

Pythagorean, Predecessor, and Hebrew:
Philo of Alexandria and the Construction of Jewishness in Early Christian Writings

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Abstract

This study investigates the presentation of Philo of Alexandria and his relationship to Jewishness in the works of Clement, Origen and Eusebius, the first three Christians explicitly to name him in their extant writings. None of Philo's earliest Christian readers openly calls him a Jew. Through a detailed reading of their descriptions of Philo and his relationship to the Hebrew Scriptures, contemporary Judaism, and the Pythagorean-Platonic philosophical tradition, I illuminate the diverse identities that Clement, Origen and Eusebius assign to Philo. I argue that although Philo's insights into the Jewish scriptures and way of life is emphasized and treasured by his Christian readers, his own Jewish identity remains ambiguous. This ambiguity is due in part to the secondary importance of the literal interpretation of the Jewish scriptures in Philo's writings. Philo's Christian readers increasingly define Jews as those who misinterpret the Hebrew Bible by reading its prophecies and commandments "according to the letter." As an allegorical interpreter who recognizes, to some extent, the esoteric teachings communicated by the *Logos* through the Hebrew Scriptures, Philo does not match the image of the Jew constructed by his Christian readers. Neither, however, does he fulfill the criteria for being considered a Christian. Philo is thus presented as neither a Christian nor a Jew but as someone outside these two increasingly differentiated identities.

Cette thèse traite la représentation de Philon d'Alexandrie par rapport à la judéité dans les œuvres de Clément, Origène et Eusèbe, les trois premiers chrétiens à le mentionner explicitement dans leurs écrits existants. Aucun des premiers lecteurs de Philon chrétiens l'appellent ouvertement un juif. Grâce à une lecture détaillée de leurs descriptions de Philon et sa relation à la Bible hébraïque, le judaïsme contemporain et la tradition philosophique de Pythagore-

platonicienne, je démontre les identités diverses qu'attribuent Clément, Origène et Eusèbe à Philo. Je soutiens que, malgré la compréhension supérieure des écritures hébraïques et le mode de vie de Philo étaient soulignés et chéris par ses lecteurs chrétiens, son identité y reste ambiguë. Cette ambiguïté résulte partiellement de l'importance secondaire de l'interprétation littérale des écritures juives dans les écrits de Philon. Les lecteurs chrétiens de Philon définissent de plus en plus les juifs comme ceux qui interprètent faussement la bible hébraïque en comprenant ses prophéties et ses commandements « selon la lettre ». Étant un interpréteur allégorique qui reconnaît, dans une certaine mesure, les enseignements ésotériques communiqués par les Logos à travers les écritures hébraïques, Philon ne correspond pas à l'image du juif construit par ses premiers lecteurs chrétiens. Pourtant, il ne remplit pas les critères pour être considéré comme un chrétien non plus. Ainsi, il n'est représenté ni comme chrétien, ni comme juif, mais comme quelqu'un en dehors de ces deux identités de plus en plus différenciées.

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Abbreviations

Works of Philo

<i>Abr.</i>	<i>De Abrahamo (On Abraham)</i>
<i>Aet.</i>	<i>De aeternitate mundi (On the Eternity of the World)</i>
<i>Agr.</i>	<i>De agricultura (On Husbandry)</i>
<i>Anim.</i>	<i>De animalibus (On Animals)</i>
<i>Cher.</i>	<i>De cherubim (On the Cherubim)</i>
<i>Conf.</i>	<i>De confusione linguarum (On the Confusion of Tongues)</i>
<i>Congr.</i>	<i>De congressu eruditionis gratia (On Mating with the Preliminary Studies)</i>
<i>Contempl.</i>	<i>De vita contemplativa (On the Contemplative Life)</i>
<i>Decal.</i>	<i>De decalogo (On the Decalogue)</i>
<i>Det.</i>	<i>Quod deterius potiori insidiari soleat (That the Worse is Wont to Attack the Better)</i>
<i>Deus</i>	<i>Quod Deus sit immutabilis (On the Unchangeableness of God)</i>
<i>Ebr.</i>	<i>De ebrietate (On Drunkenness)</i>
<i>Flacc.</i>	<i>In Flaccum (Flaccus)</i>
<i>Fug.</i>	<i>De fuga et inventione (On Flight and Finding)</i>
<i>Gig.</i>	<i>De gigantibus (On the Giants)</i>
<i>Her.</i>	<i>Quis rerum divinarum heres sit (Who Is the Heir of Divine Things?)</i>
<i>Hypoth.</i>	<i>Hypothetica</i>
<i>Jos.</i>	<i>De Josepho (On Joseph)</i>
<i>Leg.</i>	<i>Legum allegoriae (The Allegories of the Laws)</i>
<i>Legat.</i>	<i>Legatio ad Gaium (Embassy to Gaius)</i>
<i>Migr.</i>	<i>De migratione Abrahami (On the Migration of Abraham)</i>
<i>Mos.</i>	<i>De vita Mosis (On the Life of Moses)</i>
<i>Mut.</i>	<i>De mutatione nominum (On the Change of Names)</i>
<i>Opif.</i>	<i>De opificio mundi (On the Creation of the World)</i>
<i>Plant.</i>	<i>De plantatione (On Noah's Work as a Planter)</i>
<i>Post.</i>	<i>De posteritate Caini (On the Posterity of Cain and His Exile)</i>
<i>Praem.</i>	<i>De praemiis et poenis (On Rewards and Punishments)</i>
<i>Prob.</i>	<i>Quod Omnis Probus Liber Sit (Every Good Man is Free)</i>

<i>Prov.</i>	<i>De providentia (On Providence)</i>
<i>QE</i>	<i>Quaestiones in Exodum (Questions on Exodus)</i>
<i>QG</i>	<i>Quaestiones in Genesim (Questions on Genesis)</i>
<i>Sacr.</i>	<i>De Sacrificiis Abelis et Caini (On the Sacrifices of Abel and Cain)</i>
<i>Sobr.</i>	<i>De sobrietate (On Sobriety)</i>
<i>Somn.</i>	<i>De somniis (On Dreams)</i>
<i>Spec.</i>	<i>De specialibus legibus (On the Special Laws)</i>
<i>Virt.</i>	<i>De virtutibus (On the Virtues)</i>

Works of Clement

<i>Protr.</i>	<i>Protreptikos</i>
<i>Paed.</i>	<i>Paedagogus</i>
<i>Strom.</i>	<i>Stromateis</i>
<i>QDS</i>	<i>Quis dives salvetur? (Who is the rich man who is saved?)</i>
<i>Exc.</i>	<i>Excerpta ex Theodoto</i>
<i>Ecl.</i>	<i>Eclogae propheticae</i>

Works of Origen

<i>Cels.</i>	<i>Contra Celsum</i>
<i>Comm. Jo.</i>	<i>Commentarii in evangelium Joannis</i>
<i>Comm. Matt.</i>	<i>Commentarium in evangelium Matthaei</i>
<i>Comm. Rom.</i>	<i>Commentarii in Romanos</i>
<i>Hom. Lev.</i>	<i>Homiliae in Leviticum</i>
<i>Hom. Num.</i>	<i>Homiliae in Numeros</i>
<i>Princ.</i>	<i>De principiis (On First Principles)</i>
<i>Sel. Ezech.</i>	<i>Selecta in Ezechielem</i>

Works of Eusebius

<i>HE</i>	<i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i>
<i>PE</i>	<i>Preparatio evangelica</i>
<i>DE</i>	<i>Demonstratio evangelica</i>

CH *Chronicon*

MP *Martyrs of Palestine*

Abbreviations of Journals, Reference Works, and Series

ANF *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*

BGL *Bibliothek der Griechischen Literatur*

CPJ V.A. Tcherikover and A. Fuks (eds.), *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum*, I–III
(Cambridge, MA: 1975–1964)

CSEL *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*

ER *The Encyclopedia of Religion*

FOTC *Fathers of the Church*

GCS *Die griechische christliche Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte*

HTR *Harvard Theological Review*

JECS *Journal of Early Christian Studies*

JJS *Journal of Jewish Studies*

JSJ *Journal for the Study of Judaism*

JSNT *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*

NTS *New Testament Studies*

ODCC *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*

RGG *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*

RSR *Recherches de science religieuses*

SC *Sources chrétiennes*

SJT *Scottish Journal of Theology*

SP *Studia Patristica*

SPhA *The Studia Philonica Annual*

VC *Vigilae christianae*

Introduction

The writings of Philo of Alexandria, the first-century statesman, philosopher, and allegorical interpreter of the Jewish scriptures, survived antiquity and are extant today because they were read and copied by Christians. Although Philo earns a favourable mention from the Jewish apologist and historian Josephus within decades of his death, the next surviving reference to him by a Jewish author dates to the Italian Renaissance.¹ Between the first and sixteenth centuries stands a long Christian reception tradition, first definitively attested in the works of Clement.² Writing and teaching in Alexandria from c.180 CE until his flight to Jerusalem around 202, Clement mentions Philo in his largest surviving work, the *Stromateis*, on four occasions and includes scores of unacknowledged Philonic borrowings in his corpus.³ Clement's familiarity with Philo's writings was shared by his fellow Alexandrian and possible student, Origen.⁴ Philo's name comes up three times in Origen's surviving corpus, twice in *Contra Celsum* and

¹ "It was not until the late 16th century that Jews started to take notice of him again, stimulated by the printing of his works both in the original Greek and in Latin translations. By far the most interesting account was given by the Italian Jew, Azariah de' Rossi, who gives an analysis of Philo's thought in his *Me'or 'Enayim* (Light of the Eyes) published in his native town Mantua in 1573." David T. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature: A Survey* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 32. Possible instances of Philonic influence on Rabbinic writings are evaluated by David Winston's "Philo and Rabbinic Literature" in *The Cambridge Companion to Philo* (ed. Adam Kamesar: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 231–255.

² Philo's *Logos* theology and moral-allegorical interpretation of the law of Moses are frequently cited as possible influences on earlier Christians, including the anonymous authors of the prologue to the Gospel of John the Epistle to the Hebrews, the *Epistle of Barnabas* and early Christian teachers including Justin Martyr, Basilides, and Valentinus. Clement, however, is the earliest to mention Philo by name and to cite his works. See Roland Deines and Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr, eds., *Philo und das Neue Testament* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004); David T. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, chapters 2 and 3; Birger Pearson, *Gnosticism and Christianity in Roman and Coptic Egypt* (New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 82–99; Stefan Nordgaard Svendsen, *Allegory Transformed: The Appropriation of Philonic Hermeneutics in the Letter to the Hebrews* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009); Harold W. Attridge, "Philo and John: Two Riffs on One Logos" *SPhA* 17 (2005), 103–117.

³ The possible citations and reminiscences of Philo in the *Stromateis* identified in the critical edition of Stählin are evaluated by Anniewies van den Hoek in *Clement of Alexandria and His Use of Philo in the Stromateis: An Early Christian Reshaping of a Jewish Model* (Leiden: Brill, 1988).

⁴ Eusebius's *Historia Ecclesiastica* 6 is the earliest source to claim that Origen studied under Clement. Origen himself never claims Clement as a teacher, nor does he mention him in his surviving works. Clement's relocation to Jerusalem around 202, when Origen was still a teenager, limits the duration of his possible study with Clement. Nevertheless, Joseph Trigg contends that "it is inconceivable that he did not come under Clement's influence. . . the continuity in their thought is so marked that it could not be coincidental." Joseph Trigg, *Origen: The Bible and Philosophy in the Third-Century Church* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1983), 54.

once in the *Commentary on Matthew*, while more than a dozen Philonic borrowings are left unattributed. When Origen relocated from Alexandria to Caesarea Maritima, he brought his copies of Philo's texts with him, where they later found a place in the library curated by Pamphilus and his more famous student, Eusebius. Eusebius scatters mentions of Philo across his corpus, excerpting him at length in book 2 of his *Historia Ecclesiastica* and books 7 and 12 of his *Preparatio Evangelica*. Eusebius's successor as Bishop of Caesarea, Photius, had Philo's treatises copied from papyrus into parchment codices, from which the medieval Greek manuscripts that stand behind the modern critical editions of Cohn and Wendland descend.⁵

The fact that early Christians read and preserved Philo's works while contemporary Jews did not is frequently noted in studies of Christianity's relationship to Judaism in antiquity. For the past twenty years, this note has most often been accompanied by a citation of David T. Runia's comprehensive survey *Philo in Early Christian Literature*.⁶ Published in 1993, Runia's study masterfully assembles more than a century's worth of scholarship charting Philo's influence on early Christian thinkers scattered throughout the secondary literature and is the only book-length study to evaluate the role of Philo diachronically through Christian literature.⁷ In

⁵ Numerous Greek manuscripts dating from the tenth through fourteenth centuries form the bulk of the ancient witnesses to Philo. In addition to these manuscripts, Cohn and Wendland had access to the Coptos Papyrus, dated to the third century, which preserves the continuous text of *Sacr.* and *Her.* There is also a sizable corpus of Philonic manuscripts preserved in Armenian, including the only extant witnesses to *Quaestiones in Genesim*, *Quaestiones in Exodum*, *De providentia*, and *De animalibus*. For further details on the transmission of the Philonic corpus, see James R. Royse, "The Works of Philo" in *The Cambridge Companion to Philo* (ed. Adam Kamesar: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 62–64.

⁶ Not all of those who cite Runia fully agree with his assessment that, although knowing Philo to be a Jew, his Christian readers adopted him as an honorary Christian. Gregory Sterling suggests that "Early Christians thought that anyone who wrote as Philo did must have been a Christian." Sterling, "The Place of Philo of Alexandria in the study of Christian Origins," *Philo und das Neue Testament*, 22. Commenting on Clement's use of Philo, James Carleton Paget suggests that since Clement never refers to Philo as a Jew, "perhaps that knowledge of Philo's Jewish roots had disappeared." Paget, "Clement of Alexandria and the Jews," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 51 (1998), 86–97, 94. Against the theory of Philo's Christianization, Jörg Ulrich argues specifically of Eusebius that "An keiner Stelle wird die Person des Philo selbst durch Eusebius christlich 'vereinnahmt'; Philo von Alexandrien bleibt bei Euseb stets 'Hebräer' und 'Jude'," Ulrich, *Euseb von Caesarea und die Juden: Studien Zur Rolle Der Juden in Der Theologie Des Eusebius Von Caesarea* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1999), 97–8.

⁷ Prior to Runia's monograph, the most comprehensive overview of Philo's portrayal and influence in early Christian literature was J. Edgar Bruns' short article "Philo Christianus: The Debris of a Legend," *HTR* 66 (1973):

both *Philo in Early Christian Literature* and his more recent contribution to *The Cambridge Companion to Philo*, Runia submits that by the beginning of the fourth century Philo had been “Christianized” and regarded as an “honorary Church Father.”⁸ Yet in spite of this adoption and Christianization, Runia maintains that the Christians who consulted Philo’s works were “well aware that Philo is a Jew who lived at the very beginning of the Christian Church.”⁹ Runia pauses to appreciate how counterintuitive it is that Philo the Jew was adopted by the Christian tradition. Given that, “from the outset Christianity engaged in continuous and not seldom acrimonious rivalry with its ‘mother-religion,’” Runia asks, “is it not remarkable and quite unexpected that Philo the Alexandrian Jew should have been accepted within Christianity to the extent that we have observed?”¹⁰

In his more recent work, Runia modifies his familial metaphor for the relationship between Judaism and Christianity, adopting Alan F. Segal’s metaphor of the two religions as siblings, *Rebecca’s Children*, born in the first century.¹¹ His description of Philo’s Christian reception, however, is not significantly affected by the change in analogy: “We are thus presented with a paradox. Philo was neglected by his own people, to whose cause he had shown such strong devotion, and he was rescued from oblivion through the attentions of a group of

141–45. Hindy Najman contributes a short piece on Philo’s Christian reception, “The Writings and Reception of Philo of Alexandria,” in *Christianity in Jewish Terms* (eds. Tikva Frymer-Kensky, Peter Ochs, David Novak and Michael Singer: Boulder: Westview Press, 2000), 99–106. Gottfried Shimanowski’s 2002 article “Philo als Prophet, Philo als Christ, Philo als Bischof” in *Grenzgänge: Menschen und Schicksale zwischen jüdischer, christlicher und deutscher Identität* (ed. Folker Siegert: Münster: Lit Verlag, 2002) discusses the roles Philo is assigned in post-Nicene Christian writings, following Runia closely.

⁸ This assertion is reiterated throughout Runia’s study: “It was because of this process of ‘adoption’ that a large proportion of his writings have survived to this day. I wish to commence my survey of Philo’s fate in the Christian tradition with a brief account of the story of Philo’s Christianization,” *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, 1; “Philo has in fact been adopted as an honorary church father. For this reason he had a place in Origen’s library, and, as a direct result of this inclusion, his works have survived to this day,” 125; “We saw how Philo was adopted as an honorary Church father *avant la lettre*,” 344.

⁹ Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, 6.

¹⁰ Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, 344.

¹¹ Runia, “Philo and the Church Fathers,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Philo*, 211–2. Alan F. Segal, *Rebecca’s Children: Judaism and Christianity in the Roman World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986). Rosemary Radford Ruether used the metaphor of Christianity and Judaism as brothers in her influential *Faith and Fratricide: the theological roots of anti-Semitism* (New York: Seabury Press, 1974).

people of whom he had most likely never heard, and who would later actively oppose his Jewish religion . . . why did Philo's Christian successors adopt him, but his Jewish successors neglect him?" Runia's account of Philo's reception in the early centuries CE thus posits the existence of two related yet distinct religious groups, Christians who accepted Philo's writings and Jews who rejected them.

In recent years, numerous scholars have questioned the presumption that a clear and consistent distinction indeed separated Jews from Christians of the late Roman imperial period. Among them, Daniel Boyarin has also described the relationship between nascent Judaism and Christianity using the metaphor of Rebecca's twins. He argues, however, that the two had an unusually long period of gestation, and contends that they did not emerge fully-formed and separate until the fourth century. During the first three centuries of the Common Era the embryos that would become orthodox Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism "jostled in the womb" of a "complex religious family."¹² Rather than speaking of Judaism and Christianity as separate religions, he proposes that in this period "Judeo-Christianity" existed as a "single circulatory system," a continuum of beliefs and practices lacking a firm boundary.

Boyarin is one of the more influential critics of the "Parting of the Ways" paradigm, a model which conceives of Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism emerging from the common source of Second-Temple Judaism, originating as a single path before diverging into two separate

¹² Daniel Boyarin, *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 6. He elaborates, "The image suggests that for at least the first three centuries of their common lives, Judaism in all of its forms and Christianity in all of its forms were part of one complex religious family, twins in a womb, contending with each other for identity and precedence, but sharing to a large extent the same spiritual food, as well. It was the birth of the hegemonic Catholic Church, however, that seems finally to have precipitated the consolidation of rabbinic Judaism as Jewish orthodoxy, with all its rivals, including the so-called Jewish Christianities, apparently largely vanquished. It was then that Judaism and Christianity finally emerged from the womb as genuinely independent children of Rebecca."

directions.¹³ The “Parting of the Ways” model finds early articulations in James Parkes’s *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue* (1934)¹⁴ and Marcel Simon’s *Verus Israel* (1964).¹⁵ Challenging the supercessionist model dominant in (Christian) scholarship prior to the Second World War, which understood nascent Christianity to have quickly broken free of a Judaism grown stale and legalistic,¹⁶ Simon emphasized Christianity’s Jewish roots, arguing that it remained a minority expression of Judaism for most of the first century. According to Simon, it was the Jewish revolts of 66–70 CE that resulted in a decisive split between church and synagogue.¹⁷ After this pivotal rupture, Judaism and Christianity developed separately; their

¹³ According to Reed and Becker, under the Parting model, “Judaism and Christianity are likened to two paths that branched off from a single road, never to cross or converge again.” Adam H. Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed, eds., *The Ways that Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 1. James D. G. Dunn defends a much more nuanced definition of the Parting model in the 2005 reprint of his 1989 book, *The Partings of the Ways*: “the imagery of ‘ways’ or ‘paths’ need not imply directness and can include a landscape of moor or hillside criss-crossed by several or many paths, whose directions are not always clear and which ramblers or fellow-walkers may follow without a clear sense of where they are headed; the path actually travelled is always clearer looking back!” Dunn, *The Partings of the Ways between Christianity and Judaism and Their Significance for the Character of Christianity* (Norwich, SCM Press, 2006), xiii. Martin Goodman supplies nine helpful graphic illustrations of different ‘partings’ models in “Modeling the Parting of the Ways,” in *The Ways that Never Parted*, 121–9.

¹⁴ James Parkes, *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue: A Study of the Origins of Anti-semitism* (London: Soncino Press, 1964). Parkes uses the metaphor of the “parting of the ways” in the title of the third chapter of his groundbreaking monograph.

¹⁵ Marcel Simon, *Verus Israel: Étude Sur Les Relations Entre Chrétiens Et Juifs Dans L'empire Romain (135–425)* (Paris: Éditions E. de Boccard, 1964).

¹⁶ So Frederick Foakes-Jackson, dating the *Letter of Barnabas* to the wake of the destruction of the temple, argues that the epistle “marks however an important stage in the relations of Judaism and Christianity. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews hints that the time is coming when Christians must part company with the Jews, and in Barnabas we see that this has come to pass.” *The History of the Christian Church from the Earliest Times to A.D. 461* (New York: Doran, 1924), 99.

¹⁷ The exact date and cause of the split between Christians and Jews is a question of debate among “separatists,” with some preferring a date close to the time of Paul and others defending a relatively late separation resulting from the Bar Kokhba revolts in 135. Parkes identified the *Birkat ha-minim*, or Twelfth Benediction of the *Amidah*, as evidence of Rabbinic efforts to exclude (Judeo-)Christians from the synagogues by the end of the first century, thus confirming their continued presence in Jewish worship up to that point. While contending that “there is no reason to suppose that all simultaneously came to the same conclusion,” Parkes reasons that “we may, however, accept the date of the malediction as that affecting the majority of those concerned,” fixing the decade between 80–90 CE as marking the final separation between Church and Synagogue. Parkes, *The Conflict of the Church with the Synagogue*, 77–9. The difficulty of equating the *minim* with (Judeo-)Christians is elucidated in Reuven Kimelman, “Birkat Ha Minim and the lack of evidence for an Anti-Christian Jewish Prayer in Late Antiquity,” in *Jewish and Christian Self-definition*, II, Aspects of Judaism in the Graeco-Roman Period (eds. E.P. Sanders, A. I. Baumgarten and Alan Mendelson: London: SCM Press, 1981), 226–244. Yaakov Teppler gives a fresh defense to the equation of the *minim* with Christians in *Birkat HaMinim: Jews and Christian in Conflict in the Ancient World* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), contending that “The first Christians were Jews. And in its development *vis-a-vis* the outside, the pagan Hellenistic world, Christianity called itself *Verus Israel* and anchoring [sic] its principles to the Hebrew Bible.

only contact consisted in their fierce competition for converts and legitimacy in the eyes of Greco-Roman elites, with Christianity eventually emerging victorious.

Judith Lieu's 1995 essay, "The Parting of the Ways: Theological Construct or Historical Reality?" was one of the first articles to challenge the model which had become "a truism which needs no justification."¹⁸ Emphasising that the "Parting of the Ways" metaphor is, in fact, a model, "and only one among a number of possible models of the changing relationship between Judaism and Christianity in the first two centuries CE," Lieu argues that the Parting model works best not as a description of a historical process but as (Christian) theological apologetic.¹⁹ She contends that the essentializing of Christianity and Judaism as abstract religions in the first and second centuries is problematic, suggesting that "what we need is a more nuanced analysis of the local and specific before we seek to develop models which will set them within a more comprehensive overview."²⁰ Following her own advice, in *Image and Reality* Lieu studies a range of second-century Christian texts hailing from Asia Minor for their presentations of Jews and Judaism, catching in the reflection of the constructed "other" an image of the Christian self.²¹ Although the Christian authors Lieu surveys fiercely argue for the "otherness" of the Jews, her study highlights the continued interaction between these Christians and their Jewish opponents, so that "Pagan writers who still confused the two religions may have been

And it was against this "Israel," i.e. Christianity as a whole, that the *Tannaim* responded, beginning in the generation of Yavneh and into the second century," 368. Ruth Langer defends Kimelman's argument that the *minim* cannot be equated with the Christians, contending, "The meaning of *minim* changes with place and time. In the tannaitic texts from the Land of Israel, it generally means a deviant Jew, i.e., a Jew who does not conform with rabbinic norms, but not a gentile. This continues in the amoraic literature from there." Langer, *Cursing the Christians? A History of the Birkat HaMinim* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 26. See also Joel Marcus, "Birkat ha-minim Revisited" *NTS* 55 (2009): 523-51.

¹⁸ Lieu, "The Parting of the Ways: Theological Construct or Historical Reality?" *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 17 (1995): 101-119. Reprinted in *Neither Jew nor Greek? Constructing Early Christianity* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2002), 11.

¹⁹ Lieu, *Neither Jew nor Greek?*, 15-18.

²⁰ Lieu, *Neither Jew nor Greek?*, 18.

²¹ Judith Lieu, *Image and Reality: The Jews in the World of the Christians in the Second Century* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 1-3.

representative of some popular perception even among adherents of the two religions.

Contemporary, and not just ‘Old Testament,’ Judaism continued in the second century to be part of the immediate religious, literary, and social world of early Christianity.”²² Lieu does not deny that, in spite of its often inchoate theological and social manifestations, “even from the New Testament period there is a consciousness of being a single body, *the church*,” and acknowledges that “whatever the fuzziness at the edges, the use of the term *Ioudaioi* without apology both in pagan literature and in Jewish inscriptions implies a coherent perception from outside and from within”; what separates the one from the other, however, remains contested.²³

The Parting model is further challenged from a number of perspectives in the essays collected by Annette Yoshiko Reed and Adam H. Becker in their provocatively titled book, *The Ways that Never Parted*. Becker and Reed’s stated aim is to approach Judaism and Christianity “as traditions that remained intertwined long after the Second Temple had fallen and the dust had settled from the Jewish revolts against Rome,” paying particular attention to “points of intersection, sites of interaction, and dynamics of interchange.”²⁴ This perspective follows the Parting paradigm’s claim that by the second century, some level of differentiation between Judaism and Christianity existed, so that it would be possible for an individual to identify as a Jew but not a Christian (or, conversely, as a Christian but not a Jew), but resists the essentialism and firm boundaries that the Parting model takes for granted.

Many of the critics of the Parting model share the suspicion that views preserved in the writings of the invariably elite male ecclesiastical authorities do not reflect the lived reality of everyday Christians and Jews and therefore must be read as prescriptive rather than descriptive

²² Lieu, *Image and Reality*, 12.

²³ Lieu, *Image and Reality*, 19–20.

²⁴ Becker and Reed, “Introduction,” *The Ways that Never Parted*, 3.

of actual social, theological and liturgical boundaries.²⁵ Assertions such as we find in Ignatius's *Letter to the Magnesians* 10 that "it is utterly absurd to profess Jesus Christ and to practice Judaism" are taken to indicate that some members of the Magnesian community would have argued the opposite.²⁶ Lacking a singular decision making body, Christians continued to contest the criteria for determining which practices were legitimately Christian and which were to be rejected as lapses into Jewishness until the Peace of the Church was established. Only then, when the Emperor invested the ecumenical Councils with the power to police the borders of orthodoxy, did firm and legally enforceable boundaries between Christian and Jewish identity emerge. "In short," Boyarin argues, "without the power of the Orthodox Church and the Rabbis to declare people heretics and outside the system—'neither Jews nor Christians,' in Jerome's words, in his famous letter to Augustine, it remains impossible to declare phenomenologically who is a Jew and who is a Christian."²⁷ Although those who criticise the Parting model are not themselves without critics,²⁸ they have succeeded in discrediting the assumption that "Judaism"

²⁵ See, for example, the argument of Paula Fredriksen: "Despite the tendencies of imperial law, the eruptions of anti-Jewish (and anti-pagan, and anti-heretical) violence, the increasingly strident tone and obsessive repetition of orthodox anti-Jewish rhetoric, the evidence—indeed, precisely this evidence—points in the other direction: on the ground, the ways were not separating, certainly not fast enough and consistently enough to please the ideologues." Paula Fredriksen, "What Parting of the Ways?" in *The Ways that Never Parted*, 35–64, 61.

²⁶ ἄτοπόν ἐστιν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν λαλεῖν καὶ ἰουδαΐζειν. Steve Mason has argued that the Greek verb ἰουδαΐζω, parallel to other ἰζω verbs such as λακωνίζω or ἀττικίζω, does not mean "to practice Judaism," as it is often rendered by English translators, but to go over to, adopt, or align with Jewish people and their practices. See Mason, "Jews, Judeans, Judaizing, Judaism: Problems of Categorization in Ancient History," *JSJ* 38 (2007): 457–512, 462.

²⁷ Daniel Boyarin, "Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism," *J ECS* 6 (1998): 577–627, 584.

²⁸ In his review of recent "critical examinations of the Parting paradigm," James Carleton Paget, describing himself as a "mild separatist," raises five objections to the alternative hermeneutic of "continuity and convergence" championed in various forms by Boyarin, Lieu, Becker, and Reed. Chief among his complaints is that their critique owes much, perhaps too much, to the influences of post-modern thinkers including Levi-Strauss, Foucault, and Derrida, which he identifies in their "general suspicion in 'master-narratives,' the related interest in recovering lost voices or little noted witnesses, in taking seriously the constructed character of identity, particularly as it manifests itself in texts, in paying greater attention to local differences in the manifestations of Judaism and Christianity rather than in engaging in general stories with teleologies, and in a flight from what some have termed 'positivistic historicism,'" 8. Paget clarifies, however, that his criticism is not a defense of the old paradigm, adding that the contributions of Boyarin et. al. "are to be welcomed in that they have sent us back to what we thought was established, and made it seem less so." James Carleton Paget, *Jews, Christians and Jewish Christians in Antiquity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 6–24. Taking a different tack, Marius Heemstra emphasizes that the imposition of the *Fiscus Judaicus* required a legal definition of Judaism, and contends that Nerva's reforms of the tax in 96 CE is

and “Christianity” were clearly defined and mutually exclusive entities prior to the Constantinian period.

In the wake of the deconstruction of the Parting model, David Runia’s contention that “we must never lose sight of the fact that Philo was a Jew and was recognised as such,” by his Christian readers becomes problematic, as it takes for granted a stable and essentialized concept of “the Jew” in the early centuries CE shared between Philo’s early Christian commentators and intuitive to modern scholars.²⁹ His assessment is further complicated by the fact that none of the three earliest Christians to mention Philo ever explicitly refers to him as a Ἰουδαίος, the term most commonly translated as “Jew.”³⁰ Among the four *testimonia* to Philo in his *Stromateis*, Clement of Alexandria twice refers to Philo as “the Pythagorean.” Origen anonymously cites Philonic exegetical traditions by attributing them to “one of our predecessors.” Eusebius, the early Christian author who mentions Philo most frequently, typically calls him a “Hebrew.” To

the decisive date for the parting of the ways. See Heemstra, *The Fiscus Judaicus and the Parting of the Ways* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010).

²⁹ Runia, “Philo and the Church Fathers,” 229. Simon’s Parting model, which envisions a conflict primarily between clearly differentiated groups of “Jews” and “Christians” rather than among groups and individuals contesting the boundaries of Judaism and Christianity, is detectable in the way Runia frames Philo’s place in Jewish-Christian relations: “A further aspect of our theme that will often be specifically addressed is what Philo’s reception in Christian writers tells us about the relation between Jews and Christians in the period of the early Church. As we have already observed, Philo is sometimes regarded as virtually a Church Father, sometimes as very much a Jew. This difference in perspective must be placed against the background of the often very strained relations between the two religions and their adherents during this period. In this context the act of specifically adducing Philo’s name, or conversely of deliberately concealing it, can have special significance.” Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, 36.

³⁰ The question of how to translate Ἰουδαίος has been debated for several decades. A.T. Kraabel warns against a too-hasty equivalence between Ἰουδαίος and Jew, as in some situations the term might be better translated as “Judaean” as an indicator of geographic origin. This concern is particularly valid for the interpretation of epigraphic evidence. See Kraabel, “The Roman Diaspora: Six Questionable Assumptions,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 33 (1982): 445–64; Ross Kraemer argues that the term *Ioudaios* “may also indicate pagan adherence to Judaism”, or that *Ioudaios/Ioudaia* may have been used as a proper name. See Kraemer, “The Meaning of the term “Jew” in Greco-Roman Inscriptions” in J. Andrew Overman and Robert S. MacLennan, eds., *Diaspora Jews and Judaism* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992) 311–330. Shaye J. Cohen argues that the term *Ioudaios* shifted from a geographic/ethnic to a political or cultural/religious referent during the Hasmonean period. See Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Uncertainties, Varieties* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), chapter 3. Steve Mason rejects Cohen’s shift from a geographic/ethnic to a cultural/religious one, arguing that “the *Ioudaioi* were understood until late antiquity as an ethnic group comparable to other ethnic groups, with their distinctive laws, traditions, customs, and God,” and therefore rejecting the modern translation “Jew,” with its religious connotations, for the ethnic denonym “Judaean.” See Mason, “Jews, Judeans, Judaizing, Judaism,” 457.

say that Philo's Christian readers knew him to be a Jew in this period requires us to ask further, what was it about Philo that made him a Jew in their eyes?

Method, aims and scope of the thesis

This study examines the portrayals of Philo in pre-Nicene Christian literature for their presentations of his relationship to Jewishness, using these portrayals as windows into early Christian understandings of Jewish and Christian identity, their areas of overlap and points of divergence.³¹ My investigation consists of two parts. Part one provides two preliminary studies of the background to the early Christian reception of Philo. Chapter one surveys a broad spectrum of modern scholarly opinions on the question of Philo's Jewishness. The diversity of interpretations that Philo's writings engender speaks to the enigma of his character and the ease with which he can be cast into the shape desired by the interpreter. Chapter two addresses the questions of the historical conditions and transmission tradition that ultimately allowed Clement to secure access—perhaps even to own—copies of Philo's treatises. Situating Clement's encounter with Philo in the Greco-Roman philosophical schools, I challenge the theory that the Church in Alexandria stood in direct continuity with a synagogue or school presided over by Philo himself.

Part two consists of three chapters that together comprise the main body of the thesis. Here I analyze the presentations of Philo in the writings of Clement, Origen and Eusebius, the

³¹ I will often use the terms "Jewishness" or "Jewish identity" rather than Judaism, which carries the connotation of a religion or ideological system in contradistinction to Christianity, in order to refer to the larger complex of beliefs, texts, laws, and practices that were understood in the early centuries CE to be peculiar to Jews by both those who considered themselves to be Jews and by outside observers. The content of "Jewishness" is therefore variable and subjective. Shaye J.D. Cohen provides a helpful articulation: "Jewishness, like most—perhaps all—other identities, is imagined; it has no empirical, objective, verifiable reality to which we can point and over which we can exclaim, 'This is it!' Jewishness is in the mind." Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness*, 5.

three earliest Christian writers to mention Philo explicitly and to cite his works.³² I examine the descriptions of Philo offered by his Christian readers, asking what it means for Clement to identify someone as a Pythagorean, whom Origen includes as “τῶν πρὸ ἡμῶν τις,” and what Eusebius implies by calling someone a Hebrew rather than a Jew. I investigate the relationship between these identities and the definitions of Jew and Christian that each author articulates, paying careful attention to each author’s word choice and the range of meanings that the terms Jew, Hebrew, and Israel express. Although Clement, Origen and Eusebius belong to a common philosophical-exegetical tradition, the three employ different methods of citing Philo’s work and label him with different epithets. Each inhabits a different historical moment during a period when the relationships between Christians and Jews (as well as others in the Roman Empire) were subject to frequent change. Consequently, I evaluate the presentation of Philo in each of his readers separately, offering a series of snapshots demonstrating how three influential Christians negotiated the areas of overlap and discontinuity in between Christian and Jewish identity prompted by their use of Philo’s corpus. In the conclusion, I identify common perceptions of Philo’s Jewishness, as well as points of disjuncture between the three Philos sketched by his Christian readers.

To anticipate my conclusions, I shall demonstrate that while Philo’s insight into the Jewish scriptures and way of life is emphasized and treasured by his Christian receivers, his own Jewish identity remains ambiguous. This ambiguity results in part from the secondary importance of the literal interpretation of the Jewish scriptures in Philo’s thought. Philo’s

³² Philo is mentioned in two additional Christian sources that may antedate Eusebius but whose dates, provenance and authorship are uncertain. The *Muratorian Fragment*, a Latin translation of a Christian canon list that is variously dated between the late 2nd to the 4th century, identifies Philo as the author of the *Wisdom of Solomon*. Pseudo-Justin’s *Cohortatio ad Gentiles* invokes “Philo and Josephus” together as historians who prove Moses’ antiquity on three occasions. Runia assigns the *Cohortatio* a date between 220–300, while Elizabeth de Palma Digeser argues for a date as late as the fifth century. See Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, 350; de Palma Digeser, *A Threat to Public Piety*, 130.

Christian readers define Jews as those who (mis)interpret the Hebrew Bible's commands and therefore attempt to fulfill them "according to the letter," even if they also purport to have faith in Jesus. It is the practice of the literal interpretation of the Hebrew scriptures that render the Jews Jewish for Clement, Origen, and Eusebius.

Before setting out on our investigation, it will be helpful to discuss briefly several contextual factors that influence the Christian reception of Philo and will merit our attention over the course of this study. We shall now consider in turn 1) the Roman Empire as a setting for encounters between races, nations, and cultures; 2) the shared middle Platonic philosophical background of Philo and his Christian interpreters; 3) the articulation of Christianity as a "philosophy" and as a way of life.

Christians and Jews among the Nations

As inhabitants of large cosmopolitan port cities in the Eastern Mediterranean, Christians such as Clement, Origen, and Eusebius were members of marginal minority communities surrounded by *τὰ ἔθνη*, the nations that made up the diverse populace of the Roman Empire. While the followers of Moses and Jesus³³ debated between and amongst themselves over who could rightfully claim the names of Christian, Jew, and Israel, they also contended with the representatives of Greek learning and Roman government over their place within the Empire and access to its cultural resources.³⁴ Some centuries earlier, Philo too inhabited a vibrant multi-

³³ This phrase is used by the second-century medical philosopher Galen, as cited by Loveday Alexander, "Paul and the Philosophical Schools: The Evidence of Galen," in *Paul in His Hellenistic Context* (ed. Troels Engberg-Pedersen: Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994): 60–83, 64. Whether the "followers of Moses and Jesus" are one group or two is unclear from Galen's text.

³⁴ Although it is doubtful that his *Apology* ever reached its intended recipient, Justin Martyr addresses his defense of the Christians to the emperor Antoninus Pius, his son Verissimus, and a certain Lucius, whom he calls philosophers. By the middle of the second century, however, Christians had come to the attention of the governing elites and Roman *literati* alike, as Origen's addressee Celsus is thought to have written his *On True Doctrine* during this

cultural city. As an elite member of the Jewish community in Alexandria, Philo rubbed shoulders with well-born (or well-moneyed) Greeks and Egyptians. In his treatises *In Flaccum* and *Legatio ad Gaium*, he argues vigorously against the representatives of those nations in the face of threats to the rights and privileges of Jews in relation to other ethnic groups in the city. Philo's Jewishness cannot be disentangled from the political and cultural structures of the first-century Alexandrian world any more than his later readers' Christianity can be disembedded from their Greco-Roman urban contexts.

Judith Lieu has recently pointed students of early Christianity to contemporary theories of identity that emphasize its hybrid nature, contending not only that "there is not 'any universal meaning that can be attributed to terms such as "Roman," "Greek," "Christian," "barbarian,"" Jew, but also that these are not mutually exclusive categories, and so we can only expect to understand one term in its relations with the others."³⁵ A good example of the variability of meaning possible in any of these terms is the name "Christian" itself, which was only slowly adopted by followers of Jesus in the second and third centuries. The apologist and gospel-harmonizer Tatian notably avoids the term, identifying himself instead as one born among the Assyrians and educated in the teachings of the Greeks who has become a "disciple of the barbarian philosophy."³⁶ Employing a different strategy, Tatian's contemporary Theophilus of Antioch vigorously defends the name "Christian," which his addressee, Autolycus, seemingly uses as a slur.³⁷ Even in the later writings of Clement and Origen, the word "Christian" occurs

period, perhaps in response to Justin. See also Salvatore Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria: a Study of Christian Platonism and Gnosticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 37.

³⁵ Lieu, *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 20–21, citing R. Miles, "Introduction: Constructing Identities in Late Antiquity" in *idem* (ed.), *Constructing Identities in Late Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 1999).

³⁶ Tatian, *Oratio ad Graecos* 42.

³⁷ Theophilus, *Ad Autolycum*, 1.1. In 1.12, he explains the meaning of Christian as "anointed by God," further elaborating that this anointing makes the Christians "sweet and serviceable" to God. Theophilus's familiarity with rabbinic exegeses of the opening chapters of Genesis in *ad Autolycum* 2.9–33 has led some scholars to identify him

relatively rarely. For the sake of simplicity, in this study the word “Christian” will ordinarily describe the communities of Clement, Origen and Eusebius, with the understanding that its definition was under continuous construction during the periods in which they wrote.

As Christians sought to articulate the legitimacy and indeed the superiority of their way of life to an audience that was often either hostile to or dismissive of their claims, they engaged in the practices and discourses of identity that other conquered nations, notably including the Jews of the Diaspora, had already developed.³⁸ These strategies included the compilation of comparative chronologies, ranking the dignity of various peoples according to their antiquity, and the study of genealogies to establish kinship, often fictive, between races.³⁹ The relatively recent incarnation and life of Jesus proved a persistent problem for Christians to overcome. Their articulation of Christianity as a ‘new-and-improved’ way of life stood in tension with the necessity to legitimize that way of life according to the accepted Greco-Roman standards, according to which antiquity was honourable and novelty suspect.⁴⁰ As we survey Philo’s function in early Christian apologetic, we will take note of how his readers use his writings to establish the continuity of the Christian way of life with humanity’s earliest history, paying careful attention to the role of the Jewish people in these contexts.

as a “Jewish-Christian” or a converted God-fearer. See Nicole Zeegers, “Les Trois Cultures de Théophile d’Antioche,” in *Les Apologistes Chrétiens et la Culture Grecque* (eds. Bernard Pouderon and Joseph Doré: Paris: Beauschesne, 1998), 169-72.

³⁸ Among Diaspora Jewish authors, in *Against Apion* 1.6–48, Josephus argues that the barbarian nations, the Jews among them, have a longer history and kept more accurate historical records than the Greeks; (pseudo-)Eupolemus equates Biblical figures with the characters of the Greek myths, so that, for example, Enoch is conflated with Atlas; Artapanus argues that the Egyptians called Moses Hermes, and that he was the teacher of the Greek Orpheus. For references see René Bloch, *Moses und der Mythos: Die Auseinandersetzung Mit Der Griechischen Mythologie Bei Jüdisch-Hellenistischen Autoren* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 131–135.

³⁹ Tatian’s *Oratio ad Graecos*, chapter 36, cites as the sources for his defense of the antiquity of “barbarian philosophy” the histories of Juba the Assyrian, Berosus the Babylonian, a compilation and translation of three Phoenician histories, and the Egyptians Ptolemy and Apion, whose writings also sought to prove the antiquity and, correspondingly, the excellence of their nations.

⁴⁰ On the veneration of the ancient in Greco-Roman Literature, see Ramsay MacMullen, *Paganism in the Roman Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 1–3.

A number of recent studies have drawn attention to the early Christian adoption of the language of race and ethnicity prominent in Hellenistic and Imperial discourses around identity, pointing out instances of Christian self-definition in racial or ethnic terms.⁴¹ The title of Denise Kimber Buell's groundbreaking study, *Why this New Race?*, is taken from the opening paragraph of the *Epistle to Diognetus*, an enigmatic example of early Christian apologetic usually dated to the late second century.⁴² Buell's title, however, cuts off the *Epistle*'s anonymous author mid-sentence; his full question asks why “this new race or practice (τοῦτο γένος ἢ ἐπιτήδευμα)” has only recently made its appearance.⁴³ The recognition of racial and ethnic elements in early Christian articulations of identity has been particularly useful for challenging the theological judgment that casts Judaism as inward-looking and particularist in contrast to the universalism of Christianity, although the frequent claims in early Christian apologetic to the universal accessibility of the movement—provided the prospective Christian renounce his previous identity—should not be ignored.⁴⁴ Yet the recent emphasis on racial language in early Christian self-presentation can cause the second term in *Diognetus*' interlocutor's description of

⁴¹ Denise Kimber Buell, *Why This New Race : Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005); Judith Lieu, *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), chapter 8, “The Christian Race”; Aaron P. Johnson, *Ethnicity and Argument in Eusebius' Praeparatio Evangelica*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006). On the uses of the terms “race” (γένος), “people” (λαός) and “nation” (ἔθνος) in late antiquity, see Johnson, *Ethnicity and Argument*, 25-35.

⁴² The *Epistle to Diognetus* is not cited by any Patristic authors and is known from a single 13th C codex, where it is wrongly attributed to Justin Martyr. This lone manuscript was destroyed by fire in 1860. See Paul Foster, “The Epistle to Diognetus” in *Writings of the Apostolic Fathers* (ed. Paul Foster: London: Continuum International Publishing, 2007).

⁴³ *Epistle to Diognetus* 1: Ἐπειδὴ ὁρῶ, κράτιστε Διόγνητε, ὑπερεσπουδακότα σε τὴν θεοσεβείαν τῶν Χριστιανῶν μαθεῖν καὶ πάνν σαφῶς καὶ ἐπιμελῶς πυνθανόμενον περὶ αὐτῶν, τίνι τε Θεῷ πεποιθότες καὶ πῶς θρησκεύοντες αὐτὸν τὸν τε κόσμον ὑπερорῶσι πάντες καὶ θανάτου καταφρονοῦσι, καὶ οὔτε τοὺς νομιζομένους ὑπὸ τῶν Ἑλλήνων θεοὺς λογιζονται οὔτε τὴν Ἰουδαίων δεισιδαιμονίαν φυλάσσουσι, καὶ τίνα τὴν φιλοστοργίαν ἔχουσι πρὸς ἀλλήλους, καὶ τί δῆποτε καὶ τὸ τοῦτο γένος ἢ ἐπιτήδευμα εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὸν βίον νῦν καὶ οὐ πρότερον. Ἀποδέχομαι γε τῆς προθυμίας σε ταύτης, καὶ παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ—τοῦ καὶ τὸ λέγειν καὶ τὸ ἀκούειν ἡμῖν χορηγοῦντος—αἰτούμαι δοθῆναι ἔμοι μὲν εἰπεῖν οὕτως ὡς μάλιστα ἂν ἀκούσαντά σε βελτίω γενέσθαι, σοὶ τε οὕτως ἀκούσαι ὡς μὴ λυπηθῆναι τὸν εἰπόντα.

⁴⁴ The universalistic-particularistic dichotomy used to distinguish early Christianity from its forerunner, Judaism, was challenged by Nils Dahl, “The One God of Jews and Gentiles (Romans 3:29–30)” in *Studies in Paul, Theology for the Early Christian Mission* (ed. Nils Dahl: Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1977), 178–91.

Christianity, ἐπιτήδευμα, practice, to be overlooked. This study shall therefore be attentive to the instances in which Philo is taken as a source for describing the practices that set both Christians and Jews as distinct races apart from the nations. Which practices do Clement, Origen, and Eusebius identify as uniquely Christian, which as characteristically Jewish (and therefore *not* Christian), and which override the boundaries of multiple races?

Philo and the wisdom of the Greeks

In modern scholarship, Philo often plays the role of the poster child of Hellenistic Judaism, that strain within the Diaspora that sought to accommodate itself to the philosophical convictions and literary forms of the dominant Greek culture.⁴⁵ Although Philonic scholarship has begun to address the particularly Alexandrian and Roman aspects of Philo's writings,⁴⁶ it is his familiarity with the methods and traditions of the Greek philosophical schools that has drawn the most attention. The combination of Greek and Jewish elements in Philo's thought has both fascinated and troubled many of his later readers. Previous generations of researchers devoted much energy to determining whether, in the words of Samuel Sandmel, "[Philo] was a Greek Jew, or, might

⁴⁵ *The Encyclopedia of Religion* opens its article on Philo with the phrase "Hellenistic Jewish thinker." (David Winston, "Philo," *ER* 11:287. The third edition of the *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* calls him "the most important figure among the Hellenistic Jews of his age," (*ODCC*, 1279). *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* submits that "Die hellenistische Umweltkultur wirkte bei ihm als entscheidender Ansporn, um dem tiefgreifenden Hellenisierungsprozess der jud. entgegenzutreten und eine Synthese zwischen griechischer Philosophie und jüdischer Tradition zu vertreten." (Giuseppe Veltri, "Philo of Alexandria, *RGG* 6:1287). Critics such as Jacob Neusner have sought to undermine the rigid distinction between Palestinian-Rabbinic and Diaspora "hellenized" Judaism, emphasizing in recent decades that all Jews in the centuries after Alexander the Great were influenced by Hellenistic culture, albeit in various ways. Joseph Gutmann adds, "It is now realized that all Jews of Greco-Roman antiquity, no matter whether they spoke Aramaic or Greek, were subject to the process of Hellenization, although each Jewish community may have responded differently to the Hellenistic environment, which was also not uniform throughout the region." Gutmann, "The Synagogue of Dura Europos" in *Evolution of the Synagogue: Problems and Progress* (eds. Howard Clark Kee and Lynn H. Cohick: Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1999): 73–88, 83–4.

⁴⁶ Especially in the work of Maren Niehoff, *Philo on Jewish Identity and Culture* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001) and *Jewish Exegesis and Homeric Scholarship in Alexandria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

one more properly speak of him as a Jewish Greek?”⁴⁷ Lurking behind this question is the suspicion that Philo’s enthusiasm for Greek concepts brought him dangerously close to religious syncretism. That suspicion has sometimes been transferred to his Christian enthusiasts, as scholars have credited (or blamed) him with blazing a trail for philosophically-inclined Christians like Clement and Origen to follow, teaching them how to read the philosophy of the Greeks in (or into) the Hebrew scriptures.⁴⁸

Clement, Origen, and Eusebius agree with Philo’s modern commentators that the Alexandrian had mastered the wisdom and culture of the Greeks. It is hardly surprising that the Christians who took the most interest in Philo’s work also shared his intellectual background in the Greek philosophical schools.⁴⁹ Although all four have been subject to charges of philosophical eclecticism, it is now recognized that eclecticism was itself a feature of the contemporary form of Platonism, dubbed middle Platonism by modern scholarship.⁵⁰ The

⁴⁷ Samuel Sandmel, *Philo of Alexandria: An Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 15.

⁴⁸ “The Philonic heritage of combining biblical exegesis with philosophical expression made it ideal for Christian reuse.” George E. Nickelsburg, “Philo among Jews, Greeks, Christians,” in *Philo und Das Neue Testament*, 72. Speaking specifically of Clement, David Runia contends that “Philo did not teach Clement Platonism, but rather *how to connect his Platonism to biblical thought*, and specifically to biblical exegesis.” Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, 155. R.P.C. Hanson contends, less charitably, that “[i]t was from Philo, too, that Origen derived his use of allegory, and from Philo very largely his conception of the Logos as teaching divine truths to the men of the Old Testament which they assimilated by means of a partly mystical and partly intellectual apprehension, and it was in imitation of Philo that he turned traditional Christian typology into non-historical allegory. We can therefore reasonably claim that the particular parts of Origen’s interpretation of Scripture which are irreconcilable with the assumptions of the scholars of today derive largely (but not solely) from sources extraneous to traditional Christianity, from a Platonic attitude to history and a Philonic attitude to Holy Scripture.” *Allegory and Event* (London: SCM Press, 1959), 368.

⁴⁹ The affinities between Clement, Philo, and the eclectic middle Platonism of the first century BCE to the third century CE have been well-illustrated by Salvatore Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria: A Study of Christian Platonism and Gnosticism*. The influence of Platonism on Origen has been well-studied; important works include Henri Crouzel, *Origène Et La Philosophie* (Paris: Aubier, 1962), 20–49; Pierre Nautin *Origène: Sa Vie Et Son Œuvre*. *Christianisme Antique* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1977); Joseph Trigg, Origen *The Bible and Philosophy in the Third-Century Church* (Atlanta: J. Knox, 1983), 68–74; Peter W. Martens, *Origen and Scripture: The Contours of the Exegetical Life* (Oxford University Press, 2012): 34–7. Mark J. Edwards emphasizes the discontinuities between Origen and the Platonic tradition in *Origen against Plato* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002). Eusebius’s interest and skill in philosophy has been less generously assessed by modern scholarship; for a more generous evaluation, see Elizabeth C. Penland, “Martyrs as Philosophers: The School of Pamphilus and Ascetic Tradition in Eusebius’s Martyrs of Palestine.” PhD Diss., Yale University, 2010.

⁵⁰ John Dillon, *The Middle Platonists: 80 B.C. to AD 220* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977; revised and repr., Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996). On the eclecticism of Middle Platonism, see “‘Orthodoxy’ and

features that distinguish middle Platonism from previous Academic philosophy are first apparent in the writings of Eudorus, a shadowy figure who was active in Alexandria in the last decades of the first century BCE. Rejecting the Socratic skepticism that had marked the New Academy, Eudorus credited the origins of his doctrine beyond even Plato, to the sixth-century philosopher Pythagoras.⁵¹ While incorporating the vocabulary of the Stoic and peripatetic schools into his own teaching, Eudorus vociferously defended God's providential care for the material world while simultaneously affirming the freedom of the human will to strive after likeness to God.⁵² In middle Platonism, Philo and his Christian successors found a worldview that was, in their judgment, highly congruent with the teachings of their own sacred texts. My evaluation of Philo as presented by his Christian readers will therefore explore how *they* understood his training in Greek philosophy to impact his Jewishness. Of special interest is the way in which they relate Philo's extensive immersion in Greek *paideia*, the education or culture that made a Greek man truly Greek, to their defense of Greek literature's role in Christian education.

The question of the validity of Greek *paideia* was one element in a larger intra-Christian debate over how to make sense of the presence of true doctrines in the teachings of other peoples and whether to incorporate these foreign insights into their own worldview. At one extreme, Tertullian famously rejected all the wisdom of the nations as foolishness (using refined Latin rhetoric to make his point— "*Quid Athenae Hierosolymis?*"), while Hippolytus of Rome sought to demonstrate that each "heretical" expression of Christianity took its root in the doctrines of a particular philosophical school.⁵³ Clement, Origen and Eusebius, however, employed a different

'eclecticism': middle Platonists and Neo-Pythagoreans" in *The Question of "Eclecticism": Studies in Later Greek Philosophy* (eds. John M. Dillon and A.A. Long: Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989): 103–125.

⁵¹ Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, 117.

⁵² Trigg, *Origen*, 68.

⁵³ Tertullian, *Prescription against the Heretics* 7; Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 1. Contrast with the opinion of Origen as expressed in *Hom. in Ex.* 11.6: "For when I perceive that Moses the prophet full of God, to whom God spoke "face to face," accepted counsel from Jethro the priest of Madian, my mind goes numb with admiration. . . he

strategy, claiming that all knowledge finds its source in the *Logos*, God's Word incarnate in the person of Jesus, wherever it may be found. What was true was worthy of study, no matter its origins. As authority figures in Christian communities in Alexandria and Caesarea, Philo's Christian readers were influential arbiters of which texts, doctrines, and practices originating outside of the *ekklesia* did indeed conform to the truth as revealed by the *Logos*. My evaluation of early Christian descriptions of Philo and his ideas will therefore also be attentive to their use of *Philo's* writings to legitimize their own consultation of Greek texts.

Christianity as Philosophy

By the middle of the second century, a number of Christian teachers had styled themselves as philosophers, describing their Christianity as a way of life and as a philosophy (φιλοσοφία).⁵⁴

One of the earliest writers to express his Christianity as a philosophy was Justin Martyr, who not only employed literary *topoi* common in philosophical writing but, according to Eusebius, even dressed the part, donning the philosopher's characteristic cloak.⁵⁵ In the account of his martyrdom, Justin is styled as an independent philosophical teacher, reportedly offering anyone

listens and does everything which he says. He hears not the one who speaks, but what he says. Whence also we, if perhaps now and then we discover something said wisely by the Gentiles, ought not immediately to despise what is said because we despise the author. Nor is it appropriate, because we hold a law to be given by God, for us to swell with pride and despise the words of the prudent, but as the Apostle says, we should "prove all things and hold fast that which is good." Origen, *Homilies on Genesis and Exodus* (trans. Ronald E. Heine: Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2010).

⁵⁴ "Philosophy" occurs only once in the New Testament, in Col. 2:8: Βλέπετε μή τις ὑμᾶς ἔσται ὁ συλαγωγῶν διὰ τῆς φιλοσοφίας καὶ κενῆς ἀπάτης κατὰ τὴν παράδοσιν τῶν ἀνθρώπων, κατὰ τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου καὶ οὐ κατὰ Χριστόν. The epistle's treatment of foreign philosophy as suspect but the true knowledge of Christ as the goal of the life of faith is further developed by the second century apologists. Clement himself argues that the phrase "according to the elements of the universe" that follows the injunction that "no one take you captive by philosophy and empty deceit" restricts Paul's condemnation of philosophy to the materialism promoted by the Epicureans. See Clement, *Strom.* 1.11.

⁵⁵ Famous examples include his narration of his *Wanderjahre* through the philosophical schools at the outset of the *Dialogue with Trypho* and his conscious paralleling of the persecution of the Christians with the execution of Socrates in his *First Apology* 5.3. For his philosophical dress, see *Mart. Just.* in Herbert Musurillo, ed., *Acts of the Christian Martyrs* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972).

who wished to seek his instruction “the word of truth that abides in me.”⁵⁶ In his self-conscious adoption of the methods and terminology of the philosophical schools, Justin presages the teaching activities of Clement, Origen, and Eusebius. But Clement and Origen would not have had to look as far afield as Justin’s Rome for their model. As David Brakke notes, “Although the origins of Alexandrian Christianity remain obscure, the first Alexandrian Christians to whom we can point with any clarity are teachers and their students. . . . Like other Hellenistic philosophers, such Christian teachers would rent their own premises, gather a group of students, and publish learned treatises under their own names. Within these small study circles, Christians advanced spiritually and intellectually under the guidance of their teachers.”⁵⁷ To an outside observer, the teachings and the methods of these Christians would not have differed notably from those of the philosophical schools.

While George Nickelsberg observes that the “Christian usage of Philo was connected with the fact that Christian theology in these centuries was increasingly being clothed in philosophical dress,”⁵⁸ it has long been questioned how well the philosopher’s cloak fit the teachers of the Gospel. At the turn of the twentieth century, Adolf von Harnack identified Christianity’s increasingly philosophical self-presentation as a betrayal of its primeval Hebraic character. As Winrich Löhr explains, “Harnack believed that the fact that Christianity presented itself as a philosophy transformed Christianity itself. It became something to be taught, a knowledge and a doctrine, something complicated and fully comprehensible only to the educated. For Harnack, then, the self definition of Christianity as a philosophy was both

⁵⁶ *Mart. Just.* 3 in Musurillo, ed., *Acts of the Christian Martyrs*.

⁵⁷ David Brakke, “Canon Formation and Social Conflict in Fourth-Century Egypt: Athanasius of Alexandria’s Thirty-Ninth Festal Letter” *HTR* 87:4 (1994): 395–419, 400.

⁵⁸ Nickelsberg, “Philo among Jews, Greeks, and Christians,” 72.

historically necessary and deeply problematical.”⁵⁹ Harnack’s equation of Christian philosophy with an intellectual doctrine is challenged by the French philosopher Pierre Hadot, who clarifies that, for the ancients, philosophy was far more than an exclusively academic pursuit. It was a way of life lived under the direction of a spiritual master and in the company of a practicing community.⁶⁰ The purpose of the philosophical schools of the ancient world was above all therapeutic, aiming to convert their students from an animal existence of enslavement to the passions to the ennobled life devoted to reason.⁶¹ Consequently, Hadot reasons, “if doing philosophy meant living in conformity with Reason, then the Christians were philosophers, for they lived in conformity with the divine Logos.”⁶²

Loveday Alexander further challenges the Harnackian view that Christianity’s self-presentation as a philosophy was a second-century innovation, contending that “to the casual pagan observer the activities of the average synagogue or church would look more like the activities of a school than anything else.” She elaborates, “teaching or preaching, moral exhortation, and the exegesis of canonical texts are activities associated in the ancient world with philosophy, not religion.”⁶³ Alexander cites Arthur Darby Nock’s classic study of conversion in late antiquity to further argue that the philosophical schools and not the religious cults required adherents to transform their way of life. According to Nock’s definition, conversion consists in “the reorientation of the soul of an individual, his deliberate turning from indifference or from an

⁵⁹ Winrich Löhr, “Christianity as a Philosophy: Problems and Perspectives of an Ancient Intellectual Project,” *VC* 64 (2010): 160–88, 169.

⁶⁰ Pierre Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?* (trans. Michael Chase: Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002), 247.

⁶¹ Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?*, 102.

⁶² Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?*, 239. He continues, “Like Greek philosophy, Christian philosophy presented itself both as a discourse and as a way of life. In the first and second centuries, the time of the birth of Christianity, philosophical discourse in each school consisted mainly of explicating texts by the school’s founders. . . . The discourse of Christian philosophy was also, quite naturally, exegetic, and the exegetical schools of the Old and New Testaments, like those opened in Alexandria. . . . offered a kind of teaching which was completely analogous to that of contemporary philosophical schools,” 239.

⁶³ Loveday Alexander, “Paul and the Hellenistic Schools: The Evidence of Galen” in *Paul in his Hellenistic Context* (ed. Troels Engberg-Pedersen: Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 60–1.

earlier form of piety to another, a turning which implies a consciousness that a great change is involved, that the old was wrong and the new is right.”⁶⁴ He therefore contends, “there was therefore in these rivals [i.e., the civic cults] of Judaism and Christianity no possibility of anything which can be called conversion. In fact the only context in which we find it in ancient paganism is that of philosophy, which held a clear concept of two types of life, a higher and a lower, and which exhorted men to turn from the one to the other.”⁶⁵ As we survey the early Christian *testimonia* to Philo, we shall note the ways in which Philo’s readers use his texts to help them to establish Christianity as a virtuous way of life parallel to the philosophical schools.

Yet Harnack’s observation that the presentation of Christianity in increasingly philosophical terms made it less accessible to the average man on the street, “something complicated and fully comprehensible only to the educated,” remains a valid concern. In the second century, critics including Galen and Celsus could make exactly the opposite charge, contending that Christian teachers offered no rational proofs for their doctrines and beguiled “boys and slaves” in the marketplaces rather than attempting to convert educated men.⁶⁶ Clement and Origen spin the alleged intellectual weakness of their doctrine into a strength: they cite Christianity’s universal accessibility as a sign of its superiority to the complicated philosophies of the Greeks.⁶⁷ But their claims to the simplicity of the Christian philosophy are counter-balanced by the development of increasingly sophisticated defenses of its doctrines and the awareness that the majority of their fellow community-members were either unwilling or incapable of delving into the deeper mysteries of the sacred texts, restricting them from

⁶⁴ Arthur Darby Nock, *Conversion: The Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933; repr. 1961), 7.

⁶⁵ Nock, *Conversion*, 14.

⁶⁶ *Contra Celsum* 3.50–2.

⁶⁷ *Strom.* 6.18.167. In *Paedagogus* 3.11, Clement proclaims that all Christians philosophize, even those who are illiterate, for to love God and neighbour ultimately is to philosophize.

ascending from the knowledge of God as revealed in Jesus to the knowledge of God, the transcendent Father.

As they strove to build a systematic Christian worldview that matched the intellectual rigor of the philosophical schools, the Alexandrian Christians needed to account for the differing capabilities of their community's adherents to grasp the truths taught by Christ. This problem was made all the more pressing by the presence of schools in Alexandria founded by so-called gnostic teachers such as Valentinus and Basilides, who defended a theory of election that excluded the freedom of the will championed by middle Platonists. According to their detractors, these "gnostics falsely so-called" taught that humans were born with one of three kinds of natures—somatic (bodily), psychic (soulish), or pneumatic (spiritual)—which allowed them greater or lesser innate ability to know God, the cosmos, and their place within it.⁶⁸

As we follow the Philonic citations in the writings of these three Church leaders and teachers of Christian philosophy, we will see how Philo's description of the relationship between ascetic Jewish communities and the masses of ordinary Jews help Clement, Origen, and Eusebius to conceptualize the Christian community. In response to the challenge of Valentinus and Basilides, in the latter books of the *Stromateis* Clement develops his concept of the true gnostic, an elite Christian who, in the fashion of the sages of the philosophical schools, combines an ascetic lifestyle with exegetical expertise and a philanthropic spirit that seeks to pass on its knowledge to others.⁶⁹ Although Origen bemoans the limited exegetical capabilities of those he deems *simpliciores*, the homilies he preached over three years in Caesarea offer a glimpse into

⁶⁸ In *Strom.* 5.1.3, Clement distinguishes between the teaching of Valentinus and Basilides, contending that Valentinus teaches that one is saved by nature, regardless of belief, while Basilides says that one believes and is elect by nature. See also *Strom.* 2.3.10.2. The definition of the term "Gnosticism" and the corresponding determination of which groups and belief systems ought to be included under that term has been a topic of intense debate in the last decade. For a concise overview of the definitions on offer, see David Brakke, *The Gnostics: Myth, Ritual and Diversity in Early Christianity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 19–25.

⁶⁹ See especially *Strom.* 7:13–14

the benevolent service expected of true gnostics. In the writings of Eusebius, we see the impulses of Clement and Origen further developed and institutionalized, so that Eusebius can claim that there is not just one but two Christian ways of life, a higher and a lower, making it possible for all to practice Christian philosophy.⁷⁰

Moving Forward

The Apostle Paul declares in his letter to the Galatians that those baptized in Christ are “no longer Jew nor Greek” (Gal. 3:28). In the centuries separating Paul from Constantine, those who claimed the name continued to develop on Paul’s negative definition of a Christian as one who is neither Jew nor Greek. In contrast to their own self-perception stands Philo, famous in the eyes of his later readers for being *both Jew and Greek*. The chapters that follow explore his legacy in the writings of Clement, Origen, and Eusebius, three of the most influential and prolific ante-Nicene Christians. Their depictions of this particularly Greek Jew shall serve as our lens through which not only early Christian perceptions of Philo’s Jewishness, but also the evolving conceptions of what it means to be a Christian, and no longer a Jew or a Greek, may come more sharply into focus.

⁷⁰ Eusebius, *Demonstratio Evangelica* 1.8.48–50.

Chapter 1

Philo's Jewishness in Modern Scholarship

Introducing Philo

In spite of the thirty-six treatises from his pen available to readers today,¹ Philo of Alexandria remains something of an enigma. The surest details we know of his life come by way of his reflections on the crisis that befell the Alexandrian Jewish community at the hands of the city's prefect, Flaccus, in 38 CE. In response to the persecution, Philo was chosen to lead a delegation to Rome on behalf of Alexandria's Jews to protest their mistreatment and demand the reinstitution of civic privileges recently denied to them. Philo's reference to himself as an "old man" in *Legat.* 180 allows us to fix the latter years of his life to Gaius Caligula's reign. Extrapolating backwards, it is likely that Philo was born around 20 BCE. Some additional biographical details can be gleaned from incidental comments that pepper his writings.² His references to first-hand experience of the Alexandrian arena, gymnasium, *symposia*, and theatre are indicative of his high social status and Greek enculturation.³ Other particulars are left unreported; Philo never reveals whether he was married or if he had children, nor does he refer to his occupation or to holding a long-term office within the Alexandrian Jewish community.

Nothing is known of Philo's career after his embassy to Rome; it is assumed that he died shortly thereafter. Philo's fame, however, did not die with him. In the *Jewish Antiquities*,

¹ The exact number of extant Philonic treatises depends on whether one counts multi-volume works as a single or as multiple treatises. For a comprehensive overview of Philo's works, see James R. Royse, "The Works of Philo," in *The Cambridge Companion to Philo* (ed. Adam Kamesar: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009): 32–64.

² More extensive accounts of Philo's life, taking his writings and later *testimonia* into account, are found in Samuel Sandmel, *Philo of Alexandria: An Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 1–13; Dorothy Sly, *Philo's Alexandria* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 4–10; Daniel R. Schwartz, "Philo, His Family, and His Times," in *The Cambridge Companion to Philo* (ed. Adam Kamesar: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009): 9–31.

³ *Prob.* 26; *Spec.* 4.74; *Leg.* 3.156; *Prob.* 141.

published perhaps a half-century after Philo's death, Josephus attests that Philo's actions on behalf of his community and his philosophical abilities were widely known and supplies additional information about his family and social status:

But Philo, the leader of the embassy of the Jews, a man eminent in everything, brother to Alexander the alabarch, and one not inexperienced in philosophy, was prepared to make his defense against those charges. But Gaius prohibited him, and ordered him to get out of his way; he was so angry, that it openly appeared he was about to do them some terrible harm. So Philo, having been insulted, went out, and said to those Jews who were with him, that they had to be of good courage, for while Gaius raged against them in word, he had already set God against himself in deed. (*Ant.* 18.257–60)⁴

Josephus's report confirms that knowledge of Philo's philosophical writings, if not copies of those writings themselves, had spread beyond Alexandria and into Josephus's hands by the late first century. But in spite of the reputation Josephus attributes to Philo, this reference is the only external witness to the Alexandrian that we possess prior to Clement.

That Philo was tapped to lead the embassy to Gaius suggests that he was held in high esteem by his Jewish contemporaries in Alexandria. Yet the degree to which Philo may be considered a representative Jew, and his Jewishness reconciled with a proposed “normative Judaism” in light of his philosophical interests, has perplexed his modern interpreters. Before we embark on our investigation of the presentation of Philo's Jewishness by his earliest Christian readers, it is worthwhile to ask, what did Philo have to say about his own Jewishness? This question has been asked increasingly pointedly by numerous scholars in recent decades. Rather than adding yet another study to the already vast literature, in this chapter I review the findings

⁴ Φίλων ὁ προεστὼς τῶν Ἰουδαίων τῆς πρεσβείας, ἀνὴρ τὰ πάντα ἐνδοξος Ἀλεξάνδρου τε τοῦ ἀλαβάρχου ἀδελφὸς ὢν καὶ φιλοσοφίας οὐκ ἄπειρος, οἷός τε ἦν ἐπ' ἀπολογία χωρεῖν τῶν κατηγορημένων. διακλείει δ' αὐτὸν Γάιος κελεύσας ἐκποδὼν ἀπελθεῖν, περιοργῆς τε ὢν φανερός ἦν ἐργασόμενός τι δεινὸν αὐτοῦς. ὁ δὲ Φίλων ἔξεισι περιυβρισμένος καὶ φησι πρὸς τοὺς Ἰουδαίους, οἱ περὶ αὐτὸν ἦσαν, ὡς χρή θαρρεῖν, Γαίῳ λόγῳ μὲν αὐτοῖς ὀργισμένου, ἔργῳ δὲ ἤδη τὸν θεὸν ἀντιπαρεξάγοντος. Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 18.257-60. Translation mine, in consultation with the English in *The Works of Flavius Josephus* (trans. William Whiston: Auburn: John E. Beardsley, 1895).

of eight prominent scholars published over the past century. As we shall discover, the hefty volume of Philo's writings, combined with the variety of texts alongside of which he has been read, has engendered diverse interpretations of the man and his Jewishness in the minds of his modern readers.⁵

Philo the Jew in modern research

Our literature review begins with the work of Erwin R. Goodenough, who in 1940 published *An Introduction to Philo Judaeus*. Aimed at non-specialist scholars and students of Philo's works, the *Introduction* incorporates findings from his more technical studies, *By Light, Light* (1935), in which he controversially argued that Philo belonged to a mystical subsect of Judaism, and *The Politics of Philo Judaeus* (1938). Goodenough sees in Philo a fully-formed synthesis between Hellenic and Hebraic thought, as he explains,

The two traditions of thought, the Jewish and the Greek, so completely blended in his mind that the favourite dispute as to whether he was more Greek or more Jewish has little meaning. Out of the two strands he had woven himself a single cloth, warp and woof. He read Plato in terms of Moses, and Moses in terms of Plato, to the point that he was convinced that each had said essentially the same things.⁶

In Goodenough's presentation, Philo's Judaism is typical of the Judaism of the Diaspora, which thoroughly combined traditional Hebrew veneration of the Torah with Greek philosophical thought. Echoing the words of the apostle Paul, he claims that Philo and other Diaspora Jews are

⁵ The following literature review is intended to be representative, rather than exhaustive, of the pertinent studies that have appeared since the mid-twentieth century. Other relevant studies, to which reference may occasionally be made, include: Isaak Heinemann, *Philons griechische und jüdische Bildung. Kulturvergleichende Untersuchungen zu Philons Darstellung der jüdischen Gesetze* (Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1962); John B. Burke, *Philo and Alexandrian Judaism* (PhD. Diss., Syracuse University, 1963); Peder Borgen, *Philo of Alexandria, an Exegete for his Time*. Supplements to Novum Testamentum (Leiden: Brill, 1997); Dorothy Sly, *Philo's Alexandria* (New York: Routledge, 1996); Mireille Hadas-Lebel, *Philon D'Alexandrie: un penseur en diaspora* (Paris: Fayard, 2003).

⁶ Erwin R. Goodenough, *An Introduction to Philo Judaeus* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940), 10.

therefore “neither Jew nor Greek” but rather, like children, exhibit traits of both parents while having their own unique personalities.⁷ Goodenough resists the stark distinction between what he terms “rabbinic” and “Hellenized” Judaism, admitting that “we shall probably have to conclude that all Jews were more or less Hellenized.”⁸

Although he concedes “the vagueness of what we mean by Judaism as a generic term in Philo’s day apart from Hellenistic influence,” Goodenough defines Judaism, both ancient and modern, as a tradition that combines aspects of religion, ethnicity and philosophy. Answering the question, “What is a Jew?” Goodenough asserts “superficially he [*sic*] is the son of Jewish parents dedicated by them through the rite of circumcision . . . More deeply, a Jew is, and was, one who was loyal to the Jewish people (Philo called it the ‘race,’ but this word is now spoiled), and expresses his loyalty in an attempt to perpetuate the Jewish tradition.”⁹ Goodenough proposes “the actual observance of the Jewish way of life as defined in the law” as determinative of Jewish identity for Philo and his contemporaries.¹⁰

Characteristic of “all orthodox Jews,” and on full display in Philo’s writings, is what Goodenough terms, “the Jewish sense of religious superiority, the sense that the Jews alone know how to worship God in an acceptable manner.”¹¹ He accuses Philo of never attempting to understand the symbolism behind pagan rites and reads his reference to the barring of Egyptian proselytes from admittance to the synagogue “until the third generation” as evidence that Philo would not have welcomed Egyptian converts.¹² In this context, Goodenough stresses the continuity between Philo and other Jews of his era. Although acknowledging that Philo’s social

⁷ Goodenough, *Introduction*, 122.

⁸ Goodenough, *Introduction*, 13.

⁹ Goodenough, *Introduction*, 77.

¹⁰ Goodenough, *Introduction*, 80–81.

¹¹ Goodenough, *Introduction*, 84.

¹² Goodenough, *Introduction*, 132.

situation was unusual for a first-century Jew, he rejects the conclusion of his predecessor George Foot Moore that Philo as an individual thinker was “unique in Judaism and Hellenism alike.”¹³ In Philo’s Judaism, Goodenough sees a variety of Jewishness that helps to explain the near-contemporaneous rise of Christianity but which ought not to be understood as being “smothered or absorbed by Christianity.”¹⁴ Describing him as an “open-minded Jew,” Goodenough compares Philo’s attitude to Hellenistic culture to that of the “modern American Jew,” who would have no qualms about accepting the best of Gentile culture, from Shakespeare to Einstein.¹⁵

Goodenough’s *Introduction to Philo Judaeus* opens up a number of key themes in subsequent Philonic studies. His work is pioneering in its insistence that Philo is not an anomalous Jewish luminary and in its attempt to situate him within a subgroup of philosophically and/or mystically oriented Jews. In the *Introduction*, Goodenough clarifies his previously articulated argument that Philo belonged to a Jewish mystery cult of sorts, downplaying its sectarian implications and emphasizing Philo’s continuity in practice with his Jewish contemporaries.

In *Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (1947), Harry A. Wolfson famously claimed for Philo the achievement of inventing medieval philosophy. Wolfson contends that, as the first author to present a coherent theory of epistemology, physics, metaphysics, and ethics ultimately dependent not on rational speculation but on divine revelation, Philo paved the way for later Christian, Jewish, and Muslim religious philosophy, initiating a worldview that went fundamentally unchallenged for over a thousand

¹³ Goodenough, *Introduction*, 2, 17.

¹⁴ Goodenough, *Introduction*, 27.

¹⁵ Goodenough, *Introduction*, 11. Einstein seems an odd choice to include in among the high points of “gentile culture,” given that he was a Jew.

years. Few scholars have been willing to follow Wolfson's lofty esteem for Philo's contribution to philosophy; however the appearance of Wolfson's two-volume presentation of Philo's thought ignited a new era in Philonic studies.

Wolfson conceives of Philo's Alexandrian Jewish community as set apart from the rest of Alexandrian society, enjoying an independent education system and intellectual life.¹⁶ He describes Judaism as a way of life into which one was born but remained affiliated with by choice, asserting, "it was comparatively easy at that time to for a Jew to escape Judaism. Those at that time who cut themselves off from the body Jewish cut themselves off completely, leaving no dangling shreds of festering dead tissue."¹⁷ Those who chose to remain part of the community were "united in its essential beliefs and practices," which consisted of the observation of the Sabbath and the festivals, circumcision, devotion to the temple in Jerusalem, and the assertion of the divine origin of scripture.¹⁸ Wolfson argues that a strenuous monotheism was held in common among all Jews and contends that the Jews were the first to claim that their God was not like the other gods, who do not really exist.¹⁹

Countering the prevalent notion of Judaism in the Diaspora as "syncretistic," Wolfson presents Jewish thought as fully-formed upon its encounter with Hellenism rather than as undergoing consistent development. Wolfson imagines that the Jewish writers recognized in the doctrines of Pythagoras, Plato, and Aristotle "an approach to the truth of Scripture."²⁰ Going

¹⁶ Wolfson, *Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (2 vols.: Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1947, repr., 1962, 1968), 1.5.

¹⁷ Wolfson, *Philo*, 1.83.

¹⁸ Wolfson, *Philo*, 1.85.

¹⁹ Wolfson, *Philo*, 1.10. Responding to the hypothetical objection to stringent Jewish monotheism raised by the *Letter of Aristeas*, Wolfson asserts, "If Aristeas in his letter is made to say that the God worshipped by the Jews is the same as that which the Greeks call Zeus it is only because Aristeas is presented as a non-Jew and a Stoic philosopher to whom Zeus meant the same as the God worshipped by the Jews, 'He through whom all things are endowed with life and come into being.'"

²⁰ Wolfson, *Philo*, 1.23.

against the grain of scholarship, Wolfson implies that the Alexandrian Jews arrived at their allegorical method of scriptural interpretation independently from contemporary Stoic or Aristotelian scholarship.²¹

The continuity of Philo's Jewishness with that of the broader Jewish community is emphasized by Wolfson, although he allows that Philo was more philosophically oriented than most of his contemporaries. Adducing parallels between Philo's writings and later collections of rabbinic materials, Wolfson argues that Philo was often dependent on Palestinian sources, particularly for his legal interpretations (*halakhah*).²² He criticizes Goodenough's characterization of Philo's Judaism as a "mystery religion," arguing that the similarities in vocabulary between Philo and the mystery cults Goodenough identifies were due to popular idiom.²³ Philo's condemnation of Hellenistic mystery cults are indicative, to Wolfson's mind, of his general attitude of both Jewish loyalty and philosophical openness as demonstrated in *Spec.* 1.319–320:

If these things are good and profitable, they should be produced in the midst of the market place, where you might extend them to every man and thus enable all to share in security a better and happier life.

Philo's liberality is also on display in his critiques of those Jews who reject allegorical interpretation. Wolfson characterizes such Jews as "oblivious to the social significance of the philosophical interpretation of the Scripture either as a means of satisfying inquiring minds among the Jews or as a means of defending Judaism against the attacks of heathen writers." Nevertheless, Philo's literal-minded opponents seem to have represented the views of "the great

²¹ Wolfson, *Philo*, 1.57.

²² Wolfson, *Philo*, 1.90–91.

