Traces of the Ancient Origin of some Mythic Components in Philo of Byblos' *Phoenician History*

Jordi Cors i Meya – Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

A close reading of the *Phoenician History* by Philo of Byblos (1st-2nd centuries AD), which has reached us mainly via the *Praeparatio euangelica* of Eusebius of Caesarea (3rd-4th centuries AD)[1], provides us with abundant and valuable mythic materials. These materials appear to derive from a –perhaps inappropriate– combination of sources and offer a result which may appear to be inconsistent at certain points. Firstly, as far as the combination of sources is concerned, if we look at the most significant passage in terms of the features described –the part subdivided into two sections known as the "History of Kronos" (the first section) and the "Accounts of Later Rulers" (second section)–[2] we find a large number of details in the narrative, beginning with many proper nouns, which suggest a strong influence of Hesiod's *Theogony*. These names, indeed, and the narrative details we have just mentioned are equivalent or identical in Hesiod's poem, but with the particularity that in the *Theogony* they are incorporated in their true contexts, apparently better placed here than in the *Phoenician History*. In addition, given the prestige and the dissemination of Hesiod's epic, written many centuries before Philo's narrative, the hypothesis of the possible influence of the *Theogony* on the *Phoenician History* is plausible.

However, as regards the apparent occasional inconsistencies, we should first consider the surprising desire of the Phoenician author to stress precisely the opposite of what these findings would lead us to suppose: that the Phoenician sources are older than tbe Greek ones. Accordingly, the Phoenician sources would have been the inspiration for Greek poets (among them Hesiod) who adulterated and misunderstood them[3]. And in this context, we should also note that in spite of the similarities between the *Phoenician History* and the *Theogony*, there are numerous differences as well. Specifically, in addition to the Euhemeristic nature of Philo's account, which speaks directly of kings or sovereigns and not of gods –Euhemerism that was normal at that time and easily interpretable as it has no bearing on the description

1. *Cf.* J. Cors i Meya, *A Concordance of the* Phoenician History *of Philo of Byblos*, Sabadell (Barcelona) 1995: the text, pp. 11-20, and, in particular, the *Preface*, pp. 5-8, esp. pp. 5-6 and nn. 1-5, where the relevant bibliography is also cited. We should add C. Clemen, *Die phönikische Religion nach Philo von Byblos*, Leipzig 1939; G. del Olmo Lete (ed.), *Mitología y Religión del Oriente Antiguo. II/2 Semitas Occidentales*, Sabadell (Barcelona) 1995: by G. del Olmo, "Mitología y Religión de Siria en el II milenio A.C. (1500-1200)", pp. 45-222, and by J. Teixidor, "La Religión Siro-fenicia en el primer milenio A.C.", pp.351-409, esp. pp. 359-363.

2. *PE* [= *Praeparatio euangelica* by Eusebius, a source of Philo's text] 1.10, 15-30 ("History of Kronos") and *PE* 1.10, 30-42 ("Accounts of Later Rulers").

3. See, before the passage we discuss, *PE* 1.9, 27-28; 10, 8, and, inside this passage, *PE* 1.10, 30.39-41.

of the events narrated– we should note above all the variations in genealogy and conduct between Philo's royal characters and their homonyms in Hesiod (even if, in order to simplify and attenuate the differences, we consider all the characters as divine given Philo's Euhemeristic transposition)[4]. In this light, we must decide on one of these two options:

– Either Philo is (at least) inconsistent in his claim that there was a Phoenician influence on Hesiod (and so the claim would be simply a culturally partisan invention –typical of the era, a time of strong national affirmation vis-à-vis the political domination of Rome, and the cultural domination of Greece), because his account would then contain too many important differences for it to have derived from earlier sources which had served as a model for Hesiod's work (our interpretation ignores the manifest presence of Euhemerism, which is of no relevance here and should merely be considered as a particular method of presenting the myth, a method that was characteristic of Philo's time and has no influence on the essence of the events related, as we mentioned above). In conclusion, then, all these aspects would mean that Philo was not only inconsistent due to the excessive number of differences that we have noted, in spite of his intention, but inconsistent above all –if one is to invent an influence that is the opposite of what the narrative data and the chronology seem to indicate– because he did not achieve greater verisimilitude by skilfully distributing similarities and differences: using other sources at the same time he would in fact be adopting, broadly speaking, the Hesiodic schema, but introducing modifications, without taking sufficient care to achieve a consistent result; thus, rather than discredit Hesiod for his relative inability to respect the truth by following the authentic indications of the Phoenician sources, Philo inadvertently draws attention to his own lack of skill, and above all to the inconsistency of the narrative that he offers.

