2009

Philo of Alexandria's Exposition of the Tenth Commandment

Hans Svebakken

Loyola University Chicago

Recommended Citation

http://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_diss/244

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 License.
Copyright © 2009 Hans Svebakken
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Work on this project began in earnest during my year as a Schmitt Dissertation Fellow (2004 – 2005). I want to thank both the Arthur J. Schmitt Foundation for its financial support and the Graduate School of Loyola University Chicago for awarding the fellowship.

Many people have helped me through my years at Loyola. First, I want to thank the faculties of Classical Studies and Theology for generously sharing their expertise and equipping me to complete a doctoral dissertation. (Two Professors no longer at Loyola, David E. Aune and John L. White, deserve thanks as well.) In particular, I want to thank my two readers, Professors Robert Di Vito and James Keenan, who taught me much in the course of my studies and thoughtfully reviewed my work. Most of all, I want to thank Professor Thomas Tobin, S.J., the director of my dissertation, whose Hellenistic Judaism seminar sparked my interest in Philo. At every critical juncture of the process, his expert guidance has invariably steered me toward a better outcome. I want to thank also my graduate student colleagues, too many to name, whose friendship and conversation have encouraged me professionally and personally. Finally, I want to thank Catherine Wolf, Administrative Assistant for the Theology Department,
for having a friendly answer to all of my questions, and the Interlibrary Loan staff of Cudahy Library for greatly facilitating my research.

I have a large extended family, and each member—in his or her own way—deserves a personal word of thanks. But for the sake of brevity I'll mention only my family of origin, who first welcomed me into the world. My brother, Pete, and sister, Khris, my first and oldest friends, have never questioned my choice of a meandering academic career, and I appreciate their confidence. My father, Gene, has also been a great encouragement, and I will remember fondly the extra time we spent together as a result of my education in the Chicago area. My mother, Kay, gave me a gift of love that continues to shape my life. Sadly, she did not live to see me complete this degree, but I can well imagine her happy words and congratulations.

Two people inspire everything I do. My wife, Mary Jane, graciously welcomed Philo into our lives and supported this project in every possible way. I cannot begin to express the value of her unfailing encouragement. Our son, Elias, arrived in the course of chapter four, and the extraordinary joy he brought into our lives helped carry me over the finish line.

This has been a long journey, and I consider its completion a great blessing. Unsure of how to express my deepest sense of gratitude, I'll let Philo have the last word, in honor of our many hours together: "It is for God to give benefits and for mortals to give thanks, since they have nothing else to give in return" (Plant. 130).
Behold me daring, not only to read the sacred messages of Moses, but also in my love of knowledge to peer into each of them and unfold and reveal what is not known to the multitude.

Philo of Alexandria, *De specialibus legibus* 3.6
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

iii

## LIST OF TABLES

viii

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ix

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1

PhiLO’S COMMENTARY ON MOSAIC LEGISLATION  2

PHILO’S EXPOSITION OF THE TENTH COMMANDMENT  9

THE VALUE OF PHILO’S EXPOSITION  13

HISTORY OF RESEARCH  17

Harry A. Wolfson  18

Kathy L. Gaca  23

PLAN OF THE DISSERTATION  38

## CHAPTER TWO: PHILO ON DESIRE (ΕΙΣΙΘΥΜΙΑ)

40

INTRODUCTION  40

PHILO’S MIDDLE-PLATONIC CONTEMPORARIES  41

"IRRATIONAL" AND "NON-RATIONAL" IN MORAL PSYCHOLOGY  44

PLATONIC FOUNDATIONS  45

BIPARTITION IN MIDDLE PLATONISM  48

Reason over against Ἐπιθυμία / Θυμός  48

Reason over against Appetite (ὄρεξις)  50

Reason over against Impulse (ὁρμη)  53

Reason over against Emotion (πάθος)  57

Summary  59

BIPARTITION IN PHILO’S WRITINGS  60

Reason over against Ἐπιθυμία / Θυμός  60

Reason over against Appetite (ὄρεξις)  62

Reason over against Impulse (ὁρμη)  65

Reason over against Emotion (πάθος)  69

Reason over against Sense-Perception (αἴσθησις)  72

Reason over against "Stoic" Non-Rational Soul  75

Summary  77

PROBLEMATIC MALFUNCTIONS OF DESIRE  79

Passionate Desire (ἀμετρὸς ἐπιθυμία)  79

Tyrannical Desire (ἐρώς)  87

"Ἐρως as Advanced Grade of Desire  89

Negative Impact of Ἐρως  93

CONCLUSION  98

## CHAPTER THREE: PHILO ON SELF-CONTROL (ΕΓΚΡΑΤΕΙΑ) AND PRACTICE (ΑΣΚΗΣΙΣ)

100
## LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Variations of Bipartition in Middle Platonism</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Variations of Bipartition in Philo’s Writings</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations of primary sources are those of *The SBL Handbook of Style* (ed. Patrick H. Alexander et al.; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1999), with the following exceptions:

**PRIMARY SOURCES**


**SECONDARY SOURCES**

AB Anchor Bible


*ACPQ* American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly

*AJP* American Journal of Philology

*ALGHJ* Arbeiten zur Literatur und Geschichte des hellensitischen Judentums

*AMMTC* Ancient Mediterranean and Medieval Texts and Contexts

*AMP* Ancient and Medieval Philosophy


*AP* Ancient Philosophy

*ARGU* Arbeiten zur Religion und Geschichte des Urchristentums

*ASE* Annali di storia dell'eseGESI
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASR</td>
<td>Annali di scienze religiose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBB</td>
<td>Bonner biblische Beiträge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEATAJ</td>
<td>Beiträge zur Erforschung des Alten Testaments und des antiken Judentum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BJS</td>
<td>Brown Judaic Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BThSt</td>
<td>Biblisch-Theologische Studien</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BU</td>
<td>Biblische Untersuchungen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BZAW</td>
<td>Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBQMS</td>
<td>Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCWJWCW</td>
<td>Cambridge Commentaries on Writings of the Jewish and Christian World 200 BC to AD 200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEC</td>
<td>Critical Essays on the Classics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJA</td>
<td>Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CQ</td>
<td>Classical Quarterly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR</td>
<td>Classical Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRINT</td>
<td>Compendia Rerum Judaicarum ad Novum Testamentum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSCP</td>
<td>Cornell Studies in Classical Philology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSP</td>
<td>Cornell Studies in Philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CUAPS</td>
<td>Catholic University of America Patristic Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CWS</td>
<td>Classics of Western Spirituality. New York, 1978—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELA</td>
<td>Études de littérature ancienne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPM</td>
<td>Études de philosophie médiévale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETL</td>
<td>Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETR</td>
<td>Études théologiques et religieuses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUSLR</td>
<td>Emory University Studies in Law and Religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FJCD</td>
<td>Forschungen zum jüdisch-christlichen Dialog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRBS</td>
<td>Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRRS</td>
<td>Greco-Roman Religion Series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HBS</td>
<td>Herders Biblische Studien</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HPhQ</td>
<td>History of Philosophy Quarterly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSCP</td>
<td>Harvard Studies in Classical Philology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HTR</td>
<td>Harvard Theological Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JACE</td>
<td>Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum, Ergänzungsband</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JBL</td>
<td>Journal of Biblical Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JHS</td>
<td>Journal of Hellenic Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JJML</td>
<td>Journal of Jewish Music and Liturgy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JJS</td>
<td>Journal of Jewish Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JLAS</td>
<td>Jewish Law Association Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSH</td>
<td>Journal of Sport History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSHRZ</td>
<td>Jüdische Schriften aus hellenistisch-römischer Zeit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSNT</td>
<td>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSPSup</td>
<td>Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha: Supplement Series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JTS</td>
<td>Journal of Theological Studies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

xii
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LTE</td>
<td>Library of Theological Ethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCL</td>
<td>Martin Classical Lectures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MScRel</td>
<td>Mélanges de science religieuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDB</td>
<td>Le Monde de la Bible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>Museum Patavinum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAWG</td>
<td>Nachrichten von der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NovT</td>
<td>Novum Testamentum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NovTSup</td>
<td>Supplements to Novum Testamentum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTOA</td>
<td>Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBO</td>
<td>Orbis biblicus et orientalis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPM</td>
<td>Oxford Philosophical Monographs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTM</td>
<td>Oxford Theological Monographs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>Philosophia Antiqua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PASSV</td>
<td>Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PBACAP</td>
<td>Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ph&amp;PhenR</td>
<td>Philosophy and Phenomenological Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhilSup</td>
<td>Philologus: Supplementband</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHR</td>
<td>Problèmes d'histoire des religions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REG</td>
<td>Revue des études grecques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REL</td>
<td>Revue des études latines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RKAM</td>
<td>Religion und Kultur der alten Mittelmeerwelt in Parallelforschungen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RM</td>
<td>Review of Metaphysics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSR</td>
<td>Recherches de science religieuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTL</td>
<td>Revue théologique de Louvain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Studia Anselmiana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAP</td>
<td>Studien zur antiken Philosophie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBLTT</td>
<td>Society of Biblical Literature Texts and Translations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBS</td>
<td>Stuttgarter Biblestudien</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ScEs</td>
<td>Science et esprit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHNT</td>
<td>Studia ad corpus hellenisticum Novi Testamenti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ScrTh</td>
<td>Scripta Theologica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SF</td>
<td>Studi filosofici</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SJPh</td>
<td>Southern Journal of Philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNTSMS</td>
<td>Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SO</td>
<td>Symbolae Osloenses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>Studia Philonica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPPhA</td>
<td>Studia Philonica Annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPPhA</td>
<td>Studies in Philo of Alexandria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPPhAMA</td>
<td>Studies in Philo of Alexandria and Mediterranean Antiquity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSEJC</td>
<td>Studies in Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STA</td>
<td>Studia et Testimonia Antiqua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUNT</td>
<td>Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TSAJ  Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum
TSHP  New Synthese Historical Library: Texts and Studies in the History of Philosophy
TSP  Trivium: Special Publications
TUGAL  Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur
VC  Vigiliae Christianae
VCSup  Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae
VTSup  Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
WMANT  Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WS  Wiener Studien: Zeitschrift für Klassische Philologie und Patristik
WTS  Wijsgerige Teksten en Studies
WUNT  Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZNW  Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The Septuagint version of Exodus 20:17, translated literally, reads as follows:

You shall not desire your neighbor's wife. You shall not desire your neighbor's house, nor his field, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his beast of burden, nor any of his flock, nor anything that is your neighbor's.¹

This is the last of the Ten Commandments,² and although Philo of Alexandria (ca. 20 B.C. – A.D. 50) must have known the full biblical version,³ he cites the Tenth Commandment simply as "You shall not desire" (οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις),


² Within the biblical canon, the Ten Commandments appear first in Exod 20:1-17 (cf. Deut 5:1-21) spoken by God and so become known as the "ten words," or in modern usage the "Decalogue" (NB LXX Deut 10:4: τοὺς δέκα λόγους). Philo often refers to them as οἱ δέκα λόγοι (e.g., Spec. 1.1, Decal. 154) or δέκα λόγια (e.g., Decal. 36, Spec. 3.7).

³ Philo used the LXX, not the Hebrew Bible (see Valentin Nikiprowetzky, Le commentaire de l'écriture chez Philon d'Alexandrie [ALGHJ 11; Leiden: Brill, 1977], 50-96, esp. 51-52). No evidence for an abbreviated version of the Tenth Commandment exists in the MS tradition of the LXX. On the LXX Pentateuch, see the introductory essays in Le Pentateuque d'Alexandrie: text grec et traduction (ed. Cécile Dogniez and Marguerite Hart; Bible d'Alexandrie; Paris: Cerf, 2001), 31-130, including David Runia, "Philon d'Alexandrie devant le Pentateuque," 99-105.
indicating that in his view the principle concern of this Commandment is desire itself (ἐπιθυμία), not desire’s object.⁴

This dissertation explains in detail Philo’s exposition of the Tenth Commandment. As an introduction, this chapter (1) situates Philo’s exposition within his larger corpus of works, (2) sketches in summary form the nature and content of the exposition, (3) explains the value of the exposition, (4) reviews prior research, and (5) outlines the plan of the dissertation.

PHILO’S COMMENTARY ON MOSAIC LEGISLATION

Philo describes the contents of the Pentateuch as a sequence of three topics: creation, history, and legislation.⁵ In a series of works known collectively

---

⁴ In Spec. 4.78, Philo cites the Tenth Commandment as an abbreviated, two-word prohibition: "Let us turn now to the last of the Ten Words (δέκα λόγια)... You shall not desire" (οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις) (my translation). (Unless otherwise noted, all translations of Philo’s writings are from PLCL.) In Decal. 142, he clearly has this abbreviated version in mind: "Finally, he places a prohibition on desiring (τελευταίον δ’ ἐπιθυμεῖν ἀπαγορεύει), knowing that desire (τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν) is crafty and treacherous (νεωτεροποιοῦν καὶ ἐπιβουλοῦν)" (my translation). (Cf. Decal. 173: πέμπτον [of the second tablet] δὲ τὸ ἀνέφερον τὴν τῶν ἁδικημάτων πηγὴν, ἐπιθυμίαν; Her. 173: ἢ δ’ ἔτερα πεντάς ἐστιν ἀπαγόρευσις μοιχείας, ἀνδροφονίας, κλοπῆς, ψευδομαρτυρίας, ἐπιθυμίας.) In his discussion of the Tenth Commandment (Decal. 142-153, 173-174; Spec. 4.78b-131), Philo mentions none of the prohibited objects of desire listed in the LXX version (οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις, παίζεις, παιδοῦσκε, βοῦς, ὑποζύγιον, κτήνος), with the exception of ἱματία, which appears once in a list that includes also "reputation" (δόξα) and summarily "anything else that produces pleasure" (ποιος ἄλλος τῶν ἡδονήν ἀπεργαζομένων) (Decal. 151). Similarly, πλησίος, an essential element of the LXX version (τοῦ πλησίον σου; τῷ πλησίον σοῦ), appears only once (Spec. 4.93), and there it involves Platonic psychology: the θυμός, or spirited part of the soul, is a "neighbor" to the λόγος, or rational part.

⁵ "The oracles delivered through the prophet Moses are of three kinds (τρεῖς ιδέαις). The first deals with the creation of the world (τὴν μὲν περὶ κοσμοποιίας), the second with history (τὴν δὲ ιστορικὴν) and the third with legislation (τὴν δὲ τρίτην νομοθετικὴν)“ (Praem. 1). The same classification appears in Mos. 2.46-47, although Philo initially identifies only two parts: (1) the historical part (ιστορικὸν μέρος), which he subdivides into two sections dealing respectively with the creation of the world (κόσμου γενέσεως) and genealogy (γενεαλογίκοι), and (2) the part dealing with commands and prohibitions (περὶ προστάξεις καὶ ἀπαγορεύσεις). The part dealing with commands and prohibitions is equivalent to the third topic in Praem. 1, while the subdivisions of the first part are equivalent to the first two topics in Praem. 1. (On the equivalence of γενεαλογικὸς and ιστορικὸς, see F. H. Colson’s note on Mos. 2.47 in PLCL 6, 606; also PLCL 8, 313, n. a.) This correlation of Praem. 1 and Mos. 2.46-47 is standard—see, for example, Peder
as the Exposition of the Law, he offers an exegesis of the Pentateuch using these topics as his basic outline. The Exposition begins with a treatise on the creation of the world (De opificio mundi), continues with a set of treatises on the patriarchs (De Abrahamo and De Iosepho), and ends with a set of treatises on Mosaic legislation (De decalogo, De specialibus legibus 1-4, and De virtutibus).

This last set dealing with legislation consists thematically of only two parts, despite its formal division into six treatises: the first comprises De decalogo and practically all of De specialibus legibus (1.1 – 4.132), the second comprises the

---


Originally, the set included treatises also on Isaac and Jacob (see los. 1), which are now lost. Most assign these treatises to the "history" portion of the creation-history-legislation triad of Praem. 1 (e.g., Peder Borgen, "Philo," 237). Some, however, assign them to the legislative portion, based on Philo's claim that the patriarchs themselves represent unwritten counterparts to the written laws he begins to consider in De decalogo (see Abr. 3). The historical portion, in this configuration, consists of Philo's Allegorical Commentary, a separate series of treatises covering most of Genesis (on which see Borgen, "Philo," 243-44; Morris, "Philo," 830-40). Valentin Nikiprowetzky, for one, holds this view: see PAPM 23, 13, and Commentaire, 234-35, n. 17. But if the correlation of Praem. 1 and Mos. 2.46-47 is correct, the legislative portion mentioned in Praem. 1 corresponds explicitly to "commands and prohibitions" in Mos. 2.46 and cannot reasonably include the lives of the patriarchs. For other problems with this view, see Cohn, "Einteilung und Chronologie," 406, n. 23; cf. Morris, "Philo," 845-46, n. 134.

Another treatise, De praemis et poenis, immediately follows Virt. and concludes the Exposition. In Praem. 2-3, Philo states that he has fully discussed (i.e., finished) the legislative section in the preceding treatises and is moving on to a new topic: "the rewards and punishments which the good and the bad have respectively to expect." De praemis et poenis thus forms a fitting conclusion to the Exposition, insofar as the stipulated rewards and punishments are contingent on observance of the laws. But it does not form part of the legislative section proper, because it does not deal with the laws themselves. Philo's treatise on Moses, De vita Mosis 1-2, is closely connected with, but not part of, the Exposition (see Erwin R. Goodenough, "Philo's Exposition of the Law and His De Vita Mosis," HTR 26 [1933]: 109-25).
remainder of *De specialibus legibus* (4.133-238) and *De virtutibus*. In both parts, Philo cites laws then analyzes them, noting mostly their literal bearing on practical and ethical matters. But the real commentary on Mosaic legislation in Philo’s Exposition is the first part (*Decal. 1.1 – Spec. 4.132*), which he frames as a unified, systematic, and comprehensive exposition of Mosaic commands and prohibitions, using an organizational scheme based entirely on the Ten Commandments.

For Philo, the Ten Commandments are absolutely preeminent, and *their* arrangement and content determine the overall arrangement and content of his legal commentary in *Decal. 1.1 – Spec. 4.132*. To establish their importance,

---

9 Philo makes an obvious, explicit transition from one major topic to another in Spec. 4.132-34. For division of the same material into the same two parts, see points B and C on Peder Borgen’s outline of the Exposition (“Philosopher or Editor?,” 118).

10 In *Decal. 1.1* Philo announces that his investigation of the written laws will not neglect allegorical interpretations, when they are warranted, and indeed it does not (e.g., Spec. 2.29-32). Nevertheless, Philo’s legal commentary tends to avoid allegory, in some instances offering only a literal treatment of laws read allegorically in the Allegorical Commentary (see Colson, PLCL 7, xiii, n. c, and Isaak Heinemann, PCH 2, 4, n. 1, for examples, such as Ebr. 14-95 vs. Spec. 2.232 on Deut 21:18-21). Samuel Sandmel (“Philo Judaeus: An Introduction to the Man, his Writings, and his Significance,” ANRW 21.1:3-46, 10) thus goes too far in saying: “The treatises in [the ‘Exposition of the Law’] are no less allegorical than those in the ‘Allegory of the Law.’”

11 Praem. 2 suggests that part one (*Decal. 1.1 – Spec. 4.132*) represents, from Philo’s perspective, the Pentateuch’s “legislative part” proper (thus Borgen, “Philosopher or Editor?,” 132-33; cf. Borgen, “Philo,” 239-40). Part two (Spec. 4.133-238 and Virt.) has a different organizational scheme (categorization by virtues, not Commandments [see Spec. 4.133-35]) and is secondary to part one in terms of both length and design. Part one is roughly three times as large (ca. 277 vs. ca. 95 pages in PCW); but, more importantly, part one represents Philo’s principal effort to organize all Mosaic precepts into a single logical system (on which see esp. Yehoshua Amir, “The Decalogue According to Philo,” in *The Ten Commandments in History and Tradition* [ed. B.-Z. Segal and G. Levi; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1990], 121-60, 128-30; idem, “Philon und die jüdische Wirklichkeit seiner Zeit,” in *Die hellenistische Gestalt des Judentums bei Philon von Alexandrien* [FJCD 5; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1983], 3-51, esp. 42-44 (="Das System der Gebote"). In this respect, part two serves as a catchall, accommodating laws that do not fit neatly into Philo’s primary scheme (see Amir, “Decalogue,” 127; Morris, “Philo,” 851).

Philo begins his systematic study of Mosaic legislation with a distinction between two categories of law:

I will proceed to describe the laws (τούς νόμους) themselves in order, with this necessary statement by way of introduction, that some of them (οὗς μὲν) God judged fit to deliver in His own person alone without employing any other, and some (οὗς δὲ) through His prophet Moses whom He chose as of all men the best suited to be the revealer of verities. Now we find that those which He gave in His own person and by His own mouth alone are both laws and heads summarizing the particular laws (συμβεβηκε καὶ νόμους . . . καὶ νόμων τὸν ἐν μέρει κεφάλαιον), but those in which He spoke through the prophet all belong to the former class. (Decal. 18-19)

Two key traits set the Ten Commandments apart. First, God delivered them personally to the Israelites without a human mediator. Second, each of the Ten Commandments has a unique dual significance: like any law, it stands on its own


13 Substituting "are" (συμβεβηκε) for Colson's "include," which does not properly emphasize the dual nature of each Commandment. Cf. Nikiprowetzky, PAPM 23 ("sont non seulement des lois, mais aussi des principes qui commandent le détail des lois particulières"); Treitel, PCH 1 ("sind zugleich Gesetze und Grundprinzipien"); Francesca Calabi, Filone di Alessandria, De Decalogo (Philosophica 24; Pisa: ETS, 2005) ("sono leggi e principi delle leggi particolari").

14 Cf. Spec. 2.189. Philo rejects an anthropomorphic concept of God speaking to the Israelites, developing instead the notion of a miraculous "divine voice" created especially for the occasion (Decal. 32-35; for analysis see Amir, "Decalogue," 135-48; also Reinhard Weber, Das"Gesetz" bei Philon von Alexandrien und Flavius Josephus: Studien zum Verständnis und zur Funktion der Thora bei den beiden Hauptzeugen des hellenistischen Judentums (ARGU 11; Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 2001), 68-77.
as a distinct ethical imperative; but it also functions as the "head" (κεφάλαιον) or "summary" of an entire category of particular laws (νόμου τῶν ἐν μέρει).

In Philo's view, God delivered each of the Ten Commandments "in the form of a summary," stating succinctly what Moses spells out at length by means of additional laws found elsewhere in the Pentateuch. These other laws form a distinct set of subsidiary precepts, which—despite their individual variety—all express in some way the moral essence of their respective summary Commandment. To characterize this unique relationship of particular law(s) to summary Commandment, Philo uses a variety of terms and expressions. In terms of status, the particular laws are all subordinate to their respective "heads," as Philo's use of ὑπό ("under") and related compounds clearly indicates. In terms of function, they all "refer to" (ἀναφέρεσθαι; ἀναφορὰν λαμβάνειν) a

---

15 Cf. Decal. 154: "[W]e must not forget that the Ten Words (οἱ δέκα λόγοι) are summaries of the special laws (κεφάλαια νόμων εἰσὶ τῶν ἐν εἰδεί) which are recorded in the Sacred Books and run through the whole of the legislation" (substituting "Words" [λόγοι] for Colson's "Covenants"). Thus the title of De decalogo in Greek MSS (G, F, H): περὶ τῶν δέκα λογίων, οἱ κεφάλαια νόμων εἰσίν (MSS: λογίων, PCW: λόγων; PCW & G: οἱ, F & H:α). On κεφάλαια, see Termini, "Taxonomy," 5-6.

16 κεφαλαίωδες τύπος (Spec. 4.78; also Decal. 168). Cf. Gaius 178-79: "We determined to give Gaius a document, presenting in a summarized form (κεφαλαίωδη τύπον) the story of our sufferings and our claims. This document was practically an epitome (ἐπιτομή) of a longer supplication which we had sent to him a short time before through the hands of King Agrippa."

17 Decal. 175: "For it was in accordance with His nature that the pronouncements in which the special laws were summed up (κεφάλαια μὲν τῶν ἐν ἑαυτῷ νόμων) should be given by Him in His own person, but the particular laws (νόμους δὲ τοὺς ἐν τῷ μέρει) by the mouth of the most perfect of the prophets whom He selected for his merits and having filled him with the divine spirit, chose him to be the interpreter of His sacred utterances." Cf. Cong. 120, where these ten are "general heads (γενικὰ κεφάλαια), embracing the vast multitude of particular laws (τῶν κατὰ μέρος ἀπείρων νόμων), the roots (ῥίζαι), the sources (ἀρχαι), the perennial fountains of ordinances (πηγαὶ ἄξιοι διαταγμάτων) containing commandments positive and prohibitive (προστάξεις καὶ ἀπαγορεύσεις περιεχόντων) for the profit of those who follow them."

18 For the particular laws as simply "under" (ὑπό) their respective heads, see Decal. 170; as "arranged under" (ὑποτάσσεσθαι), see Decal. 168, 171; as "falling under" (ὑποστίπτειν), see Decal. 174 (ὑποστέλλειν essentially = ὑποστίπτειν in Decal. 157, Spec. 4.1, and Spec. 4.132).
single summary command, serving or promoting its moral purpose in some way. But in abstract terms, Philo envisions the relationship between summary Commandment and particular law(s) as that of genus to species.

The treatises *De decalogo* and *De specialibus legibus* represent, at least in part, Philo’s painstaking and systematic attempt to illustrate this genus-species relationship. His treatise on the Ten Commandments deals with the ten genera, expounding each of the Commandments in sequence (*Decal. 50-153*) and introducing the idea of their summary function (*Decal. 154-75*). His treatise on the particular laws (*Spec.*) again expounds the ten genera, in even greater depth, but goes on to identify and comment on their respective species. The Pentateuch itself never uses a genus-species taxonomy to organize precepts into a coherent system, so Philo must construct the system himself. In other words, Philo must match species with genera, indicating which laws belong with which of the Ten

---

19 E.g., *Spec. 2.223*: “I have now completed the discussion of the number seven [i.e., the fourth "head"] (cf. *Spec. 2.39*) and of matters connected with days and months and years that have reference to that number (τῶν εἰς αὐτὴν ἀναφερομένων).” *Spec. 2.242*: “I have gone through the five heads of laws (κεφάλαια νόμων) that belong to the first table, along with whatever particular laws have reference to each of them (ὅσα τῶν κατὰ μέρος εἰς ἐκατον ἐλάμβανε τὴν ἀναφοράν)” (my translation). Cf. *Leg. 2.102*: “This is practically the summation (τὸ κεφάλαιον) of the whole Song [of Moses], to which every other part refers (ἐφ’ ὅ τὰ ἄλλα πάντα ἀναφέρεται)” (my translation). In *Hist. eccl. 2.18.5*, Eusebius refers to *De specialibus legibus* as Περὶ τῶν ἀναφερομένων ἐν εἰδεί νόμων εἰς τὰ συντείνοντα κεφάλαια τῶν δέκα λόγων α β γ δ.

20 The δέκα λόγοι are τά . . . γένη τῶν ἐν εἰδεί νόμων (*Spec. 1.1; Spec. 3.125*: τά γένη τῶν ἐν εἰδεί νόμων) and thus "generic" (*Cong. 120*: γενικά κεφάλαια; *Her. 167*: τῶν γενικῶν δέκα νόμων; *Her. 173*: γενικοί . . . κανόνες). On this as a *legal* taxonomy in Philo, see esp. Jastram, *Generic Virtue*, 30-35. Jastram’s remarks situate the legal taxonomy in the context of Philo’s broader application(s) of the genus-species concept (see his chapter one, “Theory of Genus, Species, and Particular,” 10-72). See also Termini, “Taxonomy.” Termini argues that Philo’s application of a genus-species taxonomy to Mosaic legislation is radically innovative, although his interest in the systematic organization of legal materials reflects contemporary trends in Roman jurisprudence.

21 Philo first treats introductory questions such as why God delivered the Ten Commandments in the desert (§§2-17), why there were ten (§§20-31), what voice announced the Commandments (§§32-35), and why the form of address was second-person singular (§§36-43).
Commandments. When his work is finished, he leaves no doubt as to his purpose:

For if we are right in describing the main heads delivered by the voice of God as generic laws (κεφάλαια γένη νόμων), and all particular laws of which Moses was the spokesman as dependent species (εἴδη), for accurate apprehension free from confusion scientific study was needed, with the aid of which I have assigned and attached to each of the genera what was appropriate to them throughout the whole legislation (ἐκάστῳ τῶν γενῶν ἡ ἀπάσης τῆς νομοθεσίας τὰ σφόντα προσένειμα καὶ προσέφυσα). (Spec. 4.132)

The scope of Philo’s project is immense: considering each of the generic summaries in turn, he has scoured the Pentateuch in search of the corresponding specific precepts. In this respect, De specialibus legibus

---

22 Despite disagreement over the originality of Philo’s use of the Decalogue as a comprehensive taxonomic framework, consensus suggests that Philo at least did the work of matching species with genera. This consensus justifies the study of Philo’s view of the Tenth Commandment, insofar as it allows for him to decide which laws logically pertain to the Tenth Commandment, based on his understanding of that Commandment. For a minimalist position, which concedes the originality of Philo’s genus-species matching but otherwise attributes his basic taxonomy to traditional (rabbinic) Judaism, see Naomi Cohen, Philo Judaeus: His Universe of Discourse (BEATAJ 24; Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1995), 72-85, esp. 84-85. (On Philo’s understanding of the Decalogue in relation to rabbinic tradition, see esp. Hecht, "Preliminary Issues," 3-17.) For a more generous position, which sees Philo as an innovator not only in his assignment of species to genus but also in his granting of a special inclusive status to the Decalogue, see Termini, "Taxonomy." Borgen, "Philosopher or Editor?," 126, has an intermediate position, which nevertheless approximates Cohen’s: "Philo seems to develop in a more systematic fashion a notion also found in Palestinian tradition, that the Decalogue contained in nuce all the commandments of the Mosaic laws. Thus, Philo has a Jewish concept as organizing principle, but he has developed it into a broader systematic rewriting than found elsewhere in the contemporary Jewish sources."

23 Substituting "genera" (γενῶν) for Colson’s "heads." On this passage, see also Termini, "Taxonomy," 8. Cf. Spec. 3.7: "Since out of the ten oracles which God gave forth Himself without a spokesman or interpreter, we have spoken of five, namely those graven on the first table, and also of all the particular laws which had reference to these (ὅσα τῶν κατὰ μέρος συνέτεινεν εἰς ταύτα), and our present duty is to couple them with those of the second table as well as we can, I will again endeavour to fit the special laws into each of the genera (πειράσομαι πάλιν καθ’ ἐκάστον τῶν γενῶν ἐφαρμόζειν τούς ἐν εἰδεὶ νόμων)" (substituting "genera" [γενῶν] for Colson’s "heads").
complements De decalogo by presenting for each Commandment subsidiary laws that reflect its moral essence.\textsuperscript{24}

Although the scope of Philo's project involves all of the Ten Commandments, his procedure makes it simple to extract the remarks devoted to any one of them. For the most part, he follows a rigid ten-point outline in both Decal. and Spec., introducing each Commandment, saying what he wants to say, then moving on to the next.\textsuperscript{25} As a result, both treatises have an embedded series of self-contained units, each with its own topic and structure, each dealing essentially with one of the Ten Commandments. Correlating the text unit devoted to a particular Commandment in Decal. with the text unit devoted to the same Commandment in Spec. provides material for a more or less self-contained exposition of that Commandment.\textsuperscript{26} Each exposition includes Philo's analysis of the Commandment itself (the genus), plus his treatment of the subordinate laws (the species).

\textbf{PHILO'S EXPOSITION OF THE TENTH COMMANDMENT}

Naturally, the last exposition embedded in Decal. and Spec. deals with the Tenth Commandment, which in Philo's Decalogue is the two-word prohibition \textit{οὐκ}...
Philosophy abbreviates the Septuagint version, which lists various aims of desire: a neighbor's wife, house, field, etc. Although he never explains or justifies this abbreviation, it makes good sense in light of his overall treatment of the Ten Commandments, especially the last five, which he views as a pentad containing basic prohibitions governing human affairs. Superficially, the abbreviation accomplishes a stylistic leveling, bringing the Tenth Commandment into line with the four other basic prohibitions: oú μοιχεύσεις, oú κλέψεις, oú ψοφεύσεις, and oú ψευδομαρτυρήσεις—the last of which is itself an abbreviation of the Ninth Commandment. More importantly, however, a specific formulation of the Tenth Commandment would contradict Philo's claim that the Commandments are comprehensive, generic summaries—or, as with oúκ ἐπιθυμήσεις, generic prohibitions. In his system of thought, limiting the scope of the Tenth Commandment to specific objects would blur the distinction between genus and species. Rather than a summary, the Commandment would read more like a short list of "particular laws." Philo does consider various objects of

---

27 See above, n. 4.
29 Decal. 121: ἀπαγορεύσεις τῶν πρὸς ἀνθρώπους. In Philo's view, these five prohibitions are comprehensive: "These are general rules forbidding practically all sins (οὗτοι γενικοὶ σχεδὸν πάντων ἁμαρτημάτων εἰσὶ κανόνες), and to them the specific sins may in each case be referred (ἐφ’ οὓς ἐκαστὸν ἀναφέρεσθαι τῶν ἐν εἰδεῖ συμβεβηκέναι)" (Her 173). For the division of the Ten Commandments into pentads, see esp. Decal. 50-51 (also Her. 168).
31 Although the LXX version does include a general prohibition of ἀσά τῷ πλησίον σου ἔστιν, it never loses the fundamental specification τοῦ πλησίον σου. In its full LXX formulation,
desire in his exposition, but only as concrete illustrations of the nature and function of desire itself, not restrictions on the Commandment’s proscriptive range of objects.32

In its entirety, Philo’s commentary on the Tenth Commandment consists of three text units: Decal. 142-53, Decal. 173-74, and Spec. 4.78b-131. The first of these units, Decal. 142-53, is the last installment in Philo’s initial survey of the Ten Commandments (Decal. 50-153). Focusing on what the prohibition entails, this unit contains a sketch of the nature, mechanics, and potentially disastrous effects of desire, framed initially (§§142-46) as a review of the four cardinal πάθη: pleasure (ηδονή), grief (λυπη), fear (φόβος), and desire (ἐπιθυμία).33 The

---

32 For example, in Spec 4.86-91 Philo wants to illustrate how desire "produces a change for the worse in all which it attacks" (§86) by listing various aims of desire and the respective vices associated with those aims. The aims are all quite general: "money" (χρηματική), "reputation" (δόξα), "power" (δύναμις), "physical beauty" (σωμάτως κάλλος), "the tongue" (γλῶττα) (i.e., desire to speak or keep silent), "the belly" (γαστήρ) (i.e., desire for food and drink).

second unit, *Decal*. 173-74, briefly restates the pervasive ill effects of desire, then previews *De specialibus legibus* by noting the existence of "many ordinances which come under this head," without identifying any of those ordinances. The third unit, *Spec*. 4.78b-131 contains Philo's most comprehensive and sustained treatment of the Tenth Commandment and represents the exposition proper. 34 Again he covers the nature, mechanics, and effects of desire, as in the first unit, but in much greater depth (*Spec*. 4.78b-94). Then, in fulfillment of his overarching program for *Decal*. and *Spec*., Philo cites and expounds the Mosaic dietary laws, which in his view are the "particular laws" that belong under the heading ὁ οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις (*Spec*. 4.95-131). Together these three units amount to 374 lines of Greek text in *PCW*, and the exposition proper amounts to 301 lines, all devoted to Philo's understanding of the Tenth Commandment. In sheer quantity, Philo's
exposition of ὁκ ἐπιθυμήσεις stands on a par with some of his independent treatises—for example, De gigantibus (320 lines in PCW) and De sobrietate (353 lines in PCW). The importance of this exposition, however, lies in the material itself, first in its own right but also in its relation to other first-century treatments of the Tenth Commandment and key topics in Philo's ethical theory.

THE VALUE OF PHILO'S EXPOSITION

As a substantive, detailed analysis of the Tenth Commandment from arguably the best representative of Hellenistic Judaism in antiquity, Philo's exposition of ὁκ ἐπιθυμήσεις deserves a full and independent analysis. In his exposition, he considers in depth both the Commandment itself and the dietary laws that in his mind reflect its moral essence, so a careful reading should answer two fundamental questions:

1. In Philo's view, what does the Tenth Commandment prohibit? (All desire? A certain type? What type?)

2. In Philo's view, how is the Tenth Commandment observed? (What are the mechanics of its observance? What role do the dietary laws play in its observance?)

Answering these two questions also illuminates broader questions regarding Philo's unique fusion of Judaism and Hellenism. For example, how does a first-century Jew, who is fully committed to the literal observance of the Law of Moses, who is also an accomplished student of Greek philosophy, interpret the

35 See Migr. 89-93, esp. 93: "Nay, we should look on all these outward observances as resembling the body (σῶματι), and their inner meanings as resembling the soul (ψυχῇ). It follows that, exactly as we have to take thought for the body, because it is the abode of the soul, so we must pay heed to the letter of the laws (τῶν ῥητῶν νόμων ἐπιμελητέον). If we keep and observe these, we shall gain a clearer conception of those things of which these are the symbols; and
significance of the Decalogue's prohibition of desire (ἐπιθυμία), a function of the soul that Greek philosophers studied at length? How does an obscure set of dietary regulations, which placed observant Jews at odds with the broader culture, become the centerpiece of Moses' philosophical training program for the management of desire? Philo's exposition speaks to these and other issues.

But Philo's work is important also for the comparative assessment of a broader first-century interest in the Tenth Commandment, attested by two of Philo's contemporaries, Paul and the author of 4 Maccabees. Both authors, like Philo, cite Greek versions of the Tenth Commandment and contemplate its moral significance. A full appreciation of the similarities and differences among these three treatments of the Tenth Commandment, as well as their relation to broader besides that we shall not incur the censure of the many and the charges they are sure to bring against us."


37 See Romans 7:7-25 and 4 Maccabees 2:4-6. The exact dates of the relevant texts cannot be determined, but their relative chronology can. The absolute terminus ad quem for Philo's exposition is his death, which by general consensus is hardly later than A.D. 50 (Peder Borgen, "Philo of Alexandria," ABD 5:333-42, 333). Paul's letter to the Romans probably was written between A.D. 55 and 60 (Joseph Fitzmyer, Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary [AB 33; New York: Doubleday, 1993], 85-88). 4 Maccabees probably was written near the end of the first century A.D. (Hans-Josef Klauck, 4. Makkabäerbuch [JSHRZ 3.1; Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1989], 668-69).

38 Paul's version, like Philo's, is οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις (Rom 7:7; cf. Rom 13:9). 4 Macc has an expanded, more specific version, οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις τὴν γυναίκα τοῦ πλησίον σου οὔτε ὅσα τῷ πλησίον οὐ̄ έστιν (2:5), but the context suggests that a comprehensive scope is understood (NB πάσης ἐπιθυμίας in 2:4; and esp. μὴ ἐπιθυμεῖν εἰρήκεν ἡμᾶς ὁ νόμος in 2:6).
trends in biblical exegesis and ethical reflection, is impossible without a proper understanding of Philo's work—which is by far the most elaborate of the three.  

Finally, a comprehensive investigation of Philo’s exposition of the Tenth Commandment promises a better understanding of key topics in Philo’s ethical theory, which can in turn illuminate broader trends in Middle-Platonic ethical theory.  

For example, Philo grounds his exposition in theoretical overviews of the πάθη, using a variety of technical terms and concepts.  

Clearly, he intends to establish at first a working model of έπειθυμία as πάθος and then apply it to his discussion of the prohibition οὐκ έπειθυμήσης. Because Philo is a Middle Platonist, his exposition offers valuable insight into the elements of a Middle-Platonic theory of the “passions,” insofar as it deals with passionate desire.  

---


42 Simply put, Philo’s exposition reflects a Middle-Platonic theory of the passions, insofar as it combines a fundamentally Platonic psychology (esp. *Spec.* 4.92-94) with Stoic technical
concept of self-control (ἐγκράτεια) also bears directly on Philo's understanding of the Tenth Commandment.⁴³ When he begins his survey of the "particular laws," species of the genus οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις, Philo cites the law of first fruits (Exod 23:19; Deut 18:4), which in his view exists "for the practice of self-control" (πρὸς ἀσκησιν . . . ἐγκρατεῖας).⁴⁴ This phrase suggests not only the importance of ἐγκράτεια, but also the relevance of another ethical concept, ἀσκησις—specifically, how Mosaic laws regarding food and drink function as practice in the cultivation of self-control.⁴⁵ Understanding Philo’s exposition involves the clarification of these and other topics.


⁴⁴ Spec. 4.99. Philo twice lists ἐγκράτεια as one of many different kinds of ἀσκησις (Her. 253, Leg. 3.18). Pierre Hadot uses Philo’s two lists as a basis for his discussion of different "spiritual" exercises in antiquity, by which he means exercises of Greco-Roman philosophers pertaining to the soul, not exercises practiced in a religious setting (Pierre Hadot, "Spiritual Exercises," in Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault [ed. w/intro. Arnold Davidson; trans. Michael Case; Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 1995], 81-125, 84).

⁴⁵ In regard to Philo’s usage, the term ἀσκησις has little to do with modern terms such as "ascetic" or "asceticism," whose connotations derive mostly from Christian monasticism. The Greek term has no intrinsic association with religious practice (see Hermigild Dressler, The Use
Even an introductory survey of the nature and content of Philo’s exposition of the Tenth Commandment commends it to further study. Moreover, Philo facilitates such study by neatly packaging his material: the structural layout of his broader Exposition of the Law makes his exposition of οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις a complete text in and of itself. Earlier studies of Philo have touched on this text in a variety of ways, from a variety of perspectives, with a variety of results.

**HISTORY OF RESEARCH**

Had Philo chosen to publish his exposition of the Tenth commandment as an independent work, it surely by now would have received more attention. But to date there is no comprehensive study of this important treatise, one that deals exclusively with Philo’s view of the Tenth Commandment in light of *his* interests, *his* agenda, *his* organization of the material, and *his* understanding of the relevant topics—one that clearly and adequately answers the two basic questions of *what* the Commandment prohibits and *how* someone observes the Commandment. Translators of the units *Decal.* 142-53, 173-74 and *Spec.* 4.78b-131 offer general remarks on Philo’s interpretation of οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις, along with commentary on specific passages, but the scope of their work is too broad and too sketchy to treat those units—especially the exposition proper—in sufficient depth. Similarly, a number of works whose aims lie elsewhere offer...
incidental, often helpful, remarks on Philo's Tenth Commandment, but never in an effort to explain his view in full. In fact, only two works offer sustained treatments of the Tenth Commandment in Philo, and neither satisfies the need for a comprehensive study.

Harry A. Wolfson

In an extensive work on Philo, Harry Wolfson devotes part of a chapter on ethics to a study of the Tenth Commandment. The title of his brief analysis, "The Virtue of the Control of Desire," reflects a broader aim on Wolfson's part to explore the relationship between law and virtue, in particular where and how Philo's understanding of Mosaic law incorporates terms and concepts derived from Greek ethical theory (and/or Jewish tradition). He does not intend to


49 Before his discussion of the Tenth Commandment, Wolfson deals with the topics "'Under the Law' and 'In Accordance with Nature'" (165-200) and "Commandments and Virtues" (200-225). Topics in "The Virtue of the Control of Desire," listed in the table of contents as subheadings, are: "Control of actions and control of emotions, 225.—The treatment of the tenth commandment as dealing with the control of the pure emotion of desire in native Jewish tradition.
provide a comprehensive analysis of the contents of Philo's exposition. Instead, as part of a sweeping effort to reconstruct Philo's system of thought, he considers the significance within that system of a moral imperative aimed not at action(s) but at "pure emotion." Although limited, Wolfson's treatment nevertheless includes substantive claims about Philo's interpretation of οὐκ ἔπιθυμήσεις.

Wolfson's most valuable contribution comes at the end of his analysis, where he recognizes the central importance of ἔγκρατεια in Philo's overall understanding of the Tenth Commandment. In particular, he recognizes that "[t]he negative tenth commandment is . . . a command to control one's desire." In other words, the negative prohibition implies a positive command to cultivate the virtue of ἔγκρατεια, which—as Wolfson notes—is "the positive term . . . by which the control of excessive desire is to be described." But because his interests lie elsewhere, he only considers that this is true, not how this is true. He never answers the basic question of how someone observes the Tenth Commandment or how it in fact promotes ἔγκρατεια. Wolfson also realizes that, for Philo, other Mosaic laws work along with the Tenth Commandment to

and in Philo, 226.—Philo's diatribe against the emotions and the rabbis' diatribes against the evil yetzer, 229.—Similarity and difference between Philo on the one hand and Aristotle and the Stoics on the other in their treatment of the emotion of desire, 231.—'Continence' as the virtue opposed to the vice of 'desire,' 235."
50 Wolfson, Philo, 2:225.
51 Stanley Stowers (e.g., "Paul and Self Mastery," 532) similarly notes the importance of ἔγκρατεια for Philo's understanding of the Tenth Commandment.
52 Wolfson, Philo, 2:235.
53 Wolfson, Philo, 2:235.
promote ἑγκράτεια. But he never mentions the dietary laws, let alone explain how—in Philo's view—they pertain to οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις. In this respect Wolfson's treatment, even where it does correctly characterize Philo's view of the Tenth Commandment, remains sketchy.

Although valuable for its emphasis on ἑγκράτεια, Wolfson's study misconstrues Philo's view of what the Commandment prohibits. He makes the unfounded assumption that Philo, with the Septuagint version in mind, understands the Tenth Commandment to be a prohibition only of desire for what belongs to another person. Wolfson does not acknowledge the generalizing effect of Philo's abbreviated οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις, choosing instead to retain the Septuagint version's specification "of your neighbor" (τοῦ πλησίον σου). He admits that this specification does not appear in Philo's commentary but assumes it nevertheless:

Though Philo speaks of desire in general, that is, of a desire for what we have not, and not of a desire for that which belongs to somebody else, still his discussion, in so far as it is a commentary upon the commandment, implies that the desire of which he speaks is that desire which the commandment explicitly describes as a desire for that which belongs to another person. (Wolfson, Philo, 2:228)

---

54 "It is the virtue of 'continence' . . . that is taught by the tenth commandment as well as by all those special laws of which the purpose, as seen by [Philo], is to teach the control of desire" (Wolfson, Philo, 2:236).
55 Wolfson, Philo, 2:228-29.
56 Wolfson takes this in its most general sense of ὅσα τῷ πλησίον σοι ἐστίν, as the LXX version stipulates. He cites and disagrees with Colson, whose assessment is correct: "The words 'thy neighbour's,' which are repeated so emphatically in the tenth commandment, as we have it and Philo also had it in the LXX, receive little attention from him" (PLCL 8, x).
57 Also 2:229: "It is exactly the latter kind of desire, the desire for that which belongs to somebody else, that the tenth commandment as a law, and not a mere moral maxim, legally prohibits, according to Philo . . ." Ibid.: "In his discussion of the legal prohibition not to desire that which belongs to one's neighbor, a prohibition, as we have said, of a mere desire for that which belongs to one's neighbor."
The only evidence Wolfson offers in support of this view involves Philo's first
eexample of an object of desire, namely money ($\chi\rho\iota\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$).58 He argues that,
although Philo does not specify the money's source:

> the subsequent statement that a desire for money leads to robbery and
> purse-cutting and house-breaking makes it quite evident that the desire for
> money spoken of was not a desire for money in general but rather for the
> money in the pocket or the purse or the house of one particular person.

(Wolfson, *Philo*, 2:228)

But Wolfson fails to cite the entire passage, which goes on to associate the
desire for money also with, for example, receiving bribes ($\delta\omega\rho\odot\delta\kappa\iota\alpha\zeta$), which
clearly involves greed per se and not desire for the money "of one particular
person." Moreover, the other examples of desiderata on Philo's list, none of
which Wolfson mentions, hardly make sense when construed strictly as
belonging to another person. This is especially true in the case of desires for food
and drink, which are, for Philo, governed by the Tenth Commandment's particular
laws.59

Wolfson's study suffers also from an outdated conception of Philo's
relationship to Greek philosophy. As he investigates select details of Philo's
"homily on the evils of desire," Wolfson considers Philo an eclectic who adopts
any number of different philosophical positions ad hoc. Wolfson suggests that in
most of his analysis of $\epsilon\pi\iota\theta\upsilon\mu\iota\alpha$ Philo chooses a Stoic position, but "[w]henever

58 *Spec* 4.87: "If the desire is directed to money it makes men thieves and cut-purses,
footpads, burglars, guilty of defaulting to their creditors, repudiating deposits, receiving bribes,
robbing temples and of all similar actions."

59 On Philo's association of the Tenth Commandment with dietary laws, Amir notes: "This
association of ideas is possible only if the Commandment is shorn of its concluding words,
'anything that is your neighbor's'. For after all, kashrut has nothing to do with issues of ownership,
of 'mine and thine'. An animal is not forbidden as food because it is stolen goods" ("Decalogue,"
159).
forced by certain native Jewish presuppositions, he departs from the Stoics and follows some other philosopher or presents a new view of his own."\(^{60}\) Wolfson is correct, generally speaking, when he matches various terms and concepts in Philo's commentary with the same terms and concepts in sources known to be, for example, Stoic.\(^ {61}\) But he gives the misleading impression that Philo freely vacillates from one philosophical \textit{opinion} to another, with no underlying commitment to one philosophical \textit{orientation} over another. Philo's "eclectic" philosophical mix is instead best understood as a reflection of his Middle Platonism; but without this insight Wolfson's study cannot provide an adequate understanding of Philo's philosophical perspective.\(^ {62}\)

In sum, Wolfson offers a substantial discussion of the Tenth Commandment in Philo, but one whose breadth and depth are severely limited due to the relatively minor role it plays within a much larger and more broadly oriented work. His answer to the question of \textit{what}, in Philo's view, the Tenth Commandment prohibits is incorrect, since he limits the scope of \(\varepsilon\pi\nu\theta\upsilon\mu\iota\alpha\) to

\(^{60}\) Wolfson, \textit{Philo}, 2:231. Wolfson initially emphasizes Stoic provenance: e.g., 2:230: "It is the Stoics . . . whom Philo follows here in the external formulation of his views." . . . "He similarly follows the Stoics . . . ."

\(^{61}\) E.g., Wolfson cites \textit{SVF} for definitions of emotion comparable to \textit{Spec.} 4.79, but he fails to note the significance of the non-Stoic \(\delta\iota\varepsilon\rho\omicron\omicron\zeta\) in Philo's definition (see above, n. 42).

\(^{62}\) Cf. Dillon, \textit{Middle Platonists}, 182: "My chief thesis (as against such an authority as H.A. Wolfson, for example) is that Philo was not so much constructing for himself an eclectic synthesis of all Greek philosophy, from the Presocratics to Posidonius, as essentially adapting contemporary Alexandrian Platonism, which was itself heavily influenced by Stoicism and Pythagoreanism, to his own exegetical purposes." For a fuller, yet still concise, statement of this position, in which Dillon rejects the misconceptions of (1) Philo as an "eclectic" who (2) merely uses philosophical \textit{language} to serve exegetical aims, see his preface to \textit{Philo of Alexandria}: The Contemplative Life, The Giants, and \textit{Selections} (trans. and intro. David Winston; CWS; Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist, 1981), xii-xiii. See also David Winston's introduction (idem, 1-37), in which he accepts Philo's views as "Middle Platonist, that is, a highly Stoicized form of Platonism, streaked with Neopythagorean concerns" (3).
only desire for what belongs to another person. Nor does he answer the question of how someone observes the Tenth Commandment, although he provides the proper context for an answer—namely, the acquisition, development, and exercise of ἐγκράτεια. Finally, his comments on the nature and function of ἐπιθυμία, although helpful at times, fail to represent Philo’s relationship with Greek philosophy properly.

*Kathy L. Gaca*

In her book *The Making of Fornication*, Kathy Gaca includes a chapter on Philo that deals in part with his understanding of the abbreviated Tenth Commandment.63 While the broad scope of her work precludes an exhaustive treatment of Philo’s exposition, Gaca nevertheless presents a sustained and virtually self-contained study of Philo’s interpretation of οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις, offering summary conclusions and a bold thesis about Philo’s notion of forbidden desire.64 Taking all three of the relevant text units into account (*Decal.* 142-53, 173-74; *Spec.* 4.78b-131), she addresses not only the question of what, in Philo’s view, the Commandment prohibits, but also but also how someone observes the Commandment, including an explanation of how the dietary laws promote its

---

63 Chapter seven [=“Philo’s Reproductive City of God”] in *The Making of Fornication: Eros, Ethics, and Political Reform in Greek Philosophy and Early Christianity* (HCS 40; Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 190-217. Pages 193-99 deal directly with the Tenth Commandment.

64 See esp. her section titled “Philo’s Revolutionary Conception of Forbidden Desire” (Gaca, *Making of Fornication*, 194-204). The aim of her book is “to resolve an important philosophical and historical problem about the making of sexual morality in Western culture: Do the patristic sexual rules of second-century Christianity differ notably from the Greek philosophical sexual principles that the patristic writers used to help formulate their own? Alternatively, are these Christian rules in unison with the Greek philosophical basis that they claim to have” (1). Her interest in Philo lies mainly in his contribution to the sexual ethics of “Christian Platonism” (see 193-94, along with her study of Clement of Alexandria in 247-72).
observance. In one important general respect Gaca’s work breaks new ground and sets a worthy standard: in her consideration of Philo’s view of οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις, she takes seriously the idea that he is a Middle Platonist, consistently bearing in mind his debt to Plato and his acceptance of Platonic doctrines pertinent to an analysis of ἔπιθυμια. But in her analysis of Philo’s view, Gaca misconstrues the textual data, misreading a number of passages and failing to mention others that would readily disprove her claims. For this reason, and because her study proposes a definitive—but incorrect—account of how Philo understands the Tenth Commandment, it deserves a detailed review.

Stated in its broadest terms, Gaca’s thesis is that Philo’s explanation of the abbreviated Tenth Commandment combines two elements into one innovative “Jewish Middle Platonist notion of forbidden desire”—namely, (1) “the Hellenistic Jewish concern about the desire (ἔπιθυμια) to disobey God’s laws” and (2) “the Middle Platonist problem of excessive physical appetites (ἔπιθυμια).

---

65 Gaca does not quote Philo at length, but she does refer to passages from all three units of his exposition, indicating her awareness of the extent of his treatment. Her references take into account esp. Decal. 142, 173-174 and Spec. 4.78, 85, 87-96, 100-118.

66 On Gaca’s concept of Philo as a “Jewish Middle Platonist,” see Making of Fornication, 191, n. 2. Although her conclusions are problematic, Gaca’s approach is commendable in several respects. For example, she brings a Platonic psychological model to bear on the textual data of Philo’s exposition, relating his discussion of ἔπιθυμια to Plato’s theory that there is in the soul a distinct, non-rational source of ἔπιθυμια—i.e., ἰδιὸς ἀλλογιστῶν τε καὶ ἐπιθυμητικῶν (Resp. 439 D; NB Spec. 4.92-94 [cf. Tim. 70 D-E]). Moreover, she notes key implications of Plato’s theory, such as one’s inability to remove appetitive ἔπιθυμια entirely and the consequent importance of its moderation (e.g., Making of Fornication, 197). Gaca also understands that Philo’s Middle Platonism involves the reinvention of Stoic terms and definitions: “The Stoic definitions of the passions that Philo uses are thus like a label that at first glance looks Stoic, but the contents have changed” (201). Gaca’s understanding of exactly how Philo changes the contents is problematic, but this statement as such is correct.

67 Cf. David Runia’s review of The Making of Fornication in SPhA 17 (2005): 237-43, esp. 241-43. Runia’s summary assessment of Gaca’s study includes a caveat: “[B]ecause its method of analyzing and interpreting texts is flawed, it is to be used with caution” (243).
for the pleasures of food, drink, and especially sexual activity, contrary to
reason's judicious sense of moderation." What this means is that Philo follows a
broader exegetical trend within Hellenistic Judaism to treat the Tenth
Commandment as an abbreviated, two-word prohibition (οὐκ ἐπιθυµήσεις), but
he does not follow the standard line of interpretation, which takes the prohibition
to mean "that it is wrong or sinful even to desire to act contrary to God's will." Instead, Philo follows Plato's conviction that uncontrolled appetitive desire,
especially sexual desire, corrupts individuals and societies, and for this reason

---

68 See Gaca, Making of Fornication, 194-95. Stated differently: "He reinterprets Platonic
appetition—and sexual desire foremost—in light of the Hellenistic Jewish prohibition against the
desire (ἐπιθυµία) to disobey God's will" (197). Gaca frames her thesis as a matter of sexual
ethics: "Philo's sexual principles are part of an innovative agenda for social order that borrows
from Plato and the Pentateuch, makes sense only in relation to both, and yet represents neither
without noteworthy transformation. This is especially true for Philo's reinterpretation of the
problems Plato sees with sexual desire, which Philo presents in his take on the aphoristic version
of the Tenth Commandment: 'You will not desire' (οὐκ ἐπιθυµήσεις). In Philo's synthesis,
forbidden desire (ἐπιθυµία) in the Hellenistic Jewish sense, which signifies any inclination to defy
God's will, becomes primarily sexual in light of Plato's conviction that uncontrolled desire
(ἐπιθυµία) for sexual pleasure is the single biggest source of individual and social corruption"
(Gaca, Making of Fornication, 193).

69 Gaca, Making of Fornication, 153. See 153-54 for Gaca's idea of a "Hellenistic Jewish
variant on the Septuagint Tenth Commandment." In her discussion of Philo, Gaca speaks of "the
Hellenistic Jewish Tenth Commandment in its two more traditional forms," by which she means
(a) the LXX version itself (Exod 20:17 [=Deut 5:21]) and (b) the abbreviated version οὐκ ἐπιθυµήσεις, which omits the list of direct objects (198). She believes that Paul and Philo's
citations of οὐκ ἐπιθυµήσεις serve as evidence for a hypothetical tertium quid—namely, an
exegetical tradition that influenced these two authors. Her supposition involves first the claim that
prior to Philo, who in fact offers the earliest extant citation of οὐκ ἐπιθυµήσεις (see above, n. 37),
one or more unidentified Hellenistic Jewish exegtes chose to make an abbreviated Tenth
Commandment their object of inquiry. This is of course plausible, but the alternate supposition
that Philo himself was the first to cite and interpret οὐκ ἐπιθυµήσεις is equally plausible and less
speculative. After all, his is the most extensive extant commentary on the abbreviated version
and—contingent on unknown facts regarding the publication of his Exposition of the Law—is as
likely as any to have been the seminal work. Be that as it may, Gaca goes on to attribute a
standard line of interpretation to this already hypothetical exegetical tradition. οὐκ ἐπιθυµήσεις,
the "newer prohibition" offered by the tradition, means "that it is wrong or sinful even to desire to
act contrary to God's will" (153). Gaca's view problematically requires Philo to creatively modify a
tradition for which no evidence exists, at least in terms of an extant text that cites οὐκ ἐπιθυµήσεις,
then explicitly offers the interpretive conclusion "that it is wrong or sinful even to
desire to act contrary to God's will." (On 152 Gaca cites "a broader Hellenistic Jewish and early
Christian trend that stresses the danger of rebellious impulses very stringently": but this broader
trend—even if it did exist—does not constitute evidence for the exegetical trend that Gaca posits.)
he interprets οὐκ ἐπιθυμησεῖς as a divine injunction to control appetitive, especially sexual, desire.

This last idea, that Philo's Tenth Commandment deals especially with sexual desire, deserves careful attention, since it in effect answers the question of what the Commandment prohibits. Ultimately, this idea derives from a reasonable but false assumption on Gaca's part that Philo imports without modification a certain concept of desire found in Plato's writings—a concept she outlines in an earlier chapter of her study.70 Taken for granted, this assumption drives an almost syllogistic logic that informs much of what Gaca has to say about Philo's view of the Tenth Commandment: (a) when Plato thinks of ἐπιθυμία and its dangerous propensity for excess, he has in mind physical appetites, especially the sexual appetite; (b) when Philo thinks of the Commandment οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις, he has in mind Plato's concept of ἐπιθυμία and its dangerous propensity for excess, therefore (c) Philo has in mind physical appetites, especially the sexual appetite. A number of sweeping claims ensue:

Philo reinterprets this commandment in a Platonic spirit that is very much in keeping with "nothing in excess," as though οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις meant "you will restrain your physical appetites from becoming excessive," the sexual appetite especially. By οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις in this sense, God too teaches the Platonic doctrine that depravity is grounded primarily in the

---

70 See Gaca, Making of Fornication, 26-41, esp. 32-33. The accuracy of Gaca's reading of Plato on this point bears only secondary importance, since the question is what Philo has to say about desire in his exposition of the Tenth Commandment. Even if she has correctly understood Plato's concept of appetitive desire, this concept must not serve automatically as the interpretive lens for Philo's understanding of οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις without proof that Philo too is employing the same concept. This is especially true if Philo, as Gaca admits, is a Middle Platonist, which implies that he would have employed "Platonic" concepts that had been modified in significant respects in light of philosophical developments postdating Plato.
unrestrained sexual appetite and its progeny of vices. (Gaca, *Making of Fornication*, 196)

Or similarly:

In God's social order these iniquities would become a thing of the past, so long as the people heed the commandment ὁυκ ἐπιθυμήσεις by getting their appetitive urges under control, especially sexual desire. (Idem)\(^71\)

Gaca frames these statements carefully, avoiding the claim that ὁυκ ἐπιθυμήσεις deals *exclusively* with sexual desire. She does, after all, understand that the basic operation of Plato's ἐπιθυμητικόν involves desires also for food and drink.\(^72\) But in some instances there is no clear acknowledgement of the relevance of non-sexual desire(s) within the Commandment's purview: "Philo's Tenth Commandment is innovative as a Decalogue rule because it valorizes sexual desire as the main source of all wickedness."\(^73\) In other instances, particularly in concluding summaries of her argument, there is no indication that anything but sexual desire lies within the proscriptive range of ὁυκ ἐπιθυμήσεις:

Though Philo supports Plato's argument that uncontrolled sexual desire is the primary and most incorrigible source of all vices, he identifies the

---

71 The "iniquities" Gaca has in mind appear in *Republic* 575 B. In her view, Philo cites this passage in *Spec.* 4.87 (certainly an allusion, but Philo's χρεωκοπίαις τε καὶ παρακαταθηκῶν ἄρνήσεις has no parallel in the *Republic* passage) to illustrate "proliferating vices that he attributes to breaking his version of the Tenth Commandment" (196). But in *Spec.* 4.87, Philo explicitly considers desire directed at "money" (χρήματα), not sexual or even appetitive desire per se. Plato *does* consider χρήματα an object of appetitive desire (see *Resp.* 580 E), but Philo's inclusion of other objects of ἐπιθυμία, like "reputation" (δόξα), which Plato does *not* associate with appetitive desire, proves that ἐπιθυμία in his exposition must be conceived more broadly.

72 E.g., Plato cites thirst to illustrate the distinction between rational and appetitive elements within the soul (see *Resp.* 439 A-E; cf. 437 D: "'[S]hall we say that the desires (ἐπιθυμίων) constitute a class and that the most conspicuous members of that class are what we call thirst and hunger?' 'We shall,' said he" [trans. Paul Shorey] [unless otherwise noted, all translations of Plato's writings are from the Loeb Classical Library]).

73 Gaca, *Making of Fornication*, 198. Also: "Philo's version of ὁυκ ἐπιθυμήσεις, however, prohibits unrestrained sexual desire as the primary religious defiance and corruption in the city of God" (198).
Hellenistic Jewish notion of desiring to disobey God (ἐπιθυμία) with the Platonic sexual appetite (ἐπιθυμία). (Gaca, Making of Fornication, 297; emphasis added)\(^74\)

Gaca clearly has an answer to the question of what Philo’s Tenth Commandment prohibits. Although she ostensibly points to “excessive appetitive desire,” she in fact has appetitive sexual desire in mind.\(^75\)

But the idea that Philo’s concept of desire in his exposition is exclusively—or even primarily—sexual is incorrect, since Philo associates οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις with a generic desire involving any number of different objects, none of which looms any larger than another in the Commandment’s theoretically limitless proscriptive range.\(^76\) In fact, the idea that οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις deals with a specific desire of any type is inherently implausible, because Philo believes that the Ten

\(^74\) Cf. 216, where Philo is said to identify "the Platonic notion of sexual desire (ἐπιθυμία) with the Hellenistic Jewish concern about the inherently wrongful impulse (ἐπιθυμία) to transgress God's laws. He makes this identification most notably through his Jewish Middle Platonist explanation of the commandment against forbidden desire (οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις)” (emphasis added). Also 23: "[Plato] would have needed an interpreter to understand how the problems that he associates with uncontrolled sexual desire were written into the Tenth Commandment's real concern—sexual desire: "Philo regards Moses' dietary laws as the one sure regimen that reduces sexual desire and thereby subdues its offspring of vices" (Making of Fornication, 196).

\(^75\) This exclusive focus is confirmed by Gaca’s construal of the Mosaic dietary laws, which in her view do not ultimately regulate appetitive desires for food and drink, but instead target the Tenth Commandment’s real concern—sexual desire: "Philo regards Moses’ dietary laws as the one sure regimen that reduces sexual desire and thereby subdues its offspring of vices" (Making of Fornication, 196).

\(^76\) On this point there seems to be virtually unanimous agreement among commentators, with the exception of Gaca. For example, Colson (PLCL 7, 76, n. c): "Philo extends the meaning of the word from covetousness of what is another’s to desire in general"; Mosès (PAPM 25, 17, n.1): Philo’s version of the Tenth Commandment “n’admet pas de contenu veritable, puisque le désir est lui-même coupe de tout objet précis”; Williamson (Philo, 267): "Philo . . . extends the meaning of a desire to include its most general sense." Even Wolfson (2:228), who needlessly specifies "desire for that which belongs to another person," nevertheless acknowledges that "Philo speaks of desire in general, that is, of a desire for what we have not." On the concept of generic desire, note esp. Migr. 155: "It is this mixed multitude which takes delight not in a few species of desire only (μὴ μόνον ὀλίγοις εἴδεσιν ἐπιθυμίας χαίρων), but claims to leave out nothing at all, that it may follow after desire’s entire genus (γένος), including all its species (ὅ πάν εἴδος ἐμφέρεται)" (substituting "desire" [ἐπιθυμία] and "desire’s" [ἐπιθυμίας] for Colson’s "lusting" and "lust’s,” neither of which the context supports).
Commandments are all generic summaries. Philo's commentary consistently reflects his underlying belief in a prohibition of desire able to subsume any and all specific types. For example, in Spec. 4.80 Philo identifies this most troublesome passion simply as "desire for what we do not have" (ἕπιθυμία τῶν ἀπόντων). When Philo goes on to associate this desire with specific aims, he is merely illustrating its troublesome nature, noting that it creates savage hunger and thirst, "but not for something to fill the void in their bellies—they hunger for money, fame, power, voluptuous bodies, or any of the countless other things that seem to them enviable and worthy of struggle" (Spec. 4.82; my translation). As this list indicates, sexual desire is not foremost in Philo's mind, nor even appetitive desire per se. At most, sexual desire forms a part, but only a small part, of

77 NB Spec. 4.78b: "[L]et us go on to the last of the Ten Words (δέκα λογίων), which like each of the rest was delivered in the form of a summary (κεφαλαίων τύπῳ καθάπερ καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἐκαστὸν): 'Your shall not desire'' (my translation). Note also the following descriptions of the Ten Commandments: Cong. 120: γενικὰ κεφαλαία; Her. 167: τῶν γενικῶν δέκα νόμων; Her. 173: γενικοὶ . . . κανόνες.

