CHAPTER TWO

A HOMILETIC PATTERN

The state of research. Homilies in translation

The preceding chapter showed the way Philo and John wove together fragments from haggadic traditions and words from Old Testament quotations. This investigation prompts a further question: What is the composition of expositions formed from such a method? An examination of this question will show that Mut. 253-263, Leg. all. III 162-168 and John 6, 31-58 all follow the same homiletic pattern.

Before citing these homilies in translation and discussing them, previous investigations in the question of homiletic compositions in Philo and John will be reviewed briefly.

Bousset's thesis is that Philo's exegetical works consist mainly of a Jewish source strongly influenced by secular Hellenistic culture. This source, or rather body of sources, can further be identified as traditions preserved in the form of lectures, dissertations, etc. from a Jewish exegetical school in Alexandria. This scholarly source, however, was reshaped and commented upon by Philo in order to give his works their present form.1

Correspondingly Bultmann holds the theory that a main source in John consists of gnostic revelatory discourses ("Offenbarungsreden"). "The Evangelist" then reshaped and commented on the source. This revelatory source is basically characterized by antithetic parallelism between paired sentences which thus have received poetic form. As parallels to the form used by the revelatory discourse source, Bultmann points to the Odes of Salomon and the Mandean Scriptures.2

As an alternative to the theories of Bousset and Bultmann some scholars have suggested that Philo and John contain sermons and homilies from the synagogue and the Church respectively,3 whereas

1 W. Bousset, Schulbetrieb, pp. 43-45, 153-154, etc.
2 See page 4, n. 3 and Bultmann, Evangelium, p. 2 and n. 5. Cf. E. Ruckstuhl, Einheit, pp. 24 f., where also other characteristics are listed.
3 For such criticism of Bousset, see I. Heinemann in Die Werke Philos von Alexandria in deutscher Übersetzung, by L. Cohn, I. Heinemann, M.
others have advanced this theory quite apart from any consideration of Bousset and Bultmann.\(^1\)

Thus it is surprising that to date no one has made a serious and broad attempt to analyse the structure of such homilies as these. As far as Philo is concerned, H. Thyen has gone so far as to state that it is impossible to identify and single out individual homilies, since Philo so completely worked the traditions together into a unified whole.\(^2\) As for John, the attempt of J. Schneider to analyse the structure of the sermonic meditation in John 6, 27-58 is not convincing. One basic weakness is the lack of comparative material for his study.\(^3\) Thus the question is open for a detailed investigation.

The method of exegetical paraphrase found in Philo and John 6, 31-58 can guide this new investigation. As a starting point the following principle will be followed: The unit which belongs to a quotation from the Old Testament may be traced by examining the extent to which the paraphrase of that quotation goes.

The employment of this principle uncovers the following units: Leg. all. III 162-168; Mut. 253-263 and John 6, 31-58. For convenience in investigation the cited and paraphrased words of the Old Testament quotations (and their immediate Old Testament context) are italicized in the following translation of the three passages:\(^4\)

\(\text{Leg. all. III 162-168:}\)

\(\text{a}) \ 162: \ "\text{That the food of the soul is not earthly but }\text{heavenly}, \text{we shall find abundant evidence in the Sacred Word:}\)

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3 H. Thyen, Der Stil, pp. 8-9: "Philo hat fast alle von ihm aufgenommenen Traditionen sehr stark überarbeitet und einheitlich stilisiert, sodass es nicht mehr möglich ist, durch literarkritische Analyse einzelne ganze Homilien in seinen Traktaten aufzufinden."

4 See above p. 28, n. 3 for reference to Schneider’s work.

4 Concerning Congr. 170-174, see p. 42, n. 1.