewhat and may have included the mainland near the island during certain periods.¹⁰⁷ In antiquity, Bahrain had large fresh water aquifers that provided it with plentiful water in an otherwise arid climate. These water sources allowed Dilmun to become a

¹⁰⁷ Alster, "Dilmun, Bahrain, and the Alleged Paradise in Sumerian Myth and Literature," 52.

trading emporium and to cultivate its famous dates.¹⁰⁸ In Enki and Ninhursaga, it is Enki who provides Dilmun with its water.

Another unusual feature of Bahrain is the surprisingly large number of tumuli on the island. Earlier scholars interpret these graves as proof of foreign burials or reburials and argue that Mesopotamians were buried in Dilmun since it was regarded as a paradise.¹⁰⁹ At present, however, the dominant theory is that all of the tumuli were made by the indigenous population.¹¹⁰

Dilmun is also mentioned as the eternal, gods-given home of Ziusudra after the flood in The Sumerian Flood Story.¹¹¹ Some have taken this reference as another indication that Mesopotamians thought of Dilmun as an

¹⁰⁸ An example of Dilmun's fame as a trading emporium is seen in the introduction of Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta where the lack of foreign trade is symbolized by stating that Dilmun did not yet exist (line 12). The fame of Dilmun's dates is shown in two texts which seek to elevate the esteem of their own dates by asserting priority over Dilmun: "Before Dilmun existed, palm trees grew in my city. Before Dilmun existed, palm trees grew in Nibru" (ETCSL 1.5.1 lines 34-35); "Before the land of Dilmun ever existed, my house was created from a date palm. Before the land of Dilmun ever existed, Isin was created from a date palm" (ETCSL 4.22.1 lines 93-94). It should be noted that these assertions of a time when Dilmun did not exist would seem to be inconsistent with the idea of Dilmun as a primeval human paradise.

¹⁰⁹ See for example C. C. Lamberg-Karlovsky, "Dilmun: Gateway to Immortality," *JNES* 41 (1982): 45-50.

¹¹⁰ After an analysis of the grave constructions and the grave goods, Crawford concludes, "There is no evidence that any of the burials described were those of foreigners from Mesopotamia or the Indus valley" (Harriet Crawford, *Dilmun and its Gulf Neighbours* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998], 102; cf. Alster, "Dilmun, Bahrain, and the Alleged Paradise in Sumerian Myth and Literature," 53; Geoffrey Bibby, "'The land of Dilmun is holy . . .,'" in *Bahrain Through the Ages: The Archaeology* [ed. Haya Ali Khalifa and Michael Rice; London: KPI, 1986], 192).

¹¹¹ The source for the text is a single tablet from Nippur that is most likely Old Babylonian. A couple small fragments are possibly related (Civil, "The Sumerian Flood Story," 138; Jacobsen, "The Eridu Genesis," 513-514).

"Abode of the Blessed" or the "Land of the Living."¹¹² The text in question states:

Ziusudra, the king, prostrated himself before An (and) Enlil. An (and) Enlil che[rish] Ziusudra, life like a god they give him, breath eternal like a god, they bring down to him. In those days, Ziusudra, the king, the preserver of the name of *níg-gil-ma* (and) the seed of mankind, in the "land of crossing", the land Dilmun, the place where the sun rises, they caused to dwell.¹¹³

From this brief description it is clear that Dilmun was considered remote and exotic enough to be the dwelling for a mortal turned immortal, but nothing more can be deduced about any paradisiacal characteristics.¹¹⁴

The reference to Dilmun in The Sumerian Flood Story is best taken as figurative. Even though it is clear from other texts that Dilmun was a real place, it could still be used as "a mental construct" to denote a remote

¹¹² Samuel Noah Kramer, "Dilmun, the Land of the Living," *BASOR* 96 (1944): 18; Arie van der Kooij, "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* (ed. Katharine J. Dell, Graham Davies, and Yee Von Koh; Leiden: Brill, 2010), 12.

¹¹³ Lines 254-260, translated by Kramer, "The Sumerian Deluge Myth," 121. The last line is variously translated depending on whether *kur* is taken as "land" or "mountain" in its two occurrences, *kur-bal kur-dilmun-na ki-^dutu-è-šè mu-un-tìl-eš* (line 260 in Civil, "The Sumerian Flood Story," 144). Jacobsen translates, "Ziusudra, being king, stepped up before An and Enlil kissing the ground, and An and Enlil after hono[r]ing him] were granting him life like a god's, were making lasting breath of life, like a god's, descend into him. That day they made Ziusudra, preserver, as king, of the name of the small animals and the seed of mankind, live toward the east over the mountains in Mount Dilmun" (*COS* 1.158:515).

¹¹⁴ It is essential to note that Ziusudra was given immortality before living on Dilmun, not by living on Dilmun. Other passages refer to Dilmun as remote or exotic: "in a land as foreign to them as Dilmun" (ETCSL 2.4.1.1 line 65); "My lord, you have given me instructions about every matter, from the sea and the land of Dilmun," (ETCSL 3.1.03 line 4). Dilmun is often listed with other distant lands, like Magan and Meluḥḥa (Sargon Geography 42; Wayne Horowitz, *Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography* [MC 8; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1998], 94 and 328).

place.¹¹⁵ The author does not have to describe how it is that Ziusudra presently lives among the locals in the real Dilmun because that is not the point. Since Ziusudra now has life like a god, he has to live apart like a god, so the author makes reference to a place that everyone in Mesopotamia knew as far off, Dilmun.

That distance and not some life-giving power was the primary image associated with the habitation of the flood hero is more explicit in The Gilgamesh Epic. First, distance is highlighted in the gods' description of Utnapishtim's dwelling, "far away, at the mouth of the rivers,"¹¹⁶ and in his recurring epithet, "the far distant."¹¹⁷ Second, the length of Gilgamesh's journey is emphasized throughout the text, with his various feats, such as crossing the "waters of death,"¹¹⁸ emphasizing the remoteness and inaccessibility of Utnapishtim's dwelling.¹¹⁹ Third, Gilgamesh is never described as seeking the land of immortality or paradise, but Utnapishtim the

¹¹⁵ Piotr Michalowski, "Mental Maps and Ideology: Reflections on Subartu," in *The Origin of Cities in Dry-Farming Syria and Mesopotamia in the Third Millennium B.C.* (ed. Henry Weiss; Guilford, Conn.: Four Quarters, 1986), 134–135. The use of Timbuktu in English is comparable. Other scholars make a similar distinction. Jacobsen notes, "Dilmun was the present Bahrain. Here in the tale it seems to have been considered a faraway, half-mythical place" (Jacobsen, *The Harps That Once--*, 150 n. 18).

¹¹⁶ XI.205, translated by George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 714. On the debate whether "the mouth of the rivers" can be identified with Dilmun, for negative arguments see Alster, "Dilmun, Bahrain, and the Alleged Paradise in Sumerian Myth and Literature," 54; and for positive arguments see George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 519–521.

¹¹⁷ See for example X.250 and XI.1. The Sumerian name Ziusudra can also be analyzed as reflecting remoteness with sudra as the equivalent of the Akkadian epithet *rūqu*, "the far distant" (Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia*, 2).

¹¹⁸ X.84.

¹¹⁹ See especially X.250-253.

immortal.¹²⁰ Fourth, Utnapishtim's island does not have any power to make Gilgamesh immortal; it takes an assembly of the gods.¹²¹

2. Enki and Ninhursaga

The description of Dilmun contained in Enki and Ninhursaga is the main source for the interpretation of Dilmun as idyllic.¹²² It is also the most commonly appealed to text in order to support the presence of a primeval paradise in Mesopotamian literature. Thus this Sumerian myth is worthy of an extended analysis.

Enki and Ninhursaga is made up of at least two somewhat loosely connected stories involving Enki. The break can be seen in the change of characters, from Dilmunite Ninsikila to Mesopotamian Nintur/Ninhursaga, and location, from the land of Dilmun to the marshes of southern Mesopotamia.¹²³ The story line also takes a dramatic shift. The first account describes Enki and Ninsikila in unformed Dilmun, Ninsikila's request for life sustaining water, and Enki's fulfillment. The latter involves Enki's seduction of Nintur/Ninhursaga,

¹²⁰ IX.75-77. Note that the description of the land by the ale-house with its gem bearing trees is more exotic than Utnapishtim's island (IX.171-194).

¹²¹ XI.199-208. Despite some previous suggestions, there is no indication that Utnapishtim's fountain, where Gilgamesh is washed, is "a fountain of youth" (George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 522). Also, it must be emphasized that the plant of rejuvenation is not located on Utnapishtim's island.

¹²² The myth most likely originated in Neo-Sumerian times, although the three versions found are all Old Babylonian (P. Attinger, "Enki et Ninḫursaĝa," *ZA* 74 [1984]: 2; Jacobsen, *The Harps That Once--*, 181).

¹²³ Jacobsen, *The Harps That Once--*, 182; Alster, "Dilmun, Bahrain, and the Alleged Paradise in Sumerian Myth and Literature," 59.

then the daughter from their union, then the daughter from that union, and so on. Eventually Ninhursaga becomes angry with Enki, and he becomes sick. Later Ninhursaga relents and heals him.

The first account begins with a general description of a time when Dilmun was "pure," "clean," and "sacred" and Enki and Ninsikila lay there alone. The account then continues with a list of 15 things that were absent from Dilmun at that time. Among the things listed are some of the afflictions faced in everyday life. This description has been interpreted as portraying a time when Dilmun was a paradise free of sickness and death.¹²⁴

A careful reading of this description will reveal that it is not portraying a paradise but an unformed land. The items listed as absent are not focused on the evils facing humanity, but are a sampling of the normal way of life in ancient Mesopotamia.¹²⁵ Thus they are not listed to indicate that Dilmun had a

¹²⁴Samuel Noah Kramer and W. F. Albright, *Enki and Ninhursag: A Sumerian 'Paradise' Myth* (BASORSup 1; New Haven, Conn.: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1945): 4. Some argue for idyllic images elsewhere in Enki and Ninhursaga. For example, in the second account the quick and easy births of the various goddesses are interpreted as depicting a time before pain in child birth (Kramer and Albright, *Enki and Ninhursag*, 8). These images will not be discussed since they are in general less convincing and dependent on the interpretation of the initial section as paradisiacal.

¹²⁵ It is important to emphasize that even though the first portion of Enki and Ninhursaga is explicitly set in Dilmun, the imagery comes from the cultural sphere of Mesopotamia and not necessarily Dilmun, as would be expected of a Sumerian composition.

different character at that time; instead, they represent what is absent from Dilmun, i.e., normal life.¹²⁶

Transliteration:¹²⁷

- 1 iri^{ki} kug-kug-ga-am₃ e-ne ba-am₃-me-en-ze₂-en
- 2 kur dilmun^{ki} kug-ga-am₃
- 3 ki-en-gi kug-ga e-ne ba-am₃-me-en-ze₂-en
- 4 kur dilmun^{ki} kug-ga-am₃
- 5 kur dilmun^{ki} kug-ga-am₃ kur dilmun sikil-am₃
- 6 kur dilmun^{ki} sikil-am₃ kur dilmun^{ki} dadag-ga-am₃
- 7 dili-ni-ne dilmun^{ki}-a u₃-bi₂-in-nu₂
- 8 ki^den-ki dam-a-ni-da ba-an-da-nu₂-a-ba
- 9 ki-bi sikil-am₃ ki-bi dadag-ga-am₃
- 10 dili-ni-ne dilmun^{ki}-a u₃-bi₂-in-nu₂
- 11 ki^den-ki^dnin-sikil-la ba-an-da-nu₂-a-ba
- 12 ki-bi sikil-am₃ ki-bi dadag-ga-am₃
- 13 dilmun^{ki}-a uga^{mušen} gu₃-gu₃ nu-mu-ni-be₂
- 14 dar^{mušen}-e gu₃ dar^{mušen}-re nu-mu-ni-ib-be₂
- 15 ur-gu-la saĝ ĝiš nu-ub-ra-ra
- 16 ur-bar-ra-ke₄ sila₄ nu-ub-kar-re
- 17 ur-gir₁₅ maš₂ gam-gam nu-ub-zu
- 18 šaĝ₂ še gu₇-gu₇-e nu-ub-zu
- 19 nu-mu-un-su₂ munu₄ ur₃-ra barag₂-ga-ba
- 20 mušen-e an-na munu₄-bi na-an-gu₇-e
- 21 tum₁₂^{mušen}-e saĝ nu-mu-un-da-ru-e
- 22 igi-gig-e igi-gig-me-en nu-mu-ni-be₂
- 23 saĝ-gig-e saĝ-gig-me-en nu-mu-ni-be₂
- 24 um-ma-bi um-ma-me-en nu-mu-ni-be₂
- 25 ab-ba-bi ab-ba-me-en nu-mu-ni-be₂

¹²⁶ Note the similar conclusion of Attinger, "Ce passage célèbre, considéré longtemps comme la description paradisiaque de Dilmun, dépeint en fait Dilmun avant l'apparition de toute vie, et jette par là-même quelque lumière sur la conception que se faisait le Sumérien de l'origine de la vie et de la civilisation" (Attinger, "Enki et Ninĝursaĝa," 33).

¹²⁷ The transliteration of the Sumerian text is from ETCSL 1.1.1 lines 1-28. The lines have been divided and numbered according to Attinger, "Enki et Ninĝursaĝa," 6-9. Textual issues will be discussed in conjunction with the translation.

26 ki-sikil a nu-tu₅-a-ni iri-a nu-mu-ni-ib-sig₁₀-ge
 27 lu₂ id₂-da bal-e ĝi₆-de₃ nu-mu-ni-be₂
 28 niĝir-e zag-ga-na nu-um-niĝin₂-niĝin₂
 29 nar-e e-lu-lam nu-mu-ni-be₂
 30 zag iri-ka i-lu nu-mu-ni-be₂

Translation:

1 The city is pure; you are the ones who allotted it.¹²⁸
 2 Dilmun land is pure.
 3 Sumer is pure; you are the ones who allotted it.
 4 Dilmun land is pure.
 5 Dilmun land is pure, Dilmun land is clean.
 6 Dilmun land is clean, Dilmun land is sacred.
 7 When alone in Dilmun he had lain down,
 8 the land where Enki lay down with his spouse¹²⁹
 9 that land was clean, that land was sacred.
 10 When alone in Dilmun he had lain down,
 11 the land where Enki lay down with Ninsikila
 12 that land was clean, that land was sacred.
 13 In Dilmun, the raven did not cry out any cries.
 14 The francolin did not cry out the francolin cry.
 15 The lion did not kill.
 16 The wolf did not snatch the lamb.
 17 The dog¹³⁰ did not know the subduing of a kid.¹³¹

¹²⁸ Literally, "you (plural) are he who allotted (it)." See the similar construction in Thomsen, *The Sumerian Language*, §582(782):267. This phrase could be understood as addressed to the gods, emphasizing their disposition to Sumer and Dilmun. See also the translations of Jacobsen, "and you are the ones to whom it is allotted" (Jacobsen, *The Harps That Once--*, 185), Attinger, "distribuez-les leur" (Attinger, "Enki et Ninĝursaĝa," 7 and 32), and Alster, "give it you a share" (Alster, "Dilmun, Bahrain, and the Alleged Paradise in Sumerian Myth and Literature," 63).

¹²⁹ Alster argues that Enki and his spouse are depicted as in a creation slumber, "an intermediate stage between existence and non-existence," showing that Dilmun at that time was "not a real world, but a potential one on the border between reality and fiction . . . there is male and female, but no intercourse, and no time reckoning (they are sleeping)" (Bendt Alster, "Enki and Ninĝursaĝa: The Creation of the First Woman," *UF* 10 [1978]: 16). His interpretation is certainly possible, although the verb can also be a euphemism for intercourse.

- 18 The pig did not know the eating of grain.¹³²
 19 The malt barley spread out on the roof by a widow,¹³³
 20 the birds in the sky did not eat that malt barley.

¹³⁰ ur-gir₁₅ is most likely not referring to a specific breed, but is the common word for a domestic dog (Alster, *Proverbs of Ancient Sumer*, 347). Kramer's translation of ur-gir₁₅ as "wild dog" is misleading (Kramer and Albright, "Enki and Ninḫursaĝa," 11; Samuel Noah Kramer and John R. Maier, *Myths of Enki, the Crafty God* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1989], 23).

¹³¹ In line 17 (and 18), the main verb nu-ub-zu can be taken as passive, "the dog . . . was not known," or as active, "the dog . . . did not know" (cf. the translation, "Inconnu est le chien rabattant les chevreaux" by Attinger, "Enki et Ninḫursaĝa," 9). It is possible to argue textually and grammatically for either (Attinger, "Enki et Ninḫursaĝa," 35). Both would also fit the context, although the latter is preferable. All of the surrounding lines are predicating the absence of a characteristic of their subject, not the absence of the subject itself (e.g., "The lion did not kill" not "The killing lion was not"). Thus it is expected that line 17 (and 18) would likewise predicate the absence of a characteristic of the dog (and the pig). Nevertheless, as will be argued below, the point of all the lines is the absence of the subjects (no lions, no dogs, etc.).

If the verb is best taken as active, why did the author break from the normal form of the other lines (i.e., why did he not write, "the dog did not subdue the kid")? A possible explanation is that the author wanted to highlight that the characteristic actions described of the dog and pig are learned actions of domesticated animals, not instinctual actions of wild animals (cf. the translation, "the dog had not been taught to make kids curl up," by Jacobsen, *The Harps That Once--*, 186).

¹³² It is best to understand šaḥ₂ here as a reference to a domesticated pig. šaḥ₂ can be used of both wild and domestic pigs, although wild boars are usually designated as šaḥ₂ ĝiš-gi₄ (Niek Veldhuis, "How to Classify Pigs: Old Babylonian and Middle Babylonian Lexical Texts," in *De La Domestication Au Tabou: Le Cas Des Suidés Dans Le Proche-Orient Ancien* [ed. Brigitte Lion and Cécile Michel; TMRG 1; Paris: De Boccard, 2006], 26–27; cf. Alster, *Proverbs of Ancient Sumer*, 5.57:129). As with other domestic animals, pigs were fed grain, especially to fatten them up for slaughter (David I. Owen, "Pigs and Pig By-Products at Garšana in the Ur III Period," in *De La Domestication Au Tabou: Le Cas Des Suidés Dans Le Proche-Orient Ancien* [ed. Brigitte Lion and Cécile Michel; TMRG 1; Paris: De Boccard, 2006], 78–80). Even though a pig's appetite was proverbial, there is no reason to see an allusion to it here (pace Benjamin R. Foster and Emmanuelle Salgues, "« Everything except the Squeal »: Pigs in Early Mesopotamia," in *De La Domestication Au Tabou: Le Cas Des Suidés Dans Le Proche-Orient Ancien* [ed. Brigitte Lion and Cécile Michel; TMRG 1; Paris: De Boccard, 2006], 288; cf. Alster, *Proverbs of Ancient Sumer*, 8 Sec. B 3:167).

¹³³ nu-mu-un-su₂ is a less common spelling for widow. The more common spelling, nu-mu-un-su, is found in one copy (Attinger, "Enki et Ninḫursaĝa," 8). In the beer-making process, barley is first malted (made to begin germination) and then dried to stop germination. This line is probably describing a widow placing the malted grain on her roof to dry.

- 21 The dove did not toss its head.¹³⁴
 22 The eye-illness did not cry out "I am eye-illness."
 23 The head-illness did not cry out "I am head-illness."
 24 Its¹³⁵ matriarch¹³⁶ did not cry out "I am a matriarch."
 25 Its patriarch did not cry out "I am a patriarch."
 26 The unwashed young woman did not bathe in the city.¹³⁷

¹³⁴ The verb here is disputed. Kramer understands it as *šub* and translated the phrase as, "The dove *droops* not the head" (Kramer, "Enki and Ninḫursaĝa," 10–11). Attinger takes the verb as *ru* and argues, "RU ne peut être lu *šub*, vu le -e (et non -bé!) qui suit" (Attinger, "Enki et Ninḫursaĝa," 36). He suggests that the image is that of a bird strutting, with its head bobbing (Attinger, "Enki et Ninḫursaĝa," 9). A similar image is found in the Debate between Bird and Fish, although a different verb is used: "To strut (du) about in the E-kur is a glory for Bird, as its singing is sweet" (ETCSL 5.3.5 line 168).

¹³⁵ The referent is best taken as Dilmun, from line 13, "In Dilmun . . . its matriarch . . ." (Attinger, "Enki et Ninḫursaĝa," 9 n. 13).

¹³⁶ Translating *um-ma* and *ab-ba* as "old woman" and "old man" is unhelpful since it focuses exclusively on age. Using "matriarch" and "patriarch" or "matron" and "elder" helps to indicate that these terms also designate status in society. They often appear together in descriptions of social groups (cf. Jacob Klein, "Additional Notes to 'the Marriage of Martu,'" in *kinattūtu ša dārāti: Raphael Kutscher Memorial Volume* [ed. Anson F. Rainey; Tel Aviv: Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University, 1993], 103). For example, in The Cursing of Agade, society is divided up in an almost identical fashion as lines 24-27 of Enki and Ninḫursaĝa, "She endowed its old women (*um-ma-bi*) with the gift of giving counsel, she endowed its old men (*ab-ba-bi*) with the gift of eloquence. She endowed its young women (*ki-sikil-bi*) with the gift of entertaining, she endowed its young men (*ĝuruš-bi*) with martial might" (ETCSL 2.1.5 lines 29-32). Note the further societal divisions mentioned in the Marriage of Martu, "He gratified the elders (*ab-ba*) of Inab with golden torcs. He gratified the old women (*um-ma*) of Inab with golden shawl He gratified the men (*ĝuruš*) and women (*munus*) of Inab with golden He gratified the slaves of Inab with and gratified them also with coloured cloths. He gratified the slave-girls of Inab with silver jugs" (ETCSL 1.7.1 lines 115-125).

¹³⁷ The referent of the non-person pronominal prefix in *nu-mu-ni-ib-sig₁₀-ge*, "she did not place/do it," is unclear. It seems best to take the referent as in ellipsis. Attinger understands the prefix as referring to water, a, "aucune jeune femme, non (encore) baignée, ne fait ses ablutions dans la ville . . . Litt: <<(. .) ne jette son eau.>>" However, he admits "Le sens de cette expression est peu clair, la traduction proposée donc une simple conjecture" (Attinger, "Enki et Ninḫursaĝa," 9 n. 14, cf. Alster, "Dilmun, Bahrain, and the Alleged Paradise in Sumerian Myth and Literature," 63). The translation takes the referent as the compound verb *a...tu₅*, "the unwashed young woman did not place it (washing) in the city." A similar use of the verb *sig₁₀* with a non-person pronominal prefix referring to a verbal idea is seen in Bilgames' Death, *gub-ba nu-ub⁷-sig₁₀-ge tuš-a nu-ub-sig₁₀-ge a-nir im-ĝa₂-ĝa₂*, "Unable to stand up, unable to sit down, he laments" (ETCSL 1.8.1.3, Nibru, Segment A line 15). However, there are some textual issues with this line (Cavigneaux and Al-Rawi, *Gilgames*

- 27 The man crossing the river did not cry out "....."¹³⁸
 28 The herald in his district did not make rounds.¹³⁹
 29 The singer did not cry out an *elulam*,¹⁴⁰
 30 at the border of the city, he did not cry out¹⁴¹ an *ilu*.¹⁴²

et la mort, 38). Jacobsen translates, "No maiden was as she is in her unwashed state in the city" (Jacobsen, *The Harps That Once--*, 186). His reasoning is not apparent.

¹³⁸ The meaning of what the man cries is debated. Attinger suggests it is an "onomatopée exprimant l'effort ou cri permettant de cadencer les mouvements" (Attinger, "Enki et Ninĥursaĝa," 11 n. 15; cf. Kramer and Maier, *Myths of Enki, the Crafty God*, 209 n. 7). Other translators read some form of ĝi₆ (night) as the substance of the cry: "It is getting dark!" (Jacobsen, *The Harps That Once--*, 186); "It's midnight" (Alster, "Dilmun, Bahrain, and the Alleged Paradise in Sumerian Myth and Literature," 63).

The combination id₂-da...bal can be taken as "to cross a river" (Attinger, "Enki et Ninĥursaĝa," 9; cf. ETCSL 3.2.02 line 3; Alster, *Proverbs of Ancient Sumer*, UET 6/2 271:312). Crossing rivers was a feature of normal life in Mesopotamia (see ETCSL 2.5.3.4 line 43; ETCSL 5.6.1 line 189; and Alster, *Proverbs of Ancient Sumer*, 3.88:96). It is also possible to interpret it as "to dig a canal," "to dredge a river" (Jacobsen, *The Harps That Once--*, 186; ETCSL 1.1.1 line 25). However, the verb "to dig" is usually written ba-al (ETCSL 1.7.3 line 32; 2.4.1.1, A version from Nibru, line 225; 2.4.1.4, A version from Urim, line 4; 2.6.7.1 line 54)

¹³⁹ Alster's translation is also possible, "the herald circles not round himself," although its meaning is less than apparent (Alster, "Dilmun, Bahrain, and the Alleged Paradise in Sumerian Myth and Literature," 63). Jacobsen's translation of niĝir as a constable is possible but not as likely in this context (Jacobsen, *The Harps That Once--*, 186). In texts referring to humans, the niĝir is usually the one to proclaim the message given by those in authority. "A seal inscribed with the name of Ur-DUN, the merchant, was lost. In accordance with the word of the assembly, the herald (niĝir) has sounded the horn throughout all the streets: no one now has any claim against him" (ETCSL 5.7.a lines 1-4). But in texts referring to gods, especially Ĥendursaĝa, the niĝir not only proclaims but enforces the decree or justice in general. See the description of Ĥendursaĝa in The Nanshe Hymn 175-249 in Jacobsen, *The Harps That Once--*, 138-142.

¹⁴⁰ An *elulam* is some type of song or cry, but its precise nature is elusive since it is rare. *elulam* has been interpreted as, "Cri exprimant la joie" (Attinger, "Enki et Ninĥursaĝa," 11 n. 17), as "work songs" (Jacobsen, *The Harps That Once--*, 186), and as a "wail" (Kramer and Albright, "Enki and Ninĥursag," 11).

¹⁴¹ Jacobsen's passive translation, "and no wailings were wailed in the city's outskirts there," is a possible reconstruction (Jacobsen, *The Harps That Once--*, 186). Nevertheless, based on its extensive use elsewhere in the context, the transitive form, nu-mu(-ni-be₂), is more likely (Attinger, "Enki et Ninĥursaĝa," 8).

¹⁴² An *ilu* is a term that often occurs in contexts of sadness but can also occur in contexts of praise or joy (Attinger, "Enki et Ninĥursaĝa," 11 n. 18; cf. Lugalbanda I 262).

The initial terms describing Dilmun as "pure," "clean," and "sacred" in lines 1-12 are not used to describe it as a land apart but as a place fit for the dwelling of the gods. Similar terminology is found elsewhere to describe places in Sumer that are appropriate for temples.¹⁴³ Note that Sumer is also called "pure" in the third line. Thus the author is here comparing the land of Dilmun to that of Sumer. Both are places the gods have chosen to inhabit.¹⁴⁴ This description fits with one purpose of Enki and Ninhursaga, the integration of Dilmun and its chief god into the Sumerian world. Thus the account focuses on the presence of Sumerian gods in Dilmun when the city was founded and ends with the birth of Dilmun's chief god, Ensag, who is begotten by Enki.

The author's description of Dilmun at that time continues in the following lines. The list given in lines 13-30 describes not a former paradise, but a time before normal life had developed, an "inchoate state."¹⁴⁵ In order to properly understand these lines, three key issues need to be addressed. First, what is the author expressing by using these negations? Second, how

¹⁴³For example, "let them establish places of divination in pure (kug) places" (ETCSL 1.7.4 Segment A line 7), and, "They cleaned (sakil) the E-ninnu, they polished (dadag) it" (ETCSL 2.1.7 lines 896-897). Note the similar terminology used for Dilmun in Enki and the World Order, "He cleansed (sakil) and purified (dadag) the land of Dilmun. He placed Ninsikila in charge of it" (ETCSL 1.1.3 lines 238-239).

¹⁴⁴ Bottéro and Kramer label this section, "Éclat de Dilmun comparable à Sumer" (Jean Bottéro, *Lorsque Les Dieux Faisaient L'homme: Mythologie Mésopotamienne* [Paris: Gallimard, 1989], 152). Batto concludes, "These are, then, not so much statements about paradisiacal conditions as about the suitability of the place as a cultic center" (Batto, "Paradise Reexamined," 40).

¹⁴⁵ Jacobsen, *The Harps That Once--*, 186.

are the elements mentioned characterized? Are they all unpleasant and harmful or are they mixed? And third, what was the author's purpose for the list?

Each line states that a characteristic of some being or thing was not yet occurring. The question is whether only the characteristic was absent or the being or thing itself. Interpreters have been inconsistent on this point.¹⁴⁶ The first step to a solution is to note that the various characteristics mentioned are best understood as a defining or distinguishing characteristic of that being or thing.¹⁴⁷ The first four lines of the list (13-16) contain clear examples of this principle: nothing is more distinctive of a bird than its cries, lions are paradigmatic carnivores, and wolves are a proverbial threat to the flock.¹⁴⁸ In some other lines, the connection is not as clear because of the difficulties in the grammar or imagery, as in the descriptions of the young woman and man in lines 26-27.¹⁴⁹ Nevertheless, overall this interpretation seems valid.

¹⁴⁶ Kramer and Maier state that the animals mentioned are absent, not just their characteristics, but seem to assume that people are present, "It depicts Dilmun as . . . a land where there are no birds to disturb its peace; where there are no wild animals preying on their victims; a land unfamiliar with sickness, aging, or (perhaps) death" (Kramer and Maier, *Myths of Enki, the Crafty God*, 23).

¹⁴⁷ Attinger states that these characteristics are "essentielle" (Attinger, "Enki et Ninḫursaĝa," 34 n. 63).

¹⁴⁸ On lions and wolves, see Enmerkar and Ensuhgirana 48-49; Alster, *Proverbs of Ancient Sumer*, 5.64:131 and 5.B75:134. Other clear examples of distinguishing characteristics would be the herald making rounds in line 28 and the singer(s) singing in lines 29-30.

¹⁴⁹ It is not obvious why a woman's bathing and a man's crying out while crossing a river are characteristic actions (cf. Attinger, "Enki et Ninḫursaĝa," 34 n. 63). The former could

Therefore, the characteristics should not be understood as negative elements that could be removed from some being or thing, leaving it in a better state. Instead, their absence is being used to indicate that the being or thing itself did not yet exist.¹⁵⁰ For example, stating that "the raven did not cry out cries" is not describing a time when there were ravens of a different nature which made no sound or a different sound; instead, it is a way to state that ravens did not yet exist. Likewise, statements about young women and men are not describing a time when young women and men were different, but that humans did not yet exist. Lines 13-30 are a more poetic way to state, "There was no raven, there was no francolin, there was no lion . . ." ¹⁵¹

Among the absent characteristics listed in lines 13-30, there are a number that are to some degree unpleasant or harmful, at least to humans. The clearest examples are the predatory nature of lions and wolves (15-16), the malt-stealing of birds (19-20), and the experience of illness (22-23). It is

be tied to a young woman's menstrual cycle. Also, both involve water and could thereby prepare for the lack of water mentioned immediately after these lines.

¹⁵⁰ Note especially lines 22-24. These lines are surely indicating more than that illnesses or older people are not crying out. They are not crying out because there are no illnesses or older people.

¹⁵¹ For uses of negation similar to lines 13-30, see Clifford, *Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible*, 28; J. J. A. van Dijk, "Le motif cosmique dans la pensee sumerienne," *AO 28* (1964): 40–41; Piotr Michalowski, "Negation as Description: The Metaphor of Everyday Life in Early Mesopotamian Literature," in *Velles Paroles: Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Honor of Miguel Civil* (ed. Piotr Michalowski et al.; AO 9; Barcelona: Sabadell, 1991), 131–136. Such rhetorical use of negation is found in many places. Note the description of the location of the Anzud bird's nest in Lugalbanda II 37, "where no snake slithers, no scorpion scurries," *muš nu-un-sul-sul ġir₂ nu-sa-sa* (translated by Vanstiphout, *Epics of Sumerian Kings*, 138–139). The description does not mean that it is a place where snakes and scorpions are different, but one where they do not live.

debatable whether other characteristics listed could also be viewed as unpleasant or harmful, but it is hard to argue that all of them should be viewed that way.

For example, one proverb lists the raven with other (scary?) wild animals, "Above a raven, below a mongoose, in the steppe a lion,, my husband! where shall I go?"¹⁵² Thus there is some evidence that ravens were not viewed favorably. However, does the same apply to the other birds mentioned? Are francolins and doves, mentioned in lines 14 and 21, really such troublesome birds that their absence conjures up images of paradise? Such a reading is not self-evident.

The lack of singing in lines 29-30 has been interpreted as a world free of mourning.¹⁵³ Nevertheless, it is far from certain that only sad songs are mentioned in these lines. It seems better to tie these lines into the larger theme of total silence, emphasized by the repetition of the verb *nu-mu-ni-be₂* nine times.

The imagery concerning the dog in line 17 is particularly hard to interpret. Dogs in Mesopotamia were used for hunting, as watchdogs, for keeping flocks, and as pets.¹⁵⁴ But dogs were not always views positively since

¹⁵² Alster, *Proverbs of Ancient Sumer*, 1.128:28.

¹⁵³ Kramer and Maier, *Myths of Enki, the Crafty God*, 24.

¹⁵⁴ Oded Borowski, *Every Living Thing: Daily Use of Animals in Ancient Israel* (Walnut Creek: AltaMira, 1998), 134–137.

they could be quarrelsome, sometimes bothered the livestock, and are even listed among a group of fear-causing animals.¹⁵⁵ Thus the basic image in line 17 is clear enough, the dog making the kid crouch, but it is debated whether that action is beneficial, herding the kid, or destructive, attacking the kid.¹⁵⁶ The former seems preferable.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵ See Alster, *Proverbs of Ancient Sumer*, 3.95:97 and 5.92:138.; ETCSL 1.6.2 line 430; and Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta 138, which is discussed below.

¹⁵⁶ The verb *gam* refers to the physical posture of bending, bowing down or crouching and thus can be used for the idea of submission in general (of Inana, ETCSL 1.4.1 line 164; of foreign countries, ETCSL 2.2.4 lines 242-243; of wrestlers ETCSL 1.8.2.1 line 355). In two examples involving animals, *gam* refers to the physical posture of animals that are resting (Gudea CyLB.iv.18-19) and that have been rebuked (Alster, *Proverbs of Ancient Sumer*, 5.36:125). One seemingly relevant, though unclear, use has been interpreted as involving dogs and guarding, "Ninkasi, it is you who water the earth-covered malt; the noble dogs (ur me-me) guard (*gam-gam-ma-am₃*) it even from the potentates (?)" (ETCSL 4.23.1 lines 23-24). *gam* is also used to describe the killing of an animal in Lugalbanda I 355, "Like a *bullfighter* he must take on the brown buffalo, the highland buffalo; like a wrestler he must subdue it" (translated by Vanstiphout, *Epics of Sumerian Kings*, 123).

¹⁵⁷ Based on the use of dogs in Mesopotamia, it is certainly possible to take ur-gir₁₅ in line 17 as a sheep dog (cf. Attinger, "Enki et Ninġursaġa," 9 n. 7; Batto, "Paradise Reexamined," 39). The shepherd Dumuzid is described as having a dog: "the black dog, your shepherd dog (ur nam-sipad-da-zu), the noble dog (ur gir₁₅), your lordly dog" (ETCSL 1.4.3 lines 95-97). On a cylinder seal the shepherd Etana is depicted shepherding his sheep with dogs (Dominique Collon, *Ancient Near Eastern Art* [Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1995], 78–79 fig. 59f; cf. J. M. Aynard, "Animals in Mesopotamia," in *Animals in Archaeology* [ed. Alan Houghton Brodrick; New York: Praeger, 1972], 52 and 56–57). Sheep dogs protected the flocks (Alster, *Proverbs of Ancient Sumer*, 5.56:129 and 403) and most likely watched over or herded them (Borowski, *Every Living Thing*, 135; Aynard, "Animals in Mesopotamia," 57; although cf. Terence Clark, "The Dogs of the Ancient Near East," in *Dogs in Antiquity: Anubis to Cerberus: The Origins of the Domestic Dog* [ed. Douglas Brewer, Terence Clark, and Adrian Phillips; Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 2001], 60–61). The Akkadian dispute poem The Fable of the Fox contains a boast of the dog about his shepherding abilities, "I take my onerous place before the sheep, Their lives are entrusted to me, instead of to shepherds or herdsmen, I am sent off on my regular path in the open country and the watering place, I go around the fold . . . At my baying, panther, tiger, lion, wildcat take to flight . . . No rustler thieves [from] my pens!" (translated by Benjamin R. Foster, *Before the*

In the larger context, everything lacking is not harmful. Immediately following the present passage, Ninsikila bemoans to Enki the lack of fresh water in Dilmun. Only after Enki provides this life-sustaining liquid can Dilmun then prosper into the thriving trading emporium described at the end of the first section.¹⁵⁸ Thus, like the lack of fresh water, the elements lacking in lines 13-30 should not be viewed as a list of afflictions.¹⁵⁹

An analysis of the structure of the passage will also help in determining its purpose. The list can be divided into sections on animals and on humans. Each of those sections can be divided again into sections dealing with nature and culture.¹⁶⁰ A final sub-division can be made, resulting in a chiastic

Muses: An Anthology of Akkadian Literature [3rd ed.; Bethesda Md.: CDL Press, 2005], 930; cf. W. G. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960], 192–193).

Another possible, though less probable, understanding of this line is to see the dog's action in the context of a hunt. Dogs were used to chase wild animals and hold them and keep them until their master came. In this understanding, maš₂ would be taken as a wild goat (cf. Lugalbanda I 314).

¹⁵⁸ Alster, "Dilmun, Bahrain, and the Alleged Paradise in Sumerian Myth and Literature," 58–59.

¹⁵⁹ Batto argues, "Any assessment of these predications of non-existence must take into consideration that desirable as well as undesirable elements did not exist at that time" (Batto, "Paradise Reexamined," 39).

¹⁶⁰ In the animal section, the animals in the nature subdivision are non-domesticated and associated with the countryside. Those in the culture subdivision are domesticated or associated with the city. For example, the dar^{mušen}, francolin, was paradigmatic of the countryside, "The *irsag*-bird, its voice befits the garden. The francolin, its voice befits the fields" (Alster, *Proverbs of Ancient Sumer*, 6.32–33:150). In contrast the tum₁₂^{mušen}, dove, was often domesticated and dwelt in the city, "Like a pigeon on its window ledge it took counsel with itself" (ETCSL 1.4.4 line 139).

In the human section, the characteristics in the nature subdivision are things that people experience. Those in the culture subdivision are activities that people do.

structure for both the animal and human sections.¹⁶¹ The structure can be diagrammed thus:

Animals (13-21)
 Nature (13-16)
 Birds (13-14)
 Quadrupeds (15-16)
 Culture (17-21)
 Quadrupeds (17-18)
 Birds (19-21)
 Humans (22-30)
 Nature (22-25)
 Ailments (22-23)
 Older People (24-25)
 Culture (26-30)
 Younger People (26-27)
 Activities (28-30)¹⁶²

The structuring of lines 13-30 helps to show that the list is not composed of the various afflictions facing humans but represents the totality

¹⁶¹ Note also a possible inclusio structure as the list begins and ends with the lack of the songs (cries) of birds and people.

¹⁶² This structure is a slightly modified form of that given by Attinger. He labels the animal sections as "sauvages" and "domestiques" and differently divides and labels the last two sections, calling lines 26-28 "soins corporels, métiers" and lines 29-30 as "chant" (Attinger, "Enki et Ninḫursaĝa," 34). He admits, though, that lines 26-28 do not fit together well (Attinger, "Enki et Ninḫursaĝa," 34 n. 63). It is better to divide as indicated above since lines 26-27 use terms that focus on gender and age (or social status) whereas lines 28-30 use terms that focus on a person's job or activity. Attinger recognizes the animal section as a chiasm but not the human section (Attinger, "Enki et Ninḫursaĝa," 34). The chiastic structure of the human section is not as clear as that for the animal section, but the tie between the two central portions is strengthened when it is noticed that the order of um-ma, ab-ba, ki-sikil, and lu₂ is quite similar to lists seen elsewhere to denote the totality of human society (see the footnote on line 24 in the translation). Thus it is not old age in general that is absent, but every level of Dilmun's social structure.

of living creatures as seen in both nature and culture. There is no focus on harmful or malevolent phenomena, just a sampling from all areas of life.¹⁶³

It is worth noting that not every undesirable element is negated in lines 13-30. Widows are mentioned in line 19, and it is only the birds that eat their malt that are described as absent. Does that mean that widows and death were therefore present? No, the point is that the whole situation, as an example of normal life, was absent.¹⁶⁴

Lines 13-30 are consistent with the use of negation elsewhere to describe normal life. Michalowski notes, "Negation is thus a rhetorical and stylistic device. It is one of the few rhetorically limited formal contexts in which descriptions of realia appear in Sumerian literature."¹⁶⁵ Two Sumerian works directed to Utu provide a helpful comparison. In both, the early sections use positive description and negation to praise Utu. Among the negations is a particularly close parallel to line 16 of Enki and Ninhursaga.

¹⁶³ In fact, the cultural elements are given a slightly greater weight since 5 lines are used in both of these sections versus 4 lines in those dealing with nature.

¹⁶⁴ Kramer and Maier note that the presence of the widow would seem to indicate that death was present in Dilmun, but then they make the unconvincing suggestion that maybe it was just an error by the author: "the poet was depicting a harassing action by birds with which he was familiar in his own day and place, and therefore could not occur in paradisaic Dilmun, not realizing that there were no widows there" (Kramer and Maier, *Myths of Enki, the Crafty God*, 209 n. 5).

It is uncertain why a widow is used in this image. Possibly, a widow best exemplifies an urban setting since she would be less prone to live on her own but would seek the safety and care provided in the city. Note the references to "the sons of the widows" (dumu nu-mu-un-su-a-ke₄) portrayed as a group in the city (ETCSL 1.8.1.2, unknown provenance, Segment B line 82; Me-Turan, Segment D lines 30 and 56; and ETCSL 1.8.1.4 Version A line 153).

¹⁶⁵ Michalowski, "Negation as Description," 134.

^dutu za-e-da nu-me-a ur-bar-ra sila₄ nu-kar-kar
 Utu, without you the wolf does not snatch away the lamb¹⁶⁶

This seemingly harmful action, along with a few others like it, is included among a list of mostly beneficial actions.¹⁶⁷ The point seems clear: without Utu many (or all) of the normal elements of life would be absent.

The use of both pleasant and unpleasant elements to characterize normal life is seen elsewhere in Mesopotamian literature. The list of the cultural norms, me, found in the Sumerian work *Inana and Enki* contains elements that do not seem beneficial ("slander," dishonesty," "deceit," "the rebellious land," and "dispute") and some that seem questionable ("prostitution," "the (wise) state of old age," "fear," and "the bitter toothed").¹⁶⁸ This practice fits with the positive but realistic view of civilization seen elsewhere. As was argued above, the granting of civilization by the gods was a blessing, but it had consequences that were not always so positive.

¹⁶⁶ Line 23, text and translation from Mark E. Cohen, "Another Utu Hymn," *ZA* 67 (1977): 6–7. It is contained on an Old Babylonian tablet (Cohen, "Another Utu Hymn," 3). Parallel to it is line 47 in the *Incantation to Utu* which is preserved on Old, Middle, and Neo-Babylonian tablets (Bendt Alster, "Incantation to Utu," *ASJ* 13 (1991): 33–35). The copies vary and read either the verb *ra* 'to slay' or *kar* 'to snatch' (Alster, "Incantation to Utu," 45–46 and 72).

¹⁶⁷ Positive activities mentioned as lacking without Utu include justice, kingship, the establishment of priests, and gathering food. Actions associated with death or destruction include "the lion hiding itself in the fields could not snatch (?) the kid . . . the great dragon-snake could not kill . . . the bird could not be caught in a snare . . . no fish would go into a net . . . city walls could not be destroyed, their cities could not be overthrown" (Alster, "Incantation to Utu," 72–73).

¹⁶⁸ Translated by Gertrud Farber (*COS* 1.161:523). The extant tablets are Old Babylonian (Farber, *COS* 1.161:523).

The purpose of lines 13-30 of Enki and Ninhursaga is not to portray a place lacking every evil, a paradise lacking death and disease.¹⁶⁹ Instead, they function in the same way that negations are used at the beginning of other stories, to characterize the world at that time as unformed. Everything still needed to be brought into existence, even the less desirable elements of normal life.¹⁷⁰ Batto concludes,

This description of Dilmun cannot be separated from other Mesopotamian primeval texts containing a similar series of negative statements: There was no *x*, there was no *y*. In other texts such statements clearly are not intended to describe a positive condition, that is an existing idyllic state of affairs; rather they describe a lack of existence which is then remedied by a creative act on the part of the appropriate deity or deities.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁹ Even though Sasson states that in Enki and Ninhursaga "primordial perfection is detailed as the absence of imperfection," he admits, "The main business of such material, however, is hardly to establish utopian ideals; above all, it is not meant to freeze time at the moment of perfection. Rather, the examples often serve to etiologically explain the changes that had to occur before we reach the institutions or conditions under which we all suffer" (Jack M. Sasson, "Utopian and Dystopian Images in Mari Prophetic Texts," in *Utopia and Dystopia in Prophetic Literature* [ed. Ehud Ben Zvi; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006], 28–29). Overall, his analysis is still problematic as it only focuses on the negative elements described.

¹⁷⁰ Note that even illnesses are described in cosmological terms in the introductions to incantations to cure them. For example, an eye-illness in an Akkadian incantation is tied to the worm and its origin is traced: "Anu engendered heaven, heaven bore earth, earth bore stench, stench bore mud, mud bore the fly, the fly bore the worm" (Graham Cunningham, *Deliver Me from Evil: Mesopotamian Incantations: 2500-1500 BC* [SP 17; Roma: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1997], 106).

¹⁷¹ "Paradise Reexamined," 38. Michalowski states, "negative devices in creation stories accentuate that the world is not static, that it is capable of change" (Michalowski, "Negation as Description," 134).

Therefore, Enki and Ninhursaga is not in conflict with the earlier conclusions concerning paradisiacal imagery and original immortality. It does not depict a time when humans were free from aging, sickness, and death. Also, it is not an example of original vegetarianism or animal peace. In fact, the present diet of carnivores is assumed in the imagery as it is used for their defining characteristic.

D. The So-Called Spell of Nudimmud in Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta

Another important text in the present study, especially concerning original vegetarianism and animal peace, is a section from Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta (ELA) that has been interpreted as the content of a spell of Nudimmud (another name for Enki). The passage contains a description of a time when there were no harmful animals and when humans spoke one language. It also describes how Enki brought some change into humankind's language. Many appeal to this passage in order to argue for a primeval paradise in Mesopotamian literature. Kramer, who first published the passage, says it describes "man's golden age, when fearless and unrivalled he lived in a world free from war and want."¹⁷²

Understandably, the passage in question, lines 136-155 of ELA, has generated a significant amount of interest. It has been compared with the confusion of languages at Babel in Genesis 11:1-9 and with biblical images of paradise. This interest, however, has not led to a consensus interpretation. It is debated whether the description is of the past, present or future; whether it is the content of an incantation or a narrative side note; and what exactly is

¹⁷² Samuel Noah Kramer, "Man's Golden Age: A Sumerian Parallel to Genesis XI. 1," *JAOS* 63 (1943): 192. His basic understanding did not change noticeably in later publications, although it became more nuanced as more information came to light. See Samuel Noah Kramer, "The 'Babel of Tongues': A Sumerian Version," *JAOS* 88 (1968): 108-111; Kramer, "The Sumerian Deluge Myth," 116 n. 2; Kramer and Maier, *Myths of Enki, the Crafty God*, 88.

depicted. Because of these debates, an extended examination of the text is needed. It will show that lines 136-155 provide background information for the narrative that characterizes the setting of the account as an early period before some elements of normal life existed.

ELA belongs to a group of four Sumerian epics that deal with conflicts between the Mesopotamian city of Uruk (Sumerian Unug) and the far-distant, legendary city of Aratta. These epics seek to demonstrate, among other things, the ultimate cultural superiority of Sumer.¹⁷³ The epics are set in the time of Enmerkar, the king and founder of Uruk, who, according to The Sumerian King List, belonged to the second dynasty after the flood.¹⁷⁴ Vanstiphout argues that these epics were composed during the Ur III period (Neo-Sumerian) to promote its ideological outlook; "in the remote times of the glorious rulers of Unug the foundations were laid for Sumer's preeminence among nations - and this preeminence persists in the present Ur III state."¹⁷⁵ Most of the tablets containing the epics are scribal exercises dating from the

¹⁷³ Herman L. J. Vanstiphout, "Problems in the 'Matter of Aratta,'" *Iraq* 45 (1983): 29.

¹⁷⁴ "Enmerkar, the son of Meš-ki-aĝ-gašer, the king of Unug, who built Unug, became king; he ruled for 420 years" (ETCSL 2.1.1 lines 102-106).

¹⁷⁵ Vanstiphout, *Epics of Sumerian Kings*, 8; cf. Herman L. J. Vanstiphout, "Another Attempt at the 'Spell of Nudimmud,'" *RA* 88 (1994): 135-54; Adele Berlin, "Ethnopoetry and the Enmerkar Epics," *JAOS* 103 (1983): 17-18; Niek Veldhuis, *Religion, Literature, and Scholarship: The Sumerian Composition Nanše and the Birds, with a catalogue of Sumerian bird names* (CM 22; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 73.

later Isin-Larsa period (early Old Babylonian), and their relative number and quality indicate popularity and high standing in the scribal curriculum.¹⁷⁶

At the beginning of ELA, Enmerkar desires to build (or beautify) the temple for Inana in Uruk, the Eana, but he lacks materials. Unfortunately, trade does not yet exist, so in order to get his supplies Enmerkar wants to force the Lord of Aratta to give them to him. Inana suggests that he send a messenger to the Lord of Aratta demanding that he submit and provide the materials or be destroyed. Enmerkar sends a messenger, but the Lord of Aratta resists, basing his refusal on the assumption that Inana has chosen and supports him and Aratta. Thus the Lord of Aratta is quite surprised when the messenger informs him that Inana is backing Enmerkar in his demand. The Lord of Aratta then issues a series of challenges to Enmerkar, through the messenger, to see who is superior and who really has the favor of Inana. Enmerkar is able to defeat the Lord of Aratta in all of these challenges, and yet the Lord of Aratta persists and refuses to despair. The end of the text is fragmentary, but it seems that the gods institute trade to end the conflict.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶ Vanstiphout, *Epics of Sumerian Kings*, 1; Herman L. J. Vanstiphout, "The Old Babylonian Literary Canon: Structure, Function and Intention," in *Cultural Repertoires: Structure, Function and Dynamics* (ed. G. J. Dorleijn and Herman L. J. Vanstiphout; Leuven: Peeters, 2003), 1-29; cf. Veldhuis, *Religion, Literature, and Scholarship*, 58–66.

¹⁷⁷ See the discussion in Catherine Mittermayer, *Enmerkara und der Herr von Arata: Ein ungleicher Wettstreit* (OBO 239; Fribourg: Academic Press, 2009), 44–47.

Lines 136-155 come at the end of the first message that Enmerkar instructs his messenger to deliver to the Lord of Aratta. To discern how they fit into this context, lines 134-135 have been included in the transliteration and translation.

Transliteration:¹⁷⁸

134 e₂-nun-e₂-nun-ba šir₃ kug nam-šub du₁₂-a-ba
 135 nam-šub ^dnu-dim₂-mud-da-kam e-ne-ra dug₄-mu-na-ab
 136 ud-ba muš nu-ĝal₂-la-am₃ ĝiri₂ nu-ĝal₂-la-am₃
 137 kir₄ nu-ĝal₂-la-am₃ ur-maḥ nu-ĝal₂-la-am₃
 138 ur-gir₁₅ ur-bar-ra nu-ĝal₂-la-am₃
 139 ni₂ teĝ₃-ĝe₂₆ su zi-zi nu-ĝal₂-la-am₃
 140 lu₂-ulu₃ gaba-šu-ĝar nu-um-tuku-am₃
 141 ud-ba kur šubur^{ki} ḥa-ma-zi^{ki}
 142 eme ḥa-mun ki-en-gi kur gal me nam-nun-na-ka
 143 ki-uri kur me-te ĝal₂-la
 144 kur mar-tu u₂-sal-la nu₂-a
 145 an ki niĝin₂-na uĝ₃ saĝ sig₁₀-ga
 146 ^den-lil₂-ra eme 1-am₃ ḥe₂-en-na-da-ab-dug₄
 147 ud-ba a-da en a-da nun a-da lugal-la
 148 ^den-ki a-da en a-da nun a-da lugal-la
 149 a-da en-ne a-da nun-ne a-da lugal-la
 150 ^den-ki en ḥe₂-ĝal₂-la en dug₄-ga zid-da
 151 en ĝeštug₂-ga igi-ĝal₂ kalam-ma-ke₄
 152 mas-su diĝir-re-e-ne-ke₄
 153 ĝeštug₂-ge pad₃-da en eridug^{ki}-ga-ke₄
 154 ka-ba eme kur₂-kur₂ en-na mi-ni-in-ĝar-ra
 155 eme nam-lu₂-ulu₃ 1 i₃-me-[am₃]

Translation:¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁸ The transliteration of the Sumerian text follows ETCSL 1.8.2.3 with variants from Mittermayer, *Enmerkara und der Herr von Arata*, 122. Relevant textual issues will be discussed below.

134 "When in all its courts holy songs and incantations are performed,
 135 they are the incantations of Nudimmud. Tell him that."
 136 In that day, there was no snake, there was no scorpion,
 137 there was no hyena, there was no lion,
 138 there was no dog or wolf,
 139 there was no fear or terror,
 140 man had no equal.
 141 In that day, the lands of Šubur and Ḫamazi,
 142 with the complementary-tongued lands¹⁸⁰ - Sumer, the great land of the
 royal standards,
 143 Akkad, the land appropriately endowed,
 144 and the land of the Martu, lying in verdant pastures -
 145 the whole of heaven and earth, the cared-for people,
 146 spoke to Enlil with one voice.
 147 In that day, until, because of conflicts between lords, conflicts between
 princes, and conflicts between kings,
 148 until Enki, because of conflicts between lords, conflicts between princes,
 and conflicts between kings,
 149 because of conflicts between lords, conflicts between princes, and
 conflicts between kings,
 150 until Enki, lord of plenty, lord of truth
 151 lord of wisdom, the keeper of the land,
 152 the leader of the gods
 153 chosen for wisdom, the lord of Eridu,
 154 placed diverse tongues in their mouths,
 155 the speech of man was one.

The placement and function of the passage in the epic are crucial for its interpretation. Therefore, the initial issue to be settled is whether lines 136-

¹⁷⁹ The translation is based on that of Mittermayer, *Enmerkara und der Herr von Arata*, 123 with substantive changes in lines 134-135 and 140. Issues in the translation will be discussed below.

¹⁸⁰ Various interpretation have been offered for the beginning of this line. The above translation is an attempt to render more succinctly Mittermayer's translation, "(als auch) die mit den (ineinander) übersetzbaren Sprachen, (die da sind) . . ." (Mittermayer, *Enmerkara und der Herr von Arata*, 123).

155 are a part of the message that Enmerkar instructed his messenger to speak to the Lord of Aratta in order to convince him to submit. This point of interpretation is quite contested and will require careful examination.

The strongest argument in favor of the inclusion of lines 136-155 into Enmerkar's speech is their position. They occur immediately after the mention of a spell of Nudimmud and a direct instruction to the messenger, and thus it seems reasonable to take them as the content of a spell which the messenger is instructed to deliver. Jacobsen translates lines 134-136 accordingly,

and as in all their chambers holy songs and incantations are intoned recite this spell of Nudimmud to him: In those days, there being no snakes, there being no scorpions . . .¹⁸¹

There are, however, two variations of this understanding.

Based on the grammatical forms, lines 134-136 are most naturally read as describing the past. Thus, the events described in ELA 136-155 are interpreted as occurring previous to the events of the epic. However, commentators struggle to explain how a spell containing a record of past events fits in with Enmerkar's speech.¹⁸² What roll did it have in convincing the Lord of Aratta to submit to Enmerkar?

¹⁸¹ Jacobsen, "The Spell of Nudimmud," 406.

¹⁸² Kramer, "Man's Golden Age," 192 n. 3. In his earlier writing, Jacobsen postulates that the passage was a later, clumsy insertion (Jacobsen, *The Harps That Once--*, 288–289 n. 25). More recently Jacobsen argues that Enmerkar uses the spell to justify his threats of force against the Lord of Aratta. Jacobsen states that Enki created not only divisions of language

A few interpreters argue that an incantation by its very nature would not describe past events, "that since the passage is dubbed a *nam-šub*, the reference *cannot but* be to the (near) future."¹⁸³ Thus lines 136-155 should be translated as describing a blessed future time when humans will have no opponents and will address Enlil in one language because of a future act of Enki in which he changes the many languages into one. Nevertheless, commentators still find it difficult to explain how the spell was to convince the Lord of Aratta to submit.¹⁸⁴ Also, the future interpretation strains, to say the least, the grammar of the passage.¹⁸⁵

but also strife to avoid Enlil's annoyance. Thus strife "was Enki's will" (Jacobsen, "The Spell of Nudimmud," 416).

¹⁸³ Vanstiphout, "Another Attempt at the 'Spell of Nudimmud,'" 149; cf. Alster, "Dilmun, Bahrain, and the Alleged Paradise in Sumerian Myth and Literature," 58; Beate Pongratz-Leisten, "Gudea and His Model of an Urban Utopia," in *Vorderasiatische Beiträge für Uwe Finkbeiner* (ed. M. van Ess, B. Faist, and R. Dittmann; BM 37; Mainz, Germany: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 2006), 52–54. Cohen argues that *nam-šub* in this passage should be understood not as a spell but as a hymn (Mark E. Cohen, "The Incantation-Hymn: Incantation or Hymn?," *JAOS* 95 [1975]: 595).

¹⁸⁴ The spell, according to Alster, should persuade the non-Sumerian Lord of Aratta to submit to the Sumerian Enmerkar since the unified future language will be Sumerian (Bendt Alster, "An Aspect of 'Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta,'" *RA* 67 [1973]: 104–105). He states his reasoning differently in a later publication, arguing that the spell displays to the Lord of Aratta the power of Enki, who chose and supports Enmerkar (Alster, "Dilmun, Bahrain, and the Alleged Paradise in Sumerian Myth and Literature," 58).

¹⁸⁵ Alster confesses, "The use of the introductory formula *u₄-ba*, 'in those days,' points towards the past. Nevertheless, admitting this difficulty, I would still claim that if we can understand the text as an ideal situation to come, the text would make perfectly good sense. A prophecy is normally introduced by the formula *u₄-ne*, 'on that day,' but, at any rate, there would be no point in reciting an incantation if it did not somehow apply to the future" (Alster, "Dilmun, Bahrain, and the Alleged Paradise in Sumerian Myth and Literature," 58). Vanstiphout, in his argument for a future reading, readily admits that a past reading is grammatically possible, but labors to show that a past reading is not grammatically necessary (Vanstiphout, *Epics of Sumerian Kings*, 93–94 n. 19; Vanstiphout, "Another Attempt at the

It is better to interpret lines 136-155 as the words of the narrator. They are not the words of Enmerkar, not the content of a spell of Nudimmud, but a side note by the author that gives some needed background information for the story. The contemporary audience would wonder how the two kings could communicate since Aratta was so distant from Uruk. The author explains to his audience that in this early period all the various regions spoke one language since it was before Enki had confused the languages.¹⁸⁶ Thus the passage is describing a past time setting, but only past for the narrator and his audience. The initial situation it describes is the setting for the larger narrative of ELA, and the confusion of languages occurs sometime between the events of the epic and the narrator's time.

'Spell of Nudimmud,'" 135–154). Klein argues against the future interpretation, noting that its proponents "take the verbs $\text{h}\acute{\text{e}}\text{-en-na-da-ab-dug}_4$ (146) and $\text{\grave{i}}\text{-k}\acute{\text{u}}\text{r}$ (154) in principle as present-future forms, which is of course against the generally accepted grammatical norms" (Jacob Klein, "The So-called 'Spell of Nudimmud' [ELA 134-155]: A Re-examination," in *Studi sul vicino oriente antico: dedicati alla memoria di Luigi Cagni* [ed. Simonetta Graziani and Maria Cristina Casaburi; Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 2000], 570; cf. Jacob Klein, "The Origin and Development of Languages on Earth: The Sumerian versus the Biblical View," in *Tehillah le-Moshe: Biblical and Judaic Studies in Honor of Moshe Greenberg* [ed. Mordechai Cogan, Barry L. Eichler, and Jeffrey H. Tigay; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1997], 85 n. 36). Mittermayer likewise states, "Seine 'Zukunftsdeutung' wirft allerdings einige grammatikalische Probleme auf, da $\text{u}_4\text{-ba}$ in der Regel auf eine vergangene Zeit verweist und die Verbalformen in Z. 146 ($\text{h}\acute{\text{e}}_2\text{-en-na-da-ab-du}_{11}$) und 154 (von ihm $\text{i}_3\text{-kur}_2$ gelesen) eindeutig *hamtu* sind" (Mittermayer, *Enmerkara Und Der Herr Von Arata*, 61).

¹⁸⁶ J. J. A. van Dijk, "La 'confusion des langues': Note sur le lexique et sur la morphologie d'Enmerkar," *Orientalia* 39 (1970): 304–305. One reason for van Dijk's understanding involved the nominalized clause in line 155, ending with $\text{i}_3\text{-me-a}$. He argues that a section cannot end with such a dependent clause, so either the spell is incomplete or is dependent on what follows (Dijk, "La 'confusion des langues,'" 304). However, not all agree with his understanding of the grammar (cf. Jacobsen, "The Spell of Nudimmud," 406–407). Also, there are textual issues with line 155. It is probably best to read $\text{i}_3\text{-me-am}_2$ and take line 155 as an independent clause (Vanstiphout, "Another Attempt at the 'Spell of Nudimmud,'" 139, 146; Mittermayer, *Enmerkara Und Der Herr Von Arata*, 171).

Three main arguments support this interpretation. Two have been proposed by other commentators while the third is unique to this study and thus will be explained more thoroughly. The third argument also results in distinct translations of line 135 and its parallels.

The first argument deals with the epic's use of repetition. In the epic, Enmerkar tells his messenger what to say to the Lord of Aratta, and then the entire message is repeated word for word when the messenger delivers it.¹⁸⁷ Thus, if lines 136-155 are a part of the message, it is expected that they will be repeated by the messenger when he delivers the message to the Lord of Aratta. However, they are not, and this fact alone should cause doubt as to whether lines 136-155 are part of Enmerkar's message.¹⁸⁸ Those who defend lines 136-155 as a part of Enmerkar's message, as the content of the Spell of Nudimmud, do not provide an adequate explanation for this lack.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁷ In contrast, the replies of the Lord of Aratta are recorded only once, when the Lord of Aratta speaks them to the messenger.

¹⁸⁸ Klein, "The Origin and Development of Languages on Earth," 87.

¹⁸⁹ Attinger, through private correspondence to Uehlinger, suggests that in lines 134-135 Enmerkar directed his messenger to say the Spell of Nudimmud to the Lord of Aratta only after the temple in Uruk is finished, i.e., when songs are being sung in its chambers (Christoph Uehlinger, *Weltreich und "eine Rede": Eine neue Deutung der sogenannten Turmbauerzählung [Gen 11,1-9]* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990], 411 n. 17; cf. Mittermayer, *Enmerkara Und Der Herr Von Arata*, 241–242). Jacobsen in his earlier work argues that the lack of repetition helps to show that lines 136-155 are not integral to the epic and were most likely "added by some copyist who thought it might fit" (Jacobsen, *The Harps That Once--*, 289). He does not comment on the issue in his later article (Jacobsen, "The Spell of Nudimmud"). Others merely note the absence of these lines with various degrees of surprise (Samuel Noah Kramer, *Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta: A Sumerian Epic Tale of Iraq and Iran* [Philadelphia: University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, 1952], 49; Alster,

The second argument deals with the epic's interest in providing etiologies for elements of culture common in the author's day. For example, the epic as a whole explains the origin of trade. The author in the introduction sets the narrative in a time before trade had developed and ends with a description of trade between Uruk and Aratta.¹⁹⁰ Another etiology is highlighted by the author through a narrative aside after Enmerkar's last message.¹⁹¹ Enmerkar was rather long and complex in his instructions, so much so that the messenger has trouble remembering it. To solve this problem, Enmerkar writes the message on a clay tablet for the messenger to bring to the Lord of Aratta. The narrator then adds:

Before that day, there had been no putting words on clay; But now, when the sun rose on that day - so it was: The Lord of Kulab had put words as on a tablet - so it was!¹⁹²

"An Aspect of 'Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta,'" 103; Vanstiphout, *Epics of Sumerian Kings*, 94 n. 24).

¹⁹⁰ Jacobsen, *The Harps That Once--*, 275; Vanstiphout, "Problems in the 'Matter of Aratta,'" 35–42. Note lines 12, and 16-19, "The land Dilmun did not yet exist . . . [. . .] was not yet *imported*; there was no trading; [. . .] was not *exported*; there was no commerce. [Gold], silver, copper, tin, blocks of lapis lazuli, [The mountain ores,] were not yet brought down from the highlands" (translated by Vanstiphout, *Epics of Sumerian Kings*, 57). The land of Dilmun was famous as a trading emporium and thus its absence symbolizes the lack of international trade.

¹⁹¹ Klein, "The Origin and Development of Languages on Earth," 87.

¹⁹² Lines 504-506, translated by Vanstiphout, *Epics of Sumerian Kings*, 85. A similar narrative aside, also beginning with *ub-bi-ta*, is found in Sargon and Ur-Zabab, "In those days, although writing words on tablets existed, putting tablets into envelopes did not yet exist" (ETCSL 2.1.4 Segment B line 53). Cooper and Heimpel claim it 'parodies' these lines in ELA (Jerrold S. Cooper and Wolfgang Heimpel, "The Sumerian Sargon Legend," *JAOS* 103 [1983]: 82).

The author tells his audience that this was no ordinary cuneiform tablet; it was the first one! Enmerkar had invented writing.

Lines 136-155 fit very well as another etiology of the author.¹⁹³ It explains to the reader the far distant setting of the narrative, not only in a time before trade or writing but even before multiple languages. And then it explains how the present situation came to be.¹⁹⁴ Mittermayer argues that these two passages frame the greater part of the story and are chiastically arranged in that the first emphasizes background with an added etiology while the second emphasizes the etiology with an added background.¹⁹⁵

The third argument focuses on the phrase e-ne-ra dug₄-mu-na-ab, "Tell that to him," found at the end of line 135. This phrase is best understood as a set formula in the epic indicating the conclusion of a message. Thus lines 136-

¹⁹³ Klein strengthens the parallel between lines 136-155 and 504-506 based on other repetitions in the contexts, especially in the delivery of the message (lines 208-217 = lines 526-535; Klein, "The Origin and Development of Languages on Earth," 87-90). Vanstiphout also argues for a connection between these two passages, although, for different purposes. He notes that Enmerkar's last challenge is "merely a stronger assertion of his original challenge" (lines 187-189 = lines 487-489) and that both sections deal with matters relating to language in general and Sumerian in particular (Vanstiphout, *Epics of Sumerian Kings*, 53). Mittermayer shows that Enmerkar, in both messages, appeals to the will of Enki as she connects the Spell of Nudimmud in line 135 with the instruction and omen of Nudimmud in line 495 (Mittermayer, *Enmerkara Und Der Herr Von Arata*, 74-77).

¹⁹⁴ It should be noted that the two etiologies are somewhat different. With writing, the change occurs as an element in the narrative, while with multiple languages, the change occurs outside of the narrative. This difference should not be overstated, however, since the change of multiple languages is related to the events of the narrative, the conflict, as will be argued below.

¹⁹⁵ Mittermayer, *Enmerkara Und Der Herr Von Arata*, 57-58.

155 could not be a part of the message of Enmerkar since they follow this closing formula.

Every other message in the epic given by both Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta ends with the phrase e-ne-ra dug₄-mu-na-ab.¹⁹⁶ It always stands apart from the rest of the message because of the change in subject, from the intended recipient to the messenger.¹⁹⁷ It is also always separated grammatically from the rest of its line, standing alone as a complete sentence.¹⁹⁸ Thus, e-ne-ra dug₄-mu-na-ab is best understood as an added, final formula instructing the messenger to deliver the previous given message, with the non-person object -b- referring to the message as a whole.

The formula e-ne-ra dug₄-mu-na-ab operates in parallel with the set opening formula for all the messages in the epic: u₃-na-dug₄ u₃-na-de₃-tah, "tell to him, add to him."¹⁹⁹ Together they indicate the beginning and the end

¹⁹⁶ A couple of the messages are broken into two parts, with each part ending with the formula e-ne-ra dug₄-mu-na-ab. See lines 226 (the end of the first part of the Lord of Aratta's first reply), 293, 346, 411, 461, 476 (the end of the first part of Enmerkar's last message), and 496. For lines 495-496, read inim dug₄-ga ^dnu-dim₂-mud-a-ka ġiškim-a-ni ħe₂-zu-zu e-ne-ra dug₄-mu-na-ab (Mittermayer, *Enmerkara Und Der Herr Von Arata*, 209).

¹⁹⁷ For example, before line 135 Enmerkar is commanding things for Aratta to do (see the precativ forms in lines 130-133), but in 135 he is giving a command to his messenger.

¹⁹⁸ In every occurrence but line 135, e-ne-ra dug₄-mu-na-ab is preceded by a finite verbal form, marking the end of the preceding sentence. Line 135 will be discussed below.

¹⁹⁹ See lines 114, 219, 242, 339, 397 (partially restored), 456, 470, and 477.

of a message. Similar use of formulas is seen elsewhere, including *dug₄-mu-na-ab* at the end of messages.²⁰⁰

Opening and closing formulas are sometimes repeated and sometimes omitted by the messenger.²⁰¹ In ELA they are omitted.²⁰² When delivering a message, the messenger begins with an opening of his own and only starts his direct quotation of Enmerkar with the section directly addressed to the

²⁰⁰ In Enlil and Sud, a message for Enlil from Nidaba is given to the messenger Nuska and repeated to Enlil. In both occurrences, the specific part of the message directed at Enlil begins and ends with a double command to Nuska: *u₃-na-dug₄ . . . kur gal ^den-lil₂-ra u₃-na-a-dug₄ . . .*, "tell him . . . tell Enlil, the great mountain . . .," *lugal-zu-ur₂ ki-ur₃ maḥ-a-ni ur₅-gin₇ dug₄-mu-na-ab ^den-lil₂-ra itima kug sig₉-ga-na u₃-ga-na-de₃-taḥ*, "Inform your lord thus in his august Ki-ur. Repeat this to Enlil in the privacy of his holy bedchamber." The beginning formula is found in lines 68-69 and 97-98, the ending in lines 72-73 and 101-102. The text and translation are from ETCLS 1.2.2. Note that the messenger not only delivers the part of the message directed at Enlil but the whole speech of Nidaba.

In Lugalbanda II, Lugalbanda acts as a messenger to bring a message from Enmerkar to Inana. The message contains the ending formula *nin₉ e₅-mu kug ^dinana-ra ur₅-gin₇ dug₄-mu-na-ab*, "Speak thus to my noble sister, Holy Inana!" (lines 321 and 387, translated by Vanstiphout, *Epics of Sumerian Kings*, 152–153 and 156–157).

See also an unidentified myth containing a message given by an unidentified person to a messenger for the goddess Ninazimau. The message ends with the formula *ur₅-gin₇ dug₄-mu-na-ab*, "Say as that to her" (UET6.1, 27).

In letters, *u₃-na-dug₄* is a common set opening formula. For examples see ETCLS 3.1.05, ETCSL 3.1.06.1, ETCSL and 3.1.21. The use of this form originated in the role of the scribe or messenger as an intermediary between the two parties and continued even when there was no intermediary (Piotr Michalowski, *Letters from Early Mesopotamia* [ed. Erica Reiner; SBLWAW 3; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1993], 3–4).

²⁰¹ In both Enlil and Sud and Lugalbanda II, the formulas are repeated when the messenger delivers the message.

²⁰² There are only two examples of the messenger delivering his message since the messages from the Lord of Aratta to Enmerkar are not repeated in the text and Enmerkar's last message is contained on a tablet. In both deliveries, the opening and closing formulas are not included.

Lord of Aratta.²⁰³ The same is true for the closing. At the end of the second speech that the messenger delivers to the Lord of Aratta the text contains $\hat{g}a_2$ -a-ra ha-ma-an-dug₄, "he told that to me," in place of the formula e-ne-ra dug₄-mu-na-ab, "Tell that to him."²⁰⁴ The latter was Enmerkar's closing formula as he entrusted the message to the messenger; the former is the messenger's closing formula as he delivers the message to the Lord of Aratta. The same pattern is what should be read in Enmerkar's first message.²⁰⁵

²⁰³ Compare lines 185-186 with 114-115 and lines 381-382 with 339-340. Note the identical opening dialogue between the Lord of Aratta and the messenger in lines 178-179, 380-381, and 517-518.

²⁰⁴ Compare line 388 with 346. Both Kramer and Cohen place this statement outside of the quotation marks of Enmerkar's message (Kramer, *Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta: A Sumerian Epic Tale of Iraq and Iran*, 31; Sol Cohen, "Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta," [Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1973], 131). Strangely, Vanstiphout translates it as, "Tell him that!" and keeps it within the quotation of Enmerkar without any note or comment (Vanstiphout, *Epics of Sumerian Kings*, 79).

²⁰⁵ The first message of Enmerkar ends with the expected formula, e-ne-ra dug₄-mu-na-ab, in line 135. The last line of the messenger's delivery of the first message, line 207, is fragmentary in all the extant texts, but the extant portion clearly contains $\hat{g}a_2$ -ra, "to me" instead of e-ne-ra, "to him" (Mittermayer, *Enmerkara Und Der Herr Von Arata*, 179). Thus it seems most reasonable to reconstruct the end of line 207 as the messenger's closing formula, $\hat{g}a_2$ -ra ha-ma-an-dug₄, based on the parallel with line 388. The problem is that the extant texts also contain what looks like the initial sign of dug₄-mu-na-ab instead of ha-ma-an-dug₄. However, it is likely that line 207 has been misread in the extant texts since it was expected to be parallel to line 135.