78 Philo's immediate specification of "things which seem good, though they are not truly good" (οὐκ θεοκεῖν ἀγαθοῖς, πρὸς ἀλλήλων οὐκ ἄντων) mitigates the generic sense of ἐπιθυμία somewhat but still allows for most any particular "good" object (cf. the parallel passage in Decal. 146: ἐπειδὰν δὲ λαβῶν τις ἔννοιαν ἀγαθοῦ μὴ παρόντος ὀρέγηται τυχεὶν αὐτῷ). Of course, when Philo turns to the Tenth Commandment's particular laws (dietary laws) the desire for food and drink are singled out, but in a paradigmatic, not absolute, sense (see Spec. 4.96).

79 Cf. Spec. 4.86-91.

80 In fact, Gaca's proposal that ἐπιθυμία in Philo's exposition refers specifically to Platonic appetitive desire (a function of τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν) collapses with the mention in Spec. 4.82 of δόξα (cf. §88) and ἡγεμονία (cf. ἀρχή in §89)—which represent, in Plato's own reckoning, ambitions of the spirited part of the soul, τὸ θυμοειδὲς. E.g., Resp. 581 A-B: "'[D]o we not say that [τὸ θυμοειδὲς] is wholly set on predominance (τὸ κρατεῖν) and victory (νικᾶν) and good repute (εὐδοκιμεῖν)?' 'Yes indeed.' 'And might we not appropriately designate it as the ambitious part (φιλόνικον) and which it is cowed by (κατακρατήσει)?' 'Most appropriately.' (On τὸ θυμοειδὲς see John Cooper, "Plato's Theory of Human Motivation," in Reason and Emotion [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999], 118-37, esp. 130-36; repr. from HPhQ 1 [1984].) Schmidt, Anthropologie, 92-93, notes: "Als Gegenstand des Begehrens werden fast durchweg die Strebungen, die Platon von dem zweiten und dritten Sellenteil aussagt, zusammengefaßt." This conflation of τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν and τὸ θυμοειδές makes sense in light of Middle-Platonic moral psychology, which was influenced by Aristotle's concept of ἐπιθυμία and θυμός as two types of
Philo's overall concept of desire with respect to the Tenth Commandment. Not only do Philo's words fail to support the claim that ὁ λόγος ἐπιθυμήσεως targets sexual desire—they positively refute it.

Naturally, this raises the question of where and how Gaca finds textual support for her idea that the desire proscribed by Philo's Tenth Commandment is primarily sexual. She asserts that "Philo accepts Plato's theory of the irrational physical appetites as well as his position that the sexual appetite is the most domineering and recalcitrant of the lot" (emphasis added), citing Spec. 4.92-94 to support her claim.

Finally, they determined that desire must reside in the area around the navel known as the "diaphragm" (ἐπιθυμία δὲ τὸν περὶ τὸν ὁμφαλὸν καὶ τὸ καλοῦμενον διάφραγμα χῶρον). Since desire has the least to do with reason (ἡκίστα μετέχουσαν λογισμοῦ), it clearly must reside as far as possible from reason's royal domain—pratically at the outskirts. Naturally, the pasture of this most insatiable and licentious of beasts (πάντων ὀρεξίων, which both belonged to a single faculty of the soul, the ὀρεκτικόν (see P. A. Vander Waerdt: "The Peripatetic Interpretation of Plato’s Tripartite Psychology," GRBS 26 [1985]: 283-302 and "Peripatetic Soul-Division, Posidonius, and Middle Platonic Moral Psychology," GRBS 26 [1985]: 373-94; cf. Charles Kahn, "Plato's Theory of Desire," RM 41 [1987]: 77-103, 78-80).

81 The passage in Philo's exposition that pertains to sexual desire appears in Spec. 4.89: "If the object [of desire] is bodily beauty they are seducers (φθορέως), adulterers (μοιχούς), pederasts (παιδεραστῶν), cultivators of incontinence and lewdness (ἀκολασίας καὶ λαγνείας ζηλωτάς), as though these worst of evils were the best of blessings." In Decal. 168-69, Philo has in mind the very same types of immoral sexual behavior, but he is commenting on a different Commandment, the κεφάλαιον τὸ κατὰ μοιχών, "under which come many enactments against seducers (φθορέως) and pederasty (παιδεραστῶν), against dissolute living (τῶν λαγνίστερον βιούντων) and indulgence in lawless and licentious forms of intercourse (ὁμιλίας τε καὶ μίξεων ἐκνήμιος καὶ ἀκολασίας χρωμένων)." The lack of commentary on sexual matters in Philo's exposition of the Tenth Commandment is best explained by his having already dealt with such matters in his exposition of the Sixth Commandment, which governs the obviously sexual transgression of adultery. The preeminence of the Sixth Commandment, not the Tenth, in Philo's consideration of sexual ethics is correctly noted by Baudouin Decharneux, "Interdits sexuels dans l’œuvre de Philon d’Alexandrie dit ‘Le Juif,’" Religion et Tabou Sexuel (ed. Jacques Marx; PHR 1; Bruxelles: Editions de l’Université de Bruxelles, 1990), 17-31, esp. 18-25.

82 See Gaca, Making of Fornication, 195. Presumably, Spec. 4.92-94 is the textual evidence Gaca has in mind, since it is the only passage she cites in the paragraph other than Decal 173-74, which for her serves only to prove that "appetites are an unavoidable part of our human and animal nature."
Philo clearly marks in this passage the Platonic ἐπιθυμητικόν as the seat of primal drives for food and sex, but this is ultimately nothing more than an endorsement of Plato’s tripartite psychology. By itself, this passage does not prove that Philo saw οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις primarily as a restriction of sexual desire. In fact, not one of the passages Gaca cites reflects a special emphasis on sexual appetite in Philo’s exposition. She claims that he agrees with Plato that:

[t]he sexual appetite and reproductive urge, when fattened and left to their own devices, are the main root of depraved minds and social mores because they stimulate a proliferation of other passions. (Gaca, Making of Fornication, 195)

To support this claim, she cites Spec. 4.85 as follows: "Sexual eros is 'the passion at the origin of wrongdoing' (ἀρχέκακον πάθος) (Spec 4.85)." But a fuller citation shows that Gaca misreads Philo’s statement:

For the passion to which the name of originator of evil can truly be given is desire (τὸ . . . ἀρχέκακον πάθος ἐστιν ἐπιθυμία), of which one and that the smallest fruit the passion of love (ἡ ἐν τῷ βραχύτατον ἐγγονον, ἐρως) has not only once but often in the past filled the whole world with countless calamities (συμφορῶν) . . . (Spec. 4.85)

---

84 NB λόγος, θυμός, and ἐπιθυμία in Spec. 4.92. Gaca may be justified in her suggestion that Philo here endorses "Plato’s theory of the irrational physical appetites" (Gaca, Making of Fornication, 195), but Philo says nothing about "[Plato’s] position that the sexual appetite is the most domineering and recalcitrant of the lot." Gaca assumes that a reference to the Platonic ἐπιθυμητικόν mentioning its characteristic appetites proves ipso facto that Philo holds a highly sexualized concept of ἐπιθυμία throughout his exposition.
85 Gaca, Making of Fornication, 195.
The ἄρχέκακον πάθος in this passage is clearly ἐπιθυμία (desire involving any object), not "sexual eros" as Gaca states. Philo does identify ἔρως as an "offspring" (ἔγγονον) of ἐπιθυμία, but nothing in the passage requires even this word to have a sexual connotation. Gaca also misconstrues the phrase ἀπάντων πηγὴ τῶν κακῶν (Spec. 4.84), which she cites four times. The "spring of all vices" is indeed ἐπιθυμία, but in light of Spec. 4.82 (esp. ἀλλων ἄμυθήτων) it must be understood as desire involving any number of possible objects—not sexual desire, or even appetitive desire per se. Gaca first misunderstands the sense when she states that "physical appotion in general" (ἐπιθυμία) is "the origin of all wrongdoing," then she provides in each subsequent reference to Spec. 4.84 a different rendering of ἐπιθυμία:

---

86 Thus, for example, Méasson, Char allé, 154: "Philon analyse d’abord le désir en lui-même et, sans référence à aucun objet, le définit: ἄρχέκακον πάθος, «la passion qui est le principe du mal» (§ 85)" (emphasis added). Note also ἀλλων ἄμυθήτων in Spec. 4.82.
87 Spec. 4.85 in its entirety shows that the "calamities" (συμφορῶν) Philo has in mind primarily involve warfare. A parallel passage in Decal. 152-53 also mentions "calamities" (συμφορῶν) involving warfare, and their source in that passage is the desire (ἐπιθυμία) for money (χρημάτων), glory (δόξης), or pleasure (ηδονής). In general, Gaca fails to note that ἔρως in Philo’s exposition is not inherently sexual, given Philo’s association of ἔρως with a variety of objects, as in Decal. 151: "Consider the passion whether for money or a woman or glory or anything else that produces pleasure (χρημάτων ἔρως ἢ γυναικὸς ἢ δόξης ἢ τινος ἄλλου τῶν ἡδονήν ἀπεργαζομένων): are the evils which it causes small or casual?" Gaca seems to limit the scope of ἔρως, by definition, to sexual desire alone: "Uncontrolled sexual desire, or eros, is especially problematic for Philo and his predecessor Plato" (Gaca, Making of Fornication, 195).

This is surprising, since Gaca in an earlier chapter on Platonic desire emphatically notes the difference between "sexual appetite" and "Platonic eros" (see Making of Fornication, 36-69). On ἔρως in Plato, including its orientation in theory toward any object, see David M. Halperin, "Platonic Erôs and What Men Call Love," AP 5 (1985): 161-204. Gaca faults Halperin’s study for "diminishing the opposition" between eros and sexual desire (Making of Fornication, 38, n. 53), when in fact he clearly and carefully notes the difference (Halperin, "Platonic Erôs," 170-76). Her citation of Halperin, intended to prove his conflating of eros and sexual appetite for sexual pleasure, fails to take into account his explicit distinction between the terms "appetite" and "desire" (see Halperin, "Platonic Erôs," 170). For the more general notion of ἔρως in Plato, see esp. Symp. 205 D, where it is defined as ἡ τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἐπιθυμία καὶ τοῦ εὐδαιμονείν.

88 Gaca, Making of Fornication, 198.
"sexual and other appetition" is "the origin of all wrongdoing" \(^{89}\)

"innate sexual desire" is "the origin of wrongdoing" \(^{90}\)

"eros" is "the origin of wrongdoing" \(^{91}\)

The same word, \(\varepsilon \pi \tau \theta \upsilon \mu \iota \alpha\), from the same passage, receives a progressively more sexual connotation in the course of Gaca's study, without justification or explanation. Gaca can produce no clear evidence for an especially sexual connotation of \(\varepsilon \pi \tau \theta \upsilon \mu \iota \alpha\) in Philo's exposition because no such evidence exists. Moreover, the principal evidence she cites (three times) from elsewhere in Philo's corpus, \(O p i f\). 151-52, is inconclusive.\(^{92}\) Although this passage deals with sexual attraction, it has little to say about the kind of \(\varepsilon \pi \tau \theta \upsilon \mu \iota \alpha\) Philo envisions when commenting on the Tenth Commandment.\(^{93}\) In fact, this passage does not even contain the word \(\varepsilon \pi \tau \theta \upsilon \mu \iota \alpha\), contrary to Gaca's original citation:

"The irrational appetite" (\(\varepsilon \pi \tau \theta \upsilon \mu \iota \alpha\)), and the sexual appetite in particular, "is the beginning of wrongs and violations of the Law" (\(O p i f\) 151-2).\(^{94}\)

The relevant section in full reads:

And this desire begat bodily pleasure (ὁ δὲ πόθος οὗτος καὶ τὴν τῶν σωμάτων ἡδονὴν ἐγέννησεν), that pleasure which is the beginning of

---

\(^{89}\) Gaca, \textit{Making of Fornication}, 198: "Philo, however, differs dramatically from Plato by insisting that sexual and other appetite is a 'great and excessive wickedness, truly the origin of all wrongdoing' (Spec 4.84)."

\(^{90}\) Gaca, \textit{Making of Fornicataion}, 200: "For Philo, however, the 'origin of wrongdoing' and 'of violation of the Law' (Spec 4.84, \textit{Opif} 151-2) is innate sexual desire and its tendency to excessive pleasure . . . ."

\(^{91}\) Gaca, \textit{Making of Fornication}, 216: "In support of Plato's political theory, Philo formulates a distinctively Jewish Platonist position that sexual desire is the primary root of rebellion against God. As he phrases this idea, eros is the 'origin of wrongdoing' and 'of violation of the Law' (Spec 4.84, \textit{Opif} 151-2)."

\(^{92}\) See Gaca, \textit{Making of Fornication}, 198, 200, and 216.

\(^{93}\) As part of his commentary on Genesis 1-3, Philo considers the nature and consequences of sexual \(\varepsilon \rho \omega \zeta\) between Adam and Eve.

\(^{94}\) Gaca, \textit{Making of Fornication}, 198.
wrongs and violation[s] of the law (ἠτίς ἐστίν ἀδικημάτων καὶ παρανομημάτων ἀρχὴ), the pleasure for the sake of which men bring on themselves the life of mortality and wretchedness in lieu of that of immortality and bliss. (Opif. 152)\(^{95}\)

Clearly, the passage states that "bodily pleasure" (τὴν τῶν σωμάτων ήδονὴν), and not "irrational appetite" (ἐπιθυμία), is ἀδικημάτων καὶ παρανομημάτων ἀρχή.\(^{96}\) The pleasure (ἡδονὴ) mentioned here arguably involves sexual ἐπιθυμία, but the word ἐπιθυμία simply does not appear, and applying this passage to Philo's commentary on the Tenth Commandment is unwarranted. Gaca is unable, with this or any other passage, to demonstrate that Philo sees οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις mainly as a proscription of sexual desire, or that he anywhere in his exposition singles out sexual desire as especially problematic over against any other type.

Because her study misidentifies what the Commandment prohibits, its explanation of how someone observes the Commandment, particularly the role played by the dietary laws, is also incorrect. According to Gaca, and in keeping with her overall emphasis, the dietary laws for Philo ultimately target sexual

\(^{95}\) The "desire" mentioned here is πόθος, which—like ἔρως, also in Opif. 152—need not have a sexual connotation, although it clearly does in this case. Cf. Opif. 5: ἔρωτι καὶ πόθῳ αὐθιάς; Ebr. 21: πόθος ἀρετῆς; Fug. 164: πάθον ἐπιστήμης; Decal. 148: πόθῳ τοῦ πραγματήναι ταῖς ἀκοάς τὸν ήχον.

desire. Since a dangerous causal link exists between unrestrained eating and unrestrained sexual desire (which in turn causes a proliferation of other vices), dietary laws that restrict food intake restrict also sexual desire and thus limit the vicious behavior associated with sexual excess. But nowhere in Philo's discussion of the dietary laws (Spec. 4.96-131) is sexual desire mentioned, much less cited as the ultimate concern. This again calls into question Gaca's treatment of Philo's text—what does she claim to find and where. She refers to Spec. 4.96, where Philo states the rationale of the dietary laws from Moses' perspective, but she misinterprets his statement:

Moses thus "began to train and chastise the appetite centered on the belly" (Spec 4.96), because he knew God's people needed to put their "love-mad" sexual behavior on the right kind of diet (Spec 3.9-10).

According to Philo, the reason Moses focused on training the desire "whose field of activity is the belly" (τὴν περὶ γαστέρα πραγματευομένην ἐπιθυμίαν) is so that "the other forms (τὰς ἄλλας) will cease to run riot as before and will be restrained by having learnt that the senior and as it were the leader of their company (τὴν πρεσβυτάτην καὶ ὁς ἡγεμονίδα) is obedient to the laws of temperance" (Spec. 4.96). The desire for food and drink is preeminent and

---

97 "Restricting diet is an important part of taming sexual desire for both Philo and Plato. Philo regards Moses' dietary laws as the one sure regimen that reduces sexual desire and thereby subdues its offspring of vices" (Gaca, Making of Fornication, 196).

98 Gaca elsewhere makes the connection between food and sexual desire without explicitly mentioning dietary laws: "Human beings must keep their appetites under rational guard by curbing their wild sexual desire through restricting the intake of food and drink" (Making of Fornication, 195). Also: "Sexual eros on Plato's view comes into its own as a raging tyrant once surplus nutriment fuels its voracity. The combined sexual appetite and reproductive urge, when fattened and left to their own devices, are the main root of depraved minds and social mores because they stimulate a proliferation of other passions. Philo fully agrees with Plato on this matter" (idem).

99 Gaca, Making of Fornication, 196.
serves as a "paradigmatic instruction" (παραδείγματική διδασκαλία in 4.96), whose training is applicable to any other form of desire, including—but certainly neither limited nor especially pertinent to—sexual desire. Gaca omits the second half of Philo's sentence in Spec. 4.96, which contains his understanding of the rationale for training dietary desires, and substitutes a different rationale based on a passage from a different treatise, which has no direct application to Philo's discussion of the Tenth Commandment.\footnote{100 Philo's comments in Spec. 3.9-10 pertain, as he explicitly states, to the Sixth Commandment, the first in the second table (see Spec. 3.1-8).} As for prohibited animals, Gaca understands Philo to say that Moses "knew that the prohibited types of animal flesh, such as pork, are particularly laced with an aphrodisiac surplus (Spec 4.100-18)."\footnote{101 Gaca, Making of Fornication, 196. Gaca essentially considers only Philo's discussion of prohibited animals (Spec. 4.100-18), leaving out Spec. 4.119-31, a section that also treats particular laws falling under the rubric οὐκ ἐπιθυμηθαίες.} But Philo says nothing of the sort in Spec. 4.100-18. He does say that Moses prohibited animals "whose flesh is the finest and fattest, thus titillating and exciting the malignant foe pleasure (τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν ἡδονήν) . . . knowing that they set a trap for the most slavish of the senses, the taste (γεῦσιν), and produce gluttony, an evil very dangerous both to soul and body" (Spec. 4.100).\footnote{102 Presumably, this is the passage Gaca has in mind, since Philo immediately gives the example of pork in Spec. 4.101 and Gaca mentions pork explicitly when citing this passage.} Without exploring here the full import of this statement for Philo's understanding of the dietary laws, it is enough to note that the sensory pleasure involved is gustatory, not sexual.\footnote{103 In any case, the context suggests that Philo's interest is in Moses' proscriptive cultivation of self-control (NB Spec. 4.101: πρὸς . . . ἐγκράτειαν), not the avoidance of "aphrodisiac surplus." Isaak Heinemann, commenting on this passage, correctly notes this interest on Philo's part: "Nach SpL. IV 100 ff. will Moses durch seine Speisegesetze vor allem zur}
prohibition of various animals, that "by this as by the withdrawal of fuel from a fire he creates an extinguisher to desire (αβέσιν τῇς ἐπιθυμίᾳς)" (Spec. 4.118).¹⁰⁴

But this has no explicit bearing on sexual desire, unless the term ἐπιθυμίᾳ is presumed to have an especially sexual connotation in Spec. 4.96-131, which it does not. In fact, due to an overemphasis on sexual desire, Gaca overlooks the fundamental role of the dietary laws from Philo's perspective, which is to promote self-control (ἐγκρατεία)—initially with respect to desire(s) for food and drink, but ultimately with respect to desires of any type.¹⁰⁵

Despite their respective contributions, the studies of Wolfson and Gaca, along with other shorter, incidental treatments of οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις, fail to answer with sufficient depth or accuracy the fundamental interpretive questions surrounding Philo's exposition of the Tenth Commandment. As a result, this important aspect of Philo's thought remains obscure.

¹⁰⁴ Gaca, Making of Fornication, 196.

PLAN OF THE DISSERTATION

Chapters two and three of this dissertation do not deal directly with Philo's exposition of the Tenth Commandment. Instead, they offer an introductory survey of terms and concepts that Philo uses in that exposition, situating his moral psychology within the philosophical context of Middle Platonism. Chapter two treats Philo's concept of desire (ἐπιθυμία), including explanations of its source, nature, function, and problematic malfunction. Chapter three treats Philo's concept of self-control (ἐγκράτεια), including explanations of its nature, its acquisition through ἀσκησις, and its role in the proper management of desire. With this conceptual backdrop in place, Philo's exposition of οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις emerges more clearly as a thoughtful, coherent statement of his ethical theory.

Chapter four focuses directly on Philo's exposition of the Tenth Commandment, Spec. 4.78b-131, although Decal. 142-53 and 173-74 receive consideration in connection with relevant sections of the exposition proper. The goals of this chapter are to provide (1) an outline of the contents of Philo's exposition, (2) a fresh translation of the PCW text, (3) notes on select passages, and (4) commentary on each distinct unit of text.

Chapter five summarizes the results of the dissertation by providing direct and concise answers to the basic questions regarding Philo's exposition:

---

106 Without assuming or suggesting that Philo intends to write as a systematic philosopher, chapters two and three nevertheless demonstrate the existence of coherent strands of thought running throughout his exegetical works. Multiple attestation, based on a broad reading of Philo's works, confirms the reliability of these strands as accurate representations of his thought.
1. In Philo’s view, what does the Tenth Commandment prohibit? (All desire? A certain type? What type?)

2. In Philo’s view, how is the Tenth Commandment observed? (What are the mechanics of its observance? What role do the dietary laws play in its observance?)

Chapter five also suggests lines of further research based on the results of this investigation.
CHAPTER TWO
PHILO ON DESIRE (ΕΙΙΙΘΥΜΙΑ)

INTRODUCTION

Understanding Philo's exposition of όσα ἐπιθυμήσεις depends on a clear understanding of his concept of ἐπιθυμία, including its source, nature, function, and problematic malfunction. Philo's concept of ἐπιθυμία depends in turn on his broader concept of the soul, in particular his moral psychology—his understanding of how various elements of the soul's structure and function relate to questions of morality. This chapter begins with a survey of the basic moral psychology of Philo's Middle-Platonic contemporaries, especially their concept of a fundamental bipartition between rational and non-rational components within the soul and their concept of various non-rational capacities whose normal operation includes instances of ἐπιθυμία. Next comes a survey of Philo's moral psychology, with a special emphasis on the correspondence between contemporary Middle-Platonic views and his own understanding of both bipartition and the various capacities involved with ἐπιθυμία. The chapter ends with a consideration of how Philo views the malfunction of ἐπιθυμία in the soul, identifying two grades of problematic desire—passionate and tyrannical desire—analyzed in light of contemporary Middle Platonism.
As a de facto Middle Platonist, Philo reflects the views of his Middle-Platonic contemporaries, in particular Eudorus of Alexandria (fl. ca. 25 B.C.) and his associates.¹ As representatives of a movement known for its renewed interest in the doctrines of Plato, Middle Platonists naturally derived fundamental convictions from the writings of Plato himself, but to rely solely on Plato and project his views onto later Platonists without qualification ignores centuries of philosophical activity postdating Plato.² For this reason, Middle-Platonic evidence

¹ On the notion of a "de facto Middle Platonist," see above, page 15, n. 40. In the afterward to his 1996, revised edition of The Middle Platonists, John Dillon reviews his position on the relation between Philo and Eudorus: "Despite my cautionary remarks, I have been repeatedly accused (or worse, commended), for presenting Philo as a pupil of Eudorus, and as a Middle Platonist. Let me make it clear once again that I wish to make neither claim. There is no evidence that Philo had ever heard of Eudorus (though I regard it as very probable that he did). All I would claim is that Philo shows the influence of a brand of Platonism that is in many ways close to that of Eudorus, and that he constitutes good evidence for prevailing trends in contemporary Platonism." (Middle Platonists, 438-39; emphasis added). On the relation between Philo and the Alexandrian Platonism of Eudorus, see also Mauro Bonazzi, "Towards Transcendence: Philo and the Renewal of Platonism in the Early Imperial Age," in Philo of Alexandria and Post-Aristotelian Philosophy (ed. Francesca Alesse; SPhA 5; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 233-51. On Eudorus himself, see John Dillon, Middle Platonists, 115-35, 436-39; also Heinrich Dörrie, "Der Platoniker Eudorus von Alexandria," in Platonica Minor (STA 8; München: W. Fink, 1976), 297-309. For fragments of his work, see esp. Mazza.

² For example, Middle Platonists adapted Stoic technical terms, infusing them with new meaning for use within their fundamentally different system of thought, and a failure to appreciate this leads to a false impression of their incoherent adoption of the Stoic principles underlying those terms. When Eudorus expounded a dogmatic Platonism in the first century B.C. (after the Academy's skeptical phase), an elaborate lexicon of Stoic terms and definitions, with an accompanying conceptual vocabulary, had already been systematically formulated. Rather than creating de novo an alternative system, with its own terms, definitions, etc., Middle Platonists chose to revise the system at hand, creating distinctively Platonic understandings of Stoic philosophical language. This was especially true in the field of ethics (e.g., the topic of "passions" [πάθη], including ἐπιθυμία and moral psychology. On this aspect of Middle-Platonic ethics, note Dörrie, "Eudorus," 301-03 (e.g., 302: "Der Platonismus konnte hier [Ethik] nirgends aus dem Vollen schöpfen wie in der Physik und der Theologie"; 303: "Die bloße Einteilung der Ethik konnte niemanden befriedigen—jetzt galt es, den neuen platonischen Inhalt in diese alte Form zu gießen"); also Giovanni Reale, The Schools of the Imperial Age (vol. 4 of A History of Ancient Philosophy; ed. and trans. John R. Catan; Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 233: "The eclectic character of Middle Platonic ethics has frequently been emphasized, for in addition to Platonic tenets Middle Platonists saw no difficulty in accepting Aristotelian as well as
must act as a guide—confirming, supplementing, and modifying what can be otherwise known from the Platonic dialogues. And enough evidence exists to reconstruct the basic moral psychology and corresponding concept of ἐπιθυμία held by Alexandrian Middle Platonists of Philo’s day, based—in addition to the extant fragments from Eudorus himself (Mazz.)—on the following sources:

ARIUS DIDYMUS³ (b. ca. 75 B.C.): Arius was a Stoic philosopher, probably a native of Alexandria and personal acquaintance of Eudorus.⁴ He composed surveys of contemporary philosophical views, including Eudorus and certain "Platonic philosophers" (οἱ κατὰ Πλάτωνα φιλοσόφοιντες [Eclog. 38.14-15]). Information on this group of philosophers (Eclog. 37.18 – 38.15) bears special importance, since it most likely depicts contemporary Alexandrian (Middle-)Platonists, and it summarizes principal tenets of their moral psychology, providing crucial evidence for an otherwise unattested aspect of Eudoran Middle Platonism.⁵

Stoic doctrines. A great deal of evidence could be brought forward as proof of this assertion. Nevertheless, that the Middle Platonists only rarely accepted the results after Plato which are opposed to the Platonic spirit has not been adequately appreciated. In fact, in the great majority of cases they reinterpret and ground again the new results according to the Platonic spirit" (original emphasis). Cf. Inwood, Ethics and Human Action, 132: "so many of the innovators who looked back beyond Stoic monism to the psychological observations made by Plato and Aristotle continued to use the terminology of the Stoic theory in setting forth their own doctrines"; John Whitaker, "Platonic Philosophy in the Early Centuries of the Empire," ANRW 36.1: 81-123, 116: "We may in fact conclude that the Stoic element in Middle Platonism, both in the 'Didaskalikos' and elsewhere, is generally of a superficial nature and indicates rather a generous disposition toward Stoic concepts and terminology than a whole-hearted attempt to accommodate Platonism to a Stoic mould."

⁴ Hahm, "Arius Didymus," 3035-41.
⁵ Arius presents the definitions currently held by his contemporaries: οὐτος μὲν οὐν οἱ κατὰ Πλάτωνα φιλοσόφοιντες ὁρίζονται (Eclog. 38.14-15). His familiarity with one particular Middle-Platonic philosopher from first-century B.C. Alexandria (Eudorus) implies some familiarity with other "Platonic philosophers" from the same milieu (whose views he cites, presumably, in Eclog. 37.18 – 38.15). The doxographical nature of Arius’ report concerning the moral psychology of these "Platonic philosophers" suggests that the attested views were standard, which in turn suggests that these would have been the views of Eudorus. Without considering the question of Eudorus, P. A. Vander Waerdt nevertheless holds that Eclog. 37.18 – 38.15 represents good evidence for Middle Platonism (see "Moral Psychology," 378).
**Pseudo-Timaeus,** *On the Nature of the World and the Soul* [=TL]: Probably composed in the late first century B.C. or the first century A.D., this treatise arguably represents Eudoran Middle Platonism, based on its distinct profile of agreements with Eudorus on a number of points. Purportedly written by Timaeus of Locri (of Plato's *Timaeus*), in an affected Doric dialect, the treatise generally reads like an epitome of *Timaeus* 27 C – 92 C, although it offers scholastic Middle-Platonic elaborations on key topics.

**Pseudo-Metopus,** *On Virtue* [=Ps.-Metop.]: This treatise, probably composed in the first century B.C., in a Doric similar to TL, is one of many Pseudo-Pythagorean ethical writings that arguably reflect Eudoran Middle Platonism. The clearly didactic aim of *On Virtue* suggests a handbook, which in turn suggests conventional ethical doctrines.

**Plutarch** (b. ca. A.D. 45): Plutarch was a Middle Platonist who knew the works of Eudorus. Furthermore, Plutarch's teacher Ammonius was both a contemporary of Philo and a native of Alexandria. Assuming Plutarch

---


7 On the date of TL, see Tobin, *Timaios of Locri*, 3-7. On the agreements between TL and Eudorus, see Baltes, *Timaios Lokros*, 22-26. Baltes does not believe that Eudorus himself composed TL, but that the work is more likely "ein Produkt aus der Schule des Eudor" (25). Tobin notes some problems with Baltes' position (*Timaios of Locri*, 6) but nevertheless affirms the likelihood of some connection between TL and Eudorus: "One can probably say that the TL came after Eudorus and that the author of the TL was aware of his work" (7).

8 See *Pseudopythagorica Ethica*: I trattati morali di Archita, Metopo, Teage, Eurifamo (text, trans., comm., Bruno Centrone; Elenchos 17; Naples: Bibliopolis, 1990), esp. 87-94 (text), 193-216 (comm.).


11 On Plutarch as a Middle Platonist, see Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, 184-230. Plutarch cites Eudorus by name in *De animae procreatione in Timaeo* (An. procr.) 1013 B, 1019 E, and 1020 C.

12 On Ammonius see C.P. Jones, "The Teacher of Plutarch," *HSCP* 71 (1967), 205-13; also Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, 189-92. Jones suggests approximate dates for Ammonius of A.D. 20 to A.D. 70-80 ("Teacher of Plutarch," 208; cf. Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, 191: "Ammonius was probably dead by about A.D. 80"). Dillon calls Ammonius "a product of Alexandrian Platonism* (*Middle Platonists*, 190), although he taught and died in Athens. John Glucker believes, concerning Ammonius' career as a "personal teacher" (καθηγητής) and his arrival in Athens, that
did not radically depart from his teacher on basic ethical theory, his views—especially insofar as they corroborate the testimony of Arius, Ps.-Timaeus, and Ps.-Metopus—reflect standard views among Philo’s Middle-Platonic contemporaries.13

For the most part, the identification of this material with Eudorus rests on reasonable conjecture, not demonstrable fact. But in any case, this material does represent Middle-Platonic thought, as general consensus and corroborating evidence from, for example, Alcinous’ doctrinal handbook the Didaskalikos attest.14 Therefore, while the comparison of Philo to Arius Didymus, Ps.-Timaeus, Ps.-Metopus, and Plutarch probably illustrates his relation to Eudoran Middle Platonism, it certainly illustrates Philo’s relation to general trends in Middle-Platonic thought.

"IRRATIONAL" AND "NON-RATIONAL" IN MORAL PSYCHOLOGY

The most fundamental question to ask about ἓπιθυμία in Middle-Platonic moral psychology involves the Greek word ἀλογος, which has two radically

---

13 Among Plutarch’s works, De virtute morali (Virt. mor.) bears special significance, because of its summary representation of a Middle-Platonic (over against Stoic) stance on moral psychology and passion(s). Moreover, the moral psychology of Virt. mor. reflects Plutarch’s broader commitment to a fundamentally Platonic understanding of the soul, such as he collaborates in An. proc. (see Jan Opsomer, "L’âme du monde et l’ âme de l’homme chez Plutarque," in Estudios sobre Plutarco: Ideas religiosas: Actas del III Simposio Internacional sobre Plutarco, Oviedo 30 de abril a 2 de mayo de 1992 [ed. Manuela García Valdés; Madrid: Ediciones Clásicas, 1994], 33-49). Also important are five ethical treatises—De curiositate (Curios.), De cohibenda ira (Cohib. ira), De garrulitate (Garr.), De vitiioso pudore (Vit. pud.), and De laude ipsius (De laude)—that pertain directly to moral virtue, in particular the role of “practice” (ἀόρκησις) in management of the passions (see Heinz Gerd Ingenkamp, Plutarchs Schriften über die Heilung der Seele [Hypomnemata 34; Göttingen: Vandehoeck & Ruprecht, 1971]).

different meanings. On the one hand, ἀλόγος can mean "non-rational," indicating the absence of reasoning capacity. On the other hand, ἀλόγος can mean "irrational," indicating the corruption or malfunction of a reasoning capacity that nevertheless exists. In a treatise that defends a Platonic view of the passions over against the Stoic view of Chrysippus, Galen explains the distinction:

[S]ometimes the α negates the meaning of the word to which it is prefixed, and sometimes it does not. And I find the word ἀλόγον used in this way by all the ancients and by men of today. When a person says that a fish or a crab is ἀλόγον, he completely negates the meaning of the word logos; but when men criticize a particular statement of a particular person by saying that it is ἀλόγον, they do not give it this name because it has no logos, but because it is blameworthy and faulty. (PHP IV 4.13-15)\(^{15}\)

Philo understands the same distinction just as clearly:

There are two ways of understanding the absence of reason (τὸ ἀλόγον): it means either defying the dictates of logos, as when people call the senseless man "irrational" (ἀλόγον), or having no logos at all, as with the non-rational animals (ὡς τῶν ζῴων τὰ μὴ λογικά). (Sacr. 46)\(^{16}\)

Do Philo and his Middle-Platonic contemporaries see ἐπιθυμία as an "irrational" (ἀλόγος) or a "non-rational" (ἀλόγος) function of the soul? Plato himself offers the best place to begin answering this critical question.

**Platonic Foundations**

Plato believed that the human soul has three essential components: one rational (τὸ λογιστικὸν), one assertive (τὸ θυμοειδὲς),\(^{17}\) and one intensely

\(^{15}\) Trans. De Lacey (slightly modified).

\(^{16}\) My translation. In *De animalibus*, Philo argues at length that beasts are non-rational (see §§77-100), a position he consistently holds throughout his works: e.g., ζῷα ἀλογά in *Opif.* 73, *Spec.* 2.89, and *Virt.* 160; or simply ἀλογά, as in *Spec.* 1.260.

\(^{17}\) "Assertive" captures the essence of this component of the soul. Cf. John Cooper, "Human Motivation," 133-34: "the motivations that Plato classifies under the heading of spirit are
desirous (τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν). Among these three, the most antagonistic relation exists between reason and desire. In fact, Plato establishes the independence of desire from reason by noting its capacity for diametric and simultaneous opposition to reason, granting desire independent agency as a distinct source of motivation in the soul along with reason. If the ἐπιθυμητικόν exists in contradistinction to reason, it must also operate apart from reason, so Platonic
έπιθυμία is plainly “non-rational” (ἄλογος). Without rational calculation, without deliberating on the best course of action, έπιθυμία impulsively pursues pleasure (ἡδονή) as its ultimate aim (most notably via food, drink, and sex) whenever stimulated by the appropriate thought or sensory impression. Reason’s task is to manage desire, as a rational human being would manage a non-rational animal, ensuring that desire’s myopic pursuits serve, rather than subvert, the greater good, which requires the rational pursuit of the best overall course of life.

20 Resp. 439 D: ἄλογιστόν τε καὶ ἐπιθυμητικόν; Tim. 71 D: λόγου καὶ φρονήσεως οὐ μετείχε [τὸ ἐπιθυμητικὸν τῆς ψυχῆς]. For a full explanation of ἐπιθυμία as a non-rational phenomenon, see Lorenz, Brute Within, e.g. 9: "The notion of a part of the soul that is incapable of reasoning, but capable of giving rise to episodes of behaviour, even to episodes of human behaviour, sets the scene for the book’s central theme: the idea, shared by Plato and Aristotle, that while reason can, all by itself, motivate a person to act, parts or aspects of the soul other than reason are equipped with non-rational cognitive resources that are sufficient for the generation of fully formed motivating conditions." For explanations of how desire manages to operate without the capacity to reason, see esp. Lorenz, Brute Within, 55-95 [=“Belief and Appearance in Plato”] and 113-86 [=“Phantasia and Non-Rational Desire in Aristotle”], esp. 119-73; also Cooper, "Reason, Virtue, Value," esp. 255-64 [=“Non-Rational Desires”; and idem, "Some Remarks on Aristotle’s Moral Psychology," in Reason and Emotion (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 237-52, esp. 241-44; repr. from SJPh supp. (1988): 25-42; cf. the discussion of "sense-appetite" in N. J. H. Dent, "Varieties of Desire," PASSV 50 (1976): 153-75, esp. 154-58.

21 On the connection between ἐπιθυμία and ἡδονή, see e.g. Resp. 439 D: τὸ . . . ἄλογιστόν τε καὶ ἐπιθυμητικόν, πληρώσεων τινων καὶ ἡδονῶν ἐταίρων; Phaedr. 238 A: ἐπιθυμίας δὲ ἄλογως ἐλκοῦσι ἐπὶ ἡδονάς. Cf. Cooper, "Human Motivation," 126-30; idem, "Reason, Moral Virtue, and Moral Value," in Reason and Emotion (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 253-70; repr. from pages 81-114 in Rationality in Greek Thought (ed. M. Frede and G. Striker; Oxford: Clarendon, 1996); David Halperin, "Platonic Erôs," 172; Lorenz, Brute Within, passim, e.g. 2: "Appetite’s stubborn and inflexible attachment to whatever happens to give a person pleasure renders psychological conflict ineliminable. . . . Appetite’s attachment to what in fact gives us pleasure is unrefromable"). Later philosophers recognized this association in Plato’s writings and formulated it with greater precision (e.g., Aristotle, De an. 414 b 5-6: ἡ ἐπιθυμία τοῦ γὰρ ἡδος ὅρεξις αὐτῆς; Galen, PHP V 5.8: τρίον ὅσιν τούτων ἡμῖν οἰκείωσευν ύπαρξοςὸν ψύχης, καθ’ ἐκαστον τῶν μορίων τῆς ψυχῆς εἴδος: πρός μὲν τὴν ἡδονήν διὰ τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν).

22 The Platonic view of ἐπιθυμία as a non-rational (ἄλογος) force facilitates its comparison to a non-rational animal, leading to the Platonic imagery of desire as "beast"; see esp. Tim. 70 D-E: ἐπιθυμητικόν . . . ὡς θρέμμα ἄγριον; Resp. 588 B – 591 A: θηρίον . . . θρέμμα (cf. Urs Dieraur, Tier und Mensch im Denken der Antike: Studien zur Tierpsychologie,).
BIPARTITION IN MIDDLE PLATONISM

Reason over against Ἐπιθυμία / θυμός

Like other Middle Platonists, Ps.-Timaeus endorses Platonic tripartition, but in a distinctly modified version:

With regard to human souls (ἀνθρωπίνας ψυχῆς), one part is reasonable and intelligent (τὸ μὲν λογικὸν ἐστὶ καὶ νοερὸν), but the other part is without reason and foolish (τὸ δ` ἄλογον καὶ ἄφρον). . . Of the non-rational part (τὸ ὰ. ἄλογω μέρεςς), the irascible element is located around the heart (τὸ μὲν θυμοειδῆς περὶ τὰν καρδίαν) and the appetitive element around the liver (τὸ δ` ἐπιθυματικὸν περὶ τὸ ἄπαρ). (TL 46)

Although he clearly identifies each of Plato's three "parts," including its respective location in the body, Ps.-Timaeus frames this tripartition in dualistic terms: the soul, it seems, really has just two parts—the rational and the non-rational (τὸ μὲν λογικὸν . . . τὸ δ` ἄλογον). This bipartite conception of Platonic tripartition subsumes the spirited and desiderative parts under a single "non-rational part" (ἄλογον μέρος), coordinating them as one pair that stands over against reason.

---

Anthropologie und Ethik [SAP 6; Amsterdam: Grüner, 1977], 66-89 [="Hinweise auf Tiere in der Anthropologie und Ethik Platonis"]). This comparison of the ἐπιθυμητικὸν (ἐπιθυμία) to a beast appears also in Middle Platonism, see, e.g., Didask. 23 [176.22]: ἄγριον θρέμα; Plutarch, Vitr. mor. 447 C: ἐπιθυμία as τὸ θηρίον (cf. Julia Annas, "Humans and Beasts: Moral Theory and Moral Psychology," in Platonic Ethics, Old and New [CSCP 57; Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999], 117-36, esp. 134-36).


24 Cf. TL 82: "Music and philosophy, its guide, which were established by the gods and the laws for the correction of the soul, accustom, persuade, and sometimes even coerce the non-rational part to obey reason (τὸ μὲν ἄλογον τῷ λογιμῷ πείθοντα), the irascible part of the non-rational soul to be tame (τὸ δ` ἄλογον θυμὸν μὲν πρᾶσον εἰμένες), and the appetitive part (ἐπιθυμητικὸν δὲ) to remain quiet when the mind summons it either to action or to enjoyment." (Unless otherwise noted, all translations of TL are from Tobin, Timaeos of Locri.)

25 Arius Didymus provides evidence for bipartite psychology among "Platonic philosophers" of his day: Eclog. 38.3-4: τὸ ἄλογον μέρος τῆς ψυχῆς . . . τῷ λόγῳ; Eclog. 38.5-6: ἄλογον μέρος τῆς ψυχῆς . . . τῷ λόγῳ; Eclog. 38.12-13: ψυχῆς τοῦ ἄλογον μέρους . . . τῷ λογικῷ.
Plato did not formulate tripartition in this way.\textsuperscript{26} Aristotle, to facilitate his discussion of ethics, endorsed a simple dichotomy in the soul between "rational" (τὸ λόγον ἔχον) and "non-rational" (τὸ ἄλογον) (Eth. nic. 1102 a 29-30), but he did not use this dichotomy as a frame for Platonic tripartition.\textsuperscript{27} Instead, this formulation derives from an early and highly influential Peripatetic rendering of Plato's tripartite psychology, first attested in the Magna Moralia.\textsuperscript{28} Peripatetic philosophers superimposed Aristotle's dichotomy onto Platonic tripartition, making his rational part (τὸ λόγον ἔχον) equivalent to Plato's λογιστικὸν, while his non-rational part (τὸ ἄλογον) was taken to comprise Plato's θυμοειδές and ἐπιθυμητικόν (or θυμός and ἐπιθυμία). This hybrid version of Platonic tripartition, which pits rational against non-rational, became a standard model for moral psychology among Middle Platonists.\textsuperscript{30}

\textsuperscript{26} First, Plato never uses the terminology λόγος – ἄλογος in reference to a bipartite division of the soul (see Vander Waerdt, "Peripatetic Interpretation," 283-86). Second, Plato's tripartition often views reason and τὸ θυμοειδὲς as a united pair over against τὸ ἐπιθυμητικὸν (e.g., Resp. 441 A; Phaedr. 253 D – 254 E). But the absence of a particular formulation of tripartition as bipartition does not mean that Plato never ascribes bipartition to the soul (see e.g. D. A. Rees, "Bipartition of the Soul in the Early Academy," JHS 77 [1957]: 112-18).


\textsuperscript{28} Vander Waerdt, "Peripatetic Interpretation." On the appropriation of this Peripatetic rendering in Middle Platonism, see Vander Waerdt, "Moral Psychology."

\textsuperscript{29} Plato's term for the assertive part is θυμοειδές (e.g., Resp. 441 A: ἐν ψυχῇ τρίτον ἐστὶ τὸ θυμοειδὲς [εἶδος]). Middle Platonists often used the Aristotelian term θυμικός instead of θυμοειδές (cf. Leg. 1.70-72, Leg 3.124; also θυμός [e.g., Conf. 21; Spec. 4.92]). See Whittaker, Alcinoos, 87, n. 73 (NB his citation of Leg. 3.115); Vander Waerdt, "Peripatetic Interpretation," 286, n. 9; also Jean Bouffartigue, "La structure de l'âme chez Philon: terminologie scolastique et metaphors," in Philon d'Alexandrie et le langage de la philosophie (ed. Carlos Lévy; Turnhout: Brepols, 1998), 59-75, 60, n. 3 (on Leg. 3.115)

\textsuperscript{30} Vander Waerdt, "Moral Psychology," 378-81, notes six representative examples of Middle-Platonic sources that "harmonize bipartition and tripartition in accordance with Peripatetic doctrine by collapsing the θυμικόν and ἐπιθυμητικόν into a single ἄλογον and by opposing this to a reasoning faculty" (377): Arius Didymus' epitome, the Didaskalikos, Apuleius, Plutarch, Philo,
**Reason over against Appetite (ὁρεξίς)**

Although Middle-Platonic bipartition appears simply to reconfigure Plato's three soul parts, and thus appears to leave Plato's conception of those parts intact, it actually owes much to Aristotle's theory of desire, which differed from Plato's in significant respects. Unlike Plato, who envisioned three distinct soul parts, each with its own sorts of desires (ἐπιθυμίαι), Aristotle acknowledged just one appetitive faculty of the soul, which generates three different sorts of appetite (ὁρεξίς): ἐπιθυμία, θυμός, and βουλήσις. Of these, ἐπιθυμία and θυμός are non-rational ὁρεξίαι analogous to the motivations generated by Plato's ἐπιθυμητικόν and θυμοειδές. For example, Aristotle understood θυμός to be the sort of non-rational motivation at work when people get angry, mirroring Plato's concept of the θυμοειδές, which is—among other things—the seat of...

---

50

---

31 On the fundamental revision of Plato's theory of desire resulting from a bipartite conception of tripartition, see Vander Waerdt, "Peripatetic Interpretation," esp. 286-87 and 291-301. Ultimately the *attribution of the division ἄλογον/λόγον ἔχειν* to Plato is based upon an interpretation of tripartition in the terms of Aristotle's doctrine of ὁρεξίς" (286).

32 See, for example, Resp. 580 D and De an. 414 b 2. On Aristotle's theory of desire, see esp. Cooper's essays "Aristotle's Moral Psychology" and "Reason, Virtue, Value." ὁρεξίς in Aristotle serves as the generic term for "appetite," of which there are several specific types. Plato, who had no corresponding notion of "generic appetite," never uses the term ὁρεξίς. (The term itself derives from ὁρέω: reach, stretch [LSJ, s.v.], which Plato does use in the context of moral psychology: e.g., Resp. 439 B: ὁρέεσθαι [reach after].) Because ὁρεξίς only becomes a term of moral psychology with Aristotle, its use among Middle Platonists demonstrates their appropriation of terms and concepts postdating Plato.

33 On ἐπιθυμία and θυμός in Aristotle, see Cooper, "Reason, Virtue, Value," esp. 255-64. NB 257: "Aristotle seems throughout his career to have accepted from Plato's account of the human soul in the Republic the division of our non-rational desires into two types, appetitive and spirited (ἐπιθυμία and thumos)."
anger in the soul. In addition, Aristotle associated \( \epsilon_πιθυμία \) with "bodily" desires for food, drink, and sex—the three desires that characterize Plato's \( \epsilon_πιθυμημητικόν \). But in two key respects, the Aristotelian conception of \( \thetaυμός \) and \( \epsilon_πιθυμία \) underlying Middle-Platonic bipartition differs from that of Plato.

First, what for Plato are acquisitive aims of the \( \thetaυμοειδές \)—things like victory, honor, and fame—lose all association with "assertive appetite" (\( \thetaυμός \)) and become simply additional objects of "acquisitive appetite" (\( \epsilon_πιθυμία \)), along with food, drink, and sex. In other words, Aristotle followed Plato in viewing \( \epsilon_πιθυμία \) as a non-rational desire for pleasure, but he expanded the scope of \( \epsilon_πιθυμία \) to include the intangible—but nevertheless pleasurable—objects of

---

34 Plato, in fact, argues for the distinct function of the \( \thetaυμοειδές \) over against the \( \epsilon_πιθυμημητικόν \) by citing the story of Leontius, whose anger against his own repugnant desire to view corpses demonstrates the separation of \( \thetaυμός \) and \( \epsilon_πιθυμία \) within the soul (see Resp. 439 E – 440 A, esp. 440 A: ὃς λόγος σημαίνει τὴν ὄργην πολεμεῖν ἐνίοτε ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις ὡς ἄλλο ὑπὸ ἄλλω). On the role of the \( \thetaυμοειδές \) in Plato, see Cooper, "Human Motivation," esp. 130-36.

35 E.g., Eth. nic. 1147 b 25-29. NB ἀναγκαία μὲν τὰ σωματικὰ (1147 b 25-26) (cf. Resp. 558 C-E, 559 A-D). On Plato's \( \epsilon_πιθυμημητικόν \), note Resp. 437 D, where of all \( \epsilon_πιθυμία \), δίψα (\( \epsilon_πιθυμία \) ποτοῦ) and πείνα (\( \epsilon_πιθυμία \) ἔδωδης) are the "most obvious" (ἐναρχεστάτας); also Tim. 70 D: τὸ δὲ δὴ σῖτων τε καὶ ποτῶν ἐπιθυμημητικῶν. In Spec. 4.96-97 Philo acknowledges as chief of all desires τὴν περὶ γαστέρα πραγματευομένην \( \epsilon_πιθυμία \), which concerns ἔδωδη καὶ πόσις (cf. Plato, Leg. 782 E: ἔδωδη μὲν καὶ πόσις). In Leg. 1.86, \( \epsilon_πιθυμία \) (i.e., τὸ \( \epsilon_πιθυμημητικόν \) [see Leg. 1.70-71]) compels one toward σῖτια καὶ ποτά (cf. Leg. 3.147). Cf. δίψα and πείνα as "harsh mistresses" in Mos. 1.191, Spec. 4.82, Virt. 130, Contemp. 37. The desire for sexual pleasures (ἀφροδισία) is another basic function of τὸ \( \epsilon_πιθυμημητικόν \) (e.g., Resp. 580 E [cf. 436 A-B]). In fact, desires for food, drink, and sex often appear together as the primal triumvirate of appetites (e.g., Leg. 782 E; Phaed. 81 B). Although closely tied to bodily requirements and conditions, the desires for food, drink, and sex properly belong to the soul (viz. τὸ \( \epsilon_πιθυμημητικόν \)—there are, for Plato, no desires of the body, only "bodily desires," desires of the soul bearing a unique connection to the body (see e.g. R. Hackforth, Plato's Examination of Pleasure [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1945], 61; cf. 79, n. 4; 112, n. 2; 140, n. 2).

36 Cf. Cooper, "Reason, Virtue, Value," 263: "In the Republic Plato gives this intermediate kind of desire [sc. \( \thetaυμός \)] its own special object of pursuit, victory, and/or esteem or honor (τιμή), corresponding to appetite's [sc. \( \epsilon_πιθυμία \)] pursuit of pleasure. As we have already seen, Aristotle rejects this identification: according to him, akратic lovers of honor and victory are incontinently pursuing a pleasure and so are inappropriately subject not to spirited desire but to certain appetites, appetites for victory and honor."
victory, honor, and fame. This broader concept of ἐπιθυμία strips θυμός of all acquisitive aims, leaving it almost exclusively associated with anger and aggression in Middle-Platonic thought. In other words, Middle Platonists continued to associate ἐπιθυμία with a particular component of the Platonic soul, but they conceived it more broadly as the one source for all non-rational appetites, pursuing its aim of pleasure through any number of possible objects.

Second, since Aristotle assigned both θυμός and ἐπιθυμία to a single ὀρεκτικόν faculty of the soul, and since θυμός and ἐπιθυμία constitute the soul’s ἄλογον μέρος in the bipartite version of Platonic tripartition, ὀρεκτικόν and ἄλογον μέρος become interchangeable in Middle-Platonic moral psychology. Attesting this trend, Arius Didymus lists τὸ ὀρεκτικὸν μέρος τῆς ψυχῆς (Eclog. 38.8) as a variant Middle-Platonic designation for the soul’s non-rational part over against its rational part. In fact, Middle-Platonic ethical theory in general, which deals

---

37 De an. 414 b 5-6: ἡ ἐπιθυμία· τοῦ γὰρ ἡδέος ὀρεξὶς αὕτη (cf. Eth. nic. 1119 b 6-8).
38 In Plato’s Republic (548 C - 550 B), the man ruled by τὸ θυμοειδὲς is not constantly angry: he is rather φιλοκράτως and φιλότιμως (549 A)—he wants power and honor. The Middle-Platonic conception (following Aristotle) would identify a φιλοκράτως or φιλότιμος as one ruled by ἐπιθυμία (sc. τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν), while someone ruled by θυμός (sc. τὸ θυμοειδὲς) would in fact be irascible. When Ps.-Timaeus considers training of the soul (TL 82), in particular the obedience of the non-rational part to reason (τὸ μὲν ἄλογον τῷ λογισμῷ πείθεσθαι), the ideal for θυμός, which constitutes the non-rational part along with ἐπιθυμία, is that it be “tame” (τὸ δ’ ἄλογῳ θυμόν μὲν πρᾶσον εἶμεν)—in other words, Ps.-Timaeus envisions θυμός primarily as an irascible element. Plutarch, however, sometimes does maintain the strictly Platonic role for τὸ θυμοειδὲς as the motivating force for reckless ambition (see Tim Duff, Plutarch’s Lives: Exploring Virtue and Vice [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999], 83-89).
39 Cf. Ps.-Metop.117.9-10: ἄ μὲν ὄν διάνοια ἀπὸ τὸ λογικόν μέρες ἐντὶ τὰς ψυχὰς, ἄ δὲ ὀρεξὶς ἀπὸ τὸ ἄλογῳ (also Ps.-Theag. 193.13-14: ἄ δὲ ὀρεξὶς τὸ ἄλογῳ); Didask. 29.2 [182.29-35] (note the association of αἱ ὀρέξεις with non-rational over against rational): σῳφροσύνη = δύναμις τῆς ἐστὶ καθ’ ἣν τεταγμένῳ καὶ εὐπειθής ἔχουσιν αἱ ὀρέξεις πρὸς τὸ φύσεως δεσποτικόν, τούτεστι τὸ λογιστικόν; Plutarch, Virt. mor. 450 E-F: τὸν λογισμὸν ἠγείρον καὶ ἀρχεῖν τοῦ ἄλογου, where τοῦ ἄλογου includes ὀρέξεις.
with reason's management of non-rational forces in the soul, and which must
systematically conceptualize the nature and function of those non-rational forces
in need of management, takes full advantage of ἀλογον μέρος as a heuristic
device, making it the locus not only of appetite (δρεξίς) but also of impulse
(ὁρμή) and emotion (πάθος).

Reason over against Impulse (ὁρμή)

"Appetite" (δρεξίς), generally speaking, bears a close relation to "impulse"
(ὁρμή), so Middle-Platonic moral psychology, which placed δρεξίς in the soul's
non-rational part, naturally placed ὁρμή there as well.40 The term ὁρμή denotes
above all directed movement within the soul.41 Thus δρεξίς, as a type of impulse,
denotes directed movement toward something, and ἐπιθυμία, more specifically,
denotes movement toward pleasure, a pursuit—other types of impulses denote

---

40 On the topic of impulse (ὁρμή), see Inwood, Ethics and Human Action (cf. Tad
Inwood; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003], 265-69). Inwood considers primarily the
Stoic view (esp. 42-101 [="The Psychology of Action"], but also the less technical views of Plato
and Aristotle (see 242-49 [="Hormē in Plato, Aristotle, and the Magna Moralia"]). For Plato,
neither ὁρμή nor δρεξίς are technical terms (the latter does not appear in his writings), so their
precise relation cannot be determined. For Aristotle, the terms were more or less
interchangeable, which allowed for their conflation among later philosophers, as Inwood notes:
"For although one was the central theoretical term for the Stoa [ὁρμή] and the other for Aristotle
[δρεξίς], they could be blended together by those who were not interested in or did not
understand the difference between the two psychological theories. This process continued to the
point where . . . the desiderative part of the soul could be called to hormētikon rather than to
orektikon" (245). For the Stoics, δρεξίς was a type of impulse: namely, a rational impulse toward
the apparent good (see Inwood, Ethics and Human Action, 235-37; cf. 114-15, 227-28).

41 According to the generic Stoic definition, an impulse is simply "a motion of the soul
toward something," as in ESE 9: λέγουσιν . . . ὁρμήν εἶναι φορᾶν ψυχῆς ἐπὶ τι κατὰ τὸ γένος
(Cf. Inwood, Ethics and Human Action, 32: "In most of our sources impulse is explicitly defined as
a kind of change, movement or activity of the soul"). Stoics considered this definition broad
enough to describe impulse in both rational and non-rational animals (τὴν τε ἐν τοῖς λογικοῖς . . .
καὶ τὴν ἐν τοῖς ἀλογοῖς), although they believed that human beings, as rational animals,
experience only rational impulse (λογικῆ ὁρμή).
other types of directed movement. The issue dividing Stoics and Middle Platonists was not how to describe the phenomenon of impulse, since both could acknowledge the experience of directed movement within the soul. They disagreed over where in the soul (in a theoretical sense) impulse occurred and what role reason played in the generation of impulse. Arius Didymus notes that "Platonic philosophers" (οἱ κατὰ Πλάτωνα φιλοσοφοῦντες) associated ὀρμή with the non-rational part of the soul (ἄλογον μέρος τῆς ψυχῆς) over against the rational part (τῷ λογικῷ). This same association appears in other writings with "Eudoran" affinities (Ps.-Timaeus, Ps.-Metopus, Plutarch) and arguably in the extant fragments of Eudorus himself. By locating impulse in the non-rational

---

42 Pleasure (ἡδονή), for example, as an impulse denotes directed movement upward—an "elevation" (ἐπάρασις) of the soul (ESE 10b; DL 7.114).

43 Eclog. 38.10-14 (citing various equivalent definitions of ἡθική): ὀρμή ψυχῆς πρακτική.

... ἢ [=] ποιότης ἄλογον μορέων ψυχῆς ἢ [=] ψυχῆς τοῦ ἄλογου μέρους ποιότης καθ’ ὑποτακτικὸν λόγον δυναμένη τῷ λογικῷ ἐπακολουθεῖν. In Eclog. 117.11-12, Arius notes the explicit identification of ἄλογον μέρος with ὀρμητικόν by Peripatetic philosophers: τῆς γὰρ ψυχῆς τὸ μὲν εἶναι λογικόν, τὸ δ’ ἄλογον· λογικὸν μὲν τὸ κριτικόν, ἄλογον δὲ τὸ ὀρμητικὸν (NB Vander Waerdt, "Peripatetic Interpretation," 294, n. 29: "Arius' description of the ἄλογον as ὀρμητικὸν contravenes Stoic doctrine and appears to represent a Peripatetic adaptation of the Stoic theory of ὀρμή"). Middle Platonists surely made the same identification, given their readiness to adopt Peripatetic models in moral psychology (e.g., tripartition as bipartition). But even without an explicit equation of ἄλογον μέρος with ὀρμητικόν in Middle-Platonic sources, the association of ἄλογον μέρος with ὀρμή unmistakably appears.

44 See esp. Mauro Bonazzi, "Eudorus' Psychology and Stoic Ethics," in Platonic Stoicism – Stoic Platonism: The Dialogue between Platonism and Stoicism in Antiquity (ed. Mauro Bonazzi and Christoph Helmg; AMP 39; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2007), 109-32. On the basis of a distinction between θεωρία and ὀρμή in Eclog. 42.13-23 [=Mazz. 1.4-10], Bonazzi convincingly argues for Eudorus’ acknowledgement of non-rational impulse in the context of a Platonic bipartition between rational and non-rational parts of the soul. The association between ὀρμή and ἄλογον μέρος appears explicitly in Ps.-Metop.117.12-14: τῶν μερεόν τῶν ψυχῶν δύο τὰ πράττα, τὸ μὲν λογιστικόν τὸ δ’ ἄλογον· καὶ λογιστικὸν μὲν, ὁ κρίνομεν καὶ θεωρέομεν· ἄλογον δὲ, ὁ ὀρμώμενος καὶ ὀρεγόμεθα (cf. ὀρμή and ὀρεφίς) (cited also by Bonazzi, "Eudorus' Psychology," 125). Ps.-Timaeus has the association, but not as clearly: e.g., TL 71, where the soul’s hermestic faculty (ὁρμητικά) is listed separately from its rational faculty (逻γικά), indicating its non-rational function. See also Plutarch, Virt. mor. 450 E-F: τὸν λογισμὸν ἤγεισθαι καὶ ἄρχειν τοῦ
part of the soul, which stands over against reason, Middle Platonists affirmed the existence of non-rational impulses in adult human beings. For them, impulses capable of motivating human action could arise, subsist, and desist wholly apart from reason, without reason's assent or authorization. Such impulses are thus capable of genuinely opposing, or even usurping, reason. In sharp contrast, the Stoics flatly denied the possibility of non-rational impulse in adult human beings. For them, impulse (ὀρμή) always involves rational assent (συγκατάθεσις) and thus always denotes an activity of the mind (ἡγεμονικόν).

---

\[\text{αλόγου}, \text{identifying αι όρμαι (πρός τα σωματικά κινούμεναι) with τού αλόγου (cf. Bonazzi, "Eudorus' Psychology," 125-26).}\]

45 Just as non-rational animals, who have no capacity for reason, nevertheless operate according to impulse. For an explanation of the role of impulse in animal behavior, see Inwood, Ethics and Human Action, 66-91, esp. 72-82.

46 See, for example, Inwood, Ethics and Human Action, 224-42 [=Appendix 2: "The Kinds of Impulse"], esp. 225. Commenting on Arient Didymus' detailed summary of the Stoic classification of impulse (see Eclog. 86.17 – 88.7), Inwood notes the Stoic attribution of non-rational impulse to non-rational animals, while noting also that for rational animals (i.e., human beings) the concept of non-rational impulse simply does not apply (225). Cf. Julia Annas, Hellenistic Philosophy of Mind (HCS 8. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 106: "Our normal talk of 'irrational' impulses suggests that they are not rational at all; but for the Stoics ordinary language is just wrong here, for there can be no such thing as a totally nonrational impulse, at least not in undefective humans. We grasp the phenomenon, but it is not what we think it is, namely, reason versus something devoid of reason, but rather good reason versus bad, inadequate reason."

47 The relation between impulse and assent stands as part of the broader Stoic psychology of action (see Inwood, Ethics and Human Action, 42-101). Following Inwood (Ethics and Human Action, 28), ἡγεμονικόν is translated "mind" (also A. A. Long, "Stoic Psychology," in The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Psychology [ed. Kaimpe Algra et al.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999], 560-84, esp. 572-83 [="Rationality and the faculties of the mind"]). Technically, ἡγεμονικόν refers to the "governing part" of the human soul (ψυχῆ), which commands the operation of strictly instrumental non-rational parts such as the five senses (αἰσθησιῶν), the faculty of speech, and the faculty of reproduction—thus in Stoic theory, the soul has eight parts (see Inwood, Ethics and Human Action, 27-41; cf. Long, "Stoic Psychology," esp. 560-72). The mind itself has four powers—"impression" (φαντασία), "impulse" (ὀρμή), "assent" (συγκατάθεσις), and "reason" (λόγος)—of which the first two have non-rational analogues in non-rational animals (on the mind's powers, see esp. Long, "Stoic Psychology," 572-83). The presence of reason in Man, however, influences the operation of the entire mind, making all of its functions distinctly rational: "[O]ur sources are correct, but misleading, when they say that the mind or 'governing part' of the human psuchē has the four faculties, impression, assent, impulse, reason. The Stoics' model of the mind would be better rendered by saying that there are three..."
Stoics, in other words, considered impulse a rational function, precluding on theoretical grounds the idea of impulse opposing, much less usurping, reason.48 The Middle-Platonic discussion of impulse certainly owed much to the Stoics, insofar as the Stoics brought the topic into prominence by emphasizing the role of impulse in moral theory, but the difference in their respective understandings of the origin and nature of impulse could not be starker. Simply put, the Stoics conceived impulse as an exclusively rational function, while Middle Platonists conceived impulse as a non-rational function, appropriately located in the soul's non-rational part.49

mental faculties—rational impression, rational impulse, and rational assent. Reason is not something over and above the other three. It is the mind in its entirety. Hence reason (logos), mind (nous), and thought (dianoia) are all terms that refer to the distinctive nature of a human being's psuchē" (Long, "Stoic Psychology," 575).

48 For the Stoics, a moment of rational assent is always the direct cause of human behavior, whether or not the agent is consciously aware of that moment. The idea of an internal, non-rational force causing or determining behavior clearly and flatly contradicts the Stoic theory of human action. (Cf. Inwood, Ethics and Human Action, 139: "[A]t no time do we experience impulses or passions which are produced independently of our assenting reason or which conflict with and resist it.") This reflects the Stoic "monistic" psychology, which holds that the human psyche stands united under one arbiter—reason. Thus no psychic power other than reason (i.e., no non-rational power) can ultimately determine the course of human action, which always proceeds on the basis of an autonomous agent's rational decision. As Inwood explains (idem, 33), Stoic monism did not preclude the existence of soul parts (μέρη), only the possibility of opposition among those parts.

