



CARTHAGE
COLLEGE

Abstract

This poster was the result of a paper that was written as the first essay assignment in an Intellectual Foundations class. The paper covered the first unit of this class, Gods and myths. The goal of the paper was to compare the idea of the divine and their relationships with the world and humanity in Babylonian Genesis, Genesis, and Plato’s work on training soldiers. The author began by thinking of their experience with religion and how it fit with the role of God discussed in class. One such discussion was how different Christian branches interpret the work of Genesis differently; they often interpret him as being all powerful, all knowing, and acting almost as a puppeteer of humanity when he is not presented as such in the literal text. Focusing on this religious interpretation versus literal interpretation idea, the author discovered that different interpretations of God can influence behavior in communities, as presented by Plato’s work. Overall, working on this paper solidified for the author that while the literal meanings of religious texts differ from how they are presented in religious contexts, there is still value in non-literal interpretations in the sense that they can bring comfort, solace, and guidance to individuals and communities that need it.

Introduction

Around the world, many people turn to religion to fulfill various purposes in their lives; these purposes range from wanting to feel a part of a community to needing spiritual guidance. Religion provides a sense of comfort for some as it explains the key to leading a happy, fulfilling life. Religion can also provide explanations to how and why the world was created, however, each religion is unique and can have its own explanations for how the world and everything in it came to be. Throughout the following paragraphs, I will be comparing Babylonian Genesis, Genesis, and Plato’s work on training soldiers, and explaining what each text says about the Divine and their relationship with the earth and its beings.

Focus Questions:

Through class discussions and group work, we were asked to look at these texts from a literary perspective and think of our own conclusions on the following:

- Take two of the religious texts and explain what we learn about the divine in them.
- Describe the material world in each text.
- Explain what we know about humans in each text.
- Explain what Plato says about the divine and do you believe humans would have a relationship with Plato’s divinity?
- Which text is most persuasive to you?

