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## THE CONCEPTS OF THE LOGOS IN PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA

*Abstract:* Philo of Alexandria offers versatile and many-layered approaches to the understanding of the Logos in Scripture, applying a philosophical apparatus to holy texts in order to explore the rich ontological, theological and anthropological sphere of the manifold concept. Some of the main concepts that he uses in his extensive analysis of the status, nature, functions and meaning of the Logos intertwine and coincide, and some seem to exclude one another, depending on the way of interpretation of certain passages of his works.

The main concepts of the Logos briefly overviewed in the present article are: “second God” and the ontological and methodological connection between them, along with Philo’s apophatic convictions; an utterance of God, whose words and deeds strictly correspond; a Word of God; “Son” of God; a divine archetype – both a blueprint and a place for Ideas and a thought eternally produced by God, an object of thinking and an essence permeating everything else which is thought/created; a principle of creation and differentiation in the world; a bond which orders and controls physical laws and spiritual and corporeal relations; an intermediary principle of power which serves not only as a messenger or agent of God, but as his attribute, his exteriorisation, his otherwise transcendent existence rendered present and involved in earthly matters; a multi-named archetype; wisdom of God and immanent wisdom which guides human intellects in their contemplation and virtue.

The extensive allegorical and philosophical work of Philo of Alexandria (Judaeus Philo) represents a synthesis of the intellectual traditions of his two cultures: the religious mythical and theological Hebraic thought, and the philosophical concepts of the Greek. By using Greek philosophical approaches in his interpretation of biblical stories, and by developing new ontological and religious explanations of both revelation teachings and key philosophical concepts, he successfully bridges the two traditions, clearing the way for future expansion of early Christian thought.

In an attempt to show the ontological and religious importance of a key Greek philosophical concept in a dominantly Mo-

saic milieu, this text provides a brief account of his versatile and complex understanding of the concept of the Logos. Due to the complexities of the concept and its overwhelming philosophical and theological importance, the elements of some of the different accounts overlap, and in some cases they seem to simultaneously exclude and complement each other.

Philo mainly applies an apophatic approach in discussing the notion and essence of God, so it should seem clear that the Logos does not coincide with God. While the Logos is a topic of intricate and pluriperspective analysis, the essence of God, due to man's limitations, is to be left unknown. It is still somewhat (infinitesimally) available, when pondered as exteriorised in the world, through the immanent Logos. The soul of the universe is God, Philo underlines, and as men are ignorant of the nature of the essence of their own souls, they cannot possibly have notion of the soul of the universe.<sup>1</sup> And yet, the soul manages to derive a proper notion of God, only through his inspiration and by his power, as human intellect is too humble to be able to comprehend it himself.<sup>2</sup> Philo's abstaining from affirmative statements about God is not absolute, for he defines him as a place to himself, self-sufficient and full of himself, surrounding everything, but not surrounded by anything, one with the universe, omniscient and the Cause of all things.<sup>3</sup> God's virtues are founded in truth, "existing according to his essence: since God alone exists in essence, on account of which fact, he speaks of necessity about himself, saying, 'I am that I Am'" (referring to *Exodus* 3:14).<sup>4</sup> However, the Logos can also be seen as God, as Philo marks a distinction between *the God*, and cases in which the word is used incorrectly, without the article. In the examination to see whether there really are two Gods, Philo writes that it is said "I am the God who was seen by thee not in my place, but in the place of God", as if he meant of some other God, and he continues with the statement that there is one true God only: but they who are called *Gods*, by an abuse of language, are numerous, on which account the holy scripture indicates that it is the true God that is meant by the use of the article, the expression being "I am the God". When the word is used incorrectly, however, he clarifies further, it is used without the article, the expression being "He who was seen by thee in the place"

<sup>1</sup> *LA*. I, XXIX, 91. All quotes and paraphrases are from C. D. Yonge, trans., *The Works of Philo, Complete and Unabridged* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1993). The standard titles given in Latin and the common abbreviations, along with the English titles, are at the end of the article.

<sup>2</sup> *LA*. I XII, 38.

<sup>3</sup> *LA*. I, XIV, 44; XVII, 57, XVII, 58.

<sup>4</sup> *LA*. I, XLIV, 160.

not “of the God”, but simply “of God”. There is no name properly belonging to the living God, and whatever appellation any one may give him will be an abuse of terms; for the living God is not of a nature to be described, but only to be. Philo here clearly states that what is called *God* is, in fact, his most ancient word (the Logos).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *Som.* XXXIX, 1. 229-1. 230.

In his massive exploration of Philo’s philosophical system, appropriately acknowledging his extremely complex concepts, Harry Austryn Wolfson states that the Logos is conceived by Philo as both the totality of ideas and the totality of powers, and seen as created, as the first-born son, the man of God, the image of God, second to God (pointing out *LA.* II, 21), or a second God (*secundus Deus*, pointing out *Questiones in Genesis*, II, 62), and as a being merely called *god* because of insufficiencies in men’s knowledge - Harry Austryn Wolfson, *Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), 234.

Benedict Th. Viviano warns that, despite Philo’s strong language of the Logos as the second God, there is no evidence that ancient Israelites prayed or offered sacrifices to the divine Logos - B. Th. Viviano, “The Trinity in the Old Testament”, *Theologische Zeitschrift* 54 (1998): 198. Philo’s language on this matter can hardly be recognised as even mild, and in his haste for historical accuracy, Viviano disregards that the whole point of the Logos, as an immanent principle of the Universe, is that it needs no sacrifices or special rites, the connection to it being ontologically and epistemologically complex, but ritually non-existent.

Ronald Williamson finds that Philo deduces the description of the Logos as ‘the second God’ from the statement “in the image of god he made man” from Gen. 9: 6, underlying that he derives his usage from Scripture (which is not in the least surprising), and summarising with “... though the Logos is neither God nor a god, it is the primary, secondary layer (as it were) of the effulgence or emanation of the divine light, the Thought of God - and therefore appropriately called either the *second God* or allowed the title *theos*” - Ronald Williamson, *Jews in the Hellenistic World – Philo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 107.