Other approaches to line 207 are problematic. Jacobsen suggests that the reading is a mistake and restores $\hat{g}a_2$ -ra to e-ne-ra, thus making it identical to line 135 (Jacobsen, "The Spell of Nudimmud," 406 n. 43). Vanstiphout rightly argues, "It is not very plausible that the change to the first person singular dative is accidental or mistaken" (Vanstiphout, "Another Attempt at the 'Spell of Nudimmud,'" 152). Efforts to explain the use of $\hat{g}a_2$ -ra in this line have been unconvincing. Alster takes the imperative as addressed to the Lord of Aratta, who was supposed to say the Spell of Nudimmud to the messenger (i.e. "to me") as a sign of his submission, "speak the incantation of Nudimmud to me!" (Alster, "An Aspect of 'Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta,'" 102-103). Vanstiphout likewise takes the imperative as addressed to the Lord of Aratta and argues that it was calling on him to speak in the universal tongue spoken

But such an interpretation raises another issue. If the end of line 135 (and 207) is read as a closing formula, does the beginning of this line make sense on its own? Does it function as the end of a complete sentence as seen in all the other parallel passages?²⁰⁶ Most translations rightly make a break between lines 133 and 134.²⁰⁷ Since line 134 does not contain a main verb, it must be dependent on line 135. Therefore most have taken the final imperative in line 135, *dug₄-mu-na-ab*, as the main verb with the non-person object referring to the incantation. But it is possible to take the first part of line 135 as providing the main verb since *nam-šub^dnu-dim₂-mud-da-kam* ends with the enclitic copula.²⁰⁸ Thus lines 134-135 could be rendered, "When

of in the spell, in Sumerian, "Now speak to me *according* to the incantation, the one of Nudimmud.' In other words: 'Speak to me in Sumerian'" (Vanstiphout, "Another Attempt at the 'Spell of Nudimmud,'" 152). In a later work, Vanstiphout takes the imperative as addressed to the messenger, and thus as a variant of line 135, "Chant to him for me the spell of Nudimmud!" (Vanstiphout, *Epics of Sumerian Kings*, 69; cf. Mittermayer, *Enmerkara Und Der Herr Von Arata*, 127 and 248).

²⁰⁶ See lines 226, 293, 346, 411, 461, 476, and 496.

²⁰⁷ See for example Jacobsen, "The Spell of Nudimmud," 406; Vanstiphout, *Epics of Sumerian Kings*, 63. Line 133 ends with a precative, in parallel with lines 131-132 but distinct from lines 134-135. This argument also applies to the parallel passage in lines 205-207.

²⁰⁸ There are some textual issues with this reading. For both lines 135 and 207, one text has the ending *-ke₄* in place of *-kam* (Mittermayer, *Enmerkara Und Der Herr Von Arata*, 168 and 179). The form *-ke₄* is problematic since the common function of the *-e* ending as an ergative or directive (locative-terminative) makes no sense in context. Jacobsen argues that the *-e* is "the demonstrative suffix *-e* 'this'" (Jacobsen, "The Spell of Nudimmud," 409), and Mittermayer, while opting for *-kam*, suggests that the alternative *-ke₄* is best understood as "ein fokussierendes *-e*" (Mittermayer, *Enmerkara Und Der Herr Von Arata*, 241-242). Such functions of the *-e* suffix, however, are doubted (Thomsen, *The Sumerian Language*, §137:81, Edzard, *Sumerian Grammar*, §7.3:50). Cohen suggests that the *-e* ending may be a vocative, indicating that the "Spell of Nudimmud" is a title, but he does not point to any similar occurrences (Cohen, "The Incantation-Hymn," 595). It seems best to conclude with Vanstiphout, "On the whole *-kam* seems preferable" (Vanstiphout, "Another Attempt at the 'Spell of Nudimmud,'" 137 n. 12).

in all its courts holy songs and incantations are performed, they will be the incantations of Nudimmud. Tell him that."²⁰⁹

The above three arguments have shown that it is best to understand line 135 as indicating the end of Enmerkar's words to his messenger and to take lines 136-155 as the words of the narrator, providing background information. Having solved the initial question of the relationship of lines 136-155 to their context, it is possible to study these lines themselves. First the content will be described, and then its meaning and function in the larger narrative will be examined.

The background is divided into three sections by the repeated use of *ud-ba*.²¹⁰ *ud-ba* and similar forms of *ud* are often used to provide an initial setting for an account or to provide background information within an account.²¹¹ It is best to take all three sections as descriptions of the same time period, contemporary with the narrative, "In that day."²¹² Within the third section is an etiology of the present state, contemporary with the time of the

²⁰⁹ The proposed translation has the advantage of keeping the referent of the non-person possessive *-bi* of *e₂-nun-e₂-nun-ba*, "in its courts" (line 134), consistent with the immediately previous lines (i.e., the temple in Uruk) instead of assuming an abrupt change of reference to Aratta. Temples were known for the singing of songs and incantations (Gudea CylA.xxvii.10 and Enki and the World Order 106).

²¹⁰ See lines 136, 141, and 147.

²¹¹ For example, see lines 33 and 542.

²¹² Mittermayer, *Enmerkara Und Der Herr Von Arata*, 60–61. In contrast note the use of *ud-bi-ta*, "before that day," in line 504 to indicate that there had been no writing before that point in the narrative and that its invention occurred during the time of the narrative.

author. It is given in a temporal clause which describes a change that occurred after the time of the narrative, future to the time of Enmerkar.²¹³

The first section, lines 136-140, begins with a list of six animals that were not present at that time.²¹⁴ It then mentions a lack of fear and terror and of a rival for humans, describing what life was like without the animals listed.²¹⁵ The focus is not on life in general, but on life for humans. The lack of

²¹³ See the discussion in Mittermayer, *Enmerkara Und Der Herr Von Arata*, 60–61. Based on their understanding of the contents, other commentators interpret the various sections as referring to different periods of time, taking *ud-ba* differently in each section (see for example Vanstiphout, "Another Attempt at the 'Spell of Nudimmud,'" 148 n. 59). Such a reading may be possible grammatically but does not fit this context.

²¹⁴ Note the similar use of *nu-ĝal₂-la-am₃* among the negations at the beginning of Ewe and Grain (text and translation from ETCSL 5.3.2).

12 *še muš₅ ud 30-am₃ nu-ĝal₂-la-am₃*

13 *še muš₅ ud 40-am₃ nu-ĝal₂-la-am₃*

14 *še muš₅ ud 50-am₃ nu-ĝal₂-la-am₃*

15 *še di₄-di₄ še kur-ra še a₂-dam kug-ga nu-ĝal₂-la-am₃*

16 *tug₂ niĝ₂ mu₄-mu₄-bi nu-ĝal₂-la-am₃*

12 There was no *muš* grain of thirty days

13 there was no *muš* grain of forty days

14 there was no *muš* grain of fifty days

15 there was no small grain, grain from the mountains or grain from the holy habitations

16 There was no cloth to wear

There may be a purposeful ordering of the animals, especially since the last three all begin with *ur* 'beast.' The order of the first three is seen in a proverb (UET 6/2 237) suggesting that it is not arbitrary; however, all three animal names are only partially preserved. "Let the snake (*muš*) find its base, the scorpion (*ĝiri₂*) its hole, and the hyena (*kir₄*) its exit" (Alster, *Proverbs of Ancient Sumer*, UET 6/2 237:307). Snakes (*muš*) and scorpions (*ĝiri₂*) are also mentioned together and in this order in Lugalbanda I 185-186 and Lugalbanda II 37. Klein notes the "wordplay" of the three *ur* animals, "*ur-maḥ* (lit. 'the lofty beast'), *ur-gir₁₅* ('the noble beast') and *ur-bar-ra* ('the wild/outside beast')" (Klein, "The So-called 'Spell of Nudimmud,'" 567 n. 23).

²¹⁵ The terms in line 139, *ni₂...te* and *su...zig₃*, can be used not only of unpleasant fear and terror but of proper reverence and awe. See for example their use for Inana in ETCSL 1.3.1 Segment D line 14 and ETCSL 4.07.4 line 28; of temples in ETCSL 2.1.5 line 208;

fear, terror, and rival provide the significance of the animal list. These animals pose a threat to humans or to their livelihood.

Lions and wolves are well known predators that could threaten livestock and even humans. Hyenas are not mentioned as often and were better known as scavengers, but it is easy to see how they could be viewed with fear.²¹⁶ Snakes and scorpions are feared not so much as predators but because of their venomous bite or sting. The presence of the normal term for a domestic dog (ur-gir₁₅) in this list has caused surprise among some interpreters.²¹⁷ However, dogs fit in the list since they were not always viewed favorably, especially since they could become rabid.²¹⁸

of parents in ETCSL 1.8.1.4 Segment A line 8, ETCSL 2.2.4 Segment S line 284, ETCSL 2.5.4 Segment E line 5, and ETCSL 1.7.4 Segment C line 13; and as an attribute for Ziusudra in ETCSL 1.7.4 Segment C line 13. The mention of worship to Enlil in the following section at least raises the possibility that the terms have some sense of proper reverence, although it seems unlikely. Since they follow a list of dangerous animals, it seems best to take them here as unpleasant.

²¹⁶ On the hyena's smelly diet, see Alster, *Proverbs of Ancient Sumer*, 8 Sec. B 15 (= UET 6/2 294):168.

²¹⁷ Jacobsen states, "The text has *ur-gir_x(ŠE)* 'domestic dog', which can hardly be right since the context clearly demands the name of a wild animal dangerous to man. It seems therefore likely that at an early point in the tradition a scribe mistook a dictated *ur-gir_x(ĜAR)* = *girru* 'lionet' for the similar sounding *ur-gir_x(ŠE)* *kalbu* 'domestic dog'" (Jacobsen, "The Spell of Nudimmud," 409).

²¹⁸ Dogs, snakes and scorpions are the most frequently mentioned animals in incantations which were recited to protect people from various evils. The dogs mentioned were almost certainly rabid dogs and thus were viewed with snakes and scorpions as "the three notorious 'poisonous' animals in Mesopotamia" (Wu Yuhong, "Rabies and Rabid Dogs in Sumerian and Akkadian Literature," *JAOS* 121 (2001): 32; cf. Vanstiphout, "Another Attempt at the 'Spell of Nudimmud,'" 150). Often the more specific term *ur-mu₂-da* is used to designate a rabid dog but the generic *ur-gir₁₅* is also used as in the incantation title *ka-inim-*

It is also necessary to comment on the phrase lu₂-ulu₃ gaba-šu-ĝar nu-tuku in line 140. Based on its use elsewhere, the phrase does not mean that humankind did not face any opposition, that there was perfect peace. Instead, the phrase is best taken as stating humankind's preeminence, that humans were able to defeat any threat against them in the animal world.²¹⁹ Thus the translation "man had no rival/equal" is preferable to "man had no opponent/enemy."

There are various grammatical issues in the second section, lines 141-146, but they do not bear on the main thrust of the passage, portraying a time when all humans shared a common language.²²⁰ The main point, however, is not limited to the unity of speech. The mention of Enlil in line 146 is not a side note used to illustrate the unified language; instead, it is a very important part of the description of that time. Humans had a unified language and a unified religion focused on Enlil as the representative of the Sumerian

ma muš/ur-gir₁₅ ti-la-kam, "incantation to survive the (poison of) a snake/dog" (Yuhong, "Rabies and Rabid Dogs in Sumerian and Akkadian Literature," 32).

²¹⁹ The noun gaba-šu-ĝar is often used in conjunction with the verb tuku, "to have," in a negative phrase or sentence, usually in the identical form to ELA 140, gaba-šu-ĝar nu-tuku. The phrase focuses on someone's greater power or strength relative to those who would oppose him, not on the absence of opponents. In Lugalbanda II 108-110, the Anzud bird promises to bless whoever took care of its nest, "I shall not suffer you to have a rival in the highlands; 'Hero-made-strong-by-Anzud' you(r name) shall be!" (translated by Vanstiphout, *Epics of Sumerian Kings*, 141). The king Išme-Dagan is endowed with power by Enlil to elevate him, "This is how Enlil determined his fate. From the E-kur he gave huge strength to the king. He has been made lordly; Enlil's words made him a man without rival" (ETCSL 2.5.4.02 lines 55-57). The phrase also occurs as an epithet of the gods, for example of Ninurta in a passage celebrating his ability to defeat his enemies, "A flood which frightens the rebel lands, without rival!" (ETCSL 2.4.4.4 line 6).

²²⁰ See Mittermayer, *Enmerkara Und Der Herr Von Arata*, 242-244.

pantheon. Thus the description is of a time when the world had a unified Sumerian culture.

The last section, lines 147-155, focuses on the origins of different languages and thereby cultures and religions. The grammar is difficult and debated. It is best to take i_3 -me-am $_3$ in line 155 as the main verb of the whole section and the nominalized verb mi-ni-in-ĝar-ra in line 154 as part of a long temporal clause beginning in line 147.²²¹ The main clause restates the unity of humankind's language, "In that day . . . the speech of man was one," while the temporal clause gives the etiology for the present diversity of languages, "until Enki . . . because of conflicts . . . placed diverse tongues in their mouths." Thus the day of Enmerkar was characterized by a unified tongue, and Enki brought about the present divisions sometime after him.

Most commentators agree on the meanings of the list of repeated terms in lines 147-149, a-da en a-da nun a-da lugal. They are a variation of the normal term for "contest," a-da-min $_3$, in which min $_3$, "two," has been

²²¹ Dijk, "La 'confusion des langues,'" 303; Mittermayer, *Enmerkara Und Der Herr Von Arata*, 60 and 245. The alternative is to find the main verb in line 154, reading i_3 -kur $_2$ with one text instead of kur $_2$ -kur $_2$. The rest of line 154 is then taken as a relative clause and line 155 is understood either as a second independent clause (cf. Vanstiphout, "Another Attempt at the 'Spell of Nudimmud,'" 146) or as a relative clause (cf. Jacobsen, "The Spell of Nudimmud," 407). Such a reading is possible although it is based on a questionable textual decision. Mittermayer notes, " i_3 -kur $_2$ in Wk ist nicht absolut gesichert, da die Tafel in diesem Bereich leicht beschädigt ist. Es ist nicht ausgeschlossen, dass der obere schräge Keil von NI ursprünglich länger war; in dem Fall müsste kur $_2$ - kur $_2$ gelesen werden" (Mittermayer, *Enmerkara Und Der Herr Von Arata*, 245 n. 573). It also requires that the three sections not refer to the same period of time (see discussion above).

replaced with a more specific designation of the combatants as en "lords," nun "princes," or lugal "kings."²²² It is less clear how they fit syntactically into this section.²²³ The two main possibilities are that the contests are either the reason motivating Enki's actions, "for/because of conflicts," or the focused location of his action, "into conflicts."²²⁴ By either reading, it is reasonable to conclude that the nature of conflicts changed after Enki divided humankind's languages. Conflicts are not an incidental element added to these lines, but a focus for Enki's action.

The general content of the three sections can thus be summarized as follows. In the first section, lines 136-140, the author uses negation to describe a time before humans faced the current threats to life and livelihood from the animal world. In the second, lines 141-146, the known world is described as having a unified culture, Sumerian, exemplified by a single

²²² Jacobsen, "The Spell of Nudimmud," 413; Vanstiphout, "Another Attempt at the 'Spell of Nudimmud,'" 145.

²²³ Commenting on lines 147-149, Jacobsen states, "The precise syntactic structure is not clear" (Jacobsen, "The Spell of Nudimmud," 413).

²²⁴ The debate centers on how to take the -a ending of a-da-lugal-la and the -e ending of a-da-en-ne and a-da-nun-ne. Here are three example translations of line 149 and explanations of the endings. Jacobsen translates, "into this conflict between lords, this conflict between princes, and conflicts between kings," taking the -a ending as the inessive or locative case and the -e ending as the demonstrative suffix (Jacobsen, "The Spell of Nudimmud," 407 and 413). Vanstiphout translates, "for the lordly, princely and royal contests," taking the -e ending as the locative-terminative (directive) case but not commenting on the -a ending (Vanstiphout, "Another Attempt at the 'Spell of Nudimmud,'" 148 n. 60). Mittermayer translates, "(wegen) solcher Wettstreite zwischen Stadtherren, Fürsten und Königen," taking the -a ending as an abbreviation for the enclitic copula and the -e ending as the demonstrative pronoun (Mittermayer, *Enmerkara Und Der Herr Von Arata*, 123 and 245).

A few interpreters have sought to take the substance of lines 147-149 as appositional to Enki, but see Attinger's critique in Uehlinger, *Weltreich und "eine Rede,"* 244 n. 28.

religious devotion to Enlil in a single tongue. The third section, lines 147-155, provides a description of how Enki changed conflicts by dividing human language and thereby culture and religion.

Having surveyed the content of these lines, it is time to address the more interesting and also more difficult question of their meaning and function. The second section is the easiest to understand and will be examined first, followed by the third section. The first section is most unique and will be studied last.

The placement of this background information immediately after Enmerkar gives his instructions to his messenger and before he delivers the message indicates its relevance for the deliverance of the message.²²⁵ One reason for this background information has already been mentioned above. It explains to the reader how two distant kings could communicate with one another: they spoke the same language.

The unified language is described primarily in the second section, lines 141-146. However, these lines deal with more than language. As argued above, the unified devotion of Enlil indicates a unified Sumerian culture. The audience also needed this information to understand the significance of the

²²⁵ Mittermayer, *Enmerkara Und Der Herr Von Arata*, 58.

epic, to understand the unique conflict between Uruk and Aratta.²²⁶ The passage explains not only how Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta could communicate, but why they appear culturally identical in the narrative.²²⁷

Aratta is not portrayed as foreign, but as a far distant Sumerian city or, as Michalowski puts it, "a negative correspondent of Uruk."²²⁸ Note that the temple in Aratta, E-zagin, and its ruler in Enmerkar and Ensuhgirana, En-suhgir-ana, both have Sumerian names.²²⁹ The Lord of Aratta claims that

²²⁶ Note that lines 141-144 use descriptions of the present world known to the author while lines 145-146 describe what was formerly true of these lands (Mittermayer, *Enmerkara Und Der Herr Von Arata*, 242–244).

²²⁷ The fact that the messenger could communicate with such a far distant land might not have raised questions for the audience since messengers often acted as translators. Jacobsen understands the messenger's action as such in his rendering of lines 173-175, "His master's preeminence he proclaimed, and was decorously speaking the words he had by heart, the envoy was translating them for the Lord of Aratta" (Jacobsen, *The Harps That Once--*, 291). However, the issue of a unified language becomes more important in light of the form of the final message, a message written on a tablet (Klein, "The So-called 'Spell of Nudimmud,'" 573). How is the Lord of Aratta supposed to read it unless he knows the same language?

Other solutions have been offered with regard to the tablet. Komoróczy offers the ingenious possibility that the writing would have been pictographic so that anyone could read it (Geza Komoróczy, "Zur Ätiologie der Schrifterfindung im Enmerkar-Epos," *AoF* 3 [1975]: 23–24). Alternatively, Cohen suggests that the messenger read the tablet to the Lord of Aratta (Cohen, *Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta*, 38). However, there is no hint of this scenario in the text. Vanstiphout argues that the Lord of Aratta is not able to read since writing was just invented, so he tries but fails to understand the writing on the tablet (Vanstiphout, "Enmerkar's Invention of Writing Revisited," in *Dumu-e2-dub-ba-a: Studies in Honor of Åke W. Sjöberg* [ed. Hermann Behrens, Darlene Loding, and Martha Tobi Roth; OPSNKF 11; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum, 1989], 517–524). There is no indication of a lack of understanding in the text, and Vanstiphout's reading is based on a narrative logic that seems foreign to the epic. See also the arguments for a different textual reconstruction of this passage in Mittermayer, *Enmerkara Und Der Herr Von Arata*, 65–66.

²²⁸ Michalowski, "Mental Maps and Ideology," 133.

²²⁹ Michalowski, "Mental Maps and Ideology," 133. Nisaba who possesses the lapis-lazuli tablet is also associated with Ezagina, the lapis lazuli temple. In a hymn to Nisaba, it is

Aratta was chosen by Dumuzid and thus loved by Inana.²³⁰ Mittermayer argues that ELA 576 indicates that at some time previous to the narrative Inana subjected Sumer to Aratta, and she suggests that the narrative depicts the time when the rite of "holy marriage" was imported from Aratta to Sumer.²³¹

The overall conflict, as Uruk and Aratta vie for Inana's affections, would have most likely sounded strange in the time of the author. As capricious and paradoxical as Inana was, she was still a *Mesopotamian* goddess.²³² Therefore the author needed to explain how such a situation as described in ELA could exist. He does so by explaining that in this still-developing world, all people were Sumerian (i.e., spoke Sumerian and worshipped Sumerian gods).

located in Aratta, "In Aratta he [Enki?] has placed E-zagin at her [Nisaba's] disposal" (ETCSL 4.16.1 line 32). Elsewhere her temple is located in Ereš (ETCSL 1.2.2 lines 7, 46; ETCSL 4.80.1 line 529; and ETCSL 2.5.8.1 line 53).

²³⁰ See lines 220-224 and 564-576. A few associations of Inana with Aratta are seen outside of the Aratta epics. The title ^dnin-arata^{ki}, "Lady of Aratta," is used of Inana in a god list, and she speaks of arata-ĝu₁₀, "my Aratta," in one text (Mittermayer, *Enmerkara Und Der Herr Von Arata*, 85).

²³¹ Mittermayer, *Enmerkara Und Der Herr Von Arata*, 86–89. For more on the sacred marriage and its history see P. Steinkeller, "On Rulers, Priests and Sacred Marriage: Tracing the Evolution of Early Sumerian Kingship," in *Priests and Officials in the Ancient Near East: Papers of the Second Colloquium on the Ancient Near East - The City and Its Life held at the Middle Eastern Culture Center in Japan (Mitaka, Tokyo) March 22-24, 1996* (ed. Kazuko Watanabe; Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1999), 103–137; Pirjo Lapinkivi, *The Sumerian Sacred Marriage in the Light of Comparative Evidence* (SAAS 15; Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2004).

²³² Michalowski recognizes this tension. In his description of the plot he states that Aratta "is, most implausibly, sacred to Inana" (Michalowski, "Mental Maps and Ideology," 133). Inana was worshipped beyond Mesopotamia proper in places such as Susa which are under its influence (Mittermayer, *Enmerkara Und Der Herr Von Arata*, 38), but the situation depicted in the Aratta epics is unique.

Thus the conflict that is present in the Aratta epics is between two centers of Sumerian culture.²³³ The two lords are fighting over central position in the world. The winner of this struggle not only receives the submission of the other party, but more importantly demonstrates the favor and choosing of the gods, especially Inana.

If the second section orients the audience to the cultural and linguistic unity of Enmerkar's time, what is the purpose of the third section, lines 147-155? Although the main clause describes the unity of language at that time, most of the third section is taken up by the etiology.²³⁴ Is the etiology relevant to the epic? Even though the etiology is not the most necessary part of the background information, it still seems to have a connection with the larger narrative through the thrice-repeated theme in lines 147-149, conflicts. Because of conflicts, such as the one between Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta, Enki changed the situation so that different lands had their own languages and their own gods.²³⁵ Never again would conflicts be the same

²³³ Vanstiphout, using the later centrality of Ur during the Ur-III period, calls it the "struggle between the two Ur's" (Vanstiphout, "Enmerkar's Invention of Writing Revisited," 521).

²³⁴ Note that of the total twenty lines for ELA 136-155 eight are devoted to the etiology (147-154).

²³⁵ Klein argues for the same purpose for the etiology, to explain "the origin of the cultural phenomenon of the existence of different nations, with different languages and religions" (Klein, "The So-called 'Spell of Nudimmud,'" 574). The Sumerians sometimes attempted to integrate or explain the origins of foreign gods by myths. The Marriage of Martu acknowledges the existence of Martu while still in many ways maintaining his foreignness. Another text shows a fuller integration as Martu is called a son of An (ETCSL 4.12.1 line 23). Enki and Ninhursaga describes Dilmun's chief god Ensag (Inzak) as a son of Enki even though

since they would now take place in a world that was differentiated into distinct peoples with distinct gods, cultures, and purposes. Of course, the Sumerian gods remained the highest gods, and Sumer became the center of the world since the gods had chosen it as their place for worship.

This understanding of the background information fits well with the overall purpose of the Aratta epics to show the superiority of Uruk and Enmerkar. The background information helps to show the true significance of Enmerkar's accomplishments in the establishment of the present world. Because Enmerkar bests the Lord of Aratta, Sumer becomes the center of the world, and Aratta disappears from world history.²³⁶

Ensağ is probably not Sumerian in origin (Khaled al Nashef, "The Deities of Dilmun," in *Bahrain Through the Ages: The Archaeology* [ed. Shaikha Haya Ali al Khalifa and Michael Rice; London: KPI, 1986], 340–349).

²³⁶ It is helpful to note that Aratta was not an existing city during the time of the author, or so it seems. Various identifications have been offered for Aratta but with limited success. Aratta is mentioned only in mythical and literary texts. Cohen notes, "It is indeed strange that the name of such an important trade center should as yet remain unknown to us from any economic, administrative or other non-literary texts from the Ur III or Old Babylonian period" (Cohen, *Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta*, 61). The few references to Aratta outside the Aratta epics generally characterize it as rich, blessed, and distant. See the helpful discussion in Mittermayer, *Enmerkara Und Der Herr Von Arata*, 26–39. It seems best to follow Michalowski who argues that Aratta is a "mythological invention" (Michalowski, "Mental Maps and Ideology," 133, cf. Daniel T. Potts, "Exit Aratta: Southeastern Iran and the Land of Marhashi," *Nāme-ye Irān-e Bāstān* 4 [2004]: 44–46; Berlin, "Ethnopoetry and the Enmerkar Epics," 24). Mittermayer helpfully concludes, "Wie das Land Delmun (in den literarischen Texten) ist auch Arata ein Konstrukt, das ein bestimmtes Konzept darstellt: Während Delmun als Synonym für Handel belegt ist, repräsentiert die Idee 'Arata' Reichtum, aber auch Ruhm und Ehre" (Michalowski, *Enmerkara Und Der Herr Von Arata*, 38).

The myth Enki and The World Order (EWO) provides a helpful comparison.²³⁷ It is probably too strong to say that the third section, lines 147-155, are specifically referring to this myth, but they do seem to describe a similar event, when Enki ordered the cultures of the lands. In a number of texts, Enki is depicted as the organizer of civilization, especially as the possessor of the me, "cultural norms," which he gives to humanity to order society.²³⁸ However, ELA and EWO are to some degree unique in that they focus on the differences between peoples and not civilization in general.

In EWO, Enki is commissioned by Enlil to bring blessings on the peoples.²³⁹ As he goes about his task, he makes clear distinctions between the lands. His focus is on establishing blessing for Sumer, resulting in abundance for the temples and gods.²⁴⁰ Sumer's trade partners are made prosperous, but only so their goods can flow into Sumerian ports.²⁴¹ Sumer's enemies are

²³⁷ There are numerous Old Babylonian copies of EWO (Clifford, *Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible*, 34; Kramer and Maier, *Myths of Enki, the Crafty God*, 38 and 215–216 n. 1). Mittermayer also compares ELA with EWO, focusing on Enki's role to establish Uruk (and by that Sumer) and trade (Michalowski, *Enmerkara Und Der Herr Von Arata*, 77).

²³⁸ See for example Inana and Enki or the beginning of The Disputation between Bird and Fish.

²³⁹ "Enlil, the Great Mountain, has commissioned you to gladden the hearts of lords and rulers and wish them well" (ETCSL 1.1.3 lines 38-39).

²⁴⁰ Lines 192-218, 299-300, 358-360, and 368-373. Vanstiphout argues, "the production process is regulated with the ultimate goal of creating the conditions in which wealth can be brought to the Land, or to Nippur, which after all houses all the gods, in the most efficient manner" (Herman L. J. Vanstiphout, "Why Did Enki Organize the World?," in *Sumerian Gods and Their Representations* [ed. Irving L. Finkel and Markham J. Geller; CM 7; Groningen: STYX Publications, 1997], 122).

²⁴¹ Lines 123-133, 219-242, and 248-249.

given as plunder to enrich Sumerian cities.²⁴² But most relevant to the present discussion, the great gods take up residence in Sumer and are allotted their dwelling places in its cities.²⁴³ The unstated assumption is that the other nations have their own lesser gods. Thus the different regions and thereby the different cultures are credited to Enki and his ordering.²⁴⁴

ELA is set in a time before the world known to its readers existed. The early setting of the Aratta epics is indicated to a greater or lesser degree in their introductions.²⁴⁵ It was the time of the decreeing of the fates, when the gods set about ordering the world. Sumer was not yet established as the center of the world but was proving its preeminence. The world was still undifferentiated by language, culture, and religion. It was a world in flux, moving toward the well-ordered world. Is it too much to say that ELA is set in a time before the present world as organized by Enki in EWO existed?²⁴⁶

So why did Enki change the languages of the nations?²⁴⁷ Any answer will remain speculative, yet it is worth giving a tentative solution. The first

²⁴² Lines 242-247.

²⁴³ Lines 202-209 and 369-372.

²⁴⁴ Vanstiphout concludes, "what Enki is actually doing here is laying down the conditions for the good life on earth, which is taken to be identical to the (idealized) Sumerian way of public life" (Vanstiphout, "Why Did Enki Organize the World?," 130).

²⁴⁵ See ELA 6-22, Enmerkar and Ensuhgirana 14 and 18-19, and Lugalbanda I 1-19.

²⁴⁶ Note that Dilmun does not exist in ELA but does in EWO.

²⁴⁷ Kramer early on suggests and later more rigorously argues that Enki divided humankind's language because he was jealous of Enlil and the universal adoration he received, a rivalry Kramer sought to find in other texts (Kramer, "Man's Golden Age," 194; Kramer, "The 'Babel of Tongues,'" 111; Samuel Noah Kramer, "Enki and His Inferiority

reason could be as an expression of divine favor for Sumer. In EWO Enki's actions are presented as both beneficial to the gods and to humanity, although focusing on the wellbeing of Sumer and thereby its gods. The division of languages could be seen as part of the organizational process that would produce such a state.²⁴⁸ The various regions of the world are given different roles in the well ordered world, but Sumer is the center. It is given the superior Sumerian language and culture, tying it to the most important gods.²⁴⁹ The prominence of Sumer and Akkad is also implied in ELA 136-155 in that they are the successors of the original universal religion and language.

Another possible reason may be related to Inana. In EWO there is a confrontation between Enki and Inana. The last section of the myth describes how Inana comes to Enki after he has ordered the world and complains that he has assigned her no functions. He responds by noting what she already controls or does, especially her role in battle. Vanstiphout understands Enki's response almost as a rebuke, showing that her functions ideally lie outside his

Complex," *Orientalia* 39 (1970): 103–110; Kramer and Maier, *Myths of Enki, the Crafty God*, 88). Kramer's attempt to show a sustained rivalry between Enki and Enlil, a striving for devotion, has rightly been rejected by many interpreters. See for example Jacobsen, "The Spell of Nudimmud," 415 n. 85. There may be specific instances when Enki and Enlil dispute in the mythology, but to read that conflict into every text is problematic.

²⁴⁸ Batto helpfully notes that a unified language may not have been viewed as "a good thing" by the author. He argues that the division of languages is part of making humans fully civilized (Batto, "Paradise Reexamined," 49).

²⁴⁹ This well ordered world of Enki was the model for the prosperous Sumerian state (Ur III). Averbeck suggests that EWO reflects or is related to a ritual for "the restoration and/or maintenance of the Sumerian world order by engaging with the gods (especially Enki) and calling on them for their active participation in this essential matter" (Richard E. Averbeck, "Myth, Ritual, and Order in 'Enki and the World Order,'" *JAOS* 123 [2003]: 770).

well ordered universe while still acknowledging the reality of their existence in it.²⁵⁰ If Vanstiphout is right, it would not be surprising to find in ELA an instance of Enki trying to limit Inana's characteristic activities.

Based on this proposal, Enki was not motivated by a desire to increase or decrease conflicts, but he wanted to change their nature, especially as related to Inana. Both ELA and Enmerkar and Ensuhgirana focus on the contest for Inana's affections.²⁵¹ Vanstiphout argues, "she appears explicitly in the poems as at the same time the object, the origin and the spoils of the contest between the rivals."²⁵² Inana's fickleness is seen in Lugalbanda II when Enmerkar openly questions Inana's continual affections for him as he

²⁵⁰ Vanstiphout, "Why Did Enki Organize the World?," 131. Averbeck disagrees and argues that Enki is complimenting Inana and showing her that she is too important to be limited by a particular function (Averbeck, "Myth, Ritual, and Order in 'Enki and the World Order,'" 766–767).

In two other texts, Enki/Ea seeks to control Inana/Ishtar. In a Sumerian text, Enki creates the gala priests to calm Inana through their songs. In the Akkadian Agushaya Poem, Ea creates a female rival for Ishtar, Saltu, to confront Ishtar's excessive violence (Tikva Simone Frymer-Kensky, *In the Wake of the Goddesses: Women, Culture, and the Biblical Transformation of Pagan Myth* [New York: Free Press, 1992], 67; Samuel Noah Kramer, "BM 29616, The Fashioning of the Gala," *ASJ* 3 (1981):1-11; Foster, *Before the Muses*, II.5:96-106).

²⁵¹ Enmerkar's victory is explicit in Enmerkar and Ensuhgirana 276-280 but less clear in ELA. The fragmentary ending makes it rather difficult to interpret the rainstorm of Ishkur that ended the famine, although it is probably not a sign of Inana's continuing favor as the Lord of Aratta thought (cf. lines 557-576; Mittermayer, *Enmerkara Und Der Herr Von Arata*, 22).

²⁵² Herman L. J. Vanstiphout, "Inanna/Ishtar as a Figure of Controversy," in *Struggles of Gods: Papers of the Groningen Work Group for the Study of the History of the Religions* (ed. Hans G. Kippenberg, H. J. W. Drijvers, and Y. Kuiper; RR 31; Berlin: Mouton, 1984), 227.

struggles in his siege of Aratta.²⁵³ Instability and conflict surround Inana. Thus a possible motivation for Enki's action, or at least a consequence of it, is to limit Inana's arena of strife. There was a certain instability in the world order when Inana can be claimed as lover by two kings of far distant lands. When the Sumerian culture was tied to Mesopotamia, it tied Inana to Mesopotamia. That is why the conflict in the Aratta epics is unique. In other literary and mythic texts, Inana is the goddess who helps Mesopotamian kings in their battles with foreign nations or is involved in rivalries between Mesopotamian kings, but she is not tied with both a Mesopotamian and a foreign king.²⁵⁴

In discussing Enki's motivations for creating a diversity of languages, a suggestion by Jacobsen also deserves consideration. He argues that it would be against the usual description of Enki as the friend of humanity to see him here acting to humankind's detriment. Thus he proposes that Enki acted in order to save humans from Enlil. Humankind's universal address to Enlil would

²⁵³ Lines 294-321. This characteristic of Inana/Ishtar is the focus of Gilgamesh's stinging rebuke of her advances (The Epic of Gilgamesh VI.22-79). Inana's character in myth is partly shown through what she does not do. Jacobsen states, "We see her, in fact, in all the roles a woman may fill except the two which call for maturity and a sense of responsibility. She is never depicted as a wife and helpmate or as a mother" (Jacobsen, *The Treasures of Darkness: A History of Mesopotamian Religion* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976], 141).

²⁵⁴ In other Mesopotamian literature, Inana (or Ishtar) is identified with many Mesopotamian cities; "she was the divine overseer of the separate and often rival early cities of Uruk, Kish, Zabalam, Badtibira, and Akkad" (Frymer-Kensky, *In the Wake of the Goddesses*, 222). Inana is described as giving victory and power to their kings, but also leaving them as they fall.

eventually annoy Enlil, causing him to seek to destroy them, as with the flood in Atrahasis. Enki avoided this situation by introducing diverse languages.²⁵⁵

If probable reasons for the second section and possible reasons for the third have been found, what about the first section, lines 136-140? It is the section most relevant to the issues of original vegetarianism and animal peace. Why was it included? It does not seem like a necessary piece of background information for the larger narrative, and the later two sections appear to be comprehensible on their own. How does the lack of fear and rival relate to a unified culture or Enki's actions?

It needs to be emphasized that this description of a time when humans had no rival need not imply a time of animal peace and vegetarianism. What is found elsewhere in the Aratta epics seems to indicate the normal use and relations of animals. In ELA, meat-eating is not mentioned, although domestic animals are.²⁵⁶ In Enmerkar and Ensuhgirana, various predators and their prey are described in the contest between the Wise Woman Sagburu and the sorcerer Urgirnuna.²⁵⁷ In Lugalbanda I 300-394, Lugalbanda kills a buffalo and

²⁵⁵ Jacobsen, *The Harps That Once--*, 288–289 n. 25; Jacobsen, "The Spell of Nudimmud," 414–416.

²⁵⁶ ELA 99, 596-598, and Enmerkar and Ensuhgirana 175-221 refer to shepherding.

²⁵⁷ An eagle takes a fish (231), a wolf takes a lamb (235), a lion takes a cow with a calf (239), and a mountain lion takes an ibex and wild sheep (243). There is also the buffalo killing Anzud bird in Lugalbanda II 65-66. Various beasts are mentioned not as characters in the stories but in the descriptions: lions (piriĝ) ELA 264, Lugalbanda II 87; dogs (ur) ELA 290, Lugalbanda I 58, 162; dragons (ušumgal) ELA 351, Lugalbanda II 265; snakes (mir) ELA 466,

some goats in a sacrificial feast for the gods.²⁵⁸ In Lugalbanda II 405, Inana's instructions to Enmerkar included the preparation of fish for a meal.

The most popular understanding is that the first section, lines 136-140, describes a blessed time, a golden age, and therefore it here characterizes the time of Enmerkar in a positive way.²⁵⁹ This interpretation seems to fit with the

(muš) Lugalbanda I 225, 360, 370, Lugalbanda II 145, 252; and wolves (ur-bar-ra) ELA 508, Lugalbanda II 242.

²⁵⁸ Hallo argues that this narrative is an etiology for meat-eating and sacrifice. According to him, Lugalbanda is stranded in the mountains without edible vegetation and so must resort to meat. He captures some animals but is reluctant to kill them until the god of dreams, Zangara, instructs Lugalbanda to slaughter the animals for him and pour their blood into a pit. Lugalbanda then sacrifices the animals, making a banquet for An, Enlil, Enki and Ninhursag. Hallo notes that this account fits well as an etiology along with the other etiologies present in the Aratta epics (William W. Hallo, "The Origins of the Sacrificial Cult: New Evidence from Mesopotamia and Israel," in *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross* [ed. Patrick D. Miller, Paul D. Hanson, and S. Dean McBride; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987], 7–11; William W. Hallo, *Origins: The Ancient Near Eastern Background of Some Modern Western Institutions* [SHANE 6; New York: Brill, 1996], 217–220). Katz disagrees with Hallo and suggests that the account is only an etiology for sacrifice, the proper use of food for feeding the gods (M. A. Katz, "The Problems of Sacrifice in Ancient Cultures," in *The Bible in the Light of Cuneiform Literature* [ed. William W. Hallo, Bruce William Jones, and Gerald L Mattingly; SC 3; Lewiston, N.Y.: E. Mellen Press, 1990], 113).

As was mentioned above, etiologies are an important theme in ELA; nevertheless, Lugalbanda's actions do not function thus here. In contrast to the etiologies in ELA, the author never states that before this time there had been no meat-eating or sacrifice. Thus, there is no reason in the narrative to take this act as the first occurrence. In fact, line 383 compares Lugalbanda's preparation of the meat with that of Dumuzid, indicating it is not unique. The emphasis is on Lugalbanda's resourcefulness, even doing things he had never done before (like baking bread, lines 292-299). Also, Hallo's reconstruction of the account is questionable. First, there is no indication that Lugalbanda is forced to be carnivorous. Second, there is no mention of Lugalbanda being hesitant or conflicted about killing the animals. He delays because he is overcome by sleep after he captures them. Overall, Hallo is too quick to call something an etiology. Another example is when he calls Lugalbanda's use of flint stones to start a fire, "the invention of fire, or at least of fire-making," even though he himself mentions that Lugalbanda had been left with a fire earlier in the story (Hallo, *Origins*, 218).

²⁵⁹ Mittermayer, *Enmerkara Und Der Herr Von Arata*, 58–59. Most who interpret the first section as a golden age place it in the past or future, not at the time of Enmerkar, as

view of the Aratta epics as propaganda for the Ur-III kings as they tied their line back to the great former kings of Uruk.

Nevertheless, there are a number of problems with this interpretation.

The first concerns the small fragmentary text UET 6.61, discussed above, which Jacobsen suggests formed part of the beginning of The Sumerian Flood

discussed above. One possible variation would be to interpret the initial section (ELA 136-140) as describing a benefit brought about by Enmerkar in that his founding of Uruk removed the wild animals from the land. A somewhat comparable statement is found in Lugalbanda I 15 as it describes long life as a consequence of the founding of kingship in Uruk.

sâg gig₂ zi su₃-ud-ba mi-ni-ib-dug₃-ge-eš-ba

Then the Black-headed were long-lived and satisfied

(translated by Vanstiphout, *Epics of Sumerian Kings*, 105). However, ELA 136-140 seem to describe the world in general and not just the realm of Enmerkar.

Pongratz-Leisten compares ELA 136-140 with the various descriptions of peace brought about by Gudea as he restores Ningirsu's temple. Most relevant is a passage right before Ningirsu enters the completed temple. Gudea "made the (whole) city kneel down, he made the Land prostrate itself," which brings sleep not only on the city but also the wild animals; "the wild animals, creatures of the steppe, all had crouched together. Lion, lioness (?) and the 'dragon of the steppe' enjoyed sweet sleep" (CylB iv.13-14 and 18-21, translated by Dietz Otto Edzard, *Gudea and his Dynasty* [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997], 90-91).

Pongratz-Leisten interprets this image as Gudea making "the lions and other wild animals sleep peacefully side by side . . . a world of absolute peace, the ultimate expression of order . . . it shows the king's power radiating beyond the city, into the realm of disorder and chaos, and thus emphasizing his part in the absolute control of cosmic order" (Pongratz-Leisten, "Gudea and His Model of an Urban Utopia," 47-48). While this passage certainly fits with the other images of peace and righteousness used to indicate Gudea's adherence to all that is proper and pious (CylA xii.21-xiii.11, CylB xvii.18-xviii.11), it does not describe a time when predator and prey dwell as one. The lions and dragon should not be included within the wild animals "crouched together." The imagery is of the city and animals laying down for the night so that as Ningirsu approaches the temple there is utter stillness (cf. Claudia E. Suter, *Gudea's Temple Building: The Representation of an Early Mesopotamian Ruler in Text and Image* [CM 17; Groningen: STYX Publications, 2000], 97; Jacobsen, *The Harps That Once--*, 404 n. 59). Note that a similar moment also accompanied Gudea's earlier dream of Ningirsu (CylA viii.4-5 = CylB iv.15-16). Therefore, it is best to understand this description in Gudea as an example of something propitious in that present time. It does not describe a different state of the world like lines 136-140 of ELA.

Story. It contains two sections, both beginning with *ud-ba*, "in that day." The initial portion describes primitive humans as animal-like before irrigation agriculture and the wearing of clothes. Enough of the latter portion was preserved to indicate that it is almost identical to lines 136-140 of ELA.²⁶⁰ As concluded above, it seems best to take the lack of harmful animals as a characteristic of early times. Rivalry comes with development.

This parallel makes it questionable that the first section, lines 136-140 of ELA, is meant to paint the time of Enmerkar as a golden age. Thus, van Dijk argues that these lines are using "des descriptions par la négative" to characterize an early time.²⁶¹ However, the parallel really raises another issue. Why is the same description used to characterize the time of Enmerkar when it is clear that humans are no longer animal-like? The reason for rivalry with the wild animals must involve more than just the differentiation between humans and animals.

Another question is the relationship between the first and second sections. Are the lack of rivals and the unified language mentioned just because they both refer to early times? Their juxtaposition raises a number of questions. Should they be connected? If Enki changed the united language, was he also responsible for introducing the wild animals? If so, why? As

²⁶⁰ Jacobsen relied on lines 136-140 of ELA in his reconstruction of UET 6.61 (Jacobsen, "The Eridu Genesis," 516–517 n. 7).

²⁶¹ Dijk, "La 'confusion des langues,'" 302.

mentioned above, there are a number of ways to view Enki's confusion of languages in a favorable light, at least for Sumer, and no apparent reason to take it as malevolent towards humans. In ELA, Enki is also viewed in a very favorable light, especially in his assistance with the second task (line 420).²⁶² Thus, if Enki were involved with the introduction of wild animals it would be expected that this action was also in the interest of humankind.

A helpful parallel comes from The Gilgamesh Epic. In Utnapishtim's account of the flood, he tells how Enki rebuked Enlil after the flood for sending such a destruction on humanity. He notes how he could have used natural predators or other means to deplete humans instead of the total destruction of the flood.

Instead of the Deluge you caused, a lion could arise to diminish the people! Instead of the Deluge you caused, a wolf could arise to diminish the people! Instead of the Deluge you caused, a famine could happen to slaughter the land! Instead of the Deluge you caused, Erra could arise to slaughter the land!²⁶³

An implication to draw from this passage is that these forces are now means used by the gods to control human population. The gods appointed them as rivals or equals of humans after the flood.²⁶⁴

²⁶² See Mittermayer, *Enmerkara Und Der Herr Von Arata*, 71–78.

²⁶³ XI.188-195 translated by George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 715 and 717.

²⁶⁴ In Atrahasis, Enlil first tries to reduce humankind's numbers by plague and famine before resorting to the flood. Enki's speech here in The Gilgamesh Epic is surely an allusion to that older tradition (George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 519).

The institution of new means for population control after the flood is seen explicitly in Atrahasis.²⁶⁵ The text is fragmentary so not all of the provisions have been preserved. The extant ones address limits to childbirth.

Now then, let there be a third (woman) among the people,
 Among the people are the woman who has borne
 and the woman who has not borne.
 Let there be (also) among the people the (she)-demon,
 Let her snatch the baby from the lap of her who bore it,
 Establish high priestesses and priestesses,
 Let them be taboo, and so cut down childbirth.²⁶⁶

Although the text is fragmentary, it seems clear that Enki is the one speaking. Thus, Enki, the friend and savior of humans, is also the one who establishes the various afflictions of life in order to limit population growth and stave off another disaster like the flood.

The first section, ELA 136-140, can also be understood in terms of population control. The second and third sections, lines 141-155, focus on the interactions between humans and the gods, so it is necessary to read the first section in that light. It is the gods who determine humankind's relationship with the animals. The lack of an equal implies that the gods have not yet instituted the present means for population control.²⁶⁷ It also implies a certain

²⁶⁵ Moran argues that humankind's unchecked procreation creates an unbalance in the world that is righted after the flood: "The origin of this balance is, in our opinion, the central question of the Atrahasis Epic" (William L. Moran, "Atrahasis: The Babylonian Story of the Flood," in *The Most Magic Word: Essays on Babylonian and Biblical Literature* [ed. Ronald S. Hendel; Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2002], 41).

²⁶⁶ III.vii.1-8, translated by Benjamin R. Foster (*COS* 1.130:452).

²⁶⁷ Jacobsen, "The Spell of Nudimmud," 415–416.

instability in the created order. A similar theme is used at the beginning of The Gilgamesh Epic. Gilgamesh has no equal and thus is creating havoc in Uruk. The gods decide to create Enkidu to remedy the situation, "let them rival each other and so let Uruk be rested."²⁶⁸ In a similar manner, humans will create havoc on the earth without a rival.

The purpose of the first section, ELA 136-140, is not to color a certain period with an idyllic light, but to highlight the still developing nature of the world during the reign of Enmerkar, when humans had nothing in nature that could match them, no natural enemies able to restrain their propagation. Thus, humans during the reign of Enmerkar may have lacked some of the fears found in the time of the author, but that does not necessarily make the period of Enmerkar better since it lacked some of the later benefits and included many elements that are less than ideal, war and famine being the most obvious.²⁶⁹

Based on this interpretation, ELA 136-140 and UET 6.61 are best understood not as statements about which members of the animal kingdom were present in the world, but as descriptions of how animals interacted with humans. Humans had no fear or rival, but gazelle and deer did. The etiology is

²⁶⁸ I.98, translated by George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 98.

²⁶⁹ ELA 248-249, 360, and 452-453.

focused on dangers to humans and their livelihood, not predation and animal conflict in general.

Having studied the relationship of lines 136-155 of ELA with their context, their content, and its purpose; it is clear that they do not describe a paradise free from death or a time of vegetarianism or animal peace. Instead, these lines depict a world that is still in the process of being formed, progressing toward the well ordered world known to the author and his audience. What made the kings of Uruk great was not that they lived in a better time than the author and his readers, but that they were instrumental in making Sumer great by their achievements. Thus it is better to speak of ELA as taking place in a "heroic age" not a "golden age" in order to focus on the figures and not some blissful state of the world.

Based on the interpretation of ELA 136-155 presented here, some interesting comparisons with Gen 11:1-9 can be observed. First, both are set in a time after the flood when the center of culture is shifting from the East to Mesopotamia. Aratta is located in the East and it is being overtaken by Uruk. In Gen 11:2, people move from the East to settle in the plain of Shinar (שִׁנְעָר), which is Mesopotamia.²⁷⁰ Second, both use the diversification of languages to bring about the present divisions among nations. The extent of these divisions are further described in other texts, for example EWO and Gen 10. Third, the

²⁷⁰ "שִׁנְעָר" 3, HALOT.

splitting of languages can be related to a restraint on humans. In ELA 136-155, conflicts are altered by the division of languages, and the division is parallel with changes in wild animals that likewise affect humans. In Gen 11:6, God acts to limit what humans can accomplish and by that their hubris. Nevertheless, the two accounts seem to differ in whether the change in language is favorable toward Mesopotamia. In ELA 136-155, it establishes the preeminence of Sumer, while in Gen 11 it is a judgment on those building Babel.

E. Conclusions

It is always dangerous to speak of the Mesopotamian view of something. There are differences based on region and period, and even in the same time and place contradictory ideas can coexist. Nevertheless, it seems likely that the textual evidence is unified on the present points of consideration. Is the initial created state characterized by human immortality, vegetarianism, and animal peace? The answer is no on all counts, although some nuances need to be added.

A negative answer fits well with the overall lack of paradisiacal elements. As was demonstrated above, the notion of an idyllic period at the creation of humans is not found in Mesopotamian literature.²⁷¹ Instead, when the primeval world is distinguished from later periods, it is characterized as a world in need of development. Alster argues, "In Sumerian mythology, it is a basic thought that originally life was hard, unorganized, and unpleasant . . . According to Mesopotamian thought it was the ideal ruler, the Sumerian king, who was responsible for creating a happy and well-organized society."²⁷² The texts focus on what was lacking in earlier periods and describe the progress towards the civilized state known to the authors. It is probably proper to take

²⁷¹ Batto states, "To my knowledge there are no Akkadian texts which have been adduced as evidence for a paradise motif in Mesopotamian tradition" (Batto, "Paradise Reexamined," 34). The possible Sumerian examples have been examined above.

²⁷² Alster, "Dilmun, Bahrain, and the Alleged Paradise in Sumerian Myth and Literature," 55; cf. Alster, "An Aspect of 'Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta,'" 104.

these portrayals as a form of anti-primitivism, indicating "that the least excellent and least desirable phase of the existence of the human race came at the beginning."²⁷³ The individual texts examined in more detail, Enki and Ninhursaga 1-30 and Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta 136-155, accord with this general picture.

Human immortality would not need to be connected with a paradise. In fact, immortal workers would serve the gods rather well. However, there is no evidence for this notion in the texts, and there are explicit statements that mortality always separated humans from gods. The only human that lives forever is the flood hero (and his wife), and his special status required a gathering of the gods. Lambert's suggested reconstruction of Atrahasis, while possible, lacks compelling reasons for its adoption. Life was somewhat different before the flood with a longer lifespan and less means of population control, but it still seems that humans were destined to die.

The Mesopotamian texts studied did mention a different diet for primeval humans, but it was used to indicate their primitive, animal-like nature. The descriptions were not concerned with whether primeval humans ate meat or not. A different diet for animals was never mentioned. The description of lions and wolves that did not kill in Enki and Ninhursaga does

²⁷³ Arthur O. Lovejoy and George Boas, *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity* (New York: Octagon Books, 1965), 3; cf. Clifford, *Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible*, 46–47.

not indicate that there were once lions and wolves that were satisfied by vegetation. Instead, it shows the opposite; lions and wolves are so characterized by killing that their absence is described by the absence of that trait. Also, the lack of harmful animals described in UET 6.61 and Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta 136-140 is not an indication of a lack of predators in the animal kingdom. Instead, the focus is on threats to humans.

The issue of initial animal peace needs the most nuancing. There are no indications that there was a primeval peace among the animals for the same reasons just mentioned concerning vegetarianism. However, there are changes in the interactions of humans and animals described in Mesopotamian literature. It is best to speak of two, related issues.

First, the cultural development of humans created conflict and opposition. The movement from an animal-like state to a civilized society meant that humans would now have to protect their fields, livestock, storehouses, and more from the animal kingdom. Becoming civilized led to a separation from and an enmity with animals, illustrated most clearly by the figure of Enkidu in The Gilgamesh Epic.

Second, harmful animals were used in new ways by the gods to control human populations. There was an instability in the initial period of human history, seen most clearly by the flood episode. As described in UET 6.61 and

Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta 136-140, animals in these periods were not the rivals of humans that they presently are. The main point is not whether the fearsome animals listed were present in the world, but whether they were feared by humans.

Nevertheless, while noting these two changes, no Mesopotamian texts describe a time of absolute peace between humans and animals. It is better to speak of differing levels of opposition. Animals themselves are not portrayed as changing, but their interactions with humans change as humans develop and as the gods bring about the 'normal' state of the world.

III. Hebrew Bible

A. Paradise and Civilization

The beginning chapters of Genesis and the garden of Eden in particular are synonymous with paradise for most readers of the Hebrew Bible, a time of blessedness that was lost. While such a characterization may be proper to some degree, it can obscure the message of the text. Commentators are liable to say what can and cannot be true based on their assumptions about what a paradise is like. Thus, before examining the biblical texts relevant to original immortality, vegetarianism, and animal peace; it is necessary to examine what the biblical text says about the primeval period. The analysis will highlight some commentators who question the paradise interpretation since their critiques help to define more clearly the character of what is described.

As with the Mesopotamian material, two main questions need to be kept in mind. First, is the initial created state portrayed as ideal, better than the present? Second, is it described as complete or in need of development? This background will then help in the later assessment of original immortality, vegetarianism, and animal peace, i.e., whether there was death in the garden of Eden.

Genesis 1-3 contains two accounts of creation.²⁷⁴ Genesis 1 gives a sweeping overview with God creating in six days the heavens and earth and everything in them. Humans, both male and female, are created on the sixth day in the image of God and are blessed with the commands to subdue and rule. What this task entails will be discussed below.

Genesis 2-3 has a narrower focus. God forms a man from the dust and breathes into him the breath of life.²⁷⁵ God then places the man into a garden that he made. The garden is located in a region called Eden and is filled with trees and watered by a river.²⁷⁶ Two of the trees are unique: the tree of life

²⁷⁴ Genesis 1:1-2:4a is recognized as P and 2:4b-3:24 as non-P (J).

²⁷⁵ Some argue that it is inappropriate to refer to the human as initially created as having a distinct gender (Phyllis Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978], 80; Mieke Bal, *Lethal Love: Feminist Literary Readings of Biblical Love Stories* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987], 112–119). Others suggest that the human as created was androgynous or had sexual organs of both genders (Rashi on Gen 1:28 and 2:21; LaCocque, *The Trial of Innocence*, 121–123). However, the narrative assumes an identity between the first created human and the later male figure. Jobling writes, "it is surely clear that the primal human is perceived as male. The word *'dm* which is used for this creature continues to be used in the later part of the text for the man as opposed to the woman . . . The agricultural work of the *'dm* (2.15) is specifically *male* work in 3.17-19. The body from which the woman is taken is surely perceived as male (the alternative is that it became male during the operation!)" (David Jobling, *The Sense of Biblical Narrative: Structural Analyses in the Hebrew Bible* [2d ed.; JSOTSup 7; 2 vols.; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986], 2:41).

²⁷⁶ One common proposal for the background of עֵדֶן, Eden, is that it comes from Sumerian eden, "plain" (cf. Akkadian *edinu*), or is related to Mesopotamian place names from the same root: עֵדֶן in 2 Kgs 19:12, Is 37:12, and Ezek 27:23 and בֵּית עֵדֶן in Amos 1:5 (G. Castellino, "The Origins of Civilization according to Biblical and Cuneiform Texts," in *I Studied Inscriptions from before the Flood: Ancient Near Eastern Literary and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1-11* [ed. Richard S. Hess and David Toshio Tsumura; trans. David W. Baker; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1994], 81). More recent commentators connect it with a root *'dn* related to delight and luxury (Westermann, *Genesis*, 210; Carol Meyers, "Food and the First Family: A Socioeconomic Perspective," in *The Book of Genesis: Composition, Reception, and*

and the tree of knowing good and bad. The man is given the task of tending and guarding the garden and permission to eat from the trees, but he is also prohibited from eating of the tree of knowing good and bad on the penalty of death. God then notes that it is not good for the man to be alone. He creates animals for the man to name, but they do not suffice. He then creates a woman from the man, and they are united in the first marriage.²⁷⁷

The man and woman are described as naked and yet unashamed. A snake is then introduced that speaks to the woman. He questions the threatened death for eating from the tree of knowing and says, "God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and bad" (3:5). The woman eats, followed by the man, and their eyes are opened to see that they are naked. The man and woman cover themselves and also hide at God's approach. God confronts them, delivers a series of curses for their actions, and then clothes them with animal hides. God states that the man and woman have become like God, knowers of good and bad. In order that they will not eat from the tree of life and live forever, God banishes the man and woman from the garden and places heavenly beings to guard the way.

Interpretation [ed. Craig A. Evans, Joel N. Lohr, and David L. Petersen; VTSup 152; Boston: Brill, 2012], 151). It is possible that the author played with both associations, especially in light of the explanations provided later in the narrative for names like Noah and Babel that had more to do with thematic considerations than precise etymology (cf. Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden*, 257–259).

²⁷⁷ LaCocque, *The Trial of Innocence*, 133.

The first issue to examine is whether the primeval state was in some way better than what follows. Genesis 1 does not make explicit that the initial creation was distinct, although it is shown as different by way of contrast. The continual evaluation of "it was (very) good" found in Gen 1 is parallel with the negative evaluation given at the flood in 6:11 (P), "and the earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence." How the change occurred is not addressed in the passages traditionally attributed to P.²⁷⁸

In analyzing the Eden narrative, the curses in Gen 3 are crucial. They signal a change from what was then to what is presently known and show that the former was in some way better than the latter. The change for humans is spoken of as the addition of misery (עֲצָבוֹן) in verses 16 and 17. Life was better before the curses because it was not characterized by this misery.²⁷⁹ The relationship between death and the curses will be examined below.

²⁷⁸ Noort suggests that Ezek 28 is a recounting of a P fall narrative that was not preserved in the redaction of the Pentateuch (Ed Noort, "Gan-Eden in the Context of the Mythology of the Hebrew Bible," in *Paradise Interpreted: Representations of Biblical Paradise in Judaism and Christianity* [ed. Gerard P. Luttikhuisen; TBN 2; Leiden: Brill, 1999], 26).

²⁷⁹ Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis* (trans. Israel Abrahams; 2 vols.; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1961), 1:163–169; Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, *The Eden Narrative: A Literary and Religio-historical Study of Genesis 2-3* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 72–73.

Another issue in examining the creation state is its relationship to patriarchy. Some commentators argue that the sexes were equal before the curse of Gen 3:16 (Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, 102 and 128). However, others convincingly point out that the woman's creation for man and from man and his naming of her indicate some level of patriarchy in the creation state (Walsh, "Genesis 2," 174; LaCocque, *The Trial of Innocence*,

The movement to a worse state aligns well with the common interpretation of Gen 2-3 as an account of sin and punishment. The curses indicate that the action of the man and woman in eating from the tree of knowing is best described as an act of disobedience. They are the negative consequences that result from the transgression of the prohibition given by God in 2:16-17. Note that God's speech to the man in 3:17 explicitly ties the curse to his breaking of the prohibition, "Because you . . . have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You may not eat of it,' cursed is . . ." ²⁸⁰

The text does not present this disobedience against God in a sympathetic light. In other mythology, struggles against the gods can be portrayed positively but that was not the view of the biblical authors. Propp states,

The world of myth was full of struggle against the divine Establishment . . . The attempt to rise above these limitations was the essence of heroism. When the gods were angered and the attempt failed, there was pathos. In contrast, Israel accorded less nobility to struggle against the will of Yahweh. The Bible is of course filled with tales of rebellion against God, but in general little nobility accrues to the rebels, who are merely sinners. ²⁸¹

9–10; Danna Nolan Fewell and David M. Gunn, "Shifting the Blame: God in the Garden," in *Reading Bibles, Writing Bodies: Identity and the Book* [ed. Timothy K. Beal and David M. Gunn; New York: Routledge, 1997], 21–26).

²⁸⁰ For more discussion concerning the nature of the prohibition and curse, see below.

²⁸¹ William H. C. Propp, "Eden Sketches," in *The Hebrew Bible and Its Interpreters* (ed. William H. C. Propp, Baruch Halpern, and David Noel Freedman; BJSUCSD 1; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 200. Similarly, Walsh says that in Genesis 3, "the grandeur of

The second main issue to examine is how the initial state was different. What distinguishes humans or their lives as created from later times? Were there further changes brought about by human disobedience beyond an increase in misery? Answering these questions will help determine the character of the garden and its status as a paradise.

For many, paradise implies the absence of work. In Mesopotamian, as described above, humans were created to relieve the gods of their labors. What about the biblical text? Does work have a place in the garden or did it originate in the curse of Gen 3:17-19?

Batto argues that Gen 2-3 in the non-P (J) account is not the description of a paradise where the man and woman would have lived in blessedness. Instead, it describes a situation very similar to the Mesopotamian motif of humans as replacement workers for the gods. Batto, states that the man was created by God as a worker to take care of the garden God had planted and irrigated, "apparently to relieve the deity - or perhaps better, the gods - from the agricultural chores of providing food for the divine realm, much as in Atrahasis."²⁸² Batto goes on to argue that the P account of

the heroic achievement is transformed into the sordidness of a sin of disloyalty" (Jerome T. Walsh, "Genesis 2:4b-3:24: A Synchronic Approach," *JBL* 96 [1977]: 173).

²⁸² Batto, "Creation Theology in Genesis," 28; cf. Edward L. Greenstein, "God's Golem: The Creation of the Human in Genesis 2," in *Creation in Jewish and Christian Tradition* (ed. Henning Graf Reventlow and Yair Hoffman; New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 217–39.

creation in Gen 1 describes paradisiacal conditions and its later placement before Gen 2-3 caused the garden to be reinterpreted as a paradise.²⁸³

Batto's analysis is helpful by questioning some of the notions often associated with the Eden narrative, but it makes too much of the distinction between Gen 1 and 2-3. On the issue of work, both Gen 1 and 2-3 state that humanity was made to perform some task in relationship to the creation of God: subduing and ruling (1:28) or working and guarding (2:15).²⁸⁴ What is lacking from both in comparison with Mesopotamia is a previous characterization of these tasks as onerous. In Mesopotamian texts, the lower gods rebel because of the drudgery of their work which is then put on humans. In Genesis, it is not until the curses of Gen 3 that human work is

²⁸³ Batto states, "when viewed within its Priestly frame, Eden is transformed into an idyllic place. The aura of perfection from Genesis 1 spills over into Genesis 2. The image of humankind created in the image and likeness of God in Genesis 1 acts as a colored lens filtering out the servant aspect, but leaving humankind in the garden to indulge in its delectable fruits and presumably to enjoy Yahweh's company as he took his afternoon strolls in the refreshing shade of the garden" (Batto, "Creation Theology in Genesis," 36).

²⁸⁴ Meyers attempts to play down any real amount of work associated with the command to work and guard in Gen 2:15 due to her analysis of gardens as places of minimal labor in the Hebrew Bible (Carol Meyers, "Food and the First Family: A Socioeconomic Perspective," 148–149). While the present analysis would agree that human labor before the curse would not be as arduous, it is not based on location, garden versus field. Note that in Gen 3, the expulsion from the garden is not tied to the implementation of the curses but to the removal of access to the tree of life, as argued below. For examples of commentators who have questioned the originality of Gen 2:15 because it mentions work, see Westermann, *Genesis*, 220.

characterized by misery.²⁸⁵ Thus the curse of Gen 3:17-19 does not record the institution of work, but explains why it is now difficult.²⁸⁶

A second difference is that Yahweh is not described as needing human labor.²⁸⁷ The Mesopotamian gods make human replacement workers because they needed someone to provide for them.²⁸⁸ In the Hebrew Bible God is described as working, and thus human labor is to some degree parallel.²⁸⁹ Yet,

²⁸⁵ Based on the difficult nature of work, it is the time after the curse that parallels the initial creation of humans in Mesopotamia. Propp states, "In J, Humanity was expelled from God's presence, condemned to labor outside Eden 'by your brow sweat' (Gen 3:19), just as according to Mesopotamian myth, humans were created to liberate the gods from toil" (William H. C. Propp, *Exodus 19-40: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 2A; New York: Doubleday, 2006], 693; cf. LaCocque, *The Trial of Innocence*, 54–55). Batto admits of the present form of the narrative, "Only in Genesis 3, with the cursing of the human, his wife, and the ground, does the aura of perfection comes [*sic*] to an abrupt end. Under the pen of P the Eden story has become something of a 'fall' after all" (Batto, "Creation Theology in Genesis," 36).

²⁸⁶ August Dillmann, *Genesis: Critically and Exegetically Expounded* (trans. Wm. B. Stevenson; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1897), 163; LaCocque, *The Trial of Innocence*, 228–230. In the same manner, the curse of Gen 3:16 does not record the institution of childbearing by the woman, but explains why it is painful. Also, Gen 3:18 is not describing a change in humankind's diet from fruit to plants, but how they will now have to fight against thorns and thistles when growing food (pace Jan Christian Gertz, "The Formation of the Primeval History," in *The Book of Genesis: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation* [ed. Craig A. Evans, Joel N. Lohr, and David L. Petersen; VTSup 152; Boston: Brill, 2012], 128). For more on the curses, see below.

²⁸⁷ Castellino, "The Origins of Civilization according to Biblical and Cuneiform Texts," 53.

²⁸⁸ The divine need for human provisions is most clearly seen in the flood episode in Atrahasis as the gods grow hungry during the flood and then eagerly circle the sacrifice of Atrahasis afterward (III.iii.31 and v.34-36, cf. Damrosch, *The Narrative Covenant*, 127–128; Clifford, *Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible*, 149).

²⁸⁹ LaCocque, *The Trial of Innocence*, 89.

God is not described as dependent upon humans, in any way needing them as replacement workers.²⁹⁰

Therefore, the Hebrew Bible shares with Mesopotamian literature the idea that humans were made to work, but differs on its purpose and why it is difficult. Work was a part of the picture of the former, better state of the garden. It was not a place of idle pleasure but required (some) effort.

Work is also connected with development. The theme of progress is seen in the commands in Gen 1:28 since they are given in a logical or temporal order.²⁹¹ Fruitfulness leads to being numerous which is necessary before filling the earth. The filling of the earth leads to subduing, and subduing is a necessary step before ruling. The commands thus give a task or goal to humans, indicating that they are not in a static state.

Genesis 2-3 is similar. The lack of cultivated vegetation in Gen 2:5 is attributed to the absence of a human cultivator; agricultural development will come through human labor. The command to work and guard with respect to the garden in 2:15 fits with this cultivating role of humankind.²⁹² However, the

²⁹⁰ Ps 50:12-13 and Isa 40:18-31; although cf. Propp, *Exodus 19-40*, 702.

²⁹¹ Norbert Lohfink, *Great Themes from the Old Testament* (trans. Ronald Walls; Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1982), 177; Francis I. Andersen, *The Sentence in Biblical Hebrew* (The Hague, Netherlands: Mouton, 1974), 108; Paul Beauchamp, "Création et fondation de la loi en Gn 1,1-2,4," in *Création dans l'Orient ancien; congrès de l'ACFEB, Lille (1985)* (ed. Fabien Blanquart and Louis Deroousseaux; Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1987), 150–151.

²⁹² What the man is to work and guard (לְעֹבְדָהּ וּלְשָׁמְרָהּ) in Gen 2:15 is unclear since the object of these verbs is a feminine pronoun that does not agree with the usually

focus on agriculture in 2:15 is best understood as a synecdoche for all human cultural endeavors.²⁹³ Thus, Gen 2:5 is really implying the lack of civilization, and the task of creating civilization is given to the man in 2:15.

There are two elements that change not because of the curses but as a direct result of the man and woman eating of the tree of knowledge. First, in Gen 2:25 the man and woman are initially naked and unashamed, but in 3:7 their eyes are opened to see their nakedness. Second, in Gen 3:5 the serpent says eating will make them like God, knowers of good and bad, and God confirms that they have undergone that change in 3:22.²⁹⁴

masculine גן, garden. It is not impossible to take גן here as feminine or reposit to a masculine pronoun (לְעֵבֶרָה וּלְשָׂמְרָה) (GKC §1221). It is also possible that the ground, הָאֲדָמָה, is the object in ellipsis, especially in light of the repeated phrase "to work the ground," לְעֵבֶר אֶת־הָאֲדָמָה, in 2:5 and 3:23.

Some commentators argue that the lack in 2:5 is not filled until God sends the man from the garden "to work the ground" in 3:23 (Terje Stordalen, "Man, Soil, Garden: Basic Plot in Genesis 2-3 Reconsidered," *JSOT* 53 [1992]: 19). While 3:23 is worded identically to 2:5, God's placing of the man in the garden to work cannot be ignored as a part of this theme.

²⁹³ Westermann states, "It is quite correct that the narrator in using the words 'to till and keep' has in mind the work of the Palestinian farmer. However, it would be wrong to restrict his intention to this work; he is concerned with the duty which God has laid upon and entrusted to his people in the living space assigned to them . . . every human occupation shares in some way in this 'tilling and keeping.' The narrator, in using these two verbs, has given a basic definition of human activity" (Westermann, *Genesis*, 221). Similarly, LaCocque writes, "What interests J is less agriculture - in spite of the commentators' insistence - than plain work. Since the setting of the myth is bucolic, it was fitting to describe human work as gardening - rather than masonry or carpentry, for instance. But, any human work is implied" (LaCocque, *The Trial of Innocence*, 89). The same is true for the curse in Gen 3:17-19. It is not concerned only with why farming is difficult, but why all work is toilsome.

²⁹⁴ There is no reason to take God's statement as ironic or inaccurate in some way (Walter Vogels, "'Like one of us, knowing tōb and ra' ' [Gen 3:22]," *Semeia*, no. 81 [1998]: 147; pace John Calvin, *Commentary on the First Book of Moses, Called Genesis* [trans. John

Some commentators argue that these two descriptions are of a child-like or even an animal-like state from which humankind must mature and develop.²⁹⁵ For example, Bechtel argues that Gen 2-3 traces the movement from birth to adulthood. Birth and childhood are seen in Gen 2, especially as nakedness without shame indicates a childhood ignorance of sexuality and social norms.²⁹⁶ For Bechtel, Gen 2:24 is not describing what is true of the man and woman at that point in the narrative but is "a transitional foreshadowing of what will come in the maturation process . . . marriage . . . and reproduction."²⁹⁷ The tree of knowing good and bad refers to discernment, something absent from childhood and thus originally forbidden in the garden.²⁹⁸ Eating indicates the transition from childhood to adulthood. It is accompanied by a removal of a child's garden-like view of the world and an

King; 2 vols.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1948], 1:182; Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, 136).

²⁹⁵ For an example of an animal-like comparison, see Batto, "Creation Theology in Genesis," 29.

²⁹⁶ Lyn M. Bechtel, "Genesis 2.4b-3.24: A Myth about Human Maturation," *JSOT* 67 (1995): 7 and 17; Lyn M. Bechtel, "Rethinking the Interpretation of Genesis 2.4b-3.24," in *A Feminist Companion to Genesis* (ed. Athalya Brenner and Luise Schottroff; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 84–86.

²⁹⁷ Bechtel, "Genesis 2.4b-3.24," 16; cf. Ellen J. van Wolde, *Words Become Worlds: Semantic Studies of Genesis 1-11* (New York: Brill, 1994), 19–21.

²⁹⁸ Some commentators suggest that God introduced the prohibition in order to prompt the man and woman to eat from the tree and thus gain maturity by knowing good and evil. (Fewell and Gunn, "Shifting the Blame," 28).

introduction to the realities of life, as described in the curses, and ends with a going out into the world, the expulsion from the garden.²⁹⁹

Three elements in the narrative argue against an animal- or child-like state.³⁰⁰ First, the man and woman are established as a model for marriage in Gen 2:24.³⁰¹ An etiological note usually follows the event that brings about the new situation; it does not foreshadow it. The narrative assumes sexual maturity at this point because a resolution has been reached for man's aloneness: there is now man and woman.³⁰² Verse 25 does not alter this picture. In Mesopotamian literature, the nakedness of primitive humans illustrates a lack of civilization, not sexual immaturity. There is no reason to assume sexual immaturity in Gen 2:25. Instead, as will be argued below, the lack of shame relates to the following act of disobedience. Verse 25 is not

²⁹⁹ Bechtel, "Genesis 2.4b-3.24," 12 and 19–26; cf. Anthony York, "The Maturation Theme in the Adam and Eve Story," in *Go to the Land I Will Show You: Studies in Honor of Dwight W. Young* (ed. Joseph E. Coleson and Victor Harold Matthews; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 409. Similarly, Fewell and Gunn suggest that the curses are just consequences of a richer life gained by knowing good and evil: "Procreation involves children to love but also physical and emotional pain, not to mention infant and female mortality . . . Passion allows for love and intimacy, but also the possibility of domination (even violence); it can be the excuse for estrangement and the cause of unwanted pregnancy. In work one may find the satisfaction of accomplishment as well as the weariness of labor and the frustration of failure" (Fewell and Gunn, "Shifting the Blame," 29).

³⁰⁰ Note also that in Ezek 28:12-13 the primeval figure in Eden is not at all animal- or child-like, being full of wisdom.

³⁰¹ LaCocque, *The Trial of Innocence*, 133.

