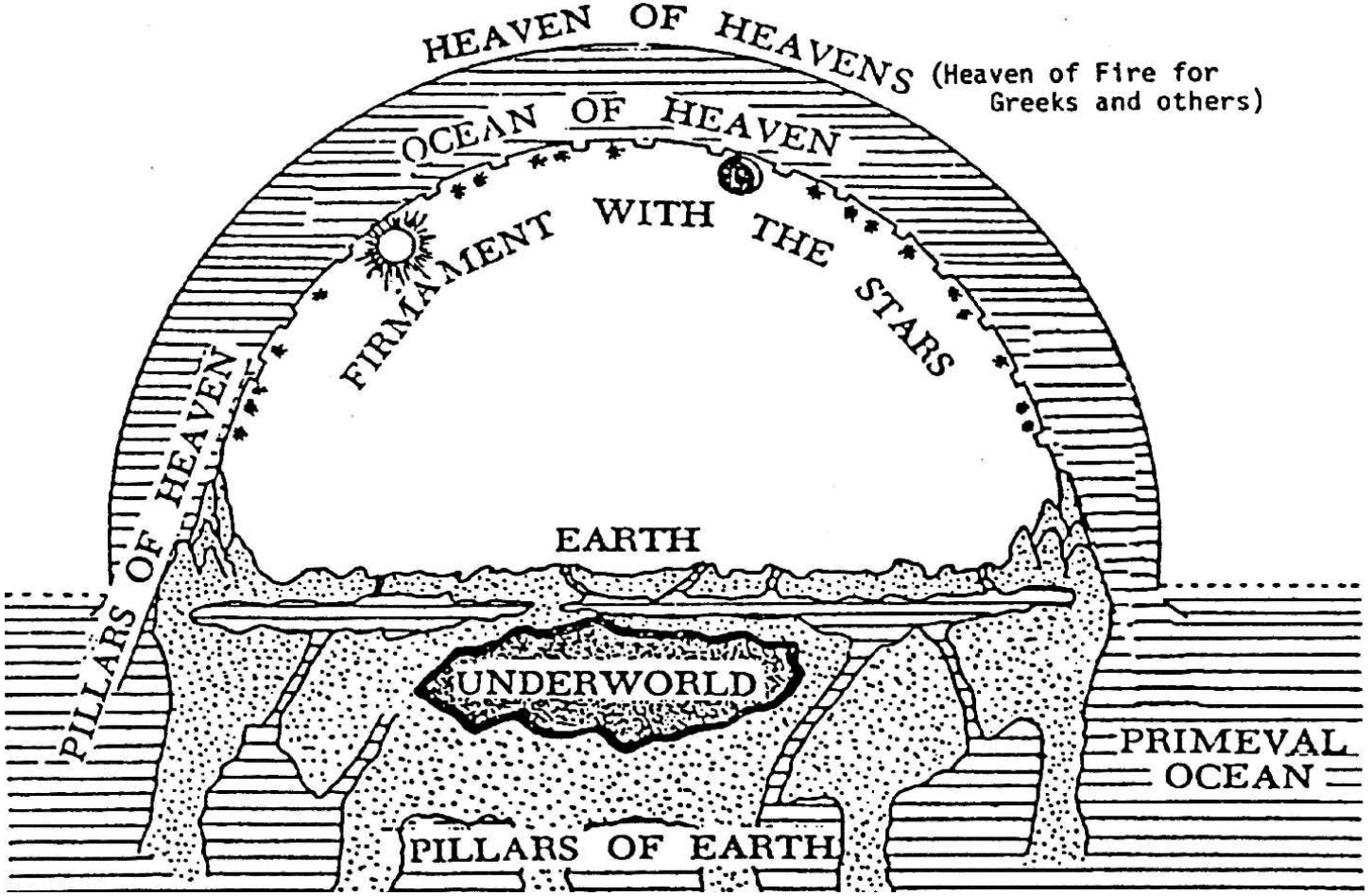A COMMON COSMOLOGY OF THE ANCIENT WORLD