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The Husband of Philosophy: A Few Observations regarding the Interpretative Tradition on Odysseus and Abraham

Abstract: The paper highlights some related features of allegorical interpretations of Odysseus and Abraham. Both figures were interpreted as souls on a quest. The affinity between exegetical depictions of these quests may have prompted the later synthesis of ancient readings regarding Odysseus' intellectual pursuits. The comparison of Penelope and her maids to philosophy and lesser disciplines influenced Philo's image of Abraham as the husband of wisdom, and the mirror image of Philo himself as the husband of philosophy. There are grounds to question whether Philo's exegesis subsequently formed a background against which Odysseus' pursuits were expounded. Among the similarities between his Abraham and Eustathios' Odysseus the philosopher, the portrayal of these characters as stargazers is the most conspicuous.

Keywords: Odysseus, Penelope, Abraham, Eustathios of Thessalonike, Philo of Alexandria

The twelfth-century archbishop of Thessalonike Eustathios¹ sums up ancient allegorical interpretations of the Odyssey in his monumental Commentary on the poem (*Parekbolai*, 1396.27-35²), stating that Odysseus was interpreted by the ancients as a philosopher, and that Penelope, who was pursued by him, was for that reason understood to be philosophy. The description of Odysseus' wife as *the one being pursued* (διωκομένην) by him is followed by a clarification. She is *the woman desired* (ποθουμένην) by him. Her maids represent inferior arts which have philosophy, the art of arts, as their mistress (δέσποινα). She is the most beautiful, the one in supreme command (ἀρχιτέκτων), reserved for Odysseus alone, that is for the true philosopher (τῷ ὄντως φιλοσόφῳ). With Penelope being unavailable to them, the suitors pursue another relationship (ἄλλης συνουσίας), consorting with the maids, that is they engage with some of the other arts. Prior to this passage we do not see the exegeti-

¹ He was a professor of rhetoric in Constantinople before his appointment to the metropolitan see of Thessalonike. His work on Homeric commentaries span over many years, both in Constantinople and later in Thessalonike, see Cullhed, *Commentary*, 4*-9*. For a general introduction to his life and work see Kazhdan, *Studies on Byzantine Literature*, 115-195, Schönauer, *Eustathios von Thessalonike*, 3*-24*. He is commemorated as a saint on September 20 according to the Orthodox liturgical calendar. About his veneration see Marković, *Култ и иконографија* and collection of papers *Άγιος Εὐστάθιος*, ed. Kontakis.

² Edited and translated by Cullhed, *Commentary*, 122-123.

cal use of the ancient image of Penelope reflecting philosophy interwoven with Odysseus' unrelenting urge to come back home.³ Furthermore, the background discussion that made Penelope into an image of philosophy in antiquity seems to dwell on her as the figure of authority surrounded by lesser figures and on her famous undertaking at the loom, not on her as the object of Odysseus' pursuit. The reception of both characters has been an object of extensive study⁴ and in the following section we will briefly reflect just on those segments of the reception which are pertinent to Eustathios' outline of ancient exegesis. The discrepancy between the outline and extant ancient sources is then discussed in light of peculiar features of Odysseus the philosopher found in other passages of *Parekbolai*.

Philosophy without a Husband: Figurative Analogies pertinent to Eustathios' Outline

The image of the relation between philosopher and philosophy as a kind of love affair goes back to 5th century BC, as Plato's dialogues show. There Eros is identified as a philosopher, defined as being neither ignorant nor wise, but scaling somewhere in-between, and desiring the good and the beautiful that he does not possess⁵. Inclination to, love of, devotion to or striving for wisdom as implications of the compound word *philosopher* may be conceived in different ways, and Plato's influence on the solemn tone of it looms large.⁶ The correlation between consorts and educational pursuits comes up in Plato's work too. The pertinent passage has a negative lover constraining the one he desires. This lover prevents the boy's other relationships (*ἄλλων συνουσιῶν*) in order to prevent the development of his faculties and above all, he keeps the boy apart from the one that would most enhance the powers of his mind, that is he keeps him far away from the divine philosophy (*ἡ θεία φιλοσοφία*).⁷ In a related image philosophy lacks a fitting consort. Ineligible men engage in unworthy intercourse with her and produce bastards.⁸

As for the figure of Penelope herself in Plato's dialogues, her weaving activity is compared to the toils of a soul which is unlike the soul of a philosopher. Rather it is a soul who after disentangling itself from the ties of the body by means of philosophy seeks to indulge in bodily experience again tangling itself up anew.⁹ Eustathios comments extensively on

³ Cf. Buffière, *Les mythes d'Homère*, 389-391, Mactoux, *Pénélope*, 169, Helleman, *Personification of Wisdom*, 45-47, Cullhed, *Commentary*, 380-382 (notes on 1437.18-31 in the apparatus).

⁴ Buffière, *Les mythes d'Homère*, 365-521; Stanford, *Ulysses Theme*; Mactoux, *Pénélope*; Helleman, *Personification of Wisdom*, 33-59; Montiglio, *From Villain to Hero*, García, *El silencio*.

⁵ *Symposium*, 202 d; see also *Respublica*, 490a-b. Cf. Helleman 2009: 42-45 on these and other relevant passages.

⁶ Cf. Burkert, *Platon oder Pythagoras? Zum Ursprung des Wortes "Philosophie"*; Moore, *Calling philosophers names*, 246-256; he examines the early use of the word philosopher in light of similar compounds and concludes it was originally used to dismiss a person as a "sage-wannabe", *Calling philosophers names*, 1-106.

⁷ *Phaedrus*, 239a-b.

⁸ *Respublica*, 496a. Cf. Lucian (2nd c. AD), *Fugitivi*, 9-21, where Philosophy complains about the abuse she suffers comparing her toils to those of Penelope at the loom.

⁹ *Phaedo*, 84a-b.

Penelope's weaving as reflecting reasoning through syllogisms.¹⁰ It has been suggested that he preserves an older interpretation that goes back to 3rd c. BC.¹¹ While that is a possibility, the history of that image seems to involve primarily the notion of *weaving a syllogism*, i.e. it has to do with figurative thinking about this kind of structured reasoning. A thought process was conceived as weaving (ὑφαίνω) already in Homer. Arranging premises according to different patterns (figures) was correlative to entwining of threads; argumentation was an act of interweaving (πλέκω). Therefore, both the web of a spider and that of Penelope could represent the fabric of logic, and both were used to express doubts about its merit.¹² For present purposes it suffices to note that this branch of imagery is likewise independent of Odysseus' figure. It relates to Penelope's activities alone.

