well be Posidonius as Antiochus, the former of whom (again perhaps mediated by Eudorus) would also be a probable influence on Philo.

In the field of logic, Philo exhibits an overlaying of Aristotelian logic with Stoic such as was characteristic of Antiochus, but which also seems to be characteristic of Eudorus (whose order of categories he follows), so that there is no need to assert any particular degree of influence here. The general position, however, that Stoic and Aristotelian logical systems are compatible, and both are to be seen as extrapolations from the practice of the Old Academy—and, if various Pythagorean pseudepigrapha, such as that of ps. Archytas *On the Structure of Discourse*, be taken into account, of Pythagoreanism as well—would seem to have found favour with Philo. He adopts the Aristotelian categories, but also those of the Stoics (e.g. *Leg.* 3.175, where Manna is interpreted as the Stoic supreme category *ti*), and other aspects of Stoic logic, such as the theory of *lekta*, or "sayables", which he expounds at *Agr.* 141.

As I remarked at the outset, the web of Philo's influences from Hellenistic philosophy in general is so tangled that to separate out a specifically Antiochian strand is somewhat temerarious. Certainly there was much about Antiochus' view of the nature of true being and of first principles that Philo would have found uncongenial, as being too close to Stoic materialism, but we must reflect that after all he may have only come into contact with Antiochus through the medium of Eudorus, and this mediation would have filtered out much that was objectionable, leaving only the basic project of returning from the 'deviation' of Academic scepticism to the 'true' teaching of Plato, which is what would have attracted Philo.

TOWARDS TRANSCENDENCE: PHILO AND THE RENEWAL OF PLATONISM IN THE EARLY IMPERIAL AGE

MAURO BONAZZI

1. An error that is to be avoided when we talk about the rebirth of Platonism in the early Imperial age is thinking that it was a unified and systematic process, as if all the philosophers were working together in agreement on the codification of a single body of doctrines. Rather, to use an expression by Heinrich Dörrie, we do better to think of it as a battlefield, in which various images of Plato faced each other, not necessarily compatible one with another. A second complication is that this attempt to construct a systematic Platonism is not only an *affaire de famille*, the result of the exegetical work of Platonists engaged in reading Plato's dialogues. No less important is the comparison with other schools of thought in the attempt to conquer a major role on the philosophical scene. And, as always, comparison also means contamination: the various images of Plato were enriched with elements taken from other schools or traditions, whether Pythagoreanism, Aristotelianism, Stoicism or Scepticism. It would therefore be more correct to speak of various Platonisms that start from similar problems and try to elaborate a coherent body of doctrines in order to conquer a central place on the philosophical scene of the period.

We need to bear these problems in mind when we consider the position of Philo of Alexandria, who was not a philosopher in the traditional sense, but a "philosophically oriented exegete" (Runia), who was very well acquainted with the philosophical language of the age (Nikiprowetzky)—not only its terminology, but also its concepts—and was able to use it for his own exegetical ends.[1] An ancient *bon mot* read ἢ Πλάτων φιλωνίζει ἢ Φίλων πλατωνίζει:[2] effectively, even a superficial

[1] On the problematic relation between 'philosopher' and 'commentator' and the debate that followed the famous study by V. Nikiprowetzky, *Le Commentaire de l'Écriture chez Philon d'Alexandrie* (Leiden 1977), cf. the comments by D.T. Runia, "Was Philo a Middle Platonist? A Difficult Question Revisited", *The Studia Philonica Annual* 5 (1993), 120–123.

[2] Phot. *Bibl.* cod. 105, first attested in Jerom. *De vir. inl.* 11.

reading of his writings reveals that Philo was extremely deeply-read in Plato. And not only Plato: his Platonic readings often reflect the influence of Platonist interpretations that were circulating in the early Imperial age. This was the philosophical tradition to which Philo was closest.[3] But, more precisely, is it possible to clarify what type of Platonism he was most interested in? In this paper I want to analyse Philo's testimony in relation to the new Pythagoreanizing Platonism, which had been circulating in Alexandria from the end of the I century BC.[4] As we know, it is a particularly delicate problem on which it is difficult to reach incontrovertible conclusions. But at least on some points this type of analysis will allow us to clarify some underlying problems and the type of solutions that have been devised: in this sense Philo is an important testimony of Platonism in one of the most lively periods of its history. And at the same time this comparison will also allow us to show Philo's competence and autonomy: he was not just slavishly assimilating other people's doctrines, but proved capable of exploiting them brilliantly for his own objectives.

2. One of the most interesting texts for evaluating the spread of Platonic themes in the I century AD is certainly the *De opificio mundi*, particularly the opening section with its discussion of the ultimate principles of reality. After criticising those who impiously prefer the world, or the product, to its creator,[5] Philo exalts Moses' superiority, claiming:

> [Moses] recognized that it is absolutely necessary that among existing things there is an activating cause on the one hand and a passive object on the other, and that the activating cause is the absolutely pure and unadulterated intellect of the universe, superior to excellence and superior to knowledge and even superior to the good and the beautiful itself (τὸ μὲν δραστήριον αἴτιον, τὸ δὲ παθητόν, καὶ ὅτι τὸ μὲν δραστήριον ὁ τῶν ὅλων νοῦς ἐστιν εἰλικρινέστατος καὶ ἀκραιφνέστατος, κρείττων ἢ ἀρετὴ καὶ κρείττων ἢ ἐπιστήμη καὶ κρείττων ἢ αὐτὸ τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν; *Opif.* 8).[6]

Thus, the ultimate principles of reality can be reduced to two, even though, strictly speaking, the principle is one only, because *to patheton* should be understood not so much as a real principle as the passive element on which the active principle intervenes. In spite of the repeated Platonic allusions (cf. also §10 and 16–25), reducing the principles to an active cause and a passive element recalls the Stoic bi-partition,[7] and this has suggested that Philo was in some way following a form of Stoicized Platonism, as, for example, testified in the doxography of Diogenes Laertius (3.69 and 76).[8] Confirming this suggestion, Gretchen Reydams-Schils has further observed that a similar mingling of Platonic and Stoic themes is also found in Aristobulus, that is, in the Hebraic tradition before Philo.[9] This is certainly an interesting connection, but, on reflection, there are also some details that make the connection with Stoicism much less pertinent than it seems at first sight. One evident characteristic of the first principle is, in fact, its separateness:[10] God is pure, uncontaminated, he even transcends positive qualities like the good and the beautiful. This is a fundamental concept that returns

[3] As has now been shown by the researches of D.T. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria and the* Timaeus *of Plato* (Leiden 1986), and J. Dillon, *The Middle Platonists, 80 B.C. to A.D. 220* (London 1996²), 139–183 among others.

