

# PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA'S *DE GIGANTIBVS* AND *QVOD DEVS SIT IMMVTABILIS*: COMPLEXITIES IN THE TRANSMISSION OF THE ALLEGORICAL COMMENTARY\*

## ABSTRACT

*One of the tendencies among scribes who transmitted the corpus Philonicum was to divide treatises into smaller units. This article argues that Philo's De gigantibus and Quod Deus sit immutabilis were originally a single treatise that scribes split in an effort to create thematic unities for each half. Two lines of evidence support this conclusion. There is significant evidence that the two treatises circulated as a single work in antiquity. The most important evidence lies in the titles. Eusebius knew a compound title for a single work and the eighth-century compilers of the Sacra parallela attributed fragments from Quod Deus sit immutabilis to De gigantibus. The second line of evidence is internal. De gigantibus is noticeably shorter than any other treatise in the Allegorical Commentary with the exception of De sobrietate that may be incomplete. More importantly, the work concludes with an internal transitional phrase that introduces the citation that opens Quod Deus sit immutabilis. While Philo creates a bridge between treatises, this is an internal transition marker. For these reasons, we should discontinue following the scribal tradition and reunite the two halves of Philo's treatise.*

**Keywords:** Philo of Alexandria; allegorical commentary; *corpus Philonicum*; *De gigantibus*; *Quod Deus sit immutabilis*; textual transmission; Eusebius; transitional markers

The basic lines of the transmission of the *corpus Philonicum* are well known;<sup>1</sup> there are, however, still some challenges posed by the confusion created in the earliest period.<sup>2</sup> If we use the catalogue of the episcopal library that Eusebius helped to compile as a benchmark, there were at least three major shifts within the Philonic corpus by the early fourth century. First, those who transmitted the corpus lost sight of the distinctive character of the three-commentary series that Philo devised and produced, especially the distinction between the Allegorical Commentary and the Exposition of the Law.<sup>3</sup> Second,

\* I initially presented this as a paper to the Philo of Alexandria Seminar of the Society of Biblical Literature. I am grateful to the members of the seminar for their comments and to *CQ*'s editor and reader for their suggestions.

<sup>1</sup> For treatments see D.T. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature: A Survey* (Assen and Minneapolis, 1993), 16–31; and G.E. Sterling, 'Philo of Alexandria', in A. Kulik, G. Boccaccini, L. Di Tommaso, D. Hamidovic and M.E. Stone (edd.), *A Guide to Early Jewish Texts and Traditions in Christian Transmission* (Oxford, 2019), 299–316.

<sup>2</sup> For a summary of the major issues see J.R. Royse, 'Philo's division of his works into books', *Studia Philonica Annual* 13 (2001), 59–85, especially 70–4.

<sup>3</sup> On the authorial shaping of the three series, see G.E. Sterling, 'The structure of Philo's allegorical commentary', *ThLZ* 143 (2018), 1225–38, especially 1229–33. Five criteria support this position: Philo's explicit statements about the structure of the Exposition of the Law; the use of secondary prefaces for a number of treatises in the Allegorical Commentary and for every treatise in the Exposition of the Law except the introductory bios (*De uita Moysis*) and the first work of the series (*De opificio mundi*); distinct approaches to the biblical text in all three series; the shift in the literary form of the commentary for each series; and the different implied audiences for the three series.

a number of scrolls were lost at an early date, including scrolls from multi-scroll works, for example *De Isaaco*, *De Jacobo*, *De prouidentia* 1,<sup>4</sup> *De aeternitate* 2. In addition, some were lost after Eusebius, for example *De somniis* 1, 4 and 5. Third, some individual scrolls began to be broken up into smaller units. The *locus classicus* for this is *De specialibus legibus* whose four scrolls—which Eusebius knew—began to circulate in as many as twenty-seven different units when subtitles for sections—as we think of them—became markers for distinct units.<sup>5</sup>

I would like to address a lingering example of the third category. At least since the work of Leopold Cohn, scholars have recognized that *De gigantibus* and *Quod Deus sit immutabilis* are related. Cohn wrote: ‘It is acknowledged that after one book was split into two parts, they now have their place among individual books.’<sup>6</sup> Cohn has been followed by a number of scholars, most notably Valentin Nikiprowetzky in the opening essay in the commentary on the two treatises edited by David Winston and John Dillon.<sup>7</sup> Cohn has not, however, been followed by everyone: Louis Massebieau suggested that the two-volume work *De pactis* (*On Covenants*) belonged between *De gigantibus* and *Quod Deus sit immutabilis*.<sup>8</sup> This is the work which Philo mentioned but was apparently lost prior to Eusebius who knew it only through Philo’s reference—an example of the second shift in the *corpus* mentioned above.<sup>9</sup> Others, like André Mosès have argued that the two treatises are ‘rigoureusement complémentaires’ but not a literary unity.<sup>10</sup> It is worth noting that the two have been printed as separate works in all of the major editions and

<sup>4</sup> Euseb. *Hist. eccl.* 2.18.6 only knew one book which was the second. He cited it twice in *Praep. euang.* 7.21.1–4 and 8.14.2–42. The first book was lost in the Caesarean tradition. The Armenian translation preserves two books, but the first book appears to be abbreviated.

<sup>5</sup> The books were all subdivided and each unit was assigned a title, although Books 2 and 3 lack subtitles for the opening sections. Book 1 was subdivided into nine units; Book 2 was broken up into four or five smaller units; Book 3 became eight distinct units; and Book 4 was transmitted in six units. For details see L. Cohn, P. Wendland and S. Reiter (edd.), *Philonis Alexandrini opera quae supersunt*, 6 vols. (Berlin, 1896–1915), 5.xix–xxvi (hereafter PCW); and E.R. Goodenough, *The Politics of Philo Judaeus: Practice and Theory with a General Bibliography of Philo* by H. Goodhart and E.R. Goodenough (New Haven, 1938), 133–6 (hereafter G–G).