To come back to her early reception, Penelope's character received significant attention from another member of Socrates' social circle. Antisthenes of Athens (5th-4th c. BC) is credited with two works which seem to have discussed her: *On Odysseus and Penelope* and *On Helen and Penelope*.¹³ Neither of the two works survives, but references to Antisthenes in Homeric scholia likely derive from these. One of the references explains Odysseus' choice for Penelope over Calypso with the fact that Penelope excelled in regard to her endowments of mind¹⁴ and not those of body, since no one could be superior in appearance to the goddess Calypso. Odysseus' devotion to his wife because of her intelligence is a testimony to his preference of the mind over the body, but in this interpretation Penelope is still a virtuous woman of flesh. Prince suggests a possibility that Antisthenes' treatment of the marriage of Penelope and Odysseus might have included a proposition of a marital union which would entail an attraction going beyond procreation, a bond more sublime and "consummated through philosophy".¹⁵ Her supposition has to do with a differentiation between bodily attraction and the attraction of one soul to another. The attraction between souls implies a union which in Socrates' circle was usually forged between a youth and a senior male seen as capable of empowering the mind of his consort. Socrates himself though describes a female character, Diotima, in the supposed act of broadening his own mind.¹⁶ The teaching

¹⁰ *Parekbolai*, 1437.19–27.

¹¹ Helleman sees Chrysippus as its author, *Personification of Wisdom*, 48–49. She holds that Chrysippus, contesting the views of Ariston of Chios who denigrated the role of logic and preparatory subjects, depicted Penelope at the loom as a symbol of workings of logic that one must understand in order to enter the quarters of mistress Philosophy. Buffière supposes that the source of the interpretation predates Ariston, see *Les mythes d'Homère*, 391. Eustathios' description of Penelope's syllogistic web however echoes terms used in the Late Antique commentaries on treatises on logic and the views on logic found in subsequent Byzantine commentaries on rhetorical textbooks, cf. footnote 57.

¹² Stobaeus, *Anthologium*, 2.2.22 (Ariston); Cicero, *Academica* II, XXIX 95. πλέκειν συλλογισμόν comes up as a common phrase in later commentaries.

¹³ Prince (*Antisthenes of Athens*, 158) points out that his focus on Penelope stands out since Helen was in the foreground at that time. Lost tragedies titled *Penelope* are ascribed to Aeschylus and Philocles.

¹⁴ *Antisthenes of Athens*, T. 188, ed. Prince, alluding to Od. verses 5.216, cf. Montiglio 34–36.

¹⁵ Prince, *Antisthenes of Athens*, 18, 136, 159.

¹⁶ The bibliography on the character is significant, cf. Sier, *Die Rede der Diotima*. Socrates identifies her (rather playfully) as a woman with a prophetic background who taught him about love, i.e. about the nature of philo-

she imparts to Socrates assimilates a philosopher to a lover in pursuit of a beauty that never fades. This pursuit unfolds as a quest for knowledge that ultimately leads upward towards the contemplation of beauty itself.

However, the *comparison* through which Penelope came to personify philosophy is not inspired by Penelope's union with her lover, nor by his famous return, but by the futile pursuit of the ones who desired her and failed, settling for her maidservants instead. The comparison rests on Penelope's commanding presence as a sought-after but unattainable female. There are many attributions of the comparison¹⁷, but in all cases it solely involves the relation of the suitors to Penelope; the figure of the husband who attains her is beside the point, unlike in the *Parekbolai* passage. Penelope parallels philosophy as opposed to her maids who stand for inferior disciplines. Diogenes Laertius (3rd c. AD) comments on the use of this comparison¹⁸ and attributes it to Aristippus (5th-4th c. BC). Those who are introduced to the usual fields of higher studies (τῶν ἐγκυκλίων παιδευμάτων¹⁹), but remain ignorant of philosophy are said to resemble (ὁμοίους) Penelope's suitors. They get the handmaidens, but they are not able to marry the mistress herself. The reports about Ariston of Chios (3rd c. BC) further support the idea that this comparison presupposes a sole focus on the female hierarch and her subordinates (to reflect the relation of philosophy to types of lesser education). He is said to have used the same simile²⁰, but Diogenes in the cited passage on Aristippus ascribes to Ariston an analogous remark in which the role of the one who fails to accede to philosophy corresponds to none other than Odysseus himself. He is said to have seen and met with nearly all the dead in the underworld, but he did not behold the queen herself.

In Pseudo-Plutarch's treatise *On education of children*, usually dated to the beginning of the 2nd c. AD, the same comparison is credited to Bion of Borysthenes (4th-3rd c. BC). There suitors mingling with the maids correspond to the students who bring themselves to rot away (κατασκελετεύουσι) lingering with unworthy disciplines, because they are

sophical pursuit, while in another of Plato's dialogues *Aspasia* (*Menexenus*, 235e) figures as his supposed teacher of rhetoric. Both women are in a way depicted to reflect a form of art: Diotima - the art of mediating between gods and men which has much in common with Socrates' views of philosophy, and *Aspasia* - the art of rhetoric.

17 The comparison appears as a saying ascribed to Gorgias (*Gnomologium Vaticanum*, 166), Aristippus, Aristotle, Ariston, Bion. See analysis of the chronological layers in the "saying" in its different renderings by de Rijk, 'Ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία', 83-84, who takes note on variations in wording.

18 Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae philosophorum*, II 8.79 2.8.79-80: ...τοὺς τῶν ἐγκυκλίων παιδευμάτων μετασχόντας, φιλοσοφίας δὲ ἀπολειφθέντας ὁμοίους ἔλεγεν εἶναι τοῖς τῆς Πηνελόπης μνηστῆρσι: καὶ γὰρ ἐκείνους Μελανθῶ μὲν καὶ Πολυδώραν καὶ τὰς ἄλλας θεραπαίνας ἔχειν, πάντα δὲ μᾶλλον ἢ αὐτὴν τὴν δέσποιναν δύνασθαι γῆμαι. τὸ δ' ὅμοιον καὶ Ἀρίστων: τὸν γὰρ Ὀδυσσεῖα καταβάντα εἰς ἄδου τοὺς μὲν νεκροὺς πάντας σχεδὸν ἑωρακέναι καὶ συντετυχηκέναι, τὴν δὲ βασίλισσαν αὐτὴν μὴ τεθεῆσθαι.

19 The development of the concept of a specific general program of education (including basics of different disciplines usually enumerated as grammar, rhetoric, dialectic, music, geometry, arithmetic and astronomy) is dated in the 5th century, but the relating terms probably came to be used at a significantly later period, see Fuchs, *Enkyklios paideia* (RAC); Christes, *Enkyklios paideia* (NP).

