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THE  
LETTER OF ARISTEAS

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH

WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

H. ST. J. THACKERAY, M.A.

*Reprinted from the 'Jewish Quarterly Review' and published  
for the Jewish Historical Society of England*

London

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED  
NEW YORK: THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

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Price One Shilling



*Aristeas' epistle*

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# SUBJECTS TO STUDY

FOR THE YEAR 1917

FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF

PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

OXFORD: HORACE HART  
PRINTER TO THE UNIVERSITY



B 544

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1904

## NOTE TO THE PRESENT EDITION

At the suggestion and through the kind instrumentality of Mr. Abrahams, joint editor of the 'Jewish Quarterly Review,' the present translation of the Letter of Aristeas is reprinted from the pages of that journal (April, 1903), in the hope that there may be readers interested in Septuagint studies who will care to possess it in a separate form.

H. ST. J. T.



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## TRANSLATION OF THE LETTER OF ARISTEAS.



THE celebrated document, of which a new English version is here presented to the reader, professes to give a contemporary account of the translation of the Pentateuch into Greek in the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus (285-247 B. C.). It has long been recognized that the letter cannot be contemporary with the events described. The writer in various ways betrays his later date. Thus he says that the arrangements made at the Alexandrian court for the entertainment of foreigners "may still be seen in operation" (§ 182), and he describes the scrupulous care with which "all business used to be transacted by these kings" (§ 28), as though he were looking back over the history of a long dynasty of Ptolemies. He anticipates the incredulity with which his story will be received (§ 296). He is guilty of some historical inaccuracies, in making Demetrius Phalereus the friend and librarian of Philadelphus, and in his references to Menedemus (§ 201), Theopompus (§ 314), and Theodectes (§ 316). But that which chiefly arouses suspicion as to the historical character of the narrative is the apologetic tendency displayed in it. The writer is clearly a Jew of Alexandria,

not a heathen courtier as he professes to be, and his main object is to magnify the Jewish nation in the eyes of the Greek world by narrating the honour bestowed upon it by a Greek monarch and the praise accorded to it by heathen lips. This apologetic tendency is seen most clearly in the long exposition given by Eleazar of "the inner meaning of the law" (§ 171) with regard to clean and unclean food—a section which is penned with the intention of satisfying the "curiosity" which that law had excited (§ 128), and counteracting fallacious views on the subject which still found supporters although they had long been exploded (§ 144). Still, as has been said, "a work written with a tendency, with a romantic colouring, may nevertheless be trustworthy," and the problem of sifting the false from the true in this story yet awaits solution.

Recent criticism has set in the direction of rehabilitating the story here told, or at any rate a part of it. The numerous papyri of the Ptolemaic age which have been unearthed in Egypt in recent years have shown that the writer employs the titles of court officials and the technical terms connected with royal decrees and court usage with strict accuracy. The information which he gives with regard to Alexandria and the customs and institutions of the Ptolemies may be accepted as trustworthy, and may sometimes be used to supplement the information supplied by the papyri.

But the question of the date of the letter is still so far from being settled that there is a difference of more than two centuries between the earliest and the latest date assigned to it. The three dates which critics of the present day have suggested are (1) that of Schürer, who places it at about 200 B. C., i. e. little more than half a century after the time when the translation is said to have been made; (2) that of Wendland, who sets it between 96 and 63 B. C., rather nearer to the former date; (3) that of Willrich (*Judaica*, 1900), who, following Graetz, brings it down as late as the time of Caligula (after 33 A. D.). It is impossible

here to discuss the grounds on which these critics have arrived at these widely differing results. Suffice it to say that the date assigned by Willrich is almost certainly too late, while the evidence afforded by the papyri on some minor points tends to show that Schürer's date is somewhat too early. The chief reason which has induced him to assign to the work so high an antiquity is the picture here presented of the political position of Palestine and its relation to Egypt. The fortress of Jerusalem is still in the possession of the Jews, Alexandrians are allowed to enter the country and its capital without molestation, and "the Jewish people and their high priest appear as almost politically independent." This, according to Schürer, presupposes the period before the conquest of Palestine by the Seleucid dynasty in 198 B. C. as the date of writing. A further argument in favour of the early date is the supposed reference of Aristobulus (170-150 B. C.) to the Aristeas letter in a passage (ap. Eus. *P. E.* xiii. 12. 664 b) where he states that the whole law was first translated under Philadelphus through the instrumentality of Demetrius Phalereus. The authenticity of the passage has, however, been disputed. ✓

On the other hand must be set certain details which point to a date not earlier than the middle of the second century B. C. Strack<sup>1</sup> has shown that, while the honorary title ἀρχισωματοφύλαξ, in conjunction with some other title such as διοικητής or στρατηγός, is found in the papyri of the third century B. C., the use of the plural τῶν ἀρχισωματοφυλάκων, which occurs in Aristeas § 40, is not met with before about 145 B. C.<sup>2</sup> A similar instance is that of the phrase ἐὰν φαίνεται with no dative following it (Aristeas § 32, see my note on the passage), which appears to be unattested in the papyri before 163 B. C. Again, some of the names of the Seventy (§§ 47 ff.), such as Jason, are names which

<sup>1</sup> *Rhein. Museum*, LV, 168 ff.

<sup>2</sup> The earliest instance seems to be Tebtunis Papyri, 79. 52 (about 148 B. C.).

only came into vogue in the Maccabean age. The alleged widespread interest in the Jewish law (§ 128) and the false views which were in circulation about it (§ 144), the pointed reference to a difference between the Greek text and the Hebrew in a passage of Exodus (§ 57), and the probable allusion to attempts which had been made to improve on the rendering of the translators (§ 310)—all these appear to indicate a date further removed from the age of Philadelphus than that which Schürer would adopt. The writer refers in § 31 to Hecataeus of Abdera (who lived in the time of Alexander the Great and the first Ptolemy), and Wendland has shown<sup>1</sup> that in the description of Palestine he has probably made a large use of the genuine work of that historian, and not of the spurious writings which have been attributed to him. May not the picture of Palestine as it existed before the Seleucidian conquest have been taken over directly from Hecataeus by a writer of a slightly later age?

It is not the place here to enter into a discussion of the questions to which the letter gives occasion: whether the translation was made in the reign of Philadelphus, whether it owed its origin to a Greek monarch, or rather, as we should expect, to the growing need felt for such a version by the Jewish colony at Alexandria, and whether the translators were Palestinians or Alexandrians. Neither can we dwell on the subsequent accretions to the story, according to which the whole of the Old Testament, and not the law only, was rendered by the seventy-two translators, who worked independently in separate cells, or two and two in a cell, and all produced identical versions, whereas Aristeeas definitely states that the rendering finally agreed upon was the result of comparison and conference (§ 302). For a discussion of these and kindred questions reference may be made to Dr. Swete's *Introduction to the O. T. in Greek*, an article by Mr. Abrahams in the *Jewish*

<sup>1</sup> In Kautzsch, *Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen*, II, 1 f.

*Quarterly Review* for January, 1902, Wendland's text (Teubner, 1900) and translation (in Kautzsch, *Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen*, 1900), and Schürer (*Geschichte des Jüd. Volkes*<sup>3</sup>, III, 466-73), where the further literature on the subject is given.

The text used for this translation is that contained in the Appendix to Dr. Swete's *Introduction* (second edition, 1902). Constant reference has also been made to the text and translation of Wendland, from whom also are taken the sections into which the text is divided. The felicitous conjectures of Wendland and Mendelssohn have again and again brought out the true meaning of the letter.

H. ST. J. THACKERAY.

[THE OCCASION OF THE TRANSLATION AND PRELIMINARY PROCEEDINGS.]

As the story of our interview with Eleazar, the high priest of the Jews, is a remarkable one, and because thou, Philocrates, hast set thy heart, as thou art constantly reminding me<sup>1</sup>, on learning the object and the occasion of our mission, I have endeavoured to give thee a clear account of what took place. I know that love of learning of thine; and it is indeed man's highest task "ever to make addition<sup>2</sup> to his store of learning and acquirements,"<sup>2</sup> either by the study of history or by actual experience of affairs. For in this way there is formed a pure disposition in the soul, which, assimilating what is best, and inclining towards that which is all-important, even piety, directs its course by the guidance of an unerring rule<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Wendland restores the grammar by reading *ὑπομνήσκειν*, "you remind me that you are keen to learn."

<sup>2</sup> These words form an iambic line in the Greek, and are probably a quotation from a lost tragedy. Two fragments of Sophocles are very similar: "And we must ever be daily acquiring (knowledge), while it is possible to learn better things," "ever desire to add something useful to thy knowledge" (Fragments 779 and 622 in Dindorf, *Poetae Scenici Graeci*).

<sup>3</sup> I have, following Wendland, made *τὴν προαίρεσιν* the beginning of the next sentence, and slightly altered the punctuation, reading *διάθεσις ἀναλαβοῦσα τὰ κάλλιστα καὶ κ.τ.λ.* I have taken *διοικεῖ* to be used in an absolute sense.