³⁰² Tribble, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, 94-105.

limiting verse 24 but preparing for the continuation of the narrative in Gen 3.³⁰³

Second, the work assigned to the man and his activities display a level of mental and physical abilities.³⁰⁴ The man is given a task as he is called to work and guard (2:15). He actually fulfills a duty as he names the animals (2:19-20). His mental abilities are best seen as he discerns that only the woman, not the animals, is a fitting companion (2:20 and 23) and then responds with poetry (2:23).

Third, the prohibition and punishment in Gen 2:17 presuppose that the man and woman are capable of understanding and responsible for obeying.³⁰⁵ There are no indications that God had an ulterior motive for the prohibition,

³⁰³ Batto, *Slaying the Dragon*, 56; Mettinger, *The Eden Narrative*, 28; Tribble, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, 105-107; Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden*, 218-220.

³⁰⁴ LaCocque, *The Trial of Innocence*, 112-113; Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden*, 236; Robert Gordis, "The Knowledge of Good and Evil in the Old Testament and the Qumran Scrolls," *JBL* 76 (1957): 124-129; Ellen J. van Wolde, *A Semiotic Analysis of Genesis 2-3: A Semiotic Theory and Method of Analysis Applied to the Story of the Garden of Eden* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1989), 135-138.

³⁰⁵ LaCocque states, "It is not that the human couple before eating of the forbidden fruit were ignorant, without wisdom, morons manipulated at will by the creator God. They are on the contrary addressed by God as mature and responsible beings, partners in the work of creation (see Gen 2:19-20). They are 'commandable' . . . and they know what they are doing when they choose to 'try their luck' with the forbidden 'fruit'" (LaCocque, *The Trial of Innocence*, 74). Levinson realizes this implication, but explains it as "paradoxical." He argues that the account is about how humans become autonomous agents but must also portray them as autonomous agents. He states, "What the narrative here presents in linear and chronological terms is that for which there can be no genetic account, that for which there is no genesis: the conception of the human as agent and as autonomous" (Bernard M. Levinson, *The Right Chorale: Studies in Biblical Law and Interpretation* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008], 45). While intriguing, his interpretation is not convincing because it assumes that the prohibition was not in earnest.

that it was not given earnestly. Likewise, the curses in Gen 3 are portrayed as negative consequences for disobedience. The pattern of disobedience and punishment is prominent in the early portions of Genesis and throughout the Hebrew Bible.³⁰⁶ There are not adequate reasons to interpret in another manner the similar description found in Gen 2-3.³⁰⁷

Even if the man and woman are not animal- or child-like, studies focused on maturation helpfully highlight some type of development in the narrative. The associations of nakedness with a lack of civilization in Mesopotamia, as described above, suggest such a connotation in the Genesis account.³⁰⁸ Nakedness is not viewed ideally in the Hebrew Bible.³⁰⁹ Instead,

³⁰⁶ For example, the flood is described as a punishment tied to human (and animal?) actions, "The end of all flesh is coming before my face, because the earth is filled with violence because of them, and behold I am about to destroy them with the earth" (6:13, P); cf. David J. A. Clines, "Theme in Genesis 1-11," *CBQ* 38 (1976): 487–489. The curses of Gen 3 fit with the common theme elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible of blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience. See especially Lev 26 and Deut 28.

³⁰⁷ This argument assumes that Gen 2-3 should not be taken as distinct from Gen 4-11. Gen 2-3 does not have its own mythological logic while the following chapters have a narrative logic. The common connections and themes of Gen 2-11 argue for continuity.

³⁰⁸ Westermann, *Genesis*, 235; Gregory Mobley, "The Wild Man in the Bible and the Ancient Near East," *JBL* 116 (1997): 227; Batto, *Slaying the Dragon*, 55–56.

³⁰⁹ Stordalen states, "If nakedness was depriving within the shame codex in which the implied reader was socialised, Gen 2:25 would not imply unrestrained happiness" (Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden*, 228). Magonet argues, "The inescapable conclusion from these usages in that the primary significance of the Hebrew word ערום, 'nakedness' (in its various forms), is . . . a state of defenselessness and helplessness, without possessions or power" (Jonathan Magonet, "The Theme of Genesis 2-3," in *A Walk in the Garden: Biblical, Iconographical and Literary Images of Eden* [ed. Paul Morris and Deborah Sawyer; JSOTSup 136; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992], 43).

clothing is one element that distinguishes humans from animals.³¹⁰ It is a sign of culture, not only functional but providing beauty and indicating status.³¹¹

The man and woman are shown to lack a key mark of civilization through their nakedness, and they progress in the narrative as their clothing proceeds from more to less primitive.³¹²

Similarly, it is hard to imagine how becoming like God, knowers of good and bad, is not in some sense a form of progress.³¹³ Human creation in the image of God in Gen 1:26 is "good," and no other texts in the Hebrew Bible

³¹⁰ The distinction between humans and animals is seen elsewhere in Gen 1-11. In Gen 1, humans are the only ones created in God's image. In Gen 2, the animals do not provide a suitable helper for the man. In Gen 9, animals are allowed to be killed but humans are not.

³¹¹ The priestly garments were for glory and beauty (לְכָבוֹד וְלְתִפְאֵרֶת; Exod 28:2 and 40). Sheba is awed by the clothing (מַלְבוּשׁ) of Solomon's servants (1 Kgs 10:5). Houtman states, "according to ancient thinking 'the clothes make the man' (e.g. Gen. 37:3; 2 Sam. 13:18; Isa. 61:10; Dan. 5:16; Zech. 3:3, 5; Pss. 45:14; 104:1; Esth. 8:15). Wearing of the official costume transforms the wearer, turns him into an office bearer. The kind of clothing determines the status of the wearer" (Cornelis Houtman, *Exodus* [trans. Johan Rebel and Sierd Woudsta; HCOT; 4 vols. Leuven: Peeters, 1993-2002], 3:466).

³¹² There is a development from the fig leaf girdles the man and woman make, to the leather garments God gives, and ending with cloth clothing of the author's day (Propp, "Eden Sketches," 197). Thus, the leather garments most likely do not symbolize degradation or a threat, but a stage of development (pace Calvin, *Genesis*, 1:182; Propp, "Eden Sketches," 197). The term leather (עוֹר) may also have been chosen for its similarity with nakedness (עָרוֹם, עֵירֹם) and subtlety (עָרוֹם).

A few argue that God's clothing of the man and woman in verse 21 was accomplished by instructing or directing them to make garments for themselves, which would provide a clearer indication of human development (Calvin, *Genesis*, 1:181; Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 1:171).

³¹³ Robert A. Di Vito, "The Demarcation of Divine and Human Realms in Genesis 2-11," in *Creation in the Biblical Traditions* (ed. Richard J. Clifford and John J. Collins; Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1992), 47.

describe being like God as a negative attribute. What knowing good and bad means will be discussed below.

The question then remains of how the man and woman developed through disobedience. One answer commentators posit is that human development was not seen as positive by God. Some argue that God desired humans to stay in a child-like state free from care and pain.³¹⁴ However, a real child-like state does not make sense of the narrative, as discussed above. Other commentators suggest that God was guarding wisdom or some form of it as one of the divine attributes, and thus development in that sense was a breach of the divine-human distinction.³¹⁵ Nevertheless, such a reading would

³¹⁴ Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 1:113; Wolde, *Words Become Worlds*, 44.

³¹⁵ John Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis* (2d ed.; ICC 1; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1969), 87–88; Westermann, *Genesis*, 224 and 247–248. Some argue that humans are only allowed to have wisdom or immortality, not both, in order to maintain the distinction between gods and humans. See Izre'el, *Adapa and the South Wind*, 121 and 126–128; Arvid S. Kapelrud, "You Shall Surely Not Die," in *History and Traditions of Early Israel: Studies Presented to Eduard Nielsen, May 8th 1993* (ed. André Lemaire and Benedikt Otzen; VTSup 50; Leiden: Brill, 1993), 52–60; Mettinger, *The Eden Narrative*, 99–132; York, "The Maturation Theme in the Adam and Eve Story," 409.

Some commentators offer a combination of these two opinions. Vogels suggests that God prohibited the tree of knowing good and bad because it would grant the divine attribute of wisdom, but also because he wanted humans to experience only good and not bad, although he does not connect such a state with childhood (Vogels, "Like one of us, knowing *tôb* and *ra' ' [Gen 3:22],"* 151). Stordalen's conclusion is similar: "Why should YHWH God be against development in human maturation? Apparently because he thought the human party would be better off with less (though: some) knowledge and more life . . . the lesser mental abilities in chapter 2 seem to facilitate an astonishingly harmonious world. This (childishly) happy state of affairs is what YHWH God intended for the human couple . . . having eaten from the Tree of Knowledge, the human party comes too close to divinity" (Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden*, 247).

prove the serpent correct in its insinuation of God's jealous motive for prohibiting the tree, a questionable interpretation.³¹⁶ It also does not fit the narrative. The man and woman are not portrayed as ignorant before eating, as argued above, and there is no indication that they gained something extraordinary by eating (see below). Elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible wisdom and development are not viewed by themselves as illegitimate, but are to be pursued.³¹⁷ Similarly, wisdom and knowledge, at least what is appropriate to humans, are not something guarded by the gods in Mesopotamian but are given freely to humans.³¹⁸ There are not adequate reasons to understand the depiction of God in Gen 2-3 differently.

LaCocque suggests a distinct variant of these interpretations. He argues that there were two types of wisdom or knowledge before the man and woman, one that was "in communion with the Autonomous One" and another "in insurgence against him." There was "a good knowledge and a bad one," and eating from the tree of knowing good and bad led to the latter. The man and woman pursued this "knowledge for the power it conveys of deciding for themselves what is good and what is bad. To become (like) God means to be liable to no one for one's choice and actions, the moral scale being in one's own hands." God only wanted them to know good, but they in hubris also wanted to know its opposite (LaCocque, *The Trial of Innocence*, 62, 71, and 77). LaCocque's analysis is helpful by showing that the choice was not between ignorance and knowledge, but between two types of knowing. However, his interpretation of the name of the tree of knowing good and bad and the effects of eating from it will be debated below.

³¹⁶ Di Vito, "The Demarcation of Divine and Human Realms in Genesis 2-11," 48.

³¹⁷ On wisdom, see especially Prov 1-9. On development, note that the movement from the semi-nomadic life of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to the settled urban life of Israel is described as promise and fulfillment. The blessings and curses often correspond, with images from settled life as a blessing and their removal as a curse. For example, curses depict a city being made into a plowed field (Mic 3:12) or a place for grazing (Isa 32:14).

³¹⁸ Batto states, "Wisdom, according to ancient Near Eastern psychology, was a trait the progenitors of the human race were supposed to possess" (Batto, *Slaying the Dragon*, 58; cf. Mettinger, *The Eden Narrative*, 129). See above on the general pattern of the gods

A better option is to understand development as inevitable in the biblical account. The man and woman were not in a static state where they could remain as they were. In this regard they were child-like since childhood inevitably moves toward adulthood, even though they were not child-like in their abilities. Thus the question in the narrative is not if they would develop, but how.³¹⁹ The prominent ethical component in these early stories of Genesis required that progress be evaluated.³²⁰ An analysis of the theme of nakedness and of the tree of knowing good and bad will support this suggestion.

In Gen 2-3, the ethical element is seen in the description of nakedness. The focus in Gen 2:25 and 3:7 is not on the nakedness of the man and woman, but on their reaction to it. Clothing is introduced because the man

granting what was needed for civilization to primitive humans and that mortality, not knowledge, was what separated humans from gods.

Izre'el argues that in Adapa and the South Wind (frg. B:57-59) Anu is angry over the wisdom given by Ea to Adapa and humans in general (Izre'el, *Adapa and the South Wind*, 125–130). However, it is better to take the statement as frustration over how Adapa has (mis)used his wisdom in breaking the South Wind's wing. It does not indicate that Anu had wanted humans to remain animal- or child-like. There is no evidence of such a divine attitude in Mesopotamia.

³¹⁹ LaCocque states, "The creation of Adam is left unfinished: the humans must now become what they are intended to be by the Creator" (LaCocque, *The Trial of Innocence*, 51–52). The issue of human mortality is similar in that the initial situation must transition to another because of the presence of the tree of knowing good and bad and the tree of life; see below.

³²⁰ The ethical emphasis in comparison to Mesopotamian literature has been noted by many. Damrosch states, "In developing the old stories, Genesis 2-11 gives a new prominence to ethical issues, as has been noted ever since the Mesopotamian parallels were first discovered" (Damrosch, *The Narrative Covenant*, 137). On the ethical transformation of the flood narrative, see Hendel, "Historical Context," in *The Book of Genesis: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation* (ed. Craig A. Evans, Joel N. Lohr, and David L. Petersen; VTSup 152; Boston: Brill, 2012), 74–76.

and woman now feel the need to hide their nakedness. The narrative thus highlights the role of shame in relationship to nakedness.³²¹ Knowledge of their nakedness is equal to shame because of it.

This change is seen first in the relationship of the man and woman. In Gen 2:25, a Hithpolel verbal form is used that is best taken as having some reciprocal force to indicate that the lack of shame was with respect to one another.³²²

וַיְהִיו שְׁנֵיהֶם עֲרוּמִים הָאָדָם וְאִשְׁתּוֹ וְלֹא יִחְבֹּשׁוּ

And the two of them were naked, the man and his wife, but they were not causing each other to feel shame.

In Gen 3:7, after the man and woman eat from the tree of knowing, it is their nakedness among themselves that first prompts them to try and cover up. In Gen 3:8, God's approach causes them to take the further step of hiding among the trees, another means of covering themselves.³²³ Even though

³²¹ Bal, *Lethal Love*, 120.

³²² Sasson offers his translation "which takes full cognizance of the factitive as well as the reciprocal qualities of the *hithpolel*: 'yet, they did not shame each other', or, more elegantly put: 'yet, they did not embarrass each other'" (Jack M. Sasson, "w^elō' yitbōšāšū [Gen 2:25] and Its Implications," *Biblica* 66 [1985]: 420; cf. LaCocque, *The Trial of Innocence*, 134–135).

³²³ Lambden concludes that their disobedience has disturbed both "peaceful human relations and the divine-human relationship" (Stephen N. Lambden, "From Fig Leaves to Fingernails: Some Notes on the Garments of Adam and Eve in the Hebrew Bible and Select Early Postbiblical Jewish Writings," in *A Walk in the Garden: Biblical, Iconographical and Literary Images of Eden* [ed. Paul Morris and Deborah Sawyer; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992], 76).

shame is not mentioned in these verses, it is clearly implied by the contrast with 2:25.³²⁴ They do not want their nakedness to be seen.

In the Hebrew Bible, shame is not necessarily tied with guilt. It can result from a situation that is uncomfortable for a number of reasons.³²⁵ Thus some argue that the shame felt by the man and woman in 3:7 is proper as it indicates the removal of their ignorance; they now realize that it is not right to remain naked.³²⁶ However, in Gen 3:7 the desire of the man and woman to cover themselves is connected with their disobedience and thus should be understood as an expression of guilt.³²⁷ Knowledge of outward nakedness

³²⁴ Westermann, *Genesis*, 250.

³²⁵ Westermann states, "Shame is ethically an ambivalent phenomenon . . . the sense of shame should not be restricted to a reaction to sin or sensuality" (Westermann, *Genesis*, 236). בּוֹשׁ, to be ashamed, can be used of embarrassment in a variety of situations not involving guilt (Judg 3:25, 2 Sam 19:6, 2 Kgs 2:17, 8:11, and Ezra 8:22) and of a guilty shame (Ezra 9:6, Job 19:3, Isa 1:28, Jer 2:26, and 6:15). It is quite often used as an indicator of whether one's trust has rightly been placed in another (Ps 25:3, Isa 20:5, and Jer 2:36). This use is similar to a guilty shame since it relates to a person's choices, although the evaluation of that choice is not strictly ethical.

³²⁶ Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden*, 227–229; Westermann, *Genesis*, 251. Others connect nakedness with human limitedness, and thus the man and woman become ashamed of their limitedness after they try and become godlike (J. Alberto Soggin, "And You Will Be like God and Know What is Good and What is Bad': Genesis 2-3," in *Sefer Moshe: The Moshe Weinfeld Jubilee Volume: Studies in the Bible and the Ancient Near East, Qumran, and Post-Biblical Judaism* [ed. Chaim Cohen, Avi Hurvitz, and Shalom M. Paul; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2004], 192–193; Vogels, "Like one of us, knowing ṭôb and ra' [Gen 3:22]," 153; Magonet, "The Theme of Genesis 2-3," 43).

³²⁷ Dillmann's conclusion is similar, "Childlike unconstrained innocence knows as yet no shame. Shame first enters with sin and the feeling of guilt (ch. III. 7). This is here the chief point of view . . . A fragment bearing upon the history of culture . . . is here used . . . from a purely ethical standpoint" (Dillmann, *Genesis*, 146). Hauser shows how nakedness without shame is a sign of intimacy in 2:25, while the need to cover nakedness in 3:7 indicates the alienation brought about by disobedience (Alan Jon Hauser, "Genesis 2-3: The Theme of Intimacy and Alienation," in *Art and Meaning: Rhetoric in Biblical Literature* [ed.

symbolizes their inner sense of exposure.³²⁸ Three observations are helpful to establish this point. First, shame is felt in the one relationship in which nakedness was appropriate, that of a man and wife. Second, the man and woman hide from God even after making their primitive coverings; actual nakedness is not the issue.³²⁹ Third, the man and woman try and shift the blame when questioned by God, indicating a desire to excuse or hide their actions and not just their nakedness.

Thus clothing is first used as a cover for a guilty shame. It is a form of hiding and signals the alienation that has resulted from disobedience. Barriers are needed in a relationship which had been characterized by openness. God recognizes this change as he provides a covering of leather garments in 3:21, making relationships among humans and between humans and God possible

David J. A. Clines, D. M. Gunn, and A. J. Hauser; JSOTSup 19; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1982], 25 and 27–28). Similarly, LaCocque states, "Genesis 2:25 is the indispensable background of Genesis 3: innocence is put on trial; failing, it becomes shame" (LaCocque, *The Trial of Innocence*, 136).

³²⁸ LaCocque says of Adam's nakedness in 3:10-11, "Evidently, J means more than a physical nakedness. He means . . . exposure to somebody else's sight and judgment" (LaCocque, *The Trial of Innocence*, 154).

³²⁹ These first two reasons are adequate to answer those who argue that knowledge of nakedness is a good thing in 3:7 based on the general negative connotations of nakedness and the commands to be fully clothed when appearing before God (Exod 20:26, 28:42-43; cf. Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden*, 228). It needs to be emphasized that in various contexts, nakedness can have different symbolic values (Sasson, "w^lō' yitbōšāšû [Gen 2:25] and Its Implications," 419 n. 3).

again.³³⁰ Various barriers continue to be required throughout the Hebrew Bible.³³¹

Nevertheless, clothing does not have a negative connotation.

Nakedness is not used in Gen 2-3 as an ideal in contrast to clothing; instead, it expresses a state of innocence.³³² Clothing is a good thing, a sign of

³³⁰ Landy speaks of the different purposes for clothing:

In 3.7, clothing signifies estrangement . . . In 3.21, however, clothing defines the formal distance between man and woman and the desperate resource becomes a permanent institution. Therewith the triangular relationship between God, man and woman is reestablished . . . with certain constraints and limitations . . . God clothes man; whereas in 3.8 they hid from his presence, here he makes them clothes so as to enable them to face each other without shame. It indicates the restitution of divine favour, his commiseration for their embarrassment, and a wish for human relations to continue. Once more they are man and wife.

(Francis Landy, *Paradoxes of Paradise: Identity and Difference in the Song of Songs* [Sheffield: The Almond Press, 1983], 253–254). Fewell and Gunn write, "Clothing becomes a symbol of autonomy and vulnerability, both protecting and revealing that one needs to be protected" (Fewell and Gunn, "Shifting the Blame," 30).

³³¹ The tabernacle is a large scale example. Propp writes, "The Tabernacle is dedicated to a paradoxical proposition. God and Israel both want to live together, yet Yahweh's attribute of Holiness is incompatible with earthly corruption . . . a shrine sheathes the divine presence within concentric circles of diminishing sanctity, insulating the Holy and the impure from one another" (Propp, *Exodus 19-40*, 686 and 688). Haran argues that the priestly robes are parallel to the different layers of the tabernacle, only in reverse as they cover an impure priest who is going to appear before God's holiness (Menahem Haran, *Temples and Temple-Service in Ancient Israel: An Inquiry into Biblical Cult Phenomena and the Historical Setting of the Priestly School* [Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1985], 165–174).

³³² Various commentators note the negative meaning of nakedness and yet its use in Gen 2:25 to express an openness. Vogels states, "The primary significance of nudity is not sexual. Nudity refers to poverty, weakness, and human limitations . . . To be nude before someone indicates that you have nothing to hide, that you are showing yourself as you are" (Vogels, "Like one of us, knowing *ṭôb* and *ra* ' [Gen 3:22]," 153). Lambden writes, "Since 'nakedness' in the Hebrew Bible usually refers to the loss of human and social dignity the primordial 'nakedness' and 'unashamedness' most probably indicates that human relationships were originally characterized by innocence and mutual trust and respect before God"

civilization, and yet it was first used by the man and woman to hide their disobedience. Therefore, ethical and developmental interpretations are not mutually exclusive. Nakedness as an indication of a lack of civilization did not need to be emphasized or brought out in the narrative. It was a common cultural assumption. The use of nakedness for innocence, however, was more unique.

The name of the tree of knowing good and bad and the effects of eating also fit with the suggestion that development was inevitable. The phrase knowing good and bad is understood by some commentators as a body of knowledge with good and bad defining its range.³³³ For example, some understand good and bad as a merismus, and thus the knowledge spoken of is in some way knowledge of everything.³³⁴ However, based on

(Lambden, "From Fig Leaves to Fingernails," 75). It is possible that their nakedness is also symbolic of an indeterminate state, that what they are to be is yet to be seen (cf. LaCocque, *The Trial of Innocence*, 134; Wolde, *Words Become Worlds*, 21).

³³³ Some commentators admit that the effects of eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and bad are unclear even if they assume knowledge was gained. Jobling states, "Nothing could be clearer than that our text tells of a gain of knowledge by the man (or by humanity) . . . Wherein this knowledge precisely consists, the text does not specify" (Jobling, *The Sense of Biblical Narrative*, 31). Friedman concludes that the meaning "is not clear to us in the text of the story as it has survived. The only immediate consequence of eating from the tree that the story names is that before eating from the tree the humans are not embarrassed over nudity and after eating from it they are. This is not sufficient information to tell us what limits of 'good and bad' are meant" (Richard Elliott Friedman, *Commentary on the Torah: With a New English Translation* [San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001], 17–18).

³³⁴ A few take the universal extent as an indication of the divine nature of this knowledge (Robert A. Oden, "Divine aspirations in Atrahasis and in Genesis 1-11," *ZAW* 93 [1981]: 212–213; Howard N. Wallace, *The Eden Narrative* [Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1985], 116–129; LaCocque, *The Trial of Innocence*, 77–78; Mettinger, *The Eden Narrative*,

identical and similar phrases elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, it is best to take knowing good and bad as an ability.

In some phrases, the ability of discernment is highlighted by the use of prepositions. Solomon asks for the ability to distinguish between good and bad (לְהַבִּין בֵּין-טוֹב לְרָע) in order to rightly rule Israel (1 Kgs 3:9). In 2 Sam 19:36, Barzillai states that old age renders one no longer able to know good from bad.

בֶּן-שְׁמוֹנִים שָׁנָה אֲנֹכִי הָאָדָע בֵּין-טוֹב לְרָע

I am 80 years old. Can I know good from bad?

It is best to interpret his statement in light of the following two examples he gives: "Can your servant taste what he eats and what he drinks? Can I still hear the voice of male and female singers?"³³⁵ Thus his comment about knowing is not focused on a state of forgetfulness but a loss or diminution of former physical abilities, including taste and hearing.³³⁶

Other examples do not use prepositions. In 2 Sam 14:17, a wise woman from Tekoa appeals (falsely) to David for judgment, saying that he is

62–64). While good and bad can operate as a merismus, content or amount of information is not the focus of the phrase as a whole elsewhere. Also, there are no indications in the narrative that the man and woman leap forward in how much they know after eating from the fruit.

³³⁵ The use of the interrogative הַ whether continued by וְאִם may express a list (Isa 10:9), a contrast (Num 13:19, 20, 2 Sam 24:13), or expansion (Judg 6:3, Hab 3:8) as here.

³³⁶ York's comments are similar, "Barzillai no longer has the full powers of manhood, or maturity, about him" (Anthony York, "The Maturation Theme in the Adam and Eve Story," 409).

able to understand good and bad (לְשֹׁמֵעַ הַטּוֹב וְהָרָע) like the angel of God. The woman is not appealing to David's breadth of knowledge, but his ability to make a right decision.³³⁷ In Deut 1:19, childhood is marked by not knowing good and bad.

וּבְנֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר לֹא יָדְעוּ הַיּוֹם טוֹב וָרָע

and your children who do not know today good and bad

While it is certainly true that an increase in knowledge accompanies the move to adulthood, a certain maturity in mental capacities is the major change.³³⁸ Childhood is a period of dependence in some way, before someone is able to be on their own or do the tasks of an adult. There is evidence that in Israel

³³⁷ Note that the same verb is used in Solomon's request for an understanding heart (לֵב שֹׁמֵעַ). Some commentators argue for a merismus in 2 Sam 14:17 (good and bad = everything) since in verse 20 David's wisdom is compared to the wisdom of the angel of God "to know all that is on the earth" (לְדַעַת אֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר בְּאֶרֶץ) (Wallace, *The Eden Narrative*, 125–126; Vogels, "Like one of us, knowing ṭôb and ra' [Gen 3:22]," 150). However, the verses are not parallels since the one is an appeal for justice and the other an expression of amazement at the uncovering of a secret (W. Malcolm Clark, "Legal Background to the Yahwist's Use of 'Good and Evil' in Genesis 2-3," *JBL* 88 [1969]: 269). Also, in verse 20 itself the focus of the knowledge or wisdom is not on content, omniscience, but the ability to figure out what is occurring.

³³⁸ Similar language is used in 1 Kgs 3:7 as Solomon professes, "I am a little child, I do not know how to go out or in" (וְאֲנֹכִי נֶעֱר קָטָן לֹא אֲדַע צֵאת וְבֵאת). This lack of knowledge is relieved by the ability to discern in verse 9, indicating that the focus was not on content. The phrase used to mark a stage in development in Isa 7:16 is also comparable: "before the boy knows to reject the bad and choose the good" (בְּטַרְם יָדַע הַנְּעָר מֵאֵס בָּרַע וּבָחַר בַּטּוֹב).

Cassuto agrees that the other texts mentioned in this discussion are about ability (discernment) but argues that Deut 1:39 is about content since no preposition are used, that the children "know nothing" (Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 1:113). However, there is no reason to take this example as unique. In the context it is best to see the children (בָּנִים) as older than the little ones (טַף) mentioned in the previous line. Thus they are not babies who know nothing.

male children were not considered "of age" until 20 years old.³³⁹ In light of all these examples, it is best to conclude that knowing good and bad does not refer to content but ability, whether rational, moral, or physical.³⁴⁰

What is unclear in the narrative is the relationship between the name of the tree and the effect of eating from it. Based on the parallel with the tree of life, it is assumed that the name and effect are related. Does eating from the tree of knowing good and bad grant some sort of ability? It was argued above that the narrative assumes human rational and moral ability before the eating. Is there some other ability that the man and woman exhibit after eating from the tree?

³³⁹ In Num 1:3, the census is of those 20 and older, those deemed able to fight. In Num 14:29 (P) and 32:11 (non-P), all those 20 and older are punished by death in the wilderness for grumbling against Yahweh because of the report of the 10 spies. This punishment implies that those under 20 are not held responsible. More importantly, Deut 1:29 is listing who will enter the land and not die in the wilderness. If Deut 1:29 is referring to all those who would enter the land, not just the youngest, then the age of 20 would be when one was considered to know good and bad. This connection is made in 1QSa (The Rule of the Congregation, 1.9-11).

ולוא י[קרב] אל אשה לדעתה למשכבי זכר
כי אם לפי מולואת לו עש[ר]ים שנה בדעתו [טוב] ורע

But he shall not [approach] a woman to know her by lying with her until he is fully twe[nty] years (of age), at which time he knows [good] and evil.

(text and translation from James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations - Volume 1. Rule of the Community and Related Documents* [Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1994], 110–113; cf. Gordis, "The Knowledge of Good and Evil in the Old Testament and the Qumran Scrolls," 123–124).

³⁴⁰ Likewise, Speiser concludes that to know good and bad is "to be in full possession of mental and physical powers" (Speiser, *Genesis* [2d. ed.; AB 1; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1964], 26). York takes it as "*maturity*, the full measure of one's powers" (York, "The Maturation Theme in the Adam and Eve Story," 407). Another comparable interpretation is functional knowledge: knowledge is referring to the power of discernment, being able to distinguish and discriminate, and good and bad are a reference to what is helpful or harmful (Westermann, *Genesis*, 241–248; Wolde, *Words Become Worlds*, 36–38).

In Gen 3:7, the eyes of the man and woman are opened so that they know their nakedness. However, this description is not of a new ability they have gained but something new they have experienced. As argued above, the knowledge of their nakedness is really the discomfort they now feel in each other's presence and at God's approach. The immediate result of eating is not a newly developed ability but a new feeling of shame and fear.

What about later events? Stordalen asserts that the narrative "indicates a certain human 'knowledge' *prior* to eating from the tree. And yet, on eating from that tree, human mental abilities definitely expand and change." Nevertheless, the only examples he gives are the attempt by the man and woman to cover their nakedness, which he rightly calls "childishly helpless," and their shifting of the blame under God's questioning. He adds that the silence of the serpent after the eating "could be a hint that human mental ability has increased to a level at which the most shrewd animal (3:1) is no match."³⁴¹ While these actions are more deviant than what the man does before eating, it is not clear that they display an increase in mental ability. Thus the name of the tree does not seem to be a description of what happens after eating from it.

³⁴¹ Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden*, 236–237; cf. Wolde, *A Semiotic Analysis of Genesis 2-3*, 139–141.

Instead, God in Gen 2:17 warned the man of the effect of eating from the tree of knowing good and evil; eating brought death. Thus the tree of knowing good and bad is really best seen as the opposite of the tree of life: one brings curse and death, the other brings blessing and life.³⁴² The tree of knowing could have been called the tree of death if it was named for the effect it produced.³⁴³

³⁴² For more on the tree of life, see below. LaCocque argues, unconvincingly, that the two trees are the two sides of one tree. However, his analysis of the contrast between them is helpful.

'Eating' the fruit of the tree of life is saying 'yes' to God. But there is no 'yes' without its opposite . . . according to the divine warning, the tree of knowledge brings about death. One face of the tree brings life, the reverse face brings death. Those alternatives are at the heart of the Garden. Thus, from the outset, Adam and Eve's existence is set at the crossroad of two opposites. One is reminded of the crucial formula of Deut 30:19, 'I have set before you life and death, blessing and curses. Choose life in order to live.' The Hebrew way of thinking is fond of this type of alternatives.

(LaCocque, *The Trial of Innocence*, 70–71).

³⁴³ A tree of death (*š mt*) is mentioned in a Ugaritic text (CAT 1.100) concerning snake venom. Lines 64-69 describe the god Horon performing a rite that removes the deadly poison.

From the trees, he drives out the tamarisk, From the bushes, the tree of death. With the tamarisk he scatters it, With the cluster of dates he clears it out, With the swirl he swills it, With the channel he discharges it. Horon arrives at his house, And comes to his court. The poison peters out like a stream, Dissipates like a ditch.

(translated by Simon B. Parker, *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry* [ed. Simon B. Parker; SBLWAW 9; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1997], 222.; cf. N. Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit: The Words of Ilmilku and his Colleagues* [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998], 385–386).

A few commentators have connected this tree of death with the tree of knowing good and bad in Gen 2-3, especially since both are connect with snakes (Matitiahu Tsevat, "The Two Trees in the Garden of Eden," *ErIsr* 12 [1975]: 40–43; Johannes C. de Moor, "East of Eden," *ZAW* 100 [1988]: 105–111; Landy, *Paradoxes of Paradise*, 211; LaCocque, *The Trial of Innocence*, 74). While the parallel is helpful to illustrate that the designation 'tree of death' was known, the text is too obscure to make any convincing connections.

Why then is it called the tree of knowing good and bad? Its name focuses not on the effects of eating, but its function in the garden. Some commentators question the reason for the prohibition: why all this fuss about a piece of fruit?³⁴⁴ Others, however, point out that the prohibition actually grants to the man and woman freedom and responsibility. They are now in a position to obey or not, and it is their choice.³⁴⁵ In this way, the tree of knowing was the focus of a test for the man and woman, an interpretation that will be developed more below.

³⁴⁴ James Barr, *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 11–12.

³⁴⁵ Westermann argues, The command then opens up the possibility of a relationship to the one who commands. By the command something is entrusted to the man; he is given an area of freedom which the animals do not possess; it is not a limitation but an enlargement of his potential . . . Where there is the capacity to decide there is at the same time a limit . . . This limitation is expressed in the law, and here in the sentence, 'In the day that you eat of it you shall die.' This is not in fact a threat of death, but rather the clear expression of the limit which is the necessary accompaniment of the freedom entrusted to humanity in the command. To say no to God - and this is what freedom allows - is ultimately to say no to life; for life comes from God. (Westermann, *Genesis*, 224). Similarly, LaCocque states, God's commandment sets Adam free. It pulls Adam from irresponsibility up to responsibility, from object to subject. The worst disservice to the Yahwistic text is to conclude from it that God's command in Gen 2:16-17 smacks despotism, a stonewalling device to keep Adam's autonomy in check. This misunderstanding is put by J in the mouth of the serpent . . . on the ethical plane, the prohibition could have been about most anything as the intent was the exercise of human free will. As suggested above, the forbidden fruit is the inverted image of the fruit of life. Thus, what is forbidden is much less arbitrary than it first seems; the order is, 'Do not die!'" (LaCocque, *The Trial of Innocence*, 37 and 95).

The name of the tree of knowing good and bad refers to what was granted by its very presence.³⁴⁶ It was the tree of decision, the tree of discernment. As the man and woman acted in relationship to the tree of knowing good and bad, they demonstrated their ability and responsibility as moral agents.³⁴⁷ In doing so, they are like God and contrasted with the animals. The man and woman would become knowers of good and bad no matter if they ate or refused to eat. Thus the serpent was telling the truth, just not all of it. The question was whether their development would be through obedience or disobedience.³⁴⁸ The tree of knowing good and bad indicated their moral culpability and functioned as an evaluation of it.

³⁴⁶ Bal partially recognizes this point: "It was the likeness to God that the serpent presented to her as the main charm of the tree. This likeness included the free will to act, which was implied in the interdiction itself" (Bal, *Lethal Love*, 125).

³⁴⁷ Kline's conclusions are similar although he focuses on a confrontation with the serpent: "the name of the tree pointed not so much to something man would acquire as to something he must do. It referred not to knowledge of a certain kind that he might gain, but to knowledge in action, knowledge engaged in pronouncing judgment" (Meredith G. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview* [Eugene, Ore.: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2006], 106–107).

³⁴⁸ In contrast, some commentators see human development and simple obedience as contrasting possibilities (Di Vito, "The Demarcation of Divine and Human Realms in Genesis 2-11," 47). But LaCocque's conclusion is closer to the truth: "Adam is put before two kinds of wisdom, *not* before a choice between childishness and maturity, or between myopic naïveté and farsighted intelligence" (LaCocque, *The Trial of Innocence*, 72).

Wisdom literature likewise contrasts differing types of wisdom, acknowledging wisdom among the nations and yet claiming that the fear of Yahweh is the beginning of wisdom. Stordalen states, "The human attitude towards one's mental capacity is as crucial as that capacity itself. Only the humble are truly wise. From such a perspective, that human who autonomously challenged one of YHWH God's decrees would be a fool, despite the fact that the abilities which promoted such challenging might elsewhere be regarded as desirable" (Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden*, 248).

Yet, if the man and woman were destined to become knowers of good and bad, why does God react to their new status in 3:22-23 with banishment from the garden? The answer again is the ethical evaluation. God is not sending them from the garden because of their abilities, but for the way they have used their abilities in disobedience. The Babel narrative in Gen 11:1-9 (non-P, J) provides a close parallel. After the people have started to build the city and tower, Yahweh comes down to investigate, and in verse 6 he assesses the situation using the same language as 3:22, "Behold (וַיַּרְא) . . . And now (וַעַתָּה) . . ." ³⁴⁹ The content of Yahweh's assessment is also parallel to 3:22. It does not render a judgment about the people's actions, whether they are good or bad; instead, the focus is on the people's abilities. Yet, are these abilities what has caused Yahweh to act? No, it is clear from the context that God was concerned by their use of their abilities in an act of hubris, even though that is not explicitly stated. The same is true for 3:22. God does not act because of the man and woman's abilities as knowers of good and bad but because of their use of them in disobedience. ³⁵⁰

³⁴⁹ Gordon Wenham, *Genesis* (WBC 1; Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1987), 240. This combination is only found in these two verses in Genesis.

³⁵⁰ Note the other parallels between the accounts: God uses the plural: "as one of us" (3:22) and "let us go down and let us confuse" (11:7); God expels the man (הָאָדָם) from the garden (3:24) and scatters the sons of man (בְּנֵי-הָאָדָם) from the city (11:5 and 8). The connections between Gen 3, 6:1-4, and 11:1-9 are well known. Oden states that these passages are "instances of the human propensity to trespass upon the divine sphere . . . a picture of humans aspiring to divine status - which status is ultimately denied them" (Oden, "Divine aspirations in Atrahasis and in Genesis 1-11," 211 and 215). Di Vito, however,

This interpretation also provides another way to understand the well-known pun between the couple's nakedness, עֲרוּמִים, (2:25) and the serpent's shrewdness, עָרוּם, (3:1). In an unpointed text, the terms are identical in both the singular (עָרוּם) and plural (עֲרוּמִים). Could the author be playing with the ambiguity? In 2:25, naked seems to fit best because of the mention of shame. In 3:1, naked could work since snakes have no hair, but shrewd seems better because of the snake's speech. The key is in 3:7, for a different word is used for nakedness (עֵרָמָם). Why the change? To remove the ambiguity. The author uses the unambiguous form to highlight that the man and woman's pursuit of greater mental ability has not succeeded. They didn't gain shrewdness (עֲרוּמִים) but just saw nakedness (עֵרָמָם). It also causes the reader to reconsider the עֲרוּמִים of 2:25. Since the man and woman did not gain mental ability, they must have already been shrewd (עֲרוּמִים) and not ashamed.³⁵¹

provides a helpful nuance as he stresses that the judgments made in these passages do not arise from a threat to the ontological boundaries but from ethical evaluations (Di Vito, "The Demarcation of Divine and Human Realms in Genesis 2-11," 50).

³⁵¹ LaCocque makes similar connections although his conclusions are not identical. He states, "The human couple are naked; they will be met by the most naked of all animals. The serpent is naked and clever; the humans also are clever, not just naked" (LaCocque, *The Trial of Innocence*, 137).

In contrast, Sawyer emphasizes the need for shrewdness to replace nakedness: "It is this powerful commodity, necessary for survival in a hard world, that the serpent introduces into the Garden of Eden. Without it we would be defenseless, vulnerable, naked" (John F. A. Sawyer, "The Image of God, the Wisdom of Serpents and the Knowledge of Good and Evil," in *A Walk in the Garden: Biblical, Iconographical and Literary Images of Eden* [ed. Paul Morris and Deborah Sawyer; JSOTSup 136; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992], 68). However, it is better to see a parallel between them. Nakedness is not a good or bad thing in

On the theme of progress, the nakedness of the man and woman and the presence of the tree of knowing good and bad indicate that human growth and development is necessary and even inevitable. This conclusion fits with the conclusions concerning work above. They also indicate an assessment of progress. How humans go about a task is as essential as the task itself.

The evaluation of development is best seen in the larger context of Gen 1-11. Humans continue to progress after being banished from the garden. Various cultural elements are described as humanity moves toward the civilized society known to the author. This development is similar to that seen in Mesopotamia with two major differences. First, it is not God who brings about these changes. Second, the cultural developments are portrayed in a negative light.

In Mesopotamia, the gods are the ones that impart knowledge to primitive humans to allow them to develop, bestowing upon them technology like the hoe and social institutions like kingship.³⁵² In contrast, Genesis speaks only of humans engaging in new activities. Cain builds a city (4:17), Jabal is a nomadic herder (4:20), Jubal plays musical instruments (4:21), and Tubal-cain is a metalworker (4:22). The contrast is most explicit in Gen 11:1-9 as God actually intervenes to limit cultural achievements: "Behold, they are one

itself and yet is experienced differently by the man and woman in 2:25 and 3:7. Likewise, subtlety does not lead to good or bad on its own; it depends on how it is used.

³⁵² Westermann, *Genesis*, 57–59.

people, and they all have one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; and now nothing that they propose to do will be impossible for them" (11:6).³⁵³

Westermann attributes the lack of direct divine involvement in the progress of civilization to the unique purpose for humankind's work in the Hebrew Bible. He states, "all progress in civilization is a human achievement . . . This accords well with the description of the destiny of humanity in Gen 1-3 which is quite different from that found in Babylon and Egypt; people were not created to minister to the gods, but to master, cultivate and preserve the earth."³⁵⁴ Thus, Westermann views the descriptions of progress as a playing out of the blessing given by God to humans (e.g., Gen 1:28).

Yet, Westermann notes that not all advances in civilization are equal; there is no "blanket approval to all forms of progress."³⁵⁵ He argues that the description of the rise of civilization in 4:17-22 is placed between Cain's murder and Lamech's boast in order to color it in a negative way. This arrangement highlights the abuse that can be made of progress.³⁵⁶ He also

³⁵³ Damrosch states, "In Genesis 2-11, this fundamentally anti-epic perspective leads to the dramatic reversal of the traditional ending of the creation-flood epics, in which the city is evoked as the center and validator of culture . . . the Yahwistic creation-flood epic closes with a parody of the establishment of Babylon, opening the way for the probing of earthly institutions that is central to Hebrew historiography" (Damrosch, *The Narrative Covenant*, 134–135).

³⁵⁴ Westermann, *Genesis*, 61.

³⁵⁵ Westermann, *Genesis*, 343.

³⁵⁶ Westermann, *Genesis*, 344.

notes that in 11:1-9 human ambition, which in itself is not bad, has to be restrained by God since it has led humans to overstep "the limits assigned to them."³⁵⁷

Di Vito, while appreciating much of Westermann's analysis, argues that the presentation in Gen 1-11 is actually much more pejorative. Development was not a good that could be abused, but was itself undesirable. He states, "the persistent contrast the Bible presents to the epic tradition is an unabashedly negative assessment of human civilization and cultural progress."³⁵⁸ He highlights the difference by comparing Enkidu and Adam and Eve: "In contrast to the thoroughly positive treatment the acquisition of knowledge receives in Gilgamesh's depiction of primitive human beginnings, in the famous scene of Enkidu's seduction by the harlot (I iv), Adam and Eve come to shame upon eating the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, and the

³⁵⁷ Westermann, *Genesis*, 555. Miller notes a similar contrast between the Mesopotamian and biblical views of the rise of the city. The one is brought about by the gods as a needed, positive development. The other is a human achievement viewed neutrally at best or as in conflict with God. He concludes, "For Israel, in some sense the city was as viable and as ambiguous as kingship, as capable of fulfilling the destiny of God for the human community (Isa 1:26; Zech 8:3-5) as kingship was (e.g., Isa 11:1-9), and as capable of subverting that divine intention as was kingship (Isa 1:21-23; Mic 3:9-12)" (Patrick D. Miller, "Eridu, Dunnu, and Babel: A Study in Comparative Mythology," *HAR* 9 [1985]: 243).

³⁵⁸ Di Vito, "The Demarcation of Divine and Human Realms in Genesis 2-11," 54. Jacobsen likewise sees a complete contrast in the Mesopotamian and biblical views of progress. He says of Mesopotamia, "Things were not nearly as good to begin with as they have become since," and of the Hebrew Bible, "Things began as perfect from God's hand and grew then steadily worse through man's sinfulness . . . The moral judgment here introduced, and the ensuing pessimistic viewpoint, could not be more different" (Jacobsen, "The Eridu Genesis," 529).

clothes they wear - for Enkidu, an emblem of civilized life - become the mark of their disgrace."³⁵⁹

While the theme of civilization in *The Gilgamesh Epic* is more nuanced than Di Vito admits, the contrast he makes is helpful. Mesopotamian literature may wrestle with the positive and negative effects of civilization, but they do not subject it to the same ethical critique found in the beginning chapters of *Genesis*.³⁶⁰ However, in light of the discussion above, Di Vito goes too far in concluding that *Gen 1-11* condemns all development. It is better to follow Westermann in his view of human cultural progress as a carrying out of God's blessing, while noting with Di Vito that the particular progress described in *Gen 1-11* is assessed negatively, beginning with the man and woman in the garden.

³⁵⁹ Di Vito, "The Demarcation of Divine and Human Realms in *Genesis 2-11*," 53. Damrosch's comparison is the same: "Whereas in the *Gilgamesh Epic* clothing was a symbol of maturity and the gifts of civilization, here it signifies only loss" (Damrosch, *The Narrative Covenant*, 142). Other commentators make a similar comparison with Sumerian texts. LaCocque notes, "in 'Ewe and Wheat' (li. 20-24), the clothing is highly praised as civilized, while, in *Genesis*, the clothing happens, not as a promotion of humanity, but as a cover up of their shame" (LaCocque, *The Trial of Innocence*, 108). Gmirkin states, "In *The Sumerian Flood Story*, humanity's primitive animal-like existence was miserable and pathetic, while the gifts of civilization were occasions for joy. But in *Genesis*, nature was paradise, while culture, a product of the tree of knowledge, was evil and corrupting" (Gmirkin, *Berosus and Genesis, Manetho and Exodus*, 101).

³⁶⁰ Damrosch's contrast is helpful as a partial explanation of the difference: "The Babylonians typically saw much that was negative in their gods, and conversely exalted what was positive in human culture; the Bible could be said to do the reverse" (Damrosch, *The Narrative Covenant*, 132).

For Genesis and the Hebrew Bible as a whole, development is a necessary part of human history. The man and woman were not created to remain naked and not knowing good and bad. Nakedness and the tree of knowing signify the need for progress, but disobedience was not the only path. Instead, it is better to take the narrative as indicating that obedience would also have led to development, although without shame and curse.

Therefore, just as in Mesopotamia, humans as created were in need of cultural progress. The garden may have been blessed but it was just the beginning point for human development. However, in contrast to Mesopotamia, the source of human development was from human abilities. They did not need the outside interventions portrayed in Mesopotamian literature.³⁶¹ Thus human development was not only needed but inevitable, and more importantly, it could be subject to an ethical evaluation. The cultural progress that did occur took on a distinctly negative element because of human disobedience.

Any notion of a primeval paradise in the Hebrew Bible needs to be tempered by the themes of work and progress. The garden was a better place

³⁶¹ In light of this distinction, it is interesting to compare the serpent in Genesis and the *apkallu* in Mesopotamian literature, the fish-men that bring knowledge to the first humans including the figure of Oannes in Berossos described above. Both have animal features and yet speak with humans. They are both associated with knowledge. The big difference is whether they are needed for human development. The *apkallu* are culture heroes whereas the serpent's role is questionable at best. Gmirkin suggests that the serpent is a polemic against the *apkallu* (Gmirkin, *Berossus and Genesis, Manetho and Exodus*, 106–107).

because it was before the curses, the misery and hardship that characterize 'normal' life. Yet, the same basic elements were still there, including work. Also, the garden was not a description of the ideal state since humans were at the beginning of their development, not the end. To remain as they were initially created was as impossible as a child remaining in childhood. All the man and woman needed to progress in obedience was given, and yet they chose disobedience.

B. Human Mortality in Genesis 2-3 and 6:1-4

1. Genesis 2-3

There is a level of terminological confusion in the discussion of whether the Hebrew Bible portrays humans as created mortal or immortal. As mentioned earlier, Lambert helpfully distinguishes between two concepts of death in Mesopotamian literature: natural death and violent death. The first refers to death that eventually comes upon humans from old age. The second refers to being killed. The distinction is important because Mesopotamian literature states that death separates humans from gods while also depicting gods as being killed. Gods were not subject to natural death but in rare cases could suffer violent death.³⁶²

The use of mortal and immortal in the discussion of Genesis 2-3 likewise suffers from ambiguity. Often, scholars posit a clear contrast between older Christian and Jewish interpretations and the contemporary consensus: the former argue that humans were created immortal and become mortal through sin; the latter assert that humanity was created mortal and missed the opportunity to become immortal.³⁶³ However, the situation is more

³⁶² Lambert, "Death in Mesopotamia," 65.

³⁶³ Konrad Schmid, "Loss of Immortality? Hermeneutical Aspects of Genesis 2-3 and Its Early Receptions," in *Beyond Eden: The Biblical Story of Paradise (Genesis 2-3) and Its Reception History* (ed. Konrad Schmid and Christoph Riedweg; FAT 2.34; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 58–64; Bob Becking, "Signs from the Garden: Some Remarks on the Relationship between Eve and Adam in Genesis 2-3," in *Enigmas and Images: Studies in*

complex. There are genuine differences, but there are also many areas of overlap.³⁶⁴

In brief, most of the confusion is due to the two trees. The presence of the tree of knowledge and the tree of life in the garden adds an indeterminate nature to the narrative. There is a conditionality and a potentiality present that make it difficult to describe the state of humanity.³⁶⁵ Clifford goes so far as to say that on the question of mortality Gen 2-3 "has apparently conflicting data."³⁶⁶

Older Jewish and Christian interpreters wrestle to some degree with how to describe the man and woman in the garden since the man and woman had the possibility of eating from the tree of life or, as many believe, they

Honor of Tryggve N. D. Mettinger (ed. Göran Eidevall and Blazenka Scheuer; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 32–33.

³⁶⁴ One main area of difference is the description of humankind's body. Calvin wants to distance humans as created from any notion of decay and what he perceives as the negative connotation of their dusty creation. He states, "in his body there was no defect, wherefore he was wholly free from death . . . For as soon as he had been raised to a dignity so great, that the glory of the Divine Image shone in him, the terrestrial origin of his body was almost obliterated" (Calvin, *Genesis*, 1:127 and 180). In contrast, Becking emphasizes continuity with decay and death from the beginning, "Most exegetes of Gen 1-3 nowadays are of the opinion that the human has been mortal from creation. Death is part of life. This view, needless to say, concurs with insight in modern biology" (Becking, "Signs from the Garden," 33).

³⁶⁵ Humbert helpfully highlights the need to deal with the conditional state of the man and the woman in the garden in which obedience and disobedience lead to distinct possibilities, to maintain "la nécessaire distinction entre la virtualité et l'acte" (Paul Humbert, *Études sur le récit du paradis et de la chute dans la Genèse* [Neuchâtel: Secrétariat de l'Université, 1940], 148).

³⁶⁶ Clifford, *Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible*, 147.

were already eating from it.³⁶⁷ They opt for immortal, although it was an immortality conditioned upon obedience with regard to the tree of knowledge. What they argue against is the opposite, that humans were created mortal in the sense that they would die a natural death, to use Lambert's term, even if they were obedient.³⁶⁸ Thus human mortality is described as a result of disobedience, since it was only then that they were doomed to die. Because of

³⁶⁷ Debates about whether the man and woman ate from the tree of life before the tree of knowledge further complicate the discussion. If they were eating from the tree of life in the garden, then the question of how they were created would need to be separated from their state in the garden. Otherwise commentators may agree that eating from the tree of life is necessary for immortality but disagree on the original state. One argues that humans were immortal in the garden since they were eating from the tree of life and became mortal when they were barred from the tree. The other argues that humans were mortal in the garden since they had not eaten from the tree of life and remained mortal when it was barred from them. On the debate, see the discussion below.

For examples of those who explicitly state or imply that the man and woman were already eating from the tree, see Calvin, *Genesis*, 1:183–184; John Gill, *An Exposition of the First Book of Moses Called Genesis* (Springfield, Mo.: Particular Baptist Press, 2010), 43; Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology* (ed. James T. Dennison; trans. George Musgrave Giger; Phillipsburg, N.J.: P & R Pub., 1992), 1:476.

³⁶⁸ "If any man says that Adam, the first man, was created mortal, so that whether he sinned or not he would have died, not as the wages of sin, but through the necessity of nature, let him be anathema" (canon 1 of the Council of Carthage, 418 C.E. as quoted in Schmid, "Loss of Immortality?," 58; cf. Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 473–474).

Note, however, that some who argue that humans were immortal do not assert that they would live forever in their present state. Even if obedient, their present state would only be temporary with a transition to a heavenly life that would occur without death. For example, Calvin states, "His earthly life truly would have been temporal; yet he would have passed into heaven without death, and without injury," a transition he later compares with that of Enoch (Calvin, *Genesis*, 1:127 and 232). Kidner envisions the same scenario if humankind had been obedient, but is willing to call humans "naturally mortal" because of the temporary nature of their earthly life, even if it doesn't involve death. He states, "The translation of Enoch, 'that he should not see death' (Heb. 11:5), perhaps illustrates what God had prepared for man" (Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary* [TOTC; Chicago: InterVarsity, 1967], 65).

these concerns, commentators often made specific distinctions between types of immortality and mortality.³⁶⁹

In general, modern commentators who describe humans as created mortal approach the question differently.³⁷⁰ They do not label as immortal one who is only conditionally or potentially immortal. Instead, humans, created from dust, did not possess the 'living forever' mentioned with the tree of life and thus are best called mortal, even if they were not yet doomed to die.³⁷¹

Mortality does not refer to the necessity of death.

³⁶⁹ For example, Augustine describes three states: possible not to die, not possible not to die, and not possible to die. He labels both the first and the last as immortality, "the first immortality, which Adam lost by sinning, was the ability to avoid death; the final immortality will be the inability to die" (Augustine, *City of God* [trans. Henry Bettenson; Penguin Classics, 1984], XXII.30:1089). Turretin argues that it is best to say Adam was created immortal, although in a qualified sense, while also admitting that he could be called in one sense mortal. He states that the immortality of Adam he is referring to is not "essential and absolute immortality" but "comparative and participative immortality," not "the immortality of the soul" but "the immortality of man in the genus of morals and as to happiness," not "the immortality of glory" but "the immortality of the way, which is placed in the conditional power not to die." He says of mortality,

It does not concern a remote mortality, in which sense that is called mortal which has a remote power of death (viz., which is composed of earthy and elementary matter). Thus Adam can be called mortal remotely because his body was of dust and composed of contrary qualities. Rather it concerns a proximate mortality on which the act immediately depends and implies the necessity of dying. The question is whether Adam was so mortal by a proximate power as that he would necessarily and certainly have died even if he had not sinned.

(Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:473–474).

³⁷⁰ Present opinion is by no means unanimous. For the opinion that man was created immortal, see Hendel, "Of Demigods and the Deluge," 25; Lambert, "Death in Mesopotamia," 58; Clifford, *Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible*, 148.

³⁷¹ Whether death is viewed as a negative or a necessity is debated by commentators. For example, Benjamin identifies two themes in the narrative, immortality and fertility. He

Nevertheless, the terminology is not always clear even in more modern scholarship. Humbert is compelled to divide scholars into three camps: mortal, immortal, and "une position intermédiaire."³⁷² He then seeks to clarify his own view of humankind's original mortality by stating that all mortal means in this context is "susceptible de mort." Therefore he makes a distinction between "mortalité *virtuelle* et mortalité *effective*" in order to describe humans before and after their eating from the tree of knowledge and adds, "La mortalité est sa condition, mais sa mort est cependant conditionnelle!"³⁷³

The following examination of Genesis 2-3 will show that the man and woman in the garden of Eden did not possess the 'living forever' attached to the tree of life. Thus, it does not seem best to describe them as immortal. It

compares the man and woman in Gen 2-3 with primitive man, *lullû*, in Atrahasis and Enkidu in The Gilgamesh epic. All are created immortal. Both the man and woman and Enkidu are created infertile and exchange their immortality for fertility. In contrast, *lullû* in Atrahasis is both immortal and fertile, but the condition leads to overpopulation and the disaster of the flood (Don C. Benjamin, "Stories of Adam and Eve," in *Problems in Biblical Theology: Essays in Honor of Rolf Knierim* [ed. Henry T. C. Sun et al.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1997], 42–43). Similarly, Brichto argues that humans cannot have both knowledge (sexual knowledge leading to procreation) and immortality because it would lead to overpopulation and thus concludes, "Was the choice that man made evil? Perhaps the question itself is too restricting" (Herbert Chanan Brichto, *The Names of God: Poetic Readings in Biblical Beginnings* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1998], 96).

³⁷² Humbert, *Études sur le récit du paradis et de la chute dans la Genèse*, 117 and 125–126.

³⁷³ Humbert, *Études sur le récit du paradis et de la chute dans la Genèse*, 142 and 147. Other commentators also recognize this tensions between mortality and death. LaCocque states of humans as created, "Paradoxically, Man *is* a mortal creature, but dying is out" (LaCocque, *The Trial of Innocence*, 99). Niditch writes, "While it is certainly true that mankind is not said to live forever in Eden, on the other hand, ironically, as long as humans do not attempt to gain divine forbidden knowledge, the possibility for immortality, that aspect of divinity, remains" (Susan Niditch, *Chaos to Cosmos: Studies in Biblical Patterns of Creation* [Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1985], 31).

was possible for them to die; their bodies were susceptible to natural death. And yet, because of the possibility offered by the tree of life, it is also best to say that the man and woman were not doomed to die until after their disobedience. To address these issues, the narrative as a whole will be discussed before turning to specific questions regarding the prohibition and curse.

In Genesis 2-3, eternal life is portrayed as something to be gained and not lost.³⁷⁴ The first point to notice is that humans are never spoken of as immortal in these chapters. Instead, the description of the creation of the human in 2:7 is best interpreted as indicating the possibility of death.

וַיִּצַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָם עֹפָר מִן־הָאֲדָמָה וַיִּפַּח בְּאַפָּיו נְשָׁמַת חַיִּים
וַיְהִי הָאָדָם לְנֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה:

Then Yahweh-God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils a breath of life. And the human became a living being.

Dust is a substance that is frequently associated with frailty and transience, and thus God's use of dust characterizes his creation as likewise frail and

³⁷⁴ Some commentators divide Gen 2-3 into various sources, often arguing that the tree of life was an added element. For example, Westermann concludes, "a narrative that was concerned with one tree in the middle of the garden has been expanded both at the beginning and at the end by the addition of a motif that belonged to an independent narrative" (Westermann, *Genesis*, 212). However, the narrative can be read as a unity and the reasons given for its division are not compelling (Propp, "Eden Sketches," 192–193; Mettinger, *The Eden Narrative*, 5–41; Ska Jean-Louis, "Genesis 2-3: Some Fundamental Questions," in *Beyond Eden: The Biblical Story of Paradise [Genesis 2-3] and Its Reception History* [ed. Konrad Schmid and Christoph Riedweg; FAT 2.34; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008], 4–16; Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden*, 187–249).

transient.³⁷⁵ Also, the culmination of the creation process ends with the human as a *נִפְשׁ חַיָּה*, terminology that also describes the animals.³⁷⁶

The second point is the presence of the tree of life. Even though it does not play a role in the main action, the tree of life frames the narrative as it is mentioned in 2:9 and 3:22-24.

9 וַיִּצְמַח יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים מִן־הָאֲדָמָה כָּל־עֵץ נֹחַמֵד לְמִרְאָה
וְטוֹב לְמֵאֲכָל וְעֵץ הַחַיִּים בְּתוֹךְ הַגֶּן וְעֵץ הַדַּעַת טוֹב וְרָע:

9 Then Yahweh-God caused to sprout from the ground every tree that is pleasant in appearance and good for food and, in the midst of the garden, the tree of life and the tree of knowing good and bad.³⁷⁷

22 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים הֵן הָאָדָם הָיָה כְּאָחֵד מִמֶּנּוּ

³⁷⁵ "עֵפֶר," *HALOT*; Delbert R. Hillers, "Dust: Some Aspects of Old Testament Imagery," in *Love & Death in the Ancient Near East: Essays in Honor of Marvin H. Pope* (ed. John H. Marks and Robert M. Good; Guilford, Conn.: Four Quarters, 1987), 107; Mettinger, *The Eden Narrative*, 47; Schmid, "Loss of Immortality?," 62; Becking, "Signs from the Garden," 27–28; Dillmann, *Genesis*, 165; Humbert, *Études sur le récit du paradis et de la chute dans la Genèse*, 136.

Similar ideas are expressed in 1 Cor 15:42-53. Genesis 2:7 is quoted in verse 45, and the body of the first man, "from the earth dusty" (ἐκ γῆς κοῖκός, 47-49), is described as corruptible/perishable (φθορά, 42, 50, φθαρτός, 53) and even mortal (θνητός, 53).

³⁷⁶ The use of *נִפְשׁ חַיָּה* in Gen 2:19 is best taken as a reference to the animals listed. Most of the other occurrences are in passages associated with the Priestly source, Gen 1:20, 21, 24, 30, 9:10, 12, 15, 16, Lev 11:10, 46, cf. Ezek 47:9, Qoh 3:19. Mitchell argues that *נִשְׁמָה*, breath, is only used for humans and thus in Gen 2:7 "God's creation of man is distinguished from that of the rest of the animal creation" (T. C. Mitchell, "Old Testament Usage of *nēšāmā*," *VT* 11 [1961]: 186). However, as he admits, some of the occurrences are debatable, especially Gen 7:22.

³⁷⁷ The phrase *בְּתוֹךְ הַגֶּן* "in the midst of the garden" modifies both trees. In Hebrew, a description of location that applies to two items is normally placed between them. See Mettinger, *The Eden Narrative*, 22; Jean-Louis, "Genesis 2-3," 10–11; who both reference Andreas Michel, *Theologie aus der Peripherie: Die gespaltene Koordination im Biblischen Hebräisch* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1997), 196.

לַדַּעַת טוֹב וְרָע וַעֲתָה פְּנוּ-יִשְׁלַח יְהוָה וְלָקַח גַּם מֵעֵץ
 הַחַיִּים וְאָכַל וְחַי לְעֹלָם:
 23 וַיִּשְׁלַחֵהוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים מִגֶּן-עֵדֶן לְעַבְדֵּךְ אֶת-הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר
 לָקַח מִשָּׁם:
 24 וַיִּגְרֹשׁ אֶת-הָאָדָם וַיִּשְׁכֵּן מִקֶּדֶם לְגִן-עֵדֶן אֶת-הַכְּרֻבִים
 וְאֵת לַהֵט הַחֶרֶב הַמִּתְהַפֶּכֶת לְשָׁמֵר אֶת-דֶּרֶךְ עֵץ הַחַיִּים:

22 Then Yahweh-God said, "Behold, the man has become as one of us by knowing good and bad. And now, lest he send out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat and live forever . . ."

23 So Yahweh-God sent the man from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken.

24 And thus he banished the man. Then he positioned east of the garden of Eden cherubim and an ever-moving, flaming sword to guard the way to the tree of life.

The presence of the tree of life in the garden is described in 2:9 in conjunction with the tree of knowledge, yet its significance is not revealed until 3:22; the one who eats from it lives forever. While the main action of the narrative revolves around eating from the tree of knowledge, the possibility of eating from the tree of life is an undercurrent that is finally brought to the forefront in God's banishment of the humans. The man and woman are sent from the garden not as a part of the curse, as a way to remove their former blessedness, but in order to remove the possibility of eating from the other tree and living forever.³⁷⁸ The fact that God's final actions revolve around the tree of life indicate its narrative importance. The tree of life and the possibility of living forever were present but are now removed. The implication is that

³⁷⁸ Barr, *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality*, 4.

the tree of life is in the garden because humans were not immortal as created. Why would an immortal need the fruit of a tree life? Only by eating from the tree of life would the man and woman live forever.³⁷⁹

There are some questions regarding humankind's relationship to the tree of life before their banishment. Did they know of it, eat from it, or even understand its purpose?³⁸⁰ God's statement in Gen 3:22 is central in this discussion.

As mentioned above, older commentators often assume that humans had access to and had eaten from the tree of life from the beginning. Stordalen gives a recent defense of this interpretation. He translates the end of verse 22 as, "And now, lest he keep stretching out his hand, and take even

³⁷⁹ Propp, "Eden Sketches," 192; Noort, "The Stories of the Great Flood," 26–26; Kooij, "The Story of Paradise in the Light of Mesopotamian Culture and Literature," 17; Kidner, *Genesis*, 65; Robert Martin-Achard, *From Death to Life: A Study of the Development of the Doctrine of the Resurrection in the Old Testament* (trans. John Penney Smith; Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1960), 19; M. A. Knibb, "Life and Death in the Old Testament," in *The World of Ancient Israel: Sociological, Anthropological, and Political Perspectives; Essays by Members of the Society for Old Testament Study* (ed. R. E. Clements; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 402.

³⁸⁰ For a list of scholarly opinions, see Humbert, *Études sur le récit du paradis et de la chute dans la Genèse*, 126–127; Mettinger, *The Eden Narrative*, 49.

This question also raises the relationship between the eating of the tree of life and living forever. Did the tree of life function similar to the tree of knowledge in that the man and woman only had to eat once? If so, then they couldn't have eaten from it. Those commentators who argue that the man and woman were already eating from the tree must assume that its effects were not permanent. Modern commentators have compared it with the plant of rejuvenation that Gilgamesh finds and then loses (H. Th. Obbink, "The Tree of Life in Eden," *ZAW* 46 (1928): 111–112). While this latter interpretation may be possible, the parallels between the trees and God's concern in 3:22 argue for the former (Humbert, *Études sur le récit du paradis et de la chute dans la Genèse*, 133–134; Propp, "Eden Sketches," 192).

from the Tree of Life, and eat, and live forever . . ." ³⁸¹ However, the use elsewhere of לֵּאמֹר, lest, and אֲנִי, also, makes his translation and conclusions unlikely.

לֵּאמֹר is never used to introduce an ongoing situation that someone is seeking to end. ³⁸² The initial portion of a לֵּאמֹר clause can be the continuation of a previous activity and yet the clause as a whole introduces a new situation. ³⁸³ Yet, according to Stordalen, there is a new situation, "the new situation to be avoided is *not* the eating of the Tree of Life, but the eating from the tree *after*

³⁸¹ Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden*, 230; cf. Obbink, "The Tree of Life in Eden," 106; LaCocque, *The Trial of Innocence*, 71. Interestingly, Stordalen still describes humans as mortal, "Being created from dust (2:7), humankind was mortal, but continued eating would result in the lasting delay of ageing and death" (Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden*, 291).

³⁸² Barr, following Humbert, states, "By Hebrew grammar and meanings, I believe it cannot mean 'lest he continue to eat of the tree of life, as he has been doing all along' . . . I have gone through all the 131 cases of Hebrew לֵּאמֹר 'lest' in the Bible and found none which means 'lest someone continues to do what they are already doing'" (Barr, *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality*, 58 and 135 n. 2; cf. Humbert, *Études sur le récit du paradis et de la chute dans la Genèse*, 131–132).

There are some debatable examples. 1 Samuel 13:19 mentions that there were no blacksmiths in Israel and then gives the reason why they were prohibited by the Philistines, "Lest the Hebrews make swords or spears." Obbink argues that the Philistines were seeking to stop what had been a normal practice for Hebrew blacksmiths (Obbink, "The Tree of Life in Eden," 106). However, Saul and Jonathan are the only ones with weapons at that time (1 Sam 13:22) so it was hardly a normal practice! The Philistines were concerned with what the blacksmiths may begin to do under their new king Saul. In Genesis 45:11, Joseph instructs his father to come to Egypt so that he can provide for him in the remaining years of the famine "lest you, your house, and all who are to you be dispossessed (תִּהְיֶה אֲנִי וְבֵיתִי וְכָל אֲשֶׁר לִי)." Is Joseph's concern the continual loss of possessions from the famine? More likely, the reference is to a future state of ruin for a family that presently still has wealth.

³⁸³ Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden*, 230–231. Thus in Exodus 1:10, the first verb in the clause, "lest they multiply" is describing something Israel was already doing (1:7), but the clause as a whole focuses on the new situation of Israel joining Egypt's enemies and leaving (cf. 2 Sam 12:28). Obbink and Humbert focus only on the first verb and thus do not maintain this distinction (Obbink, "The Tree of Life in Eden," 106; Humbert, *Études sur le récit du paradis et de la chute dans la Genèse*, 132).

having taken from the Tree of Knowledge."³⁸⁴ However, such a reading is strained, especially in light of the use of **גַּם**.³⁸⁵

גַּם is used here to modify the object of **לִקַּח**, "to take also from," setting up a comparison with the previous act of eating from the tree of knowledge.³⁸⁶ Thus Stordalen is right that God is concerned to prevent the man and woman from eating of the tree of life since they have eaten from the tree of knowledge. Yet, can God's concern be that humans no longer continue to eat of the tree of life after having eaten from the tree of knowledge? There is nothing explicit to indicate that humans had previously eaten, such as the use of **עוֹד**, **יִסַּף**, or **שׁוּב**.³⁸⁷ More importantly, such an interpretation distorts the comparison implied by **גַּם** since eating from the tree of knowledge was a onetime act and not ongoing. Lastly, when **גַּם** is used elsewhere to make a comparison, it modifies what is new about the situation.³⁸⁸ Thus, there may have been reaching out and taking before, but not from the tree of life. It is

³⁸⁴ Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden*, 231.

³⁸⁵ Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 1:124; Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament* (trans. James Martin, et al.; 10 vols.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1959), 1:107.

³⁸⁶ Humbert emphasizes that it cannot modify the verb here, "to take again" (Humbert, *Études sur le récit du paradis et de la chute dans la Genèse*, 132).

³⁸⁷ Humbert, *Études sur le récit du paradis et de la chute dans la Genèse*, 132.

³⁸⁸ See for example Gen 3:6, 19:35, 26:21, 29:30, 30:15, 32:20, 38:10, 44:29, Exod 4:9, Judg 3:22, 8:9, 10:9, 1 Sam 8:8, 2 Sam 14:7, 1 Kgs 3:18, 2 Kgs 21:11, Esth 9:13, Job 1:6, 2:1, and Isa 7:13. The only other occurrences of **גַּם** and **וְ** together are Gen 38:11, Exod 1:10, and Prov 26:4.

best to conclude with Mettinger that God's statement in 3:22 "must imply that they had not eaten of the tree of life before."³⁸⁹

The question would then be, why not? There is no prohibition regarding the tree of life, and thus God's permission to eat of all the trees in 2:16 would seem to apply. Also God's statement in 3:22 indicates that the tree of life was accessible to the man and woman. Barr asserts that the man and woman "accidentally or incidentally" gained the ability to eat from the tree of life only after they gained wisdom by eating from the tree of knowledge since it is only at that point in the narrative that God removes the possibility, one he never intended for them to have.³⁹⁰ Such a reading, however, does not adequately explain the presence of the tree of life, why Yahweh had planted it in the first place.

Mettinger offers a better solution. He argues that the tree of knowledge is a test for the man and woman with the tree of life as a reward for obedience.³⁹¹ Nevertheless, the man and woman do not know that it is a test

³⁸⁹ Mettinger, *The Eden Narrative*, 20.

³⁹⁰ Barr, *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality*, 16 and 60. Batto likewise does not think the tree of life was intended for the man and woman, "Access to the tree of life was limited to the gods. In traditional exegesis, the fact that 'Adam and Eve' had access to the tree means that they were destined to have eternal life, until their sin subverted God's plan. The Yahwist very likely intended another meaning, however. That the protohuman couple had access to the source of immortality suggests that humankind's status was not as yet entirely defined, that the human experiment was still in the developmental stage" (Batto, *Slaying the Dragon*, 57; cf. Batto, "Paradise Reexamined," 53).

³⁹¹ He speaks of "the divine test of the two humans. The tree of knowledge served as the test case; the tree of life was the potential reward if the humans passed the test"

or about the reward of the tree of life. The presence of the tree of life is revealed to the reader in the narrative but not to the man and woman. Mettinger compares this test with those of Abraham (Gen 22) and Job who also were unaware that God was testing them.³⁹² He argues that Eve's reference in 3:3 to "the tree in the midst of the garden" without specifying it as the tree of knowledge indicates that she only knows of one special tree in the midst of the garden.³⁹³ Thus, before the outcome of the test the man and woman do not eat from the tree of life because it was "unknown to the humans but known to the narrator and to God."³⁹⁴

(Mettinger, *The Eden Narrative*, 60). Brichto reasons, "why did God make this tree available in the first place? Apparently, as a test of man; clearly, as a test of his obedience" (Brichto, *The Names of God*, 74). Stordalen likewise argues for a probationary test (Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden*, 226–227). However, his argument that על צוה is usually used for provisional instructions, which would be expected for a test, and not for issuing laws is dubious. His survey of texts is incomplete, he does not distinguish between the use of על to designate the recipient of a command (1 Kgs 2:43; Esth 2:10, 20, 4:8, cf. Gen 28:6, 1Kgs 11:11, 1 Chr 16:40, 2 Chr 7:13, 19:9, Esth 4:17, Isa 5:6, Jer 35:6, and Amos 2:12) and the person about whom a command is given (Gen 12:20, 44:1, 2 Sam 14:8; Esth 4:5, Jer 39:11; cf. Num 8:22, 1 Chr 22:13, Isa 10:6, 45:11, Nahum 1:14, and Mal 3:22), and a couple of his references do not seem relevant (Gen 44:1 and 1 Kgs 11:10). Also, note the change to צוה + pronoun suffix in Gen 3:17 when God refers back to 2:17. Cassuto speaks of the tree of life as what the man and women would have received if they had not disobeyed, although he does not use the language of reward or test (Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 1:124–125).

³⁹² Mettinger, *The Eden Narrative*, 54–55. Van der Kooij compares Gen 2–3 with God's testing of Hezekiah in 2 Chr 32:31 "to know what was in his heart" (Kooij, "The Story of Paradise in the Light of Mesopotamian Culture and Literature," 20).

³⁹³ Mettinger, *The Eden Narrative*, 37–39; cf. Humbert, *Études sur le récit du paradis et de la chute dans la Genèse*, 128.

³⁹⁴ Mettinger, *The Eden Narrative*, 49; cf. Brichto, *The Names of God*, 74. Humbert goes a step farther and argues that the tree must have been physically hidden in some way, not just its significance (Humbert, *Études sur le récit du paradis et de la chute dans la Genèse*, 128–136). One question that remains is why eating of the tree of life is a possibility after eating of the tree of knowledge. Was the tree of life now revealed to the man and

Often, commentators argue that humans are only made mortal after their disobedience because 3:19 introduces natural death as the fulfillment of 2:17, the punishment for eating from the tree of knowledge.³⁹⁵ Now it is true that the prohibition concerning the tree of knowledge in 2:17 sets up the main action in the narrative. Thus it seems natural to look for a fulfillment for the threatened death in the curses that are listed after the man and woman eat.³⁹⁶ However, to argue that the threatened death is fulfilled in the curses does not adequately deal with what is described in both the prohibition and the curses.