20 Those resembling suitors are committed to general studies, but disregard philosophy, Stobaeus, *Anthologium* 3.4.109: Ἀρίστων ὁ Χίος τοὺς περὶ τὰ ἐγκύκλια μαθήματα πονομένους, ἀμελοῦντας δὲ φιλοσοφίας, ἔλεγεν ὁμοίους εἶναι τοῖς μνηστῆρσι τῆς Πηνελόπης, οἱ ἀποτυγχάνοντες ἐκείνης περὶ τὰς θεραπαίνας ἐρίνοντο.

incapable of attaining to philosophy (μη δυνάμενοι κατατυχεῖν).²¹ The wording²² brings to mind the heap of bones of rotten men around the Sirens (Od. 12.45-46). In Plutarch's treatise concerned with education guidelines are given on how to approach the study of poetry without endangering the students' goal of attaining to philosophy. A stance that poetry should not be shunned but engaged with discerningly is illustrated by the image of Odysseus who found a way to expose himself to Sirens to his advantage.²³ Therefore, both the suitors and the skeletons around Sirens might be taken to represent students that do not reach philosophy out of their own ineptitude or through misguidance.

A philosophy textbook from 6th c. AD also ascribes the use of analogy between Penelope and philosophy to Aristotle.²⁴ The testimony is usually linked to the passage in which he discusses the hierarchy of branches of knowledge and the one discipline that is above all others, but without specific reference to Penelope and the Odyssean setting.²⁵ At one point, wisdom is described as the knowledge with the most power and authority (ἀρχικωτάτη καὶ ἡγεμονικωτάτη), whose position other kinds of knowledge, like bondwomen (ὡσπερ δούλας), cannot rightfully contest. An engagement with a subordinate discipline is portrayed more respectfully than the tone of the allusions to Penelope's maid-servants would allow for. Eustathios' outline which has Penelope as an "architect" betrays a firm connection to the reception of this description of the supreme knowledge by Aristotle. In later commentaries on *Metaphysics* wisdom, the mistress of the other disciplines (δέσποινα τῶν ἄλλων ἐπιστημῶν), is "the most architectonic" (ἀρχιτεκτονικωτάτη), the one whose supremacy comes from the understanding of the whole through the understanding of the ultimate end.²⁶ Thus a commentary on Gregory of Nazianzus, probably written towards the beginning of the 12th century²⁷, refers to Aristotle for the use of the adjective *architectonic* for philosophy in the sense of its supremacy over other disciplines. In the Alexandrian introductions to philosophy from the 5th and 6th c. Aristotle is also credited with a definition of philosophy as *the art of arts and the discipline of disciplines*.²⁸ The first of the two phrases applies to Penelope in Eustathios' outline, and the first recorded use of it describes wisdom in the work of Philo of Alexandria.²⁹

²¹ *De liberis educandis*, 10.7.

²² It is uncertain whether this choice of words is made by the unknown author of the work (Pseudo-Plutarch) or possibly by Bion himself. Kindstrand deems that κατασκελετεύουσι fits Bion's expression, *Bion of Borysthenes*, 188-189.

²³ *De audiendis poetis*, 15d.

²⁴ Elias, *In Porphyrii isagogen*, 21.6-10.

²⁵ *Metaphysica*, 982a1-19, 996b9-26 (in the preceding lines he mentions Aristippus' derogation of mathematics); the turn to philosophy ensues as a flight from ignorance; philosophy is the only knowledge that enjoys freedom (μόνην οὖσαν ἐλευθέραν τῶν ἐπιστημῶν) in the sense that it is free from serving a need, 982b19-27. Cf. Helleman, *Personification of Wisdom*, 43-45.

²⁶ Alexander of Aphrodisias, *In Aristotelis metaphysica commentaria* (2nd-3rd c. AD), 14.3-15.5; 184.14-27. The phrasing appears in later 6th c. commentaries too.

²⁷ Macé - Andrist, *Elias of Crete's Commentary*, 201-205, 216-219.

²⁸ φιλοσοφία ἐστὶ τέχνη τεχνῶν καὶ ἐπιστήμη ἐπιστημῶν, e.g. Ammonius, Elias, David.

²⁹ *De ebrietate*, 88-89. Cf. Hofer - Piper, *Retracing the "Art of Arts and Science of Sciences"*.

The Husband of Philosophy and his Pursuits: Exegetical Background of Eustathios' Outline

From these well-known instances of such imagery it is clear that Penelope corresponds to philosophy in relation to her maids who reflect the inferior arts, with the aim of highlighting those who miss out on the opportunity to commit to philosophy. All of it though appears as part of figurative expression in the extant texts and remains at the fringes of the discussions, which do not deal with the interpretation of the *Odyssey*. The point in which it crosses from a level of productive reception into Homeric exegesis has not been established. However, the derivative treatment of these motifs which reshapes them into an exegesis is found in the interpretation of Abraham, Sarah and Hagar by Philo³⁰ whose writings belong to the first half of the 1st c. AD. There we have the focus on the prominent figure of the husband, and a positive reading of the engagement with the maid, Hagar, to whom his wife sends him (Genesis 16:3). Through Abraham both of those he pursues are defined. Sarah stands for wisdom defined as knowledge of all divine and human things, and their respective causes. For Philo wisdom and philosophy are not synonyms³¹, but the definition of wisdom he alleges is treated as a definition of philosophy in the cited 6th c. philosophy textbooks of which Eustathios is aware³². Hagar is interpreted as a positive figure, a symbol of ancillary intellectual pursuits³³, with which one should engage for a limited time out of obedience to philosophy. In Philo's interpretation one has the sense that it is not a person, but marriage (the assiduous commitment to wisdom) that portrays philosophy. In any case, the marital union stands here for the pursuit of philosophy and unlike in the older comparisons of philosophy to Penelope, the husband is not peripheral to the discussion, but central. Philo's interpretations of Abraham's migrations, as well as the explicit and implicit self-references distinguishing his exegesis, may be more significant for the image of Odysseus in the *Parekbolai*, as will be noted below.

The extant writings on Homer's poetry and on Homeric problems (relating to the allegorical accounts of the gods), composed after the time of Philo and before the end of 2nd c. AD³⁴, do not interpret Penelope as philosophy. In these works Odysseus is celebrated for the disposition of his mind, of course, but not in quite the same way as in *Parekbolai*. The ingenuity of Odysseus is of a kind that provokes diverse readings of his character. Antisthe-

³⁰ *De congressu eruditionis gratia*. esp. 1-14, 71-80. Cf. Helleman, *Personification of Wisdom*; Bos, *Hagar and the Enkyklios Paideia*. The above highlighted Aristotelian colouring of the *Parekbolai* passage seems all the more pertinent, since Bos suggests that Philo's exegesis likewise might be taking cues primarily from Aristotle. Cf. Borgen, *Exegete for his time*, 163-165, on how the tension between paganism and Judaism reflects on Philo's view of preliminary studies and how it differed from the stance of his stoic contemporary.

