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Philo of Alexandria Seminar

The Structure of Philo's *De plantatione*  
and its Place in the Allegorical Commentary

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Outline

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1. *The riddles of the Allegorical Commentary*

There was a time that Philo was above all known as an allegorist. He was widely admired, but also reviled for his interpretations of the Bible in terms of the history of the soul and its quest for knowledge of God.<sup>1</sup> In more recent times there has been a decline of interest in this part of the Philonic legacy. Modern scholars are more interested in what Philo can tell us about the beliefs and practices of the Judaism of his time than about the complexities of his ethical and theological interpretations of the scriptural text. This is not to say that good work is not being done on the Allegorical Commentary. Two recent examples that come to mind are the stimulating chapter in Maren Niehoff's book on Alexandrian Jewish exegesis and Scott Mackie's fine study of the allegory of Hannah in *De ebrietate*.<sup>2</sup> It is one of the more important tasks of the Philo of Alexandria Commentary Series, I believe, to make these works more accessible to a broad circle of readers so that they can be recognised for the fascinating pieces of exegetical and philosophical literature that they are. So far only a commentary has been published on only one allegorical treatise, *De agricultura*.<sup>3</sup> It is to be hoped that others will soon follow.

The Allegorical Commentary presents us with many difficult questions, some of which may prove impossible to answer. In the first place, what was its original extent. Even though it is by far the longest of Philo's three great biblical commentaries, we can be certain that it originally contained at least nine more books.<sup>4</sup> Did it start with an allegorical commentary on the first chapter of Genesis?<sup>5</sup> Were the gaps in the treatment of the continuous text of

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<sup>1</sup> Admired by Church fathers such as Clement, Origen, Didymus the blind and (by implication) Ambrose; criticised by Theodore of Mopsuestia, Augustine and (later) by the Patriarch Photius. See Runia (1993).

<sup>2</sup> Niehoff (2011), Mackie (2014).

<sup>3</sup> Geljon–Runia (2013)

<sup>4</sup> For a listing of lost treatises see Runia (1992).

<sup>5</sup> On this question see the discussion in Sterling (2012) 63–64.

Genesis dealt with in writings that we have no inkling of?<sup>6</sup> Or was the Commentary as a whole divided into formal or informal clusters of treatises, with gaps in coverage to some degree analogous to what we find in the *Quaestiones*? In the second place, is there a unified and consistent method that Philo follows in composing his allegorical treatises, or did he develop and modify it as he went along? Should we in fact include the work *De somniis*, which seems to deviate in its method from the earlier treatises in the Allegorical Commentary at all? A related question is whether Philo devised a coherent overall conception for the entire Commentary, as he clearly did for the Exposition of the Law. How, indeed, did he intend this difficult work to read and studied and in what context? And then there is the perennial question of how original Philo's work was in relation to his Alexandrian predecessors and contemporaries, but also in relation to the work of allegorists working in the Hellenic tradition.<sup>7</sup>

## 2. A cluster of five treatises

Amidst all these questions, it is good to grasp hold of some facts of which we may be fairly certain. One of these is that the Commentary originally contained a cluster of five treatises giving an allegorical interpretation of the story of the life of Noah and his sons after the end of the flood, as described in Gen 9:21–27. Following the practice established from the beginning of the Commentary as it has come down to us, Philo begins the first of these treatises, *De agricultura*, with the quotation of the scriptural text, in this case Gen 9:20–21a. However, at the beginning of the next treatise, *De plantatione*, he deviates for the first time from this method and makes a reference to what he has done in the previous treatise. He had written a book on the art of cultivation in general and now will turn to the specific art of viticulture (*Plant.* 1). He had in fact anticipated that he would write this treatise in his final words of that treatise at *Agr.* 181.

As Gregory Sterling has pointed out in a recent study of the internal cross-references in Philo's biblical commentaries,<sup>8</sup> the opening words of *Plant.* constitute a 'secondary preface.' They follow a well-established practice in the ancient world of introducing a new treatise written on a separate scroll but belonging to a larger work or series. The reader, when opening up the roll could immediately identify the contents of the scroll and its particular place in the larger work. Many of Philo's treatises contain such secondary prefaces. It is also the case for the two following surviving treatises, *De ebrietate* and *De sobrietate*. The first of the treatises, *Agr.*, is the only one to have an anticipatory concluding statement, as noted above. But there is a complication of which we must take note. At *Plant.* 139 Philo includes a transitional passage in which he summarizes what he has discussed in the book so far and introduces his next subject. This passage sits somewhat uncomfortably in relation to the beginning of the treatise and we will return to it below.

The relevant passages for the cluster of treatises can thus be set out as follows:<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> See the analysis of the textual coverage in Morris (1987) 830–840.

<sup>7</sup> On Philo's predecessors see the studies of Hay (1979–80), (1991), Goulet (1987), Niehoff (2011) 77–129.

<sup>8</sup> Sterling (2012) 60–62. I am much indebted to his excellent discussion of the series *Agr.–Sobr.*

<sup>9</sup> For translations of these texts see the Appendix.

*Agr.* 1: (the main biblical lemma, Gen 9:20–21a) ‘Καὶ ἤρξατο Νῶε ἄνθρωπος γεωργὸς γῆς εἶναι, καὶ ἐφύτευεν ἀμπελώνα, καὶ ἔπιε τοῦ οἴνου, καὶ ἐμεθύσθη ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ αὐτοῦ.’

*Agr.* 181: τὰ δὲ περὶ τῆς φυτουργίας εἰρημένα αὐτοῦ λέγωμεν αὐθις.

*Plant.* 1: ‘Ἐν μὲν τῷ προτέρῳ βιβλίῳ τὰ περὶ γεωργικῆς τέχνης γενικῆς, ὅσα καιρὸς ἦν, εἶπομεν, ἐν δὲ τούτῳ περὶ τῆς κατ’ εἶδος ἀμπελουργικῆς, ὡς ἂν οἶόν τε ἦ, ἀποδώσομεν. τὸν γὰρ δίκαιον οὐ γεωργὸν μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἰδίως ἀμπελουργὸν εἰσάγει φάσκων· ἤρξατο Νῶε ἄνθρωπος εἶναι γεωργὸς γῆς καὶ ἐφύτευεν ἀμπελώνα’ (Gen 9:20).

