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SOME COMMENTS ON PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA, *DE AETERNITATE MUNDI*

Anton-Hermann CHROUST

IN the *De Aeternitate Mundi* V, 20–24, which is regarded as a fragment of Aristotle's lost dialogue *On Philosophy*,[1] Philo of Alexandria states: "Out of respect for the visible God [the universe, *note by the author*], the arguments which prove the universe to be uncreated and imperishable should be given their proper precedence and be placed at the beginning of our discussion. All things which are liable to destruction are subject to two basic causes of destruction, namely, an internal cause and an external cause. Iron, bronze and similar substances will be found being destroyed from within when rust invades and devours them like a creeping sickness;[2] and also from without, when a house or a city is set on fire and they too are caught in the flames and destroyed by the fierce unrush of fire. Similarly, too, death comes to living beings from themselves when they fall sick, or from the outside when they have their throats cut or are stoned or burned to death or suffer the unclean death of hanging.[3] If the universe, too, is destroyed, it must be destroyed either by something outside the universe or by some forces which it contains within itself. Now each of these is impossible. There is nothing outside the universe, since all things have contributed to its completeness. For only thus will it be one, whole and ageless: one because only if something had been left out of its composition could there be another universe like the present universe; whole, because the whole of being has been used up to make it; and ageless and diseaseless, because bodies which fall pray to disease and old age succumb to the violent assault from without of heat and cold and the other

1. Frag. 19, Rose[3]; frag. 19a, Walzer; frag. 19a, Ross; frag. 29, Untersteiner.
2. The term "creeping sickness" is also applied to vice, desire or to the spreading of famine. See PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA, *De Specialibus Legibus* IV, 83; PHILO, *De Providentia* 20; PHILO, *De Decalogo* 150; PHILO, *Quod Deterius Potiori Insidiari Soleat* 110; PHILO, *De Iosepho* 160.
3. See PHILO, *De Mutatione Nominum* 62.

contrary forces,[4] of which none can escape the universe, circle around and attack it, since they are all in their entirety confined within the universe and no part of them can stay away from it. If there is anything outside, it will of necessity be the complete void or an impassive nature which cannot suffer or do anything. Nor again will the universe be destroyed by anything within it. Firstly, because if this would be the case the part would then be both greater and more powerful than the whole, which is against all reason. For the universe, wielding forces which nothing can surpass, directs all of its parts and is directed by none. Secondly, since there are two causes of destruction, namely one internal and one external, things which are liable to one of these two causes are necessarily susceptible also to the other cause. As a proof of this we may cite the following: an ox and a horse or a man or any such-like animals, because they can be destroyed by iron, can also perish by disease. For it is difficult and, as a matter of fact, impossible to find anything that is susceptible to destruction through an external cause and at the same time wholly insusceptible to the internal cause. Since, then, it has been shown that the universe will not be destroyed by anything without, because absolutely nothing has been left outside, neither will it be destroyed by anything within as demonstrated by the argument stated above, namely, that which is susceptible to the one cause must also be susceptible to the other cause."

Furthermore, in *De Aeternitate Mundi* VI, 28–VII, 34, likewise considered a fragment of Aristotle's *On Philosophy*,[5] Philo writes: "This whole matter [to wit, the assertion that what is indestructible is uncreated, *note by the author*] may be put in another way. Of composite bodies all those which are destroyed are dissolved into their components parts. Dissolution, however, is indeed nothing else than reduction to the natural state or locus of the parts, so that conversely where there is composition it has forced into an unnatural condition or position those parts or ingredients which have come together. And indeed all of this seems to be so beyond a doubt. For we men are put together by borrowing small parts of the four elements which in their entirety belong to the whole universe, namely, earth, water, air and fire. Now these parts or elements, when thus put together, are deprived of their natural position, the upward travelling heat being forced down, and the earthy or heavy substance, being made light, assumes instead the upper region which is occupied by the earthiest of our parts, namely, the head. But the bond which has been fastened by violence is the worst of bonds. It is violent and shortlived, for it is broken sooner by those who have been bound, because they shake off the noose through their longing for their natural movement towards which they eagerly hasten. For, as the tragic poet says, 'What

4. Philo probably has in mind here Plato, *Timaeus* 32C ff.: "Now the creation [of the universe, *note by the present author*] took up the whole of each of the four elements. For the Creator compounded the universe out of all the fire and all the water and all the air and all the earth, leaving outside no part of any of them nor any power of them. His intent was, in the first place, that the universe should be, as far as this is possible, a perfect whole and of perfect parts. Secondly, that it should be one, leaving no remnants out of which another such universe might be created. And finally, [He intended] that this universe should be free from old age and unaffected by disease. Considering that if heat and other powerful forces which unite bodies surround and attack them from without when they are unprepared, they decompose them, and by bringing diseases and old age upon them, make them waste away. For this reason and on these grounds He made the universe single and whole, being in every part complete and therefore perfect and not liable to old age and disease."

