

Foreshadowings

Philo of Alexandria

INTRODUCTION

In the Introduction, I pointed out six theological tendencies that flourished in early to mid-second-century Alexandria. Alexandrian Christian theologians, adapting themes and techniques from Hellenized Jewish thought, emphasized universalizing themes that intersected with (mainly Platonic and Pythagorean) philosophical tendencies, including the idea of a wholly transcendent God, distinct creative agencies, theandry, the transmigration of souls, the rejection of corruptible flesh, and the deification of the mind. This chapter explores our richest example of Hellenized Jewish thought in Alexandria, namely the works of Philo.

Philo is by no means representative of all Jews in Alexandria. At the same time, due to the extent of his surviving work, his education, and his era (early first century CE), he provides the best window into Alexandrian Jewish intellectual culture before the advent of the Jesus movement(s). It pays dividends, then, to begin with him to see if he can help to specify the intellectual trends that would appear in Christian sources after him. In Chapter 3, I explore what Philo tells us about Jewish social history in Alexandria.¹

¹ Recent introductions to Philo's life and thought include Adam Kamesar, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Philo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Mireille Hadas-Lebel, *Philo of Alexandria: A Thinker in the Jewish Diaspora*, *Studies in Philo of Alexandria* 7 (Leiden: Brill, 2012); Maren R. Niehoff, *Philo of Alexandria: An Intellectual Biography* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018).

LIFE AND WORK

Philo belonged to a tiny minority. He was a wealthy aristocrat, and his wealth may have been in the family for generations. His brother, Alexander (called “the Alabarch”), was a tax official who loaned money to kings and plated nine gates of the Jerusalem temple with gold.² Although Philo never spoke of it, it is likely that he owned income-producing estates as well as household slaves. Whether or not Philo was a citizen of Alexandria, he obtained an education as if he was one. Money went a long way in this department, paving the way not only for Philo’s encyclical studies (geometry, music, astronomy, grammar) but also for the heights of philosophical learning.³

Possibly Philo set up a kind of school in his home where he trained students, not just in any philosophy, but in the distinctly Jewish philosophy that claimed Moses for its master.⁴ The Alexandrian’s teaching was duly calibrated for different audiences. He wrote three commentary series: (1) an allegorical series focusing on a detailed exegesis of *Genesis*, (2) a question-and-answer series focusing on exegetical problems in *Genesis* and *Exodus*, and (3) an expository series focusing on the creation story, the Mosaic law, and the lives of the Hebrew patriarchs. On top of all this, he wrote several in-depth philosophical tractates.

Philo was familiar with every Hellenistic philosophy and melded elements from Neo-Pythagoreanism, Platonism, and Stoicism to create a mosaic of Mosaic philosophy.⁵ Plato was Philo’s most revered and most influential philosopher. At the same time, Philo did not comment on the works of Plato but on those of Moses. To outsiders, the Pentateuch seemed a rough-hewn block of myths and laws, but for Philo, these pages

² Josephus, *J.W.* 5.205; *Ant.* 18.159; 20.100.

³ Philo, *Cong.* 1–19. See further Teresa Morgan, *Literate Education in the Hellenistic and Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Erkki Koskenniemi, *Greek Writers and Philosophers in Philo and Josephus: A Study of their Secular Education and Educational Ideas*, Studies in Philo of Alexandria 9 (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 21–151.

⁴ Gregory E. Sterling, “The School of Sacred Laws’: The Social Setting of Philo’s Treatises,” *VC* 53 (1999) 148–164; Sterling, “The School of Moses in Alexandria: An Attempt to Reconstruct the School of Philo,” in *Second Temple Jewish “Paideia” in Context*, ed. G. Boccaccini and J. Zurawski, BZNW 228 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2017), 141–166.

