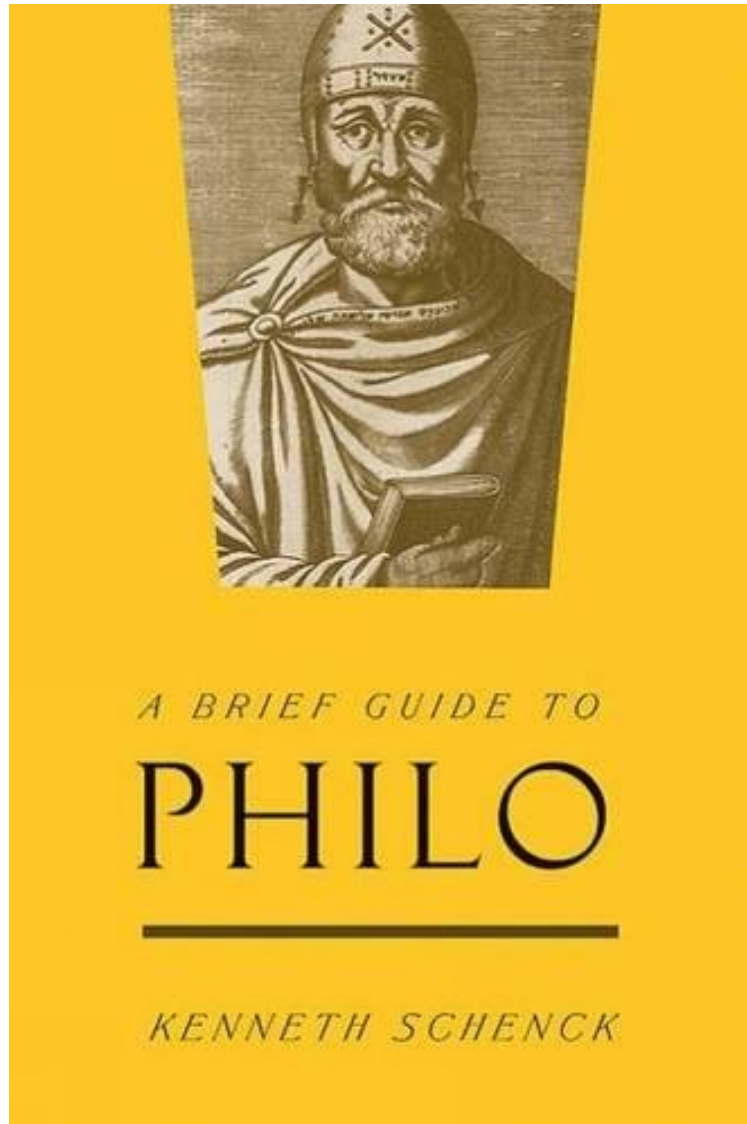


A Brief Guide to Philo

Kenneth Schenck

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#1155124 in Books Kenneth Schenck 2005-02-02 2005-02-02Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.25 x .40 x 7.52l, .61 #File Name: 066422735X184 pagesA Brief Guide to Philo | File size: 35.Mb

Kenneth Schenck : A Brief Guide to Philo before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Brief Guide to Philo:

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Best Introduction to PhiloBy John S. UebersaxPhilo is notorious for being difficult to read -- because of the style, content, and structure of his corpus. Therefore, unlike as with, say Josephus, it benefits a reader, whether serious or casual, to get an overview before plunging in. This need is admirably met by Prof. Schenck's book. With the instincts of a teacher, Schenck anticipates the stumbling blocks the Philo

newcomer is liable to experience, and deftly addresses them. A lot of material is covered in a relatively short book -- something enabled by Schenck's clear writing style, which focuses more on facts than speculation or opinion. His brief but informative background on Platonic and Stoic influences on Philo is an example. Schenck makes the sensible suggestion to begin with one of Philo's non-religious works first (e.g., Embassy to Gaius), which will acquaint the reader with Philo's style and personality, and from there to proceed to Philo's well-structured Questions and Answers on Genesis, before trying to tackle the more complex allegorical works. A feature of special note is the helpful topical index to Philo's works supplied at the end of the book. Unlike a previous reviewer, I didn't get the impression that Schenck casts doubt on possible Philonic influences on early Christianity as much as takes a sensible moderate view, in contrast to some who tend to see it everywhere in the Epistles and the Gospel of John. Certainly Philo's later influence on Church Fathers (St. Clement of Alexandria, Origen, St. Ambrose of Milan, etc.) is beyond question. In my opinion this is the best book for a newcomer about Philo and his works, and even specialists will find it a worthwhile library addition. For those whose interest in Philo extends beyond the academic and historical to the devotional -- that is, who sense in Philo something of an inspired religious philosopher with genuine spiritual insights, Schenck's book might be supplemented with Samuel Sandmel's *Philo of Alexandria: An Introduction* -- now out of print, but easily available used for a few dollars. Kenneth Guthrie's book, *The Message of Philo* (1909), available online, may also interest such readers.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Reliable and Brief
By Scott
This is a reliable guide, but the text needs a little more detail. Schenck's application of Philo to the NT is excellent.

9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. A long awaited overview of a complex and contradictory figure
By Eric Maroney
Philo of Alexandria is a curious figure in the history of philosophy and Judaism and finally here, in Schenck's compact book, we get an excellent summary of both the joys and frustrations of reading Philo's work. Schenck succinctly shows Philo's seeming centrality in the history of philosophy. He is one of the early examples of Middle Platonism; he is considered one of the transitional figures from ancient to medieval philosophy (and a prime example of a Greco-Roman philosopher). Schenck highlights his importance, but also illustrates his lack of influence. Few read Philo until recently. His impact on philosophy is uncertain and perhaps marginal. Schenck also illustrates how difficult it is to place Philo in the history of Judaism. Philo is certainly an example of a Hellenized Jew, but how typical was his life and work? What was Philo's relationship to the different strains of 1st century Judaism? Again, Schenck does not shrink from presenting uncertainty. Philo provides us with an invaluable window on the lost world of Hellenized Jews, but his impact on subsequent Judaism was doubtful or non-existent. Finally, Philo's once one uncontested influence is also brought into doubt by Schenck: his influence on early Christianity. This book shows that the authors of some early Christian works use the same terminology and images as Philo, but in different and sometimes profound ways. Philo influence on early Christianity is cast in doubt by Schenck. This small book does a great deal of heavy lifting in presenting Philo and his work in all the complexity they deserve.

This is a compact introduction to the work of Philo (c. 20 BCE-50 CE), the important Jewish thinker and scriptural interpreter. Kenneth Schenck provides a guide for understanding Philo's complex works, a roadmap for topics and contents of Philo's writings, and a description of contemporary research so students can easily find their ways into Philo study.

About the Author
Kenneth Schenck is Professor of Religion at Indiana Wesleyan University in Marion, Indiana and an ordained minister in the Wesleyan Church.