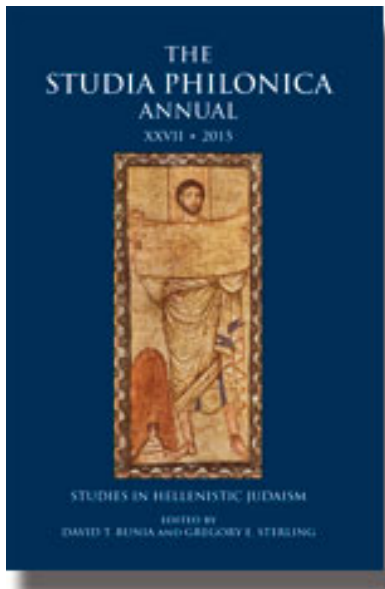


RBL 06/2019



David T. Runia and Gregory E. Sterling, eds.

Studia Philonica Annual: Studies in Hellenistic Judaism, Volume XXVII (2015)

Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015. Pp. x + 271. Hardcover. \$51.95. ISBN 9780884141273.

Tyler Smith
University of Ottawa

The twenty-seventh volume of the *Studia Philonica Annual* (2015) contains a general collection of six articles and a special section with three articles on Philo's *De decalogo*, the latter introduced by Sarah Pearce. As usual, readers are updated on the wider world of Philonic scholarship by means of a bibliography section, a book review section, and a "News and Notes" section.

The opening article, Sarah Pearce's "Intermarriage and the Ancestors of the Jews: Philonic Perspectives," expands her previous work on Philo and Jewish exogamy.¹ She is especially interested here in Philo's treatments of Hagar, Bilhah, Zilpah, Tamar, Aseneth, Zipporah, and Moses's Ethiopian wife. This novel approach to the question of Philo's attitude toward intermarriage allows Pearce to offer a corrective to earlier, oversimplified scholarly assessments of the evidence. Of this set of women, only Aseneth, Zipporah, and the Ethiopian woman are for Philo unambiguously non-Jewish women married to Jewish men. Philo does not try to downplay or obscure their non-Jewish origins, and, in the cases of Aseneth and Zipporah, he seems to take a certain pride in their high social status as indicative of how highly the outside world esteemed the Jews.

1. Sarah Pearce, "Rethinking the Other in Antiquity: Philo of Alexandria on Intermarriage," *Antichthon* 47 (2013): 140–55.

Michael Francis's "Wasted Seed and Sins of Intent: Sexual Ethics in *De specialibus legibus* 3.34–36 in the Case of Infertile Marriage" addresses another aspect of Philo on marriage and sexual ethics, namely, the case of the "infertile wife." After discussing Philo and the procreationist principle, Francis observes that Philo's silence on certain issues and his failure to spell out implications that would seem to follow naturally from his other statements regarding sexual ethics may be a matter of tactful expedience. Philo avoids taking a stand on whether husbands should divorce wives found to be infertile after marriage (even though doing so would allow them to remarry in an effort to follow the procreationist principle) or whether husbands should stay married and sexually involved with infertile wives (prioritizing the wife and the marriage over the duty to reproduce). There is less ambiguity in Philo's stance toward men who marry women they know are infertile; this, for Philo, is an inexcusable crime, a callous pursuit of sexual pleasure with blatant disregard for the procreationist mandate.

In "Cosmic Mothers in Philo of Alexandria and in Neopythagoreanism," Arco den Heijer presents some of the findings of his master's thesis, completed in 2015 at the Radboud University in Nijmegen. He looks at the conceptual backgrounds that have been proposed for the maternal imagery Philo uses in connection with σοφία and its counterparts in cosmological discourse and concludes that Neopythagorean contexts deserve more consideration than they have hitherto received, observing that Pseudo-Ocellus uses the expression "mother and nurse of all things" for justice; a *Hymn to Number*, preserved by several Neoplatonist authors, uses the expression "mother of all things" in connection with the Decad; and Valentinians such as the second-century teacher Marcus used the expression "mother of the universe" in connection with the Tetractys.

Eusebius of Caesarea famously quotes the mid-second-century pagan philosopher Numenius as saying, "What is Plato but Moses speaking in Attic?" Gregory E. Sterling's "The Theft of Philosophy: Philo of Alexandria and Numenius of Apamea" surveys what can be said about Numenius, his historical context, his writings, and the possible factors that could have led him to form the positive view of Judaism seemingly implied in the aforementioned quip about Plato and Moses. One possibility, in answer to the latter question, is that Numenius knew some of the works of Philo. Sterling does not find incontrovertible proof that Numenius had access to Philo's writings but identifies a sufficient number of similarities to conclude that "minimally it is possible that Numenius knew some of Philo's works and maximally it is probable that he did" (84). Numenius, evidently interested in finding "ways to bridge the East and the West via his reconstruction of Platonism" (85), would have found much in Philo's oeuvre that was congenial to such a project.