²³ Wolfson, *Philo*, 1.46.

masses of the Alexandrian Jews.”²⁴ Conversely, Wolfson interprets Philo’s admiration for philosophical virtue to extend even to those uncircumcised Gentiles who renounced idolatry. He argues that Philo considered such philosophers to be “spiritual proselytes,” even if they do not openly acknowledge and worship the Jewish God.²⁵

Responding to both Wolfson and Goodenough, the French Jesuit Jean Daniélou’s *Philon d’Alexandrie* presents Philo as a man whose importance lies both in the force of his own personality as a figure who unites the “faith of the Old Testament” with Hellenistic culture and as a witness to the state of Judaism in the era of Christianity’s appearance.²⁶ Daniélou’s Philo is presented throughout the volume as a “contemporary of Christ” and as “an important witness to Biblical interpretation in the time of the New Testament.”²⁷ It is the potential of Philo’s writings to shed light on the early development of Christianity within Judaism that Daniélou emphasizes.

Daniélou distinguishes sharply between the Aramaic speakers of Palestine and the Greek speakers of the Diaspora. This is not to say that Daniélou identifies only two types of Judaism in the first century; to the contrary, he acknowledges the variety of Jewish experience in the period, remarking,

“Nous commençons à voir combien de tendances se heurtaient dans le monde juif, palestinien ou hellénistique: ce judaïsme tardif est à la fois celui des messianistes zélotes et celui des cosmopolites hérodiens, celui du légalisme pharisien et du

²⁴ Wolfson, *Philo*, 1.64. He goes on to emphasize that “these three tendencies in Alexandrian Judaism, the traditional, the allegorical, and the extremely allegorical, thus did not constitute sects. They merely represented a certain conflict of ideas the like of which will be found existing subsequently in both Christianity and Judaism during the periods of their greatest internal unity. They represent that conflict of ideas which is inevitably bound to appear in any religion based upon a Scripture and a native tradition when on its coming in contact with a philosophy from another source attempts are made on the part of some to reconcile the two,” 71–72.

²⁵ Wolfson, *Philo*, 2.373–374.

²⁶ Jean Daniélou, *Philon D’Alexandrie* (Paris: Fayard, 1958), 8.

²⁷ Daniélou, *Philon*, 11, 81.

piétisme essénien; on y voit fleurir l'apocalyptique, en même temps que l'interprétation gnostique de la Genèse."²⁸

"Palestinian" and "Hellenistic" Judaism nevertheless remain useful, if broad, categories in Daniélou's estimation. For example, he conceives of Palestinian Judaism as both a political and religious entity ("nation et religion ne font qu'un"), while in the case of Diaspora Jews like Philo, Daniélou speaks of Judaism primarily as a "faith."²⁹ He frequently refers to Philo as a "believing Jew," a concept that he defines as one who is faithful in observing the law as it is expressed in the Torah.³⁰ The opposite of such a "believing Jew" is the "religious syncretist" who collapses the distinction between the Jew and the pagan. Hatred of idolatry unifies all loyal Jews, whether they live in Palestine or the Diaspora.³¹

Writing soon after the first publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls, Daniélou is convinced of a deep connection between the Qumran Community and Philo's writings. Arguing for the historical equivalence of the scroll authors and the Essenes, Daniélou cites the two texts in Philo's corpus in which he writes in praise of the Essenes in support of his claim that "Ainsi, pour lui, les Esséniens représentent-ils l'idéal du judaïsme de son époque."³² It is the piety of the Essenes, who lead lives of asceticism and quiet reflection while refraining from participation in the sacrificial system of the temple that Daniélou argues is particularly praised by Philo.

Daniélou devotes special attention to the social status of Philo's family, emphasizing their place at the peak of Alexandrian Jewish society and their connection with the Herodian dynasty in Judea. Stressing that Philo's career and family connections entailed him a stake in

²⁸ "We are beginning to see how many tendencies presented themselves to the Jewish world, Palestinian or Hellenistic; late Judaism is at the same time that of the messianic Zealots and that of the cosmopolitan Herodians, that of Pharisaic legalism and Essene piety. We see in it the flourishing of apocalyptic and, at the same time, the gnostic interpretation of Genesis." Daniélou, *Philon*, 41.

²⁹ Daniélou, *Philon*, 24.

³⁰ Daniélou, *Philon*, 21.

³¹ Daniélou, *Philon*, 29.

³² "For him, the Essenes represent the ideal of Judaism in his time." Daniélou, *Philon*, 43.

preserving the political *status quo*, Daniélou notes the absence of apocalypticism in Philo's thought. Philo is, however, deeply involved in maintaining the civic rights of the Alexandrian Jewish community, whom Daniélou describes as occupying a precarious position threatened by the "anti-semitism" of segments of the Egyptian and pagan population.³³ Philo is cast as an apologist on behalf of his community, and the *Life of Moses* and the *Exposition of the Law* are claimed to have been intended to present Jews in a positive light to outsiders.³⁴

Daniélou presents Philo's Jewishness as a legitimate expression of the Jewish "faith" that nevertheless may be distinguished from other expressions. Philo's Jewishness lacks the *raideur pharisienne* and fanaticism of the Zealots. Daniélou contends that it is difficult to imagine a greater contrast than that between Philo's Judaism and the nationalistic Aramaic speaking Judaism that surrounded Jesus.³⁵ Alexandrian Judaism, which Philo embodies, unites Jewish faith with Hellenistic culture and loyalty to the Roman Empire without being compromised by either.³⁶ Daniélou asserts that it was Philo's intent to demonstrate that one could adopt Hellenistic thought-processes while remaining loyal to "biblical faith."³⁷ The content of Philo's work was philosophy, but the form was *midrash*. From Hellenistic culture, Philo inherits his "humanism" or "*savoir-vivre*."³⁸ Following Harnack, Daniélou conceives of Palestinian Judaism as exclusivist but claims that Diaspora Judaism was a universalistic religion, attributing to Philo

³³ Daniélou, *Philon*, 23.

³⁴ Daniélou, *Philon*, 8, 22.

³⁵ Daniélou, *Philon*, 11. Daniélou compares Philo to early Christian figures such as Jesus and Paul throughout the work.

³⁶ Daniélou, *Philon*, 12.

³⁷ Daniélou, *Philon*, 21.

³⁸ Daniélou, *Philon*, 21.

a “missionary orientation.”³⁹ Daniélou’s Philo is a “liberal rabbi” appreciative of Hellenistic culture.⁴⁰

Samuel Sandmel, a student of Goodenough, devoted his doctoral dissertation, published in 1956 as *Philo’s Place in Judaism: A Study of Conceptions of Abraham in Jewish Literature*, to articulating the distinctions between Philo’s Hellenized Judaism and the Palestinian Judaism discernible in the rabbinic corpus.⁴¹ Sandmel’s method of inquiry is an in-depth comparison of portrayals of Abraham across the scope of ancient Jewish literature, a method adopted in conscious opposition to the amassing of (frequently superficial) parallels. Taking direct aim at Wolfson, as well as Samuel Belkin,⁴² Sandmel argues from his investigation into the Alexandrian’s characterization of Abraham that Philo was either unaware of or uninterested in both rabbinic *haggadah* and other Hellenistic Jewish literature.

Sandmel expands on his earlier conclusions in his *Introduction to Philo of Alexandria*, which he intends as a supplement to (or, more likely, a replacement of) Goodenough’s *Introduction*. In Sandmel’s presentation, “Judaism” ought to be considered a single religion, similar to Christianity, but as comprising a wide range of possible “religiosities.”⁴³ For both the rabbis in Palestine and Philo in Alexandria, the Bible is central. Yet their respective uses and interpretations of that Bible differs markedly. Sandmel asserts that in Philo’s Judaism, “the Bible is the vehicle for bringing us into communion with God. Such communion is the purpose and

³⁹ Daniélou, *Philon*, 24.

⁴⁰ Daniélou, *Philon*, 22.

⁴¹ See also his review article of recent interpretations of Philo and his relationship to Palestinian Judaism, “Philo’s Place in Judaism,” *Hebrew Union College Annual* 25 (1954), 26 (1955), 5–26.

⁴² In his *Philo and the Oral Law*, Belkin asserts, “Philo’s *halakah* is based upon the Palestinian Oral Law as it was known in Alexandria . . . No longer may a sharp line of distinction be drawn between Palestinian and Hellenistic Judaism.” *Philo and the Oral Law*, 29.

⁴³ Samuel Sandmel, *Introduction to Philo of Alexandria* (Chico: Scholars Press, 1977). Sandmel defines “religiosity” as “the tone and character of the carrying out of the religion on the part of differing personalities within the tradition” 82–83.

indeed the essence of religion. All else, including the Mosaic laws, is secondary. The Bible is the vehicle; man rides forward by means of that vehicle.”⁴⁴ Sandmel is unaware of any parallel in rabbinic literature to the “central goal of Philo’s Judaism, mystic communion with the Godhead.”⁴⁵

Although Sandmel frequently labels Philo’s Judaism as “Hellenized,” crediting him with “the first major reconciliation between Jewish revelation and Greek rationalist philosophy,” he maintains that Philo himself is not a representative voice of Diaspora Jews. Philo’s social situation and intellectualism separated him from the rabble, whom he disdained. Challenging the assumption that Philo was a rabbi who taught in a synagogue setting, Sandmel suggests that “if [Philo] was ever invited to expound Scripture in the Alexandrian synagogue, one guesses that he bored the congregation with his erudition and wordiness quite as much as he enlightened it. Ordinary Jews would scarcely have understood his repeated citations of abstruse philosophy.”⁴⁶ In Sandmel’s view, Philo’s Hellenization goes beyond that of language and everyday culture, removing him beyond any conceivable mainstream. “It is not wrong to regard Philo as representing a marginal *viewpoint*,” Sandmel suggests, “but I have seen no evidence that Philo speaks for a segment of Jewry large enough to be called a *marginal Judaism*.”⁴⁷

Writing forty years after the publication of Sandmel’s dissertation, Naomi G. Cohen arrives at nearly opposite conclusions in *Philo Judaeus: His Universe of Discourse* (1995). Although nowhere citing Sandmel—except perhaps in a covert reference to “a person who combined the callings of Orthodox Rabbi, academic scholar, and communal leader [who] has

⁴⁴ Sandmel, *Introduction*, 88.

⁴⁵ Sandmel, *Introduction*, 83.

⁴⁶ Sandmel, *Introduction*, 13.

⁴⁷ Sandmel, *Introduction*, 148.

depicted Philo as similar to himself”⁴⁸—Cohen asks the same basic question, namely, did Philo and the rabbis share a common exegetical tradition? While Sandmel pursued his study of Abraham to answer this question negatively, Cohen’s method is an in-depth study of one Philonic passage, viz. *Spec. Leg.* IV 132–50, in which Philo interprets the Decalogue as comprising the organizing principles or “heads” (*kephalaia*) of the whole of Jewish law. As a result of her research, she affirms halakhic correspondence between Philo and the rabbis. Cohen revives Samuel Belkin’s thesis, rejected by Sandmel, that “Philo used living Palestinian/Alexandrian midrashic traditions—both halakhic and haggadic,” while clarifying that neither she nor Belkin argue for literary dependence between Philo’s corpus and rabbinic *midrash*.⁴⁹ While acknowledging that extant rabbinic writings were redacted centuries after Philo’s day, Cohen cites evidence from rabbinic traditions attested in *Jubilees* and Josephus to argue that some material in the *Mishnah* and the *Talmuds* must pre-date Philo. Mitigating the problem of language by assuming wide-scale bilingualism, she envisions a constant exchange of preachers between Israel and the Diaspora, so that even simple villagers who never travelled would be exposed to proto-rabbinic exegetical traditions.⁵⁰ Thus ancient Judaism, as “a way of life and thought,” was highly cohesive throughout Palestine and the Diaspora.⁵¹ Citing Josephus, she maintains that “there was a ‘normative’ commitment in the Jewish society of his day to life according to the Torah, a term which was understood as encompassing the Pentateuch and other holy writings illuminated by the ancient traditions, together with the decisions of the

⁴⁸ Naomi G. Cohen, *Philo Judaeus: His Universe of Discourse*. Beiträge Zur Erforschung Des Alten Testaments Und Des Antiken Judentums (Frankfurt-am-Main: Peter Lang, 1995), 3.

⁴⁹ Cohen, *Universe of Discourse*, 8.

⁵⁰ Cohen, *Universe of Discourse*, 30.

⁵¹ Cohen, *Universe of Discourse*, 14.

contemporary religious authorities.”⁵² While acknowledging that such traditions were not “monolithic,” Cohen argues in favour of broad continuity.

Cohen situates Philo among the Jewish community as a “preacher and teacher of Judaism.”⁵³ She envisions him as writer of *midrash*, part of a “flourishing genre,” translating the “truths of Judaism” into the language of Greek philosophy.⁵⁴ Calling Philo a “faithful and enthusiastic proponent of what he considered to be ‘normative Judaism,’” she affirms that his teaching, while not identical with that of the later rabbinic writings, had much in common with them.⁵⁵

Repeating Goodenough’s simile, Cohen finds that Philo’s Jewish and Hellenistic frames of reference are “inextricably intertwined like the warp and the woof of a woven tapestry.”⁵⁶ She hypothesizes that during the initial stage of Hellenistic rule when Palestine was under the jurisdiction of the Ptolemies, Hellenistic *topoi* became “part of the cultural baggage of the educated Judean.” It was only after the transfer to Seleucid authority that Palestinian Jews became openly critical of “Hellenistic” rule, spurring on the Maccabbean revolt. However, a significant amount of Hellenization had already been incorporated into “‘authentic’ local Jewish tradition.”⁵⁷ Cohen’s reconstruction makes a cultural rapprochement between Palestine and the Diaspora plausible, challenging the validity of “Palestinian” and “Hellenistic” as denominators of difference.

⁵² Cohen, *Universe of Discourse*, 22.

⁵³ Cohen, *Universe of Discourse*, 10.

⁵⁴ Cohen, *Universe of Discourse*, 14, 21.

⁵⁵ Cohen, *Universe of Discourse*, 22, 287.

⁵⁶ Cohen, *Universe of Discourse*, 10.

⁵⁷ Cohen, *Universe of Discourse*, 26.

While acknowledging the influence of Hellenism on all Jews, Cohen denies that Jewish writers of Greek texts would have gained the interest of a pagan audience. Rather, she contends that Philo and his contemporaries wrote only for a small circle of fellow Jews, having no hope—or desire—for a wider audience.⁵⁸ Cohen makes this case for all of Philo's writings, including the *Exposition of the Law*, a set of treatises that frequently have been interpreted as a presentation of the Mosaic law in a form easily comprehensible to outsiders.⁵⁹ Cohen's insistence on an exclusively Jewish readership is necessary to make the central argument of her work tenable—namely, that Philo's presentation of the Decalogue as the organizing principle of the laws is owed to a common Jewish tradition that is also found in rabbis, rather than to the principles of Greco-Roman jurisprudence.⁶⁰ Thus when Philo writes of an *agraphos nomos*, he is in fact referring to what is essentially the Oral Torah, and not the Greco-Roman conception of an unwritten law of Nature.⁶¹

In contrast to Cohen's depiction of Philo as a proto-rabbi, in *Philo's Jewish Identity* Alan Mendelson portrays Philo as something of a proto-liberal Jew. Putting a new spin on Goodenough's thesis that Philo represented a mystically-oriented subse(c)t of Alexandrian Judaism, Mendelson argues that "Philo adopted a two-tiered conception of his co-religionists."⁶² Distinct from the mass of unsophisticated Jews was a circle of philosophical adepts, among whose membership Philo counted himself. In Mendelson's presentation, the elites were

⁵⁸ Cohen, *Universe of Discourse*, 20; see also Cohen, *Philo's Scriptures: Citations from the Prophets and Writings: Evidence for a Haftarah Cycle in Second Temple Judaism*. Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 2: "On the face of it, he must have been writing for the educated element of the contemporary Jewish community who found intellectual and emotional satisfaction in the weaving of their Hellenistic frames of reference into those traditional Jewish texts to which Philo encouraged them to be unconditionally committed."

⁵⁹ Scholars who defend a version of this hypothesis include Goodenough and Sandmel (discussed above) and Ellen Birnbaum and Maren Niehoff (discussed below).

⁶⁰ Cohen, *Universe of Discourse*, 76 ff.

⁶¹ Cohen, *Universe of Discourse*, 22, 278.

⁶² Alan Mendelson, *Philo's Jewish Identity* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 8.

characterized not by their mysticism, but their enthusiasm for Greek learning. “What distinguished Philo’s circle, then,” he explains, “was not so much the purity of their theological utterances as a keen awareness of two complementary beliefs: first, that the Bible was written on the level of the philosophically unsophisticated and, second, that the truth of Scripture could be approached, if not reached, by allegory.” Mendelson frequently refers to Jews who, like Philo, see symbolic meaning in the Biblical text as “moderns” who “prided themselves on having a rational grasp of religious practice.”⁶³ In one example, Philo’s ascription of health benefits to the practice of circumcision is said to be motivated by the desire to make the practice appealing to “modern,” “liberal” Jews.⁶⁴

Given his aim of reconstructing Philo’s specific Jewish identity, Mendelson expends no great energy on defining Judaism beyond Philo’s experience and expression of it. He most frequently refers to Philo’s Judaism as his “religion” and calls other Alexandrian Jews his “co-religionists.” Mendelson sees Philo’s Judaism as highly interiorized, commenting that “Philo’s Judaism thus was a religion in which the state of one’s soul had priority over mere formalities, and intent was more important than deed.”⁶⁵ At the heart of Philo’s religion Mendelson sees a philosophical monotheism, expressed in his condemnation of the philosophical schools in the conclusion of his treatise *On the Creation of the World (Opf.)*. Mendelson suggests that *Opf.* 171–172 can be interpreted as Philo’s creed, adding further that, “if Philo had been so inclined, he might have stated that the alpha and omega of orthodoxy was a belief in monotheism. The rest for him was commentary.”⁶⁶

⁶³ Mendelson, *Philo’s Jewish Identity*, 69.

⁶⁴ Mendelson, *Philo’s Jewish Identity*, 54–55.

⁶⁵ Mendelson, *Philo’s Jewish Identity*, 66.

⁶⁶ Mendelson, *Philo’s Jewish Identity*, 49.

There is nothing in *Opf.* 171–172 and the philosophical monotheism it promotes, however, that would distinguish Philo from a religious Platonist. Mendelson has difficulty connecting Philo’s purported conception of orthodoxy with his conception of particularly Jewish orthopraxy, a problem for which he blames Philo himself. Caught between two worlds, Mendelson imagines that Philo’s daily existence involved a complex calculus of cultural negotiation and accommodation in search of the point where “a Jew must be willing to sacrifice himself to preserve his Jewish identity.”⁶⁷

For Philo and his circle, Mendelson claims, the preservation of traditional Jewish practices was something of a first principle. Nevertheless, those practices required rationalization, a belief Mendelson attributes to Philo’s keen Hellenization. Philo adopts Hellenistic attitudes towards the barbarian peoples and is eager to demonstrate, on the Greeks’ own terms, that the Jews are in fact a highly civilized people. Despite seeming to want Philo himself to acknowledge the counterintuitivity of distinctive Jewish practice, Mendelson notes Philo’s frequent and unabashed claims of the “spiritual supremacy” of “virtually every aspect of Jewish life.”⁶⁸ He characterizes Philo’s attitude toward pagan religion as generally “condescending and dismissive,” highlighting Philo’s hope that, ultimately, “each nation would abandon its peculiar ways and, throwing overboard its ancestral customs, turn to honouring our laws alone.”⁶⁹ Mendelson’s analysis emphasizes the tension Philo may have felt in straddling Jewish and Hellenistic cultural contexts. His Philo, while loyal to his ancestral customs, is equally enchanted by the cultural contributions of his Greek neighbours. One is left, however, with the impression that it is not Philo who is straining to make the strange traditions of an

⁶⁷ Mendelson, *Philo’s Jewish Identity*, 21–24.

⁶⁸ Mendelson, *Philo’s Jewish Identity*, 129.

⁶⁹ Mendelson, *Philo’s Jewish Identity*, 130–31, quoting *Vit. Mos.* 2.44.

outmoded religion relevant to an educated, skeptical audience consisting of both insiders and outsiders, but Mendelson himself.

The complex interrelations of the religious, political, philosophical, and cultural components of Philo's Judaism are further elucidated by Ellen Birnbaum's doctoral dissertation, revised and published as *The Place of Judaism in Philo's Thought: Israel, Jews and Proselytes* (1996). The study begins with the observation that Philo does not use the terms Ἰσραὴλ (Israel) and οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι (the Jews) interchangeably. Through a close reading of Philo's treatises and a number of word studies, she demonstrates that Philo does not usually use the two terms in the same set of treatises. Philo employs the word "Israel" most frequently in the *Allegorical Commentary*, which Birnbaum contends is aimed at an elite, highly educated segment of the Jewish audience. Here Philo interprets Israel etymologically as ὁρῶν θεόν, "seeing God," and uses it as a designation for those possessing an elite spiritual or mystical capability to experience a vision of God. This capability may be inborn or attained through philosophical study and practice. On the other hand, οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι are discussed in the *Exposition of the Law*, which she contends is aimed at a more general Jewish readership. In these treatises οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι are praised as the discreet social group that follows the laws of Moses and thus alone properly worships the one true God.

Theoretically, Philo opens both designations to outsiders. The "membership requirements" for the two groups, however, differ. Proselytes, Birnbaum claims, seek to become Jews, not members of Israel. She observes, "Philo mentions that proselytes leave behind mythical inventions, polytheistic beliefs, ancestral customs, family, friends, and country and

come over to the one true God, truth, piety, virtue, the laws, and a new polity.”⁷⁰ In contrast, “because the distinguishing mark of “Israel” is its ability to see God, it would seem that anyone who qualifies—whether Jew or non-Jew—may be considered part of “Israel.” Birnbaum continues, “Philo speaks quite admiringly of non-Jews like the Persian Magi and other unnamed sages from Greek and foreign lands. Although he never calls these people “Israel” or speaks of them as seeing God *per se*, his description of them would lead one to think that they meet the requirements for belonging.”

According to Birnbaum’s reading, Philo has no concept of “Israel according to the flesh”; membership in Israel is determined purely by spiritual capability. Jews as a nation therefore have no inherent claim to the title Israel. She contends,

Philo himself does not explicitly draw a connection between the vision of God and Jewish worship of Him. We may speculate that seeing God may lead one to worship Him in the Jewish way and worshipping God in the Jewish way may lead one to be able to see Him. Despite these possibilities, however, Jewish worship of God and the vision of Him are not necessarily connected. We therefore cannot determine precisely the relationship between those who see God—“Israel”—and those who worship Him in the Jewish way—the Jews. Although these two entities may overlap or be one and the same, the exact connection between them remains unclear.⁷¹

Birnbaum interprets Philo as effectively associating Israel with the ontologically superior spiritual realm and the Jews with the lower, corporeal realm, maintaining that there is no necessary connection between the two.

Birnbaum’s identification of Philo’s distinction between Israel, those who mystically “see” God, and the Jews, the people who worship God properly according to his laws, is highly useful for understanding Philo’s appeal to Clement, Origen and Eusebius and the semantic

⁷⁰ Ellen Birnbaum, *The Place of Judaism in Philo's Thought: Israel, Jews, and Proselytes*. Brown Judaic Studies (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 196.

⁷¹ Birnbaum, *The Place of Judaism*, 212.

distinctions each makes between Israel, Hebrews, and Jews. Her claim that Philo does not make a connection between Israel and the Jews, and associates proselytes with the Jews and non-Jewish sages with Israel, however, has encountered some resistance.⁷² Birnbaum herself admits that Philo does use the term “Israel” to denote the Jewish people at least once in his corpus (*Legat.* 1–7).⁷³ Moreover, Philo frequently expresses the superiority of the Jewish law over all other constitutions, considering it to be consistent with the law of Nature and extolling the special virtues of the Jewish people as the only nation that worships God properly. These criticisms aside, Birnbaum makes a valuable contribution to the study of Philo’s Jewishness by carefully cataloguing his very distinct uses of the terms “οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι” and “Ἰσραὴλ.”

In *Philo of Alexandria on Jewish Identity and Culture*, Maren Niehoff conceives of Philo’s Jewishness as an ideological and cultural framework encompassing far more than religion.⁷⁴ Following the theoretical frameworks of Max Weber and Clifford Geertz, Niehoff proceeds from the assumption that “identity and culture are social constructs” that exist in a permanent state of flux.⁷⁵ Rather than evaluating Philo’s Jewishness against external rubrics such

⁷² See Maren Niehoff, *Philo on Jewish Identity and Culture* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 95 n. 84: “Such a radical distinction between Jews and Israel, however, is unwarranted. Statements such as ‘the suppliants’ race which the Father and King of the Universe and the source of all things has taken for his portion. . . is called in the Hebrew tongue Israel, but, expressed in our tongue, the word is ‘he that sees God’” (*Leg.* 3–4) demonstrate the intrinsic connection between Jews and Israel.”

⁷³ Birnbaum argues that since this treatise is an apologetic work detailing the sufferings of the Jews in Alexandria under Roman rule, Philo deliberately portrays the Jews in the best possible light, identifying the nation as a whole with “those who see God” for rhetorical reasons only.

⁷⁴ Niehoff explicitly criticizes previous scholarship on Philo for discussing his writings “by reference to abstract ideas and as a form of ‘ism.’” While applauding Alan Mendelson for turning scholarly focus to Philo’s Jewish identity, she laments, “Even Alan Mendelson’s important monograph on Philo’s Jewish identity ultimately takes recourse to theological categories. . . Mendelson overall relies on the categories of “orthodoxy” and “orthopraxy.” He argues that Philo’s Jewish identity should be understood as a form of orthodox belief and praxis. These terms, however, are patently anachronistic.” *Jewish Identity and Culture*, 11.

⁷⁵ Niehoff, *Jewish Identity and Culture*, 2. Niehoff defines culture as “an interpretative framework which renders man’s action meaningful and makes communication with others possible. It creates a public forum in which messages are exchanged and broader structures of significance attributed to specific human action. These social constructs provide man with crucial guidelines without which his life would make no sense.” 3–4. She conceives of Jewish identity and culture as relative, “in a permanent flow and respond[ing] to the changing circumstances of history.” 5.

as the Torah or rabbinic interpretation, Niehoff assigns herself the task of discerning what makes Philo Jewish in his own eyes.⁷⁶ Her focus is on the “significant Others” of Philo’s social context and the lines that he constructs between “us” and the various “thems” that populate his worldview.⁷⁷ Rejecting the simplistic dichotomy between “Jewish” and “Hellenistic” influences on Philo, Niehoff’s analysis pays particular attention to the influence of Rome on Philo’s thought.

Niehoff argues that the following factors emerge as characteristic of Philo’s presentation of Jewishness: descent from Jewish parents (with a new emphasis on matrilineal descent sparked by Roman influence);⁷⁸ loyalty to Jerusalem as the “mother city” of all Jews;⁷⁹ superiority to the Egyptians;⁸⁰ religion, which she describes as a factor in Jewish identity, but emphasizes does not comprise Jewishness *tout court*;⁸¹ a morality defined by self-restraint;⁸² a friendly and beneficent relationship to the Romans and Roman culture;⁸³ and the claim that Greek cultural achievements are derivative of a more ancient Jewish tradition.⁸⁴ In the second half of her study, Niehoff identifies ways in which Philo’s construction of Jewish identity is “translated” into the cultural discourses of child-rearing, gender roles, and the conformity of the Jewish law to Nature. She accepts Tcherikover’s argument that Philo’s literary circle of influence would have been limited

⁷⁶Niehoff, *Jewish Identity and Culture*, 11.

⁷⁷Niehoff, *Jewish Identity and Culture*, 5.

⁷⁸Niehoff, *Jewish Identity and Culture*, 23.

⁷⁹Niehoff, *Jewish Identity and Culture*, 33–34.

⁸⁰Niehoff, *Jewish Identity and Culture*, 46.

⁸¹Niehoff, *Jewish Identity and Culture*, 78.

⁸²“Self-restraint and sublimation thus set the Jews apart as a group of individuals who are called to become moral agents.” Niehoff, *Jewish Identity and Culture*, 95.

⁸³In contrast to Goodenough, Niehoff reads *Against Flaccus* and the *Embassy to Gaius* not as emblematic of Jewish disdain for their Roman overlords but as disturbingly unusual and unanticipated events for Philo’s Jewish community. She contends that, “the exceptional cases of Flaccus and Gaius thus prove the rule: true Romans are beneficent and friendly towards the Jews. They bring peace and civilization to all regions of the empire and are to a high degree congenial to the Jews.” Niehoff, *Jewish Identity and Culture*, 136.

⁸⁴“Philo suggests a deep affinity between Jews and Plato, for example, while contrasting “us” to the Greek philosophers in general. Both aspects of the equivocal position reflect a clear sense of superiority over the Greeks and their culture.” Niehoff, *Jewish Identity and Culture*, 138.

to a small group of like-minded, elite Jews, and, perhaps excepting *The Life of Moses*, understands his writings to have been specifically oriented to the internal concerns of a congenial subset of a diverse Alexandrian Jewish community.⁸⁵ Envisioning a multiplicity of Egyptian-Jewish points of view in the first century, Niehoff refrains from describing Philo, or, for that matter, any other member of his community, as “typical.”

In her 2011 monograph *Jewish Exegesis and Homeric Scholarship in Alexandria*, Niehoff identifies Philo as but one example of a larger group of Jewish scholars that populated his native city. Following from her study of the extant manuscripts of ancient Homeric commentary, or *scholia*, Niehoff proposes that text-critical techniques developed by the Aristotelian interpreters of Homer exerted much more influence over the development of Jewish scriptural exegesis than has previously been acknowledged. She notes with some surprise that Alexandria’s status as the leading centre of Homeric scholarship in the Hellenistic world, home to both the world’s largest library and the Museum, an institution with some similarities to the modern university, has been mostly overlooked by Philonists.⁸⁶ Reading Alexandrian Jewish literature alongside the Aristotelian *scholia*, Niehoff argues that Jewish exegetes were fully engaged with the wider literary disputes of their age. Within the writings of Pseudo-Aristeas, Aristobulus, and Philo, Niehoff identifies a fundamental disagreement among Jewish exegetes over the validity of applying the methods of textual criticism developed for the study of Homer’s epics to the Jewish Scriptures.

Following the previous research of David Hay, Niehoff attempts to reconstruct Philo’s contemporary Jewish colleagues through the fragments of their interpretations preserved in

⁸⁵ Niehoff, *Jewish Identity and Culture*, 12.

⁸⁶ Maren Niehoff, *Jewish Exegesis and Homeric Scholarship in Alexandria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 2.

Philo's works.⁸⁷ Turning to *On the Confusion of Tongues*, she argues that Philo's critique of other commentators on the Tower of Babel reveals Jewish scholars following the critical methodology and assumptions of Homeric scholars.⁸⁸ Philo's criticism of these exegetes for their impiety suggests that his opponents are fellow members of the Jewish community. Niehoff thus contends that Philo represents a relatively conservative exegetical position, one that insisted on the categorical distinction between the "myths of the poets" and the writings of the Law Giver.⁸⁹ In her analysis of Philo's references to other interpretations of the Binding of Isaac, Niehoff further claims that Philo adopts the conservative position that scripture is timeless and immutable, while revealing his opponents' "surprisingly modern position. . . that Moses revised the more primitive stages of the Jewish religion and introduced important reforms."⁹⁰

In this more recent work, Niehoff alters her previous position on the intended audience of Philo's treatises. In agreement with Birnbaum and a growing number of Philonists, she suggests that the three major groups of Philo's treatises, the *Allegorical Commentary*, the *Exposition of the Law*, and the *Questions and Answers*, are each written with a different audience in mind. Identifying the *Allegorical Commentary* as Philo's earliest work, she contends that "literal exegetes" committed to the text-critical methods of Aristarchus constitute his implied audience, "whom he hopes to convince of the usefulness of his allegorical approach."⁹¹ It is in this set of treatises that Philo devotes the most attention to "anchoring" the allegorical interpretation to the

⁸⁷ David M. Hay, "References to Other Exegetes," in *Both Literal and Allegorical: Studies in Philo of Alexandria's Questions and Answers on Genesis and Exodus* (ed. David M. Hay: Atlanta, Scholars Press, 1991).

⁸⁸ Niehoff's reading of Philo's critique demonstrates that his opponents compared the Jewish scriptures with the Homeric epics and other non-Jewish texts. Anticipating modern scholarship by nearly eighteen hundred years, Philo's colleagues engaged in a study of comparative mythology. Without rejecting the Biblical account altogether, they suggest that Moses' Tower of Babel improves upon Homer's myth of the Aloeidae in *Od. II:315–16* by increasing the plausibility or verisimilitude of the attempt of the proud to reach the heavenly home of the god(s). Niehoff, *Jewish Exegesis and Homeric Scholarship*, 80.

⁸⁹ Niehoff, *Jewish Exegesis and Homeric Scholarship*, 92–93.

⁹⁰ Niehoff, *Jewish Exegesis and Homeric Scholarship*, 95.

⁹¹ Niehoff, *Jewish Exegesis and Homeric Scholarship*, 135.

literal text and to demonstrating that the allegories he adduces are consistent with Moses' own intentions. Agreeing that the *Questions and Answers* literature suggest a more general audience, she proposes that the treatises "provide a unique glimpse into the world of Jewish education in Alexandria at a time when Philo may already have become an authoritative figure in the community."⁹² Finally, she contends that the *Exposition of the Law* was written between 38–41 CE, while Philo was stuck in Rome waiting for his audience with Emperor Gaius, with the intent of presenting a "more positive image of the Jews and the customs" in response to those presented by the head of the opposing Egyptian delegation, the infamous Apion.⁹³ Niehoff's reconstruction of the chronology of Philo's works, although speculative, remains plausible. Her frequent descriptions of Philo as a "conservative" voice among Alexandrian Jewish exegetes, however, seem inconsistent with her portrayal of Philo as an innovator of extended allegorical interpretations infused with Platonic concepts. Niehoff's description of Philo as a "conservative" exegete may also inject too much of the modern debate between "conservative" and "liberal" biblical scholars into the often ambiguous references that Philo makes to other interpreters.

Conclusions

My survey of modern interpretations of Philo's Jewishness reveals a progression from a tendency to describe Philo's Judaism as his religion to a more holistic conception of Jewishness as a major facet of his identity. Wolfson, Daniélou, Goodenough, and Sandmel primarily speak of Philo's Judaism as his religion, with Goodenough and Daniélou constructing Philo's Hellenistic Judaism as more "religious" than the Judaism of Palestine due either to its being

⁹² Niehoff, *Jewish Exegesis and Homeric Scholarship*, 153.

⁹³ Niehoff, *Jewish Exegesis and Homeric Scholarship*, 177. If Niehoff's hypothesis is correct, Philo's *Exposition of the Law* would rightfully be the original *Against Apion*.

increasingly interiorized and individualized (Goodenough) or to its having shed political/nationalistic ambitions (Daniélou). Unsurprisingly, more recent scholarship finds the categorization of Judaism in the first century as a religion to be problematic. The studies of Mendelson and Cohen both broaden the conception of Judaism from a religion to an “identity” or a “tradition,” but continue to employ the vocabulary of orthodoxy and orthopraxy derived from modern studies of religion. Birnbaum’s thesis that Philo uses the term “Israel” to describe the mystical experience of “seeing God” and “Jew” to describe the customs, laws, and worship of a particular people suggests that Philo did not operate with a concept of religion that united both internal experience of the divine and the external practice of worship. Niehoff redefines Jewishness as a self-perception of identity rather than an “-ism.” Nevertheless, “religion” remains an important aspect of Philo’s Jewishness in Niehoff’s presentation. However insufficient religion may be as a category for Philo’s Jewishness, it is the most common conceptual framework through which scholars have attempted to understand that Jewishness. As an expositor of holy texts, moral theorist, and apologist for the traditions of his people, Philo addresses many of the themes that fall under the modern rubric of religion, and he does so from a self-consciously Jewish perspective.

Although acknowledging the great diversity of Second Temple Judaism, the scholars surveyed operate with a notion of normative Judaism. What qualifies as characteristic of that normativity varies somewhat between monotheism (Wolfson); legal observance (Goodenough); devotion to the Scriptures (Daniélou); and the keeping of the ancestral traditions as arbitrated by established religious authorities (Cohen). Sandmel, Mendelson and Niehoff relativize the question, pursuing Philo’s understanding of normative Judaism rather than seeking after beliefs and practices held in common by all Jews.

Disagreement persists over whether Philo ought to be considered mainstream or marginal. Philo's elite status and family connections are emphasized by Daniélou, who nevertheless portrays him as a valid spokesman for the distinct yet legitimate Biblical faith of the Alexandrian Jews. Goodenough and Mendelson both locate Philo within a smaller circle of congenial Jews distinguished by their special interest in mysticism and philosophy, respectively. Although portrayed as representing a very specific subgroup, both Goodenough and Mendelson maintain that Philo was a loyal (even "orthodox") Jew. We find in Wolfson, Sandmel and Niehoff an emphasis on Philo's unique intellectual achievements which distinguished him from other Jews, including educated members of the community. Yet while Wolfson and Niehoff assert that Philo makes an important contribution to Jewish intellectual exchange, Sandmel presents Philo as the tenant of an ivory tower at a far remove from the everyman. Describing Philo as a more-or-less typical rabbi, Naomi Cohen joins Wolfson and Niehoff among those who interpret Philo as an authoritative teacher of the Alexandrian Jewish community, but attributes to his writings a closer relationship with "orthodox" Palestinian rabbis than Niehoff would accept. The scholars are also split on whether Philo ought to be interpreted as a "liberal" (Goodenough, Daniélou, Mendelson) or a "conservative" (Cohen, Niehoff).

Just as the category of Judaism has become problematized, so too have the concepts of Hellenism and Hellenistic Judaism in particular. Goodenough and Cohen both argue that all first-century Jews were Hellenized, with Cohen going further than Goodenough would follow in attempting to break down barriers thought to exist between the Jews of Palestine and the Diaspora. The relationship between Jews and their neighbours has also been presented in a variety of ways. While Daniélou conceives of Philo's Jewish community as existing in a persecuted and tenuous state and Goodenough sees Philo as bristling under the force of Roman

occupiers, Mendelson emphasizes Philo's *philohellenism*. Niehoff in particular has drawn attention to the plurality of Others surrounding the Alexandrian Jewish community and emphasizes the distinctly Roman influences detectable in Philo's writings.

The lively debate over Philo's intended audience appears to be moving toward the reversal of a previous consensus. Scholars such as Daniélou and Goodenough who approach Philo from the background of the Christian tradition write with the assumption that all of Philo's treatises were written with the awareness that they would be consulted by curious non-Jews not unlike themselves. Scholars trained in the wake of Viktor Tcherikover's influential 1956 essay, including Naomi Cohen and, initially, Maren Niehoff, interpret Philo with the conviction that his audience was intended to consist only of fellow Jews, and congenial ones at that.⁹⁴ Ellen Birnbaum's demonstration of Philo's distinct word choice in his various series of treatises lends new support to the hypothesis that Philo's treatises were aimed at different audiences, with the *Allegorical Commentary* directed toward his circle of educated fellows and the *Exposition of the Law* aimed at a more general, possibly non-Jewish public. Niehoff's recent study of Philo in the context of Alexandrian scholarship and Philo's Roman sojourn adds further weight to the possibility that Philo modified the genre of his writing with different audiences, and apologetic concerns, in mind.

Also apparent is the significant impact that the choice of intertexts has on the interpretation of Philo's writings. Although all eight of the commentators surveyed above have an extensive knowledge of Philo's own writings, we find that Wolfson's Philo sounds a great deal like the medieval philosophers he identifies as Philo's heirs, while Goodenough's has strong affinities with the initiates of the Hellenistic mystery cults; Daniélou's with the early

⁹⁴ Viktor Tcherikover, "Jewish Apologetic Literature Reconsidered." *Eos* 48.3 (1956): 169–93.

Alexandrian Christians; Cohen's with the sages of Israel; and Niehoff's with Alexandrian Homeric scholars. The Philonists surveyed choose different ways of coping with the immensity of Philo's extant corpus, including selecting particular passages for close reading (Cohen); the comparative analysis of Philo's portrayal of a particular Biblical character (Sandmel, Niehoff 1992) or theme (Goodenough) throughout his entire corpus; an attempt to impose order through the systematic presentation of the philosophical aspects unsystematically scattered throughout his works (Wolfson); word studies (Birnbaum); and the attempt to recover social realities casually embedded in non-historiographical texts (Mendelson, Niehoff). Each of these methods, however, results in a disproportionate weighting of some material at the expense of others, thereby allowing for different versions of Philo to emerge. Thus, for example, Sandmel and Cohen can both set out to evaluate the similarity of Philo's writings to those of the rabbis and arrive at diametrically opposed conclusions. The various portraits of Philo the Jew sketched in modern scholarship reflect the expertise and expectations of his readers, their interpretations influenced by the companions who surround him on their bookshelves.

Philo's modern commentators are in agreement that the Alexandrian considered himself to be a Jew; what sort of a Jew he was remains up for debate. The indeterminate character of Philo's Jewishness as perceived in modern scholarship ought to be kept in mind as we venture backwards in time and encounter him in the writings of his earliest Christian readers. It cautions against the assumption that Philo can be slotted into a single pre-existing concept of "the Jew" held in common by Clement, Origen, and Eusebius, or that such a concept even existed. Rather, by investigating their portrayals of Philo's Jewishness, we will gain a better appreciation of just what they each individually understood Jewishness to entail in their own time and context.

Before we turn to the *testimonia* themselves, in chapter two we shall stop to consider how it was that Christians came to possess Philo's writings in the first place. We have just seen the impact that context and expectations have had in the modern interpretation of the Alexandrian; we should expect no less of his ancient readers. We must therefore ask, in which settings were Philo's treatises received and read? Which book rolls sat alongside Philo's on the desks of his Christian readers?

Chapter 2

Sects and Texts: The Setting of the Christian Encounter with Philo

How did the Alexandrian Christians come to possess Philo's treatises? The usual answer to this question is that at some point in the late first or early second century, some of Philo's Jewish successors became followers of Jesus while still understanding themselves to be Jews. These "Jewish Christians" then shared Philo's writings with followers of Jesus who, like Clement and Origen, did not consider themselves to be Jews. Although the details of textual transmission remain murky, this general path of transmission is assumed by some to be self-evident. Ronald E. Heine, for example, asserts that "one of the more obvious traces of the continuing imprint of its early Jewish-Christian origins is the acceptance and use of the works of Philo in a segment, at least, of the Alexandrian Christian community."¹ Similarly, Ilaria L.E. Ramelli claims, "The link between Philo and the Early Christian community in Alexandria, although historically unfounded, reflects however the probable Jewish roots of Alexandrian Christianity, before the transformation that occurred at the beginning of the second century (115–117) when Alexandrian Judaism appears to have been swept away."²

Yet there are other possible routes that Philo's treatises may have taken before ultimately landing on Clement's desk. The philosophical schools of the Pythagorean-Platonic tradition are an alternative and, as I shall contend, more likely milieu for the dissemination of the Philonic corpus to early Christians. The assumption that possession of Philo's writings reveals continuity between Clement's church and Philo's synagogue has led to the corollary conclusion that in

¹ Ronald E. Heine, *Origen: Scholarship in Service of the Church* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 31.

² Ilaria L.E. Ramelli, "The Birth of the Rome-Alexandria Connection: The Early Sources on Mark and Philo, and the Petrine Tradition," *SPhA* 23 (2011): 69–95.

refraining from calling Philo a Jew, Clement intentionally downplays or obfuscates Philo's Jewishness. Re-locating the Christian encounter with Philo from the Synagogue to the philosophical school prompts a new evaluation of how Philo's readers understood him in relation to their Jewish contemporaries and the value of his insights for Christians.

The earliest Alexandrian Christians

The origins of Christianity in Alexandria are notoriously murky.³ References to Apollos, identified as an Alexandrian Jew in Acts 18 and described as a somewhat competitive co-worker by Paul in 1 Corinthians, suggest that a non-Pauline Christian teaching had reached Alexandria within years of the crucifixion. A tradition that the evangelist Mark was sent by Peter to found the church in Alexandria is attested by Eusebius and possibly by Clement in the letter containing the so-called "Secret Gospel of Mark."⁴ This tradition is expanded in the fourth-century *Acts of Mark*, which includes an account of his martyrdom in that city.⁵ The Markan connection is certainly legendary; however given Alexandria's economic prominence and large Jewish

³ "Die empfindlichste Lücke in unserem Wissen von der ältesten Kirchengeschichte ist unsere fast vollständige Unkenntnis der Geschichte des Christentums in Alexandrien und Ägypten." Adolf von Harnack, *Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums*. 2 vols. (repr. Hinrich'sche Buchhandlung, 1924), 2.706.

⁴ *Historia Ecclesiastica* 2.16. The authenticity of the *Secret Gospel of Mark* remains hotly debated. For a recent evaluation of the current state of research and extensive bibliography, see Timo S. Paananen, "From Stalemate to Deadlock: Clement's Letter to Theodore in Recent Scholarship" *Currents in Biblical Research* 11.1 (2012): 87–125.

⁵ The Acts of Mark survive in two Greek recensions, represented by a manuscript in Paris published as *Patrologia graeca* 115.164–169 and a Vatican manuscript published in *Acta Sactorum* 9:344–49 (rev. ed.; Paris: Palmé, 1863–1940). An English translation appears in *New Testament Apocrypha* (6th ed.; ed. Wilhelm Schneemelcher; trans. Robin McLachlan Wilson; Vol. 2: Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003). Birger A. Pearson has argued that the topographic references in the Acts of Mark confirm that the earliest Christian community in Alexandria was located in the predominantly Jewish quarters of the city. Beyond the challenge of retrieving accurate information about the first-century from a fourth-century text recounting events of suspect historical veracity, Pearson strains to connect the locations mentioned to Alexandria's Jewish community. The first location mentioned in the text, the Bendideion, a temple dedicated to the Thracian goddess Bendis, has no connection to the city's Jewish population. The next site, referred to as τὰ βουκόλου, the cow pasture, is described only as located "in the eastern district." Yet Pearson contends that τὰ βουκόλου "was in the first century the very heart of the most prominent Jewish neighbourhood in Alexandria." See Pearson, "Ancient Alexandria in the Acts of Mark," in *Gnosticism and Christianity in Roman and Coptic Egypt* (London: T&T Clark, 2004): 100–111.

community, it is highly unlikely it was bypassed by the earliest Christian missionaries.⁶ Papyrus finds suggest that a version of the Gospel of John was known in Egypt in the early decades of the second century, and discoveries of fragments of the gospels of Thomas and Mark demonstrate the early circulation of a variety of Christian texts in the region.⁷ A number of early writings, including the letter to the Hebrews, the *Letter of Barnabas*, the *Gospel of the Egyptians*, and the *Gospel of the Hebrews* have all been proposed to have originated in the milieu of early Alexandrian Christianity, although these attributions are disputed.⁸ Eusebius preserves no more information about Christianity in Alexandria prior to Clement than a catalogue of bishops of suspect authenticity.⁹ Erosion and continuous settlement have made the systematic excavation of Alexandria impossible, contributing to the complete absence of identifiably Christian archaeological or epigraphic evidence from this period.

The silence of the sources concerning Christianity in Alexandria prior to Clement has prompted various reconstructions of the historical situation. In 1934, Walter Bauer proposed the bold thesis that in its early decades, “mainstream” Alexandrian Christianity was characterized by

⁶ So Helmut Koester: “It is indeed unthinkable that the Christian mission should have bypassed Alexandria for decades. One or several communities must have existed there as early as the second half of the 1st C.” *Introduction to the New Testament: History and Literature of Early Christianity* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1982; repr. 2000), 227.

⁷ The oldest Christian fragment is Papyrus Rylands Greek 457 (P 52) a recto-verso fragment of the gospel of John, usually dated on paleographic grounds to 117CE and 138CE, however there is no consensus. Its exact geographic origins are unknown; the most probable possibilities being Oxyrhynchus or the Fayyum. See Wilfred Griggs, *Early Egyptian Christianity* (Leiden: Brill, 1990), 23–26.

⁸ Stefan Norgaard Svendsen, *Allegory Transformed* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009) is the most recent in a long line of New Testament scholars to argue that the author of Hebrews was steeped in the writings of Philo. For arguments in favour of the Alexandrian provenance of *The Letter of Barnabas*, see Birger Pearson, “Christians and Jews in First-Century Alexandria” *Harvard Theological Review* 79 (1986), 206–216; James Carleton Paget, *The Epistle of Barnabas: Outlook and Background* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994). Alexandrian origin is rejected by Helmut Koester in *Introduction to the New Testament*, 279. *The Gospel of the Hebrews* and *The Gospel of the Egyptians* are both extant only in fragments preserved by other authors, among whom Clement is a primary witness. For a sober appraisal of the available evidence regarding their place and date of composition, see *New Testament Apocrypha*, ed. W. Schneemelcher (Westminster: James Clarke and Co., 1991), 172–179 and 209–215.

⁹ Doubts over the list’s authenticity go back to Harnack, who considers Eusebius’s list „Schall und Rauch.“ *Die Chronologie der altchristlichen Literatur I* (1897), 205 (cited by Bauer, *Rechtgläubigkeit*, 50).

syncretism and gnosticism.¹⁰ Bauer's thesis begins from the observation that Eusebius's relative silence on Christian origins in Egypt cannot be blamed on a lack of investigation: the Church historian had evidently dug through the histories of the period, even arguing that Philo's *Therapeutae* were in fact the earliest Alexandrian Christians.¹¹ What Eusebius presents, Bauer suggests, is a cover story, a patched-together history that fits more neatly with his own fourth-century definition of orthodoxy than with the evidence from the first century available to him. He dates the earliest signs of proto-Catholicism in Alexandria to Bishop Demetrius of the early third century, who sought to unify the Alexandrian church under his monarchical supervision. Bauer theorizes that it was from Demetrius's hand-picked head of the Catechetical school, Heraklas, that Julius Africanus received the doctored list of bishops that was inherited by Eusebius.¹²

Bauer's insight that the orthodoxy of the fourth-century Roman church was not the universal understanding of Christian belief and practice from the church's earliest inception has been widely accepted by subsequent scholars. Many of his specific claims about the original forms of Christianity in particular locations, however, have been challenged. In particular, Bauer's description of the Alexandrian situation has been strongly disputed by an alternative theory that locates the origins of the Christian movement in Alexandria in its synagogues.¹³ In

¹⁰ Walter Bauer, *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1934; repr. 1964).

¹¹ Bauer, *Rechtgläubigkeit*, 50. For more on Eusebius's claim that the *Therapeutae* were Christians, see chapter 5 below.

¹² Bauer, *Rechtgläubigkeit*, 59.

¹³ Colin H. Roberts appeals to the frequent presence of *nomina sacra* in early Egyptian Christian papyri to argue in favour of the synagogue as the locus of the early Christian movement in Egypt. See Roberts, *Manuscript, Society, and Belief in Early Christian Egypt* (London: Oxford University Press, 1979); Birger Pearson extrapolates backwards from two texts that he considers to be of Alexandrian provenance, the *Letter of Barnabas* and the *Teachings of Silvanus*, to suppose that it is more likely that the dominant form of Alexandrian Christianity reflected the dominant form of Alexandrian Judaism and the early Missionaries from Jerusalem. Pearson's argument rests on the assertion of an Alexandrian provenance for the *Letter of Barnabas* and an early date for the traditions preserved in the *Teachings of Silvanus*, a text usually dated to the late second/early third century. See Birger A. Pearson, "Christians and Jews in First-Century Alexandria," *Harvard Theological Review* 79 (1986); "Earliest Christianity in Egypt: Further Observations," in *The World of Early Egyptian Christianity: Language, Literature, and Social*

this hypothesis, the earliest missionaries to Alexandria were closely connected to the Jerusalem church. As such, they prized the authority of James and Peter above that of Paul, as attested by the latter's absence from early texts claimed to have originated in Alexandria. Being Jews themselves, these Jerusalem missionaries evangelized to their fellow Jews. Thus the presence of Christians in late first-century Alexandria is obscured by the fact that those Christ-believers remained inside the synagogue.

Helmut Koester offers a reconstruction of Christian origins in Alexandria that emphasizes the movement's diversity rather than a uniform Jewish origin. Noting the size and stature of the city, as well as its importance as a trade hub, Koester imagines a wide variety of early missionaries arriving in Alexandria by the end of the first century. He asserts, "however fragmentary the total picture may be, it is nevertheless obvious that the earliest mission and expansion of the new message during the first years and decades after Jesus' death was a phenomenon that utterly lacked unity. On the contrary, great variety was the result of these quickly expanding groups of followers of Jesus."¹⁴ Koester contends that a confluence of philosophical schools, cult traditions, and forms of *gnosis*, originating in both Jewish and Pagan milieux, preceded the arrival of Christianity in the city.¹⁵ The various forms of Christianity that sprang up in the second and third centuries simply added to the crowded marketplace of ideas.

Eric Osborn, drawing on the work of Roelof van den Broek and David T. Runia, adopts a version of this diversity model that reifies six early Christian "groups" in the city: Jewish

Context (ed. James E. Goehring and Janet A. Timble: Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007): 97–112. Following Pearson, Ronald E. Heine asserts, "it may even be an anachronism to call these earliest Jesus believers in Alexandria Christians. They were simply a new variant among the many variants of Judaism in the city." Ronald E. Heine, *Origen: Scholarship in Service of the Church* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 27.

¹⁴Koester, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 102.

¹⁵ Koester, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 230.

Christians (whose numbers drop precipitously after 117 owing to the Trajanic revolt); apocalyptics in the vein of the author of the Sibylline Oracles; *simpliciores* who satisfied themselves with “faith alone”; ascetics/Encratites; Gnostic Christians; and Platonist Christians who consulted the Greek philosophers.¹⁶ Osborn’s divisions, although provided in the context of illuminating the background to Clement’s Philonic borrowings, are ultimately of little use, as he does not indicate the degree of unity both between and within these categories.¹⁷ The groups might better be characterized as “varieties” that are neither static nor mutually exclusive, and which do not correspond with discreet social or worshipping communities.

Ultimately, attempts to reconstruct an “original” form of Christianity in Alexandria, be it (proto-)orthodox, Gnostic, or Jewish, rest on an unstable foundation of insufficient evidence. Due to the paucity of early sources, it is unsurprising that many scholars have extrapolated backwards from the writings of Clement and Origen to inform their conceptions of the roots of Christianity in Egypt. The continuity this strategy presumes, however, is not only unverifiable but rendered highly suspect by two factors which I shall presently explore: the bloody events of the Trajanic and Hadrianic revolts and the mobility of texts and ideas throughout the Roman Empire.

¹⁶ Eric F. Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 84.

¹⁷ On the following page, Osborn describes Marcionites and Judaizers, two groups that are not clearly identified in his six-group schema, as “fronts” against which Clement is “fighting,” suggesting an adversarial relationship between factions as opposed to a single unified church in the city. Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria*, 85.

The Trajanic Revolt of 115–117¹⁸

It is difficult to imagine that the co-ordinated uprisings among Jews in Cyrenaica, Egypt, Mesopotamia and possibly Palestine against the Roman government, and their violent repressions, failed to be noticed by the Christians of Alexandria. Their impact on Alexandrian Christians, however, is not made explicit in our extant sources. The accounts of the revolts preserved by Dio Cassius (68.32), Appian (*Bell. civ.* 2.90), Orosius (7.12) and Synkellos (347 d) do not mention Christians; a stash of papyrus letters exchanged by the Roman *strategos* Apollonios, his wife Aline, and his mother Eudaimonis provide a glimpse into the intensity of this fighting, but are silent on Christians as well.¹⁹ Eusebius recalls the events in *Historia Ecclesiastica* 4.2, attributing the violence to “rebellious” Jews in the thrall of an upstart, possibly messianic, king named Loukuas.²⁰ While the Jewish community suffered, Eusebius contends that the church was left unscathed: “While our Saviour’s teaching and His Church were flourishing and progressing further every day, the Jewish tragedy was moving through a series of disasters towards its climax. When the emperor was about to enter his eighteenth year another rebellion broke out and destroyed vast numbers of Jews” (*HE* 4.2.1). When the uprising was finally quelled by Rome’s most skilled general, Marcus Turbo, those in Alexandria who identified as Jews suffered tremendous consequences.

¹⁸ The exact dating of the Trajanic Revolts is disputed. Although I preserve the traditional dating here, Miriam Pucci Ben Zeev puts the *terminus post quem* of the rebellion in Egypt on 18 May 116, the date of the last receipt of the *fiscus Judaicus* in Apollinopolis Magna. Miriam Pucci Ben Zeev, *Diaspora Judaism in turmoil, 116/117 CE: ancient sources and modern insights* (Leuven: Peeters, 2005), 167.

¹⁹ Classical references as cited by Miriam Pucci Ben Zeev, *Diaspora Judaism in Turmoil*, 180.

²⁰ Pucci Ben Zeev suggests that disaffection for the Romans among the lower strata of Jewish society in Egypt began in the period post 60 CE, citing the *Sibylline Oracles* as preceding the violence. She continues, “In 116, a general ferment may have prevailed in Jewish circles in response to circulating prophecies about the fall of Rome, and in response to the strong earthquake that took place in the winter of 115 at Antioch, that may have been interpreted as one of the signs announcing the coming of the Messiah. At the same time, in Egypt, and possibly also in other countries, the Roman military forces had been drastically diminished to be sent to the Parthian front. The movement may have been perceived to be particularly propitious and have led to an intensification of messianic expectations. All in all, it is clear that the Jewish uprising did not arise out of nothing.” *Diaspora Judaism in Turmoil*, 141–142.

Most recent scholars have recognized that the uprisings presented a serious blow to the Alexandrian Jewish community. Opinions differ as to whether the survivors were numerous and well-organized enough to maintain the distinct institutions and identity of the Jewish community. The papyrological and epigraphic evidence, as amassed by Victor Tcherikover and most recently analyzed by Annemarie Luijendijk, provides no witness to identifiably Jewish life in Egypt between 120 CE and the end of the third century.²¹ Miriam Pucci Ben Zeev notes that from the evidence of the papyri (*CPJ* 445, 448), the few survivors of the crackdown had their property seized, so that “the rare survivors, stunned by the harsh verdict of imperial justice, had become totally impoverished.”²² The cultural life of the Alexandrian Jews, including that of whatever Christ-believers who may have continued to identify themselves with the Jewish community, disappears from the papyrological and epigraphic sources.

The degree to which any remnant of the Jewish community and Alexandrian Christians interacted from the mid-second to late-third centuries remains contentious. Owing to the scarcity of archaeological and literary sources for Jewish life in late-second to early-third century Alexandria, highly divergent claims appear in the secondary literature. One increasingly popular position claims that a number of Jews joined the church following the destruction of the Synagogue. In support of this hypothesis, L.W. Barnard has suggested that the *Letter of*

²¹ “The Jewish Revolt under Trajan in 115–17 greatly impacted Jewish life in Egypt and dramatically reduced the Jewish population (citing Tcherikover, *CPJ* 1.93). Oxyrhynchus papyri testify to this. One document mentions “open lots, in which there are buildings burnt by the Jews” (P. Oxy. 4.707r, early 2nd C); it suggests a city embroiled by revolt. By the year 199/200, the Oxyrhynchites still celebrated yearly their victory over the Jews, as they bragged in a petition to the emperor (P. Oxy. 4.705= *CPJ* 2.450). Only at the end of the third century do we learn of a Jewish community at Oxyrhynchus again. A manumission *inter amicos* dated 14 April 291 CE attests that the synagogue, the Jewish community, presumably of Oxyrhynchus, bought free a forty year old Jewish slave woman called Paramone and two or three of her children for the substantial sum of fourteen talents of silver (P. Oxy. 9.1205). A Greek text documents the lease of a room and a cellar that a Jew called Aurelius Jose, son of Judas, rented from two nuns (P. Oxy. 44.3203, June–July 400). From the end of the fourth century or early fifth century come several fragments written in Hebrew. These documents show the presence of Jews and a Jewish community in Oxyrhynchus.” Annemarie Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord: Early Christians and the Oxyrhynchus Papyri* (Harvard Theological Studies: Cambridge, 2008) 16–17.

²² Pucci Ben Zeev, *Diaspora Judaism in Turmoil*, 190.

Barnabas was composed by a converted Alexandrian rabbi after the fallout of the revolt.²³

Mark J. Edwards imagines assimilation flowing in the other direction, arguing that Alexandrian Christians may have at times attempted to “pass” as Jews in order to avoid official persecution. Edwards operates under the assumption that, in the late second and early third centuries, Alexandria continued to have a large and vital Jewish population. He supports this claim, however, with evidence antedating the Trajanic revolt, including Philo’s writings, and gives no indication of having considered the riots and their aftermath in his calculations.²⁴ Piotr Ashwin-Siejkowski, following Edwards, proposes that Clement interacted with members of a vibrant Alexandrian Jewish community and groundlessly speculates that his teacher, Pantaenus, may have been a Jewish convert to Christianity.²⁵

In contrast, James Carleton Paget, citing Tcherikover’s analysis of the epigraphical and papyrological evidence, argues that Clement’s “relative lack of anti-Jewish sentiment” can be attributed to the lack of a thriving Jewish community in the Alexandria of his day.²⁶ As I will demonstrate further in the chapter that follows, the evidence (or lack thereof) in Clement’s

²³ L.W. Barnard, *Studies in the Apostolic Fathers and their Background* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1966), 47. Barnard cites the author’s familiarity with “Jewish rites” and rabbinic exegetical methods as evidence for his rabbinic training and the ferocity of his attacks against Judaism as “born of the consciousness that, as a Christian convert, he was finally excluded from Judaism and its worship, never to return” 54. Barnard’s claims have been challenged by Reidar Hvalvik, who, noting the lack of solid evidence informing the study of *Barnabas*’s origins, argues just as plausibly that the author of *Barnabas* was in fact a Gentile and not necessarily an Alexandrian. Hvalvik notes that “it is correct that a majority of scholars seem to place Barnabas in Egypt or more specifically in Alexandria. But there has never been any consensus on this matter, and today there is a growing tendency to look in other directions or to leave the question open.” *The Struggle for Scripture and Covenant: The Purpose of the Epistle of Barnabas and Jewish-Christian Competition in the Second Century* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 35. Evaluating the evidence collected in favour of an Alexandrian provenance, he concludes, “we may say that there are some factors which may point in the direction of Egypt, but there is absolutely no clear proof for Alexandrian origin. Besides, there is at least one important factor pointing in another direction: the strong eschatological flavour of *Barnabas*--a feature which is in no way typical of Alexandrian theology” 38–39.

²⁴ “No city of the Mediterranean world played host to such a large population of Jews as Alexandria in the time of Origen.” Mark J. Edwards, *Origen against Plato* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 12.

²⁵ Piotr Ashwin-Siejkowski, *Clement of Alexandria: A Project of Christian Perfection* (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 7; on Pantaenus: “Pantaenus himself may have been a convert to Christianity and it is not impossible that his previous religion was Judaism in one of its forms” 25.

²⁶ James Carleton Paget, “Clement of Alexandria and the Jews” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 51 (1998): 86–98; reprinted in *Jews, Christians and Jewish Christians in Antiquity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010): 91–102.

corpus suggests that he had very little, if any, contact with a living Jewish community while in Alexandria. If that was indeed the case, how might Clement have come into contact with Philo's writings?

The Catechetical School of Alexandria: A continuous Jewish-Christian Institution?

In an alternative to the theory that Clement was introduced to Philo's writings by a Jewish teacher, Gregory Sterling and Annewies van den Hoek suggest that although Clement likely had no contact with a living Jewish community, he belonged to a school tradition with Jewish roots. Van den Hoek connects this tradition to the so-called "Catechetical School of Alexandria" described by Eusebius in *Historia Ecclesiastica* 5.10:

At that time the school for believers in Alexandria was headed by a man with a very high reputation as a scholar, by name Pantaenus, for it was an established custom that an academy of sacred learning should exist among them. This academy has lasted till our own time, and I understand that it is directed by men of high standing and able exponents of theology.²⁷

Although Eusebius describes the Catechetical School as a long-standing and continuous institution, many modern commentators are convinced that the "school" was a succession of study circles formed around individual teachers who shared a common hermeneutical approach to the scriptures, rather than an extension of an "official" Alexandrian church.²⁸ Van den Hoek challenges this scepticism, affirming Eusebius's account of a continuous institution and

²⁷ Ἦγεῖτο δὲ τῆς τῶν πιστῶν αὐτόθι διατριβῆς ἀνὴρ κατὰ παιδείαν ἐπιδοξότατος, ὄνομα αὐτῷ Πάνταινος, ἐξ ἀρχαίου ἔθους διδασκαλείου τῶν ἱερῶν λόγων παρ' αὐτοῖς συνεστῶτος· ὃ καὶ εἰς ἡμᾶς παρατείνεται καὶ πρὸς τῶν ἐν λόγῳ καὶ τῇ περὶ τὰ θεῖα σπουδῇ δυνατῶν συγκροτεῖσθαι παρελήφαμεν. Trans. G. A. Williamson.

²⁸ Gustave Bardy, "Aux Origines De L'école D'alexandrie," *RSR* 27 (1937): 65–90; Allain Le Boulluec, "L'école D'alexandrie: De Quelques Aventures D'un Concept Historiographique," in *Alexandrina: hellénisme, judaïsme et christianisme. Mélanges Offerts Au P. Claude Mondésert* (Cerf: Paris, 1987); Dietmar Wyrwa, "Religiöses Lernen im zweiten Jahrhundert und die Anfänge der alexandrinischen Katakhetenschule," in *Religöses Lernen in der biblischen, frühjüdischen und frühchristlichen Überlieferung* (eds. Beate Ego and Helmut Merkel: Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 271–306; Piotr Ashwin-Siejkowski, *Clement of Alexandria*, 36; Andrew Itter, *Esoteric Teaching in the Stromateis of Clement of Alexandria* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 7–12.

contending that its instructors also served as priests, uniting “liturgical and didactic functions” within an organized church.²⁹ Based on the large number of works cited by Clement in his treatises, she argues that this institution likely housed an extensive and diverse library to which its teachers and students had access. Although admitting that “unfortunately, one cannot answer the question of how the Philonic corpus and other Jewish texts ended up in Christian libraries,” van den Hoek speculates that “during or after the suppression of the Jewish revolt, Christians (among them Jews and non-Jews) might have appropriated or rescued existing book collections.”³⁰ Van den Hoek thus argues that their presence in the Catechetical school’s library is most likely how Clement consulted Philo’s scrolls.

In a similar vein, Gregory Sterling suggests a direct line of succession between Clement’s library and an earlier circle of disciples centred around Philo. Although rejecting van den Hoek’s theory that the library was formally attached to an official church, Sterling speculates that Philo’s texts may have entered Christian hands when his own personal library was incorporated into a private Christian library either through the conversion of one disciple or the entire school to Christianity.³¹ The library, together with Philo’s exegetical methods, was then

²⁹ Annewies van den Hoek, “The ‘Catechetical’ School of Early Christian Alexandria and Its Philonic Heritage,” *HTR* 90 (1997): 59–87, 77–79.

³⁰ Van den Hoek, “The ‘Catechetical’ School,” 86. van den Hoek’s suggestion echoes that of Dominique Bartélemy, who suggested that Pantaenus himself retrieved Philo’s corpus after the destruction of the Alexandrian Jewish community. See Dominique Bartélemy, “Est-ce Hoshaya Rabba qui censura le ‘Commentaire Allégorique? A partir des retouches faites aux citations bibliques, étude sur la tradition textuelle du Commentaire Allégorique de Philon” in *Philon d’Alexandrie. Lyon 11–15 Septembre 1966: Colloques Nationaux du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique* (Paris, 1967), 60.

³¹ Sterling posits a private educational setting in which Philo’s treatises were kept, dubbing it the “School of Sacred Laws” and suggests, while admitting that this suggestion is highly speculative, that “a student in the school was either a Christian or became one and made arrangement for the Christian community to obtain copies of the manuscripts; or, a later disciple who became the head of his own school converted to Christianity and brought the library with him. While we will probably never know what actually took place, the theory that his library was preserved by a school of disciples appears the most reasonable explanation of the evidence. Either a student or a head of a subsequent school converted to Christianity and brought the library.” Gregory E. Sterling, “The School of Sacred Laws: The Social Setting of Philo’s Treatises” *VC* 53 (1999): 148–164, 163. Gregory Snyder offers a reconstruction that challenges Sterling’s hypothetical “School of Sacred Laws,” imagining Philo as a solitary scholar for whom text served as teacher: “Philo no doubt hopes that once his own body has returned to the dust his writings

passed down through a succession of teachers and students, eventually coming into Clement's possession. Both Sterling and van den Hoek situate Clement and Philo in a continuous tradition of textual and hermeneutical transmission from Jews to Christians. Recognizing the severity of the persecutions in the aftermath of the Trajanic revolt, they contend that although Clement had no relationship with a living Jewish community, he read the scriptures in accordance with the methods of Philo's Jewish school and understood himself to have inherited a Jewish exegetical tradition.

An Alternative Hypothesis: Reading Philo in the Philosophical Schools

The transmission theories of Sterling and van den Hoek presume the direct passing of Philo's treatises from an initially Jewish circle of readers through an unbroken chain of Jewish/Christian/"Jewish-Christian" successors until those treatises eventually land on Clement's desk. Implicit in their reconstructions is the assumption that Philo's treatises were not widely copied and distributed and so remained circumscribed by a small circle of Jewish, and eventually Christian, readers. Ancient books certainly were costly and time-consuming to reproduce; nevertheless, philosophical texts often were exchanged and given as gifts among the educated and the cultural elite.³² The second-century P.Oxy. XVIII.2192 records the activities of one such

will carry the flame of his heart and mind to future generations. It may well be the case that Philo preached in the synagogue and held teaching sessions in his own home; it seems quite likely, however, that he preferred the company of books to the hubbub of the classroom. By writing, Philo served his own devotional needs, in so far as reading and reflecting on scripture placed him at the feet of Moses and Jeremiah. No doubt he hoped that his own writings would do the same for others." Gregory H. Snyder, *Teachers and Texts in the Ancient World: Philosophers, Jews, and Christians* (London: Routledge, 2007), 136.

³² Anthony Grafton and Megan Hale Williams, *Early Christianity and the Transformation of the Book: Origen, Eusebius and the Library at Caesarea* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press at Harvard University Press, 2006), 13–14; Gregory Snyder, *Teachers and Texts*, 49, provides further insight into the mechanics of text circulation: "It is a well-known fact that collecting books was not a matter of purchasing pre-existent copies, especially writings used within a school, except in rare circumstances. Rather, copies of desired works were commissions with the permission of

circle of bibliophiles who eagerly acquired, copied, and exchanged books with one another.³³

Once copied, a text fell out of its author's control. As Harry Gamble explains,

In principle the work became public property: copies were disseminated without regulation through an informal network composed of people who learned of the work, were interested enough to have a copy made, and knew someone who possessed the text and would permit it to be duplicated. Thus a text made its way into general circulation gradually and for the most part haphazardly, in a pattern of tangents radiating from the points, ever more numerous, where the text was available for copying."³⁴

The haphazard nature of textual transmission in antiquity complicates the easy assumption that Clement's knowledge of Philo's writings can be taken as evidence of a continuous Jewish-to-Christian transmission tradition.

The major trading hub of the Eastern Mediterranean, Alexandria attracted ships from the far reaches of the empire and beyond to its ports.³⁵ In addition to papyrus, wheat, and luxury goods from the orient, these ships also facilitated the distribution of students, books, and ideas. The letters of Paul and the Acts of the Apostles portray early Christians as enthusiastic travellers, bringing their books along with them. Gamble notes, "the travel of individual Christians or small delegations from one church to another, often over long distances, made the variety and breadth of Christian literature known to the congregations, thus increasing interest and demand, and also served as the efficient vehicle for the brisk movement of texts from one place to another."³⁶

Irenaeus's *Against the Heresies*, hailing from Lyons, and *The Shepherd of Hermas*, written in

the owner, typically a friend or colleague. Although the author of a manuscript might make a copy at his own expense to give to friends, the person who desired the book usually bore the cost of copying."

³³ This papyrus is described by Raffaella Cribiore in *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 146.

³⁴ Harry Y. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 85.

³⁵ Christopher Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 19–29.

³⁶ Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 142.

Rome, are attested in Alexandria within twenty years of their composition.³⁷ The speed of their transmission across the Mediterranean was not unusual; in the Roman empire of the second century, geography was no insurmountable barrier to the diffusion of people, texts, and ideas.

Although Clement and Philo both made their homes in Alexandria, Philo's writings need not have remained sequestered in that city in order for Clement to have read them. As van den Hoek notes in an earlier article, Clement accessed the purportedly-Alexandrian writings of Demetrius, Artapanus, and Ezekiel the Tragedian via the non-Jewish intermediary Alexander Polyhistor, a native of Asia Minor who settled in Rome, having never resided in Alexandria.³⁸ Clement may have come in contact with Philo's corpus in a similarly roundabout way. In *Strom.* 1.1.11, he recounts his studies under the guidance of an Ionian, a Syrian, an Egyptian, an Assyrian, and a Palestinian Hebrew before finally finding his perfect teacher in a man he describes as the "Sicilian Bee." Eusebius identifies this man as the acclaimed Pantaenus, who himself was said to have travelled as far afield as India as a teacher of the Gospel. Nor was Pantaenus a unique case; Eusebius contends that "there were even then many evangelists of the word eager to contribute an inspired fervour of apostolic pattern for the increase and building up of the divine word," so that when Pantaenus arrived in India, he discovered that the Gospel of Matthew had arrived ahead of him (*HE* 5.10). The extensive travels of Clement and his teachers

³⁷ Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 82.

³⁸ Anniewies van den Hoek, "How Alexandrian was Clement of Alexandria?" *Heythrop Journal* 31 (1990): 179–94, 186. Van den Hoek's article illustrates the difficulty, if not impossibility, of determining the geographical provenance of the writings Clement cites, problematizing their assignment of an Alexandrian provenance on the basis of their having been first cited by Clement (eg. *The Letter of Barnabas*, the *Kerygma Petrou*). Nevertheless, she concludes, "Seen as a whole then, and setting aside pagan authors, writings of probable Alexandrian descent are dominant among those absorbed into Clement's work. The Jewish authors are almost entirely Alexandrian and the Christian and heretical borrowings of local origin represent half of Clement's total Christian and heretical borrowings. If we add the writings which indeed stem from elsewhere but were very popular in Egypt, like the *Didache*, *Pastor Hermae*, I Clement, and the work of Irenaeus, then Clement appears to be influenced by his environment to an even greater extent" 194. This conclusion is problematic as it dismisses the methodological issues in assigning provenance that she herself clearly articulates at the outset of the article and includes several curious omissions, most notably failing to count NT references as "Christian borrowings."

undermine the assumption that his knowledge of Philo's texts requires continuity between groups of Jews and Christians in Alexandria.

That Philo's writings were dependent on the Hebrew Scriptures need not have precluded them from reaching a non-Jewish audience. An analogy may be made to the apostle Paul, who, as Gregory Snyder notes, cited the Septuagint even among his Gentile disciples. Snyder concludes, "in light of the hoary antiquity of these texts, even pagans would have conceived a respect for the books of Moses."³⁹ The social conditions in first-century Alexandria promoted intellectual exchange. Edward Jay Watts argues, "one must imagine that a great deal of original literary and philosophical material passed through the social networks that bound upper-class Alexandrians. This flow would not have been impeded by religious differences. Men of all faiths attended some of the same schools for rhetoric and philosophy. Their mutual interest and similar educations meant that certain intellectual approaches were shared between them."⁴⁰ Although Watts' use of the categories 'faith' and 'religious difference' are problematic when speaking of the ancient world,⁴¹ his description of intellectual interaction among students of various backgrounds and philosophical persuasions is well-founded.

The exchange of texts and ideas among philosophical traditions, Christian and Jewish included, is perhaps nowhere better illustrated than in the curious figure of Ammonius Saccas, described by Elizabeth DePalma Digeser as a "sometime Christian" who taught an open circle of

³⁹ Snyder, *Teachers and Texts*, 196.

⁴⁰ Edward Jay Watts, *City and School in Late Antique Athens and Alexandria: The Transformation of the Classical Heritage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 154.

⁴¹ Steve Mason warns against imposing a modern categorical distinction between philosophical schools and "religious" groups such as synagogues and churches. Arguing that "the concept of religion. . . lacked a taxonomical counterpart in antiquity," Mason declares Christianity to be novel in its compression of elements from the ancient categories of ethnicity, national cult, familial traditions, astrology and magic, voluntary associations, and philosophical schools into a new category that only gradually becomes associated with the Latin word *religio*. Steve Mason, "Jews, Judaeans, Judaizing, Judaism," *JSJ* 38 (2007): 457-512, 480.

philosophically advanced Christians and Hellenes.⁴² Active in Alexandria in the early third century, Ammonius's circle of hearers included both Origen and Plotinus. Porphyry describes Ammonius as "the most distinguished philosopher of our time" (*HE* 6.19). As a result of her analysis of what she dubs the "Ammonian school," DePalma Digeser contends that while "most historians of theology and philosophy have simply assumed that Platonist philosophers and Christian theologians would not interact with each other's circles," the legacy of Ammonius suggests the contrary.⁴³ In the writings of Origen and Porphyry, she detects a similar desire to establish a "philosophy without conflicts," which she attributes to the influence of their common teacher. She explains, Ammonius's students "began from the premise that 'true philosophy' . . . was discerned through a process of intellectual engagement with a wide variety of texts. These could be excavated in order to recover this true philosophy as it had been divinely revealed to August figures in the remote past whether Pythagoras, Plato, or Moses."⁴⁴ Thus the sectarian commitments of the members of the various philosophical schools were not so strong as to preclude their members from consulting outside works.

The *Wanderjahre* of philosophical youths from school to school is so widely attested in Greco-Roman literature as to have become a stereotype.⁴⁵ Even after a school had been settled upon, students continued to read the texts of their rivals. Gregory Snyder submits the first-century Stoic Seneca as an example of such intellectual openness. Although "Seneca prefers the

⁴² DePalma Digeser suggests that Origen began his studies with Ammonius while serving as catechetical teacher in Alexandria, after his own period of catechetical instruction under Clement. She summarizes Ammonius' influence on Origen thus: "Analysis of Origen's career and writing shows that his early contact with Ammonius influenced his exegetical methodology and goals. In particular, Origen used some of Ammonius's techniques for handling texts to set out his own 'theology without conflicts.'" Elizabeth DePalma Digeser, *A Threat to Public Piety: Christians, Platonists, and the Great Persecution* (Cornell University Press, 2012), 50-52.

⁴³ DePalma Digeser, *A Threat to Public Piety*, 13.

⁴⁴ DePalma Digeser, *A Threat to Public Piety*, 15.

⁴⁵ Citing the examples of Justin Martyr and Galen, Peter Lampe comments about this phenomenon, "what is stereotypical in this 'literature' follows primarily from the stereotypical experiences in real life. . . Eclectic education was part of stereotypical 'real life' in Justin's period." Peter Lampe, *Christians in Rome in the First Two Centuries: From Paul to Valentinus* (trans. Michael Steinhauser: London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2006), 261.

works of Stoics,” Snyder notes that he “also seems to be familiar with the writings of other schools,” citing Seneca’s statement in Epistle 33.3 that “such thoughts as one may extract here and there in the works of other philosophers run through the whole body of our writings.”⁴⁶ Those “other philosophers” need not have been Greeks; pagan interest in the Hebrew scriptures is attested by Numenius, the second-century Pythagorean teacher from Apamea in Syria famous for his interest in barbarian philosophy and the quip, “who is Plato but Moses speaking Attic Greek?”⁴⁷ The dearth of contemporary middle Platonic and Pythagorean texts to have survived antiquity renders it impossible to determine the extent to which Philo’s corpus was copied and distributed. Given Philo’s prominence and the fame attested to him by Josephus,⁴⁸ however, it is not unlikely that his texts were exchanged by a variety of philosophically-inclined readers having a special interest in the sacred texts of “barbarian” peoples such as the Jews. If Philo’s readers extended beyond the Alexandrian synagogue or a small circle of disciples, then the possibilities of lines of transmission to Clement begin to multiply.

Conclusions

In the foregoing argument, I have attempted to show that Clement’s use of Philo is not the “obvious trace” of Alexandrian Christianity’s “early Jewish-Christian origins” that Ronald Heine suggests. While it may be possible that Clement encountered Philo’s texts through a continuous institution such as a library, a synagogue, or a church, the path of textual transmission quite

⁴⁶ Snyder, *Teachers and Texts*, 34.

⁴⁷ Τί γάρ ἐστι Πλάτων ἢ Μωϋσῆς ἀττικίζων; The quote is preserved by Eusebius in *Preparatio Evangelica* 11.10.12–14; the provenance of the quote within Numenius’s corpus is unclear. See Édouard des Places, *Numénios: Fragments* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1973).

