

Philo of Alexandria's *Logos* and *Life of Moses*¹

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I propose to examine Philo's Moseology,² as expressed primarily in *De Vita Mosis* (*Mos.*), with a view to determining Moses' ontological status. *De Vita Mosis* is Philo's biographical account wherein Moses mediates God to humanity through the offices of philosopher-king, lawgiver, high priest, and prophet. I begin by examining the work of other scholars who have treated Moses' ontological status and other issues pertinent to this question. According to Ian Scott³ and E.R. Goodenough,⁴ Philo depicts Moses as he ascends through higher forms of contemplation. However, Scott does not agree with Goodenough's position that these stages correspond to an elevation of Moses' ontological status. By examining Ysabela de Andia⁵ and Dominic O'Meara,⁶ it emerges that the metaphysical structure which underlies *De Vita Mosis* is crucial for determining the ontological status of Moses. Both Jaroslav Pelikan⁷ and Roberto Radice⁸ examine Philo's metaphysics relative to the theory of creation. Their findings have significant implications relative to my purpose. It is my position that Philo's theology as expressed in his theory of creation is

1. I am grateful for the insightful comments provided by Dr. Eli Diamond, Dr. Michael Fournier, and Dr. Alexander Treiger on my MA thesis "Swiftly Runs the Word: Philo's Doctrine of Mediation in *De Vita Mosis*," Dalhousie University Department of Classics, 2010. For this reason, and for his continued encouragement and support of my work, I owe my utmost thanks to Dr. Wayne Hankey.

2. For use of the term 'Moseology,' see P. Borgen, "Moses, Jesus, and the Roman Emperor: Observations in Philo's Writings and the Revelation of John," *Novum Testamentum* 38.2 (1996): 158. Borgen argues that the influence of the Roman Imperial court is discernable in the writings of both Jews and Christians, and he states, "[t]hus, John the Seer's Christology probably represented an application and further development of a model from Jewish 'Moseology.'" I owe thanks to Sasha Treiger for this reference.

3. I. Scott, "Is Philo's Moses a Divine Man?" *Studia Philonica Annual* 14 (2002).

4. E.R. Goodenough, *By Light, Light: the mystic gospel of Hellenistic Judaism* (Amsterdam: Philo Press, 1961).

5. Y. de Andia, *Henosis: L'union à Dieu chez Denys L'Aréopagite* (Leiden: Brill, 1996).

6. D. O'Meara, *Platonopolis* (Oxford: Oxford U Press, 2003).

7. J. Pelikan, *What Has Athens To Do With Jerusalem? Timaeus and Genesis in Counterpoint* (Ann Arbor: The U of Michigan Press, 1997).

8. R. Radice, "Philo's Theology and Theory of Creation," in *The Cambridge Companion to Philo*, ed. Adam Kamesar (New York: Cambridge U Press, 2009).

the same theology that underlies *De Vita Mosis* and is vital for determining Moses' ontological status. I shall discuss the place of *De Vita Mosis* within the series of Philonic treatises that scholars call the *Exposition of the Law*. In doing so, I reiterate the significant connection between Philo's theory of creation and *De Vita Mosis*.

Next, I shall examine *De Vita Mosis*, making the following three points. First, through the pursuit of philosophy, which moves from sensible to intelligible realities, Moses actualizes proper human nature, which is a restoration of the human relative to the image of God. Self-reflexive contemplation is the culmination of the philosophical ascent that Philo describes, using the image of the burning bush. Here, Moses achieves the highest knowledge of both the human and the divine attainable through the exercise of reason: this is the knowledge of the human as immaterial and of God as the Existent. Second, Moses' union with God on Sinai described relative to the high priest's office, represents, for Philo, a complete return of the logos from creation back to its source. Following the union of Moses and God on Sinai, Philo describes the structure of the tabernacle, its furnishings and the appointment of the priesthood, which parallels his descriptions of the created order in *De Opificio Mundi* (*Opif.*) and *Legum Allegoriarum* (*LA*). Third, Philo's depiction of Moses the inspired prophet depicts God's imminence in the material world. Through the miracles that Moses foretells and performs, Philo ascribes to him not only divine knowledge and power, but also a degree of simultaneity between his word and effective deed, which is only comparable to that of God. By considering these three sections of *De Vita Mosis* with reference to Philo's metaphysics, I shall argue that he identifies Moses with the logos, which occupies every level in the hierarchy of created being.

PHILO'S MOSES AND HIS METAPHYSICS

Ian Scott compares *De Vita Mosis* to Hellenic and Hellenistic biographies of divine men. In the Greek and Roman accounts, during the first century CE, Scott maintains that a great deal of ambiguity surrounds the status of the divine men: "in part because Greek theology had not worked out a clear or universal understanding of the various ranks of intermediate beings."⁹ Scott rejects the notion that the 'divine man' refers to a distinctive type which would have shared the same definition by all authors who used it: "some ancient men can be called divine in the sense that they manifest some superhuman power or special inspiration though they remain mere mortals. Others, however, were understood as being, or becoming a demi-god."¹⁰ Scott whittles down the issue of Moses' divinity to a question of his ontological

9. Scott, "Is Philo's Moses a Divine Man?" 92.

10. Scott, "Is Philo's Moses a Divine Man?" 90.

status: "the question here is whether Moses' unique contemplation of divine realities makes him ontologically divine, comparable to Hellenistic divine men."¹¹ Scott determines that Moses' ascent on Sinai represents, for Philo, contemplation of a form of the good, because of which Moses earns the title 'god.' Philo uses both the Platonic philosopher-king and the Stoic sage as his model for Moses, who "perceives divine reality and is thus given authority over the world *insofar as he reflects that divine reality* [Scott's italics]."¹² For Scott, there is no correlation between Moses' elevated forms of contemplation and an elevation of his ontological status in *De Vita Moses*. Rather, as Scott sees it, Moses gains increasing authority over the world according to the degree he mediates divine realities.

