## **Preliminary Textual Work on Creation Themes**

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### Genesis 1.1

# 1:1 בראשית ברא אלהים את השמים ואת הארץ

The Hebrew text can be rendered a number of different ways--all are literal translations:

- 1) When God started creating the heavens and the earth
- 2) In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth
- 3a) With reshit God created the heavens and the earth

See Proverbs 8.22: "The LORD created me reshit . . . .

## יהוה קנני ראשית דרכו קדם מפעליו מאז

Who is created to be reshit?

Wisdom. . . on the basis of Proverbs 8.1:

הלא־חכמה תקרא ותבונה תתן קולה

- 3b) With Wisdom God created the heavens and the earth
- 4) Bereshit created gods with the heavens and the earth
- 5) Bereshit created gods alongside Heavens and Earth

These kinds of readings surface in various traditions; Greek, Targum, Rabbinic literature, "gnosticism". A project for study: Biblically-based gnosticism is rooted in bible; works just like classical midrash.

Syriac: Kit dia Kis di Kmlk Kis diris Agrees with Hebrew exactly.

Alexandrinus, U2 (PAmherst 003--contains Gen 1.1-5)

In the beginning God made. . . Old Greek: ἐν ἀρχῆ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν

Aquila: έν κεφαλαίω έκτισεν θζ συν τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τ[ἡ]ν γῆν In heading [playing on Ψ'Ν ?] God created... reserving ποιεω

translates Hebrew את

for עשה

Targums:

וית ארעא יוי ית שמיא וית ארעא ארעא ארעא בקדמין ברא יוי ית

In ancient times the LORD created the heavens and the earth.

מן אוולא ברא אלקים ית שמייא וית ארעא PSJ1:1

From the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

ארעא וית שמיא וית שכלל ית שמיא וית ארעא NFT1:1

From ancient times with wisdom the son of LORD perfected the heavens and the earth.

[\*\* This is the result of a correction after erasure--vav before שכלל is still visible] Perhaps:

בחוכמתא ברא ייי ושכלל

With Wisdom the LORD created and perfected . . . [P Nfmg and VN lack "and perfected"]

Hebrew reshit = Son

Jerome Hebr quaest. Gen 1.1

4 Ezra = 2 Esdras 6:38, 43: In the beginning of creation you spoke the word . . . and your word perfected the work.

## Creation of the world in/by wisdom:

### Proverbs 8.22:

# יהוה קנני ראשית דרכו קדם מפעליו מאז

The LORD created me reshit of his ways, in front of his works of old.

Aramaic: ייי בראני בריש בריותיה [בריתיה] ומן־קדם עובדוי מריש בריותיה

The LORD created me at the head of his creation, and before his first works.

Syriac: פלא פוע פוע פוע פוע פוע פוע פוע פוע איז Syriac and Aramaic agree in all but the last word.

Old Greek: κύριος ἔκτισέν με ἀρχὴν <u>όδῶν αὐτοῦ</u> εἰς ἔργα αὐτοῦ Agrees with more Hebrew than

Syriac/Aramaic.

### Proverbs 3.19:

# יהוה בחכמה <u>יסד</u>־ארץ כונן שמים <u>בתבונה</u>

The LORD with Wisdom laid the foundations of the earth, established the heavens with understanding.

Aramaic: אלהא בחכמתא (פס $> \{$ סם $> \}$  שיתאסיה דארעא ארעא שמיא בביונא

God with Wisdom set the foundations of the earth, and fixed the heavens with understanding.

Note: Aramaic DD ?

Jastrow notes *p-s-final weak*: "to spread, extend"

A misreading of letters is also possible-- DD is the more common word.

# Syriac: <u>הובמשם היאצ בסארם הביאלי הישהלאצ שם האשבוש</u> היא

The Lord with Wisdom set the foundations of the earth, and fixed the heavens with insight.

Syriac has affinities to both Aramaic and Hebrew.

Recall that in 8.22, Syriac and Aramaic mostly agree.