5. Frag. 20, Rose[3]; frag. 19b, Walzer; frag. 19b, Ross; frag. 28, Untersteiner.

springs from earth goes back to earth, the ether-born to heaven's vault returns. Naught that is born can die. Hither and thither its parts disperse and take their proper form.' [6] For all things that perish, this, then, is the law laid down to govern all things: when the parts that have come together in the combination or mixture have settled down they have accepted and experienced disorder in place of their natural order and, hence, must move to the opposites of their natural places, so that in a sense they seem to be exiles. But when they are dissolved, they return to their natural sphere or condition. The universe, however, has no part in the disorder of which we have been speaking. Hence let us consider the following: if the universe is perishing, its several parts at present must have been arranged in a place or in a region that is unnatural to them. But such a supposition is irreverent. For all of the parts of the universe have been assigned the best possible position and the most harmonious arrangement, so that each, as though fond of its own country, seeks no change to a better country. For this reason, then, there was assigned to the earth the midmost position to which all earthy things, even if they are thrown up, descend. But this is an indication of their natural place or position. For in that region in which a thing brought thither stays and rests, even when under no compulsion, there it has its proper place. Secondly, water is spread over the surface of the earth, and air and fire have moved from the middle to the upper region, to air being allotted the region between water and fire, and to fire the uppermost region. And so, even if you light a torch and throw it to the ground, the flame will all the same force its way against you and speed upwards and lighten itself and return to the natural motion of fire. As a matter of fact, if the cause of destruction of other creatures is the unnatural placement or arrangement of their parts, while in the universe each of the parts is arranged naturally and has its proper place assigned to it, the universe may justly be called imperishable."

And finally, in *De Aeternitate Mundi* VIII, 39–43, likewise considered a fragment of Aristotle's *On Philosophy*,[7] Philo maintains: "There exists another most conclusive argument [in support of the thesis that the universe is uncreated and indestructible, *note by the present author*] on which, I know, thousands of people pride themselves as on something that is most precise and absolutely irrefutable. They ask, why should God destroy the universe? Either to save Himself from continuing in world-making, or in order to create a new universe. Now the first of these two purposes is alien to God. For what befits Him is to turn disorder into order, not order into disorder. Moreover, He would thus admit to Himself repentence which is an affection and disease of the soul. For He should either not have made a universe at all, or else, if He judged His work to be befitting to Himself, should have rejoiced in His product. The second alternative deserves full examination. For if in the place of the present universe He should make another universe, the new universe He makes will be in any case either worse or better than the present universe or just like the present universe. But each of these possibilities is open to objection. For if it is worse, its artificer, too, will be worse. But the works of God, fashioned as they are by the most

6. This is a quotation from EURIPIDES, *Chrysippus* (frag. 836, Nauck). Part of this fragment is also cited in Philo, *De Aeternitate Mundi* I, 5; and *ibid.*, XXVII, 144.

7. Frag. 21, Rose[3]; frag. 19c, Walzer; frag. 19c, Ross; frag. 17, Untersteiner.

consumate skill and knowledge, are blameless, above criticism or censure, and incapable of improvement. For as the popular saying goes, 'not even a woman is so lacking in good judgment as to prefer the worse when the better is available.'[8] And it befits God to give shape to the shapeless, and to invest the ugliest things with marvellous beauties. If the new universe is just like the old one, its artificer will have toiled in vain, differing in nothing from mere senseless children who often, when they build sand-castles on the shore, first build them up and then send them tumbling back to the ground.[9] It would be far better, instead of making a new universe just like the old one, neither to take away nor to add anything, nor to change anything for the better or for the worse, but leave the original universe in its place. If He should make a better universe, the artificer himself must become better, so that when he made the former universe he must have been more imperfect both in skill and knowledge. Even to harbor such a thought is unlawful. For God is equal to Himself and like unto Himself, and His power admits neither slackening towards the worse nor intensification towards the better."[10]

In his preserved ("acroamatic") works Aristotle mentions the uncreatedness and indestructibility of the universe several times, for instance, in *De Caelo* 279 b 4 ff., *Meteorologica* 352 a 17 ff., *De Motu Animalium* 699 b 29 ff., and perhaps in *Physics* 261 a 8 ff., and *ibid.*, 261 b 10 ff.[11] Moreover, ancient doxographical tradition reports that the Stagirite taught the uncreatedness and indestructibility of the cosmos.[12] But nowhere in his preserved writings does Aristotle submit a detailed proof for his

8. The ultimate source of this popular "saying" is unknown. It should be noted that Philodemus, the Epicurean, hurls the same invective against Aristotle. See PHILODEMUS, *De Rhetorica. Volumina Rhetorica* (ed. S. Sudhaus, Leipzig, 1896), vol. II, p. 61, col. LVI, 44, 10–15.

