

PHILO-JUDAEUS OF ALEXANDRIA

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649670154

Philo-Judaeus of Alexandria by Norman Bentwich

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

NORMAN BENTWICH

**PHILO-JUDAEUS
OF ALEXANDRIA**

PHILO-JUDÆUS OF ALEXANDRIA

BY

NORMAN BENTWICH

Sometime Scholar of Trinity College, Cambridge



PHILADELPHIA

THE JEWISH PUBLICATION SOCIETY OF AMERICA

1910

COPYRIGHT, 1910, BY
THE JEWISH PUBLICATION SOCIETY OF AMERICA



Release 10-10-28 N.T.T.

022 8/10 E.S.

TO MY MOTHER
θρεκτήρια



PREFACE

It is a melancholy reflection upon the history of the Jews that they have failed to pay due honor to their two greatest philosophers. Spinoza was rejected by his contemporaries from the congregation of Israel; Philo-Judæus was neglected by the generations that followed him. Maimonides, our third philosopher, was in danger of meeting the same fate, and his philosophical work was for long viewed with suspicion by a large part of the community. Philosophers, by the very excellence of their thought, have in all races towered above the comprehension of the people, and aroused the suspicion of the religious teachers. Elsewhere, however, though rejected by the Church, they have left their influence upon the nation, and taken a commanding place in its history, because they have founded secular schools of thought, which perpetuated their work. In Judaism, where religion and nationality are inextricably combined, that could not be. The history of Judaism since the extinction of political independence is the history of a national religious culture; what was national in its thought alone found favor; and unless a philosopher's work bore this national religious stamp it dropped out of Jewish history.

Philo certainly had an intensely strong Jewish feeling, but his work had also another aspect, which

was seized upon and made use of by those who wished to denationalize Judaism and convert it into a philosophical monotheism. The favor which the Church Fathers showed to his writings induced and was balanced by the neglect of the rabbis.

It was left till recently to non-Jews to study the works of Philo, to present his philosophy, and estimate its value. So far from taking a Jewish standpoint in their work, they emphasized the parts of his teaching that are least Jewish; for they were writing as Christian theologians or as historians of Greek philosophy. They searched him primarily for traces of Christian, neo-Platonic, or Stoic doctrines, and commiserated with him, or criticised him as a weak-kneed eclectic, a half-blind groping for the true light.

Even during the last hundred years, which have marked a revival of the historical consciousness of the Jews, as of all peoples, it has still been left in the main to non-Jewish scholars to write of Philo in relation to his time and his environment. The purpose of this little book is frankly to give a presentation of Philo from the Jewish standpoint. I hold that Philo is essentially and splendidly a Jew, and that his thought is through and through Jewish. The surname given him in the second century, "Judæus," not only distinguishes him from an obscure Christian bishop, but it expresses the predominant characteristic of his teaching. It may be objected that I have pointed the moral and adorned the tale in accordance with preconceived opinions, which—as Mr. Claude

Montefiore says in his essay on Philo—it is easy to do with so strange and curious a writer. I confess that my worthy appeals to me most strongly as an exponent of Judaism, and it may be that in this regard I have not always looked on him as the calm, dispassionate student should; for I experience towards him that warmth of feeling which his name, *Φίλων*, “the beloved one,” suggests. But I have tried so to write this biography as neither to show partiality on the one side nor impartiality on the other. If nevertheless I have exaggerated the Jewishness of my worthy’s thought, my excuse must be that my predecessors have so often exaggerated other aspects of his teaching that it was necessary to call a new picture into being, in order to redress the balance of the old.

Although I have to some extent taken a line of my own in this Life, my obligations to previous writers upon Philo are very great. I have used freely the works of Drummond, Schürer, Massebieau, Zeller, Conybeare, Cohn, and Wendland; and among those who have treated of Philo in relation to Jewish tradition I have read and borrowed from Siegfried (*Philon als Ausleger der heiligen Schrift*), Freudenthal (*Hellenistische Studien*), Ritter (*Philo und die Halacha*), and Mr. Claude Montefiore’s *Florilegium Philonis*, which is printed in the seventh volume of the *Jewish Quarterly Review*. Once for all Mr. Montefiore has selected many of the most beautiful and most vital passages of Philo, and much as I should have liked to unearth new gems, as beautiful and as illumi-