Nothing is created in the image of God, but rather in the image of the Logos (which marks it as a mediator between God and the world, whether as a Son of God, or otherwise, as it will be shown later). The deliberate lack of a definite article shows that Philo is not trying to ontologically equate them, interprets Rodoljub Kubat, continuing with Philo’s insistence on a one true God, and its word, the Logos, which would mean the God is the real God, and God is the Logos, but it is not the same God, which is why in this case there are two different Gods, and the Logos can be conceived as a second God. The problem in Kubat’s substantiation of this claim is that he references parts of a text (*Som.*, 1 288), where Philo also discusses archetypal models, which might result in a merger of the “second God” concept with the concept of the Logos as an intermediary power, or a transcendent power, or as a paradigm/archetype/Form - Родољуб Кубат, “Библијски теолог – Филон Александријски: Неки аспекти Филоновог схватања Логоса и поистовећење Логоса са старосавезним Анђелом Господњим”, *Богословље*, LXIV 1-2 (2005): 54.

Aware of Philo’s explanation that to call the Logos *God* is not a correct appellation, Marian Hillar finds Philo’s loose approach to the use of the name (title) of God to a non-divinity very important in determining the usage of the term

God's words and actions coincide: what is uttered does not differ from what is done,<sup>6</sup> hence, the concept of the Logos as the utterance of God (this is not to be confused with the Logos as the aforementioned word of God, which could be explained by the Aramaic *Memra*). While God spoke the word, he created at the same moment, and would not allow for anything to come between the word and the deed.<sup>7</sup> "The uncreated God outstrips all creation", Philo writes, "so also does the word of the uncreated God outrun the word of creation", it can outstrip and overtake everything.<sup>8</sup> God commands the earth to produce race of trees in full perfection with fruit in a state of entire ripeness.<sup>9</sup> The point here is that any utterance of God is a speech act, the word changes reality, the command equals the act of production/creation.

The Logos as a revealer of God (a first born, chief angel, imitating the ways of his father)<sup>10</sup> is another concept (despite the

in the Hebrew *Bible* and especially as a testimony contemporary with the *New Testament* writers. The distinction between a transcendent being, *ho theos*, and the other one without the article, *theos*, which designates a being or an entity with divine quality, as a second (dependent) God, but not identified with the supreme God, is quoted in only one Christian instance, the *Gospel of John* 1:1, where the Logos, the word, is divine, but is not God, the Father, the One - Marian Hillar, *From Logos to Trinity - The Evolution of Religious Beliefs from Pythagoras to Tertullian* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 69. According to Hillar, Philo describes the Logos as God in three passages, the first two being a commentary on *Genesis* 22:16 (the aforementioned linguistic distinction in the usage of a definite article or lack thereof, and in answering why God could only swear by himself - as he alone has any knowledge about his actions, and men must be content to be able to understand his name, his Logos, as an interpreter of his will) and on *Genesis* 9:6 (asking whether saying that God made man after the image of God would mean that he is speaking of himself, or some other God, Philo concludes that no mortal thing could have been formed on the similitude of the supreme Father of the universe, but only after the pattern of the second deity, the Logos of the supreme (Hillar, *From Logos to Trinity*, 68).

<sup>5</sup> "The Word of God" is an Aramaic expression (usual terms for *word* being *pitgama* and *milla*) from the targumim, wherever God's power manifests in the material world and in the minds of men is mentioned in the sense of a mediator, as a substitute for *the Lord* and in avoidance of an anthropomorphic expression. (Kaufmann Kohler, "Memra", *The Jewish Encyclopaedia, The complete unedited text from 1901-1906*, Cyrus Adler, Isidore Singer, Eds., (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1901-1906) <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/10618-memra>). In these paraphrased translations of the *Old Testament*, the holy names are sometimes substituted by "Memra", but sometimes are not, so it is not a clean case of an ever-present metonymy (see Viviano, "The Trinity in the Old Testament", 198-200).

<sup>6</sup> *Som.* XXXI, 1.182.

<sup>7</sup> *Sac.* XVIII, 65.

<sup>8</sup> *Sac.* XVIII, 66.

<sup>9</sup> *Op.* XIII, 42.

<sup>10</sup> *Conf.* XXVIII, 146–147.

obvious equation between “angels” and “words of God”),<sup>11</sup> revelation being conceived not as through words, but through the “Angel of the Lord,” according to Scripture.<sup>12</sup>

The Logos (the word of God), is glue and a chain for all other things, intrinsically and by their own nature loose, explains Philo, for if there is anything in any way consolidated, it is because it has been bound by the word of God, which connects and fastens everything together. The Logos, moreover, is peculiarly full itself of itself, having no need whatever of anything beyond, but filling all things with its essence.<sup>13</sup> In this respect, the Logos serves as a constant consolidator, a universal bond, and a provider of essence.

God’s thinking and acting (creating) are simultaneous, and he is incessantly organising matter by his thought. The Ideas (Forms) have existed with him from the beginning, his thinking does not come before his acting, nor are there times when he does not create. Ever thinking, God creates, and furnishes to sensible things the principle of their existence, so that both should exist together: the ever-creating Divine Mind and the sense-perceptible things to which beginning of being is given.<sup>14</sup> The Forms are not equal to the Platonic Forms, however: they are eternally being created, constituting the intelligible world as God’s thoughts. The sensible world is given its existence through the intelligible Forms, which serve as a principle of existence (the impressions they make are destructible, depending on the perishable substance that constitutes them).<sup>15</sup> This modification of the Platonic concept is consistent with Philo’s strong monism – nothing exists but God, and nothing acts/creates. The Logos creates as an operator, based on an ideal model. Philo uses the connection to explain God’s ways of creation: first of all he conceives a form in his mind (like a thought), then, according to it he makes an intellect-only perceivable world and a world available to the senses, using the first

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<sup>11</sup> *Som.* XXIII, 1.148; XIII, 1.72.

<sup>12</sup> *Som.* XXXIX, 1.228-239; and scattered through *Cher.* 1-3.

<sup>13</sup> *Her.* (also “*Quis het.*” But “*Her.*” in this article) XXXVIII, 188.