*Plant.* 139–141:<sup>10</sup> Περὶ μὲν οὖν γεωργίας τῆς πρεσβυτάτης καὶ ἱερωτάτης, ἣ τὸ αἴτιον πρὸς τὸν κόσμον, τὸ παμφορώτατον φυτῶν, χρῆται, καὶ περὶ τῆς ἐπομένης, ἣν ὁ ἀστειὸς ἐπιτηδεύει, καὶ περὶ τῆς φερομένης τετράδος τῶν ἄθλων, καὶ ἃ κατὰ προστάξεις καὶ ὑφηγήσεις νόμων συνεκροτεῖτο, ὡς οἶόν τε ἦν εἶπομεν. (140) τὴν δὲ τοῦ δικαίου Νῶε ἀμπελουργικὴν, εἶδος γεωργικῆς οὖσαν, ἐπισκεψώμεθα. λέγεται γὰρ ὅτι ‘ἤρξατο Νῶε ἄνθρωπος εἶναι γεωργὸς γῆς· καὶ ἐφύτευεν ἀμπελώνα, καὶ ἔπιε τοῦ οἴνου, καὶ ἐμεθύσθη’ (Gen 9:20–21a). (141) οὐκοῦν τὸ μέθης φυτὸν ἐξεργάζεται τεχνικῶς καὶ ἐπιστημόνως ὁ δίκαιος τῶν ἀφρόνων ἄτεχνον καὶ πλημμελῆ ποιούμενον αὐτοῦ τὴν ἐπιστάσιαν, ὥστε ἀναγκαῖον τὰ προσήκοντα περὶ μέθης εἰπεῖν· εὐθὺς γὰρ εἰσόμεθα καὶ τὴν δύναμιν τοῦ παρέχοντος αὐτῇ τὰς ἀφορμὰς φυτοῦ. τὰ μὲν οὖν εἰρημένα τῷ νομοθέτῃ περὶ μέθης εἰσόμεθα ἐπ’ ἀκριβείας αὐθις, νυνὶ δὲ ἐξερευνησώμεν ὅσα καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἔδοξεν.

*Ebr.* 1: τὰ μὲν τοῖς ἄλλοις φιλοσόφοις εἰρημένα περὶ μέθης, ὡς οἶόν τε ἦν, ἐν τῇ πρὸ ταύτης ὑπεμνήσαμεν βίβλῳ, νυνὶ δὲ ἐπισκεψώμεθα τίνα τῷ πάντα μεγάλῳ καὶ σοφῷ νομοθέτῃ περὶ αὐτῆς δοκεῖ.

*Sobr.* 1: τὰ περὶ μέθης καὶ τῆς ἐπομένης αὐτῇ γυμνότητος εἰρημένα τῷ νομοθέτῃ διεξεληλυθότες πρότερον ἀρξώμεθα τοῖς λεχθεῖσι τὸν ἐξῆς προσαρμόττειν λόγον· περίεστι τοῖνυν ἐν τοῖς χρησμοῖς ἀκόλουθα τὰδε (the main biblical lemma, Gen 9:24)· ‘ἐξένηψε δὲ Νῶε ἀπὸ τοῦ οἴνου καὶ ἔγνω ὅσα ἐποίησεν αὐτῷ ὁ υἱὸς αὐτοῦ ὁ νεώτερος.’

This collection of structural passages give rise to a number of questions of interpretation.

(1) The fact that *Agr.* begins with the quotation of the text that will form the main biblical lemma of the three treatises that follow (and is cited a further two times in *Plant.*) strongly suggests that this cluster of treatises belong together and were planned as a group. A more difficult question is whether the cluster ends with the final part of *Sobr.* as it has been transmitted. I am inclined to think it does. The prayer of the σπουδαῖος to dwell in the houses of the one (Shem) who holds that what is noble is the only good (§68, based on Gen 9:27) is a fitting final theme. The final paragraph then makes an additional minor point drawn from the final line of the same biblical text. It is, however, a little unusual that Philo does not refer to the actual text and uses a different term (δοῦλος instead of παῖς). So it is possible that the final part is mutilated. Moreover it should be noted that Book 2 of the *Quaestiones in Genesim* asks a question of Gen 9:28 (not treated in *Sobr.*) and then goes on to ask four more questions of Gen 10:1–8 (*QG* 2.78–82). So it remains possible that the treatise, which is of course unusually short,<sup>11</sup> continued with exegesis relating to all the names in Gen 10 and the cluster ended with some kind of transition to *De confusione linguarum*, which commences with a secondary preface which is completely unpecific and then proceeds to quote Gen 11:1–9. It is impossible to attain any degree of certainty on these matters.

(2) As Albert Geljon has discussed in his paper, there are grounds for thinking that *Agr.* and *Plant.* are not separate treatises, but two books of a single work, analogous to

<sup>10</sup> There are difficulties in the text of §139 at the words τῶν ἄθλων, καὶ ἃ. The LCL proposes τὸ ἄθλον, ἦ. These will be discussed in the Commentary.

<sup>11</sup> It is in fact the shortest of all Philonic treatises (about the same length as *Gig.*, but it should not be regarded as a separate treatise, but rather as joined with *Deus*).

*Legum allegoriae* with its three books or *De vita Moysis* with its two books.<sup>12</sup> Hints are provided in this direction by the transmitted title *περὶ φυτουργίας* *Νῶε τὸ δεύτερον* and the evidence supplied by Eusebius both in his catalogue in the *Historia ecclesiastica* and when citing from the books in the *Praeparatio evangelica*.<sup>13</sup> It very much looks like Philo himself is responsible for the confusion. At *Agr.* 181 he announces that he will speak *περὶ τῆς φυτουργίας*, but there is no mention of this subject in the opening words of *Plant.* (though we note *περὶ τῶν κατὰ μέρος φυτουργιῶν τε καὶ γεωργιῶν* in §2), while at §139 he reverts to *περὶ γεωργίας* again. So there may have been books *α'* and *β'* of *Περὶ γεωργίας*, as was apparently the case for *Ebr.* (see (4) below), or they may have had separate titles. We cannot be certain. Geljon in his remarks on the book's title<sup>14</sup> rightly points out that the two books could have been written on a single scroll (together they are 75 pages of C-W's Greek text, quite similar to longer treatises such as *Her.* or *Spec.* 1). But, as Sterling suggests, the fact that *Plant.* has a secondary preface indicates that it was most likely written on a separate roll. Papyrus rolls could be tailor-made to the length of the treatise after it was copied out by glueing the sheets together. Only the total length could be a problem. If a book got much longer than seven metres, it became unwieldy and it was time to bring it to a close. Authors or copyists would have developed a sense of how big a pile of sheets a book of that length amounted to.

