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Master Thesis
Research Master *Religion and Culture*
University of Groningen

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Groningen, 21 June 2013

In Remembrance of

Albertje Schuil-Wiersma

November 16, 1920 – December 13, 2007

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Now the writing process of my Research Master thesis has been finished, a period of six years of university education has almost come to a close. After my Bachelor *Theology* (2007–2010) at the University of Groningen, my Research Master *Religion and Culture* (2010–2013) at the same university has been finished as well. It is time to look back at my study period and to thank those who have contributed most to my intellectual development.

Firstly, and most importantly, I am very thankful for the student-assistantships I held during my studies *Theology* and *Religion and Culture*. These student-assistantships have been invaluable opportunities to develop my academic qualities beside my studies. I always gladly fulfilled my duties as a student-assistant and enjoyed delivering high-quality work. Profuse thanks are therefore due to Prof. Dr. Wout van Bekkum, Dr. Ronit Nikolsky, Drs. Bram van der Zwan, Prof. Dr. Jacques van Ruiten, and Prof. Dr. George H. van Kooten.

Additionally, I am grateful for the warm welcome I received "on tour" during my Research Master. Within my study *Religion and Culture*, I had the opportunity to visit various scholars at Dutch universities as part of an optional module or research traineeship. It has been a great pleasure to me to be able to profit from the knowledge and expertise of these scholars. Many thanks have therefore to be expressed to Prof. Dr. Jan Willem van Henten (University of Amsterdam), Prof. Dr. Ellen van Wolde (Radboud University Nijmegen), and Dr. Eric Ottenheijm (Utrecht University).

Also, I think back with warm memories to my visit to the University of St Andrews. The presentation of my paper "The Reception of Isa 40:15 in *4 Ezra, 2 Baruch*, and Pseudo-Philo" at the 1st St Andrews Graduate Conference for Biblical and Early Christian Studies (June 15–16, 2011), and the possible (still under peer review) publication of my paper in the accompanying proceedings volume, has been one of the high points of my study period. I therefore wish to thank the organizer of this conference, Dan Batovici, for accepting my paper, and Prof. Dr. Jacques van Ruiten and Prof. Dr. Mladen Popović for commenting on drafts of my paper/article.

Finally, I have to express my gratitude for the comments and support I received during the writing process of my thesis. Especially the supervision of my supervisor Prof. Dr. George H. van Kooten during the ups and downs of the writing process has been important to me. Also my audience during the presentation of my thesis proposal at the Groninger

ABBREVIATIONS

The abbreviations follow *The SBL Handbook of Style* (ed. P.H. Alexander et al.; Peabody, Mass., 1999) with the following additions:

ANCIENT SOURCES

Bib. hist.	*Bibliotheca historica*, by Diodore of Sicily
Const.	*De constantia*, by Seneca
Excess. divi Marci	*Ab excessu divi Marci*, by Herodian
Hist.	*Historiae*, by Polybius
Hist. conscr. sit	*Quomodo historia conscribenda sit*, by Lucian
Hist. Rom.	*Historia Romanorum*, by Cassius Dio
Pan. Or.	*Panathenaic Oration (Or.* 1), by Aelius Aristides
Rhod. Or.	*Rhodian Oration (Or.* 25), by Aelius Aristides
Strat.	*Strategicus*, by Onasander
Vit. phil.	*Vitae philosophorum*, by Diogenes Laërtius

SERIES AND JOURNALS

AcBib	Academia biblica
BMCR	*Bryn Mawr Classical Review*
ESEC	Emory Studies in Early Christianity
EurHochPhil	Europäische Hochschulschriften 20, Philosophie
MonPhil	Monothéismes et philosophie
OPA	Oeuvres de Philon d'Alexandrie
PACS	Philo of Alexandria Commentary Series
RBL	*Review of Biblical Literature*
SGPSPS	Structure and Growth of Philosophic Systems from Plato to Spinoza
SJHLDU	Schriften der jüdisch-hellenistischen Literatur in deutscher Übersetzung
SPhiloAn	*Studia Philonica Annual*

SPhiloM	Studia Philonica Monographs
TBN	Themes in Biblical Narrative
VCSup	Supplements to Vigiliae christianae
VKAWLSKBKL	Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België: Klasse der Letteren

INTRODUCTION

This thesis aims to contribute to the study of conversion in Graeco-Roman Antiquity in general, and in early Judaism in particular, by examining the understanding of conversion at that time. This aim flows from my own methodological questions about the application of modern theories of conversion to the study of conversion in the ancient Mediterranean. It seems to me that modern sociological and psychological research of conversion can make interesting contributions to our understanding of conversion in Antiquity,[1] as does the historical study of conversion in the ancient Mediterranean,[2] but I wonder whether differences in understanding conversion in the modern West and in Antiquity (or, for that matter, any other culture) warrant such an application. Should we not ask in the first place what conversion meant to people at that time and in that particular culture, how they described and understood conversion, before applying our own understanding of conversion in our research of conversion in Antiquity through the use of modern theories? I think we should. That is why this thesis aims to contribute to the recovering of the understanding(s) of conversion in Graeco-Roman Antiquity.

My main conversation partner in this thesis is Zeba A. Crook (Carleton University, Ottawa). In his book *Reconceptualising Conversion* (2004),[3] Crook takes an explicit stand on the use of modern theories of conversion to understand conversion-like phenomena in Antiquity, especially Paul's conversion. Crook argues that ancient conversion should be studied from the ancient, emic understanding of conversion, rather than from the etic (psychological) perspective of the modern West. Crook believes that the proper framework with which the Graeco-Romans understood the interaction between humans and their gods is found in the ancient Mediterranean institution of patronage and clientage.[4] It is in this context

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[1] See, e.g., the work of Rodney Stark, a proponent of the use of Rational Choice Theory. As for his application of Rational Choice Theory in the study of conversion in early Christianity, see esp. R. Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: How the Obscure, Marginal Jesus Movement Became the Dominant Religious Force in the Western World in a Few Centuries* (Princeton, N.J., 1996), 13–21; R. Stark, *Cities of God: The Real Story of How Christianity Became an Urban Movement and Conquered Rome* (New York 2006), 8–15.

[2] For the influence of the modern understanding of conversion on the eventual interpretation of conversion in Antiquity, see esp. the influential monograph of A.D. Nock, *Conversion: The Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo* (Oxford 1952), 7–16.

[3] Z.A. Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion: Patronage, Loyalty, and Conversion in the Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean* (BZNW 130; Berlin 2004). This book is a published version of Crook's dissertation completed in 2003 at the University of St. Michael's College in the University of Toronto, under the supervision of John S. Kloppenborg.

[4] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, esp. 76–88.

that Crook proposes to understand the ancient notion of conversion as well.[5] In Crook's model of patronage and benefaction, conversion is understood either as a client's wholesale change in patrons/benefactors or as a change within an already existing patron-client relationship.[6] With this study of the understanding of conversion in Graeco-Roman Antiquity, Crook aims to show that Paul's description of his conversion in some of his letters (1 Cor 9:1, 16–17; 15:8–10; Gal 1:11–17; Phil 3:4b–11) fits within this framework of patronage and benefaction as well, rather than within the modern Western understanding of conversion.[7]

This thesis aims to advance the study of the emic understanding of conversion in Graeco-Roman Antiquity by evaluating and correcting Crook's model of patronage and benefaction. To the best of my knowledge, this has not been done so far. Crook's book *Reconceptualising Conversion* does not seem to be much received in scholarly research. At the very least, it does not appear to have been systematically discussed yet. This is noteworthy, because the reviews written about Crook's book are quite complimentary.[8] Especially the reviews of the socio-analytic proponent Philip F. Esler (in *Biblical Theology Bulletin*) and Heike Omerzu (in *Theologische Literaturzeitung*) should be mentioned in this context. Omerzu believes it is "positiv zu würdigen" that Crook proposes to read Paul's conversion no longer within Western introspective and psychological categories,[9] while Esler regards it as "both secure and a vital scholarly advance"[10] to read Paul within the framework of patronage and benefaction and as a "deep debt" of all New Testament scholars to Crook's "pioneering explication of Paul in his context."[11]

The reviews of Omerzu and Esler do mention, however, an important problem in Crook's book that is also relevant for the evaluation and correction of Crook's model in this thesis. Omerzu and Esler refer to Crook's problematic use of the notion of conversion throughout his book.[12] Here it has to be brought to mind that it is not until his conclusion that Crook defines

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[5] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, esp. 89, 91–150.

[6] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 255.

[7] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 151–197, 243–250.

[8] R.A. Baergen, review of Z.A. Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, TJT 22 (2006): 232–233; P.F. Esler, review of Z.A. Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, BTB 37 (2007): 132–135; D. Neufeld, review of Z.A. Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, RBL 4 (2008): n.p. [cited 12 May 2013; online: http://www.book reviews.org/pdf/6452_6970.pdf]; H. Omerzu, review of Z.A. Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, TLZ 131 (2006): 374–376; C. Osiek, review of Z.A. Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, BMCR 2006.02.33 (2006): n.p. [cited 12 May 2013; online: http://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/2006/2006-02-33.html].

[9] Omerzu, review of Crook, 376.

[10] Esler, review of Crook, 134.

[11] Esler, review of Crook, 134.

[12] Esler, review of Crook, 133–134; Omerzu, review of Crook, 375. See also Baergen, review of Crook, 232–233.

his understanding of the meaning of conversion in Antiquity,[13] and even here it is just a parenthetic comment that is too short to make clear, e.g., whether Crook still relates conversion to God-human relationships only (in agreement with the religious overtones of the modern Western concept of conversion) or to human patronal relationships as well. Esler expresses Crook's problematic use of the notion of "conversion" as follows:

> In this volume [i.e., Crook's book *Reconceptualising Conversion*], the situation of Paul's movement from persecutor of the Christ-movement to its advocate within patron/client language is both secure and a vital scholarly advance. Less certain is what this has to do with the notion of "conversion," a concept in relation to which Crook has gathered views and offered opinions but not systematically modeled.[14]

Because of Crook's unclear use of the notion of conversion, both Esler and Omerzu question whether Paul would really have understood his transition from persecutor to advocate of the early Jesus movement as a conversion, or rather as something else, e.g., a call.[15] Esler emphasizes that Crook should have provided a detailed explanation of his understanding of the meaning of conversion at the beginning of his book,[16] while Omerzu makes clear that Crook should have reflected on the hermeneutical problem that "kulturimmanenten Kategorien" are only accessible via the modern presuppositions Crook so strictly repudiates.[17] In other words, Crook's use of the notion of conversion in his book is unclear and unreflected.

I believe that lack of clarity and unreflectiveness are not the *only* reasons for why Crook's use of the notion of conversion is problematic. It has to be added that Crook's approach is a considerable weakness as well. No evidence of any antique definition or description of conversion is adduced that explicitly indicates to understand *conversion*—rather than the God-worshipper relationship—in the way Crook defines it, as a client's change in patrons/benefactors or as a change within an already existing patron-client relationship.[18] Instead, Crook rather deductively infers from his demonstration that the God-worshipper relationship in Antiquity was understood in terms of patronage and clientage,[19] that conversion was interpreted within this context as well.[20] It is because of this lack of ancient

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[13] As a client's change in patrons/benefactors or as a change within an already existing patron-client relationship. See Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 255.
[14] Esler, review of Crook, 134.
[15] Esler, review of Crook, 133–134; Omerzu, review of Crook, 375.
[16] Esler, review of Crook, 133–134.
[17] Omerzu, review of Crook, 375.
[18] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 255.
[19] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, esp. 76–88.
[20] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 89: "Since the Greeks, Romans, and Jews of the first century lived in relationships of patronage and benefaction with their gods, that means that conversion in their world must have

support, in combination with Crook's unclear use of the notion of conversion within his book, that I am neither convinced that Crook's definition of the meaning of conversion in Antiquity provides an adequate explanation of Paul's understanding of his transition, nor of other understandings of conversions at that time.

Crook's problematic use of the notion of conversion warrants therefore an evaluation and correction of his model of patronage and benefaction. If Crook's definition of the ancient understanding of conversion—as a client's change in patrons/benefactors or as a change within an already existing patron-client relationship[21]—can be taken as a guideline, we may take a look at descriptions of phenomena in Antiquity that from our perspective could be termed "conversions" (a transition from one religious tradition to another[22]). With a close look at such descriptions, it can be evaluated whether, and to what extent, Crook's model provides an adequate explanation for the understanding of conversion (conversion-like phenomena) in Graeco-Roman Antiquity and whether, and how, his model can possibly be corrected. Such an evaluation and correction may result in a better knowledge of the way(s) conversion (conversion-like phenomena) was understood in Antiquity and how this/these differ from the modern Western understanding(s) of conversion.

This thesis provides a modest contribution to the evaluation and correction of Crook's model of patronage and benefaction. Because of its limited scope, it examines only the (in)ability of Crook's model to explain correctly one conversion narrative in Graeco-Roman Antiquity, that of the early Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria (15/10 BCE–45/50 CE) in his *De paenitentia* (*Virt.* 175–186) and *De nobilitate* (*Virt.* 187–227). These two treatises, part of Philo's writing *De virtutibus*, provide us with a good opportunity to evaluate Crook's model, because Crook himself demonstrates throughout his book that Philo—who was deeply versed in the Greek philosophy of his time and succeeded to harmonize this with his Jewish background—was influenced by Hellenistic thinking about the God-worshipper relationship in terms of patronage and benefaction.[23] Crook even shows that a passage in Philo's

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been grounded in that reality as well. If we are to understand ancient conversion, we need to begin by understanding its "religious" framework, which was indisputably that of patronage and benefaction." See also p. 199: "If ancient conversion occurred within the conceptual, linguistic, and experiential framework of patronage and benefaction, then ancient conversion must have been, in essence, some change in a patronal relationship." This point is discussed in more detail in §1.5 of this thesis.

[21] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 255.

[22] In the *Oxford Dictionary of English* "conversion" has been defined as follows: "the fact of changing one's religion or beliefs or the action of persuading someone else to change theirs." See A. Stevenson, ed., *Oxford Dictionary of English* (Oxford 2010), 1764.

[23] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 71, 85–88, 111–112, 142, 211.

description of conversion in *De paenitentia* (!) is of a patronal character.[24] These claims make Philo therefore a good starting point to check whether Crook's argument indeed holds true for *De paenitentia* and *De nobilitate*.

In his *De paenitentia* (*Virt.* 175–186) and *De nobilitate* (*Virt.* 187–227), Philo has written down a systematic exposition of a conversion-like phenomenon—a transition from one religious tradition (Gentile polytheism) to another (Jewish monotheism)—and its framework of nobility. These two treatises from *De virtutibus*, one of the writings in Philo's commentary series Exposition of the Law,[25] conclude Philo's virtue discourse started in the previous writing in this series, *De specialibus legibus* (4.133ff). With this virtue discourse, Philo aims to show that the Ten Commandments, and the specific laws subsumed under them, contribute to a virtuous life. In other words, Philo shows that the Jews live by the highest ideals of the prevailing culture at that time, being guided by the best philosophical principles.[26] Subsequently, Philo discusses the contribution of the Mosaic law to justice (*Spec.* 4.135–238: *De iustitia*), to courage (*Virt.* 1–50: *De fortitudine*), and to humanity (*Virt.* 51–174: *De humanitate*).

In the final two treatises of *De virtutibus*, *De paenitentia* and *De nobilitate*, Philo no longer discusses the law's contribution to promoting a specific virtue.[27] Rather, Philo shows that membership of the Jewish community is defined not in ethnic or national terms, but more decisively in religious and ethical terms.[28] A discussion of conversion in *De paenitentia* makes clear that the Mosaic law encourages everyone everywhere, that is, also non-Jews, to

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[24] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 130, discussed in §2.2.2 of this thesis. Crook shows that Philo's description of conversion in *Virt.* 180, 182 contains the rhetorical convention of patronal synkrisis.

[25] The Exposition of the Law is a systematic exposition of the Mosaic law, and its writings focus on literal readings of the biblical text rather than allegorical meanings. It consists of three parts. (1) The cosmological section, in which Philo deals with the nature of the universe and demonstrates that Moses' laws are in harmony with the nature of the universe: *De opificio mundi*; (2) The historical section, in which Philo turns to the lives of Israel's ancestors and makes clear that these ancestors lived in accord with the natural law: *De Abrahamo*, *De Isaaco* (no longer extant), *De Iacobo* (no longer extant), and *De Iosepho*; (3) The legislative section, in which Philo elucidates Moses' written laws: *De decalogo* (general laws), *De specialibus legibus* 1.1–4.132 (specific/special laws), *De specialibus legibus* 4.133–*De virtutibus* (virtues), and *De praemiis et poenis* (rewards and punishments). *De vita Mosis* I–II may have been intended as a kind of companion piece (see W.T. Wilson, *Philo of Alexandria* On Virtues: *Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* [PACS 3; Leiden 2011], 3–4). For a recent introduction to the Exposition of the Law, see J.R. Royse, "The Works of Philo," in *The Cambridge Companion to Philo* (ed. A. Kamesar; Cambridge 2009), 45–50.

[26] As noted by Wilson, *Philo of Alexandria* On Virtues, 4–5.

[27] Conversion and nobility are nowhere identified as a virtue in Philo's extant writings. See Wilson, *Philo of Alexandria* On Virtues, 21. *Contra* those who interpret conversion and nobility as a virtue, e.g., J.N. Bailey, "*Metanoia* in the Writings of Philo Judaeus," in *SBL Seminar Papers, 1991* (SBLSP 30; Chico, Calif., 1991), 139–140; H.A. Wolfson, *Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (2 vols.; SGPSPS 2; Cambridge, Mass., 1947), 255. Some authors speak of conversion as a secondary virtue, e.g., D. Konstan, "Assuaging Rage: Remorse, Repentance and Forgiveness in the Classical World," in *Ancient Forgiveness* (ed. C. Griswold and D. Konstan; Cambridge 2012), 22; repr. of *Phoenix* 62 (2008): 243–254.

[28] As noted by Wilson, *Philo of Alexandria* On Virtues, 22.

live virtuously, as a result of which they may enter into the Jewish community (*Virt.* 175). Conversion (μετάνοια and cognates) is needed to arrive at this virtuous state, and Philo explains how this conversion proceeds. As Philo's stance on conversion assumes that the observance of the Mosaic law and the resulting membership of the Jewish community is not restricted to ethnic Jews on the basis of genealogy, Philo explores in *De nobilitate* the distinction between ethical and genealogical nobility. In his view, nobility is ascribed on the basis of one's observance of virtue, irrespective of one's origin (*Virt.* 189–197). Philo's examples show that fools are punished for their ignoble behavior despite their noble descent, while people of ignoble descent may convert to ethical nobility and join the Jewish community.[29]

We may therefore conclude that Philo provides a systematic exposition of his understanding of conversion (in *De paenitentia*) and of the framework of ethical nobility with which he explains why conversion is possible for non-Jews (in *De nobilitate*). The length and depth of his exposition makes it possible for us to become truly familiar with an emic understanding of conversion in Graeco-Roman Antiquity, and also to learn about emic thoughts on the framework in which conversion should be placed. An analysis of *De paenitentia* and *De nobilitate* may therefore offset Crook's failure to provide any antique

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[29] I follow the order of treatises in the present edition of *De virtutibus* (*De fortitudine - De humanitate - De paenitentia - De nobilitate*), as presented in the critical edition of L. Cohn and P. Wendland, *Philonis Alexandrini opera quae supersunt* [7 vols.; Berlin 1896–1930], vol. 5. This critical edition is also followed by the recent commentaries of R. Arnaldez et al., *De virtutibus* (OPA 26; Paris 1962); L. Cohn, I. Heinemann, and M. Adler, *Die Werke Philos von Alexandria in deutscher Übersetzung* [7 vols. SJHLDU 1–7; Breslau 1909–1964), vol. 2.2; F.H. Colson, *Philo* (12 vols.; LCL; London / Cambridge, Mass., 1929–1962), vol. 8; Wilson, *Philo of Alexandria* On Virtues. It should be noted, however, that the problematic direct and indirect textual transmission of *De virtutibus* led to some uncertainty about the order of treatises, especially concerning the in- or exclusion of *De nobilitate* and the in- or exclusion of *De pietate* (no longer extant, apart from some disputed fragments in John of Damascus' *Sacra parallela* and some other byzantine anthologies). For some good introductions to the text problems of *De virtutibus*, with relevant bibliography, see E. Hilgert, "A Review of Previous Research on Philo's *De virtutibus*," in *SBL Seminar Papers, 1991* (SBLSP 30; Chico, Calif., 1991), 104–108; J.R. Royse, "The Text of Philo's *De virtutibus*," *SPhiloAn* 18 (2006): 73–101; D.T. Runia, "Underneath Cohn and Colson: The Text of Philo's *De virtutibus*," in *Philo and the Church Fathers: A Collection of Papers* (VCSup 32; Leiden 1995), 78–100; repr. of "Underneath Cohn and Colson: The Text of Philo's *De virtutibus*," in *SBL Seminar Papers, 1991* (SBLSP 30; Chico, Calif., 1991), 116–134; G.E. Sterling, "'The Queen of the Virtues': Piety in Philo of Alexandria," *SPhiloAn* 18 (2006): 107–112; Wilson, *Philo of Alexandria* On Virtues, 10–15. I follow the order of the present edition of *De virtutibus*, especially with regard to the inclusion of *De nobilitate*, because this order makes most sense (1) argumentatively: *De nobilitate* is a necessary step in Philo's explanation; (2) structurally: the end of *De nobilitate* links *De virtutibus* to Philo's argument in his next writing *De praemiis et poeniis* (also noted by M. Alexandre, "Le lexique des vertus: Vertus philosophiques et religieuses chez Philon: μετάνοια et εὐγένεια," in *Philon d'Alexandrie et le langage de la philosophie: Actes du colloque international organisé par le Centre d'études sur la philosophie hellénistique et romaine de l'Université de Paris XII-Val de Marne (Créteil, Fontenay, Paris, 26–28 octobre 1995)* [ed. C. Lévy; MonPhil; Turnhout 1998], 45); (3) text critically: one of the oldest preserved manuscripts (Seldenianus Supra 12 [10th–11th cent.]) preserves this order, as well as Clement of Alexandria (150–ca. 215 CE) in his citations and paraphrases from *De virtutibus* in his *Stromata* (2.78–100) (for Clement's use of *De virtutibus*, see esp. A. van den Hoek, *Clement of Alexandria and His Use of Philo in the* Stromateis: *An Early Christian Reshaping of a Jewish Model* [VCSup 3; Leiden 1988], 69–115).

definition or description in support of his understanding of the meaning of conversion in Antiquity. If an analysis of *De paenitentia* and *De nobilitate* will confirm Crook's model remains to be seen, however.

So far we have made clear that this thesis evaluates and corrects Crook's model of patronage and benefaction on the basis of an analysis of Philo's understanding of conversion in his *De paenitentia* (*Virt.* 175–186) and *De nobilitate* (*Virt.* 187–227). In other words, it answers the following question:

> How can Crook's model of patronage and benefaction be evaluated and corrected on the basis of an analysis of Philo's understanding of conversion in his *De paenitentia* (*Virt.* 175–186) and *De nobilitate* (*Virt.* 187–227)?

At the outset of this thesis, it should be made clear that it will be impossible, on the basis of one passage, to prove the *general* incorrectness of Crook's model or to set up a new *general* model of the ancient understanding of conversion. Rather, the different way Philo understands conversion will provide us just with an initial impetus to see the possibilities and limitations of Crook's model.

This thesis starts off with an introductory chapter which extensively summarizes and problematizes Crook's argument in his book *Reconceptualising Conversion*. It is necessary, before the actual evaluation and correction of Crook's model of patronage and benefaction can take place, to introduce the reader more comprehensively to Crook's model of patronage and benefaction than the short description provided at the beginning of this introduction. This makes it possible for the reader to fully understand Crook's model, and paves the way for the evaluation and correction of his model in later chapters of this thesis. This introductory chapter answers the following question:

> 1. What is involved in Crook's model of patronage and benefaction?

When the reader is fully introduced to Crook's model and its problems, the actual evaluation and correction of Crook's model of patronage and benefaction can be carried out. Three questions have to be answered:

1. How does Crook's model of patronage and benefaction relate to Philo's understanding of conversion in his *De paenitentia*?

2. How does Crook's framework of patronage and benefaction relate to Philo's framework of ethical nobility in his *De nobilitate*?

3. How does Crook's framework of patronage and benefaction relate to the place Philo's framework of ethical nobility has within nobility discussions in Graeco-Roman Antiquity?

With these questions, Crook's model of patronage and benefaction will be evaluated and corrected on three subsequent levels, in three separate chapters. (1, ch. 2) Crook's understanding of the meaning of conversion in Antiquity is related to Philo's understanding of conversion in *De paenitentia*; (2, ch. 3) Crook's framework of patronage and benefaction is compared with Philo's framework of ethical nobility in *De nobilitate*; (3, ch. 4) Crook's context of the institution of patronage and benefaction is contrasted with Philo's Graeco-Roman context of nobility discussions. In this way, Crook's model of patronage and benefaction will be evaluated and corrected, with a concentric move, from his specific understanding of conversion, via his larger framework for interpreting this understanding, to the general context in which he places this framework.

We may conclude this introduction with some practical matters.

Firstly, in this thesis, the Greek word μετάνοια (and its cognates) is always translated with "conversion" (and its cognates). It is this word that is used by Philo in his *De paenitentia* as a reference to conversion. For the sake of convenience, it has been rendered as "conversion" elsewhere in translations of Philonic and other Graeco-Roman texts as well. In this way, it becomes clear that the original text contains this particular word. The reader should be aware, however, that μετάνοια has many different meanings. These have been summarized as "later knowledge," "change of mind (*i.c.*, feelings, will, thought)," and "regret/remorse" in classical Greek literature[30] and more prominently—although the classical Greek meanings are attested as well—as "repentance" and "conversion" in Hellenistic Jewish literature.[31]

Secondly, unless otherwise indicated, passages from classical Graeco-Roman literature are quoted after the Loeb Classical Library series, but may have been slightly modified when necessary. Passages from Philo's oeuvre, in particular from *De paenitentia* and *De nobilitate*,

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[30] J. Behm, "μετανοέω, μετάνοια," *TDNT* 4:978–979.
[31] N.N., "μετανοέω, μετάνοια," *TDNT* 4:991–995.

are translated by myself, but these translations are nevertheless dependent upon LCL as well. A translation of the complete text of *De paenitentia* and *De nobilitate* can be found in the appendix to this thesis, so that the reader may easily consult the context of passages from these treatises when cited in the main thesis.

1

CROOK'S MODEL OF PATRONAGE AND BENEFACTION

The focus of this chapter is on what is involved in Crook's model of patronage and benefaction. In the introduction to this thesis, it was already indicated how Crook's book *Reconceptualising Conversion* sets out to offer a new understanding of Paul's conversion by approaching conversion in Graeco-Roman Antiquity from an ancient, emic perspective rather than from a modern Western, etic perspective. According to Crook, the proper framework for understanding conversion in Graeco-Roman Antiquity is the ancient institution of patronage and clientage.[1] In this chapter, a more detailed discussion of Crook's argument will be provided. Chapter by chapter his argument will be discussed, and problems associated with it will be pointed out. This will both improve the reader's understanding of Crook's thesis as well as facilitate his comprehension of the evaluation and correction of his model in later chapters of this thesis.

1.1

CROOK'S CRITICISM OF THE MODERN WESTERN APPROACH TO CONVERSION

The first step in Crook's argument is to explain his dissatisfaction with the modern Western perspective with which previous studies approached Paul's conversion. In the first chapter of his book, Crook shows that the modern West has been greatly influenced by psychology in the way it tends to analyze and describe conversion.[2] As a result, even though some studies may focus on other, e.g., social or theological, aspects of conversion, the West overwhelmingly understands conversion as an event marked more by its internal effects and features than it is by its external effects and features.[3] Crook demonstrates that the influence of psychology can also be found in New Testament studies, including the study of conversion in the New Testament and Graeco-Roman Antiquity in general and Paul's conversion in

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[1] Z.A. Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion: Patronage, Loyalty, and Conversion in the Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean* (BZNW 130; Berlin 2004), esp. 1–11, 53–150, 251–256.
[2] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 13.
[3] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 13–14.

particular. A discussion of the works of T. Callan, C.H. Dodd, G. Theissen, J. Murphy-O'Connor, W. James, A.D. Nock, and R. MacMullen follow in order to show that each of these authors presupposes the modern, psychological framework in their treatments of ancient and New Testament conversion.[4] Even B. Gaventa's and A. Segal's recent challenges to this psychological approach are unsuccessful, Crook believes, as they reject the psychological approach to conversion for the wrong reasons.[5] Actually, they still operate within the psychological framework.[6]

Crook rejects this modern Western psychological approach, because he believes it is "precisely and narrowly cultural."[7] He motivates this rejection with a criticism of the cross-cultural psychological model. This model, as it is defined by Crook, takes what is learned from the field of psychology (general psychology) and applies it to people in other cultures.[8] However, such an approach assumes that, despite cultural and local differences, people are essentially the same.[9] This assumption, called "the presupposition of psychic unity,"[10] is a fallacy, according to Crook. Crook argues that Western psychology is based upon the study of a single notion of the self (a so-called "idiocentric," or individualistic, self). This notion has been developed in the modern West only,[11] for other cultures have developed different senses of self (so-called "sociocentric," or collectivistic, selves).[12] This is demonstrated by Crook with some observations from recent important work in the field of cultural psychology, anthropology, and history.[13] These observations are illustrated with a discussion of the cultural influence on the experience of emotion, among which the different concepts of shame in the modern West and in Graeco-Roman Antiquity are described as well.[14] As a result, Crook concludes, the use of the modern Western psychological framework in the study of non-Western cultures is not helpful and may even lead to distortion and misrepresentation of emotional and behavioral phenomena.[15]

In his first chapter, Crook convincingly shows the need for an emic approach to conversion in Graeco-Roman Antiquity, and persuasively points out the dangers of applying the modern Western concept of conversion to comparable phenomena in other cultures. It has to be asked, however, whether his picture does not present an over-simplified black-and-white opposition between the West and other cultures in their construction of the self. While Crook

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[4] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 17–27.
[5] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 28–30.
[6] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 30.
[7] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 14.
[8] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 32.
[9] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 32.
[10] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 32.
[11] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 34, 49.
[12] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 34, 49.
[13] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 33–38, 46–47.
[14] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 39–45.
[15] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 51.

speaks of "general patterns,"[16] I propose to take into account the possibility of different tendencies within the same culture. At the very least, a close analysis of Philo's understanding of conversion in his *De paenitentia* (ch. 2) will show us that Philo's position is much more nuanced than Crook's model would allow.

1.2

CROOK'S EMIC MODEL OF PATRONAGE AND BENEFACTION

The second step in Crook's argumentation is to develop an emic model with which Paul's conversion can be understood. This emic model has to function as an alternative to the dominant psychological paradigm with which the West typically approaches conversion.[17] This model Crook finds in the social institution of patronage and benefaction in Graeco-Roman Antiquity. He believes that this model provides the conceptual and practical framework within which Graeco-Romans expressed their experience and understanding of their interactions with their gods.[18] Accordingly, the ancient concept of conversion has to be understood within this framework as well.[19]

1.2.1

PATRONAGE AND BENEFACTION IN GRAECO-ROMAN ANTIQUITY

In his second chapter, Crook turns to a discussion of the practice of reciprocity among humans and their gods in Graeco-Roman Antiquity. However, before he arrives at this discussion, Crook deals with some preliminary matters. He indicates, within various types of reciprocity-oriented types of exchange, that the institution of patronage and benefaction belongs to the category of general reciprocity. In this category, the exchange is characterized by the unequal social status of the parties involved (patrons vs. clients) and by the exchange of goods or services that do not share equal value (benefactions vs. honour, gratitude, and loyalty).[20] Crook also demonstrates that patronage and benefaction are slightly different forms of exchange, but are often difficult to distinguish from each other.[21] It seems that patronage occurred on a daily level, and tended to have to do with survival, while benefactions occurred

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[16] See esp. Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 33–34. [17] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 52.
[18] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 53. [19] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 89.
[20] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 57–58. [21] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 66.

sporadically and tended to have to do with luxury.[22] Patronage tended to occur between individuals, and thus lent itself more to exploitation, while benefactions tended to be directed at groups of people.[23] The difficulty in distinguishing patronage from benefaction probably led Crook to speak of "patronage and benefaction" most of time.

After defining patronage and benefaction, Crook extensively discusses three types of patronage and benefaction in Graeco-Roman Antiquity:

1. Social patronage. Crook defines this patron-client relationship as consisting of a vertical relationship between people of unequal status, one party in need of a good or service (client) and the other with the means to provide it (patron/benefactor).[24] The patron/benefactor could provide his client(s) with various forms of actions or concrete goods that would fit the needs of the client.[25] Crook points out that being a client, whether as an individual, association, or city, carried with it certain obligations.[26] The primary responsibility of clients was reciprocity.[27] This did not entail paying back benefactions nor remunerating them with something of similar or greater monetary value,[28] but it involved public expressions of adequate gratitude and other activities that would bring honour to the patron/benefactor.[29] Crook also indicates that often a third party, a broker, was involved, as frequently too great a distance of social status or geography inhibited the person in need of some good or service from directly approaching a person with the ability to provide this.[30]

2. Literary patronage. Crook points out that, contrary to social patronage, literary patronage frequently involved people of high social standing, the wealthy and elite, as writers seeking patronage or benefaction could be near social equals with their patron/benefactor.[31] This also meant, according to Crook, that a writer could receive very different benefits than a non-elite client would receive in social patronage.[32] Benefactions included providing a form of financial assistance, or room and board so that the writer could live in the house of his patron.[33] However, as some writers were elite, and thus fully capable of funding their own efforts, Crook believes that other, less tangible benefactions were as important to them: access to influential audiences

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[22] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 65.
[23] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 65.
[24] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 68.
[25] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 69.
[26] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 70.
[27] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 71.
[28] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 70–71.
[29] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 71–72.
[30] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 72–74.
[31] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 74.
[32] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 74.
[33] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 75.

or citizenship.[34] Crook finally points out that a literary client could especially honour his patron/benefactor by dedicating his writing to him or her, which differs only in degree of artistry from the common practice of inscribing stones with honorary decrees in social patronage.[35] In both cases, the importance of writing in expressing gratitude is attested to.[36]

3. Divine patronage and benefaction (among which Crook, apparently, also includes philosophical patronage[37]). According to Crook, the entire system of human patronage and benefaction is mirrored in, or was a mirror of, divine patronage and benefaction.[38] Crook points to passages in the writings of Seneca, Dio Chrysostom, and Aelius Aristides, in which they describe or refer to the gods as benefactors.[39] Also in the context of associations in Graeco-Roman Antiquity, gods were honoured as patrons/ benefactors.[40] Crook finally refers to the conduct of worshippers (in a "religious" setting) and disciples (in a philosophical setting), which parallels that of clients, and to the role of brokers to facilitate relationships between patrons and clients (priests, angels, demi-gods, or philosophers seeing themselves as mediators of God's divine wisdom).[41]

Crook argues that the Graeco-Roman concept of divine patronage and benefaction is also found in Hellenistic Judaism.[42] This would indicate that Paul, being an Hellenistic Jew, must have been acquainted with this concept as well.[43] In order to demonstrate that Hellenistic Jews described their relationship with their God in the language and imagery of patronage and benefaction, Crook refers to patronage and benefaction-language used for the relationship between God and humankind in the writings of the Septuagint, Josephus, and Philo. It appears that, while the Septuagint writings only attest to a growing awareness of human and divine patronage and benefaction,[44] Josephus and Philo were well acquainted with the Graeco-Roman system of patronage and clientage and did regard their God in terms of a Graeco-Roman divine benefactor.[45] It may therefore be concluded, according to Crook, that "being

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[34] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 75.
[35] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 75.
[36] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 75.
[37] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 78–79.
[38] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 76.
[39] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 76, 78.
[40] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 76–78.
[41] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 78–79.
[42] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 80.
[43] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 88.
[44] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 80–82.
[45] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 82–88.