In *By Light, Light*, E.R. Goodenough holds that Philo's *De Vita Moses* describes a contemplative ascent through several stages of 'mysteries' into which Moses is initiated. However, unlike Scott, Goodenough maintains that each stage corresponds to an elevated ontological status, epitomized by four incidents. First, at the burning bush, God as Being is mediated to Moses through a triune image of the logos and its creative and regent powers. For Goodenough, the attainment of this knowledge precedes kingship, and anticipates the second incident: Moses' ascent on Sinai, which is required before assuming the office of high priest and entails a higher, more immediate knowledge of God. The third occurs when Moses gives the Torah (which Philo does not treat in *De Vita Moses*). Fourth, at his death, Moses is restored to his essential nature, pure being, which is above the mind itself. Through these four mysteries, Moses draws increasingly closer to the source of the divine light stream. Though both Goodenough and Scott find a contemplative progression in *De Vita Moses*, all scholars alike do not hold this position.

In *Henosis: L'union à Dieu chez Denys L'Aréopagite*, Ysabel de Andia compares the mystical ascent of Moses as described in Dionysius, Gregory of Nyssa, and Philo, and concludes that, unlike Gregory and Dionysius, "[les] étapes de l'ascension n'intéressent pas Philon qui ne voit pas, dans l'ascension de Moïse, un progrès spirituel, mais écrit la Vie de Moïse en fonction de ses titres. Ici [*De Vita Moses* 2.74], il s'agit de la prêtrise."¹³ De Andia finds in Gregory and Dionysius a complex metaphysics, which is lacking in Philo. Here in de Andia, the notion of spiritual progress implies a metaphysical system on which it is based. In *Platonopolis*, Dominic O'Meara describes the way in which Eusebius has elevated the authority of the Platonic philosopher king, from a specific city to a universal city, by means of a fuller, more

11. Scott, "Is Philo's Moses a Divine Man?": 107.

12. Scott, "Is Philo's Moses a Divine Man?": 109.

13. de Andia, *Henosis*, 318.

detailed metaphysics than described by Plato. O'Meara seeks the origin of this modification and suspects that the alteration of Plato's doctrine originated in the second century Platonists, such as Numenius of Apamea. The developments O'Meara finds in Eusebius and attributes to the Middle and Neoplatonists, are clearly found in Philo, whom O'Meara mentions only once in *Platonopolis*, citing him in a footnote. In the footnote, O'Meara writes:

It is true that Exodus mentions a model which God shows Moses and which Moses must imitate in the construction of the sanctuary. However, Dionysius interprets this model as the archetype of which *all* priestly institutions are an image. The interpretation of Moses as legislator in the light of Plato's *Rep.* can already be found in Philo of Alexandria, Eusebius and Gregory of Nyssa. The interpretations of Moses in Philo, Gregory of Nyssa, and the Pseudo-Dionysius are compared in detail by de Andia.¹⁴

Following de Andia, O'Meara misses the universal character of Philo's thought because he does not see the metaphysical system on which it rests. Philo's metaphysics has been most fully articulated relative to his theory of creation, and it is to this, which I now turn.

PHILO'S LOGOS AND ITS ROLE IN THE CREATED HIERARCHY

In *What Has Athens To Do With Jerusalem?* Pelikan devotes an entire chapter to examining the convergent reading of Genesis and Plato's *Timaeus* as it occurred in Alexandrian Judaism, using the Philonic corpus and the Book of Wisdom as his exemplars. For Philo, the cause of creation is God, the materials are the elements, the instrument is the word, and the final cause is the goodness of the architect. Thus, Pelikan writes, "Specifically, Philo noted that goodness was an attribute of the God of Moses, whom the word from the burning bush equated with the $\delta\ \acute{\omicron}\nu$ of Plato."¹⁵ Pelikan argues that Philo connects God the creator in Genesis with the maker and father described in *Timaeus* 28c. Moreover, Philo applies the Timaeian distinction between noetic and sensible realms to Genesis, and understands the creator in the terms of the *Timaeus*—as an architect. Pelikan writes, "that implied, for example, that Solomon, in building his temple, was constructing "a copy [$\mu\acute{\iota}\mu\eta\mu\alpha$] of the sacred tabernacle prepared by [God] from the beginning."¹⁶ Another Philonic innovation is positing the logos as a quasi-hypostatic reality involved in the act of creation. According to Pelikan, the Philonic logos provides a principle of mediation, which can explain the plural in God's imperative "Let us make." Philo maintained that God created all things simultaneously and that the sequential process described in the hexameron

14. O'Meara, *Platonopolis*, 165.

15. Pelikan, *What Has Athens To Do With Jerusalem?* 71.

16. Pelikan, *What Has Athens To Do With Jerusalem?* 80, quoting Wisdom 8:9.

accounts for the necessity of order. Moreover, according to Pelikan, Philo identifies the activity of creation with that of providence—God never ceases making: “[Philo] asserted a concept of providence as ‘creatio continua’.”¹⁷ Crucially, Pelikan connects the metaphysical system underlying Philo’s exegesis of Genesis and other aspects of his thought, such as his interpretation of the burning bush and the construction of the tabernacle in Exodus. But how can Philo’s philosophical interpretation of Genesis be used to determine Moses’ ontological status in *De Vita Mosis*?

The key to connecting Philo’s theory of creation with the philosophical system underlying *De Vita Mosis* is found in Roberto Radice’s article “Philo’s Theology and Theory of Creation.” Radice identifies three creative aspects of the Philonic logos and places these relative to an ontologically ordered hierarchy of creation. According to Radice, the ineffability of Philo’s God is due to “God’s infinite ontological superiority with respect to man and the world.”¹⁸ But, if the creator is completely superior to creature, how can Philo also claim that God the Father cares for his creation? Radice writes, “Philo resolves the antimony of transcendence and providence by means of a series of hypostases or intermediate beings that take their places in a kind of ontological hierarchy between God and the world,” however, “within this hierarchy itself the differences are not always clear cut.”¹⁹ In a note, Radice illustrates one such ambiguity in Philo’s ontology:

Philo uses the word “God” to indicate both the supreme being, which is transcendent and ineffable (*Somm.* 2.28) [*De Somniis*], and His creative power (*Plant.* 86) [*De Plantatione*]. For this reason, everything that is said of God could be attributed to the former entity or to the latter, with the result that there emerge serious inconsistencies concerning the ontological status of God.²⁰