49 The acknowledgement of non-rational impulses (ἀλόγοι ὀρμοί) in adult human beings serves in itself as a criterion for distinguishing Middle-Platonic from Stoic moral psychology, including the moral psychology of the Stoic Posidonius (ca. 130 – 50 B.C.). While Posidonius did acknowledge non-rational forces in the soul analogous to Platonic ἐπιθυμία and θύμος, he did not count these non-rational "affective movements" (παθετικά κινήσεις [see PHP V 5.28]) as impulses (ὁρμοί)—although they could influence the character of (always rational) impulses (see John Cooper, "Posidonius on Emotions," in Reason and Emotion: Essays on Ancient Moral Psychology and Ethical Theory [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999], 449-84, esp. 467-68, 474-75; repr. from pages 71-111 in The Emotions in Hellenistic Philosophy [ed. J. Sihvola and T. Engberg-Pedersen; TSHP 46; Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1998]). In other words, Posidonius need not muddle the clear and radical difference between Middle Platonists (including Philo) and Stoics on the question of non-rational impulses in adult human beings—or, for that matter, on the question of παθή, which both groups analyzed ultimately as a type of impulse: for Middle Platonists a type of non-rational impulse, for Stoics a type of (ir)rationa impulse.
Reason over against Emotion ($\pi\vartheta\omicron\varsigma$)

Along with $\delta\rho\epsilon\zeta\iota\varsigma$ and $\dot{\omicron}\rho\mu\eta\iota$, Middle Platonists placed also emotion ($\pi\vartheta\omicron\varsigma$) in the non-rational part of the soul: feelings of dejection, fear, elation, desire—can all arise, subsist, and desist apart from the rational faculty.\(^50\) Arius Didymus confirms that "Platonist philosophers" (Eclog. 38.14-15) considered the soul's non-rational part to be also its "emotional part" ($\pi\alpha\theta\eta\tau\iota\kappa\omicron\dot{\omicron}\mu\epsilon\rho\omicron\varsigma$), thus indicating that emotions are essentially non-rational phenomena.\(^51\) Similarly, in TL 71 Ps.-Timaeus lists the soul's "emotional faculty" ($\pi\alpha\theta\eta\tau\iota\kappa\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ [sc. δυνάμιος]) as something other than its rational faculty ($\lambda\omicron\gamma\iota\kappa\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ [sc. δυνάμιος]), indicating that emotions occur apart from reason. Along with the Stoics, Middle Platonists acknowledged four cardinal $\pi\alpha\theta\eta$: grief ($\lambda\varsigma\pi\tau\eta\eta$), fear ($\phi\omicron\beta\omega\varsigma$), pleasure ($\eta\delta\dot{\omicron}\nu\eta$), and desire ($\epsilon\pi\iota\theta\upnu\varsigma\iota\mu\iota\alpha$).\(^52\) But agreement between the two groups virtually ends

\(^50\) The term $\pi\vartheta\omicron\varsigma$ bears various translations, and a comparison of Middle-Platonic over against Stoic ethical theory demands the subtle yet crucial distinction between "emotion" ($\pi\vartheta\omicron\varsigma$) and "passion" ($\pi\vartheta\omicron\varsigma$). Emotion ($\pi\vartheta\omicron\varsigma$) is a strictly amoral function of normal human life, while passion ($\pi\vartheta\omicron\varsigma$) is an immoral function of abnormal human life. These different connotations led to semantic confusion and charges of equivocation (see Plutarch, Virt. mor. 449 A-C).

\(^51\) Eclog. 38.5-7: "Ἀλογον μέρος τῆς ψυχῆς εἰθισμένον ὑπακούειν τῷ λόγῳ ἢ πάθος ἢ παθητικόν μέρος τῆς ψυχῆς εἰθισμένον ὑπακούειν τῷ λογικῷ. Cf. Plutarch, Virt. mor. 442 A: [ἡ τ’ἀνθρώπου ψυχή] ἔτερον μὲν ἔχει τὸ νοερὸν καὶ λογιστικόν, . . . ἔτερον δὲ τὸ παθητικόν καὶ ἄλογον (Virt. mor. represents in large part Plutarch's polemic against the Stoics, who refuse to acknowledge that passions are something other than reason, not—as they claim—aberrant manifestations of reason; see 441 C [the Stoic view], 443 B, 446 F – 447 C, 448 D); also Didask. 5.2 [156.35-37]: τέμνομεν τὴν ψυχήν εἰς τέ τὸ λογικόν καὶ εἰς τὸ παθητικόν, καὶ αὖ πάλιν τὸ παθητικόν εἰς τέ τὸ θυμικὸν καὶ τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν (cf. 17.4 [173.11-15]). Lilla (Clement of Alexandria, 87) suggests that a general tenet of the Middle-Platonic doctrine of $\pi\vartheta\omicron\varsigma$ is: "the tendency to consider it as produced by the irrational [i.e., non-rational] parts of the soul."

\(^52\) On the four cardinal passions, see Inwood, Ethics and Human Action, 144-45. The four appear also in Middle Platonism, e.g. TL 72: ἀρχεῖ δὲ κακίας άνδρας καὶ λύπης ἐπιθυμεῖται τε καὶ φόβοι; Philo, Her. 269-70: Τὰς τῶν τεταρτῶν παθῶν δυνάμεις . . . ηδονῆς . . . ἐπιθυμία . . . λύπης . . . φόβου (cf. Schmidt, Anthropologie, 88, n. 92). Baltes, Timaios Lokros, 199, suggests that the doctrine of four cardinal passions attested in TL 72 formed (for Middle Platonists) part of "ein neues ethisches Lehrgebäude."
with this taxonomy. In the first place, Stoics considered these four passions to be expressions of the mind, albeit aberrant expressions (i.e., "irrational" [ἀλογος]).

This follows from the Stoic conviction that (a) passions are a type of impulse and (b) every impulse derives from reason. By claiming that passions arise independently from the rational faculty, Middle Platonists reject Stoic theory unequivocally. In addition, Stoics considered these four πάθη to be always and inherently bad—thus passions and not just emotions. Middle Platonists, by contrast, considered the cardinal πάθη an amoral part of normal human existence: their non-rational energy provides essential motivation for human activity, including virtuous human activity, and they become problematic only when they overstep the dictates of reason. So Middle Platonists endorsed as

---


54 In other words, they side with the Platonic-Aristotelian tradition over against the Stoic. For a discussion of the radical difference between the Platonic-Aristotelian concept of πάθος (as non-rational) and the Stoic concept (as [ir]rational), see Frede, "Stoic Affections," esp. 94-100.

55 E.g., Ps.-Metop. 121.10-12: οὐκ ἀφελέλειν όν τί δὲ πάθεα τάς ψυχάς, οὔτε γὰρ ὄφελιμον αὐτὰ ἀφελέλειν, ἀλλὰ συναρμόσασθαι ποτὲ τὸ λόγον ἔχον τὸ δέντος καὶ τῷ μετρίῳ; Plutarch, Virt. mor. 443 C: οὐ βουλομένου [τοῦ λόγου] τὸ πάθος ἐξαίρειν παντάσπαιν (οὔτε γὰρ δυνατὸν οὔτε ἄμεινον), ἀλλ᾽ ἄρον τινὰ καὶ τάξιν ἐπιτιθέντος αὐτῷ; 451 C: μέτεστιν οὖν [ἀνθρώπω] καὶ τοῦ ἀλόγου, καὶ σύμφωνον ἔχει τὴν τοῦ πάθους ἀρχήν, οὐκ ἐπεισόδιον ἀλλὰ ἀναγκαίαν οὐσαν, οὔτε ἀναρρέτειαν παντάσπαιν ἀλλὰ θεραπεῖας καὶ παιδαγωγίας δεομένην; Didask. 32.4 [186.14-18]: τῶν δὲ παθῶν τά μὲν ἐστὶν ἄγρια, τά δὲ ήμερα· καὶ ήμερα μὲν ὁσα κατὰ φύσιν υπάρχει τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ ἀναγκαίᾳ τε καὶ οἰκείᾳ· οὕτως δ᾽ ἔχει ἐας ἂν σύμμετρα υπάρχῃ, προσελθούσης δε αὐτοῖς ἀμετρίας ἡμαρτημένα υπάρξει; For Middle Platonists, passions are in fact an essential component of moral virtue (ἡτική ἄρετή): TL 73: τὸ πῶς ἔχειν ποτὲ τὰ πάθεα ἀρχή τε καὶ πέρας ἄρετάς καὶ κακίας ἐστι· τὸ γὰρ πλεονάζεται ἐν ταύταις ἢ κάρον αὐτών εἰμεν ἢ κακώς ἄμε διατίθηται (on which see Baltes, Timaios Lokros, 206. "[W]ie bei Platon . . . sind die Affekte an sich noch nicht schlecht, sie werden es erst durch Übermaß und Unkontrolliertheit"), Arius Didymus (Eclog. 38.6-7): [ἡτική ἄρετή] = πάθος ἢ παθητικὸν μέρος τῆς ψυχῆς εἰθισμένον ὑπάκουειν τῷ λογικῷ; Ps.-Metop. : 119.8: τὰ δὲ πάθεα τάς ἄρετας ὅλα; 121.7: γίνεται γάρ ἐκ τῶν παθῶν ἄ ἄρετα; Plutarch, Virt. mor. 440 D: [on ἡτική ἄρετή] τῷ τὸ μὲν πάθος ὑλῆν ἔχειν.
an ethical norm the *moderation* of emotion.\textsuperscript{56} This emphasis on moderation stems directly from Middle-Platonic convictions about the soul: a non-rational component, the locus of emotion, simply exists as a matter of fact; and its existence calls for active management *on the part of reason.*\textsuperscript{57}

**Summary**

According to Alexandrian Middle Platonism, the human soul consists of two essentially different parts: a rational part and a non-rational part. Although the non-rational part represents in theory a composite of Platonic θυμός and ἐπιθυμία, this representation involves dramatic modifications of Plato's views. Along with expanding the scope of acquisitive desire (ἐπιθυμία), this representation of tripartition as bipartition facilitates a unitary conception of the soul's non-rational part as the locus of appetite (δρέξις), impulse (ὁρμή), and emotion (πάθος)—which all are conceived as non-rational capacities in accordance with their non-rational origin. In sum, Middle Platonists understand "rational" over against "non-rational" to be the one overarching paradigm for


\textsuperscript{57} Cf. Dillon, "Metriopatheia and Apatheia," 515: "the controversy about metriopatheia and apatheia, which generated such heat in later Greek philosophy, is properly one between the concept of a bipartite or tripartite soul, in which the lower part [or] parts can never be eradicated—at least while the soul is in the body—but must constantly be chastised, and that of a unitary one."
moral psychology, although that paradigm accommodates a number of different conceptual models:

**Table One: Variations of Bipartition in Middle Platonism**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TRIPARTITION</th>
<th>APPETITE (δρεξία)</th>
<th>IMPULSE (ἐρμή)</th>
<th>EMOTION (πάθος)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RATIONAL</td>
<td>λογικὸν μέρος</td>
<td>λογικὸν μέρος</td>
<td>λογικὸν μέρος</td>
<td>λογικὸν μέρος</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NON-RATIONAL</td>
<td>ἀλογόν μέρος</td>
<td>θύμος / ἐπιθυμία</td>
<td>ὀρεκτικὸν μέρος</td>
<td>παθητικὸν μέρος</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This variety naturally allows for variant conceptions of desire (ἐπιθυμία), depending on the model in question. For Middle Platonists, the term ἐπιθυμία can denote either an enduring "part" of the soul or an intermittent function of some "part" (ὀρεκτικὸν, ὀρμητικὸν, παθητικὸν). But in any case, ἐπιθυμία represents a non-rational force within the soul in need of reason's management.

**Bipartition in Philo's Writings**

*Reason over against Ἐπιθυμία / Θυμός*

Philo consistently maintains the bipartite psychological model of his Middle-Platonic contemporaries.\(^{58}\)

---

\(^{58}\) Generally speaking, studies of Philo's work identify the bipartition of rational and non-rational (often "irrational") as the model held most consistently: e.g., Billings, *Platonism of Philo*, 52: "The one distinction which persists throughout is the one... between the rational and the irrational parts of the soul"; Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, 174-75: "[F]or Philo each of these divisions expresses some aspect of the truth, but the most basic truth remains the division into rational and irrational" (175); Runia, *Philo and The Timaeus*, 468: "Philo regarded the main thrust of Plato's psychology as tending towards a bipartition of the soul into a rational and an irrational part" [cf. 304-05]); Schmidt, *Anthropologie*, 50: "Trotzdem Philon zwischen den verschiedenen Einteilungen... hin- und herschwankt... dominiert doch entsprechend seiner dualisischen Grundhaltung die Zweiteilung der Seele." Cf. Hermann S. Schibli, "Xenocrates' Daemons and the
Since our soul is bipartite (ψυχής ἢμών διμεροῦς ὑπαρχοῦσης), having one rational part (τὸ μὲν λογικὸν) and one non-rational part (τὸ δὲ ἄλογον), there is a virtue associated with each part . . . (Congr. 26)\(^{59}\)

Furthermore, Philo uses this bipartite model to accommodate Platonic tripartition, again in agreement with contemporary Middle Platonism:

[Esau] was wild and indocile, brimful of fierce temper and desire (θυμόυ γέμοντα καὶ ἐπιθυμίας\(^{60}\)), who to sum him up armed the non-rational part

---

\(^{59}\) My translation. Also Leg. 2.2: ἐγὼ πολλὰ εἰμὶ, ψυχή σῶμα, καὶ ψυχής ἄλογον λογικὸν; Her. 132: τὴν μὲν ψυχὴν εἰς λογικὸν καὶ ἄλογον; Her. 167: αὐτ καθήλθαι τῶν γενεικῶν δέκα νόμων . . . δόδε εἰσίν ἱσαρίθμοι τοῖς τῆς ψυχῆς μέρεσι, λογικῷ καὶ ἄλογῳ; Spec. 1.66: οὐ κράματα ἐκ λογικῆς καὶ ἄλογου φύσεως, οίς τὰς ἡμετέρας εἶναι συμβεβηκέναι; Spec. 1.201: δύοιν δ’ ὄντων ἣν ἡ ἡμετέρα ψυχή συνεστή, λογικοῦ τε καὶ ἄλογου; Spec. 1.333: τὴν ἄλην ψυχήν ἐκ λογικοῦ καὶ ἄλογου μέρους συνεσώσαν; Conf. 111: ἐκάστας τῶν ἐν ψυχῆς δυνάμεων προσκληρώσαντες τὰς μὲν λογικῆς, τὰς δὲ ἄλογα μερίδι.

\(^{60}\) While Philo does use the term ἐπιθυμίας to refer to the desiderative element of the tripartite soul in Leg. 1.70-72 and Leg. 3.115, he elsewhere uses the term ἐπιθυμία (cf. θυμός for θυμοειδές), as Ioannes Leisegang notes (Indicis ad Philonis Alexandrini Opera [= vol. 7 of PCW], s.v. at no. 1, “tertia pars animae”): Conf. 21; Spec. 4.92; Spec. 1.146-50, cf. 206 ff.; Virt. 13; Migr. 67; Her. 64; Spec. 4.10.
of the soul to war against the rational part (τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ἄλογον μέρος ἐπιτετεχικότα τῷ λογικῷ). (Praem. 59)\(^{61}\)

Reflecting the full range of variant models endorsed by Middle Platonists, Philo also locates appetite (ὀρέξις), impulse (ὁρμή), and emotion (πάθος) within the non-rational part of the soul.

*Reason over against Appetite (ὀρέξις)*

In agreement with his Middle-Platonic contemporaries, Philo locates ὀρέξις in the non-rational part of the soul:

> Our soul is tripartite (τριμερήν): one part is rational (μέρος μὲν ἐν λογιστικόν), a second is assertive (δεύτερον δὲ θυμικόν), and a third is desiderative (τρίτον δὲ ἐπιθυμητικόν). . . . To the desiderative part [philosophers have assigned] the area around the abdomen and belly, since that is the dwelling place of desire (ἐνταῦθα γὰρ κατοικεῖ ἐπιθυμία), non-rational appetite (ὀρέξις ἄλογος). (Leg. 3.115)\(^{62}\)

Philo indicates in Leg. 3.116 that he views this tripartite Platonic model in Middle-Platonic terms, as a *bipartite* dichotomy: ὁ λόγος over against ὁ θυμός and ἡ ἐπιθυμία, with the latter pair identified as μέρη τοῦ ἄλογου. If Philo places ἐπιθυμία in the soul's non-rational part, then his equation of ἐπιθυμία with ὀρέξις ἄλογος clearly places ὀρέξις there as well. So Philo, in good Middle-Platonic fashion, sees ὀρέξις operating *apart* from reason as a *non-rational* force within the soul in a distinct, non-rational part. This flatly contradicts the Stoics,


who themselves defined ἐπιθυμία as ὀρεξὶς ἀλογος but unequivocally meant "irrational appetite," a malfunction of the rational faculty.63

Philo's identification of ἐπιθυμία as ὀρεξὶς ἀλογος derives ultimately from Aristotle, and Philo's overall use of the term ὀρεξὶς further reflects the Aristotelian modifications of Platonic theory inherent in Middle-Platonic bipartition. Plato had understood pleasure (ἡδονή) to be the ultimate aim of ἐπιθυμία, and Aristotle added technical precision to this idea by defining ἐπιθυμία as an ὀρεξὶς τοῦ ἡδέος, or appetite for the pleasant.64 Philo likewise associates ἐπιθυμία with ὀρεξὶς . . . ἡδονῶν (Leg. 3.138).65 He can speak of the typical varieties of

---

63 E.g., DL 7.113: ἡ δ᾽ ἐπιθυμία ἐστὶν ἀλογος ὀρεξὶς [=SVF III 96, 22]. Galen understands both the ambiguity of ἀλογος and the clear intention of Chrysippus to mean "irrational" in his definition of ἐπιθυμία: "[I]n his definition of desire (τὸν τῆς ἐπιθυμίας ὄρον), which he calls irrational appetite (ὀρεξὶς ἀλογον), he touches in a way, verbally at least, on the non-rational power in the soul; but here too he departs from it in his explanation, since even the appetite (ἡ ὀρεξὶς) that he includes in the definition belongs to the rational power (τῆς λογικῆς ἐστὶ δυνάμεως). Thus he defines appetite (αὐτῆν) as 'rational impulse' (ὀρμὴν λογικὴν) . . ." (PHP IV 4.2-3; trans. De Lacey, slightly modified). Schmidt, Anthropologie, 89, citing Leg. 3.115 (see 162, n. 126), recognizes that the definition of ἐπιθυμία as ὀρεξὶς ἀλογος is "aus der Stoa wörtlich übernommene," but also that the words by themselves mean very little ("inhaltlich recht leere"). The meaning must be supplied, either through explicit commentary or through clear contextual cues, such as Philo provides via the framework of Platonic tripartition, in which ἐπιθυμία explicitly resides outside of the reasoning faculty and is thus non-rational.

64 E.g., De an. 414 b 5-6; Eth. nic. 1119 b 6-8.

65 "We have already mentioned that pleasure goes not only on its breast (ἐπὶ τῷ στήθει) but also on its belly (τῇ κοιλίᾳ), and pointed out that the stomach (γαστέρα) is a place most appropriate to pleasure, for we may almost describe it as a reservoir of all the pleasures (σχεδὸν γὰρ ἀγγείον τῶν ἡδονῶν ἀπασῶν αὐτῆς ἐστί). For when the belly has been filled, cravings after the other pleasures also become vehement (ὁρέξεις καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἡδονῶν γίνονται σύντονοι), but when it has been emptied, theses are quieted and become more still (ἡμεῦται καὶ σταθμηστέραι)" (NB κοιλία in Philo’s allegory stands for ἐπιθυμία, i.e., τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν). Cf. Post. 71, where Philo similarly implies that desire (φλεγοῦσης τῆς ἐπιθυμίας) consists of an appetite (τοὺς τῶν ὀρέξευν ἐχάλλασε τε καὶ ἔλυσε τόνους) for pleasure (ἡδονῶν ἀπεχομένους); also Abr. 96: τὰς μὲν ἐφ᾽ ἡδονὴν ἀγούσας ὀρέξεις (cf. Praem. 71: ἐπιθυμήσῃ τινὸς ἡδέος).
Platonic ἐπιθυμία (for food, drink, sex) in terms of ὀρέξεις, as did Aristotle. But more importantly, his concept of the non-rational appetite for pleasure expands to include, as it did for Aristotle, objects that Plato had associated with the soul's assertive function, not its appetitive function—objects like victory, honor, and fame. So for Philo, as for other Middle Platonists, ἐπιθυμία encompassed the objects of both of Plato's inferior soul parts (τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν, τὸ θυμοειδές) in its pursuit of pleasure. This "expansion" of the role of ἐπιθυμία in turn casts ἄθμος more exclusively as the non-rational agent of anger. Philo does not often use the term ὀρέξεις, but his use does reflect standard trends within Middle-Platonic moral psychology.

66 Det. 113: ταῖς μετὰ γαστέρα χρώμενος ήδοναῖς ἐπαλλήλοις καὶ ἔτι ταῖς πρὸς αὐτούς ἐπηρεάσθαι ὀρέξειν ἄκμαζον; Gig. 35 μὴ πρὸς πάντα οὖν τὰ τῇ σερκῇ φίλα αἱ ὀρέξεις ἀνηρεύθησασαν; Ebr. 214: ἡ τάς ὀρέξεις ἀναρρηγηγυνήτα [σιτίων, ὕπου, ποτῶν]; Ebr. 222: ἡ ἀπλήστος ἐν αὐτοῖς ὀρέξεις ἀναρρηγηγυνήτα καὶ λαμμαργάς καὶ τῶν αἰσχρίτων ἠδονῶν ἤτους; Decal. 123: τὰς ὀρέξεις (of the adulterer); Virt. 136: τὰς ὑπερφυίους γαστρωμαργίας ὀρέξεις.

67 Philo attests this view explicitly only in Post. 116, but the passage is telling. Philo has in mind people whose appetites are engaged (ταῖς ἀφοίστοις αὐτῶν ὀρέξειν)—appetites involving not only "bodily pleasures" (σωματικάς ήδονές) but also objects typically associated with Plato's θυμοειδές, such as fame (ϕιλοδόξους). Cf. Post. 117: εὐμορφίας γυνακός έίνεκα, ἡ χρημάτων, ἡ δόξας, ἡ τιμής, ἡ ἀρχής, ἡ κτίσεως, ἡ συνόλως δόσα σώματος καὶ τῶν ἐκτὸς ἔστι πλεονεκτήματα; Opif. 79: αἱ δόξας ἡ χρηματῶν ἡ ἀρχής ἐπιθυμεῖται; los. 70: ἀρχής ἐπιθυμεῖα.

68 E.g., Leg. 2.107: τὰ γοῦν ποιητικά [ἡδονής] ... χρυσός, ἀργυρός, δόξα, τιμαί, ἀρχαι, αἱ ὑλαι τῶν αἰσθητῶν. Schmidt, Anthropologie, recognized this tendency, without noting the historical developments in moral psychology that account for it: "Als Gegenstand des Begehrens werden fast durchweg die Strebungen, die Platon von dem zweiten und dritten Sellenteil aussagt, zusammengefasst" (92-93).

69 Leg. 3.130: τοῦ θυμοῦ ... τοῦ πολεμικοῦ μέρους; Leg. 3.131: ἐρείς δὲ μὴν ἐστὶ θυμοῦ ... τὰς οὖν ἐφιστικὰς καὶ φιλονείκους ψυχῆς πλημμελεῖς γέννημα θυμῶν; Migr. 67: τῶν πολεμικῶν θυμῶν; Migr. 210: τὸ θυμοῦ καὶ ὀργής πάθος. Cf. Méasson, Char ailé, 158-60 [="Le «thumos» chez Platon et chez Philon"].

70 Compare the instances of ὀρέξεις (15) and ἐπιθυμία (218) (see Philo Index, s.v.). Because the two terms are virtually equivalent (ἐπιθυμία = ἐπιθυμία ὀρέξεις), Philo's preference for ἐπιθυμία over ὀρέξεις may come from a conviction that ὀρέξεις in most cases amounts to needless technical jargon.
Reason over against Impulse (ὀρμη)

Siding with his Middle-Platonic contemporaries against the Stoics, Philo believes that the soul's non-rational part can generate non-rational impulses (ὀρματι), whose independent origin allows them genuinely to oppose, or even usurp, reason. Philo's acceptance of non-rational impulse as a factor in human moral psychology derives from broader convictions about the relation between animal and human souls. Following standard formulations of the so-called scala naturae, which ranks various forms of existence according to natural endowment, Philo recognizes impulse (ὀρμη) as a capacity possessed by non-rational animals. Because animals are non-rational (ἄλογος), their impulses are likewise non-rational (ἀλογος), generated by a reflexive mechanism every time an appropriate stimulus appears, without the authorization or assent of reason. Occupying a higher rank on the scale, human beings have not only the capacity for impulse (ὀρμη), but also the endowment of reason (λόγος), which distinguishes them as a more advanced type of soul. But in Stoic theory, reason is not just one additional endowment among others. In other words, a human soul in no way amounts to simply the capacities of an animal soul, as they

---

71 Philo acknowledges also rational impulses in human beings (e.g., Praem. 104: τὰς ὀρμάς διανοιας). But the issue is not whether mind can generate impulses or not (it can), but whether or not there are also non-rational parts of the soul that can generate impulses. On ὀρμη in Philo's writings, including rational ὀρμη, see Schmidt, Anthropologie, 86-87.
72 E.g., Leg. 2.23: ψυχὴ δὲ ἐστὶ φύσις προσειληπτικὰ φαντασίαν καὶ ὀρμην· αὕτη κοινὴ καὶ τῶν ἀλόγων ἐστίν (cf. Leg. 1.30; Deus 41). On the scala naturae, see Inwood, Ethics and Human Action, 18-27 [="The Place of Man in Nature"].
73 For a discussion of how impulse works in non-rational animals, see Inwood, Ethics and Human Action, 66-91 [="Human and Animal Action"].
function in animals (i.e., non-rationally), with reason added on as a distinct new element.\(^7\) Reason transforms the very nature of the human soul, making its capacities thoroughly rational. So human beings, for the Stoics, experience only rational impulses. In Philo’s view, by contrast, the capacities of the animal soul, as they function in animals (i.e., non-rationally), remain intact within the human soul, coexisting with reason in what amounts to an animal soul superintended by reason:

Each one of us (ἐὰν ἐκεῖνος ἤμων) . . . is two in number (ἁριθμὸς δύο εἶναι), an animal (ζώον), and a man (ἄνθρωπον). To each of these has been allotted an inner power akin to the qualities of their respective life-principles (συγγενῆς δύναμις τῶν κατὰ ψυχήν), to one the power of vitality (ἡ ζωτική), in virtue of which we are alive, to the other the power of reasoning (ἡ λογική), in virtue of which we are reasoning beings. Of the power of vitality the non-rational creatures (τὰ ἄλογα) partake with us . . . . (Det. 82)\(^7\)

This Middle-Platonic understanding of the scala naturae gives Plato's basic image of the "beast within" a more sophisticated theoretical basis—one that has profound implications for Philo's moral psychology. In particular, Philo considers the same mechanism of non-rational impulse found in animals to operate also in

---

\(^7\) See Long, "Stoic Psychology," esp. 574-75.

\(^7\) Substituting "each" for Colson's "either"; "non-rational" for Colson's "irrational." For Philo, ἡ ζωτικὴ δύναμις (the life power of the ζώον) includes ὀρμή; e.g., Leg. 1.30: τὸ γὰρ ζώον τοῦ μὴ ζώου δεύτερον προίκησέ τιν ἡ φαντασία καὶ ὀρμή (cf. Leg. 2.23; Deus 41). Furthermore, Philo states that ἡ ζωτικὴ δύναμις, including ὀρμή, retains its distinct nature within the human soul, functioning for human beings as it does for non-rational animals (cf. Spec. 3.99: τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς φαυλότερον εἶδος . . . ἐν τῷ σώματι, τὸ ἄλογον, οὐ καὶ τὰ θηρία μετέχειν; Sacr. 47: τὰς δὲ καθ’ ἐπέμειναι ἐκδοχῆς ἄλογος [δυνάμεις] . . ., διότι μὴ λογικά, ὦν καὶ τὰ ἄλογα ἡμας κοινοὶ). Cf. Wolfson, Philo, 1:385-89 ["Animals and the Irrational Soul of Man"].

In his description of Moses, Philo presents an idealized portrait of reason’s management of non-rational impulse(s):

He did not . . . allow the lusts of adolescence (τὰς μερικακιώδεις ἐπιθυμίας) to go unbridled, . . . But he kept a tight hold on them with the reins, as it were, of temperance and self-control, and forcibly pulled them back from their forward course (τὴν εἰς τὸ πρόσω φορὰν ἀνεχαίτιζε βίς). 

And each of the other emotions (τῶν ἄλλων μέντοι παθῶν ἐκαστὸν), which rage so furiously if left to themselves, he tamed and assuaged and reduced to mildness; . . . and in general he watched the first directions and impulses of the soul (τὰς πρώτας τῆς ψυχῆς ἐπιβολάς τε καὶ ὀρμάς) as

---

76 In QG 1.55 (Gk. Petit), Philo acknowledges the reflexive generation of impulse (ὁρμή) at the mere appearance of something (ὀτὰν προσσέσῃ τινὸς φαντασία), i.e., without rational assent. In other words, he describes a mechanism of non-rational impulse in human beings. Commenting on the Armenian version of this passage, Margaret Graver correctly notes: "Here the 'impulse . . . of which the appearance is the cause' cannot be the usual Stoic ὀρμή, since in adult humans ὀρμή is always caused by assent, never by the presentation itself" ("Stoic AC?A!1+3!3," 207, n. 19). She then suggests, however, that Philo, "using the term ὀρμή loosely," has in mind the Stoic technical term προσψάθεια. But Philo more likely speaks with precision: he refers in this case to a non-rational ὀρμή (neither the rational ὀρμή of the Stoics, nor a προσψάθεια). The suggestion that προσψάθεια played a meaningful role in Philo’s theory of the passions presumes that rational assent (συγκατάθεσις) played a meaningful role as well: "Philo . . . assumes that προσψάθεια can be called upon to explain away apparent exceptions to the posited incompatibility of virtue and emotion, taking advantage of a theoretical time-lag between impression and assent" (ibid., 200-01); "Philo employs [the appeal to the προσψάθεια] only where there is some textual warrant for positing a time-lag between impression and assent" (205-06; cf. 208: "the gap between impression and assent"). Philo, however, in keeping with his Middle-Platonic affinities, nowhere brings συγκατάθεσις into his understanding of πάθος (see Pohlenz, Philon, 456, n. 1). He would have had precedent for his view of non-rational impulse in the Academic tradition, since Arcesilaus (ca. 316-240 B.C.), in dispute with the Stoics and using Stoic terminology, claimed that in human beings impulses reflexively occur in response to the appropriate sensory impression. See e.g. LS 53S [=Plutarch, Stoic. rep. 1057 A (=SVF III 42, 22-27)]: οὐκείας φαντασίας γενομένης εὖθες ὀρμᾶν μὴ εἰξαντας μηδὲ συγκαταθεμένους; cf. LS 69A and commentary: "In effect, Arcesilaus applies to human action the Stoics' account of non-rational animal behaviour" (LS 1:456) (see also Inwood, Ethics and Human Action, 86-88). For the term ἄλογος ὀρμαί, see Leg. 3.185: ἄλογος ὀρμή; Ebr. 98: ἐν ἡμῖν αἱ ἄλογοι ὀρμαί; Ebr. 111: ἄλογοις ὀρμαίς; cf. Sacr. 80: τὴν τοῦ ἄλογου πάθους ὀρμήν. Elsewhere, Philo uses the term ὀρμή when he means ἐπιθυμία (ἀλογοὺς ὀρέξεις: non-rational appetite), referring to the basic desires for food, drink, and sex (esp. Spec. 1.101: ταῖς πρὸς συνουσίαν ὀρμαῖς; Spec. 1.193: ἐπιστομίζοντας τὰς ἐφ’ ἴδιον ὀρμᾶς [= ἐπιθυμίας]; cf. Det. 5: τὰς ψυχῆς ἄλογους φορὰς; Agr. 41: τῆς ἀνθρώπων ἀπάντων ἄλογου φοράς; Spec. 3.129: ἄλογὸν φοράς). These are clearly non-rational impulses (ἄλογοι ὀρμαί), the kind common to both human beings and animals.
one would a restive horse (ὡς ἀφηνιαστὴν ἵππον), in fear lest they should run away with the reason which ought to rein them in (τοῦ ἤνιοχεῖν ὃφειλοντος λογισμοῦ), and thus cause universal chaos. For it is these impulses (αὐταὶ) which cause both good and bad (εἰσιν αἱ ἀγαθῶν αἵτια καὶ κακῶν)—good when they obey the guidance of reason (ὅταν ἠγεμονὶ λόγῳ πειθαρχῶσι), bad when they turn from their regular course into anarchy (ἀναρχίαν). (Mos. 1.25-26; emphasis added)

The characterization here of reason's relation to impulse illustrates the Middle-Platonic perspective evident throughout Philo's writings. The "primary impulses" (πρῶτα ὁρμαί) clearly arise apart from reason, since reason must act upon them, actively managing them as a rational human being would manage a non-rational animal (ἀφηνιαστὴν ἵππον). Although quite dangerous when left to themselves, these impulses are not inherently bad. Their moral import lies entirely in their relation to reason—i.e., whether or not they obey its commanding authority (ἡγεμόνι λόγῳ πειθαρχῶσι).

Philo does not name in this passage the source of the impulses, but clearly desire (ἐπιθυμία) and the "other emotions" (πάθη) derive from the same source. This grouping of ὁρμή, ἐπιθυμία, and πάθος over against reason reflects the Middle-Platonic dichotomy between "rational part" (λογικὸν μέρος) and "non-rational part" (ἐλογον μέρος) evident among Philo's contemporaries. In particular,

---

77 Along with τὰς πρώτας . . . ὁρμάς, the phrase τὴν εἰς τὸ πρόσω ψυχῆς ἐπὶ κατὰ τὸ γένος (ESE 9). On "primary impulse," see Inwood, Ethics and Human Action, 184-94, 218-23.

78 Cf. Spec. 2.142: ἐὰν λογισμόν τὰς πρώτας ἤνιοχωμένον ὁρμὰς μὴ ἐπιτρέποντες αὐταῖς ἠφεινάζειν καὶ ἀνασκειράν τρόπον ὑψηλάτων ἀγαλαρχήν οὐκ ἔχοντος; Spec. 3.79: οἱ ταῖς πρώταις εὐθὺς ὁρμαίς ἐνδιδόντες ὅποιαί περ ἄν οὐσι πυγεύονται ἢ ἤνιοχεῖν δέον ἀχαλινώτους ἔωσι.
the placement of *emotion* within the soul's non-rational part bears special significance for Philo's moral theory.

*Reason over against Emotion (πάθος)*

Philo agrees with his Middle-Platonic contemporaries, against the Stoics, when he locates emotion (πάθος) *outside of* the rational faculty *within* the non-rational part of the soul.\(^79\) Most clearly in *Leg.* 3.114-16, Philo identifies the two non-rational "parts" of the Platonic soul (θυμός and ἐπιθυμία) as the locus of emotion (πάθος):\(^80\)

If, therefore, O mind, thou art ever inquiring what quarter pleasure (ἡδονή) has for her portion, do not consider the place occupied by the head, where the reasoning faculty resides (ὅπου τὸ λογιστικόν), *for thou wilt assuredly not find it there* (οὐ γὰρ μη ἐὐφήσεις), since reason is at war with emotion (μάχεται ὁ λόγος τὸ πάθει), and cannot remain in the same place with it (ἐν ταύτῳ μένειν οὐ δύναται) . . . But look for it in the breast and belly, where high spirit (ὁ θυμός) and desire (ἡ ἐπιθυμία) are, portions of the non-rational (μέρη τοῦ ἀλόγου) . . . (*Leg.* 3.116)\(^81\)

Stoics, by contrast, invariably located the πάθη *within* the mind, identifying them as "judgments" (κρίσεις) and thus rational phenomena.\(^82\) Philo explicitly rejects this view:


\(^81\) Emphasis added; substituting "emotion" for Colson's "passion" and "non-rational" for "irrational." Cf. *Leg.* 3.114: τὰ μέρη τὸ πάθος, τὰ τε στέρνα καὶ τὴν γαστέρα.

\(^82\) DL 7.111: "They hold the emotions to be judgments (δοκεῖ δ’ αὐτοῖς τὰ πάθη κρίσεις εἶναι), as is stated by Chrysippus in his treatise *On the Passions* (Περὶ παθῶν)" (trans. R. D. Hicks).
The non-rational part of the soul consists of sense-perception and its offspring the emotions, which are also non-rational—especially if they are not our "judgments" (κρίσεις). (Leg. 2.6)\footnote{οδε ἄλογον αἰσθησίας ἐστι καὶ τὰ ταύτης ἢκονα πάθη, καὶ μάλιστα εἰ μὴ κρίσεις εἰσίν ἡμέτεραι. The translation (my own) clearly offers an interpretation of the Greek, but the obscurity of the construction calls for it. Despite Philo’s wording, his meaning is clear, given the broader context of the passage (Leg. 2.1–8). In the course of his allegorical exegesis of Gen 2:8, Philo establishes the following points: the soul is divided into rational (λογικόν) and non-rational (ἄλογον) parts (Leg. 2.2); to assist the mind (νοῦς [rational part]), God separately fashioned sense-perception (αἰσθησίας) and passions (πάθη) as "helpers" (Leg. 2.5); the "ruling part" of the soul (τὸ ἄγεμον [νοῦς, rational part]) holds preeminence over the non-rational part (τὸ ἄλογον), which consists of the "helpers" sense-perception and passion, which together represent a distinct, inferior order of creation (Leg. 2.6); mind, sense-perception, and the passions are distinct “parts” (μέρη) of one soul (ψυχή) (Leg. 2.8). Philo clearly affirms Middle-Platonic bipartition in this passage: λογικόν μέρος over against ἄλογον μέρος. He clearly assigns the πάθη to the soul’s non-rational part, identifying them as something other than reason and therefore not functions of reason. There cannot be any real question in Philo’s mind as to whether or not the passions are judgments, because he repeatedly and unmistakably claims that they are not, insofar as he identifies them as something distinctly other than the rational faculty. By using the term κρίσεις in connection with πάθη, Philo undoubtedly alludes to the Stoic doctrine, which he cites only to reject. Commentators who understand Leg. 2.6 in this way include Bréhier, Idées philosophiques et religieuses, 263; Le Boulluec, "Philon sur le plaisir," 137; Pohlenz, Philon, 458-59; Schmidt, Anthropologie, 88. Alcinous, in his Middle-Platonic treatment of the passions, similarly cites and rejects the Stoic view that passions are judgments (κρίσεις) (Didask. 32.1 [185.24–42]). Lilla not only understands Philo to reject the idea of passions as judgments in Leg. 2.6 (Clement of Alexandria, 92) but also more generally identifies the "refusal to regard [πάθος] as a wrong judgement of reason" as one of three principal tenets in the Middle-Platonic doctrine of πάθος (idem, 87). Cf. Alain Le Boulluec, "La place des concepts philosophiques dans la réflexion de Philon sur le plaisir," in Pages in Philon d’Alexandrie et le langage de la philosophie (ed. Carlos Lévy; Turnhout: Brepols, 1998), 129–152, 131: "Une altération sensible consiste à dissocier «passion» . . . et capacité intellectuelle."}

As part of the non-rational equipment of the soul, emotions are simply an endowment of human nature.\footnote{And, for that matter, an endowment of animal nature. Just as human beings have within them a mechanism of non-rational impulse analogous to the mechanism within non-rational animals, they also have within them a mechanism of emotion (which consists of non-rational impulses) analogous to the emotional mechanism of non-rational animals. For a consideration of the nature of animal emotion, see Juha Silvola, "Emotional Animals: Do Aristotelian Emotions Require Beliefs?" in Psychology and Ethics (ed. Lloyd P. Gerson; vol. 3 of Aristotle: Critical Assessments; London: Routledge, 1999), 50–82.} In this respect, emotions are like a natural faculty (δύναμις), comparable to other faculties like sense-perception.\footnote{See esp. Abr. 236-37: τὰς ἐν ἡμῖν τῶν τεττάρων παθῶν δυνάμεις, ἡδονής, ἐπιθυμίας, φόβου, λύπης. Cf. Leg. 3.250; Sobr. 49.}

Philo acknowledges the natural occurrence of non-rational πάθη most clearly in Congr.
81, where he notes that before the onset of mature rational calculation
(λογισμός) children have only their emotions (πάθη) to guide them.86

Because they are not intrinsically immoral, these emotions can provide
non-rational motivation for perfectly natural, ethically appropriate behavior.87

Philo accordingly asserts that God created the emotions as "helpers" (βοηθοῖ) for
the human race:

Moreover, there are, as I have said, helpers of another kind (ἐστὶ τοίνυν
ἐτερον εἰδος βοηθῶν), namely the emotions (τὰ πάθη). For pleasure
(ἡδονή) and desire (ἐπιθυμία) contribute to the permanence of our kind:
pain (λύπη) and fear (φόβος) are like bites or stings warning the soul to
treat nothing carelessly: anger (ὀργή) is a weapon of defense, which has
conferred great boons on many: and so with the other emotions (καὶ
τὰλλα ταῦτα). (Leg. 2.8)88

The emotion of ἐπιθυμία, for example, can be especially useful, and in fact
necessary, as a non-rational motivator for the procurement of food and drink,

---

86 See esp. Congr. 81-82, on which Le Boulluec ("Philon sur le plaisir," 131) notes:
"Prises en elles-mêmes, les quatre «passions» principales, chagrin, peur, désir, plaisir, semblent
selon Philon moralement neutres."
88 Substituting "emotion" for Colson's "passion." Philo's allegorical exegesis of Gen 2:19
(see Leg. 2.9) equates the πάθη with the "beasts" (τὰ θηρία) God created then presented to
Adam as "helpers." Because he considers the emotions morally dangerous, Philo qualifies this
identification (see Leg. 2.10-11), but he never denies it outright. In Plant. 43, he similarly equates
θηρία with πάθη, acknowledging their ferocity but nevertheless admitting that they are a
necessary component of life in the body (NB εἰ ἀνάγκης; cf. Praem. 88). On Philo's allegorical
equation of beasts with emotions, see Carl Siegfried, Philo von Alexandria als Ausleger des Alten
Testaments (Jena: Hermann Dufft, 1875), 182-84, esp. 182: "Die Thiere, insofern sie vernunftlose
Wesen sind, werden Symbole der Leidenschaften, welche ebenfalls das ἄλογον im Menschen
darstellen" (emphasis added). A similar Middle-Platonic understanding of the emotions appears in
Didask. 32.4 [186.14-29], where Alcinous discusses "wild" and "tame" emotions: τῶν δὲ παθῶν
τὰ μὲν ἐστὶν ἄγρια, τὰ δὲ ἡμέρᾳ [186.14-15]. "Tame" emotions are ὄσα κατὰ φύσιν ὑπάρχει τῷ
ἀνθρώπῳ ἀναγκαῖα τε καὶ οἰκεῖα [186.16-17]. These emotions only become problematic when
they exhibit a lack of moderation (ἀμετρίας) [186.18].
both of which are obviously necessary for survival. So, for example, in the case of desire for food, virtue requires not the eradication of ἔπιθυμια but its proper management by reason. In general, Philo promotes the value of restraint by endorsing the moderation of emotion (μετριοπάθεια) as an ethical norm, although he admits the theoretical possibility of a perfect sage becoming free from the influence of emotion (ἀπάθεια).

Reason over against Sense-Perception (αἴσθησις)

Philo holds yet another conception of the soul’s bipartition between rational and non-rational—one closely related to the reason-emotion dichotomy—

---

89 Plato, Resp. 558 D–E: “[D]esires that we cannot divert or suppress may be properly called necessary (ἀνάγκαια), and likewise those whose satisfaction is beneficial to us (ὡςελουσιν ἠμᾶς), may they not? For our nature compels us to seek their satisfaction (τῇ φύσει ἀνάγκη).” Cf. Philo, Leg. 1.86 (substituting “desire” for Colson’s “lust”): “Mark you not that even the most self-controlled of men (οὐχ ὁρᾶς ὅτι καί οἱ ἔγκρατέστατοι) under compulsion of the mortal element in them (ἀνάγκη τοῦ θνήτου) resort to food and drink (παραγίνονται ἐπὶ αἰτία καί ποτά), out of which the pleasures of the appetite develop (ἐξ ὧν αἱ γαστροὶ ἡδοναὶ συνεστάσειν)? So we must be content to face and fight desire as a principle (ἀγαπητὸν οὐν ἐστὶν ἀντιβῆναι καὶ μεγέσασθαι τῷ γένει τῆς ἐπιθυμίας)” (cf. Leg. 3.147, 151, 157; Gig. 34; Ebr. 131, 214; Mos. 1.28; Contemp. 37).

90 Philo in fact endorses both μετριοπάθεια and ἀπάθεια, as the respective goals for intermediate and advanced stages of ethical development (see esp. Lilla, Clement of Alexandria, 92-106; also Richard Sorabji, Emotion and Peace of Mind: From Stoic Agitation to Christian Temptation: The Gifford Lectures (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 385-86; Spanneut, “Apatheia,” 4701-04; Williamson, Philo, 205-07; Winston, “Philo’s Ethical Theory,” 400-05). But since ἀπάθεια presumes a sort of moral perfection, μετριοπάθεια becomes, practically speaking, the ethical ideal (e.g., Virt. 195: παρ’ ἐμοί [ἐυγένεια] μὲν γὰρ αἰδός καὶ ἀλήθεια μετριοπάθεια τε καὶ ἀτυφία καὶ ἀκακία τίμια; cf. Gemünden, “Culture des passions,” 339-42; Williamson, Philo, 206). Philo’s concept of ἀπάθεια differs from the Stoic concept of ἀπάθεια, in accordance with his rejection of Stoic monistic psychology. Whereas the Stoics envision a mind that avoids false assessments of value and thus avoids passions, Philo envisions a mind so divorced from the sensible world, and so immersed in the intelligible world, that it operates free from the influence of emotions (e.g., Congr. 106: τὸ ψυχικὸν Πάσχει = ἢ ἄπόδο παντὸς πάθους καὶ παντὸς αἰσθητοῦ διάβασις τοῦ δ ὅτι νοστόν ἐστὶ καὶ θείον; cf. Fug. 91; Leg. 1.103; Gig. 33; Ebr. 99-103). Plutarch endorses a similar Middle-Platonic notion of ἀπάθεια, while at the same time endorsing μετριοπάθεια, as Christopher Gill notes in his comment on Virt. mor. 444 C-D: “[T]here are two ideals: apatheia for the mind as the vehicle of abstract thought and knowledge and metriopatheia for the body-based emotions as regulated by practical reason” (The Structured Self in Hellenistic and Roman Thought [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006], 238).
which despite a relative lack of attestation among his contemporaries still bears Middle-Platonic affinities: a bipartition of mind (νοῦς) over against sense-perception (αἴσθησις). Xenocrates (396 – 314 B.C.), third scholarch of Plato's Academy, used the Timaeus to endorse a bipartition of the soul into λογικὸν and αἰσθητικὸν, indicating a dichotomy between parts of the soul geared respectively to the intelligible (νοητός) and sensible (αἰσθητός) realms. In this view, sense-perception, a non-rational component of the soul, stems from embodiment and entails the emotions—so αἰσθησις (like πάθος) often opposes νοῦς (and intelligible realities) through its attachment to the sensible realm. Philo affirms the non-rationality of αἰσθησις, its close association with the emotions, its link

---


92 See Schibli, "Xenocrates' Daemons," esp. 149-53. For Xenocrates, "τὸ αἰσθητικὸν points to that part of the soul which links the psyche to the material, sensate world (the αἰσθητή σοφία); as such it merely serves as the conduit for sensations and operates without reason. The dichotomy of τὸ αἰσθητικὸν—τὸ λογικὸν not only implies that the sensitive element lacks what its counterpart possesses, but it conceivably also points to the antithetical dimension of the two divisions, in so far as the sensible part may give rise to affections and passions that militate against reason, and that reason in turn must conquer" (153).

93 See esp. Tim. 42 A-B (cf. Didask. 16.2 [172.2-19]). On αἰσθησις and embodiment, see Congr. 21, where Philo calls αἰσθησις "τὸ σωματοειδέστερον ψυχής μέρος."

94 E.g., Leg. 3.50: αἰσθησις . . . ἀλογος οὖσα; Spec. 2.89: αἰσθησις . . . ἡ κοινὴ καὶ τῶν ἀλόγων ζωών (cf. Leg. 1.24; Migr. 213; Spec. 1.33; Spec. 4.123).

95 E.g., Leg. 2.6: τὸ δὲ ἀλογον αἰσθησις ἐστὶ καὶ τὰ ταύτης ἑκονα πάθη; Leg. 2 50: τὴν παθῶν αἰτίαν αἰσθησιν; Abr. 238: ἐξ ὧν γὰρ ἂν ἰδομεν ἡ ἀκοointmentsision ἢ σοφραντόμεν ἢ γενομένα ἢ ἄφωμεθα, λύσι παρατηρεῖ δὲνοι καὶ φόβοι καὶ ἐπιθυμία συνήταται, μηδενὸς τῶν παθῶν καθ’ αὐτὸ σθένοντος, εἰ μὴ ἔχορηγεῖτο ταῖς διὰ τῶν αἰσθῆσεων παρασκευαῖς.
to the sensible over against intelligible realm,\(^{96}\) and particularly its capacity to oppose νοῦς:

Now the younglings (θρεμμάτων) that are reared among the herd are tame and docile, because they are guided by the care of the herdsman who rules them (ὑπὸ ἐπιστάτου . . . βουκόλου). For those that roam at large and in liberty become wild (ἐξαγριωμένοι) for want of one to tame them, but those who are led by goatherd, neat-herd, shepherd, and the like, the herdsman, that is, who tends whatever kind of animal it may be, must needs be tame and gentle (ἡμερούται). So then, the senses also as a kind (τὸ αἴσθησεων γένος) may be either wild or tame. They are wild (ἀτίθασαν) when, throwing off the control of their herdsman the mind (ἀφηνιάσαν ὁσπέρ βουκόλου τοῦ νοῦ), they are carried away in their unreason (ἀλόγως) into the outer sphere of things perceptible by them (πρὸς τὰ . . . αἰσθητά). They are tame (ἡμερον) when they respond submissively to reflection (λογισμῷ), the ruling element in our compound nature, and accept its guidance and control. (Sacr. 104-06)\(^{97}\)

Here Philo casts αἴσθησις as a non-rational animal in need of a rational ruler (ἐπιστάτης), the mind (νοῦς). With the mind in charge, αἴσθησις functions like an obedient, tame creature.\(^{98}\) But αἴσθησις can become "wild," rejecting the

---


\(^{97}\) Cf. Alcinous “tame” and “wild” emotions (Didask. 32.4 [186.14-18]).

\(^{98}\) E.g., Det. 53: [τιμή] τῆς δὲ αἰσθήσεως τὸ μή ἀφεθῆναι μόνη μὴ φέρεσθαι πρὸς τὰ ἐκτὸς αἰσθητά, ἐγχαλινοθήναι δὲ ὑπὸ νοῦ κυβερνᾶν καὶ ἤνιοχεῖν τὰς ἀλόγους ἐν ἡμῖν δυνάμεις ἐπισταμένου.
authority of reason and bringing destructive chaos to the soul.\textsuperscript{99} This sort of relation between νοῦς and αἴσθησις fits Philo’s general characterization of Middle-Platonic bipartition: a rational element placed over a non-rational element, one capable of opposing or even usurping reason’s hegemony. This emphasis on the νοῦς-αἴσθησις dichotomy allows Philo to press another model of the soul, an otherwise Stoic model, into Middle-Platonic service.

\textit{Reason over against "Stoic" Non-Rational Soul}

For Stoics, the soul has eight parts: the rational mind (ήγεμονικόν), plus the five senses, the faculty of speech, and the faculty of reproduction.\textsuperscript{100} On the surface, this Stoic model resembles Philo’s Middle-Platonic dichotomy of νοῦς-αἴσθησις: not only does the Stoic soul divide into a rational and a non-rational component (ήγεμονικόν plus collective seven), but the senses account for five of the seven non-rational parts. So a loose description of both models as rational mind over non-rational sense-perception fits the data reasonably well. In terms of moral psychology, however, the two models are fundamentally incompatible. The non-rational parts of the Stoic soul operate only by order of the ήγεμονικόν in a strictly instrumental capacity.\textsuperscript{101} Under no circumstances would—or could—

\textsuperscript{99} E.g., Agr. 58: οἱ μὲν γὰρ τροφᾶς ταῖς αἰσθήσεις διὰ τῆς τῶν αἰσθητῶν ἀφθονίας εὔτρεπτιζόμενοι, δούλοι γίνονται τῶν τρεφομένων καθάπερ δεσποίναις οἰκείται φόρον τελοῦντες καθ’ ἐκάστην ἡμέραν ἀναγκαίον, ἀρχοντες δὲ οἱ τούτων ἐπιστατούντες καὶ τὰ περιττὰ τῆς εἰς ἀπληστίαν ὀρμῆς αὐτῶν ἐπιστομιζόντες; Leg. 2.49: ἕνεκα τῆς αἰσθήσεως ὁ νοῦς, ὅταν αὐτῇ δουλωθῇ, καταλείπει καὶ τὸν πατέρα τῶν ὅλων θεῶν καὶ τὴν μητέρα τῶν συμπάντων, τὴν ἄρετην καὶ σοφίαν τοῦ θεοῦ ... ἵνα γένωνται μία σάρξ καὶ ἐν πάθος οἱ δύο.


\textsuperscript{101} Inwood, \textit{Ethics and Human Action}, 33.
αἰσθήσις ever oppose, let alone usurp, the ἡγεμονικόν.102 But Philo, who clearly knows and cites the Stoic eight-part model,103 nevertheless characterizes its non-rational component as an antagonist of reason, able not only to oppose but even to supplant and enslave its rightful sovereign:

[S]ix of [the faculties within us] wage ceaseless and continuous war on land and sea, namely the five senses (αἱ τε πέντε αἰσθήσεις) and speech (ὁ προφορικὸς λόγος), the former in their craving for the objects of sense (αἱ μὲν πόθῳ αἰσθητῶν), deprivation of which is painful to them, speech because with unbridled mouth (ἄχαλινῳ στόματι) it perpetually gives utterance where silence is due. But the seventh faculty is the dominant mind (ἡ περὶ τὸν ἡγεμόνα νοῦν), which, after triumphing over the six and returning victorious through its superior strength (δυνάμειας Ῥώμης κατακρατήσας), welcomes solitude and rejoices in its own society. (Abr. 28-30)104

Philo's omission here of the faculty of reproduction, making a soul of seven parts instead of the canonical eight, illustrates his general practice of co-opting the Stoic model and forcing it into a Middle-Platonic mold.105 He has no real

102 Because αἰσθήσις clearly does function in this way for Philo, his understanding of αἰσθήσις simply cannot be called Stoic (cf. Pohlenz, Philon, 456-57, esp. 456: "[F]ür ihn wächst die Aisthesis weit über die Rolle hinaus, die ihr nach der Stoa zukommen kann. Sie wird zu einem selbstständigen seelischen Vermögen, das dem Nus wohl unentbehrlieh für die Erkenntnis der Außenwelt ist und ihm damit gute Dienste tut, aber zugleich, da es auch die sinnlichen Triebe umfaßt, sein ständiger Widerpart wird und an die Stelle tritt, die in der griechischen Philosophie das Alogon einnimmt.

103 E.g., Opif. 117: τῆς ἡμετέρας ψυχῆς τὸ δίχα τοῦ ἡγεμονικοῦ μέρος ἐπταχῆ σχίζεται, εἰς πέντε αἰσθήσεις καὶ τὸ φυσιτήριον ὄργανον καὶ ἐπὶ πάσι τὸ γόνυμον (cf. Det. 168; Mut. 111; Her. 232; Leg. 1.11).


105 Philo knows all seven of the Stoic non-rational parts, he simply chooses to omit one (cf. Det. 168: τὸ ἄλογον τῆς ψυχῆς εἰς ἐπτά διανέμεται μοίρας, ὄρασιν ἀκοήν ἀσφησθεῖν γεώιν ἀφὴν λόγον γόνυμον; also Mut. 111, Leg. 1.11; on antagonism between the reproductive faculty and reason, see Det. 100-103, esp. 102, 170-74, esp. 174). For another example of Philo's recasting of the Stoic model as Middle-Platonic bipartition, see Agr. 30-34. On Philo's use of the Stoic model, see also Carlos Lévy, ""Le concept de doxa des Stoïciens à Philon d’Alexandrie: essai d'étude diachronique" in Passions and Perceptions (ed. J. Brunswig and M. Nussbaum; Cambridge, 1992), 250-84, esp. 275-84.
commitment to the Stoic doctrine, but he does insist on the Middle-Platonic bipartition of rational over against non-rational, with the patently non-Stoic assumption of antagonism between the two components. The Stoic formulation simply gives Philo more options when speaking of the soul's non-rational part: reason's non-rational antagonist can be αἰθοθεσίς (as in the Middle-Platonic νοῦς-αἰθοθεσίς dichotomy), or the faculty of reproduction, or the faculty of speech.

Philo does not endorse a Stoic understanding of the soul—he merely superimposes Middle-Platonic bipartition onto a Stoic formulation, always presuming a moral psychology incompatible with Stoic monism.

Summary

Despite a variety of formulations, Philo ultimately endorses one basic model of the soul, setting rational over against non-rational in an often antagonistic bipartition:

**Table Two: Variations of Bipartition in Philo's Writings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>&quot;PLATONIC&quot;</th>
<th>APPETITE</th>
<th>IMPULSE</th>
<th>EMOTION</th>
<th>SENSE- PERCEPTION</th>
<th>&quot;STOIC&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>THREE PARTS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RATIONAL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>λόγος</td>
<td>λόγος</td>
<td>λόγος</td>
<td>λόγος</td>
<td>λόγος (νοῦς)</td>
<td>λόγος</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NON-RATIONAL</td>
<td>θύμος</td>
<td>ὀρεξίς</td>
<td>ὀρμή</td>
<td>πάθος</td>
<td>αἰσθησίς</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ἐπιθυμία</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;STOIC&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EIGHT PARTS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Philo's Middle-Platonic contemporaries offered him various ways of framing his discourse on ἐπιθυμία. Undoubtedly, Plato's conviction that the soul contains an independent, enduring source of non-rational desire exerts a powerful influence: the term ἐπιθυμία stands often as a reference to either the Platonic faculty of desire (i.e., τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν) or the operation of that faculty (i.e., ἐπιθυμίαι)—either, to use Platonic imagery, the beast itself or the beast in action.\(^\text{107}\) Philo's Middle-Platonic moral psychology, however, allows for greater technical precision and more sophisticated, variant conceptions of the phenomenon of desire. Philo can, for example, identify ἐπιθυμία as an ἀλογος ὑπερεξίας. In addition, he understands that ἐπιθυμία bears analysis as an impulse (ὁρμή), which in turn allows him to speak of transient instances of desire in the more abstract technical language of impulse. Or Philo can speak of ἐπιθυμία as an emotion (πάθος), although he sides with contemporary Middle Platonists by asserting that the emotion of desire, as a function of the non-rational, "emotional" part of the soul, is both natural and amoral. Philo's dichotomy of νοῦς-αἰθήσιως offers him not only another model of bipartition, but also another way of envisioning desire: non-rational αἰσθήσιως yearning for the attractions of the sensible world.\(^\text{108}\)

\(^{107}\) For Philo's Platonic identification of τὸ ἐπιθυμητικὸν (ἐπιθυμία) as a beast, see esp. Spec. 1.148: ἀλόγου θρέμματος, ἐπιθυμίας; also Abr. 160: τὸ σύμφυτον ἡμίν θρέμμα . . . τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν; Leg. 1.69: τύχηδι δὲ τῷ ἀτιθασσότῳ ζῷῳ τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν [Μουσῆς] εἶκεν; Contempl. 74: τῷ θρεμμάτων ἀπληστότατον . . . τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν; QE 1.19 (Gk. Petit): πολυκεφάλῳ θρέμματι τῶν ἐν ἡμίν. 

\(^{108}\) E.g., Her. 109: αἰσθήσιον δὲ ἀκόρεστον, ἐμφυσιμένην μὲν αἰεὶ τῶν αἰσθητῶν, ὅπο ὃ ἀκράτορος τῆς ἐπιθυμίας μηδέποτε ἐμπληθῆναι δυναμένην; Abr. 29: αἱ τὲ πέντε αἰσθήσεις . . . αἱ μὲν πόθων αἰσθητῶν; Agr. 58: ἄρχοντες δὲ οἱ τούτον [τῶν αἰσθησεών] ἐπιστατοῦντες καὶ τὰ περιττὰ τῆς εἰς ἀπληστὰν ὅρμης αὐτῶν ἐπιστομίζοντες; Somn. 2.267: τὸ κτηνώδες θρέμμα,
same notion of non-rational αἰσθησις, but adding the two non-rational faculties of reproduction and speech, Philo used a reworked Stoic model for his Middle-Platonic moral psychology, facilitating, for example, his discussion of the desire to speak and the desire to keep silent. All of these various conceptions of the soul and its faculties make it possible for Philo to understand and describe any given instance of desire in a variety of equivalent ways. But no instance of ἐπιθυμία, however described, necessarily represents for Philo an ethical problem or malfunction of the soul. When Philo wants to speak of desire as an aberration, he turns to other conceptual models.

PROBLEMATIC MALFUNCTIONS OF DESIRE

Passionate Desire (ἀμετρος ἐπιθυμία)

In Philo’s view, the term ἐπιθυμία can refer also to "passionate desire," meaning non-rational desire that has overstepped the bounds of reason. For Middle Platonists, as for Plato, ἐπιθυμία as such was normal and morally unobjectionable—an inevitable, often useful, ingredient of human life. But certainly there were problematic manifestations of ἐπιθυμία, so Plato’s heirs needed a precise model for explaining the mechanics of problematic desire to match the elaborate moral psychology of the Stoics. For the Stoics, problematic movements of the soul belonged categorically under one rubric, "passion"
(πάθοςς): the passions (πάθη), including ἐπιθυμία, were always and inherently bad. But for Middle Platonists, the term πάθος did not bear such an exclusively negative meaning. So despite the appeal—from the standpoint of systematic moral theory—of having one designated class of problematic phenomena, the label πάθος by itself simply would not work (as it did for the Stoics) because of its moral ambiguity. The technical Stoic definition of πάθος, however, was more promising, especially the designation of πάθος as "excessive impulse" (πλεονάζουσα ὀρμή). Stoics and Middle Platonists, despite radically different views of the human soul, could agree that (1) the soul generates impulses (ὁρμαί); (2) some impulses are unobjectionable, some are problematic; and (3) human appetition, generally speaking, bears analysis as either an unobjectionable or a problematic impulse. Middle Platonists, then, could preserve the analytic value of the Stoic category πάθος (despite the ambiguity of the term from a Platonic perspective) by focusing on the term ὀρμή and endorsing—albeit reinterpreting—the Stoic idea that a πάθος consists of a πλεονάζουσα ὀρμή.

What did the Stoics mean by "excessive impulse"? In accordance with Stoic psychology, the impulse had to be a rational impulse, a function of the mind, because the Stoics denied the existence of non-rational impulses in adult human beings. But in what sense is the impulse "excessive"? Ultimately, the excess lies in a faulty—but nevertheless reasoned—assessment of something's

---

110 E.g., DL 7.110: αὑτὸ τὸ πάθος κατὰ Ζήνωνα . . . ὀρμή πλεονάζουσα [=SVF III 99, 32-33]; ESE 10: πάθος δ’ εἶναι φασιν ὀρμήν πλεονάζουσαν [=SVF III 92, 11].
111 On this question, see Inwood, Ethics and Human Action, 165-73.
value: an excessive, exorbitant appraisal. The notion is strictly qualitative: an excessive impulse differs in quality from a non-excessive impulse in the same way that strict alternatives like "correct" and "incorrect" differ from one another. In this qualitative model, the only way to eliminate an "excessive impulse" is to abandon an incorrect rational assessment and make a different (correct) rational assessment. Nothing in the Stoic sources suggests a quantitative notion of excess: the idea that an impulse, whose essential nature never changes, proceeds along an incremental scale of measurement until at some point it goes too far, becoming too powerful, too intense, too big. On the contrary, the term πλεονάζουσα ὀρμή denoted for the Stoics the quality of a rational impulse.

The earliest extant evidence for a Middle-Platonic definition of πάθος using the Stoic terms πλεονάζουσα ὀρμή comes from Eudorus of Alexandria. Unfortunately, no explanation survives from Eudorus of what he meant by that definition. If he simply meant what the Stoics meant, he would have endorsed the

---

112 Cf. Frede, "Stoic Affections," 107: Due to their faulty assessments of objects, moral agents "feel impelled towards them or away from them, with an intensity which stands in no comparison to their real value, and which hence is excessive."

113 Impulse was a principal topic in Eudorus' system of ethics: Ταῦτα ἐστὶ τὰ πρὸς μέρη τοῖς ἠθικοῖς λόγου θεωρητικοῖς, ὀρμητικοῖς, πρακτικοῖς (Mazz. 1.10 [=Eclog. 42.23]; cf. Bonazzi, "Eudorus' Psychology"). He took an interest in both the taxonomy of impulse (ἐἴδος) and the relation between impulse and passions, in particular the notion of passion as an "excessive impulse": Ὑπὸ δὲ περὶ τῆς ὀρμῆς λόγου οὐ μὲν ἐστὶ περὶ τῆς εἰδικῆς ὀρμῆς, ὡς ὑπὸ περὶ παθῶν. Ἡ χάρι πᾶν πάθος ὀρμή πλεονάζουσα, ἥ τα γέ πλειότα μεθὸς ὀρμῆς καὶ τὰ ἄρρωστήματα (Mazz. 1.23-24 [=Eclog. 44.3-6]). Ps.-Timaeus (TL 73-74) similarly attests a Middle-Platonic use of Stoic terminology (πλεονάζει... ὀρμῶσι) with reference to the passions (πάθεις), which both Tobin (Timaioi Lokri, 79, n. 35) and Baltes (Timaioi Lokros, 206-07) identify as an allusion to the Stoic definition, πάθος = ὀρμῆ πλεονάζουσα. Plutarch uses the same Middle-Platonic concept of πάθος: τὰ δὲ πάθη οἰδομῆτε ὀρμῶσι (An. corp. 501 D [identified as an allusion to the Stoic definition also by Francesco Becchi, "Plutarco tra Platonismo e Aristotelismo: La Filosofia come ΠΙΛΑΔΕΙΑ,” in Plutarco, Platón y Aristóteles: Actas del V Congreso Internacional de la I.P.S. : Madrid-Cuenca, 4-7 de mayo de 1999 (ed. Aurelio Peréz Jiménez et al.; Madrid: Ediciones Clásicas, 1999), 25-43, 32] cf. Virt. mor. 444 B-C).
Stoic theory of impulse, which in turn implies an endorsement of Stoic monistic psychology. In that case, his association with Middle Platonism, which disagreed so sharply with the Stoics on the fundamentals of moral psychology, becomes difficult to explain. A more likely conjecture would have Eudorus revising the Stoic definition in accordance with the tenets of Middle-Platonic moral psychology. Given Middle Platonism’s strong association of impulse with the non-rational part of the soul, the impulse in question would most certainly be a non-rational impulse (ἐλαχιστός ὀρμή). Since non-rational impulses (like emotions) are not problematic as such, but only become problematic when they overstep the bounds of reason, "excessive" would then denote a non-rational impulse whose measure exceeds proper limits and becomes "immoderate" in a quantitative sense. When the bounds of reason are transgressed—precisely at that moment—an otherwise benign impulse of emotion (say, fear or desire) becomes a passion, a morally problematic, injurious force within the soul. In other words, based on what is otherwise known of Middle-Platonic moral psychology, a Middle Platonist speaking of πάθος as πληθυσμός ὀρμή would almost certainly have meant the excessive quantity of a non-rational impulse, not excessive sense.

