

Philo of Alexandria's *De opificio mundi* (LIII-LXI): discovering the essential features of Greek and Western Misogyny in a Platonising Jewish Text¹

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I also chose on another occasion³ Philo's of Alexandria *De opificio mundi* as an important and highly significant text with regard to the use of classical allegory in a didactic theological *lógos*. This fact, then, should permit me now not to repeat extensively the necessary references to the role placed by Philo in Alexandrine Judaism and, specifically, to the intelligent adaptation of the Biblical wisdom to the dictates of Greek thought. It was precisely thanks to it that the *Book of Genesis* –which Philo believed to have been written by Moses himself- could be understood by the Hellenized world. Nevertheless, I do not abandon either Philo or his *De opificio mundi* yet, since my intention now is to present an accurate analysis of some of its chapters, which, in my opinion, are quite relevant in order to grasp the deep meaning of Western misogyny. Indeed, prejudice about women, about sexual intercourse with them, about sensuality, etc. is remarkable enough in Jewish culture to become a considerable doctrinal *corpus*, but, as is well-known, misogyny is also a significant feature of the ancient Greeks. Needless to say, the fact that Jewish and Greek civilizations were misogynists does not make acceptable what we read in Philo's text. I rather regret that this original thinker, who was contemporaneous with Jesus Christ, did not glimpse the opportunity –if possible in his historical and cultural context- to move away from Greek thought and, above all, from Platonic one in order to defend what one sees immediately that for him was not worth defending, that is, women. On the contrary, for Philo misogynist *lógos* seems to be the most suitable way to prove that Jewish and Greek thought can be -and even must be- brought into agreement. At any rate, every suspicion should always be accompanied by conclusive proofs, so that I prefer to conclude now this brief introduction in order to look for, paradoxically in Philo of Alexandria, the Greek basis of Western misogyny.

“But since no created thing (ἐν γενέσει) is constant (βέβαιον), and things mortal (τὰ θνητὰ) are necessarily liable to changes and reverses (τροπὰς δὲ καὶ μεταβολὰς), it could not be that the first man too should experience some ill fortune (κακοπραγίας). And woman (γυνή) becomes for him the beginning of blameworthy life (τῆς ὑπαιτίου ζωῆς)”⁴.

There is nothing in these first statements that may surprise us, if we bear in mind that they belong to such a Platonic –or Platonizing- thinker as Philo. Obviously, everybody should be

¹ This article was published in Catalan in the *Anuari de Filologia de la Universitat de Barcelona*, volume XIII, 1990, Section D, number 1, pages 55-84, with a different title: “ ‘... Però la dona ho esguerrà tot’. El *De opificio mundi* de Filó d'Alexandria (LIII-LXI), o els fonaments grecs d'una fita en la història de la misogínia occidental”, and I have introduced now some little changes.

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³ P. Gilabert. “El *De opificio mundi* de Filó D'Alexandria o les lleis de l'al·legorisme clàssic al servei de la teologia pedagògica” (Philo's of Alexandria *De opificio mundi* or the laws of Classical Allegory at the service of the didactic theology). *Universitas Tarraconensis* XI (1987) 107-122.

⁴ Translated by F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker. *Philo. De Opificio Mundi. Loeb Classical Library*. London: William Heinemann Ltd.; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1962. All the quotations will correspond to this edition.

shocked at the brutality of the final conclusion that, in the manner of a curse, we have just read. However, it is also true that we all have read or heard so many times such similar and brutal syllogisms that they might seem to be finally both correct and acceptable. In any case, it is not the traditional interpretation of the *Book of Genesis* what I would like to examine now but the Greek basis upon which -and also thanks to both Philo and texts such as his *De opificio mundi*- such a “curious” interpretation has remained unchanged throughout the centuries.

Indeed, it would be impossible not to notice that Philo’s proposal consists of considering the world and existence in general as an ill-fated mixture of “what is always” (*ὄν αἰεί*), “remains always the same” (*αἰεὶ ταῦτα ὄν*) and is perceived by means of our mind or reason (*νοῦς, λόγος*), and what, being totally different, does never exist (*ὄν οὐδέποτε*), is liable to birth (*γένεσις*), change and transformation (*μεταβολή*), is perceived with the help of the senses (*αἰσθήσεις*) and is also alien to reason (*ἄλογον*), as read for instance in Plato’s *Timaeus*⁵. For both Philo and Plato, human beings should be conscious of their inferior status, that is, a worldly, material and mortal one, which is logically opposed to that other superior, divine, heavenly, immaterial and eternal. The latter thinks of the world of the Ideas and the supreme One, the Good, while the former thinks of an almighty and eternal God who created the world *ex nihilo*, that is to say, a provident Father who takes care both of the universe and mankind. Nevertheless, Plato and Philo show a clear tendency to move away from Nature, no longer understood as an existential unity which reaches everything and everyone, or as a self-sufficient entity which gives birth to itself and rules itself by its constant becoming something different and new. Human beings, little by little, have learnt not to be mistaken for Nature, to dominate and subdue it to their interests. Being proud of having overcome all sorts of obstacles such as crossing the sea, curing diseases, hunting wild beasts and triumphing over human enemies –let us remember that famous chorus in Sophocles’s *Antigone*⁶-, they glimpse the opportunity to leave behind definitively the heavy burden consisting of becoming constantly (*gígnesthai*), thus passing to inhabit finally the realm of what does not change, of what is immutable and everlasting. Platonic men and women, being sick of the unending succession day-night, health-sickness, etc., which are true “phenomenons”, prefer to escape from the chain of events –from what becomes (*genéseis*)- in order to attain finally the incorporeity and unchanging eternity of the Good.

It took centuries till Greek thought reached this goal. Aristotle wrote his personal vision of the Greek philosophical “adventure” in the first book of his *Metaphysics*:

“Most of the earliest philosophers conceived only of material principles as underlying all things. That of which all things consist, from which they first come and into which on their destruction they are ultimately resolved, of which the essence persists although modified by its affections – this, they say, is an element and principle of existing things... for then is some one entity (or more than one) which always persists and from which all other things are generated” (τῶν δὴ πρῶτον φιλοσοφησάντων οἱ πλεῖστοι τὰς ἐν ὕλης εἶδει μόνας ᾤθησαν ἀρχὰς εἶναι πάντων· ἐξ οὗ γὰρ ἐστὶν ἅπαντα τὰ ὄντα καὶ ἐξ οὗ γίγνεται πρῶτου καὶ εἰς ὃ φθίρεται τελευταῖον, τῆς μὲν οὐσίας ὑπομενούσης τοῖς δὲ

⁵ 27d-28, 3: ‘Now first of all we must, in my judgement, make the following distinction. What is that which is Existent always and has no Becoming? And what is that which is Becoming always and never is Existent? Now the one of these is apprehensible by thought with the aid of reasoning, since it is ever uniformly existent; whereas the other is an object of opinion with the aid of unreasoning sensation, since it becomes and perishes and is never really existent’ (Ἔστιν οὖν δὴ κατ’ ἐμὴν δόξαν πρῶτον διαιρετέον τάδε· τί τὸ ὄν αἰεὶ, γένεσιν δὲ οὐκ ἔχον, καὶ τί τὸ γιγνόμενον μὲν αἰεὶ, ὄν δὲ οὐδέποτε; τὸ μὲν δὴ νοήσει μετὰ λόγου περιληπτόν, αἰεὶ κατὰ ταῦτα ὄν, τὸ δ’ αὖ δόξη μετ’ αἰσθήσεως ἀλόγου δοξαστόν, γιγνόμενον καὶ ἀπολλύμενον, ὄντως δὲ οὐδέποτε ὄν –translated by R. G. Bury, Loeb Classical Library. London: William Heinemann Ltd. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1966).

⁶ 332-383

πάθει μεταβαλλούσης, τουτο στοιχείον καὶ ταύτην ἀρχὴν φασιν εἶναι τῶν ὄντων, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο οὔτε γίνεσθαι οὐθὲν οἴονται οὔτε ἀπόλλυσθαι, ὡς τῆς τοιαύτης φύσεως ἀεὶ σωζομένης... δεῖ γὰρ εἶναι τινα φύσιν ἢ μίαν ἢ πλείους μιᾶς ἐξ ὧν γίγνεται τᾶλλα σωζομένης ἐκείνης -translated by Hugh Tredennick, Loeb Classical Library. London: William Heinemann; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1972)⁷.

Consequently, let us notice that, in the course of the Hellenic philosophical adventure, there have been different perspectives. The Greeks passed certainly from “believing” in an everlasting first material principle in spite of all its qualitative transformations -in fact, the whole Nature-, from identifying themselves with Nature, to the rejection of body and its servitudes –at least according to some philosophical systems-, thus splitting their personalities and cultivating their spirit quite exclusively.