<sup>6</sup> PCW 2.xxi: ‘unum librum in duas partes, quae nunc singulorum librorum locum obtinent, postea diremptum esse inde comprobatur.’ See also L. Cohn, ‘Einteilung und Chronologie der Schriften Philos’, *Philologus* 7 (1899), 387–435, at 397: ‘Die beiden in den Hss. getrennten Abhandlungen bildeten ursprünglich ein Buch unter dem Titel περί γιγάντων ἢ περί τοῦ μὴ τρέπεσθαι τὸ θεῖον (Eusebius), wie auch Ioannes Damascenus beweist, der mehrere Stellen der zweiten Abhandlung ἐκ τοῦ περί τῶν γιγάντων citiert.’

<sup>7</sup> V. Nikiprowetzky, ‘L’exégèse de Philon d’Alexandrie dans le *De Gigantibus* et le *Quod Deus sit immutabilis*’, in D. Winston and J. Dillon (edd.), *Two Treatises of Philo of Alexandria: A Commentary on De Gigantibus and Quod Deus Sit Immutabilis* (Chico, CA, 1983), 5–7 and 59 n. 1. Cf. also J. Morris, ‘The Jewish philosopher Philo’, in E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C.–A.D. 135)*, 3 vols., rev. and ed. G. Vermes, F. Millar and M. Goodman (Edinburgh, 1973–87), 3.2.809–89, especially 835–6; Royse (n. 2), 72; J.R. Royse, ‘The works of Philo’, in A. Kamesar (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Philo* (New York, 2009), 32–64, especially 41.

<sup>8</sup> L. Massebieau, ‘Le classement des œuvres de Philon’, *Bibliothèque de l’école des hautes études: Sciences religieuses* (Paris, 1889), 21–3. Cohn (n. 6), 397–8, placed *De pactis* after *Quod Deus sit immutabilis*.

<sup>9</sup> Philo, *De mutatione nominum* 53; Eus. *Hist. eccl.* 2.18.3.

<sup>10</sup> A. Mosès, *De Gigantibus. Quod Deus Sit Immutabilis* (Paris, 1963), 11: ‘Les deux traités sur les Géants et sur l’immuabilité de Dieu sont rigoureusement complémentaires. Il ne faut pas seulement les rapprocher parce qu’ils sont consacrés à commenter des versets de la *Genèse* qui se suivent (Gen. 6,1 à 4 pour *Gig.*; 5 à 12 pour *Deus*): ils constituent en réalité les deux volets d’un diptyque et les ressemblances extérieures ne suffisent pas à exprimer l’unité profonde qui les unit. Les séparer risquerait de les mutiler en les plaçant, chacun, dans une perspective trompeuse.’

translations of Philo, even when the editors realized that there was a relationship between the two.<sup>11</sup>

There has not been a full study devoted to the relationship between the two treatises.<sup>12</sup> This contribution will provide one. We will consider the issue first within the manuscript tradition and then explore the internal evidence of the texts. The question that we will attempt to answer is whether we should consider *De gigantibus* and *Quod Deus sit immutabilis* a single work that was subsequently separated or as related treatises much like *De agricultura* and *De plantatione* or *De ebrietate* and *De sobrietate*.

## THE MANUSCRIPT TRADITION

### *The manuscripts*

*De gigantibus* is attested in twenty-two manuscripts from seven families, while *Quod Deus sit immutabilis* is present in twenty-five manuscripts from nine families. The following table summarizes the evidence by listing the names of the manuscripts under their families with some notes in parentheses, the date of the manuscript by century, the relative order in which *De gigantibus* and *Quod Deus sit immutabilis* appear in the manuscript, and the references to the discussion in Cohn-Wendland and Goodhardt and Goodenough. I place an asterisk beside the manuscript that is the family prototype.

<sup>11</sup> This is true for all the major editions: A. Turnebus (ed.), *Φίλωνος Ἰουδαίου εἰς τὰ τοῦ Μωσέως κοσμοποιητικά, ἱστορικά, νομοθετικά. Τοῦ αὐτοῦ μονόβιβλα. Philonis Judaei in libros Mosis De mundi opificio, historicos, De legibus. Eiusdem libri singulares. Ex bibliotheca regia* (Paris, 1552), 191–7, 198–215; T. Mangey (ed.), *Φίλωνος τοῦ Ἰουδαίου τὰ εὐρισκόμενα ἅπαντα. Philonis Judaei opera quae reperiri potuerunt omnia. Textum cum MSS, contulit, quamplurima etiam e codd. Vaticano, Mediceo & Bodleiano, scriptoribus item vetustis, necnon Catenis Graecis ineditis, adiecit, interpretationemque emendavit, universa notis & observationibus illustravit*, 2 vols. (London, 1742), 1.262–72, 272–99; and PCW 2.42–55 and 56–94, although P. Wendland placed a semi-colon rather than a full stop at the end of *De gigantibus*: ἔστι δὲ ταῦτα· not ἔστι δὲ ταῦτα. It is also true for all the major translations. In English see C.D. Yonge, *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged*, ed. D.M. Scholer (Peabody, MA, 1993<sup>2</sup>, originally published 1853), 152–7, 158–73; and F.H. Colson, G. Whitaker, and R. Marcus, *Philo in Ten Volumes (and Two Supplements)* (Cambridge, MA, 1929–62), 2.441–79, 3.1–101. In French see Mosès (n. 10). The two are bound in a single volume, although they are counted as two independent works in the series, i.e. vols. 7 and 8 in the series *Les œuvres de Philon d'Alexandrie*. In German see L. Cohn, I. Heinemann, M. Adler and W. Theiler (edd.), *Philo von Alexandria. Die Werke in deutscher Übersetzung*, 7 vols. (Breslau and Berlin, 1909–64), 4.53–71, 72–110. Heinemann thought that the two were originally from a single book (4.53). In Hebrew see S. Daniel-Nataf, Y. Amir and M. Niehoff (edd.), *Philo of Alexandria. Writings*, 5 vols. (Jerusalem, 1986–2012), 4.2.3–28, 29–88. Both treatises were translated by Y. Cohen-Yashar. In Italian see R. Radice, G. Reale, C. Kraus Reggiani and C. Mazzarelli (edd.), *Filone di Alessandria. Tutti i trattati del Commentario allegorico alla Bibbia* (Milan, 2005). In Spanish see J.P. Martín (ed.), *Filón de Alejandria, Obras Completas*, 8 vols. (Madrid, 2009–), 2.231–61, 263–309. P. Nieto translated *De gigantibus* and J.P. Martín handled *Quod Deus sit immutabilis*.

