Ἅγιος Λόγος, Divine Word: Philosophic Identity Construction in Late Second Temple Judaism

Lauren Mayes

Introduction & Methodology

My research for this paper examines the role of Jewish exegetes in the Second Temple Period and how these thinkers play with Jewish identity in their writings. By paying close attention to how intellectuals like Philo of Alexandria, Josephus, and Paul construct their identity in writings aimed at gentile audiences, I will demonstrate that Jewish thinkers in the first century CE rely on philosophical discourses popular within the Roman imperial capital to present their Jewish identity as one that is inextricably philosophical. In addition, this presentation in their writings will showcase the prominence of Rome in dispensing cultural capital. Lastly, through close analysis of their works, I will properly locate each thinker as a historical individual who responds in real time to his material and social circumstances. I am broadly reliant on Maren Niehoff's *Philo of Alexandria* (2018) and other New Perspective on Paul scholars for my analysis of Philo and the groundwork for this paper's methodology.

To begin, I want to counter the idea that due to vast cultural differences, we cannot analyze ancient thinkers as historical individuals who change over time and have a distinct perspective on their own circumstances. Some scholars posit that ascribing the agency to respond to historical circumstances to our subjects of study is somehow a methodologically irresponsible proposition that inserts too much of ourselves (the *modern*) into our ancient subjects. This is both incorrect scientifically and problematic methodologically. A scientific study of the human brain

published in 2018 reads as follows: "300,000 years ago, brain size in early *H. sapiens* already fell within the range of present-day humans. Brain shape, however, evolved gradually within the *H. sapiens* lineage, reaching present-day human variation between about 100,000 and 35,000 years ago."[1] Thus, viewing our subjects of study as so different from us that they require some sort of complete othering in order to understand them prevents productive analysis from taking place. Our subjects were humans who were the same as us scientifically. It disadvantages scholars to presume such difference when there is great benefit to properly locating them as dynamic historical actors. Despite the required translation, both cultural and linguistic, this temporal and geographic distance need not collapse the original author's perspective or the influence of their historical context.

This paper utilizes historical-critical and comparative methodology to analyze four selections from Philo and Paul. These selections will be properly located within their first-century Roman imperial historical context in order to demonstrate how the philosophy expounded within changes over time in response to historical circumstances. To do so, I will examine two works from each thinker in Greek, one dated relatively early, the other relatively late, so that the difference in underlying philosophical assumptions becomes clear. I will also briefly examine the work of Josephus' *Antiquities Judaica (AJ)* to triangulate how another thinker, this one self-styled as a historian, presents Jewish identity to a Roman audience. Through my analysis, it will become clear that Jews in the first century CE presented their identity to gentiles as one that was distinctly philosophical, trafficking in both the popularity of Stoicism in the capital and the exotic appeal of Jewish practices, as an apologetic response to antisemitism in a pluralistic imperial context.

[1] Neubauer, Hublin, and Gunz, "The Evolution of Modern Human Brain Shape."

Philo

Our journey begins with Philo of Alexandria, and to understand him, we first must understand where he lived. One of the earliest cosmopolitan cities in the Mediterranean, Alexandria was a bustling urban locale replete with a diverse population, reflected in the city's myriad religious practices. The city began its life as an artificial construction in the third century BCE by Alexander the Great. Due to this style of foundation, the city did not have an identity that was distinctly Greek, Macedonian, or Egyptian; instead, its population was made up of a majority of mercenaries and tradesmen, and a majority of the population growth was driven by immigration.[2] This transforms over time into the first century CE when "Alexandrian" becomes a legitimate and desirable identifier in opposition to Greek (or Greco-Egyptian) identity.[3] This process of legitimation is defined by the city's close relation to Alexander himself, and he operates as the major mechanism by which the city and its elites legitimize their power and identity.[4] One of the key ways the Ptolemaic dynasty ensured this legitimation and centralization of power was through the construction of the Library of Alexandria. Perhaps based upon the Egyptian-style Houses of Books and Houses of Life, the Library engages in a Greek-style collection of literature competition to symbolize political power.[5]

Philo, thus, lived and operated within this not-quite-Egyptian, not-quite-Greek world during the Roman period. In the first century CE, Alexandria is the only major city to rival

[2] Stephens, "Ptolemaic Alexandria," 47.

[3] Ibid, 48.

[4] Ibid, 49-50.