³¹ He compares the marriage of Abraham and Sarah to his marriage to Philosophy, but in another sense philosophy is a maidservant of wisdom, *De congressu eruditionis gratia*, 79-80.

³² *Parekbolai*, 1421.31-32.

³³ Phrasing varies, cf. *De congressu eruditionis gratia* 11: γραμματικῆ, γεωμετρία, ἀστρονομία, ῥητορικῆ, μουσικῆ, τῆ ἄλλῃ λογικῆ θεωρίᾳ πάσῃ; 20: τῆς μέσης παιδείας, 23: ἡ ἐγκύκλιος μουσικῆ πᾶσα, etc.

³⁴ Pseudo-Plutarch, *De Homero*, cf. Hillgruber, *Die pseudoplutarchische Schrift*, 75-76; Heraclitus, *Quaestiones Homericae*, cf. Pontani, *Eraclito*, 9-13.

nes, mentioned earlier, commended the intelligence of Odysseus, denounced by many as self-serving, and argued for his virtues. He is the figure that chooses the next life most wisely and mirrors Socrates in Plato's myth about the after-life. His actions in the *Odyssey* come up as paradigms in discussions of different philosophical concepts, types of knowledge and ways of living.³⁵ Different thinkers opted to invoke some of his traits or deeds as either positive or negative examples. Homeric exegesis appropriated the figural content from these debates. Teachers of grammar and rhetoric were content to portray Odysseus' demeanour as anticipating (or inspiring) notable teachings of various philosophers, while disregarding their often conflicting tones. In such writings Odysseus is a rational man, the wisest and the most prudent, a man whose virtues lie in his soul and not in his appearance or status,³⁶ a man of learning and exploration.³⁷ However, the role of a philosopher is not attributed to Odysseus but rather to Homer.³⁸ The poet was understood to have had his own philosophy³⁹ which he conveyed through his verse. He is presented as the source of doctrines which later philosophers expounded, and as the first to philosophize (φιλοσοφῆω) about issues belonging to physics and ethics.⁴⁰ Hence, the poet is seen as outdoing those who profess to be philosophers, and Odysseus is depicted as the instrument of his philosophy.⁴¹ Although Homer and his versatile hero were often fused together as an object of either criticism or praise,⁴² the explicit appellation of Odysseus as a philosopher still escapes notice prior to Eustathios' vast synthesis of previous Homeric scholarship.

In summary, it is only in *Parekbolai* that we finally see the full implications of the Penelope/philosophy parallel, where it is developed into an interpretation of Homer's verse which links it with the whole of Odysseus' quest to return home. Apart from Penelope's commanding presence as a sought-after but hardly attainable female, her web seems to have been another important attribute that made her a suitable personification of philosophy. The image of her weaving and unweaving the web was an image influential in its own right, instigating an independent line of reception. We may conclude, that these discern-

³⁵ Montiglio, *From Villain to Hero*.

³⁶ *De Homero*, 1401 (ἔμφρων ἀνὴρ), 1610 (σοφώτατον καὶ φρονιμώτατον), 1622-1629.

³⁷ Heraclitus, *Quaestiones Homericae*, 70.6, 70.8, 70.9.

³⁸ E.g. Heraclitus, *Quaestiones Homericae*, 24.1, 26.3, 34.8, 35.9, cf. Pontani, *Eraclito*, 27. On the other hand see Heracles as ἀνὴρ φιλόσοφος in *Quaestiones Homericae*, 34.3.

³⁹ Cf. esp. Heraclitus, *Quaestiones Homericae*, 48.5, 60.1.

⁴⁰ *De Homero*, 1738-1739. Unlike Heraclitus who emphasizes the allegorical nature of Homer's expression which needs to be interpreted accordingly in order to understand Homer's idea, the unknown author of this treatise has a wider focus. In the section concerned with philosophical theories, his primary intent is not to interpret those of Homer, but to trace the seed of every imaginable theory in Homer. The text also lacks the enmity towards philosophers which seem to provoke the bitter reaction of Heraclitus. On that and other peculiar features of Heraclitus' *Homeric Problems* see Pontani, *Eraclito*, 32-40.

⁴¹ That would be the part of his philosophy which concerns virtue, Heraclitus, *Quaestiones Homericae*, 70.2.

⁴² Montiglio, *From Villain to Hero*, 124-126, to the examples cited one may add Proclus, *Ad rem publicam*, 110.18-21, who takes Odysseus and Nestor to be mouthpieces of Homer. Montiglio thinks that "idealized image" of Odysseus, recognizable already at the beginning of the Imperial period, made him into a philosopher (p. 124), with Plutarch being the significant patron and promoter of that image (pp. 128-146).

ible influences on the interpretation of Penelope as philosophy do not corroborate the view that the ancients defined *what was pursued* (τὸ διωκόμενον) in relation to *the pursuer* as Eustathios notes in *Parekbolai*.⁴³

He suggests that τὸ διωκόμενον is a term used in this example. The object of the pursuit (τὸ διωκόμενον) and the agent of the pursuit (τὸ διώκων) appear as terms in Aphthonius' textbook. They characterize a relationship rather more questionable than that of a husband going back to his faithful wife, that of Apollo and Daphne. The famous mythical episode was an example used for exercises in *refutation* and *confirmation*.⁴⁴ Apollo's longing for a woman introduces an aspect that does not add up with his godly status. The *confirmation* of the story was thus more complicated than its *refutation*. Certain meanings are attributed to different parts of the story with no particular regard to the way they fit together. The following motifs seem relevant and they form parts of a rather incoherent whole: the poet who said that Daphne was the beloved of Apollo was 'philosophizing' (φιλοσοφῆω); Daphne is a supreme beauty; since beauty is the gift of the gods, one can say that beauty has a god as a lover; Apollo loving Daphne stands for the pursuit of virtue⁴⁵; his experience of longing, of pain and toil speaks to the nature of the seemingly endless pursuit, not to the nature of the god himself. The object of the pursuit is reassessed because it reflects unfavourably on the god to chase a girl. Nonetheless, the agent of the pursuit loses his singular character and is depicted as the generic pursuer of virtue.

