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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF READING PHILONIC PARALLELS: EXAMPLES FROM THE *DE PLANTATIONE**

SAMI YLI-KARJANMAA

Introduction

In this article I discuss the question of how the exercise of reading together several Philonic passages can change our understanding of what the Alexandrian exegete wants to say. I take two examples from the *De plantatione*: the description of the creatures belonging to the cosmic regions at §§ 11–14, where my focus is on those of the air in §14, and the rich mixture of Philo's anthropological, ethical, and soteriological views that we find in §§ 17–25. For the former, the most important parallels are *Gig.* 6–18 and *Somn.* 1.133–141, but parts of *Conf.* 174–177 and *QG* 4.188 also clearly belong to the same series of more or less overlapping passages. For the latter, I mainly discuss *Plant.* 44; *Leg.* 1.31–38, 61; *Det.* 83–86 and *Her.* 54–64.¹

My point of departure is that when Philo treats the same subject matter using similar vocabulary, he is giving expression to the same underlying set of ideas in each case, even though the subset of ideas explicitly expressed

* This essay is a revised version of the paper I delivered at the Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting in Atlanta in November 2015.

¹ These parallelisms have, to somewhat varying degrees, long been recognized. For the former case, see, e.g., Azariah ben Moses de' Rossi, *The Light of the Eyes: Azariah De' Rossi: Translated from the Hebrew with an Introduction and Annotations by Joanna Weinberg*, Yale Judaica Series 31 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 154–56; Thomas H. Billings, *The Platonism of Philo Judaeus* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1919), 28 n. 4; David T. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus of Plato*, *Philosophia Antiqua* 44 (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 228–29; Anita Méasson, *Du Char Ailé de Zeus à l'Arche d'Alliance: Images et Mythes Platoniciens Chez Philon d'Alexandrie* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1986), 281–93; and Wilfried Eisele, *Ein unerschütterliches Reich: Die mittelpatonische Umformung des Parusiegedankens im Hebräerbrief*, *BZNW* 116 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003), 196–227. For the latter (but not including all the parallels I discuss), see, e.g., Thomas H. Tobin, *The Creation of Man: Philo and the History of Interpretation* (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1983), esp. 87–93; Runia, *Philo and the Timaeus*, esp. 324–29 and Gregory E. Sterling, "'Wisdom among the Perfect': Creation Traditions in Alexandrian Judaism and Corinthian Christianity," *NT* 37 (1995) 355–84, esp. 365, 375–76.

varies. Reading such passages together results in a better understanding of his thinking and his message.

The Souls of the Air

Inspired by Plato's account in the *Timaeus* (39e–40a) and possibly adapting some of its Platonist interpretations, Philo in *Plant.* 11–13 presents a division of the “plants” of the universe.² He begins with the distinction based on the capability of locomotion (§11). Those that possess that power he divides into the creatures of land, water, air, fire, and heaven (§12). After some remarks on these last, i.e., stars and planets, he states that the immobile kind is specifically called “plants.” In *Plant.* 14 he then returns to two of the five regions, the earth and the air.³ He wants to specify that each actually sustains two kinds of creatures.⁴ As we will see, the human souls belong to both regions, to the air as discarnate (§14), to the earth as incarnate (§§17–25). The two “winged” kinds of beings in the air include two species: those that are sense-perceptible (the birds) and those that are not. The latter are further subdivided into those that enter bodies (the human souls, my main focus) and those that do not (the angels).

In what follows I first quote the parallel texts in *De plantatione*, *De somniis*, and *De gigantibus* and then discuss the connections between these and certain other texts. I devote particular attention to features that I see as evidence that the Pythagorean–Platonic tenet of *reincarnation* is in Philo's mind not only in *Somn.* 1.138–139—which is his *locus classicus* on the subject—but also in the other texts.⁵ Here, the links between the parallels and reading them together become an acute question.

The text in *De plantatione* goes:

In the air He made the winged creatures perceived by senses, and other powers besides which are wholly beyond apprehension by sense. This is the host of the bodiless souls. Their array is made of companies that differ in kind. We are told

² φυτόν can also mean “creature” more generally.

³ Philo's earlier description of the locations of earth, water, air, fire, and ether in relation to each other in *Plant.* 3 favors understanding these as cosmic regions rather than as elements. In *Gig.* 7 he calls the five (the fifth now being heaven) “primary elementary divisions (πρώτων και στοιχειωδῶν μερῶν),” in *Somn.* 1.135 simply “parts of the universe (τὰ τοῦ κόσμου μέρη).”

⁴ In PCW, §14 begins only after this statement.

⁵ See Sami Yli-Karjanmaa, *Reincarnation in Philo of Alexandria*, SPhiloM 7 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2015). For the *De somniis*. passage and the history of its interpretation, see esp. 1, 9–13, 129–50.

that some enter into mortal bodies, and quit them again at certain periods, while others, endowed with a diviner constitution, have no regard for any earthly quarter but exist on high nigh to the ethereal region itself. These are the purest souls of all whom the Greek philosophers call “heroes,” but whom Moses, employing a well-chosen name, entitles “angels.” (*Plant.* 14)⁶

In *De somniis*, in one of the interpretations he gives for the ascending and descending angels in Jacob’s dream of the heavenly ladder (Gen 28:12), Philo writes,

Of these souls [of the air] some, those that are closest to the earth and lovers of the body, are descending to be fast bound in mortal bodies, while others are ascending, having again been separated (from the body) according to the numbers and periods determined by nature. Of these last some, longing for the familiar and accustomed ways of mortal life, hurry back again, while others, pronouncing that life great folly, call the body a prison and a tomb but escaping from it as though from a dungeon or a grave are lifted up on light wings to the ether and range the heights for ever. Others there are of perfect purity and excellence ... that have never felt any craving after the things of earth ... These are called “daemons” by the other philosophers, but the sacred record is wont to call them “angels,” employing an apter title. (*Somn.* 1.138–141)

I have argued elsewhere that this passage is not an isolated case but only the clearest manifestation of the fact that Philo endorsed the doctrine of reincarnation.⁷ I have not found any serious attempt in scholarly literature to see *Somn.* 1.138–139 as something else than a description of reincarnation. Indeed, ever since Azariah de’ Rossi’s *The Light of the Eyes* (published in 1573–1575), it is this passage that has been the basis for seeing Philo as a proponent of the tenet.⁸

A third text probably also ultimately derived from, or influenced by, a common source is found in *De gigantibus*, where Philo is engaged in explaining the “angels” mentioned in the version of Gen 6:2 he had at

⁶ The translations of both Philonic and other texts are those in the Loeb Classical Library (with occasional small changes), unless otherwise indicated; for *Gig.* I have used David Winston, *Philo of Alexandria: The Contemplative Life, The Giants, and Selections: Translation and Introduction* (London: SPCK, 1981). The text in *Plant.* 14 goes on to discuss the tasks of angels, and Philo’s description here and those in *Gig.* 12, 16 and *Somn.* 1.141 are ultimately based on Plato, *Symp.* 202e.

⁷ Yli-Karjanmaa, *Reincarnation in Philo*. My result was based on analyzing all available indirect and direct evidence bearing on the matter.

⁸ See Rossi, *The Light*, 113, 156. Philo’s attitude towards reincarnation has divided scholars in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries without ever having been the main subject of any study before mine. Debate between researchers has been almost non-existent. Earlier, during the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries there was a virtual consensus that Philo had appropriated the doctrine. See *Reincarnation in Philo*, 9–29.

hand.⁹ He states (§6): “It is Moses’ custom to give the name of ‘angels’ to those whom other philosophers call ‘daemons,’ souls that fly and hover in the air.” A little later he says,

Now some of the souls have descended into bodies, but others have never deigned to associate with any of the parts of earth ...¹⁰ The former, however, descending into the body as though into a stream have sometimes been caught up in the violent rush of its raging waters and swallowed up, at other times, able to withstand the rapids, they have initially emerged at the surface and then soared back up to the place whence they had set out. These, then, are the souls of the genuine philosophers, who from first to last practice dying to the life in the body in order to obtain the portion of incorporeal and immortal life in the presence of the Uncreated and Immortal. But the souls that have been plunged into the surf below are the souls of the others who have had no regard for wisdom. They have surrendered themselves to unstable and chance concerns, none of which relate to our noblest part, the soul or mind, but all are related to that corpse which was our birth-fellow, the body. (*Gig.* 12–15)¹¹

We can see that in addition to similarities, the accounts have many differences, for example, in *De gigantibus* two concepts that are in their original contexts linked with reincarnation, the image of the body as river and the practising of death, absent in the others, are added.¹²

We next turn to examining individual elements in *Plant.* 14. It is clearly the sparsest of these parallels. This can also be expressed by saying that—if it is accepted that each of the texts reflects the same scheme of the souls of the air—the *De plantatione* passage is the one for whose understanding the potential benefit of reading parallels is the greatest. The notion of there being *souls in the air* may in itself be regarded as a reincarnational feature. David Runia has commented in the context of *Somn.* 1.137 that seeing the

⁹ The LXX as we have it speaks of the “sons” of God taking wives of the daughters of humans.

¹⁰ What is omitted here is the description of the tasks of the angels as God’s “ministers and helpers.”

