Arab musical practices, including the extra-musical associations of *maqamat* [Arabic musical scales] that determine which of the eleven modes is to be used. Kligman contextualizes the music and liturgy of Syrian Jewish worship within the disciplines of ethnomusicology, Judaic and cultural studies, and anthropology. A CD of liturgical chanting is also included with this volume.

I first attended a Syrian Sabbath service in the spring of 1990 and was immediately struck by the enthusiasm of the members of the congregation during the service, as well as the manner in which the music was an intrinsic part of worship. As I discovered how Syrians pray, I learned about individuals and their love of Jewish life, in addition to their knowledge of music and religion. This also allowed me the opportunity to reflect on my own Ashkenazi religious tradition.

This study is based primarily on ethnographic materials gathered through participant observation at Sabbath services, interviews with cantors and other members of the community, and private *ud* lessons. Beginning in August 1991, I studied the liturgical tradition with respected lay cantors. I conducted multiple interviews with Cantors Moses Tawil, David Tawil, and Isaac Cabasso. Our meetings focused on the cantor's responsibilities for Sabbath morning prayers, and Moses Tawil taught through example. He sang portions of the liturgy; I subsequently tried to replicate what he taught me. I recorded each session, and portions of the transcript of our interactions appear in the text of this study. David Tawil recommended that I study the *ud,* stating that learning the *ud* was essential to acquire an understanding of the *maqamat* [Arab model system]. Additionally, he recommended a specific teacher, Hakki Obadia, who has ongoing contact with the Syrian community.

I also attended and participated in cantorial classes that trained young men, ages twenty through forty, in *pizmon* melodies and their application to the liturgy. These classes were taught by Hazzan Isaac Cabasso from November 1991 through March 1992. The discussions in the class allowed me to witness how the Syrian liturgical tradition is acquired, transmitted, and maintained. Additionally, I made use of liturgical recordings available at the Sephardic Archives of the Sephardic Center in Brooklyn. The initial phase of this research culminated in my doctoral dissertation.

Since then I have continued working with members of the community, including service as a research consultant for a video taping of the community for the Milken Family Foundation on October 6, 1999 (a weekday evening where recording was permissible). The Sabbath morning service and *Rosh Hashanah* prayers were also recorded, and material from these tapes is included in this study.

To more fully understand the complexity of the Syrian Sabbath service I chose to attend weekly Sabbath morning services for a full liturgical Jewish year. I participated in Sabbath services at Congregation Beth Torah, as well as other holidays and occasionally weekday services… [and] attended services at many of the other Syrian synagogues.

Walter Paul Zenner's comment that "the most Arab of cultural forms for Syrian Jews in Brooklyn is paradoxically one of the most Jewish" refers to the Arab nature of their Jewish prayer. Thus, Syrians perform Jewish ritual with Arab melodies and aesthetics effectively blurring boundaries of "Jewish" and "Arab." Despite Middle Eastern political tensions between Jews and Arabs, Syrians create or enact their identity as Jews. In other domains of Syrian life, such as food and literature, they also display a Judeo-Arab synthesis; ritual shows the most intensely rooted cultural aesthetics. Religious expression, therefore, is at times porous, absorbing many influences. Syrian Jewish religious expression fuses identity, ethnicity, and heritage. ■

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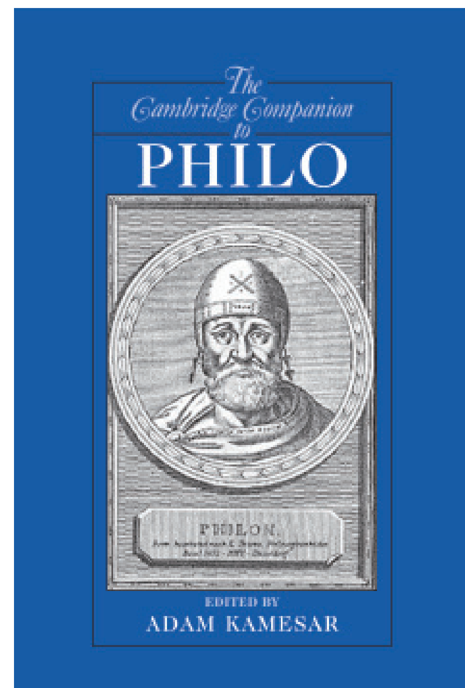

The Cambridge Companion to Philo

Dr. Adam Kamesar, Cambridge University Press, 2009

The works of Philo of Alexandria, a slightly older contemporary of Jesus and Paul, constitute an essential source for the study of Judaism at the turn of the eras and the rise of Christianity. They are also of extreme importance for understanding the Greek philosophy of the time and help to explain the onset of new forms of spirituality that would dominate the following centuries. This handbook presents an account of Philo's achievements; it gives readers a sense of the current state of scholarship and provides a depth of vision in key areas of Philonic studies. It contains a profile of his life and times, a systematic overview of his many writings, and survey chapters of the key features of his thought, as seen from the perspectives of Judaism and Greek

philosophy. The volume concludes with a section devoted to Philo's influence and significance.