Notwithstanding, with regard to this view of life the worst would not be the increasing incapacity of men to accept their constant becoming, that is, their birth and death; after all, even in the most materialistic man there might always be some metaphysical desire, just as paradoxically there have been great metaphysical men who did not abhor matter. The worst would be certainly the intellectual trajectory which leads them to reject “the other”, to associate death and suffering with the half of human race, women, to condemn them for being different from those other noble beings, men, who are able to “ascend”, thus despising women’s companionship: “And woman becomes for him the beginning of blameworthy life”. We can easily infer which will be the consequences of such a sectarian thesis but it is quite better to continue to read Philo’s text:

“For so long as he was by himself (εἷς), as accorded with such solitude (ὠμοιοῦτο), he went on growing like to the world and like God, and receiving in his soul the impressions made by the nature of each, not all of these, but as many as one of mortal composition can find room for. But when woman too had been made, beholding a figure like his own (ἀδελφὸν εἶδος) and a kindred form (συγγενῆ μορφήν), he was gladdened by the sight (ἠσμένισε τῇ θέᾳ), and approached and greeted her (ἠσπάζετο). She, seeing no living thing more like herself than he, is filled with glee and shame (μετ’ αἰδοῦς) fastly returns his greeting. Love (ἔρως) supervenes, brings together and fits into one the divided halves, as it were, of a single living creature, and sets up in each of them a desire for fellowship with the other with a view to the production of their like (πόθον... κοινωνίας εἰς τὴν τοῦ ὁμοίου γένεσιν), this desire begat likewise bodily pleasure (τὴν τῶν σωματῶν ἡδονήν), that pleasure which is the beginning of wrongs and violation of law (ἀδικημάτων καὶ παρανομημάτων), pleasure for the sake of which men bring on themselves the life of mortality and wretchedness in lieu of that of immortality and bliss”⁸.

We should thank Philo for describing so clearly the “conflict” as is felt by certain religious men. Indeed, the true paradise was not that in which the man and the woman enjoyed an absolute happiness before the fall, but that golden age during which the only reference for the first man was God, thus being also free from the real danger which the presence of the woman implies. Only a God, only a world, only a man: that was the great dream. As is depicted, Philo should be conscious that in the bosom of this unity there is only room for homoerotic love –I am not saying homosexual- but it seems to guarantee, at least, that kinship between Father and son, between the

⁷ Arist. *Metaph.* A3. 983b 6-18.

⁸ LIII (151-152).

creator and his creature⁹. In other words, the true religious man ought to have only one reference or *télos*, only one reason to live: God-Father. Any addition to this first nucleus becomes a real disturbance, thus putting an end in its turn to the true paradise. Indeed, all of a sudden, man has in front of him a “figure like his own” and “a kindred form” which distracts his attention from his only real goal. We know by intuition that, from now on, he will pay attention not only to a High power but also to a worldly one which can move him away from the right way definitively.

And, once again, love or desire (*éros*) turns out to be the true Satan or winner of a war which is the result of its very presence. Leaving aside a few moments of “shame”, very soon between the man and the woman “supervenes” a desire which poisons their souls. Both feel impelled to create a new unity or harmony, which is now the fruit of two created beings –creatures, then- who might be interested in the “production of their like” rather than in the permanent adoration of the almighty God. Only “their like”, since their harvest is now the final consequence of sensuality and pleasure, completely different from that first God’s creation *ex nihilo*, in which the senses and matter did not play any role –that is, God never creates for the sake of pleasure and matter becomes simply the tangible form of His “artistic” genius. Now, on the other hand, appears the mortal *génésis*, thus starting an ill-fated succession of change and transformation. And the origin of this disaster was *hedoné*, that is “the beginning of wrongs and violation of law” while they would have not existed if the first woman had not appeared, thus causing an inevitable distraction which puts a definitive end to the *mónosis Theós-anér*. Since then -Philo *dicit*-, “men bring on themselves the life of mortality and wretchedness in lieu of that of immortality and bliss” and, at the same time, God-Father has lost His son and in lieu of him has got a sensual being who can be seduced and distracted; to sum up, a man who is *philogýnes* rather than *philótheos*.

At first sight, this thesis might not seem the most suitable if Philo wants to address himself to the Greeks or Hellenized. However, he knows perfectly well that, with regard to women, Greek genius did not conceive either different or less non-senses. One should take advantage now of Anthropology –and I am a philologist- and try to explain how societies –and not only ancient ones- adopted masculine exclusive values, and in this respect Greek and Jewish obsessions are quite the same. The Greeks also imagined a golden age during which men inhabited the earth free from any misfortune or ill¹⁰. Hesiod tells in *Works and Days* that men “lived like gods without sorrow of heart, remote and free from toil and grief: miserable age rested not on them; but with legs and arms never failing they made merry with feasting beyond the reach of all evils... the fruitful earth unforced bare them fruit abundantly and without stint”¹¹. But, unfortunately, everything changed later on and the origin of this *katastrophé* is well-known: Pandora. She symbolizes an idyllic earth which gave everything (*pan-do*) and, at the same time, she is the first woman and the origin of human misfortunes, since, having been gifted by all the Olympian gods (*pan-do*), became the bait Epimetheus would swallow on account of paying no attention to his brother Prometheus’s warnings¹². Pandora does symbolize the end of an age¹³

⁹ Cf. I (9-10).

¹⁰ Hes. *Op.* 90-92: “For ere this the tribes of men lived on earth remote and free from ills and hard toil and heavy sicknesses which bring the Fates upon them” (Πρὶν μὲν γὰρ ζώεσκον ἐπὶ χθονὶ φύλ’ ἀνθρώπων / νόσφιν ἄτερ τε κακῶν καὶ ἄτερ χαλεποῖο πόνοιο / νούσων τ’ ἀργαλέων, αἱ τ’ ἀνδράσι κήρας ἔδωκαν -translated by Hugh G. Evelyn-White. Loeb Classical Library. William Heinemann Ltd.; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1954).

¹¹ Hes. *Op.* 116-118: “... they had all good things; for the fruitful earth unforced bare them fruit abundantly and without stint” (... ἐσθλὰ δὲ πάντα / τοῖσιν ἔην· καρπὸν δ’ ἔφερε ζεῖδωρος ἄρουρα / αὐτομάτη πολλόν τε καὶ ἄφθονον... -*idem*).

¹² Hes. *Op.* 81-82. See Carles Miralles. “Hesíodo sobre los orígenes del hombre y el sentido de *Trabajos y días*” (Hesiod about the origins of the man and the meaning of *Works and Days*) *BIEH IX* (1975) 3-36.

which was also depicted by Plato by means of the myth of Chronos's happy age in his *Statesman*. Then, a) men came to life again out of the earth; b) they did not reproduce like now, as expected from an age during which there were neither women nor children, and c) everybody had fruits in plenty from the trees and other plants, which the earth furnished them of its own accord, without help from agriculture¹⁴. Or, in other words, happy times free from human *g nesis* in the course of which everything seemed to be immutable; happy times, to sum up, because there were no degraded men who had their origin in women¹⁵. If we bear in mind, furthermore, that the myth of the three genres –better known as the myth of the androgynous- in Plato's *Symposium* speaks about the irrepressible desire to leave behind our incomplete nature in order to recover a lost total one, that *p thos* assigned by Philo to the first couple acquires, for any Greek or Hellenized cultivated mind, own cultural features¹⁶.

In fact, throughout *De opificio mundi* appear similar ideas about the duality soul/matter, about the increasing degradation of human beings, about the need to cultivate our spirits, etc. And it is not easy for Philo, for he writes in the end on the *Book of Genesis* and, as a consequence, the earth, which has just been separated by God from the great mass of water, should be perfect *stricto sensu*. However, the very fact of writing conditioned by centuries of metaphysical ascent leads him to establish a rigid hierarchy even in the realm of *h yle*. Long time ago it was pure and genuine, free from any mixture or alloy and, besides, God selected the best of it to mould the man, etc., that is to say, true cautions in order to dignify as far as possible what in fact is undervalued:

“That first man, earth born¹⁷, ancestor of our whole race, was made, as it appears to me, most excellent in each part of his being, in both soul and body, and greatly excelling those who came after him in the transcendent qualities of both alike: for this man really was the one truly beautiful and good. The fair form of his body may be gathered from three proofs. The first is this. When, at the severing of the great mass of water, which received the name of ‘sea’, the newly formed earth appeared, the material (τὴν ὕλην) of the things to come into existence was, as a result, pure (καθαρὰν) and free from mixture or alloy (ἀμιγῆ, ἄδολον), and also supple and easy to work, and the things wrought out of it naturally flawless. Secondly, God is not likely to have taken the clay from any part of the earth that might offer, or to have chosen as rapidly as possible to mould this figure in the shape of a man, but selecting the best from it all, out of pure material (ἐκ καθαροῦς)

¹³ Hes. *Op.* 57-58: “I will give them as the price an evil thing in which they may all be glad of heart while they embrace their own destruction” (τοῖς δ’ ἐγὼ ἀντὶ πυρὸς δώσω κακόν, ᾧ κεν ἅπαντες / τέρονται κατὰ θυμὸν ἕον κακὸν ἀμφαγαπῶντες –*idem*).

¹⁴ 271e-272a: ... οὐκ ἦσαν οὐδὲ κτήσεις γυναικῶν καὶ παίδων· ἐκ γῆς γὰρ ἀνεβίωσκοντο πάντες, οὐδὲν μεμνημένοι τῶν πρόσθεν... καρποὺς δὲ ἀφθόνους εἶχον ἀπὸ τε δένδρων καὶ πολλῆς ὕλης ἄλλης, οὐχ ὑπὸ γεωργίας φουομένους, ἀλλ’ αὐτομάτης ἀναδιδούσης τῆς γῆς (‘... nor did men possess wives or children; for they all came to life again out of the earth, with no recollection of their former lives... they had fruits in plenty from the trees and other plants, which the earth furnished them of its own accord, without help from agriculture’ –translated by Harold N. Fowler. *Plato. The Statesman*. Loeb Classical Library. London: William Heinemann Ltd.; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1962).

