



Reviews of the Enoch Seminar 2013.03.02

José Pablo Martín, ed., *Filón de Alejandría: Obras completas Volumen III*. Madrid: Editorial Trotta, 2012. € 30.00. ISBN: 978-8498792423.

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This is the third volume in the extraordinary *Obras Completas*, the complete works of Philo of Alexandria, accomplished under the direction of José Pablo Martín with the collaboration of Marta Alesso. This task, which began in 2009 with the appearance of Volumes I and V and continued the following year with Volume II, is a major contribution to Philonic studies and more broadly to research on Jewish sources from the Second Temple period.

Volume III concludes Philo's *Allegorical Commentary*, covering the seven last treatises that comprised his *lectio continua* of Genesis 2–18, in line with a version of the Septuagint. Thus, of the nineteen (twenty) treatises that constitute the *Commentary*, three appear in Volume I, followed by ten in Volume II, and finally, the seven treatises included in the present volume. In addition, within the interpretation initiated with the creation of man and ended with the figure of Abraham, Martín distinguishes between four allegorical cycles, which he designates the archetypes, the initiators, Noah, and Abraham. The last seven treatises included in this volume correspond, according to the editor, to “Abraham's cycle,” in which the Patriarch or human model reaches “where man can reach, to the vision of God and his powers” (p. 13). Furthermore, this understanding of Philo's *lectio continua* allows the editor of this publication to substantiate the limits of *Commentary* to chapter 18 of Genesis, in a treatise to which the Armenian fragment *De deo* would have belonged.

The scholars responsible for the translation of the texts and for the notes also provide an introduction to each of the treatises included in Volume III. The introductions are organized into four parts: the location of the treatise in the *corpus philonicum*, the topics and major issues, the structure of the treatise, and the presentation of the Spanish translation.

Francisco García Bazán presents *La confusión de las lenguas (De confusione linguarum)*, which elucidates Genesis 11:1–9. This passage narrates the construction of the Tower of Babel and the subsequent dispersion of its community. Bazán offers two contributions in his introduction. The first concerns the treatise in particular, with an emphasis on two components—cosmological and anthropological—in Philo's thought. The second focuses on the question of the Gnostics in the text, specifically as it pertains to Philonic dualism.

Bazán also introduces *La migración de Abraham (De migratione Abraham)*, which covers the text of Genesis 11:31–12:6, that is, the journey of Abraham from Kharran to the promised land of Canaan. This treatise concentrates on the concept of “migration,” which according to Bazán refers to “el traslado activo desde lo sensible a lo inteligible, entendido este aspecto de lo real en su propio significado judío según lo tiene incorporado la Ley mosaica” (pp. 75–76). Two important contributions further enrich this introduction: first, an analysis of a possible influence of Pseudo-Aristotle’s *De Mundo* on Philo; second, Bazán’s examination of the relationship between Philo and the Gnostics, using the work of H. Jonas and his conception of the Alexandrian context as a starting point.

El heredero de los bienes divinos (Quis rerum divinarum heres sit), one of the most important treatises of the *Allegorical Commentary*, covers the text of Genesis 15:2–18, namely, the covenantal dialogue between God and Abraham concerning his descendants and inheritance. Marco Antonio Santamaría analyzes the three main themes of the treatise: the inheritance of the divine things, the division of things into identical and opposite parts, and the *Logos*, divider and yet intermediate and mediator between the parts.

Marcela Coria introduces, translates, and comments on *Acerca de la unión con los estudios preliminares (De congressu eruditionis gratia)*, which concerns the account in Genesis 16:1–6 of Abraham’s union with and offspring from Hagar, Sarah’s slave. According to Coria, this treatise is organized by two overlapping themes: “the need of the intellect [Abraham] to undertake the cycle of preliminary studies [Hagar] and the corrective function of punishment in this course of learning, that is, in the path to virtue [Sarah]” (p. 233).