God's statement in 2:17, "you will surely die," is best understood as a reference to capital punishment and not the introduction of mortality and thus cannot find its fulfillment in the curse of 3:19.³⁹⁷ Both the form of the threat and the temporal clause attached support such a reading.

woman? Biblical narrative does not always tell the reader how a character comes to know something, like Eve's knowledge of the prohibition (Jean-Louis, "Genesis 2-3," 8–9).

³⁹⁵ The mortality interpretation is quite old. Symmachus renders 2:17 as "you will become mortal," *θυνητὸς ἔσῃ*. Cohon states that the Hebrew can be interpreted as "the forfeiture of immortality" (Samuel Solomon Cohon, "The Origin of Death," *JJLP* 1 [1919]: 388). See also Ramban on Gen 2:17; Calvin, *Genesis*, 1:127–128 and 179–180; Gill, *An Exposition of the First Book of Moses Called Genesis*, 43–44 and 65–66; Cohon, "The Origin of Death," 387–390; Wenham, *Genesis*, 83; LaCocque, *The Trial of Innocence*, 75 and 101.

³⁹⁶ Wenham notes that 3:17 alludes to 2:17 through the mention of the prohibition, "You may not eat from it," and he suggests that the narrator "must have expected the listener to complete the quotation of 2:17 and to be looking for a confirmation of the treat of death in the curses" (Wenham, *Genesis*, 83). However, the question is not whether the reader expects it, but whether the death threat is actually carried out.

³⁹⁷ For a list of scholarly opinions, see Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 1:124–125.

16 וַיִּצַו יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים עַל־הָאָדָם לֵאמֹר מִכָּל עֵץ־הַגָּן אָכַל תֹּאכַל:
 17 וּמֵעֵץ הַדַּעַת טוֹב וְרָע לֹא תֹאכַל מִמֶּנּוּ כִּי בַיּוֹם אֲכָלְךָ מִמֶּנּוּ
 מוֹת תָּמוּת:

16 Then Yahweh-God commanded the man saying, "From every tree of the garden you may freely eat,
 17 but from the tree of knowing good and bad you may not eat. For in the day you eat from it, you will surely die."

The form used for the promised death indicates a violent death and not a natural death, to use Lambert's categories.³⁹⁸ In legal codes a Qal infinitive absolute and a third person Hophal imperfect of מוֹת are used to describe capital punishment.³⁹⁹ The use of the causative Hophal makes it explicit that natural death is not in view; the person will be killed. Genesis 2:17 contains a similar although slightly different form, a Qal infinitive absolute followed by a Qal imperfect. This form is used when a particular individual or group is addressed and thus is the normal form used outside of law codes.⁴⁰⁰ It also

³⁹⁸ Schmid, "Loss of Immortality?," 63–64; Kooij, "The Story of Paradise in the Light of Mesopotamian Culture and Literature," 6; Wenham, *Genesis*, 67; Westermann, *Genesis*, 223–225; Karl-Johan Illman, *Old Testament Formulas about Death* (Åbo, Finland: Åbo Akademi, 1979), 104.

³⁹⁹ Exod 19:12, 21:12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 31:14, 15, Lev 20:2, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 27, 24:16, 17, 27:29, Num 15:35, 35:16, 17, 18, 21, 31; cf. Gen 26:11, Judg 21:5, and Ezek 18:13.

⁴⁰⁰ Gen 20:7, Num 26:65, 1 Sam 14:39, 44, 22:16, 2 Sam 12:14, 1 Kgs 2:37, 42, Jer 26:8, Ezek 3:18, 33:8, and 14. The occurrences in 2 Kgs 1:4, 6, 16 and 8:10 are not comparable since they are the response to a question concerning recovery from an illness. Soggin helpfully describes this form as the "announcement or threat of the highest penalty to the potential or actual perpetrator of a specific crime" (J. Alberto Soggin, "Philological-linguistic Notes on the Second Chapter of Genesis," in *Old Testament and Oriental Studies* [Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1975], 173). However, Soggin's further analysis should be questioned. He notes that there are cases where the penalty announced with the Qal imperfect is not carried out (specifically with Jonathan and Jeremiah) and thus argues that

normally refers to capital punishment, although it can refer to other means of death than execution when God is the speaker.⁴⁰¹ Therefore, the reader expects the man and woman to be put to death in some way if they eat of the tree of knowledge, not die a natural death.

This expectation is strengthened by the phrase beginning with *בַּיּוֹם*, "in the day." The use of *בַּיּוֹם* with an infinitive construct is a common temporal clause used in combination with threatened punishments and with ritual and legal prescriptions.⁴⁰² In all of these occurrences, *בַּיּוֹם* indicates a close temporal connection between what is described in the temporal clause and the main clause.⁴⁰³ One interesting parallel is the statement by the serpent in

מוֹת תָּמוּת "should be translated, 'you will be worthy of death', 'you deserve death'." He also posits a difference between the two formulas: the Hophal form refers to "a penalty which is actually applied" whereas the Qal form leaves "open the question of whether or not it will be executed" (Soggin, "Philological-linguistic Notes on the Second Chapter of Genesis," 174–175). Soggin's error is trying to find the possibility for pardon in the actual form. It is doubtful that everyone who broke a law with a Hophal form of the penalty was actually killed. For example David is not executed for murder and adultery. Also, the fact that Jonathan and Jeremiah are not killed does not mean that Saul in 1 Sam 14 and the crowds in Jer 26 did not pronounce a death sentence. They were just unable to carry it out.

⁴⁰¹ It is used of a terminal illness in 2 Sam 12:14 and of the death of the wilderness generation, except for Caleb and Joshua, in Num 26:65.

⁴⁰² For punishments, see Exod 10:28, 32:34, 1 Kgs 2:37, 42. For ritual and legal material, see Lev 6:13, 7:16, 13:14, 23:12, Num 6:13, 30:6, 8, 9, 13, 15, Deut 21:16, and Ruth 4:5.

⁴⁰³ Mettinger argues that in Gen 2:17 *בַּיּוֹם* "carries more of a conditional sense . . . 'for if you eat of it you shall certainly die'" and thus takes Adam's later death as the fulfillment of the judgment (Mettinger, *The Eden Narrative*, 22; cf. Humbert, *Études sur le récit du paradis et de la chute dans la Genèse*, 140; Soggin, "Philological-linguistic Notes on the Second Chapter of Genesis," 172). It is true that *בַּיּוֹם* does not always refer to a specific day but often has a more generic temporal sense "when" that is closely related to a conditional sense. However, Mettinger fails to provide any convincing parallels that lack the notion of close

Gen 3:5, "in the day that you eat of it your eyes will be opened," that is fulfilled immediately (and ironically) in 3:7.⁴⁰⁴ Therefore, based on the form of the prohibition, it is hard to see how Adam's death 930 years later (or any number of years later) can be seen as the fulfillment of these terms.⁴⁰⁵

Because of these difficulties, some commentators, concerned to explain how God carried out his threatened judgment, try to explain the death mentioned in 2:17 as a spiritual death or a beginning of misery.⁴⁰⁶ However, such interpretations are an unnecessary stretch. Instead, it is best to say that God does not bring about the threatened judgment on the man and the woman. Some argue that this absence shows that the serpent was correct in 3:4, at least ironically.⁴⁰⁷ Nevertheless, it does not mean that God was lying. Instead, the narrative is an example of God refraining from bringing the promised judgment as seen elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible.⁴⁰⁸

temporal proximity (cf. Kooij, "The Story of Paradise in the Light of Mesopotamian Culture and Literature," 4–7; Wenham, *Genesis*, 68; Westermann, *Genesis*, 224–225).

⁴⁰⁴ The irony deals with expectations. Surely the woman (and the reader) thought the opening of their eyes would lead to more than just a revelation of nakedness.

⁴⁰⁵ Barr, *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality*, 10–11; Kooij, "The Story of Paradise in the Light of Mesopotamian Culture and Literature," 6–7.

⁴⁰⁶ Kidner, *Genesis*, 69; Calvin, *Genesis*, 1:127–128; Wenham, *Genesis*, 74–75; R. W. L. Moberly, "Did the Serpent Get it Right?," *JTS* 39 (1988): 1–27; C. John Collins, *Genesis 1–4: A Linguistic, Literary, and Theological Commentary* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P & R Pub., 2006), 175. See also the list of opinions in Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 1:124–125.

⁴⁰⁷ Barr, *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality*, 8.

⁴⁰⁸ See for example the interpretation of Micah's prophecy (3:12) in Jer 26:18–19, God's statement in Ezek 33:14–15, and Jonah's complaint in Jonah 4:2. Stordalen notes, "It is customary in the 'J' primeval stories of sin and punishment for Yahweh to show compassion while conducting punishment" (Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden*, 227). See also Schmid, "Loss of

God does punish, just not according to the terms of the prohibition. Therefore, human death as described in 3:17-19 is a consequence of the disobedience of the man and woman; they are now doomed to die. These verses, however, do not introduce death as a change in human nature but as the inevitable end that will come to humans that have failed to attain immortality.

17 וּלְאָדָם אָמַר כִּי־שָׁמַעְתָּ לְקוֹל אִשְׁתְּךָ וַתֹּאכַל מִן־הָעֵץ
 אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִיךָ לֵאמֹר לֹא תֹאכַל מִמֶּנּוּ
 אֲרוּרָה הָאָדָמָה בְּעִבּוּרָךָ
 בְּעִצְבוֹן תֹּאכְלֶנָּה כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ:
 18 וְקוֹץ וְדַרְדַּר תַּצְמִיחַ לָךְ וְאָכַלְתָּ אֶת־עֵשֶׂב הַשָּׂדֶה:
 19 בְּזַעַת אַפֶּיךָ תֹאכַל לֶחֶם עַד שׁוֹבֵךְ אֶל־הָאָדָמָה
 כִּי מִמֶּנָּה לְקַחְתָּ כִּי־עֵפֶר אֶתָּה וְאֶל־עֵפֶר תָּשׁוּב:

17 And to the man he said, "Because you listened to the voice of your wife and ate from the tree of which I commanded you saying, 'You may not eat from it,' the ground is cursed because of you. In pain you will eat of it all the days of your life 18 for⁴⁰⁹ thorns and thistles it will sprout for you

Immortality?," 74; Samuel Luzzatto, *The Book of Genesis: A Commentary by ShaDal* (trans. Daniel A. Klein; Northvale, N.J.: Jason Aronson, 1998), 41; Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, 67; Westermann, *Genesis*, 225; Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis* (trans. Mark E. Biddle; Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1997), 10; Soggin, "Philological-linguistic Notes on the Second Chapter of Genesis," 175; Friedman, *Commentary on the Torah*, 19. Failure to see God's action in this way leads Barr to argue that the narrative lacks "the atmosphere of guilt and tragedy" because God continues his relationship with and even care for the man and the woman after their disobedience (Barr, *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality*, 11–12). Cassuto objects that such an interpretation "is improbable, because there is no mention of the punishment being reduced on account of repentance" (Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 1:125). While the man and woman do not explicitly repent, they do (eventually) admit what they have done. Note the contrast with Cain who lies to God when he is questioned (4:9).

⁴⁰⁹ The waw is taken as explanatory, tying verse 18 with the end of 17 (*IBHS* §39.2.4; Joüon §170c).

and thus⁴¹⁰ you will eat the plant of the field.
 19 By the sweat of your nostrils you will eat bread until you
 return to the ground
 because from it you were taken
 for you are dust and to dust you will return.

In Gen 3:17-19, the ground is cursed and then the curse is explicated through two clauses which indicate how the curse will affect humans. The first line of each clause, the end of verse 17 and beginning of 19, begins with a prepositional phrase with an initial בְּ and ends with a temporal clause. The second lines, verse 18 and the end of 19, contain explanatory or causal clauses that expand upon the first. Verse 18 expands on why humankind's eating will be "in pain." The latter part of verse 19 expands upon the temporal clause, humankind's "returning to the ground."⁴¹¹

⁴¹⁰ The meaning of the end of verse 18 and its relationship with the beginning of the verse is debated. Westermann takes it as an "easily recognizable" addition (Westermann, *Genesis*, 265). Many commentators interpret it as instituting a change in humankind's diet (Calvin, *Genesis*, 1:175; Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 1:169). However, it is better to take the waw consecutive perfect as providing a logical contrast ("and yet you will eat . . .") or summary ("and thus/in this way you will eat . . ."). The point is not that humanity is forced to eat different food, but that the earth will not provide their food easily anymore.

⁴¹¹ Humbert's structure is similar and likewise highlights the parallel temporal clauses (Humbert, *Études sur le récit du paradis et de la chute dans la Genèse*, 144).

אָרוּרָה הָאָדָמָה בְּעִבּוּרָךְ	A.	v. 17.
בְּעִצְבוֹן תֹּאכְלֶנָּה	B.	
כֹּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ:	C.	
וְקוֹץ וְדַרְדַּר תִּצְמִיחַ לָךְ	A.	v. 18.
[וְאָכַלְתָּ אֹתָם עֵשֶׂב הַשָּׂדֶה:]		
בְּזַעַת אַפֶּיךָ תֹּאכַל לֶחֶם	B.	v. 19.
עַד שׁוּבְךָ אֶל־הָאָדָמָה	C.	
כִּי מִמֶּנָּה לָקַחְתָּ		
וְאֶל־עֹפֶר תֵּשׁוּב:		
כִּי־עֹפֶר אַתָּה		

The temporal clause in 19 with its following causal clause focuses the man's attention upon his eventual natural death.⁴¹² Yet, in one way, it is not directly a part of the curse. Both temporal clauses, in 17 and 19, imply death, "all the days of your life . . . until you return to the ground." And it needs to be noted that the former is an exact parallel to the end of 3:14 and the curse on the serpent. These references to eventual death are not a part of the description of the curse but of its duration.⁴¹³ They do not imply that humans were formerly immortal any more than implying that the serpent was.⁴¹⁴ Instead, the temporal clauses in 17 and 19 state that the pain and sweat from the curse on the ground will last as long as humans live.

⁴¹² Barr argues that the return to the ground, to dust, is mentioned because it is tied with the man's occupation as an agriculturalist, "His death is not the punishment, but is only the mode in which the final stage of the punishment works out . . . his returning to the dust is part of the picture of his bitter agricultural life; in the end, after all his struggle with the unrewarding land, he would himself be swallowed up in it and become part of it" (Barr, *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality*, 9–10). His insight is helpful but inadequate to fully explain the emphasis in 3:19.

⁴¹³ Humbert argues that if returning to the ground were part of the curse, the expected form would be an imperfect in an independent clause, וְהָשׁוּב אֶל-הָאֲדָמָה, and not a temporal clause (Humbert, *Études sur le récit du paradis et de la chute dans la Genèse*, 142; cf. Schmid, "Loss of Immortality?," 62; Westermann, *Genesis*, 265–267; Knibb, "Life and Death in the Old Testament," 402).

⁴¹⁴ Snakes were associated with rejuvenation in the ANE, most famously in The Gilgamesh Epic as a snake steals the plant of rejuvenation from Gilgamesh and thus sheds its skin (XI.305-307). Joines attempts to integrate the serpent's connections with immortality by suggesting that "the original design of the serpent is that man should become immortal and thereupon throw into confusion the plan of creation" (Karen Randolph Joines, "The Serpent in Gen 3," *ZAW* 87 (1975): 9; cf. Niditch, *Chaos to Cosmos*, 35). However, the serpent's role in this account is focused on its shrewdness, not its rejuvenation, and on the prohibition concerning the tree of knowledge, not the tree of life (Westermann, *Genesis*, 238).

It is also important to notice how the end of verse 19 focuses on natural death. There is no mention of a change in humankind's body. Instead, the end of verse 19 connects the death of humans with their origin, alluding to 2:7 and not 2:17.⁴¹⁵ Humans came from the ground, from dust, and thus will return.

Nevertheless, the dust to dust pattern does not indicate that natural death occurs apart from God's hand. God is still the one who brings about human death.⁴¹⁶ Thus humankind's returning to the ground is properly understood as a part of God's curse. These words contain God's rebuke of human aspirations; the ones who tried to become like God/gods will now be shown that they are but dust.⁴¹⁷

The emphasis on natural death in verse 19 also highlights what the man and woman failed to gain, eating from the tree of life. Thus, in the logic of the narrative as a whole, humans were not doomed to die, to return to the ground, until they had broken the prohibition.⁴¹⁸ Humankind's origin in the

⁴¹⁵ Kooij, "The Story of Paradise in the Light of Mesopotamian Culture and Literature," 7; Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, 84–85.

⁴¹⁶ God's active role is seen in Job 10:9 and Ps 90:3; cf. Ps 103:14 and Qoh 3:20.

⁴¹⁷ The conflict between human aspirations and God are also seen in Gen 6:1-4 and 11:1-9.

⁴¹⁸ Similar connections between disobedience, death, and the tree of life are made by various commentators. Kapelrud, through a comparison with Adapa, argues that the punishments in 3:16-19 "are results which accompany the fact that man and woman had lost the possibility of everlasting life" (Kapelrud, "You Shall Surely Not Die," 59). Others who compare Genesis 2-3 with Adapa and Gilgamesh argue that humanity is only allowed to have wisdom or immortality, not both, in order to maintain the distinction between gods and

dust and return to the dust indicate that they have missed the chance to progress beyond their origins, to be not just the one from the ground but also the one who has eternal life.⁴¹⁹ Therefore, human death is best understood as a result of and even a punishment for eating from the tree of knowledge since the tree of life was barred from them because of their disobedience.⁴²⁰

Mettinger reaches similar conclusions: "whether the first humans were to be mortal or immortal was an open issue until they failed the test. It seems that immortality was never granted. It was only a possible reward that never materialized. Without the divine gift of immortality, the first humans remained beings created out of dust who must return to dust."⁴²¹ Early Jewish and Christian interpretations could also be read in this way.⁴²²

humans. See Westermann, *Genesis*, 272; Izre'el, *Adapa and the South Wind*, 121 and 126–128; Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden*, 245–248.; Mettinger, *The Eden Narrative*, 99–132.

⁴¹⁹ See the similar contrast made in 1 Cor 15:47-49.

⁴²⁰ It is interesting that some commentators (wrongly) connect the removal of access to the tree of life and the death penalty of 2:17. Cassuto paraphrases 2:17, "when you eat of the tree of knowledge it shall be decreed against you never to be able to eat of the tree of life, that is, you will be unable to achieve eternal life and you will be compelled one day to succumb to death" (Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 1:125; cf. Humbert, *Études sur le récit du paradis et de la chute dans la Genèse*, 145–147).

⁴²¹ Mettinger, *The Eden Narrative*, 59–60; cf. Martin-Achard, *From Death to Life*, 20; Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden*, 227–232; Humbert, *Études sur le récit du paradis et de la chute dans la Genèse*, 151. Likewise, Dillmann states, "For man, although by nature mortal, was nevertheless destined by God to an enduring life, otherwise he would not have been placed in the garden with the tree of life. By his sin he has made the attainment of this end impossible, and has become a prey to inevitable death" (Dillmann, *Genesis*, 165).

⁴²² See Wis 2:23-24, Sir 25:24, and Rom 5:12 (cf. 1 En. 69:11, Gen. Rab. 12:6). Barr states that the Wisdom of Solomon makes "clear that man was immortal - or at the least was destined for immortality" and sees Paul's interpretation in the New Testament as comparable if not directly related (Barr, *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality*, 16–18). For an

Genesis 2-3, like Mesopotamian literature, does not contain a description of humans as originally immortal. However, the situation is not exactly comparable. In Mesopotamia, mortality was the destiny of humans and separated them from gods, although immortality could be granted as with Utnapishtim. In the Hebrew Bible, humans had the possibility of gaining immortality, but it was not reached because of disobedience. Thus, death may have been a possibility for humans in the original state, but it was not necessarily their destiny.

2. Genesis 6:1-4

Another account that has been analyzed in conjunction with human mortality is Gen 6:1-4.⁴²³ Some commentators argue that God's speech in verse 3 implies that humans were immortal at that time and that God then instituted death in the form of mortality upon humanity. It is helpful to distinguish two forms of this argument. Some understand Gen 6:1-4 as a separate tradition of how originally immortal humans became mortal and thus

argument, although ultimately unconvincing, that these texts are not talking about the question of immortality, see John J. Collins, "Before the Fall: The Earliest Interpretations of Adam and Eve," in *The Idea of Biblical Interpretation: Essays in Honor of James L. Kugel* (ed. Hindy Najman and Judith H. Newman; Boston: Brill, 2004), 296–301; Schmid, "Loss of Immortality?," 65–69 and 73.

⁴²³ Many commentators recognize Gen 6:1-4 as J (non-P) because of the use of Yahweh in verse 3; nevertheless, a wide variety of other suggestions have been offered (Marc Vervenne, "All They Need is Love: Once More Genesis 6:1-4," in *Words Remembered, Texts Renewed: Essays in Honour of John F. A. Sawyer* [ed. Jon Davies, Graham Harvey, and Wilfred G. E. Watson; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995], 22–24).

see it as in conflict, to some degree, with the surrounding context.⁴²⁴ Others interpret Gen 6:1-4 as a new development in which the intermarriage produced immortal children and required a new response by God.⁴²⁵

The introduction of mortality is a possible reading of Gen 6:1-4, and it should be noted that such an understanding is not tied to one particular interpretation of the many debated elements of the passage.⁴²⁶ However, the introduction of mortality is certainly not the only nor the best way to understand these verses, especially if the larger context is included.⁴²⁷ The

⁴²⁴ Cohon, "The Origin of Death," 386–387; Kvanvig, "Gen 6,1-4 as an Antediluvian Event," 111–112.

⁴²⁵ Some take it as a new attempt to prolong human life that is thwarted by Yahweh, parallel to Gen 3:22. See David L. Petersen, "Genesis 6:1-4, Yahweh and the Organization of the Cosmos," *JSOT* 13 (1979): 57; Westermann, *Genesis*, 373–376; Gunkel, *Genesis*, 57.

Others argue that there is no conflict in the passage; God is simply limiting the lifespan of humans to prevent issues like overcrowding. See Haim Schwarzbaum, "The Overcrowded Earth," *Numen* 4 (1957): 72–73; cf. Umberto Cassuto, "The Episode of the Sons of God and the Daughters of Man (Genesis vi 1-4)," in *Biblical and Oriental Studies* (trans. Israel Abrahams; 2 vols.; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1973), 1:25; P. J. Harland, *The Value of Human Life: A Study of the Story of the Flood (Genesis 6-9)* (Leiden; New York: Brill, 1996), 25; Niditch, *Chaos to Cosmos*, 38.

⁴²⁶ For example, Cohon argues that the 120 years refers to a shortened lifespan while Kvanvig leans toward a time of delay before the flood (Cohon, "The Origin of Death," 387; Kvanvig, "Gen 6,1-4 as an Antediluvian Event," 98–99).

⁴²⁷ The present study is not an investigation of the pre-history of Gen 6:1-4 but of its meaning in its present context. Many commentators argue that the present form of the text is a mess. Childs' description is especially colorful, "The present condition of the text can only be the result of an age-long struggle which reflects the scars of battle" (Brevard S. Childs, *Myth and Reality in the Old Testament* [Naperville Ill.: A.R. Allenson, 1960], 56). Nevertheless, there are a number of commentators that are more hopeful that the present form has a meaningful unity and place in its context. See Vervenne, "All They Need is Love," 30–37; Hendel, "Of Demigods and the Deluge," 25–26; Cassuto, "The Episode of the Sons of God and the Daughters of Man (Genesis vi 1-4)," 1:17–28.

following analysis will first explore the possible interpretations of verse 3 and then argue for an interpretation of the narrative as a whole.

1 וַיְהִי כִּי־תַחַל הָאָדָם לָרֹב עַל־פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה וּבָנוּת יִלְדוּ לָהֶם:
 2 וַיִּרְאוּ בְנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים אֶת־בָּנוֹת הָאָדָם כִּי טֹבֹת הָנָה
 וַיִּקְחוּ לָהֶם נָשִׁים מִכָּל אֲשֶׁר בָּחָרוּ:
 3 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה לֹא־יִדּוֹן רוּחִי בָאָדָם לְעֹלָם בְּשִׁגְמוֹ⁴²⁸ הוּא בָשָׂר
 וְהָיוּ יָמָיו מֵאָה וְעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה:
 4 תִּנְפְּלִים הָיוּ בָאָרֶץ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם וְגַם אַחֲרֵיהֶן אֲשֶׁר יָבֹאוּ
 בְּנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים אֶל־בָּנוֹת הָאָדָם וַיִּלְדוּ לָהֶם הַמָּוֶה הַגְּבֻרִים
 אֲשֶׁר מֵעוֹלָם אֲנָשֵׁי הַשָּׁם:

1 When man began to grow numerous upon the face of the earth and daughters were born to them,
 2 the sons of gods saw that the daughters of man were good and they took for themselves wives from any which they chose.
 3 And Yahweh said, "My spirit will not contend with man forever because of the noise. He is flesh and his days will be 120 years."
 4 The Nephilim were in the land in those days, and also afterwards, when the sons of gods were going into the daughters of man and they were bearing children for them. They were the mighty men which were of old, the men of renown.

The issue of mortality is prompted by the use of לְעֹלָם with reference to humans in the beginning of verse 3. Unfortunately, it appears in arguably the most obscure portion of an obscure text as both the verb and subject of this clause are the focus of debates. The root and meaning of יָדוֹן is unclear and has been variously explained.⁴²⁹ It is also unclear to what רוּחִי is referring.⁴³⁰

⁴²⁸ For a discussion of this form and its translation see below.

⁴²⁹ See the survey of opinions in Westermann, *Genesis*, 375.

The most common interpretation of יָדוֹן follows the LXX translation, καταμένω, to remain, and thus reads, "My spirit will not remain/abide in man forever." To explain the Hebrew, some emend the text to יָדוּר from דוּר, to dwell, live, most likely caused by the confusion of similar letters. Others offer possible comparative evidence for a root דָּנָן with a similar meaning.⁴³¹ רִיחֵי is usually taken as a reference to what God grants to animate or enliven humans.⁴³² Therefore, the thought is that God will not let humanity live forever.⁴³³

Perhaps the second most common interpretation is to take יָדוֹן as an imperfect from דָּיִן. The expected Qal form would be יָדִין. The middle vowel may be the influence of the more common ayin-waw verbs or even as a common textual error, the confusion of similar letters.⁴³⁴ A Niphal could also fit the context. The expected form only differs in the pointing, יָדוֹן. The

⁴³⁰ See the survey of opinions in Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, 144–145; Westermann, *Genesis*, 374.

⁴³¹ Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 1:295–296; Westermann, *Genesis*, 375. Speiser remains unconvinced: "The results cannot be said to inspire the slightest degree of confidence" (E. A. Speiser, "YDWN, Genesis 6:3," *JBL* 75 [1956]: 127).

⁴³² See the similar uses in Ezek 37:14, Job 27:3, 34:14-15.

⁴³³ A similar meaning is suggested by those who connect the root דָּנָן with the common Akkadian root danānu, to be strong. The thrust of the passage would be that the human life force given by God would not continue to be as strong as before, so he will die sooner (Hendel, "Of Demigods and the Deluge," 15; Kvanvig, "Gen 6,1-4 as an Antediluvian Event," 85).

⁴³⁴ "In certain cases the root עָוָו and the root עָוָו seem to have coexisted, e.g. דָּוָשׁ and דָּוָשׁ to tread, רוּחַ and רוּחַ to breathe" (Joüon §81a). However, note that a shureq would be the expected vowel, not a holem waw (Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 1:295).

Targumim seem to understand the verb as from דָּיַן.⁴³⁵ The issue is how then to render the verb in context; what does it mean that God's spirit will not judge? The best solution is to take the phrase as "contend with."⁴³⁶ Thus, Yahweh's speech is decreeing the end of the present strife between God and humankind, "My spirit (i.e., I) will not contend with man forever."⁴³⁷

It is primarily the first rendering that has led some to posit that Gen 6:3 depicts humans as immortal, although it could possibly fit with the second interpretation also. However, there are at least three other possible interpretations for לְעֵלָם. First, some note that God grounds his statement on human nature, "because he is flesh," and thus the statement about forever is describing not a previous state of humans but what was never true of humans by nature.⁴³⁸ Second, לְעֵלָם may be interpreted in the sense of an extended period of time, not forever, and thus the 120 year period is a shortening of

⁴³⁵ Targumim Psuedo-Jonathan and Neofiti are both quite expansive but clearly refer to judging, that God will not judge the future generations according to the judgment of the flood generation. The periphrastic rendering of Targum Onqelos, "this evil generation will not endure before me forever" (לא יתקיים דרא בישא הדין קדמי לעלם), makes it difficult to know how this verb was understood.

⁴³⁶ See the Qal in Qoh 6:10, although the preposition עִם is used and not בְּ, and the Niphal in 2 Sam 19:10; cf. Isa 57:16.

⁴³⁷ "My spirit" is a way to refer to oneself used commonly by humans (cf. Job 6:4, Ps 31:6, and Isa 26:9) but less often by God (cf. Isa 30:1 and Zech 6:8). נַפְשִׁי, "my being," is used in a comparable way (cf. Gen 27:25, 49:6, Lev 26:11, and 30).

Speiser's rendering also speaks of the end of a time of tension. He connects the root דָּן with the Akkadian noun *dinānu*, substitute, and posits the meaning of 'to shield, protect' for the verb. Thus Yahweh will no longer shield humans from the judgment for their actions (Speiser, "YDWN, Genesis 6," 127–128).

⁴³⁸ Humbert, *Études sur le récit du paradis et de la chute dans la Genèse*, 137.

the long life spans recorded in Gen 5.⁴³⁹ Third, others argue that לְעֵלָם refers to the present generation, not individuals humans, and thus the 120 years is a period of delay until the judgment of the flood.⁴⁴⁰ The latter is the most compelling when the narrative is read within its context in Genesis and the comparative evidence from the ANE.

The central issue in Gen 6:1-4 is the identity of the 'sons of gods.' Are they divine, human, or something in-between?⁴⁴¹ The best case can be made for the 'sons of gods' as human rulers who claimed to be or were viewed as in some sense divine. Their abuse of power displayed in their forceful taking of women evokes God's judgment. Such a solution fits well in the narrative while also making sense of the terminology.

Westermann helpfully notes that the pattern of seeing and taking beautiful women described in verse 2 is elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible used for rulers, Pharaoh in Gen 12:15 and David in 2 Sam 11:2-4. A ruler "has the power, and so the opportunity, to take as a wife whom his fancy chooses."⁴⁴² A human ruler also fits with Yahweh's response in verse 3 because his

⁴³⁹ Dillmann, *Genesis*, 239; Emil G. Kraeling, "The Significance and Origin of Gen. 6:1-4," *JNES* 6 (1947): 198.

⁴⁴⁰ Concerning this interpretation, see below.

⁴⁴¹ Von Rad prematurely declared this question settled in favor of angelic beings (Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary* [trans. John H. Marks; Rev. ed.; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972], 114).

⁴⁴² Westermann, *Genesis*, 366–367.

judgment is directed toward humans.⁴⁴³ Thus it seems best if the primary actors, the sons of gods, were also human.⁴⁴⁴ Some argue that the judgment is against the children of the sons of gods, who would be partially human; however, children are not mentioned until verse 4 and thus cannot be the object of God's judgment.⁴⁴⁵ Lastly, the punishment of a whole people for the misdeeds of their rulers fits both the pattern seen in the Hebrew Bible and the ANE.⁴⁴⁶

So why is בְּנֵי-הָאֱלֹהִים used in Gen 6? Westermann argues that the author chose to call them 'sons of gods' since there were no established divisions of humanity at that time, "the narrator wants to introduce a class that is utterly superior; persons who are so powerful that, when they desire a woman because of her beauty, they are not confined by the limits that restrain ordinary mortals."⁴⁴⁷ A better option, although not necessarily in

⁴⁴³ John W. Rogerson, *Genesis 1-11* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 69.

⁴⁴⁴ A few commentators argue that God's response is not one of condemnation but more of a pronouncement. Thus Gen 6:1-4 is not a part of any cycle of sin or the flood (Cassuto, "The Episode of the Sons of God and the Daughters of Man [Genesis vi 1-4]," 1:24-27; Wolde, *Words Become Worlds*, 72-74). While it is true that no particular terms for anger or judgment are used, Gen 6:1-4 is best read that way in light of the similar pattern of human action and divine response seen elsewhere in Gen 2-11, especially Gen 3 and 11:1-9.

⁴⁴⁵ For example, Cassuto paraphrases the end of verse 3 as if it is speaking of the children mentioned in verse 4, "the children born from the union of the sons of God with the daughters of men, since they are human on their mother's side, shall not be immortal like their fathers, but shall die when their time comes like all members of the human race" (Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 1:296; cf. Harland, *The Value of Human Life*, 25).

⁴⁴⁶ See for example David's census in 2 Sam 24 or the destruction of the E-kur by Naram-Sin in The Curse of Agade.

⁴⁴⁷ Westermann, *Genesis*, 367.

opposition to Westermann, is to connect the designation 'sons of gods' with deified kings, a view that has many similarities with the interpretation of the Targumim and early Jewish literature.⁴⁴⁸

Various kings in the ANE claimed divinity or were regarded as divine after their death. Gilgamesh provides a particularly helpful comparison. He is described as two thirds divine, but he was also known for his sexual oppression, the rite of *ius primae noctis* over which Enkidu challenges him, and his physical dominance, both themes in Gen 6:1-4.⁴⁴⁹ Thus God's statement in 6:3 is a reaction to royal abuse of power similar to the reaction of the gods to Gilgamesh.⁴⁵⁰ Clines concludes with regard to Mesopotamian literature, "The same outlook is credible in the Biblical pericope: that the 'sons

⁴⁴⁸ Targumim Onqelos and Pseudo-Jonathan read בני רברביא, sons of the great ones; Targum Neofiti reads בני דיידניא, sons of the judges; and Symmachus reads γίγαντες υἱοὶ τῶν δυναστεύοντων, sons of the powerful. See Meredith G. Kline, "Divine Kingship and Genesis 6:1-4," *WTJ* 24 (1962): 187–204; Yair Zakovitch, "Psalm 82 and Biblical Exegesis," in *Sefer Moshe: The Moshe Weinfeld Jubilee Volume: Studies in the Bible and the Ancient Near East, Qumran, and Post-Biblical Judaism* (ed. Chaim Cohen, Avi Hurvitz, and Shalom M. Paul; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 213–215.

⁴⁴⁹ See The Gilgamesh Epic I.29-92 and II.100-115; Millard, "A New Babylonian 'Genesis' Story," 12; David J. A. Clines, "The Significance of the 'Sons of God' Episode (Genesis 6:1-4) in the Context of the 'Primeval History' (Genesis 1-11)," *JSOT* 13 (1979): 35; John H. Walton, "Are the 'Sons of God' in Genesis 6 Angels?," in *The Genesis Debate: Persistent Questions about Creation and the Flood* (ed. Ronald F. Youngblood; Nashville: T. Nelson, 1986), 198–200.

⁴⁵⁰ See The Gilgamesh Epic I:63-93

of God' were both regarded as rulers of ancient times, and traditionally ascribed divine or semi-divine origins."⁴⁵¹

In the context of the Hebrew Bible, it may be best to see an additional polemic against humans that would claim divinity. Thus the designation 'sons of gods' would have an ironic quality. Understood in this way, Gen 6:1-4 fits well within the larger theme of humanity trying to be godlike as seen in Gen 3 with the pursuit of godlike knowledge and in Gen 11 with the building of a tower to heaven.⁴⁵² Note especially the pursuit of a name in both 6:4 and 11:4.⁴⁵³

The largest objection to this interpretation is the use of 'sons of gods' for divine or heavenly beings elsewhere.⁴⁵⁴ Yet the terminology is not as conclusive as argued. First, **בְּנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים** is not common in the Hebrew Bible, with all of the clearest parallels coming from the book of Job.⁴⁵⁵ Second, it is possible that similar terminology is used elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible for

⁴⁵¹ Clines, "The Significance of the 'Sons of God' Episode (Genesis 6:1-4) in the Context of the 'Primeval History' (Genesis 1-11)," 35.

⁴⁵² Some commentators who defend the divine being view of the 'sons of gods' admit that Gen 6:1-4 is unique among these passages as "here the divine world illegitimately impinges upon the human world" (Rick R. Marrs, "The Sons of God (Genesis 6:1-4)," *ResQ* 23 [1980]: 220-221).

⁴⁵³ Hendel, "Of Demigods and the Deluge," 24 n. 53; Kline, "Divine Kingship and Genesis 6:1-4," 202.

⁴⁵⁴ Cassuto, "The Episode of the Sons of God and the Daughters of Man (Genesis vi 1-4)," 1:17-23; Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 1:292-294; Hendel, "Of Demigods and the Deluge," 16 n. 16.

⁴⁵⁵ **בְּנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים** (Job 1:6, 2:1), **בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים** (Job 38:7, Deut 32:8 Qumran & LXX), and **בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים** (Pss 29:1, 89:7).

human rulers.⁴⁵⁶ Third, in the ANE the terminology is not exclusive of divine beings.⁴⁵⁷ Lastly, the motif of male gods taking human women is not present elsewhere in Mesopotamia or the Levant.⁴⁵⁸

⁴⁵⁶ The ancient translations and earlier interpreters understood the references to אֱלֹהִים in Exod 21:6, 22:7, 8, and 27 as judges; however, most modern scholars reject this interpretation (Cyrus Herzl Gordon, "ELOHIM in its Reputed Meaning of Rulers, Judges," *JBL* 54 [1935]: 139–44; Propp, *Exodus 19-40*, 192). The uses of אֱלֹהִים and בְּנֵי עֲלִיּוֹן in Ps 82:1 and 6 are also interpreted as human rulers and judges by some (Charles A. Briggs and Emilie Grace Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1969], 214–217.; cf. Zakovitch, "Psalm 82 and Biblical Exegesis," 228). Perhaps the best candidate for a use of אֱלֹהִים for a human ruler is Ps 45:7 (Artur Weiser, *The Psalms: A Commentary* [Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962], 363; Houtman, *Exodus*, 3:116). See also 1 Sam 2:25, Pss 58:2 and 138:1. Note that the kings of Israel were spoken of as God's son (2 Sam 7:14 and Ps 2:7). Wifall compares the sons of gods and the mighty men with the use of אֶל גְּבוּר for the royal child to be born in Isa 9:5 (Walter R. Wifall, "Gen. 6:1-4: A Royal Davidic Myth?," *BTB* 5 [1975]: 296).

⁴⁵⁷ Millard, "A New Babylonian 'Genesis' Story," 12. *bn il* or *bn ilm* are used in Ugaritic literature for the gods. But *bn il* is also used of Kirta (CAT 1.16 I 10, 20-21; II 48; cf. Kline, "Divine Kingship and Genesis 6:1-4," 192). Del Olmo Lete suggests, "as well as 'son of *Ilu*,' *Kirta* is considered as belonging to the group of *Rapa 'ūma* (cf. KTU 1.15 III 3.14), of the 'dead and deified kings,' who in both Ugaritic literature and Hebrew tradition, have preserved the meaning and aspect of legendary 'heroes' and whose 'heroic' semi-divine origin may explain Gen 6:1-4" (Gregorio del Olmo Lete, *Canaanite Religion: According to the Liturgical Texts of Ugarit* [trans. Wilfred G. E. Watson; Bethesda, Md.: CDL Press, 1999], 326). In Sumerian, kings were often called the son (dumu) of a male or female god: Enmerkar the son of Utu (Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta 35), Gilgameš, the son of Ninsumun (ETCSL 1.8.13 line 221), Išme-Dagan the son of Enlil (ETCSL 2.2.5 lines 14-15), Ur-Namma, son of Ninsumun (ETCSL 2.4.1 Segment B line 7), Lipit-Eštar the son of Enlil (ETCSL 2.5.5.1 line 2), Šulgi the son of Enlil (ETCSL 5.3.5 line 76), Ur-Ninurta the son of An (ETCSL 2.5.6.6 Segment B line 9). See also Ivan Engnell, *Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East* (2d ed.; Oxford: Blackwell, 1967); Henri Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods: A Study of Ancient Near Eastern Religion as the Integration of Society & Nature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965); Aubrey Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel* (2d ed.; Cardiff: Wales U.P., 1967); Samuel Henry Hooke, *Myth, Ritual, and Kingship: Essays on the Theory and Practice of Kingship in the Ancient Near East and in Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960); John Day, ed., *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar* (JSOTSup 270; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998).

⁴⁵⁸ The closest analogies are with Greek literature where there are numerous stories of gods taking mortal women and producing demigods (Ruth Scodel, "The Achaean Wall and

Another objection relates to the Nephilim in verse 4 who are often identified with the offspring of the sons of gods. Why are they viewed as distinct if they are only human? To begin with, it is possible that the sons of rulers became a distinct class of men. However, it is best not to identify the Nephilim as the children of the sons of the gods. Verse 4 contains three sections: an initial clause about the Nephilim, a final clause about the mighty men, and a relative clause about the sons of gods in the middle. The relationship between the Nephilim and the mighty men and the relationship between the children of the sons of the gods and the mighty men are debatable. But there is no reason to equate the Nephilim with the children of the sons of the gods.

The Nephilim are introduced as a new element that also characterized that time. The relative clause concerning the sons of gods does not modify the Nephilim but the time period "those days" and thus is best rendered in English by "when."⁴⁵⁹ All the clause denotes is that the Nephilim were around at the

the Myth of Destruction," *HSCP* 86 [1982]: 42). In Mesopotamia, the examples of divine human sexual pairings are human males with female goddesses (usually Inana/Ishtar). Thus Hendel, who compares Gen 6:1-4 with the Greek tales of gods and demigods, mentions Gilgamesh, mothered by Ninsun and propositioned by Ishtar, as the closest Mesopotamian parallel (Hendel, "Of Demigods and the Deluge," 16–17 n. 16; cf. David P. Melvin, "The Gilgamesh Traditions and the Pre-History of Genesis 6:1-4," *PRSt* 8 [2011]: 23). For earlier attempts to find closer connections that have been shown to be incorrect, see Cassuto, "The Episode of the Sons of God and the Daughters of Man (Genesis vi 1-4)," 1:23; Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 1:299; Childs, *Myth and Reality in the Old Testament*, 55–56; Marrs, "The Sons of God (Genesis 6:1-4)," 223 n. 22; Westermann, *Genesis*, 379–380.

⁴⁵⁹ "אֱנִיִּים," A.3, *HALOT*. See the survey of opinions in Westermann, *Genesis*, 377.

same time as when the sons of gods were having children by the daughters of man. Yet many commentators seek to connect the Nephilim with the progeny of the sons of gods since they are listed in such close proximity; however, most recognize that the present form of the text does not make that connection.⁴⁶⁰

The referent for the final clause in verse 4 is difficult to determine. The pronoun הַמְּזֵה could be connected with the Nephilim, describing them further.⁴⁶¹ However, it is better to connect it with the progeny of the sons of gods. The relative clause does more than just refer to something previously mentioned. Instead it introduces a new development, the birth of children. Why mention these children? Again, the author is characterizing that time. The rulers begot children who were the famous mighty men of that time. This

⁴⁶⁰ Skinner asserts, "The idea undoubtedly is that this race *arose* at that time in consequence of the union of the divine 'spirit' with human 'flesh'" but admits, "all that can be strictly inferred from it is that there was some traditional association of the Nephîlîm with the incident recorded in vv.^{1f.} . . . The writer apparently shrinks from the direct statement that the Nephîlîm were the offspring of the marriages of vv.^{1.2}, and tantalises the curiosity of his readers with the cautious affirmations that such beings then existed" (Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, 146; cf. Vervenne, "All They Need is Love," 34–35; Kraeling, "The Significance and Origin of Gen. 6:1–4," 196; Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1–17* [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1990], 269–270; Rad, *Genesis*, 115; Childs, *Myth and Reality in the Old Testament*, 55 and 58; Hugh Rowland Page, *The Myth of Cosmic Rebellion: A Study of Its Reflexes in Ugaritic and Biblical Literature* [New York: Brill, 1996], 114–115).

⁴⁶¹ The LXX makes this connection by rendering both הַמְּזֵה and הַנְּפִלִים with οἱ γίγαντες.

understanding fits rather well with the description of Nimrod in Gen 10:8-10 as both a נְבוֹר and a ruler.⁴⁶²

If the sons of gods are understood as rulers, it is possible to take the 120 years as either a shortened lifespan or a time of delay. The latter best fits the context since the proximity of this account to the flood implies some relationship.⁴⁶³ The Targum makes the 120 years explicitly a time of delay, and the LXX could also be understood that way.⁴⁶⁴ Also, God's decrees of judgment elsewhere include time periods until the destruction.⁴⁶⁵

Many have questioned any connection with the flood, especially since another reason for the flood is given in 6:5-7.⁴⁶⁶ However, these passages are

⁴⁶² Kline, "Divine Kingship and Genesis 6:1-4," 201.

⁴⁶³ Childs states, "regardless of what the original meaning of the one hundred and twenty years was, in its present position as an introduction to the flood, one cannot help seeing some connexion with a period of grace before the coming catastrophe" (Childs, *Myth and Reality in the Old Testament*, 58).

⁴⁶⁴ The Targumim speak of the 120 years as a time for repentance. The LXX limits Yahweh's statement by the demonstrative pronoun, "My spirit will not remain in *these* men (ἐν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τούτοις) forever." While not explicit, the pronoun seems to restrict the judgment to the present generation and thus would imply that the 120 years refers not to individuals (note also the plural "their days" αἱ ἡμέραι αὐτῶν), but the time until that generation was punished. Both views are found in Rabbinic writings (Menahem M. Kasher, *Encyclopedia of Biblical Interpretation: A Millennial Anthology* [trans. Harry Freedman; 9 vols.; New York: American Biblical Encyclopedia Society, 1953-1979], 1:184-185).

⁴⁶⁵ See for example Gen 15:13-16 and Jonah 3:4.

⁴⁶⁶ Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 1:297; Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, 141; Harland, *The Value of Human Life*, 25-26. Westermann argues that the sons of gods episode is not the cause of the flood, although it is an illustration of the general corruption (Westermann, *Genesis*, 368 and 376; cf. Gunkel, *Genesis*, 59-60). Hendel suggests that 6:1-4 was "originally connected to the flood narrative and functioned as its motivation. The Yahwist detached the story of the demigods from the

by no means mutually exclusive. One can be viewed as establishing a time of delay until judgment and the other providing the conclusion after that time. Clines argues that because of the repetition of *רַיָּה*, "the relation of the decree in 6:3 to the destruction of 7:22 appears to be that of cause and effect."⁴⁶⁷

Verse 4 also implies a connection. Why does the author mention the Nephilim if they are not to be connected with the sons of gods? Why does the author mention the children of the sons of gods, the mighty men? The answer from the text is that the author is describing that time.⁴⁶⁸ Those days were not only characterized by oppressive rulers, but also by others who were fearsome and violent: the Nephilim/giants, before whom Israel's spies would cower in Num 13:33, and the renowned mighty men, progeny of the sons of gods.⁴⁶⁹

myth of the deluge in order to preface the flood with a more purely ethical motive: Yahweh's anger at the evil behavior of humanity" (Hendel, "Of Demigods and the Deluge," 16–17).

⁴⁶⁷ Clines, "The Significance of the 'Sons of God' Episode (Genesis 6:1-4) in the Context of the 'Primeval History' (Genesis 1-11)," 42.

⁴⁶⁸ Similarly, Page writes of the Nephilim, "It is the one element in the tale that gives it spatio-temporal specificity. It is set during the time when the 'fallen ones' were on earth" (Page, *The Myth of Cosmic Rebellion*, 115–116).

⁴⁶⁹ Kraeling makes a similar connection between the mighty men and the violence causing the flood (Kraeling, "The Significance and Origin of Gen. 6:1-4," 197).

The term *נְפִילִים* "Nephilim" only occurs in Gen 6:4, Num 13:33, and possibly Ezek 32:27. Not much can be said with confidence about its etymology and meaning. See P. W. Coxon, "Nephilim," *DDD*, 618-620; Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, 145–147; Westermann, *Genesis*, 377–379.

The connection between the groups described as Nephilim in Gen 6:4 and Num 13:33 is probably based on a physical characteristic, being giants, instead of an ethnic link (cf. Kraeling, "The Significance and Origin of Gen. 6:1-4," 195 and 203). In Num 13:33, the people of the land of Canaan are described as *בְּנֵי עֲנָק מִן־הַנְּפִילִים*, "the sons of Anak from the Nephilim." The preposition *מִן* in such a designation is not used for a genealogical link. Instead, it provides other relevant information, usually indicating someone's or somepeople's place of origin (town, territory, etc.), although it can also be used of a group to which they

This verse does not fit if Gen 6:1-4 is supposed to be self-contained and separated from its context; however, it does make sense as an introduction for the greater flood account.

Parallels with Atrahasis also suggest that the 120 years refers to a period of delay. In Atrahasis, the narrative is divided up into periods of 1200 years which are associated with an increase in population, "When the land extended and the peoples multiplied."⁴⁷⁰ At the ends of these periods, Enlil has finally had enough as humankind's noise has become too great and therefore brings various afflictions upon humans, culminating in the flood. In the biblical account, there is likewise a population explosion, "When man began to grow numerous upon the face of the earth" (6:1). If the 120 years in 6:3 are understood as a period of delay, then they are parallel to the 1200 year period in Atrahasis. Both begin with an expansion in population and end in judgment. The possible connection is strengthened by the similarity

belong (cf. Jer 1:1). Thus, fearsome giants that are described in various places may all be called Nephilim without implying a genealogical link. Such an understanding is at least one way to answer the question of how the Nephilim can appear before and after the flood.

Some commentators who argue for the Nephilim as the children of divine fathers and earthly mothers reach comparable conclusions. The Nephilim before and after the flood are not related genealogically. Instead, divine-human intermingling occurred both before and after the flood, and their offspring are all called Nephilim (Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 1:298; Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, 147; Wenham, *Genesis*, 143).

⁴⁷⁰ I.vii.353//II.i.2, translated by Lambert and Millard, *Atra-ḥasīs*, 67 and 73.

between 120 and 1200 and their reflection of the Mesopotamian sexagesimal system.⁴⁷¹

Another possible connection with Atrahasis and thus with the flood is the debated word בְּשִׁנָּם in 6:3. The most common explanation is that בְּשִׁנָּם is made up of the preposition בְּ, the relative pronoun שִׁנָּ, and the conjunction וְ and introduces the reason for Yahweh's statement, "since (even) . . ." While possible, it should be noted that the relative pronoun שִׁנָּ appears nowhere else in the Pentateuch and this combination appears nowhere else in the Hebrew Bible, although בְּ + שִׁנָּ and שִׁנָּ + וְ do.⁴⁷² Another possibility is to read with many MT manuscripts and editions בְּשִׁנָּם, an infinitive construct from שִׁנָּ, to make an error, with a prepositional prefix and third masculine plural suffix, "in their error."⁴⁷³ A third suggestion is that בְּשִׁנָּם is a nominal form related to the Akkadian verb šagāmu, to roar, shout, with the prepositional prefix, "because of the noise."⁴⁷⁴ This reading has parallels with the theme of noise, *rigmu*, as

⁴⁷¹ Millard, "A New Babylonian 'Genesis' Story," 13; Clines, "The Significance of the 'Sons of God' Episode (Genesis 6:1-4) in the Context of the 'Primeval History' (Genesis 1-11)," 42; Kvanvig, "Gen 6,1-4 as an Antediluvian Event," 99.

⁴⁷² See Qoh 2:16, 8:17, Jon 1:7, and 12 for the former and Qoh 1:17, 2:15, and 8:14 for the latter (cf. Vervenne, "All They Need is Love," 28–30). The absence of the relative pronoun שִׁנָּ elsewhere in the Pentateuch is not conclusive. Although שִׁנָּ appears most frequently in post-exilic literature, it is also used in earlier periods (Jud 5:7) and seems to be the older form of the relative that was supplanted by אֲשֶׁר in much of the pre-exilic period (Joüon §38).

⁴⁷³ GKC §67p.

⁴⁷⁴ Clines, "The Significance of the 'Sons of God' Episode (Genesis 6:1-4) in the Context of the 'Primeval History' (Genesis 1-11)," 40. Kvanvig defends this suggestion and compares it with the 'outcry' of Sodom and Gomorrah in Gen 18:20 (Kvanvig, "Gen 6,1-4 as an Antediluvian Event," 107–110). Vervenne's objection "that such a derivation remains

the cause of the flood in Atrahasis, which a number of authors take as a sign of rebellion.⁴⁷⁵ The latter two explanations, especially the last one, provide a close parallel to the gods' motivation for the flood in Atrahasis and thus suggest a connection between the 120 years and the flood.⁴⁷⁶

The deified kings interpretation of Gen 6:1-4 fits in well with the context of Genesis and Mesopotamian parallels related to kingship and the flood. In the end, however, the text is too obscure to be overly dogmatic. On the issue of human immortality, the evidence is clearer. In order to understand Gen 6:1-4 as an account of God making immortal humans mortal, the text must be ripped out of its context and subjected to a number of narrative inconsistencies. Such a step is unnecessary, especially without compelling comparative evidence.

extremely hypothetical" is true enough but far from conclusive (Vervenne, "All They Need is Love," 28).

⁴⁷⁵ G. Pettinato, "Die Bestrafung des Menschengeschlechts durch die Sintflut: Die erste Tafel des Atrahasis-Epos eröffnet eine neue Einsicht in die Motivation dieser Strafe," *Orientalia* 37 (1968): 165–200; Oden, "Divine aspirations in Atrahasis and in Genesis 1-11," 197–216; Batto, "The Sleeping God: An Ancient Near Eastern Motif of Divine Sovereignty," *Biblica* 68 (1987): 159–160.

⁴⁷⁶ In all three explanations, the following phrase 'he is flesh' could be taken as the reason for Yahweh's statement in the first part of verse 3. However, in the latter two the causal sense is not explicitly marked by a conjunction but implied by simple juxtaposition (Joüon §170b).

C. Genesis 1:28-30 and 9:1-7

1. Genesis 1:28-30

The most important text for the study of original vegetarianism and animal peace in the Hebrew Bible is Gen 1:28-30. It contains God's words addressed to newly created humans about the relations between humans, animals, and plants. These few verses have inspired a voluminous amount of literature and debate.

The overwhelming majority of commentators throughout the history of interpretation understand Gen 1:28-30 as portraying an initial vegetarian state for both humans and animals.⁴⁷⁷ However, there is some diversity on the specifics. Among more recent commentators, most understand 1:29-30 as itself implying a vegetarian state.⁴⁷⁸ Others argue that only after 1:29-30 is compared with 9:2-3 is its description of an original vegetarian state clear.⁴⁷⁹ Many understand these verses as also implying an initial time of idyllic peace

⁴⁷⁷ For early C.E. examples see b. Sanh. 59b and Andrew Louth and Marco Conti, eds., *Genesis 1-11* (ACCS 1; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 41–43; Morwenna Ludlow, "Power and Dominion: Patristic Interpretation of Genesis I," in *Ecological Hermeneutics: Biblical, Historical and Theological Perspectives* (ed. David G. Horrell et al.; New York: T & T Clark, 2010), 146–147.

⁴⁷⁸ Barr claims, "Genesis i is explicit that in the beginning man was vegetarian, as were also the animals" (James Barr, "Man and Nature: The Ecological Controversy and the Old Testament," *BJRL* 55 [1972]: 21; cf. Nahum M. Sarna, *Genesis = Be-Reshit: The Traditional Hebrew Text with New JPS Translation* [JPSTC; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989], 13–14; Michael A. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985], 318).

⁴⁷⁹ Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, 34.

between humans and animals and within the animal world itself.⁴⁸⁰ Others question the notion of an initial state of animal peace.⁴⁸¹ Some even question whether an original vegetarian diet was viewed as ideal.⁴⁸²

After a close study of these verses, it will be shown that notions of vegetarianism and animal peace do not arise from the text itself. Instead, humankind's call to subdue and rule in Gen 1:28-30 indicates the presence of some form of strife and most likely allows the use of animals as a food source. Thus these texts align with the general view seen elsewhere in the biblical record - eating meat is a blessing.⁴⁸³

The basic outline of this section is rather simple. After some initial comments on Gen 1:28-30, the verbs כבש and רדה, subdue and rule, are analyzed followed by an examination of the giving of plants in verses 29-30. Then Gen 9:1-7 is compared with Gen 1:28-30 to see if it changes the

⁴⁸⁰ Lohfink states, "The vegetarian instruction for nourishment both of humans and animals that follows immediately after Gen. 1:28, in verse 29, shows that human governance of the animals was certainly intended as something altogether peaceful and paradisiacal" (Norbert Lohfink, *Theology of the Pentateuch: Themes of the Priestly Narrative and Deuteronomy* [trans. Linda M. Maloney; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994], 168).

⁴⁸¹ Westermann speculates that 1:28 indicates "an echo of the belief that the animal was the human's deadly enemy in the early stages of the human race" (Westermann, *Genesis*, 159). Grünwaldt argues that verses 1:29-30 were not written as a description of "das Motiv des Tierfriedens" but simply as the means for humankind to carry out the commands in 1:28 (Klaus Grünwaldt, "Wozu wir essen: Überlegungen zu Genesis 1:29-30a," *BV* 49 [1989]: 36-37).

⁴⁸² Firmage cautions, "As priests also benefited from sacrifice, we may be reading too much into Gen. 1.1-2.4 to assume that, like primitivist myths from other cultures, it is imputing any particular *virtue* to the vegetarianism that prevailed among the first humans" (Edwin B. Firmage, "Genesis 1 and the Priestly Agenda," *JSOT* 82 [1999]: 102 n. 16).

⁴⁸³ See Appendix 1.

relations between humans and animals. What complicates this section is the dizzying array of interpretations, mainly defending a vegetarian reading of these passages, that must be engaged.

Text:

28 וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם אֱלֹהִים
פָּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלֵאוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ וּכְבֹּשׁוּ
וַרְדּוּ בַדְגַת הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבְכָל־חַיָּה הַרְמִשָּׁת עַל־הָאָרֶץ
29 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים
הִנֵּה נָתַתִּי לָכֶם
אֶת־כָּל־עֵשֶׂב זֶרַע זֶרַע אֲשֶׁר עַל־פְּנֵי כָל־הָאָרֶץ
וְאֶת־כָּל־הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר־בוּ פְרִי־עֵץ זֶרַע זֶרַע
לָכֶם יִהְיֶה לְאֹכְלָהּ
30 וּלְכָל־חַיַּת הָאָרֶץ וּלְכָל־עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם
וּלְכָל רֹמֵשׁ עַל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־בוּ נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה
אֶת־כָּל־יֵרֶק עֵשֶׂב לְאֹכְלָהּ

Translation:

28 And God blessed them and God said to them,
"Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it
and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every
animal which moves on the earth."

29 And God said,

"Behold I give to you⁴⁸⁴

every seed-bearing plant which is upon the face of all the earth
and every tree which has in it fruit of a seed-bearing tree.

To you it will be for food

30 and to every animal of the earth and to every bird of the sky

and to every moving thing upon the earth which has in it a living soul.

(I give to you) every green plant for food."

⁴⁸⁴ The perfect נָתַתִּי is best understood as a performative (*IBHS* 30.5.1d); God gave the plants to man when he spoke to them.

God's first speech to humanity is recorded as a blessing; therefore the imperatives of verse 28 are best taken as desirous activities and goals that God has empowered humans to undertake.⁴⁸⁵ In the same manner, the fish in verse 22 are granted fertility so they can fill the seas. The blessing to humans goes beyond fertility to include dominion.⁴⁸⁶ Verses 29-30 are probably best included as a part of the blessing, since all of Gen 9:1-7, which is parallel to 1:28-30, is depicted as God's blessing.⁴⁸⁷ Therefore it is proper to examine Gen 1:28-30 and speak of various rights granted to humans and even the duties given to them.

In Gen 1:28-30, God establishes humankind's relationship with the created world, specifically plants and animals. The lists of plants and animals in these verses are not identical to lists earlier in the chapter, but these differences are mainly stylistic.⁴⁸⁸ The animals in verse 28 correspond to the

⁴⁸⁵ Lohfink, *Great Themes from the Old Testament*, 172–173.

⁴⁸⁶ Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 1:58.

⁴⁸⁷ In Gen 9:1-7, the blessing of fertility is given in both verse 1 and 7, and so the enclosed verses are best taken as part of the blessing. Westermann refers to the provision of food in 9:3 as a blessing; however he focuses only on the three imperatives related to fertility as the substance of the blessing in 1:28 (Westermann, *Genesis*, 160–161 and 463; cf. Claus Westermann, *Blessing in the Bible and the Life of the Church* [trans. Keith R. Crim; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978], 18 and 30).

⁴⁸⁸ McEvenue states that "the priestly writer seems to be at pains, not only to vary when he repeats, but also to confuse and interlock symmetries, and to disturb balance" (Sean McEvenue, *The Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer* [Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1971], 185). Note that the one category of land animals in verse 28 is broken into two in verse 30 by simply separating the terms used (תַּיִת הָאָרֶץ => תַּיִת הָאָרֶץ and רוֹמֵשׁ עַל-הָאָרֶץ). In verses 29-30 the author varied the lists so that a form of עַל-הָאָרֶץ and אֲשֶׁר-בּוֹ appears in the lists of both plants and animals.

ones in verse 26 and those described on the fifth and sixth days of the creation week. Verse 30 is also equivalent except for the omission of sea creatures. The list of plants in verses 29-30 should be understood as a reference to the plants described on the third day of the creation week.

Genesis 1:28-30 also describes the similarities and differences between humans and animals. In verse 28, humans share with animals the blessing of multiplying, as seen in verse 22, but the repetition helps to highlight the commands to subdue and rule given only to humans. In verse 26, humankind's rule is connected to their unique creation in the divine image.⁴⁸⁹ Humans are also the only land animal commanded to fill the earth, indicating their supremacy.⁴⁹⁰ In contrast, humans are not distinguished from other land animals in verses 29-30 as both are given rights over all types of vegetation.

⁴⁸⁹ The jussive is functioning as an indirect volitive indicating purpose, "so that he might rule . . ." (cf. Jon Douglas Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil: The Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence* [Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994], 112–116; J. Richard Middleton, *The Liberating Image: The Imago Dei in Genesis 1* [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Brazos Press, 2005], 53). Von Rad states, "This commission to rule is not considered as belonging to the definition of God's image; but it is its consequence, i.e., that for which man is capable because of it" (Rad, *Genesis*, 59; cf. Andreas Schüle, "Made in the >Image of God<: The Concepts of Divine Images in Gen 1-3," *ZAW* 117 [2005]: 5). Creation in the divine image also creates a contrast with the animals that are "according to their kinds" (Ellen J. van Wolde, "The Text as an Eloquent Guide: Rhetorical, Linguistic and Literary Features in Genesis 1," in *Literary Structure and Rhetorical Strategies in the Hebrew Bible* [ed. L. J. de Regt, Jan de Waard, and J. P. Fokkerman; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1996], 148–149).

⁴⁹⁰ Wöhrle argues that of the animals only fish are blessed 'to fill' since they are not in competition with humans for the same living space (Jakob Wöhrle, "dominium terrae: Exegetische und religionsgeschichtliche Überlegungen zum Herrschaftsauftrag in Gen 1,26-28," *ZAW* 121 [2009]: 180). Others commentators argue that land animals are not blessed with fruitfulness because they share the same living space as humans and would thus be in

These verses are quite general. They establish humankind's preeminent position in creation, but do not provide much detail. God issues a series of commands in verse 28 that grant fertility and give humans a right and duty to assert authority over the animals. Exactly what this dominion entails, however, is not defined. Verses 29-30 contain a declarative statement that grants vegetation to humans and designates it as a food source for humans and animals. But they do not mention if other uses of vegetation are allowed or comment on other food sources.⁴⁹¹

There is a logical or temporal progression built into God's commands in verse 28.⁴⁹² Fruitfulness leads to being numerous which is necessary before filling the earth. The filling of the earth leads to subduing, and subduing is a necessary step before ruling.⁴⁹³ Although each of these steps goes on

competition with them (Beauchamp, "Création et fondation de la loi en Gn 1,1-2,4," 151–152; Andreas Schüle, *Der Prolog der hebräischen Bibel: Der literar- und theologiegeschichtliche Diskurs der Urgeschichte [Genesis 1-11]* [ATANT; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 2006], 112). Seas filled with fish are a blessing while a land overrun by animals is a curse.

⁴⁹¹ Driver writes, "the aim of the verse is simply to define, with reference to v. 11 f., how the different kinds of plants there mentioned may be utilized for food" (S. R. Driver, *The Book of Genesis* [London: Methuen & Co., 1904], 16).

⁴⁹² Lohfink, *Great Themes from the Old Testament*, 177; Andersen, *The Sentence in Biblical Hebrew*, 108; Beauchamp, "Création et fondation de la loi en Gn 1,1-2,4," 150–151.

⁴⁹³ Clark notes that the connection between fertility and dominion is seen elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible (Gen 22:17, 24:60) and states, "Numerous descendents is viewed as an essential ingredient of success, in military ventures as elsewhere" (W. Malcolm Clark, "The Animal Series in the Primeval History," *VT* 18 [1968]: 436). Koch likewise sees an order but argues that subduing is the main goal and not ruling. He understands subduing the earth as the purpose for the earlier imperatives of being fruitful, multiplying and filling, but he asserts that ruling the animals is only a necessary consequence of subduing the earth since animals share the earth with humans (Klaus Koch, *Imago Dei: Die Würde des Menschen im Biblischen Text* [BSJGGWH; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000], 38–39 and 45–46). Koch's

simultaneously at some level, they are meant to lead to the ultimate goal of ruling, spoken of already in verse 26. Thus, subduing and ruling should not be viewed as two distinct activities. Instead, they must be analyzed together, as two steps in one process.

Crucial to a proper understanding of 1:28-30 is a study of the key verbs *כבש* and *רדה*, to subdue and rule. Many commentators note how harsh or strong these verbs are.⁴⁹⁴ The question then raised is how they fit with an initial paradise. This apparent tension causes commentators to offer a wide range of solutions.

In general, these solutions take two basic forms. First, some studies of Gen 1:28, especially recent ones, seek to soften *כבש* and *רדה* in some way. They argue that Gen 1:28 occurs in the context of a peaceful, vegetarian

interpretation is built on a different understanding of what it means to subdue the earth, which will be discussed below.

⁴⁹⁴ After a review of their usage, Boersema concludes, "The harsh undertone of *rādāh* has almost become the dominant tone in *kābaš*" (Jan J. Boersema, *The Torah and the Stoics on Humankind and Nature: A Contribution to the Debate on Sustainability and Quality* [Leiden: Brill, 2001], 70; cf. Gunkel, *Genesis*, 114; Rad, *Genesis*, 60). Henry argues that Gen 1 asserts the distinctiveness and superiority of humans as contrasted with the teaching of texts like Gen 2-3 and Isa 11:6-8 which posit a stronger unity between humans and the rest of the animals. She says this teaching is most clearly seen in its use of *כבש* and *רדה*, "an den harten, man möchte fast sagen brutalen Ausdrücken" (Marie Louise Henry, "Das Tier im religiösen Bewußtsein des alttestamentlichen Menschen," in *Gefährten und Feinde des Menschen: Das Tier in der Lebenswelt des alten Israel* [ed. Bernd Janowski, Uwe Gleßmer, and Ute Neumann-Gorsolke; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1993], 33–36).

state, and thus כבש and רדה cannot be as harsh as many assert.⁴⁹⁵ Their arguments will be engaged in the following discussion of כבש and רדה. Second, other commentators admit the strength or harshness of these verbs, but seek to minimize their implications in some way so as not to disturb the presumed peaceful, vegetarian state of Gen 1. These arguments will be taken up after the initial discussion of כבש and רדה.

The verbs כבש and רדה are drawn from the realm of human interaction. They focus on gaining and exerting authority over another, a call to conquest and dominion. In them, humans are granted permission to use animals for their purposes. These verses do not elaborate on which uses are legitimate or illegitimate, but the verbs by themselves do not imply a prohibition against eating meat. On the contrary, it is more natural to understand them as implying the opposite, the permission to eat meat.

In verse 28, humans are told to subdue (כבש) the earth (הָאָרֶץ).⁴⁹⁶

Based on its other occurrences, כבש denotes an active pursuit of dominion

⁴⁹⁵ For example, Koch argues against the common understanding of כבש and רדה since it would naturally lead to the conclusion that humankind could eat meat, which he sees as in tension with 1:29-30: "Was soll ein Niedertreten - wohlgemerkt, nicht (nur) von Haustieren, sondern von Wild, Vogel und Fisch - bezwecken, wenn Adam die Tiere nicht einmal zu seiner Ernährung nutzen darf?" (Klaus Koch, "Gestaltet die Erde, doch heget das Leben!: Einige Klarstellungen zum dominium terrae in Genesis 1," in *>>Wenn nicht jetzt, wann dann?<<: Aufsätze für Hans-Joachim Kraus zum 65. Geburtstag* [ed. Hans-Georg Geyer et al.; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1983], 25).

⁴⁹⁶ The 3fs pronoun suffix on וְכִבְשֶׁתָּהּ is best taken as referring to the previously mentioned הָאָרֶץ.

through the use of force over someone who is offering some degree of resistance. In other words, כָּבַשׁ involves a conflict in which the stronger gains control of the weaker.⁴⁹⁷ It is used most frequently of international conflicts,⁴⁹⁸ but is also used of forcing people to be slaves⁴⁹⁹ and of rape.⁵⁰⁰ Even though the action denoted involves opposition and the use of force, the term does not by itself have a negative connotation. Force is appropriate when wielded by the "right" people.

But how does this notion of gaining dominion relate to an inanimate object like the earth? Gen 1:28 is the only place where כָּבַשׁ appears with אֶרֶץ as its direct object; however, there are four uses of the Niphal of כָּבַשׁ with הָאָרֶץ as the subject.⁵⁰¹ These descriptions of the earth being subdued are helpful in determining what it means to subdue the earth. All of them are in the context of Israelite wars against other nations in the land of Canaan.

⁴⁹⁷ Wagner states, "The Hebrew verb *kābaš* is one of several that express the exercise of force . . . The verb always presupposes a stronger party as subject and a weaker party as object" (S. Wagner, "כָּבַשׁ," *TDOT* 7:56). Oswalt concludes, "*kābash* assumes that the party being subdued is hostile to the subduer, necessitating some sort of coercion if the subduing is to take place" (John N. Oswalt, "כָּבַשׁ," *TWOT* 1.951:430). כָּבַשׁ is related to Akkadian *kabāsu* "to tread" and most likely still has that meaning in Mic 7:19, which describes God treading the sins of Israel. However, note that *HALOT* suggests that the occurrence in Mic 7:19 is an example of the root כָּבַשׁ "to clean" ("כָּבַשׁ," *HALOT*).

⁴⁹⁸ Num 32:22, 29, Josh 18:1, 2 Sam 8:11, I Chr 22:18 and Zech 9:15.

⁴⁹⁹ 2 Chr 28:10, Neh 5:5, Jer 34:11, and 16. The verb itself does not communicate slavery, but it is used in conjunction with לְעֶבְדִים.

⁵⁰⁰ Esth 7:8 and possibly Neh 5:5 (Wagner, *TDOT* 7:54-55).

⁵⁰¹ Num 32:22, 29, Josh 18:1, and I Chronicles 22:18. Zech 9:15 is similar since the sling stones are best taken as a metonymy for the enemies.

One solution offered is that כבש has a somewhat unique meaning in all these verses; it is not about subduing but taking possession.⁵⁰² A few commentators argue, based largely on the use of Akkadian *kabāsu*, that כבש can refer to stepping upon something which is symbolic of taking possession of it.⁵⁰³ Thus כבש with ארץ in Num 32:22 corresponds to ירש with ארץ in Deut 3:20.⁵⁰⁴

עַד הוֹרִישׁוּ אֶת־אֹיְבָיו מִפְּנֵי וְנִכְבְּשָׁה הָאָרֶץ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה

until he has driven out his enemies from before him and the land is subdued (possessed?) before Yahweh. (Num 32:21b-32a)

עַד אֲשֶׁר־יָנִיחַ יְהוָה לְאֶחְיֵיכֶם כַּכֶּם וַיִּרְשׁוּ גַם־הֵם אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם נָתַן לָהֶם בְּעֶבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן

until Yahweh gives rest to your brothers, as to you, and they also possess the land that Yahweh your God is giving them across the Jordan. (Deut 3:20a)

⁵⁰² Lohfink, *Theology of the Pentateuch*, 9–11; Ute Neumann-Gorsolke, "And the land was subdued before them . . .?": Some Remarks on the Meaning of כבש in Joshua 18:1 and Related Texts," in *Land of Israel in Bible, History, and Theology: Studies in Honour of Ed Noort* (ed. J. T. A. G. M. van Ruiten and Jacobus Cornelis de Vos; VTSup 124; Boston: Brill, 2009), 76–85; Ute Neumann-Gorsolke, *Herrschen in den Grenzen der Schöpfung: Ein Beitrag zur alttestamentlichen Anthropologie am Beispiel von Psalm 8, Genesis 1 und verwandten Texten* (WMANT; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2004), 274–300.

⁵⁰³ Neumann-Gorsolke offers the most extensive argument. First, she notes that Akkadian *kabāsu* can be used of walking upon a land in contexts where there is no association with "violence or warfare." Second, she mentions occurrences when stepping on a land can be a symbolic action for taking possession of it. Third, she ties these notions together to argue that some of her Akkadian examples "bear the possibility to understand *kabāsu* 'to set foot on (the land)' as a symbolic act of acquiring land." Fourth, she then examines the uses of כבש with ארץ in the Hebrew Bible and argues that they can bear a similar meaning, the image of someone walking on the land and thereby symbolically taking possession of it. (Neumann-Gorsolke, *Herrschen in den Grenzen der Schöpfung*, 274–300; Neumann-Gorsolke, "And the land was subdued before them . . .?," 76–85; cf. Lohfink, *Theology of the Pentateuch*, 9).

⁵⁰⁴ See also Num 32:29, Deut 31:3 and Josh 1:15 (Lohfink, *Theology of the Pentateuch*, 10).