(3) We are not yet finished with the problems raised by the transitional passage at *Plant.* 139–141. In addition to the terminological issue already discussed above, there are two further points. Firstly the summary of the contents of *Plant.* so far (i.e. §§1–138) has some oddities, which I will not discuss now. Secondly and more importantly, Philo says in §139 that he now wants to specifically discuss the subject of viticulture (he had said he would do this in §1, but then got distracted by his grand allegory on planting) and so he again quotes the main biblical lemma. But this means, he continues (§141), that because of its ethical implications (via allegory), it will necessary to discuss the related subject of inebriation (*περὶ μέθης*). This is of course the title of *Ebr.* First, however, before examining what Moses says on the subject he will investigate what the philosophers think about it, and this topic takes up the rest of the book. Why did Philo not start a separate book at this point? After all, the subject matter of section §§142–177 fits in much better with *Ebr.* than it does with *Plant.* The only answer that comes to my mind is that he thought the contents of the book so far were a bit too short for a decent scroll, so he should add a bit more to it. There is another possibility, namely that he *did* start another book, i.e. the originally *Plant.* 139 was the beginning of *Ebr.*<sup>15</sup> The initial words of *Ebr.* as we have it do not rule out this possibility, even if they do not contain a reference to a previous book or account as in *Plant.* 1 or *Sobr.* 1. However, the words of §§139–141 do not read like the beginning of a new book, not only because the summary of the previous book is rather long,<sup>16</sup> but especially because the title of the new book would not appear until the eleventh line. So I not think this possibility is quite likely.

<sup>12</sup> But note that *Leg.* originally had at least four books, as noted by Sterling (2012) 64–65.

<sup>13</sup> See the comments on the title of the work in Albert Geljon's paper.

<sup>14</sup> See his paper for Atlanta, p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> It may well have been the case that someone (Pantaenus?) had to rescue and re-edit Philo's writings after they had miraculously survived the 'shipwreck' of Hellenistic-Jewish literature. See Runia (1993) 22–23, Sterling (1999) 161–163.

<sup>16</sup> None of the secondary prefaces in the Allegorical Commentary discussed by Sterling (2012) 62–63 are as detailed as this passage. However, some of those in the Exposition are quite lengthy and detailed.

(4) Lastly there is the problem of the lost other book of *Ebr.* We can be certain that there was another book. The opening words of *Sobr.* indicate that the subjects of inebriation and nakedness had been discussed. The latter theme, obviously taking its starting-point from Noah's nakedness in the main biblical lemma, is not covered in *Ebr.* It is also very likely that the fourth meaning that Philo records Moses as associating with wine at *Ebr.* 4, 'good humour and gladness,' was discussed in the missing book. We return to this possibility later on in our paper.<sup>17</sup> The first three are all covered in *Ebr.* and the fifth is the missing 'nakedness'. Eusebius and Jerome inform us that there were two books, as does the title in the ms. Laurentianus LXXXV 10. It surely seems very plausible that *Ebr.* is the first of these two books and that the missing book covered what Philo had promised to discuss but is not contained in *Ebr.* The only snag is that the Oxyrhynchus papyrus dating back to the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> century check describes the extant book as Book 2. I agree with Gregory Sterling that given our present knowledge this seems implausible, but that the ancient scribe might have had access to evidence that we no longer have.<sup>18</sup> Long ago Adler suggested that the final part of *Plant.* might be the missing first book of *Ebr.* (he did not know about the papyrus).<sup>19</sup> This would mean that the missing subjects in the treatment of inebriation would have been found in a missing section of *Ebr.* as we have it now. As evidence he argued that Philo's references to words like *προοίμια* at §149, when compared with his use of the same words at *Ebr.* 11, shows that a new treatise began at *Plant.* 139. But it should be noted that in the former text they are the prelude of an investigation (*σκέψις*), in the latter of a writing (*γρᾶφή*). Moreover, it seems to me unlikely that the arguments of the philosophers begun at *Plant.* 142 would be of sufficient length to occupy an entire book, even if in the treatise's present state there is definitely some material missing. Adler's hypothesis certainly provides a solution if we are looking for a different first book of *Ebr.* between the existing treatment of the biblical text in *Plant.* and the beginning of the present *Ebr.* But I cannot find it convincing.

### 3. *Philo's methods of composition*

We return now to the structure of the individual treatise, with a particular focus on *Plant.* For this discussion we take our earlier work on the structure of Philo's allegorical treatises as the starting-point, in particular the study on *Agr.* which was presented at the meeting of the Philo group (as it was then) held in New Orleans in November 2009 and published in *The Studia Philonica Annual* in 2010 as part of the preparations for the publication of the Commentary on the treatise in the Philo of Alexandria Commentary Series jointly authored by Albert Geljon and myself.<sup>20</sup> We will take the basic features of our understanding of Philo's exegetical method in the Allegorical Commentary as given and not dwell further on its

<sup>17</sup> See below ¶5 (6).

<sup>18</sup> Sterling (2012) 62 n. 54. On the papyrus and its evidence see Royse (1980), esp. 160–161. The fragments preserved in the Sacra Parallela, which refer to both book 1 and 2 of *Ebr.*, do not give any worthwhile clues regarding content: see Morris (1987) 837. The texts are printed in Wendland (1891) 22–25.

<sup>19</sup> Adler (1929) 53–67.

<sup>20</sup> Runia (2010); Geljon and Runia (2013).

details except to make a few additional points.<sup>21</sup> Its most important principle is the primacy of the biblical text. The structure that Philo constructs for a particular treatise is for the most part determined by his selection of biblical texts, in the first instance the main biblical lemma with which the treatise always commences, together with secondary lemmata that are linked to the main text through verbal and thematic association. These texts form the ‘skeleton’ of the treatise and they point the way to an understanding of the allegorical thematics that Philo develops in the course of the treatise.

I would wish to defend the validity of this theory of how Philo composed his allegorical treatises and its value for understanding their structure. It is, I would emphasise, a purely empirical theory, based on observing how the treatises work and not on any preconceived notions about Philo’s methods. In two respects it might be possible to add refinements. Firstly, there is the question of levels of textual exegesis. In my 2010 article I assumed the two levels of primary and secondary exegesis. In the meantime Gregory Sterling has pointed out that sometimes, also in *Agr.*, Philo in fact also incorporates a tertiary level into his exegesis, i.e. the citation of a secondary text leads by association to the citation of another text which is then given exegesis. This tertiary level was already incorporated into the structural analysis in the Commentary on *Agr.*<sup>22</sup> It is in fact particularly prominent in three treatises which take the brief text of Gen 9:20–21 as their starting-point. We shall include it in our analysis of *Plant.* below.