¹¹ For observations of Philo’s exegetical technique in *Gig. De gigantibus*, see David T. Runia, “Further Observations on the Structure of Philo’s Allegorical Treatises,” *VChr* 41 (1987): 105–38, especially 133–34. For a further analysis with additional viewpoints regarding *Gig.* 6–18, see Sami Yli-Karjanmaa, “Philo of Alexandria,” in *Brill’s Companion to the Reception of Plato in Antiquity*, ed. Harold Tarrant et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 115–129, 122–25.

¹² On the river metaphor, see Runia, *Philo and the Timaeus*, 260–62. See also Yli-Karjanmaa, *Reincarnation in Philo*, 114–17, 122–24 for the reincarnational contexts of both of these notions in Plato, and Philo’s use of them. The differences between the parallels are further discussed below.

air as “a flourishing city, populated with immortal souls” whose number is astronomical¹³

is an obvious attempt to systematize the doctrine of the *Timaeus* in relation to further data on demons and incorporeal souls in the *Symposium*, *Republic*, *Phaedrus* and *Epinomis*. The souls created by the demiurge are sown onto the planets and the earth (41e4–5, 42d4–5), so that it is natural to deduce that in the process of reincarnation there must be a continual procession of incorporeal souls in the air (cf. also *Phaed.* 81c–d).¹⁴

The idea may also draw on Pythagorean teachings. A similar notion is mentioned in Alexander Polyhistor’s compendium of them (Diogenes Laertius 8.25–35): “The whole air is full of souls which are called genii or heroes (δαίμονας τε καὶ ἥρωας); these are they who send men dreams and signs ...” (8.32).¹⁵ Although these do not seem to be ordinary human souls and Alexander’s description is thus only partly parallel to Philo’s, it is worth noting that it is precisely “daemons” (*Gig.* 6; *Somn.* 1.141; *QG.* 4.188)¹⁶ and “heroes” (*Plant.* 14) which Philo reports as the philosophers’ names for angels.¹⁷

The Pythagorean idea that the soul is invisible (ἀόρατος) “just as the ether is invisible” (Diogenes Laertius 8.30) resembles Philo’s “the air, too, must therefore be filled with living things, though they are invisible to us, since even the air itself is not visible to sense” (*Gig.* 8), even if the element mentioned is not the same. In *Plant.* 14 the souls’ inapprehensibility by sense and in *Somn.* 1.136 their invisibility are mentioned.¹⁸ Neither of these two passages says anything about the invisibility of the air, but based on the other features linking them with *De gigantibus* it would not seem sound

¹³ On this last point both Philo (*Somn.* 1.137) and also Alcinoüs (*Did.* 16.2) follow Plato (*Tim.* 41d).

¹⁴ Runia, *Philo and the Timaeus*, 254. Cf. Xenocrates who seems to have equated the air with Hades (fr. 213) which is compatible with the idea that souls reside in or travel through the air between incarnations.

¹⁵ See Méasson, *Du char ailé*, 275.

¹⁶ In the *QG* passage, the Armenian word is դևիք (*devkʻ*) which Marcus translates “divine beings.” However, in a note he retranslates to Greek, οἱ δαίμονες, which accords with what G. Awatikʻean, X. Siwrmēlean, and M. Awgerean, Նոր Բարոյիքի Հայկազանի Լեզուի (Nor Baṛgirkʻ Haykazean Lezuī) [*New Dictionary of the Armenian Language*], 2 vols. (Venice: Mechitarist Press, 1836) (henceforth NBHL) gives for *devkʻ* (δαίμων, δαίμόνιον). The Old Latin translation of this passage has “daemones.”

¹⁷ The identification of airborne souls with both daemons and heroes occurs, according to Augustine (*Civ.* 7.6), in the Middle Platonist Varro (d. 27 BCE) as well.

¹⁸ Another example of how a property may be assigned either to the ether or the air is the natural propensity to foster life (and the resultant necessity that the element in question has to have its own creatures): Aristotle (at Cicero, *Nat. d.* 2.42) opts for the ether, Philo, for the air (*Somn.* 1.137).

to think that it is *exclusively* *De gigantibus* that is drawing on a tradition similar to that recorded by Alexander. This is a noteworthy example of how a Philonic parallel with its tradition-historical links has an effect on how we view other passages in which the links are not equally manifest. This case also clearly exemplifies how Philo can sometimes leave part of the story untold without giving us any reason to assume that he has changed his mind or that the passages contradict each other.

Philo says in *Plant.* 14, “We are told that some enter into mortal bodies.”¹⁹ The first part, λόγος ἔχει, can be compared with “the old saying (ὁ παλαιὸς λόγος)” referring to Plato’s *Timaeus* a little later in §17. Philo sometimes uses λόγος ἔχει for referring to the scriptures (see *Her.* 56), but here that is not the case; the pre-existence of souls is, at the literal level, not a notion that was present in Philo’s Bible.²⁰ Instead, a Platonist (and thus reincarnational)²¹ tradition is the likeliest source for Philo’s εἰσκρίνεσθαι ... σώμασι θνητοῖς—a source Alcinous too seems to be drawing on when writes in *Did.* 25.6: “It follows from the proposition that souls are immortal that they should enter into bodies (τὸ εἰσκρίνεσθαι αὐτὰς τοῖς σώμασι) ... and that they should pass through many bodies both human and non-human ... [perhaps because of] love of the body (διὰ φιλοσωματίαν).”²²

¹⁹ I pass by the statement, “Their array is made of companies that differ in kind.” Azariah de’ Rossi, who is the first author to mention Philo’s endorsement of reincarnation (p. 113 in Weinberg’s edition, section 1.4) criticizes Philo’s views of the soul—not reincarnation but the idea that souls and angels do *not* differ in kind (Rossi, *The Light*, 157; section 1.6). He did not thus read *Plant.* carefully enough although he cites our passage (p. 155 Weinberg). His misunderstanding is understandable on the basis of *Gig.* 6, 16, although Philo ultimately ends up explaining that “bad” angels are really no angels at all but evil human souls. See David Winston and John Dillon, *Two Treatises of Philo of Alexandria: A Commentary on De Gigantibus and Quod Deus Sit Immutabilis* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983), 205 and Yli-Karjanmaa, “Philo of Alexandria,” 124.

²⁰ It is present in later Jewish writings such as *Wis* 8:20; see David Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon: A New Translation and Commentary*, First Yale University Press Impression, Anchor Yale Bible 43 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 25–32.

²¹ This kind of underlining of the presence of reincarnation in Platonism may seem unnecessary. However, looking at approximately the last eighty years of research into Philo’s views concerning the soul one can say that there has prevailed a noteworthy tendency to implicitly—i.e., without examining the question—assume Philo *rejected* this part of Platonist “dogma.” See my *Reincarnation in Philo*, 17–18, 25–29.

²² Tr. Dillon. I have omitted the other possible causes of incarnation which Alcinous mentions. For these, see John Dillon, *Alcinous: The Handbook of Platonism: Translation with an Introduction and Commentary*, Clarendon Later Ancient Philosophers (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), 34, 155–58; David Winston, *Logos and Mystical Theology in Philo of Alexandria* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1985), 35; Yli-Karjanmaa, *Reincarnation in Philo*, 44–52. Note that Philo’s view of reincarnation could not accommodate human souls being born as animals, because it was his view that they do not possess the highest part of the soul.

There are several things to be noted. Philo seems to be one of the first authors to use the word εἰσκρίνω about the soul's entrance to the body.²³ This verb seems, in fact, to be connected to a noteworthy extent with the doctrine of reincarnation in later authors, both Christian and Neoplatonist.²⁴ Philo uses the verb to denote the entrance into the body in *Leg.* 1.32 as well; there the entity about to incarnate is the "earthly mind" one characteristic of which is that it is body-loving (1.33, from *Phaed.* 68b), just like the descending souls in *Somn.* 1.138 are "lovers of the body (φιλοσώματοι), descending to be fast bound in mortal bodies (ἐνδεθροσόμεναι σώμασι θνητοῖς)."²⁵ This last expression, again, is paralleled in the "enter into mortal bodies (σώμασι θνητοῖς)" of *Plant.* 14. The notion of being "bound to a (mortal) body" is referred to several times by both Plato and Philo; for Plato, see, e.g., *Tim.* 44b: "So often as the soul is bound within a mortal body (εἰς σῶμα ἐνδεθρή θνητόν) it becomes at the first irrational." In its Platonic contexts this expression can well be called reincarnational.²⁶

De plantatione 14 is connected to *Somn.* 1.138 by the reference to time periods as well: souls quit their bodies "at certain fixed periods (κατὰ τινὰς ὀρισμένας περιόδους)" (*Plant.*) vs. "according to the numbers and periods determined by nature (κατὰ τοὺς ὑπὸ φύσεως ὀρισθέντας ἀριθμοὺς καὶ χρόνους)" (*Somn.*). Another parallel, particularly close to *De plantatione*, is found in *Her.* 282. In connection with death Philo states, "this debt [each of us] repays when the appointed time-cycles are completed (καθ' ὀρισμένας περιόδους καιρῶν ἐκτίνει τὸ δάνειον)." What is being referred to is the idea,

²³ Another passage is *Somn.* 1.31 where Philo (rhetorically) asks, "At our birth, is [the mind] at once introduced into us from without (ἐξωθεν εἰσκρίνεται)?" As noted by Runia, "Philo and Hellenistic Doxography," in *Philo of Alexandria and Post-Aristotelian Philosophy*, ed. Francesca Alesse; SPhA 5 (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 13–54, 25, this has a loose parallel in Stobaeus (*Ecl.* 1.48.7): "Pythagoras, Anaxagoras, Plato, Xenocrates, and Cleanthes (said) the mind enters (εἰσκρίνεσθαι) from outside."