¹⁵ With regard to the meaning of the myth of the three ages, see also the above mentioned article by Carles Miralles.

¹⁶ At any rate, let us remember that in the *Symposium* human beings desire to recover a lost unity that they lost as a result of their unforgivable pride, while in the *De opificio mundi* desire is the origin of a union man-woman which favours in its turn the end of the unity God-man.

¹⁷ He refers to the *Book of Genesis* 2, 7 slightly changed; that is, according to XLVI (134): “God formed man by taking clay from the earth, and breathed into his face the breath of life”.

taking the purest (τὸ καθαρώτατον) and most subtly refined, such as was best suited for his structure; for a sacred dwelling-place or shrine was being fashioned for the reasonable soul, which man was to carry as a holy image, of all images the most Godlike. The third proof, incomparable stronger than the two that have been given, is this, that the Creator excelled, as well as in all else, in skill to bring it about that each of the bodily parts should have in itself individually its due proportions, and should also be fitted with the most perfect accuracy for the part it was to take in the whole. And together with this symmetry (of the parts) He bestowed on the body goody flesh, and adorned it with a rich complexion, desiring the first man to be as fair as could be to behold”¹⁸.

In my opinion, we read the adjective “pure” too many times not to foresee future ages stigmatized by the loss of everything man had had in earlier times:

“Such was the first man created, as I think, in body and soul, surpassing all the men that now are, and all that have been before us. For our beginning is from men, whereas God created him, and the more eminent the maker is, so much the better is the work... so the man first fashioned was clearly the bloom of our entire race, and never have his descendants attained the like bloom, forms and faculties ever feebler having been bestowed on each succeeding generation... the copies are inferior to the originals... Mankind has evidently undergone something of the same kind. As generation follows generation the powers and qualities of body and soul which men receive are feebler”¹⁹.

“Originals and copies”. No doubt a Platonic language²⁰ with the help of which Philo has seen quite clearly how to explain Moses’s *Genesis* to the Greeks or Hellenized, and the truth is that the whole *De opificio mundi* is full of reasonings and syllogisms made of originals and copies, mirrors and reflections²¹.

On the other hand, Philo might be also taking advantage of the myth of the three ages as is told by Hesiod in *Works and Days*²² and present, then, in the mind of the Greeks. It is true that Philo refuses to approach the “myth” since Moses condemned it as “liar”²³ but, if I am not completely mistaken, I should dare to say that Philo accepts willingly either myths or poets who,

¹⁸ XLVII (136-138).

¹⁹ XLIX (1 40-141).

²⁰ See e.g. the book X of Plato’s *Republic* X, 595a: ‘We get, then, these three couches, one, that in nature, which, I take it, we would say that God produces, or who else?... And then there was one which carpenter made... And one which the painter... God... created only one, the couch which really and itself is... And what of the carpenter? Shall we not call him the creator of a couch?’. “Yes”. “Shall we also say that the painter is the creator and maker of that sort of thing?’ ‘By no means... this... seems to me the most reasonable designation for him, that he is the imitator of the thing which others produce’. ‘Very good’, said I; ‘The producer of the product three removes from nature you call the imitator?’... (‘... Οὐκοῦν τριτταὶ τινες κλῖναι αὐταὶ γίνονται· μία μὲν ἢ ἐν τῇ φύσει οὔσα, ἣν φαῖμεν ἄν, ὡς ἐγῶμαι, θεὸν ἐργάσασθαι· ἢ τίν’ ἄλλον; ... Μία δέ γε ἦν ὁ τέκτων... Μία δὲ ἦν ὁ ζωγράφος... Ὁ μὲν δὲ θεός... οὕτως ἐποίησεν μίαν μόνον αὐτὴν ἐκείνην ὃ ἔστιν κλίνη... Τί δὲ τὸν τέκτονα; ἄρ’ οὐ δημιουργὸν κλίνης; Ναί. Ἡ καὶ τὸν ζωγράφον δημιουργὸν καὶ ποιητὴν τοῦ τοιοῦτου; Οὐδαμῶς... ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ μετρίωτατ’ ἂν προσαγορεύεσθαι, μιμητῆς οὐ ἐκείνοι δημιουργοί. Εἶεν, ἦν δ’ ἐγώ· τὸν τοῦ τρίτου ἄρα γεννήματος ἀπὸ τῆς φύσεως μιμητὴν καλεῖς’ -translated by Paul Shorey. *Loeb Classical Library*. London: William Heinemann Ltd.; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1970).

²¹ In the above mentioned article of mine (pp.114-115) there is a collection of examples.

²² Vv. 106-201.

²³ *De opificio mundi* I (1 and 2).

like Hesiod, try to explain the human condition and to preserve the poetic memory of a glorious past.

Nevertheless, before leaving behind those paragraphs which have permitted us to examine the meaning of the opposition spirit/matter, spirituality/sensuality, it is worth reading the final thesis for the sake of revealing new secrets:

“If we call that original forefather of our race not only the first man but also the only citizen of the world (μόνον κοσμοπολίτην) we shall be speaking with perfect truth. For the world was his city and dwelling-place. No building made by hand had been wrought out of the material of stones and timbres. The world was his mother country (ἐν πατρίδι) where he dwelt far removed from fear (φόβου), inasmuch as he had been held worthy of the rule of the denizens of the earth, and all things mortal trembled before him, and had been taught or compelled to obey him as their master (ὑπακούειν ὡς δεσπότη). So he lived exposed to no attack amid the comforts (ἐν εὐπαθείαις) of peace unbroken by war (ἐν εἰρήνῃ ἀπολέμῳ)”²⁴.

On this occasion, the text mentions neither the first woman nor the long list of misfortunes caused by her presence. However, it continues to speak about that idyllic *mónosis* God-man before her appearance. “The first man”; “the only citizen of the world”; “the world was his mother country where he dwelt far removed from fear”; “all things trembled before him” and “he lived exposed to no attack amid the comforts of peace unbroken by war”. Let us make, then, some significant questions? What is the disadvantage in being no longer the first man? To fall into the abyss of an increasing degradation? Yes, indeed, Philo already *dixit*. What is the disadvantage in being no longer the only citizen of the world? To have to “share with” and to “count on” the other? Yes, indeed. It is always far more difficult to harmonize two attitudes and wills than only one. If he fails, he may feel even exiled, since that ancient safe world, his safe country, may become an ill-fated stage on which the first man gives up being a master and becomes a slave -in other words, he is subdued and seduced. Subdued and seduced? By whom? By a seductive being who is the origin of *éros* (desire) and pleasure, etc. etc. From his point of view, it is a real tragedy, but Philo adds something else: it is the end of peace and the beginning of war. Needless to say, this war has nothing to do with the beneficial tension generated by two opposite poles –a too Heraclitean vision for a Platonic or Platonizing writer like Philo-; on the contrary, this war is a true obstacle to attain a perfect or harmonic life, free from any sort of dangers; to sum up, a life without women, without enemies²⁵.

Let us read on:

“While man was still leading a life of solitude (μονήρη βίον), the woman not having been yet formed, a park of pleasure (παράδεισον), we are told, was planted by God, quite unlike the pleasures with which we are familiar (*Gen.* II.8 ss.): for in them the wood is soul-less (ἄψυχος); they are full of trees of all sorts, some ever-blooming to give uninterrupted joy to the eye, some bursting forth with young life every spring: some again bearing cultivated fruit for man, not only for use by way of necessary nourishment, but also for his superfluities, for the enjoyment of a life of luxury; while others yield a different kind of fruit, supplied to the wild beasts to satisfy their actual needs. But in the divine park or pleasure (κατὰ δὲ τὸν θεῖον παράδεισον) all plants are endowed with soul or reason (ἔμψυχα καὶ λογικά), bearing the virtues for fruit (τὰς ἀρετὰς), and

²⁴ XLIX (142).

²⁵ I am not maintaining, of course, that to follow a metaphysical creed implies necessarily a misogynist attitude; now my reflections refer exclusively to Philo’s *De opificio mundi*.

beside these insight (σύνεσις) and discernment (ἀγχίνουσιαν) that never fail, by which things fair and ugly are recognized (ἢ γνωρίζεται τὰ καλὰ καὶ τὰ αἰσχροῦ), and life free from disease (ζωήν... ἄνοσον), and incorruption (ἀφθαρσίαν), and all that is of a like nature. This description is, I think, intended symbolically rather than literally (συμβολικῶς μᾶλλον ἢ κυρίως); for never yet have trees of life or of understanding appeared on earth, nor is it likely that they will appear hereafter. No, Moses evidently signifies by the pleasance the ruling power of the soul (τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ἡγεμονικόν), which is full of countless opinions (δοξῶν), as it might be of plants; and by the tree of life he signifies reverence toward God (θεοσεβείαν), the greatest of the virtues, by means of which the soul attains immortality; while by the tree that is cognisant of good and evil things he signifies moral prudence (φρόνησις), the virtue that occupies the middle position, and enables us to distinguish things by nature contrary the one to the other”²⁶.