As previously noted, the ancient testimonies point to two separate strands of imagery – the one referring to Odysseus' ordeals as emblematic for paths in life, and the other comparing the failure to win Penelope with the misguided choice of not pursuing philosophy. The two strands were tied together for the purpose of the interpretation of the broader Homeric storyline. The linkage in the *Parekbolai* follows the pattern of remodelling the object of a pursuit when it reflects badly on the pursuer. The case of Odysseus and Penelope alone does not quite fit the pattern. Its use in that instance, presumably, has more to do with the synthesis and elaboration of the ancient tradition in a way which allows for a story about Odysseus' marital and extramarital intellectual pursuits.

The end result in the *Parekbolai* has the husband, the philosopher, pursuing his wife, philosophy, and during the pursuit spending time on other exploits *as a philosopher*, meaning that he always overcomes the challenges they pose to the main pursuit. He engages with poetry and turns to contemplation (Sirens) but as a political philosopher (πολιτικός φιλόσοφος) he knows not to disregard the betterment of his community.⁴⁶ He tackles, phil-

⁴³ "... they characterize what they call the object of the pursuit from the pursuer (... χαρακτηρίζοντες ἐκ τοῦ διώκοντος ὃ φασὶ τὸ διωκόμενον)." Cf. footnote 2.

⁴⁴ Aphthonius, *Progymnasmata*, 5, 6. Apollo's chase of Daphne appears also in exercises in *narration* and in *speech in character* (Libanius, *Progymnasmata*, 2.17; 11.11).

⁴⁵ The verb διώκω implying a vigorous seeking after something difficult to attain or reluctant to be caught makes good sense in the Apollo story. It suits well the ancient idea about a lover praying on the object of his yearnings. The motifs evoke Plato's philosopher - the lover of beauty and there are traces of other philosophical concepts in what seems as a halfhearted attempt at allegorical interpretation.

⁴⁶ *Parekbolai*, 1707.42–1709.30.

osophically, cosmic observations and theories about the celestial spheres and their motion, and overcomes them (Cyclops).⁴⁷ He engages with celestial phenomena and their effects (Calypso) as a stargazing philosopher (ἀποτελεσματικός φιλόσοφος) but prefers to come back to a philosophy that conforms to rules and methods (Penelope)⁴⁸. The interpretation of the Sirens episode in *Parekbolai* has an almost essayistic character. It elaborates on the ancient reflections on Sirenic lore of poetry, lore of learning and lore of contemplative life on the whole. The exegetical background is extant and well known.⁴⁹ The antecedents of astronomical interpretations of Cyclops and Calypso are however obscure.⁵⁰ An etymology that takes the compound *Cyclops* as meaning ‘eying circles’ rather than ‘circular eye’ supports the reading according to which his character stands for observing the circular forms of the celestial order (such as the zodiac belt, the celestial equator, the tropic circles and the rest). The names and nature of his mythological ancestry is taken to point to the features and nature of celestial motions. Odysseus, we are told, tackles such theories philosophically and prevails. The source of the Calypso interpretation is also unclear. Her name in this reading references the heavenly cover enclosing the earth from above and holding everything together, the shell of the universe. As the offspring of Atlas – that is of the axis which “holds” the heavens and which is inferred from contemplation and study of the heavens, she represents the speculations that such observations and concepts bring forth. The inspiration could have come from the involvement of a different hero, on a philosophical route of his own, with the daughters of Atlas (the Hesperides).⁵¹ This involvement had earlier made Heracles into an authority on celestial matters. His dealings with Atlas were subject to rationalizations early on⁵² and notes on Calypso in *Parekbolai* include these too.⁵³ The encounter was explained as one of gaining knowledge. The heavy weight put on Heracles’ shoulders by the barbarian Atlas was the weight of knowledge about stars, heavens and ways to predict happenings on account of it. The ancient tradition of explaining mythical narratives as naïve or corrupted descriptions of natural phenomena and historical events gained new momentum with the broadening of the interest for astronomy and the transmission of the new knowledge through an enormously popular hexameter poem by Aratus.⁵⁴ However, widespread interpretations of mythical narratives in light of astronomical speculations are one thing, while similar interpretations of Homer’s poetical intent are quite another. The latter seem to have been in circulation by 1st c. AD.⁵⁵ But apart from

⁴⁷ *Parekbolai*, 1392.58–1392.62.

⁴⁸ *Parekbolai*, 1389.63–1390.6.

⁴⁹ Buffière, *Les mythes d’Homère*, 382–386; Wedner, *Tradition und Wandel* (chapters dealing with ‘reproduzierende Rezeption’, esp.157–165).

⁵⁰ Cf. Pontani, *Speaking and concealing*, 51–52; Cullhed, *Commentary*, 99, notes in the apparatus.

⁵¹ Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, 4.27.

⁵² Herodorus of Heraclea, Fr. 24a (Clem. Alex. Strom. 1.15.73.2), cf. Moore, *Heracles the Philosopher*.

⁵³ *Parekbolai*, 1390.23–28.

⁵⁴ Cf. Mastorakou, *Aratus*.

⁵⁵ Cf. Broggiato, *Interpretazioni antiche*, 66–70. Demo, a known name of an unknown biography usually dated to 4th or 5th c. AD (Ludwich, *Die Homerdeuterin Demo*, Pontani, *Sguardi su Ulisse*, 87–88), was already active by then according to Savio, *I frammenti dell’erudita Demò*. The interpretations ascribed to her concern

the question of the individual astronomy- and astrology-related interpretations of Cyclops and Calypso, the question remains when did they get tied up in this way with Odysseus' homecoming. There are different ways to weave in the interpretations in the fabric of the poem. If these indeed stem from interpreters prone to astrological tradition and astronomical theories⁵⁶, it is doubtful that persons of such inclination would be likewise responsible for the shadow of the inimical and belittling stance towards such speculations that can be discerned in the *Parekbolai*. When did the sublime image of Odysseus gazing at the stars become a side-pursuit with ominous overtones signifying a dalliance to be ended for the sake of the only true philosophy? The *Parekbolai* depicts Odysseus immersed in the heavenly beauties in the place where he has arrived, yet striving to return back to the philosophy from which he set out and without whom there is no philosophizing (οὐκ ἔστι φιλοσοφεῖν). The philosophy he most desires (ποθεῖ) is said to be methodical and rigorous (μεθοδικήν καὶ κανονικήν). The characterization of Penelope as philosophy distinguished by methods and rules is reminiscent of a curious description of rhetorical exercises. Namely, according to an introduction to Aphthonius' *Progymnsamata*, his textbook has its place in the domain of philosophy.⁵⁷ It does not pertain to either the theoretical or to the practical part, but rather falls between the two, since it pertains to the methodological and instrumental (μεθοδικὸν καὶ ὀργανικόν) part, i.e. the part concerned with logic. For it teaches rules and methods (κανόνας γὰρ καὶ μεθόδους διδάσκει). Eustathios taught rhetoric and logic and, apparently, from the students' records one would be led to believe that his students were instructed by Aristotle himself.⁵⁸ It is also worth having in mind that the rhetorical treatment of the model story for reinterpretation of the *pursued* and the *pursuer* – that of Daphne and Apollo – was subject to syllogistic analysis in the Commentary on Aphthonius written by John of Sardis.⁵⁹ Aphthonius' refutation of the storyline is described in terms of *weaving syllogisms*.⁶⁰ This ninth-century guide implies that teachers of rhetoric were supposed to be proficient in the famous art of Penelope. In like manner, Eustathios deemed that this art constituted the fabric of philosophical achievements, including his very own.⁶¹ Understanding