Creation Stories and Religion

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CELEBRATION
of SCHOLARS

Babylonian Genesis

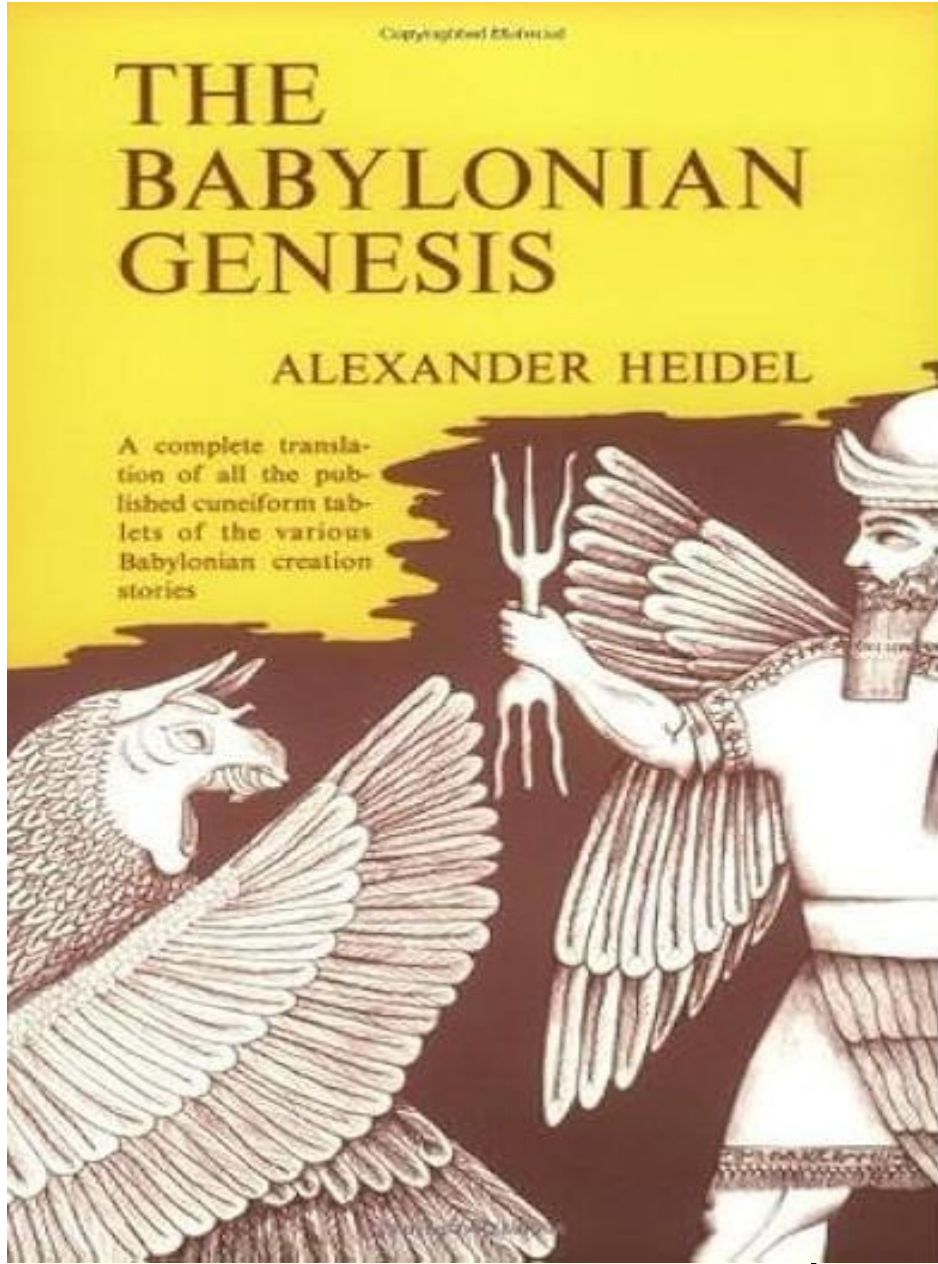
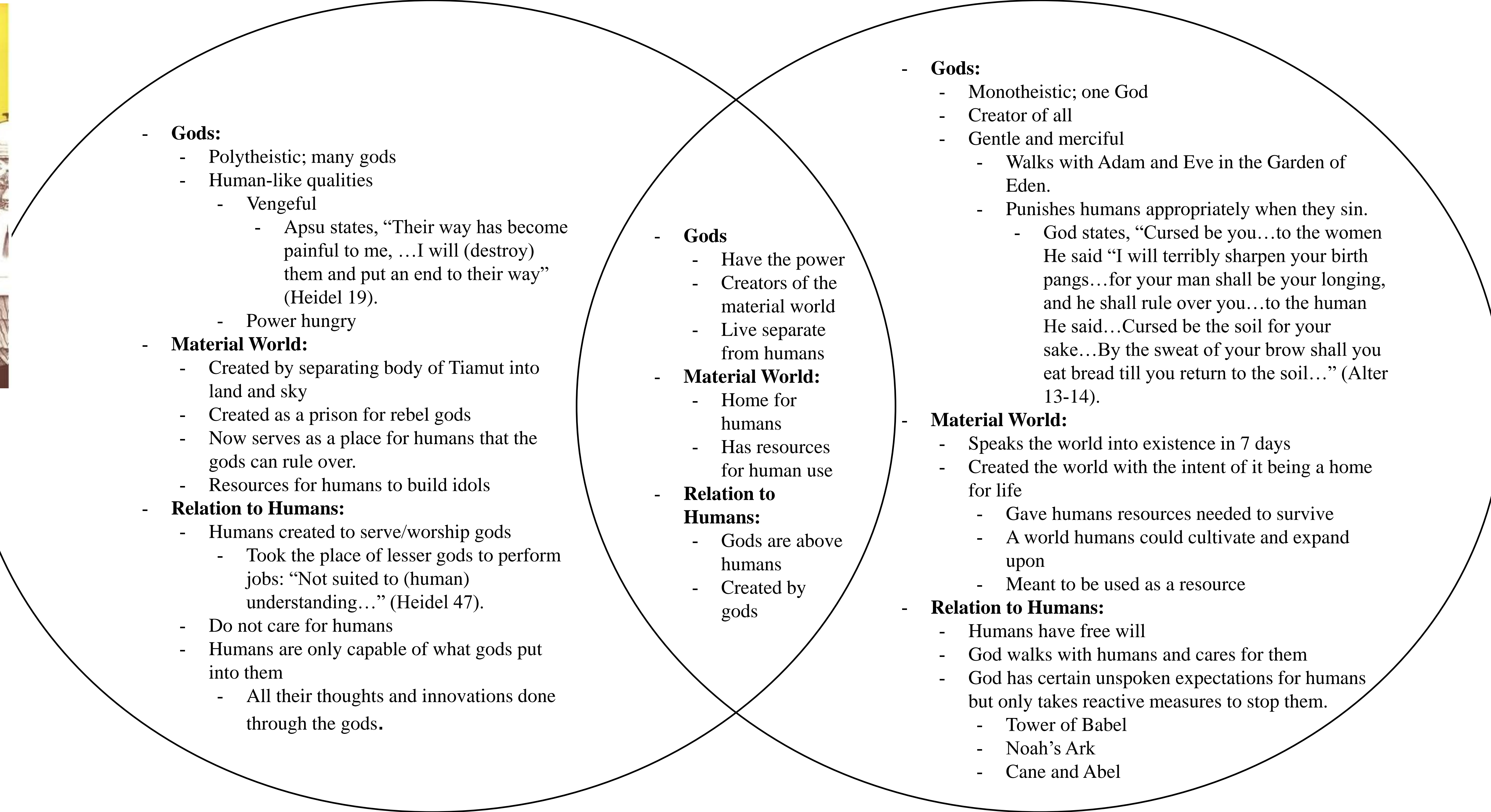