Old Greek: ὁ θεὸς τῆ σοφία ἐθεμελίωσεν τὴν γῆν ἡτοίμασεν δὲ οὐρανοὺς ἐν φρονήσει God with Wisdom founded the earth, and prepared the heavens with insight.

### Wisdom/Ben Sira 9.9:

[Hebrew from Genizah?]

And with you was Wisdom, who knows your works and was with you when you made the worlds, and knows what is beautiful before your eyes, and what is right in your commandments.

Syriac here maps rather well to the Greek.

Old Greek: καὶ μετὰ σοῦ ή σοφία ή εἰδυῖα τὰ ἔργα σου καὶ παροῦσα ὅτε ἐποίεις τὸν κόσμον καὶ ἐπισταμένη τί ἀρεστὸν ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς σου καὶ τί εὐθὲς ἐν ἐντολαῖς σου

And with you was Wisdom; she is the one who knows your works and was present when you made the world, and she is the one who understands what is pleasing in your eyes and what is right in your commandments.

### Psalm 104.24

קנינך מלאה הארץ קנינך מתשיך יהוה כלם בחכמה עשית מלאה הארץ קנינך How many are your works, O LORD! With wisdom you made all of them; the earth is full of your creatures.

Aramaic: מה סגיעין הינון עובדך יהוה כולהון בחכמתא עבדתא מליא ארעא קניינך Aramaic = Hebrew

Greek: ὡς ἐμεγαλύνθη τὰ ἔργα σου κύριε πάντα ἐν σοφία ἐποίησας ἐπληρώθη ἡ γῆ τῆς κτήσεώς σου Greek=Syriac=Aramaic=Hebrew

## Another Trajectory: An Issue in Amos: Amos 4.13

כי הנה יוצר <u>הרים</u> וברא רוח ומגיד לאדם <u>מה־שחו</u> עשה שחר עיפה ודרך על־במתי ארץ יהוה אלהי־צבאות שמו:

For look! The one who forms the <u>mountains</u> and creates wind and declares to <u>adam what is his thought</u>--he is the one who makes dawn of the darkness and treads on the heights of the earth--the LORD God of Hosts is his name!

#### Greek:

διότι ίδου <u>έγω στερεων</u> <u>βροντήν</u> και κτίζων πνευμα και άπαγγέλλων είς άνθρωπους <u>τον χριστον</u> <u>αυτου</u> ποιων ὄρθρον και όμίχλην και έπιβαίνων έπι τὰ ύψη της γης κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ ὄνομα αὐτω

For look! I am the one who strengthens the thunder and creates wind and declares to humans his Christ--[I am the one] who makes dawn and darkness and treads on the heights of the earth--Lord God Ruler of All is his name.

- 1) Notice Greek "thunder" for Hebrew "mountains": Hebrew "דעם "thunder."
- 2) Notice different speaker.
- 3)Greek translation is perhaps reading a Hebrew manuscript which has מה־שוֹחו instead of מה-שוֹחו .

### Aramaic:

ארי הא מתגלי דצר טוריא וברא רוחא ל<u>חואה</u> לאנשא מא עובדוהי לאתקנא ניהור זיהור לצדיקיא כניהור צפרא דאזיל ותקין ולאיתאה חשוך לרשיעיא למתבר רשיעי ארעא יוי אלהי

For look! It is revealed that the one who formed the mountains and created the wind [perhaps "Spirit" here] to reveal to humanity what are his works, to establish the light splendor for the righteous ones just like the light of the morning that goes, and establishes, along with the darkness that comes for the wicked ones, for breaking the wicked of the earth--the LORD God of | Hosts | | is his name |

For the one who <u>created the winds and created the mountains</u> and reveals to the <u>sons of man</u> what she/that praise/glory; he makes dawn darkness and treads on the height of the earth--the Lord God of Power is his name.