<sup>12</sup> D.T. Runia, 'Further observations on the structure of Philo's allegorical treatises', *VC* 41 (1987), 105–38, addressed the issue of the thematic unity of the two but did not work through the manuscript evidence and internal issues that we are addressing. His focus was on the structure of the exegesis. Cf. also his earlier article that addressed *Quod Deus sit immutabilis* but not *De gigantibus*: 'The structure of Philo's allegorical treatises: a review of two recent studies and some additional comments', *VChr* 38 (1984), 209–56.

MSS of *De gigantibus* and *Quod Deus sit immutabilis*

MSS	Century	<i>Gig.</i>	<i>Deus</i>	PCW	G–G
<b>Family A</b>					
Monacensis gr. 459* (Previously Augustanus)	13 <sup>th</sup>	31	30	1.iv–vii	35
Palatinus gr. 183 (Copy of A)	14 <sup>th</sup>	31	30	1.vii	37
Vaticanus gr. 378 (Part 2 [Part 1 is Vaticanus gr. 380])	15 <sup>th</sup>	31	30	1.vii–viii	39
Vaticanus gr. 2174 (Copy of Vaticanus gr. 378)	16 <sup>th</sup>	31	30	1.vii–viii	41
Matritenis Olim Est. 11	16 <sup>th</sup>	15	14	1.viii–x	36
<b>Family B</b>					
Venetus gr. 41*	14 <sup>th</sup>	10	11	1.x–xi	46
Oxonensis Collegii Novi 143 (Part 2 [Part 1 related to H])	16 <sup>th</sup>	4	5	1.xix	95
Laurentianus plut. LXIX 11 (Part 3 [Whole MS is Family K])	15 <sup>th</sup>	3	4	1.xxix–xxx 2.xxi	97
Matritensis O 17 (Part 3 [Whole MS is Family K])	16 <sup>th</sup>	3	4	1.xxx–xxxix	98
<b>Family F</b>					
Laurentianus plut. LXXXV cod. 10* (Jacob Diassorinus added <i>Gig.</i> from Turnebus's edition)	15 <sup>th</sup> /16 <sup>th</sup>		32	1.xx–xxv	80
Vaticanus gr. 379	14 <sup>th</sup>		18	1.xxv–xxvii	81
<b>Family G</b>					
Vaticanus Palatinus gr. 248*	14 <sup>th</sup>		17	1.xxxiv–xxxv	83
<b>Family H</b>					
Venetus gr. 40*	15 <sup>th</sup>	14	15	1.xi–xiv	84
Venetus gr. 39 (Twin or copy of H = Venetus gr. 39)	15 <sup>th</sup>	14	15	1.xiv	87
Vaticanus gr. 382 (Copy of H)	15 <sup>th</sup>	14	15	1.xiv	85
Palatinus gr. 311	15 <sup>th</sup> /16 <sup>th</sup>	14	15	1.xiv	93
Genuensis bibliothecae Congregationis missionis urbanae 39	14 <sup>th</sup>	14	15	1.xiv	89
Ottobonianus gr. 48	17 <sup>th</sup>	14	15	1.xiv	91
Monacensis gr. 124 (Copy of H)	16 <sup>th</sup>	14	15	1.xiv–xv, lxxviii	86
Escorialensis Y I 05	15 <sup>th</sup>	14	15	1.xv	90

(Continued)

(Continued)

MSS	Century	<i>Gig.</i>	<i>Deus</i>	PCW	G–G
Parisinus gr. 434 (Previously Regius 2250) <b>Family L</b>	16 <sup>th</sup>	14	15	1.xv–xvi	88
Parisinus gr. 433* (Previously Regius 1895) <b>Family M</b>	16 <sup>th</sup>	14	15	1.xvi–xvii	99
Mediceus* (Also Laurentianus plut. X cod. 20) <b>Family P</b>	13 <sup>th</sup>	7	6	1.xxxi–xxxiv	100
Petropolitanus XX A 21* <b>Family U</b>	13 <sup>th</sup> /14 <sup>th</sup>	15	16	1.xvii–xix	104
Vaticanus gr. 381*	13 <sup>th</sup> /14 <sup>th</sup>	7	8	1.xix–xx	110

The first thing that strikes us is that the two treatises were consistently handed down together or in sequence. The only exception to this is FG where *De gigantibus* is missing. However, the sequence of the two treatises was not uniform. In BHLPU the sequence is what we would expect: *De gigantibus* which deals with Gen. 6:1–4a comes first and *Quod Deus sit immutabilis* which deals with Gen. 6:4b–12 follows; in AM the order is reversed and *Quod Deus sit immutabilis* precedes *De gigantibus*. Further, in both families AM, *Quod Deus sit immutabilis* comes immediately after *De agricultura* which deals with Gen. 9:20a. It is clear that the sequence of the biblical text was not used to arrange the order of the treatises in the manuscripts. This is not surprising since the scribes who handed down the manuscripts did not think of the works within larger structures of the Allegorical Commentary and the Exposition of the Law. As Adams has reminded us, they read Philo differently from how we do<sup>13</sup>—and, in my judgment, differently from how Philo did.

The titles

We might ask if the titles of the works help. I am not asking who is responsible for the titles, that is, whether Philo assigned them or a subsequent scribe.<sup>14</sup> I am asking whether the titles used in the manuscript tradition help us understand whether scribes were handing down a single work or two related works.