[4] It is interesting to observe that this link was also recognised by Clement and other Christian writers, who refer to Philo as Pythagorean, the term being a sort of equivalent in this period for 'Platonist', cf. D.T. Runia, "Why does Clement of Alexandria call Philo 'the Pythagorean'?", *Vigiliae Christianae* 49 (1995), 1–22 and, more generally, M. Bonazzi, *Academici e Platonici. Il dibattito antico sullo scetticismo di Platone* (Milan 2003), 208–211.

[5] The identity of these impious adorers of the cosmos is controversial. A.P. Bos, "Philo of Alexandria: a Platonist in the Image and Likeness of Aristotle", *The Studia Philonica Annual* 10 (1998), 66–86, thinks of the Chaldeans, but perhaps F. Trabattoni "Philo *De opificio mundi* 7–12", in M. Bonazzi–J. Opsomer (eds.), *The Origins of Platonism* (Leuven, forthcoming) is right to suggest that the target of the polemic is rather the Aristotelian tradition.

[6] The translations of this treatise are by D.T. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria. On the Creation of the Cosmos according to Moses. Introduction, translation and commentary* (Leiden 2001); the translations of the other treatises are from the Loeb Classical Library with some occasional modifications.

[7] *SVF* 2.300–312 (fr. 302 corresponds to the passage of *Opif.* 8 just cited). On the link between this Stoic doctrine and Plato, cf. D.N. Sedley, "Hellenistic Physics and Metaphysics", in K.A. Algra–J. Barnes–J. Mansfeld–M. Schofield, *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy* (Cambridge 1999), 355–411.

[8] Alongside the passage of Diogenes, we should recall, for its great importance on Stoicism, the celebrated fragment by Theophrastus *ap.* Simpl. *In Phys.* 26, 7–13 (= fr. 230 FSH&G). The doxography of Aëtius (1.6–7) and, even more, Antiochus, require separate treatment. There is no doubt that Antiochus' physics, as presented by Cicero (*Ac. po.* 1.24–29) reproduce a structure similar to the Stoic one, but that does not mean that he can be treated as a follower of the Stoics, cf. P.L. Donini, *Le scuole, l'anima, l'impero. La filosofia antica da Antioco a Plotino* (Turin 1982, repr. 1993), 79; on Antiochus' strategies cf. now M. Bonazzi, "Antiochus' Ethics and the Subordination of Stoicism", in M. Bonazzi–J. Opsomer (eds.), *The Origins of Platonism*, cit. For more detailed treatment of the relations between Antiochus and Philo, see also John Dillon's contribution to this volume.

[9] G. Reydams-Schils, *Demiurge and Providence. Stoic and Platonist Readings of Plato's* Timaeus (Turnhout 1999), 135–139, 145–151.

[10] D.T. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria.* On the Creation of the Cosmos, cit., 115.

again and again in Philo's texts: God is distinct from the cosmos, his product, and cannot be confused with it. An idea like this is hard to reconcile with Stoic doctrine: the presence of terms that are in some ways traceable to Stoic language betrays a conception that has little in common with Stoicism.

If we are looking for a parallel with Greek philosophy, it is rather to the Pythagoreanizing Platonism that spread in Alexandria that we should look. In Philo's city between the end of the I century BC and the early I century AD a type of Platonism gained ground that had taken up themes and problems that were thought to be distinctive of early Pythagoreanism, even though they actually often depended more on the previous reception of Pythagoreanism in the Old Academy. Unfortunately, we have little information on the individual philosophers, but it is surely significant that this very period also saw the production of numerous treatises attributed to the most important Pythagoreans, who were often actually reproducing Platonic doctrines. As long as we do not think of these works as a response to a coherent and systematic project down to the last detail, they can also be legitimately used as documents of Alexandrian Platonism in the early Imperial age.[11] One of the most significant characteristics that emerges from these documents is the central position of the theological dimension: Eudorus, Plutarch's teacher Ammonius, the pseudo-Timaeus and the pseudo-Archytas of the treatise on principles all agree in calling the first principle "God", θεός.[12] This is naturally a significant point of contact with Philo, even though it would be easy to object that in itself it does not settle the matter finally: but there are other characteristics that allow us to consider the connection more deeply. Alongside the exaltation of his divine character these authors insist on the singularity of the first principle, which is the cause of unity and order in a world that tends to split up into a disordered multiplicity. "The principle of what is, the true principle,"

[11] The problem of these Pythagorean pseudo-epigraphs is actually still more complex because some texts at least seem to date from earlier periods. To avoid confusion I shall concentrate only on those treatises which scholarship has established, with reasonable certainty, as being connected with Platonism in the early Imperial age, particularly *De natura mundi et animae* attributed to Timaeus and a *De principiis* attributed to Archytas; cf. M. Baltes, *Timaios Lokros. Über die Natur des Kosmos und der Seele* (Leiden 1972), 22–23, and B. Centrone, "The Theory of Principles in the *Pseudopythagorica*", in K.I. Boudouris (ed.), *Pythagorean Philosophy* (Athens 1992), 90–97.

[12] Cf. in particular, with relation to Eudorus, Simpl. *In Phys.* 181, 7–30 = Eudorus T 3–5 Mazzarelli; to Ammonius, Plut. *De E*, 391e–394c; ps.-Tim. *De univ. nat.* 205, 5–225, 10 and ps.-Arch. *De princ.* 19, 5–20, 17 Thesleff.

writes the Pythagorean Thearidas, who was actually an apocryphal figure of the early Imperial age, "is One; and it is unique and alone (ἁ ἀρχὰ τῶν ὄντων, ἀρχὰ μὲν ὄντως ἀληθινά, μία· κείνα γὰρ ἐν ἀρχᾷ τέ ἐστιν ἓν καὶ μόνον)".[13] This insistence on unity is confirmed most significantly in Eudorus, who calls the first principle respectively God and One (ἕν), but just as interesting is the great speech that Plutarch puts into Ammonius' mouth in the *De E apud Delphos*:

> you are One (εἶ ἕν). In fact the Deity (τὸ θεῖον) is not Many, like each of us who is compounded of hundreds of different factors [...], a heterogeneous collection combined in a haphazard way. But Being must have Unity, even as Unity must have Being (ἀλλ' ἓν εἶναι δεῖ τὸ ὄν, ὥσπερ ὂν τὸ ἕν; 393b; trans. Babbit).[14]

The link with Pythagoreanism, which was so deeply concerned with numbers and their value, makes the importance of this characteristic absolutely clear, and converges significantly with Philo, who often celebrates his God as "One" or "Monad", to underline its character of uniqueness and separateness.[15] In addition, the passage of Plutarch just cited also brings out another characteristic that we often find in Philo:[16] the presentation of God as a real being (τὸ ὄντως ὄν), attributing him a feature that in Plato was reserved for the description of ideas.