Secondly, it may be worth looking a little further at the kinds of biblical text that Philo introduces as secondary and tertiary lemmata. These vary to a considerable degree, both in length and how they fulfil their structural role. The treatise contains a number of texts which Philo cites at some length and which determine the structure of quite long portions of the argument. Good examples of these are Exod 15:17–18 (§47, underpinning §§48–58), Gen 21:33 (§73, underpinning §§74–92), and Lev 19:23–25 (§95, underpinning §§96–138 with various other texts cited in the course of the exegesis). In other cases secondary or tertiary texts introduce shorter sequences of the argument, such as at §59 where the quite long text Deut 32:7–9 is followed only by a short explanation in §§60–61 before being succeeded by other texts linked through the theme of *κλῆρος* (Lev 16:8 in §61, Deut 10:9 and Num 18:20 in §63). Another method is to cite a brief secondary text, move to another text, then return to a continuation of the previous text. This occurs in §§32–45, when he first cites Gen 2:8, then moves to Ps. 36:4, returns briefly to Gen 2:9 before linking this text with Gen 25:27. In all these cases the role of the first cited text is definitely structural. In most cases (though not all) the mode of transition is plainly inspired by verbal similarity (which of course does not exclude thematic continuity as well).

There are other cases where the secondary and tertiary texts appear to play less of a structural role. They are cited in order to illustrate a theme in the argument. A good example is the citation of the fundamental anthropological texts Gen 2:7 and 1:27 in §19. They serve to illustrate how Moses’ doctrine of the human being differs from that of the philosophers. Similarly in §§134 two texts are introduced to explain how Judah and Issaschar illustrate the numbers four and five in the secondary lemma Lev 19:24–25 cited for a second time in §132.

<sup>21</sup> Based on research in two articles published in the 1980’s, Runia (1984), (1987), which has been further developed since then.

<sup>22</sup> See the structure published in Geljon–Runia (2013) 11–15 and the list of cited texts at 16–17, with instances at §§51, 64, 107, 131, 145, 172.

These illustrative texts generally reveal a thematic rather than a verbal link with the biblical texts that they shed light upon. However, they may still be asked to play a structural role. Both texts are further woven into the argument in §§135–136, before Philo cites two other texts and rounds of the chapter.

In analysing the different roles that secondary and tertiary texts play in determining the structure of the allegorical treatise, I have toyed with the idea of introducing further refinements, such as the distinction implied above between structural and illustrative texts. On the whole, however, it seems better to recognise that Philo has all manner of different ways of linking together and interweaving biblical passages and that the best way forward is to emphasise the flexibility of his technique within the parameters of his basic exegetical and allegorical method.

It is particularly the importance of the verbal linkages between the biblical texts that Philo uses in his allegorical treatises that strikes the reader once this method is discerned. Albert Geljon in his introduction to §§1–72 has noted the central role that the verbs φυτεύω and καταφυτεύω play in the texts selected for inclusion in *Plant*. In fact he has shown that all the occurrences of the two verbs in the first three books of the Pentateuch are utilised in the treatise:<sup>23</sup>

Gen 2:8, cited at §32: ἐφύτευσεν ὁ θεὸς παράδεισον ἐν Ἐδέμ κατὰ ἀνατολάς, καὶ ἔθετο ἐκεῖ τὸν ἄνθρωπον ὃν ἔπλασεν.

Gen 9:20, cited at §1: ἤρξατο Νῶε ἄνθρωπος εἶναι γεωργὸς γῆς καὶ ἐφύτευσεν ἀμπελώνα.

At §140 he adds the words from v. 21 καὶ ἔπιε τοῦ οἴνου, καὶ ἐμεθύσθη.

Gen 21:33, cited at §73: φυτεύσαι ἄρουραν ἐπὶ τῷ φρέατι τοῦ ὄρκου καὶ ἐπικαλέσαι τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου θεὸς αἰώνιος.

Exod 15:17, cited at §47: εἰσαγαγὼν καταφύτευσον αὐτοὺς εἰς ὄρος κληρονομίας σου, εἰς ἔτοιμον κατοικητήριόν σου ὃ κατειργάσω, κύριε, ἅγισμα, κύριε, ὃ ἠτοίμασάν αἱ χεῖρές σου· κύριος βασιλεύων τὸν αἰῶνα καὶ ἐπ' αἰῶνα καὶ ἔτι.

Lev 19:23, cited at §95: ὅταν εἰσέλθητε πρὸς τὴν γῆν, ἣν κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὑμῶν δίδωσιν ὑμῖν, καὶ καταφυτεύσητε πᾶν ξύλον βρώσεως, περικαθαριεῖτε τὴν ἀκαθαρσίαν αὐτοῦ· ὁ καρπὸς αὐτοῦ τρία ἔτη ἔσται ἀπερικάθαρος, οὐ βρωθήσεται· τῷ δὲ ἔτει τῷ τετάρτῳ ἔσται πᾶς καρπὸς αὐτοῦ ἅγιος, αἰνετὸς τῷ κυρίῳ· τῷ δὲ ἔτει τῷ πέμπτῳ φάγεσθε τὸν καρπὸν, πρόσθεμα ὑμῖν τὰ γεννήματα αὐτοῦ. ἐγὼ εἰμι κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὑμῶν.

In addition, at §28 Philo cites a text containing the verb φυτεύω from outside the Pentateuch:<sup>24</sup>

Ps. 93:9, ὁ φυτεύων οὓς οὐκ ἀκούει; ὁ πλάσων ὀφθαλμοὺς οὐκ ἐπιβλέψει.

The remaining occurrences of the two verbs in the Pentateuch are found in Deuteronomy and Philo does not cite these in *Plant*. However, he does cite them elsewhere in the Allegorical Commentary, except the two negative references to planting which are alluded to in the Exposition of the Law as part of the discussion of curses in *Praem*.<sup>25</sup> One of the texts, Deut 20:6, was in fact already cited in *Agr*. 148, and so in a sense anticipates the themes of the treatise that will be its sequel.

<sup>23</sup> We cite the texts as found in Philo's text (there are some elements of paraphrase).

<sup>24</sup> Note that there are nine instances of the two verbs in the Psalms, so Philo has been selective here, for example not utilising the remarkable text in Ps. 79:9 (LXX).

<sup>25</sup> The texts are: Deut 6:11, cited in *Deus* 94, *Fug*. 175; Deut 16:21 cited in *Leg*. 1.48; Deut 20:6 cited in *Agr*. 148; Deut 28:30, 39, alluded to but not cited in *Praem*. 128.

Without exception the six verses containing the word (κατα)φυτεύω, starting with the main biblical text, play key roles in the structure of the treatise. This can be immediately seen if the structural analysis that we shall present below is consulted. In fact all the main sections of the work start with these texts (§1, §28, §73, §95, §140), to which can be added §47 within the long chapter §28–72). We shall return to these texts below.

