

# The Structure of Philo's Commentary on the Pentateuch

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In the last twenty-five years Philonic scholarship has taken a turn which promises to achieve an understanding of the Philonic commentary as a consistent argument which intends to reflect the logic of the Biblical text. Only since the work of Nikiprowetzky<sup>1</sup>, Christiansen<sup>2</sup> and Cazeaux<sup>3</sup>, is there a sustained suggestion that the Philonic commentary is a sincere attempt to interpret the Pentateuch. These same scholars have sought to discover a structure and argument in the individual Philonic treatises and to determine the relation between the three major exegetical series. In addition to these important breakthroughs, Hamerton-Kelly<sup>4</sup> and Mack<sup>5</sup> have suggested the profitability of a structural analysis of the entire exegetical corpus. We have undertaken such an analysis and will outline in this paper the argument, structure and arrangement of the Philonic commentary. To help the reader appreciate the importance of our discovery of a unifying structure to the commentary, we begin with a brief review of modern scholarship in this field.

Until recently scholars had despaired of identifying any developing argument or coherent logic in the commentary. Attempts to arrange the treatises or describe the relation of the three major exegetical series<sup>6</sup> were based entirely upon considerations external

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1. V. Nikiprowetzky, *Le Commentaire de l'Écriture chez Philon d'Alexandrie*. Leiden: 1977; "Problèmes du 'recit de la Création' chez Philon d'Alexandrie." *Revue des Etudes Juives* 124 (1965) 271-306.

2. I. Christiansen, *Die Technik der allegorischen Auslegungswissenschaft bei Philon von Alexandrien*. Tübingen: 1969.

3. J. Cazeaux, "Aspects de l'exégèse philonienne." *Revue des Sciences Religieuses* 47 (1973) 262-69; *La Trame et la Chaîne ou les structures littéraires et l'Exégèse dans cinq des Traités de Philon d'Alexandrie*. Leiden: 1983.

4. R.G. Hamerton-Kelly, "Sources and Traditions in Philo Judaeus: Prolegomena to an Analysis of His Writings." *Studia Philonica* 1 (1972) 3-16.

5. B.L. Mack, "Exegetical Traditions in Alexandrian Judaism: A Program for the Analysis of the Philonic Corpus." *Studia Philonica* 3 (1974-75) 71-112.

6. Since 1889, following M.L. Massebieau, "Le Classements des Oeuvres de Philon," *Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études . . . Science Religieuses* I (Paris, 1889): 1-91, there has been general acceptance of the following threefold arrangement of the philonic exegetical corpus:

i. The Exposition of the Law, consisting of *De Abrahamo*, *De Iosepho*, *De Decalogo*, *De Specialibus Legibus*, *De Virtutibus*, and *De Praemiis et Poenis*.

or peripheral to the textual content. For example, since Schurer (1874)<sup>7</sup> and Massebieau (1889)<sup>8</sup>, there has been continuing speculation about the intended audience of the individual treatises as the clue to determining the purpose and role of the treatises within the corpus. This classification of Philonic writings in terms of audience addressed has necessitated various extraordinary reworkings of the traditionally received corpus, and questioned the unity of many treatises. Unfortunately, the intended readership of the treatises is so ambiguous and uncertain that no understanding of the corpus which is based upon a proper identification of the readership will be convincing or conclusive.<sup>9</sup> In 1906 Masse-

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ii. The Allegory of the Law, consisting of *Legum Allegoriae*, *De Cherubim*, *De Sacrificiis Abelis et Caini*, *Quod Deterius Potiori insidiari solet*, *De Posteritate Caini*, *De Gigantibus*, *Quod Deus immutabilis sit*, *De Agricultura*, *De Plantatione*, *De Ebrietate*, *De Sobrietate*, *De Confusione Linguarum*, *De Migratione Abrahami*, *Quis Rerum Divinarum Heres*, *De Congressu quaerendae Eruditionis gratia*, *De Fuga et Inventione*, *De Mutatione Nominum*, and *De Somniis*.

iii. *Quaestiones et Solutiones in Genesin* and *Quaestiones et Solutiones in Exodum*.

Two important exegetical works, *De Opificio Mundi* and *De Vita Moysis* are not included in these three-fold classifications because of general disagreement among scholars regarding their place in the Philonic commentary.

7. E. Schurer first published his work as *Lehrbuch der Neutestamentlichen Zeitgeschichte* (1874), published since the 2nd. edition (1886-7) under the title *Geschichte des Jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter Jesu Christi*. The first English translation was published in five volumes (1890-1) as *A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*.

8. M.L. Massebieau, "Le Classement des Oeuvres de Philon," *Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études . . . Science religieuses* I. (Paris, 1889): 1-91.

9. The preoccupation with assigning appropriate readership to the individual Philonic treatises has meant that little attention has focused on the possibility that there is a continuing argument and coherent structure within the commentary as a whole. Scholars have assumed both that the primary goal of Philo's writings is to address specific groups ('Jews', 'non-Jews', 'a more esoteric circle of Jews', 'less faithful and less knowledgeable Jews', 'Jewish initiates', 'gentiles', 'gentiles at a specific stage of religious conversion', 'gentiles interested in Judaism as a religion but retaining their political point of view', etc.) and admitted at the same time that the writings do not reveal a clearly defined readership. F.H. Colson (Introduction to *Philo* VI, Loeb, 1935) concludes in fashion typical to Philonic scholarship of the last one hundred years, that a continuing and developing argument is not present in Philo's exegetical works, but rather only a 'shifting mentality'. He reasons:

. . . the natural answer to the question for whom was the Exposition written will be, primarily at any rate, for Gentiles . . . It is true that the epilogue of the *De Praemiis et Poenis* seems to be mainly addressed to the Jews, but if we expand "primarily for the Gentiles", by the addition,

bieau and Brehier<sup>10</sup> proposed an arrangement of the commentary according to a chronology based on a historical reconstruction of recurrent Jewish persecutions. Their thesis sought to explain differing presentations and interpretations of Biblical characters and passages in various treatises. They speculated that Philo's attitudes shifted from one treatise to another according to the intensity of Jewish persecutions in his environment at a given time and claimed to discover allusions to historical events which allowed a precise dating and chronology to the writings.<sup>11</sup>

A final example of this tendency to arrange the corpus in a manner which generally ignores the text is that of Cohn<sup>12</sup> who offers a classification on the hypothesis that three distinct periods in Philo's psychological development determined the nature of writing produced in each stage. He concludes that the young Philo wrote the purely philosophical treatises. In his maturity he wrote the three large works on the Pentateuch: *The Allegorical Commentary*, *The Questions and Answers*, and *The Exposition of the Law*, in that order. In his old age he wrote the polemical and apologetic treatises, *Hypothetica* and *De Vita Mosis*.

None of these attempts to identify the relation of the various treatises to one another takes seriously the content and possible logic and coherence of a developing argument within the exegetical corpus. Another continuing theme which has hindered the discovery of a structural argument in the commentary is the refusal to view Philo as a serious exegete. His intention primarily is not to interpret the Holy Scripture but rather to present Greek philosophical ideas under the guise of a scriptural commentary in order to convince the Greeks that the Jewish faith is not a primitive religion but contains the truth of the most profound Greek thought.

In this view, the apologetic concern is so overwhelming that the biblical text is made to conform to Greek philosophy. In the

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"and also for Jews though not of the type which delighted in the tortuous meditations of the Commentary" it will probably satisfy the facts. It is quite in accordance with Philo's perpetually shifting mentality that he should have at one moment the first, at another the second class of readers in view. p. xiv.

10. L. Massebieau and E. Brehier, "Essai sur la Chronologie de la vie et des oeuvres de Philon", *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* 53 (1906): pp. 25-64, 164-185, 267-289.

11. V. Nikiprowetzky, *Le commentaire de l'Écriture chez Philo d'Alexandrie*. Leiden, 1977, 193 argues that W. Volker, *Fortschritt und Vollendung bei Philo von Alexandrien* (Leipzig, 1938) 16 n.2, demonstrates the weakness of this thesis.

12. L. Cohn, "Einteilung und Chronologie der Schriften Philos", *Philologus* 7 (1899) 387-435.

endeavour to show Greek philosophical thought consistent with a biblical faith, the scriptures are used and interpreted in whatever way necessary to support the claim that Greek philosophy need not be rejected within the Jewish community. Since Philo does not intend to be faithful to the biblical story, no structural integrity which reflects the biblical thread can be discerned in his writings. On the other hand, although scripture is relegated to be a handmaid of philosophy, scholarship has not discovered a coherent and consistent philosophical system in his writing. The pervasive opinion, as expressed by one scholar, is that "any attempt to extract a coherent system from Philo seems to me doomed to failure; his eclecticism is that of a jackdaw rather than the Philosopher."<sup>13</sup> In like fashion, Colson, the translator of the comprehensive Loeb English edition, who prefaces his translations with analyses of the texts, remarks that Philo's ramblings remind him of Mrs. Nickleby in Dickens. He admits that it is possible to follow Philo from point to point, but that his arguments present "an awful tangle."<sup>14</sup>

For most of this century Philo has been regarded as neither a genuine exegete nor a systematic philosopher. Consequently, attempts to order his corpus have concentrated on considerations external or peripheral to the actual textual content, with little success.