<sup>14</sup> As interpreted from *Prov.* 1.7 in David Winston’s *Introduction to David Winston, trans., Philo of Alexandria: The Contemplative Life, Giants and Selections* (New York: Paulist Press, 1981), 15. It is not clear how he finds these claims so firmly on one of the least clear and fragmented passages (also, one known through Eusebius), but scholars seems to pass them on - see for example Hillar, *From Logos to Trinity*, 53; Paul M. Blowers, *Drama of the Divine Economy: Creator and Creation in Early Christian Theology and Piety* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 61.

<sup>15</sup> *Det.* XX1, 75–77; *Mut.* XI, 80, XXI, 122, XXVI, 146; *Cher.* XV, 51.

one as a model.<sup>16</sup> The Logos, and not God (unlike the Demiurge, or Maker or Artificer in Plato's *Timaeus*, albeit it being a strong influence on Philo's doctrine of creation), acts as an agent of creation, as the "man of God".<sup>17</sup> The Logos, a blueprint for creation, both a pattern and an instrument, is also shown as the shadow of God ("the shadow of God is his word"), it is the model, the archetype of other things, "For, as God is himself the model of that image which he has now called *a shadow*, so also that image is the model of other things".<sup>18</sup> The Logos is, thus, the Form of Forms (Platonic), the Idea of Ideas, or the sum total of Forms or Ideas,<sup>19</sup> which overlaps with the understating of the Logos as Divine Mind. The Logos creates the four elements from pre-existent primordial, chaotic matter, through the agency of his incorporeal powers (*Ideas*).<sup>20</sup> Moses recognised an active and a passive principle of being, the former being the intellect of the universe, the latter a powerless inanimate and motionless matter, anticipating Plato with the idea of pre-existing water, darkness and chaos/abyss, purports Philo.<sup>21</sup> The archetypal model of all things, in accordance with which each thing is assigned to its proper species and limited to its proper dimensions is the most important of all essences,<sup>22</sup> and out of that essence God created everything, without touching it himself, but by the agency of his incorporeal powers, of which the proper name is *ideas*.<sup>23</sup> The pre-existent shapeless matter may or may not be compared to the Receptacle from *Timaeus*,<sup>24</sup> and

<sup>16</sup> *Op.* IV, 19.

<sup>17</sup> *Conf.* XI, 41.

<sup>18</sup> *LA.* XXXI, 96. Philo describes that, in his account of anthropogenesis, Moses calls the invisible Divine Logos the *image of God* (*Op.* VI. 24; 31 and also throughout *LA.* I).

<sup>19</sup> *Det.* XXI, 75–76.

<sup>20</sup> *LA.* I. 1, 329.

<sup>21</sup> *Op.* II, 8-9. Philo's claims that God not only brought all things to light, but has even created what had no previous existence, thus being a founder of all things, as well as their creator (*Som.* XIII, 1.76; *Op.* XXVI, 81) seem ambiguous. Hillar assumes that Philo does not refer here to God's creation of the visible world *ex nihilo*, but to his creation of the intelligible Forms prior to the formation of the sensible world (which reads, granted, in *Spec. leg.* LX. 1.328), by analogy to the biblical narrative (the world is created in the image of his archetype in the mind of God) (Hillar, *From Logos to Trinity*, 52-53).

<sup>22</sup> *Spec leg.* I, LX, 327.

<sup>23</sup> *Spec leg* I, LX, 329.

<sup>24</sup> Ideas or Forms of heaven, earth, air (darkness), empty space (abyss), water, pneuma (mind?), light, the patterns of sun and stars (*Op.* VII, 29) were created by God during the first day. *Timaeus'* space (khora) is unconditioned by a Form, therefore self-existing, and is not apprehended by reason, never departing from its own character (*Timaeus* 50b-c), it is stable, permanent. In Philo, a re-

the question whether it really was pre-existent or was created out of nothing only seems problematic, as Philo's ideas of eternal creation do not allow for an independent and eternal pre-existent matter. Among the five beautiful lessons of Moses about the creation of the world, Philo includes the teaching of the real being and existence of the Deity,<sup>25</sup> that God is one, that the world was created, "by this lesson refuting those who think that it is uncreated and eternal", that the created world is also one (the creation resembles the Creator in singularity, as God employed all existing essence in the creation of the universe for it to be complete, composed of parts complete and whole themselves).<sup>26</sup> The ideas are thought out before the creation of the world, and out of them it is composed. This means that the intelligible world is thought out by the same act of thinking, which makes it both a product of the act and an object of thought. The problem here, following the Aristotelian logic, is that there must be a mind doing the act of thinking and having an object of thought, and in the case of God in Philo, they are the same – the world prior to creation was the object of thought of the act of thinking of the mind of God. Philo uses *Logos* in claiming that the world consisting of the ideas could have no other but the divine Logos to order them, and the placement

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ceptacle (void, empty space, self-existing place) is unacceptable, so space's pattern has a form in the divine mind.

Additionally, the intelligible world cannot be contained in a place – therefore it receives a place in the Logos. Runia remarks that this is "an equivocation, to be sure, but one that can easily be understood. In Philo's platonizing worldview there is physical place and supra-physical place" - see David Runia's comment in David Runia, trans., *Philo of Alexandria - On the Creation of the Cosmos according to Moses, Introduction, Translation and Commentary by David T. Runia* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 143.

For Philo there are three ways in which place is to be understood (although his phenomenology of place is much more complex and scattered through numerous texts): "firstly a space filled by a body; secondly the divine Logos, which God himself has completely filled with incorporeal powers; thirdly God himself is called a *place* in that he contains whole things and is not contained by anything whatsoever" (*Som.* XI, 1. 62). The Logos is the eldest of all intellectual beings, the one established nearest to the only truly existent one, no distance whatsoever between them (*Fug.* XIX, 100). Speaking in terms of ontology, this way of illustrating space and emplacement is so that it can be reiterated that the Logos is the closest thing to God. Though *Fug.* XIX, 100 shows the Logos to be spatially most proximate to the Deity, notices Ronald R. Cox, *Som.* 1.67 describes the place of the Logos as possibly quite far from the first cause - Ronald R. Cox, "By The Same Word: The Intersection Of Cosmology And Soteriology in Hellenistic Judaism, Early Christianity and 'Gnosticism' in The Light of Middle Platonic Intermediary Doctrine" (PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 2005), 116.