In my previous paper on the structure of *Agr.* I suggested that Philo must have studied the terms used in the Pentateuch for various activities and concepts very carefully and that he may have used some kind of concordance, unless he could draw on the resources of what was clearly a formidable memory.<sup>26</sup> I would like to add to this by making the further suggestion that he might have prepared a dossier of interlinked texts before composing his treatise. The linkages would be in many case verbal, as we see in the striking example we have just studied, but they could also be thematic. Key biblical texts, such as those in the creation account might be included, but also texts that are quite obscure. In many cases the texts would have to be cited out of context. But for Philo this would not be a problem, for it is a basic assumption of his allegorical method that the Pentateuch constitutes an integrated network of meaning. A parallel case of a dossier of texts focusing on a particular topic, with emphasis on verbal linkages, can also be seen in the case of the following treatise *Ebr.*, where the theme of planting gives way to that of wine (οἶνος) and inebriation (μέθη), both of which are contained in the main biblical lemma. Here too the major elements of the treatise's structure are all introduced by passages containing these terms or words based on them.<sup>27</sup>

#### 4. *The structure of De plantatione*

It is now time to present the structure of the treatise, subdividing it into its separate structural and thematic elements in accordance with the method discussed above.<sup>28</sup> The following abbreviations are used:

MBL = Main Biblical Lemma, the main biblical verse on which Philo comments.

SBL = Secondary Biblical Lemma, an additional biblical verse that is quoted to explain the MBL.

TBL = Tertiary Biblical Lemma, another biblical text that is quoted to explain a SBL.

MOT = Mode of Transition, the way in which the quoted verses are linked together.

Note that a verbal MOT generally also entails a thematic MOT, but not vice versa. This structural analysis will form the basis of the divisions of our translation and the commentary based on it.

<sup>26</sup> Runia (2010) 96.

<sup>27</sup> See *Ebr.* 2 (Gen. 9:20–21); §14 (Deut 21:18–21, esp. οἶνοφλυγεί); §96 (Exod 32:17–19, esp. οἴνου); §127 (Lev 10:8–10, esp. οἶνον); §143 (1 Sam 1:11, esp. οἶνον καὶ μέθυσμα, cf. also v. 15 cited in §149); §166 (Gen 19:33, esp. οἶνον); §210 (Gen 39:1 etc., esp. ἀρχιτοιοχόφ); §222 (Deut 32:32–33, esp. οἶνος).

<sup>28</sup> I wish to acknowledge the contribution of Albert Geljon to determining this structure. He may not necessarily agree with every aspect of it.

Philo of Alexandria  
*On planting (De plantatione)*  
Exegetical structure

*Part One: On Planting (§§1–138)*

Chapter 1: God plants the cosmos and what it contains (§§1–27)

(a) Transitional statement: announcement of this book's main theme and citation of MBL Gen 9.20 (§1):

After treating the skill of cultivation we now turn to that of planting vines.

(b) Introduction of God as the greatest planter and how he created the cosmos as the greatest plant (§§2–10):

God created the cosmos out of earth, water, air and fire. There is no need to look for a corporeal base. God's eternal Word is the firm prop of the cosmos

(c) Creation of the lesser and particular plants, i.e. animals and plants (§§11–16):

God created living animals, which are assigned to the four divisions of the cosmos. Those in the air include incorporeal souls. He also produced plants which always stand on the same place.

(d) Creation of the human being, citation of SBL Gen 2:7 and Gen 1:27 (MOT thematic) (§§17–22):

The human being is a heavenly plant. His soul has been inbreathed by the divine spirit and so the human being has been made after the image of God's Word. His body was made erect so that he looks up to heaven and towards God.

(e) Lovers of wisdom are called upwards, citation of SBL Lev 1:1 and Exod 31:2 (MOT thematic, but note the verbal link between Gen 2:7 and Gen 31:3 implicitly cited in §23) (§§23–27):

Those who long for wisdom are not focused on the body and earthly things but yearn for what is above in heaven. Examples are Moses and Bezalel, who are called upwards.

Chapter 2. God plants virtues in the human being (§§28–72)

(a) Transition to theme of the creation of trees in the human being, illustrated by SBL Ps 93:9 (MOT verbal φυτεύω) (§§28–31):

The senses and the powers in the body are like trees or shoots planted by God, as illustrated by the Psalmist.

(b) Citation of SBL Gen 2:8 (MOT verbal φυτεύω, also ἔπλασεν) and first comment on interpreting the Garden of Eden (§§32–35):

God plants a garden (paradise) in Eden, but a literal interpretation raises theological problems, so we must turn to allegory.

(c) Allegorical reading of the planting of paradise. Citation of TBL Ps 36:4 (MOT verbal), continuation of SBL Gen 2:9 (MOT thematic ξύλον), and TBL Gen 25:27 (MOT verbal ἀπλαστος) (§§36–45)

God has planted in the human soul a garden of virtues. The name Eden means 'luxury', a symbol of a joyful soul that rejoices in the Lord as the psalmist says. Further details explained are its position towards the East, the fact that only the human being

is placed there and no animals, and that it is the moulded man who was introduced there.

(d) Citation of SBL Exod 15:17–18 (MOT verbal *καταφυτεύω*) and explanation of the people of vision being planted in the mountain of God's inheritance (§§46–58):

Moses prays that his people may be planted in the mountain of God's inheritance (*κληρονομία*) so that they can imitate God and lead a good life. This world is the mountain of God's inheritance because it is the possession and portion (*κλήρος*) of its maker. God gives a portion since all things belong to him. The sacred band of wise souls is a special portion of God.

(e) Citation of TBL Deut 32:7–9 (MOT thematic, but note that *μέρις* recalls *κλήρος*, *κληρονομία*) and TBL Lev 16:8 (MOT verbal *διακληρώω*) (§§59–61):

He who sees God is described as his portion and allotment/inheritance, whereas the sons of Adam are scattered. The former is symbolised by the goat that is assigned to the Lord on the Day of Atonement.

(f) Citation of TBL Deut 10:9 (MOT verbal *μέρις*, *κλήρος*) and TBL Num 18:9 (MOT verbal (*μέρις*, *κληροδοσία*)) (§§62–72):

The tribe of Levi, that is the purified mind, has the Lord as his portion as stated in the two biblical texts. The name Levi means 'He for me'. To have the highest cause as one's allotment is the greatest honour of all, reserved for those who seek wisdom.

### Chapter 3: The practices of the wise person relating to planting (§§73–93)

(a) Transition to new topic, citation of SBL Gen 21:33 (MOT verbal *φυτεύω*) (§§73–74):

Transition to the practices illustrated by the allegory of planting. Quotation of another biblical verse with the verb *φυτεύω*. The wise Abraham imitates the planting by God. Brief outline of main components of the allegorical explanation: tree, plot of land, fruit.

(b) Explanation of 'a ploughed field' in SBL (§§75–77):

The field representing the tree measures ten thousand square cubits. This is the most complete and perfect number and symbolizes that God is the beginning and limit of all things.