astronomical and cosmological motives in Homer among which is the interpretation of Otus and Ephialtes as natural philosophers (φυσικοί φιλόσοφοι, *Scholia in Lucianum* 24.23.) engaged in astronomical calculations, cf. Savio, *I frammenti*, 254, 430-448.

56 Cf. the extolling tone of Heraclitus' remark about Odysseus astronomical knowledge indispensable for sailing with regards to the Aeolus episode, *Quaestiones Homericae*, 70.6. Cf. also Palaephatas, *De incredibilibus*, 17, where Aeolus is an astronomer (ἀστρολόγος) who explained to Odysseus matters related to seasons and celestial movements on account of which the winds blow.

57 *Prolegomena in Aphthonii progymnasmata*, 79.18–24. As for dating, Kennedy notes that the text indicates that its author is “a Christian who lived no earlier than the fifth century after Christ and perhaps much later”, *Progymnasmata. Greek Textbooks*, 90–91. On the nature of these introductions which follow certain patterns of systematization typical for the Neoplatonic introductions to philosophy see Kennedy, *Greek Rhetoric*, 116–120. Cf. MacDougall, *John of Sardis' Commentary*, 740–741.

58 Cf. Choniates, *Orationes*, 16.24–31.

59 On the commentator who was bishop of Sardis see Alpers, *Untersuchungen zu Johannes Sardianos*, 39–43; about his recourse to Aristotelian logical tradition see MacDougall, *John of Sardis' Commentary*.

60 *Commentarium in Aphthonii progymnasmata*, 82.3–8. Cf. MacDougall, *John of Sardis' Commentary*, 735–740.

61 Cf. Eustathios' note on his own exegesis as syllogistic weaving, *Parekbolai*, 1437.27–31.

logic appears to be a prerequisite for understanding Penelope and those who do not are not fit to be the husband of philosophy. Eustathios' fitness for the task is not the only likeness between him and Odysseus that he is willing to disclose. This affinity has already been noted with regards to his reflections on his own occupation with Sirenic voices of the past.⁶² The passages on Odysseus facing the Sirens, like a philosopher mindful of his responsibility for society, mirror his own engagement with the erudite voices of his scholarly endeavours, undertaken while abiding by the obligation to oversee and address contemporary issues and affairs. The extent to which his personal inclinations and literary experience may have influenced his account of the earlier exegetical tradition⁶³ remains to be explored.

In this respect, a closer examination of the parallels between Eustathios' Odysseus the philosopher and Philo's exegetical portrayal of Abraham⁶⁴, which here can only be sketched out, might be fruitful. It should be noted that in both exegetical bodies of work, which relate to the texts they interpret in significantly different ways⁶⁵, the allegorical exegesis does not preclude the historicity of the characters (Odysseus and Abraham respectively), nor does it pertain to the entirety of the narrative related to the characters. The allegorical readings, as was usual for the approach in the antiquity, reflect on images of a certain story line and may show no regard for the complexity of the whole story. Likewise, the allegorical readings of both husbands of philosophy are not given as a single, unified account. Their portraits appear in scattered passages, brought about by a certain part of the text that the exegetes are elaborating on. Notwithstanding the personal inclination to these "philosophers" of their exegetical making, both authors are more concerned with various facets of the text they are interpreting in light of their (differently) set out goals than with individual characters of the text.

Philo's interpretation of Abraham as a soul⁶⁶ similar to platonic readings of Odysseus as a soul⁶⁷ (appearing in later platonic texts and in *Parekbolai*) has drawn atten-

⁶² Cesaretti, *Allegoristi*, 224-226; *Echo of the Sirens*, 257-261; Lovato, *The Wanderer*, 225-228.

⁶³ The reshaping of the tradition often proceeds inadvertently. See for instance an example of Eustathios' misrepresentation of Aristarchus' polemics in Nünlist, *Aristarchus*, 106-110; or the case pointed out in Šijaković, *Κύκλον у човјеку*, 150-159, where the ancient interpretation of the inner Cyclops acquires new layers through unobtrusive rephrasing. Principal features of his rather unpredictable approach to sources are surveyed in Pagan, *Eustathios' use of Ancient Scholarship*.

⁶⁴ Cf. Sandmel, *Philo's Place in Judaism*; Runia, *The Place of De Abrahamo*; Adams, *Movement and Travel in Philo's Migration of Abraham*; Adams, *Abraham in Philo of Alexandria*.

⁶⁵ Philo was interpreting Moses who for him stands at the summit of philosophy which he expounds through his exegesis, cf. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria*, 528-546. Unlike Philo, Eustathios is not interpreting the central text of his worldview. The songs of Homer and all the wealth of knowledge the songs subsumed over the centuries before and after Homer could be described in the context of his *Parekbolai* as the scriptures of the art of rhetoric. The main purpose of the vast undertaking is to provide full access to the ancient epics as to a venerable treasure chest and offer authoritative guidance on how to master the use of its inestimable and unfailing treasures for future compositions.

⁶⁶ Philo makes a distinction between his explanations of Abraham's migrations (*ἀποικίαι*) as migrations of the wise man and as migrations of the virtue loving soul, *De Abrahamo*, 68, 88. Cf. Tobin, *The Beginning of Philo's Legum allegoriae*.