3 Having determined to make a close investigation into things divine, we offered our services for an<sup>1</sup> embassy to the man above-named, who, owing to his virtuous character and exalted position, is held in high honour both by his countrymen and by the rest of the world, and is in possession of [documents of] the greatest service to his nation, whether at home or abroad. The object of our mission was<sup>2</sup> the translation of the law of God, because in their country  
4 they have it inscribed on parchment in Hebrew letters. And the interest which we displayed<sup>3</sup>, when an opportunity offered itself, in bringing before the king the case of the men who were removed to Egypt from Judaea by the king's father, who was the first possessor of the city [of Alexandria] and ruler of Egypt, this also it is worth  
5 while my telling thee. For I am convinced that thou above all men, with thy leanings towards the holiness and the sentiments of the men who live in accordance with the holy law, wilt gladly listen to the story about them which we are proposing to narrate, having but recently come over from the island<sup>4</sup> to us, and being anxious to gather any  
6 instructive information. On a former occasion I sent thee a description of matters in my opinion worthy of record concerning the Jewish nation, which we obtained from the high priests, the most  
7 learned body in that most learned of countries, Egypt<sup>5</sup>. It is right to communicate such things to thee with thy eagerness to learn what may benefit the mind; I would, if possible, impart them to all

<sup>1</sup> Or "the embassy," with Wendland's reading *εις την προς τον κ.τ.λ.*

<sup>2</sup> Possibly *προς την ἐρμηνείαν κ.τ.λ.* should be taken with the preceding sentence, "documents of the greatest service . . . for the translation," &c. (Wendland).

<sup>3</sup> The text is at fault. I have adopted the easiest correction, that of Mendelssohn, *ἦν δὲ καὶ ἐποιησάμεθα ἡμεῖς σπουδῆν*. Wendland, keeping *ἦν δὲ* and *σπουδῆν*, supposes that some words (*ἃ δὲ διελέχθημεν*) have fallen out before *λαβόντες*. The translation will then run, "This embassy we actually undertook, and with no little zeal. And our address to the king, when an opportunity offered itself, on behalf of the men," &c. But *πρεσβείαν* seems rather too far off to be taken as the antecedent to *ἦν*.

<sup>4</sup> It is doubtful whether Cyprus or Pharos is intended. A comparison of § 301, where "the island" clearly means Pharos, suggests the latter. But it is difficult, in that case, to understand why Philocrates should need a description of events with which he must have already been well acquainted.

<sup>5</sup> Possibly the writer wishes to identify himself with the historian Aristeas, who wrote a work *περὶ Ἰουδαίων*, a fragment of which is preserved by Eusebius, *Praep. Ev.*, 430d. With the reference to the learning of Egypt, cp. Herodotus, II, 3 οἱ γὰρ Ἕλιοπολίται λέγονται Αἰγυπτίων εἶναι λογιώτατοι.



who are like-minded with thee, but chiefly to thee; so sincere are thy principles, and not only does thy conduct show thee to be my brother by birth, but in thy striving after goodness thou art at one with us<sup>1</sup>. For precious gold or any other of the objects that the vain-glorious hold in honour does not confer the same advantage as the training of culture and the study of these subjects. But, lest we become tedious by extending our introductory remarks to an inordinate length, we will come back to the thread of the narrative.

Demetrius of Phalerum<sup>2</sup>, being keeper of the king's library, received large grants of public money with a view to his collecting, if possible, all the books in the world; and by purchases and transcriptions he to the best of his ability carried the king's purpose into execution. Being asked once in our presence, about how many thousands<sup>3</sup> of books were already collected, he replied, "More than two hundred thousand, Sire: but I will ere long make diligent search for the remainder, so that a total of half a million may be reached. And I am informed that the Jews also have certain laws which are deserving of transcription and a place in thy library." "What is to hinder thee, then," replied the king, "in this task? For all the necessary means are at thy service." And Demetrius answered, "Translation is also required. For in the Jews' land they use a writing of their own (just as Egyptians have their system<sup>4</sup> of letters) as well as a language peculiar to themselves. It is commonly thought that they use the Syrian language<sup>5</sup>, but this is an error: it is another dialect." And when the king had learnt all the facts, he gave command that a letter should be written to the high priest of the Jews, in order that the proposal above-mentioned might be carried into effect.

And now thought I was the opportunity for introducing a matter about which I had often made request to Sosibius of Tarentum and Andreas, the heads of the body-guard, namely the liberation of

<sup>1</sup> By a slight transposition of words (*ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸν τρόπον*) the sentence is improved (Wendland). It will then run, "and not only art thou my brother by birth, but also in thy character, which in its striving after goodness is akin to ours."

<sup>2</sup> Demetrius lived from about B. C. 345 to about B. C. 283. The last part of his life was spent at the court of Ptolemy Soter, but we are told by Hermippus that he was out of favour with Ptolemy Philadelphus, and banished by him. He was never the royal librarian. For a discussion as to the part which he may have taken in suggesting the translation, see Swete, *Introd. to O. T.*, 18 f.; *J. Q. R.*, Jan., 1902, 338.

<sup>3</sup> Greek, "tens of thousands."

<sup>4</sup> Literally, "arrangement."

<sup>5</sup> i. e. Aramaic.

the Jews who had been carried away from Judaea by the king's father. For he, after overrunning the whole of Coele-Syria and Phoenicia, assisted by good fortune and his own prowess, transplanted some and made prisoners of others, terrorizing and reducing the whole country to submission. It was on this occasion that he carried away more than a hundred thousand persons from the Jews' country  
 13 into Egypt, of which number he armed about thirty thousand picked men and settled them in the fortresses in the country. Many Jews had already before this entered the country along with the Persian, and others had at a still earlier time been sent out as auxiliaries to fight in the army of Psammetichus against the king of the Ethiopians; but these immigrants were not so large a body as those  
 14 whom Ptolemy, son of Lagus, introduced<sup>1</sup>. Well, as we said before, he selected those who were best fitted by their age for service and the strongest, and armed them, but the rest of the multitude, old and young, and the women, he handed over [to the soldiers] as menials, not of his own free will, but rather compelled thereto by the soldiers, in return for the services which they had rendered on his campaigns. When, therefore, we found some pretext for their release, as has been already explained, we addressed the king some-  
 15 what as follows: "It would surely be unreasonable, O king, to let ourselves be placed in the wrong by the actual facts. For, as the laws which we are proposing not only to transcribe but also to translate are binding on all Jews, what reasonable ground shall we have for our mission, whilst large numbers of the race continue in slavery in thy kingdom? Nay, with a perfect and bounteous heart release those who are held fast in miseries, since the same God who gave them the law directs thy kingdom, as my careful investigations  
 16 have taught me. For the God who seeth and created all things Whom they worship is he whom all men worship, and we too, O king, though we address him by other names as Zeus and Dis; and by these names they of old time not inappropriately signified that he

<sup>1</sup> The immigration of Jews into Egypt in the time of Ptolemy I Soter is no doubt historical. He made three expeditions into Syria in 320, 312, and 302 B. C. A passage of Hecataeus of Abdera, probably genuine, preserved in Josephus (*cont. Ap.* I, 186), says that after his victory at Gaza many Jews voluntarily returned with him and settled in Egypt. Nothing is known of the earlier settlements alluded to. "The Persian" seems to refer to Cambyses who conquered Egypt in 525 B. C. Psammetichus was king of Egypt from about B. C. 671 to 617; he was the first king of Egypt to employ *Greek* mercenaries in foreign campaigns (*Hdt.* II, 151 ff.). Others think that Psammis or Psammetichus II, as he is sometimes called, is here intended. He became king of Egypt about 595 B. C., and carried on war with Ethiopia (*Hdt.* II, 159-61).

through whom all things receive their life and being, is the director and lord of all<sup>1</sup>. Outdo, then, all men in magnanimity, and set at liberty those who are held in bondage." The king kept silence 17 for a brief while, and we inwardly prayed to God to incline his mind to a general release. (For the human race, being God's creation, is subject to change and alteration under his hand; and therefore I called with many and divers prayers upon him that rules the heart, that he might be constrained to fulfil my desire. For I had a good 18 hope, in bringing forward a proposal concerning the deliverance of men<sup>2</sup>, that God would cause the fulfilment of my desires; for when men piously think that they are working for righteousness and the furtherance of good deeds, their actions and designs are directed by Almighty God.) But the king, raising his head and looking at me with a cheerful countenance, said, "How many 19 thousands<sup>3</sup> dost thou think there will be?" And Andreas, who was standing beside him, replied, "A little over a hundred thousand." "Of a truth," said he, "it is but a small request which Aristeas makes of us." But Sosibius and some of the bystanders said, "It is indeed an action worthy of thy magnanimity to offer the release of these men as a thank-offering to the most High God. For, as thou hast been most highly honoured by the Almighty and exalted above thy forefathers, so is it fitting that thou shouldst make the very highest of thank-offerings." And he, greatly elated, gave orders that [the 20 redemption money] should be added to the soldiers' pay: for every slave the owner should receive twenty drachmas: a royal decree should be issued on the subject, and the lists should be drawn up forthwith. So magnificent was his zeal, and thus did God fulfil our whole desire, constraining him to liberate not only those who had entered the country with his father's army, but also any who were there before, or had since been introduced into the kingdom. It<sup>4</sup> was pointed out that the donation would exceed four hundred talents. And I think that it will not be without use to set down here the copy 21 of the royal decree. For the munificence of the king, who was enabled by God to be the means of deliverance to vast multitudes, will thus be made far clearer and more evident. It ran thus:—

"BY THE KING'S DECREE. All persons who took part in the 22

<sup>1</sup> The two accusative forms of Ζεύς, viz. Ζῆνα and Δία, are here derived from ζῆν (to live), and διά (through). This etymology is found in Orphic and other writings: see the Orphic fragment quoted by Blass on Acts xvii. 28.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. § 292. With this punctuation it is not necessary to read, with Mendelssohn, "the men." <sup>3</sup> Greek, "tens of thousands."