⁵ Gregory E. Sterling, “The Jewish Philosophy’: Reading Moses via Hellenistic Philosophy according to Philo,” in *Reading Philo: A Handbook to Philo of Alexandria*, ed. Torrey Seland (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 129–156; David Runia, “The Rehabilitation of the Jackdaw: Philo of Alexandria and Ancient Philosophy,” in *Greek and Roman Philosophy 100 BC–200 AD*, ed. Robert W. Sharples and Richard Sorabji, 2 vols. (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 2007), 2.483–502.

contained the deepest of sacred mysteries. It was Philo's mission as a writer to smooth out the problems in scripture and – for an initiated audience – to reveal the deeper mysteries of Mosaic lore.⁶

On the face of it, Philo's methods foreshadow developments in later rabbinic literature.⁷ He constantly compared scripture with scripture – often multiple scriptures – before circling back to his main text. Unlike the rabbis, however, Philo's mind was suffused with the categories and characters of Platonic philosophy (the Forms, the Logos, the intelligible world, the passions, the virtues). Philo would admit that the surface meaning of his sacred text contained problems and improbabilities (God walking in the garden, a boat holding every kind of animal, Moses killing an Egyptian, and so on). But understanding the literal meaning of the text was not the end goal. What the text meant in a higher sense was known only to the initiates endowed with advanced knowledge – in short, to allegorical readers.

Philo indefatigably allegorized; at the same time, he was careful to maintain Jewish practices. The Sabbath was a symbol of nonaction on the part of creation, but it was also a time when Jews did not light fires, plow soil, carry loads, demand deposits, or recover loans.⁸ Circumcision symbolized the slicing away of the passions, but Philo also believed that actual foreskins should be removed from male Jewish babies.⁹ The animals forbidden in the Torah were symbols of vices, but they were still off Philo's actual menu.¹⁰ The Jewish temple was a symbol of the cosmos, and the true temple was the mind.¹¹ Nevertheless, Philo went on pilgrimage to Jerusalem and stood in awe of the physical edifice.¹²

Toward the end of his life, Philo was wrenched away from scholarly seclusion and selected to lead a five-man embassy to the emperor after a horrible pogrom (August 38 CE). He sailed to Rome and likely stayed

⁶ Philo, *Fug.* 85. See further Naomi G. Cohen, "The Mystery Terminology in Philo," in *Philo und das Neue Testament: Wechselseitige Wahrnehmungen. I. Internationales Symposium zum Corpus Judaico-Hellenisticum 1.–4. Mai 2003, Eisenach/Jena*, ed. Roland Deines and Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr, WUNT 172 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 173–188.

⁷ See further David Winston, "Philo and Rabbinic Literature," in *The Cambridge Companion to Philo* 231–254.

⁸ Philo, *Migr.* 91; *Mos.* 2.21–22; *Spec.* 2.66–67.

⁹ Philo, *Migr.* 92; *QG* 3.49. See further John M. G. Barclay, "Paul and Philo on Circumcision: Romans 2.25–9 in Social and Cultural Context," *NTS* 44 (1998): 536–556.

¹⁰ Philo, *Spec.* 4.100–125.

¹¹ Philo, *Somn.* 2.250–251; cf. *Spec.* 1.66.

¹² Philo, *Prov.* 2.64; cf. *Legat.* 191, 194, 198, 216–217; *Spec.* 1.71–73. See further Ellen Birnbaum, *The Place of Judaism in Philo's Thought: Israel, Jews, and Proselytes* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996); Maren Niehoff, *Philo on Jewish Identity and Culture*, TSAJ 86 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001).

there until 41 CE. While he waited for an interview with the emperor – who was assassinated in early 41 CE – Philo probably wrote his political tractates *Against Flaccus* and the initial sections of his *Embassy to Gaius*. While it is true that Philo’s outlook became explicitly political at this stage, his intellectual stance probably did not undergo a revolutionary change from Platonism to Roman Stoicism. Nor is it safe to say that Philo wrote his entire expository series and philosophical works in Rome.¹³ When Philo perished is unknown, but if he was unable to finish his “palinode” attached to his *Embassy*, this would suggest a death not too far into the reign of Claudius (41–54 CE).¹⁴