– Or alternatively Philo, in spite of his exaggerated claims in favour of the Phoenician sources, may be right, either partially, or almost totally. First, if this were so, he would be providing us with at least some authentically Phoenician sources, as we can see today in the profound links with the religious and mythic world revealed by the discovery of the Ugaritic tablets (1929), the world of Ugarit in the second millennium BC being a clear precursor of the Phoenician world of the first[5]. Second, we would have to suppose that if instead of inventing systematically –as the above hypothesis conjectured– Philo was at pains to use Phoenician sources –as this alternative suggests– then the set of divine characters who use homonyms of the Hesiodic names and whose genealogy differs from the one that Hesiod proposes in his *Theogony* would also be, at least partly, of Phoenician origin: as in other cases, for specific cultural reasons which are difficult to fathom or due to the presence –apparent or not– of some common features, among the mythic characters identified with the same denomination, the name of one of the Greek gods, culturally prestigious at that time, would have been given to a Phoenician god –or, perhaps, the Phoenician tradition prior to Philo would already have done so– but on this occasion without taking account of the

4. Some examples of genealogical variation: Atlas is the son of Uranos and Ge (Gea) according to Philo (*PE* 1.10, 16), but of Iapetos and Clymene according to Hesiod (*Theogony* [*Tg*] 507-509); Astarte / Aphrodite is the daughter of Uranos and of one of his wives (*PE* 1.10, 16.22), but, according to Hesiod, of the member of Uranos thrown into the sea (*Tg* 188-200); Eros is the son of Kronos and Astarte (*PE* 1.10, 24b), but is one of the three primordial deities for Hesiod, along with Chaos and Gea (*Tg* 116-122); Persephone, Athena and Apollo are children of Kronos (*PE* 1.10, 18a.26), but according to Hesiod, of Zeus and Demeter (*Tg* 912-913), Zeus and Metis (*Tg* 886-900.924-926), Zeus and Leto (*Tg* 918-920), respectively; Poseidon is son of Pontos, son of Nereus, son of Zeus Belos, son of Kronos (*PE* 1.10, 27.26), but, according to Hesiod, Nereus, in contrast, is son of Pontos (*Tg* 233-234), Pontos is son of Gea (*Tg* 131-132) and Poseidon is brother of Zeus and son of Kronos and Rhea (*Tg* 453-457); and, as we will mention later, Uranos is brother and husband of Ge (Gea) (*PE* 1.10, 15-16), but, according to Hesiod, is the firstborn son who becomes her husband (*Tg* 126-128.132-133). As regards the variations in conduct, in Philo's text Kronos, for instance, acts as sovereign, with authority, taking on some of the functions that in Hesiod's text correspond to Zeus.

5. *Cf.* the bibliography in note 1, especially A.I. Baumgarten, *The* Phoenician History *of Philo of Byblos*, Leiden 1981, pp.1-6.

name's genealogical correspondence[6]. Finally, in the light of these two reasons, Philo may have been right in other cases, but without being totally (or at all) aware of it: perhaps by an internal critique of his account we could discover elements of great antiquity, prior to or contemporary with Hesiod, which reflect the use of ancient autochthonous sources, albeit in all likelihood mixed with other later elements, so that Philo, in using them, was perhaps not able to discriminate between them, if it is the case that he actually knew them, and even less so if he was only intuitively aware of their existence.

