## Information Structures in New College MS 143 Codex of Philo of Alexandria

Among the many manuscripts held at Oxford is a large Greek codex containing works composed by Philo of Alexandria (c. 20 BC–c. 50 AD).<sup>1</sup> A member of a very wealthy Jewish family, Philo received a thorough Greek education, including a deep knowledge of Plato and other philosophers, which he leveraged for his unique interpretation of Jewish scripture in Greek, specifically the Pentateuch.<sup>2</sup> As part of my research for a commentary on his *De congressu eruditionis gratia* (typically rendered in English as 'On Mating with the Preliminary Studies') for Brill's Philo of Alexandria Commentary Series (PACS), I had the opportunity to look at images of *Oxoniensis Collegii Novi* MS 143, a Greek manuscript consisting of 396 folios and dating from 1533 that contains 38 works (or portions of works) of Philo (see below, Table 1: Treatise order in MS 143).<sup>3</sup>

MS 143 has not received substantial attention in scholarly circles. Leopold Cohn was one of the earliest scholars to critically evaluate MS 143, concluding that the first part was copied from MS H (Marcianus gr. Z. 40) and that the second half was a copy of MS B (Marcianus gr. Z.41).<sup>4</sup> For this reason, MS 143 was thought to be unnecessary to include in the critical apparatus for the now-standard critical edition of Philo's works by Leopold Cohn and Paul Wendland.<sup>5</sup> Although this perspective has been rightly challenged by James Royse in a previous issue of this journal,<sup>6</sup> more work is still needed to fully understand the manuscript as a physical entity.

In this article, I evaluate a few features of the codex, specifically its two *pinakes* (i.e., table of contents, sg. *pinax*) and the scribe's practice of labelling treatise order in the first half and not the second. By reading these two features through the methodological framework of lists and knowledge structures, we gain insight into how Philo's treatises in MS 143 were received and understood by its earliest readers.

## PINAKES

One of the most interesting aspects of MS 143 is that it is a combination of two groups of Philo treatises that come from different manuscript families.<sup>7</sup> Although the compilation of what came to be MS 143 is not known, it appears that this book is a secondary binding of two already-completed codices.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> For an overview of the life of Philo, see Jenny Morris, 'The Jewish Philosopher Philo', in Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C.–A.D. 135)*, revised and edited by G. Vermes, F. Millar, M. Black, and M. Goodman, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1973–1987), III.ii, 809–870, and, most recently, Maren R. Niehoff, *Philo of Alexandria: An Intellectual Biography* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> For a discussion of his corpus, including the treatises that have survived primarily or exclusively in translation (e.g., Armenian and Latin), see James R. Royse, 'The Works of Philo', in Adam Kamesar (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Philo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 32–64.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> On the acquisition of MS 143 by New College through Reginald Pole, see Jonathan Woolfson, 'Reginald Pole and his Greek Manuscripts in Oxford: A Reconsideration', *The Bodleian Library Record* 17 (2000), 79–95. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19 restrictions, I was unable to come to Oxford as planned. However, I would like to thank Christopher Skelton-Foord and Suzannah Bridge for their assistance. Funding for manuscript images was provided by the Scottish Research Council.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Leopold Cohn, 'Die Philo-Handschriften in Oxford und Paris', Philologus 51 (1892), 266-75, at p. 272.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Leopold Cohn and Paul Wendland (eds.), *Philonis Alexandrini opera quae supersunt*, 6 vols. (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1896–1915).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> James R. Royse, 'Philo of Alexandria at New College', New College Notes 13 (2020), no. 4, at pp. 2, 5-6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Cohn and Wendland place Marcianus gr. Z. 40 in Family H and Marcianus gr. Z.41 in Family B.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> The first part provides clear quire numbering and short notes at the beginning and end of bundles (respectively) (cf. ff. 3r, 10r, 18r, 26r, 34r, etc.).