<sup>4</sup> Possibly the word "although" has fallen out in the MSS.

expedition of our father into the regions of Syria and Phoenicia, and invaded the territory of the Jews, and became possessors of Jewish slaves, and have brought these over into the city and the country, or have sold them to others, likewise also if any such were beforetime [in the country] or have since been introduced, the possessors shall straightway release them. Compensation shall forthwith be paid for every slave twenty drachmas, to the soldiers with their  
 23 pay, and to the rest at the royal bank. For we are of opinion that the making of these persons prisoners was contrary to the will of our father and to justice, and that the spoliation of their country and the transportation of the Jews into Egypt were due to the recklessness of the soldiery; for the spoil which accrued to the soldiers on the field of battle should have sufficed, and that, not content with this<sup>1</sup>, they reduced these men to subjection is therefore  
 24 wholly unreasonable. Forasmuch then as we undertake to award justice to all men, but chiefly to those who are without reason kept in subjection, and do in all things seek after what is right from motives of justice and piety towards all, we have decreed that the owners of all Jewish persons who are held in bondage anywhere<sup>2</sup> in any manner within the kingdom, shall on receipt of the prescribed sum release them: and no one shall in any way be dilatory in arranging for these matters, but they shall within three days from the date of publication of this decree hand in their lists to those who are set  
 25 over this business, and shall also forthwith exhibit the persons. For we are resolved that it is expedient for ourselves and for the realm that this matter be accomplished. And any who will may give information concerning defaulters, on condition that the informer shall become owner of the person if found guilty, but the property of such persons shall be confiscated to the royal purse<sup>3</sup>.”  
 26 When the decree was submitted to be read over to the king, containing all the rest with the exception of the words, “Also if any such were beforetime [in the country] or have since been introduced,” the king himself<sup>4</sup> out of his munificence and magnanimity appended this clause, and gave orders to assign a grant of the moneys in a  
 27 lump sum to the regimental paymasters and the royal bankers. This decision being arrived at, the decree was confirmed within seven days: and the donation amounted to over six hundred and sixty<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Καί.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps read “with any one and.”<sup>3</sup> Cf. the draft of a royal decree in 3 Macc. iii. 25-28, in which the same technical phrases occur (προστέταχαιμεν—διδιελήφαμεν—μηνύειν δὲ τὸν βουλόμενον κ.τ.λ.).<sup>4</sup> Reading αὐτός with Josephus.<sup>5</sup> Josephus says, “over 460 talents.”

talents. For many children at the breast were also liberated along with the mothers. And when the further question was referred, whether twenty drachmas should be given for these as well, the king ordered that this also should be done. So strictly to the letter did he carry out every detail of the resolution.

And when this business was ended, he ordered Demetrius to submit <sup>28</sup> a statement concerning the transcription of the Jewish books. For all business used to be transacted by these kings<sup>1</sup> by means of decrees and with great security, and nothing was done in an offhand or casual manner. And therefore have I set down here the copy of the memorial, and the copies of the letters, and the number of the presents sent, and the nature of each, for every one of these excelled in magnificence and technical skill. And the following is a copy of the memorial.

"To the great king [a statement submitted] by Demetrius. In <sup>29</sup> obedience to thy order, O king, concerning the books that are wanting to complete the library, that these should be added to the collection, and that those which have been lost should be duly replaced, after making careful inquiry into these matters, I refer the following statement to thee.

"Certain <sup>2</sup> books of the Jewish law with some few others are wanting; <sup>30</sup> for these are composed in Hebrew letters and in the Hebrew tongue, but have been interpreted<sup>3</sup> somewhat carelessly and not according to their true meaning, according to information supplied by the experts, because they have not hitherto received the supervision of royalty. And it is necessary that these books should in an emended form <sup>31</sup> find a place in thy library, because these laws, in that they are divine, are most full of wisdom and faultless. For this reason the writers of prose and verse and the host of historians have avoided any mention of the books aforesaid, and of the men who have lived [and are living]<sup>4</sup> their lives in accordance with them, because the views presented in them have a certain sanctity and holiness,

<sup>1</sup> This is one of several indications in the letter that the writer lived at a later age than that which he is describing.

<sup>2</sup> It is not necessary to read τὰ δὲ τοῦ νόμου. Demetrius is made to speak indefinitely of certain books, as in § 10 ("certain laws"), where also there is no article in the MSS.

<sup>3</sup> If σεσήμανται is correctly rendered, there appears to be a reference to an earlier Greek translation of the law than the LXX (cf. § 314). Aristobulus (second century B. C.), in a well-known passage refers to such a translation (see Swete, *Introduction to O. T. in Greek*, p. 1). Σεσήμανται may, however, merely mean "committed to writing." The explanation of Diels that incorrect vocalization is referred to is ingenious.

<sup>4</sup> Perhaps a gloss.

32 as says Hecataeus of Abdera<sup>1</sup>. Be it then thy good pleasure<sup>2</sup>,  
 O king, that a letter be written to the high priest at Jerusalem,  
 bidding him send such men as have lived the best of lives and are  
 advanced in years, versed in their country's law, six from each tribe,  
 in order that we may test wherein the more part agree, and so  
 obtaining an accurate translation may deposit it in a conspicuous  
 place<sup>3</sup> in a manner worthy of the undertaking and of thy gracious  
 33 will. Fare ever well!"<sup>4</sup> And when this memorial had been pub-

<sup>1</sup> A contemporary of Alexander the Great and Ptolemy I, and author of a history of Egypt. A history of the Jews, attributed to him, and often mentioned by Josephus and others, is probably a forgery, though, as Schürer thinks, based on genuine portions of Hecataeus. Wendland (Kautzsch, *Apokryphen*, II, 1 f.) has made it probable by the similarities which he has traced between our letter and the first book of Diodorus, whose main authority at this point is Hecataeus, that pseudo-Aristeas made a very large use of the true Hecataeus, especially in the description of Palestine.

<sup>2</sup> Ἐὰν οὖν φαίνηται. In this little phrase we may have a clue to guide us to the date of the letter. In the Papyri we find three formulae: (a) εἴ σοι δοκεῖ (ἐάν σοι δόξη), (b) ἐάν σοι φαίνηται, (c) ἐὰν φαίνηται. I find, after examining several collections of Ptolemaic papyri, that the classical phrase (a) is common in the earlier Ptolemaic period, (b) makes its appearance in 252 B.C., but does not occur after 163 B.C., at which date (c) first appears, and is common down to 70 B.C. I find no instance of the omission of the pronoun before 163 B.C. The evidence may of course be upset when more third-century papyri come to light, but it certainly looks as if our letter were not earlier than the middle of the second century. It should be added that the reading of B ἐὰν οὖν φανῆται σοι ἔννομον is clearly a correction. The instances in the papyri are: for (a) Grenfell (series 2), XIV a (270 or 233 B.C.), Petrie Pap. (series 2), IV, 5. 2 (255 B.C.), XII, 13 (241 B.C.), Petrie Pap. (series 1), XXVI (third cent.), Petrie Pap. (series 2), XVII, 12 (third cent.), Turin Pap., III, 33 (circa 120 B.C.); for (b) Petrie Pap. (series 2), XX, 2. 3, 9 (252 B.C.), IX, 5 (241-239 B.C.), I, 20 (third cent.), Brit. Mus. 22. 6 (164 B.C.), 35. 22 (circa 164 B.C.), 24 (163 B.C.), Paris, 35. 34 (163 B.C.); for (c) Paris, 37. 47 (163 B.C.), Brit. Mus., 44. 28 (161 B.C.), Paris, 12. 17 (157 B.C.), 13. 22 (157 B.C.), 40. 50 (156 B.C.), Grenfell, Erotic Fragment, XV, 4 (146 or 135 B.C.), Paris, 7. 17 (129 B.C.), Turin Pap., I, 3. 7 (? 120 B.C.), II, 40 (? 120 B.C.), V, 19 (?), VI, 20 (?), Grenfell, Erotic Fragment, XXXVIII, 16 (71 B.C.): to these may be added Letronne Inscr. (Philae), XXVI (127 B.C.).

<sup>3</sup> i. e. in the Alexandrian library (cf. § 38). It is just possible, however, that we should translate "may make the meaning plain" (cf. § 30, ἀμελέστερον . . . σεσήμανται).

<sup>4</sup> Εὐτύχει, as Mahaffy has shown, is the regular formula at the end of

sented, the king ordered that a letter should be written to Eleazar on these matters, informing him also of the liberation of the captives that had taken place. And he likewise presented towards the construction of bowls and vials<sup>1</sup> and a table and cups for libations fifty talents' weight of gold and seventy talents of silver and of precious stones a great number (enjoining the treasurers to leave to the craftsmen the selection of such materials as they might desire), and of stamped money for sacrifices and other purposes as much as a hundred talents. And we will describe to thee the construction [of these works of art], 34 but must first set out the copies of the letters. The tenor of the king's letter was as follows: "King Ptolemaeus to Eleazar the high 35 priest greeting and health. Forasmuch as many of the Jews chance to have been forcibly removed from Jerusalem by the Persians at the time of their power and to have been settled in our country, and others have entered Egypt as captives in the train of our father—of these he 36 enrolled many in the army, giving them higher pay, and in like manner from his confidence in those who were already in the country he placed under their charge the fortresses which he built, that the native Egyptians might<sup>2</sup> be intimidated by them: and we too on inheriting the kingdom meet all men, but chiefly thy countrymen, in a very friendly spirit—we, then, have given liberty to 37 more than a hundred thousand captives, paying their owners the value in money which is right, and making good any wrong which they have suffered through the violence of the rabble. For we are resolved that in this we are doing a pious action, and we hereby dedicate a thank-offering to the most high God, who has preserved our kingdom in peace and in the highest esteem throughout the whole world. And we have further placed in the army those who are in the prime of their life, but to such as are qualified for attendance on our person, and deserving of confidential posts at court, have we assigned offices of state. And since we desire to 38 confer a favour not on these only, but on all Jews throughout the world, and on future generations, it is our royal will that your law be translated from the Hebrew, as you call it, into Greek, that so these writings also may find a place in our library with the other royal volumes. Thou wilt therefore do well and wilt duly 39 repay our zeal, if thou lookest out men who have lived honour-

an address from a subordinate to his superior, and is therefore correctly used here. A person addressing his subordinate or his equal uses *ἐρωσο* (so in the letters that follow, §§ 40, 46).