Jewish in no way disqualifies Paul from conceiving of his God as a divine benefactor, nor of himself or his converts as clients."[46]

It can be concluded from Crook's discussion that Philo must have understood the relationship between God and his worshippers in terms of patronage and clientage.[47] This warrants my own application of Crook's model to Philo's understanding of conversion in *De paenitentia* (ch. 2) and to Philo's framework of ethical nobility in *De nobilitate* (ch. 3). Crook's general argument in favor of understanding conversion in Graeco-Roman Antiquity in a patronal context already implies that Philo must have interpreted conversion in light of patronage and clientage as well. Now Crook has argued of his own accord that divine patronage and benefaction appears in Philo's writings, the implication that Philo's understanding of conversion was framed within in a patronal context is made even stronger. This makes Philo therefore a good starting point to evaluate and correct Crook's model.[48]

1.2.2

THE RHETORIC OF PATRONAGE AND BENEFACTION IN GRAECO-ROMAN ANTIQUITY

In his third chapter, Crook deals with the rhetoric of patronage and benefaction in more detail. A study of this rhetoric makes it possible, according to Crook, to understand the ancient concept of conversion on a much more concrete basis than is possible with the (in Crook's view) "speculative" claims of the modern Western psychological approach to this topic.[49] Crook discusses five conventions of the rhetoric of patronage and benefaction. He emphasizes that these conventions do not all appear in every instance where patronage or benefaction is described,[50] but he believes that they occur with sufficient consistency to establish a pattern of rhetoric within the institution and practice of patronage and benefaction.[51] These five conventions are:

1. Call of the patron/benefactor. Crook points out that, especially in the context of literary patronage and benefaction, human patrons/benefactors are often described or referred to as making the initial contact with their potential clients.[52] This (in Crook's terminology) "call" can also be found in the relationship between gods and their

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[46] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 88.   [47] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 85–88.
[48] Later in his argument, Crook applies one of his rhetorical conventions, patronal synkrisis, to *De paenitentia* (*Virt.* 180, 182), clearly implying that Philo's concept of conversion agrees with Crook's model of patronage and benefaction. See Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 130.
[49] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 150.   [50] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 93.
[51] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 93.   [52] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 94–97.

potential worshippers. As it happens, gods were reputed on occasion to inaugurate benefit relationships with humans.[53] Crook believes that, in ancient descriptions of divine patronal calling, the vocabulary of "call" does not have to be present[54]; the relationship with client-worshippers may also have been initiated via, for example, a revelation.[55]

2. Philosophical persuasion. According to Crook, philosophers served as benefactors to any who would hear them and incorporate their teachings into their actions.[56] This function was possible because philosophers served as brokers between a god (patron) and a human being (client).[57] They could therefore benefit humankind by providing access to divine wisdom.[58] Crook argues that philosophers had to use persuasive rhetoric, protreptic,[59] because they had to convince others of their need of salvation and of the effectiveness of their philosophical teachings to bring this salvation about.[60] The point of protreptic, according to Crook, was about changing the behavior of the listener, that is, about converting to a particular philosophical position.[61]

3. Prayer, praise, and proselytism. These activities, Crook believes, were the primary means by which a client could publicly exercise his reciprocity towards a generous patron/benefactor.[62] This applies to both human and divine patronage and benefaction. Prayer, praise, and proselytism, according to Crook, could accomplish three things: to give thanks to a patron, to praise a patron, and to secure future benefactions.[63] Giving thanks by prayer and praise acknowledges the benefactions given, allows others to witness them, and can be attended by titles and descriptions of the patrons that honour them.[64] Prayers of supplication also honour a client's patron. These prayers say a great deal about the potential generosity of the patron, because they imply that the patron has the ability to give what is being asked.[65] Clients could also show honour and gratitude by convincing other people of the worthiness and generosity of their (divine) patrons.[66] This patronal proselytism, as Crook comes to

[53] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 97–99.
[55] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 98.
[57] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 102–103.
[59] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 104.
[61] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 106, 108.
[63] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 108.
[65] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 110.

[54] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 98.
[56] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 103.
[58] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 102–103.
[60] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 100, 104.
[62] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 117.
[64] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 109–110.
[66] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 112.

call it, may be intended to bring new clients to the patron, since the more clients a patron had the more honourable status he got.[67]

4. Patronal synkrisis. Synkrisis actually is a particularly simple rhetoric trope, namely comparison.[68] Crook argues that, in patron-oriented rhetoric, a client's life before and after having received the benefaction of a patron/benefactor is often compared. Its aim is to credit the patron/benefactor with the client's present state of happiness, bliss, and favor.[69] This patronal synkrisis is intended to honour the patron on behalf of the client and to express the client's gratitude for the benefactions received.[70] According to Crook, this convention occurs not only in human, divine, and philosophical patronage and benefaction,[71] but can also be found in Hellenistic Jewish and early Christian writings.[72]

5. The χάρις of the patron/benefactor. Crook demonstrates that the term χάρις should also be included among the rhetoric of patronage and benefaction, although not as technical vocabulary.[73] This term functions in four semantic contexts: (1) beautiful; (2) beneficence or kindness; (3) a concrete gift of benefaction; (4) gratitude.[74] It is its third meaning, Crook indicates, that is closely associated with the institution of patronage and benefaction, both human and divine.[75] This means that, according to Crook, Paul's usage of the term χάρις should not be understood theologically nor as completely distinct from its Graeco-Roman meanings, as the scholars J. Moffatt, W. Manson, and H. Conzelmann did.[76] Rather, in the New Testament in general, and in Paul's writings in particular, the term χάρις functions within the rhetoric of patronage and benefaction.[77]

Throughout his discussion of these conventions, Crook shows that the rhetoric of patronage and benefaction was very often the rhetoric of religion in Graeco-Roman Antiquity.[78] From this continuity, Crook infers that the rhetoric of conversion narratives and discourse must have been embedded in the institution of patronage and benefaction as well.[79] Having

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[67] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 112.   [68] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 117.

[69] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 119, 131–132.   [70] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 119, 131.

[71] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 119–128.

[72] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 128–131, with Wisdom of Solomon, Philo, and Titus as examples.

[73] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 148.   [74] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 132–135.

[75] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 134, 140–141.   [76] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 137–139.

[77] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 138, 140, 145–148.

[78] This is his intention to make clear. See Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 93.

[79] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 93.

identified these five conventions of the rhetoric of patronage and benefaction, it will be possible, Crook believes, to discover a patronal context for narratives that have to do with conversion.[80]

In my application of Crook's model to Philo's understanding of conversion in *De paenitentia* (ch. 2), these rhetorical conventions will be used as a starting point. On the one hand, Crook's suggestion that these conventions make it possible to discover a patronal context in conversion narratives[81] warrants a check whether they do or do not appear in *De paenitentia*. It makes clear whether a patronal context of conversion is present or not. On the other hand, I will make use of the opportunity to discuss whether Philo's comments about conversion in *De paenitentia* agree with the assumptions underlying the rhetorical conventions that seem to be present in *De paenitentia*. Do these conventions indeed point to a patronal context? Such an analysis will show us therefore both whether, and to what extent, Philo understood conversion within a patronal context, and whether these conventions point to a patronal context at all.

1.3

THE PATRONAL CONTEXT OF PAUL'S CONVERSION

In his fourth chapter, Crook finally discusses the rhetoric of patronage and benefaction in Paul's conversion passages. As Paul appears to participate in the rhetoric of patronage and benefaction, Crook assumes that he must have understood conversion in a patronal context as well.[82] To substantiate this point, Crook analyzes conversion passages written by Paul himself (1 Cor 9:1, 16–17; 15:8–10; Gal 1:11–17; Phil 3:4b–11). He argues that previous studies on Paul's conversion are often implicitly based upon, or strongly supplemented by, Luke's description of this event (Acts 9:3–9; 22:6–11; 26:12–18).[83] It is a methodological miscue, according to Crook, to prefer Luke's testimony of Paul's conversion over Paul's own testimony of this event.[84] Matters get even worse, in his opinion, when psychology is used to interpret the physiological effects in Luke's description of Paul's conversion and from there to

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[80] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 93.
[82] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 151.
[84] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 93.

[81] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 150.
[83] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 153–154.

read Paul.[85] Therefore, as Crook aims to find *Paul's* understanding of his conversion and religious experience, his starting point is Paul's own testimony of his conversion.[86]

1. 1 Corinthians 9:1, 16–17; 15:8–10. Crook points out that Paul indicates that a vision of Christ (1 Cor 9:1; 15:8) led to his conversion.[87] This vision from God, according to Crook, fits well into the rhetorical convention of the patronal call,[88] which was regarded as a benefaction of God.[89] Accordingly, according to Crook's fifth convention, Paul refers to this vision as a χάρις of his patron God (1 Cor 15:10).[90] The effect of this vision was that Paul changed from a self-professed pursuer of the Jesus movement to a witness on behalf of it.[91] His new behavior reflects Crook's third convention, prayer, praise, and proselytism, for Paul's mission to the gentiles is a form of proselytizing, of publicly broadcasting the generosity and assistance of one's patron.[92] Crook believes that the framework of patronage and benefaction also explains Paul's feeling of being obliged to proselytize (1 Cor 9:16).[93] Expressing reciprocity was an obligation, not only as a desire to live up to one's moral duty to express gratitude and honour to a patron/benefactor, but also as a practical need to ensure future benefactions and thus survival.[94] Crook also provides an explanation for Paul's comment on being committed to an οἰκονομία ("management of a household") in 1 Cor 9:17. He points out that being appointed "supervisor" of a (in Paul's case) very extended household or estate was regarded as a benefaction from one's patron/benefactor in the institution of ancient patronage and benefaction.[95]

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[85] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 153–154.
[86] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 155.
[87] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 156.
[88] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 156.
[89] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 157–158.
[90] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 157–158.
[91] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 158.
[92] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 158–159. Later on, Crook devotes a separate section to the relationship between Paul's vision and his apostleship, that is, his mission to the gentiles (pp. 164–169). In this section, Crook identifies two possible options to explain this relationship within the framework of ancient patronage and benefaction. On the one hand, it could have been possible that Paul's apostleship was a benefaction that he received from God at the time of Paul's vision or revelation (or, possibly, at a subsequent revelation). On the other hand, Paul could have come to the idea of his mission to the gentiles as a form of client reciprocity in recognition of the benefactions given to him and to humanity by his divine patron/benefactor. Crook does not make a choice between both options. Therefore, I do not exactly understand how this relates to Crook's previous discussion of Paul's mission as an expression of the rhetorical convention of proselytizing. This sounds like making a choice for the second option.
[93] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 159–160.
[94] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 160.
[95] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 160–161.

2. Galatians 1:11–17. Crook briefly indicates that, as in the Corinthian conversion passages, Paul mentions his vision of Jesus (Gal 1:12) and considers it to be a divine benefaction (Gal 1:15 [χάρις]).[96] He regards it, however, as very important that Paul refers to being called (καλέσας) by God (Gal 1:15).[97] This means that the rhetorical conventions of the patronal call and of the χάρις of the patron/benefactor are attested. Crook devotes most attention to explaining the modest synkrisis in Gal 1:13–16 (the fourth rhetorical convention). In these verses, Paul compares his life as a pursuer of the earliest Jesus movement with his life as a supporter of this movement after the revelation of Jesus.[98] According to Crook, Paul's behavior both before and after his conversion was—or Paul understood it to be—honouring of and loyal to his patron God. With the vision of Jesus, however, Paul learned that Jesus was a broker of this deity and that he was actually dishonouring his patron by pursuing the early Jesus movement. Therefore, Paul changed his behavior to being a supporter of the Jesus movement.[99]

3. Philippians 3:4b–11. Crook admits that this passage lacks any reference to a vision or revelation of Jesus; it does not contain anything that could be construed as a benefaction, nor obviously the term χάρις itself.[100] The only feature that makes of Phil 3:4b–11 a conversion narrative, is its use of the rhetorical convention of patronal synkrisis, the comparison of Paul's life before and after his conversion.[101] In this synkrisis, Paul describes his previous life in Judaism with great pride,[102] but, as Crook points out, it is not a typical feature of patronal synkrisis for clients to refer to their past with such glowing praise.[103] Usually the convert's past is described in pejorative terms (e.g., exile, ignorance, illness, death).[104] The peculiarity of Paul's synkrisis in Phil 3:4b–11 can be explained, according to Crook, as a very powerful rhetorical feature to honour his divine patron: improving upon an excellent past that in comparison to one's awesome present status is actually—or appears to be—so worthless as to call it ζημία ("loss") and σκύβαλα ("rubbish things") (Phil 3:7–8) is very difficult and therefore honours the patron all the more so.[105]

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[96] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 171.
[97] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 175–177.
[98] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 171–174.
[99] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 174–175.
[100] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 179.
[101] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 179.
[102] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 180–181.
[103] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 181.
[104] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 181.
[105] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 181–182.

With his analysis of Paul's conversion passages, Crook has demonstrated that the first (patronal call), the third (proselytism), the fourth (patronal synkrisis), and the fifth (the χάρις of the patron/benefactor) conventions of the rhetoric of patronage and benefaction are attested in Paul's conversion passages.[106] This means that only the second convention, philosophical persuasion, does not occur. Therefore, Crook aims to demonstrate in a separate section the similarities between Paul and philosophers. He points to parallels between Paul and the Stoics and Cynics[107] and to the notion of exclusive conversion in both philosophy and early Christianity.[108] Because of these parallels, Crook argues, it seems almost certain that Paul would have appeared to Graeco-Roman audiences as a philosopher with a different—but not entirely novel—message and method.[109] To them, Paul would have looked like a patron-philosopher who, in his travelling and teaching, attempted to benefit humanity with a share in the divine benefactions to which he was himself party.[110] This means, according to Crook, that also the second rhetorical convention is attested to in Paul.[111]

Crook seems to be very successful in his application of his model of patronage and benefaction to Paul's conversion narratives. The way he presents his results easily leads to the conclusion that Paul understood his conversion within the context of patronage and clientage. Although my thesis does not aim to question Crook's results with regard to Paul's understanding of conversion, it is necessary to point out that Crook never discusses the assumptions underlying his rhetorical conventions in his discussion of Paul's conversion narratives. Do these rhetorical conventions necessarily point to a patronal context? At the very least, Paul never speaks of honouring God in his conversion narratives nor uses the word εὐεργέτης ("benefactor") or its cognates in reference to God or his benefactions in any of his writings. This observation does not necessarily imply that a patronal context is *not* present in Paul's understanding of conversion, but it is a weakness of Crook's approach that has to be taken into account. In my application of Crook's model of patronage and benefaction to Philo's understanding of conversion in his *De paenitentia* (ch. 2), therefore, I will not only check whether any of Crook's rhetorical conventions are present but also question whether they necessarily point to a patronal context.

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[106] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 186.
[107] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 186–189.
[108] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 190–192.
[109] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 189–190.
[110] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 192.
[111] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 192.

1.4

THE PLACE OF LOYALTY IN PATRONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Now Crook has established that Paul fits well into the rhetoric of patronage and benefaction, being a man and product of his culture,[112] Crook believes that he has characterized religious or philosophical conversion too much as a sterile or commercial business transaction in which revenues and expenditures are weighed up against each other.[113] There is more dynamism to ancient conversion, he argues.[114] This dynamism was caused by the role of loyalty in the relationship between the patron/benefactor and his client.[115]

Therefore, in his fifth chapter, Crook considers the role of loyalty in ancient patronage and benefaction. First, he discusses the nature of loyalty in Graeco-Roman Antiquity through an analysis of *fides*, a Roman word for loyalty of patrons and clients in ancient patronage and benefaction. Crook demonstrates that the Romans defined *fides* primarily as a social quality expressed in external action within a relationship with another person(s); only secondarily *fides* referred to an internal disposition or to an emotional quality.[116] In the case of a client's loyalty, on which Crook focuses, this consisted of a client's positive actions with regard to his patron.[117] The same accounts for the Greek language, Crook argues.[118] In Greek, a number of words can express loyalty, among which the words πίστις and πιστός.[119] As these words commonly had an element of loyalty in their meanings, Crook believes that the modern translations "faith" and "faithful" do not provide an adequate rendering of their meanings.[120]

Loyalty, Crook suggests, stands behind all appropriate client conduct.[121] It is about being committed to actions and conduct that increase the honour of one's patron.[122] In order to establish this point, Crook discusses three types of patronage and benefaction in which loyalty is a more explicit element of the patronal relationship than in others:

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[112] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 193. [113] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 199–200.

[114] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 200. [115] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 200.

[116] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 204–209, 214. [117] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 208–209.

[118] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 209. [119] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 209.

[120] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 209–214. [121] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 215.

[122] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 216.

1. Imperial loyalty. This is the loyalty in the patronal relationship between Rome and foreign client-kings. In this patronal relationship, according to Crook, a client's loyalty was mutually beneficial,[123] but for Rome loyalty was a critical element in her relationship with a client-king.[124] Rome asked peaceful coexistence, absence of hostility, and a willingness to follow Rome's commands.[125] This loyalty on the part of client-kings had to be expressed outwardly and publicly, e.g., in inscriptions, changed names, coinage, and monuments.[126] Crook concludes that, while it is possible that actual feelings of goodwill and friendship were part of a client's relationship with Rome, a client's loyalty was not an emotional state but a state of relationship expressed in actions.[127]

2. Manumission loyalty. Manumission, that is, the release of a slave by his master, was a common Roman practice, but Crook expects it was practiced in a similar way in Greece.[128] Crook points out that manumission was the highest benefaction a slave-owner could grant a slave.[129] This manumission changed their master-servant relationship into a patronal relationship, which meant that a freedperson continued to live under the authority of his former master.[130] The freedperson was expected, both socially and legally, to be loyal and grateful to his former master, because of the latter's benefaction of manumission.[131] This loyalty should be expressed in positive actions and in positive qualities.[132] Expressing this loyalty, Crook concludes from discussions about this topic in ancient Roman legal circles and from the rich sources of expressions of loyalty and gratitude, seems to have been a far greater concern in manumission loyalty than was typical in patronal relationships.[133]

3. Philosophical loyalty. Adhering to a philosophy implied an exclusive loyalty, Crook argues, because philosophies offered different and competing answers to similar questions.[134] As a result, conversion in philosophy is expressed above all in terms of loyalty to the teacher and to that teacher's doctrine.[135] Because of this exclusive loyalty, conversion involved expressing disloyalty to one's first teacher in the process of expressing loyalty to a new teacher (even if remaining within the same

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[123] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 220–221.
[125] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 221.
[127] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 226.
[129] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 228.
[131] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 234.
[133] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 229–234.
[135] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 243.

[124] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 226.
[126] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 221–226.
[128] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 226–227.
[130] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 228.
[132] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 231–232.
[134] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 235–237.

philosophy).[136] Crook believes that this change in loyalty was primarily expressed in the form of actions, like leaving the school of one's former teacher and joining the school of one's new teacher, rather than as a change of mind.[137]

Crook argues that the introduction of loyalty into the patronage-conversion equation avoids the modernistic tendencies of psychologisation.[138] Even though loyalty did not necessarily lack psychological elements, it was rather primarily expressed in action and measured in terms of appropriate conduct.[139] Crook therefore concludes that conversion in Graeco-Roman Antiquity, as its primary component is a client's change in patronal loyalties, does not necessarily have an emotional component either.[140]

According to Crook, loyalty is also an important feature of Paul's relationship with God.[141] Firstly, Paul and his people were monotheists, which was an expression of exclusive loyalty.[142] Next, Paul makes abundant use of the πιστ-root words, which commonly had the component "loyalty" in their meanings.[143] Thirdly, in his conversion passages, Paul expresses with ζηλ-root words (referring to "zeal") his loyalty in his life before the revelation of Jesus (Gal 1:13–14; Phil 3:5–6).[144] This means that, before and after his conversion, Paul remained fiercely, and exclusively, loyal to his patron God.[145] This should demonstrate to us that Paul fits well within the importance of loyalty within ancient patronage and conversion.

At the end of his chapter on loyalty, when he has set forth all aspects of his model, Crook attempts to explain why Paul *converted* but remained loyal to the *same* patron, the God of Israel. First, Crook points for an analogy to philosophical conversion, in which an adherent could change in philosopher-teacher (broker) but remained loyal to the same philosophy (patron), but this raises for Crook the question of who/what functioned as Paul's broker prior to Jesus, prior to his conversion.[146] A little while later, Crook says that Paul "borrowed" this loyalty to the same patron before and after his conversion from both manumission patronage, in which a slave remained loyal to the same patron (his former master) after his manumission, and from philosophical patronage.[147] And then, on the next page, Crook seems to express an altogether different opinion when he concludes that Paul's conversion and his expression of loyalty draw syncretistically from his Jewish monotheistic loyalty to a single god and his

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[136] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 239–243.
[138] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 243–244.
[140] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 244–245.
[142] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 246.
[144] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 247.
[146] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 248.

[137] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 239–242.
[139] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 244.
[141] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 245.
[143] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 246.
[145] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 247–248.
[147] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 249.

exclusive loyalty to a teacher which is more common among the philosophies.[148] It seems that Crook could not really work this problem out.

The difficulty with Crook's use of the concept of loyalty is that it is such a general notion that it can be easily read into many different contexts. Although the words *fides* and πίστις ("loyalty") can be used as a guide in one's interpretation, it can by no means be concluded that they always refer to the concept of loyalty in patron-client relationships.[149] Because of the general character Crook ascribes to loyalty, it will not play an important part in the application of Crook's model of patronage and benefaction to Philo's understanding of conversion in *De paenitentia* (ch. 2), to his framework of ethical nobility in *De nobilitate* (ch. 3), and to his Graeco-Roman context (ch. 4). Only when the word πίστις ("loyalty") or its cognates appear, the aspect of loyalty will be discussed.

1.5
CONCLUDING REMARKS

The strength of Crook's book *Reconceptualising Conversion* is that it not only criticizes the modern Western, psychological approach to the study of conversion in Graeco-Roman Antiquity, but also offers in return the emic model of patronage and benefaction as the way of understanding the concept of conversion at that time. Although Crook never systematically defines his own understanding of the Graeco-Roman concept of conversion, the following outline can be presented from Crook's definitions and characterizations of the ancient concept of conversion that are scattered throughout Crook's book:

1. The ancient concept of conversion either involved a client's wholesale change in patrons/benefactors or consisted of a change within an already existing patron-client relationship.[150]

2. People converted either because of the benefactions they received unannounced by their prospective patron/benefactor (e.g., a patronal call) or because of the benefactions they expected to gain by being loyal to a patron first.[151]

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[148] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 250.
[149] See the research of S.J.M. Sierksma-Agteres, "Paul among the Ancient Philosophers: Perspectives on *pistis*" (Ph.D. diss., University of Groningen, forthcoming).
[150] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 255.   [151] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 249.

3. Conversion did not have an exclusive character, as loyalty relationships with a human or divine patron were rarely exclusive in Graeco-Roman Antiquity. Philosophical patronage and benefaction is an exception.[152]

4. Conversion was thought of primarily as an external event that was marked by actions and implied a collectivistic construction of the self, instead of as a primarily internal, personal, and introspective experience that the modern Western approach takes as its starting point.[153]

This outline of the concept of conversion in Graeco-Roman Antiquity will be regarded as Crook's understanding of this concept within his model of patronage and benefaction. Throughout my application of Crook's model of patronage and benefaction in subsequent chapters of this thesis (esp. in ch. 2), I will allude to this outline.

Crook's results may sound convincing, but I—as already indicated in the introduction to this thesis—regard the way Crook presents these results as a weakness of his book. This presentation suggests that Crook made use of a deductive approach in analyzing his data. He seems to infer hypotheses from an existing theory, that of the widespread institution of patronage and benefaction. As this institution, according to Crook, was matched by an equally widespread perception of patronage and benefaction between humans and their gods,[154] he rather deductively infers that the ancient concept of conversion must have been understood in this context as well.[155] This hypothesis he takes as his starting point, without asking whether any author in the ancient Mediterranean has defined or described conversion in that way. Crook seems only to adduce evidence on the patronal character of the God-worshipper relationship in Antiquity, rather than on the ancient understanding of conversion as such. This means that the correctness of Crook's hypothesis is never questioned, nor tested. Such a presentation may easily lead to the conclusion that Crook's model of patronage and benefaction applies to the understanding of conversion in Antiquity in general.

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[152] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 149.   [153] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 33, 51, 244, 255.
[154] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 199.
[155] See Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 89: "Since the Greeks, Romans, and Jews of the first century lived in relationships of patronage and benefaction with their gods, that means that conversion in their world must have been grounded in that reality as well. If we are to understand ancient conversion, we need to begin by understanding its "religious" framework, which was indisputably that of patronage and benefaction." See also p. 199: "If ancient conversion occurred within the conceptual, linguistic, and experiential framework of patronage and benefaction, then ancient conversion must have been, in essence, some change in a patronal relationship."

My analysis of Philo's understanding of conversion in his *De paenitentia* (*Virt*. 175–186) and *De nobilitate* (*Virt*. 187–227) may demonstrate the pitfalls of Crook's model of patronage and benefaction resulting from his deductive approach. With an inductive approach that starts with texts rather than with general theory, it can be shown whether, and to what extent, Crook's model indeed provides an adequate explanation for the understanding of conversion in Graeco-Roman Antiquity. In the case of Philo's understanding of conversion in his *De paenitentia* and *De nobilitate*, it remains to be seen whether, and to what extent, Philo's notion of conversion, its framework, and its general context agrees with Crook's model of patronage and benefaction. These aspects will be examined in the three subsequent chapters of this thesis.

2

PHILO'S UNDERSTANDING OF CONVERSION

IN HIS *DE PAENITENTIA*

The previous chapter introduced the reader to Crook's model of patronage and benefaction, as described in his book *Reconceptualising Conversion*,[1] and to the problems associated with it. We may now proceed with the first step in evaluating and correcting Crook's model by examining his understanding of the meaning of conversion in Graeco-Roman Antiquity, that is, as a client's wholesale change in patrons/benefactors or as a change within an already existing patronal relationship.[2] On the basis of an analysis of the conversion process described in Philo's *De paenitentia* (*Virt.* 175–186), this chapter will evaluate whether, and to what extent, Philo's description contains the patronal context Crook's model argues for, and agrees with the ancient collectivistic construction of the self which it assumes. A stage-after-stage discussion of the conversion process set forth in *De paenitentia* (§§2.1–4) will show whether Crook's conventions of the rhetoric of patronage and benefaction are present in *De paenitentia* and—if present—whether they are indicative of a patronal context or not.[3] A separate section on the individual, inner tendencies within Philo's understanding of conversion in *De paenitentia* (§2.5) may demonstrate whether Crook's underlying argument in favor of the collectivistic construction of the self in Graeco-Roman Antiquity, rather than the modern Western, individualistic one, is correct. In this way, it will become clear whether, and to what extent, Crook's model of patronage and benefaction offers an adequate explanation for Philo's understanding of conversion in *De paenitentia*.

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[1] Z.A. Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion: Patronage, Loyalty, and Conversion in the Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean* (BZNW 130; Berlin 2004).

[2] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 255.

[3] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 91–150, summarized in §1.2.2. These rhetorical conventions are: (1) patronal call; (2) philosophical persuasion; (3) prayer, praise, and proselytism; (4) patronal synkrisis; (5) the χάρις of the patron/benefactor.

2.1

THE INTELLECTUAL PRELIMINARY STAGE

It becomes clear from *De paenitentia* that conversion, as Philo understood it, is preceded by a preliminary stage.[4] This preliminary stage is thoroughly intellectual, like, in fact, Philo's concept of conversion in general (cf. §§2.2.1–3).[5] This intellectual aspect is understandable in light of Philo's understanding of the relationship between God and man as a background to his ethical theory.[6] While God is the supremely transcendent reality, his primary manifestation as the Logos is manifest in the human mind. This mind, according to Philo, has been created in the image (the Logos) of God, the mind of the universe.[7] In this respect, humankind is akin to God and has potentially access to God from within. This access is only possible, however, when a human being eradicates or suppresses the passions that are overpowering his mind.[8] When these passions are mastered and mind is restored in its position as ruler over the irrational soul and the body,[9] a human being may contemplate creation and may soar so high as to grasp the nature of God[10] and may live in virtue.[11]

It is therefore understandable that conversion is made possible by an intellectual preliminary stage, for this suggests that someone's mind is not or no longer completely overpowered by passions and is thus open for a correct understanding of God. In *De paenitentia*, Philo expresses this position as his belief that, in order to convert, one needs to have some knowledge of where one ultimately has to convert to. This intellectual precondition is expressed in the following passage:

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[4] Some authors do not mention an intellectual preliminary stage, probably because it does not belong to Philo's understanding of conversion as such. See P. Borgen, "Proselytes, Conquest, and Mission," in *Recruitment, Conquest, and Conflict: Strategies in Judaism, Early Christianity, and the Greco-Roman World* (ed. P. Borgen, V.K. Robbins, and D.B. Gowler; ESEC 6; Atlanta 1998), 63–64; E.K. Dietrich, *Die Umkehr (Bekehrung und Busse) im Alten Testament und im Judentum* (Stuttgart 1936), 291–299; G.D. Nave, *The Role and Function of Repentance in Luke-Acts* (AcBib 4; Atlanta 2002), 92–95; G.E. Sterling, "Turning to God: Conversion in Greek-Speaking Judaism and Early Christianity," in *Scripture and Traditions: Essays on Early Judaism and Christianity in Honor of Carl R. Holladay* (ed. P. Gray and G.R. O'Day; NovTSup 129; Leiden 2008), 84–88; W.T. Wilson, *Philo of Alexandria On Virtues: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* (PACS 3; Leiden 2011), 362–363.

[5] See M. Alexandre, "Le lexique des vertus: Vertus philosophiques et religieuses chez Philon: μετάνοια et εὐγένεια," in *Philon d'Alexandrie et le langage de la philosophie: Actes du colloque international organisé par le Centre d'études sur la philosophie hellénistique et romaine de l'Université de Paris XII-Val de Marne (Créteil, Fontenay, Paris, 26–28 octobre 1995)* (ed. C. Lévy; MonPhil; Turnhout 1998), 23.

[6] For the following, see D. Winston, "Philo's Ethical Theory," *ANRW* 21.1:372–373.

[7] Cf. *Opif.* 69, 139.   [8] Cf. *Leg.* 2.91.   [9] Cf. *Leg.* 2.79, 104.

[10] Cf. *Opif.* 70–71; *Leg.* 1.38.   [11] Cf. *Leg.* 2.55–59.

converting (τὸ ... μεταβαλεῖν) from a sinning to a blameless life is peculiar to a prudent man (φρονίμου) who has not been utterly ignorant (εἰς ἅπαν οὐκ ἀγνοήσαντος) of what is beneficial (τὸ συμφέρον). (Philo, *Virt.* 177)

The characterizations of the prospective convert as "a prudent man" (φρονίμου) and as one "who has not been utterly ignorant" (εἰς ἅπαν οὐκ ἀγνοήσαντος) make it clear that conversion is only possible for those who already have some knowledge of what is good for them.[12] The object of this knowledge is "what is beneficial" (τὸ συμφέρον). This phrase might be interpreted as referring to the benefits to be received after conversion, as in a patronal context.[13] However, given that elsewhere in Philo's corpus the verb συμφέρω ("to confer a benefit, be useful or profitable") mostly indicates the resulting well-being, safety, peace, virtue and the like from a certain action,[14] it is more probable that in *Virt.* 177 the inherent value of the converted state is implied rather than its instrumental value of attaining patronal benefits. This agrees with Philo's understanding of conversion as an improvement from a bad state to a good state of life (cf. *Virt.* 176, see §2.2).

This intellectual precondition is further developed by Moses' instructions and exhortations—that is, probably, by the Mosaic law. In *Virt.* 178, the prudent men introduced in *Virt.* 177 (cited above) are initiated by Moses into his mysteries and are instructed and exhorted by him:

> Therefore, when he [i.e., Moses] convokes such people [τοὺς τοιούτους, i.e., prudent men who have not been utterly ignorant, cf. *Virt.* 177] and initiates them into his mysteries, he invites them, holding out conciliatory and friendly instructions which exhort them to practice sincerity (ἀψεύδειαν) and reject vanity (τῦφον), and to embrace truth (ἀληθείας) and simplicity (ἀτυφίας) as the most necessary things and as the sources of happiness, while rising in rebellion against the mythical fables (μυθικῶν πλασμάτων) which their parents and nurses and tutors and countless other familiars have engraved upon their yet tender souls from their earliest years, causing them to go endlessly astray regarding the knowledge of the best (περὶ τῆς τοῦ ἀρίστου γνώσεως). (Philo, *Virt.* 178)

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[12] Prudence is one of the cardinal virtues, but in *Virt.* 177 it is probably used in a non-technical sense. For prudence as an activity of the mind/intellect, see *Abr.* 57; *Congr.* 155; *Ebr.* 140; *Leg.* 1.70–71, 79; 3.150–152; *Plant.* 98; *Praem.* 81; *QG* 2.72; *Virt.* 11. This activity entails knowledge of the things one ought to do and of the things one ought not to do (esp. *Leg.* 1.70; *Mut.* 153). It therefore has the practical aspect of regulating human life (*Praem.* 81), holding off wrong (e.g., *Leg.* 1.66, 74–75, 79; 3.150–152), and producing good (e.g., *Plant.* 98).

[13] See Wilson, *Philo of Alexandria* On Virtues, 366, with an irrelevant reference to Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 128–132. Crook's section deals with patronal synkrisis, but *Virt.* 177 does not contain a patronal synkrisis.

[14] See esp. *Abr.* 18, 215, 256; *Cher.* 13; *Congr.* 85; *Det.* 145; *Deus* 135; *Ebr.* 20, 160; *Ios.* 62, 63, 65, 73, 77; *Leg.* 3.19, 84; *Praem.* 33, 113; *Sacr.* 28, 35; *Somn.* 1.111; 2.9; *Spec.* 1.149, 203, 204, 206, 320; 2.12, 42, 62, 236; *Virt.* 3, 19, 181. Possible exceptions are *Det.* 53; *Ebr.* 33; *Somn.* 2.150; *Spec.* 1.330.