In his list of Philo’s works in the Episcopal library, Eusebius counted the work as one scroll with a compound title that offered two alternatives *περὶ γιγάντων ἢ περὶ μὴ τρέπεσθαι τὸ θεῖον* (*Concerning the Giants or Concerning the Fact that the Divine Does not Change*).<sup>15</sup> This is the earliest evidence that we have for the title. It raises the question

<sup>13</sup> S. Adams, ‘Treatise order in the Greek codices of Philo of Alexandria: lists, *pinakes*, and manuscripts’, *Studia Philonica Annual* 34 (2022), 1–32.

<sup>14</sup> More work is needed on the titles of Philo’s treatises. Philo states the major themes for some treatises in the six secondary prefaces he included (see below). It is not, however, clear that he gave titles to the treatises.

<sup>15</sup> Eus. *Hist. eccl.* 2.18.4. The title appears to have been inspired from phrases in the text: *De gigantibus* 58 has *περὶ γιγάντων* (§60 bis and §67 *περὶ γιγάντων*) and *Quod Deus sit immutabilis* 22 asks *τί γὰρ ἂν ἀσέβημα μείζον γένοιτο τοῦ ὑπολαμβάνειν τὸν ἄτρεπτον τρέπεσθαι*;

whether an early compound title reflects a combination of two once independent scrolls or whether the compound title was divided into two separate titles suggested by the ‘or’ and assigned to the halves of the treatise when it was split.

This is not the only compound title among the seventeen (if the two works we are considering were one) or eighteen (if they were separate) extant works within the Allegorical Commentary: there are six other treatises in the Allegorical Commentary that have compound titles in some of the manuscripts: *De cherubim*, *De sacrificiis Abelis et Caini*, *De posteritate Caini*, *Quis rerum diuinarum heres sit*, *De fuga et inuentione*, and *De mutatione nominum*. In the cases of *De posteritate Caini* and *Quis rerum diuinarum heres sit*, we have only one title (there is only one MS for *De posteritate Caini*).<sup>16</sup> There is one variant for *De mutatione nominum* but it is only to add Philo’s name.<sup>17</sup> This leaves us with three treatises that have compound titles with variations. Here they are with their MSS support.

*De cherubim*

Περὶ τῶν χερουβὶμ καὶ τῆς φλογίνης ῥομφαίας καὶ τοῦ κτισθέντος πρώτου ἐξ ἀνθρώπου Κάϊν MGH  
 Φίλωνος περὶ τῶν χερουβείμ καὶ τοῦ κτισθέντος πρώτου ἐξ ἀνθρώπου Κάϊν AP  
 Φίλωνος περὶ τῶν χερουβὶμ καὶ τῆς φλογίνης ῥομφαίας UF

*De sacrificiis Abelis et Caini*

Φίλωνος περὶ γενέσεως Ἀβελ καὶ ὧν αὐτός τε καὶ ὁ ἀδελφὸς ἱερουργοῦσι Pap  
 Περὶ γενέσεως Ἀβελ καὶ ὧν αὐτὸς καὶ ὁ ἀδελφὸς αὐτοῦ Κάϊν ἱερουργοῦσιν UF  
 Φίλωνος περὶ ὧν ἱερουργοῦσιν Ἀβελ τε καὶ Κάϊν M  
 Φίλωνος Ἰουδαίου περὶ ὧν ἱερουργοῦσιν Ἀβελ τε καὶ Κάϊν A  
 Περὶ ὧν ἱερουργοῦσιν Ἀβελ τε καὶ Κάϊν GHP

*De fuga et inuentione*

Φίλωνος περὶ φυγῆς καὶ εὐρέσεως G  
 Περὶ φυγάδων H

In the cases of *De cherubim* and *De sacrificiis Abelis et Caini*, there are two major titles: one is a true compound and the other is singular. The MSS evidence itself favours the compound in the case of *De cherubim*, but the case of *De sacrificiis Abelis et Caini* is more difficult to judge based on the MSS evidence since it pits the papyrus and UF over against M. How can we assess the probabilities of the transmission history?

The tendency in the tradition was to create smaller units rather than to combine them; for example *Legum allegoriae* 1–2 probably reflect the original *Legum allegoriae* 1.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, Book 2 of *De uita Moysis* was split into two, making Philo’s two-volume work three volumes.<sup>19</sup> This suggests that scribes would be more inclined to split a compound

<sup>16</sup> For *De posteritate Caini* the title is Φίλωνος περὶ τῶν τοῦ δοκησισόφου Κάϊν ἐγγόνων καὶ ὡς μετανάστης γίγνεται (V). For *Quis rerum diuinarum heres sit* the title is Φίλωνος περὶ τοῦ τίς ὁ τῶν θεῶν ἐστὶν κληρονόμος καὶ περὶ τῆς εἰς τὰ ἴσα καὶ ἐναντία τομῆς (Pap).

<sup>17</sup> περὶ τῶν μετονομαζομένων καὶ ὧν ἕνεκα μετονομάζονται (A); τοῦ αὐτοῦ Φίλωνος Ἰουδαίου περὶ τῶν μετονομαζομένων καὶ ὧν ἕνεκα μετονομάζονται (B).

<sup>18</sup> The key evidence is that the two are one in P and in the Armenian translation. For the Armenian see G. Zarbhanalean, *P’iloni Hebrayec ‘woy cark’ t’argmanealk’ i naxneac’ meroc’ oroc’ hellen bnagirk’ hasin ar mez* (Venice, 1892). For analyses see Cohn, PCW 1.lxxxvi; and J.R. Roysse, ‘The text of Philo’s *Legum Allegoriae*’, *Studia Philonica Annual* 12 (2000), 1–28, especially 2–3.