[5] Ibid, 55. The Houses of Books and Life were the means by which Egyptian elites maintained their scribal and religious cultures Interestingly enough, the Library's first mention is in the *Letter to Aristeas*, which narrativizes the impetus to create the Septuagint.

Rome, and the two engage in competing intellectual discourses that come to define their respective identities. Rome has a penchant for Stoicism, to be expounded upon below, while Platonism is quite popular in Alexandria.[6] Alexandria by this point has its own distinct literary identity as the home of "commentary culture" and the stronghold of Platonic philosophy.[7] Simultaneously, Rome seems to have won the rivalry between the two cities by turning Alexandria into a provincial capital as Augustus solidifies his empire, but the two cities retain the most "visible tension" of any pair of imperial capitals.[8] Philo himself was an elite Jewish man in the first century CE whose work evidences his literate education in Greek myth and thought as well as Jewish scripture in Greek translation.[9] He was sent out as an emissary to Roman Emperor Caligula as a response to rising antisemitism in Alexandria, and he remained a prolific writer throughout his life.[10]

Philo is the first of our three authors to display how intricately Greek culture is intertwined with Roman power structures, and each author relies on how Rome interprets Greek identity in order to further their ideas in the capital. Philo's shift in his description of Judaism from a traditional Platonist model to a more Stoic conception underscores how influential Roman elite culture was to the dissemination of these ideas. Indeed, as Maren Niehoff argues in her book *Philo of Alexandria* (2018), Philo's work should be considered in two distinct sections. His early work, written before his embassy to Rome while he lived in Alexandria, evidences obvious

[6] Niehoff, *Philo of Alexandria,* 15.

[7] Ibid, 15-7.

[8] Ibid, 11-2.

[9] Ibid, 3.

[10] Ibid, 5-9.

interaction with the strong Alexandrian Jewish community and a distinct Platonist bent. His work during and after his time in Rome, instead, evidences a distinct preference toward Stoicism.[11]

Philo's *Allegorical Interpretation of Genesis 2, 3 (AG*) offers a paradigmatic example of his early work in Alexandria, and I will analyze AG 1.16.1 below to demonstrate the movements Philo makes to present himself as a Jewish exegete in Alexandria. He writes this work as a young man between 10–35 CE and employs a classic Alexandrian allegorical commentary style to Jewish scripture as textually witnessed in the Septuagint, expounding upon a Platonic, utterly transcendent God.[12] He emphasizes God's transcendence in myriad ways, but most importantly for our purposes, he prioritizes God's omnipresence to the point that YHWH exists purely as a Platonic Ideal Form due to the devaluation of the Temple in his thought.[13] Philo presents here not a reliance on the Stoic style of allegory, which at the time attempted to explain away the old myths through naturalization, but instead a blend of Alexandrian literary tradition with exegesis that balances allegorical interpretation with authorial intent.[14]

In *AG* 1.16.1, Philo comments on Genesis 2:2 and does so in a way that betrays his own stance as a philosopher (See Appendix I below). As described above, Philo's God in *AG* is fully transcendent and able to reach the soul of any creature at any time. However, due to God's transcendent status, He requires a mediator to deal with the mortal things (*ta thnēta*), and for Philo, that mediator is the *hagios logos*, divine reason. Both divinities seem to be involved in the act of creation, but only one can come upon the mortal soul. Since God is *so* holy, He requires an

[11] Ibid, 3, 9. These two sentences reflect the core thesis of Niehoff's book, whose analysis this paper evidently is deeply indebted to.

[12] Niehoff, *Philo of Alexandria*, 245.

[13] Ibid, 66-7, 95.

[14] Ibid, 181.

intermediary, the *logos*, between himself and the things that were created (*ho… hagios logos… epigenetai tēi psukhēi*). Philo also makes an interesting choice to neologize *hagios logos* here. By using commonplace words to describe a very specific thing, Philo is engaging in a trick common to philosophers, both ancient and modern. He crafts new meaning from words that often have a specific religious and philosophic cachet in order to flag his own specific interpretation and indirectly promote it. We will see Paul also engage in this strategy in the section below.