This passage is interesting in light of Crook's second rhetorical convention, philosophical persuasion, in which a patron-philosopher serves as a broker between a client-student and the benefits of his philosophy, and needs to persuade prospective pupils to accept these benefactions.[15] Given that Philo regarded Judaism as a philosophy and Moses as a philosopher,[16] Moses' initiations, instructions, and exhortations in *Virt.* 178 may be interpreted as philosophical persuasion.[17] The difficulty with this view is, however, that Moses does not really have to persuade his new pupils, as they had come to his philosophy of their own accord.[18] Instead, he seems to have a more instructive function than Crook's rhetorical convention of philosophical persuasion allows.[19]

It is also important to note that Philo's intellectual preliminary stage does not agree with Crook's first rhetorical convention of the call of the patron/benefactor.[20] Philo does not speak of the God of the Jews as calling or revealing to prospective converts.[21] Instead, Philo refers only to these potential converts as acquiring some knowledge of what is good for them (*Virt.* 177), without indicating *how* they have acquired this knowledge. This knowledge is further deepened by the instructions and exhortations provided by Moses in the Jewish Scriptures, but still God is not spoken of as calling or revealing the prospective converts. This means either that, according to Philo's *De paenitentia*, God does not inaugurate the patron-client relationship with a potential worshipper, or that it is not important how prospective converts acquired their knowledge. Philo therefore makes no use of Crook's first rhetorical convention, the call of the patron/benefactor.

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[15] See Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 100–108, summarized in §1.2.2.
[16] For Judaism as a philosophy, see, e.g., *Contempl.* 26, 28; *Legat.* 156, 245; *Mos.* 2.216; *Somn.* 2.127; *Virt.* 65. For Moses as a philosopher, see, e.g., *Mos.* 2.2; *Opif.* 8; *Prob.* 43.
[17] See Wilson, *Philo of Alexandria On Virtues*, 366–367.
[18] *Contra* Borgen, "Proselytes," 66. Borgen presents Moses as actively reaching out to the gentiles.
[19] In addition to this, it has to be pointed out that, in Philo's oeuvre, εὐεργέτης ("patron/benefactor") and cognates are never used in reference to Moses. Only once it is used in reference to a teacher-student relationship (*Post.* 140).
[20] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 93–100, summarized in §1.2.2.
[21] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 97–100.

2.2

THE CONVERSION STAGE

In *De paenitentia*, the intellectual preliminary stage results in three separate, though partly intertwined conversions. They are all characterized as conversion (μετάνοια), and to each of them a section is devoted. Even though this suggests that Philo did not regard conversion as one moment, he may still refer with his word for conversion (μετάνοια and cognates) to the conversion stage in general. Before the three separate conversions are discussed, it is necessary to cite his view on conversion in general:

> ... And second stand the things exhibiting improvement (τὰ κατ' ἐπανόρθωσιν συνιστάμενα), recovery from diseases, the prayed-for deliverance from the dangers of a voyage, and recollection supervening on forgetfulness, the brother and closest kinsman of which is converting, which is not placed in the first and highest rank of goods, but in the rank next to the first, taking the second prize. (Philo, *Virt*. 176)

This passage can be found in the introductory paragraphs of *De paenitentia*. After indicating that Moses urges everybody everywhere to pursue piety and justice, and offers participation in the best polity to those who convert (*Virt*. 175), Philo explains that conversion holds the second place to good things like health, safe voyage, and memory (*Virt*. 176). Conversion is therefore characterized as an improvement from a bad state to a good state of life. This means that conversion is possible in only one direction, in the direction that is perceived as good by Philo. It is this notion of conversion that governs Philo's description of the three separate conversions as well.

2.2.1
CONVERSION TO PIETY

The first conversion Philo speaks of involves the acquisition of piety (θεοσέβεια [cf. *Virt*. 186] / εὐσέβεια).[22] Accordingly, this conversion may be called a "conversion to piety." It involves a turn from the worship of idols to the acknowledgement and worship of the God of the Jews, as Philo summarizes:

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[22] See also Borgen, "Proselytes," 63; Dietrich, *Umkehr*, 291–292; Nave, *Repentance in Luke-Acts*, 93–94; Sterling, "Turning to God," 86–87; Wilson, *Philo of Alexandria* On Virtues, 363.

Now the first and most essential form of conversion (εἰς μετάνοιαν) has been discussed. But one should not only convert (μετανοείτω) from the things with which he was deceived for a long time, honouring things created instead of the Uncreated and Maker, ... (Philo, *Virt.* 180)

Throughout *Virt.* 178–179 this summary is elaborated on in antitheses. It starts with the contrasts between the practice of sincerity and the rejection of vanity (*Virt.* 178) and between the embracement of truth and simplicity and the rebellion against mythical fables (*Virt.* 178) in Philo's description of Moses' encouragements of prospective converts (cf. §2.1). This is further elaborated by Philo as a contrast between the honour of God and of those "who are no gods" (*Virt.* 179), and between the embracement of the rule of One and of the rule of many (*Virt.* 179). This emphasis makes clear that, for Philo, this type of conversion entails a change from polytheism and idolatry to the acknowledgement and worship of the God of the Jews.

Philo's conversion to piety implies an intellectual turn from ignorance to knowledge.[23] This agrees with the intellectual quality Philo gives to his terms for "piety" (θεοσέβεια / εὐσέβεια) throughout his oeuvre, for piety is made possible, according to Philo, by a human understanding of God and his service.[24] In *De paenitentia*, this intellectual quality is expressed in an intellectual distinction that governs the antitheses mentioned above: the converts' search for "the knowledge of the best" and their former "empty-mindedness." This antithesis flows forth from Moses' encouragement of prospective converts (cf. §2.1) to reject the mythical fables. Their parents, tutors, and others had not provided them with the right education ("engraving"), as a result of which they were led astray regarding "the knowledge of the best":

... while rising in rebellion against the mythical fables (μυθικῶν πλασμάτων) which their [i.e., the converts'] parents and nurses and tutors and countless other familiars have engraved upon their yet tender souls from their earliest years, causing them to go endlessly astray regarding the knowledge of the best (περὶ τῆς τοῦ ἀρίστου γνώσεως). (Philo, *Virt.* 178)

Philo immediately continues to identify "the best" as God and makes it clear that it is under the influence of "empty-mindedness" that the worship due to God is given to no-gods:

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[23] See Alexandre, "Lexique des vertus," 23.

[24] Esp. *Mut.* 76; *Spec.* 4.147. See also *Decal.* 58; *Fug.* 150; *Migr.* 132; *Mos.* 2.66; *Mut.* 155; *Opif.* 172; *Plant.* 77; *Somn.* 1.251; *Spec.* 1.309; *Virt.* 42. See G.E. Sterling, "'The Queen of the Virtues': Piety in Philo of Alexandria," *SPhiloAn* 18 (2006): 113–114; H.A. Wolfson, *Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (2 vols.; SGPSPS 2; Cambridge, Mass., 1947), 2:208–218.

> And what is the best of all that is but God? His honours they have assigned to those who are no gods, glorifying them beyond measure, while they, empty-minded people that they are (οἱ κενοὶ φρενῶν), utterly forgot Him. (Philo, *Virt.* 179)

These paragraphs therefore make clear that piety, that is, the acknowledgement and worship of God, has a thorough intellectual quality for Philo. Right knowledge makes it possible to worship God; idolatry means that this knowledge is lacking or forgotten. It has to be noted, by the way, that instruction, in the form of one's childhood upbringing, is again an important factor in receiving this knowledge and becoming pious or not (cf. §2.1).

In Philo's concept of conversion, the conversion to piety implies an intellectual turn from this empty-mindedness to the knowledge of the best. This turn is subsequently expressed in light/darkness and seeing/being blind metaphors:

> ... and we must rejoice with them [i.e., the converts], as if, although being blind at the first, they had regained their sight, seeing from the deepest darkness the most brilliant light. (Philo, *Virt.* 179)

The light/darkness and seeing/being blind metaphors in this passage may at first sight be interpreted as an expression of Crook's fourth rhetorical convention, patronal synkrisis: a comparison of life before and after conversion with the aim of honouring one's patron God.[25] However, in light of Philo's views on the incorporeal, invisible light that is perceptible to the mind only ("noetic" [νοητός] light), these metaphors are much more than mere rhetoric.[26] According to Philo, this noetic light is part of reality. It is part of the incorporeal world of ideas and forms the pattern of the light perceptible to our senses.[27] God himself is the ultimate archetype of this light, as it is created in the image of the divine reason (λόγος).[28] The human mind, being created in the image of God's mind (νοῦς),[29] has access to this incorporeal world and may therefore "see" this light.[30] The noetic light is thoroughly intellectual, as it is equated with wisdom or knowledge.[31] Seeing the noetic light means that a human mind—with the

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[25] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 117–132, summarized in §1.2.2.

[26] For an introduction to Philo's light terminology and its relationship with knowledge, see, e.g., F.-N. Klein, *Die Lichtterminologie bei Philon von Alexandrien und in den hermetischen Schriften: Untersuchungen zur Struktur der religiösen Sprache der hellenistischen Mystik* (Leiden 1962), 13–79; G. Kweta, *Sprache, Erkennen und Schweigen in der Gedankenwelt des Philo von Alexandrien* (EurHochPhil 403; Frankfurt am Main 1996), 323–333.

[27] Cf. *Opif.* 29–32.

[28] Esp. *Opif.* 29–31; *Somn.* 1.75.

[29] Cf. *Opif.* 69.

[30] Cf. *Opif.* 70–71. Philo indicates that the eye of the mind, when it is on its way to perceive God himself, is blinded by God's concentrated light.

[31] Esp. *Migr.* 40. The all-knowing God is the archetype of wisdom and knowledge.

possible help of instruction and education (cf. *Virt.* 178, see §2.1)—has obtained wisdom, knowledge, piety, and virtue,[32] while blindness implies folly, ignorance, and attachment to passions, sense-perception, and earthly wealth.[33] The light/darkness and seeing/being blind metaphors in *Virt.* 179 therefore make clear that the welcoming of the noetic light brings about the intellectual turn in conversion to piety from empty-mindedness ("blindness") to knowledge of the best ("seeing").

It is not until §2.3.1 ("Relationship with God") that the patronal character of the relationship established between God and convert can be demonstrated. However, in the context of conversion to piety, it is necessary to tone down Crook's argument on the part of patronage as a *reason* for converting. Crook suggests that conversion happens anywhere when either a patron/benefactor provides people unannounced with benefactions (such as a patronal call) or when prospective clients expect to receive benefactions by being loyal to a patron/benefactor first.[34] In *De paenitentia*, on the contrary, conversion is neither described as being brought about by an unannounced benefit of God to the convert (cf. §2.1) nor is any benefit referred to as being provided as a result of one's conversion (cf. §§2.3.1–2). Rather, conversion to piety seems to be brought about by an intellectual understanding of how reality truly fits together. The fact alone that the God of the Jews is the only God in charge (*Virt.* 178–179, 180) warrants the worship and honour of God. This observation agrees with the three types of worship Philo distinguishes in a different writing from the Exposition of the Law, *De Abrahamo*:

> [128] My [i.e., God's] first prizes will be set apart for those who honour Me for Myself alone, the second to those who honour Me for their own sakes, either hoping to obtain blessings or expecting to find relief from punishments, since, even though their worship is mercenary and not unbribed, yet all the same it revolves within the divine enclosure and does not stray outside. [129] But the prizes set aside for those who honour Me for Myself will be gifts of friendship; to those whose motive is self-interest it will not be friendship but that I do not count them as aliens. For I accept both him who wishes to enjoy My beneficial power and thus partake of blessings and him who out of fear propitiates My authoritative and despotic power to avert chastisement. For I know well that they will not only not be worsened, but actually bettered through the persistence of their worship, practicing piety pure and undefiled (εἰλικρινῆ καὶ καθαρὰν εὐσέβειαν). (Philo, *Abr.* 128–129)

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[32] Cf. *Abr.* 25; *Her.* 48; *Deus* 3; *Leg.* 3.109–110; *Migr.* 38; *Somn.* 1.117; 2.106; *Spec.* 1.288; 2.23; *Virt.* 164, 172. For the relationship of the noetic light with instruction and education, see *Ebr.* 168; *Leg.* 3.167; *Somn.* 1.164; *Spec.* 3.6.

[33] Cf. *Abr.* 25; *Her.* 48, 76; *Deus* 3; *Leg.* 3.109–110; *Migr.* 38; *Spec.* 1.54, 288; 2.23; *Virt.* 164, 172.

[34] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 249, summarized in §1.5.

In this passage, Philo distinguishes the honour of God for God alone (the first prize) from the honour of God for his blessings and for relief from his punishments (the combined second prize). A worshipper having converted because of patronal benefits would belong to the second type of worship, in which God is honoured for his blessings (benefits). As it happens, this type of worship is explicitly referred to by Philo as knowing God as the Benefactor (εὐεργέτης) (*Abr.* 125). However, it is not the honour of God for his blessings, but the honour of God for God's sake that represents for Philo the ideal type of worship of God. It seems that this ideal type of worship underlies the reason for converting to piety in *De paenitentia* as well: converts become attached to God because they understand that he is the only God in charge. Therefore, they come to worship God for God's sake alone rather than for any of his benefits. This means that Crook's model of patronage and benefaction has to be toned down on the part of patronal benefits as a primary reason to conversion.

Another aspect of Crook's model has to be toned down as well. Crook works with a model in which "loyalty to a human or divine patron was rarely exclusive in the ancient world."[35] For Philo, on the contrary, conversion to the God of the Jews is the only conversion possible, because in Philo's monotheistic belief this God is the only God there is. As the acknowledgement and worship of God implies a rightly used mind (*Virt.* 179), conversion to a piety concerning the God of the Jews must be the improvement Philo ascribes to conversion (*Virt.* 176). Any turn to the worship of other gods could hardly be called an improvement in Philo's view, as this worship means empty-mindedness (*Virt.* 179). Although this conception is honouring of the God of the Jews, it is not meant as honouring *alone*. For Philo, it is all the more a description of how reality truly fits together, the God of the Jews being the only God in charge. One should therefore convert to a piety concerning this God and give credit to whom credit is due. As a result, unlike Crook's model of patronage and benefaction, Philo's concept of conversion is strictly exclusive.

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[35] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 149, summarized in §1.5. Crook mentions philosophical patronage and benefaction as an exception.

2.2.2
CONVERSION TO VIRTUE

According to *De paenitentia*, the conversion to piety is immediately followed upon by another, so-called "conversion to virtue."[36] Although Philo indicates elsewhere that piety is a virtue as well,[37] in fact the highest virtue,[38] in *De paenitentia* he distinguishes piety from the acquisition of all other virtues. According to him, when honour is rendered to the God who exists—that is, when one is pious—, the whole company of other virtues must follow "as in the sunshine the shadow follows the body" (*Virt.* 181).[39] As the final paragraph of *De paenitentia* indicates, the wise man is protected by piety (θεοσέβεια) as by an impregnable wall, presumably against passions and vices.[40] This shows us that, for Philo, piety is the starting point of a virtuous life.

This conversion to virtue is introduced as a comparison with a change from the misgovernment of ochlocracy/mob-rule (ὀχλοκρατία) to the well-ordered government of democracy (δημοκρατία). This comparison gives an intellectual character to Philo's concept of conversion. It is probable that Philo has in mind a change in a soul's constitution from mob-rule, in which passions and outward senses revolt, to a democratic polity, in which each part of the soul possesses the status and power appropriate to it, that is, in which the passions and outward senses will be subject to the rule of reason[41]:

> ... one should not only convert (μετανοείτω) ... but also in respect of the other things which are essential in life, passing over, as it were, from ochlocracy [mob-rule], the worst of all bad polities, to democracy, the most well-ordered polity, ... (Philo, *Virt.* 180)

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[36] See also Borgen, "Proselytes," 63–64; Dietrich, *Umkehr*, 291–295; Nave, *Repentance in Luke-Acts*, 94–95; Sterling, "Turning to God," 87; Wilson, *Philo of Alexandria* On Virtues, 363.

[37] Cf. *Abr.* 60, 114; *Cher.* 96; *Decal.* 52, 119; *Det.* 72, 114; *Migr.* 132; *Mos.* 2.66, 216; *Opif.* 154; *Plant.* 35; *Praem.* 53, 160; *Somn.* 2.182; *Spec.* 4.134, 135, 147; *Virt.* 51, 95.

[38] Cf. *Abr.* 60; *Decal.* 52, 119; *Opif.* 154; *Praem.* 53; *Spec.* 4.97, 135, 147; *Virt.* 95.

[39] The use of the phrase "*other* virtues" (τῶν ἄλλων ἀρετῶν) in contradistinction to the rendering of honour to God (i.e., piety) makes clear that Philo understands piety as a virtue in *De paenitentia* as well.

[40] Cf. *Migr.* 215. See Wilson, *Philo of Alexandria* On Virtues, 376.

[41] Cf. *Abr.* 242–244. See Alexandre, "Lexique des vertus," 25–27; Wilson, *Philo of Alexandria* On Virtues, 369. *Contra* those interpretations, e.g., F.H. Colson, *Philo* (12 vols.; LCL; London / Cambridge, Mass., 1929–1962), 8:437–439, who regard the change from mob-rule to democracy as an a change in political affiliation. A reference to a soul's constitution is more probable as a starting point for a conversion to virtue. For Philo, a change in political affiliation is a result of conversion, not its cause (cf. §2.3.2).

This comparison with the change from mob-rule to democracy is immediately followed upon by a lengthy comment in which this change is explained as a change from vice to virtue. It makes clear that, when reason is restored in its appropriate place, a conversion to virtue will take place:

> ... that is (τοῦτο δ' ἐστὶν), [passing from] ignorance (ἐξ ἀμαθίας) to knowledge of things which it is disgraceful not to know (εἰς ἐπιστήμην ὧν ἡ ἄγνοια αἰσχρόν), from foolishness to prudence (ἐξ ἀφροσύνης εἰς φρόνησιν), from lack of self-control to self-control (ἐξ ἀκρατείας εἰς ἐγκράτειαν), from injustice to justice (ἐξ ἀδικίας εἰς δικαιοσύνην), from cowardice to boldness (ἐξ ἀτολμίας εἰς θαρραλεότητα). [181] For it is very excellent and beneficial to desert without a backward glance to virtue (πρὸς ἀρετὴν), abandoning vice (κακίαν) that treacherous mistress; .... (Philo, *Virt*. 180–181)

This passage shows us that conversion to virtue consists of a turn to knowledge as well as a turn to the four cardinal virtues of prudence, self-control, justice, and boldness. The mention of knowledge again underlines the intellectual character of Philo's concept of conversion. In line with the change from mob-rule to democracy in a soul's constitution, it implies that conversion to virtue is made possible by an underlying turn from ignorance to knowledge. In this way, knowledge functions as a kind of meta-virtue, reflecting the idea that virtues are forms of knowledge (and hence teachable, cf. *Virt*. 178, see §2.1).[42]

We may continue with citing Philo's subsequent elaboration on the conversion to virtue in *De paenitentia*. As it happens, Crook uses *Virt*. 180 and 182 as examples of his fourth rhetorical convention, patronal synkrisis, in Philo's oeuvre.[43] In *Virt*. 182, Philo contrasts with two more-or-less corresponding lists of virtues and vices the virtuous lives of proselytes with the vicious lives of those who keep far from the holy laws:

> For the proselytes (οἱ ἐπηλύται) become at once temperate, self-controlled, modest, gentle, kind, humane, reverent, just, high-minded, lovers of truth, superior to the desire for money and pleasure; just as also conversely those who keep far from the holy laws (τοὺς τῶν ἱερῶν νόμων ἀποστάντας) are seen to be unbridled, shameless, unjust, irreverent, petty-minded, quarrelsome, friends of falsehood and perjury, who have sold their freedom for dainties and strong liquor and cakes and beauty—enjoyments of the things of the belly and of those below the belly, the ends of which are the gravest injuries to both body and soul. (Philo, *Virt*. 182)

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[42] Cf. *Congr*. 142; *Det*. 18; *Fug*. 82. See D. Konstan, "Philo's *De virtutibus* in the Perspective of Classical Greek Philosophy," *SPhiloAn* 18 (2006): 59; Wilson, *Philo of Alexandria* On Virtues, 369–370.

[43] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 130.

Crook regards Philo's descriptions of conversion to virtue in *Virt*. 180 and 182 as examples of patronal synkrisis. In a conversion context, this means that a past poor (pre-conversion) state and an excellent present (post-conversion) state are compared with the primary aim of ascribing honour to God.[44] This view, however, is a one-sided portrayal of Philo's description of conversion to virtue. For Philo, the synkriseis in *Virt*. 180 and 182 are not just rhetoric aimed at honouring God. Rather, they are primarily descriptive. They describe what state conversion to virtue brings about, in fact, *should* bring about. This ethical state relates to Philo's stance of ethical nobility in *De nobilitate* (*Virt*. 187–227), that is, the individual moral excellence to which everyone should aspire (see ch. 3). Non-Jews may arrive at this state through conversion. This ethical nobility is therefore an actual state of life and conversion brings this state about. This means that Crook's fourth rhetorical convention has to be adjusted for the primary function patronal synkrisis has.

2.2.3
CONVERSION TO HARMONIOUS LIFE

After his description of the conversion to virtue, Philo turns to a third conversion, a "conversion to harmonious life."[45] It entails a conversion from a disharmonious life to a harmonious life. Philo introduces this type of conversion as follows:

> Very excellent indeed too are the instructions to conversion (εἰς μετάνοιαν), with which we are taught to adapt (μεθαρμόζεσθαι) our life from discord (ἐξ ἀναρμοστίας) into a change for the better (εἰς τὴν ἀμείνω μεταβολήν). (Philo, *Virt*. 183)

In his explanation, Philo interprets Deut 30:11–14[46] as showing that this conversion to harmonious life is very near to us, dwelling in the three parts of ourselves: mouth, heart, and hands, symbolizing, respectively, speech, thoughts, and actions (*Virt*. 183). These three aspects have to correspond to one another:

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[44] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 130. Strictly speaking, a comparison between a convert's state before and after conversion is only found in *Virt*. 180, for in *Virt*. 182 Philo describes two opposing choices or ways of life (see Wilson, *Philo of Alexandria* On Virtues, 371). Nevertheless, Crook includes the comparison of two people among his definition of patronal synkrisis as well (Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 119).

[45] See also Dietrich, *Umkehr*, 292, 295–296; Wilson, *Philo of Alexandria* On Virtues, 363. This conversion is not mentioned, or not mentioned as a separate conversion, by Borgen, "Proselytes," 63; Nave, *Repentance in Luke-Acts*, 92–95; Sterling, "Turning to God," 87.

[46] Deut 30:11–14 (NRSV): [11] Surely, this commandment that I am commanding you today is not too hard for you, nor is it too far away. [12] It is not in heaven, that you should say, "Who will go up to heaven for us, and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?" [13] Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, "Who will cross to the other side of the sea for us, and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?" [14] No, the word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart for you to observe.

For when judgment corresponds to speech and deeds correspond to thought, life is praiseworthy and perfect, but when they are at strife with each other, it is imperfect and blameworthy. ... (Philo, *Virt.* 184)

Philo believes that, when mankind does not forget to keep the harmony (ἁρμονία) between speech, thoughts, and actions, "he will become well-pleasing to God, becoming at the same time God-beloved and God-loving" (*Virt.* 184). This passage again underlines that the prospective convert initiates the relationship with God, instead of God, as Crook's rhetorical convention of the patronal call would have it.[47]

In *De paenitentia*, Philo does not explain how conversion to harmonious life exactly relates to conversion to piety and to virtue. In light of other passages in his oeuvre, however, it is probable that the conversion to harmonious life should not be interpreted as an additional conversion stage within the conversion process.[48] That is, conversion to harmonious life does not follow upon conversion to virtue as conversion to virtue follows upon conversion to piety. Rather, it seems that conversion to harmonious life is an underlying change that makes conversion to piety and conversion to virtue possible. This becomes clear when *Virt.* 183–184 is compared with an interpretation of Deut 30:11–14 in a writing from the Allegorical Commentary, *De posteritate Caini*[49]:

[85] And in a thoroughly philosophic way he [i.e., Moses] makes a threefold division of it [i.e., the good thing] saying: "It is in thy mouth and in thy heart and in thine hand" [Deut 30:11–14], that is, in words, in thoughts, in actions. For these are the parts of the good thing (τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ), and of these it is compacted, and the lack of but one not only renders it imperfect but absolutely destroys it. [86] For what good is it to say the best things but to plan and carry out the most shameful things? ... [87] And what is the good of having right intentions, and yet resorting to unfitting deeds and words, by the words inflicting loss on those who hear them, and by the deeds on those who are their victims? Again, it is blameworthy to practise the things that are excellent without understanding and explicit speech. [88] For what is done apart from these comes under the head of involuntary action, and in no way whatever merits praise. But if a man succeeded, as if handling a lyre, in

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[47] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 93–100, summarized in §1.2.2.

[48] *Contra* Dietrich, *Umkehr*, 292, 295–296; Sterling, "Turning to God," 87; Wilson, *Philo of Alexandria On Virtues*, 362–363. Other authors do not discuss the precise relationship between conversion to harmonious life and conversion to piety and to virtue. See Alexandre, "Lexique des vertus," 25; P.J. Bekken, *The Word Is near You: A Study of Deuteronomy 30:12–14 in Paul's Letter to the Romans in a Jewish Context* (BZNW 144; Berlin 2007), 94–102; E. Birnbaum, *The Place of Judaism in Philo's Thought: Israel, Jews, and Proselytes* (BJS 290 / SPhiloM 2; Atlanta 1996), 150–152; Nave, *Repentance in Luke-Acts*, 89.

[49] Cf. also *Deus* 7–9; *Mos.* 2.130; *Praem.* 80–81. Nave (*Repentance in Luke-Acts*, 91) refers to *Fug.* 160, which expresses in different wordings a similar idea: "The man who, lying against the truth, maintains while still doing wrong that he has converted (μετανενοηκέναι), is a madman. It is just as if the sick man were to act the part of the healthy man: he will clearly get worse through declining to have recourse to any means conducive to health." This passage confirms our observations in the main text that the harmony between speech, thoughts, and acts is a necessary precondition for being converted.

> bringing all the notes of the thing that is good (τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ) into tune, bringing speech into harmony with intent, and intent with deed, such a one would be considered perfect and of a truly harmonious character. (Philo, *Post.* 85–88)

In this passage, Philo explains that the good thing consists of three parts: speech, thoughts, and actions. All three parts have to be good in order to arrive at the good thing. One fails when only one part is good, while the others are shameful and bad. In that case, one is both not truly good nor contributes to the good thing in one's environment. The importance ascribed to harmonious life in *Post.* 85–88 may explain the place conversion to harmonious life has in the conversion process described in *De paenitentia*. Philo presumably implies that one cannot truly convert to piety and to all other virtues without harmoniously saying, thinking, and doing what is good.[50] Otherwise, with only one part of ourselves being pious or virtuous, conversion would be insincere. In that case, one is not completely pious or virtuous but still (partly) evil. I would therefore suggest that, for Philo, conversion to harmonious life does not follow upon conversion to virtue as conversion to virtue follows upon conversion to piety. Rather, this conversion to harmonious life is an underlying condition that makes it possible to arrive at the improved state brought about by the two other conversions.

This conversion to harmonious life could be interpreted as Crook's fourth rhetorical convention, patronal synkrisis, as a comparison of one's past disharmonious state and one's excellent present harmonious state in order to ascribe honour to God.[51] However, as was noticed with regard to conversion to virtue (cf. §2.2.2), this understanding is a one-sided portrayal of what Philo's notion of conversion entailed. Although conversion to harmonious life might be implicitly honouring of God, its primary objective is descriptive. In Philo's view, conversion to harmonious life refers to a change between two actual states of life, harmony and disharmony. This conversion is a necessary precondition of being truly pious and virtuous. It therefore has not just a rhetorical function aimed at honouring God. As with regard to conversion to virtue (cf. §2.2.2), Crook's fourth rhetorical convention has to be adjusted for the primary function patronal synkrisis has.

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[50] This is also implied by Dietrich, *Umkehr*, 295–296.
[51] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 117–132, summarized in §1.2.2.

2.3

THE POST-CONVERSION STAGE

It becomes clear from *De paenitentia* that, according to Philo, conversion is not the final stage in the conversion process. Although conversion is the most important part of this process, its results are taken into account by Philo as well. One of the results relates to the relationship between God and convert, the other to the new community a convert enters into.

2.3.1
RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

In the previous discussion, it has been pointed out several times (cf. §2.1, §2.2.1, §2.2.3) that, unlike Crook's rhetorical convention of the patronal call,[52] Philo indicates that the God-convert relationship is inaugurated by the convert, by his conversion. In other words, a convert's conversion results in the establishment of a relationship with God.[53] In *De paenitentia*, when Deut 26:17–18 is interpreted,[54] this aspect is denoted as a "mutuality of choice." Philo believes that a convert's choice for God is reciprocated by God's choice for him:

> … Therefore, excellently, and in agreement with the things discussed, this saying was used: "You chose God today to be God to you, and the Lord chose you today to become a people to Him" [Deut 26:17–18]. [185] Very excellent is the reciprocation of choice (τῆς αἱρέσεως ἡ ἀντίδοσις), when man hastens to serve (θεραπεύειν) the Existent and God hastens without delay to take the suppliant to Himself and anticipates the will of him who honestly and sincerely comes into His service (ἐπὶ τὴν θεραπείαν αὐτοῦ). … (Philo, *Virt.* 184–185)

Although, in full accordance with Philo's views on freedom and determinism,[55] God is spoken of as anticipating the choice of a prospective convert, it is the will of the convert that initiates the relationship with God. God is portrayed as rather passive, as awaiting the choice the prospective convert will make. This presentation differs therefore from the active role Crook's

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[52] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 93–100, summarized in §1.2.2.
[53] See also, although speaking of "reconciliation," Nave, *Repentance in Luke-Acts*, 95.
[54] Deut 26:17–18 (NRSV): [17] Today you have obtained the LORD's agreement: to be your God; and for you to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, his commandments, and his ordinances, and to obey him. [18] Today the LORD has obtained your agreement: to be his treasured people, as he promised you, and to keep his commandments; ….
[55] See Wilson, *Philo of Alexandria* On Virtues, 375.

rhetorical convention of the patronal call has accorded to a deity in inaugurating a relationship with a client.[56]

The relationship that is established between God and a convert may be interpreted as a patron-client relationship. In this way, Crook's description of how Philo innately understood his God as a patron/benefactor would be supported.[57] In *De paenitentia*, however, Philo is not very explicit about the patronal character of the God-convert relationship. God and his benefactions are never referred to with the word εὐεργέτης ("benefactor") or its cognates nor—contra Crook's fifth rhetorical convention[58]—with the word χάρις ("benefaction") or its cognates. Neither are any "praise, prayer, and proselytism" (Crook's third rhetorical convention[59]) found in *De paenitentia*. On the contrary, Philo describes the relationship between God and convert with only general references to worship, service, and assigning honours.[60] It is therefore difficult to make some firm conclusions about the patronal character of the God-convert relationship on the basis of this terminology.

Nevertheless, the references to service and supplication in *Virt.* 184–185 (cited above) may give us a clue about the patronal character of the God-convert relationship. Service and supplication on the part of the convert seem to have been for Philo important aspects of the God-worshipper relationship. The combination of both aspects is found throughout Philo's oeuvre,[61] while the reference to service specifically harks back to Philo's primary characterization of piety as the service of God.[62] The service and supplication language is retained in the continuation of *Virt.* 184–185 as well:

> ... And the true servant and suppliant (ὁ δ' ἀληθὴς θεραπευτής τε καὶ ἱκέτης), even though he happens to be one man in number, is in power, insofar as he makes his own choice, the whole people, equal in value to a complete nation. (Philo, *Virt.* 185)

As mentioned before, this type of language is too general in *De paenitentia* so as to make firm conclusions about the patronal character of the God-convert relationship. Elsewhere in Philo's oeuvre, however, service and supplication can be explained as the means of a client to request

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[56] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 93–100, summarized in §1.2.2.
[57] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 85–88, summarized in §1.2.1.
[58] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 132–148, summarized in §1.2.2.
[59] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 108–117, summarized in §1.2.2.
[60] *Virt.* 179: they have assigned honours (τὰς τιμὰς προσένειμαν); to worship (σέβειν). *Virt.* 180: honouring (θαυμάσας). *Virt.* 181: honour (τιμή). *Virt.* 185: to serve (θεραπεύειν); service (θεραπείαν).
[61] Cf. *Congr.* 105; *Det.* 160; *Migr.* 124; *Spec.* 1.42, 309, 312; *Virt.* 221.
[62] Cf. *Abr.* 129; *Decal.* 108; *Det.* 21, 55, 56; *Mos.* 2.66; *Sacr.* 37; *Spec.* 1.317.

or secure more (patronal) benefits,[63] to express thankfulness,[64] and to express loyalty and love.[65] This makes the connection with Crook's model much stronger. It is also in agreement with the observation that references to service and to supplication can be found in contexts in which God is characterized as a benefactor (εὐεργέτης) or his gifts as benefactions (εὐεργεσία / χάρις).[66] We may therefore conclude that, in general terms, the God-convert relationship established by conversion agrees with Crook's model of patronage and benefaction.

2.3.2
ENTRANCE INTO THE JEWISH POLITY

Another result of being converted is one's entrance into the Jewish polity.[67] This socio-political result of conversion is a major deviation from Crook's model of patronage and benefaction. Even though Crook works from the assumption that "ancient and many non-Western people are collectivistic, dyadic, and unbounded,"[68] meaning that a self was constructed in relation to his social environment, Crook pays almost exclusive attention to the social relationship between a client and his patron. He shows no awareness that conversion, beside the establishment of a patronal relationship between a convert and his deity, may lead to new socio-political allegiances. It is to be expected, however, that a convert will enter into a new group of client-worshippers after his conversion.

Philo includes a change of socio-political allegiances in his description of the conversion process in *De paenitentia*. He shows us that conversion results in a convert's entrance into the Jewish polity.[69] This is expressed as early as the first paragraph of *De paenitentia*, when Philo describes how Moses urges everybody everywhere to pursue piety and justice, and offers to those who convert entrance into the Jewish polity:

> The most holy Moses, being a lover of virtue and of goodness and especially of the human race, urges everyone everywhere to become followers of piety and justice, setting up great prizes, as to the victorious, to those who convert (τοῖς μετανοοῦσι): membership

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[63] Esp. in the case of supplication: *Abr.* 6; *Congr.* 109; *Her.* 15, 186; *Leg.* 3.213–215; *Mos.* 1.128, 273; 2.166; *Praem.* 56; *Spec.* 1.42, 45; 2.196, 203, 209, 218. Cf. also *Her.* 8; *Mos.* 2.5; *Praem.* 166.

[64] Cf. *Spec.* 2.203.

[65] Cf. *Contempl.* 12; *Her.* 8; *Plant.* 38–39.

[66] Cf. *Deus* 36–37; *Ebr.* 144–145; *Her.* 37; *Leg.* 3.214–215; *Sacr.* 57–58, 127; *Somn.* 1.162; *Spec.* 1.43–45; 2.218–219; *Virt.* 41, 79.

[67] See also Nave, *Repentance in Luke-Acts*, 95. *Contra* Bekken, *Word*, 87–88; Borgen, "Proselytes," 64. Bekken and Borgon incorrectly refer to a convert's entrance into the Jewish polity as a conversion.

[68] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 33, summarized in §1.1.