<sup>1</sup> Or "saucers."

<sup>2</sup> I have, following Josephus and Eusebius, omitted the negative which stands in the Aristeas MSS.

able lives, advanced in years, well versed in the law and able to translate, six out of each tribe, that we may discover wherein the more part agree: for the inquiry concerns matters of more than ordinary import. For we are of opinion that we shall through this  
 40 achievement gain great renown. And we have sent on this business Andreas, of the chief of the body-guards, and Aristeas, who hold honoured places in our court, to confer with thee. They bring with them dedicatory offerings for the temple, and for sacrifices and other purposes a hundred talents of silver. And shouldest thou also write to us concerning any desires of thine, thou wilt be welcome and wilt be doing only what friendship requires: and be assured that thy wishes will receive instant fulfilment. Farewell.”

41 In reply to this letter Eleazar wrote much<sup>1</sup> as follows: “Eleazar the High Priest to king Ptolemaeus, a sincere friend, greeting. Do thou fare well and the queen Arsinoe, thy sister, and the children<sup>2</sup>, so will it be well and we have our desire: we ourselves also are in good  
 42 health. On receiving thy letter we greatly rejoiced because of thy royal purpose and noble resolve, and we collected the whole people and read it to them, in order that they might know thy pious reverence for our God. And we also exhibited the vials<sup>3</sup> which thou sentest, twenty of gold and thirty of silver, the five bowls, and a table as dedicatory offerings, and the hundred talents of silver for the offering of sacrifices and for such repairs as the temple may  
 43 require – gifts which were brought by Andreas, who is of those who hold an honoured place at thy court, and Aristeas, virtuous and cultivated men, who in all ways show themselves worthy of thy high principles and righteousness. They have also imparted to us thy commissions, and have heard from our lips such replies as befit what  
 44 thou hast written. For in all things which are to thy profit, even though they be contrary to our natural impulses, will we do thy bidding: for this is a mark of friendship and affection. For thou too hast in divers manners<sup>4</sup> done great services to our countrymen  
 45 which cannot pass out of mind. We therefore straightway offered

<sup>1</sup> The force of *ἐνδεχομένως* (which elsewhere seems equivalent to *ὅσον ἐνδέχεται*, “so far as possible”) is doubtful. Wendland suggests “so far as he could write Greek,” the writer excusing the use of this language by a Jew of Palestine. It does not seem necessary to alter the reading, with Diels, to *ἐκδεχομένως*, “straightway.”

<sup>2</sup> The marriage of Ptolemy with his sister Arsinoe II probably took place in 278 B.C.; she appears to have been childless, but is said to have adopted the children of Arsinoe I (Mahaffy, *Empire of the Ptolemies*, 137, 155).

<sup>3</sup> Or “saucers.”

<sup>4</sup> Read *κατὰ πολλοὺς τρόπους* with Eusebius.



sacrifices on thy behalf and on behalf of thy sister and thy children and thy 'friends'<sup>1</sup>, and the whole people prayed that thy undertakings might ever prosper, and that Almighty God would preserve thy kingdom in peace with honour, and that the transcription of the holy law might be to thy profit and carefully executed. And in 46 the presence of them all we selected virtuous men, advanced in years, six from each tribe, whom we are also sending with [the copy of] the law. Thou wilt therefore do well, O just king, if thou givest orders that, so soon as the transcription of the books be accomplished, the men may be restored to us again in safety. Farewell. <sup>2</sup>And 47 their names are, of the first tribe, Joseph, Ezekias<sup>3</sup>, Zacharias, John, Ezekias<sup>3</sup>, Elisha: of the second, Judas, Simon, Samuel<sup>4</sup>, Adaius<sup>5</sup>, Mattathias, Eschlemias<sup>6</sup>: of the third, Nehemiah, Joseph, Theodosius, Baseas<sup>7</sup>, Ornias<sup>7</sup>, Dakis: of the fourth, Jonathas, Abraius, Elisha, 48 Ananias, Zacharias<sup>8</sup>, Chelkias<sup>8</sup>: of the fifth, Isaac, Jacob, Jesus, Sabbataius<sup>9</sup>, Simon, Levi: of the sixth, Judas, Joseph, Simon, Zacharias, Samuel, Selemias: of the seventh, Sabbataius<sup>9</sup>, Zedekiah, Jacob, 49 Isaac, Iesias<sup>10</sup>, Natthaius: of the eighth, Theodosius, Jason, Jesus, Theodotus, John, Jonathas: of the ninth, Theophilus, Abraham, Arsamus<sup>11</sup>, Jason, Endemias, Daniel: of the tenth, Jeremiah, Eleazar, 50 Zacharias, Baneas, Elisha, Dathaius<sup>12</sup>: of the eleventh, Samuel, Joseph, Judas, Jonathas, Caleb<sup>13</sup>, Dositheus: of the twelfth, Isaelus, John, Theodosius, Arsamus, Abietes, Ezekiel: in all seventy-two persons."

<sup>1</sup> A court title.

<sup>2</sup> The names form a postscript to the letter (*ὑπογεγραμμένα ἐν τῇ ἐπιστολῇ*, Jos.).

<sup>3</sup> Possibly one of these names is due to corruption.

<sup>4</sup> Σομόηλος here and in § 48: in § 50 Σαμούηλος.

<sup>5</sup> Either Adaiah (אדאי) or Iddo (אידו).

<sup>6</sup> Representing כנלש, which is more correctly represented by Σελεμίας in § 48.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. 3 Reg. ii. 46 h 'Ορνείου . . καὶ Βασά: 2 Reg. iii. 4 A 'Ορνίας.

<sup>8</sup> The names Zacharias, Chelkias are derived from the list of names in the Syriac version of Epiphanius, *De mens. et pond.*, who uses the narrative of Aristeas. In the MSS. of Aristeas Χαβρίας stands in place of Zacharias, and the sixth name in this tribe has disappeared.

<sup>9</sup> Σαββαταῖος occurs, in conjunction with Λευείς, in 1 Esdras ix. 14 (= עבד עזרא x. 15, Σαβαθαὶ δὲ Λευείτης): Σαββαταίας in 1 Esdras ix. 48 A.

<sup>10</sup> Probably = Jesse (Epiphan. ישש).

<sup>11</sup> The nearest form in the LXX is 'Αρσά, 3 Reg. xvi. 9 A. For the termination cf. Βαάλασαμος, 1 Esdras ix. 43.

<sup>12</sup> Or Thaddaeus, as one MS. reads.

<sup>13</sup> So Epiphanius. The MSS. have Χαβεῦ.

51 Such, then, was the reply which the king's letter met with at the hands of Eleazar.

[DESCRIPTION OF THE ROYAL PRESENTS.]

I will now fulfil the promise which I made to describe the works of art. For these were wrought with extraordinary technical skill, as the king not only made large contributions, but also exercised a constant supervision over the craftsmen, so that they could not neglect or slur any of the details. I will first give thee an account of  
 52 the table. Now, the king's intention was to make this structure of gigantic dimensions. However, he gave orders that an inquiry should be made of persons in the locality as to the size of the existing  
 53 table<sup>1</sup> which stood in the temple at Jerusalem: and on receiving their reports of these dimensions, he inquired further whether the dimensions of his structure should be larger. Thereupon some of the priests and of the people said there was nothing to prevent it. But the king replied that, though his wish was to make his gift five times as large, yet he doubted whether such a table might not be useless  
 54 for the public ministrations. For it was not his desire that his offerings should merely be deposited on the spot, but it would afford him far greater satisfaction, if the appropriate services were duly performed by the proper ministers on the structures which he had  
 55 designed. He added that the small scale on which the former works were constructed was not due to any lack of gold, but was apparently so planned for some definite reason. For had any injunction been given<sup>2</sup> [for a larger table], there would have been no lack [of means to supply it]: it was not therefore right to surpass or exceed what  
 56 had been well designed. At the same time he ordered that the utmost diversity of artistic skill should be employed, since all his conceptions were on a grand scale, and he had a natural gift for comprehending the impression which objects would produce<sup>3</sup>. And whatever details were left unrecorded [in scripture], these he ordered [the craftsmen] to beautify, but wherever written directions were given, they were to be guided by these in the measurements.

<sup>1</sup> The table of shewbread.

<sup>2</sup> Adopting Mendelssohn's ingenious emendation *ἐπιταγῆς* for *ἐπὶ τὰ τῆς*. But the reading of the MSS. may perhaps stand. "For nothing could have been lacking for the existing table."

<sup>3</sup> Or "for designing the appearance of objects." The artistic talent of Philadelphus is attested by the historians of his time. Callixenus of Rhodes (Athenaeus, V, 36. 203 C) says *ὁ Φιλάделφος . . . περὶ πάντα ἔσπουδάκει τὰ κατασκευάσματα φιλοτίμως*.