⁴⁸ The testimony of Josephus in *Antiquities of the Jews* 18.257–60, published perhaps a half-century after his death, suggests that Philo’s actions on behalf of his community and his philosophical abilities were widely known.

plausibly could have been much more roundabout. The near-annihilation of Alexandria's Jews during the Trajanic Revolt is more likely to have severed any institutional connection between the synagogue and Alexandria's philosophically-inclined Christian circles than to have facilitated the transfer of Philo's writings from Jewish to Christian possession. Yet Clement undoubtedly did read Philo's writings and appropriate elements of his thought into his own works. I propose that, whatever the context of their initial composition, Philo's writings were exchanged by members of the learned elite in Alexandria and Rome who were interested in some aspect of his "barbarian philosophy." The treatises then circulated among interested readers attached to various philosophical schools throughout the Mediterranean, ultimately introduced to Clement by one of his beloved teachers.

Clement himself never reveals how he came to know Philo's works. One further piece of evidence in support of my hypothesis, however, is to be found in his writings: in two of Clement's four references to Philo, he calls him "the Pythagorean." As we turn now to Clement's own writings and the references that he makes to Philo within them, we shall consider the implications of this epithet on Clement's presentation of his source's Jewishness.

Chapter 3

The Pythagorean: Clement's Philo

τούτων ἀπάντων πρεσβύτατον μακροῦ τὸ Ἰουδαίων γένος, καὶ τὴν παρ' αὐτοῖς φιλοσοφίαν
ἔγγραπτον γενομένην προκατάρξαι τῆς παρ' Ἑλλήσι φιλοσοφίας διὰ πολλῶν ὁ Πυθαγόρειος
ὑποδείκνυσι Φίλων¹

*The Pythagorean Philo has demonstrated that the race of the Jews is the oldest by far of all of
these and that their written philosophy came into being prior to the philosophy of the Greeks*

Stromateis 1.15.72

Although numerous studies have sought the influence of Philo of Alexandria's writings on the New Testament and the Apostolic Fathers, the first certain citations of Philo's works in early Christian literature coincide with the re-appearance of his name. Philo is mentioned four times in the *Stromateis* of Clement, a teacher who resided in Alexandria some one hundred and fifty years after Philo. Clement introduces Philo not as a synagogue preacher, a reclusive aristocrat, a guru surrounded by disciples, or a passionate community activist, as we might expect, but instead twice calls Philo "the Pythagorean." The discussion in this chapter provides a close reading of the four Philonic *testimonia* in Clement's corpus in order to illuminate the relationships between Philo, Pythagoreanism, Jewishness, and Christianity in Clement's mind. What does Philo "the Pythagorean" contribute to Clement's articulation of Christian philosophy?

¹ I use the Greek text of the *Stromateis* found in *Les Stromates* (7 vols.: edited and translated by P. Th Camelot, Marcel Caster, Alain Le Boulluec, Patrick Descourtieux, Annewies van den Hoek, and Claude Mondésert: Sources chrétiennes 30, 38, 278, 279, 428, 446, 463: Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1951–2009). English translations of the Greek are informed by the French of the Sources chrétiennes series and the English translation in *Stromateis* 1–3 (trans. John Ferguson: FOTC 85: Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1991; repr. 2005), with modifications.

What is it about Philo that makes him Pythagorean in Clement's estimation? Do those same characteristics disqualify him from being a Jew?

1. Introducing Clement

1.1 Clement's Life

Few details are known about the life of Titus Flavius Clemens. According to Epiphanius, some sources claimed Alexandria for his birthplace, while others considered him a native Athenian.² The myriad citations and allusions to Greek philosophical and literary texts that fill his writings confirm that he received an extensive Greek education.³ Eusebius claims that Clement was active in Alexandria during the reign of Commodus (180–192 CE) and internal evidence suggests that the *Stromateis* were composed during the subsequent reign of Severus (193–210 CE).⁴ He is said to have left Alexandria around 202 CE under the threat of persecution, either from the imperial authorities or his own bishop Demetrius.⁵ The last trace of his life comes from a letter written by his former student, Bishop Alexander of Jerusalem, recommending him to the church in Antioch.⁶ André Méhat dates the letter to around 205 CE.⁷

² Epiphanius, *Haer.* 32.6: Κλήμης τε ὃν φασί τινες Ἀλεξανδρέα, ἕτεροι δὲ Ἀθηναῖον.

³ According to the index in Stählin's edition, Clement's corpus contains more than a thousand references to approximately three hundred individual sources. Salvatore Lilla argues that Clement, like Justin, was a disciple of the Middle Platonic school tradition prior to his conversion. Lilla maintains, "Clement judges the individual philosophical systems from the point of view of Middle Platonism. His philosophical education has not been effaced by his conversion to Christianity." *Clement of Alexandria: A Study of Christian Platonism and Gnosticism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971; repr. Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2005), 51.

⁴ *HE* 5.11, *Strom.* 1.21.140.

⁵ *HE* 6.2–4

⁶ *HE* 6.11.6.

⁷ André Méhat, *Étude sur les 'Stromates' de Clément D'Alexandrie* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1966), 48.

Although I use the term “Christian” to describe Clement, it should be noted that the term is rarely used by Clement himself.⁸ Instead, he speaks of the ἐκκλησία (assembly or church), which he defines as a body of individuals who have πίστις (faith)⁹ in Jesus as the incarnation of the λόγος (the “Word” or reason of God). In Eusebius’s telling of the church’s story, Clement plays the part of director of the official Catechetical School in Alexandria, preceded in the role by Pantaenus and succeeded by Origen.¹⁰ He thus takes his place among the venerable fathers of the church, to be distinguished from teachers who peddled false revelations purportedly passed down in secret by Jesus and his earliest followers. Eusebius’s account has been met with scepticism by many commentators, who envision Clement and Pantaenus as private Christian teachers who attracted circles of devotees like Justin Martyr did in Rome.¹¹ David Dawson contends that Clement’s circle was only one among many, including those of Valentinus and Basilides, that existed apart from the institutional control of a bishop.¹² Clement may allude to tensions with an emerging church hierarchy in *Strom.* 6.13.106.2, where he describes the gnostic as the “true priest of the church” (πρεσβύτερος τῆς ἐκκλησίας). Although it is clear that Clement

⁸ By my count, he uses the terms Χριστιανός, Χριστιανοί, and their inflected forms only twelve times in the *Stromateis*, most frequently in the context of martyrdom.

⁹ Although πίστις is most commonly translated “faith,” the term has a wide breadth of meaning in Clement’s writings. Eric Osborn submits, “Faith was anticipation, assent, perception, hearing God in scripture, intuition of the unproved first-principle, discernment by criterion, dialectic and divine wisdom, unity with God.” Faith is Clement’s solution to the epistemological problem of infinite regress. Osborn, “Arguments for Faith in Clement of Alexandria” *VC* 48 (1994): 1–24, 2.

¹⁰ *HE* 2.16, 5.10, 6.6

¹¹ For the various methods of philosophical education in the Roman Empire, see H. Gregory Snyder, *Teachers and texts in the ancient world : philosophers, Jews, and Christians* (London: Routledge, 2000). Eusebius’s sceptics include Gustave Bardy, “Aux origines de l’école d’Alexandrie” *RSR* 27 (1937): 65–90, 82; Johannes Munck, *Untersuchung über Klemens von Alexandrien* (Stuttgart, 1933), 174; Denise Kimber Buell, “Producing Descent/Dissent: Clement of Alexandria’s use of filial metaphors as intra-Christian Polemic,” *HTR* 90 (1997): 89–104, 92; and Roelof van den Broek, “The Christian “School” of Alexandria in the Second and Third Centuries,” in *Centres of Learning: Learning and Location in Pre-Modern Europe and the Near East* (ed. J.W. Drijvers and A.A. McDonald: Leiden: Brill, 1995): 39–47; repr. Roelof van den Broek, *Studies in Gnosticism and Alexandrian Christianity* (Leiden: Brill, 1996): 197–205, 199.

¹² “We should think of Clement in much the same way as we thought of Valentinus—as an independent teacher in loose relation to the Christian church in Alexandria, attracting students who sought to learn a higher Christian knowledge.” David Dawson, *Allegorical readers and cultural revision in ancient Alexandria* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 183, 219–222. Dawson’s reconstruction is accepted by Denise Buell, *Making Christians: Clement of Alexandria and the Rhetoric of Legitimacy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 108.

considered himself to belong to an ἐκκλησία with a global membership that extended beyond his own circle of teachers and students (*Strom.* 2.6.30.1), and to preserve a tradition stretching back to the disciples (*Strom.* 1.19.95), Clement's status within the Alexandrian ἐκκλησία remains hazy, as does the extent to which we can speak of a singular "official" Alexandrian church in the late second century.¹³

1.2 Clement's Corpus

The bulk of Clement's surviving corpus consists of three major works that may form an intended trilogy, the *Protreptikos* (*Exhortation to Conversion*, one volume), the *Paedagogus* (*Tutor*, three volumes), and the *Stromateis*¹⁴ (often referred to in English as the *Miscellanies*, eight volumes, although the eighth consists of a disorganized treatise on logic that Clement may not have intended to include with the other seven volumes).¹⁵ There is no satisfactory English translation

¹³ Thus Ulrich Neymeyer concludes his evaluation of Clement's relationship to an organized Alexandrian church: "Im Sinne seines weitgefaßten Kirchenbegriffs und unter Berücksichtigung der offenen Struktur der alexandrinischen Gemeinde kann Klemens durchaus als kirchlicher Lehrer bezeichnet werden. Die Frage, ob er, wie es eigentlich dem Gnostiker zukäme, dem Presbyterium der alexandrinische Gemeinde angehörte oder ob er sich mit der Aussicht auf einen himmlischen Ehrenplatz begnügen mußte, kann nicht eindeutig beantwortet werden." Ulrich Neymeyer, *Die Christlichen Lehrer im Zweiten Jahrhundert* (Leiden: Brill, 1989), 91–92.

¹⁴ The *Stromateis* survive in only one eleventh century manuscript from Florence, *Laurentianus* V 3. A second MS, the sixteenth century *Parisinus Supplementum Graecum* 250, descends from *Laurentianus* V 3 and is of no independent value. The critical edition of Stählin, Fruchtel and Treu collates these two MSS. *Laurentianus* V 3 contains many rather obvious orthographic and grammatical errors; it is unclear whether they are to be attributed to a lazy copyist or if they come from the pen of Clement himself, which is possible if the *Stromateis* were never intended for wide publication (about which see below). See John Ferguson, "Introduction," *Stromateis, Books 1–3. Fathers of the Church* 85 (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1991), 15.

¹⁵ Other surviving works include an exposition of Jesus' encounter with the rich young ruler, *Quis dives salvetur?* (*Who is the rich man that is being saved?*), an exegesis of prophetic passages throughout scripture, *Eclogae ex Scripturis Prophetis*, and a series of excerpts from an otherwise unknown gnostic, Theodotus, occasionally interrupted by Clement's critical comments, the *Excerpta ex Theodoto*. Only fragments survive of an eight volume work entitled the *Hypotyposeis*, or *Outlines*, in which, according to Eusebius, he "has expounded his own interpretations of Scripture alongside the traditional." A Latin translation of parts of the *Hypotyposeis*, commissioned by Cassiodorus in the sixth century, is extant as the *Adumbrationes*. Recently, Bogdan Bucur has revived the theory of Pierre Nautin that what is preserved in the *Cod. Laur.* V 3 as the *Eclogae Propheticae* and the *Excerpta ex Theodoto* are in fact excerpts of the *Hypotyposeis*, which would have been the culminating work of Clement's corpus. See Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology: Clement of Alexandria and Other Early Christian*

for στρωματεύς, the word that Clement consistently uses in reference to the volumes of the work.¹⁶ Claude Mondésert notes that στρωματεύς differs from στρῶμα, a rather straightforward word denoting a blanket, mattress, or anything else spread out for sitting upon, which also appears in Clement's writings.¹⁷ A στρωματεύς is a patchwork, a quilt pieced together rather than spun from whole cloth. By the Hellenistic period, the plural of στρωματεύς, στρωματεῖς, took on the metaphorical sense of a literary work composed in a miscellaneous style.¹⁸ In addition to Clement, Origen and Plutarch are reported to have written στρωματεῖς, although these works no longer survive.¹⁹

The genre, intended audience, and purpose of the *Stromateis*, as well as their relation to the *Protrepticus* and the *Paedagogus*, have been the subject of intense scholarly debate over the past century.²⁰ At issue is whether the *Stromateis* correspond to the *Didaskalos*, the final work

Witnesses (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 9-10. Eusebius also claims in *HE* 6.13 to possess a work on the *Celebration of Easter*, treatises on *Fasting* and on *Slander*, and an *Exhortation to Patience*, also titled *For the newly Baptized*. A purported work *Against the Judaizers*, dedicated to Bishop Alexander of Jerusalem, is unfortunately no longer extant. In 1973, Morton Smith published plates of a manuscript that was subsequently lost, purported to be a letter written by Clement to a certain Theodore discussing a so-called "Secret Gospel of Mark." The authenticity of the letter remains a topic of burning controversy. See Smith, *Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973); Scott G. Brown, *Mark's Other Gospel: Rethinking Morton Smith's Controversial Discovery* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2005).

¹⁶Clement concludes book 1: "But let us conclude our first *Stromateus*, composed of gnostic reminiscences according to the true philosophy." Books 2, 3, 5, and 7 end similarly. See also 4.2.4.3, "These *Stromateis*, these carpets of notes contribute without doubt to the memory and the manifestation of the truth for him who is capable of searching in a rational fashion." According to Eusebius, the full title of the work is "Titus Flavius Clemens' *Stromateis*: Gnostic Publications in the Light of the True Philosophy." *HE* 6.13

¹⁷ Claude Mondésert, "Introduction," *Les Stromates: Stromate I*. SC 30 (Paris: Cerf, 1951), 7-9. See also the definitions in Liddell-Scott-Jones.

¹⁸ Eusebius describes the *Stromateis*: "In the *Stromateis* he has woven a tapestry combining Holy Writ with anything that he considered helpful in secular literature. He includes any view generally accepted, expounding on those of Greeks and non-Greeks alike, and even correcting the false doctrines of the heresiarchs, and explains a great deal of history, providing us with a work of immense erudition. With all these strands he has blended the arguments of philosophers, so that the work completely justifies the title *Stromateis*." *HE* 6.13.

¹⁹ Joseph Trigg argues that Origen's *Stromateis* may have been so named as an homage to his teacher. See Trigg, *Origen: The Bible and Philosophy in the Third-Century Church*, (Atlanta: J. Knox, 1983), 54. According to Aulus Gellius (*Noctes Atticae*, pref. 6-8), however, the title *Stromateis* was frequently given to miscellaneous works (Ferguson, *FOTC* 85, 10).

²⁰ For a recent presentation of the *status questionae*, see Andrew Itter, *Esoteric Teaching in the Stromateis of Clement of Alexandria* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 15-31; Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology*, 10-18; Eric F. Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 5-7.

of a proposed trilogy outlining the three stages of the salvific economy described in *Paed.*

1.1.3.3.²¹ For the majority of the last century, the *Stromateis*' characteristic disorganization and frequent meanderings have prompted scholars to reject the identification of the *Stromateis* with the *Didaskalos* and to propose alternative theories of the form and function of Clement's *oeuvre*.²² More recently, Eric Osborn and his student Andrew Itter have argued that the obscurity of the *Stromateis* is integral to their function as a teacher of an elevated, esoteric doctrine that must be guarded from those who are not properly prepared to receive it.²³ Taking an intermediate position, André Méhat has argued that Clement composed the *Stromateis* as an exercise of Platonic recollection of his masters' teachings and that they were intended as a teaching tool to aid him in his instruction, but that should not be considered the third part of an intended trilogy.²⁴

²¹ "The λόγος, always full of love for humanity, assures the efficacy of our formation according to his good plan (οἰκονομία), perfectly adapted: he begins to exhort (προτρέπων), then he is a tutor (παιδαγωγῶν), and finally he teaches (ἐδιδάσκων)." Quatember points out that here Clement speaks of actions of the λόγος; he does not clearly indicate that he intends to write treatises on these topics. Friedrich Quatember, *Die christliche Lebenshaltung des Klemens nach seinmen Pädagogus* (Vienna: Herder, 1946), 38–41.

²² So Eugène de Faye, *Clément d'Alexandrie: étude sur les rapports du christianisme et de la philosophie grèque au 2e. siècle* (Paris: E. Laroux, 1906), 110–121; Gustave Bardy, *Clément d'Alexandrie* (Paris: Gabalda, 1926), 22; Chadwick, *The Early Church*, 94; Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria*, 189; Ferguson calls the suggestion that the *Stromateis* are the *Didaskalos* "nonsense," *FOTC* 85, 11.

²³ "As method, the "Teaching" is the way one comes to knowledge: as doctrine, the "teaching" is what one comes to know. The *Stromateis* is the *Didaskalos*. Its miscellaneous nature creates a literary labyrinth through which the soul of the initiate has to pass. In this light much more can be discovered about Clement as a philosopher, teacher and theologian in his own right." Itter, *Esoteric Teaching in the Stromateis of Clement of Alexandria*, 221. See also Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria*, 15; Bogdan Bucur offers an alternative solution: "The *Stromateis* fulfill Clement's projected doctrinal exposition only in part: 'having here and there interspersed the dogmas which are the gems of true knowledge.' A still higher and clearer exposition of Christian doctrine would have followed, using Scripture in such a way—selection of certain themes and passages, use of allegory—as to move from ethics to physics and epoptics and offer students the possibility to 'listen to the Didaskalos.' For several reasons, the most likely candidate for this next stage is the work known as the *Hypotyposeis*." Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology*, 27.

²⁴ « C'est comme oeuvre d'enseignement que les Stromates s'expliquent le mieux. C'est à cause de la diversité des auditeurs, pour faire bénéficier malgré tout du secret gnostique ceux qui ne seront jamais aptes à le recevoir, pour le rappeler à ceux qui l'ont reçu, et surtout pour y préparer ceux qui en sont dignes, que les Stromates ont été écrits. Souvenir d'un enseignement qui en continue la tradition, préparation des leçons entre lesquelles il est divisé, c'est toujours à un enseignement qu'on est ramené, lorsqu'on cherche à comprendre les Stromates, à les situer dans la vie. Ils reflètent donc une expérience au moins, celle d'un maître aux prises avec des disciples, qui s'efforce de les arracher à leurs fautes, à leurs passions, à leurs erreurs, d'encourager et de guider leurs recherches, de leur indiquer la voie de la Vérité. » André Méhat, *Étude sur les 'Stromates' de Clément D'Alexandrie*, 530.

1.3 Clement's Teaching

Whether or not Clement intended the *Stromateis* to be the third work of a great trilogy, it is clear that he intended them to preserve and promulgate his teachings only for a select audience. The teaching contained within these writings is not intended to be straightforward; Clement repeatedly asserts that advanced doctrines must be acquired through disciplined study, and, like pearls before swine, ought not to be presented openly but carefully guarded.²⁵ Still, Clement's repeated worries that his writings may eventually wind up in the hands of the uninitiated suggests that he expected his *Stromateis* to be read beyond his classroom and his direct control.²⁶ Consequently, he admits to composing the *Stromateis* in an intentionally obfuscating manner.²⁷ Modern interpreters are therefore at a disadvantage as we attempt to follow the thread of his arguments and reconstruct his teachings without "the help of someone, either the author himself, or someone else who has walked in his footsteps" (1.1.14.4).²⁸

In spite of his intentional esotericism, the broad strokes of Clement's teaching are discernible. To his students within the ἐκκλησία, Clement teaches an interpretation of scripture that he describes as "true philosophy." The study of the scriptures and the mysteries they contain

²⁵ "But it is not permitted to communicate to sacred things to dogs, as long as they remain wild beasts." *Strom.* 2.2.8. On the progressive nature of Clement's teaching, see Judith Kovacs, "Divine Pedagogy and the Gnostic Teacher According to Clement of Alexandria," *J ECS* 9 (2001) 3–25, 7–8.

²⁶ *Strom.* 1.1.14.4, citing Plato's *Ep.* 2.314, "Once a thing is written there is no way of keeping it from the public." (trans. Ferguson).

²⁷ See *Strom.* 1.1.15.1: "Sometimes my manuscript will make allusive references. It will insist on some things, it will make a simple statement of others. Sometimes it will try to say something unobtrusively or to reveal something without uncovering it or to demonstrate it without saying anything." (trans. Ferguson). Clement also compares the *Stromateis* to a mountain covered with a variety of plants, some bearing fruit, some not. It is not a neatly arranged garden; it is up to the reader to arrange the garden and harvest its fruit (7.18.111).

²⁸ The disadvantage of the modern reader is highlighted by Itter, who warns, "As scholars we must remember that we are not initiates and this position itself precludes certain insights into Clement's works." Itter, *Esoteric Teaching in the Stromateis of Clement of Alexandria*, 31.

is intended to lead the student on a journey from πίστις to γνῶσις (knowledge) and, ultimately, to likeness to God (ὁμοίωσις), “as far as it is possible” for a mortal being.²⁹ Clement calls the perfected individual the “gnostic” (γνωστικός), and describes him as a “friend of God.”³⁰ Γνῶσις, Clement maintains, is attained by initiates who have first recognized the causes of temptation to sin and learned to master their passions; it is achieved through dedicated study with a teacher who stands in the tradition that guards the oral traditions of Jesus and his disciples.³¹ Γνῶσις is thus potentially attainable by all but actually pursued by few (*Strom.* 4.8.58.2).³²

In the three stages of Clement’s salvific economy, the λόγος exhorts, trains, and teaches those who have πίστις how to become like God, which is the highest goal of human life and only fully attainable after death (*Strom.* 1.19.94). For this reason, martyrdom is not to be avoided;

²⁹ Likeness to God as far as possible (*homoiosis theō kata to dynaton*), a phrase taken from *Theatetus* 176B, is considered the highest good by Middle Platonic philosophers from Eudorus of Alexandria onward. Henny Fiska Hägg identifies twenty-two borrowings of this phrase across all of Clement’s major surviving works. See Hägg, “Deification in Clement of Alexandria,” *SP* 46 (2010): 169–73. On the transition of the *sumum bonum* of human life from the Stoic concept of conformity to nature to the Platonic ὁμοίωσις, see John Dillon, *The Middle Platonists: 80 B.C. to A.D. 220* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 120. For Clement’s take on the τέλος of mankind as taught by the various philosophical schools, see *Strom.* 2.21–22. Clement defines the goal of human existence here as “to obey the commandments and live in their light faultlessly in full understanding derived from the revealed knowledge of God’s will. The greatest possible likeness to the true λόγος, the hope of being established fully as adopted sons through the Son—this is our goal, a sonship which constantly glorifies the Father through the “great high priest” who deigned to call us “brothers” and “fellow heirs” (*Strom.* 2.22.134, trans. Ferguson). For additional Platonic parallels to Clement’s conception of ὁμοίωσις see Méhat, *Étude sur les Stromates*, 373–379.

³⁰ *QDS* 73. At *Strom.* 2.10.46, Clement describes the gnostic as a philosopher characterized by three practices: contemplation, fulfilling the commandments, and training a people of virtue. The gnostic thus combines *theoria* with *praxis* and community leadership.

³¹ “For it is not by nature (φύσις), but by learning (μαθήσει), that people become noble and good.” *Strom.* 1.6. Clement further develops the distinction between nature and learning freely chosen in his critique of Valentinus and Basilides in *Strom.* 2.

³² On this point see Itter: “Clement is espousing an esotericism distinct from Gnosticism. The elect are not naturally saved, nor exempt from responsibilities to the religious community despite being predestined, and they are not the only ones to reap the benefits of God’s saving grace. The gnostic is more or less distinguished from simple believers, but never distinct from them. This is an important point that Clement strove to communicate: the gnostic chooses to search for the knowledge of God and as such is distinguished from others only inasmuch as they have the capacity to receive higher teachings. Clement’s gnostics are not an elect race apart from other Christians, predestined to be saved while others fail, but rather predestined because they have chosen to submit fully to the grace of salvation: a grace that is communicated through the gnostic to all. Knowledge is in no sense a self-serving exercise, but wholly philanthropic in this respect.” Itter, *Esoteric Teaching*, 216.

neither, however, is it to be pursued.³³ All who wish to be saved, that is, to become like God in this life and after death, must therefore choose to have faith (πίστις) and live faithfully according to the teaching of the λόγος. Clement's articulation of the life of faith takes direct aim at the teaching of the Valentinians, Basilidians, and others who propose that different classes of people possess different natures and that πίστις is supplanted by γνῶσις in those who are able to receive it. Clement likens πίστις to bread and milk: although easy to digest, it is necessary throughout one's life (*Paed.* 1.6). Clement is adamant that all people are exhorted by the λόγος to put their πίστις in him and submit to his training. No one is inherently God-like by virtue of his nature; πίστις must be chosen and γνῶσις pursued. Clement's conception of πίστις is closely bound to his conception of ethics: one cannot learn the higher γνῶσις of the λόγος if one does not remain faithful to the call of the λόγος προτρεπτικός and the training regimen of λόγος παιδαγωγός.

2. Israel, Hebrews, and Jews in Clement's Writings³⁴

Before examining the roles that Philo plays in Clement's corpus, it will be useful to review what he says about Jewishness in general. As was noted in chapter two, scholars are divided in their judgments about the extent of Clement's contact with a living Jewish community. When compared with Origen and Eusebius, Clement has relatively little to say about Jews and

³³ In *Strom.* 4.4.17.1, Clement asserts that those who pursue martyrdom with too much vigour “οὐχ ἡμέτεροι, μόνου τοῦ ὀνόματος κοινωνοί” (are not ours, having nothing in common with us besides the name). However, it is unclear from the context whether the “name” referred to here is Christian, gnostic, or martyr. In *Strom.* 7.66–67 and 76–77, Clement distinguishes the gnostic, whom he calls “truly brave,” from the martyr. See Anniewies van den Hoek, “Clement of Alexandria on Martyrdom” *SP* 26 (1991): 324–341, who identifies in Clement the beginning of the spiritualization of the concept of martyrdom. See also Davide Dainese, “The Idea of Martyrdom in *Stromateis* VII” in *The Seventh Book of the Stromateis* (eds. Havrda, Husek and Platova: Leiden: Brill, 2012): 317–328, who argues that Clement's writing on martyrdom is inconsistent, identifying a development of Clement's thought from toleration to opposition of martyrdom over the course of the *Stromateis*.

³⁴ This argument appears in a more developed version in my article, “Philo, Judaeus?: A re-evaluation of why Clement calls Philo ‘the Pythagorean’” *SPhA* (2014), forthcoming.

Jewishness. His sparring partners are the “gnostics falsely so-called,” Valentinus and Basilides, and the false teacher Marcion. Still, numerous references to “Israel,” “Hebrews,” and to “Jews” are found in Clement’s writings. All three of these terms are used to designate the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, both in the ancient past and in present, and thus sometimes are used interchangeably.³⁵ When we examine Clement’s corpus as a whole, however, shades of meaning emerge.³⁶

2.1 Israel

When Clement refers to Septuagint teachings and exhortations to “Israel,” he generally follows the subordinationist practice of interpreting the text as applicable to the ἐκκλησία of which he is a part. At *Paed.* 1.10.91.3, Clement appropriates the words of Baruch, “Blessed are we, Israel; for what is pleasing to God is known by us,” for his own community. His substitution of the church for ethnic Hebrews as the true “Israel” follows the practice of other second-century Christian writers beginning with Justin Martyr.³⁷ Clement’s usage, however, includes some peculiarities. The term “Israel” is especially applied to those Christians who voluntarily pursue the γνῶσις of God through the λόγος. Clement calls these gnostics “true Israelites” at *Strom.* 6.13.108. His adoption of the term “Israel” for his fellow Christ-believers is more consistent than

³⁵ See *Strom.* 6.6, where the righteous dead liberated from Hades by Jesus first are called Israel, then Jews, then Hebrews, and then Jews again, all in reference to the same people.

³⁶ Graham Harvey considers the semantic ranges of the terms Jew, Hebrew, and Israel in Jewish writings from the Second Temple period and contends that similar differentiations were adopted by Christians. See Harvey, *The True Israel: The use of the terms Jew, Hebrew, and Israel in Ancient Jewish and Early Christian Texts* (Leiden: Brill, 1996); Ellen Birnbaum identifies a similar distinction between Philo’s usage of the terms Israel, Hebrew and Jew throughout his corpus. See Birnbaum, *The Place of Judaism in Philo’s Thought: Israel, Jews, and Proselytes* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996).

³⁷ *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*, 123.9: “As therefore your whole race, from that one Jacob, who was surnamed Israel, were called Jacob and Israel, so we, from Christ who begat us for God, are called and are Jacob and Israel and Judah and Joseph and David, and true children of God.” *Ante-Nicene Fathers* vol. 1 (eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson: Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1867–1873; repr. Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson, 1994.).

is typical of Christian *Contra Iudaeos* literature. Verses such as Isaiah 1:3, “the ox knows his owner, and the ass his master’s crib; but Israel has not known me” are not used as ammunition against Jews but are universalized as a complaint against all unbelievers (*Prot.* 10.92.1 and *Paed.* 1.9.77.4).

2.2 Hebrew

The designation “Hebrew” and its cognates most frequently occur in reference to the historical people whose scriptures will become the church’s “Old Testament”; the term is not applied to Clement’s church. While Clement includes himself within the category of Israel, he does not include himself among the Hebrews.³⁸ Sometimes the term is used solely in reference to the Hebrew language (*Strom.* 6.129, 6.130.1) or as a citation of the *Letter to the Hebrews*, taken by Clement to have been written by Paul (*Strom.* 5.6, 5.10). Clement once explicitly cites a *Gospel of the Hebrews* as the source of an authoritative tradition. In *Strom.* 1.1.11.2, Clement mentions a “Hebrew of Palestine” among a list of “blessed and truly remarkable men” whose discourses he treasures. Here “Hebrew” is employed parallel to the epithets “Ionic” and “Sicilian” Clement uses for his other teachers. Thus “Hebrew” typically carries an ethnic connotation for Clement, designating the ancestral race into which one is born. A Hebrew may be a Christ-believer; Clement notes that Paul was “a Hebrew by birth” and it is likely that the “Hebrew of Palestine” whom he so admired imparted Christian teachings. Hebrew is a term used of contemporary Christians for whom texts such as the Epistle and the Gospel of the Hebrews were composed;

³⁸ See *Strom.* 1.21, 2.10.47, 2.18, 5.11.68.3; *Paed.* 1.10.90.2, 1.6.41.2, 2.2.19.1, 2.4.43.3, 2.8.61.3, 2.12.126.3; *Protr.* 1.8.1, 8.80.1, 9.85.2

however, texts composed for “Hebrews” were also read by Christians, like Clement, who do not count themselves among the Hebrews.

“Hebrew” can have a positive connotation; the “philosophy of the Hebrews” is often praised as both the most ancient and most true of the philosophies (*Strom.* 1.21, *Paed.* 2.1.18). In *Strom.* 1.15, Clement famously compares the law of the Hebrews to the philosophy of the Greeks; both find their value in their roles as school-masters leading their respective peoples to Christ.³⁹ On the other hand, “Hebrew” can also be used as a criticism of the other. The “Hebrew people” are convicted of crucifying Christ (*Paed.* 2.8.63.2). In *Paed.* 1.9.87.1, Clement describes the relationship of the “Hebrews” to God through the law as one of involuntary piety, hatred and fear, equivalent to the relationship between a slave and a harsh master.

2.3 Jew

In the first book of the *Stromateis*, the term “Jew” occurs most frequently in reference to ethnologies compiled by the likes of Megasthenes, Apion, Ptolemy, Josephus and Philo himself, that attempt either to establish or to discredit the people’s great antiquity (*Strom.* 1.15.72; 1.21.1). The references to Jews by Josephus (who is called a Jew explicitly) and Philo (who is not) reflect the language choice of the original authors.

Although his usual practice when referring to the people of the Hebrew scriptures is to use the terms native to the texts themselves, namely “Israel,” “Hebrews,” and “the people,” Clement uses the term “Jews” to refer to this collective three times in the *Paedagogus*. Twice the

³⁹ Τάχα δὲ καὶ προηγουμένως τοῖς Ἑλλήσιν ἐδόθη τότε, πρὶν ἢ τὸν Κύριον καλέσαι καὶ τοὺς Ἑλλήνας ἐπαιδαγώγει γὰρ καὶ αὐτὴ τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν ὡς ὁ νόμος τοὺς Ἑβραίους, εἰς Χριστόν.

connotation of the passage quoted is clearly negative. Clement criticizes “the Jews” who “transgressed by asking for a King” and argues that the Jews required the ascetic law of Moses to break down their propensity for indulgence. It is used once to foreshadow Christ, as Clement interprets the crowns worn by the kings of Israel christologically.⁴⁰

The negative connotation of “Jew” in Clement’s writings is further developed by his quotations from early Christian texts, in which the term is used in reference to those who reject Christ. He quotes the gospel tradition that identifies Jesus as “King of the Jews” (*Strom.* 1.21), notes that Paul “became a Jew to reach the Jews”; asks with Paul in Romans 3:29 if God is the God of Jews only (*Strom.* 5.3.18.13); and echoes what he takes to be Paul’s criticism of Jews who think themselves wise by rejecting Christ in 1 Cor. 3 (*Strom.* 5.4.20). Citing the *Kerygma Petrou*, Clement urges Christians not to “worship as the Jews do, who thinking they know God, do not know him” (*Strom.* 6.5). Although Clement lacks the ferocity of his contemporaries Tertullian and Melito of Sardis, his use of the term “Jew” has a pejorative edge.

In the majority of instances where Clement uses the term “Jew” or its cognates to describe his contemporaries, the term applies to those who, while accepting the authority of the Pentateuch, reject Christ. In each of the *Protrepticus*, the *Paedagogus*, and the *Stromateis*, Clement alludes to Gal. 3:28, Eph. 4:24 and Col. 3:9–11, and interprets them as effacing the differences between Jew and Greek, presenting the Christian as a new creation. Faith in the λόγος thus has the effect of annulling one’s Jewishness or Greekness. Consequently, Clement describes Paul in *Paed.* 1.6 as a former Jew. Interpreting Paul’s statement in 1 Cor. 13:11, “When I was a child, I spoke as a child, thought as a child, reasoned as a child; when I became a man, I put childish things away,” Clement asserts, “‘when I was a child’ may be expounded thus:

⁴⁰ *Paed.* 2.1.17.1; 2.8.63.4; 3.4.27.2

that is, when I was a Jew (for he was a Hebrew by extraction) I thought as a child, when I followed the law; but after becoming a man, I no longer entertain the sentiments of a child, that is, of the law, but of a man, that is, of Christ. . .” (1.6.34.2).⁴¹ Paul’s acceptance of Christ is presented as a simultaneous rejection of Jewish law and identity.

The concept of “Jewish-Christians” is absent from Clement’s thought. When one becomes a Christian, one ceases to be a Jew.⁴² Jews, defined as those who live according to the law of Moses, do not have the πίστις or the saving knowledge γνῶσις of Christ. Clement asserts, “Faith was lacking in those who were righteous according to the law ” (*Strom.* 6.6.45).⁴³ Similarly, Clement remarks at the outset of *Stromateis* 2 that, although the primary targets of his arguments are the followers of Valentinus, Basilides, and Marcion, he will demonstrate the consistency of his arguments with the scriptures, so that “the Jew also might be convinced to have faith in the one in whom he does not have faith.”⁴⁴

Reading early Christian texts, including the canonical Gospels, the letters of Paul, and the *Kerygma Petrou*, as containing accurate representations of Jews, Clement frequently presents “the Jews” as the people who characteristically reject Christ on account of their misreading of the law and the prophets.⁴⁵ Grounding his concept of “the Jews” on their characterization in these

⁴¹ Χάριεν τοίνυν οὕτως ἐξηγήσασθαι τὸ “ὅτε ἤμην νήπιος,” τουτέστιν ὅτε ἤμην Ἰουδαῖος, Ἑβραῖος γὰρ ἄνωθεν ἦν, “ὡς νήπιος ἐφρόνουν,” ἐπειδὴ εἰκόμην τῷ νόμῳ· “ἐπὶ δὲ γέγονα ἀνὴρ,” οὐκέτι τὰ τοῦ νηπίου, τουτέστι τὰ τοῦ νόμου, ἀλλὰ τὰ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς φρονῶ, τουτέστι τὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ

⁴² *Strom.* 7.15.89.3 includes the verb ἰουδαῖζειν, however Clement does not use the term as it is often used in contemporary scholarship, namely in reference to (gentile) Christians who affect Jewish practices. Rather, Clement uses it in conjunction with the verb φιλοσοφεῖν, “to philosophize,” meaning to identify as a Jew or as a philosopher.

⁴³ τοῖς μὲν γὰρ κατὰ νόμον δικαίοις ἔλειπεν ἡ πίστις.

⁴⁴ εἴ πως ἡρέμα καὶ ὁ Ἰουδαῖος ἐπαιὼν ἐπιστρέψαι δυνηθεῖν ἐξ ὧν ἐπίστευσεν εἰς ὃν οὐκ ἐπίστευσεν.

⁴⁵ I offer five examples:

Strom. 1.27.175: τοῦ νόμου δὲ τὴν εὐποιάν διὰ τῆς πρὸς τοὺς Ἰουδαίους περικοπῆς δεδήλωκεν ὁ ἀπόστολος γράφων ὧδε πως· . . . ὁμοίως δὲ τῷ Παύλῳ ἡ προφητεία ὀνειδίζει τὸν λαὸν ὡς μὴ συνιέντα τὸν νόμον. “the apostle showed the beneficent function of the law in the passage relating to the Jews, writing, (quotes Rom. 2:17–20). . . . In the same way as Paul, prophecy upbraids the people with not understanding the law.

texts, Clement uses the term to denote a misguided hermeneutic position rather than a tradition with which he identifies himself, or a people with whom he is in close contact.⁴⁶ This conceptualization is well-demonstrated in *Strom.* 7.18.109.3, where Clement gives us his most explicit summary of “Jewish” scriptural exegesis. He argues that, like the unclean animals of Lev. 11:4–6, Jews ruminate on the “food” of scripture, but do not possess a parted hoof, that is, they reject the divinity of God the Son. He explains, “Now those that ruminate, but do not part the hoof, indicate the crowd of the Jews, who have the oracles of God in their mouths, but not resting on the truth, do not have the faith and the progression from the son to the father that

Strom. 2.5: ὁ σωτὴρ δὲ ἡμῶν ὑπερβάλλει πᾶσαν ἀνθρωπίνην φύσιν· καλὸς μὲν ὡς ἀγαπᾶσθαι μόνος πρὸς ἡμῶν τὸ καλὸν τὸ ἀληθινὸν ἐπιποθούντων, «ἦν γὰρ τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν», «βασιλεὺς» δὲ καὶ ὑπὸ παιδῶν ἀπείρων ἔτι καὶ ὑπὸ Ἰουδαίων ἀπιστούντων καὶ ἀγνοούντων ἀναγορευόμενος καὶ πρὸς αὐτῶν προφητῶν ἀνακηρυττόμενος δείκνυται· “But our Saviour surpasses all human nature. He is so lovely, as to be alone loved by us, whose hearts are set on the true beauty, for “He was the true light.” He is shown to be a king, as such hailed by unsophisticated children and by the unbelieving and ignorant Jews, and heralded by their prophets.”

Strom. 6.5, quoting the *Kerygma Petrou*: μὴδὲ κατὰ Ἰουδαίους σέβεσθε· καὶ γὰρ ἐκεῖνοι μόνοι οἰόμενοι τὸν θεὸν γινώσκειν οὐκ ἐπίστανται, λατρεύοντες ἀγγέλοις καὶ ἀρχαγγέλοις, μηνὶ καὶ σελήνῃ. “Neither worship as the Jews; for they, thinking that they only know God, do not know Him, adoring as they do angels and archangels, the month and the moon.”

Strom. 6.6.44, quoting an *agraphon* of Jesus of unknown origin: εἰ γὰρ δέσμιοι μὲν Ἰουδαῖοι, ἐφ’ ὧν καὶ ὁ κύριος «ἐξέλθετε» εἶπεν «ἐκ τῶν δεσμῶν οἱ θέλοντες», τοὺς ἐκουσίως δεδεμένους καὶ «τὰ δυσβάστακτα φορτία» (φησὶν) αὐτοῖς διὰ τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης παρεγγειρήσεως ἐπαναθεμένους λέγων. “If the prisoners are the Jews, to whom the Lord said, “go out from the prison, those who are willing,” he designates by it those who consented to be enchained and are charged with carrying “heavy burdens” of human origin.”

QDS 28: πυνθανομένου δὲ τοῦ προσδιαλεγομένου «τίς ἐστὶν πλησίον;» οὐ τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον Ἰουδαίοις προωρίσατο τὸν πρὸς αἵματος οὐδὲ τὸν πολίτην οὐδὲ τὸν προσήλυτον οὐδὲ τὸν ὁμοίως περιτετμημένον οὐδὲ τὸν ἐνὶ καὶ ταυτῷ νόμῳ χρώμενον· “And on His interlocutor inquiring, “Who is my neighbour?” he did not, in the same way with the Jews, specify the blood-relation, or the fellow-citizen, or the proselyte, or him that has been similarly circumcised, or the man who uses one and the same law.

⁴⁶ My argument here applies specifically to Clement’s situation in 2nd C Alexandria; I am not suggesting that all descriptions of Jews in early Christian literature are simply literary constructs, or that Jews and Christians did not interact in other times or in other places. For a recent account of the ongoing debate over whether Jews were “real” or “constructs” in early Christian texts, see Leonard V. Rutgers, *Making Myths: Jews in Early Christian Identity Formation* (Leuven: Peeters, 2009), 6–7.

accompany them.”⁴⁷ Without the “parted hoof” of the Father and the Son, the Jewish interpretation of the scriptures lacks balance, and is prone to falling down. In Clement’s caricature, the Jews are presented as people who know the law but fundamentally misunderstand its purpose.

Another possible reference to Jewish exegesis is found in *Paedagogus* 1.6.

Interpreting 1 Cor. 3:2, (“I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for solid food. Even now you are still not ready”), Clement asserts, “οὐ μοι γὰρ δοκεῖ Ἰουδαϊκῶς ἐκδέχεσθαι δεῖν τὸ λεγόμενον” (*Paed.* 1.6.34.3).⁴⁸ Translating the sentence as “it does not seem to me that we must understand the passage Jewishly,” Robert L. Wilken has suggested that by Ἰουδαϊκῶς, Clement refers to the exegetical practices of the rabbis, citing it as evidence that he was familiar with rabbinic exegesis.⁴⁹ Beyond the obvious unlikelihood of the rabbis offering an interpretation of a Pauline letter, Clement’s further comments give no indication that Ἰουδαϊκῶς here refers to actual Jewish exegetical practice. Marrou and Harl more plausibly suggest that Clement only wishes to clarify that in 1 Cor. 3, childlikeness is not a figurative reference to Jewishness, as he argued it was in 1 Cor. 13, but a reference to the needs of all believers.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Αὐτίκα τὰ ἀνάγοντα μηρυκισμόν, μὴ διχηλοῦντα τέ, τοὺς Ἰουδαίους αἰνίσσεται τοὺς πολλοὺς, οἱ τὰ μὲν λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ ἀνὰ στόμα ἔχουσιν, τὴν δὲ πίστιν καὶ τὴν βάσιν δι’ υἱοῦ πρὸς τὸν πατέρα παραπέμπουσιν οὐκ ἔχουσιν ἐπερειδομένην τῇ ἀληθείᾳ.”

⁴⁸ *Le Pédagogue*. Sources chrétiennes 70, 108, 158 (trans. Marguerite Harl, C. Matray, and Claude Mondésert: Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1951).

⁴⁹ Robert L. Wilken, *Judaism and the Early Christian Mind: a Study of Cyril of Alexandria’s Exegesis and Theology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971; repr. Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2004), 41.

⁵⁰ 1 Cor. 3:2 presents a challenge to Clement’s argument in favour of the unity of πίστις and γνῶσις and that scriptural references to children may refer to believers throughout their lives, not to the recipients of an immature faith in contradistinction to those who have been illuminated by γνῶσις (*Paed.* 1.6.25). Clement resolves the problem via a highly dubious reading of 1 Cor 3:1–2. In Clement’s revised reading, the text means something like, “I have instructed you in Christ, giving you the true food, pure and simple— spiritual— that is the milk, the food of infants, who cling to their mother’s breast.” *Paed.* 1.6.35. Denise Buell identifies a “sharp contrast” between Clement’s exegesis of 1 Cor. 3.2 in the *Paedagogus* and his evaluation of the same text in *Strom.* 5, arguing that in the latter passage Clement uses the Pauline text “to outline a distinction among stages of Christian development” that he specifically rejects in the *Paedagogus* (*Making Christians*, 129). Buell seems to have missed the point of Clement’s argument in *Paed* 1. There, his goal is to counter gnostic arguments that spiritual Christians, enjoying a superior form of salvation, have no need of the “milk” of simple faith necessary for second-rank, “soullish”

Consequently, they translate the sentence as “Il me semble que nous ne devons pas comprendre ce texte en le rapportant aux Juifs.”⁵¹ The use of the term Ἰουδαϊκῶς is incidental to Clement’s argument and not an indication of his familiarity with rabbinic exegesis.

3. Clement’s Reception of Philo: Literature Review

In spite of his criticism of Jewish exegesis, Clement read many of Philo’s writings and reproduces the Alexandrian Jew’s words in his own works. The extent to which Philo’s works influenced Clement’s in the critical aspects of his thought, especially the exegesis of the Septuagint and the function(s) of the λόγος, have long been debated. More recently, scholars have turned to Clement’s use of Philo for hints as to the possible influence of Judaism more broadly on his writings.

In *Clement of Alexandria and his use of Philo in the Stromateis: An early Christian reshaping of a Jewish model*, Annewies van den Hoek provides a highly systematic and methodologically aware evaluation of the Philonic citations in the *Stromateis*.⁵² Her point of departure is the register of more than three hundred Philonic parallels identified by Stählin in his critical edition of the text.⁵³ Assigning each passage a letter grade of A, B, C, or D based on the likelihood of Philonic dependence, van den Hoek analyzes in detail four “major sequences of

Christians. Rejecting the difference in natures between “soullish” and “spiritual” Christians, Clement argues that milk is fundamentally the same substance as blood and meat; the difference in form merely makes it easier for “babes” to digest (*Paed.* 1.6.39–42). In *Strom.* 5, Clement’s argumentative goal is to exhort his students to advance from simple faith, symbolized by milk, to the γνῶσις symbolized by solid food. Milk and solid food, like πίστις and γνῶσις, remain fundamentally the same food but are suited to be consumed by individuals at different states of maturity. Clement never suggests that Christians do not undergo development; to the contrary, he understands the λόγος to actively compel Christians to progress to ever greater knowledge.

⁵¹ *Sources chrétiennes* 70, 172–173.

⁵² Annewies van den Hoek, *Clement of Alexandria and his use of Philo in the Stromateis: An early Christian reshaping of a Jewish model* (Leiden: Brill, 1988).

⁵³ van den Hoek, *Philo in the Stromateis*, 20.

borrowings” and an additional four “minor sequences” of lesser length before providing short comments on the remaining one hundred and twenty “isolated references” to Philo’s writings in the *Stromateis*. In her concluding analysis, van den Hoek identifies two major categories of Philonic borrowings in Clement’s work: “philosophical/theological conceptions,” which account for 47% of the A and B borrowings, and “biblical interpretations,” making up another 49% of the total, leaving only 4% of the A and B borrowings unaccounted for.⁵⁴ Van den Hoek concludes that Philo served Clement’s needs not as a teacher of Platonic philosophy, with which he was already well-versed, but that Philo “was his master in the use and interpretation of the Pentateuch, skills that other traditions did not provide.”⁵⁵

Although van den Hoek’s analysis has provided a valuable template for further studies of Philonic influence on Clement and other early Christian authors, questions could be raised about the utility of her division of the Philonic borrowings into either “biblical” or “philosophical” categories, as the borrowings could have been analyzed and categorized according to any number of variables. In my analysis below, I suggest an alternative variable—namely the presence of Pythagorean elements—that sheds a different light on Clement’s Philonic borrowings.

David T. Runia devotes one chapter of *Philo in Early Christian Literature* to Clement. He begins with a thorough review of important monographs that have addressed Philo’s relationship to Clement, dividing the authors of these works into two disciplinary camps: the Theologians and the Historians of Philosophy.⁵⁶ Runia contends that scholars primarily interested in the development of Christian philosophy have viewed Clement as a great debtor to

⁵⁴ van den Hoek, *Philo in the Stromateis*, 220–224.

⁵⁵ van den Hoek, *Philo in the Stromateis*, 229.

⁵⁶ Runia assigns Henry Chadwick and Eric Osborn to the first group and H.A. Wolfson, R. Mortley, and Salvatore Lilla to the second. David T. Runia, *Philo in early Christian literature : a survey* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 150–153.

Philo; those interested in Clement's theology, conversely, have minimized Philo's importance. Runia himself offers a third way of understanding the relationship between the two Alexandrians. Philo, Runia suggests, taught Clement how to apply his Platonic philosophical outlook to his reading of the Bible, above all through his method of allegorical exegesis.⁵⁷

In a 1995 article, Runia asks, "Why does Clement call Philo the Pythagorean?"⁵⁸ He argues that this title is counterintuitive, expecting instead that Clement would refer to Philo as "the Jew" or "the Hebrew."⁵⁹ Runia thinks it unlikely that Clement thought Philo to have been a Pythagorean in the sense of belonging to a Pythagorean community, contending that the epithet signals instead "affinity of thought" with the Pythagorean tradition.⁶⁰ Clement would have been attuned to the characteristically Pythagorean elements of Philo's thought, Runia argues,

⁵⁷ Runia, *Philo in early Christian literature*, 155.

⁵⁸ David T. Runia, "Why does Clement call Philo 'the Pythagorean'?" *VC* 49 (1995), 1–22, 16. Cited recently in Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria*, 85; Mark J. Edwards, *Origen against Plato* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 131, who adds, "perhaps his sobriquet for Philo means no more than that the Pythagoreans would have recognized him as an exponent of their own hermeneutical methods"; Ilaria L.E. Ramelli, "The Birth of the Rome-Alexandria Connection: The Early Sources on Mark and Philo, and the Petrine Tradition" *SPhA* 23 (2011): 72–95, 79; James Carleton Paget "Clement of Alexandria and the Jews" *SJT* 51 (1998): 86–97. Repr. in *Jews, Christians and Jewish-Christians in Antiquity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 94. Carleton Paget suggests the possibility that Clement's community had forgotten Philo's ethnic origin.

⁵⁹ "Now in my view the epithet 'Pythagorean' which Clement attaches to Philo is unexpected. It is surely surprising that he does not describe him as 'Philo the Jew' or, as might be more likely, 'Philo the Hebrew'... We would expect that Philo's role as a predecessor in the Jewish-Christian tradition, i.e. the tradition that ascribes authority to the Hebrew scriptures, was more important for Clement than an attachment to a philosophical school of thought" Runia, "Philo the Pythagorean," 3.

⁶⁰ The existence of "Pythagorean schools" or communities in which one could be a member remains a matter of controversy. According to Dillon and Hershbelt, "tempting as it is to connect the Pythagoras legend with Pythagorean communities, there is no indisputable evidence for such communities in antiquity. . . But whether the Pythagorean communities portrayed by Iamblichus or his sources even existed, remains a subject for further examination. Certainly there were individuals such as Heraclides, Aristoxenus, or Iamblichus who kept Pythagoras's memory alive, but they themselves were not members of Pythagorean communities. . . the existence of Pythagorean communities may never be proved to everyone's satisfaction, and yet the vividness and detail with which Iamblichus or his sources portray the Pythagorean life suggests that it once flourished among a chosen few." Iamblichus, *On the Pythagorean way of life* (trans. John Dillon and Jackson Hershbelt: Atlanta: Scholars' Press, 1991), 16. See also Helmut Koester, *An Introduction to the New Testament Vol. I: History, Culture and Religion of the Hellenistic Age* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1982, repr. 2000), 375–376; Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, 379; Graham Anderson, *Saint, Sage and Sophist: Holy Men and their Associates in the Early Roman Empire* (London: Routledge, 1994), 12.

especially his “penchant for arithmologizing exegesis.”⁶¹ He concludes, however, that it is Philo’s Platonism, which since the time of Eudorus was increasingly understood as a continuation of an older Pythagorean tradition that Clement wished to indicate by calling Philo a Pythagorean.⁶²

Runia then considers the context in which Philo is described as a Pythagorean, noting that Clement first uses the epithet while defending the antiquity of Moses and the nobility of the Jewish law. Citing van den Hoek’s analysis of Clement’s Philonic borrowings in the *Stromateis* and her conclusion that Clement uses Philo in 49% of the A and B borrowings as an expert in the interpretation of the Pentateuch, Runia asserts that, despite Clement’s failure to identify Philo explicitly as a Jew, it is in “the Judaeo-Christian tradition where, also for Clement (in the light of his borrowings), [Philo] primarily belongs.”⁶³ Clement does not bother to identify Philo as Jew because “it is obvious enough, and does not need to be underlined.”⁶⁴ Runia concludes that although Clement is neither embarrassed by nor attempting to hide Philo’s Jewishness,⁶⁵ it is

⁶¹ Runia, “Philo the Pythagorean,” 10.

⁶² Runia, “Philo the Pythagorean,” 15–16. See also Henry Chadwick, *Early Christian thought and the classical tradition: studies in Justin, Clement, and Origen* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), 14: “The contemporary Neopythagoreans, for instance, had had considerable success in representing Plato as the great popularizer of Pythagorean doctrines, finding their theology especially in the *Timaeus* and the *Parmenides* and producing pseudipigraphic texts in which very early Pythagoreans expounded on Platonism.”; Gillian Clark, “Philosophical Lives and the Philosophic Life,” in *Greek Biography and Pangyric in Late Antiquity* (eds. Thomas Hägg and Philip Rousseau: Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000): 29–51, 36: “To propound Pythagorean views, or adopt Pythagorean practices, was not an alternative to being Platonist: depending on one’s position in a long-running debate, Pythagoreanism was Platonism properly interpreted or Platonism with optional extras. This applies to philosophic lifestyle as well as philosophic theory. Pythagoreanism implied an ascetic lifestyle, but an ascetic philosopher was not necessarily Pythagorean.”

⁶³ Runia, “Philo the Pythagorean,” 16.

⁶⁴ Runia, “Philo the Pythagorean,” 13.

⁶⁵ As suggested by F.C. Conybeare, *Philo About the Contemporary Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1895, repr. 1987), 328–329. Cited by Runia, “Philo the Pythagorean,” 13.

nevertheless in the interest of Clement's argument to minimize Philo's connection to Judaism, and its resulting potential bias, when making his apologetic point.⁶⁶

Eric Osborn has addressed the extent of Philo's influence on Clement's thought at several points over his career.⁶⁷ In a 1998 article, "Philo and Clement: Quiet Conversion and Noetic Exegesis," Osborn tries a different strategy, contending that "the *influence* of Philo on Clement is secondary to the *use* which Clement makes of Philo."⁶⁸ Osborn argues that Clement knowingly uses Philo for purposes that sharply contrast Philo's own goals.⁶⁹ Employing van den Hoek's analysis of the Philonic borrowings in the *Stromateis*, he suggests that a primary goal of Clement's Philonic citations is to convince Jews "quietly" to convert from the law to the gospel. Drawing on evidence from the Gospels, Josephus, and Philo's *Spec.* 1.55, Osborn asserts that Jews in the first centuries CE were subject to harsh penalties, including death, should they convert to Christianity.⁷⁰ Quotations of Philo, reworked to include christological features, were intended gently to coax Jews to faith "quietly" so as to evade the attention of the authorities. The Platonic tradition of noetic exegesis common to both Hellenistic Jews and Christians is identified as a second method by which Clement used Philo to persuade Jews and Greeks alike to put faith in the incarnate λόγος.

Osborn presents Clement's Philo as obviously Jewish, his writings intentionally subverted by Clement to assist in the conversion of other Jews to Christianity. He avoids the problem of Clement's presentation of Philo as a Pythagorean by neglecting to mention his use of

⁶⁶ "Clement does not bother to tell his reader that Philo is Jewish." Runia, "Philo the Pythagorean," 6. In the same context, as Runia admits, Clement openly calls Josephus a Jew.

⁶⁷ See Eric Osborn, "Philo and Clement," *Prudentia* 19 (1987) 35–49; Osborn, "Philo and Clement: citation and influence," *Lebendige Überlieferung, Festschrift für H.J. Vogt* (ed N. el-Khoury et. al.: Beirut-Ostfildern: F. Rückert Verlag-Schwaben Verlag, 1992).

⁶⁸ Eric Osborn, "Philo and Clement: Quiet Conversion and Noetic Exegesis" *SPhA* 10 (1998): 108–124, 109. Italics mine.

⁶⁹ Osborn, "Philo and Clement: Quiet Conversion and Noetic Exegesis," 114.

⁷⁰ Osborn, "Philo and Clement: Quiet Conversion and Noetic Exegesis," 112–114.

the epithet. His argument that the (quiet) conversion of Jews was a primary motivation for Clement's use of Philo is weakened by its reliance on the single comment at *Strom.* 2.1.2.1 that the use of the scriptures in the *Stromateis* might convince Jews as well as Greeks to believe in Christ and the strong indications that the *Stromateis* were primarily directed to an insider group of students rather than a broad readership.

Osborn evaluates the relationship between Clement and Philo afresh in his 2005 monograph, *Clement of Alexandria*.⁷¹ Here he argues that Philo shows Clement "how the narrative of the *Kerygma* may be translated into a metaphysic," through his use of allegory, which binds the patriarchal narratives to the philosophical concept of the soul's return to God developed in the schools of middle Platonism. Clement's greatest inheritance from Philo, Osborn argues, is his use of Philo's presentation of Moses as a philosopher and the Bible as philosophy from *The Life of Moses*.⁷² Despite their common conviction that the One God "was the first principle of physics, logic, and ethics," Osborn observes a fundamental rift between the two in Clement's elevation of the λόγος to a reciprocal relationship with the Father in the Godhead that would have been unthinkable for Philo.⁷³ The two also part ways in their estimation of the law. Osborn depicts Philo as "a law-observing Jew, who appropriated the Hellenic world of thought simply to bring his religion up to date with contemporary ideas."⁷⁴ In contrast, for Clement, "the law is imperfect, fulfilled in Christ, good but dangerous because it cannot give life (*QDS* 8.9)."⁷⁵ Although they share an appreciation for the philosophers and a devotion to the God of Israel, in Osborn's estimation Clement and Philo are representatives of distinct religious traditions.

⁷¹ Osborn's 2005 monograph comes almost a half-century after his first book-length study of Clement's thought, *The Philosophy of Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957).

⁷² Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria*, 91.

⁷³ Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria*, 82–83.

⁷⁴ Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria*, 26.

⁷⁵ Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria*, 82.

Osborn's Clement professes a Christianity that is self-consciously orthodox and proto-catholic; Philo is a decidedly traditional, law-observant Jew.⁷⁶ In Osborn's final estimation, "Clement rejects as much of Philo as he accepts; that is the way poetic and philosophic influence work."⁷⁷

Osborn only briefly considers the problem of Clement's description of Philo as a Pythagorean, declaring that Runia's article has "elucidated" the issue, adding that, among second-century Platonists, "some would be more Pythagorean, some more Peripatetic." Osborn's subsequent comments, however, differ in significant ways from Runia's essay. While Runia locates Philo squarely in a "Judaean-Christian tradition," Osborn affirms that "Alexandrian tradition had already assimilated Philo in a stream of religious Platonism." Osborn also re-proposes Conybeare's claim that Clement is hiding Philo's Jewishness, which Runia explicitly rejects. Osborn contends, "Clement would have good reasons for not advertising his Jewish source. He is fighting on many fronts: against Marcionites who reject the Old Testament and against Judaizers who think the Old facilitates an improvement on the New." While Runia argues that Clement neglects to mention Philo's Jewishness due to its obviousness, Osborn's conclusion suggests that Clement may have expected that Jewishness to be unknown to his opponents.⁷⁸

In a recent study that delves further into Clement's knowledge and use of Jewish sources, Piotr Ashwin-Siejkowski challenges what he calls "the classic dilemma facing scholars in their approach to Clement's philosophical legacy," which he argues "may be summed up by the two following questions. Was Clement of Alexandria a Platonist, who, like Philo before him, expressed his faith in a Platonic/Hellenistic form and language? Or, was he a profound Christian

⁷⁶ Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria*, xv, 99.

⁷⁷ Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria*, 105.

⁷⁸ Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria*, 85.

who ‘baptized’ Platonism much as Aquinas later baptized Aristotelianism?’⁷⁹ Ashwin-Siejkowski contends that both questions err by “eliminat[ing] Hellenistic Judaism from his background.”⁸⁰ Contending that Clement’s instruction in Hellenistic Judaism formed a phase separate from his Christian education, Ashwin-Siejkowski submits, “My assumption is therefore that Clement underwent a gradual but steady transition from paganism, through some encounter with a Hellenized form of Judaism, that achieved its ultimate fulfilment in Christianity.”⁸¹ In this teleological reconstruction, Ashwin-Siejkowski presents Christianity as a more universal and liberal form of Judaism that would naturally hold a greater appeal to someone of Clement’s background than would Judaism itself, while simultaneously contending that Clement would have required an intermediate step from his “pagan beliefs” before embarking on his Christian “stage of life.”⁸²

Although Ashwin-Siejkowski convincingly illustrates Clement’s dependence on Second-Temple Jewish literature, his analysis fails to ask, let alone to demonstrate, whether Clement himself considered the writings and themes he classifies as “Hellenistic-Jewish” to form a separate category of sources discontinuous with his Christianity.⁸³ It is Ashwin-Siejkowski, and not Clement, who groups such diverse sources as Philo, Josephus, Aristobulus, Ezekiel the Tragedian, Pseudo-Aristeas, Artapanus, Demetrius, Eupolemus, the Sibylline Oracles, Sirach,

⁷⁹ Piotr Ashwin-Siejkowski, *Clement of Alexandria : a project of Christian perfection*, (London: T & T Clark, 2008), 3.

⁸⁰ Ashwin-Siejkowski, *Clement of Alexandria*, 3–5.

⁸¹ Ashwin-Siejkowski, *Clement of Alexandria*, 23.

⁸² Ashwin-Siejkowski, *Clement of Alexandria*, 79.

⁸³ Ashwin-Siejkowski’s argument is based on his identification of three important themes in Clement’s writing as “Hellenistic Jewish” rather than “Greek”: Moses as an archetype for perfection; the metaphor of the High Priest, and the concept of the fear (φόβος) of God. Ashwin-Siejkowski shows that Clement relies on Philo, the *Letter to the Hebrews*, the *Wisdom of Solomon* and *Sirach* for his own development of these themes. The problem is that none of these sources are referred to by Clement as “Jewish” while several are explicitly called Christian. Eusebius preserves a fragment of the *Hypotyposeis* in which Clement argues in favour of the Pauline authorship of the *Letter to the Hebrews* (HE 6.14); the Wisdom texts belong to the Septuagint, scriptures claimed by Christians as their own; and Philo is identified as a Pythagorean rather than as a Jew.

and the author of the Wisdom of Solomon together as “Hellenistic Jewish” writings.⁸⁴ Neither is there any indication in Clement’s writings that he encountered these texts during a separate phase of his education prior to his introduction to Christian teachings.

According to Ashwin-Siejkowski’s theory, Clement was introduced to Philo during the earlier Hellenistic Jewish phase of his education. Not only does Philo remain for Clement always a Jew, Ashwin-Siejkowski uses a possible Philonic citation to make the rather roundabout case that Clement uses “*expressis verbis* terms in which he identifies himself with the Jewish tradition.”⁸⁵ Emphasizing Clement’s consciousness of Philo’s Jewishness (and, consequently, Clement’s Jewish self-association), Ashwin-Siejkowski seeks to minimize the significance of the Pythagorean epithet. Echoing Runia, he avers, “whatever is said about Clement’s relationship with the Jewish philosopher, whether to maximize or minimize its influence, it was in Philo’s hermeneutics that Clement found a model for his own original way of bringing together the Hebrew religious tradition with Greek philosophy, particularly with that of Plato, in its Middle Platonic form.”⁸⁶ Although Ashwin-Siejkowski cites Runia’s explication of the Pythagorean epithet favourably, he continues, “in my view, as the epithet ‘Philo the Pythagorean’ appears only once in four references to Philo, it was used spontaneously rather than deliberately as a sign

⁸⁴ It is not clear from his citation techniques that Clement knew these sources now widely considered to be penned by Jewish authors to be, in fact, Jewish. This is particularly true of the writings he may have known via the intermediary source of Alexander Polyhistor (Demetrius, Eupolemus, Artapanus and Ezekiel the Tragedian) and of the writings of pseudo-Aristeas and the Sybilline Oracles, whose authors present themselves as Greeks, not Jews.

⁸⁵ He explains, “while commenting on the biblical concept of the creation of human beings as God’s image and likeness, Clement states: ‘Is not this the way in which some of our people accept the view that a human being has received “according to the image” at birth, but will secure “according to likeness” later, as he attains perfection?’” It is possible that Clement had in mind Philo’s *Opif.* 144, which as a Philonic treatise was well known to Clement and quoted in many other places. Philo thus would be one of ‘our people’.” That Clement has the Philonic source in mind is uncertain; Ashwin-Siejkowski himself admits that Ireaneas’s *Adv. haer.* 5.6.1 is also a possible source. But even if we assume that Philo is one of “our people” to whom Clement refers, the citation does not indicate that Clement identified Philo, and much less himself, with “the Jewish tradition.” Ashwin-Siejkowski, *Clement of Alexandria*, 6.

⁸⁶ Ashwin-Siejkowski, *Clement of Alexandria*, 31.

of Philo's philosophical association."⁸⁷ Ashwin-Siejkowski's argument is undercut by a factual error: Clement calls Philo "the Pythagorean" *twice*, not once, suggesting that the association is not spontaneous and ought not to be dismissed so quickly.

4. Clement's *Testimonia* to Philo

4.1 Situating the Philonic Borrowings in the context of *Stromateis* I

The four instances in which Clement mentions Philo by name are clustered at the outset of the *Stromateis*, with three of the four occurring in Book 1.⁸⁸ In this book, Clement aims to establish, albeit unsystematically, the compatibility of Greek philosophy with scriptural revelation. In so doing he fends off potential challenges to the legitimacy of his teaching from a variety of implied critics. He defends, in turn, the validity of writing (*Strom.* 1.1.1–14); the value of esotericism (*Strom.* 1.1.15–18); the apostolic origin of his teaching (*Strom.* 1.1.11); and the divine origin of all that is true in Greek and barbarian philosophy (*Strom.* 1.1.18). Ultimately, Clement aims to show "that evil has an evil nature, and can never produce a good harvest." He affirms, "throughout my *Stromateis*, I will demonstrate that philosophy is in some sense also a work of

⁸⁷ Ashwin-Siejkowski, *Clement of Alexandria*, 50, n. 53.

⁸⁸ A possible fifth reference is found at 1.21.141.3: "Φίλων δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς ἀνέγραψε τοὺς βασιλεῖς τοὺς Ἰουδαίων διαφώνως τῷ Δημητρίῳ. (And Philo wrote his own account of the Kings of the Jews, differing from Demetrios)." This reference does not correspond to any text known from Philo's corpus and therefore likely refers to Philo the Elder, author of a Greek epic titled "On Jerusalem" and possibly also mentioned by Josephus (*Against Apion* 1.218). It is also unclear from context whether Clement differentiated between the two Philos. Perhaps he calls our Philo "the Pythagorean" in order to distinguish him from Philo the Elder. On the other hand, Clement twice refers to our Philo simply as "Philo," which indicates that the epithet is not applied consistently.

divine providence.”⁸⁹ It is in the context of supporting these claims that Clement chooses to cite Philo explicitly.

The beginning of *Stromateus* 1 is lost; the extant text begins midway through a defense of the legitimacy of writing as a means of preserving and imparting knowledge, a debate that had been raging among the Greek philosophical schools since the fifth century BCE (*Strom.* 1.1).⁹⁰ Although Clement criticizes the composition of “myths and slanders” (μῦθοι καὶ βλασφημία), he nevertheless defends writing as a bequest of contemporary wisdom to future generations. Writing is itself a form of reproduction; he contends, “as children are the progeny of the body, so words are the progeny of the soul” (οἱ μὲν γε παῖδες σωμάτων, ψυχῆς δὲ ἔγγονοι οἱ λόγοι). Although this analogy is also found in Platonic and peripatetic sources, Clement cites neither Plato nor Aristotle as his source.⁹¹ Instead, he grounds his argument in the filial language of the Hebrew Scriptures, invoking Prov. 2:1–2: “My son, if you receive the saying of my commandment, and hide it within yourself, your ear will hear wisdom.” Here we catch a glimpse of a method that Clement employs throughout the *Stromateis*. Seeking out philosophical truths from the whole scope of sources available to him, be they Greek philosophical treatises, the Hebrew scriptures (in their Greek translation), or the burgeoning collection of Christian literature, Clement weaves together threads pulled from various traditions so that they mutually reinforce one another.

⁸⁹ *Strom.* 1.1.18.4 Ἐγὼ δὲ ὅτι μὲν ἡ κακία κακὴν φύσιν ἔχει καὶ οὐποτ’ ἂν καλοῦ τινος ὑποσταῖν γεωργὸς γενέσθαι, παρ’ ὅλους ἐνδείξομαι τοὺς Στρωματεῖς, αἰνισσόμενος ἅμη γέ πη θείας ἔργον προνοίας καὶ φιλοσοφίαν. In *Strom.* 1.7.37.6, Clement defines philosophy as “not Stoic, Platonic, Epicurean or Aristotelian” but “all that is rightly said in each of these schools, all that teaches righteousness combined with pious knowledge (μετὰ εὐσεβοῦς ἐπιστήμης).”

⁹⁰ Dietmar Wyrwa has demonstrated the influence of *Symposium* 206b–209e and *Phaedrus* 276 in the opening chapter of the *Stromateis*. See Wyrwa, *Die christliche Platonaneignung in den Stromateis des Clemens von Alexandrien* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1983). On Clement’s responses to Plato’s criticism of writing, see Alain Le Boulluec, “Pour qui, pourquoi, comment? Les *Stromates* de Clément d’Alexandrie,” in *Alexandrie antique et chrétienne. Clément et Origène* (Paris: Institut d’études augustiniennes, 1997; repr. 2006): 104–107. On the status of writing in Middle and Neoplatonism, see Anthony Grafton and Megan Hale Williams, *Christianity and the transformation of the book: Origen, Eusebius, and the library of Caesarea* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), 30–31.

⁹¹ *Symposium* 209 A–D, *Phaedrus* 278A, *Theatetus* 150D and *Nichomachean Ethics* IX 7.3

These diverse traditions are compatible with one other because they ultimately stem from the same source: the divine λόγος.

Clement's conception of the λόγος draws on articulations of the λόγος σπερματικός developed in Stoic circles and adapted by middle Platonists, including Philo.⁹² In Clement's conception, the λόγος, although always and everywhere present, has especially revealed itself in the archaic past to Moses, who promulgated his law in accordance with it (*Strom.* 1.26.167.3). Yet while the λόγος has a special relationship with the ancient nation of Israel, everything that is true and good in the cosmos ultimately derives from it. Alluding to the Biblical maxim that God sends rain on the good and the bad alike, Clement interprets the parable of the Sower as intimating glimmers of the λόγος being showered on the whole of creation (*Strom.* 1.7.37). While Clement's λόγος is dependent upon ideas that originated in Jewish and Greek milieux, his conception deviates from these models by standing firmly in the tradition, most clearly articulated in the prologue to the Gospel of John, that understands Jesus of Nazareth to have been the λόγος mysteriously incarnated in human flesh.⁹³ The teachings of Jesus, as preserved in writing and oral traditions by his disciples, thus constitute the fullest revelation of the λόγος who had been present throughout the cosmos since its creation. According to Clement's Christian

⁹² John Dillon summarizes Philo's conception of the λόγος as follows: "the Logos is the divine reason-principle, is the active element of God's creative thought, and is often spoken of as the 'place' of the Ideas. Through the influence of the Logos, the Ideas become seminal reason-principles (*logoi spermatikoi*), a concept borrowed from the Stoics . . . As *Logoi spermatikoi*, the Ideas serve as the models and creative principles of the physical world." Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, 159. Dillon also evaluates contemporary Neopythagorean speculation on divine intermediaries (relying heavily on Numenius), concluding "Initially, the Demiurge seems to have been taken as the supreme principle, active in the world, but when under Neopythagorean influence the One, as a totally transcendent first principle was placed above the active principle, the Demiurge came to be seen as a second God, Intellect, the agent or λόγος of the Supreme God" 7. Salvatore Lilla traces the origins of Clement's λόγος through Greek and Jewish predecessors, including the *Wisdom of Solomon*, *Sirach*, and Justin, in addition to the influence of Philo, in *Clement of Alexandria: A study in Christian Platonism and Gnosticism*. See also Mark J. Edwards, "Clement of Alexandria and His Doctrine of the Logos." VC 54 (2000): 159–177.

⁹³ "ὁ λόγος ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ ἄνθρωπος γενόμενος, ἵνα δὴ καὶ σὺ παρὰ ἀνθρώπου μάθῃς, πῇ ποτε ἄρα ἄνθρωπος γένηται θεός." *Protr.* 1.8.4

understanding, this λόγος is continually active in the world,⁹⁴ exhorting unbelievers to come to faith; training believers to overcome the passions, and instructing the virtuous in the higher knowledge of the written revelation, so that they may become like God.⁹⁵

Clement describes his teaching as a legacy inherited from the apostles. The *Stromateis* are not artful compositions but “memoranda, stored up against old age as a remedy against forgetfulness, an image and outline of those vigorous and animated discourses which I was thought worthy to hear, and of blessed and truly remarkable men” (1.1.11.1).⁹⁶ These unnamed teachers hail from disparate regions of the Empire—Greece, Coele-Syria, Egypt, Assyria and Palestine—but all provide insight into the same truth.⁹⁷ Tracing his spiritual genealogy through these preeminent teachers, Clement claims that his teaching is derived ultimately, but directly and without adulteration, from “the holy apostles, Peter, James, John, and Paul” who are called “fathers” to Clement’s own teachers.⁹⁸ Following Justin Martyr and Tatian, he calls this tradition “barbarian philosophy,” superficially new but in fact older than the whole of Hellenic culture.⁹⁹ Having established his pedigree, Clement offers his compatibility with the apostolic writings,

⁹⁴ *Strom.* 1.1.12.3

⁹⁵ For Clement’s description of the three functions of the λόγος, see *Paed.* 1.1.3.3. Clement’s *Protreptikos* and *Paedagogus* are articulations of these first two functions of the λόγος.

⁹⁶ “Ἡδὲ δὲ οὐ γραφὴ εἰς ἐπίδειξιν τετεχνασμένη ἦδε ἡ πραγματεία, ἀλλὰ μοι ὑπομνήματα εἰς γῆρας θησαυρίζεται, λήθης φάρμακον, εἶδωλον ἀτεχνῶς καὶ σκιαγραφία τῶν ἐναργῶν καὶ ἐμψύχων ἐκείνων, ὧν κατηξιώθην ἐπακοῦσαι, λόγων τε καὶ ἀνδρῶν μακαρίων καὶ τῷ ὄντι ἀξιολόγων.

⁹⁷ τούτων ὁ μὲν ἐπὶ Ἑλλάδος, ὁ Ἰωνικός, οἱ δὲ ἐπὶ τῆς Μεγάλης Ἑλλάδος (τῆς κοίλης θάτερος αὐτῶν Συρίας ἦν, ὁ δὲ ἀπ’ Αἰγύπτου), ἄλλοι δὲ ἀνὰ τὴν ἀνατολήν. καὶ ταύτης ὁ μὲν τῶν Ἀσσυρίων, ὁ δὲ ἐν Παλαιστίνῃ Ἑβραῖος ἀνέκαθεν. One, however, he elevates above the others: “When I came upon the last (he was the first in power), having tracked him out concealed in Egypt, I found rest. He, the true Sicilian bee, gathering the spoil of the flowers of the prophetic and apostolic meadow, engendered in the souls of his hearers a pure substance of γνῶσις.” Most modern commentators follow Eusebius in identifying this “Sicilian bee” with the shadowy figure of Pantaeus, mentioned by name in Clement’s now-fragmentary *Hypotyposes*. Ferguson speculates that the Ionian may have been Melito of Sardis; the Assyrian Bardesanes or Tatian; the Jew, Theophilus of Caesarea or Theodotus, but admits that “we cannot be certain who are these saintly masters.” Ferguson, *FOTC* 85, 30.

⁹⁸ For Clement’s use of filial metaphors to legitimize his doctrine, see Buell, “Producing Descent/Dissent: Clement of Alexandria’s use of filial metaphors as Intra-Christian Polemic,” and *Making Christians*, 80–81.

⁹⁹ *Dialogue with Trypho* 1–6; *ad Graecos* 42; see also Guy Stroumsa, *Barbarian Philosophy: The Religious Revolution of Early Christianity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 47.

most frequently the letters of Paul, as a guarantor for the legitimacy of his doctrine (*Strom.* 1.1.15.4).

Clement anticipated that not everyone would accept his teaching's legitimacy. He addresses his opposition, providing his disciples with tools for challenging their opponents. In the first *Stromateus*, he takes aim against those who dismiss the benefit of learning the methods and the arguments of the Greek philosophical schools. Doubtless, Clement agrees, the sophistry of the rhetoricians is worthless; but he maintains that not all foreign wisdom is evil. Clement introduces here in the *Stromateis* the recurring claim, fundamental to both his soteriology and his anthropology, that God has made himself known through his λόγος to different peoples in different ways:

Πάντων μὲν γὰρ αἴτιος τῶν καλῶν ὁ θεός, ἀλλὰ τῶν μὲν κατὰ προηγουμένον ὡς τῆς τε διαθήκης τῆς παλαιᾶς καὶ τῆς νέας, τῶν δὲ κατ' ἐπακολούθημα ὡς τῆς φιλοσοφίας. Τάχα δὲ καὶ προηγουμένως τοῖς Ἑλλήσιν ἐδόθη τότε πρὶν ἢ τὸν κύριον καλέσαι καὶ τοὺς Ἑλλήνας. ἐπαιδαγώγει γὰρ καὶ αὕτη τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν ὡς ὁ νόμος τοὺς Ἑβραίους εἰς Χριστόν. Προπαρασκευάζει τοίνυν ἡ φιλοσοφία προοδοποιουσα τὸν ὑπὸ Χριστοῦ τελειούμενον.

For God is the cause of all good things, but of some primarily, as of the ancient and new covenants, of others consequentially, as philosophy. Perhaps, too, [philosophy] was given to the Greeks primarily [i.e., directly by God], until the Lord should call the Greeks as well. For [philosophy] instructed the Greek to Christ, just as the law did for the Hebrews. Philosophy, therefore, was a preparation, clearing the path for him who is perfected in Christ. *Strom.* 1.5.28.

If God is the God of all, he can show no favouritism, either for a particular nation, or for a class of individuals gifted by nature (φύσις). Therefore, Clement suggests, prior to the incarnation philosophy worked parallel to the law.

4.2 *Stromateis* 1.5.31¹⁰⁰

It is here that Philo makes his entrance in Christian literature, not as a Trypho-like apologist defending the Jewish people but as a proponent of the value of Greek learning. Clement's first Philonic name-dropping occurs midway through an extensive borrowing from the treatise *De Congressu eruditionis gratia*. This treatise interprets Gen. 16:1–6, the account of Sarah's dealings with her handmaid, Hagar. Read literally, Philo does not find anything particularly edifying about this story. Interpreted figuratively, however, the episode contributes to his running interpretation of the patriarchal narratives, in which Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are allegorized as different types of souls that achieve a vision of God, while their wives represent the various virtues that each must acquire in order to attain that vision.

