Philo's Quaestiones in Genesim have been handed down only indirectly. A considerable number of fragments has been found in the so-called Catenae, in Procopius and in some anthologies. These fragments were edited recently by Miss Françoise Petit in the series "Les Oeuvres de Philon d'Alexandrie", vol. 33. See Vigiliae Christianae 33 (1979) 294-295.

There is, moreover, an Armenian translation of the Quaestiones, probably dating from the 5th century. This translation was edited by J. B. Aucher in 1826, with a Latin translation. In the Loeb series R. Marcus published an English rendering of the Armenian text. In his preface he writes: "For various reasons we can be reasonably sure that the Armenian version has faithfully preserved Philo's meaning except in a few cases where the Greek text used by the translator was corrupt or ambiguous or unusually obscure".

In her excellent edition of the fragments Miss Petit has, on many occasions, made usage of the Armenian version to restore the Greek text in cases where the manuscripts did not give a decisive answer. In this respect the first fragment presents an interesting case. Two of the three manuscripts read olovte, the third oioviav. Because of the Armenian version Miss Petit conjectures oiov re. In the same fragment she makes still another conjecture: she reads ᾱ instead of ἱ, because of the Greek context. Here the Armenian text was corrupt and had to be mended as well.

The purpose of this article is to given a thorough analysis of the text of the fragment, which will lead to the conclusion that the second conjecture has to be accepted but that in the other case the manuscript reading should be maintained.

For the convenience of the reader the three texts concerned follow here in full; viz. a) the Greek text of the fragment as it has been edited by Miss Petit; b) the Latin version by Aucher; c) the English rendering by Marcus.
a) Διὰ τὶ τὴν κοσμοποιίαν ἐπιλογιζόμενος φησίν Μωσῆς· «αὕτη ἡ βίβλος γενέσεως οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς, ὁ δὲ ἐγένετο»;

Τὸ μὲν «ὁτε ἐγένετο» ἀδριστὸν ἑοίκε χρόνον ἐμφαίνειν τοῦτο δὲ ἄστιν ἔλεγχος δυσωπῶν τοὺς συγκεφαλαιομένους ἀριθμὸν ἐτῶν ἀφ’ οὗ τὸν κόσμον οἶον τε γενέσθαι. τὸ δὲ «αὕτη ἡ βίβλος γενέσεως» ἦτοι διεικτικὸν ἄστιν τοῦ ὑποκειμένου τεῦχος δ τὴν κοσμοποιίαν περιέχει ἢ ἀναφορά τῶν εἰρημένων περὶ τῆς κοσμοποίησις πρὸς τὰ ἐπ’ ἀληθείας γεγονότα. (In the last sentence Miss Petit reads ὅ instead of ὅ. This seems to be a misprint and has, therefore, been amended here.)

b) “Quare mundi creationem in mente revolvens ac recensens dicit: Hic est liber generationis caeli et terrae, quum facta sunt?

Illud quum facta sunt indeterminatum atque incircumscriptum, ut visum est, tempus indicat. Hoc autem argumentum erit confutans illos qui suppetunt numerum quendam annorum in unum redactum ex illo tempore quo mundus creari potuerit. Hic autem liber generationis ceu indicativus est libri suppositi, qui mundi continet creationem; ubi innuitur dicta de mundo condito ad veritatem ipsam pertinentere”.

c) “Why, when he (Moses) considers and reflects on the creation of the world, does he say, “This is the book of the coming into being of heaven and earth, when they came into being”?

The expression “when they came into being”, which is undetermined and uncircumscribed, apparently indicates time. And this evidence confutes those who consider it to be a certain number of years summed under one head, during which the cosmos was to come into being. But the expression, “this is the book of coming into being” is meant to indicate a supposed book which contains the creation of the world and an intimation of the truth about the creation of the world”.

The fragment consists of a question and the answer to this question. This is the structure of the present work of Philo, which therefore is often named Quaestiones et Solutiones in Genesim. The answer to this question consists of two parts, each of which explains a part of the text under discussion.

1. The question put by Philo here concerns a statement of the author of Genesis at the end of the creation story, one could say a concluding observation. Philo characterizes Moses’s way of speaking by adding the words τὴν κοσμοποιίαν ἐπιλογιζόμενος.

With regard to the Latin and English translation of the verb ἐπι-