Philo makes no mistake, Radice explains, when he uses the term God for certain entities, such as the logos and wisdom, because “these [the logos and wisdom] powers seem to be hypostases coeternal with the creator and collaborators in creation ... so that they would share the same essence as him.”²¹ When Philo speaks of God’s ‘creative power,’ he refers to the instrumental function of the logos in the creation of the entire cosmos, which Radice terms ‘Logos in itself.’ In addition to its instrumental function, Radice identifies two other creative aspects of the logos. The ‘Logos in God’ is the aspect of the logos which precedes all created things; it is both identical to

17. Pelikan, *What Has Athens To Do With Jerusalem?* 84.

18. Radice, “Philo’s Theology,” 126.

19. Radice, “Philo’s Theology,” 128–29.

20. Radice, “Philo’s Theology,” 129, n. 9.

21. Radice, “Philo’s Theology,” 129.

God having the function of his mind and also distinct as the object of his thought. The ‘Logos in the world,’ acts as the immanent bond uniting and ordering all parts of the entire cosmos in perfect harmony.²² Radice adds that the three creative operations of the logos correspond analogically at every stage of creation, including its operation in the human: “the ‘logic’ of the divine intellect in the moment of creation is not distinct from the ‘logic’ that governs the world in a physical sense. This same logic is the content of Wisdom [...] and belongs as an inheritance to the wise man.”²³ Radice maintains that although Philo’s logos functions analogously at every level of creation, its characteristics appear different according to the context in which it is considered.²⁴ I shall now undertake to show how *De Vita Mosis*, as a whole, must be understood in the context of Philo’s history of creation.

PHILO’S DIVINE HISTORY

Before I turn to *De Vita Mosis*, it is necessary to examine its place within the Philonic corpus insofar as this clarifies the relation between Philo’s theory of creation and divine history, and how *De Vita Mosis* stands at the pinnacle of both. Twelve treatises comprise *The Exposition of the Law*, which is, according to Runia, “the most systematic and thematically unified of [Philo’s] commentaries ... the fundamental division of the work is based on a tripartition of the Pentateuch into a part on creation, a part on history, and a part on legislation.”²⁵ The parts on creation and history take up the book of Genesis, while the part on legislation covers Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. *De Opificio Mundi* deals with the part of Genesis on creation. The biographies of the three patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—of which only *De Abrahamo* survives—and the biography of the statesman Joseph *De Iosepho* deal with the historical part of Genesis. *De Decalogo*, *De Specialibus Legibus*, *De Virtutibus*, and *De Praemis et Poenis* pertain to the third divided section of the Pentateuch, the part on legislation. Placing *De Vita Mosis* within the sequence of texts as described above has been a point of difficulty among scholars for some time. There are valid arguments for placing *De Vita Mosis* in

22. See Proclus, *Commentary on Plato’s Timaeus: Book Three Part One: Proclus on the World’s Body*, trans. D. Baltzly (Cambridge: Cambridge U Press, 2007), 2.15.13–18. Proclus outlines three ways in which the term ‘bond’ (*desmos*) is used. The first refers to the pre-existent (*prohyparchon*) bond in the cause of the things bound, the second refers to the immanent bond found in the things which are bound by it. The third meaning is an intermediate between the first two: “on the one hand, it proceeds from the cause, but on the other, it is manifested in the things that have been bound.” These three senses described by Proclus correspond to the ‘Logos in God,’ ‘Logos in the world,’ and the ‘Logos in itself,’ respectively.

23. Radice, “Philo’s Theology,” 139.

24. See F. Siegert, “Philo and the New Testament,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Philo* 207. According to Siegert, considered at its most imminent stage “Philo’s Logos [...] is the Mosaic law.”

25. D. Runia, *On the Creation of the Cosmos According to Moses* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 6.

the sequence following *De Iosepho*, just as there are for taking *De Vita Mosis* to be the first in the sequence, as an introduction to the *Exposition*. The current consensus, according to James Royce, is that *De Vita Mosis* does not properly fit within the exposition and is therefore placed among Philo's historical and apologetic works.²⁶ The difficulty with the current classification is that it removes *De Vita Mosis* entirely from the context of the *Exposition*, where it clearly belongs and places it among treatises to which it has little or no correspondence. Specifically where and how it belongs within the *Exposition* is far from clear, and it seems likely that this ambiguity was deliberate on the part of Philo. For my present purpose, I abandon the current consensus and locate Moses in the *Exposition* following *De Iosepho* and preceding *De Decalogo*, according to the order of the Pentateuch.

The first thing to recognize is that the creation of the world does not end when history begins. In his introduction to *De Abrahamo*, Philo explains that the book of Genesis derives its name from its account of the creation of the world, which includes a variety of other matters: "for it tells of peace and war...how fire and water wrought great destruction of what is on earth; how on the other hand plants and animals were born ... and so too men, some of whom lived a life of virtue, others vice."²⁷ For Philo, the entire book of Genesis describes the coming forth of creation: "since some of these things [depicted in Genesis] are parts of the cosmos, and others events which befall it, and the cosmos is the complete consummation which is completely filled with them all, he dedicated the whole book to it."²⁸ *De Opificio Mundi* outlines the order according to which the cosmos is made; this order is the law of nature according to which the lives of the Patriarchs are aligned. Here, I arrive at a second point. Not only is the historical part of the Pentateuch understood in terms of creation, but, through both creation and history, the law is also revealed. Philo shows that the unwritten law of nature is fulfilled through the lives of the Patriarchs, which serve as paradigms for human activity. The lives of the Patriarchs are the enacted—or lived—law, which is prior to the written law. Philo writes, "since it is necessary to undertake our examina-

26. J.R. Royce, "The Works of Philo," in *The Cambridge Companion to Philo*, 47.

27. *Abr.* 1: ὅσα κατ' εἰρήνην ἢ πόλεμον ... ἢ τὰς μεγίστας τῶν ἐπὶ γῆς φθορὰς διὰ πυρὸς καὶ ὕδατος ἢ τούναυτίον γενέσεις καὶ εὐτροφίας ζώων καὶ φυτῶν κατὰ τὴν ἀέρος καὶ τῶν ἐτησίων ὥρων εὐκρασίαν καὶ ἀνδρῶν τῶν μὲν ἀρετῆ τῶν δὲ κακίᾳ συμβιωσάντων. English translations of Greek text are generally my own. However, in cases where the English rendition of Philo's text is acceptable, I have often retained (or emended) the translation found in *The Works of Philo* vol. 1–10, ed. and trans. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard U Press: 1929). The Greek text is from *Philonis Alexandrini opera quae supersunt*, vol. 1–6, ed. L. Cohn and P. Wendland (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1896–1930).