Clement introduces Philo's allegory in response to an anonymous τις, who maintains that Prov. 5:20, "Do not be much with a foreign woman," is a metaphorical injunction against the study of Greek philosophy. Clement agrees with his anonymous opponent's interpretation of the foreign woman as philosophy, but argues that he has misread scripture's advice. Instead of banning philosophical study the author of the proverb "admonishes us to use indeed, but not to linger and spend time with, secular learning" (*Strom.* 1.5.29.9). Clement thus turns the proverb into an endorsement of his own position. He goes on to present the proverb as a Hebrew version of a well-known interpretation of Penelope's suitors in the *Odyssey* in which the men "ensnared by the charms of handmaidens, have despised their consort philosophy, and have grown old,

¹⁰⁰ An expanded version of the arguments in this section is published in Jennifer Otto, "Paideia in Genesis: Interpreting Sarah and Hagar with Philo and Clement of Alexandria." *Philosophy and the Abrahamic Religions: Scriptural Hermeneutics and Epistemology* (eds. W. J. Torrance Kirby, Rahim Acar and Bilal Bas: Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2013): 29–44.

some of them in music, some in geometry, others in grammar, the most in rhetoric.”¹⁰¹ He continues by explicating the relationship between these preparatory studies and philosophy, and of philosophy to wisdom:

Ἀλλ’ ὥς τὰ ἐγκύκλια μαθήματα συμβάλλεται πρὸς φιλοσοφίαν τὴν δέσποιναν αὐτῶν, οὕτω καὶ φιλοσοφία αὐτὴ πρὸς σοφίας κτῆσιν συνεργεῖ. ἔστι γὰρ ἡ μὲν φιλοσοφία ἐπιτήδευσις σοφίας, ἡ σοφία δὲ ἐπιστήμη θείων καὶ ἀνθρωπίνων καὶ τῶν τούτων αἰτίων. κυρία τοίνυν ἡ σοφία τῆς φιλοσοφίας ὥς ἐκείνη τῆς προπαιδείας. εἰ γὰρ ἐγκράτειαν φιλοσοφία ἐπαγγέλλεται γλώσσης τε καὶ γαστρὸς καὶ τῶν ὑπὸ γαστέρα, καὶ ἔστιν δι’ αὐτὴν αἰρετὴ, σεμνοτέρα φανεῖται καὶ κυριωτέρα, εἰ θεοῦ τιμῆς τε καὶ γνώσεως ἕνεκεν ἐπιτηδεύοιτο.

But as the encyclical studies contribute to philosophy, which is their mistress; so also philosophy itself works together for the acquisition of wisdom. For philosophy is the pursuit of wisdom, and wisdom is the knowledge of things divine and human, and of their causes. Wisdom is therefore the mistress of philosophy, as philosophy is of preliminary studies. For if philosophy professes control of the tongue, and the belly, and the parts below the belly, and is worthy of being chosen on its own account, it appears more worthy of respect and pre-eminence, if cultivated for the honour of God and knowledge. *Strom.* 1.5.30

As Annewies van den Hoek has demonstrated, this passage borrows substantially from Philo’s

De Congressu 79–80.¹⁰² With a glance to Philo, Clement restates the Greek truism that the encyclical studies are a preparation for philosophy, which he defines in terms similar to those of

¹⁰¹ Diogenes Laertius’ *Lives* 2.79–80 reports that Aristippus of Cyrene (435–350) compared Penelope’s suitors to “those who went through the ordinary curriculum but in their studies stopped short at philosophy,” settling instead for her handmaids. He attributes similar interpretations to Ariston of Chios and Bion of Borysthenes.

¹⁰² van den Hoek, *Clement of Alexandria*, 31. Philo’s text reads, “For some have been ensnared by the love lures of the handmaids and spurned the mistress and have grown old, some doing on poetry, some of geometrical figures, some on the blending of musical “colours,” and a host of other things, and have never been able to soar to the winning of the lawful wife. For each art has its charms, its powers of attraction, and some beguiled by these stay with them and forget their pledges to Philosophy. But he who abides by the covenants he has made provides from every quarter everything he can to do her service. It is natural, then, that the holy word should say in admiration of his faithfulness that even then was Sarah his wife when he wedded the handmaid to do her service. And indeed just as the school subjects contribute to the acquirement of philosophy, so does philosophy to the getting of wisdom. For philosophy is the practice of study of wisdom and wisdom is the knowledge of things divine and human and their causes. And therefore just as the culture of the schools is the bond-servant of philosophy, so much philosophy be the servant of wisdom. Now philosophy teaches us the control of the belly and the parts below the belly, and control also of the tongue. Such powers of control are said to be desirable in themselves, but they will assume a grander and loftier aspect if practiced for the honour and service of God. So when we are about to woo the handmaids we must remember the sovereign lady, and let us be called their husbands, but let her be not called but be in reality our true wife.” Trans. Colson and Whittaker.

Cicero, Seneca, and Plutarch.¹⁰³ Clement follows Philo in distinguishing wisdom as mistress of philosophy, as philosophy is mistress to the encyclical studies. He parts company with Philo, however, by tweaking his source text to emphasize philosophy's value as a servant to divine wisdom. While Philo had designated ἐγκράτεια, self-control, as that which is "more worthy of respect and authority if cultivated for the honour God and γνῶσις," Clement restructures the sentence so that φιλοσοφία becomes the subject.¹⁰⁴ It is at this point that Clement brings up the allegory of Sarah and Hagar, summarizing what he has read in Philo's *Congr.* 145:

Τῶν εἰρημένων μαρτυρίαν παρέξει ἡ γραφή διὰ τῶνδε· Σάρρα στεῖρα ἦν πάλαι, Ἀβραάμ δὲ γυνή. μὴ τίκτουσα ἡ Σάρρα τὴν ἑαυτῆς παιδίσκη ὀνόματι Ἄγαρ τὴν Αἰγυπτίαν εἰς παιδοποιίαν ἐπιτρέπει τῷ Ἀβραάμ. ἡ σοφία τοίνυν ἡ τῷ πιστῷ σύνοικος (πιστὸς δὲ ἐλογίσθη Ἀβραάμ καὶ δίκαιος) στεῖρα ἦν ἔτι καὶ ἄτεκνος κατὰ τὴν γενεὰν ἐκείνην, μηδέπω μηδὲν ἐνάρετον ἀποκυήσασα τῷ Ἀβραάμ, ἡξίου δὲ εἰκότως τὸν ἤδη καιρὸν ἔχοντα προκοπῆς τῇ κοσμικῇ παιδείᾳ (Αἴγυπτος δὲ ὁ κόσμος ἀλληγορεῖται) συνευνασθῆναι πρότερον, ὕστερον δὲ καὶ αὐτῇ προσελθόντα κατὰ τὴν θείαν πρόνοιαν γεννῆσαι τὸν Ἰσαάκ.

Scripture will provide a witness for what we say: Sarah, the wife of Abraham, had been barren for a long time. Since Sarah had not produced children, she delivered her own maidservant, Hagar by name, the Egyptian, to Abraham in order to produce children. And so wisdom, which cohabited with faith (Abraham was reputed as faithful and righteous) was still at this time barren and without child in that generation, and had not yet given to Abraham the progeny of virtue; she rightly wished that the man, who had already some progress, should first unite with worldly education (Egypt being allegorically the world), before approaching her, according to divine providence, to conceive Isaac.

Although the broad strokes remain intact, Clement has made significant shifts in Philo's characterizations of Abraham's consorts. Sarah is no longer cast as ἡ κυρία φιλοσοφία, as she was in *Congr.* 145, but is designated as σοφία, the wisdom that rules philosophy. Hagar too takes on a new function. She is no longer associated with ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία but instead κοσμικῇ παιδείᾳ. Her role is altered so that she represents not the specifically preliminary studies,

¹⁰³ Cicero, *De Off.* II 5; Seneca, Ep. 88; Plutarch, *Mor.* 874E.

¹⁰⁴ As noted by van den Hoek, *Philo in the Stromateis*, 33.

excluding the pursuit of philosophy, as she did in Philo's treatise, but παιδεία more broadly. In Clement's re-telling, philosophy is demoted from mistress to handmaid.

Hagar's shifting identity is made clearer as the chapter continues. Clement again subtly adapts a Philonic source text, here *Congr.* 153–154, where he once again identifies Hagar specifically with ἐνκύκλια παιδεία. Once again, Clement changes the descriptor to align with his recasting of the handmaid:

διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ὁ Ἀβραάμ, παραζηλούσης τῆς Σάρρας τὴν Ἄγαρ παρευδοκιμοῦσαν αὐτήν, ὡς ἂν τὸ χρήσιμον ἐκλεξάμενος μόνον τῆς κοσμικῆς φιλοσοφίας, «ἰδοὺ ἡ παιδίσκη ἐν ταῖς χερσί σου, χρῶ αὐτῇ ὡς ἂν σοι ἄρεστόν ᾤ» φησί. δηλῶν ὅτι ἀσπάζομαι μὲν τὴν κοσμικὴν παιδείαν καὶ ὡς νεωτέραν καὶ ὡς σὴν θεραπαινίδα, τὴν δὲ ἐπιστήμην τὴν σὴν ὡς τελείαν δέσποιναν τιμῶ καὶ σέβω.

That is why Abraham, seeing Sarah's jealousy at Hagar being treated with more honour than herself, choosing only what was useful of worldly philosophy, said to her, "Look, your maidservant is in your hands; do with her as you wish," meaning, I welcome worldly education as younger and as your servant, but I honour and revere your knowledge as my perfect mistress. *Strom.* 1.5.32.1

In Clement's reformulation, philosophy is not at one with wisdom, the higher lover represented by Sarah in Philo's allegory. Philosophy becomes "worldly" and incorporated with the preparatory subjects as a useful first step on the path to knowledge.

Philo's name finally appears, without introduction, at the end of the borrowing. The reader is given no hint of his origins or whether he belongs to the ἐκκλησία. All Clement says about Philo is that he is one who interprets, revealing the deeper meaning of the sacred text which is not immediately apparent:

ἐρμηνεύει δὲ ὁ Φίλων τὴν μὲν Ἄγαρ παροίκησιν ἐνταῦθα γὰρ εἴρηται· «μὴ πολὺς ἴσθι πρὸς ἀλλοτρίαν», τὴν Σάραν δὲ ἀρχὴν μου.

Philo interprets Hagar as “sojourner/foreigner,” for it is said in connection to this, “do not be for long with a strange woman”; and Sarah he interprets “my ruler.”
Strom. 1.5.31

Philo renders an important service in Clement’s argument. Via his allegorical interpretation of Hagar’s name, Clement is able to make the connection between the “foreign woman” of Prov. 5:20 and the useful concubine of Genesis 16. By drawing the parallel with Hagar, Clement effectively neutralizes his opponents’ criticism of pursuing Greek education, including philosophical studies, as prohibited by the scriptures. Although Clement modifies his source material, nowhere does he claim to be following Philo’s argument. It is only for the interpretation of the two names, Hagar and Sarah, that he acknowledges his reliance on Philo, possibly invoking him as a known authority on the allegorical interpretation of the scriptures. The rest of the borrowing is not explicitly attributed to him.¹⁰⁵ While Philo provides the bulk of the raw materials Clement uses in his apologetic interpretation of Sarah and Hagar, the finished product has undergone significant alterations.

4.3 *Stromateis* 1.15.72

The next time we encounter Philo in the *Stromateis*, he is overtly identified for the first time as a Pythagorean:

τούτων πάντων πρεσβύτατον μακρῶ τὸ Ἰουδαίων γένος, καὶ τὴν παρ’ αὐτοῖς φιλοσοφίαν ἔγγραπτον γενομένην προκατάρξαι τῆς παρ’ Ἑλλησι φιλοσοφίας διὰ πολλῶν ὁ Πυθαγόρειος ὑποδείκνυσι Φίλων, οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ Ἀριστόβουλος ὁ Περιπατητικὸς καὶ ἄλλοι πλείους, ἵνα μὴ κατ’ ὄνομα ἐπιὼν διατρίβω.

The race of the Jews is the oldest by far of all of these, and that their written philosophy came into being prior to the philosophy of the Greeks, the

¹⁰⁵ What we make of this diminution of dependence and abbreviated introduction rests in large part on our understanding of the genre and *Sitz im Leben* of the *Stromateis*. If the treatises are a teaching tool aimed at an insider audience, then the minimal attribution is of little consequence. We may presume that either Clement’s students were familiar with Philo and his writings or that a more extensive introduction would have been supplied in the course of his lectures.

Pythagorean Philo demonstrated, and also Aristobulus the Peripatetic and many others, whom it suffices that I not name. *Strom.* 1.15.72

Here Philo's name is listed among others shown either to argue or to admit that Greek philosophy owes its origins to the barbarian peoples. The context clearly presents Philo as an apologist for the antiquity of the Jewish race but stops short of actually calling him a Jew. As we noted above, David T. Runia has suggested that Clement hesitates to identify his two Jewish sources as Jews in this context because it would weaken his argument; after all, "there is nothing remarkable about a Jew claiming the antiquity of his own race."¹⁰⁶ Runia's explanation presumes a strongly apologetic character for the *Stromateis* that is difficult to reconcile with the likelihood that the treatises were "insider" texts, be they lecture notes, esoteric textbooks, or mnemonic devices. Even if Clement here conveniently neglects to mention the "obvious" Jewishness of Philo and Aristobulus, he is not compelled to identify them with Greek philosophical traditions. If the epithet "Pythagorean" is not intended to obfuscate Philo's Jewishness, it is likely that the term was thought by Clement to convey something of importance about him.

Just a few paragraphs prior to his citation of "the Pythagorean Philo," Clement invokes Pythagoras as "the first to call himself a philosopher."¹⁰⁷ *Strom.* 1.15 rehearses a short summary of the life of Pythagoras as it was passed on by various biographers, citing the works of Aristarchus, Neanthes, Hippobotus, Aristoxenus, and Theopompus.¹⁰⁸ Clement notes that while the sources cannot agree on Pythagoras's birthplace, with some claiming it to be Tuscany, others Syria, and still others Tyre, most are convinced that Pythagoras was of barbarian extraction

¹⁰⁶ Runia, "Philo the Pythagorean," 6.

¹⁰⁷ *Strom.* 1.14.61.4: "ὅψὲ δὲ Πυθαγόρας ὁ Φερεκύδου γνώριμος φιλόσοφον ἑαυτὸν πρῶτος ἀνηγόρευσεν"

¹⁰⁸ None of these works survive in full, however they are cited by Porphyry among the thirty-one sources he mentions in his *Life of Pythagoras*. Aristoxenus, *floruit* in the 3rd C BCE, is deemed by I. Levy to be the "founder of literary biography." He wrote volumes on the Life of Pythagoras, the Pythagorean Sayings, and the Pythagorean Way of Life. Neanthes was likely a 3rd C BCE historian from Cyzicus. Theopompus, born c. 380 BCE in Chios, is a historian whose works Clement criticizes earlier in *Strom.* 1.1. Hippobotus, born c. 200 BCE, is frequently mentioned by Diogenes Laertius as a historian of philosophical schools. See Dillon and Hershbell, "Introduction," in Iamblichus, *On the Pythagorean way of life*, 6–14.

(*Strom.* 1.14.62.2). Moreover, he is widely reported to have travelled extensively, to have studied under Chaldeans, and even to have had himself circumcised in order to be admitted to the shrines of the Egyptians.¹⁰⁹ Although he was the founder of Italic philosophy and one of the original roots of Greek thought, the sources of Pythagoras's thought were all barbarian. Pythagoras (and, by extension, Pythagoreans) thus challenge the opposition between Greek and barbarian taken for granted in Greco-Roman discourse; for Clement's purposes, Pythagoras and his eponymous followers are both barbarian and Greek.

Clement argues that the Jews, more than other barbarian races, had an outsized influence on Pythagoras and his teachings. After rehearsing a tedious chronology establishing the antiquity of Jewish philosophy, Clement proceeds to explain that the Pythagoreans learned—indeed stole—their wisdom from the Jews. Citing Aristobulus at *Strom.* 1.22.150, Clement reports that “Pythagoras transferred many of our [i.e., the Jews'] doctrines into his own.”¹¹⁰ The similarity between Jewish philosophy and the teachings of the wisest Greeks, Plato and Pythagoras, was recognized not only by Jews and Clement's fellow Christ-believers, but by the eminent Numenius as well, whom Clement also identifies as a Pythagorean philosopher. It is to him that Clement attributes the famous *bon mot*, “What is Plato but Moses speaking Attic Greek?”¹¹¹

This second reference to Philo in the *Stromateis* thus establishes him as an authority on the history of the Jews while refraining from identifying him as a Jew as such. Philo, like Numenius, is referred to as a Pythagorean, a tradition Clement describes as old and venerable among the Greeks but nevertheless dependent on Jewish wisdom.

¹⁰⁹ *Strom.* 1.15.66.2, “Θαλῆς δὲ Φοῖνιξ ὦν τὸ γένος καὶ τοῖς Αἰγυπτίων προφήταις συμβεβληκέναι εἴρηται, καθάπερ καὶ ὁ Πυθαγόρας αὐτοῖς γε τοῦτοις, δι' οὓς καὶ περιετέμετο.”

¹¹⁰ Πυθαγόρας πολλὰ τῶν παρ' ἡμῖν μετενέγκας εἰς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ δογματοποιάν. *Strom.* 1.22.150.3. Here Aristobulus is quite unambiguously identified as belonging to the Jewish people.

¹¹¹ Τί γάρ ἐστι Πλάτων ἢ Μωυσῆς ἀττικίζων; *Strom.* 1.22.150.4.1.

4.4 *Stromateis* 1.23.153

Clement continues his demonstration in the *Stromateis* of the Jewish scriptures' similarity but ultimate superiority to Greek philosophy with a summary of Moses' life and accomplishments. In this section, he adopts the structure of Philo's *Life of Moses* I and II, interspersed with citations from the Jewish historians Eupolemos and Artapanus and the playwright Ezekiel in order to present a hagiographic account of Moses' life.¹¹² Annewies van den Hoek notes that Clement "reduces the narrative of *De Vita Mosis I* to some identifiable fragments with the apparent intention of reproducing this 'historical novel' as briefly as possible. In the second part he uses Philo only schematically."¹¹³ From the narrative account in *Life of Moses I*, she notes that Clement selects only Philo's account of Moses' birth, education, ancestry, and career as a shepherd, all included in the Exodus narrative.¹¹⁴ From *Life of Moses II*, Clement adopts elements of Philo's depiction of Moses as the ideal king, prophet, and legislator, and grants him the additional titles of tactician (τακτικός, which he describes as imposing order, both in the state and in the soul), general (στρατηγικός; Clement credits Moses as the model for Miltiade's victory at Marathon), statesman (πολιτικός), and philosopher (φιλόσοφος). Significantly, Clement omits Philo's description of Moses as the ideal High Priest, a title which, as van den Hoek notes, Clement reserves for Jesus/the λόγος.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Eupolemus was a Greek-speaking Palestinian who lived in the mid-2nd C BCE. According to Carl R. Holladay, "he is reliably identified as "Eupolemus, the son of John, the son of Accos," who participated in an embassy to Rome in 161. Nothing certain is known of Artapanus. Holladay notes that "The name Artapanus is of Persian origin, and this may point to mixed descent. . . The essential dilemma has always been that the fragments appeared far too syncretistic to have been produced by a Jew, however liberal; yet, they are so thoroughly committed to the glorification of Jewish heroes and Jewish history that a pagan origin in impossible." Both authors were preserved by Alexander Polyhistor; whether Clement encountered their works via Alexander, another compilation, or the original texts themselves is a matter of debate. See Holladay, *Fragments from Hellenistic Jewish Authors Volume I: Historians* (Scholars Press: Chico, 1983).

¹¹³ van den Hoek, *Philo in the Stromateis*, 68.

¹¹⁴ van den Hoek, *Philo in the Stromateis*, 62.

¹¹⁵ van den Hoek, *Philo in the Stromateis*, 64.

Clement explicitly mentions Philo as his source for his knowledge of Moses' eclectic education:

Ἐν δὲ ἡλικίᾳ γενόμενος ἀριθμητικὴν τε καὶ γεωμετρίαν ῥυθμικὴν τε καὶ ἀρμονικὴν ἔτι τε μετρικὴν ἅμα καὶ μουσικὴν παρὰ τοῖς διαπρέπουσιν Αἰγυπτίων ἐδιδάσκετο καὶ προσέτι τὴν διὰ συμβόλων φιλοσοφίαν, ἣν ἐν τοῖς ἱερογλυφικοῖς γράμμασιν ἐπιδείκνυνται τὴν δὲ ἄλλην ἐγκύκλιον παιδείαν Ἕλληνες ἐδίδασκον ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ, ὡς ἂν βασιλικὸν παιδίον, ἧ φησι Φίλων ἐν τῷ Μουσέως βίῳ, προσεμάνθανε δὲ τὰ Ἀσσυρίων γράμματα καὶ τὴν τῶν οὐρανίων ἐπιστήμην παρὰ τε Χαλδαίων παρὰ τε Αἰγυπτίων, ὅθεν ἐν ταῖς Πράξεσι πᾶσαν σοφίαν Αἰγυπτίων πεπαιδεῦσθαι φέρεται.

When he was old enough, he was taught arithmetic and geometry, rhythm and harmonics as well as metrics and also music by distinguished Egyptians, and further philosophy through symbols, which they display with holy inscriptions (hieroglyphics). The remaining encyclical curriculum Greeks taught him in Egypt, as though he were a royal child, as Philo says in “The Life of Moses”; he was taught the Assyrian letters and the knowledge of the heavens by Chaldeans and Egyptians; on that account he is said in the Acts [of the Apostles] “to have been taught all the wisdom of the Egyptians.” 1.23.153.

Although Clement re-presents the text of Philo's *Life of Moses* 1.23 nearly word-for-word, he omits context that significantly alters the impression of the text. Earlier in Philo's account, Moses' foreign teachers were said to be no match for the inborn talents of their student, who quickly exceeded them in knowledge.¹¹⁶ In Clement's version, Moses is presented less as an innovator than as a repository for all knowledge, both Greek and barbarian. The presence of Greek teachers of encyclical studies seems anachronistic, as both Philo and Clement insist that the Greeks owe their wisdom to the Hebrews. It is noteworthy that the Greeks are said to teach Moses not philosophy (Clement goes on to argue that Moses' writings taught Plato dialectic) but only the introductory subjects that he had not learned from his Egyptian teachers. The chronology is still problematic—what might Greek grammar have consisted of before Homer

¹¹⁶ ἐν οὐ μακρῷ χρόνῳ τὰς δυνάμεις ὑπερέβαλεν εὐροϊρῖα φύσεως φθάνων τὰς ὑφηγήσεις, ὡς ἀνάμνησιν εἶναι δοκεῖν, οὐ μάθησιν, ἔτι καὶ προσεπινοῶν αὐτὸς τὰ δυσθεώρητα. *Life of Moses* 1.21.

and Hesiod?— but the intention remains clear. Moses acquires the wisdom of all peoples, and his writings, inspired by the λόγος, contain the pinnacle of human wisdom.

Although Clement generally follows Philo’s word choice, an interesting deviation occurs with the word ἱερογλυφικοῖς, hieroglyphics, a technical term which, then as now, refers especially to the sacred pictorial script of the Egyptians.¹¹⁷ Philo’s text reads, “. . . ἣν ἐν τοῖς λεγομένοις ἱεροῖς γράμμασιν ἐπιδείκνυνται καὶ διὰ τῆς τῶν ζώων ἀποδοχῆς, ἃ καὶ θεῶν τιμαῖς γεραίρουσι. τὴν δὲ ἄλλην ἐγκύκλιον παιδείαν Ἕλληνας . . .”¹¹⁸ While Philo derides the “so-called” holy writings and animal worship of the Egyptians, Clement, arguing in favour of the barbarian origin of philosophy, edits out Philo’s criticism.¹¹⁹ Clement’s account, and his use of the technical term, indicates an openness to Egyptian wisdom as an instance of the λόγος at work in the world absent from his Philonic model.

As was also the case in his borrowing of Philo’s interpretation of Sarah and Hagar, Clement does not mention his source until midway through the borrowing. Intriguingly, Philo’s name comes up again in the context of education, and particularly in the division of studies between encyclical and advanced subjects. He is again depicted as an expert source in Hebrew history, especially of its intersections with other cultures.

4.5 Situating the Final Philonic Borrowing in the context of *Stromateis* 2

¹¹⁷ So Liddell-Scott-Jones.

¹¹⁸ “which they display in so-called holy characters and through the favour they bestow on animals, to whom they give the honours due to gods. The remaining encyclical curriculum. . .”

¹¹⁹ While criticizing Egyptian animal worship is one of Philo’s favourite hobby-horses, Clement offers a positive figurative interpretation of the practice at *Strom.* 5.7. In *Contra Celsum* 1.20, Origen uses Celsus’s praise of the symbolic interpretation of Egyptian animal worship to demonstrate his hypocrisy in criticizing the allegorical interpretation of the Hebrew scriptures: “If, to make their doctrine about the animals respectable, the Egyptians introduce theological interpretations, they are wise; but if a man who has accepted the Jewish law and lawgiver refers everything to the only God, the Creator of the universe, he is regarded by Celsus and people like him as inferior to one who brings God down to the level not only of rational and mortal beings but even to that of irrational animals.” See also *Contra Celsum* 1.52; 3.17–19; 4.90; 5.51; 6.80.

The final mention of Philo occurs toward the end of the second *Stromateus*. Clement's discussion has shifted from the demonstration of the barbarian (and pre-eminently Jewish) origin of Greek philosophy, ultimately locating the origin of all true philosophy in the λόγος, to the means by which that truth can be discerned. In this book, he articulates his theory that πίστις (faith, belief, loyalty) in Jesus as the incarnation of the λόγος is the first principle of ἐπιστήμη (discursive knowledge).¹²⁰ For Clement, πίστις consists not only of intellectual assent to a series of propositions, but a life lived faithfully according to the ethical precepts taught by the λόγος both in the Gospels and, mystically, through the law and the Prophets (*Strom.* 2.2.4, 2.5.21.5). Naming the followers of Valentinus and Basilides as his opponents, Clement insists that πίστις is neither innate nor an inferior form of salvation reserved for those of second-rate nature (φύσις).¹²¹

A life of πίστις has ethical requirements. The precepts written in the law must be kept; however, as Jesus revealed to his disciples, the law is not always intended to be fulfilled literally.¹²² The λόγος reveals that there are four ways by which the law instructs: by types,¹²³ signs, literal commands, and prophecy (*Strom.* 1.28.179.3). Determining which method of interpretation applies in each situation is a “manly” (ἀνδρῶν) task requiring prior training in

¹²⁰ “And since choice is the beginning of action, faith is discovered to be the beginning of action, being the foundation of rational choice in the case of any one who exhibits to himself the previous demonstration through faith” *Strom.* 2.2.8.

¹²¹ *Strom.* 2.3.10: οἱ δὲ ἀπὸ Οὐαλεντίνου τὴν μὲν πίστιν τοῖς ἀπλοῖς ἀπονεύσαντες ἡμῖν, αὐτοῖς δὲ τὴν γνῶσιν τοῖς φύσει σωζομένοις κατὰ τὴν τοῦ διαφέροντος πλεονεξίαν σπέρματος ἐνυπάρχειν βούλονται, μακρῶ δὴ κεχωρισμένην πίστει, ἢ τὸ πνευματικὸν τοῦ ψυχικοῦ, λέγοντες. ἔτι φασὶν οἱ ἀπὸ Βασιλείδου πίστιν ἅμα καὶ ἐκλογὴν οἰκεῖαν εἶναι καθ’ ἕκαστον διάστημα, κατ’ ἐπακολούθημα δ’ αὖ τῆς ἐκλογῆς τῆς ὑπερκοσμίου τὴν κοσμικὴν ἀπάσης φύσεως συνέπεσθαι πίστιν κατάλληλόν τε εἶναι τῇ ἐκάστου ἐλπίδι καὶ τῆς πίστεως τὴν δωρεάν. “For the Valentinians, assigning faith to us, the simple, would have it that γνῶσις belongs to them only who are saved by nature, according to the superior quality of their seed; they say that γνῶσις is very different from πίστις, as the pneumatic from the psychic. The disciples of Basilides add that faith and election, the two together, are particular kinds of degree, and so, consequently that cosmic faith depends on supercosmic election, and moreover that the gift of faith is proportional to the hope of each individual.”

¹²² At *Strom.* 2.23.147, Clement argues that the law that an adulteress be put to death is kept when she repents; her former self is dead since she is regenerated into a new life; *Strom.* 4.3.8.6 interprets the sabbath as instructing self-control.

¹²³ “ὡς τύπον τινὰ δηλοῦσαν” is absent from the Greek mss; Mondésert and Caster supply it in the *Sources chrétiennes* edition from the scholia to fill out the “four ways” indicated in the mss.

dialectic reasoning.¹²⁴ Faithfulness to the instruction of the law, properly interpreted, is the beginning of virtue. After reiterating the reciprocity between πίστις, γνῶσις, and ἀγάπη, Clement concludes, “the virtues are elements of γνῶσις, πίστις is yet more fundamental, as necessary for the gnostic to live as breathing, as long as he lives in our world; and just as it is impossible to live without the four elements, in the same way without πίστις there is no γνῶσις. Πίστις is thus the ground of truth.”¹²⁵

4.6 *Stromateis* 2.19.100

Strom. 2.7 marks a turning point in the argument of Book 2, as Clement incorporates a defence of the goodness and divine origin of the law into his larger discussion of the necessity of πίστις. After defending the Hebrew Scriptures against the objections of the Marcionites (*Strom.* 2.8.39) and the philosophers, Clement, dependent on Philo’s *On the Virtues*,¹²⁶ attempts to show that “all the other virtues, as described by Moses, were the origin of the whole of Greek ethical theory, that is, of courage, temperance, prudence, justice, endurance and patience, self-control, and above all piety” (*Strom.* 2.18.78).¹²⁷ Philo’s collection of philanthropic laws, which he employs against Roman charges of Jewish μισανθρωπία, is taken over nearly whole by Clement, who uses

¹²⁴ *Strom.* 1.28.179.4. Here Clement seems to argue that, in general, only one of these interpretations is correct, in opposition to Origen, Augustine, and later Medieval exegetes that will look for two, three, or four interpretations in each text.

¹²⁵ *Strom.* 2.6.31.3 στοιχείων γοῦν οὐσῶν τῆς γνώσεως τῶν προειρημένων ἀρετῶν στοιχειωδεστέραν εἶναι συμβέβηκε τὴν πίστιν, οὕτως ἀναγκαίαν τῷ γνωστικῷ ὑπάρχουσιν, ὥς τῷ κατὰ τὸν κόσμον τόνδε βιοῦντι πρὸς τὸ ζῆν τὸ ἀναπνεῖν· ὥς δ’ ἄνευ τῶν τεσσάρων στοιχείων οὐκ ἔστι ζῆν, οὐδ’ ἄνευ πίστεως γνῶσιν ἐπακολουθῆσαι. αὕτη τοίνυν κρηπίς ἀληθείας.

¹²⁶ *De virtutibus* consists of four sub-treatises on the virtues courage (ἀνδρεία), philanthropy (φιланθρωπία), repentance (μετανοία) and good birth (εὐγενεία), seemingly intended to follow from the conclusion of *Spec. Leg.* The text of *De Virtutibus* has come down in a number of variant forms, including fragments preserved in papyri from Oxyrhynchus dating to the third century. On this material and the structure of *De virtutibus*, see James R. Royse, “The Text of Philo’s *De virtutibus*,” *SPhA* 18 (2006): 73–101.

¹²⁷ Parallels between Philo, Clement and Stoic conceptions of virtue have been frequently noted. See Pierre Camelot, *Stromate II. Sources chrétiennes* 38 (1951), 108; Clement contrasts his virtue theory with the Stoic at *Strom.* 2.19.101: “That’s why the Stoics have stated that the goal of man is to live in conformity with nature, inverting the name of God and that of nature in an indecent manner, for the domain of nature is plants, seeds, trees and stones.”

Philo's arguments to charge that Marcion and his followers "are neither virtuous enough to understand the law, nor, in fact have well understood it" (*Strom.* 2.18.84.2).¹²⁸

Departing from Philo, Clement re-assigns the authorship of the law from Moses to the λόγος. The law ceases to be the national legislation of the people of Israel as it is transformed into the universal source of virtue. Clement intersperses his Philonic borrowings with compatible teachings derived from Christian written and oral traditions. The injunction of Ex. 23:5 and Deut. 22:4 to care for the livestock of one's enemies is presented as a "teaching of the Lord" and combined with the command in Matt. 5:44 to pray for one's enemies (*Strom.* 2.18.90.1). At *Strom.* 2.18.91, he interjects into his Philonic source material, "does the law not appear philanthropic and beneficent, that which leads to Christ, and does this God not appear good and just, caring for each generation, from the beginning to the end, to lead them to salvation?"

Interrupting his source text, Clement supplements Philo's defense of the law's φιλανθρωπία with additional allegorical (more precisely tropological) exegeses, applying the moral principles inherent in the law to different circumstances. Clement extends the proscription of Deut. 22:10 against yoking together an ox and an ass, which Philo presents as a literal injunction promoting the humane treatment of animals. Although acknowledging the validity of its literal interpretation, Clement offers two additional allegorical interpretations of the law: not to yoke together people of other races, "when we have nothing against them apart from their foreignness, for which they are not responsible, which is not an immoral trait and does not spring

¹²⁸ Clement abbreviates Philo's praise of laws forbidding interest on loans (84); prompt payment of wages (85); humane treatment of debtors (85); prohibition of harvesting what has fallen on the ground (85–6); the year of Jubilee (86); return of lost livestock to its owner (87); welcoming Gentiles (88); permitting a period of grieving for captive women (88–9); the liberation of slaves in the seventh year of their servitude (91); kind treatment of animals (92–3); not to destroy the fertility of enemy land (95). He omits entirely only the section on Moses as a model of *philanthropia*.

from one”¹²⁹ and against “sharing the cultivation of the λόγος on equal terms between pure and impure, faithful and faithless” (*Strom.* 2.18.94).¹³⁰ Here Clement parts company with Philo, who considers the Pentateuch to be of little value as a history book but rarely allegorizes the law so as to undermine the importance of its literal fulfilment.¹³¹

It is at the end of this extended borrowing that Clement mentions Philo’s name for the last time in the *Stromateis*. Following his Philonic source, Clement cites Adam, Noah, and the Patriarchs to argue that true nobility is not a function of good birth (εὐγένεια) but of obedience to God. By imitating them, one becomes “a co-citizen of the righteous ancients who lived according to the law and conformed to the law before the law, and whose actions become laws for us” (100). The end result of the virtuous life lived in obedience to the law is resemblance to God. Clement associates this ὁμοίωσις with the life of the true gnostic. He is fully aware, however, that he is not the first thinker to arrive at this formulation:

Πλάτων δὲ ὁ φιλόσοφος, εὐδαιμονίαν τέλος τιθέμενος, ὁμοίωσιν θεῷ φησιν αὐτὴν εἶναι κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν, εἴτε καὶ συνδραμῶν πως τῷ δόγματι τοῦ νόμου αἱ γὰρ μεγάλαι φύσεις καὶ γυμναὶ παθῶν εὐστοχοῦσιν πως περὶ τὴν ἀλήθειαν, ὥς φησιν ὁ Πυθαγόρειος Φίλων τὰ Μωυσέως ἐξηγούμενος, εἴτε καὶ παρὰ τινων τότε λογίων ἀναδιδαχθεὶς ἅτε μαθήσεως ἀεὶ διψῶν. φησὶ γὰρ ὁ νόμος· ὀπίσω κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ ὑμῶν πορεύεσθε καὶ τὰς ἐντολάς μου φυλάξετε. τὴν μὲν γὰρ ἐξομοίωσιν ὁ νόμος ἀκολουθίαν ὀνομάζει· ἡ δὲ τοιαύτη ἀκολουθία κατὰ δύναμιν ἐξομοιοῖ.

And Plato the philosopher, proposing happiness to be the goal, says that it is “to resemble God as far as possible.” Perhaps here he is discerning the teaching of the law, “for those with great natures and naked of passions somehow hit on the truth,” as Philo the Pythagorean said in his exegesis of the writings of Moses; perhaps, on the other hand, he was taught by certain wise traditions,

¹²⁹ trans. Ferguson. ἀπαγορεύει τε ἐν ταῦτῳ καταζευγνύναι πρὸς ἄροτον γῆς βοῦν καὶ ὄνον, τάχα μὲν καὶ τοῦ περὶ τὰ ζῷα ἀνοικείου στοχασάμενος, δηλῶν δ’ ἅμα μηδένα τῶν ἑτεροεθνῶν ἀδικεῖν καὶ ὑπὸ ζυγὸν ἄγειν, οὐδὲν ἔχοντας αἰτιάσασθαι ἢ ὅτι τὸ ἀλλογενές, ὅπερ ἐστὶν ἀναίτιον, μήτε κακία μήτε ἀπὸ κακίας ὀρμώμενον.

¹³⁰ trans. Ferguson.

¹³¹ The contrast in approach to the law is further brought out in Clement’s interpretation of the Decalogue in *Strom.* 6. Although sometimes acknowledging the literal prescription, Clement directs his attention to the commandments’ spiritual fulfillment. Significantly, Clement’s interpretation contains no clear borrowings of Philo’s treatise *On the Decalogue*.

since he was always thirsting after learning. For the law says, “walk in the ways of the Lord your God and guard my commandments.” For the law calls assimilation “following after”; and this following after renders one like God as far as possible. *Strom.* 2.19.100

This citation marks the second time Philo is called a Pythagorean. The reference to Philo bridges Plato’s Greek wisdom with the commandment of Deut. 30:16. Philo the Pythagorean reappears in Clement’s mind, and his *Stromateis*, in order to demonstrate the unity of the Greek and the barbarian understanding that ὁμοίωσις, likeness to God, is part and parcel with a life well lived.

Philo is mentioned here after being “conspicuously absent,” in van den Hoek’s estimation, throughout the discourse of the virtues.¹³² Again, Philo is not acknowledged as the source of the previous thread in the *Stromateus*, perhaps because, yet again, Clement has subtly altered his Philonic raw materials to produce his own argument. The text that Clement quotes does not derive from *On the virtues*, as do the many Philonic borrowings that directly precede it. Rather, it is taken from the *Life of Moses II*, part of the text that Clement omitted from the previous extended borrowing in *Strom.* 1. In the source text, Philo is in fact referring to Moses as the one whose “great nature” allowed him to arrive at knowledge beyond the scope of his accomplished teachers. Clement applies Philo’s description to Plato as well, suggesting that the Athenian may have independently discovered the originally Hebrew (in Clement’s estimation) concept of ὁμοίωσις. Or, he may have picked it up from a sage familiar with the law of Moses.¹³³

Conclusions

Clement employs Philo as an expert exegete and historian of Jewish antiquity. In particular, he is brought in to testify about the intersections between ancient Hebrew and foreign wisdom, attesting to the ultimately Hebrew source of Greek learning. In spite of the insight into Jewish

¹³² van den Hoek, *Philo in the Stromateis*, 107.

¹³³ Philo entertains similar speculations about the source of Socrates’ correct teachings in *QG* 2:6.

history he provides, Philo is not called a Jew; instead Clement twice calls him a Pythagorean.

What Clement intends to communicate with this epithet is the subject of our next investigation.

5. Pythagoras and Pythagoreans in the *Stromateis*¹³⁴

5.1 Clement's Pythagoras

In *Stromateis* 1, Pythagoras figures prominently as an intermediary between Greek and barbarian wisdom. Although esteemed as one of the original Greek philosophers, Pythagoras is shown to have been born outside of Greece (exactly where is a matter of debate) and to have studied with a vast number of exotic teachers, from the Brahmins of India to the Egyptian prophet Sonches, before introducing philosophy to Italy.¹³⁵ Although ancient, he is demonstrated to have lived centuries after Moses, described by Clement as the original philosopher, to whom the λόγος was exceptionally known.¹³⁶

Stromateis 1 thus continues an apologetic tradition, adapted from Jewish forbearers, that aims to establish the legitimacy of Christianity through the demonstration of its antiquity.¹³⁷

Clement's "barbarian philosophy," revealed in the law of Moses and made manifest through the

¹³⁴ This argument appears, in expanded form, as Jennifer Otto, "Philo, Judaeus? A re-evaluation of why Clement calls Philo 'the Pythagorean'" in *SPhA* 25 (2013): 115–138.

¹³⁵ *Strom.* 1.14.62 (3x); 1.14.63 (2x); 1.15.66 (2x); 1.15.68; 1.15.69; 1.15.70

¹³⁶ *Strom.* 1.14.61; 1.14.65; 15.72; 1.16.80; 1.16.80; 1.21.107, 1.21.129, 1.21.130.

¹³⁷ A tradition that, arguably, begins with Paul's speech in Acts 17:16–34 and is taken over more explicitly by Tatian, whose argument Clement incorporates in *Strom.* 1, and Justin. This Jewish and Christian apologetic is related to a broader Greco-Roman interest in the ultimate origins of philosophy. David T. Runia notes, "A massive body of ethnographic and 'historical' writings—now almost completely lost—was based on the assumption that the *oikoumene* possessed a common culture with a single source. The central question was: what was that source, which nation could take the credit for discovery and authentic tradition? Addressing the Roman senate, Cicero no doubt found a willing ear for his assertion that their ancestors were not the pupils but the teachers of the philosophers in the matter of religion. In one and the same treatise Plutarch states that Pythagoras based his precepts on secret teachings of the Egyptian priests and that the names of Egyptian gods are to be explained by means of Greek etymologies." David T. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus of Plato* (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 532.

incarnation of the λόγος in Jesus, is the original philosophy from which all other philosophy, including Pythagoreanism, is derivative. The nature of this derivation is ambivalent. Clement often emphasizes the agreement of Pythagorean doctrines with the law, the prophets, the Gospels, or Paul.¹³⁸ As one of the oldest philosophies, Pythagorean teachings are presented as close relatives of the true teachings of the λόγος, with which they share something of a family resemblance. Pythagoreans and church members alike are monotheists¹³⁹ who believe in providence¹⁴⁰ and the immortality of the soul and judgment after death.¹⁴¹ Clement notes no distinction in ethics between Christians and Pythagoreans: both refuse to worship images¹⁴² or sacrifice animals,¹⁴³ face persecution with courage,¹⁴⁴ include virtuous women among their numbers,¹⁴⁵ are encouraged to pursue celibacy after having children,¹⁴⁶ and consider the words of their teacher as a legitimate foundation for faith.¹⁴⁷ The only Pythagorean doctrine that Clement criticizes is the transmigration of the soul and vegetarianism practiced on that account¹⁴⁸ (vegetarianism adopted as a method of developing one's ἐγκράτεια, self-mastery, is praised).¹⁴⁹ On the other hand, in the latter books of the *Stromateis*, Clement increasingly depicts this

¹³⁸ *Strom.* 1.1.10; 1.10.48; 1.15.70; 2.18.79; 4.3.9; 4.23.151; 4.26.171; 5.5.27 (2); 5.5.28 (2); 5.5.29; 5.5.29; 5.5.30; 5.5.31.

¹³⁹ *Protr.* 6.72

¹⁴⁰ *Protr.* 6.72; 5.13.88

¹⁴¹ *Strom.* 4.7.44, 4.22.144

¹⁴² *Strom.* 5.1.8; 5.5.28

¹⁴³ *Strom.* 7.6.32

¹⁴⁴ *Strom.* 4.8.56

¹⁴⁵ *Strom.* 4.19.121 (x2)

¹⁴⁶ *Strom.* 3.3.12; 3.3.24

¹⁴⁷ *Strom.* 2.5.24. Clement's evaluation of the acceptance of Pythagorean doctrine on faith is echoed by John Dillon: "All this Pythagorean activity, however, seems to have occurred on the non-philosophical, or at least sub-philosophical, level. The treatises are bald and didactic, stating their doctrine without attempt at proof, and aimed at an audience which, it would seem, was prepared to substitute faith for reason." *The Middle Platonists*, 119. Note the similarity between Dillon's evaluation of Hellenistic Pythagoreanism and Celsus's critique of Christianity.

¹⁴⁸ 7.6.32. On Pythagorean vegetarianism and its possible influence on early Christians, see Andrew McGowan, *Ascetic Eucharists: Food and Drink in Early Christian Ritual Meals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 69–78.

¹⁴⁹ *Paed.* 2.1.11

derivation as unacknowledged and prideful plagiarism.¹⁵⁰ The so-called “Great Pythagoras” and “Chief among the Greeks” offers only a distorted refraction of the true saving γνῶσις imparted by the λόγος known through Jesus.¹⁵¹

In *Stromateis* 5, Pythagoras and the school he inspired re-emerge in support of Clement’s claim that truly sacred texts communicate truths via enigmas.¹⁵² According to Iamblichus’s account of the Pythagorean way of life,

Most indispensable for him (Pythagoras) was his manner of teaching by means of symbols . . . But in accord with the “silence” legislated for them by Pythagoras, they engaged in divine mysteries and methods of instruction forbidden to the uninitiated, and through symbols, they protected their talks with one another and their treatises. And if someone, after singling out the actual symbols, does not explicate and comprehend them with an interpretation free from mockery, the things said will appear laughable and trivial to ordinary persons, full of nonsense and rambling. When, however, these utterances are explicated in accord with the manner of these symbols, they become splendid and sacred instead of obscure to the many, rather analogous to the prophecies and oracles of the Pythian god.¹⁵³

Similarly, Clement argues that the law, the prophets, and the sayings of Jesus conceal their true teaching from outsiders, so that their hidden meaning may be understood only by initiates: “The prophecies and the oracles are spoken in enigmas, and the mysteries are not exhibited carelessly to anyone who chances upon them but only after certain purifications and previous

¹⁵⁰ *Strom.* 5.14.89; 5.14.99; 6.2.17; 6.2.27.

¹⁵¹ *Strom.* 1.21.133; 5.11.67

¹⁵² Andrew Dinan demonstrates the pervasiveness of this theme in Clement’s thought. He notes, “*Ainittomai*, *ainigma*, and related forms appear more than one hundred and forty times in Clement’s extant works, often in connection with other words denoting oblique or allusive communication (*symbola*, *metaphora*, *parabole*, *allegoria*, *huponoia*).” These terms are most often used to describe the obscure utterances of scripture, however, “the second most common use of *ainittomai* and *ainigma* is to characterize the sayings of barbarian and Greek sages, philosophers, and poets, who foreshadow, often in astonishing ways, Christian teachings” (177). Among the barbarians and Greeks cited for their use of enigmas, Dinan affirms that “Clement, like Plutarch and others, especially finds riddles in the Pythagorean *symbola* and among Pythagoras’ teachers, the Egyptians” (177). See Dinan, “‘Αἰνιγμα and Αἰνιττομαι in the Works of Clement of Alexandria.” in *Papers Presented at the Fifteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies Held in Oxford 2007* (eds. Jane Baun et. al.: Leuven: Peeters, 2010): 175–180.

¹⁵³ Iamblichus, *On the Pythagorean way of life* (trans. Dillon and Hershbelle), 103–110.

instructions.”¹⁵⁴ The hermeneutic of the Pythagoreans is thus recommended as the correct method for interpreting the church’s scriptures (*Strom.* 5.5.29.3). By maintaining that the Pythagorean teachings are derivative of the Hebrew, however, Clement defends the stature and the originality of the Church’s holy writings as the highest source of profound hidden doctrines.

5.2 Philo the Pythagorean?

Having a fuller picture of Clement’s understanding of just what being a Pythagorean entailed, we may now reconsider the question, why did Clement call Philo “the Pythagorean”? Re-examining Clement’s borrowing of Philo’s allegorical interpretation of Sarah and Hagar as the propaedeutic and advanced studies, a number of Pythagorean elements emerge. Broadly, the context of the borrowing argues in favour of the pursuit of wide learning. The Philonic passage, with a few adjustments, helps Clement to argue that Greek philosophy, of which Pythagoras is an originator,¹⁵⁵ is a useful servant to the higher ἐπιστήμη and σοφία of the λόγος. Although a common element in Greek education, the two-stage paideutic system of *quadrivium* and *trivium* was especially associated with the Pythagorean school.¹⁵⁶ Pythagorean novices first studied the qualities of numbers prior to advancing to the higher studies of philosophy.¹⁵⁷ Philo is introduced

¹⁵⁴ *Strom.* 5.4.20.1 “Ἐντεῦθεν αἱ προφητεῖαι οἷ τε χρησιμοὶ λέγονται δι’ αἰνιγμάτων καὶ αἱ τελεταὶ τοῖς ἐντυγχάνουσιν ἀνέδην οὐ δείκνυνται, ἀλλὰ μετὰ τινων καθαρῶν καὶ προρρήσεων”).

¹⁵⁵ *Strom.* 1.14.62

¹⁵⁶ Note here the testimony of Justin: “I came to a Pythagorean, very celebrated—a man who thought much of his own wisdom. And then, when I had an interview with him, willing to become his hearer and disciple, he said, 'What then? Are you acquainted with music, astronomy, and geometry? Do you expect to perceive any of those things which conduce to a happy life, if you have not been first informed on those points which wean the soul from sensible objects, and render it fitted for objects which appertain to the mind, so that it can contemplate that which is honourable in its essence and that which is good in its essence?' Having commended many of these branches of learning, and telling me that they were necessary, he dismissed me when I confessed to him my ignorance.” Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*, 2.

¹⁵⁷ Proclus describes a Pythagorean propaedeutic *Quadrivium* of Arithmetic, Music, Geometry and Astronomy in his *Commentary on the First Book of Euclid’s Elements*, xii.

here as an interpreter of esoteric meanings hidden in the names of the Patriarchs and their wives, utilizing the hermeneutic attributed to the Pythagoreans in *Stromateis* 5.

In *Strom.* 1.23.153, Clement strategically adapts elements of *On the Life of Moses* as part of his broader argument that the archaic barbarian races taught philosophy to the Greeks. The Pythagorean Numenius made similar claims.¹⁵⁸ Allain Le Boulluec argues that Clement's development of this trope is directly influenced by Numenius, who was in turn influenced by Philo.¹⁵⁹ Prior to this borrowing, Clement asserts the continuity between the Mosaic and Pythagorean traditions, claiming that Pythagoras copied much from Moses, whom he presents, borrowing a phrase from Philo, as a fellow "interpreter of sacred laws."¹⁶⁰ Clement highlights similarities in Philo's depiction of Moses' education in barbarian wisdom with traditions surrounding Pythagoras. Both are taught by Chaldeans; Pythagoras is also said to have studied with Magi (including Zoroaster), Brahmins, Gauls and Assyrians, while Moses learned Assyrian letters. For both sages, preliminary study in the sacred traditions of the Egyptians is emphasized. Moses is taught their philosophy through symbols expressed in sacred writings, while Pythagoras is reported to have undergone circumcision in order to study mystical philosophy in their sacred sanctuaries.¹⁶¹

By borrowing from Philo's treatise *On Virtues* in *Strom.* 2, Clement presents the law as a means of inculcating virtues through a lifestyle of seemingly unusual practices and prohibitions,

¹⁵⁸ Numenius Frag. 1a, cf. Eusebius, *Preparatio Evangelica* 9.7.1. Édouard des Places, *Numénios: Fragments* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1973).

¹⁵⁹ "L'humanité aurait atteint la sagesse la plus haute, le savoir authentique, au commencement, quand elle était encore proche de son origine divine, et bien avant le début de la philosophie grecque. Numénios la développe, sous l'influence de Philon, et considère qu'à partir des témoignages de Platon, il faut remonter aux doctrines de Pythagore, 'puis en appeler aux peuples de renom,' à tout ce qu'ont établi les Brahmanes, les Juifs, les Mages et les Égyptiens." Allain Le Boulluec, "Introduction," *Stromates V*. Sources chrétiennes 278 (Paris: Cerf, 1981).

¹⁶⁰ *Strom.* 1.22.150.

¹⁶¹ ὁ Πυθαγόρας αὐτοῖς γε τούτοις, δι' οὓς καὶ περιετέμετο, ἵνα δὴ καὶ εἰς τὰ ἄδυνα κατελθὼν τὴν μυστικὴν παρ' Αἰγυπτίων ἐκμάθοι φιλοσοφίαν, Χαλδαίων τε καὶ Μάγων τοῖς ἀρίστοις συνεγένετο καὶ τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τὴν νῦν οὕτω καλουμένην τὸ παρ' αὐτῷ ὁμακοεῖον αἰνίττεται. *Strom.* 1.15.66; Cf. also Iamblichus, *Vit. Pyth.* 18 sq.

not unlike Iamblichus's defence of vegetarianism in *On The Pythagorean life* (106–109). A demonstration of the Pythagorean inculcation of piety, wisdom, justice, self-control, courage, and friendship also occupy the last section of Iamblichus's work (134–240). Clement makes an explicit connection between Pythagoreanism and the pursuit of virtue in 2.21.130.3, where Clement relates that “Pythagoras taught that the knowledge of the perfection of the virtues was happiness of the soul.”¹⁶² His borrowings from Philo's *On the Virtues* are also punctuated by claims of the law's harmony with Pythagorean teaching. Immediately following Clement's first borrowing of the sequence, on the law's inculcation of justice and wisdom, he interjects a reference to Prov. 11:1, “Deceitful balances are an abomination before God; but a just balance is acceptable to Him,” which he equates to the Pythagorean Symbol, “do not step over the balance.” Both are interpreted as general exhortations to justice. Borrowing Philo's notice of the law's concern for the welfare of animals, Clement comments that Pythagoras must have derived his own similar teaching from Moses. At 2.98.1 (*Virt.* 171–172), Clement echoes Philo in interpreting the mouth, hands, and heart of Deuteronomy as symbols indicating action, volition, and speech.

Although he is not explicitly cited as the source of Clement's musings on the virtues, Philo is called “the Pythagorean” a second time very shortly after the completion of the sequence. The immediate context of the borrowing, Plato and Moses' shared exhortation to *homoiosis*, may also have Pythagorean resonances. John Dillon supposes that, although no fragments of Numenius's ethical theory survive, it is likely that he considered “likeness to God” an ethical imperative.¹⁶³

¹⁶² This is the reading of MS L. Stählin follows a variant preserved by Theodoret which reads “numbers,” ἀριθμῶν, in place of “virtues,” ἀρετῶν. Contextually, “virtues” makes equally good sense.

¹⁶³ Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, 336.

Stromateis 5 does not make explicit mention of Philo as a source; it does, however, include an extensive borrowing from Philo's description of the Temple and vestments of the High Priest in *Life of Moses* II. This interpretation follows on the heels of a favourable description of the Pythagorean symbols. This theme begins in *Strom.* 5.4, where the initiates of the Mysteries, the Egyptian hieroglyphs and Socratic apothegms are shown to convey truth esoterically in the same manner as the scriptures. Pythagoras, however, is the parabolic teacher *par excellence*. Clement begins with the affirmation, "the Pythagorean symbols were related to the barbarian philosophy in a most mysterious manner."¹⁶⁴ Clement then adduces scriptural parallels to the esoteric interpretations of Pythagorean Symbols 7, 10, 33, 68, 27, 2, 4, 14.¹⁶⁵ Having thus demonstrated dependence, Clement concludes Pythagoras must have been acquainted with the writings of Moses.¹⁶⁶ Clement's elucidation of the cosmological mysteries hidden in the physical structure and furnishings of the Temple and the High Priest's clothing, which is dependant on Philo, follows directly after this extended demonstration of Pythagorean esotericism. This exegetical sequence combines a variety of elements known from Stoic, Platonic, Gnostic, and Apocalyptic texts. The framing of the chapter, however, underlines the association between correct biblical interpretation and Pythagorean exegesis. Clement ends the sequence by re-introducing the Pythagoreans, noting the famous *Ephesian Letters* whose esoteric meanings are revealed by "Androcydes the Pythagorean" (5.8.45). Clement thus associates Philo's method of allegorical interpretation of the Temple in *Strom.* 5.6 with the correct interpretation of hidden wisdom, an ability that is shared by the initiates of all philosophical

¹⁶⁴ Αὐτίκα τῆς βαρβάρου φιλοσοφίας πάνυ σφόδρα ἐπικεκρυμμένως ἡρτηται τὰ Πυθαγόρεια σύμβολα. *Strom.* 5.5.27.

¹⁶⁵ Alain Le Boulluec supplies parallels between Clement's choice of *Symbola* and Plutarch's Table Talks VIII (727c–728c), suggesting common use of the same source material, are frequently noted. The principal source for the allegorical interpretation of the Pythagorean Symbols is Androcydes, *Peri Pythagorikon Symbolon*. Walter Burkert attributes to him the interpretation of the *symbola* as *ainigmata*. Le Boulluec, *Stromate V*, 114–15.

¹⁶⁶ *Strom.* 5.5.27–30.

traditions but is especially characteristic of the Pythagoreans. In the unfolding of Clement's argument in book 5, Philo is located alongside Pythagoreans in a broad tradition of interpreting the hidden expressions of the λόγος in enigmatic texts.

5.3 Philo: Pythagorean and Jew?

The foregoing analysis illuminates the commonalities shared between Philo and the Pythagoreans in Clement's mind. We must now consider whether Clement may have considered Philo to be both a Jew and a Pythagorean. Although Clement asserts the unity of all truth, he especially emphasizes the relationship between Pythagoras and the teachings of Moses. Many later commentators have also noted similarities between Pythagorean and Jewish practices and have submitted a variety of explanations to account for those similarities. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Edouard Zeller and Isidore Levy both advanced theories that Pythagoreanism had exerted influence on Second-Temple Judaism, particularly among its more 'Hellenized' adherents.¹⁶⁷ Josephus makes direct comparisons between the Essenes and the Pythagoreans in *Ant.* 15.10.4, describing the Jewish sect as "practicing a way of life introduced to them by the Pythagoreans." Dillon and Hershbelle suggest that Philo's *On the Contemplative Life* portrays the *Therapeutae* as "having been much influenced by Pythagoreanism" and further report that "the notion of Jewish Pythagorean communities was much alive in the Graeco-Roman world."¹⁶⁸ Guy Stroumsa takes up Clement's position and argues that "Pythagoras was said . . .

¹⁶⁷ Isidore Levy, *La légende de Pythagore de Grèce en Palestine* (Paris: Champion, 1927); Edouard Zeller, *Die Philosophie der Griechen in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung* (Leipzig: Riesland, 1923). I owe these references to Dillon and Hershbelle, "Introduction," in *On the Pythagorean way of life*, 15.

¹⁶⁸ Dillon and Hershbelle, "Introduction," in *On the Pythagorean way of life*, 15 n. 71. The authors unfortunately do not supply primary sources to support their claims.

to have been under Jewish influence.”¹⁶⁹ Todd S. Beall, however, dismisses ancient and modern claims of mutual influence between Jews and Pythagoreans. In his analysis of Josephus’s comments on the Essenes, Beall concludes that Josephus exaggerates Essene similarities to Pythagoreans in order to make them more comprehensible to his Roman audience.¹⁷⁰ Being unfamiliar with living Essene communities, however, Clement may have taken Josephus’s claims at face value and thought of Philo as an Essene/Pythagorean Jew.

While the Essenes may or may not have been familiar with the Pythagoreans, the Pythagorean Numenius was certainly familiar with the Jewish scriptures. Clement, the earliest extant witness to Numenius, mentions him in almost the same breath as Philo in *Stromateis* 1.22–23, all in the context of proving the genetic relationship between Greek and Hebrew philosophy. Despite his interest in the exotic wisdom of the Hebrews and the Christians, Numenius is uniformly remembered by his successors as a Pythagorean, and certainly not a Jew (or, for that matter, a Christian).¹⁷¹ The question of whether Numenius knew the works of Philo remains a debated one. In any event, John Dillon remarks that “he was certainly acquainted with the results of allegorical exegesis of the Pentateuch.”¹⁷² The example of Numenius suggests that Clement may in fact have understood Philo to be, like Numenius, a non-Jewish Pythagorean who

¹⁶⁹ Stroumsa, *Barbarian Philosophy*, 61. Stroumsa does not mention a source; perhaps he has Clement’s claims in *Strom.* 1.23 in mind?

¹⁷⁰ According to Todd Beall, “Alleged similarities between the Essenes and Pythagoreanism include the prayer to the sun (*Jewish War* 2.128), practiced at the beginning and end of each day by the Pythagoreans; the prohibition of sacrifice among the Essenes (*Antiquities* 18.1,5) and among some Pythagoreans; similarities in their calendar and numerical systems; the immortality of the soul (*Jewish War* 2.154–7); and various similar cultic rituals (wearing of white, baths, secrecy, etc.)” Beall argues that these parallels do not stand up to scrutiny. See Beall, *Josephus’ Description of the Essenes Illustrated by the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 132.

¹⁷¹ Norman Bentwich, writing in 1913, considered Numenius “certainly a Jew”; see Bentwich, “From Philo to Plotinus” *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 1 (1913) 1–21. This speculation of the early twentieth century has fallen out of favour and is rebuked by John Dillon: “Efforts to prove Numenius a Jew are surely also misguided. One did not have to be a Jew in the Syria of the second century CE to be acquainted with either Jewish or Christian writings. Numenius certainly accord to the God of the Jews high honour, declaring him to be “without communion with others, and Father of all the gods, who will not have it that anyone should share in his honour”. . . but this is a position that could be adopted by a friendly gentile philosopher with esoteric and syncretistic tendencies” *The middle Platonists*, 379.

¹⁷² Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, 378.

recognized the hidden λόγος in the writings of the ancient Hebrews, without ruling out the possibility that he considered him both a Pythagorean and a Jew.

6. Conclusions

My analysis of the Philonic citations in the *Stromateis* indicates that Clement not only calls Philo a Pythagorean explicitly, but also implicitly connects him with Pythagorean practices, most notably teaching via symbols or enigmas. Both in content and context, Clement associates Philo with fellow Pythagorean Numenius who, though not a Jew, praises Moses and the philosophy his writings inspire. Clement's Philonic borrowings dislodge the life and teachings of Moses from the sphere of Jewish law and practice, emphasizing their similarity with other revelations of the λόγος, both Greek and barbarian. Clement's use of Philo associates him with Pythagorean exegesis while distancing him from "the Jews" who reject Christ. Consequently, I suggest the possibility that Clement's portrayal of Philo may not be innovative or idiosyncratic. Philo's treatises may have reached Clement as Pythagorean writings, rather than via a chain of exclusively Jewish/Christian readers.

Did Clement know Philo to be Jewish? The fact that Clement never explicitly labels him as such requires us to speculate. Certainly Clement knows that Philo did not recognize Christ in the Old Testament; when he borrows Philo's allegorical exegeses, Clement frequently adds a Christological dimension to the interpretation that is not found in the source text.¹⁷³ Crucially, in

¹⁷³ See, for example, *Strom.* 1.5.31.3, where Clement inserts the identification of Isaac as a "type of Christ" into Philo's interpretation of Sarah and Hagar in *De Congressu*. This tendency is also noted by van den Hoek, *Philo in the Stromateis*, 220, and Osborn, "Quiet Conversion and Noetic Exegesis," 111, arguing that "this is yet another reason why he does not acknowledge Philo as his source. It would be dishonest to claim, as Philonic, the heavily christological content with which Clement loads his major Philonic sequences."

Clement's adaptations of Philo's texts, the authorship of the law is transferred from Moses to the λόγος.¹⁷⁴ But the fact that Clement employs Philo's allegories suggests that Clement thinks he is on the right exegetical track. In Clement's usage, "Jews" misunderstand the law and the prophets (see especially *Strom.* 1.27.174–175); Philo, in contrast, is employed as an aid to decipher the hidden meaning of the Mosaic scriptures. Using this definition of Jew, the term does not fit Clement's Philo very comfortably, casting doubt on the assumption that Clement read Philo's texts as specifically "Jewish."

By calling Philo a Pythagorean, Clement locates him within a philosophical school tradition that comes haltingly close to grasping the truth of the λόγος. Clement does not fault Pythagorean ethics or exegesis; in his evaluation, Pythagorean teaching errs only in its doctrine of metempsychosis. Still, the Pythagoreans, like all Greeks, are unbelievers who condemn themselves by their "unwillingness to believe the truth which declares that the law was divinely given through Moses, while they honour Moses in their own writers" (*Strom.* 1.26.170.2). Pointing out their inconsistency, Clement criticizes "those Zealots of the Samian Pythagoras, who, seeking demonstrations of the objects of investigation, consider 'He has said it' to be sufficient for faith, and content themselves in his voice alone for confirmation of what they have heard; yet 'those who love to contemplate the truth' (cf. *Republic* 5.475 E), persisting in their refusal to have faith in the teacher worthy of faith, in God the only saviour, demand from him

¹⁷⁴ Clement compares Moses and Jesus at *Strom.* 2.5.21.1–5: "Moses was a man of wisdom, a king, a legislator. But our Saviour surpasses all human nature, being beautiful to the point of being the sole object of our love in our yearning for true beauty, 'for he was the true light.'... He is our lawgiver, presenting us with the law through the mouth of the prophets, and instructing us in all that has to be done, not least when it is not clear." (trans. Ferguson).

proof of his words.”¹⁷⁵ Clement’s description of Philo as a Pythagorean may be a subtle criticism of his excessive praise of Moses and insufficient grasp of the λόγος by whom Moses spoke.

¹⁷⁵ *Strom.* 2.5.24: καὶ γὰρ ἄτοπον, τοὺς μὲν Πυθαγόρου τοῦ Σαμίου ζηλωτὰς τῶν ζητουμένων τὰς ἀποδείξεις παραιτουμένους τὸ “αὐτὸς ἔφα” πίστιν ἡγεῖσθαι καὶ ταύτη ἀρκεῖσθαι μόνη τῇ φωνῇ πρὸς τὴν βεβαίωσιν ὧν ἀκηκόασι, “τοὺς δὲ τῆς ἀληθείας φιλοθεάμονας,” ἀπιστεῖν ἐπιχειροῦντας ἀξιοπίστῳ διδασκάλῳ, τῷ μόνῳ σωτῆρι θεῷ, βασάνους τῶν λεγομένων ἀπαιτεῖν παρ’ αὐτοῦ.

Chapter 4

“One of our Predecessors”: Origen’s Philo

περὶ ἧς καὶ τῷ Φίλωνι συντέτακται βιβλίον, ἄξιον φρονίμου καὶ συνετῆς παρὰ τοῖς φιλαλήθεσιν ἐξετάσεως.

Philo also composed a book about this matter which is worthy of intelligent and wise study by those who wish to find the truth. Contra Celsum 6.21¹

Origen knew Philo’s exegetical treatises well;² in contrast to the sometimes cut-and-paste style of Clement’s Philonic borrowings, Origen integrates Philo’s interpretive strategies seamlessly into his own writings.³ Yet in spite of his abundant use of material gleaned from Philo’s treatises, Origen mentions his fellow Alexandrian on only three occasions: twice in *Contra Celsum* and once in the *Commentary on Matthew*, his final two major works.⁴ Origen’s failure to cite Philo has sometimes been interpreted as reticence to reveal his reliance on Jewish sources.⁵ Nonetheless Origen does not leave his debt wholly unacknowledged. In addition to the three explicit mentions of Philo, on multiple occasions Origen refers to him anonymously using

¹ I use the Greek text of *Contra Celsum* published in *Contre Celse* (SC 132, 136, 147, 150: ed. and trans. M. Borret: Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1967–1969).

² As was the case with Clement, Origen alludes to Philo’s *Allegorical Interpretation*, *Exposition of the Law*, and *Questions and Answers* treatises while remaining silent on his historical works *Legatio ad Gaium*, *In Flaccum* and the *Hypothetica*. That Origen fails to cite the *Legatio* as evidence of the Jews’ suffering in the wake of Jesus’ crucifixion, a frequent claim of the *Contra Celsum*, suggests that he was unfamiliar with that treatise.

³ Origen’s borrowings of Philonic material are catalogued by Annewies van den Hoek, “Philo and Origen: A Descriptive Catalogue of Their Relationship,” *SPhA* 12 (2000): 44–121, in which the author evaluates Origen’s probable Philonic borrowings according to a similar rubric as in her study of Clement’s borrowings in the *Stromateis*.

⁴ On the chronology of Origen’s works, see R. P. C. Hanson, *Origen’s Doctrine of Tradition* (London: S.P.C.K., 1954), 8–30. Hanson dates the *Comm. Mat.* to 246 and *Cels.* to 248. In the introduction to his translation of *Comm. Matt.*, Hermann J. Vogt argues for its contemporaneity with *Contra Celsum*. Amongst other thematic and linguistic similarities, Vogt’s most striking evidence is Origen’s adoption of the title of Celsus’s treatise, *alethes Logos*, the title of Celsus’s anti-Christian treatise, to describe Jesus, a phrase that he uses in only one other text. See Vogt, “Introduction,” Origenes, *Der Kommentar zum Evangelium nach Mattäus II*. Bibliothek der Griechischen Literatur 30 (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1990), 1–4.

⁵ Illaria L.E. Ramelli demonstrates that Origen’s lack of specific attribution conforms with his standard practice of omitting citations to extra-biblical sources in his commentaries and, especially, his sermons, in “Philo as Origen’s Declared Model,” *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations* 7 (2012), 1–17, 7.

phrases such as “τίς τῶν πρὸ ἡμῶν.”⁶ This phrase is most often translated as “one of our predecessors” and interpreted as signalling that Origen understood himself to be a successor to Philo in a continuous Judaeo-Christian tradition of allegorical scriptural exegesis.⁷

This chapter will evaluate afresh Origen’s perception of Philo as a Jew and of their relationship as interpreters in the Alexandrian allegorical tradition. It begins with a consideration of Origen’s construction of Jewishness via a study of the references to Jews, Israel, Hebrews and Ebionites in the *Contra Celsum* and the *Commentary on Matthew*, the two works that also contain his three explicit *testimonia* to Philo. It then proceeds to analyse Origen’s *testimonia* to Philo against the background of the image of Jewishness he constructs in these texts. Does Philo fit into Origen’s description of a Jew? What is Origen’s perception of the relationship between Philo and his own exegetical tradition? And what does Origen intend to convey by calling Philo “τίς τῶν πρὸ ἡμῶν”?

1. Introducing Origen

1.1 Origen and the “Catechetical School”

The major events of Origen’s early life are well known, thanks in large part to the sixth book of the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, in which Eusebius presents his own teacher Pamphilus and, by extension, himself, as the rightful heirs to Origen’s ecclesiastical and philosophical legacy.⁸

⁶ David T. Runia has identified 13 instances in which Origen anonymously cites Philo in *Philo in Early Christian Literature* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 161–163. Ramelli identifies an additional four references in “Philo as Origen’s Declared Model,” 7.

⁷ Ramelli contends that “Origen wanted to present Philo the Jew as his principal inspirer in fact of Biblical philosophical allegoresis, what indeed Philo was.” Ramelli, “Philo as Origen’s Declared Model,” 6.

⁸ Although he lived a generation after Origen’s death, Eusebius had access to Origen’s original works and correspondence, preserved in the ecclesiastical library at Caesarea. Elizabeth Penland’s analysis of *HE* 6 concludes

Owing to the hagiographical intent of the account, some details of the biography supplied in *HE* 6 have been challenged, but the main points are generally accepted.⁹ According to Eusebius, Origen was born to Christian parents in Alexandria during the reign of Septimius Severus and educated in the traditions of the church by Clement at the so-called Alexandria Catechetical School (*HE* 6.6.1). Eusebius's claim that Origen studied under Clement is undermined by the fact that Origen himself never mentions Clement and has also been challenged on the basis of chronology.¹⁰ In addition to Clement, Origen is purported to have studied with at least two other masters: a "Hebrew doctor" and the mysterious Ammonius Saccas, whom we met in chapter two. All three of Origen's purported teachers may plausibly have included Philo's treatises in their curricula.

Eusebius relates that when Origen was just seventeen years old, his father Leonides was martyred. In the wake of his father's death, Origen supported his family by working as a teacher of both Greek grammar and Christian philosophy. While still only seventeen, Origen was appointed sole instructor of elementary catechesis in the Alexandrian church by Bishop Demetrius. Subsequently, Eusebius contends, Origen decided "that the teaching of literature did not harmonise with training in theology, and promptly broke off his lectures on literature as

"Eusebius has to perform rhetorical work to construct and enhance this lineage. The appeal to lineage is always an imaginary map, a narrative explanation, the creation of connections between points to form a line. Lineage is the struggle to relate elements to one another and to present the illusion that they have always been integrally related." Penland, *Martyrs as Philosophers: The School of Pamphilus and ascetic tradition in Eusebius's Martyrs of Palestine*, (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 2010), 140.

⁹ See especially Pierre Nautin, *Origène: Sa Vie et son Oeuvre* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1977). Origen's life has been the subject of numerous other critical studies, including Jean Daniélou, *Origène: Le Génie Du Christianisme* (Paris: La Table ronde, 1948); Joseph W. Trigg, *Origen: The Bible and Philosophy in the Third Century* (Atlanta: J. Knox, 1983); Charles Kannengiesser and William Lawrence Petersen, *Origen of Alexandria: His World and His Legacy* (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988); Ronald E. Heine, *Origen: Scholarship in Service of the Church* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Peter W. Martens, *Origen and Scripture: The Contours of an Exegetical Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

¹⁰ Runia notes that Origen would have been in his teens when Clement relocated to Palestine. If Eusebius's depiction of Origen as a child prodigy is to be trusted, however, it would not be unreasonable to imagine a teenaged Origen studying with Clement. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, 157.

useless and a hindrance to sacred studies” (*HE* 6.3.12). Having sold his collection of Greek writings, Origen dedicated himself to the study of the Bible and quickly developed a reputation for exegetical skill. Eventually, he separated his charges into two groups, appointing his own pupil Heraclas as teacher over the beginning students and keeping for himself those who had advanced in their studies (*HE* 6.6.15). One of those who eventually found their way into Origen’s lectures was a wealthy adherent of Valentinian Christianity named Ambrosius, who, being won over by Origen’s teaching, would eventually become his teacher’s most supportive patron (*HE* 6.18).

1.2 Origen and the Church

Although “Origenism” ultimately would be anathematized as a heresy at the Fifth Ecumenical Council in 553 CE, Origen considered himself to be a churchman and a stalwart defender of the Rule of Faith.¹¹ Nevertheless, his enthusiasm for orthodoxy did not prevent him from running afoul of the ecclesiastical leaders of his day, most famously his own bishop in Alexandria, Demetrius.¹² The conflict originated in Origen’s activities in Caesarea where, at the behest of bishop Theoctistus, he taught and interpreted the scriptures publicly, despite not yet having been ordained a presbyter (*HE* 6.19.16). Demetrius deemed his lectures improper and wrote to the bishops of Palestine demanding that Origen return to Alexandria immediately, a demand with which Origen complied.

¹¹ Origen declares in *Hom. Luke* 16.6, “But I hope to be a man of the Church. I hope to be addressed not by the name of some heresiarch, but by the name of Christ. I hope to have his name, which is blessed upon the earth. I desire, both in deed and in thought, both to be and to be called a Christian.” For Origen’s understanding of the Rule of Faith, based on his articulation in *On First Principles*, see Peter W. Martens, *Origen and Scripture*, 209–212. For the factors that contributed to the condemnation of Origenism, see Georg Röwekamp, *Einleitung*, in Pamphilus von Caesarea, *Apologie für Origenes* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 208–217.

¹² For a more extensive account of Origen’s conflict with Demetrius, see Lisa R. Holliday, “Origen of Caesarea: Creating Christian identity in the third century” (PhD. diss., University of Kentucky, 2006), 42–64.

Tensions were heightened further as the result of Origen's subsequent trip to Athens via Palestine. While en route, Origen visited his contacts in Caesarea where he was ordained without the knowledge or permission of Demetrius. Upon learning that Origen intended to remain in Caesarea, relocate his school and take up regular preaching duties in its church, Demetrius sent out letters to his fellow bishops condemning his former star teacher. A council was convened to debate Origen's excommunication. The bishops of Egypt and Rome joined Demetrius in his condemnation of Origen, while the Palestinians supported the decision of the Caesarean church. Over time, the political underpinnings of the rift would be supplemented with charges of heresy, against which Origen vigorously defended himself (*HE* 6.36). Despite lingering suspicions surrounding his orthodoxy, Origen continued to field requests to weigh in on theological debates until the last years of his life (*HE* 6.38). As an elderly man, he was caught up in Decius's persecution, "enduring dreadful cruelties for the word of Christ, chains and bodily torments, agony in iron and the darkness of his prison" (*HE* 6.40). Although he survived the persecution, Origen died shortly thereafter during the reign of Gallus, at the age of seventy (*HE* 7.1).

1.3 Origen's Teaching

Whether he was lecturing to catechumens in Alexandria, preaching in the church in Caesarea, or guiding the reading of his small circle of committed disciples, Origen understood himself to be engaged in the same activity: teaching.¹³ In his *Address to Origen*, Gregory Thaumaturgos provides a first-hand account of the instructional methods and curriculum Origen imposed upon

¹³ "Origen has no specific word for preacher. He calls him simply *didaskalos*, or "teacher"; that is, the preacher was one sort of educator." Joseph T. Lienhard, "Introduction," in Origen, *Homilies on Luke. Fathers of the Church* 94 (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996), xx.

his advanced students.¹⁴ Gregory testifies that Origen employed many of the pedagogical strategies commonly used in the philosophical schools.

According to Gregory, Origen presented both his subject and his method as philosophy, for “he said, in effect, that it is impossible to practice a perfect piety towards the Master of the cosmos . . . without philosophizing” (*Address*, 79).¹⁵ The first subject of study was logic, taught via Socrates’ dialectical method, followed by physics and ethics (*Address*, 93–149). The next stage of the curriculum began with a survey of the doctrines of the philosophers. Gregory relates that Origen had his students “read with all of our energy all of the extant texts composed by the ancient philosophers and poets, neither rejecting nor refusing anything, for we did not yet possess the means to judge them” (*Address*, 151). He urged his students to examine each of the philosophers, “whether Greek or barbarian,” without preference, while Origen himself plucked what was “useful and good” from each (*Address*, 153, 172).¹⁶ This exercise taught the students not to devote themselves to any one teacher but to the source of truth itself, the divine *Logos*. Only after this preparation and purification were the students permitted to progress onto theology. Scriptural exegesis was the apex of the Origenian curriculum, as the students put the

¹⁴ There is some controversy as to whether the *Address* was in fact written by Gregory Thaumaturgos. The earliest reception tradition attributes it to an otherwise unknown student named Theodore, which later interpreters understood as Gregory’s baptismal name. See Trigg, *Origen*, 167. Blossom Stefaniw defends the Wonder-worker’s authorship in “Gregory Taught, Gregory Written: The Effacement and Definition of Individualization in the Address to Origen and the Life of Gregory the Wonderworker.” *Reflections on Religious Identity: Greco-Roman and Judaeo-Christian Texts and Practices*. Eds. Jörg Rüpke, and Wolfgang Spickermann (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 119–43. Whether the *Address* was written by Gregory Thaumaturgos or an otherwise unknown student is irrelevant to my argument.

¹⁵ English translations are based on the Greek text of Grégoire le Thaumaturge, *Remerciement a Origène* (ed. Claude Mondésert: SC 148: Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1969), in consultation with the French translation.

¹⁶ Eusebius corroborates Gregory’s account of Origen’s didactic method, reporting that “first [Origen] taught them geometry, arithmetic, and the other preparatory subjects; then he led them on to the systems of the philosophers, discussing their published theories and examining and criticizing those of the different schools, with the result that the Greeks themselves acknowledged his greatness as a philosopher.” *HE* 6.18.

skills they had mastered over their course of study to use in illuminating the enigmatic teachings conveyed through the holy texts (*Address*, 174).¹⁷

In his own writings, Origen affirms a conviction shared with Clement, Philo, and the adherents of the Pythagorean school that individuals varied in their natural capacity to comprehend philosophical truth.¹⁸ Consequently, it was the duty of the responsible teacher to accommodate his instruction to the capabilities of his audience and to protect the simple and the uninitiated from receiving doctrines they were unprepared to understand. This was especially the case within the church, which consisted of many more simple believers than philosophical adepts such as Gregory.¹⁹ That these simple Christians could not provide a rational defense for their faith in the Gospel of Jesus and the teachings of the church was no discredit Christianity; to the contrary, Origen contends that simple faith in the words of the teacher is a feature shared by all philosophical schools.²⁰ Moreover, even his simple Christian students put the best of the philosophers to shame by bettering them in their conduct and worship:

Ὅρῶν δ' οἶμαι ὁ θεὸς καὶ τὴν ἀλαζονείαν ἢ τὴν πρὸς τοὺς ἄλλους ὑπεροψίαν τῶν
μεγάλα μὲν φρονούντων ἐπὶ τῷ ἐγνωκέναι τὸν θεὸν καὶ ἀπὸ φιλοσοφίας τὰ θεῖα

¹⁷ Origen's scriptural hermeneutics have attracted much scholarly comment. Important studies include Hal Koch, *Pronoia Und Paideusis: Studien Über Origenes Und Sein Verhältnis Zum Platonismus* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1932); Henri de Lubac, *Histoire Et Esprit : L'intelligence de L'écriture D'après Origène* (Paris: Théologie Études Publiées Sous la Direction de la Faculté de Théologie S J De Lyon-Fourvière 16; Aubier, 1950); R. P. C. Hanson, *Allegory and Event : A Study of the Sources and Significance of Origen's Interpretation of Scripture* (London: SCM Press, 1959); Karen Jo Torjesen, *Hermeneutical Procedure and Theological Method in Origen's Exegesis* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1986); Frances M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Peter W. Martens, "Revisiting the Allegory/Typology Distinction: the case of Origen" *J ECS* 16.3 (2008) 283–317.