---

114 Cf. Dillon, Middle Platonists, 122: "Eudorus’ terminology is as fully Stoic as that of Antiochus [of Ascalon], although, like Antiochus, he would not have admitted that it was distinctively Stoic, but would claim it as the normal current language of philosophic discourse. We, from our perspective, attach too much importance to ferreting out Stoic, and even Epicurean, terms, in Platonic writers. By Eudorus’ time, the technical language of philosophy was very largely uniform. Only the meanings given to certain terms by the various schools might differ" (emphasis added). For an example of Eudorus’ revision of Stoic formulations in the area of physics, see Mauro Bonazzi, “Eudoro di Alessandria alle origini del platonismo imperiale,” in L’eredità platonica: studi sul platonismo da Arcesilao a Proclo (ed. Mauro Bonazzi and Vincenza Celluprica; Elenchos 45; Naples: Bibliopolis, 2005), 117-60, esp. 127-49.

115 Cf. Bonazzi, “Eudorus’ Psychology.”
the aberrant quality of a rational impulse.\textsuperscript{116} Exactly this sort of Middle-Platonic reinvention of Stoic ideas appears in the writings of Philo.

In his most obvious citation of the Stoic definition, Philo adds one qualifying term, as if to clarify precisely what he means:

On the one hand, every "passion" (πάθος) is reprehensible (ἐπίληπτον), since we are responsible (ὑπαίτιος) for every unmeasured "excessive impulse" (ἀμέτρος καὶ πλεονάζουσα ὀρμή). (Spec. 4.79)\textsuperscript{117}

Philo grants, along with the Stoics, that a passion is an "excessive impulse"—but by "excessive" he means "immoderate" (ἀμέτρος), something quite different from what the Stoics had in mind. The term ἀμέτρος denotes quantitative excess:

going beyond the proper measure (μέτρον) imposed by reason.\textsuperscript{118} As a natural

\textsuperscript{116} John Dillon, Middle Platonists, 77, entertains this idea as a possibility but does not explore it further or mention it in connection with Eudorus. Speaking of Antiochus of Ascalon, he writes: "Antiochus, then, accepted the Stoic ideal of apatheia (freedom from passion) as opposed to the Academic-Peripatetic metriopatheia (moderation in the passions). It is not impossible, however, that Antiochus took the Stoic term and gave it a meaning consonant with Peripateticism. After all, he could argue, a passion is defined as an 'immoderate impulse' (hormê pleonazousa); if an impulse is under the control of moderation, it is not pleonazousa, and therefore not a passion 'within the meaning of the Act'. There were, after all, in Stoic theory, so-called 'equable states' (eupatheiai) corresponding to all of the pathê (except Distress, of which there could be no reasonable form), and it would not have been beyond the wit of Antiochus to equate these with the Peripatetic 'means'. The difference, he might well say, is more verbal than real." Just such a connection between the Peripatetic notion of mean (μέσον) and the term πλεονάζειν appears in Eth. nic. 1106 a 29-33: λέγω δὲ τοῦ μὲν πράγματος μέσον τὸ ἰον ἀπέχον ἣ τὸ ἐκατέρων τῶν ἄκρων, ὅπερ ἐστὶν ἐν καὶ ταύτιν πάσιν, πρὸς τῆς δὲ ὁ μήτε πλεονάζει μήτε ἐλλείπει (cited by Francesco Becchi, "Platonismo medio ed etica Plutarchea," Prometheus 7 (1981): 125-45 [part one], 263-84 [part two], 275, in the context of Middle-Platonic theories of virtue).

\textsuperscript{117} My translation. Cf. Virt. mor. 444 B-C. Inwood, Ethics and Human Action, cites Virt. mor. 450 E – 451 B & 444 C (304, n. 193) understanding Plutarch to mean that "excessiveness of impulse" is "a reference to the exceeding of some ideal and moderate degree of emotion in the soul" (170).

\textsuperscript{118} Cf. Agr. 70: σὺν πλεονήμι ὀρμήν πέραν ἐκφέρεται τοῦ μέτρου. NB the task of reason in Spec. 4.79: μέτρα ταῖς ὀρμαῖς ὀρίζειν (cf. Petit, QE N° 24 [Fragments non identifiés]: ὑψόμετρα πλεονάζοντα τὸν ὅψων ὑπερβαίνει ὡς γίνεσθαι τὴν μὲν ἀμέτρον φρόνησιν πανοργίαν, τὴν δὲ σωφροσύνην φειδωλίαν, τὴν δὲ ἀνδρείαν θραυσύτητα); cf. Plutarch, Virt. mor. 444 B: τὴν δὲ ὀρμήν τοῖς πάθεις τοις ἑκάστοις, λόγου δεομένην ὀρίζοντος, ὡς μετρία παρὴ καὶ μὴ ὑπερβάλλη μὴ-ἐγκαταλείπη τὸν καιρὸν. On the ethics of measure in Middle Platonism,
component of the human soul, non-rational impulse (ὁρμή) poses no threat while it operates within the bounds of reason. If, however, an impulse exceeds those bounds (i.e., if the non-rational force usurps reason's control), it becomes morally problematic (a "passion"). For a Middle Platonist like Philo, the term ἄμετρος best captured what was actually going wrong with the impulse; but the Stoic technical term πλεονάζειν worked as a synonym, and this equivalence enabled a deliberate pressing of the Stoic definition of "passion" into Middle-Platonic service.¹¹⁹

This Middle-Platonic reinvention of Stoic technical terminology allowed Philo to speak with greater precision about problematic desire over against amoral desire. Desire itself—understood variously as the Platonic ἐπιθυμητικόν, ἀλογος ὑπεξίς, a type of ὁρμή, a useful emotion (πάθος), or some other expression of the non-rational soul (e.g., αἰσθησίς)—was unobjectionable. But passionate desire—understood as an excessive (i.e., immoderate) desiderative impulse, and thus a "passion" by Stoic definition—was unquestionably a moral problem. In Her. 245, among the "deadly and irreconcilable enemies of the soul," Philo lists δαι ἄλλα τι πλεοναζούσης ὁρμής εἰώθαι φύεσθαι ἀλογοι


Cf. Didask. 32.2 [186.6-7]: πλεονάζει μέντοι ἐν τῷ λυπεύοντα καὶ ὀχλεύοντα, on which Whittaker, Alcinoos, 148, n. 519: "Le terme stoïcien πλεονάζω (cf. SVF I. 205 et III. 479, etc.) a été adopté tant par les Moyen-platoniciens (cf. Eudore d'Alexandrie ap. Stobée, Anth. II. 44. 5 W.; Philon d'Alexandrie, De spec. leg. IV. 79; Plutarque, De virt. mor. 441 C; Timée de Locres 222. 14 M.) que par les Péripatéticiens (cf. Arius Didyme ap. Stobée, Anth. II. 38. 18-24 W.)."
έπιθυμία, stating plainly that ἄλογοι ἐπιθυμίαι stem from "excessive impulse" (ἐκ πλεοναζούσης ὀρμῆς). He is obviously making use of the Stoic definition, but in Stoic theory an "excessive" desiderative impulse would simply be ἐπιθυμία: the term "irrational desire" (ἄλογος ἐπιθυμία), from their perspective, makes no sense, because ἐπιθυμία is always irrational—there is no other type. For a Middle Platonist, however, the term ἐπιθυμία by itself denotes the non-rational desire inherent in the soul, whose presence and operation do not necessarily result in irrational behavior, provided that reason stays in control. Only when the impulse of non-rational desire oversteps the bounds of reason does desire become "irrational": a non-rational desire usurps reason and becomes a dangerous force, capable of motivating a rational being to act contrary to reason (i.e., irrationally). So for Philo, as Her. 245 illustrates, ἄλογος ἐπιθυμία designates "irrational desire"—in other words, problematic desire, which appears only when an otherwise natural desiderative impulse oversteps reason and becomes "immoderate" (πλεονάζουσα / ἁμετρος).\footnote{Cf. Somn. 2.276: οἱ μὲν ἐπὶ συνηγοριῶν ἡδονῆς καὶ ἐπιθυμίας καὶ πάθης πλεονάζουσης ὀρμῆς ἐτράποντο, ἄλογον πάθος ἐπιτειχίζοντες ἤγεμόνι λογισμῷ (NB the equivalence of ἐπιθυμία, πλεονάζουσα ὀρμή, and ἄλογον πάθος). Despite the apparently Stoic identification of ἐπιθυμία with πλεονάζουσα ὀρμή, Philo betrays his Middle-Platonic position by referring to this as an ἄλογον πάθος. For the Stoics every πάθος was irrational, so the term ἄλογον πάθος would strike them as redundant. But for a Middle-Platonist, who believes that non-rational ἐπιθυμία need not be "irrational," the term ἄλογον πάθος makes perfect sense: an excessive desiderative impulse represents an otherwise useful emotion (πάθος) that has become problematic and thus "irrational" (ἄλογον) This is precisely the idea underlying Philo's use of ἄλογος ἐπιθυμία in Her. 245. In other words, a non-rational force no longer under the control of reason, operating contrary to reason, is "irrational." Cf. εὔλογον πάθος in Her 192, in reference to a non-rational emotion that is not irrational (opposed to reason) but "eurational" (obedient to reason). This is the Middle-Platonic version of Stoic εὔπάθεια (see also Plutarch, Virt. mor. 448 F: πάθος . . . ἀκολουθοῦν τῷ λόγῳ; 449 A: πάθη προσπιθέμενα . . . τῷ λογισμῷ; 449 B: γίνεται.
revised Stoic definition of passion ( ámbetos καὶ πλεονάζουσα ὀρμή), Philo cites the task of reason as μέτρα ταῖς ὀρμαίς ὀρίζειν (see Spec. 4.79). Reason must impose boundaries on non-rational desire as such (ἐπιθυμία), lest it become passionate desire ( ámbetos ἐπιθυμία). This Middle-Platonic revision of Stoic terminology underlies expressions such as μέτρα ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις περιθείναι (Cherub. 33) and [ἐπιθυμίαις] μέτρους περιορίζειν (Spec. 4.217). Since ἐπιθυμία bears analysis as an impulse, πλεονάζουσα ( ámbetos) ἐπιθυμία simply represents a more specific instance of πλεονάζουσα ( ámbetos) ὀρμή, both of which are morally problematic. With the concept of "immoderation" ( ámbetría), Philo was able to clearly distinguish passionate desire from amoral desire, using a reinvented Stoic definition of passion.

121 NB Plant. 105: ἀμέτρων ἐπιθυμιῶν; Legat. 162: τῆς ἀμέτρου ... ἐπιθυμίαις; Prov. 2.70: τὴν ἀμετρίαν τῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν; Migr. 21: ἐπιθυμιῶν ... ἀμετρίαις. Cf. Leg. 2.77: ἀμετρία τῶν ἡδονῶν; Leg. 3.111: ἡδονῆς ἀμέτρου; Conf. 117: ἀμέτρους ἡδοναῖς (cf. TL 72: ἀδοναί ἀμετροί).

122 Cf. Spec. 1.343: τὸ δ’ ἀμέτρων μέτρους ἐπιστομίζουσα.

123 And since ἐπιθυμία bears analysis as also a useful emotion (πάθος), the Middle-Platonic use of ámbetos terminology to analyze non-rational impulse applies also to the analysis of non-rational emotion, particularly in connection with the idea of "moderate" emotion (μετριοπάθεια). In Virt. 195, Philo explicitly contrasts μετριοπάθεια with ἡ ἀμετρία τῶν παθῶν, "immoderation of the emotions" (cf. Migr. 18: τὰς ... παθῶν ἀμετρίαις; Migr. 21: παθῶν ἀμετρίαις; Mut. 143: παθῶν ἀμετρίαις; Spec. 3.209: τὰς ἀμετρίαις τῶν παθῶν). For Middle Platonists, the need to distinguish between emotion (πάθος) and passion (πάθος) posed an obvious terminological problem. So they often denoted passion by using terms that ascribed excess or lack of measure to emotion: ἀμετρία τῶν παθῶν designates a "passionate emotion,"
Along with passionate desire (πλεονάζουσα [ἀμετρος] ἐπιθυμία), Philo recognizes a second and even worse type of problematic desire, a "tyrannical desire" (ἐρως), which does not simply overstep the bounds of reason, but instead takes control of the entire soul. Philo's characterization of tyrannical desire relies not on reinvented Stoic terminology but on the writings of Plato himself, who believed that ἐρως can operate as a consuming, injurious, relentless desire for a single beloved object. He describes this type of desire in Books VIII – IX of the Republic through his portrait of the "tyrannical soul." Just as governments

an amoral, potentially useful emotion (πάθος) that exceeds rational bounds and become morally problematic, or "passionate" (cf. πλεονάζουσα [ἀμετρος] ὁμή). Plutarch describes this phenomenon in Virt. mor. 444 C, where he associates τὰς ἀμετρίας τῶν παθῶν with an impulse (ὁμή) that goes too far (ἐκφέρεται ... πολλῇ ... σφοδρών; cf. ὑπερβάλλοντες τὸ μέτριον [444 B]). Evidence of the terminological problem faced by Middle Platonists appears in Didask. 30.5-6 [184.20-36], where Alcinous uses the terms ἀμετρισματικῆς and ὑπερπαθῆς to designate excessive (i.e., "passionate") emotion (cf. ἐν τοῖς πάθεσιν ἀμετρία 30.5 [184.20-21]). (On ἀμετρία in Middle Platonism [including Virt. 195], see Whittaker, Alcinoos, 62, n. 504, who cites Resp. 486 D and Phileb. 52 C in connection with the term; cf. Dillon, Alcinoos, 188-89.)

This clearly negative image of ἐρως from the Republic corresponds with a similar image in Phaedr. 237 D – 238 C, where Socrates defines ἐρως as an ἐπιθυμία that usurps reason and becomes tyrant (238 B: τυραννεύσασα; cf. 238 A: ἐπιθυμίας ... ἀρξάτως ἐν ἡμῖν; 238 B: [sc. ἐπιθυμίας] δυναστευόσας ... κρατήσας ἐπιθυμία). Plato's positive image of ἐρως, by contrast, sees it as a means by which the soul of the philosopher ascends to the realm of true beauty and goodness (see Symp. 210 A – 212 C; Phaedr. 245 B – 257 B). Philo employs also this positive understanding of ἐρως in his writings (e.g. Contempl. 11-12; Praem. 84: ὑπ’ ἐρωτος σύρανεο; Gig. 44; cf. Didask. 1.2 [152.11-12]: ἔρως τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἔχειν ἐρωτικός), on which see esp. Dieter Zeller, Charis bei Philon und Paulus (SBS 142; Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1990), 75-79 [="Der himmlische Eros"] (cf. Peder Borgen, "Heaven Ascent in Philo: An Examination of Selected Passages," in The Pseudepigrapha and Early Biblical Interpretation [ed. James Charlesworth and Craig Evans; JSPSup 14; SSEJC 2; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993], 246-68, esp. 253-56; Holger Thesleff, "Notes on Eros in Middle Platonism," Arctos 28 [1994]: 115-28, esp. 119-20). Both views ascribe to ἐρως a consuming motivational power capable of directing the course of one's life (cf. Post. 157). On Platonic ἐρως in general, see Halperin, "Platonic Erôs"; idem, "Plato and the Metaphysics of Desire," PBACAP 5 (1989): 27-52.
degenerate stepwise from a best to a worst type, souls can degenerate from a best to a worst type, with tyranny representing the worst of both states and souls. The "tyrannical soul" suffers under the hegemony of an overgrown desire (ἐπιθυμία)—a preeminent, tyrannical desire (ἐρως) that dominates not only other competing desires but also the collective operation of the entire soul.125 Without explicitly citing Plato's text, Philo nevertheless clearly demonstrates a familiarity with Plato's description of soul tyranny in the Republic.126 In particular, he incorporates Plato's notion of tyrannical desire (ἐπιθυμία) into his moral psychology to describe the ultimate victory of non-rational desire (ἐπιθυμία) over reason (λόγος).127

---

125 See Resp. 572 E: ἐρωτά τινα . . . προστάτην τῶν . . . ἐπιθυμίων; 573 B: [ἐρως] ὁ προστάτης τῆς ψυχῆς; 573 D: ἐρως τύραννος ἐνδόν οἰκών διακυβερνά τα τῆς ψυχῆς ἄπαντα; 573 E: ἐρωτος, πάσας ταῖς ἄλλας [ἐπιθυμίας] ὀσπερ δορυφόροις ηγουμένου; 575 A: ὁ ἐρως . . . αὐτὸς δὲν μόναρχος. Ἐρως is a type of desire (Phaedr. 237 D: ἐπιθυμία τις ὁ ἐρως), originating in the Platonic ἐπιθυμητικόν. Philo clearly associates ἐρως with ἡ ἐπιθυμία (i.e. the ἐπιθυμητικόν) in Conf. 21. Cf. the scholium on Didask. 34.3 [188.30-35] from the ninth-century codex Parisinus Graecus 1862 (see Whittaker, Alcinoos, 167), which correlates the various constitutions of Resp. IX with the corresponding parts of the Platonic soul: κατὰ τὸ λογικόν: ἡ ἀριστοκρατική; κατὰ τὸ θυμικόν: ἡ τιμοκρατική; κατὰ τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν: ἡ δημοκρατική, ἡ ὀλιγαρχική, καὶ ἡ τυραννίς.

126 Esp. Agr. 45-46, where Philo speaks of "bad governments" (κακοπολιτείων), noting the danger of "mob rule" (ἀχλοκρατία [= δημοκρατία of Resp. VIII]), and the even greater danger of an arising tyrant (τύραννος), which in cities involves a man (πόλεων μὲν ἀνθρώπος), but in body and soul involves a savage mind (σώματος δὲ καὶ ψυχῆς . . . θηριωδέστατος νοοῦ). See also Leg. 2.91: τυράννου τρόπου; Leg. 3.80: ὁ . . . τύραννος νοοῦς; Conf. 164: τὰς τῶν τυράννων τύχας (cf. Colson, PLCL 4, 558); Prob. 45: ὃσπερ τῶν πόλεων αἱ μὲν ὀλιγαρχοῦμεναι καὶ τυραννοῦμεναι δουλεύειν ὑπομένουσα . . . οὕτως καὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων; Abr. 242: ἀντὶ τυραννίδον καὶ δυναστείων ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ.

127 Cf. Emma Wasserman, The Death of the Soul in Romans 7 (WUNT 256; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 60-76 [= "The Death of the Soul in Philo of Alexandria"]. Wasserman similarly notes the influence of Resp. VIII and IX on Philo's Platonic notion of an inferior part of the soul utterly defeating reason, but she does not explore this connection in terms of ἐρως (tyrannical desire). Instead, she suggests a link between Philo's motif of "soul death" (e.g., Leg. 1.105-107) and the "extreme immorality" (broadly conceived) represented by Plato's image of tyranny in the Republic (see 67-76 [="Extreme Immorality in Platonic Discourse"], esp. 67-70).
"Ερως as Advanced Grade of Desire

Unlike useful desire, which dutifully submits to reason's command, passionate desire and tyrannical desire both counteract reason, but to different extents, and in different ways. Generally speaking, passionate desire and tyrannical desire correspond to the ethical categories of "lack of self-control" (ἀκρασία) and "intemperance" (ἀκολασία), which in turn represent two distinct dynamic relations between non-rational desire (ἐπιθυμία) and reason (λόγος) within the soul. In the case of passionate desire, ἐπιθυμία impulsively counteracts the dictates of reason—overstepping the bounds of reason (becoming ἀ-μετρος)—despite reason's attempt to enforce those dictates. In other words, desire forcibly asserts its inclination over against the inclination of reason in a contest of power. The moral agent simply does not have the requisite power (κράτος) to control desire (i.e., ἀ-κρασία), and thus acts under compulsion "against his or her will." In the case of tyrannical desire, however, the moral agent no longer experiences internal conflict, because desire has defeated reason entirely. Desire has become the undisputed ruler of the soul, a tyrant.

128 In descending order of moral value, the four relations are "self-mastery" (σωφροσύνη), in which reason enjoys uncontested dominion over compliant desire; "self-control" (ἐγκράτεια), in which reason asserts contested control over opposing desire; "lack of self-control" (ἀκρασία), in which desire asserts contested control over opposing reason; and "intemperance" (ἀκολασία), in which desire enjoys uncontested dominion over compliant reason. The ethical theory underlying this scale of morality comes from Book VII of Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics (see Helen North, Sophrosyne: Self-Knowledge and Self-Restraint in Greek Literature [CSCP 35; Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966], 203). For the scale from a Middle-Platonic perspective similar to Philo's, see Plutarch Virt. mor. 445 B – 446 C.

129 E.g., Abr. 135: ὁ δὲ ἐλεγχός πρὸς οὐδὲν ἄν ὀφελος, ὑπὸ βιαστέρας νικομένων ἐπιθυμίας.
whose agenda determines the overall orientation and course of life. The moral agent, whose reason offers no opposition—no correction (κόλασις) of desire's errant ways (i.e., σκλασία)—acts as the compliant slave of desire. In terms of moral psychology, what this means is that the invariable, sole aim of ἔπιθυμία, which the Platonic tradition identifies as pleasure (ἡδονή), has become the invariable, sole aim of the moral agent, who thus becomes a "Lover of Pleasure" (φιλήδονος). Just as ἔπιθυμία can invariably seek pleasure through a variety of means (food, money, fame), tyrannical desire (ἐρως) can invariably represent "love of pleasure" (φιλήδονία) despite a variety of distinct means to pleasure. Philo speaks of the trouble caused by:

130 Cf. Annas, "Humans and Beasts," on Resp. VIII – IX: "[T]he 'tyrannical' man is the only one to have lost all overall control, once a master desire has been implanted within him" (129).

131 Cf. los. 40: εὕρως ἁκολάστου; Spec. 3.65: ἁκολασίας . . . ἦν ἐνιοί . . . ἑρωτα ἁνομάζοναι. On the slavery imposed by (tyrannical) desire, see Her. 269: ἡ δουλεία . . . ὅταν δὲ ἐπιθυμία κρατήσῃ, ἑρωτὸς ἐγγίνεται τῶν ἀπόντων. In Leg. 2.90-91, Philo associates the absence of discipline (παιδεία [cf. κόλασις]) with the eventual rise of tyranny in the soul.

132 Philo sees ὁ φιλήδονος as a particular type (τρόπος) of soul (Leg. 3.212: φιλήδονος τρόπος; Sobr. 24: φιλήδονον . . . ἐν ψυχῇ τρόπων) equivalent to the tyrannical soul—in other words, a soul dominated by desire and possessed of ἁκολασία: e.g., los. 151-153: ὁ φιλήδονος . . . ταῖς ἀκαθέκτοις ἐπιθυμίαις χαριζόμενοι οἷς ἐν προστάτεωσι εἶκοντες; Leg. 3.37-38: τὸν . . . τέλος ἐγνώμενον τὰς ἠδόνας . . . τὸν φιλήδονον; Opif. 165-66: διελεσθείς [λογισμὸς τῇ ἡδονῇ] ὑπήκους ἀνθῆγεμόνος, δούλος ἀντὶ δεσπότου; Spec. 3.23: ἡ ὀάκολασία καὶ φιληδονία; Leg. 2.90: εἶν γὰρ ὡς ψυχὴ ἀπορρηψύ τὴν παιδείαν (cf. ἁκολασία), γέγονε φιλήδονος. Cf. Ronocchia, "Anti-Epicurean Polemic," 93: "Philo never tires of attacking in his writings the 'pleasure-seeker' (ἡδονικός) or 'pleasure lover' (φιλήδονος) who has chosen pleasure as the only yardstick of judgment and has made it his supreme rule of life" (emphasis added). Philo's disdain for the φιλήδονος may indeed reflect a polemic against Epicurean philosophy, but he understands the moral psychology of hedonism along fundamentally Platonic lines. (On the Epicurean notion of pleasure as "the good," see LS 21A-X, esp. 21B, line 2 [from Epicurus, Letter to Menoeceus]: τὴν ἡδονὴν ἀρχήν καὶ τέλος λέγομεν εἰναι τοῦ μακρίως ζήν· ταύτην γὰρ ἄγαθον πρῶτον καὶ συγγενικὸν ἔγγονες; cf. John Cooper, "Pleasure and Desire in Epicurus," in Reason and Emotion: Essays on Ancient Moral Psychology and Ethical Theory [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999], 485-514.)
tirannical desire for money (χρημάτων ἔρως) or a woman (ἡ γυναικός) or fame (ἡ δόξης) or any other source of pleasure (ἡ τίνος ἄλλου τῶν ἠδονήν ἀπεργαζόμενων) . . . (Decal. 151)133

Plato's general theory of ἔρως makes a distinction between the object and the aim of ἔρως, which explains for tyrannical desire (ἔρως) the relation between various means and the one ultimate end—pleasure (ἡ ἠδονή).134 For Plato, ἔρως engages the rational mind, whose scope includes the convictions and aspirations of the moral agent, not just the impulsive activity of a non-rational element within the soul.135 Ἐρως fundamentally involves a passionate pursuit of the Beautiful (τὸ καλόν), the object of ἔρως, in an effort to secure the Good (τὸ ἄγαθόν), the ultimate aim of ἔρως.136 By properly evaluating reflections of the Beautiful manifested in a variety of sources in the sensible realm, the student of philosophy can ultimately ascend to the one source of those reflections in the intelligible realm, the Beautiful itself, in order to secure the Good itself, which

---


134 On this distinction, see Halperin, "Platonic Eros", esp. 176-82.

135 Cf. J. M. E. Moravcsik, "Reason and Eros in the 'Ascent'-Passage of the Symposium," in Essays in Ancient Greek Philosophy (ed. J. P. Anton and G. L. Kustas; Albany: State University of New York Press, 1971), 283-302, 290: "Plato is using 'eros' in a wide sense, including any over-all desire or wish for what is taken to be good. The qualification 'over-all' is needed, for Plato is not talking about momentary impulses but about wishes, desires, aspirations that determine the ultimate goals of one's life. Thus eros is not blind passion; it is the wish or desire . . . for things deemed on account of their nature to be worthy of having their attainment become a man's ultimate goal." NB Symp. 205 D: οὖτω τοῖνν καὶ περί τόν ἔρωσα τὸ μὲν κεφάλαιον ἐστὶ πάσα ἡ τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἐπιθυμία καὶ τοῦ εὐδαιμονείν; 206 A: οὐδὲν γε ἄλλο ἐστὶν οὐ ἔρωσιν ἄνθρωποι ἡ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ . . . οἱ ἀνθρώποι τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἔροσιν.

results in happiness (ἐυδαιμονία). But this philosophical use of ἔρως presumes that the moral agent values as good what is truly good. In the case of tyrannical desire, the moral agent operates under the erroneous conviction that pleasure (ήδονή) is good and thus worthy of pursuit. Ὅταν ἔρως ἔγγίνεται τῶν ἀπόντων—a tyrannical desire that racks the soul on unmet expectation as

Philo emphasizes the distinct nature of ἔρως as an advanced grade of desire by representing passionate desire (and thus ἀκρασία) as a preliminary condition that engenders tyrannical desire (and thus ἀκολασία):

When desire prevails within the soul (ὁταν δε ἐπιθυμία κρατήσῃ), a tyrannical desire arises for things one does not have (ἔρως ἔγγίνεται τῶν ἀπόντων)—a tyrannical desire that racks the soul on unmet expectation as
if hanging it on a rope (καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ὥσπερ ἀπ’ ἀγχόνης ἐλπίδος ἀτελοῦς ἐκρέμασε). Always thirsty, yet never able to drink, such a soul suffers the awful fate of Tantalus (διψῇ μὲν γὰρ ἄει, πιεῖν δὲ ἄδυνατεί ταντάλειον τιμωρίαν ὑπομένουσα). (Her. 269)

In order for tyrannical desire to come into existence, ἔπιθυμία must first overpower reason (κρατεῖν), subjecting the soul to passionate desire—or, to put it differently, tyrannical desire is born only in souls predisposed to its genesis by passionate desire and the accompanying state of incontinence (ἀκρασία).

Advancement to this terminal grade of desire invariably brings disaster.

Negative Impact of ἔρως

Once established, tyrannical desire’s hegemony ravages the soul by imposing the “fate of Tantalus” (Her. 269). For Tantalus, this meant the torturous circumstance of being always thirsty yet never able to take a drink. Framed as a more general predicament, this means suffering under an insatiable desire: always wanting something yet never able to get it. This experience of chronic insatiability (ἀπληστία) distinguishes tyrannical desire (ἔρως) from all other types. In fact, only the abject defeat of reason (ἀκολασία) presupposed by tyrannical desire can explain the phenomenon of chronic insatiability. Unlike a physical receptacle such as the stomach, whose physical limits can be reached

---

140 My translation. For the same idea of passionate desire as a preliminary condition engendering ἔρως, see Spec. 4.80-81.
141 See Od. 11.582-92.
143 Gig. 31: ἀπληστος . . . ἔρως (cf. Leg. 3.39: ἀπληστοι τῶν ἀρετῆς ὄντες ἕρωτων).
to induce satiety, desire itself (ἐπιθυμία)—as a function of the soul—has no inherent limit. Philo explains:

[T]he craving of the soul that is out of control is not restricted as the bodily organs are by their size (οὐ γὰρ ἀναλογεῖ τοῖς σωματικοῖς ὁγκοῖς ἢ τῆς ἀκράτορος ὕπερθυμία). These are vessels of a fixed capacity admitting nothing that exceeds it (ἀμέτρον οὐδέν), but ejecting all that is superfluous. Desire is never filled up (ἡ δὲ ἐπιθυμία πληροῦται μὲν οὐδέποτε), but continues always thirsty and in want of more (μένει δὲ ἐνδεής καὶ διψαλέα ἄει). (Leg. 3.149)

Once activated in the soul, desire impulsively extends toward its object, with nothing to limit it other than reason. In the virtuous soul, reason imposes limits, allowing desire to pursue its object only so far as that pursuit serves a rational end: to secure, for example, something necessary or useful. But in the soul under tyrannical desire (ἐρως), reason never exercises its limiting capacity, so nothing counteracts this appetitive extension. The moral agent consumed with tyrannical desire continually holds the object of desire in mind, causing non-rational desire to pursue reflexively the pleasure afforded by that object, which in turn leads to the unending frustration of insatiable desire in a soul racked with longing.

Although Philo alludes to this phenomenon in a variety of passages, he finds it signified explicitly under the allegorical figure of Tubal (LXX: Θοβέλ), a

---

144 What applies here to the ἀκρατος soul applies also to the ἀκόλοστος soul. Desire itself is insatiable, whether the absence of restraining reason is temporary (ἀκρασία) or chronic (ἀκολοσία).

145 Cf. Ebr. 206: καὶ τὰς τοῦ σώματος δεξιμανὰς ἀποπληρωθοῦσι πάσαις, ἢτι κενοὺς τὰς ἐπιθυμίας ὄντας; Contempl. 55: τὰς μὲν γαστέρας ἄρμα φαρύγγων πεπληρωμένοι, κενοὶ δὲ πρὸς τὰς ἐπιθυμίας (also Ebr. 6: ἀπληστίας δὲ [αἰτίαν] ἢ ἀργελεωτάτῃ παθῶν ψυχῆς ἐπιθυμία).
descendant of Cain mentioned in Gen 4:22. Tubal represents for Philo the torturous extension of a soul consumed by a tyrannical desire (ἐρως) for the pleasure (ἡδονή) of false "goods" (ἀγαθά):

[T]he soul of someone vexed by the pleasures derived from either bodily or external "goods" (τοῦ γὰρ σεσοβημένου περὶ τὰς ἡ σωματικὰς ἡδονὰς ἢ τὰς ἡδονὰς [ἡ] τὰς ἐκτὸς ὑλὰς ἢ ψυχῆ) gets hammered thin as if on an anvil, driven by the long and cavernous extensions of its desires.

146 On Philo's etymological interpretation, see Lester L. Grabbe, *Etymology in Early Jewish Interpretation: The Hebrew Names in Philo* (BJS 115; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988). On "Θοβέλ," see idem, 165-66 (cf. 29-33). Grabbe correctly notes that Philo, generally speaking, does not so much draw meaning as inject meaning: "Philo has a definite philosophical and theological system in mind. While certain modifications have been made to accommodate it to Judaism, this system is still evidently a representative of Middle Platonism. Philo is not in reality exegeting the biblical text, any more than the Stoic allegorists exegeted the text of Homer. He is only building an extensive bridgework between the Jewish sacred text and his philosophico-theological system. Although Philo probably would not have thought consciously in such terms, his question is, ultimately, not what the text means but how can he funnel his philosophical system into it" (116). See also David Runia, "Etymology as an Allegorical Technique in Philo of Alexandria," *SPhA* 16 (2004): 101-21.

147 Although the term ἐρως does not appear in *Post.* 116, Philo clearly has ἐρως in mind: (1) the broader context of the passage (*Post.* 113: esp. ὃς δὲ θανατησάμων) alludes to Plato's teaching on ἐρως in the Symposium (211 C: esp. ὠσπερ ἐπαναβαθμίσε; cf. Arnaldez, *PAPM* 6, 110, n.3); (2) Philo links the term σεσοβημένου, which Colson translates as "vehemently concerned," with ἐρως elsewhere (*Her.* 70: ἔρωτι σφραγίω σεσοβημένης); (3) the terms οἴστρον and ἃμερον, which appear in *Post.* 116, signal the involvement of ἐρως (e.g., οἰστρώ and ἃμερος in *Phaedr.* 251 C-E). Philo describes a person whose state of mind is characterized by ἐρως, although distinct instances of desire still bear description with terms like ἐπιθυμία and ὅρεξις, which are both found in *Post.* 116.

148 Cohn emends the text as follows: τοῦ γὰρ σεσοβημένου περὶ τὰς ἡ σωματικὰς ἡδονὰς [ἡ] τὰς ἡδονὰς [ἡ] τὰς ἐκτὸς ὑλὰς ἢ ψυχῆ, suggesting that Philo means "either (1) bodily pleasures or (2) the materials of external things." But the phrase τὰς ἡ σωματικὰς ἡδονὰς (not ἡ τὰς σωματικὰς ἡδονὰς) suggests that Philo has in mind one type of pleasure over against another: τὰς [ἡ] (1) σωματικὰς ἡδονὰς ἢ (2) τὰς ἡδονὰς τὰς ἐκτὸς ὑλὰς. The context of Philo's statement (*Post.* 112-15) clearly shows that he has in mind two classes of false "goods," those related to the body (e.g., health) and those related to the external world (e.g., wealth). "Sella" is a symbol (σύμβολον) of the "goods" of the body and external "goods" (esp. §112: τῶν περὶ σώμα καὶ ἐκτὸς ἄγγελον) and "Tubal" is the "son" of "Sella." In this context, τὰς σωματικὰς ἡδονὰς must refer to pleasures derived from (associated with) "goods" of the body, and τὰς ἡδονὰς τὰς ἐκτὸς ὑλὰς, although an awkward expression, must refer to pleasures derived from (associated with) external "goods," with τὰς ἐκτὸς ὑλὰς serving as an adjective modifying ἡδονὰς, just as σωματικὰς modifies ἡδονὰς. This emphasis on pleasure complements Philo's subsequent emphasis on desire (τὰς τῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν μακρὰς καὶ διώλγυρας ἐκτάσεις), since he understands that ἐπιθυμία fundamentally involves a desire for pleasure.
Philo notes that such people have literally boundless appetites (ταῖς ἀφρόστοις αὐτῶν ὀρέξεσιν [Post. 116]), meaning that their desire is insatiable.¹⁴⁹

Tyrannical desire harms not only the individual, but also the community at large through the individual, whose obsessive pursuit of pleasure via false "goods" leads to lawless behavior and violent conflict. Plato associates tyrannical desire with lawlessness in the Republic, in his portrait of the tyrannical man:

Consumed by tyrannical desire (τυραννευθείς δὲ ύπο έρωτος), he regularly becomes by day the sort of person he scarcely dreamed of becoming at night. He will kill anyone, eat anything, do anything, because the tyrannical desire inside of him (τυραννικός ἐν αὐτῷ ὁ ἔρως) lives in absolute anarchy and lawlessness (ἐν πάσῃ ἀναρχίᾳ καὶ ἀνομίᾳ). As the undisputed ruler of the soul (αὐτὸς ὦν μόναρχος), tyrannical desire will drive (ἀξεῖ) its host, its subject "city" (πόλιν), to dare anything (ἐπὶ πᾶσαιν τόλμαιν) . . . . (Resp. 574 E – 575 A)¹⁵⁰

Philo also links inner tyranny with lawless behavior, in a clear allusion to Plato's Republic:

Anarchy (ἀναρχίᾳ) . . . is not our only danger. We have to dread also the uprising of some aspirant to sovereign power, forcibly setting law at naught (ἵνα καὶ παρανόμου καὶ βιαίου τινὸς ἐφ’ ἡγεμονίαν ἐπανάστασις). For a tyrant is a natural enemy (τύραννος γὰρ ἐκ φύσεως ἐχθράς). In cities this enemy is man (πόλεων μὲν ἀνθρώπος); to body and soul and all the interests of each of these (σώματος δὲ καὶ ψυχῆς καὶ τῶν καθ’ ἐκάτερον πραγμάτων), it is an utterly savage mind, that has turned our inner citadel into a fortress from which to assail us (ὁ τίνα ἀκρόπολιν ἐπιτετειχικῶς ἐκάστῳ θηριωδέστατος νοῦς). (Agr. 46)¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹ Cf. Conf. 117: σὺν ἀμέτροις ἡδοναῖς ἀφρόστοις ἐπιθυμία.
¹⁵⁰ My translation.
¹⁵¹ On ὁ τίνα ἀκρόπολιν ἐπιτετειχικῶς ἐκάστῳ θηριωδέστατος νοῦς, see André Pelletier, "Les passions à l’assaut de l’âme d’après Philon," REG 78 (1965): 52-60, 56. Cf. Leg. 3.79-80: Ἄρχων (βασιλεὺς) is a thing at enmity with a despot (τυράννος), the one being the author of laws, the other of lawlessness (ἀνομίας . . . εἰςηγητῆς). So mind, the despot (ὁ . . . τύραννος
People consumed by tyrannical desire will do anything to get what they want: nothing deters them, not even the law. For instance, Philo in Spec. 4.7 speaks of someone "crazed with a tyrannical desire for what belongs to others" (ἐρωτὶ τῶν ἀλλοτρίων ἐπιμανεῖς), who as a result "attempts to steal" (κλέπτειν ἐπιχειρή). As in Agr. 46, the tyrannical desire for possessions has "set law at naught."

Tyrannical desire leads not only to individual acts of lawlessness, but also to violent conflict among entire groups of people. Philo states this most clearly in his exposition of the Tenth Commandment:

[A]mong the passions, only passionate desire deserves the name “Master Vice,” whose one little offspring (ἐγγόνον) tyrannical desire (ἐρως) has repeatedly filled the world with unspeakable disasters—which, too numerous for land, have spilled out into the sea. Everywhere the vast watery expanse has been filled with ships of war and all the terrible inventions of war. Charging out to sea, their violence runs its course then crashes back like a tide upon the shores of home. (Spec. 4.85)\(^{152}\)

This same idea appears in Philo’s allegorical reading of Tubal, who represents the soul consumed by tyrannical desire (ἐρως)\(^{153}\) and thus all "war makers" (δημιουργοὶ ... πολέμου):

[And that is why they are said to be workers in iron and bronze,\(^{154}\) and these are the instruments with which wars are waged (ὅτι ᾧν οἱ πόλεμοι). For any who are looking into the matter would find, that the greatest quarrels both of men individually and of states corporately, have arisen in the past, and are going on now, and will take place in the future, either for

---

\(^{152}\) My translation. Cf. Decal. 151-53.

\(^{153}\) On ἐρως in Post. 116-17, see above, n. 142.

\(^{154}\) See Gen 4:22: χαλκεῖς χαλκοῦ καὶ σιδήρου.
a woman’s beauty (ἡ εὔμορφίας γυνακῶς εἶνεκα), or for money (ἡ χρημάτων), or glory (δόξης) or honor (τιμῆς) or dominion (ἀρχῆς), or acquisition (κτήσεως), or, in a word, to gain advantages pertaining to the body and outward things (ἡ συνόλως ὁσα σώματος καὶ τῶν ἐκτός ἐστι πλεονεκτήματα). (Post. 117)155

Tyrannical desire (ἐρως) thus poses a unique threat to both individual and society, representing the maximum ill effect of unrestrained ἐπιθυμία.

CONCLUSION

Philo holds a coherent, consistently Middle-Platonic theory of ἐπιθυμία, involving a great variety of terms and concepts. Philo consistently locates ἐπιθυμία in the non-rational part of the soul, but he uses different terms to describe that part. This makes ἐπιθυμία a fundamentally non-rational phenomenon, which operates according to a non-rational mechanism of stimulus (pleasurable object) and response (pursuit). Discrete instances of ἐπιθυμία may receive different labels (ἐπιθυμία, ὀρεξίς, ὀρμή, πάθος), but each describes the same phenomenon, only from a different conceptual perspective. Desire serves a variety of useful purposes for human beings—most notably the necessary desire for food and drink—and so forms an integral part of life. If not properly managed by reason, however, desire can become an injurious force. Passionate desire signals the partial victory of non-rational desire over reason, in which desire forcibly oversteps the bounds of reason, despite the moral agent’s knowledge of what reason requires. Tyrannical desire (ἐρως) signals the complete defeat of reason by non-rational desire, in which desire enslaves reason, compelling the

155 Cf. Conf. 45-50.
entire soul to pursue desire’s single aim of pleasure. So the non-rational desire
(ἐπιθυμία) found in every human soul poses a latent threat, and tyrannical desire
(ἐρως) represents the absolute realization of that threat. Instead of a useful
source of non-rational motivation, desire becomes an awful tyrant, whose
despotic rule harms both the individual and the surrounding community.

Clearly, effective management of the threat posed by non-rational desire
requires preemptive intervention, an effort to contain the threat before it ever
matures. Since the terminal state of intemperance (ἀκολασία) accompanying
tyrrannical desire always develops from a prior lack of self-control (ἀκρασία),
preemptive therapeutic intervention must target the preliminary state and the
passionate desire associated with it. If non-rational desire always remains within
rational bounds, then passionate desire can never emerge, which in turn
removes the precondition for tyrannical desire and so precludes its development.
The moral quality necessary for keeping non-rational desire in check is self-
control (ἐγκράτεια)—literally the power (κράτος) to restrain desire when it tries to
usurp the dictates of reason. So a complete system of practical ethics must
include provisions for the development and exercise of self-control (ἐγκράτεια).
CHAPTER THREE

PHILO ON SELF-CONTROL (ἙΓΚΡΑΤΕΙΑ) AND PRACTICE (ΛΣΚΗΣΙΣ)

INTRODUCTION

Philo considers non-rational desire (ἐπιθυμία) a necessary, even useful component of human life, but its innate and invariable tendency to pursue pleasure (ἡδονή) apart from rational calculation (λογισμός) threatens human well being. The initial danger lies in the ability of ἐπιθυμία to oppose and overpower the dictates of reason, to compel moral agents to pursue pleasure against their better judgment in an instance of ἄκρασία ("lack of self-control"). When an otherwise benign emotion overpowers reason in this way, it becomes a malignant passion, and Middle Platonists conceptualized this transformation as an impulse (ὁρμή) becoming "immoderate" (ἀμέτρος) as it transgresses the limit or "measure" (μέτρον) set by reason. Passionate desire unquestionably harms the soul, but the ultimate danger of ἐπιθυμία lies not so much in its ability to get the occasional upper hand as in its ability to usurp reason entirely, to rule the moral agent without opposition in a state of "ἀκολασία" ("intemperance"). At this terminal stage, ἐπιθυμία becomes an all-consuming tyrannical desire (ἐρως) and the moral agent becomes thoroughly corrupt.
Self-control (ἐγκράτεια) involves the moral agent’s ability to assert the dictates of reason over against the demands of desire whenever the two conflict, and by preventing desire from ever getting the upper hand, ἐγκράτεια eliminates the risk of tyrannical desire entirely. Recognizing its critical importance for the overall health of the soul, Philo speaks highly of ἐγκράτεια and gives it a prominent role in his ethical theory.¹ This chapter explains Philo’s concept of ἐγκράτεια in light of Middle-Platonic moral psychology, addressing in turn the fundamental questions of what ἐγκράτεια is and how to acquire it.

THE NATURE OF ἘΓΚΡΑΤΕΙΑ

Philo has a coherent but multi-faceted concept of ἐγκράτεια, whose character emerges best by considering three of its aspects. First, ἐγκράτεια simply involves a *power dynamic*, in which reason engages and overpowers a separate, unruly element of the soul. Second, ἐγκράτεια involves the *curtailing of excessive impulse*, and so it figures prominently in a Middle-Platonic theory of passion, especially through the Platonic image of reason as charioteer. Finally, ἐγκράτεια involves a *predominance of rational motivation*, in which the urge to secure a rationally determined, *ultimate* benefit for the entire soul outweighs the urge to experience an immediate pleasure.

---

¹ E.g., Spec. 1.173: τὴν ὠφελιμωτάτην τῶν ἀρετῶν, ἐγκράτειαν (cf. Spec. 1.175); Contempl. 34: ἐγκράτειαν δὲ ὡσπερ τινὰ θεμέλιον προκαταβαλλόμενοι τῆς ψυχῆς τὰς ἄλλας ἐποικοδομούσιν ἀρετάς. A similar emphasis on ἐγκράτεια appears in Xenophon’s portrait of
"Εγκράτεια -- Victory of Rational over Non-Rational

The Platonic tradition associates ἐγκράτεια with the victory of reason, but it characterizes reason's opponent in different ways. One broad formulation simply pits reason against the rest of the soul, understood more or less as a single inferior "part" whose inferiority stems from a lack of reasoning capacity. One narrow formulation pits reason against only desire (ἐπιθυμία), based on a theoretical correlation of specific virtues with specific elements of the tripartite Platonic soul. Philo uses both of these formulations in his ethical discourse.

The broad formulation appears in Plato's Republic as a reflection on the division within the soul presumed by the term ἐγκράτεια itself, which commonly denotes power (κράτος) over oneself. Socrates notes the association of "self-control" (ἐγκράτεια) with the expression "κρείττω αὐτοῦ," whose literal sense—"stronger than himself"—creates confusion:

Now the phrase "stronger than himself" (κρείττω αὐτοῦ) is ridiculous, is it not? For anyone stronger than himself (ὁ γὰρ ἐαυτοῦ κρείττων) would also be weaker than himself (ἡττών . . . αὐτοῦ), and anyone weaker (ὁ

---


2 See Resp. 430 D – 432 A. κράτος takes the genitive to indicate the domain of power: power over someone or something (see LSJ, s.v.). Walter Grundmann suggests that ἐγκράτεια derives from "ἐν κράτει ὄν," which implies a "status of power" ("ἐγκράτεια," TDNT 2:339-42, 340)—i.e., a state of being in power, namely over oneself. As with κράτος, the term ἐγκράτεια can also take the genitive, at least in earlier usage (e.g., Resp. 390 B: ἐγκράτειαν ἐαυτοῦ). But the reflexive pronoun eventually became unnecessary (see A. A. Long, "Hellenistic Ethics and Philosophical Power," in Hellenistic History and Culture [ed. Peter Green; HCS 9; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993], 138-56, esp.144. Philo never uses ἐγκράτεια with the reflexive pronoun, despite his use of equivalent expressions elsewhere: Post. 42: δς μηδ' αὐτοῦ κρατεῖν ἰκανός ὄν; Agr. 37: οὐκετί κρατεῖν ἑαυτῶν δύναται; and Ebr. 221: οὐκετί κρατεῖν ἑαυτῶν δυνάμενοι.
Socrates, however, further explains what people really mean by such expressions, despite the obscurity:

The soul of man within him has a better part (τὸ μὲν βέλτιον) and a worse part (τὸ δὲ χείρον), and the expression "being stronger than himself" (τὸ κρείττων αὐτοῦ) really means the control of the worse by the naturally better part (τὸ βέλτιον φύσει τοῦ χείρονος ἐγκρατές). (Resp. 431 A)

Here the "naturally better part" (τὸ βέλτιον φύσει) stands for reason, which ought to be in control (ἐγκράτεια). But Plato never clearly identifies the "worse part" (τὸ χείρον), here or elsewhere, because he never clearly formulates a bipartite model of the soul. Middle Platonists, however, ultimately preferred a bipartite model of the soul, envisioning simply a "rational part" over a "non-rational part," and they developed a broad conception of ἐγκράτεια along these lines:

Whenever the rational part of the soul overpowers the non-rational part (τὸ λογιστικὸν μέρος τὰς ψυχὰς ἐπικρατή τῷ ἀλόγῳ), self-control comes into existence (γίνεται . . . ἐγκράτεια). Whenever the non-rational part of the soul overpowers the rational part (τῷ ἀλογον μέρος τὰς ψυχὰς τῷ λογιστικῷ), lack of self-control comes into existence ([γίνεται] ἀκρατία). (Ps.-Metop. 117.16-18)

---

3 On this passage, see also Plutarch, Virt. mor. 450 D-E. Cf. Leg. 626 E: "[Τ]he victory over self (τὸ νικᾶν αὐτὸν αὐτὸν) is of all victories the first and best while self-defeat (τὸ δὲ ἠττᾶσθαι αὐτὸν υφ’ ἐαυτοῦ) is of all defeats at once the worst and the most shameful. For these phrases signify that a war exists within each one of us (πολέμου ἐν ἐκάστοις ἡμῶν ὄντος πρὸς ἡμᾶς αὐτοῦς)."

4 Despite evidence for the concept of bipartition (see Rees, "Bipartition").

5 My translation. Cf. Plutarch, Virt. mor. 442 A: "[The soul of man] has as one part the intelligent and rational (ἐτερον μὲν ἐχεῖ τὸ νοερὸν καὶ λογιστικόν), whose natural duty is to govern and rule the individual (ὡς κρατεῖν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου κατὰ φύσιν καὶ ἀρχεῖν προσηκόν ἔστιν), and as another part the passionate and irrational (ἐτερον δὲ τὸ παθητικὸν καὶ ἀλογον), the variable and disorderly (πολυπλανές καὶ ἄτακτον), which has need of a director (ἐξεταστοῦ
Although Philo never defines ἐγκράτεια in this way, he presumes this sort of definition when, for example, he interprets biblical references to "shepherding" (ποιμενική τέχνη) along allegorical lines as an ethical discourse about reason's management of the "herd" (ἀγέλη) of non-rational powers within the soul (Agr. 26-66).6 Consistent with Philo’s Middle-Platonic moral psychology, this line of interpretation envisions a basic power dynamic in the soul between a rational component fit to govern and a separate, non-rational component in need of governance.7 As long as the non-rational component tractably accepts governance, all is well. But when the two components conflict, moral well being hinges on the presence or absence of ἐγκράτεια. Its presence consists in the

---

6 Moses uses the figures of "shepherd" (ποιμήν) and "feeder of livestock" (κτηνοτρόφος) respectively to speak of the rational faculty engaged in either good or bad management of its non-rational "herd" (ἀγέλη) (esp. Agr. 29: φαύλος μὲν γὰρ ὃν ὁ ἀγελάρχης οὗτος [λογισμός] καλείται κτηνοτρόφος, ἀγαθός δὲ καὶ σπουδαῖος ὄνομάζεται ποιμήν) (cf. Sacr. 104-06). Figurative representations of the soul as a combination of "Man" (rational) and "Beast" (non-rational) suit the Platonic moral psychology particularly well. See Annas, Platonic Ethics, 117-36 [="Humans and Beasts: Moral Theory and Moral Psychology"], esp. 134-36. Cf. Theo Heckel, Der innere Mensch: Die paulinische Verarbeitung eines platonischen Motivs (WUNT 53; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1993). Heckel considers the Platonic image of the tripartite soul as "man" (τὸ λογιστικόν, the "inner man"), lion (τὸ θυμοειδὲς), and many-headed beast (τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν) (Resp. 588 B-D), especially its use among authors postdating Plato (see his ch. 3, "Der Aufstieg der Metapher vom 'Inneren Menschen' und die neue Platonhermeneutik ab dem ersten Jh. v. Chr.," 31-88, esp. 42-76 [="Der 'Innere Mensch' bei Philon"]).

7 Philo’s subdivision of the non-rational component into five senses, the organs or speech, and the organs of reproduction (Agr. 30) in no way undermines the fundamentally bipartite conception of the soul presumed in his shepherding allegory (see above, 72-77). In this case, the manifold nature of the non-rational part simply fits the characterization of reason as manager of a non-rational "herd." On Philo’s conviction that the "better" (rational) part ought to govern the "worse" (non-rational) part, note for example Leg. 1.72: δίκαιον γὰρ τὸ μὲν κρείττον ἄρχειν ἀεὶ καὶ πανταχοῦ, τὸ δὲ χείρον ἀρχεσθαι κρείττον μὲν δὴ τὸ λογικόν, χείρον δὲ τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν καὶ τὸ θυμικόν [= τὸ ἀλογον] (cf. Leg. 3.222; Fug. 24; Praem. 59; QG 4.218).
ability of the rational to overpower the non-rational, and Philo attributes precisely this ability to "shepherds," who use their rational powers to rule (κρατεῖν) over the non-rational forces within.\(^8\) The absence of ἐγκράτεια (ἀκρασία) similarly involves a question of power, but in this case non-rational forces overpower the rational. Philo can use the shepherding allegory to depict this disastrous situation:

```
[T]he stream of these evils becomes most grievous when the non-rational forces of the soul attack and overpower the forces of reason (ἐπειδὰν αἱ ἄλογοι δυνάμεις τῆς ψυχῆς ἐπιθέμεναι ταῖς τοῦ λογισμοῦ κρατήσωσιν). While the herd obeys its herdsman (βουκόλια βουκόλιοι . . . πειθαρχεῖ), or the flocks of sheep or goats obey the shepherd or goatherd (ἡ ποιμέσι ποίμνια ἡ αἰπόλοις αἰπόλια), all goes well with them; but, when the controlling herdsmen (ἀγελάρχαι) prove weaker than their charges (ἀσθενέστεροι τῶν θρεμμάτων), everything goes awry. (Somn. 2.151-52)
```

Although Philo sees reason engaged in a struggle against certain "powers of the soul" (δυνάμεις τῆς ψυχῆς), he disregards the specific identity of those powers and notes only a common property, their lack of reason (ἄλογοι). Here he construes ἐγκράτεια in the broadest possible terms: a variety of distinct opponents may contend with reason (desire, anger, fear, etc.), but they necessarily offer only one type of opposition, non-rational opposition. The value of such a broad formulation lies in its ability to construe the forcible control of any non-rational movement as an instance of ἐγκράτεια.

---

\(^{8}\) E.g., Agr. 63: δύνανται κρατεῖν τῶν ἄλογων [δυνάμεων] . . . χρώμενοι ταῖς λογικαῖς [δυνάμεσι] (cf. Agr. 40; Sacr. 49).
The narrow formulation of ἐγκράτεια ultimately derives from a development within Platonic tradition regarding the nature of σωφροσύνη, "self-mastery." Plato himself had conceived of σωφροσύνη in terms of "order" (κόσμος) or "concord" (εὐμφωνία) among all parts of the soul as to which part should rule (ὀπότερον δεῖ ἀρχεῖν). But Middle Platonists, dogmatically assigning a single cardinal virtue to each of the soul’s parts, narrowed the scope of σωφροσύνη from an agreement involving the entire soul to simply a governance of τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν, the seat of ἐπιθυμία. Philo reflects this trend:

We must understand, then, that our soul has three parts (ἐστὶν ἡμῶν τριμερῆς ἡ ψυχή): the rational (τὸ μὲν λογικὸν), the assertive (τὸ δὲ θυμικὸν), and the desirous (τὸ δὲ ἐπιθυμητικόν). . . . and that to each of the parts an appropriate virtue has been attached (ἀρετὴν δὲ ἐκάστῳ τῶν μερῶν οἰκεῖαν προσημόθεα): prudence to the rational part (τὸ μὲν λογικὸν φόρον ηῆσαν) . . . . courage to the assertive part (τὸ δὲ θυμικὸν ἀνδρείαν); and self-mastery to the desirous part (τὸ δὲ ἐπιθυμητικὸ σωφροσύνην). For it is by self-mastery that we heal and cure our desires (σωφροσύνη γὰρ τὰς ἐπιθυμίας ἀκούμεθα καὶ ἰώμεθα). (Leg. 1.70)

---

9 See Resp. 430 E and 432 A. On σωφροσύνη in Plato’s writings, see North, Sophrosyne, 150-96.

10 Cf. North, Sophrosyne, 173: "[S]ophrosyne must be practiced by all three parts of the soul; it is never, for Plato, as for many later Platonists, solely the virtue of the appetitive part" (cf. Lilla, Clement of Alexandria, 78, n. 2). On the doctrine of virtues for each part in Middle Platonism, see Lilla, Clement of Alexandria, 72-84, esp.80-83. In addition to the passages Lilla cites, note also Ps.-Metop.118.9-13: τὸ μὲν γὰρ λοιπὸν μέρες τὰς ψυχὰς ἀρετὰ ἀ φρόνισις . . . τὸ δὲ θυμοειδές ἀνδρεία . . . τὸ δ ἐπιθυμητικὸ ἀ σωφροσύνα . . . ὅλας δὲ τὰς ψυχὰς ἀ δικαιοσύνα; cf. Didask. 29.1 [182.22]: τὸ ἐπιθυμητικὸν τῆς σωφροσύνης. On Philo’s understanding of the cardinal virtues, see Carl Joachim Classen, “Der platonisch-stoische Kanon der Kardinaltugenden bei Philo, Clemens Alexandrinus und Origenes,” in Kerygma und Logos: Beiträge zu den geistesgeschichtlichen Beziehungen zwischen Antike und Christentum (ed. Adolf Ritter; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), 68-88, esp. 70-75; Wofson, Philo, 2:218-35; and in general, Pierre Daubercies, "La vertu chez Philon d’Alexandrie," RTL 26 (1995): 185-210.

11 My translation.
As the "appropriate virtue" for the ἐπιθυμητικόν, σωφροσύνη accordingly manages the non-rational desires (τὰς ἐπιθυμίας) generated in that part of the soul—and it manages them well. Philo associates σωφροσύνη with the "healing" and "curing" of desire, suggesting a state of moral wellness in which desire operates only as it should. In other words, σωφροσύνη represents the ideal sort of management, in which ἐπιθυμία plays the obedient servant of reason, acting only with reason's authorization and never opposing its dictates. Plutarch characterizes the man of self-mastery along similar lines:

And you would say, as you looked at the man, "Then, indeed ceased the gale; a windless calm arose; some god had laid the waves to rest" [Od. 12.168], since by reason the violent, raging, and furious movements of the desires (κινήματα τῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν) had been quenched and those movements which Nature absolutely requires (ὁν δ’ ἡ φύσις ἀναγκαίως δεῖται) had been made sympathetic (ὁμοπαθή), submissive (ὑπήκοα), friendly (φίλα), and, when the man chose a course of action, willing to cooperate (συνεργά), so that they did not outstrip the dictates of reason (μὴ προεκθεῖν τοῦ λογισμοῦ), nor fall short of them (ὑπενδιδόναι), nor misbehave (ἀπακτεῖν), nor disobey (ἀπειθεῖν), but so that every impulse was easily led (πάσαν ὀρμήν εὐάγγειον, νοοῦν). (Virt. mor. 446 D-E)\(^\text{12}\)

Plutarch situates this concept of self-mastery at the top of a four-point scale depicting four possible relations between reason and desire: reason rules desire without conflict (σωφροσύνη), reason rules desire with conflict (ἐγκράτεια), desire rules reason with conflict (ἀκρασία), and desire rules reason without conflict.  

\(^{12}\)Cf. TL 82: ὅρος σωφροσύνας εὐπείθεια.
conflict (ἀκολασία). Despite occasional lapses in technical precision, Philo demonstrates a fundamental acceptance of this same scale in his ethical theory. For example, he identifies moral "opposites" according to the terms of the scale, correlating the terms denoting absence of conflict (σωφροσύνη and ἀκολασία) and the terms denoting its presence (ἐγκράτεια and ἀκρασία). Furthermore, Philo’s ethical theory presumes and depicts, in a variety of ways, the four types of relation between reason and desire outlined by the scale, so he affirms its distinctions by implication if not always by name. Philo’s general acceptance of such a well-developed scheme, especially its distinction between self-mastery and self-control, helps to clarify his concept of ἐγκράτεια.

Like σωφροσύνη, which in Middle-Platonic theory deals specifically with the ἐπιθυμητικόν, ἐγκράτεια deals specifically with ἐπιθυμία, but in a different way. In Spec. 1.149, Philo calls ἐγκράτεια desire’s "antagonist" (ἀτίπαλον ἐπιθυμίας), and this image captures the essential difference between ἐγκράτεια and σωφροσύνη. In the case of "self-mastery," reason placidly manages an ever docile desiderative faculty. But in the case of "self-control," reason struggles against desire in an active contest of power: reason does manage to assert its

---

13 Plutarch gives a detailed overview of this scale in Virt. mor. 445 B – 446 E. The ethical theory underlying the scale comes from Book VII of Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics (see North, Sophrosyne, 203).

14 For σωφροσύνη opposed to ἀκολασία, see for example Opif. 73: τάναττα . . . σωφροσύνην καὶ ἀκολασίαν; Her. 209: ἐναντία . . . σωφροσύνη, ἀκολασία; for ἐγκράτεια opposed to ἀκρασία, see for example Abr. 103: πρὸς ἐγκράτειαν ὁ ἀκρατής; Mos. 1.161: ἀκράτορες μεταβάλλουσι πρὸς ἐγκράτειαν; Virt. 180: ἐξ ἀκρατείας εἰς ἐγκράτειαν.

15 See above, 87-93.
directives, but only against—and over—desire’s positive opposition to those
directives. Plutarch characterizes the man of self-control along these lines:

[Τ]he self-controlled man (ὁ δ’ ἐγκρατής), while he does indeed direct his
desire by the strength and mastery of reason (ἀγεί μὲν ἐρρωμένῳ τῷ
λογισμῷ καὶ κρατοῦντι τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν), yet does so not without pain, nor
by persuasion (οὐδὲ πειθομένην), but as it plunges sideways and resists
(πλαγίαν καὶ ἀντιτείνουσαν), as though with blow and curb (ὑπὸ πληγῆς
καὶ χαλινοῦ), he forcibly subdues it and holds it in (καταβιαζόμενος καὶ
ἀνακρούων), being the while himself full of internal struggle and turmoil
(ἀγώνος ὅν ἐν ἑαυτῷ καὶ θορύβου μεστός). (Virt. mor. 445 B-C)

Because self-control involves an active conflict between reason and desire,
Plutarch uses terms of strength, force, and violent opposition to characterize it.
Philo demonstrates a similar view of self-control and uses similar language in his
own characterizations, although he never states his theoretical positions quite as
clearly as Plutarch.¹⁶ He does, however, encapsulate his understanding of
ἐγκράτεια in an interpretive reflection on the creature known as the "snake-
fighter" (ὁφιομάχης):

For the snake-fighter is, I think, nothing but a symbolic representation of
self-control (συμβολικός ἐγκράτεια εἶναι), waging a fight that never ends
and a truceless war against intemperance and pleasure (μάχην
ἀκαθαίρετον καὶ πόλεμον ἀσπονδὸν ἐκφέρουσα πρὸς ἀκρασίαν καὶ
ηδονήν). (Opif. 164)

The notions of "never ending fight" (μάχην ἀκαθαίρετον) and "truceless war"
(πόλεμον ἀσπονδὸν) obviously convey the element of conflict characteristic of
ἐγκράτεια. And despite Philo’s naming here of ἀκρασία and ηδονή as the

¹⁶ Cf. Leg. 1.86 (NB οἱ ἐγκρατέστατοι): ἀγαπητὸν οὖν ἐστὶν ἀντιβήματι καὶ μαχέσασθαι
τῷ γένει τῆς ἐπιθυμίας.
opponents of ἐγκράτεια, he in no way contradicts the notion of a fundamental opposition between ἐγκράτεια and ἐπιθυμία. By pitting ἐγκράτεια against ἀκρασία, Philo simply notes that self-control subverts the victory of desire over reason (ἀκρασία) by enforcing the victory of reason over desire (ἐγκράτεια). By pitting ἐγκράτεια against ἡδονή, Philo simply recognizes pleasure as the constant and necessary counterpart of desire. Since Platonic ἐπιθυμία invariably seeks ἡδονή as its object, pleasure and desire ultimately represent twin aspects of the same phenomenon, and for that reason ἐγκράτεια interchangeably represents the antagonist of either one.17 But in either case ἐγκράτεια involves active management of one part of the soul, the ἐπιθυμητικόν.

Whether formulated broadly as the dominance of rational over non-rational forces or narrowly as the dominance of reason over desire, ἐγκράτεια always involves a decisive contest of power. Since only reason can successfully direct the soul on a virtuous course of life, moral well being demands an ability to overcome any opposition to reason, no matter the source. Conceiving ἐγκράτεια along these lines, as simply a power dynamic, rightly identifies self-control with the victory of reason, but it does nothing to define that victory. A more precise

---

17 In Philo’s discussion of σωφροσύνη in Leg. 1, he links self-mastery with the ἐπιθυμητικόν alone (§§70-71) yet—in line with the Platonic view of ἐπιθυμία—presumes its dealing with both desire and pleasure (§86: ἀδυνατεῖ κυκλώσασθαι τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν καὶ ἡδονήν). Since it deals with the same part of the soul, ἐγκράτεια deals also with both desire and pleasure: either the forcible subjugation of ἐπιθυμία or the forcible abstention from ἡδονή (cf. Ps.-Metop. 117.21-22: ἀ δὲ ἐγκράτεια ἐν τῷ ἀντέχειν ἡδονῇ).
concept of ἔγκρατεια emerges through Philo’s use of what he and other Middle
Platonists took as a model of self-control in action: the two-horse chariot.