<sup>19</sup> *De uita Moysis* 2.1–65 became Book 2 and 2.66–292 became Book 3. On the MSS tradition and the debates it has generated about possible missing material in the work, see G.E. Sterling, ‘Philo of

title. In the instance of *De gigantibus* and *Quod Deus sit immutabilis*, it is more likely that a work whose earliest title was compound—especially if the scribes knew the version of the title in Eusebius that offered alternative titles—was split rather than arguing that Eusebius or a predecessor created a single work from two independent works that were subsequently split back into the two original treatises—at least this is a much simpler explanation.<sup>20</sup> This is strengthened by Jerome's catalogue of Philo's works when he says 'de gigantibus liber unus' and does not list *Quod Deus sit immutabilis* as a distinct work.<sup>21</sup> For these reasons, I think that the title was split sometime after Eusebius and half was given to each treatise.<sup>22</sup>

There is one other piece of evidence that we need to consider. We have an eighth century work traditionally attributed—but not without difficulties—to John of Damascus (675–749 C.E.) known as the *Sacra parallela*.<sup>23</sup> The work originally consisted of three books: Books 1 and 2 were known as τὰ ἱερὰ (*Sacred Things*) and dealt with divine and human affairs respectively. The third book was known as τὰ παράλληλα (*The Parallels*) and addressed ethics. The work was a collection of citations drawn from the Bible, early Christian writers and other authors including Philo. The Philonic fragments belong to Family D and are attested in at least four manuscripts of this family. They are:

D<sup>C</sup> Coislinianus 276, tenth century, extracts from Book 1

D<sup>L</sup> Laurentianus pluteus VIII, 22, fourteenth century, three mixed recensions

D<sup>M</sup> Venetus Marcianus gr. 138, eleventh century

D<sup>R</sup> Berolinensis gr. 46, twelfth century

The collector of the fragments attributed seven fragments from Philo's *Quod Deus sit immutabilis* to *De gigantibus* with five variant formulae. Here is the evidence:

ἐκ τοῦ περὶ γιγάντων

*Deus* 42–44 D<sup>L</sup> fol. 112r

*Deus* 61 D<sup>R</sup> fol. 114r

*Deus* 62 D<sup>R</sup> fol. 22v D<sup>C</sup> fol. 45v

*Deus* 64–65 D<sup>R</sup> fol. 252r

Alexandria's *Life of Moses*: an introduction to the Exposition of the Law', *Studia Philonica Annual* 30 (2018), 31–45, especially 34–6. Philo explicitly states that he wrote *De uita Moysis* in two books (*De uirtutibus* 52). Two MSS families (CG<sup>2</sup>) followed by Mangey (n. 11) read τρισί instead of δυσί in this text; however, the transcriptional probabilities suggest that it is more likely that scribes altered the text to reflect the MSS tradition rather than to argue that they preserved a reading that defied the MSS tradition.

<sup>20</sup> The titles for *De gigantibus* are as follows: Φίλωνος περὶ γιγάντων (MAH), Φίλωνος Ἰουδαίου σοφοῦ περὶ γιγάντων λόγος ἡ' (U), τοῦ αὐτοῦ περὶ γιγάντων (P). The titles for *Quod Deus sit immutabilis* are: Φίλωνος ὅτι ἄτρεπτον τὸ θεῖον (MAGH), Φίλωνος Ἰουδαίου ὅτι ἄτρεπτόν ἐστι τὸ θεῖον λόγος θ' (U), περὶ τοῦ ὅτι ἄτρεπτόν ἐστι τὸ θεῖον (F), τοῦ αὐτοῦ ὅτι ἄτρεπτον τὸ θεῖον (P).

<sup>21</sup> Jer. *De uir. ill.* 11. It is not clear whether this includes *Quod Deus sit immutabilis*, but since he did not list it as a separate work, he either included it under *De gigantibus* or did not know it.

<sup>22</sup> So also Cohn, PCW 2.xxi: 'amplificatus hic titulus effecisse uidetur, ut postea duo libri discerperentur.'

<sup>23</sup> On the text see K. Holl, *Die Sacra parallela des Johannes Damascenus* (Leipzig, 1896). Vaticanus gr. 1553 (tenth century) attributes the work to Leontius the priest and an unidentified John. The earliest fragments come from the ninth century which suggests that the work dates from the time of John whether or not he produced it. On the life and work of John of Damascus see the old but still helpful work of J.M. Hoeck, 'Stand und Aufgaben der Damaskenos-Forschung', *OCP* 17 (1951), 1–60, especially 29–30 n. 6 for *Sacra parallela* and Hoeck's doubts of its authenticity.



τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἐκ τοῦ περὶ γιγάντων

*Deus* 5–6 D<sup>C</sup> fol. 254r

*Deus* 42–44 D<sup>R</sup> fol. 221v

*Deus* 46–47 D<sup>M</sup> fol. 282 D<sup>P</sup> fol. 376v

*Deus* 48 D<sup>M</sup> fol. 18r

τοῦ αὐτοῦ περὶ τῶν γιγάντων

*Deus* 48 D<sup>L</sup> fol. 57r

Φίλωνος περὶ τῶν γιγάντων

*Deus* 48 D<sup>L</sup> fol. 23r

Φίλωνος ἐκ τοῦ περὶ γιγάντων

*Deus* 64–65 D<sup>R</sup> fol. 159r

The introductory formulae to the seven fragments indicate that as late as the eighth century there was a manuscript that contained both *De gigantibus* and *Quod Deus sit immutabilis* as a single work known as *De gigantibus*. This may explain Jerome's reference to 'de gigantibus liber unus'. We cannot identify the time when the work was split, but it must have been after Eusebius and perhaps subsequent to the eighth century. The motive for splitting the work is probably the same as the motive that led to the breaking up of *De uita Moysis* and *De specialibus legibus*: there was a desire to provide smaller, unified works.<sup>24</sup>

## THE INTERNAL EVIDENCE

Does the text itself help us answer our question? We will consider two aspects of the text: the lengths of the texts and the use of transitional phrases.

### *The length of the treatises*

The first is the most obvious: *De gigantibus* is exceptionally short for a treatise in the Allegorical Commentary. Here is a table with the lengths of each extant treatise measured by the paragraphs in the *editio maior* of Cohn-Wendland.