So they fashioned [the table] two cubits in length and a cubit 57  
and a half in height, making the work of pure gold and perfectly  
solid; that is to say, the gold was not overlaid upon other material,  
but the plate of beaten metal was affixed entire<sup>1</sup>. And they made 58  
a border of an hand-breadth round about, and its ledges of twisted  
work<sup>2</sup>, with a design of ropes in relief, the chasing being wonderfully  
executed on the three sides. For the ledges were triangular in shape<sup>3</sup>, 59  
and the work on each side was fashioned upon the same pattern,  
so that, whichever way they were turned, the appearance was the  
same, and while the ledge rested on the border that side of it which  
sloped towards the table was beautifully worked, although the side  
which sloped outwards [alone] met the eye of the spectator. And so 60  
the edge in which the two sloping sides met, and which ran along the  
top, was a sharp one, since, as we have said already, the shape was a  
triangular one [whichever way the ledge was turned]<sup>4</sup>. And precious  
stones were inlaid in the ledge between the rope-work: set one kind  
beside another they were interwoven in an inimitable manner. And 61  
they were all perforated and securely fastened by golden pins. And at  
the angles the clamps held them<sup>5</sup> firmly in their places. And slanting 62

<sup>1</sup> Lit. "was itself attached" or welded, i. e. to other similar plates of gold. The table is in part modelled on the description of the table of shewbread in Exod. xxv. 23 ff.; from that passage are taken the dimensions, the pure gold, the border of a hand-breadth, and the *κυμάτια στρεπτά*. The passage is interesting as showing that the writer was aware of a remarkable divergence between the Hebrew and Greek texts which we find at this point in Exodus. While the Hebrew text says that the shewbread table was to be made of acacia wood and overlaid with pure gold, the LXX says it was to be "gold, of pure gold" (*χρυσὴν, χρυσοῦ καθαροῦ*). Possibly the LXX text has come from the description of the golden shewbread table in Solomon's temple (1 Kings vii. 48).—The MSS. of Aristeas only mention the length and height of Ptolemy's table. Josephus adds the breadth "one cubit," as in Exodus, and Wendland accordingly inserts *πῆχους δὲ τὸ εὖρος* into the text of Aristeas. But it is noticeable that the breadth of the table in Exodus is there also omitted in the Codex Ambrosianus.—Much of the following description is obscure, especially as regards the *κυμάτια στρεπτά*.

<sup>2</sup> Or "and its mouldings (or 'rims') were made so as to revolve." The words *καθ' ὃ ἂν μέρος στρέφοιτο* below suggest that the writer took *στρεπτά* in the sense of "revolving."

<sup>3</sup> Reading *τρίγωνα* with Josephus in place of *τριγωνία*. The table, having four legs, was presumably not triangular.

<sup>4</sup> These words should perhaps be omitted.

<sup>5</sup> It is doubtful whether the precious stones or the "ledges" are intended.

upwards from the border and encircling the table there was an egg pattern set with precious stones, and elaborately worked with a series of flutings<sup>1</sup>, packed closely together round the whole table<sup>2</sup>.

63 And beneath the raised work of the stones which formed the egg pattern the craftsmen made a crown of fruits of all kinds: projecting from it were shown vine-clusters and corn-ears, dates also and apples and olives and pomegranates and the like. They worked the stones, which had the colour of each species of the aforesaid fruits, to resemble those fruits, and then attached them edgeways to the gold

64 all round the table. And next to the crown the egg pattern was worked over again, and the rest of the fluted and relief work, because the table was made to be used on either side according to choice<sup>3</sup>, and with such symmetry that the ledges and the border reappeared

65 on the side nearest the feet. For they made a plate of solid metal, four fingers broad, extending along the whole breadth of the table, into which the legs could be inserted, these being provided with pins and clamps to secure them to the border, in order that either side of the table might be used according to choice. This metal plate was visible on the surface, as the work was constructed so as to

66 be reversible. And on the top of the table they worked a meander in relief, with precious stones of divers hues standing out in the middle of it, carbuncles and emeralds, and onyx, and the other kinds which

67 are noted for their beauty. And next to the meander there was a wonderful design of open net-work, giving the centre of the table the appearance of a lozenge-shaped pattern; and into this were inlaid crystal and the so-called electron<sup>4</sup>, affording an in-

68 imitable spectacle to the beholders. And the legs they made with lily-shaped capitals, the lilies bending over beneath the table, while the parts which met the eye represented the leaves in an upright posi-

69 tion. The basis of the leg which rested on the ground consisted entirely of carbuncle, a hand-breadth [high] and of eight fingers' breadth, and in appearance had the shape of a shoe; upon this rested the whole

70 plate into which the leg was inserted<sup>5</sup>. And they represented ivy, intertwined with acanthus, growing out of the stone and encircling the leg, together with a vine and its clusters (these being worked in stone), and reaching to the capital. And the pattern of the four legs was the same: all the parts were carefully made and attached,

<sup>1</sup> Or "with continuous mouldings."

<sup>2</sup> Some variation of the egg and dart pattern seems to be meant.

<sup>3</sup> Read *αἰρῶνται* for *αἴρωνται* in this and the next section (Wendland).

<sup>4</sup> Probably "amber."

<sup>5</sup> Literally "the whole plate of the leg," apparently that mentioned in § 65.

and with such consummate skill and craftsmanship as exactly to resemble nature, insomuch that if a breath of air blew upon them the leaves stirred in their places; so closely was every detail modelled to imitate nature. The top of the table they made in three pieces, 71 as it were a triptych, the pieces being fitted together by dovetailing which was secured by pegs in the thickness of the structure, and the joinings being rendered invisible and undiscoverable. The thickness of the whole table was no less than half a cubit, so that many talents went to the whole fabric. For, as the king had determined not 72 to increase the dimensions at all, he expended all the more upon these details<sup>1</sup>, even as much as would have been required for a table on a larger scale; and in accordance with his purpose the whole of the work was completed in a marvellous and memorable style, and was inimitable in its craftsmanship, in its beauty magnificent.

As regards the bowls, two of them were wrought in gold, and from 73 their bases to half way up their sides bore a device of scales in relief, and precious stones cunningly set between the scales. Then above 74 this was a meander, a cubit in height, with raised work of stones of divers hues on its surface<sup>2</sup>, which besides having a beautiful effect displayed the most elaborate skill. Over this was a mosaic of interlacing lozenge-shaped figures extending to the brim and producing the appearance of net-work. And in the middle were bosses of 75 stones of various kinds, arranged alternately, and not less than four fingers broad, which completed the beauty of the spectacle. And round the crown of the brim were worked lilies with their blossoms and interlacing vine clusters. Such was the fashion of the golden 76 bowls, and they contained over two firkins each. But those of silver were made with a smooth surface, and formed a veritable mirror, marvellous on account of their very smoothness, which was such that anything brought close to them was reflected more clearly than in mirrors. But it is impossible to describe the real impression pro- 77 duced by the completed works of art. For when the vessels were finished and were set side by side—that is to say, first a silver bowl, then a golden, then another silver and another golden one—the nature of the sight was quite indescribable, and those who came to view it could not tear themselves from it, so dazzling was the brightness and so entrancing the vision. There was variety in the effect of 78 the spectacle. If one looked at the gold work, it was one of delight and astonishment, as the mind took in one by one each detail of the execution. And again, when one wished to turn one's eyes to the silver vessels which stood there, all the surrounding objects were

<sup>1</sup> Text and meaning are uncertain.

<sup>2</sup> Read ἐν ὑπεροχῇ for ἐνυπὴρχε (Wendland).

reflected, wherever one stood, causing a still greater ecstasy to the beholders. So the artistic skill displayed in the works is quite beyond description.

79 And on the golden vials<sup>1</sup> they engraved vine-wreaths in the centre, and round the rims they plaited in relief work a wreath of ivy and myrtle and olive, in which they set precious stones. And the rest of the relief work they wrought in various patterns, as they zealously strove to make everything in a manner worthy of the king's pre-  
80 eminent position. In a word, there was no such work for costliness and artistic skill either in the royal treasuries or in any other. Great interest was shown by the king, who loved to gain a reputation  
81 for the excellence of his designs. For often he would omit to give his public audience, and would carefully supervise the craftsmen, to see that they executed the works in a manner befitting the place to which they were to be sent. And so they were all made in a magnificent style, and were worthy of the king who was sending them and of the high priest who was the governor of the place.  
82 So excessive was the number of the precious stones (there were not less than five thousand, and they were large to boot), and so first-rate was all the craftsmanship, that the expenditure upon the precious stones and the skilled work amounted to five times the value of the gold.

#### [DESCRIPTION OF JERUSALEM AND ITS VICINITY.]

83 I have given thee this description, as I considered that a record of these presents was required. The next portion [of my letter] contains an account of our journey to Eleazar. But first I will indicate the configuration of the whole country. When we reached the district, we beheld the city lying in the centre of the whole  
84 of Judaea upon a mountain which rose to a great height. Upon its crest stood the temple in splendour, with its three enclosing walls, more than seventy cubits high, their breadth and length corresponding to the structure of the edifice. The whole was built with a mag-  
85 nificence and liberality beyond all precedent. The lavish expenditure of money was apparent even in the great doorway, and in its frame-  
86 work of door posts, and in the stability of its lintel. And the fashion of the curtain bore a very close resemblance to a door<sup>2</sup>, the woven hanging being kept in incessant motion by the current of wind underneath. For while the current took its rise from the ground, the swell extended to the upper and tauter part of the curtain<sup>3</sup>:

<sup>1</sup> Or "saucers."

<sup>2</sup> Reading *θυρώσει*.

<sup>3</sup> Text and meaning are uncertain. Schmidt's emendation *καταλείπειν* is adopted.

and the effect was a beautiful spectacle, from which it was hard to tear oneself away.