*ἔγκρατεια -- Curtailing Excessive Impulse*

While he owes the analogy between soul and chariot to Plato’s *Phaedrus*
(esp. 246 A-B; 253 D – 256 D), Philo’s particular use of the chariot figure to
depict ἔγκρατεια reflects a decidedly *Middle*-Platonic moral psychology and a
set of didactic aims different from Plato’s. In the *Phaedrus*, the chariot figure
helps to narrate a myth of the soul’s journey to transcendent reality, not to
expound moral theory. The struggle between charioteer and horse obviously
symbolizes conflict within the soul, but Plato examines this conflict strictly in
terms of the myth, not as a separate ethical concern. In Philo’s writings, by
contrast, the chariot figure serves as a working model for moral psychology,
stripped of any explicit connection with the *Phaedrus* myth and framed according

---

18 On Philo’s use of the *Phaedrus* image, see esp. Méasson, *Char ailé*, 141-76; also
Billings, *Platonism of Philo*, 88-92. On the broader use of the *Phaedrus* image in Middle
Platonism, see Vander Waerdt, “Moral Psychology,” 390 (cf. Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria*, 92-103,
esp. 97). Within Middle Platonism, Philo’s use takes precedence, as Méasson notes: “l’œuvre de
Philon est sans doute le plus ancien témoignage subsistant de l’utilisation de cette image destiné
da devenir un des themes familiers du moyen platonisme” (176). On the chariot as a model of
ἔγκρατεια, see esp. Plutarch’s explicit statement to that effect in *Virt. mor.* 445 B-D. On the
*Phaedrus* image in Plutarch, see François Fuhrmann, *Les images de Plutarque* (Paris: C.
Heads: Individual Portraits and Irrational Forces in Plutarch’s *Galba* and *Otho*,” in *Plutarch and
his Intellectual World: Essays on Plutarch* (ed. Judith Mossman; London: Duckworth, 1997), 189-
214, 192-96.


20 See Jacqueline de Romilly, “Les conflits de l’âme dans le *Phèdre* de Platon” *WS* 16
(1982): 100-13, esp. 112, where she concludes concerning the conflict depicted through the
chariot figure: “Il s’agit, en commandant mieux à l’attelage de notre âme, de pouvoir monter
jusqu’au lieu supracéleste, et, pour finir, d’échapper au cycle des incarnations. Ou bien il s’agit,
dans le cas contraire, de s’empêtrer dans la matière et les souffrances infinies au’entraîne cette
déchéance.”
to Middle-Platonic conceptions of the soul. Gone, for example, are the wings of the chariot-soul so indispensable to the mythical narrative.²¹ And just as Middle-Platonic bipartition recast θυμός as more of an opponent of reason than an ally, Philo pits both horses against the driver, replacing the Phaedrus notion of a "bad" horse (ἐπιθυμία) yoked to an obedient "good" horse (θυμός).²² In further agreement with Middle-Platonic moral psychology, which offered variant conceptions of the soul’s non-rational part (ἀλογον μέρος) over against its rational part (λογικὸν μέρος), Philo offers variant conceptions of what exactly the soul’s driver, reason, must manage. Reflecting Middle Platonism’s configuration of tripartition as bipartition, Philo can speak of either two horses, θυμός and ἐπιθυμία, or a single horse, representing simply the non-rational part of the soul.²³ Elsewhere, he identifies the team of horses more broadly as emotion(s).²⁴ He can also envision the team as sense-perception (αἰσθησίς).²⁵ But no matter what team Philo envisions, he always casts the soul’s rational element as the

²¹ E.g., Phaedr. 246 A: ἑοικέτω ξυμφύτω δυνάμει ὑποπτέρου ζεύγους τε καὶ ἕνιόχου; 246 E: τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς πτέρωμα.
²² See Méasson, Char ailé, 148-49 ["De l’attelage de Platon à celui de Philon"]; 158-60 [= "Le «thumos» chez Platon et chez Philon"].
²³ Horses θυμός and ἐπιθυμία: e.g., Agr. 72-73; Migr. 67 (cf. Leg. 1.72); single horse: e.g., Leg. 2.99, cited in Inwood, Ethics and Human Action, 142, n. 63. On the single horse variation (142), Inwood writes: "In Plato the two horses represent the two distinct irrational elements in the soul. When a dualistic contrast of reason and the irrational part of the soul in its undifferentiated formulation was preferred, an analogy with only one horse was substituted."
²⁴ E.g., Leg. 193: ὅχηματι παθών.
²⁵ E.g., Leg. 3.222-24: e.g., νοῦς δὲ κρείττον αἰσθῆσεως, ὥσπερ οὖν ἄρχοντος μὲν ἕνιόχου καὶ ταῖς ἕνιαις τὰ ζῷα ἄγοντος ἥμιλεται ἄγεται τὸ ἀρμα. See Méasson, Char ailé, 160-63.
charioteer charged with controlling the team. In this way, his chariot figure always serves as a model of ἐγκράτεια in action—as a model of reason managing or "driving" the non-rational elements of the soul—and in this respect it perfectly suits the Platonic tradition’s broad formulation of ἐγκράτεια as a power dynamic of rational versus non-rational. But since it can also depict reason managing the discrete movement of those elements—managing, in other words, discrete instances of non-rational impulse (ὀρμή)—the figure accommodates a more precise concept of ἐγκράτεια tailored to a Middle-Platonic view of "passion."

Philo’s use of the concept of impulse (ὀρμή) to develop his chariot figure into a more elaborate model of ἐγκράτεια presumes a suitable basis in the actual dynamic between horses and drivers.

Drivers (ἡνίοχοι) ... lead [their team] just as they please by keeping hold of the reins (τῶν ἡνιῶν). Sometimes they give rein for a brisk trot (ἐφιέντες πρός ὀξὺν δρόμον), other times they pull back violently.

---

26 In Agr. 93, Philo characterizes the "art of driving" (τέχνην τὴν ἡνιοχίκην) as an ability кρατεῖν ἱππόν (cf. Virt. 13: ψυχής ἕκαστή χρησίμος καὶ συναίνει καὶ τὴν ἔπιθεσιν καὶ τὸν λόγον, ἐπικρατεῖ τῆς λογικῆς καὶ ὑπερ ἀφηνεσάτος ἱππούς ἡνιοχούσης ἐκατέρας). Conversely, Philo assumes the capacity of the team to overpower the driver (cf. ἀκρασία) and bring everything to ruin (see esp. Leg. 3.223: ὑπερ ὅποιος ἁγοντος μὲν ἡνίοχον ταῖς ἡνίαις τὰ ᾱρα ἐγγοντος ἐρ πουλεῖται ἀγεται τὸ ἀρμα, ἀφηνεσάντων δὲ ἓκείνων καὶ κρατησάντων, ὃ τ ἡνιοχος κατοπρική πολλάκις τὰ τὰ ᾱρα ἐστὶν ὅτε τῇ ρούμῃ τῆς φοράς εἰς βόθρον κατηχθεὶ πλήμμελώς τε πάντα φέρεται).

27 Philo himself had seen chariots in action: "Thus in chariot races (ἐν ἵπποδρομίαις) ... I have seen (εἶδον) people giving way to thoughtlessness who, instead of sitting in their places as they should as orderly spectators, stood in the middle of the course and pushed over by the rush of the chariots were crushed under the feet and wheels, a proper reward for their folly" (Prov. 58). Philo’s knowledge of chariots included familiarity with obscure technical terminology, on which see H. A. Harris, “The Foot-RESTs in Hippolytus’ Chariot,” CR 18 (1968): 259-60. On Philo’s extensive familiarity with a variety of competitive sports, see esp. H. A. Harris, Greek Athletics and the Jews (TSP 3; Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1976), 51-95.
Here Philo reviews the fundamentals of managing an unruly team. Of course, the problem lies not in the team's movement per se, but in its movement beyond what the driver sanctions, in its "excessive surge." Philo uses the term φορά—a synonym of ὀρμη— to describe this surge and qualifies it with the expression πλείων τοῦ δέοντος, "greater than the need," meaning greater than the movement needed to accomplish the driver's purpose. Philo elsewhere denotes this type of unruly, excessive movement using a number of specialized terms, most commonly ἀφηνιάζειν, "to throw off the reins." To counter this unruliness, drivers must reassert their control, whether by "pulling back violently" (ἀναχαίτιζειν), as Philo indicates here, or by some other technique, such as "curbing" (ἐπιστομίζειν), as Philo indicates elsewhere. In any case, Philo envisions controlling a team of horses as a matter of curtailing their excessive movements, which bear description in terms of impulse. Philo’s characterization of chariot driving applies also to the mounted horseman:

When the horse goes forward in obedience to the reins (εὐνίως), the horseman gives a few pats as if to praise the horse, but when the horse gets carried away beyond proper measure by excessive impulse (ὅταν δὲ σὺν πλείονι ὀρμη πέραν ἐκφέρηται τοῦ μετρίου), the horseman pulls

---

28 My translation.
29 ἀφηνιάζειν and its variants appear over fifty times in Philo’s writings. Méasson (Charailé, 146) considers it part of a larger vocabulary "inspiré du Phèdre."
30 ἀναχαίτιζειν: lit. to throw back the mane (χαίτη), i.e., to cause to rear up. In other words, the driver pulls back with such violence that the team rears up. ἐπιστομάζειν: to curb with the bit (cf. στόμα).
back violently with force (μετὰ βίας εὐτόνως ἀναχαίτιζει) to slow the horse down. (Agr. 70)\textsuperscript{31}

Here again Philo equates control with the curtailing of excessive impulse (πλείονι ὀρμή), which involves movement beyond the limit or measure (πέραν . . . τοῦ μετρίου) set by the horseman’s purpose. He also highlights a key element of managing any unruly non-rational power, horse or not: the use of brute force (μετὰ βίας). By the application of force, a horseman bends the steed to his will, not to eliminate its movement, but simply to control it. Technically, neither of these passages describes the soul, but they clearly allude to the Middle-Platonic definition of "passion" Philo formulates in Spec. 4.79:

- ἀμετρος καὶ πλεονάζουσα ὀρμή (Spec. 4.79)
- φορά τοῦ δέοντος πλείων (Opif. 88)
- πλείονι ὀρμή πέραν . . . τοῦ μετρίου (Agr. 70)

In other words, Philo sees in the management of horses an effective means of representing the management of non-rational impulse, specifically the "excessive" impulse Middle Platonists counted as "passion." Capitalizing on this analogy, Philo applies the language of horsemanship directly to the realm of moral psychology to characterize ἐγκράτεια as the curtailing of excessive impulse.

Since Middle Platonists defined passion in terms of non-rational impulse, Philo can depict the management of passion strictly in terms of non-rational impulse, without ever naming a specific type of passion (desire, fear, grief, etc.).

\textsuperscript{31} My translation.
For ["horsemen"] are able, by applying a bridle to the soul's non-rational faculties (χαλινόν ταῖς ἀλόγοις δυνάμεις ἐμβαλόντες), to curb the surge of their excessive impulse (αὐτῶν ἐπιστομίζειν τής πλεοναζοῦσης τὴν φορὰν ὀρμῆς). (Agr. 94)\(^{32}\)

As Philo suggests here, the soul has a variety of non-rational faculties (ἀλόγοι δυνάμεις), whose existence in itself poses no problem. But since these faculties can usurp reason's authority and become "passionate," the moral agent must be able to exercise ἐγκράτεια, which Philo depicts here as "applying a bridle" (χαλινόν . . . ἐμβαλόντες). In particular, the moral agent must be able to curb the surge of excessive non-rational impulses, whatever their source. Desire (ἐπιθυμία), for example, represents a perfectly natural faculty of the soul. But when the impulses of desire become excessive, ἐπιθυμία the benign emotion becomes ἐπιθυμία the malignant passion. Controlling ἐπιθυμία (exercising ἐγκράτεια) specifically involves the curtailment of this excess:

But there are others, boastful persons, of the sort that is puffed up by arrogance, who in their craving for high position determine to have nothing to do in any way with the frugal, the truly profitable mode of living. Indeed, if any rebuke them in order to rein in the unruliness of their desires (ἐνεκα τοῦ τῶν ἀφηνιασμὸν τῶν ἐπιθυμίων ἀναχαίτισαι), they regard the admonition as an insult. (Spec. 2.18)\(^{33}\)

The rebuke here stands against passionate desire, since it involves "pulling back violently" (ἀναχαίτισαι) not on desire per se but on the "unruliness" of desire.


\(^{33}\) Cf. Spec. 2.135: χαλινόν . . . ἐμβαλεῖν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις ὑπὲρ τοῦ μὴ ἀνασκιρτάν ἐπὶ πλέον; Virt. 113: σοκ εἰςαλευνομεθα καθήσασα τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν ἀπαυγανίζονσαν, ἐστεῖλατο τὸ σφωνόν . . . χαλάσας.
(τὸν ἀφηνιασμὸν), which represents the movement in excess of the "frugal mode of living" reason would otherwise allow. And the dynamic envisioned here relative to ἐπιθυμία applies in theory to any emotion. In Leg. 3.118-37, for example, Philo uses the chariot figure to represent the work of Aaron, who stands as the allegorical exemplar of the moderation of emotion (μετριοπάθεια).34 While cues in the biblical text prompt Philo to highlight θυμός in his allegorical consideration of μετριοπάθεια, he clearly has all emotions in view.35 In general, he portrays the moderating effect of ἐγκράτεια as bringing reason (λόγος) to bear on the emotions (πάθη), "so that [reason] like a charioteer may curb their surge to excess (ἐπί ὁποίον τρόπον ἐπιστομίζῃ τὴν ἐπὶ πλέον αὐτῶν φοράν)" (Leg. 3.134). In other words, reason seeks not to eliminate emotions but simply to curb their excessive impulse. With reason in command, emotion never oversteps the limits of moderate expression—never becomes, in other words, a

34 Leg 3.131: Ἅρων μετριοπάθειαν... ἀσκεῖ, ἐκτεμεῖν γὰρ ἐτι τὸ στήθος καὶ τὸν θυμὸν ἀδυνατεῖ· φέρει δὲ ἐπὶ αὐτὸν τὸν ήνιόχον... λόγον. Philo contrasts the μετριοπάθεια of Aaron, a lower ethical stage, with the ἀπάθεια of Moses, a higher ethical stage (Leg. 3.128-29). For this distinction between μετριοπάθεια and ἀπάθεια in Middle Platonism, see Lilla, Clement of Alexandria, 92-106 (cf. John Dillon, "Plotinus, Philo and Origen on the Grades of Virtue," in Platonismus und Christentum: Festschrift für Heinrich Dörrie [ed. Horst-Dieter Blume and Friedhelm Mann; JACE 10; Münster: Aschendorff, 1983], 92-105, esp. 102-03).

35 On reason as the "charioteer" of θυμός, see, for example, Leg. 3.123: ἐπὶ τοῦ θυμοῦ, ἐπὶ τοῦ θυμοῦ ἠνιχνήθη λόγῳ; Leg. 3.127: ἠνισχήθησα τὸν θυμὸν υπὸ τὸ λόγῳ. Philo, however, sets this long discourse on "Aaronic" moderation in the broader context of a Middle-Platonic bipartite opposition between reason (λόγος) and emotion (πάθος). At the outset (Leg. 3.115), he seems to endorse Platonic tripartition, but he immediately reveals his Middle-Platonic affinities in Leg. 3.116 by making bipartition the overarching frame: the soul consists of reason opposed to emotion (μᾶχεται ὁ λόγος τῷ πάθει), for instance πλάκη (κρατοῦσα... λόγῳ φρούδους ἡ ἤδονή, νικώσης... ἤδονής φυγάς ὁ λόγος), or of reason opposed to θυμός and ἐπιθυμία, elements of the non-rational part (ὁ θυμός καὶ ἡ ἐπιθυμία, μέρη τοῦ ἅλαγος), abode of the emotions (τὰ πάθη). In Philo's Middle-Platonic tripartition as bipartition, θυμός and ἐπιθυμία...
"passion": a disruptive force that overpowers reason and leads the soul to destruction, like a runaway horse pulling a hapless chariot to ruin. Here again Philo conceives ἔγκρατεια as the curtailing of excessive non-rational impulse, and he formulates this concept in light of a Middle-Platonic definition of "passion."

While this notion of curtailing excess certainly lends precision to Philo’s concept of ἔγκρατεια, his most practical concept of what it means for a rational part to rule over non-rational parts within the soul—especially for reason to rule over desire (ἐπιθυμία)—involves the different and often conflicting sources of human motivation.

Ἐγκρατεία -- Predominance of Rational Motivation

Reason and desire represent two distinct sources of motivation in the human soul, each with its own characteristic aim. Desire (ἐπιθυμία) represents a source of motivation whose invariable aim is pleasure (ἡδονή). Given a sensory impression of something pleasurable, desire always responds by motivating the moral agent to pursue pleasure. Reason (λόγος), by contrast, represents a source of motivation whose invariable aim is the good (ἀγαθός). Given a set of circumstances, reason—unless captive to another component of the soul—always responds by motivating the moral agent to do what rational calculation


---

36 For analysis of the Platonic theory in terms of motivation, see for example Lohrenz, Brute Within, 35: "the embodied human soul is a composite object, composed of a number of parts which (strictly and accurately speaking) are the subjects or bearers of different kinds of
(λογισμός) deems best in those circumstances. These two sources of motivation do not necessarily oppose one another, but they obviously can. Desire overcomes reason (ἀκρασία) whenever the moral agent acts for the sake of pleasure despite reason's contrary motivation to act for the sake of rational benefit. Conversely, reason overcomes desire (ἐγκράτεια) whenever the moral agent acts for the sake of rational benefit despite desire's contrary motivation to act for the sake of pleasure. ConceIVED in terms of conflicting motivations, ἐγκράτεια imposes onto desire the "measure" of rational benefit: desire may pursue its aim of pleasure, as long as that pursuit serves a rational end and bears rational justification. The pursuit of pleasure beyond reasonable measure—the pursuit of pleasure for pleasure's sake—represents the triumph of desire (as a source of motivation) over reason (as a source of motivation), and desire at that moment, as its characteristic motivation predominates, becomes "excessive" and so "passionate." While this dynamic applies in theory to any desire, the most basic of desires, the desire for food, illustrates it well.

motivating conditions" (emphasis added; cf. passages in the General Index under "Motivating condition" [218]); see also Cooper, "Human Motivation."

37 E.g., Det. 95: τὴν ἡδονὴν ἀποδεχόμεθα ἐγκράτειαν πέραν δρόμων ἐλαύνοντες.
38 E.g., Agr. 48: χρη... ἔργον τὸν ἡμέτερον νοῦ... τὸ συμφέρον πρὸ τοῦ ἡδονὸ... άποφέγμενον.
39 E.g., QG 2.68 (Pelti): πίνει δι᾽ ἐγκράτειαν δι᾽ ἤν ἐμέτρει τὴν χρήσιν.
40 For an illustration of this basic dynamic relative to sexual desire, see Kathy L. Gaca, "Philo's Principles of Sexual Conduct and Their Influence on Christian Platonist Sexual Principles," SPhA 8 (1996): 21-39, esp. 22-27, where Gaca outlines Philo's (Pythagorean) "procreationist principle." Although Gaca does not analyze it in terms of moral psychology, the procreationist principle nevertheless envisions ἐγκράτεια as the predominance of rational motivation by endorsing sex for the sake of reproduction (reason as source of motivation) and rejecting sex for the sake of pleasure (desire as source of motivation). Niehoff (Philo on Jewish Identity, 99-102) examines the same principle of limiting sex to reproduction but downplays the
With regard to food, desire invariably seeks only the pleasure of eating, while reason seeks the moral agent’s overall well being.\textsuperscript{41} Desire always urges indulgence, due to its reflexive, non-rational mode of operation—in other words, given an opportunity to eat pleasurably, desire always says "yes." Reason, by contrast, taking all factors into account, can accordingly urge either for or against indulgence on an ad hoc basis. While reason could not in principle categorically endorse a certain type of indulgence, human beings must eat to live, so—barring exceptional circumstances—reason always approves eating for nourishment as the unavoidable indulgence of a "necessary" desire, an indulgence perfectly consistent with the demands of 

Mark you not that even the most self-controlled of men (οἱ ἐγκρατεύοντες) under compulsion of the mortal element in them (ἀνάγκη τοῦ θνητοῦ) resort to food and drink (παραγίνονται ἐπὶ σιτία καὶ ποτά), out of which the pleasures of the appetite develop (ἐὰν οἱ γαστροίς ἕδοναι συνεστάσιν) (\textit{Leg.} 1.86)\textsuperscript{42}  

\textsuperscript{41} Much of Philo’s discourse on ethical eating reflects elements of the diatribe tradition, especially the works of Musonius Rufus (see Paul Wendland, “Philo und die kynisch-stoische Diatribe,” in \textit{Beiträge zur Geschichte der griechischen Philosophie und Religion} [Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1895], 1-75, esp. 8-15; cf. Bréhier, \textit{Idées philosophiques et religieuses}, 261-62; Niehoff, \textit{Philo on Jewish Identity}, 105). Musonius, for example, endorses the standard of need over pleasure: \textit{e.g.}, \textit{Troph.} B. 116.9-11: γαστριμαργία τι ἢ ἐπὶ ἄλλο ἢ ἀκρασία περὶ τροφῆν, δι’ ἧν ἄνθρωποι τὸ ἕδον τὸ ἐν σίτι τοῦ ὠφελίμου προτιμώσαν; 118.6-7: ἀσκών καὶ ἐθίζων αὐτόν αἱρετικὴ σίτον οὐκ ἣν ἕδαται ἀλλ’ ἣν τρέφονται. Such similarities, however, do not signal the acceptance of Cynic-Stoic \textit{philosophical} commitments on Philo’s part but simply the use of a widespread ethical topos (cf. A. C. van Geytenbeek, \textit{Musonius Rufus and Greek Diatribe} [trans. B. L. Hijmans; rev. ed.; WTS 8; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1963], 106: “Like nearly all moralists who treat the problem of food, Musonius rejects pleasure as the aim”). Although he sometimes frames ethical discourse in ways comparable to Musonius, Philo presupposes a moral psychology quite different from Musonius or any other Stoic.\textsuperscript{42} 

\textsuperscript{42} Cf. \textit{Leg.} 3.147: τοῖς γὰρ ἀναγκαίοις σιτίοις καὶ ποτοῖς ἡ φύσις βιάζεται χρήσθαι; \textit{Ebr.} 131: σιτίων καὶ ποτῶν καὶ ὑπού καὶ πάντων ὡσα ἀναγκαῖα τῇ φύσει. For Plato’s understanding of “necessary desires,” see \textit{Resp.} 558 C – 559 D.
So a moral agent who genuinely needs to eat can satisfy both reason and desire with a good meal: rational calculation (λογισμός) motivates the eating as a logical means of sustaining life and health, while desire (ἐπιθυμία) motivates the eating as a pleasurable experience. Of course, rational calculation (λογισμός) may compel the same hungry moral agent to reject a meal despite desire’s pressing motivation to eat for the sake of pleasure—if, for instance, the meal is poisoned or belongs to someone else. But the conflict between reason and desire in matters of food more commonly involves the question of eating in excess of rational necessity. Having eaten enough to survive in good health, and so having no real need to eat, how does the moral agent handle further opportunities to eat? At this point, Philo’s moral theory can explain indulgence and abstinence in term of ἀκρασία and ἐγκράτεια, understanding each as the victory of a certain type of motivation. To eat represents a victory of desire over reason (ἀκρασία), since the moral agent eats strictly for the sake of pleasure: the motivation for pleasure has in effect overpowered the motivation for rational benefit, which urges abstinence as the reasonable course. Philo understands ἀκρασία along these lines in Mos. 1.160-61, where he attributes a lack of ἐγκράτεια to those who incite desires, including the desires of the stomach (τὰς γαστρικὰς ἐπιθυμίας), beyond necessities (ἐξω τῶν ἀναγκαίων)—by eating more than they need, they eat for pleasure and reflect the predominance of ἐπιθυμία
as a motivating disposition. Conversely, \textit{not to eat} represents a victory of reason over desire (έγκρατεία), since the moral agent \textit{controls} the desire for food by keeping it within the bounds of rational necessity. Philo equates \textit{έγκρατεία} with eating (and drinking) according to need, since it involves reason motivating the moral agent to indulge desire only \textit{to the point of need} and no further. Commenting on Exodus 23:25b Philo writes:

\begin{quote}
In this passage, he symbolically indicates nourishment and health (τροφήν καὶ υγίειαν αἰνώτεται): nourishment through the mention of food and water, and health through the expression "turn away weakness" (διὰ τοῦ μαλακίαν ἀποτρέψειν). Second, he represents self-control (έγκρατείαν εἰσηγεῖται) by talking about the consumption of necessities only (τὴν τῶν ἀναγκαίων μετουσίων μονόν). (QE 2.18)
\end{quote}

Philo’s identification here of \textit{έγκρατεία} with the indulgence of \textit{necessary} desire enhances the notion of curtailing excess from the chariot figure by further characterizing "excessive" as "unnecessary." Conceived in these terms,

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{In this passage, Philo contrasts ἀκρασία and \textit{έγκρατεία} (NB §161: \(\text{oí...άκρατορες μεταβάλλουσι πρὸς ἐγκράτειαν}\), associating the former not only with desire \(ξιῶ\) τῶν ἀναγκαίων, but also with the enjoyment of pleasure (καθησυχασθείν [cf. ἧδος]); cf. Det. 95: τὴν ἥδονήν ἀποδεχόμεθα ἐγκράτειαν πέραν ὀρῶν ἐλαύνοντες; Opif. 158: ὁ φιλόδονος... ἐκτραχηλιζούσης καὶ ὑποσκελιζούσης τῆς ἀκρασίας; Somn. 2.48: πρὸς ἀπόλαυσιν ἥδονης μᾶλλον ἢ πρὸς μετουσίαν τροφῆς. In Det. 113, Philo associates ἀκρασία with those whose desires continue despite a full stomach. With no rational motivation for eating, only a desire for pleasure can explain their behavior (cf. Leg. 2.16: πότερον ἑνέκα τοῦ ἀναγκαίου μόνον... ἢ καὶ ἑνέκα τοῦ ἀμέτρου καὶ περιττοῦ).}
\footnote{LXX: εὐλογήσω τὸν ἄρτον σου καὶ τὸ υδρὸν σου καὶ ἀποστρέψω μαλακίαν ἀφ’ ὑμῶν. As Marcus notes (PLCL suppl. 2, 56, n. c), "Philo agrees with Heb. against LXX in omitting 'and wine' after 'bread.'" (cf. Petit, 254, n. b).}
\footnote{My translation of Petit’s text of the Greek fragment (Petit, 254). The passage continues from the Armenian, "for bread is a plain food without anything extra, and flowing water is (a similarly plain) drink, and upon these (depends) health" (trans. Marcus; PLSL suppl. 2, 56). In Leg. 3.154, Philo likewise associates the restraint of desire (συνεστάλθαι τὰς ἐπιθυμίας) with only necessary indulgence(s) (μόνοις χρησόμεθα τοῖς ἀναγκαίοις, τὸν δὲ περιττὸν ἀφεξόμεθα) (cf. Mos. 1.28: γαστρήσει τῇ γὰρ ἔξω τῶν ἀναγκαίων ἀνασμένην, οὐδὲν ἡ φύσις ἐταξεῖν, οὐδὲν πλέον ἑχορήγηει).}
\end{footnotes}


\( \grave{e} \gamma k\acute{r}\acute{a}t\epsilon\iota \alpha \) works to counteract passionate desire (\( \pi\lambda e\omicron o\acute{a}\acute{z}\omicron o\alpha \) [\( \acute{a}m\acute{e}t\rho\omicron \alpha \)] \( \acute{e} \pi \iota \vartheta \omicron \mu \acute{m} \acute{a} \) by consistently enforcing the "measure" urged by reason (necessity) over against desire's persistent urge toward pleasure. In other words, \( \grave{e} \gamma k\acute{r}\acute{a}t\epsilon\iota \alpha \) eliminates excessive, unnecessary desire and the unnecessary pleasure it entails. Philo symbolically interprets the rite of circumcision along these lines:

They say that circumcision of the skin is a symbol, as if (to show that) it is proper to cut off superfluous and excessive desires (\( \tau \acute{a} \varsigma \, \pi e\omicron \iota \tau \tau \acute{a} \varsigma \, \kappa \alpha \iota \pi\lambda e\omicron o\acute{a}\omicron \acute{z}\omicron o\alpha \varsigma \acute{e} \pi \iota \vartheta \omicron \mu \acute{m} \acute{a} \varsigma \) by exercising self-control (\( \acute{e} \gamma k\acute{r}\acute{a}t\epsilon\iota \alpha \nu \)) ... For just as the skin of the foreskin is superfluous in procreation . . . so the excess of desire is superfluous . . . It is superfluous because it is not necessary . . . (QG 3.48)

So the moral agent possessed of \( \acute{e} \gamma k\acute{r}\acute{a}t\epsilon\iota \alpha \) moderates \( \acute{e} \pi \iota \vartheta \omicron \mu \acute{m} \acute{a} \) and avoids passion by indulging according to need, curtailing the excess of unnecessary indulgence by ensuring the predominance of a motivation to secure rational benefit (necessity) over a motivation to secure pleasure.

**Summary**

Although Philo never offers a direct, extended explanation of \( \acute{e} \gamma k\acute{r}\acute{a}t\epsilon\iota \alpha \), he nevertheless reveals through incidental remarks a substantive concept of \( \acute{e} \gamma k\acute{r}\acute{a}t\epsilon\iota \alpha \) framed along three distinct but complementary lines. First, \( \acute{e} \gamma k\acute{r}\acute{a}t\epsilon\iota \alpha \) involves a power dynamic of rational over non-rational forces, understood either broadly as \( \lambda \acute{o} \gamma \varsigma \) defeating any challenge from elsewhere in the soul, or narrowly as \( \lambda \acute{o} \gamma \varsigma \) defeating \( \acute{e} \pi \iota \vartheta \omicron \mu \acute{m} \acute{a} \). Second, \( \acute{e} \gamma k\acute{r}\acute{a}t\epsilon\iota \alpha \) involves the curtailing of excessive impulse. Finally, \( \acute{e} \gamma k\acute{r}\acute{a}t\epsilon\iota \alpha \) involves the predominance of rational
motivation over against a non-rational urge toward pleasure. But how, in Philo’s view, does the moral agent acquire ἔγκράτεια?

**THE ACQUISITION OF Ἐγκράτεια**

Because ἔγκρατεια involves the control of non-rational forces, the means of acquiring it have a correspondingly non-rational character, insofar as they do not involve the formulation or deployment of rational argument. Without a capacity for reason, ἔπιθυμιτο simply cannot accept or reject a moral agent’s reasoned guidance. Instead, the moral agent must manage ἔπιθυμιτο through the application of force—just as the charioteer does not reason with an unruly team (he cannot), but simply acts to bring it into submission. In other words, ἔγκρατεια comes from doing, not thinking: the moral agent becomes good at controlling ἔπιθυμιτο only by exerting or practicing control, not by theoretical reflection.46

Philo’s philosophical contemporaries considered the importance of practice in moral development under the conceptual rubric of ἀσκήσις.47 Although the term

---

46 Philo clearly distinguishes between theoretical and practical virtue: e.g., Leg. 1.57: ἢ δὲ ἀρετή καὶ θεωρητική ἐστι καὶ πρακτική; Congr. 46: ἢ γάρ ἄνευ πράξεως θεωρία ψιλῆ πρὸς οὐδὲν ὀδέλος τοῖς ἐπιστήμοις.

47 As noted earlier (16, n. 45), the term ἀσκήσις in Philo’s usage has little to do with modern terms such as “ascetic” or “asceticism,” whose connotations derive mostly from Christian monasticism. The Greek term has no intrinsic association with religious practice (see Dressler, *Use of Ἀσκείω*. For use the term in Middle Platonism, see, for example, Didask. 24.4 [177.14-15]: τοῦ μὲν [λογιστικοῦ] διὰ διδακτικάς, τοῦ δὲ [παθητικοῦ] διὰ τῆς τοῦ ἔθους ἄσκησεως; cf. 30.3 [184.1-2]: ἐξ ἔθους ἐγγυνώμεναι καὶ ἄσκησεως; Plutarch, *Garr.* 510 C: τῶν γὰρ παθῶν κρίσει καὶ ἄσκησει περιγινόμεθα; *Eclog.* 37.18 – 38.1: Ἡθικὴ ἐστὶ δύναμις ψυχῆς, δι’ ἦς ἄσκησιν καλῶς ἡ πρακτικὴ κατασκευάζεται ἀρετή. For the concept in contemporary Stoicism, see, for example, Musonius Rufus, “On Training” (*Πέρι ἄσκησεως*) (see also Richard Valantasis, “Musonius Rufus and Roman Ascetical Theory,” *GRBS* 40 [1999]: 207-31; cf. B. L. Hijmans, *ἈΣΚΗΣΙΣ: Notes on Epictetus’ Educational System* [WTS 2; Assen: Von Gorcum,
appears nowhere in the Pentateuch, Philo has much to say about ἀσκησις, because he believes that Moses considered the topic allegorically under the figure of Jacob.

Ἐγκράτεια through Ἀσκησις

Philo's view of Jacob fits into a broader interpretive scheme involving the three patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who each represent a different way of acquiring virtue: through instruction (μάθησις), nature (φύσις), and practice (ἀσκησις) respectively:

For the holy word seems to be searching into the types of souls (τρόπους ψυχῆς), all of them of high worth, one which pursues the good through teaching (ἐκ διδασκαλίας), one through nature (ἐκ φύσεως) and one through practice (ἐκ ἀσκήσεως). The first called Abraham, the second Isaac and the third Jacob, are symbols of virtue (σύμβολο[α] . . . ἀρετῆς) acquired respectively by teaching (διδασκαλίας), nature (φυσικῆς) and practice (ἀσκητικῆς). (Abr. 52)

Although Philo ostensibly discovers this threefold scheme through allegorical exegesis of the Pentateuch, the notion of virtue accruing by nature, instruction, and practice comes from Greek philosophy, appearing in systematic formulation at least as early as Aristotle and gaining later acceptance among Philo's philosophical contemporaries, including his fellow Middle Platonists. Philo's

48 Cf. Mut. 12; Ios. 1; Mos. 1.76.
49 Diogenes Laertius (5.18), attributes the formulation to Aristotle: "Three things he declared to be indispensable for education: natural endowment (φύσεως), study (μαθήσεως), and constant practice (ἀσκήσεως)" (trans. R. D. Hicks). Noting the tripartite method in Didask. 28.4 [182.3-6], Dillon writes (also citing Abr. 52-54) that "it is thus likely to be the basic Middle-Platonic doctrine" (xxiii) (cf. Lilla, Clement of Alexandria, 66-68). For the doctrine among contemporary Stoics, see Geytenbeek, Musonius Rufus, 28-29.
reason for choosing Jacob as the model of practice (ἀσκησις) derives mainly from the patriarch’s wrestling match at the ford of the Jabbok (Gen 32:22-32).\(^\text{50}\)

Since wrestling plays a definitive role in the life of Jacob, Philo makes it an essential attribute of the type of soul Moses represents through the story of Jacob. Wrestlers are athletes, and in the athletic discourse of antiquity "ἀσκησις" refers to the practice (i.e., exercise, training) that every athlete—wrestler or not—must undergo to achieve excellence. And the discourse of ἀσκησις belongs to an even larger stock of athletic imagery and terminology deployed in connection with the Jacob soul: an "agon motif" that suits Philo’s allegorical method well because it operates on two levels.\(^\text{51}\)


struggle to train in pursuit of tangible prizes. But figuratively, the motif speaks of the soul’s struggle to train in pursuit of intangible—yet more valuable—prizes, especially virtue. While ἀσκησις can in theory yield a number of virtues, Philo sees it primarily as a means of acquiring ἐγκράτεια. He thematically highlights ἐγκράτεια as a prominent goal of the Jacob soul by characterizing its struggle as a contest with non-rational forces—a wrestling match against emotion (πάθος).

While the patriarch Jacob played the athlete by literally wrestling with a physical opponent, the Jacob soul—the soul possessed of Jacob’s athletic qualities—takes its practice (ἀσκησις) by figuratively wrestling with an intangible

---

52 When Philo lists the elements of ἀσκησις, he mentions only the virtue of ἐγκράτεια: Leg. 3.18: μέρι τῆς ἀσκήσεως = ἀναγνώσεις, μελέται, θεραπεύαι, τῶν καλῶν μνήμαι, ἐγκράτεια, τῶν κηθοκότων ἐνέργειαί; Her. 253: πάντα γὰρ τὰ τῆς ἁσκήσεως = ἡ ζήτησις, ἡ σκέψις, ἡ ἀνάγνωσις, ἡ ἀκράσια, ἡ προσοχή, ἡ ἐγκράτεια, ἡ ἐξαιτίας τῶν ἀδιαφόρων.

53 Cf. Völker, Fortschritt und Vollendung, 126-37 ["Der kamf gegen die πάθη"]; esp. 129-30: "Daneben fordert Philo eine willensmäßige Anspannung, um die πάθη zu überwinden, ein systematisches Sich-Üben in der ἐγκράτεια." Although a prominent goal, ἐγκράτεια clearly does not represent for Philo the ultimate goal of the Jacob soul. Philo translates "Israel" as "seeing God" (Conf. 51: Ἱσραήλ γὰρ ὅρων θεοῦ ἐφημηνεύεται; cf. Ebr. 82: ὄρασιν γὰρ θεοῦ μηνύει τούτων; on the etymology see Grabbe, Etyymology, 172-73), so the Jacob soul must become "Israel" and obtain a vision of God to achieve its final end. This ultimate emphasis on seeing God—representing detachment from the sensible world in favor of the intelligible—gives Philo’s understanding of Jacob, and thus his concept of ἀσκησις, an overarching Platonic framework (see esp. Praem. 36-40; cf. Migr. 214; Somn. 1.46; on the Platonic nature of such a vision, see David Bradshaw, "The Vision of God in Philo of Alexandria," ACPQ 72 [1998]: 483-500; Frederick E. Brenk, "Darkly Beyond the Glass: Middle Platonism and the Vision of the Soul," in Platonism in Late Antiquity [ed. Stephen Gersh and Charles Kannengiesser; CJA 8; Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992], 39-60; cf. Irl Goldwin Whitchurch, The Philosophical Bases of Asceticism in the Platonic Writings and in Pre-Platonic Tradition [CSP 14; New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1923]; Sarah J.K. Pearce, The Land of the Body: Studies in Philo’s Representation of Egypt [WUNT 208; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007], 30-33 ["Migration and Allegory"]). So despite his identification of Cynic elements in Philo’s concept of ἀσκησις, Émile Bréhier’s suggestion that it derives entirely from Cynicism must be rejected (Idées philosophiques et religieuses, 261: "L’on ne saurait réduire toute la morale philonienne au cynisme . . . nous allons essayer de montrer que tout son ascétisme en provient" [emphasis added]; see 261-71 [= "Le cynisme et l’ascétisme"]).
yet dangerously real opponent, the emotions (πάθη). Philo’s vision of the moral agent grappling with, and so struggling against, the emotions reflects above all the division of soul presumed in Middle-Platonic moral psychology, where πάθος has an independent existence over against the rational faculty. The Jacob soul, in other words, contends with distinct, non-rational πάθη—but how and to what end? Philo clearly depicts the Jacob soul engaged in a contest of power whose outcome rests solely on the relative strength of opponents: the moral agent, exemplified by reason (λόγος), either is or is not stronger than emotion, and so either will or will not succeed in forcibly controlling it. And the Jacob soul clearly does, in Philo’s view, wrestle for control of the emotions, not their elimination or absolute suppression. Specifically, the Jacob soul seeks to moderate emotion and keep it from overstepping the limits or bounds set by reason in a given circumstance. In Philo’s view, the historical patriarch Abraham exhibits this type of soul, as he "wrestles" with the emotion of grief at the loss of Sarah and rightly aims for μετριοπαθεῖν (Abr. 257):

---

54 E.g., Leg. 3.93: ὁ πτερνιστής τῶν παθῶν καὶ ἁσκητής ἁρετής Ἰακώβ; Sobr. 65: ὁ τὴν πρὸς πάθη πάλην γεγυμνασμένος Ἰακώβ (cf. Leg. 3.190; Sacr. 17; QG 4.163).
55 E.g., Leg. 3.18: ὁ ἁσκητής οὖν Ἰακώβ νοῦς, ὅτε μὲν ορά ταπεινὸν τὸ πάθος, περιμένει λογιζόμενος αὐτὸ νικήσειν κατὰ κράτος; Mut. 85: ὁ δ ἁσκητής καὶ τὸ ἐκούσιον ἔχων αὐτὸ μόνον καὶ τούτῳ γυμνᾶς καὶ συγκροτών, ἵνα τὸ οἰκεῖον πάθος τῷ γενήτω καταβάλῃ.
56 In general, Philo suggests a necessary correlation between μετριοπάθεια and ἁσκησις as characteristics of a moral agent occupying a lower stage of ethical development (i.e., making progress [προκόπτων] toward perfection): e.g., Leg. 3.132: ὁ γε προκόπτον τεύτερος ὄν Ἀαρών μετριοπάθειαιν . . . ἁσκεῖ; Det. 65: ὃ μὲν οὖν ἁσκησις μέσον, οὐ τέλειον; Post. 78: τοῖς μὲν γὰρ ἁσκηταῖς προκόπτουσι καὶ βελτιστομένοις. Ἐγκράτεια fits into this nexus, insofar as it always involves conflict and thus always denotes a measure of imperfection on the part of the moral agent, who has failed at some level to settle the issue of who—or what—shall rule the soul.
When grief was making itself ready to wrestle with his soul (τῆς λύπης ἐπαποδομένης ἤδη καὶ κατὰ τῆς ψυχῆς κοινομένης), he grappled with it, as in the arena, and prevailed (ὤσπερ ἀθλητῆς ἐπεκράτησε). He gave strength and high courage to the natural antagonist of emotion, reason (τὸν ἀντίπαλον φύσει τῶν παθῶν λογισμὸν), which he had taken as his counselor throughout his life and now particularly was determined to obey. (Abr. 256)57

Philo’s conception of what the ascetic soul achieves in grappling with the emotions mirrors the Middle-Platonic theory of "passion" sketched elsewhere in his writings. Benign emotions become malignant "passions" by becoming "immoderate" (ἀμετρος), so the Jacob soul targets any expression of emotion in excess of the measure (μέτρον) set by reason, "wrestling" it down into a more appropriate form.58 Allegorically interpreting the "numbing of the broad part" (πλάτος νάρκη)59 as a "prize" (βραβείον) awarded to Jacob the "practiser" (ὁ ἀσκητής) after his wrestling match, Philo writes:

Nothing is so profitable (σύμφορον) as that the laxity and free play of the impulses (τὸ κεχαλασμένον καὶ ἀνειμένον τῶν ὀρμῶν) should be hampered and numbed (ἀνακοπήναι τε καὶ ναρκῆσαι) with their vitalizing forces paralyzed so that the inordinate strength of the emotions may be exhausted (ἐν ἑκατέροις ἀμετρος ἰσχύς ἐξαισθητάσατο) and thus provide a breadth in which the better part of the soul may expand (πλάτος ἐμπαράσχῃ ψυχῆς τῷ βελτίων μέρει). (Praem. 48)60

57 Substituting "grief" for Colson’s "sorrow," and "emotion" for "passion."
58 Note also in Abr. 257 Philo’s characterization of μετριοπαθεῖν as μήτε πλέον τοῦ μετρίου σφαιρέζειν.
59 Gen 32:26: ἐνάρκησεν τὸ πλάτος τοῦ μηροῦ Ἰακώβ ἐν τῷ παλαίειν αὐτὸν μετ’ αὐτοῦ.
60 Substituting "impulses" for Colson’s "appetites"; "emotions" for "passions"; "paralyzed" for "paralysed." On κεχαλασμένον, see Philo’s interpretation of "girding the loins" (ὄσφυς περείζωσθαι) which likewise speaks of moderating emotion (e.g., Leg. 3.153-54: ἀνεξώσθαι γάρ βούλεται ἡμᾶς τὰ πάθη, ἀλλὰ μὴ ἀνειμένα καὶ κεχαλασμένα φορεῖν; cf. Leg. 2:28: ἐπὶ τοῦ πάθους, δὲ ἀνεξώσθαι χρῆ καὶ μὴ ἐὰν κεχαλάσθαι καὶ ἀνειθαί).
Since *curtailing excess* stands in Philo’s mind as one aspect of ἐγκράτεια, he characterizes here the laborious wrestling of the Jacob soul as the *practice* (ἀσκησις) of ἐγκράτεια. ⁶¹ Speaking allegorically of "Jacob," Philo elsewhere notes:

[The Man of Practice (ὁ ἀσκητής)] . . . wrestles with the emotions (πρὸς τὰ πάθη παλαίων) and . . . goes into training to gain self-control (πρὸς ἐγκράτειαν ἀλειφόμενος) . . .. (Congr. 31) ⁶²

Insofar as he identifies the emotions *generically* as the wrestling opponent of the Jacob soul, Philo brings a *broad* formulation of ἐγκράτεια ("rational" over "non-rational") to his consideration of ἀσκησις. But the emotions obviously include ἐπιθυμία, and the *narrow* formulation of ἐγκράτεια singles it out as the principal antagonist of reason. When Philo considers the specific types of practice needed to acquire ἐγκράτεια, he tends to have this narrow formulation—with its emphasis on ἐπιθυμία—in mind.

*Ἐγκράτεια through Ascetic Precepts*

Based on his understanding of what Jacob represents, Philo sees the acquisition of ἐγκράτεια as a matter of *practice* (ἀσκησις): strenuous, active engagement with an opponent (ἐπιθυμία), in a contest of power that builds strength and skill. But exactly what *sort* of practice endows the moral agent with ἐγκράτεια? What *sorts* of exercises make for good training? In general, Philo

---

⁶¹ Cf. Praem. 100: ἐγκράτειαν ἀσκήσαντες; Hypoth. 7.11: πρὸς ἀσκήσεως . . . ἐγκρατείας; Hypoth. 11.14: ἀσκεῖν ἐγκράτειαν.

⁶² Substituting "emotions" for Colson’s "passions."
believes that the Law of Moses promotes virtue among its adherents. But he also believes that Moses designed specific laws to promote specific virtues, including ἔγκράτεια. In other words, Moses had a clear grasp of the activities of soul capable of effecting ἔγκράτεια, and—like a good trainer—he prescribed those activities through specific laws. Apart from any religious significance, such precepts have great philosophical significance, because their formulation reflects principles of moral psychology and ἄσκησις derived from Philo’s philosophical milieu. To coin a term, they are "ascetic precepts," and they


64 E.g., Spec. 2.163: υφηγησεις νυμων θειον, οι τας τε γαστρας θηδονας και υπογαστριους εστειλαν...και τας της πυχης άκρας και πλεοναζουσας ορμας ανεκοψαν και ανεχατισαν. On the valorization of ἐγκράτεια among Philo’s contemporaries as a context for his own emphasis on ἐγκράτεια in regard to the Tenth Commandment (and dietary laws), see Stowers, Romans, 46-56; also Niehoff, Philo on Jewish Identity, 75-110 [= "Jewish Values: Religion and Self-Restraint"]; cf. Long, "Ethics and Power."

65 In Philo’s view, Moses could formulate helpful exercises in ἐγκράτεια because he himself had mastered desire: "When [Moses] was now passing beyond the term of boyhood, his good sense became more active. He did not, as some, allow the lusts of adolescence to go unbridled (ὑπὸ ὡς ἐνιού τὰς μερακιώδεις ἑπιθυμίας ἄχαλινωτος ἐων), though the abundant resources which palaces provide supply numberless incentives to foster their flame. But he kept a tight hold on them with the reins, as it were, of temperance and self-control (σωφροσύνη καὶ καρτερία ὁπερ τοιαὶ ἄννας ἐνδησάμενος αὐτάς), and forcibly pulled them back from their forward course (τὴν εἰς τὸ πρόσω ψυχὴν ἐνεχατιπτεὶς βίας). (Mos. 2.25-26). On Philo’s view of Moses, see Hywel Clifford, "Moses as Philosopher-Sage in Philo," in Moses in Biblical and Extra-Biblical Traditions (ed. Axel Graupner and Michael Wolter; BZAW 372; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), 151-67;

66 These Mosaic philosophical exercises fit the definition of "sittliches Exerzitium" (also "sittliche Übung"), the term Paul Rabbow offers to describe a type of methodical practice popular among philosophers of the early Roman Era: "a particular exertion, a calculated act of self-
signal Philo’s attempt to understand Mosaic legislation in light of contemporary Middle-Platonic ethical concerns. Although Philo casts a number of laws as exercises in ἔγκρατεία (ascetic precepts), he never couples an individual law with a complete explanation of how it works. But considering his remarks on several such laws provides enough material to create an adequate concept of the ascetic precept.

In the law regarding a year of Sabbath rest for the land (Lev 25:2-7; Exod 23:10-11), the law regarding fasting on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:29-31; influence, carried out with the express purpose of achieving a specific ethical effect; it always transcends itself, insofar is it is either repeated or forms part of a larger network of acts designed for the same purpose” (my translation of Paul Rabbow, Seelenführung: Methodik der Exerzitien in der Antike [München: Kösel, 1954], 18).

67 In general, research into Philo’s theory of ἀσκησίας has overlooked the place of Mosaic legislation within that theory. Studies of Philo that deal directly with ἀσκησίας but do not consider the ascetic function of precepts include Bréhier, Idées philosophiques et religieuses, 261-71 [="Le cynisme et l’ascétisme"] ; Völker, Fortschritt und Vollendung, 198-239 [="Die ἀσκησίας als Weg zur Vollkommenheit"]; and Winston, "Philo’s Ethical Theory," esp. 405-14 [="Asceticism"].

Similarly, David Charles Aune, "Mastery of the Passions," while he intends in part to "illustrate Philo’s . . . ascetic program" (128), does not consider the role of precepts. Siegfried, Philo, does speak of "das mosaische Gesetz als das zweckmässigste Anleitungsmittel für . . . sittlichen Uebungen" (257) in the context of Philo’s theory of ἀσκησίας (Uebung), but he does not explore the precept-ἀσκησίας connection in depth (cf. 21 [on 4 Macc]: "durch die Uebung des Gesetzes . . . diese vier Tugenden Entstehen"). In their study of Jacob as Philo’s allegorical paradigm of ἀσκησίας, Hayward ("Philo and the Name ‘Israel’") and Sheridan ("Jacob and Israel") also overlook the role of precepts within that paradigm. Steven Fraade notes the role of precepts in his "Ascetical Aspects of Ancient Judaism" (in Jewish Spirituality [ed. Arthur Green; New York: Crossroad, 1986], 253-88, 265: "Such strength is only gradually achieved with the help of the commandments of the Torah, which are often interpreted by Philo as exercises intended to strengthen the soul by repeatedly accommodating it to abstinence from and moderation of desires for food, drink, sex, etc." But Fraade does not explore the precept-ἀσκησίας connection in depth, or from the standpoint of moral psychology. There are also important treatments of ἀσκησίας per se that mention Philo yet fail to consider ascetic precepts (e.g., Bernhard Lohse, Askese und Mönchtum in der Antike und in der alten Kirche [RKAM; ed. Carsten Colpe and Heinrich Dörrie; Munich and Vienna: R. Oldenbourg, 1969], 102-10). Pierre Hadot, "Spiritual Exercises," provides an excellent survey of therapeutic exercises in Greco-Roman philosophy, including Philo. He cites Philo’s general lists of what constitutes ἀσκησίας (Her. 253, Leg. 3.18) (64) but nowhere mentions Mosaic precepts, which are for Philo just the sort of therapeutic exercises Hadot seems to have in mind.
Num 29:7-11), and the law regarding marrying female prisoners of war (Deut 21:10-13), Philo recognizes deliberate efforts on Moses’ part to promote ἐγκράτεια through ἀσκησις.68 First of all, Moses understood that the dominance of λόγος over ἐπιθυμία can involve either the complete suppression of desire (no indulgence) or simply the constraint of desire within certain limits (moderate indulgence). In either case, the moral agent controls desire and effectively exercises a capacity for ἐγκράτεια. The law of Sabbath rest, for example, calls for a moderate indulgence of ἐπιθυμία, because it prohibits farmers from working their land every seventh year. By enjoining the deliberate forgoing of potential gain (κέρδος), this law trains its adherents not only to bear unexpected deprivation (ἐνδοια) but also to keep their desires within moderate bounds.69 In Philo’s view, the command targets πλεονεξία, a form of excessive desire.70 Speaking of those who do not observe the law of Sabbath rest, Philo writes:

68 On the law of Sabbath rest, see esp. Spec. 2.86-109, Spec. 4.212-18, and Praem. 153-56 (cf. Hypoth. 7.15-18). On fasting, see esp. Spec. 1.186-88 (cf. Spec. 1.192-93; Mos. 2.23-24) and Spec. 2.193-203 (esp. §195). On female prisoners of war, see Virt. 110-13. Philo himself seems to acknowledge the barbaric setting of a law treating women as spoils of war subject to nonconsensual marriage. He takes an apologetic tack, including this law in his discussion of Mosaic humanity (φιλανθρωπία) and highlighting the kindness it enjoins (NB Virt. 110: μὴ ὡς αἰχμαλώτῳ, φησίν, ἐναπεργής τὸ πάθος, ἀλλ᾽ ἡμερότερον οὐκισάμενος τῆς μεταβολῆς ἐπικούφισον τὴν συμφοράν, μεθαρμοσάμενος πάντα πρὸς τὸ βέλτιον; Virt. 114: ἐλεεῖ τὴν αἰχμαλώτον). Unlike the laws of Sabbath rest and fasting, which had practical application in Philo’s day, the law regarding marrying female prisoners of war presumably had only a theoretical interest for Philo.

69 On training for unexpected hardship, see Spec. 2.87-88, where Philo makes the ascetic function of this precept explicit: καλοῖς ἐναπαύοντοι νομίμοις (§88). Philo’s explanation of how this precept works to moderate desire comes in Spec. 4.212-18, as part of an explanation of the law against sowing two kinds of seed (Lev 19:19; Deut 22:9), to which Philo attributes the same ascetic function (see esp. Spec. 4.215-18).

70 Cf. πλεονεξία (= ὁ πλέον ἐχων) (see LSJ s.v.). On πλεονεξία and excessive desire, see Spec. 4.5: τοῖς οὖσιν οὐκ ἄρκομενος περιττοτέρων ὀρέγεται, πλεονεξίαν, ἐπίβουλον καὶ
They have burdened the fields by continually pursuing unjust gains based on greedy cravings (ἀεὶ κέρδη μεταδιώκοντες ἐκ πλεονεξίων ἀδίκα), adding to otherwise reasonable desires (ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις ἐπιστάντες) unbridled and unjust impulses incapable of fulfillment (ἀχαλίνους καὶ ἀδίκους ὀρμάς εἰς τὸ ἀκόρεστον). (Praem. 154)

Philo clarifies here the nature of πλεονεξίαι as excessive desires in terms of Middle-Platonic theory. The ἐπιθυμίαι he names represent the unobjectionable emotion desire, whose otherwise benign impulse becomes malignant with the addition (ἐπιστάντες) of excessive impulse. In other words, the ἀχαλίνους καὶ ἀδίκους ὀρμάς correspond to the πλεονάζουσα (ἄμετρος) ὀρμή of Middle-Platonic theory, the quantitative excess constituting passion. To observe the law, farmers need not deny their reasonable desire for produce; they exercise ἐγκράτεια and curtail their desire within limits prescribed by Moses. Outright denial—at least for a time—figures in the laws of fasting on the Day of Atonement and marrying female prisoners of war. Here reason cedes nothing to ἐπιθυμία, compelling it to wait for a fixed interval of time deprived of the pleasure it seeks. The fast, for example, involves one day of "bridling impulses for

δυσίατον πάθος, ἐπιτείχιζων; also Spec. 4.129: αἱ γὰρ ἄγαν πλεονεξίαι μέτρον οὐκ ἔχουσι (cf. Spec. 1.270, Virt. 100).

71 My translation. The phrase ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις ἐπιστάντες ἀχαλίνους καὶ ἀδίκους ὀρμάς εἰς τὸ ἀκόρεστον has caused some difficulty (e.g., PLCL 8, 411, n. d), but it makes sense in light of a Middle-Platonic concept of passion, without Cohn’s emendation of present (ἐφιστάντες) for the manuscript aorist (ἐπιστάντες).

72 In Spec. 4.217, Philo compares violators of the law of Sabbath rest to those who προσαναρρηγήσως τὰς ἀδίκους ἐπιθυμίαις αὐτοῦ, μέτροις αὐτὰς μὴ περιορίζουν (cf. Cher. 33: μέτρα ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις περιόδειναι).
pleasure" (Spec. 1.193: ἐπιστομίζοντας τὰς ἐφ’ ἠδονὴν ὀρμάς). The marriage law involves *thirty days* of postponing consummation, reflecting Moses’ unwillingness to "let desire get swept away in unbridled disobedience" (Virt. 113: οὐκ εἶσαεν ἀχάλινον φέρεσθαι τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν ἀπαυγενίζουσαν). In either case, Moses has designed an effective exercise in ἐγκράτεια, since obedience requires a stark denial of desire on reason’s part. Like the moderation enjoined by the law of Sabbath rest, the abstinence enjoined by these laws of fasting and marriage strengthen the capacity of λόγος to subjugate ἐπιθυμία, which in turn promotes self-control in contexts beyond those contrived by Moses.

In fact, the ascetic value of these laws hinges on their *not* being ends in themselves, since training exercises necessarily serve as a *means* for cultivating broader proficiencies. In other words, Philo admires Moses’ ascetic precepts not so much for the successful *instances* of ἐγκράτεια they enjoin as for the successful *life* of ἐγκράτεια they collectively promote. The moral capacities derived from observing particular commands transfer broadly to analogous situations Moses never addressed, so those trained by Mosaic legislation can operate *apart from law* as free moral agents possessed of ἐγκράτεια. Philo illustrates this principle of transference in Spec. 4.218, where he praises the law

73 τὰς ἐφ’ ἠδονὴν ὀρμάς = ἐπιθυμίας, in accordance with Platonic theory. Philo contrasts this restraint with the *incitements* to desire characteristic of pagan holidays (e.g., Spec. 1.192: τὰς γαστρὸς ἄκορέτους ἐπιθυμίας ἐγείρουσας; Spec. 2.193: δι’ ὲτὸν ἐγείρει τὰς ἀκαθέκτους ἐπιθυμίας).

74 Cf. Virt. 113: λογισμός γὰρ πεδῆσαι τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν οὐδὲν ὑβριστικὸν ἔσσας αὐτὴν ἐξεργάσασθαι, ἀλλὰ τὴν μηνιαίαν προθεσμίαν ἐπισχέιν.
of Sabbath rest for the land as one of two precepts—along with the law against planting two types of seed in a vineyard (Deut 22:9; cf. Lev 19:19)—designed to restrain "by extension" (μακρόθεν) the madness of greedy cravings (πλεονεξίων τὴν λύσσαν) aimed at people (ἐπ᾽ ἀνθρώποις) rather than plants.\(^75\)

For he who as a commoner has learned to shun unjust gains (κέρδος ἀδίκου) in the treatment of his plants will, if he becomes a king with greater matters in his charge (λαβόμενος μειζόνων πραγμάτων), follow his acquired habit (τὸ ἐθεὶ) when he comes to deal with men and also women. He will not exact a double tribute nor wring the life out of his subjects with his imposts (δασμοῖς). For long familiar habit (τὸ σύντροφον ἔθος) has the power to soften harsh temperaments and in a sense to tutor and mould them to better forms (πρὸς βελτίωνας τύπους). (Spec. 4.218)

Through the repeated practice (ἀσκησις) of Moses’ agricultural laws, the moral agent develops a "habit" (ἔθος) of successfully dealing with desire.\(^76\) Since ἐγκράτεια per se stands as the ultimate goal, the original context of the precept has little significance, except that it stages a contest of power between λόγος and ἐπιθυμία whose result is the moral habit of moderating desire. Once acquired

---

\(^75\) For this use of μακρόθεν, see also Spec. 4.104: μακρόθεν ἀνείρξα αυλόμενος τὴν ἐπὶ τὰ λεχθέντα ὀρμήν. For the language of restraint Philo uses in Spec. 4.218 to describe the function of these laws (ἀνείργοις καὶ ἀνακόπτοις), see also Decal. 173 (πέμπτον δὲ τῷ ἀνείργοις τὴν τῶν ἀδικήματων πηγήν, ἐπιθυμήσων) and Spec. 2.163 (τὰς τῆς ψυχῆς ἀκρίτους καὶ πλεοναζόσας ὀρμας ἀνέκκοψαν), which also speak of the function of law.

\(^76\) Aristotle clearly articulated a theory of the role played by ἔθος in the acquisition of moral virtue (e.g., Eth. nic. 1103 a 17-18: ἡ δ’ ἠθικὴ ἔξ ἔθους περιγίνεται; cf. Nancy Sherman, "The Habitation of Character," in Aristotle’s Ethics: Critical Essays [ed. Nancy Sherman; CEC; Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999], 231-60). In Middle-Platonic moral theory, the concepts of ἀσκήσις and ἔθος bear a close relation, since both involve a process of training non-rational elements of the soul to obey reason. E.g., Didask. 24.4 [177.15]: διὰ τῆς τοῦ ἔθους ἀσκήσεως; Didask. 30.3 [184.1-2]: ἐξ ἔθους ἐγγίνομεναι καὶ ἀσκήσεως; Didask. 28.4 [182.4-5] cites the threefold means to acquiring virtue familiar to Philo (e.g., Abr. 52), expanding ἀσκήσης to include ἔθεσι τε καὶ ἀγωγή καὶ ἀσκήση τῇ κατὰ νόμον; Plutarch, Garr. 510 C-D: ἀσκήσας... ἐθιζέται. The association appears in Plato as well: e.g., Resp. 518 D-E: τῷ ὁντι γὰρ οὐκ [ἀρεταί] ἐνοῦσαι πρῶτον ὑπερον ἐμποιεῖσθαι ἔθεσι τε καὶ ἀσκήσεων.
through Moses’ ascetic precepts, this habit of moderation transfers to "greater matters" (μειζόνων πραγμάτων), such as the duties of a king. Instead of indulging an inordinate desire for revenue, a ruler trained by Moses’ regimen will exercise moderation and not exhaust the wealth of his subjects. The same principle of transference appears in Philo’s analysis of the fasting prescribed for the Day of Atonement, which he calls a day "devoted to ἐγκράτεια" (Spec. 2.195: ἐξαιρετον ἡμέραν ἀναθεὶς αὐτῇ [ἐγκράτεια]):

To one who has learnt to disregard food and drink which are absolutely necessary (σιτίων γὰρ τις καὶ ποτῶν μαθὼν ἄλογειν τῶν οὕτως ἀναγκαίων), are there any among the superfluities of life (τίνος . . . τῶν περιττῶν) which he can fail to despise, things which exist to promote not so much preservation and permanence of life (καὶ γέγονεν οὐ διαμονῆς καὶ σωτηρίας ἐνεκα) as pleasure with all its powers of mischief (μᾶλλον ἢ βλαβερωτάτης ἡδονῆς)? (Spec. 2.195)

Philo admires the lifestyle of ἐγκράτεια this law promotes, not simply the temporary exercise of ἐγκράτεια it requires. By practicing on a limited basis the more challenging denial of necessary desires, the moral agent masters the comparatively easy denial of superfluous desires. And this broader capacity for consistent denial of superfluous desires amounts to ἐγκράτεια, because it involves the enforcement of reason’s measure (necessity) over against desire’s tendency to pursue pleasure in excess of that measure.

**CONCLUSION**

Philo has a multi-faceted but theoretically consistent understanding of ἐγκράτεια. In essence, ἐγκράτεια involves the rule of reason over antagonistic
non-rational forces within the soul, especially ἐπιθυμία. In particular, ἔγκράτεια involves the curtailing of excessive non-rational impulses through the enforcement of limits set by reason. Framed in terms of human motivation, this involves reason’s consistent enforcement of its goal, the greatest overall good for the soul, over against desire’s goal of pleasure. In any case, ἔγκράτεια stands as the indispensable guard against passion, because it keeps the emotion ἐπιθυμία from ever usurping reason’s authority and overtaking the soul. For this reason, Philo commends the acquisition of ἔγκράτεια, identifying ἀσκησίς as the principle means to that end. By repeatedly practicing reason’s dominance over desire, the moral agent develops a capacity for ἔγκράτεια. Moses understood this principle and so designed a number of ascetic precepts, which enjoin the subjugation of desire in a limited, artificial setting in order to cultivate a broader lifestyle of ἔγκράτεια among those trained by his precepts.
CHAPTER FOUR

PHILO’S EXPOSITION OF THE TENTH COMMANDMENT: TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY

PHILO’S EXPOSITORY AGENDA

In his exposition of the Tenth Commandment, Philo uses the conceptual nexus of ἐπιθυμία, ἐγκράτεια, and ἄσκησις as an overarching frame of reference for his work. Within that frame, his concept of desire figures most prominently, since a serious attempt to explain the prohibition οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις requires an equally serious concept of ἐπιθυμία, serious enough to enable a precise statement of what exactly the Tenth Commandment prohibits. For Middle Platonists, the operation of ἐπιθυμία can represent either a perfectly natural, amoral emotion (πάθος) or an immoral passion (πάθος), depending on whether or not reason stays in control. Reading οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις as a categorical prohibition of the emotion desire—ἐπιθυμία itself—makes no sense from a Middle-Platonic standpoint for two reasons: (1) the emotion itself involves nothing morally objectionable and (2) human existence requires, at minimum, the indulgence of necessary desires for food and drink. So on theoretical grounds alone, Philo must take οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις as a prohibition of passionate desire, which in fact he does in the course of his exposition, justifying the prohibition in light of dangers posed by passionate desire itself and its dangerous propensity to
burgeon into tyrannical desire (ἐρως). But how does someone actually observe a prohibition of passionate desire? Here the concept of ἐγκράτεια figures into Philo’s frame of reference as the solution to the problem addressed by the Tenth Commandment. Because Middle Platonists conceived passionate desire as "immoderate" desire (ἀμέτρος ἐπιθυμία), abstaining from the passion (thereby observing the prohibition) means keeping the emotion within the bounds of moderation, which in turn requires ἐγκράτεια. For this reason, Philo’s exposition programmatically commends ἐγκράτεια as the means to observing the Tenth Commandment. But Philo also outlines the Mosaic program for acquiring ἐγκράτεια, which brings ἀσκησις into his frame of reference. In particular, he casts the Mosaic dietary laws as a set of ascetic precepts designed to inculcate ἐγκράτεια through ἀσκησις. So Philo’s entire exposition can be summarized in terms of these three concepts: (1) the Tenth Commandment prohibits passionate ἐπιθυμία, (2) obeying the prohibition amounts to the exercise of ἐγκράτεια, and (3) the Mosaic dietary laws inculcate ἐγκράτεια through ἀσκησις.

Recognizing ἐπιθυμία, ἐγκράτεια, and ἀσκησις as Philo’s ultimate frame of reference helps to explain the various interpretive moves he makes in connection with both the prohibition οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις and the dietary laws presumed to support its observance. Before composing an exposition of the Tenth Commandment, Philo understood these three concepts to stand in a certain theoretical relationship, conceived along Middle-Platonic rather than
biblical lines. So when he encounters a biblical prohibition of ἐπιθυμία, he tries to make sense of it in light of the Middle-Platonic theory at his disposal, framing a philosophical notion of the type of desire proscribed, the reason for its proscription, and the means of observing the proscription. Similarly, once Philo identifies the dietary laws as the legal species of the genus οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις, his interest lies not so much in the laws per se as in the Mosaic program of ἀσκησις they represent. In other words, Philo operates according to a clear expository agenda: a deliberate effort to correlate the Tenth Commandment and its dietary laws with the best of contemporary philosophy (Middle Platonism) by carefully highlighting the principles of ἐπιθυμία, ἔγκρατεια, and ἀσκησις at work in their formulation. Philo implements this agenda in a variety of ways throughout his exposition, but two particular ways involve his prior knowledge of (1) traditional interpretations of the dietary laws, particularly laws concerning clean and unclean animals, and (2) contemporary genres of philosophical literature. Giving preliminary consideration to these topics clarifies their relevance to Philo’s expository agenda.