Philo underlines that Moses’s *Genesis* is intended symbolically rather than literally, but the final message is certainly unambiguous: the ruling power of the soul, the soul, the soul-man is pure and he should have never been tainted with later additions. In the divine paradise, in the soul of a pure man, there is only room for reason, intellect, virtue, the cognition of the good and evil, reverence towards God, etc. The Greek temper, then, of Philo’s thought is now quite evident: he is recommending a philosophical way of life –that is, a Greek one- which, fortunately, can be brought into agreement with a religious spirit, thus being dignified. It has to do neither with a precise philosopher nor a philosophical system but, undoubtedly, we should mention Plato and the philosophical temper of most of Hellenistic philosophies, specially Cynicism and Stoicism -in spite of the great differences between them-, both searching to get pure and ruling men who, therefore, must be hostile to lustful pleasure and cultivate instead both their spirit and intellect. Men without a body? Philo seems to suggest only that they should not take it into account. He wants pious men completely devoted to God and, given that this self-annihilation implies the exclusive use of reason, any distraction becomes at least dangerous. “Of course”, women are who prevent men from attaining this ideal goal because of their body, which is a true incitement to pleasure, and also because of their lack of reason, intelligence, prudence, etc. Are we exaggerating? Let us see it:

“Having set up these standards in the soul, He watched, as a judge might, to see to which it would tend. And when He saw it inclining to wickedness, and making light of holiness and godly fear, out of which comes the winning of immortal life, He cast it forth, as we might expect, and drove it from pleasance, giving the soul which committed offences that defy the healer’s skill, no hope of a subsequent return (ἐλπίδα τῆς εἰσαυθις ἐπανόδου), inasmuch as the reason given for their deception was in a high degree blameworthy. This we must not leave unexplained. It is said that in olden times the venomous earthborn crawling thing (τὸ ἰοβόλον καὶ γηγενὲς ἐρπετόν ὄφις) could send forth a man’s voice, and that one day it approached the wife (γυναικί) of the first man (ἀνδρὸς) and upbraided her for her irresoluteness and excessive scrupulosity in delaying and hesitating to pluck a fruit most beautiful to behold and most luscious to taste, and most useful into the bargain, since by its means she would have power to recognize things good and evil. It is said that she, without looking into the suggestion, prompted by a mind devoid of steadfastness and firm foundation (ἀπὸ γνώμης ἀβεβαίου καὶ ἀνιδρύτου συναινέσασαν), gave her consent and ate of the fruit, and gave some of it to her husband; this instantly brought them out of a state of simplicity (ἀπλότητος) and innocence

²⁶ LIV (153-4).

(ἀκακίας) into one of wickedness (πανουργίαν): whereat the Father in anger appointed for them the punishments that were fitting. For their conduct well merited wrath, inasmuch as they had passed by the tree of life immortal (τὸ ζωῆς ἀθανάτου φυτόν), the consummation of virtue (τὴν ἀρετῆς παντέλειαν), from which they could have gathered an existence long and happy (μακροαίωνα καὶ εὐδαίμονα βίον). Yet they chose that fleeting and mortal existence (τὸν ἐφήμερον καὶ θνητόν... βίον) which is not an existence but a period of time full of misery”²⁷.

Certainly this is not a good instance of unprejudiced allegorical interpretation. Short before and thanks to it precisely, Philo did not accuse the first woman of the great fall into the world which life is for any coherent Platonic man. Indeed, the loss of paradise, the fall itself, the need to reascend (*epánodos*), the loss of piety, etc., everything was attributed by him exclusively to the human soul, a sexless entity which dwells in both men’s and women’s bodies. But, suddenly, the allegorical interpretation is left behind and seems not to be the suitable method to understand what one might suppose that it has always been well-understood. That serpent of the *Book of the Genesis*, that “venomous earthborn crawling thing” approached the wife of the first man and she, “prompted by a mind devoid of steadfastness and firm foundation, gave her consent and ate of the fruit, and gave some of it to her husband”. Adam lost then inexorably his idyllic *mónosis* with God and, on account of a new and ill-fated comradeship, “whereat the Father in anger appointed for them the punishments that were fitting”. Adam gained certainly a woman, but he lost a loving Father. The passing from simplicity and innocence to wickedness, and from immortality to a mortal existence, is the logical result of this new man accompanied by a woman who in fact has become orphan and exiled.

Probable Greek references? Many, I am afraid, but I will choose the most significant ones. First of all, I would emphasize Philo’s explanation of the “tragedy” of the fall, that is, by using clearly Platonic images that he must already perceive as necessary. Very probably, the whole palinode in Plato’s *Phaedrus* pervades the paragraphs we have just read²⁸, thus alluding to the heavenly world of the Ideas, the winged nature of our souls, the loss of the wings, the fall into the material world, the slow ascent towards the lost paradise, etc. Notwithstanding, everything is presented for the sake of both a logical and coherent proposal: the urge to avoid women, intellectually feeble, if men really want to fly or ascend till reaching the dignity they deserve. And we should also bear in mind that, both in Plato’s *Phaedrus* and *Symposium*, this “flight” is finally possible thanks to philosophy and pederastic love. Only the beautiful images of beautiful adolescents provoke the metaphysical jump²⁹. I am not saying, of course, that Philo’s proposal is quite the same, but I should like to point out that, later on, we shall have the opportunity to prove that certain negative intellectual valuations of women –that is to say: there is no reason (*noûs*) in them- resemble very much the thesis of those Greek pederasts in the *Symposium*, who got married *katà tòn nómon* and not *katà* their *phýsin*.

With regard to women’s mind, which is “devoid of steadfastness and firm foundation”, there are, unfortunately, many possible Greek references. It would be useful, then, to present some instances drawn out from different texts and authors. First, I should like to mention a few well-known words said by Aristophanes’s *Lysistrata*. The Greek “ambassador” wants to speak to her as the leader of the sexual-abstinence movement, and she introduces herself in such an odd way: “I am a woman, but there is mind in me” (ἐγὼ γυνή μὲν εἰμι, νοῦς δ’ ἔνεστί μοι –the translation is mine following the edition by F. W. Hall i W. M. Geldart. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901, rpr.

²⁷ LV (155-156).

²⁸ 244-257b.

²⁹ The teachers or lovers are men, so are the pupils; it is quite obvious, therefore, that the intelligence – according to this vision- belongs to the realm of gender.

1967)³⁰. It would be useless underlining that something grave must be happening when Lysistrata needs to add an adversative particle (*dè*) to the “proclamation” of her feminine identity. From comedy we can pass to tragedy: Euripides’s *Hippolytus*. The hero is proclaiming his radical misogyny and, having decided not to differentiate between his stepmother and the rest of the women, affirms:

‘That man has it easiest whose wife is a nothing, although a woman who sits in the house in her folly causes harm. But a clever woman –that I loathe! May there never be in my house a woman with more intelligence than benefits a woman! For Cypris engenders more mischief in the clever ones. The woman without ability is kept from indiscretion (*morían*) by the slenderness of her wit’ (... ῥᾶστον δ’ ὄτω τὸ μηδέν, ἀλλ’ ἀνωφελῆς / εὐηθία κατ’ οἶκον ἴδρυται γυνή. / σοφὴν δὲ μισῶ μὴ γὰρ ἔν γ’ γυναῖκα χροί. Τὸ γὰρ κακοῦργον μᾶλλον ἐντίκτει Κύπρις / ἐν ταῖς σοφαῖσιν· ἢ δ’ ἀμήχανος γυνή / γνώμη βραχεία μωρίαν ἀφηρέθη – translated by David Kovacs. Loeb Classical Library. London: William Heinemann Ltd.; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1995³¹.

Hippolytus is finally punished but his words reveal at least a general belief. In his opinion women should die (ὄλοισθε), and he will never feel satiated hating women (μισῶν γυναῖκας > misogyny)³². And, in the realm of philosophy, we find a good collection of the traditional pieces of nonsense against women in Plato’s *Symposium*, 181b-c: ‘Now the Love that belongs to the Popular Aphrodite is in very truth popular and does his work at haphazard: this is the Love we see in the meaner sort of men; who, in the first place, love women as well as boys; secondly, where they love, they are set on the body more than the soul; and thirdly, they choose the most witless people they can find, since they look merely to the accomplishment and care not if the manner be noble or no. Hence they find themselves doing everything at haphazard, good or its opposite, without distinction: for this love proceeds from the goddess who is far the younger of the two, and who in her origin partakes of both female and male. But the other Love springs from the Heavenly goddess who, firstly, partakes not of the female but only of the male; and secondly, is the elder, untinged with wantonness: wherefore those who are inspired by this Love betake them to the male, in fondness for what has the robuster nature and a larger share of mind’ (τὸ ἐρρωμονέστερον καὶ νοῦν μᾶλλον ἔχον) -translated by Lamb, W. R. M. *Loeb Classical Library*. London: William Heinemann Ltd; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1983). Certainly, the presence of the comparative adjective should imply that there is also mind or *noûs* in women, but the rest of the dialogue confirms in my opinion that women are only useful for those who aim at perpetuating themselves by means of their children.

At any rate, Philo has not finished his misogynist *lógos* yet:

“Now these are not mythical fictions (οὐ μύθου πλάσματα), such as poets and sophists delight in, but modes of making ideas visible, bidding us resort to allegorical interpretation (ἐπ’ ἀλληγορίαν) guided in our renderings by what lies beneath the surface (ὑπονοιῶν). Following a probable conjecture (εἰκοτι στοχασμῶ) one would say that the serpent spoken of is a symbol of pleasure (ὄφιν ἡδονῆς εἶναι σύμβολον), because in the first place he is an animal without feet sunk prone upon his belly (πεπτωκὸς ἐπὶ γαστέρα); secondly because he takes clods of earth as food (γῆς βῶλοισ); i thirdly because he carries in his teeth the venom with which it is his nature to destroy those

³⁰ *Lysistrata* 1124.