With the choice between these two alternatives in mind, we will now present the results of an internal critique of the text regarding two of these ancient elements that we have just mentioned. This is not the moment for a detailed analysis of the general opinion of Philo's work among literary and mythic criticism. For centuries scholars were highly sceptical of the objectivity of Philo's defence of the Phoenician cosmogonic and theogonic sources over the Greek sources; this scepticism persisted until the beginning of the twentieth century, and was related to support for the first option. Today, however, the second option is widely accepted, above all since the deciphering of the Ugaritic[7]. I also subscribe to the second option, firstly because of the parallels with the Ugaritic world, but more specifically for the second reason, that is to say the probable presence of an autochthonous Phoenician pantheon concealed behind names of Greek gods. In my view, the existence of such as pantheon can explain many apparent inconsistencies, oversights and errors. I also find the third reason compelling, and will now briefly discuss two elements which are mentioned at the beginning of this paragraph and which argue in its favour.

A first element becomes apparent by the unequal treatment given to one of the characters of royal lineage in terms of naming ("royal", as we said, being equivalent to "divine", due to the Euhemeristic context). The author normally gives each character a single name, habitually Greek[8], but sometimes Semitic[9]; in contrast, instead of this single name, Philo's text offers in many cases two names for the same character, a Semitic name and its Greek equivalent[10]; or sometimes, two Greek names as a possible double denomination, instead of the single name[11] or the equivalent name (so we now have three names, the Semitic and the double Greek equivalent)[12]. In addition, on a few occasions Philo presents the name of the character accompanied by a second complementary name, which is either in apposition or an epithet; normally both are Greek names[13], but it is possible that there is only one Greek one, usually the first[14]; or like many others which have no apposition or epithet, they may also bear a new name as an equivalent, which will be the third name, or they may be the equivalent denomination (second and third names) of the

6. My thanks to Prof. Joan Pagès for his suggestion of the possible presence, behind the homonymy of many of the names of Greek gods used by Philo, of a local Phoenician pantheon or pantheons.

7. In 1929-1930. And also, in addition, since the publication of fragments of the Hurrian-Hittite Kumarbi myths: cf. E. Forrer, "Eine Geschichte des Götterkönigtums aus dem Hatti-Reich", *Mélanges France Cumont, AIPHO* 4 (1936) 687-713. For a good summary of all these opinions see A.I. Baumgarten, *The* Phoenician History..., Leiden 1981, *l.c.*

8. In this note and the following notes about names we quote the names according to the Greek form in which they appear for the first time in the part under discussion (*PE* 1.10, 15-42): Γῆ (15c), Ἄτλαντα (16), Ἀθηνᾶ (18a), Περσεφόνη (18a), Ῥέας (22), Εἱμαρμένην (23), Ὥραν (23), Πόθος (24b), Ἔρως (24b), Ἀσκληπιόν (25), Κρόνος [ὁμώνυμος τῷ πατρί] (26), Ἀπόλλων (26), Πόντος (26), Τυφῶν (26), Νηρεύς (26), Ποσειδῶν (27) and, in plural, τῶν Διοσκούρων (20), Καβείροις (35), Ἀγρόταις (35), Ἁλιεῦσιν (35).

9. Βηρούθ (15a), Βαίτυλον (16), Σάδιδον (21), Συδύκῳ (25), Σιδών (27).

10. Ἑλιοῦμ / Ὕψιστος (15a), Ἥλον, τὸν καὶ Κρόνον (16), Δαγών / Σίτων (16), Μέλκαρθος, ὁ καὶ Ἡρακλῆς (27), Ἀστάρτην / Ἀφροδίτην (32), Βααλτίδι, τῇ καὶ Διώνῃ (35).

11. Τιτανίδες ἢ Ἀρτέμιδες (24a).

12. Μοὺθ / Θάνατον καὶ Πλούτωνα (34).

13. Ἐπίγειος Αὐτόχθων (15b), Ἑρμῆ τῷ τρισμεγίστῳ (17), Ζεὺς Ἀρότριος(25).

14. Ζεὺς Βῆλος (26), Ζεὺς Δημαροῦς (31).

first name –but, out of consistency with the names mentioned that do not have a complement, the equivalent name has to be Semitic if the first is Greek, and vice versa[15].