Fortunately, a most welcome shift in focus in the last 25 years has begun to regard seriously the content and structure of the texts themselves. Christiansen, Cazeaux and Nikiprowetzky consider Philo an exegete who uses well-formed exegetical techniques and methods consistently throughout his commentary. Christiansen suggests that Philo's allegory is controlled by the regular application of the Aristotelian diaeresis whereby distinctions (διαίρεσις) found at the literal level of the text reflect analogous distinctions found at a deeper, more spiritual and allegorical level.

Nikiprowetzky allows an integrity to Philo's commentary unknown in previous scholarship of this century. He exposes the futility of speculation of intended readership to arrange the structure of the commentary, and calls us to consider that the exegesis might reflect the character of the Pentateuch itself. Philo has a genuine interest in interpreting and understanding the scriptural text.

Nous ajouterons, pour caractériser l'orientation de sa pensée, que celle-ci va de la Bible à Philon et non, comme le suppose

13. E.R. Dodds, "The *Parmenides* of Plato and the Origin of the Neoplatonic 'One' ", *Classical Quarterly* 22 (1928) 132.

14. F.H. Colson, "Philo's Quotations from the Old Testament," *Journal of Theological Studies* 41 (1940) 250.

Goodenough, de Philon à la Bible. Nous voulons dire que c'est le texte biblique qui la mobilise et la met en branle et que notre auteur ne demande pas simplement à l'Écriture des supports où accrocher une pensée toute formée au préalable.<sup>15</sup>

Nikiprowetzky shows Philo to be an exegete who uses philosophical concepts and systems exclusively as aids to understand the genuine meaning of the biblical text. Whatever structure is found in the commentary is intended to be a reflection of the structure of the Pentateuch.

Cazeaux continues this line of study in his careful structural analysis of five of the allegorical treatises in which he demonstrates the presence of various well-formed and coherent symmetrical structures in the texts. These allegorical treatises witness to the unfolding of the Word which gives unity to scripture. Consequently, the treatises themselves, as faithful commentaries of Scripture, reflect the same unity of the divine Word.

Christiansen, Nikiprowetzky and Cazeaux have identified the intimate relationship between Scripture and Philo's commentary, but they have not discovered the overall argument of the corpus because they do not understand Philo's view of Scripture. Cazeaux is faithful to Philo when he writes

Nous avons proposé l'hypothèse que tout tiennne à l'Écriture inspiré,<sup>16</sup>

but he recognizes that it can mean many things to say that Scripture is inspired. In fact Cazeaux is wrong when he describes

... pour Philon comme pour ces autres rabbins, Jean ou Paul, ou Jésus de Nazareth, le sens de l'Écriture est déjà ambigu. Il est à mi-chemin entre le système et la pure discontinuité: autrement dit, il est «rue prophétique». Une seule et unique Parole y est prononcé, mais répondue en echoes divergents.<sup>17</sup>

Philo reads Scripture as a literal reflection of the Word of God which has created all things and believes Scripture to reflect the same order as the creation. In a systematic fashion Scripture describes the various stages of reality from the noetic to the sensible worlds. In this way Scripture has a philosophical character which Cazeaux and Nikiprowetzky have not understood. Nikiprowetzky points out that the philosophical concepts are intended as necessary aids to faithfully render the meaning of Scripture.

15. V. Nikiprowetzky, *Le Commentaire de l'Écriture chez Philo d'Alexandrie*. Leiden, 1977. 181.

16. J. Cazeaux, 504.

17. *Ibid*

Comme dans les écrits de Platon la forme du dialogue est étroitement liée à la notion dialectique de la recherche philosophique, chez Philon la forme du commentaire est inséparable de l'idée que l'auteur se fait de la philosophie, exégèse de la parole de Dieu. Le commentaire est la voie d'accès à la philosophie et son instrument même.<sup>18</sup>

But Nikiprowetzky does not fully understand the relation of Scripture to philosophy.<sup>19</sup> Neither he nor Cazeaux recognize Philo's insistence of a radical identity of the Word of God with philosophical truth. It is not simply that philosophy serves as the handmaid of Scripture, but that ultimately there is no distinction between them.<sup>20</sup> Scripture is divinely given philosophical truth, systematically presented. This view of Scripture allows the possi-

18. V. Nikiprowetzky, *Le Commentaire* . . . 181.

19. T.H. Tobin, *The Creation of Man*. Washington: 1983, indicates how Nikiprowetzky's position is inadequate. The attempt to explain the philosophical inconsistencies in Philo by appealing to the fact that Philo saw himself as an exegete and not a philosopher does not explain the exegetical inconsistencies. We will argue that these apparent inconsistencies are resolved within the philosophical framework which orders the commentary.

20. Every truth discovered through philosophy is ultimately grounded in the Word of God and is anticipated in the Sacred Scriptures. We must be careful not to read a later Patristic view of the dependence of Greek Philosophy upon the Scriptures. Samuel Sandmel is mistaken when he asserts:

Philo . . . would have insisted that the Platonism and Stoicism came out of Scripture. He and his Christian successors assert that Plato was right because Plato derived his views from Moses, who was earlier and greater than Plato (Samuel Sandmel, *Philo of Alexandria*. New York: 1979, 28).

This is not Philo's view. Philo does not insist upon the literal dependence of Greek philosophers upon Moses, but rather claims that philosophy leads to the Divine Word as revealed in the Holy Scriptures. This is made clear in the following passage in which the royal road, ἡ βασιλικὴ ὁδός, or true and genuine philosophy is identified with the Word of God, θεοῦ ῥῆμα καὶ λόγον.

for since God is the first and sole King of the universe, the road leading to Him, being a King's road, is also naturally called royal. This road you must take to be philosophy . . . This royal road then, which we have just said to be true and genuine philosophy, is called in the Law the utterance and word of God. For it is written "Thou shalt not swerve aside from the word which I command thee this day to the right hand nor to the left hand" (Deut. xxviii. 14). Thus it is clearly proved that the word of God is identical with the royal road. He treats the two as synonymous, and bids us decline from neither, but with upright mind tread the track that leads straight on, a central highway.

bility of a developing argument in philosophical categories within a sustained exegesis of Holy Scripture. Philo is convinced that it is the revealed truth of the biblical text which determines the shape of the philosophical position he presents as a commentary faithful to the Pentateuch. Philo intends to reflect the argument of the Pentateuch in the overall structure and logic of his commentary.

Hamerton-Kelly, Cazeaux and Mack<sup>21</sup> have advanced scholarship in focusing upon the need for an analysis of the structure, coherence, integrity and intention of a treatise or group of treatises. Cazeaux and Mack have been extremely successful in demonstrating how creative and insightful this type of analysis can be, in works published within the past ten years.<sup>22</sup> Mack, however, clearly expresses what is deficient in these local analyses and identifies the critical insight which has managed to escape the frustrated Philonic scholarship of this century, when he recognizes that

The question of the scope and intention of an exegetical system requires that the analysis begin (and end) with the Philonic corpus as a whole in relation to the Pentateuch as a whole.<sup>23</sup>

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(*De Posteritate Caini* 101, 102).

Philo did not dismiss the possibility that some Greeks had been familiar with the written law. He suggests that Zeno drew his thought concerning bad and virtuous men from the Law-book of the Jews (*Quod Omnis* 57). Heraclitus derived his theory of opposites from Moses (*Quaestiones in Genesis* III, 5, IV, 152) and is accused of being like a thief taking law and opinions from Moses. A comment is made in *De Specialibus Legibus* IV, 10, 61 that the Greeks had copied from the Law of Moses. Although this type of literal dependency is suggested in some instances, the complete dependence of Greek philosophy upon the Word of God springs from the relation of the truths of nature to that which has brought nature into being. This is seen to be the relation of philosophy (that which discovers the truths of nature) to the Word of God (that which creates and sustains nature). In a discussion of this matter, Thomas H. Billings accurately concludes:

"By his eclecticism in philosophical vocabulary, Philo exhibits Judaism as the transcendent philosophy which gives place to all that is true in all schools of Greek speculation"

(Thomas H. Billings, *The Platonism of Philo Judaeus*. New York, 1979, p. 11).

21. R.G. Hamerton-Kelly, "Sources and Tradition . . ."; J. Cazeaux, "Aspects de l'exégèse philonienne" and *La Trame et la Chaîne ou les Structures littéraires et l'Exégèse dans cinq des Traités de Philon d'Alexandrie*; B.L. Mack, "Exegetical Traditions . . ." and "Weisheit und Allegorie Bei Philo von Alexandrien", *Studia Philonica*, Vol. 5 (1979) 57-105.

22. J. Cazeaux, *La Trame et La Chaîne* and B.L. Mack, "Weisheit und Allegorie".

23. B.L. Mack, "Weisheit und Allegorie", 79.

It is unfortunate that Mack sees this important task as unmanageable and, continuing to insist that the corpus as a whole be regarded as the primary field of investigation, he concludes that the single treatise "provides the reasonable unit for thorough analysis", and presents such a limited study in his "Weisheit und Allegorie bei Philo von Alexandria (Untersuchungen zum Traktat *De Congressu eruditionis*)".