Two treatises are much shorter than the other treatises in the Allegorical Commentary: *De gigantibus* and *De sobrietate*. It should hardly come as a surprise that both Massibeu and Wendland thought that part of *De sobrietate* was missing.<sup>25</sup> Cohn suggested that *De sobrietate* and *De confusione linguarum* were originally a single work,<sup>26</sup> a suggestion supported by the citation of a fragment from *De confusione linguarum* but attributed to

<sup>24</sup> There is a pressing need to do more work on the thematic unity or lack of unity for the treatises in the Allegorical Commentary; I have addressed this in part in Sterling (n. 3), 1233–5. In addition to the obvious work of exploring the thematic coherence and the exegetical structures within each treatise, several pieces of evidence should also be incorporated. The six secondary prefaces are important statements of Philo's own assessment of these treatises (see below). The MSS tradition offers two other forms of evidence. The titles need to be thoroughly investigated; they often come from a phrase in the text (see n. 15 and the discussion below). The division of works into separate treatises indicates that scribes had an interest in thematic unity, although there is no consistency in their practices.

<sup>25</sup> Massebeu (n. 8), 25; and Wendland, PCW 2.xxix–xxxi, at xxxi.

<sup>26</sup> Cohn (n. 6), 399: 'de sobrietate entbehrt des rechten Schlusses und de confusione linguarum beginnt mit den Worten: περὶ μὲν δὴ τούτων ἀρκέσει τὰ εἰρημένα. Einer solchen Uebergangsformel bedient sich Philo wohl mitten in einer Abhandlung, aber nie am Anfang eines neuen Buches. Ich



Treatise	Paragraphs in PCW
<i>Legum allegoriae</i> 1	108
<i>Legum allegoriae</i> 2	108
<i>Legum allegoriae</i> 3	253
<i>De cherubim</i>	130
<i>De sacrificiis Abelis et Caini</i>	139
<i>Quod deterius potiori insidari soleat</i>	178
<i>De posteritate Caini</i>	185
<i>De gigantibus</i>	67
<i>Quod Deus sit immutabilis</i>	183
<i>De agricultura</i>	181
<i>De plantatione</i>	177
<i>De ebrietate</i>	224
<i>De sobrietate</i>	69
<i>De confusione linguarum</i>	198
<i>De migratione Abrahami</i>	225
<i>Quis heres rerum diuinarum sit</i>	316
<i>De congressu eruditionis gratia</i>	189
<i>De fuga et inuentione</i>	213
<i>De mutatione nominum</i>	270
<i>De somniis</i> 1	256
<i>De somniis</i> 2	302

*De sobrietate*,<sup>27</sup> the same phenomenon we noted above when the compilers of the *Sacra parallela* assigned fragments from *Quod Deus sit immutabilis* to *De gigantibus*. We will leave the specific debate about *De sobrietate* to the side, but it is important to note the similar transmission histories for the two shortest works within the Allegorical Commentary.

If we combine *Legum allegoriae* 1 and 2 into one book and leave off the two works presently under consideration, the average number of paragraphs per treatise is 213. The range extends from 130 (*De cherubim*) to 316 (*Quis rerum diuinarum heres sit*). If we combine *De gigantibus* and *Quod Deus sit immutabilis* we get 250 paragraphs, a size that fits nicely into the basic lengths of the treatises in the series.

### *The transitional phrase*

But this only means that it is reasonable to posit a single work. Is there anything within the text that is more compelling? The final statement of *De gigantibus* is important: 'We have said enough for the present about the giants, let us turn to the subsequent matters in

möchte daher annehmen, daß die beiden Traktate ursprünglich zusammen ein Buch ausmachten, was nach ihrem Umfange sehr wohl möglich ist.'

<sup>27</sup> *De confusione linguarum* 167 D<sup>C</sup> fol. 215r Φίλωνος ἐκ τοῦ περὶ τοῦ νήψας ὁ νοῦς εὐχεται. Cohn (n. 6), 399 pointed this out. This is the only example in the apparatus criticus of *De confusione linguarum* in which a fragment from *De confusione linguarum* is attributed to *De sobrietate*.

the account. These are the words.<sup>28</sup> This is clearly a transitional statement. The issue is what type of transitional statement it is.

Philo used multiple types of transitions to mark structures. At the broadest level, Philo used secondary prefaces to open six of the treatises in the Allegorical Commentary.<sup>29</sup> In one case, Philo set up the transition from one treatise to another by including both a closing statement in one treatise and a secondary preface in the following treatise. He closed *De agricultura* with these words: ‘Let us speak in turn about his skill in cultivating plants.’<sup>30</sup> He then opened *De plantatione* with a reference back to this: ‘In the former book, we discussed the matters pertaining to general agricultural skills, at least what was appropriate to it. In this book we will explain—as best we can—the particular skill of tending vines.’<sup>31</sup> The close connection led Eusebius to speak of two works *De agricultura*;<sup>32</sup> however, the use of a secondary preface makes it clear that they are discrete units in a larger, unified work.<sup>33</sup>

Philo also used transitional statements to mark out internal structures within a treatise. He did this in both the Allegorical Commentary and the Exposition of the Law. For example, he routinely used transitional phrases in *De plantatione* to mark the discrete units, for example ‘Now that we have thoroughly covered the larger plants in the cosmos, let us consider the way in which the all-wise God crafted trees in the human, the microcosm.’<sup>34</sup> The statement marks the transition from Philo’s discussion of the cosmos as the largest plant or macrocosm to humanity, the microcosm. The Alexandrian used the same type of technique in his *De uita Moysis* where he carefully marked out the offices Moses held by means of transitional statements, for example ‘We said above that four qualities must be present in the perfect ruler—the office of king, legislative skill, the high priesthood, and prophecy . . . I have discussed the first three and shown that Moses was the best king, legislator, and high priest, and come now to the last and will show that he was the most highly approved prophet.’<sup>35</sup> Josephus used a similar technique in *Contra Apionem* to provide a clear structure for his readers.<sup>36</sup>

The question is what type of transition do we have in the final statement of our current *De gigantibus*? Since the existing manuscripts use this as a transition from one treatise to another, we can begin by considering the closings and openings of treatises. Here our options are limited: only *De agricultura* and *De gigantibus* conclude with transitional statements. There is, however, a difference: the statement in *De agricultura* sets up the main theme of *De plantatione*, while the statement in *De gigantibus* only sets up the citation of Gen 6:4b that opens *Quod Deus sit immutabilis* but does not set out the basic theme. The fact that *Quod Deus sit immutabilis* opens with a citation is hardly a surprise:

<sup>28</sup> Philo, *De gigantibus* 67.