On the other hand, Philo treats a similar topic in quite a different manner in *On Account of the World's Creation Given By Moses* (*Account*). Written between 40–49 CE for a broader Greco-Roman audience, Philo writes in a style that is distinctly influenced by Roman cultural interests and for an audience primarily of gentiles. While the material record shows that there were certainly Jews in Rome during the first century, we have little remaining textual evidence for Roman Jewish communities at that time, and the evidence that we do have points to a community much smaller and with much less influence than the one in Alexandria.[15] Indeed, Philo's own status as an elite man who travelled to the city as a political envoy points to the fact that he is no longer writing for an audience drawn by religious lines; instead, he is writing to those of his same social class, most likely upper-class gentiles. These gentiles already most likely had a positive view of Jewish people, as opposed to those that occasioned Philo's mission in Alexandria, and considered them to be a model minority whose ethnic practices were more in line with those of contemporary Roman intellectuals.[16] Stoicism is the dominant philosophy in the capital, and this dominance is displayed in Philo's later writings.

[15] For example, the amphora with a menorah stamped into the handle in *Corpus Inscriptorum Latinarum* 15:3552, 1; see also: Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 38-40; Niehoff, *Philo of Alexandria*, 16.
[16] Niehoff, *Philo of Alexandria*, 89.

Account 1.3.1 (see Appendix I) bears a drastically different interpretation of the creation than *AG*. Everything neatly agrees with itself without the previous need for an intermediary. Most notably, Philo emphasizes language like *nomos* (law, custom) and *kosmos* (order) that to connect our everyday life with the divine rather than separate the two. Philo presents creation as a harmonious whole (using the verb *sunaidō*, to sing together). To a Roman audience, these words would have been understood within their proper Stoic valences and fit in with the Stoic understanding that "the aim of ethics is 'to live according to nature'" as expressed by Arius Didymus.[17] We see no reference in this passage to the previous language of *logos* or the divinely separated natural ordering; instead, there is an emphasis on connecting the *kosmos* with the *nomos*, a word often used by ancient writers (both Jewish and gentile) to describe Jewish ethnic customs. By following the Law, an individual acts directly as an agent of God and to a point embodies that divinity by living justly.

These two examples showcase for the reader that Philo positions himself and his philosophy based on his context. He is entranced by Roman philosophy during his stint at the imperial capital. While Philo does mention some Stoic precepts in his earlier works, even in *AG*, he mentions them only to refute them and champion a Platonic interpretation of Judaism.[18] On the contrary, once he begins writing in Rome and operating in its intellectual sphere, the theological picture of Judaism that Philo presents is much more focused on integrating Judaism with Stoicism. The picture of Judaism that emerges is one distinctly influenced by the philosophical interests of the Roman cultural elite.

[17] Quoted in Niehoff, *Philo of Alexandria*, 96.

[18] See: Niehoff, *Philo of Alexandria*, 240-1.

Josephus

Josephus is another writer integral to our understanding of late Greco-Roman Judaism at the end of the Second Temple Period. Writing his major works, *Antiquities Judaica* (*AJ*) and *Bellum Judaica* (*BJ*), after the fall of the Second Temple in the First Jewish Roman War, he represents the *terminus ad quem* for Second Temple Judaism. Born around 37 CE to an aristocratic priestly family in Jerusalem, he lives a generation after Philo and styles himself explicitly as a historian of the Jews for a gentile Roman audience.[19] He writes *BJ* first, wanting to break into the Roman literary scene after noticing a gap in the triumphalist narratives surrounding Rome's victory over Jerusalem.[20] He relies on his own ethnic capital as a Jew to carve out a distinct space for himself in the literary market, recognizing the Roman interest in Jewish culture and stories.[21] After creating an audience for himself, he then writes *AJ*, further expanding the narrative he had begun in *BJ* by adding details of cultural background. A major focus of his work is the intellectual and humane presentation of the Jewish people (thereby magnifying Emperor Vespasian's achievement of conquering them) and locating the origins of the war with Emperor Nero.[22] In his writing, Josephus clearly betrays his Greek and priestly upbringing along with a sense of literary cunning. For our purposes, I will examine here a selection from *AJ* in which he describes the Jewish sects (the Essenes, the Sadducees, and the Pharisees) in the fullest account available in his writings.

[19] Sievers and Levine, *The Pharisees,* 108-110.

[20] Ibid, 91.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid, 92.