- \* In addition to the interesting textual issue surrounding "his thoughts" and "his Messiah," the Amos passage is of interest in that the Hebrew can be read to suggest the first human's presence at the time of creation. The passage may hint at an ancient idea wherein the creation of the first man occurred prior to the time of the creation of the physical world.
- 1) The notion is not that far removed from what one finds in the Genesis 2-3 creation account; there, the creation of man occurs at the beginning of God's creative activity.
- 2) The idea would seem to have been more popular than the 'biblical record' would have us think, as early rabbinic reports and even medieval midrashic compositions seem to actively polemicize against the notion. For example, see Tosefta Sanhedrin 8:7 and Jerusalem Talmud Berakhot 12d.

Tosefta Sanhedrin 8:7: "Our rabbis taught: Adam was created on the eve of the Sabbath. Why? So that the sectarians could not say, 'The Hold One, blessed be He, had a partner in His work of creation."

Jerusalem Talmud Berakhot 12d: "The sectarians asked Rabbi Simlai, "How may gods created the world?" He said to them, "Are you asking me? Go and ask the first man, as it is written (Deuteronomy 4:32): 'Ask now of the first days which were before you, since God created man upon the earth.' It is not written here 'they created' but 'he created.'" They said to him, "It is written, 'In the beginning God created (Genesis 1:1).' "Is it written, '(they) created?' It is only written, '(he) created.'" Rabbi Simlai said, "In every passage where the sectarians go wrong, they have an answer close by."

In different ways, both texts seem to testify to the popularity of traditions which claimed exalted status for Adam.

For more, see Alan F. Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven: Early Rabbinic Reports About Christianity and Gnosticism* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1977), especially 109–14, 124–27, 151.

Hebrew Aramaic Greek

במלין מחשיך עצה במלין בלי־דעת

Who is this who darkens counsel with words with no knowledge!

י אזר־נא כגבר חלציך ואשאלך והודיעני

Gird up your loins like a man; I will question you, and you will declare to

4 איפה היית<u>ביסדי</u>־ארץ הגד אם־ידעת בינה

Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell!-- if you have understanding!

כ מי־שם ממדיה כי תדע או מי־נטה עליה קו

Who set its measurements? If indeed you know! Who stretched out a measuring line upon it?

> 6 על־מה אדניה הטבעו או מי־ירה אבן פנתה

Upon what were its bases planted?
Who cast its cornerstone

ברן־יחד כוכבי בקר ויריעו כל־בני אלהים

while the morning stars sang together and all the divine beings shouted for joy? מן דין דמחשיך מלכתא מן במליא מדלית מנדעא

[Same as Hebrew]

זרז כענ [כדון] היך גברא חרצייך ואבענך ותהודענני

[Same as Hebrew]

האן הויתא<u>במשתתי</u> ארעא <u>חוי</u> אין ידעתא ביונתא

Where were you when I established the earth? Show!--if you have understanding!

מן שוי משחתהא ארום תדע או מן מתח עלה מתקולתא:

Who placed the measurements? Since you know! Who stretched out a measuring line upon it?

על מה סומכיאה [סמכייהא] אטמעו או מן שדא אבנ זיויתאה [זיוויתה]

[Same as Hebrew]

בזמן דמשבחין כחדא כוכבי צפרא ומיבבי<u>ן כל כתי</u> מלאכיא

in the time that the morning stars praised together and all the group of angels made a joyful noise? τίς οὖτος ὁ <u>κρύπτων με</u> βουλήν συνέχων δὲ ῥήματα ἐν καρδία ἐμὲ δὲ οἴεται κρύπτειν

Who is this who <u>conceals</u> counsel <u>from</u> me, <u>encloses</u> words in his heart and expects to conceal them from me!

ζώσαι ώσπερ άνηρ την όσφύν σου έρωτήσω δέ σε σύ δέ μοι ἀποκρίθητι

Gird up your loins like a man; I will question you, and you will answer me!

ποῦ ἦς ἐν τῷ θεμελιοῦν με τὴν γῆν ἀπάγγειλον δέ μοι εἰ ἐπίστῃ σύνεσιν

Where were you when I founded the earth? Announce to me if you know understanding!