¹⁸ "The existence of certain doctrines, is not a peculiarity of Christian doctrine only, but is shared by the philosophers. For they had some doctrines which were exoteric and some esoteric. Some hearers of Pythagoras only learnt of the master's *ipse dixit*; but others were taught in secret doctrines which could not deservedly reach ears that were uninitiated and not yet purified." *Cels.* 1.7; cf. *Comm. Matt.* 11.4.

¹⁹ Hermann Josef Vogt, *Das Kirchenverständnis des Origenes* (Köln: Böhlau-Verlag, 1974), 81.

²⁰ "What man who is urged to study philosophy and throws himself at random into some school of philosophers, comes to do so for any reason except either that he has come across a particular teacher or that he believes some one school to be better than the rest? He does not wait to hear the arguments of all the philosophers and of the different schools, and the refutation of one and the proof of another, when in this way he chooses to be a Stoic, or a Platonist, or a Peripatetic, or an Epicurean or a follower of some such philosophical school." *Cels.* 1.10. See also *Cels.* 4.9.

μεμαθηκέναι παραπλησίως δὲ τοῖς ἀπαιδευτοτάτοις ἐπὶ τὰ ἀγάλματα καὶ τοὺς νεῶς αὐτῶν καὶ τὰ θρυλούμενα μυστήρια ἀγόντων «ἐξελέξατο» «τὰ μωρὰ τοῦ κόσμου», τοὺς ἐν Χριστιανοῖς ἀπλουστάτους καὶ πολλῶν φιλοσόφων μετριώτερον καὶ καθαρώτερον βιοῦντας, «ἵνα καταισχύνῃ τοὺς σοφοὺς», οὐκ αἰδουμένους ἐν τῇ τοῖς ἀνύχοις προσομιλεῖν ὡς θεοῖς ἢ θεῶν εἰκόσιν

I believe that because God saw the arrogance or the disdainful attitude towards others of people who pride themselves on having known God and learnt the divine truths from philosophy, and yet like the most vulgar keep on with the images and their temples and the mysteries which are a matter of common gossip, He chose the foolish things of the world, the simplest of the Christians, who live lives more moderate and pure than many philosophers, that He might put to shame the wise, who are not ashamed to talk to lifeless things as if they were gods or images of gods. (*Cels.* 7.44)

What separates the Christians from the other philosophers, Origen charges, is their ability to put their philosophical knowledge of God into practice. Although the church consists of both simple and advanced believers who vary in their ability to perceive the deeper truths embedded in scripture, the average Christian manages to out-philosophize the philosophers.

2. Origen's relationships with Jews

2.1 Literature Review

In the mid-1970s, two groundbreaking studies appeared that brought Origen's relationships with living Jews into the foreground of Origenian studies. Hans Bietenhard's *Caesarea, Origenes und die Juden* laid the groundwork for future study by identifying both the major discussions of Judaism and the individual references to Jewish traditions in Origen's corpus.²¹ Unfortunately, Bietenhard does not distinguish between references to Jewish and to Hebrew exegesis, listing all together as transmitting "eine oder andere Schriftdeutung von jüdischen Gelehrten (von Juden)."²² Nor does he establish a critical framework for determining whether a particular

²¹ Hans Bietenhard, *Caesarea, Origenes und die Juden* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1974).

²² Bietenhard, *Caesarea, Origenes und die Juden*, 19.

tradition is rabbinic or if it could have conceivably reached Origen as a Hebrew-language folk tradition. Asserting without supplying evidence that “mit Sicherheit ist aber nur dann ein bekehrter Jude die Quelle für Origenes wenn er dies ausdrücklich sagt,” Bietenhard is confused by Origen’s references to “Hebrew” traditions, such as the claim that Golgotha was the site of Adam’s burial, which would seem to find meaning only in a Christian context.²³ Trusting in the claims of rabbinic writings redacted centuries after Origen’s time that certain traditions originated in the Tannaitic age, Bietenhard consistently equates parallels between Origenian and rabbinic exegesis as evidence of the former’s dependence on the latter.²⁴ The relationship is described as one of student and master, with Origen always taking the role of the dutiful pupil.

Although acknowledging instances of anti-Jewish polemic in Origen’s writings, Bietenhard chooses to emphasize Origen’s positive statements about Jews, especially his insistence in the *Commentary on Romans* that “all Israel” has hope for salvation in the *eschaton*. Accordingly, Bietenhard concludes his study with the assurance that “Origenes selbst ist kein Judenfeind, kann es nicht sein, weil er Röm 9–11 verstanden hat. Auch hat er seine Gemeinde vor aller Judenfeindschaft zu bewahren versucht. Es führt m. E. von Origenes kein Weg zu irgend einem Antijudaismus.”²⁵

The recent work of Anna Tzvetkova-Glaser offers a different perspective on the relationship between Origen and Jewish exegetes, including the rabbis. As a result of her comparison of Origen’s exegeses of Pentateuchal themes with their rabbinic counterparts, Tzvetkova-Glaser contends that some parallels more likely reflect the influence of Christian

²³ “Certainly a converted Jew is Origen’s source only when he expressly says this.” Bietenhard, *Caesarea, Origenes und die Juden*, 29.

²⁴ Bietenhard, *Caesarea, Origenes und die Juden*, 26.

²⁵ “Origen himself is no enemy of the Jews; he can’t be, for he has understood Rom. 9–11. He also tried to restrain his congregation from any kind of enmity toward Jews. There is no way from Origen to any kind of anti-Judaism.” Bietenhard, *Caesarea, Origenes und die Juden*, 72.

exegesis on the rabbis than of rabbinic influence on Origen. She concludes, “die Auswirkung der Entwicklung der origenianischen und allgemein christlichen Exegese auf die rabbinische Schriftauslegung ist ein Punkt, der in der bisherigen Forschung nicht genug berücksichtigt worden ist und der Thema weiterer Untersuchungen sein sollte”²⁶ Tzvetkova-Glaser suggests a way forward that takes seriously the mutual influence of diverse Biblical interpreters on each other rather than positing a unidirectional flow of knowledge and traditions from “the rabbis” to Christian exegetes who defer to their authority.

Nicholas de Lange’s *Origen and the Jews* followed Bietenhard’s book in 1976. De Lange introduces Origen as “excellently placed to give a sympathetic outsider’s view of the Jews of his day and of their relations with their non-Jewish neighbours.”²⁷ His study gathers Origen’s explicit comments about the Jews of his acquaintance for insights into Jewish life and practice, especially the institution of the Patriarchate that had been established in Palestine.²⁸ De Lange’s major contribution, however, is his examination of Origen’s exegetical works for traditions also found in rabbinic writings. While acknowledging the chronological difficulties posed by the late redaction of the *Mishnah* and the *Talmudim* and allowing for the possibility that Origen and the rabbis may have arrived independently at the same exegeses, de Lange contends that “about one-fifth of [Origen’s] interpretations are also found in Philo or in the various Greek versions of the Bible. But this is a small proportion of the total. For the rest we are entitled to seek another

²⁶ “The impact of the development of Origenian and general Christian exegesis on rabbinic scriptural interpretation is a point that has not been sufficiently considered in the research up to now and ought to be the subject of additional research.” Anna Tzvetkova-Glaser, *Pentateuchsauslegung bei Origenes und den frühen Rabbinen* (Frankfurt-am-Main: Peter Lang, 2010), 439.

²⁷ Nicholas R. M. De Lange, *Origen and the Jews: Studies in Jewish-Christian Relations in Third-Century Palestine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 1.

²⁸ De Lange, *Origen and the Jews*, 29–61.

source.”²⁹ Arguing that Origen “relied on the rabbis for both the carnal and the spiritual interpretation of scripture,” he adduces several possible examples of rabbinic influence,³⁰ drawing particular attention to interpretations of Hebrew names that differ from those found in Philo, have parallels in the rabbinic writings, and are not obvious from their etymologies.³¹

De Lange helpfully draws attention to the fact that, as was also the case in the writings of Philo and Clement, Origen does not use the terms *Hebraioi* and *Ioudaioi* interchangeably. Rather, he notes that “if the connotations of *Hebraioi* are philological, those of *Ioudaioi* are polemical.” He contends that these connotations are reflective of a significant difference between the meanings of *Ioudaios* and *Hebraios* in Greek, arguing that “although *Ioudaioi* in various places and periods was neutral in its connotations it did easily tend to take on derogatory overtones, in which case *Hebraioi* became the polite word for the Jews,” and continues further, “*Ioudaios*, in many mouths, was a sneering expression, even perhaps a term of abuse; *Hebraios*, on the other hand, was a liberal’s word, leaning over backwards to give no offense.”³² De Lange’s claim that the term *Ioudaios* was practically an ancient slur has been frequently repeated in Origenian scholarship but is unsupported by the word’s usage in Philo, Josephus, or Roman literature, where *Ioudaios* is the normal term used to refer to a contemporary Jew.³³ Reading

²⁹ De Lange, *Origen and the Jews*, 119. De Lange provides no source to back up his assertion that one-fifth of Origen’s interpretations can be found in Philo or a Greek Biblical translation, nor does he further specify the proportion of the interpretations that come from each source.

³⁰ De Lange, *Origen and the Jews*, 121.

³¹ De Lange, *Origen and the Jews*, 118.

³² De Lange, *Origen and the Jews*, 29 and 31.

³³ Clements, citing de Lange, writes, “The distinction between “Hebrews” as a title of respect and “Jews” as a denigrating title was commonplace in the ancient world.” Clements, “Peri Pascha,” 114. Graham Harvey, who elsewhere argues that the term “Jew” in ancient Jewish literature “is often a neutral term... [and] is more generally applicable than “Hebrew” or “Israel”, comments on de Lange’s generalization, “This seems a rather sad comment on Christian responses to Judaism. In the light of wider uses of the names, it would seem fairer to suggest that “Hebrews” is used by Origen to mean “good Jews.” *The True Israel: Use of the Names Jew, Hebrew and Israel in Ancient Jewish and Early Christian Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 139. Harvey does not elaborate the criteria Origen would use for determining whether a Jew was “good” or not. De Lange cites only three Jewish literary examples from widely divergent periods, each of them highly rhetorically charged, for the “sneering” use of *Ioudaioi*: Jonah 1:9, IV Maccabees and Judith. These limited examples, all written by Jews, are incapable of

Hebraioi as a term of honour and *Ioudaioi* as one of disdain, de Lange contends that both terms ought usually to be understood as referring to the same group of people, maintaining that “Origen had Jewish friends and teachers, as we have seen, whom he called *Hebraioi*.”³⁴ His interpretation of the distinction between *Hebraioi* and *Ioudaioi* supports de Lange’s claim that Origen had collegial relationships with rabbis, reflected in his choice of the term *Hebraioi* to refer to his Jewish colleagues. He concludes, “it was Origen’s dilemma that as a theologian he must condemn the Jews while as a scholar and exegete he depended on them. The dilemma was not resolved, but concealed, by using a different word in each case for the same people.”³⁵

Although de Lange’s study remains highly influential, it suffers from several insufficiently critical assumptions that result in untenable conclusions. He is too hasty in his identification of potentially Jewish traditions unknown from the Septuagint or other written Jewish sources as indications of Origen’s debt to specifically “rabbinic” exegesis. Scholars of early Judaism increasingly caution against the assumption of early rabbinic hegemony, even in Palestine.³⁶ Even when parallel traditions are found in Origen and rabbinic texts, it is not

sustaining the thesis that the term *Ioudaioi* was widely perceived to have negative connotations in the Greco-Roman world.

³⁴ In another context, de Lange does admit that some traditions “of the Hebrews” must derive from non-rabbinic Jewish sources: “To take first the traditions ascribed vaguely to ‘the Hebrews,’ one example of those quoted, the tradition that Adam was buried at Golgotha, is certainly not Jewish in the strict sense. If it is Jewish at all, it comes from the Jewish Christian Church. For the rest, there is no instance in which it is at all safe to insist on a rabbinic origin. On the contrary, some at least of Origen’s ‘Hebrews’ were acquainted with the story of Susanna, which does not figure in the rabbinic canon.” De Lange, *Origen and the Jews*, 132.

³⁵ De Lange, *Origen and the Jews*, 31. Later, however, de Lange concedes that “the Jews” and “the Hebrews” may not always refer to the same people: “*Hebraios*, as we have already seen, is a term of many applications, which may (but need not) imply a knowledge of Hebrew (or Aramaic), and need not even denote an adherent of the Jewish religion.” De Lange, *Origen and the Jews*, 132.

³⁶ See Shaye J.D. Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 2006), 221–227 and, more recently by Lee I. Levine, “Synagogue Art and the Rabbis in Late Antiquity” *Journal of Ancient Judaism* 2 (2011), 82–111.

necessary to conclude that Origen directly consulted rabbis for the information; such parallels may be the result of second-hand knowledge transmitted via Hebrew-speaking Christians.³⁷

Ruth A. Clements takes de Lange's study of Origen's rabbinic contacts as the starting point for her own investigation of "[Origen's] domestication of the Jewish scriptures and of Jewish exegesis, via his development of a rhetoric of Jewish interpretation as an aspect of his own exegesis."³⁸ Her study combines de Lange's interest in Origen's social situation and contacts with Jewish communities in Alexandria and Caesarea with Karen Jo Torjesen's more theoretical analysis of Origen's exegetical practice to arrive at an explanation for Origen's seemingly contradictory attitude towards Jewish interpretation.³⁹ Clements argues that "by the time he left Alexandria, Origen construed Jewish interpretation in two seemingly contradictory ways: positively, on the one hand, as a source for exegetical materials for use in his own works and as a model for his own exegetical method; and negatively, on the other, as synonymous with a theologically problematic literal reading of the biblical text that is blind to its true spiritual meaning."⁴⁰ Following de Lange, Clements argues that Origen actively constructs a rhetorical distinction between "Hebrews," who provide helpful literary and etymological advice, and

³⁷ Ruth A. Clements also recognizes that "the trouble with de Lange's examples is that, even if these particular etymologies are only paralleled in our day in rabbinic sources, this does not mean that Origen must have learned them from rabbis. The play with Hebrew which is evident in many of the etymological examples need not have been qualitatively different from the rabbinic practice of world play." Clements, "Peri Pascha: Passover and the Displacement of Jewish Interpretation within Origen's Exegesis" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1997), 80.

³⁸ Clements, "Peri Pascha," 19. Of de Lange's work, she writes, "This study takes as axiomatic de Lange's demonstration that Origen had encounters with contemporary (rabbinic) Jewish exegetes and that these encounters were significant for his own exegetical program." She adds the caveat, "However, 'significance' should not be taken to mean 'resulting in a sympathetically positive picture of third century Jews.'" Clement, "Peri Pascha," 10.

³⁹ Torjesen's *Hermeneutical Procedure and Theological Method in Origen's Exegesis* illuminates the complexity of Origen's hermeneutics, examining the relationship between literal and allegorical interpretation in his thought. She identifies four distinct steps that together comprise Origen's exegetical procedure. The first two stages are concerned with the "literal" aspects of the Biblical text: Origen's first step is to establish the proper grammatical reading of a text, a process that includes the kind of text-critical analysis developed by Alexandrian Homeric scholars; the second stage seeks to determine the "concrete and or historical reality to which the grammatical sense refers." The third and fourth stages move beyond the grammatical and historical phases of exegesis, identifying first the eternal meaning conveyed thought the text by the divine Logos and then the particular spiritual meaning appropriate to the reader.

⁴⁰ Clements, "Origen's Hexapla and Christian-Jewish Encounter in the Second and Third Centuries" in *Religious Rivalries and the Struggle for Success in Caesarea Maritima* (ed. Terence L. Donaldson: Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 2000) 303–329; 306–307.

“Jews” whom Origen styles as literalists par excellence.⁴¹ Clements maintains that Origen’s distinction between “Hebrews” and “Jews” has no objective basis; it is entirely rhetorical, “a perceptual wedge between the Jewish scholars whose authority and traditions Origen wants to appropriate, and the synagogue, the contemporary Jewish community that is the theological and sociocultural enemy of the *ekklesia*.”⁴²

While Clements seeks to illuminate the “perceptual wedge” between *Hebraioi* and *Ioudaioi* that Origen constructs, Peter W. Martens aims to reconcile Origen’s characterization of Jews as literalists with his simultaneous adoption of non-literal Jewish exegesis.⁴³ Martens contends that what Origen describes as “Jewish literalism” ought not to be equated with Jewish “philological procedures” tout court but understood as “a critique of a particular set of literal interpretations supportive of troubling liturgical and doctrinal commitments.”⁴⁴ Martens identifies scriptural exegesis as Origen’s foremost boundary-marker between Jews and Christians.⁴⁵ It is the “literal” interpretation of the law and the prophets that causes the Jews to reject Jesus as Messiah and that continues to promote “a distinctive Jewish way of liturgical and ceremonial life” that is rejected by Origen. Jewish exegesis that neither rejects christological claims nor insists on the obedience to the letter of the Mosaic law need not be literal, nor need it be rejected by Origen, as his acceptance of Hebrew etymologies and Philonic allegory

⁴¹ Clements, “Origen’s Hexapla,” 311.

⁴² Clements, “Origen’s Hexapla,” 311.

⁴³ Martens, *Origen and Scripture*, 133–134.

⁴⁴ Martens, *Origen and Scripture*, 134.

⁴⁵ “The differences between Jews and Christians in the first half of the third century could be explained by the differing ways in which these communities interpreted the Scriptures they held in common.” Martens, *Origen and Scripture*, 137.

demonstrate.⁴⁶ Thus, Martens argues, Origen's charges of literalism function more to establish boundaries between the Jewish and Christian communities than to describe Jewish exegesis.⁴⁷

2.2 Origen's Interactions with Jews in Alexandria and Caesarea

Origen occasionally mentions encounters with both "Hebrews" and "Jews" in Alexandria and Caesarea. Current scholarship is divided over whether Origen's relationships with Jews were friendly, didactic, collegial, or combative. Scholars disagree about the size and prominence of the Alexandrian Jewish community in the late second and early third century. Both Bietenhard and de Lange presume the presence of a rabbinic synagogue community in the Alexandria of Origen's boyhood, although there is no external evidence to corroborate its presence.⁴⁸ Whether or not the city had a synagogue, Alexandria was where Origen first encountered the teacher he calls "the Hebrew," a figure whom Pierre Nautin argues had a profound influence on Origen's early scholarship.⁴⁹ Whether this Hebrew was a convert to Christianity remains a subject of debate. Bietenhard describes him as a "Jewish" Jew, contending that if he had been a convert to Christianity, Origen would have said so explicitly.⁵⁰ Nautin reconstructs him as a Palestinian emigrant, the son of a rabbi, who had converted to Christianity prior to moving to Alexandria.⁵¹

⁴⁶ Martens concludes that Origen was therefore "not mired in self-contradiction when he acknowledged (as he did) the simultaneous presence of allegory within Jewish circles." Martens, *Origen and Scripture*, 147.

⁴⁷ Martens, *Origen and Scripture*, 147.

⁴⁸ Bietenhard takes Origen's knowledge of a rabbinic tradition in *Princ.* 4.17 as evidence that Origen had first-hand contact with rabbis in Alexandria. See Bietenhard, *Caesarea, Origenes und die Juden*, 19. De Lange assumes the presence of a synagogue community with a Patriarch to have existed in Alexandria during Origen's youth. See de Lange, *Origen and the Jews*, 24.

⁴⁹ *Com. Ps.* 1; *Princ.* 1.3.4; *Sel. Ezech.* 9.2.

⁵⁰ Bietenhard, *Caesarea, Origenes und die Juden*, 27.

⁵¹ See Nautin, *Origène*, 347, 417. Following Nautin, Joseph Trigg describes "the Hebrew" in these terms: "one person whom he probably met at Alexandria during this period of his life exerted a very great influence; the man whom Origen referred to as 'the Hebrew.' We do not even know his name. All we know is that he knew Hebrew, that he had been trained as a rabbi, and that he fled his native land when he became a Christian— indications that

Ruth A. Clements agrees with Nautin that “the Hebrew” is a convert to Christianity, but asserts that most references to “a Hebrew” or interpretations from “among the Hebrews” in the Alexandrian commentaries refer not the teachings of “the Hebrew” but to contemporary Jewish exegetes. Thus, Nautin adduces *Sel. in Ez.* 9.2 as evidence of the influence of “the Hebrew,” while Clements cites the same passage as evidence that Origen made use of specifically non-Christian Jewish exegesis in his early works composed in Alexandria.⁵²

There is much greater evidence for Origen’s interactions with non-Christian Jews after his move to Caesarea than in Alexandria. In addition to native Syrians, Greeks, and a burgeoning Christian population, the presence of large Jewish and Samaritan communities in third-century Caesarea has been well documented.⁵³ Origen’s writings from this period, including *Contra Celsum* and the *Commentary on Matthew*, allude to public debates with Jews. Nicholas de Lange characterizes these debates as a “dialogue between the synagogue and the church,” and a situation where, “despite powerful antagonisms, Jews and Christians could live in close harmony and derive mutual benefit from their intercourse.”⁵⁴ De Lange’s depiction of Jewish-Christian relations in Caesarea has been criticized by Frances Young as exaggerated and by David Runia as too irenic.⁵⁵ A more combative depiction of the situation is given by Clements who, following

point to a Palestinian origin.” Trigg, *Origen*, 80. Trigg’s equation of all teachers of Hebrew extraction with rabbis begs the question. De Lange includes “the Hebrew” in his discussion of Origen’s Jewish sources, *Origen and the Jews*, 20–29.

⁵² Clements, “Origen’s Hexapla,” 308. Heine takes a strong position against Clements’ interpretation, asserting that “there is no evidence for significant contact between Origen and a Jewish community in Alexandria. The Jews he knew in Alexandria appear to have been Christian Jews, such as the Hebrew teacher whom he highly regarded, and the community that used the Gospel according to the Hebrews.” Heine, *Origen*, 30. Origen himself never uses the term “Christian Jews.”

⁵³ The seminal work on this topic is Lee I. Levine, *Caesarea under Roman Rule* (Leiden: Brill, 1975). See also the papers collected in *Religious Rivalries and the Struggle for Success in Caesarea Maritima* (ed. Terence L. Donaldson: Waterloo, Canada: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 2000).

⁵⁴ De Lange, *Origen and the Jews*, 21 and 135.

⁵⁵ Frances Young contends that “the extent of Origen’s Jewish contacts may have been overestimated,” by de Lange, but concludes that, more generally, “what is in any case clear is that Origen shared a common culture with the scholarly communities of the ancient world. Groups which sharply differentiated themselves from one another, in fact shared a common rationalistic heritage. The logic of deducing *Halakah* was parallel to the logic of deducing

the work of scholars such as Paul Blowers and John McGuckin, argues that the evidence of Origen's Caesarean writings "show us a situation of increasing public competition after 240 with 'the masters and teachers of the synagogue.'"⁵⁶ Rather than fostering a mutually beneficial scholarly relationship, she contends that "preaching and debate were the two arenas within which Jews and Christians sought to sell their intellectual and scriptural arguments to the public."⁵⁷

Citing de Lange, Roger Brooks criticizes modern scholars for "rendering far too positive an evaluation of Origen's relationship to, and reliance upon, Rabbinism" in Alexandria and especially Caesarea, which is known to have been the location of several prominent Rabbinic schools.⁵⁸ Noting that Origen's numerous *Homilies on Leviticus* treat only five passages also discussed in the *Mishnah*, Brooks concludes, "Origen's school and the Rabbinic academies may have prospered in the same city; students in each may have discussed portions of the Bible together; Origen himself may even have studied some Hebrew with a Rabbi; Origen and the Rabbis may have produced parallel systems to regulate life under the Roman Empire." In spite of these possibilities, Brooks strikes a note of caution: "Nevertheless, a warning bell ought to

Christian doctrine . . . what Christians and Jews now shared was a parallel commitment to a unitive exegesis, achieved by similar methods of argument seeking the coherent biblical response to exegetical questions." Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 93–94. David Runia concurs: "De Lange's study has been criticized for painting, in the spirit of modern ecumenicity, too irenic a picture of Origen's relation to Jews and Judaism. In Caesarea the Church was in competition with the Synagogue, and no doubt an equally competitive spirit existed between Origen's school and the Jewish academies." Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, 182.

⁵⁶ Paul Blowers, "Origen, the Rabbis and the Bible: Toward a Picture of Judaism and Christianity in Third-Century Caesarea" in *Origen of Alexandria: His World and His Legacy* (eds. Charles Kannengiesser and William L. Petersen: Notre Dame: Notre Dame Press, 1988); see also John McGuckin, "Origen on the Jews" in *Christianity and Judaism: Papers read at the 1991 Summer Meeting and the 1992 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society* (ed. Diana Wood: Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell Publishers, 1992).

⁵⁷ Clements, "Origen's Hexapla," 316. See also Aryeh Kofsky, who, although writing about a slightly later period, cautions that "the extent of good relations between the different religious groups should not be overstated. There is not doubt that tension and hatred existed despite the general atmosphere of tolerance" in *Eusebius of Caesarea against Paganism* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 95.

⁵⁸ Roger Brooks, "Straw Dogs and Scholarly Ecumenism: The Appropriate Jewish Background for the Study of Origen." *Origen of Alexandria: His World and His Legacy*. Eds. Charles Kannengiesser and William L. Petersen (Notre Dame: Notre Dame Press, 1986), 95.

sound. The Jewish background and culture available to Origen throughout his life seems to have been remarkably superficial.”⁵⁹

2.3 Conclusions

Scholarly opinion remains quite split on the question of the character and the extent of Origen’s interactions with rabbis and other learned Jews and Hebrews. This variety is due in part to their particular sensitivity to the differing connotations expressed by the terms Jew, Hebrew, and Israel in Origen’s writings. While Bietenhard collapses Jews, Hebrews and Israel in Origen’s writings into a monolithic entity, de Lange and Clements promote versions of the theory that Origen uses the terms “Jew” and “Hebrew” rhetorically to construct a “Hebrew” tradition that is legitimate for Christian use separate from the beliefs and practices of the “Jews.” In what follows, I take a closer look at the functions the terms “Jew,” “Hebrew,” and “Israel” play in *Contra Celsum* and the *Commentary on Matthew* and suggest an alternative interpretation of the difference that Origen intends to communicate via his use of these terms.

⁵⁹Brooks, “Straw Dogs,” 94.

3. Jews, Hebrews and Israel in the *Contra Celsum* and the *Commentary on Matthew*⁶⁰

3.1 *Contra Celsum*

Contra Celsum is one of the few works of considerable length completed by Origen that has survived in its entirety in Greek, allowing us to read Origen in his own words, free of interventions by fourth-century translators with theological and/or political biases.⁶¹ Origen wrote its eight books while living in Caesarea in the final years of Christian toleration prior to the Decian persecutions. Commissioned by his patron, Ambrosius, *Contra Celsum* addresses a short treatise entitled *On the True Doctrine*, written perhaps seventy years earlier by a certain Celsus whose identity remains mysterious.⁶² In it, Origen gives a thorough, if at times repetitive,

⁶⁰ Origen's depictions of Jews and Judaism varies by genre and context. Works that focus their on the Homilies, including Lisa R. Holliday's "Origen of Caesarea: creating Christian identity in the third century" and Susanna Laing Drake's "Sexing the Jew: Early Christian Constructions of Jewishness (PhD. diss., Duke University, 2008) tend to find a much more Judaeo-phobic Origen than those studies that depend more heavily on the commentaries, such as the works of Bietenhard and de Lange. The sheer size of Origen's extant corpus makes a complete study of his references to Jews across all his works unfeasible in a dissertation. Rather than giving a cursory and selective overview of Origen's references to Jews in many works, I have chosen instead to record and evaluate each single reference to Jews, Hebrews, Israel, and Ebionites in the *Contra Celsum* and Books 10–17 of the *Commentary on Matthew*, limiting the scope of my analysis in order to increase its rigor. That said, I will also make occasional reference to other relevant selections from Origen's corpus. By analyzing two large texts composed during the same period of Origen's career, one a wide-ranging apology, the other a commentary, my aim is to provide a snapshot of the mature Origen's understanding of the common ground and dividing line between Judaism and Christianity.

⁶¹ The most recent critical edition of the *Contra Celsum* was compiled by Marko Markovic (2000), expanding upon the previous editions by Paul Koetschau (*GCS Orig.* 2–3, Leipzig 1899), and Michel Borret (*Sources chrétiennes*, 5 Vols., 1967–76). *Contra Celsum* is extant in two manuscript traditions, Vatican Gr. 386 (13th C, complete), and two copies of the *Philocalia*, an anthology of Origen's works compiled in the 4th C by Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianus that includes excerpts of *Contra Celsum*, Venice 47 (11th C) and Patmos manuscript (10th C). A papyrus found at Tura in 1941 includes excerpts of books 1 and 2 and is the basis of several alternative readings proposed by Markovic. I have generally followed the English translation of Henry Chadwick in *Origen: Contra Celsum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953; repr. 1965, 1980, 1993) with some modifications.

⁶² Numerous attempts have been made to reconstruct the text of Celsus's *On The True Doctrine*, the most recent being that of R. Joseph Hoffman, who consults the earlier reconstructions of Theodor Keim (1873), Otto Glöckner (1924) and Robert Bader (1940). Origen identifies the author of the treatise as an Epicurean philosopher by that name who was famous for his criticism of magicians with whom Galen had a correspondence and to whom Lucian of Samosata dedicated a pamphlet. This identification was accepted by Harnack and defended by Theodor Keim. In the introduction to his translation of *Cels.*, Henry Chadwick refutes this easy attribution by demonstrating that the text betrays Middle Platonic, not Epicurean, theological and philosophical convictions. See Chadwick, *Contra Celsum*, xxiv–xxv. Taking a middle position, Hoffman argues that the term "Epicurean" had a broad semantic range in the second and third centuries, rendering the traditional claims of authorship plausible while acknowledging the presence of Middle Platonic arguments in Celsus's text. See Hoffman, *Celsus On the True Doctrine: A Discourse Against the Christians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 30–32.

refutation of Celsus's complaints against the Christians. Origen strives to give the impression that the writing of his reply is unnecessary, introducing the work by noting Jesus' silence in response to the false witness borne against him during his own trial. The followers of Jesus do not owe their detractors a response, and no true Christians could be convinced by Celsus's arguments (preface, 1). Origen claims that he writes only at the behest of Ambrosius, for the benefit of those whose faith is weak, painstakingly refuting every charge that would discredit his cause.

Celsus's *True Doctrine* consists of a multi-pronged polemic against the Christian "superstition." He challenges Christian teachings and practices from the varying perspectives of Roman traditional piety, Jewish law-obedience, and Greek philosophical rationalism, altering his *persona* to conform to each perspective. Speaking in the *persona* of a Jew, Celsus temporarily adopts a Jewish worldview, which he discards and even denigrates when arguing from the perspective of a Platonist. Consequently, Origen finds himself sometimes defending Jews when Celsus attacks them on a point of belief shared with Christians, sometimes challenging the position of Celsus's imaginary Jewish critic.

It is striking that the major conflict in the first two books of the *Contra Celsum*, a Christian's rebuttal to a Greek polemic, erupts over what a Jew would and would not say. Here Celsus and Origen each present alternative accounts of the history, beliefs and practices of people who call themselves Jews. Although neither claims himself to be a Jew, both Celsus and Origen claim to know the doctrines that define legitimate Jewish belief and the kinds of arguments that Jews raise against the claims made by Christians.

Origen's strategy of responding to Celsus's charges point-by-point helps to explain the variety of scholarly evaluations of his attitude toward Judaism in the abstract and to the Jews of his acquaintance in Caesarea. While some have emphasized Origen's defense of Jewish belief and practice against Celsus's charges, others highlight Origen's depiction of the Jews as carnal literalists rejected by God.⁶³ Both perspectives, however, fail to capture the full spectrum of Origen's statements about Jews and Jewishness in *Contra Celsum*. In what follows, I provide a comprehensive overview of Origen's comments concerning Jews, Hebrews, Israel, and the Ebionites, a group known to straddle the boundary between Jews and Christians, in *Contra Celsum*. As we shall discover, Origen's attitude towards Jews is more nuanced than a simple designation of "positive" or "negative" allows.

3.1.1 Jews

The word "Jew" and its cognates occur much more frequently in *Contra Celsum* than the terms "Hebrew" or "Israel." This is largely because Celsus writes about "the Jews," whether he is speaking of the ancient nation or of his contemporaries, and Origen generally follows his word choice. The word "Israel" does not occur in the passages of *True Doctrine* excerpted by Origen, while the word "Hebrew" is used only once, in reference to the language.⁶⁴ Origen can use the

⁶³ Ronald E. Heine cites *Cels.* in support of his claim that "Origen can argue with the Jews but he cannot ultimately reject either them or their Scriptures." Heine, *Origen*, 179. He continues, "Origen does not consider the Jews enemies to the faith in the sense that he did the Gnostics. He knows that the Jewish Scriptures are fundamental for the teachings of the Church. He repeatedly defends the Jews and their prophets— including Moses— against the attacks of Celsus." 192. See also de Lange, *Origen and the Jews*, 21, cited by David T. Runia in "Why does Clement call Philo 'the Pythagorean'?" 13, in support of his claim that "both Clement and Origen had on the whole a relatively neutral or even selectively favourable attitude to contemporary Judaism." In contrast, John McGuckin describes Origen's "dialogue with the Jewish tradition in Caesarea" as "neither successful nor particularly happy." McGuckin, "Origen and the Jews," 13.

⁶⁴ It is impossible to exclude the possibility that Celsus did use the terms "Israel" or "Hebrews" in reference to Jews since, as Hoffmann relates, "it is now widely recognized that Origen abbreviates and omits passages of his

term “the Jews” to describe the nation governed by the law of Moses in the ancient past, the people who lived in Judea in the time of Jesus, and the law-observant community that existed in his own day.

Origen frequently comes to the defense of the ancient Jews against Celsus, who dismisses them as “runaway slaves who escaped from Egypt and never did anything remarkable.”⁶⁵ Echoing Clement’s claim in the *Stromateis* that the best of the Greek philosophers cribbed their doctrines from the ancient Jewish scriptures, Origen speculates that Plato may have picked up some of his doctrines, such as the descent of souls, from encounters with those in Egypt “who interpret the Jews’ traditions philosophically” (cf. *Strom.* 2.19.100).⁶⁶ Origen’s defense of the ancient Jews, however, ought not to be read as a defense of Judaism *per se*. In these arguments Origen seeks to confirm the philosophical pedigree of Christianity by rooting it in the antiquity and excellence of the Jewish scriptures. Origen’s defense of the Jews of antiquity is thus the starting point for his defense of his own Christianity.

Although quick to defend the ancient Jews against Celsus’s slanders, Origen’s own portrayal of the ancient Jewish nation is not entirely laudatory. He alternates between idealizing the Jews as the people who alone worshipped the one true God properly and denigrating them as a disobedient nation characterized by hard-heartedness. Thus the Jews are acknowledged to have been “the Lord’s portion” (4.8). They are praised for enduring suffering to avoid renouncing “Judaism and their law” under the Assyrians, the Persians and Antiochus (3.3).⁶⁷ Echoing Philo’s description in *De Specialibus Legibus* 2.62, Origen claims that during their Sabbaths and feasts, “it was possible to see an entire nation studying philosophy” (4.31). Yet Origen charges that

opponent’s book with some regularity. . . a majority of scholars would put the percentage of Celsus’s work accessible through Origen’s response at around 70 percent.” Hoffmann, *Celsus: On the True Doctrine*, 45.

⁶⁵ *Cels.* 4.32: “ἀπ’ Αἰγύπτου δραπεταὶ γεγόνασιν, καὶ ὅτι μηδὲν πόποτ’ ἀξιόλογον.”

⁶⁶ *Cels.* 4.39–40.

⁶⁷ *Cels.* 3.3: “ἵνα μὴ ἐξομόσωνται τὸν ἰουδαϊσμὸν καὶ τὸν κατ’ αὐτὸν νόμον.”

they were unable to maintain their position at the summit of holiness and repeatedly fell into sin (4.32). The Jews worshipped the golden calf (2.74) and killed the prophets (5.43). In response to their transgressions, God repeatedly rebuked them, so that they might be motivated to repentance (4.32). This cycle of punishment and repentance continued until it was permanently severed by the killing of Jesus, which Origen describes as the ultimate transgression of the law (8.69). The reaction to the crucifixion is one of the key factors separating Christians from Jews:

Χριστιανοὶ μὲν γὰρ τῷ Ἰησοῦ ὡς κατὰ τὰ προφητευόμενα ἐληλυθότι
πεπιστεύκαμεν· Ἰουδαίων δ' οἱ πλεῖστοι τοσοῦτο δέουσι τοῦ πιστεῦειν εἰς αὐτόν,
ὡς καὶ τοὺς μὲν κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν ἐκεῖνον ἐπιβεβουλευκέναι τῷ Ἰησοῦ τοὺς δὲ νῦν
εὐδοκοῦντας τοῖς ὑπὸ Ἰουδαίων κατ' αὐτοῦ τετολμημένοις τότε κακηγορεῖν τὸν
Ἰησοῦν, ὡς διὰ τινος γοητείας πλάσάμενον. . .

For Christians have believed that Jesus is the one who has come in accordance with the prophecies; whereas most of the Jews are so far from believing in him that those of that time conspired against Jesus, and those of our time are delighted by what the Jews dared to do against him then, and accuse Jesus of having worked some sort of sorcery. . .⁶⁸

The rejection and crucifixion of Jesus is identified by Origen as the crucial turning point of Jewish history. Although the Jews as a nation had repeatedly rebelled against God and suffered due punishment for their infidelity, their failure to recognize Jesus as the one foretold by the prophets marks a decisive rupture in their relationship with God. The Jews are accused of holding the temple of stone in greater honour than “the true temple of God, the *Logos*” (2.10) and of “misrepresenting Jesus as a vagabond” (2.38). According to Origen, it was their envy of the multitude (of Jews!) who followed Jesus that provoked “the Jews” to conspire against him (3.10). From the resurrection until the present day, Origen charges, the Jews continually have sought to undermine Christ and his followers, accusing them of spreading malicious accusations of child sacrifice and sexual license against the Christians (6.27). Their disbelief in Jesus is

⁶⁸ *Cels.* 3.1. Italics mine. Origen makes this claim in response to Celsus’s contention that “there is nothing worthy of attention in the dispute of Jews and Christians with one another.” Cf. *Hom. Lev.* 10.2

characterized as “consistent with the behaviour of the people from the very beginning as described by scripture” (2.75).

As punishment for this greatest of their misdeeds, the Jews are described by Origen as totally forsaken by God (2.5; 2.8; 2.78; 7.8). The destruction of Jerusalem features prominently in Origen’s argument:

Ἐλεγχέτω δὴ τὸ λεγόμενον ὡς ψεῦδος ὁ βουλόμενος, εἰ μὴ ἀνάστατον τὸ πάντων Ἰουδαίων ἔθνος γεγένηται οὐδὲ μετὰ γενεάν ὅλην μίαν τοῦ ταῦτα πεπονθέναι ὑπ’ αὐτῶν τὸν Ἰησοῦν· τεσσαράκοντα γὰρ ἔτη καὶ δύο οἶμαι ἀφ’ οὗ ἑσταύρωσαν τὸν Ἰησοῦν γεγονέναι ἐπὶ τὴν Ἱεροσολύμων καθαίρεσιν. Καὶ οὐδέ ποτε γὰρ ἰστόρηται, ἐξ οὗ Ἰουδαῖοί εἰσι, τοσοῦτον αὐτοὺς χρόνον ἐκβεβλήσθαι τῆς σεμνῆς ἀγιστείας καὶ λατρείας, κρατηθέντας ὑπὸ δυνατωτέρων. . . . Ἐν οὖν τῶν παριστάντων θεῖόν τι καὶ ἱερὸν χρῆμα γεγονέναι τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐστὶ καὶ τὸ Ἰουδαίοις ἐπ’ αὐτῷ τοσαῦτα καὶ τοιαῦτα πολλῶ ἤδη συμβεβηκέναι χρόνῳ. Θαρροῦντες δ’ ἐροῦμεν ὅτι οὐδ’ ἀποκατασταθήσονται. Ἄγος γὰρ ἔπραξαν τὸ πάντων ἀνοσιώτατον, τῷ σωτῆρι τοῦ γένους τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐπιβουλεύσαντες ἐν τῇ πόλει, ἔνθα τὰ νενομισμένα σύμβολα μεγάλων μυστηρίων ἐποίουν τῷ θεῷ. Ἐχρῆν οὖν ἐκείνην τὴν πόλιν, ὅπου ταῦτα πέπονθεν Ἰησοῦς, ἄρδην ἀπολωλέναι καὶ τὸ Ἰουδαίων ἔθνος ἀνάστατον γεγονέναι καὶ ἐπ’ ἄλλους τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς μακαριότητα κλῆσιν μεταβεβηκέναι, τοὺς Χριστιανοὺς λέγω, ἐφ’ οὓς ἐλήλυθεν ἡ περὶ τῆς εἰλικρινοῦς καὶ καθαρᾶς θεοσεβείας διδασκαλία.

I challenge anyone to prove my statement untrue if I say that the entire Jewish nation was destroyed less than one whole generation later on account of these sufferings which they inflicted upon Jesus. For it was, I believe, 42 years from the time when they crucified Jesus to the destruction of Jerusalem. Indeed ever since the Jews existed, it has not been recorded in history that they were ejected for so long a time from their sacred and ritual worship, after they had been conquered by some more powerful people... Accordingly, one of the facts which show that Jesus was some divine and sacred person is just that on his account such great and fearful calamities have now for a long time befallen the Jews. We will go so far as to say that they will not be restored again. For they committed the most impious crime of all, when they conspired against the Saviour of mankind, in the city where they performed to God the customary rites which were symbols of profound mysteries. Therefore the city where Jesus suffered these indignities had to be utterly destroyed. The Jewish nation had to be overthrown, and God’s invitation to blessedness transferred to others, I mean the Christians, to whom came the teaching about the simple and pure worship of God.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ *Cels.* 4.22. See also 8.42, 8.69.

Origen concludes that the Jews' loss of their homeland was due not to the failure of God to keep his promises, but to "all their transgressions of the law and especially in their crime against Jesus" (8.69).

In addition to their rejection of Jesus, contemporary Jews are defined by their obedience to the law of Moses and worship of the one supreme God (5.6). Origen is ambivalent, however, as to whether their continued legal observance is worthy of praise or blame. The doctrines of contemporary Jews are rejected as "myths and trifles"⁷⁰ that are no longer capable of being fulfilled literally.⁷¹ Origen charges that Jews do not really understand the law, that they read the books of Moses "superficially, and only as stories" (ἐπιπολαιώτερον καὶ μυθικώτερον) and that, having failed to learn its proper interpretation from Jesus, they do not comprehend the law intelligently.⁷² Yet in spite of criticizing Jewish legal observance as a misinterpretation of the law, Origen suggests that legitimate Jews follow its precepts. Thus, when Celsus claims that some Jews worship angels or the heavens, Origen accuses him of confusing real Jews (i.e., those

⁷⁰ *Cels.* 2.5: Διὸ καὶ ἔστιν ἀληθῶς ἰδεῖν πάντα μὲν τὰ Ἰουδαίων τῶν νῦν μύθους καὶ λήρους—οὐ γὰρ ἔχουσι τὸ φῶς τῆς γνώσεως τῶν γραφῶν

⁷¹ 7.26: Εἰ δὲ χρή κἀν ὀλίγα περὶ τῆς διαφόρου πολιτείας εἰπεῖν, ἦντινα Ἰουδαῖοι κατὰ Μωϋσέα πρότερον ἐπολιτεύοντο, καὶ ἦν Χριστιανοὶ νῦν κατὰ τὴν Ἰησοῦ διδασκαλίαν βούλονται κατορθοῦν, φήσομεν ὅτι οὔτε τῇ κλήσει τῶν ἐθνῶν ἤρμοξε κατὰ τὸν Μωϋσέως ὡς πρὸς τὸ γράμμα πολιτεύεσθαι νόμον, ὑπὸ Ῥωμαίοις τεταγμένων, οὔτε τοῖς πάλαι Ἰουδαίοις οἷόν τ' ἦν τὸ σύστημα τῆς πολιτείας ἔχειν ἀκαθαίρετον. . . Καὶ μὴ βουλομένη γε ἡ πάλαι μὲν τὸν νόμον δεδωκυῖα πρόνοια νῦν δὲ τὸ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εὐαγγέλιον κρατεῖν ἔτι τὰ Ἰουδαίων καθεῖλεν αὐτῶν τὴν πόλιν καὶ τὸν ναὸν καὶ τὴν παρὰ τῷ ναῷ διὰ θυσιῶν καὶ τῆς ἀναγεγραμμένης λατρείας θεραπείαν τοῦ θεοῦ.

"If we may say a little about the manner of life which the Jews formerly used to follow according to the prescriptions of the law of Moses, and which Christians now wish to correct to conform to the teaching of Jesus, we will observe that it did not fit in with the calling of the Gentiles that they should conduct their society according to the literal interpretation of the law of Moses, since they were subject to the Romans. Nor was it possible for the structure of life of the ancient Jews to remain without any modification... But the providence which long ago gave the law, but now has given the gospel of Jesus Christ, did not wish that the practices of the Jews should continue, and so destroyed their city and temple." Origen's position on the value of the literal observance of the law in the *Contra Celsum* is more positive than the total rejection of the *Letter of Barnabas* but less laudatory than Clement's depiction of the law as a system that inculcates virtue in *Stromateis* (especially book 2). See also *Cels.* 1.18.

⁷² See 2.4; 2.6; 2.76; 5.7; 6.70; 8.29.

who keep the Mosaic law) with illegitimate or unfaithful Jews “who transgress the law.”⁷³ In spite of their inability to truly understand the law, Origen asserts that the Jews’ strict monotheism proves that they “do possess some deeper wisdom, not only more than the multitude, but also than those who seem to be philosophers, because the philosophers in spite of their impressive philosophical teachings fall down to idols and daemons, while even the lowliest Jew looks only to the supreme God.”⁷⁴

At several points in *Contra Celsum*, Origen mentions public debates with men whom he identifies as “τινι Ἰουδαίων λεγομένους σοφοὺς.”⁷⁵ Reuven Kimelman contends that the designation of these men as “wise” indicates “that his opponents were rabbis.”⁷⁶ Ruth Clements identifies parallel references to such debates in the rabbinic literature, where Origen’s contemporaries Rabbis Hoshaya and Yochanan are depicted as responding to questions that “might be levelled by Christians,” although their questioners are not explicitly identified as such.⁷⁷ Although these Jews are said to be wise, Origen portrays them as defenders of irrational positions rather than sources of traditions he wishes to appropriate.⁷⁸

⁷³ *Cels.* 5.9: “since [Celsus] observed that the Jews keep the law, and said that they are those who live according to the law, either he ought not to have attributed this to the Jews at all, or, if he did so, ought to have shown that they are Jews who transgress the law if they do such things.”

⁷⁴ *Cels.* 5.43: σοφώτερόν τι εἰσὶν εἰδότες Ἰουδαῖοι οὐ μόνον τῶν πολλῶν ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν φιλοσοφεῖν δοκούντων, ὅτι οἱ μὲν φιλοσοφοῦντες μετὰ τοὺς σεμνοὺς ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ λόγους καταπίπτουσιν ἐπὶ τὰ εἰδῶλα καὶ τοὺς δαίμονας, Ἰουδαίων δὲ καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος μόνῳ ἐνορᾷ τῷ ἐπὶ πᾶσι θεῷ· καὶ καλῶς γε ὅσον ἐπὶ τούτῳ σεμνύνονται καὶ τὴν τῶν ἄλλων ὡς ἐναγῶν καὶ ἀσεβῶν ἐκτρέπονται κοινωνίαν. Origen directly follows this praise of the philosophical character of the Jewish people with the lament, “Would that they had not sinned and broken the law, both earlier when they killed the prophets and also later when they conspired against Jesus!”

⁷⁵ *Cels.* 1.45; 1.55; 1.56; 2.31

⁷⁶ Kimelman, “Rabbi Yohannan and Origen on the Song of Songs: A Third-Century Jewish-Christian Disputation.” *HTR* 73 (1980) 567–595, 572.

⁷⁷ Clements, “Origen’s Hexapla,” 315, citing *b. Pes.* 87a–88a.

⁷⁸ Origen challenges the seemingly wise Jews for their rejection of Jesus despite their acceptance of Moses (1.45); on the question of whether the Christ is the son of God (1.49); and the interpretation of prophecies purported to foretell Jesus (1.55–56).

While Origen can be quite critical of Jews both ancient and modern, *Contra Celsum* repeatedly returns to beliefs and practices shared by “Jews and Christians.”⁷⁹ This is largely due to the nature of *Cels.* as a point-by-point response to Celsus’s arguments. Thus when Celsus puts his polemic in the mouth of a Jew, Origen goes on the offensive against the Jews, defending his Christian position by distinguishing it from what he perceives to be Jewish error. When Celsus changes strategy and attacks the Jews and Christians together, characterizing them as “frogs holding council round a marsh” (4.23), Origen adapts his tactics, now coming to the defense of Jewish beliefs and practices that are shared by Christians.

Origen concurs with Celsus that Christianity finds its origin (ἀρχή) in the teachings of the ancient Jews (1.20). Christians and Jews agree that the God of the universe has revealed himself to humanity through the writings of Moses and the prophets (1.44; 3.2; 4.89). Thus Origen presents Jews and Christians together as preserving the doctrine of God’s unchangeable nature, pitting them against Stoics, Epicureans, and Aristotelians, who each hold irreverent opinions about the divinity (1.21). Christians and Jews both acknowledge God as the creator and ruler of the cosmos (5.59) and commendably avoid pagan altars and temples (7.64; 8.31). Origen charges that those who claim to be Christians while denigrating the creator God of the Jews are undeserving of the name “Christian” (8.14).⁸⁰

Given Origen’s frequent representation of Jews as literalists, it is perhaps surprising that he affirms Celsus’s claim that the wiser Christians and Jews both allegorize elements of the scriptures. Responding to the charge that “the more reasonable Jews and Christians are ashamed of these [stories such as the creation of Eve from Adam’s rib] and try somehow to allegorize

⁷⁹ *Cels.* 1.2; 1.21; 3.1; 3.2; 3.14; 4.3; 4.11; 4.21; 4.23; 4.25; 4.38; 4.48; 4.49; 4.87; 4.89; 5.1–4; 5.59; 5.60; 5.61; 6.23; 7.5; 7.8; 7.59; 7.64; 8.31; 8.48.

⁸⁰ *Cels.* 8.14: “If Celsus misunderstood certain people who do not confess that the Son of God is the Son of Him who created this universe, that is a matter between him and those who agree with this doctrine.”

them,” Origen maintains that some Biblical stories were indeed composed as allegories.⁸¹

Turning this criticism against his opponent, Origen contends that the myths of Hesiod are more ludicrous than the tales preserved in Genesis and asks,

ἄρα μόνοις Ἑλλήσιν ἐν ὑπονοίᾳ ἔξεστι φιλοσοφεῖν, ἀλλὰ καὶ Αἰγυπτίοις, καὶ ὅσοι τῶν βαρβάρων σεμνύνονται ἐπὶ μυστηρίοις καὶ ἀληθείᾳ· μόνοι δὲ Ἰουδαῖοι ἔδοξάν σοι καὶ ὁ τούτων νομοθέτης καὶ οἱ συγγραφεῖς πάντων ἀνθρώπων εἶναι ἀνοητότατοι, καὶ μόνον τοῦτο τὸ ἔθνος οὐδεμιᾶς δυνάμεως θεοῦ μετεληφέναι, τὸ οὕτως μεγαλοφυέστατα δεδιδαγμένον ἀναβαίνειν ἐπὶ τὴν ἀγέννητον τοῦ θεοῦ φύσιν κἀκεῖνᾳ μόνῳ ἐνὸρᾶν καὶ τὰς ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ μόνου ἐλπίδας προσδοκᾶν;

Are the Greeks alone allowed to find philosophical truths in a hidden form, and the Egyptians too, and all barbarians whose pride is in mysteries and in the truth which they contain? And do you think that the Jews alone, and their lawgiver, and the authors of their literature, are the most stupid of all men, and that this nation alone had no share at all of God’s power, although it had been taught so magnificently to ascend to the uncreated nature of God, and to look upon Him alone, and to base its hopes only on Him? *Cels.* 4.38

Crucially, however, it is only the narrative sections of the Hebrew Scriptures that the Jews recognize to contain allegories. According to Origen, it is the interpretation of legal requirements that distinguishes Christian from Jew. He contends,

οἰόμενον τὰ αὐτὰ ἡμᾶς Ἰουδαίοις περὶ τῶν ἐκκειμένων δοξάζειν, φήσομεν ὅτι τὰ μὲν βιβλία θεῷ γεγράφθαι πνεύματι ὁμολογοῦμεν ἀμφοτέρω, περὶ δὲ τῆς ἐκδοχῆς τῶν ἐν τοῖς βιβλίοις οὐκέτι τὰ ὅμοια φαμεν, οἳ γε οὐδὲ βιοῦμεν ὡς Ἰουδαῖοι τῷ φρονεῖν οὐ τὴν κατὰ τὸ ῥητὸν ἐκδοχὴν τῶν νόμων εἶναι τὴν περιέχουσαν τὸ βούλημα τῆς νομοθεσίας.

when he thinks that we hold the same opinions as the Jews about the stories he quotes, we will say that we both confess that the books were written by divine inspiration, but concerning the interpretation of the contents of the books we no longer speak alike. In fact, the reason why we do not live like the Jews is that we think the literal interpretation of the laws does not contain the meaning of the legislation. *Cels.* 5.60

Christian allegoresis, in contrast to Jewish interpretation, extends beyond identifying hidden meanings of narrative texts. While the (admittedly) wise Jewish allegorists continue to live by

⁸¹ *Cels.* 4.38: οἱ ἐπιεικέστεροι Ἰουδαίων τε καὶ Χριστιανῶν ἐπὶ τοῦτοις αἰσχυρόμενοι πειρῶνται πως ἀλληγορεῖν αὐτά. See also 4.48; 4.87.

the letter of the law, Christians part ways with them by living according to its spiritual interpretation.

3.1.2 *Israel*

Origen rarely uses the term “Israel” independently in the *Contra Celsum*; it occurs almost exclusively in the context of scriptural citations.⁸² In these contexts, Israel denotes the nation of the Jews in antiquity.⁸³ In addition to the nation of Israel, Origen hints at the existence of a spiritual Israel that is distinct from an “Israel according to the flesh.”⁸⁴ In 2.1, he contends that Peter needed the vision he receives in Acts 10, “so that he would share the doctrines of faith with Cornelius, who was not an Israelite according to the flesh (τῷ μὴ κατὰ σάρκα Ἰσραηλίτῃ Κορνηλίῳ), and those with him, because he was still a Jew and was still living according to the traditions of the Jews, despising those outside Judaism (καταφρονῶν τῶν ἔξω τοῦ ἰουδαϊσμοῦ).” Origen’s description of Cornelius as “not an Israelite according to the flesh” suggests the possibility of a different way of being an Israelite. He elaborates further on the distinction between different “Israels” in book six. Here he charges that Celsus “does not see all the care of God for the Jews and for their ancient and sacred society, and that because of their fall salvation

⁸² *Cels.* 1.36; 1.59; 2.74; 4.3; 4.8; 4.17; 4.95; 5.29; 6.23; 7.20

⁸³ Origen hints that the ancient Israelites consisted of pre-existent souls that fell to a lesser extent than the inhabitants of other nations. See 4.8–9, where Origen begins to explicate the reasons why “formerly, ‘the Lord’s portion was Jacob and his people, Israel the lot of his inheritance,’ whereas concerning the latter the Father said to the Saviour, ‘Ask of me and I will give you the nations for your inheritance,’” but stops short of a full exploration of the issue, since “the explanation of this has something rather mysterious and profound about it, the understanding of which is quite beyond the capacity of the common people.” At 5.31–32, Origen contends that the formerly superior Israelites “sinned still more, and on this account were scattered in the other parts by the rulers of other nations who carried them off,” so that God has now “as if avenging himself . . . detached those whom he could from the other nations . . . his purpose being to lead them on to the end to which he led those of the earlier nation who did not sin,” suggesting that the Church has become a replacement for the original Israel.

⁸⁴ This distinction is made more explicit in *Princ.* 4.3.6, commenting on 1 Cor. 10:18: “Thus, the Apostle says somewhere in order to raise our thinking: ‘Behold Israel according to the flesh’ as though there were also an Israel according to the spirit.”

has come to the Gentiles, and that ‘their fall is the riches of the world and their loss the riches of the Gentiles, until the fullness of the Gentiles comes in’ and after this ‘all Israel,’ of the meaning of which Celsus has no comprehension, ‘may be saved’.”⁸⁵ Origen avoids elaborating here on the meaning of “all Israel” that eludes Celsus, but considers the question at length in his Commentary on Romans, written in Caesarea shortly before the composition of *Contra Celsum*.⁸⁶ There he explains,

For there are many from Israel’s race, but they are not all named Israel. For Israel received its name by seeing God. For Jacob himself says the following: ‘I have seen God face to face, and my soul was saved.’ Therefore, since he saw God, he was called Israel. But the one who has not seen the one who said, ‘He who has seen me has seen the Father as well’ cannot be called Israel.⁸⁷

Origen’s identification of Israel as those who “see God” echoes the etymology defined by Philo in *Migr.* 59–61, but is given a Christological twist with the addition of the words of Jesus in John 14:9.⁸⁸ Interpreting Paul’s claim in Rom. 11:26 that “all Israel will be saved,” Origen admits, “Who the “all Israel” are who will be saved, and what that fullness of the Gentiles will be, only God knows, and his only-begotten, and perhaps anyone who are his friends,” but continues, “Israel cannot attain to salvation as long as it continues to be Israel according to the flesh and fails to become a true Israelite according to the Spirit, mentally gazing on God” (8.12.6). In the

⁸⁵ *Cels.* 6.80: οὐχ ὁρῶν πᾶσαν τὴν περὶ Ἰουδαίους καὶ τὴν σεμνὴν πάλαι πολιτείαν αὐτῶν τοῦ θεοῦ οἰκονομίαν, καὶ ὥς «τῷ» ἐκεῖνων «παραπτώματι ἢ σωτηρίᾳ» γεγέννηται «τοῖς ἔθνεσι» καὶ «τὸ παράπτωμα αὐτῶν πλοῦτος κόσμος καὶ τὸ ἥττημα αὐτῶν πλοῦτος ἐθνῶν»· ἕως «τὸ πλήρωμα τῶν ἐθνῶν εἰσέλθῃ», ἵνα μετὰ τοῦτο «πᾶς», ὃν οὐ νοεῖ Κέλσος, «Ἰσραὴλ» σωθῇ.

⁸⁶ Thomas P. Scheck dates the *Comm. Rom.* to 246 CE. It is the only one of Origen’s commentaries to survive “in a coherent form beginning to end,” although its total size has been reduced by half (from sixteen to ten books) by Rufinus, whose Latin translation forms the basis of the critical edition. See Scheck, “Introduction,” in *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans (Fathers of the Church 104)*: Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001).

⁸⁷ *Comm. Rom.* 7.14.2 (trans. Scheck).

⁸⁸ Philo’s consistent distinction between the λαός of the Jews and the γένος of Israel is illuminated by Ellen Birnbaum, *The Place of Judaism in Philo’s Thought: Israel, Jews, and Proselytes* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996). Birnbaum contends that Philo’s conception of Israel was non-ethnic and that membership in Israel was potentially accessible to the elite of any nation who “see God” (115, 212). See chapter 1 above.

Commentary on Romans, Origen reserves the idea of an “Israelite according to the spirit” for those who “descend from the race of Israel”—seemingly excluding gentile Christians, who belong to the “fullness of the Gentiles”—while maintaining that not all descendants of Israel qualify as “true” Israelites.⁸⁹ The Israelites who comprise the “all Israel” that is to be saved after the “fullness of the Gentiles” come into the kingdom consists only of those Jews who “see God” in Jesus.

3.1.3 Hebrew(s)

“Hebrew(s)” occurs most frequently in reference to the language spoken by Jews both ancient and modern.⁹⁰ “Hebrews” as a people usually refer to the Jews of antiquity, often in contexts where Origen wants to emphasize the great antiquity and superiority of this ancient people, as illustrated by the example of 5.10: “The people of the Hebrews, then, were called by God to be ‘an elect race,’ ‘a royal priesthood,’ ‘a holy nation,’ and ‘a people for His possession.’”⁹¹ Origen consistently refers to the participants in the Exodus from Egypt as Hebrews when refuting Celsus’s claim that the race of the Jews originated as a group of Egyptian rebels who were subsequently driven out of the land.⁹²

⁸⁹ In other contexts, Origen does suggest that Gentiles may become members of Israel. Commenting on the 144,000 sealed out of the tribes of Israel in the *Apocalypse of John*, Origen contends, “But also, if those “from the tribes” are the same as the virgins, as we showed previously, and a believer from Israel according to the flesh is rare, so that one might perhaps dare to say that the number of the 144,000 is not filled up with believers from Israel according to the flesh, it is clear that the 144,000 is composed of those gentiles who come to the divine Word, who are not defiled with women.” *Commentary on John* 1.7 (FOTC 80: trans. Ronald E. Heine: Catholic University of America Press, 2010).

⁹⁰ *Cels.* 1.24; 1.35; 3.6; 3.8; 4.31; 4.34; 4.35; 4.73; 6.16; 6.17; 6.18; 6.25; 6.32; 6.43; 6.44; 7.59.

⁹¹ *Cels.* 5.10: «Γένος» τοίνυν «ἐκλεκτὸν» καὶ «βασίλειον ἱεράτευμα» καὶ «ἔθνος ἅγιον» καὶ «λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν» κληθέντες ὑπὸ θεοῦ εἶναι ὁ Ἑβραίων λαός. See also 4.31; 4.34; 5.15.

⁹² *Cels.* 3.5; 3.6; 4.47; 5.59; 8.69

Although the term “Hebrew” generally refers to people of the ancient past, Origen occasionally employs it in reference to his contemporaries.⁹³ On one occasion, Origen cites an interpretation by certain “Hebrews” whom he deems to be truly, not seemingly, wise. Defending the Genesis account of humanity’s creation against Celsus’s ridicule, Origen asserts that the Mosaic narratives “have been interpreted philosophically by the wise men among the Hebrews,” not unlike the practice of the Jewish allegorizers mentioned in book 4.⁹⁴ Origen does not, however, reserve the term “Hebrew” as a coded reference to “good Jews” or Jews whose traditions he wishes to claim for his own. Hebrews can be portrayed negatively, as in *Cels.* 2.74, where they are described as “disbelieving God” by worshipping the golden calf. Origen concludes that “through the sins of the Hebrew people God would choose out, not one nation, but selected men from all places.”⁹⁵

3.1.4 Ebionites

According to Origen, “most of the Jews” reject Jesus; yet he admits that a small faction claim to be Jews *and* to follow Jesus. These, Origen asserts at the outset of book two, are the Ebionites, introduced in order to discredit Celsus’s assertion that some Jews “deluded by Jesus have left the law of their fathers, and have been quite ludicrously deceived, and have deserted to another name and another life.”⁹⁶ Origen contends that, far from abandoning their ancestral practices, Jews who claim to believe in fact continue to observe the law: “They live according to it, deriving their name from the poverty of their interpretation of the law. For a beggar is called Ebion

⁹³ *Cels.* 2.77.

⁹⁴ *Cels.* 6.49: εἰρημένων ὑπὸ τῶν παρ’ Ἑβραίοις σοφῶν πεφιλοσοφημένων

⁹⁵ *Cels.* 2.78: Καὶ ταῦτα δὲ προεῖπον οἱ προφηταί, ὥς ἄρα διὰ τὰ ἀμαρτήματα τοῦ τῶν Ἑβραίων λαοῦ ἐκλέξεται ὁ θεὸς οὐχὶ ἔθνος ἀλλὰ λογάδας πανταχόθεν

⁹⁶ *Cels.* 2.1: Φησὶν αὐτοὺς καταλιπόντας τὸν πατριὸν νόμον τῷ ἐψυχᾷ αὐτῶν ἡγεῖσθαι ὑπὸ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἡπατῆσθαι πάνυ γελοίως καὶ ἀπηυτομολῆσαι εἰς ἄλλο ὄνομα καὶ εἰς ἄλλον βίον.

among the Jews, and they call Ebionites those from the Jews who accept Jesus as Christ.”⁹⁷

Origen’s use of the term “Ebionite” here suggests that it serves as a catch-all designation for Jews who have faith in Jesus. His contention that the term refers to the “poverty of their interpretation of the law” aligns the Ebionites with the rest of the Jews who have not properly understood the law of Moses rather than the Christians who interpret the law spiritually.⁹⁸

Origen likens the Ebionites’ attachment to the law to the post-resurrection behaviour of Peter and the apostles. Like the Ebionites, Jesus’ disciples continued to observe the law literally until they received additional instruction from the resurrected Jesus to “ascend from the letter of the law to its spiritual interpretation.”⁹⁹ The apostles’ faith in Jesus, like the faith of the Ebionites, was incomplete until they received further instruction in the law’s spiritual interpretation.

Origen’s initially straightforward depiction of all Jewish Jesus-believers as Ebionites becomes more complicated as he begins to differentiate between Jewish believers who hold that “Jesus was the Christ and son of the living God” but cling to the “dung and loss”¹⁰⁰ of their ancestral practices, and others who desist from their former practices. This second group follows the example of Peter by interpreting the law spiritually. Contrary to Celsus’s charges, Origen contends that they do not “despise what is written in the law” but “accord it greater honour by

⁹⁷ *Cels.* 2.1: μηδὲ τοῦτο κατανοήσας, ὅτι οἱ ἀπὸ Ἰουδαίων εἰς τὸν Ἰησοῦν πιστεύοντες οὐ καταλελοίπασιν τὸν πάτριον νόμον. Βιοῦσι γὰρ κατ’ αὐτόν, ἐπώνυμοι τῆς κατὰ τὴν ἐκδοχὴν πτωχείας τοῦ νόμου γεγεννημένοι. Ἐβίων τε γὰρ ὁ πτωχὸς παρὰ Ἰουδαίους καλεῖται, καὶ Ἐβιωναῖοι χρηματίζουσιν οἱ ἀπὸ Ἰουδαίων τὸν Ἰησοῦν ὡς Χριστὸν παραδεξάμενοι.

⁹⁸ If “Ebionite” was used as a self-designation, it must have been understood more positively, more likely referring to material poverty, as its Hebrew etymology would suggest. Cf. Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 1.26.2. In *Against all the Heresies*, 7.34, Hippolytus alternatively suggests that the term “Ebionite” refers to the founder of the sect, a certain Ebion. This explanation is also given by Tertullian in *de Carne Christi*, 14.

⁹⁹ *Cels.* 2.1–2: ὡς μηδέπω ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ μαθὼν ἀναβαίνειν ἀπὸ τοῦ κατὰ τὸ γράμμα νόμου ἐπὶ τὸν κατὰ τὸ πνεῦμα. Origen goes on to cite Acts 10:9–15 and John 16:12–13.

¹⁰⁰ σκύβαλα and ζημία, citing Phil. 3:8

showing what a depth of wise and mysterious doctrines is contained by those writings.”¹⁰¹ In contrast, “those from the Jews have not contemplated them but read them superficially and as myths.”¹⁰²

At 2.3, the depiction of Christ-believers of Jewish background becomes yet more diverse. Origen now suggests that there are in fact three different attitudes towards the law held among “*Israelites* [not Jews] who believe in Jesus.”¹⁰³ Some see no opposition between belief in Jesus and the observance of the law of Moses, “thinking that they possess in the letter the whole meaning of the Spirit.” Others profess to interpret according to the spirit but continue to observe their ancestral customs. Still others no longer follow Jewish practices because they follow “interpretations and allegories.” Although confirming Celsus’s charge that some Jewish believers abandon their ancestral practices, Origen maintains that they have not abandoned the law but in fact keep it more authentically than do other Jewish believers. This group, however, can no longer be called Ebionites precisely because they have been converted from the poverty of literal obedience to the richness of spiritual exegesis.

The Ebionites reappear in *Cels.* 5, as Origen replies to Celsus’s charge that many sects (αἱρέσεις) all claim the name of Christian. Origen admits that “some also accept Jesus and on that account boast that they are Christians although they still want to live according to the law of the Jews like the multitude of the Jews. These are the two sects of Ebionites, the one confessing as we do that Jesus was born of a virgin, the other holding that he was not born in this way but

¹⁰¹ *Cels.* 2.2 οὐχ, οἱ προϊόντες ἀτιμάζουσι τὰ ἐν τῷ νόμῳ γεγραμμένα, ἀλλὰ πλείονα τιμὴν αὐτοῖς περιτιθέασιν, ἀποδεικνύοντες ὅσον ἔχει βάθος σοφῶν καὶ ἀπορρήτων λόγῶν ἐκεῖνα τὰ γράμματα

¹⁰² *Cels.* 2.2: τὰ ὑπὸ Ἰουδαίων οὐ τεθεωρημένα, τῶν ἐπιπολαιότερον καὶ μυθικώτερον αὐτοῖς ἐντυγχανόντων.

¹⁰³ Ἰσραηλίταις πιστεύουσιν ἐπὶ τὸν Ἰησοῦν.

like other men.”¹⁰⁴ Ebionites are here presented as calling themselves Christians, citing their acceptance of Jesus as the criterion for their adoption of the name. Origen, however, invokes a different standard: viz. attitude toward the law. Both sects of Ebionites, Origen charges, still want to live like Jews; consequently, the Christianity of both is called into question.

3.2 *Commentary on Matthew*

We now turn to the *Commentary on Matthew*, the only other text in Origen’s corpus where Philo is mentioned by name. The better part of Origen’s commentary on this Gospel, which he believed to have a Hebrew *Vorlage*, remains extant.¹⁰⁵ Originally consisting of twenty-five books, books one through nine, with the exception of two fragments, are lost. Fortunately, books ten through seventeen, in which Origen comments on Mat. 13:36–22:33, have been preserved in Greek, and the majority of the remaining books, covering from Mat. 22:34 to the end of the gospel, survive in Latin translation.¹⁰⁶ The commentary employs exegetical methods gleaned from the Greco-Roman grammar and rhetorical schools.¹⁰⁷ His investigations, however, are always carried out in accordance with what he considers to be the teaching of the church.

¹⁰⁴ *Cels.* 5.61: “Ἐστῶσαν δὲ τινες καὶ τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἀποδεχόμενοι ὡς παρὰ τοῦτο Χριστιανοὶ εἶναι ἀνχοῦντες, ἔτι δὲ καὶ κατὰ τὸν Ἰουδαίων νόμον ὡς τὰ Ἰουδαίων πλήθη βιοῦν ἐθέλοντες· οὗτοι δ’ εἰσὶν οἱ διττοὶ Ἐβιωναῖοι, ἧτοι ἐκ παρθένου ὁμολογοῦντες ὁμοίως ἡμῖν τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἢ οὐχ οὕτω γεγεννησθαι ἀλλὰ ὡς τοὺς λοιποὺς ἀνθρώπους· τί τοῦτο φέρει ἐγκλημα τοῖς ἀπὸ τῆς ἐκκλησίας, οὓς ἀπὸ τοῦ πλήθους ὠνόμασεν ὁ Κέλσος;

¹⁰⁵ See *Comm. Jo.* 6.32, in which Origen relates that the Gospel of Matthew was written before the other gospels for “the Hebrews, the faithful ones from the circumcision (τοῖς ἐκ περι τομῆς πιστεύουσιν).”

¹⁰⁶ I follow the Greek text in the critical edition of Erich Klostermann, *Commentarium in evangelium Matthaei* (GCS 40.1–40.2: Leipzig: Teubner, 1935–1937). English translations are made in consultation with the German of *Der Kommentar Zum Evangelium Nach Mattäus I–III*. Bibliothek Griechische Literatur (trans. Hermann J. Vogt: Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1990).

¹⁰⁷ Origen’s use of common Greco-Roman text-critical practices in the *Commentary on Matthew* is described by Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 82–96.

Throughout the commentary, Origen displays an enthusiasm for drawing boundaries of legitimate Christian belief and practice that rivals that of the most ardent heresiologists.¹⁰⁸

3.2.1 *Jews*

Naturally enough, in *Comm. Matt.* Origen refers to Jews primarily in the context of exegeses of scriptural passages in which they are mentioned. Frequently, however, he uses descriptions of Jews in the Gospel as a point of departure for discussing those of his own day. Portraying the beliefs and behaviour of contemporary Jews as equivalent to those attributed to them in the gospel, Origen suggests that criticisms of the Jews of first century Palestine remain valid for the Jews of his own acquaintance. Moreover, he blames the enticement of Jewish error for inciting some who think themselves Christians to adopt Jewish dietary restrictions and to celebrate Jewish festivals.

Throughout the commentary, Origen presents the Jews as the people to whom the scriptures were first entrusted but who are now incapable of properly understanding them, having a “veil upon their hearts” (10.6, 12.9). Their continued obedience to the literal interpretation of the law is portrayed as a desire to remain in a state of bondage (11.12). Being beholden to the law, they do not seek after goods from above but after earthly goods (11.13). He interprets the gospel as verifying the charge of the Jews as Christ’s killers and reads Matt. 22:8 as a prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem, which he characterizes as punishment for their murderous actions. In fulfilment of the prophecy that “a prophet is not without honour, except in his own

¹⁰⁸ For example, see *Comm. Matt.* 12.12 “Now, if you attend to the saying, Many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in and shall not be able, you will understand that this refers to those who boast that they are of the church, but live weakly and contrary to the word. Of those, then, who seek to enter in, those who are not able to enter will not be able to do so because the gates of Hades prevail against them”; Origen goes on to liken Marcion, Basilides and Valentinus to the Gates of Hades.

country,” Origen claims that contemporary Jews, who are Jesus’ fleshly compatriots, continue to persecute Christians (10.16, 18). The Word of God has thus left the Synagogue of the Jews as though it were an adulterous wife and has chosen the Gentiles to be his “wife of fornication” (12.4). Origen emphasizes Jesus’ compassion upon his fellow Jews, in spite of their sinfulness, until the moment of his crucifixion. However, that compassion is no longer extended to those who refuse to acknowledge Jesus as the Son of God prophesied in the Scriptures.

3.2.2 *Israel*

Israel is a multivalent term in *Comm. Matt.* It can simply refer to the “land of Israel” (11.16) or the people of that territory. The twin concepts of Israel according to the flesh and the spiritual Israel encountered elsewhere in Origen’s corpus are invoked in his interpretation of Matthew 15. Commenting on Jesus’ remark to the Canaanite woman that he “had not been sent by the Father for any other thing than to the lost sheep of the house of Israel”, Origen contends that in this instance Jesus refers not to the literal but to the spiritual Israel, “a lost race of souls possessing clear vision,”¹⁰⁹ who are figuratively called “sheep of the house of Israel” (11.17). The simpler people (οἱ ἀπλούστεροι) take these sheep to be Israel according to the flesh. But if Jesus is taken literally here, those simple believers would have to concede that “our Saviour was sent by the Father not to any others but only to those lost Jews,” an unthinkable proposition for an increasingly non-ethnically Jewish movement. Spiritual interpretation is necessary, and it allows Origen to insist that

¹⁰⁹ Here Origen is again invoking the established etymological interpretation of Israel as “one who sees God” or “seeing God” that is also found in Philo’s treatises. For more on this trope see Birnbaum, *The Place of Judaism in Philo’s Thought*.

Ἡμεῖς δὲ οἱ εὐχόμενοι ἐξ ἀληθείας λέγειν· «Εἰ καὶ Χριστὸν ποτε κατὰ σάρκα ἐγνώκαμεν, ἀλλὰ νῦν οὐκέτι γινώσκουμεν», ἴσμεν τοῦ λόγου προηγούμενον εἶναι ἔργον σφῶζειν τοὺς συνετωτέρους· οἰκειότεροι γὰρ οὗτοι παρὰ τοὺς ἀμβλυτέρους αὐτῷ τυγχάνουσιν. Ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ τὰ ἀπολωλότα πρόβατα οἴκου Ἰσραὴλ παρὰ τὸ “κατ' ἐκλογὴν χάριτος λεῖμμα» ἠπειθήσαν τῷ λόγῳ, διὰ τοῦτο «ἐξελέξατο τὰ μωρὰ τοῦ κόσμου, τὸν μὴ Ἰσραὴλ μηδὲ διορατικόν, ἵνα καταισχύνῃ τοὺς σοφοὺς» τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ.

we, who can truthfully boast that ‘if we have once known Christ after the flesh, but now no longer do we know Him so,’ are assured that the primary work of the Logos is to save the intelligent, for these resemble Him more than those who are simple. But since the lost sheep of the house of Israel, with the exception of “the remnant according to the election of grace,” disbelieved the Word, on this account “God chose the foolish things of the world,” namely, that which was not Israel, nor clear of vision, that He might confound the wise ones of Israel.

Although the “lost race of souls possessing clear vision” that comprise “the lost sheep of Israel” are initially presented as the more intelligent souls who “resemble the Logos more than those who are simple,” Origen reinterprets the “lost sheep” as the majority of Israel who, with the exception of the “remnant” described by Paul in Romans, “disbelieve the Word.” The Canaanite woman represents the humble and foolish people of the world who nevertheless recognize Jesus as the Son of God. Although they are initially worthy not of loaves but only of crumbs, the Gentiles are chosen by God to confound the Israel that is ultimately unworthy of the name Israel because they have rejected the Logos.

3.2.3 Hebrew(s)

As in *Contra Celsum*, the term “Hebrews” is frequently applied to the ancient people recounted in the Old Testament.¹¹⁰ “Hebrew” is also used when Origen wishes to make an etymological or linguistic point, using the term to connote speakers of the Hebrew language (11.16). Hebrews

¹¹⁰ Origen describes Daniel, Hananiah, Azariah and Misael as Hebrews in 15.5. While discussing the Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in 17.36, he calls God “the God of the Hebrews.”

can also refer to the recipients of the *Letter to the Hebrews*, a text which is accepted by the church, and in reference to the *Gospel of the Hebrews*, which is not accepted by the church (15.14). Origen also uses the term Hebrew in conjunction with contemporaries who provide him with exegetical assistance. In 11.9, he credits “one of the Hebrews” for explicating the finer points of the tradition of Corban, which he admits he would not otherwise have known. This reference, and others similar to it, has prompted de Lange to suggest that Origen had a congenial working relationship with rabbinic scholars in Caesarea. However, Origen does not provide any extra hints about the identity of his source. Knowledge of the traditions surrounding Corban suggests a Jewish background, but knowledge of Jewish traditions and Hebrew language in the early third century was not limited to rabbis, nor was it necessarily precluded from believers in Christ.

In 11.5, as part of a long exposition on Matt. 14:22, “And then he made the disciples get into the boat and precede him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds,” Origen gives a figurative interpretation of “Hebrews.” Emphasizing the distinction between Jesus’ treatment of the crowd and the disciples, Origen explains,

Οὐ γὰρ ἠδύναντο οἱ ὄχλοι εἰς τὸ πέραν ἀπελθεῖν, ὥς οὐ μυστικῶς Ἑβραῖοι οἵτινες ἐρμηνεύονται περατικοί. ἀλλὰ τοῦτο ἔργον ἦν τῶν Ἰησοῦ μαθητῶν, λέγω δὲ τὸ εἰς τὸ πέραν ἀπελθεῖν καὶ ὑπερβῆναι τὰ βλεπόμενα καὶ σωματικά ὡς πρόσκαιρα, φθάσαι δὲ ἐπὶ τὰ μὴ βλεπόμενα καὶ αἰώνια.

For the crowds were not able to cross to the other side, as they were not mystically Hebrews, the ones interpreted “crossers-over.” But this was the work of the disciples of Jesus, I say, to cross to the other side and go beyond the visible and the bodily as being transient, and approach the invisible and the eternal.

Origen’s etymological interpretation of Hebrews as those who “cross boundaries” from the corporeal realm to knowledge of incorporeal realities¹¹¹ echoes Philo’s definition of Hebrews in

¹¹¹ Origen invokes the same etymology at *In. Num. Hom.* 19.4.

Migr. 20, which he defines as “quitting sense perceptions to go after those of the mind.” Here Origen equates figurative Hebrews with the disciples of Jesus, an elite subset within the broader movement of Christ-followers. In this instance, the term “Hebrew” is stripped of its ethnic and linguistic connotations and is invoked as a category to differentiate the strata of philosophical achievement possible for members of the Christian community.