9. HOMER, *Iliad* XV, 362–365.

10. Simplicius, *In Aristotelis De Caelo Comment.*, CIAG, vol. VII (ed. J. L. Heiberg, Berlin, 1894), 289, 1–15, incidentally considered a fragment of Aristotle's *On Philosophy* (frag. 15, Rose[2]; frag. 16, Rose[3]; frag. 16, Walzer; frag. 16, Ross; frag. 25, Untersteiner), is quite similar to Philo, *De Aeternitate Mundi* VIII, 39–43. Says Simplicius: "Aristotle speaks of this in his book entitled *On Philosophy*. In general, where there is a better there is a best. Since, then, among existing things one is better than another, there is also something that is best, which will be the divine (*τὸ θεῖον*). Now that which changes is changed either by something else or by itself. And if it is changed by something else, it is changed either by something better or by something worse. And if it is changed by itself, it is changed either to something worse or through a desire for something better. But the divine has nothing better than itself by which it may be changed (for that other would then have been more divine), nor, on the other hand, is it lawful for the better to be affected by the worse. Moreover, if it were changed by something worse, it would have admitted some evil into itself, but nothing in it is evil. On the other hand, it does not change itself through desire for something better, since it lacks none of its own excellences. Nor again does it change itself for the worse, since even a man does not willingly make himself worse, nor has it anything evil such as it would have acquired from a change to the worse. This proof, too, Aristotle took from the second book of Plato's *Republic*." This reference is to Plato, *Republic* 380D–381E. It will be noted that Simplicius, who did not have direct access to Aristotle's (lost) *On Philosophy*, in all likelihood did rely here on Alexander of Aphrodisias who had some direct knowledge of this Aristotelian work. See P. WILPERT, "Reste verlorener Aristoteles-Schriften bei Alexander von Aphrodisias," *Hermes*, vol. 75 (1940), pp. 368–396, especially, p. 387. Simplicius, however, does not report *verbatim* what Aristotle had said in the *On Philosophy*, but in a somewhat liberal fashion merely records certain Aristotelian arguments. See, in general, R. MONDOLFO, *La Comprensione del Sogetto Umano nell' Antiquità Classica* (Florence, 1959), p. 143.

11. See also SIMPLICIUS, *In Physicorum Lib. V–VIII Comment.*, CIAG, vol. X (ed. H. Diels, Berlin, 1895), 1129, 29 ff.

12. See, for instance, AETIUS, *Placita* II, 5, 1 (ed. H. Diels, *Doxographi Graeci*) 332 ff.

unusual thesis. This omission is somewhat puzzling, the more so, since he apparently attached much importance to this theory. As a matter of fact, in *De Caelo* 279 b 4 ff., he implies that he is the first philosopher who advanced the thesis of the uncreatedness and indestructibility of the universe.[13] The only sensible explanation of this omission, it appears, is that he had already discussed in great detail the thesis of the uncreatedness and indestructibility of the universe in one of his earlier (or "popular") works, namely, in the *On Philosophy*.[14]

In his *De Aeternitate Mundi*, Philo of Alexandria has preserved what appear to be the most extensive fragments of that part of the Aristotelian *On Philosophy* which contains the earliest and, at the same time, the most detailed discussions, elaborations and attempt to prove the uncreatedness and indestructibility of the universe.[15] As a matter of fact, Philo relates that it was Aristotle who "had insisted that the universe is uncreated and indestructible," and that "he had charged with serious ungodliness (*δεινὴ ἀθεοτῆς*) those who asserted the opposite."[16] Obviously, Philo refers here to Aristotle's rebuttal of the "atheistic atomists" (Democritus),[17] whose cosmology the Stagirite had refuted in the *On Philosophy*.[18]

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13. In *De Caelo* 279 b 10 ff., Aristotle states that in the issue of whether the universe is created or uncreated, destructible or indestructible, "it is necessary to be rather an arbitrator than a party to the dispute." This passage may indicate that while in the *On Philosophy* he had been a party to this dispute, now in the *De Caelo* he wishes to cast himself in the role of an impartial referee.