<sup>29</sup> Philo, *De plantatione* 1; *De ebrietate* 1; *De sobrietate* 1; *Quis rerum diuinarum heres sit* 1; *De fuga et inuentione* 2; *De somniis* 1.1. On Philo’s use of secondary prefaces, see G.E. Sterling, ‘“Prolific in expression and broad in thought”: internal references to Philo’s Allegorical Commentary and Exposition of the Law’, *Euphrosyne* 40 (2012), 55–76, especially 60–3.

<sup>30</sup> Philo, *De agricultura* 181.

<sup>31</sup> Philo, *De plantatione* 1.

<sup>32</sup> Euseb. *Hist. eccl.* 2.18.2. Cf. also Eusebius, *Praep. euang.* 7.13.3–4 and Jerome, *De uir. ill.* 11.

<sup>33</sup> On the statements in *De agricultura* and *De plantatione* see A.C. Geljon and D.T. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria On Cultivation: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* (Leiden and Boston, 2013), 3; and A.C. Geljon and D.T. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria On Planting: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* (Leiden and Boston, 2019), 3, 92.

<sup>34</sup> Philo, *De plantatione* 28. Cf. also §§73, 94, 139–40.

<sup>35</sup> Philo, *De uita Moysis* 2.187. Cf. also §§8, 66, 187. For a full discussion see G.E. Sterling, ‘A human *sui generis*: Philo’s *Life of Moses*’, *JJS* 73 (2022), 225–50, especially 228–34.

<sup>36</sup> Joseph. *Ap.* 1.69–72, 219–22; 2.145–50.

this is a standard way to open a treatise in the Allegorical Commentary.<sup>37</sup> Only the treatises that have secondary prefaces and the last two (*De somniis* 1–2) that are thematic in nature fail to place a biblical citation first. In short, the use of a transition marker to end a treatise is rare in the Allegorical Commentary and is unique in marking a transition to a specific element in the next treatise.

What about transition statements that set out internal structures within treatises? We are fortunate to have three examples in the Allegorical Commentary that are virtually identical to the statement in *De gigantibus*. They all share a common structure and even use some of the same vocabulary. Each has two phrases. The first phrase consists of three elements: a participle of speaking, an adverb/prepositional phrase that marks the extent of the speaking, and the topic which is generally marked with the preposition περί. The second phrase uses the hortatory subjunctive of τρέπω with the preposition ἐπί to indicate a new topic. I will set each common element in bold.

*De gigantibus* 67

τοσαῦτα εἷς γε τὸ παρὸν ἀρκούντως περὶ τῶν γιγάντων εἰρηκότες  
ἐπὶ τὰ ἀκόλουθα τοῦ λόγου τρεψόμεθα.  
ἔστι δὲ ταῦτα·

*De ebrietate* 206

διειλεγμένοι δὴ περὶ τούτων ἱκανῶς  
ἐπὶ τὰ ἀκόλουθα τῷ λόγῳ τρεψόμεθα.

*Quis rerum diuinarum heres sit* 50

τὴν δὲ τροπικωτέραν τούτων ἀπόδοσιν ἐν ἑτέροις εἰρηκότες  
ἐπὶ τὰ ἀκόλουθα τῶν ἐν χερσὶ τρεψόμεθα ...

*De fuga et inuentione* 143

ἀποχρώντως λελαληκότες καὶ περὶ τούτων  
ἐπὶ τὸ τρίτον ἐξῆς τρεψόμεθα κεφάλαιον ...

Let us consider each of the parallels. The first is in *De ebrietate*: ‘Since we have discussed these things thoroughly, let us now turn to the subsequent matters in the account.’<sup>38</sup> Philo suggested that wine was a symbol for five things in the preface to the treatise.<sup>39</sup> This statement marks the shift from Philo’s discussion of wine as a symbol for ‘insensibility’ or ‘stupor’ (the second of the five for which wine is a symbol) to ‘greed’ or ‘gluttony’ (the third of the five). The second example is from *Quis rerum diuinarum heres sit*: ‘Since we have spoken about the allegorical interpretation of these things elsewhere, let us turn to the subsequent matters that are at hand ...’<sup>40</sup> In this context,

<sup>37</sup> Philo, *Legum allegoriae* 1.1; 2.1; 3.1; *De cherubim* 1; *De sacrificiis Abelis et Caini* 1; *Quod deterius potiori insidiari solet* 1; *De posteritate Caini* 1; *De gigantibus* 1; *Quod Deus sit immutabilis* 1; *De agricultura* 1; *De plantatione* 1b; *De sobrietate* 1b; *De confusione linguarum* 1b; *De migratione Abrahami* 1; *Quis rerum diuinarum heres sit* 1–2; *De congressu eruditionis gratia* 1; *De fuga et inuentione* 1; and *De mutatione nominum* 1.

<sup>38</sup> Philo, *De ebrietate* 206.

<sup>39</sup> Philo, *De ebrietate* 1–5. The five are ‘folly’ or ‘foolish speaking’ (§§11–153), ‘insensibility’ or ‘stupor’ (§§154–205), ‘greed’ or ‘gluttony’ (§§206–224), ‘cheer’ (missing but presumably covered in the lost Book 2), and ‘nudity’ or ‘nakedness’ (missing but presumably covered in the lost Book 2).

<sup>40</sup> Philo, *Quis rerum diuinarum heres sit* 50.