²⁴ In addition to Alcinous, it (or the noun εἰσκρίσις) is used in this sense, e.g., by Origen (*Comm. in Joann.* 6.14.85, *Cels.* 1.32), Epiphanius (*Panarion* 3.91.15), and Photius (*Bibl. cod.* 117, 92a25), as well as Plotinus (*Enn.* 4.3.9, 6.4.16) and Iamblichus (*De mysteriis* 1.8.36).

²⁵ These souls can be identified with the reincarnating ones in 1.139 (see *Reincarnation in Philo*, 47), and there are also signs that with his "mind which is entering, but has not yet entered (εἰσκρινόμενον ... οὐπω δ' εἰσκειριμένον), the body" in *Leg.* 1.32 Philo is, for some reason, referring to souls in the inter-incarnational state; see Sami Yli-Karjanmaa, "'Call Him Earth': On Philo's Allegorization of Adam in the *Legum Allegoriae*," in *Adam and Eve Story in the Hebrew Bible and in Ancient Jewish Writings Including the New Testament*, ed. Antti Laato and Lotta Valve, Studies in the Reception History of the Bible 7 (Turku: Åbo Akademi University; Winona Lake; Eisenbrauns, 2016), 272.

²⁶ See Plato, *Tim.* 43a, 44d, 69e; *Phaed.* 81e, 92a; Philo, *Leg.* 2.22, 3.151; *Conf.* 92, 106, 177; *Her.* 274; *Mut.* 36; *Ios.* 264; *Spec.* 4.188; *Virt.* 74.

presented in *Tim.* 42e, that the portions of earth, water, air and fire, which constitute the physical body, are paid back at death.²⁷ Given the thoroughly reincarnational anthropology of the *Timaeus* this means, at *each* death. The reference to time periods is not, however, part of Plato's account. John Dillon has drawn attention to the fact that not only Philo but also Alcinous adds such a reference in a similar context at *Did.* 16.1: the gods "borrowed certain portions from primal matter for fixed periods (πρὸς ὠρισμένους χρόνους), with a view to returning them to it again."²⁸ Philo seems to be using a standard Middle Platonist formula for the duration of human life in all these cases (and some others).

The question of an author's intentions is always a tricky one. But we may ask: how would Philo's audience, if they were familiar with his interpretations of the dream about the ladder, have seen the accounts in *De plantatione* and *De gigantibus*? The parallelisms were surely no more difficult to notice in antiquity than they are now. Would Philo's hearers not have perceived the passages as referring to the same underlying pool of ideas about the journey of the soul? I think they would. With all its Platonic and Philonic links, *Plant.* 14 would have served to remind the audience, among other things, of the view that souls reincarnate until they denounce the bodily life and are ready to be saved.

Plant. 17–25: Protological Anthropology, Universal Soteriology, or Both?

Between the two sections discussed in this paper Philo first deals with the species belonging to the earth (§15), the plants and animals.²⁹ He treats their different anatomy in Platonic terms (§16)—we are back in the *Timaeus* (91e–92a), in the concluding part of the dialogue where reincarnation plays a significant role. Humans make a somewhat unexpected reappearance in §17 when Philo moves from animals to the human constitution. Given the overall theme of the first part of *De plantatione* it comes as no surprise that

²⁷ *Post.* 5 is similar, although more cosmological in idea and different in vocabulary. For a more detailed discussion of the notion of borrowing the elements as well as the references to periods of time in *De plantatione*, *Quis rerum divinarum heres sit* and *De somniis* and their background, see my *Reincarnation in Philo*, 117–19, 136–38.

²⁸ Dillon, *Handbook of Platonism*, 137.

²⁹ That land animals are presented paired with *plants* (which were already part of the first division at §11, 13) is reminiscent of Apuleius's division of creatures: those of fire and air are followed by mortal kinds composed of both water and earth: plants and land creatures (*Dogn. Plat.* 204).

Philo wants to utilize the heavenly plant motif (90ab).³⁰ At §18 Philo wants to correct an anthropological error:

Now while others, by asserting that our human mind is a portion of the ethereal nature, have claimed for the human being a kinship with the ether, our great Moses likened the rational class of soul to none of the created things. (*Plant.* 18)³¹

Philo himself is not innocent of advocating the view of the mind being a portion of the ether.³² Thomas Tobin takes the corrective here as a criticism of “the Stoic conceptual framework used to interpret Gen 2:7.”³³ However, the idea of *kinship* with the ether (συγγένεια ἀνθρώπου πρὸς αἰθέρα) is blameworthy too, or at least inferior to Moses’s view. Thus Plato gets his share of censure; cf. the affirmation in *Tim.* 90a that the leading part of the soul raises the human body “up from earth towards our kinship in the heaven (πρὸς τὴν ἐν οὐρανῷ συγγένειαν).”³⁴ Once this is set straight, Philo puts his *Timaeus* scroll aside for a while, as it were, and returns to Genesis, now to 1:27 and 2:7. It is, in particular, his exegesis of these verses that I primarily discuss below.

So what is Moses’s view more precisely?

[He] averred [the rational class of soul] to be a genuine coinage of that divine and invisible “Spirit,”³⁵ signed and impressed by the seal of God, the stamp of

³⁰ For an analysis of the Timaeian influences in *Plant.* 16–22, see Runia, *Philo and the Timaeus*, esp. 327–29, 347–48.

³¹ The translation is based on the PLCL but adopts some of Tobin’s (*Creation*, 91) corrections and introduces a few others. Worth mentioning is that I do not think Philo is referring to the rational *part* of the soul with τῆς λογικῆς ψυχῆς τὸ εἶδος. Cf. *Conf.* 176 (which is a clear parallel to *Plant.* 14 in many respects), where human souls are described as a reasoning (λογική), perishable species (εἶδος).

³² Cf., e.g., *Leg.* 3.161 where the soul is described in virtually identical terms as “a portion of an ethereal nature.” This kind of discrepancy is an example of such *differences* between parallels that should make a scholar fond of reading them together beware. The basic assumption of the passages telling (somewhat different parts of) the same story cannot then hold *in toto* and the limits of what can be read together need to be demarcated by analyzing what subjects the agreements and disagreements pertain to.

³³ Ibid. As for the history of the idea itself, cf. also Cicero, *Nat. d.* 1.27 where the notion that “the entire substance of the universe is penetrated and pervaded by a soul of which our souls are fragments” is ascribed to Pythagoras. See also Winston, *Logos*, 28–29, 64–65.

³⁴ This kinship is further discussed below, 160.

³⁵ I use quotation marks more than is customary in order to make a clearer distinction between what Philo is explaining and what his explanation is. The word πνεῦμα (“spirit,” but also “wind” etc.) is a case in point. In its “spiritual” sense it is not a Philonic category. An analysis of all of its occurrences in the *Allegorical Commentary* leads to the conclusion that apart from the instances where it denotes a physical phenomenon or is related to the Stoic notion of cohesion, it always comes from the biblical text and is something Philo will

which is the eternal Logos [τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἀοράτου πνεύματος ἐκείνου δόκιμον εἶναι νόμισμα σημειωθὲν καὶ τυπωθὲν σφραγίδι θεοῦ, ἧς ὁ χαρακτήρ ἐστὶν ὁ αἰδιος λόγος]. For “God inbreathed into his face a breath of life,” so that it cannot but be that the one who receives is made in the likeness of the one who sends forth. Accordingly we also read that the human being is³⁶ “in accordance with the image of God.” (*Plant.* 18–19)

The soul is, Philo says, a coinage of spirit, which is not a very precise description of the relationship between coinage and spirit. Regardless, it seems an impress is stamped on the soul whereby it receives the image of the Logos.³⁷ And this Philo takes to be described in Genesis *both* as the reception of the “breath of life” and being “in accordance with the image of God.”³⁸

Coming to the Philonic parallels, it is very interesting, first of all, to deal with *Plant.* 44 where Philo also discusses both Gen 1:27 and 2:7.³⁹ Philo begins by emphasizing the significance of details: “It is with deliberate care that the lawgiver says not of the human stamped ‘after the image’ but of the ‘moulded’ one that he was introduced into the garden.”⁴⁰ The reason,

want to *explain* (away). For the details, and a critique of the use of this category in Philonic research, see my “Call Him Earth,” 281–82.

³⁶ γεγενῆσθαι; Whitaker: “has been made.” For translating past tenses of γίγνομαι, see see LSJ, I.3 and II.

³⁷ Cf. *Leg.* 3.95 where Philo speaks of an “image” (χαρακτήρ) which “God has stamped (ἐντετύπωνεν) on the soul as on a tested coin (νομίσματος δοκίμου τρόπον).” This character seems again to be the Logos (3.96, 104), although Philo is not quite explicit.