In *AJ* 18.18.12-22,[23] Josephus describes the most popular Jewish sects at the time and mainly differentiates them through the amount of agency they ascribe to God. This question is important to schools of philosophy, as we have already seen in the works of Philo above. In these passages, Josephus describes the Pharisees as an extremely popular group, indeed the most popular of those he describes, who eschew luxury, follow ancestral customs in addition to Mosaic law, and believe in punishment after death (*AJ* 18.18.12-5). Regarding their position on free will, he writes that according to them "it was God's good pleasure that there should be a fusion [of fate and free will] and that the will of man with his virtue and vice should be admitted to the council chamber of fate" (*AJ* 18.18.13-4). For Josephus's Pharisees, free will is something that is intertwined with divine will. They take a "both-and" approach rather than an "either-or" approach.

Regarding the Sadducees, Josephus spends little time on this less popular group. He describes them as dependent upon the Pharisees to legitimize any decision they make for the public, despite their nominally superior position in local politics (*AJ* 18.18.16-7). In contrast to the Pharisees, Josephus argues that they do not believe in an eternal soul (*tas psukhas ho logos sunaphanizei tois sōmati*), and aside from this comment and his assertion of their exclusive loyalty to Mosaic Law, he spends little time commenting on their philosophy, instead devoting his time to actively disparaging them. He even paints them as almost not Jewish, likening them to the worst of Greek philosophers—that desire to sit and debate all day about minutiae with those who are supposed to be teaching them (*amphilogein … pros … tous didaskalous)*. Indeed, Josephus presents this group not as a proper sect but instead as a group that relies on a traditional legitimacy it no longer deserves.

[23] Josephus translations used are from the Loeb Library. Henderson, *Jewish Antiquities*.

Finally, Josephus describes the Essenes, a clear favorite for our author among the three (*AJ* 18.18.18-22). In his lengthiest and most laudatory section, he describes this ascetic sect more along the lines of a philosophical school rather than a religious group. Yes, they are still clearly ethnically Jewish, but Josephus engages in specific rhetorical strategies in order to cast Essene ideas as something closer to Stoicism than something like the Eleusinian Mysteries. In contrast to his earlier example of the Pharisees, for Josephus's Essenes, everything happens according to the will of God (*epi men theōi kataleipein philei ta panta ho logos*, *AJ* 18.18). He describes them as the rightful owners of the conservative traditional authority the Sadducees seem to hold (*alla mēd' eis oligon, ekenois ek palaiou sunelthon en tōi epithdeuesthai mē kekōlusthai*, *AJ* 18.18.20).[24] He also describes them as popular outside of the city, playing on the trope common to the ancient Mediterranean that associates the rural with the wise, and he states that they try to live ethically in their day-to-day lives; the ethics are left undefined for the reader (*AJ* 18.18.18).

Josephus's description of these three groups does not tell the modern reader much about these groups themselves, but about how Josephus wanted to present Jews and their sects to a Roman audience. He presents them in a distinctly philosophical cast. When considering that Josephus writes his narratives primarily for a Roman gentile audience, it becomes clear that his praise and presentation of the Essenes is at least partly due to their great similarity to the Stoic doctrine popular in Rome in the first century, going so far as to explicitly connect the two schools in his later work, *Life of Josephus*.[25] However, it is notable here that Josephus goes beyond their connection in the *AJ* passage: he argues that they are greater than any philosophic

[24] "[The practice of virtue has been found in them uninterrupted] not even briefly, but have been among them in constant practice and never interrupted since they adopted them from of old."

[25] Sievers and Levine, *The Pharisees*, 106.

school, either Greek or barbarian, in the matter of their virtue (*AJ* 18.18.13). Thus, by presenting Jewish thought in this fashion, Josephus effectively does two things: he cashes in on the exotic popularity of Jews and Jewish thought in first-century Rome, while at the same time, he fashions an image of Judaism that is palatable to Roman readers' Stoic sensibilities.

Paul

For this paper, we must approach Paul the Apostle not as the biblical founder of the Christian church as we know it today but as someone situated snugly within his historical context. For my analysis, he requires placement in his historical circumstances before anything more can be said about his work. Relying on the methodology of the New Perspective on Paul, especially that of scholars like Heidi Wendt and Paula Fredriksen, our Paul is a self-authorized Jewish religious specialist operating in the first century CE.[26] Paul sees his main mission as one that spreads his messianic and millenarian interpretation of Jewish scripture to gentile audiences. He is able to accomplish this mission only due to his specific historic moment: the establishment of the Pax Romana in 27 BCE furnishes the Empire with new modes of connectivity, especially roads and an imperially backed postal service, which allows Paul to travel prolifically in ways that previously would have been inaccessible.[27] He takes advantage of the interconnectivity of the period in order to spread his own teachings and carve out his own position in the competitive space of self-authorized religious specialists.