(c) Explanation of 'the well of the oath' and citation of TBL Gen 26:32–33 (MOT verbal *φρέαρ*, *ὄρκος*) (§§78–84):

Those who investigate the nature of existing things resemble those who dig wells. Just as diggers of wells often do not find water, so researchers do not attain perfection of knowledge. The oath symbolizes the firm conviction of this fact, calling on God as witness.

(d) Explanation of the names 'Lord' and 'God' in SBL and quotation of TBL Gen 28:21 (MOT verbal *κύριος*, *θεός*) (§§85–92):

The two names representing the fruit of the tree refer to the two powers of He who IS: Lord indicating him as ruler, God as bestowing benefits, which he does continuously.

(e) Summary of allegorical exegesis of SBL Gen 21:33 (§93)

The summary didactically lists the main points explained (cf. §74)

## Chapter 4: the not yet perfect human beings as planters (§§94–138)

(a) Scripture also is concerned with another group of planters, as introduced through the citation of SBL Lev 19:23–25 (MOT verbal καταφυτεύω) (§§94–95):

We, who are not yet perfect and are busy with our ordinary duties, also have to practise cultivation.

(b) Explanation of ‘the entering of the land’ (SBL) (§§96–98):

When the intellect has set out on the road of understanding it will cultivate trees that bring forth cultivated fruit, and will strive for freedom from passions, knowledge and good things.

(c) Explanation of ‘remove fully its uncleanness’ (SBL) and quotation of TBL Gen 30:37 (MOT thematic) (§§99–112):

Harmful shoots that grow among the ordinary duties should be cut away, such as hypocrisy and dishonesty. Note the practiser Jacob, who stripped rods to the white bark by tearing away the green, that is he does away with what is harmful in the duties and reveals what is good.

(d) Explanation that ‘the fruit will be uncleansed and not eaten for three years’ (SBL) (§§113–116):

Three years refer to the three parts of time: past, present and future. The fruit of instruction does not need cleansing and will last for ever.

(e) Explanation that ‘in the fourth year all the fruit will be holy and praiseworthy for the Lord’ (SBL) (§§117–131):

Scripture recognizes the special significance of the number four, for example in the physical world, in ethics and mathematics. The fruit of instruction is ‘praiseworthy’ in that it teaches praise and thanksgiving to God, the importance of which is shown by an ancient story.

(f) Explanation that ‘in the fifth year’ the fruit will be (SBL), and quotation of TBL Gen 29:35 and Gen 30:18 (MOT thematic) (§§132–136):

The number five refers to the five senses which nourish the mind. Judah, the fourth son of Leah, means ‘confession of praise to the Lord’ and Issachar, the fifth, means ‘reward’. The cultivator receives a reward from the trees in the fifth year.

(g) Explanation of ‘I am the Lord your God’ and quotation of TBL Hos 14:9–10 (MOT verbal καρπός) (§§137–138):

The fruit and the products belong to the One God. As the prophet states, the wise man who possesses the fruit of understanding will understand this.

*Part Two: On viticulture (§§139–177)*

## Chapter 1: Introducing the subject (§§139–148)

(a) Summary of treatise so far and repeated citation of the MBL Gen 9:21–21 (§§139–140):

We have now dealt with the most ancient form of cultivation utilized by the first cause and other related aspects. We will now examine a species of cultivation, viticulture.

## (b) How the subject will be treated (§§141–142)

Noah cultivates the vine with knowledge and skill, but foolish persons do it in a unskillful way. We will later investigate what Moses said about drunkenness, now we discuss the opinion of the other philosophers on the question: will the wise man get drunk?

## (c) Short overview of two contrary opinions (§§143–148)

Some say that the drinking of wine befits a wise man, because his good sense will protect him for harmful results. Other say that a wise man should not drink wine, because he will no longer be able to control himself.

## (d) Setting out the method to be followed in the discussion (§§149–150a)

Our question clearly can be answered in two ways: the wise man will get drunk, or he will not get drunk. We start with proofs for the former position.

## Chapter 2: Argumentation that the wise man will get drunk (§§149–174)

## (a) First argument (§§150b–155):

There are homonyms and synonyms. ‘Drinking wine and ‘getting drunk’ are synonyms. Both words denote excessive indulgence in wine, which the wise man may wish to engage in for a variety of reasons.

## (b) Second argument (§§156–164):

In earlier times there was a more robust culture, in which wine was drunk with care and the appropriate decorum, as indicated by the etymology of the word μεθύειν as μετὰ τὸ θύειν describing the behaviour of the wise person. Nowadays people drink wine to excess with practices involving disgusting drinking contests.

## (c) Third argument (§§165–172):

Etymological argument: ἡ μέθη (drunkenness) is derived from μέθεσις (relaxation). Wine is the cause of relaxation for the soul. For Moses play and laughter belong to the goals of wisdom, as practised by Isaac (whose name means ‘laughter’) and Rebecca (meaning ‘patience’). Wine intensifies natural impulses for good or for the opposite.

## (d) Fourth argument (§§173–174):

A non-technical argument: many writers have written about drinking wine, but they do not report about its misuse and that it would be a bad thing for the wise person to do.

## Chapter 3: Counterarguments (§§175–177)

## (a) Introductory remark about method (§175)

It is also necessary to state the contrary position in the argument in order to reach a just verdict.

## (b) First counterargument (§§176–177):

No one will entrust a secret to a drunken man. But we should immediately state the opposed view. Absurd consequences for the wise person can be drawn from this argument.

*End of treatise*

### 5. Comments on the treatise and its structure

In the next part of my paper I wish to make some interpretative comments on the structure that I have just presented. These are still in a provisional form and will be no doubt be sharpened through our work on the commentary.

(1) We have already noted that the treatise clearly consists of two parts, both of which start with the citation of the main biblical lemma, but which do not cohere very well together. The title of the treatise in fact does not cover the subject matter of the second part at all. It would have been better joined up with the following treatise, since the common theme turns to wine and inebriation.

(2) In contrast to the treatise as a whole, its first part of the treatise taken on its own does have a tight and well thought through structure. To understand it fully, we have to return to the Pentateuchal use of the verbs of planting, *φυτεύω* and *καταφυτεύω*, which we have already discussed above. Not only is the activity described the verbs important, but also who is performing that activity. There are four different subjects. The first is Noah in the main biblical lemma. Strangely, after this first mention, he disappears completely from the treatise, until briefly resurfacing at §140 when the second part of the work commences. On both occasions Philo gives him his scriptural epithet *ὁ δίκαιος* (Gen 6:9), but does nothing further with it. In *Agr.* the status of Noah was important. In the treatise's second part Philo emphasises that he is a beginner and not strong enough spiritually to reach the final goal of full knowledge.