³⁸ Sterling, “Wisdom,” 365 sees the rationale for the connection between the “image” and the “breath” in Philo’s contrast between Gen 2:7b–c and Lev 17:11a (discussed below). I do not agree, because the term “blood” (key in Lev) is not discussed in *De plantatione* On p. 365, primarily in connection with *Det.* 79–90 but apparently also referring to *Plant.* 18–19 he has just discussed, Sterling says that Philo takes both εἰκὼν and πνεῦμα as references to “the rational capacity of humanity,” and (p. 375), based on *Plant.* 17–23, that “[t]he inbreathing of the θεῖον πνεῦμα is thus the anthropological basis for the reception of σοφία.” I would agree with this, if it referred to reaching virtue and, ultimately, salvation. But Sterling seems to understand the “capacity” and “basis” in anthropological terms as the human mind (νοῦς; see 365, 375–76), which is quite problematic for the reason which *Leg.* 1.37, quoted on p. 375, makes clear: νοῦς is the *recipient* of the “breath.”

³⁹ A brief description of what happens in the second chapter of *Plant.* before §44 is in order. After some thoughts on the plants planted in the human being (§§28–31) Philo moves to a secondary lemma, Gen 2:8. He presents an interpretation which has close points of contact with his exegesis of the same verse in *Leg.* Cf. especially *Plant.* 32–42 with *Leg.* 1.43–47. In both, Philo takes a subsidiary lemma, Gen 6:19 in *Plant.* 43 and Deut 16:21 in *Leg.* 1.48–51, and even these have some common elements like the wildness (or the lack of it) of animals or plants. Note also the connections between §§33, 37 and 3.51–53, 253. These parallelisms should alert us to connections between Philo’s exegeses of Gen 2:7 in the two treatises.

⁴⁰ The reference is to Gen 2:8b. In *De plantatione* Philo does not launch into the kind of comparison between Gen 2:15 and 2:8b he presents in *Leg.* 1.53–55, building on the fact that

which Philo does not explicitly spell out, seems to be that the former already finds himself represented in Paradise:

The human stamped with the “spirit” “in accordance with the image of God” [ὁ μὲν γὰρ τῷ κατὰ τὴν εἰκόνα θεοῦ χαραχθεὶς πνεύματι] differs not a whit, as it appears to me, from the tree that bears the fruit of immortal life. (*Plant.* 44)

Thus in both *Plant.* 18 and 44 the human (soul) receives a stamp, and this Philo sees described in both Gen 1:27 and 2:7. This much is quite obvious. The identification of the human after the image with the tree of life is somewhat surprising, but Philo kindly explains that “both are imperishable things (ἄφθαρτα) and have been accounted worthy of the most central and princely portion.”⁴¹

What about the other human, then? “Nor does the ‘moulded’ human differ at all from the composite and more earthly (γεωδεστέρου) body” (§44). The key feature of both is having “no part in the unmoulded and simple nature (ἀπλάστου καὶ ἀπλῆς φύσεως ἀμέτοχος).” I find this statement strongly resonating with what I have called the *corporealization of the mind* defined as the mind’s (or soul’s) orientation towards, and its desire to experience, the world of matter in general and a physical body of its own in particular.⁴² The concept is based on the Philonic notion of the mind becoming bodylike and earthly which is present in his interpretations of Gen 3:19 in QG 1.51 and *Leg.* 3.252–253. In the former, the first human is said to have “g[iven] himself wholly over to the earth,” and in the latter he is “ranked with things earthlike and incohesive.” For Philo, *this transformation* is the justification for God’s words, “you are earth and into the earth you will depart” (Gen 3:19) and the explanation for the *aporia* (explicit in QG 1.51) that calling the first human “earth” ignores his inbreathed component: the soul, too, has become earthly and needs to return to earth—that is, reincarnate.⁴³

Let us compare three expressions:

In *Leg.* 1.31 the “heavenly human,” who is “not moulded [οὐ πεπλάσθαι],” is “altogether without part in corruptible and terrestrial substance [γεώδους οὐσίας ἀμέτοχος].”

his text of v. 15 apparently read (like some LXX MSS. do) ἐποίησε instead of ἐπλασεν. The “made” human is in *Legum allegoriae*, interpreted as the one “after the image and archetype” (cf. Gen 1:26; 5:3). Nevertheless, Philo uses the same epithets in both treatises: the “moulded” (πεπλασμένος) human and the one “after the image” (κατ’ εἰκόνα).

⁴¹ For the theme of centrality in a similar context, see *Leg.* 1.59–60 (cf. also 3.28–29).

⁴² I discuss corporealization as a potential cause of (re)incarnation in *Reincarnation in Philo*, 70–79.

⁴³ In *Leg.* 3.252 Philo goes as far as to change the text of the LXX in order to usher in a reincarnational interpretation. See *ibid.*, 76–77.

In *Leg.* 3.252 the “foolish mind” which is “ranked with things earthly [γεώδεσι]” has been “‘taken’ (Gen 2:7) not from the sublime nature [τῆς μεταρσίου φύσεως] but from the more earthly matter [τῆς γεωδεστέρας ὕλης].”

In *Plant.* 44 the human who is identified with the “more earthly [γεωδεστέρου] body” has “no part in the unmoulded and simple nature [ἀπλάστου καὶ ἀπλῆς φύσεως ἀμέτοχος].”

To fully appreciate the connections between these passages it is necessary to note a very important feature in both *Leg.* 1.31–32 and *Plant.* 44: Philo connects Gen 1:27 with 2:7b and plays these against 2:7a—the “image” and the “breath” against the “moulding” and the “earth.”⁴⁴ I have argued elsewhere that Philo’s famous “two types of humans”—the heavenly and the earthly—in *Leg.* 1.31–32 does not refer to Gen 1:27 and 2:7 as such but to the combination of 1:27 and 2:7b against 2:7a.⁴⁵ The rationale behind this splitting up of the human being of Gen 2:7 into two entities is that Philo’s interpretation of the “breath of life” of Gen 2:7 in *Leg.* 1 is almost exclusively *universal* instead of *protological* (more specifically, it is *soteriological*).⁴⁶ In *Leg.* 1.31–32, God’s act symbolized in the biblical text as the

⁴⁴ Sterling (“Wisdom,” 363) notes in *Opif.* 135 “a sharp distinction between Gen 2:7a which refers to the mortal nature of humanity and 2:7b which presents our immortal nature” and refers to *Opif.* 144; *Leg.* 1.33; *Det.* 83; *Her.* 55–57; *Spec.* 1.171; 4.123 as containing “similar statements.” But I have seen no other references to this phenomenon in scholarly literature which I regard as the key to understanding *Leg.* 1.31–32 in particular. Gen 2:7 is naturally divided into three parts as follows: v. 7a: “And God moulded the human being, taking dust from the earth”; v. 7b: “and breathed into his face a breath of life”; v. 7c: “and the human being became a living soul.” These are quoted by Philo three, eight, and five times, respectively (these are the figures for the quotations of entire sub-verses in Philo’s surviving Greek *œuvre*). For a list of Philo’s citations of and allusions to Gen 2:7 (51 in total) see *ibid.*, 362 n. 22.

⁴⁵ See Yli-Karjanmaa, “Call Him Earth,” 292.

⁴⁶ Steps in this direction in the interpretation of *Leg.* 1 have been taken in earlier research. See the references in Yli-Karjanmaa, *Reincarnation in Philo*, 36 n. 133. By universal as opposed to protological allegory I mean an interpretation of the biblical, protological narrative (in practice, the first chapters of Genesis) which does not take over its protological perspective. According to my observations, this is the dominant—although not exclusive—mode of Philo’s exegesis in *Legum allegoriae*. Note the affinity between this distinction and the observation by David T. Runia, *On the Creation of the Cosmos According to Moses: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary*, PACS 1 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001), 333–34 concerning the distinction in Philo “between a presentation as *history*, i.e., an account of the life of early mankind, and a presentation in terms of *actualization* and *idealization*, i.e. seeing Adam and Eve as types of human beings” (emphasis original). Cf. also the reference of Folker Siegert (“Philo and the New Testament,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Philo*, ed. Adam Kamesar [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009], 175–209) at p. 184 to “mankind as it is in the present” in connection with *Leg.* 1.31–38.

“inbreathing” converts the “earthly” mind/human into a heavenly one. Compare the following expressions:

The heavenly human being
(*Leg.* 1.31)

– κτ’ εικόνα γεγονώς / οὐ πεπλάσθαι
– κατ’ εικόνα τετυπῶσθαι
– φθαρτῆς καὶ γεώδους οὐσίας
ἀμετοχος

The earthly human being after receiving the
breath of life (*Leg.* 1.32)

– γίνεται, οὐκέτι πλάττεται⁴⁷ (νοερὰν καὶ ζῶσαν ὄντως)
– οὐκ ἀδιατύπτων (ἐτύπωσε in 1.38)
– οὐκ ἀργόν⁴⁸

As we have seen, Philo in *De plantatione* to an extent follows his exegesis of Gen 2:7–8 in *Leg.* 1 and at §44 splits Gen 2:7 into two parts as well, once more combining verse 7b with 1:27 and distinguishing these from verse 7a.⁴⁹ *Plant.* 18 too features this combination—but there 2:7a is absent.⁵⁰ In §§18–19 a key question demanding an answer is: is Philo being proto-logical, telling us how the human being was *created*?⁵¹ To answer this question we need to be clear on what it is that Philo says was inbreathed. To recall, his words were, “For ‘God inbreathed into his face a breath of life,’ so that it cannot but be that the one who receives is made in the likeness of the one who sends forth [ἀνάγκη πρὸς τὸν ἐκπέμποντα τὸν δεχόμενον

⁴⁷ Cf. also the characterization of the earthly human as “compacted out of incohesive matter [ὑλης] ... a ‘moulded’ work but not offspring [πλάσμα, ἀλλ’ οὐ γέννημα] of the Artificer.”