SELECT TEACHINGS

Following contemporary currents in Platonism, Philo supported a transcendent God: a God transcending even his Neo-Pythagorean and Platonic counterparts. God was “superior to the Good, purer than the One, and more primordial than the Monad.”¹⁵ Human reason “cannot attain to God, who is totally untouchable and unattainable,” nor is nature a clear mirror for knowing the divine essence.¹⁶

Philo confessed God’s oneness as his most sacred creed; but God’s unity was complex.¹⁷ In human perception, at least, the Godhead was refracted in various ways. The ultimate and unknowable God was “the Existent” (ὁ ὄν or τὸ ὄν).¹⁸ Since this ultimate deity was Being itself, Philo did not think that a human could share the nature of the Existent. The Existent is the primal God, the ultimate father of the Universe.¹⁹ He may not have directly made the structures made of matter, but he was still the creator.

¹³ Pace Niehoff, *Intellectual Biography* 3–8.

¹⁴ See further Daniel R. Schwartz, “Philo, His Family, and His Times,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Philo* 9–31.

¹⁵ Philo, *Contempl.* 2; cf. *Praem.* 40.

¹⁶ Philo, *Post.* 14, 167–169; *Cong.* 105. See further David T. Runia, “The Beginnings of the End: Philo of Alexandria and Hellenistic Theology,” in *Traditions of Theology: Studies in Hellenistic Theology, Its Background and Aftermath*, ed. D. Frede and A. Laks (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 308–312; Mauro Bonazzi, “Towards Transcendence: Philo and the Renewal of Platonism in the Early Imperial Age,” in *Philo of Alexandria and Post Aristotelian Philosophy*, ed. Francesca Alesse (Leiden: Brill, 2008); Deirdre Carabine, *The Unknown God: Negative Theology in the Platonic Tradition – Plato to Eriugena* (Leuven: Peeters, 1995), 51–102.

¹⁷ Philo, *Opif.* 171; *Virt.* 214; *Leg.* 3.82. See further Paula Fredriksen, “Philo, Herod, Paul and the Many Gods of Ancient Jewish ‘Monotheism,’” *HTR* 115 (2022): 23–45.

¹⁸ E.g., Philo, *Abr.* 121.

¹⁹ Philo, *Mos.* 2.205.

The Existent became known on the level of the Logos, which can be thought of as God's Mind, an intelligible being who represents the fullness of divinity as far as it can be known to human minds.²⁰ Philo could call the Logos a "second God," but he was not a being independent of God.²¹ Below the Logos are the Existent's two "Powers," namely the "Beneficent" and "Ruling" Powers (whom Philo named "God" and "Lord," respectively).²² The stars, including sun and moon, for Philo, were divine on some level.²³ Under these cosmic divinities were the "heroes" and "daimones" of the Greeks whom Philo called "angels" in accordance with his scriptures.²⁴ To a certain extent, even humans could participate in divinity at its lower levels.

The Existent could not come into contact with limitless and chaotic matter. Instead, the Existent used bodiless potencies to shape boundless matter.²⁵ The chief of these Powers was the Logos, the active cause of creation.²⁶ The Logos was the chief instrument by which God made the world.²⁷ He (or it) contained the model of all creations,²⁸ made the four elements distinct, and carved out the shapes of animals and plants.²⁹

²⁰ For God the Logos as pure creative Intellect, see Philo, *Opif.* 8; *Fug.* 10; *Her.* 236.

²¹ Philo, *QG* 2.62. Cf. *Leg.* 3.207–208; *Somm.* 1.229–230.

²² Philo, *Abr.* 119–122. See further Ellen Birbaum and John Dillon, *Philo of Alexandria On the Life of Abraham: Introduction, Translation and Commentary*, PACS 6 (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 270–272.