The second subject is God the planter. He is first depicted as planting the entire universe. Philo does not have a Pentateuchal text for this (the metaphor is not used in the creation account), so the section on cosmology (§§2–27) has to do without a text referring to God as planter (later at §48 he compensates for this through his allegorical identification of the 'mountain' in Exod 15:17 as the cosmos). This changes when the formation of the human being is introduced, for after a brief discussion on Ps 93:9, which refers to God planting the senses, he can turn to the important text in the creation account when God plants a paradise, Gen 2:8, which provides plenty of rich allegorical material up to §45. Of course the sojourn of the soul in paradise comes to a sad end. The earthly mind Adam is removed and exiled (§46). But Moses prays that God will plant the people of vision on the mountain of his inheritance (Exod 15:17). So again God does the planting, if he responds to Moses' prayer, as he surely does. To have God as one's allotment (*κλήρος*) is the greatest good that one can have (§72) and this rounds off the discussion of God's activity as planter rather nicely.

The third subject is the wise person Abraham, whose planting activity forms the core of the next cited text containing the verb *φυτεύω* at §73. The other two Patriarchs are also invoked (Isaac at §78, Jacob at §90). This is the stage that Noah had not reached in *Agr.* The wise understand that God is the source of all blessings. They trust in him and this makes them feel cheerful and safe (§§91–92). After this relatively short section we arrive at the fourth subject. This time it relates to the people of Israel as they enter the land which the Lord grants them (Lev 19:23), which Philo immediately converts into a first person plural, so it concerns those who have not yet attained perfection (just like Noah in *Agr.*). This text about planting fruit provides a wealth of allegorical material sufficient to keep the exegete going until the end of the first part of the treatise at §138, ending with the themes of giving thanks, reward and recognition, and that the soul's fruits are the possession of God who is One.

(3) The correlation of the movement of the first part from God to us human beings who are not yet perfect with the subjects of the chief verbs φυτεύω and καταφυτεύω have given the treatise a tight and coherent structure, within which many ethical and spiritual themes can be elaborated in more or less detail. It may seem logical, therefore, to divide this first part into three chapters, corresponding to the three different subjects. We have not chosen this path because it would mean that the chapter on God as planter would take up the entire section from §§2–72. Yet this long slab of text clearly divides into two, a first part dealing with God as planter of the cosmos and all that it contains (§§2–27), the second treating God as planter of virtues in the human soul (§§28–72). This has led me to regard these parts as separate chapters, making them more manageable in size for the commentary and acknowledging that they represent two steps in the build-up of the argument. It would also be possible to divide the single long chapter into two sub-chapters, as Albert Geljon has advocated in his analysis.

(4) Long ago in my dissertation I labelled the passage §§2–27 as Philo's 'phyto-cosmological excursus'.<sup>29</sup> The label was intended to highlight that he here gives a compact presentation of an entire cosmology, patently based on the structure of Plato's *Timaeus* and the interpretations of its subsequent readers, which Philo has very creatively overlaid with the plant metaphor supplied by the subject of the treatise. (The two sources of Mosaic and Platonic metaphor nearly converge in the depiction of the human being as a 'heavenly plant,' duly utilised and attributed, though not by name, in §17.) It might be thought that the would 'excursus' is inappropriate, given how tightly Philo integrates this passage into the structure of the treatise. But I believe that it can be defended. As we noted above, the section is not introduced by any biblical text and it gives a great deal of—admittedly fascinating—detail that is not of direct relevance for the main subject of the treatise. It is really background material, but we would not want to do without it.

(5) Turning now to the second part of the treatise, containing the arguments of the philosophers on whether the wise man will get drunk, it is immediately obvious that the kind of text that Philo presents here is totally different from his usual manner in the Allegorical Commentary. It resembles much more closely the style and content that we find in the philosophical treatises, and particularly (although the subject-matter is quite different) in the *De aeternitate mundi*. It has proved possible to divide it up into chapters and sections, as was done for Part one, but these are generally much shorter than in the earlier part and of course they are wholly devoid of scriptural quotations, although there is a brief allusion to Moses and his depiction of Isaac and Rebecca which he has imported in §§168–169.

The reason why this part of the treatise is so different is of course obvious. In putting forward the views of the philosophers on this subject, Philo has consulted an existing philosophical text (or possible multiple texts) by an unknown author and has adapted it for use in the present context. The resemblance to *Aet.* is not coincidental. Not only is he also in that treatise heavily dependent on philosophical sources, but in both cases he makes use of the same method of presentation. As I demonstrated in my first published article on Philo,<sup>30</sup> he uses the genre of the *θέσις* or *quaestio infinita*, a method of discussing a general question.

<sup>29</sup> Runia (1986) 389–392.

<sup>30</sup> Runia (1981). The study of Von Arnim (1888) 101–140 is flawed because, misled by the thematic similarities to Seneca *Ep.* 83, he interprets it as a Stoic ζήτημα.

That this is the genre is made quite clear by the way that Philo introduces it: *προτείνεται δὲ οὕτως· εἰ μεθυσθήσεται ὁ σοφός* (§142). The subject is put forward and arguments are produced in the affirmative and the negative. At the end of the treatise a decision may be made on which position and arguments are the stronger (usually it is the ones that are presented second), or the question may be left open.

The turning point between the two sets of arguments occurs at §175 where he says that in order to be judged victorious, it is necessary to let those arguments which establish the opposed point of view speak. The term for ‘establish’, *κατασκευάζω*, is exactly the same as that used at *Aet.* 20, when Philo introduces the long list of arguments defending the view that the cosmos is ungenerated and everlasting. It belongs to the technical vocabulary of the *θέσις*. This was already made clear when he commences the arguments in favour of the *θέσις* at §149.<sup>31</sup> However, only a single argument is put forward (§§176–177). This argument is then not allowed to stand on its own, as occurred in the case of the earlier arguments, but an opponent with a refutatory argument (*φήσει δὴ τις ἐναντιούμενος*) is immediately introduced. This argument forms the conclusion of the treatise.

It can hardly be doubted that Philo did not intend the treatise to end in this way. Not only is the conclusion very abrupt and even anti-climactic, but it also runs contrary to the intent to present further arguments which he states before introducing the opponent, as indicted in the words ‘before we string together the other arguments in sequence’ (§176). We can safely say that the final part of the treatise has been lost. How it would have ended is a matter of speculation. Philo may have been content to leave the question up in the air. He is often keen to show that the philosophers are in disagreement with each other.<sup>32</sup> Moses can supply the answer, and that will be revealed in the next treatise, *Ebr.*

(6) It might be argued that Philo will surely support the view that the wise person will get drunk, since is it not the case that this is what happens to Noah? This was the view that I took in my early article.<sup>33</sup> The situation, however, is more complicated. In the first instance, is Noah here a wise person? To be sure, the Bible calls him *δίκαιος*, ‘perfect (*τέλειος*) in his generation’ and ‘well-pleasing to God’ (Gen 6:8–9). Elsewhere Philo interprets these words as referring to the virtuous and (by implication) wise person.<sup>34</sup> But we recall that in *Agr.* he had not yet reached the final goal.