14. In *De Caelo* 279 a 28 ff., Aristotle refers back to what he had said in his *ἐγκύκλια φιλοσοφήματα* (that is, in his "discussions concerning the divine and addressed to a general public"), to wit, in the *On Philosophy*. It is reasonable to surmise that in *De Caelo* 279 b 4 ff., where he discusses the uncreatedness and indestructibility of the universe, he too had in mind what he had stated previously in the *On Philosophy* which, after all, dealt with cosmological and theological issues. See also ARISTOTLE, *Physics* 194 a 35-36, and ARISTOTLE, *De Anima* 404 b 19, where Aristotle refers to his *On Philosophy*. In *Poetics* 1454 15–18, he mentions his "published writings," that is, the (lost) *On Poets*. See DIOGENES LAERTIUS V, 22 (no. 2).

15. The first scholar who maintained that Philo's *De Aeternitate Mundi* (III, 10-11; V, 20–24; VI, 28-VII, 34; and VIII, 39–43) contained substantial fragments of Aristotle's *On Philosophy*, was V. ROSE, *Aristotelis Qui Ferebantur Librorum Fragmenta* (Leipzig, 1886). V. Rose, who insisted that on account of its Platonic tenor the *On Philosophy* and for that matter all of the so-called lost works credited to Aristotle were erroneously assigned to the Stagirite, numbered these four fragments no. 17, no. 19, no. 20 and no. 21. It is possible that Philo's *De Aeternitate Mundi* contains some additional fragments of the Aristotelian *On Philosophy*.

16. In his *De Opificio Mundi* 7, on the other hand, Philo insists that "there are some people who admire more the universe than the Creator of this universe and, hence, pronounce the universe uncreated and indestructible... while on the contrary we ought to astonished by His powers as the Creator and Father and, hence, should not assign to the universe a disproportionate majesty." Undoubtedly, Philo refers here to what Aristotle had said in the *On Philosophy*. In his *De Praemiis et Poenis* VII, 41 ff. (frag. 13, Walzer; frag. 13, Ross; frag. 16, Untersteiner), Philo insists that some people who, like Aristotle in the *On Philosophy*, find the way to God through His handiwork or creation, proceed in an inferior (or "second best") way. For they know of God only through His "shadow," that is, through His creation — a typical Platonic notion. The "best way" of knowing God, according to Philo, is to know God through God Himself, that is, through divine and direct revelation or inspiration.

17. This may be inferred from Philo, *De Aeternitate Mundi* III, 8-9. Philo also includes here the Stoics who believed in the cyclic destruction of the universe through total conflagration (*ἐκπύρωσις*).

18. The assumption that Aristotle is here attacking Plato in particular is probably without foundation, although it must be admitted that the cosmology and theology which Aristotle advances in his *On Philosophy* at times conflict with notions maintained by Plato — a fact of which Philo is fully aware. See, for instance, PHILO, *De Aeternitate Mundi* IV, 13 ff.

On the whole, Philo's *De Aeternitate Mundi* V, 20–XXVII, 149, can be subdivided into two major parts, namely,

(I) V, 20–X, 54, which contains arguments in support of the thesis that the universe is uncreated and indestructible, without however naming a specific author;[19] and

(II) XI, 55–XXVII, 149, which enumerates the arguments assigned to a definite author or doctrine, namely, to:

(A) Critolaus (XI, 55–XV, 75);[20]

(B) Some later Stoics,[21] such as Boethus of Sidon, Panaetius of Rhodes and Diogenes of Babylon (XV, 76–XVI, 84);

(C) Some special arguments against the Stoic doctrine of the ἐκπύρωσις and the παλλιγγενεσία (XVII, 85–XIX, 103);[22]

(D) Some other arguments, including some Stoic arguments, to arguments made by Heraclitus of Ephesus[23] and to arguments made by some unnamed Peripatetics[24] (XX, 104–XXII, 116); and

(E) Four Stoic arguments against the uncreatedness and indestructibility of the universe and their refutation by Theophrastus[25] (XXIII, 117–XXVII, 149).