28. *Abr.* 2: ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ τούτων τὰ μὲν ἐστὶ τοῦ κόσμου μέρη, τὰ δὲ παθήματα, τελειότατον δὲ καὶ πληρέστατον ὁ κόσμος, αὐτῶ τὴν ὅλην βίβλον ἀνέθηκεν.

tion of the laws in order, let us postpone our consideration of the particular laws, which are, so to speak, images, and examine first those which are more general and may be called their archetypes.”²⁹ Here, I reach a third crucial point: the order of the *Exposition* is modeled on the order of the Pentateuch, which proceeds from the universal to the particular manifestations of the law. Furthermore, according to Philo, the structure of the Pentateuch corresponds to the structure of the whole created order as it has come forth from God.

One must remember that Moses not only appears in the Pentateuch as the giver of the Decalogue and the Special Laws, but, as Philo sees it, he is also the author of the whole Pentateuch and as such cannot be contained in any of its parts. Insofar as the Pentateuch reflects the order of reality for Philo, he sees in Moses—its author—a reflection of God, who is both above and within his creation. Thus, the content of the *Exposition of the Law*, which treats the coming forth of the creation as the coming forth of the law is somehow contained, elucidated and fulfilled in Philo’s *De Vita Mosis*. The law revealed by Moses encompasses all forms of law—both written and unwritten, and all forms of creation—including those which transcend the power of human reason. In sum, *De Vita Mosis* is the treatise in which Philo relates all forms and modes of creation and law that are taken up separately by the other treatises in the *Exposition*. As such, *De Vita Mosis* stands at the culmination of Philo’s divine history as the fulfillment and perfection of creation. I shall now turn to the text of *De Vita Mosis* beginning with Moses’ education prior to his kingship which depicts a contemplative progression from sensible to intelligible. At the summit of his ascent, Moses obtains the highest conception of man and of God attainable through human reason. In this act of contemplation, Moses actualizes the highest human potential, which is a restoration to its original nature, created in the image of God.

BECOMING A BETTER MAN: MOSES’ PHILOSOPHICAL EDUCATION

Philo outlines three distinct stages of education through which Moses passes before he receives his call to kingship. The first is an education in sensible matters. This is followed by contemplation of the incorporeal causes of the cosmos, and finally, a turn to the self as incorporeal and intelligible principle. Each stage is creative involving a greater actualization of the soul’s powers; moreover, this progression mirrors the order according to which the human was created in *De Opificio Mundi* and *Legum Allegoriarum*.³⁰ For

29. *Abr.* 3: ἐπεὶ δὲ τοὺς νόμους κατὰ τὸ ἐξῆς <καὶ> ἀκόλουθον ἀναγκαῖον διερευνᾶσθαι, τῶν ἐπὶ μέρους καὶ ὡς ἂν εἰκόνων ὑπέρβειν ποιησάμενοι τοὺς καθολικωτέρους καὶ ὡς ἂν ἀρχετύπους προτέρους διερευνήσωμεν.

30. Philo summarizes the movement from sensible to intelligible by means of philosophy at *Opif.* 53–54, which he takes up again relative to the image of God at 69–71.

Philo, the sensible realm is the necessary starting point from which human begins to progress towards the goal of immaterial contemplation, in virtue of which, the soul fully actualizes its potencies and is rendered immortal. In *Legum Allegoriorum*, Philo explains that the human mind was created first, followed by the senses, and finally pleasure which unites the two; however, “it is potentially only that they differ in age, but in actual time they are equal in age. For the soul brings all together with herself, some parts in virtue of actual existence, others in virtue of their potentiality to come to be, even if they have not yet reached their consummation.”³¹ According to Philo, the three aforementioned aspects of the human are created simultaneously—or, *ex tempore*—the sequence in Genesis corresponds to their superiority, and the inversion of this order in *De Vita Mosis* reflects the necessity of temporal beings to actualize their potencies gradually according to the correct method: “for accomplishment in the lesser must precede accomplishment in the greater.”³²

Philo describes young Moses' proficiency as a learner, whose education included the Greek encyclical curriculum (arithmetic, geometry, music, grammar, logic, rhetoric), and the astronomical sciences of the Chaldaeans and the Egyptians. It is significant that Moses undertakes the encyclicals in Egypt, because it conveys that the content of this knowledge is fundamentally bound up with the sensible world.³³ Although the sciences of the perceptible realm are necessary, they are concerned with appearances and alone are insufficient means to reach truth. Philo uses Moses' exile in Arabia to give an account of the next stage in his education, which involves deriving concepts from the perceptible realm, which are themselves not sensible. From the order present in the cosmos, Moses arrives at a concept of justice, which is incorporeal, and is “nature's upright logos, the sole source and spring of virtues.”³⁴ Implicit here, is the Stoic division of soul into two equal and opposite parts, the rational and the irrational, which is then given a seven-fold division (the five senses, voice, and reproductive faculty).³⁵ At this stage, Moses knows that the division of the individual soul corresponds to the cosmic order. The ruling faculty of the soul presides over its seven lower parts in the same way that the

31. *LA* 2.73–4: δυνάμει δὲ εἰσιν αὐτῶν αἱ ἡλικίαι διάφοροι νοούμεναι μόνον, χρόνος δὲ ἰσηλικες· ἅμα γὰρ ἑαυτῇ ψυχῇ πάντα ἐπιφέρεται, ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν ἐντελεχεία, τὰ δὲ τῷ δύνασθαι γενέσθαι, εἰ καὶ μήπω προσείληφε τὸ τέλος.