<sup>25</sup> *Op.* LXI, 170.

<sup>26</sup> *Op.* LXI, 171.

makes for Logos to mean *mind*, which he uses as a substitute for *Nous* (Aristotle's term for *mind*).<sup>27</sup> The use of *Logos* is justified by the ample correlations with *knowledge* and *thought* in Plato, for example, as well as with the general ideas of intelligent design by which nature is created and ordered.

Moses also says, claims Philo, that God created the world in the beginning, which is not according to time, because there was no time before the world – they were created simultaneously.<sup>28</sup> But, Philo continues, if this beginning Moses speaks of “is not to be looked upon as spoken of according to time”, then it may be a beginning according to number, thus making “in the beginning” equivalent to “first of all” that God created heaven, the best of all things (it is natural in reality the purest of substances to be created first),<sup>29</sup> for even if everything was made at the same moment, still, things created in beauty would have had a harmonic arrangement. Order is a consequence of a regular connection of precedent and subsequent things, it is the defining feature of things free from confusion, accurate and stationary.<sup>30</sup> The image of God, reminds us Philo, Moses called *the invisible divine reason*, perceptible only by intellect.<sup>31</sup> The world is not eternal, independent of creative acts, insists Philo, critiquing the opinion that God exists in a state of complete inactivity (the Aristotelian account). The world is eternally being created, as God is eternally applying himself to his creation. God “overlooks and presides over everything, and regulates everything”, makes sure of the durability of the universe and its management, in accordance with right reason.<sup>32</sup> If everything is destroyed, God would have his existence rendered miserable by inactivity: a proverbial death would occur if God were to be inactive. Destruction of the perpetual motion of the soul destroys the soul itself, so, surely God, as the soul of the world, would thus be destroyed.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Wolfson, *Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy*, 230.

<sup>28</sup> *Op.* VII, 26. The logic behind this is that if we define time as the interval of the motion of the heavens, there could not have been any motion of heavens before heavens existed, which makes it necessary for time to be either simultaneously or subsequently created.

<sup>29</sup> *Op.* VII, 27.

<sup>30</sup> *Op.* VII, 28.

<sup>31</sup> *Op.* VIII, 31.

<sup>32</sup> *Aet.* XVI, 83.

<sup>33</sup> *Aet.* XVI, 84. Philo hesitates to formulate this, for it can be interpreted as impious, but the death of God he conceives is mentioned only so that it can be instantly discarded, and so that his point of a constantly, eternally active and involved God can be strongly affirmed.



Forms, it was mentioned, exist in God's mind as his thoughts, but they not only exist as thoughts, since God's thinking and acting are simultaneous, but also as his powers.<sup>34</sup> They are intelligible like God, and they are his glory.<sup>35</sup> Creation happens through the Forms as powers.<sup>36</sup> The Logos, understood as the divine mind, is thus the Form of Forms (Idea of Ideas), or even the sum of all Forms.<sup>37</sup> The world must have been created in the image of its archetype present in the mind of God. The Logos is wisdom in the divine mind, like light is the instrument of seeing, but it also beholds itself – the archetypal model in God.<sup>38</sup> The ideas or powers or, in their total sum, the Logos, after having served as patterns for the design of the world, are introduced into it, to act as the immutable laws of nature. In this phase the Logos is not a property of God, nor the totality of created powers, but a synthesis – a totality of powers of God in the world.

Having been “born” before anything else that was created,<sup>39</sup> the Logos is also a governor through which God rules the world.

<sup>34</sup> Wolfson draws attention to the fact that Ideas are used by Philo primarily in the sense of patterns, and by Plato as causes that possess power. Philo, describing Ideas as *habits*, attributes power to them, and depicts them as active, trying to show that the conception of ideas as causes has also been anticipated in Scripture, by identifying the Platonic ideas, in so far as they are causes and have power, with what, according to him, Scripture calls *the powers of God* (Wolfson, *Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy*, 216-217).

<sup>35</sup> *Spec. leg.* VII, 1.45–50. Moses' prayer “Show me, I pray Thee, Thy glory” in Philo reads “...I beseech Thee that I may at least see the glory that surrounds Thee, and by Thy glory I understand the powers that keep guard around Thee”. God answers that these powers Moses seeks are discerned only by mind, as is he, they bring form to everything that is, and, that “some (among you) call them not inaptly *ideas*” (*Spec.* I, VIII, 45-48). Wolfson underlines the three terms used in the passage - *glory*, *powers*, and *ideas*, and remarks that of these three terms the first two are said to be scriptural and only the third one is said to be Platonic, assuming that “some among you” to whom Philo refers are Plato and his followers. It is remarkable, Wolfson continues, that the identification of glory with powers is introduced by Philo through his spokesman Moses as something which “I understand”, no explanation required (Wolfson, *Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy*, 219).

<sup>36</sup> *Spec. leg.* LX, 1.327–329.

<sup>37</sup> It is strange that Hillar (Hillar, *From Logos to Trinity*, 56) uses *Det.* 75-76 in order to corroborate this claim, as it is a passage with no such strong formulation. A more suitable one would be “... the archetypal seal, which we call that world which is perceptible only to the intellect, must itself be the archetypal model, the Idea of Ideas, the Reason of God” (*Op.* VI, 25).

<sup>38</sup> *Mig.* VIII, 40.

<sup>39</sup> By depicting the Logos as neither eternal like God, nor created like everything else, but begotten from eternity, Philo seems to have transformed the Stoic impersonal and immanent Logos into a being that is clearly mediating between the two realities.

The Logos is God's reason and firstborn son,<sup>40</sup> and as such he governs in his father's stead. It has an origin, but it also has eternal generation as God's thought (everything else is secondary product). God has caused the Logos "to spring up as the eldest son, whom, in another passage, he [Moses] calls the firstborn; and he who is thus born, imitating the ways of his father, has formed such and such species, looking to his archetypal patterns".<sup>41</sup>

Two primary and supreme powers of the transcendent God are united in the Logos, which is like "the third thing between the two": Goodness (Creative Power), by which God created everything, and Authority (Regent Power), by which he governs the world. They are present in the Logos, because it is through it that God is/does good and is a ruler.<sup>42</sup> Since logically first it takes for

<sup>40</sup> *Agr.* XII, 51.