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19. *De Aeternitate Mundi* V, 20–X, 54, without naming a particular author, in the opinion of many scholars apparently refers to Aristotle's *On Philosophy* (V, 20–24; VI, 28–VII, 34; VIII, 39–43). In passing, it also mentions Plato, *Timaeus* 32C ff. (V, 25–27); Plato, *Timaeus* 33C (VII, 38); and Plato, *Timaeus* 37E (X, 52); to Chrysippus' Περὶ αὐξανομένου (IX, 48); to some unnamed Stoics (IX, 45–47 and X, 54); and to some unnamed authors in general (VII, 35–38 and X, 52-53). — Chrysippus' Περὶ αὐξανομένου or αὐξανομένων (*On Increase*) cannot be found in Diogenes Laertius' "catalogue" of Chrysippus' writings. See, however, PLUTARCH, *De Communibus Notitiis Adversus Stoicos* 1083B. In *De Aeternitate Mundi* III, 12 Philo mentions Ocellus Lucanus, *De Universi Natura*, which argues in favor of the eternity of the universe. It is possible that Ocellus, whose arguments in support of the eternity of the universe are very similar to those made by Critolaus (XI, 55–XV, 75), ultimately derives his thesis from Aristotle's *On Philosophy*. This would suggest that certain passages found in Ocellus Lucanus, *De Universi Natura*, likewise are fragments of the Aristotelian *On Philosophy*. See B. EFFE, *Studien zur Kosmologie und Theologie der Aristotelischen Schrift "Über die Philosophie"*, Zetemata, Heft 50 (Munich, 1970), pp. 31 ff.

20. The phrase, "for each race remains forever, though particular specimens perish, a marvel in every way and the work of God" (XIII, 69), may possibly refer to Plato, *Symposium* 206C. See also PHILO, *De Vita Contemplativa* 68, which may refer to Plato, *Symposium* 209A. *De Aeternitate Mundi* X, 74, at the end, might also refer to Plato, *Timaeus* 73A.

21. XVI, 78, it will be noted, contains arguments quite similar to those advanced in V, 20 and XV, 74.

22. In XIX, 100, Philo refers back to XVI, 71.

23. In XXI, 109-110 Philo refers to "the annual seasons which circle round and round, each making room for its successor as the years ceaselessly revolve. So, too, the elements in the universe in their mutual interchanges seem to die, yet, strangest of contradictions, are made immortal as they ever run backwards and forwards, and continually pass along the same road up and down. The uphill journey begins from earth." The notion of the "uphill journey" and "downhill journey" actually goes back to Heraclitus of Ephesus. See DIOGENES LAERTIUS IX, 9.

24. In XXII, 113 Philo refers to "the four principal ways in which destruction occurs: addition, subtraction, transmission and transmutation." These four ways of destruction are actually of Peripatetic origin. The Stoics enumerate three ways of destruction, namely, dismemberment, annihilation and amalgamation. See XVI, 79.

25. In XXIV, 124 Theophrastus refutes the Stoic argument (see Diogenes Laertius VII, 141) that since "all component parts are perishable, the universe too is perishable." In XXIV, 125 ff. Theophrastus analyses this Stoic argument. In XXV, 137 Philo insists that "mountains are destroyed by the unrush of rain," while in XXV, 132–134 he states that the changes of mountains are so slow that they become perceptible only after a long time. In XXVI, 141 Philo quotes from Plato, *Timaeus* 24E, and *ibid.*, 25CD; in XXVII, 146 from Plato, *Phaedo* 96A; in XXVII, 146-147 from Plato, *Laws* 676A ff., and *ibid.*, 677A ff., and from Plato, *Timaeus* 23A ff.; and in XXVII, 149 from Plato, *Timaeus* 22C.

Further analysis of *De Aeternitate Mundi* V, 20–X, 54, divulges that this part of the work contains six distinct proofs for the eternity or uncreatedness and indestructibility of the universe. The first proof (V, 20–24), which is considered a fragment of Aristotle's *On Philosophy*,[26] uses the argument that there are two causes for the destruction of the universe, namely, an external cause and an internal cause. Since neither of these two causes can possibly affect the universe, the latter is, and must be, indestructible.[27] The second proof (V, 28–VII, 34), which likewise is called a fragment of the Aristotelian *On Philosophy*,[28] proceeds along the theory that the dissolution (or destruction) of a composite body such as the universe is actually the dissolution of its "body" into its component parts or elements by a necessary "re-arrangement" of its component elements which seek their natural places. In other words, these "misplaced" elements within the universe ultimately will return to their proper locus, thus "decomposing" the universe. But since within the most orderly universe each component element occupies its proper place, the universe cannot be dissolved by this kind of "decomposition" and, hence, cannot perish.[29] The third argument (VII, 35–38), which cannot be ascribed to any particular author (and, hence, may have been devised by Philo himself), makes use of a proof based on an analogy: in the same manner as the "nature" of each individual thing strives for its survival, so also the universe as such in its totality strives for its integral survival.[30] But while the individual thing as such is too feeble to achieve survival, the universe in its absolute strength is "invincible and triumphs over everything that might possibly injure it."[31] The fourth argument (VIII, 39–43), which likewise has been called a fragment of the Aristotelian *On Philosophy*,[32] rejects the possibility of a destruction of the universe by resorting to what might be called a "theological proof": it would be contrary to the nature of God to destroy the universe. The fifth (IX, 45–51) and the sixth (X, 52–54) argument — two arguments which are of little interest to us — on the other hand turn against the Stoics in general and their doctrine of the ἐκπύρωσις and παλιγγενεσία.