32. *Mos*. 1.62: γὰρ τὰ μεγάλα πρὸ τῶν μικρῶν τελεσθῆναι.

33. See, Philo, *De Congressu Eruditionis Gratia* 20–21, here the encyclicals are explicitly connected with the sensible, symbolized by ‘Egypt.’

34. *Mos*. 1.48: ἐφίεμενος οὐ τοῦ δοκεῖν ἀλλὰ τῆς ἀληθείας, διὰ τὸ προκείσθαι σκοπὸν ἕνα τὸν ὄρθον τῆς φύσεως λόγον, ὃς μόνος ἐστὶν ἀρετῶν ἀρχὴ τε καὶ πηγὴ.

35. *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* II.830, 831. For an examination of the convergence of Aristotelian, Platonic, and Stoic psychologies in Philo, see J. Dillon “The Pleasures and Perils of Soul Gardening,” in *Studia Philonica Annual* 9 (1997): 190–97.

logos presides over the seven planetary circuits. Philo writes, “thus it follows that the two natures, the rational and the intellectual, one in man and the other in all, are complete and indivisible.”³⁶ At this point, the human soul has aligned itself to the immanent aspect of the creative logos, which Radice termed the ‘Logos in the world.’ It is important to recognize that although the principle to which the soul is aligned is incorporeal and universal, it is nonetheless external to the subject and derived from the sensible world. Philo’s account of the burning bush corresponds to Moses’ final step in the philosophical ascent which involves wholly immaterial and self-reflexive thought, independent from external objects.

Philo describes the burning bush as follows: “though enveloped from root to twigs in a mass of fire which looked as though it were spouted up from a fountain, it remained whole instead of being consumed, and seemed to be some unaffected substance [ἀπαθῆς οὐσία] instead of being fuel [οὐχ ὕλη] for the fire, it actually fed on it.”³⁷ The burning bush as a whole symbolizes the self-reflexive activity of nous which is a separate substance and is immortal. In the midst of the apparition of the bush, Philo describes a form of light brighter than the fire: the light symbolizes a mental vision that is received in virtue of the soul’s dianoetic activity, represented by the flames. Though Philo does not identify the form of light with the image of God, they are somehow connected: “anyone might have supposed [the form of light] to be the image of The Existent [God].”³⁸ In order to understand how Philo associates Moses’ mental vision with the image of God, it is necessary to return again to his thoughts on the creation.

In *De Specialibus Legibus*, Philo takes up Genesis 2:7, identifying the divine spirit which God breathed into man with the essence (substance) of the intellectual and rational soul. This spirit is associated with light: “and clearly what was thus breathed was ethereal spirit, or something if such there be better than ethereal spirit, even a ray of the blessed, thrice blessed nature of the Godhead.”³⁹ Philo discusses the same passage (Genesis 2:7) in *Legum Allegoriarum*: “the expression clearly brings out something that accords with nature. For three things are necessary: that which ‘breathes into,’ that which

36. Philo, *Quis Rerum Divinarum Heres Sit* 233: ὁ γάρ, οἶμαι, ἐν ἀνθρώπῳ ψυχῇ, τοῦτο οὐρανὸς ἐν κόσμῳ. τὰς οὖν νοεράς καὶ λογικὰς δύο φύσεις, τὴν τε ἐν ἀνθρώπῳ καὶ τὴν ἐν τῷ παντί, συμβέβηκεν ὁλοκλήρους καὶ ἀδιαιρέτους εἶναι.

37. *Mos.* 1.65: βάτος ἦν, ἀκανθῶδες τι φυτὸν καὶ ἀσθενέστατον· οὗτος, οὐδενὸς πῦρ προσενεγκόντος, ἐξαίφνης ἀνακαίεται καὶ περισχεθεὶς ὅλος ἐκ ρίζης εἰς ἀκρέμονα πολλῆ φλογὶ καθάπερ ἀπὸ τίνος πηγῆς ἀνομβρούσης διέμενε σώος, οὐ κατακαϊόμενος, οἷά τις ἀπαθῆς οὐσία καὶ οὐχ ὕλη πυρὸς αὐτὸς ὦν, ἀλλὰ τροφή χρώμενος τῷ πυρὶ.

38. *Mos.* 1.66: ἦν ἂν τις ὑπετόπησεν εἰκόνα τοῦ ὄντος εἶναι.

39. *Spec.* 4.123: τὸ δ’ ἐμφωσώμενον δηλον ὡς αἰθέριον ἦν πνεῦμα καὶ εἰ δὴ τι αἰθερίου πνεύματος κρείσσον, ἅτε τῆς μακαρίας καὶ τρισμακαρίας φύσεως ἀπαύγασμα.

receives [the breathing], and that which is breathed."⁴⁰ God is that which breathes, the mind receives, and the spirit is that which is breathed: "union [ἔνωσις] of the three occurs when God sends forth his own power through the mediating spirit until it reaches what lies below it so that it might obtain a conception of him."⁴¹

Philo makes a crucial distinction between the human in Genesis 2:7 and the man made in the divine image in Genesis 1:26. The former is the individual, perceptible man (or woman) mortal with respect to its body, but with respect to its soul, it has the capacity to become immortal.⁴² The bush symbolizes the actualization of this capacity through the activity of contemplation in which the subject knows itself not as an individual, but as an immaterial, indestructible nature, prior to the division of the sexes. Alignment with this higher, undivided nature is alignment to the 'Logos in itself,' and is the way that humanity is created in the image of God. In *De Opificio Mundi*, Philo writes: "all men, with respect to dianoia, are aligned to the divine word, having come into being as a copy, or fragment, or ray of that blessed nature."⁴³ By following the stages Philo has ascribed to Moses, the individual human who is capable of undertaking the life of philosophy can re-confirm its original, immortal nature, as created in the image of God.