⁴⁸ Cf. *Mos.* 2.136, *Spec.* 1.21 and *Flacc.* 148, which show that ἀργός is a natural attribute of ὑλη.

⁴⁹ If we followed him further, we would find in §45–46 two other concepts used in the exegesis of Gen 2 in *Leg.* 1, ὁ μέσος νοῦς (*Leg.* 1.93, 95) and Adam as ὁ γήινος νοῦς (1.31, 90, 95). The latter is in my view a genuinely Philonic term for the “corporealized mind.” See *Reincarnation* in Philo, 74–75.

⁵⁰ Its exegesis in *Leg.* 1 may, however, be hinted at a little later: The notion of *being compacted out of perishable matter* with the words ὑλη, φθαρτός, and πήγνυμι (within one line) appears only in *Plant.* 22 and *Leg.* 1.31 in the whole TLG. It seems that in *Leg.* the notion is still an elaboration of the biblical text rather than part of Philo’s interpretation proper: he directly refers to the text of Gen 2:7a when he says Moses calls (κέκληκεν) matter “dust.” Thus even though the actual allegorization of Gen 2:7a is in *Leg.* 1.31–32 framed in terms of the earthly human, “perishable matter” also refers to the physical human body. We thus come very close to the idea of the similarity between the body and the corporealized mind expressed more clearly in *Plant.* 44. Little wonder, then, that this entity has to hear God’s words, “you are earth” (Gen 3:19).

⁵¹ In stating that in *Plant.* 16–22 and *Det.* 79–90 “Philo looks at man as he is in his earthly existence” (in the same way as Plato is at the end of the *Timaeus* no longer dealing with protology) Runia seems to opt for a universal understanding (*Philo and the Timaeus*, 338). He continues that in those passages Philo “prefers to reconcile the two Mosaic texts, considering that also in this existence man’s ‘true self’ is present, albeit dimly.” This “dimming” of “the true self” corresponds to what I call corporealization.

ἀπεικονίσθαι]”—an elaboration of the soul’s becoming “signed and impressed by the seal of God.” Since the soul is thus the object of God’s action, it must logically exist prior to the event described as “inbreathing.” Philo’s combined interpretation of Gen 1:27 and 2:7b in *Plant.* 18 presupposes the soul: it addresses neither its creation nor its coming together with the body.⁵² It has to be regarded as universal, not protological.

It is illuminating to compare the text concerning sending and receiving just cited with two passages in *Legum allegoriae*. First, in 1.37 (exegesis of Gen 2:7) Philo makes a similar distinction between three factors: “that which inbreathes (τὸ ἐμπνέον) is God, that which receives (τὸ δεχόμενον) is the mind, that which is inbreathed (τὸ ἐμπνεόμενον) is the ‘spirit’ (πνεῦμα).”⁵³ I have argued that in *Leg.* this inbreathing, which enables the soul to “conceive of God” (1.38) is a salvific event granted to the soul, equivalent to its regaining its “own life” upon dying to the life of vice (1.107–108).⁵⁴ But what about *Plant.* 18–19: does Philo there too imply that the “breath” symbolizes a salvific event? *Plant.* 44 comes closer to *Leg.* 1.37, for the role of the spirit is more explicitly expressed. Let us compare three key expressions in the *De plantatione* passages:

- In §18 the soul is “signed and impressed [τυπωθέν] by the seal [σφραγίδι] of God the stamp of which is the eternal Logos.”
- In §44 we first have the human being “stamped [τυπωθέντα] ‘after the image.’”
- Then, the same entity is said to have been “stamped with the ‘spirit’ [χαραχθεὶς πνεύματι] ‘in accordance with the image of God.’”

In context, it is clear that the two expressions in §44 mean the same. Based on the identity between the Logos and the image of God in §§19–20 it seems §18 can also be taken as saying the same thing. It follows then that in the former expression the instrumental role of the “seal of God” is very similar to that of “spirit” in the latter one and that we can rather safely assume that

⁵² An example *par excellence* of the use of undivided Gen 2:7 to denote the coming together of body and soul is *Leg.* 3.161. There are also passages where Philo uses Gen 2:7b only as evidence for the divine origin of the mind in a non-soteriological context. He states in QG 1.50, “the mind is a divine inbreathing” and calls the mind in *Somn.* 1.34 a divine fragment justifying this with the verse. This kind of interpretation can also be expressed in terms which are very similar to what we are discussing; cf. *Det.* 83 (discussed below), where the essence of the rational part of the soul is said to be “‘spirit’ [πνεῦμα] ... an impression [τύπον] and stamp [χαρακτῆρα] of the divine power [δυνάμει] to which Moses gives the appropriate title of ‘image.’”

⁵³ The similarity of the passages is such that Thomas Mangey in fact wanted to conjecture ἐμπνέοντα for ἐκπέμποντα at *Plant.* 19.

⁵⁴ See my “Call Him Earth,” 266–81.

what is said about the “seal” in §18 can be taken as an *elaboration* of the more ambiguous “coinage of ‘spirit’” used earlier in the same passage.⁵⁵ Thus the event whereby “the one who receives is made in the likeness of the one who sends forth” is one whereby *the soul receives the “image” of the Logos when God stamps it with “spirit.”* This is in harmony with a soteriological interpretation of *Plant.* 18–19, but we need to read on before we can judge if that interpretation is to be preferred.

Before moving on to the second parallel in *Leg.* 1 we need to discuss a complication in *Plant.* 19. The italicized part in “it cannot but be that the one who receives *is made in the likeness* of the one who sends forth” translates a single word, ἀπεικονίσθαι, which is the middle/passive perfect infinitive (the only one for this verb in the whole TLG).⁵⁶ In Greek “the perfect denotes a completed action the effects of which still continue in the present.”⁵⁷ It is very interesting to notice that the English (Yonge and PLCL), German (PCH) and French (PAPM) translations all use the *present* tense in rendering the verb.⁵⁸ They may, in fact, be right, and the perfect, wrong. First of all we may note that it would be difficult to make sense of “it cannot but be that the one who receives *has been made* in the likeness of the one who sends forth.” For although the *effect* of having been made in the likeness of the sender is continuing at the moment of sending, the perfect tense unavoidably makes the *act* of making anterior to the act of the present-tense sending—thereby cancelling the causal relationship clearly implied by the logic of appealing to Gen 2:7b and the word ὥστε.⁵⁹ Fortunately, there seems to be an attractive way out of this dilemma. Eusebius quotes *Plant.* 18–20 (*Praep. ev.* 7.18.1–2), and in some Eusebian mss., as well as in the epitome *De mundo* (MS. E, see PCW 2.vii), the verb form in question is in the present tense, ἀπεικονίζεσθαι.⁶⁰ Wendland often follows Eusebius who, he notes, alone transmits the correct text, e.g., at §18 (see PCW 2.x). In my

⁵⁵ It is intriguing to note that in *Leg.* 3.95–96, another “numismatic” passage connected to Gen 1:27, the soul is said to receive a stamp like a tested coin (see above, n. 37), but now Exod 31:2–3 takes, as it were, the place of Gen 2:7b, although Philo does not explicitly mention the “divine spirit” of 31:3.

⁵⁶ For many of the observations mentioned below I am indebted to James R. Royce. The conclusions are mine.

⁵⁷ Herbert Weir Smyth, *Greek Grammar* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge MA, 1956), §1945 (henceforth HWS).

⁵⁸ This is also true for Sterling’s translation, “is made in the image” (“Wisdom,” 365).

⁵⁹ Note also that according to HWS §1865, although the infinitive does not have time of itself, it does express the stage of action, which for the perfect is that of *completion*. I.e., the action is *over*, only its effects continue.

⁶⁰ This is one of the thirteen occurrences of this verb form in the TLG.

view, we should opt for the present tense, the perfect being explicable as an accidental omission of two letters (Z and Σ not being altogether unlike).