The third argument (VII, 35–38), it will be noted, differs drastically from the mode of argumentation employed in V, 20–24; VI, 28–VII, 34; and VIII, 39–43, all three considered fragments of Aristotle's *On Philosophy*. The latter three arguments proceed according to the following basic scheme: (A) All destruction is due to some factor; (B) in the case of the universe there exists no such factor; (C) hence the universe is indestructible. VII, 35–38, on the other hand, operates with an analogy

26. See note 1, *supra*.
27. VI, 25–27 calls upon Plato's *Timaeus* for support of the thesis that the universe is indestructible, and that this indestructibility itself is proof of the uncreatedness of the universe, for "indestructibility presupposes uncreatedness."
28. Frag. 20, Rose[3]; frag. 19b, Walzer; frag. 19b, Ross; frag. 28, Untersteiner.
29. With some modifications this argument is restated in XXII, 113–116.
30. See text, *infra*.
31. Philo supports his argument by quoting Plato, *Timaeus* 33C.
32. Frag. 21, Rose[3]; frag. 19c, Walger; frag. 19c, Ross; frag. 17, Untersteiner.

and, hence, employs an entirely different mode of argumentation.[33] In this, VII, 35–38 seems to be wholly "out of place" in the sequence consisting of argument I (V, 20–24), which operates on the basis of the principle of efficient cause; argument II (VI, 28–VII, 34), which operates on the principle of material cause; and argument IV (VIII, 39–43), which operates on the principle of final cause. It is also most significant that arguments I, II and IV, but not argument III, have been credited to one author or philosopher, namely, to Aristotle. As a matter of fact, a comparison of the three arguments (in support of the thesis that the universe is uncreated and indestructible) credited to Boethus (XVI, 78–84) with the three arguments credited to Aristotle (V, 20–24; VI, 28–VII, 34; VIII, 39–43) seems to confirm this. In XVI, 78 Boethus insists that since there exists no cause for the destruction of the universe either within or without the universe, any destruction of the universe must originate with the void — a totally unthinkable assumption.[34] In XVI, 79–82 Boethus states that the universe may be destroyed by decomposition, annihilation or disarrangement.[35] And in XVI, 83-84 Boethus asks the question what God will do after the destruction of the universe, since total inactivity would make His existence wholly meaningless.[36] In brief, Boethus (XVI, 78–84) follows rather closely the pattern or arguments laid out in the sequence V, 20–24; VI, 28–VII, 34; and VIII, 39–43, omitting, however, the argument contained in VII, 35–38. Moreover, *De Aeternitate Mundi* XX, 106 stresses the close affinity of argument I (V, 20–24) and argument IV (VIII, 39–43). In XX, 106 we are told that "a good point is made by the investigators of truth when they maintain that if the universe is destroyed, it will be destroyed either by some other cause or by God. Nothing else whatever will cause it to suffer destruction, for there is nothing which it does not encompass, and what is encompassed and controlled is certainly weaker than that which encompasses and, hence, also controls it. Conversely to maintain that it is destroyed by God is the worst of profanities. Those who hold the true belief acknowledge Him to be the cause, not of disorder, disharmony and destruction, but rather the cause of order and harmony and life and of all that is most excellent." In brief, XX, 106 combines V, 20–24 and VIII, 39–43. The report of Boethus (XVI, 78–84) and the statement found in XX, 106 — not to mention the fact that V, 20–24; VI, 28–VII, 34; and VIII, 39–43 have been credited to Aristotle — lend additional support to the thesis that V, 20–24; VI, 28-VII, 34; and VIII, 39–43, constitute a definite single pattern, and that VII, 35–38 is actually an "out-of-place" insertion

33. It may be maintained that the argument by analogy found in VI, 35–38 apparently is of Stoic origin. In any event, it proceeds along lines that are definitely Stoic. This might be inferred, for instance, from CICERO, *De Natura Deorum* II, 13, 35; and *ibid.*, II, 22, 58. According to Cicero, *De Natura Deorum* II, 13, 35, Zeno, the Stoic, had stated that "it is undeniable that every organic whole must have an ultimate ideal of perfection. As in vines or in cattle we see that, unless obstructed by some force, nature progresses along a certain path of her own to her goal of full development... even so and far more in the world of nature as a whole there must be a process towards completeness and perfection. The various limited modes of being may encounter many external obstacles to hinder their perfect realization, but there can be nothing that could frustrate nature as a whole, since nature embraces and contains within itself all modes of being."