[26] For theorization of self-authorized religious experts and Paul within this category, see: Heidi Wendt, *At the Temple Gates* (2016). For the Jewish Paul, see: Fredriksen, *The Pagans' Apostle* (2018).

[27] On the newfound accessibility of the roads and the postal service, see: Kolb, "The Romans and the World's Measure" in Bianchetti, Cataudella, and Gehrke, *Brill's Companion to Ancient Geography* (2015).

In terms of dating Paul, the methodology is notably intricate, rocky, and, at times, circular. From his own admission, we know that Paul was born a generation after Jesus (1 Cor 15:8, "Last of all, as to one untimely born, he [Jesus] appeared to me"[28]). Given his own admission, the scholar can reasonably assume that Paul was active in the late first century CE. Aside from this, his status in the Christian canon is precisely what makes dating him difficult.[29] However, it is not unreasonable to assume that he is a rough contemporary of Philo and that they both operated in a similar intellectual milieu due to Paul's above admission in 1 Cor and the rhetorical structure of his arguments. Even if we know for certain that Philo was an upper-class man and that Paul explicitly tries to portray himself as a suffering-artist-philosopher type, Paul betrays certain characteristics in his writing that hint at either an upper-class background or access to upper-class benefits through patrons: for example, his ability to write (Gal 6:11, "See what large letters I make with my own hand!"[30]); his extensive knowledge of Mosaic law; the money he has to travel (whoever might finance that for him); and his self-proclaimed connection to the Pharisees (Phil 3:4-6, "If anyone has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: … as to the Law, [I am] a Pharisee"[31]).

In this section, I will analyze two verses from Paul, one early and one late. To begin, let us examine Galatians 6:7-8 (see Appendix I). At this point in the letter, Paul is at the climax of his upbraiding of the Galatians while trying to secure his place in the community. It is clear from

[28] NRSV Translation.

[29] See the introductory discussion on the difficulties of Paul's canonical status in regard to his dating and chronology in Campbell, "Chronology" in Schellenberg and Wendt, *T&T Clark Handbook to the Historical Paul*, 265. I follow the impulse of Knox, who emphasizes that the only things that can be firmly known about Paul comes from his own, authentic letters.

[30] NRSV Translation.

[31] NRSV Translation.

contextual clues, especially Paul's focus on circumcision throughout this letter, that other Jewish religious experts who advocate a more physical expression of an individual's participation in Judaism have entered the community. Paul, then, is repudiating them in order to secure his social position in competition with these other self-authorized experts.[32] In this verse specifically, Paul uses a pastoral metaphor, imagery common to Jewish literary imagination in the first century, to emphasize human choice in the everyday practice of ethically right behaviour. If this idea seems reminiscent of Philo's thoughts in *Account* discussed above, it should. However, Paul also displays a soft lean toward Platonism in this rhetoric as well: Paul presents God (*theos*) and the *pneuma* (definition discussed below) as two distinct things here. The sheer separation in their mentions in the verse confirms this impulse. While neither being is presented as an active agent, it is the *pneuma* that believers can have direct contact with, and through the *pneuma*, they may experience the *theos*. According to Paul in this verse, it is through the *pneuma* that a believer can achieve eternal life (*ho de speirōn eis to pneuma ek tou pmenatos therisei zōēn aiōnion*).

Paul's concept of *pneuma* here is key to his entire religious program. Similar to the move Philo makes in *AG* with *hagios logos*, Paul takes a common word here and neologizes it in order to flag something very specific within his thought, thereby creating a common language for he and his audience. In the broader Hellenistic context, *pneuma* is a word popular in philosophical circles, both Stoic and Platonist, as an ontologically real, animating element. Indeed, this is reflected in Liddel & Scott's *Greek-English Lexicon* definitions that move from "a wind, a blast" to "that which is breathed forth" until its most metaphorical "the spirit of a man."[33] As this

[32] See: "Galatians" by Nanos & Wendt, 329-48 in Schellenberg and Wendt, *T&T Clark Handbook to the Historical Paul*. Especially of note: 330-1.