[69] Philo must have implied that the convert left his first fatherland, family, and friends as well. Cf. *Praem.* 15–21; *Spec.* 1.51–53, 309; 4.178; *Virt.* 102–104.

in the best polity (πολιτείας κοινωνίαν τῆς ἀρίστης) and enjoyment of the things great and small in it. (Philo, *Virt.* 175)

The convert's entrance into the Jewish polity in *Virt.* 175 agrees with other passages in Philo's oeuvre in which proselytes are said to join the Jewish polity.[70] It seems that, for Philo, the allowance to converts of entrance into the Jewish polity functioned as a way to overcome the issue of descent associated with joining the Jewish nation.[71] As it happens, Philo never indicates that proselytes join the Jewish *nation* or *race* (ἔθνος/λαός/γένος).[72] This is understandable, since converts of foreign birth could never become "Jews" in a genealogical sense, and as a result they could never become a member of the Jewish nation. Entrance of converts to the Jewish polity was therefore a way for Philo to circumvent the problem of descent. This polity (πολιτεία) refers to both the laws of Moses, or, more broadly, the ancestral customs of the Jews as a form of government, and to the community of people who live according to this form of government.[73] Apparently, if converts came to share the Jewish laws and customs, Philo allowed them membership in the Jewish polity.

Elsewhere in *De paenitentia*, a passage can be found in which Philo discusses the entrance of converts into the Jewish polity from the Jewish point of view. When he describes conversion to piety (*Virt.* 178–179), Philo emphasizes that converts should be accepted by the native Jews. He uses friendship and kinship language to denote this acceptance:

> So all these [i.e., converts] who, although they did not think it worthy to worship the Creator and Father of all from the beginning, but later welcomed the rule of One instead of the rule of many, should be received as our dearest friends and closest kinsmen (φιλτάτους καὶ συγγενεστάτους). They have shown the greatest way to friendship and familiarity (εἰς φιλίαν καὶ οἰκειότητα), a character beloved by God, and we must rejoice with them (οἷς χρὴ καὶ συνήδεσθαι), as if, although being blind at the first, they had regained their sight, seeing from the deepest darkness the most brilliant light. (Philo, *Virt.* 179)

In this passage, Philo focuses on the relationship between converts and native Jews from the perspective of the native Jews. His emphasis on friendship and kinship parallels similar appeals elsewhere in his oeuvre.[74] One reason for this emphasis is Philo's awareness that a

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[70] Cf. *Spec.* 1.51–53; *Virt.* 219. Cf. also *Virt.* 108, an example with μέτοικος ("resident alien").

[71] This is also noted by Birnbaum, *Place of Judaism*, 214–215, 216–217.

[72] In fact, Philo often carefully distinguishes the incomers from the native, autochthonous Jews. Cf. esp. *Praem.* 151; *Spec.* 1.51–53; 2.118–119; *Virt.* 102–104.

[73] See Birnbaum, *Place of Judaism*, 214–215. See also the analysis in A. Kasher, *The Jews in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt: The Struggle for Equal Rights* (TSAJ 7; Tübingen 1985), 359–361.

[74] Cf. *Spec.* 1.51–53; *Virt.* 102–104.

friendly acceptance of converts by the native Jews means that these converts are not left destitute when they leave their family and friends—and the false beliefs and practices associated with them—upon their conversion.[75] Another reason finds its basis in the friendship that both native Jews and converts share in their mutual honouring of God. This is emphasized in another writing from the Exposition of the Law, *De specialibus legibus*:

> Thus, while giving equal rank to all incomers (ἄπασιν ἐπηλύταις) with all the privileges which he also gives to the autochthonous (τοῖς αὐτόχθοσι), he exhorts the old nobility (τοῖς εὐπατρίδαις) to honour them not only with marks of respect but also with special friendship (ἐξαιρέτῳ φιλίᾳ) and with more than ordinary goodwill (εὐνοίᾳ περιττῇ). And surely there is good reason for this; they have left, he says, their country, their kinsfolk and their friends for the sake of virtue and holiness (δι' ἀρετὴν καὶ ὁσιότητα). Let them not be denied other cities or families and friends, and let them find places of shelter standing ready for refugees to piety (πρὸς εὐσέβειαν). For the most effectual love-charm (φίλτρον ... ἀνυσιμώτατον) and the unbreakable bond of goodwill (δεσμὸς ἄλυτος εὐνοίας ἐνωτικῆς) is the unifying honour of the one God (ἐνωτικῆς ἡ τοῦ ἑνὸς θεοῦ τιμή.). (Philo, *Spec.* 1.52)

What Philo seems to emphasize in this passage as well as in *De paenitentia* is that belonging to the Jewish community is not dependent upon shared genealogical relations, but upon shared customs and beliefs—the most important of which, of course, is the acknowledgement and worship of the God of the Jews. This determines both the criteria for converted non-Jews to join the Jewish community as well as the relations between Jews and converted non-Jews within this community.[76] As it happens, it is this importance of sharing certain beliefs and practices over and against ethnic relationships which is further elaborated on by Philo in his *De nobilitate*, when he explains the distinction between genealogical and ethical nobility (cf. ch. 3).[77]

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[75] Cf. *Spec.* 1.51–53; 4.176–178; *Virt.* 102–104. Cf. also *Spec.* 2.118–119.

[76] See also Sterling's comments upon the extent of friendship in Philo. See G.E. Sterling, "The Bond of Humanity: Friendship in Philo of Alexandria," in *Greco-Roman Perspectives on Friendship* (ed. J.T. Fitzgerald; SBLRBS 34; Atlanta 1997), 217–221.

[77] See Alexandre, "Lexique des vertus," 30–31.

2.4

PATRONAGE AND BENEFACTION

IN RELATION TO CONVERSION IN *DE PAENITENTIA*

In the previous sections, Crook's conventions of the rhetoric of patronage and benefaction have been related to the various stages of the conversion process described by Philo in his *De paenitentia*. The results of this comparison offer only limited support for Crook's model. In *De paenitentia*, conversion is not brought about by a patronal call (cf. §2.1, §2.2.1, §2.2.3, §2.3.1), philosophical persuasion is not an adequate description of Moses' instructions (cf. §2.1), prayer, praise, and proselytism are never mentioned (cf. §2.3.1), the patronal synkriseis do not have a primarily patronal function (cf. §§2.2.1–3), and the χάρις ("benefaction") of the patron/benefactor does not appear at all (cf. §2.3.1). This means that on the basis of these conventions it cannot be concluded that the conversion process set forth in *De paenitentia* contains a patronal context.

It was possible, however, to connect Crook's model of patronage and benefaction to the post-conversion stage "Relationship with God" (§2.3.1). It is in this post-conversion stage, in which the convert's choice for God is reciprocated by God's choice for him, that a patron-client relationship seems to be established between God and convert. It has to be observed, nevertheless, that this happens *after* the prospective convert has passed through the conversion stage. This means that in Philo's mind conversion and the establishment of a God-convert relationship are two different things. The establishment of the God-convert relationship is not *part* of conversion, it is its *result*. We may therefore conclude that the context of patronage and benefaction is just a small aspect in the conversion process set forth in *De paenitentia*, and is not directly related to Philo's understanding of conversion as such.

This observation is supported with the different way Philo understood conversion in comparison with Crook in his model of patronage and benefaction. While Crook summarized the concept of conversion in Graeco-Roman Antiquity as either a client's wholesale change in patrons/benefactors or as a change within an already existing patron-client relationship,[78] Philo indicates that he regarded conversion as an improvement from a bad state to a good state of life (cf. §2.2). This general characterization of conversion governed the three specific conversions Philo identified in his *De paenitentia*: conversion to piety, conversion to virtue, and conversion to harmonious life—all three conversions being an improvement from a bad

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[78] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 255, summarized in §1.5.

state of life to a good one (in Philo's view). This understanding of conversion is obviously very different from Crook's definition of the ancient concept of conversion within the context of patronage and benefaction. As a result, Crook's model of patronage and clientage does not provide an adequate explanation for Philo's concept of conversion.

2.5

CONVERSION AS AN INDIVIDUAL, INNER EXPERIENCE IN *DE PAENITENTIA*

It has now been made clear whether, and to what extent, the conversion process as described by Philo in his *De paenitentia* agrees with the patronal context Crook's model of patronage and benefaction argues for. This has prepared the way for a discussion of the question whether, and to what extent, Crook's underlying argument in favor of the collectivistic construction of the self in Graeco-Roman Antiquity, rather than the modern Western, individualistic one, is correct with regard to the conversion process set forth in Philo's *De paenitentia*. It appears that Philo's concept of conversion is of a much more individual, even inner nature than Crook's model would allow.

Crook's model of patronage and benefaction is presented as an alternative to modern Western interpretations of conversion that understand conversion in Graeco-Roman Antiquity in psychological categories.[79] In Crook's view, conversion was at that time not regarded as an individual, introspective, and emotional experience,[80] but it related to a collectivistic, dyadic, and unbounded conception of self that constructs a self in relation to his social environment.[81] Crook's model of patronage and benefaction takes this different conception of self into account, as it has as its starting point the prevalent social relationship between patron and client.[82] According to Crook, conversion in Graeco-Roman Antiquity entailed a change in patrons, or a change within an already existing patronal relationship.[83] In other words, it was an external event, associated with actions, rather than an introspective experience.

Philo, on the contrary, seems to construe conversion as a very individual, even inner experience. This is striking in light of Crook's criticism of Western interpretations of conversion. Philo's concept of conversion takes the individual as its starting point, while

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[79] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 2–4, 13–52, 251–256, summarized in §1.1.

[80] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 13–15, 49–52, 252–253, summarized in §1.1.

[81] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 33, summarized in §1.1.

[82] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 52, summarized in §1.5.

[83] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 199, 255, summarized in §1.5.

collectivistic aspects only appear in the post-conversion stage. All three conversions concern a change of an individual: his belief in and worship of the God of the Jews (conversion to piety, see §2.2.1), his virtuous character and behavior (conversion to virtue, see §2.2.2), and his harmony between speech, thoughts, and actions (conversion to harmonious life, see §2.2.3). On top of this, the intellectual aspects of the three separate conversions (§§2.2.1-3)—and of the intellectual preliminary stage (§2.1)—suggest that, for Philo, the inner life of the individual is rather important. Although, like Crook's model, Philo has excluded psychological, emotional aspects from his concept of conversion, one's individual life is still represented in the importance attached to a right functioning intellect. We may therefore conclude that the individual, even inner character of Philo's concept of conversion is a huge deviation from Crook's model of patronage and benefaction.

2.6

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This chapter has shown us that Crook's model of patronage and benefaction could not adequately explain the conversion process described by Philo in his *De paenitentia*. Neither patronage and clientage nor the collectivistic construction of the self could account for Philo's understanding of conversion as such. In general, it seems that Crook, in his criticism of the Western psychological approach to conversion, pendulates too much to the other extreme. In his drive to prove that behavior in the ancient world was governed externally within a collectivistic construction of self, he excluded *all* aspects of inner life, and eradicated *all* individualism from the ancient understanding of conversion and understood conversion exclusively within the context of patronage and benefaction. In the case of Philo's concept of conversion, however, the situation is much more nuanced. Emotions are excluded, but the human intellect retained. Conversion is an individual experience, but has consequences for the social relations an individual enters into. The conversion process includes patronage and clientage, while conversion itself consists of other elements. A detailed analysis of the different way Philo understood conversion in his *De paenitentia* leads therefore to an important correction of Crook's understanding of the meaning of conversion in Graeco-Roman Antiquity.

3

PHILO'S FRAMEWORK OF ETHICAL NOBILITY
IN HIS *DE NOBILITATE*

The previous chapter has been concluded with the negative observation that Crook's model of patronage and benefaction, as described in his book *Reconceptualising Conversion*,[1] could not provide an adequate explanation for Philo's understanding of conversion in his *De paenitentia* (*Virt.* 175–186). A second step in evaluating and correcting Crook's model is to relate his framework of patronage and benefaction to the framework Philo himself provides for his understanding of conversion in *De nobilitate* (*Virt.* 187–227), the tractate following upon *De paenitentia* in *De virtutibus*. As was demonstrated in the introduction to this thesis, this treatise backed the argument in *De paenitentia*. Conversion as a means of attaining membership of the Jewish polity (*Virt.* 175, 179) is possible, because partaking in this polity is based upon an ethical notion of nobility (εὐγένεια), rather than a genealogical notion. This chapter will therefore go more deeply into the relationship between the concepts of conversion, nobility, and patronage in Philo's oeuvre. After reconstructing Philo's nobility discussion in *De nobilitate* (§3.1), it will be made clear how Philo's concept of conversion is placed within his framework of ethical nobility (§3.2). This will set the ground for a discussion (§3.3) of the relationship between nobility and patronage in Philo's literary corpus, in order to make clear whether, and to what extent, Crook's model is in agreement with Philo's framework of ethical nobility.

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[1] Z.A. Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion: Patronage, Loyalty, and Conversion in the Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean* (BZNW 130; Berlin 2004).

3.1

TRUE AND FALSE NOBILITY IN *DE NOBILITATE*

In his *De nobilitate*, Philo opposes his own true notion of ethical nobility (εὐγένεια) to his opponents' notion of genealogical nobility. This argument is set up in light of different views on the law. Philo believes that the law judges all people individually, while his opponents think that people are judged on the basis of the merits of their ancestors (*Virt.* 227). A genealogical notion of nobility would therefore dissuade Jews from living a virtuous life, and prevent non-Jews from being benefitted for their high excellence (καλοκἀγαθία) (226). In that case, non-Jews would not be encouraged to convert, and to become ethically noble.

3.1.1

GENEALOGICAL NOBILITY

Philo starts his *De nobilitate* with a description of the stance of his opponents. They advocate a genealogical form of nobility in which membership of the Jewish nation is based upon ancestry, and rewards and punishments of the law are distributed accordingly (*Virt.* 226–227). Already the opening paragraph of *De nobilitate* makes clear which notion of nobility is being challenged by Philo:

> Therefore also, those who hymn nobility (εὐγένεια) as the greatest good (μέγιστον ἀγαθὸν) and the source of other great goods (μεγάλων ἀγαθῶν αἴτιον) ought to be rebuked not in a moderate way, because in the first place they think that the descendants of rich and esteemed forebears (τοὺς ἐκ παλαιοπλούτων καὶ παλαιενδόξων) are noble (εὐγενεῖς), although neither did the ancestors from whom they boast to be descended find happiness in their abundant wealth, for the true good (τὸ πρὸς ἀλήθειαν ἀγαθὸν) does not naturally dwell in anything external, not yet in things of the body, and further not even in every part of the soul, but only in its governing part. (Philo, *Virt.* 187)

In this passage, Philo associates his opponents' notion of nobility with a certain type of descent, namely of being descended from rich and esteemed forebears (παλαιόπλουτος / παλαιένδοξος). Philo denies his opponents' claim that nobility—as they conceive it—is the greatest good, and the source of other great goods. Not only did the rich and esteemed ancestors not find happiness in their superabundance of possessions, but they actually put

their trust in the wrong aspects of life.[2] Like all other external things, as well as things related to the body and the non-sovereign parts of the soul, this type of nobility is not a true good. For Philo, the only true good possible is that residing in the mind, the governing part of the soul.

Although this opening paragraph suggests that the genealogical notion of nobility is restricted to descent from rich and esteemed forebears, this is not true for the rest of *De nobilitate*. It appears that Philo specifically addresses a different, more ethically defined type of genealogical nobility. The turning point in his presentation of the genealogical view on nobility is found in *Virt.* 189–190. In these paragraphs, Philo writes:

> [189] Therefore, since nobility (εὐγένεια) is the proper portion of a mind purified with complete purifications (κεκαθαρμένης διανοίας καθαρσίοις τελείοις), one must call only the temperate and just noble (εὐγενεῖς), even though they may happen to be born from homebred or purchased slaves; but to the wicked children born of good parents (τοῖς δὲ ἐξ ἀγαθῶν πονηροῖς γεγονόσιν) the landed property of nobility (τὸ εὐγενείας χωρίον) must be inaccessible. [190] For the fool (φαῦλος) has no home and no city, having been expelled from the native land of virtue (ἐκ πατρίδος ἀρετῆς), which is in very truth the native land of wise men (σοφῶν ἀνδρῶν ... πατρίς): with such a man ignobility (δυσγένεια) necessarily follows, even though he may be born from grandfathers or ancestors with blameless lives, for he pursues estrangement and separates himself very far away from nobility (τῆς εὐγενείας) in both words and deeds. (Philo, *Virt.* 189–190)

Whereas Philo's criticism of genealogical nobility related to wealth and esteem is still present in his discussion of the virtuous men descended from home-bred or purchased slaves, Philo seems to criticize a different notion of genealogical nobility in his case of the fool born from good, blameless ancestors. In the fool's case, his genealogical nobility involves descent from virtuous ancestors, which seems to be a rather ethical view on genealogical nobility.[3]

It is this ethically defined type of genealogical nobility which concerns Philo most in *De nobilitate*. This can be seen most clearly in his introductory paragraphs to the biblical examples that have to illustrate Philo's own notion of nobility:

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[2] Cf. *Virt.* 188: "For silver and gold and honours and offices and the good condition and beauty of body are like men set in command for ordinary purposes (ἐν ταῖς ἡγεμονίαις ἐπὶ χρειῶν) compared with the service to queenly virtue (πρὸς τὴν οἷα βασιλίδος ἀρετῆς ὑπηρεσίαν), ..."

[3] Still, Philo may have included this ethical descent among the "descendants of esteemed forebears" (ἐκ παλαιενδόξων) in *Virt.* 187, as Philo writes that the wicked are "irreconcilable enemies to nobility (εὐγένεια), since they destroy their ancestral reputation (τὸ προγονικὸν ἀξίωμα) and dim and extinguish as much as is illustrious in their family (ὅσον ἐν τῷ γένει λαμπρὸν)" (*Virt.* 191).

That he [i.e., Moses] held that nobleness (τὸ εὐγενὲς) lies in the acquisition of virtue (ἐν ἀρετῆς κτήσει) and assumes that its possessor (τὸν ἔχοντα ταύτην) is noble (εὐγενῆ) alone, but not whoever is born from excellent and good parents (καλῶν καὶ ἀγαθῶν ... γονέων), is clear from many examples. (Philo, *Virt.* 198)

Now these examples belong to the censurable class (τῆς ἐπιλήπτου τάξεως), wicked children born of good parents (ἐξ ἀγαθῶν πονηροὺς γενομένους), to whom the virtues (ἀρεταί) of their fathers were of no benefit, and the countless vices in their souls (αἱ ... ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ κακίαι μυρία) injured them. But I can cite others who are placed in the opposite and better (ἀμείνω) class, whose ancestors were reprehensible (ὑπαίτιοι) while their own life was worthy of emulation (ζηλωτὸς) and full of good report (ἀνάπλεως εὐφημίας). (Philo, *Virt.* 211)

And, indeed, of all biblical examples Philo cites—Cain (199–200), Ham (201–202), Adam (203–205), Abraham's sons except Isaac (207), Esau (208–210), Abraham (212–219), Tamar (220–222a), and Zilpah and Bilhah and their sons (222b–225)—, only the cases of Cain and of Zilpah and Bilhah and their sons do not challenge the ethically defined type of genealogical nobility.[4] All others are either examples of foolish children of good parentage, or of good men of wicked ancestry.

The importance Philo attaches to questioning the validity of the ethical notion of genealogical nobility lies in his conviction that this form of nobility is of no use when it comes to the rewards and punishments of the law. The law, of course, punishes on the basis of one's individual merits rather than those of one's ancestors. After a comparison with physically disabled people (*Virt.* 193), to whom the health of their ancestors is of no help, Philo writes:

In the same way, just (δίκαιοι) parents are of no use (ὄφελος) to the unjust (ἀδίκοις), nor temperate (σώφρονες) parents to the unbridled (ἀκολάστοις), nor, in general, good (ἀγαθοὶ) parents to the wicked (πονηροῖς), any more than the laws to law-breakers, whose chastisers they are; and also the lives of those who strived after virtue are unwritten laws. (Philo, *Virt.* 194)

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[4] In the case of Cain, Philo characterizes his parents Adam and Eve only very generally as being earth-born (γηγενής), highborn (εὐπατρίδης), and the first bridal pair (*Virt.* 199). This general characterization may imply an ethical descent, but the discussion of Adam's fall in *Virt.* 203–205 makes this unlikely. The case of Zilpah and Bilhah and their sons is much more explicit. In the discussion of their nobility—which starts off with a short digression on Tamar's status as freeborn (ἐλεύθερος), born from free (ἐλεύθερος) and not insignificant (οὐκ ἄσημος) ancestors (*Virt.* 223)—, the focus is explicitly on Zilpah's and Bilhah's change in status from handmaids and concubines to the position of Jacob's wives, almost equal in honour to their mistresses (*Virt.* 223), with their base-born sons receiving the same treatment as Jacob's legitimate children (*Virt.* 224).

In the proceeding account, Philo often returns to this observation. Throughout his discussion of the bad examples—the wicked children of good ancestry—, Philo emphasizes that nobility was of no use to these children (cf. *Virt.* 200, 202, 206, 210).[5] All were punished for their own misbehavior, instead of being rewarded for any form of genealogical nobility.

The only use Philo grants to the ethical form of genealogical nobility is to provide one with good examples. This is said in a fictive speech by personified nobility (*Virt.* 195–197):

> … and I [i.e., nobility] shall frown on them [i.e., the wicked] more than on those reproached for their ignoble birth (εἰς δυσγένειαν): for their defense is that they have no pattern of high excellence (παράδειγμα καλοκἀγαθίας) as their kin, but you stand accused, you who spring from great houses, whose boast and fame are their illustrious families; for, even though good models (ἀρχετύπων ἀγαθῶν) were set up beside you and, in a way, have grown up with you, you have never been minded to reproduce (ἀπομάξασθαι) anything excellent (καλὸν). (Philo, *Virt.* 197)

The point personified nobility wishes to make in this passage concerns the imitation of the models provided by one's ethical descent and to become virtuous oneself. As nobility says at the beginning of her speech: "Kinship (τὸ συγγενὲς) is not only measured by blood, if truth holds sway, but also by similarity of actions and pursuit of the same objects (πράξεων ὁμοιότητι καὶ θήρᾳ τῶν αὐτῶν)" (*Virt.* 195). If one does not succeed, one stands even more accused than the good men of ignoble descent. In fact, the wicked are alienated from nobility and will be regarded as nobility's enemies (*Virt.* 195–197). They are her mortal enemies, as they destroy their ancestral prestige (*Virt.* 191).[6]

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[5] Cf. also Philo's final remark in *De nobilitate*: "I do not know whether there might be any more harmful proposal than this, if avenging justice will not pursue the wicked acting children of good parents (τοῖς ἐξ ἀγαθῶν πονηρευομένοις) nor if honour will follow the good children of the wicked (τοῖς ἐκ πονηρῶν ἀγαθοῖς), for the law examines each man by himself (ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ) and does not praise or chastise one for the virtues or vices (ἀρεταῖς ἢ κακίαις) of one's kinsmen" (*Virt.* 227).

[6] In light of nobility's speech, it becomes very remarkable that virtuous people of ignoble ancestry may arrive at moral excellence and may become the standard of nobility for all proselytes (in the case of Abraham [*Virt.* 219]) or the starting point of nobility for all one's descendants (in the case of Tamar [*Virt.* 222a]). They have no good models provided for them by their lineage.

3.1.2

ETHICAL NOBILITY

Philo opposes this genealogical notion of nobility to his own view on nobility, which may be dubbed "ethical." In Philo's opinion, true nobility is part of the mind and lies in the acquisition of virtue:

> Therefore, since nobility (εὐγένεια) is the proper portion of a mind purified with complete purifications (κεκαθαρμένης διανοίας καθαρσίοις τελείοις), one must call only the temperate and just noble (εὐγενεῖς), even though they may happen to be born from homebred or purchased slaves; but to the wicked children born of good parents (τοῖς δὲ ἐξ ἀγαθῶν πονηροῖς γεγονόσιν) the landed property of nobility (τὸ εὐγενείας χωρίον) must be inaccessible. (Philo, *Virt.* 189)

This passage forms the conclusion to Philo's argument that the true good, that is, virtue, resides in the mind (cf. *Virt.* 187–188). He believes that only those who serve "queenly virtue" (*Virt.* 189), that is, the virtuous, can be called noble. This virtue, and therefore nobility, is not restricted on the basis of lineage, but is accessible to all who know and implement virtue. Philo therefore calls virtue "the native country of the wise" (σοφῶν ἀνδρῶν ... πατρίς), from which the fool (ὁ φαῦλος) is expelled (*Virt.* 190).

Philo's notion of nobility differs completely from his opponents' notion of genealogical nobility. On the one hand, true nobility is contrasted with the wrong notion of nobility by being associated with the mind instead of with external things or things related to the body and the non-sovereign parts of the soul. On the other hand, true nobility differs from genealogical nobility by consisting of one's own virtuous behavior and character rather than any inheritance of wealth, esteem, or virtue from one's ancestors. This complete reversal is best expressed in Philo's argument that the true good, that is, virtue, resides in the mind:

> For silver and gold and honours and offices and the good condition and beauty of body are like men set in command for ordinary purposes (ἐν ταῖς ἡγεμονίαις ἐπὶ χρειῶν) compared with the service to queenly virtue (τὴν οἷα βασιλίδος ἀρετῆς ὑπηρεσίαν), ... (Philo, *Virt.* 188)

In this passage, we see that the terminology is inverted. What in light of the genealogical notion of nobility would have been highly esteemed—silver, gold, honour, offices, and good condition and beauty of body—is now compared with men set in command for ordinary purposes (ἐν ταῖς ἡγεμονίαις ἐπὶ χρειῶν). In Philo's view on nobility, however, it is virtue—

and by implication those who are virtuous[7]—that is called "queenly," a very noble position from the point of view of genealogical nobility. As a result, Philo applies the flavor of genealogical nobility to his internalized interpretation of nobility.

Philo's distinction between the wrong, genealogical notion of nobility and the true, ethical notion of nobility accompanied him throughout his life and writings. He explicitly comments upon it elsewhere as well. This is not only the case in the Exposition of the Law (*Abr.* 219), the series of writings to which *De virtutibus* belongs, but also in his two other commentary series, the Allegory of the Law (*Post.* 42) and the Questions and Answers (*QG* 4.180). We may even point out that in a youthful essay of Philo's, *Quod omnis probus liber sit*, already comments about the relative importance of virtue in comparison with descent can be found (*Prob.* 109, 126, 149).[8] Philo has been aware of a virtue vs. descent discussion from an early age onwards. It is only in his commentary series, however, that Philo attributes this debate to the notion of nobility as such. It seems therefore that *De nobilitate* is an elaboration of what was already part of Philo's thought elsewhere in his writings. Only when Philo wished to explain the possibility of admission of non-Jews to the Jewish polity in *De paenitentia*, a more detailed discussion of the framework for his concept of conversion was warranted.

3.2

ETHICAL NOBILITY AS A FRAMEWORK
FOR PHILO'S UNDERSTANDING OF CONVERSION

The previous section has shown us what Philo's notion of true, ethical nobility in *De nobilitate* looked like and how it was opposed to the wrong, genealogical notion of nobility. We may now proceed with exploring how Philo's understanding of conversion, as described in *De paenitentia*, fits within Philo's framework of ethical nobility in *De nobilitate*. For this exploration, the positive examples in *De nobilitate*—good children of wicked ancestry—can be taken as a starting point. Although Philo never uses his word for conversion (μετάνοια) in this section, as far as contents are concerned these positive examples pass through the stages

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[7] See W.T. Wilson, *Philo of Alexandria On Virtues: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* (PACS 3; Leiden 2011), 390: "Since each virtue is sovereign over a certain aspect of life, the one who possesses them wields power like a king, e.g., *Leg.* 1.65; *Post.* 128; *Congr.* 18, 37; *Mut.* 89; *Somn.* 2.243; *Abr.* 15."
[8] This writing is devoted to a related topic as that of *De nobilitate*. See Wilson, *Philo of Alexandria* On Virtues, 415.

of Philo's concept of conversion.[9] It appears that (ethical) ignobility refers to one's pre-conversion state, while (ethical) nobility denotes the state after conversion has taken place.

3.2.1
ABRAHAM

We may start with Philo's most important positive example, Abraham (*Virt.* 212–219). In the climax of this extensive description, Abraham is called the standard of (ethical) nobility for all proselytes who exchange their ignobility for participation in the best polity (*Virt.* 219). In this way, Abraham is, for Philo, connected to proselytism in general, and therefore to his concept of conversion in *De paenitentia* in particular. Like all proselytes (cf. *Virt.* 219), Abraham knew a pre-conversion state. This state is called "ignobility" (δυσγένεια) by Philo. It refers to the religious implications of his (genealogical) non-Jewish descent. Being of Chaldaean stock, the son of an astrologer (212), Abraham was the son of those who spend their time with the astrological science, those who "think that the stars and the whole heaven and universe are gods" and assume "that there is no cause outside the things perceptible by the senses" (212). Abraham's supposed adherence to these tenets is referred to as the "ignobility" (δυσγένεια) in his soul:

> What could be more grievous or more capable of exposing the ignobility in the soul (τὴν ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ δυσγένειαν) than this, which, because of its knowledge of the many, the secondary, and the created, leads to an ignorance of the One, the Oldest, the Uncreated, the Maker of all and, on account of these things and countless others which the human reason because of their magnitude cannot grasp, of the Most Excellent? (Philo, *Virt.* 213)

As in *De paenitentia* (esp. *Virt.* 177, see §2.1), it is the intellectual aspect of religious conversion that makes Abraham's religious conversion possible. Abraham is said to have acquired insight (ἔννοια) and to have been divinely inspired (ἐπιθειασις) (214). This made him leave his native country, his race, and his paternal home (214). One is reminded of the conversion to piety described in *De paenitentia* (*Virt.* 178–179, see §2.2.1), when Abraham is said to wish to escape the delusions of the polytheistic creed and to replace it with truth (214). As in *De paenitentia* (*Virt.* 178, see §2.1), Abraham receives instructions, although not by Moses but by God himself:

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[9] This is also pointed out by Wilson, *Philo of Alexandria On Virtues*, 360.

At the same time, also, the oracles proclaimed to him (λόγια χρησθέντα) fanned his wish to know the Existent, and, being guided by these, he went on his search for the One with untiring zeal. And he did not stop before having received clearer visions (τρανοτέρας ... φαντασίας), not of His essence—for that is impossible—, but of His existence and providence. (Philo, *Virt.* 215)

It is because of this intellectual persistence that Abraham receives clear visions and ultimately arrives at a conversion to piety (cf. *Virt.* 178–179, see §2.2.1):

And, therefore, he [i.e., Abraham] is the first person spoken of as believing (πιστεῦσαι) in God, since he first got an unswerving and firm conception that there is one Cause above all, and that it provides for the world and the things in it. ... (Philo, *Virt.* 216)

As in *De paenitentia* (*Virt.* 180–182, see §2.2.2), this conversion to piety results in a conversion to all other virtues:

... And having gained faith (πίστιν), the most firm of the virtues (τῶν ἀρετῶν), he [i.e, Abraham] gained with it also the others [i.e., virtues], ... (Philo, *Virt.* 216)

After having passed through the conversion to piety and to virtue, Abraham arrived at a state that may be called nobility:

... so that by those who received him [i.e., Abraham] he was regarded as a king (βασιλεύς), not because of his means (ταῖς παρασκευαῖς)—for he was a commoner (ἰδιώτης)—, but because of the greatness of his soul (τῷ περὶ τὴν ψυχὴν μεγέθει), for his spirit was kingly (φρονήματος ... βασιλικοῦ). (Philo, *Virt.* 216)

Here Philo sets forth his notion that the sage alone is king. As in the introduction to *De nobilitate* (esp. *Virt.* 189, see §3.1.2), genealogical nobility is inverted in comparison to ethical nobility. As it happens, Abraham is not called a king with regard to his outward means (παρασκευή), for outwardly he is just a commoner. In this way, the genealogical notion of nobility is disparaged, for it values only external things (cf. *Virt.* 188). True, ethical nobility, on the contrary, esteems things with regard to the mind, that is, virtue (cf. *Virt.* 188). Therefore, with regard to the greatness of his soul, Abraham is described as having a kingly spirit—a very valuable state for those who adhere to a genealogical notion of nobility. It is this state of sovereignty, in which Abraham is regarded as king by those among whom he settled, that can be interpreted as the establishment of a relationship with God in *De paenitentia* (*Virt.* 184–185, see §2.3.1): God seems to have reciprocated Abraham's choice for

him when Philo writes that God gave Abraham imperial powers in order to benefit those around him (*Virt.* 218). In this respect, Abraham is called the standard of nobility for all proselytes who abandon the ignobility of their impious customs and come to the true, living polity (*Virt.* 219).

3.2.2

TAMAR

Philo's second example of good children born from wicked ancestors is Tamar, Judah's daughter-in-law (*Virt.* 220–222a). Like Abraham, Tamar seems to be significant within Philo's views on conversion. In the concluding statement of the description of her change, she is referred to as having become the starting point (ἀφορμή) of (ethical) nobility for all who come after her (222a). This means that Tamar, like Abraham (cf. *Virt.* 219), has become a kind of standard of nobility, to be imitated by future generations for the attainment of nobility.[10] Contrary to Abraham, however, Philo's description of Tamar's change is much shorter and focuses predominantly upon conversion to piety. This is already made clear in the opening statement:

> For this nobility (εὐγένειαν) not only did men beloved by God strive, but women also, when they unlearnt the ignorance of their upbringing concerning the honour of things wrought by hands, and were instructed in the knowledge concerning the rule of One, by which the world is governed. (Philo, *Virt.* 220)

The elaboration of Tamar's conversion to piety starts with the supposed ignobility of her pre-conversion state. As in the case of Abraham, her pre-conversion state is associated with the religious implications her (genealogical) non-Jewish descent had. Tamar's Syrian descent implies a wrong type of worship:

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[10] *Contra* those interpretations who translate ἀφορμή with "source/origin." See, e.g., M. Alexandre, "Le lexique des vertus: Vertus philosophiques et religieuses chez Philon: μετάνοια et εὐγένεια," in *Philon d'Alexandrie et le langage de la philosophie: Actes du colloque international organisé par le Centre d'études sur la philosophie hellénistique et romaine de l'Université de Paris XII-Val de Marne (Créteil, Fontenay, Paris, 26–28 octobre 1995)* (ed. C. Lévy; MonPhil; Turnhout 1998), 44; Wilson, *Philo of Alexandria On Virtues*, 88, 412. This interpretation suggests a genealogical notion of nobility. It is more probable that Philo means that Tamar's nobility makes it possible for later generations to become noble. As a starting point of ethical nobility, Tamar may be imitated (cf. *Virt.* 197).

Tamar was a woman from Palestinian Syria, being brought up in a house and city which acknowledged a multitude of gods and was full of wooden images and statues and idols in general. … (Philo, *Virt.* 221)

In agreement with the conversion to piety in *De paenitentia* (*Virt.* 178–179, see §2.2.1), Tamar's conversion to piety implies an intellectual turn from ignorance to knowledge, from darkness to light. This starts off, as in the intellectual preliminary stage (*Virt.* 177, see §2.1), with gaining some knowledge of where one has to convert to:

… But when she was able, as it were, from deep darkness to glimpse a little ray of truth, she deserted to piety (πρὸς εὐσέβειαν) at the risk of death, caring little to live, if it were not to live excellently: this living excellently she held to be nothing else than the service and supplication of the one Cause. (Philo, *Virt.* 221)

In *De paenitentia* (*Virt.* 180–182) and in the description of Abraham (*Virt.* 216), this conversion to piety is followed by a conversion to virtue. Tamar, however, is not explicitly described as converting ethically. Nevertheless, Philo does include a reference to her virtue. When he refers to the biblical story that Tamar was married to two sons of Judah in turn (cf. Gen 38:6–10), he concludes:

… but nevertheless, keeping her own life spotless (ἀκηλίδωτος), she was even able to obtain the good report which belongs to the good and to become the starting point of nobility (εὐγενείας ἀφορμὴ) to all those who came after her. (Philo, *Virt.* 222a)

This passage therefore implies that it is only after showing ethically correct behavior that a prospective convert may win the good report belonging to the good and may become an opportunity for nobility for later generations. In this way, Philo retains both conversion to piety and to virtue in Tamar's change from (ethical) ignobility to nobility.