I have been selective in my treatment of *De Vita Mosis*, focusing solely on the three sections which are most relevant to my purpose. Insofar as space does not permit a detailed analysis of the offices of king and lawgiver which follow Philo's account of Moses' early life and education, it is necessary to briefly remark on their function in *De Vita Mosis*. Although, from the beginning of *De Vita Mosis* through to the conclusion of the royal office, Philo maintains a continuous narrative comprised of biblical events he does not describe a continuation of the spiritual ascent which culminated at the burning bush. Rather, Philo is wholly concerned with the way in which the king functions as divine mediator. Through the formation of a state in accordance with the natural order, the king is an image of God's creative power. By maintaining order in the state through the education of its people, the king exercises the providential power of the Lord, which preserves cosmic justice and harmony.

After Philo treats the office of king, he then examines the legislative office. Here, his primary purpose is to show the identity, and continuity of the law, which appears in various forms, such as it is written in the Pentateuch, or

40. *LA* 1.37: ἐμφαίνει δέ τι καὶ φυσικώτερον ἢ προφορά. τρία γὰρ εἶναι δεῖ, τὸ ἐμπνέον, τὸ δεχόμενον, τὸ ἐμπνεόμενον.

41. *LA* 1.37: ἔνωσις γίνεται τῶν τριῶν, τείναντος τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ δύναμιν διὰ τοῦ μέσου πνεύματος ἄχρι τοῦ ὑποκειμένου—τίνος ἕνεκα ἢ ὅπως ἐνοιῶν αὐτοῦ λάβωμεν.

42. See *Opif.* 134–35.

43. *Opif.* 146: ἡ δὲ συγγένεια τίς; πᾶς ἄνθρωπος κατὰ μὲν τὴν διάνοιαν ὠκεῖται λόγῳ θεῷ, τῆς μακαρίας φύσεως ἐκμαγεῖον ἢ ἀπόσπασμα ἢ ἀπαύγασμα γεγυνώς.

discerned in the actions of a just king, or seen in the harmony of the cosmic spheres. Moreover, Philo maintains that this law operates at every level of creation as the agent of justice and the bond of unity. It will be no surprise then, to see that the office of Philo's high priest, which governs the sacred rites and liturgies, is firmly established on cosmic foundations in full accordance with the divine law that it manifests.

THE COSMIC PRIESTHOOD

The degree of perfection Moses attains on Sinai entirely exceeds created things insofar as his union with God corresponds to the primal union that is the source of all creation. In contrast to the straight road that Moses paved for his people as king,⁴⁴ Philo describes the place to which Moses is raised on Mount Sinai as impassible (ἄβατος) and inaccessible (ἀπρόσιτος) to all things other than Moses.⁴⁵ By examining how the various aspects of the priesthood correspond to Philo's account of the creation, it becomes clear that atop Sinai, Moses reaches the unknowable and ineffable source of all being. This corresponds to the creative aspect of the logos that Radice calls the 'Logos in God,' which entails a substantial identity of God and the logos. God and the logos are distinct only as different aspects of the same activity, which is the divine self-knowing. Considered as the 'Logos in God,' Moses transcends the ontological hierarchy of created beings, which depend on the union of God and his word, as both source and end.

When Moses comes forth from his communion with God, it is as the 'Logos in itself,' which is perceived as blinding light: "those who saw him were filled with awe and amazement; nor even were their eyes able to bear the dazzling brightness that flashed from him like the rays of the sun."⁴⁶ Insofar as the union on Sinai encompasses the whole created order, this emanation of light has a perfecting power more extensive than the light which first created the world. This second creation enables the full perfection of all embodied souls (not just those capable of philosophy) through the rites of the priesthood which are also the means to their immortality. When Philo explains the significance of the tabernacle and the sacred objects, he emphasizes that he is discussing the arrangement as it exists *before* its actual construction. It is useful to remember Pelikan's argument, discussed earlier, that when God the creator is understood as the architect of noetic entities, sensible structures like Solomon's temple can be viewed as copies of an eternal paradigm. This

44. See Philo, *De Gigantibus* 64. The path outlined by Moses is "the way of the one sole almighty king, swerving and turning aside neither to the right nor to the left," (ὁδῶ τῆ τοῦ μόνου βασιλέως καὶ παντοκράτορος, ἐπὶ μηδέτερα ἀποκλίνων καὶ ἐκτρέπομενος).

45. *Mos.* 2.70.

46. *Mos.* 2.70: ὡς τοὺς ὀρώντας τεθηπέναι καὶ καταπεπλήχθαι καὶ μὴδ' ἐπὶ πλείου ἄντεχειν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς δύνασθαι κατὰ τὴν προσβολὴν ἡλιοειδούς φέγγους ἀπαστρέπτοντος.

point holds true for Philo as well, and here, he describes a coming forth of eternal paradigms and archetypes according to which the tabernacle in the realm of sense is to be built.

Prior to the construction of the sanctuary, which is the duty of the high priest, “enshrined in the *dianoia* of the prophet was the paradigmatic shape of what had been pre-formed and pre-inscribed secretly without matter by the invisible forms. The fully completed work was constructed in accordance with that shape by impressing the seals of the artist upon the material substances required in each case.”⁴⁷ Although, here, Philo assigns different aspects of the creation to the prophet and to the high priest it is important to recognize that in actuality, these are not assigned to two individuals—the high priest is also a prophet. Through prophecy, he receives the immaterial paradigms in his *dianoia*. Acting as high priest, he recollects the impressions which remain in his *dianoia*, thereby engraving their shapes on his soul as incorporeal ideas from which the material likenesses are constructed. Thus it is clear that in his account of the office of high priest, Philo describes a process of creation in terms of a movement from higher, intellectual orders into the order of soul, before coming to be in the realm of sense.