Finally, Philo and these authors agree in insisting on the separateness and superiority of the first divine principle. On this, which, as we have seen, is of decisive importance, because it marks a decisive break with Stoicism and any type of Stoicizing Platonism, the convergence with Alexandrian Platonism is even more marked, as we can see from a comparison with Eudorus. One of Philo's expedients for underlining the separateness and distance of the first principle from the cosmos is the use of the adverb ὑπεράνω. God is beyond, ὑπεράνω, the heavens (*Congr.* 105); he is beyond, ὑπεράνω, space and time (*Post.* 14); his

[13] Thear. *De nat.* 201, 16–18 Thesleff.

[14] Shortly after, moreover, at 393c, the formula εἷς καὶ μόνος returns. In general, J. Whittaker's observations on Ammonius' discourse in "Ammonius on the Delphic E", *Classical Quarterly* 19 (1969), 185–192, remain fundamental; more generally, on the value of Plutarch's testimony, cf. F. Ferrari, *Dio, idee e materia. La struttura del cosmo in Plutarco di Cheronea* (Naples 1995), 51–61.

[15] Cf., for example, *Leg.* 2.1–3, 3.48, *Deus*, 11, *Her.* 187, 189, *Spec.* 2.176 and the list in H.-J. Krämer, *Der Ursprung des Geistmetaphysik. Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Platonismus zwischen Platon und Plotin* (Amsterdam 1964), 273–274 and P. Boyancé, "Études Philoniennes", *Revue des Etudes Grecques* 76 (1963), 82–95; cf. also *Agr.* 54, *Her.* 216, *Leg.* 2.1 on the formula εἷς καὶ μόνος.

[16] Cf., for example, *Deus*, 11, *Ebr.* 83, *Congr.* 51.

logos is beyond, ὑπεράνω, the whole universe, and is older and more universal than everything that is born (*Leg.* 3.175). This use is perfectly matched in an eloquent expression of Eudorus, whose definition of the first principle is ὁ ὑπεράνω θεός (Simpl. *In Phys.* 181, 19). Unfortunately, the scanty evidence available makes it difficult to examine this connection further; yet the parallel is not to be undervalued. As Jaap Mansfeld observed, the use of the adverb *hyperano* in metaphorical sense "seems to be rather late";[17] it is not attested either in Plato or Aristotle, but it returns significantly in Iamblichus' account of Speusippus.[18] It is difficult to establish if the term went back to Speusippus or if it was retrospectively attributed to him by Iamblichus: in any case, this testimony is authoritative confirmation of the importance this idea had in traditions interested in comparing Platonism and Pythagoreanism, and is also confirmed in other later Platonist texts (Anon. *In Parm.* 2.12). But this idea is not only characteristic of Platonists, because the formula ὁ ὑπεράνω θεός seems to have been common in Christian tradition too;[19] Clement, one of the first Christians known to have adopted this formula, uses it with explicit reference to Philo (*Strom.* 2.2.6, 1): Eudorus and Philo are a junction of fundamental importance, not only for the spread of the formula, but also for what is behind it, for the attempt to characterise the first principle in a transcendent and divine sense, in a framework in which theological interests gradually prevail over physical or cosmological questions.

Careful analysis of the testimonies available, then, shows a deep affinity between Philo and the Platonists of his time, all of whom extract from the Platonic dialogues and Pythagorean testimonies the doctrine of a single first principle that is divine and transcendent: God is, to quote a fragment of Philolaus that Philo recalls with approval, "one, always existent, abiding, unchanged, himself identical to himself and differing from all others" (*Opif.* 100 = 44B20 DK). Naturally, this does not mean that Philo is wholly dependent on Platonism. His thoughts, as is well known, are inspired above all by the Bible. But it would be a serious error to undervalue the importance of this relation with regard

[17] J. Mansfeld, "Compatible Alternatives. Middle Platonist Theology and the Xenophanes Reception", in R. van den Broek–T. Baarda–J. Mansfeld (eds.), *Knowledge of God in the Greco-Roman World* (Leiden 1988), 97 n. 17.

[18] Iambl. *De comm. math. sc.* 4 = Speusippus T 72 Isnardi Parente.

[19] Cfr. e.g. Just. *Triph.* 2.120, Iren. *Adv. haer.* 1.20, 2, Clem. *Strom.* 2.2, 6; 2.11, 51, 1, Orig. *Contra Cels.* 5.33, *Philocal.* 26, 3, Hipp. *Ref.* 7.26, 1, 7.32, 7, Greg. Nyss. *Adv. Maced.* 96, 31, etc.

to Philo's attempt to mediate between Hebraism and Greek philosophy. It has often been observed that one of the main obstacles to this operation is the difficulty of mediating between the 'personal' God of the Scriptures and the 'abstract' God of philosophy. But one of the most significant characteristics that we have observed in Eudorus, Ammonius and the apocryphal Pythagoreans is precisely the alternation between impersonal (ἕν, θεῖον) and personal (θεός) formulas. The doctrines of these Platonists perform, then, a function of decisive mediation in Philo's work of unifying the Bible and Platonism—a mediation whose importance it is impossible to exaggerate, if we think of the significance that Philo's work was to have over the centuries.

Given the importance of this connection, it is a pity that the shortage of material that we have prevents more systematic analysis. This would allow us to solve many problems, deepening our knowledge of Philo as well as of Alexandrian Platonism. As things stand, for example, one is tempted to observe that Philo seems to contradict himself, sometimes comparing God to the monad and the one (and in this he recalls Eudorus and the other Platonists mentioned above), and sometimes claiming he is superior to them.[20] John Dillon advises us not to treat as "strictly philosophical statements" claims that should be considered as "essentially rhetorical flourish[es]",[21] depending probably on his desire to exalt the superiority and grandeur of God. In part, at least, this is certainly true, but it is just as true that complex theological and philosophical problems are at stake: the first divine principle is the cause of our world, but still remains other from it, and this introduces the problem of how we can understand and call him or how we *cannot* understand and call him—the problem of negative theology, in short. Discussing the whole problem of negative theology would require much more space than is available here, but some observations may be useful. It is known that similar concerns held a central place in Hebraic tradition; so when Philo insisted on "the overwhelming superiority and sublimity of God", which cannot be "exhausted by his relationship to created reality via the Logos",[22] one might think that he was at least partly distancing himself from Greek tradition. But similar problems are to be found elsewhere too. In particular, John Whittaker has tried

[20] Cf., for example, *Praem.* 40, *Contempl.* 2, *QE* 2.68.