[33] Liddell, Scott, and Berry, *Liddell & Scott Greek-English Lexicon, Abridged*, 649. Interestingly enough, this word is also a deverbal form (etymologically coming from the verb πνέω (to blow) plus the -μα(τ) suffix), which perhaps

relates to Paul and his work, scholars in recent years have been moving toward a consensus that *pneuma* represents an intelligent and real substance that is the underlying mechanism for all life.[34] This situates Paul within the broader philosophic dialogue of the first century, but it is unclear from his employment of it in Galatians whether he is siding firmly with either a Stoic or Platonist impulse; instead, it seems more likely that in this instance, he uses it idiosyncratically without making a firm choice either way. Despite this insecure philosophical positioning in his early letters, *pneuma* remains Paul's *key* concept throughout his thought.

While the thought progression between the two Pauline selections is less drastic than that in Philo's above, this shift in thought does evidence itself through the way Paul further concretizes his use of *pneuma*. While Galatians is one of Paul's earliest and most autobiographical letters, Romans is considered one of his latest and most philosophically polished.[35] In Romans 8:9-10 (see Appendix I), Paul both expands his Platonic impulse, by further explaining that the material realm as it currently stands spells death for the individual (Rom 8:10), and cloaks it, by now firmly backing a Stoic presentation of *pneuma*. Despite this Stoic presentation, Paul also goes to great lengths to maintain the Platonic divine intermediary status of the *pneuma* throughout the verse. Paul here seems to couch his Platonic idea of the separation between the *theos*, Christ, and the *pneuma* by hiding it in a *pneuma* that operates

allows it such strong retention of its material quality (For the underlying linguistic theory, see: Sihler, *A New Comparative Grammar of Greek and Latin* [1995], 296-7). The ghost of the material hangs in the word's own etymology.

[34] Wendt, *At the Temple Gates: The Religion of Freelance Experts in the Roman Empire*, 165. See also, Troels Engberg-Pederson, *Cosmology and the Self in the Apostle Paul: The Material Spirit* (2010). Engberg-Pederson, however, takes a stronger stance toward Paul's Stoicism that seems to collapse the difference in thought Paul displays through his letters.

[35] For an indispensable analysis of Galatians' importance to Paul's self-characterization, see Nanos & Wendt, "Galatians" in *T&T Clark Handbook to the Historical Paul* (2022), ed. Schellenberg and Wendt.

much like the Hellenistic Stoic *psukhē*. For Stoicism during the Hellenistic period, the *psukhē* had a distinctly physical characteristic that functioned much like the way the brain controls the central nervous system in modern thought; for these Stoics, the *psukhē* is the central nervous system operating the body, controlled by the mind.[36] Therefore, the status of *pneuma* as both divine intermediary and physical operator marks a blend of Stoicism and Platonism unique to Paul's brand as a self-authorized expert.

Indeed, Paul does not completely eschew Stoicism in this verse to the Romans. He doubles down on the previously mentioned idea of Arius Didymus: the purpose of ethics is "to live according to nature."[37] If someone takes no action and lives in the world as it is without ethics, they will be living but dead in their body (*to men sōma nekron dia hamartian*). However, the ameliorating action that the believer may take is one that primarily centers Paul and his religious program: by listening to his teachings and following the branch of ethical living that he himself promotes, the believer can partake in the physical *pneuma* of Christ, thereby ensuring their own morally earned eternal life through the *pneuma* (*ei de khristos en humin … to de pneuma zōē dia diakaisunnēn*). As *pneuma* is the operative mechanism for Paul's thought, it plays an integral role in his ethics and is used strikingly in this passage. While never appearing as a subject nominative in the Galatians verse, *pneuma* is the subject of the last clause in quite an emphatic placement while also being referenced throughout. It is clear that by the time Paul has written Romans, he is now explicitly doubling down on the *pneuma* as an integral intermediary that not only allows the believer to live a just life on Earth but will provide eternal life in the world to come.

---

[36] Algra et al., *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy*, 560.

[37] Niehoff, *Philo of Alexandria*, 96.