²³ *Prov.* 2.50. Philo called the stars "(sensible) gods" (*Opif.* 27; *Spec.* 1.19; *Aet.* 46, 112; *QG* 1.42, 4.157) and often attributes to them a divine nature (*Opif.* 84, 143–144; *Gig.* 8; *Prov.* 2.50; *QG* 4.188). See further Alan Scott, *Origen and the Life of the Stars: A History of an Idea* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 69–75; David T. Runia, "Worshipping the Visible Gods: Conflict and Accommodation in Hellenism, Hellenistic Judaism and Early Christianity," in *Empsychoi Logoi – Religious Innovations in Antiquity: Studies in Honour of Pieter Willem van der Horst*, ed. Alberdina Houtman, et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 47–64.

²⁴ Philo, *Gig.* 6; *Somm.* 1.140–141. Angels qualify as "sacred and divine natures" (ἱεραὶ καὶ θεῖαι φύσεις) (*Abr.* 115). See further M. David Litwa, *Posthuman Transformation in Ancient Mediterranean Thought: Becoming Angels and Demons* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 74–93.

²⁵ Philo, *Spec. leg.* 1.47, 329.

²⁶ Philo, *Opif.* 27.

²⁷ Philo, *Leg.* 3.96; *Cher.* 125–127.

²⁸ Philo, *Leg.* 3.96.

²⁹ Philo, *Her.* 140. On the levels of deity in Philo, see further David Winston, "Philo's Conception of the Divine Nature," in *Neoplatonism and Jewish Thought*, ed. Lenn E. Goodman (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992), 21–23; Ronald Cox, *By the Same Word: Creation and Salvation in Hellenistic Judaism and Early Christianity*, BZNBW 145 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 87–140; Roberto Radice, "Philo's Theology and Theory of Creation," in *The Cambridge Companion to Philo*, 124–145 at 128–129.

The Existent is utterly unlike humanity.³⁰ That is why the model for humanity is the derived divinity of the Logos.³¹ Philo identified the human made in God's image and likeness (*Gen* 1:26) with an ideal or form (ἰδέα τις).³² The archetype for this form was the "intelligible and incorporeal" Logos.³³ The relationship implies that the Logos is the model for the human mind, a mind which Philo called the "true human" within.³⁴ Philo named the Logos, "the iconic Human" (ὁ κατ' εἰκόνα ἄνθρωπος, based on *Gen* 1:26) and "God's Human" (ἄνθρωπον θεοῦ, based on *Gen* 42:11).³⁵ He considered the Logos to be the source and father of humans.

The notion of transmigration in Philo is contested since he only employed its language in passing. In one passage of his Allegorical Commentary, for instance, Philo noted that disembodied souls close to earth descend to be bound in mortal bodies. When these souls live their lives and then exit their flesh, some of them long for the "familiar and accustomed ways of mortal life" and "hurry back again" (παλινδρομοῦσιν αὐθις) to the body.³⁶ Παλινδρομέω in Philo almost always indicated a movement from bodiless back to bodily things, including the passions.³⁷

In another passage of the Allegorical Commentary, Philo argued that humans do not possess anything, even their own souls. Humans are entities that, after death, join with other bodiless entities and "hasten to

³⁰ Philo, *Deus* 53; *QG* 1.55; 2.54; 2.62; *Leg.* 2.1. See further R. A. Baer, *Philo's Use of the Categories Male and Female* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 19.

³¹ For the distinction between primal and derived deity, see David T. Runia, "God and Man in Philo of Alexandria," *JTS* 39:1 (1988): 48–75; M. David Litwa, "The Deification of Moses in Philo of Alexandria," *SPhA* 26 (2014): 1–27, at 7–9.

³² Philo, *Aet.* 134. David T. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria on the Creation of the Cosmos According to Moses: Introduction, Translation and Commentary*, PACS 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 323. Cf. T. H. Tobin, *The Creation of Man: Philo and the History of Interpretation* (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association, 1983), 126; Jens Holzhausen, *Der Mythos vom Menschen im hellenistischen Ägypten: Eine Studie zum 'Poimandres' (=CH 1), zu Valentin und dem gnostischen Mythos* (Bodenheim: Athenäum Hain Hanstein, 1994), 104–106.