τίς ἔθετο τὰ μέτρα αὐτῆς εἰ οἶδας ἢ τίς ὁ ἐπαγαγὼν σπαρτίον ἐπὰ αὐτῆς

Who placed the measurements of it? If you know! Who drew a cord upon it?

ἐπὶ τίνος <u>οἱ κρίκοι αὐτῆς</u> <u>πεπήγασιν</u> τίς δέ ἐστιν ὁ βαλὼν λίθον γωνιαῖον ἐπὰ αὐτῆς

Onto what were its rings fastened? Who cast the cornerstone upon it?

ότε ἐγενήθησαν ἄστρα ἤνεσάν με φωνῆ μεγάλη πάντες ἄγγελοί μου

When the stars came into being, all of my angels praised me in a great voice.

Syriac:

Who is this that minds the mind (?) with words with no knowledge!

3: איז ארצא אוי איז איז איז איז איז א אוו question you, you will declare to me.

Who placed its measurements? If you know! Who stretched out a measuring line upon it?

منه محد محد اشهرون حوبرة الاعد ما ملا شعب محم حدد با الحوادة فه مانة Upon what do its bases stand? Who cast its cornerstone?

رخه محسته المحسته ونه المحمد عونه محلهم وتر محله المحمد ونه محده :7

He created (?) together the stars of the dawn, and all of the sons of the angels made a joyful noise. [Notice that different elements in this line maps to both Hebrew and Aramaic]

The passage continues with creation imagery: subduing and setting the limits of the sea and making clouds. Indeed, though the Lord's diatribe continues through chapter 41, the message is already clear: Job is in no position to challenge the ways of God because he does not possess the necessary wisdom; he was not present at the time of creation and thus cannot declare the answers. The rhetorical effect here is forceful, and we might think that no one could possibly have access to this knowledge. Interestingly, a passage from an earlier chapter in Job seems to suggest just the opposite.

In Job 15.7-9 Eliphaz reprimands Job as such:

Hebrew

Aramaic

Greek

# הראישון אדם תולד ולפני גבעות חוללת

Are you the first man that was born? Were you brought forth before the hills?

8 הבסוד אלוה תשמע ותגרע אליך חכמה

Have you listened in on the council of God? Do you limit wisdom to yourself alone?

> מה־ידעת ולא נדע תבין ולא־עמנו הוא

What do you know that we do not know? What do you understand that we do not?

# הא בקדמאי אדם בלא אבא [איבא] ואמא אתילידא [איתילידתא] וקדם גלמאתא

Behold! Are you the first man--who was born without father or mother? Were you created before the hills?

איפשר [האוושר] דברז אלהא תשמע ואטפי לותך חכמתא

Is it possible that you listened in on the mystery of God? Have I closed off wisdom to you?

> מה ידעתא ולא נדע תתביין ולא גבנא [עמנא] הוא

> > [Same as Hebrew]

τί γάρ μὴ πρῶτος ἀνθρώπων έγενήθης ἢ πρὸ θινῶν ἐπάγης

Are you the first man that was born? Were you put together before the shore?

ή σύνταγμα κυρίου ἀκήκοας είς δὲ σὲ ἀφίκετο σοφία

Have you listened to the arrangement of the Lord? Does wisdom reach only you?

τί γὰρ οἶδας ὂ οὐκ οἴδαμεν ἢ τί συνίεις ο ούχὶ καὶ ήμεῖς

[Same as Hebrew]

Syriac:

ז: לעלבאר המשו הום כם מה מבל הצור הים השלו

Perhaps you were born the first man? Or before the hills you were conceived?

9: رام المم الماء عند منه مديم مدي من الماء الماء عند الماء الماء

[Note that the Syriac seems to have affinities with the Hebrew and the Aramaic.]

As in Job 38, the point here is that Job does not possess the requisite insight. Note though that the language of Eliphaz' rebuke--"Are you the first man that was born? Where you brought forth before the hills?--implies that the first human did. Because he was present at the creation of the world, the first man can declare the secrets which Job cannot.