3.2.3

ZILPAH AND BILHAH AND THEIR SONS

The third example Philo adduces consists of Jacob's concubines Zilpah and Bilhah and their sons. In this example, the focus is upon the social-political consequences of the conversion process described in *De paenitentia* (cf. *Virt.* 175, 179, see §2.3.2) rather than upon conversion as such. While Abraham and Tamar are not specifically referred to as entering any community after their conversion—although Abraham migrated from his native country and

Tamar married two of Judah's sons (*Virt.* 222a)—, in the case of Zilpah, Bilhah and their sons Philo pays much attention to their acceptance among Jacob's legitimate wives and children. Their supposed ignobility consists of their combined non-Jewish descent and slave status:

> Handmaids [i.e., Zilpah and Bilhah] born beyond the Euphrates, in the extreme parts of Babylonia, were given as dowry to their mistresses [i.e., Leah and Rachel] when they were married, …. (Philo, *Virt.* 223)

Philo does not dwell upon the religious and moral implications of Zilpah's and Bilhah's non-Jewish and slave status, but it seems to be implied in his thinking. At the very least, the event that brings about their change in status implies a kind of conversion on their part:

> … but when they [i.e., Zilpah and Bilhah] had been judged worthy (ἄξιαι … κριθεῖσαι) to pass on to the wise man's [i.e., Jacob's] bed, …. (Philo, *Virt.* 223)

The implication of this passage is that Zilpah and Bilhah were at first not believed to be worthy to pass on to Jacob's bed, while later on they were. Because of the reference to Jacob as a wise man, that is, a pious and virtuous person (cf. *Virt.* 186, 190), we may assume that Zilpah and Bilhah attained this (ethically) noble position through conversion. Their acquisition of (ethical) nobility resulted also in a change from (genealogical) ignobility to (genealogical) nobility:

> … they passed on, in the first place, from being concubines to the name and position of wedded wives and were made instead of handmaids, I want to say, almost equal in honour to their mistresses by whom, what is most incredible, they were promoted to the same dignity. … (Philo, *Virt.* 223)

Also, Zilpah and Bilhah's children with Jacob, although (genealogically) ignoble because of their non-Jewish and slave descent, were treated like Jacob's (genealogically) noble, legitimate sons:

> Secondly, the baseborn sons of these women differed in nothing from the legitimate sons, not only in the judgment of their begetter …, but also in the judgment of their stepmothers …. (Philo, *Virt.* 224–225)

It appears therefore that the conversion of Zilpah and Bilhah resulted for them and their sons in a change from ignoble concubinage and illegitimate descent to the noble status of married women and legitimate descent.

Although it is not explicitly stated as such, we may assume that the change Zilpah, Bilhah, and their sons experience stands for the change non-Jewish converts and their descendants undergo in *De paenitentia* when they enter the Jewish polity in the post-conversion stage (see §2.3.2).[11] With this interpretation, the way Philo ends his description of the change of Zilpah and Bilhah and their sons seems to contain an implicit appeal to treat converts in the Jewish polity with love and affection:

> … The brothers, though considered as half-brothers by birth, did not consider it worthy to show a half affection for each other, but, increasing twice as large the passion for loving and for being loved in return, they even filled up what seemed to be lacking, hastening to bring together the children born from both parentages in harmony and union of dispositions. (Philo, *Virt.* 225)

This passage can therefore be interpreted as a description of the ideal affectionate relationship between the (genealogically) ignoble converts and (genealogically) noble Jews in a polity of (ethically) noble people. In this way, it harks back to Philo's appeal in *De paenitentia* that religious converts "should be received as our dearest friends and closest kinsmen" (*Virt.* 179, see §2.3.2).

3.2.4

CONCLUSION

These three examples of good children born from wicked ancestors—Abraham (*Virt.* 212–219), Tamar (*Virt.* 220–222a), and Zilpah and Bilhah and their sons (*Virt.* 222b–225)—have shown us that Philo's description of the conversion process in *De paenitentia* fits within his framework of ethical nobility. First, the cases of Abraham and to a lesser extent that of Tamar make clear that the conversion stage described in *De paenitentia* (§§2.2.1–3) appeared in their change from (ethical) ignobility to (ethical) nobility. This change was made possible by a conversion to piety and to virtue.[12] Secondly, the intellectual character of conversion in *De*

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[11] This is also noted by Alexandre, "Lexique des vertus," 42.

[12] Conversion to harmonious life is not mentioned in *De nobilitate*, but this can be explained with the observation made already in §2.2.3 that this conversion consists of an underlying change with which the two other conversions are made possible. Elsewhere in *De nobilitate* it becomes clear that Philo does attach value to harmony between words, thoughts, and deeds. In the speech of personified nobility, in which she accuses those who adhere to a genealogical notion of nobility, Philo writes: "Why, then, although practicing estrangement by your deeds, do you in word hypocritically pretend kinship by putting on a specious name? For I also cannot endure clever wiles, because it is easy for anyone to find prettily-sounding words, but it is not easy to exchange bad dispositions with good ones" (*Virt.* 196). Elsewhere in his oeuvre, Philo calls harmonious people (ethically) noble (*Prob.* 155).

paenitentia, including its preliminary stage (§2.1), could be recognized in the intellectual aspects in Abraham's and Tamar's conversions, and the importance of the intellectual trigger with which their conversions started off. Thirdly, the post-conversion stage set forth in *De paenitentia* (§§2.3.1–2) was found in the results of the change from (ethical) ignobility to (ethical) nobility. In the case of Abraham a relationship with God was established, while Zilpah and Bilhah and their sons (and, less clearly, Abraham and Tamar) entered into a new, Jewish community. This means that all aspects of the conversion process in *De paenitentia* are found in the description of Philo's (ethically) noble examples in *De nobilitate*. We may therefore conclude that Philo's understanding of conversion was framed within his view on nobility.

3.3

PATRONAGE AND BENEFACTION
IN RELATION TO PHILO'S FRAMEWORK OF ETHICAL NOBILITY

Now it has been demonstrated how, for Philo, the conversion process described in *De paenitentia* was part of his view on nobility, it remains to be seen how Philo's framework of ethical nobility relates to Crook's model of patronage and benefaction. Philo seems to frame his concept of conversion in a completely different context than Crook's model argues for. He happens to write a section on nobility, rather than one on patronage and benefaction. This does not necessarily imply, of course, that Crook has it all wrong. It is possible that the positions of nobility and ignobility in Philo's framework of ethical nobility may implicitly relate to the positions of patron/benefactor and client in Crook's model. In that case, Philo's framework of ethical nobility would only be a different way of expressing Crook's model of patronage and benefaction.

In *De nobilitate*, some descriptions can be found that may confirm our observation in §2.3.1 that conversion results in a patron-client relationship between God and convert. That is, an ethically noble person accepts the position of client in a patron-client relationship with God. We may adduce both the descriptions of Abraham's and Tamar's change in *De nobilitate*. In the case of Abraham, the word πίστις is used to characterize the position of Abraham vis-à-vis God. Crook argues that this word may mean "(cliental) loyalty" in a

patron-client relationship,[13] but because of the many different meanings of πίστις ("faith")[14] the patronal character of the relationship between God and Abraham is not proven beyond question:

> And, therefore, he [i.e., Abraham] is the first person spoken of as being loyal (πιστεῦσαι) to God, since he first got an unswerving and firm conception that there is one Cause above all, and that it provides for the world and the things in it. ... (Philo, *Virt.* 216)

> ... [Abraham] was loyal (πιστεύσαντα) to none of the things in creation rather than to the Uncreated and Father of all ... (Philo, *Virt.* 218)

In a similar way, the relationship between Tamar and God is also denoted vaguely. When she is said to convert to piety, Tamar wishes to live excellently. This excellent life is identified with the service and supplication of God, the terminology of which—as we saw in *De paenitentia* (*Virt.* 184–185, see §2.3.1)—agrees in general terms with a God-client relationship:

> ... this living excellently she held to be nothing else than the service and supplication (τὴν θεραπείαν καὶ ἱκεσίαν) of the one Cause. (Philo, *Virt.* 221)

This means that, in the case of Abraham and Tamar, the patronal character of their relationship with God is a possibility. It could imply that ethically noble people assume the position of client in a relationship with God.

This patron-client relationship between God and an ethically noble person occurs more explicitly elsewhere in Philo's writings as well.[15] A good example is found in *De sobrietate* (55–58). In this rather lengthy passage, containing an interpretation of Noah's words "blessed is the Lord, the God of Shem" (Gen 9:26), God is said to be praised as a benefactor by the ethically noble people:

> [55] Surely, too, His [i.e., God's] gifts are such as shew a lavish hand. For while the words "Lord and God" proclaim Him master and benefactor (δεσπότης καὶ εὐεργέτης) of the world which is open to our senses, to that goodness which our minds perceive He is saviour and benefactor (σωτὴρ καὶ εὐεργέτης) only, not master or lord. For wisdom is rather God's friend than His servant. And therefore He says plainly of Abraham, [56] "Shall I hide anything from Abraham My friend?" (Gen 18:17). But he who has this portion has

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[13] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 209–214, summarized in §1.4.
[14] See the research of S.J.M. Sierksma-Agteres, "Paul among the Ancient Philosophers: Perspectives on *pistis*" (Ph.D. diss., University of Groningen, forthcoming).
[15] Cf. *Post.* 42; *Sobr.* 55–58; *Spec.* 1.51.

passed beyond the bounds of human happiness. He alone is noble (εὐγενής), for he has registered God as his father and become by adoption His only son, ... [57] ... [58] What, then, of him who has been deemed worthy of blessings so great, so transcendent, so multitudinous? What should he do but requite his Benefactor (τὸν εὐεργέτην) with the words of his lips with song and with hymn? That is, it seems, the inner meaning of the saying, "blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem." For it is meet that he who has God for his heritage should bless and praise Him, since this is the only return that he can offer, and all else, strive as he will, is quite beyond his power. (Philo, *Sobr.* 55–58)

In this passage, Philo makes plainly clear that the ethically noble people are the clients of God their patron. They have received great blessings (55, 58), which they can only reciprocate with praise (58). Apart from the terminology—God is called a benefactor (εὐεργέτης)—, we may also recognize Crook's third convention of the rhetoric of patronage and benefaction, viz. prayer, praise, and proselytism.[16] In general, Philo's description agrees very closely with Crook's notion of general reciprocity, in which the asymmetrical relationship between benefactor and client means that "a benefaction by definition can never be repaid with another benefaction; it must be repaid with honour, gratitude, and loyalty."[17] This suggests that Crook's model of patronage and benefaction adequately describes the relationship between God and an ethically noble person.

If we turn to other relationships ethically noble people may have, the relation of Philo's framework of ethical nobility to Crook's model of patronage and benefaction becomes more complicated. Crook's model assumes a link between social status and patronage/ benefaction—patrons and benefactors are generally of higher social status than their clients[18]—, but for Philo this social status is not necessarily dependent upon (ethical) nobility. In Philo's view, all people, irrespective of their ancestry, may attain (ethical) nobility (cf. §3.1.2). It is therefore unsurprising that a couple of passages in Philo's literary corpus suggest that ethically noble behavior could be characteristic of both patrons and clients. This means that, in these situations, the difference in social status must have been dependent upon other criteria than (ethical) nobility.

In Philo's corpus, two passages, *Spec.* 2.22 and *Prob.* 119, contain a reference to nobility in the context of a patron-client relationship between a ruler (patron/benefactor) and a city (client). In the first passage, *Spec.* 2.22,[19] it is the patron-ruler who is called noble. In this

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[16] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 108–117, summarized in §1.2.2.
[17] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 58.
[18] Esp. Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 65, 69, 72–73. With the exception of literary patronage, in which patrons and clients are near social equals.
[19] Another example of an (ethically) noble patron is found in *Ios.* 248.

passage, noble rulers act as benefactors to their cities by bestowing benefactions (χαρίζομαι) in the form of good things to their client-cities:

> And therefore, they have filled their cities with plenty and abundance, with order and peace; of no good thing have they mulcted them, all good things have they bestowed freely (χαριζόμενοι), unsparingly and unstintedly. These and the like are the actions of noble men (τῶν εὐγενῶν), and of rulers in the true sense. (Philo, *Spec.* 2.22)

In the other passage, *Prob.* 119, it is the client-town that is referred to as noble.[20] This passage recounts the loyalty (πίστις) of the Xanthians to Julius Caesar, their benefactor (εὐεργέτης), during the attack of Brutus' army on their city:

> [118] Indeed we hear of whole populations voluntarily suffering annihilation to safeguard their liberty and at the same time their loyalty (πίστεως) to dead benefactors (τῆς ... εὐεργέτας). Such is the story told of the Xanthians in recent years. When one of the assassins of Julius Caesar, namely Brutus, marched with an army against them, ... [119] ... But when their [i.e., the Xanthians'] whole strength was spent, they drove their women and parents and children each to their several homes and there slaughtered them, and after piling the bodies in a heap fired it and slew themselves upon it, thus completing their allotted term as free men with a free and noble spirit (ἀπ' ἐλευθέρου καὶ εὐγενοῦς φρονήματος). (Philo, *Prob.* 118–119)

This shows us therefore that, for Philo, (ethical) nobility is not a sufficient criterion for determining the difference in social status between a patron/benefactor and a client. Rather, Philo seems to have believed that acting nobly may mean different things, depending on the situation and position of the noble persons involved. As Philo's notion of ethical nobility implies that all people, irrespective of their ancestry, may become ethically noble, this means that both patrons and clients can reach this position of ethical nobility and may act nobly. This means that ethical nobility, for Philo, does not necessarily imply a difference in social status, nor a patronal type of relationship.

It can therefore be concluded that Crook's model of patronage and benefaction relates only partly to Philo's framework of ethical nobility. As Crook pays only attention to the patron-client relationship between God and convert in his model—which, as we saw in §2.3.1, was one of the results of conversion—, he does not focus on the inner state of the convert, nor on the practical consequences conversion had for the relationships of the convert outside his relationship with God. For Philo, on the contrary, ethical nobility refers primarily to the

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[20] Another example of an (ethically) noble client is found in *Legat.* 332.

ethical state of one's character and behavior. Although the attainment of virtue has consequences for the relationships one maintains, both human and divine, it does not primarily denote these relationships but just the ethical state of a human being. This observation also applies to the attainment of piety. Crook's model is only able to describe the God-human relationship, because the attainment of piety (serving God) *results* in Philo's thinking in a patronal relationship with God (when God accepts the servant and supplicant). This means that Crook's model of patronage and benefaction only accords with the post-conversion stage "Relationship with God" (§2.3.1), but does not adequately explain Philo's larger framework of ethical nobility.

3.4

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this chapter, it has been made clear that Crook's model of patronage and benefaction does not adequately explain Philo's framework of ethical nobility. This means that Crook's model is not only unable to provide an adequate explanation for Philo's description of the conversion process in *De paenitentia* (cf. ch. 2), but his model is also unrelated to the framework of ethical nobility Philo himself provides in *De nobilitate* for his understanding of conversion. It seems that in Graeco-Roman Antiquity conversion does not *necessarily* have to be conceptualized within the framework of patronage and benefaction. For Philo, the patronal relationship between God and convert was only one of the areas in which his framework of ethical nobility could be applied. His framework amounted to something different, because it first entailed a view on the ethical state of a human being. Our analysis of Philo's framework of ethical nobility, in relation to his understanding of conversion, has provided us therefore with an example of a different tendency in framing concepts of conversion in Graeco-Roman Antiquity.

4

NOBILITY DISCUSSIONS

IN GRAECO-ROMAN ANTIQUITY

In the previous chapter, Philo's framework of ethical nobility in *De nobilitate* (*Virt.* 187–227) has provided us with a way of framing concepts of conversion in Graeco-Roman Antiquity that differs from that of Crook in his book *Reconceptualising Conversion*.[1] We may now proceed with an analysis of how Philo's framework of ethical nobility relates to nobility discussions in his Graeco-Roman context.[2] With this analysis, a third step in evaluating and correcting Crook's model can be carried out. While Crook argues that his framework of patronage and benefaction for conversion in Graeco-Roman Antiquity could be placed within the general cultural context of the Graeco-Roman institution of patronage and benefaction,[3] this chapter will demonstrate that Philo's framework of ethical nobility has to be placed within a different context. First (§4.1), it will be shown how Philo's nobility discussion can be placed in debates about nobility in his Graeco-Roman context. Then (§4.2 and §4.3) the place of change/conversion and admission to a polity or nation in Philo's framework of ethical nobility will be related to that in the general Graeco-Roman nobility debate. Finally, this chapter, like the previous one, will be concluded with a discussion (§4.4) of how Crook's model of patronage and benefaction relates to the nobility discussions in Antiquity in general, in order to make clear whether, and to what extent, Crook's model agrees with these discussions.

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[1] Z.A. Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion: Patronage, Loyalty, and Conversion in the Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean* (BZNW 130; Berlin 2004).

[2] Due to limited time and space, it is not possible to explore Philo's complete cultural-historical context. I have restricted my exploration in various ways: (1) Only Philo's gentile Graeco-Roman context up to and including the 3rd cent. CE has been taken into account, with the exception of Josephus, another Jewish writer assimilated to his Graeco-Roman context; (2) Only important Greek-writing historians, orators, and philosophers have been examined, with the exception of Seneca, an important Stoic author writing in Latin; (3) Only passages with the words εὐγένεια ("nobility") or δυσγένεια ("ignobility") and their cognates have been considered, as Philo refers with these words to the noble and ignoble positions in his nobility discussion. These passages have been found with the help of the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*® (University of California).

[3] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 5, 67–89.

4.1

DISCUSSIONS OF TRUE AND FALSE NOBILITY

IN GRAECO-ROMAN ANTIQUITY

Philo's nobility discussion in *De nobilitate* seems to have been part of a wider debate on the meaning and value of nobility in Graeco-Roman Antiquity. These discussions are especially found among philosophers, but appear among historians and orators as well. This interest in nobility has been explained by the historical situation that, by the time of Augustus, the number and influence of great families was diminishing in Roman society. The rise of new *nobiles* demanded a reassessment of nobility as a concept. Especially the relationship between nobility and virtue became a common topic, in particular in philosophical circles.[4] This wider debate was held in various ways, aspects of which also appear in Philo's *De nobilitate*.

We may start with the first type of nobility discussion. This discussion entails a debate about the relative unimportance of genealogical nobility compared to virtue. As it happens, at the beginning of his *De nobilitate*, Philo also disparages genealogical nobility in favour of virtue as not being a true good (*Virt.* 187–188). This nobility vs. virtue debate is found throughout Antiquity,[5] but is nicely expressed by the Middle-Platonist Plutarch (46–after 119 CE) in his comments upon the attempt of the Spartan general Lysander (d. 385 BCE) to reform the royal succession in Sparta:

> And it seemed but natural justice, in a way, that the best of the best (τὸν ἐξ ἀρίστων ἄριστον) should rule in a city which had the leadership in Hellas because of his virtue (δι' ἀρετήν), and not because of his noble birth (δι' εὐγένειαν). For just as a hunter looks for a dog, and not the whelp of a certain bitch, and a horseman for a horse, and not the foal of a certain mare (for what if the foal should prove to be a mule?), so the statesman makes an utter mistake if he enquires, not what sort of a man the ruler is, but from whom he is descended. ... And if vice (κακία), even in one of ancient family (μετὰ γένους), is dishonourable, then it must be virtue (ἀρετὴ) itself, and not noble birth (δι' εὐγένειαν), that makes virtue honourable. (Plutarch, *Comp. Lys. Sull.* 2.1–2 [|| *Lys.* 24.4–5])

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[4] An introduction to this historical situation is found in W.T. Wilson, *Philo of Alexandria On Virtues: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* (PACS 3; Leiden 2011), 381, with a reference to D.W.T.C. Vessey, "The Stoics and Nobility: A Philosophical Theme," *Latomus* 32 (1973): 332–334.

[5] Cf. Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 4.3.18; Herodian, *Excess. divi Marci* 5.1.5-6; Onasander, *Strat.* 1.21–2.4; Plutarch, *Ti. C. Gracch.* 4.1. Cf. also those passages which speak only of (genealogical) nobility/ignobility as being unimportant, indifferent, or evil: Diogenes Laërtius, *Vit. phil.* 2.31 (Socrates), 94 (school of Hegesias); 6.72 (Diogenes), 104 (the Cynics); 7.102 (Zeno); Plutarch, *Adol. poet. aud.* 35e; *Comp. Lys. Sull.* 2.1–2; *Exil.* 606e; *Lys.* 24.3; *Tranq. an.* 475b; Seneca, *Ep.* 117.9.

It seems that Plutarch, at least in the case of the appointment of kings in Sparta, agreed with Lysander that the virtue of the candidate was more important than his ancestry. However, contrary to Philo in his *De nobilitate*, in this type of discussion the meaning of nobility itself is not redefined as constituting moral excellence.

Another type of discussion involved the ethical implications good ancestry had for its descendants.[6] This discussion is interesting in light of the value Philo himself attaches to genealogical nobility in his fictive speech of nobility (*Virt.* 195–197). Although Philo believes that genealogical nobility has no inherent value itself, he has personified nobility to accuse the fools of good descent for not considering reproducing the good models provided by their noble lineage (197). This accusation relates to the concern found throughout Graeco-Roman Antiquity, especially in Plutarch's writings, for being worth one's nobility, for not putting one's inherited nobility to shame.[7] In other words, one has to act in accordance with one's (genealogical) nobility. This is for example emphasized by the Greek rhetorician Aelius Aristides (117–180 CE) in his *Rhodian Oration* (*Or.* 25), a speech of consolation to the Rhodians after an earthquake had ruined their city (142 CE):

> Therefore it is especially fitting for you [i.e., the Rhodians] to be desirous of handling the present circumstances with good cheer and nobility (εὐκόλως καὶ γενναίως), because you have many observers and witnesses as to how you shall carry through. And it is fair and an act of the Rhodians to show to them your abundant nobility (τῆς εὐγενείας τὴν περιουσίαν), that even if your walls fell ten times, the dignity of the city (τὸ ... ἀξίωμα τῆς πόλεως) will not fall, so long as one Rhodian is left, but it will remain firm and sound, so that they may not share your grief rather than admire you, nor remember your city with mourning, but with envy toward the survivors, nor may send missions to console you, but that you may do this for them preserving the ancestral pride of the Dorians (τὸ πάτριον τοῖς Δωριεῦσι ... φρόνημα), which is now exhibited in you alone, or at least in the largest measure among the Greeks.[8] (Aristides, *Rhod. Or.* 42 [*Or.* 25])

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[6] This discussion is also described by G.H. van Kooten, "Philosophical Criticism of Genealogical Claims and Stoic Depoliticization of Politics: Greco-Roman Strategies in Paul's Allegorical Interpretation of Hagar and Sarah (Gal 4:21–31)," in *Abraham, the Nations, and the Hagarites: Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Perspectives on Kinship with Abraham* (ed. M. Goodman, G.H. van Kooten, and J.T.A.G.M. van Ruiten; TBN 13; Leiden 2010), 368–372.

[7] Cf. Aristides, *Rhod. Or.* 42 (*Or.* 25); Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 1.70.4; 1.81.3; Herodian, *Excess. divi Marci* 5.1.5–8; Isocrates, *Areop.* 76 (*Or.* 7); *Bus.* 10 (*Or.* 11); Lucian, *Hist. conscr. sit* 26; Plutarch, *Adol. poet. aud.* 34d; *Ag. Cleom.* 32.1; *Apoph. lac.* 226a–b; *Cat. Min.* 73.4; *Fort. Rom.* 320e; *Her. mal.* 859a; 863f; *Mar.* 9.3; *Praec. ger. rei publ.* 798b; *Thes.* 7.2; *Vit. pud.* 535b.

[8] Cited according to the translation in C.A. Behr, *P. Aelius Aristides: The Complete Works* (2 vols.; Leiden 1981–1986), 2:66–67.

Right education and instruction may stimulate this nobility-appropriate behavior,[9] as Plutarch's introduction to the character and education of the well-born Caius Marcius Coriolanus suggests:

> The same man [i.e., Marcius] also bore witness for those who hold that the high-born and good nature (τὴν φύσιν ... οὖσα γενναία καὶ ἀγαθὴ) if it lacks education (παιδείας), is apt to produce much that is mean along with its better fruits, like a noble (εὐγενῆ) soil deprived of the husbandman's culture. (Plutarch, *Cor.* 1.2)

In light of Philo's comments in the speech of personified nobility (*Virt.* 195–197), we may also mention the appeal found in some Graeco-Roman authors who urge descendants to imitate their ancestral virtue.[10] A nice example, although with a reference to ethical nobility, is found in the *Antiquitates romanae*, written by the Greek historian Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*fl.* ca. 20 BCE). In his introduction, Dionysius explains that his description of the illustrious men of the early Roman period may promote an (ethically) noble life among Romans of later time:

> And again, both the present and future descendants of those godlike men [i.e., the illustrious men of the early Roman period] will choose (αἱρεῖσθαι), not the pleasantest and easiest (τὸν ἥδιστόν τε καὶ ῥᾷστον) of lives, but rather the noblest and most ambitious (τὸν εὐγενέστατον καὶ φιλοτιμότατον), when they consider that all who are sprung from an illustrious origin ought to set a high value on themselves (μέγα ἐφ' ἑαυτοῖς ... φρονεῖν) and indulge in no pursuit unworthy (μηδὲν ἀνάξιον ἐπιτηδεύειν) of their ancestors. (Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 1.6.4)

In this passage, Dionysius comes quite close to the value Philo attaches to the imitation of one's ancestral models for becoming ethically noble (*Virt.* 197). Dionysius likewise suggests that the choice for the right and noble type of life can be facilitated by the provision of good ancestral models. However, unlike Philo in his *De nobilitate*, Dionysus—like this type of discussion in general—does not redefine the meaning of nobility as such.

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[9] Cf. Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 10.9.3; Cassius Dio, *Hist. Rom.* 52.26.4; Plutarch, *Cor.* 1.2; *Sert.* 14.2. Cf. also those passages in which it is unclear whether genealogical or ethical nobility is referred to: Diogenes Laërtius, *Vit. phil.* 7.8 (Zeno); Epictetus, *Diatr.* 2.20.34; Plato, *Pol.* 310a; *Resp.* 375a.

[10] Cf. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 1.6.4; Plato, *Menex.* 237a (cf. 236e; 248e).

It is in the third type of discussion that the notion of nobility as such is redefined.[11] This discussion is found throughout Antiquity.[12] It appears that even some Graeco-Roman philosophers wrote—or, more likely, were credited to have written—treatises on nobility.[13] These *De nobilitate*'s show that there was an interest in the position of philosophers on nobility, an interest in which Philo's *De nobilitate* shared. Among these discussions, other authors—philosophers as well as orators and historians—arrived at the same conclusion as Philo did, namely, that true nobility entailed moral excellence rather than good ancestry.[14] This discussion had its roots in Greek philosophy, but in the Roman Empire this ethical definition may have been rooted in and—although not exclusively—may have been a characteristic of the Stoic school.[15] As an example, a speech of Dio Chrysostom (ca. 40–ca. 112 CE) has to be introduced. Dio, a Greek orator and popular philosopher with Stoic and Cynic roots, devoted his speech *De servitute et libertate ii* (*Or.* 15) to the question of who is a slave and who is free (cf. *2 Serv. lib.* 2). The speaker that is accused of being a slave believes that only those persons who are unfree (ἀνελεύθερος) and servile (δουλοπρεπής) in nature have to be called slaves (29). This ethical definition is also applied to those who are called high-born (γενναίος) and noble (εὐγενής):

> The case is the same with those known as high-born (γενναίους) and noble (εὐγενεῖς). For those who originally applied these names applied them to persons who were good (εὖ) in respect to virtue (πρὸς ἀρετήν), not bothering to inquire who their parents were. Then afterwards the descendants of rich and esteemed forebears (οἱ ἐκ τῶν πάλαι πλουσίων καὶ τῶν ἐνδόξων) were called noble (εὐγενεῖς) by some people. (Dio Chrysostom, *2 Serv. lib.* 29 [*Or.* 15])

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[11] For similar descriptions of this discussion in relation to Philo, see M. Alexandre, "Le lexique des vertus: Vertus philosophiques et religieuses chez Philon: μετάνοια et εὐγένεια," in *Philon d'Alexandrie et le langage de la philosophie: Actes du colloque international organisé par le Centre d'études sur la philosophie hellénistique et romaine de l'Université de Paris XII-Val de Marne (Créteil, Fontenay, Paris, 26–28 octobre 1995)* (ed. C. Lévy; MonPhil; Turnhout 1998), 36–39; Wilson, *Philo of Alexandria On Virtues*, 381-384. See also the description in Vessey, "Stoics and Nobility," 334–344.

[12] Cf. Dio Chrysostom, *2 Serv. lib.* 29–32 (*Or.* 15); Diogenes Laërtius, *Vit. phil.* 3.88–89 (Plato); 6.10 (Antisthenes); Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 3.11.3-6; Seneca, *Ep.* 44.

[13] Today only a few (late) antique references to and fragments of these writings are preserved. They credit Aristotle (Plutarch, *Arist.* 27.2; Athenaeus, *Deipn.* 13.555d–556a; Diogenes Laërtius, *Vit. phil.* 5.22; Stobaeus, *Flor.* 29.24, 25, 52), Metrodorus, a pupil of Epicurus (331/0–278/7 BCE) (Diogenes Laërtius, *Vit. phil.* 10.1, 24), Diogenes of Babylon, the head of the Stoic school (3rd/2nd cent. BCE) (Athenaeus, *Deipn.* 4.168f), and Plutarch (Stobaeus, *Flor.* 29.21, 22, 51) with writing *De nobilitate*'s. Only of the writings attributed to Aristotle and Plutarch have enough contents been preserved so as to be able to identify the position advocated. It turns out that both writings argue for an ethically defined type of genealogical nobility.

[14] Cf. Dio Chrysostom, *2 Serv. lib.* 29–32 (*Or.* 15); Diogenes Laërtius, *Vit. phil.* 3.88–89 (Plato); 6.10 (Antisthenes); Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 3.10.3–6; Seneca, *Ep.* 44.

[15] See D. Loenen, *Eugeneia: Adel en adeldom binnen de Atheense demokratie* (Kartons; Amsterdam 1965), 67–74; Vessey, "Stoics and Nobility," 334; Wilson, *Philo of Alexandria On Virtues*, 383. For an example of a non-Stoic author advocating the ethical notion of nobility, see Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 3.11.5.

In this passage, Dio makes a clear distinction between the original ethical notion of nobility and the later developed genealogical notion of nobility. The accused person—and probably Dio as well—prefers the original, ethical notion of nobility, as he makes clear later on:

> And so when a man is excellent (καλῶς) in respect to virtue (πρὸς ἀρετὴν), it is right to call him high-born (γενναῖον), even if no one knows his parents or his ancestors either. (Dio Chrysostom, 2 Serv. lib. 31 [Or. 15])

This passage shows that Dio's stance is remarkably similar to Philo's. Dio advocates the same ethical notion of nobility. Like Philo (esp. Virt. 189), he emphasizes that true nobility entails being virtuous without regard for one's ancestry. The wrong notion is genealogical nobility.

It can therefore be concluded that Philo, with his De nobilitate, participated in a wider debate on the meaning and value of nobility in Graeco-Roman Antiquity. The parallels with the various types of nobility discussions mentioned above show that Philo's De nobilitate takes a stance especially in the third type of nobility discussion. In fact, it turns out that other authors arrived at the same conclusions as Philo did. Philo must therefore have been aware of these nobility discussions as well—at least he was aware of the historical situation of the new nobiles[16]—, and must have applied the nobility discussion to his conception of partaking in the Jewish polity in De virtutibus.

4.2

THE PLACE OF CHANGE WITHIN
THE GRAECO-ROMAN NOTION OF NOBILITY

The previous section has shown us how Philo's discussion of nobility related to the general nobility debate in Graeco-Roman Antiquity. We may now proceed with the question of what place conversion has in the Graeco-Roman understanding of nobility. In §§3.2.1–4, it was demonstrated that Philo believed that the change from (ethical) ignobility to (ethical) nobility was brought about by conversion. This means that, for Philo, (ethical) nobility is not an inbred quality, but a quality that could be attained or lost during one's life time. It seems that this

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[16] Cf. Philo, Spec. 2.22–23, in which Philo contrasts the noble (εὐγενής) and true governors with the newly become rich (νεόπλουτος). Philo argues that the latter, because of a blunder of fortune, stumble on blind wealth, while the first have genuine wealth, i.e., virtue.

concept of conversion is a profound development of the possibility of change that could be part of the Graeco-Roman notion of nobility.

The Graeco-Roman author who comes closest to Philo's concept of conversion as part of his framework of ethical nobility is Seneca the Younger (ca. 4 BCE–65 CE). This Stoic orator, statesman, and philosopher is an exponent of the third type of nobility debate (cf. §4.1) and redefines the notion of nobility in the same ethical way as Philo does. This redefinition can be found in Seneca's 44th moral epistle *On Philosophy and Pedigrees*.[17] In this letter, Seneca reacts to the complaint of his addressee Lucilius that he is a nobody (*malignius*), being badly treated by both nature and fortune (*Ep.* 44.1). Seneca disparages the genealogical notion of nobility Lucilius adheres to and argues that true nobility entails being noble yourself irrespective of one's ancestry (*Ep.* 44.4–5). As philosophy adheres to the ethical notion of nobility, ethical nobility can be attained through the practice of philosophy. This happened with Plato[18]:

> Philosophy did not find Plato already a nobleman (*nobilem*); it made him one. (Seneca, *Ep.* 44.3)

Lucilius, too, may attain ethical nobility. In an inversion of genealogical and ethical nobility, which is similar to that of Philo (esp. *Virt.* 188), Seneca suggests that Lucilius may become free, that is, noble, when he pursues the good things that make life happy:

> Suppose, then, that you were not a Roman knight, but a freedman (*libertinum*), you might nevertheless by your own efforts (*potes hoc consequi*) come to be the only free man (*liber*) amid a throng of gentlemen (*ingenuos*). "How?" you ask. Simply by distinguishing between good and bad things without patterning your opinion from the populace. You should look, not to the source from which these things come, but to the goal towards which they tend. If there is anything that can make life happy, it is good on its own merits; for it cannot degenerate into evil. (Seneca, *Ep.* 44.6)

So it seems that Seneca, like Philo, believes that ethical nobility is not an inbred quality, but something to be attained during one's life time. This implies a change—or conversion—from ignobility to nobility. As in Philo's concept of conversion, the cause of this change may be intellectual. Seneca's instructions to Lucilius about the acquisition of ethical nobility may function similarly to those of Moses in Philo's *De paenitentia* (cf. *Virt.* 178, see §2.1) in

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[17] Cf. Seneca, *Ben.* 3.28.1.
[18] The irony in Seneca's statement is that Plato was of high descent, for he was born of an aristocratic Athenian family. As a result, genealogically speaking, Plato was already noble. See Vessey, "Stoics and Nobility," 335.

bringing about the conversion. Although Seneca does not develop his idea of conversion in such a profound way as Philo does, Seneca's instructions at least suggest that the change can be brought about by a form of Stoic philosophy in which the good things that make life happy, a life "with unalloyed freedom from care" and with "unshaken confidence" (*Ep.* 44.7), are pursued instead of the bad things that lead to unhappiness and to worries (*Ep.* 44.7).