34. This statement, which seems to contain an attack upon the Stoics, parallels V, 20–24 and XV, 74 (Critolaus).

35. This statement, which likewise is a refutation of the Stoics, has its parallel in VI, 28–VII, 34.

36. This statement, which definitely contains an attack upon the Stoics, parallels VIII, 39–43.

which originally was not part of this sequence but might have been inserted by Philo himself. This original pattern or sequence, namely, V, 20–24; VI, 28–VII, 34; and VIII, 39–43, it appears, also became the standard model for subsequent philosophic discussions of the eternity of the universe. This is borne out, for instance, by Boethus (XVI, 78–84) as well as by the remarks found in XX, 106.

This raises the further question, namely, who authored the basic pattern or sequence of argumentation which becomes manifest in *De Aeternitate Mundi* V, 20–24; VI, 28–VII, 34; and VIII, 39–43. The fact that these three passages have been assigned to Aristotle's *On Philosophy* by many scholars is in itself rather significant. Moreover, in III, 10[37] Philo specifically refers to Aristotle as the author of the thesis that the universe is uncreated and indestructible: "Aristotle was surely speaking piously and devotedly when he insisted that the universe is uncreated and indestructible, and when he charged with grave ungodliness those who maintained the opposite, that is, those who held the belief that the great visible God [to wit, the universe, *note by the present author*], Who contains in truth the sun and the moon and the pantheon of the planets and the fixed stars, is no better than the work of man's hands." In view of the indisputable prominence Philo assigns to Aristotle in the whole discussion over the uncreatedness and indestructibility of the universe — Aristotle apparently supplies Philo with the most effective ammunition against those philosophers who advocated the creation and destruction of the universe *in tempore* — it would certainly be most unusual, to say the least, if Philo should not have quoted Aristotle whom he probably considered the most prominent and eloquent advocate in the debate over the eternity of the universe. As a matter of fact, in view of the high esteem Philo has for Aristotle, it is reasonable to surmise that he quotes the Stagirite *verbatim* or almost *verbatim*.[38] This, then would warrant the authenticity of V, 20–24; VI, 28–VII, 34; and VIII, 39–43: these three passages are authentic fragments of, or perhaps better, authentic though probably stylistically and verbally somewhat altered citations from Aristotle's *On Philosophy*. More than that: these three passages from Aristotle's *On Philosophy* constitute the structural frame of the whole discussion in the first part (V, 20–X, 54) of Philo's *De Aeternitate Mundi*.

There exists, however, some additional evidence for the authenticity of *De Aeternitate Mundi* V, 20–24, namely, Cicero, *Academica Priora* II (*Lucullus*) 38, 119.[39] Here Cicero maintains: "When your wise Stoic has said all these things syllable by syllable [namely, that the universe is subject to cyclic destruction and creation, *note by the present author*], Aristotle will come with the golden flow of his speech and state that the Stoic is talking plain nonsense.[40] He will say that the universe never came into

37. Frag. 17, Rose[2]; frag. 18, Rose[3]; frag. 18, Walzer; frag. 18, Ross; frag. 21, Untersteiner.

38. In VIII, 41, for instance, Philo uses the (Platonic) terms δημιουργός and δημιουργηθέντα. We must also assume that Philo occasionally interjects his own personal views or his own terminology. As a matter of fact, V, 20–24; VI, 28–VII, 34; and VIII, 39–43, contain several terms which cannot be found in the preserved *Corpus Aristotelicum* (Bonitz), but which are rather common in the writings of Philo.