Figure 1. Cover photo of Heidel’s Translation of The Babylonian Genesis.



Abrahamic Genesis

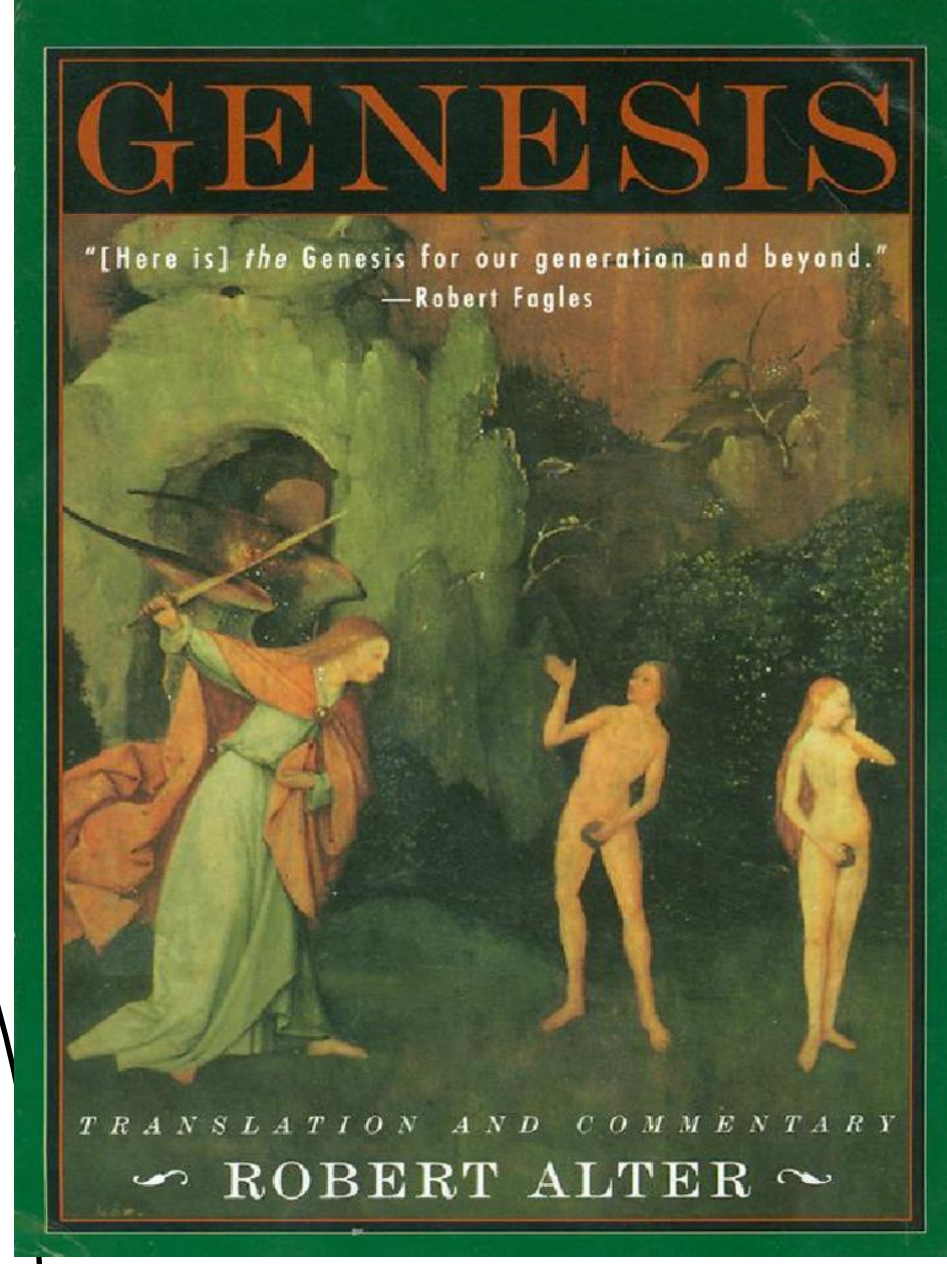


Figure 2. Cover photo of Alter’s Translation of Babylonian Genesis.

Plato’s Work: The Republic Book II

The Republic discusses the account of Socrates as he contemplates how soldiers should be prepared for war. Rather than focusing on battle, the main focus seems to be on how the soldiers will be taught about the Divine, and how to make them good people.

- Concludes that gods have to be in complete agreement, so there can only be one God
- An Effective God:
 - Is only responsible for the good in the world.
 - No need to lie or deceive
 - Meaning God cannot change form to appear to humans
- Implies that God is more of a role model figure; similar to characters in a parable