Only once does Philo give a character three Greek names, the first or principal name accompanied by an epithet and a third name equivalent to the other two: ἐξ ὧν γεννᾶται Ἐπίγειος Αὐτόχθων, ὃν ὕστερον ἐκάλεσαν Οὐρανόν (*PE* 1.10, 15b). The principal name is, in fact, a little used adjective which is substantivized here; it rarely takes the value of a noun and indeed this is the only context in which it plays the role of proper noun[16]; it means "earthly", "which lives / is on the earth". The epithet accompanying it is an adjective that means "indigenous", "native". The equivalent name is a noun meaning "sky", and is the only one of the three denominations that is a homonym of the one used in Hesiod's *Theogony*, which also refers to the god of the sky. What needs to be explained here, then, is not the equivalent name, which we have just seen is homonymous with the Hesiodic name, but the two first names. Both are Greek, both are originally adjectives, and broadly synonymous; it is surprising that one is an epithet of the other, but it is even more surprising that they have a meaning (an intense one, given the mutual support between synonyms) which represents a type of personification of the earth when, in fact, they refer to the sky (as shown by the equivalent name and the continuation of Philo's account)[17]. Above all, it is surprising that they are both Greek (or, at least, it is surprising that the first is), given the advantage of maintaining the equivalent name in Greek as it is a basic point for comparison with Hesiod due to its homonymy: indeed, as we have noted above, if the equivalent has to be Greek, the principal name does not, out of consistency with what appears to be Philo's line of narrative here, i.e., using the equivalent name to offer a cultural approximation, which with the first name alone –in all other cases in a language other than the equivalent name that follows it– may be less accessible, slightly distant or unclear.

In place of the dual Greek name that interests us, then, we would expect a Semitic name, alone or accompanied by another, referring here to the sky (such as *Šamaim*, in Greek, probably, Σάμην –*cf.* Βεελσάμην on *PE* 1.10, 7b), or alternatively no name at all, leaving the equivalent name –homonymous with the one Hesiod uses– as the sole name: this is the case of its wife, the earth, which only has a Greek name, the one that Hesiod uses (Γῆ). So what is the function of the superfluous, unusual dual Greek name for the sky? The reason may be this: perhaps, on the basis of an ancient tradition conceived as autochthonous, (translated into Greek possibly many years before) Philo considers it a genuine denomination for the sky, a name fossilized by tradition, and thus indispensable and inmutable. This is why he presents it, just once, in the form in which it has been passed down to him from his ancestors, from the Phoenician sources; and it is for this reason that it occupies the position that surprised us above, the position occupied in other cases by the Semitic name of the deity, clarified subsequently by the respective equivalent name in Greek. However, he does not appear to understand it fully; it seems to represent the description of a type of personification of the earth, without any manifest relation to the sky. So I believe that this is a small narrative unit of great antiquity, and it is this antiquity that justifies its position here, in spite of its apparent inappropriacy.

15. Ζεὺς Δημαροῦς <ὁ> καὶ Ἄδωδος (31) and Δαγών / Ζεὺς Ἀρότριος (25), but Ἐπίγειος Αὐτόχθων / Οὐρανόν (15b).

16. *Cf.* Tümpel, "Epigeios", *RE* [= Pauly-Wissowa] 11/1, Stuttgart 1907, p. 63.

17. See, before the passage we are discussing (in the passage called "History of Culture"), a name of only two elements, but which is highly comparable: Γῆϊνον Αὐτόχθονα (*PE* 1.10, 12a), with an almost identical meaning of the principal name and the epithet; however, we should note that it is very different: from the context, because it only has two elements (not three) and because it refers to a merely terrestrial character (unrelated to the sky). All this confirms, in other contexts, the system of denomination which, with its variants, Philo uses, as we have seen. *Cf.* C. Clemen, *Die phönikische Religion nach Philo von Byblos*, Leipzig 1939, p. 61; H.W. Attridge - R.A. Oden (eds.), *Philo of Byblos, The Poenician History*, Washington 1981, p. 84 n. 70, which note the similarity between the two denominations we are comparing: see, also, on *Geinos Autochthon*, A.I. Baumgarten, *The* Phoenician History..., Leiden 1981, pp. 169-170.