<sup>41</sup> *Conf.* XIV, 63.

<sup>42</sup> The biblical cherubim Philo uses to illustrate this are the symbols of the two powers of God, and the flaming sword (Gen. 3.24) is the symbol of the Logos, corresponding with the Greek concept of reason (mind) as flaming hot.

Philo regarded the Powers as light-emanations, and the way he brought God, essentially beyond relation, into a sun-and-light-upon-things relation with the world, foreshadows Plotinus, insists Erwin R. Goodenough multiple times in his comparison of his writings to hermetic and magical traditions - Erwin R. Goodenough, *By Light, Light - The Mystic Gospel of Hellenistic Judaism* (Amsterdam: Philo Press, 1969), 11, 44. The Logos serves as a fiery light expression of God, a connecting and differentiating power in the world.

When it comes to overlapping concepts of the Logos, Williamson uses the fact that Philo calls the Creative Power *God*, while the Regent Power is called *Lord* (or, rather, Philo remarks that this is how these two powers are described in Scripture) to illustrate that Philo, without intending to infringe his Jewish monotheism, and without in fact doing so, calls the Logos *the second God*, in whose image man has been made (Williamson, *Jews in the Hellenistic World - Philo*, 107).

Philo assigns to God actions that at other times he assigns to the intermediate reality. God exists everywhere at once by means of his tensile motion, and Cox notices that in *Plant.* IX he describes the Logos as having a similar cosmic ubiquity and purpose. The puzzling element here is that Philo does not limit the intermediate reality to the Logos alone, and instead includes as intermediaries the Deity's goodness and authority, both above and also subsumed under the Logos (Cox, "By The Same Word", 111). Cox describes the manifold intermediate realm as akin to Russian matryoshka (nested) dolls - the powers appear at times to be nested together, one within another, and at times stand separately (Cox, "By The Same Word", 113). He carries this analogy further, applying it to the Logos as a creative principle: in cosmology, what is said about the other members of the nexus in their cosmological function is said of the Logos (Cox, "By The Same Word", 118).

Scott D. Mackie sees no problem in the differentiation and employment of powers. Philo's allegiance to the doctrine of divine transcendence in many texts necessitates the inclusion of intermediaries, he writes, such as the Logos or the

something to be, for it can be ordered and ruled upon, the Creative power is conceptually older, and logically (not temporally) prior to the Regent Power. The former makes and maintains things, while they are ordered and preserved in appropriateness and equality by the latter. The Logos is not merely an agent or a characteristic of God, but more like an extension of him. The Creative Power is the one through which God made and ordered all things, which would mean that the Logos, as the creative principle and agent of creation is the Creative power. This might seem confusing, but is not inconsistent with Philo's ontological claims - the Logos is a manifestation of God's thinking-acting. Philo also mentions that time and eternity are the two primary powers of the living God,<sup>43</sup> and then goes on to explain that one is his beneficent power, in accordance with which he made the world, and in respect of which he is called *God*, and that the other is his chastening power (so the Regent is also punitive), according to which he rules and governs what he has created, in respect of which he is further denominated *Lord*.<sup>44</sup> Other powers are the merciful, in respect of which the Creator pities and shows mercy towards his own work, and legislative, by which he forbids what may not be done.<sup>45</sup>

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Powers; occasionally they are all the noetic philosopher can see of God - Scott D. Mackie, "Seeing God in Philo of Alexandria: Means, Methods, and Mysticism", *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 43 (2012): 148; The Logos and/or Powers are the means by which the transcendent God relates to the world. In many instances, however, God himself appears to be the object of sight - Scott D. Mackie, "Seeing God in Philo of Alexandria: the Logos, the Powers, or the Existent One?", *The Studia Philonica Annual* 21 (2009): 28.

Philo sees the Logos as involved in all of the aspects of cosmology, but he appears to separate them into distinct functions, in the same way he deals with functions of the two powers (creative and governing). Even in the cases where he converges the multiple powers into the Logos, there still remains some ontological or performative gradation, what Wolfson aptly termed *transcendent Logos* and *immanent Logos*. The Logos, which starts off as the mind of God or as the thinking power of God, and hence as identical with the essence of God, "now enters upon a second stage of its existence, as an incorporeal mind created by God, having existence outside of God's essence, and containing within itself the intelligible world and the myriads of ideas of which the latter consists" (Wolfson, *Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy*, 233).

<sup>43</sup> *Her.* XXXIV, 165.

<sup>44</sup> *Her.* XXXIV, 166.

<sup>45</sup> *Fug.* XVIII, 95. God and his two Powers are in reality one, appearing to the human mind as a Triad with God above the powers that belong to him (*Her.* XXXIV, 166). The human voluntary and self-impelling intellect is thanks to the Logos as immanent reason, permeating everywhere (*Deus.* X, 46-47). Through the Logos men learn all kinds of instruction and gather everlasting wisdom (*Fug.* XXIII, 127-129). However, the human mind is imperfect and limited, and vari-

From the many reiterations and reformulations about the Logos as a manifestation of God's powers, an agent or power of God in the world, a messenger or mediator,<sup>46</sup> it can be gathered that Philo regards it as in intermediary power, a nexus between God and the world. The Logos is "sent to Earth" and gives men their intellect and hope, and provides a safe harbour for the struggles of their ephemeral existence.<sup>47</sup>

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ous powers of the Logos are known on different levels. The essence of God is obscured, and the Logos, its extension or intermediary force, as part of the divine reality, gets more and more difficult to grasp, the further people's cognitive capabilities are from their summit. Namely, at the peak of knowledge, people grasp the powers as unity, then, as the level of understanding descends, people know the Logos as Creative power, and the ones beneath know it as Regent power, continuing with those incapable of intelligible levels and limited to the sensible sphere (*Fug.* XVIII, 94-95; *Abr.* XXV, 124-125; *Fig.* V, 20-21).