Mack need not have shied away so quickly from his call for the analysis of the coherence, integrity and structure of the overall commentary in relation to the Pentateuch. We will show in this paper that the integrity of the corpus as a whole is clearly identifiable in its rigorously symmetrical structure and balanced argument. The urgency of the task we accomplish in this paper is acknowledged by Mack when he admits:

The characteristics of the exegetical systems must be won by studies which encompass the entire Philonic corpus in relation to the whole of the Pentateuch, before detailed analyses of the individual treatises can be done with care and profit.<sup>24</sup>

The remainder of this paper will show in outline form how a single argument is present in the commentary, beginning with *De Opificio Mundi*, through the Exposition and the Allegory, and concluding with *Quaestiones in Genesin* and *Quaestiones in Exodum*. The argument contains a preface designed to introduce the corpus (*De Opificio Mundi* 1-6). The content and structure of this general preface is repeated in the concluding work (*Quaestiones in Exodum*) which exhaustively reconsiders each element of *De Opificio Mundi* 1-6, but as conclusions which follow from the argument of the commentary. QE I, 1-II, 51 is a restatement of *De Opificio Mundi* 1-3; QE II, 52-123 returns to the content of *De Opificio Mundi* 4-6. The general preface is followed by a preface to *De Opificio Mundi* itself. *De Opificio Mundi* establishes the philosophical principles which are systematically developed throughout the corpus. The Exposition is a series of treatises which shows the logical descent of the intelligible to the sensible, or the universal to the particular, in terms of external law. As such, it faithfully presents what Philo sees to be the argument of Scripture. The Exposition is followed by the Allegory which assumes the entire argument of the Exposition and shows that although there can be no logical ascent from the sensible to the intelligible, it is possible, after the argument of the Exposition, to discover the meaning of the intelligible within the sensible world in general. QG concludes the argument by repeating the logic and structure of the Exposition and the Allegory, not in relation to external law and the sensible world, but in terms

24. B.L. Mack, "Weisheit und Allegorie", 107.



of the inner life of the soul. As a conclusion, *QE* completes the rigorous symmetry of the corpus by returning to the themes of the general preface.

In this paper we will not be able to consider the argument in detail, but as each stage of the argument is worked out exactly in the Philonic commentary itself, the careful reader of the commentary will identify its structure and integrity as outlined.

### *De Opificio Mundi*

*De Opificio Mundi* (*DOM*) considers the exordium of Moses (the creation story of Genesis 1) and functions as the exordium or pivotal treatise of the exegetical corpus. As the creation story reveals the principles of interpretation necessary to understand the Mosaic Law, so the metaphysic and cosmology of the creation story as present in *DOM* is the key to understanding and discerning the integrity of the Philonic commentary.

The general preface to the entire corpus (1-6) begins by describing the character of this exordium. It will consider the principles of Mosaic law in a direct and philosophical manner, without the use of fiction or myth. It will both provide a philosophical ground for the laws,<sup>25</sup> and prepare those who will live under them to receive them. This exordium

consists of an account of the creation of the world, implying that the world [ὁ κόσμος] is in harmony with the Law [ὁ νόμος], and the Law with the world, and that the man who observes the law is constituted thereby a loyal citizen of the world [κοσμοπολίτης], regulating his doings by the purpose and will of Nature [Βούλημα τῆς φύσεως], in accordance with which the entire world itself also is administered.<sup>26</sup>

Moses introduces his law with an account of the creation of the world because of the intricate relation between natural law and the Mosaic code which implies that the person who is obedient to the Mosaic law follows the purpose and will of Nature. The world is administered by the same purpose and will of Nature which is reflected in the Mosaic law.

The latter half of the general preface (4-6) describes the beauty of the ideas embodied in Moses' exordium as beyond the comprehension of finite minds but indicates that a proper reflection upon the Mosaic law will allow the finite mind to grasp something of

25. *DOM* 1,2. Critical of those who have "nakedly and without embellishment drawn up a code of things held to be right among their people", Moses "refrained from stating abruptly what should be practised or avoided".

26. *DOM* 3.

the beauty of the ideas of creation [τὰ νοημάτα τῆς κοσμοποιίας] inscribed in the law.<sup>27</sup>

This general preface introduces the entire exegetical corpus, claiming an intimate correspondence between kosmos and law which makes it possible to discover the fundamental structure and nature of reality in the Mosaic law. The whole of the Philonic exegesis is a commentary on the Mosaic law which intends to consider the law as it reflects the underlying principles of kosmos.

The preface specific to *DOM* (7-12) states the basic metaphysic and cosmology which will be discovered in the examination of Moses' account of creation. God is described as utterly transcendent, one and eternal. The kosmos had a beginning, has a unity and is governed by providence. The argument *DOM* shows how these truths are reconciled, i.e. how it is possible for an utterly transcendent God to be active in the created world.<sup>28</sup>

Genesis tells of at least two major stages in the creation of the visible kosmos:

For God, being God, assumed that a beautiful copy would never be produced apart from a beautiful pattern, and that no object of perception would be faultless which was not made in the likeness of an original discerned only by the intellect. So when He willed to create this visible world He first fully formed the intelligible world [τὸ νοητός] in order that He might have the use of a pattern wholly God-like and incorporeal in producing the material world as a later creation, the very image of an earlier, to embrace in itself objects of perception of as many kinds as the other contained objects of intelligence [νοητά].<sup>29</sup>

The six-day creation described in Genesis 1 is that of the intelligible world [ὁ κόσμος νοητός], discernible only by intellect. Commenting on the conclusion to the six-day creation story,<sup>30</sup> Gen. 2:4,5, Philo suggests:

27. *Ibid* 6. "The minutest seal takes in under the graver's hand the contours of colossal figures. So perchance shall the beauties of the world's creation recorded in the Laws, transcendent as they are and dazzling as they do by their bright gleams the souls of readers, be indicated by delineations minute and slight."

28. Cf. L.A. Montes-Peral, *AKATALEPTOS THEOS: Der Unfassbare Gott*. Leiden: 1987, for a detailed study of the transcendence and immanence of the Philonic deity.

29. *Ibid* 16.

30. The six days do not represent a chronological sequence in the creation of the intelligible world, but rather illustrate that there is an intrinsic order in the noetic world which is reflected in the corporeal world. This is made clear in *DOM* 26, 28.

Is he not manifestly describing the incorporeal ideas present only to the mind [τὰς ἀσωματούς καὶ νοητὰς ἰδέας] by which, as by seals, the finished objects that meet our sense were moulded? For before the earth put forth its young green shoots, young verdure was present, he tells us, in the nature of things without material shape, and before grass sprang up in the field, there was in existence an invisible grass [χόρος ἦν οὐχ ὄρατός]. We must suppose that in the case of all other objects also, on which the sense pronounce judgement, the original forms and measures, to which all things that come into being owe shape and size, subsisted before them, for even if he has not dealt with everything in detail but in the mass, aiming as he does at brevity in a high degree, nevertheless what he does say gives us a few indications of universal Nature, which brings forth no finished product in the world of sense without using an incorporeal pattern [ἥτις ἄνευ ἀωμάτου παραδείγματος οὐδὲν τελειοουργεῖ τῶν ἐν αἰσθήσει].<sup>31</sup>

The intelligible world is nothing other than Divine Reason, or the Word of God:

even so the universe that consisted of ideas [ὁ τῶν ἰδεῶν κόσμος] would have no other location than the Divine Reason [τὸν θεῖον λόγον] which was the Author of this ordered frame.<sup>32</sup>

The world discerned only by the intellect [τὸν νοητὸν κόσμος] is nothing else than the Word of God [θεοῦ λόγον] when He was already engaged in the act of creation.<sup>33</sup>

The sensible world which is created in Genesis 2 is an image of the intelligible world. The following passage describes the relation of the sensible to the intelligible:

. . . the intelligible as far surpasses the visible in the brilliancy of its radiance, as sunlight assuredly surpasses darkness and day night, and mind, the ruler of the entire soul, the bodily eyes. Now that invisible light perceptible only by mind has come into being as an image of the Divine Word. Who brought it within our ken: it is a supercelestial constellation [ὑπερουράνιος ἀστήρ], fount of the constellations obvious to sense [πηγὴ τῶν αἰσθητῶν ἀστέρων]. It would not be amiss to term it "all brightness", to signify that from which sun and moon, as well as fixed stars and planets draw, in proportion to their several capacity, the light befitting each of them: for that pure and undiluted radiance is bedimmed so soon as it begins to undergo the change that is entailed by the passage

31. *Ibid* 129, 130.

32. *Ibid* 20.

33. *Ibid* 24. Cf. *Ibid* 25.

from the intelligible to the sensibly discerned, for no object of sense is free from dimness.<sup>34</sup>

The sensible world is a further stage of creation, dependent upon the intelligible world for its order, and more distant from its Maker. This contrast between the intelligible and corporeal worlds is essential to the argument of both *DOM* and the entire Philonic commentary. The distinct character of each world is maintained forcibly throughout *DOM*.

Moses describes man's creation in two stages as well. The first Adam of Genesis 2 is an idea or type made according to the divine image:

. . . he that was after the (Divine) image was an idea or type or seal [ἰδέα ἢ γένος ἢ σφραγίς], an object of thought (only), incorporeal, neither male nor female, by nature incorruptible.<sup>35</sup>

The man formed in Genesis 2:7 is sensible man:

After this he says that "God formed man by taking clay from the earth, and breathed into his face the breath of life" (Genesis 2:7). By this also he shows very clearly that there is a vast difference between the man thus formed and the man that came into existence earlier after the image of God: for the man so formed is an object of sense-perception, partaking already of such or such quality, consisting of body and soul, man or woman, by nature mortal.<sup>36</sup>

At this point in his argument Philo interjects a comment about the literary form of Genesis 1-3. He tells us that Moses' accounts of the creation of the intelligible and sensible worlds and of individual man before the fall does not contain fiction or myth.<sup>37</sup> Allegory appears in Scripture for the first time in the account of the fall of man. Prior to his consideration of the fall, however, we are told that the literal truth of Genesis 1 and 2 bids us

resort to allegorical interpretation guided in our renderings by what lies beneath the surface. [κατὰ τὰς δι' ὑπονοιών ἀποδόσεις].<sup>38</sup>

Philo begins immediately an allegorical interpretation of the serpent of Genesis 3.