And the altar was built of a size in keeping with<sup>1</sup> the place and with 87 the sacrifices which were consumed by fire, and the ascent to it was on a like scale. The place was approached by a gentle slope from a proper regard for decency, and the ministering priests were clad in coats of fine linen reaching to the ankles<sup>2</sup>. And the house looks toward the east, 88 and its back is turned westwards. And the whole floor is paved and slopes away in the right directions, so as to admit of the influx of water, with which it is flushed to wash away the blood from the sacrifices. For many thousands of cattle are offered on the feast-days. And there 89 is an unfailing supply of water, because a rich natural spring bubbles up within the temple area, and there are also wonderful underground reservoirs passing description. These, as was explained to me, extended at a distance of five furlongs all round the site of the temple, and had innumerable pipes attached to each of them, since the channels converge on every side. [It was explained] also how all 90 these were soldered with lead to the ground and the sides<sup>3</sup>, and over them is laid a great mass of plaster, so that everything is made secure: and they have numerous outlets at the base of the temple, which are invisible to all except the actual ministrants: and in this way all the vast accumulation of sacrificial blood is swept away in the twinkling of an eye. And, having myself been convinced 91 as to the nature of the reservoirs, I will explain how I reached that conviction. They led me more than four furlongs out of the city, and at a certain place bade me stoop down and listen to the rushing noise of the meeting of the waters; thus was the magnitude of the receptacles made evident to me, as I have described them<sup>4</sup>.

And the priests' ministration in its exhibition of physical strength 92 and in its orderly and silent performance could in no way be surpassed. For they all of their own free will undergo labours requiring much endurance, and each has his appointed task. And their service is without intermission, some [carrying] wood, others [having charge

<sup>1</sup> Read *συμμέτρως ἔχουσαν* (Mendelssohn).

<sup>2</sup> Exod. xx. 26; xxxix. 27 (LXX xxxvi. 35). Read *τῶν λειτουργούντων ἱερέων* (Mendelssohn).

<sup>3</sup> Or "had their bases and sides of lead."

<sup>4</sup> For these underground cisterns see (Ecclus. I. 3 *ἀποδοχείων ὑδάτων*) Philo the epic poet (second century B. C., ap. Eus., *P. E.*, 453 b *αἰπὸν δ' ἄρ' ἐκπτύουσι διὰ χθονὸς ὑδροχόουσι σωλήνες*), Tacitus, *Hist.*, V, 12 (*fons perennis aquae, cavati sub terra montes et piscinae cisternaeque servandis imbribus*) and the *Itinerarium Burdigala Hierosolymam* (circa 333 A. D., *Palaeestinae descriptiones*, ed. T. Tobler, 1869).

of] oil, others of fine flour, and others of the spices, while others again offer the burnt-offerings of the flesh, displaying herein extra-  
 93 ordinary power. For they grip with both hands the legs of the calves, each animal weighing wellnigh over two talents, and then with both hands and with wonderful dexterity fling the beast to a considerable height, and never fail to plant it on the altar. The sheep and goats are, likewise, remarkable for their weight and fat. For those whose duty it is always select such as are without blemish and of exceeding fatness, and then the offering already described is  
 94 performed. And there is a place set apart for them to rest, where those who are relieved from duty take their seats. And thereupon, some of those who have relaxed their toil rise up willingly, without  
 95 any order for their ministration being given. And the deepest silence prevails, so that one would suppose<sup>1</sup> that there was not a single person in the place, although the ministers in attendance number some seven hundred, not to mention the large multitude of those who bring their sacrifices to be offered: but everything is performed with awe and in a manner worthy of the divine majesty<sup>2</sup>.

96 And when we beheld Eleazar in the course of his ministration, and his apparel, and the lustre lent by the wearing of the coat<sup>3</sup> wherewith he is clad and by the precious stones which encircle it, we were struck with a great amazement. For there are bells of gold around [the border of] his long robe, giving out a peculiar musical sound, and on either side of these are pomegranates embroidered  
 97 in gay colours, and of a marvellous hue. And he was girt with a rich and magnificent girdle<sup>4</sup>, woven in the fairest colours. And on his breast he wears what is called the oracle<sup>5</sup>, wherein are set twelve stones of divers kinds, enclosed in gold, [bearing] the names of the heads of the tribes according to their original order, each of them  
 98 flashing forth in indescribable fashion its own natural hue. And on his head<sup>6</sup> he has what is called the turban, and over this the inimitable mitre, the consecrated diadem, bearing in relief upon a plate of gold in holy letters the name of God, set between his eyebrows, full of glory. [Such is the raiment worn by him]<sup>7</sup> who is judged worthy of these things in the public services. And the  
 99 general aspect of these things produces terror and discomfiture, insomuch that one thinks that one has passed into another sphere

<sup>1</sup> Read *ὥστε ὑπολαμβάνειν*.

<sup>2</sup> Literally "great divinity."

<sup>3</sup> Exod. xxviii. 4, 31-35.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 15-21; xxxix. 8 ff. The apposition of *λίθοι* and *τὰ ὀνόματα* is to be explained by Exod. xxviii. 21 *οἱ λίθοι ἔστωσαν ἐκ τῶν ὀνομάτων*.

<sup>6</sup> Exod. xxviii. 36 ff.; Ecclus. xlv. 12.

<sup>7</sup> Some words appear to have fallen out in the Greek,



outside the world; indeed I confidently affirm that any man who witnesses the spectacle which I have described will experience an amazement and wonder beyond description, and will be profoundly moved in his mind at the sanctity attaching to every detail.

To obtain an accurate knowledge of everything, we ascended to <sup>100</sup> the citadel of the city, which lies hard by, and watched the spectacle. The citadel is situated on a very lofty spot, and is fortified with several towers, which are constructed up to their highest points of great blocks of stone, as a defence, so we are informed, to the precincts of the temple, in order that, in case of any attack or <sup>101</sup> revolution or invasion of an enemy, no one might effect an entrance within the walls which surround the house. For there are engines for discharging missiles and machines of various kinds on the towers of the citadel, and the place commands the enclosing walls aforementioned, and the towers are guarded by the most trusted men who have <sup>102</sup> wrought great achievements in their country's service. And these had orders not to quit the citadel, except on the feast days, and then only in turn, nor did they suffer any one to enter. And even <sup>103</sup> when any injunction was given by their leader<sup>1</sup> to admit any persons as sightseers, great care was exercised, as was shown in our case. For although we were unarmed and only two in number they could hardly be brought to admit us to witness the offering of the sacrifices. And they said that they were pledged by oaths <sup>104</sup> to act thus. For they all had sworn, and had of bounden duty and for conscience sake fulfilled their bond, that they, although numbering five hundred men, would not admit more than five persons at the same time; for the citadel was the one protection of the temple, and its builder had thus securely fortified its tower of defence.

The extent of the city is moderate, its circuit being about forty <sup>105</sup> furlongs<sup>2</sup>, to give a rough estimate. And the arrangement of its towers and of the thoroughfares which pass out between them reminds one of a theatre, the resemblance extending to the cross-streets which are seen, some below, and some above, in the usual manner [of a theatre]<sup>3</sup>. For the ground is irregular, as the city is built

<sup>1</sup> Apparently the high priest is meant (cf. § 122).

<sup>2</sup> So Timochares (Eus., *P. E.*, 452 b). Hecataeus (Ios., *cont. Ap.*, I, 197), whom pseudo-Aristeas is probably following in this description, says the circuit was "about fifty furlongs (or stadia)."

<sup>3</sup> Reading *εἰθισμένως*, an emendation suggested by Dr. Redpath, and regarding *καὶ φαινόμενων . . . ἐπάνωθεν* as parenthetical; *εἰθισμένων* of the MSS. might mean "which are the most frequented." With the comparison to a theatre cf. *Encyc. Bibl.*, II, 2412, art. Jerusalem, "There is, however, a second affluent or head of the central Tyropoeon valley on the W. side

106 on a mountain. And there are also stair-ways leading to the cross-streets. For some persons take their way along the higher level, and others underneath, <sup>1</sup>the distinction in the means of journeying being chiefly made <sup>1</sup>for the sake of those who are undergoing the usual purifications, to prevent them from coming into contact with any forbidden thing.

107 And it was not without reason that the original founders built the city of convenient proportions, but from a wise insight. For as the country is extensive and fair, and some parts, namely those in Samaria so called, and those adjoining the country of the Idu-maeans, are level plain, while other parts are mountainous, <sup>2</sup>namely those adjoining the country of Judaea, the inhabitants must <sup>2</sup>devote their unremitting attention to agriculture and the care of the soil, in order that the mountain-dwellers also may thereby obtain a fair crop. And in this way cultivation of every sort is carried on and an abundant harvest reaped throughout the whole of the  
108 district above-mentioned. On the other hand, it has been the fate

of its main course—a kind of dell or *theatre-shaped depression* extending westwards," a depression which would face a spectator looking westwards from the Temple Mount, where the writer of our letter professes to be standing. Strabo employs the same comparison in his description of Jericho (763 Ἱερικοῦς δ' ἐστὶ πεδῖον κύκλω περιεχόμενον ὀρεινῇ τινι καὶ πού καὶ θεατροειδῶς πρὸς αὐτὸ κεκλιμένη), and it is perhaps noteworthy that in the same chapter he has the word διαβάθραι of the scaling-ladders used by Pompey against Jerusalem. The διεόδοι (the main streets leading out of the city) and the δίοδοι (cross-streets) seem to be distinguished: for the former cf. Matt. xxii. 9 τὰς διεόδους τῶν ὁδῶν, and for the large number of the latter cf. the added words in the LXX of Jer. ii. 28 καὶ κατ' ὀρθμὸν δίοδων τῆς Ἱερουσαλήμ ἔθνον τῆ Βάαλ. "Jerusalem, like other ancient cities, was probably divided into quarters by main streets that passed out to the country through gates . . . The principal streets must from the nature of the ground have run from north to south, and these must have been connected by cross-streets, forming *insulae*, which were no doubt intersected by numberless narrow winding lanes" (Smith, *Dict. Bibl.*<sup>3</sup>, I, ii. 1593). With the word ἀνάκλασις (bending back) we may perhaps compare the statement of the same writer that the northern and southern outliers of the Mount of Olives "*bend round slightly towards the city, and give the effect of 'standing round about Jerusalem'*" (ibid., 1587).