Genesis 1:28 would thus be translated, "and take possession of it (step upon it)."⁵⁰⁵

There are a few problems with a possession interpretation. First, the cognate languages do not support it. It is true that Akkadian *kabāsu* can mean "to step on something," but there is no textual evidence that it was ever used in the derived meaning of "to possess."⁵⁰⁶ Second, the idea of possession does not fit well with the biblical Niphal occurrences. If the Qal is to be read as "to step on, to possess" then the Niphal would be something like "to be stepped upon, to be possessed." The problem is the preposition לְפָנַי which occurs in these contexts. What does it mean for land to be stepped upon before someone, to be possessed before someone?⁵⁰⁷ Third, there seems to be a

⁵⁰⁵ Lohfink, *Theology of the Pentateuch*, 10; Neumann-Gorsolke, *Herrschen in den Grenzen der Schöpfung*, 299.

⁵⁰⁶ The examples listed by Neumann-Gorsolke are unconvincing. Most are best understood as referring to physical presence somewhere, not possessing it. Also, the derived meanings of *kabāsu* do not relate to possession but are similar to subdue: "to crush, defeat an enemy, to bother, to make people do work, to press people" ("*kabāsu*," *CAD*). In fact, Neumann-Gorsolke admits in a footnote that it is possible for Akkadian *kabāsu* to be used of subduing a land as metonymy for subduing its hostile inhabitants (Neumann-Gorsolke, *Herrschen in den Grenzen der Schöpfung*, 293–294 n. 138). It has this meaning when *kabāsu* is used in the Ntn stem (=IV/3) with 'land' as the subject, a very close parallel to the Niphal occurrences in the Hebrew Bible. For example a letter to Sargon II states, "this land has now been trodden under your feet (KUR ha-an-ni-tú ina KI.[T]A GÌR.2-ka ta-at-tak-ba-as)" (translated by Simo Parpola, *The Correspondence of Sargon II, Part I: Letters from Assyria and the West* [SAA 1; Helsinki, Finland: Helsinki University Press, 1987], 1.53:6). For other examples see "*kabāsu*," 9, *CAD*.

⁵⁰⁷ Neumann-Gorsolke seeks to address this concern by rendering the verb with a modal nuance, "the land could be stepped upon before . . ." However, her rendering does not fit grammatically with the form of the verbs. For example, she translates Josh 18:1 as "The land could be stepped upon before them" (Neumann-Gorsolke, "And the land was subdued before them . . .?," 83). However, the perfect נִכְבְּשָׁה is used, and so the translation, based on

clear contrast between *כבש* and *ירש* in Josh 18:1 and 3. The narrator in verse one states that the land was subdued (*וְהָאָרֶץ נִכְבְּשָׁה*), and then Joshua in verse 3 calls on the people to possess the land (*לָרֶשֶׁת אֶת־הָאָרֶץ*). In this passage, at least, subduing would seem to be prior to possessing in Israel's conquest of Canaan.⁵⁰⁸

Another more common solution is to take *כבש* as applying metaphorically to the direct object *הָאָרֶץ*. Humankind subdues the earth by making use of it. Often this interpretation is motivated by the assumed peaceful state of creation. *כבש* implies opposition and conflict and thus it must have a metaphorical meaning in Gen 1:28.⁵⁰⁹ Within this group, it is debated

Neumann-Gorsolke's arguments, should be, "The land had been stepped upon before them." The imperfect would be expected if the author wanted to communicate the modal "could be stepped upon" (*IBHS* 31.4e). This observation applies to the other occurrences.

⁵⁰⁸ Smith uses Josh 18:1, which he says is in a "priestly context," to suggest that *כבש* in Gen 1:28 does not refer to a human conquest but to God's allotment. He says that the use of *כבש* in Josh 18:1 "evokes God's power to allot the land to the Israelites. Similarly, the verb in Genesis 1 suggests the divine allotment of the world to humanity" (Mark S. Smith, *The Priestly Vision of Genesis 1* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010], 101). However, Smith's analysis does not explain the change in binyan. Even though it is possible to argue that the Niphal of *כבש* in Josh 18:1 assumes God as the agent and thus his "power to allot," the agent for the Qal in 1:28 has to be humans.

⁵⁰⁹ For example, Gill states, "not that it was in the hands of others, who had no right to it, and to be conquered and taken out of their hands; but is to be understood of their taking possession, and making use of it; of their tilling the land, and making it subservient to their use" (Gill, *An Exposition of the First Book of Moses Called Genesis*, 25). Fretheim's reasoning is similar, appealing to the uniqueness of the context. He argues, "While the verb may involve coercion in interhuman relationships (Num 32:22, 29), no enemies are in view here . . . later usages of the verb for post-sin and human activities should not be simply transferred to this context." He suggests the meaning, "bring order out of continuing disorder" (Terence E. Fretheim, "Genesis and Ecology," in *The Book of Genesis: Composition*,

in what ways humans may use the earth. Some see humankind's power as basically unlimited.⁵¹⁰ Others understand it in a more limited way. Barr states, "I doubt whether more is intended here than the basic needs of settlement and agriculture . . . Basically what is intended is tilling; it corresponds with the 'working' or 'tilling' of the ground in the J story, Genesis ii. 5, 15."⁵¹¹

The problem with a metaphoric interpretation is that it fails to adequately deal with the Niphal examples of כָּבַשׁ with אֶרֶץ.⁵¹² They are all in the context of Israel's wars against the nations in the land of Canaan and refer to the state of the land after those nations have been defeated.⁵¹³ For example, in Num 32:21-22 Moses tells the trans-Jordanian tribes that in order to inherit the land on the east side of the Jordan they must cross the Jordan armed for war and fight until Yahweh has brought victory.

עַד הוֹרִישׁוּ אֶת־אֹיְבֵי מִפְּנֵי וְנִכְבְּשׁוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה

Reception, and Interpretation [ed. Craig A. Evans, Joel N. Lohr, and David L. Petersen; VTSup 152; Boston: Brill, 2012], 690).

⁵¹⁰ Jacob states, "Mit diesem Einen Worte . . . ist dem Menschen die uneingeschränkte Herrschaft über den Weltkörper Erde verliehen, deshalb kann keine Arbeit an ihr, z.B. Durchbohrung oder Abtragung von Bergen, Austrocknen oder Umleiten von Flüssen u. dgl., als gottwidrige Vergewaltigung bezeichnet wurden" (Benno Jacob, *Das erste Buch der Tora - Genesis* [New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1974], 61).

⁵¹¹ Barr, "Man and Nature," 22; cf. Koch, "Gestaltet die Erde, doch heget das Leben!," 26–31; Laurence A. Turner, *Announcements of Plot in Genesis* (JSOTSup 96; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 34–35.

⁵¹² Num 32:22, 29, Josh 18:1, and I Chronicles 22:18; cf. Zech 9:15.

⁵¹³ Hermann-Josef Stipp, "Dominium terrae: Die Herrschaft der Menschen über die Tiere in Gen 1,26.28," in *Gott Mensch Sprache: Schülerfestschrift für Walter Gross zum 60. Geburtstag* (ed. Andreas Michel, Hermann-Josef Stipp, and Walter Gross; St. Ottilien: EOS, 2001), 119–120.

until he has driven out his enemies from before him and the land is subdued before Yahweh.

The same tie between defeated enemies and subdued land is also clearly seen in David's words to the leaders of Israel in 1 Chr 22:18.

נָתַן בְּיָדֵי אֶת יְשֵׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ וְנִכְבְּשָׁה הָאָרֶץ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וְלִפְנֵי עַמּוֹ

He has given the inhabitants of the land into my hand, and the land is subdued before Yahweh and his people.

The subduing of the earth is not referring to the carrying out of cultural activities like farming and building, but to something that precedes them and makes them possible. Opposing forces must be defeated before a land is subdued. In fact subduing a land is defeating the opposing forces. In these verses the references to the land are metonymy for the opposing nations in the land. The land being subdued is equivalent to the people in the land being conquered.⁵¹⁴

Thus in 1:28, humankind's duty is to extend their dominion by force against any in the world that oppose them. Yet, whom were humans to subdue? To answer this question it is important to remember the logical

⁵¹⁴ Wöhrle, "dominium terrae," 173; Norman C. Habel, "Geophany: The Earth Story in Genesis 1," in *The Earth Story in Genesis* (ed. Norman C. Habel and Shirley Wurst; EB 2; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 47; Beauchamp, "Création et fondation de la loi en Gn 1,1-2,4," 170. Wybrow correctly interprets these texts, "The violence of the invader is not directed against the *land* being invaded, but against the land's current *occupants*. In fact, it would be foolish for the invaders to use force on a military scale against the land, for then the land would be damaged, and lose the value which makes it worth conquering." However, he then inexplicitly suggests that "*occupying* it" is all that it means to subdue the land in Gen 1:28 (Cameron Wybrow, *The Bible, Baconianism, and Mastery over Nature: The Old Testament and its Modern Misreading* [New York: Peter Lang, 1991], 148).

progression in the commands in 1:28. Humans are to subdue the same group they are to rule, the animals. Luzzatto concludes, "Conquer it from the beast - in the same sense as every use of the term *kibbush* is used in relation to the land, implying conquest *from others*."⁵¹⁵

Subduing comes before ruling, making it possible. Humans had to overcome the resistance of the animals before they could rule them. This conclusion has profound implications for the primeval period. If the command to subdue implies conflict and the animals are the source of that conflict, then the initial state was not characterized by animal peace.

What about God's command to rule, *רדה*, over the animals? In the Hebrew Bible, *רדה* is used to communicate a highly coercive form of control.⁵¹⁶ The verb by itself can be used to communicate harshness or injustice.⁵¹⁷ In

⁵¹⁵ Luzzatto, *The Book of Genesis*, 26; cf. Wöhrlé, "dominium terrae," 174. Gardner takes the primary opponents in view as false gods. He suggests that the command "to subdue the earth" may have been a polemic against the gods of the surrounding nations that were tied to "the power or spirit of the earth." Gardner points out a possible contextual parallel in that "the non-naming of the sun and moon" is almost certainly a polemic against deifying them (Anne Gardner, "Ecojustice: A Study of Genesis 6.11-13," in *The Earth Story in Genesis* [ed. Norman C. Habel and Shirley Wurst; EB 2; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000], 124). Davis posits a more general "[o]pposition to God" (Ellen F. Davis, *Scripture, Culture, and Agriculture: An Agrarian Reading of the Bible* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009], 62). While the general nature of Gen 1:28-30 certainly allows for the opposition to be broader than the animal world; nevertheless, animals are the opposition described in the immediate context of 1:28.

⁵¹⁶ The possible occurrences of *רדה* in Pss 49:15, 68:28, and Lam 1:13 have not been included in the discussion because of textual issues.

⁵¹⁷ Lev 26:17, Neh 9:28, and probably Isa 14:6.

other occurrences, added words make these notions more explicit.⁵¹⁸ The focus is on having power over someone and not on executing administrative or bureaucratic functions. Bird states, "The term emphasizes superior position and power rather than any particular activity, purpose, or quality of rule . . . The primary function of *RDH* in Genesis 1 is to describe *adam's* place in creation."⁵¹⁹

רדה usually has royal connotations and refers to a king's or a state's dominion over foreign nations. It is used in parallel with other descriptions of a battle to describe the initial conquering of a nation.⁵²⁰ It also refers to the power wielded over those previously subdued through war or threat of war.⁵²¹ Janowski highlights the parallel, Neo-Assyrian use of *redû* to denote the king's rule of all lands.⁵²²

It is possible that the meaning 'to rule' for רדה is derived from the meaning 'to tread'.⁵²³ רדה occurs with the meaning 'to tread' only in Joel 4:13

⁵¹⁸ It appears with פָּרַד in Lev 25:43, 46, 53, and Ezek 34:4 and with אָרַד in Isa 14:6.

⁵¹⁹ Phyllis A. Bird, "Male and Female He Created Them': Gen 1:27b in the Context of the Priestly Account of Creation," *HTR* 74 (1981): 154–155.

⁵²⁰ The battle context is clear in Lev 26:17 and Num 24:19 (non-P). It is less clear though still evident in Neh 9:28, Ps 110:2 and Isa 14:2.

⁵²¹ 1 Kgs 5:4, Ps 72:8, Isa 14:6, and Ezek 29:15.

⁵²² Bernd Janowski, "Herrschaft über die Tiere: Gen 1,26-28 und die Semantik von rdh," in *Biblische Theologie und gesellschaftlicher Wandel: für Norbert Lohfink SJ* (ed. Georg Braulik, Walter Gross, and Sean E. McEvenue; Freiburg i. Br., Germany: Herder, 1993), 189–190, cf. Neumann-Gorsolke, *Herrschen in den Grenzen der Schöpfung*, 222–223.

⁵²³ H.-J. Zobel, "רָדָה," *TDOT* 13:334; Stipp, "Dominium terrae," 136.

where it is used of treading the winepress.⁵²⁴ Based on this etymology, it is easy to see why many commentators argue that רדה denotes harsh rule.⁵²⁵ Some argue that רדה "is derived from the court language of the great empires" because the royal courts of Babylon and Egypt use the image of treading to describe conquering or ruling over foreign nations.⁵²⁶

The royal overtones of רדה can also be seen through its connection with the divine image in 1:26. In Mesopotamian literature, there are references to the king as the image of a deity, a notion that fits with the royal ideology of the king as a representative of the gods. Commentators argue that Gen 1 contains a "democratization" of this kingly notion as it applies the divine image to humanity in general.⁵²⁷

⁵²⁴ It is possible to read the form ירד here as from the root ירד "to descend" (Lohfink, *Theology of the Pentateuch*, 11). The Vulgate takes it this way, translating it as "*descendite*," however, the Septuagint takes it as a form of רדה, translating it as "πατερετε." Rütterswörden helpfully points out that it is unlikely that anyone spoke of going down into a winepress in ancient Palestine since they were only shallow indentations in the bedrock (Udo Rütterswörden, *dominium terrae: Studien zur Genese einer alttestamentlichen Vorstellung* [BZAW; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1993], 86).

⁵²⁵ Brayford suggests that the LXX uses ἄρχω (also used in 1:14) to translate רדה in order to soften the harsher Hebrew term (Susan Brayford, *Genesis* [SCS; Leiden: Brill, 2007], 222; cf. Jennifer Dines, "Creation under Control: Power Language in Genesis 1:1-2:3," in *Studies in the Greek Bible: Essays in Honor of Francis T. Gignac, S. J.* [ed. Jeremy Corley and Vincent T. M. Skemp; Washington, D. C.: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2008], 13).

⁵²⁶ Westermann, *Genesis*, 158–159.

⁵²⁷ Bernard Frank Batto, "The Divine Sovereign: The Image of God in the Priestly Creation Account," in *David and Zion: Biblical Studies in Honor of J. J. M. Roberts* (ed. Bernard Frank Batto and Kathryn L. Roberts; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 143–86; Middleton, *The Liberating Image*, 111–122; Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 114–116. There are commentators who disagree. For example, Wöhrle argues that humankind's dominion should not be related to the divine image despite the close proximity

However, רדה is not used for someone ruling over his own people unless that rule involves some sort of oppression or injustice.⁵²⁸ In two places, Israelites are said "to rule," רדה, over fellow Israelites. In both places, additional qualifications are used to negatively characterize their rule. In Jer 5:31, the priest are condemned for ruling "according to their hand" (על-ידיהם). It is debated what this means, but it is clear from the context that it is improper. In Ezek 34:4, Israel's leaders are condemned for ruling with "force" (חִזְקָה) and "harshness" (פְּרוֹד). Verbs such as מַשַּׁל and מִלֵּךְ are normally used for ruling over one's own people. רדה overlaps semantically with these verbs but is not a close synonym.⁵²⁹

There are also a few non-royal uses of רדה. It is used of the overseers of Solomon's non-Israelite work-gangs⁵³⁰ and in conjunction with פָּרַד to describe how an Israelite bond-servant is not to be treated.⁵³¹ In both of these instances, the people being ruled were compelled by force or

between the image and ruling in Gen 1:26. He notes that the verbs כָּבַשׁ and רדה can be used in non-royal contexts and that the appeal to the image in Gen 9:6 indicates that the image refers to humankind's special nature and not a special function as ruler (Wöhrle, "dominium terrae," 176–178). Neither reason is compelling since the verbs are found in many royal contexts and it is unnecessary to make such a sharp distinction between nature and function.

⁵²⁸ Stipp, "Dominium terrae," 127–132; Wöhrle, "dominium terrae," 175.

⁵²⁹ Zobel, *TDOT* 13:331; pace Ellen J. van Wolde, "Facing the Earth: Primaeval History in a New Perspective," in *The World of Genesis: Persons, Places, Perspectives* (ed. Philip R. Davies and David J. A. Clines; JSOTSup 257; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 27 n. 10. *HALOT* highlights this distinction in its definition of רדה, "to rule (with the associated meaning of oppression [in contrast to] מַשַּׁל)" ("רדה," *HALOT*).

⁵³⁰ 1 Kgs 5:30, 9:23, and 2 Chr 8:10.

⁵³¹ Lev 25:43, 46, and 53.

circumstance into their present status. Thus, it is important to note that in all the occurrences of רדה the one being ruled is under some form of coercion to submit.⁵³²

Some commentators, in reaction to those who argue that 1:28 gives humankind the right to plunder the earth, argue that humans have positive duties towards the ones they rule.⁵³³ Note, however, that such duties are not inherent in the terms themselves. רדה never implies benefits for the one being ruled but only for the one ruling.⁵³⁴ Nevertheless, the focus on the ruler does not necessitate an unfavorable rule for the subjects. Although רדה can imply a harsh or unjust rule, the main focus of the verb is on the ruler's dominion.

In 1:28, there is no reason to take רדה as implying a harsh or unjust rule. Nevertheless, it does communicate a level of separation between humans and animals and at least implies the possibility of conflict. Bird states, "RDH is appropriate in this context to describe rule over those who are not of the

⁵³² Dines, "Creation under Control," 7.

⁵³³ For example, Brueggemann states, "the task of 'dominion' does not have to do with exploitation and abuse. It has to do with securing the well-being of every other creature and bringing the promise of each to full fruition" (Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis* [IBC; Atlanta: John Knox, 1982], 32; cf. Wolde, "Facing the Earth," 27). Zobel argues that since humankind's rule is based on "being made in the image of God" it "must have positive consequences for the ruled" (Zobel, *TDOT* 13:335). Some argue that Noah's care for the animals in the ark is an expression, though unusual, of humanity's dominion duty to care for the animals (Koch, "Gestaltet die Erde, doch heget das Leben!," 34; Janowski, "Herrschaft über die Tiere," 193; cf. Neumann-Gorsolke, *Herrschen in den Grenzen der Schöpfung*, 246).

⁵³⁴ Stipp concludes, "Es bezeichnet eine Form der Domination, die ganz im Interesse der Herrschenden and nicht der Beherrschten praktiziert wird" (Stipp, "Dominium terrae," 136).

same kind or order and who may be viewed in their created state as potentially hostile. This is not the rule of a 'brother' but of a stranger."⁵³⁵

Lohfink argues for a distinct meaning of רדה in Gen 1:28 based on the use of Akkadian *redû* "accompany, lead" used "for driving and leading animals." Thus Lohfink concludes that humans "are to govern the animals, and that apparently is done by leading them to pasture, making use of them as beasts of burden, giving them commands to be obeyed, or, in other words: domesticating them."⁵³⁶ The difficulties with Lohfink's interpretation are twofold.⁵³⁷ First, רדה is not used this way elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible.⁵³⁸ Second, his appeal to Akkadian *redû* is less than convincing. *redû* has a wider range of meaning than just "accompany, lead;" and its royal uses are arguably more relevant to Hebrew רדה.⁵³⁹ Also, when it is used of animals, *redû* refers to the actual physical movement of them, especially pack animals, comparable to the movement of inanimate objects: "to drive animals, to drive wagons,

⁵³⁵ Bird, "Male and Female He Created Them," 154 n. 70.

⁵³⁶ Lohfink, *Theology of the Pentateuch*, 12. See also Koch who agrees with Lohfink in his earlier work but more recently argues against it (Koch, "Gestaltet die Erde, doch heget das Leben!," 31–36; Koch, *Imago Dei*, 43–44).

⁵³⁷ Another objection is that domesticated animals only make up a small portion of the animal world. How do humans rule over the non-domesticated ones? How do non-domesticated animals like most fish serve humans? For more on this question, see below.

⁵³⁸ Wöhrle, "dominium terrae," 174–175.

⁵³⁹ Janowski, "Herrschaft über die Tiere," 189.

boats."⁵⁴⁰ There are no clear examples of *redû* for the care or domestication of animals in general.

This survey has shown that כבש and רדה together describe humankind's unique position and duty. The former focuses on the pursuit of dominion over the animals and the latter on the exercise of that dominion.⁵⁴¹ They imply conflict and the use of force. Through these commands, God grants to humans the right to use animals for their purposes. The question then remains of whether humans may use animals for food.

Humans can derive many different benefits from animals. Their strength provides for transportation and traction; their by-products like milk and wool are used for food and coverings. And yet, what use of animals is more natural and well known than as a source of meat for food? What reason is there to say that the right to kill and eat would not fall within humankind's rule of the animals?⁵⁴²

Part of the issue is that it is common in the Hebrew Bible to find animal imagery being applied to the realm of humans, but the opposite is rather

⁵⁴⁰ "*redû*," *CAD*.

⁵⁴¹ Wöhrle, "dominium terrae," 176; Rütterswörden, *dominium terrae*, 103.

⁵⁴² In an anthropological study of meat in Western culture, Fiddes identifies a symbolic connection between the use of animals for food and dominion. He concludes that meat-eating "tangibly represents human control of the natural world. Consuming the muscle flesh of other highly evolved animals is a potent statement of our supreme power" (Nick Fiddes, *Meat, A Natural Symbol* [London; New York: Routledge, 1991], 2).

rare.⁵⁴³ Thus interpreters debate on what it means "to rule animals." To answer the question it must be kept in mind that ruling over animals is a metaphor like a king being a shepherd. The specifics of what shepherds do with their sheep or of what rulers do with their subjects are not the focus; the limits of a metaphor apply to both images.⁵⁴⁴ Thus if ruling implies benefits for the ruler, it seems reasonable to include the use of animals as a food source. Meat-eating can only be understood as a misuse of humankind's rule if they were commanded to be vegetarians.⁵⁴⁵

Throughout the history of interpretation, a number of commentators have wondered if humankind's rule included the right to eat meat. In the Talmud, objections are raised that seem to assume the right to kill and eat. In b. Sanh. 59b, questions are raised on how fish and birds could serve humans other than as food. The answer states that it is possible, although the two examples given are rightly called "far-fetched": driving a wagon with a goat

⁵⁴³ Rütterswörden, *dominium terrae*, 108 and 113–115.

⁵⁴⁴ In Jer 27:6 and 28:14 (cf. Dan 2), animals are given to the king of Babylon in parallel with people in order to serve him. The author does not need to specify that animals and people will serve the king differently; it is an obvious implication.

⁵⁴⁵ Sarna rightly emphasizes that humankind is not given power to mistreat animals, "to exploit nature banefully," but his idea of what is appropriate is driven by his interpretation of the text as portraying an original vegetarian state (Sarna, *Genesis = Be-Reshit*, 12–13). The same can be said for Janowski in his study of רדה. He helpfully notes that the violence in 6:11-13, which most likely includes violence towards animals, is an indication of the failure of humankind's rule. The problem is that his understanding of what constitutes violence towards animals is based on a vegetarian diet (Janowski, "Herrschaft über die Tiere," 194–196).

and a shibbuta (a type of fish), and threshing grain with geese or chickens.⁵⁴⁶ B. Sanh. 59b also notes that R. Judah b. Tema said that Adam ate meat roasted by the angels, a statement that seems to indicate that Adam or the angels could kill animals. The explanation given to explain the presence of the meat apart from animal death is that the meat fell from heaven. Saadya b. Joseph Gaon, a tenth century Jewish commentator, includes the right to eat animals in his extensive list of what humankind's rule entails.⁵⁴⁷ Likewise, Luzzatto argues that "the command 'Rule over the fish of the sea' is clear proof that the killing of animals is permitted, for how could man rule over the fish without their leaving the water and dying?"⁵⁴⁸

A number of commentators agree in general with the analysis of כבש and רדה given above, and yet still hold to the view that Gen 1:29-30 describes a time of primitive vegetarianism and animal peace. Some argue that there is tension in the text because of later additions. Kraetzschmar, followed by Gunkel, states that the language of humankind's rule over the animals would naturally include their use as a food source, "Was bleibt von dem freien Verfügungsrechte des Menschen über die Tiere, abgesehen von den

⁵⁴⁶ Yael Shemesh, "Vegetarian Ideology in Talmudic Literature and Traditional Biblical Exegesis," *RRJ* 9 (2006): 145.

⁵⁴⁷ See the quotation in Jeremy Cohen, *"Be Fertile and Increase, Fill the Earth and Master It": The Ancient and Medieval Career of a Biblical Text* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 184–186.

⁵⁴⁸ Luzzatto, *The Book of Genesis*, 27. Similarly Gill asserts, "what can this dominion over fish and fowl signify, unless it be a power to feed upon them?" (Gill, *An Exposition of the First Book of Moses Called Genesis*, 23).

Haustieren, übrig, wenn ihm verboten war, sie zu seiner Speise zu verwenden?" He thus sees a contradiction between verse 28 and 29-30 and argues that they are from different authors.⁵⁴⁹ Auld suggests that כַּבַּשׁ is a later addition to Gen 1:28 based on its occurrence in Josh 18:1, serving as the command for what had been completed. After noting the harshness of כַּבַּשׁ, he states, "If the opening chapter of the Bible did have the paradise myths in mind, then it is unlikely that *kbšh* was an original part of its text."⁵⁵⁰

Others acknowledge that the call to subdue does not fit well in a time of peace and suggest that it is in some way proleptic, reflecting a later time. Boersema asserts, "In my view there is a tension between the world in which the writer (P source) lived and the ideals he had. It is conceivable that Gen 1:26-28 is formulated more in terms of the *real* world than Gen 1:30, which clearly reflects an *ideal* world."⁵⁵¹ Sawyer argues that the commands to

⁵⁴⁹ Richard Kraetzschmar, *Die Bundesvorstellung im Alten Testament in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung untersucht und dargestellt* (Marburg, 1896), 193–194; Gunkel, *Genesis*, 165. Weippert reaches similar conclusions, "Denn wie sollte dieses *dominium terrae* praktisch verwirklicht werden? Ich denke, daß hier ursprünglich die Tötung von Landtieren, Fischen und Vögeln zur Abwehr von Gefahr und zur Ernährung des Menschen in die »Schöpfungsordnung« eingebaut war und damit legitimiert wurde. Demgegenüber ist m.E. die göttliche Anordnung in V. 29A-30A, daß Mensch und Tier sich pflanzlicher Nahrung bedienen sollten, sekundär" (Manfred Weippert, "Tier und Mensch in einer menschenarum Welt: Zum sog. *dominium terrae* in Genesi 1," in *Ebenbild Gottes--Herrscher über die Welt: Studien zu Würde und Auftrag des Menschen* [ed. Hans-Peter Mathys; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1998], 54).

⁵⁵⁰ A. Graeme Auld, *Joshua Retold: Synoptic Perspectives* (OTS; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 66–68.

⁵⁵¹ Boersema, *The Torah and the Stoics on Humankind and Nature*, 72 n. 68. Similarly, Brett notes, "the imperative to 'subdue' the earth excludes a purely peaceful interpretation. Thus, the representation of even this utopian beginning is marked by a

subdue and rule refer to the world after "the curse of Adam in ch. 3," whereas Stipp argues for the state of hostility found after the flood.⁵⁵² Postell states that the real application is to Israel in Canaan: "The militaristic overtones of the creation mandate, therefore, make sense only when understood as the prototypical mandate to conquer the Promised Land."⁵⁵³

Beauchamp asserts that כבש and רדה are used paradoxically in Gen 1:28. He notes the violent nature they have in most contexts, but asserts that they are softened in Gen 1 through the vegetarian diet of 1:29.⁵⁵⁴ However, the vegetarian diet, according to Beauchamp, is not primarily about what humans were to eat. Instead, Beauchamp argues that the human-animal relationship in Gen 1 and 9 is metaphoric of the human-human relationship. Thus humanity's original vegetarian diet plays an essential role in depicting the ideal, peaceful human society, which is in contrast to the present state of war depicted in Gen 9.⁵⁵⁵ While Beauchamp's metaphoric interpretation is

significant tension, which probably betrays the realities of daily experience in the ancient world" (Mark G. Brett, "Earthing the Human in Genesis 1-3," in *The Earth Story in Genesis* [ed. Norman C. Habel and Shirley Wurst; EB2; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000], 78).

⁵⁵² Sawyer, "The Image of God, the Wisdom of Serpents and the Knowledge of Good and Evil," 64 and 70; Stipp, "Dominium terrae," 137–140.

⁵⁵³ Seth D. Postell, *Adam as Israel: Genesis 1-3 as the Introduction to the Torah and Tanakh* (Eugene, Or.: Pickwick Publications, 2011), 102.

⁵⁵⁴ He states, "Ce sondage fait voir que le vocabulaire de conquête et de domination employé par Gn 1 reçoit de son contexte habituel une note de violence et qu'il est parfois associé au *prk* d'Ex 1. Gn 1 fait donc, en quelque sorte, un emploi paradoxal, et d'autant plus expressif, de *kvš* et *rdh*" (Beauchamp, "Création et fondation de la loi en Gn 1,1-2,4," 171).

⁵⁵⁵ Beauchamp, "Création et fondation de la loi en Gn 1,1-2,4," 41–42.

stimulating, it is unconvincing.⁵⁵⁶ More importantly, his interpretation of Gen 1:29 and Gen 9 will be questioned below.

Rüterswörden argues that in 1:28 these terms cannot have the coercive force seen elsewhere because of the vegetarianism commanded in 1:29-30. Instead, they reflect a new ideology of the king that developed during the Persian period during which Gen 1 was written. Based mainly on iconography, Rüterswörden notes that the Persians had a different view of the relationship between the king and the foreign lands. The nations were not forcibly pushed down under the foot of the conquering king as before, but they were willingly upholding him as a benevolent ruler. In the same way, 1:28 sets up humankind's rule as beneficial with the support of the animal world.⁵⁵⁷ In the end, however, the Persian evidence that Rüterswörden seeks to marshal for his thesis is not adequate to show that the terminology of 1:28 was used in as unique a way as he maintains.⁵⁵⁸ Many would also raise questions about his dating of P, a crucial element in his argument.⁵⁵⁹

⁵⁵⁶ Beauchamp defends his interpretation by arguing that the priestly tradition has a midrashic nature (Beauchamp, "Création et fondation de la loi en Gn 1,1-2,4," 164–165).

⁵⁵⁷ Rüterswörden, *dominium terrae*, 118–130.

⁵⁵⁸ Dwight R. Daniels, "review of Udo Rüterswörden, *dominium terrae: Studien zur Genese einer alttestamentlichen Vorstellung*," *CBQ* 58 (1996): 722–24.

⁵⁵⁹ For example see Richard Elliott Friedman, *The Exile and Biblical Narrative: The Formation of the Deuteronomistic and Priestly Works* (HSM 22; Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1981), 44–119; Gary A. Rendsburg, "Late Biblical Hebrew and the Date of 'P,'" *JANESCU* 12 (1980): 65–80; Ziony Zevit, "Converging Lines of Evidence Bearing on the Date of P," *ZAW* 94 (1982): 481–511; Avi Hurvitz, *A Linguistic Study of the Relationship Between the Priestly Source and the Book of Ezekiel: A New Approach to an Old Problem* (CahRB 20; Paris: J.

A few commentators argue that there was hostility between humans and animals, and yet humankind was still called to be vegetarian. Westermann argues for a more abstract understanding of *רדה* in 1:26 and 28. He bases his understanding of humankind's rule on the rule (*מושל*) of the heavenly bodies described in Gen 1:16-18. Since the sun, moon, and stars are inanimate objects in the Hebrew Bible and not gods as in the ANE, their rule must have a non-literal meaning. Westermann suggests ruling here refers to the way in which heavenly being are the dominant feature in the realm they rule, the sky, like "an elevation that dominates a landscape."⁵⁶⁰ In a similar manner, humans are created as the dominant living being, highest in the "hierarchical order." Westermann reasons that humankind's elevated position may have been for his protection from animals, "human's deadly enemy in the early stages of the human race."⁵⁶¹ However, it is questionable whether this comparison is helpful. In 1:16 both the rulers and the realms are inanimate, a substantially different situation from 1:28. Also, the rule of humankind is tied in context to the image of God, a notion entirely absent from 1:16-18.⁵⁶²

Gabalda, 1982); Risa Levitt Kohn, *A New Heart and a New Soul: Ezekiel, the Exile, and the Torah* (JSOTSup 358; London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 30–85 and 96–104.

⁵⁶⁰ Westermann, *Genesis*, 132.

⁵⁶¹ Westermann, *Genesis*, 159.

⁵⁶² Luzzatto addresses a student's question that is similar to Westermann's interpretation. The student suggested that humankind's ruling was just to prevent animals "from ruling over" and "harming" man, but Luzzatto responds by noting that *רדה* never has the meaning of "overpower" but always communicates "subjugation and authority to force others to one's will and pleasure" (Luzzatto, *The Book of Genesis*, 27).

Wöhrle also has a similar analysis of כבש and רדה, but then concludes that in 1:28 these verbs are not addressing how humans could use the animals. Instead, these commands were given to solve the problem of how humans and land animals would share the dry land. Humankind's call to subdue and rule the animals is really a call to gain control of the habitable land and thus create a human cultural realm. Wöhrle notes that this interpretation fits with the fact that humans are the only land dwelling creature to be blessed with filling the earth. Sea creatures are also blessed with filling but that is because they are not in competition with humans for living space; they are to fill the seas.⁵⁶³ The main problem with his understanding is that the fish are included as objects of רדה in 1:26 and 28 even though they are not in competition with humans for living space. Wöhrle admits this problem but provides no adequate solution.⁵⁶⁴

Neumann-Gorsolke argues that the primary purpose of the animal list is to establish the universal nature of humanity's rule. She notes that the list includes not only animals but their living-realms and that the focus of the list seems to be (especially in verse 28) on mentioning all the living-realms: sea (ים), sky (שָׁמַיִם), and earth (אֲרֶץ). Thus the object of humanity's ruling is not so

⁵⁶³ Wöhrle, "dominium terrae," 176–181.

⁵⁶⁴ Wöhrle suggests that the fish are included to show humankind's general supremacy and possible conflicts with the great sea creatures (Wöhrle, "dominium terrae," 179–180 n. 23). However, this suggestion destroys his whole paradigm by now ignoring the distinction between land and sea animals.

much the animals but the living-realms which they represent.⁵⁶⁵ Neumann-Gorsolke's emphasis on the universal nature of humanity's rule is helpful; however, her analysis ignores the fact that רדה refers to ruling over animate not inanimate objects. Examples of ruling over lands are best taken as metonymy for the people in the land. Therefore it is best to take the animals as the primary object of humanity's rule, as the 'subjects' that benefit humans in some way.

A few commentators understand humankind's forceful rule as directed against chaos or evil in the world. Möller interprets כבש and רדה as the way humans are to image God's *creatio ex tumulto*, in some way striving against forces opposed to God's order.⁵⁶⁶ Similarly, Schüle suggests that the strong terms כבש and רדה are used because in them humans are given the responsibility to maintain the stabilized created order which involves restraining the violence (חַמָּס) and evil (רַע) inherently present in all flesh that is especially revealed in the flood story. Their task is parallel to the lights in the heavens that rule (מוֹשֵׁל) in order to restrain the pre-creation, chaotic darkness. However, humans fail, and thus after the flood God steps in and replaces human rule by his laws, which is why the commands of כבש and רדה

⁵⁶⁵ Neumann-Gorsolke, *Herrschen in den Grenzen der Schöpfung*, 224–229.

⁵⁶⁶ Karl Möller, "Images of God and Creation in Genesis 1-2," in *A God of Faithfulness: Essays in Honour of J. Gordon McConville on His 60th Birthday* (ed. Jamie A. Grant, Alison Lo, and Gordon J. Wenham; New York: T & T Clark, 2011), 19–21.

are not repeated in Gen 9.⁵⁶⁷ While both Möller and Schüle helpfully recognize the presence of opposition, their interpretations fail to adequately explain the expressed objects of the verbs. It will also be argued below that the difference in language between Gen 1:28 and 9:2 is not as great as Schüle maintains.

Görg is more specific as he argues that the animals in Gen 1:28 represent the chaos present in the world and that humanity is called to rule over those forces and create order in the world - "Die Priesterschrift läßt den Menschen als Chaosbändiger 'auftreten.'"⁵⁶⁸ Görg's analysis is intriguing since animals are used elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible to symbolize desolation and danger. Nevertheless, the animal lists in Gen 1 and the related texts of Gen 6 and 9 certainly seems to refer to real animals, just as they refer to real plants, etc.

These commentators are all trying to explain what they perceive as some sort of tension in the text between the harsh verbs, subdue and rule, and the original, paradisiacal created order, especially its vegetarian character. However, it is better to question whether any tension is present in the text, whether subdue and rule is at odds with the granting of plants in verses 29-

⁵⁶⁷ Schüle, *Der Prolog der hebräischen Bibel*, 106–116.

⁵⁶⁸ M. Görg, "Alles hast du gelegt unter seine Füße. Beobachtungen zu Ps 8,7b im Vergleich mit Gen 1,28," in *Freude an der Weisung des Herrn: Beiträge zur Theologie der Psalmen: Festgabe zum 70. Geburtstag von Heinrich Gross* (ed. Ernst Haag and Frank-Lothar Hossfeld; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1986), 146. He bases his interpretation upon the depiction of animals in the ANE, especially Egypt, and his analysis of Ps 8.

30. It is the common understanding of the original created order as characterized by vegetarianism and animal peace that needs to be reexamined. The next step towards this conclusion is an examination of God's giving of plants.

Gen 1:29-30 establishes humankind's right to use vegetation for their benefit. The general meaning of these verses is quite simple: humans and animals are given vegetation as a food source. However, there are two debated issues that need to be addressed. First, which plants are given to humans and which ones are given to animals? Because of different interpretations of the structure, commentators have debated this issue. One's position can influence not only the interpretation of 1:29-30 but also 9:3. Second, do these verses imply an exclusively vegetarian diet for humans and animals, especially when read in conjunction with 1:28 and 9:3? To settle these issues, it is important to discuss first the structure of these verses and then how they are to be interpreted in context.

God's speech in verse 29 contains two independent clauses. He gives plants to humans and then states that they are appropriate for food.⁵⁶⁹ In contrast, the continuation of God's speech in verse 30 is not a complete

⁵⁶⁹ Andersen calls this structure "specifying apposition . . . the second clause makes explicit some detail lacking or present only in a general way in the first clause . . . specifies the purpose of the fruit and vegetables" (Andersen, *The Sentence in Biblical Hebrew*, 47). See the similar structure with the same verbs in Gen 9:13.

sentence by itself since it lacks a verb.⁵⁷⁰ Therefore, verse 30 must be dependent on verse 29. There are basically two possible interpretations.⁵⁷¹

The majority of commentators interpret verse 30 as an independent sentence with the main verb of verse 29, *נָתַתִּי*, implied.⁵⁷²

- 29 Behold I give to you
every seed-bearing plant which is upon the face of all the earth
and every tree which has in it fruit of a seed-bearing tree.
To you it will be for food.
- 30 And [I give] to every animal of the earth and to every bird of the sky
and to every moving thing upon the earth which has in it a living soul
every green plant for food.

Based on this structure, many commentators conclude that humans and animals are given different categories of vegetation.⁵⁷³

⁵⁷⁰ Grünwaldt argues that the simplest solution is that the verb *נָתַתִּי* dropped out before the final *נָתַתִּי* in verse 30 through haplography (Grünwaldt, "Wozu wir essen," 25). However, he does not explain why the author would change to the imperfect in verse 30. Overall, it is best to follow the universal textual evidence and assume that the verb of verse 30 is in ellipsis, a solution that Grünwaldt admits is possible.

⁵⁷¹ There is one textual issue in verse 30; however, it does not help solve the interpretive difficulties. Some MT manuscripts and LXX manuscripts have a conjunction (*καὶ*) before the *נָתַתִּי*, reading *וְנָתַתִּי כָל-יֶרֶק עֵשֶׂב לְאֹכְלָהּ*. Most likely it is not original. It may be an unintentional error caused by the list of animal categories preceding it, each beginning with the conjunction. Or it was added to link this category of plants with those in verse 29. The suggestions of Wevers concerning the possible meanings of this conjunction are grammatically questionable (John William Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Genesis* [SCS 35; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1993], 18).

⁵⁷² For example, see the RSV, NJPS, and Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Genesis*, 17–18. One variation of this understanding is to take verses 29–30 as one long sentence with *לְאֹכְלָהּ* as a parenthetical statement (Dillmann, *Genesis*, 86).

⁵⁷³ Dequeker points out the parallel structure in a hymn to Amon-Re that states "He who made herbage [for] the cattle, And the fruit tree for mankind" (translated by John A. Wilson, *ANET* 366 [cf. *COS* 1.25:39]; Dequeker, "Green Herbage and Trees Bearing Fruit,"

Another option is to take verse 30a as continuing verse 29 and 30b as an independent sentence with the main verb and indirect object of verse 29, *נָתַתִּי לָכֶם*, implied.⁵⁷⁴

29-30a Behold I give to you

every seed-bearing plant which is upon the face of all the earth
and every tree which has in it fruit of a seed-bearing tree.
To you it will be for food
and to every animal of the earth and to every bird of the sky
and to every moving thing upon the earth which has in it a living soul.

30b [I give to you] every green plant for food.

According to this understanding, humans and animals are explicitly given the same categories of vegetation.

Both of these interpretations are grammatically possible, but the latter is preferable for three reasons. First, the latter interpretation keeps the focus of verse 30 upon humans as would be expected in God's address to them. The animals are added as a side note, showing what they share with humans.

121; cf. Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, 34; Rad, *Genesis*, 61). Zenger equates the two different food allotments with two different "living areas" so that humans and animals would not be in tension, "Behind Gen 1:29-30 stands the experience that human beings and animals, as inhabitants of one and the same house of life, are in fact simultaneously partners and rivals; the assignment to different living spaces is the utopian alternative to that situation" (Karl Löning and Erich Zenger, *To Begin with, God Created . . . : Biblical Theologies of Creation* [Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2000], 114).

⁵⁷⁴ Rashi on Gen 1:29-30; Friedman, *Commentary on the Torah*, 13.

Second, the allusion to these verses in Gen 9:3 seems to assume the same material in ellipsis, "as (I give to you every) green plant."⁵⁷⁵

Third, the vegetation mentioned in verse 30 (יֵרֶק עֵשֶׂב) is best understood as a general category made up of the two types of vegetation mentioned in verse 29 (עֵץ and עֵשֶׂב).⁵⁷⁶ In Genesis 1:11 and 12, most commentators argue that הַשָּׂמַיִם is used as a general term for all vegetation which is then broken into the subcategories עֵץ and עֵשֶׂב.⁵⁷⁷ These two categories represent the full range of vegetation. The use of עֵץ and עֵשֶׂב in 1:29 is in parallel with their use in 1:11 and 12 and should be understood in the same way. Since verse 29 refers to the totality of vegetation, it would be odd to take verse 30 as introducing a new subdivision. Thus it is best to understand יֵרֶק עֵשֶׂב as a general term for all vegetation in parallel to the use of הַשָּׂמַיִם in verses 11 and 12.⁵⁷⁸

⁵⁷⁵ The argument here is using the majority interpretation of 9:3. Other interpretive attempts will be evaluated below.

⁵⁷⁶ This conclusion regarding the types of vegetation is not dependent on the proposed structure of verses 29-30 but strengthens it.

⁵⁷⁷ Bryan Paradise, "Food for Thought: The Septuagint Translation of Genesis 1.11-12," in *A Word in Season: Essays in Honour of William McKane* (ed. James D. Martin and Philip R. Davies; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986), 178–179.

⁵⁷⁸ The description of the vegetation destroyed by the plagues of hail and locust is also instructive. In Exodus 9:25 and 10:15 (both non-P), the combination of עֵץ and עֵשֶׂב is used in a similar manner to 1:29 as it designates the full range of vegetation destroyed. And similar to 1:30, יֵרֶק is used in Exodus 10:15 to designate a general category for vegetation which includes both עֵץ and עֵשֶׂב. Also, in both of these contexts a phrase containing עֵשֶׂב is used earlier as a general category describing what would be destroyed (9:22 הַשָּׂמַיִם and 10:12 הָאֲרֶזִים, both non-P). So it is not strange that in Genesis 1:29-30 עֵשֶׂב can be used in

This understanding is confirmed by the use of **יֵרֶק עֵשֶׂב** in Genesis 9:3 since it is used in the discussion of the diet of humans and not animals and is used alone as a reference to vegetation. The allusion in 9:3 does not make sense if **יֵרֶק עֵשֶׂב** is understood in 1:30 as the category of plants given only to animals. Why would the author allude to this category and not those in 1:29? Therefore, the most reasonable conclusion is that **יֵרֶק עֵשֶׂב** was given to humans in 1:30.⁵⁷⁹ Also, since it is the only category mentioned in 9:3, it seems best to understand it as a general category of vegetation that includes both those listed in 1:29.⁵⁸⁰

Based on these arguments, it is best to interpret 1:29-30 in light of the second structure presented above. Thus, 1:29-30 grants all vegetation to humans while also noting its use by animals for food. This conclusion accords with the variety of what humans and animals eat.

different combinations as both a specific category of vegetation and a reference to all vegetation. Note that **עֵשֶׂב** is also used as a designation for all vegetation in Deut 29:22 and Isa 42:15.

⁵⁷⁹ A few commentators on Genesis 9:3 try to maintain that **יֵרֶק עֵשֶׂב** is a distinct category, not previously given to humans (Dequeker, "Green Herbage and Trees Bearing Fruit," 126–127; Neumann-Gorsolke, *Herrschen in den Grenzen der Schöpfung*, 231–236 and 261–263; Luzzatto, *The Book of Genesis*, 93). Their theories will be discussed below.

⁵⁸⁰ Alfred Marx, *Les offrandes végétales dans l'Ancien Testament: du tribut d'hommage au repas eschatologique* (VTSup 57; Leiden; New York: Brill, 1994), 140. Most commentators who treat **יֵרֶק עֵשֶׂב** in 1:30 as a distinct category take it in 9:3 as a general category without argumentation. For example, Paradise states that in 1:30 **יֵרֶק עֵשֶׂב** "refers to that which animals use for food in distinction to the **עֵשֶׂב** bearing seed and the **עֵץ פֵּרִי** which man uses for food," but in 9:3 it "refers back to God's giving all the plants to man, including the seed-bearing and fruit-bearing ones" (Paradise, "Food for Thought," 181). There is no reason to take **יֵרֶק עֵשֶׂב** as having different meanings in these two interrelated passages.

Most commentators interpret 1:29-30 as implying that humans were only given vegetation for food and that in 9:3 they are then given meat to eat. Often it is argued that 1:29-30 acts as a restraint on what is granted in 1:28.⁵⁸¹ Nevertheless, the language used states only that all vegetation is allowable and does not imply some sort of exclusivity, a prohibition against other food.⁵⁸² The clearest parallel is Gen 9:3 where identical language is used in the provision of animals for food. However, it would be ridiculous to argue that this provision implies some sort of prohibition on vegetation. It is obvious in the context that vegetation is allowed even though it is not specifically given.

The provision of manna also provides a helpful example. In Exod 16:15, the people ask what the manna is and Moses responds,

הוא תִּלְחָם אֲשֶׁר נָתַן יְהוָה לָכֶם לֶאֱכֹלָהּ

It is the bread which Yahweh has given to you for food.

In the context it is clear that this provision of manna does not mean that they can only eat manna, especially since the provision of quail is described in the

⁵⁸¹ Turner states, "Read in isolation the command [to rule] might seem to give unlimited power to humans over the animal creation," but he then notes that 1:29-30 provides a context that "indicates a rigorous vegetarian diet not only for animals, but also for humans" (Turner, *Announcements of Plot in Genesis*, 42; cf. Rad, *Genesis*, 61; Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 1:58).

⁵⁸² Dequeker, "Green Herbage and Trees Bearing Fruit," 120; Kidner, *Genesis*, 52; Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, 54.

surrounding verses.⁵⁸³ Note also the use of נָתַתִּי for priestly allotments. The provision itself does not contain any notion of exclusivity. The focus is on what is being given.⁵⁸⁴ Likewise, the designation of something as לֶאֱכֹלָה, a food or fuel source, makes a pronouncement only about the particular item in the context and not about other potential sources.⁵⁸⁵

Some commentators recognize that 1:29-30 does not imply a prohibition, but they still argue for an original vegetarianism because only plants are explicitly designated as food.⁵⁸⁶ Jacob offers the suggestion that 1:29-30 leaves open the possibility of the provision of meat later; "Die Fleischgenuß wird den ersten Menschen nicht geradezu verboten, so daß die Tür zu späterer Gestattung offen bleibt. Die ausschließlich vegetarische Kost wird also nicht als eine unabänderliche göttliche Schöpfungsordnung hingestellt . . . Die Frage der Fleischnahrung bleibt also noch offen."⁵⁸⁷

It must be noted that there is an inconsistency in the reasoning of most of the above commentators. They argue Gen 1:29-30 excludes meat either

⁵⁸³ See also God's provision of his defeated enemies to the birds and beasts for food (נָתַתִּיךָ לְאֶכְלָה) in Ezek 29:5 and 39:4.

⁵⁸⁴ Lev 6:10 and Num 18:8-24.

⁵⁸⁵ Gen 1:29-30, 6:21, 9:3, Exod 16:15, Lev 11:39, 25:6, Jer 12:9, Ezek 15:4, 6, 21:37, 23:37, 29:5, 34:5, 8, 10, 35:12, and 39:4.

⁵⁸⁶ Westermann argues of 1:29-30, "An assignment or conveyance does not imply any prohibition; it is an action of the creator who is making provisions for his creatures" (Westermann, *Genesis*, 162). Nevertheless, he takes 1:29 as indicating "that dominion over the animals cannot mean killing them for food" (Westermann, *Genesis*, 159).

⁵⁸⁷ Jacob, *Das erste Buch der Tora - Genesis*, 62–63.

because of an implied prohibition or because it is not explicitly designated as food. However, they do not think the text excludes other non-vegetable, non-meat food sources such as bee's honey, milk products, and eggs that are likewise not explicitly designated as food.⁵⁸⁸ They appeal to the general nature of the passage to explain their omission.⁵⁸⁹ The question then remains why the omission of meat is significant and other omissions are not.

Commentators are correct to mention the general nature of these verses, but they ignore the way they are also specific: they are focused on plants. Verses 28-30 are best understood as relating humans to the various other realms of creation. They are not an exhaustive list of humankind's duties and rights but a general explanation of their relationship with the created world. Therefore, they are organized according to those realms and not according to humankind's needs. Humankind's authority over the animals is described in verse 28. Verses 29-30 then describe the relationship of humans with vegetation. The focus in verses 29-30 is not on everything humans can eat, but on establishing humankind's rights over the vegetation created on the

⁵⁸⁸ It could be added that humans are surely allowed to eat plants that grow in the water even though they are not mentioned.

⁵⁸⁹ Skinner comments on verses 29-30, "The statement is not exhaustive: no provision is made for fishes, nor is there any mention of the use of such victuals as milk, honey, etc." (Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, 34; cf. Driver, *The Book of Genesis*, 16–17; Dillmann, *Genesis*, 86–87).

third day. Thus there is no reason to expect verses 29-30 to list meat among the appropriate foods.⁵⁹⁰

Here it is helpful to notice that fish are not mentioned in verse 30. Why is that? Most likely fish are not mentioned because the plants described are those that grow on land, as described in day 3. Such an interpretation again highlights the nature of these verses. It shows that the focus is not on what every animal will eat, for nothing is allotted to the fish. Instead, verses 29-30 relate one creation realm, land vegetation, to another, land animals.⁵⁹¹

⁵⁹⁰ Psalm 104:14-15 only mentions cultivated vegetation, wine, and oil as God's provisions for humans. Does that mean the Psalm depicts them as vegetarians? Levenson argues it does, taking it as a parallel with Gen 1 (Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 164 n. 16). However, the Psalm is not giving an extensive description of humankind's diet, but its main components. Note also that God is providing for carnivores (104:21), an interesting statement if it is a parallel to Gen 1.

A comparison with Egyptian texts is helpful. Two texts only list vegetation as humankind's food. Coffin Text 80, dating to the 1st Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom, mentions food provisions: "falcons living off birds, jackals off prowling, pigs off the highlands, hippopotami off the cultivation, men off grain, crocodiles off fish, fish off the waters in the Inundation" (translated by James P. Allen, *COS* 1.8:13; cf. 1.2:6). A Hymn to Amon-Re preserved from the 2nd Intermediate Period states, "He who made herbage [for] the cattle, And the fruit tree for mankind" (translated by John A. Wilson, *ANET* 366, cf. *COS* 1.25:39). In contrast, the Instruction of Merikare, which was probably written in the 1st Intermediate Period, lists meat: "Well tended is mankind - god's cattle, He made sky and earth for their sake, He subdued the water monster, He made breath for their noses to live. They are his images, who came from his body, He shines in the sky for their sake; He made for them plants and cattle, Fowl and fish to feed them" (translated by Miriam Lichtheim, *COS* 1.35:65). Do those differences mean that there were conflicting beliefs or that the texts just had different purposes? The latter seems like the better option (cf. Dequeker, "Green Herbage and Trees Bearing Fruit," 120–121).

⁵⁹¹ Kidner argues, "The assigning of *every green plant for food* (RSV) to all creatures must not be pressed to mean that all were once herbivorous, any more than to mean that all plants were equally edible to all" (Kidner, *Genesis*, 52).

The different terminology used for humankind's relationship with the animals and plants does not imply that animals cannot be used as a food source. Instead, the terminology reflects the differences between animals and plants. The metaphor of dominion, to subdue and rule, is better suited for humankind's relationship with animals than with vegetation.⁵⁹² Animals can be captured and tamed; they must be cared for and guarded against. Also the notion of ruling fits well with the variety of ways in which humans use animals.⁵⁹³ Vegetation can also be used in a variety of ways, but its primary role is that of nutrition.⁵⁹⁴ Meat, on the other hand, is a luxury and was not an everyday part of the diet in Israel or elsewhere in the ANE.⁵⁹⁵

⁵⁹² For this to be consistent, it is necessary to follow the Syriac in verse 26 and read *אֶת־תַּיִת הָאָרֶץ* so that only animals are the object of the verb *רדה* (cf. Ronald S. Hendel, *The Text of Genesis 1-11: Textual Studies and Critical Edition* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1998], 122). Westermann states, "In the thinking and language of P and of the Old Testament dominion can be exercised only over what is a living being. The relationship to plant life is different as vv. 29-30 show; a relationship to metals or to chemical substances could not be called 'dominion'" (Westermann, *Genesis*, 159). Similarly, Zenger distinguishes between the granting of dominion and the granting of land. He argues that verses 29-30 are not "a further explanation of the character of human beings as the image of God, as if, having received hegemony over the animals, they are now to be given sovereignty over the world of plants as well. Genesis 1:29-30 is not simply the continuation of Gen 1:26-28, but introduces a new theme. This is indicated not only by the introductory formula of the discourse, but also the absence of the motifs from 1:29-30 in God's self-address (Gen 1:26)." Zenger states the Gen 1:29-30 is a "solemn formula of gift . . . Just as a royal ruler 'gives' his vassals olive groves, vineyards, and fields as a fief . . . so the creator God transfers the earth to the living creatures as *their* 'home'" (Löning and Zenger, *To Begin with, God Created . . .*, 113–114).

⁵⁹³ Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, 54–55.

⁵⁹⁴ Targum Pseudo-Jonathan adds in 1:29 that non-fruit trees were given for building and burning, *וּיִת כָּל אֵילָנֵי סָרְקָא לְצָרוּךְ בִּינְיָנָא וּלְאִסְקוּתָא*.

⁵⁹⁵ See Appendix 1.

The giving of plants for food does not by itself exclude other legitimate food sources, even other non-meat items such as bee's honey, milk products, and eggs. Instead what is proper must be determined from the greater context, especially verse 28. In light of the terminology used and its general nature, verse 28 seems to indicate that animals could be used for food. But this conclusion must be evaluated in light of another part of the greater context: Gen 9:1-7.

2. Genesis 9:1-7

The correlation between 1:28-30 and 9:1-7 is obvious. After the flood, Noah and his family are blessed as humans were at creation.⁵⁹⁶ It is a new beginning in parallel with chapter 1, and yet God's commands to Noah and his sons are not identical with those given in chapter 1. One of the key changes is the explicit granting of meat for food in verse 3. What do these changes indicate, especially for humankind's relationship with the animals? An analysis of this text will show that the relationship is not greatly altered. Instead, humankind's previously implied right to eat meat is stated explicitly to prepare for the prohibitions found in verses 4-6 which address the violence before the flood.

⁵⁹⁶ For a list of parallels between the creation and flood accounts, see John H. Sailhamer, *Introduction to Old Testament Theology: A Canonical Approach* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1995), 292–293.

The analysis will first focus on the relationship between the commands to subdue and rule in 1:28 and the mention of fear and dread in 9:2. Then Gen 9:3 will be examined, especially the comparison with plants. It will be shown how it relates to what comes before in 9:2 and prepares for what follows in 9:4-6.

Text:

1 וַיְבָרֵךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־נֹחַ וְאֶת־בָּנָיו וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם
פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלֵאוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ
2 וּמִוֵּרְאֹכֶם וְחִתְכֶם יִהְיֶה
עַל כָּל־חַיַּת הָאָרֶץ וְעַל כָּל־עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם
בְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר תִּרְמֹשׁ הָאָדָמָה וּבְכָל־דְּגֵי הַיָּם
בְּיַדְכֶם נִתְּנוּ
3 כָּל־דָּמָשׁ אֲשֶׁר הוּא־חַי לָכֶם יִהְיֶה לְאֹכְלָהּ
כַּיֵּרֶק עֵשֶׂב נִתְּחִי לָכֶם אֶת־כָּל
4 אֶדְ-בְּשָׂר בְּנִפְשׁוֹ דָּמוֹ לֹא תֹאכְלוּ
5 וְאֵד אֶת־דַּמְכֶם לְנַפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם אֲדַרְשׁ
מִיַּד כָּל־חַיָּה אֲדַרְשֶׁנּוּ
וּמִיַּד הָאָדָם מִיַּד אִישׁ אָחִיו אֲדַרְשׁ אֶת־נַפְשׁ הָאָדָם
6 שִׁפְךָ דָּם הָאָדָם בְּאָדָם דָּמוֹ יִשְׁפָךְ
כִּי בְצַלֵּם אֱלֹהִים עָשָׂה אֶת־הָאָדָם
7 וְאַתֶּם פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ שִׂרְצוּ בָאָרֶץ וּרְבוּ־בָהּ

Translation:

1 And God blessed Noah and his sons and he said to them,
"Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth,⁵⁹⁷
2 and your fear and your dread will be

⁵⁹⁷ The LXX in 9:1 adds *κατακυριεύσατε αὐτῆς*, the same form used in 1:28 to translate *וּכְבַשְׁתָּהּ*, and subdue it. Hendel erroneously retroverts this variant as *בה וררו* based on his reconstruction of 9:7 (Hendel, *The Text of Genesis 1-11*, 140). Most commentators rightly argue that the LXX is harmonizing with 1:28.

upon every animal of the earth and upon every bird of the sky
within⁵⁹⁸ everything with which the ground moves and within all the fish of
the sea.

Into your hand they are given.

3 Every moving thing which is alive will be to you for food;
like a green plant, I give to you everything.

4 But flesh with its life, its blood, you may not eat.

5 And also your blood belonging to your lives I will seek.

From the hand of any animal I will seek it and from the hand of man.

From the hand of each (concerning) his brother, I will seek the life of man.

6 The one who sheds the blood of man, by⁵⁹⁹ man will his blood be shed,

⁵⁹⁸ The reason for the change in preposition here from *על* to *ב* is not clear, although the *ב* is most likely an allusion back to 1:28b. Jacob argues that the preposition changes since the four elements are not one list but broken up into two contrasting groups based on location: earth and sky, ground and sea (Jacob, *Das erste Buch der Tora - Genesis*, 242). It is best to follow most translations and commentators by taking *ב* as in sequence with *על*, either used spatially (within, among) or circumstantially (together with). This interpretation keeps the animal list together as is usual in the context. Note that the LXX uses *ἐν* throughout.

The preposition change may be an indication of a clausal division. A division is supported by the fact that the MT does not have a conjunction before the first *ב* (though it appears in the LXX and some MT and Samaritan manuscripts) and that the major accent *athnach* precedes it. It is difficult, however, to understand how the two *ב* phrases would modify *נתנו* *בְּיַדְכֶם*. Neumann-Gorsolke opts for a *beth comitantiae* and translates, "mit allem, was sich auf dem Erdboden regt, und allen Fischen des Meeres sind sie in eure Verfügungsgewalt gegeben" (Neumann-Gorsolke, *Herrschen in den Grenzen der Schöpfung*, 250–251; cf. Dillmann, *Genesis*, 292). On this understanding the subject of the verb *נתנו* is actually the beast and bird of verse 2a. Alternatively, Weavers argues that both *תְּרֵמֶשֶׁת הָאָרֶץ* and *וּבְכָל־דְּגַי הַיָּם* "are nominals which semantically serve as the subject of *נתנו*" (Weavers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Genesis*, 113). He seems to be arguing for a *ב* of specification ("with regard to," "that is;" cf. *IBHS* 11.2.5e), which is a possibility.

⁵⁹⁹ Milgrom argues that the chiasmic structure of 6a-b indicates that *אדם* in both refers to the victim. Thus the *ב* is not indicating the agent (*IBHS* 11.2.5d) but is an example of "the *beth pretii*, meaning 'in exchange, for'" (Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 3; New York: Doubleday, 1991], 705). Lust notes that the LXX seems to be based on a similar understanding (Johan Lust, "'For Man Shall His Blood Be Shed': Gen 9:6 in Hebrew and in Greek," in *Tradition of the Text: Studies Offered to Dominique Barthélemy in Celebration of his 70th Birthday* [ed. Gerard J. Norton and Stephen Pisano; Fribourg, Switzerland: Universitätsverlag, 1991], 96–100; cf. Alexander Ernst, "'Wer Menschenblut vergießt . . .': Zur Übersetzung von באדם in Gen 9,6," *ZAW* 102 [1990]: 252–53; Markus Zehnder, "Cause or Value?: Problems in the Understanding of Gen 9,6a," *ZAW* 122

because in the image of God he made man.

7 And you, be fruitful and multiply, swarm in the earth and multiply in it.⁶⁰⁰

The blessing for fruitfulness in 9:1 corresponds word for word with 1:28. This statement is then repeated with some changes in verse 7. The enclosed verses 2-6 focus on humankind's relationship to the animals and one another, although in different language than in 1:28-30. Overall, the focus is on the propagation and protection of human life in light of the increased violence that led to the flood. Gen 9:2 and 5-6 focus on God's preservation of humans while Gen 9:3-4 focus on regulating the proper killing of animals. It is possible to structure the passage chiastically.

- A. Blessing for fruitfulness (1)
- B. Provision for humankind's dominion over animals (2)
- C. Provision to humankind of animals for food (3)
- C' Prohibition to humankind about animals for food (4)
- B' Prohibition protecting humankind from animals and humankind (5-6)
- A' Blessing for fruitfulness (7)

[2010]: 81–89). While Milgrom's interpretation is possible, the parallel structure does not have to be understood in that fashion.

⁶⁰⁰ In the MT of 9:7, the blessing of fruitfulness is given in two parallel statements of two verbs each instead of the three verbs in 9:1 and 1:28. The repetition of רבה in both statements is most likely original. The variants seen in the LXX are harmonizations with 1:28 and 9:1. The LXX reading, καὶ πληρώσατε τὴν γῆν, is most likely a harmonization with 1:28 and 9:1 where it renders וּמִלְאֵם אֶת-הָאָרֶץ and thus is not a translation of MT שְׂרַצְוּ בָּאָרֶץ (Hendel, *The Text of Genesis 1-11*, 92 and 140). A few LXX manuscripts read καὶ κατακυριεύσατε αὐτῆς instead of καὶ πληθύνεσθε ἐπ' αὐτῆς for MT וַיִּרְבוּ בָּהּ. This variant seems to give support to the popular reconstruction of this phrase as וַיִּרְדּוּ בָּהּ (Hendel, *The Text of Genesis 1-11*, 56–57). The problem is that κατακυριεύω is not used to translate רדה in 1:26 or 1:28 (although it does translate it in Pss 49:15, 72:8, and 110:2); instead, it translates כבש in 1:28a and also appears in LXX's harmonizing form of 9:1. Thus, in the LXX manuscripts containing καὶ κατακυριεύσατε αὐτῆς, 9:7 is identical to 1:28a and 9:1. Therefore, it is best to take this variant as a harmonization and not reflective of a different Hebrew text.

The commands to subdue and rule, כבש and רדה, are not repeated in Gen 9:1-7. Instead, new terminology is used in 9:2 to describe the relationship between humans and animals.⁶⁰¹ These sections are therefore parallel, and it is necessary to ask how the terminology differs and why it was changed.⁶⁰²

Commentators of various periods argue for continuity between 1:28 and 9:2, seeing 9:2 as a restoration of the dominion given to humans in 1:28.⁶⁰³ In contrast, many modern commentators interpret this language

⁶⁰¹ Some commentators argue that the renewed blessing of Gen 9 has no element that corresponds to כבש in 1:28; the idea of subduing the earth is omitted entirely. They argue that the language of 9:2 corresponds only to רדה since both deal explicitly with animals (Neumann-Gorsolke, *Herrschen in den Grenzen der Schöpfung*, 252). However, as was argued above, both כבש and רדה are related to humankind's relationship with animals.

⁶⁰² Mason states, "The phrase 'subdue and rule' (וירדו וכבשה) presented in Gen 1:28 is notably absent from the mandate here. Yet, this is precisely the subject of vv. 2-6 which details the authority structure of relationships on the earth; that is . . . the stipulations essentially detail how to subdue and rule the earth in the new post-flood era" (Steven D. Mason, *Eternal Covenant" in the Pentateuch: The Contours of an Elusive Phrase* [New York: T&T Clark International, 2008], 74).

⁶⁰³ Philo in looking at these verses says, "But has it not indeed been clearly shown through these words that he considers Noah, who became, as it were, the beginning of a second genesis of man, of equal honor with him who was first made in (his) image? And so he granted rule over earthly creatures in equal measure to the former and the latter" (QG 2.56, suppl. I:140-142 as quoted in Cohen, *Be Fertile and Increase, Fill the Earth and Master It*, 73). In Sir 17:4, portions of Gen 9:2 and 1:28 are combined when describing human creation, "He put the fear of him upon all flesh, and dominion over beasts and birds."

Most early Rabbinic interpreters understood these terms in a positive way, a reestablishment to some degree of the awe that the animals originally had for humans which had been lost (Gen. Rab. 34:12, b. Šabb. 151b and Kasher, *Encyclopedia of Biblical Interpretation*, 2:52–53). Similarly, Moses b. Jacob al-Balideh, a sixteenth century Jewish commentator, argues that "on account of the evil of the generation of the flood, [humans] had reverted to the state of the beasts of the field, and the blessing of Adam had been

change as an indication of a shift in the relations between humans and animals, from a time of peace to one of strife.⁶⁰⁴ For example, von Rad states, "The relationship of man to the animals no longer resembles that which was decreed in ch.1. The animal world lives in fear and terror of man."⁶⁰⁵

The words themselves do not suggest a change in humankind's dominion or his interactions with animals. As in 1:28, the terms used in 9:2 usually describe human interactions but are applied here to animals. The main

forfeited. Now, therefore, he again blessed them and increased the fear of them" (as quoted in Cohen, *Be Fertile and Increase, Fill the Earth and Master It*, 189).

Latter commentators, including recent ones, likewise emphasize the basic equivalence of the terminology (Calvin, *Genesis*, 1:290; Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 2:125; Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, 318; Batto, "The Divine Sovereign," 182; Wöhrle, "dominium terrae," 181; Stipp, "Dominium terrae," 137–140).

⁶⁰⁴ A few interpreters have understood the animals metaphorically. Mosis argues that the animals in 9:2 represent the chaotic and evil forces which endanger humankind, "Die Tierwelt, die die drei Bereiche der kosmischen Menschenwelt besiedelt, muß hier, wie auch anderswo im Alten Testament und im Alten Orient, die immer präsenten und nachsintflutlich aggressiv tätigen Mächte des Chaotischen und Bösen repräsentieren" (Rudolf Mosis, "Gen 9,1-7: Funktion und Bedeutung innerhalb der priesterschriftlichen Urgeschichte," *BZ* 38 [1994]: 223). Mason seizes upon the normal uses of these terms for human interaction to see in them an allusion to Israel's interactions with the nations, "This new post-flood relationship between humans and animals thus prefigures Israel's mandated relationship to its human, international enemies" (Mason, "*Eternal Covenant*" in the *Pentateuch*, 75). The difficulty with these interpretations is that the animals mentioned in 9:3-4 are clearly not being used metaphorically, although note that Mosis argues that 9:2 and 9:3-4 are independent of each other (Mosis, "Gen 9,1-7," 220–223).

⁶⁰⁵ Rad, *Genesis*, 131; cf. Bernd Janowski, "Die lebendige Statue Gottes: Zur Anthropologie der priesterlichen Urgeschichte," in *Gott und Mensch im Dialog: Festschrift für Otto Kaiser zum 80. Geburtstag* (ed. Markus Witte; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), 207–210; Mason, "*Eternal Covenant*" in the *Pentateuch*, 74; Wenham, *Genesis*, 192; John W. Rogerson, "The Creation Stories: Their Ecological Potential and Problems," in *Ecological Hermeneutics: Biblical, Historical and Theological Perspectives* (ed. David G. Horrell et al.; New York: T & T Clark, 2010), 26; William P. Brown, *Structure, Role, and Ideology in the Hebrew and Greek Texts of Genesis 1:1-2:3* (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1993), 80; Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Creation, Un-Creation, Re-Creation: A Discursive Commentary on Genesis 1-11* (London: T & T Clark, 2011), 145.

focus of מורא and תת and נתן ביד is on dominion, having power over another. As in 1:28, these terms imply that the one under such power is not submitting willingly but only through compulsion. The terms have less of a royal connotation than in 1:28, although it is still present.⁶⁰⁶

The combination of מורא and תת occurs only in 9:2, but similar formulations are found elsewhere. The only other occurrence of תת is in Job 41:25, in which the Leviathan, לַיָּתוֹן, is described as the one made without fear (תת). Its lack of fear is a consequence of the fact that nothing, not even humans, can subdue or rule over it. In conflicts, the weaker party is the one who has fear and dread upon (על) them. It can be used of people who have been conquered,⁶⁰⁷ are soon to be conquered,⁶⁰⁸ or are afraid of being conquered.⁶⁰⁹ A helpful example with מורא is seen in Deut 11:25. In a description of how Israel will successfully conquer the nations of Canaan if the Israelites obey, Moses says Yahweh will place Israel's dread (פחד) and fear (מורא) upon the surface of all the land (על-פני כל-הארץ), a metonymy for its

⁶⁰⁶ Westermann argues that 1:28 and 9:2 both use the language of the dominion of a king, "though the negative side of this dominion is presented in 9:2" (Westermann, *Genesis*, 462).

⁶⁰⁷ See the use of פחד in 2 Chr 14:13 and Esth 9:2.

⁶⁰⁸ See the use of תרא and פחד in Deut 2:25, פחד and מורא in Deut 11:25, and אימה in Josh 2:9.

⁶⁰⁹ See the use of פחד in I Chr 14:17, 2 Chr 17:10, and 20:29

inhabitants.⁶¹⁰ This statement is meant to give Israel assurance in the coming battle. On the other side, Israel in their conquests of the nations is not to fear (ירא) or dread (חתת), an attitude that would make them ineffectual in battle.⁶¹¹ These commands are given to encourage warriors and are often accompanied by promises, e.g., the enemy is given into your hand.⁶¹²

In the above examples, fear and dread are viewed positively if the "right" people are the object (and not the subject) of those emotions. But there are also many examples where it is proper for even the "right" people to fear someone else, especially God. Thus, the terms used have a range from the emotions of fear and dread to those of reverence and awe.⁶¹³ For example, in Isa 8:13 the people are commanded to make Yahweh their fear

⁶¹⁰ The other uses of מוֹרָא are not as relevant. It is used to refer in general to an attitude of fear or awe (Ps 9:21, Jer 32:21, Mic 1:6, 2:5), to fear-causing acts (Deut 4:34, 26:8, 34:12), and to fear-causing individuals (of God - Ps 76:12, Isa 8:13; others - Isa 8:12).

⁶¹¹ For examples as commands, see Deut 1:21, 31:8, Josh 8:1, 10:25. For an example when Israel did fall into fear and dread, see 1 Sam 17:11. Similar verbs are used as commands in Num 14:9, 21:34, Deut 1:29, 3:2, 3:22, 7:18, 21, 20:1, 3, 31:6, Josh 1:9, 10:8, and 11:6.

⁶¹² Edgar W. Conrad, *Fear Not Warrior: A Study of 'al tîrā' Pericopes in the Hebrew Scriptures* (BJS 75; Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1985), 34–35.

⁶¹³ This range is seen more in uses of the root ירא (H. F. Fuhs, "יָרָא," *TDOT* 6:290-314). Those from the root חתת always communicate fear and dread with the possible exception of Mal 2:5 (F. Maass, "חָתַת," *TDOT* 5:277-283).

(מורא) and dread (מעריון).⁶¹⁴ Note also the common phrase "the fear of Yahweh."⁶¹⁵

"To give into the hand" (נתן ביד) is a common phrase used to describe control over someone. It usually implies some use of force or compulsion. Often the control is that of an army in battle over its enemy or a people over a land or nation.⁶¹⁶ But it is also used of the control given to someone over flocks,⁶¹⁷ a household,⁶¹⁸ or prisoners.⁶¹⁹ Most instructive is the similar use of רדה and "to give into the hand" in the lists of curses for disobedience in Lev 26:17 and 26:25. They both describe the oppressive control of Israel's enemies over them and their lives.⁶²⁰ As with the rest of the terminology in 1:28 and 9:2, "to give into the hand" is viewed positively if the "right" people have the power.

The shift from imperatives in 1:28 to indicatives in 9:2 is important.

The language in both is drawn from the realm of a military conquest. The

⁶¹⁴ See also Ps 76:12 and Mal 1:6.

⁶¹⁵ The emotion of fear is still present to some extent even in these examples. Note that God's fear (יראה) upon the people restrains their sinning (Exod 20:20 [non-P], cf. Gen 20:11 [non-P]). Likewise, פחד of Yahweh upon the people induces them to follow Saul in 1 Sam 11:7.