Image 1: New College Library, Oxford, MS 143-quire bundles

There is good evidence for this position identified by other scholars (e.g., handwriting, text-type, etc.),<sup>9</sup> and they are further supported by features that have received insufficient attention. First, there are two *pinakes* in the volume, one found on f. 3r, giving the contents of the first half, and the other on f. 187r, containing the contents of the second (see Images 2 and 3, respectively). Second, the visual spacing differs between the two codices combined as MS 143. As can be seen in Image 3, the title of the *pinax* is very close to the top of the page and the treatise titles are very near to the spine, creating an imbalance of margin spacing that continues until the end of the volume. Third, some writing appears to be cut off at the top of f. 187r (see Image 3), implying that the original codex was trimmed to fit the current binding.<sup>10</sup> As a result, it is best to view MS 143 as a combination of two previously discrete codices. This results in three distinct production layers: 1) the writing of part two; 2) the writing of part one, the scribe of which selected treatises based on those in part two; and 3) the binding of the codex, which we now call MS 143.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> The first half is apparently written by Arsenius, bishop of Monembasia, whereas the second is probably written by Bartolomeo Comparini. Howard L. Goodhart and Erwin R. Goodenough, 'Manuscripts of Philo,' in Erwin R. Goodenough (ed.), *The Politics of Philo Judaens: Practice and Theory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1938), pp. 139–53, at p. 148.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Cut of writing is also witnessed on the subsequent page.

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Image 2: New College Library, Oxford, MS 143, f. 3r

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Image 3: New College Library, Oxford, MS 143, f. 187r

If MS 143 is a combination of two codices, having two *pinakes* could be expected and does not represent an intentional division of material by a singular scribe. Viewed through the lens of knowledge structuring, however, the two *pinakes* function in a particular way allowing the reader to view MS 143 as two individual manuscripts or as one newly formed piece. Tables of contents, placed at the beginning or end of a manuscript, act as a frame for the reader in order to represent the content of the whole book. Pinakes are constructed at the end of the process, encoding the macro-level organisational principle of the manuscript that highlights the relationality between texts contained within the codex.<sup>11</sup> The assumption tacitly supported by the *pinax* is that it is complete and is, therefore, representative of the whole. This, however, is not the case with MS 143, in which the first pinax no longer represents the volume's contents.<sup>12</sup> There is no indication in the first *pinax* by the scribe that it is incomplete. This is understandable, given that at the time of its formation, it was complete. However, the act of binding two codices together renders the first *pinax* insufficient. This lack could have been addressed as there is sufficient space on f. 3r (following the first pinax) to include more entries or to signal the existence of another *pinax* that would complete the tally of works. Its absence, although possibly not a conscious decision by the secondary binder, impacts the way that a reader approaches and views the codex.

The signalling of closure to the reader is also confusing in MS 143. Following the final treatise of the first part (f. 181) we have the end of treatise with slightly larger-than-standard flourishes, but no colophon or subscription to the volume (see Image 4). Following this, the next two folia are blank, which would normally indicate the end of the codex. The mitigating element is the size of the volume, which implies that there is more material in the book.

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Image 4: f. 181r

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Sabine Mainberger, 'Musing about a Table of Contexts. Some Theoretical Questions Concerning Lists and Catalogues', in Rebecca Laemmle, Cédric Scheidegger Laemmle, and Katharina Wesselmann (eds.), *Lists and Catalogues in Ancient Literature and Beyond: Towards a Poetics of Enumeration* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021), pp. 19–34, at pp. 31–32. Cf. Roger Chartier, *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors, and Libraries in Europe Between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Another example of an incomplete *pinax* in Philo codices, is BAV Pal. gr. 248.

In contrast, the final page of the second part has the Greek word τέλος centre-justified and bracketed with decoration. Below there is a statement in Latin about the copying of the codex: *Patauii exscriptum anno ab incarnatione Servatoris, et domini nostri IHESV Christi. M. D. XXXIII. Die XXIII. Decembris* (see Image 5).

Paraunjex scriptu amo abin carnatione sernatoris, er domi nostri IHESV Christi. M. D. XXXIII. Die. XXIII. Decembris.

Image 5: f. 399v

## TREATISE ORDER NUMBERING

The above discussion focused on the impact on the reader of combining two codices into one bound book. In this section, we limit our attention to the first volume and interrogate the selection of the treatises as well as the numbering system that the scribe employed to identify them.

