

Philo as a Reader

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Philo of Alexandria (app. 20 BCE – 50 CE) is a post-Hellenistic writer. He is a Jewish scholar. His texts are taken to preserve many fragments of philosophical works which are otherwise lost. He can be different things to different people largely because the interpretative communities which have an interest in his corpus select different passages from it to construct their Philo. The purpose of our seminar is to read across the boundaries of the quasi-canons which have emerged in various academic subjects (as they are formulated in modern universities). One approach which we hope to encourage is a focus on Philo's own reading practices and hermeneutical strategies. We will consider the following questions: Whom did Philo read? How did he read? How are his interpretative strategies located in a broader array of practices of reading in antiquity? How was Philo transmitted and preserved? What is his Nachleben?

Wk. 1: Introduction

Wk. 2: De Abrahamo 1-15 and 268-76

Wk. 3: De Opificio Mundi 45-61

Wk. 4: De Decalogo 1-20

Wk. 5: De Vita Mosis 2.1-44

Wk. 6: De Vita Contemplative 75-89

Wk. 7: De Specialibus Legibus 3.1-16

Wk. 8: De Migratione Abrahami 82-94; De Vita Mosis 1.165-73