*Traditional Interpretations of Clean and Unclean Animals*

In his extended interpretation of the Mosaic regulations concerning clean and unclean animals (*Spec. 4.100-118*), Philo demonstrates familiarity with a line of interpretation developed by an earlier generation of Hellenistic Jews in Alexandria—namely, the symbolic interpretation of clean and unclean animals
attributed to the High Priest Eleazar in the Letter of Aristeas. Essentially, Eleazar argues that Moses formulated his legislation on clean and unclean animals to promote justice (δικαιοσύνη) among his followers. The designations "clean" and "unclean" have little to do with the properties of animal flesh for eating—instead they derive from physical and behavioral traits that symbolize certain ethical traits among human beings. Eleazar’s most extensive interpretation along these lines involves various species of birds (Let. Arist. 145-50). Unclean birds, for example, "are wild and carnivorous and with their strength oppress the rest and procure their food with injustice" (Let. Arist. 146). As Eleazar explains further:

Through these creatures then, by calling them 'unclean' (ἀκάθαρτα), [Moses] set up a symbol (παράσημον) that those for whom the legislation was drawn up must practice justice (δικαιοσύνη) in spirit and oppress no one, trusting in their own strength, nor rob anyone of anything, but must guide their lives in accordance with justice (ἐκ δικαίου) . . . (Let. Arist. 147)

1 See esp. Let. Arist. 144-69. On the question of Philo’s knowledge of the Letter of Aristeas, see Moses Hadas, Aristeas to Philocrates: Letter of Aristeas (New York: Harper, 1951; repr., Eugene, Oreg.: Wipf & Stock, 2007), 21-26. Hadas concludes: "The balance of probability seems to be rather on the side of Philo’s having read our Aristeas" (25-26). Cf. Rhodes, "Diet and Desire," 124, n. 10: "Whether or not Philo knew the Letter of Aristeas or simply inherited a similar exegetical tradition is difficult to determine with certainty. The situation is analogous to the famous crux of whether Philo derives his story of the origin of the LXX (Mos. 2.25-44) from Aristeas or an independent tradition. On balance, the wide circulation eventually attained by the Letter of Aristeas favors Philo’s knowledge of that document." Berthelot ("L’interprétation symbolique," 253) suggests a shared tradition: "Bien que l’inspiration de Philon soit très proche de celle d’Aristée, il n’est pas sûr que Philon dépende à strictement parler de celui-ci; il semble plutôt que les deux auteurs aient puisé à une tradition commune." On Philo’s relation to the Letter of Aristeas, see also Hecht, "Patterns of Exegesis," 112-14.

2 E.g., Let. Arist. 144: δικαιοσύνης ἐνεκεν . . . πάντα ἀνατέτακται; 148: διὰ τῶν τοιούτων . . . ὁ νομοθέτης σημειούσθαι τοὺς συνετοὺς εἶναι δικαίους; 169: περὶ βρωτῶν ὁν καὶ τῶν ἀκαθάρτων ἐρπετῶν καὶ κνῳδάλων καὶ πᾶς λόγος ἀνατείνει πρὸς δικαιοσύνην.

3 On this sort of ethical interpretation, see Berthelot, "L’interprétation symbolique."
Moses’ prohibition functions as a symbolic discourse in which the command to abstain from a certain type of bird translates directly into a moral exhortation to abstain from violent oppression. This line of interpretation makes actual abstinence seem irrelevant, since eating an unclean bird would not in fact undermine Moses’ purpose, as long as the moral agent abstains from the type of behavior the bird represents. Similarly, the clean birds are all "gentle" (ἡμερα) herbivores, which never violently oppress another creature (Let. Arist. 147). By calling them "clean," Moses commends the disposition they represent, again with no real concern for the consumption (or not) of their flesh:

By such examples, then, the lawgiver has commended to men of understanding a symbol (ἡμετεροθαί τοῖς συμμέτοις) that they must be just (δικαίως) and achieve nothing by violence (βία), nor confiding in their own strength (ἰσχύ), must they oppress others (ἐτέρους καταδυναστεύειν). (Let. Arist. 148)

In sum, then, the exegetical method of Eleazar involves recognizing in the designations "clean" and "unclean" an animal behavioral trait analogous to a human ethical trait—and further recognizing Moses’ primary intention as the commendation or condemnation of ethical traits, not types of meat. As a result of this method—interpreting mainly the traits of "savage" and "carnivorous," "tame" and "herbivorous"—Eleazar identifies justice (δικαιοσύνη) as Moses’ real ethical concern.

---

4 Eleazar downplays the literal significance of the dietary laws at the beginning of his interpretation (Let. Arist. 144): "Do not accept the exploded idea that it was out of regard for ‘mice’ and the ‘weasel’ and other such creatures that Moses ordained these laws with such scrupulous care."
Although he uses elements of this traditional interpretation, Philo fundamentally reworks these elements to suit his expository agenda, adapting Eleazar’s method and its results to his own particular frame of reference: ἐπιθυμία, ἐγκράτεια, and ἀσκησις. Above all, Philo tries to show that Moses had in mind the promotion of ἐγκράτεια—not δικαιοσύνη—when he formulated laws concerning clean and unclean animals. As a result, Philo tends to emphasize the literal significance of Moses’ regulations in two important respects: (1) in drawing a connection between the actual eating (or not) of certain meats and the operation of ἐπιθυμία in the human soul, and (2) in casting the commands to eat or abstain as the substance of a practical regimen of ἀσκησις, not the dispensable symbolic form of Moses’ ethical exhortations. And when Philo does use a symbolic mode of interpretation comparable to Eleazar’s, he uses it to demonstrate Moses’ ultimate concern for issues of ἐπιθυμία, ἐγκράτεια, and ἀσκησις.

Contemporary Genres of Philosophical Literature

Philo models his exposition of the Tenth Commandment on a type of philosophical literature whose attention to issues of πάθος, ἐγκράτεια, and ἀσκησις resonates with Philo’s exegetical agenda. Five examples of the genre appear among the Moralia of Philo’s Middle-Platonic near contemporary Plutarch—treatises Heinz Gerd Ingenkamp calls “praktische
Seelenheilungsschriften. Essentially, the Seelenheilungsschrift names one particular passion (πάθος) as its topic and consists of two parts: a diagnosis (κρίσις) of that passion and a prescription for treatment (ἀσκησις). Plutarch explains the relation between the two parts:

[W]e get well by the diagnosis and treatment of our passions (τῶν γὰρ παθῶν κρίσει καὶ ἀσκήσει), but the diagnosis must come first (προτέρα δὲ ἡ κρίσις); since no one can become habituated to shun or to eradicate from his soul what does not distress him (οὐδεὶς γὰρ ἐθίζεται φεύγειν καὶ ἀποτρίβεσθαι τῆς ψυχῆς δὲ μὴ δυσχεραίνει), and we only grow distressed with our passions (τὰ πάθη) when we have perceived, by the exercise of reason, the injuries and shame which result from them (τὰς βλάβας καὶ τὰς αἰσχύνας τὰς ἀπ᾽ αὐτῶν). (Garr. 510 C-D)

In other words, a Seelenheilungsschrift tries to convince the reader of the horrible nature of a particular passion, in hopes of motivating the reader to embrace the practical exercises offered as a therapeutic treatment or cure for that passion.

Philo most likely encountered the genre through acquaintance with the philosophical milieu of Plutarch’s teacher, Ammonius, a contemporary of Philo and native of Alexandria. In that case, the Seelenheilungsschrift most likely to represent the genre as Plutarch learned it, and thus as Philo knew it, would be the earliest of the five, De garrulitate or On Talkativeness.

---

5 See Ingenkamp, Schriften, 7, where he introduces the term and lists the five treatises: De curiositate, De cohibenda ira, De garrulitate, De vitioso pudore, and De se ipsum citra invidiam laudando.


7 See above, 43, n. 12.

8 Ingenkamp identifies De garrulitate as the earliest of the five Seelenheilungsschriften, written sometime after A.D. 68 (Schriften, 116-18). And of the five, De garrulitate bears the least
Although Plutarch makes talkativeness (ἀδολεσχία) the explicit subject of his earliest Seelenheilungsschrift, he ultimately considers the issue of desire (ἐπιθυμία)—but desire considered under just one of its aspects, a desire for listeners:

[B]ut even in that which they desire (περὶ αὐτῆν τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν) especially they fail miserably. For in other diseases of the soul (νοσημασί τῆς ψυχῆς), such as love of money (φιλαργυρία), love of glory (φιλοδοξία), love of pleasure (φιληδονία), there is at least the possibility of attaining their desires (τυγχάνειν ὑπὲρ ἑφιένται), but for babblers (τοῖς δὲ ἀδολέσχοις) this is very difficult: they desire listeners (ἐπιθυμοῦντες ἀκροτόν) and cannot get them, since every one runs away headlong. (Garr. 502 E)

Here Plutarch suggests that ἐπιθυμία as it relates to speech can manifest itself in a "diseased" way as talkativeness (ἀδολεσχία), even though the desire itself involves nothing objectionable.9 Thinking along Middle-Platonic lines, Plutarch understands the critical importance of reason’s position over against this type of desire, consistently framing his discussion of talkativeness as a matter of self-control (γκράτεια) or its absence (ἀκρασία).10 With reason in control, the moral
agent speaks in an appropriate manner. But if the moral agent's desire for listeners becomes excessive and overcomes reason, a "passion" (πάθος) results, and since the excessive desire here involves speech, the resulting passion accordingly manifests as an irrational, excessive type of speech, talkativeness.¹¹

Following the basic format of a Seelenheilungsschrift, Plutarch's approach to the problem of talkativeness involves first a diagnosis (κρίσις), then a treatment (ἀσκησίς).

Plutarch's diagnosis of talkativeness includes both broad denunciations of the passion and specific examples of its ill effects.¹² With chiastic flair, he characterizes ἀδολεσχία as worst among the passions:

Now of the other passions and diseases some are dangerous (ἐπικίνδυνα), some detestable (μισητά), some ridiculous (καταγέλαστα); but talkativeness has all these qualities at once (τις ἀδολεσχία πάντα συμβέβηκε); for babblers are derided (χλευάζονται) for telling what everyone knows, they are hated (μισοῦνται) for bearing bad news, they run into danger (κινδυνεύουσι) since they cannot refrain from revealing secrets. (Garr. 504 F)¹³

Plutarch supports his rhetoric with anecdotal evidence of the trouble talkativeness brings, such as the destruction and ruin attending revealed

---


¹¹ Plutarch understands "passion" in the Middle-Platonic sense of πλεονάζουσα (ἀμετρος) ὑφή (see above, 79-86). Cf. Garr. 514 C: τὸ λάλον... πλεονάζον.

¹² Philo, too, vilifies immoderate speech: e.g., Somn. 2.274-75.

¹³ Substituting "passions" for Helmbold's "affections" (παθῶν), "diseases" for "maladies" (νοσημάτων), "talkativeness" for "garrulousness" (ἀδολεσχία).
secrets.\textsuperscript{14} King Seleucus, for example, escaping a disastrous battle incognito, received food from a farmer whose \( \dot{a}d\delta ol\epsilon s\chi\iota \alpha \) brought death (\textit{Garr.} 508 D-F).

The farmer recognized Seleucus and could not restrain himself (ο\( \upsilon \) κατ\( \varepsilon \)σ\( \chi \)ε\( \nu \)ν):

[O]n taking leave, [he] said, "Farewell, King Seleucus." And Seleucus, stretching out his right hand to him and drawing him towards himself as though to kiss him, gave a sign to one of his companions to cut off the man’s head with a sword. (\textit{Garr.} 508 E)

Plutarch frames this as a deadly case of \( \dot{a}k\rho\alpha\sigma\iota \alpha \) (508 F), a lack of \textit{verbal} self-control characteristic of everyone possessed of talkativeness. By this and other examples, framed with disparaging rhetoric, Plutarch hopes to accomplish the express purpose of his diagnosis: revealing the "injuries and shame" (\( \tau\dot{a}\varsigma \) β\( \lambda \)\( \dot{a}b\alpha \varsigma \) κα\( \iota \) \( \tau\dot{a}\varsigma \) α\( \iota\sigma\chi\upsilon\nu\alpha\varsigma \) [510 D]) of \( \dot{a}d\delta ol\epsilon s\chi\iota \alpha \), so that his readers will embrace the practical treatment he offers in the second part of his treatise.\textsuperscript{15}

Having made his diagnostic case against talkativeness, Plutarch turns to a course of \textit{treatment} (\( \dot{a}sk\eta\omicron\iota\varsigma \)), offering specific exercises (\( \epsilon\thetai\sigma\mu\omicron\iota \)) designed to rid the moral agent of talkativeness by inculcating verbal self-control (\( \dot{e}g\kappa\rho\acute{a}t\epsilon\iota\varsigma \)). These exercises work by orchestrating a contest of power between the soul’s rational and non-rational parts—in the case of \( \dot{a}d\delta ol\epsilon s\chi\iota \alpha \), reason contends against \( \dot{e}p\iota\theta\upsilon\mu\iota \alpha \) \textit{as it relates to speech}. With each successful

\textsuperscript{14} \textit{Garr.} 508 D: "[S]ecrets, when they escape, destroy and ruin (\( \dot{a}p\omega\lambda\lambda\omicron\upsilon\omicron\iota\varsigma \) κα\( \iota \) \( \delta\iota\alpha\phi\omicron\theta\epsilon \)ρ\( \omicron\upsilon\iota\iota \)) those who cannot keep them."

\textsuperscript{15} In \textit{Garr.} 510 D, Plutarch summarizes everything learned from his diagnosis: "Thus, in the case of babblers [we perceive] that they are hated when they wish to be liked, that they cause annoyance when they wish to please, that they are laughed at when they think they are admired, that they spend their money without any gain, that they wrong their friends, help their enemies, and destroy themselves."
exercise, the moral agent’s capacity to control this type of desire increases, while the likelihood of desire usurping reason to engender *talkativeness* correspondingly decreases. Plutarch offers two basic types of ἐθισμός; the first involves refraining from speech for a period of time:

> In the first place (πρῶτον), then, when questions are asked of neighbors, let him accustom himself to remaining silent (ἐθιζέτω σιωπάν) until all have refused a response (μέχρι οὗ πάντες ἀπεἶπον τὴν ἀπόκρισιν). (Garr. 511 F)

In other words, the moral agent *waits* to speak and in so doing subjugates and restrains desire’s impulse toward the pleasure(s) of speech. Plutarch again commends the exercise of delayed response when he considers how the moral agent ought to deal with direct questions (Garr. 512 D-F). Neatly summarizing the thrust of his remarks, he identifies the ultimate *goal* of these exercises as the training of non-rational desire:

> In any case, this ravenous hunger for talking (πρὸς τοῦς λόγους ὀξύπεινον) must be checked so that it may not seem as though a stream (ῥέμα) which has long been pressing hard upon the tongue were being gladly discharged at the instance of the question. Socrates, in fact, used to control his thirst in this manner—he would not allow himself to drink after exercise until he had drawn up and poured out the first bucketful, so that his non-rational part might be trained to await the time dictated by reason (ἐθιζήται τὸν τοῦ λόγου καιρὸν ἀναμένειν τὸ ἄλογον). (Garr. 512 F)

---

16 Plutarch indirectly labels this abstention an ἀσκήμα, because after this first example (πρῶτον) he goes on to describe a second (δεύτερον) ἀσκήμα in Garr. 512 D. He describes this sort of exercises as “mastering the disease by habituation” (511 F: ἐθεὶ... κρατήσαι τοῦ νοσήματος).

17 NB Garr. 512 D: ἐθιστέεν ἑφιστάναι καὶ ποιεῖν τι διάλειμμα μεταξὺ τῆς ἐρωτήσεως καὶ τῆς ἀποκρίσεως; 512 E: τὸν δὲ βουλόμενον ἐμμελέλας ἀποκρίνασθαι δὲι... ἀναμένειν.
A second type of ἑθισμὸς commended by Plutarch involves not the delay of speaking but complete abstinence from speaking on certain topics that incite talkativeness because of the excessive pleasure they afford:

Moreover, just as Socrates used to urge men to be on their guard (ῥυλάττεσθαι) against those foods which induce us to eat when we are not hungry, and against those liquids which induce us to drink when we are not thirsty, so it is with the babbler as regards subjects for talk (τῶν λόγων): those in which he takes most delight (οἷς ἠδεται μᾶλλιστα) and employs ad nauseam he should fear and stoutly resist (ἀντιβαίνειν) when they stream in upon him. (Garr. 513 D)\(^\text{18}\)

In terms of moral psychology, the danger of especially pleasurable topics lies in their capacity to draw the moral agent into speech for the wrong motive—for pleasure itself and not for good reason, such as a legitimate need to speak.\(^\text{19}\) By avoiding such topics, the moral agent develops verbal ἐγκράτεια, since rejecting pleasure as a motivation amounts to a subjugation of ἐπιθυμία on the part of λόγος. So within Plutarch’s therapeutic program, delay and avoidance represent two fundamental techniques of ἀσκησις, directed against a passion to develop ἐγκράτεια.

Philo’s exposition of the Tenth Commandment exhibits the form and function of a Seelenheilungsschrift. First of all, it has as its topic one particular

\(^{18}\) Cf. Garr. 514 A: “[H]e that has a greater weakness for one class of subjects than for the other should be on his guard against these subjects and force himself to hold back and withdraw as far as possible from them (ἄφειλε τούτων ρυλάττεσθαι καὶ ἀνέχειν ἔκαλον ἀπὸ τούτων), since they are always able, because of the pleasure they give (ὅτι ἠδονήν), to lure him on to dilate upon them.”

\(^{19}\) On the compelling force of pleasurable speech, note also Garr. 513 E: τὸ ἡδόμενον ἐλκεῖ τὴν φωνὴν ἐφ᾽ ἐκατό. On need as the proper measure for speech, see Garr. 513 A-C.
passion, ἐπιθυμία. Second, it essentially divides into the two-part structure characteristic of the genre: a "diagnosis" (κρίσις) and a "treatment" (ἀσκησις). In Spec. 4.79-94, Philo considers the horrible nature of desire, offering—like Plutarch—both broad denouncements of the passion and specific examples of its ill effects, especially its capacity to burgeon into ἐρως. In Spec. 4.95-130, he considers the proper treatment of desire, casting the Mosaic dietary laws as therapeutic exercises comparable to those prescribed by Plutarch in De garrulitate. The Mosaic exercises in Philo's exposition mirror not only the ascetic techniques used in De garrulitate—for example, delay and avoidance—but also the overall purpose of Plutarch's "treatment": to cure a passion by cultivating ἐγκράτεια through ἀσκησις.

STRUCTURE OF PHILO'S EXPOSITION 21

I. Introduction (§78b)

II. Diagnosis (Κρίσις) (§§79-94)

A. Problem: Every Passion (§79)

B. Problem: Passionate Desire Burgeoned into Tyrannical Desire (§§80-94)

i. Overview of Tyrannical Desire (§§80-83)

a. Origin (§80a)

b. Character (§§80b-83): Insatiable, Oppressive, All-Consuming

20 Not the amoral emotion ἐπιθυμία, but the immoral passion ἐπιθυμία.

21 The structure of the commentary follows the text-units marked with boldface type.
ii. Tyrannical Desire as "Source of All Ills" (§§84-91)
   a. Statement of the Claim (§§84-85)
   b. Illustrations (§§86-91)
      1. Mode of Operation
      2. Tyrannical Desire for Money
      3. Tyrannical Desire for Fame
      4. Tyrannical Desire for Power
      5. Tyrannical Desire for Beauty
      6. Tyrannical Desire over the Tongue
      7. Tyrannical Desire over the Belly

C. Location of Ἐπιθυμία (§§92-94)

III. Treatment ("Ἀσκησις") (§§95-130)
   A. Overview of Moses' "Paradigmatic Instruction" (§§95-97)
   B. Elements of Moses' "Paradigmatic Instruction" (§§98-125)
      i. First Fruits (§§98-99)
      ii. Clean and Unclean Animals (§§100-118)
         a. Introduction (§100-102)
         b. Land Animals (§§103-109)
         c. Aquatic Animals (§§110-112)
         d. "Reptiles" (§§113-115)
         e. Birds (§§116-117)
f. Conclusion (§118)

iii. Dead Animals (§§119-121)

iv. Blood and Fat (§§122-125)

C. Concluding Moral Narrative (§§126-131)

TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY

§78b: Introduction

[§78b] Let us turn now to the last of the Ten Words, which like each of the others was delivered in the form of a summary: "You shall not desire."

Philo finally arrives at the Tenth Commandment, after commenting in depth on the other nine in Spec. 1.12 – Spec. 4.78a. He does little more than announce his transition to the last of the "Ten Words," noting only that this Commandment, like the others, has the form of a summary. Naturally, he also cites the Tenth Commandment, providing the basis of his exposition, but he cites an abbreviated version (cf. Exod 20:17; Deut 5:21), placing emphasis on ἐπιθυμία itself and not any of its objects.

§79: Problem: Every Passion

[§79] On the one hand, every "passion" is reprehensible, since we are morally responsible for every unmeasured, "excessive impulse" and for...

---

22 On the one hand (μὲν): Philo here compares the passions as a class (Πάν μὲν πάθος) with one particular passion in §80 (πάν δὲ πάθος).

23 "passion" (πάθος): Philo’s use of the terms ἐπιθυμία (reprehensible) and ὑπαίτιος (morally responsible) indicates an immoral "passion," not an amoral "emotion" (πάθος).

24 every unmeasured, "excessive impulse" (πᾶσα ἀμέτρος καὶ πλεονάζουσα ὀρμή): Philo cites the Stoic definition of "passion" (πλεονάζουσα ὀρμή) but fundamentally recasts it for Middle-Platonic use by adding the qualifying term ἀμέτρος (cf. DL 7.110: ἔστι δὲ αὐτὸ τὸ πάθος κατὰ Ζήνωνα... ὀρμή πλεονάζουσα).
the soul's "irrational and unnatural movement." After all, what do these terms describe if not an unleashing of the emotional part of the soul? So if anyone fails to place limits on the impulses of emotion, fails to bridle, so to speak, his team of unruly horses, he ends up indulging a malignant "passion." And by giving free rein to the team's unruliness, he will careen like an unwitting charioteer into some ditch or chasm, from which he will barely escape—if at all.

To begin his exposition of οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις, Philo summarizes the problem posed by every passion (Πᾶν μὲν πάθος) and not just desire, which he will consider at length beginning in §80 (τῶν δὲ παθῶν . . . ἐπιθυμία). In agreement with the Stoics, he notes that passions categorically indicate a moral lapse by using the terms ἐπίληπτον and ὑπαίτιος. But Philo differs radically in his

---

25 the soul’s "irrational and unnatural movement" (τῆς ψυχῆς ἓν ἄλογος καὶ παρὰ φύσιν κίνησις): Philo cites an alternative Stoic definition of "passion" (cf. DL 7.110: ἐστὶ δὲ αὐτὸ τὸ πάθος κατὰ Ζήνωνα ἕν ἄλογος καὶ παρὰ φύσιν ψυχῆς κίνησις), in which ἄλογος clearly denotes a morally problematic "irrational" (vs. "non-rational") movement.

26 After all, what do these terms describe if not (ἐκάεραν γὰρ τούτων <τι> ἐστὶν ἐτερον ἢ) an unleashing of the emotional part of the soul (παλαιον πάθος ἐξηπλωμένον): The addition of τι in PCW seems necessary, since the phrase παλαιον πάθος ἐξηπλωμένον further explains, from a Middle-Platonic perspective, the phenomena Philo denotes using Stoic definitions. In the explanatory phrase, πάθος refers to the non-rational part of the soul as seat of emotion(s) (i.e., παθητικὸν μέρος; cf. Eclog. 38.5-7: ἁλογον μέρος τῆς ψυχῆς . . . ἕν πάθος ἕν παθητικὸν μέρος). So παλαιον has the sense of "longstanding," indicating an enduring component of the soul activated intermittently (cf. Qe 1.7 [Gk. Petit]: τὴν ἄρτη πνευμῆν ἀριστοκρατίαν ἐν ψυχῇ καθελούσις τῆς παλαιας ὅλοκρατίας, where ὅλοκρατία stands for the Platonic ἐπιθυμητικῶν, as in Resp. VIII – IX). απλῶ (LSJ, s.v.): to unfold, stretch out.

27 place limits on the impulses of emotion (μέτρα ταῖς ὄρμαις ὀρίζει): Philo undoubtedly has in mind non-rational impulses of the emotional part of the soul—in other words, discrete impulses of desire, fear, grief, pleasure, etc. requiring the proper "measure" (μέτρον) of reason (cf. Opif. 81: τῶν παθῶν ὕμμαι; Conf. 90: τῶν παθῶν ὄρμας; Mut. 173: τάς . . . παθῶν ὄρμας). indulging a malignant "passion" (πάθει χρήται δυσιάτω): Philo speaks of the state resulting from a lack of measure: an "emotion" (πάθος) has become a "passion" (πάθος).

28 Philo often uses "reprehensible" (ἐπιληπτικος) as an antonym of "praiseworthy" (ἐπαινετος) (e.g., Post. 75; Deus 71; Spec. 3.209). As he states elsewhere, the deeds of the unjust are reprehensible (ἐπιληπτικος), due to lack of measure in their emotions (διὸ τὰς ἄμετρας τῶν παθῶν)—i.e., due to "passions" (Spec. 3.209). In addition, the moral agent is "morally responsible" (ὑπαίτιος) not for emotion, but for passion. The moment of moral accountability lies not in the experience of desire, distress, pleasure, or fear, but in the victory of these emotions over reason, which signals reason's failure to properly restrict or measure their
concept of what those passions fundamentally are. Reworking a standard Stoic definition, he uses the term ἀμέτρος to express the Middle-Platonic notion of passion as a quantitative excess of the non-rational impulses of emotion. In similar Middle-Platonic fashion, Philo suggests that the moral agent avoids passion by moderating these non-rational impulses (metriopathieia), and he uses the Platonic chariot figure to make his point. In other words, having framed the problem of passion as "unmeasured impulse" (ἀμέτρος ὀρμή), Philo frames the solution as "measured impulse" (μέτρα ταῖς ὀρμαίς)—only when the charioteer fails, when emotion oversteps the "measure" of reason's directing authority, only


30 In Philo's view, every instance of passion involves an "unmeasured" (ἀμέτρος) impulse, one excessive in quantity, not in quality as the Stoics believed. The term ἀμέτρος, which appears not a single time in SVF (see index, s.v.), is patently not Stoic, but commentators persist in labeling ἀμέτρος καὶ πλεονάζουσα ὀρμή a "Stoic" definition without accounting for the anomaly of ἀμέτρος (e.g., Colson, PLCL 8, 57, n. b; Heinemann, PCH 2, 270, ns. 1-2; Mosès, PAPM 25, 246, n. 2; also David Charles Aune, "Mastery of the Passions," 126; Bréhier, Idées philosophiques et religieuses 253, n. 9; Gaca, Making of Fornication, 200; Lilla, Clement of Alexandria, 92; Pohlenz, Philon, 457; Völker, Fortschritt und Vollendung, 80; Reydams-Schils, "Stoic and Platonist Psycho-Physiology," 193; Wolfson, Philo, 2:230). The other definition of passion Philo cites (τῆς ψυχῆς ἢ ἁλογος καὶ παρὰ φύσιν κίνητος) must be understood along similar Middle-Platonic lines: An unmeasured impulse entails a movement of the soul inconsistent with the dictates of reason and thus "irrational" (vs. non-rational). Such a movement is also "unnatural," since Nature prescribes the rule of the superior over the inferior, in this case reason over the emotions. Philo’s reference to an "unleashing of the emotional part of the soul" appears as a clarification of the Middle-Platonic moral psychology underlying the Stoic terminology he has just used. An unmeasured (excessive) impulse of desire, distress, fear, or pleasure indicates not the sudden genesis of passion as something qualitatively distinct within the soul, but instead the "unleashing" (ἐξάπλώσω—in the sense of a "loosening" or removal of restraint) of a preexisting emotional faculty (παλαιὸν πάθος). Elsewhere, Philo allegorically interprets the biblical prescription for "girded loins" (ὑπαίτιος στρεφεὶς) as an injunction against just this sort of "slackening" (χαλάω) of the emotions (e.g., Leg. 3.151-54).

31 Cf. Mosès, PAPM 25, 246, n. 3. On Philo’s chariot figure, see above, 111-18.
then does passion arise in the soul (πάθει χρήται δυσιάτω). Finally, he portrays the disaster in store for all who allow passion to arise in their souls, all who allow otherwise useful emotions to run wild, usurping the directing authority of reason. This lack of restraint (ἄφηναςμόν) "wrecks" the soul, as the non-rational "horses" are given free rein.

By commending moderation at the outset of his exposition, Philo gives an early indication of how he interprets ὡς ἐπιθυμησεῖς. While obviously a prohibition, the Tenth Commandment does not prohibit ἐπιθυμία per se, since Philo recommends the limitation of impulse, not its elimination. In other words, the Tenth Commandment prohibits passionate desire (ἀμετρος ἐπιθυμία), understood as the impulse(s) of the emotion ἐπιθυμία exceeding the measure set by reason.

§79 Excursus: Parallel Material in Decal. 142-46

In Decal. 142-46, Philo introduces his preliminary comments on the Tenth Commandment with similar μὲν . . . δὲ comparisons of all πάθη (πάντα μὲν γὰρ τὰ ψυχῆς πάθη; τῶν μὲν ἄλλων) to the one πάθος desire (χαλεπώτατον δ’ ἐπιθυμία; μόνη δ’ ἐπιθυμία). But unlike Spec. 4.79, which emphasizes the moral culpability of a failure to moderate the impulses of emotion—in other words, the moral culpability of a "passion"—Philo notes merely that all πάθη are
"troublesome" (χαλεπά), without condemning them explicitly. In fact, his analysis of pleasure (ηδονή), distress (λύπη), and fear (φόβος) ascribes virtually no moral culpability to these πάθη, since they originate from without and compel the moral agent to experience their effects involuntarily (ἀκούσιον). As Philo explains in Decal. 143-45, the perceptions of a present good (ἀγάθον), an impending ill (καικόν), or a present ill (κακόν) automatically generate the sensations of the corresponding πάθη. Although Philo's account of the sensations of pleasure, distress, and fear echoes Stoic terminology, his account of the mechanics of these passions flatly contradicts Stoic doctrine. Above all, Stoics maintained the full accountability of the moral agent for all passions, which all result from voluntary, rational assent (συγκατάθεσις). So Philo's association of πάθη with involuntary responses to external stimuli clearly reflects a different perspective.

Decal. 142-46 in fact represents a Middle-Platonic account of emotions (πάθη), not—as in Spec. 4.79—of passions (πάθη). Philo gives an unusual account of ἐπιθυμία because he needs to show why the Decalogue restricts only

32 Emotions are "troublesome" in their capacity to "unnaturally move and jar the soul, preventing its healthy operation (κινοῦντα καὶ σείοντα αὐτήν παρὰ φύσιν καὶ ύπαίρειν ώς ἔωντα)" (Decal. 142).
33 Cf. Mut. 241: τῶν δ’ ἀκούσιων οὐδὲν ὑπαίτιον (also Deus 48).
34 I.e., he does not offer a Stoic account of the passions, pace Colson (PLCL 7, 612).
35 See Inwood, Ethics and Human Action, 42-101 [="The Psychology of Action"], e.g., 44: "the power to give or withhold assent . . . makes men morally responsible for their actions"; 54: "Man is responsible because of assent"; 72: "Assent . . is vital to the Stoic analysis of action because it is the locus of moral responsibility." The term συγκατάθεσις appears nowhere in Decal. 142-46 nor anywhere in Philo's analysis of the passions (see Pohlenz, Philon, 456, n. 1).
this emotion, but he otherwise reflects standard Middle-Platonic views comparable to Didaskalikos 32.1 [185.24-42]. For example, both Decal. 142-46 and Didask. 32.1 speak of emotions as movement in the soul, with the Didaskalikos stating explicitly what Philo certainly presumes: that the movement occurs in the soul's non-rational part. Both speak of emotions as involuntary responses to the perception of an apparent good or ill. Both speak of four cardinal emotions, and describe the respective causes of pleasure, distress, and fear in similar terms. Since Philo, as a Middle-Platonist, acknowledges the existence of both emotions (πάθη) and passions (πάθη), he attempts to distinguish ἐπιθυμία both from other emotions (πάθη), as in Decal. 142-46, and from other passions (πάθη), as in Spec. 4.79-80. Given the unique prohibition of ἐπιθυμία over against other πάθη, Philo must articulate a fundamental difference between ἐπιθυμία and other πάθη, discernable both at the level of emotion per

---

36 Didask. 32.1 clearly speaks of "emotion" (πάθος), not "passion" (πάθος), since the Middle-Platonic concept of passion appears later in 32.4 [186.14-29], which contrasts "wild" (ἄγρια) and "tame" (ἡμερα) emotions: "'Tame' are such as belong naturally to man (κατὰ φύσιν), being necessary and proper to him (ἀναγκαῖα τε καὶ οἰκεία). They remain in this state as long as they preserve moderation (ἐὼς ἀν σύμμετρα ὑπάρχη); if they come to exhibit lack of moderation (ἀμετρίας), they become bad (ἡμαρτημένα)" (trans. Dillon).

37 Decal. 142: κινοῦντα καὶ σείοντα; Didask. 32.1 [185.26]: κίνησις ἄλογος ψυχής; Didask. 32.1 [185.27-29]: ἄλογος μὲν οὖν εἰρήκται κίνησις ὅτι οὐ κρίσεις τὰ πάθη οὐδὲ δόξαι ἀλλὰ τῶν ἄλογων τῆς ψυχῆς μερῶν κινήσεις.

38 Involuntary: Decal. 142: τῶν μὲν ἄλλων . . . ἀκούσιον; Decal. 144: ἀκούσαν; Didask. 32.1 [185.31-32]: Ἀκούσει γοῦν ἐν ἡμίν ἐγγίνεται πολλάκις καὶ ἀντιτείνουσιν. Response to perception of good or ill: esp. Decal. 143: τοῦ παρόντος καὶ νομισθέντος ἀγαθοῦ φαντασία διεγείρει καὶ διανιστήσῃ τὴν ψυχήν (NB φαντασία as subject, causing a response in the soul); Didask. 32.1 [185.38-39]: πάντα γὰρ [πάθη] συνίσταται ἢ κατὰ ἀγαθοῦ ἐμφάσιν ἢ κατὰ κακοῦ.

39 ἡδόνη: τοῦ παρόντος καὶ νομισθέντος ἀγαθοῦ φαντασία (Decal. 143); ἀγαθὸν γὰρ ἐάν μὲν παρεῖναι υπολάβωμεν, ἡδόμεθα (Didask. 32.1 [185.39-40]); λύπη: τὸ δ’ ἐναντίον ἀγαθῶ κακῶν, ἐκβισασάμενον (cf. παρεῖναι) (Decal. 144); κακὸν γὰρ ἐὰν μὲν παρεῖναι υπολάβωμεν,
se (Decal. 142-46) and at the level of passion—i.e., the excessive, unmeasured expression of emotion (Spec. 4.79-80).

§§80 – 83: Overview of Tyrannical Desire

[§80] On the other hand, among the passions, none proves quite so agonizing as a passionate desire for objects of fantasy that seem valuable but really are not, because longing of this kind eventually gives birth to oppressive tyrannical desires incapable of fulfillment. And consider the plight of those subject to tyrannical desire! Free of restraint and fixed on the thought of a beloved object, desire just keeps stretching and driving the soul farther and farther out into a boundless expanse, pursuing a pesky mocker who flees backwards in a brazen taunt. [§81] The quarry notices desire trying hard to catch up, then stops for a moment—just long enough to provide a teasing hope of capture—only to pull away out of reach, jeering mercilessly. And so desire, constantly eluded, constantly

40 a passionate desire for objects of fantasy that seem valuable but really are not (ἐπιθυμία τῶν ἀπόντων ὅσα τῷ δοκεῖν ἀγαθῶν, πρὸς ἀλήθειαν οὐκ ὄντων): In light of his introductory remarks on "passion" (§79), Philo must have in mind passionate desire (ἀμετρος ἐπιθυμία), although he simply refers to it as ἐπιθυμία. He notes two characteristics of the objects desired: (1) they are not present to the moral agent, and (2) they are "false goods." The first characteristic speaks to how the objects are desired: they are not materially present, so they must be visualized in the mind in order to be desired (cf. Decal. 146: ἐπειδὰν δὲ λεβὸν τις ἔννοιαν ἀγαθοῦ μη παρόντος). The moral agent compulsively "fantasizes" about the objects, because desire has captured the mind, compelling it to incorrectly esteem as "good" (valuable) something that is not. Only people enmeshed in the world and its system of values care about such things—Philo says as much in Spec. 4.82: ὅσα κατὰ τὸν ἀνθρώπινον βίον ζηλωτὰ καὶ περιμάχητα εἶναι δοκεῖ (cf. Deus 148: τὸν βασιλεία τῶν φαινομένων ἀπόντων ἀγαθῶν τὸν γῆσιν ἐδώμ—ὅτι τῶν γὰρ τὰ τῷ δοκεῖν ἀγαθὰ πάντα γῆινα).

41 longing of this kind eventually gives birth to oppressive tyrannical desires incapable of fulfillment (χαλεποὺς καὶ ἀνηνύτες ἔρωτας ἐντίκτουσα): The participial clause explains why ἐπιθυμία τῶν ἀπόντων (subj. of ἐντίκτουσα) proves so "agonizing" (ἀργαλέον) because it gives birth to "tyrannical desires" (ἔρωτας), whose harmful effects ("oppressive . . . incapable of fulfillment") Philo describes in §§80b-83. Mosés also takes the clause as explanatory: "Mais aucune d’entre les passions n’est aussi cruelle que le désir des biens absents, biens d’opinion qui n’en sont pas en réalité: car ils engendrent interminablement des caprices tyranniques."

42 And consider the plight of those subject to tyrannical desire! (γάρ): Philo now turns to a detailed characterization of life for those subject to tyrannical desire.

43 Free of restraint and fixed on the thought of a beloved object: Philo presupposes but does not explicitly state these conditions. Desire has triumphed over reason (cf. Decal. 149: ὅ τε κρατηθεὶς ἐπιθυμία), whose restraining force consequently no longer exists. The birth of ἔρως signals the involvement of the mind (see above, 87-93).
deprived, struggles endlessly in vain,\(^44\) dooming the poor soul to a Tantalus fate. You remember that wretch. As the story goes, he could never quench his thirst, because the water would instantly recede every time he tried to take a drink. Likewise, whenever he reached for some fruit on the nearby trees, it would all disappear—the loaded branches would suddenly turn barren. \([\S82]\) Now, just as those hard, implacable taskmasters hunger and thirst rack the body more painfully than an inquisitor cranking his torture wheel—often to the point of death, unless someone appeases their savagery with food and drink—desire can create even harsher taskmasters for the soul by creating a grumbling emptiness within. People forget what's right in front of them and become obsessed with what's somewhere off in the distance, working themselves into a frenzied and unending madness. They become just like Tantalus, racked with "hunger" and "thirst," but not for something to fill the void in their bellies—they hunger for money, fame, power, voluptuous bodies, or any of the countless other things that seem to them enviable and worthy of struggle.\(^45\) And don't think that passionate desire, once indulged, will ever stop short of this full-blown agony.\(^46\) \([\S83]\) Just as what physicians call the "creeping disease" never stays in one place, but moves about and as its name suggests "creeps" through the whole body, spreading and seeping, taking over the different parts of the body one after another, from head to toe, so too desire spreads quickly and eventually infects every last part of the soul in its drive for absolute tyranny. Think of it as a fire with plenty of fuel, which keeps burning once it's lit until the flames consume everything.

Having sketched briefly the problem posed by passions \textit{in general}, Philo now considers \emph{ἐπιθυμία in particular}. Any emotion (\textit{πάθος}) can become a passion (\textit{πάθος}) when reason fails to set proper limits—and passion, understood in this way as a failure of restraint, typically brings disaster to the soul (\S79). Of course,

\(^{44}\) \textit{struggles endlessly in vain (σφαδάζει)}: Cf. \textit{Praem.} 140: ἐξω δὲ τοῦ σφαδάζειν οὐδὲν ἐργάσασθαι δυνήσονται.
\(^{45}\) Cf. \textit{Decal.} 151: χρημάτων ἔρως ἢ γυναικὸς ἢ δόξης ἢ τινὸς ἀλλοῦ τῶν ἡδονήν ἀπεργαζομένων.
\(^{46}\) Some such thought underlies Philo's introduction of disease and fire imagery in \S83, which otherwise seems out of place. The agony he has just described inevitably comes once desire oversteps the bounds of reason unchecked. Philo states this more plainly in \textit{Decal.} 150: ὠσπερ τε τὰ ἐρπηνύδη τῶν νοσημάτων, εἰ μὴ προονέκρουσθη τομαίς ἢ κατοσοσθη, ἐπιθέντα σύμπασαν ἐν κύκλῳ καταλαμβάνει τὴν τοῦ σώματος κοινωνίαν οὐδὲν ἀπαθής μέρος, οὕτως.
this general rule applies also to ἐπιθυμία, which turns from useful emotion to destructive passion when it oversteps the measure of reason. But passionate desire (ἀμετρὸς ἐπιθυμία) poses a unique problem and deserves unique censure, because it fosters the awful menace of tyrannical desire (ἔρως). Philo wants to describe that menace in detail and so illustrate just how bad ἐπιθυμία can be, not ἐπιθυμία per se—and certainly not ἐπιθυμία the moderated, useful emotion—but ἐπιθυμία at its full-blown worst, ἐπιθυμία burgeoned into ἔρως. In §§80-83, Philo introduces the topic of tyrannical desire (ἔρως) then begins his "diagnosis" (κρίσις) in earnest by explaining its torturous effect on the soul.

Philo first makes a precise statement of the type of desire he has in mind (§80a): a longing (ἐπιθυμία τῶν ἀπόντων) after false goods gives birth to tyrannical desires (ἔρωτας ἐντίκτουσα). Here Philo repeats the close Platonic association of ἔρως with πόθος, a distinct aspect of ἔρως. Both terms suggest an obsessive desire, but with different emphases. Πόθος specifically involves objects not in the subject’s physical presence. As Philo plainly states, the desire

λόγος ὁ κατὰ φιλοσοφίαν ἱστροῦ δίκην ἀγαθοῦ ἰέων ἐν τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν ἐπίσχοι, πάντ’ ἔξ ἀνάγκης τὰ τοῦ βίου πράγματα κινηθήσεται παρὰ φύσιν.


48 Symp. 197 D: ἰμέρου, πόθου πατήρ [ἔρως] (cf. Phaedr. 250 D). Philo elsewhere notes the association explicitly: Opif. 5 (also Opif. 111): ἔρωτι καὶ πόθῳ; Opif. 77 (also Somn. 2.150; Spec. 4.161): ἔρωτα καὶ πόθον; Congr. 166: ἔρως ἑστὶ καὶ πόθος. Cf. Ps-Andr. 231.93: Πόθος δὲ ἐπιθυμία κατὰ ἔρωτα ἀπόντος [=ESE 10c]. The phrase οἰαστρον καὶ μανίας ἀκάθεκτον (§82) also suggests the involvement of ἔρως (e.g., Phaedr. 240 D: ὑπ’ ἀνάγκης τε καὶ οἰαστρον ἐλαύνεται; 251 D: ἣ ψυχή οἰαστρα; 241 A: ἀντ’ ἔρωτος καὶ μανίας; 256 D: τῆς ἑρωτικῆς μανίας).

49 Crat. 420 A: "πόθος" αὐ ταλείται σημαίνων ὅτι τοῦ παρόντος εἶναι ἀλλὰ τοῦ ἄλλοις ποὺ ὄντος καὶ ἀπόντος.
is τῶν ἀπόντων, which makes it a *longing*, a *pining*, for something remote and invisible. Since there is by definition nothing to perceive through the senses, the moral agent must *produce* and *hold in mind* an image of the beloved object. And ἔρως specifically involves objects deemed "good" (ἀγαθός) and thus worthy of ultimate pursuit. So tyrannical desire, as Philo points out, tragically involves a *mistaken* perception of what is good, compelling the moral agent to pursue fervently *as good* what really is not (ὅσα τῷ δοκεῖν ἀγαθῶν, πρὸς ἀληθείαν οὐκ ὄντων). In terms of Middle-Platonic moral psychology, this happens when the emotion ἐπιθυμία not only oversteps the bounds of reason to become passionate desire (ἀμετρος ἐπιθυμία), but defeats reason entirely, compelling the vanquished moral agent to embrace its false notion of the good—namely, pleasure, which various false goods seem to afford.⁵⁰

Once he identifies tyrannical desire (ἔρως) as his topic, Philo explains its characteristic ill effects, beginning with the tortuous *insatiability* ἔρως creates in the soul (§§80b-82). Philo uses both the image of a maddening, futile chase and the mythical figure of Tantalus to portray vividly the same dreadful experience: fervently, endlessly reaching for something but *never* getting hold of it.⁵¹ While

---

⁵⁰ In *Phaedr*. 237 D – 238 C, the term ἔρως applies to one in whom ἐπιθυμία has conquered (238 B: κρατήσας ἐπιθυμία; cf. *Leg.* 870 Α: ἐπιθυμία κρατοῦσα ... ἐρωτας μυρίους ἐντίκτουσα; *Her.* 269: ὅταν δὲ ἐπιθυμία κρατήσῃ, ἔρως ἐγγίνεται τῶν ἀπόντων; *Decal*. 149: ὃ τε κρατηθεὶς ἐπιθυμίας, διψῶν ἀεὶ τῶν ἀπόντων).

the chase image conveys an impression of the experience, Philo's commentary on Tantalus provides a genuine analysis in terms of moral psychology. Hunger and thirst are desires of the soul especially linked to physical states of "emptiness." As long as the physical emptiness remains, ἐπιθυμία (τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν) remains activated, in reflexive pursuit of the pleasure of a physical "filling" with food or water. The physical emptiness acts as an inherent trigger, constantly goading the "taskmasters" hunger and thirst, which in turn compel the moral agent to eat and drink. But the goading and compelling disappear when the emptiness disappears. Similarly, tyrannical desire creates something like a physical emptiness, insofar as it creates an inherent trigger for the soul's ἐπιθυμία (τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν). Obsessed with a false good, the moral agent continually brings an image of that "good" to mind, and because that "good" promises pleasure, ἐπιθυμία remains in a state of continual arousal in pursuit of that pleasure. Unlike physical hunger, which can end once the physical emptiness is filled, this "hunger" cannot end, because there is no corresponding

---

associates ἔρως with the "unreachable" (ἀνεφικτὸς): e.g., Leg. 1.75: ἀνεφικτῶν ἔρως; Spec. 1.44: τῶν ἀνεφικτῶν ἔρως. On Tantalus, see Od. 11.582-92 (cf. Her. 269: δυσφή μὲν γὰρ ἀεί, πιεῖν δὲ ἄδυνατεὶ ταντάλειον τιμωρίαν ὑπομένουσα). On the relation of hunger and thirst, as desires of the soul, to physical states of the body, see Phileb. 31 E – 35 D (cf. Hackforth, Plato's Examination of Pleasure, 61; also 79, n. 4, 112, n. 2., 140, n. 2).

52 Of course, reason may or may not authorize the pursuit of food or water, depending on the circumstances. In Resp. 439 C-D, Plato describes the moral agent who simultaneously desires something to drink but refuses to drink, because reason keeps desire in check.
physical emptiness to fill. So the soul under tyrannical desire endures an oppressive, agonizing (ἀργαλέον) fate with no hope of relief.55

Next, Philo notes the all-consuming nature of tyrannical desire (§83). If left unchecked, desire eventually spreads throughout the entire soul (δι᾽ ὅλης . . . τῆς ψυχῆς), just as disease consumes all of the body (πᾶσαν τὴν κοινωνίαν τῶν τοῦ σώματος μερῶν) and fire consumes all available fuel (πᾶσαν αὕτην).56 These images suit Philo’s Middle-Platonic psychology, because they portray desire as a distinct power capable of malignant, independent operation—of spreading its influence from one part of the soul to another. Once desire has broken free of reason’s restraint, it settles for nothing less than complete domination.57 In this way, tyrannical desire represents the terminal stage of desire’s unrestrained activity: ἐπιθυμία has “consumed” the rational part of the soul, replacing any proper notion of “the good” with its singular focus on pleasure.

§§80 – 83 Excursus: Parallel Material in Decal. 146-50

In Decal. 146-50, Philo gives a similar account of tyrannical desire, describing its insatiability and all-consuming nature. The initial context, however, deals with desire, pleasure, fear, and distress as emotions (πάθη), not passions

---

54 Cf. Agr. 36: κἂν αὐτής γαστρὸς ἀποκληρωθῶσι δεξαμεναί, σπαργώσαν ἑτὶ καὶ μαίμωσαν τὴν ἀεὶ κενὴν ἐπιθυμίαν περιβλέπεσθαι καὶ περιφοιτᾶν . . . ἵνα καὶ τούτῳ παμφάγου πυρὸς δίκην ἐπιλιθισθῇ.
addressing the question of how ἐπιθυμία (which alone the Decalogue prohibits) differs from the other three (§142). Philo claims that desire alone is "voluntary" (ἐκούσιος), because desire alone has its origin within us (τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐξ ἡμῶν αὐτῶν λαμβάνει), and he carries this idea into the ensuing descriptions of how each emotion works (§§143-45). In the case of pleasure, distress, and fear, the perceptions of present good, present ill, or impending ill—perceptions that originate outside the moral agent—cause the corresponding emotion to occur involuntarily, and Philo signals this grammatically by making the perception the subject in each description. But when he comes to desire (§146), the subject of his description becomes the moral agent (τις), who himself brings an apparent "good" to mind (λαβὼν ἡν ἐννοιαν ἄγαθον μὴ παρόντος). So Philo's descriptions of the four cardinal emotions do in fact support his initial claim about the unique genesis of desire, but only because he manipulates his account of ἐπιθυμία to that end. He elsewhere understands ἐπιθυμία to operate according to the same non-rational mechanism of stimulus and response underlying the other emotions. So consistency of doctrine would have required him to give an account of the emotion desire similar to his accounts of pleasure, distress, and fear. But instead, beginning in §146 and continuing through §150, he describes

---

58 Wolfson (Philo, 2:232-35) explains the unique "voluntary" aspect of desire in light of Philo's concept of human free will (choice). But from a Platonic perspective, non-rational ἐπιθυμία moves reflexively and so independently of the moral agent's "will."

59 §143: φαντασία διεγείρει καὶ διανίστησι τὴν ψυχὴν; §144: τὸ...κακόν...αὐτὴν ἀναποιμπληκτικὸν ἀκούσαι; §145: τὸ κακόν...προσώπι καὶ ἐγκυνίαν...προσκεπάμεται.

60 E.g., Leg. 3115: ἐπιθυμία = ὀρέξεις ἄλογος (cf. above, 67, n. 76).
not the emotion ἐπιθυμία but its vicious offspring, tyrannical desire (ἐρως), in terms that mirror Spec. 4.80-83.

Although Philo does not use the term ἐρως in §146 when he introduces his topic (as he does in Spec. 4.80 using the term ἐρωτας), he nevertheless speaks of tyrannical desire. The moral agent holds in mind a concept (ἐννοιαν) of an absent "good" (ἄγαθον μὴ παρόντος) and "reaches" to get it (ὁρέγονται τυχεῖν αὑτοῦ). Setting the mind on what is deemed good signals Platonic ἐρως—in particular, a tyrannical desire set on any number of false goods and the pleasures they promise.61 Philo states the involvement of tyrannical desire explicitly in §151: χρημάτων ἐρως ἢ γυναικός ἢ δόξης ἢ τινος ἄλλου τῶν ἡδονῆς ἀπεργαζόμενων. The absence of the beloved object (μὴ παρόντος) suggests Platonic πόθος, to which Philo refers explicitly in §146: ψάεσαι τοῦ ποθομένου γλιχόμενος (cf. πόθος in §148).62 With the beloved "good" set up in the mind, ἐπιθυμία (τὸ ἐπιθυμητικὸν) reflexively "reaches" (ὁρέγονται) to attain the pleasure it offers.63 Desire has completely defeated the moral agent, imposing its ultimate "good" of pleasure upon the rational faculty and so establishing an object of hopeless pursuit for the non-rational ἐπιθυμία within.64

---

61 As in Spec. 4.80: ὅσα τὸ δοκεῖν ἄγαθων, πρὸς ἀλήθειαν οὐκ ὅντων.
63 Cf. Plato's use of ὁρέγονται to indicate the "reaching" or "yearning" of τὸ ἐπιθυμητικὸν to drink (Resp. 439 A).
64 §149: ὅ τε κρατηθεῖς ἐπιθυμία, διψῶν ἀεὶ τῶν ἀπόντων.
4.80-83, Philo vividly portrays the endless, futile striving to grasp an ever-elusive object.

Instead of elaborating the image of an exasperating, futile chase (mentioned summarily in §146), Philo appeals in §§147-149a to the senses of sight and hearing to illustrate the straining, agonizing, fruitless effort to apprehend the beloved object of tyrannical desire. The eyes, he says (§147), are often hard pressed for the "apprehension" (κατάληψις) of some far-off object. Despite their intense and continued effort, they are unable to get hold of what they "desire" and exhaust themselves. Likewise, the ears (§148-149a) can be "aroused" (ἀνεγερθέντα) by an indistinct, far-off noise, which produces a "longing" (πόθος) for clarity. The sound, however, remains indistinct, provoking an even greater yearning for "apprehension" (τοῦ καταλαβεῖν ἵμερον). These analogies from the realm of sense-perception not only present a novel image of insatiability—they also reflect the Middle-Platonic moral psychology underlying Philo's exposition. By choosing to compare the mechanism of tyrannical desire

---

65 Philo introduces the analogy in §147: ὁμοιον δὲ τι καὶ περὶ τὰς αἰσθήσεις ἑοικε συμβαίνειν.
66 In Philo's account (§147), note esp. τείνοντες αὐτούς (cf. §146: ἐκτείνων; §149: ἐπιτείνεσθαι; Spec. 4.80: ἐπιτείνῃ); πλέον τῆς δυνάμεως; σφαλέντες; τῷ βιαίῳ καὶ συντόνῳ τῆς ἀτενοῦς προσβολῆς ἀπαθενήσαντες.
67 Philo often uses ἀνεγείρω in connection with the emotions (e.g., Ebr. 98, Fug. 91), which makes sense in light of the moral psychology of ἐρως: the rational part of the soul, consumed with tyrannical desire, holds in mind an image that continually arouses the emotion ἐπιθυμία, creating the maddening experience of insatiability (cf. Spec. 1.92: ἐπιθυμίας ἐγείρουσα; Spec. 2.193: ἐγείρει ... ἐπιθυμίας; Spec. 4.129: ἐπιθυμίαι ἐγείραντες).
68 Like πόθος, ἵμερος represents an aspect of ἐρως for both Plato and Philo. Examples for Plato: Symp. 197 D: ἵμερον, πόθου πατήρ ἐρως (cf. Phaedr. 251 C-E); for Philo: Opif. 70-71:
with the *non-rational* mechanism of sense-perception (*ἀνθοθήσις*), Philo reaffirms his understanding of ἔπιθυμία as a fundamentally *non-rational* power, which *non-rationally* pursues the "good" (pleasure) set before it.\(^{69}\)

As in *Spec.* 4.81-82, Philo cites the mythical figure Tantalus to illustrate the operation of tyrannical desire (§149b). Although brief, his remarks plainly state the condition of someone consumed by ἐρως, someone "conquered by desire" (κρατηθεὶς ἐπιθυμίᾳ). Desire, in other words, has reached the height of power, supplanting reason and making its own goal of pleasure the goal of the moral agent. In this condition, the moral agent "thirsts" always for what is absent (διψῶν ἀεὶ τῶν ἀπόντων) without ever being "filled" (οὐδέποτε πληροῦται). In fact, there is no possibility of being filled, since the appetite aroused by an image of false goods has no capacity for fulfillment—it is an "empty," in the sense of "vain" or "pointless," appetite (κενὴν . . . τὴν δρεξίν).

As in *Spec.* 4.83, Philo compares desire to disease and fire (§150), both of which spread until they have consumed everything available to them. Again, the imagery reflects Middle-Platonic moral psychology by depicting ἔπιθυμία as a destructive force originating in one part (of the body, of the combustible mass, of the soul) and spreading to other parts.\(^{70}\) Revealing his Middle-Platonic affinities

---

\(^{69}\) Cf. Philo’s bipartite model of reason over against ἀνθοθήσις (see above, 72-75).

\(^{70}\) Philo describes a disease spreading throughout the body leaving no "part" (μέρος) unaffected (ἀπαθεῖς) (§150).
even further, Philo uses this imagery to reflect the adversarial relationship
between parts (between reason and desire) so fundamental to the Platonic
perspective. He notes that the soul will suffer infection "lest philosophical reason
hold back the stream of desire" (εἰ μὴ λόγος ὃ κατὰ φιλοσοφίαν . . . ρέουσαν
tὴν ἐπιθυμίαν ἐπίσχοι).71 Here reason acts to restrain desire, in order to
preclude an overpowering of reason by desire. If reason fails to hold back the
stream, then desire will have its way, ultimately overrunning the entire soul with
the tyranny of ἔρως. Similarly, if the "flame" of desire is granted "freedom"
(ἀδεια)72 and "leisure" (ἐκεχειρία)73—in other words, if reason fails to restrain
desire and gives it free rein instead—then it will eventually spread and destroy
everything through the tyranny of ἔρως. Philo deploys the imagery in this way
because he understands the importance of ἐγκράτεια: reason must either
impose its rule on non-rational ἐπιθυμία or in the end suffer the rule of desire's
tyrrannical offspring ἔρως.

§§84 – 91: Tyrannical Desire as "Source of All Ills"

[§84] So great and egregious an ill, then, is passionate desire. In fact, if
truth be told, it is the source of all the world’s ills. Think for a minute about
the underlying cause of looting, robbery, and swindling; of flattery and
insult; of seduction, adultery, murder—of all wrongdoing involving matters
private or public, sacred or secular. Do these ultimately have any source
other than desire? [§85] For this reason, among the passions, only

71 Cf. Legat. 65: τὴν πολλὴν αὐτοῦ ρύμην τῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν ἐφέξοντα. On "stream of
desire," see also Resp. 485 D-E; cf. Crat. 419 E – 420 B.
72 Cf. esp. Leg. 2.91, where Philo associates this same "freedom" (ἀδεια) with the
eventual rise of tyranny within the soul (τυράννου τρόπον) (also Post. 98; Congr. 158).
73 Cf. Philo’s use of ἐκεχειρία in connection with the Sabbath (e.g., Mos. 2.22; Spec.
2.69).
passionate desire deserves the name "Master Vice," whose one little offspring tyrannical desire has repeatedly filled the world with unspeakable disasters—which, too numerous for land, have spilled out into the sea. Everywhere the vast watery expanse has been filled with ships of war and all the terrible inventions of war. Charging out to sea, their violence runs its course then crashes back like a tide upon the shores of home. [§86] We can better understand the effect of passionate desire by thinking of it as a venomous creature or lethal poison, both of which cause an overall change for the worse anytime they take hold of someone. What exactly do I mean by that? Think of tyrannical desire as the fatal "bite" of passionate desire, a terminal "taking hold" akin to a "taking over." [§87] For example, if a tyrannical desire for money takes over of the soul, it turns people into thieves and pickpockets, larcenists and burglars—it makes them likely to swindle and scam, to accept bribes, to violate sacred trusts, to perform any other similar act of greed. [§88] If a tyrannical desire for reputation takes over, it makes people pretentious, arrogant, unsteady and unsettled in character. With eager ears they listen for the pronouncements of other people, becoming at the same time dejected and elated as they

---

74 among the passions, only passionate desire deserves the name "Master Vice," whose one little offspring tyrannical desire has repeatedly filled the world with unspeakable disasters—which, too numerous for land, have spilled out into the sea. Everywhere the vast watery expanse has been filled with ships of war and all the terrible inventions of war. Charging out to sea, their violence runs its course then crashes back like a tide upon the shores of home. [§86] We can better understand the effect of passionate desire by thinking of it as a venomous creature or lethal poison, both of which cause an overall change for the worse anytime they take hold of someone. What exactly do I mean by that? Think of tyrannical desire as the fatal "bite" of passionate desire, a terminal "taking hold" akin to a "taking over." [§87] For example, if a tyrannical desire for money takes over of the soul, it turns people into thieves and pickpockets, larcenists and burglars—it makes them likely to swindle and scam, to accept bribes, to violate sacred trusts, to perform any other similar act of greed. [§88] If a tyrannical desire for reputation takes over, it makes people pretentious, arrogant, unsteady and unsettled in character. With eager ears they listen for the pronouncements of other people, becoming at the same time dejected and elated as they

---

75 the effect of passionate desire (τοῦ πάθους ἐνέργειαν): Reading ἐνέργειαν with MSS (SM) rather than ἐνέργειαν proposed by Mangey and adopted by Cohn-Wendland. Philo, after all, explains in §§87-91 the work of desire in the soul (cf. Leg. 2.101: ὁ ἀπόπτητον τῶν παθῶν καὶ ὑπερτίτων τῆς ἐνέργειας αὐτῶν; Leg. 3.22: ταῖς τῶν παθῶν ἐνέργειας).

76 Think of tyrannical desire as the fatal "bite" of passionate desire, a terminal "taking hold" akin to a "taking over." Since the Greek of §86 ends with τί δ’ ἐστιν τὸ λέγω ("What exactly do I mean by that?")], this sentence attempts to clarify the logic of Philo's venom/poison simile in light of the examples given in §§87-91. He presupposes passionate desire as the condition from which tyrannical desire—the worst, terminal grade of desire—is born. Passionate desire represents a genuine danger to the soul, but it fatally "bites" the soul by burgeoning into tyrannical desire, which consumes the moral agent and thoroughly corrupts the character.

77 if a tyrannical desire for money takes over of the soul (εἰ πρὸς χρήματα γένοιτο): Philo uses γένοιτο to indicate the "birth" of tyrannical desire (cf. §85: τὸ βραχύτατον ἔγγονον, ἔρως) relative to a particular beloved object, in this case χρήματα. He envisions the same phenomenon relative to other objects (δόξα, etc.) in subsequent paragraphs.

78 With eager ears they listen for the pronouncements of other people (φωναῖς τὰ ὁτα πεφράκτας): The phrase φωναῖς τὰ ὁτα πεφράκτας most likely represents a play on words. The verb ἐπιφράσσω with τὰ ὁτα means "to stop one's ears" (see LSJ, s.v.), an idiom attested in Philo (e.g., Leg. 2.25; Migr. 191). But treating φράσσω as an equivalent of ἐπιφράσσω yields a sense directly opposite to what the context demands: people concerned with reputation clearly do not "stop their ears"—they want to know what people are saying about them, and because they
hear from the fickle masses, who deal out praise and blame by indiscriminate whim. Because they care only for what others have to say about them, they readily exchange love for hatred, or hatred for love, depending on what they hear—without a moment's consideration. You'll find them doing other things like this, always for the same reason. [§89] If a tyrannical desire for power takes over, it makes people contentious, inequitable, domineering by nature, cruel at heart. They become enemies of their own land, harsh masters of anyone weaker, irreconcilable enemies of their equals in strength, and deceitful flatterers of anyone stronger. If a tyrannical desire for voluptuous bodies takes over, people become seducers, adulterers, pederasts, devotees of indulgence and lust—they consider the greatest of evils to be the happiest of goods. [§90] Overtaking even the tongue, tyrannical desire has stirred up endless troubles, since we know that people are often gripped with a desire to keep quiet when they ought to speak or a desire to speak when they ought to keep quiet—and both receive their just deserts. [§91] And when tyrannical desire seizes the belly, it produces hopeless, insatiable gluttons, devotees of a life of ease and dissipation, people who revel in guzzling and gorging, base slaves of drinks and delicacies, who forage around at parties and banquets like ravenous little dogs. Such people end up with a miserable, accursed life more painful than any death.

Proceeding with his "diagnosis" (κρίσις), Philo turns from the agonizing experience tyrannical desire works in the individual (§§80-83) to consider the moral corruption and chaos it works in society through such individuals (§§84-91). Philo makes one central claim in this section: that all moral and social ills stem from ἐπιθυμία. Such a claim both expands the scope of Philo's programmatic condemnation of desire and justifies the Decalogue's prohibition of only one πάθος as an efficient preclusion of all wrongdoing. And Philo undoubtedly does mean passionate desire when he calls ἐπιθυμία the "source of
all ills" (ἀπάντων πηγῆ τῶν κακῶν in §84) and "Master Vice" (ἀρχέκακον in §85), although he means it in a qualified sense. He indicts passionate desire insofar as it gives birth to tyrannical desire (ἐρως), and tyrannical desire then does the real work of corrupting character and engendering corrupt behavior. As Philo puts it in §85, ἐπιθυμία is the Master Vice, "whose one little offspring tyrannical desire (ἐρως) has repeatedly filled the world with unspeakable disasters."

Using a series of concrete examples, Philo goes on to explain in §§86-91 just how tyrannical desire operates. Philo's argument presumes a direct stepwise progression from useful ἐπιθυμία, to passionate ἐπιθυμία, to ἐρως, which bears full responsibility for the corruption of character. In other words, unrestrained desire gives birth to ἐρως, whose hegemony in turn transforms the moral agent into an evildoer who stops at nothing in pursuit of the beloved object. To clarify the mechanism of this transformation, Philo compares desire to poison, suggesting that both effect an overall change for the worse in whomever they afflict.

Poison, for instance, when introduced into the body (by venomous creatures or lethal drugs), despite its initial localization, eventually transforms the entire body from healthy to sick, from living to dead. Similarly, ἐπιθυμία, despite the "localization" of its initial break with reason, eventually burgeons into ἐρως and transforms the entire soul from healthy to sick, from virtuous to vicious. And

79 Philo makes the same claim in Decal. 173: τὴν τῶν ἀδικημάτων πηγῆν, ἐπιθυμίαν, ἀφ’ ἡς ῥέουσιν αἱ παρανόμαι πράξεις.
80 §86: δοσων ἀν... προσάψηται, μεταβολὴν ἀπεργάζεται τὴν πρὸς τὸ χείρον.
people display different forms of moral corruption depending on which false
goods they pursue under tyrannical desire’s control: whether money (χρήματα),
reputation (δόξα), power (ἀρχή), or voluptuous bodies (σωμάτως κάλλος) (§§87-
89). In each case, the moral agent’s obsessive drive for that particular "good"
ultimately leads to a distinct profile of reprehensible behaviors detrimental to both
self and society. For example, an ἔρως for money yields thieves and swindlers
(§87); an ἔρως for reputation yields pretentious braggarts (§88), an ἔρως for
power yields ruthless oppressors (§89); an ἔρως for voluptuous bodies yields
sexual offenders (§89). In this way, Philo traces a huge spectrum of wrongdoing
to one source, tyrannical desire. To complete this spectrum of wrongdoing, Philo
adds to his list of four false goods (§§87-89) two parts of the body over which
tyrranncial desire can reign (§§90-91): the tongue (γλῶττα) and the belly (τὰ περὶ
γαστέρα).