⁶¹⁶ For examples, see Gen 14:20 (non-P), Exod 23:31 (non-P), Lev 26:25, Num 21:2 (non-P), 34 (non-P), Deut 1:27, 2:24, 30, 3:2, 3, 7:24, 20:13, 21:10, Josh 2:24, 6:2, 7:7, 8:1, 7, and 18. In Deut 19:12 it is used of the avenger of blood.

⁶¹⁷ Gen 30:35 (non-P), and 32:17 (non-P).

⁶¹⁸ Gen 39:4 (non-P), and 8 (non-P).

⁶¹⁹ Gen 39:22 (non-P).

⁶²⁰ See also Neh 9:28 where "into the hand" and רדה are used to describe the subjection of Israel.

former is the call to conquest while the latter is an oracle of success in the conquest.⁶²¹ The dominion that humankind was commanded to bring about in 1:28 is now promised to Noah and his sons in 9:2.

The terminology of 9:2 does not reflect a change in the level of dominion given to humans over the animals. Also it does not introduce an element of conflict that is not already seen in 1:28. Gen 9:2 reflects God's provision and promise in response to the violence on the earth. Since humankind's fear and dread are upon the animals and they are given into their hand, humans will be able to subdue and rule over the animals. This statement was given as a comfort and encouragement.⁶²²

The question remains of how 9:3 fits into this context. Most commentators assume that if humans are explicitly granted permission to eat meat for the first time in 9:3, then it must be something new. Also, they interpret the comparison with plants as containing a temporal element, indicating that plants were given at first and then animals later: "As (I previously gave you) green plants, I (now) give you all (animals)."

⁶²¹ Lohfink states, "The formulations 'fear and dread,' and 'to deliver into [someone's] hand' are part of the language of war. In the oracle that is reflected here the divinity gave the enemies 'into the power' of those making war on them, and in the battle itself the god took part and thus threw the enemies into 'fear and dread'" (Lohfink, *Theology of the Pentateuch*, 13). See also the more extensive survey in Gerhard von Rad, *Der Heilige Krieg im alten Israel* (Zürich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1951).

⁶²² See the similar conclusions in Neumann-Gorsolke, *Herrschen in den Grenzen der Schöpfung*, 256–258.

A close analysis of the text and its context indicates that 9:3 is not introducing a new right to eat meat; instead, it is making explicit what was implicit in 1:28 and 9:2. Humans always had the right to eat meat, but that right needed to be clarified in the "new world" after the flood because of the violence upon the earth. Also, the comparison with plants does not indicate the newness of the provision of meat, but its extent.

As was argued concerning 1:29-30, the provision of something for food only makes a positive statement. It does not imply a prohibition on what is not provided. Similarly, a provision does not imply that what is provided was previously prohibited. Thus the granting of meat in 9:3 does not by itself mean that humans were (or were supposed to be) vegetarian before then. Although the parallel is not exact, note that the provision of clean animals in Lev 11 does not mean that they were previously prohibited. Instead they are listed because of new legislation, as a needed part of the description of what was clean and unclean.

There are similar factors at work in Gen 9 as the provision of 9:3 is part of new legislation. In order to see this point, verse 3 must be viewed in its context. First, it should be interpreted as an implication of 9:2 and not a new subject. Second, it is an introduction for what follows in 9:4.

Genesis 9:3 should not be separated from 9:2.⁶²³ Most importantly, the end of 9:2 and the beginning of 9:3 parallel the two statements concerning plants in 1:29. Something is given (נתן) and then designated as food (לְאֹכֶלֶה).⁶²⁴ In 1:29, it is clear that these two statements are related, the latter making explicit something that is implicit in the former (i.e., the giving of plants means they can be used for food). Although the wording is not (exactly) identical, it seems best to understand the statements in 9:2-3 in the same manner. Thus, it is possible to understand 9:3 as providing an implication of the statement in 9:2 (i.e., the giving of animals means they can be used for food).⁶²⁵ But more importantly, since 9:2 is equivalent to 1:28 as argued above, 9:3 would then also be a clarifying statement of what is described in 1:28.⁶²⁶

⁶²³ Note that the same verbal pattern is used in both verses (נתן and היה), indicating a tie between them. Andersen states, "The piling up of four clauses in apposition has a cumulative effect in Ge 9²⁻³. The alternation of two pairs of identical verbs gives a sequence ABA¹B¹. The clauses become more and more and more specific" (Andersen, *The Sentence in Biblical Hebrew*, 56).

⁶²⁴ It is possible to extend the analysis by noting that both sequences end with a summary statement (involving עָשָׂב וְיֶרֶק), in 1:30 and 9:3 respectively.

⁶²⁵ Westermann argues that the giving of animals into humankind's hand means that "humans acquire power over the life of animals" (Westermann, *Genesis*, 462; cf. Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, 170). Note that he thinks this right is newly granted in Gen 9.

⁶²⁶ Fishbane is on the right track when he argues that what is given in 9:3 should be seen as under the "legal scope" of 1:28, but he does not go far enough since he views it as an extension of that legal scope and not an explication (Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, 318).

But why is the provision of meat made explicit here? If nothing has changed, why is the wording different? Structure again helps provide an answer. Even though 9:3 should not be separated from 9:2, it has an even tighter connection with 9:4. Together they form a dietary law similar in form to those in Leviticus; an entire class of animals is designated as proper for food (or as improper) with the following restrictive clause providing the exceptions.⁶²⁷ Thus 9:3 is a necessary (or at least formulaic) introduction to 9:4-6. Humankind's right to eat animals is stated more explicitly in 9:3 than in 1:28 because of the prohibitions that were going to be introduced.⁶²⁸ And these prohibitions were God's response to the violence of all flesh, clarifying the issue of power over life.

⁶²⁷ Lev 11:3-4 (cf. Deut 14:6-7), 20-21, and 35-36. The same structure occurs in the laws of redemption in Lev 27:26, 28 and Num 18:15. Andersen labels these forms as exclusive sentences in which "the lead clause states a general rule and the exclusive clause states a limiting exception, with negation. The conjunction in these instances is usually 'ak, and is equivalent to adversative *however*" (Andersen, *The Sentence in Biblical Hebrew*, 173).

⁶²⁸ Likewise, Luzzatto argues,

My opinion is that the permission to eat meat was included in the expression 'Rule over the fish of the sea,' etc.; for after Noah had been told (below, 9:2), 'And all of the beasts of the earth . . . will be frightened and terrified of you . . . [they] are given into your power,' he was told explicitly, 'Any living creeping thing will be yours to feed upon.' Adam [had already been given such permission but] did not have to be told so specifically, while Noah, because he had to be warned against the shedding of human blood, was first told that he was not forbidden to slaughter animals.

(Luzzatto, *The Book of Genesis*, 27). Abusch argues for a similar relationship between verses 3-6, although he understands verse 3 as the first granting of animals for food. He interprets the prohibition on blood "as a jumping-off point to assert something new . . . bloodshed and killing are forbidden" (Tzvi Abusch, "Biblical Accounts of Prehistory: Their Meaning and Formation," in *Bringing the Hidden to Light: The Process of Interpretation: Studies in Honor of Stephen A. Geller* [ed. Kathryn F. Kravitz and Diane M. Sharon; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2007], 12-13).

The reason for the flood given in Gen 6:11-13 is that all flesh, humans and animals,⁶²⁹ had corrupted their ways and filled the earth with violence (חַמְסָה). חַמְסָה can be used as a more general term for sin, but in Gen 6:11 and 13 it is best taken in its more specific use to describe acts of violence and oppression, especially the destruction of human life.⁶³⁰ Some commentators, based on their interpretation of an original vegetarian state, argue that חַמְסָה may also be referring to carnivorous acts by humans and animals.⁶³¹ Even without an original vegetarian state, it is possible that חַמְסָה in Gen 6:11 and 13 includes acts of violence and oppression done to animals.⁶³²

It is reasonable to assume that after the flood God would seek to change or clarify the interactions of humans and animals so that violence would be better controlled. This change or clarification is precisely what seems to be recorded in 9:1-7.⁶³³ Commentators who argue that verse 3 grants permission to eat meat for the first time are faced with the problem of explaining how that new right relates to the problem of violence.

⁶²⁹ In light of the other uses of כָּל-בְּשָׂר in Genesis, it is best to take it here as a reference to both animals and humans. However, see the discussion in Westermann, *Genesis*, 416.

⁶³⁰ Abusch, "Biblical Accounts of Prehistory," 415–416; Harland, *The Value of Human Life*, 32–40; cf. H. J. Stoebe, "חַמְסָה," *TLOT*, 1:437-439.

⁶³¹ Sarna, *Genesis = Be-Reshit*, 51; Harland, *The Value of Human Life*, 32 and 150; Propp, *Exodus 19-40*, 681.

⁶³² The killing and eating of animals does not preclude a condemnation of animal cruelty, the unnecessary infliction of pain and suffering.

⁶³³ Harland, *The Value of Human Life*, 38 and 153; Koch, *Imago Dei*, 55–57; Löning and Zenger, *To Begin with, God Created . . .*, 124–125.

Some argue that it is a positive development unrelated to the violence before the flood.⁶³⁴ For example, Firmage argues that humankind's right to eat meat represents an upward development, making them more like God; "in making this concession, God is giving up a portion of what had previously been his exclusive prerogative: the right to take life. God thus empowers humanity to act more like God himself."⁶³⁵ McEvenue states of 9:2-3, "God is increasing the blessing of Gen 1,28-30 by giving man a victory over animals, and giving him flesh as well as plants to eat."⁶³⁶

Among older Jewish and Christian interpreters, the permission to eat meat is often related to a change in humans or animals that is not directly connected with pre-flood violence. One argument is that animals became mortal because of Adam's sin and thus may be eaten, but only after the flood so as not to reward Adam for his sin.⁶³⁷ Some argue that humans grew

⁶³⁴ Older Jewish commentators teach that humans ascended mentally above animals after the flood and thus gained the right to eat lower creatures or that eating meat was a right or reward for Noah because of his labors in saving the animals from the flood (Shemesh, "Vegetarian Ideology in Talmudic Literature and Traditional Biblical Exegesis," 147; Ramban on Gen 1:29)

⁶³⁵ Firmage, "Genesis 1 and the Priestly Agenda," 102; cf. S. Dean McBride, "Divine Protocol: Genesis 1:1-2:3 as Prologue to the Pentateuch," in *God Who Creates: Essays in Honor of W. Sibley Towner* (ed. W. Sibley Towner, William P Brown, and S. Dean McBride; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2000), 21.

⁶³⁶ McEvenue, *The Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer*, 68.

⁶³⁷ Kasher, *Encyclopedia of Biblical Interpretation*, 2:54.

weaker and vegetation less nourishing after the flood or that humans became wasteful, and thus humans needed meat to survive.⁶³⁸

The majority of modern commentators, however, see the right to kill and eat animals as a somewhat surprising accommodation to humankind's violent nature. For example, Mason states that even though violence is the cause of the flood, "taking the life of other living things is, ironically, sanctioned in the post-flood context."⁶³⁹ A number of these commentators reason further that meat-eating has a negative connotation since it is an accommodation to human violence and not the original will of God.⁶⁴⁰ Cassuto argues that one function of the prohibition on blood in 9:4 is to serve "as a reminder that in truth all flesh should have been forbidden."⁶⁴¹

⁶³⁸ Shemesh, "Vegetarian Ideology in Talmudic Literature and Traditional Biblical Exegesis," 147; Louth and Conti, *Genesis 1-11*, 42.

⁶³⁹ Mason, "Eternal Covenant" in the Pentateuch, 79; cf. Koch, *Imago Dei*, 56; Westermann, *Genesis*, 463–464; Sarna, *Genesis = Be-Reshit*, 60; Christophe Nihan, *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch: A Study in the Composition of the Book of Leviticus* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 337; Propp, *Exodus 19-40*, 682; Harland, *The Value of Human Life*, 150; Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, 169.

⁶⁴⁰ Westermann, *Genesis*, 164; Rogerson, "The Creation Stories," 27; John W. Olley, "Mixed Blessings for Animals: The Contrasts of Genesis 9," in *The Earth Story in Genesis* (ed. Norman C. Habel and Shirley Wurst; EB 2; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 134; Nihan, *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch*, 235; Walter J. Houston, "Towards an Integrated Reading of the Dietary Laws of Leviticus," in *The Book of Leviticus: Composition and Reception* (ed. Rolf Rendtorff and Robert A. Kugler; Boston: Brill, 2003), 148.

⁶⁴¹ Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 2:126; cf. Boersema, *The Torah and the Stoics on Humankind and Nature*, 180. Marx states it more strongly, "Seul l'interdit de la consommation du sang rappellera que la vie animale, pas plus que la vie humaine, n'appartient aux humains, et donc que toute mise à mort d'un animal est un meurtre. Mais ce meurtre est désormais devenu légitime lorsqu'il est commis dans l'intention d'obtenir une nourriture" (Marx, *Les offrandes végétales dans l'Ancien Testament*, 142).

Nevertheless, modern commentators do offer some reasons for the provision of meat. A few suggest that it channels humankind's violent impulses onto animals rather than other humans.⁶⁴² Others suggest that it protects humans in some way from violence caused by animals.⁶⁴³ Abusch takes the provision of animals as a means of population control as in Mesopotamian accounts, although here for the animals.⁶⁴⁴ It is also suggested that the right to eat animals is granted to prepare for the Israelite sacrificial system that will maintain order.⁶⁴⁵

There is no need to find reasons for the introduction of eating meat in 9:3. Instead, it is better to take the restrictions in verses 4-6 as what is new.⁶⁴⁶ Humans before the flood had the right to eat meat, but restrictions were placed on that right in order to restrain violence. In Gen 1:28 the right to eat animals was implied, but in 9:3 it needs to be explicitly mentioned since God was modifying that portion of humankind's relations with animals.

⁶⁴² Marx, *Les offrandes végétales dans l'Ancien Testament*, 143; Robert Alter, *Genesis* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996), 38; Stephen Geller, *Sacred Enigmas: Literary Religion in the Hebrew Bible* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 77.

⁶⁴³ Mason, "Eternal Covenant" in the Pentateuch, 74; Lohfink, *Theology of the Pentateuch*, 168; Harland, *The Value of Human Life*, 150–151. However, note that most animals used for food are not a danger to humans.

⁶⁴⁴ Abusch, "Biblical Accounts of Prehistory," 13 and 15–16.

⁶⁴⁵ Rogerson, *Genesis 1-11*, 19; Jonathan Morgan, "Sacrifice in Leviticus: Eco-Friendly Ritual or Unholy Waste?," in *Ecological Hermeneutics: Biblical, Historical and Theological Perspectives* (ed. David G. Horrell et al.; New York: T & T Clark, 2010), 37–43.

⁶⁴⁶ It is possible that even 9:4-6 are not new but are clarifications of what was implicit earlier in the narrative. Some parts surely are. For example, the mention of the image of God in 9:6 is best understood as explaining why humans and animals are treated differently, why animal blood may be shed and humankind's may not. This reasoning is parallel to 1:26 where humankind's rule over the animals is connected to the divine image.

Nevertheless, if 9:3 is a clarification, what is the purpose for the comparison with plants? Doesn't it imply that meat-eating is new, that plants were given first in Gen 1 and meat later in Gen 9? Most commentators assume such a temporal element in verse 3: "As (I previously gave you) green plants, I (now) give you all (animals)." This assumption needs to be questioned.

A few commentators confront this majority opinion but with limited success. Luzzatto argues that *יֶרֶק עֵשֶׂב* is given to animals in 1:30 and not humans. Thus the comparison in 9:3 is not with something previously given to humans. He states, "The meaning of the phrase here is, 'Like the green vegetation that grows wild and serves as food for all the beasts of the earth and flying creatures of the heaven [above, 1:30], so all living things are given to you.'"⁶⁴⁷ While his reading is ingenious, there is no reason or need to assume such a lengthy ellipsis.

Dequeker also argues that *יֶרֶק עֵשֶׂב* is a category given to the animals and not humans in Genesis 1:30 and therefore cannot be the basis for a comparison in 9:3. Instead it is a new category of plants given along with the animals to humans. He states, "The meaning of verse 3 - which is intended to recapitulate the well structured verse 2 - is that all living beings, together with

⁶⁴⁷ Luzzatto, *The Book of Genesis*, 93.

their food, are given to mankind."⁶⁴⁸ He translates 9:3b as, "Together with the green herb I give you them all."⁶⁴⁹ Brown seeks to strengthen Dequeker's position by arguing for a כִּי of identity in verse 3.⁶⁵⁰ However, no function of כִּי justifies Dequeker's interpretation.⁶⁵¹

These commentators are on the right track in questioning a temporal element in the comparison in 9:3 even if their interpretation are not convincing, especially since they assume a previous division in the food

⁶⁴⁸ Dequeker, "Green Herbage and Trees Bearing Fruit," 127.

⁶⁴⁹ Dequeker, "Green Herbage and Trees Bearing Fruit," 126; cf. Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Genesis*, 114. Dequeker uses his interpretation of $\text{כִּי יִרְקַע עֵשֶׂב}$ as one argument against an original vegetarian diet of humans since it eliminates any possible temporal comparison in 9:3.

⁶⁵⁰ Brown agrees with Dequeker's interpretation of $\text{כִּי יִרְקַע עֵשֶׂב}$ but not with his overall arguments against an original vegetarian diet. Brown translates 9:3, "As well as the green plants I hereby give to you every one (i.e., creeping creature)" (Brown, *Structure, Role, and Ideology*, 79–80).

Neumann-Gorsolke argues that in 1:29–30 humans and animals were originally given separate vegetarian food sources in order to prevent any conflict between them. In 9:3 these borders are removed as humanity is given both animals and their food source (Neumann-Gorsolke, *Herrschen in den Grenzen der Schöpfung*, 231–236 and 261–263; cf. Albert de Pury, "Gemeinschaft und Differenz: Aspekt der Mensch-Tier-Beziehung im alten Israel," in *Gefährten und Feinde des Menschen: Das Tier in der Lebenswelt des alten Israel* [ed. Bernd Janowski, Uwe Gleßmer, and Ute Neumann-Gorsolke; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1993], 140). The problem is that she never explains how the comparison in 9:3 is compatible with her interpretation, although she seems to be following Dequeker's reading. She translates 9:3 as, "Alles, was sich reget, das lebendig ist: euch sei es zur Speise; wie das grüne Kraut habe ich euch alles gegeben" (Neumann-Gorsolke, *Herrschen in den Grenzen der Schöpfung*, 251).

⁶⁵¹ Dequeker does not provide a grammatical defense of his interpretation. He seems to be taking כִּי as functioning equivalent to the preposition עִם or אֶת . Brown's explanation is not sufficient. The כִּי of identity establishes a comparison in which the agreement between two things is viewed as complete in the context (*IBHS* 11.2.9b). To argue for a כִּי of identity, the object אֶת־כָּל would have to be understood as referring to both plants and animals, and a second comparison with animals (כִּי־יִרְקַע ?) would have to be assumed from the context. A loose translation would be, "I give to you everything, animals as well as green plants."

granted to humans and animals. The comparison in 9:3 is with the plants previously given to humans in 1:29-30, but the focus is not on when something is granted. Instead, the thrust of the comparison is to illustrate the extent of humankind's right to eat meat, that they could eat all animals, while also highlighting the prohibitions that follow. The form and wording of the comparison does not by itself indicate anything about when humans were allowed to eat meat. Any temporal element would have to come from contextual factors.

It is important to note the type of comparison made in 9:3 and its structure. *כִּי־יִרְקַע עֵשֶׂב* is being used to indicate agreement in manner, a construction in which the comparison is modifying the predicate. In contrast, agreement in kind directly compares two things with the point of comparison often expressed.⁶⁵² There are numerous laws that include a manner comparison.⁶⁵³

While it is grammatically possible to divide 9:3 in two ways, with *עֵשֶׂב* *כִּי־יִרְקַע* modifying either the first or second clause, most if not all commentators

⁶⁵² Note the differences between these examples of agreement in manner and kind: "Joshua is a prophet *in the manner* of Moses;" "Joshua is *like* Moses *as* a prophet" (*IBHS* 11.2.9b).

⁶⁵³ See for example Lev 4:26, 5:13, 6:10, 13:43, and 22:13. For a non-legal example see Gen 13:10 (non-P).

argue for the latter.⁶⁵⁴ A probable chiasmic structure, indicated by the fact that 9:3 begins and ends with כל, helps confirm that כִּירֶק עֵשֶׂב modifies the second clause.⁶⁵⁵ Nevertheless, these two clauses should not be understood as separate from each other. The comparison כִּירֶק עֵשֶׂב does modify the first clause, but in conjunction with the second clause. The author in 9:3 is making a comparison between the provision of animals and plants, but the exact point of the comparison is ambiguous when the comparison is attached directly to the first clause. Therefore a second clause was added with the comparison to indicate the focus of the comparison. A similar structure is seen in Lev 12:2. It states that when a woman gives birth to a son,

וְטִמְאָהָ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים כִּי־מִי נִדַּח דְּוֹתָהּ תִּטְמָא

Then she will be unclean for seven days; as in the days of the menstrual flow of her menstruation, she will be unclean.

⁶⁵⁴ One possible exception is Lohfink who translates 9:3, "Every living crawling thing shall provide food for you, no less than the foliage of plants. I give you everything" (Lohfink, *Great Themes from the Old Testament*, 180).

⁶⁵⁵ McEvenue, *The Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer*, 68; Martin Arneht, "Die noachistische Gebote (Genesis 9,1-7): Die Priesterschrift und das Gesetz in der Urgeschichte," in *Tora in der Hebräischen Bibel: Studien zur Redaktionsgeschichte und synchroner Logik diachroner Transformationen* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2007), 12. The structure can be diagrammed as following.

- A. כל phrase: כָּל־רֶמֶשׂ אֲשֶׁר הוּא־חַי
- B. indirect object: לָכֶם
- C. verb: יִהְיֶה
- D. prepositional phrase: לְאֹכְלָהּ
- D' prepositional phrase: כִּירֶק עֵשֶׂב
- C' verb: נִתְּחִי
- B' indirect object: לָכֶם
- A' כל phrase: אֶת־כָּל

Note that the comparison here would be ambiguous without the second clause, possibly modifying "being unclean," "seven days," or a combination of both. The second clause focuses the comparison on "being unclean." The woman who gave birth will be unclean in the same manner as when menstruating.⁶⁵⁶

In the same way, the second clause in Gen 9:3 focuses the comparison on the extent of humankind's right to use animals for food. If the author had only written, "Every moving thing which is alive will be to you for food as a green plant" (כָּל־רֶמֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר הוּא־חַי לָכֶם יִהְיֶה לְאֹכְלָהּ כִּי־רֶקֶת עֵשֶׂב), the comparison would be ambiguous. The point could be that just as plants are food so animals are food. By including the second clause, the author makes his comparison more precise. The comparison is emphasizing which animals may be eaten not the fact that they may be eaten - all animals as all plants.⁶⁵⁷

⁶⁵⁶ The ambiguous form of this comparison is found a few verses later in Lev 12:5.

וְטִמְאָה שְׁבַע־יָמִים כְּנִדְתָּהּ

Then she will be unclean for two weeks, as in her menstrual flow.

A similar comparison is made in Lev 15:25 for a woman with an extended flow of blood, although it is probably best to take it as agreement in kind.

כָּל־יְמֵי זֹב טִמְאָתָהּ כִּי־יָמֵי נִדְתָּהּ תִּהְיֶה טִמְאָה הִיא

All the days of the flow of her uncleanness (will be) as the days of her menstrual flow (in that) she will be unclean.

⁶⁵⁷ The author uses the generic אֶת־כָּל and not some form of the expected אֲשֶׁר הוּא־חַי because the reason for the second clause is not to make the comparison by itself but simply to indicate the point of the comparison: animals are as green plants in that all have been given.

The emphasis on כָּל in 9:3 indicates that the author is dealing with the question of which animals humans may eat.⁶⁵⁸ In an Israelite context with its clean and unclean distinction, the notion that all animals were permissible as food would not be assumed and even foreign. Therefore, the author uses an easily grasped comparison to aid in understanding. Just as there are no unclean plants, there were no unclean animals in the time of Noah; all could be eaten.⁶⁵⁹

The use of רֶמֶשׂ in the first half of the verse also reflects the author's concern to emphasize that every animal can be eaten. It is clear that רֶמֶשׂ is here being used as a generic for all animals. The difficulty is that elsewhere, especially in Genesis, רֶמֶשׂ is almost always used for a subset of land animals, a class of "lower," mainly unclean animals.⁶⁶⁰ The participle from the same root

⁶⁵⁸ Nihan, *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch*, 338.

⁶⁵⁹ Gill comments, "As every green herb was given for meat to Adam originally, without any exception, *Gen. 1:29-30*; so every living creature, without exception, was given to Noah and his sons for food" (Gill, *An Exposition of the First Book of Moses Called Genesis*, 154; cf. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, 55 and 254–255). Midrash T'hilim 146, 4 states, "Every animal which is unclean in this world will be declared clean in the Messianic era . . . That they were clean we learn from our text, *As the green herb have I given you all*: just as I permitted the green herb, so did I originally permit every beast and domestic animal to all" (as translated in Kasher, *Encyclopedia of Biblical Interpretation*, 2:55).

Despite this emphasis on כָּל both at the beginning and end of 9:3, some commentators still debate whether the clean and unclean distinction is assumed in these verses (Wenham, *Genesis*, 192–193; Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, 318 n. 3; Houston, "Towards an Integrated Reading of the Dietary Laws of Leviticus," 159–160).

⁶⁶⁰ רֶמֶשׂ is most often used to designate a class of land animal contrasted with בְּהֵמָה (Gen 6:7 [non-P], 20, 7:23 [non-P], 8:17, Ezek 8:10, 1 Kgs 5:13), חַיָּה (Gen 8:19, Ezek 38:20, Hos 2:20, cf. Gen 9:2) or both (Gen 1:24–26, 7:14, Ps 148:10; see also its use for sea creatures in Ps 104:25, Hab 1:14). שָׂרִיץ is used in a similar way (Gen 7:21, Lev 5:2, 11:29, 31,

shows a greater variety in its usage, even occurring in general references to all land animals and birds in Gen 7:21 and 8:19.⁶⁶¹ So it is possible to understand why רָמַשׁ is fitting as a generic for all animals, focusing on the common character of movement.⁶⁶² Yet, why is it used in this way only here, especially when there were other possible terms such as תְּיָה?⁶⁶³ Most likely, use of another term such as תְּיָה would have created confusion, since Israelite interpreters might assume that it was a more specific referent and thus did not include the "lower," unclean animals. By using רָמַשׁ the author chose a term associated with those "lower," unclean animals and thus emphasized their inclusion.

41-44). Both are consistently translated by ἐρπετόν in the LXX (except in Lev 5:2), including in 9:3 where it is clear that רָמַשׁ refers to all animals (Brayford, *Genesis*, 272). רָמַשׁ is not used in the dietary laws, but שָׂרִיץ as a category is declared unclean (Lev 11:41-44). Therefore רָמַשׁ would most likely also have an unclean connotation, as can be seen in its use in Ezek 8:10.

Most commentators don't comment on the use of רָמַשׁ in this verse. Skinner called the phrase, "an unusually vague definition of animal life. - Observe P's resolute ignoring of the distinction between clean and unclean animals" (Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, 170; cf. Friedman, *Commentary on the Torah*, 41-42).

⁶⁶¹ In Gen 7:21 it modifies בָּשָׂר and in 8:19 it is used independently. Elsewhere in Genesis it is used of sea creatures (modifying הַתְּיָה נִבְשָׁה הַתְּיָה, 1:21), a subset of land animals (modifying רָמַשׁ, 1:26, 7:14, 8:17; and independently, 1:30, 7:8, cf. 9:2), and land animals in general (modifying תְּיָה, 1:28).

⁶⁶² The etymology of רָמַשׁ is uncertain, but the root in the Hebrew Bible clearly denotes movement, often the more specific form of "scuttling on very short legs or wriggling like a snake" (R. E. Clements, "רָמַשׁ," *TDOT* 13:512).

⁶⁶³ Note that just two verses later כָּל־תְּיָה is used as a reference for any animal that kills a human. Compare with the use of תְּיָה for all the land animals in Gen 2:19 (non-P) or for all the animals in the ark in Gen 8:17. See also Lev 11:47, where תְּיָה is used for all animals in general, both clean and unclean.

It is possible that a manner comparison such as in 9:3 could contain a secondary temporal element. A word could explicitly mark for time or it could be implied from the context. A good example of both is found in the description of Aaron's sacrifice in Lev 9:15.

וַיִּקַּח אֶת־שְׂעִיר הַחַטָּאת אֲשֶׁר לָעֶם וַיִּשְׁחָטְהוּ וַיַּחַטְּאֵהוּ כְּרִאשׁוֹן

And he took the goat of the people's sin offering, and he slaughtered it, and he offered it as a sin offering like the first one.

It is clear that the focus of the comparison is on the manner of sacrifice, and yet it is also clear that the two sacrifices occurred at different times, the one before the other. This secondary temporal element in the comparison is made explicit through the use of רִאשׁוֹן and can also be clearly inferred from the broader narrative.

In 9:3, there are no temporal indicators that would make a time difference explicit, so the question comes down to context. But, as has been argued concerning 1:28-30 and 9:1-7, there is nothing in the context to indicate that plants were given as food earlier than animals, since the right to eat meat can be implied from 1:28. Therefore, there is no textual reason to assume a temporal element in the comparison with plants.

The description of humankind's right to eat meat in 9:3 introduces the prohibitions found in verses 4-6. These verses address the violence before the flood by more clearly defining the distinction between humans and animals. A

contrast between humans and animals may be seen in verses 3-4 in regard to the consumption of meat. In these verses humans are called on to eat animals in a way distinct from how animals eat meat. Verses 5-6 declare that human life is to be treated different from animal life. Animals may be killed, but there will be punishment for animals or humans that kill a human.

In 9:3, the modifying phrase *אֲשֶׁר הוּא־חַי* is unique in the lists of animals, although comparable to other phrases used to modify land animals and birds in Genesis.⁶⁶⁴ The majority of interpreters do not comment on this phrase, taking it as a general designation of an animal. A few, however, understand it as a prescription specifying that an animal needs to be alive when prepared for food and not found dead or torn (*נִבְלָה וְטֶרֶפָה*) as in the dietary laws.⁶⁶⁵ This phrase would thus contrast the diet of humans with that of scavengers.

The terse nature of this section as a whole makes this interpretation possible. The other uses of a relative clause of this form (i.e. *חַי* + pronoun + *אֲשֶׁר*) all designate the state of being alive.⁶⁶⁶ The parallel phrases used of

⁶⁶⁴ Compare with *חַיִּים בְּאַפְיֵי* (6:17, 7:15), and *אֲשֶׁר־בוּ רוּחַ חַיִּים* (1:30), and *אֲשֶׁר־בוּ נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה* (7:22 [non-P]).

⁶⁶⁵ Gill, *An Exposition of the First Book of Moses Called Genesis*, 154; Wenham, *Genesis*, 192; Harland, *The Value of Human Life*, 151; Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2001), 144; Neumann-Gorsolke, *Herrschen in den Grenzen der Schöpfung*, 261 n. 636. Jacob explains the clause as establishing a contrast to dead animals, but did not say it involved a prohibition (Jacob, *Das erste Buch der Tora - Genesis*, 242–243). For the dietary laws see Exod 22:30 (*טֶרֶפָה* only), Lev 7:24 (concerning the suet), 11:40 (*נִבְלָה* only), 17:15, 22:8, Deut 14:21 (*נִבְלָה* only), Ezek 4:14, and 44:31.

⁶⁶⁶ Deut 4:10, 12:1, 31:13, 1 Kgs 8:40 (= 2 Chr 6:31) and Qoh 4:2.

animals killed in the flood also focus on the state of being alive.⁶⁶⁷ The prohibition tied to it in 9:4 assumes that a living animal is in view. Thus it is at least possible to take the relative clause as adding a qualification on which animals could be eaten. But more importantly, it indicates that the focus of 9:3 is on the eating of meat that involves killing.⁶⁶⁸

The prohibition in 9:4 creates a separation between killing and eating. In contrast to the uncontrolled violence before the flood, the prohibition in 9:4 requires the controlled killing of animals through the making of distinctions.⁶⁶⁹ It is important to note that the prohibition is against eating flesh in a certain condition and not against ingesting blood in particular. The concern is to distinguish between *בֶּשָׂר* and *נֶפֶשׁ*. The one is permissible and the other is not, and blood is used as the way to distinguish between them.

Commentators have debated what exactly is prohibited in 9:4. Many assume that it requires the draining of blood as outlined in the laws in

⁶⁶⁷ *אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁמַת־רוּחַ חַיִּים בְּאַפָּיו* (7:22) and *אֲשֶׁר-בּוֹ רוּחַ חַיִּים* (6:17, 7:15).

⁶⁶⁸ Genesis 9:3 may not be concerned with the eating of meat found dead since the issue of eating flesh with life would not be a problem. The focus is on how to properly kill animals for food.

⁶⁶⁹ These same themes are more pronounced in later legislation, especially in Leviticus. Eilberg-Schwartz argues that uncontrollability is related to contamination in the Levitical laws. Thus, one of the key features of a sacrifice is its orderliness; "Sacrifice is the controllable spilling of blood" (Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, *The Savage in Judaism: An Anthropology of Israelite Religion and Ancient Judaism* [Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1990], 186–189; cf. Jonathan Klawans, "Pure Violence: Sacrifice and Defilement in Ancient Israel," *Harvard Theological Review* 94 [2001]: 144–145).

Leviticus and Deuteronomy.⁶⁷⁰ However, nothing is stated about how to handle the blood in 9:4. Jacob, followed by Westermann, helpfully illuminates the imagery by explaining that the prohibition is not against eating blood itself, but against eating flesh with life in it as seen in the still pulsating blood.⁶⁷¹ Similar is the Rabbinical interpretation that the prohibition refers to tearing off a limb (or meat) from a living animal to eat.⁶⁷² A helpful parallel is the use of *בֶּשֶׂר חַי* to designate an open sore.⁶⁷³ However, it may be too specific to say the prohibition is only against meat with warm blood still in it. Instead, meat with blood in it is raw, staying bloody until it is processed (cooked or dried) in some way. Thus it may be best to understand 9:4 as prohibiting the eating of raw, unprocessed meat. In other words, raw meat was not forbidden because of a blood prohibition, but the mention of blood is to prohibit the consumption of raw meat.

Many commentators seek to ground this prohibition in the fact that life belongs to God, and thus humans are to honor his ownership in some way by refraining from blood.⁶⁷⁴ However, it needs to be emphasized that 9:4 does

⁶⁷⁰ Sarna, *Genesis = Be-Reshit*, 61; Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 706; Wenham, *Genesis*, 193.

⁶⁷¹ Jacob, *Das erste Buch der Tora - Genesis*, 249–252; Westermann, *Genesis*, 464–465.

⁶⁷² R. Sanh. 57a. Rashi argues for a prohibition against eating either a limb or blood from a living animal (9:4).

⁶⁷³ Lev 13:10, 14, 15, and 16.

⁶⁷⁴ Mary Douglas, *Leviticus as Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 233; Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 706; Herbert Chanan Brichto, "On Slaughter and Sacrifice, Blood and

not contain a blood ritual; there are no commands on how to handle the blood, how to return the life to God.⁶⁷⁵ Also, why are animals allowed to eat flesh with blood? The focus of the prohibition is on humankind's relationship with their fellow creatures and not with God. Therefore, it is better to understand the prohibition as a division marker, between animals and humans, between nature and culture, and not as a way to honor God's ownership of all life.⁶⁷⁶

Atonement," *HUCA* 47 (1976): 21–22. Sarna asserts that "popular thought had it that one could renew or reinforce one's vitality through its absorption of blood. For this reason, blood played an important role in the cults of the dead in the ancient world" (Sarna, *Genesis = Be-Reshit*, 61). Blood is portrayed as enlivening the dead or gods of the underworld, but it does not seem to be used by the living to gain vitality (cf. Dennis J. McCarthy, "The Symbolism of Blood and Sacrifice," *JBL* 88 [1969]: 166–176; Dennis J. McCarthy, "Further Notes on the Symbolism of Blood and Sacrifice," *JBL* 92 [1973]: 205–210).

⁶⁷⁵ The requirement to pour out the blood (and cover it) in Lev 17 and Deut 12 are best understood as a polemic against the worship of chthonic deities (Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 3A; New York: Doubleday, 2000], 1483 and 1490–1493; cf. Jehoshua M. Grintz, "'Do Not Eat on the Blood': Reconsiderations in Setting and Dating of the Priestly Code," *ASTI* 8 [1972]: 78–90). In Lev 17:11, 'the use of blood for atonement' is given as an additional reason for the blood prohibition, beyond the equation of blood and life, and is not applicable in Gen 9:4. The parallel between blood and suet (חֵלֶב) helps to illustrate this point. Suet is prohibited for consumption since it is God's portion on the altar, but the prohibition applies, most likely, only to sacrificial animals (Baruch J. Schwartz, "'Profane' Slaughter and the Integrity of the Priestly Code," *HUCA* 67 [1996]: 30–31). In contrast, the blood of all animals is prohibited, indicating that the use of the blood of sacrificial animals is most likely not the only reason for the prohibition.

⁶⁷⁶ Nihan states that the prohibitions on "eating animal blood and killing other human beings . . . should be regarded as a kind of minimal requirement for the possibility of a civilized life" (Nihan, *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch*, 234). Fiddes notes the symbolism of cooking: "Raw meat, dripping blood, is what is eaten by wild, carnivorous animals, not by civilised humans. We position ourselves above animals in general by eating meat, and above other carnivores by cooking it. Raw meat is bestial and cooking sets us apart" (Fiddes, *Meat, A Natural Symbol*, 89).

Animals eat raw flesh. Most predators kill their prey and immediately begin to feed on the bloody meat. The prohibition in 9:4 makes humans different.⁶⁷⁷ They are required to introduce an intervening step, preparing the meat for consumption.⁶⁷⁸ Humans are to be characterized by culture and not nature.⁶⁷⁹ This control on humankind's eating of meat most likely also had the

⁶⁷⁷ Note that one of the criticisms of the Martu in Mesopotamian literature is that they eat uncooked meat (ETCSL 1.7.1 line 136).

⁶⁷⁸ Gill states,

the meaning is, that a creature designed for food should be properly killed, and its blood let out; that it should not be devoured alive, as by a beast of prey; that raw flesh should not be eaten, as since by cannibals, and might be by riotous flesh eaters, before the flood; for notwithstanding this law, as flesh without the blood might be eaten, so blood properly let out, and dressed, or mixed with other things, might be eaten, for aught this says to the contrary; but was not to be eaten with the flesh, though it might [be] separately - which was afterwards forbidden by another law [cf. *Deut. 15:23*]."

(Gill, *An Exposition of the First Book of Moses Called Genesis*, 155). Similarly, Vos notes, "Since the animals are not to devour man after a carnivorous fashion, man also is not to eat animals as wild beasts devour their living prey" (Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1948], 64).

⁶⁷⁹ The contrast these verses create between animals and humans is similar to the contrast between nature and culture, the raw and the cooked observed by Lévi-Strauss. He posits that cooking methods can also indicate the same distinction. Boiling is associated with culture and roasting with nature since boiling places a cultural object, the pot, between the meat and the fire and more thoroughly cooks the meat (Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Origin of Table Manners* [trans. John Weightman and Doreen Weightman; London: J. Cape, 1978], 477–495). Hendel argues that this contrast can be seen in the priestly laws of the Hebrew Bible. The priests (and most likely all the Israelites) are required to boil the meat of a sacrifice. In contrast, the sons of Eli commit a great sin by demanding raw meat to roast (1 Sam 2:15-17). He also notes that for אֶדְדָּהּ the lamb is to be roasted (Exod 12:9), creating a lasting contrast between "Egyptian captivity" and "Israelite culture" (Ronald S. Hendel, "Sacrifice as a Cultural System: The Ritual Symbolism of Exodus 24,3-8," *ZAW* 101 [1989]: 383–386). While not denying the nature-culture contrast elsewhere, Propp suggests that the symbolism of roasted meat may be parallel to that of unleavened cakes: purity. "Boiling and leavening both involve interpenetration of substances - broth and meat, yeast and dough - and both processes are associated with putrefaction . . . Unleavened cakes symbolize purity, and their analogue, roasted meat, is passed through fire, the ultimate purifier that sends

added goal of restraining brutality towards animals and even their fellow humans.⁶⁸⁰

Thus in 9:4 a normal practice of flesh-eating animals is prohibited from humans: eating a fresh kill. Humans were to eat only prepared meat. They are to be distinguished from the animals by how they eat.

The provision of animals as food in verses 3-4 also prepares for the prohibition on shedding human blood in verses 5-6. Genesis 9:5-6 highlights humankind's unique status.⁶⁸¹ Verse 5 is closely connected with verse 4, beginning with וְאֵלֶיךָ and containing the inverted pair of blood (דָּם) and life (נַפְשׁ).

sacrifices to heaven" (William H. C. Propp, *Exodus 1-18: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 2; New York: Doubleday, 1999], 440).

It is possible to see in the Israelite dietary laws concerning blood and unclean animals a heightening of these prohibitions. There are more restrictive proscriptions concerning blood, requiring that it be drained. Also, carnivores and scavengers are generally prohibited as unclean, creating even more separation between Israelites and flesh-eating animals (Ronald S. Hendel, "Table and Altar: The Anthropology of Food in the Priestly Torah," in *To Break Every Yoke: Essays in Honor of Marvin L. Chaney* [ed. Robert Coote and Norman K. Gottwald; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2007], 139).

⁶⁸⁰ Some commentators argue that restraining brutality towards animals had the ultimate goal of restraining it towards other men (Westermann, *Genesis*, 465). Others argue that restraining human violence is the primary role of ritual. Propp states, "many writers describe animal sacrifice, like the hunt and rites of passage, as discharging male aggression in ways beneficial to the group . . . The Priestly Writer himself holds such a view, advocating bloodless flesh eating as the solution to the general 'violence' (*hāmās*) that obtained before the Flood and brought on universal obliteration . . . Ritualized meat consumption . . . has the power to stabilize and even create society" (Propp, *Exodus 19-40*, 701).

⁶⁸¹ Carmichael argues that the Cain and Abel narrative highlights the same issue. Abel is allowed to kill animals from his flock but Cain is not allowed to kill his brother, "His is a confusion of the categories, men and animals" (Calum M. Carmichael, "The Paradise Myth: Interpreting without Jewish and Christian Spectacles," in *A Walk in the Garden: Biblical, Iconographical and Literary Images of Eden* [ed. Paul Morris and Deborah Sawyer; JSOTSup 136; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992], 57).

It functions as another restriction upon verse 3 while also contrasting with verse 4. In verse 4, God requires humans to distinguish between flesh and life when they eat animals, but there is no penalty for animal death. In verse 5, God declares that human death is different. Anyone or anything, animal or human, who kills a person will be held to account.⁶⁸² Unlike the prohibition concerning blood, a punishment and explanation are provided for the prohibition on murder. Verse 6 establishes the talionic principle of blood for blood in human death. It then goes on to state that the reason why the blood of humans may not be shed, even though the blood of animals may, is because humans are made in the image of God.⁶⁸³

⁶⁸² כָּל-חַיָּה is best taken here as a reference to all animals. Although it can be used in contrast with בְּהֵמָה to refer to wild animals, there is no reason to restrict it here. The inclusion of animals in the prohibition brings the focus on human death. It does not matter who has spilled blood, a hateful brother or a hungry animal; all human life is watched over by God. Animals are held as responsible as a human, especially since they are subservient to humans as indicated in 9:2. In two sets of Israelite laws, animals are killed for their actions. In Exod 21:28-32, an ox that kills someone is to be stoned, an execution method that explicitly distinguishes its death from normal slaughter or sacrifice (cf. Propp, *Exodus 19-40*, 233–234). In contrast, similar Mesopotamian laws do not seem to require the death of an ox who kills someone (Eshnunna ¶154-55, Hammurabi ¶251-252; cf. F. Charles Fensham, "Liability of Animals in Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Law," *JVSL* 14 [1988]: 87). In Lev 20:15-16, an animal that has intercourse with a man or woman is to be killed. The same language of punishment is used for humans and animals (cf. Fensham, "Liability of Animals in Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Law," 88). In similar Hittite laws, some animals are killed and some are not (¶199-200).

⁶⁸³ Two explanations have been given for the clause in 9:6, "because in the image of God he made man." Most commentators, as above, argue that it explains why human blood should not be shed and why its shedding must be punished so severely. Others have proposed that this clause explains why humans can carry out such a severe judgment as capital punishment (Brayford, *Genesis*, 273; Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, 44; Jeffrey H. Tigay, "The Image of God and the Flood: Some New Developments," in *Studies in Jewish Education and Judaica in Honor of Louis Newman* [ed. Alexander M. Shapiro and Cohen, Burton I.; New

In the prohibition on murder, the violence before the flood is most directly addressed. Verses 3-4 serve as a logical backdrop. They discuss legitimate killing, legitimate shedding of blood, to provide a contrast with humankind's unique status. Verses 5-6 also correspond with verse 2 as they assert, in another way, humankind's dominant position over the animals. And all of these verses are serving the greater thrust seen in 1 and 7, the fruitfulness of humans on the earth.

On the issue of original vegetarianism, Genesis 9:1-7 does not explicitly state or imply that animals were first allowed for food at that time. Thus it does not limit humankind's rule in 1:28, the ways in which humans may use animals. Meat-eating would seem to be allowable. The contrast between the giving of plants in 1:29-30 and the giving of animals in 9:3 can be explained by the purposes for each section. The former is relating vegetation to humans, not defining their food supply. The latter is regulating the violence seen before the flood, providing a clearer contrast between humans and animals.

York: KTAV Publishing House, 1984], 174). The latter explanation accords well with the connection between the divine image and ruling seen in Gen 1:26. However, Fishbane makes a compelling case that the rearrangement in 9:1-7 of earlier material from Gen 1 indicates that the author is using the image for a different function, to explain the prohibition on shedding human blood but not that of animals (Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, 320–321 and 424).

D. Eating Meat in Genesis 2-8 and Leviticus

Various passages before and immediately after the flood are relevant to the question of original vegetarianism. Likewise, original vegetarianism is influential in the interpretation of some laws in Leviticus. These are helpfully divided into two groups. First, in passages recognized as non-P, meat-eating is presumed before the flood. Second, commentators argue that some texts recognized as P in Genesis and Leviticus assume original vegetarianism.

There are no explicit examples of humans or animals eating meat before the flood. However, food is not a prominent subject in these narratives outside of Gen 2-3, and thus the lack is not surprising.⁶⁸⁴ There are narratives in which animals are killed and some that describe activities which usually include the eating of meat.⁶⁸⁵ An audience used to meat-eating would naturally assume its practice without an explicit statement to the contrary.

In Gen 3:21, God clothes the man and woman in garments of leather (פְּתִיחוֹת עוֹר). עוֹר is the word used for the skin of an animal and thus implies that an animal (or more than one) was killed to make these garments. Even though there is no implication that the flesh of the animals was eaten in this

⁶⁸⁴ The eating of the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and bad is the only recorded act of eating (Gen 3:6, non-P). Four passages in Gen 1-8 contain instructions from God to humankind about food: Gen 1:29-30, 2:16-17 (non-P), 3:17-19 (non-P), and 6:21.

⁶⁸⁵ It must be admitted that all of these stories are traditionally regarded as non-P. There are no P stories between the creation and flood to analyze.

instance,⁶⁸⁶ it demonstrates that animals could be killed to serve human needs.⁶⁸⁷

Genesis 4:2 states that Abel was a shepherd, רֹעֵה צֹאן, a strange but not wholly unimaginable occupation if he were a vegetarian.⁶⁸⁸ However, Abel brought an offering, מִנְחָה, from his flock which Yahweh regarded with favor.⁶⁸⁹ It is tempting to try and align his offering with the more specific descriptions of Israelite sacrifices, but it is not necessarily helpful.⁶⁹⁰ Nevertheless, it is clear that he did not offer the entire animal but the suet (חֶלֶב), the exclusive portion of God in Israelite sacrifices.⁶⁹¹ There is no mention of what Abel did with the meat, but it is natural to assume that Abel did what every later Israelite did: he ate it. God's regard for Abel's sacrifice indicates that killing an animal, at least for a sacrifice, was permissible.⁶⁹²

⁶⁸⁶ Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 1:171.

⁶⁸⁷ Marx, *Les offrandes végétales dans l'Ancien Testament*, 142.

⁶⁸⁸ A few commentators argue that he only used the byproducts of the flocks, not their meat (Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 1:203; Sarna, *Genesis = Be-Reshit*, 32).

⁶⁸⁹ Gen 4:2 and 4 (non-P). מִנְחָה is used here in the general sense of a gift or offering and not for a vegetable offering.

⁶⁹⁰ The laws concerning the first fruits and firstborn seem most parallel (Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, 104; Westermann, *Genesis*, 295).

⁶⁹¹ Lev 3:16 and 7:23-25. The ו in מִן חֶלֶב הַצֹּאן is explanatory, "from the firstborn of his flock, that is their suet" (GKC §154a n. 1b). It would make no sense to mention their suet if the whole animal were offered.

⁶⁹² Gunkel assumes that Abel partook of the offering and states that it is in tension with the P account in 1:29-30 (Gunkel, *Genesis*, 43; cf. John W. Rogerson, "Genesis 1-11," in *Genesis and Exodus* [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001], 48-49).

Abel was not the only one to keep animals. In 4:20 Jabal is said to be the father of all who live in tents and keep cattle, מִקְנֵה. He is given as the paradigm of what nomadic herders are like, and there is no indication that he did not use his cattle in the same ways as later herders, even eating them.

With regard to Noah and the flood, there are a couple elements that are relevant. First, Noah offered a sacrifice after the flood which was pleasing to God. His sacrifice is another indication that killing animals, at least for sacrifice, was viewed as legitimate.⁶⁹³ However, Noah most likely did not eat any part of these animals since his sacrifice is called an עֹלָה, a sacrifice in which the whole animal is burned.

Second, Noah is commanded to bring 7 pairs of every clean animal and (clean?) bird into the ark, and he then takes from all these clean animals and birds after the flood for his sacrifice.⁶⁹⁴ In the Hebrew Bible, the clean and unclean distinction in animals is used more often of dietary laws than sacrifices, especially since in Leviticus not all clean animals are appropriate for sacrifice.⁶⁹⁵ Thus the use of clean and unclean language may imply the practice of eating meat.⁶⁹⁶

⁶⁹³ Gen 8:20 (non-P).

⁶⁹⁴ Gen 7:2-3 (non-P). Note that the same language (הַבְּהֵמָה הַטְּהוֹרָה) is used in 7:8 which is usually recognized as P.

⁶⁹⁵ For example, some wild animals like the gazelle and deer could be eaten and thus are clean, but they are not mentioned among the sacrifices. However, note that Noah does

The killings and other practices mentioned above occur after the curses listed in Genesis 3.⁶⁹⁷ Did these curses fundamentally change the relationship between humans and animals?⁶⁹⁸ The curses contain no new rights for humans and no explicit permission to eat animals. Turner argues that the image of a man crushing a snake in Gen 3:15 (non-P) indicates a change;

sacrifice from all (כָּל) the clean animals in Gen 8:20. Luzzatto concludes that the number of animals fit for sacrifice was greater in Noah's day, "The animals that were then acceptable for sacrifice were the ones people were accustomed to eat" (Luzzatto, *The Book of Genesis*, 81).

'Clean' and 'unclean' are mentioned in food laws in Lev 11:4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 26, 27, 29, 31, 47, 20:25, Deut 14:8, 10, 11, 19, and 20. However note the use of 'unclean' for those animals that could not be sacrificed in Lev 27:11 and 27.

⁶⁹⁶ Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, 255.

⁶⁹⁷ Many commentators argue that Gen 2-3 portrays the man and woman as vegetarians based on the permission to eat from the trees of the garden and an assumed animal peace displayed in the naming of the animals. Neither reason is compelling without an assumption of original vegetarianism in Gen 1. See Sarna, *Genesis = Be-Reshit*, 21; Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, 58; Westermann, *Genesis*, 208; Pury, "Gemeinschaft und Differenz: Aspekt der Mensch-Tier-Beziehung im alten Israel," 134; Löning and Zenger, *To Begin with, God Created . . .*, 114; Izak Cornelius, "Paradise Motifs in the 'Eschatology' of the Minor Prophets and the Iconography of the Ancient Near East: The Concepts of Fertility, Water, Trees and 'Tierfreunden' and Gen 2-3," *JNSL* 14 (1988): 44; Hallo, *Origins*, 214; Marx, *Les offrandes végétales dans l'Ancien Testament*, 144; Dillmann, *Genesis*, 87; Robert Murray, *The Cosmic Covenant: Biblical Themes of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1992), 99–100. A few commentators argue that the non-P accounts differ from the P accounts in regard to the original diet of humans and animals. See Gunkel, *Genesis*, 43.

⁶⁹⁸ Later Jewish literature mentions changes to the animals after the man and the woman eat from the forbidden fruit. In Jub. 3:28, all the animals lose their ability to speak, "On that day the mouth of all the beasts and cattle and birds and whatever walked or moved was stopped from speaking because all of them used to speak with one another with one speech and one language" (translated by O. S. Wintermute, *OTP* 2:60). In Apoc. Mos. 10:1-12:2, a beast attacks Seth, and Eve questions why the beast dares to attack the image of God and does not remember its former subjection. It replies, "O Eve, neither your greed nor your weeping are due to us, but to you, since the rule of the beasts has happened because of you. How is it that your mouth was opened to eat from the tree concerning which God commanded you not to eat from it? Through this also our nature was changed" (11:1-3, translated by M. D. Johnson, *OTP* 2:275). It is also argued that animals became mortal because of Adam's sin and thus may be eaten, although not until Noah so as not to reward Adam (Kasher, *Encyclopedia of Biblical Interpretation*, 2:54).

there is now conflict in which humans have the power to kill.⁶⁹⁹ However, conflict does not need to be understood as new to make sense of the narrative, especially since the man was commanded to guard (שמר) the garden.⁷⁰⁰ Surely the man and woman should have been in conflict with the serpent earlier since it was questioning God's commands. Genesis 3:15 may reflect a new level of conflict, but there is no reason to understand it as the source of all conflict.

The ways in which animals are used in Gen 2-8 seems basically equivalent to those seen elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible.⁷⁰¹ Animal skins are used for clothing, flocks and herds are kept for livelihood, and various animal sacrifices are offered. There are not sufficient reasons to read these description differently. Thus they provide examples of meat-eating, at least implicitly, before the provision of meat in Gen 9:3, although from non-P texts.

⁶⁹⁹ Turner states, "an acknowledgement that human dominion will now entail superior death-dealing physical authority over the serpent is an intensification of human dominion over it and this amounts to a 'curse' upon the serpent, and a punishment for its attempt to reverse the divine order. Thus, 3.14-15 announces a decisive shift in human-animal relations. Conflict has replaced simple dominion, with the guarantee of victory going to the human side" (Turner, *Announcements of Plot in Genesis*, 45). See also Abusch, "Biblical Accounts of Prehistory," 9.

⁷⁰⁰ Gen 2:15 (non-P), cf. 3:24 (non-P). Luzzatto argues that the man had to guard it from "animals and wild beasts" (Luzzatto, *The Book of Genesis*, 39; cf. Ibn Ezra on 1:15). Gunkel writes, "Even Paradise must be worked and guarded. This element indicates that the author conceives of Paradise not as an absolutely perfect place, but only as a beautiful locale" (Gunkel, *Genesis*, 10).

⁷⁰¹ Based on the narratives before the flood, Calvin tentatively argues that humankind was always allowed to use animals for food (Calvin, *Genesis*, 1:291).

There are texts recognized as P, beyond Gen 1 and 9, that are interpreted as teaching original vegetarianism. Most important is the command for Noah to take a pair of every animal into the ark in Gen 6:19-20. The presence of only one pair is understood as assuming a vegetarian diet for humans and animals since the pair must be kept alive in the ark (e.g., not eaten) in order to repopulate the land after the flood. Westermann states, "The number of animals is one of the most notable differences between J (7:2) and P. This is conditioned by P's overall plan: in P there is no sacrifice after the exit from the ark. Nevertheless, 1:29f. still holds: it is forbidden to humans and animals to eat flesh. A pair of each kind therefore is enough to preserve the species."⁷⁰²

Two questions can be raised about this interpretation. First, those who argue for a contrast in the number of animals between P and non-P also argue that the primary reason for the difference is related to sacrifices: P does not have sacrifices until the tabernacle.⁷⁰³ The quote above from Westermann is a good example. The mention of vegetarianism is a secondary, tacked on

⁷⁰² Westermann, *Genesis*, 423.

⁷⁰³ Friedman writes, "The number of animals on the ark is seven pairs of pure and one pair of impure in Gen 7:2,3 (J); but it is only one pair of each, whether pure or impure, in 6:19-20; 7:8,9,15 (P). This fits with the fact that in J Noah will offer sacrifices at the end of the flood, so he needs more than two of each animal - or else his sacrifice would end a species. But in P, there are no sacrifices in the story until the establishment of the Tabernacle in Exodus 40, so two of each animal are sufficient" (Friedman, *The Bible with Sources Revealed*, 43).

reason in his understanding. The polemic against pre-Sinai sacrifice would be enough by itself to explain the different numbers of animals.

Second, God commands Noah in Gen 6:21 (P) to take onto the ark "from all food that is eaten" (מִכָּל-מֵאֲכָל אֲשֶׁר יֹאכֵל) for himself and the animals. The word for food, מֵאֲכָל, is very generic and is used elsewhere of meat.⁷⁰⁴ Therefore, there is no reason to assume that the provisions on the ark were only vegetarian. If the food that was eaten at that time included meat, then meat was loaded on board. In fact, these provisions could have included other live animals. Noah was commanded to take pairs of animals on the ark in order to preserve them alive (6:19-20). But that command does not prohibit Noah from taking other animals, his flocks and herds, as food for himself and the carnivorous animals.⁷⁰⁵

A couple of texts from Leviticus are also connected by commentators to original vegetarianism. Milgrom argues that the laws regarding slaughter and blood in Lev 17 reflect original vegetarianism since the shedding of animal blood requires expiation.⁷⁰⁶ He asserts that Lev 17:10-12 prohibits the eating

⁷⁰⁴ מֵאֲכָל refers to meat in 1 Kgs 10:5 (=2 Chr 9:4), 1 Chr 12:41, Ps 44:12, 74:14, and Dan 1:10; and to human corpses for the wild animals in Deut 28:26, Ps 79:2, Jer 7:33, 16:4, 19:7, and 34:20.

⁷⁰⁵ As mentioned above, some commentators argue that animals had become carnivorous before the flood and thus do not avoid the "problem" of how Noah fed and housed carnivores.

⁷⁰⁶ Note that many commentators, including Milgrom, argue that Lev 17 is part of H and thus differs in some ways from P.

(not drinking) of blood and so must be dealing with "the שלמים, the offering of well-being, the only sacrifice whose flesh is eaten by the lay worshipper."⁷⁰⁷

The problem is that Lev 17:11 grounds the prohibition in the use of blood to make expiation, and the שלמים is not used to make expiation. Milgrom solves the problem by first noting that Lev 17:3-4 teaches that an Israelite who slaughters a sacrificial animal away from the altar and not as שלמים is condemned with a capital offense.

דָּם יִחָשֵׁב לְאִישׁ הַהוּא דָּם שָׁפָךְ וְנִכְרַת הָאִישׁ הַהוּא מִקֶּרֶב עַמּוֹ

Blood will be reckoned to that man; blood he has shed; and that man will be cut off from the midst of his people.

Milgrom then connects these two laws. For an Israelite, the slaughter of a sacrificial animal is viewed as murder, the shedding of blood. However, if it is offered properly at the altar as a שלמים, the blood expiates and thus frees the offerer from the bloodguilt.⁷⁰⁸ Milgrom argues that the equation of animal slaughter with murder is based on the fact that according to Gen 1:28-30 humans were originally not allowed to kill and eat animals. In Lev 17, God is

⁷⁰⁷ Jacob Milgrom, "A Prolegomenon to Leviticus 17:11," *JBL* 90 (June 1971): 152–153.

⁷⁰⁸ Milgrom, "A Prolegomenon to Leviticus 17:11," 155; cf. Propp, *Exodus 19-40*, 682 and 696–697. Brichto comes to a similar conclusion through somewhat different argumentation. He interprets the כּ in Lev 17:11c as a *beth pretii* and thus translates, "for it is the blood which serves as *kōper*, compository payment, for the life [taken]." The blood is necessary to "settle the difference" for killing the animal (Brichto, "On Slaughter and Sacrifice, Blood and Atonement," 27–28). Most of the following criticisms of Milgrom also apply to Brichto.

holding Israel to a higher standard with reference to sacrificial animals than the general requirement to refrain from blood given in Gen 9:3-4.

A few questions can be raised with Milgrom's interpretation. First, Lev 17:10-12 applies not only to the lay Israelite, but also to the priest and stranger (גֵר) who partake of more than the שלמים. Also, it is questionable whether it is restricted just to sacrifices since it applies to any blood (כָּל־דָּם). Therefore, there is no reason to understand these verses as only applying to the שלמים.⁷⁰⁹ Instead, the lack of specificity indicates the general nature of these verses, both with reference to not eating blood and to making expiation.⁷¹⁰

Second, Lev 17:4 does not make a general pronouncement that slaughtering an animal makes one guilty of bloodguilt. Instead, the place of slaughter is the focus; it must be done at the tabernacle.⁷¹¹ Lev 17:5-7

⁷⁰⁹ William K. Gilders, *Blood Ritual in the Hebrew Bible: Meaning and Power* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 21–22.

⁷¹⁰ Rolf Rendtorff, "Another Prolegomenon to Leviticus 17:11," in *Pomegranates and Golden Bells: Studies in Biblical, Jewish, and Near Eastern Ritual, Law, and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom* (ed. David P. Wright, David Noel Freedman, and Avi Hurvitz; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 27.

⁷¹¹ Katz helpfully points out, "it is not the slaughter itself to which the text specifically attributes blood-guilt, but the failure to offer the animal as a *qorbān*" (Katz, "The Problems of Sacrifice in Ancient Cultures," 172 n. 62). Schwartz notes, "v. 4 proclaims killing an animal to be tantamount to murder only if it is done outside of the tabernacle; if performed inside the tabernacle it is a perfectly lawful act" (Baruch J. Schwartz, "The Prohibitions Concerning the 'Eating' of Blood in Leviticus 17," in *Priesthood and Cult in Ancient Israel* [Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991], 58). Gilders argues, based on Num 35:30-34, that in H no murder is expiable. Therefore, if slaughter of an animal by itself makes one guilty of bloodguilt, then even the

provides a perfectly plausible and clear explanation for the requirements of verses 3-4: to end the sacrifices to the שְׂעִירִים. Profane slaughter is a capital crime in order to eliminate false sacrifice, not because of the death of the animal.⁷¹²

Third, the imputation of bloodguilt in just one type of animal killing is dubious, especially since it is not marked more explicitly. The stranger (גֵּר) may kill a sacrificial animal away from the tabernacle without bloodguilt; hunters, both Israelite and non-Israelite, are not guilty of bloodguilt when they kill an animal;⁷¹³ and all non-שְׂלָמִים sacrifices do not make one guilty of bloodguilt.⁷¹⁴ Milgrom attempts to address these problem but never gives an

offerer at the tabernacle should be guilty of an non-expiable murder (Gilders, *Blood Ritual in the Hebrew Bible*, 164–166).

⁷¹² Gilders, *Blood Ritual in the Hebrew Bible*, 166; Schwartz, "Profane' Slaughter and the Integrity of the Priestly Code," 21–26. Note also that the priests would not receive their portion of the sacrifice if the people did not bring it to the tabernacle.

⁷¹³ Note that the prohibition on profane slaughter in Lev 17:3-4 is addressed only to Israelites. Those concerning hunting in verses 13-14 are address to all. Milgrom argues that these first two categories fall under the general allowances and restrictions given in Gen 9:3-4 (Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22*, 1476–1484).

⁷¹⁴ Schwartz argues that on Milgrom's theory all sacrifices should make the offerer guilty of bloodguilt (Schwartz, "The Prohibitions Concerning the 'Eating' of Blood in Leviticus 17," 58). Milgrom responds that only the שְׂלָמִים are for the benefit of the offerer. All the other sacrifices belong to God (Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22*, 1475). Note also Propp's speculation that the transfer of guilt from the offerer to the animal would make the animal liable to death and thus free the offerer from bloodguilt (Propp, *Exodus 19-40*, 701).

adequate reason why Israel is given this "additional safeguard" in just this one case.⁷¹⁵

Various authors argue that the Levitical laws on both sacrifice and diet are a movement back toward the vegetarian ideal of creation. For example, Nihan, relying on evidence from ancient Greece and modern anthropological studies, posits that for P there was a problem with the killing of domesticated animals but not of wild animals. The issue was partly addressed through sacrifice. For P, the first sacrifices are those commanded by God in Leviticus, and it is through them that the killing of domestic animals is made more legitimate since part is offered to God.

the implication of Lev 1-9 is that the revelation of the *tôrâ* of Lev 1-3 by Yahweh himself to the Israelites means that the latter are able not only to honor him appropriately but also, *simultaneously*, to compensate, at least partially, for the violence involved in putting to death domestic animals by offering these animals ritually. Israel, defined as the 'priestly nation' on earth and the one in charge of presenting the god of the universe with offerings, is thus simultaneously described in P as the nation in which a relationship between God, men and animals *superior* to that characterizing post-diluvian mankind prevails; as such, Israel is closer (although not equivalent!) to the original creation.⁷¹⁶

⁷¹⁵ Milgrom, "A Prolegomenon to Leviticus 17," 156. It should be noted that Milgrom anchors his non-substitutionary view of sacrifice on this reading of Lev 17 (Milgrom, "A Prolegomenon to Leviticus 17," 149; Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22*, 1477).

⁷¹⁶ Nihan, *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch*, 236–237; cf. Propp, *Exodus 19-40*, 695–698. In contrast, Katz argues that animals are treated no differently than any other substance used, like grain for bread or wood for a boat. Rituals involving animals are "not to absolve

Similarly, Nihan argues that the dietary laws of Lev 11 are a movement back toward a vegetarian ideal through the limiting of Israel's diet in contrast to the unrestricted nature of Gen 9:3.

Lev 11 introduces the requirement of a *differentiated* consumption of meat, as opposed to the undifferentiated consumption characterizing Gen 9. In this regard, the legislation of Lev 11 offers to Israel the possibility of an intermediate position between the - now impossible - vegetarian ideal of origins and the general permission of feeding from all living creatures.⁷¹⁷

While these arguments might be possible interpretations of the evidence if there was an original vegetarian ideal in Israel, they do not constitute positive evidence for such an ideal. The sacrificial system and dietary laws themselves, as described in Leviticus, do not indicate an original

humans beings from any imputed guilt, but to dissociate the object from its mundane context and achieve its assimilation to divine status" (Katz, "The Problems of Sacrifice in Ancient Cultures," 113).

⁷¹⁷ Nihan, *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch*, 338. Houston likewise argues for the dietary laws as a compromise solution, "This is clearly not the full harmony, free of violence or predation, envisioned primevally in Gen 1:26-30 or eschatologically in Isa 11:6-9, but it is an acceptable substitute" (Houston, "Towards an Integrated Reading of the Dietary Laws of Leviticus," 160). However, in contrast to Nihan, Houston suggests that the biblical authors thought that the dietary laws derived from universal norms and thus are assumed in Gen 9:3 (Houston, "Towards an Integrated Reading of the Dietary Laws of Leviticus," 159-160). Douglas argues that the classification of animals as unclean in Lev 11 is actually to protect those unclean animals, to make them off limits. Thus the law emphasizes the sanctity of life, even though the author could not go to the extreme of forbidding all animal killings because of the ancient traditions of sacrifice (Douglas, *Leviticus as Literature*, 134-175). Milgrom reasons that the dietary laws of Lev 11 and the requirement to sacrifice all domestic animals at the Tabernacle are ways to limit access to animal flesh in general and thereby to promote reverence for life (Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 733-736). Propp focuses on the prohibition on carnivores, "the few land animals licit to eat are all vegetarian . . . That is, while the carnivores and scavengers may continue their 'violence,' Israelites may not enjoy the fruits thereof" (Propp, *Exodus 19-40*, 682).

vegetarian state. Instead, authors argue for that state from Gen 1 and then give an interpretation of these laws as if they are a solution to that problem. However, the fact remains that the priestly laws required animal death and provided a steady supply of meat for the priests, both of which seem problematic for a group with a vegetarian ideal.⁷¹⁸

Passages in Gen 2-8 and Leviticus do not provide additional arguments for an original vegetarian state. Instead, the non-P passages seem to assume meat-eating before the flood. Also, possible explanations can also be given for the numbers of animals on the ark and what the carnivores would have eaten. Lastly, the cultural system described in Leviticus is built around the killing and eating of animals, even if it is highly regulated and ritualized.

⁷¹⁸ Stephen A. Reed, "Meat Eating and the Hebrew Bible," in *Problems in Biblical Theology: Essays in Honor of Rolf Knierim* (ed. Henry T. C. Sun et al.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1997), 290–291.

E. Isaiah 11:1-9 and 65:25

1. Isaiah 11:1-9

Isaiah 11:6-8 has had a significant influence on the interpretation of Gen 1:28-30. Many commentators, especially those dealing with Genesis, reason that the image of animals and humans at peace in Isa 11:6-8 originates in creation descriptions and thus makes explicit what is implicit in Gen 1:28-30.⁷¹⁹ Nevertheless, there is no consensus on the interpretation of Isa 11:6-8 or the source of its imagery. Instead commentators offer a wide variety of possible understandings - realistic, metaphoric, allegorical, or hyperbolic - and a number of origins for the description.

The present study of Isa 11:6-8 in its larger context of verses 1-9 will question any creation ties and offer a different solution. The focus of the imagery is not on a restored creation but the absence of divinely implemented curses. It is a portrayal of blessedness through the removal of the curse of devouring animals.⁷²⁰ However, in distinction from similar blessings elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, the animals themselves are not removed. Instead, in a

⁷¹⁹ See for example Jacob, *Das erste Buch der Tora - Genesis*, 62; Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 1:59; Westermann, *Genesis*, 164–165; Rogerson, "Genesis 1-11," 78–79. Such reasoning accords with the general rule that mythic allusions are often clearer in biblical poetry than in prose (cf. William H. C. Propp, *Water in the Wilderness: A Biblical Motif and Its Mythological Background* [HSM 30; Atlanta Ga.: Scholars Press, 1987], 2). This principle is not debated, just whether it is applicable to Isa 11 and Gen 1.

⁷²⁰ This terminology comes from the categorization of curses given in Delbert R. Hillers, *Treaty-Curses and the Old Testament Prophets* (BibOr 16; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1964), 54–56.

unique hyperbolic turn, the animals formerly feared by humans are described as domesticated, providing a poignant image of safety and security.

This study will first analyze the unity of Isa 11:1-9 and the relations between the parts. Then the imagery of verses 6-8 will be explored, including possible sources for the imagery. An examination of the function of verse 9 will follow. Finally, the parallel passage in Isa 65:25 will be studied for comparison.

Text:

1 וַיֵּצֵא חֶטֶר מִגִּזְעֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּנְצֵר מִשְׁרָשְׁוֹי יִפְרָה:⁷²¹
 2 וַנְּחַה עֲלֵיו רוּחַ יְהוָה רוּחַ חֲכָמָה וּבִינָה
 רוּחַ עֲצָה וְגִבּוֹרָה רוּחַ דַּעַת וַיִּרְאֵת יְהוָה:
 3 וַהֲרִיחוּ בִירְאֵת יְהוָה⁷²²
 וְלֹא-לְמַרְאֵה עֵינָיו יִשְׁפּוּט וְלֹא-לְמִשְׁמַע אָזְנוֹ יוֹכִיחַ:
 4 וְשָׁפַט בְּצַדֵּק דְּלִים וְהוֹכִיחַ בְּמִישׁוֹר לְעֵנְוֵי-אֶרֶץ
 וְהִכָּה-אֶרֶץ⁷²³ בְּשִׁבְטֵי פִּי וּבְרוּחַ שְׁפָתָיו יָמִית רָשָׁע:

⁷²¹ Based on the evidence of the versions, Wildberger suggests reading יפּרה as a better parallel to וַיֵּצֵא (Hans Wildberger, *Isaiah 1-12: A Commentary* [trans. Thomas H. Trapp; CC; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991], 461; cf. George Buchanan Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Isaiah: I-XXVII* [ICC; New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1912], 216). However, the MT makes sense as is, and the versions' changes may be stylistic.

⁷²² Many commentators argue that the repetition of 'fear of Yahweh' in 3a is problematic and suggest that 3a is a dittography from the end of 2, i.e., וַהֲרִיחוּ בִירְאֵת יְהוָה came from רוּחַ יְהוָה (דַּעַת) וַיִּרְאֵת יְהוָה (Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Isaiah: I-XXVII*, 221; Wildberger, *Isaiah 1-12*, 461). The Septuagint reads [καὶ] (Alexandrinus) ἐμπλήσει αὐτὸν πνεῦμα φόβου θεοῦ, which could reflect וַהֲרִיחוּ בִירְאֵת יְהוָה (cf. Ezek 24:13; Wildberger, *Isaiah 1-12*, 461). However this reconstruction does not fully match the LXX and fails to explain the form of the MT. De Sousa states that the LXX "is best seen as another example of an explanatory rendering" (Rodrigo Franklin de Sousa, *Eschatology and Messianism in LXX Isaiah 1-12* [New York: T & T Clark, 2010], 146). For a suggested rendering of the MT see the translation.

5 וְהָיָה צֶדֶק אֲזוּר מִתְנִיּוֹ וְהָאֱמוּנָה אֲזוּר חֲלָצִיו:

6 וְנָר זָאב עִם-כֶּבֶשׂ וְנֹמֵר עִם-גְּדֵי יִרְבֵּץ

וְעִגְלָה וְכַפִּיר יִמְרָאוּ.⁷²⁴ יַחְדָּו וְנָעַר קִטָּן נֶהֱג בָּם:

7 וּפָרָה וְדָב תִּרְעִינָה.⁷²⁶ יַחְדָּו יִרְבְּצוּ.⁷²⁵ יִלְדִיָּהֶן

וְאֲרִיָּה כִּבְקָר יֹאכַל-תְּבֹן.⁷²⁷

8 וְשַׁעֲשַׁע יוֹנֵק עַל-חֵר פֶּתֶן וְעַל מְאוּרֶת.⁷³⁰ צַפְעוֹנִי.⁷²⁹ נִמּוּל יָדָו הִדָּה:⁷²⁸

⁷²³ Many suggest emending the text to עֲרִץ (violent ones) as a better parallel to רָשָׁע (*BHS*, Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Isaiah: I-XXVII*, 218; Wildberger, *Isaiah 1-12*, 461). Nevertheless, all the textual evidence supports the MT, and אֲרִץ can be understood as metonymy for those opposing the king. It is also possible that the two objects in verse 4b are to be taken together as a reference to 'the wicked of the land.'