There are, nevertheless, ways to perceive God, and Philo distinguishes between an inferential mode and a direct mode: as long as the mind is present (shines and hovers around), "pouring a noontide light into the whole soul", there is no need for external stimulation, there is no inspired prophecy or a "heaven inflicted madness" while we are shone upon by divine light (*Her.* LIII, 264-265). The theme of light, prevalent in his treatment of knowledge, like in Plato, continues: people have an impression of the existence of God, because he reveals it himself. Like the sun shines light, and thus light is like its product or consequence, so God, "being his own light, is perceived by himself alone", as there is no other being which would be able of, or entitled to pure comprehension of his existence, and yet, some men manage to arrive at the real truth that forms "their ideas of God from God, of light from light" (*Praem.* VII, 45-46).

Referring to *Fug.* 45-49, where Philo interprets the six cities of refuge as a gradation of six intermediate entities between the Deity and humanity, Winston writes that the different entities represent the same being (the Logos) seen from the perspective of six different levels of cognition (Winston, *Philo of Alexandria*, 24).

<sup>46</sup> See, for example "... God was the cause, not the instrument; and what was born was created indeed through the agency of some instrument" (*Cher.* XXXV, 25); God has given to his most ancient Word a pre-eminent gift, to stand between Creator and created, serving continually as a suppliant to the immortal God on behalf of the mortal race, and as an ambassador sent by the Ruler to the subject race (*Her.* XLII, 205); the Word stands in the midst between the Lord and the people, neither uncreated like God, no created like the people, in the middle of the two extremities, like a hostage, in fact, to both parties, as it secures the whole race from revolting entirely and guiding the created, so that it can be confident in the mercy of God (*Her.* XLII, 206).

<sup>47</sup> It is doubtful, remarks Williamson, if we should do justice to Philo's view of the Logos if we described it as an intermediary, for to regard the Logos as an intermediary in the proper and fullest sense would involve a departure from the Jewish view of God as a living God, himself active in the world and history - a step not taken by Philo. Williamson emphasises: the Logos for Philo is God's Logos, the incorporeal Word or Thought of God, not a distinct and separate being having its own divine ontological status, subordinate to God (Williamson,

Philo's anthropology functions under the banner of the understanding of the Logos as divine component that implants its seed within men,<sup>48</sup> which could also mean that men are partially included within or participate in the Logos. This is clear also from the fact that man was created in the likeness and image/imitation of the Word and is allied to the divine reason, having been copied from its nature.<sup>49</sup> If we consider the Logos to be the Son of God, then all men are sons of God (the Logos is the image of God, and in *Genesis* man is created in the image of God). However, the Logos makes men become sons in the true sense of the word, if they follow the life of reason, repent and strive for salvation.<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, as it was shown, men who intensely participate in the divine Logos by virtue of their rationality,<sup>51</sup> behold the Logos, and even gaze on the One (The Existent, God),<sup>52</sup> although the limitation remains: men who wish to know God by seeing him are not permitted, and are instead diverted to see its Image, the most holy Word.<sup>53</sup>

Moses is also a speaker for God, a “revealer of truth” and lessons, he functions as a reporter for the words of God. Also, he is seen as a design archetype, similar to Adam,<sup>54</sup> and is considered as sublime as a man can be.<sup>55</sup> This would mean that the link be-

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*Jews in the Hellenistic World – Philo*, 107). Williamson finds, nevertheless, that the thought which was perhaps uppermost in Philo's mind when he used the term *Logos* was that of mediation, which makes sense because even if God is seen as transcendent, he communicates through a messenger, through his Thought expressed in a form at least partially available to men's cognitive abilities (Williamson, *Jews in the Hellenistic World – Philo*, 105, 107).

<sup>48</sup> *Her.* XXIV, 119.

<sup>49</sup> *Op.* XLVIII, 139; LI, 146.

<sup>50</sup> *Spec. leg.* IV, XXXVI, 188; *Her.* XIII, 63; *Deus.* XXVIII, 134-135.

<sup>51</sup> Philo tries to emphasise the practical and active aspect of life, remarks Williamson, in *Congr.* 70 stressing the importance of deeds and actions, this being only one of the many passages in which the ethical character of Philonic Judaism is exhibited (Williamson, *Jews in the Hellenistic World – Philo*, 115), with the reassurance that although men are not perfect, they possess their Leader's Divine word.

<sup>52</sup> *Op.* VIII, 31.

<sup>53</sup> *Conf.* XX, 97.

<sup>54</sup> On the relation between man as heavenly, an image of God, and the creation of the empirical man relegated to the empirical, sensible world, in the context of the Logos as the image of God, man as the image of the Logos, and man as a whole being an image of God, possessing Godlike qualities, see A. J. M. Wedderburn, “Philo's 'Heavenly Man'”, *Novum Testamentum*, Vol. 15, Fasc. 4 (Oct., 1973): 301-326, especially 310-312.

<sup>55</sup> Marco Nobile, *Teologia dell'Antico Testamento* (Torino: Elle Di Ci Editrice, 1998), 207.

tween the Logos and Moses is much more complex than between the Logos and any random man, because Moses can be seen as a type of the Logos, and on certain levels deified. The wise Moses was under the divine spirit of wisdom for a long time,<sup>56</sup> and is defined as a chief priest,<sup>57</sup> and blessed by an unsurpassable blessing, the greatest honour, instructed by the sacred oracles of God in everything that related to the sacred offices and ministrations.<sup>58</sup> The depiction of Moses throughout Philo's work is so majestic, it leads to questions whether he was deified,<sup>59</sup> thought of as a special incarnation of the Logos, or as being a Logophany,<sup>60</sup> some raised (and answered) by Philo himself. Enjoying a partnership with the Maker of all, Moses basically had the honour of bearing the same title, for he was named *god* (without a definite article) and *king* of the whole nation, and entered the darkness where the God was.<sup>61</sup> The distinction between god without an article and with an article is like the one between the Logos as second God and (the) God. Moses is God's interpreter, a divine prophet,<sup>62</sup> and the name *God* is a prerogative assigned to him. Moses himself is shown as the divine word guiding and rescuing men from the material, sensible and earthly, thereby functioning as (a manifestation of) the Logos. God is essentially nameless,<sup>63</sup> and Moses and the Logos are alike in the sense that they are multi-named.<sup>64</sup> If Moses is Logos incarnate, then the Logos is personal in this respect, as well as in the respect of him being personal as the Son of God, or high priest. The Logos has some aspects of personification, but is never fully personalised – while there might be an incarnation of the Logos in the life of Moses, it is a case of divinisation of a human

<sup>56</sup> *Gig.* XI, 47.