As for the tongue, Philo mentions the reprehensible desire of some either
to keep quiet what ought to be said or to say what ought to be kept quiet (§90). He
describes a situation of desire having "reached" the tongue (ἐπὶ γλῶτταν
φθάσωσα)—that is, desire having extended its influence even so far as to
overtake the tongue, causing people to act (speak) contrary to reason. Just as
the tyranny of ἔρως over people enamored of false goods causes corruption and

---

81 Cf. Philo’s list in §82: χρήματα, δόξα, ἡγεμονία, εὐμορφία.
82 On ἔρως for δόξα see also Plutarch, Suav. viv. 1100 B.
wrongdoing, the tyranny of ερως over the tongue causes all sorts of troubles.

Philo does not consider at length the immoralities caused by speech and silence, because tracing them to ἐπιθυμία-turned-ερως confirms his central claim that all moral and social ills—including these—stem from desire.

Finally, Philo speaks of desire "getting hold of the belly" (ἀψαμένη δὲ τῶν περὶ γαστέρα), which clearly indicates more than just reasonable desires for food and drink. He has in mind people overcome by tyrannical desire (ερως), who have established the pleasure derived from eating and drinking as their ultimate "good." Tyrannical desire has made them "base slaves" (κακοὺς δούλους) of drinks and delicacies, who lead a "miserable and accursed life" (ἀθλίων καὶ ἐπάρατον . . . ζωήν) more "agonizing" (ἀργαλεωτέραν) than any death.84 As with every case of ερως, a particular object of affection produces a particular brand of immorality: those who adore the pleasures of food and drink become, above all, "gluttons" (γαστριμάργους).85

§§84 – 91 Excursus: Parallel Material in Decal. 151-53

In Decal. 151-53, Philo likewise indicts desire as the source of countless troubles. He initially asks whether ερως for money, a woman, reputation, or "anything else producing pleasure" becomes the cause of only "small and

84 Cf. §80: οὐδὲν ἀργαλεόν ὡς ἐπιθυμία τῶν ἀπότων ὅσα τῷ δοκεῖν ἄγαθῶν, πρὸς ἀλήθειαν οὐκ ὄντων, χαλεποὺς καὶ ἀνηνύτις ἔρωτας ἐντέκτουσα.

85 In the course of Phaedr. 237 C – 238 C, Socrates labels ερως as it relates to food "γαστριμαργία" (esp. 238 A-B: περὶ μὲν γὰρ ἐδωδήν κρατοῦσα τοῦ λόγου τοῦ ἀρίστου τῶν
This rhetorical question functions as the thesis for §§151-53 and reflects real convictions about desire crucial to Philo’s exposition of the Tenth Commandment: tyrannical desire (ἐρως), which can arise in connection with any number of pleasurable aims, in turn becomes responsible for (αἵτιος γίνεται) great and innumerable ills. In §§152-53, Philo considers warfare in particular, ultimately concluding that "all wars flow from one source: desire (ἐπιθυμία) for money, or reputation, or pleasure." He essentially restates here the thesis of §151, but with less precision, metonymically replacing the specific term ἐρως with the generic term ἐπιθυμία, replacing also the carefully worded "things that produce pleasure" (τῶν ἡδονήν ἀπεργαζομένων) with a generic reference to "pleasure" (ἡδονής).

§§92 – 94: Location of Ἐπιθυμία

[§92] And this overpowering desire for food and drink explains why those who had not simply “tasted” philosophy but had lavishly “feasted” on its sound doctrines—once they had investigated the nature of the soul and

άλλων ἐπιθυμιῶν ἐπιθυμία γαστριμαργία(ἀρα ἐγείρεται τῆς αἰτίας). Philo elsewhere associates γαστριμαργία with an absolute dominance of desire for food (e.g., Agr. 36).

86 §151: χρημάτων ἑρως ἢ γυναικός ἢ δόξης ἢ τινος ἀλλο τὸν ἡδονὴν ἀπεργαζομένων ἀρα γε μικρῶν καὶ τῶν τυχόντων αἵτιος γίνεται κακῶν.

87 §153: πόλεμοι πάντες ἀπὸ μιᾶς πηγῆς ἐρρύθησαν, ἐπιθυμίας ἢ χρημάτων ἢ δόξης ἢ ἡδονής.

88 this overpowering desire for food and drink explains (Ἰούσης ἐνεκα τῆς αἰτίας). Philo does not name the reason philosophers decided to distribute (ἀπένειμαν) the soul’s parts as they did, but Iαυτής . . . τῆς αἰτίας must refer to some aspect of §91, because §§92-94 bear obvious connections to only that paragraph. Fundamentally, §91 and §§92-94 have in common the association of ἐπιθυμία with the same general region of the body (§91: τὰ περὶ γαστέρα; §93: ὁ περὶ τὸν ὀμφαλὸν καὶ τὸ καλοῦμενον διάφραγμα χῶρος) and the use of language related to eating (§91: οἰνοφυλαγίας, ὀψαφαγίας, συμπόσια, γραπέζες; §92: γευσάμενοι, ἐστιαθέντες). Since §91 describes corrupt, compulsive eating and drinking, ταύτης . . . τῆς αἰτίας undoubtedly refers to the overpowering desire for food and drink underlying such behavior.
recognized its tripartite structure—distributed the various parts as they did. They put reason, which rules the soul, in the most appropriate place, the head, which is the topmost part of the body. The head also serves as headquarters for the senses, which together form a sort of entourage for the soul’s "king," the mind. [§93] Next, they determined that spirit must reside in the chest, for two reasons: first, in the chest, spirit wears a breastplate, just like a soldier, and this added protection makes it very difficult to defeat, although certainly not invincible; second, in the chest, dwelling near the mind, spirit receives help from its neighbor, whose wise counsel lulls it into compliance. Finally, they determined that desire must reside in the area around the navel known as the "diaphragm." [§94] Since desire has the least to do with reason, it clearly must reside as far as possible from reason’s royal domain—practically at the outskirts. Naturally, the pasture of this most insatiable and licentious of beasts is the area of the body associated with primal drives for food and sex.

Paragraphs 92-94 represent an excursus framed as a review of Platonic doctrine on the physical location of each of the soul’s three parts. Just before this excursus (§§86-91), Philo had been describing how ἐρως functions as the source of all wrongdoing, using a series of examples that matched specific false goods pursued under tyrannical desire’s hegemony with specific types of moral corruption. His final example (§91) noted the ability of ἐπιθυμία-turned-ἐρως to "seize the belly" and so corrupt the moral agent in matters of eating and drinking. But in §92, Philo no longer considers the mechanism of ἐρως, choosing instead to reflect further on the association of ἐπιθυμία with a particular region of the body, which he now refers to as ὁ περὶ τὸν ὀμφαλὸν καὶ τὸ καλωμένον

---

89 recognized its tripartite structure (τρίτον έιδος ἐνιαόντες κύτης): PCW rightly emends the τρίτον of MSS to τριτόν. Philo’s immediate listing of the three Platonic έιδη (λόγος, θυμός, and ἐπιθυμία) indeed suggests an original reference to "threefold [i.e., tripartite] form" rather than "third form." Cf. Aet. 86: πυρὸς τριτόν έιδος τὸ μὲν ἄνθρωπος, τὸ δὲ φιλός, τὸ δὲ αὐγή.

90 On Plato’s theory, see Tim. 69 C – 71 D (cf. Runia, Philo and the Timaeus, 301-14).
The diagram of the χώρος (§93) instead of simply τὰ περὶ γαστέρα (§91). Although Philo retains from §91 an interest in the connection between ἐπιθυμίᾳ and "belly," his question has changed from how ἐπιθυμία (τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν) tyrannizes the soul to how knowledgeable philosophers determined its location.

Philo’s manner of juxtaposing §91 and §§92-94 implies that philosophers connected the ἐπιθυμητικόν with the the belly because so many people experience an overpowering, tyrannical desire for food and drink. He clearly notes in §§92-94 that these philosophers posited the connection "for this reason" (ταύτης ἐνέκα τῆς αἰτίας), and the placement of the phrase requires the "reason" to be somewhere in §91, most likely in the gluttonous immorality Philo portrays in that paragraph. But when he actually spells out the reason in §94, he says nothing about gluttonous immorality, merely citing the logical necessity that (1) the faculty having "least to do with reason" reside farthest from reason and (2) the "most insatiable and licentious of beasts" (ἐπιθυμία) inhabit the bodily regions associated with food and sex. But Philo does not simply abandon the logic of his transitional phrase in favor of an allusion to Plato’s Timaeus— he moves his train of thought in an entirely new direction. And, in fact, when viewed in the context of Philo’s entire exposition, §§92-94 do not so much advance the argument as provide a transition within the exposition from the diagnosis section (κρίσις) to the treatment section (ἀσκησις).

91 Cf. Tim. 70 D – 71 A.
Most importantly, §§92-94 function as a transition by introducing new material crucial to Philo’s upcoming argument. Part one of his treatise, designed to expose the shameful character of tyrannical desire, essentially ends with §91, since §§92-94 both derive and digress from that paragraph and bear no direct connection to earlier material. But nothing in part one of his exposition, up to and including §91, gives Philo a theoretical basis for asserting the preeminence of desires for food and drink over against any other type of desire. In fact, the desire for food and drink appears as only part of his list, last among desires for money, reputation, etc.—all of which are equally capable of causing moral ruin after burgeoning into their respective versions of tyrannical desire. Yet in his explanation of the rationale underlying Moses’ therapeutic program (§96), Philo will argue that management of "the desire having to do with the belly" (τὴν περὶ γαστέρα πραγματευμένην ἐπιθυμίαν) serves as the paradigmatic model for managing all corruptible desires, since that one desire is fundamental, being the "eldest" (τὴν πρεσβυτάτην) and "chief" (ἡγεμονίδα) of them all. Paragraphs 92-94 give Philo the theoretical justification for such a claim, because they endorse a Platonic view of the soul, which grants preeminence to desires for food and drink while still tracing all corruptible desires to one part of the soul.

In addition, §§92-94 effect a smooth transition from part one (esp. §91) to part two (esp. §§95-97) by considering ἐπιθυμία in a new light without disrupting a basic continuity of content involving the nexus of desire, food and drink, and
the belly. Before §§92-94, Philo considers ἐπιθυμία in a decidedly negative light, limiting his concern almost exclusively to the disastrous tyranny of ἔρως, which represents the terminal stage of ἐπιθυμία overstepping the bounds of reason. But the treatment section of Philo’s exposition concerns itself with how to prevent ἐπιθυμία from overstepping the bounds of reason. In other words, the topic of part two is not tyrannical desire, but useful desire—the kind a moral agent may rightly condone and exercise without compromising virtue, provided reason stays in control. By commenting in §§92-94 on the location of ἐπιθυμία within Platonic tripartition, Philo shifts the emphasis from desire as raging tyrant to desire as a natural component of the soul, without entirely losing sight of its dangerous capacity for misconduct (§94: πάντων ἀπληστότατον καὶ ἀκολαστότατον . . . θρεμμάτων). He can then begin in §§95-97 his consideration of how best to manage ἐπιθυμία, particularly the ἐπιθυμία for food and drink, which—though prone to excess—forms a natural part of every human life.

§§95 – 97: Overview of Moses’ "Paradigmatic Instruction"

[§95] Now, the most holy Moses, in my view, took all of this into account when he designed a special set of laws for managing desire.92 His goal was to eliminate passionate desire,93 having come to detest it as both a horrible disgrace in itself and—as I just explained—the ultimate cause of disgraceful behavior, a sort of siege-engine within us, bent on overtaking

---

92 he designed a special set of laws for managing desire (ἀπείπεν ἐν τοῖς μάλιστα τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν): Unlike the Tenth Commandment itself, which categorically prohibits passionate desire, Moses’ prohibition (ἀπείπεν) operates through the cumulative effect of a whole set of dietary laws promoting virtuous management of the emotion desire.

93 to eliminate passionate desire (ἐκάθεσαν τὸ πάθος): Moses’ goal is that of the Tenth Commandment: to eliminate the passion desire (τὸ πάθος ἐπιθυμίᾳ).
and corrupting the soul.\footnote{a sort of siege-engine within us, bent on overtaking and corrupting the soul (ὁς τίνα τῆς ψυχῆς ἐλέπολις): A ἐλέπολις was a machine of war, designed for hostile assault of an enemy fortification. By using this term, Philo suggests that ἐπιθυμία seeks to overthrow reason. By “storming the citadel” and taking over the soul, ἐπιθυμία-turned-ἔρως becomes the cause of disgraceful behavior (“ὁς” demands some connection between “disgraceful” and “siege-engine”). The independent, hostile agency of ἐπιθυμία conveyed by the metaphor illustrates Philo’s fundamentally Platonic perspective. See Pelletier, “Passions à l’assaut de l’âme,” esp. 57-58. Cf. Abraham Malherbe, “Antisthenes and Odysseus, and Paul at War,” HTR 76 (1983): 143-73, esp. 145-47.} He understood that a life free of passionate desire, in which desire obeys the commanding authority of reason,\footnote{a life free of passionate desire, in which desire obeys the commanding authority of reason (ἡς ἐπιθυμίας ἀνακρίβειας ἢ πειθαρχούσης κυβερνήτη λογισμῶ): At face value, the Greek suggests two ways of managing ἐπιθυμία to achieve peace and happiness: abolish ἐπιθυμία entirely (ἀνακρίβειας) or (ἡ) make it obedient to reason (πειθαρχούσης . . . λογισμῶ). But Philo’s statement of the issue reflects the inherent Middle-Platonic ambiguity of the term ἐπιθυμία, which refers either to the passion desire or the emotion desire. He clearly calls for the abolition of passionate desire (cf. ἐκδώσασθαι τὸ πάθος [§95]), but this amounts to the emotion desire obeying reason. In other words, the ἡ indicates not an alternative solution to the problem of desire but an alternative formulation of a single solution: the elimination of passionate desire—id est, the obedience of desire to reason.} would be filled with peace, order, and genuine prosperity, resulting in perfect happiness. [§96] And since Moses cherishes brevity and tends to address innumerable cases with just one paradigmatic instruction, he builds a comprehensive therapeutic program on the chastisement and training of just one desire, desire involving the belly.\footnote{he builds a comprehensive therapeutic program on the chastisement and training of just one desire (παραδειγματικὴ διδασκαλία μίαν τὴν πολλὴ γαστρὰ πραγματευόμενην ἐπιθυμίαν ἀρχεῖαι νοθετεῖν τε καὶ παιδεύειν): Philo believes that by training the desire for food and drink Moses expected to train all desire(s). So the training of this one desire stands as the foundation (ἀρχεῖαι) for what amounts to a “comprehensive therapeutic program,” insofar as all desires are in view.} He reasons that once the most primal and commanding desire has learned to submit to the laws of self-mastery, all other desires will likewise become obedient to the rein and accept the authority of reason. [§97] So what sort of instruction lies at the heart of Moses’ therapeutic program? Obviously, its two fundamental concerns are food and drink, and Moses left neither of these unregulated. Instead, he curtailed their use by means of dietary laws whose observance leads to self-control, not to mention philanthropy and—most important of all—piety.

Philo begins the “treatment” section (ἀσκήσις) of his exposition by summarizing briefly the “diagnosis” section (κρίσις) he has just completed (§§79-94). He
attributes to "the most holy Moses" (ὁ ἱερώτατος Μωσῆς) an understanding of everything (πάντα) he has just explained about the nature, function, and problematic malfunction of ἐπιθυμία. This philosophical insight created in Moses a determination that Philo expects the reader to share at this point in the exposition: a determination "to eliminate passionate desire (ἐκδύσασθαι τὸ πάθος), having come to detest it (μυσαξάμενος) as both a horrible disgrace in itself (ὡς αἰσχύστον) and—as I just explained—the ultimate cause of disgraceful behavior (τῶν αἰσχύστων αἴτιον)." Passionate desire, in other words, proves not only reprehensible in itself—it also generates reprehensible behavior whenever it overtakes and tyrannizes the soul. For this reason, Moses sought to eliminate the passion desire by training the emotion to obey the commanding authority of reason ([ἐπιθυμίας] πειθαρχοῦσης κυβερνήτη λογισμῶ)—which calls for the exercise of "self-control" (ἕγκράτεια) on the moral agent’s part. He addressed this critical need for self-control through his legislation, as Philo explains in §§96-97.

---

97 Cf. Garr. 510 C-D: "[W]e get well by the diagnosis and treatment of our ailments (τῶν γὰρ παθῶν κρίσει καὶ ἀσκήσει περιγινύμεθα), but the diagnosis must come first (προτέρα δ’ ἡ κρίσις ἐστίν); since no one can become habituated to shun or to eradicate from his soul what does not distress him (οὕτως γὰρ ἐθύτησαι φεύγειν καὶ ἀποτρίβεσθαι τῆς ψυχῆς ὦ μὴ δυσχεραίνει), and we only grow distressed with our ailments (δυσχεραίνουμεν δὲ τὰ πάθη) when we have perceived, by the exercise of reason, the injuries and shame which result from them (ὅταν τὰς βλάβας καὶ τὰς αἰσχύνας τὰς ἀπ’ αὐτῶν τῶν λόγω κατανόησαμεν).

98 The term κυβερνήτης invokes Philo's premier model of ἕγκράτεια, the chariot figure (cf. §79): e.g., Leg. 3.224: ὁ τῆς ψυχῆς ἤνιοχος ἢ κυβερνήτης ὁ νοῦς; Sacr. 45: τὼν κατὰ ψυχὴν ἀλόγων δυνάμεων ἤνιοχός τε καὶ κυβερνήτης.
According to §96, Moses ingeniously crafted one "paradigmatic instruction" (παραδείγματική διδασκαλία) for the management of ἐπιθυμία, which—though ostensibly geared only to the desire for food and drink—applies in fact to every type of desire. Of course, this "instruction" appears nowhere in the Pentateuch as a distinct, coherent, continuous discourse. Instead, Philo must gather the scattered elements of Moses’ instruction and cobble them together into a meaningful unit. He believes that as a set the various precepts governing food and drink reveal, upon careful examination, an ulterior motive on Moses’ part: to inculcate self-control relative to gastric desire, which extends in turn to all desire. And because the dietary laws promote the management of ἐπιθυμία, Philo identifies them as the specific laws falling under the generic heading οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις.

To explain a single therapeutic program whose benefits extend throughout the whole range of desires, Philo relies on the principle of transference, which gives him a much-needed warrant for reconciling parts one and two of his exposition. Without it, he is left "diagnosing" in part one a problem involving many desires (for money, reputation, etc.), while "treating" in part two only one desire (for food and drink). By casting the Mosaic dietary laws as a paradigmatic instruction, Philo effectively accounts for all of the desires mentioned in part one,

---

99 Cf. Philo’s notion of circumcision as a sort of "paradigmatic instruction" in Spec. 1.9: αἰνιττομένοις περιτομήν περιττῆς ἐκτομήν καὶ πλεοναζούσης ἡδονής, οὔ μιᾶς, ἄλλα διὰ μιᾶς . . . καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἀπασώγοι; also QG 3.48.
100 On the principle of transference, see above, 135-37.
since their successful management follows from the successful management of
gastric desire. This approach not only solves a practical problem for Philo—it
also makes good sense in light of Middle-Platonic theoretical principles. First, the
idea that gastric desire predominates—being, as Philo puts it, τὴν πρεσβυτάτην
καὶ ὡς ἠγεμονίδα—comes from Plato himself, who highlights desires for food
and drink in his characterizations of ἐπιθυμία. 101 Second, Philo believes that
gastric desire’s ability "to obey the laws of self-mastery" (τοῖς σωφροσύνης
νόμοις πειθαρχείν) yields restraint among the other desires (οὐκέθ᾽ ὀμοίως ἀφηνιάσειν . . . σταλήσεσθαι), reasoning that because desires for food and
drink are most powerful, their compliance necessarily engenders compliance
among other desires stemming from the ἐπιθυμητικὸν, which are by definition
less powerful. 102 Plutarch envisions a similar transference of the moral agent’s
capacity to manage desire—but in his method of training, restraint develops first
in less difficult situations then applies stepwise to progressively more difficult
situations. 103 Moses’ method exhibits greater efficiency by reversing the

---

101 E.g., Resp. 437 D.
102 Philo’s language of restraint in this passage—esp. his use of ἀφηνιάσειν and
σταλήσεσθαι (στέλλω)—reflects his Middle-Platonic view of passion. For example, within the
model of ἐγκράτεια posed by Philo’s chariot figure, the term ἀφηνιάζω (cf. ἀφηνιασμός) denotes
“excess”—namely, the excess movement responsible for transforming an emotion into a passion
(see above, 111-18). By claiming that all other types of ἐπιθυμία will no longer ἀφηνιάσειν upon
successful implementation of Moses’ therapeutic dietary program, Philo means that they will
become moderate in the Middle-Platonic sense of measured or without excess. In other words,
they will become restrained (σταλήσεσθαι) in the very sense he suggests elsewhere in his
writings: e.g., Prov. 2.70: τὴν ἀμετρίαν [cf. ἀφηνιασμός] τῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν στείλει; Virt. 113:
ἐπιστέλλετα τὸ φυσικὸν [cf. ἀφηνιασμός] αὐτής [sc. ἐπιθυμίας]; Det. 25: στελέλυτες τὸ τῶν
ἐπιθυμιῶν μέγεθος [cf. ἀφηνιασμός].
103 See Ingenkamp, Schriften, 105, esp. the first on his list of three ἔθισμοι.
progression, training the most difficult desire first and so removing the need to address less demanding calls for self-control from less difficult desires.

In §97, Philo summarizes the method of Moses’ paradigmatic instruction. Clearly, the instruction must deal with food and drink, since they are the objects of gastric desire. As Philo explains, Moses restricted their use (ἐπεστόμισε) with specific ordinances whose observance leads to self-control (διατάγμασι... πρὸς ἐγκράτειαν... ἀγωγοτάτοις).104 In other words, Moses designed the dietary laws as ascetic precepts to promote ἐγκράτεια among members of his commonwealth—first with respect to food and drink, but ultimately with respect to every object of desire.105 Viewed in terms of moral philosophy, Moses’ method looks much like the recommendation of practical exercises aimed at eliminating a passion (πάθος) through the practice (ἀσκησις) of self-control (ἐγκράτεια). His "ordinances" (διατάγματα) serve the same function as the ἔθισμοι of Plutarch’s Seelenheilungsschriften. In the case of De garrulitate, followers of Plutarch’s philosophy will eliminate the passion of talkativeness (ἀδολεσχία) from their lives.

---

104 Philo’s use of ἐπεστόμισε again suggests the chariot figure (see above, 111-18). Along with the inculcation of ἐγκράτεια, Philo mentions also philanthropy and piety, but these do not figure prominently in his exposition until the end, where he revisits the notion of piety in §§128-131. He mentions them here because he sees each of the Ten Commandments as promoting the more generic virtues, although each has its special purpose(s). On Philo’s view of piety (ἐυσέβεια), see esp. Gregory E. Sterling, “The Queen of the Virtues: Piety in Philo of Alexandria,” SPhA 18 (2006): 103-23.

105 Philo actually names ἐγκράτεια here, but note further indications of ἐγκράτεια in §§95-97: §95: [ἐπιθυμίας] πειθαρχούσης κυβερνήτης λογισμῶν; §96: ἐπιθυμίαν... ἀρχεται νοουθετεῖν τέ καὶ παριθεύειν; τάς ἄλλας [ἐπιθυμίας] οὐκέθα ὁμοίως ἀφηγησείν; τάς ἄλλας [ἐπιθυμίας]... σταλήσεθαι; τῷ τὴν προσβυτάτην καὶ ως Ἰησοῦνδα μεμαθηκέναι τοῖς σωφροσύνης νόμοις πειθαρχεῖν.
by developing \textit{\v{e}gkrátěia} with respect to speaking, as they engage in behaviors enjoined by his \textit{\v{e}thi\v{s}mōi}. Similarly, followers of Moses' philosophy will eliminate the passion of gluttony (\textit{gastrimagía}) from their lives by developing \textit{\v{e}gkrátěia} with respect to eating and drinking, as they engage in behaviors enjoined by his \textit{\v{e}thi\v{s}mōi}, the dietary laws. But with Moses' ingenious program, as Philo presents it, the elimination of gluttony entails the elimination of \textit{all} passions similarly characterized by excessive desire for a certain object (wealth, reputation, etc.). While Plutarch treats passions one at a time, Moses treats passions all at once.

\textit{§§98 – 99: First Fruits}\footnote{See Deut 18:4.}

[§98] For example, Moses commands the people to bring as first fruits some of their grain, wine, oil, livestock, and other goods. They are instructed to designate one portion of these first fruits for sacrifice and another portion for the priests—the former out of gratitude to God for bountiful produce and abundance of goods, the latter out of gratitude for the sacred temple-service, in order that the priests might receive a reward for their performance of holy duties. [§99] He completely forbids anyone to sample these goods or take hold of them until the first fruits are duly apportioned. This command functions as an exercise in the self-control that proves so beneficial to all of life.\footnote{This command functions as an exercise in the self-control that proves so beneficial to all of life (ἀμα καὶ πρὸς ἄσκησιν τῆς βιοφελεστάτης ἐγκρατείας): In other words, obedience to this command, in so far as it enjoins the practice (ἀσκησὶς) of ἐγκρατεία, amounts to an exercise in self-control— i.e., an ascetic precept.} You see, Moses knew that by learning to restrain their eager rush to enjoy the season's harvest, by waiting for the consecration of the first fruits, the people were in fact training themselves to check the unruliness of their impulses, quieting any passionate desire within.

Philo begins his study of Moses' "paradigmatic instruction" with the law of First Fruits, which of course involves food \textit{and} drink: Philo lists "grain, wine, oil, and
livestock" as items falling under the commandment’s purview. His reference here to "wine" (oίνος) stands alone in the treatment portion of the exposition, which cites no other laws mentioning wine or any other drink. So despite his earlier framing of Moses’ instruction as a matter of ἐδώδη καὶ πόσις (§97), Philo really ends up discussing only food. He mentions both because he knows that ἐπιθυμία of the belly theoretically involves both eating and drinking, a fact duly noted in the diagnostic portion of his exposition (§91). But Philo does not see any significant role for laws governing drink(s) or drinking in Moses’ instruction on desire.

Philo explicitly identifies the law of First Fruits as an exercise in self-control (πρὸς ἀσκησιν ... ἐγκρατεῖται). Essentially, the law requires people eager to consume fresh stores of food and drink to wait (ἀναμένων) until a ceremonial dedication has first taken place. In terms of moral psychology, this involves ἐπιθυμία activated by the pleasurable prospect of consuming a variety of goods but forcibly restrained for a time by reason. To indulge the initial impulse to eat and drink, ignoring the law, would be to act strictly on a motive for pleasure, which amounts to indulging an unmeasured, excessive impulse—or, in this case, indulging a passionate desire. By waiting until reason authorizes the indulgence of desire, the moral agent effectively removes the excessiveness of

---

108 Cf. Colson 67, n. b: “This is the only way in which restraint in drinking is enjoined throughout these sections.” But note liquor (ἀκράτου) in §113.
the impulses of desire (τὸν ἀφηνιασμὸν τῶν ὀρμῶν . . . ἀναχαιτίζειν), which amounts to a quieting of the passionate aspect of the desire (ἐξευμαρίζων τὸ πάθος). This exercise clearly employs a delay technique, which appears both elsewhere in Philo’s writings and in Plutarch’s De garrulitate.

§§100 – 102: Introduction to Clean and Unclean Animals

[§100] As for foods not otherwise regulated by the law of First Fruits, Moses did not in the least allow members of the sacred commonwealth simply to eat whatever they wanted without restriction. In fact, he strictly prohibited all of the richest, most succulent types of meat—meat that tickles and teases our treacherous foe pleasure—by prohibiting just the right animals from land, sea, and sky. He knew that these meats could bring about the insatiability of tyrannical desire, once they had ensnared the most slavish of the senses, taste. And insatiability represents a practically incurable problem not only for souls but also for bodies, since an insatiable desire for food naturally leads to overeating, which in turn leads to indigestion, a foundation and wellspring of diseases and infirmities. [§101] Now, the most obvious prohibitions of pleasurable fare involve the pig, whose meat everyone acknowledges as the most delectable among land animals, and scaleless sea creatures. In these

---

109 Cf. Spec. 2.18: τὸν ἀφηνιασμὸν τῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν ἀναχαιτίζει. With ἀφηνιασμὸν and ἀναχαιτίζειν, Philo again invokes the chariot figure (see above, 111-18).
110 Cf. Opif. 81: ἐξευμαρίζοντες αἱ ἄμετροι τῶν παθῶν ὀρματί.
111 Cf. §99: ἀναμένον, ἔχρις ἢν ἢ πάροικο καθοσοιώδος; Garr. 511 F: ἐθιζέτοι σιωπάν μέχρι οὗ πάντες ἀπείπωνται τὴν ἀπόκρισιν. On the same technique at work in other ascetic precepts, see above, 130-35.
112 See Lev 11; Deut 14:1-21
113 As for foods not otherwise regulated by the law of First Fruits (Οὐ μὴν οὐδὲ τὴν τῶν ἄλλων μετουσίαν): Philo moves on to foods not under the purview of the First Fruits regulation (cf. Mosès 259, n.10: “Ceux qui ne sont pas assujettis à une offrande préalable”).
114 He knew that these meats could bring about the insatiability of tyrannical desire, once they had ensnared the most slavish of the senses, taste (εἶδος ὁτι τὴν ἀνδραποδοδεστάτην τῶν αἰσθήσεων δελεάσαντα γεύσιν ἀπληστίαν ἐργάσεται): Pace Colson, ἀπληστία indicates “insatiability,” not “gluttony” (cf. Heinemann: “Unersättlichkeit”; Mosès: “l’insatiabilité”). And ἀπληστία signals the presence of tyrannical desire (ἐρως) in the soul—in this case, ἐρως as it relates to food.
115 PCW posits a lacuna in the Greek text of §101: ἐνυδρῶν δὲ τὰ γένη τῶν ἀλεπίδων [...] πρὸς γὰρ ἐγκράτειαν, εἰ καὶ τὶς ἀλλακτικός ἰκανὸς ὃν ἀλείψατο τοὺς ἐφύσιας ἑχοντας πρὸς ἀσκησιν ἀρετῆς. Cohn’s note suggests the emendation τοῦτων δη χρήσῃς ἀνέχειν κελεύει. The text, however, makes sense as it stands. Philo mentions the prohibitions of pork and
and other restrictions, self-control was Moses’ ultimate concern, and he—if anyone—had the philosophical expertise to train those with natural aptitude in the practice of virtue. He accomplishes this inculcation of self-control by training and drilling people to be sparing and easily satisfied, targeting the removal of extravagance. [§102] Determined to promote neither a life of austerity, like the Lacedaemonian lawgiver, nor of daintiness, like the man who introduced habits of feebleness and luxury to the Ionians and Sybarites—cutting instead a straight path right between the two—Moses relaxed what was too severe in one and tightened what was too lax in the other. As with a musical instrument, he sought to blend the excesses of either end of the scale into a moderate tone, promoting a life of harmony and blameless integrity. So he was not at all haphazard when he drew up his legislation on dietary matters. On the contrary, he took the utmost care in determining foods to be eaten and foods to be avoided.

Philo devotes by far the majority of his discussion of the content of Moses’ “paradigmatic instruction” to the legislation governing various species of clean (καθαρά) and unclean (ἀκαθαρτά) animals (ζώα).116 The designations “clean” and “unclean” of course refer to an animal’s legal status as either a permitted or prohibited food source.117 So with this new topic Philo abides by his initial framing of Moses’ instruction as a matter of “food and drink” (§97: ἔδωδη καὶ πόσις)—or, in this case, only food—but the issue now becomes whether or not the people may eat a certain meal, not how or when, as with the law of First Fruits. In any case, his exegetical task remains the same: to explain how these dietary laws

scaleless sea creatures, emphasizing the pleasure they afford, because they illustrate Moses’ real purpose for the dietary laws: the promotion of ἐγκράτεια.

116 Compare Clean-Unclean Animals (§§100-118) to First Fruits (§§98-99), Dead Animals (§§119-121), and Blood and Fat (§§122-125). On Philo’s discussion of clean-unclean animals in §§100-118, see especially Rhodes, “Diet and Desire.”

117 E.g., §113: φησὶν εἶναι πρὸς ἔδωδην οὐ καθαρά.
promote ἐγκράτεια in service to the Tenth Commandment’s prohibition of passionate desire, οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις.

According to Philo, the legislation on clean and unclean animals reflects in general an unwillingness on Moses’ part to permit the "unrestricted use" (χρήσιν ἀδεέα) of foods not otherwise regulated by the law of First Fruits.\(^{118}\) In particular, Moses selected for prohibition the "fattest" (εὐσαρκότατα) and "richest" (πιότατα) animals from land, sea, and sky, knowing that they yield the tastiest meats. He did this because he understood the dangerous capacity of delicious foods to "ensnare" (δελεάσαντα) the palate and, in so doing, cause people to eat strictly for the pleasure of eating.\(^{119}\) In terms of moral psychology, eating for pleasure represents a victory of ἐπιθυμία over reason: in particular, a victory of ἐπιθυμία as motivating disposition (whose aim is pleasure) over reason as motivating disposition (whose aim is rational benefit: survival, good health, etc.). The victory of ἐπιθυμία produces in the soul an "insatiability" (ἀπληστίω), which in turn causes overeating and leads to indigestion, a "foundation and wellspring" (ἀρχή τε καὶ πηγή) of diseases and infirmities. Philo’s incidental remark here on the danger of tasty meat echoes and corroborates his earlier, extended remarks in §§79-91 on the danger, broadly speaking, of passionate desire. In either case, he envisions a torturous Tantalus fate of insatiable desire—the mark of tyrannical

\(^{118}\) Cf. χρήσιν ἀδεέα in Prov. 2.70, where Philo also speaks of restricting desires for food (NB οἷς ἐμέλησε τὴν ἀμετρίαν τῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν στειλαι).

\(^{119}\) Cf. Garr. 514 B: δελεάσομένη γὰρ ὑπ’ αὐτῶν ἡ ἀδολεσχία.
desire (ἐρως)—looming as the eventual outcome of ἐπιθυμία gaining the upper hand over reason. And just as he earlier associated the terminal grade of desire with a condition of soul generating further moral decline (§§86-91), Philo here associates the terminal grade of eating for pleasure with a condition of body generating further physical decline. These parallels suggest an attempt on Philo’s part to coordinate the "diagnosis" and "treatment" portions of his exposition by using similar terms to frame both problem and solution. Here, the solution Moses offers amounts to a simple principle: avoiding especially pleasurable meats eliminates the risk of indulging passionate desire, which in turn eliminates the even greater risk of suffering tyrannical desire. But understood in this way, Moses’ prohibitions only steer the moral agent away from a specific—and thus limited—set of dietary incitements to passionate desire, without addressing the broader concern of cultivating ἐγκράτεια in observance of the general prohibition οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις. In §§101-102, Philo traces a broader connection between avoiding tasty meats and a lifestyle of ἐγκράτεια.

He begins by citing two examples, presumably his best, of prohibited animals commonly acknowledged "by those who partake" (παρὰ τοῖς χρωμένοις)

---

120 In §100, Philo calls "insatiability" (ἀπληστίαν) a δυσάτον κακόν ψυχαῖς τε καὶ σώμασιν. Philo described its harm to souls at length in the diagnosis portion of his exposition, using images like the frustrated pursuit and Tantalus (§§80-81). He describes its harm to bodies in §100, where he links it to indigestion.

121 Philo earlier described those enslaved to a tyrannical desire for food and drink in §91.
as "delicious" (ἡδοτον): pigs and scaleless sea creatures. Philo then immediately deploys the agon motif in order to cast these prohibitions as exercises designed by Moses to train moral athletes in the practice of ἐγκράτεια. But how exactly does Moses' training program work? Since Moses prescribed these exercises in an effort to remove extravagance (ἀφελείν πολυτέλειαν), he evidently considered anything done for pleasure's sake to be an extravagance by definition. No one, in other words, ever needs to eat something delicious—one only needs to eat. By prohibiting delicacies, Moses in effect trained the people to eat according to their need—not their pleasure—instilling the virtues of "frugality" (ὀλιγοδεία) and "contentment" (εὐκολίας).

And the consistent practice of living according to need amounts to the consistent practice of ἐγκράτεια, since it represents, in terms of moral psychology, the consistent dominance of reason (as motivating disposition seeking the rational

---

122 Philo's reference to creatures of both land (pigs) and sea (scaleless creatures) proves that he still speaks in general, introductory terms at this point (cf. §100: χερσαίων ἢ ἐνώπρων ἢ πτηνῶν). His failure to give an example of an especially tasty bird may stem from his not having one to give. Cf. Heinemann PCH 2, 276, n. 2: "Auf die Vögel wird hier nicht eingegangen, da bekanntlich, was Philo §100 allerdings ausser acht lässt, sehr wohlschmeckende Vögel zum Genusse erlaubt sind." His discussion of each distinct domain of creatures begins in earnest with land animals in §103.

123 §101: πρὸς γὰρ ἐγκράτειαν . . . πρὸς ἀσκητὴν ἀρετής [sc. ἐγκρατείας]. Note esp. the terms in §101 associated with Moses’ training: ἀλείψαι (to anoint with oil [before gymnastic exercises]), γυμνάζει (to train), συγκροτεί (to drill). Cf. Spec. 2.98: τὸ παραπλήσιον μὲν τοῖς ἀλέητας ἐστὶν ἰδεῖν δρόμοντας ἐπὶ τῶν ἀθλητῶν· ὅταν γὰρ αὐτοῖς συγκροτήσωσιν ἑπάλληλοι καὶ συνεχείς γυμνασίαις, πρὶν εἰς ἄκρον καμεῖν, ἀνάκτων παρέχοντες ἀνέσεις . . . τῶν ἐν ἀθλήσει πόνων. On Philo's agon motif, see above, 125-30.

124 Philo elsewhere connects ἐγκράτεια and (esp.) ὀλιγοδεία: e.g., Opif. 164: ἡ ἔγκρατεια εὐπτέλειαν καὶ ὀλιγοδεῖαν καὶ δοσον ἀναγκαῖον . . . ἀσπάζεται; Mos. 1.28-29: γαστρὶ τῇ γὰρ ἐξῳ τῶν ἀναγκαιῶν δασμῶν, όγον ἢ φύσις ἔταξε, σωθέν πλέον ἐχορήγη . . . γενόμενος τε διάφεροντος ἀσκητῆς ὀλιγοδείας; QG 4.172 (Petit): ὁ δὲ σπουδαῖος ὦ
benefit of sustenance) over desire (as motivating disposition seeking the pleasure of delicious food). In other words, ἐπιθυμία trained to accept the measure set by reason never becomes passionate. At the same time, since the challenge of limiting indulgence to reasonable need accompanies any expression of ἐπιθυμία (for food, wealth, etc.), the habits of ἔγκρατεια Moses cultivates by prohibiting voluptuous foods apply more broadly to any situation requiring the moral agent to abstain from extravagant (i.e., unnecessary) pleasures.

According to Philo, the lifestyle of ἔγκρατεια Moses promotes through his legislation on clean and unclean animals strikes a perfect balance between two extreme positions. On the one hand, Moses avoids the overly austere approach (σκληραγωγίαν) of Lycurgus (ὁ Λακεδαιμόνιος νομοθέτης), "loosening" the severity of the Spartan way (τὸ μὲν οφοδρόν ἐχάλασε). On the other hand, he avoids the overly indulgent (τὸ ἀβροδίαιτον) approach of Sardanapalus—"the man who introduced habits of feebleness and luxury to the Ionians and Sybarites" (ὁ τοῖς Ἰωσί καὶ Συβαρίταις τὰ περὶ θρύψιν καὶ χλιδῆν εἰσηγησάμενος)—"tightening" the laxity of his dissolute way of life (τὸ δ᾽ ἀνεµείνον ἐπέτεινε). To convey the harmonious moderation of Moses’ approach, Philo uses the image of a musical instrument (ὁργάνῳ μουσικῷ)

πλεονέκτης, ἀτε ὀλιγοδεείας καὶ ἔγκρατείας ἑταῖρος; Spec. 1.173: ἔγκρατειαν, ἢ δορυφορεῖται πρὸς εὐτελείας καὶ εὐκολίας καὶ ὀλιγοδείας.

125 Cf. Contemp. 69: τὴν . . . Λακωνικὴν σκληραγωγίαν.

126 On Sardanapalus, see also §122 (cf. Sandnes, Belly and Body, 65-68; Abraham Malherbe, "The Beasts of Ephesus," JBL 87 (1968): 71-80, esp. 76-77). The tomb of
sounding a beautiful "middle chord" (τῇ μέσῃ) in place of extreme tones.\textsuperscript{127}

Despite the obvious rhetorical function of these appeals, Philo has in mind genuine ethical concerns. Moral agents of the Sardanapalus type, for example, would eat the delicious foods Moses prohibited, indulging in pleasure for pleasure's sake \textit{because} desire rules their souls without the restraint or "measure" of reason. Moral agents of either the Lycurgus or Moses type would of course avoid \textit{overly} pleasurable foods, but Philo gives no clear indication of what would otherwise distinguish their respective dietary habits. Presumably, Philo envisions the Spartan approach as determined avoidance of \textit{any} pleasure: food serves only to sustain life, and pleasure—because it contributes nothing to that purpose—has no place in the Spartan diet.\textsuperscript{128} Philo seems to envision Moses' approach as less severe, but similarly geared toward eating for sustenance over pleasure. While strictly opposed to eating \textit{for pleasure's sake}, Moses nevertheless allows for the \textit{incidental} pleasures accompanying a healthful diet. After all, he prohibits only the most delectable meats, generously allowing the people to enjoy a variety of other meats as they choose.

\textsuperscript{127} §102: ἔσθε, πίνε, παίζε (see Sandness, \textit{Belly and Body}, 66; Malherbe, "Beasts of Ephesus," 76). On the Sybarites, see also \textit{Spec}. 3.43.

\textsuperscript{128} Some Spartan dishes notoriously offered \textit{no} pleasure to the palate, esp. "black broth" (μέλας ζωμός), a pork stew (e.g., see Plutarch \textit{Lyc}. 12.6-7).
Plutarch offers similar praise of balanced moderation in *De garrulitate*, though he has in mind ἐπιθυμία affecting the tongue, not the stomach.\(^{129}\) Just as Philo acknowledges three basic approaches to eating, Plutarch acknowledges three basic approaches to answering questions: "the barely necessary" (τὸ ἀναγκαίον), "the polite" (τὸ φιλάνθρωπον), and "the superfluous" (τὸ περισσόν).\(^{130}\) And, like Philo, Plutarch associates the "barely necessary" with Spartan austerity:

For example, if someone asks, "Is Socrates at home?" one person may reply ... "Not at home" (οὐκ ἔνδον). And if he wishes to adopt the Laconic style (λακωνίζειν), he may omit the "At home" (ἔνδον) and only utter the bare negative (αὐτὴν μόνην ... τὴν ἀπόφθεγμεν). So the Spartans, when Philip wrote to ask if they would receive him into their city, wrote a large "No" on the paper and sent it back. (*Garr*. 513 A)

Plutarch disapproves of the Spartan refusal to speak beyond what absolute necessity requires, just as Moses disapproves of the austere Spartan diet's emphasis on necessity at the expense of pleasure. But Plutarch disapproves also of excessive indulgence in speech, which involves a failure of "the indulgent and talkative man" (ὁ δὲ περιττῶς καὶ ἀδολέσχης) to tailor his answer to the questioner's need (τὴν χρεία τοῦ πυθανομένου). In fact, Plutarch identifies the questioner's "need" (χρεία) as the "measure" (μέτρον) of a proper response (*Garr*. 513 C). Here Plutarch deploys the same Middle-Platonic concept of ἐπιθυμία attested in Philo's writings, understanding "passionate" desire as

---

\(^{129}\) *Garr*. 513 A-C.  
\(^{130}\) *Garr*. 513 A.
immoderate desire (ἀμετρος ἐπιθυμία). In Plutarch’s example, a desire to speak becomes passionate when it oversteps the reasonable measure (μέτρον) of politely providing needed information and motivates the moral agent to indulge in speaking for the sake of speaking, in particular for the pleasure derived from speaking. In Philo’s example, a desire to eat becomes passionate (ἀμετρος) when it oversteps the reasonable measure (μέτρον) of amply providing needed sustenance and motivates the moral agent to indulge in eating for the sake of eating, in particular for the pleasure derived from eating.

Taken as a unit, §§100-102 undoubtedly serve as a thesis governing all of Philo’s comments on Moses’ legislation concerning clean and unclean animals. Not only do §§100-102 form a discrete text-unit preface to the detailed analyses of specific laws, but they also speak in the broad, synoptic terms characteristic of an overarching claim. Philo asserts, in sum, that Moses recognized throughout the animal kingdom (land, sea, and sky) the dangerous incitement to ἐπιθυμία posed by delicious meats, and he obviated the risk by declaring those animals "unclean." By removing the incitement, he sought to lessen the incidence of passionate desire, which so easily burgeons into tyrannical desire. Although Philo explains how such prohibitions promote also a lifestyle of ἐγκράτεια (§§101-102)—thereby subsuming all of §§100-118 under his earlier, express purpose of showing how all dietary laws promote ἐγκράτεια (§§95-97)—his thesis regarding the legislation on clean and unclean animals specifically asserts
Moses’ intention to eliminate passionate desire by prohibiting delicious meats. He makes this claim prospectively in §§100-102, but also retrospectively in §118, where he recapitulates it, creating an unmistakable interpretive frame for §§103-117.\textsuperscript{131} So Philo ostensibly draws just one fundamental conclusion from his investigation of clean and unclean animals—a conclusion he prompts the reader to accept by placing it prominently at both the beginning and end of his work.

Composing §§100-118 in this way, Philo inadvertently offers a criterion for assessing his work, since each consideration of a certain animal or type of animal either does or does not support the overarching thesis. If it does, then Philo reveals consistency in his analysis of the clean and unclean animals. If it does not, then Philo reveals an inconsistency, which calls for some sort of explanation. And a consideration of the inconsistencies in Philo’s work helps to illustrate his underlying expository agenda.

\textbf{§§103 – 109: Land Animals}\textsuperscript{132}

\textbf{§103} Take the case of man-eating beasts. Someone might easily consider it perfectly just for them to endure from man the same fate they impose. But Moses, carefully considering what befits a gentle soul, thinks we should abstain from enjoying the meat of such creatures—which do provide, by the way, a most suitable and delicious feast. You see, while perpetrators certainly deserve to suffer in kind, it should not be at the hands of their victims, lest we become beasts unknowingly by indulging a passionate desire for revenge against man-eaters.\textsuperscript{133} [§104] In fact, Moses

\textsuperscript{131} Rhodes ("Diet and Desire," 133) notes the "inclusio" formed by §§100-102 and §118.
\textsuperscript{132} See Lev 11:1-8; Deut 14:3-8
\textsuperscript{133} lest we become beasts unknowingly by indulging a passionate desire for revenge against man-eaters (μὴ λάθωσιν ὑπ’ ὀργῆς, ἀγρίου πάθους, θηριωθέντες): Philo’s consideration of ὀργῆ in an exposition of οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις makes sense in light of Aristotle’s consideration of ὀργή in \textit{Rhetoric} 1378a30 – 1378b10, where he defines it as an \textit{appetite (διέξεις)} for retribution.
makes so extreme an effort to prevent such behavior as to forbid categorically the eating of all carnivorous animals, wanting to restrain preemptively the impulse for revenge against man-eaters. He designated instead the herbivores as suitable livestock fit for eating, since they are tame by nature and eat only the gentle yield of the earth. Such creatures never plot mischief against anyone. [§105] Now, of the herbivores, Moses lists ten approved for eating: the calf, the lamb, the kid, the deer, the gazelle, the fallow deer, the ibex, the addax, the oryx, and the giraffe. Because of his constant devotion to numerical theory, which he acutely understood as being of the greatest possible significance in every matter, Moses legislates nothing great or small without first considering the appropriate number and, as it were, affixing that number to the precepts. And of the numbers following the monad, the decad represents absolute perfection—a most holy and sacred number, as Moses declares. Here he places it on the various types of clean animals as a seal of approval, once he decided to grant their use to members of his commonwealth. [§106] He also provides a simple way of authenticating and approving these ten animals, based on a pair of traits they all exhibit: each has split hooves and chews its cud. Animals that exhibit neither of these traits, or only one of them, are in Moses' view unclean. You see, these two traits are really symbolic representations of the most enlightened methods of teaching and learning, which can, when put into practice, lead to the clear discernment of moral excellence from its opposite. [§107] Consider the ruminating animal. After taking a few initial bites, the food settles in its gullet. Then after a short while, bringing it up again, the animal works it into a smoother substance, before finally sending it down into the stomach. In the same way, a student takes in through his ears various philosophical doctrines and theories from his teacher. But unable to comprehend immediately and grasp the lesson

(τιμωρία) (cf. Ps.-Andr. 231.81: Ὄργη... ἔστιν ἐπιθυμία τιμωρίας τοῦ ἡδικηκέναι δοκοῦντος), conceivable in broader terms as an appetite (δρέξες) for pleasure (ἡδονή)—namely, the pleasure of retribution (cf. Spec. 3.85). The issue here is not a desire for revenge per se, but the danger of such a desire becoming excessive (passionate) due to the personal involvement of the agent of justice. On Ὄργη and other terms for "anger," see William V. Harris, Restraining Rage: The Ideology of Anger Control in Classical Antiquity (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001), 50-70 [="The Greek and Latin Terminology"]. On the likelihood of Philo's concept of Ὄργη being similar to Aristotle's, note esp. Harris, Restraining Rage, 61: "All or most of the many definitions of ὀργῇ which later writers offer are more or less simplified versions of the one in Aristotle's Rhetoric, not that most of their authors will have know the Aristotelian text." wanting to restrain preemptively the impulse for revenge against man-eaters (βουλόμενος τὴν ἐπὶ τὰ λεγόμενα ὀρμην ἀπαγορεύσαι): The ὀρμη Philo has in mind of course involves eating the meat of man-eaters, but for him such eating amounts to an act of revenge. In other words, Moses sought to legislate against the ὀρμη (cf. δρέξες, ἐπιθυμία) for τιμωρία, which could too easily become excessive (passionate) when killing and eating this type of animal.
firmly, he continues to hold onto it, until by bringing it up again over and over in his memory through repeated exercises, which act as a sort of cement for ideas, he imprints it securely onto his soul. [§108] But the firm grasp of ideas, it seems, does no good at all without the added ability of sorting through them and making decisions about which to accept and which to reject. This ability to discriminate appears under the symbol of the split hoof, indicating that there are just two roads in life: one leading to vice and one leading to virtue. Of course we must turn from one and never leave the other. [§109] So animals whose hooves are either not split at all or split more than once are equally unclean, but for different reasons. The first kind represents the idea that good and evil have one and the same nature—in the sense that one spherical surface has both a concave and a convex aspect, or one road runs both up and down a hill at the same time. The second kind, far from offering no choice at all, deceives the traveler by presenting many different roads in life. With a multitude of options, finding the best and most productive path becomes difficult.

Philo’s consideration of land animals begins at §103, continues through §109, and divides easily into three sections: (1) an explanation of why Moses did not sanction the slaughter of man-eating animals (or any carnivores) for food (§§103-104a), (2) an introduction and listing of the ten "clean" herbivores, with special emphasis on the number ten (§§104b-105), and (3) a symbolic interpretation of Moses' criteria for designating a land animal "clean" (§§106-109).\footnote{135 Philo gives no formal introduction to this section, but note his retrospective comment in §110: τούτους ἐπὶ τῶν χερσαίων τοὺς ὄρους θείων.} Of these, only his discussion of man-eating animals bears any clear relation to the issues of ἐπιθυμία, ἐγκράτεια, and ἀσκησις raised more broadly throughout his exposition—but even here the relation seems contrived in two respects. First, Moses never explicitly prohibits man-eating animals—or any carnivorous land animals, for that matter—despite their obvious failure to meet the criteria for
clean animals. So Philo’s decision to make any comment at all on man-eating animals stems from his own agenda, not an exegetical imperative. Second, the case of man-eaters does not, strictly speaking, confirm the thesis Philo has just formulated in §100 about how Moses’ dietary restrictions promote ἐγκράτεια. But the “prohibition” of man-eaters does resemble the type of restriction, and the accompanying strategy for promoting ἐγκράτεια, that Philo’s thesis attributes to Moses. All of this suggests an effort on Philo’s part to find at least one other example, in addition to the pig, of a land animal whose flesh incites πιθυμία and whose removal from the diet is meant therefore to obviate passion.

While man-eating animals, in Philo’s estimation, no doubt make “a most suitable and delicious feast” (§103), he evidently does not consider them as dangerously delicious as pigs and scaleless sea creatures (§101), because he explains their prohibition on different—though analogous—grounds. Because these animals kill and eat human beings, retributive justice warrants their being killed and eaten in return. Moses, however, recognized a great moral danger whenever victims take the place of dispassionate agents of justice in executing a sentence, since victims easily succumb to their own desire for revenge—succumb, in other words, to the emotion of "wrath" or "anger" (ὁργή). If the followers of Moses were, for example, allowed to eat lions, they might do so not

---

136 Which Philo reviews in §§106-109. This technicality may account for Philo’s wording: Μουσῆ ἰδὲ τῆς τούτων ἀπολαύσεως ἀνέχειν δοκεῖ.  
137 §103: δίκαιον εἶναι τὰ αὐτὰ πρὸς ἀνθρώπων πάσχειν οἷς διατίθησι; τοῖς διατίθεισιν ἀρμόττει τὰ παραπλήσια παθεῖν.
from a reasonable desire to nourish their bodies but from a passionate desire to avenge all who have fallen prey to lions. As Philo puts it, they might "become beasts" (θηριωθέντες) by indulging the "savage passion of wrath" (ὑπ` ὀργῆς, ἀγρίου πάθους). So the lion, like the pig, represents a delectable meal, but in a fundamentally different sense. The pig incites ἐπιθυμία by promising abundant pleasure through the sweet taste of delicious meat. The lion incites ἐπιθυμία by promising abundant pleasure, too, but through the sweet taste of revenge.

Moses, understanding the meat of man-eating animals to be especially pleasurable in this qualified sense, recognized a danger and did not allow his followers to consider such animals a source of food. In fact, as Philo goes on to explain in §104, Moses was so eager to protect against the dangerous "impulse" (ὁρμή) to kill and eat with a vengeance, that he forbade as a precaution the consumption of any animal that kills and eats other animals—let alone human beings.  

Herbivores, Moses reasoned, never plot mischief against anyone, man or animal (μηδέν εἰς ἐπιβουλήν πραγματευόμενα), so no one runs the risk of eating them with a vengeance. In other words, no one could ever reasonably perceive herbivores as reprehensible aggressors, so no one could ever reasonably harbor a dangerous, potentially overwhelming desire to punish them.

In some respects, Philo’s discussion of man-eating land animals, including his ensuing remarks on carnivores and herbivores, invites comparison with

---

138 §104: ὅστε μακρόθεν ἀνείρξαι βουλόμενος τὴν ἐπὶ τὰ λεχθέντα ὀρμήν.
Eleazar’s discussion of clean and unclean birds in the *Letter of Aristeas*. Both discussions highlight the contrasting characteristics of carnivores and herbivores, both label the former "savage" or "wild" (αγριος) and the latter "gentle" or "tame" (ημερος), and both draw attention to correspondingly "savage" (αγριος) and "gentle" (ημερος) characteristics in human beings. But despite these notable similarities, the two discussions represent radically different understandings of what Moses sought to accomplish through his dietary legislation. The *Letter of Aristeas*, on the one hand, believes that the ethical benefit of Moses’ legislation on unclean, savage, carnivores and clean, gentle, herbivores derives from a symbolic application. The animals exemplify certain noble and ignoble character traits, which Moses either commends or condemns symbolically through the designations "clean" and "unclean." To eat or abstain as prescribed does not in itself affect the character of the moral agent, who must first correctly discern and then embrace the moral exhortations Moses expresses symbolically through his legislation. Philo, on the other hand, believes that the ethical benefit of the carnivore-herbivore legislation derives from a strictly literal application.

---

140 *Pace* Rhodes, "Diet and Desire," esp. 125: "[B]oth Philo and Aristeas discern a similar logic operative in the dietary legislation."
141 *Let. Arist.* 148-49: "By such examples, then, the lawgiver has commended to men of understanding a symbol (συμειωσθαι) that they must be just and achieve nothing by violence, nor, confining in their own strength, must they oppress others. For if it is lawful not even to touch the creatures aforementioned because of their several natures, how must we not in every way guard our characters from degenerating to a similar state."
142 In other words, Philo attributes no symbolic significance to Moses’ legislation on unclean, savage, carnivores and clean, gentle, herbivores. Philo obviously does engage in symbolic interpretations through much of §§100-118: namely, §§106-109 (criteria for clean land.
Man-eating animals do not, in Philo’s view, represent a reprehensible character trait. They actually eat human beings—who might actually eat them in return, indulging an actual vengeance that overshadows reason. By literally abstaining from the meat of man-eaters, the soul literally abstains from a troublesome passion. Similarly, Moses does not prohibit carnivores as a class because they represent violence, oppression, or some other vicious trait, but because a person accustomed to eating all sorts of carnivores will have difficulty abstaining from one particular sort, the man-eaters. As for herbivores, both Eleazar and Philo commend them as "gentle" (τὴν ἐμπρός) creatures satisfied with the fruit of the animals), §§110-112 (criteria for clean aquatic animals), §§113-115 (clean and unclean "creeping" animals). But he invariably announces his symbolic interpretations: ταύτ' ἐδὲ τὰ σημεία ἄμφωτερα σύμβολα (§106), σύμβολα δὲ καὶ ταύτ' ἐστὶ (§112), πάλιν σινιττόμενος διὰ μὲν ἐρπετῶν (§113), πάλιν διὰ συμβόλων (§114). He makes no such announcement in §103-105. Heinemann (Bildung, 161) acknowledges: "Philon kennt für die Speisegesetze allegorische und wörtliche Begründungen"—and he gives examples of the two approaches (161-66). Under "wörtliche Begründungen," Heinemann mentions first the prohibition of "besonders wohlgeschmeckende Tiere" (such as pork), recognizing Moses’ goal of "zur Selbstbeherrschung anregen" (163). In Heinemann’s view, the prohibition of man-eaters involves "wörtliche Begründungen" as well, but he does not situate this prohibition within the larger context of promoting self-control in service to the Tenth Commandment.

143 Pace Rhodes, "Diet and Desire," 123: "Philo advances an allegorical argument that explains why no carnivores are among those permitted for food." Unlike Eleazar (Let. Arist. 146-149), Philo attributes to Moses no objection to carnivores per se, on allegorical, symbolic, or any other grounds. In Philo’s view, Moses prohibits all carnivores only to increase the likelihood of his followers successfully abstaining from the one type of carnivore whose meat endangers the soul—namely, man-eaters (cf. Heinemann, Bildung, 164: "Das Verbot anderer Fleischfresser betrachtet Philon als Schutzmaßnahme, um die Begier nach menschenfressenden Tieren zu unterdrücken"). In other words, Moses’ tacit prohibition of all carnivores really only targets creatures that grievously offend human beings. The behavior of carnivores as carnivores has at best an incidental significance. Eleazar, by contrast, understands Moses to have concerned himself first with the nature of carnivores per se, whose aggression happens to affect human beings in some cases: "But of the winged creatures which are forbidden you will find that they are wild and carnivorous and with their strength oppress the rest and procure their food with injustice at the expense of the tame fowl mentioned above. And not only these, but they also seize lambs and kids, and they do violence to men too (καὶ τοὺς ἄθροπους δὲ ἄδικον), both the dead and the living" (Let. Arist. 146).
earth. But they again differ as to the symbolic or literal significance of this disposition. For Eleazar, a person who merely follows Moses’ instruction to eat only herbivores misses Moses’ real purpose, which was to promote the sort of life herbivores represent: a life of justice that oppresses no one. For Philo, the person who eats only herbivores—even with no reflection on the significance of the rule—fulfills Moses’ purpose, which was to safeguard his followers from a passionate desire for revenge by allowing them to eat only harmless creatures.

So despite superficial similarities, Philo’s remarks in §§103-104 represent a radical departure from Eleazar’s discussion of clean (herbivorous) and unclean (carnivorous) birds in the Letter of Aristeas. Eleazar, for his part, understood the dietary laws in terms of moral exhortation. Once decoded properly, obscure regulations about “clean” and “unclean” animals become straightforward ethical maxims—such as, “Be just and achieve nothing by violence” (Let. Arist. 148). But while they inform a moral agent’s theoretical conception of what virtue requires, actual observance of the dietary laws yields no practical benefit, no training in virtue. In other words, they involve learning (μάθησις) and not practice (ἀσκησις). Philo, by contrast, understands these dietary laws in terms of moral psychology, construing them as practical exercises designed to eliminate passionate desire.

---


and promote ἐγκράτεια.¹⁴⁶ Everyone who puts them into practice benefits from them, with or without an awareness of the ethical theory Moses used to formulate them.¹⁴⁷ In fact, only those who put them into practice benefit from them. The relative unimportance of knowledge and understanding stems from the fact that these laws involve the training and management of the soul’s non-rational part. In other words, they ultimately involve practice (ἀσκησις), not learning (μάθησις)—and this fits Philo’s overall agenda in the exposition. In fact, his effort to construe the dietary laws as a matter of ἀσκησις explains his treatment of split hooves and rumination.

After a brief listing of the ten species of clean herbivores (§105), Philo considers the two authenticating “signs” (σημεῖα) common to all ten: split hooves and rumination (§§106-109).¹⁴⁸ Because he ascribes a symbolic significance to these two traits, Philo’s commentary begins at this point to resemble more closely the Letter of Aristeas, which also interprets split hooves and rumination symbolically (Let. Arist. 150-60). But despite his application of the same mode of interpretation to the same material, Philo manages to draw different conclusions because of his different interpretive agenda. Although Philo cannot make split hooves and rumination speak directly to issues of ἐπιθυμία and ἐγκράτεια, he

¹⁴⁶ This fits the overall purpose(s) of his exposition. NB the discourse of moral psychology in Spec. 4.103-04: ὄργης, ἀγρίου πάθους; τὴν ἐπὶ τὰ λεχθέντα ὄρμην.
¹⁴⁷ In other words, not eating man-eaters helps to eliminate passionate desire for revenge, whether or not someone understands why it helps.
¹⁴⁸ See Rhodes, "Diet and Desire," 125-27. Philo considers the same "signs" in a similar way in Agr. 131-45.
can make them speak to the issue of ἀσκησις, which in turn allows him to maintain the coherence of his work by tying this particular portion to his broader expository agenda. Philo engages the notion of ἀσκησις primarily through his remarks on rumination, which both he and Eleazar identify as a symbol of "memory" (μνήμη). But unlike Eleazar—who interprets rumination in terms of the content of memory: namely, remembrance of God—Philo interprets rumination in terms of the faculty of memory per se: namely, memory as a type of ἀσκησις, which serves the learning process by making thoughts of whatever content secure in the mind through repetition (§107). This type of ἀσκησις obviously differs from the type of ἀσκησις used to acquire ἐγκράτεια, which involves forcibly training a non-rational power (ἐπιθυμία) to obey reason. But in both cases the moral agent must actively engage certain faculties to achieve

---

149 So §§106-109 fit sensibly into Philo’s exposition, even though he seems to have lost all sight of issues pertinent to the Tenth Commandment—namely, ἐπιθυμία and ἐγκράτεια. Because Colson misses the importance of ἀσκησις to Philo’s expository agenda, he does not see the relevance of §§106-109: "In §§100-105 the prohibition of certain kinds of beasts, fishes, and birds is based on the supposition that they are the most appetizing and to abstain from them encourages self-control. It will be seen that from §106 onwards a totally different line of argument is adopted, viz. that philosophical and moral lessons are intended by the distinctions" (68, n. a); cf. Rhodes, "Diet and Desire," 127: "One cannot help but think that in his discussion of rumination and cloven hooves, Philo has wandered from his initial theme of desire and self-control." Rhodes, however, does not miss the relevance of Philo’s other symbolic interpretations (§§110-115) to issues of ἐγκράτεια and ἐπιθυμία ("Diet and Desire," 127-31).

150 Philo’s special interest in memory comes through in the ordering of his commentary on the two traits: first rumination (memory), then the split hoof, despite his initial listing of first the split hoof, then rumination (§106: τὸ τε διχηλείν καὶ τὸ μηροκάσθαι). The Pentateuch mentions first the split hoof, then rumination (Lev 11:3; Deut 14:6)—and Eleazar naturally comments on the traits in that order. Philo’s reversal suggests a deliberate reorganizing of the material.


152 In Leg. 3.18, Philo lists τῶν καλῶν μνημείων among the μέρη τῆς ἀσκησίας. On Philo’s understanding of the role of μνήμη in the learning process, see Post. 148-49 (cf. Agr. 131-35).
certain ends. Furthermore, in both cases the engagement takes the form of discrete exercises, since memory employs "constant exercises" (συνεχέσι μελέταις) as the "cement of thoughts" (κόλλα νοημάτων). So in the symbolic interpretations that follow (§§110-115), Philo does not construe the dietary laws as practical exercises designed to inculcate ἐγκράτεια, as he did, for example, with the prohibition of pork. Rather, he construes them as repositories for the principles of ἐγκράτεια, which—once properly discerned—are indeed mastered and secured in the mind through practice. Here Philo’s symbolic method corresponds to that of the Letter of Aristeas, which likewise extracts ethical principles from the dietary laws with little concern for the practical implications of their literal observance. Yet even when Philo does replicate Eleazar’s technique, the technique serves a different agenda. Philo ultimately has in mind a very practical program of desire management, which the theoretical principles outlined in §§110-115 commend.

---

153 On the association of μελέτη with ἀσκησις, see, e.g., Leg. 3.18: μέρη τῆς ἀσκήσεως. . . μελέται; Sacr. 85-86: μελέτην καὶ ἀσκησιν αὐτῶν ποιεῖσθαι συνεχῆ . . . συνεχῆς γὰρ ἀσκησις ἐπιστήμην πάγιον ἐργάζεται (cf. Gig. 26; Conf. 110; Migr. 31). See also Pierre Hadot, “La philosophie antique: une éthique ou une pratique?,” in Problèmes de la Morale Antique (ed. Paul Demont; Amiens: Université de Picardie-Jules Verne, 1993), 7-37, esp. 23-24; and Mosès, 264-65, n. 4: "La μελέτη mémorisante peut être également évoquée à travers l'image de la simple mastication (Leg. I, 98) ou à travers le symbole de la manne concassée (Sacrif. 86). Ce type d'exercice mental appartient à la plupart des ascèses philosophiques de l'époque."