In this presentation the allegorical interpretation of the Scriptures is only possible when ὑπόνοια (the hidden meaning) has already been revealed and is known. Allegory can be introduced

34. *Ibid* 30, 31.

35. *Ibid* 134.

36. *Ibid*

37. *Ibid* 157.

38. *Ibid*

in this point of Scripture because the *ὑπόνοια* (the true meaning which lies at the bottom of the allegory) has been described in Genesis 1 and 2. The intelligible world (that which 'lies beneath the surface'), and the relation of the sensible to the intelligible, has been revealed to us in the creation accounts of the intelligible world, the sensible world, and individual man before the fall.

Moses' account of creation in Genesis 1 and 2 has revealed that God exists, He is one, the kosmos had a beginning, the kosmos is one, God's providence runs through all creation, there are two created orders of intelligible and corporeal worlds, the intelligible world is the Divine Reason of God, and the corporeal world is a reflection of the intelligible. It has described man's nature before the fall. These are truths of revelation which Philo claims to contain no allegory or approximation to truth.

Beginning with the account of the fall of man and the subsequent confusion of the once exact correspondence of the sensible to the intelligible, precise truth and direct statement of metaphysical reality becomes increasingly replaced by allegory and approximations of truth. It is the nature of the visible world after the fall that it cannot be spoken of with the same clarity and accuracy that the intelligible forms allow.<sup>39</sup>

*DOM* ends with an account of the fall of man and its consequences for the human soul. The fallen soul's relation to the fallen corporeal world and to the intelligible world is described. Philo explains how it is possible for fallen man to come to know the intelligible but warns of the many difficulties involved in the fallen soul's perception of the intelligible and indicates the causes of deception which are always present in the fallen soul. This epistemology provides the comprehensive framework for Philo's overall concern in his corpus which is to show how the individual soul might journey back to God. In this latter part of *DOM* Philo reveals that in the Mosaic account of the fall, mind corresponds to man and the senses to woman.<sup>40</sup> This image plays a major role in the description of the soul's salvation. As Philo discusses the effects of pleasure and pain on the fallen soul, his use of allegory increases.

*DOM* presents the principles of the metaphysic, cosmology and epistemology which will be worked out in the commentary. The transcendence and unity of God is protected, yet His providence is active in creation because of the mediation of Divine Reason and the noetic world. Philo claims that these biblical truths are

39. *Ibid* 31. "τῆς ἀμιγυῶς καὶ καθαρᾶς ἀγῆς ἐκείνης ἀμαυρουμένης, ὅταν ἄρξηται τρεπεσθαι κατὰ τὴν ἐκ νοητοῦ πρὸς αἰσθητὸν μεταβολήν. εἰλικρινὲς γὰρ οὐδὲν τῶν ἐν αἰσθήσει."

40. *Ibid* 165.

intensely practical and relevant to the return of the individual to a relationship with God:

He that has begun by learning these things with his understanding rather than with his hearing, and has stamped on his soul impressions of truths so marvellous and priceless, both that God is and is from eternity, and that He that really is is One, and that He has made the world and has made it one world, unique as Himself is unique, and that He ever exercises forethought for His creation, will lead a life of bliss and blessedness, because he has a character moulded by the truths that piety and holiness enforce.<sup>41</sup>

We shall see that the integrity of the corpus follows from *DOM* as a single argument which demonstrates how the individual fallen soul can achieve salvation.

#### *The Exposition*

The Exposition continues the Scriptural exegesis in a consideration of law which describes how the individual can be related to a transcendent God through participation in the various levels of reality which separate the creation from the creator.<sup>42</sup> The Mosaic law will correspond precisely with the natural order of the kosmos, mediated by *ἰδεαί* or incarnate true images of the intelligible, i.e. the patriarchs who imitate the principles and order of nature most exactly. These patriarchs are identified as incarnations of the law [νόμοι ἔμψυχοι] who have a unique relation to the intelligible world as true and actual images of the noetic virtues.<sup>43</sup> In the ethical realm they are a necessary stage in the mediation of the intelligible world to the sensible.

After the νόμοι ἔμψυχοι considered in *De Abrahamo* and *De Iosepho* the next stage in the descent from God in the ethical realm is that of the written law. *De Vita Mosis* provides the transition

41. *Ibid* 172.

42. The entire scheme is clearly presented in *De Abrahamo* 3-6.

43. Cf. W. Richardson, "The Philonic Patriarchs as Νόμος Ἐμψυχος", *Studia Patristica* 1 (Berlin, 1957) 515-525. Several passages in *De Abrahamo* indicate that these patriarchs are more than individual mortal men (54, 55, 276). Passages from the Allegory describe Isaac as a Platonic idea incarnate, spiritually begotten on the ideal plane of reality (*De Mutatione Nominum* 145, 146), and directly as "most pure thought" (νόημα καθαρώτατον) (*De Fuga et Inventione* 167). In the Exposition Joseph is not a man but "either God or Logos or divine law" (ἢ θεὸς ἢ λόγος ἢ νόμος θεῖος) (*De Iosepho* 174). Moses is master (δεσπότης) of the elements, shares in the possession of the kosmos as God's heir (κληρονόμος), and is God's friend who entered into the archetypal essence of all existing things. The intelligible world has been fully revealed to him. (*De Vita Mosis* I, 155-158).

from the biographical treatises to *De Decalogo* which begins the treatment of the written law.

The traditional division of *De Vita Mosis* into two books is suggested by the argument of the text. *De Vita Mosis* I treats Moses as the philosopher-king. It continues in the same spirit of the previous biographical treatises, being an historical account of Moses as a νόμος ἔμψυχος whose life reveals the intelligible order. *De Vita Mosis* II considers the role of Moses as the ideal lawgiver, priest and prophet.<sup>44</sup> In this second book Moses actually translates the principles of the intelligible world to the sensible world through his priesthood, prophecy and legislation.<sup>45</sup> As a lawgiver Moses reproduces the intelligible order in the sensible world in its most permanent and concrete ethical form:

But Moses is alone in this, that his laws, firm, unshaken, immovable, stamped, as it were, with the seals of nature herself, remain secure from the day when they were first enacted to now, and we may hope that they will remain for all future ages as though immortal, so long as the sun and moon and the whole heaven and universe exist.<sup>46</sup>

These laws are likenesses and copies of the perfect patterns enshrined in the souls of the νόμοι ἔμψυχοι and therefore, following the biblical accounts of the patriarchs, these written laws represent the next stage in the descent from God in the ethical realm. *De Decalogo* demonstrates the exhaustive unity of the ten commandments which are issued by God directly. The four books of *De Specialibus Legibus* show how each of the particular laws fall under one or other of the ten commandments and, in this way, insists that the particular laws have a true correspondence to the κόσμος νοητός though removed by several stages.<sup>47</sup>

44. Cf. *De Vita Mosis* II, 5-6.

45. As perfect priest Moses constructs the tabernacle and designs his priestly robes in a way which presents the intelligible form in sensible material. *Ibid* II, 74-76. As perfect prophet he declares "by inspiration what cannot be apprehended by reason" (*Ibid* II, 187), presenting the intelligible to mortal man directly, through his oracles. As perfect lawgiver, he translates the intelligible into written laws (*Ibid* II, 14).

46. *Ibid* II, 14. Cf. *Ibid* II, 52: "Thus whoever will carefully examine the nature of the particular enactments will find that they seek to attain to the harmony of the universe and are in agreement with the principles of eternal nature."

47. In keeping with the principles revealed in *De Opificio Mundi*, allegory becomes more pronounced as the argument develops toward the particular and away from the intelligible forms. Philo tells us:

I shall now proceed in due course to give full descriptions of the written Laws. And if some allegorical interpretation should appear to underlie them, I shall not fail to state it. For

The next stage of the descent into particularity is introduced in the latter sections of *De Specialibus Legibus* which sums up the discussion of the particular laws and introduces the analysis of the particular virtues in a consideration of justice.<sup>48</sup> The entire collection of particular laws must be accepted intact because these laws are designed to guide the soul between extremes and each particular law can only function in concord with all the others. Virtue is a mean and the particular laws as a whole maintain a balance between the extremes which define each virtue. Justice is comprehensive of all the virtues since it reveals the general nature of virtues as means.

*De Virtutibus* considers the particular virtues and describes the final stage of descent in the ethical realm. The soul is described in its relation to the world. Piety is not considered as the soul stands before God as a finite, discrete individual.<sup>49</sup> It is significant that *De Virtutibus* is the first treatise of the Exposition not to include a treatment of both piety and the acquisition of virtue.<sup>50</sup>

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knowledge loves to learn and advance to full understanding and its way is to seek the hidden meaning rather than the obvious.

(*De Decalogo* I)

Extended passages of allegory first appear in a concentrated way in *De Specialibus Legibus* I. The discrete nature of the particular laws is far removed from the unity of the intelligible.