39. Frag. 18, Rose[2]; frag. 22, Rose[3]; frag. 20, Walzer; frag. 20, Ross; frag. 22, Untersteiner.

40. The sharp contrast between Aristotle's cosmology and the cosmology advocated by the Stoics is also stressed in the *De Aeternitate Mundi*.

being, because there never was a new design from which so noble a work could have taken its beginning; and that it is so well designed in every part that no force can possibly bring about such great movements and so great a change [as the creation or destruction of the universe, *note by the present author*], and that no old age can come upon the universe by the passing of time, so that this most beautiful universe should ever fall to pieces and perish." Cicero's statement, aside from emphasizing the uncreatedness and indestructibility of the universe,[41] in essence summarizes what Philo states in *De Aeternitate Mundi* V, 20–24, that is, what Aristotle originally had proclaimed in his *On Philosophy* about the uncreatedness and indestructibility of the universe.[42] In the case of *De Aeternitate Mundi* VIII, 39–43 it may be argued that the Aristotelian origin of this passage might be asserted with the assistance of Simplicius, *In Aristotelis De Caelo Comment.* 289, 1–15.[43] As to its main topic, structure and form, this passage from Simplicius is very close to the topic, structure and mode of argumentation found in VIII, 39–43. It might be contended, therefore, that on this particular point Philo (VIII, 39–43) and Simplicius (289, 1–15), or Simplicius' more immediate source, to wit, Alexander of Aphrodisias, consulted one and the same source, namely, Aristotle's *On Philosophy*. In any event, Simplicius starts his report with the remark that "Aristotle speaks of this in his work entitled *On Philosophy*."[44] Moreover, there exist close philosophic, logical and systematic connections between V, 20–24; VI, 28–VII, 34; and VIII, 39–43, three passages which constitute an articulate sequence of relevant arguments: the universe is not subject to destruction by some internal or external cause, that is, by some efficient cause; it is not subject to destruction by some inherent material cause; and it is not subject to destruction by God.[45]

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41. Cicero may refer here to what, according to Philo, *De Aeternitate Mundi* III, 10, Aristotle had said about the uncreatedness of the universe in the *On Philosophy*. See note 37, *supra*.

42. When Cicero refers here to "the golden flow of his [*scil.*, Aristotle's] speech," he has in mind one of the "exoteric" works of the Stagirite which in antiquity were famous for their stylistic perfection and beauty. See, for instance, CICERO, *De Inventione* II, 2, 6; CICERO, *De Oratore* I, 2, 49, and *ibid.*, III, 21, 80; CICERO, *Brutus* XXXIII, 120-121; CICERO, *Ad Atticum* II, 1, 1; CICERO, *De Finibus* I, 5, 14; CICERO, *Topica* I, 3; THEMISTIUS, *Oratio* 319c; DIONYSIUS OF HALICARNASSUS, *De Compositione Verborum* 183; DIO CHRYSOSTOM, *Oratio LIII* 1; QUINTILIAN, *Institutio Oratoria* X, 1, 83; ELIAS, *In Porphyrii Isagogen et Aristotelis Categ. Comment.*, CIAG, vol. XVIII, part 2 (ed. A. Busse, Berlin 1900), 124, 3 ff.; AMMONIUS, *In Aristotelis Categ. Comment.*, CIAG, vol. IV, part 4 (ed. A. Busse, Berlin, 1895), 6, 25 ff.

43. See note 10, *supra*.

44. Some scholars have suggested that *De Aeternitate Mundi* VIII, 39–43 does not report what Aristotle himself had said in the *On Philosophy*. They insist that the notion of "God the Creator", found in VIII, 39–43, is alien to Aristotle as well as conflicts with his views concerning the uncreatedness of the universe advocated in the *On Philosophy*. Other scholars are of the opinion that VIII, 39–43 relates what Plato, cast in the role of a discussant or interlocutor in the *On Philosophy*, had propagated in this dialogue. For some additional detail, see, for instance, M. UNTERSTEINER, *Aristotele: Della Filosofia — Temi e Testi, Introduzione, Testo, Traduzione e Commento Esegetico* (Rome, 1963), pp. 221 ff., and *ibid.*, p. 223.

45. Perhaps the most satisfactory solution of the problem posed by VIII, 39–43 is the following: after having shown that the universe cannot be destroyed by natural forces, Aristotle raises the hypothetical question of whether the universe, provided it had actually been created by God as some people believe, could be destroyed by God. His answer is that even if we were to assume that the universe had been created by God — something which Aristotle does not accept — God cannot, and will not, destroy it.

In conclusion it may be maintained that Philo of Alexandria, *De Aeternitate Mundi* V, 20–24; *ibid.*, VI, 28–VII, 34; and *ibid.*, VIII, 39–43, are authentic fragments of Aristotle's *On Philosophy*, although Philo probably made some stylistic and terminological changes. The only difficulty might possibly arise with VIII, 39–43.[46] This difficulty, however, may be resolved if one assumes that VIII, 39–43 actually deals with a hypothetical issue raised by Aristotle himself: even if we were to assume that God created the universe, He would never destroy it. Hence a universe created by God is likewise indestructible.

46. See note 45, *supra*.