³¹ Vv. 638-644.

³² Vv. 664-665.

whom he has bitten. The lover of pleasure (ὁ φιλήδονος) is exempt from none of these traits, for he is so weighed and dragged downwards (βαρυνόμενος καὶ καθελκόμενος) that it is with difficulty that he lifts up his head (μόλις... τὴν κεφαλὴν ἐπαίρει), thrown down and tripped up by intemperance (ἀκρασίας): he feeds not on heavenly nourishment (οὐράνιον τροφήν), which wisdom (σοφία) by discourses and doctrines (διὰ λόγων καὶ δογμάτων), proffers to lovers of contemplation (τοῖς φιλοθεάμοσι), but on that which comes up out of the earth with the revolving seasons, and which produces drunkenness (οἰνοφλυγία), daintiness (ὀψοφαγία) and greediness (λαίμαργία). These, causing the cravings of the belly to burst out and fanning them into flame (τὰς γαστρὸς ἐπιθυμίας), make the man a glutton, while they also stimulate and stir up the things of his sexual lusts (τοὺς ὑπογαστρίους οἴστρους). For he licks his lips over the labour of caterers and confectioners, and twisting his head about all round strains to match some of the steam and savour of the delicacies. Whenever he beholds a richly spread table, he flings down his whole person and tumbles upon the dishes set out, eager to devour all at once. His aim is not to sate his hunger, but to leave nothing that has been set before him undevoured. Hence we see no less than the serpent he carries his poison in his teeth. These are the agents and ministers of excess, cutting and chewing all eatables, handing them over first to the tongue, the judge of savours, for its decision, then to the gullet. Immoderate eating is by its nature deadly and poisonous, for what is eaten has no chance of being assimilated, owing to the rush of the fresh viands which takes place before those already swallowed have been digested. Again the serpent is said to emit a human voice. This is because pleasure (ἡδονή) employs ten thousand champions and defenders, who have undertaken to look after her and stand up for her, and who dare to spread the doctrine that she has assumed universal sovereignty over small and great, and that no one whatever is exempt there from. And certainly the first approaches of the male to the female have pleasure to guide and conduct them (αἱ τε πρῶται τοῦ ἄρρενος πρὸς τὸ θῆλυ σύνοδοι ξεναγὸν ἔχουσιν ἡδονήν)³³.

After having warned us that these chapters do not contain mythical fictions but a great exercise of allegorical interpretation which invites us to search for the deepest meanings, Philo gives way to all sorts of fears and reticences regarding human nature. The serpent is a symbol of pleasure, since “he is an animal without feet sunk prone upon his belly”. Consequently, given that “the first approaches of the male to the female have pleasure to guide and conduct them”, we must infer that men, after having been seduced by women, when they are no longer able to “stand” -that is, completely subdued-, become slaves or, even worse, serpents. Weighed and dragged downwards like serpents, hardly able to lift up their heads, everything in them shows their lack of self-control. Having lost their love for contemplation, their wisdom, prudence, piety, etc. they live completely devoted to satiate their sexual desire. Philo seems to ask: where is now their original purity? Nobody –even the most sensual man or woman- would dare to deny the inconveniences of drunkenness, daintiness or greediness, but what about the spiritual ones? Needless to say, Philo would never think of “spiritual intemperances” but the truth is that, if Philo’s words are read following an elemental logical system –that is, Aristotelian-, they become certainly brutal: The serpent is a symbol of pleasure; lovers of pleasure are like serpents; men living with women search for and feel pleasure; therefore, married men become serpents. Second version, even more misogynist: the serpent is the symbol of pleasure; lovers of pleasure are like serpents; the first approaches of men to women have pleasure to guide and conduct them; therefore, married men love in fact serpents. I should dare to affirm that those relationships male-woman, in Philo’s opinion so *hypogastríous*, and those others God-man, so heavenly, must be as

³³ LVI (157-161).

different as celibacy, when it is conceived as a simple strategy or means to attain a goal, and that other celibacy which has always considered women to be the great temptation as well as marriage an institution completely alien to the purity of the rulers.

This baneful identification woman = serpent deserves a brief parenthesis in the margin of our analysis of the Greek basis of Philo's thesis. In fact, as affirmed by J.A. Phillips³⁴, there has been a constant identification Eve = the serpent and the serpent = Satan. Furthermore, *Javvah* - Eve- seems to derive from the Arabic or Aramaean terms meaning serpent (*hiwja* in Aramaic). In spite of not being always a negative identification, since serpents were believed to rule wisdom and immortality –they even watch over earthly or heavenly gardens³⁵-, the truth is that the creation of Eve justifies her mission and nature. It is worth mentioning, for instance, a Jewish legend in accordance with which Eve did not come from an Adam's rib but from his tail, which explains why men have a useless coccyx since then³⁶. On the other hand, our cultural tradition has always maintained that the fall implied some sort of sexual transgression. Phillips quotes Anatole France when writing: "We knew that there was a hell but its geography remained unknown till that violent African Father of the Church –Tertulian- discovered its door among women's thighs". The Fathers of the Church, then, are in a good measure responsible for the "sexualization" of the story of the fall, thus showing Eve both tempting and being tempted, but the Jewish texts previous to the draft of the New Testament show a path by which, later on, many have liked to walk. Phillips mentions them³⁷ -and I am not going to repeat the list- but in my opinion we should bear in mind that Philo's *De opificio mundi*, by maintaining what it maintains, probably followed afterwards by the Fathers of the Church and surviving in some way "thanks to" them, might be also, among others, the responsible for a Western centuries-old misogynist tradition.

Notwithstanding, now approaching again the probable Greek basis of Philo's text, it is worth noticing that the serpent has no feet and, as a consequence, he hardly lifts up his head, while all these impediments would obviously disappear if he had not only feet but also wings. As Plato writes: 'The natural function of the wing is to soar upwards and carry that which is heavy up to the place where dwells the race of the gods. More than any other thing that pertains to the body it partakes of the nature of the divine. But the divine is beauty, wisdom, goodness, and all such qualities' (Πέφυκεν ἡ πτεροῦ δύναμις τὸ ἐμβριθεὲς ἄγειν ἄνω μετεωρίζουσα ἢ τὸ τῶν θεῶν γένος οἰκεῖ, κεκοινῶνηκε δέ πη μάλιστα τῶν περὶ τὸ σῶμα τοῦ θεοῦ ψυχὴ, τὸ δὲ θεῖον καλόν, σοφόν, ἀγαθόν, καὶ πᾶν ὅτι τοιοῦτον -translated by Fowler, H. N. *Loeb Classical Library*. London: William Heinemann Ltd., Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1971)³⁸ and, if I am not completely mistaken, I should dare to maintain that the whole palinode of his *Phaedrus* underlies Philo's text making us think of the reverse of the serpent. Indeed, human beings should abandon the prison of the flesh and, therefore, avoid all sorts of temptations –and the greatest one: *gyné*-, thus recovering their wings. And, with regard to the dreads of the Greeks before feminine sexuality, let us remember that the sphinx, the siren or the serpent were for them the symbol of a great danger. Serpent-mothers, seductive monsters who are a mixture of woman and serpent, and serpent-women who possess and devour their victims form a wide range of cases analyzed by C. Miralles in his article "La invención de la dona" (The invention of the woman)³⁹. Among others he focuses on the mythical Hellen. The identification

³⁴ *Eva. La historia de una idea*, México: F. C. E., 1984, chapter IV.

³⁵ See e.g.: R. Graves/ R. Patai. *Hebrew Myths: the Book of Genesis*, Nueva York 1964, 69, and Theodor H. Gaster. *Mito, leyenda y costumbre en el libro del Génesis*, Barcelona 1973, 51-53.

³⁶ See Graves. *Op. cit.*, chapter X, note 37.

³⁷ See Phillips. *Op. cit.*, pp. 82-87.

³⁸ Pl. *Phdr.* 246d-e.

³⁹ In *La dona en l'antiguitat*, Barcelona 1985, pp. 61-83.

Hellen = serpent is never explicit, but Nicander⁴⁰ tell us that the pilots who took her to Egypt were captured and died because of a mortal bite of a serpent.

From now on and till the end of my analysis, Philo repeats in great measure his thesis. However, there are still significant aspects to be commented, which, furthermore, confirm most of our preceding forebodings:

“And certainly the first approaches of the male to the female have pleasure to guide and conduct them, and it is through pleasure that begetting and the coming of life is brought about, and the offspring is naturally at home with nothing sooner than pleasure, delighting in it and feeling distress at pain its contrary. This is why the infant when born actually weeps aloud, chilled most likely by the cold all round it; for when, leaving a place of fiery warmth in the womb, which for a long time it has tenanted, it suddenly issues into the air, a cold and unaccustomed place, it is taken aback and utter cries, a most clear sign of its pain and its annoyance at suffering. And they tell us that every living creature hastens after pleasure as its most necessary and essential end, and man above all: for while other creatures seek pleasure only through taste and the organs of reproduction, man does so through the other senses as well, pursuing with ears and eyes all such sights and sounds as can afford delight. A very great deal more is said in praise of pleasure, and of the great closeness of its connexion and kinship with living creatures. But what has now been said is enough to show why the serpent seemed to utter a human voice. It is for this reason, I think, that even in the detailed laws, where the lawgiver writes about animals, laying down which may be eaten and which may not, he especially praises the “snake-fighter” (ὄφιομάχην) (Lev. XI.221) as it is called. This is a reptile with legs above its feet, with which it springs from the ground and lifts itself into the air like a grasshopper. For the snake-fighter is, I think, nothing but a symbolic representation of self-control (ἐγκράτεια), waging a fight that never ends and a truceless war (πόλεμον ἄσπονδον) against intemperance and pleasure (ἀκρασίαν καὶ ἡδονήν). Self-control welcomes beyond measure simplicity and abstemiousness (εὐτέλειαν καὶ ὀλιγοδείαν) and so much as is requisite for a severe and lofty mode of life (φιλαυστήρω); intemperance gives a like welcome to superfluity and extravagance (περιεργίαν καὶ πολυτέλειαν), which induce softness and voluptuousness in soul and body, and these result in the the culpable life, the life that in the view of right-minded people (τοῖς εὖ φρονούσι) is worse than death (τὴν ὑπαίτιον καὶ θανάτου χαλεπωτέραν)”⁴¹.