<sup>1</sup> The meaning is doubtful. Wendland, reading *διεστηκνίας*, interprets the passage "especially if they have a long journey to make."

<sup>2</sup> Restored by conjecture, some words having been lost in the MSS. But it is doubtful if Judaea would be used in this restricted sense, and Wendland's reading "namely those in the centre" is perhaps nearer the mark.

of all large and consequently prosperous cities to be thickly populated themselves, while they neglect the country, as the thoughts of every one are bent on enjoyment, and all men have a natural propensity to pleasure<sup>1</sup>. And this is what happened to Alexandria, a city which 109 surpasses all others in size and prosperity. For the country folk by migrating to the town and making a long stay there brought the tillage of the soil to a low ebb. And so the king, to prevent them 110 from making a stay, ordered that their visits should not exceed twenty days: and he likewise gave written injunctions to the officials, that if it were necessary to summon any such persons [to town], they should decide their cases within five days. And as he considered 111 the matter one of great importance, he established judges with their subordinates in every district<sup>2</sup>, that so the tillers of the soil and their directors might not, while making private gain, diminish the granaries of the city, I refer to the proceeds of agriculture<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Aristot., *Eth. N.*, ii. 8. 8 οἷον αὐτοὶ μᾶλλον πεφύκαμεν πρὸς τὰς ἡδονάς, διὸ εὐκατάφοροί ἐσμεν μᾶλλον πρὸς ἀκολασίαν ἢ πρὸς κοσμιότητα.

<sup>2</sup> Κατὰ νομούς (the technical name for the districts into which Egypt was divided), not κατὰ νόμους.

<sup>3</sup> The agricultural class are to be kept on the land and prevented from deserting their employment in order to make the large private incomes which they could acquire by setting up business in the city. The meaning of προστάται (?directors or agents) is doubtful. Possibly we should render "the agricultural class who are also the protectors (or backbone) of the city," τῆς πόλεως being taken to refer both to it and to τὰ ταμεία. A good deal of light is thrown on the passage by an important papyrus document which is assigned to the year 165 B.C. (Paris Papyri, no. 63, *Notices et Extraits*, tom. XVIII, ed. Letronne and Brunet). This document contains directions from a superior official in Alexandria to subordinate officials explaining the meaning of a previous edict which had been issued with regard to agriculture, and had been misunderstood (τῶν πρὸς ταῖς πραγματείαις οὐ κατὰ τὸ βέλτιστον ἐνδεχομένων τὸν τοῦ περὶ τῆς γεωργίας προστάγματος νόον). It probably refers to a crisis following a drought, and illustrates the importance attaching to the agriculture of the country. An explanation of the previous edict is required, because some of the military class had, contrary to the intention of the edict, been forced to take part in the agricultural labour imposed by it when they should have been exempted. Town and country are contrasted as in Aristeas. The subordinate officials have ludicrously (παιδαιρώδη) supposed that the citizen class already laden, day and night, with the burden of the public services (τοὺς ἐν τῇ πόλει καὶ διὰ νυκτὸς καὶ δι' ἡμέρας ἐν ταῖς λειτουργίαις καταπονουμένους) were to be forced to till the ground. Many words and phrases in Aristeas find illustration in this papyrus. With δι' ἐγγράπων διαστολὰς ἔδωκεν cf. in the Papyrus καθότι προδιεστάλμεθα, διεστάλμεθα (col. 7), and τηλικούτων διαστολῶν γεγοννίων ὑμῖν καὶ ἐνοπίοις (sic)

- 112 We have been led into this digression by Eleazar's admirable exposition to us of the principles to which we have referred. Their industry in agriculture is indeed great. For their country is thickly planted with olive trees, and is rich in cereal produce and pulse, in vines also and honey in abundance; fruit trees of other kinds and palms are beyond reckoning with them. And there are cattle
- 113 in abundance of all sorts, and rich pastures for them. And so they rightly recognized that the [rural] districts needed a dense population, and they constructed the city and the villages in correct proportions.
- 114 And a great mass of spices, precious stones, and gold is conveyed by the Arabs into the district. For the country, besides being suited for cultivation, is also adapted for commerce, and the city is skilled in many arts, and has no lack of any wares that are carried across
- 115 the sea. For it has havens well situated which supply its needs—namely, that at Ascalon, and Joppa, and Gaza, as well as Ptolemais which was founded by the king<sup>1</sup>. And it holds a central position as regards these places, and is not far distant from them. Thus the country enjoys everything in plenty, being well watered on every
- 116 side and securely enclosed. And round it there flows the Jordan so-called, a river which never runs dry. The country originally embraced not less than sixty million acres (although subsequently the neighbouring peoples encroached upon it), so that six hundred thousand men became possessors of lots of a hundred acres each<sup>2</sup>.

καὶ διὰ γραμμάτων (col. 2, 35). With *πρὸ πολλοῦ ποιούμενος* (of the importance which the king attached to agriculture), cf. (col. 6, 185) *πρὸ πάντων γὰρ ἡγησάμενοι τὴν περὶ τοῦ μέρους τούτου σπουδὴν* (of the same). It may also be noted, in connexion with the word *προστάται* in Aristeas, that the verb *προστήναι* is twice used in the papyrus, meaning apparently "to superintend" or "see to" agricultural work. On the *χρηματισταί* (or circuit-judges) see the Turin Papyri, ed. Peyron, p. 94.

<sup>1</sup> i. e. Ptolemy Philadelphus. The writer is correct in implying that the place received its name of Ptolemais from Ptolemy II (Schürer, *Geschichte*<sup>3</sup>, II, 112). Its earlier name was Acco. It is pointed out that Joppa did not fall into the hands of the Jews until after 146 B. C., when it was taken by Jonathan, and shortly after finally secured by Simon (1 Macc. x. 76; xiv. 5, 34): Gaza did not belong to the Jews till it was taken by Alexander Jannaeus about 96 B. C., while Ascalon and Ptolemais never formed part of their territory. In view of the error with regard to the two places last named, it is impossible to draw any inference as to the date of the work from this passage. Wendland, on account of the allusion to Gaza, dates the letter after 96 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> The text is doubtful. Two MSS. read *ὑπέβησαν* for *ἐπέβησαν*, and Wendland accordingly translates "(when) the neighbouring peoples retired" (i. e. were gradually driven back by the Israelites), but it is

And the river, like the Nile, is swollen about the time of harvest<sup>1</sup>, and irrigates a large part of the land. But the former discharges 117 its waters into another river in the district of the people of Ptolemais<sup>2</sup>, while the latter empties itself into the sea. And there are other so-called brooks flowing down [into the plain] and embracing the parts about Gaza and the region of Azotus. And surrounded as 118 the country is by natural defences, invasion is difficult and impracticable for large numbers, because the passes are narrow, being flanked by steep cliffs and deep defiles, and the whole mountain-range which surrounds the entire country is of a rugged character.

It was further reported that in former days there were copper 119 and iron mines in the neighbouring mountains of Arabia. But the working of these ceased at the time of the Persian rule, as the overseers of those days spread a false report that the working of them was unprofitable and expensive, in order to prevent the country from 120 being spoiled for the sake of the mining of the aforesaid places, and possibly taken out of their hands as a consequence of the Persian overlordship, while by the help of the false report which they had spread they found a pretext for entering the district<sup>3</sup>.

difficult, with that rendering, to understand the contrast between *κατὰ τὸ ἀρχαῖον* and *μετέπειτα*. The number 600,000 is taken from Exod. xii. 37 (the number of Israelites who journeyed from Egypt); cf. xxxix. 3 LXX, Numb. xi. 21. For *ἑκατονταρούροις* we must read *ἑκατοντάρουροι* as Mahaffy pointed out. The word, "a hundred-acre man," is frequently used in the Petrie Papyri of the veterans to whom lots of land in the Fayyum were assigned by Ptolemy II.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Joshua iii. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Such seems to be the meaning; "the district of Ptolemais" is referred to in 1 Macc. x. 39. It is useless to attempt to explain the writer's geographical errors.

<sup>3</sup> The meaning of this section is obscure. There is a passage in Agatharchides (second half of the second century B.C.) in his work on the Erythraean Sea which appears to have some relation to it. Agatharchides describes certain *gold* mines on the confines of Egypt and Ethiopia (Diodorus says they were on the borders of Egypt, Arabia, and Ethiopia), the working of which ceased partly owing to the Persian rule: *εὐρηται μὲν γὰρ ὑπὸ τῶν πρώτων τοῦ τόπου βασιλέων τῶν μετάλλων ἢ φύσις, διέλιπε δὲ ἐνεργούσα, πότε μὲν Αἰθιοπίων ἐπὶ τὴν Αἴγυπτον πλήθους συνελθόντος . . . πότε δὲ Μήδων καὶ Περσῶν ἐπικρατησάντων* (Müller, *Geog. Graec. Min.*, I, 128, § 29). This description is repeated by Diodorus, III, 12 ff.