⁷²⁴ In place of MT (and probably also 4QIsa^c, frg. 6) and וּמְרִיא, 'and fatted calf', the Septuagint and 1QIsa^a both read a verb: βοσκηθήσονται (same as verse 7) and יִמְרוּ. Both could reflect a verbal form of מָרָא meaning 'to feed,' as proposed here. It would be the only occurrence of a verbal form of מָרָא, although there is cognate evidence to support it ("מָרָא," *HALOT*). Also note that the Septuagint lists three animals, καὶ μοσχάριον καὶ ταῦρος καὶ λέων = וְעִגְלָה וְפָר וְכַפִּיר, possibly through a corrupt dittography of וְכַפִּיר to וְפָר (cf. Sousa, *Eschatology and Messianism in LXX Isaiah 1-12*, 149 n. 34). Gitay provides a valiant if unconvincing defense of the MT by appeal to purposeful variation (Yehoshua Gitay, *Isaiah and His Audience: The Structure and Meaning of Isaiah 1-12* [SSN; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1991], 221).

⁷²⁵ Following MT (and 4QIsa^c, frg. 6) against 1QIsa^a and וּרְבִצוּ. Note that in the MT this colon is the only one in verses 6-8 (and verses 1-8 excluding verse 2) that does not begin with a ו conjunction. The Septuagint has καὶ ἅμα τὰ παιδία αὐτῶν ἔσονται, which might indicate a nominal clause in the Hebrew (Alexandrinus has the verb βοσκηθήσονται).

⁷²⁶ Since the root רעה is also used to describe the association or friendship of people, some have suggested taking it thus here, perhaps reading a Hithpael form as in Prov 22:24: הִתְרַעֲינָה (Wildberger, *Isaiah 1-12*, 462). Nevertheless, there is no need to emend the text since the idea of grazing fits the context. It is possible that the author is playing with both possible meanings (suggested by William H. C. Propp in private correspondence; cf. Shalom M. Paul, "Polysensuous Polyvalency in Poetic Parallelism," in *"Sha'arei Talmon": Studies in the Bible, Qumran, and the Ancient Near East Presented to Shemaryahu Talmon* [ed. Michael A. Fishbane, Emanuel Tov, and Weston W. Fields; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1992], 147–163).

⁷²⁷ The Septuagint reads καὶ λέων καὶ βουὸς ἅμα φάγονται ἄχυρα, 'and the lion and the ox together eat straw,' which most likely is a harmonization with the animal pairs mentioned earlier in these verses. Vaticanus, Lucian and the parallel in Isa 65:25 agree with the MT.

⁷²⁸ Repointing the verb as a participle הִדָּה in parallel to נֶהֱג in verse 6 (cf. the Septuagint). The MT has יָדָו הִדָּה, but the perfect is unexpected in context. Another possibility is to read an imperfect יִדָּה with 4QIsa^c in which the initial י was lost in the MT through haplography (of similarly shaped letters). The root הדָּה only appears here; however, the

9 לֹא־רָעוּ וְלֹא־יִשְׁחִיתוּ בְּכָל־הַר קְדָשִׁי
 כִּי־מִלְאָהּ⁷³¹ הָאָרֶץ דָּעה אֶת־יְהוָה כַּפְּנִים לַיָּם מִכִּסִּים:

Translation:

1. And a shoot will go out from the stump of Jesse, and a sprout from his root will be fruitful.
2. And upon him will rest the spirit of Yahweh, a spirit of wisdom and understanding
 a spirit of counsel and strength, a spirit of knowledge and the fear of Yahweh.
3. Therefore his smelling will be according to the fear of Yahweh.⁷³²

meaning seems clear from the cognate evidence ("הרה", *HALOT*). Reider suggests that the words have been incorrectly divided and proposes reading יַהֲרֶה, derived from Arabic dahdah, "'to roll or throw stones', perhaps 'play pebbles'" (Joseph Reider, "Etymological Studies in Biblical Hebrew," *VT* 2 [1952]: 115). Gray suggests יַהֲרֶה 'to trip about' (Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Isaiah: I-XXVII*, 221).

⁷²⁹ The plural is found in 1QIsa^a, 4QIsa^c, and the Septuagint.

⁷³⁰ Most commentators assume that מְאֹרֶת is related in some way to אֹרֶךְ 'light' and thus have difficulty rendering it in this verse. Based on the parallel with הַר and the Septuagint translation κοίτην, some interpret it as a 'light hole' which is a reference to the entrance of a snake's den (cf. Wildberger, *Isaiah 1-12*, 462). Others argue that it refers to some 'gleam' coming from the snake that attracts the child, possibly its eyes or skin (Archibald L. H. M. Wieringen, *The Implied Reader in Isaiah 6-12* [BIS 34; Leiden; Boston: Brill, 1998], 190). Another suggestion is emending the text to מְעַרַת 'cave' (Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Isaiah: I-XXVII*, 220). The present translation is based on the suggestion by Perles, followed by Wildberger, that relates מְאֹרֶת to Akkadian mûru, 'young animal.' Such an interpretation easily fits in this verse and corresponds well with the mention of other young animals in verses 6 and 7 (Felix Perles, "Übersehenes akkadisches Sprachgut im Alten Testament," *JSOR* 9 [1925]: 126–127; Wildberger, *Isaiah 1-12*, 461–462). This interpretation also makes the plural מְאֹרֶת found in 1QIsa^a understandable. Note that the Septuagint similarly refers to 'the young of asps' ἐπεσπύων ἀσπίων; however, it is probably a rendering of מְאֹרֶת since מְאֹרֶת is rendered by κοίτην and מְאֹרֶת is not otherwise translated.

⁷³¹ 1QIsa^a reads תְּמִלְאָהּ which seems to be a combination of the perfect and imperfect forms (cf. Wildberger, *Isaiah 1-12*, 462). The ת is probably secondary to match the other verbs in context or the Niphal imperfect in the parallel passage in Hab 2:14. It is best to stick with the MT and interpret it as a future perfect (Wildberger, *Isaiah 1-12*, 462).

⁷³² Most who follow the MT understand the king's smelling as a metaphor for what or whom he takes pleasure in (i.e., in his actions that accord with the fear of Yahweh or in people who act according to the fear of Yahweh, cf. RSV). In the context it is more likely that it refers to his judging (cf. NJPS), especially since two other senses are mentioned immediately afterward in the context of judging: seeing and hearing (cf. Ibn Ezra; Radak;

And not according to the appearance of his eyes will he judge, and not according to the hearing of his ears will he arbitrate.⁷³³

4. But he will judge with righteousness the poor, and he will arbitrate in fairness for the lowly of the land, and he will strike the land with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he will kill the wicked.⁷³⁴

5. And righteousness will be his waist cloth, and reliability, his hip cloth.⁷³⁵

6. And the wolf will sojourn with the lamb, and the leopard with the kid will lie down, and the calf and the lion will feed together. And the young boy will be leading them.

John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah* [trans. William Pringle; 4 vols.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1948], 1:376; Ian D. Ritchie, "The Nose Knows: Bodily Knowing in Isaiah 11:3," *JOT* 87 [March 2000]: 59–73; Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah* [OTL; Louisville, Kent.: Westminster John Knox, 2001], 103; Marjo C. A. Korpel, "The Messianic King: Isaiah 10:33–11:10," in *Enigmas and Images: Studies in Honor of Tryggve N. D. Mettinger* [ed. Göran Eidevall and Blaženka Scheuer; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2011], 149). Note also the use of באש 'to stink' as an idiom to describe someone who is hated by another (Gen 34:30, Exod 5:21, 1 Sam 13:4, 27:12, 2 Sam 10:6, 16:21, 1 Chr 19:6, and Prov 13:5; cf. Dan 6:15 [Aramaic]).

⁷³³ This phrasing does not mean that the king neglects his senses when judging, but that he is not led astray by his eyes or ears, either by deception or by favoritism (Wildberger, *Isaiah 1–12*, 475).

⁷³⁴ It is debated whether this verse asserts that the king's mere words accomplish his will or if they are metaphoric or metonymic for his judgments being carried out by normal means (Otto Kaiser, *Isaiah 1–12: A Commentary* [trans. R. A. Wilson; OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972], 159–160; Wildberger, *Isaiah 1–12*, 477–478). The clearly metaphoric nature of verse 5 argues for the latter. Similarly, Weinfeld takes the reference as "a royal decree," although he contrasts it with military means (Moshe Weinfeld, *Social Justice in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995], 50 and 63; Moshe Weinfeld, "Zion and Jerusalem as Religious and Political Capital: Ideology and Utopia," in *The Poet and the Historian: Essays in Literary and Historical Biblical Criticism* [ed. Richard Elliott Friedman; HSS 26; Chico, Calif: Scholars Press, 1983], 104).

⁷³⁵ אַזוֹרָה was the innermost garment worn around the waist ("אַזוֹרָה," *HALOT*). It is probably best understood as a usual part of a man's attire (cf. 2 Kgs 1:8, Isa 5:27, Jer 13:1). Thus the image may be of righteousness and faithfulness most intimately and essentially bound to the king (Wildberger, *Isaiah 1–12*, 240 and 478). Alternatively, the אַזוֹרָה would have been used to 'gird up one's loins' in preparation for some undertaking, often battle (cf. Job 38:3, Jer 1:17). Therefore the image may indicate that the king's undertakings will be "undertaken in *righteousness* and *faithfulness*" (Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Isaiah: I–XXVII*, 218).

7. And the cow and the bear will graze, together their young will lie down.
And the lion as the ox will eat straw.
8. And the suckling will play by the hole of the cobra, and upon the young of
the viper the weaned will stretch his hand.
9. They will not harm and they will not destroy on all my holy mountain
because the earth will have been filled with the knowledge of Yahweh as the
waters cover the sea.⁷³⁶

To properly interpret verses 6-8, it is necessary to discern their connection with verses 1-5 and, to a lesser extent, verse 9.⁷³⁷ The question of how verses 1-9 fit into their context is debated but less important. For example, some argue that 10:33-34 provides the backdrop for 11:1, depicting either the felling/humbling of the Davidic dynasty before its restoration⁷³⁸ or

⁷³⁶ The ה is here an indicator of the accusative (Joüon §125k).

⁷³⁷ The authorship of this passage will not be debated here. Opinions include the 8th century prophet Isaiah (Wildberger, *Isaiah 1-12*, 466–469; Dan P. Cole, "Archaeology and the Messiah Oracles of Isaiah 9 and 11," in *Scripture and Other Artifacts: Essays on the Bible and Archaeology in Honor of Philip J. King* [ed. Michael D. Coogan, J. Cheryl Exum, and Lawrence E. Stager; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1994], 53–69), someone writing during the reign of Josiah (Marvin A. Sweeney, *Isaiah 1-39, with an Introduction to Prophetic Literature* [FOTL 16; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1996], 203–205), and an exilic or post-exilic writer (Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Isaiah: I-XXVII*, 214–215; Ronald E. Clements, "The wolf shall live with the lamb: Reading Isaiah 11:6-9 Today," in *New Heaven and New Earth--Prophecy and the Millennium* [ed. P. J. Harland and Robert Hayward; Leiden: Brill, 1999], 90). It is sufficient to mention here that the stump imagery does not necessitate a time after the Davidic line had been cut off in the exile. See Wildberger, *Isaiah 1-12*, 470; Gitay, *Isaiah and His Audience*, 216–217; Christopher Seitz, *Isaiah 1-39* (Louisville: John Knox, 1993), 96–98; Walter Brueggemann, *Isaiah 1 - 39* (WesBC; Louisville, Kent.: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 99. Also note Sweeney's argument that Jeremiah is dependent on Isa 11:1-16 for his oracle in Jer 23:1-8 (Marvin A. Sweeney, "Jeremiah's Reflection on the Isaian Royal Promise: Jeremiah 23:1-8 in Context," in *Uprooting and Planting: Essays on Jeremiah for Leslie Allen* [ed. John Goldingay; LHBOTS 459; New York: T & T Clark, 2007], 317–321).

⁷³⁸ Calvin, *Isaiah*, 1:368–370; Kaiser, *Isaiah 1-12*, 157; Gitay, *Isaiah and His Audience*, 215–216; Brueggemann, *Isaiah 1 - 39*, 97–98; Ronald A. Simkins, *Creator &*

the downfall of Assyria which allows for the renewal of the Davidic dynasty.⁷³⁹ Others assert that there is a new beginning in 11:1 with very little connection to chapter 10.⁷⁴⁰ A few commentators exclude verse 9 for syntactical, thematic, or structural reasons.⁷⁴¹ Others extend the pericope to 11:10 (or 16) since it reuses the language of a shoot and stump from 11:1.⁷⁴² Most, however, understand the introduction formula in 11:10 as an indication of a new pericope.⁷⁴³

These issues of the larger context are peripheral to the present study. What is needed is to discern the tie between the coming king and a description of animals, the relationship between verses 1-5 and 6-8. Even

Creation: Nature in the Worldview of Ancient Israel (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994), 224–225; Korpel, “The Messianic King,” 150 and 152–153.

⁷³⁹ William A. M. Beuken, “Lebanon with its majesty shall fall. A shoot shall come forth from the stump of Jesse’ (Isa 10:34-11:1): Interfacing the Story of Assyria and the Image of Israel’s Future in Isaiah 10-11,” in *The New Things: Eschatology in Old Testament Prophecy: Festschrift for Henk Leene* (ed. Ferenc Postma, Klaas Spronk, and E. Talstra; ACEBT 3; Maastricht: Uitgeverij Shaker, 2002), 18; J. J. M Roberts, *The Bible and the Ancient Near East: Collected Essays* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 350. An alternative is offered by Irvine who argues that the unnamed enemy in 10:27d-34 is the Syro-Ephraimite coalition threatening Ahaz (Stuart Irvine, *Isaiah, Ahaz, and the Syro-Ephraimite Crisis* [Atlanta Ga.: Scholars Press, 1990], 273–281). The interpretation in 4Q285 (frg. 7) is unique in that the branch of 11:1 (the Leader of the congregation) is taken as the one cutting down the trees (executing the king of Kittim) in 10:34 (Michael Wise, Martin Jr. Abegg, and Edward Cook, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation* [Rev. ed.; San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005], 368–369; cf. Sousa, *Eschatology and Messianism in LXX Isaiah 1-12*, 143–144).

⁷⁴⁰ Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Isaiah: I-XXVII*, 213–214; Wildberger, *Isaiah 1-12*, 462–463; Seitz, *Isaiah 1-39*, 95.

⁷⁴¹ Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Isaiah: I-XXVII*, 223–224); Korpel, “The Messianic King,” 149–150 and 153–154.

⁷⁴² John Watts, *Isaiah 1-33* (WBC 24; Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1985), 170; Gitay, *Isaiah and His Audience*, 213–214.

⁷⁴³ Wildberger, *Isaiah 1-12*, 463.

though the shift in imagery between verses 5 and 6 is undeniable, it is essential to see the unity of verses 1-8.⁷⁴⁴ The peace depicted in 6-8 is tied to the righteous reign of the king described in 1-5.

In the description of the coming king in verses 1-5, there is a certain progression building up to verse 5. First the king's genealogical identity is introduced, tying him to the line of David with its promises.⁷⁴⁵ What makes this king ideal, however, is his spiritual endowment described in verse 2, consisting of both the ability to rule and the proper religious-ethical orientation. The righteous nature of his rule, seen in his judgments, is described in verses 3-4. Verse 3 provides the negative contrast for verse 4, noting how the king will not be led astray by his senses of smell, sight, and sound. In verse 4, his conformity to righteousness is illustrated by his care for the lowly and his correction and punishment of the wicked. Verse 5, then, gives a metaphoric summary of his ideal reign; righteousness will so characterize the king that it will be as if he wore it as a belt.

In verse 6, the prophecy of the coming king is suddenly interrupted by a scene dominated by animals. Some commentators divide verses 1-5 from 6-

⁷⁴⁴ The integrity of verse 9 is not as crucial; however, as will be discussed below, it forms a very apt summary of verses 1-8, and the arguments against its unity with 1-8 are unconvincing.

⁷⁴⁵ Weinfeld states, "The image of the crown prince as a shoot or branch is quite common in Assyrian and Babylonian royal inscriptions" (Weinfeld, *Social Justice in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East*, 65).

9 because they seem to be thematically unrelated.⁷⁴⁶ Others go farther and argue that these passages came from different authors.⁷⁴⁷ Nevertheless, the juxtaposition of these verses indicates a probable connection, especially since verse 6 begins with a waw consecutive perfect and not an introduction formula, syntactically expressing some sort of sequence.

The connection is one of cause and result. The imagery shifts as the author shifts his focus from the king to his land. The king's righteous reign described in 1-5 leads to the peace seen in 6-8. Targum Jonathan makes this connection explicit by an addition at the beginning of verse 6.

ביומיהו דמשיחא דישראל יכני שלמא בארעא

In the days of the messiah of Israel, peace will increase in the land.

The connection between righteousness and prosperity is certainly not unusual in Isaiah or the Hebrew Bible in general.⁷⁴⁸ Gitay writes, "Injustice causes punishment while justice causes reward . . . Verses 1-5 (dealing with the righteous king) are connected with vv. 6-10 (the new period) by the

⁷⁴⁶ Matthijs J. de Jong, *Isaiah among the Ancient Near Eastern Prophets: A Comparative Study of the Earliest Stages of the Isaiah Tradition and the Neo-Assyrian Prophecies* (VTSup 117; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 135 n. 404.

⁷⁴⁷ Eissfeldt argues that the themes in 2-5 are seen elsewhere in genuine oracles of Isaiah; however, the poetic peace in 6-8 is not seen elsewhere in Isaianic material but has ties with later material (presumably he means Isa 65:25), thus it most likely is not genuine to Isaiah (Otto Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament: An Introduction* [trans. Peter R. Ackroyd; New York: Harper & Row, 1965], 319). In contrast, Wildberger has a helpful discussion in which he argues for the Isaianic origins of all of 11:1-9 (Wildberger, *Isaiah 1-12*, 466–468).

⁷⁴⁸ See especially Isa 1:19-20 and 32:17.

prophetic divine principle of cause and effect."⁷⁴⁹ The tie between righteousness and prosperity is especially true with regard to the king. In the Hebrew Bible, the king was envisioned as providing blessing for the people. He did not reign for his own sake, but to provide for his people. Thus it is not strange for a vision about the ideal king to move into a vision about a blessed life for common people; the king's reign is expected to affect the lives of his subjects.⁷⁵⁰ Such ideals are not unique to Israel but found elsewhere in the ancient Near East.⁷⁵¹ There are even similar 'prophecies' that tie together a king's righteous reign and the blessedness accompanying it.⁷⁵² Sweeney calls

⁷⁴⁹ Gitay, *Isaiah and His Audience*, 218.

⁷⁵⁰ Note the mention of the blessed state of the people in the description of Solomon's reign in 1 Kgs 4:20 and 5:5. Kaiser states of Isa 11:6-8, "This expectation is not without an inward connection with the promise of the saviour king which precedes it. He is to bring righteousness into the world. Where righteousness truly prevails, the whole world is brought into the condition intended for it by God" (Kaiser, *Isaiah 1-12*, 161).

⁷⁵¹ On the ideology of the king in the ANE and Israel see Sigmund Mowinckel, *He That Cometh: The Messiah Concept in the Old Testament and Later Judaism* (trans. G. W. Anderson; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2005), 21–95; Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*; Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*; Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, *King and Messiah: The Civil and Sacral Legitimation of the Israelite Kings* (ConBOT 8; Lund: LiberLäromedel/Gleerup, 1976); Day, *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East*. Weinfeld emphasizes discontinuity with the ANE by arguing that Isaiah 11:1-9 is written in contrast to the ruthless imperialistic policies of the Assyrian empire in his day (Moshe Weinfeld, "The Protest against Imperialism in Ancient Israelite Prophecy," in *The Origins and Diversity of Axial Age Civilizations* [ed. Shmuel N. Eisenstadt; Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York, 1986], 169–182).

⁷⁵² Five works are generally included in this group: the Marduk Speech, Grayson and Lambert's Text A, the Shulgi Speech, the Uruk Prophecy, and the Dynastic Prophecy. The designation of this group has been debated with most agreeing that they differ from other ANE prophecies and apocalypses. Other labels such as "literary predictive texts" and "ex eventu prophecies" have been suggested (Martti Nissinen, "Neither Prophecies nor Apocalypses: The Akkadian Literary Predictive Texts," in *Knowing the End from the Beginning: The Prophetic, the Apocalyptic and Their Relationships* [ed. Lester L. Grabbe and Robert D. Haak; London: T & T Clark International, 2003], 134–148; Matthew Neujahr, "Royal Ideology

the form "ANNOUNCEMENT OF A ROYAL SAVIOR" and comments, "This is a typical form used throughout the ancient Near East to announce the inauguration of the reign of a new king. Its setting is in the royal court, and it focuses on a description of the positive attributes of the new king's rule with special emphasis on the justice of the king's decisions and the peace that the kingdom will enjoy as a result of his rule."⁷⁵³ Wildberger concludes concerning Isa 11:1-9, "There is hardly any justification for separating vv. 6-8 (and thus, naturally, also v.9) . . . The genre itself practically demands that there be a

and Utopian Futures in the Akkadian *ex eventu* Prophecies," in *Utopia and Dystopia in Prophetic Literature* [ed. Ehud Ben Zvi; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006], 41–54). The similarity of these texts with biblical texts such as Isa 11:1-9 has been recognized. Nissinen states, "An unmistakable affinity between biblical prophecy and the literary predictive texts is the expectation of the ideal king and the *Heilszeit* under his rule" (Nissinen, "Neither Prophecies nor Apocalypses," 141; cf. Neujahr, "Royal Ideology and Utopian Futures in the Akkadian *ex eventu* Prophecies," 49; Antti Laato, *A Star is Rising: The Historical Development of the Old Testament Royal Ideology and the Rise of the Jewish Messianic Expectations* [Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1997], 237). For translations, see: the Marduk Speech (Foster, *Before the Muses*, III.13:388-391, *COS* 1.149, Tremper Longman, *Fictional Akkadian Autobiography: A Generic and Comparative Study* [Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1991], 233–235), Grayson and Lambert's Text A (*ANET* 606, Longman, *Fictional Akkadian Autobiography*, 236–237), the Shulgi Speech (Foster, *Before the Muses*, III.8:357-359, Longman, *Fictional Akkadian Autobiography*, 236–237), the Uruk Prophecy (Longman, *Fictional Akkadian Autobiography*, 237–238), the Dynastic Prophecy (Foster, *Before the Muses*, 4.62:1026-1027, *COS* 1.150, Longman, *Fictional Akkadian Autobiography*, 239–242) See also the Prophecies of Neferti (*COS* 1.45), *ANET* 626-627, and Foster, *Before the Muses*, IV.57:1015-1016.

⁷⁵³ Sweeney, *Isaiah 1-39*, 203; cf. Watts, *Isaiah 1-33*, 175; Irvine, *Isaiah, Ahaz, and the Syro-Ephraimitic Crisis*, 286; Brueggemann, *Isaiah 1 - 39*, 102; Weinfeld, *Social Justice in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East*, 67–74.

transition from the theme of righteousness to the theme of peace in the transition from v. 5 to v. 6."⁷⁵⁴

Therefore, it is best to understand Isa 11:6-8 as describing some form of blessedness that results from the reign of the coming king. Nevertheless, commentators who agree with this point do not agree on the nature of that blessedness. They offer a number of different interpretations of the imagery and its purpose in this passage. They also disagree about possible connections with other texts and ideas.

One common interpretation is that the animal relations in Isa 11:6-8 are metaphoric or allegorical of human-human relations.⁷⁵⁵ Some early church fathers identify the various animals with different types of people that are all brought together in the church.⁷⁵⁶ More recent commentators take the

⁷⁵⁴ Wildberger, *Isaiah 1-12*, 467–468. Tucker similarly argues, "There is no good reason to treat Isa 11:6-9 either as late or as separate from 11:1-5. They are two parts of the same proclamation concerning the future reign of peace" (Gene M. Tucker, "The Peaceable Kingdom and a Covenant with the Wild Animals," in *God Who Creates: Essays in Honor of W. Sibley Towner* [ed. W. Sibley Towner, William P. Brown, and S. Dean McBride; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2000], 217).

⁷⁵⁵ Metaphoric and allegorical interpretations are being presented together because they are closely related and not always easily distinguished. The main difference is how specifically commentators identify the various elements of the imagery.

⁷⁵⁶ Steven A. McKinion, ed., *Isaiah 1-39* (ACCS 10; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 105; cf. John F. A. Sawyer, *The Fifth Gospel: Isaiah in the history of Christianity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 235; Rotraut Wisskirchen, "Zum 'Tierfrieden' in Spätantiken Denkmälern (nach Gen. 1,29f, Jes. 11,6/8 und 65,25)," *JAC* 52 (2009): 142–163. A particularly ingenious allegorical interpretation is that of Jerome who identifies the wolf as the apostle Paul since he was from the wolf-like (Gen 49:27) tribe of Benjamin (McKinion, *Isaiah 1-39*, 105).

imagery as referring to the new peaceful relations of people generally.⁷⁵⁷

Korpel, for example, argues that the imagery illustrates that the powerful in society will no longer prey upon the weak: "not only verses 4 and 5 are dealing with social criticism, but also verses 6-8."⁷⁵⁸ A few interpreters argue that the animals represent international relations.⁷⁵⁹ Seitz says verses 6-8 "might be better interpreted in a symbolic sense (cf. here Daniel 7-8). The predator animals are symbols of nations in their devouring capacities . . . The chief burden of the section is that hostility *directed at Israel* will cease" so that "the king can take up his charge to rule Israel and the nations with justice and righteousness (11:1-5)."⁷⁶⁰

⁷⁵⁷ Some argue verse 9 provides the key for interpretation. The subject must be the animals previously mentioned, but their new actions are founded upon the knowledge of Yahweh, something not applicable to animals. Thus verse 9 shows that verses 6-8 are really about the new peaceful relations of people (E. Zenger, "Die Verheissung Jesaja 11,1-10, universal oder partikular?," in *Studies in the Book of Isaiah* [ed. J. T. A. G. M. van Ruiten and Marc Vervenne; Leuven: Peeters, 1997], 138–139). See below for a critique of this interpretation of Isa 11:9. Sawyer argues that contemporary use of the imagery reflects a similar understanding: "the animals represent more the warring elements within human nature, than anything political" (Sawyer, *The Fifth Gospel*, 150).

⁷⁵⁸ Korpel, "The Messianic King," 152. She bases her position on a similar interpretation of Isa 65:25, the comparison of hostilities between animals with those of humans in Sira 13:16-19, and the use of animal imagery for oppressors in biblical texts (Korpel, "The Messianic King," 151–152).

⁷⁵⁹ Buber looks to verse 9 to help explicate verses 6-8 and argues that the location of God's holy mountain presumes a focus on people since they are depicted as streaming there for judgment in Isa 2. Thus the various animals could be interpreted as different nations (Martin Buber, *Der Glaube der Propheten* [Heidelberg: Lampert Schneider, 1984], 188–189; cf. Zenger, "Die Verheissung Jesaja 11,1-10, universal oder partikular?," 139–140). See below for a critique of this interpretation of Isa 11:9.

⁷⁶⁰ Seitz argues that verses 1-5 and 6-9 are referring to the same time period and yet notes that the description of the king in verses 1-5 assumes the presence of evil and injustice even though these elements are not found in verses 6-9. Therefore he concludes that they

The major shortcoming of these metaphoric or allegorical interpretations is that they fail to reckon adequately with the fact that verses 6-8 include descriptions of not only wild and domestic animals, but also humans.⁷⁶¹ As will be argued below, the main point of the imagery is how the wild animal relate to human interests, including their domesticated animals. It is not a simple contrast between wild and domestic animals or between animals and humans, as would be expected in a biblical metaphor or allegory.⁷⁶²

The most common interpretation of verses 6-8 is that they allude to an early creation paradise. Commentators argue that these verses are not describing blessedness in general as seen in the stock blessings and curses found in the ANE. Instead, verses 6-8 recall creation descriptions of original animal peace and vegetarianism. In his study of the prophets' use of blessings and curses, Hillers does not include Isa 11:6-8 in his section titled "Devouring

must be describing different realities: verses 1-5 describe the realities within Israel and verses 6-9 describe international relations and not a time of perfect peace (Seitz, *Isaiah 1-39*, 106–107). However, it is better to understand the relationship between these two sections as that of cause and result, as argued above.

⁷⁶¹ Wildberger, *Isaiah 1-12*, 481; Zenger, "Die Verheissung Jesaja 11,1-10, universal oder partikular?," 140; John W. Olley, "'The Wolf, the Lamb, and a Little Child': Transforming the Diverse Earth Community in Isaiah," in *The Earth Story in the Psalms and the Prophets* (ed. Norman C. Habel; EB 4; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 225. Korpel argues that the inclusion of humans does not rule out an allegorical interpretation since allegories can have inconsistencies and since the role of the young humans is parallel to that of the lamb and kid, "the helpless victims of the ferocious animals" (Korpel, "The Messianic King," 151). However, as argued below, the role of humans in these verses is greater than as possible victims of the wild animals.

⁷⁶² It is worth noting that elsewhere in the context allegories are made explicit, as in Isa 5:1-7 (Tucker, "The Peaceable Kingdom and a Covenant with the Wild Animals," 218).

animals" because "Is 11:6-10 is not closely related to this group of treaty-curses . . . the picture there of a transformation of the nature of animals goes back to an ancient concept of paradise."⁷⁶³ Similarly, Zenger emphasizes the uniqueness of these verses.

That the end of violence, oppression, and enmity is now occurring in a new, creative manner is the message of the world of images in Isa 11:6-8. That this passage does *not*, as one would expect, see the end of enmity as coming by the annihilation of predatory animals and mortally-dangerous snakes, but by their transformation into peaceful companions in the pasture and playmates is the special point of the creation-theological utopia of Isa 11:1-10.⁷⁶⁴

Among these interpreters, there is diversity about the author's purpose for making this allusion. Some argue that the peace depicted between animals and humans is a restoration of the original creation state described in Gen 1 and possibly Gen 2-3 and that the prophet expected a real biological change that would restore animals to a vegetarian diet. Mazor states, "Isaiah 11:6-8 describes a future reality constituting a return to the age of the Garden of Eden: the beasts of prey will once again return to eating grass, and the enmity between snakes and humans will disappear."⁷⁶⁵

⁷⁶³ Hillers, *Treaty-Curses and the Old Testament Prophets*, 56–57 n. 40.

⁷⁶⁴ Löning and Zenger, *To Begin with, God Created . . .*, 177.

⁷⁶⁵ Lea Mazor, "Myth, History, and Utopia in the Prophecy of the Shoot (Isaiah 10:33-11:9)," in *Sefer Moshe: The Moshe Weinfeld Jubilee Volume: Studies in the Bible and the Ancient Near East, Qumran, and Post-Biblical Judaism* (ed. Chaim Cohen, Avi Hurvitz, and Shalom M. Paul; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 77; cf. Rüdiger Bartelmus, "Die Tierwelt in der Bibel II: Tiersymbolik im Alten Testament exemplarisch dargestellt am Beispiel

Others, however, are more hesitant to interpret the description as realistic. Instead, they describe the images as "poetic hyperbole" or "utopian reality," not giving exact details but illustrative of the peaceful character of the new state.⁷⁶⁶ Botterweck asks, "Is it the prophet's purpose to declare that the coming age of peace will witness a real transformation of animal nature and instinct, that the lion will really eat chopped straw? Hardly! What is crucial is the promise of total peace, the cosmic scope of which is represented in the vivid picture of peace among the animals."⁷⁶⁷

A few commentators try to strengthen the case for a creation paradise interpretation by arguing for specific literary ties between Isa 11:1-9 and

von Dan 7, Ez 1/10 und Jes 11,6-8," in *Gefährten und Feinde des Menschen: Das Tier in der Lebenswelt des alten Israel* (ed. Bernd Janowski, Uwe Gleßmer, and Ute Neumann-Gorsolke; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1993), 304–305; Edward Young, *The Book of Isaiah: The English Text, with Introduction, Exposition, and Notes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 390–391; Gitay, *Isaiah and His Audience*, 220. Gregory of Elvira is one of the few ancient church commentators to interpret verses 6-8 as a description of biological change. He states, "In his kingdom, God will recreate the world as wonderfully as it was made at the beginning, before the first man sinned" (McKinion, *Isaiah 1-39*, 107–108). Calvin argues that the verses depict a real physical change in animals, "a blessed restoration of the world," but that the main point is that there will be an analogous change in people (Calvin, *Isaiah*, 1:383–384; cf. 4:405–406). However, note that in his comments on Gen 1:28-30 in his later Genesis commentary he does not commit himself to an original vegetarian state for humans (Calvin, *Genesis*, 1:99–100).

⁷⁶⁶ Hilary Marlow, *Biblical Prophets and Contemporary Environmental Ethics: Re-Reading Amos, Hosea and First Isaiah* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 242; Moshe Weinfeld, "The Roots of the Messianic Idea," in *Mythology and Mythologies: Methodological Approaches to Intercultural Influences: Proceedings of the Second Annual Symposium of the Assyrian and Babylonian Intellectual Heritage Project Held in Paris, France, Oct. 4-7, 1999* (ed. Robert M. Whiting; MS 2; Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2001), 281; cf. Olley, "The Wolf, the Lamb, and a Little Child," 225–226; Zenger, "Die Verheissung Jesaja 11,1-10, universal oder partikular?," 141–142; Wildberger, *Isaiah 1-12*, 480–481; Childs, *Myth and Reality in the Old Testament*, 67.

⁷⁶⁷ G. Johannes Botterweck, "יָאֵב," *TDOT* 4:6-7.

other creation texts in the Hebrew Bible. Some see a connection between the snakes mentioned in verse 8 and the snake in Gen 3, indicating that the enmity between humans and snakes ordained in Gen 3:15 will be reversed.⁷⁶⁸ However, there are no linguistic ties between the two texts to indicate an allusion; rather, verse 8 is easily understood in light of the general fear of snakes.⁷⁶⁹ Some commentators connect the expression הַר קְדְשִׁי with Eden through the use of similar terminology, הַר קְדֵשׁ אֱלֹהִים, in Ezek 28:14 to describe Eden.⁷⁷⁰ Such a connection is doubtful since all other references to הַר קְדֵשׁ refer to Jerusalem or by extension to the temple in Jerusalem or the land Jerusalem governs.⁷⁷¹ Mazor attempts to connect the waters of verse 9

⁷⁶⁸ Simkins, *Creator & Creation*, 227; Mazor, "Myth, History, and Utopia in the Prophecy of the Shoot (Isaiah 10:33-11:9)," 77; Moshe Weinfeld, "Literary Creativity," in *The Age of the Monarchies: Culture and Society* (ed. Abraham Malamat; WHJP 4-5; 2 vols.; Jerusalem: Massada Press, 1979), 2:53; Löning and Zenger, *To Begin with, God Created . . .*, 175–176.

⁷⁶⁹ Note that Isa 11:8 mentions two specific types of poisonous snakes while Gen 3 uses the generic נָחָשׁ. Mazor suggests that the differences indicate that Isa 11 is referring to a somewhat different paradise tradition (Mazor, "Myth, History, and Utopia in the Prophecy of the Shoot [Isaiah 10:33-11:9]," 77).

⁷⁷⁰ Mazor, "Myth, History, and Utopia in the Prophecy of the Shoot (Isaiah 10:33-11:9)," 83–84; Richard Bauckham, *Living with Other Creatures: Green Exegesis and Theology* (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2011), 126.

Ezekiel's connection between God's holy mountain and the garden of Eden is a blending of West Semitic and Mesopotamian motifs and seems to be unique to Ezekiel (Richard J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament* [HSM 4; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972], 100–103).

⁷⁷¹ Jerusalem or the hill on which it was built seems to be the referent in Pss 2:6, 48:2, 87:1, Isa 66:20, Ezek 20:40, Dan 9:16, 20, Joel 2:1, 4:17, Obad 1:16, Zeph 3:11, and Zech 8:3. The temple itself seems to be the focus in Ps 3:5, 15:1, 43:3, 99:9, Isa 27:13, 56:7, and 65:11, cf. Ps 24:3. The land seems to be the referent in Isa 57:13 and Jer 31:23, cf. Ps 78:54.

with the waters of creation or the flood.⁷⁷² The problem is that in verse 9 the waters are covering the sea, their present place, not the earth as in creation and the flood.

However, most commentators who argue for a creation paradise interpretation admit that the imagery of verses 6-8 is not found in the same detail anywhere in creation texts in the Hebrew Bible or the ANE. Marlow notes, "the idea of a primordial golden age of peace with animals . . . is implicit rather than explicit in the primeval stories of Genesis."⁷⁷³ Botterweck emphasizes the unique way in which Isa 11:6-8 depicts the creation theme of animal peace.

While the ancient Near East visualized the ideal primordial age as a cosmos without wild beasts, without danger and anxiety, hope projected this primordial age into the coming eschaton of peace. Isaiah, however, did not draw the logical conclusion that there would be no wild animals at the eschaton; instead he interpreted the age of peace as including a new harmony between the wild animals (wolf, leopard, young lion, bear,

⁷⁷² "When the prophet employs the image of waters covering the earth, referring to the flood or the waters of the primeval world (Gen 1:2), he is describing a new creation" (Mazor, "Myth, History, and Utopia in the Prophecy of the Shoot [Isaiah 10:33-11:9]," 83).

⁷⁷³ Marlow, *Biblical Prophets and Contemporary Environmental Ethics*, 239; cf. Wieringen, *The Implied Reader in Isaiah 6-12*, 209 n. 306; Murray, *The Cosmic Covenant*, 106–108; Mowinkel, *He That Cometh*, 182; Gitay, *Isaiah and His Audience*, 221 and 267 n. 15. Gressmann states, "Wenn man fragt, woher die Farben zu diesem Gemälde stammen, so kann die Antwort nicht zweifelhaft sein: Der Tierfriede ist eine Eigentümlichkeit des Paradieses. Obwohl in der israelitischen Paradiessage selbst dieser Zug nicht enthalten ist, hat sich doch in dem nüchternen Speisegebot des Priesterkodex (Gen. 1:29f.) eine Erinnerung daran bewahrt" (Hugo Gressmann, *Der Messias* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1929], 151).

adder, and viper) and the domestic animals, and even the suckling child.⁷⁷⁴

Botterweck's conclusions on the newness of Isa 11:6-8 can even be heightened since there is no "ideal primordial age" in Mesopotamian literature as argued above.

Another issue with a creation paradise interpretation is that descriptions of the blessedness of a king's reign are not elsewhere accompanied by allusions to a by-gone creation order. Instead, standard blessings drawn from the present better fit the context. Wildberger argues strongly that a tie between justice and peace is expected, but he notes, "The only thing which is surprising is that Isaiah would illustrate the coming salvation by using the imagery of peace among the animals . . . Ancient images, about the beginning of time when everything was perfect, are used to portray the messianic peace."⁷⁷⁵ Steck argues that verses 6-8 are secondary based partly on the unexpected form of the animal blessing, "Dem Ductus von 11,1-5 hätte

⁷⁷⁴ Botterweck, *TDOT* 4:7.

⁷⁷⁵ Wildberger, *Isaiah 1-12*, 479–480. Nwaoru likewise asserts that the author speaks in "a very unconventional way" since he does not describe the elimination of harmful animals but their union "with the tamed, harmless, gentle ones. This style can only make the hearers/readers stretch their imagination to the optimum" (Emmanuel O. Nwaoru, "Building a New World Order: A Perspective from Isa. 11:6-9," *BN* 119-120 [2003]: 139; cf. Botterweck, *TDOT* 4:6-7).

entsprochen, daß die wilden Tiere wie die Gewaltmenschen in 11,4 gemäß Lev 26,6; Ez 34,25-28 ausgerottet werden."⁷⁷⁶

These comparative and contextual reasons raise doubts, at least, that the imagery in Isa 11:6-8 was borrowed from a description of a creation paradise. The earlier portions of this dissertation have argued that a similar description is lacking in the Hebrew Bible and Mesopotamia. Could it be that the imagery comes from a creation account that has been lost? Certainly. However, it will be argued below that a better source is the blessing and curse literature which provides close parallels and is more appropriate for the context.

A last category of interpretation understands the imagery of Isa 11:6-8 as an idealized or hyperbolic picture of blessedness in a more generic way, without an allusion to a creation paradise. Most do not offer any specific source for the imagery.⁷⁷⁷ Collins, however, ties it with David and Solomon:

⁷⁷⁶ Odil Hannes Steck, "„ . . . ein kleiner Knabe kann sie leiten“: Beobachtungen zum Tierfrieden in Jesaja 11,6-8 und 65,25," in *Alttestamentlicher Glaube und biblische Theologie: Festschrift für Horst Dietrich Preuss zum 65. Geburtstag* (ed. Jutta Hausmann and Hans J. Zobel; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1992), 107 n. 21.

⁷⁷⁷ Tucker, "The Peaceable Kingdom and a Covenant with the Wild Animals," 219; Clements, "The wolf shall live with the lamb," 99; Gitay, *Isaiah and His Audience*, 220. Childs seems to break with his earlier opinions and argue against an allusion to a creation paradise in his commentary. He states,

Often the imagery is described as a return to paradise . . . Although there are occasional hints in the primordial history of Genesis that the alienation from God also produced enmity between man and beast (3:15; 9:25ff.), this concept was never fully developed and only infrequently shimmers behind the text. Rather, the portrayal of universal peace in this chapter is set within an

"Isa. 11 is a prophecy of the restoration of the Davidic monarchy to its full glory. Never mind that the wolf did not lie down with the lamb in the time of David or Solomon. This is an idealized description of a this-worldly kingdom."⁷⁷⁸

In light of the above disagreement, a carefully examination of verses 6-8 is needed. What is the main point of this description of animals and people? After investigating the imagery, its source and purpose will then be discussed.

To properly interpret the imagery, it is important to note which animals are described, where they are, and what they are doing. These observations will indicate that the imagery of verses 6-8 focuses on human interests. Animals hostile to human life and livelihood are acting domesticated in domesticated spaces.

The imagery from verse 6 is taken from the pastoral life of the shepherd. The verbs נהג and רבץ are used of guiding and shepherding

eschatological context (Hos. 2:20[18]) and is an expansion of the picture of the future harmony among the peoples who flow to the holy mountain (Isa. 11:9). The prophetic picture is not a return to an ideal past, but the restoration of creation by a new act of God through the vehicle of a righteous ruler.

(Childs, *Isaiah*, 103–104).

⁷⁷⁸ John J. Collins, "The Eschatology of Zechariah," in *Knowing the End from the Beginning: The Prophetic, the Apocalyptic and their Relationships* (ed. Lester L. Grabbe and Robert D. Haak; London: T & T Clark International, 2003), 76.

animals.⁷⁷⁹ Also the three domesticated animals mentioned are usual members of the flock or herd.⁷⁸⁰ So the image is not taken from nature in general but from a specifically human context.

In this image, the wild animals feared by shepherds are not removed but depicted as under his control, domesticated. Notice that it is only the young of the flock that are mentioned (עֵגֶל, וְגֵרִי, and כֶּבֶשׂ). They were the ones that were especially vulnerable to attacks by wild animals. Now, however, the shepherd does not have to fight off the wild animals to protect his flock; instead, they come and join.

The verbs used progressively increase the tie between these wild animals and the domesticated herd. First, the wolf is said to sojourn (גֵּר) with the lamb, a foreign guest with a native. Second, the leopard lies down (רָבַץ) with the kid, a more intimate identification with the flock. Third, the lion feeds (מָרַא) with the calf, sharing not only the same space but the same diet. And last, a young shepherd boy is leading (נָהַג) all of these animals as one flock.

Most likely the age of the boy is mentioned to indicate his weakness, inexperience, and vulnerability in parallel with the young animals.⁷⁸¹ He is not

⁷⁷⁹ On נָהַג, see Ps 78:52, 80:1; cf. Gen 31:18, Exod 3:1, 1 Sam 23:5, and 1 Sam 30:20. For רָבַץ, see Ps 23:2, Song 1:7, Isa 13:20, 17:2, 27:10, Jer 33:12, Ezek 34:14-15, Zeph 2:14, and 3:13.

⁷⁸⁰ See for example כֶּבֶשׂ in Is 5:17 and Hos 4:16, וְגֵרִי in Gen 27:9 and 38:17, and עֵגֶל in Is 27:10.

an experienced shepherd, let alone a mighty man, able to defeat ferocious animals (e.g. Samson, David, ANE kings). Nevertheless, he can now lead his flock without fear.

The imagery in verse 7 is taken from the realm of the larger animals that were often kept closer to the village and used for agriculture.⁷⁸² In ancient Israel, especially in a small village, large cattle were primarily kept as draft animals, both the males and females.⁷⁸³ When not working, large cattle would be taken out to graze, although they did not traveled as far as the sheep and the goats. However, they were fed straw (תִּבְנֵי) when working the

⁷⁸¹ Katheryn Pfisterer Darr, *Isaiah's Vision and the Family of God* (LCBI; Louisville, Kent.: Westminster John Knox, 1994), 49–50; Bauckham, *Living with Other Creatures*, 125; Murray, *The Cosmic Covenant*, 109. In contrast, Nwaoru asserts that the child, both in verses 6 and 8, has a more active role in bringing about the "peaceful coexistence" depicted (Nwaoru, "Building a New World Order," 139).

⁷⁸² Gray argues that 7c may have originally preceded 6c and that 6d - about the shepherd boy - was a later addition. Thus the two statements about lions and cattle would be together (Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Isaiah: I-XXVII*, 219–220). His suggestion is unconvincing but helps to highlight that the organizational principle of this passage is based not on the animal classes but on the geographical distance of the animals to the village.

⁷⁸³ Borowski, *Every Living Thing*, 42, 74 and 121–124. בָּקָר is a generic collective used for large cattle in general. They are used for ploughing (1 Sam 11:5, 7, 1 Kgs 19:19–21, Amos 6:12), pulling carts (2 Sam 6:6), and threshing (2 Sam 24:22, 24). That cows (פָּרָה) were used as draught animals can be seen in their associations with yokes (Num 19:2, cf. Hosea 10:11 and Judg 14:18). The one recorded instance of them pulling a cart is exceptional (1 Sam 6:10–14). The references to herds raised for food are tied to the upper classes. See for example the cattle for the royal table which were pasture- or stall-fed (1 Kgs 5:3, cf. 1 Chr 27:29).

fields near the village or being cared for in the village.⁷⁸⁴ Note the contrast between grazing animals and working animals in Isa 30:23-24.

יִרְעֶה מִקְנֵיךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא פֶּר נִרְחֵב: וְהָאֲלָפִים וְהָעִירִים עֲבָדֵי הָאֲדָמָה
בְּלֵיל חֲמִיץ יֹאכְלוּ אֲשֶׁר-זָרָה בְּרַחַת וּבְמִזְרָה:

Your herds will graze in that day in broad pastures, and the oxen and donkey who work the land will eat seasoned fodder which has been winnowed with the shovel and fork.

Bears and lions were proverbial dangers of the wilderness,⁷⁸⁵ especially a bear that had cubs.⁷⁸⁶ Now, however, a bear and her cub are eating and lying down beside a cow and her calf. Two protective mothers are at ease with one another in the pasture. And more surprising, the king of beasts is found at the manger, eating his master's straw.

The imagery is about more than what these wild animals now eat. Since the wild animals in verse 6 were not only eating with the domesticated ones but also joining them as they followed their shepherd boy, something similar is implied in verse 7. The bear and the lion are portrayed in a new relationship; eating from the trough indicates that they now serve the one

⁷⁸⁴ The other occurrences of תָּבַן as animal food are all with reference to animals primarily used for travel (Gen 24:25, 32, Judg 19:19, 1 Kgs 5:8, cf. Isa 1:3). See also Job 6:5, Isa 1:3.

⁷⁸⁵ Both are mentioned in 1 Sam 17:34, 36, 37, Prov 28:15, Lam 3:10, Hos 13:8, and Amos 5:19. Bears alone are mentioned in 2 Kgs 2:24. Lions alone are mentioned in Judg 14:5, 1 Kgs 13:24, 20:36, 2 Kgs 17:25, Ps 7:3, 10:9, 17:12, 22:14, 22, Isa 15:9, Jer 5:6, 50:17, Amos 3:12, and Micah 5:8.

⁷⁸⁶ 2 Sam 17:8, Prov 17:12, and Hos 13:8.

who gives them the straw. Thus, it is implied that they now work for humans like the cow and ox (e.g., pulling the plow).

The imagery for verse 8 is taken from even closer to the village, maybe inside its confines.⁷⁸⁷ It is describing the realm of mothers with their young children, going about the business of the day. But now, the normal dangers are no longer a source of fear or harm. To illustrate this security, the most defenseless of children, those nursing (יֹנֵק) or newly weaned (גְּמוּל),⁷⁸⁸ are described as playing with impunity by the holes of the most dangerous snakes and with their young.⁷⁸⁹ Notice that again the focus is not on the removal of the threat. There are still snakes which are assumedly still poisonous; however, the snakes no longer harm curious and playful children. In fact, if the above reconstruction of the text is correct, the image is of children playing not only near the snakes but even with them. Thus the snakes are described as domesticated pets, playmates. There is intimate contact between humans and wild animals without fear or harm to humans.⁷⁹⁰

⁷⁸⁷ Watts places the setting inside the mud-floor huts (Watts, *Isaiah 1-33*, 175).

⁷⁸⁸ Nursling (יֹנֵק) occurs a number of times as a description of the youngest ones (Deut 32:25, 1 Sam 15:3, 22:19, Ps 8:3, Jer 44:7, Lam 2:11, and Joel 2:16). Weaned one (גְּמוּל) is used in a similar fashion in Isa 28:9.

⁷⁸⁹ Other passages highlight פֶּתֶן as venomous (Deut 32:33, Job 20:14, 16, Ps 58:5; "a horned viper" ["פֶּתֶן," HALOT]) and warn of the bite of זָפְעָנִי (Jer 8:17, Prov 23:32; "a poisonous snake, viper" ["זָפְעָנִי," HALOT]).

⁷⁹⁰ Thus Darr's analysis, for example, does not go far enough since it focuses solely on restraint. She argues that those with limited knowledge and competence "are spared the deadly consequences of their actions" (Darr, *Isaiah's Vision and the Family of God*, 48).

Thus, an examination of verses 6-8 reveals that the images are not about a lack of hostility in the animal world at large; instead, they focus on animal and human interactions, describing animal dangers known to an Israelite villager.⁷⁹¹ The hostile animals mentioned are those which posed a threat to domesticated animals and humans themselves. But more revealing is that all of the animals with which the hostile animals are now at peace are domesticated animals in a domesticated setting. The point is not whether wolves are at peace with deer, but whether they attack a shepherd's flock.⁷⁹² The focus on human and animal relations is most evident in verse 8 since it only mentions serpents and young children. Simpkins concludes concerning Isa 11:6-8,

The Bible is not concerned about violence within the animal world . . . Domestic animals are part of the human world. They are ingroup members with humans in contrast to wild animals that make up the outgroup; they represent culture rather than nature. They are raised by humans for humans. An attack against them by wild animals is an attack on the human world. Thus, the domestic animals serve as the key for understanding Isaiah's oracle. This oracle is not envisioning the cessation of violence among wild animals but between the animal world and the human world.⁷⁹³

⁷⁹¹ Watts states, "The scene in vv 6-8 is a village with simple huts, mud floors, and human beings and animals in crowded association . . . The people eke out an existence in sharp and often bitter conflict with a hostile nature" (Watts, *Isaiah 1-33*, 175).

⁷⁹² Steck, ". . . ein kleiner Knabe kann sie leiten," 110.

⁷⁹³ Simpkins, *Creator & Creation*, 226. Similarly, Kaiser argues that Isaiah "has in mind not so much the existence animals lead with one another, as the removal of the damage and danger to which they give rise for man" (Kaiser, *Isaiah 1-12*, 160–161).

The geographical areas mentioned in verses 6-8 also highlight this point. The imagery moves throughout the regions used by an Israelite villager, from the boy leading flocks in the pasture to the babies in the village.⁷⁹⁴ Thus Isa 11:6-8 deals with areas of human activity; the wilds of the wilderness are not the concern.

Additionally, an examination of these verses reveals that the wild animals in these areas of human activity are described not just as peaceful but as domesticated. They are acting not as harmless wild animals, like a deer, but as animals under human care and control.⁷⁹⁵ They join the flock and feed at the trough. 2 Bar 73:6 alludes to Isa 11:6-8 in describing the messianic age and emphasizes the domestication or dominion theme, "And the wild beasts

⁷⁹⁴ Although less obvious, there is movement in verses 1-8 as a whole, a movement of geography and age. In verse 1-5, the realm and role of the adult king are described. In 6-7, the pasturing fields of the shepherd boy are the focus. Lastly in verse 8, the play areas of the infant are mentioned. Mazor views the geographical progression as from the king figure in 1-5, described as a tree, to those under his branches (Mazor, "Myth, History, and Utopia in the Prophecy of the Shoot [Isaiah 10:33-11:9]," 85-86).

Some commentators have suggested connecting the king, shepherd boy, and babe to some degree. Mazor views them as "stages in the growth of the First Man in the Garden of Eden" (Mazor, "Myth, History, and Utopia in the Prophecy of the Shoot [Isaiah 10:33-11:9]," 78). Landy argues that they allude to David since he was the shepherd boy turned king (Francis Landy, "The Figure of the Child in Isaiah 11" [paper presented at the annual international meeting of the SBL, London, July 2011], 5). Zenger suggests that they are "an allusion to the royal youth in Isa 7:14-15 and 9:51" (Löning and Zenger, *To Begin with, God Created . . .*, 176; cf. Murray, *The Cosmic Covenant*, 109). Sweeney notes that "the portrayal of a small boy and his leading role is striking in this context and suggests an allusion to the boy-king Josiah, one of the youngest ruling monarchs of the Davidic dynasty" (Sweeney, *Isaiah 1-39*, 204). Nevertheless, the passage does not seem to move backward in time, from the mature king to his youth, but progresses forward, from the king's actions to their benefits.

⁷⁹⁵ Steck, ". . . ein kleiner Knabe kann sie leiten," 112.

will come from the wood and serve men, and the asps and dragons will come out of their holes to subject themselves to a child."⁷⁹⁶

It is important to note what is not a part of the imagery of Isa 11:6-8. Predatory, carnivorous behavior is not the focus.⁷⁹⁷ Also, nowhere is it stated or implied that humans return to a vegetarian diet.⁷⁹⁸ Instead, what seems to

⁷⁹⁶ Translated by A. F. J. Klijn, *OTP* 1:645. For other allusions to Isa 11:6-8, see the *Sibylline Oracles* 3.788-795, Philo's *On Rewards and Punishments* 87-90, and Irenaeus' *Against Heresies* 5.33.3; cf. Bauckham, *Living with Other Creatures*, 127-130. A similar illustration of idyllic peace using wild animals performing domesticated tasks is found in the *Einsiedeln Eclogues* that are preserved on a 10th century manuscript but most likely date to the 1st century C.E. The second one makes clear allusions to Vigil's *Eclogue IV* and states, "Now doth earth untilled yield fresh produce from the rich soil, now are the wild waves no longer angry with the unmenaced ship: tigers gnaw their curbs, lions endure the cruel yoke" (lines 35-37 [Duff and Duff, LCL]; cf. Appendix II; Genovese, "Paradise and the Golden Age: Ancient Origins of the Heavenly Utopia," 26-27).

⁷⁹⁷ Bauckham rightly states concerning Isa 11:6-9, "It has often been misunderstood by modern readers as depicting simply peace between animals, as well as between animals and humans. In fact, it depicts peace between the human world, with its domesticated animals (lamb, kid, calf, bullock, cow), and the wild animals (wolf, leopard, lion, bear, poisonous snakes) that were normally perceived as threats both to human livelihood (dependent on the domestic animals) and to human life." However, he goes on to argue that peace among even wild animals "is also implied, both in the fact that the bear and the lion become vegetarian (Isa. 11:7) and the snakes harmless (11:8)" (Bauckham, *Living with Other Creatures*, 125). Clements understands these verses as one example of the biblical authors' "inconsistency and diversity of attitudes" toward the natural world. Here the author makes an "implicit condemnation of the taking of one species of animal for food by another" while elsewhere killing for food is allowed or even celebrated (Clements, "The wolf shall live with the lamb," 95). However, since the focus of verses 6-8 is on human interests, it is inappropriate to take them as a comment on animal behavior in general.

⁷⁹⁸ Simkins argues that the human diet is not mentioned because the oracle "is proclaimed from a human point of view." He suggests that a return to vegetarianism "might be inferred from the text" (Simkins, *Creator & Creation*, 227). However, it is unclear why a "human point of view" would restrain the prophet from describing the human diet if that was an essential element of a restoration of creation. Bauckham asserts that "the cessation of all harm and destruction (11:9) . . . must mean also that humans are to be vegetarian" (Bauckham, *Living with Other Creatures*, 126). The problem is that the harm and destruction

be described is village life in which flocks and herds are still being kept for all the normal purposes, including meat. The only change for humans is the level of peace and security they experience.

Based on this examination, verses 6-8 do not describe a time of general animal peace or a return to a vegetarian diet. Instead, the focus is on human blessedness. Therefore, it is best to situate these verses within the blessing and curse imagery found in the ANE, the Hebrew Bible, and even elsewhere in Isaiah, especially since the context places verses 6-8 within the category of blessings accompanying the reign of a king. An analysis of the blessings and curses will show that even though Isa 11:6-8 may not be identical to other blessings related to devouring animals, it does fit with the general pattern seen among blessings and curses.

Threats from wild animals were a part of life in ancient Israel. Settlements may push them back, but they were always on the fringe, seeking to return.⁷⁹⁹ However, animals are not viewed as just a natural threat in the Hebrew Bible and the ANE; they are portrayed as instruments of divine curse

spoken of in context are those directed against humans and human interests and not human use of animals for food.

⁷⁹⁹ The danger posed by too much unsettled land is the concern behind Deut 7:22, "Yahweh your God will remove these nations before you little by little. You will not be able to destroy them quickly, lest the beasts of the field grow too numerous for you."

or punishment.⁸⁰⁰ For example, they are mentioned among the curses in Lev 26:22.⁸⁰¹

וְהִשְׁלַחְתִּי בְּכֶם אֶת־חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה וְשָׂפְלָה אֶתְכֶם וְהִכְרִיתָה אֶת־בְּהֵמַתְכֶם
וְהִמְעִיטָה אֶתְכֶם וְנָשְׂמוּ דְרָכֵיכֶם

And I will send against you the beast of the field and it will bereave you of your children and destroy your livestock and make you few in number, so that your roads shall be desolate.

In Deut 32:24, both vicious beasts and poisonous snakes are mentioned as God's means of punishment.

וְשֵׁן־בְּהֵמוֹת אֲשַׁלַּח־בָּם עִם־חַמַּת זֶחָלִי עָפָר

And the teeth of beasts I will send against them, with the venom of those that crawl in the dust.

⁸⁰⁰ Hillers, *Treaty-Curses and the Old Testament Prophets*, 54–56; Douglas Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah* (WBC 31; Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1987), xxxvi; Tucker, "The Peaceable Kingdom and a Covenant with the Wild Animals," 222–224; Mason, "Eternal Covenant" in the *Pentateuch*, 77–78.

A related notion is the restraint of chaotic forces by the gods in the ANE. Control of the wild animals is depicted as part of that order. In Erra and Ishum 1.84-86, Erra's weapons are trying to taunt him into action by describing the state of the world.

Beasts are overrunning the meadows, life of the land,
The farmer sobs bitterly for his [field].
Lion and wolf are felling the livestock,
The shepherd, who cannot sleep day or night
for the sake of his flocks, is calling upon you.

(translated by Foster, *Before the Muses*, IV.17:884). Humans, especially the king, play a role as they keep the gods favorably disposed and thus diligent in their restraint of chaos. Also relevant would be the use of wild animals for population control as discussed above.

⁸⁰¹ Similar curses are found in the Sefire treaty, "May the gods send every sort of devourer against Arpad and against its people! [May the mou]th of a snake [eat], the mouth of a scorpion, the mouth of a bear (?), the mouth of a panther. And may a moth and a louse and a [. . . become] to it a serpent's throat!" (translated by Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S. J., *COS* 2.82:214).

In narrative accounts, various wild animals are described as attacking humans because of wrong actions against God.⁸⁰² The man of God who prophesied against the altar in Bethel is killed by a lion after he eats and drinks against the command of God.⁸⁰³ In 1 Kgs 13:26, the prophet from Bethel states:

מָרָה אֶת־פִּי יְהוָה וַיִּתְּנֵהוּ יְהוָה לְאֲרִיָּה וַיִּשְׁכְּרֵהוּ וַיִּמָּתֵהוּ
כַּדְּבַר יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר דִּבְרָה לּוֹ

He rebelled against the mouth of Yahweh; therefore Yahweh has given him to the lion and it has torn him and killed him, according to the word of Yahweh which he spoke to him.

The prophets also mention animal attacks among the punishments sent by God.⁸⁰⁴ Jeremiah lists a number of animals that God will use against Judah in Jer 5:6.

⁸⁰² God sends snakes against Israel when they grumble against God and Moses in the wilderness: "Then Yahweh sent against the people fiery serpents, and they bit the people, and many people of Israel died" (Num 21:6). A man is killed by a lion for refusing the command of a prophet to strike him, "And he said to him, 'Because you did not obey the voice of Yahweh, behold, when you walk away from me, then a lion will strike you'. And he walked away from beside him and a lion met him and struck him" (1 Kgs 20:36). Elisha curses a group of young men for mocking him by sending two bears on them, "And he turned around and saw them, and then he cursed them in the name of Yahweh. And two she-bears came out of the woods and tore forty-two of the young men" (2 Kgs 2:24). Also, the new inhabitants of Samaria are attacked by lions because of their wrong worship: "And at the beginning of their dwelling there, they did not fear Yahweh. Therefore Yahweh sent lions against them and they were killing among them" (2 Kgs 17:25).

⁸⁰³ The man of God mentions God's command not to eat or drink in 1 Kgs 13:9 and 17. In verses 21-22, his coming death is prophesied by the old prophet who had earlier lied to him. The unusual nature of the lion's actions - it stands by the body and does not eat it nor harm the man of God's donkey (verses 24 and 28) - indicates that this killing was no normal occurrence. The description is similar to Isa 11:6-8 in that predator and prey are together without harm. However, the point is not one of security, but to emphasize the precise object of God's punishment, the man of God.

⁸⁰⁴ Jeremiah mentions various snakes, "'For behold, I am sending among you serpents, adders that cannot be charmed, and they will bite you,' declares Yahweh" (8:17). Isaiah speaks of a lion against Moab "For I will place upon Dibon added things, a lion for the

על-כן הָכֵם אֲרִיָּה מִיַּעַר זֶאֵב עֲרֵבוֹת יִשְׁדָּדֵם נֹמֵר שֶׁקֶד עַל-עֲרֵיָהֶם
כָּל-הַיּוֹצֵא מִהֵנָּה יִטָּרֵף כִּי רַבּוּ פְּשָׁעֵיהֶם עֲצֻמוֹ מִשְׁבוֹתֵיהֶם:

Therefore a lion from the forest will strike them down. A wolf from the wilds will devastate them. A leopard is watching their cities. Everyone who goes out of them will be torn in pieces, because their transgressions are many, their apostasies are great.⁸⁰⁵

In Job 20:16, snake venom is the fate of the wicked.

רֹאשֵׁי-פִתְנִים יִינָק תְּהַרְגֵהוּ לְשׁוֹן אִפְעָה

He will suck the poison of cobras; the tongue of a viper will kill him.

To these examples could be added those involving animals that do not threaten human life directly but threaten human livelihood or comfort. For example, various small animals and insects are included among the plagues on Egypt,⁸⁰⁶ locusts are often a figure of judgment,⁸⁰⁷ and even worms could be used for a curse.⁸⁰⁸

Curses often have a corresponding blessing in the Hebrew Bible. Many blessings are the positive alternative to the curse - defeating your enemies instead of being defeated.⁸⁰⁹ Others are stated as the absence of the curse -

escapees of Moab and for the remnant of the land" (15:9). It is sometimes difficult to decide if the animals mentioned are being used metaphorically of attacking enemies.

⁸⁰⁵ Steck argues that the list of wild animals in Isa 11:6-8 is connected with Jer 5:6 (Steck, ". . . ein kleiner Knabe kann sie leiten," 110).

⁸⁰⁶ Frogs, gnats and flies are mentioned in Exod 8, locusts in Exod 10.

⁸⁰⁷ Deut 28:39, 1 Kgs 8:37, Joel 1:4, and 2:25.

⁸⁰⁸ Deut 28:39 and Jonah 4:7.

⁸⁰⁹ Lev 26:7-8 and Deut 28:7.

no one making you tremble.⁸¹⁰ And sometimes there is a more fundamental transformation - peace with your former enemies.⁸¹¹

Occasionally the image of humans striking wild animals is used to portray a blessing. Psalm 91:13 says,

עַל־שָׁחַל וּפְתָן תִּדְרֹךְ תִּרְמַס כְּפִיר וְתַנִּין:

Upon the lion and the adder you will tread; you will trample the young lion and the serpent.⁸¹²

More commonly the removal of wild animals connotes a blessing.⁸¹³ This image is seen in the list of blessings in Lev 26:6.⁸¹⁴

וְהִשְׁבַּתִּי חַיָּה רָעָה מִן־הָאָרֶץ

And I will remove harmful beasts from the land.

⁸¹⁰ Job 11:19, Jer 30:10, and Mic 4:4.

⁸¹¹ Isa 2:1-4 and 19:24-25.

⁸¹² Clements, following Vermeylen, argues that Isa 11:6-8 has "been directly influenced from Ps. 91:13" (Clements, "The wolf shall live with the lamb," 89; cf. J. Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe à l'apocalyptique: Isaïe, I-XXXV, miroir d'un demi-millénaire d'expérience religieuse en Israël* [Paris: J. Gabalda, 1977], 1:276).

⁸¹³ Examples are found in Ezekiel 34:25 and 28, "I will make with them a covenant of peace and I will remove harmful beasts from the land. And they will dwell securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods . . . And the beasts of the land will not eat them." The road through the wilderness for the redeemed is described with similar imagery in Isa 35:9, "No lion shall be there, and a ravenous beast will not come up on it. They will not be found there, but the redeemed will walk there."

⁸¹⁴ Rabbinic debate on this passage is contained in Sipre Behuqotai 2:1-3. R. Judah argues that it refers to the removal of dangerous beasts, but R. Simeon argues that it refers to changing the nature of dangerous beasts, "He will make them tranquil, so that they will not injure people." He then appeals to Isa 11:6-9 as proof of this interpretation (translated by Jacob Neusner, *Sifra: An Analytical Translation* [3 vols.; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1988], 3:353; cf. Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 3B; New York: Doubleday, 2001], 2296).

In Hosea 2:20 the imagery is somewhat different. The animals are not removed; instead, a covenant is made with them that results in security for humans.⁸¹⁵ Notice also that the covenant is not made with only harmful animals but with all land animals in a list similar to those in Gen 1 and 9.

וְכָרַתִּי לָהֶם בְּרִית בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא עִמ־חַיֵּי הַשָּׂדֶה וְעִמ־עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וְרִמָּשׁ
הָאֲדָמָה וְקִשְׁתׁ וְחֶרֶב וּמִלְחָמָה אֲשַׁבֵּר מִן־הָאָרֶץ וְהַשְּׂפָכֵתִים לְבַטָּח

And I will make for them a covenant on that day with the beasts of the field and with the birds of the heavens and with the creeping things of the ground. And the bow and the sword and war I will destroy from the land, and I will make you lie down in safety.

In Job 5:22-23, a similar notion is seen in Eliphaz's speech. He is talking about how the righteous are protected by God from all harm, including wild animals.⁸¹⁶

⁸¹⁵ There is a contrast with verse 14 in which the beasts of the field (חַיֵּי הַשָּׂדֶה) are used to punish Israel. Thus, in the context, verse 20 describes a reversal of the curse of devouring animals, "the restoration of a prejudgment state of the relationship with creation" (Tucker, "The Peaceable Kingdom and a Covenant with the Wild Animals," 225). Batto ties verse 20 into a larger 'covenant of peace' motif in the ANE and the Hebrew Bible in which a covenant establishes peace after a destructive judgment (Bernard Frank Batto, "The Covenant of Peace: A Neglected Ancient Near Eastern Motif," *CBQ* 49 [1987]: 187–211).

⁸¹⁶ A narrative example would be the restraint of the lions in Dan 6:22, giving proof that Daniel was blameless (cf. Mark 1:13). The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs records a similar notion: "Every wild creature you shall subdue, so long as you have the God of heaven with you, and walk with all mankind in sincerity of heart" (T. Iss. 7:7); "If you achieve the good, my children, men and angels will bless you; and God will be glorified through you among the gentiles. The devil will flee from you; wild animals will be afraid of you, and the angels will stand by you . . . The one who does not do the good, men and angels will curse, and God will be dishonored among the gentiles because of him; the devil will inhabit him as his own instrument. Every wild animal will dominate him, and the Lord will hate him" (T. Naph. 8:4 and 6); "For the person who fears God and loves his neighbor cannot be plagued by the spirit of Beliar since he is sheltered by the fear of God. Neither man's schemes nor those of animals can prevail over him, for he is aided in living by this: by the love which he

לְשׂוֹר וּלְכַפֵּן תִּשְׂחַק וּמַחֲנֵית הָאָרֶץ אֶל־תִּירָא׃
כִּי עִם־אֲבֹנֵי הַשָּׂדֶה בְּרִיתְךָ וְחַיֵּית הַשָּׂדֶה הַשְּׁלֵמָה־לְךָ׃

At destruction and famine you will laugh, and the beasts of the earth you will not fear. For with the stones of the field is your covenant, and the beasts of the field have been made to be at peace with you.

From the above survey, it is clear that the blessings related to devouring animals appear in a number of forms. They are all related but by no means uniform. In general, similar variations are seen in other types of blessings and curses.

For Isa 11:6-8, another common variation is most important to note. Blessings and curses often include not only the realistic but also the hyperbolic.⁸¹⁷ For example, the blessing on agriculture in Lev 26:4-5 is bountiful but possible.

וְנָתַתִּי גִשְׁמֵיכֶם בְּעֵתָם וְנָתַנָּה הָאָרֶץ וּבֹלָה וְעֵץ הַשָּׂדֶה יִתֵּן פְּרִיֹו׃
וְהַשִּׁיג לָכֶם הַיֵּשׁ אֶת־בְּצִיר וּבְצִיר יִשִּׁיג אֶת־זֶרַע

Then I will give your rains in their season, and the land will give its produce, and the tree of the field give its fruit. Your threshing

has toward his neighbor . . . If you continue to do good, even the unclean spirits will flee from you and wild animals will fear you" (T. Benj. 3:4-5 and 5:2, translated by Howard C. Kee, *OTP* 1:804, 813-814, and 825-826; cf. Bauckham, *Living with Other Creatures*, 119–124).

⁸¹⁷ Alter emphasizes the role of hyperbole in prophetic images of destruction and redemption, "If the logic of hyperbole leads monitory poetry ultimately to imagine the historical world turned back into primal chaos, hyperbole in the poetry of consolation leads to a vision of history and nature transformed into harmonious order, unending fulfillment" (Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* [New York: Basic Books, 1985], 156). Some commentators fail to appreciate this use of hyperbole and instead connect everything beyond normal to paradise (cf. Cornelius, "Paradise Motifs in the 'Eschatology' of the Minor Prophets and the Iconography of the Ancient Near East," 44–51).

will last until the grape harvest, and the grape harvest will last until sowing.

In comparison, Amos 9:13 contains a hyperbolized form.⁸¹⁸

הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְנִגַּשׁ הַזֹּרֵשׁ בְּקֹצֵר וְרֹדֵף עֲנָבִים בְּמוֹשֵׁף הַזֹּרֵעַ
וְהַטִּיפוּ הַהָרִים עֲסִיס וְכָל־הַנְּבָעוֹת תִּתְמוּנְגָנָה:

"Behold, days are coming," declares Yahweh, "when the plowman shall overtake the reaper and the treader of grapes the sower of seed; the mountains will drip sweet wine, and all the hills will flow."

In Isa 11:6-8, the author has created a hyperbolic form of the blessing related to devouring animals. Humankind's fear of wild animals and the damage they can inflict on humans and their livelihood will be no more. Devouring animals will no longer be used as a divine sanction because of the new reign of righteousness inaugurated by the coming king. However, instead of describing the removal of these wild animals from the land, as seen elsewhere, the prophet goes farther.⁸¹⁹ He portrays a world in which wild

⁸¹⁸ Andersen and Freedman state, "Here the fertility of the land is described in hyperbolic terms" (Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman, *Amos: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 24A; New York: Doubleday, 1989], 891). De Guglielmo rightly notes that the prophecies about extraordinary fertility are of the same nature as those depicting animal peace (e.g. Isa 11:6-8) since they both describe something beyond normal blessedness. He argues that they both should be understood literally, portraying the removal of the curse of Gen 3, but he admits that it would also be possible to take them metaphorically (Antonine de Guglielmo, "The Fertility of the Land in the Messianic Prophecies," *CBQ* 19 [1957]: 310). Also, images of water in the desert (e.g. Isa 35:6) could be understood as hyperbolic forms of the blessing of adequate rains (Deut 28:12).

⁸¹⁹ Pace Gressmann who argues for the opposite development, that the removal of the animals is a rationalizing of the original tradition of peace among the animals, "Das Wegschaffen der Tiere aus dem Lande ist wohl eine sekundäre Neuerung rationalistischer Art gegenüber der alten Überlieferung, die von einer Umwandlung aus der Wildheit zur Zahmheit

animals act domesticated, where lions serve as oxen and young vipers are played with like puppies.

As with all hyperboles, there is nothing about the form itself that identifies it as a hyperbole. Instead, it is the simple incongruity between what is depicted and the normal state of the world. Wild animals do not act like domesticated ones; nevertheless, that is how the prophet portrays the future peace as he seeks to comfort and inspire his audience. The extent of the future blessedness is emphasized by an image that goes beyond what is physically possible. The individual elements are ordinary but their combination is extraordinary, allowing the author of Isa 11:6-8 to "express the fantastic in terms of the mundane."⁸²⁰

Hyperbolic rhetoric was not unexpected in the ANE. Korpel notes that blessings beyond historical reality were tied into the "idealistic, utopian concept of kingship created in royal propaganda all over the ancient Near East. This type of exaggeration was quite normal when the virtues of a king

wußte" (Hugo Gressmann, *Der Ursprung der israelitisch-jüdischen Eschatologie* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1905], 201).