Apart from the condemnation of pleasure, the emphasis is once more on begetters and their offspring, on the human way to create, that is, on being born from a woman. As seen before, generated things are neither immutable nor perfect, but now pain is the result of the addiction to pleasure. The appearance of the woman opened a new and dark age. Different texts coming from different cultures confirm this thesis, but we had never been told before that everything negative in men’s and women’s life were the *apódosis* or the price to pay for an excessive preceding delight⁴². Very probably the fact that pleasure is seen as the origin of the progressive degradation of human beings is the result in its turn of the increasing sexualization of the story of the fall in Jewish intertestamentary texts, upon which is based precisely *De opificio mundi*⁴³. In any case, Philo seems now to be incoherent since he does not think of pain -the opposite to pleasure- as

⁴⁰ *Ther.* 305-315.

⁴¹ LVII-LVIII (161-164).

⁴² *Ther.* 305-315.

⁴³ See Phillips.

that sickness we had never had before but as the proof or sign of a true virility, if we are able to endure it without weeping.

Nevertheless, even when being incoherent, Philo does not give up looking for the suitable Greek reference. Indeed, Aristotle wrote extensively about the refreshing function of the inhaled air, thus presenting a total theory of respiration. In fact, his thesis was also maintained both by the physician –contemporaneous with him- Diocles de Caristos⁴⁴, and by Plato⁴⁵. However, I would rather quote Plutarch's *De Stoicorum repugnantis*⁴⁶ on Stoics' physical theories, which in their turn come back to Aristotle⁴⁷. He writes in this case on the *enodatio nominis* of the term *psyché*, the soul, as proposed by Chrysippus:

“(Chrysippus) believes that the foetus in the womb is nourished by nature like a plant but that at birth the vital spirit, being chilled and tempered by the air, changes and becomes animal and that hence the soul has not inappropriately been named after this process. On the other hand, he holds soul to be vital spirit in a more rarefied and subtle state than nature” (Τὸ βρέφος ἐν τῇ γαστρὶ φύσει τρέφεσθαι νομίζει καθάπερ φυτὸν· ὅταν δὲ τεχθῆ, ψυχόμενον ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀέρος καὶ στομούμενον τὸ πνεῦμα μεταβάλλειν καὶ γίνεσθαι ζῶν· ὅθεν οὐκ ἀπὸ τρόπου τὴν ψυχὴν ὠνομάσθαι παρὰ τὴν ψῦξιν)⁴⁸.

To sum up, every man born from a woman must assume a new identity as *aisthetikòs kai pathetikòs anér*. And Moses's laws about animals, “laying down which may be eaten and which may not” show quite clearly that human beings' life ought to be a constant *ophiomachía* or fight against the serpent, against pleasure. Virtue must be powerful and fierce, that is, must have necessarily masculine features. Self-control (*egkrátēia*) is hostile to pleasure and fights against it by means of both a ceaseless war (*pólemos*) and a battle (*máche*) which is pure (*akatháiretos*) or free from any febleness. And once more, if we apply Logics strictly, the result is highly misogynist: men must fight against the serpent, against the pleasure; the first approaches of the male to the female have pleasure to guide and conduct them; therefore, a married man loves a serpent; in fact he should fight against her in order to reestablish his power and recover his purity. If not, simplicity (*eutéleia*), frugality (*oligodeia*) and a severe and worthy life (*philaústeros kai sémnos bíos*) will no longer belong to him, thus embracing the excess (*periergía*), luxury (*polytéleia*), softness (*chlidê, thrýpsis*) and these “resulting in the culpable life, the life that in the view of right-minded people is worse than death”.

As said before, when analyzing the basis of certain misogynist Ethics, it is useful –and surprising- to read some significant texts of Greek pederasty. I shall present, then, some paragraphs of Plutarch's *Eroticus* (II a. D) which are certainly a good summary of the question. Philo is contemporaneous with Christ but, on the other hand, it has always been acknowledged that his *Eroticus* attacks pederasty in general and some aspects of that of Plato in particular. Here are the words of Protogenes, a traditional and misogynist *erastés* –I beg the reader to pay attention above all to the adjectives and compare them with those in Philo's *De opificio mundi*:

‘In a normal state one's desire for bread and meat is moderate, yet sufficient; but abnormal indulgence of this desire creates the vicious habit called gluttony and gormandizing. In just the same way there normally exists in men and women a need for the pleasure derived from each other; but when the impulse that derives us to this goal is

⁴⁴ Fr. 15 Wellman.

⁴⁵ 70 c-d.

⁴⁶ 1052 J. SVF II, 806.

⁴⁷ See D. Hahm, *The Origins of Stoic Cosmology*, Ohio 1977, pp. 100-101.

⁴⁸ Plutarchus. *De Stoicorum repugnantis* 1053a. SVF II 579, translated by Harold Cherniss, *Loeb Classical Library*, 1976.

so vigorous and powerful that it becomes torrential and almost out of control (πολλήν καὶ δυσκάρηκτον), it is a mistake to give the name Love to it. Love, in fact, it is that attaches himself to a young and talented soul (εὐφυοῦς καὶ νέας) and through friendship (διὰ φιλίας) brings it to a state of virtue (ἀρετήν); but the appetite (ἐπιθυμία) for women we are speaking of, however well it turns out, has for net gain only an accrual of pleasure in the enjoyment of a ripe physical beauty (ἀπόλαυσιν ὥρας καὶ σώματος) ... The object of desire is, in fact, pleasure and enjoyment (ἡδονὴ καὶ ἀπόλαυσις); while Love, if he loses the hope of inspiring friendship, has no wish to remain cultivating a deficient plant which has come to its prime, if the plant cannot yield the proper fruit of character to produce friendship and virtue (φιλίαν καὶ ἀρετήν). If, however, such a passion (πάθος) must also be called Love, let it at least be qualified as an effeminate and bastard love (θηλιν καὶ νόθον), that takes its exercise in the women's quarters as bastards do in the Cynosarges... there is only one genuine Love, the love of boys (παιδικός). It is not 'flashing with desire', as Anacreont says of the love of maidens, or 'drenched with unguents, shining bright'. No, its aspects is simple and unspoiled (λιτὸν... καὶ ἄθροπτον). You will see it in schools of philosophy (ἐν σχολαῖς φιλοσόφοις), or perhaps in the gymnasia and palaestrae (γυμνάσια καὶ παλαίστρας), searching for young men whom it cheers on with a clear and noble cry to the pursuit of virtue when they are found worthy of its attention. But that other lax and housebound love (ὑγρὸν... καὶ οἰκουρὸν), that spends its time in the bosoms and beds of women (ἐν κόλποις... καὶ κλινιδίοις), ever pursuing a soft life (τὰ μαλθακὰ), enervated amid pleasure devoid of manliness and friendship and inspiration (ἡδοναῖς ἀνάνδροις καὶ ἀφίλοις καὶ ἀνενοουσιάζουσις), it should be proscribed, as in fact Solon did proscribe it. He forbade slaves to make love to boys or to have a rubdown, but he did not restrict their intercourse with women. For friendship (φιλία) is a beautiful and courteous relationship (καλὸν καὶ ἀστεῖον), but mere pleasure (ἡδονή) is base and unworthy of a free man (κοινὸν καὶ ἀνελεύθερον). For this reason also it is not gentlemanly or urbane to make love to slave boys: such a love is mere copulation (συνουσία), like the love of women (ὁ τῶν γυναικῶν)' -translated into English by W. C. Helmbold. Loeb Classical Library. London: William Heinemann Ltd. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1969⁴⁹.

There are so many parallelisms with Philo's text that it is not easy to choose an starting-point: a) to love women is already a passion which is peculiar to sensual men ruled by the senses – Philo emphasized the passionate nature of those men who search for pleasure after the birth of the first woman-; b) to love women implies both effeminacy and baseness –Philo maintained that in the true paradise, God and the first man, enjoyed a *mónosis* or harmony which was broken by the appearance of the first woman-; c) to love boys, on the contrary, has nothing to do with desires or unguents –Philo stated that, after the creation of the first woman, the man felt desire (*póthos*) and experienced pleasure, while the self-control of those who reject *hedoné* leads them towards simplicity and frugality, etc.-; d) masculine love is simple and unspoiled; it is seen in the schools of philosophy, or perhaps in the gymnasia and palestrae; it pursues young men in order to lead them towards virtue; it is a pure love without sex –at least theoretically-, in which only intervenes friendship and not the desire; to sum up, a sort of love which is peculiar to strong hunters like Hippolytus, always loyal to Artemis –Philo warned us about the risk run by those

⁴⁹ 750C-751B:

who are slaves of pleasure (which comes from the first approaches of the male to the female...) and, as a consequence, they are doomed to assume the sophistication and the excessive waste of their wives, thus becoming soft and getting spoiled-; e) masculine love is not related to “that other lax and housebound love” which, devoid of manliness, worships women’s body and is mere copulation (*synousía*) not love or friendship (*éros kai philía*); to sum up: free men are neither vulgar nor slaves –Philo has repeated the same up to the satiety.