[21] J. Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, cit., 156; cf. too D.T. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria and the* Timaeus, cit., 435 n. 147.

[22] D. Runia, "Was Philo a Middle Platonist?", cit., 139.

to show, on the basis of Hermetic testimonies and other writings dating from the early Imperial age, that Pythagoreanism played a central role in the development of negative theology.[23] This would be confirmed by Philo himself, if Whittaker's conjecture is true that he is referring to the Pythagoreanizing Platonists in *Somn.* 1.184 after criticising the immanentist theology of Hellenistic philosophers:

> Some say that everything that subsists occupies some space, and of these one allots to the Existent One [note that the term used for God is the Platonic τὸ ὄν] his space, another that, whether inside the world or a space outside it in the interval between worlds. Others maintain that the Unoriginate resembles nothing among created things, but so completely transcends them, that even the swiftest understanding falls far short of apprehending Him and acknowledges its failure.[24]

This is certainly an interesting possibility, although it is difficult to reach any certain conclusion. In any case, a partial confirmation at least of Whittaker's conjecture comes from two occurrences of the adverb ὑπεράνω, which we have already discussed. Hyppolitus, discussing the Gnostic Basilides' theory of the ineffability of God, explains that for him one cannot even say of God that he is ineffable (ἄρρητος) because that would in any case mean attributing him a name, whereas in reality God is ὑπεράνω παντὸς ὀνόματος ὀνομαζομένου.[25] Similarly, the anonymous commentary on the *Parmenides*, which though later is also influenced by Platonist doctrines of the early Imperial age, claims that God is the cause of all things, of their plurality and their being, but that

> in himself he is neither one nor plural, but supersubstantial [...] so that he is superior not only to the notion of plurality, but also to that of the One (οὐ πλήθους μόνου ὑπεράνω, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆς τοῦ ἑνὸς ἐπινοίας); through him, in fact, both the One and the Monad are (2.9–14).

Even without thinking that these are fragments or reminiscences of Eudorus, the two passages show the 'negative' potential that the term ὑπεράνω had when it was used metaphorically. And Eudorus too, when he defines the first principle (ὁ ὑπεράνω θεός) with the term "one" (ἕν), does not indicate only its unity, but also underlines its transcendence of all qualities (and so in some ways of unity too), which are made

[23] J. Whittaker, "Neopythagoreanism and the Transcendent Absolute", *Symbolae Osloenses* 48 (1973), 77–86.

[24] J. Whittaker, "Neopythagoreanism and the Transcendent Absolute", cit., 80–81.

[25] On Basilides and Hyppolitus, cf. J. Whittaker, "Basilides on the Ineffability of God", *The Harvard Theological Review* 62 (1969), 367–371.

to depend on two elementary principles of the monad and the dyad. If this reading is correct, in Eudorus as in Philo, we shall thus find alternative ways of describing and understanding the first principle that are not necessarily incompatible with each other, but dependent on the point of view that is adopted each time.[26] Despite our scanty sources, and without questioning the importance of the Hebraic tradition, the surviving evidence shows that Philo's ambiguous expressions are not an isolated case, but depend on interests that are also common to other traditions, particularly the Platonic-Pythagorean one. And as Whittaker has rightly observed, the convergence "may be considered symptomatic of the tendency to transcendentalism which dominates the thinking of Philo and his contemporaries".[27]

3. The emphasis on the superiority of the first principle is not only a novelty in itself, but also for what it betokens. In a religious perspective it is unimaginable to think that God, "happy and blessed as it was", could "touch the limitless chaotic matter" (*Spec.* 1.329). But how then should we explain the creation of the universe? The insistence on transcendence brings out the problem typical of Platonism—"the bureaucratic fallacy" or the need to reconcile distinct planes of reality.[28] If the growing importance of the theological perspective made this need to preserve God's separateness still more deeply felt, no less urgent was the need to make the existence of everything dependent on his providential intervention. In Plato's *Timaeus* the mediating function was performed by the demiurge; the theological reading of the *Timaeus* in the early Imperial age, by contrast, entails the demiurge being identified with the first divine principle, while the role of mediator is performed by eidetic principles: they are the instrument that the first principle makes use of

[26] Fundamental to this regard is J. Mansfeld, "Compatible Alternatives", cit., 100; cf. too the interesting comments by F. Calabi, "Conoscibilità e inconoscibilità di Dio in Filone di Alessandria", in F. Calabi (ed.), *Arrhetos Theos. L'ineffabilità del primo principio nel medio platonismo* (Pisa 2002), 53–54.

[27] J. Whittaker, "Neopythagoreanism and the Transcendent Absolute", cit., 80; on the historical importance of this 'tendency to transcendentalism', cf. now D.T. Runia, "The Beginnings of the End: Philo of Alexandria and Hellenistic Theology", in D. Frede–A. Laks (eds.), *Traditions of Theology. Studies in Hellenistic Theology, its Background and Aftermath* (Leiden 2002), 308–312.

[28] Cf. J. Rist, "On Plotinus' Psychology", *Rivista di Storia della Filosofia* 61 (2006), 726: "if we have two terms (or, better, two items) A and B, there must be a third item, AB to link them together. Which notion inevitably leads to the bureaucrat's dream: an infinite regress of middle-men".

to order matter.[29] In other words, reality should not be brought back to two principles, but to three: the god/demiurge, who is the principle in the strictest and highest sense, matter and the instruments which the god concretely makes use of in his action of ordering matter.[30] This doctrine of the three principles was to be typical of Platonism in the Imperial age. Here we can see clearly how the transcendent and theological reading involves the adoption of a paradigm that is radically different from the dualist doctrines mentioned earlier.