³³ Philo, *Opif.* 146, cf. *QG* 1.4; *Leg.* 3.96.

³⁴ Philo, *Her.* 231. Cf. *Fug.* 68–72; *Det.* 22–23; *Plant.* 42; *QG* 1.94. The "single Mind" (ἕνα [νοῦν]) who governs the universe who also serves as the archetype of the human mind (ὡς ἄν ἀρχέτυπον) is probably the Logos (*Opif.* 69). Cf. "the truly incorporeal Being," described as the model for humanity (*QG* 2.56). See further Tobin, *Creation*, 57–76; T. K. Heckel, *Der Innere Mensch: Die paulinische Verarbeitung eines platonischen Motivs* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1993), 42–75.

³⁵ Philo, *Conf.* 146–147; 40–41. On the development of these traditions, see Tobin, *Creation* 108–134.

³⁶ Philo, *Somm.* 1.137–139.

³⁷ Sami Yli-Karjanmaa, *Reincarnation in Philo of Alexandria*, *Studia Philonica Monographs* 7 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), 129–150 (here: 140), 251–254.

rebirth” (εἰς παλιγγενεσίαν). In context, only flawed souls are reborn and – since they have already died – must be reborn in bodies.³⁸

In a text from the *Questions and Answers* series, Philo commented on *Exodus* 24:12, when God called Moses to ascend Mount Sinai and “be there.” The ascent to Mount Sinai was taken to be an ascent to heaven meant for stable minds divorced from flesh. Some souls, however, instead of floating up on an eagle’s wings, “settled downward again” (αὐτίκα ὑπενόστησαν), dragged to the extremes of “Tartarus.”³⁹ The imagery is pulled from Plato’s *Phaedrus*, which depicts the soul as a chariot sometimes dragged down by the horse of unsteady desire. The “true Tartarus” is the earthly body and the “flames of desire.”⁴⁰ In short, souls dragged to Tartarus are probably reincarnated to live again on earth.⁴¹

In these passages, Philo may have appealed to preexisting traditions, but to suppose he was not committed to transmigration depends on what we mean by “commitment.”⁴² Transmigration was not, admittedly, “an essential component of how scripture should be interpreted on the fate of the soul after (and also before) death.”⁴³ At the same time, Philo could still believe in transmigration even if it was not seen as essential or an essentially scriptural doctrine.⁴⁴ In my view, Philo thought very seriously about what traditions he passed on. He would not have written what he did if he did not on some level accept a notion of transmigration. My sense is that transmigration was a common notion among Alexandrian Platonists – including other Alexandrian Jewish Platonists. Evidently Philo was not overly concerned about criticism from other philosophers, since there was no official position on transmigration at the time, even in the Jewish community.

As a Platonist, Philo was committed to the idea that the soul or mind was superior to the fleshly body. Yet Philo also expressed at least rhetorical disdain for the coat of skin that he wore. He called the mortal body a “baneful corpse,”⁴⁵ the soul’s grave,⁴⁶ a foul prison,⁴⁷ wicked by nature, a

³⁸ Philo, *Cher.* 114 with Yli-Karjanmaa, *Reincarnation* 150–167.

³⁹ Philo, *QE* 2.40.

⁴⁰ Philo, *QG* 4.234.

⁴¹ Yli-Karjanmaa, *Reincarnation* 180, 185. Yli-Karjanmaa’s appeal to Philo, frag. 7.3 (Harris) as a text supporting transmigration (186–211) is unconvincing.

⁴² David T. Runia, “Is Philo Committed to the Doctrine of Reincarnation?” *SPhA* 31 (2019): 107–125.

⁴³ Runia, “Is Philo Committed,” 115.