3.2.4 *Ebionites*

On multiple occasions in the commentary, the Ebionites are presented as a vital and familiar challenge to the practices of the church and its attitude toward the law. The Ebionites apparently counted among their numbers not only believers of Jewish descent, but Gentile adherents as well. In fragment 79, Origen cautions that “an inexperienced believer may fall into Ebionism” when he reads in Matthew’s gospel that Jesus celebrated the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Passover, implying that the Ebionites not only continued to observe the tradition but pointed to the model of Jesus’ own actions in support of their practice. Origen argues that believers are not required to imitate the physical actions of Christ, but ought to follow the spiritual interpretation of the practice. He contends,

it is fitting that we act in imitation of Christ, but (the Ebionite) does not know the Jesus, who in the fullness of time, was sent, born of a woman, and was under the law to those who were under the law, not so that they would remain under the law, but in order to lead out from the law. So, therefore, if he came to those who were under the law, to lead them out, how much less appropriate is it for those who were outside the law now to enter into the law? (Fr. 79).¹¹²

¹¹² This fragment is preserved only in Latin translation. See Hermann J. Vogt, “Introduction,” in Origenes, *Der Kommentar zum Evangelium nach Mattäus* III. Bibliothek Griechische Literatur 38 (Stuttgart: Hierseman, 1990).

Origen thus defines legitimate Christianity so as to exclude law-observant Christ believers. By following Jewish practices, the Ebionites misunderstand Jesus in the same way as do the Jews, so that ultimately they differ little from the Jews.¹¹³

In 16.12, Origen interprets the two blind men from Jericho healed by Jesus in Matt. 20:29–34 as believers in Jesus from among the Jews. That there are two blind men is to be interpreted as representing the two different kinds of blindness possessed by Jewish believers in Jesus, those who believe Jesus to have been the human son of Mary and Joseph, and those who consider him the son of Mary and the Holy Spirit but do not confess him to be truly God. Their blindness is cured when they, like the men in the Gospel, call out, "Son of David, have mercy upon me" and their purely human knowledge of Jesus (as "son of David") is supplemented with the knowledge of his divinity. Origen cites their blindness and their former poverty of soul as a warning against any believer who would "stray from the Word" and follow the teachings of Jewish believers.

Origen does not confine the threat of Jewish influence only to "former" Jews or the Ebionites. He describes Jewish belief and practice that oppose the spiritual interpretation of the law as a persistent threat to the simple believers who have not yet learned to progress from the letter to the spirit. Origen interprets the "leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees" as errors that continue to plague believers who occupy the margins of Origen's conception of Christianity. He asserts that those who "along with the Christian way of life, prefer to live as the Jews" partake of the leaven of the Pharisees, not recognizing that the physical law is a shadow of the

¹¹³ See 11.12: Σαφῶς διὰ τούτων ὑπὸ τοῦ σωτῆρος διδασκόμεθα, ἀναγινώσκοντες ἐν τῷ Λευϊτικῷ καὶ ἐν τῷ Δευτερονομίῳ τὰ περὶ καθαρῶν καὶ ἀκαθάρτων βρωμάτων, ἐφ' οἷς ὡς παρανομοῦσιν ἐγκαλοῦσιν ἡμῖν οἱ σωματικοὶ Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ οἱ ὀλίγῳ διαφέροντες αὐτῶν Ἐβιωναῖοι, μὴ νομίζεῖν τὸν σκοπὸν εἶναι τῇ γραφῇ τὸν πρόχειρον περὶ τούτων νοῦν.

spiritual, while those “heterodox” who do not believe in the resurrection of the body partake of the bread of the Sadducees (12.5).

3.3 Conclusions

“Jews” is the typical word employed by Origen and his interlocutors in reference to the Jewish people, both in antiquity and in the present. He does not use the term as a slur or with a sneer, often employing it in contexts of praise. Although acknowledging the existence of sects such as the Samaritans and Sadducees, in *Contra Celsum* and the *Commentary on Matthew*, Origen presents “real” Jews as a singular nation or race that follows the law of Moses. The unifying and defining characteristics of Jewishness are a commendable, indeed philosophical, monotheism, and a lamentable inability to perceive the correct spiritual interpretation of the law taught by the prophets and especially Jesus. As a result, Jews continue to uphold the literal commandments of the law, despite the fact that such behaviour is not only unnecessary but in fact inhibits their acquisition of the spiritual knowledge of God. Thus, Origen contends that while the Jews did indeed worship God in the distant past, presently they only profess to do so.¹¹⁴ Yet the Jews continue to exceed many of the philosophers in virtue by refusing to sacrifice to idols. The wiser individuals among the Jews also recognize that narrative episodes in the scriptures are to be interpreted allegorically, although they wrongly maintain that the law must be followed in the flesh. The majority of the Jews failed to recognize Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah foretold by the prophets and put him to death. Consequently, God has rejected his former people and allowed their city and temple to be destroyed.

¹¹⁴ *Cels.* 6.29: “Whether we are disputing with Jews or amongst ourselves, we acknowledge one and the same God, whom the Jews both used to worship long ago and profess to worship now. . .”

Origen maintains that Jews may become Christians but to do so they must cease entirely from observing Jewish dietary requirements, festivals, and physical circumcision, as even Peter and the other apostles eventually discovered. Jews who believe in Jesus are not truly Christians unless they ascend from the letter to the spirit, recognizing the Mosaic precepts as shadows rather than eternal commandments. Thus, Ebionites and other believers in Jesus who observe Jewish law are more Jewish than Christian.

“Hebrews” is used most frequently in philological contexts, in reference to a language and its speakers. The one time Celsus uses the term, he does so in reference to the language. Origen’s consistent description of the people of Exodus as Hebrews contributes to his defense of the Jews’ antiquity. When Origen speaks of contemporary Hebrews, however, it is not always clear that he wishes to indicate anything more than a speaker of the Hebrew language. Taken in combination with other references to Hebrews in his corpus, including his mention of the “Hebrew” tradition that Adam was buried at Golgotha,¹¹⁵ Origen’s usage of the term in *Cels.* and *Comm. Matt.* suggests that “Hebrew” may also refer to Christians of Jewish descent who no longer fulfil the letter of the law of Moses and thus no longer qualifying as Jews under Origen’s definition, such as his “Hebrew” teacher or the disciples in Matthew’s Gospel. “Hebrew” is most certainly *not* Origen’s codeword for “good Jews” or elements of the Jewish tradition that he wishes to appropriate, as his negative depiction of the “Hebrews” falling into sin and worshipping the Golden Calf in *Cels.* 2.74 and 2.78 makes clear.

“Israel according to the flesh” is defined by Origen as a nation set apart by God to be ruled directly by him. Its rejection of Jesus resulted in God replacing that nation with the people drawn from “the nations” until the final judgment. Yet Israel has not been entirely forsaken; once

¹¹⁵ *Comm. in Matt.* frag. 126.

“the fullness” of the Gentiles have come to believe in Jesus, Origen argues that a remnant of the former Israel, the “true Israel” who “see God” in Jesus, referred to by Paul in Rom. 11:26 as “all Israel,” will be saved. Significantly, however, “all Israel” does not include each individual Jew, nor does “the fullness of the Gentiles” mentioned in Rom. 11:25 imply that every Gentile will receive salvation.

My analysis challenges the claims of de Lange and Clements that Origen’s usage of the terms “Jews” and “Hebrews” constitutes an attempt to create difference through rhetoric where in reality none exists. Although the concepts of “Jew” and “Hebrew” have significant areas of overlap in his mind, Origen can conceive of Hebrews who are not really Jews, in that they do not follow the law of Moses according to the letter. Origen’s insistence on identifying legitimate Jews with a specific form of legal observance may reveal something of the actual teaching and practice of his Caesarean Jewish contemporaries. By denigrating their law observance, Origen is able to flip Jewish piety on its head, presenting what was likely a source of pride as a symptom of insufficient knowledge.

My findings also confirm Peter Martens’ proposal that Origen’s charges of Jewish literalism ought to be understood as a denunciation of *Jewish legal observance* and not of rigidly literal interpretations of the scriptures as a whole. Wise Jews, like wise Christians, know that the scriptures contain myths which ought to be interpreted allegorically (*Cels.* 4.44). Martens minimizes, however, the centrality of this disagreement by characterizing the source of the conflict as “a handful of literal interpretations that squarely confronted the undermined central Christian convictions, namely the denial that Jesus was Israel’s prophesied Messiah and the

continuance of Jewish liturgical and ceremonial customs.”¹¹⁶ The continued participation of those who identified themselves as Christians in “Jewish liturgical and ceremonial customs” was a major problem for Origen precisely because he held the fulfilment of the law “in the spirit” rather than “in the flesh” as a defining factor differentiating Christians from Jews.

4. Origen’s Reception of Philo: Literature Review

Although Origen was indisputably a student of Philo’s writings, his modern interpreters disagree about the nature and extent of Philo’s contribution to Origen’s thought. During the renaissance of Origenian studies in the middle of the twentieth century, Philo’s role as a conduit of Platonic traditions was emphasized while his Jewishness was correspondingly downplayed. Taking a maximalist position, Henri Crouzel contended that Plato’s influence on Origen was second perhaps only to Philo’s, “through whom more Platonic elements, mixed with stoic elements and already having encountered Jewish revelation, reached him.”¹¹⁷ Jean Daniélou located Philo’s influence in instances where Origen interprets the Old Testament as a narrative of the individual soul’s progress. Daniélou categorized these interpretations as “allegorical,” in contradistinction to “typological” interpretations in which people and events recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures prophetically foreshadow Christ and the Church.¹¹⁸ Daniélou attributed the ahistorical character

¹¹⁶ Martens, *Origen and Scripture*, 160.

¹¹⁷ “par qui lui parviennent encore des éléments platoniciens, mêlés à des éléments stoiciens et déjà confrontés à la révélation juive.” Henri Crouzel, *Origène et la Philosophie* (Paris, 1962), 49.

¹¹⁸ Thus, Daniélou contends that what Paul understands as allegory (i.e., typology) is different from Origen’s allegory. The construction of allegory and typology as distinct modes of interpretation is, however, a modern one, and is criticized by David Dawson, *Allegorical Readers and Cultural Revision in Ancient Alexandria* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 15–17, and Peter W. Martens, “Revisiting the Allegory/Typology Distinction: The Case of Origen” *JECS* 16 (2008) 283–317, as unreflective of the exegetical methods actually employed by Alexandrian interpreters.

of Philo's allegorism to an over-enthusiasm for Platonism, which caused the Alexandrian scholar to undervalue the significance of God's historical dealings with Israel.¹¹⁹

In a similar vein, Richard Hanson argued that Origen's use of allegory, inherited from Philo, dislocates the text from historical events so that the dignity of space and time as the plane in which God interacts with humanity is undermined.¹²⁰ This dislocation is theologically dangerous for the Christian because it threatens the historical necessity and reality of the incarnation of God in Jesus. Hanson also goes on to blame Philo for Origen's conception of the Bible as inspired and inerrant, concluding that "we can therefore reasonably claim that the particular parts of Origen's interpretation of Scripture which are irreconcilable with the assumptions of the scholars of today derive largely (but not solely) from sources extraneous to traditional Christianity, from a Platonic attitude to history and a Philonic attitude to holy Scripture."¹²¹ In Hanson's view, the "unorthodox" elements in Origen's thought ought to be attributed in no small part to Philonic influence.

In contrast to his French colleagues and to Hanson, Henri de Lubac cautioned against overemphasizing Origen's debt to Philo precisely as a result of the importance of the incarnation for Origen's thought. De Lubac stresses the transformative role of the Incarnation in Origen's understanding of the law as a major point of disagreement between the two.¹²² While Philo aims

¹¹⁹ Jean Daniélou, *From Shadows to Reality: Studies in the Biblical Typology of the Fathers* (trans. Dom Wulstan Hibberd: London: Burns and Oates Ltd, 1960). Daniélou is particularly critical of Christian exegetes following Philo in his extrapolation of "symbols in Scripture either of the universe or of the soul" (112). "Proper," "traditional" typology, in Daniélou's definition, seeks to identify the prefigurations of Christ and the Church contained in the Old Testament (11). Theories of the soul or universe derived from a non-literal reading of the Old Testament belong to "a biblical philosophy of man" which differs from exegesis in that its method is "artificial" (111).

¹²⁰ Hanson, *Allegory and Event*, 363–368.

¹²¹ Hanson, *Allegory and Event*, 368.

¹²² de Lubac's assertion that the role of the incarnate Logos is what primarily distinguishes Origen's hermeneutics from Philo's has been echoed recently by Daniel Boyarin, who suggests, "What seems to me lacking in Philo's thought is a way of accounting for the fact that he, via interpretation, can accomplish that which Moses himself could not. Christian theories of the Logos Incarnate seem better equipped to address this issue. . . it is only the

to prove the equivalence of the law of Israel (properly interpreted) with the law of Nature, de Lubac emphasizes that Origen requires Israel's law to be interpreted in the light of the revelation and teaching of Jesus.¹²³

Hans Georg Thümmel further presses the distinction between Origen and Philo's understandings of the function of the law. For Philo, the literal commandments of the law remain in effect, intended to regulate society in the present. Thümmel contrasts this approach with Origen, for whom the Torah invites the reader to look beyond what is apparent in search of loftier insights. He summarizes the contrast between Philo and Origen as such: "Philo describes the world as one created and governed by God. Diverse structures of the philosophical interpretation of the world are found therein. In this world lives Man, who is capable of both good and evil, whose life is therefore regulated by the Torah. Origen is concerned with salvation and the return to God."¹²⁴ While emphasizing Philo's often overlooked commitment to the literal fulfilment of the law, Thümmel's portrayal minimizes the importance of the mystical aspect of Philo's interpretation and its possible influence on Origen's exegetical practice.

From a different perspective, Nicholas de Lange has argued that Philo's influence on Origen has been "much exaggerated" by Hanson, Daniélou and others who do not recognize the

presence of the actual living Logos in the incarnate form of the pedagogue Jesus that enables "us" to discover the Logos as the content of scripture. In this way Origen answers the aporia that Philo's work presents. . . I would just add that the teaching of the New Testament writers has a special dispensation and precedence, for it was for them that the Logos directly and without mediation, in his own voice through Jesus' human vocal mechanism, taught them(and thereby us) how to read scripture as referring to him and him alone." Boyarin, "Philo, Origen, and the Rabbis on Divine Speech and Interpretation" in *The World of Early Egyptian Christianity: Language, Literature and Social Contexts* (ed. James E. Goehring and Janet A. Timbie: Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 113–129; 116, 122.

¹²³ de Lubac, *Histoire et Esprit*, 159.

¹²⁴ "Philon beschreibt die Welt als eine, die von Gott geschaffen ist und regiert wird. Darin finden sich vielfältig Strukturen philosophischer Weltdeutung. In dieser Welt lebt der Mensch, der zum Bösen wie zum Guten fähig ist, dessen Leben daher von der Thorah reguliert wird. Origenes geht es um Erlösung als Rückführung zu Gott." Hans Georg Thümmel, "Philon und Origenes" in *Origenianna Octava: Origen and the Alexandrian Tradition* (ed. L. Perrone: Leuven: Peeters, 2003) 275–286; 285.

variety of traditions and sources from which Origen draws.¹²⁵ Part of the problem, he contends, is that when Origen introduces an interpretation as stemming “from one of our predecessors,” it is not always certain whom he has in mind.¹²⁶ Particularly in the case of plural attributions (“some of our predecessors”), it is possible that Origen may understand himself to be drawing upon an undifferentiated tradition rather than any particular individual. This emphasis on the multiplicity of Origen’s exegetical influences reflects de Lange’s larger project of illuminating Origen’s reliance on rabbinic traditions.

While previous commentators emphasized Origen’s debt to Philo’s philosophy, David Runia highlights Philo’s influence on Origen’s scriptural exegesis. Surveying the anonymous references to Philo in Origen’s corpus, Runia notes, “Origen regards Philo above all as an exegete of scripture. He is described as an interpreter, teacher and expositor. He is praised for his sharp perception. He supplies the exegete with ideas that can be further pursued. His views are held in high respect by intelligent men. . . he is well known for having practiced allegorical exegesis.”¹²⁷ Runia sees Origen’s “adoption” of Philo as a “predecessor” as a transformative moment in the reception of Philo’s Jewishness by his Christian readers. He contends, “Origen is of course aware that [Philo] was a Jewish interpreter of scripture, which results in certain regrettable limitations. But because of Philo’s love for allegory and feeling for philosophically mature exegesis, he had in Origen’s view a considerable advantage over more recent Jewish interpretation. Philo is in fact well on the way to being adopted as an honorary Church Father.”¹²⁸ Runia suggests that although Origen knows Philo to be a Jew, his Jewishness does not

¹²⁵ De Lange, *Origen and the Jews*, 16.

¹²⁶ De Lange, *Origen and the Jews*, 21.

¹²⁷ Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, 163.

¹²⁸ Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, 183.

disqualify him from being counted among the church's wise men in his eyes. Origen is thus a crucial importer of Philo from Jewish territory into the realm of Christian exegesis.

5. Origen's *Testimonia* to Philo

5.1 *Contra Celsum* 4.51

Over the course of Origen's refutation of Celsus, Philo is mentioned explicitly on two occasions. His name first appears at 4.51, in response to Celsus's derision of the Hebrew scriptures as "telling utterly the most simple-minded fables" (ἀντικρυς εὐηθέστατα μεμυθολόγηται) unsuited to allegorical interpretation, despite the efforts of "the more reasonable Jews and Christians" (οἱ ἐπιεικέστεροι Ἰουδαίων καὶ Χριστιανῶν) to make sense of them in this way.¹²⁹ Origen pursues two lines of attack to refute this charge. He begins by turning Celsus's accusation back on the myths of the Greeks, which he contends are far more ridiculous and immoral than the stories found in the Scriptures. His second strategy more directly addresses Celsus's charge, as Origen contends that the Biblical authors themselves promote allegorical interpretation. His star witness is Paul, citing three instances in which the apostle counsels an allegorical interpretation of the Hebrew scriptures (1 Cor. 9:9–10; Eph. 5:31–2; 1 Cor. 10:4). The authors of Psalm 78 ("I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings from of old") and Psalm 119 ("Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law") are offered as additional examples. If the Biblical authors themselves interpreted the narratives allegorically, Origen argues, it follows that the scriptures were intentionally composed as allegories (*Cels.* 4.49); that they are also usually

¹²⁹ *Cels.* 4.48

found to impart sound moral teaching, being adapted to the capacities of both simple and philosophically advanced Christians, speaks in their favour (*Cels.* 4.49).

Having justified his allegorical hermeneutic with the support of Paul and the Psalmists, Origen then proceeds to Celsus's next charge:

Δοκεῖ δέ μοι καὶ ἀκηκοέναι ὅτι ἐστὶ συγγράμματα περιέχοντα τὰς τοῦ νόμου ἀλληγορίας, ἅπερ εἰ ἀνεγνώκει, οὐκ ἂν ἔλεγεν· Αἱ γοῦν δοκοῦσαι περὶ αὐτῶν ἀλληγορίαι γεγράφθαι πολὺ τῶν μύθων αἰσχύιους εἰσὶ καὶ ἀτοπώτεραι, τὰ μηδαμῇ μηδαμῶς ἀρμοσθῆναι δυνάμενα θαυμαστῇ τινι καὶ παντάπασιν ἀναισθήτῳ μωρίᾳ συνάπτουσαι. Ἔοικε δὲ περὶ τῶν Φίλωνος συγγραμμάτων ταῦτα λέγειν ἢ καὶ τῶν ἔτι ἀρχαιοτέρων, ὅποιά ἐστι τὰ Ἀριστοβούλου. Στοχάζομαι δὲ τὸν Κέλσον μὴ ἀνεγνώκεναι τὰ βιβλία, ἐπεὶ πολλαχοῦ οὕτως ἐπιτετεῦχθαί μοι φαίνεται, ὥστε αἰρεθῆναι ἂν καὶ τοὺς ἐν Ἑλλήσι φιλοσοφοῦντας ἀπὸ τῶν λεγομένων· ἐν οἷς οὐ μόνον φράσις ἐξήσκηται ἀλλὰ καὶ νοήματα καὶ δόγματα καὶ ἡ χρῆσις τῶν, ὡς οἶεται, ἀπὸ τῶν γραφῶν μύθων ὁ Κέλσος. Ἐγὼ δ' οἶδα καὶ Νουμήνιον τὸν πυθαγόρειον, ἄνδρα πολλῶ κρεῖττον διηγησάμενον Πλάτωνα καὶ περὶ τῶν Πυθαγορείων δογμάτων πρεσβεύσαντα, πολλαχοῦ τῶν συγγραμμάτων αὐτοῦ ἐκτιθέμενον τὰ Μωϋσέως καὶ τῶν προφητῶν καὶ οὐκ ἀπιθάνως αὐτὰ τροπολογοῦντα, ὥσπερ ἐν τῷ καλουμένῳ Ἑποπι καὶ ἐν τοῖς περὶ ἀριθμῶν καὶ ἐν τοῖς περὶ τόπου

[Celsus] seems to me to have heard also that there are treatises containing allegories of the law. But if he had read them he would not have said: "At any rate, the allegories which seem to have been written about them are far more shameful and preposterous than the myths, since they connect with some amazing and utterly senseless folly ideas which cannot by any means be made to fit." He appears by this to mean the works of Philo or even writers still earlier such as the writings of Aristobulus. But I hazard to guess that Celsus has not read the books, for I think that in many places they are so successful that even Greek philosophers would have been won over by what they say. Not only have they an attractive style, but they also discuss ideas and doctrines, making use of the myths (as Celsus regards them) in the scriptures. I am also aware of Numenius the Pythagorean, a man who expounded Plato with very great skill and maintained the Pythagorean doctrines, quotes Moses and the prophets in many passages in his writings, and gives them no improbably allegorical interpretation. . . . *Cels.* 4.51

Origen gathers from Celsus's polemic that he is familiar with specific treatises allegorizing the Jewish scripture. The first person to come to his mind as someone to have authored such a text is

Philo. Although Philo is the most prominent allegorical expositor of the Mosaic Scriptures, Origen is aware of others who predate him, including Aristobulus. Despite the fact that Celsus is said to have encountered treatises that allegorize “the law,” in this context we should understand “the law” not to refer narrowly to the legal ordinances in the books of Moses but to the Pentateuch as a whole. Celsus’s critique is directed not at those who make sense of Mosaic legislation by allegorizing their commandments, but at those who proffer “shameful and preposterous” interpretations of the myths— that is, the narrative elements— of the Hebrew scriptures. Although Philo is not himself specifically called a Jew, the context indicates that Origen included him among the “more reasonable Jews and Christians” whom Celsus accuses of misguidedly allegorizing the scriptures.

To vindicate “the more reasonable Jews and Christians” against the charge of explaining the Jewish so-called myths in an arbitrary manner, Origen cites the authority of unnamed “Greek philosophers” who have been convinced by his interpretations. He follows his praise of Philo with a reference to Numenius of Apamea, the 2nd century CE Pythagorean who also treated the Hebrew scriptures as a source of philosophical teachings to be plumbed. Unlike Clement, Origen refrains from calling Philo a Pythagorean, although his citation of Philo and Numenius together presents them as similar thinkers, and, by extension, suggests that the “more reasonable Jews and Christians” and Pythagoreans share similar exegetical methods.¹³⁰ Stopping short of claiming that Philo was Numenius’s source, Origen suggests the possibility through the juxtaposition of the two. In any event, Origen presents Philo as an exegete worthy of being taken seriously, and

¹³⁰ As we also found to be the case with his presentation of the Jews, Origen will sometimes emphasize the continuity of Christians with Pythagoreans, sometimes point out their distinguishing characteristics depending on the particular point that he is arguing. In *Cels.* 1, Origen defends Christian practices such as esoteric teaching by equating them with Pythagorean practices. In *Cels.* 8 he distinguishes Pythagorean vegetarianism from the Christian refusal to eat meat sacrificed to the gods. Pythagoras is cited together with Plato and Socrates as ideal Greek philosophers at *Cels.* 1.29; 3.25; 4.97. At 1.15, Pythagoras is said to have brought his philosophy to the Greeks from the Jews.

who writes in very pleasing Greek. Origen's comment adds weight to the possibility that Philo's treatises circulated among educated Greeks, and suggests the philosophical school of Ammonius Saccas as a more likely environment for Origen's encounter with Philo's treatises than in his discussions with contemporary Jews who were "said to be wise."

From the passage quoted, it is impossible to discern whether Celsus's critique of allegorical interpreters of the Jewish scriptures was indeed written with Philo in mind, although it is not difficult to imagine a reader rejecting Philo's interpretations as difficult to reconcile with the texts they propose to elucidate. Celsus does not specifically mention him, and as Origen himself states, other works allegorizing the Jewish scriptures (at minimum, the writings of Aristobulus) were in circulation. It is significant, however, that Celsus's mention of the allegorical interpretation of the Jewish scriptures immediately calls Philo to Origen's mind. Philo serves as the representative of proper allegorical exegesis of scriptural narratives and as the likeliest of commentators that a Hellene like Celsus would have read.

The context of the Philonic citation invites a comparison with the apostle Paul, another allegorizer whose Jewishness has long vexed scholars.¹³¹ A few paragraphs prior to his citation of Philo, Origen claims "that we have received from wise *men* before us" the instruction to interpret the "brides and maidservants" of Genesis 15 allegorically.¹³² Although he immediately follows this claim with a discussion of Paul's interpretation of Sarah and Hagar in Galatians 5, the plural "wise men" is noteworthy, as Philo's treatise *De Congressu* provides a lengthy

¹³¹ At *Cels.* 5.8, Origen repeats Clement's claim that Paul ceased to be a Jew when he became a Christian. He describes Paul as having "received a meticulous education in Jewish doctrines and later became a Christian as a result of a miraculous appearance of Jesus." Origen thus suggests that Paul has a Jewish background but ceased to be identifiable as a Jew when he "became a Christian" through his encounter with the resurrected Christ.

¹³² *Cels.* 4.44: Νύμφας τε καὶ θεραπαινίδας ἀνάγεσθαι ἐπὶ τροπολογίαν οὐχ ἡμεῖς διδάσκομεν, ἀλλ' ἄνωθεν ἀπὸ σοφῶν παρελήφαμεν.

allegorical exposition of Sarah and Hagar cited by and attributed to Philo by Clement in *Strom.*

1. It is therefore possible that Origen had both Philo and Paul's exegeses in mind. Although Philo and Paul come to very different conclusions about the allegorical significance of Abraham's wife and concubine, Origen's comments in *Contra Celsum* 4 suggest that he considered them to employ essentially the same, correct method of interpreting the narrative elements of the Hebrew Scriptures.

5.2 *Contra Celsum* 6.21

Philo is invoked a second time in the sixth book of *Contra Celsum*, as Origen attempts to correct Celsus's presentation of the Christian conception of the heavens. Celsus contends that the Christians crib their cosmology from the older traditions of the Greeks, the Persians and the Mithraists, whom they have misunderstood. Having misinterpreted Plato's description of the realm of ultimate being as being located in the region above the heavens in *Phaedrus* 247b–e, the Jews and the Christians laughably think that an anthropomorphic God lives above the highest heaven (6.19). While not denying the similarity between Jewish and Christian cosmology and that of the *Phaedrus*, Origen repeats the frequent Christian claim that the influence flows from the Hebrews to the Greeks and not vice-versa (6.19).¹³³ David's words in Psalm 148:4, "Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens!", which vastly predate Plato's dialogues, are cited as a possible source for the Athenian's knowledge of the super-celestial sphere.

¹³³ For the development of this theme, see Daniel Ridings, *The Attic Moses. The Dependency Theme in Some Early Christian Writers* (Göteborg: Acta Universitatis Gotheburgensis, 1995).

Once again, Origen invokes the pair of Paul and Philo as his forerunners in the proper allegorical hermeneutic that allows him to detect hidden cosmological doctrines in the Scriptures. He begins by describing Paul as one “who was educated in those prophetic writings and desired the things of the other world and the region beyond the heavens, and did every action in the light of those things that he might hit upon them,” before introducing a series of Pauline quotations intended to prove the presence of the Platonic doctrine of the material and ideal realms in the Scriptures.¹³⁴ Turning to 2 Cor. 4:17, Origen argues,

Ἐντικρυς γὰρ τοῖς ἀκούειν δυναμένοις παρίστησι τὰ μὲν αἰσθητὰ λέγων αὐτὰ «βλεπόμενα», τὰ δὲ νοητὰ καὶ νῶ μόνῳ καταληπτὰ ὀνομάζων «μὴ βλεπόμενα». Οὗτος δὲ καὶ «πρόσκαιρα» μὲν οἶδε τὰ αἰσθητὰ καὶ «βλεπόμενα», «αἰώνια» δὲ τὰ νοητὰ καὶ «μὴ βλεπόμενα»· καὶ βουλόμενος πρὸς τῇ ἐκείνων θεᾷ γενέσθαι ὑπὸ τοῦ πρὸς ἐκεῖνα πόθου βοηθούμενος πᾶσαν θλῖψιν τὸ οὐδὲν καὶ ἐλαφρὰν τινα ἐνόμιζεν εἶναι·

To those who are able to hear [Paul] obviously means the sensible world, though he calls it “the things that are seen,” and the intelligible world which is comprehensible by the mind alone, though he calls it “the things that are not seen.” He also knows that sensible things are temporal and visible, while intelligible things are eternal and invisible. Desiring to continue in the contemplation of these things and being helped by his longing for them, he regarded all affliction as nothing and as something light. *Cels.* 6.20

Perceptive readers will interpret Paul’s comments to the Corinthians as recounting the same contemplation of the super-celestial truth that the charioteers with well-matched horses experience in the *Phaedrus*. While Plato and Paul are shown to agree, Celsus is mistaken in claiming Plato as Paul’s source. As a “legitimate student of Jesus” (ὁ γνήσιος τοῦ Ἰησοῦ μαθητῆς), Paul learns from him that “when the perfect comes, the imperfect will pass away” (1 Cor. 13:10). Thus Origen domesticates the Platonic conception of the material and ideal realms,

¹³⁴ *Cels.* 6.19: Καὶ ἀπ’ ἐκείνων γε τῶν λόγων παιδευθεὶς ὁ Παῦλος ἡμῶν καὶ ποθῶν τὰ ὑπερκόσμια καὶ ὑπερουράνια καὶ δι’ ἐκεῖνα πάντα πράττων, ἴν’ αὐτῶν τύχη

a distinction that undergirds his allegorical hermeneutical practice, in the Christian tradition in the first place via the writings of Paul.

Origen follows his harmonization of Paul and the *Phaedrus* with his second explicit mention of Philo. Here Philo is invoked for essentially the same purpose as Paul was in the previous paragraph: to demonstrate the agreement, and perhaps even the dependence, of Plato with the church's scriptures when they are read "with understanding." Plato's assertion that "the way for the souls to and from the earth passes through the planets" is considered by Origen to be derived from Jacob's dream of the ladder to heaven as recorded by Moses in Gen. 28:12–13:

Μωϋσῆς δέ, ὁ ἀρχαιότατος ἡμῶν προφήτης, ἐν ὅψει τοῦ πατριάρχου ἡμῶν Ἰακώβ φησιν ἑωρᾶσθαι θεῖον ἐνύπνιον, κλίμακα «εἰς οὐρανὸν» φθάνουσιν καὶ ἀγγέλους «τοῦ θεοῦ» ἀναβαίνοντας καὶ καταβαίνοντας ἐπ' αὐτῆς, τὸν δὲ κύριον ἐπεστηριγμένον ἐπὶ τοῖς ἄκροις αὐτῆς, εἴτε ταῦτα εἴτε τινὰ μείζονα τούτων αἰνιττόμενος ἐν τῷ περὶ τῆς κλίμακος λόγῳ· περὶ ἧς καὶ τῷ Φίλωνι συντέτακται βιβλίον, ἄξιον φρονίμου καὶ συνετῆς παρὰ τοῖς φιλαλήθεσιν ἐξετάσεως.

But Moses, our most ancient prophet, says that in a divine dream our forefather Jacob had a vision in which he saw a ladder reaching to heaven and angels of God ascending and descending upon it, and the Lord standing still at its top; perhaps in this story of the ladder Moses was hinting at these truths or at yet more profound doctrines. Philo also composed a book about this ladder, which is worthy of intelligent and wise study by those who wish to find the truth. *Cels.* 6.21

The passage in question is another narrative containing fantastic elements— quite possibly one of the stories considered a "very stupid fable" by Celsus. Origen's invocation of Philo's exegesis re-presents the story as a lesson in cosmology. The book about the ladder attributed to Philo is *de Somniis* 1, in which Philo analyzes God-inspired dreams that enable the mind to "receive some foretaste and foreknowledge of things to come" (*Somn.* 1.2). Runia narrows the source to paragraphs 133–145, where Philo interprets the angels ascending and descending the ladder to heaven according to the Platonic notion that superior souls

unencumbered by bodies populate the realm of the air, which extends from the earth to the sphere of the moon.¹³⁵ The parallels between the Genesis text and the *Phaedrus* indicate to Origen that Plato formulated his conceptions of the cosmos under the influence of Moses, although he does not acknowledge this debt. Philo's exegesis demonstrates the presence of philosophical truths in the superficially unphilosophical Jewish scriptures. Origen does not acknowledge any Platonic influence on Philo, interpreting their similarities instead as evidence in favour Plato's dependence on those same scriptures.

As was the case in the previous citation, Philo is again invoked as an exegete who uses allegory to transform the fantastical elements of the Torah's narratives into sound philosophical doctrines. The mention is entirely laudatory; Philo's book is deserving of diligent study and recommended as a guide to truth. Although Origen does not specifically call Philo a Jew, he suggests his Jewishness through attributing to him authorship of a book about the ladder described by Moses; yet the very Jewishness of Moses is undermined by Origen's description of him as "our most ancient prophet" who reveals hidden truths in the narratives recorded about "our forefather" Jacob. Thus Origen locates Philo as an interpreter of Moses who, like Paul and Origen himself, penetrates the deeper meaning of the Jewish scriptures.

¹³⁵*Somn.* 1.38 continues, "of these souls some, such as have earthward tendencies and material tastes, descend to be fast bound in mortal bodies, while others ascend, being selected for return according to the numbers and periods determined by nature." Cited in Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, 160. This snippet is however only a brief portion of Philo's exegesis of Jacob's dream of the noble soul's ascent to God through *askesis*, which continues up to *Somn.* 182.

5.3 Commentary on Matthew 15.3

One more citation of Philo is found in the *Commentary on Matthew*. In the fifteenth book of the commentary, Philo is brought into the fray as Origen elucidates Jesus' teaching on eunuchs in 19:12, a text that has caused considerable consternation throughout the Christian tradition:¹³⁶

εἰσὶν γὰρ εὐνοῦχοι οἵτινες ἐκ κοιλίας μητρὸς ἐγεννήθησαν οὕτως, καὶ εἰσὶν εὐνοῦχοι οἵτινες εὐνουχίσθησαν ὑπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, καὶ εἰσὶν εὐνοῦχοι οἵτινες εὐνούχισαν ἑαυτοὺς διὰ τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν. ὁ δυνάμενος χωρεῖν χωρεῖτω.

For there are eunuchs who have been so from their mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let he who is able to accept this, accept it.

Interpreting the third kind of eunuch literally, "according to the flesh," Jesus seems to be advising young men who cannot control their lusts to have themselves physically castrated for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven. In light of the popular legend of Origen's own self-castration, Origen's interpretation of the text is perhaps surprising.¹³⁷ He argues that in order to maintain the consistency of the passage, all three kinds of eunuchs ought to be interpreted not corporeally but "according to the spirit," for in this passage, as is the case for much of the

¹³⁶ Prior to Origen, the implications of Matthew 19:12 for the Christian understanding of sexual renunciation were discussed by Justin Martyr in *Apol.* 1.24 and Clement in *Stromateis* 3. Tertullian also makes frequent reference to this passage in his treatises *De monogamia* and *Ad uxorem*. The later Latin Church Fathers, Matthew Kuefler notes, "distinguished between unmanly eunuchs who castrated their bodies and manly eunuchs who castrated their spirits but left their bodies intact. Depending on the rhetorical needs of the moment, they offered a host of alternative meanings for the 'eunuchs who have made themselves that way for the sake of the kingdom of Heaven.' Spiritual eunuchs might be virgins, continent persons, men or women in sexless marriages, or widows." Kuefler, *The Manly Eunuch: Masculinity, Gender Ambiguity and Christian Ideology in Late Antiquity* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), 268.

¹³⁷ The oft-repeated legend of Origen's self-castration finds its origins in Eusebius, *HE* 6.8. Origen himself makes no mention of the event. For a recent summary of the debate on the veracity of Eusebius's report, see Christoph Marksches, "Kastration Und Magenprobleme? Einige Neue Blicke Auf Das Asketische Leben Des Origenes," *Origeniana Nona: Origen and the Religious Practice of His Time. Papers of the 9th International Origen Conference* (eds. G. Heidl and R. Somos: Leuven: Peeters, 2009). If the legend is true, then the above passage in *Comm. Matt.* may reveal an older and wiser Origen condemning the rash actions of his youth.

Mosaic law, “the letter kills, but the spirit gives life” (15.1).¹³⁸ Thus the eunuchs described in Matthew 19 are not anatomical eunuchs at all; rather they are those who live lives of sexual renunciation in order to avoid bodily passions and impurities.

Origen then interprets the three kinds of eunuchs as representing three groups of celibates: the first, those who are eunuchs “from their mother’s wombs” are those who live asexual lives due to their natural disposition. The second group, those whom Jesus describes as “eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men” are those who chose to follow an ascetic lifestyle influenced not by the Word of God but by the words of men such as the Greek philosophers and the heretics (15.4). Those who make themselves eunuchs for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven are those who figuratively cut away the soul’s passions by meditating on the Word of God, which is called the “sword of the spirit” by Paul in Eph. 6:17 (15.5). This castration of the soul cannot be accomplished by physical means but must be accomplished without “laying a hand upon the body.” In Origen’s exegesis, Matt. 19:12 becomes a particularly acute proof for the necessity of allegorical interpretation.

Origen unfortunately is aware of a number of zealous new believers who, having not yet learned to rise above the level of the letter to the level of the spirit, out of their honest lust for holiness follow Jesus’ advice in a mistakenly fleshly manner.¹³⁹ Moreover, it seems that Jesus was not the only authority they could turn to defend the practice. Origen is aware of two other wise men of antiquity who were thought to advocate physical castration as a solution for

¹³⁸ cf. *Cels.* 7.20; *Princ.* 4.3.2. 2 Cor. 3:6 is one of Origen’s most cited verses; *Biblia Patristica* lists 82 references, of which most are found in *Comm. Jo.*, *Comm. Matt.*, *Comm. Rom.*, *Hom. Lev.*, and *Hom. Num.*

¹³⁹ *Comm. Matt.* 15.3 Although it is impossible to determine the extent of the practice of castration for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven, Justin Martyr approvingly reports a famous case of a Christian petitioning a governor to allow him to be castrated. See Justin Martyr, *Apology* 1.24.

uncontrollable lust. One was the author of the mysterious Sentences of Sextus.¹⁴⁰ The other was Philo:

καὶ Φίλων δέ, ἐν πολλοῖς τῶν εἰς τὸν Μωσέως νόμον συντάξεων αὐτοῦ εὐδοκιμῶν καὶ παρὰ συνετοῖς ἀνδράσι, φησὶν ἐν βιβλίῳ ᾧ οὕτως ἐπέγραψεν· Περὶ τοῦ τὸ χεῖρον τῷ κρείττονι φιλεῖν ἐπιτίθεσθαι, ὅτι «ἐξευνουχισθῆναι μὲν ἄμεινον ἢ πρὸς συνουσίας ἐκνόμους λυττᾶν»

Philo also says, in many of his writings on the law of Moses, which are held in esteem by intelligent men, he said in the book which is called, *That the worse loves to attack the better*, that “it is better to be made a eunuch than to lust after unlawful intercourse.”

Origen has taken this quotation, as he acknowledges, from *That the worse is wont to attack the better* 176.¹⁴¹ If we were to leave this citation here, we could take it together with *Cels.* 6.21 as indicating Origen’s positive evaluation of Philo as an exegete.¹⁴² In his comments that follow, however, Origen makes it clear that, on this occasion, Philo has got it wrong:

¹⁴⁰ Commentators both ancient and modern have debated the origins and orthodoxy of this mysterious collection of maxims. Sextus is offered similar praise to Philo when introduced by Origen: “And Sextus said in the *Gnomia*, in the book held by many as acceptable (δοκίμῳ)” (15.3). Although Origen is the earliest witness to the *Sentences*, he introduces them as though they were well known and highly regarded. The absence of any clear indication on Origen’s part of Sextus’ Christianity, accompanied by an emphasis on his wisdom, led Harnack and his student Erwin Preuschen to conclude that the pagan authorship of the text was well-known and that “Origen seems not to assume that the collection is Christian.” Adolf von Harnack, *Die Chronologie der altchr. Litt. II* (Leipzig, 1904), 190. Cited in Chadwick, *The Sentences of Sextus*, 113. Henry Chadwick aims to refute this conclusion from the evidence of another anonymous citation in Origen’s corpus, this time taken from his first sermon on Ezekiel. Reflecting on the necessity of withholding the deeper mysteries of the scriptures from those who are not prepared to receive them, Origen repeats a favourite quotation that he attributes to a “sapiens et fidelis vir”: “It is dangerous to speak even the truth about God.” Chadwick identifies the quotation as Sextus’ maxim 352 and concludes, based on the characterization of the author as “fidelis vir,” which he translates as “believing man,” that Origen thought that Sextus was a Christian. As a result, Chadwick asserts, “But it is certain that Origen regarded the collection as Christian, that he himself found the tone of the maxims profoundly congenial, and that, perhaps to his surprise, the maxims were extensively and appreciatively read at a popular level by less highly educated believers. In fact, because of the high regard in which the maxims were generally held in the Church, he found it necessary to warn his readers that over-enthusiastic Christians might be led gravely astray by the language about self-mutilation which they contained.” See Chadwick, *The Sentences of Sextus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 114, 135.

¹⁴¹ The critical editions of *Comm. Matt.* and Philo’s text have only two slight differences. In Origen’s text a γε has dropped out in the first clause. Origen’s text also reads μεν in the place of μνην. The accuracy with which Origen quotes Philo here strongly suggests that he consulted Philo’s text while composing his commentary rather than relying on his memory.

¹⁴² As indeed it is by Runia (“The remark is certainly complimentary. . .” *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, 161) and van den Hoek (“Origen mentions Philo’s many works on the Pentateuch and portrays these as being respected among intelligent people.” “Philo and Origen,” 89).

Ἀλλ' οὐ πιστευτέον αὐτοῖς μὴ τὸ βούλημα τῶν ἱερῶν γραμμάτων περὶ τούτων ἐξεληφόσιν.

But one should not believe them, for they have not understood the intent of the holy scriptures in these things.

Origen implicitly convicts Philo of the same offense as the self-castrators: he remains at the hermeneutical level of the letter and, as a result, interprets the law in an unduly corporeal manner. Although Philo laudably searches out the allegorical interpretation of the Pentateuchal narratives— in *Comm. Matt.* 15.5, just a few paragraphs on, Origen may allude to Philo's allegorical interpretation of Pharaoh's eunuchs in *Ebr.* 212¹⁴³— but when it comes to putting the law into practice, Philo, like Origen's Jewish contemporaries, fails to understand its intended spiritual meaning. Philo and Sextus err because they have failed to take into account Galatians 5:22, which names self-control of the human body given by God as a fruits of the spirit. Philo's advice also contravenes the corporeal sense of Lev. 19:27, “you shall not destroy the appearance of your beard” and Deut. 23:1, “No eunuch and no castrated man shall enter the assembly of the Lord” (15.3). When “the letter kills,” the literal interpretation must be rejected; in these cases, the only valid meaning of the text is the spiritual, for it alone “gives life.”¹⁴⁴ This principle is applicable to both narrative and prescriptive passages, not only in the Old Testament, but in the New as well.

The three explicit *testimonia* of Philo in Origen's corpus consistently portray him as an exegete of the Books of Moses worthy of consideration by intelligent readers. Origen praises

¹⁴³ This parallel is given a rating of B, indicating “passages where dependency is highly probable” by van den Hoek, who notes, however, that Clement has preceded Origen in this borrowing. See van den Hoek, “Origen and Philo,” 47.

¹⁴⁴ At *Princ.* 4.2.4, Origen famously distinguishes three senses of scripture, the literal, the moral, and the spiritual, corresponding respectively to the body, soul, and spirit of the human. In practice, however, he rarely distinguishes between the moral and the spiritual senses, emphasizing instead the contrast between literal and spiritual exegesis. For most passages, the literal interpretation is valid and instructive, although less so than the correct spiritual interpretation (4.3.4). Sometimes, however, the literal meaning is absent or impossible (4.2.9); these are stumbling blocks inserted into scripture by God to prompt the careful reader to search out the spiritual meaning.

Philo especially for his allegorical interpretation of the narratives contained the in law of Moses. Yet Origen does not refrain from rebuking Philo for his misunderstanding of the scriptures' teaching on self-harm for the sake of self-restraint. When it comes to deriving practical doctrines from the scriptures, like the immature Christians, Philo fails to rise to the hermeneutical level of the spirit.

5.4 *One of our predecessors*

In addition to the explicit citations in *Contra Celsum* and *Comm. Matt.*, Origen occasionally refers to Philonic exegeses of scriptural passages, attributing the interpretations to “τῶν πρὸ ἡμῶν τις [or τινες].”¹⁴⁵ Runia identifies thirteen instances of such allusions to Philo, to which Ramelli adds an additional seven purported examples.¹⁴⁶ As de Lange pointed out, it is not always certain that Philo is the predecessor Origen intends to invoke when using this epithet, especially in the case of plural attributions. Other predecessors could also be intended; Annewies van den Hoek has identified four instances in which Origen uses the same phrase to refer to Clement.¹⁴⁷

In 1895, F. C. Coneybeare suggested that Origen may have chosen to cite Philo anonymously in order to mask his use of a Jewish source, but this suggestion fails to note that Origen rarely cites his sources by name while also overlooking Origen's laudatory mentions of

¹⁴⁵ References collected by Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, 161–163: *Sel. in Gen.* 44, *Hom. in Ex.* 2.2, *Hom. in Lev.* 8.6, *Hom. in Num.* 9.5, *Hom. in Jos.* 16, *Hom. in Jer.* 14.5, *Com. in Joh.* 6.25.

¹⁴⁶ Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, 161–162; Ramelli, “Philo as Origen's Declared Model,” 7.

¹⁴⁷ van den Hoek, “Origen and the Intellectual Heritage of Alexandria: Continuity or Disjunction?” *Origeniana Quinta* (ed. Robert J. Daly: Leuven: Peeters, 1992), 40–46; 44. As is the case with Philo, it is not always possible to be certain that Clement is the predecessor Origen has in mind, however in three of these four instances it is clear that Origen does not mean Philo, as they pertain to interpretations of the Gospels.

Philo.¹⁴⁸ Rather than intending to hide his debt to Philo, Runia contends that Origen's identical anonymous references to Philo and Clement signal his acceptance of both as equally his predecessors. Runia, together with most other modern commentators, translate τῶν πρὸ ἡμῶν τις as "one [or some] of our predecessors,"¹⁴⁹ however the phrase could more literally be rendered as "one [or some] of those who came before us." According to a letter preserved by Eusebius, Origen's near contemporary Bishop Dionysius of Alexandria used the similar phrase, "τινὲς μὲν οὖν τῶν πρὸ ἡμῶν," to refer to fellow Christians who rejected the authenticity of the Apocalypse of John (*HE* 7.25.1). In this case, Dionysius clearly does not use the phrase to align himself with a particular school of thought; his position on the canonicity of Revelation is in fact at odds with that of his "predecessors." The translation "predecessor" suggests a closer "genetic" relationship between the thought of Origen and Philo than the Greek text requires, suggesting that Origen saw Philo as a forefather in his own tradition.

Recent scholarship has cited Origen's description of Philo as a "predecessor" in order to present him as aligning himself consciously with one particular Judaeo-Christian exegetical tradition. In this direction, David Runia contends, "apparently Origen sees no need to distinguish between Philo and Clement as distinguished predecessors in the task of elucidating scripture . . . Philo has an honoured place in the tradition of biblical interpretation. There is no need to draw explicit attention to his name, because the exegetical tradition itself is more important than its individual contributors."¹⁵⁰ Ramelli heightens the rhetoric further by arguing that Origen's many

¹⁴⁸ F. C. Conybeare, *Philo About the Contemporary Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1895, repr. 1987), 328–329. Cited by Runia, "Philo the Pythagorean," 13.

¹⁴⁹ Examples include Chadwick's translation of *Cels.* 7.20; Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, 161–163; van den Hoek, "Philo and Origen," 46; Ramelli, "Philo as Origen's declared model," 2 and *passim*.

¹⁵⁰ Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, 182.

anonymous citations of Philo demonstrate his preference for the exegeses of Philo, “the Jew” to that of “Christian” heretics, inserting identity markers not found in Origen’s writings.¹⁵¹

Although a detailed study of each purported anonymous reference to Philo is beyond the scope of this investigation, I shall now consider the purported anonymous citations identified by Ramelli and Runia in the two works that contain explicit references to Philo, the *Commentary on Matthew* and the *Contra Celsum*, for their depictions of Philo in relation to Origen’s constructions of Jewish and Christian identity. The first possible instance of anonymous citation in *Comm. Matt.* occurs in book 10, where Origen interprets the events surrounding the death of John the Baptist recorded in Matthew 14. Noting that the fateful dance of Herodias’ daughter took place in the course of Herod’s birthday celebrations, Origen comments,

Καὶ ἐν γενεθλίοις δὲ παρανόμου βασιλεύοντος αὐτῶν λόγου ὀρχοῦνται, ὥς ἀρέσκειν ἐκείνῳ τῷ λόγῳ τὰς κινήσεις αὐτῶν. Ἐτήρησε μὲν οὖν τις τῶν πρὸ ἡμῶν τὴν ἀναγεγραμμένην ἐν Γενέσει τοῦ Φαραὼ γενέθλιον καὶ διηγήσατο ὅτι ὁ φαῦλος τὰ γενέσεως ἀγαπῶν πράγματα ἐορτάζει γενέθλιον. Ἡμεῖς δὲ ἀπ’ ἐκείνου ταύτην εὐρόντες ἀφορμὴν ἐπ’ οὐδεμιᾶς γραφῆς εὔρομεν ὑπὸ δικαίου γενέθλιον ἀγομένην.

And while their lawless reason rules over them, they revel in their birthdays, so that the movements of their genesis is pleasing to that (kind of) reason. Indeed one of our predecessors has observed that the birthday of Pharaoh is recorded in Genesis and recounts that it is the wicked man who, being in love with the affairs of birth and becoming, celebrates his birthday. But we, taking our cue from that interpreter, discover that nowhere in the scriptures is a birthday celebrated by a righteous person. *Comm. Matt.* 10.22

In this instance, Origen clearly intimates that his exegesis is based on a singular external source, which has been convincingly identified as Philo’s treatise *De ebriatate* 208. The narrative of Herod’s birthday party reminds him of Philo’s criticism of Pharaoh’s birthday celebration. The context of the citation is, however, intriguing, for it occurs in the middle of a harsh indictment of the Jews of Jesus’ day. Immediately preceding his citation of Philo, Origen compares the

¹⁵¹ Ramelli, “Philo as Origen’s declared model,” 2.

behaviour of the Jews to the dancing of Herodias, which seems to follow the law but is in fact opposed to the holy dancing mentioned in Matt 11:17. Subsequently, Origen likens Jewish interpretation to the beheading of John the Baptist, as Jews attempt to understand prophecy while removing its head, namely Jesus. In this context, Philo's correct condemnation of Pharaoh's birthday celebration stands in direct contrast to "Jewish" exegesis.

The next anonymous citation occurs at 17.17, in the midst of Origen's clarification of the wording of Matt. 22:2, "ὁμοιώθη ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν ἀνθρώπῳ βασιλεῖ." Why, Origen, asks, does the verse include the redundant word ἀνθρώπῳ, when it could simply be expressed, "ὁμοιώθη ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν βασιλεῖ." Origen resolves the problem by explaining that the two descriptors reveal different aspects of God's character:

τῶν μὲν πρὸ ἡμῶν ποιήσας τις βιβλία νόμων ἱερῶν ἀλληγορίας, τὰς ὡσπερεὶ ἀνθρωποπαθῇ παριστάσας λέξεις τὸν θεὸν διηγούμενος καὶ τὰς τὸ θεῖον αὐτοῦ ἐμφαινούσας, ἐνὶ μὲν ῥητῇ ἐχρήσατο περὶ τοῦ ὡς ἄνθρωπον λέγεσθαι εἶναι τὸν θεὸν ἀνθρώπους οἰκονομοῦντα, τῷ «ἐτροποφόρησέ σε κύριος ὁ θεός σου ὡς εἴ τις τροποφορήσαι ἄνθρωπος τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ», ἐνὶ δὲ περὶ τοῦ μὴ ὡς ἄνθρωπον εἶναι τὸν θεόν, τῷ «οὐχ ὡς ἄνθρωπος ὁ θεὸς διαρτηθῆναι».

One of our predecessors, who composed books on the allegorization of the sacred laws, presents some texts in which God is described as having human feelings and other texts in which his divinity is revealed. For the view that God is spoken of as a man who exercises care over mankind he used as a text "the Lord your God nourished you like a man nourishes his son," while for the view that God is not as a man he used the text "nor like a man is God deceived."

God is understood to be like a human when emotions and other anthropomorphisms are attributed to him; he is like a king when he is credited with regnant power and immutability.

These two aspects are also on display in the Books of Moses, Origen claims, and relevant texts have been collected by "one of our predecessors who composed books on the allegorization of the sacred laws." The texts from Deuteronomy cited by Origen resemble those found in Philo's treatise *On the Unchangeability of God* 53–54, which addresses exactly this question. The

similarity of the citation as well as the identification his source as a single author of allegorical treatises on the law strongly suggests that Origen is here making an anonymous reference to Philo. Here Philo's defence of God's impassibility, in spite of scriptural language that when read literally suggests God's passibility, is borrowed by Origen to resolve an exegetical difficulty in the Gospels.

Two more possible anonymous references to Philo are identified in *Contra Celsum*. The first example occurs in book 5, where Origen takes on the difficult task of interpreting the actions of the *Nephilim* recorded in Genesis 6:

Ἀλλ' ἵνα καὶ εὐγνωμονέστερον αὐτῷ δῶμεν ἢ μὴ ἐώρακεν ἀπὸ τῶν ἐν τῇ Γενέσει γεγραμμένων, ὅτι «ιδόντες οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ τὰς θυγατέρας τῶν ἀνθρώπων ὅτι καλαὶ εἰσιν, ἔλαβον ἑαυτοῖς γυναῖκας ἀπὸ πασῶν ὧν ἐξελέξαντο»· οὐδὲν ἥττον καὶ περὶ τούτων τοῖς δυναμένοις ἀκούειν προφητικοῦ βουλήματος πείσομεν ὅτι καὶ τῶν πρὸ ἡμῶν τις ταῦτα ἀνήγαγεν εἰς τὸν περὶ ψυχῶν λόγον, ἐν ἐπιθυμίᾳ γενομένων τοῦ ἐν σώματι ἀνθρώπων βίου, ἅπερ τροπολογῶν ἔφασκε λελέχθαι «θυγατέρας ἀνθρώπων».

However, let us be open-minded and grant [Celsus] that according to the words of Genesis which he did not notice “the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were fair, and took to themselves wives of all whom they chose”; nevertheless even here we shall convince those who are able to understand the meaning of the prophet that one of our predecessors (τῶν πρὸ ἡμῶν τις) referred these words to the doctrine about souls who were afflicted with a desire for life in a human body, which, he said, is figuratively called “daughters of men.” *Cels.* 5.55

Once again, Origen clearly has one particular source in mind, this time Philo's treatise *de Gigantibus* 6–18. Origen is responding to Celsus's confusion over the status of Jesus as the Christ, a unique divine messenger sent to earth from God. After enumerating a list of angelic visitations, citing the Pentateuch, the Synoptic Gospels, and, intriguingly, the fall of the angels as reported by the books of Enoch (5.52), Celsus asks, how can the Christians claim Jesus to be unique when their scriptures feature so many stories about the descent of divine beings from

heaven? In his rebuttal, Origen charges Celsus with not having read the Enochic books, while also criticizing him for his failure to recognize that “the books entitled Enoch are not generally held to be divine by the churches” (5.54).¹⁵² However, Origen grants to his audience that, while the Enochic account of the fallen angels is of questionable validity, Genesis 6, which also recounts the unions between the sons of God and daughters of men, is certainly authoritative. It is at this moment that he chooses to cite Philo’s allegorical interpretation of the narrative. The reference is particularly pertinent coming as it does directly following Origen’s dismissal of the Enochic literature from the texts “generally held to be divine by the churches.” By juxtaposing Philo’s correct interpretation of Genesis 6 with the Enochic literature’s erroneous account of the fallen angels, Origen implies acceptability of the Philonic exegesis of the Genesis text that he explicitly denies to the Enochic rewritten Bible. Philo’s exegesis is acceptable as it reveals the psychic dimension obscured by the literal reading of the Genesis narrative.

A second possible anonymous citation occurs in book 7:

Φέρει δ’ ὁ Κέλσος καὶ τὸ προειρηθῆναι αὐτοῖς μὴ πειθομένοις τῷ νόμῳ τὰ αὐτὰ πείσεσθαι, ἅπερ ἔδρων τοὺς πολεμίους. Καὶ πρὶν ἂν τι παρατιθεῖς τούτοις ὁ Κέλσος χρήσεται οἷς νομίζει ἐναντιώμασι πρὸς τὸν νόμον ἀπὸ τῆς Χριστοῦ διδασκαλίας, λεκτέον περὶ τῶν προειρημένων. Φαμὲν τοίνυν ὅτι ὁ νόμος διττός ἐστιν, ὁ μὲν τις πρὸς ῥητόν, ὁ δὲ πρὸς διάνοιαν, ὡς καὶ τῶν πρὸ ἡμῶν τινες ἐδίδαξαν.

Celsus also states that it was foretold to them that if they disobeyed the law, they would suffer the same fate as that which they inflicted upon their enemies. Before Celsus produces any argument on this point and quotes sayings from the teaching of Christ which, as he supposes, contradict the law, we must speak of his earlier remarks. We maintain that the law has a twofold interpretation, one literal and one spiritual, as was also taught by some of them who came before us. *Cels.* 7.20

¹⁵² On the composition and reception of the Enochic books along the spectrum of Jewish/Christian communities, see Annette Yoshiko Reed, *Fallen Angels and the History of Judaism and Christianity: The Reception of Enochic Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

Chadwick connects this citation with Philo's description of his hermeneutical practice in *Spec. Leg.* 1.287 (τὰ μὲν ῥητὰ ταῦτα, τὰ δὲ πρὸς διάνοιαν τοῖς τῆς ἀλληγορίας κανόσιν ἐπικεπτέον).

This parallel is affirmed by Runia, van den Hoek (who adds *Hypoth.*, and *Migr.* 89–93 as possible Philonic source texts) and Ramelli.¹⁵³ What follows in Origen's text, however, suggests that Philo may not be one of the "some that came before us" that he has in mind.¹⁵⁴

Καὶ ὁ μὲν πρὸς τὸ ῥητὸν οὐ τοσοῦτον ὑφ' ἡμῶν ὅσον ὑπὸ τοῦ ἐν τινι τῶν προφητῶν λέγοντος θεοῦ εἴρηται εἶναι «δικαιώματα οὐ καλὰ» καὶ «προστάγματα οὐ καλὰ»· ὁ δὲ πρὸς διάνοιαν κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν προφήτην ἐκ προσώπου τοῦ θεοῦ λέγεται εἶναι «δικαιώματα καλὰ» καὶ «προστάγματα καλὰ»· οὐ γὰρ προφανῶς ἐναντία λέγει ὁ προφήτης ἐν ταῦτῳ. Ἦ ἀκολούθως καὶ ὁ Παῦλος τὸ μὲν «γράμμα» εἶπεν ἀποκτέννειν, ὅπερ ἴσον ἐστὶ τῷ πρὸς τὸ ῥητόν· «τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα» ζῶοποιεῖν, ὅπερ ἰσοδυναμεῖ τῷ πρὸς διάνοιαν.

And it is not so much we as God speaking in one of the prophets, who described the law literally understood as judgments that are not good and statutes that are not good (cf. Ezek. 20:25); in the same prophet God is represented as saying that the law spiritually understood is judgments that are good and statutes that are good. The prophet is obviously not making contradictory statements in the same passage. It is consistent with this when Paul also says that 'the letter kills,' which is equivalent to the literal interpretation; whereas 'the spirit gives life,' which means the same as the spiritual interpretation.

Although he employs a conception of the two-fold law similar to the one found in Philo, Origen goes on immediately to identify the predecessors he has in mind as the prophet Ezekiel and the apostle Paul. It is Ezek. 20:25, interpreted in conjunction with 2 Cor. 3:6–8, that Origen expressly invokes to arrive at an authoritative defence of allegorical interpretation and, ultimately, Jesus' actions in the Gospels.¹⁵⁵ The point of debate with Celsus in this question is

¹⁵³ Chadwick, *Contra Celsum* 411, n. 2

¹⁵⁴ While admitting that "the reference to a predecessor is rather vague," van den Hoek concludes, "it seems clear that Origen has Philo in mind" and considers the passage worthy of an "A" ranking, signifying certain dependency. van den Hoek, "Philo and Origen," 53.

¹⁵⁵ Ezek. 20:25, NRSV: "Moreover I gave them statutes that were not good and ordinances by which they could not live." 2 Cor. 3:6-8, NRSV: "for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. Now if the ministry of death, chiseled in

not simply whether the Mosaic law has both spiritual and literal senses but whether that the literal sense always conveys a valid teaching. Origen and Philo are in agreement that the law, understood on the level of the letter, sometimes includes irrationalities and impossibilities providentially inserted to prompt the careful reader to search out the deeper spiritual meaning (cf. *Conf.* 14, *Leg. Al.* 2.19). But Origen parts ways from Philo by insisting, with confirmation from the scriptures and Jesus' actions, that the letter of the law has the power to kill its spiritual intent.¹⁵⁶ In contrast, the purpose of Philo's treatises on the *Special Laws* is to defend the rationality of Jewish legal observance by demonstrating the relationship between outward practice and inner symbolism. *Migr.* 89–93 argues yet more pointedly for the necessity of maintaining outward practice even for those who comprehend the symbolic meaning:

ἀλλὰ χρὴ ταῦτα μὲν σώματι εἰκέναι νομίζειν, ψυχῇ δὲ ἐκεῖνα· ὥσπερ οὖν σώματος, ἐπειδὴ ψυχῆς ἐστὶν οἶκος, προνοητέον, οὕτω καὶ τῶν ῥητῶν νόμων ἐπιμελητέον· υλαττομένων γὰρ τούτων ἀριδηνότερον κἀκεῖνα γνωρισθήσεται, ὧν εἰσιν οὗτοι σύμβολα πρὸς τῷ καὶ τὰς ἀπὸ τῶν πολλῶν μέμψεις καὶ κατηγορίας ἀποδιδράσκειν.

But we ought to think that these [outward observances] resemble the body, and their inner meanings as resembling the soul; therefore, just as we take care of the body because it is the home of the soul, *so too we must pay attention to the plain meaning of the laws*. If we keep and observe these, we shall gain a clearer conception of those things of which these are the symbols.¹⁵⁷

In this instance, despite the use of a phrase similar to that found in *Spec. Leg.* 1.287, Origen's argument follows that of Paul in 2 Cor. 3 much more closely than anything to be found in Philo's treatises.

letters on stone tablets, came in glory so that the people of Israel could not gaze at Moses' face because of the glory of his face, a glory now set aside, how much more will the ministry of the Spirit come in glory?

¹⁵⁶ Compare Origen's understanding of the Mosaic legislation with Philo's treatises on the law, *De Decalogo* and *De Specialibus Legibus*, which are written to show the merits of the Jewish law as a path to virtue when kept according to the letter.

¹⁵⁷ *Migr.* 93. Emphasis mine.

While Ramelli describes Philo as Origen's "declared model," it is to Paul's use of allegorical and spiritual interpretation that Origen regularly turns to validate his own hermeneutics.¹⁵⁸ Both of the positive mentions of Philo in *Contra Celsum* occur on the heels of appeals to Pauline texts; Philo is invoked as an additional wise man who agrees with Paul (and Origen). Although the combined one hundred and sixteen certain and probable references identified by Annewies van den Hoek attest to Origen's extensive use of Philo's treatises, those citations are dwarfed by his invocations of Paul in defense of his hermeneutical practice. 2 Cor. 3:6 ("for the letter kills, but the spirit give life") alone is quoted eighty-two times; the allegorical interpretation of Sarah and Hagar in Galatians 4:24–6 is invoked on fifty occasions.¹⁵⁹ Although Philo frequently is identified as the predecessor to whom Origen appeals in *Cels.* 7.20, it is Paul that is cited explicitly. Consequently, it is unlikely that Philo is the anonymous predecessor that Origen intends to invoke.

6. Conclusions: Philo among the "more reasonable" Jews

Origen never explicitly calls Philo a Jew, although his Jewishness is implied in *Cels.* 4.51, in which he is invoked as one of the "more reasonable" Jews who know that the fabulous tales of the Torah were intended to be interpreted allegorically. On this matter, wise Christians like Origen have more in common with wise Jews like Philo than they do with pagans like Celsus, heretics like Marcion (cf. *Comm. Matt.* 15.3), and simple Christians who have not yet learned to ascend beyond the letter of the law. Accordingly, Origen cites Philo positively for his allegorical interpretations of the philological and narrative details in the Mosaic law while virtually ignoring

¹⁵⁸ Ramelli, "Philo as Origen's Declared Model," 6.

¹⁵⁹ *Biblia Patristica: index des citations et allusions bibliques dans la littérature patristique. Vol. 3: Origène* (ed. Jean Allenbach: Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1982).

Philo's comments on legal practice. The results of my reading of the explicit and anonymous reference to Philo in *Contra Celsum* and *Comm. Matt.* are consistent with van den Hoek's tabulations of Origen's Philonic borrowings. Of the 23 'A' and 93 'B' borrowings in Origen's corpus, only one 'B' passage deals directly with the Pentateuch's legal material.¹⁶⁰ In the sole instance where Origen criticizes Philo, it is for being too much of a literalist.

What does Origen imply by calling Philo a predecessor? To read Origen's references to Philo as "τίς τῶν πρὸ ἡμῶν" as signalling that the Alexandrian was Origen's "principal inspirer in fact for his Biblical philosophical allegoresis," as Illaria Ramelli does, overstates his dependence on the Alexandrian exegete. Origen is described by Gregory Thaumaturgos as an eclectic philosopher who plucked what was "useful and good" from the philosophical traditions available to him (*Address* 172). Although Origen certainly plucked many good and useful exegeses and doctrines from Philo, it is less clear that he understood them both to belong to a continuous Judaeo-Christian exegetical school tradition. Origen cites Philo explicitly in the company of Numenius and Sextus, sources that combine a knowledge of the Jewish and Christian scriptures with Pythagorean ethics and exegetical strategies. Philo belongs to the fraternity of philosophically adept men, some of them Jews, who interpret the narratives of the Hebrew scriptures allegorically. Origen, however, locates himself beside Paul in the tradition that teaches the true philosophy inaugurated by Jesus. It is the apostle Paul's exegetical footsteps that Origen understands himself to be following; he willingly follows Philo only where the Alexandrian joins Paul along the same path.

¹⁶⁰ Excluding *Spec. Leg.* 1.287 as the source intended by *Cels.* 7.20. The other passage from, *Spec. Leg.* 2.175, is used by Origen to explain the choice of barley rather than wheat as the first fruits offering.

Chapter 5

“Of the Hebrew Race”: Eusebius’s Philo

τὸ μὲν οὖν γένος ἀνέκαθεν Ἑβραῖος ἦν, τῶν δ’ ἐπ’ Ἀλεξανδρείας ἐν τέλει διαφανῶν οὐδενὸς
χείρων. . . ὅτε μάλιστα τὴν κατὰ Πλάτωνα καὶ Πυθαγόραν ἐζηλωκῶς ἀγωγὴν, διενεγκεῖν ἅπαντας
τοὺς καθ’ ἑαυτὸν ἱστορεῖται.¹

“He was, then, of the Hebrew race by origin, inferior to none of those appearing in office in
Alexandria of his day. . . he is related to have greatly surpassed all his contemporaries in zeal
for the schools of Plato and Pythagoras.” *Historia Ecclesiastica* 2.4

Eusebius cites Philo many more times than does Origen or Clement, with multiple references being made to him in four of the Caesarean bishop’s major works, the *Historia Ecclesiastica* (HE), the *Preparatio Evangelica* (PE), the *Demonstratio Evangelica* (DE), and the *Chronicon*. He is the first Christian writer to explicitly label Philo a “Hebrew” and to locate him within a Jewish literary tradition, frequently mentioning him in the same breath as Josephus or Aristobulus.

Eusebius is also the first to articulate a sharp distinction between the terms “Hebrew” and “Jew,” reifying the semantic distinction already perceptible, if not fully developed, in the writings of Clement and Origen. For Eusebius, the Hebrews are the ancient people who alone showed proper piety (εὐσέβεια) to God in contradistinction to the idolatry of the Nations. These Hebrews he claims as distant ancestors of the Christians, not through biological lineage, but through their rediscovery of the Hebrews’ original piety and way of life (βίος). The Jewish way

¹ I use the Greek text published in *Historia Ecclesiastica* (SC 31, 41, 55; trans. Gustave Bardy; Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1952-1958). I follow the English translation in *The History of the Church* (trans. G.A. Williamson; London: Penguin Books, 1965. Repr., 1989), with modifications.

of life and worship according to the law of Moses, Eusebius charges, is different enough to distinguish them as a separate nation (ἔθνος) from the Hebrews and marks a regression from the Hebrews' perfect piety.

The sharp distinction Eusebius makes between Hebrews and Jews has long been well known,² however scholars have increasingly become aware that the theoretical boundaries he constructs between the two groups are not always borne out in reality;³ as much could be said about his presentation of Philo. Although Eusebius most often calls Philo a "Hebrew," he does not use this epithet exclusively. Philo is sometimes invoked as a spokesman for "the Jews" and twice included in lists of "Jewish authors." Moreover, Philo is praised as an adept in the schools of Platonic and Pythagorean philosophy.

The investigation of Eusebius's Philonic citations that follows in this chapter shall therefore be attentive to the different contexts in and purposes for which Eusebius employs the Alexandrian. It will identify the ways in which Eusebius's presentation of Philo aids and, at times, undermines, his attempts to essentialize the differences between the Hebrew, the Jewish, the Greek, and the Christian ways of life. Finally, it will also consider the problem of whether Eusebius knowingly misuses, and even alters, Philo's texts in order to achieve his apologetic aims.

² See Jean Sirinelli, *Les vues historiques d'Eusèbe de Césarée durant la période prénicéenne* (Paris, Université de Dakar, 1961), 139–161, for discussion and scholarship on this distinction prior to 1960.

³ See Aryeh Kofsky, *Eusebius of Caesarea against Paganism* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 103; Sabrina Inowlocki, *Eusebius and the Jewish Authors: His Citation Technique in an Apologetic Context*, *Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity—Arbeiten Zur Geschichte Des Antiken Judentums Und Des Urchristentums* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 106–120; Aaron P. Johnson, *Ethnicity and Argument in Eusebius's Praeparatio Evangelica* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006), 108–124; Edward Iricinschi, "Good Hebrew, Bad Hebrew: Christians as *Triton Genos* in Eusebius's Apologetic Writings" in *Reconsidering Eusebius* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 71–85; Marie Verdoner, *Narrated Reality, The Historia Ecclesiastica of Eusebius of Caesarea* (Frankfurt-am-Main: Peter Lang, 2011), 145–146.

1. Introducing Eusebius

Eusebius of Caesarea was probably born between 260 and 264 CE; nothing certain is known of his early life and it is assumed, for lack of other evidence, that he was raised in the city where he would later serve as bishop.⁴ Nothing is known of Eusebius's family, but his erudition indicates that he received the education customary for boys whose families could afford it. His self-styling as *Pamphili*, son of Pamphilus, his beloved teacher, hints at the possible absence of his natural father.⁵

1.1 Eusebius and the school of Pamphilus

Like Origen two generations before him, Pamphilus served as both presbyter in the church of Caesarea and as the centre of a community of Christian scholars that Elizabeth Penland and Marie Verdoner recently have described as a philosophical school.⁶ The son of a noble family of Berytus (modern Beirut) in Phoenicia, Pamphilus rejected his wealth and comfort for the "life of a true philosopher" (*HE* 7.32). As a youth he moved to Alexandria, where he studied with Pierius, a presbyter of the church known as "the younger Origen" for his philosophical training

⁴ See Alden Mosshammer, *The Chronicle of Eusebius and the Greek Chronographic Tradition* (London: Bucknell University Press, 1979), 31. Eusebius's successor at the bishopric in Caesarea, Acacius, wrote a *Life of Eusebius*, but that work is now lost.

⁵ Early witnesses agree that Eusebius was not the natural son of Pamphilus. Jerome states that Eusebius acquired the name "from his friendship with Pamphilus the martyr." Jerome, *On Illustrious Men*, 81 (trans. Thomas Halton: Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1999).

⁶ Penland justifies this characterization, arguing that, in the *Martyrs of Palestine*, "the presence of literate teaching activity, of students and a tradition of teaching, and of textual production does indeed constitute a school." Elizabeth Penland, "Martyrs as Philosophers: The School of Pamphilus and ascetic tradition in Eusebius's *Martyrs of Palestine*" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 2010), 67. Verdoner, working with the *Historia Ecclesiae*, submits that "Although philosophical learning and Greek culture in one case are opposed to divine faith and true philosophy, these are generally not seen as opposites, but rather as complementary. Due to this Christianity is, at least indirectly, regarded as a philosophy and the Christians as followers of a certain philosophical school. The use of the term "diadochs," normally ascribed to leaders of philosophical schools in connection with Christians underlines this aspect as does the description of the Christian bishops as "dwelling-places of goodly words, school of sobriety, auditory of godliness grace and dear to God." Verdoner, *Narrated Reality*, 119, citing *HE* 10.4.4.

and exegetical acumen.⁷ Eusebius's relationship with Pamphilus began around 280, when the latter relocated from Alexandria to Caesarea. As a teacher in Caesarea, Pamphilus oversaw and expanded the ecclesiastical library thought to house Origen's personal collection, including copies of Philo's writings.⁸ A devoted heir to the Origenian tradition, he took special interest in collecting, copying and editing his predecessor's works.⁹ Pamphilus and his circle of devotees carried out extensive and expensive scribal activities, indicating that they received financial support from either wealthy benefactors or a sizable Christian constituency.¹⁰ Eusebius quickly became one of his teacher's stand-out graduate students, so to speak, and the two collaborated on a number of works, most famously their *Defense of Origen*.¹¹ The emotional bond between Eusebius and the teacher he considered his father is readily apparent in the future bishop's writings. He lauds Pamphilus as not only his "most accomplished contemporary in the study of both sacred and Greek philosophy," but also as "a name very dear to me" (*MP* 27), and "the most wonderful man" (*HE* 7.32).

Both the character and the contents of Eusebius's works provide clues about the daily activities of what we might call the Caesarean Christian philosophical school. The size and

⁷ See Timothy D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981), 198–200; Andrew Carriker, *The Library of Eusebius of Caesarea*, (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 13. Eusebius praises Pierius for "his life of absolute poverty and for his philosophical studies. He was exceptionally well versed in the science and exposition of theology, and was a first-rate popular preacher." *HE* 7.32

⁸ It is widely accepted that Origen brought copies of Philo's treatises with him from Alexandria and that they subsequently became a part of an ecclesial library at Caesarea; see Carriker, *Library of Eusebius*, 164. Although this reconstruction is highly plausible, we should bear in mind that there are Philonic texts known to Eusebius (*Legatio, Flacus, Contempl.*) that were apparently unknown to Clement and Origen, as demonstrated by the studies of van den Hoek. Pamphilus is also acknowledged as an avid collector of books, and his interest in Origenian philosophy may have motivated him to acquire Philonic treatises absent from the Caesarean collection. It is possible that Philo's non-exegetical, 'historical' treatises were not part of Origen's collection and that Eusebius's use of them marks a new stage in the Christian reception of Philo as a witness to the situation in Alexandria and Palestine contemporary to Jesus.

⁹ Jerome reports that Pamphilus "transcribed the greater part of Origen's works," which continue to be housed in the library at Caesarea, and that he personally possesses "twenty-five volumes of Commentaries of Origen" written in Pamphilus's hand. *Lives of Illustrious Men*, 75.

¹⁰ On the cost of book production in late antiquity and the need for financial support from patrons, see Megan Hale Williams and Anthony Grafton, *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book: Origen, Eusebius and the Library of Caesarea* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), 55–56.

¹¹ Carriker, *The Library of Eusebius*, 17–18.

contents of the library at Caesarea attest to the time its members spent reading, editing, collating and commenting upon the scriptures and other writings belonging to their tradition.¹² Through the instruction of Pamphilus in the contents of the Scriptures, Eusebius and his fellow students acquired not only exegetical knowledge but, more importantly, virtuous habits and conduct (*MP* 14). Pamphilus's disciples lived together with their teacher and presumably shared material possessions, committing themselves to celibacy, simplicity and frugality.¹³ Eusebius's studies with Pamphilus were thus highly academic but not limited to bookish scholasticism. Like its Origenian predecessor, Pamphilus's school promoted Christian *philosophia* as a way of life.

The launch of Diocletian's persecution in 303 brought an end to the era of the peaceful co-existence of the Christian churches and the Roman *imperium* that allowed schools like Pamphilus's to flourish.¹⁴ Eusebius's immediate circle appears to have endured the early years unscathed, but their fragile security was broken in the third year of the persecution, when Apphianus, a teenaged student and member of Pamphilus's household, was gruesomely executed after attempting to interrupt sacrifices performed by the city's governor, Urbanus (*MP* 4). In the fifth year of the persecution (308 CE), Pamphilus himself was arrested and suffered the torments previously experienced by his students. Following a two-year incarceration, Pamphilus was martyred in the company of eleven others, including members of his household.

¹² On the contents of the library at Caesarea, see Carriker, *The Library of Eusebius*, 299–311. On scribal activity in the school of Pamphilus, see Hale Williams and Grafton, *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book*, 184–185.

¹³ On the communal and ascetic aspects of Pamphilus's School, see Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 194–195.

¹⁴ For possible reconstructions of the events that led to the Great Persecution, see Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 17–19; Elizabeth de Palma Digieser, *A Threat to Public Piety: Christians, Platonists, and the Great Persecution* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012), 164–191.

1.2 School and Church in Caesarea

The relationship between the school activities and the wider Christian community narrated in the *Martyrs of Palestine* is reminiscent of Origen's situation in Caesarea a generation earlier.¹⁵ Like Clement and Origen before him, Eusebius presents the *ekklesia* as a two-tiered hierarchy, composed of an inner core of particularly devoted disciples, similar to the Clementine conception of the "true gnostics," and a larger multitude of "simple believers" who, in spite of their relatively shallow comprehension of the Christian mysteries, are nonetheless full members of the church.¹⁶ In *DE* 1.8.4, Eusebius claims that Jesus' disciples taught two different "ways of life to the Church of Christ."¹⁷ Taking into account human frailty, the disciples accommodated the Gospel to the "weakness of the masses," allowing them to marry and have children; to work for the state and to command soldiers; and to devote their lives to labour, setting aside particular times for religious instruction. The elite Christian, however, was to "surpass the common human way of living" (ὕπερφυῃ καὶ τῆς κοινῆς καὶ ἀνθρωπίνης πολιτείας), devoting himself entirely to the service of God.

Eusebius's years under the tutelage of Pamphilus were a time of security and growing confidence for the church across the empire, and especially in Caesarea. Christians occupied high-ranking positions, both in the Imperial households and the military.¹⁸ Christian communities had also become materially successful, owning buildings specifically designated

¹⁵ On the relationship between the Philosophical School and the *Ekklesia* in Caesarea in the *MP*, see Penland, "Martyrs as Philosophers," 65–106.

¹⁶ Aryeh Kofsky contrasts the ascetic ideal promoted by Eusebius with "the comfortable bourgeois way of life led by the Christian upper class of Alexandria, which was idealized by Clement of Alexandria, though of course he recommended moderation and restrictions" citing *Quis dives salvetur?* See Kofsky, *Eusebius against Paganism*, 116. Kofsky overlooks, however, Clement's own call to asceticism for the elite, "true gnostic" Christians in *Strom.* 4 chapters 7–8.

¹⁷ Marie Verdoner notes a similar distinction between "Christian philosophers who are, of course, ascetic, while other Christians are not" in *HE*, although in this text "there is not explicit discernment between two Christian ways of life." Verdoner, *Narrated Reality*, 120.