Now, what is the meaning of this valuable fossilized expression, which is not well understood but is inserted in a very specific place? I think it is a descriptive, concise vision of the role played by Hesiod's personified sky in relation to the personified earth: that which is or lives on the earth, as a native, born of her; i.e., it refers to the son of the earth that also covers her as her husband, living inseparably over her (until, in a later episode, they are separated by their son, Kronos).

If this is the meaning, and if we do not find in Hesiod any indication of a concise denomination of the type we are discussing, only the narrative elaboration (recalled here) of what the denomination includes, we must attribute the origin of the account and of the corresponding concise denomination to a source previous to Hesiod. In this source we will find the narrative element that interests us (the earth is the mother of the sky, which is inseparably united to it, thus including all reality), distantly derived in part from previous sources or narrations (e.g., in the cultural area of Mesopotamia, Tiamat, the feminine aqueous principle, of the partition of the body from which the earth and the sky will emerge –cf. *Enūma eliš*, IV 137ff.– is a deity which is an ancestor of Anu, the god of the sky), with the consequent parallel crystallization of the account in a concise denomination that is similar (or even almost identical) to the one that we know later translated into Greek. Indeed, it must be so, since otherwise there is no explanation for Philo's striking use of a denomination which is apparently contradictory and out of place, and whose scope he does not fully perceive; so there is no justification for thinking that Philo invented it, inspired by Hesiod (although he does not acknowledge it), and summarizing Hesiod's account; nor is it logical that the denomination could have emerged between Hesiod's time and Philo's inside the Phoenician culture (autochthonously, without any sign of a comparable denominative process in the Greek culture!), as a synthesis of the consciously accepted influence of Hesiod.

The most likely possibility, as we have suggested, is that at a time before Hesiod a source emerged (influenced by or dependent on previous works or sources, some of which we have mentioned) with the germ of the account and, at the same time, of the concise name of a character that summarizes the initial conduct; this takes its form, along different channels, in the Greek culture (Hesiod) and in the Phoenician culture of the same time (i.e. the precursors of Philo). Hesiod only transmits to us the account; we do not know if he knew the denomination that we are analyzing; nor do we know if it already existed; in any case, following the same criterion as in the rest of his theogonic narrative, he does not use it, and there is no sign of it until Philo. Philo, in contrast, only transmits the denomination, the expression of the pre-Hesiodic source and which reached the Phoenician culture via a different route, inside a process in which, at an unknown moment, the two adjectives that it comprises were translated into Greek (it was probably a literal translation, i.e., with precise renderings of its components). In addition, Philo evidently knows the account, though we do not know whether he knows it because the source mentioned incorporates the parallel and simultaneous presence of the account and the denomination, or if it is simply via Hesiod, but in any case –ignoring the variations due to the Euhemeristic approach, which are easy to interpret– he does not follow this account, at least not at the crucial initial point (included in the denomination which Philo disregards because, as we said, he respects it due to the weight of tradition without fully understanding it): the sky is first the son of the earth, not the brother (as Philo tells us), before being considered its husband (a later point on which Hesiod and Philo agree)[18].

18. See, however, H.W. Attridge - R.A. Oden (eds.), *Philo of Byblos, The Phoenician History*, Washington 1981, p. 86 n. 82, where they say, without presenting any proof, that the identification of this personification of the earth with Uranos, as Clemen suggests, is probably the work of Philo, and does not come from an ancient source. Indeed, C. Clemen, *Die phönikische Religion...*, Leipzig 1939, p. 61, believes that *Epigeios Autochthon*, due to its terrestrial meaning, cannot be identified with Uranos and attributes the identification to Philo. Both H.W. Attridge - R.A. Oden, *l.c.*, and, more explicitly, C. Clemen, *l.c.*, attribute to Diodorus Siculus the possible inspiration for Philo's use of the deity Uranos to give a name to the sky. Diodorus Siculus (Ist century BC), speaking of the Atlants, explains the denomination of Uranos referring to the sky as a result of the popular admiration