Philo of Alexandria (ca. 15 BCE – 45 CE) stands at the crossroads of three great civilizations of antiquity: the Judaic, the Greek, and the Christian. Philo's primary heritage was that of biblical Judaism, but in the form it had taken on in the Diaspora of the Hellenistic world. His chief literary medium was biblical exegesis, but he sought to interpret the Scriptures by reference to the most advanced and sophisticated systems of thought of the times, which were those of Greek philosophy. In theology and what was called 'physics,' the system of primary importance for Philo was that of Platonism, and in ethics that of Stoicism. However, Philo's attempt to assimilate biblical and Greek thought often finds closer parallels in the Christian world than in a Jewish or a pagan environment. Indeed, Philo came to be appreciated more by the later Christian Fathers than by the Rabbis or the Greek philosophers of the Roman imperial age. In view of his background and influence, the writings of Philo are of fundamental importance for the understanding of Judaism, for the history of Greek philosophy, and for the study of early Christianity.

Within the context of the history of Greek literature as well, Philo appears to have lived across the span of the eras in more than simply a chronological sense. For in his writings he assumes many guises and, in a manner of speaking, emerges as a representative of different epochs. At times he is a man of science or a practitioner of the technical disciplines such as grammar and advanced literary study as they had developed in Hellenistic times. At other times, his moralizing diatribes and rhetorical displays have much in common with the popular philosophical literature of the early imperial age. And finally, his Platonistic religiosity and focus on the quest for the transcendent would appear to presage certain forms of spirituality that we encounter in later antiquity, in the Hermetic literature, in the Chaldean Oracles, and in Gnosticism. Of course, Philo's erudition was vast and he drew on an extraordinary array of sources. He knew not only secular Greek literature, but also owed much to a previous tradition of biblical exegesis, no doubt that of Greek-speaking Judaism, which he characterizes only in the most general of terms, without naming names. In fact, Philo's dependence on earlier authorities was such that some would study him, as A.D. Nock has put it, 'primarily as a source rather than as a man' (*Essays on Religion and the Ancient World* [1972], II, p. 559). Nevertheless, this circumstance alone cannot account for the great variety in the Philonic corpus. It must also be put down to the breadth of Philo's interests and horizons and to his versatility as a writer. His works represent a most interesting specimen of Greek literature.

Philo's bicultural heritage in Judaism and Hellenism, however, and even his proximity to Christian thought can make him a perplexing author to read. And the sheer bulk and variety of the Philonic corpus make it a difficult sea to navigate. Thus, the role for an up-to-date handbook of this sort. Of course, a handbook of moderate size cannot address all the aspects of Philo's works, nor can it be a substitute for reading those works directly, which, it may be acknowledged, is not always an easy or pleasant experience. But this *Companion* endeavors to supply some essential introductory information in a clear and unassuming format that can turn that experience into less of a struggle. While it is introductory, the *Companion* goes beyond the elementary level. The chapters are intended to provide not only a sense of recent progress in the scholarship on Philo, but also a certain vision of the topics under consideration. ■

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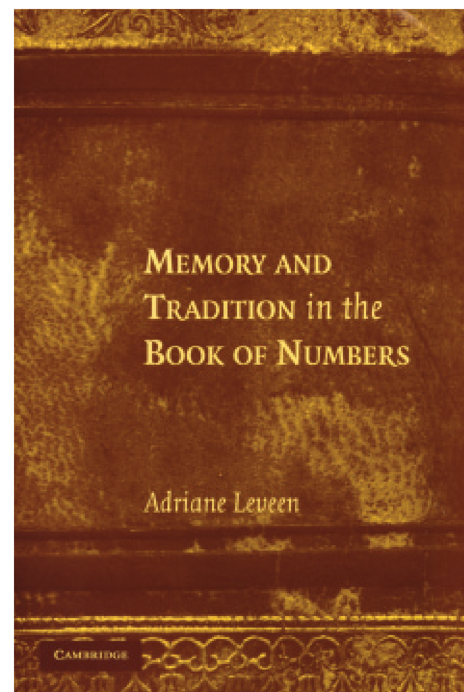

Memory and Tradition in the Book of Numbers

Adriane Leveen, Cambridge University Press, 2008

In this book, Adriane Leveen offers an imaginative rereading of the fourth book of Moses. Leveen examines how the editors of Numbers crafted a narrative of the forty-year journey through the wilderness in order to shape the Israelite understanding of the past and influence the world-view of future generations. Leveen's book explores religious politics, the complexities of collective memory, and the literary strategies used by the editors of Numbers to convince the children of Israel to accept priestly rule. Leveen considers how this process took place in the face of the horrifying memory at the heart of the Book of Numbers: the death of an entire generation of Israelites in the wilderness, struck down before their children's eyes by divine decree.

As the site of oppression and of God's liberating acts, Egypt should obligate the people in the present to live a future life in accord with God's plans for them. This is the assumption of the first section of Numbers. They take unfamiliar steps forward in an unfamiliar terrain towards the one site worth possessing – the promised land. The path is dedicated to a new life as God, Moses, and the priests lead them.