¹⁸ See the example of Philoromus, who held "an important office in the administration of Alexandria," in *HE* 8.9

for worship (*HE* 8). The Caesarean Christian community was apparently free of the power struggles between church and school hinted at by Clement's removal to Palestine and the conflict between Origen and bishop Demetrius in Alexandria.¹⁹ Like Origen before him, Eusebius and other philosophically advanced Christians held offices within the church (bishop, presbyter, deacon, reader).²⁰ The advanced disciples were distinguished from the simple not only by their ordination, but by the devotion of their entire lives to the pursuit of the Gospel teaching of Jesus. The simple Christians, although demonstrably transformed by the Gospel, maintained their secular positions and family ties. Both divisions of Christians, however, formed a single *ekklesia*.

1.3 Pamphilus's school among the Philosophical Schools

Under Roman rule, Caesarea had become a centre of learning, famous for its schools of philosophy, grammar, rhetoric and Roman law.²¹ Pamphilus's school numbered among them. Like its Origenian predecessor, the school's philosophical views aligned most closely with those of the Pythagoreans and the Platonists while maintaining that Moses was the original source of the philosophers' true doctrines (*PE* 13).²² Eusebius is familiar not only with most of Plato's writings, but also with much of the commentary tradition.²³ His treatment of Plato is especially

¹⁹ See *HE* 6.11.6 for Clement and 6.8 for Origen.

²⁰ The illustrious churchmen of Eusebius's own day recorded in *HE* 7 are routinely praised for their knowledge of both sacred and secular philosophy.

²¹ Joseph Patrich, "Caesarea in the time of Eusebius" in *Reconsidering Eusebius: Collected Papers on literary, historical and theological issues* (ed. Sabrina Inowlocki and Claudia Zamagni: Leiden: Brill, 2011), 3.

²² On Eusebius's presentation of the Caesarean school as the legitimate heir to the Origenian tradition, see Penland, "Martyrs as Philosophers," 140.

²³ For a listing of works likely to have been found in Eusebius's library, see Carriker, *The Library of Eusebius of Caesarea*, 299–311. Among the Platonic dialogues, Carriker lists the *Timaeus*, *Theatetus*, *Phaedrus*, *Republic*, *Politics*, *Phaedo*, *Laws*, *Apology*, *Cratylus*, *Crito*, *Gorgias*, *Philebus*, *Sophist*, *Symposium* and *Epinomis*. In his concluding comments on the content of the Caesarean Library, Carriker notes, "It is certainly the Platonic school, however, that is most fully represented in the library's holdings: Plato, in a complete or nearly complete edition, and Xenophon (fourth century BC); Attitucs, Celsus, Numenius, Plutarch, Severus (all from the second century);

laudatory, naming him his “best friend among the Greeks” and one whose ideas “are so dear and close” to his own (*PE* 13.8). Yet Eusebius is also willing to criticize the Athenian luminary, devoting the final six chapters of *PE* 13 to enumerating systematically the Platonic doctrines that fall outside the truth revealed in the Gospel.²⁴ Although he places Plato at the summit of Greek philosophy, Eusebius considers the Pythagorean ascetic way of life worthy of special praise. He favourably cites *Rep* 10 (the only place in the authentic Platonic tradition where Pythagoras is mentioned), in which Plato credits Pythagoras for his way of life, noting that his “followers to this day continue to follow a genre of life that they call Pythagorean and that distinguishes them from other men.”²⁵

Despite Eusebius’s praise for Plato’s philosophy, signs of increased conflict between the Christian philosophical school in Caesarea and the successors of the Neo-Platonist Plotinus begin to appear toward the end of the third century.²⁶ Porphyry’s polemic *Against the Christians* rigorously challenged the claims of the Christians, possibly prompting Eusebius to write his

Amelius and Longinus (from the third century); and Neopythagoreans from the first and second centuries used by Origen like Cronius, Moderatus, and Nicomachus.” 313–314.

²⁴ Johnson describes Eusebius as ultimately critical of Plato, who “functions as a hinge between the Hebrews and the Greeks. His authoritative status among philosophers of late antiquity could not easily be dismissed. But it could be undermined; and this is what Eusebius attempts to do in *Preparatio* 11.1–13.14.” Johnson, *Ethnicity and Argument*, 151. Johnson’s interpretation minimizes the genuine warmth and respect Eusebius exhibits for Plato at the end of book 13: “I revere him who has ideas that are so dear and so close to my own, if not absolutely the same as mine.” *PE* 13.18. Eusebius does not undermine Plato so much as carefully distinguish between his correct and incorrect doctrines, measured against the authority of ecclesiastical teaching.

²⁵ Plato, *Rep.* 10.600b

²⁶ Elizabeth DePalma Digeser argues that a split between the heirs of the Alexandrian philosopher Ammonius Saccus caused a rift between Hellenic and Christian philosophical schools that ultimately may have contributed to the outbreak of the Great Persecution. She contends, “before Iamblichus of Chalcis began teaching in the late third century, Christian and Hellene philosophers, theologians, and the educated people in their circles, tended to focus on explaining the character of transcendent divinity and how their souls might draw closer to it. In this enterprise, they were more united than divided. For example, Origenists and Plotinians shared the notion that an intelligible hypostasis or logos had emanated from a transcendent divinity, and that an ascetic regime drew attention away from the body so that one could focus on the return of the soul.” *A Threat to Public Piety*, 6. Digeser suggests that in the wake of the split between Iamblichus and Porphyry, the two schools jockeyed for position in the imperial courts, with the result that “the argument over who taught the truest philosophy was not just an intramural disagreement among Ammonius’s heirs; it became a public controversy and cause, made more acute by the presence of Christian courtiers in Diocletian’s inner circle,” 9.

major two-part treatise the *Preparatio Evangelica* and the *Demonstratio Evangelica*.²⁷ *Against the Christians* is no longer extant, and scholars disagree as to whether it can be reconstructed on the basis of Eusebius's text as the argument of Celsus's *On True Doctrine* has been recovered on the basis of Origen's reply.²⁸ Elsewhere, Eusebius claims that Porphyry wrote *Against the Christians* specifically against the teaching of Origen, purportedly motivated by his success even among non-Christians (*HE* 6.18–19).²⁹ To whatever degree Porphyry inspired Eusebius to compose his apologetic works, Eusebius's familiarity with and access to his writings indicate the continued exchange of ideas between the successors of Origen and Plotinus.

1.4 Relationships among Jews and Christians in Eusebius's Caesarea

At the end of the third century, the city of Caesarea Maritima boasted an eclectic population of Samaritans, Christians, Jews, and heterogeneous pagans, with no one ethnic group constituting a majority.³⁰ Religious practice was diverse, as testified by the archaeological remains of temples

²⁷ *Against the Christians* has traditionally been considered the spur that prompted Eusebius to compose the *Apodeixis*. Eusebius is called the “anti-Porphyry” by J. Geffcken in *Zwei griechische Apologeten* (Leipzig-Berlin: Teubner, 1907), 309 (cited by Sebastian Morlet, “Eusebius's Polemic Against Porphyry: A Reassessment” in *Reconsidering Eusebius* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 119). Aryeh Kofsky deems Porphyry's role in the *PE-DE* “problematic,” contending that “Although Porphyry was a key figure behind the work, close scrutiny of the text shows that Eusebius did not want the work to be seen as just another refutation of Porphyry's *Against the Christians*. . . the purpose of Eusebius's work extends beyond any limited polemic against Porphyry. In this work Eusebius embarked on a comprehensive campaign against pagan culture, along with a defense of Christian tenets.” Kofsky, *Eusebius against Paganism*, 313. Sebastian Morlet goes further than Kofsky, arguing that the content of *PE-DE* is traditional, its criticisms of Christianity stemming from Celsus rather than Porphyry's arguments. While allowing that Eusebius polemicizes against Porphyry “on a smaller scale,” Morlet concludes that “the *PE-DE* cannot be considered as a general answer to Porphyry's *Contra Christianos*” Morlet, “Eusebius's Polemic Against Porphyry,” 125. Adding to the confusion is the question of whether Eusebius's reference to Porphyry's writing *Against the Christians* refers to a single, self-contained text. Robert Berchman suggests that *Against the Christians* refers to excerpts from at least three different works of different genres composed by Porphyry at various points in his career. See Robert M. Berchman, *Porphyry Against the Christians* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 7.

²⁸ Joseph Hoffman published an attempt at reconstructing the fragments as *Porphyry Against the Christians: The Literary Remains* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1994); Berchman denies the possibility of reconstructing an outline of Porphyry's work. See Berchman, *Porphyry Against the Christians*, 7.

²⁹ In a fragment attributed to *Against the Christians* Book 3 preserved by Eusebius at *HE* 6.19, Porphyry testifies that Origen was familiar with the writings of Numenius, Cronius, Apollophanes, Longinus, Moderatus, Nichomachus, certain eminent followers of Pythagoras, as well as the Stoics Chaeremon and Cornutus.

³⁰ Jörg Ulrich estimates a total population of 70,000 in late 3rd C Caesarea. Although Jews made up only a minority of the total population of Palestine, they formed a sizable community in Caesarea. The remains of a third-century

dedicated to a variety of Greek and Eastern deities that have been unearthed.³¹ According to *BT Hulin* 86d, a Jewish house of learning opened onto the Caesarean Agora.³²

As we have already discovered in our investigation of Origen, the degree of interaction among Christian scholars and the rabbinic academy in Caesarea, not to mention broader groups of self-identifying Jews, Christians, and others in between, has been variously interpreted. Polemical comments about Jews occur throughout Eusebius's corpus, however unlike Origen, Eusebius does not explicitly refer to his own participation in face-to-face debates. Nevertheless, Sabrina Inowlocki contends that, in addition to their apologetic purposes, the *PE* and *DE* together were probably used as handbooks for use in debates against Jews and Pagans.³³ Citing *BT Avodah Zahra* 41, Aryeh Kofsky argues that "R. Abbahu, Eusebius's older contemporary, enjoyed good relations with the Christians, and the Babylonian Talmud confirms his contacts with Christian scholars."³⁴ Jörg Ulrich proposes that an intellectual community made up of Christians, Pagans and Jews fostered a "Klima der Gelehrsamkeit, der geistigen Vitalität und der anregenden intellektuellen Auseinandersetzung, in welchem eigentlich alle religiösen Richtungen gut gedeihen konnten."³⁵ Ulrich goes on to characterize the atmosphere in Eusebius's Caesarea as "relatively tolerant," a judgment that curiously overlooks the fact that several of Eusebius's fellow scholars would be executed for their religious positions. Kofsky is less rosy in his evaluation, noting "the extent of good relations between the different religious

synagogue have been identified in Caesarea and the Jerusalem Talmud makes mention of a collective of "Caesarean Rabbis." Ulrich notes, however, that there is insufficient evidence for fixing hard and fast numbers. An oft-overlooked piece of the ethnic puzzle in Caesarea are the Samaritans, who may have been more numerous than the non-Samaritan Jewish community. Ulrich, *Euseb Von Caesarea Und Die Juden: Studien Zur Rolle Der Juden in Der Theologie Des Eusebius Von Caesarea* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1999), 13.

³¹ Patrich, "Caesarea in the Time of Eusebius," 1–24, 11–12.

³² Patrich, "Caesarea in the Time of Eusebius," 11.

³³ Inowlocki, *Eusebius and the Jewish Authors*, 16. To my mind the texts are too unwieldy to serve as "handbooks" in actual debate settings; reference collections would seem to me more likely.

³⁴ Kofsky, *Eusebius against Paganism*, 93.

³⁵ "a climate of scholarship, of intellectual vitality and exciting intellectual dispute, in which in fact all religious persuasions could be well served." Ulrich, *Euseb und die Juden*, 26.

groups should not be overstated. There is no doubt that tension and hatred existed despite the general atmosphere of tolerance. . . Eusebius says that the pagan masses still derided Jesus, sneered at him, and condemned him, and that the Jews mocked and spat on him (*DE* 10.8).”³⁶ Eusebius testifies to a Caesarea where the boundaries separating Christian and Jew were becoming firmer and the possibility of friendly interaction growing more remote.

2. Eusebius’s Definitions of Jews, Hebrews, and Christians in *Demonstratio Evangelica* I

Neither Clement nor Origen provide explicit definitions of the terms “Hebrew” or “Jew” in their extant writings; Eusebius, in contrast, operates with a clear distinction between Hebrews and Jews in mind, which he describes in the opening book of the *Demonstratio Evangelica*.³⁷ Before turning to Eusebius’s Philonic citations, we shall take a closer look at the theoretical boundaries between Hebrews, Jews, and Christians that he establishes.

2.1 Hebrews

In Eusebius’s conception, Hebrews are the righteous men who lived before the institution of the law of Moses. He argues that the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, as well as other ancients including Job and Melchizedek, cannot properly be classified as Jews because they do not follow the Jewish law (*DE* 1.2.13). Eusebius’s conception has identifiable roots in the Pauline argument that the Patriarchs lived righteously despite their ignorance of the law of Moses (see especially Romans 4), but he departs from Paul by interpreting the patriarchs’ righteousness as synonymous

³⁶ Kofsky, Eusebius against Paganism, 95.

³⁷ The *DE* originally comprised twenty books, of which the first ten and fragments of the fifteenth remain extant. On the plan of the *PE-DE* as two parts of one comprehensive apologetic work, see Aryeh Kofsky, *Eusebius of Caesarea against Paganism* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 86–88 and Sébastien Morlet, *La Démonstration Évangélique d’Eusèbe de Césarée* (Paris: Institut d’Études Augustiniennes, 2009), 35–49. I cite the Greek published in *Demonstratio evangelica*. GCS 23 (ed. I.A. Heikel: Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1913). English translations are based on those in *The Proof of the Gospel*. Translations of Christian Literature 1 (trans. W. J. Ferrar: London: The Macmillan Company, 1920), with modifications.

with following a philosophical way of life. Interpreting their namesake, the shadowy figure of Heber mentioned in Genesis 10:21, according to an etymology also known to both Philo and Origen, he describes the Hebrews as “boundary-crossers,” “who have set out on their journey from this world to pass to the contemplation of the God of the universe. For they are recorded to have travelled the straight path of virtue aright by natural reasoning and by unwritten laws, and to have passed beyond carnal pleasures to the life of perfect wisdom and piety.”³⁸ Aaron Johnson has rightly pointed out that “Eusebius’s portrayal of the Genesis patriarchs as idealized philosophers whose lives function as ‘unwritten laws’ reflects their portrayal in Philo’s treatises much more closely than in the Old Testament itself.”³⁹ Being in themselves “unwritten laws,” Eusebius’s Hebrews are able to practice a philosophical way of life without need of the regulations introduced by Moses.

2.2 *Jews*

In Eusebius’s conception of salvation history, the pre-lapsarian Edenic golden age might almost be said to have lasted through the period of the patriarchs all the way until the sojourn of Israel’s descendants in Egypt. Far from offering salvation in the face of famine, Eusebius’s Egypt is the place where the Hebrews fall from the knowledge of the one God into the decadence and error of polytheism and idolatry.⁴⁰ Upon their Exodus from Egypt, Eusebius contends that the Hebrews were in need of discipline if they were to regain their previous level of piety. So God sent Moses,

³⁸ PE 7.8.20, trans. Johnson, *Ethnicity and Argument*, 115.

³⁹ Johnson, *Ethnicity and Argument*, 112.

⁴⁰ Philo describes Egypt in similarly unflattering terms. See Sarah Pearce, *The Land of the Body: Studies in Philo's Representation of Egypt* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007).

himself a true Hebrew, to inaugurate a law “intended to raise up the fallen, and to set on their feet those who were lying on their faces, by suitable teaching.”⁴¹

The way of life codified in this new law marked a drastic breach in the way of life followed by the Hebrews, so much so that the two peoples, though of the same biological descent, could no longer be considered one *ethnos*.⁴² For Eusebius, Jewishness begins with the inauguration of the law of Moses at Sinai, a harsh constitution instituted as a corrective against the perverse habits picked up by the descendants of Israel in Egypt. Although he traces the name “Jew” back to the tribe of Judah and the land of Judaea, Eusebius presents the Jews as a people sprung from a constitution, defining Judaism in the abstract as “that constitution appointed according to the law of Moses, the one dependent on the God of all” (*DE* 1.2.2).⁴³

The crux of Eusebius’s argument is his claim that the way of life enjoined by the law of Moses was only ever intended to be followed by the Jews. Distinguishing the Jewish polity from the superior pre-Mosaic Hebrew way of life and worship, Eusebius argues that the law had only temporary validity. In so doing, he sharpens the distinction between the ancient Hebrews and the Jews who lived after Moses found in a less extreme form in the writings of earlier Christians.⁴⁴

⁴¹ *DE* 1.4.6: ἡ μὲν γὰρ τοῖς ἀποπεσοῦσι τῆς τῶν προγόνων εὐσεβείας Ἰουδαίοις τὸν αἰγυπτιακὸν δὲ βίον καὶ τρόπον ζηλώσασιν ἐπὶ τε τὴν πολύθεον πλάνην καὶ τὴν ἀμφὶ τὰ εἰδωλα τῶν ἔθνῶν δεισιδαιμονίαν ὀλισθήσασιν νενομοθέτητο, ὥς ἂν πεσόντας ἀνεγείρουσα καὶ ἀνορθοῦσα τοὺς πρηνεῖς κειμένους καταλλήλοις διδασκαλίαις. “For [the old covenant] was given as a law to the Jews, when they had fallen from the piety of their forebears, and had embraced the way of life and customs of the Egyptians, and had declined to the errors of polytheism, and the idolatrous superstitions of the Gentiles. It was intended to raise up the fallen, and to set on their feet those who were lying on their faces, by suitable teaching.”

⁴² For Eusebius’s use of ethnic language to distinguish between Hebrews and Jews, see Johnson, *Ethnicity and Argument*, 114–115.

⁴³ . . . τὴν κατὰ τὸν Μωσέως νόμον διατεταγμένην πολιτείαν, ἐνὸς ἐξημμένην τοῦ ἐπὶ πάντων θεοῦ.

⁴⁴ Sébastien Morlet contends that “Le concept eusébien d’Hébreux est original dans la première littérature chrétienne. S’il existe des antécédents à son usage du terme, Eusèbe est le premier à l’utiliser pour opposer un certain groupe d’hommes à ceux qu’il appelle les ‘juifs’. La distinction entre les deux termes n’est plus de l’ordre de la nuance ou de la connotation; elle est radicale, les deux termes s’excluant l’un et l’autre. (The Eusebian concept of the Hebrews is original in early Christian literature. If antecedents to his usage of the term exist, Eusebius is the first to utilize it to oppose a certain group of men from those whom he calls the “Jews” The distinction between the two terms is no longer on the order of nuance or connotation; it is radical, the two terms excluding each other.)” Morlet, *Démonstration Évangélique d’Eusèbe de Césarée*, 176. Morlet’s contention that the terms “Jew” and “Hebrew” are mutually exclusive in Eusebius’s thought is problematic, as the case of Philo illustrates.

Although he does not take a position as extreme as the author of the *Letter to Barnabas*, who would have the law invalidated from the moment its original tables were smashed by Moses (*Ep. Barn.* 4:8), Eusebius presents it as having a very restricted historical and geographical span of applicability. This argument is made forcefully in *DE* 1.3, which consists of a compilation of commands cited as proof that the law's sacrificial system would have been impossible for Jews living outside of Judaea, let alone Gentiles, to observe. He charges,

Ἄρα γὰρ τοὺς ἐκ περάτων γῆς μέλλοντας κατὰ Μωσέα θεοσεβεῖν, ὡς ἂν φύγοιεν μὲν τὴν κατάραν, τύχοιεν δὲ τῆς ἐπηγγελμένης πρὸς τὸν Ἀβραὰμ εὐλογίας, ταῦτα πάντα χρῆν πράττειν καὶ τρις τοῦ ἔτους ἀπαντᾶν εἰς τὰ Ἱεροσόλυμα, καὶ τὰς ἐκ πάντων δὲ τῶν ἐθνῶν θεοσεβεῖν προηρημένας γυναῖκας, ἄρτι τόκων καὶ ὠδίνων παυσάμενας, τοσαύτην στέλλεσθαι πορείαν, ὡς ἂν τὴν προστεταγμένην ὑπὸ Μωσέως θυσίαν ἐφ' ἑκάστῳ τῶν γεννωμένων ἀνενέγκαιεν . . . ; ἀλλὰ συνορᾷς ὡς καὶ αὐτοῖς τοῖς ἀμφὶ τὰ Ἱεροσόλυμα κατοικοῦσι καὶ ἐπὶ μόνῃς τῆς Ἰουδαίας τὰς διατριβὰς ποιούμενοις ὁ κατὰ Μωσέα βίος δυσκατόρθωτος ἦν, μὴ τί γε δυνατὸς ἐπιτελεῖσθαι καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς ἔθνεσιν.

Was it, then, meant that those destined to worship God according to Moses from the farthest reaches of the earth, if they would escape the curse and obtain the blessing that had been proclaimed to Abraham, must accomplish all these things, and go to Jerusalem three times a year, and the women from all nations, just after suffering the pains of childbirth, to ready themselves for a journey, in order to offer the sacrifice commanded by Moses for each one of their offspring? . . . But it is clear to you that it was hard enough for those who lived around Jerusalem, or only inhabited Judaea, to follow the way of life according to Moses, and that it was hardly possible for the other nations to fulfil it.⁴⁵

Eusebius's criticism of the law is founded on the assumption that the one God ought to have enjoined a single rule of life and worship equally applicable to all people. The particularity of the law of Moses renders it inadequate to that task and, he reasons, must therefore never have been intended as a universal law code.⁴⁶ Although Eusebius never challenges the God-given character of the law, he describes its commandments as "given to common and wicked men" (φαύλοις

⁴⁵ *DE* 1.3.40–41: See also *DE* 1.7.44.

⁴⁶ Contrast Eusebius's position with Philo's, who maintains in *Vita Mos.* 2.44 that the Mosaic law is the best of the world's constitutions and imagines an eschatological future in which "I believe that each nation would abandon its peculiar ways, and, throwing overboard their ancestral customs, turn to honouring our laws alone. For, when the brightness of their shining is accompanied by national prosperity, it will darken the light of the others as the risen sun darkens the stars."

ἀνδράσι καὶ μοχθηροῖς παραδεδομένων) at a time when they were in need of a harsh pedagogue (*DE* 1.6.30). While the law of Moses enabled the Jews to “take the first step of holiness,” Eusebius claims that it was “designed by Moses to meet the needs of those who were like infants and invalids (νηπίοις καὶ ἀσθενέσι)” (*DE* 1.6.63).

Eusebius follows his predecessors by presenting “the Jews” as having corporately rejected Jesus and echoes the frequent claim that the destruction of Jerusalem was their due punishment. He is less optimistic than Origen about the likelihood of the Jews of his own day acknowledging Christ and receiving salvation. In his interpretation of the remnant of Israel at Rom. 11:1–5, Eusebius contends,

Διὰ τούτων γὰρ ὁ ἀπόστολος σαφῶς ἐπὶ τῇ τοῦ παντὸς Ἰουδαίων ἔθνους ἀποπτώσει ἑαυτὸν καὶ τοὺς αὐτῷ παραπλησίους ἀποστόλους τε καὶ εὐαγγελιστὰς τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν πάντας τε τοὺς ἔτι καὶ νῦν ἐξ Ἰουδαίων εἰς τὸν Χριστὸν πιστεύσαντας τὸ σπέρμα εἶναι διασαφεῖ τὸ ὑπὸ τοῦ προφήτου ὠνομασμένον κατὰ τὸ «εἰ μὴ κύριος Σαβαώθ ἐγκατέλιπεν ἡμῖν σπέρμα». τοῦτο δὲ εἶναι καὶ τὸ ἐν ταῖς λοιπαῖς προφητείαις δηλούμενον ὑπόλειμμα τοῦ παντός, ὅπερ φησὶν «κατ’ ἐκλογὴν χάριτος» πεφυλάχθαι. περὶ οὗ ὑπολείμματος φέρε πάλιν τὰ ἀπὸ τῶν προφητῶν ἐξαπλώσωμεν, ὡς ἂν παρασταίῃ διὰ πλειόνων, ὅτι μὴ ἀδιακρίτως παντὶ τῷ Ἰουδαίῳ ἔθνει τὴν τοῦ Χριστοῦ παρουσίαν σωτήριον ἔσεσθαι ὑπέσχετο ὁ θεὸς ἀλλ’ ὀλίγοις καὶ κομιδῇ σπανίοις, τοῖς εἰς τὸν σωτῆρα καὶ κύριον ἡμῶν πεπιστευκόσιν, ὥσπερ οὖν καὶ τὸ ἔργον ἀκολούθως ταῖς προρρήσεσιν ἐπηκολούθησεν.

In these words the Apostle clearly separates out, in the spurning of the whole Jewish nation, himself and the Apostles and the Evangelists of our saviour resembling himself and all those from the Jews then and now believing in Christ, to be the seed clearly named by the prophet in the words: “Unless the Lord of Sabaoth had left to us a seed.” And he indicates that they also are that which is called in the other prophecies the remnant of all, which he says was guarded “according to the election of grace.” Regarding this remnant let us return again to the words of the prophets and explain what they say, so that it may stand on more, that God did not promise to the undistinguished whole nation of the Jews that the coming of Christ would be their salvation, but just a small, scanty few, those who would believe in our saviour and Lord, as has actually taken place in compliance with the predictions. *DE* 2.3.47–8.

Understanding the remnant of Israel to be those of Jewish descent who have already joined the church, Eusebius suggests that the majority of the Jews are irrevocably and necessarily forsaken in exchange for the salvation of the nations. He accepts that “[the prophets] could preach the good news that though one race were lost every nation and race of men would know God, escape from the daemons, cease from ignorance and deceit and enjoy the light of piety.”⁴⁷ Eusebius nevertheless insists that the *Demonstratio Evangelica* should not be interpreted as a polemic against the Jews, as it confirms the former legitimacy of the Jewish βίος by establishing its fulfillment in Christianity.⁴⁸ While he leaves open the possibility that individual Jews may convert to the Christian εὐσεβεία and βίος, nonetheless he makes no direct appeal that they corporately ought to abandon their way of life and become Christians.

In spite of the stark distinction Eusebius makes between Hebrews and Jews, he does not fashion these categories as always mutually exclusive. While all who belong to the people governed by the law of Moses are considered by Eusebius to be Jews, he allows that an elite minority of Jews preserved the philosophical piety of their forefathers and may therefore also be considered Hebrews. Thus the prophets are styled as Ἑβραῖοι θεολόγοι, Hebrews who teach about God, because they transmit the prophecies of Christ and the philosophical way of life in

⁴⁷ ἀντὶ τῆς ἑνὸς ἔθνους ἀποβολῆς πᾶν ἔθνος καὶ γένος ἀνθρώπων θεογνωσίαν εὐαγγελιζόμενοι, καὶ δαιμόνων ἀποφυγὴν, ἀγνωσίας τε καὶ πλάνης ἀπαλλαγὴν, φωτός τε καὶ εὐσεβείας ἀνάλαμπιν . . . DE 1.1.8.

⁴⁸ “And this is why in attacking this subject myself I must of course endeavour, with God’s help, to supply a complete treatment of the Proof of the Gospel from these Hebrew theologians. And the importance of my writing does not lie in the fact that it is, as might be suggested, a polemic against the Jews—far from that! For if they would fairly consider it, it is really on their side. For as it establishes Christianity on the basis of the antecedent prophecies, so it establishes Judaism from the complete fulfilment of its prophecies.” (DE 1.1.8) Jörg Ulrich reads this passage as a confirmation that the Jews are not excluded from the salvation offered in the Gospel of Christ, arguing that “Hier handelt es sich nun ganz eindeutig um einen Satz, der die bleibende Gültigkeit des Evangeliums Christi auch für die Juden klar zum Ausdruck bringt: Bedächten sie die Argumente des Eusebius wohl, vermöchten sie zu sehen, daß sie eigentlich auf ganz ihrer Seite sind. Es zeigt sich, daß Euseb wohl gerade in Anbetracht der einst an Israel vollgültig ergangenen göttlichen Verheißungen kein allgemein—und vor allem kein endgültiges heilsgeschichtliches Verdikt gegen die Juden im Auge hat,” although he admits that Eusebius never explicitly states that the gospel of universal salvation in Christ, for Jews and Pagans, remains in effect for “Israel,” including the Jews. Ulrich ignores the fact that, for Eusebius, conversion to Christianity involves the exchange of the Christian *bios* for the Jewish, the rejection of the law of Moses for the law of the Gospel. Ulrich, *Euseb und die Juden*, 153.

continuity with the βίος of the Hebrew sages of old.⁴⁹ As he himself (usually) followed the law of Moses, Jesus could qualify as a Jew as well as a Hebrew and a Christian according to Eusebius's definitions.

2.3 Christians

Having rejected the applicability of the law of Moses for the nations, Eusebius argues that the “Hebrew” prophets, Jeremiah and Isaiah, foretold the need for a new covenant or law (*DE* 1.4.5), one that was capable of being observed by all people.⁵⁰ Eusebius finds this new covenant in “the law and life of our saviour Jesus Christ” (*DE* 1.5.2). Defining Hellenism as “the worship of many Gods according to the ancestral religions of all nations,” he construes monotheistic Judaism as its polar opposite. Again adopting a Pauline bifurcation of humanity into the two categories of Jew and Greek, Eusebius constructs Christianity as a sort of golden mean between the two. Having defined Judaism as the way of life governed by the Mosaic constitution and Hellenism as polytheism, Eusebius reasons that “Christianity would therefore be neither a form of Hellenism nor of Judaism, but something between the two.”

Although this Christian middle ground between the poles of Judaism and Hellenism was “only lately codified as the law for all mankind in the whole world,” Eusebius insists that Christianity is not novel but rather “the most ancient organization for holiness, and the most venerable philosophy.” Eusebius submits the thesis that not only the faith but also the piety and way of life practiced by the ancient Hebrews was, in all major respects, identical to the piety of

⁴⁹ For the definition of θεολόγος as “one who teaches about God” in the Christian writings of the 2nd–5th C, see the entry in Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969).

⁵⁰ See *DE* 1.5.1, “And I have shown that the ideal of the new covenant must be helpful to the life of all nations: the members of its kingdom are to be restricted in no way whatever. Considerations of country, race or locality, or anything else are not to affect them in any way at all.” (τὸν δὲ τῆς καινῆς διαθήκης τρόπον πᾶσιν ἔθνεσιν βιωφελῆ χρῆν δέηπου καταστῆναι, ὡς μηδαμῶς μηδαμόθεν παραποδίζεσθαι τοὺς κατὰ τοῦτον πολιτεύεσθαι μέλλοντας, μήτ’ ἀπὸ χώρας μήτ’ ἀπὸ γένους μήτ’ ἀπὸ τόπου μήτε ἕκ τινος ἑτέρου τὸ σύνολον). Jeremiah 38:31–33 is a favourite proof-text of Eusebius’s.

his own Christian contemporaries. Although he admits to some notable variations in lifestyle between the Christians and their Hebrew ancestors, including their preference for polygamous marriage resulting in large families and the practice of animal sacrifice, Eusebius asserts,

εἰ γοῦν ἐθελήσειας τόν τε Χριστιανῶν βίον καὶ τὴν ὑπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ πᾶσιν ἔθνεσι καταβεβλημένην θεοσέβειαν συνεξετάσαι τῷ τρόπῳ τῶν ἀμφὶ τὸν Ἀβραάμ ἐπ’ εὐσεβείᾳ καὶ δικαιοσύνῃ μεμαρτυρημένων, ἓνα καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν εὐρήσεις. κεῖνοί τε γὰρ τῆς πολυθέου πλάνης ἀποχωρήσαντες, καὶ τὴν περὶ τὰ ἀγάλματα δεισιδαιμονίαν ἀποστραφέντες, ὑπερκύψαντες δὲ καὶ τὴν ὁρωμένην ἅπασαν κτίσιν, καὶ μήθ’ ἥλιον μήτε σελήνην μήτε τι τῶν μερῶν τοῦ παντὸς θεοποιήσαντες, ἐφ’ ἓνα τὸν ἀνωτάτω θεόν, αὐτὸν δὴ τὸν ὕψιστον τὸν οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς δημιουργόν, ἑαυτοὺς ἀνήγαγον.

And if you wished to compare the life of Christians and the worship introduced among all nations by Christ with the lives of the men who with Abraham are witnessed to as pious and righteous, you would find them to be one and the same. For they too renounced the errors of polytheism, they relinquished idolatrous superstition, they looked beyond the whole of the visible creation and deified neither sun nor moon, nor any part of the whole. They raised themselves to the Supreme God, Himself the Highest, the Creator of heaven and earth. *DE* 1.5.3–4.

The Christians follow the example of “Hebrews” like Melchizedek who were uncircumcised and ignored the Mosaic dietary laws. Enoch too, being uncircumcised, “lived a distinctly Christian (Χριστιανικῶς) rather than a Jewish (ἰουδαϊκῶς) life” (*DE* 1.6.5). Even Abraham, the first man to receive circumcision, shows through his “rejection of idolatry and confession of one omnipotent God” that he “lived as a Christian, not as a Jew” (χριστιανικῶς ἀλλ’ οὐχὶ ἰουδαϊκῶς βεβειωκῶς) (*DE* 1.6.6). Eusebius’s star witness is Job, whose way of life corresponded far more closely to the teachings of Jesus in the Gospels than to the law of Moses. From the sages of the distant past, Eusebius fashions an honourable lineage for his Christian contemporaries dependent not on heredity but on lifestyle.

Although Christians do not follow the law of Moses, Eusebius insists that they are not lawless. Rather, they follow a “new and salvific legislation”—the “law according to the gospel”

(ὁ κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον νόμος) given by Jesus (*DE* 1.7.1). Eusebius describes Jesus as fundamentally a lawgiver whose law not only parallels but exceeds that of Moses (*DE* 1.7.2). Although (or perhaps because) Eusebius maintains that the law of the Gospel is a law that anyone and everyone can follow, he presents that law as accommodated to the unequal capabilities of two divisions of Christians, enjoining two different ways of life. The minority of philosophical adepts learn from the gospel law to live a life “above nature and beyond common human living” (τὸν μὲν ὑπερφυῖ καὶ τῆς κοινῆς καὶ ἀνθρωπίνης πολιτείας ἐπέκεινα), while the same law teaches the majority a “secondary grade of piety” that remains sufficient for “a part in the coming of salvation” (*DE* 1.8.1). While the Mosaic ordinances imposed a single way of life on all Judeans, Jesus’ law carves two distinct paths to salvation.

Fully convinced of the rational basis of the Christian way of life, Eusebius is especially offended by the allegations of Hellene “slanderers” who charge that the Christians are unable to provide a reasoned defense for their beliefs and way of life (*DE* 1.1.15). He presents the choice to join the Christians as a rational process, “due not to illogical and unexamined impulse, but to judgment and sober reasoning, and that our devotion to the oracles of the Hebrews thus has the support of judgment and sound reason.”⁵¹ That the way of life taught by Jesus accords fully with reason is most evident in its rejection of blood sacrifices and its monotheism, which, Eusebius reminds his readers, the Greek philosophers also rejected.

As we turn now to Eusebius’s portrayal of Philo across his corpus, we shall be attentive to the ways in which the Alexandrian exemplifies Eusebius’s definitions of the Hebrew, the Jew, and even the Christian, as well as the ways in which the plurality of roles he embodies challenges the distinctions between these identities that Eusebius asserts.

⁵¹ οὐ μὴν μέντοι ἀλόγῳ καὶ ἀνεξετάστῳ ὁρμῇ κρίσει δὲ καὶ σώφρονι λογισμῷ μεταθήμενοι, τήν τε περὶ τὰ Ἑβραίων λόγια σπουδῇν κεκριμένως ἡμῖν καὶ εὐλόγως γεγεννημένην παραστήσαντες. *DE* 1.1.17.

3. Eusebius's Reception of Philo: Literature Review

3.1 Eusebius's Philo in modern research

In the years since David Runia noted in *Philo in Early Christian Literature* that “remarkably little systematic research has been carried out on the subject of Eusebius’s acquaintance with Philo and the use he made of Philo’s treatises in his scholarly production,” two researchers in particular have contributed studies to fill that gap.⁵² Jörg Ulrich’s 1999 *Habilitationsschrift*, *Euseb und die Juden*, devotes an excursus to Eusebius’s reception of Philo, arguing that the bishop portrays Philo and his Judaism in a positive light: “In der Apologetik verarbeitet er Philo selbständig im Sinne einer positiven Bewertung des Judentums in Relation zu Heiden.”⁵³ A yet more substantial contribution has been made by Sabrina Inowlocki, whose program of research puts Eusebius’s citations of Jewish authors, Philo included, under the microscope. Inowlocki contends that Eusebius was no mere complier but that his citation methods demonstrate “an intent to answer points of controversy, and that the quotation technique indeed constitutes an ‘ideological weapon’ in Eusebius’s view.”⁵⁴ She contends that “paraphrasing, summarising, citing faithfully, or ignoring some parts of the text undeniably constituted important apologetic tools which enabled Eusebius to build his own picture of the Christian history,” a picture that is highly rhetorically charged and consequently not always to be trusted.⁵⁵

3.2 Philo the “virtual/quasi/honorary/semi- Christian”

Focusing their attention on Eusebius’s Christian interpretation of *De Vita Contemplativa*, many modern commentators have understood Eusebius to present Philo as a Christian of a kind, if not

⁵² Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, 212.

⁵³ “In the apologetic [Eusebius] utilizes Philo independently in the interests of a positive evaluation of Judaism in relation to the Pagans.” Ulrich, *Euseb und die Juden*, 100.

⁵⁴ Inowlocki, *Eusebius and the Jewish Authors*, 13.

⁵⁵ Sabrina Inowlocki, “The Reception of Philo’s *Legatio ad Gaium* in Eusebius of Caesarea’s Works,” *SPhA* 16 (2004): 30–49, 49.

a full convert to Christianity. More recently, scholars including Ulrich and Inowlocki have challenged this point of view, arguing that while Eusebius does not trumpet Philo's Jewishness, he nevertheless presents him not as a convert to Christianity but as a Jew.

Citing Eusebius's use of Philo's treatises *On the Contemplative Life*, Timothy Barnes argues that "Eusebius adopts a broad definition of Christianity which allows him to claim Philo and Josephus, both Jews by race and religion, as virtual Christians and to use them as valuable evidence for the first century . . . Eusebius can thus use what Philo reports about the Jewish Therapeutae to prove that the Christians of Philo's day lived a life similar to the more ascetic and philosophical Christians of the late third century . . . On the strength of this description, Philo is enrolled as a quasi-Christian."⁵⁶ Although not going so far as to assert that Eusebius has baptized Philo, so to speak, Barnes contends that Eusebius's conception of Christianity is wide enough to accommodate him within its boundaries.

In her analysis of quoted material in the *HE*, Marie Verdoner interprets Eusebius's use of the Alexandrian as a "Christian appropriation of Philo, who is never referred to as being Jewish, but as being Hebrew—a group that cannot immediately be identified with the Jews . . . [Philo and Josephus's] status is made dependent upon their positive relations to Christianity."⁵⁷ She contends that Philo and Josephus are given the "special status" of "semi-Christians," and that they are used to lend authority to Eusebius's account in the same manner as Christian sources. Consequently, "the narrator strives to tone down their non-Christian backgrounds."⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 130.

⁵⁷ Verdoner, *Narrated Reality*, 64–5.

⁵⁸ Verdoner, *Narrated Reality*, 65.

David Runia has most recently characterized Philo as playing the part of an “honorary Christian” in Eusebius’s writings.⁵⁹ He categorizes Eusebius’s interpretation of the Therapeutae as the “oldest extant version of the legend of *Philo Christianus*.”⁶⁰ Highlighting Eusebius’s use of Philo as a historical source rather than as an exegetical authority, Runia argues that “what makes Eusebius’s treatment of Philo distinctive compared to that of his predecessors is that he is the first to emphasize and articulate the role that Philo played in the continuity existing between Alexandrian Judaism and Alexandrian Christianity.”⁶¹ Runia contends, “Eusebius regards Philo in his role as historian as Jewish, but as exegete and philosopher he relates him more to the Platonist tradition and tends to see him as an incipient Christian thinker.”⁶² Describing Eusebius’s emphasis on Philo’s philosophical insights as “downplaying Philo’s Jewishness,” Runia concludes that “Eusebius is paying him the best compliment he could give, even if Philo himself may have been less happy to receive it.”⁶³

3.3 *Philo the persistent Jew*

Jörg Ulrich agrees that Eusebius presents Philo as a highly learned philosopher and, of lesser importance, a writer of Jewish history.⁶⁴ He challenges, however, Barnes’ reading of Eusebius’s Philo as a virtual Christian, arguing that Eusebius consistently aligns Philo with both Hebrews and Jews. He contends, “in no place is the person of Philo himself ‘co-opted’ for Christianity by Eusebius; Philo of Alexandria rather remains for Eusebius always ‘Hebrew’ and ‘Jew.’”⁶⁵ Ulrich

⁵⁹ Runia, “Philo and the Early Church Fathers” in *The Cambridge Companion to Philo* (Ed. Adam Kamesar: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 211.

⁶⁰ Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, 218.

⁶¹ Runia, “Philo and the Early Church Fathers,” 221.

⁶² Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, 225.

⁶³ Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, 226.

⁶⁴ Ulrich, *Euseb und die Juden*, 89–90.

⁶⁵ “[an] keiner Stelle wird die Person des Philo selbst durch Eusebius christlich ‘vereinnahmt’; Philo von Alexandrien bleibt bei Euseb stets ‘Hebräer’ und ‘Jude.’” Ulrich, *Euseb und die Juden*, 97.

emphasizes Eusebius's presentation of both Philo and Josephus as praiseworthy "Hebrews" in spite of the fact that both lived *after* Jesus' incarnation, a fact, he charges, that has been overlooked by previous scholars.⁶⁶ Ulrich marshals Eusebius's laudatory statements about Philo to further his thesis that Eusebius was not a "Judenfeind," arguing that the Caesarean bishop could selectively praise Jews of the recent past.

Sabrina Inowlocki echoes Ulrich's point that Eusebius does not simply portray Philo as a convert to Christianity. She finds this fact problematic, however, asking, "how Eusebius could both condemn the Jews who did not accept Christ as a Messiah and unhesitatingly praise Josephus and Philo whom he knew did not accept Christ's teachings." Answering her own question, Inowlocki suggest that the witness Philo provides to earliest Christian practices in Alexandria and to the presence of the Apostle Peter in Rome function to cancel out the taint of his Jewishness.⁶⁷ On balance, Philo is a net asset to Eusebius's agenda, and is accordingly portrayed positively.

Elizabeth Penland accentuates the ambivalence in Eusebius's presentation of Philo, noting that, while he is presented as visiting the Christian community and appreciating their teachings, "Philo is never shown receiving doctrinal instruction or baptism. The circumstantial evidence certainly points towards Philo's inclusion in a group of early Christian sympathizers, if not adherents, but Eusebius never labels Philo as a Christian."⁶⁸

As we shall soon discover, the inconsistent evaluations of Eusebius's Philo in contemporary scholarship is partially attributable to the variety of contexts in which the bishop chooses to employ Philo. In different parts of Eusebius's corpus, Philo functions alternately as a

⁶⁶ Ulrich, *Euseb und die Juden*, 110, 124.

⁶⁷ Inowlocki, *Jewish Authors*, 136. See also Sabrina Inowlocki, "Relectures Apologétiques de Philon Par Eusèbe de Césarée: Les Exemples D'Enoch Et Des Thérapeutes," in *Philon D'alexandrie: Un Penseur À L'intersection Des Cultures Gréco-Romaine, Orientale, Juive Et Chrétienne* (Eds. Sabrina Inowlocki and Baudouin Decharneux: Turnhout: Brepols, 2011).

⁶⁸ Penland, "Martyrs as Philosophers," 122.

Hebrew theologian, a witness to the sufferings of the Jews, and a guarantor of the piety of the early Church. We shall now take a comprehensive look at each of these roles that Philo performs in the Eusebian corpus and how they work together to further Eusebius's understanding of the sudden emergence of the Christian βίος in history and its relationship to the Hebrew, Jewish, and Greek ways of life.

4. Eusebius's *Testimonia* to Philo

4.1 *Philo the Hebrew Interpreter*

Philo plays a prominent role in the latter half of the *Praeparatio Evangelica*, a mammoth work in fifteen volumes in which Eusebius lays out the Christian case for abandoning the traditional Greco-Roman pantheon in favour of the God of the Jews.⁶⁹ In this context, he is put to use most frequently as a source of authentic “Hebrew” theology, helping Eusebius to locate his own [Platonic] philosophical doctrines in the Hebrew scriptures by means of allegorical interpretation. Philo's exegesis helps to bridge the chasm between Christian and Old Testament theology, advancing Eusebius's claim that Christianity is a recovery of authentic Hebrew belief and practice, or, from the opposite perspective, that Abraham, Jacob and Job ought to be considered Christians of a kind.

⁶⁹ On the dating the *PE/DE*, see Jean Sirinelli and Édouard des Places, Eusèbe de Césarée, *La Préparation évangélique* I, SC 206 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1974), 8–15. Most commentators agree that Eusebius began the work after 312 and completed it around 325. The *PE* is preserved in two manuscript families, the oldest stemming from Parisinus graecus 451, copied in 914 by Bannes for Arethas, bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, and containing Books I–IV in the same binding with Pseudo-Justin's *Cohortatio* and Tatian's *Ad Graecos*. A second family descends from Parisinus graecus 465 dating from the last quarter of the 13th century. This manuscript contains multiple lacunae; book 12 is entirely lacking. The principal witness of the second family is Marcianus graecus 341, composed by two hands dating from the second half of the 15th C. For further details see Sirinelli and des Places, SC 206, 55–58. I use the Greek text of GCS 43.1–43.2 (ed. K. Mras: Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1954–1956). The English translation is made in consultation with the French of *La Préparation évangélique IX–XV*. SC 292, 307, 338, 369 (trans. Édouard des Places: Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1982–1991).

PE 7:12–13

The first mention of Philo in the *Praeparatio* occurs at the end of 7.12, where Eusebius elucidates what he claims to be the “Hebrew” doctrine of the Second Cause. Scanning the scriptures (or a perhaps a *catena* previously prepared by himself or someone else) for references to the “Word, Wisdom and Power of God (λόγον καὶ σοφίαν καὶ θεοῦ δύναμιν),” which he equates with a “second substance and divine power (δευτέραν οὐσίαν καὶ θεϊαν δύναμιν),” Eusebius cites a string of verses from Job 12, 13 and 28, Psalm 32, Prov. 8, and Wis. 6–7 before highlighting instances where God appears to address another Lord (Gen. 19:24, Ps. 109). These verses are presented as proof that Sophia/the Logos functioned instrumentally as the Second Cause in creation.⁷⁰ Yet Eusebius suspects that some of his readers may not find his arguments convincing, and so he promises further evidence:

ἵνα δὲ μὴ σοφίζεσθαί με ταῦτα νομίσης, ἐρμηνέα σοι τῆς ἐν τῇ γραφῇ διανοίας
Ἑβραῖον ἄνδρα παραστήσω, τὰ οἰκεῖα πατρόθεν ἀκριβοῦντα καὶ παρὰ
διδασκάλων τὸ δόγμα μεμαθηκότα, εἰ δὴ σοι τοιοῦτος ὁ Φίλων. ἐπάκουσον οὖν
καὶ τοῦδε, ὅπως τὰς θείας ἐρμηνεύει φωνάς·

But so that you may not judge me to interpret these texts deceptively, I shall present for you as an interpreter of the thought contained in the scriptures a Hebrew man who accurately described the things of his household from his fathers and learned the teachings of the schools: Philo, if you will have him. Listen then to how he interprets the divine discourses. *PE 7.12.14*

Eusebius acknowledges that his own status as a “stranger and foreigner” to the Hebrew tradition renders his scriptural interpretations vulnerable to criticism.⁷¹ Philo is therefore invoked as a reliable witness to the traditional interpretation of the ancient Hebrews and serves as a guarantor for the accuracy of Eusebius’s exegesis of the Hebrew scriptures and articulation of Hebrew philosophy. Philo’s identification as a Hebrew functions here not to align but to alienate

⁷⁰ Eusebius follows the Christian tradition that assimilates these two concepts. See also *PE 11.14*.

⁷¹ Eusebius states that Jews accuse Christians of being ἀλλόφυλοι καὶ ἀλλογενεῖς and therefore incapable of properly understanding their scriptures. *PE 1.2.5*

him from the Christian tradition; Philo is not “one of us” but a witness brought in from the outside who nevertheless testifies to the truth of Eusebius’s claims. Eusebius’s argument rests on the premises that Philo’s *Logos* doctrine is equivalent with that of the earliest Hebrews and identical to that of Eusebius’s own Christianity. Both of these assumptions are vulnerable to criticism, but they demonstrate Eusebius’s desire to present himself and Philo as being of the same mind.

Having introduced Philo at the end of 7.12, 7.13 presents three excerpts from his treatises. The accuracy of each of these quotations has generated controversy. Although it is unlikely that the text of the Philonic manuscripts currently extant is identical to that read by Eusebius, it is from bishop Photius’s copies of the Philonic manuscripts in the Caesarean library that today’s manuscripts descend. Thus, where the manuscript families agree, we should expect them to reliably indicate the text that Photius had in front of him only a generation after Eusebius.⁷² The nature of Eusebius’s inaccuracies has a bearing on our interpretation of his presentation of Philo. If it can be proven that Eusebius knowingly and significantly altered his Philonic source text, it follows that Eusebius was not fully in agreement with the elder Alexandrian, despite his laudatory presentation of Philo as a reliable source of ancient Hebrew philosophy.⁷³

The first text that Eusebius cites appears to be taken from one of the no-longer-extant earlier chapters of *Questions and Answers on Genesis*. Since this fragment is preserved only by

⁷²On Photius’s role in the preservation of Philo’s corpus, see David T. Runia, “Caesarea Maritima and the Survival of Hellenistic-Jewish literature” in *Caesarea Maritima. A Retrospective after two Millennia* (Eds. H. Raban and K.G. Holum: Leiden: Brill, 1996), 531–540.

⁷³The most comprehensive treatment of Eusebius’s citation technique is Sabrina Inowlocki’s *Eusebius and the Jewish Authors*. In her study, Inowlocki argues that “the use of numerous cited passages corresponds to an intent to answer points of controversy, and that the quotation technique indeed constitutes an “ideological weapon” in Eusebius’s view.” 13. Inowlocki’s method is to evaluate the accuracy of the quotations in the *PE* and the *DE*, analyzing edits and omissions for their apologetic value.

Eusebius, its accuracy cannot be checked against the Philonic manuscript tradition. Here Philo is said to explain that humans are created “according to the second God (δεύτερον θεόν), who is the *Logos*” because it is impossible for the image of the supreme God to be represented. Philo’s description of the *Logos* as a δεύτερον θεόν is significant and suspicious.⁷⁴ Sabrina Inowlocki doubts that the word δεύτερον occurred in Philo’s treatise, noting that the concept is foreign to Philo’s other writings but that Eusebius frequently uses δεύτερον as an adjective in combination with οὐσίαν, αἰτία, or δύναμιν to indicate the second person of the Trinity.⁷⁵ This alteration has serious implications for the meaning of the citation: without the δεύτερον, Philo’s text suggests that humans cannot be created in the image of God himself but only in the image of his *Logos*, which Philo typically describes as an attribute or power of the supreme God and not as a second or separate divine being.

Lacking the Philonic original, it is impossible to prove that Eusebius altered the text. Still, it is worth asking why Eusebius may have added the word δεύτερον to his source. Perhaps he thought Philo’s text defective and therefore willfully altered what he knew to be Philo’s words in order to make a more persuasive argument. But Philo would not have the value that Eusebius ascribes to him as an interpreter of Hebrew philosophy if his texts were in need of radical editing. If Eusebius were truly convinced of the affinity of Philo’s witness to the Christian tradition, the addition of the word may have been meant as a clarification of the meaning intended by its author.

⁷⁴ Ironically, this piece of “Hebrew theology” will get Eusebius into trouble with his anti-Arian opponents for promoting a subordinationist Christology. Photius criticizes it, and later manuscript editors have attempted to protect Eusebius’s orthodoxy by omitting the word θεόν.

⁷⁵ δευτέρον οὐσίαν (*PE* 7.12.2); δευτερευούσης δυνάμεως (*PE* 15.5); ὁ δεύτερος (*DE* 5.4.9). References are noted by Guy Schroeder, SC 215, 232.

Having let the excerpt from *QG* speak for itself, Eusebius provides no further commentary. He turns his attention instead to another text:

‘Ὁ δ’ αὐτὸς ἐν τῷ Περὶ γεωργίας προτέρῳ καὶ υἱὸν θεοῦ τὸν πρωτόγονον αὐτοῦ λόγον τοῦτον ὀνομάζει τὸν τρόπον· “Ταῦτα δὴ πάντα ὁ ποιμὴν καὶ βασιλεὺς θεὸς ἄγει κατὰ δίκην, νόμον προσταγόμενος τὸν ὀρθὸν αὐτοῦ λόγον καὶ πρωτόγονον υἱόν, ὃς τὴν ἐπιμέλειαν τῆς ἱερᾶς ταύτης ἀγέλης οἶα τις μεγάλου βασιλέως ὑπαρχος, διαδέξεται.”

“But the same man, in the first book “On Agriculture,” also calls “the Son of God” his first-born *Logos* in this manner: “God the shepherd and king leads all things according to justice, for he sets over them as law his genuine *Logos* and first-born son, who succeeds in the commission of this holy company as though he were some deputy of a great king.” *PE* 7.13.3.

When checked against the Philonic manuscript tradition, a small but significant change has again been detected by Inowlocki. Eusebius omits the word καὶ between δίκην and νόμον attested in Philo.⁷⁶ Inowlocki explains the impact of this small alteration: “Whereas [Philo] merely claims that God leads the universe ‘according to justice and law’ which is a usual claim in his writings, Eusebius turns the *Logos* into the law of the universe, by omitting the καί.”⁷⁷ Again, it appears that Eusebius has slightly modified his Philonic source to render it even closer to his own position. The real value of this citation for Eusebius, however, lies not in establishing the *Logos* as law of the cosmos but in Philo’s identification of the *Logos* as the first-born son of God.⁷⁸ For Philo, this is a metaphor; for Eusebius, reading this passage through the lens of John 1 and two

⁷⁶Philo, *Agr.* 51, which reads: “Ταῦτα δὴ πάντα ὁ ποιμὴν καὶ βασιλεὺς θεὸς ἄγει κατὰ δίκην καὶ νόμον προσταγόμενος τὸν ὀρθὸν αὐτοῦ λόγον καὶ πρωτόγονον υἱόν, ὃς τὴν ἐπιμέλειαν τῆς ἱερᾶς ταύτης ἀγέλης οἶα τις μεγάλου βασιλέως ὑπαρχος, διαδέξεται.”

⁷⁷Inowlocki, *Eusebius and the Jewish Authors*, 197.

⁷⁸For Philo’s *Logos* theology and its relationship to Christian thought see Harold W. Attridge, “Philo and John: Two Riffs on One *Logos*,” *SPhA* 17 (2005), 103–117; Daniel Boyarin, “Philo, Origen, and the Rabbis on Divine Speech and Interpretation,” in *The World of Early Egyptian Christianity: Language, Literature, and Social Context : Essays in Honor of David W. Johnson* (Ed. J.E. Goehring, J.A. Timbie, and D.W. Johnson: Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2007); John Dillon, *The middle platonists, 80 B.C. to A.D. 220* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1977), 159; Baudouin Decharneux, “Le *Logos* Philonien comme Fondation Pradoxale de l’Evangile de Jean” in *Philon d’Alexandrie: Un Penseur* (eds. Inowlocki and Decharneux: Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 317–333.

centuries of Christian reflection on Jesus as the incarnation of that *Logos*, the metaphor is transformed into a historical reality.

As he did with the first citation, Eusebius leaves this second passage bare of further comment, moving on to his last piece of evidence, a text from *De Plant.* that poses the most severe textual problem of the three citations:

Τὰς δυσωπίας οὖν εἴ τις ἀποδιδράσκειν βούλεται τὰς ἐν τοῖς διαπορη-
θεῖσι, λεγέτω μετὰ παρρησίας ὅτι οὐδὲν τῶν ἐν ὕλαις κραταιὸν οὕτως ὥς
τὸν κόσμον ἀχθοφορεῖν ἰσχύσαι. λόγος δ' ὁ αἰδιος θεοῦ τοῦ αἰωνίου τὸ ὀχυρώ-
τατον καὶ βεβαιότατον ἔρεισμα τῶν ὅλων ἐστίν. . . δεσμὸν γὰρ αὐτὸν
ἄρρηκτον τοῦ παντὸς ὁ γεννήσας ἐποίει πατήρ.

If someone would wish to flee from the feeling of shame caused by leaving problems unresolved, let us say frankly that nothing made from matter is strong enough so as to be able to bear the weight of the cosmos. But the everlasting Word of the eternal God is the very strong and steadfast support of the whole. . . For the Father who generated him made him an unbreakable bond of the Universe.

Scholars of the manuscript tradition of these texts have long been aware that where Eusebius has the word λόγος, the Philonic manuscripts unanimously attest νόμος.⁷⁹ Guy Schroeder offers two possible theories for the origin of the discrepancy: a) νόμος is original; λόγος entered the tradition through Christian tampering or b) λόγος is original; νόμος entered the tradition through Jewish tampering.⁸⁰ The scholarly opinion is divided over which reading is original.⁸¹ νόμος and λόγος are in some cases practically interchangeable for Philo, and, as Inowlocki notes, the two words are orthographically similar enough that scribal error could also be a factor.⁸² But the fact that such a discrepancy exists complicates our understanding of the Philonic manuscript

⁷⁹ Cohn and Wendland follow the Eusebian witness in the critical edition of *De Plant.*

⁸⁰ Schroeder, SC 215, 233.

⁸¹ Inowlocki on this passage: "In 1935, Goodenough chose the reading of the Philonic manuscripts: According to him, the word *nomos* (when designating the law of God and nature) is certainly interchangeable with *logos* and there are numerous occurrences in the Philonic corpus where *Logos* is used where *nomos* would be expected. Contrary to Cohn and Wendland, he thus favours the reading of *nomos*. *Logos* would be, according to him, a Christian interpolation. His hypothesis was shared by Daniélou." The opposite conclusion was championed in a still-influential article by Dominique Bartélemy, "Est-ce Hoshaya Rabba qui censura le Commentaire Allégorique?" *Actes du Colloque National du C.N.R.S. de Lyon 1966 sur Philo d'Alexandrie* (Paris, 1967).

⁸² Inowlocki, *Eusebius and the Jewish authors*, 200.

tradition, as the current scholarly consensus would have all of the extant manuscripts descend from those Eusebius consulted in the library at Caesarea. The problem would be resolved if Eusebius was the Christian who exchanged νόμος for λόγος. Eusebius's entire purpose in *PE* 7.13, however, is to demonstrate the compatibility of his *Logos* theology with Philo's.⁸³ If the word he reads is not λόγος, then Eusebius consciously manufactured evidence to support his case, despite insisting that he is reproducing Philo's text "τάδε γράφει." Eusebius has been shown to be selective in his citation and interpretation of his source material.⁸⁴ But supposing the Philonic manuscript were available to others to consult, he would have been opening himself up to easy criticism for falsifying his source. It is also difficult to imagine how Eusebius would have stumbled upon this particular passage in his search for Philonic discussions of the λόγος if indeed the word did not occur in it at all. It is therefore most likely that, however the text came to be modified, Eusebius read the word λόγος.

In *PE* 7.13, Philo functions as a guarantor of the continuity between the *Logos* theology of the early Hebrew friends of God and Christians such as Eusebius. Philo's texts may require a bit of tweaking in order to clarify the fundamental agreement of his Hebrew philosophy with Eusebius's own,⁸⁵ but Philo would be useless as a source if Eusebius was not convinced that the two ultimately shared the same conception of the *Logos* with each other and with the earliest adherents of the true religion.

⁸³ This point is also raised by Inowlocki, *Eusebius and the Jewish Authors*, 200.

⁸⁴ Sabrina Inowlocki concludes, "the assessment of Eusebius's faithfulness in citing reveals that he occasionally modified the text cited, mainly for theological and apologetic reasons. These changes proved to be infrequent but this makes their impact all the more powerful." Inowlocki, *Eusebius and the Jewish Authors*, 221. See also 236: "Eusebius was probably sincerely impressed by the fact that some of Philo's and Aristobulus's passages so exactly reflected some aspects of Christianity."

⁸⁵ Compare Eusebius's presentations of Philo and Plato in this context. Here Eusebius has nothing but praise for Philo, whose positions he presents as identical to his own. With Plato, on the other hand, Eusebius openly admits to differences of opinion. Although calling Plato his "best friend among the Greeks" Eusebius concedes that "I revere him who has ideas that are so dear and close to my own, if not absolutely the same as mine." *PE* 13.18.

PE 7.18

From PE 7.14–17, Eusebius elaborates on the cosmology of the Hebrews, reading Biblical passages from the Psalms, Job, and Daniel allegorically so as to accommodate them to the scientific standards of his day. These “Hebrew doctrines” illuminated by Philo and Aristobulus are contrasted with those of the Greeks, which Eusebius characterizes as polytheistic and demonic (PE 7.15.18). After explaining the relationship between the first and second causes and the other divine beings, both good and evil, that populate the cosmos, Eusebius turns to the relationship of God to humankind as described in the opening chapter of Genesis. While the Egyptians and the Phoenicians think that humans and animals alike are generated from the muck of the earth, the Hebrews have given the world an “all-beautiful, wise and true” definition of humanity’s true constitution. After quoting Gen. 1:26–7 and 2:7 as “Hebrew teachings” (τὰ Ἑβραίων λόγια), Eusebius turns immediately to Philo for their interpretation: Καὶ ταῦτα δὲ πάλιν ὁ Ἑβραῖος ἐρμηνεύει Φίλων, ταῖς ἐκτεθείσαις αὐτοῦ φωναῖς ἔτι καὶ τὰδε ἐπιλέγων.⁸⁶ Citing *De Plant.* 18–20’s argument that the rational soul is made in the image of the *Logos* and imbued with the breath of God, Eusebius then expands on Philo’s thoughts: “Alone of all the living creatures on the earth, the most God-beloved—we ourselves—had its soul made according to the image and likeness of God. . . The Hebrews say that man exists with a notable pre-eminence, for he is made in the image and likeness of God himself.”⁸⁷ Philo’s interpretation of the creation of mankind in Genesis becomes proof for Eusebius that the Hebrews had an elevated conception of human nature more laudable and worthy of assent than the theories held by the Greeks or other barbarian peoples.

⁸⁶ “And the Hebrew Philo again interprets these things, adding these words to the passages that we have already cited from him.” PE 7.17.4

⁸⁷ PE 7.18.3, 5: μόνον δὲ τῶν ἐπὶ γῆς ζῴων τὸ θεοφιλέστατον, ἡμᾶς αὐτούς, κατ’ εἰκόνα θεοῦ καὶ καθ’ ὁμοίωσιν τὴν ψυχὴν γεγονέναι... Τοῦτον μὲν οὖν κατ’ εἰκόνα φασὶ θεοῦ καὶ καθ’ ὁμοίωσιν πρὸς αὐτοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ μετὰ τινος διαφορῶσης ὑπεροχῆς ὑποστῆναι.

PE 11.15

In PE 11, Philo is re-introduced as a Hebrew interpreter who clarifies the meaning of scripture: τὴν δὲ τοῦ δόγματος διάνοιαν Φίλων ὁ Ἑβραῖος λευκότερον ἐρμηνεύων τοῦτον παράστησι τὸν τρόπον.⁸⁸ Eusebius aims to prove the harmony of Moses and Plato in matters of logic, physics and ethics by appealing to the opinions of Platonic commentators including Atticus, Aristocles, Numenius and Plutarch.⁸⁹ Philo is presented as an interpreter of Moses, a Hebrew counterpart to the famous interpreters of Plato. Eusebius cites a pair of texts from Philo's *De Confusione Linguarum* that identify the *Logos* with the Platonic Second Cause.⁹⁰ Taking the quotes out of context, Eusebius pays no attention to Philo's interpretation of the Tower of Babel (namely that in order to attain knowledge of God one must first observe and know the world, then the image of God, then God himself, rather than attempting to get to God directly and in an unmediated fashion), nor to the defense of philosophy that directly follows the passage he cites.⁹¹ That Eusebius is "proof-texting" Philo here is suggested by the fact that he misattributes these citations to the treatise *That the worse is wont to attack the better*, which treats Cain's murder of Abel. The two treatises treat such different topics that it is difficult to imagine that Eusebius could simply have mixed them up. Eusebius's error rather suggests that he is working either from a pre-existing handbook of Philo's treatises, organized by topic, or his own notes that he misreads (or that are misread to him by a student or secretary).⁹² Eusebius ends the chapter by re-

⁸⁸ "But Philo the Hebrew, wanting to translate the dogma in the clearest possible terms, interprets it in the following way."

⁸⁹ PE 11.1, 2, 10, 11.

⁹⁰ *Conf.* 97: "For it is normal, when we set out in search of knowledge to attempt to see Being; and if we that be not possible, at least his image, the most holy logos"; *Conf.* 146–147: second cause as archangel, first born of God, the man according to the image; all humanity are children, if not of God, than of his image.

⁹¹ Eusebius's first quotation stops just short of Philo's definition of philosophy as "the earnest desire to see these things exactly as they are," a sentiment that Eusebius shares.

⁹² Grafton and Williams suggest that: "To produce these immense compilations... Eusebius had to mobilize a flock of secretaries and notaries. This simple fact helps to explain why his extracts from extant sources are often faulty,

affirming the Hebrew origin of the Platonic doctrine of the Second Cause and by once again identifying Philo as a Hebrew and, therefore, as someone in a position to know about such matters.

PE 11.24

This citation follows a quotation from Arius Didymus on the Platonic Ideas based on his reading of *Timaeus* 29–30. Asserting that the Platonic conception of the *Logos* ultimately derives from Moses and the teachings of the Hebrews (οἱ Ἑβραίων λόγοι), Eusebius once again invokes Philo, urging, “Ἡδὲ καὶ οἱ τῶν ἱερῶν νόμων ἐξηγηταὶ ἐπάκουσαν ὅπως τὴν ἐν τοῖς Μωσέως γράμμασι διάνοιαν σαφηνίζουσι· λέγει δ’ οὗν ὁ Ἑβραῖος Φίλων τὰ πατρια διερμηνεύων αὐτοῖς ῥήμασιν.”⁹³ There follows a long citation from *Opf.* 24–27 intended to prove that Plato derived from Moses his theory of an intelligible world distinct from and created prior to the material (*PE* 11.24.1–6). Eusebius then skips over the majority of *Opf.* 28, in which Philo describes the sensible sky as the home of the “manifest and visible gods,” suggesting that the sun, moon and stars are divine. In *PE* 13.18, Eusebius explicitly rejects the divinity of the heavenly bodies as a corrupt Platonic doctrine, making his case, ironically enough, by quoting Philo (see below). Eusebius also omits Philo’s suggestion that the days of creation suggest order rather than a strictly chronological sequence, leaving open the possibility that the cosmos came into being all at once. Philo’s de-historicizing interpretation is unlikely to have appealed to Eusebius.

and why they sometimes contradict his own descriptions and introductions.” *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book*, 214.

⁹³ “But now listen to how the interpreters of the sacred laws explain the thought found in the Mosaic writings; as Philo the Hebrew, interpreting the ancestral texts, says in his own words.” *PE* 11.23.12.

The quotation picks up again at *Opf.* 29, which describes first the creation of the incorporeal and then the corporeal heaven and earth. Eusebius overlooks Philo's ruminations on the nature of dawn and dusk, rejoining his source at his discussion of the role of the *Logos* in creation. Again consolidating his source text, Eusebius skips ahead to *Opf.* 35–36, and quotes Philo's interpretation of the firmament in Gen. 1:6 as the sensible and corporeal sky in contrast to its intelligible and incorporeal model (*PE* 11.24.7–12).

Eusebius ends chapter 24 by associating Philo with Clement, segueing into a quotation from *Strom.* 5.93–4 by noting that the two Alexandrians were in agreement that the Greeks stole their philosophy from the barbarians.⁹⁴ Thus in his framing of this chapter, Eusebius argues that Plato, Philo, and Clement shared one and the same understanding of the intelligible and sensible realms while using Philo and Clement together to support his claim that this doctrine was first articulated by Moses and is therefore Hebrew, not Greek, in origin.

PE 13.18.12

Philo appears once more as an authority on Hebrew thought in the final chapter of Book 13, which Eusebius has devoted to pointing out Platonic doctrines that fall away from the truth known by the Hebrews. At issue is the worship of the sun, moon and stars as divinities.

Introducing a quotation from *Spec.* I.13–17, Eusebius characterizes Philo as “the well-educated Hebrew” (ὁ Ἑβραίων πεπαιδευμένος Φίλων) and contends, “Ταῦτα τῆς Ἑβραίων εὐσεβείας τὰ

⁹⁴ Inowlocki argues that Eusebius downplays Philo's Platonism in the *PE* for apologetic reasons: “dans un ouvrage destiné principalement à contrer les critiques de l'hellénisme, il aurait été maladroit d'insister sur le bagage philosophique grec de Philon.” “Relectures apologetiques”, 376–377.

ὡς ἀληθῶς ἀκήρατά τε καὶ θεῖα μαθήματα πρὸ τῆς τετυφωμένης φιλοσοφίας τετιμήκαμεν.”⁹⁵

The accord of Philo’s Hebrew theology with reason supports Eusebius’s argument that he and his fellow Greeks and barbarians do well to abandon their own ancestral philosophies in favour of Hebrew doctrines.

4.2 Philo as a source for Jewish law and Jewish philosophy

Philo is one of four Jewish witnesses cited by Eusebius in the eighth book of the *PE* to give an account of “the Mosaic *politeia*, which occupies the second rank of piety,” surpassed only by the lifestyle of the ancient Hebrews (*PE* 8.1.1). Eusebius here walks a fine balance between praise of the Mosaic law as superior to all the legal codes of other nations and the rejection of its claims to universal validity. The three extracts from Philo, together with those of Josephus, (pseudo)-Aristeas and Aristobulus, constitute the bulk of the book. Implicitly, Eusebius treats Philo not as a Hebrew but as a Jew.

The book begins by explaining how the Hebrew scriptures came to be accessible to non-Jews. Excerpting the account of the Septuagint’s translation from Aristeas, Eusebius contends that, had it not been for King Ptolemy’s request of a copy to deposit in the Alexandrian library, the Hebrew oracles would have come into Gentile hands, “for the Jews hid their oracles from us on account of jealousy (ἀποκρυψάντων ἅν τὰ παρ’ αὐτοῖς λόγια διὰ τὸν πρὸς ἡμᾶς φθόνον)” (*PE* 8.1.7). This comment, one of the few times when Eusebius speaks in his own voice in the book, reinforces his ambiguous portrayal of the Jews as both virtuous and sinister.

⁹⁵ “These are the truly pure and divine teachings of the piety of the Hebrews which we have preferred to deluded philosophy.”

PE 8.6

Having recounted the providential events surrounding the translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, Eusebius sets as his next task the illumination of their contents in the words of the Hebrews’ “outstanding men.”⁹⁶ Philo is the first of these that he cites. Quoting the first book of the *Hypothetica*, a text known only from fragments here preserved, Eusebius introduces its subject as “the journey of the Jews from Egypt, which occurred under Moses’ leadership . . . where [Philo] speaks in favour of the Jews against their accusers.”⁹⁷ Philo is thus presented as an apologist for the Jewish people and a defender of the Mosaic law, a law which Eusebius stresses at the outset of book eight is only applicable for the Jewish people.

The Philonic citation that follows takes up all of chapter six. In this apology, Philo answers criticisms concerning the origins of the Jewish people while downplaying the role of divine intervention in the events of the Exodus and the founding of Israel.⁹⁸ Both the increase in population of the Jews and their nostalgia for the homeland of their ancestors are offered by Philo and reproduced by Eusebius as motives for the Exodus—hardships experienced under the Egyptians are avoided altogether. Eusebius indicates that he is omitting some text before rejoining Philo’s highly idealized account of Moses’ leadership of the Jews in the wilderness. Philo asserts that Moses kept his people “free of all internal factions and above all readily obedient to his command.” The unpleasant business of the Golden Calf is wholly ignored, as is the long series of battles that led to the capture of the Holy Land. The liberty that Philo takes with the OT account strongly suggests that he wrote for an audience more familiar with Hellenistic accounts of the history of civilizations that besmirch the Mosaic legacy than with the

⁹⁶ PE 8.5.11: “ἐκ τῶν παρὰ τοῖς ἀνδράσι διαφανῶν”

⁹⁷ τὰ περὶ τῆς ἀπ’ Αἰγύπτου πορείας τῶν Ἰουδαίων, ἣν πεποίηται Μωσέως ἡγουμένου. . . ἔνθα τὸν ὑπὲρ Ἰουδαίων, ὡς πρὸς κατηγοροῦ αὐτῶν, ποιούμενος λόγον ταῦτά φησιν. PE 8.5.11

⁹⁸ Colson suggests that in this treatise Philo “wishes to meet the hostile criticism of the Gentiles by giving a rationalistic version of the history.” *Philo IX*, LCL, 408.

Hebrew Scriptures. Philo's argument is neatly summarized in the conclusion of the excerpt:

“Nor have the people changed a single word of what [Moses] wrote, but would even endure to die a thousand deaths rather than to obey anything opposed to the laws and customs set down by him.”⁹⁹

Eusebius neither vouches for the accuracy of Philo's history nor points out his inconsistencies with the Septuagint account. He is true to his stated method, allowing the prominent Jew to give a defense for his people in his own words. In the *DE*, Eusebius will give his own account of the behaviour of the Jews in the wilderness, presenting the law as a necessarily harsh corrective to cure the Jews of the vices they acquired in Egypt.¹⁰⁰ Although Philo's account directly contradicts Eusebius's version of events, the Caesarean presbyter is able to put it to use for his immediate purpose of demonstrating the superiority of the Jewish πολιτεία. The citation also confirms that the Jews derive their law from Moses and keep it exactly as he ordained.

PE 8.7

Eusebius then introduces the next excerpt from the *Hypothetica*, reporting “After these words he epitomizes the constitution laid down for the ἔθνος of the Jews from the laws of Moses.”¹⁰¹ The purpose of this citation is to demonstrate the high moral standards of the Jewish law. This is accomplished in the first part by emphasizing the law's severity. The citation begins with a long

⁹⁹ μηδὲ ῥῆμά γε αὐτὸ μόνον τῶν ὑπ' αὐτοῦ γεγραμμένων κινῆσαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ μυριάκις αὐτοὺς ἀποθανεῖν ὑπομεῖναι θάπτον ἢ τοῖς ἐκείνου νόμοις καὶ ἔθεσιν ἐναντία πεισθῆναι. *PE* 8.6.9.

¹⁰⁰ *DE* 1.4

¹⁰¹ *PE* 8.6.10: Ταῦτ' εἰπὼν ἐπιτέμνεται τὴν ἐκ τῶν Μωσέως νόμον καταβεβλημένην τῷ Ἰουδαίων ἔθνει πολιτείαν. Aaron P. Johnson explains, “In Eusebius's *Praeparatio*, the term *ethnos* is limited to its designation of racially distinct peoples.” It appears primarily in contexts “concerned with describing customs and communal ways of life.” *Ethnos*, for Eusebius, is bound up with *politeia*, the constitution or laws of a people. See Johnson, *Ethnicity and Argument*, 40–46.

list enumerating capital offenses.¹⁰² The text continues by noting that wives must submit to their husbands and children to their fathers and also emphasizes that property dedicated to God cannot be recovered, even if that property be a wife's sustenance or a child's inheritance.¹⁰³ In addition to the written law, Philo adds that the Jewish community follows many unwritten laws and customs, including such common platitudes as "what a man would hate to suffer he must not do to others"¹⁰⁴ and "what a man has not sown he must not reap."¹⁰⁵ Philo adds censures against leaving a body unburied; neutering the generative organs of men or women; mistreating animals; using fraudulent scales and measures; and the separation of slave families. The law also takes interest in seemingly insignificant offenses, barring the destruction of a bird's nest or ignoring animals in distress. Eusebius concludes this excerpt with Philo's warning, "These things are worth nothing, one may say. But that law which sets them is great and is worthy of attention, and the proclamations and the threats of ruin are great also; and God himself surveys and avenges such things everywhere."¹⁰⁶ This last sentence suggests a universal applicability of the law in contradiction to Eusebius's position that the law was instituted only for Jews in Judea.¹⁰⁷

PE 8.7 continues with a further citation from the *Hypothetica*, rejoining Philo as he explains the purpose of the Sabbath. Philo avers that the Sabbath not only trains the Jewish people in self-control but serves to educate the populace of the laws and customs of their ancestors (τῶν πατρίων νόμων καὶ ἐθνῶν ἐμπείρως ἔχειν). He describes the whole community as

¹⁰² The crimes cited are pederasty, adultery, rape of a young person, prostitution, kidnapping, selling a free man into slavery, theft, blasphemy, and disrespect of a parent or benefactor. Colson notes that neither stealing in general nor the disrespect of a benefactor are listed as capital offenses in the OT itself, nor does Philo classify them as such in the *Spec. Leg.* Philo IX, LCL, 423.

¹⁰³ *PE* 8.7.3–5 Philo allows that a priest or other authority may, however, reject such offerings.

¹⁰⁴ Colson cites parallels at Herodotus III.142.3; Isocrates; and Matt. 7:12

¹⁰⁵ Colson cites parallels at Diog. Laert. 1.57; Plato, Leg. 9.913 c; Josephus, c. Apion II.208; and Luke 19:21

¹⁰⁶ Οὐδενὸς ἄξια ταῦτα γ' ἴσως εἴποις ἄν, ἀλλ' ὃ γ' ἐπ' αὐτοῖς νόμος ἐστὶ μέγας καὶ πάσης ἐπιμελείας αἴτιος, καὶ αἱ προρρήσεις μεγάλαι καὶ ἀραιαὶ κατὰ τ' ἐξωλείας καὶ ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸς ἐπόπτης τῶν τοιούτων καὶ τιμωρὸς ἀπανταχοῦ.

¹⁰⁷ Eusebius's very use of Philo, an Alexandrian, also contradicts his "only in Judea" interpretation of the Mosaic law, but Eusebius shows no awareness of this conflict.

gathering together each Sabbath day for instruction in the law and its interpretation, so that none of them may be ignorant of its precepts, including women, children and servants.¹⁰⁸ The synagogue shares the pedagogical method of the philosophical school, as priests or elders “read the sacred laws and comment on them point by point.”¹⁰⁹ Philo then defends the practice of the Sabbath year, arguing that both people and the land are more productive after a period of rest (*PE* 8.7.15–19). The citation ends with an appeal to “doctors, philosophers and scientists” (καὶ ἰατρῶν καὶ φιλοσόφων καὶ φυσιολόγων) who all confirm the special place of the seventh day for nature and especially for man (*PE* 8.7.20). In these citations of the *Hypothetica*, Eusebius presents Philo as a Jewish insider who accordingly serves as a reliable, if patriotic, source for the Jewish customs and practices that demonstrate the excellence of their *politeia*.

PE 8.8–10

After reiterating that the previous excerpts were taken from Philo, Eusebius goes on to record similar material from Josephus’s *Against Apion*, which he mistakenly attributes to the *Antiquities of the Jews*, without further comment on the Philonic text.¹¹⁰ The citations from both authors reveal Eusebius’s interest in demonstrating the law’s *philanthropia* and accordance with reason, virtues that Eusebius elsewhere associates with the teaching of the *Logos*.¹¹¹ The Josephus fragments also highlight the compatibility of the law with the teachings of Greek philosophers

¹⁰⁸ Philo implies at 8.7.14 that only free adult men are present in the synagogues, who are expected to pass on the teachings to their wives, children and slaves.

¹⁰⁹ *PE* 8.7.13. The pedagogical method described by Philo is nearly identical to those of Alexander of Aphrodisias’s Peripatetic school. See H. Gregory Snyder, *Teachers and Texts in the Ancient World: Philosophers, Jews and Christians* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 66–7. Given the apologetic intent of the *Hypothetica*, Philo may have presented the teaching style of the synagogue in terms with which his educated Hellenistic readers would have been familiar.

¹¹⁰ The selections from Josephus that follow retread much of the ground covered by Philo. The similarities in their accounts of the law suggest that Josephus may have used Philo’s text as a source. See Gregory E. Sterling, “A Man of the Highest Repute: Did Josephus know Philo’s Writings?” *SPhA* 25 (2013) (in press).

¹¹¹ See for example *PE* 1.5.3, “the Logos is philanthropic and turns nobody at all away but heals every man by remedies suitable to him...”

and present the Sabbath as an opportunity for instructing the entire *politeia*. He repeats the philanthropic command to honour one's parents and the prohibition against humiliating one's wife,¹¹² while adding interdictions against abortion and infanticide (*PE* 8.8.35). Laws requiring bodies to be buried and the proper treatment of animals are also adduced to support the Mosaic code's philanthropic character (*PE* 8.8.45 and 47).