The most surprising thing, in my opinion, is to verify that Ethics have been constructed by rejecting what is feminine, by abhorring women’s features such as softness, smoothness, etc., thus showing besides that Ethics have been “sexualized” or, even worse, “masculinized”, given that the definition of their nature mentions only the features of masculine anatomy or character such as strength or rudeness. Consequently, we ought to reflect both seriously and calmly on the true meaning of those ethical codes full of references to virility, firmness, vigour, etc. A sort of analysis which does correspond to an anthropologist or to a psychologist, and not to a philologist. However, I should dare to suggest that hyper-masculinity may reveal a true homoeroticism or, in other words, the rejection of what is –or it is said to be- feminine often reveals a real inner conflict in the personality of some men.

It would be useless remembering now that, in order to abandon definitively the hell that Philo’s text depicts, the best thing would be to leave the earth by jumping over it like grasshoppers, which have both feet and legs. But men were not able to overcome an insurmountable obstacle:

“Pleasure does not venture to bring her wiles and deceptions to bear on the man, but on the woman, and by her means on him. This is a telling and well-made point: for in us mind (νοῦς) corresponds to man, the senses (αἰσθησις) to woman; and pleasure encounters and holds parley with the senses first (προτέραις ἐντυγχάνει καὶ ἐνομιλεῖ ταῖς αἰσθήσεσι), and through them cheats with her quackeries the sovereign mind itself (τὸν ἡγεμόνα νοῦν): for when each sense has been subjugated (ὑπαχθῆ) to her sorceries, delighting in what she proffers, the sense of sight in variegated colours and shapes, that of hearing in harmonious sounds, that of taste in delicate savours, and that of scent in the fragrance of perfumes which it inhales, then all of them receive the gifts and offer them like handmaids to the Reason (τῷ λογισμῷ) as to a master, bringing with them Persuasion to plead that it reject nothing whatever. Reason is forthwith ensnared and becomes a subject instead of a ruler (ὑπήκοος ἀνθ’ ἡγεμόνος), a slave instead of a master (δοῦλος ἀντὶ δεσπότου), an alien instead of a citizen (ἀντὶ πολίτου φυγᾶς), and a mortal instead of an immortal (θνητὸς ἀντ’ ἀθανάτου). In a word we must never lose sight of the fact that Pleasure, being a courtesan and a wanton, eagerly desires to meet with a lover, and searches for panders, by whose means she shall get one on her hook. It is the senses that act as panders for her and procure the lover. When she has ensnared these she easily brings the Mind (τὸν νοῦν) under her control. To it, dwelling within us, the senses convey the things seen without, reporting them fully and making them manifest, impressing on it the forms of the several objects, and producing in it the corresponding affection (πάθος). For it resembles wax, and receives the images that reach it through the senses, by which it apprehends material substances (τὰ σώματα), being incapable, as I have said before, of doing this by itself⁵⁰.

From now on, I would rather not to follow so closely Philo’s text. As we have just read, the abyss between man and woman has become absolute. Both have their attributes and, in case of changing them, the price to pay is death. We must live to please to the senses or to the intellect.

⁵⁰ LIX (165-166).

We must decide if we want to be sovereigns, owners, citizens and immortals or slaves, servers, fugitives, procuresses, hetaras, mortals, etc. Let us notice that the roles are not justified. Indeed, the allegorical interpretation has been, in spite of the images, definitively cornered. Women are the way they are, and men are quite different. It seems as if there were only room for pride and prejudice. Men should always be in alert state, since, if not, the senses will seduce them and their intellects will give up imposing their unappealable criterion. And, once lost the “empire”, men run a great risk. Once caught in the monstrous sensuality of low beings, men can turn involved in senseless behaviours. Shall I mention Hipolitus’s obsession consisting of accusing women of ruining the life of men?⁵¹ Let us remember: a man with a daughter must prepare a dowry in order to get her married; wives squander their husbands’ patrimony, etc. Shall I also mention the long list of non-senses of Semonides’s famous iambus?: women are different⁵²; they eat all the time⁵³, they do not work and spend very much in unguents⁵⁴, etc. And finally we should mention once more Plato’s *Symposium* in which one can read that vulgar men love and make love to women. They love in fact their bodies rather than their souls and, therefore, they avoid what has a larger share of mind (*noûs*). Having fallen into the abyss of sensuality, they are no longer strong and rulers⁵⁵. On the contrary: ‘Men who are sections of the male pursue the masculine, and so long as their boyhood lasts they show themselves to be slices of the male by making friends with men and delighting to lie with them and to be clasped in men’s embraces; these are the finest boys and striplings, for they have the most manly nature. Some say they are shameless creatures, but falsely: for their behaviour is due not to shamelessness but to daring, manliness, and virility, since they are quick to welcome their like. Sure evidence of this is the fact that on reaching maturity these alone prove in a public career to be men. So when they come to man’s state they are boy-lovers, and have no natural interest in wiving and getting children, but only do these things under stress of custom; they are quite contented to live together unwedded all their days’ -translated by Lamb, W. R. M. *Loeb Classical Library*. London: William Heinemann Ltd; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1983)⁵⁶. Free of any sensuality they only cultivate –now according to Diotima- their intellect and reproduce in a different way, thus not leaving behind them biological children but disciples of their virtue: ‘Now those who are teeming in body betake them rather to women, and are amorous on this wise: by getting children they acquire an immortality, a memorial, and a state of bliss, which in their imagining they for all succeeding time procure. But pregnancy of soul –for there are persons, she declared, who in their souls still more than in their bodies conceive things which are proper for soul to conceive and bring forth’-*idem*⁵⁷. Surely Philo is not so innocent as not to suspect that both sensuality and sexuality were present in those pure pederastic relationships, but he might be as innocent as not to notice that any “masculinization” of Ethics –as in fact he proposes-, besides being an inexcusable discrimination of feminine values, may imply –as said before- a true homoeroticism.

It is quite obvious that this vision of Eve has lasted throughout the centuries, but it is far more difficult to know to what extent such an important figure of the Alexandrine world as Philo and his *De opificio mundi* exerted an influence on the creation of an idea. I have already mentioned the sexualization of the story of the fall in the Jewish intertestamentary texts. However, the chapters we are reading now are in fact an accurate summary which might have been very interesting for the Fathers of the Church. In any case, the thesis is always the same: Eve –the

⁵¹ Vv. 616-668.

⁵² V. 1.

⁵³ V. 24.

⁵⁴ Vv. 57-70.

⁵⁵ 181b-d.

⁵⁶ 191e-192b.

⁵⁷ 208e-209.

woman- is sensual and, being slave of the senses, she is seduced, and thanks to her Satan reaches Adam, the man.

In this respect, we could begin by quoting a brief passage of the *Malleus Maleficarum*, which, having been approved by Pope Innocent VIII and published for the first time in 1846, is responsible for the death of so many women accused of witchcraft by the authorities -secular or religious, Catholic or Protestant:

“Although the devil tempted Eve, she seduced Adam. The sin of Eve would have not caused the death of our souls and bodies, if afterwards it had not passed to Adam, who was tempted by Eve and not by the devil. She is, then, bitterer than death”⁵⁸.

The Book of Genesis does not explain why Eve is tempted by the serpent and not Adam but, given that the latter comes from the former, we can infer that the man, as created directly by God, is considered far more excellent than the woman. She has already “attained”, indeed, a first degree of degradation⁵⁹. Luther writes for instance:

“Since Satan observes that Adam is more excellent, he does not dare to attack him... I also believe that, if he had approached to Adam first, Adam would have won”⁶⁰.

Saint Paul writes as well:

“Adam was not fooled but the woman, who, having been seduced, became guilty of transgression”⁶¹.

According to these texts, it is quite clear that Eve is not intelligent enough to fight against passions. She is sensual rather than rational and, as a consequence, it is not surprising that the *Malleus Maleficarum* maintains that men do not pay attention to Satan’s calls, above all because God chose to have a son and not a daughter:

“Praised be the Most High! He has preserved men from such an execrable crime, because, since He wanted to be born and suffer for us, has given men this privilege”⁶².

Jesus Christ was born in order to save us but he had to pay a very high price. Who was the responsible for it? Tertulian has not any doubt:

“You –Eve- violated that forbidden tree; you deserted first the divine law; you persuaded the one whom Satan did not dare to attack. You destroyed very easily the man, God’s image. Because of you the very Son of God had to die”⁶³.

Men, on the other hand, are quite different. Here is Saint Agustin and Saint Thomas’s thesis: the sin committed by Adam is the result of his sense of comradeship and not of his wickedness:

⁵⁸ Edited by Heinrich Kramer and James Spranger. London: Pushkin Press, 1951, quoted by Phillips, p.95.

⁵⁹ Besides, according to many Hebrew texts, Eve was shaped with poor materials. See Graves, chapter X.