The vesture of the high priest corresponds to the structure of the tabernacle insofar as it too is a symbolic depiction of the whole created order. Philo writes: “we have in it a whole and in its parts an image and a copy of the cosmos and each of its parts.”⁴⁸ The gown symbolizes the realm of generation and corruption: “as the gown is one, the three said elements [earth, water, and air] are of a single kind, since all below the moon is alike in its liability to change.”⁴⁹ Gold chains link the breast piece to the two shoulder pieces signifying the link between the two principles of reason in the universe: human and natural, the former being a copy of the latter.⁵⁰ From the shoulders to the feet, the vesture is a symbol of the order in both the celestial and ter-

47. *Mos.* 2.76–77: ὁ μὲν οὖν τύπος τοῦ παραδείγματος ἐνεσφραγίζετο τῇ διανοίᾳ τοῦ προφήτου διαζωγραφούμενος καὶ προδιαπλαττόμενος ἀφανῶς ἀνευ ὕλης ἀοράτοις εἶδει· τὸ δ' ἀποτέλεσμα πρὸς τὸν τύπον ἐδημιουργεῖτο, ἐναποματτομένου τὰς σφραγίδας τοῦ τεχνίτου ταῖς προσφόροις ἐκάστων ὑλικαῖς οὐσίαις. See Philo's *Opif.* 17–20, which describes the process of creation using similar terms as here.

48. *Mos.* 2.117: ὅλη μὲν δὴ γέγονεν ἀπεικόνισμα καὶ μίμημα τοῦ κόσμου, τὰ δὲ μέρη τῶν καθ' ἕκαστον μερῶν.

49. *Mos.* 2.121: ὡς γὰρ ὀχιτῶν εἷς, καὶ τὰ λεχθέντα τρία στοιχεῖα μιᾶς ἰδέας ἐστίν, ἐπειδὴ τὰ κατωτέρω σελήνης ἅπαντα τροπᾶς ἔχει καὶ μεταβολᾶς·.

50. Philo's mention of the gold chains echoes Plato's cosmological description at *Timaeus* 38e–39a [*Platonis opera* vol. 4, ed. J. Burnet (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968)]: “now, when each of these whose cooperation was needed for the creation of time had come to its proper orbit, and they had been generated as living creatures having bodies fastened with ensouled bonds, and they learned their appointed task—moving in the motion of the other, which is diagonal and passes through and is dominated by the motion of the same—they revolved, some in a greater circle,

restrial realms. The high priest wears a turban on his head “expressing the judgment that he who is consecrated to God is superior when he acts as a priest, not only to the layman but also to kings.”⁵¹ As Philo sees it, the high priest is superior insofar as he mediates the entire hierarchy of created being, of which the king reflects only a part.

The high priest wears a golden plate inscribed with the Tetragrammaton, which Philo interprets symbolically as the inspired words communicated to the high priest when he functions as prophet: “above the turban is the golden plate on which the carvings of the four letters are impressed, indicating, as we are told, the name of the self-existent.”⁵² According to Philo, the form of light Moses receives at the burning bush corresponds symbolically to the Tetragrammaton insofar as both represent knowledge of divine matters received intuitively by the human *dianoia*. However, the Tetragrammaton and the form of light differ according to one crucial point. The former is received in virtue of the activity proper to human nature, which is achieved as a result of progressive effort culminating in immaterial contemplation, where God is known as Existent. The latter is received by the prophetic faculty of the high priest and depends on a process of purification which culminates in the complete cessation of all modes of cognition, including that by which the human perfects its nature. The knowledge received by the high priest pertains to the proper performance of rites and liturgies, which can never be known through the unaided efforts of human reason. In his account of the high priest’s office, Philo does not depict Moses acting immediately within the sensible realm. Instead, Moses acts through the constituent members of the priesthood and also through the Levites. However, in Philo’s account of prophecy by inspiration, he depicts miracles performed by Moses while he is immediately present in the realm of sense. Through the near simultaneity Philo ascribes to Moses’ thought, word, and deed, it is clear that as inspired prophet, Moses mediates the highest, atemporal, and simultaneous activity of creation to the lowest levels of created being.

and some in a lesser circle” (ἐπειδὴ δὲ οὐκ εἰς τὴν ἑαυτῷ πρέπουσαν ἕκαστον ἀφίκετο φορὰν τῶν ὅσα εἶδει συναπεργάζεσθαι χρόνον, δεσμοῖς τε ἐμπύχοις σώματα δεθέντα ζῶα ἐγεννήθη τό τε προσταχθὲν ἔμαθεν, κατὰ δὲ τὴν θατέρου φορὰν πλαγίαν οὖσαν, διὰ τῆς ταύτου φορᾶς ἰούσης τε καὶ κρατουμένης, τὸ μὲν μείζονα αὐτῶν, τὸ δ’ ἐλάττω κύκλον ἴον).

51. *Mos.* 2.131: δικαίων τὸν ἱερωμένον τῷ θεῷ, καθ’ ὃν χρόνον ἱεράται, προφέρειν ἀπάντων καὶ μὴ μόνον ἰδιωτῶν ἀλλὰ καὶ βασιλέων.

52. *Mos.* 2.132: ὑπεράνω δὲ τὸ χρυσοῦν ἐστι πέταλον, ᾧ τῶν τεττάρων αἱ γλυφαὶ γραμμάτων ἐνεσφραγίσθησαν, ἐξ ὧν ὄνομα τοῦ ὄντος φασὶ μνηύεσθαι.

MOSES THE MIRACLE-WORKER

In the introduction to the office of prophet, Philo tells us that of the various kinds of prophecy, his focus is the three which belong specifically to Moses. The first kind Philo excludes from the discussion on the basis that it pertains to ineffable subject matter. The second type involves question and answer: the prophet has a question and God reveals its answer. My focus shall be the third kind, in which Moses appears under divine inspiration. Here, Philo's mode of presentation emphasizes divine imminence: Moses possesses the agency to acquire the knowledge and power of God, with which he acts immediately in the material realm.⁵³ Philo characterizes this type of prophecy by re-telling four events from Exodus, which he has already described in detail earlier in *De Vita Mosis*.⁵⁴ In each case Philo describes Moses as fully present in the sensible realm as the sole agent responsible for his inspiration. Moses recognizes a situation, without prayers or deliberation he becomes inspired and foretells miracles which occur immediately thereafter.⁵⁵

Philo emphasizes the sheer incredibility of Moses' inspired predictions and the divinity of the power responsible for their fulfillment. For example, Philo describes Moses' prediction of the parting of the red sea as "being greater than all hope,"⁵⁶ and that when it came to pass, it was brought about "not by human agency but by divine power greater than words."⁵⁷ Relative to the sending of manna, Moses' predictions are characterized as impossibilities (ἀδύνατα).⁵⁸ When describing the revolt of the temple attendants, Philo removes Moses' prediction even from the course of nature. Moses addresses the crowd as follows:

53. It must be reiterated that this form of prophecy belongs only to Moses: the human cannot act as the sole agent by which it receives prophetic insight. See *De Somniis* 2.1 where Philo disparages the category of prophetic dream typified by Joseph, which occurs through the agency of the individual soul.