154 Cf. §107: τὰ σοφίας δόγματα καὶ θεωρήματα.

155 Cf. Somn. 1.169: "There being, then, three methods by which virtue accrues, it is the first and third that are most intimately connected (τοὺς ἄκρους μάλιστα συμβεβήκεν ἡνώσθαι); for what comes by practice is the offspring and product of that which comes by learning (τὸ γὰρ ἀκήσει ἐγγονὸν τοῦ μαθήσει) . . ."
[§110] After establishing these restrictions for land animals, Moses begins to list aquatic animals that are clean and approved for eating. Here again he clearly marks the clean species with a pair of traits—fins and scales—rejecting with disapproval any animal that exhibits neither or only one of them. Now, this requires an accurate explanation. [§111] You see, creatures lacking either or both of these traits get dragged along by the current, unable to withstand the force of its movement. But creatures equipped with both face the current head-on and repel it. Eager to contend with the opponent, they train themselves with zeal and invincible daring: pushed they push back, chased they turn and charge, hemmed in they clear wide swaths for an easy escape. [§112] As with the land animals mentioned earlier, these two types of aquatic creatures are also symbols: the first represents the soul of a lover of pleasure, the second represents the soul enamored of endurance and self-control. After all, the road to pleasure is downhill all the way—easier than any other. So instead of a path for walking, it ends up being more like a slippery slope. By contrast, the road to self-control is a steep uphill climb—laborious, to be sure, but more beneficial than any other. The road to pleasure whisks us away and compels our descent, bearing us down headlong until at last it flings us off into the lowest depths. But the other road leads upward to heaven, granting immortality to those who do not grow weary, who have the strength to endure its rough and challenging climb.

In his symbolic interpretation of the criteria for clean land animals, Philo had to reckon with a traditional, perhaps even authoritative, understanding of the significance of rumination and split hooves, but his interpretation of fins and scales, the criteria for clean aquatic animals, seems like a novel venture. While he does use the traditional technique of correlating animal behavior with human character—just as Eleazar did in the case of carnivorous birds (Let. Arist. 145-49)—Philo’s results seem original, given their tailored fit to his expository agenda. He begins with a characterization of the unclean aquatic animal, which

---

156 See Lev 11:9-12; Deut 14:9-10.
lacks fins, or scales, or both. Such a creature, he notes, gets swept away by the current, "unable to withstand the force of its movement" (ἀντέχειν ἀδυνατοῦντα τῇ βίᾳ τῆς φοράς) (§111). Since Philo commonly uses the term φορά ("movement") as a synonym for the technical term ὀρμή ("impulse"), his wording here mirrors the discourse of moral psychology deployed elsewhere in his writings.¹⁵⁷ In particular, he portrays the plight of someone mastered by the non-rational impulse(s) of ἐπιθυμία, someone identified explicitly in §112 as the φιλήδονος ψυχή. Consistent with his Middle-Platonic view of the soul, Philo portrays a contest of power within the moral agent whose reason (λόγος) suffers abject defeat, unable (ἀδυνατοῦντα) to withstand the force (τῇ βίᾳ) of the dominating non-rational power (ἐπιθυμία). Just as the current absolutely directs the movement of a finless, scaleless creature, so ἐπιθυμία-turned-ἔρως absolutely directs the movement of a φιλήδονος ψυχή, as it travels along the easy path to pleasure (ἔφ’ ἡδονήν).¹⁵⁸ By contrast, aquatic animals with fins and

¹⁵⁷ On τῇ βίᾳ τῆς φοράς, cf. Leg. 1.73: τῇ βίᾳ τῆς ὀρμῆς; Agr. 94: ἐπιστομίζειν τῆς πλεοναζοῦσας τὴν φοράν ὀρμής. On the virtual synonymy of ὀρμή and φορά, note the generic Stoic definition of impulse: λέγοισιν... ὀρμήν εἶναι φοράν ψυχής ἐπὶ τι κατὰ τὸ γένος (ESE 9). On Philo’s use of φορά in the context of moral psychology, note e.g. Leg. 3.134: ἐν’ οὕτῳ ἡμιόχῳ τρόπον ἐπιστομίζῃ τὴν ἐπὶ πλέον [τῶν παθῶν] φοράν; Leg. 3.155: ἐπιστομίζει γὰρ ὁ λόγος καὶ ἐγκαθιστάει τὴν ῥύμην καὶ φοράν τοῦ πάθους; Agr. 88: τῆς κατὰ ψυχῆν ἀλόγου καὶ ἀμέτρου καὶ ἀπείθους φοράς; Fug. 91: τὴν τῶν παθῶν ἀναγείρει φοράν; Virt. 14: ὕπο τῆς τῶν παθῶν φορᾶς κατακλύσεσθαι. Philo elsewhere equates water (ὕδωρ) with the φορά of the passions (πάθη), e.g. Leg. 2.103: ὕπο τὸ ὕδωρ τούτεστιν ὕπο τὴν φοράν τῶν παθῶν; Conf. 70: "ὕπο τὸ ὕδωρ"... τούτεστιν ὕπο τὴν παθῶν φοράν.

¹⁵⁸ The φιλήδονος ψυχή, mastered by tyrannical desire (ἔρως), orients its life toward the "good" invariably sought by desire, which is pleasure (ἡδονή) (see above, 87-94). In §112, Philo signals the presence of harmful ἔρως in the φιλήδονος ψυχή by contrasting it with the soul enamored of endurance and self-control (καρτερίαν καὶ ἐγκράτειαν ποθούσης), whose longing
scales stoutly oppose the current (§111). Philo characterizes their behavior using the agon motif, portraying the sort of struggle against ἐπιθυμία engaged by those who acquire ἐγκράτεια through practice (ἀσκησις). In his view, these creatures symbolize the soul that yearns for endurance and self-control (καρτερίαν καὶ ἐγκράτειαν ποθούσης [ψυχῆς]). This soul travels a difficult, yet profitable, path, which leads not only to ἐγκράτεια but ultimately to heaven (εἰς οὐρανόν) for those strong enough to endure it. By highlighting issues of ἐπιθυμία, ἐγκράτεια, and ἀσκησις, Philo incorporates his interpretation of clean aquatic animals into the larger purpose of his exposition.

§§113 – 115: "Reptiles"

[§113] Moses applies the same idea to reptiles, declaring both creatures with no feet, which wriggle about by sliding on their stomach, and four-legged creatures with many feet unclean for eating—but he is once again hinting here at something else. Reptiles with no feet represent people who live for their bellies, who gorge themselves like cormorants, bringing a series of endless tributes to their sovereign ruler, the wretched belly. With liquor, pastries, seafood, and in general whatever baked treat or tasty relish the exacting culinary arts produce for every sort of dish, these people fan and stoke their boundless and insatiable desires. Reptiles with four legs and many feet represent the miserable slaves of not just one passion, desire, but of all passions, which generically are four in number, each having many species. The tyranny of one passion is hard enough—how oppressive and unbearable the tyranny of many! [§114] But among reptiles, Moses designates as "clean" creatures with legs above their feet enabling them to leap up off of the ground. These are the various kinds of grasshoppers, along with the creature known as the "snake fighter." Once


160 See Lev 11:2-23, 41-45. Here "reptiles" in the broad sense of creatures that "creep" (τῶν ἔρπετῶν) (cf. Lat. repere).
again, Moses is using symbols to carefully examine the different habits and dispositions of a rational soul. In this case, we learn that the powerful pull of the body naturally weighs foolish people down, strangling and crushing them as it adds its force to the great sinking mass of mortal existence. [§115] Some happy souls, however, can resist the downward force of that pull with a superior counterforce. Taught by the principles of proper instruction to leap upward from earth and all earthly concerns into the ethereal circuits of heaven, these souls glimpse a vision deemed worthy of envy and struggle by all who forgo half-hearted efforts and attain it through determined resolve.

In his explicit references to the structure of his commentary on clean and unclean animals, Philo acknowledge only three major elements—animals of land, sea, and sky—leaving no place in his outline for the reptiles (τὰ ἐρπετῶδες) of §§113-115, except as part of his discussion of aquatic animals (§§110-112).161 He obviously does not place reptiles in the same physical domain, but they do, in his view, share with aquatic creatures the same symbolic domain, which justifies their standing together with aquatic creatures under the same rubric. In Philo’s view, Moses formulated dietary restrictions for the reptiles using "the same idea" (τῆς δ’ ἀυτῆς ἰδέας) he had used when formulating restrictions for aquatic creatures (§113).162 Generally speaking, Moses’ "idea" involved the correlation of animal behavior with human character, a correlation noted also by Eleazar in the Letter of Aristeas (esp. 145-49). But specifically, Moses saw in both aquatic

---

161 When he finally begins his discussion of birds in §116, Philo claims to have considered only two classes of animal (land and aquatic) up to that point, so apparently none of the creatures mentioned in §§113-115 represent a distinct class (§116: Ἐπεληλυθώς οὖν τῷ λόγῳ τὰς τῶν χερσαίων καὶ τὰς τῶν ἐνύδρων ζώων ἰδέας). Elsewhere, Philo plainly states that his discussion of clean and unclean animals involves only three distinct varieties of creature: of land, sea, and sky (§100: ὥσα τῶν χερσαίων ἢ ἐνύδρων ἢ πτηνῶν; cf. §118).

162 Cf. §113: πάλιν αἵνεκα διὰ μὴν ἐρπετῶν.
creatures and reptiles certain physiological traits indicative of ἐγκράτεια: either its abject absence, amounting to φιληδονία, or its salutary presence. By designating creatures either "clean" or "unclean" in accordance with their traits, Moses instructs students of his dietary laws in matters bearing on the Tenth Commandment, either commending the vigorous management of ἐπιθυμία (ἐγκράτεια) or denouncing enslavement to ἐπιθυμία (φιληδονία). In the case of aquatic creatures, Moses explores the symbolic significance of fins and scales, while in the case of reptiles, he considers the symbolic significance of feet.

Philo subdivides the unclean reptiles into those "with no feet" (ἀποδά) and those "with four legs and many feet" (τετρασκελή καὶ πολύποδα), and both represent souls utterly devoid of ἐγκράτεια (§113).163 By creatures "with no feet," Philo clearly means serpents, which of necessity "wriggle about by sliding on their stomach" (συμμῶ τῆς γαστρῶς ἰλυσπώμενα).164 Symbolically, serpents represent people who live for their bellies (ἐπὶ κοιλίας), specifically for the pleasure derived from eating and drinking. Holding pleasure as their ultimate aim, such people embody φιληδονία, the condition of soul indicative of tyrannical

163 The actual terms Philo uses to classify unclean reptiles do not appear in the biblical prohibition in Lev 11:41-42: καὶ πᾶν ἐρπετόν, ὁ ἐρπετόν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, βδέλυγμα τοῦτο ἐστιν υμῖν, οὐ βρωθήσεται. καὶ πᾶς ὁ πορευόμενος ἐπὶ κοιλίας (cf. ἀποδά) καὶ πᾶς ὁ πορευόμενος ἐπὶ τέσσαρα διὰ παντός (cf. τετρασκελή), ὁ πολύποδης τοις πολύποδοι ἐν πάσιν τοῖς ἐρπετοῖς τοῖς ἐρπουσίν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, οὐ φάγετε αὐτόν, ὅτι βδέλυγμα υμῖν ἐστιν (Lev 11:41-42). Philo offers a similar interpretation of Lev 11:42 in Leg. 3.139.

desire. Philo further suggests the involvement of tyrannical desire with his description of those who live "for their bellies," echoing his earlier description of those consumed by tyrannical desire affecting the belly (§91). Instead of controlling desire with ἐγκράτεια, such people end up constantly stimulating desire, which in their case can never reach satiety because the deposed rational faculty sets no limit. Similarly, creatures "with four legs and many feet" represent people who, in general, fail to master the soul’s non-rational forces through ἐγκράτεια and become instead mastered by those forces. In particular, Philo has in mind souls dominated by all of the passions (πάθη): not just the four generic passions (τετρασκελή [ἐπιθυμία, ἰδὸνη, φόβος, λύπη]), but also their many various species (πολύποδω). Philo’s symbolical reflection at this point involves all passions, clearly transcending the scope of his overarching topic, the prohibition of one passion in οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις. But he still singles out ἐπιθυμία for special mention in his description of reptilian souls, comparing their subjugation to many passions to the miserable slavery and harsh despotism.

---

165 Cf. Leg. 3.159: ὁ μὲν φιλήδονος ἐπὶ κοιλίαν βαδίζει.
166 Apart from general similarities, note especially the terms common to both passages: γαστερά (§91) and γαστρόγαστρί (§113); ἀκρόεστος (§91) and ἀκρόεστος (§113); ἀκράτος (§91) and ἀκράτος (§113); ἰχθύων (§91) and ἰχθύων (§113); ἐδεσμάτων (§91) and ἐδεσμάτων (§113); ἔλασμάτων (§91) and ἔλασμάτων (§113). Philo does, however, compare gluttonous people to other sorts of animals in the two passages: dogs in §91 (τρόπον κυνιδίων) and cormorants in §113 (τὸν αἰθίους τρόπον). The cormorant (αἰθίους; genus Phalacrocorax), a voracious bird emblematic of gluttony (see also Leg. 3.155; Det. 101; Contemp. 55), would have fit perfectly into Philo’s discussion of birds (§§116-117), had Moses designated it “unclean.”
167 §113: ἀναρριπτέοις καὶ προσαναφλέγουσι τὰς ὑπάλληλους καὶ ἀκρόεστους ἐπιθυμίας.
imposed by one passion, ἐπιθυμία, whose tyranny brings trouble enough.\textsuperscript{168} By framing such a comparison, Philo presumes to have already spoken on the nature and effects of tyrannical desire. And indeed he has, in both his symbolic interpretations (§§110-113) \textit{and} the theoretical reflections of the exposition’s "diagnosis" portion (esp. §§80-91). So even though Philo’s remarks on four-legged multipeds deny a particular significance to tyrannical desire in the interpretation of that restriction, they nevertheless confirm the preeminence of tyrannical desire in Philo’s exposition.

Philo interprets also the clean reptiles symbolically (§§114-115), exploring the significance of their distinguishing trait: legs above their feet enabling them to leap from the ground (πηδᾶν ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς δύνασθαι).\textsuperscript{169} Like their unclean counterparts, these reptiles represent for Philo a certain type of soul, which in this case Moses sought to commend, not condemn.\textsuperscript{170} In particular, Philo correlates their ability to leap from the ground (πηδᾶν ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς) with the ability of souls to "leap" upward from the earth and from all earthly concerns (ἀνω πηδᾶν . . . ἀπὸ γῆς καὶ τῶν χαμαίζηλων), which secures for them a vision of the divine (ὁ θεός ζηλωτή καὶ περιμάχητος).\textsuperscript{171} Here Philo deploys the agon motif in

\textsuperscript{168} NB in §113: τοὺς μὴ ἑνὸς πάθους, ἐπιθυμίας, . . . κακοὺς δουλοὺς; χαλεπὴ μὲν οὖν καὶ ἡ ἑνὸς δεσποτεία.
\textsuperscript{169} Cf. Lev 11:21: ἂ ἔχει σκέλη ἀνώτερον τῶν ποδῶν αὐτοῦ πηδᾶν ἐν αὐτοῖς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς. NB Philo’s emendation of ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς to ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς to suit his exegetical purpose.
\textsuperscript{170} §114: πάλιν διὰ συμβασίαν ἡ θή καὶ τρόπους λογικῆς ψυχῆς διερευνώμενος.
\textsuperscript{171} Cf. Her. 239: "Conversely Moses gives high approval to those reptiles which can leap upwards (ἀνω δύναται πηδᾶν). Thus he says, 'These shall ye eat of the flying reptiles which go on four legs, which have legs above their feet (ἀ ἔχει σκέλη ἀνώτερον τῶν ποδῶν), so as to leap
its distinctively Platonic aspect, casting the practice of ἐγκράτεια as a means of escaping the body's entanglement with the sensible realm. While he does not use the term ἐγκράτεια, the concept undoubtedly informs his notion of a "leaping" soul that wrestles successfully against the "pull of the body" (ἡ τοῦ σώματος ὀλκή) by resisting with superior strength (κραταιοτέρα δυνάμει πρὸς τὴν ῥοπὴν τῆς ὀλκῆς ἀντιβιάσασθαι). Also, Philo's specific mention of the "snake fighter" (ὁφιομάχης) suggests an effort on his part to characterize this type of soul as a model of ἐγκράτεια, since he elsewhere interprets the snake fighter in precisely those terms:

172 On the Platonic aspect of Philo's agon motif, see above, 127, n. 53.
For the snake-fighter is, I think, nothing but a symbolic representation of self-control (συμβολικῶς ἐγκράτεια εἶναι μοι δοκεῖ), waging a fight that never ends and a truceless war against intemperance and pleasure (πρὸς ἀκρασίαν καὶ ἰδιονήν). (Opif. 164)\(^{174}\)

So Philo equates the clean reptiles with souls possessed of ἐγκράτεια, which prove themselves superior to their unclean counterparts by rejecting pleasure instead of embracing it (φιληδονία).

§§116 – 117: Birds\(^{175}\)

[§116] Having provided a rational account of the nature of land-based and aquatic animals, and having made the most appropriate distinctions among them by the laws he enacted, Moses begins to examine the essence of the last type of creature—the myriad kinds of winged creatures. He rejects a great number of birds, in particular those that prey either on other animals or on human beings. The prohibition includes every carnivorous, every venomous bird, and in general every bird that uses aggressive force of any kind. [§117] But Moses includes ring-doves, pigeons and turtle-doves, and the various types of cranes, geese, and birds of that sort all in one class of tame and gentle creatures. He allows these birds without restriction to anyone who chooses to use them for food.

Philo completes his survey of clean and unclean animals from land, sea, and sky with a short consideration of the legislation governing birds (γένη τῶν πτηνῶν).

Philo’s brevity contrasts sharply with Eleazar’s elaborate interpretation of these same laws in the Letter of Aristeas.\(^{176}\) While Philo does recognize along with

---

\(^{174}\) Cf. Leg. 2.105. Philo’s symbolic interpretation of the snake fighter, although modeled on Eleazar’s method, reveals Philo’s unique appropriation of that method. Eleazar’s method assumes some animal trait reasonably analogous to a human ethical trait. Nothing about “fighting snakes,” as an animal trait, suggests a comparison with human self-control. The snake-fighter can only represent self-control if the "snake" represents pleasure (see Calabi, ”Il serpente e il cavaliere”; Siegfried, Philo, 247), and this identification involves Philo’s allegory of the soul (on which see Tobin, Creation of Man, 135-76).

\(^{175}\) See Lev 11:13-19; Deut 14:11-18.

\(^{176}\) Let. Arist. 145-49.
Eleazar the Mosaic correlation of "clean" with docility (herbivores) and "unclean" with aggression (carnivores), he does not make Eleazar’s connection between these behavioral traits and similar character traits. In fact, Philo makes no application to the realm of ethics at all, taking the laws neither literally as practical exercises in ἐγκράτεια nor symbolically as theoretical promotions of ἐγκράτεια. Such an omission clearly defeats the purpose of Philo’s exposition, which presumes to show how Moses’ dietary laws promote the observance of οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις by fostering proper management of ἐπιθυμία within the soul. By citing a set of dietary laws and tracing no connection to his overall expository agenda (ἐπιθυμία, ἐγκράτεια, ἀσκησις), Philo seems to deny the existence of any connection.

But Philo earlier proved his creative ability to find such connections for the sake of his expository agenda, using a variety of literal and symbolic techniques. So his failure to produce an interpretation here along lines of moral psychology hardly stems from an inability to do so, but more likely from an unwillingness. The reluctance makes sense, if in fact Philo knew the Letter of Aristeas, or at least the symbolic interpretation of clean and unclean birds it contains. After all, the careful explication of how Moses ingeniously used obscure regulations about eating birds to commend justice and condemn violent.

---

177 In fact, the logic of Philo’s interpretation of the prohibition of man-eaters (§§103-104), however strained, could just as well apply here to the prohibition of carnivorous birds, since they too—as both Philo and Eleazar acknowledge—incite human beings and could therefore incite
oppression stands as the highlight of Eleazar’s discourse on the dietary laws. Such a notable interpretation probably either was standard before its inclusion in the *Letter of Aristeas* or became standard as a result. In either case, a well-established traditional understanding of the laws governing birds, especially one at odds with his expository agenda, would put Philo in an awkward exegetical position. According to Eleazar, Moses had one clear objective in prohibiting or permitting certain species of birds: the promotion of δικαιοσύνη. But, according to Philo, Moses formulated the dietary laws in an effort to promote ἔγκράτεια, not δικαιοσύνη. Rather than flatly contradict a venerable traditional interpretation, Philo offers no interpretation at all. As a result, he gives absolutely no support to one element of his original thesis about the laws of clean and unclean (§§100-102), which states that Moses regulated the consumption of animals from land, sea, and sky with a view to eliminating passionate desire. Yet when he summarily concludes his discussion of the laws of clean and unclean, he speaks as if he had.

§118: Conclusion of Clean and Unclean Animals

[§118] So, as you can see, Moses withdrew from our use certain animals from every region of the earth: creatures from the land, from the sea, and from the sky. He was, in a sense, withdrawing fuel from a fire, intending all along to extinguish passionate desire.¹⁷⁸

---

¹⁷⁸ *passionate vengeance* (§116: δια... κατ’ ἀνθρώπων φονέ; *Let. Arist.* 146: τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἀδικούσει), *He was, in a sense, withdrawing fuel from a fire, intending all along to extinguish passionate desire* (καθάπερ ὑλὴν πυρὸς [ὑφαίρων], σβέσαν τῆς ἐπιθυμίας ἀπεργάζεται): These restrictions do nothing to “extinguish” ἐπιθυμία itself, since even those who abstain from prohibited animals indulge the amoral emotion ἐπιθυμία when they eat, and Philo nowhere
In §118, Philo completes the interpretive frame he began in §§100-102, suggesting that Moses crafted his legislation on clean and unclean animals primarily to remove incitements to ἐπιθυμία and obviate the risk of passionate desire (ἀμέτρος ἐπιθυμία). He made the claim explicitly in §100, citing Moses’ prohibition of the "fattest" (ἐυσκαφότατα) and "richest" (πικρότατα) animals from land, sea, and sky—animals with especially delicious meats likely to cause the moral agent to eat strictly for the sake of pleasure. Here in §118, Philo uses more general terms to make the same essential point: Moses’ strategic prohibition of certain animals from land, sea, and sky amounts to the withdrawal of "fuel from a fire" in order to "extinguish" passionate desire.179 By framing his entire discussion of the laws governing clean and unclean animals with one distinct claim about the purpose of those laws, Philo implies that each one of his analyses corroborates, or at least should corroborate, that claim. But only two of the animals he considers in fact support his claim: pigs and scaleless sea creatures, both of which Philo clearly identifies as especially pleasurable to eat and morally dangerous for that reason. He does manage to fit one other type of prohibited animal, the land carnivores, into his interpretive scheme, but only through a

advocates the elimination (extinguishing) of ἐπιθυμία per se. The ἐπιθυμία Philo has in mind must be passionate desire, which Moses’ dietary regulations are designed to eliminate. 179 Cf. Gemünden, "Culture des Passions," 341: "[L]es homes imparfaits doivent lutter, ils doivent faire des efforts pour avancer (Her. 275). Dans cette lutte, c’est surtout le logos qui combat les passions. Pour cette lutte, le prokoptón doit se référer à la philosophie et à la Loi. Cette dernière peut étendre par exemple le désir (ἐπιθυμία), comme Philon le démontre dans De specialibus Legibus IV, 118 au sujet des lois alimentaires qui peuvent étendre le désir
strained notion of man-eaters being delicious (§103-104). Otherwise, he offers strictly symbolic interpretations of the various clean and unclean species, avoiding any sort of claim about how they actually taste. He discontinues the symbolic mode when he gets to the legislation concerning birds, but instead of interpreting that legislation in light of his claim about delicious fare, he offers no interpretation at all. So Philo hardly succeeds in demonstrating a systematic tendency on Moses’ part to designate delicious animals “unclean” in an effort to combat passionate desire.

But in §§100-118 Philo does succeed in promoting the broader expository agenda he brings to all of the dietary laws, despite his failure to unite the laws of clean and unclean animals under one interpretive claim. In other words, Philo finds a way of making this subset of the dietary laws speak to issues of ἐπιθυμία, ἀγαθετεία, and ἀσκησις, confirming their essential relation—as species to genus—to the Tenth Commandment’s prohibition of desire. In particular, he shows how the Mosaic legislation on clean and unclean species, with almost perfect consistency, addresses the problem of ἀμετρος ἐπιθυμία by posing the solution of ἀγαθετεία acquired through ἀσκησις. The prohibitions of pork and scaleless sea creatures of course support not only Philo’s specific thesis for

---

180 With two significant exceptions: the laws regarding rumination and split hooves (§§106-109) and the laws governing birds (§§116-117). In the case of rumination, Philo does the best he can, turning the interpretation toward his exegetical agenda by highlighting the role of
§§100-118 but also his general thesis about the dietary laws overall, since the consistent avoidance of excessive pleasure fosters a lifestyle of ἐγκράτεια, which accepts only rational (moderate) indulgences of ἐπιθυμία. The prohibition of land carnivores promotes ἐγκράτεια through a similar mechanism, even though no one—including Philo—considers the meat of such animals especially tasty. Philo ascribes a symbolic function to all of the other regulations, explaining how the designations "clean" and "unclean" respectively either commend ἐγκράτεια and ἀσκησις or condemn the excessive indulgence of ἐπιθυμία, quite apart from the palatability of the animals involved.

§§119 – 121: Dead Animals

[§119] In other regulations concerning food, Moses commands the avoidance of dead animals, whether dead by natural causes or savaged by a predator. As the second prohibition suggests, a human being should not dine with wild beasts, all but feasting with them on their meal of flesh. As for the first prohibition, there seem to be at least two possible reasons. To begin with, eating a creature dead by natural causes is harmful and likely to cause disease, since the vital fluid of the creature has died inside the body along with the blood. Also, a creature already claimed by death should be left untouched out of respect for the forces of nature to which it succumbed. [§120] Now, great hunters, the kind trained as expert marksmen who down their prey with rarely a miss, receive praise from most lawgivers among Greeks and barbarians. Such men boast in their successful exploits, especially when they share some of the catch with the dog handlers and even with the dogs themselves. They are praised for their character, as men who are not only brave but also generous. But the architect of our sacred commonwealth would obviously condemn such behavior, having forbidden outright the consumption of animals either dead by natural causes or—as applies in this case—savaged by a predator, for the reasons previously stated. [§121] Suppose, however, one

ἀσκησις in connection with μνήμη. In the case of birds, Philo's failure to promote his exegetical agenda likely derives from deference to the interpretive tradition found in the Letter of Aristeas.

See Exod 22:30; Lev 17:15; Deut 14:21.
of our commonwealth’s athletes of virtue becomes fond of physical training and the hunt,\textsuperscript{182} expecting in this way to undergo exercises and preparations for wars and dangerous engagements with his enemies. Whenever he has a successful expedition, he should simply give the catch to his dogs for them to feast on, as a payment or prize for their courage and impeccable service. He himself should never even touch the dead animals, so as to learn in his dealings with non-rational creatures a proper attitude toward human enemies. In particular, he should never do battle with them in order to gain something he does not already own, which is the business of robbers, but in an effort either to avenge past wrongs or to deal with ones he considers imminent.

As part of an overarching thesis for §§100-118, Philo claimed that Moses prohibited animals yielding delicious meats in order to promote ἐγκράτεια, but his discussion in §§119-121 of animals dead from either natural causes (θνησιματίων) or violent attack (θηριάλωτον) clearly requires a different approach.\textsuperscript{183} Since these prohibitions presume edibility under different circumstances of death, they must involve only the moderately tasty "clean" animals, whose demise from old age, disease, or mauling can only make them less appetizing. Philo can no longer broach the topic of moral psychology, as he did earlier, by analyzing the dietary laws in terms of the pleasure (ἡδονή) certain

\textsuperscript{182} Suppose, however, one of our commonwealth’s athletes of virtue becomes fond of physical training and the hunt (εἰ δὲ τῶν ἀσκητῶν φιλογυμναστής γένοιτο καὶ φιλόθηρος): Philo considers the case of a moral athlete (τις τῶν ἀσκητῶν) who becomes enamored of physical training and an actual sport, the hunt (φιλογυμναστής . . . καὶ φιλόθηρος). Both Heinemann and Mosès read the passage in this way: "Wenn aber ein tugendbeflissener Mann auch Freund von Körperübungen und Jagd ist"; "Et si tel athlète de la vertu est aussi un amateur des exercices physiques et de la chasse"). Colson does not identify τις τῶν ἀσκητῶν with a moral athlete, "based on the belief that ἀσκητής is not used absolutely in this way" (PLCL 8, 83, n. b). But Philo uses ἀσκητής in precisely this way in Post. 154: τινες τῶν ἀσκητῶν, οίς τὴν ἐπ’ ἀρετὴν ἁγούσαν ὁδὸν τραχείαν καὶ δυσάντη καὶ χαελπὴν νομισθείσαι τὸ πρῶτον.

\textsuperscript{183} See Exod 22:30: καὶ ἄνδρες ἄγιοι ἔσεσθε μοι. καὶ κράσας θηριάλωτον οὐκ ἐδεσθε, τῷ κυνὶ ἀπορρίψατε αὐτῶ; Lev 17:15: καὶ πάσα ψυχή, ἥτις φάγεται θνησιματίον ἢ θηριάλωτον ἐν
animals afford when eaten. In fact, nothing in his initial explanation of why Moses prohibited the θησιμαίον and the θηριάλωτον (§119) speaks at all to the issues of ἐπιθυμία, ἐγκράτεια, and ἁσκησις raised elsewhere in his exposition. To create a connection between these two prohibitions and his exegetical agenda, Philo uses a convoluted bit of legal reasoning to derive from them a brand new prohibition, found nowhere in the Pentateuch, which in his view counts as an exercise in ἐγκράτεια.

Philo contrasts Greek and barbarian lawgivers, who praise the generosity of expert huntsmen who share the catch even with their hounds (σκύλαξι), with Moses, who presumably would find fault with such a practice based on his prohibition of θησιμαίον and θηριάλωτον, particularly the latter. In other words, Moses’ prohibition of mauled animals (θηριάλωτον), which Philo characterized in §119 as a prohibition of sharing a meal of flesh with animals (συνενωχούμενον ταῖς σαρκοφαγίαις), would forbid a hunter from sharing with his dogs. But Philo still has no clear application to moral psychology, so he poses yet another scenario, which holds at best a tertiary relation to Moses’ original prohibition of θηριάλωτον. Suppose, says Philo, someone fond of training becomes an avid hunter (φιλόθηρος), in order to train for warfare. ¹⁸⁴ Philo suggests that such

---

¹⁸⁴ §121: μελέτας καὶ προάγωνας ὑπολαμβάνων εἶναι πολέμων καὶ κινδύνων τῶν πρὸς ἑχθροὺς. In other words, Philo poses the very specialized case of someone who hunts not for food, but for martial training.
hunters should not even touch their dead quarry (μὴ ψαυνέτω), but simply give the
dogs a well-deserved feast. And because he characterized the hunt as strictly a
preparation for warfare, Philo can interpret the practice of abstaining from the
catch in a brand new way, which does not involve the condition of the deceased
animal(s) but does—at long last—involve the moral condition of the hunter.

By avoiding all contact with the dead quarry, the hunter as moral agent
learns through practice with animal opponents to battle human enemies not for
"unjust gain" (διὰ κέρδος ἄδικον), but only for the just causes of retaliation or
preemptive self-defense. Since he has painstakingly managed to cast the law of
θηριάλωτον as an exercise in abstaining from κέρδος ἄδικον, Philo can now rest
assured of its relevance to moral psychology and the management of ἐπιθυμία,
though he chooses not to explore that relevance in detail. Elsewhere, however,
Philo clearly associates the pursuit of κέρδος ἄδικον with the indulgence of
passionate desire, with a failure to limit ἐπιθυμία properly, particularly in his
interpretation of the law against sowing more than one type of seed in a
vineyard.185 Trying to get more than one crop from one piece of land represents
an act of egregious avarice.186 Whoever makes the attempt incites unjust desires
(ἄδικος ἐπιθυμίας), failing to restrict them with proper limits (μέτροις αὐτὰς μὴ

---

186 Spec. 4.212: φιλοχρηματίας ύπερβαλλούσης ἔργον.
περιορίζων) in the pursuit of "unjust gain" (κέρδος ἁδικον). While seeking gain from one crop represents a just and reasonable course of action, seeking more represents an overstepping of reason's authority on the part of desire. Philo's case of the just warrior suggests a similar dynamic: while going to war for a just cause represents a reasonable course of action, going to war for gain represents a triumph of ἐπιθυμία over λόγος, since the violence no longer bears justification on rational grounds. So in Philo's mind, a hunter training for battle who gives his catch to the dogs not only obeys a semblance of Moses' prohibition of θηριάλωτον—he also, more importantly, is training himself in going to war with a rational motivation, not a motivation based on ἐπιθυμία. And by encouraging the dominance of reason over desire, such training promotes ἐγκράτεια.

§§122 – 125: Blood and Fat

[§122] Of course, some devotees of Sardanapalus, greedily extending their ever dainty lack of self-control beyond all bounds and limits, cleverly devise new kinds of pleasure. For their culinary delight, they prepare meat unfit for any sacrifice by strangling and choking the animals to death. In this way, they entomb the blood, the essence of the soul, within the body—blood that should have been liberated and released from the body. They should be content to enjoy the flesh alone, without touching anything akin to the soul. [§123] This explains Moses' decision to legislate elsewhere concerning blood, as he does when he prohibits the consumption of both blood and fat. Blood is prohibited for the reason I mentioned: it is the essence of the soul. I do not mean the intelligent and rational soul, but the soul that operates through the senses—the soul that

---

188 Philo suggests in §121 that those who go to war for unjust gain essentially engage in robbery (λαμπωδοφύτων πράξεις), which is precisely the sort of behavior expected from those taken captive by a tyrannical desire for wealth (§87: ἐι πρὸς χρήματα γένοιτο, κλέπτας ἀποτελεῖ καὶ βαλανιτισμὸς καὶ λαμπωδύτας).
189 See Lev 3:17.
provides both to us and to non-rational animals the same capacity for life in the sensible world. But the essence of the other type of soul is divine spirit, especially from Moses' perspective. In his account of the creation of the world, Moses states that God infused the first man and founder of our race with a "breath of life" into his "face," the most commanding part of the body, where the senses are stationed like an entourage for the mind as for a great king. Clearly, what God infused was ethereal spirit, and, if you will, something better than ethereal spirit: an effulgence of the blessed, the triply blessed, Nature. [§124] As for the fat of the animal, Moses prohibits its consumption because it is most succulent. Here again he wants to teach self-control and zeal for an austere life—a life that forgoes what is easiest and convenient and instead endures voluntarily the mental efforts and other labors needed to acquire virtue. [§125] For this reason, the blood and the fat are taken from every sacrificial animal and given as a whole burnt offering, as a sort of first fruits. The blood is poured out onto the altar as a drink offering, while the fat, on account of its richness, is brought instead of oil to fuel the flame of the sacred and holy fire.

Philo now turns to the prohibitions of blood and fat, taking first the prohibition of blood (§§122-123).\(^\text{190}\) In the case of unclean animals, Philo cast the dietary laws as exercises in \(\text{ἐγκράτεια}\) by presuming to identify Moses' \(\text{tacit}\) rationale for prohibiting certain species—the pig, for example, tastes delicious and incites \(\text{ἐπιθυμία}\), and Moses prohibits the pig for that reason. In the case of blood, however, Philo must account for a dietary prohibition whose \(\text{explicit}\) rationale has little or nothing to do with \(\text{ἐπιθυμία}, \text{ἐγκράτεια}, \text{or ἀσκησις}\). Moses instead forbids blood because of its unique relation to the soul (ψυχή).\(^\text{191}\) But despite biblical data at odds with his expository agenda, Philo still broaches the topic in terms of moral psychology, characterizing the consumption of blood as one of the

\(^{190}\) For the two prohibitions together, note esp. Lev 3:17: νόμιμον εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα εἰς τὰς γενεὰς ὕμων ἐν πάσῃ κατοικίᾳ ὕμων· πάν στέαρ καὶ πάν αἷμα οὐκ ἐδεόθε.  
\(^{191}\) Lev 17:10-14 (e.g., v. 11: ἡ γὰρ ψυχὴ πάσης σαρκὸς αἷμα αὐτοῦ ἐστιν). Philo clearly knows the biblical prohibition (τὸ μὲν αἷμα δι’ ἣν εἶπον αἰτίαν ὅτι οὐοία ψυχῆς ἐστιν [§123]).
decadent pleasures (ήδονάς) enjoyed by some "Sardanapalus types" (Σαρδανάπαλλοι). These people strangle the animals they eat, "entombing" the blood within the body, and so demonstrate an egregious, effeminate lack of self-control. The reprehensible luxury of such a practice lies in its being done strictly for the sake of pleasure by those unwilling to content themselves with the more reasonable indulgence of eating only the flesh drained of blood. So Philo effectively frames the prohibition of blood as a deterrent to passionate desire, deploying the same λόγος-έπιθυμία dynamic that informs his exposition of the laws of clean and unclean animals. He implies that reason, imposing proper measure (μέτρον) on ἐπιθυμία, would in fact endorse the eating of meat properly drained of its life force. But someone subject to passionate desire (ἂμετρός ἐπιθυμία), acting on the basis of desire’s motivation for pleasure, oversteps this reasonable limit in order to enjoy the delectable but unreasonable indulgence of blood-infused meat. By avoiding such meat, the moral agent learns by practice (ἀσκησις) to avoid eating for pleasure’s sake, to operate on the basis of a rational motivation, and to develop the moderate lifestyle possessed of ἐγκράτεια. Of course, Philo must acknowledge, as he clearly does, that Moses did not have the pleasures of blood in mind when he made the prohibition, but

192 On Sardanapalus, see §102.
194 NB §122: σαρκῶν γὰρ αὐτὸ μόνον ἀπολαύειν αὐτάρκεις ἂν.
rather its *property* of kinship with the soul. But Philo cannot limit his commentary to the biblical data without losing the overall thrust of his exposition, which programmatically seeks to draw some connection between the individual dietary laws and the management of ἐπιθυμία. And Philo *does* draw the connection—in fact, he highlights it by discussing it *first*. Although the "Sardanapalus types" Philo mentions ought to abstain from blood *primarily* because it carries life, they clearly would also derive the *secondary* benefit of a more moderate lifestyle. And followers of Moses, who would *first* avoid the meat of strangled animals because it still contains the essence of life, nevertheless derive the same benefit of eliminating a dangerously titillating food from their diet.

The Mosaic prohibition of fat, by contrast, perfectly suits Philo’s expository agenda, since it corresponds *exactly* to the prohibition of pork in its theoretical mechanism.195 As Philo explained in §100, Moses prohibited animals, like the pig, whose flesh is "most succulent" (πιότατα), knowing that abstinence from delectable fare facilitates proper management of ἐπιθυμία. Echoing these remarks, Philo attributes the prohibition of fat (τὸ στέρι) to its being "most succulent" (πιότατον), noting that Moses here "again" (πάλιν)—with *this* dietary restriction—offers a lesson in self-control (διδασκάλιαν ἐγκρατεῖας). By abstaining from fat, the moral agent learns to reject the life of luxury, which pursues pleasure for pleasure’s sake at the prompting of ἐπιθυμία. Of course,

---

195 Noted also by Heinemann, *Bildung*, 163.
the life of ἐγκράτεια, which pursues only necessities at the prompting of reason, demands strenuous exercise (ἀσκησίς)—a point duly made by Philo through deployment of the agon motif. In particular, the command to abstain from fat promotes "zeal for an austere life" (ζηλὸν αὐστηροῦ βίου), a life that voluntarily forgoes what is easy (τὰ ῥᾴστα) to endure hardships (πόνους), in order to acquire virtue (ἔνεκα κτήσεως ἀρετῆς). In his exposition of criteria for clean aquatic creatures (§112), Philo deployed the same figure in the same way, contrasting the "easy" (ῥᾴστη) road to pleasure with the "toilsome" (ἐπίπονος) road πρὸς ἐγκράτειαν.

§§126 – 131: Concluding Moral Narrative

§[126] Finally, remember that Moses condemns some of his contemporaries as gluttons, as people who consider the experience of pleasure to be the pinnacle of happiness. A luxurious life in the city was not enough for them, where the supplies and provisions for all their necessities were inexhaustible. They wanted the same thing in the desolate, trackless wilderness, expecting to find vendors of fish, meat, and every kind of seasonable produce. §[127] When scarcity did come, they joined forces in shouting down, denouncing, and disparaging their leader with shameless audacity. And they did not stop their revolt until they got what they wanted. Their demands were met for two reasons: first, to show that all things are possible for God, who finds a way in the midst of impossible and irresolvable situations; second, to punish the people, who were slaves of their belly and shirkers of holiness. §[128] As the story goes, a great cloud of quail, swept in from over the sea, poured out of the sky at dawn. So thick was this mass of birds that the encampment and the surrounding area—in every direction, as far as a fit man could walk in a day—were overshadowed. In addition, they were flying only a few feet off the ground, which made them easy to capture. §[129] Now, you would


197 See Num 11:4-34.
think that the people, struck with amazement by such a marvelous demonstration of power on God’s part, would have been satisfied simply with what they saw—that filled with reverence, and amply fed by reverence, they would have abstained from eating any of the meat. Instead, goading their desire to an even greater pitch, they went after what seemed to them the greatest possible good fortune. Raking in the quail with both hands, they packed the folds of their garments. Storing those birds away in their tents, they went back outside to catch others, demonstrating that greedy cravings for more have no limit. Preparing their game in a variety of ways, they gorged themselves insatiably, about to be destroyed—the fools—by their bloat. [§130] And, in fact, they did perish before long in a pool of noxious discharges. So in keeping with the passion that destroyed them, that place was named "Tombs of Desire." Clearly, as our story teaches, there is no evil in the soul greater than desire. [§131] Taking all of this into consideration, we can admire what Moses so admirably says in his exhortations, "Let no one do what is pleasing in his own sight." He is saying, in effect, "Let no one indulge his own desire." If a person expects to become truly noble, let him be pleasing to God, the world, Nature, laws, and wise men by rejecting the love of self.

At §126, Philo abruptly turns from his serial treatment of discrete dietary laws to a moralized retelling of God’s provision of quail to the Israelites in the wilderness.

Philo’s narrative ends in §130 with an explicit statement of what the story ultimately teaches: that "there is no greater evil (μείζον κακόν) in the soul than desire." This sweeping indictment of ἐπιθυμία clearly resembles earlier material from the diagnosis (κρίσις) portion of Philo’s exposition (§§79-94), which sought above all to illustrate the reprehensible nature and harmful effects of

---

198 filled with reverence, and amply fed by reverence (γεμισθέντας εὐσεβείας καὶ ταύτῃ τραφέντας): Reading, with Colson and Mosès, καὶ (MSS) instead of κάν (PCW).
199 ἐπιθυμίας] οὐκ ἐστιν ἐν ψυχῇ ... μείζον κακόν. Philo takes the epithet "Tombs of Desire" (LXX Num 11:34: Μνήμητα τῆς ἐπιθυμίας) as an indication of the story’s concern with the passion (πάθος) desire (§130). Cf. Philo’s comments on Num 11:4 in Migr. 155, esp. his interpretation of ἐπιθυμήσαν ἐπιθυμίαν as a reference to the genus ἐπιθυμία itself (κατού τοῦ γένους), not any particular species of ἐπιθυμία (οὐκ ἐνός τινος τῶν εἰδών). In other words, the story from Numbers speaks in Philo’s view to more than just gastric desire, and for this reason it
desire, particularly of its most egregious manifestation, tyrannical desire (ἐρως).

Insofar as the material in §§126-130 serves to depict tyrannical desire in a negative light, it too bears analysis as part of Philo’s diagnosis, although it appears at the very end of his exposition.

Philo undoubtedly sees tyrannical desire as the distinct manifestation of ἐπιθυμία at work in the people’s clamoring for meat and later gorging themselves with quail. In particular, they suffered from tyrannical desire affecting the belly, which turned them into "gluttons" (§126: γαστριμάργους), the very effect Philo described as part of the exposition’s first and more extensive diagnosis. But despite the incidental involvement of the stomach as the sphere of desire’s influence, the real issue—as with any instance of tyrannical desire—is the involvement of the rational faculty, in particular its being overthrown by desire, which results in the moral agent designating pleasure as "the good." As Philo puts it in §126, the people "supposed" (ὑπολαμβάνοντας) that "the experience of pleasure" (τὸ καθηδύπαθεῖν) was the "pinnacle of happiness" (εὐδαιμονικὸν ἐν τοῖς μάλιστα). And because they, under the tyranny of ἐπιθυμία-turned-ἐρως, sought the experience of pleasure per se, instead of a clear, rational objective such as maintaining life, their desire for meat had no limit.


200 §91: [ἐπιθυμία] ἀψιμένη δὲ τῶν περὶ γαστέρα παρέχεται γαστριμάργους.  

201 Cf. §129: ἐπιθυμίαν ἐγείραντες ὡς ἐπὶ μέγιστον ἀγαθὸν ἔντο.
(μέτρον). They literally ate themselves to death, illustrating the destruction attending tyrannical desire. Consistent with the generic aims of a "diagnosis" (κρίσις), Philo not only illustrates the disastrous results of indulging a given passion (in this case, ἐπιθυμία), but also emphasizes the morally reprehensible nature of such indulgence. In this way, §§126-130 essentially restate the case made in §79-94, but through a biblical narrative rather than a philosophical discourse. This change in literary vehicle allows Philo to explore for the first time the relation between ἐπιθυμία and piety—a relation he only hinted at in §97, when he claimed that observance of the dietary laws leads not only to ἐγκράτεια but also to εὐσέβεια.

Philo’s retelling of Numbers 11:4-34 portrays the states of tyrannical desire and piety as radically incompatible, if not mutually exclusive. He recognizes two distinct breaches of piety within the story, and both stem from the hegemony of desire within the soul. First, because tyrannical desire compelled Moses’ followers to seek pleasure per se, they unreasonably craved—and demanded—the luxury of meat in a trackless desert. In Philo’s view, this made them "shirkers of holiness" (ἀφηνιαστάς ὀσιότητος), since the truly pious would

---

202 §129: αἱ γὰρ ἄγαν πλεονεξία μέτρον οὐκ ἔχουσι.
203 §129: οἱ κενοὶ φρενὸν ὑπὸ τῆς πλησιμονῆς ἀπολλυθαί (cf. §127: ἐπ᾽ ὀλέθρῳ).
204 §126: μέμφεται; §127: ἀνασχύνω θράσει... τιμωρήσασθαι.
205 On Philo’s understanding of εὐσέβεια ("piety"), see esp. Sterling, "Queen of the Virtues," (also Wolfson, Philo, 2:213-15). Philo often pairs "εὐσέβεια" with "ὁσιότητης" (e.g., Sacr. 37). The two terms are practically synonymous, insofar as they both denote piety in a general sense (Sterling, "Queen of the Virtues," 113: "Philo used the two terms as virtual synonyms to refer to the human response to and perception of God.").
have gratefully sated their necessary desires for food with the manna God provided. Second, after God’s miraculous provision of quail the people ought to have abstained from eating any meat, getting instead a nourishing fill of piety (γεμισθέντας εὐσεβείας καὶ ταύτῃ τραφέντας). But an obsession with pleasure kept them from properly recognizing both the provision and the power of God—they were unable to see any greater good beyond their own myopic indulgence of ἔπιθυμία. In other words, as the story illustrates, those ruled by ἔπιθυμία cannot count anything or anyone, including God, as more valuable than their personal experience of pleasure (ἡδονή), since ἔπιθυμία compels them to accept its reflexive aim (ἡδονή) as their ultimate good.

Philo concludes his analysis of the quail narrative, and his entire exposition of the Tenth Commandment, with a brief reflection on Deuteronomy 12:8, which he paraphrases as, "Let no one do what is pleasing in his own sight." To make the passage more directly relevant to both the biblical story (§§126-130) and his overall exposition of οὐκ ἔπιθυμήσεις (§§79-125), he interprets its meaning as, "Let no one indulge his own desire (ἔπιθυμία)."

---

206 §127: καὶ τοῦ τιμωρήσασθαι τοὺς γαστρὸς ἄκρατος καὶ ἄφηνιαστὰς ὀσιότητος.
207 §131: οὐ ποιήσει ἐκαστος τὸ ἀρεστὸν ἐνὼπιον αὐτοῦ. Deut 12:8 actually reads: οὐ ποιήσετε πάντα, ἢ ἡμεῖς ποιοῦμεν ὠδε σήμερον, ἐκαστος τὸ ἀρεστὸν ἐνὼπιον αὐτοῦ. By opening §131 with διό, Philo signals a logical connection with the preceding narrative, which began in §126. §§126-131 stand as the final text unit in Philo’s exposition, since he announces in §132 the completion of his commentary on laws pertaining to the Tenth Commandment, which in turn signals the end of his entire commentary on the Decalogue: “In these remarks we have discussed the matters relating to desire or lust (τῶν εἰς ἔπιθυμαν ἀναφερομένων) as adequately as our abilities allow, and thus completed our survey of the ten oracles, and the laws which are dependent on them.”
208 §131: μηδεὶς τῇ ἐπιθυμίᾳ τῇ αὐτοῦ χαρεῖσθω.
Obviously, such an exhortation applies to the cautionary tale Philo has just related in §§126-130, since *that* indulgence led unmistakably to a shameful, impious death. And just as the exhortation makes sense in light of Philo’s *biblical* "diagnosis" ( §§126-130), it makes sense also in light of his earlier *philosophical* "diagnosis" ( §§79-94). In fact, the earlier case against desire represents a more extensive elaboration of the threats to moral and physical well being posed by ἐπιθυμία, so Philo’s version of Deuteronomy 12:8 pertains at least as much to the first (roughly) third of his exposition as it does to the last few paragraphs—if not more.

But Philo apparently intends this simple proscription against indulging desire to conclude his *entire* exposition of the Tenth Commandment, not just the diagnosis elements—and it does so in two respects. First, μηδεις τη ἐπιθυμία τη αὑτοῦ χαριζέσθω reformulates with greater precision the vague prohibition οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις, offering the reader a final, more definitive encapsulation of what the Tenth Commandment actually prohibits. When Philo speaks elsewhere of "indulging" desire, or other emotions, he has in mind an indulgence at the *expense of reason*—in other words, a "giving in" to emotion that signals the *overpowering of reason* and the moral agent’s consequent departure from rational motivation. In *Ios*. 153, for example, Philo explains how for the sake of pleasure (desire’s aim) the masses disregard virtue (reason’s aim) and instead indulge (χαριζόμενοι) their "unbridled desires," yielding to whatever those
desires command. So μηδεὶς τῇ ἐπιθυμίᾳ τῇ αὐτοῦ χαριζέσθω calls not for the elimination of desire but for its moderation, for a management of ἐπιθυμία that forbids its indulgence beyond the measure set by reason. In other words, Philo takes Moses’ Deuteronomy exhortation as a prohibition of passionate desire (ἀμετρὸς ἐπιθυμία), just as he takes οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις as a prohibition of passionate desire (ἀμετρὸς ἐπιθυμία). So here at the end of his exposition, Philo appropriately offers a compact summary of what he understands the Tenth Commandment to mean in terms of moral psychology. But Philo adds one final thought on what he understands the Tenth Commandment to mean in terms of the overall orientation of the moral agent’s life. To indulge one’s own desire (τῇ ἐπιθυμίᾳ τῇ αὐτοῦ), Philo suggests, amounts to a reprehensible love of self (φιλαυτία). After all, the subjective experience of pleasure—which ἐπιθυμία invariably seeks—involves only one person, the self. So valuing pleasure above all other concerns, as those tyrannized by desire must do, truly represents a self-


centered life, since the chief aim necessarily involves only the self. Captive to self-interest, the φιλαυτος lacks a proper concern not just for other people, but also for God. In fact, love of self and love of God represent for Philo two radically opposed and incompatible modes of life. And by drawing this contrast here at the end of his exposition, Philo revisits and substantiates his earlier claim that Moses’ dietary laws lead to self-control (ἐγκράτεια), philanthropy (φιλανθρωπία), and—most of all—piety (εὐσέβεια). By inculcating ἐγκράτεια, the dietary laws promote observance of the Tenth Commandment, which forbids passionate desire. But by training the moral agent to exercise ἐγκράτεια—in other words, not to indulge in ἐπιθυμία—those laws also undermine love of self, allowing instead a life of devotion to God.

---

211 In Post. 180, Philo pairs φιλαυτία and φιληδονία, suggesting an equivalence.
212 Cf. Q.G. unidentified fragments 11 (Marcus) [cf. Petit], which begins, οἱ ἔαυτῶν μόνον ἐνεκα πάντα πράττοντες φιλαυτίαν, μέγιστον καθὼς, ἐπιτηδεύοντοι.
213 E.g., Spec. 1.344: ὑπὸ φιλαυτίας ἐκλαδόμενοι τοῦ πρὸς ἄλθειαν ὄντος θεοῦ;
214 Praem. 12: φιλαυτίαν πρὸς εὐσέβειας ἀσπασάμενοι. Allegorically, Philo identifies Abel as the φιλόθεος δόγμα, while Cain represents the φιλαυτος δόγμα (e.g., Det. 32). Cf. Harl, “Deux arbres,” 379: “[L]’homme est libre d’opter pour l’un ou l’autre movement, pour l’amour de lui-même et ce qui est proche de lui, la φιλαυτία, ou au contraire pour l’attitude proprement religieuse de l’εὐσέβεια.”
214 §97: ἐπεστόμιος διατάγμασι καὶ πρὸς ἐγκράτειαν καὶ πρὸς φιλανθρωπίαν καὶ—τὸ μέγιστον—πρὸς εὐσέβειαν ἀγωγοτάτοις.
CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY AND LINES OF FURTHER RESEARCH

SUMMARY

In the course of larger, systematic exposition of the Decalogue, Philo offers in Spec. 4.78b-131 an extended, detailed exposition of the Tenth Commandment, which he reads—despite its clear biblical formulation as a prohibition of desire for the goods of a neighbor—as a prohibition of desire itself (οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις). Capitalizing on the prominence of ἐπιθυμία in contemporary ethical discourse about the "passions" (πάθη), Philo frames his interpretation of the Tenth Commandment along philosophical lines, justifying the prohibition in light of Middle-Platonic conceptions of how desire operates within, and endangers, the human soul. Philo couples this theoretical reflection with a consideration of the Mosaic dietary laws, which in his view fall under the rubric of the Tenth Commandment (as species under genus) and promote its observance by design. This two-part structure—(1) theoretical reflection on a problem (ἐπιθυμία) and (2) practical consideration of a solution (dietary laws)—signals an effort on Philo's part to frame his philosophical exposition of the Tenth Commandment in an appropriately philosophical way: as a "Seelenheilungsschrift," a type of philosophical literature consisting of (1) the
diagnosis of a moral problem (κρίσις) and (2) a proposal for practical treatment (ἀσκησις). Ultimately, then, Philo offers a philosophical essay on the problem of ἐπιθυμία, but he never loses sight of the biblical warrant for his essay, the simple prohibition οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις. In fact, by answering the two fundamental questions raised by this prohibition, the essential points of Philo’s essay on ἐπιθυμία emerge:

1. In Philo’s view, what does the Tenth Commandment prohibit? (All desire? A certain type? What type?)

2. In Philo’s view, how is the Tenth Commandment observed? (What are the mechanics of its observance? What role do the dietary laws play in its observance?)

The first question deals with Philo’s concept of ἐπιθυμία, especially its problematic malfunction. The second question deals with Philo’s concept of ἐγκράτεια, especially the role played by ἀσκησις in its acquisition.

What, then, does the Tenth Commandment prohibit? From a strictly verbal standpoint, οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις simply prohibits any instance of ἐπιθυμία. But the term ἐπιθυμία has a fundamental ambiguity in Philo’s Middle-Platonic system of thought, due to the ambiguity of the broader rubric πάθος, which designates either an amoral emotion or an immoral passion. In other words, the abbreviated Tenth Commandment offers no clear moral imperative, except in the context of Philo’s interpretation. And Philo clearly interprets it as a prohibition of passionate desire, which—by his own definition—means excessive desire (πλεονάζουσα
επιθυμία), understood as immoderate desire (ἀμέτρος ἐπιθυμία). So the Tenth Commandment prohibits any instance of the non-rational emotion desire (ἐπιθυμία) overstepping the limit (μέτρον) set by reason (λόγος). In practical terms, the moral agent violates the Tenth Commandment whenever desire’s reflexive aim of pleasure (ἡδονή) becomes the predominate motivation for human action over against rational considerations such as necessity. By indulging passionate desire in this way, the moral agent not only violates the Tenth Commandment but also risks a much greater ill, tyrannical desire (ἐρως), which Philo sees as the final ruinous outcome of letting desire usurp reason. From an initial break with reason’s hegemony, ἐπιθυμία proceeds to overtake the entire soul, including the rational faculty, which tragically sets desire’s aim of pleasure as the moral agent’s ultimate good. Philo makes such a strong presumption of the eventual progression from passionate to tyrannical desire that his theoretical reflection on the ills of ἐπιθυμία, in part one of his exposition (the "diagnosis"), deals mainly with the ills of ἐρως. So despite his explicit identification of οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις as a prohibition of passionate desire (ἀμέτρος ἐπιθυμία), Philo sees it in effect as a preemptive prohibition of tyrannical desire (ἐρως) as well.

And how is the Tenth Commandment observed? Essentially, obedience to the Tenth Commandment requires the exercise of ἐγκράτεια, since regular enforcement of the dictates of λόγος over against ἐπιθυμία (when the two conflict) precludes the sort of passionate desire prohibited by the injunction οὐκ
επιθυμήσεις, while eliminating also the risk of tyrannical desire. In other words, the Tenth Commandment’s proscription of ἁμετρος ἐπιθυμία amounts to a prescription of ἐγκράτεια. Moses understood this, so he devised a way of equipping his followers with ἐγκράτεια, by formulating a set of dietary laws that engender ἐγκράτεια through practice (ἀσκησίας). Primarily, the dietary laws promote ἐγκράτεια through specific practical exercises: either the temporary restraint of desire or the avoidance of especially pleasurable foods. The first type of exercise orchestrates a subjugation of desire that increases the moral agent’s capacity for ἐγκράτεια—just as weight training builds physical strength and so increases a wrestler’s capacity to overthrow an opponent in a contest. The second type of exercise obviates the risk of passionate desire by eliminating incitements to passionate desire—but more broadly it promotes a lifestyle of ἐγκράτεια by training the moral agent to act from a motive of necessity rather than a motive of pleasure, which amounts to the rule of reason over desire. Secondarily, the dietary laws—in particular, certain laws regarding clean and unclean animals—symbolize broader ideals and principles of ἐγκράτεια, reinforcing and promoting the goal of Moses’ practical regimen. Taken as one comprehensive program, the dietary laws represent a course of “treatment” for the problem of passionate desire “diagnosed” in part one of Philo’s exposition, even though they ostensibly deal only with the desire for food and drink. This apparent limitation actually reveals to Philo the genius of Moses’ plan: due to the
preeminence of this one type of desire among all others, its successful management through \(\varkappa \gamma \kappa \rho \alpha \varepsilon \iota \alpha\) necessarily—a maiore ad minus—entails successful management of any other type of desire.

**LINES OF FURTHER RESEARCH**

A detailed study of Philo’s exposition of the Tenth Commandment suggests various lines of further research. Citing one desideratum for the respective fields of Philonic studies, Hellenistic Judaism, early Christianity, and Middle Platonism illustrates the range of possibilities.

In order to understand the moral psychology presumed in his exposition of \(\omega \kappa \varepsilon \pi \tau \theta \mu \mu \mu \varepsilon \iota \varsigma\), Philo’s conception of the soul as a bipartition between rational and non-rational parts received considerable attention. The significance of this basic, bipartite model lies in its ability to accommodate every other model of the soul Philo cites. In other words, Philo does not endorse different—even contradictory—models of the soul according to exegetical necessity. He instead endorses one model of the soul, which he then cites ad hoc in various equivalent formulations.¹ The idea of Philo’s having just one coherent model of the soul should be further tested and either confirmed or discarded. Settling the issue in favor of one model would provide a helpful framework for further research.

Philo’s exposition relates also to Hellenistic Judaism broadly, especially the issue of Alexandrian exegetical traditions. Philo undoubtedly reworks a

---

¹ Cf. Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, 174-75, on Philo’s reference to different soul divisions: "This is not chaotic eclecticism . . .; for Philo each of these divisions expresses some aspect of the truth, but the most basic truth remains the division into rational and irrational."
prominent traditional interpretation of clean and unclean winged creatures from the *Letter of Aristeas* to suit his own exegetical agenda. With respect to the animal traits of carnivorous (vs. herbivorous) and wild (vs. tame), Philo turns an originally *symbolic* interpretation promoting *justice* (δικαίοσύνη) into a *literal* interpretation promoting *self-control* (ἐγκρατεία). In general, this reveals something about the communal aspect of biblical exegesis in Alexandria, but it specifically reveals a nexus of text, interpretation, and cultural—especially *philosophical*—milieu worth investigating further.² The *Letter of Aristeas* found significance in otherwise obscure dietary laws by correlating its interpretation with current trends in contemporary philosophy, namely *Pythagorean* philosophy and its symbolic interpretation of dietary laws.³ Philo correlated his interpretation with *what he knew as* current trends in contemporary philosophy, namely *Middle-Platonic* philosophy. Both reflect an apologetic aspect of the relation between exegesis and cultural milieu, as they attempt to demonstrate the parity of Mosaic legislation with the highest cultural achievements of their Gentile contemporaries.⁴

---

² Thomas Tobin investigated this nexus in *The Creation of Man*—i.e., studying different levels of interpretation "involves the analysis of the thought patterns used in the interpretations, and the relationship of those thought patterns to the biblical text and to the philosophical milieu of Alexandria during the period" (9). Philo's interaction with an earlier level of interpretation in the case of *dietary laws* represents precisely the sort of interaction Tobin identifies in the case of the *story of man's creation*. The call for further research into this nexus amounts to a call for further corroboration and refinement of Tobin's approach.

³ See Berthelot, "L’interprétation symbolique."

⁴ On the valorization of ἐγκρατεία among Philo's contemporaries as a context for his own emphasis on ἐγκρατεία in regard to the Tenth Commandment (and dietary laws), see Stowers,
In terms of early Christianity, Philo’s exposition of the Tenth Commandment relates most directly to the letters of Paul, especially to issues raised in Galatians and Romans about the role and purpose of Mosaic law.

Paul’s proclamation of Christ involves at some level a marginalization, if not repudiation, of "works of the Law" (e.g., ἔργα νόμου in Gal 2:16), and this effort on Paul’s part implies the existence of an opposing viewpoint in which "works of the Law" figure prominently. So properly understanding Paul requires a historically plausible reconstruction of a role for "works of the Law" that accounts for their valorization within first-century Judaism. James Dunn’s "new perspective on Paul" correctly rejects anachronistic and theologically loaded notions of ἔργα νόμου, such as "works which earn God’s favour, as merit-amassing observances," arguing instead for the notion of cultural "badges" that "mark out the Jews as God’s people."  

The food laws, for example, as "works of the Law," establish an ethnic identity—and Paul ultimately disputes the foisting of this identity on Gentiles as an addendum to their faith in Christ. Without undermining Dunn’s assessment, Philo’s view of the food laws nevertheless calls for the consideration of another possibility. Clearly for some Jews of the first century, "works of the Law" functioned as a means to virtue, in particular the virtue of

---


6 On the food laws as identity markers, see Dunn, "New Perspective," 109-10 (e.g., 108: "[B]y ‘works of the law’ Paul intended his readers to think of particular observances of the law like circumcision and the food laws" [original emphasis]).
Further research into first-century perspectives on the Law that Paul opposed should take into account the possibility of ἐργα νόμου representing the sort of ascetic exercises Philo describes in his exposition.\(^7\)

Finally, Philo’s exposition of the Tenth Commandment brings to light not just a Middle-Platonic concept of "passion," but a distinct Middle-Platonic definition of "passion": ἄμετρος καὶ πλεονάζονα ὀρμη (Spec. 4.79).

Understanding this as a deliberately revised Stoic definition, which uses ἄμετρος to reinterpret πλεονάζονα in light of a radically different moral psychology, reveals not a superficial eclecticism within Middle Platonism but a thoughtful effort to appropriate terminology without compromising principles. Furthermore, Philo provides extensive evidence not only for the definition πλεονάζονα (ἄμετρος) ὀρμη but also for its consistent application in matters of moral psychology in first-century Alexandrian Middle Platonism—for example, in connection with the Phaedrus chariot figure. Philo’s use of a working Middle-Platonic definition of passion holds significance for further research into the historical development of ethical theory within Middle Platonism.

\(^7\) Stowers makes this point in Romans, esp. 58-65 [="Judaism as a School for Self-Mastery"] (cf. idem, "Paul and Self-Mastery," 531-34). The scope of Stowers work, however, does not allow him to consider in depth either the moral psychology of Philo or precisely how the observance of Mosaic law leads to ἐγκράτεια.

\(^8\) Cf. Stowers, Romans, 66-74 [="Audience, Opponents, and Self-Mastery in Paul"]; e.g., 67: "Paul’s attack on these opponents who taught judaizing practices to gentiles suggests that their appeal may have centered on claims that gentiles could learn self-mastery by association with the Jewish community and by adopting certain practices that were described as methods of self-mastery."
BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES


SECONDARY SOURCES


_______. "Philo of Alexandria—A Systematic Philosopher or an Eclectic Editor?" Symbolae Osloenses 71 (1996): 115-134.


______. "Patterns of Interpretation in Philo’s Interpretation of Leviticus." Studia Philonica 6 (1979-80): 77-155.


_______. "Was Philo a Middle Platonist?" *Studia Philonica Annual* 5 (1993): 112-140.


________. "Peripatetic Soul-Division, Posidonius, and Middle Platonic Moral Psychology." Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies 26 (1985): 373-394.


VITA

Hans Svebakken grew up in Davenport, Iowa. Before attending Loyola University Chicago, he earned a Bachelor of Arts in Theology (1994), summa cum laude, from Concordia University Chicago, where he minored in Biology. At Loyola, he first earned a Master of Arts in Ancient Greek (1999), receiving a distinction award on his comprehensive translation exam. He then earned a Master of Arts in Biblical Languages and Literature (2001) before entering the doctoral program in New Testament and Early Christianity. After completing coursework, Hans received the Pre-Doctoral Teaching Scholar Award (2002 – 2003) and the Arthur J. Schmitt Dissertation Fellowship (2004 – 2005).