With the result of our analysis and internal critique of this first element, which shows how Philo, probably without realizing, uses or at least has access to certain narrative components from truly ancient sources, older than Hesiod, we will now examine a second element. This is the episode that contains the surprising indication that, after the fight between Kronos and Uranos, in which Kronos ousts Uranos and becomes ruler, he gives their father Uranos' lover in marriage to his brother Dagon (who, from the Semitic sources, we know was an Amorite-Canaanite deity originally identified with El / Kronos and who therefore must act as a type of equivalent or delegate)[19]; Uranos' lover had been captured during the fight, and was pregnant. She gave birth to Uranos' son in Dagon's house, and named him Demarus (*PE* 1.10, 18b-19a)[20]. The conduct reflected (with its elements of warlike confrontation and peculiar family relations) has no parallel in Philo, nor, to our knowledge, in Phoenician literature, nor in Hesiod; in the context we are considering it is a situation without precedent, especially if we add that the account is not in the slightest contemptuous of Dagon, nor does it reflect any idea of vengeance on the part of Kronos in marrying Dagon to a woman who is pregnant by their father[21].

We should first state that there is no coincidence, in this part of the narrative, between the texts of Hesiod and Philo. In a context such as this, with possible or putative influences in either direction, all we can state is that an influence of Philo's source on Hesiod is more plausible than the other way around; it would be more logical to expect Hesiod to simplify a relatively complex question of paternity of the supreme god of the third generation, the god of light and thunder, the Weather-god Zeus, received by tradition via Philo's source, than a significant (and apparently gratuitous) complication of the paternity of the Phoenician god, Demarus, accompanied by a weakening of the figure of this god, on the initiative of Philo himself (with the intervention of his autochthonous sources), taking the simpler, clearer account (as far as the succession is concerned) that Hesiod narrates.

Now, this leaves the situation as it was, because the claim is based on mere possibility, and does not provide proof or indication of any effective influence in one direction or the other. But I think we can approach the question from a different angle. We should ask ourselves whether in this case an account as surprising and relatively complex does not respond, from the Euhemeristic perspective in which Philo decides to narrate his account, to an attempt to rationalize a mythic episode, received by tradition in the Phoenician sources, which is difficult to accept because it is extremely old or possesses elements that appear artificial, unclear or unfamiliar, responding as they do to a foreign sensitivity. If this is the case, which mythic episode is involved? If it is not autochthonous, which culture does it come from, and from which era?

In any case, we have to consider it important because it bears on one of the crucial moments in a theogonic myth such as this, centred on the generations of the first gods, reaching the third generation by

for King Uranos' knowledge of celestial phenomena; when he died, Uranos was deified (*Bibliotheca* III 56, 4-5). See, also, on *Epigeios Autochthon*, A.I. Baumgarten, *The* Phoenician History..., Leiden 1981, pp. 187-188.

19. See, for example, G. del Olmo Lete, "Mitología y Religión de Siria en el II milenio A.C. (1500-1200)", G. del Olmo Lete (ed.), *Mitología y Religión del Oriente Antiguo, II/2 Semitas Occidentales*, Sabadell (Barcelona) 1995, esp. pp. 71-72.

20. For Demarus as an equivalent of Baal, *cf.* J. Teixidor, "La Religión Siro-fenicia en el primer milenio A.C.", G. del Olmo Lete (ed.), *Mitología y Religión del Oriente Antiguo, II/2 Semitas Occidentales*, Sabadell (Barcelona) 1995, pp. 360-363, esp. p. 362; see also M. Pope, *UF* 22 (1990) 500-501, where he proposes that Demarus is a *cognomen*, a title of Baal, based on an analysis of two Ugaritic texts. On Demarus, likewise, *cf.* A.I. Baumgarten, *The* Phoenician History..., Leiden 1981, pp. 195-197.