⁶⁷ Buffière, *Les mythes d'Homère*, 419-520.

tion to the question as to who came first to be viewed as a soul on a quest.⁶⁸ Whatever the answer, from around 2nd c. AD those two soul pilgrims have a steady presence in extant exegesis, and Eustathios was acquainted with both. Did the resemblance of these journeys in their ancient exegetical depictions influence the synthesis of Odysseus' intellectual pursuits in *Parekbolai*? With Philo's exegesis of the migrations of Abraham we see the first elaborate exegetical use of the philosophical tenets concerning the road of knowledge and virtue employed to interpret a narrative.⁶⁹ The inquisitiveness about the nature of the world and cosmos was in general conceived as a natural philosophical tendency of humans. From this questioning the philosopher proceeds to a kind of higher inquiry regarded as more fundamental.⁷⁰ The way Philo reflects on this and many other concepts of Hellenic philosophers while expounding Moses is a novelty owing to his personal mastery of Alexandrian scholarship and the specific nature of the task he envisioned. His exegesis on the whole is deemed unprecedented with regards to the intricate and elaborate allegorical interpretations which discuss both the author's intent and textual problems.⁷¹

For the discussed *Parekbolai* passages, the representation of Abraham's relationship with Sarah and Hagar, to which Philo gives the parallel of his own marriage to philosophy and extramarital engagement, is most pertinent.⁷² Like Abraham, he too consorted with the handmaidens of philosophy. A captivating account of his personal relation with literature, mathematics and music serves to clarify that all the knowledge he acquired through these handmaidens and all the works he produced with them he put to the service of *his legitimate wife, philosophy*. As long as the husband is not enticed by the charms of the handmaidens to neglect the vows he made to his true mistress (δέσποινα), i.e. as long as he does not allow for the intricacy (γλαφυρότης) and attractive powers of an art (τέχνη) to subdue him (and lead his soul away from her), these pursuits can provide a proper service to philosophy. The experience with other arts in Philo's self-portrayal resonates with the lures imperilling Odysseus' journey home to Penelope. The philosophical pursuit he ascribes to Abraham presents the earliest extant version of the story about a husband of philosophy and his troublesome engagement with astronomy and astrology prior to eagerly attaining to his wife - the legitimate philosophy.

68 It is often supposed that Abraham the soul reflects a preexisting interpretation of Odysseus which did not reach us, cf. Boyancé, *Echo des exégèses*; Alekniené, *L'énigme de la « patrie »*.

69 The exegesis is understood to contain a critic of relevant Stoic views, cf. Alekniené, *L'énigme de la « patrie »*, 28-29; Jousse, *Philo's De migratione Abrahami*. For the exegetical scholarship of his age and social circle see Niehoff, *Jewish Exegesis and Homeric Scholarship*.

70 Cf. Socrates' philosophical route according to *Phaedo*, 96a-97b; Aristotle, *Metaphysica*, 1.982b10-20.

71 Niehoff, *Jewish Exegesis*, 144-145; *Philo of Alexandria*, 2018: 173-191. Cf. Bréhier, *Les idées philosophiques*, 35-60; Pépin, *Remarques*; Dawson, *Allegorical Readers*, 83-126. The mentioned Heraclitus' Homeric commentary which ascribes allegorical design to Homer is far more modest and limited in its approach, cf. Pontani, *Eraclito*, 35-38. Porphyry's treatise on the cave of Nymphs in the *Odyssey* (3rd c. AD) is the earliest sophisticated work of Homeric allegoresis to reach us.

72 *De congressu eruditionis gratia*, 74-78.

Philo's allegoresis starts from the passage in which Abram is called upon by God to depart from his land, kin, and the house of his father to a land that will be shown to him (Genesis 12:1-3). Different places on this journey are then presented as phases of preoccupation with different kinds of pursuit, choices between virtue and vice and a commitment to sublime virtue, which he in the end possesses in a way that makes him recognized as the sage king whose majesty comes from the highest virtues he demonstrates and inspires in others.⁷³ He is a lover of learning and an ardent student of celestial phenomena (ὁ φιλομαθῆς καὶ μετεωρολόσχη⁷⁴). He inquires at length about the celestial bodies, their motion and influence, but then he turns away from contemplation of the cosmos to devote himself to knowledge about the creator of the cosmos.⁷⁵ He thus becomes the philosopher, or rather the sage (ὁ φιλόσοφος, μᾶλλον δ' ὁ σοφός)⁷⁶, fully committed to contemplation of God. The pursuits of Abraham as depicted by Philo correlate with philosophical occupations of different kinds, and the supreme kind, which he full-heartedly pursued, presupposes logic.⁷⁷ His preoccupation with the study of heavenly bodies, which he overcomes and leaves behind⁷⁸ is a prominent theme reappearing in many different exegetical treatises which relate to Abraham.⁷⁹ Philo writes about Abraham's receptiveness to God's word which he follows without hesitation when he leaves behind his family residence in the land of the Chaldeans 'like as if he was returning from a foreign land to his own country, not as though he was about to depart from his own.'⁸⁰ The decisive turn away from the attractiveness of theorizing on the universe ensues upon realizing that the beauty and powers of the heavenly bodies perceived by the sense of sight amount to nothing when compared to the truly sublime perceptions of the mind alone.⁸¹ The motifs of the (inner and outer) eye, eyesight, gazing, blindness and

⁷³ *De Abrahamo*, 260-261; *De mutatione nominum*, 151-2.

⁷⁴ *De mutatione nominum*, 70.

⁷⁵ The change in him and in the nature of his pursuit is, according to the given interpretation, denoted by the name change from Abram to Abraham. For the seriousness and stakes involved in these interpretations at Philo's Alexandria see Niehoff, *Jewish Exegesis*, 122-129.

⁷⁶ The appropriateness of the designation philosopher for a man who contemplates the visible and invisible, virtues and vices, as well as the truly philosophical disposition are discussed in *De specialibus legibus III*, 190-192.

⁷⁷ When comparing the route of Abraham's pursuit with the ancient image of philosophy as a garden (in which the trees and plants, planted for the sake of the fruits, correspond to philosophy of nature, the fences guarding the fruits to logic, and the fruits of the garden to moral philosophy), Philo explains that Abraham turned to the fruits. He refers to the image again in *De Agricultura*, 14-16, where he stresses the importance of logic in terms of destroying seductive false theories.

⁷⁸ By leaving Chaldea.

⁷⁹ E.g. *De gigantibus*, 62-4; *De mutatione nominum*, 69-76; *De cherubim*, 5-7.

⁸⁰ *De Abrahamo*, 62. One might hear in this an echo of a possible reading of Hermes (interpreted as God's word by authors treating Jewish and Greek texts as part of a wisdom canon) coming down to Odysseus at the island of Calypso.