Josephus's account adds other arguments useful for Eusebius that are absent from Philo. Josephus states more clearly that Moses outdid all the Greek philosophers who "philosophized to small groups (πρὸς ὀλίγους φιλοσοφοῦντες), never attempting to convince the opinionated crowd of the truth of their teaching" by imparting his laws to the entire nation (*PE* 8.8.6). For the Jews, "piety (εὐσέβεια) is not an element of virtue, but the other virtues are elements of piety" (*PE* 8.8.7), as they are taught to be pious in both word (like the Athenians) and deed (like the Cretans and the Spartans). Josephus also explains for a Roman audience the duties of the priests and high-priest and the purpose of the sacrificial system (*PE* 8.8.28–31), demonstrating an interest in the temple and its cult absent from Philo's account.

Eusebius's own contributions pick up again at the end of the long passage from Josephus. Having properly relayed the Jewish law according to that people's own illustrious men, Eusebius's aim shifts to illuminating the allegorical truths that the laws obscure. Eusebius does not give any of his own reasons for reading the law as a text with multiple meanings but instead turns to the letter of the high priest Eleazar recorded in the *Letter of Aristeas* and to Aristobulus. Their introduction is noteworthy; unlike Philo and Josephus, Eusebius says that they were born of the Hebrew race, despite appearing in the time of the Ptolemies and being subject to Mosaic

¹¹² πρὸς ὕβρεως μὲν οὐδεμιᾶς/μὴ πρὸς ὕβρι. Josephus adds the justification, absent from the *Hypothetica*, that women "are inferior to men in everything (Γυνὴ χεῖρων ἀνδρὸς εἰς ἅπαντα)"

law.¹¹³ Echoing a tradition known from Clement, Aristobulus is further said to have practiced the philosophy of Aristotle in addition to that of his ancestors,¹¹⁴ suggesting that, for Eusebius, the Hebrew and peripatetic philosophies are not mutually exclusive.¹¹⁵ In addition to his expertise in the teachings of Aristotle, Aristobulus is said to be the author of II Maccabees (*PE* 8.9.38).¹¹⁶ After presenting the expositions of allegorical interpretation according to these two “Hebrews,” Eusebius explains their significance:

ἐπεὶ δὲ διεληλύθαμεν τὰ τε τῶν ἱερῶν νόμων παραγγέλματα τὸν τε τρόπον τῆς ἀλληγορουμένης παρ’ αὐτοῖς ιδέας, ἐξῆς ἂν εἴη καὶ τόδε ἐπισημῆνασθαι, ὡς τὸ πᾶν Ἰουδαίων ἔθνος εἰς δύο τμήματα διαιρῶν ὁ λόγος τὴν μὲν πληθὺν ταῖς τῶν νόμων κατὰ τὴν ῥητὴν διάνοιαν παρηγγελμέναις ὑποθήκαις ὑπῆγε, τὸ δ’ ἕτερον τῶν ἐν ἔξει τάγμα ταύτης μὲν ἠφίει, θειοτέρα δέ τινα καὶ τοὺς πολλοὺς ἐπαναβεβηκυῖα φιλοσοφία προσέχειν ἡξίου θεωρία τε τῶν ἐν τοῖς νόμοις κατὰ διάνοιαν σημαινομένων. ἦν δὲ τοῦτο φιλοσόφων Ἰουδαίων γένος, ὃν τὴν τοῦ βίου ἄσκησιν καὶ τῶν ἔξωθεν κατεπλάγησαν μυρίοι, τῶν δ’ οἰκείων οἱ περιφανέστατοι καὶ μνήμης ἀλήστου τούτους ἡξίωσαν, Ἰώσηπός τε καὶ Φίλων καὶ ἕτεροι πλείους·

Now since we have gone through both the precepts of the holy laws and their allegorical manner of interpretation, consequentially we may also indicate that the *Logos*, separating the whole nation of the Jews into two parts, subjected the majority of them to the deposited precepts according to the literal sense of the law, but the others of them he led out from the command to the more divine philosophy too elevated for the many, and to the contemplation of the signification of the laws according to their intention. These are a race of Jewish philosophers, whose way of life both myriads of outsiders and the most famous of their kinsmen—Josephus and Philo and many others—deemed worthy of unforgettable memorials.

From Aristobulus’s argument that “philosophers and poets” understand the allegorical character of the law, but “those who lack intellectual capacity cling to the letter only, not perceiving what it reveals allegorically” (*PE* 8.10.5), Eusebius extrapolates two ontologically separate and

¹¹³ *PE* 8.8.56: ἀνδρῶν τὸ μὲν γένος Ἑβραίων ἀνέκαθεν, τὸν δὲ χρόνον κατὰ τοὺς Πτολεμαίων χρόνους διαπρεψάντων.

¹¹⁴ “Ὁ δ’ Ἀριστοβούλος καὶ τῆς κατ’ Ἀριστοτέλην φιλοσοφίας πρὸς τῇ πατρίῳ μετεληγώς . . .”

¹¹⁵ Elizabeth Deplama Digeser emphasizes the “fluidity” of philosophical circles in the third century. See *A Threat to Public Piety*, 47. Eusebius refers to Pantaenus as a Stoic in *HE* 6 and describes a number of church leaders, including Dorotheus of Antioch, Eusebius of Alexandria, and Anatolius of Laodicea as distinguished in Greek philosophy at *HE* 7.32.

¹¹⁶ The fragment from Aristobulus, also partially attested by Clement at *Strom.* VI.32, responds to criticisms of the anthropomorphic portrayal of God in the OT by arguing that they are to be interpreted allegorically.

unequal groups of Jews divided by the *Logos* himself. Eusebius presents the “whole Jewish nation” (πᾶν Ἰουδαίων ἔθνος) as composed of two parts: the elite, who are capable of adhering to a more divine philosophy, and the rabble who are not. The criterion for membership in the elite appears to be election, as all of the action in the paragraph is attributed to the *Logos*. He is said to “subject” the majority to the literal commands of the law while leading those capable of grasping the divine, elevated philosophy away from its literal observance. The Mosaic precepts therefore are construed as necessary and beneficial for the masses but unnecessary for the superior group, who follow an even stricter code of personal conduct. Eusebius designates the elite a separate γένος, a “race of Jewish philosophers.”¹¹⁷

PE 8.11–12

The next two chapters of *PE* 8 consist of excerpts from two different Philonic works about the Essenes, whom Eusebius baldly equates with Aristobulus’s philosophers and poets.¹¹⁸ The first is attributed to the otherwise unknown *Apology for the Jews*. According to this treatise, the Essenes are to be found in many cities and villages of Judea living in large groups. Contradicting Eusebius, Philo states that they should not be considered a γένος but rather as a voluntary association characterized by their zeal for virtue and φιλανθρωπία. The community admits no children or youths but only those who are not ruled by bodily desires or passions (*PE* 8.11.3). They keep all goods in common, living and eating communally (*PE* 8.11.12). Though taking up

¹¹⁷ Johnson on this passage: “The succession of vocabulary from *tmema* to *tagma* to *genos* would seem to point towards the sense of ‘class’ (as a category of people or things) rather than ‘race’ (as a kinship group) — and yet, the context is thoroughly racial. The appellation of ‘race of philosopher’ had been employed by earlier authors. Theophrastus had considered the Syrians and Jews as a race of philosophers. Similarly Clearchus had averred that the Jews were descendants of philosophers in India. In these instances, the philosophical life was seen as intimately tied to one’s familial heritage. Here (8.10.19), Eusebius seems however to limit the *genos* of Jewish philosophers to only an elite portion of the larger Jewish *ethnos*. *Genos* may thus be seen here in a taxonomic relationship to *ethnos*, the former term denoting a part of the whole.” *Ethnicity and Argument*, 38–39.

¹¹⁸ Eusebius’s portrayal of the Essenes as the most philosophical subgroup of the Jewish ἔθνος is also attested by his contemporary Porphyry, who, citing Josephus as his source, describes them in *de Abst.* 4.11–14 as the most venerable of the three divisions of Jewish philosophers.

a variety of vocations, they are all diligent workers and their wages are deposited into a common pot (*PE* 8.11.10). They are said to reject marriage on the grounds of both continence and women's inferior moral character, although Philo earlier suggests that some have children (*PE* 8.11.13 and 14).

The next text cited by Eusebius is 75–91 of Philo's *Every Good Man is Free*. In the paragraphs leading up to this excerpt, Philo argues that the number of virtuous men in the world is very small. Although the Seven Sages of archaic Greece are to be counted among them, the majority of virtuous men are found among the barbarians, such as the Persian Magi and the Indian Gymnosophists. Eusebius picks up at Philo's argument that "Syria and Palestine, for their part, have not failed to produce excellent men." Philo again characterizes the Essenes as exceedingly righteous, deriving their name from ὁσιότης, holiness. Not only do they share all of their possessions, but they choose poverty voluntarily (*PE* 8.12.13–15). Notably absent are weapons and slaves for the Essenes value peace and equality. Here he asserts that they are holy because they render service to God, not through sacrifices but through the sanctification of their minds (ἱεροπρεπεῖς τὰς ἑαυτῶν διανοίας κατασκευάζειν ἀξιοῦντες) (*PE* 8.12.1). The Essenes practice Eusebius's favourite kind of philosophy, "abandoning logic to "word-catchers" as useless for the acquisition of virtue, and physics to speculators, as matters too lofty for human contemplation, except for the existence of God and the origin of the universe, but they apply themselves to ethics, training themselves in the laws of their fathers" (*PE* 8.12.9. cf. Philo, *Prob.* 80). This training occurs especially "every seventh day" in places called synagogues. Philo's account of Essene Sabbath gatherings is nearly identical to that observed by the whole community: the law is read and then explicated by one of the elders. In this case, however, Philo

states that the text is explained via symbols (συμβόλων). He concludes by characterizing the Essenes as “athletes of virtue,” model sages for other nations to emulate (*PE* 8.12.16).

Two elements of Essene life reported by Philo are of particular use to Eusebius’s argument. The first is Philo’s comment that the Essenes substitute the purification of their minds for the performance of sacrifice at the Jerusalem temple. This practice confirms that a highly moral and philosophical group of Jews did not follow all of the precepts set out in the law of Moses literally, supporting Eusebius’s argument that the Mosaic law was never intended to be universal in scope or necessary for righteous living. The second element is related to the first: the Essenes understand the law to contain a deeper meaning not immediately accessible to all readers but comprehended through symbols. The multi-layered nature of the scriptures is crucial to Eusebius’s argument that the Hebrew scriptures foretell both the incarnation and crucifixion of Jesus, and the destruction of Jerusalem as punishment for his rejection by the Jews.

At the end of the excerpt, Eusebius comments,

Τὰ μὲν οὖν τῆς φιλοσόφου παρὰ Ἰουδαίοις ἀσκήσεώς τε καὶ πολιτείας διὰ τῶνδε προκείσθω· τὰ δὲ τοῦ λοιποῦ βίου, ὃν δὴ τῷ πλήθει τοῦ παντὸς ἔθνους οἱ θεῖοι διηγόρευον νόμοι, τέθεται προλαβὼν ὁ λόγος. τί δῆτα λείπεται ἐπὶ τούτοις ἢ καὶ τὰ τῆς τῶν νέων θεολογίας σύμφωνα ταῖς τῶν προπατόρων εὐσεβείαις παραστήσασθαι, ὥς ἂν καὶ τῆσδε τῆς ὑποθέσεως ἐντελής ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος ἀποδοδόμενος εἴη; ἐπεὶ τοίνυν τὰ τῆς ἐνθέου γραφῆς λόγια πρόκειται διὰ τοῦ πρὸ τούτου συγγράμματος, φέρ’ ἐπὶ τοῦ παρόντος τὰ τῆς διανοίας τῶν παρὰ Ἰουδαίοις σοφῶν ἐπαθρήσωμεν, ὥς ἂν μάθοιμεν ὁποῖοι τινες καὶ ἐν τῇ θεολογίᾳ κὰν τῇ περὶ λόγους ἀρετῇ παῖδες Ἑβραίων γεγόνασιν.

Let this then set out the philosophical training and constitution among the Jews. The things of the rest of their way of life, which the divine laws command to the mass of the whole nation, the discourse has previously set down. What remains other than to establish the agreement of the theology of the latter generations with the piety of the ancestors, so that our discourse being delivered may be brought to its proposed conclusion? Since now the oracles of the inspired scriptures are set out in the preceding treatise, let us presently behold the objects of the thought of the wise men among the Jews, so that we may learn what became of some of the children of the Hebrews, both in their theology and the virtue of their words: [continues the chapter with two long Philonic excerpts, the first from *On the Creation of the World*, the second from *On Providence*]. *PE* 8.12.20–22

Here Eusebius interprets the practices of the Essenes as a pan-Jewish philosophical lifestyle. To demonstrate their agreement with the ancients, Eusebius once again turns to Philo, who now becomes representative not of all Jews, but of the “wise men among the Jews.” He thus constructs a continuity between the practice of the Essenes, the theology of the more recent generations of philosophers, and the worship practices of the ancestors, i.e., the Biblical figures who lived before Moses. These recent “wise men of the Jews” preserve the lineage of the ancient Hebrews and thus are considered “children of the Hebrews.”¹¹⁹

The Essenes, then, are set up by Eusebius as evidence of first-century Jewish philosophers whose way of life and worship is continuous with that of the ancient Hebrews. In Eusebius’s presentation, they are not a distinct sect so much as a class, to which other ‘wise Jews’ such as Philo, who was never a practicing Essene, may be added. Although Jews, they are presented as rejecting certain aspects of the literal observance of the law. These elite Jews are distinguished from the masses, those who would give up Jesus to be crucified and continue to reject him to Eusebius’s own day.

4.3 Philo the learned man

Philo plays an important role both as a source and as a character in the narrative of the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, an ambitious and unprecedented survey of the Christian movement from the Incarnation to Eusebius’s own day, written over a period of decades and published in a number

¹¹⁹ Noting the parallels between Eusebius’s presentation of the Essenes and the Therapeutae, Inowlocki wonders why Eusebius chooses to present only the Therapeutae as Christians. She argues that Porphyry’s use of Josephus’s account of the (Jewish) Essenes precluded Eusebius from using them as “real Christians” (*Jewish Authors*, 266 and “Interpretatio Christiana,” 309–310). However, Eusebius is more attentive to the differences in the Philonic accounts themselves than she gives him credit for. While Philo explicitly presents the Essenes as the wise men among the Jews, and includes an account of their way of life in his *Apology for the Jews*, he does not explicitly mention Judaism in *de vita contemplativa*. Indeed, Eusebius’s protestations that Therapeutae could only be Christians suggest that some critics might have thought them not necessarily to be Jews, but as (Greek/barbarian) ascetic philosophers.

of recensions.¹²⁰ Aside from a brief mention of Philo as one of Clement's sources in book six and a reference to him in relation to the timing of the Passover feast in book seven, the references to Philo in the *Historia Ecclesiastica* are all found in book two. Here Eusebius tells the story of the growth of the Church from Pentecost to the reign of Nero, as well as the corresponding calamities suffered by the Jews as a result of their rejection of Jesus' messianic claims. Philo is first introduced in 2.4, where Eusebius describes him as an illustrious philosopher in his own right and, in so doing, provides more biographical details about him than are previously found in Christian literature.¹²¹

Κατὰ δὴ τοῦτον Φίλων ἐγνωρίζετο πλείστοις, ἀνὴρ οὐ μόνον τῶν ἡμετέρων, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς ἑξωθεν ὁρμωμένων παιδείας ἐπισημότατος. τὸ μὲν οὖν γένος ἀνέκαθεν Ἑβραῖος ἦν, τῶν δ' ἐπ' Ἀλεξανδρείας ἐν τέλει διαφανῶν οὐδενὸς χείρων, περὶ δὲ τὰ θεῖα καὶ πάτρια μαθήματα ὅσον τε καὶ ὀπηλίκον εἰσενήνεκται πόνον, ἐργῶ πᾶσι δηλός, καὶ περὶ τὰ φιλόσοφια δε καὶ ἐλευθέρια τῆς ἑξωθεν παιδαίας οἷος τις ἦν, οὐδεν δεῖ λεγεῖν, ὅτε μάλιστα τὴν κατὰ πλάτωνα καὶ Πυθαγόραν ἐξηλωκὼς ἀγωγὴν, διενεγκεῖν ἅπαντας τοὺς καθ' εαυτὸν ἱστορεῖται.

It was then [i.e., during the reign of Gaius] that Philo became known to many, not only among us but also among those outsiders who are keen as a man most marked by *paideia*. He was, then, of the Hebrew race by origin, inferior to none of those appearing in office in Alexandria of his day. Concerning the divine and ancestral teachings he expended great labour, evident in all his work, and concerning philosophical subjects fit for free persons of foreign *paideia* he was someone such that it is not necessary to say anything, for he is related to have greatly surpassed all his contemporaries in zeal for the schools of Plato and Pythagoras.¹²²

¹²⁰ For evaluations of the versions and recensions of the *HE*, see Robert M. Grant, *Eusebius as Church Historian* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980); R.W. Burgess, "The Dates and Editions of Eusebius's *Chronici canones* and *Historia ecclesiastica*" *JTS* 48 (1997), 471–504. Marie Verdoner has recently argued in favour of four published editions of the *HE*, the first appearing in either 303 or 311, the second in 313, the third in 315 and the fourth in 325. She concludes, "An overall dating of the work as approximately between 300 and 325 seems reasonable." Verdoner, *Narrated Reality*, 38.

¹²¹ In Barnes's estimation, Philo has "an importance out of proportion to the space Eusebius allots to him." Barnes contends that Eusebius consciously emphasized "evidence that the contemporaries of Jesus recognized his significance, that the Christian church had always been as numerous, respectable and prosperous as it was in his own time." Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 131–132.

¹²² *HE* 2.4.2, translation mine.

Philo is introduced to Eusebius's audience as an acknowledged expert in the teachings both of his own ancestors and of foreign *paideia*, as well as being the pre-eminent interpreter of the Plato and Pythagoras of his day. In this passage, Eusebius is the first Christian to comment explicitly on Philo's γένος, calling him a Hebrew (Ἑβραῖος).¹²³ The description of Philo as a Hebrew emphasizes his connection with the ancient sages and their divine teachings (τὰ θεῖα μαθήματα) while subtly distinguishing him from the Jews, whose sufferings he is about to narrate. Eusebius presents Philo as widely known to well-educated pagans, whose names he unfortunately fails to mention, as well as among "us" (τῶν ἡμετέρων), another group whose membership Eusebius leaves undefined.¹²⁴

Following this description, Eusebius next quotes his likely source, Josephus's report about Philo and his embassy to Gaius from *Ant.* 18.257–60 (see chapter 1 above). Eusebius's portrayal provides little new information about Philo unknown from Josephus's report, other than asserting his fame among "us" and repeating (in somewhat more grandiose terms) Josephus's characterization of him as a man "not inexperienced in philosophy" (φιλοσοφίας οὐκ ἄπειρος). In *HE* 2.18.1 Eusebius provides an appraisal of Philo's works:

Πολύς γε μὴν τῷ λόγῳ καὶ πλατὺς ταῖς διανοίαις, ὕψηλός τε ὢν καὶ μετέωρος ἐν ταῖς εἰς τὰς θείας γραφὰς θεωρίαις γεγεννημένος, ποικίλην καὶ πολύτροπον τῶν ἱερῶν λόγων πεποιήται τὴν ὑφήγησιν, τοῦτο μὲν εἰρμῷ καὶ ἀκολουθίᾳ τὴν τῶν εἰς τὴν Γένεσιν διεξελθὼν πραγματείαν ἐν οἷς ἐπέγραψεν Νόμων ἱερῶν ἀλληγορίας, τοῦτο δὲ κατὰ μέρος διαστολὰς κεφαλαίων τῶν ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς ζητουμένων ἐπιστάσεις τε καὶ διαλύσεις πεποιημένος ἐν οἷς καὶ αὐτοῖς καταλλήλως τῶν ἐν Γενέσει καὶ τῶν ἐν Ἐξαγωγῇ ζητημάτων καὶ λύσεων τέθεται τὴν ἐπιγραφὴν.

¹²³ Aaron Johnson illuminates the distinction between *genos* and *ethnos* in the *Praeparatio*. *Genos*, he explains, "refers to a class or category of things or people joined by one or more common attributes. In the broadest sense, *genos* is applied to the 'human race' as a category of beings distinct from animals, plants, or divinities. More narrowly, Eusebius can use the term to refer to 'the class of slaves, that is, slaves as a social category or even caste...Eusebius thus applies *genos* to a number of categories, from the social to the theological." For Eusebius's 'national' use of *ethnos*, see below.

¹²⁴ Gustave Bardy interprets Eusebius as here including Philo as one of "des notres," wondering at how he is able to do so if not by "annexing the Jews to Christianity." The passage does not necessarily imply that Philo is "one of us" but that he is well-known "among us." Bardy, SC 31, 56 fn. 5.

“A voluminous writer and wide-ranging thinker, contemplating the divine writings from a lofty and elevated position, [Philo] composed subtle and wide-ranging expositions of the holy writings. At one time he followed the subjects in Genesis in a continuous and consecutive manner, which he entitled *Allegories of the Sacred Laws*. At another he carefully arranged under chapter headings the difficulties in the Scriptures, having stated them and offering his solutions in the books which he called *Questions and Answers in Genesis* and *Questions and Answers in Exodus*.

In the remainder of the chapter, Eusebius lists a catalogue of Philo’s known works, including both texts that he has at his disposal and treatises that the Alexandrian is said to have composed but which Eusebius has never seen.¹²⁵ The care shown for the preservation of Philo’s works suggests their value to Eusebius’s community. At the conclusion of the catalogue, Eusebius provides additional details about their promulgation and preservation:

οὗτος μὲν οὖν κατὰ Γαῖον ἐπὶ τῆς Ῥώμης ἀφικόμενος, τὰ περὶ τῆς Γαίου θεοστυγίας αὐτῷ γραφέντα, ἃ μετὰ ἡθους καὶ εἰρωνείας Περὶ ἀρετῶν ἐπέγραψεν, ἐπὶ πάσης λέγεται τῆς Ῥωμαίων συγκλήτου κατὰ Κλαύδιον διελθεῖν, ὥς καὶ τῆς ἐν βιβλιοθήκαις ἀναθέσεως θαυμασθέντας αὐτοῦ καταξιωθῆναι τοὺς λόγους.

During the reign of Gaius [Philo] came to Rome and wrote an account of Gaius’ hatred for God, which he entitled with characteristic irony “On Virtue.” It is said that in the time of Claudius Philo read it in front of the whole Roman senate, and that, on account of great admiration, his writings were honoured by being placed in the libraries. *HE* 2.8.8

Eusebius reports that, unlike Philo’s embassy to Gaius, from which he narrowly escaped with his life, the Alexandrian’s second trip to Rome was highly successful. Not only was he given an audience with the Emperor, but he also spoke in front of the entire Senate, achieving both fame

¹²⁵ *HE* 2.18. The majority of the titles mentioned correspond to identifiable Philonic treatises. Nevertheless, the catalogue is not a fully reliable indicator of Eusebius’s knowledge of Philo’s works. Four treatises on Genesis (*De Cherubim*, *De sacrificiis*, *Quod deterius*, and *De posteritate Caini*) are missing from Eusebius’s catalogue, however Andrew Carriker notes that two of the four are cited elsewhere in Eusebius’s corpus. He therefore concludes that Eusebius’s library contained copies of all four treatises, but that they are subsumed under the title of *Legum Allegoriae*. Carriker also notes that while the *Hypothetica* and *De Officio Mundi* are not mentioned in the catalogue, they are cited at length in other works. He thinks it likely that both these treatises were present in the Caesarean library, as well as *de Vita Moysis* and *De aeternitate mundi*, which are nowhere cited by Eusebius. See Carriker, *The Library of Eusebius*, 165–175.

and respect from the upper echelons of Roman society.¹²⁶ Eusebius ends his comments on Philo with the provocative claim that his treatises were deemed worthy of a place in the libraries. His remarks leave unclear whether this includes the libraries of Alexandria and other important collections, such as that at Pergamon, or only the libraries of Rome. Likewise uncertain is whether the Romans commissioned copies of all of Philo's exegetical and philosophical works, or only the address delivered to the Senate. The reliability of Eusebius's claim is unfortunately impossible to confirm. If accurate, it would strengthen the hypothesis that Philo's works were accessible and known to the philosophically literate citizens of the Empire from the first century to the time of Eusebius. In *HE* 6.13.7, Philo is listed among a litany of sources cited by Clement of Alexandria to prove the anteriority of the Jews to the Greeks. Eusebius reports that in the *Stromateis*, in addition to recognized and disputed Christian writings, Clement made use "also of Philo and Aristobulus, Josephus and Demetrius and Eupolemus, Jewish writers whose writings demonstrate that both Moses and the race of the Jews are older than the origin of the Greeks."¹²⁷ Here, Philo is given pride of place in a list of authors who explicitly are called Jews, not Hebrews. Eusebius lumps Philo into a category with other Jewish authors that, as we will recall, Clement himself avoided. For Eusebius as well, this usage is unusual; this is the only instance in which the bishop refers to Philo as a Jew in his own words. In this context, Eusebius recognizes Philo and his fellow Jews as contributors specifically to Clement's arguments at the end of *Stromateis* 1, in which he defends the antiquity of Moses and the race of the Jews in relation to the Greeks. Philo's function, in tandem with his fellows, is to recount the long history of the

¹²⁶ The content of Philo's speech "On Virtue" is unclear. A treatise "On the Virtues" has a complicated reception history. As Eusebius describes it, however, Philo's address also included something similar to the *Legatio ad Gaium*.

¹²⁷ ... ἔτι μὴν Φίλωνος καὶ Ἀριστοβούλου Ἰωσήπου τε καὶ Δημητρίου καὶ Εὐπολέμου, Ἰουδαίων συγγραφέων, ὥς ἂν τούτων ἀπάντων ἐγγράφως πρεσβύτερον τῆς παρ' Ἑλλήσιν ἀρχαιογονίας Μωυσέα τε καὶ τὸ Ἰουδαίων γένος ἀποδειξάντων.

Jewish people— those who lived under the law of Moses. Philo is cited as one of many Jewish historians whose arguments are also useful for Christians.

The final mention of Philo in the *HE* originates not from Eusebius's own pen, but is embedded within a letter preserved in *HE* 7.32 from his older contemporary Anatolius, bishop of Laodicea. He is described as “by birth an Alexandrian, and for his learning and training in the philosophy of the Greeks was in the first rank of the most eminent men of our time.”¹²⁸

Anatolius plays a relatively small part in the narrative of formidable bishops and misguided heretics that comprises the seventh book of the *HE*. Given his intellectual pedigree, his familiarity with Philo is unsurprising, and confirms that by the early fourth century Philo's writings were well known to educated bishops, especially those with ties to Alexandria. More unexpected is the context in which the bishop of Laodicea cites his fellow Alexandrian.

Anatolius does not put Philo to use, as we might expect, for his philosophical or exegetical arguments, but as an authority (correctly) counselling that Passover take place after the spring equinox:

ἔστιν δ' οὐχ ἡμέτερος οὗτος ὁ λόγος, Ἰουδαίοις δὲ ἐγινώσκετο τοῖς πάλαι καὶ πρὸ Χριστοῦ ἐφυλάττετό τε πρὸς αὐτῶν μάλιστα· μαθεῖν δ' ἔστιν ἐκ τῶν ὑπὸ Φίλωνος Ἰωσήπου Μουσαίου λεγομένων, καὶ οὐ μόνων τούτων, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν ἔτι παλαιότερων ἀμφοτέρων Ἀγαθοβούλων, τῶν ἐπὶ κλην διδασκάλων Ἀριστοβούλου τοῦ πάνυ . . . οὗτοι τὰ ζητούμενα κατὰ τὴν Ἑξοδὸν ἐπιλύοντες, φασὶ δεῖν τὰ διαβατήρια θύειν ἐπ' ἴσης ἅπαντας μετὰ ἰσημερίαν ἐαρινήν, μεσοῦντος τοῦ πρώτου μηνός·

This is not my own proposition, it was known to the Jews long ago, even before Christ's time, and it was carefully guarded by them. It is to be learned from the statement of Philo, Josephus, and Musaeus, and not them only but still earlier writers, both of the *Agathobuli*, named as the teachers of the famous Aristobulus. . . These authorities, in explaining the problems of the Exodus, state that the

¹²⁸ γένος μὲν καὶ αὐτὸς Ἀλεξανδρεὺς, λόγων δ' ἔνεκα καὶ παιδείας τῆς Ἑλλήνων φιλοσοφίας τε τὰ πρῶτα τῶν μάλιστα καθ' ἡμᾶς δοκιμωτάτων ἀπενηνεγμένος. *HE* 7.32.11

Passover ought invariably to be sacrificed after the spring equinox, at the middle of the first month. *HE* 7.32.15–16

Anatolius identifies Philo as a Jew, together with Josephus, Musaeus, and the otherwise unknown *Agathobuli*, echoing Eusebius's own usage in book 6. Philo's opinion on the dating of Passover is not differentiated from those of his fellow wise "Jews," who all agree that the feast ought to be celebrated after the vernal equinox, a position that Eusebius himself shares (see *HE* 7.20). Although Anatolius does not provide the exact reference, Philo indeed explains at some length that the first month of the year includes the spring equinox in *Questions and Answers on Exodus* 1.1 and that Passover ought to be celebrated after this point in the year. The Laodicean bishop is not interested in Philo's reasoning, however; rather, he uses Philo as a witness to the practices of the Jews prior to the time of Christ, which have a corroborative, if not strictly authoritative, status for the current practice of the Church.

Eusebius's choice to include this particular excerpt from the small number of Anatolius's writings reflects the raging controversy over the timing of the annual celebration of Easter, an issue that remained contentious well into the fourth century. At the Council of Antioch in 341, Christians who persisted in celebrating Easter on the Sunday after Passover were threatened with excommunication, as they were deemed to be inordinately dependent on the practice of contemporary Jews. While the Easter controversy is only a minor theme in *HE* 7, near the end of his life Eusebius composed a dedicated treatise on the subject, known as *On the Feast of Pascha*, which is now extant only in fragmentary form. While Anatolius cited Philo and his fellow ancient Jews in support of the Christian dating of Easter, Eusebius's treatise aims to differentiate the two feasts, presenting Easter as the fulfillment of the prefigurations of Christ transmitted through the Passover. Since the purpose of the Passover had been fulfilled by Jesus, Eusebius argues that the festival and its related practices are no longer valid. He describes Easter as

liberation from Jewish practice and the replacement of the old with the new, contending that “the grace which has freed us from the antiquated customs bestows upon us the new man created by God, the new law, the new circumcision, the new Pascha, and makes us someone who is a Jew inwardly” (*Pasch.* 13). While here claiming the name “Jew” for Christians, Eusebius sharply differentiates the practices of these “inward” Jews from “outward” Jews, whom he accuses of having been “mistaken about the truth from the beginning.”¹²⁹

There is thus a discrepancy between Anatolius’s use of Philo the Jew to support the Christian dating of Easter and Eusebius’s own attempt to distinguish the Jewish Passover from the Christian festival in *On the Feast of Pascha*. This discrepancy can be resolved somewhat by aligning Philo’s witness to the timing of Passover with the traditions of the ancient “Hebrews” that prefigured Christ. Philo in *HE* 7.32 is to be distinguished from contemporary “outward Jews” who persist in the particularity of the Jewish practices rendered void and replaced by the new covenant inaugurated by Jesus.

4.4 Philo the witness to the sufferings of the Jews

In *HE* 2, Eusebius segues from Josephus’s report about Philo in the *Antiquities* to a quotation from Philo’s *Legatio ad Gaium* describing the hardships of the Jews (τάς Ἰουδαίων ταλαιπωρίας) in the wake of their rejection and crucifixion of Jesus.¹³⁰ Eusebius openly admits to reading the *Legatio* selectively, stating that he will “only mention cursorily those parts through which the events that befell the Jews at once and not long after their ventures against Christ will become

¹²⁹ For a more extensive discussion of this treatise, see Mark Delcogliano, “The Promotion of the Constantinian Agenda in Eusebius of Caesarea’s *On the Feast of Pascha*” in *Reconsidering Eusebius* (eds. Sabrina Inowlocki and Claudio Zamagni: Leiden: Brill, 2011), 39–68.

¹³⁰ Eusebius states that Philo composed five books on the suffering of the Jews under Gaius (*HE* 2.5.1); the degree to which these five books correspond to the extant *Legatio ad Gaium* and Philo’s other works remains unresolved. See Sabrina Inowlocki, “Philo’s *Legatio ad Gaium* in Eusebius of Caesarea’s Works” *SPhA* 16 (2004) 30–49; 32, for various proposed solutions.

clear to my readers” (2.5.6).¹³¹ His purpose is not to present an accurate summary of Philo’s account but to advance the agenda of the *HE*. He therefore quotes the description of Gaius’ offenses against the Jews at *Legat.* 346 at length, in which Philo charges that the Emperor “appropriated the synagogues in every city, starting with those in Alexandria, and filled them with images and statues of himself. . . Then he proceeded to adapt and alter the Temple in the Holy City, which still remained unmolested and was regarded as completely inviolable, into a shrine of his own, to be called that of “Gaius, the New Zeus made manifest.”¹³² In addition to the quotation from the *Legatio*, Eusebius claims that in a work titled *On Virtues*, Philo “relates countless other atrocities that beggar description inflicted on the Jews at Alexandria in the same reign” (*HE* 2.6). While Eusebius does not excuse Gaius’s offenses outright, he cites his actions not to illustrate the tyrant’s outrageous behavior, as Philo does, but as evidence that God forsook the Jews’ cultic center immediately after Jesus’ death.

Perhaps in an attempt to pardon him from his community’s collective guilt, Eusebius refrains from specifically calling Philo a Jew in this context. Nevertheless, he acknowledges that Philo shared in the Jews suffering. Philo’s mission is said to have earned him “nothing but laughter and ridicule, and he barely endured the danger against his life” (2.5.1).¹³³ Having been introduced in glowing terms, Philo is certainly a much more sympathetic character than the cruel and blasphemous Gaius. But while the *Legatio* affirms God’s ultimate vindication of the Jews and their way of life, in Eusebius’s narrative Gaius’s desecration of the temple is an early harbinger of greater destruction to come. What in Philo’s telling is a tale of ultimate triumph for the Jews is recounted by Eusebius as a tragedy. Philo is thus a problematic figure in *HE* 2:4–6; as

¹³¹ ἐκεῖνα μόνα παραθήσομαι, δι’ ὧν τοῖς ἐντυγχάνουσι προφανῆς γενήσεται δῆλωσις τῶν ἅμα τε καὶ οὐκ εἰς μακρὸν τῶν κατὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ τετολμημένων ἕνεκεν Ἰουδαίοις συμβεβηκότων.

¹³² Trans. E. Mary Smallwood, *Philonis Alexandrini Legatio ad Gaium* (Leiden: Brill, 1961).

¹³³ οὐδέν τι πλέον γέλωτος καὶ διασυρμῶν ἀπηνέγκατο, μικροῦ δεῖν καὶ τὸν περὶ τῆς ζωῆς ἀνατλᾶς κίνδυνον.

an individual, he is a praiseworthy member of the Hebrew race but his advocacy on behalf of the deservingly-rejected Jews is presented as futile.

The desecration and ultimate destruction of the temple is once again interpreted as punishment for the Jews in the *Demonstratio Evangelica*. The single reference to Philo in this work is found in Book 8, which addresses prophecies concerning the timing of Christ's advent. Eusebius argues that the chronology of Jesus' life and the destruction of Jerusalem correspond to the prophecies in Daniel 9:20–27.¹³⁴ Arguing that Jesus' crucifixion marked the prophesied end of legitimate sacrifice acceptable to God in the Jerusalem temple, Eusebius faces the challenge of accounting for approximately forty years of continued temple sacrifice between the crucifixion and the destruction of Jerusalem. He resolves this problem with the contention that temple sacrifice was indeed abrogated from the moment the veil was rent in two at Jesus' death. He then cites two passages from Josephus and one from Philo to illustrate the temple's defilement in the period immediately following the crucifixion. Eusebius contends:

καὶ πάλιν ὁ αὐτός φησιν, Πιλάτον τὸν ἡγεμόνα (αὐτὸν δὴ ἐκεῖνον τὸν ἐπὶ τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν) τὰς Καίσαρος εἰκόνας νύκτωρ εἰς τὸ ἱερόν, ὅπερ οὐκ ἦν θέμις, εἰσκομίσαι, μεγίστην τε ταραχὴν θορύβου τε καὶ στάσεως ἐμβεβλήσθαι τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις. αὐτὰ δὴ ταῦτα καὶ ὁ Φίλων συμμαρτυρεῖ, τὰς σημαίας φάσκων τὰς βασιλικὰς τὸν Πιλάτον νύκτωρ ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ ἀναθεῖναι, ἀρχὴν τε στάσεων καὶ συμφορῶν ἐπαλλήλων ἐξ ἐκείνου τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις συμπεσεῖν. οὐ διέλιπον οὖν ἐκ τότε τὸ πᾶν ἔθνος καὶ τὴν μητρόπολιν αὐτῶν παντοίων κακῶν ἐπαναστάσεις, ἕως τοῦ ὑστάτου κατ' αὐτῶν πολέμου καὶ τῆς ἐσχάτης πολιορκίας, καθ' ἣν παντοίοις «ἀφανισμοῖς» λιμοῦ τε καὶ λοιμοῦ καὶ μαχαίρας, καταποντισμοῦ δίκην τοῦ κατ' αὐτῶν ὀλέθρου συρρεῦσαντος, πάντες οἱ κατασυστάντες τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν ἡβηδὸν ἐξεκόπησαν, ὅτε καὶ τὸ «βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως» «ἐπὶ τὸ ἱερόν» ἔστη, ὃ καὶ εἰς δεῦρο διέμεινεν, ὅσημέραι ἐπὶ τὸ χεῖρον ἐρημίας ἐλαύνον.

And the same writer [i.e. Josephus] says : "Pilate the Governor" (the one contemporary with our saviour) brought the images of Caesar into the Temple by night, which was not legal, so that a great disorder of noise and discord broke out among the Jews. Philo bears witness to these same things, affirming that Pilate set up the imperial standards in the Temple by night, marking the beginning of a succession of rebellions and infightings to fall among the Jews. Without an

¹³⁴ Eusebius's recension of this passage differs significantly from that of the LXX.

interval between them of all kinds of evils afflicted the whole nation and their city until the last war against them, and the final siege, in which destruction rushed on them like a flood with all kinds of misery of famine, plague and sword, and all who had conspired against the Saviour in their youth were cut off; then, too, the “abomination of desolation” stood “in the Temple,” and it has remained there even till today, while they have daily reached deeper depths of desolation.”¹³⁵

The passage attributed here to Philo is problematic, as it is nowhere to be found in his extant corpus. Pilate does play a role in *Legatio* 299–304, where he is accused of setting up golden shields dedicated to Tiberius in Herod’s Palace, which is interpreted by Philo as an intentional provocation of the Jewish populace.¹³⁶ E. Mary Smallwood and F.H. Colson take this incident as the probable inspiration for Eusebius’s reference, assuming that the bishop conflates it with the similar instance of Pilate installing iconic imperial standards in Jerusalem recorded by Josephus.¹³⁷

Sabrina Inowlocki argues that the Caesarean bishop knowingly “tampered” with his source texts, moving the gilded shields from Herod’s Palace to the temple for “apologetic and polemical reasons.” Recognizing that Eusebius cites Philo in this context in order to prove that temple sacrifice became invalid from the moment of the crucifixion, Inowlocki contends, “The profanation of the temple constituted a proof that Judaism had come to an end and that Christianity was about to triumph. This is why he located the profanation made by Pilate in the temple rather than in the city of Jerusalem.”¹³⁸ She attributes Eusebius’s intentional

¹³⁵ *DE* 8.2.122–124.

¹³⁶ *Legat.* 299: “Pilate was an official who had been appointed procurator of Judaea. With the intention of annoying the Jews rather than of honouring Tiberius, he set up gilded shields in Herod’s palace in the Holy City. They bore no figure and nothing else that was forbidden, but only the briefest possible inscription, which stated two things—the name of the dedicator and that of the person in whose honour the dedication was made.” Trans. Smallwood.

¹³⁷ The significant differences between *Legat.* 299–305 and Eusebius’s paraphrase prompted E. Mary Smallwood to conclude that what the bishop attributes to Philo “are clearly references to the incident related by Josephus, not to that related in the *Legatio* as we have it. This may mean that the episode of the standards was narrated by Philo in a part of his historical writings which is no longer extant, as Schürer thinks (III, 679–80). But it is equally possible that Eusebius, reading Philo and Josephus hastily, has overlooked them to be variants of a single episode, and has then given an inaccurate version of Josephus’s story under Philo’s name.” See E. Mary Smallwood, *Philonis Alexandrini Legatio ad Gaium* (Leiden: Brill, 1961), 302.

¹³⁸ Inowlocki, “*Legatio ad Gaium* in Eusebius of Caesarea’s Works,” 42

misrepresentation of Philo's text to his "willingness to present Jewish history at the time of Jesus as a succession of misfortunes which culminated in the first Jewish war and the destruction of the temple."¹³⁹ Inowlocki's attentive reading of both the *Legat.* and the *DE* convincingly demonstrates that Eusebius indeed knowingly altered the details of his source text better to fit his apologetic aims. What she describes as his "willingness" to read first-century Jewish history as "a succession of misfortunes," however, might better be described as a deeply-held conviction. For both events, Eusebius avoids directly quoting his sources and relocates the setting of Pilate's actions from elsewhere in Jerusalem to the temple itself. In so doing, Eusebius is not simply taking license with his source material to help his own cause but rather is following a mistaken tradition promulgated by Origen in *Comm. Mat.* 17.25.20–32.¹⁴⁰ Discussing Matt. 22:15–22, Origen asserts:

καὶ πολλάκις γε ἄρδην ἀπολέσθαι κεκινδυνεύκασιν ἐπὶ Ῥωμαίων βουλομένων ἀνδριάντα Καίσαρος εἰσαγαγεῖν εἰς τὸν νεὼν τοῦ θεοῦ, ἀνθιστάμενοι καὶ κωλύοντες τοὺς ἰσχυροτέρους αὐτῶν γενομένους ἐκ τοῦ ἡμαρτηκέναι Ἰουδαίους. εὗρομεν δὲ ἐκ τῶν κατὰ τὸν χρόνον Τιβερίου Καίσαρος ἱστοριῶν γραφάς, ὡς ἄρα ἐπὶ Ποντίου Πιλάτου ἐκινδύνευσεν ὁ λαός, τοῦ μὲν Πιλάτου βιαζομένου ἀνδριάντα Καίσαρος ἀναθεῖναι ἐν τῷ ναῷ τῶν δὲ καὶ παρὰ δύναμιν κωλυόντων·

"And [the Jews] frequently ran the danger of being fully annihilated, in the time when the Romans wished to install the portraits of the Caesar in the temple, and they rose up against them and put up a resistance against them, who had become mightier than them, because the Jews had sinned. We find however in the historical accounts written in the time of Caesar Tiberius, how in the time of Pontius Pilate the people fell into danger, because Pilate wanted to install the portrait of the Caesar in the temple by force, but they fought back against the powers."¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ Inowlocki, "Legatio ad Gaium in Eusebius of Caesarea's Works," 46.

¹⁴⁰ Eusebius's dependence on Origen for this tradition is discussed in Robert M. Grant, *Eusebius as Church Historian* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 104–107.

¹⁴¹ Translation informed by the German of Hermann J. Vogt in Origenes, *Der Kommentar zum Evangelium nach Matthäus II.* BGL 30 (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1990).

Origen, working from memory rather than from a text open in front of him, seems here to conflate the actions of Gaius in the temple with those of Pilate recorded by Josephus in order to establish a pattern of Roman threats against the Jewish temple. Although Eusebius has immediate access to the original Josephan and Philonic sources, his admiration for Origen may have inspired him to prefer his Caesarean predecessor's account to the better sources at his disposal. Eusebius is certain, both from his inherited ecclesiastical tradition and his own experience of persecution and salvation during the reigns of Diocletian and Constantine, that God had rejected the Jews as his particular people in favour of extending salvation to all nations through the new law and covenant proclaimed by Jesus. When the details of Philo's and Josephus's accounts contradict Eusebian salvation history, Philo and Josephus must be wrong. Inowlocki's charge that Eusebius "modified the primary meaning" of Philo's account, which was namely "to illustrate the Jews' indestructible faithfulness to their law and the final reward from God for their courage," might be answered by Eusebius with the counterclaim that it is Philo who misses the point of his story; what appeared to be God's reward for their persistent legal observance was, in fact, a temporary respite demonstrating God's patience with the Jews, allowing them yet another opportunity to recognize the superiority of the new law proclaimed by Jesus and the Church.

As was also the case in the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, in his role as historian of the period between the crucifixion and the destruction of the temple, Philo's usefulness comes from his status as an eye-witness to the sufferings of the Jews. In the *DE*, he is given no introduction, laudatory or otherwise. Both Philo and Josephus are submitted as authorities supporting

Eusebius's Christian exegesis of the prophecies in Daniel against challenges by Jews and Hellenes such as Porphyry.¹⁴² Although not called a Jew, Philo is associated with their troubles.

Philo is cited three more times as a witness to Jewish suffering in the *Chronicon*, Eusebius's grand consolidation in tabular form of world history up to Constantine's *Vicennalia* in 325.¹⁴³ The *Chronicon* fixes the date of Jesus' death to the eighteenth year of Tiberius's reign, or the fourth year of the 203rd Olympiad. Philo enters the record a mere three years later, introduced by Eusebius with the remark, "Philo the Alexandrian, a well-educated man, was well-known" (*Chronicon*, 213). This introduction is followed in rapid succession by mentions of three offenses suffered by the Jews testified to by Philo. The first is the accusation brought against the Jews of Rome by Sejanus, recorded in Philo's "second book of the Embassy."¹⁴⁴ The desecrations of the Alexandrian synagogues with images and illegitimate altars and sacrifices at the hands of Flaccus, dated to the 4th year of the 205th Olympiad, are also reported to be known from the book that Philo wrote against Flaccus, "for he himself had been present when these events occurred, and he had undertaken to lead the Embassy to Gaius" (*Chronicon*, 214).¹⁴⁵ The next year, Eusebius remarks, "all over the world images of Gaius were erected in the synagogues of the Jews, as reported by Philo and Josephus" (cf. *Legat.* 346; *HE* 2.5.1).

¹⁴² Aryeh Kofsky contends that Eusebius's lengthy exegesis of the prophecies in Daniel is motivated by Porphyry's criticism. See Kofsky, *Eusebius of Caesarea against Paganism*, 233–235.

¹⁴³ Mosshammer, *The Chronicle of Eusebius*, 29–32. Mosshammer contends that while the *Chronicon* covers world history up to 325, the bulk of work was completed prior to the outbreak of Diocletian's persecution in 303. Although the original Greek text is now lost, the *Chronicon* remains extant in two major traditions: an Armenian translation judged by Joseph Karst to date from the ninth century and a fourth-century Latin version revised and extended by Jerome. See Josef Karst, Einleitung, *Eusebius V: Chronik aus dem armenischen Übersetzung*. GCS 20 (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs' Buchhandlung, 1911), LIV. Mosshammer also notes the existence of a Syriac recension. See Mosshammer, *The Chronicle of Eusebius*, 30.

¹⁴⁴ Brief mention is made of the affair with Sejanus at *Legat.* 160. The opening sentence of *In Flaccum* (Δεύτερος μετὰ Σηιανὸν Φλάκκος Ἀουίλλιος διαδέχεται τὴν κατὰ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐπιβουλὴν...) suggests that Philo also composed a now-lost treatise against Sejanus which may be Eusebius's source.

¹⁴⁵ My English translation of Karst's German translation of the Armenian: "da er eben selbst dort anwesend war, während diese Dinge geschähen, und er die Botschaftsgesandtschaft zu Gaios zu führen übernommen hatte"

In the *Chronicon*, as in the *Demonstratio*, Philo the Jew is called upon as an unwitting witness in Eusebius's case for his people's displacement in favour of the nations in the wake of the crucifixion. Although the first reference reiterates Philo's extensive learning and fame, his philosophical abilities are of little interest in this context. Here Philo is referred to neither as a Hebrew nor as a Jew; the second epithet, however, might in this case be more fitting. The reference to Philo as the leader of the embassy to Gaius on behalf of the Alexandrian Jewish community emphasizes his membership in that community, reminding the reader that Philo not only appealed on their behalf but suffered alongside them.

4.5 Philo as a witness to the rise of Christianity

In perhaps the most well-known of Eusebius's Philonic borrowings, in *Historia Ecclesiastica* 2.17, the bishop interprets the Therapeutae, an ascetic community of men and women described in Philo's *De Vita Contemplativa*, as a community of primitive Christians. The Therapeutae have been the subject of much scholarly speculation, and some have questioned whether such a group actually existed, wondering if they might not be an idealized community of Philo's own invention.¹⁴⁶ The paucity of ancient evidence about the group renders them susceptible to Eusebius's moulding into an early Christian sect. He begins his argument by connecting Philo to the evangelist Mark via an encounter between Philo and Mark's mentor, Peter, in Rome:¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ Troels Engberg-Pedersen, "Philo's *De Vita Contemplativa* as a Philosopher's Dream," *JSJ* 30 (1999), 40–64. Joan E. Taylor has recently and convincingly answered those critics, demonstrating the high probability that the ascetic community that Philo describes actually existed on the shores of Lake Mareotis, an afternoon's walk west of Alexandria. See Joan E. Taylor, *Jewish Women Philosophers of First-Century Alexandria: Philo's Therapeutae Reconsidered* (Oxford University Press, 2003).

¹⁴⁷ Eusebius is the earliest extant witness to the tradition of Peter and Philo's meeting in Rome, a tradition that was repeated and widely distributed through Jerome's *Lives of Illustrious Men*. David T. Runia has suggested that

About him there is also the account that during the time of Claudius he went to Rome in order to meet with Peter, who was there at the time preaching to them.

Eusebius backs up his claim that Peter and Philo met in Rome by arguing that Philo's treatise *On the Contemplative Life* clearly describes the way of life of early Christians. He submits,

καὶ οὐκ ἀπαικὸς ἂν εἴη τοῦτό γε, ἐπεὶ καὶ ὁ φαμεν αὐτὸ σύγγραμμα, εἰς ὕστερον καὶ μετὰ χρόνους αὐτῷ πεπονημένον, σαφῶς τοὺς εἰς ἔτι νῦν καὶ εἰς ἡμᾶς πεφυλαγμένους τῆς ἐκκλησίας περιέχει κανόνας· ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸν βίον τῶν παρ' ἡμῖν ἀσκητῶν ὡς ἐνι μάλιστα ἀκριβέστατα ἱστορῶν, γένοιτ' ἂν ἔκδηλος οὐκ εἰδῶς μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀποδεχόμενος ἐκθειάζων τε καὶ σεμνύνων τοὺς κατ' αὐτὸν ἀποστολικοὺς ἄνδρας, ἐξ Ἑβραίων, ὡς ἔοικε, γεγονότας ταύτη τε ἰουδαϊκώτερον τῶν παλαιῶν ἔτι τὰ πλεῖστα διατηροῦντας ἐθῶν.

And this [meeting] certainly would not be unreasonable, since the small treatise about which I am speaking, being produced by his labour after some time and at a later date, clearly comprises the rules of the church guarded even now and for us. But also, narrating the life of our ascetics with the greatest accuracy, it ought to become plain that he not only knew but also accepted, divinizing and exalting them, the apostolic men of his time, as it seems, from the Hebrews, being in this way more Jewish, still observing the majority of the ancient customs. *HE* 2.17.1

This initial description of the Therapeutae reveal the fuzziness at the edges of the conceptual boundaries between Church, Hebrew, and Jew that Eusebius elsewhere attempts to fix. Eusebius begins his borrowing with the claim that Philo's treatise relates rules of the church that are still applicable and practiced in the present day. But the subject of Philo's writing then immediately narrows to "our ascetics," an elite sub-group within the larger church. The ascetics are connected to the "apostolic men of his time," who are described as being "from the Hebrews." The criterion for determining their *Hebrew* status, however, is the fact that they still

Eusebius's source is Clement's lost *Hypotyposeis*, which Eusebius cites in *HE* 2.16 for the tradition that Mark founded the Alexandrian church. However, as we have seen in chapter three, Clement's extant corpus contains no definite citations or remembrances from Philo's historical treatises, and the *Hypotyposes* are described as commentaries on the Christian scriptures. In that case, it is to be expected that they would shed further light on the composition of Mark's Gospel, but would be less likely to deal with Peter's encounters in Rome. Sabrina Inowlocki proposes Papias as an alternative source, noting that "both Papias and Clement of Alexandria seem to be Eusebius's sources for Mark's evangelization of Egypt." I find J. Bruns' suggestion of Hegesippus as the source to be the most probable, as Hegesippus is Eusebius's most common source for information about the fate of the Jews subsequent to the crucifixion. Moreover, Andrew Carriker attests that the phrase *λογος εχει* is often used to introduce material from Hegesippus. See Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, 7; Inowlocki, "Interpretatio Christiana," 320; Carriker, *Eusebius's Library*, 64–65.

keep the majority of the ancestral practices in a rather *Jewish* manner. In this short paragraph, Eusebius associates the Therapeutae with the Church, with a Hebrew origin, and with Jewish customs, without specifying which customs the Therapeutae shared with the Jews.

Eusebius's claim that Philo accepted, divinized and exalted the apostles of his day is as close as the bishop comes to suggesting that Philo converted to Christianity. Yet in the texts that Eusebius cites, Philo presents himself as an observer of the Therapeutae rather than an initiate. His outsider status has the benefit of rendering his praise all the more credible, while the suggestion that he "accepted" the apostles' teaching, if not full conversion, testifies to the persuasiveness of both their lifestyle and doctrine.

Although admitting that the Therapeutae may be, to use a modern term, "Jewish-Christians," Eusebius is nevertheless adamant that Philo describes not a sect of Jewish philosophers, but of Christians. It is clear from Eusebius's rhetoric that he expected at least some of his readers to doubt this claim. He himself admits that Philo nowhere identifies the group as such, a fact that he explains by noting that the name "Christian" was not universally agreed upon until a later date. In order to prove that the Therapeutae were indeed a Christian community, Eusebius must demonstrate that the beliefs and practices that Philo describes could not apply to Jews or to the ascetic members of other Greek philosophical schools.

The first Christian practice of the Therapeutae reported by Eusebius is their rejection of private property,

ἐκθύμῳ καὶ θερμοτάτῃ πίστει τὸν προφητικὸν ζηλοῦν ἀσκούντων βίον. καὶ γὰρ οὖν κὰν ταῖς ὁμολογουμέναις τῶν ἀποστόλων Πράξεσιν ἐμφέρεται ὅτι δὴ πάντες οἱ τῶν ἀποστόλων γνώριμοι τὰ κτήματα καὶ τὰς ὑπάρξεις διαπιπράσκοντες ἐμέριζον ἅπασιν καθ' ὃ ἂν τις χρεῖαν εἶχεν, ὡς μηδὲ εἶναι τινα ἐνδεῆ παρ' αὐτοῖς· ... τὰ παραπλήσια δὲ τούτοις μαρτυρήσας τοῖς δηλουμένοις ὁ Φίλων συλλαβαῖς αὐταῖς ἐπιφέρει λέγων·

with enthusiastic and ardent faith they were emulating the prophetic life of ascetic disciplines. For it is also contained in the recognized Acts of the Apostles that all the

disciples of the apostles sold their possessions and property, distributing to all according to necessity, so that there would be no one among them in need. . . Having testified to nearly equal things to these on display, Philo sets down in his own words. *HE* 2.17.5–7.

Disposing of private property prior to joining an ascetic community is presented here as a characteristically Christian practice. The rejection of private property, however, is a common feature of ascetic life. Moreover, the practice Philo describes in *The Contemplative Life* differs from Eusebius's digest of the Acts of the Apostles. In Philo's treatise, the Therapeutae are said to transfer their assets to their families, not to the leaders of their community (*Contempl.* 16–19). Eusebius subtly acknowledges this by attributing to Philo "about equal things" instead of quoting him directly.¹⁴⁸ The voluntary poverty of the Therapeutae may have found a closer parallel among fourth-century Christian ascetics familiar to Eusebius, which he interprets as an extension of apostolic practice. A rejection of private property is thus evidence of the Therapeutae's philosophical credibility but not definitive proof of their Christianity.

Eusebius turns next to the Therapeutae's practice of scriptural exegesis, quoting the following directly from Philo's treatise:

ἐντυγχάνοντες γὰρ τοῖς ἱεροῖς γράμμασιν φιλοσοφοῦσιν τὴν πάτριον φιλοσοφίαν ἀλληγοροῦντες, ἐπειδὴ σύμβολα τὰ τῆς ῥητῆς ἐρμηνείας νομίζουσιν ἀποκεκρυμμένης φύσεως, ἐν ὑπονοίαις δηλουμένης. ἔστι δ' αὐτοῖς καὶ συγγράμματα παλαιῶν ἀνδρῶν, οἱ τῆς αἰρέσεως αὐτῶν ἀρχηγέται γενομενοί, πολλὰ μνημεῖα τῆς ἐν τοῖς ἀλληγορουμένοις ιδέας ἀπέλιπον, οἷς καθάπερ τιςὶν ἀρχετύποις χρώμενοι μιμοῦνται τῆς προαιρέσεως τὸν τρόπον.

For, reading the holy writings, they philosophize, allegorizing their ancestral philosophy, since they consider the [words] of the literal meaning symbols of a hidden nature, revealed in the underlying meaning. They also have treatises of men of old, the founders of their school, who left many memorials of the form in their allegorical interpretation, which they consult as a kind of archetype and imitate the method of the founders of the sect. *HE* 2.17.10–11.

¹⁴⁸ Inowlocki analyzes the citation techniques employed in *HE* 17 in her article, "Eusebius of Caesarea's 'Interpretatio Christiana' of Philo's *De Vita Contemplativa*," *The Harvard Theological Review* 97.3 (2004).

Eusebius argues that it is most reasonable to interpret the “writings of men of old” as the Gospels, and that it is most probable that the ‘founders of their school’ are Paul and the other apostles, citing the Book of Hebrews in particular as an example of Christian allegorical interpretation. But while allegorical interpretation is characteristic of Christian interpretation, Eusebius can hardly argue that it is peculiar to them. He seems to be aware of this problem, because at this point he vows to recount only those details that clearly indicate that the Therapeutae are Christians:

εἰ δέ τῳ μὴ δοκεῖ τὰ εἰρημένα ἴδια εἶναι τῆς κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον πολιτείας, δύνασθαι δὲ καὶ ἄλλοις παρὰ τοὺς δεδηλωμένους ἀρμόττειν, πειθέσθω καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν ἐξῆς αὐτοῦ φωνῶν, ἐν αἷς ἀναμφήριστον, εἰ εὐγνώμονοι, κομίσεται τὴν περὶ τοῦδε μαρτυρίαν.

But if this does not seem to someone to be the particular report of the constitution according to the gospel, but to be possible to accommodate to others as well, let him be persuaded at any rate by [Philo’s] words which follow, in which, if he be reasonable, he will give heed to this most unambiguous testimony about these things. *HE* 2.17.15

There follows a series of quotations that are presented as “plain and undeniable [testimonies],” “most unambiguous witness” and “yet clearer proofs” that the Therapeutae are indeed Christians. From them, Eusebius adduces four definitively Christian practices:

- Weekly gatherings for worship and communal exegesis that include the composition and singing of hymns
- The inclusion of women, “mostly elderly virgins” in the community, “who keep their chastity not under compulsion, like some of the Greek priestesses, but of their own free will in their yearning for wisdom”
- The description of a festival following a period of fasting and including an all-night vigil that Eusebius equates with the celebration of Easter

- The hierarchical ranking of the community between elders and novices, which Eusebius equates with the offices of bishop and deacon.

Eusebius is adamant that any “reasonable” (εὐγνωμονοίη) reader will be convinced that the Therapeutae are indeed Christians, adding further proofs in an attempt to convince those who remain skeptical.¹⁴⁹ Although Eusebius seems to be protesting a bit too much, it is nevertheless the case that the practices he stresses as uniquely Christian are absent from Philo’s writings about the Essenes.

In *HE* 2.17, Eusebius uses Philo as an external witness not only to the origins of the church in Egypt but more importantly to the antiquity and continuity of its way of life. Although this early example of the Christian *bios* is acknowledged to have shared some practices with the Jews and the philosophical schools, the Therapeutae are distinctively “Christian”— or, at minimum, not “Jewish”— enough to render Eusebius’s thesis initially plausible. In harmony with Philo’s self-presentation in *Contempl.*, Eusebius portrays him as an outsider— and an admirer— rather than a convert to the Therapeutae’s way of life.

5. Conclusions

Eusebius uses the enigma of Philo’s Jewishness to his advantage, invoking the Alexandrian for a broad range of purposes. While Jörg Ulrich contends that his portrayal of Philo demonstrates that Eusebius could selectively approve of Jews who remained Jews even in the Christian era, I would instead propose that Eusebius is better understood as selectively approving of Philo.

¹⁴⁹ *HE* 2.17.15: πειθέσθω κἂν ἀπὸ τῶν ἐξῆς αὐτοῦ φωνῶν, ἐν αἷς ἀναμφήριστον, εἰ εὐγνωμονοίη, κομίσεται τὴν περὶ τοῦδε μαρτυρίαν. “let him be persuaded at any rate by [Philo’s] words which follow, in which, if he be reasonable, he will give heed to most unambiguous testimony about these things.”; *HE* 2.17.18: “εἰ δ’ ἐπὶ τούτοις ἀντιλέγων τις ἔτι σκληρύνοιτο, καὶ οὗτος ἀπαλλαττέσθω τῆς δυσπιστίας, ἐναργεστέραις πειθαρχῶν ἀποδείξεσιν, ἃς οὐ παρά τισιν ἢ μόνη τῇ Χριστιανῶν εὐρεῖν ἔνεστιν κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον θρησκεία. “But if after this someone might still, denying, be hard-nosed, he also shall be delivered from his unbelief, being convinced by yet clearer proofs which are not among just anyone, are possible to find only in the religious practice of Christians according to the Gospel.”

Eusebius calls Philo a Hebrew when he wants to present the Alexandrian in a positive light as a member of the intellectual elite (*PE* 7, 11, 13; *HE* 2.4). While the title emphasizes Philo's biological kinship with both the ancient Hebrews and his Jewish contemporaries, its primary function is to highlight the similarity of his doctrines—and, more importantly, the doctrines of the earliest Hebrews—with the best of *Greek* thought. The exegeses of Philo the “Hebrew theologian” are invoked primarily in order to prove that the cosmological and ontological doctrines shared among the Christians and the Platonists originate in the writings of Moses. Thus, counterintuitively, Philo is at his most “Hebrew” when he is espousing ideas shared by Plato. In his capacity as a transmitter of “Hebrew” philosophical conceptions such as monotheism, the existence of the *Logos* as a “second God” instrumental in the creation of the physical cosmos, and the creation of mankind in the image of God, Philo is both an admirable and authoritative figure.

When Philo acts as a representative and apologist on behalf of first-century Jews in the wake of the crucifixion, however, Eusebius mutes his praise. Where he serves as a witness to the sufferings of the Jews, Eusebius refrains from calling Philo a “Hebrew” (*DE* 8, *Chronicon*). Although he does not explicitly call Philo a Jew, in these contexts Eusebius presents Philo as suffering along with the rest of his kinsmen for their inability to recognize that the Old Covenant and its distinctive practices had been fulfilled and thus voided by the new, universal covenant promulgated by Jesus. In so far as he remains a partisan of the Jewish people, Philo is, for Eusebius, something of a tragic figure.

In his role as an observer of the laudable “ways of life” of the early Christian Therapeutae and the Essene Jewish philosophers, Philo challenges the fixed boundaries Eusebius attempts to erect between Hebrew, Jewish, and Christian identity. The Therapeutae follow a way of life that

combines the Jewish βίος with the Christian. Eusebius's appropriation of Philo's account forces him to admit that some of the practices of the Therapeutae remained Jewish (see esp. *HE* 2.17.2) while he argues that other practices were already distinctive enough to render the sect on the shores of Lake Mareotis identifiably Christian. Eusebius never adequately engages with the problem posed by his presentation of Philo as aware of, even admiring, the Christian apostles, teachings, and way of life in Egypt but nevertheless remaining outside of the *ekklesia*.

Like the Therapeutae, Philo's Essenes reside on the line Eusebius attempts to carve between two races, in this case the Jews and the Hebrews. The Essenes are understood to be Jews possessing a deeper insight into the law rather than just following its harsh strictures mindlessly like the mass of the Jews. While their law-observance keeps them within the Jewish fold, their philosophical acumen ranks them among the "children of the Hebrews."

As an expositor of Hebrew theology, Essene philosophy, and Therapeutic practice, Philo helps Eusebius to argue that Christianity is a recognizable extension of the Hebrew way of life. He is invoked to support Eusebius's claim that the Christians are the legitimate heirs to the Hebrew scriptures, which they understand better than do the Jews who focus on the literal fulfillment of Moses' law. Philo's illumination of the law's philosophical interpretation assists Eusebius in making the argument that, in spite of their neglect of the law's commandments, the philosophically-inclined Christians in fact embody the βίος originally intended by God. That this assistance is found in the writings of a Jew who lived in the wake of the crucifixion does not appear to trouble the Caesarean bishop.

It is therefore not surprising that Eusebius's use of Philo to support his presentation of the emergence of Christianity in history has been criticized by modern scholars as both dishonest and opportunistic. Sabrina Inowlocki frequently describes the bishop's selective citation and

interpretation of texts as “exploitative” and presents Eusebius as engaged in an ideological battle to legitimate his religion and therefore willing to obscure inconvenient truths. Similarly, Aaron Johnson suggests that “Eusebius’s interpretative tactics . . . may seem to verge on sophistry to the modern reader.”¹⁵⁰ These characterizations, however, minimize the confidence Eusebius had in the Christian tradition that he had inherited. Having survived the Diocletian and Licinian persecutions, Eusebius is left as the lone standard bearer of a school, a tradition, and a faith for which his closest companions sacrificed their lives. The events of 303–313 solidified Eusebius’s conviction in the truth of the Gospel and confidence in God’s providential working in human history.¹⁵¹ Were it not the case, his friends would have died in vain. I propose that we read Eusebius in light of his conviction of the truth of his tradition, a tradition that encompasses the writings of Clement, Origen, Pamphilus and their schools. Through this lens, Eusebius’s selective citation of Philo can be understood not as a malevolent misrepresentation of the Alexandrian Jew but as a process of separating the wheat from the chaff in his treatises, bringing them into conformity with the Gospel and Ecclesiastical tradition that Eusebius is convinced to be true.

¹⁵⁰ Inowlocki, *Jewish Authors*, 221–225; Johnson, *Ethnicity and Argument*, 118.

¹⁵¹ See especially *HE* 10.

Conclusions

Clement, Origen and Eusebius present Philo as a skilled interpreter of philosophical doctrines embedded in the narratives of the Hebrew scriptures and discernible via allegorical interpretation, a method of reading that eludes the masses. While Philo reads the scriptures properly as philosophical texts encoding multiple levels of meaning aimed at multiple audiences, Clement, Origen and Eusebius accuse “the Jews” of missing the most important of the truths embedded in the Hebrew scriptures—that the *Logos* would be incarnate as the Christ, and that in Jesus this prophecy was accomplished. What distinguishes the legitimate Christian from the Jew, as well as from Marcionite, the Ebionite, and the “Gnostic falsely so-called,” they contend, is faith in Jesus as the *Logos* incarnate, the one who was prophesied in the scriptures of ancient Israel and who continues to instruct via the allegorical interpretation of these writings. “The Jews” are characterized by the intersection of literal interpretation resulting in the observance of the Jewish law (especially the particularly Jewish practices of circumcision, dietary restrictions, and the observance of the Sabbath and the festivals) and the rejection of Jesus. Legitimate Christians, in the reflected image of this definition, are those who do not interpret the Mosaic law as literally applicable and who do have faith in Jesus-as-*Logos* as revealed in the Old Testament.

As an allegorical interpreter who recognizes, to some extent, the deeper teachings communicated by the *Logos* through the Hebrew Scriptures, Philo does not match the image of the Jew constructed by his earliest Christian readers. Neither, however, does he fulfill the criteria for being considered a Christian. Philo is thus presented as neither Christian nor Jew but as someone outside—or in between—these two increasingly differentiated identities. Although Philo provides useful insights into the Jewish scriptures and the Jewish way of life, his status as a Jew and his relationship to the nascent Christian movement remain ambiguous.

Philo the Pythagorean

Although this study has not attempted to quantify the influence of Philo's writings on the development of Christian theology or philosophy, my evaluation of the Christian *testimonia* to Philo challenges the usual conception of the Alexandrian Christians as direct descendants of Philo in a continuous Judeo-Christian exegetical tradition. In particular, I have questioned the assumption that Clement's familiarity with Philo's corpus constitutes evidence of the Jewish (or Jewish-Christian) origins of the Alexandrian Church. I have argued that Clement's description of Philo as a Pythagorean suggests that his writings may have reached his Clement by way of the Platonic and Pythagorean philosophical schools of the ancient Mediterranean rather than through a direct line of transmission from Philo's own disciples to the Alexandrian Christians.

Further research could fruitfully explore Clement as a node in a network of Christian philosophers stretching across the Mediterranean world. Such an approach would shift the focus away from Clement—and Philo—as members of a narrowly “Alexandrian” tradition and take seriously the interconnectivity of philosophical circles in the late Roman world. It would be particularly interesting to compare Clement's self-presentation as a man of wide learning with his depiction of Moses as source and repository of all knowledge, both Greek and barbarian.

Philo the Predecessor

My investigation of the references to Philo in Origen's *Contra Celsum* and *Commentary on Matthew*, both explicit and under the guise of “τῶν πρὸ ἡμῶν τις,” challenges the growing trend identifying Philo as the model for Origen's own exegetical endeavours. Although Philo's allegorical exegeses are praised as indicative of his great learning, his allegorical method is not

presented as unique or particularly innovative. Philo is presented by Origen as interpreting the Bible in a manner similar to that of the Psalmists and the prophets and modelled in its perfection by the Apostle Paul and Jesus himself. My reading has also uncovered Origen's open disagreement with Philo at *Comm. Matt.* 15.3, a critique that curiously has been overlooked by other commentators. Although Origen credits Philo as one of the allegorical interpreters who has come before him, Philo was but one of many, and neither the most important nor the most influential.

The results of this present study have signalled the possibility that Paul, and not Philo, is the "declared model" whose exegetical practices Origen wishes to follow. A subsequent study could further explore the degree to which Origen grounds his hermeneutics in Pauline texts and methods. A study of Origen's engagement with Pauline exegesis would also benefit from a more thorough investigation of Origen's presentation of Paul's Jewishness.

Philo the Hebrew

By depicting the Hebrew patriarchs as laws unto themselves without need of the Mosaic ordinances, Philo helps Eusebius to construct "the Hebrews" as a separate people differentiated from the Jews by their ability to behave ethically apart from the law. Philo thus helps to legitimize Eusebius's substitution of the virtuous practices promoted by the philosophical schools for the practices particular to the Jews as enjoined by the law of Moses. Eusebius appeals to Philo not only to confirm that Plato's true teachings may be found in the writings of Moses, but also to argue that the pursuit of philosophical virtue, and not ritual observance, is what the Old Testament law actually requires. While affirming the law as fundamentally good, Eusebius departs from Philo by contending that the observance of its external commands is unnecessary,

and, in the wake of Jesus' life and teaching, ultimately detrimental to the comprehension of its deeper meaning.

Philo is invoked in a greater variety of contexts and for new purposes in Eusebius's writings, in comparison to those of his Christian predecessors, Origen or Clement. Although Eusebius's use of Philo may reflect the influence of his beloved teacher, Pamphilus, his innovative use of Philo may very well be the result of his own ingenuity. This study thus contributes to the growing recognition of Eusebius as a creative thinker, indeed a philosopher, in his own right, challenging previous perceptions of the Caesarean bishop as a mere compiler or imperial propagandist.¹

Epilogue: *Philo Christianus, Philo Judaeus*

With the passing of time, Philo's status as a Jew becomes increasingly troublesome for his Christian readers. Writing in the second century, Clement fails even to pause to consider the impact of Philo's Jewishness on his legitimacy as a source. A generation later, Origen generally praises Philo's exegesis but also includes one criticism of his (stereotypically Jewish) literalism. Writing at the turn of the fourth century, Eusebius prefers to describe Philo as a Hebrew rather than a Jew but occasionally includes Philo in lists of prominent Jewish authors of old. Eusebius is also the first Christian to buttress his use of Philo by suggesting that the Alexandrian had been acquainted with, and perhaps even sympathetic to, a community of Christians.

¹ For recent re-evaluations of Eusebius that emphasize his philosophical credentials, see Elizabeth Penland, "Martyrs as Philosophers: The School of Pamphilus and Ascetic Tradition in Eusebius's *Martyrs of Palestine*." PhD Diss., Yale University, 2010; Sébastien Morlet, *La Démonstration Évangélique D'eusèbe De Césarée* (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2009).

Philo's Jewishness becomes a source of anxiety among Christian exegetes writing in the fourth and fifth centuries. As the boundary lines between Christian and Jew became enshrined in law, some Christians sought to make a convert out of Philo centuries after his death, inciting the legend of "Philo Christianus." In this vein, Jerome expands on Eusebius's claim that Philo met Peter during his embassy to Gaius in Rome, suggesting that the Alexandrian envoy and the Palestinian apostle struck up a friendship.² The fifth-century *Acta Johannis* includes a curious—and spurious—account of Philo's baptism by the apostle John.³ According to one fifth-century Byzantine catena, Philo was even ordained a Christian bishop.⁴

While some Christians attempted to convert Philo posthumously, others openly addressed the perceived constrictions of his Jewishness and their impact on his exegesis. More than any other early Christian writer, Ambrose of Milan incorporated Philo's allegorical exegeses liberally into his own works.⁵ Yet the single mention of Philo's name in Ambrose's corpus is followed by a criticism of Philo's overly "carnal" exegesis.⁶ Similarly, Philo's name occurs exactly once in the voluminous writings of Ambrose's protégé, Augustine. The citation is found in chapter 39 of *Contra Faustum*, a polemic aimed at a Manichaean named Faustus. Over the course of refuting the Manichaean contention that Christ is not prophesied by the Hebrew Scriptures, Augustine incorporates within his primary argument a critique of the Jews who similarly refuse to recognize that their scriptures foretell the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The Bishop from

² Jerome, *De Viris Illustribus* 11.

³ Pseudo-Prochorus, *Acta Johannis* (ed. Th. Zahn: Erlangen, 1880), 110.6-112.11.

⁴ Gottfried Shimanowski, "Philo als Prophet, Philo als Christ, Philo als Bischof" in *Grenzgänge: Menschen und Schicksale zwischen jüdischer, christlicher und deutscher Identität* (ed. Folker Siegert: Münster: Lit Verlag, 2002): 36–49, 42.

⁵ His borrowings are so copious that, in the words of David Runia, for five of Ambrose's treatises, "the Philonic material can be described as a framework on which Ambrose's own contribution is draped." Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, 292.

⁶ *De paradiso* 4.25. CSEL 32.1 (ed. C. Schenkl, 1869).

Hippo cites Philo's interpretation of Genesis 6:14–16, the construction of Noah's Ark, as typical of Jewish exegesis. Philo's interpretation is found at QG 2.6:

He said, "And you shall make a door out of the side"

No less, the door on the sides indicates a human construction which he (Moses) most fittingly mentioned to call "in the side," that opening by which the filth of the excretions is sent out of the door. Exceedingly well, for also Socrates used to say, either teaching according to Moses or moved from the things themselves, that fittingly aiming at what is proper to our body, the demiurge turned the passageways of the intestines from the senses to the backside, so that we might not feel disgust at our own shameful conduct with regard to the evacuations, perceiving a most shameful sight. It is for this reason also he surrounded that passageway by the expansive haunches, which also for another need he fashioned as a soft seat.⁷

Augustine reacts to Philo's allegorical interpretation of the ark door as a human anus with incredulity:

One who saw this was a certain Philo, a man of exceedingly great learning, belonging to the group of the Jews, whose style the Greeks do not hesitate to match with that of Plato. And he tried to interpret some things not so as to understand Christ, in whom he did not believe, but so that it would be more clearly seen what a difference it makes whether you refer all things to Christ, on whose account they were actually said that way, or whether by some cleverness of mind you pursue certain conjectures apart from Christ. Here the force of the apostle's words, 'When you cross over to the Lord, the veil will be removed,' is especially evident. For to mention an example of this same Philo, wishing to interpret the ark of the flood as constructed in accordance with the structure of the human body, he dealt with all its aspects piece by piece. When he also considered in a most subtle fashion the meaning of the dimensions involved, all aspects matched his interpretation exactly. There was no impediment here in understanding Christ, for the Saviour of the human race too appeared in a human body; but there was also no compulsion, since his human body was the same as that of other men. But when the exegesis came to the opening which is made in the side of the ark, every conjecture of human ingenuity failed. Something had to be said, however, and so that opening was interpreted in terms of the lower parts of the body, through which urine and excrement are released. That is what he dared to believe, dared to declare, dared to write. It is not surprising that he did

⁷ Τὴν δὲ θύραν ποιήσεις ἐκ πλαγίων, φησὶν. Οὐδὲν ἦττον ἐμφαίνει τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην κατασκευὴν ἐκ πλαγίων αὕτη ἡ θύρα ἢν εὐπρεπέστατα μεμήνυκε πλαγίαν εἰπὼν, δι' ἧς τὰ σκύβαλα τῶν περιτωμάτων ἀποπέμπεται θύραζε. πάνυ γὰρ καὶ Σωκράτης ἔλεγεν, εἴτε παρὰ Μωσέως μαθὼν εἴτε κατὰ ταῦτα κινηθεὶς, ὅτι τοῦ πρέποντος στοχασάμενος τοῦ ἡμετέρου σώματος ὁ δημιουργὸς ἀπέστρεψε τῶν αἰσθήσεων εἰς τὸ κατόπιν τοὺς πόρους τῶν ὀχετῶν, ἵνα μὴ τῇ ἰδίᾳ ταῖς καθάρσεσι βδελυρίαν καθορῶντες αἰσχίστην ὄψιν μυσσαστάμεθα: δι' ἣν αἰτίαν καὶ ἰσχύις ἐξωγκωμένοις περιέβαλε τὸν πόρον ἐκεῖνον, ἃ καὶ πρὸς ἐτέραν χρεῖαν δεδημιούργηκε μαλακὴν ἔδραν.

not discover the meaning of the opening and so went astray in this manner. But if he had passed over to Christ, with the veil removed he would have discovered the sacraments of the Church flowing from that man's side (*Contra Faustum*, 12.39).⁸

Philo's interpretation is presented by Augustine as indicative of stubborn obstinacy. Although he is under no compulsion to recognize God in the incarnation of Christ, Philo must resort to identifying ark doors as anuses in order to avoid seeing the salvific sacrifice of Christ prophesied from the beginning of their Scriptures. In Augustine's reception, Philo is no longer the Pythagorean, the Predecessor, or the Hebrew; Philo has become the quintessential Jew.

⁸ "Vidit hoc Philo quidam, vir liberaliter eruditissimus unus illorum, cuius eloquium Graeci Platoni aequare non dubitant, et conatus est aliqua interpretari non ad Christum intellegendum, in quem non crediderat, sed ut inde magis appareret, quantum intersit, utrum ad Christum referas omnia, propter quem vere sic dicta sunt, an praeter illum quaslibet coniecturas quolibet mentis acumine persequaris, quantumque valeat quod apostolus ait : cum transieras ad dominum, auferetur velamen. ut enim quiddam eiusdem Philonis commemorem, arcam diluvii secundum rationem humani corporis fabricatam volens intellegi tamquam membratim omnia pertractabat. cui subtilissime numerorum etiam regulas consulenti congruenter occurrebant omnia, quae ad intellegendum Christum nihil impedirent, quoniam in corpore humano etiam ille humani generis salvator adparuit, nec tamen cogerent, quia corpus humanum est utique et hominum ceterorum. at ubi ventum est ad ostium, quod in arcae latere factum est, omnis humani ingenii coniectura defecit. ut tamen aliquid diceret, inferiores corporis partes, qua urina et fimus egeruntur, illo ostio significari ausus est credere, ausus et dicere, ausus et scribere. non mirum, si ostio non invento sic erravit. quodsi ad Christum transisset, ablato velamine sacramenta ecclesiae manantia ex latere hominis illius invenisset." English translation based on that of David T. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, 322, with modifications.

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