<sup>57</sup> *Her.* XXXVIII, 182.

<sup>58</sup> *Mos.* II, XIII, 67.

<sup>59</sup> Some think that it is well known that Philo deified Moses - see Crispin Fletcher-Louis "4Q374: A Discourse on the Sinai Tradition: The Deification of Moses and Early Christology," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 3 (1996): 242, though some agree that the deification of Moses in Philo is a deeply contested issue, especially seen as Philo seems to both clearly assert and strongly deny it, depending on which passages one highlights - M. David Litwa, "The Deification of Moses in Philo of Alexandria", *The Studia Philonica Annual* 26 (2014): 1.

<sup>60</sup> Williams, *Jews in the Hellenistic World – Philo*, 116.

<sup>61</sup> *Mos.* I, XXVIII, 158. For instance, Moses's ascent to the intelligible world on Sinai was the culmination of his philosophical vocation, if he is labelled as a (Platonic) philosopher, having the necessary prerequisite for being one, namely, a philosophic soul (Litwa, "The Deification of Moses in Philo of Alexandria", 9).

<sup>62</sup> *Mos.* II, XXXV, 188.

<sup>63</sup> *Mut.* II, 11.

<sup>64</sup> *Conf.* XXVIII, 146; *Mut.* XXII, 125.

being (the problem of deification of Moses), rather than a Christian idea of incarnation like in Jesus' case.<sup>65</sup>

The Logos is multi-named: second God, Firstborn, Son of God, Eldest of angels, Word, Name, Image of God, Wisdom.<sup>66</sup> Wisdom as form (archetype) is a paradigm for earthly wisdom; human intellect, or the terrestrial virtue of humans is a copy, a representation of the heavenly.<sup>67</sup>

The Logos is also connected to “manna”, for Wisdom sent by God supplies the souls filling them with Manna. Manna is a generic thing coming indirectly from God. The most generic is God, next is the Logos, and everything else subsists in the Logos.<sup>68</sup> There are many different concepts of the Logos, it was shown - the beginning, the image and the sight of God, the wisdom which is conversant about the things of the earth (as being an imitation of this archetypal wisdom).<sup>69</sup> The Logos is the most universal of all things created, and when interpreted, *manna* means “what?” explains Philo, in the sense that “what” is the most universal of all things (which equates the two), and adds that the word of God is over all the world (and all over the world), and is the most ancient thing.<sup>70</sup> God “implants terrestrial virtue in the human race, being an imitation and representation of the heavenly virtue”, which acts as an assistant against the corruption of souls, an imitation of the heavenly and archetypal wisdom.<sup>71</sup> Knowledge and virtue coincide in a similar fashion like in the case of the extent of knowledge of the Logos which is dependent upon the level

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<sup>65</sup> Unless the “vision divine and superhuman” (*Praem.* 165), in one of the rare passages of eschatology in Philo, Williams warns, is a reference to the Logos in a Messianic role, there is no connection in Philo between the Logos and the Messiah of Judaism, unlike in John, for whom the Logos in flesh is the Son, sort of like in Philo, and an agent of creation, but also the Son of God – the Messiah (Williams, *Jews in the Hellenistic World – Philo*, 118).

<sup>66</sup> Wishing to keep close to the scriptural modes of speech, Philo needs to clothe his philosophic thought in scriptural imagery: Scripture speaks of the word of God and the wisdom of God, so he calls the divine mind *Logos* and *Wisdom* (*Sophia*), Scripture speaks of the Lord of glory and the Lord of the powers, so he calls ideas (forms) *glory* and *powers*, explains Wolfson (Wolfson, *Foundations of Religious Philosophy*, 97).

<sup>67</sup> *LA.* XIV, 43; XIV, 45-46.

<sup>68</sup> Philo writes that it is through the wisdom of God, which being both sublime and the first of things he quarried out of his own powers, that he gives drink to the souls that love him; and they, when they have drunk, are also filled with the most universal manna, “for manna is called something which is the primary genus of every thing” (*LA.* II, XXI, 86).

<sup>69</sup> Additionally see *Mut* XXII, 125; *Somn* XXXVIII, 2.254; *QG* III, 40.

<sup>70</sup> *LA.* III, LXI, 175.

<sup>71</sup> *LA.* I, XIV, 46.

of perfection of the human soul: less perfect men are content with being nourished by parts of the Word (Logos), while the soul of the perfect man is nourished by the whole Logos.<sup>72</sup> The wisdom of God (the Logos), which is the nurse and foster-mother and educator of those who desire incorruptible food (by this Philo means spiritual food for the soul), as the mother of those things which exist in the world, supplies such food, but not all souls are equally worthy of divine nourishment.<sup>73</sup> Wisdom means *the daughter of God*, Philo writes, and then expresses a degree of confusion on the matter that the daughter of God, namely, Wisdom, can also be properly called *a father*, thus finding a problem in the genders: the name of wisdom is feminine (*Sophia*) but the gender (of *word*, of the *Logos*) is masculine. He resolves this by remarking that all the virtues bear the names of women, but have the powers and actions of full-grown men (with the obligatory reminder that the male always has the precedence and the female falls short, and is inferior in rank). However, he carries on, it can be safely concluded, without paying any attention to the difference in the names, that wisdom, the daughter of God, is both male and a father, and that it is that “which sows the seeds of, and which begets learning in souls, and also education, and knowledge, and prudence, all honourable and praiseworthy things”.<sup>74</sup> It seems like the name is feminine, but the nature masculine, which shows a complementarity of principles.<sup>75</sup> Wisdom, all possible confusion aside, is only an-

<sup>72</sup> *LA*. III, LXI, 176.

<sup>73</sup> In a rather poetic language in *Det.* XXXI, 115-117; also in *Her.* XXXIX, 191, an account on the portions of food of the soul: the Logos divides equal portions among all who are to use it, “taking care of equality in an extraordinary degree”, the Manna is allotted prudently, sufficient for each man, so as neither to feel any want or any superfluity; and *Fug.* XXV, 138 – God showers down heavenly wisdom upon all intellects fond of contemplation which are properly disposed for its reception.