Orrey McFarland discusses “Philo’s Propositional Metaphysics within Early Christian Debates about the Relation of Divine Nature and Agency.” Here he looks at passages in Didymus the Blind, Basil of Caesarea, and John Chrysostom where they concatenate Gen 4:1 and 40:8. McFarland argues that Philo, who links those texts in his *Cher.* 124–130, is the source of their reflections on these texts, particularly insofar as each discusses divine agency with reference to the prepositions used in those two verses. In this project, McFarland contributes a useful piece of evidence for the larger investigation of the historical transmission of Philo’s writings and the influence Philo’s exegesis exerted on early Christian authors.

Benjamin Pollock’s fascinating essay on “Philosophy’s Inquisitor: Franz Rosenzweig’s Philo between Judaism, Paganism, and Christianity” is the odd duck of this issue, insofar as it departs from the philological and historical-critical investigation of Philo in his own context and is interested chiefly in how Philo came to the attention of Rosenzweig as a young man in 1916–1917 and, more significantly, how Philo may have influenced Rosenzweig in several notable ways. Although I cannot claim expertise in the study of neo-Hegelian philosophy, this essay struck me as both highly original and important for scholars who do work in that area. It was, furthermore, one of the most readable pieces in the volume and accessible to nonexperts. Scholars interested in the reception of Philo, particularly in the context of modern Jewish philosophy and theology, would certainly gain from Pollock’s illuminating essay. The two claims advanced by Pollock are that Philo helped Rosenzweig clarify his thinking about the concept “creation,” which would be central to his mature thought, and that Philo’s situation *between* such constructs as Judaism, paganism, and Christianity challenged Rosenzweig’s categorical, classificatory impulses with respect to these traditions.

The title of the section, “Philo of Alexandria as Interpreter of the Ten Commandments,” could mislead the casual reader. The three papers included here had their genesis in a special session of the 2014 Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature Philo of Alexandria Seminar. Five speakers at that special session addressed aspects related to Philo’s *De decalogo*. Sarah J. Pearce, who is currently preparing a translation and commentary on the *De decalogo* for the Philo of Alexandria Commentary Series, introduces the special section of this volume. The three papers that follow (James R. Royse, “The Text of Philo’s *De decalogo* in Vaticanus GR.316”; Abraham Terian, “The Armenian Textual Tradition of Philo’s *De decalogo*”; and Manuel Alexandre Jr., “Rhetorical Texture and Pattern in Philo’s *De decalogo*”) were presented at that 2014 meeting. We look forward to Sarah Pearce’s forthcoming translation and commentary, which will no doubt make judicious use of these three essays and the conversation they generated in San Diego.

The centerpiece of the bibliography section is an annotated bibliography of Philonic scholarship published in 2012. This section also includes an annotated bibliography of pre-2012 Philonic scholarship that had been overlooked in earlier issues of the *Studia Philonica Annual*. A nonannotated provisional bibliography for 2013–2015 follows. Annotations were contributed by members of the International Philo Bibliography Project under the leadership of David T. Runia.

The book review section includes reviews of some seven books that engage with Philo to greater or lesser degrees, including Y. Amir and M. R. Niehoff, *Philo of Alexandria: Writings; Part V: Allegorical Exegesis on Genesis 12–41* (reviewed by Sharon Weisser); Francesca Calabi, *Filone di Alessandria* (reviewed by Cristina Termini); Torrey Seland, ed., *Reading Philo: A Handbook to Philo of Alexandria* (reviewed by Kenneth Schenck); Lucia Saudelli, *Eraclito ad Alessandria: Studi e ricerche intorno alla testimonianza di Filone* (reviewed by David T. Runia); David Lincicum, *Paul and the Early Jewish Encounter with Deuteronomy* (reviewed by Per Jarle Bekken); Peder Borgen, *The Gospel of John: More Light from Philo, Paul and Archaeology; The Scriptures, Tradition, Settings, Meaning* (reviewed by Jutta Leonhardt-Balzer); and Karl-Gustav Sandelin, *Attraction and Danger of Alien Religion: Studies in Early Judaism and Christianity* (reviewed by Torrey Seland).

The *Studia Philonica Annual* has for many years operated as a central clearinghouse for Philonic scholarship and a valuable repository of all things Philo. This twenty-seventh volume continues that tradition in characteristically fine fashion.