The second parallel in *Leg.* 1 for the sending and receiving in *Plant.* 19 is 1.61, which in fact also bridges *Plant.* 19 and 44. Philo's primary lemma is Gen 2:9 which, in his view, tells us "what trees of virtue God plants in the soul" (1.56). It is worth highlighting that both planting the Paradise and breathing in the human face are, in Philo's view as expressed in *Leg.* 1, events whose essence is *God's action on the soul*. After some discussion of theoretical and practical arts and the extolling of virtue as best of them all (1.57–58) the tree of life is, because of its central position, identified with "virtue in the most comprehensive sense, which some term goodness" (1.59). Philo then notes that the biblical text does not reveal the location of the tree of knowing good and evil (1.60) and proceeds to declare that it is, "nominally (ὀσά) in [Paradise], but in effect (δυνάμει), outside" (1.61). To get to the points we are mainly interested in Philo needs a secondary lemma which, as he sees it, has a thematic connection with (the tree of) good and evil: "All this (πάντα ταῦτα) has come upon me!" cries Jacob in Gen 42:36. The link is that the human mind "is all-receptive and resembles wax that receives (δεχομένῳ) all impressions (τύπους) fair and ugly." Philo continues that whenever the soul

receives [δέξεται] the stamp [χαρακτήρα] of perfect virtue, it is [γέγονε]⁶¹ "the tree of life," but when (it receives) that of wickedness, it is "the tree of knowledge of good and evil." ... [Thus the mind which] has received [δεδεγμένον] [wickedness] is nominally in the "garden," for it has in it likewise the stamp [χαρακτήρ] of virtue properly belonging to the "garden." On the other hand, in effect it is not in it, because the impress [τύπος] of wickedness is alien to the divine "risings." (*Leg.* 1.61)

In *Leg.* 1 Philo ties *virtue* tightly together with the breath of life (1.34–35) as well as with Paradise with its tree of life and rivers (esp. 1.45–49, 54–66, 70–73, 88–89). It is difficult for me not to see the reception of the stamp of perfect virtue as referring to the same salvific act of God as the "breath of life" in Philo's exegesis. *Rejection* of virtue is, again, the essence of the Philonic notion of the death of the soul (1.105–108) from which the soul can recover to its own, true life—of virtue.⁶² Concepts closely linked with virtue in *Leg.* are "heavenly wisdom" (1.43) and "the right principle" (*Leg.* 1.45–46, 92–93; 3.2, 80, 106, 147–148, 150, 168, 222, 251–252), and it is highly note-

⁶¹ Whitaker: "shall have received ... straightway becomes."

⁶² On this last point see Yli-Karjanmaa, *Reincarnation in Philo*, 64. For a more extensive treatment of all the issues in this paragraph, see my "Call Him Earth," 266–73.

worthy that the corporealization of the mind, that is, its becoming “earthly,” involves forsaking both of these (3.252).

The question now is whether we should see the statement “the one who receives is made in the likeness of the one who sends forth” in *Plant.* 19 as a reference to the salvific event of the soul receiving the stamp of virtue. In my view this understanding is supported by reading §19 together with §44—which the striking image of being or becoming the “tree of life” connects to *Leg.* 1.61, and, through it, to Paradise, virtue and back to the “breath of life.” We should add the fact that in Philo virtue is often almost a synonym for salvation.⁶³

Let us now move on to *Plant.* 20. Philo posits a link, which is at least partially causal, between the soul’s image-likeness and a series of notions related to *ascending*, starting here with the body:

As a consequence, then, of the human soul having been made in the likeness (*ἀπεικονισθείσης*) (of and) after the image of the archetype, the Logos of the Cause, the body too—raised up towards the purest portion of the universe, the heaven—lifts up the eyes. (*Plant.* 20)

It seems Philo is moving towards a more protologically oriented discourse. I think this is because he has an aim. He will have wanted to end his excursus to Genesis—the end of which can be located at the words “the Logos of the Cause”—in a way that connects with the Timaeian themes he was discussing before embarking on it: the gazing towards heaven and the implied erect posture of the human body, that is, its *design*. Against this background it is understandable that he now also speaks of the *soul’s* original design, i.e., its being akin to the image of the Logos. He does this in fairly biblical terms, without blending in much allegory. He does narrow down the biblical act of creation to concern the soul only, and, as usual, interprets the “image” of Gen 1:27 in terms of the Platonic model-copy relationship. The purpose of the erect posture, Philo tells us, is “that by means of the visible [the soul] would clearly apprehend (*καταλαμβάνηται*) the unseen.” The ascent motif continues as he in §21 refers to souls that are “drawn (*ἄχθέντας*)” by God. These statements open up new soteriological vistas to parallels in *Legum allegoriae*, *Quod deterius potiori insidiari soleat* and *Quis rerumdivinarum heres sit*, which we will now discuss before continuing further in *De plantatione*.

Philo brings up the notion of being *drawn up by God* in his exegesis of Gen 2:7 in *Leg.* 1.38 in a context which is seamlessly linked with his discus-

⁶³ See, e.g., *Plant.* 37: the tree of life is called the “path [of the rational soul] to virtue, with life and immortality as its end.” Cf. also *Post.* 31; *Abr.* 269; *QG* 1.51; 4.131.

sion in 1.37 of that which inbreathes, that which receives and that which is inbreathed. The purpose of “the union of the three,” says Philo, is “that we may obtain (λάβωμεν) a conception (ἐννοίαν) of Him.” He elaborates this as follows:

For the human mind would never have ventured to soar so high as to grasp [ἀντιλαβέσθαι] the nature of God, had not God Himself drawn it up [ἀνέσπασεν] to Himself—so far as it was possible for the human mind to be drawn up—and stamped [ἐτύπωσε] it with according to the powers that are within the scope of its understanding. (*Leg.* 1.38)

Here the soul’s being drawn up, its ascent and the ability to grasp the nature of God are presented as the consequences of the reception of both the “spirit” and the stamp by the mind. We again have here the combination of Gen 2:7b and 1:27.⁶⁴ Furthermore, the context which can with good reason be called soteriological.⁶⁵

In *Quod deterius potiori insidiari soleat* the connection between the ability to know God and the joint interpretation of Gen 1:27 and 2:7b is explicit:

It would be greatly to the advantage of the thing wrought should it obtain [λάβοι] a conception [ἐννοίαν] of Him who wrought it ... He breathed into him from above [ἄνωθεν ἐνέπνευ] of His own Deity. The invisible Deity stamped on the invisible soul the impress [τύπους] of itself to the end that not even the terrestrial region should be without a share in the image of God [εἰκόνας ἀμοιρήσῃ θεοῦ]. (*Det.* 86)

Here again, the inbreathing does not stand for the reception of the soul by the human being, or her creation.⁶⁶ Instead, the *soul is stamped* so that it shares the image of God. In a relevant statement a little earlier Philo says

⁶⁴ The latter is often referred to by Philo using the terminology of stamping. See, e.g., *Opif.* 25, 71; *Leg.* 1.31; *Plant.* 20; *Her.* 231; *Mut.* 31.

⁶⁵ Grasping God’s nature and being drawn to him are, at the very least, highly conducive to salvation (understood as eternal, incorporeal existence in God’s presence as in *Gig.* 14).

⁶⁶ And yet Philo presents two very protological-looking statements in §§80, 83. In the first he says, “the essence [οὐσία] of soul is ‘spirit,’” in the second, “the human soul [Moses] names ‘spirit.’” Two things connect these two protologically geared statements. First, in both statements the aim is to distinguish the soul–“spirit” connection from the soul–“blood” connection of Lev 17:11, 14. The focus is on clearing their seeming contradiction. Second, both explicitly refer to the biblical text (φησὶν ... παριστάς, ὀνομάζει) thus indicating that Philo is moving closer to the *explanandum* than his *explanatio*, the latter being in both instances that the soul–“spirit” connection concerns the highest part of the soul. The word *παριστάς* in §80 can be thought of as introducing an *initial* explanation—“the essence of soul is ‘spirit’”—needed to bring out the actual exegetical problem, the apparent contradiction with the Lev passage, more clearly. Note that now also Gen 2:7c, “and the human being became a living *soul*,” as part of the problem, is quoted.

“spirit” is the essence of the rational power of the soul, “as it were, an impression (τύπον τινά) and stamp (χαρακτῆρα) of the divine power to which Moses gives the appropriate title of ‘image’” (*Det.* 83). The details of the interpretation as “spirit” as the impression of the “image” come very close to *Plant.* 19, 44. Again, Gen 1:27 and 2:7b are interpreted jointly to mean a “greatly advantageous” (cf. *Det.* 86) event which facilitates the soul’s orientation towards God and thus surely contributes to salvation.

Her. 54–64 presents us with a variation of this theme. Philo discusses the question of who can be the heir of divine and incorporeal things and answers, “one only is held worthy of these, the recipient of inspiration from above [ὁ καταπνευσθεὶς ἄνωθεν]” (§64). This statement operates at the universal level, not protological. That it refers to Gen 2:7b is clear based on §56, a passage parallel in thought to *Plant.* 18:

On the other hand he did not make the substance [οὐσίαν] of the mind depend on anything created, but represented [εἰσήγαγεν] it as breathed down [καταπνευσθεῖσαν] by God. For the Maker of all, he says, “inbreathed into his face the breath of life, and the human being became a living soul”; just as we are also told that he was stamped [τυπωθήναι] “in accordance with the image” of his Maker. (*Her.* 56)

The identification of the substance of mind with the “breath of life” comes juxtaposed with the connection made between blood and soul in Leviticus (§§54–55; Lev 17:11, 14).⁶⁷ Dealing as it does with the human constitution the identification is protological and it thus shows that Philo can use the combination of Gen 1:27 and 2:7b in such a context too. Philo’s angle of approach is defined by verbal connections, one between his primary lemma, Gen 15:2 and the secondary one in Lev—“blood”—and another between the secondary and tertiary (Gen 2:7) lemmas—“soul.”⁶⁸ There is a potential contradiction in the biblical texts involved, but—unlike in *Det.* 81—in *Quis rerum divinarum heres sit* Philo merely gives an explanation without raising an explicit *aporia*.⁶⁹

At §57 Philo switches to the universal mode of exegesis. Very much like in *Leg.* 1.31 he states, “so the human kind is twofold.”⁷⁰ The two classes are

⁶⁷ See previous note and also Runia, *Philo and the Timaeus*, 329.