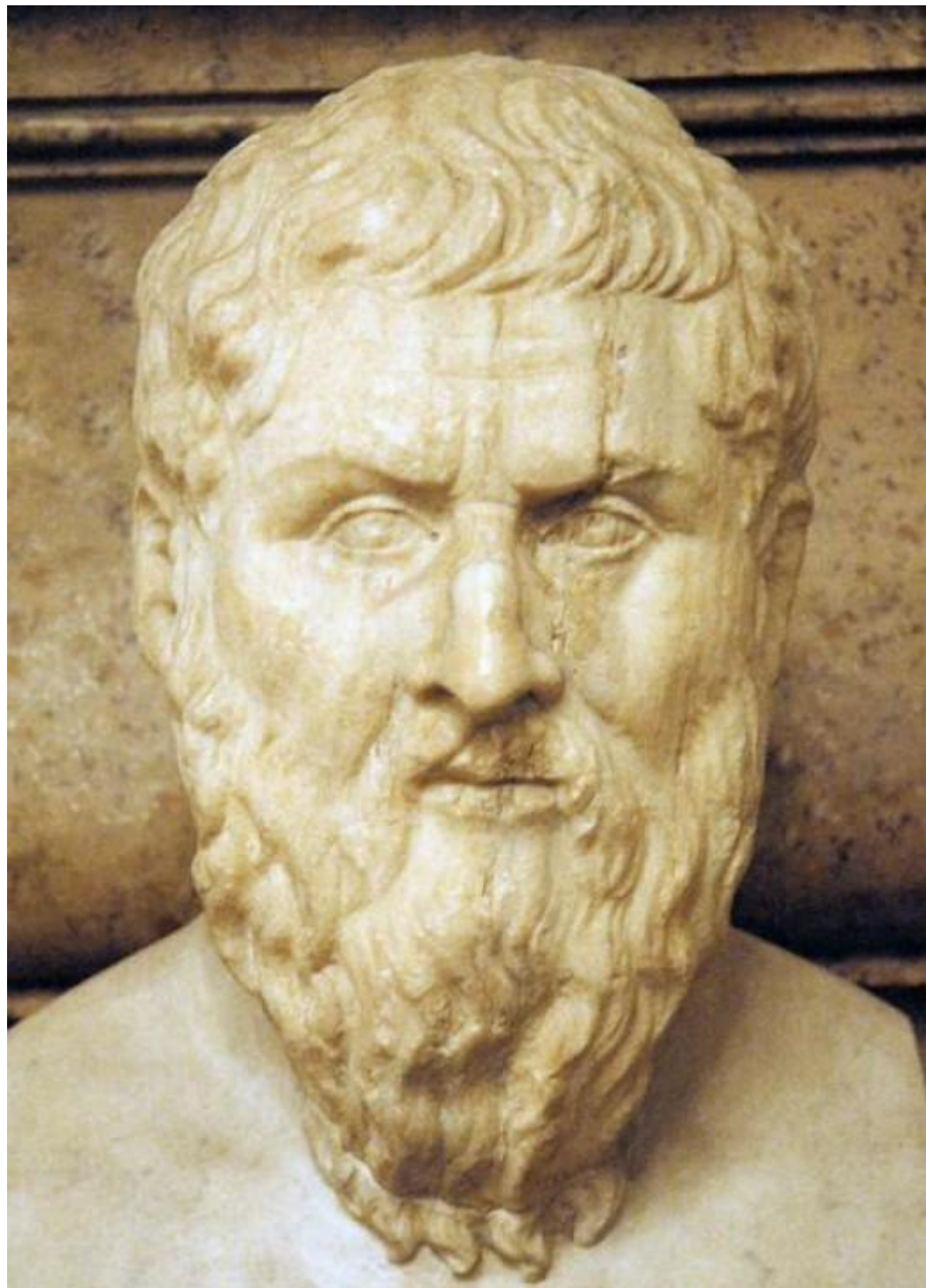


Figure 3. A sculpture of Athenian Philosopher and author of The Republic, Plato.

Conclusions

- Based on real-world observations, I believe the Abrahamic Genesis is more persuasive.
 - Provides a more accurate description of how humans interact with the world
 - Acknowledges that there is more to life then worshipping God
- The way a religious text or religion in general is interpreted, has a major impact on the way humans carry themselves and shape their lives.
- There are many religious texts and translations across the world that offer various perspectives on life, and it is important to consider their implications and respect the influence each text has on a society’s culture.

References

1. Heidel A. The babylonian genesis. United States: The University of Chicago Press; 2009.
2. Alter R. Genesis. New York City, New York: W.W. Norton & Company; 1997.
3. Plato, Lee HDP. The republic. Harmondsworth: Penguin; 1974.
Figure 1: goodreads - https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/183990.The_Babylonian_Genesis
Figure 2: [SCRIBED] - <https://www.scribd.com/document/627434967/Robert-Alter-Genesis>
Figure 3: Totally History - <https://totallyhistory.com/plato/>