At this point, however, two important qualifications are necessary. First of all, we must avoid running into the error of thinking that this doctrine of the three principles was produced perfectly and fully defined from the mind of some philosopher, like Athena from the head of Zeus. Secondly, we should always bear in mind that Philo follows this theory autonomously and not slavishly.[31] As far as the first question is concerned, careful analysis of the few surviving accounts shows that the problem of finding degrees of mediation between levels of reality and different principles found different formulations. In synthesis, there are two main solutions, the one that insisted on numbers and the one that insisted more strictly on ideas. This is no great novelty, of course, given that, as Aristotle bears witness, the complex relation between ideas and principles had already proved to be a decisive problem for Plato, and even more for his immediate successors, who had attributed increasing importance to numbers over ideas. Further confirmation of renewed interest for the Old Academy in Eudorus and pseudo-Pythagorean literature can be seen in the fact that numbers and geometrical bodies play the role of mediating between God and matter, thus guaranteeing the order of the cosmos. The god/demiurge manages to obtain a rationalisation of the indeterminate substratum thanks to the introduction of "mathematical structures" (ἀριθμοῖς καὶ σχήμασι), to use the words of Alcinous (*Did.* 167, 18–20). In spite of its brevity, if the passage by Simplicius is compared with the other accounts, it shows that this was the solution Eudorus proposed. In Simplicius' testimony, the basic framework of Eudorus' doctrine is articulated in the contrast between *arche* and *stoicheia*, the transcendent principle (ἀρχή, *In*

[29] Phil. *Cher.* 125; *Leg.* 3.96, *Spec.* 1.329 etc.

[30] Cf. too G. Reydams-Schils, *Demiurge and Providence*, cit., 147.

[31] On this cf. R. Radice, "Observations on the Theory of the Ideas as the Thoughts of God in Philo of Alexandria", in D.M. Hay–D.T. Runia–D. Winston (eds.), *Heirs of the Septuagint. Philo, Hellenistic Judaism and Early Christianity*, in *The Studia Philonica Annual* 3 (1991), 128.

Phys. p. 181, l. 1)—the God ὑπεράνω (l. 19) and one (ἕν, ll. 11, 17, 22, 26, 29)—and the elements (στοιχεῖα ll. 24, 26)—the monad (μονάς) and the dyad (ἀόριστος δυάς), from whose union the other bodies derived (ll. 26–27).[32] Eudorus' choice of the terms monad and dyad to indicate the principles is significantly in agreement with many other accounts of the time—from the Pythagorean writings of Alexander Polyhistor to the anonymous *Life of Pythagoras* and Plutarch of Chaeroneia—and clearly shows that the function of ordering the cosmos happened according to mathematical-geometrical principles: from these first two principles derive numbers in the strict sense, and the numerical progression "one-two-three-four" marks the dimensional progression "point-line-surface-solid" that makes it possible to put order in the substratum of matter.[33] The importance of numbers is also confirmed in the *De principiis* of the pseudo-Archytas, the text which more than any other has affinities with Eudorus:[34] to bring unformed and disordered matter to order and form (μορφώ) the God has recourse to the power of numbers (ἀριθμῶν δυναμίας, p. 20, 3–5 Thesleff). Mathematics—or, more precisely: the mathematicalisation of principles—enables, then, the transition from a theological and metaphysical plane to the cosmological and physical plane, thus resolving the problem of mediating between two degrees of different realities. In confirmation of the novelty of these doctrines and of Alexandrian Platonism, it is interesting to note that they were completely lacking in the sceptical Platonism of the Hellenistic Academy, which did not include Pythagoras in its genealogies, and does not demonstrate any positive and explicit interest either in mathematics or in theology.

Thus, a characteristic feature of Alexandrian Pythagorean Platonism is the importance it attributed to mathematical entities as mediating principles between divinity and matter in the constitution of the cos-

[32] For more detailed analysis, cf. M. Bonazzi, *Eudoro di Alessandria alle origini del platonismo imperiale*, in M. Bonazzi–V. Celluprica (eds.), *L'eredità platonica. Studi sul platonismo da Arcesilao a Proclo* (Naples 2005), 115–160.

[33] Cf. Alex. Polyhist. *ap.* D.L. 7.24–25, Anon. *Vit. Pyth. ap.* Phot. *Bibl.* 438b19–24, Plut. *Plat. quaest.* 3.1001f–1002a; *De def. or.* 428e–f, Sext. *M* 10.258–262; equally interesting is Clem. *Strom.* 5. 11, on which cf. J. Whittaker, "Neopythagoreanism and Negative Theology", *Symbolae Osloenses* 44 (1969), 112–113. That this was in some ways a theory attributable to Eudorus too is further confirmed by Plutarch, who states that Eudorus agreed with Xenocrates when he claimed that numbers are the product of the one/monad and of the indefinite dyad, Plut. *De an. procr.* 1012e = Eudorus T 6 Mazzarelli.

[34] Cf. M. Bonazzi, "Eudoro di Alessandria alle origini del platonismo", cit., 152–157.

mos. If we turn to Philo, we may note that traces of this doctrine return in his writings too. John Dillon, in particular, has indicated the importance of two passages, *Her.* 156 where "God is described as employing all numbers and all forms in the bringing to completion of the world" and *Opif.* 102 which discusses ideas in association with numerical and derivative sequence: it is thanks to this sequence that we pass "from the incorporeal and intelligible substance to a conception of three-dimensional body, which is by nature the first object to be perceived by the senses" (*Opif.* 49).[35] But in spite of these significant passages, it is evident to any reader of Philo that for him ideas cannot be reduced only to numbers, but play a wider role. The most significant confirmation of the importance of ideas is to be found in his claim, which he made on various occasions, that they are the thoughts of God: in Philo we find a first explicit declaration of a doctrine that would make up one of the distinctive features of Imperial Platonism and its doctrine of the three principles (God, idea, matter). Now, one might claim that, in part at least, in the Pythagorean branch of Alexandrian Platonism too there are traces of this doctrine, as we can see from the occurrence in the pseudo-Timaeus (§30) of the formula *idanikos kosmos*—a clear parallel with Philo's more famous *noetikos kosmos*, which clearly takes us back to the same context.[36] Further indications could also be found from the occurrence of *noetikos kosmos* in Achilles' *Isagoge*, which seems to reflect the influence of Eudorus.[37] And, of course, it is easy to imagine that the Pythagoreanizing Platonists might in some way endorse this thesis if we

[35] J. Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, cit., 159. The more general section from which the passage of *Her.* 156 is taken is the long discussion of the *logos* as divider, which in turn echoes themes of the Old Academy and Pythagoreanism. As for Philo's numerological and arithmetical competence, cf. D.T. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria. On the Creation of the Cosmos*, cit., 25–29 *et passim*; nevertheless Runia, 277, following R. Radice, claims that "ideas" in *Opif.* 102 "should *not* be taken in the technical Platonic sense": the fact remains, however, that the affinities with the accounts just discussed are significant (the same applies too for *Opif.* 49).

