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**PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA, PARADIGM FOR  
INTERRELIGIOUS AND INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE**

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**Key words:** Philo, Alexandria, dialogue, intercultural, intrereligious, exegese, allegorical.

Philo of Alexandria (approximately 20 BC-50 AD) represents a key character of the inter-testamentary period. Important representative of the Alexandrian Jewish diaspora of its time, he wrote a work that mostly contains papers of biblical exegese, an exception being a few historical and philosophical texts. Its importance is given by the fact that his work shows a synthesis between the philosophical ideas representatives for the time currents and the Judaic religion, being a sample of intercultural and interreligious dialogue. At the same time, his works inspired a few Christian writers, that have taken his ideas without reserves.

The Philonian synthesis represents today the object of some developed research, that have been imposed by the opportunity of the retrieval of the relation between the Hellenistic culture and the primary Christianity precedent. In Romania its writings are partially translated, and the Romanian theological research often appeals to his work, that is exclusively written in Greek. Constantin Daniel and Dumitru Abrudan are authors that have opened the field of Philo's work in the Romanian theology, in which today we find an increasing interest. The imperative of a Philo's work general research is sustained by a significant reporting to the theological research in general, as to the lack of a synthetic work in Romanian language devoted to Philo. Also, a methodological necessity imposes. Because Philo's work is vast, and to return the exact context of its writing we have little informations, it is necessary for our research to cover the essential aspect, that it has been, for the posthumous readers, a paradigm for achieving a type of dialogue, subsequently applied in the same space of Hellenistic cultural values by Christian authors.

The first part of this research presents Alexandria as an area of intercultural and interreligious dialogue, phenomenon associated with city development in all

aspects of its founding. Attraction they exert on the elites of the Hellenistic city was due to cultural institutions based here under the Ptolemaic patronage, on which the Library was highlighting. Economic life of the metropolis has attracted people of different ethnic groups, which in time would forget their mother tongue, and speak Greek. It is the case with the Jews of Alexandria, who, like Jews throughout Hellenistic Egypt, constituted a community formed by successive migrations. As religious, sovereigns have promoted syncretism, a phenomenon that started from the initial coexistence practitioners Egyptian religion with those of the Greek, while the formalization of the god Serapis cult, which is assigned a mixed descent, considered the heir of Greek gods and the Egyptian, would give another dimension Alexandrian dialogue in a place where a specific ethnic or religious group became increasingly difficult to preserve. Jews, despite the fact that Greek-speaking reached, preserve their identity through Law, as to a special status that they received in the city, that members of a politeuma, community holding a certain autonomy. Prosperity of this community would lead to a cultural expression, on which the synagogues had a crucial role. The most important moment of intercultural dialogue in which the Alexandrian Jews were captured is the translation of the Pentateuch in Greek, The Septuagint version, during the reign of Ptolemy the Philadelphus (283-246 B. C.) The importance of timing related to multiple meanings, as Alexandrian Jews were now able to conduct worship in the language they speak, and the academia of the city would recognize their cultural heritage that time. At its turn, Septuagint has evidence of the Hellenistic values influence into Hellenism-Judaism dialogue. However, a biblical literature, with fundamental Hellenistic influences, would be born in this place. Philo of Alexandria, unique case among other authors, work was submitted, being appreciated for its synthetic value, but also for practical reasons, its apologetic sequences about Judaism inspiring the Christian apologists. Member of an important family, related to the descendants of Herod the Great (74-4 B. C. AD), Philo of Alexandria wrote very little about him, although recorded in detail the most important political moment in which he was involved, Caius Caligula embassy (39 AD), essential point for the restitution of Jewish political relations with other ethnic groups in the city, especially in the context of new political domination of Rome (from 30 B. C.).

Philo's work is vast, with a various content. We were sent to thirty-six titles, while catalogs are reported lost work units. Also, there are writings that are assigned

by tradition, and being corrupted by transmission in the Armenian language or Ethiopian, have a pseudo-philonian status. We find, following scriptural essay, being eighteen works that comment on the first part of the book of Genesis, ten are treated on the prominent figures among biblical texts or legislative sphere, two are collections of questions and answers on topics from Genesis and Exit. Only two escapes in the field of historical writing Bible study, as a series of five treaties whose paternity was part of contestants. There were written only in the Armenian language the chronicles called Antiquities, treaty Animalibus and some biographies.

Transmission was due appreciation of his work of writers such as Pantene, Clement, Origen and Eusebius, and their use as a model of biblical commentary by several Church Fathers and ecclesiastical writers. In Judaism, Philo was found again only in the sixteenth century, after centuries ignored his countrymen, and the first complete edition of his work translated into Hebrew was printed only in 1986.

Beyond these data, Philo was not just a politician, or just an intellectual but a practitioner of his religion, fervently believing in the universality of Judaism vocation. Such a conception can only be developed in Alexandria centuries I BC-I AD, space of dialogue par excellence.