48. Scholarship has been unable to explain the appearance of this discussion of justice in *De Specialibus Legibus* IV. The comments of Samuel Sandmel, *Philo of Alexandria* (New York, 1979), p. 69, underline the radical nature of our thesis and its utter departure from former trends in Philonic scholarship:

But why has Philo included within *On The Special Laws*, Book Four, the section noted just above on justice? Would not this section logically have been the initial part of *On The Virtues*? Has some scribal caprice or an accident resulted in disarray? Furthermore, one could have expected to find in *On The Virtues* the usual balance that Philo presents between piety on the one hand and the four cardinal virtues on the other hand, but if a section on piety was ever part of *On The Virtues* (as some think), there it has disappeared. Scholars who have inquired into these problems have not found in the surviving manuscripts of Philo's writings any clue to a solution. But perhaps the explanation is that Philo was guilty of not providing what scholars have unreasonably expected: pure consistency.

49. *De Virtutibus* 227.

50. The balance between piety and virtue is such a characteristic of each treatise of the Exposition that scholars have suggested that a section on piety must have been part of *De Virtutibus* originally, and that this section has been lost. For Cohn and Wendland's postulation that *De Pietate* has been lost see F.H. Colson, Introduction to *Philo* 8, pp. xii ff. We contend that the overall argument of the Exposition explains the absence of such a section on piety.



*DOM* is concerned exclusively with piety, i.e. an apprehension of the truths about God and the intelligible world. As the Exposition continues, each treatise maintains a balance of consideration of piety (activity of the soul directed immediately toward the divine and intelligible) and virtuous activity in the world. The biographical treatises affirmed the priority of the piety of the patriarchs which led to their wholly virtuous character. *De Decalogo* outlined the ten commandments in two sets of five which concerned piety and virtue respectively. *De Specialibus* continued in the same manner, treating the multiplicity of individual laws under the decalogue. In each successive treatise the discussion of piety receives less attention while the consideration of the practical virtuous life increases. Finally, as *DOM* is concerned with piety wholly, so *De Virtutibus* attends entirely to the life of virtue in the world. The structure of the Exposition is balanced. The descent from the intelligible to the sensible and from the universal to the particular, in the ethical sphere, is now complete.

*De Praemiis et Poenis* sums up the argument of the Exposition and introduces the Allegory. It begins with a summary of the Exposition in terms of creation, history and legislation.<sup>51</sup> The reader is encouraged to turn to the account of creation found in *DOM* and Philo considers the history (*De Praemiis et Poenis* 7-78) and legislation (79-151) in turn, concluding with a call to a religious conversion.

The summary of the historical part of the Exposition forcibly substantiates our thesis that the Exposition is concerned with the metaphysical structure of the descent from God to the finite world. It is not possible, claims Philo, to demonstrate the infinite from the finite. All that can be inferred from the sensible world is that there is a creator, there is a providence, and that there is a noetic world which gives order to the sensible world. Nothing of the character or nature of the Creator, the providence, or the intelligible world, can be concluded.<sup>52</sup>

The patriarchs begin with a vision of the intelligible which reveals the significance and meaning of the sensible world. It is impossible to approach the monad from the side of the dyad. All true knowledge of the dyad begins with a vision of the monad. The following passage provides a rationale for the logic of the Exposition which begins with an account of the intelligible and pro-

51. In *De Praemiis et Poenis* 1-3, the Exposition is said to consider, in turn, creation [*De Opificio Mundi*], history [*De Abrahamo* to *De Iosepho*, and legislation [*De Decalogo*, *De Specialibus*, *De Virtutibus*, and *De Praemiis et Poenis*]

52. *De Praemiis et Poenis* 41, 42, 43.

ceeds to inform the sensible and particular with meaning. Philo is speaking of the knowledge of one of the patriarchs.

And this knowledge he has gained not from any other source, not from things on earth or things in Heaven, not from the elements or combinations of elements mortal or immortal, but at the summons of Him alone who has willed to reveal His existence as a person to the suppliant. How this access has been obtained may be well seen through an illustration. Do we behold the sun which sense perceives by any other thing than the sun, or the stars by any others than the stars, and in general is not light seen by light? In the same way God too is His own brightness and is discerned through Himself alone, without anything co-operating or being able to co-operate in giving a perfect apprehension of His existence. They then do but make a happy guess, who are at pains to discern the Uncreated, and Creator of all from His creation, and are on the same footing as those who try to trace the nature of the monad from the dyad, whereas observation of the dyad should begin with the monad which is the starting point. The seekers for truth are those who envisage God through God, light through light.<sup>53</sup>

The summary of the legislative part of the Exposition assumes the correspondence between the intelligible and sensible worlds described in *DOM*. Obedience to the specific laws will bring a person's life into conformity with the spiritual ordering of the intelligible world. If all men obeyed these laws, the entire world would attain a harmony and peace reflective of the eternity of the spiritual world.<sup>54</sup>

Philo concludes the Exposition with a call to conversion, which is the recognition that this world is insubstantial and that the spiritual and intelligible world is the proper home of the soul. This account of conversion and coming to see the sensible world as insubstantial provides the transition from the Exposition to the Allegory.

#### *The Allegory of the Law*

The Allegory is notorious for its apparent lack of order and consistent thought. Goodenough is typical of the judgement of scholarship when he concludes:

the Biblical text is often, as Cohn says, dismissed as ridiculous and absurd in its literal sense, and becomes a springboard up into psychology, politics, mysticism, ethics, metaphysics,

53. *Ibid* 44-46.

54. *Ibid* 88,89.

theories of education, and a dozen other subjects which appear at first to be stirred together with a spoon.<sup>55</sup>

Cazeaux and Mack have demonstrated how wrong such judgments have been. They identify clear structures and symmetries within the Allegory. Cazeaux finds in his detailed treatment of five of the Allegorical treatises, that they intend to reflect the unity and coherence of Scripture. We have indicated above that Cazeaux falls short of seeing the overall unity of Philo's commentary because he does not recognize such an overall argument in Scripture itself. However there is no doubt that Cazeaux convincingly has shown the principles of symmetry and redundancy (i.e. one verse looking forward to the next) to be consistently present in the Allegory.

The symmetries and structures found in the Allegory are various and precise, but the Allegory as a whole does not advance a single and logical argument of a similar sort we witness in the Exposition. The logic of the Exposition has shown why such an argument is not able to be presented to the Allegory.

The Allegory considers activities in the sensible realm which can never directly demonstrate the character of the intelligible with precision. The transition treatise from the Exposition to the Allegory has made it clear that the sensible cannot reveal the nature of the intelligible.<sup>56</sup> If one were constrained to begin with the manifold experiences and existences of the sensible world, the spiritual world could never be defined accurately. The Allegory is fully dependent upon the prior argument of the Exposition. In the light of the knowledge of the intelligible and its relation to the sensible, described in *DOM* and the Exposition, the Allegory examines the Scriptural account of the sensible in order to explicate its spiritual and intelligible meaning, or its 'hidden sense' (ὑπόνοια).<sup>57</sup> The

55. E.R. Goodenough, *An Introduction to Philo Judaeus*. New Haven, 1940. p. 56.

56. *De Praemiis et Poenis* 46.

"They then do but make a happy guess, who are at pains to discern the Uncreated, and Creator of all from His creation, and are on the same footing as those who try to trace the nature of the monad from dyad, whereas observation of the dyad should begin with the monad which is the starting point."

57. Norman Bentwich, *Philo Judaeus of Alexandria* (Philadelphia, 1910), makes clear the consequence of failing to discern the dependence of the Allegory on the Exposition and to identify the nature of *DOM* as the introductory treatise to the Allegory as well as to the Exposition. He says, "the first part (of the allegorical commentary on Genesis) which gave the philosophical account of the first chapter of Genesis, the first six days of creation, referred to as 'the Hexameron' (τὸ ἑξήμερόν) has disappeared. (Compare *Legum Allegoriae* II, 4) . . . Here must have been the general

which completes the overall argument of the commentary and grants an unquestionable integrity to the exegetical corpus.

In general, to each passage of Scripture considered in both *Quaestiones et Solutiones in Genesin* (QG) and *Quaestiones et Solutiones in Exodum* (QE), Philo first gives the literal meaning and then the allegorical meaning.<sup>60</sup> He has shown the relation of the two meanings previously in the Exposition and the Allegory. Through his repeated literal and allegorical interpretations of a given text, Philo brings together the conclusions of the Exposition and of the Allegory. QG and QE also complete the argument of the Philonic commentary in a structural way. QG considers the subject matter and reflects the structure of the Exposition. QE returns to a consideration and restatement of the themes of DOM 1-6, the preface

60. Philo dismisses the possibility of a solely literal or allegorical interpretation of Scripture. The relation between the literal and allegorical interpretations of the Questions and Answers has not been understood because scholars have missed the overall argument of the commentary. M.J. Shroyer, "Alexandrian Jewish Literalists", *Journal of Biblical Literature* 55 (1936) 261-284, suggests, typically, that the two interpretations arise from Philo's use of various sources which he is not able to reconcile. Philo gives two interpretations because he is writing for both 'literalists' and for those who prefer an allegorical interpretation. Shroyer fails to see the intended dependence between the literal and allegorical.

Both the Exposition and the Allegory criticize literalists and extreme allegorists, dismissing their interpretations. Neither a strictly literal nor a strictly allegorical hermeneutic can view Scripture properly. Each such hermeneutic attempts to understand Scripture outside of the philosophical and theological framework which Scripture itself claims necessary to a proper hermeneutic.