### Genesis 1.2

# והארץ היתה תהו ובהו וחשך על־פני תהום ורוח אלהים מרחפת על־פני המים

And the earth was formless and void, and darkness was on the face of the Deep, and a wind from God was hovering on the face

Syriac: Follows Hebrew exactly; seyame dots indicate plural forms: "faces" and "waters".

Old Greek: ή δὲ γῆ ἦν ἀόρατος καὶ ἀκατασκεύαστος καὶ σκότος ἐπάνω τῆς ἀβύσσου καὶ πνεθμα θεοῦ ἐπεφέρετο\* ἐπάνω τοῦ ὕδατος \*\*

\* E (Bodlianus): ἐπεφέρετω \*\* E (Bodlianus): ὕδαστος

And the earth was invisible and unformed, and darkness was on the Abyss, and a wind of God was hovering on the water.

Theod [jc2BrhbS-Hx]:

θὲν καὶ ουθέν

Aquila[jBrhbS-Hx]: ἡ δὲ γῆ ἦν κένωμα καὶ [ο]υθέν [rest of line unattested α']; empty and nothingness [neologism to echo Hebrew?]

 $Sym[c_2]$ :

άργόν καὶ άδιακριτον

uncultivated and undifferentiated

Both Aquila and Theod render Hebrew על־פני literally with έπὶ πρόσωμον

Aramaic:

מנשבא [דייי] מנשבא ורוחא מו־קדם יוי ביא ורוחא מל-אפי תהומא על־אפי חות צדיא ורוקניא וחשוכא פריש על־אפי מהומא ורוחא [מתנשבא] על־אפי מיא

And the earth was empty and barren, and the darkness was spread out on the face of the Deep, and a wind from before the LORD was blowing on the face of the water.

ורוח אנפי תהומא על אנפי חות תהייא ובהיא צדיא מבני־נשׁ וריקנייא מן כל בעיר וחשוכא על אנפי תהומא ורוח PSJ 1:2 רחמין מן־קדם אלקים מנתבא על־אנפי מיא

And the earth was formless and chaotic, empty of people and barren of all creatures, and the darkness was on the face of the Deep, and a merciful wind from before God was blowing on the face of the water.

[Has the Aramaic simply translated the problematic tohu and bohu? So also NFT (immediately below)?]

ומן בעיר וריקנא מן כל פלחן צמחין ומן ברינש ומן בעיר וריקנא מן כל פלחן צמחין ומן אדרו:2 ווצדיה ווארעא הוות תהיא ובהיא אילנין וחשוכא פריס על־אפי תהומא ורוח דרחמין מן־קדם ייי הוה מנשבא על־אפי מיא

And the earth was formless and chaotic and empty of people and creatures, and desolate of botanical cutivation and of trees, and the darkness was spread out on the face of the Deep, and a merciful wind from before the LORD was blowing on the face of the water.

### Genesis 1.3

# ויאמר אלהים יהי אור ויהי־אור

And God said, "Let there be light." And there was light.

Syriac: Follows Hebrew exactly.

Greek: καὶ εἶπεν ὁ θεός γενηθήτω φῶς καὶ ἐγένετο φῶς

[p] has τὸ φῶς ; [q] omits καὶ ἐγένετο φῶς

Aquila: καὶ [ε]ἶπεν ὁ θζ [γ]ε[ν]ηθήτω φῶ[ς καὶ] ἐγέν[ετ]ο φῶς

Aramaic:

אמר יויַ יהי נהורא והוה נהורא יויַ יהי ואמר  $^{\rm ONK}$ 1:3 And the LORD said, "Let there be light." And there was light.

אמר בהורא בהורא אלקים יהי נהורא לאנהרא עלמא ומן־יד הוה נהורא אלקים יהי נהורא אלקים אמר אמר אלקים ואמר אלקים יהי נהורא And God said, "Let there be light for lighting up the world." And immediately there was light.

אור בהור בהור בהור בהור בהור בהור ממרים אור ממרים והות נהור בהור בהור יהוי יהוי יהוי יהוי אמר  $^{\rm NFT}$ 1:3 And the Memre of the LORD said "Let there be light." And there was light, according to the decree of the Memre.