[36] More generally, on *noetikos kosmos*, cf. D.T. Runia, "A Brief History of the Term *kosmos noétos* from Plato to Plotinus", in J.J. Cleary (ed.), *Traditions of Platonism. Essays in honour of John Dillon*, (Aldershot–Brookfield 1999), 151–171.

[37] Cf. D.T. Runia, "A Brief History", cit., 160. On Eudorus and ideas, cf. in particular W. Theiler, "Philon von Alexandria und der Beginn des kaiserzeitlichen Platonismus", in K. Flasch (ed.), *Parousia. Studien zur Philosophie Platons und zur Problemgeschichte des Platonismus. Festgabe für J. Hirschberger* (Frankfurt 1965), 206ff., and J. Mansfeld, "Compatible Alternatives", cit., 106–107 n. 59. In this connection we might also mention Thrasyllus, to whom Theon of Smyrna (*Exp.* 73) attributes a doctrine of the *logos* that might in some ways be compared with Philo (Thasyllus had written on the Platonic and Pythagorean principles: Porph. *Vit. Plot.* 20): H. Tarrant has dealt with this subject in *Thrasyllan Platonism* (Ithaca–London 1993), 110–117, but the scanty sources available make confirmation of this conjecture extremely difficult.

recall that it was to an extent inspired by Xenocrates. While Speusippus had replaced ideas with numbers, inaugurating the mathematicalisation of the cosmology in the *Timeaus* (the function of "model", παράδειγμα, which ideas had in the *Timaeus* was now the role of mathematical entities), Xenocrates, by contrast, had tried to keep together mathematical entities and ideas, insisting on the fact that the monad was also "intellect", νοῦς (fr. 213 Isnardi), and so must have a content of thought: ideas.[38] Anyway, restricting ourselves to the surviving accounts, we must admit that Alexandrian Platonism greatly preferred the mathematical solution: this marks a difference with Philo, in whom the role of ideas is more extensive. In addition, we should recall that the doctrine that saw ideas as the thoughts of God did not seem to be circulating only in Alexandria, but can be found elsewhere too, for example in texts traceable to Antiochus, as can be seen from Varro's famous testimony, and perhaps from Seneca too.[39] Without pretending to have found a solution to this longstanding problem, some more general conclusions can be drawn about Philo's relations with the Alexandrian Platonists. While the latter clearly preferred a mathematical interpretation of principles, Philo recognised the importance of mathematics but did not reduce ideas to just numbers. In this, then, it is possible to register a certain autonomy of thought. What emerges is an extremely fluid and lively situation, in which Philo shows he is able to move with competence and independence of thought.[40]

[38] That Xenocrates' doctrine played an important part in the formulation of the doctrine of ideas as thoughts of God is a fact, even though the surviving accounts do not allow us to claim that he was wholly responsible for it, as claimed by H.-J. Krämer, *Der Ursprung des Geistmetaphysik*, cit., 91; cf. also J. Dillon, *The Heirs of Plato. A Study of the Old Academy (347–274 BC)* (Oxford 2003), 118–121.

[39] Varro *ap.* August. *Civ. Dei*, 7.28, Sen. *Ep.* 65. On Antiochus, cf. the contribution to this volume by J. Dillon.

[40] On the subject of ideas as the thoughts of God, it should also be mentioned that, according to R. Radice, this doctrine was formulated for the first time by Philo himself (*Platonismo e creazionismo in Filone di Alessandria* (Milan 1989), 281–306). This is a fascinating conjecture, which requires far more space than is available here to deal with properly. However, one might mention, as Runia and others rightly have done, that accounts like Varro's or that of the pseudo-Timaeus confirm that the doctrine was already circulating before Philo; more generally, the arguments collected by Radice "are not strong enough to support his radical thesis" (*Philo of Alexandria. On the Creation of the Cosmos*, cit., 152). And, still more generally, the analyses in this paper, insofar as they show that Philo took up themes and doctrines of the Platonism of his

4. The importance of the new theological theories is also reflected in the field of ethics, particularly with reference to the problem of the *telos*, the goal of human existence. The gradual separation between God and the cosmos, between the creator and his product, also means a parallel shift from a cosmic theology to a 'meta-cosmic' theology: it is not enough to adapt to the laws of this world, but necessary to assimilate oneself to that God who is other than us, but to whom we are also related like children to their father. The most eloquent and famous testimony on the subject is undoubtedly a passage quoted in the second book of Stobaeus' *Anthologium*, tentatively attributed to Eudorus:

> Socrates and Plato agree with Pythagoras that the human goal (τέλος) is assimilation to God (ὁμοίωσις τῷ θεῷ). Plato articulated it more clearly by adding "in respect of what is possible", and it is only possible by wisdom, that is to say, by living in accordance with virtue. In God resides the capacity to create the cosmos and to administer it, in the wise person establishment and regulation of a way of life are present. Homer hints at this when he says: "proceed in the footsteps of God" (κατ' ἴχνια βαῖνε θεοῖο; *Odissey*, 5.193), while Pythagoras after him says: "follow God" (ἕπου θεῷ). Clearly by God he means not the visible God who advances, but the intelligible God who is harmonic cause of the good cosmic order. Plato states it according to the three parts of philosophy: physically (and in the Pythagorean manner I will add) in the *Timaeus*, pointing out without envy the previous observation of Pythagoras; ethically in the *Republic*, and logically in the *Theaetetus*. In the fourth book of the *Laws* he speaks clearly and at the same time richly on the subject of following God. [...] That Plato considers the perfect virtue the goal is stated in the *Timaeus* as well, where he indicates also the name; I will quote the end of the passage, which runs: "by assimilating (ὁμοιώσαντα), bring to fulfilment (τέλος) the best of life offered by the gods to mankind for present and future time" (*Tim.* 90c–d).[41]

This very doctrine is repeated in various passages by Philo, who mentions both the Pythagorean (and also Homeric) formulation and the Platonic one:

own time, also confirm that the most economical conjecture is that which dates the doctrine of ideas to the Platonist philosophers of the first Imperial age too.