21. The precedent that we can consider is the prerogative of the King of Israel to distribute the wives of the former king or the dead king (see II Sam 16: 21ff., I Kings 2: 17ff.): This stresses Kronos' role as king of gods (*cf.* C. Clemen, *Die phönikische Religion...*, Leipzig 1939, p. 64, and H.W. Attridge - R.A. Oden (eds.), *Philo of Byblos, The Phoenician History*, Washington 1981, p. 88 n. 93, who also quote, as a parallel, *Tg* 914). It would also distinguish Dagon (see A.I. Baumgarten, *The* Phoenician History..., Leiden 1981, p. 195). But I believe that the context is different, mainly a context of personal possession, and the important factor of the pregnancy does not intervene.

succession, the generation of the god of storm, the Weather-god (normally the supreme god); indeed, it deals with the paternity of this third god, which is essential for the succession. It is for this reason that the episode is respected and, even though perhaps one may not agree entirely with its narrative expression or may not understand its deep meaning or perhaps also –more significantly, above all if it is added to much of what has been said– we consider it as an episode that has no function in the mythic account as a whole as it is presented here, the author does not omit it; indeed, he is at pains to integrate it in the narration; Philo moulds it into the context –even though the action continues to seem complicated– in order that the mythic account should appear reasonable, even though he does not give this episode either a clear meaning or a manifest aim in the thread of the narrative that he offers.

Returning now to the earlier questions, I think that a plausible response to the question formulated above can be given without great difficulty. An ancient, mythic episode, central to the account, but poorly understood perhaps because it belongs to another culture, which must be retained out of respect for tradition, even though the author does not understand what it means or where it is leading and which, finally, may give rise in an Euhemeristic context to a strange account that is difficult to integrate, could be an episode like the following one: an episode in Hurrian-Hittite mythology, the generation of the Weather-god Tešub, son of both Anu (god of the sky) and Kumarbi (equivalent to Kronos). After nine years of 'Anu's reign, Kumarbi, until then his servant, challenges him; as Anu flees towards the sky, Kumarbi catches him, castrates him, devours his genitals and becomes pregnant; Kumarbi tries to spit out the semen, but is unable to do so and eventually gives birth to Tešub at the end of the pregnancy.

There are two aspects of this myth that are relevant to our subject. First, today there is unquestionable evidence of the numerous points of contact –this is not the place to pursue them in depth– between this Hurrian-Hittite myth and Hesiod's theogonic myth[22] and thus Philo's myth. This evidence is specified in the acceptance of reliable channels, albeit not totally defined, for these contacts and influences; this lends considerable plausibility –indeed, it is probably true– to the ancient presence, prior to Hesiod, of the Hurrian-Hittite myth that we mentioned in the autochthonous Phoenician sources. Second, the function or, if we prefer, the objective of this episode in its original Hurrian-Hittite context is to offer mediation between two rival dynasties (in the realm of the gods, probably as a reflection of a political-social situation) fighting for power –a mediation that is expressed in a son who is the synthesis of the two lineages; so, by transferring this episode from tradition to an Euhemeristic context due to its importance, as we said above, Philo does not take account of this objective and uses the episode without understanding it, merely due to its prestige as a legacy from his ancestors. As a consequence, it is an unusual incident which is difficult to fit into its Euhemeristic context (it has no meaning, and no bearing on the new thread of the narrative); it is a curious attempt to rationalize and at an elementary level to make intelligible a disconcerting royal paternity of two males (who are not father and son, even though one succeeds the other) by means of a strange, complex but finally comprehensible shared paternity involving a sort of adoption (in which an elder son adopts, as if by delegation by the firstborn, the father's younger son).

So this new element shows the presence, in the *Phoenician History*, of narrative components from ancient sources and their use by Philo on account of their importance within the tradition, even though in all likelihood he was in some way unaware of their antiquity and their meaning. These sources were indeed very old, dating from before Hesiod's time. Nonetheless, as we mentioned above, we cannot prove that Hesiod received this influence and ignored it, or simply did not know of it.

To summarize: this paper is an attempt to present an overview of the question of the research into numerous ancient elements which are far more abundant than even a reflective and thorough reading of

22. Since P. Walcot's significant contribution, this point has been unanimously accepted: see P. Walcot, *Hesiod and the Near East*, Cardiff 1966, pp. 1-26. Cf., previously, E. Forrer, art. cit.

the text might suggest, and which are concealed in the *Phoenician History* of Philo of Byblos. We hope to present a fuller study of the subject in the future. For the moment, we present this appraisal of two points that we feel are significant because of the methodological possibilities that they open up, as our small but cordial contribution to this tribute to our friend Professor Gregorio del Olmo Lete.