The discovery of many Aramaic and several Hebrew fragments of 1 Enoch in Qumran Caves 1 and 4, in conjunction with the importance of this text for other documents of the Qumran community, has led some scholars to the assumption that there was a special, almost sectarian, connection between Enochic literature and the Qumranites. This reasoning is, to a certain extent, natural. As yet, no direct evidence has been found that Hellenistic Jewish groups other than the one at Qumran knew and read 1 Enoch. We do have some fragments of the Jewish Hellenistic historian Eupolemus, but they are very scanty and are not usually taken into consideration in answering the question of how widely disseminated and how significant 1 Enoch was in Jewish society of the late Second Temple period. Even without direct literary support from the period, however, some scholars challenge the sectarian character of the Enochic literature, basing on the arguments from its content.

We have the Greek translation of some parts of the book. The translation is known from one parchment (the Gizeh-Akhmim fragment) that contains 1 En. 1–32, one papyrus (the Chester Beatty-Michigan papyrus)

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3 Ps.-Eup. frg. 1 (Eusebius, Praep. ev. 9.17.1–9) according to C.R. Holladay, Fragments from Hellenistic Jewish Authors, vol. 1: Historians (SBLTT 20; Pseudepigrapha Series 10; Chico: Scholars Press, 1983), 170–175.

that contains 1 En. 97:6–104:13; 106:1–107:3; one tachygraph fragment from the Vatican (Vatic. 1809) containing 1 En. 89:42–49, and partly from a transmission by Gregory Syncellus. The first part of 1 Enoch—the Book of Watchers—has been best preserved in Greek. In fact, some Greek fragments were also found at Qumran, but whether they belong to 1 Enoch is still a matter for debate.

The Greek translation has been variously dated. M. Black believed the translation had been made by Christians, while E. Larson thinks that it dates from the period between 150 and 50 B.C.E. Of course, Christian literary sources are rich enough in allusions to the Greek Enoch, but, for the reasons mentioned above, no literary evidence has been brought in support of an earlier date.

This paper aims to show that the works of Philo of Alexandria can, when studied properly, serve as a reliable source of such evidence. Like many ancient authors, Philo prefers allusions to direct quotations, weaving themes and expressions into the texture of his narrative. It would also be inappropriate to expect that he, commenting upon the Septuagint, and not on 1 Enoch, would prefer particular plotlines of the latter to those of the Septuagint where they differ. Therefore we have to look not for a commentary upon clearly formulated Enochic subjects, but for Philo’s knowledge and use of these Enochic subjects as they are incorporated into his commentary upon the Septuagint.

Assuming that Philo would not have worked with any text but the Greek, I will confine this study to the extant Greek fragments of 1 Enoch and to only two treatises of Philo, i.e. De gigantibus (On Giants) and Quod Deus sit immutabilis (That God Is Unchangeable), which seem to be the most relevant to the Greek fragments.

I will start with an example. The treatise On Giants begins with the description of Noah’s righteousness as against all other people—it is a commentary upon Gen 5:32–6:2. Philo says:

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