⁴⁴ Runia, “Is Philo Committed,” 114.

⁴⁵ Philo, *Leg.* 1.108; cf. *Migr.* 2; *Somm.* 2.237.

⁴⁶ Philo, *Deus* 150; *Migr.* 16.

⁴⁷ Philo, *Leg.* 3.42; *Ebr.* 101; *Migr.* 9.

plotter against the soul,⁴⁸ and the “dwelling place of endless calamities.”⁴⁹ The image of God within humankind was not something based on the internal and external form of mortal bodies (arms, legs, brain, speech, the feeling of love, and so on). Rather, the divine image is “embodied” only in the bodiless mind.⁵⁰ At death, the flesh is – or at least should be – definitively shed as the soul soars to higher spheres. Philo illustrated how, for instance, at the close of Moses’s life, his flesh whirled away and only his divinized mind ascended to God as if it were a beam of sunlight.⁵¹

On the topic of Moses’s deification, Philo did not mince words: the law-giver was “no longer human but a god.”⁵² He was “divinized,” “changed into the divine,” and became “truly divine.”⁵³ God “appointed” Moses “as god.”⁵⁴ To be sure, Moses was not deemed a god in his own right; he was granted the name and authority of God by divine decree (*Exod* 7:1).⁵⁵ Philonic deification recognized the nothingness of humanity and never fostered tyrannical arrogance or a sense of entitlement. Deification was the process of becoming an entirely bodiless and purified mind (“noetification”). Such minds did not haunt the earth but stayed forever next to God in immaterial realms.

In principle, at least, the fate of Moses was open to all. Philo wrote that “by the grace of God, it’s reasonable for a mortal to participate in deathlessness.”⁵⁶ But grace was in part built into nature. Philo called the human mind a fragment of the Logos.⁵⁷ Thus simply by virtue of being human (that is, having mind and rationality), one already has a share in divine reality. The human mind is at least partially constituted by divine breath or spirit (πνεῦμα) breathed into the first human being.⁵⁸ Philo rooted this view in *Genesis* 2:7 (God “breathed into his [the first human’s] face breath of life”).⁵⁹ For Philo, the medium of πνεῦμα was the Logos.

⁴⁸ Philo, *Leg.* 3.71; cf. *Spec.* 3.1–6.

⁴⁹ Philo, *Conf.* 177.

⁵⁰ Philo, *Opif.* 69. See further G. H. van Kooten, *Paul’s Anthropology in Context: The Image of God, Assimilation to God, and Tripartite Man in Ancient Judaism, Ancient Philosophy and Early Christianity*, WUNT 232 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 57–62.

⁵¹ Philo, *Mos.* 2.288; cf. *Virt.* 76.

⁵² Philo, *Prob.* 43–44 (οὐκετ’ ἀνθρώπων ἄλλα θεόν).

⁵³ Philo, *QE* 2.40, 29.

⁵⁴ Philo, *Sac.* 9–10.

⁵⁵ *Prob.* 44; *Mos.* 1.158–159; *Somn.* 2.189; *Det.* 162.

⁵⁶ Philo, *Aet.* 46.

⁵⁷ Philo, *Opif.* 146.

⁵⁸ Philo, *Opif.* 135. See further Runia, *On the Creation*, 326–327.

⁵⁹ In the majority of cases, Philo made no distinction between πνῴη and πνεῦμα when exegeting *Gen* 2:7.