The first half of MS 143 contains fourteen treatises: *De humanitate*, *Sacr.*, *Cher.*, *Agr.*, *Migr.*, *Congr.*, *Abr.*, *Somn.* I, *De nobilitate*, *Fug.*, *Plant.*, *Sobr.*, *Conf.*, and *Aet.* If, as Cohn claims, the exemplar for MS 143 was MS H (Marcianus gr. Z. 40), one might assume that the treatises copied in MS 143 follow the order of MS H.<sup>13</sup> However, this is not the full case; the scribe of the first part of MS 143 maintains the order, but copied selectively, keeping certain treatises: *De humanitate* = 4; *Sacr.* = 11; *Cher.* = 12; *Agr.* = 13; *Migr.* = 16; *Congr.* = 17; *Abr.* = 18; *Somn.* I = 20.<sup>14</sup>

De humanitate, Sacr., Cher., Agr., Migr., Congr., Abr., Somn. I, De nobilitate, Fug., Plant., Sobr., Conf., Aet. In a second hand and with new page numbering (see f.187r for second pinakes): Prob., Contempl., De templo, Gig., Immut., Mut., Leg. II, Decal., De circumcisione, De monarchia, De sacerdotum honoribus, De victimis, De sacrificantibus, Spec. III.1–64, Opif., Her., Praem., De exsecrationibus, De fortitudine, De hornicidas, De justitia II, Flacc., Legat.

Table 1: Treatise order in MS 143

1) Opif., 2) Decal., 3) De iudice, 4) De humanitate and beginning of De paenitentia, 5) De constitutione principum, 6) Prob., 7) Contempl., 8) De mercede meretricis, 9) Spec. III, 10) Ios., 11) Sacr., 12) Cher., 13) Agr., 14) Gig., 15) Deus, 16) Migr., 17) Congr., 18) Abr., 19) Her., 20) Somn. I, 21) Praem., 22) De exsecrationibus, 23) De fortitudine, 24) Flacc., 25) Legat., 26-28) Mos. I–III, 29) De nobilitate, 30) Fug., 31) Plant., 32) Sobr., 33) Conf., 34) Aet., 35) Det., 36) Ebr., 37) Migr., 38) Spec. I, 39) Leg. III, 40) De homicidis.

Table 2: Treatise order in Marcianus gr. Z. 4015

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Cf. Giuseppe De Gregorio, 'Filone Alessandrino tra Massimo Planude e Giorgio Bullotes: A proposito dei codici Vindob. Suppl. gr. 50, Vat. Urb. gr. 125 e Laur. Plut. 10, 23', in Christian Brockmann, et al. (eds.), *Handschriften- und Textforschung heute: Zur Überlieferung der griechischen Literatur: Festschrift für Dieter Harlfinger aus Anlass seines 70. Geburtstages* (Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert, 2014), pp. 177–230.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Numbers represent the order of Marcianus gr. Z. 40.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> For the list of treatises, see the manuscript page at the Biblioteca nazionale Marciana <<u>https://portail.biblissima.fr/en/</u> <u>ark:/43093/mdata1fca18280981ea5595d4ac0a25db930e6a5ce163</u>> (Accessed: 31 August 2021).

The selection of which treatises chosen for copying is telling. For example, the scribe of the first part of MS 143 omits *Opif.* (1), *Decal.* (2), *Prob.* (6), *Contempl.* (7), *Gig.* (14), and *Her.* (19), all of which are present in the second part. The exclusion of *Her.* in the first part is particularly telling as the scribe as the order of *Migr., Congr., Abr.,* and *Her.* is prominent and very stable in surviving manuscripts.<sup>16</sup> This avoidance suggests that part one, although placed first, might have been copied secondarily to fill in the gaps from part two in light of the antegraph for part one.