<sup>74</sup> *Fug.* IX, 50-52.

<sup>75</sup> Wolfson explains that like in the case of the created Logos, God is called *the Father of Wisdom*, and, while Wisdom, unlike the Logos, is not called the *son of God*, it is called the *daughter of God*, because both in Greek and in Hebrew the word for wisdom is of feminine gender, bearing in mind that wisdom is said to be called also *father* because it begets learning in souls (Wolfson, *Foundations of Religious Philosophy*, 256).

The Stream from God, in the form of Wisdom, can be found centred in the female principle, explains Goodenough. Philo would not have had far to look for the Jewish counterpart of this conception: it was right at hand in the Jewish Wisdom who had become *Sophia* in Greek. One representation of the connection is that the Father produces Sophia, which flows out in a river that is “generic virtue” diverging into four streams, the four cardinal virtues of intelligence, control, courage, and justice. Sophia, while the daughter of God, is both male and female, and so has the masculine power of scattering the seeds of intelligence and



other word for Logos, used in all the senses of the term *Logos*. The Logos is an eternally begat “product” of God’s essence, and, being an essence of God, is eternal. If essence is seen as a property, then, the Logos is a property of God, and so is Wisdom. The Logos is real, intelligible and created before the world, like Wisdom is. The Logos is not merely a property of God, but God’s exteriorised function in the world, it operates immanent to the world, and as such wisdom it is not transcendent, but actively involved in the matters of the world and the earthly intellects.<sup>76</sup>

The Logos has so many definitions, functions and intertwined meanings, many of which simultaneously complementary and discretely disjunctive, that deciding which best describes its power and role in the world proves to be a rather difficult task. When the field of definition is as broad, narrowing it down to just a couple of primary meanings would increase precision, but would also unjustly reduce the lavishness of the varied concepts, robbing them off their importance. Logos-speciation is a demanding endeavour, and unless one is ready to choose a definition to be presented as most suitable, thereby overshadowing all others, the multi-named, manifold, pluriperspective approach remains as interesting as ever.

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noble conduct, of begetting these, in human souls. If God is the Father of the Universe, Sophia is the Mother, but also God is the husband of Sophia and the source of Sophia. Goodenough also underlines that God and Sophia are mutually sources of delight to each other. The relations of Sophia to the Logos are subsequently also very complex, he finds, seen how Philo speaks of the Highest Divine Logos as the source of Sophia and a few paragraphs later, of the Sophia as the mother of the Divine Logos (Goodenough, *By Light, Light*, 22). For identification between the Logos and wisdom see also M. Barker, *The Great Angel, A Study of Israel’s Second God* (SPCK: London, 1992), 115.

Cox finds it a bit confusing that at times Philo calls Sophia the mother of the Logos and at times he claims the Logos dispenses Sophia, still finding this semi-conflation instructive if not overly satisfying to systematising minds, and concluding that there does not appear to have been a generally accepted view about this intermediary realm, and that it seems that the concept was (and still is) in flux (Cox, “By the Same Word”, 114).

<sup>76</sup> Wolfson reminds us that in the light of all the various uses of the terms *Logos* and *wisdom*, if we do happen to come across certain passages in which Philo does not seem to be treating these two terms as identical, we must not at once accuse him of inconsistency (Wolfson, *Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy*, 258).

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS TO PHILO'S WORK

- Abr. De Abrahamo* (On Abraham)
- Aet. De Aeternitate Mundi* (On the Eternity of the World)
- Agr. De Agricultura* (On Husbandry)
- Cher. De Cherubim* (On the Cherubim)
- Conf. De Confusione Linguarum* (On the Confusion of Tongues)
- Congr. De Congressu Eruditionisgratia* (On the Preliminary Studies)
- Decal. De Decalogo* (On the Decalogue)
- Det. Quod Deterius Potiori insidiari solet* (The Worse attacks the Better)
- Ebr. De Ebrietate* (On Drunkenness)
- Flacc. In Flaccum* (Flaccus)
- Fug. De Fuga et Inventione* (On Flight and Finding)
- Gig. De Gigantibus* (On the Giants)
- Hyp. Hypothetica/Apologia pro Iudaeis* (Apology for the Jews)
- Jos. De Josepho* (On Joseph)
- Leg. De Legatione ad Gaium* (On the Embassy to Gaius)
- Leg. All. Legum Allegoriarum* (Allegorical Interpretation)
- Mig. De IifigrationeAbrahami* (On the Migration of Abraham)
- Mos. De Vita Mosis* (Moses)
- Mut. De Mutatione Nominum* (On the Change of Names)
- Op. De Opificio Mundi* (On the Creation)
- Plant. De Plantatione* (On Noah's Work as a Planter)
- Post. De Posteritate Caini* (On the Posterity and Exile of Cain)
- Praem. De Praemiis et Poenis* (On Rewards and Punishments)
- Prov. De Providentia* (On Providence)
- Quaest in Quaestiones et Solutiones in Genesin/Gn* (Questions and Answers on Genesis)
- Quaest in Quaestiones et Solutiones in Exodum/Ex.* (Questions and Answers on Exodus)
- Her/Quis Het. Quis rerum divinarum Heres sit* (Who is the Heir of Divine Things?)
- Deus/Quod Deus. Quod Deussit Immutabilis* (On the Unchangeableness of God)
- Quod Omn. Quod omnis Probus Libersit/Prob.* (Every Good Man is Free)
- Sac. De Sacrificiis Abelis et Caini* (On the Sacrifices of Abel and Cain)

*Sob. De Sobrietate* (On Sobriety)

*Som. De Somniis* (On Dreams)

*Spec. Leg. De Specialibus Legibus* (On the Special Laws)

*Virt. De Virtute* (On the Virtues)

*Vit. Cont. De Vita Contemplativa* (On the Contemplative Life)

*Questions and Answers on Genesis and Questions and Answers on Exodus* have survived only in an Armenian version.

*Apology for the Jews* and *On Providence* are fragmentary works which survive as quoted by the ancient church historian Eusebius.

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