The literalists cannot know even the literal meaning since the literal is dependent upon knowledge of the deeper meaning, viz. the intelligible or spiritual. For example, ignorance of the principles of the intelligible leads them to suggest that God in Himself is capable of change and repentance. (Cf. *Quod Deus Immutabilis Sit* 21, 22). No proper literal interpretation is possible when the literal is thought to be complete without a relation to the intelligible. Contrariwise, the extreme allegorists are unable to interpret correctly the allegorical meaning since they ignore the clear sense of the literal. (Cf. *De Migratione Abrahami* 91-93).

Philo's hermeneutic demands that the literal and allegorical meanings inform and interpret each other. The foundation of both literal and allegorical interpretations rests upon the argument of DOM which shows the relation of the intelligible to the sensible. Allegory is absent from the philosophical account of the creation of the intelligible world in DOM. The literalism contained therein is of a philosophical character because it has as its object the intelligible world in a direct way. The literalism of much of the Questions and Answers is less certain and precise because it has as its object the sensible world and the ever changing relations therein. The account of the creation of the intelligible world in Genesis I is the firm foundation upon which all literal and allegorical interpretation of subsequent Scripture rests.

to the entire Philonic commentary.

The logic of the Exposition is repeated in *QG*, and the content of both the Exposition and the Allegory is taken up. The Exposition began with a description of law in the intelligible order and ended with an account of the particular laws and virtues. *QG* begins its treatment of the human soul in its most abstract and universal form and concludes with an account of the individual fallen soul in the sensible world. As the Exposition considers the external means of salvation in the divine law, so *QG* considers the movement toward salvation in the inner life of the soul. As the Allegory shows how the sensible particulars outside the soul reflect the intelligible, so through the same use of allegory, *QG* shows how the elements of the individual soul reflect that same intelligible order. The Exposition and the Allegory show the nature of the sensible world outside the soul and how that world participates in the divine. *QG* examines the nature of the soul itself and its participation in the divine. *QG* completes Philo's argument by claiming its logic, and the logic of Scripture, to be comprehensive of all that is, within and without the soul.

The structure of *QG* reflects that of the Exposition. *QG* 1-5 relates to the treatise as *DOM* relates to the Exposition. *QG* 1-5 considers Genesis 2:4-7 and repeats the basic metaphysic and epistemology of the *DOM* Allegory and concern with the literal meaning of the sensible begins in *QG* 6 after the review of the basic truths of creation have established the causes of the intelligible to reside in an undivided first cause, the sensible world to be an imitation of the intelligible order, and have defined the means whereby man can know his principle and Creator through the mediation of the Logos which is the likeness of God himself. As the argument of *DOM* provides the foundation for the subsequent argument of the Exposition and the Allegory, so *QG* 1-5 establishes the same foundation for the overall argument of *QG*.

After *QG* 1-5 sums up the logic of *DOM* the treatise proceeds to outline the entire content of the Exposition and the Allegory. *QG* reflects the structure of the Exposition in that it begins with the most universal and abstract and proceeds in stages to the concrete individual in its concluding sections. *QG* ends with a consideration of the repentance of the individual soul, as did the Exposition. The content of the Allegory is also contained in *QG*. The Allegory significantly expands and develops many themes which are introduced in the Exposition. It is the full articulation of these themes as found in the Allegory which is reflected and summarized in *QG*.

*QG* 6-81 expresses the anthropology, psychology and epistemology which develop from the fundamental truths of *QG* 1-5.

This discussion gives a description of the nature of the soul which makes it possible later for Philo to consider the salvation of the individual soul. *QG* 6-81 considers the nature of the soul in itself and does not refer to the actual individual living in the sensible world.

The story of the fall considers the general relation of mind, sense and bodily desires and shows how man can know the intelligible and divine from his finite stand-point.<sup>61</sup> Cain and Abel illustrate the distinction between lover of self and lover of God.<sup>62</sup> Abel and Cain were given immortality and destruction respectively because their wills were wholly devoted, the one to virtue and the other to evil. Seth is the first fully natural man described in the Bible and he has the potential for good and evil within him.<sup>63</sup> Seth shows how a perception of the good moves the will towards the perceived goal. Enoch shows the possibility of turning away from the evil toward the good, through repentance.<sup>64</sup>

Philo's lengthy discourse about Noah (*QG* I, 87-II, 82) considers the relation of body to soul in the process of repentance and salvation. The argument of *QG* has shown the senses to be the cause of the fall. The consequence of the fall was the clothing of the soul with the physical body. The soul is now more prone to evil since it is constantly tempted by the passions of the fallen body. The life of Noah describes how the senses can have a role in repentance and man's salvation when the soul wills to perceive the intelligible through the sensible.<sup>65</sup> In the process of salvation the senses must be purified, the passions denied.

This account of the participation of the senses in the soul's per-

61. *QG* I. 6-57.

62. *QG* I. 58-76.

63. *QG* I. 78:

Truly Seth is another seed and the beginning of another birth of Abel in accordance with a certain natural principle [*κατὰ τινα φυσικὸν λόγον*]. For Abel is like one who comes from above to below, wherefore he is injured, but Seth (is like one who comes) from below to above, wherefore he grows [*ἀνξάνεται*].

64. *QG* I. 82-85.

65. The five senses are compared to the windows of the ark which Noah opens after the flood. Sense-perceptible objects can help to reveal the truth to the soul. *QG* II, 34 tells how the operation of sight, though restricted to sense-perceptible objects, informs the soul of the inintelligible. The sense can be used to bring the soul to a deeper knowledge of the forms in which it then participates:

When the mind is smitten by heavenly pleasure, it desires to leap around and cut off all forms of (sensual) pleasure, in order that it may remove from its midst that which covers it with a veil and darkens it like a shadow, and that it may be able to bring sense-perception to naked and incorporeal natures. *QG* II, 46.

ception of truth and salvation completes the Philonic psychology. *QG* concludes with an examination of the movement of the individual soul to God. The lives of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are discussed in *QG* III and IV.

Philo acknowledges the new direction of his enquiry by summarizing the argument of *QG* I and II. He reviews what the soul must turn away if it is to be saved;<sup>66</sup> the role of the sense-perception in the salvific process;<sup>67</sup> the necessity of faith and hope for the movement of the soul toward the good;<sup>68</sup> the priority of knowledge in bringing the soul to salvation;<sup>69</sup> and the relation of body, sense-perception and reason.<sup>70</sup>

The central passage of *QG* is III, 9 where the longed-for union with God is described. Preparation for the ecstatic vision includes proper use of the senses which enables them to perceive the intelligible in the sensible. In the vision itself the senses and understanding are left behind as the soul sees the intelligible directly. Seeing and understanding become dull. This vision is not an activity of the soul, but a passivity which allows God to enter it and reveal Himself to it. Even the soul of the virtuous man is a slave to the elements, bodily needs and sense-pleasures. The soul only attains its true freedom when it is released from the body and returns to God in the ecstatic experience.<sup>71</sup>

Philo's presentation of the possibility of man coming to see God in this life is now complete. In a systematic fashion, Philo has proceeded from the ordering of the kosmos, a detailed psychology, to the description of the salvation possible for man in the ecstatic union. This has been an abstract and logical consideration. The argument of *QG* will now show in a much more practical way how the individual soul begins and continues that journey toward the divine vision. Immediately following the account of Abraham's vision, Philo tells us:

66. *Ibid* III, 1: "that which is subject to change and is wont to be always fluid".

67. *Ibid* III, 2: "one may be sense-perceptibility informed that a promise has been confirmed".

68. *Ibid* III, 2: "I know that thou art Lord and ruler . . . and that there is nothing impossible for thee. And though I myself have faith in what Thou has proved, I now desire and long to obtain, if not the fulfilment, at least some clear sign by which the fulfilment will be revealed".

69. *Ibid* III, 2: "I pray that Thou wilt show me a way of knowing, so that I may comprehend the future".

70. *Ibid* III, 3.

71. *Ibid* III, 10: "inasmuch as the mind is released from its evil bond, the body". Cf. *Ibid* III, 11. Consideration of the vision concludes with an emphasis on the activity of the divine in the ecstatic experience in *Ibid* III, 15.

For in the end things happen to the soul which we manage to approach with difficulty, but first one must pass and run through the bodily and external goods, health and keenness of sense and beauty and strength which are wont to flourish and grow and be attained in growth.<sup>72</sup>

The gradual growth and refinement of the soul to the point where it is able to receive such a vision is the theme of Philo's consideration of biblical characters in the remainder of *QG*.

The story of Sarah and Hagar illustrates the gradual nature of the soul's progress from the encyclical disciplines (Hagar) to virtue (Sarah). Circumcision is symbolic of the cutting away of all passions and evils from the soul. Abraham is granted a direct vision of the intelligible in another ecstatic vision, completing the movement from the encyclical disciplines to virtue and then to vision, in which the sensible world is seen for the first time in its true character.<sup>73</sup> The vision is momentary, but complete.<sup>74</sup> Because of his vision, Abraham is called a 'perfect man'. *QG IV* will describe the 'progressive man' who is still on the journey to the vision. The soul of the progressive man is that of the concrete individual who struggles through this earthly life for what he knows to be the proper end of man:

like those whose health revives after a long illness and who, though they are delivered from the danger of death, one not yet well but still maintain a balance between health and illness, confesses his own poverty by saying that he is not able to depart altogether from his city and from civilization and change to the security of quiet that is becoming to wise men. But it is for him to progress . . .<sup>75</sup>

Philo contrasts the wise man, the progressive man and the wicked man. The wise man pursues peace and seeks divine contemplation as his way of life. The wicked man seeks the earthly and the pleasurable life. The progressive man lives an active life which lies between these extremes. Aware that he is too much moved by earthly pleasures the progressive man struggles to leave

72. *Ibid III*, 16.