Sobre la fuga y el encuentro (De fuga et inventione) is introduced, translated and commented by Marta Alesso. The treatise examines, with numerous digressions, the text of Genesis 16:6b–14, which corresponds to the story of Hagar’s escape and her return next to Sarah. According to Alesso, Philo’s treatise develops the concepts of “general culture” (παιδεία or τὰ ἐγκύκλια) / virtue and wisdom, practical life/contemplative life, and *Logos*/powers.

In *Sobre el cambio de nombres (De mutatione nominum)*, Maria Victoria Spottorno focuses on Philo’s commentary on Genesis 17:1–22, and in particular Philo’s explanation of the change in Sarah’s and Abraham’s names. Included here are Philo’s digressions to other double names in order to depict the progress of the soul, due to divine intervention, on its way to perfection.

José Pablo Martín is responsible for the treatment of the Armenian fragment *Sobre Dios (De deo)*. According to Martín, this is the lost and final treatise of the twenty that comprised Philo’s *Allegorical Commentary*. The reference to the vision of Abraham, found in Genesis 18:1–2, allows Martín to place the fragment at the culmination of the commentary. Martín explains that “the topic is highly relevant to close the path of the wise Abraham, with the vision of God [the “Existent”] surrounded by his powers, Cherubim and Seraphim” (p. 412) as “the final scene of the soul’s journey to the encounter with his Creator” (p. 413). Martín underscores here an essential aspect in Philo’s thought, since the “perspective of the vision” (p. 413) calls attention to the mystical nature of his philosophy.

The Spanish translation in this volume is largely based on the critical edition of L. Cohn and P. Wendland, *Philonis Alexandrini opera quae supersunt*, in consultation with the remaining manuscripts, the available bilingual editions in French, Italian, and English, and the previous translation into Spanish by José María Triviño. Of particular note is the Armenian fragment *De deo*, translated here into Spanish for the first time by José Pablo Martín. Martín's translation is based on the Greek retroversion proposed and corrected by Folkert Siegert in 1988 and 1998 and corroborated by Pablo Torijano with the Armenian version.

The work carried out in the notes of each translation offer a detailed analysis of Philo's commentary, discussing problematic points and divergent interpretations. The notes also expose the richness of the terms used by Philo, which would otherwise be lost in translation. This emphasis on the key terms used by the Jewish philosopher highlights the philosophical trends that converged in his thinking (e.g., p. 40, note 44), an aspect that is also usefully supplemented in the bibliographic references. This emphasis on the philosophical dimensions of Philo's thought, which, overall, is the primary concern of the contributors, does tend to detract from considering Philo's place within Second Temple Judaism (e.g., pp. 44–45, notes 58 and 60). Nevertheless, each contribution proves valuable for scholars working in this field. For example, specialists in Second Temple Judaism might especially be interested in the possible connections between Philo's commentary and similar exegetical methods, such as wordplays, practiced in Jewish synagogues (e.g., *Congr.* VI, 25, pp. 244–45, n. 26; *Fug.* XVII, 93, p. 327, n. 160).

Other important features of this volume include a list of acronyms and abbreviations, an extensive bibliography, and several indices. The bibliography consists of three major parts: editions, commentaries and translations; classical sources; critical scholarship. This compilation prepared by the authors provides an important update on the *status quaestionis* and further enables scholars to recognize the inherent complexity of the volume's subject matter. The indices of biblical quotations, Philo's works, ancient and modern authors, Greek and Hebrew terms, and topics also constitute an important and useful tool, further underscoring the profusion of sources and authors consulted in this exhaustive analysis of the Philonic texts.

Finally, research on Philo has experienced a remarkable renewal in the last two decades. Undoubtedly, this new edition, the most recent translation of Philo's texts, will enrich and make a major contribution to Philonic studies. Moreover, the growth of Philonic studies will further enhance our understanding of Second Temple Judaism and Christian Origins as well as subsequent developments emerging from the reception of the Jewish Alexandrian philosopher by the Church Fathers.