Conclusion

All three of these thinkers evidence for the modern reader the sheer influence of Rome, especially its influence on Jewish intellectuals presenting their ideas for a gentile audience. Maren Niehoff's historical-critical comparative methodology has not only been fruitful for her analysis of Philo's work but, as I have shown above, is more than useful when applied to other ancient thinkers like Paul to track the trajectory of their work and the influence of their historical circumstances. Both these thinkers were Jews existing in an imperial Roman context, and the preference of Rome toward Stoicism looms large in their thought. Philo makes a distinct turn toward Stoic thought during his stay in the capital while Paul produces a thought structured by a pick-and-choose method, combining features from each school in an idiosyncratic fashion that suited his argument.

Paul and early Philo also both show a preference toward a divine intermediary figure, whether that be the *pneuma* or *logos* respectively, in their more Platonic philosophical presentations. However, Philo moves away from this need for a divine intermediary during his Stoic period by emphasizing Mosaic Law's concordance with the natural order in *Account*. Here, he also explicitly connects Judaism with Stoic thought. On the other hand, Paul harmonizes the two streams of thought by connecting his intermediary with the Law (Rom 7:14-5).[38] As a background to each of them, Josephus provides us with a more "secular" view of Jewish presentation of identity to gentiles. He demonstrates in his work a self-fashioning of the Jewish ethnicity that is explicitly connected to philosophical thought. His main thesis in *AJ* seems

[38] "For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold into slavery under sin. I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate." (NRSV Translation) While the minutia of this passage is too complex to delve into here, essentially Paul is arguing for gentile inclusion into Jewish spirituality without gentiles having to keep Mosaic Law. Jews are still obligated to do so because to Paul they are explicitly more spiritual than gentiles.

strikingly similar to Philo's understanding of Mosaic law in *Account*: those who follow Moses' Law prosper, while those who do not will experience failure in their life until they do.[39]

Evidently, it is methodologically productive to view these thinkers as philosophers engaging in ethnic philosophical discourses that involve a religious aspect, rather than bracketing them off as "religious" individuals who did not engage in their historical context. As the cultural cachet of philosophy builds at the heart of the Empire, so too that cachet spread outward so that Jewish thinkers began to apologetically present their minority ethnicity as one that was inherently philosophical. This presentation becomes especially important as antisemitism rises in the Empire and Jews exist in a way that is both exoticized and oppressed.

[39] Sievers and Levine, *The Pharisees*, 96.

Appendix: Translations

Philo, *Allegorical Interpretation of Genesis* – 1.16.1

> "'Κατέπαυσεν οὖν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἑβδόμῃ ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ ὧν ἐποίησε' (Gen. ii. 2). τοῦτο δ᾽ ἐστὶ τοιοῦτο· τὰ θνητὰ γένη παύεται πλάττων ὁ θεός, ὅταν ἄρχηται ποιεῖν τὰ θεῖα καὶ ἑβδομάδος φύσει οἰκεῖα. ἡ δὲ πρὸς τὸ ἦθος ἀπόδοσίς ἐστι τοιαύτη· ὅταν ἐπιγένηται τῇ ψυχῇ ὁ κατὰ ἑβδομάδα ἅγιος λόγος ἐπέχεται ἡ ἑξὰς καὶ ὅσα θνητὰ ταύτῃ ποιεῖν δοκεῖ."
>
> "'So, he rested on the seventh day from all his works that he made' (Gen. 2:2). And these things are such a way: God stops forming mortal things whenever he begins to make holy things and those belonging to the nature of seven. But the explanation for His disposition is thus: whenever the <ἅγιος λόγος>, which corresponds to the number seven, comes to the soul, the six along with so many mortal things all seem to stop."

Philo, *On the Account of the World's Creation Given by Moses* – 1.3.1

> "δ᾽ ἀρχή, καθάπερ ἔφην, ἐστὶ θαυμασιωτάτη, κοσμοποιίαν περιέχουσα, ὡς καὶ τοῦ κόσμου τῷ νόμῳ καὶ τοῦ νόμου τῷ κόσμῳ συνᾴδοντος, καὶ τοῦ νομίμου ἀνδρὸς εὐθὺς ὄντος κοσμοπολίτου, πρὸς τὸ βούλημα τῆς φύσεως τὰς πράξεις ἀπευθύνοντος, καθ᾽ ἣν καὶ ὁ σύμπας κόσμος διοικεῖται."
>
> "And the beginning, as I've said, is the most marvelous. It holds an account of the world's ordering, so that the world is in accordance with the law and the law the world, and that the man of the law is a directly a citizen of the world, directing his actions toward the purpose of nature, according to which the entirety of the world is governed."