73. *Ibid IV*, 1.

74. *Ibid IV*, 21:

O happy soul, to which God has shown nature and what is in accordance with nature, when the veil has been removed and various works have been revealed for more effective comprehension! This is the consummation of the contemplative life and all the virtues, (namely) to see nature naked and the coverings of nature by which it is concealed, after the Lord and Father has removed them and clearly shown His works to the mind.

75. *Ibid IV*, 203.



his passions behind because he knows his end to be contemplation.

The progressive man is the description of the individual with whom we are to identify our own struggle to become virtuous. The types and characters of the soul described in Scripture are meant to be seen within ourselves. Philo says:

The soul of each of us has, as it were, several kinds of man in itself in accordance with the various incidences of similar things. It is as if Esau were in me, an oak inflexible, unbending and hairy, and a type alien to the thoughts of virtue, and confused in his impulses, and yielding to irrational and inscrutable impulses. In one is also Jacob, smooth and not rough. In me are both an old man and a youth, both a ruler and a non-ruler, both a holy person and a profane one.<sup>76</sup>

Consideration of the Biblical characters of Lot, Rebekah, Isaac, Jacob and Esau demonstrates that everyone who denounces the life of the passions can come to see something of the beauty and goodness of the intelligible world in the sensible. The world becomes wonderful for the progressive man because it loses its autonomy and is seen to reflect the good and the true of the spiritual realm which is his salvation. QG concludes:

For the mind of the pleasure-loving man is blind and unable to see those things which are worth seeing (namely) the world and that which is in the world—the nature of existing things, the sight of which is wonderful to behold and desirable.<sup>77</sup>

The content of the Exposition and the Allegory is taken up in QG and the same logic of the Exposition is reflected in this treatise, viz. of the movement from the universal to the particular. In the Exposition the concept of law is grounded in the intelligible order and then progressively unfolds in stages from the more abstract to the more concrete. The Exposition concludes with an account of the individual soul standing before God. QG manifests the same beginning point and ending point as the Exposition. QG begins its treatment of the human soul in its most general and universal form. The discussion of the Philonic psychology and the epistemology gradually loses its abstract nature and concludes with an account of the individual soul of the 'progressive' man and his journey to God.

The argument of the Exposition and the Allegory makes clear how the intelligible is present in the external world. The Exposition shows how the intelligible order successively descends to

<sup>76</sup>. *Ibid* IV, 206.

<sup>77</sup>. *Ibid* IV, 245.

the discrete particular in the external law. The Allegory shows how that knowledge can lead one to see the intelligible not only in the particular laws but in the multiplicity of the sensible world in general. The entire sensible world external to the soul thus is given its ultimate grounding in the intelligible. In like fashion, QG considers how the intelligible order is present within the soul. This treatise reveals in successive stages how the inner life of the individual has its ultimate grounding in the intelligible. The commentary has described fully the true nature of the world without and within the soul. The participation of both worlds in the divine has been shown. The argument of the Philonic corpus is complete.

#### *Quaestiones et Solutiones in Exodum*

QG repeats the logic of the Exposition in terms of the psychology of the soul, completing the argument outlined in the preface to the commentary, DOM 1-6. *Quaestiones in Exodum* (QE) concludes this commentary with a return to the specific themes introduced in that general preface.

The general preface introduced two themes which have been the subject matter of the entire commentary. DOM 1-3 states the correspondence between law and the kosmos and suggests that the lawholder is a citizen of the world whose actions are in accordance with the purpose and will of Nature. An argument for this claim is presented in the Exposition. The conclusions of that argument are presented in the first part of QE (I,1-II, 51). These conclusions are simply a restatement of DOM 1-3.

The second theme introduced in the general preface is the role of image and allegory in indicating the intelligible. The function and proper use of image, myth and allegory is the subject matter of the Allegory. The conclusions of that discussion are found in the latter part of QE (II,52-123). These conclusions are a restatement of DOM 4-6.

The argument anticipated in the general preface and substantiated in the body of the commentary is reviewed and concluded in QE. The arguments presented throughout the commentary regarding the relation of the sensible to the divine and the salvation of the soul, receive a concise form in QE. The statements of the general preface now appear as conclusions to the argument of the exegetical commentary.

QE I begins as DOM does, with the necessity of grounding law and custom in the order of the kosmos and the indication that one obedient to the law is a world citizen. These themes continue as the subject matter of the first part of QE (I,1-II, 51). Philo assumes familiarity with the arguments of the Exposition,

the Allegory and QG. Each detail of Exodus is treated under the assumption of these prior arguments. For example, Philo asks why a sheep is chosen in Exodus 12:56. His answer depends upon the notion of the progressive man described in QG, the truth of DOM and the Exposition, and an appreciation of the roles of the images of male and female developed in the Allegory. He says that the sheep

indicates perfect progress, and at the same time the male. For progress is indeed nothing else than the giving up of the female gender by changing into the male, since the female gender is material, passive, corporeal and sense-perceptible, while the male is active, rational and incorporeal and more akin to mind and thought.<sup>78</sup>

QE continues by showing how each detail of the Passover is perfectly consistent with, and made understandable by, the theological, cosmological, psychological and epistemological framework which he has presented in his previous commentary. Philo uses the conclusions of his previous argument to demonstrate how they are necessary and adequate to the proper interpretation of Scripture. This consideration of the Passover shows how the content of the law itself reflects the life of the soul and how obedience to that law advances the position of the soul in relation to the good. This discussion brings to bear on Scripture the arguments of both the Exposition (which describes the structure of the law as reflecting the intelligible) and QG (which describes the structure of the soul as reflecting the intelligible) and shows their relation to one another.

QE I, 1-II, 52 proceeds to reconsider each point of lines 1-3 of the general preface. It examines the relation of knowledge of first causes to the proper understanding of custom and law,<sup>79</sup> claims

78. *Quaestiones in Exodum* I.1.

79. Cf. *Ibid* I, 20: (This is said) concerning all unstable and unworthy things, for (only) up to a certain point does the pretence of divinized idols succeed by accidentally attaining knowledge in giving oracular responses through persuasive word and parables and still other (devices) which have their source in chance. And these are all of short duration, for they never see the light of sacred truth, by which alone the Creator of all, Who keeps created beings in security and is truly their Lord, can naturally be comprehended. And the comprehension of Him immediately dissolves unstable and unworthy human beliefs and the power by which men are overwhelmed because of the impotence within them. And so, just as are the words of idols, so in all things is the way of life of the foolish man. For he who has a false and erroneous opinion concerning the best, (namely) God, also has an erroneous and false way of life. And as for those who have true knowledge without error concerning the Existent One, their truthfulness is honoured in every other matter.

the soul, heaven, the natural world and the laws of the nation to reflect the same ordering,<sup>80</sup> and describes the ultimate preparation for those who are to live under the law to be the study of the truths expressed in Moses' account of creation as presented in *DOM*.<sup>81</sup> *QE* describes how Moses came to know his God and to understand the intelligible world and creation. This discussion completes the first part of *QE* which corresponds to both the first part of the general preface (*DOM* 1-3) and, in turn, the argument of the Exposition. Moses' vision of the intelligible forms provides the final authentication of the substantial relation of the law to the eternal.

*QE* II, 42 directly takes up the theme of *DOM* 3. The entire answer to the question "Does God write the Law?", clearly shows how *QE* is a conscious return to the claims of the general preface. In the following passage, the content of *DOM* 3 is restated as a conclusion to the structured argument of the exegetical commentary. Philo says:

Since God is a legislator in the highest sense of the term, it is necessary that the best law, which is called the true Law, should be laid down by him and be written in writing, not of hands, for He is not of human form, but at His command and nod. For if at His word the heaven and earth and the entire world were created and the whole of substance received its form from the divine principles (as) fashioners, then when God says that the Law should be written, were not the writings immediately to be obeyed? In the second place, this world is a great city and is a legal one. And it is necessary for it to use the best law of state. And it is fitting that it should have

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80. Cf. *Ibid* I. 23. The same powers which created the world, salutary and destructive, are present in the soul at birth:

Into every soul at its very birth there enter two powers, the salutary and the destructive. . . . Through these powers the world too was created. . . . The sun and moon and the appropriate positions of the other stars and their ordered functions and the whole creation heaven together come into being and exist through the two powers.

Cf. *Ibid*, 33 where Philo summarizes the conclusions of the Exposition, the Allegory and *QG* concerning the equivalence of the ordering of the intelligible, kosmos and soul. He outlines the ordering of the intelligible in terms of the distinction between odd and even numbers, or activity and passivity, and shows how this ordering is reflected in the kosmos in the distinction between heaven and the sublunar, and is further reflected in the soul as the distinction between the rational and the irrational. Cf. *Ibid* II, 33: ". . . It is (possible), however, to see the equivalent of this (distinction) not only in incorporeal and intelligible things but also in sense-perceptible natures."