Philo used the phrase to mark the terminus of his discussion of one of his favourite texts, Deut. 21:15–17,<sup>41</sup> to return to the text of Gen. 15 on which the treatise is based. The final example is in *De fuga et inuentione*: ‘We have spoken sufficiently about these, let us turn to the third category, in which there is seeking but finding does not follow.’<sup>42</sup> As the title suggests, the treatise deals with both flight and finding or discovery. Philo discussed three motives for flight and then turned to four possibilities of finding. Our text marks the transition from the second to the third category of finding, that is, the transition from seeking and finding to seeking but not finding. If the transitional statement in *De gigantibus* 67 functioned analogously, it marked a transition within a treatise.

What about the internal transitional phrases within *Quod Deus sit immutabilis* 20–69? Do they help? There are two examples that use the same basic form that we have just examined with slightly different but analogous vocabulary. The most significant difference between these transitional formulae and the pattern that we have just examined is that the formulae in *Quod Deus sit immutabilis* 20–69 have three clauses rather than two. The first clause uses a participle to indicate discussion of a topic, an adverb that makes it clear that the coverage has been sufficient, and the preposition *περί* with a clause indicating the contents. The second clause uses either the hortatory subjunctive or a first-person plural future to signal a change in the topic and an adverb or object to signal the introduction of a new lemma. The third clause introduces the new lemma. I will again mark the common elements off in bold font.

*De gigantibus* 67

τοσαῦτα εἰς γε τὸ παρὸν **ἀρκούντως περὶ τῶν γιγάντων εἰρηκότες**  
**ἐπὶ τὰ ἀκόλουθα** τοῦ λόγου **τρεψόμεθα.**  
 ἔστι δὲ ταῦτα.

*Quod Deus sit immutabilis* 33

**ἱκανῶς οὖν διειλεγμένοι περὶ τοῦ μὴ χρῆσθαι μετανοίᾳ τὸ ὄν**  
**ἀκλόυθως ἀποδώσομεν,**  
 τί ἔστι τὸ ...

*Quod Deus sit immutabilis* 51

**δεδηλωκότες οὖν ἀποχρώντως περὶ τούτων**  
**τὰ ἐξῆς ἴδωμεν.**  
 ἔστι δὲ ταῦτα ...

Let us consider each of the transitions in *Quod Deus sit immutabilis* briefly. Philo introduced the main biblical lemma (Gen. 6:5–7) in §20. He then worked through the issue of whether God could change (§§21–32) and came to Gen. 6:6 which he introduced with ‘Now that we have provided a sufficient discourse about the fact that the Existent does not repent, we will explain sequentially what the meaning of the following is ...’ He then quoted Gen. 6:6 and explained it. After he had worked through Gen. 6:6 (§§33–50), he introduced Gen. 6:7 with ‘Now that we have made these things sufficiently clear, let us consider the subsequent statement. The words are ...’ Philo then quoted

<sup>41</sup> Philo had addressed this text in *Legum allegoriae* 2.48; *De sacrificiis Abelis et Caini* 19 and *De sobrietate* 21. Cf. also *De specialibus legibus* 2.136.

<sup>42</sup> Philo, *De fuga et inuentione* 143.

Gen. 6:7 and explained it in §§51–69. These examples make it clear how such transitional phrases functioned in the text. It seems unambiguous that the phrase in *De gigantibus* 67 was an internal transition marker that set up the citation of Gen. 6:4b in *Quod Deus sit immutabilis* 1, just as the transitional marker in *Quod Deus sit immutabilis* 33 set up the citation of Gen. 6:6 and the transitional marker in §51 set up Gen. 6:7.

## CONCLUSIONS

How should we think of *De gigantibus* and *Quod Deus sit immutabilis*? The compound title in Eusebius, the occasional tendency of scribes to create smaller thematic units, the references in the *Sacra parallela*, the uncharacteristic brevity of the treatise and the internal transitional statement that concludes *De gigantibus* point to a single treatise that has been divided rather than to a pair of closely related treatises like *De agricultura* and *De plantatione*. This means that we have a text that covers Gen. 6:1–12, a large scope for a treatise in the Allegorical Commentary but by no means the largest: the original *Legum allegoriae* 1 covered Gen. 2:1–3:1 and *Quis heres rerum diuinarum sit* interpreted Gen. 15:2–18.

How did the treatise function in the *corpus Philonicum*?<sup>43</sup> Philo thought of the ancestors in Genesis in two sets of triads: Enos–Enoch–Noah and Abraham–Isaac–Jacob.<sup>44</sup> Each figure represented an aspect of virtue or its acquisition. The Alexandrian selected one character from each triad to focus two of the three larger biographical sections of the Allegorical Commentary: Noah and Abraham.<sup>45</sup> Our treatise is part of the Noah cycle. It stands as an island in the interpretation of Gen. 5:1–9:19. This is probably a result of the loss of a treatise that dealt with Shem<sup>46</sup> that preceded *On the Giants or that God does not Change* and the loss of the two volumes *On Covenants (De pactis)* that followed it.<sup>47</sup> While this reconstruction is just that, a reconstruction, it explains the missing treatments of the Genesis narrative. It is not entirely clear at this point in time why Philo's treatment of Genesis 5–9 was so poorly preserved; other parts of Genesis were much more fully preserved. Even the single treatise that we have on this section did not escape severe editorial work. However, it is time that we restore the two halves and read the text as the single treatise that Philo wrote.

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<sup>43</sup> For analyses of the structure of the two and the theme(s) see Runia (n. 12), who summarizes the previous work and offers his own analysis.

<sup>44</sup> Philo, *De Abrahamo* 7–47 and *De praemiis et poenis* 7–23.

<sup>45</sup> For details see Sterling (n. 3), 1235–7.

<sup>46</sup> Philo, *De sobrietate* 52. This is not the only possibility, but explains the lacuna.

<sup>47</sup> Philo, *De mutatione nominum* 53; Euseb. *Hist. eccl.* 2.18.3.