⁶⁰ *Lectures on Genesis*, chapters. 1-V in J. Pelikan. *Luthers works vol 1* (St. Louis, 1958), p. 151, quoted by Phillips, p. 99.

⁶¹ *Timotheus 2:14*.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 47 quoted by Phillips, p.120.

⁶³ Tertulian. *De cultu foeminarum*. Patrology I, 1303.

“He was incapable of living separated from his only companion, the woman, although that would mean to be associated with her in sin⁶⁴. Adam sinned as a result of a friendly good will which makes that sometimes men prefer offending God to gaining an enemy among his friends”⁶⁵.

We have reached the last chapter of those I thought it was necessary to analyse for my purpose. Philo concludes his thesis; here is the epilogue:

“Those who were the first to become slaves to a passion grievous and hard to heal at once had experience of the wages paid by Pleasure. The woman incurred the violent woes of travail-pangs, and the griefs which come one after another all through the remainder of life. Chief among them are all those that have to do with children at birth and in their bringing up, in sickness and in health, in good fortune and evil fortune. In the next place she tasted deprivation of liberty (ἀφαιρέσιν ἐλευθερίας), and the authority (δεσποτείαν) of the husband at her side, whose commands she must perforce obey (fr. *Gènesi* 3, 16). The man, in his turn, incurred labours and distress in the unceasing sweat of his brow to gain the necessaries of life. He was without those good things which the earth had been taught to bear of itself independently of all skill in the husbandman. His life was spent in unbroken toils in the pursuit of food and livelihood to save him from perishing by famine. For I imagine that, just as sun and moon always give their light after once for all being bidden to do so when the universe was first created, and continue to keep the divine ordinance for no other reason than that evil has been sent into exile far away from heaven’s frontiers; even so would earth’s deep and fertile soil, unaided by the skill of agricultural labourers, bear rich abundance as the seasons come round. As it is, when evil began to get the better of the virtues, the ever-flowing springs of the bounties of God were closed, that they might not bring supplies to those felt to be undeserving of them. If the human race had had to undergo the fitting penalty, it must need have been wiped out by reason of its ingratitude to God its benefactor and preserver. But He being merciful took pity on it and moderated the punishment, suffering the race to continue, but no longer as before supplying it with food ready to its hand, that men might not, by indulging the twin evils of idleness and satiety, wax insolent in wrong-doing. Such is the life of those who at the outset are in enjoyment of innocence and simplicity of character, but later on prefer vice to virtue”⁶⁶.

For contemporary men and women the text may seem now to be quite rude. The Alexandrine wisdom should show better results. The thesis is both simple and well-known: those who are slaves of pleasure -a true calamity for human beings- must pay for it. Men and women enjoyed pleasure at the same level but it was the woman who was tempted for the first time and tempted Adam in her turn. She must pay, then, for such a serious crime by feeling pain and assuming as well a wide range of hardships related to the fruit of the sin: her children. Here is mothers’ destiny: the “deprivation of liberty and the authority of the husband at her side”. She desires and, consequently, he dominates. Everything shows that the woman becomes doomed to such a new state because the man must rule, think and decide. In other words, the low tasks do not correspond to him. Who even knows if, regarding this vision, underlies as well that so common idea in Greek philosophy according to which men and children are a “hindrance” –a hindrance to live philosophically among the Greeks, and a hindrance to attain a philosophical spirituality in

⁶⁴ *Civitas Dei* XIV, II.

⁶⁵ *Summa Theologica* II, CLXIII-4.

⁶⁶ LX-LXIC (167-170).

Philo. The man also tasted pleasure and “incurred labours and distress in the unceasing sweat of his brow to gain the necessities of life”. Notwithstanding –and the message unfortunately seems to be quite clear-, if he does not act deceitfully before pleasure, if he is strong, manly, etc., that is, if he does not get married, things may change. If the reverse is the case, he must know, on the contrary, that he will depend on agriculture, a low science or art related to the earth, to matter, that is, a true prison for human spirituality.

Very little can be still said about the Greek basis of this final thesis. However, I should like to compare it with the texts of Plato and Hesiod which have already quoted.

To conclude, it might be useful in my opinion to read some paragraphs of a contemporaneous text: the Apostolic Letter *Mulieris Dignitatem* of the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II on the dignity and vocation of women. First of all, it is worth underlining that the Supreme Pontiff maintains, page after page, that everything we read in the *Book of Genesis* must not make us forget that men and women share the same dignity. Unfortunately, however –I do not know if he knows Philo’s text but, in any case, he refers to the *Book of Genesis*-, our well-known centuries-old misogynist tradition might have betrayed him. Here are his words:

“Therefore when we read in the biblical description the words addressed to the woman: “*Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you*” (Gen 3:16), we discover a break and a constant threat precisely in regard to this “unity of the two” which corresponds to the dignity of the image and likeness of God in both of them. But this threat is more serious for the woman, since domination takes the place of “being a sincere gift” and therefore living “for” the other: “he shall rule over you”. This “domination” indicates the disturbance and *loss of the stability* of that *fundamental equality* which the man and the woman possess in the “unity of the two”: and this is especially to the disadvantage of the woman, whereas only the equality resulting from their dignity as persons can give to their mutual relationship the character of an authentic “*communio personarum*”. While the violation of this equality, which is both a gift and a right deriving from God the Creator, involves an element to the disadvantage of the woman, at the same time it also diminishes the true dignity of the man. Here we touch upon *an extremely sensitive point in the dimension of that “ethos”* which was originally inscribed by the Creator in the very creation of both of them in his own image and likeness”⁶⁷.

But here are some questions: Why is the threat more serious for the woman? Because, being a sincere gift and, consequently, living for the other, the man rules over her? Which is the gift, then, of the man? If, logically, he rules and dominates and this is precisely his gift, why should we speak of disturbance and loss of the original stability? He rules and she obeys, that is –why not?-, a perfect harmony. But if, on the contrary, the man rules because the woman lives for the man, should the man not avoid the loss of the stability by living himself for the woman? Shall we believe that the man never feels the need to live for the other? What might be better than a relationship in which the man and the woman rule and live for each other? Does the Pontiff find submissiveness more natural –that is, traditional- in women and, as a consequence, those who do not rule need and desire, and it is precisely their desire which make them to be subject to men’s domination? Why cannot men need or desire women? Do men not live for women, for her wives? If not, certainly there would not be a true “*communio personarum*”. Men ought to be

⁶⁷Apostolic Letter *Mulieris Dignitatem* of the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II on the Dignity and Vocation of Women on the Occasion of the Marian Year (http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jpii_apl_15081988_mulieris-dignitatem_en.html).

true “tight-rope walkers”, ruling because... but, at the same time, refusing to rule because... . Neither would it be easy for women, since, if they desire, they do favour a domination which breaks the unity of the two. But, what does prevent us from assigning desires and dominations to both of them? Only tradition? The Pontiff leads us in fact to an *aporía*, since, later on, he adds: “*The woman cannot become the “object” of “domination” and male “possession”*”. In the name of liberation from male “domination”, women must not appropriate to themselves male characteristics contrary to their own feminine “originality””. That is to say: men cannot desire – and, therefore, they rule, although when doing it they should be extremely cautious-, while women cannot give up desiring and, as a result, they are dominated and, on too many occasions –as is well-known-, humiliated.

With so many cautions and dangers marriage would turn out to be finally a labyrinth, although, according John Paul II, everything might be explained perhaps on account of the special nature of the Biblical language:

“This characteristic of biblical language - its anthropomorphic way of speaking about God - *points indirectly to the mystery of the eternal “generating”* which belongs to the inner life of God. Nevertheless, in itself this “generating” has neither “masculine” nor “feminine” qualities. It is by nature totally divine. It is spiritual in the most perfect way, since “God is spirit” (*Jn 4:24*) and possesses no property typical of the body, neither “feminine” nor “masculine”. Thus even “*fatherhood” in God is completely divine and free of the “masculine” bodily characteristics proper to human fatherhood*”.

Then, I should dare to say that, when speaking of two different ways to create –in Pontiff’s opinion that of God is perfect and not different-, we should conclude that the latter implies necessarily desire and, on the other hand, desire is a human feature, neither masculine nor feminine. In other words, if desire were not “feminized”, men and women could share desires and dominations fearlessly, and they would build a world of no discriminations by means of a true companionship. For instance: would it not be logical that those who have opted for a “more perfect” way to generate –John Paul II *dicit*-, that is, priests and nuns, had the same rights since they do not generate through their bodies? Free from desire, both priests and nuns, could they not bring together their spirits and intelligences for a common task? Why not? How could domination be justified in the case of women who do not desire. They are women who live for God and not for their masculine companions. Priests, in their turn, like nuns, live for God and, consequently, if desire –that is, to live for the other- is feminized, they become feminized as well. It is unthinkable that the Pontiff believes –and I do not think he does-that the domination of priests is based upon the fact that the first man was created directly by God while the first woman came to be from Adam. Such a belief would imply to take into account only the second story about the creation of the man in the *Book of Genesis*, that which breaks precisely the fundamental stability and equality.

Probably, very probably, there is only one solution: the absolute equality man-woman, both desiring, both being able to live for the other, which must not be mistaken for feebleness or effeminacy, both ruling or dominating and being able to think and decide, which must not be mistaken for virility. Therefore, everything seems to show that that tradition we already detected in Philo has survived for centuries and in many realms. However, I would rather think that certain traditions will be soon left behind for the sake of the happiness of human beings, that is, of both men and women.