81. 'Common belief', on the other hand, is both impure and hateful, arising from illusion (*Ibid* II, 14, 22).

a worthy author of law and legislator, since among men He appointed the contemplative race in the same manner (as the law) for the world. And rightly does He legislate for this race, also prescribing (its law) as a law for the world, for the chosen race is a likeness of the world, and its Law (is a likeness of the laws) of the world.<sup>82</sup>

A further discussion of the possibility of the human will to accord with divine will, concludes the consideration of the life of Moses in *QE*.

In the same manner that the first part of *QE* (I-II, 1-52) directly considers the first part of the general preface (*DOM* 1-3), so the latter part of *QE* (II, 52-123) directly addresses the question of images and the knowability of the intelligible through the sensible, which was the theme of the latter part of the general preface (*DOM* 4-6).

In the introduction to this latter section (II, 52, 53), Philo indicates how the commentary has explained the means whereby it is possible for the sensible to inform the soul of the intelligible, which is the mind "possessed by love and longing for wisdom".<sup>83</sup> The question of how the ideas are revealed by "delineations minute

82. *Ibid* II, 42.

83. Cf. *DOM* 5.

God always appears in His work, which is most sacred; by this I mean the world. For His beneficent powers are seen and move around in all its parts, in heaven, earth, water, air and in what is in these. For the Saviour is beneficent and kind, and He wishes to except the rational race from all living creatures. He therefore honours them with an even ampler gift, a great benefaction in which all kinds of good things are found, and He graciously grants His appearance, if only there be a suitable place, purified with holiness and every (kind of) purity. For if, O mind, thou does not prepare thyself of thyself, excising desires, pleasures, griefs, fears, follies, injustices and related evils, and dost (not) change and adapt thyself to the vision of holiness, thou wilt end thy life in blindness, unable to see the intelligible sun. If, however, thou art worthily initiated and canst be consecrated to God and in a certain sense become an animate shrine of the Father, (then) instead of having closed eyes, thou wilt see the First (Cause) and in wakefulness thou wilt cease from the deep sleep in which thou has been held. Then will appear to thee that manifest One, Who causes incorporeal rays to shine for thee, and grants visions of the unambiguous and indescribable things of nature and the abundant sources of other good things.

*QE* II, 52.

and slight [βραχυτέρος χαρακτήρων]<sup>84</sup> is also answered here in terms of the argument of the commentary.<sup>85</sup>

The human mind which is "possessed by love and longing for wisdom" (*DOM* 6) is the mind which is freed from the bodily passions and wills to know God (*QE* II, 51). This love and longing for wisdom is required not only for those who seek an ecstatic vision, but also for all those who desire to understand the Scriptures. It is only to such a mind that the smallest detail of Scripture [ἡ βραχυτάτη σφραγίς] will reveal its intelligible meaning. The ability to interpret Scripture depends first upon an understanding of the relation of the sensible to the intelligible (i.e. the argument of the Exposition), and secondly through accurate examples and paradigms which show how specific sensibles are related to, and are able to reflect, the intelligible (i.e. the content of the Allegory).

After the introduction to the latter part of *QE* (II, 51 and 52), Philo devotes the remainder of his work to showing specifically how the ark, table, lampstand, tabernacle and Aaron's garments each reveal the nature and character of the intelligible world and the orderings of reality from the monad to the sensible world. Just as *QE* I, 1-II, 51 presented the conclusions of the arguments of the Exposition as restatements of *DOM* 1-3, so *QE* II, 52-123 functions as the Allegory did. Its conclusions are restatements of *DOM* 4-6.

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84. *DOM* 6.

85.

That every sense-perceptible likeness has (as) its origin an intelligible pattern in nature (Scripture) has declared in many other passages as well as in the present one. Excellently, moreover, has it presented (as) the teacher of incorporeal and archetypal things not one who is begotten and created but the unbegotten and uncreated God. For it was indeed proper and fitting to reveal to an intelligent man the forms of intelligible things and the measures of all things in accordance with which the world was made. For these reasons also the prophet alone was called and taken above, in order not to deprive the race of mortals of an incorruptible vision and not to spread abroad and publish to the multitude these divine and holy essences. And he was taken up to a high mountain, ascent to which was vouchsafed to no others. And a dense and thick cloud covered the whole place, hindering reception through these places, not as if the nature of the invisible things could be seen by corporeal eyes but because the multi-symbolism of intelligible things is described through the clear vision of the eyes, (namely) how one who learns by seeing rather figuratively can, by attributing certain forms to certain symbols, achieve a correct apprehension of them.

*QE* II, 52.

The argument of the corpus addresses the question introduced in the latter section of the general preface of how it is possible for ἡ βραχυτάτη σφραγίς (the most particular sense-perceptible object) to reflect and reveal the most 'colossal figures' (the intelligible world of forms and ideas).<sup>86</sup> This theme is directly considered in the closing paragraphs of *QE*.

It pleases Him that the incorporeal and intelligible substance should be unimpressed by itself and without shape but be formed and shaped by a seal impression (ἐκτυπωθεῖσα σφραγίς) by the Logos of the eternally Existent One. Excellently, therefore, has He represented the seal impression as an 'expression', for there are expressed in them in part the forms which the patterns had.<sup>87</sup>

For this reason (the leaf) was in the front of the principal and sovereign (Part) of the soul, to which the mind and the reason have been allotted, that the leaf was placed (as) a symbol of intelligible substance (and as) a likeness of the divine Logos and (as) an expressed seal-impression (ἐκτυπωθεῖσα σφραγίς), (namely), the form of forms.<sup>88</sup>

As Philo brings together his conclusions in this final section of *QE* he reveals in its clearest form the failure of his logic to provide a substantial and causal relationship between the sensible and intelligible worlds.<sup>89</sup> The downward series of emanations extends only to the created world of intelligible ideas:

In the first place (there is) He Who is elder than the one and the monad and the beginning. Then (comes) the Logos of the Existent One, the truly seminal substance of existing things. And from the divine Logos, as from a spring, there divide and break forth two powers. One is the creative (power), through which the Artificer placed and ordered all things; this is named "God". And (the other is) the royal (power), since through it the Creator rules over created things; this is called "Lord". And from these two powers have grown the others. For by the side of the creative (power) there grows the propitious, of which the name is "beneficent," while (beside) the royal (power there grows) the legislative, of which the apt name is "punitive". And below these and beside them (is) the ark; and the ark is a symbol of the intelligible world.<sup>90</sup>

86. *DOM* 6.

87. *QE* II, 122.

88. *Ibid* II, 123.

89. Formal and final causes of the sensible are found in the intelligible, but not efficient causes.

90. *Ibid* II, 68.

The ark can only function as a 'symbol' of the intelligible world if that to which it refers is already known. The Allegory contains no logic of ascent from the sensible because the grounding of the particular in the eternal is not substantially demonstrated. The Exposition shows the sensible to be an imitation of the intelligible but the Allegory is not able to demonstrate the intelligible from the sensible. The Allegory can only infer the correspondence after the intelligible is already known. The following description of the ascent, in the same passage as the description of the descent quoted above, must begin with the intelligible world and not with the sensible, precisely because the sensible lacks substantiality.

And the number of the things here enumerated amounts to seven (namely) the intelligible world and the two related powers, the punitive and beneficent; and the two other ones preceding these, the creative and the royal, have greater kinship to the Artificer than what is created; and the sixth is the Logos, and the seventh is the Speaker.<sup>91</sup>

In this upward procession the powers become less and less related to the created world of intelligible ideas and the sensible world is not included in the logic. Providence is restricted to the presence of the intelligible as formal and final causes of the sensible, but not efficient cause. This scheme allows a providence which protects the Monad, Speaker or Absolute from any taint of the created order.

*QE* provides a conscious and fitting conclusion to the Philonic commentary, systematically considering the arguments of the commentary precisely within the framework, themes and structure which it inherits from the general preface, *DOM* 1-6. The first half of *QE* corresponds to the argument of the Exposition and presents its conclusions in a restatement of *DOM* 1-3. The second half of *QE* shows, by example, how the sensible reflects the intelligible, repeating the function and methodology of the Allegory. This second part concludes with a restatement of *DOM* 4-6. Returning to the precise themes and structure of the general preface, *QE* completes the rigorously balanced structure of the Philonic commentary. Finally, we have seen that *QE* reveals in its most succinct form the character and limits of the logic which determines the structure and logic of the Philonic exegesis.

### *Conclusion*

The identification of the structure and argument of the Philonic corpus provides the framework which scholarship requires in its

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91. *Ibid*



present thrust. Recent attention to the structure, coherence, integrity and intention of individual treatises and groups of treatises has forced the recognition of a need to identify the character of the corpus as a whole. Mack suggests:

The characteristics of the exegetical systems must be won by studies which encompass the entire Philonic corpus in relation to the whole of the Pentateuch, before detailed analyses of the individual treatises can be done with care and profit.<sup>92</sup>

The type of expert and insightful analyses of single pericopes and treatises recently accomplished by Cazeaux and Mack lacks a discernment of the function and place of the texts within the overall argument of the commentary. A proper analysis of the character, coherence, integrity and intention of a text requires that its place within the corpus be fully established. In a recent pivotal paper on Philonic research, Hamerton-Kelly called for:

a thorough analysis of Philos' intention and techniques of composition in each treatise, as well as an investigation of the history of the traditions and sources which he utilizes.<sup>93</sup>

We have provided the necessary groundwork for this task in our identification of the overall structure and argument of the commentary and the place of each treatise within that structure.

Halifax, N.S.

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92. B.L. Mack, 107.

93. R.G. Hamerton-Kelly, 3.