[41] Stob. *Ecl.* 2.7.3, p. 49, 8–50, 10 W. (= Eudorus T 25 Mazzarelli). This text has traditionally been regarded as by Eudorus, but this attribution has been questioned by T. Göransson, *Albinus, Alcinous, Arius Didymus* (Göteborg 1995), 186–191, 219–227. Whatever the truth of the matter, it is in any case clear that the account is the work of a philosopher interested in linking Plato and Pythagoras, cf., for example, the anonymous *Life of Pythagoras ap.* Phot. *Bibl.* cod. 249, 439a8–14.

> Have we not here a most admirable injunction full of power to urge us to every virtue and piety most of all? "Always follow God" (ἕπου αἰεὶ θεῷ) (*Decal.* 100).
>
> [the first man] was closely related and akin to the Director, because the divine spirit had flowed into him in ample measure, and so all his words and actions were undertaken in order to please the Father and King, in whose footsteps he followed (ἑπόμενος κατ' ἴχνος) along the highways that the virtues mark out, because only those souls are permitted to approach him who consider the goal of their existence to be assimilation to the God who brought them forth (τέλος ... τὴν πρὸς τὸν γεννήσαντα θεὸν ἐξομοίωσιν) (*Opif.* 144).[42]

In *Fug.* 63 he even cites (anonymously) the passage of the *Theaetetus*, 176a–b that was the classical reference point for all Platonists. The resemblances are clear, and this too confirms Philo's interest for the new Platonic doctrines circulating in Alexandria in the I century AD.

Contrary to what is sometimes claimed, the novelty of this formula, strictly speaking, is neither the insistence on God nor a more marked form of religious feeling than other formulas in the Hellenistic period. This is particularly so in the case of Stoicism, whose formula "live in accordance with nature", given the coincidence between nature and God, effectively means "live in accordance with God". Indeed, it would be difficult to accuse philosophers like Cleanthes, the author of the *Hymn to Zeus*, of little religious feeling. Compared with Stoicism, the difference of the Platonist formula is in the separateness of God, who is no longer simply compared with *physis*, but is other than it. The novelty lies in this detachment between *physis* and *theos*:[43] in this case too, the insistence on transcendence brings with it a complete change of perspective—a change of perspective that does not hide its criticism of Stoicism. The underlying anti-stoic polemic can easily be heard in the passage cited from Stobaeus above, when he invites his readers to assimilate not to the visible but to the intelligible God.[44] But still more significant confirmation for reconstructing the context of polemic that accompanied the birth of the new formula is the testimony of the

[42] Cf. also *Opif.* 151; *Abr.* 61, 87, *Decal.* 73, 101; *Spec.* 4.188, *Virt.* 168; *Deus*, 48; *QG* 2.62.

[43] In this connection C. Lévy, "Éthique de l'immanence, éthique de la transcendance. Le problème de l'*oikeiôsis* chez Philon", in C. Lévy (ed.), *Philon d'Alexandrie et le langage de la philosophie* (Turnhout 1998), 153–164, is fundamental.

[44] Cf. M. Bonazzi, "Continuité et rupture entre l'Académie et le platonisme", *Études Platoniciennes* 3 (2006), 239–240; on Philo and 'Hellenistic cosmic religion', see D.T. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria*. On the Creation of the Cosmos, cit., 207–209.

anonymous commentator of the *Theaetetus*, who deliberately establishes an explicit contrast between the *oikeiosis*, the basic principle of Stoic ethics, and the *homoiosis*. Against the Stoics, who claimed to found justice on human *nature*, the arguments of Academics and Platonists show that this is intrinsically egoistic, and that the only possible foundation is the *God*, to whom the soul can be assimilated, transcending its nature.[45] As we can easily imagine, behind this contrast and the new formula is to be found a different conception not only of nature in general, but, also, more precisely, of the nature of man and his soul. The soul is no longer a homogenous and compact block as the Stoics claimed, but is divided in at least two parts, one rational and the other irrational:[46] while the latter serves for the needs of the body and the world of becoming (the *physis)*, the former, with which it thinks and reasons, is the part that brings us close to God, is what enables men to search for God and become like it.[47] This division in two is a fundamental doctrine of Platonism and returns constantly in the Platonists and in Philo.[48] In Philo too there are traces of the anti-stoic outlook of these doctrines, as we can see, for example, from the flat rejection of the cornerstone of Stoic ethics, the doctrine of *oikeiosis*. Given the separation and importance of the incorporeal soul, the *oikeiosis* becomes assimilation to the body, the flesh, and this is the cause of our greatest ignorance:

> And so though the divine spirit may stay awhile in the soul it cannot abide there … And why wonder at this? For there is nothing else of which we have secure and firm possession, since human affairs incline in opposite directions and swing to both extremes as in a balance and are subject to continual change. But the chief cause of ignorance is the flesh and kinship (οἰκείωσις) to the flesh (*Gig.* 28–29);

[45] Anon. *In Theaet.* 7.14–20 with D.N. Sedley, in G. Bastianini–D.N. Sedley, "Commentarium in Platonis *Theaetetum*", in *Corpus dei papiri filosofici greci e latini*, III (Florence 1995), 495.

[46] For the purposes of this discussion there is no need to dwell on the further division of the irrational part.

[47] The importance of this two-fold division also explains the original reading of the passage in the *Theaetetus* that is derived from the formula of the *homoiosis*: in the Platonic dialogue we read that one must be assimilated to God as far as is possible (κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν) for a mortal. In the passage of Stobaeus and other writings from the Imperial period, however, κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν indicates the part of us that is capable of being assimilated to God, i.e. the rational part, the intellect.

[48] Cf., for example, D.T. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria and the* Timaeus, cit., 468–469.

> tenancy of the body is not to him [*scil.* Moses] merely that of the foreigner as immigrant settlers count it. To alienate himself from it (ἀλλοτριώσεως), never to count it as his own (οἰκειώσεως), is, he holds, to give it its due (*Conf.* 82).

If the opposition is open here, elsewhere, as Carlos Lévy has shown, his strategy is subtler, aiming at an appropriation and hence a subordination of the key concepts of Stoicism:[49] the *oikeiosis* is not to be understood as appropriation of its own nature, but as appropriation of the nature of God. The most interesting testimony is *Post.* 135, a passage that is a mirror image of the contrast between οἰκείωσις and ἀλλοτρίωσις in the *Conf.* 82 just cited: "enstrangement on the human side brings about kingship with God (τῇ δὲ ἡ πρὸς τὸ γενητὸν ἀλλοτρίωσις πρὸς θεὸν οἰκείωσιν εἰργάσατο)".[50]

The accounts analysed so far, then, confirm Philo's convergence with the Platonists in his rejection of an immanentist ethic.