We have already remarked that it is noteworthy that in *Plant.* the personage of Noah sinks wholly below the surface, only appearing twice when the main biblical lemma is cited.<sup>35</sup> In *Ebr.* he is also scarcely mentioned (only once at §5). But in general terms the persons associated with getting drunk in the latter treatise do not come out of it at all well. It is associated with stupid chatter, complete insensibility, and insatiability (§4). These three themes take up the entire treatise. However, in the list of themes just alluded to two others are added, ‘good humour and gladness’ (*εὐθυμία καὶ εὐφροσύνη*) and ‘nakedness’ (*ibid.*).<sup>36</sup> As

<sup>31</sup> Further examples of this use of the term at *Aet.* 12, 20, 56, 94, 113, 118, 124. See the use of the term by Theon Rhetor when describing the method of the *θέσις*; see *Progymn.* 121.1, 19, 123.8.

<sup>32</sup> For example in *Ebr.* 199, *Her.* 246. On the sceptical background see Mansfeld (1988).

<sup>33</sup> Runia (1981) 114.

<sup>34</sup> *Deus* 118, *QG* 1.97.

<sup>35</sup> See above ¶5 (2).

<sup>36</sup> Reading *εὐθυμίας* with the mss.

we noted earlier,<sup>37</sup> it is very likely that these were the main themes of the missing second book of *Ebr.* The earlier of these themes will have allowed Philo to give the theme of inebriation a more positive turn, if indeed that was his wish. There are perhaps in *Plant.* already some hints in this direction. Firstly ‘good humour’ is selected, together with ‘security’ (ἀσφάλεια), as examples of what flows from having trust in God’s love of humankind at §93, the final climactic words of the chapter which discusses the planting carried out by the wise person. Secondly, it is without doubt significant that, when presenting the philosophers’ argument that wine produces relaxation in the soul, Philo adds the example of the εὐφροσύνη enjoyed together by Isaac and Rebecca (though not associated with drinking). If we are on the right track, then, despite the bad examples discussed in *Ebr.*, Philo would have ultimately agreed that the wise person can get drunk and that it can produce true joy and happiness for the soul. So he will not have been at all unhappy if it proved to be the case that the philosophical arguments in favour of this position were stronger than those arguing the opposite view, whether or not he drew that conclusion at the end of our treatise.

#### 6. *Some final reflections*

The Allegorical Commentary, with such a wealth of texts and themes, still has to yield many of its secrets. The central role of the biblical text, with its various layers and linkages, is one of them, or so I believe I have demonstrated. But it gives only a structure. The bare bones have to come to life when they are clothed with the allegorical themes that they summon up. I am conscious that much remains to be done, also in connection with this treatise that we have examined in the present article.

It is important to recognise that Philo uses a multiplicity of methods and techniques in this long work. Scholars such as Maximilian Adler have attempted to see a development in his method, and it is certainly the case that the final treatises that we have in the series, *Somn.* 1–2, if indeed they belong in it, are very different from the first, *Leg.* 1–2.<sup>38</sup> Similarly the treatises in the cluster we have been studying have their own individual characteristics, notably the focus on a very brief single main biblical text. But if there was development, it was not necessarily in a single direction, as Adler argued.<sup>39</sup> I would argue that Philo was very flexible in the various methods that he used and that these need to be further explored. For this the empirical approach that I am advocating is most suitable, because it starts off with only a very small number of assumptions and explores the text of the commentaries as they present themselves to the reader.

In closing I wish to draw attention to the performative aspect of the Philonic treatise.<sup>40</sup> The interpreter of scripture discerns and unfolds the themes that he believes are inherent in the texts that he has brought together. It is then the readers who ‘experience’ these through the act of reading. Ultimately that is what Philo wishes his readers to have, an experience that is both intellectual and spiritual, that will set the goal before them and then assist them

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<sup>37</sup> See above ¶2 (4).

<sup>38</sup> Adler (1929).

<sup>39</sup> See our remarks at Runia (2010) 90–91.

<sup>40</sup> See Runia (1987) 129–130.

in attaining it, a firm trust in and knowledge of God that will find expression in joy and thanksgiving.

## APPENDIX

### Translation of passages cited

The following is a translation of the biblical and transition passages cited above on pp. 2–3.

*Agr.* 1: (the main biblical lemma, Gen 9:20–21a) ‘And Noah began to be a human being\* who cultivates the earth, and he planted a vineyard, and he drank from the wine, and he was drunk in his house.’

*Agr.* 181: ‘As for what has been said about his work as the planter (of a vineyard), let us discuss that on another occasion.’

*Plant.* 1: ‘In the previous book we discussed everything that was opportune in relation to the skill of cultivation in general. In this book we shall give an account, as best we are able, of the specific skill of viticulture. For he (Moses) introduces the just person not only as a cultivator, but also individually as viticulturist when he says: ‘Noah began to be a human being who cultivates the earth, and he planted a vineyard (Gen 9:20).’

*Plant.* 139–141: ‘We have spoken as best we could about the most ancient and sacred form of cultivation which the Cause utilises for the cosmos, the most fertile of plants, about the next kind of cultivation which the honourable person practises, about the number four which among the numbers has won the highest honour, and also about what has been prescribed through the commands and injunctions of the laws. (§140) Let us now examine the viticulture practised by the just person Noah, which is a specific form of the skill of cultivation. For it is stated that ‘Noah began to be a human being who cultivates the earth, and he planted a vineyard, and he drank of the wine, and he became drunk (Gen 9:20–21a).’ (§141) The just person, therefore, tends the plant of inebriation with skill and knowledge, whereas the foolish give it unskilled attention of the wrong kind. So it will be necessary for us to state what is fitting about the subject of inebriation, for we will then immediately also know the power of the plant that provides the means for it. What is said by the lawgiver on the subject of inebriation we shall deal with thoroughly on a later occasion. At the present moment let us examine the views of others.’

*Ebr.* 1: ‘The statements made by other philosophers on (the subject of) inebriation we have recorded as best we could in the book prior to this one. Let us now examine the views that the in all respects great and wise lawgiver has on it.’

*Sobr.* 1: ‘Having previously examined the statements made by the lawgiver on inebriation and the nakedness that followed upon it, let now proceed by fitting the next topic to what has already been said. In the sacred oracles the words that follow are: ‘And Noah became sober from the wine and he realized what his younger son had done to him (Gen 9:24).’

\* We translate ἄνθρωπος throughout either as ‘human being’ or ‘person’, but not as ‘man’. The latter translation is reserved for the Greek ἀνὴρ.

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