All human beings have a reflection, fragment, or ray of the shining Logos within them.⁶⁰ Since the Logos is God – or God in relation to the world – Philo could say that God breathed into Adam a portion “of his own deity” (τῆς ἰδίου θεϊότητος).⁶¹ Consequently, the human mind is “a fragment of that divine and blessed soul” – evidently referring to the Logos – and so the human soul is a “divine fragment” (ἀπόσπασμα θεῖον).⁶²

Humans became divine by participation in the divine. As true Being, Philo’s primal God is divine in and of itself. Other divine beings, by contrast, need to participate in the divinity of the Existent to gain the name θεός. In Philo’s thought, there were both shareable and unshareable attributes of divinity. Absolute Being and eternity are unshareable qualities enjoyed by the Existent alone, whereas immortality and ruling power can be shared. A human could become divine by participating in these shareable divine qualities among which Philo added other attributes such as repose, passionlessness, and immutability.⁶³

PHILONIC PRACTICE

We know that Philo was a Jew and practiced the precepts of the Jewish law, but what he did on a daily basis is unknown. If Philo the urban dweller was not – or perhaps could not – be rigorously ascetic, he still lauded ascetic communities such as the Essenes and Therapeutae.⁶⁴ These communities practiced celibacy, abstention from food, and withdrawal from society. They were pictured as communities of study, of spiritual and social equality, and of worship, prayer, and singing. Their banquets were contrasted with the feasts of decadent luxury Philo was accustomed to in both Alexandria and Rome. The people of these communities lived entirely the life of the mind, as if their bodies had already worn away.

Even if Philo’s descriptions of these communities are not entirely accurate, they at least represent his own ideal. Some sort of bodily discipline

⁶⁰ Philo, *Opif.* 146.

⁶¹ Philo, *Det.* 86.

⁶² Philo, *Det.* 90; cf. *QG* 1.50–51. At one point, Philo draws a distinction between the earthly mind (νοῦς γεωδής) and the divine spirit (*Leg.* 1.32). This divine spirit evidently becomes a higher νοῦς that is unmixed with body.

⁶³ Van Kooten, *Paul’s Anthropology* 181–199; Tikhon Alexander Pino, “An Essence–Energy Distinction in Philo as the Basis for the Language of Deification,” *JTS* 68.2 (2017): 551–571.

⁶⁴ Philo, *Contempl.* (entire) with Taylor and Hay, *Philo of Alexandria on the Contemplative Life*.

is the natural outcome of Philo's theology.⁶⁵ If the true human – the human made in the image of the Logos – is the mind, then that is what one lives for. The mortal body is an appendage – and often an annoying one. It should be regimented and deprived until it is wholly obedient to mind. What matters is study and meditation, and such activities can only be practiced without bodily distractions and social entanglements. Philo was probably married, but he wrote as if he was not. He longed for the peaceful life of his country estate(s) even though he apparently spent most of his time in the hustle and bustle of the city. He likely practiced a moderate asceticism, restricting food intake and refraining from sex after his children were born. His practice and appreciation of ascetic currents would resonate with later Christian ascetic movements in Alexandria (Chapter 8).

CONCLUSION

On our scale of Alexandrian theological tendencies, Philo scores a perfect six. He upheld a transcendent God (the Existent), distinguished creative powers from the Existent (the Logos and unnamed auxiliaries), upheld a manifestation of God (the Logos) as the archetypal Human, endorsed a tradition of transmigration, rejected the corruptible flesh as unworthy of salvation, and proposed the deification of the mind. As we shall see, these six theological features will later appear among Christian theologians at Alexandria. The overlap shows, first of all, that there was no strong break between Jewish and Christian theology in Alexandria during the first and second centuries CE (despite any setbacks Alexandrian Jews suffered during this time). Christians upheld Jesus as the messiah and came to identify him as the Logos, but these affirmations did not dictate the nature of their theology as a whole. Alexandria in the first and second centuries CE was vibrant and intellectually diverse. At the same time, there seems to have been a fairly distinctive intellectual climate or set of intellectual (largely Platonizing and Pythagoreanizing) tendencies there. Whether or not the earliest Christians of Alexandria read Philo, they shared a theological climate he belonged to, which helps to explain why they posited similar tenets and manifested like tendencies.

⁶⁵ David M. Hay, "Philo's Anthropology, the Spiritual Regimen of the Therapeutae, and a Possible Connection with Corinth," in *Philo und das Neue Testament* 127–142.