But, as always in the case of Philo, convergence does not mean slavish imitation. Despite the underlying opposition between the platonic and the Stoic *telos*, in some passages Philo also echoes the Stoic theory, as, for example, in *Migr.* 128, where the (Pythagorean) invitation to "follow God" is defined as living in accordance with nature (τὸ ἀκολούθως τῇ φύσει ζῆν).[51] This apparent contradiction can be healed by two kinds of reasons, the first of which is compatible with Platonism, while the other—and more important—serves also to bring out Philo's autonomy. As far as the first aspect is concerned, it is easy to understand that in this case too Philo is showing he is practising the same strategies of subordination and appropriation discussed above for the *oikeiosis*, because the two formulas are not compared as if they were of equal value; on the contrary, the Stoic *telos* is subordinated to the Platonic-Pythagorean *telos*. Following nature (*Decal.* 81: ἑπόμενον τῇ φύσει, note that here Philo combines the Pythagorean and Stoic formulas)

[49] It is interesting to note that Eudorus too seems to be following a similar strategy in the case of another key concept of Stoic ethics, that of *horme*, cf. M. Bonazzi, "Eudorus' Psychology and Stoic Ethics", in M. Bonazzi–Ch. Helmig (eds.), *Platonic Stoicism—Stoic Platonism. The Dialogue between Platonism and Stoicism in Antiquity* (Leuven 2007), 109–132.

[50] C. Lévy, "Éthique de l'immanence, éthique de la transcendence", cit., 162–164, also indicates the differences that remain between this use of *oikeiosis* and *homoiosis*; cf. too *Opif.* 145–146, *Plant.* 55.

[51] *Migr.* 128: "This is the goal of life extolled by the best philosophers, to live in accordance with nature; and it is attained whenever the intellect entered on virtue's path, proceeds in the footsteps of right reason and follows God (κατ' ἴχνος ὀρθοῦ λόγου βαίνῃ καὶ ἕπηται θεῷ)".

means recognising the greatness of the creator *ex operibus* and this, then, opens the way to one's real end, which remains assimilation with God (*Decal.* 81, *Praem.* 11–13). The invitation to follow nature is a first step that allows us to reach God: in this sense, then, the adoption of the Stoic theory does not even conflict with the many passages in which Philo argues with those who give too much importance to our universe, neglecting its creator (*Opif.* 7). In this case too Philo demonstrates a certain ability in appropriating Stoic formulas to use them in a sense that is incompatible with Stoicism. In any case, the main reason for the presence of both formulas does not, I think, depend on Philo's philosophical interest in reconciling two philosophical systems that were otherwise hostile to each other. Rather, the adoption of the Stoic formula is an interesting example of the freedom with which the Biblical exegete exploits the arguments of pagan philosophers. Even without going into detail, it is clear that the Stoic formula allows the Jewish Philo to clarify better another aspect of nature that is very important to him, the normative character of the *physis* inasmuch as it is created and ordered by God, and hence its being similar to the *nomos*—the term that, as we know, translates the Hebraic *Torah*: the Patriarchs "gladly accepted conformity with nature, holding that nature itself was, as indeed it is, the most venerable of statutes, and thus their whole life was of happy obedience to the Law" (*Abr.* 6). This insistence on the link between nature and God through the concept of law does not necessarily conflict with Platonism, but does mean a shifting of emphasis.[52] In this sense, then, Philo also reveals his autonomy from Platonic tradition, from which he had however derived the doctrine of the *homoiosis*.

5. The analyses so far have shown—that at least is my hope—the liveliness of Platonism in the early Imperial age, at a decisive moment in its history, when various models and images of Plato, not necessarily compatible, but not completely irreconcilable either, were circulating together. The complexity also increased from the comparison with the other schools, which almost always had polemical purposes, but did not always necessarily lead to open controversy. Terms or concepts that for us distinguish a certain school were actually used in a slightly different sense by philosophers with another orientation, who were able in this way to vindicate the superiority of their own tradition over

[52] Cf. V. Nikiprowetzky, *Le Commentaire de l'Écriture chez Philon d'Alexandrie*, cit., 127–131 and n. 84, 150–151.

their adversaries. It is not difficult to find examples of these strategies of appropriation in Panaetius, Posidonius, Antiochus or Eudorus. And the same goes for the testimony of Philo: the adoption of the twofold division of causes into active and passive or of the *oikeiosis* in a context influenced by transcendence does not reflect a desire to reconcile Platonism and Stoicism or to construct a Stoically-influenced Platonism, but an attempt to subordinate Stoicism to Platonism. Some scholars have been tempted to accuse Philo of lack of clarity, eclecticism or confusion in his use of the doctrines of pagan philosophers. But the confusion—if that is the right word—is not Philo's, but of philosophy in the first Empire: Philo, on the contrary, is, to adopt the term used by Runia,[53] a "witness" of primary importance of Platonism in the first Imperial age, when it was oscillating between the two extremes of a Stoic or Pythagorean model.

Taking stock of the philosophical complexity of the first Imperial age also serves to clarify the position of Philo, who showed himself capable of making choices with great autonomy: his evident affinity with Pythagorean Platonism does not mean he adhered passively to all its doctrines (e.g. in the case of the doctrine of principles). Sometimes, as we have seen in ethics with the use of the Stoic formula of the "life according to nature", Philo even felt free to exploit theories that seem irreconcilable with the underlying Platonic outlook. But even here, we cannot really speak of eclecticism, because the use of the formulas is not in conflict with the other assumptions, but is an example of that type of subordination which we referred to previously. This example also served to show Philo's priorities in the clearest possible way, which were not those of a philosopher, but of a 'philosophically oriented exegete', whose main interest was the explanation of Scripture, and not the construction of a coherent philosophical system. Thus, bearing these elements in mind, we might even speak of Philo as a participant in Platonism—and not only as a witness: a participant who, even if he was not recognised as such by the 'official' Platonic philosophers (the inverted commas are obligatory), contributed through his choices and his freedom in a very important way to show the richness and complexity of Platonism.

[53] "Witness or Participant? Philo and the Neoplatonic Tradition", in A. Vanderjagt–D. Pätzold (eds.), *The Neoplatonic Tradition: Jewish, Christian and Islamic Themes* (Köln 1991), 36–56.

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