Paul, Galatians – 6:7-8

> "[7] Μὴ πλανᾶσθε, θεὸς οὐ μυκτηρίζεται: ὃ γὰρ ἐὰν σπείρῃ ἄνθρωπος, τοῦτο καὶ θερίσει: [8] ὅτι ὁ σπείρων εἰς τὴν σάρκα ἑαυτοῦ ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς θερίσει φθοράν, ὁ δὲ σπείρων εἰς τὸ πνεῦμα ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος θερίσει ζωὴν αἰώνιον."
>
> "Do not go astray, do not sneer at God: for whatever a human has sewn, this he will also reap. That which is sewn in his flesh will reap destruction from the flesh, but that which is sewn in the <πνεῦμα> will reap eternal life from the <πνεῦμα>."

Paul, Romans – 8:9-10

> "[9] Ὑμεῖς δὲ οὐκ ἐστὲ ἐν σαρκὶ ἀλλὰ ἐν πνεύματι. εἴπερ πνεῦμα θεοῦ οἰκεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν. εἰ δέ τις πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ οὐκ ἔχει, οὗτος οὐκ ἔστιν αὐτοῦ. [10] εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν, τὸ μὲν σῶμα νεκρὸν διὰ ἁμαρτίαν, τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ζωὴ διὰ δικαιοσύνην."

“But y’all are not in the flesh but in the <πνεῦμα>, since the <πνεῦμα> of God lives in y’all. But anyone who does not have the <πνεῦμα> of Jesus Christ is not his. But if Christ is in y’all, your body is dead through sin but the <πνεῦμα> is life through justice.”

Bibliography

Algra, Keimpe, Jonathan Barnes, Jaap Mansfeld, and Malcolm Schofield, eds. *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. https://doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521250283.

Bianchetti, Serena, Michele Cataudella, and Hans-Joachim Gehrke, eds. *Brill's Companion to Ancient Geography: The Inhabited World in Greek and Roman Tradition*. Brill, 2015. https://brill.com/edcollbook/title/22903.

Fredriksen, Paula. *Paul: The Pagans' Apostle*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018. https://www.degruyter.com/document/cover/isbn/9780300231366/original.

Henderson, Jeffrey. *Jewish Antiquities: Book XVIII*. Loeb Classical Library. Accessed November 28, 2023. https://www.loebclassics.com/view/josephus-jewish_antiquities/1930/pb_LCL433.15.xml.

Lampe, Peter. *From Paul to Valentinus: Christians at Rome in the First Two Centuries*. Translated by Michael Steinhauser. Minneapolis, MN, UNITED STATES: Fortress Press, 2003.

Liddell, Henry George 1811-1898., Robert 1811-1887 Scott, and George Ricker 1865-1945. Berry. *Liddell & Scott Greek-English Lexicon, Abridged.* 26th ed. Chicago, Ill.: Follett Pub. Co., 1927. http://catalog.hathitrust.org/api/volumes/oclc/5671631.html.

McGowan, Andrew B., and Kent Harold Richards, eds. *Method & Meaning: Essays on New Testament Interpretation in Honor of Harold W. Attridge*. Society for Biblical Literature Resources for Study 67. Atlanta: The Society of Biblical Literature, 2011.

Neubauer, Simon, Jean-Jacques Hublin, and Philipp Gunz. "The Evolution of Modern Human Brain Shape." *Science Advances* 4, no. 1 (January 24, 2018): eaao5961. https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.aao5961.

Niehoff, Maren R. *Philo of Alexandria: An Intellectual Biography*. Yale University Press, 2018. https://doi.org/10.12987/9780300231304.

Schellenberg, Ryan S., and Heidi Wendt. *T&T Clark Handbook to the Historical Paul*. 1 online resource. T&T Clark Handbooks. London, UK; T&T Clark, Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2022. https://doi.org/10.5040/9780567691989.

Sievers, Joseph, and Amy-Jill Levine, eds. *The Pharisees*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2021.

Sihler, Andrew L. *New Comparative Grammar of Greek and Latin*. [1st pbk. issue]. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Stephens, Susan. “Ptolemaic Alexandria.” In *A Companion to Hellenistic Literature*, 46–61. John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2010. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118970577.ch4.

Wendt, Heidi. *At the Temple Gates: The Religion of Freelance Experts in the Roman Empire*. Oxford University Press, 2016. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190267148.003.0002.