Part II includes an analysis of philosophical concepts in terms of which Philo commented Law. Going through his teaching we find two sources of his thesis. First, Jewish monotheism, the basis of his theological system, then concepts borrowed from Greek philosophy, required for presentation of premises such as radical distinction between God and creation, divine abyss or intermediary divine creatures issue. For correct assessment of these influences and their implications, the first chapter of this part will expose the philosophical environment of the first century AD Alexandrian. The most important aspect of this is eclecticism, manifested by a series of endless borrowing concepts rival systems, in a mixture not once incriminated by Philo. However, his theological views recorded influences of stoicism, pitagorism and Platonism. Further, the presentation will focus on acquiring Sophia Stoic conception, on describing Pythagorean numerological considerations on the origin, and the frequent recourse on Platonic dialogue Timaeus. I will then make a digression in actuality, appealing to a dispute of the twentieth century, the center of which is about a vision of Russian Sophianism, on a feminine principle of Trinity, condemned by the Russian Church, in using the neo-Platonic terminology and stoic, which turned and

Philo.

Theological content of his work involves a vision in three registers: uncreated, created intermediary, created. Philo is considered to be the first recognized operator with negative theology specific concepts (divine incomprehensibility, divine darkness) and also the father of the creature Logos theology. Logos theory is the most important sequence of the philonian thought. Multiple instances of a divine creatures, in contact with the world issues are elaborations of intermediation quaestion. Philo's Judaism was then concerning of reconciliating divine immanence with transcendence. St. John used this concept in the strict sense of the word, only by biblical inspiration, while Philo was inspired more by Plato. We can not talk about Philo's influence in the writings of St. John. Philonian creatural Logos influenced but some Christian conceptions, especially subordinationism or Arianism. Philo, however, proved to be only the chronicler of local cultural and religious dialogue, exceeded the total development of Christianity, but also foreign guilt inspiring these heresies. However, Philo expose the distinction between Being and the works of God, developing a theology of divine powers work as intermediaries, field appreciated in Christian theology, and systematized by St. Gregory Palamas. Finally, using the concept of Spirit of God, the meaning of inspiration Stoic, he describes, quite meteoric, the divine intervention of a personal nature. On creation, the fundamental thesis is the understandable opposition-sensitive, especially in the field of anthropology.

Philo's theology is a flexible form of biblical revelation granting the philosophical terminology.

Part III aims to identify intercultural and interfaith dialogue notes between Judaism and Hellenism in Alexandria, based on evidence about the religious practices of Jews confesed by Philo, but also on his scriptural exegesis. The first chapter, „Law between the imperative and dialogue” is reserved for describeing religious practices of the Alexandrian Jews, and other peoples perception about them. Circumcision, food laws and Sabbath were practices that other people associate mosaism with. On religious holidays described by Philo, very special is connotation of Easter celebration just in Egypt by a community of Hebrew. Here Philo argues, by the allegorical interpretation of sacred text, the universalism of Judaism, but also to discover the spiritual significance of the elements of historical invoice rendered by the biblical text. Moses centrality in the work of Philo goes to a transient asociation of its Logos, and

apologetic discourse of Judaism based on the primacy of Moses as legislator recognized by other cultures. Law was an opportunity for dialogue with other cultures, as long as Jewish concepts were not to disrupt the political ordering (appropriate day of rest, which could be the occasion for freedom nostalgia for the slaves) or Caligula's madness hit not in the essence of Judaism, monotheism (failure of negotiations of Philo with it is the example of failed interreligios and intercultural dialogue).

Exegesis of Holy Scripture text is Philo's favorite exercise, for which he confesses, have more to than for political life. Bible Commentary uses procedures taken from the texts of Homer and Hesiod exegesis, where allegory is considered more valuable than literal exegesis. Discovering hidden passages of Scripture connotations are part of the bill mystical development (God`s face symbolise His Essence, while His back define His works around the world, light is created before the sun for people do not worship the sun- clear reference to the god Ra cult ). This will make career in Christian exegesis, many fathers and ecclesiastical writers using it successfully. There is a hierarchy in Philo and the biblical model, in which Moses is holding the highest status.

Finally, I appeal to two works in which the Judeo-Hellenistic perspective dialogue is obvious.

First, double vocation of dialogue in Philo`s vision, vertical, in which divine intervention interrupted human sin monologue, then horizontally, based on the call to universality of the Judaism, treated in *Confusion linguarum* . Then a clear vision of Hellenistic origin in *De congressu eruditionis gratie*, on the importance of preparatory culture to acquire true wisdom, expressed through allegory of Abraham and Agar intimacy, symbolizing propedeutic education, as intermediate stage in the acquisition of true wisdom, symbolized by Sarah.

Philo was, above all, a faithful Jew of his ancestral faith. Correspondence of his thesis with the ideas of the Christians writers is justified in terms of attendance the same Hellenistic cultural environment. He did not submit anything concrete about Jesus. In Alexandria, he was not a brilliant personality, as one of the Neoplatonic exegetes of Scripture. The key on transmission and recognition of his thesis lies in his conception of the universality of Revelation.

On the other hand, the mission of Christ's apostles it lacked , in a first phase, cultural character. Flexible form of Judeo-Hellenistic synthesis that we passed it is the

merit of his originality. Filon is a model of intellectual and successful politician, a missionary and mystic, the traditionalist and innovative, the spiritual and material wealth, the Old Testament scholar and lover of wisdom and culture alike. It would be an incalculable waste if today's theological study would not stop on him. Only that he should be evaluated as what he meant, a paradigm for interreligious and intercultural dialogue.

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