⁸²⁰ Wilfred G. E. Watson, *Traditional Techniques in Classical Hebrew Verse* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 460. On metaphors and hyperbole in the prophets, see also Wilfred G. E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to its Techniques* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984), 316–321; E. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible, Explained and Illustrated* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1968), 423–428; D. Brent Sandy, *Plowshares & Pruning Hooks: Rethinking the Language of Biblical Prophecy and Apocalyptic* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 58–102; Yehoshua Gitay, "Why Metaphors? A Study of the Texture of Isaiah," in *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies of an Interpretive Tradition* (ed. Craig C. Broyles and Craig A. Evans; VTSup 70.1; New York: Brill, 1997), 57–65.

were extolled."⁸²¹ Zenger adds that blessings in nature are commonly associated with the king, "That the activity of the king as the agent of the creator God brings *shalom* even to the fertility of the animals and the fields is a widely-attested concept in the ancient Near East."⁸²² What is unique about Isa 11:6-8 is the particular hyperbolic form of the animal blessing.⁸²³

This interpretation of Isa 11:6-8 overlaps with a few of those previously mentioned. As described above, some commentators argue that the imagery

⁸²¹ Korpel, "The Messianic King," 155; cf. Weinfeld, "The Roots of the Messianic Idea," 281–282; K. Lawson Younger Jr., "The Figurative Aspect and the Contextual Method in the Evaluation of the Solomonic Empire (1 Kings 1-11)," in *The Bible in Three Dimensions: Essays in Celebration of Forty Years of Biblical Studies in the University of Sheffield* (ed. David J. A. Clines, Stephen E. Fowl, and Stanley E. Porter; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 157–75. Watson states of hyperbole, "It is a rhetorical device common to most literatures, but in the ancient Near East where it was standard practice to depict royalty and important personages as larger than life on wall-paintings, reliefs and in sculpture, hyperbole was practically part of everyday language" (Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 317; cf. Daniel L. Smith-Christopher, "Are the Refashioned Weapons in Micah 4:1-4 a Sign of Peace or Conquest?: Shifting the Contextual Borders of a 'Utopian' Prophetic Motif," in *Utopia and Dystopia in Prophetic Literature* [ed. Ehud Ben Zvi; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006], 203).

⁸²² Löning and Zenger, *To Begin with, God Created . . .*, 178. Similarly Watts states, "The classic view of Zion's king understood that natural order as much as social and political order depended on him. The effective reign of God's anointed brought justice to the people and peace (שְׁלוֹמִים in the sense of wholeness and health) to all of God's creation" (Watts, *Isaiah 1-33*, 175).

⁸²³ Pace Sweeney who, based on a citation of Wildberger, claims, "The imagery of normally antagonistic wild animals resting harmlessly together is commonly employed in the announcement of a royal savior genre to depict the new king's reign" (Marvin A. Sweeney, "Jesse's New Shoot in Isaiah 11: A Josianic Reading of the Prophet Isaiah," in *A Gift of God in Due Season: Essays on Scripture and Community in Honor of James A. Sanders* [ed. David McLain Carr and Richard D. Weis; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996], 110). Wildberger's conclusion is more reserved: "The reflections above have demonstrated that the motif of peace among the animals, within a prediction about a future king, is essentially not out of place" (Wildberger, *Isaiah 1-12*, 480). More importantly, the only evidence Wildberger cites that predates the writing of Isa 11 (by all authorship views) has been questioned in the discussion of Mesopotamian literature above.

is used in an illustrative or hyperbolic manner, either through an allusion to a creation paradise or in a more generic way. Thus their interpretations agree in general on the rhetorical purpose for the imagery, and yet their explanations of its origins are different.

Having analyzed verses 6-8, it is helpful to note how verse 9 fits in with and confirm the present interpretation. Isaiah 11:9 functions as a concluding statement by making the connection between 1-5 and 6-8 clear, that of cause and result, although listed in reverse order. Verse 9a states the intent of the imagery in 6-8: the lack of harm and destruction. Verse 9b gives the consequences of the king's rule in 1-5: knowledge of Yahweh in the land.⁸²⁴ The future perfect verb *מִלְאָה* in 9b, "will have become full," makes the causal connection clear in that the filling precedes the lack of harm.⁸²⁵ Thus the focus is on a changed relationship and not a change in nature; harm and destruction are no longer present in Israel because God no longer needs to punish them for disobedience.

Some object that the animals from verses 6-8 cannot be the ones no longer harming or destroying in verse 9. They argue that the two clauses in verse 9 are causally connected, and since animals cannot be the implied

⁸²⁴ Wildberger, *Isaiah 1-12*, 467 and 481; Richard L. Schultz, *The Search for Quotation: Verbal Parallels in the Prophets* (JSOTSup 180; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 253; Tucker, "The Peaceable Kingdom and a Covenant with the Wild Animals," 217.

⁸²⁵ Wildberger, *Isaiah 1-12*, 481.

subject of the second clause (surely animals cannot come to a knowledge of Yahweh), they are not the subject of the first.⁸²⁶ However, there is no need for both clauses to have the same subject. Animals are no longer harming or destroying because humans have come to a widespread knowledge of Yahweh.

Yet, how can a change in people lead to a change in animals? The answer is found in the function of wild animals in blessings and curses, as discussed above. Changes in animal-human relations have nothing to do with whether animals are acting rightly or not. Instead, the focus is on human actions. The coming righteous king will establish justice in the land, namely the knowledge of Yahweh, which will then lead to the blessing of verses 6-8, a time when humans no longer fear wild animals. The change in the animal-human relationship is a result of the change in the God-Israel relationship. Wild animals are no longer harming and destroying because they are not needed as a curse for disobedience. Steck concludes, "Entsprechend 11,9 handelte V. 6-8 dann nicht universell von Natur, Tierwelt im ganzen, sondern

⁸²⁶ Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Isaiah: I-XXVII*, 224. Some commentators argue that the limiting phrase 'my holy mountain' excludes the animals since it usually refers to a place inhabited by people (Buber, *Der Glaube der Propheten*, 188–189; Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, 392 n. 20; cf. Zenger, "Die Verheissung Jesaja 11,1-10, universal oder partikular?," 138–140). However, such an argument misses the main point since the image is not about animals for their own sake, but in their interactions with people.

von Tiergefährdungen für Israel im Land als Strafe Jahwes, deren Wende in unüberbietbarer Weise hier angekündigt wird."⁸²⁷

Isaiah 11:1-9 describes the ideal king who will come, and whose reign will lead to peace and security in this land. But that peace does not come about by the hunting prowess of the king, by the sling of David. It comes about through justice, as God pours blessings down on a righteous land. And that blessing is described not in the terms of a creation paradise, but using a hyperbolic form of the blessing regarding devouring animals.

⁸²⁷ Steck, ". . . ein kleiner Knabe kann sie leiten," 110. However, animals alone may not be the subject. Another suggestion is that the verbs are taken as having a vague personal subject, "no one shall hurt" (Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Isaiah: I-XXVII*, 224; Schultz, *The Search for Quotation*, 253; cf. Joüon §155b). In this interpretation, verse 9 expands upon verses 6-8, indicating that the peace depicted has reference to more than just the wild animals. Similarly, in Lev 26:6, Ezek 34:28, and Hosea 2:20 freedom from wild animals and military strife appear side by side. Along the same lines, Gitay argues that the primary subject of verse 9 is the animals but notes an allusion to people as well. After noting that the verbs רעע and שחת are used to describe Israel in Isa 1:4, he then comments on 11:9, "It is not accidental that the words have been chosen again; not just alluding to the dangerous animals, but depicting the new order as well" (Gitay, *Isaiah and His Audience*, 223). On the tie between 11:9 and 1:4, see also Steck, ". . . ein kleiner Knabe kann sie leiten," 106 n. 13; Korpel, "The Messianic King," 153; Löning and Zenger, *To Begin with, God Created . . .*, 175.

Note that the parallel phrase in Isa 65:25 can be interpreted in the same two ways. Some commentators argue that the animals are the subject since they are the only group mentioned in verse 25 (T. K. Cheyne, *The Prophecies of Isaiah: A New Translation with Commentary and Appendices* [2 vols., 3d rev. ed.; London: K. Paul Trench & Co., 1884], 2:121; Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Isaiah: I-XXVII*, 223; Schultz, *The Search for Quotation*, 255). Koole admits that the primary subject is the animals but suggests that the subject could also be taken as impersonal since it acts as the concluding statement of the passage (Jan Koole, *Isaiah III*, [3 vols.; Leuven: Peeters, 2001], 3:467).

2. Isaiah 65:25

A study of Isa 11:6-8 is not complete without an analysis of Isa 65:25 because of the close connections. That there is a tie between these two texts is hard to deny, but the relationship is far from obvious. They differ in more than their length. Of the 20 words in Isa 65:25, only 12 are identical to 11:6-9. The shared words are in bold.

זֶאֵב וְטֹלָה יִרְעוּ כְּאַחַד וְאַרְיֵה כְּבָקָר יֹאכַל-תְּבֹן וְנָחָשׁ עֹפֵר לֶחֶמוֹ
לֹא-יִרְעוּ וְלֹא-יִשְׁחִיתוּ בְּכָל-הָהָר קִדְשֵׁי אֱמֹר יְהוָה:

"The wolf and the lamb will graze as one; **and the lion as the ox will eat straw**; and as for the serpent, dust will be its food. **They will not harm and they will not destroy on all my holy mountain,**" says Yahweh.

The relationship between these passages has been debated, but the strongest arguments point to the priority of Isa 11:6-9.⁸²⁸ Isaiah 65:25 can be explained as a compression of Isa 11:6-9 that still communicates a similar meaning and thrust. Thus, it is by far the oldest commentary on Isa 11:6-9.

⁸²⁸ Steck, ". . . ein kleiner Knabe kann sie leiten," 108–109; J. T. A. G. M. van Ruiten, "The Intertextual Relationship between Isa 11,6-9 and Isa 65,25," in *The Scriptures and the Scrolls: Studies in Honour of A.S. Van Der Woude on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday* (VTSup 49; Leiden: Brill, 1992), 34–35 n. 11; B. D. Somers, "Allusions and Illusions: The Unity of the Book of Isaiah in Light of Deutero-Isaiah's Use of Prophetic Tradition," in *New Visions of Isaiah* (ed. Roy Melugin and Marvin A. Sweeney; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 174 n. 37. Partially based on its relationship with Isa 11:6-9, some take 65:25 as a later addition to 65:17-24 (cf. Claus Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66: A Commentary* [trans. David M. G. Stalker; OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969], 410–411). Schultz surveys the various arguments for priority and concludes that it is difficult to determine which text was earlier; however, he argues, "From a synchronic perspective, 65.25 must be viewed as a quotation of 11.6-9, a selective adaption designed to maintain the portrait of pervasive peace yet shifting it in keeping with the imagery of the larger unit, 65.17-25" (Schultz, *The Search for Quotation*, 255).

Isaiah 65:25 abbreviates 11:6-9 not only by selective quotation but also by rewording, resulting in two big differences: an absence of humans and a sustained focus on eating.⁸²⁹ Only the first and last animals from Isa 11:6-7 are mentioned. The description of the wolf (זָאֵב) is changed to portray it as grazing, but an exact quotation is used for the lion (אֶרְיָה). The shepherd boy is left out. The mention of a snake (נָחָשׁ) is surely an allusion to Isa 11:8, even though the words used and the image described are different. The snake is now eating dust, not playing with children. Isa 65:25 concludes with a quotation from 11:9 which leaves out the final causal clause.⁸³⁰

Although various changes have been made to fit the new context, Isa 65:25 has the same focus as 11:6-9: the domestication of the wild animals listed. As mentioned above, all humans have been eliminated from the imagery, as is most evident in the section about snakes. And yet this change does not indicate a shift in the imagery. Humans don't need to be mentioned in verse 25 since they are the focus in verses 18-24.⁸³¹ These verses describe the change in God's dealing with his people, no longer bringing judgment and

⁸²⁹ Another element lacking, not from the verses themselves but from the context, is the mention of a coming king. Van Ruiten agrees with most commentators that 65:25 has purposely omitted the kingly or messianic ties seen in Isa 11 (Ruiten, "The Intertextual Relationship between Isa 11,6-9 and Isa 65,25," 36). Childs disagrees, at least on the canonical level. He states, "The function of this appeal to intertextuality thus serves to identify the new creation of chapter 65 with the messianic hope of First Isaiah" (Childs, *Isaiah*, 539).

⁸³⁰ The causal clause would not have fit the context of Isa 65:17-25 because these verses focus on God as the one bringing the blessing without any reference to prior human obedience.

⁸³¹ Olley, "The Wolf, the Lamb, and a Little Child," 227.

curse but blessing, as various curses are mentioned and reversed.⁸³² Thus, verse 25 should be interpreted in the same way as 11:6-8; it is a blessing for the people, a reversal of the curse relating to devouring animals.⁸³³

Key to understanding 65:25 is rightly interpreting the reference to snakes. Why is their food dust? Commentators argue this phrase is alluding not only to Isa 11:8 but also to Gen 3:14.⁸³⁴ These two passages do share key terms, both נָחָשׁ and עָפָר, although they express the notion of eating differently as Gen 3:14 uses a verbal clause with אָכַל while Isa 65:25 uses a nominal clause with לֶחֶמוֹ. The problem, however, is how the curse on the serpent in Gen 3 can be used in Isa 65 as a blessing for humans.⁸³⁵ Steck asserts that

⁸³² Hillers, *Treaty-Curses and the Old Testament Prophets*, 29. Verse 20 speaks of weeping and crying out, verse 21 mentions early death, verses 21-22 refer to futility curses in which houses and vineyards are not enjoyed (cf. Deut 28:30, Amos 5:11, Zeph 1:13), and verse 23 mentions laboring in vain (לָרֵיק; cf. Lev 26:16, 20) and calamity (בְּהִלָּה; cf. Lev 26:16, Ps 78:33, Jer 15:8).

⁸³³ Schultz considers this connection as a possibility: "One also could relate v. 25 to the mention of wild beasts in Lev. 26.6, 26, though this appears less likely" (Schultz, *The Search for Quotation*, 254 n. 40).

⁸³⁴ Mark W. Elliott, ed., *Isaiah 40-66* (ACCS 11; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 277; Olley, "The Wolf, the Lamb, and a Little Child," 227. Steck attempts to expand the ties beyond Gen 3:14 by arguing for other connections between Isa 65:16b-25 and Gen 1-3. His proposed connection between Isa 65:17 and Gen 1:1 is certainly possible, but those between Isa 65:20-23 and Gen 1:28 and 3:16-18 are very tenuous, especially since he admits that Isa 65:20-23 has closer connections with Lev 26 and Deut 28 (Odil Hannes Steck, "Der neue Himmel und die neue Erde: Beobachtungen zur Rezeption von Gen 1-3 in Jes 65,16b-25," in *Studies in the Book of Isaiah Festschrift Willem A.M. Beuken* [ed. J. T. A. G. M. van Ruiten and Marc Vervenne; Leuven: Peeters, 1997], 357-360).

⁸³⁵ Watts identifies this tension without providing a solution, "A *snake has dust for its food* recalls the curse placed upon him (Gen 3:14), but the context of the verse calls for understanding this, not as a parallel to enmity with humankind, but as a peaceful element of the newly created order" (John Watts, *Isaiah 34-66* [WBC 25; Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1987], 355). Brueggemann states that this line in the context "is curious . . . Whereas 11:8

the image of the snake eating dust is to show that it is no longer dangerous as with the wolf and lion; the curse of Gen 3:14 has now become a new food assignment.⁸³⁶ However, does the author really envision snakes nourished by dust? This understanding does not adequately deal with the metaphoric nature of eating dust found elsewhere.

Van Ruiten argues that the image of the snake's food as dust is depicting an accursed humbling of the serpent. He notes that the other passages associated with eating dust are images of humility that contain "an element of curse." He suggests that the same notion is present also for the wolf and lion, "The grazing of the wolf, the eating straw of the lion can be interpreted as curses for those predatory animals." These curses also function as a blessing for the domesticated animals who can now live without fear. Thus van Ruiten understands verse 25 as a metaphor that continues the theme of chapter 65 in which the wicked-strong are cursed and the faithful-weak are blessed.⁸³⁷ Van Ruiten's analysis of eating dust is helpful, as is his

would seem to include snakes in the renovation, in our verse the serpent is the only creature of Genesis 3 who continues under curse . . . Perhaps in the end the poet is realistic and understands that even in the new city the resolution of Yahweh's *shalom* is still qualified" (Walter Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40-66* [WesBC; Louisville, Kent.: Westminster John Knox, 1998], 250). Whybray is most negative in his assessment, "it is probably useless to seek a logical link between this phrase and the rest of the verse . . . It is a gloss based on Gen. 3:14" (R. N. Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66* [NCB; London: Oliphants, 1975], 278–279).

⁸³⁶ Steck, ". . . ein kleiner Knabe kann sie leiten," 109; Steck, "Der neue Himmel und die neue Erde," 359; cf. Cheyne, *The Prophecies of Isaiah*, 121; Schultz, *The Search for Quotation*, 254. Similarly, Calvin states, "The serpent, satisfied with his dust, shall wrap himself in it, and shall no longer hurt by his envenomed bite" (Calvin, *Isaiah*, 4:406).

⁸³⁷ Ruiten, "The Intertextual Relationship between Isa 11,6-9 and Isa 65,25," 41.

attempt to connect the imagery of all three wild animals; nevertheless, his metaphoric understanding does not fit the context of 17-25, especially since it would be the only image mentioning the punishment of the wicked.

To understand Isa 65:25 it is necessary to question the tie with Gen 3:14 and the idea of the snake being cursed. There is no reason to take the image of eating dust literally, in the sense of nutrition. Instead, it refers to a physical position in which one's head is near to or on the ground.⁸³⁸ The image also fits in with the connotation of dust as a lowly object. Hillers states that dust is "that which gets stepped on, and in contrast to the sky the dust, or ground, is the lowest thing . . . Hence 'dust' is figurative for what is low, defeated, contemptible."⁸³⁹ Such lowliness of dust can be used as a metaphor for submission, especially the image of eating dust.⁸⁴⁰ In Isa 65:25, the imagery is complicated since it describes an animal that actually has a lowly physical posture. Yet, if in Isa 65:25 it only refers to the physical position of snakes, the position they presently have, what comfort is the prophet providing? Therefore it is best to take eating dust as a metaphor for

⁸³⁸ Mic 7:17; cf. Deut 32:24, Lam 3:29.

⁸³⁹ Hillers, "Dust: Some Aspects of Old Testament Imagery," 106. See also Ps 44:26, Isa 26:5, 29:4, and 47:1. In Mesopotamia, eating dust was equivalent to death. In Lugalbanda I 165, Lugalbanda does not want to die so he cries out, "Let me not yet eat bitter dust instead of barley" (translated by Vanstiphout, *Epics of Sumerian Kings*, 113). In the Descent of Ishtar to the Netherworld, the netherworld is described as a place "where dust is their sustenance and clay their food" (translated by Foster, *Before the Muses*, III.19:499).

⁸⁴⁰ On dust in general see Gen 18:27 and Job 42:6; on eating dust see Ps 72:9, Isa 49:23, Mic 7:17; cf. L. Wächter, "עֲפָרָה," *TDOT*, 11:261; Hillers, "Dust: Some Aspects of Old Testament Imagery," 106.

submission. The reference to a serpent with dust as food is describing a serpent submissive to humans, domesticated. This interpretation aligns with the other two images in Isa 65:25 and communicates the same point as Isa 11:6-8. It is a hyperbolic portrayal of human security through a description of wild animals as domesticated.

Both Isa 11:6-8 and 65:25 occur in contexts with connections to the blessings and curses seen elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible and the ANE. Their imagery can be well explained in light of the other blessings and curses related to devouring animals. Therefore it is best not to interpret them as allusions to a creation paradise nor appeal to them in the interpretation of Gen 1-3. Their imagery is a hyperbolic not realistic description of relations of wild animals with domesticated animals and humans. Thus, they do not provide evidence for a time characterized by vegetarianism or animal peace.

F. Conclusions

Genesis 1-3 describes the initial created state as one of bounty and blessing. Humans were created to work, but work was not onerous until after the curses of Gen 3. In these aspects, Gen 1-3 differs from Mesopotamia. Yet, it seems best to reach similar conclusion regarding original immortality, vegetarianism and animal peace. These were not a feature of the primeval time as in Mesopotamia. Nevertheless, there are differences that need to be highlighted.

Whereas in Mesopotamia humans are created animal-like, in need of the gifts of culture from the gods, humans in Gen 1-3 were created with the potential for progress. Development is needed in both; however, in the Hebrew Bible what is needed for civilization is not given later as in Mesopotamia but at the beginning. Thus humans may be primitive, but not animal-like. This difference allows for development to be evaluated, highlighting an ethical component.

This potential also applies to the issue of original immortality. In Gen 2-3, humans are not portrayed as immortal; instead, the possibility of living forever is placed before them. However, they miss the chance as they are barred from the tree of life after eating from the tree of knowledge, dooming them to die. Thus, there is a contrast with Mesopotamia where it is the gods'

decision that humans must die and likewise the gods' decision to make one man immortal.⁸⁴¹

Humankind's ability to develop is perhaps best seen in God's blessing in Gen 1:28. These commands grant not only fruitfulness, but also dominion. They refer to the process of civilization. But they also indicate that progress will not occur without conflict, specifically with animals. In this, the Hebrew Bible is similar to Mesopotamia which likewise recognized that cultural development created new tensions with animals. Thus animal peace is not a feature of the primeval state in Gen 1. The imagery in Isa 11:6-8 does not conflict with this conclusion because it is best understood not as an allusion to a creation paradise but as a hyperbolic form of the blessing concerning devouring animals.

It is possible that original vegetarianism could fit with such a primeval state. Yet, it is not mentioned in the texts. There is no prohibition on eating meat. Instead, humans are given dominion over animals with the implication that they can use them for their purposes. The contrast between the giving of plants in Gen 1:29-30 and meat in 9:3 is inadequate by itself to imply original

⁸⁴¹ LaCocque, *The Trial of Innocence*, 94 and 259–261. LaCocque's contrast is illustrative, "To Gilgamesh, death is just an inescapable fate . . . But to Adam, the choice is offered between the tree of life and the tree of moral license, between good and evil, between life and death" (LaCocque, *The Trial of Innocence*, 261).

vegetarianism. The differing contextual concerns are sufficient to explain why the blessing to humans is worded differently in these two places.

Although it does not settle the issue, the larger context of the Hebrew Bible supports this conclusion. Nowhere in the Hebrew Bible is it stated or implied that the killing and eating of animals is prohibited or unjust; instead, it is a blessing.⁸⁴² How does this context bear upon the beginning of Genesis? While it is expected that the initial state would be different in some ways from later 'normal' life, there must be adequate evidence for the specific differences. Without explicit evidence, as for original vegetarianism, it is best to assume continuity, that meat-eating was always a blessing.

The ANE context, at least for Mesopotamian literature as studied above, also supports this conclusion. Dequeker states well the implications of the comparative evidence, "It is necessary for us to conclude that the idea of a vegetarian diet as a symbol of paradisiacal peace in primeval times is not so well substantiated . . . as some scholars would have it. In view of the fact that this phenomenon is unknown to the older surrounding cultures of the bible, we would ask if it is indeed the interpretation demanded by the biblical text?"⁸⁴³

⁸⁴² See Appendix I.

⁸⁴³ Dequeker, "Green Herbage and Trees Bearing Fruit," 125.

What then are the implications of this study for the interpretation of Gen 1-3? The initial state of creation in the Hebrew Bible may appropriately be called a paradise since it is described as blessed and better than 'normal' life. Yet, what is meant by that designation needs to be carefully nuanced. The notion of paradise when used for Gen 1-3 must be able to include both work and development. The garden was not a static place but a starting place.

Death and conflict also need to color the picture. However, human death is not in view since the issue of human mortality was still undetermined. It is with regard to animals that the terminology of paradise when used to describe Gen 1-3 needs to be most carefully defined. The Hebrew Bible does not describe a time without carnivores, a time of animal peace. Instead, some level of conflict or strife among animals and between humans and animals is assumed from the beginning. And just as animal diets were not different from later 'normal' life, so also humans ate both vegetation and meat.

IV. Epilogue

In many ways, what is most original in this dissertation concerns animals. It is an argument that the interpretation of the initial state as described in Gen 1-3 with regards to animals needs to be fundamentally changed. Thus it is helpful to speculate about what brought about the old paradigm and to state in brief the reasons for the new. Note that the following comments are more suggestions than fully researched conclusions.

The key issue is conflict. If primeval times are understood as characterized by perfect peace, then that peace must extend to animals. How is there perfect peace when lions hunt gazelles and threaten people, when humans kill animals for protection or to eat them? Animal peace and vegetarianism are just two entailments of a lack of conflict.

Why was Gen 1-3 interpreted as depicting a time without conflict, even with animals? Most likely, one major reason was the assumed inappropriateness of conflict in a creation declared good. It didn't fit with the expectations of a paradise. The other major reason was Isa 11:6-8. It provided an image that lacked conflict, at least with wild animals, and was read back into Gen 1-3.

The comparative evidence was also influential. Early Jewish and Christian interpretations arose under the influence of Hellenism. Most likely,

their understanding of Gen 1-3 was influenced by the golden age of Hesiod as further defined by later, usually vegetarian authors and as combined with the imagery of the Elysian Fields and the Isles of the Blessed.⁸⁴⁴ Many modern commentators also cite these Greco-Roman texts as parallels. More recently, the Mesopotamian texts studied were added to the list of comparative evidence.

So why is a shift needed? First, the interpretation of the comparative evidence has changed. The interpretation of Mesopotamian texts has long been connected with and influenced by the Hebrew Bible. Commentators are often too quick to find a connection.⁸⁴⁵ But as the field has developed, the interpretation process has matured. However, older interpretations are still perpetuated in the study of the Hebrew Bible.

This process is seen in texts related to the primeval paradise. Earlier interpretations of Mesopotamian texts depended upon contemporary understandings of Gen 1-3 and thus were read as paradisiacal. However, further study has led to different results: there is no primeval paradise in

⁸⁴⁴ For a survey of the Greco-Roman material, see Appendix II. On the influence of these works on the early church, see Delumeau, *History of Paradise*, 10–15.

⁸⁴⁵ As an example, *Enki and Ninhursaga* was first published by Stephen Langdon with the title *Sumerian Epic of Paradise, the Flood, and the Fall of Man* (Philadelphia: University Museum, 1915). Rather quickly, doubts were cast upon Langdon's text and interpretation, and Kramer notes in 1945 that most interpreters agree that the poem "had nothing to do with paradise, did not mention the flood, and said nothing about the fall of man" (Kramer and Albright, "Enki and Ninhursag," 3).

Mesopotamia. This new conclusion still needs to be fully appreciated in the study of Gen 1-3. The most relevant comparative evidence now argues for original conflict and against animal peace and vegetarianism.

The second reason for a paradigm shift is a different understanding of Isa 11:6-8. If these verses are not connected with creation as argued above, then the major reason to read Gen 1-3 without conflict is gone. Genesis 1-3 needs to be interpreted in light of what it describes and no longer read through the lens of the wolf and lamb imagery.

Once the presumed lack of conflict is eliminated, the commands to subdue and rule make sense. The animals encountered are no longer the ones transferred from Isa 11:6-8, but are ones that require force to control and use. And if animal peace is not present, then the major reason for original vegetarianism is also removed.

An additional complicating feature in present scholarship is the ecology debates. White's article "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis" places the blame for Western exploitation of the environment upon the biblical call to dominion.⁸⁴⁶ Various answers are given to White's claim, often indicating its weaknesses.⁸⁴⁷ But White has also caused commentators to reexamine the

⁸⁴⁶ Lynn White, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," *Science* 155 no. 3767 (March 10, 1967): 1203–1207.

⁸⁴⁷ See especially Wybrow, *The Bible, Baconianism, and Mastery over Nature*, 3–35 and 163–193.

commands to subdue and rule, trying to soften their meaning or impact as described above. However, Möller aptly warns, "We need to be careful not to sanitize the text to make it conform to our modern sensibilities regarding issues such as force and violence . . . the harshness implied in the terms כבש and ב רדה should not be explained away."⁸⁴⁸

Concerns raised about animal rights are similar and often related. Texts are read from the perspective of animals. Note the comments of Turner concerning Noah's sacrifice and the following verses.

These animals were saved from drowning only to feel the sacrificial knife at their throats. This note struck by Noah's act is amplified by the divine statement of 9.2 that 'the fear of you . . . and the dread of you . . . shall be upon every beast of the earth . . .' After the carnage of 8.20 it is not difficult to see why. But worse is to follow: 'Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you' (9.3a). Animals will not only be used for sacrifices to God, but for everyday food for humans as well. The restriction on eating blood with the flesh (v.4) is no comfort to those creatures whose life-blood will be drained. 'Dominion' has now become despotic.⁸⁴⁹

While rhetorically compelling, such a procedure is unhelpful in the process of interpretation. It is hard to imagine that an ancient Israelite would have this perspective. It is certainly not present elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible.

Thus it may be asked, is the Hebrew Bible in favor of the exploitation of the earth or animal cruelty? In our modern context, these questions are

⁸⁴⁸ Möller, "Images of God and Creation in Genesis 1-2," 20–21.

⁸⁴⁹ Turner, *Announcements of Plot in Genesis*, 47.

difficult to answer since so much of it revolves around definitions. One person's exploitation is another's utilization. What is for one a sign of barbarity is for another a sign of civilization.

What is argued in this dissertation is that the Hebrew Bible views the killing and eating of animals as a part of the blessing given by God at creation. However, the text does not mean that humans may use animals in any way they want. Thus, there could be practices which the Hebrew Bible would condemn, which it would label animal cruelty.⁸⁵⁰ This conclusion fits with the ethical element prominent in the beginning of Genesis mentioned above. God's blessing may have granted dominion over the animals, but humankind's use of that dominion was still going to be evaluated by God.

⁸⁵⁰ Even though animals were killed and eaten, the Hebrew Bible and the ANE show concern for the right treatment of animals. Proverbs 12:10 speaks of caring for animals, "A righteous person knows the life of his animal." God likewise is said to care for animals (Jonah 4:11). The Egyptian "Negative Confessions" (Spell 125 from the *Book of the Dead*) states, "I have not committed wrongdoing against anyone. I have not mistreated cattle" (translated by Robert K. Ritner, *COS* 2.12:60).

V. Appendix 1: Meat-Eating in the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel

In the Hebrew Bible, the use of animals for food is portrayed positively. The presence of meat was significant. Meals that were in some way special included meat.⁸⁵¹ To kill and prepare an animal for a guest was a sign of hospitality.⁸⁵² The banquets prepared by Wisdom for the simple and Yahweh for the nations are depicted as grandiose by the presence of meat.⁸⁵³ Proverbs 15:17 is illuminating in its assumption that vegetables are less desirable than meat.

טוב אֶרְחַת יֶרֶק וְאַהֲבָה-שָׁם מִשׁוֹר אָבוּס וְשִׂנְאָה-בוֹ:

A meal of vegetables with love is better than a fattened ox with hatred.

The laws give an elevated status to meat. In Deut 12, the eating of meat is part of the bounty of the promised land. Israelites are to bring their sacrifices, eat, and rejoice according to God's blessing (6-7 and 17-18). Also, they may eat meat in their gates whenever they desire according to God's blessing (15 and 20-22). Some sacrificial laws call for a range of offerings based on the status or economic ability of the offerer. A grain offering is at

⁸⁵¹ Gen 27:3-4 and 1 Sam 9:24.

⁸⁵² Gen 18:6-8 and 1 Sam 25:18.

⁸⁵³ Prov 9:2 and Isa 25:6.

the bottom of the scale, listed as the last option, indicating its relative worth in comparison to an animal sacrifice.⁸⁵⁴

The eating of meat by humans is never condemned nor portrayed negatively.⁸⁵⁵ It is at least worthy of note that there are no examples of voluntary vegetarianism in the Hebrew Bible. In contrast, the Nazirite (Num 6:3-4) and Rechabites (Jer 35:6) voluntarily forsake wine. Carnivorous animals are also not condemned for eating meat; instead, they look to God for their food.⁸⁵⁶

How much meat was eaten in ancient Israel is a difficult question to answer with much precision. Many authors assert that meat was a rarity. King and Stager are representative of current opinion when they state, "The average family ate meat only on festive occasions."⁸⁵⁷ In contrast, MacDonald concludes in his recent study, "we must assume a higher level of meat consumption than was assumed by earlier scholarship . . . We know, for

⁸⁵⁴ Lev 5:11.

⁸⁵⁵ Reed states, "Meat was an important part of the diet of the Israelites. Many texts of the Hebrew Bible refer to the eating of meat by humans, and there is no indication that there is anything wrong with such behavior . . . In such a society vegetarianism would be quite unexpected" (Reed, "Meat Eating and the Hebrew Bible," 286–287).

⁸⁵⁶ Ps 104:21 and Job 38:39-40; cf. Clements, "The wolf shall live with the lamb," 93–94.

⁸⁵⁷ Philip J. King and Lawrence E. Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel* (LAI; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 68.

example, that fish was consumed to a greater extent than previously imagined."⁸⁵⁸

Undoubtedly, the answer to how much meat an Israelite ate would vary according to region, social status, and time period in Israel's history.⁸⁵⁹ Any conclusions reached are necessarily tentative since the data available are limited and a number of assumptions must be included in any model. However, it is possible to get an impression, even if imprecise, of the place of meat in the average Israelite diet. Overall it seems that meat may not have been rare, but it was certainly not a normal, everyday provision.

In Israel, meat-eating was most likely restricted based on two main criteria: economic and storage concerns. Meat was more costly than other food types, either as a trade good or as it depleted one's herd. Thus only the wealthy could afford it on a regular basis. Also, the extent of meat preservation is unclear; most likely an animal needed to be eaten soon after it was slaughtered.⁸⁶⁰

⁸⁵⁸ Nathan MacDonald, *What Did the Ancient Israelites Eat?: Diet in Biblical Times* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2008), 92.

⁸⁵⁹ Such differences would be seen in the consumption of other foods. MacDonald states that the ancient Israelite diet was centered around "the so-called Mediterranean triad: bread, wine, and olive oil" and supplemented with other foodstuffs depending on region and season. For example the diet of pastoralists would have included "a higher level of milk products" while the more agricultural areas would include "legumes, vegetables, and fruit" (MacDonald, *What Did the Ancient Israelites Eat?*, 91–92).

⁸⁶⁰ Borowski argues that there is no evidence of any method of meat storage in ancient Israel (Borowski, *Every Living Thing*, 57 and 83 n. 27). Fish were an exception. Based

In the textual record, meat is not viewed as a staple but as a supplement. Grain, wine and oil are portrayed as the core of the normal Israelite diet in the Hebrew Bible.⁸⁶¹ Two food lists are notable in their absence of meat, although they both come from later periods: the list of the necessities of life in Sir 39:26 and the minimum provisions for a wife when the husband is absent in m. Ketub. 5:8-9.

Many of the meals described in the Hebrew Bible include meat; however, they are also described as special occasions because they involve sacrifice, hospitality, celebration, or royalty.⁸⁶² Other meals, usually more mundane, don't include meat.⁸⁶³ Select types of meat act as a sign of luxury and indulgence.⁸⁶⁴

on inscriptional evidence and on their widespread distribution, it seems clear that fish were processed in some way so that they could be traded (Borowski, *Every Living Thing*, 170 and 172). Bottéro notes that salted beef, gazelle and fish are mentioned in Mesopotamian texts, and he speculates that they may also have dried and smoked meat (Jean Bottéro, "The Cuisine of Ancient Mesopotamia," *BA* 48, no. 1 [March 1985]: 39; cf. Oded Borowski, "Eat, Drink and Be Merry: The Mediterranean Diet," *NEA* 67, no. 2 [June 2004]: 100). Therefore, it is possible that similar ways of meat preservation were practiced in Israel.

⁸⁶¹ For example, see Gen 27:28, 37, 28:20, Deut 8:3, 29:6, Hos 2:10, Joel 2:19, Lam 2:12, Ps 104:14-15, and Neh 5:15.

⁸⁶² See for example Gen 18:6-8, 27:3-4, 1 Sam 9:24, 14:32, 25:18, 1 Kgs 5:2-3, 17:6, and Neh 5:18. Hendel states, "The typical Israelite meal consisted of vegetable, milk products, and grains. A meal with meat, e.g. Gen. 18.6-8, was a special meal" (Hendel, "Table and Altar," 135). Borowski notes contemporary parallels, "In traditional Middle Eastern societies, as in antiquity, meals with meat dishes signify special occasions, such as weddings and the hosting of guests, and are full of symbolism" (Borowski, "Eat, Drink and Be Merry," 101).

⁸⁶³ See for example Gen 14:18, 21:14, 25:34, Judges 19:19, Ruth 2:14, 1 Kgs 17:11, 19:6, 2 Kgs 4:38, and 42.

⁸⁶⁴ Amos 6:4.

Animal bones found in archaeological excavations of ancient Israelite sites confirm, in general, the textual picture.⁸⁶⁵ Study of these bones can show what animals were being used and in what ways, even though they cannot be used to determine precisely how much meat was consumed. To some degree, the bones reveal the relative numbers of different animals at a site, which in turn indicates the primary means of subsistence.⁸⁶⁶ A higher percentage of cows (bovines) indicates a more agricultural focus since cows were primarily used for plowing; a lower percentage indicates a more pastoral focus.⁸⁶⁷ Bones are also used to determine the approximate age of an animal when it was killed or died. If enough bones are found at a site, it is helpful to determine the usual age when animals were killed. In general, a greater

⁸⁶⁵ An analysis of human bones is also helpful in determining the amount of meat in the diet of ancient Israel. However, more work needs to be done in this area to produce statistically significant results (MacDonald, *What Did the Ancient Israelites Eat?*, 81–86).

⁸⁶⁶ The most common technique used is to compare the total number of bones found for each species (Number of Identified Specimens [NISP] = Total Number of Fragments [TNF]). The comparison, however, can be skewed depending on how many bones from each individual animal are found. Sasson argues that cattle bones are often overrepresented due to their larger size and the higher percentage of them that are broken into multiple pieces in antiquity and during an archaeological excavation (Aharon Sasson, *Animal Husbandry in Ancient Israel: A Zooarchaeological Perspective on Livestock Exploitation, Herd Management and Economic Strategies* [London: Equinox, 2010], 102–105). Another method is to calculate the minimum number of animals from each species that the bones could represent (the Minimum Number of Individuals - MNI). The problem is that this calculation "may exaggerate the presence of rarer species" (MacDonald, *What Did the Ancient Israelites Eat?*, 118 n. 3). Hess and Wapnish conclude, "It is not reasonable to assume that we will eventually find *the* correct statistic for measuring the abundance of an animal bone category. Each statistic has strengths and weaknesses, and therefore special applications" (Brian Hesse and Paula Wapnish, *Animal Bone Archeology: From Objectives to Analysis* [Washington, D.C.: Taraxacum, 1985], 109). Hesse and Wapnish provide a helpful overview of all the various "natural influences" that can distort "the information potentially encoded in animal bone remains" (Hesse and Wapnish, *Animal Bone Archeology*, 19).

⁸⁶⁷ MacDonald, *What Did the Ancient Israelites Eat?*, 63–64.

proportion of animals being killed before maturity reveals an emphasis on meat production. More animals killed after maturity reveals other interests, such as secondary products like wool and milk or agricultural labor.⁸⁶⁸

In Palestine throughout the Iron Age, the bones of sheep and goats (caprovines) are the most numerous, indicating a strong pastoral focus. The percentage of cattle bones increases in the more agriculturally productive lands, such as the Shephelah, in comparison with the more rugged areas, like the Judean highlands.⁸⁶⁹ In the areas connected with ancient Israel during the Iron I, II, and Persian periods, the bones indicate that many animals lived to maturity. Thus, meat production was most likely not the primary goal.⁸⁷⁰ The proportion of young animals increases somewhat during the Iron II period, possibly corresponding to a period of greater prosperity in which meat may have become more prevalent.⁸⁷¹

⁸⁶⁸ MacDonald, *What Did the Ancient Israelites Eat?*, 62–63. However, even in a non-meat producing economy the killing of some young animals is a normal part of herd maintenance since it helps to preserve grazing resources and promote milk production (Aharon Sasson, "Reassessing the Bronze and Iron Age Economy: Sheep and Goat Husbandry in the Southern Levant as a Model Case Study," in *Bene Israel: Studies in the Archaeology of Israel and the Levant During the Bronze and Iron Ages in Honour of Israel Finkelstein* [ed. Alexander Fantalkin and Assaf Yasur-Landau; CHANE 31; Leiden: Brill, 2008], 125–126).

⁸⁶⁹ MacDonald, *What Did the Ancient Israelites Eat?*, 62.

⁸⁷⁰ Sasson concludes from a study of Bronze and Iron Age sites "that a specialized economy in meat, milk, or wool production was not prevalent in the southern Levant" (Sasson, "Reassessing the Bronze and Iron Age Economy," 127). This conclusion is part of his larger argument that the Southern Levant employed "a survival subsistence strategy" and was not a "market-oriented economy" (Sasson, *Animal Husbandry in Ancient Israel*, 121).

⁸⁷¹ MacDonald, *What Did the Ancient Israelites Eat?*, 66–72.; cf. Sasson, "Reassessing the Bronze and Iron Age Economy," 121–128. Meyers asserts that MacDonald "is probably too

Various authors have tried to model the Israelite diet based on textual, archaeological, and anthropological evidence. Ancient rations and other textual evidence are often used in estimating quantities of grain, wine and oil. Grain-based foods probably provided at least half the caloric intake, although the proportion could have been much greater.⁸⁷² Daily wine intake was most likely over half a liter and may have been up to one liter per person, providing 10 to 20 percent of a person's calories.⁸⁷³ Similarly, olive oil probably contributed between 10 and 20 percent.⁸⁷⁴ For meat consumption, authors base their models primarily on archaeological and anthropological evidence.⁸⁷⁵ The various models center around 50 grams of meat per person per day which would provide less than 10 percent of the caloric intake.⁸⁷⁶ These numbers

optimistic . . . in suggesting increased meat consumption in Iron II" (Meyers, "Food and the First Family: A Socioeconomic Perspective," 142 n. 19).

⁸⁷² MacDonald, *What Did the Ancient Israelites Eat?*, 19; Rosemary Ellison, "Diet in Mesopotamia: The Evidence of the Barley Ration Texts (c. 3000-1400 B.C.)," *Iraq* 43 (1981): 35–45; Magen Broshi, *Bread, Wine, Walls and Scrolls* (JSP 36; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 123.

⁸⁷³ Shim'on Dar, *Landscape and Pattern: An Archaeological Survey of Samaria 800 B.C.E. - 636 C.E.* (BARIS 308; Oxford: B.A.R., 1986), 160–161; Carey Walsh, *The Fruit of the Vine: Viticulture in Ancient Israel* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 210–212; Broshi, *Bread, Wine, Walls and Scrolls*, 129 and 162.

⁸⁷⁴ MacDonald, *What Did the Ancient Israelites Eat?*, 24; Dar, *Landscape and Pattern*, 161; Broshi, *Bread, Wine, Walls and Scrolls*, 122.

⁸⁷⁵ Sasson concludes from his ethnographic study of census data from premodern Palestinian villages in the 1940s, "the contribution of livestock products to the human diet was diminutive" (Sasson, *Animal Husbandry in Ancient Israel*, 5). Broshi argues that meat consumption in the Roman period "was pretty low, with most of the population eating meat only on holidays and feast days" (Broshi, *Bread, Wine, Walls and Scrolls*, 132).

⁸⁷⁶ Baruch Rosen, "Subsistence Economy of Stratum II," in *'Izbet Şarṭah: An Early Iron Age Site Near Rosh Ha'ayin, Israel* (BARIS 299; Oxford: B.A.R., 1986), 178–179; Aharon Sasson, "The Pastoral Component in the Economy of Hill Country Sites in the Intermediate

need to be used with caution since there are many assumptions built into the models, including a relatively even distribution of meat resources.⁸⁷⁷

Meat consumption would have varied with geography, social status, and time. Meat would not have been a regular part of the Israelite diet except for the highest elites in certain periods.⁸⁷⁸ The average Israelite may have eaten meat more often than 'rarely,' but it was certainly not a part of everyday life.

Bronze and Iron Ages: Archaeo-Ethnographic Case Studies," *TA* 25 (1998): 43; Sasson, *Animal Husbandry in Ancient Israel*, 116–117; cf. Dar, *Landscape and Pattern*, 246–247.

⁸⁷⁷ MacDonald, *What Did the Ancient Israelites Eat?*, 45–49 and 77–79.

⁸⁷⁸ Meyers, "Food and the First Family: A Socioeconomic Perspective," 143–144.

VI. Appendix II: Greco-Roman Survey

Greco-Roman literature provides the clearest portrayals of primitive vegetarianism and animal peace, most often in the golden age during the reign of Cronos. Commentators often refer to these texts as parallels in their argument for similar themes in the Hebrew Bible.⁸⁷⁹ Thus, for comparative purposes, it is helpful to sketch out the relevant evidence, although a full analysis is beyond the scope of this appendix.

There are certain similarities between ANE literature and that of Greece and Rome, although the relationship is debated.⁸⁸⁰ However, the connections with the Hebrew Bible and the beginning of Genesis are not particularly close, especially in comparison with Mesopotamia. The Greco-Roman texts available for study are from the first millennium and later, with only a few from the first half of the millennium.

⁸⁷⁹ For example, Dillmann writes,

In this belief in a primitive age of paradisaical peace, the biblical narrators do not stand alone; even in regard to the particular form of their thought here, many parallels may be found elsewhere. "According to Plato and Plutarch, in the beginning men abstained from the use of flesh, because the slaying of animals was regarded as wrong. So, too, Ovid represents men in the Golden Age as making use only of *fetus arboreos* and *herbas*, but not of flesh. Virgil represents even the beasts of prey as originally living on vegetable food" (Knobel).

(Dillmann, *Genesis*, 87; cf. Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Isaiah: I-XXVII*, 219; Westermann, *Genesis*, 163–164).

⁸⁸⁰ For possible connections, see Walter Burkert, *The Orientalizing Revolution: Near Eastern Influence on Greek Culture in the Early Archaic Age* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992); M. L. West, *The East Face of Helicon: West Asiatic Elements in Greek Poetry and Myth* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).

Many of the relevant texts come from individuals or groups that are associated with vegetarianism, using a primeval vegetarian diet as one argument against eating meat.⁸⁸¹ The obvious question to ask is whether original vegetarianism arises from their polemics. It is helpful, therefore, to make a few comments on ancient vegetarianism in Greece and Rome.

The earliest known groups associated with vegetarianism are the Orphics and Pythagoreans originating in the 6th and 5th century B.C.E.⁸⁸² Both groups taught some form of metempsychosis: the transmigration of the soul again and again into the bodies of humans, animals, or vegetables. Thus to kill and eat an animal was in one sense a form of cannibalism.⁸⁸³ Orphism

⁸⁸¹ Dombrowski lists four primary reasons for ancient philosophical vegetarianism (Daniel A. Dombrowski, *The Philosophy of Vegetarianism* [Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984], 4).

⁸⁸² Orphism arose first and was influential on Pythagoras (Christoph Riedweg, *Pythagoras: His life, Teaching, and Influence* [trans. Steven Rendall; Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005], 51). In contrast to the Pythagoreans, there is very limited evidence for distinct groups that would call themselves Orphics (Robert Parker, "Early Orphism," in *The Greek World* [ed. Anton Powell; New York: Routledge, 1995], 483–485). Osborne helpfully notes that vegetarianism could only develop at certain points in history: "the question 'shall I be vegetarian?' presupposes a degree of affluence, a society or a class of society that can afford to *select* whether or not to indulge in more than the bare necessities, and to select which of a range of available sources of nutrition to employ" (Catherine Osborne, "Ancient Vegetarianism," in *Food in Antiquity* [ed. John Wilkins, David Harvey, and Mike Dobson; Exeter, England: University of Exeter Press, 1995], 221).

⁸⁸³ Marcel Detienne, "Culinary Practices and the Spirit of Sacrifice," in *The Cuisine of Sacrifice among the Greeks* (trans. Paula Wissing; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 6–7; Riedweg, *Pythagoras*, 36–37; Catherine Osborne, *Dumb Beasts and Dead Philosophers: Humanity and the Humane in Ancient Philosophy and Literature* (New York: Clarendon Press, 2007), 43–62.

was well known for its avoidance of meat.⁸⁸⁴ However, it is less clear that Pythagoras or the Pythagoreans were strict vegetarians.⁸⁸⁵

It is important to emphasize how revolutionary Orphics and Pythagoreans were. Burkert states, "The most radical transformation of Greek religion is traced to these names."⁸⁸⁶ Unfortunately, they are also shrouded in mystery. There are no extant writings for the half-mythical figure of Orpheus, although there is a body of later literature associated with him.⁸⁸⁷ More is known of Pythagoras, even if many of the accounts are fanciful, and some passages attributed to him may be authentic.⁸⁸⁸

The Orphics and Pythagoreans were certainly influential on later vegetarians. What is unclear is whether they taught some form of primeval

⁸⁸⁴ W. K. C. Guthrie, *Orpheus and Greek Religion: A Study of the Orphic Movement* (London: Methuen, 1952), 196–197.

⁸⁸⁵ Diogenes Laertius states, "The offerings he made were always inanimate; though some say that he would offer cocks, sucking goats and porkers, as they are called, but lambs never. However, Aristoxenus has it that he consented to the eating of all other animals, and only abstained from ploughing oxen and rams" (*Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 8.2 [Hicks, LCL]). Other accounts state that he sacrificed oxen when he discovered the Pythagorean theorem and would sometimes eat meat from sacrificial animals (Riedweg, *Pythagoras*, 27, 31 and 33–37). It is also stated that Pythagoras introduced meat into the diet of athletes (Porphyry, *On Abstinence from Animal Food* 1.26; cf. Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 8.13 and 26; Riedweg, *Pythagoras*, 10). Riedweg suggests that Pythagoras made distinctions concerning animals and humans. First, human souls enter all animals except those proper for sacrifice. Second, some Pythagoreans are allowed to eat animals. Therefore, those who may eat animals must only eat sacrificial ones (Riedweg, *Pythagoras*, 67–69).

⁸⁸⁶ Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion* (trans. John Raffan; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985), 296. Detienne says Orphism "develops in opposition to the dominant thought of the politico-religious world, in opposition to the officialized parlance of Hesiod and Homer" (Detienne, "Culinary Practices and the Spirit of Sacrifice," 7).

⁸⁸⁷ Parker, "Early Orphism," 485–504.

⁸⁸⁸ Riedweg, *Pythagoras*, 1–97.

vegetarianism and animal peace. The only evidence that they did comes from a number of centuries later.⁸⁸⁹

The next group of vegetarians belonged in general to the philosophers, spanning from Empedocles in the fifth century B.C.E. to Porphyry in the third century C.E. Among them, there is a greater variety of reasons for a vegetarian life.⁸⁹⁰ They all fall into the period Burkert describes as philosophical religion in which "change and revolution is finally seen to irrupt into the static structures of Greek religion."⁸⁹¹ The most relevant texts for

⁸⁸⁹ There is no explicit textual evidence that Orphics believed in a vegetarian golden age (Guthrie, *Orpheus and Greek Religion*, 197–198). In contrast, Ovid in the late first century B.C.E., early first century C.E. gives an example of Pythagoras' teachings on the errors of eating flesh which includes a description of the golden age as characterized by vegetarianism, although only for humans.

But that pristine age, which we have named the golden age, was blessed with the fruit of the trees and the herbs which the ground sends forth, nor did men defile their lips with blood. Then birds plied their wings in safety through the heaven, and the hare loitered all unafraid in the tilled fields, nor did its own guilelessness hang the fish upon the hook. All things were free from treacherous snares, fearing no guile and full of peace. But after someone, an ill exemplar, whoever he was, envied the food of lions, and thrust down flesh as food into his greedy stomach, he opened the way for crime. It may be that, in the first place, with the killing of wild beasts the steel was warmed and stained with blood. This would have been justified, and we admit that creatures which menace our own lives may be killed without impiety. But, while they might be killed, they should never have been eaten.

(*Metamorphoses* 15.96-110 [Miller, LCL]).

⁸⁹⁰ For example, the real issue may be eating itself. Osborne states, "Porphyry observes that ideally we should like to abstain from all food [On Abstinence 1.38]. Hence vegetarianism is itself not an ideal, but only a poor substitute for total detachment. In these circumstances we are not in the business of choosing what we should like to eat, but of making the best of a bad job" (Osborne, "Ancient Vegetarianism," 219).

⁸⁹¹ Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 305.

primeval vegetarianism and animal peace come from this period; however, they are not all from people who practiced vegetarianism themselves.

This background provides a necessary context in which to survey the evidence for primeval vegetarianism and animal peace. The evidence will be presented in a mainly chronological sequence. The earliest depictions of the primeval period are described first, followed by the material relevant to vegetarianism and animal peace.

In Greco-Roman literature, two types of paradise are described: the original created state and a resting place for the blessed after their lives. The first is described in a number of different ways and is most relevant to the present study. And yet, the second is also worth including since it eventually becomes associated with the original state. In these texts and Greco-Roman literature in general, original human immortality of the physical body is never envisioned. In contrast, vegetarianism and animal peace are associated with both paradises at various times.

The earliest descriptions come from Hesiod in the eighth or seventh century B.C.E. He contrasts the present world with primeval times in two different accounts: the actions of Prometheus and Pandora and the sequence of the five ages. In both *Theogony* and *Works and Days*, Hesiod describes how Prometheus deceived Zeus over the portions to be sacrificed to the gods.

Zeus in anger removed fire from men; however, Prometheus stole it back.

Zeus then makes the first woman as a punishment since women consume the profits of men's labor. In *Works and Days*, the first woman is called Pandora, and she also opens the jar that releases all the present ills of life.⁸⁹²

The five ages of the human race are described after Prometheus and Pandora in *Works and Days*. The first is a golden age that is paradise-like.

First of all the deathless gods who dwell on Olympus made a golden race of mortal men who lived in the time of Cronos when he was reigning in heaven. And they lived like gods without sorrow of heart, remote and free from toil and grief: miserable age rested not on them; but with legs and arms never failing they made merry with feasting beyond the reach of all evils. When they died, it was as though they were overcome with sleep, and they had all good things; for the fruitful earth unforced bare them fruit abundantly and without stint. They dwelt in ease and peace upon their lands with many good things, rich in flocks and loved by the blessed gods.⁸⁹³

The humans of the silver age were much inferior, with a long adolescence and a short adulthood, and known for their impiety toward the gods: "they would not serve the immortals or sacrifice on the sacred altars of the blessed ones, as is laid down for men in their various homelands."⁸⁹⁴ The bronze age was characterized by brutal and uncivilized humans, seen in their lack of

⁸⁹² See *Theogony* 534-616 and *Works and Days* 47-105.

⁸⁹³ Lines 109-120 (Evelyn-White, LCL). It is questionable whether the last line, "rich in flocks and loved by the blessed gods" (120), is original since it only appears in the work of first century B.C.E. Greek historian Diodorus Siculus (M. L. West, *Hesiod: Works & Days* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978], 181).

⁸⁹⁴ Lines 135-137, translated by M. L. West, *Hesiod: Theogony and Works and Days* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 41.

agriculture (i.e., eating bread): "They loved the lamentable works of Ares and deeds of violence; they ate no bread, but were hard of heart like adamant, fearful men."⁸⁹⁵ The fourth age, between those of bronze and iron, is the time of the legendary heroes who fought in the Theban and Trojan wars. Zeus grants them to live on the Isles of the Blessed, where life is similar to that in the golden age.

but to some Zeus the father, son of Kronos, granted a life and home apart from men, and settled them at the ends of earth. These dwell with carefree heart in the Isles of the Blessed Ones, beside deep-swirling Oceanus: fortunate Heroes, for whom the grain-giving soil bears its honey-sweet fruits thrice a year.⁸⁹⁶

⁸⁹⁵ Lines 145-148 (Evelyn-White, LCL).

⁸⁹⁶ Lines 167-173 as translated in West, *Hesiod: Theogony and Works and Days*, 41–42. In some manuscripts, there is an addition mentioning that the islands are ruled by Cronos: "far from the deathless gods, and Cronos rules over them; for the father of men and gods released him from his bonds" (Line 169 [Evelyn-White, LCL]). West argues that these manuscripts reflect a later development tying the islands to the golden age (West, *Hesiod: Works & Days*, 194–196).

Homer describes an idyllic final habitation for Menelaus, king of Sparta, who fought in the Trojan war.

But for thyself, Menelaus, fostered of Zeus, it is not ordained that thou shouldst die and meet thy fate in horse-pasturing Argos, but to the Elysian plain and the bounds of the earth will the immortals convey thee, where dwells fair-haired Rhadamanthus, and where life is easiest for men. No snow is there, nor heavy storm, nor ever rain, but ever does Ocean send up blasts of the shrill-blowing West Wind that they may give cooling to men; for thou hast Helen to wife, and art in their eyes the husband of the daughter of Zeus. (*Odyssey* 4.561-569 [Murray, LCL]). See also Pindar (*Odes* 2.59) and Virgil (*Aeneid* 6.535, 641). For a discussion of the immortal afterlife in the epic tradition, see Anthony T. Edwards, "Achilles in the Underworld: Iliad, Odyssey, and Aethiopsis," *GRBS* 26 (1985): 215–27.

The last age is of iron and corresponds to the present time of hardship, when men "will never cease from toil and misery by day or night, in constant distress, and the gods will give them harsh troubles."⁸⁹⁷

Hesiod uses both the account of Prometheus and the five ages to explain some of the present hardships. For example, in *Works and Days* these accounts illustrate how the gods made work necessary and difficult: "For the gods keep hidden from men the means of life. Else you would easily do work enough in a day to supply you for a full year even without working."⁸⁹⁸ Thus, the time before these changes was in some way better than the present, although not in every way.⁸⁹⁹

Neither account explicitly describes an initial period of vegetarianism or animal peace.⁹⁰⁰ Prometheus' deception of Zeus could be understood as the origin of animal sacrifices; however, it only provides an explanation for the way animals are apportioned. There is no contrast with a former time before

⁸⁹⁷ Lines 176-178 as translated in West, *Hesiod: Theogony and Works and Days*, 42.

⁸⁹⁸ Lines 42-44 (Evelyn-White, LCL); cf. West, *Hesiod: Works & Days*, 48-49, 155-156, and 172-174.

⁸⁹⁹ West notes that the account of Prometheus itself does not adequately demonstrate Hesiod's point and thus Pandora and the jar of ills was added (West, *Hesiod: Works & Days*, 155-156). The account of Prometheus' gift of fire to humans seems by itself anti-primitivistic, depicting humans as worse off before his gifts of civilization. Thus commentators argue that the accounts of Prometheus and the five ages are to some degree incompatible since the golden age would be an example of primitivism (Lovejoy and Boas, *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity*, 24 and 199; West, *Hesiod: Works & Days*, 172-173; Scodel, "The Achaean Wall and the Myth of Destruction," 44).

⁹⁰⁰ Dequeker states, "We do not find in Hesiod's myth any evidence to posit that a carnivorous diet was subsequent to a vegetarian one" (Dequeker, "Green Herbage and Trees Bearing Fruit," 125).

animal sacrifices and what occasioned them. This event occurs in an early stage of humanity, when the gods and men ate together and before the gift of fire and the creation of women.⁹⁰¹

The five ages mention the diet of the humans but not the issue of meat-eating. The self-producing fields of the golden age need not imply an exclusive vegetarian diet.⁹⁰² The existence of flocks at that time at least raises the possibility of using animals for food, especially in conjunction with the mention of sacrifice in the silver age.⁹⁰³

The first record of vegetarianism as a feature of the first humans is found in Empedocles in the 5th century B.C.E., who was influenced by the

⁹⁰¹ M. L. West, *Hesiod: Theogony* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), 305–306. Hesiod does not seek to integrate these two accounts in *Works and Days* but introduces them as distinct tales (line 106).

⁹⁰² Pace Dombrowski, *The Philosophy of Vegetarianism*, 20. It is worth noting that the parodies of the golden age by Greek poets were not vegetarian in character. For example, the description of Telecleides, a 5th century B.C.E. comic, included fish that would cook themselves and streams of soup full of meat (Amphictyons, 4-6; cf. Lovejoy and Boas, *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity*, 38–41).

⁹⁰³ This argument from one age to the other is not to be pushed since there are clear inconsistencies in Hesiod's description of the five ages. The movement from the golden to the silver is also marked by the change from the reign of Cronos to Zeus. Another somewhat relevant passage is found later in lines 276-278: "For this was the rule for men that Kronos' son laid down: whereas fish and beasts and flying birds would eat one another, because Right is not among them, to men he gave Right, which is much the best in practice" (translated by West, *Hesiod: Theogony and Works and Days*, 45). Does this statement imply that before, in the golden age under Cronos, animals didn't eat one another? Most likely not since Hesiod does not say the "Right" is absent from meat-eating humans. Instead, the "rule" probably relates to cannibalism.

metempsychosis of the Orphics and Pythagoreans.⁹⁰⁴ In his argument to abstain from animal sacrifice and consumption, he mentions a time when humans did not offer blood sacrifice (at least not bulls) and did not eat meat (at least not beef) and when there was a state of animal peace. However, notice that the description differs from Hesiod's golden age since Cronos is not reigning.

They had no god Ares or Battle-Din, nor Zeus the king nor Kronos nor Poseidon; but Kupris the queen [Aphrodite] . . . her they worshipped with pious images, painted pictures and perfumes of varied odours, and sacrifices of unmixed myrrh and fragrant frankincense, dashing onto the ground libations of yellow honey . . . [her] altar was not wetted with the unmixed blood of bulls, but this was the greatest abomination among men, to tear out their life-breath and eat their goodly limbs. All were tame and gentle to men, both beasts and birds, and loving thoughts blazed on . . . Will you not desist from harsh-sounding bloodshed? Do you not see that you are devouring each other in the heedlessness of your understanding?⁹⁰⁵

⁹⁰⁴ The writing of Empedocles is only known through quotations in later authors. The relationship of these fragments is a matter of debate, although most assign them to two different poems (Brad Inwood, *The Poem of Empedocles: A Text and Translation with an Introduction* [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992], 8-10).

⁹⁰⁵ Fragments 128-130 and 136, translated by Inwood, *The Poem of Empedocles*, 257–259. In other (following) fragments, his belief in metempsychosis is clear: "A father lifts up his dear son, who has changed his form, and prays and slaughters him, in great folly, and they are at a loss as they sacrifice the suppliant. But he, on the other hand, deaf to the rebukes, sacrificed him in his halls, and prepared himself an evil meal. In the same way, as son seizes his father and the children their mother, and tearing out their life-breath devour their own dear flesh" (frg. 137, translated by Inwood, *The Poem of Empedocles*, 261).

The first explicit description of the golden age as vegetarian is found in Plato from the late fifth-early fourth century B.C.E.⁹⁰⁶ It is not clear that Plato practiced a vegetarian diet, although he held it up to some extent as an ideal.⁹⁰⁷ An interesting combination of mythic ideas is found in *The Statesman*, including those of the golden age and Prometheus.⁹⁰⁸ It depicts the reign of Cronos as a time when humans and animals lived and dwelt together in peace, without eating each other.

the animals were distributed by species and flocks among inferior deities as divine shepherds, each of whom was in all respects the independent guardian of the creatures under his own care, so that no creature was wild, nor did they eat one another, and there was no war among them, nor any strife whatsoever . . . God himself was [man's] shepherd, watching over them, just as man, being an animal of different and more divine nature than the rest, now tends the lower species of animals . . . So there were no states or families, they had fruits in plenty from the trees and other plants, which the earth furnished them of its own accord, without help from agriculture. And they lived for the most part in the open air, without clothing or bedding; for the climate was tempered for their comfort, and the abundant grass that grew up out of the earth furnished them soft couches.⁹⁰⁹

⁹⁰⁶ Scodel, "The Achaean Wall and the Myth of Destruction," 42 n. 24.

⁹⁰⁷ Dombrowski, *The Philosophy of Vegetarianism*, 22–27 and 58–63.

⁹⁰⁸ Dombrowski, *The Philosophy of Vegetarianism*, 23; Pierre Vidal-Naquet, "Plato's Myth of the Statesman, the Ambiguities of the Golden Age and of History," *JHS* 98 (1978): 136–137. However, Plato viewed the golden age as an ideal that never really existed (Dombrowski, *The Philosophy of Vegetarianism*, 24–26).

⁹⁰⁹ 271d-272a (Fowler, LCL). See also *Laws* 6.782 where men in an earlier age "were forbidden so much as to eat an ox, and their offerings to the gods consisted, not of animals, but of cakes of meal and grain steeped in honey, and other such bloodless sacrifices, and from flesh they abstained as though it were unholy to eat it or to stain with blood the altars of

Animals and humans could also communicate at that time (272b-272d). However the gods removed their control leading to changes for plants and animals. Men were now unable to cope since they didn't have the gifts of civilization, so the gods, including Prometheus, gave them to mankind.

For men, deprived of the care of the deity who had possessed and tended us, since most of the beasts who were by nature unfriendly had grown fierce, and they themselves were feeble and unprotected, were ravaged by the beasts and were in the first ages still without resources or skill; the food which had formerly offered itself freely had failed them, and they did not yet know how to provide for themselves, because no necessity had hitherto compelled them. On all these accounts they were in great straits; and that is the reason why the gifts of the gods that are told of in the old traditions were given us with the needful information and instruction,—fire by Prometheus, the arts by Hephaestus and the goddess who is his fellow-artisan, seeds and plants by other deities.⁹¹⁰

Thus in Plato, the two accounts of Hesiod have been merged together as Prometheus is situated within the five ages.⁹¹¹

The origin of meat-eating (at least cattle) is connected with Hesiod's bronze age in Aratus from the late fourth-early third century B.C.E.⁹¹² He is

the gods; instead of that, those of us men who then existed lived what is called an 'Orphic life,' keeping wholly to inanimate food and, contrariwise, abstaining wholly from things animate" (Bury, LCL).

⁹¹⁰ 274b-274c (Fowler, LCL).

⁹¹¹ The popularity of this combination can be seen in Virgil's description from the 1st century B.C.E. In *Georgics* 1.130 and 2.537 he describes a time before Jove (Greek Zeus) when Saturn (Greek Cronos) reigned and no agriculture was needed and no animals were dangerous. But Jove changed the nature of the world and brought about the present conditions of predation, hunting, and agriculture.

⁹¹² West, *Hesiod: Works & Days*, 188.

describing the constellation of the Maiden (Virgo in Latin), which was identified with Justice, and how she lived with humans until the bronze race.

But when they, too, were dead, and when, more ruinous than they which went before, the Race of Bronze was born, who were the first to forge the sword of the highwayman, and the first to eat of the flesh of the ploughing-ox, then verily did Justice loathe that race of men and fly heavenward and took up that abode, where even now in the night time the Maiden is seen of men, established near to far-seen Boötes.⁹¹³

In the first century B.C.E., Virgil takes the image of the golden age and applies it to the future.⁹¹⁴ In *Eclogue IV*, he describes the coming of "the last

⁹¹³ *Phaenomena* 129-136 (Mair, LCL). Porphyry attributes similar ideas to Dicaearchus, a fourth century B.C.E. historian, who connects the killing and eating of animals with injustice and war:

the ancients, being generated with an alliance to the Gods, were naturally most excellent, and led the best life; so that, when compared to us of the present day, who consist of an adulterated and most vile matter, they were thought to be a golden race; and they slew no animal whatever . . . And this is what is said by Dicaearchus, in his narration of the manners of the ancient Greeks, and the blessed life which they then led, to which abstinence from animal food contributed, no less than other things. Hence, at that period there was no war, because injustice was exterminated. But afterwards, together with injustice towards animals, war was introduced among men, and the endeavour to surpass each other in amplitude of possessions. On which account also, the audacity of those is wonderful, who say that abstinence from animals is the mother of injustice, since both history and experience testify, that together with the slaughter of animals, war and injustice were introduced.

(Porphyry, *On Abstinence from Animal Food*, 4.2, translated by Thomas Taylor [ed. Esme Wynne-Tyson; Great Britain: Centaur Press, 1965], 145-148).

⁹¹⁴ Clausen states, "Two surprising innovations are involved in Virgil's vision of the Golden Age: the Golden Age is about to be - indeed, is now being - restored to mankind; and the restoration coincides with the birth of a child. Ever so slightly Virgil labours the coincidence: with the birth of the child (8 'nascenti') is born (5 'nascitur') a new order of time. The Ancients conceived of no such prodigious birth or rebirth; for them the Golden Age was a mythical paradise irretrievably lost" (Wendell Vernon Clausen, *A Commentary on Virgil*,

age of the song of Cumae . . . the Virgin returns, the reign of Saturn returns" that will include "the birth of the child, under whom the iron brood shall first cease, and a golden race spring up throughout the world!"⁹¹⁵ In his youth,

shall the earth untilled pour forth, as her first pretty gifts,
straggling ivy with foxglove everywhere, and the Egyptian bean
blended with the smiling acanthus. Uncalled, the goats shall
bring home their udders swollen with milk, and the herds shall
fear not huge lions; unasked, thy cradle shall pour forth flowers
for thy delight. The serpent too shall perish, and the false
poison-plant shall perish; Assyrian spice shall spring up on every
soil.⁹¹⁶

In his maturity,

every land shall bear all fruits. The earth shall not feel the
harrow, nor the vine the pruning-hook; the sturdy ploughman,
too, shall loose his oxen from the yoke. Wool shall no more learn
to counterfeit varied hues, but of himself the ram in the
meadows shall change his fleece, now to sweetly blushing
purple, now to saffron yellow; of its own will shall scarlet clothe
the grazing lambs.⁹¹⁷

Virgil was not a vegetarian, and his depiction of the coming golden age need not imply a change in diet.

Eclogues [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994], 121). Some commentators take the imagery as metaphor or hyperbole (Michael C. J Putnam, *Virgil's Pastoral Art; Studies in the Eclogues* [Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1970], 165; Eleanor Winsor Leach, *Virgil's Eclogues; Landscapes of Experience* [Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1974], 229; Mark Petrini, *The Child and the Hero: Coming of Age in Catullus and Virgil* [Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997], 118).

⁹¹⁵ Lines 4-10 (Fairclough, LCL).

⁹¹⁶ Lines 18-25 (Fairclough, LCL).

⁹¹⁷ Lines 39-45 (Fairclough, LCL). Similar imagery of plants and animals are found in Horace's *Epodes* 16.43-62 and the *Einsiedeln Eclogues* 2.15-38. The imagery in *Eclogue IV* is similar to that in Isa 11:6-8, and some commentators argue it is dependent upon Isaiah, possibly mediated through its use in the *Sibylline Oracles* 3.788-795 (Bauckham, *Living with Other Creatures*, 127 n.35).

In the analysis of this Greco-Roman literature, it is important to emphasize that ancient vegetarianism was not only a matter of diet. Since animal sacrifice was integrated into most aspects of city life, a refusal to participate in the one led to isolation from the other: "To declare oneself a vegetarian was to declare oneself an outsider."⁹¹⁸ Vegetarianism was also a way to protest against "the dominant politico-religious system."⁹¹⁹ This protest fits into a more general use of the golden age as a critique for the present: "The age of Cronos, 'life in the time of Cronos,' as it is called, is a slogan for philosophical and religious sects that are not satisfied, or are no longer satisfied, with the existing civil order."⁹²⁰

It is also necessary to emphasize that the golden age as it was described always lacked a level of civilization since it was not needed to survive. Thus the golden age had a primitive nature, even if it was viewed as a better time. However, some authors developed this lack of civilization in a more negative way, even connecting the golden age with cannibalism.⁹²¹ For

⁹¹⁸ Parker, "Early Orphism," 502. Similarly, Osborne writes, "vegetarianism was intended to be a radical statement that marked out the committed philosopher from the cultural norm" (Osborne, *Dumb Beasts and Dead Philosophers*, 235).

⁹¹⁹ Detienne, "Culinary Practices and the Spirit of Sacrifice," 6.

⁹²⁰ Vidal-Naquet, "Plato's Myth of the Statesman, the Ambiguities of the Golden Age and of History," 134.

⁹²¹ Vidal-Naquet, "Plato's Myth of the Statesman, the Ambiguities of the Golden Age and of History," 132–133; Deborah Levine Gera, *Ancient Greek Ideas on Speech, Language, and Civilization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 59. For other examples of anti-primitivism in Greek literature, see Lovejoy and Boas, *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity*, 192–221; Gerhard Baudy, "Cereal Diet and the Origins of Man: Myths of the Eleusinia in the Context of Ancient Mediterranean Harvest Festivals," in *Food in Antiquity* (ed.

them, the descriptions of the Cyclopes were the paradigm of what human life was like during the reign of Cronos.⁹²² The cynics emphasized this aspect for their political protest. They would revile all social constraints, especially those of diet and sexuality, for example by eating raw meat.⁹²³

A full analysis of Greco-Roman literature on the questions of original vegetarianism and animal peace is beyond the scope of this appendix. However, a tentative suggestion can be offered. While a number of texts explicitly describe original vegetarianism and animal peace, it is not clear how ancient and widespread that tradition was.⁹²⁴ It is possible that such a connection arose among groups that were actively defending and promoting their own vegetarian practices.⁹²⁵

John Wilkins, David Harvey, and Mike Dobson; Exeter, England: University of Exeter Press, 1995), 177–195.

⁹²² In Homer's description of the island of the Cyclopes everything grows without effort just as in Hesiod's golden age (*Odyssey* 9.105-115; cf. Gera, *Ancient Greek Ideas on Speech, Language, and Civilization*, 13–15).

⁹²³ Vidal-Naquet, "Plato's Myth of the Statesman, the Ambiguities of the Golden Age and of History," 135; Dombrowski, *The Philosophy of Vegetarianism*, 25–26. A similar move toward bestiality is seen in Dionysianism (Detienne, "Culinary Practices and the Spirit of Sacrifice," 8).

⁹²⁴ It is also not clear how to interpret the description in these texts. For example, Clausen argues, "In literature before Virgil . . . the harmonious congress of domestic and predatory animals is an adynaton" (Clausen, *A Commentary on Virgil, Eclogues*, 147–148).

⁹²⁵ Brown states, "vegetarianism as an ethical lifestyle was not originally connected to the Golden age" (Brown, *Structure, Role, and Ideology*, 80–81). Parker states, "the myth of a golden age without animal sacrifice spread in the hellenistic period outside the vegetarian circles in which it originated" (Robert Parker, *Polytheism and Society at Athens* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005], 189–190).

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