⁸¹ *De specialibus legibus I*, 20. From *De congressu eruditionis gratia* it follows that he studied astronomy for a limited period again later, presumably, in a different fashion keeping in mind the Creator to whom he was previously blind. The engagement with celestial bodies is dismissively described in terms of focusing on the perceptible, worship of it and attributing power to created things as oppose to the Creator of all. Still there exists an affirmative tone in terms of understandable infatuation with the beauties of the cosmos and the order within it since they are

coming out of the darkness feature prominently in explanations of Abraham's relinquishing the science of the Chaldeans. To accommodate the challenge of astrology among Odysseus' philosophical pursuits is not an obvious choice, while in the case of Abraham that is not too much of a stretch. His enmity with the Chaldeans because of their subservience to astrology was a developed theme in historical accounts stemming from Jewish-Hellenistic tradition, and Philo makes exegetical use of it.⁸²

His Abraham is thus a lover of learning who managed to turn away from the celestial beauty and uprightly engage in all studies conducive to his capacity to reach the summit of virtue with Sarah. The philosophy this Alexandrian scholar married Abraham off to was the philosophy of his own teachings. Penelope and her maids, as well as Odysseus, who indulges in erudite sirenic voices with no peril for his main pursuit, undoubtedly dwell in the background of Philo's exegesis. The present analysis of Eustathios' outline of the Odyssey raises the question whether Philo's exegesis subsequently formed a background against which Odysseus' pursuits were tied together as those of a husband devoted to his marriage with philosophy. This might also be relevant for the place given to Odysseus' struggle with stargazing. Moreover, it is interesting that, according to *Parekbolai*, Odysseus abandons theorizing on the sublime heavenly shell, eager to go back to his wife described in terms of the philosophy taught by Eustathios.

The Marriage and the Outward Gaze

In principle, any exegete who knew both bodies of work could have been responsible for interpreting Odysseus' exploits in light of Philo's (auto)biographical account of the marriage with philosophy. Such a one may have even concluded from Philo's Abraham that a similar line of exegesis regarding Odysseus predates him, as some modern scholars are inclined to think. Philo's exegesis of the books of Moses had a wide Christian reception. Excerpts of his work appeared in the Biblical commentaries. Notable writers of the Byzantine era showed appreciation for his intellect, and admiration for the style of his prose, irrespective of their stance on his interpretation of Moses.⁸³ The graphic autobiographical recapitulation of Philo's own philosophical route is echoed in the writings of Eustathios' older contemporary and predecessor at the see of Thessalonike, Basil of Ochrid. He was highly regarded as an intellectual during his lifetime,⁸⁴ and Eustathios likewise praises his works

created to inspire one to wonder and through wondering one becomes a philosopher. Compare e.g. *De Abrahamo*, 57-58 and 69-70. Cf. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria: On the Creation*, 111-112. A similar distinction may be found in Eustathios. He denounces the reliance on astrology of a kind which was extremely popular in his age and which ascribed determining powers to the stars and planets (cf. Kazhdan, *Studies on Byzantine Literature*, 180-183; Bourbouhakis, *Not Composed in a Chance Manner*, 108-109), but he appreciates the celestial beauties (e.g. *Epistolae*, 19.267-271, where he likens a dear addressee submerged in the heavenly beauties of books to Odysseus the stargazer) and the profound structure of the cosmos (e.g. *De emendanda vita monachica*, 11-12, where he admires the holy fathers who named the monastic orders to reflect the order of the universe).

⁸² Borgen, *Philo of Alexandria*, 220.

⁸³ Runia, *Philo in Byzantium*.

⁸⁴ Vasilievsky, *Василия Охридскаго неизданное надгробное слово*, 55-76; Messina, *Basilio Achrideno*, 41-42.

and his personality.⁸⁵ When Basil was asked to clarify the seeming precedence of Hellenic learning over the Gospels, he referred to “Philo the wise” with regard to Abraham who first produced offspring with Hagar and afterwards, nearing his old age, with Sarah, stating that “we first beget offspring from the outer learning and at last and not without toil from the true philosophy, sound and free.”⁸⁶

Philo spoke of the intricacy and attractiveness of Hellenic education, and of his devotion to philosophy practiced through interpretation of the books of Moses. His accounts of the life of Moses⁸⁷ and the life of Abraham both resonate with his own views on the value and purpose behind labouring to acquire knowledge from secondary sources, posited as inferior and foreign to the source of the higher truths honoured in one’s own community. That issue remained relevant for Christians in the Roman Empire too. Many *vitae* of Christian saints tell of the saints labouring to acquire the knowledge amassed in other cultures and excelling in Hellenic higher education and pagan philosophy, all the while remaining true to Christian philosophy.

Eustathios was a monk and one fully aware of the Christian tradition, which saw the monastic pursuit as the pursuit of the true philosophy and Abraham as one of its precursors.⁸⁸ It is in the context of exhorting those who dishonoured their vows and have gone astray from the path of their monastic forefathers that he himself mentions “the sweet Hebrew rhetor”⁸⁹. Like Philo and many Christian authors afterwards, Eustathios too contemplated Abraham’s journey as one of redirecting the outward gaze inwards and pursuing the ultimate destination abounding with blessings beyond the sand of the sea and every heavenly constellation (πᾶν οὐράνιον ἀστροθέτημα).⁹⁰ He assimilates the words Christ uttered to his disciples “Rise, let us go from here”⁹¹ with God’s call upon Abraham that marks the outset of his journey. These words open and pervade the first part of his oration delivered at the beginning of Great Lent – the period which calls upon all Christians to come back to the prime pursuit of their life. It is hard to imagine that Eustathios was unaware of the similarities between Abraham and Odysseus viewed as archetypes of philosophers. Whether this might have influenced his reception of Odysseus and possibly even his account of the related ancient exegetical tradition appears to be a question worth considering.*

⁸⁵ *Sermo* 5. 9-19 (ed. Wirth), cf. Wirth 21-22*.

⁸⁶ *Dialogi Anselmi Havelbergensis episcopi*, 37.5-10. Cf. Aristotle’s description of philosophy cited in footnote 25.

⁸⁷ His portrayal of the life of Moses includes Moses excelling at every subject of *enkyklios paideia* and studying with Egyptian philosophers, Greek teachers and Chaldean astronomers among others while demonstrating the doctrines of philosophy through his actions every day (*De vita Mosis I*, 20-24; 29).

⁸⁸ E.g. *De emendanda vita monachica* 3; 12; 30; 142.1-6.

⁸⁹ *De emendanda vita monachica* 195.13. He refers to Philo’s account of the Essenes, viewed by Christians as akin to monastic communities; cf. Runia, *Philo in Byzantium*, 274.

⁹⁰ *Sermo* 1. 60-64 (ed. Schönauer), dated to the year 1176 (Schönauer, *Eustathios von Thessalonike*, 66*).

⁹¹ John 14:31: Ἐγείρεσθε, ἀγωμεν ἐντεῦθεν.

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