The importance of philosophy in Seneca's 44th moral epistle in bringing about Lucilius' conversion relates to the importance of right education and instruction in becoming noble elsewhere in Graeco-Roman Antiquity. This importance is especially attested in contexts that fall partly under the second type of nobility discussion (§4.1). This group of authors suggests that (ethical/genealogical) nobility is an inherent/inherited quality that has to be further developed by right education or instruction.[19] In so far as one may become truly noble through right education, a change is implied. The position of this group of authors is most succinctly expressed by Zeno (ca. 335–ca. 263 BCE), the supposed founder of the Stoic school, in the *Vitae philosophorum* ascribed to Diogenes Laërtius (*fl.* 3rd cent. CE). When King Antigonus of Macedonia asked Zeno to instruct him (*Vit. phil.* 7.6–7), Zeno's supposed reply approved of Antigonus' wish of instruction as a way for noble natures to become noble by choice:

> I [i.e., Zeno] welcome your love of learning in so far as you cleave to that true education which tends to advantage and not to that popular counterfeit of it which serves only to corrupt morals. But if anyone has yearned for philosophy, turning away from much-vaunted pleasure which renders effeminate the souls of some of the young, it is evident that not by nature (φύσει) only, but also by choice (προαιρέσει) he is inclined to nobility (πρὸς εὐγένειαν). But if a noble nature (φύσις ... εὐγενὴς) be aided by moderate exercise and further receive ungrudging instruction, it easily comes to the perfect acquirement of virtue (πρὸς τὴν τελείαν ἀνάληψιν τῆς ἀρετῆς). (Diogenes Laërtius, *Vit. phil.* 7.8)

This passage shows us that those with an inbred nobility—genealogical or ethical, this does not become clear—could change to an ethical nobility with the help of philosophy, with training and with instruction. This implies that Zeno does not advocate a fully developed notion of conversion from an ignoble to a noble state as Philo does. It appears that one is first and foremost noble by nature. It can therefore be questioned whether Zeno would go so far as to claim that an ignoble nature may become (ethically) noble with right education. At the very

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[19] Positively, with right education one's inherent/inherited nobility will be retained: Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 10.9.3; Diogenes Laërtius, *Vit. phil.* 7.8 (Zeno); Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 1.6.4; Plato, *Pol.* 310a; *Resp.* 375a (cf. 374e, 376c); Plutarch, *Cor.* 1.2. Negatively, a lack of right education leads to the loss of one's inherent/inherited nobility: Epictetus, *Diatr.* 2.20.34. Cf. also Cassius Dio, *Hist. Rom.* 52.26.4; Plutarch, *Sert.* 14.2.

least, it may have been believed to be hard, given Zeno's reference to "easy" (ῥᾳδίως) in the acquisition of virtue by one of noble nature.

A similar ambivalence can be found among other authors belonging to the second type of nobility discussion (§4.1), those who emphasize the ethical implications a good ancestry has for its descendants by referring to persons acting worthily or unworthily of their good descent.[20] This implies that a change to (ethical) nobility or ignobility is possible, but that one has first and foremost an inbred, inherited form of (genealogical) nobility. It can therefore be doubted whether this group of authors would have adhered to a full-fledged notion of conversion from ignobility to nobility, as Philo did, if it concerned people of ignoble ancestry. This is at least explicitly denied in Antony's funeral speech of Julius Caesar in the *Historia Romanorum* written by the Roman historian Cassius Dio (ca. 150–235 CE):

> [1] ... I [i.e., Antony] shall speak first about his [i.e., Caesar's] lineage, though not because it is the most brilliant. Yet this, too, has considerable bearing on the nature of virtue (ἐς ἀρετῆς φύσιν), that a man should become good (ἀγαθὸν), not by an acting of one's own will (ἀπὸ ταὐτομάτου), but by inherited power (ἐκ παρασκευῆς συγγενοῦς). [2] Those, to be sure, who are not born of noble parents (ἐξ εὐγενῶν) may pretend to act as good men (ἀνδραγαθίζεσθαι), but may also some day be convicted of their base origin (τὸ κακογενὲς) by their inborn character (ὑπὸ τοῦ συμφύτου); those, however, who possess the seed of manly virtue (σπέρμα ἀνδραγαθίας), handed down through a long line of ancestors (ἐκ πολλοῦ), they all have necessarily and naturally and enduringly virtue (τὴν ἀρετήν). (Cassius Dio, *Hist. Rom.* 44.37.1–2)

In this passage, Antony rules out the possibility that a person of ignoble descent—which presupposes an ethically ignoble character—may become ethically noble through his own efforts. Even if he would try, sooner or later the inborn character of his ignoble origin will rise to the surface. This means that, according to this funeral speech, a change—or conversion—from ignobility to (ethical) nobility, as advocated by Philo in his *De nobilitate*, is strictly ruled out.

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[20] Cf. Aristides, *Rhod. Or.* 42 (*Or.* 25); Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 1.70.4; 1.81.3; Herodian, *Excess. divi Marci* 5.1.5–8; Isocrates, *Areop.* 76 (*Or.* 7); *Bus.* 10 (*Or.* 11); Lucian, *Hist. conscr. sit* 26; Plutarch, *Adol. poet. aud.* 34d; *Ag. Cleom.* 32.1; *Apoph. lac.* 226a–b; *Cat. Min.* 73.4; *Fort. Rom.* 320e; *Her. mal.* 859a; 863f; *Mar.* 9.3; *Praec. ger. rei publ.* 798b; *Thes.* 7.2; *Vit. pud.* 535b.

Some other passages are similar in stance as Cassius in Antony's funeral speech,[21] but there is one exception.[22] In his *Historiae*, the Greek historian Polybius (ca. 200–ca. 118 BCE) describes how both the Rhodians and the Cretans sent envoys to the Achaeans to beg for support in their war. The Cretan envoy Antiphatas provides Polybius with an opportunity to comment upon the way Antiphatas and his family positively deviate from the low Cretan nature:

> Antiphatas, ..., expressed a wish to address them [i.e., the Achaeans] a second time, and on receiving the permission of the strategus did so in terms more weighty and serious than is usual with a Cretan (κατὰ Κρῆτα). For, as a fact, this young man was not at all Cretan-like (Κρητικός) but had escaped the Cretan ill-breeding (τὴν Κρητικὴν ἀναγωγίαν). The Achaeans in consequence put up with his freedom of speech, and still more because his father Telemnastus had come with five hundred Cretans to join them nobly (εὐγενῶς) in their war against Nabis. (Polybius, *Hist.* 33.16.6)

Throughout this passage, Polybius values Cretan descent very negatively, but he also implies that it is possible for Cretans to escape the Cretan ill-breeding. Polybius indicates that Antiphatas and his father Telemnastus were able to speak more weightily and seriously than is usual with Cretans, the former with his freedom of speech and the latter with his assistance in the Achaean war against Nabis. Polybius even characterizes Telemnastus' behavior in this war as (ethically) noble. Supposedly, Antiphatas' father had succeeded in overcoming the (ethical) ignobility associated with his Cretan descent and had undergone a change from ignobility to nobility. This would imply that, even though he is not very explicit in this passage, Polybius seems to come close to Philo's understanding of conversion as a change from ethical ignobility to ethical nobility irrespective of one's descent.

This discussion shows us therefore that in the Graeco-Roman notion of ethical nobility a change from ignobility to nobility may be present. This was most clearly expressed by Seneca, but Polybius seemed to imply this change as well. Mostly, however, the notion of acquired (ethical) nobility was strongly connected to the authors' conception of either an inherent, ethical nobility or of an inherited, genealogical nobility. Change was not so much a reversal from an (ethically) ignoble state to a noble state, as in Philo's *De paenitentia* and *De*

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[21] Cf. Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 10.9.3; Plutarch, *Phoc.* 4.1; possibly Herodian, *Excess. divi Marci* 7.1.1-3. Passages which speak of a change in genealogical nobility are excluded from this examination: Cassius Dio, *Hist. Rom.* 37.51.1–2; Herodian, *Excess. divi Marci* 5.6.1; Lucian, *Dial. mort.* 19.4; *Merc. cond.* 24; *Rhet. praec.* 2.

[22] Possibly also Diogenes Laërtius, *Vit. phil.* 2.31; 6.1 (to be cited in §4.3). These passages speak of (genealogically) ignoble people acting (ethically) noble. As these passages do not suggest that ignoble descent implies ethically ignoble behavior, a change from (ethical) ignobility to (ethical) nobility cannot be assumed, however.

nobilitate, but rather a move to or retainment of the inherent or inherited nobility one already had. This means that, in general, change was only limitedly present in the Graeco-Roman notion of nobility along with some references to the importance of education, instruction, or philosophy in bringing about that change. Philo's understanding of conversion is therefore a profound development of what was already present in the notion of nobility in his Graeco-Roman context.

4.3

ADMISSION TO A POLITY/NATION
IN THE CONTEXT OF GRAECO-ROMAN NOBILITY DISCUSSIONS

Now we have related Philo's understanding of conversion to the Graeco-Roman notion of ethical nobility, we may turn to the socio-political consequence Philo believed a conversion to ethical nobility had. Both in *De paenitentia* (§2.3.2) as well as in *De nobilitate* (§3.2.3), it was demonstrated that conversion, or the change from (ethical) ignobility to (ethical) nobility, resulted in one's entrance into the Jewish community. It therefore turns out that Philo's framework of ethical nobility provided an answer to the issue of gentile admission to the "best polity" (cf. *Virt.* 175). A similar issue seems to have been a concern to other authors in Graeco-Roman Antiquity as well. Throughout Antiquity, there appears to have been a general political debate on the proper criteria for determining the composition of the ideal polity.[23] A particular problem was the admission of foreigners to a polity or nation. It is interesting, in light of the stance of Philo's opponents in *De nobilitate*, that this problem was also linked to the issue of sharing the nobility of one's nation or polity.

In Graeco-Roman Antiquity, nobility or ignobility was predominantly used in reference to individuals. However, polities or nations could also be called noble or ignoble. A very obvious reference is found in Aristotle's *Rhetorica*. In this writing (*Rhet.* 1.5.5), Aristotle not only defines nobility in reference to individuals in a genealogical way, but also includes a definition of nobility in relation to a nation or city state:

> Nobility (εὐγένεια), in the case of a nation or city state, means that its members or inhabitants are autochthonous (αὐτόχθονας), or ancient, and that its first members were famous as leaders, and that many of their descendants have been famous for qualities that are highly esteemed. (Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1.5.5)

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[23] See Wilson, *Philo of Alexandria* On Virtues, 385.

Aristotle therefore believes that the nobility of a nation or city state, apart from the criteria of antiquity and fame, is determined according to the extent to which its members are autochthonous. With this criterion, we may expect that hardly any foreigners will be enrolled in those nations or city states that strive for nobility or attempt to retain it.

Aristotle's autochthony criterion relates to the autochthony myth that buttressed Athenian claims of nobility. This myth, as it arose in the fifth century BCE, originally referred to the belief that the Athenians had always lived in the same land. In its further developed form, when it came to be connected to the mythical descent of the Athenians from the earthborn Erechtheus, an archaic king of Athens, the autochthony myth implied that the Athenians had sprung from the Attic land itself.[24] In the Athenian context, this myth functioned as a political value term. It created an ethnic identity that suited the needs of the present, particularly claims to territory and citizenship.[25] It explained and justified why the Athenians were capable of patriotic acts on behalf of their country, why the Athenians were unwilling to share their citizenship with non-Athenian immigrants, and why the Athenians excluded the immigrant population from democracy and equality.[26] Claims of autochthony therefore implied superiority over immigrants (ἔπηλυς), the usual opposite of αὐτόχθων ("autochthonous").[27] It is the relationship of the autochthony myth with nobility that makes the case of Athens interesting for understanding Philo's opponents: autochthony implied (genealogical) nobility. Like the Athenians, Philo's opponents may have regarded converts (ἔπηλυς)—this is the usual opposite of αὐτόχθων ("autochthonous") and it is used by Philo as a reference to converts[28]— as ignoble and have excluded them from the Jewish people/polity and its rights.

An illustration of the Athenian autochthony myth can be found in Plato's *Menexenus*.[29] Although this writing is satirical of the claims of traditional funeral speeches, particularly the one of Pericles after the first battles in the Peloponnesian War (431–404 BCE),[30] it seems to

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[24] For a description of the development of the autochthony myth, especially in relation to the myth of the Athenians' descent from the earthborn Erechtheus, see J.H. Blok, "Gentrifying Genealogy: On the Genesis of the Athenian Autochthony Myth," in *Antike Mythen: Medien, Transformationen und Konstruktionen* (ed. U. Dill and C. Walde; Berlin 2009), 256–263, 271–272; V.J. Rosivach, "Autochthony and the Athenians," *CQ* 37 (1987): 294–297, 301.

[25] See Blok, "Gentrifying Genealogy," 253–254; Rosivach, "Autochthony," 296–297.

[26] See Rosivach, "Autochthony," 303–304. For more explanations and justifications that were provided by the autochthony myth, including those for Athens' foreign policy, see J.M. Hall, *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity* (Cambridge 1997), 53–56; S. Lape, *Race and Citizen Identity in the Classical Athenian Democracy* (Cambridge 2010), 17–19; Rosivach, "Autochthony," 297–301.

[27] See Rosivach, "Autochthony," 301.

[28] In *De paenitentia* and *De nobilitate*: *Virt.* 182, 219.

[29] Cf. also Aristides, *Pan. Or.* 26 (*Or.* 1); Aristotle, *Pol.* 1.2.19; Demosthenes, *Epitaph.* 4; Plutarch, *Nic.* 2.1.

[30] See E.E. Cohen, *The Athenian Nation* (Princeton, N.J., 2000), 100-102.

have been recited annually at Athens in honour of those fallen in battle.[31] *Menexenus* contains Socrates' report of a funeral speech of his rhetoric teacher Aspasia, in which she supposedly praises Athenians who had been killed in the war. In this praise, the nobility of the fallen Athenians is determined by their native descent:

> Now as regards nobility (εὐγενείας), their first claim thereto is this—that the ancestors of these men were not of immigrant origin (γένεσις οὐκ ἔπηλυς οὖσα), nor were their descendants declared to be resident aliens (μετοικοῦντας) in the land after they had come from another place (ἀλλοθεν σφῶν ἡκόντων), but autochthons (αὐτόχθονας) living and dwelling in their own true fatherland; …. (Plato, *Menex.* 237b)

In this passage, Aspasia seems to deny any nobility claims on the part of immigrants. This can be explained by the fact that Aspasia adhered to an ethically defined type of genealogical nobility: the fallen Athenians were good because they were born from good ancestors (cf. *Menex.* 237a). Their indigenous descent is important in light of Aspasia's notion of genealogical nobility. On the one hand, it implies that the fallen Athenians had sprung from a god-beloved country that had given birth to humankind and had adequately nurtured it (237c–238b), while, on the other hand, they had grown up in a good polity (238b–239a). That is, according to Aspasia's supposed speech, indigenous descent in combination with nurture makes the Athenians noble. This is a nobility to which no other Greek, let alone a barbarian, appears to be able to come near.

Given the qualities and deeds Aspasia is said to have ascribed to the Athenian nobility in her subsequent speech (cf. *Menex.* 239a–246a), it is to be expected that this belief in the supreme Athenian nobility is accompanied by an unwillingness to share this nobility with others. Later on in Plato's *Menexenus*, this is indeed confirmed. When it is explained why the Athenians refused to remain the allies of the Persian King Artaxerxes II by handing over to him the Greek city states in Ionia (245b–e), Aspasia refers to the purity of the Athenian nobility:

> So firmly-rooted and so sound is the high-born (γενναῖον) and liberal character of our city, and so barbarian-hating by nature, for we are pure-blooded Greeks, unmixed by barbarians. For there cohabit with us none of the type of Pelops, or Cadmus, or Aegyptus or Danaus, and numerous others of the kind, who are naturally barbarians, though nominally Greeks; but our people are pure Greeks and not a barbarian blend; whence it

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[31] At least around 46 BCE: Cf. Cicero, *Or. Brut.* 151. See Cohen, *Athenian Nation*, 102. The accuracy of Cicero's reference is doubted by Loenen, *Eugeneia*, 57.

comes that our city is imbued with a whole-hearted hatred of alien races. (Plato, *Menex.* 245c–d)

Twice, in the first and last sentence of this passage, pure Greek descent is contrasted with mixing with non-Greeks. This functions as an explanation for why the Athenians refused to comply with Artaxerxes II: they hate barbarians and thus the Persians, their liberty does not agree with being allies, and their nobility (probably ethical) does not allow them to "perform the dishonourable and unholy act of surrendering Greeks to barbarians" (245d). We may, however, also infer from the phrases "unadulterated by barbarian stock" and "not a barbarian blend" that Aspasia is supposedly unwilling to share the Athenian nobility with others. These phrases suggest that the Athenians' pure Greek descent is preserved by refraining from mixing with barbarians.

In Athens, however, Aspasia's position was not the only one advocated. Despite the influence the Athenian autochthony myth had on the development of citizenship law from 451/0 BCE onwards,[32] it is historically probably that the Athenians were not ethnically homogeneous.[33] This is relevant for our discussion, because it implies that some Athenians were willing to share the Athenian nobility with foreigners. This practice may be reflected by the Athenian orator Isocrates (436–338 BCE). In 355 BCE, with his *De pace* (*Or.* 8), Isocrates argues that Athenian imperialism resulted in depravity. One of the reasons for Athens' deterioration is the sharing of its nobility with foreigners:

> We glory and take great pride in being better born (ἐπὶ τῷ βέλτιον γεγονέναι) than the rest but we are readier to share this nobility (εὐγενείας) with any who desire it (τοῖς βουλομένοις) than are the Triballians or the Leucanians to share their ignobility (δυσγενείας). (Isocrates, *De pace* 50 [*Or.* 8])

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[32] See Lape, *Race and Citizen Identity*, 19–30. Lape argues that Pericles' citizenship law in 451/0 BCE, in which candidates for citizenship must be born from two ἀστοί ("free local residents"), symbolically expressed and reinforced the Athenian autochthony myth.

[33] Several factors are listed in W.R. Connor, "The Problem of Athenian Civic Identity," in *Athenian Identity and Civic Ideology* (ed. A.L. Boegehold and A.C. Scafuro; Baltimore 1994), 36–37. It has to be taken into account that the notion of citizenship did not include from the beginning a clear legal demarcation between members and non-members of the Athenian city-state on the basis of native and foreign descent, but that this was developed over time in the seventh, sixth, and fifth centuries BCE. See P.B. Manville, *The Origins of Citizenship in Ancient Athens* (Princeton, N.J., 1990), esp. 81–82, 133–144, 173–185, 206–207, 215–216. In addition to this, it has been demonstrated that one of the criteria for establishing citizenship from 451/0 BCE onwards—being born from two ἀστοί ("free local residents")—may have been sufficiently weak for assimilated immigrants to pass through as free local residents. See Cohen, *Athenian Nation*, 49–78. Moreover, there is evidence of legal naturalization in Athens between ca. 500 and ca. 140 BCE. See M.J. Osborne, *Naturalization in Athens* (4 vols.; VKAWLSKBKL 45; Brussel 1981–1983). Finally, it has been demonstrated that the Athenians' own narratives of reception and naturalization of foreigners do not necessarily contradict the autochthony myth, but may rather have been supportive of it. See Lape, *Race and Citizen Identity*, 240–249.

In this passage, Isocrates reminds his fellow Athenians of their pride in nobility. This nobility, according to Isocrates, should not be shared with "any who desire it" (τοῖς βουλομένοις). With this reference, Isocrates had probably the various mass enfranchisements in mind at the end of the fifth century BCE (cf. *De pace* 88 [*Or.* 8]).[34] It shows us that other Athenians, although they glory and take pride in their nobility, seem to have been willing to share their nobility with foreigners, with the only criterion of admission being the immigrants' desire. This suggests that claims of (genealogical) nobility did not necessarily prevent one from mixing with foreigners.

The examples thus far adduced hold the debate of sharing nobility with foreigners on the level of genealogical nobility. Interestingly, as a possible parallel to Philo's position in *De paenitentia* and *De nobilitate*, advocates of ethical nobility could also be found in debates concerning Athenian nobility. We may refer to Antisthenes (ca. 445–ca. 365 BCE), a pupil of Socrates. In the description of his life and sayings in Diogenes Laërtius' *Vitae philosophorum* (6.1–19), he is credited with having redefined nobility in an ethical way (6.10). This ethical notion of nobility, but probably also his own supposed ignoble descent from a Thracian mother,[35] may relate to Antisthenes' contempt for the autochthony claims of the Athenians:

> And when he [i.e., Antisthenes] disparaged the Athenians for giving themselves airs on being sprung from the soil (ἐπὶ τῷ γηγενεῖς), he said that this did not make them any more noble (εὐγενεστέρους) than snails or wingless locusts. (Diogenes Laërtius, *Vit. phil.* 6.1)

This suggests that Antisthenes, like Philo, did not regard claims of genealogical nobility as important as those of ethical nobility. Probably, Antisthenes would also have agreed with Philo that (ethical) nobility is not restricted on the basis of descent, but is open for all. Diogenes Laërtius does not refer to Antisthenes' view on this issue, however, but does cite a saying attributed to Socrates that suggests that (genealogically) ignoble men may act virtuously, yes, are even more inclined to virtue than (genealogically) noble people:

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[34] That is, the enfranchisement in large numbers of foreigners and slaves in 407/6 after the battle of Arginusae, of the entire population of Samians in 405 (renewed in 403/2) as reward for their loyalty to Athens during the Peloponnesian War, and of those who were granted citizenship for helping in the expulsion of the Thirty in 403 (annulled by a *graphe* of Archinos, but re-enacted in 401/0). See J. Davidson, "Isocrates against Imperialism: An Analysis of the *De pace*," *Historia* 39 (1990): 24.

[35] Cf. Diogenes Laërtius, *Vit. phil.* 2.31; Plutarch, *Exil.* 607b; Seneca, *Const.* 18.5. Diogenes and Seneca refer to Antisthenes' mothers as a Thracian, while Plutarch believes her to be a Phrygian.

> Hence it was that, when he [i.e., Antisthenes] had distinguished himself in the battle of Tanagra, he gave Socrates occasion to remark that, if both his parents had been Athenians, he would not have turned out so brave (γενναῖος). (Diogenes Laërtius, *Vit. phil.* 6.1[36])

Despite the similarity in thinking between Philo and the views attributed to Antisthenes and Socrates, however, neither Antisthenes nor Socrates indicate in these passages that ethical nobility may be a basis for allocating Athenian citizenship to foreigners. Rather, they seem to criticize nobility claims only, arguing that true nobility is ethical nobility. This means that Philo stands out. He not only criticizes his opponents' notion of genealogical nobility, but makes ethical nobility a criterion for entrance in the Jewish polity as well.

This debate concerning the nobility of a nation or polity is not only found in the context of Athens, but, according to Dionysius of Halicarnassus' *Antiquitates romanae*, also in the context of the Roman polity. Roman history can be regarded as a story of continuous extension of the citizen body through grants of citizenship, until under Emperor Caracalla in 212 CE all free inhabitants of the Empire were made Romans.[37] The resulting claims of anti-Roman propaganda, viz. that Rome was said to have been founded by a band of misfits (cf. *Ant. rom.* 1.4.1–3),[38] Dionysius aims to refute in his writing.[39] Rather, he believes that the welcoming and allocation of citizenship to (conquered) cities is one of the factors that had contributed to Rome's supremacy (cf. 1.16.1–17.4; 3.11.5–9). The resulting rise in population numbers led to Rome's strength in war. Dionysius may therefore have belonged to that small group of ancient writers who had a positive attitude to the presence of foreigners in Rome.[40]

Dionysius of Halicarnassus included a debate about sharing one's national nobility in his retelling of a discussion between the Roman king Tullus Hostilius (672–641 BCE) and the Alban general Mettius Fufetius (*Ant. rom.* 3.10.3–3.11.11). They debate whether the uncorrupted (genealogical) nobility of the Albans should be a reason for Alban dominance over the Romans. Fufetius claims that the true-born element (τὸ γνήσιον)[41] of the Roman polity has been corrupted (διαφθείρω) by the admission in great numbers of "Tyrrhenians,

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[36] Cf. also Diogenes Laërtius, *Vit. phil.* 2.31.
[37] See J.P.V.D. Balsdon, *Romans and Aliens* (London 1979), 82. Balsdon discusses grants of citizenship to enemy deserters and allied fighters; automatic grants to Latins and Italians; provincial towns given municipal status; Roman colonies; soldiers in the legions and in the auxiliary forces, infantry, cavalry, and the navy; grants to freedmen (pp. 82–90).
[38] See Wilson, *Philo of Alexandria On Virtues*, 28–29, 32–33.
[39] See Wilson, *Philo of Alexandria On Virtues*, 28–29, 32–33.
[40] See D. Noy, *Foreigners at Rome: Citizens and Strangers* (London 2000), 31–33, although Dionysius of Halicarnassus is not mentioned here.
[41] This element is actually of Alban origin, for Alba Longa is said to have been Rome's mother city (cf. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 1.45.3; 1.66.1–2; 1.71.5).

Sabines, and others who are homeless, vagabonds and barbarians" (3.10.4–5). Tullus
disagrees with this charge:

> For we [i.e., the Romans] are so far from being ashamed to notify the city as common
> (κοινὴν) to any who wish (τοῖς βουλομένοις), that we are even proud of this supreme
> deed; …. (Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 3.11.4)

This means that, even though citizenship is not mentioned explicitly, foreigners are allowed to
come to the city and make use of its facilities. As in Isocrates' accusation of his fellow-
Athenians (*De pace* 50 [*Or.* 8]), the city is common for "any who wish" (τοῖς βουλομένοις).
No restrictions for admission are mentioned by Tullus, which suggests that the foreigners did
not have to meet any conditions.

Even though the admission of foreigners to the Roman polity does not seem to have been
restricted, we do find restrictions when it comes to the allocation of high ranks in the Roman
polity. Dionysius appears to believe that this allocation should be dependent upon someone's
ethical nobility. In the same discussion between Tullus and Fufetius, Tullus challenges
Fufetius' charge against the Romans "that the base-born should not rule over the well-born
nor newcomers (ἐπήλυδας) over the native-born" (*Ant. rom.* 3.11.3) by redefining the Alban
notion of genealogical nobility in an ethical way:

> Our [i.e., the Roman] chief magistracies and membership in the senate are held and the
> other honours among us are enjoyed, not by men possessed of great fortunes (πολλὰ
> χρήματα), nor by those who can show a long line of ancestors all natives of the country
> (πολλοὺς πατέρας ἐπιχωρίους), but by such as are worthy of these honours (τούτων τῶν
> τιμῶν ἄξιος); for we look upon the nobility (εὐγένειαν) of men as consisting in nothing
> else than in virtue (ἐν ἀρετῇ). (Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 3.11.5)

In this passage, Tullus advocates a similar ethical notion of nobility as Philo did. The result of
this notion is that not only Romans, but also non-Romans may hold important positions in the
Roman polity. In this way, (genealogically) ignoble people may rule over (genealogically)
noble people. It seems, however, that Dionysius, through Tullus, differs from Philo by using
ethical nobility only as a criterion for holding high positions in Roman society, rather than for
admission to the Roman polity in general.[42]

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[42] *Contra* Wilson, *Philo of Alexandria* On Virtues, 33, 385. Wilson understands this passage as suggesting that
"the composition and character of the nation … are determined not by lineage, but by the moral excellence
demonstrated by its citizens …" (33). In other words, he interprets it as referring to the proper criteria for
determining the composition of the ideal polity as a whole. I believe this is incorrect. Given the fact that in *Ant.
rom.* 3.11.5 Dionysius mentions magistracies, membership in the senate, and "other honours," the definition of

that ignoble people may hold this position as well. In Cassius Dio's *Historia Romanorum*, an example of this situation is found in the person of the Roman emperor Macrinus (ca. 164–218 CE). This Macrinus was of ignoble descent, because he was a Moor by birth, from Caesarea, and the son of very obscure (ἄδοξος) parents (*Hist. Rom.* 79.11.1). When Cassius refers to the wrath Emperor Macrinus vented upon those who were suspected of being displeased at his low birth (δυσγένεια) and at his unwarranted desire for supreme power (79.15.3), Cassius argues that Macrinus rather should have given benefactions (εὐεργεσία) to the people:

> He [i.e., Macrinus] ought, of course, to have done precisely the opposite: realizing what he had been at the outset and what his position was now, he should not have been haughty, [but should have acted] with moderation [and] served [the ge]nius of his h[ousehold,] and thus encouraged people with benefactions (τῇ ... εὐεργεσίᾳ) and a uniform display of virtue everywhere alike (τῇ τῆς ἀρετῆς διὰ πάντων ὁμοίως ἐπιδείξει). (Cassius Dio, *Hist. Rom.* 79.15.4)

Cassius' description of Macrinus' life shows us that (genealogically) ignoble persons could be encouraged to act as benefactors to people. As in Seneca, it is linked up with virtue, rather than with the social status of his descent. In fact, it is *because* of his ignoble descent and his later change in position that Macrinus is specifically censured for not acting as a benefactor. Together with the other examples, this means that, in Crook's model, (genealogical as well as ethical) nobility is not a sufficient criterion for holding the position of patron/benefactor.

We may also refer to the position of client in the patron-client relationship. It seems that the lower status of the client is not dependent upon its ignobility either. Although some passages refer to ignoble—or not-noble—people in the position of client,[48] likewise (genealogically as well as ethically) noble people may hold this position.[49] An example of this situation can be found in the *Historia romana*, written by Appian of Alexandria (*fl.* 2nd cent. CE), a part of which is devoted to Rome's civil wars (*Bella civilia*). In the civil war following upon the assassination of Julius Caesar in 44 BCE (books 3–5), the affairs of the two leading assassins of Julius Caesar, Cassius and Marcus Brutus, are also described (esp. *Bell. civ.* 4.58–82, 89–134). At the end of this description, Appian writes a short résumé of their lives, in

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Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 555-556; Plutarch, *Ant.* 43.1–3; Seneca, *Ep.* 70.10; 76.12. Patrons/benefactors acting (ethically) nobly: Diodore of Sicily, *Bib. hist.* 31.8.2, 5.

[48] Ignoble/not noble persons in the position of client: Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 19.15.3 (cf. 19.14.2); Herodian, *Excess. divi Marci* 2.3.1–7; 5.1.5–8.

[49] Genealogically noble persons in the position of client: Cassius Dio, *Hist. Rom.* 55.21.1–4; Herodian, *Excess. divi Marci* 2.15.1-5; Josephus, *Vita* 1 (cf. *Vita* 412–425; *B.J.* 3.408). Ethically noble persons in the position of client: Appian, *Bell. civ.* 4.132 (cf. 4.134); Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 1.81.1–6. Clients acting (ethically) nobly: Polybius, *Hist.* 16.26.6; 21.20.3; 28.6.6.

which he contrasts the kindnesses and loyalties Cassius and Brutus received during their lifetime with the punishments they got after the assassination of Julius Caesar. At that point, Appian introduces them as (probably ethically) noble:

> So died Cassius and Brutus, two most noble (εὐγενεστάτω) and illustrious (περιφανεστάτω) Romans, and of incomparable virtue (ἐς ἀρετὴν ἀδηρίτω), but for one crime [i.e., the assassination of Julius Caesar]; …. (Appian, *Bell. civ.* 4.132)

In the subsequent account of Appian's résumé, it turns out that Cassius and Brutus held the position of client in a patron-client relationship with Julius Caesar.[50] The assassination of Caesar by Cassius and Brutus was therefore not an ordinary or small crime, according to Appian. Whereas normal clients were expected to show gratitude towards their patrons,[51] Cassius and Brutus committed an ungrateful crime against their patron/benefactor Caesar:

> Against all these virtues and merits must be set down the crime against Caesar, which was not an ordinary or a small one, for it was committed unexpectedly against a friend, ungratefully (ἀχαρίστως) against a benefactor (ἐς εὐεργέτην) who had spared them in war, …. (Appian, *Bell. civ.* 4.134)

The combination of both passages therefore makes clear that noble people, in this case Cassius and Brutus, may hold the position of client in a patron-client relationship. This means that the lower social status of a client is not necessarily dependent upon someone's ignobility or not-nobility. Rather, in the situation of Cassius and Brutus, it seems to have been determined by the political situation of who was in power. Together with the other examples, this means that, in Crook's model, (genealogical as well as ethical) ignobility or not-nobility is not a sufficient criterion to hold the position of client.

It can therefore be concluded that Crook's model of patronage and benefaction cannot adequately describe the Graeco-Roman notion of nobility. As in the case of Philo (§3.3), this understanding of nobility amounts to something different than Crook's model. While Crook's model focuses on one specific type of relationship, genealogical nobility refers to one's descent and ethical nobility denotes the ethical state of one's character and behavior. The preceding discussion made it obviously clear that in Antiquity nobility and patronage do not necessarily overlap. In fact, in the case of Seneca, the necessity of such an overlap is even

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[50] Cf. Appian, *Bell. civ.* 2.111.
[51] See the emphasis on gratitude in Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 71–72.

explicitly denied. In other words, the Graeco-Roman understanding of nobility does not necessarily imply a difference in social status, nor a patronal type of relationship.

4.5
CONCLUDING REMARKS

This chapter has demonstrated that the nobility discussions in Graeco-Roman Antiquity provide a different context for understanding Philo's framework of ethical nobility than Crook's model of patronage and benefaction argues for. These nobility discussions relate both to Philo's redefinition of nobility as well as to the place of change/conversion and admission of foreigners therein. It follows therefore that Crook's model is not only unable to explain adequately Philo's understanding of conversion in *De paenitentia* (ch. 2) and his framework of ethical nobility in *De nobilitate* (ch. 3), but also does not accord with the larger context of nobility discussions to which Philo's framework belongs. This means that conversion may have been contextualized within different contexts than just patronage and clientage. Our analysis of the place of Philo's framework of ethical nobility within Graeco-Roman nobility discussions has presented us therefore with an example of such a different context.

CONCLUSIONS

This thesis aimed to contribute to the study of the emic understanding of conversion in Graeco-Roman Antiquity with an evaluation and correction of Zeba A. Crook's model of patronage and benefaction, as described in his book *Reconceptualising Conversion*,[1] on the basis of an analysis of Philo of Alexandria's understanding of conversion in his *De paenitentia* (*Virt.* 175–186) and *De nobilitate* (*Virt.* 187–227). The focus on this conversion narrative could offset Crook's failure to provide any antique definition or description to support his rather deductively inferred understanding of the meaning of conversion in Antiquity in the context of the patronal understanding of the God-worshipper relationship at that time. The previous chapters have carried out this evaluation and correction of Crook's model. It turned out that Crook's model has been refuted on all three possible levels.