⁶⁸ “Blood” is present in Gen 15:2 through Philo’s interpretation of Damascus as the “blood of a sack,” i.e., the blood-life of the body (§54).

⁶⁹ Philo’s explanation differs a little from *Quod deterius potiori insidiari soleat* in that now “blood” becomes the substance of the *whole* soul.

⁷⁰ Other links with *Leg.* 1 are the term “earthly mind” as the epithet of Adam (§52; cf. 1.31–32, 90) and the offspring of sense-perception as “those who are in truth dead to the life of the soul” in distinction to “those who are really living” (§53; cf. *Leg.* 1.32 and the death of the soul in 1.105–108).

now described in terms of a distinction between the combinations Lev 17:11 and Gen 2:7a vs. Gen 1:27 and 2:7b:⁷¹

that of those who live by the intellect, the divine “spirit,” the other of those who live by “blood” and the pleasure of the flesh. This last is a “moulded clod of earth (πλάσμα γῆς)” the other is the faithful impress (ἐκμαγεῖον) of the divine “image.” (Her. 57)

Insofar as this statement describes how the two kinds of people *live*, it is universal. There is, however, protology involved in the identification of the human intellect with the divine “spirit.”⁷² We thus have another example of the blending of the two modes of interpretation.

From the viewpoint of the soteriological interpretation of the combination of Gen 1:27 and 2:7b the main question is, are there signs of “traffic” between the two classes of humans? Or is it possible that “our piece of ‘moulded clay’ [which] has imperative need of God’s help” (§58) in fact *fails* to get that help through which it becomes an impress of the “image”? I think there are such signs. The salvific role of the “breath” is in *Quis rerum divinarum heres sit* linked with the divine help symbolized by Eliezer (§58): Philo says, “the mass of blood ... is quickened [ζωπυρεῖται] by the providence of God ... since our race cannot of itself stand firmly established for a single day.”⁷³ In §§63–64 (partly already quoted) he implies that the worthy inheriting soul is one that *stops* living its blood-life:

Can he who desires the life of the blood and still [ἔτι] claims for his own the things of the senses become the heir of divine and incorporeal things? No; one alone is held worthy of these, the recipient of inspiration from above [ὁ καταπνευσθείς ἄνωθεν], of a portion heavenly and divine, the wholly purified mind which disregards not only the body, but that other section of the soul which is devoid of reason [ἄλογον] and steeped in “blood,” aflame with seething passions and burning lusts. (Her. 63–64)

A little later in §68 Philo says the heir will not be “that intellect which abides in the prison of the body of its own free will, but that which released [λύθεις] from its fetters into liberty [ἐλευθερωθείς] has come forth [προεληλυθώς]

⁷¹ Sterling, “Wisdom,” 365 n. 36 says Philo here argues that “Gen 2:7b-c (sic) presents two classes of humanity.”

⁷² Or, perhaps, the “divine spirit.” The placing of the quotation marks depends on whether one sees here an allusion to the “breath” (πνοή) of Gen 2:7b (both πνεῦμα and πνοή are cognate to πνέω; in, e.g., Leg. 3.161 πνεῦμα occurs in a quotation of Gen 2:7b) or to the “divine spirit” (πνεῦμα θεῖον) of Exod 31:3. The latter may also have been in Philo’s mind; cf. Her. 53 where wisdom and knowledge are mentioned.

⁷³ Cf. the interpretation of the angels on Jacob’s ladder as God’s *logoi* who “with their salvific breath may quicken into new life [σωτήριον πνέοντες ἀναζωῶσι] the soul which is still borne along in the body as in a river.” (Somn. 1.147)

outside the prison walls.”⁷⁴ Progress on the part of the intellect is an implied prerequisite of the inheritance; receiving the “inspiration from above” (§64) is connected to the liberation from the body.

Based on the texts discussed it seems likely that by writing what he does in *Plant.* 18–20 Philo wants to remind his audience not only of the divine origin of the mind but also of the actual possibility of receiving (quite possibly *again*, after losing it upon the death of the soul) God’s salvific grace which he saw symbolized by the various biblical images and themes, and thereby gaining an apprehension of things divine, ultimately God.

In *Plant.* 22 Philo moves on to the theme of the flight of the soul:

The strong yearning to perceive the Existent One gives [the eyes of the soul] wings to attain not only to the furthest region of the ether, but to overpass the very bounds of the entire universe and speed away toward the Uncreate. (*Plant.* 22)

This is a profoundly Platonic passage with the themes of wingedness, yearning and overpassing the bounds of the universe coming directly from the *Phaedrus*.⁷⁵ It is noteworthy that the thought comes close to two of Philo’s most directly reincarnational passages. In *Somn.* 1.139 liberated souls “are lifted up on light wings to the ether,” and in *QE* 2.40 “a holy soul is divinized by ascending not to the air or to the ether or to heaven [which is] higher than all but to [a region] above the heavens.” In *QE* those whose desire for the divine is strong enough have their stay in the divine city sealed by God, but the fickle ones are drawn back to “Tartarus,” by which Philo means the human body.⁷⁶ Similarly Philo in §23 says that those “who crave for wisdom and knowledge with insatiable persistence are said ... to have been called upwards,” and in §25 he states of the mind of the genuine philosopher that it is “borne upward insatiably enamoured of all holy happy natures that dwell on high.”

⁷⁴ Cf. *Somn.* 1.139 where the ideas of the body as a prison and the soul’s voluntary entry to it occur. The idea of or self-induced prison terms fits reincarnation very well. Cf., e.g., *Phaed.* 82e: “the most dreadful thing about the imprisonment is the fact that it is caused by the lusts, so that the prisoner is the chief assistant in his own imprisonment.”

⁷⁵ See especially 245d–246a, 246c, 247d–248c, 249a, 251c–e. Furthermore, *Plant.* 24–25 contain a combination of Platonic reincarnational notions—pursuing philosophy correctly and the ascetic ideal of practising death (i.e., separation from the body and its needs)—which also appears in *Gig.* 14. The combination occurs thrice in the *Phaedo* (64a, 67e, 80e); the purpose of both practices is to allow the soul to depart pure so as to avoid a further incarnation (see, e.g., 80d–81e). In marked harmony with the ethos of the dialogue (e.g., 81b), in both *De plantatione* (§25) and *De gigantibus* (§15) the goods of the body are rejected. An additional commonality is that in both *Plant.* 22 and *Gig.* 14 God is called “uncreated” (ἀγενήτος; cf. *Phaedr.* 245d–246a).

⁷⁶ Cf. *QG* 4.234. For *QE* 2.40 see my *Reincarnation in Philo*, 167–86.

It is worthwhile to pose the question, who is Philo actually speaking of in *Plant.* 17–25? The soul's orientation towards the heaven, ascent to God, craving for wisdom et cetera in §§20–25 are, in his thought, things that concern good souls only. It is *they* that can, in the Philonic way of thinking, experience the sort of ascent described. How far back in *De plantatione* can we assume this qualification to reach? Working our way backward, we can see that the soul's soaring "to the utmost height" (§24) is causally linked to the its "strong yearning to see the Existent" (§22) and "the attraction of the understanding" towards the same (§21), which, for its part is in a somewhat less precise manner coupled with the erect posture of the human body and our ability to lift our eyes towards the ether and the heaven (§§20–21). The erect posture, again, is linked with soul's being made in the likeness of the Logos (§20), which, finally, is identified with the reception of the "breath of life." A striking comparison can be made:

- In *Plant.* 18–25 we have the sequence "breath" + "image" — erect posture — ascent
- In *Leg.* 1.31–32, 37–38, we find "breath" + "image" ————— ascent

The beginning and the end are similar, but in *De plantatione* Philo's train has one more stop. Why is this? This is explained by his biblical lemma. The posture issue is directly linked with the heavenly plant motif—which Philo does not want to forego in a discussion concerning planting! Let Plato be quoted at some length:

We declare that God has given to each of us, as his daemon, that kind [εἶδος] of soul which is housed in the top of our body and which raises us—seeing that we are not an earthly but a heavenly plant—up from earth towards our kinship in the heaven. And herein we speak most truly; for it is by suspending our head and root from that region whence the substance [γένεσις] of our soul first came [ἔφϋ] that the Divine Power keeps upright our whole body. (*Tim.* 90a)

It in fact seems that although Philo, as is his custom, quotes sparsely from Plato and extensively from the Pentateuch, he makes his excursus to Gen 1:27 and 2:7b in *Plant.* 17–20 in order to partly support and partly criticize the Timaeian notions quoted. Let us examine this more closely. The key statement comes right at the beginning of §18, immediately after the explicit reference to the heavenly plant motif in the *Timaeus* and just before to the references to Gen 2:7b and 1:27:

Now while others, by asserting that our human mind is a particle of the ethereal substance, have claimed for the human being a kinship with the ether, our great Moses likened the fashion of the reasonable soul to no created thing ... (*Plant.* 18)

Thus when Philo follows φυτὸν οὐκ ἐπίγειον ἀλλ' οὐράνιον in §17 with συγγένειαν ἀνθρώπῳ πρὸς αἰθέρα above, these correspond closely to Plato's πρὸς

δὲ τὴν ἐν οὐρανῷ ξυγγένειαν ἀπὸ γῆς ἡμᾶς αἶρειν ὡς ὄντας φυτὸν οὐκ ἔγγειον ἀλλ' οὐράνιον (*Tim.* 90a).⁷⁷ This last idea fits Philo's exegesis perfectly, but he is critical toward Plato's formulation of the kinship. Runia seems to be right when he says that Philo is keen on demonstrating the human kinship with God, which is not precisely what Plato says.⁷⁸ The joint interpretation of Gen 1:27 and 2:7b in *Plant.* 18–19 does serve this demonstration, but it has also an important universal aspect to it.