Treatise order is explicitly noted in the first part of MS 143. Following each title, the scribe includes all or an abbreviation of  $\lambda \dot{0}\gamma 0 \varsigma$  (see Images 6–19). Almost every way of writing  $\lambda \dot{0}\gamma 0 \varsigma$  is different. In the first two instances, there is sufficient space in the title line to write the whole word out. However, on f. 26r, the title is slightly longer and so the scribe was forced to abbreviate  $\lambda \dot{0}\gamma 0 \varsigma$  in order to stay within the line length. Beginning at f. 65v (Image 11), there is a different way of writing the  $\lambda \dot{0}\gamma 0 \varsigma$  and its corresponding number: 1) the abbreviated  $\lambda \dot{0}\gamma 0 \varsigma$  is followed by a full stop; and 2) there is no horizontal supralinear stroke over the numbers. These variations could suggest a different scribe, but there is insufficient support to make this claim.

Notably, the scribe of part one placed the term  $\lambda \dot{\rho} \gamma \rho \varsigma$  beside each manuscript title, but only completed the first eight entries. The numbering does not align with the treatise's placement in MS 143, but rather with a different ordering structure; in this case Marcianus gr. Z. 40. *De humanitate* = 4; *Sacr.* = 11; *Cher.* = 12; *Agr.* = 13; *Migr.* = 16; *Congr.* = 17; *Abr.* = 18; *Somn.* I = 20 (Images 6–13).<sup>17</sup> The inclusion of treatise numbers that are in tension with the final production layer of the codex provides a good example of when paratext (scribal contributions that are not directly part of the text being copied, but shape how the text is read) becomes hypertext (the connecting of texts within a manuscript or in different codices). The attribution of treatise number implies to the reader that a 'master list' of Philo's treatises exists and that the scribe of the first part of MS 143 was activating that connection.

Interestingly, the scribe did not fill out any more treatise numbers following *On Dreams* I, even though it was clear from the unfilled  $\lambda \dot{0}\gamma 0$  that the person intended to do so and the last six treatises are numbered in their exemplar, Marcianus gr. Z. 40 (e.g., *De nobilitated* = 29; *Fug.* = 30; *Plant.* = 31; *Sobr.* = 32; *Conf.* = 33; *Aet.* = 34). I speculate that there might be a good reason for these omissions. Of particular interest is what looks like the attribute of K' (= the number 20) to two treatises, *On Mating with the Preliminary Studies* (f. 65v) and *On Dreams* I (f. 100r) (see Images 11 and 13). I suggest that the scribe recognised that they had duplicated a treatise number and stopped to investigate. In this case, it is *Congr.* and the number 17 that are in error as *On Dreams* I is the 20th treatise in the exemplar.<sup>18</sup> This error occurred when the scribe saw a stylised  $\iota\zeta'$  and thought it was a K'.

## CONCLUSION

Cohn's dismissal of MS 143 as a copy (and therefore without value for the construction of the text) has resulted in it being overlooked by Philo scholars. In reality, MS 143 provides insight into the organisational structures that were held by some Philo scribes and the means by which those relationships were encoded. By investigating other Philo manuscripts our understanding of their perpetuation will only deepen. The fluid lives of manuscripts (see, for instance, by the K/Z confusion) and the inherently subjective copying process renders even 'copies' valuable instances of reception

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> See Sean A. Adams, 'Treatise Order in the Greek Codices of Philo of Alexandria: Lists, *Pinakes*, and Manuscripts', forthcoming.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> These treatise numbers were noted by Cohn, but he does not indicate that the treatise numbering stops part way through the first half of the codex. Cohn and Wendland, *Philonis Alexandrini opera quae supersunt*, I, xix.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> In BAV pal. gr. 311, BAV pal gr. 382, and BSB 124 the letters ιζ' are placed to the right of the title, either in the line or in the margin. When comparing this to the codex structure, we can confirm that *Congr.* is the 17th treatise in the volume (Cf. BNM gr. Z.40).

and preservation. MS 143 is representative of 'copies' of two earlier codices, but also remains a distinct entity unto itself as a composite of two prior codices, one of which appears to have been intentionally formed as a supplement to the other, before they were combined into this single manuscript.

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Image 6: f. 4r



Image 8: f. 26r



Image 10: f. 50v



Image 12: f. 81r



Image 7: f. 14r



Image 9: f. 37v



Image 11: f. 65v



Image 13: f. 100r



Image 14: f. 118v



Image 16: f. 136v



Image 18: f. 155v



Image 15: f. 121v



Image 17: f. 150r



Image 19: f. 170v