54. Namely, the parting of the Red Sea and the provision of manna told relative to the office of king and the punishment of the idolaters who fashioned the golden calf and the revolt of the temple attendants told relative to the high priest's office (*Mos.* 1.167–80; 1.191–209; 2.159–73; 2.174–86, respectively).

55. For a useful discussion on the Neoplatonic biographical accounts in which the subject is portrayed as a divine figure capable of performing miracles such as those Philo ascribes to Moses, see E. Clarke, *Iamblichus' De Mysteriis: A Manifesto of the Miraculous* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 19–38 esp. 23; 100–18.

56. *Mos.* 2.253: μείζονα ὄντα πάσης ἐλπίδος. See *Mos.* 1.196 where Philo refers to the parting of the red sea as "unexpected" (ὄσων ἐκ τοῦ παραλόγου).

57. *Mos.* 2.255–56: οὐκ ἀνθρωπίναις ἀλλὰ θεαῖς δυνάμεσι παντὸς λόγου μείζον κολασθεντας.

58. *Mos.* 2.261.

Disbelief hardly falls on the disbelievers alone. Such are schooled by facts alone and not by words. Experience will show them that I do not lie, since they cannot know by learning, they will discern this with the end of their lives. If the death they meet is in the ordinary course of nature [κατὰ φύσιν], my oracles are a false invention; but if it be of a new and different kind, my love of truth will be attested.⁵⁹

Removing the works foretold by Moses from the realm of the possible, predictable, natural, and expected, and making Moses the agent of his own inspiration, Philo assigns to him a degree of power over creation shared only by God. Considered even by Ian Scott's criteria, whereby Moses is granted authority over the earth insofar as he reflects divine realities, it is no stretch to conclude (as Scott does not wish to do) that Philo's Moses is very much a divine man.

A brief reminder of God's creative activity supports my claim that, as inspired prophet, Moses embraces both human and divine natures. For Philo, God creates simultaneously, prior to time: "God spoke and at once it was done, there was nothing set between them; or, it might suggest a truer view to say His word was His deed."⁶⁰ In each of the four examples of prophecy by inspiration, Philo emphasizes the swift succession from Moses' words to their fulfillment. For example, concerning the miraculous chastisement of the temple attendants, Philo writes, "it [Moses' prediction] was fulfilled not long after, but at the very time the prediction was given."⁶¹ In themselves, God's words and deeds are undivided and prior to time; however, in order to be perceived by the senses, they must be accommodated to their mode, and thus they occur in succession. On the one hand, Moses perceives particular situations occurring within the sensible realm, which characterizes the mode of the individual soul. On the other hand, through his own agency, Moses accesses the atemporal and divine mode of knowing, in which thought, word, and deed are simultaneous, though they appear sequentially to temporal beings. Philo's emphasis on the miraculous nature of Moses' predictions and the immediate succession of his word and deed reveals that for Philo, Moses the inspired prophet makes the highest present in even the very lowest levels of creation, as God made perceptible in Moses.

59. *Mos.* 2.280–81: χαλεπὸν ἀπιστία πράγμα τοῖς ἀπίστοις μόνοις· τούτους οὐ λόγος ἀλλ' ἔργα παιδεύει· παθόντες εἴσονται τὸ ἐμὸν ἀψευδές, ἐπεὶ μαθόντες οὐκ ἔγνωσαν. ἐπικριθήσεται δὲ τοῦτο τῇ τοῦ βίου τελευτῇ· εἰ μὲν γὰρ θάνατον ἐνδέξονται τὸν κατὰ φύσιν, πέπλασμα τὰ λόγια, εἰ δὲ καινὸν τινα καὶ παρηλλαγμένον, τὸ φιλάληθές μοι μαρτυρηθήσεται.

60. Philo, *De Sacrificiis Abelis et Caini* 65: ὁ γὰρ θεὸς λέγων ἅμα ἐποίει, μηδὲν μεταξὺ ἀμφοῖν τιθείς· εἰ δὲ χρὴ δόγμα κινεῖν ἀληθέστερον, ὁ λόγος ἔργον ἦν αὐτοῦ.

61. *Mos.*, 2.275: τελειωθὲν οὐ μακροῖς χρόνοις ὕστερον, ἀλλ' εὐθύς ὅτ' ἐχρησμοδεῖτο. The first stage of punishment occurs (2.282) "when [Moses] fell silent," (ἐπεὶ δ' ἤσυχασε), and (2.283) "shortly after," (μικρὸν δ' ὕστερον) follows the second. Philo lays emphasis on (2.284) the clearness (διάσημον) and the quick succession (ἐπάλληλον) of the events.

CONCLUSION

In sum, by examining the text which stands at the pinnacle of Philo's divine history, *De Vita Moses*, I have shown how Philo's Moseology incorporates crucial elements of his theology and cosmology, as described in his treatises on the creation. Moreover, by examining how these concepts operate in *De Vita Moses*, it is clear that Philo identifies Moses with the logos, his principle of creative mediation which traverses the hierarchy of created beings and can be seen in each of its levels. Thus, in *De Vita Moses*, Moses has an all-embracing ontological status. As the 'Logos in God,' Moses shares the essence of God and is prior to all created being. As the 'Logos in itself,' Moses is the light that proceeds from the triune Godhead, through the noetic realm, manifest finally in the sensible realm as the 'Logos in the world.' So, what then is Moses? Is he God, human, or a mixture of both? As philosopher undertaking the contemplative ascent, Moses is fully human. As consubstantial with God as an aspect of his self-knowledge, Moses is fully God. As inspired prophet and miracle worker, Moses is fully both God and man.