Firstly, Crook's understanding of the meaning of conversion in Antiquity has been proved to be incorrect in the case of Philo's *De paenitentia*. It turned out that Philo did not understand conversion as a change in patrons or as a change within a patronal relationship, nor as an external, collectivistic event. Rather, the three separate conversions identified by Philo—conversion to piety, conversion to virtue, and conversion to harmonious life—appeared to be quite internal and individualistic. For Philo, conversion entailed one's improvement from a bad state of life to a good state of life. It is only in the post-conversion stage that the patronal and collectivistic aspects of Crook's model can be seen.

Secondly, Crook's framework of patronage and benefaction for understanding conversion in Antiquity did not correlate to Philo's own framework with which he understood conversion in his *De nobilitate*. As it happens, Philo himself did not frame his notion of conversion within a patronal framework, but within a framework of ethical nobility. His examples of non-Jews becoming ethically noble demonstrate that Philo understood conversion as a change from ethical ignobility to ethical nobility. Redefining nobility in terms of virtue rather than descent meant for Philo that non-Jews, like Jews, could become noble, despite their ignoble descent, and could be allowed to enter into the Jewish community. As this ethical nobility refers primarily to one's virtuous state of being rather than to a particular type of relationship,

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[1] Z.A. Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion: Patronage, Loyalty, and Conversion in the Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean* (BZNW 130; Berlin 2004).

the positions of patron and client in Crook's model did not consistently agree with the positions of nobility and ignobility.

Thirdly, the general cultural context of the Graeco-Roman institution of patronage and benefaction within which Crook's framework of patronage and benefaction could be placed did not correspond to the general cultural context to which Philo's framework of ethical nobility belonged. Philo's redefinition of nobility in terms of virtue instead of descent was part of a general debate in Antiquity on the meaning and value of nobility. Even his connection of nobility with conversion and with the admission of foreigners to the Jewish community related to nobility discussions in his Graeco-Roman context. As with Philo's framework of ethical nobility, the positions of patron and client in Crook's model did not necessarily overlap with the positions of nobility and ignobility. The Graeco-Roman notion of nobility denoted one's descent (genealogical nobility) or the ethical state of one's character and behavior (ethical nobility), rather than a specific type of relationship.

It has to be concluded, therefore, that Crook's model does not provide an adequate explanation for Philo's understanding of conversion in these two treatises. This results in a rather negative evaluation of Crook's model: (1) Philo's understanding of conversion is not of a patronal character, but it only *results* in a patron-client relationship between God and worshipper; (2) Philo's framework for understanding conversion does not consist of patronage and benefaction, but rather of ethical nobility; (3) The context in which Philo's framework of ethical nobility has to be placed, does not relate to the Graeco-Roman institution of patronage and benefaction, but rather to ancient nobility discussions. At worst, this means that Crook's model is incorrect with regard to the understanding of conversion in Antiquity; at best, Crook's model may accord with the ancient understanding of conversion in other cases, or in some particular instances. This is impossible, however, to decide upon the basis of an analysis of only one conversion narrative, but needs further study.

I believe that, especially, the different approach in my thesis—starting with a close analysis of one conversion narrative—shows the limitations of the rather deductive approach in Crook's book *Reconceptualising Conversion*. When Crook deductively infers from his examination of the patronal character of the God-worshipper relationship in Antiquity[2] that conversion was interpreted within this context as well,[3] this does not necessarily mean that this was indeed the case. Ancient sources have to be cited in support of such a thesis, a thing which Crook failed to do in his book. I think, therefore, that much can be gained with a close

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[2] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, esp. 76–88.
[3] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 89, 199, discussed in more detail in §1.5 of this thesis.

analysis of passages in Graeco-Roman literature and inscriptions which (from our perspective) speak of a conversion-like phenomenon. When the wordings and elements of these passages are listed, a horizontal examination of the contexts in which these wordings and elements appear can be carried out. In this way, we are much surer to recover the (various) understanding(s) of conversion in their proper contexts than when reading inferences from a general theory into specific passages.

This means that we have brought the study of the emic understanding of conversion in Graeco-Roman Antiquity some small steps further with regard to the tenability of Crook's model of patronage and benefaction and with regard to the method of approaching conversion narratives. The research carried out in this thesis may therefore draw special attention to the following points of interest in the case of further study of the emic understanding of conversion in Graeco-Roman Antiquity:

1. The study of the Graeco-Roman understanding of conversion has to start unavoidably with looking for conversion narratives that meet our (general) criteria of conversion, for *we* modern Westerns ask how conversion was understood at that time. Actually, we seek to find an emic answer to an etic (modern Western) question.

2. It is advisable to start with a close analysis of conversion narratives—How is the conversion (process) phrased? What elements are highlighted?—and afterwards to relate these wordings and elements to the proper contexts in which they can be placed.

3. It may be informative to take "general tendencies," as Crook calls them,[4] in Antiquity into account, like a particular way of constructing the self. These are no more than "general tendencies," however, which may not, or not completely, hold true for specific instances.

4. We should reckon with the possibility that conversion may have been understood differently by different people in Antiquity. It is therefore unnecessary to look for only one understanding of conversion.

It is to be expected that, after a careful analysis of the understanding of conversion in Graeco-Roman Antiquity, we may be much surer about the possibilities and limitations of the application of modern theories and interpretations of conversion to the study of conversion in the ancient Mediterranean. If it has been made clear what was involved in the ancient

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[4] Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, esp. 33.

understanding(s) of conversion, then the differences from these modern theories and interpretations of conversion may come much more to the fore. In that case, any application of them might still be illuminating, but researcher and reader will be aware of which aspects of this application may run the danger of being overinterpretation.

TEXT AND TRANSLATION

OF *DE PAENITENTIA* AND *DE NOBILITATE*

APPENDIX

This appendix contains the text and translation of Philo's *De paenitentia* (*Virt*. 175–186) and *De nobilitate* (*Virt*. 187–227). The Greek text follows the Loeb Classical Library edition.[1] Translation and structure are of my own, but dependent upon the Loeb Classical Library edition as well as upon Wilson's commentary on *De virtutibus*[2] and Yonge's edition of Philo's writings.[3]

DE PAENITENTIA (*VIRT*. 175–186)

175 φιλάρετος καὶ φιλόκαλος καὶ διαφε- ρόντως φιλάνθρωπος ὢν ὁ ἱερώτατος Μωυσῆς προτρέπει τοὺς πανταχοῦ πάντας εὐσεβείας καὶ δικαιοσύνης εἶναι ζηλωτάς, ἆθλα προτιθεὶς ὡς νικηφόροις μεγάλα τοῖς μετανοοῦσι πολιτείας κοινωνίαν τῆς ἀρίστης καὶ τῶν κατ' αὐτὴν ἀπόλαυσιν μικρῶν τε καὶ μεγά- λων. 176 ἀγαθὰ γὰρ προηγούμενα ἐν μὲν σώμασιν ἡ ἄνοσος ὑγεία, ἐν δὲ ναυσὶν ἡ ἀκίνδυνος εὔπλοια, ἐν δὲ ψυχαῖς ἡ ἄληστος μνήμη τῶν ἀξίων μνημονεύ- εσθαι· δεύτερα δὲ τὰ κατ' ἐπανόρθωσιν συνιστάμενα, ἥ τε ἐκ νόσων ἀνάληψις καὶ ἡ ἐκ τῶν κατὰ πλοῦν κινδύνων εὐκταιοτάτη σωτηρία καὶ ἡ λήθης ἐκγινομένη ἀνάμνησις, ἧς ἀδελφὸν καὶ συγγενέστατον τὸ μετανοεῖν ἐστιν, οὐκ ἐν τῇ πρώτῃ καὶ ἀνωτάτω τεταγμένον τάξει τῶν ἀγαθῶν, ἀλλ' ἐν τῇ μετὰ ταύτην φερόμενον δευτερεῖα. 177 τὸ μὲν

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175 The most holy Moses, being a lover of virtue and of goodness and especially of the human race, urges everyone every- where to become followers of piety and justice, setting up great prizes, as to the victorious, to those who convert: membership in the best polity and enjoy- ment of the things great and small in it. 176 For the principal goods are in bodies health without disease, in ships a fair voyage without danger, and in souls memory without lapse of things worth remembering. And second to these stand the things exhibiting improvement, recovery from diseases, the prayed-for deliverance from the dangers of a voyage, and recollection supervening on forgetfulness, the brother and closest kinsman of which is converting, which is not placed in the first and highest rank of goods, but in the rank next to the first, taking the second prize. 177 For not

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[1] F.H. Colson, *Philo* (12 vols.; LCL; London / Cambridge, Mass., 1929–1962), 8:271-305.

[2] W.T. Wilson, *Philo of Alexandria On Virtues: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* (PACS 3; Leiden 2011), 79-81, 83-89.

[3] C.D. Yonge, *The Works of Philo Judaeus, the Contemporary of Josephus* (4 vols; London 1854-1855), 3:453-456, 496-506.

γὰρ μηδὲν συνόλως ἁμαρτεῖν ἴδιον
θεοῦ, τάχα δὲ καὶ θείου ἀνδρός, τὸ δὲ
ἁμαρτόντα μεταβαλεῖν πρὸς ἀνυπαίτιον
ζωὴν φρονίμου καὶ τὸ συμφέρον εἰς
ἅπαν οὐκ ἀγνοήσαντος.

[178] ὅθεν τοὺς τοιούτους συνάγων καὶ
μυσταγωγῶν προσκαλεῖται τὰς συμβα-
τηρίους καὶ φιλικὰς προτείνων
ὑφηγήσεις, αἳ παραινοῦσιν ἀψεύδειαν
ἀσκεῖν καὶ τῦφον προβεβλῆσθαι καὶ
ἀληθείας καὶ ἀτυφίας ὡς ἀναγκαιο-
τάτων καὶ εὐδαιμονίας αἰτίων περιέ-
χεσθαι μυθικῶν πλασμάτων κατεξανα-
στάντας, ἅπερ ἐκ πρώτης ἡλικίας
ἁπαλαῖς ἔτι ψυχαῖς γονεῖς καὶ τίτθαι
καὶ παιδαγωγοὶ καὶ μυρίοι ἄλλοι
τῶν συνήθων ἐνεχάραξαν πλάνον
ἀνήνυτον περὶ τῆς τοῦ ἀρίστου
γνώσεως ἀπεργασάμενοι. [179] τί δ’ ἂν
εἴη τῶν ὄντων ἄριστον ἢ θεός; οὗ τὰς
τιμὰς προσένειμαν τοῖς οὐ θεοῖς,
ἐκείνους μὲν ἀποσεμνύνοντες πλέον
τοῦ μετρίου, τοῦ δὲ εἰς ἅπαν οἱ κενοὶ
φρενῶν ἐκλαθόμενοι. πάντας οὖν,
ὅσοι τὸν κτίστην καὶ πατέρα τοῦ
παντὸς εἰ καὶ μὴ ἐξ ἀρχῆς σέβειν
ἠξίωσαν ἀλλ’ ὕστερον μοναρχίαν ἀντὶ
πολυαρχίας ἀσπασάμενοι, φιλτάτους
καὶ συγγενεστάτους ὑποληπτέον, τὸ
μέγιστον εἰς φιλίαν καὶ οἰκειότητα
παρασχομένους θεοφιλὲς ἦθος, οἷς χρὴ
καὶ συνήδεσθαι, καθάπερ ἂν εἰ καὶ
τυφλοὶ πρότερον ὄντες ἀνέβλεψαν
ἐκ βαθυτάτου σκότους αὐγοειδέστατον
φῶς ἰδόντες.

[180] τὸ μὲν οὖν πρῶτον καὶ ἀναγ-
καιότατον τῶν εἰς μετάνοιαν εἴρηται.
μετανοείτω δέ τις μὴ μόνον ἐφ’ οἷς
ἠπατήθη πολὺν χρόνον τὰ γενητὰ πρὸ
τοῦ ἀγενήτου καὶ ποιητοῦ θαυμάσας,
ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις ὅσα περὶ βίον
ἀναγκαῖα, μετιὼν ὥσπερ ἐκ τῆς φαυλο-
τάτης τῶν κακοπολιτειῶν, ὀχλοκρα-
τίας, εἰς τὴν εὐνομωτάτην πολιτείαν,
δημοκρατίαν, τοῦτο δ’ ἐστὶν ἐξ ἀμαθίας
εἰς ἐπιστήμην ὧν ἡ ἄγνοια αἰσχρόν,
ἐξ ἀφροσύνης εἰς φρόνησιν, ἐξ ἀκρα-

sinning at all is peculiar to God, and
possibly to a god-like man; converting from
a sinning to a blameless life is peculiar to a
prudent man who has not been utterly
ignorant of what is beneficial.

[178] Therefore, when he convokes such
people and initiates them into his mysteries,
he invites them, holding out conciliatory and
friendly instructions which exhort them to
practice sincerity and reject vanity, and to
embrace truth and simplicity as the most
necessary things and as the sources of
happiness, while rising in rebellion against
the mythical fables which their parents and
nurses and tutors and countless other
familiars had engraved upon their yet tender
souls from their earliest years, causing them
to go endlessly astray regarding the know-
ledge of the best. [179] And what is the best of
all that is but God? His honours they have
assigned to those who are no gods, glorify-
ing them beyond measure, while they,
empty-minded people that they are, utterly
forgot Him. So all these who, although they
did not think it worthy to worship the
Creator and Father of all from the beginning,
but later welcomed the rule of One instead
of the rule of many, should be received as
our dearest friends and closest kinsmen.
They have shown the greatest way to
friendship and familiarity, a character
beloved by God, and we must rejoice with
them, as if, although being blind at the first,
they had regained their sight, seeing from
the deepest darkness the most brilliant light.

[180] Now the first and most essential form
of conversion has been discussed. But one
should not only convert from the things by
which he was deceived for a long time,
honouring things created instead of the Un-
created and Maker, but also in respect of the
other things which are essential in life, pas-
sing over, as it were, from ochlocracy [mob-
rule], the worst of bad polities, to demo-
cracy, the most well-ordered polity, that is,
from ignorance to knowledge of things that
it is disgraceful not to know, from foolish-

τείας εἰς ἐγκράτειαν, ἐξ ἀδικίας εἰς δικαιοσύνην, ἐξ ἀτολμίας εἰς θαρραλεότητα. [181] πάγκαλον γὰρ καὶ συμφέρον αὐτομολεῖν ἀμεταστρεπτὶ πρὸς ἀρετὴν κακίαν, ἐπίβουλον δέσποιναν, ἀπολιπόντας· ἅμα δ' ἀναγκαῖον ἕπεσθαι, ὡς ἐν ἡλίῳ σκιὰν σώματι, καὶ τῇ τοῦ ὄντος θεοῦ τιμῇ πᾶσαν τὴν τῶν ἄλλων ἀρετῶν κοινωνίαν. [182] γίνονται γὰρ εὐθὺς οἱ ἐπηλύται σώφρονες, ἐγκρατεῖς, αἰδήμονες, ἥμεροι, χρηστοί, φιλάνθρωποι, σεμνοί, δίκαιοι, μεγαλόφρονες, ἀληθείας ἐρασταί, κρείττους χρημάτων καὶ ἡδονῆς· ἐπεὶ καὶ τοὐναντίον τοὺς τῶν ἱερῶν νόμων ἀποστάντας ἰδεῖν ἔστιν ἀκολάστους, ἀναισχύντους, ἀδίκους, ἀσέμνους, ὀλιγόφρονας, φιλαπεχθήμονας ψευδολογίας ἑταίρους καὶ ψευδορκίας, τὴν ἐλευθερίαν πεπρακότας ὄψου καὶ ἀκράτου καὶ πεμμάτων καὶ εὐμορφίας εἴς τε τὰς γαστρὸς ἀπολαύσεις καὶ τῶν μετὰ γαστέρα, ὧν τὰ τέλη βαρύταται ζημίαι σώματός τε καὶ ψυχῆς εἰσι.

[183] παγκάλους μέντοι καὶ τὰς εἰς μετάνοιαν ὑφηγήσεις ποιεῖται, αἷς διδασκόμεθα μεθαρμόζεσθαι τὸν βίον ἐξ ἀναρμοστίας εἰς τὴν ἀμείνω μεταβολήν· φησὶ γάρ [Deut 30:11-14], ὅτι τουτὶ τὸ πρᾶγμα οὐχ ὑπέρογκόν ἐστιν οὐδὲ μακρὰν ἀφεστός, οὔτε κατὰ τὸν αἰθέρα ἀνωτάτω κἂν ἐσχατιαῖς <γῆς οὔτε πέραν>[4] τῆς μεγάλης θαλάττης, ὡς ἀδυνατῆσαι λαβεῖν, ἀλλ' ἔστιν ἐγγυτάτω, τρισὶ μέρεσι τῶν καθ' ἡμᾶς ἐνδιαιτώμενον στόματι καὶ καρδίᾳ καὶ χερσί, διὰ συμβόλων λόγοις καὶ βουλαῖς καὶ πράξεσι· λόγου μὲν <γὰρ> στόμα σύμβολον, καρδία δὲ βουλευμάτων, πράξεων δὲ χεῖρες, ἐν οἷς τὸ εὐδαιμονεῖν ἐστιν. [184] ὅταν μὲν γὰρ οἷος ὁ λόγος τοιάδε ἡ γνώμη καὶ οἷον τὸ βούλευμα τοιάδε ἡ πρᾶξις, ἐπαινετὸς καὶ τέλειος ὁ βίος, ὅταν δὲ στασιάζῃ ταῦτα ἐν ἀλλήλοις, ἀτελής τε καὶ ψεκτός. εἰ μή τις τῆς

ness to prudence, from lack of self-control to self-control, from injustice to justice, from [181] cowardice to boldness. [181] For it is very excellent and beneficial to desert without a backward glance to virtue, abandoning vice that treacherous mistress; and at the same time it is necessary that, as in the sunshine the shadow follows the body, also the whole company of the other virtues follows the honour of the God who is. [182] For the proselytes become at once temperate, self-controlled, modest, gentle, kind, humane, reverent, just, high-minded, lovers of truth, superior to the desire for money and pleasure; just as also conversely those who keep far from the holy laws are seen to be unbridled, shameless, unjust, irreverent, petty-minded, quarrelsome, friends of falsehood and perjury, having sold their freedom for dainties and strong liquor and cakes and beauty—enjoyments of the things of the belly and of those below the belly, the ends of which are the gravest injuries to both body and soul.

[183] Very excellent indeed too are the instructions to conversion, with which we are taught to adapt our life from discord into a change for the better. For he says [Deut 30:11-14] that this matter is not so overgreat nor far removed, neither in the air far above nor at the ends <of the earth nor beyond>[4] the great sea, that it would be impossible to take hold of it, but it is very near, residing in the three parts of our being in the mouth and in the heart and in the hands, symbolizing words and thoughts and deeds: <for> the mouth is a symbol of speech, the heart of thoughts, the hands of deeds, and in these lies being happy. [184] For when judgment corresponds to speech and deeds correspond to thought, life is praiseworthy and perfect, but when they are at strife with each other, it is imperfect and blameworthy. If one does not

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[4] Wilson, *Philo of Alexandria* On Virtues, 372-373.

ἁρμονίας ταύτης ἐπιλάθοιτο, εὐαρεσ-
τήσει θεῷ γενόμενος ὁμοῦ θεοφιλὴς καὶ
φιλόθεος.

ὅθεν εὖ καὶ συμφώνως τοῖς
εἰρημένοις ἐχρήσθη τὸ λόγιον ἐκεῖνο·
"τὸν θεὸν εἵλου σήμερον εἶναί σοι
θεόν, καὶ κύριος εἵλατό σε σήμερον
γενέσθαι λαὸν αὐτῷ" [Deut 26:17-18]
185 παγκάλη γε τῆς αἱρέσεως ἡ ἀντίδο-
σις, σπεύδοντος ἀνθρώπου μὲν θεραπεύ-
ειν τὸ ὄν, θεοῦ δὲ ἀνυπερθέτως ἐξοι-
κειοῦσθαι τὸν ἱκέτην καὶ προαπαντᾶν
τῷ βουλήματι τοῦ γνησίως καὶ ἀνόθως
ἰόντος ἐπὶ τὴν θεραπείαν αὐτοῦ. ὁ δ'
ἀληθὴς θεραπευτής τε καὶ ἱκέτης, κἂν
εἷς ὢν ἀνὴρ ἀριθμῷ τυγχάνῃ, δυνάμει,
καθάπερ αὐτὸς αἱρεῖται, σύμπας ἐστὶν
ὁ λεώς, ἰσότιμος ὅλῳ ἔθνει γεγονώς.
186 καὶ πέφυκεν οὕτως ἔχειν· ὡς γὰρ ἐν
νηὶ μὲν κυβερνήτης πᾶσι τοῖς ναύταις
ἀντίρροπος, ἐν δὲ στρατοπέδῳ στρατη-
γὸς ἅπασι τοῖς στρατιώταις—διαφθα-
ρέντος γοῦν ἡττᾶσθαι συμβαίνει, καθά-
περ ἂν εἰ καὶ πᾶσα δύναμις ἡβηδὸν
ἑάλω—, τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον καὶ ὁ σοφὸς
ὅλου ἔθνους ἀξιώματι ἁμιλλᾶται τείχει
πεφραγμένος ἀκαθαιρέτῳ, θεοσεβείᾳ.

forget this harmony, he will become well-
pleasing to God, becoming at the same time
God-beloved and God-loving.

Therefore, excellently, and in agreement
with the things discussed, this saying was
used: "You chose God today to be God to
you, and the Lord chose you today to
become a people to Him" [Deut 26:17-18].
185 Very excellent is the reciprocation of
choice, when man hastens to serve the
Existent, and without delay God hastens to
take the supplicant to Himself and anticipates
the will of him who honestly and sincerely
comes into His service. And the true servant
and supplicant, even though he happens to be
one man in number, is in power, insofar
as he makes his own choice,[5] the whole
people, equal in value to a complete nation.
186 And it is natural to have it so: For, as in
a ship the captain is equivalent to all the
crew, and in an army the general to all the
soldiers—since if he is slain, then defeat
follows just as if the whole force from the
youth upwards were overcome—, in the
same way, too, the wise man competes with
the worth of a complete nation, being
protected by an impregnable wall, godliness.

DE NOBILITATE (VIRT. 187–227)

187 διὸ καὶ τοῖς ὑμνοῦσι τὴν εὐγένειαν
ὡς μέγιστον ἀγαθὸν καὶ μεγάλων ἀγα-
θῶν αἴτιον οὐ μετρίως ἐπιτιμητέον, εἰ
πρῶτον μὲν οἴονται τοὺς ἐκ παλαιο-
πλούτων καὶ παλαιενδόξων εὐγενεῖς,
μηδὲ τῶν προγόνων, ἀφ' ὧν αὐχοῦσι
γενέσθαι, διὰ τὰς ἀφθόνους περιουσίας
εὐδαιμονησάντων, ἐπειδὴ τὸ πρὸς
ἀλήθειαν ἀγαθὸν οὐδενὶ τῶν ἐκτός,
ἀλλ' οὐδὲ τῶν περὶ σῶμα, μᾶλλον
δὲ οὐδὲ παντὶ μέρει ψυχῆς, ἀλλὰ μόνῳ

187 Therefore also, those who hymn nobility
as the greatest good and the source of other
great goods ought to be rebuked not in a
moderate way, because in the first place they
think that the descendants of rich and
esteemed forebears are noble, although
neither did the ancestors from whom they
boast to be descended find happiness in their
abundant wealth, for the true good does not
naturally dwell in anything external, not yet
in things of the body, and further not even in

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5 The phrase "insofar as he makes his own choice" renders a very unclear phrase in Greek (καθάπερ αὐτὸς
αἱρεῖται). Various emendations and translations have been proposed. My translation follows Wilson, *Philo of
Alexandria* On Virtues, 81, 376.

τῷ ἡγεμονικῷ πέφυκεν ἐνδιαιτᾶσθαι.
188 βουληθεὶς γὰρ ὁ θεὸς δι᾽ ἡμερότητα
καὶ φιλανθρωπίαν καὶ παρ᾽ ἡμῖν τοῦθ᾽
ἱδρύσασθαι, νεὼν ἀξιοπρεπέστερον οὐχ
εὗρεν ἐπὶ γῆς λογισμοῦ· κρείττων γὰρ
<ὢν> μόνος ἀγαλματοφορεῖ τἀγαθόν,
κἂν ἀπιστῶσί τινες τῶν ἢ μὴ γευσαμέ-
νων σοφίας ἢ χείλεσιν ἄκροις. ἄργυρος
γὰρ καὶ χρυσὸς τιμαί τε καὶ ἀρχαὶ καὶ
σώματος εὐεξία μετ᾽ εὐμορφίας ἐοίκασι
τοῖς ἐν ταῖς ἡγεμονίαις ἐπὶ χρειῶν
τεταγμένοις πρὸς τὴν οἷα βασιλίδος
ἀρετῆς ὑπηρεσίαν αὐγοειδέστατον φῶς
μὴ ἰδόντες.

189 ἐπειδὴ τοίνυν ἡ εὐγένεια κεκα-
θαρμένης διανοίας καθαρσίοις τελείοις
κλῆρος οἰκεῖος, χρὴ μόνους λέγειν
εὐγενεῖς τοὺς σώφρονας καὶ δικαίους,
κἂν τύχωσιν ἐξ οἰκοτρίβων ἢ ἀργυ-
ρωνήτων γεγονότες· τοῖς δὲ ἐξ ἀγαθῶν
πονηροῖς γεγονόσιν ἄβατον ἔστω τὸ
εὐγενείας χωρίον. 190 ἄοικος γὰρ καὶ
ἄπολις ὁ φαῦλος, ἐκ πατρίδος ἀρετῆς
ἐληλαμένος, ἢ καὶ τῷ ὄντι σοφῶν
ἀνδρῶν ἐστι πατρίς· τούτῳ κατὰ τὸ
ἀναγκαῖον ἕπεται δυσγένεια, κἂν εἰ
πάππων ἢ προγόνων γένοιτο τοὺς βίους
ἀνεπιλήπτων, ἀλλοτρίωσιν ἐπιτηδεύ-
οντι καὶ πορρωτάτω τῆς εὐγενείας δια-
ζευγνύντι ἑαυτὸν ἔν τε λόγοις καὶ
ἔργοις. 191 ἀλλὰ γὰρ πρὸς τῷ μὴ
πεφυκέναι τοὺς πονηροὺς εὐγενεῖς ἔτι
καὶ πάντας αὐτοὺς ὁρῶ πολεμίους
ἀσυμβάτους εὐγενείᾳ καθαιροῦντας τὸ
προγονικὸν ἀξίωμα καὶ ὅσον ἐν τῷ
γένει λαμπρὸν ἐξαμαυροῦντάς τε καὶ
σβεννύντας.

192 διό μοι δοκοῦσι φιλοστοργότατοι
πατέρες ἀπορρήσεις χρηματίζειν καθ᾽
υἱῶν ἀποσχοινίζοντες αὐτοὺς τῆς
οἰκίας καὶ συγγενείας, ὅταν τὴν ἐκ
φύσεως ἐν τοῖς γεννήσασι περιττὴν καὶ
ὑπερβάλλουσαν εὔνοιαν ἡ ἐν ἐκείνοις
μοχθηρία κατακρατήσῃ. 193 τὸ δ᾽ ἀληθὲς
τοῦ λόγου ῥᾴδιον καὶ ἀφ᾽ ἑτέρων
διαγνῶναι. τί τῷ τὰς ὄψεις
πεπηρωμένῳ γένοιτ᾽ ἂν εἰς τὸ βλέπειν

every part of the soul, but only in its governing part. [188] For when God in His mercy and humanity willed that this was established in us also, He found no worthier temple on earth than reason: for, being better, it alone carries an image of the good, even though some of those who have never tasted wisdom or have done so only with the edges of their lips may disbelieve. For silver and gold and honours and offices and the good condition and beauty of body are like men set in command for ordinary purposes compared with the service to queenly virtue, never seeing the most brilliant light.

[189] Therefore, since nobility is the proper portion of a mind purified with complete purifications, one must call only the temperate and just noble, even though they may happen to be born from homebred or purchased slaves; but to the wicked children born of good parents the landed property of nobility must be inaccessible. [190] For the fool has no home and no city, having been expelled from the native land of virtue, which is in very truth the native land of wise men: with such a man ignobility necessarily follows, even though he may be born from grandfathers or ancestors with blameless lives, for he pursues estrangement and separates himself very far away from nobility in both words and deeds. [191] Certainly, I not only see that the wicked cannot be noble by nature, yet also that they all are irreconcilable enemies to nobility, since they destroy their ancestral reputation and dim and extinguish as much as is illustrious in their family.

[192] It is for this reason, it seems to me, that the most affectionate kind of fathers formally disinherit their sons, excluding them from their home and kinship, when the depravity in them overcomes the abundant and exceeding goodwill which is found in parents by nature. [193] And the truth of this statement can also easily be determined from other examples. What use has, to one who is disabled in his eyes, the sharp-

ὄφελος ὀξυωπία προγονική; ἢ πρὸς
ἑρμηνείαν τῷ παρειμένῳ γλῶτταν τὸ
γονεῖς ἢ πάππους γενέσθαι μεγαλο-
φώνους; τί δ' ὀνίνησι πρὸς εὐτο-
νίαν τὸν ἐκ μακρᾶς καὶ φθινάδος
νόσου κατεσκελετευμένον, ἐὰν οἱ τοῦ
γένους ἀρχηγέται δι' ἀθλητικὴν
ῥώμην ἐν Ὀλυμπιονίκαις ἢ περιο-
δονίκαις γράφωνται; μένουσι γὰρ
οὐδὲν ἧττον αἱ τοῦ σώματος κῆρες
ἐν ὁμοίῳ βελτίωσιν οὐκ ἐνδεχό-
μεναι διὰ τὰς τῶν οἰκείων εὐπρα-
γίας. [194] τὸν αὐτὸν δὴ τρόπον οὔτε
τοῖς ἀδίκοις δίκαιοι γονεῖς οὔτε
ἀκολάστοις σώφρονες οὔτε συνόλως
ἀγαθοὶ πονηροῖς ὄφελος· οὐδὲ γὰρ
οἱ νόμοι τοῖς παρανομοῦσιν, ὧν
εἰσιν αὐτοὶ κολασταί· νόμοι δέ
τινες ἄγραφοι καὶ οἱ βίοι τῶν
ζηλωσάντων τὴν ἀρετήν.

[195] ὅθεν οἶμαι τὴν εὐγένειαν, εἰ
θεὸς αὐτὴν εἰς ἀνθρωπόμορφον ἰδέαν
ἐτύπωσε, στᾶσαν πρὸς τοὺς ἀφηνιαστὰς
ἀπογόνους ταῦτα ἂν εἰπεῖν· "τὸ συγ-
γενὲς οὐχ αἵματι μετρεῖται μόνον,
πρυτανευούσης ἀληθείας, ἀλλὰ πράξεων
ὁμοιότητι καὶ θήρᾳ τῶν αὐτῶν. ὑμεῖς
δὲ τἀναντία ἐπετηδεύσατε, τὰ μὲν
ἐμοὶ φίλα νομίσαντες ἐχθρά, τὰ δὲ
δυσμενῆ φίλα· παρ' ἐμοὶ μὲν γὰρ αἰδὼς
καὶ ἀλήθεια μετριοπάθειά τε καὶ
ἀτυφία καὶ ἀκακία τίμια, παρ' ὑμῖν δὲ
ἄτιμα· κἀμοὶ μὲν ἐχθρὰ τὸ ἀναίσ-
χυντον, τὸ ψεῦδος, ἡ ἀμετρία τῶν
παθῶν, ὁ τῦφος, αἱ κακίαι, ὑμῖν δὲ
οἰκειότατα. [196] τί δὴ μελετήσαντες
ἀλλοτρίωσιν τὴν δι' ἔργων τὴν ἐν
λόγῳ συγγένειαν εὐπρεπὲς ὄνομα
ὑποδυόμενοι καθυποκρίνεσθε παραγωγὰς
γὰρ καὶ κεκομψευμένας ἀπάτας οὐκ
ἀνέχομαι, διότι ῥᾴδιον μὲν καὶ τῷ
τυχόντι εὐπροσώπους λόγους εὑρεῖν,
ἤθη δ' ὑπαλλάξασθαι πονηρὰ χρηστοῖς
οὐ ῥᾴδιον. [197] εἰς ἅπερ ἀφορῶσα καὶ
νῦν ἐχθροὺς νομίζω καὶ αὖθις
ἡγήσομαι τοὺς τὰ τῆς ἔχθρας ὑπεκ-
καύματα ζωπυρήσαντας καὶ μᾶλλον τῶν

sightedness of his ancestors for seeing? Or, to one whose tongue is paralysed, the grandiloquence of his parents or grandparents for expressing himself? What does it benefit one who is wasted away with a long and wasting disease for being restored to vigour, if the progenitors of his family were recorded as victors at the Olympic or all the other great games because of their athletic prowess? For the debilities of his body remain in the same condition, nothing smaller, for they receive no improvement because of the welfare of his kinsmen. [194] In the same way, just parents are of no use to the unjust, nor temperate parents to the unbridled, nor, in general, good parents to the wicked, any more than the laws to lawbreakers, whose chastisers they are; and also the lives of those who strived after virtue are unwritten laws.

[195] Therefore, I believe, if God had moulded nobility in a human form, that she, standing before the rebellious descendants, would address them thus: "Kinship is not only measured by blood, if truth holds sway, but also by similarity of actions and pursuit of the same objects. But you pursue the opposite, regarding the things dear to me as hostile, and the ignoble ones as dear: for, in my sight, modesty and truth and control of the passions and simplicity and innocence are honourable, but in your sight dishonourable; and to me are hostile shamelessness, falsehood, excess of passions, vanity, vices, but to you they are the closest of family members. [196] Why, then, although practicing estrangement by your deeds, do you in word hypocritically pretend kinship by putting on a specious name? For I also cannot endure clever wiles, because it is easy for anyone to find prettily-sounding words, but it is not easy to exchange bad dispositions with good ones. [197] With these things in view, I regard now as enemies and hereafter shall consider as such those who have kindled the fuel of enmity, and I shall frown on them more than

εἰς δυσγένειαν ὀνειδιζομένων ὑπο-
βλέψομαι· τούτοις μὲν γὰρ ἀπολογία τὸ
μηδὲν οἰκεῖον ἔχειν <παράδειγμα>
καλοκἀγαθίας, ὑπόδικοι δ᾽ ὑμεῖς οἱ ἐκ
μεγάλων φύντες οἴκων, οἷς αὔχημα καὶ
κλέος τὰ λαμπρὰ γένη· παριδρυμένων
γὰρ καὶ τρόπον τινὰ συμπεφυκότων
ἀρχετύπων ἀγαθῶν οὐδὲν ἀπομάξασθαι
καλὸν διενοήθητε."

198 ὅτι δὲ ἐν ἀρετῆς κτήσει τίθεται
τὸ εὐγενὲς καὶ τὸν ἔχοντα ταύτην
εὐγενῆ μόνον ὑπείληφεν, ἀλλ᾽ οὐχ
ὅστις ἂν καλῶν καὶ ἀγαθῶν γένηται
γονέων, δῆλον ἐκ πολλῶν.