Using the very useful (but still too little utilized) analyses, and concepts introduced to the research, of Philo's exegetical method by Runia, we can see that, in effect, *Timaeus* 90a–b acts as Philo's secondary lemma; mode of transition from Gen 9:20 is verbal, φυτὸν.⁷⁹ This means that Gen 1:27 and 2:7b must in fact be seen as *tertiary*. The mode of transition from *Tim.* is strongly thematic, the divine origin and constitution of the human soul, but there are also common words (ψυχή, γῆ). From the viewpoint of analyzing Philo's exegetical method it is intriguing and indeed worth noting that, *regardless* of whether we see some kind of very general thematic link between Noah's vine-planting and the accounts of the human creation, their links with *Tim.* 90a–b are much more significant than with each other.

After the excursus to Gen 1:27 and 2:7b Philo makes the already quoted, but on a closer inspection surprising, statement in *Plant.* 20 where he posits a *causal* connection between the human image-likeness and the erect body with its upward-looking eyes. I cannot fathom the logic of this statement, but what is clear is that the said bodily features are very important for Philo—so much so that he wants to support them by a direct appeal to Gen 1:27. Moses thus gets the job of speaking for Plato!

⁷⁷ Further commonalities include that both authors speak of the soul's highest part as ψυχῆς εἶδος (*Plant.* 18; *Tim.* 90a) and that Philo echoes Plato's reference to God's "keep[ing] upright (ὀρθοῖ) our whole body" (90a) with his statement that God "set high up (ἀνάρθωσεν)" the human eyes (§17); in both the context is the erect human posture.

⁷⁸ Runia, *Philo and the Timaeus*, 341 n. 11: "it is possible that [Philo] is correcting an interpretation of the *Timaeus* which stresses the kinship of man to the heavenly beings at the expense of his kinship to the demiurgic creator." I think the referent is rather "the intellections and the revolutions of the Universe" (90c–d) than heavenly beings.

⁷⁹ Secondary lemmas are used by Philo to interpret the primary ones (and tertiary sometimes to interpret the secondary). Philo moves between these using transitions which may be classified as based on a thematic or a verbal link he sees, or both. See David T. Runia, "The Structure of Philo's Allegorical Treatises: A Review of Two Recent Studies and Some Additional Comments," *VC* 38 (1984): 209–56; Runia, "Further Observations." For a recent application, see Albert C. Geljon and David T. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria: On Cultivation: Introduction, Translation and Commentary*, PACS 4 (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

Reflections and Conclusions

The discussion above aims to show that the notion of there being two species of souls in the air (*Plant.* 14) is, in Philo, part of a larger scheme that involves the journey of the human soul from its descent through reincarnation to its ascent, as well as the ever-unembodied angels and their tasks. The soul's journey with all its anthropological, ethical, and soteriological dimensions is, so this author believes, at the heart of the Philonic allegories concerning the soul, especially in the *Allegorical Commentary* but also the *Quaestiones*. In different contexts Philo exposes to view and discusses different parts of the journey and uses divergent illustrations. This does not, however, prevent his students from seeing the larger picture, although, together with Philo's habit of cultivating allusions of varying clarity, it does mean that they have to pay a lot of attention to the often very detailed links between the Philonic treatises.

The study of *Plant.* 14 with its parallels reveals the remarkable fact that Philo uses his scheme of the airy souls as an explanation of biblical verses that do not have much in common. This practice of Philo's (which is not limited to this scheme) represents, in my view, what William James has called *the law of dissociation by varying concomitants*: "What is associated now with one thing and now with another tends to become dissociated from either."⁸⁰ It would be forced to say that the scheme is inherently present in all the biblical texts Philo expounds, or even that Philo must have thought it was. It is my conviction that the further study of this phenomenon will enhance our understanding of not only individual passages in Philo's writings but, more importantly, his exegetical method and the fundamental question concerning the very different roles played by the biblical text—his *explanandum*—and the ideas presented as its *explanatio*.⁸¹ Another intriguing issue deserving further study and related to Philo's method is his apparent use of the *Timaeus* as a secondary text through which to reach tertiary biblical lemmas in *Plant.* 17–18.

⁸⁰ William James, *The Principles of Psychology*, 2 vols. (New York: Holt, 1890), 1:506.

⁸¹ Based on the observations in this essay we can see that the effect of the biblical text on the subject matter discussed in its exegesis varies widely. For example, the entire first part of *Plant.* (§§1–139) is really based on a single word in Gen 9:20, ἐφύτευσεν, whereas in *Somn.* 1.138–139 the biblical text to which the scheme is attached is broader: the upward and downward movement of angels between earth and heaven. It holds *a priori* that the narrower the biblical basis is, the fewer biblical constraints (things to be accounted for) there are and the larger freedom of maneuver Philo has with regard to the actual contents of his allegories. A systematic investigation of the extent to which Philo in practice avails himself of this freedom would be a worthwhile task.

In the case of the scheme of the souls of the air it seems that Philo's *explanatio* can be further divided into parts: On the one hand, we may think of the soul's journey from above to the world and the release from reincarnation and returning to God as the *interpretation proper*. On the other, what we find between this interpretation and the biblical text are various kinds of mostly Platonic/Platonist notions and images which Philo feels free to combine in different ways in his interpretations of different biblical verses (which do have their effect on his choice). These notions and images come, in a way, close to being mythical features, that is, narrative elements through which beliefs are expressed—for example, the image of the body as a river (*Gig.* 13) is precisely such a mytheme in its original context in the *Timaeus*.⁸² These elements do not need to remain the same in different accounts (and they can even be incompatible with each other), because the beliefs that are conveyed are what counts.

As for *Plant.* 17–25, the observations made above concerning other Philonic passages containing allegorizations of the two descriptions of the creation of the human being suggest that Philo's primary orientation is not protological but universal.⁸³ Those allegorizations have given rise to different kinds of scholarly interpretations. There is no doubt that there are cases where, as Runia has stated, “the man κατ’ εἰκόνα θεοῦ and the inbreathing of the divine πνεῦμα both refer to man's god-like part, the νοῦς or rational soul.”⁸⁴ I would call this the protological interpretation, because it refers to the (original) design of the human soul. The other alternative is the universal interpretation, where being stamped with the “image” and receiving the “breath” of life both come to mean an action by God on the human soul or mind with greatly beneficial effects contributing to its salvation. That these biblical motifs receive a joint interpretation is based on Philo's dividing Gen 2:7 into parts: verse 7b(c) belongs together with Gen 1:26–27 and refers, basically, to “heaven” while verse 7a refers to “earth.” This distinction ultimately corresponds to the fundamental divide in the Platonic worldview, the noetic and the changeless vs. the material and the

⁸² For this definition of myth, see John Bowker, ed., *Oxford Concise Dictionary of World Religions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), s. v. “myth.”

⁸³ I thus do not agree with Tobin who says that “the fact that [the interpretations of Gen 1:27 and 2:7] often appear together with their concepts and vocabulary combined (*Det.* 80–90; *Plant.* 14–27; *Mut.* 223; *O* 139, 146–146; *Spec.* 1.171) indicates they are referring to the same single creation of man.” (Tobin, *Creation*, 21, emphasis added.)

⁸⁴ Runia, *Philo and the Timaeus*, 335. This statement is about Philo's exegesis of the creation accounts as secondary lemmas, and the examples Runia gives are *Det.* 80–86; *Plant.* 18–20; and *Her.* 56, all discussed above. I do not think that these passages can be meaningfully interpreted along these lines only. For examples of interpretations of Gen 2:7b of this kind, see above, n. 52.

ever-changing. At least within the *Allegorical Commentary*, the splitting up of Gen 2:7 is operative in both the running commentary in *Leg.* 1 and in many (but not all) treatments of the verse elsewhere. The human of Gen 1 is kept separate from the human of Gen 2:7a—but not from the human of verse 7b–c.⁸⁵

The protological and universal interpretations of the accounts of the creation of the human being are not mutually exclusive. Philo accepts them both, but he also sometimes blends them so that his student may have difficulties following his train of thought: which does he mean? In *Plant.* 18–19 Philo in no way indicates he might not be discussing the general human situation (in distinction to the virtuous only), which speaks against a purely universal interpretation. On the other hand, pure protology is not possible either, because the soul is presupposed as the object of God's action. But do *all* souls receive the stamp of the Logos in §18? I do not think so, but regardless of one's answer, it is clear that there are these two interpretations and that the scholarly endeavor to understand Philo will benefit from taking both into account.

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⁸⁵ Cf. Runia's view that in "*Opif.*, *Leg.* I–II and *QG* I Philo tends to keep the man of Gen. 1:27 separate from the man created in Gen. 2:7." He continues that in *Leg.* 1.31 "the attempt is *not* made to show that the mind created in Gen. 1:27 is the same as the rational part that is inbreathed in Gen. 2:7" (*ibid.*, emphasis original.) These statements reflect an exclusively protological understanding of Philo's exegesis.