199 αὐτίκα τοὺς ἐκ τοῦ γηγενοῦς
φύντας τίς οὐκ ἂν εὐπατρίδας
εἴποι καὶ εὐπατριδῶν ἀρχηγέ-
τας; οἳ γένος ἐξαίρετον ἔλαχον
παρὰ τοὺς ἔπειτα, βλαστήσαντες
ἐκ τῶν πρώτων νυμφίων ἀνδρός
τε καὶ γυναικὸς τότε πρῶτον
εἰς ὁμιλίαν κοινὴν ἐπὶ σπορᾷ
τοῦ ὁμοίου συνελθόντων. ἀλλ᾽
ὅμως δυοῖν γενομένων ὁ πρεσ-
βύτερος ὑπέμεινε τὸν νεώτερον
δολοφονῆσαι καὶ τὸ μέγιστον
ἄγος, ἀδελφοκτονίαν ἐργασάμενος
πρῶτος αἵματι ἀνθρωπίνῳ τὴν γῆν
ἐμίανε. 200 τί δὴ τοῦτον ὤνησεν
ἡ εὐγένεια τὴν ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ δυσ-
γένειαν ἐπιδειξάμενον; ἣν καὶ ὁ
τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων πραγμάτων ἔφορος
θεὸς ἰδὼν ἐστύγησε καὶ προβαλλό-
μενος ὥρισε τιμωρίας, οὐκ εὐθὺς
ἀνελών, ὅπως ἀναισθήτως ἔχῃ συμ-
φορῶν, ἀλλὰ μυρίους ἐπικρεμάσας τοὺς
ἐν αἰσθήσει θανάτους λύπαις καὶ
φόβοις ἐπαλλήλοις εἰς κακῶν ὀδυνηρο-
τάτων ἀντίληψιν.

201 ἐγένετο δέ τις τῶν μετὰ ταῦτα
σφόδρα δοκίμων ἀνὴρ ὁσιώτατος, οὗ
τὴν εὐσέβειαν ἀνάγραπτον ἠξίωσεν
<εἶναι> ἐν ἱεραῖς βίβλοις ὁ τοὺς
νόμους διαταξάμενος· ὃς ἐν τῷ μεγάλῳ
κατακλυσμῷ, τῶν πόλεων ἀφανιζο-
μένων πανωλεθρίᾳ—καὶ γὰρ τῶν ὀρῶν
τὰ ὑψηλότατα τῇ συναυξήσει καὶ

on those reproached for their ignoble birth: for their defense is that they have no pattern of high excellence as their kin, but you stand accused, you who spring from great houses, whose boast and fame are their illustrious families; for, even though good models were set up beside you and, in a way, have grown up with you, you have never been minded to reproduce anything excellent."

198 That he held that nobleness lies in the acquisition of virtue and assumes that its possessor is noble alone, but not whoever is born from excellent and good parents, is clear from many examples.

199 To begin with, who would deny that those who sprung form the earthborn man were highborn and progenitors of highborn families? They obtained by lot an extra-ordinary family in comparison to future generations, sprung as they were from the first bridal pair, who then for the first time came together as man and wife in mutual intercourse for the propagation of their like. But, nevertheless, of the sons thus born the elder dared to murder the younger by treachery, and, after having committing the greatest abomination, fratricide, he was the first to defile the earth with human blood. 200 Now, what did noble birth benefit him who displayed ignobility in his soul? God, the Overseer of human affairs, abhorred this, when he saw it, and, accusing him, he determined a punishment, not immediately killing him lest he would be insensible to his misfortunes, but holding suspended over him countless deaths in his sense-perception through the rapid successions of griefs and fears, so that he might apprehend the most painful evils.

201 Among the most esteemed men of those after them there was someone, a very holy man, whose piety the framer of the laws considered worthy to be inscribed in the sacred books. In the great deluge when cities disappeared in utter destruction—for even the highest mountains were swallowed up by the increase and force of the flood

ἐπιτάσει τῆς περὶ τὴν φορὰν πλημμύρας κατεπίνετο—, μόνος μετὰ τῶν οἰκείων διασῴζεται τῆς καλοκἀγαθίας ἆθλον ἀράμενος, οὗ μεῖζον οὐκ ἔστιν εὑρεῖν. 202 ἀλλὰ καὶ τούτῳ τριῶν γενομένων παίδων καὶ συναπολελαυκότων τῆς πατρῴας δωρεᾶς εἷς ἐτόλμησε τὸν αἴτιον τῆς σωτηρίας πατέρα κατακερτομεῖν γέλωτα καὶ χλεύην, εἴ τι παρεσφάλη μὴ καθ' ἑκούσιον γνώμην, τιθέμενος καὶ τοῖς μὴ εἰδόσιν ἀπογυμνῶν ἃ κρύπτειν θέμις ἐπὶ τῇ τοῦ γεννήσαντος αἰσχύνῃ. τοιγαροῦν οὐκ ὤνατο τῆς λαμπρᾶς εὐγενείας ἐπάρατος γενόμενος καὶ τοῖς μετ' αὐτὸν ἀρχὴ κακοδαιμονίας· ὧν ἄξιον ἦν τυγχάνειν τὸν ἠμεληκότα γονέων τιμῆς.

203 ἀλλὰ τί τούτων μεμνῆσθαι προσῆκεν ἀφέμενον τοῦ πρώτου καὶ γηγενοῦς; ὃς ἕνεκα εὐγενείας οὐδενὶ θνητῷ σύγκριτος, χερσὶ μὲν θείαις <εἰς> ἀνδριάντα τὸν σωματοειδῆ τυπωθεὶς ἀκρότητι τέχνης πλαστικῆς, ψυχῆς δὲ ἀξιωθεὶς ἀπ' οὐδενὸς ἔτι τῶν εἰς γένεσιν ἡκόντων, ἐμπνεύσαντος θεοῦ τῆς ἰδίας δυνάμεως ὅσον ἐδύνατο δέξασθαι θνητὴ φύσις, ἆρ' οὐχ ὑπερβολή τις εὐγενείας μηδεμιᾷ τῶν ἄλλων ὅσαι διωνομάσθησαν εἰς σύγκρισιν ἐλθεῖν δυναμένη; 204 τῶν μὲν γὰρ τὸ κλέος ἐκ προγόνων εὐτυχίας—ἄνθρωποι δὲ οἱ πρόγονοι, ζῷα ἐπίκηρα καὶ φθαρτά, καὶ αἱ τούτων ἀβέβαιοι καὶ ἐφήμεροι τὰ πολλὰ εὐπραγίαι—, τοῦ δὲ πατὴρ [μὲν] θνητὸς οὐδείς, ὁ δὲ ἀίδιος θεός· 205 οὗ τρόπον τινὰ γενόμενος εἰκὼν κατὰ τὸν ἡγεμόνα νοῦν ἐν ψυχῇ, δέον ἀκηλίδωτον τὴν εἰκόνα φυλάξαι καθ' ὅσον οἷόν τε ἦν ἐπακολουθήσαντα ταῖς τοῦ γεννήσαντος ἀρεταῖς, προτεθέντων εἰς αἱρέσεις καὶ φυγὰς τῶν ἐναντίων, ἀγαθοῦ καὶ κακοῦ καὶ καλοῦ καὶ αἰσχροῦ καὶ ἀληθοῦς καὶ ψευδοῦς,

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on account of its rapid motion—, he alone was saved with his family members, receiving for his high excellence a reward of which one cannot find a greater one. 202 And yet, of the three sons born to him and sharing in the enjoyment of their father's gifts, one ventured to rail violently against the source of their salvation, their father, with laughter and scorn, because he had erred somewhat not in accordance with his voluntary judgment, and laying bare what should have been hidden to those who knew it not, so as to cast shame on him who had begotten him. Therefore, he was not benefitted by his illustrious noble birth, for he became accursed and the beginning of unhappiness to those after him: things which were worthy to befall one who had disregarded the honour due to his parents.

203 But why is it fitting to remember these, while passing over the first and earthborn man? He, on account of his noble birth, is comparable to no other mortal, being moulded in the figure of the human body by the hands of God with the perfection of plastic arts and being considered worthy of a soul coming from nothing among the things present in creation, but from God breathing as much of His own power as a mortal nature could receive. Is this then not some extraordinary quality of noble birth which cannot be brought into comparison with any of the other examples as many as are widely known? 204 For the fame of those comes from the good fortune of their ancestors— their ancestors being men, living beings subject to death and perishable, and their welfare being mostly uncertain and short-lived—while the father of him was no mortal but the eternal God. 205 As he was, in a way, His image in respect of the ruling mind in his soul, he should have kept that image spotless, following as far as he could the virtues of his Begetter, but when the opposites were displayed to choose or avoid, good and evil, excellent and shameful, true and false, he readily chose the false and

τὰ μὲν ψευδῆ καὶ αἰσχρὰ καὶ κακὰ προθύμως εἵλετο, τῶν δὲ ἀγαθῶν καὶ καλῶν καὶ ἀληθῶν ἠλόγησεν· ἐφ' οἷς εἰκότως θνητὸν ἀθανάτου βίον ἀνθυπηλλάξατο μακαριότητος καὶ εὐδαιμονίας σφαλεὶς καὶ ῥᾷστα μετέβαλεν εἰς ἐπίπονον καὶ κακοδαίμονα ζωήν.

206 ἀλλ' οὗτοι μὲν ἔστωσαν κοινοὶ πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ὅροι τοῦ μὴ ἐπὶ μεγάλοις γένεσι σεμνύνεσθαι τοὺς καλοκἀγαθίας ἀμοιροῦντας· Ἰουδαίοις δὲ καὶ ἕτεροι δίχα τῶν κοινῶν ἐξαίρετοι. τῶν γὰρ τοῦ γένους ἀρχηγετῶν εἰσιν οὓς αἱ τῶν προγόνων ἀρεταὶ συνόλως οὐδὲν ὤνησαν <ἐπ'> ἐπιλήπτοις καὶ ὑπαιτίοις πράξεσιν ἁλόντας, εἰ καὶ πρὸς ἑτέρου μηδενὸς ἐλεγχθέντας, ἀλλ' οὖν ὑπὸ τοῦ συνειδότος, ὃ μόνον ἐξ ἁπάντων δικαστήριον τέχναις λόγων οὐ παράγεται.

207 πολύπαις ἦν ὁ πρῶτος ἐκ τριῶν παιδοποιησάμενος γυναικῶν, οὐ δι' ἡδονῆς ἀπόλαυσιν, ἀλλὰ δι' ἐλπίδα τοῦ πληθῦναι τὸ γένος· ἀλλ' ἐκ πολλῶν εἷς μόνος ἀπεδείχθη κληρονόμος τῶν πατρῴων ἀγαθῶν, οἱ δ' ἄλλοι πάντες γνώμης ὑγιοῦς σφαλέντες καὶ μηδὲν τῶν τοῦ γεννήσαντος ἀπομαξάμενοι διῳκίσθησαν ἀλλοτριωθέντες τῆς ἀοιδίμου εὐγενείας.

208 πάλιν ἐκ τοῦ δοκιμασθέντος κληρονόμου δύο δίδυμοι γεννῶνται μηδὲν [ὅτι μὴ χεῖρας καὶ ταύτας ἕνεκά τινος οἰκονομίας] ὅμοιον ἐπιφερόμενοι, μήτε τοῖς σώμασι μήτε ταῖς γνώμαις· ὁ μὲν γὰρ νεώτερος καταπειθὴς ἀμφοτέροις τοῖς γονεῦσιν ἦν καὶ οὕτως εὐάρεστος, ὡς καὶ θεοῦ τυχεῖν ἐπαινέτου, ὁ δὲ μείζων ἀπειθής, [ἐκ] τῶν γαστρὸς καὶ τῶν μετὰ γαστέρα ἡδονῶν ἀκρατῶς ἔχων, ὑφ' ὧν ἀνεπείσθη καὶ πρεσβείων ἐξίστασθαι τῷ μετ' αὐτὸν καὶ μετανοεῖν εὐθὺς ἐφ' οἷς ἐξέστη καὶ φονᾶν κατὰ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ καὶ μηδὲν ἕτερον ἢ δι'

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shameful and evil and paid no regard to the good and excellent and true. Because of this he fairly received in exchange a mortal life for an immortal one, being balked of his blessedness and happiness, and he changed the easiest things into a toilsome and miserable life.

206 These examples, however, are landmarks common to all people, so that those who have no share in high excellence will not pride themselves on their great families; the Jews have also other examples, apart from the common ones, peculiar to themselves. For among the progenitors of their race, there were some to whom the virtues of their ancestors were of no benefit at all, choosing censurable and reprehensible actions, and being convicted, if not by any other human being, then at any rate by their conscience, the one and only court which is not misled by oratorical artifices.

207 The first had many children, begotten from three wives, not because of enjoyment in pleasure but because of the hope of multiplying the race. But of his many sons, only one was appointed as heir of his father's goods, and all the others, because they failed to show sound judgment and reproduced nothing of the qualities of their begetter, were excluded from the home, being estranged from their famous noble birth.

208 Again, of the one who was approved as heir, two sons, twins, were born who bore no likeness to each other, neither in their bodies nor in their dispositions [except their hands, and these only on account of some plan]. For the younger was obedient to both his parents and was so well-pleasing that he happened to be praised even by God, but the elder was disobedient, indulging without restraint in the pleasures of the belly and the parts below the belly, because of which he was induced to give up his birthright to his junior and to convert immediately from the things he had given up and to kill his brother and to busy himself with nothing else

ὧν λυπήσει τοὺς γονεῖς πραγμα-
τεύεσθαι. 209 τοιγαροῦν τῷ μὲν
εὐχὰς τίθενται τὰς ἀνωτάτω, βεβαι-
οῦντος ἁπάσας θεοῦ καὶ μηδεμίαν
ἀξιώσαντος ἀτελῆ καταλιπεῖν, τῷ δὲ
κατ' ἔλεον χαρίζονται τὴν ὑπήκοον
τάξιν, ἵνα δουλεύῃ τῷ ἀδελφῷ, νομί-
ζοντες, ὅπερ ἐστίν, ἀγαθὸν εἶναι τῷ
φαύλῳ τὸ μὴ αὐτεξούσιον. 210 καὶ εἴ γε
ὑπέμεινε τὴν δουλείαν ἄσμενος,
δευτερείων ἂν ἠξιοῦτο ὡς ἐν ἄθλοις
ἀρετῆς· νυνὶ δὲ ἀπαυθαδισάμενος
καὶ δραπετεύσας τῆς καλῆς ἐπιστα-
σίας αὐτῷ τε καὶ τοῖς ἀπογόνοις
μεγάλων αἴτιος ὀνειδῶν ἐγένετο,
ὡς τὸν ἀβίωτον αὐτοῦ βίον
ἐστηλιτεῦσθαι πρὸς σαφέστατον
ἔλεγχον τοῦ μηδὲν τὴν εὐγένειαν
ὠφελεῖν τοὺς ἀναξίους εὐγενείας.

211 οὗτοι μὲν οὖν εἰσι τῆς ἐπιλήπτου
τάξεως, οὓς ἐξ ἀγαθῶν πονηροὺς
γενομένους ὤνησαν μὲν οὐδὲν αἱ
πατέρων ἀρεταί, αἱ δ' ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ
κακίαι μυρία ἔβλαψαν. ἔχω δ' εἰπεῖν
ἑτέρους τὴν ἐξ ἐναντίας ἀμείνω
τεταγμένους τάξιν, οἷς πρόγονοι μὲν
ὑπαίτιοι, ζηλωτὸς δὲ καὶ ἀνάπλεως
εὐφημίας ὁ βίος.

212 τοῦ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἔθνους ὁ
πρεσβύτατος γένος μὲν ἦν Χαλδαῖος,
πατρὸς δὲ ἀστρονομικοῦ τῶν περὶ τὰ
μαθήματα διατριβόντων, οἳ τοὺς
ἀστέρας θεοὺς νομίζουσι καὶ τὸν
σύμπαντα οὐρανόν τε καὶ κόσμον,
παρ' οὓς τό τε εὖ καὶ τὸ χεῖρον
ἑκάστοις φασὶν ἀποβαίνειν, οὐδὲν ἔξω
τῶν αἰσθητῶν αἴτιον ὑπολαμβάνοντες
εἶναι. 213 τούτου δὲ τί ἂν εἴη χαλεπώ-
τερον ἢ μᾶλλον ἀπελέγξαι τὴν ἐν τῇ
ψυχῇ δυσγένειαν δυνάμενον δι' ἐπι-
στήμης τῶν πολλῶν καὶ δευτέρων καὶ
γενητῶν εἰς ἀνεπιστημοσύνην ἰούσῃ
τοῦ ἑνὸς καὶ πρεσβυτάτου καὶ ἀγενήτου
καὶ ποιητοῦ τῶν ὅλων καὶ διά τε
ταῦτα ἀρίστου καὶ διὰ μυρία ἄλλα, ἃ
διὰ μέγεθος ἀνθρώπινος λογισμὸς οὐ
χωρεῖ; 214 ὧν ἔννοιαν λαβὼν καὶ

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than with things that would grieve his
parents. 209 Therefore, for the first they
offered up the highest prayers, while God
confirmed all these and considered it worthy
to leave none unfulfilled, but to the other
they granted in compassion an inferior rank
in order to serve his brother, supposing that
it is good for the fool to not be his own
master. 210 And if, indeed, he had gladly
endured his servitude, he would have been
considered worthy of second prizes as in the
contests of virtue; but now, because he acted
boldly and ran away from the excellent
authority, he became the cause of great
reproaches both to himself and to his
descendants, so that his life so little worth
living stands clearly recorded as proof that
noble birth will be of no benefit to those
who are unworthy to their noble birth.

211 Now these examples belong to the
censurable class, wicked children born of
good parents, to whom the virtues of their
fathers were of no benefit, and the countless
vices in their souls injured them. But I can
cite others who are placed in the opposite
and better class, whose ancestors were
reprehensible while their own life was
worthy of emulation and full of good report.

212 The most ancient member of the
Jewish nation was a Chaldaean by birth,
whose father was an astrologer among those
who spend their time with the mathematical
sciences, who think that the stars and the
whole heaven and universe are gods, from
whom, they say, the good and the bad befall
everyone, while assuming that there is no
cause outside the things perceptible by the
senses. 213 What could be more grievous or
more capable of exposing the ignobility in
the soul than this, which, because of its
knowledge of the many, the secondary, and
the created, leads to an ignorance of the
One, the Oldest, the Uncreated, the Maker of
all and, on account of these things and
countless others which the human reason
because of their magnitude cannot grasp, of
the Most Excellent? 214 Having received

ἐπιθειάσας καταλείπει μὲν πατρίδα καὶ
γενεὰν καὶ πατρῷον οἶκον, εἰδὼς ὅτι
μένοντος μὲν αἱ τῆς πολυθέου δόξης
ἐγκαταμενοῦσιν ἀπάται ἀνήνυτον κατα-
σκευάζουσαι τὴν τοῦ ἑνὸς εὕρεσιν,
ὅς ἐστιν ἀίδιος μόνος καὶ ὅλων
πατὴρ νοητῶν τε αὖ καὶ αἰσθητῶν,
εἰ δὲ μεταναστάίη, μεταναστήσεται
καὶ τῆς διανοίας ἡ ἀπάτη μεθαρμο-
σαμένης τὴν ψευδῆ δόξαν εἰς ἀλή-
θειαν. 215 ἅμα δὲ καὶ τὸν πόθον ὃν
ἐπόθει γνῶναι τὸ ὂν προσανερρίπισε
λόγια χρησθέντα, οἷς ποδηγετούμενος
ἐπὶ τὴν τοῦ ἑνὸς ἀοκνοτάτῃ σπουδῇ
ζήτησιν ᾔει· καὶ οὐ πρότερον ἀνῆκεν
ἢ τρανοτέρας λαβεῖν φαντασίας, οὐχὶ
τῆς οὐσίας—τοῦτο γὰρ ἀμήχανον—,
ἀλλὰ τῆς ὑπάρξεως αὐτοῦ καὶ προνοίας.
216 διὸ καὶ πιστεῦσαι λέγεται τῷ θεῷ
πρῶτος, ἐπειδὴ καὶ πρῶτος ἀκλινῆ καὶ
βεβαίαν ἔσχεν ὑπόληψιν, ὡς ἔστιν ἓν
αἴτιον τὸ ἀνωτάτω καὶ προνοεῖ τοῦ τε
κόσμου καὶ τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ. κτησάμενος
δὲ πίστιν, τὴν τῶν ἀρετῶν βεβαιο-
τάτην, συνεκτᾶτο καὶ τὰς ἄλλας
ἁπάσας, ὡς παρὰ τοῖς ὑποδεξα-
μένοις νομίζεσθαι βασιλεύς, οὐχὶ
ταῖς παρασκευαῖς—ἰδιώτης γὰρ
ἦν—, ἀλλὰ τῷ περὶ τὴν ψυχὴν
μεγέθει, φρονήματος ὢν βασιλικοῦ.
217 καὶ δῆτα θεραπεύοντες αὐτὸν
διετέλουν ὡς ἄρχοντα ὑπήκοοι τὸ περὶ
πάντα μεγαλεῖον τῆς φύσεως αὐτοῦ
καταπληττόμενοι τελειοτέρας οὔσης ἢ
κατὰ ἄνθρωπον· οὐδὲ γὰρ ὁμιλίαις
ἐχρῆτο ταῖς αὐταῖς, ἀλλ' ἐπιθειάζων τὰ
πολλὰ σεμνοτέραις· ὁπότε γοῦν
κατασχεθείη, μετέβαλλε πάντα πρὸς τὸ
βέλτιον, τὰς ὄψεις, τὴν χρόαν, τὸ
μέγεθος, τὰς σχέσεις, τὰς κινήσεις,
τὴν φωνήν, τοῦ θείου πνεύματος,
ὅπερ ἄνωθεν καταπνευσθὲν εἰσῳ-
κίσατο τῇ ψυχῇ, περιτιθέντος τῷ μὲν
σώματι κάλλος ἐξαίρετον, τοῖς δὲ
λόγοις πειθώ, τοῖς δ' ἀκούουσι
σύνεσιν. 218 ἆρ' οὐκ ἂν εἴποις τὸν
μετανάστην τουτονί, τὸν πάντων

insight in these things and having been divinely inspired, he left behind his native country, his race, and his father's house, knowing that if he stayed the delusions of the polytheistic creed would stay within him, rendering his discovery of the One who alone is eternal and the Father of all intelligible and perceptible things, ineffectual, whereas if he removed, the delusion would also remove from his mind, adapting its false creed into truth. 215 At the same time, also, the oracles proclaimed to him fanned his wish to know the Existent, and, being guided by these, he went on his search for the One with untiring zeal. And he did not stop before having received clearer visions, not of His essence—for that is impossible—, but of His existence and providence. 216 And, therefore, he is the first person spoken of as believing in God, since he first got an unswerving and firm conception that there is one Cause above all, and that it provides for the world and the things in it. And having gained faith, the most firm of the virtues, he gained with it also the others, so that by those who received him he was regarded as a king, not because of his means—for he was a commoner—, but because of the greatness of his soul, for his spirit was kingly. 217 And indeed, they continued to serve him like subjects do a ruler, being amazed about the all-embracing magnificence of his nature which was more perfect than is in the human way: for he did not use the intercourses with them, but, being often divinely inspired, the more revered ones. Thus whenever he was possessed, everything in him changed to something better, his eyes, his complexion, his stature, his carriage, his movements, and his voice, for the divine spirit, which was breathed upon him from on high and dwelled in his soul, bestowed upon his body a singular beauty, upon his words persuasiveness, and upon his hearers understanding. 218 Would you not say that this wanderer, without family members or

ἔρημον οἰκείων καὶ φίλων, εὐγενέσ-
τατον εἶναι, τῆς πρὸς θεὸν συγγενείας
ὀρεχθέντα καὶ σπουδάσαντα μηχανῇ
πάσῃ γνώριμον αὐτῷ γενέσθαι καὶ
ταχθέντα μὲν τάξιν ἀρίστην τὴν ἐν
προφήταις, πιστεύσαντα δὲ μηδενὶ τῶν
ἐν γενέσει πρὸ τοῦ ἀγενήτου καὶ
πάντων πατρός, καὶ βασιλέα δέ, ὡς
ἔφην, παρὰ τοῖς ὑποδεξαμένοις νομισ-
θέντα, μήθ' ὅπλοις μήτε στρατιωτικαῖς
δυνάμεσιν, ὡς ἐνίοις ἔθος, λαβόντα τὴν
ἀρχήν, ἀλλὰ χειροτονίᾳ θεοῦ τοῦ
φιλαρέτου τοὺς εὐσεβείας ἐραστὰς
αὐτοκρατέσιν ἐξουσίαις γεραίροντος ἐπ'
ὠφελείᾳ τῶν συντυγχανόντων; [219] οὗτος
ἅπασιν ἐπηλύταις εὐγενείας ἐστὶ
κανών, δυσγένειαν μὲν τὴν ἐξ ἀλλο-
κότων νόμων καὶ ἐκθέσμων ἐθῶν, ἃ
λίθοις καὶ ξύλοις καὶ συνόλως ἀψύχοις
ἰσοθέους ἀπένειμε τιμάς, καταλιποῦσι,
καλὴν δ' ἀποικίαν στειλαμένοις πρὸς
ἔμψυχον τῷ ὄντι καὶ ζῶσαν πολιτείαν,
ἧς ἔφορος καὶ ἐπίσκοπος ἀλήθεια.

[220] ταύτην τὴν εὐγένειαν οὐ μόνον
θεοφιλεῖς ἄνδρες ἀλλὰ καὶ γυναῖκες
ἐζήλωσαν, ἀπομαθοῦσαι μὲν ἀμαθίαν
τὴν σύντροφον περὶ τιμῆς τῶν χειρο-
κμήτων, παιδευθεῖσαι δὲ τὴν περὶ
μοναρχίας ἐπιστήμην, ᾗ μοναρχεῖται ὁ
κόσμος. [221] Θάμαρ ἦν τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς
Παλαιστίνης Συρίας γύναιον, ἐν οἰκίᾳ
καὶ πόλει τραφὲν πολυθέῳ γεμούσῃ
ξοάνων καὶ ἀγαλμάτων καὶ συνόλως
ἀφιδρυμάτων. ἀλλ' ἐπειδὴ καθάπερ ἐκ
σκότους βαθέος ἐδυνήθη βραχεῖαν αὐγὴν
ἀληθείας ἰδεῖν, θανάτου κινδύνῳ πρὸς
εὐσέβειαν ηὐτομόλησεν ὀλίγα φροντί-
σασα τοῦ ζῆν, εἰ μὴ μέλλοι καλῶς ζῆν·
τὸ δὲ καλῶς ἀνέφερεν ἐπ' οὐδὲν ἕτερον
ἢ τὴν θεραπείαν καὶ ἱκεσίαν τοῦ ἑνὸς
αἰτίου. [222] καίτοι δυσὶν ἀδελφοῖς
ἀμφοτέροις πονηροῖς ἐν μέρει γημα-
μένη, κουριδίῳ μὲν τῷ προτέρῳ, τῷ δ'
ὑστέρῳ κατ' ἐπιδικασίας νόμον, γενεὰν
τοῦ προτέρου μὴ καταλιπόντος, ἀλλ'
ὅμως ἀκηλίδωτον διαφυλάξασα τὸν
ἑαυτῆς βίον ἴσχυσε καὶ τῆς προσ-

friends, was of the highest nobility, when he
yearned for kinship with God and hastened
himself by every means to become acquaint-
ted with Him, and was placed in the best
rank, among the prophets, and believed in
none of the things in creation rather than in
the Uncreated and Father of all, and was
regarded, as I have said, as a king by those
who received him, obtaining his authority
not with weapons nor with military forces,
as is the way of some, but by the election
of God, a lover of virtue, who rewards
the lovers of piety with absolute powers
for the benefit of those associated with
him? [219] He is the standard of nobility for
all proselytes, who, after leaving behind
the ignobility of strange laws and lawless
customs which assign godlike honours
to stones and stocks and soulless things in
general, were prepared to go to a good
settlement, in a truly alive and living
polity, the overseer and guardian of which
is truth.

[220] For this nobility not only did men
beloved by God strive, but women also,
when they unlearnt the ignorance of their
upbringing concerning the honour of things
wrought by hands, and were instructed in the
knowledge concerning the rule of One, by
which the world is governed. [221] Tamar was
a woman from Palestinian Syria, being
brought up in a house and city which
acknowledged a multitude of gods and was
full of wooden images and statues and idols
in general. But when she was able, as it
were, from deep darkness to glimpse a little
ray of truth, she deserted to piety at the risk
of death, caring little to live, if it were not to
live excellently: this living excellently she
held to be nothing else than the service and
supplication of the one Cause. [222] Although
she was married to two brothers in turn, both
of them wicked, to the former in lawful
marriage, to the latter according to the law
of inheritance, as the elder had left no issue,
but nevertheless, keeping her own life
spotless, she was even able to obtain the

ηκούσης τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς εὐφημίας ἐπι-
λαχεῖν καὶ τοῖς μετ' αὐτὴν ἅπασιν
εὐγενείας ἀφορμὴ γενέσθαι.

ἀλλ' αὕτη μέν, εἰ καὶ ἀλλόφυλος,
ἀλλ' οὖν γε ἐλευθέρα καὶ ἐξ ἐλευθέρων
καὶ οὐκ ἀσήμων ἴσως. ²²³ θεράπαιναι
δὲ τῶν ὑπὲρ Εὐφράτην ἐν ἐσχατιαῖς
τῆς Βαβυλῶνος γεννηθεῖσαι προικίδιαι
μὲν ἐδόθησαν γαμουμέναις ταῖς τρο-
φίμαις, ἄξιαι δὲ κριθεῖσαι παρελθεῖν
εἰς εὐνὴν ἀνδρὸς σοφοῦ τὸ μὲν πρῶτον
ἐκ παλλακίδων εἰς γαμετῶν ὄνομα καὶ
σχῆμα παρῆλθον καὶ ἀντὶ θεραπαι-
νίδων ἰσότιμοι ταῖς δεσποίναις ὀλίγου
δέω φάναι κατέστησαν ὑπ' ἐκείνων,
ὅπερ ἦν ἀπιστότατον, πρὸς τὸ αὐτὸ
ἀξίωμα παραπεμφθεῖσαι· φθόνος γὰρ
οὐκ εἰσοικίζεται σοφῶν ψυχαῖς, οὗ
μὴ παρόντος κοινοπραγοῦσι τῶν ἀγα-
θῶν. ²²⁴ οἱ δ' ἐκ τούτων νόθοι παῖδες
γνησίων οὐδὲν διήνεγκαν, οὐ μόνον
παρὰ τῷ γεννήσαντι—θαυμαστὸν γὰρ
οὐδέν, εἰ τοῖς μὴ ὁμογαστρίοις ὁ
πάντων κοινὸς πατὴρ τὴν αὐτὴν
εὔνοιαν παρεῖχεν—, ἀλλὰ καὶ παρὰ
ταῖς μητρυιαῖς· αἱ μὲν γὰρ τὸ
<πρὸς> προγονοὺς μῖσος ἀναιρού-
μεναι εἰς ἄλεκτον μεθηρμόσαντο
κηδεμονίαν· ²²⁵ οἱ δὲ προγονοὶ τῇ
κατ' ἀντίδοσιν εὐνοίᾳ τὰς μητρυιὰς
ὡς φύσει μητέρας ἐξετίμησαν· ἀδελ-
φοί τε μέρει ἡμίσει τοῦ γένους
νομισθέντες οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμισείᾳ στέργειν
ἀλλήλους ἠξίωσαν, ἀλλ' εἰς τὸ
διπλάσιον τὸ τοῦ φιλεῖν καὶ ἀντι-
φιλεῖσθαι πάθος συναυξήσαντες καὶ
τὸ δοκοῦν ὑστερίζειν προσανεπλήρω-
σαν τοῖς ἐξ ἀμφοῖν γεγονόσιν εἰς
ἁρμονίαν καὶ κρᾶσιν ἠθῶν συνδραμεῖν
σπουδάσαντες.

²²⁶ Ἔτι τοίνυν μεταδοτέον τοῖς ὡς
ἴδιον ἀγαθὸν τὸ ἀλλότριον, εὐγένειαν,
ὑποδυομένοις; οἳ δίχα τῶν εἰρημέ-
νων ἐχθροὶ δικαίως <ἂν> νομισ-
θεῖεν καὶ τοῦ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἔθνους
καὶ τῶν πανταχοῦ πάντων, τοῦ μὲν
ὅτι διδόασι τοῖς ὁμοφύλοις ἐκεχει-

²²³

²²⁴

²²⁵

²²⁶

good report which belongs to the good and
to become the starting point of nobility to all
those who came after her.

She, however, although a foreigner, was
at any rate a free woman, of free and per-
haps not insignificant ancestors. ²²³ Hand-
maids born beyond the Euphrates, in the
extreme parts of Babylonia, were given as
dowry to their mistresses when they were
married, but when they had been judged
worthy to pass on to the wise man's bed,
they passed on, in the first place, from being
concubines to the name and position of wed-
ded wives and were made instead of hand-
maids, I want to say, almost equal in honour
to their mistresses by whom, what is most
incredible, they were promoted to the same
dignity. For envy does not dwell in the souls
of the wise, who, because it is not present,
share the good things with others. ²²⁴ Se-
condly, the baseborn sons of these women
differed in nothing from the legitimate sons,
not only in the judgment of their begetter—
for it is not remarkable if the father common
to all provides the same goodwill to those
born of different mothers—, but also in the
judgment of their stepmothers: for, getting
rid of the hatred for stepchildren, they adap-
ted it into an indescribable solicitude; ²²⁵ and
with a goodwill in return the stepchildren
honoured their stepmothers as highly as their
natural mothers. The brothers, though con-
sidered as half-brothers by birth, did not
consider it worthy to show a half affection
for each other, but, increasing twice as large
the passion for loving and for being loved in
return, they even filled up what seemed to
be lacking, hastening to bring together the
children born from both parentages in
harmony and union of dispositions.

²²⁶ What should therefore be shared with
those who assume secretly the good
belonging to another, nobility, as their own?
They, apart from those mentioned, may
justly be considered as enemies of the
Jewish nation as well as of everybody
everywhere, of the former because they give

ρίαν ὀλιγωρεῖν ὑγιαίνοντος <βίου
καὶ> βεβαίου πεποιθήσει προγονικῆς
ἀρετῆς, τῶν δ' ὅτι, κἂν ἐπ' αὐτὴν
φθάσωσιν ἀκρότητα καλοκἀγαθίας,
οὐδὲν ὠφεληθήσονται διὰ τὸ μὴ
τυχεῖν γονέων καὶ πάππων ἀνεπιλήπ-
των. [227] ἧς οὐκ οἶδ' εἴ τις βλαβερω-
τέρα γένοιτ' ἂν εἰσήγησις, εἰ μήτε
τοῖς ἐξ ἀγαθῶν πονηρευομένοις ἐπα-
κολουθήσει τιμωρὸς δίκη μήτε τοῖς
ἐκ πονηρῶν ἀγαθοῖς ἕψεται τιμή,
τοῦ νόμου δοκιμάζοντος ἕκαστον
αὐτὸν ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ καὶ μὴ συγγε-
νῶν ἀρεταῖς ἢ κακίαις ἐπαινοῦντος ἢ
κολάζοντος.

[227]

their compatriots with their trust in their ancestral virtue licence to esteem lightly the sound and firm life, of the latter because, even if they may reach the summit of high excellence, they will not be benefitted because of their not having blameless parents and grandparents. [227] I do not know whether there might be any more harmful proposal than this, if avenging justice will not pursue the wicked acting children of good parents nor if honour will follow the good children of the wicked, for the law examines each man by himself and does not praise or chastise one for the virtues or vices of one's kinsmen.

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