## [ELEAZAR TAKES LEAVE OF THE TRANSLATORS.]

I have now given thee, dear brother Philocrates, such a summary description of these matters as was necessary. The story of the  
 121 translation we will tell in the sequel. Well, the high priest selected  
 the men of the best character and the highest culture, such as one  
 would expect from their noble parentage. They were men who had  
 not only acquired proficiency in Jewish literature, but who had also  
 122 given profound study to that of the Greeks. And for this reason  
 they were well qualified to be sent on embassies, and undertook this  
 office whenever occasion required. And they possessed a great genius  
 for conferences and discussions bearing on the law. They cultivated  
 the due mean, the best of courses<sup>1</sup>, and while they abjured a harsh  
 and uncouth disposition, they were likewise above conceit and the  
 assuming of an air of superiority over others, and in conversation  
 they condescended<sup>2</sup> to listen and to give a suitable reply to every  
 question. And this bearing they all observed, and it was in such  
 conduct that they most desired to outstrip each other, being all  
 123 worthy of their leader and of his virtue. And one might see how  
 they loved Eleazar, in their unwillingness to be torn from him,  
 and he them. For not only did he write to the king on the subject  
 of their safe return, but he also earnestly besought Andreas to work<sup>3</sup>  
 [for the same object], entreating us to assist to the best of our power.  
 124 And although we promised to give good heed<sup>4</sup> to his wishes, he said  
 that he was deeply distressed, for he knew how the king in his love of  
 goodness considered it the greatest of privileges, wherever he heard  
 of any one excelling in culture and wisdom, to send to fetch him  
 125 to his court. Indeed, I have been told of a wise saying of his, that  
 by having about his person just and prudent men he would possess  
 the greatest defence for his kingdom, as friends unreservedly offer  
 advice for one's best interests. And these qualities were assuredly  
 126 present in the men whom Eleazar was now sending. And he asseverated  
 on oath that he would not let the men go, if it were any private  
 interest of his own which impelled him so to do, but it was only  
 for the common benefit to all his countrymen that he was sending

<sup>1</sup> With this praise of "the mean" (*τὸ μέσον κατάστημα*) cf. § 223 *πλὴν ἢ πᾶσι μετριότης καλόν*, and § 256 *μετριοπαθῆ καθεστῶτα* (in the answer to the question, What is philosophy?). The writer clearly favours the Peripatetic school. There is an Aristotelian element in his vocabulary.

<sup>2</sup> Reading *παραδεδεγμένοι*.

<sup>3</sup> Wendland "and us," reading *καὶ ἡμᾶς* for *ποιῆσαι*.

<sup>4</sup> Reading *εὖ φροντίσειν* (Wendland).

them. For [he added] a good life consisted in the observance of 127 the laws, and this end was attained much more by oral communication than by reading. From these and similar observations it was clear what were his feelings towards them.

### [ELEAZAR'S DISCOURSE ON THE LAW.]

And it is worth while briefly<sup>1</sup> to mention the explanations given 128 by him in reply to our inquiries. For I believe that most men have some curiosity about the regulations in the law<sup>2</sup> concerning meats and drinks and the animals which are considered unclean. Well, 129 when we inquired why, although there was only a single creation, some things are considered unclean for food, and some even to the touch (for the law is scrupulous in most things, but in these matters it is excessively<sup>3</sup> scrupulous), he began his reply as follows:—

“Thou seest (said he) the powerful influence of ordinary intercourse 130 and association, since through associating with evil persons men become perverted and are rendered miserable all their life long, whereas, if they consort with the wise and prudent, they pass from ignorance and enter on a better life. Our lawgiver, then, in the first 131 place defined the principles of<sup>4</sup> piety and righteousness, and gave detailed instructions concerning these, not merely in the form of prohibitions but also by positive commands, and showed clearly the harmful effects [of disobedience] and the visitations sent by God upon the guilty. In the very first place of all he taught that God is one, 132 and that his power is made manifest through all things, every place being filled with his sovereignty, and that none of the things done in secret by men on earth is hidden from him, but whatever a man does, aye and that which is yet to be, is manifest in his sight. When he 133 had carefully elaborated these points and made them plain, he proceeded to show that even if a man should but think of acting basely, let alone the doing of the wrong, he could not be hid: thus throughout the whole of the law he displayed the power of God. Such then was 134 the preface with which he opened, and he showed that all other men except our nation consider that there are many gods, although they

<sup>1</sup> Reading *διὰ βραχείων*.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Lev. xi; Deut. xiv. 3-20. Compare also the treatment of the same subject in the Epistle of Barnabas, § 10.

<sup>3</sup> The reading is doubtful. Πάλιν, the reading of Eusebius and most MSS., may be right. Cf. its use in compounds like *παλιμμήκης*, “doubly long,” *παλίνσκιος*, “thickly shaded.”

<sup>4</sup> Or perhaps “enjoined.”

are themselves far more powerful than those whom they vainly  
 135 reverence. For they make effigies of stone and wood<sup>1</sup>, and assert  
 that they are images of those who discovered something useful for  
 their life, and these they worship, although their senselessness is  
 136 obvious. For that any one should be a god in virtue of this, namely  
 a discovery, is altogether foolish<sup>2</sup>: for the inventors but took certain  
 created things and put them together and exhibited them in a useful  
 137 form, but they did not create the substances themselves: therefore it  
 is idle and vain to deify men like themselves. Moreover, there are  
 still at the present day many men more inventive and more learned  
 than the men of yore, and yet they would never think of worshipping  
 them. And the men who have concocted and created these fables  
 138 consider that they are the wisest of the Greeks. For what further  
 need is there to speak of the rest who are quite sunk in vanity,  
 Egyptians and the like, who have put their trust in wild beasts and  
 most of the creeping things and vermin, and worship these, and offer  
 139 sacrifice to these, whether alive or dead? When, therefore, the law-  
 giver, who was fitted by God to know all things, had in his wisdom  
 considered everything, he fenced us about with impregnable palisades  
 and with walls of iron, to the intent that we should in no way  
 have dealings with any of the other nations, pure in body and  
 mind, released from vain ideas, reverencing the one Almighty God  
 140 above the entire creation. And hence it comes that the priests  
 who rule the Egyptians and have closely investigated many things  
 and been conversant with the world<sup>3</sup>, call us 'men of God,' a designa-  
 tion which does not belong to the rest of mankind, but to him only  
 who reverences the true God: but they are men of meat and drink  
 141 and raiment<sup>4</sup>, for their whole nature finds its solace in these things.  
 But with our countrymen these things are counted of no worth, but  
 their reflections throughout their whole life concern the sovereignty  
 142 of God. To the intent, then, that we should not become perverted  
 through joining in the pollutions of any<sup>5</sup> or consorting with base  
 persons, he fenced us round on all sides with laws of purification in  
 matters of meat and drink and handling and hearing and seeing.  
 143 For, speaking generally, all these, if viewed in the light of their  
 inward meaning, are alike, being directed by a single power, and in

<sup>1</sup> The treatment of idol-worship and its origin should be compared with Wisdom xiii-xv.

<sup>2</sup> Reading εἴ τι and ἀνόητον.

<sup>3</sup> Or "with literature," reading γραμμάτων for πραγμάτων (Diels).

<sup>4</sup> This, not "shelter" or "housing," is certainly the meaning of σκέπη here (cf. the use of σκέπασμα in 1 Tim. vi. 8).

<sup>5</sup> Or "through intercourse with any," reading συμμισγόμενοι (Wend.).



every detail there is a profound reason for the things which we abstain from using and those of which we make use. And, to give an example, I will explain my meaning to thee by touching on one or two points. For thou must not be led to follow the rejected view that it was out 144 of regard for mice and weasels<sup>1</sup> or such creatures that Moses drew up this code of laws with such exceeding care: no, all these ordinances have been solemnly made to promote holy meditation and to build up character for the furtherance of righteousness. For all the winged 145 creatures, of which we partake, are tame and distinguished by cleanly habits, using wheat and pulse for their sustenance, such as doves, turtle-doves, locusts<sup>2</sup>, partridges, geese, and the like. But as touching 146 the forbidden winged creatures, thou wilt find that they are wild and carnivorous and that they use the power which they possess to oppress the remainder of their kind, and that they get their sustenance by preying on the aforesaid tame creatures with violence: and not on these only, but they also carry off lambs and kids, and do violence to dead men and living. By these creatures, then, which he called 147 unclean<sup>3</sup>, the lawgiver signified that those for whom the laws were ordained, must be inwardly righteous and oppress no one through confidence in their own strength, nor carry off anything by violence, but must direct their lives by righteous motives, even as the tame creatures among the aforesaid winged things consume the pulse that grows on the earth, and do not exercise oppression by destroying their kin<sup>4</sup>.

“By such injunctions, then, the lawgiver has taught persons of 148 understanding to note that they must be just and do nothing by violence, nor oppress others through confidence in their own strength. For whereas it is not meet even to touch the aforesaid creatures by 149 reason of their several natures, what strict precautions must we not take to prevent the character from degenerating to a like condition? He has, then, set forth all these rules as to what is permitted us in 150 the case of these and the other creatures by way of allegory. For the parting of the hoof and the dividing of the claws<sup>5</sup> symbolize discrimination in directing every action to a good end: for the strength 151 of the whole body, in order to display itself in action, is dependent upon the arms<sup>6</sup> and legs. He constrains us, then, to do everything with discrimination and with a view to righteousness, as he signifies<sup>7</sup> by these symbols. He further [signifies] that we are distinct from

<sup>1</sup> Lev. xi. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Lev. xi. 22.

<sup>3</sup> Deut. xiv. 19.

<sup>4</sup> Perhaps we should read, with Eusebius, “by destroying the inferior or kindred creatures.”

<sup>5</sup> Lev. xi. 3 ff. ; Deut. xiv. 6 ff.

<sup>6</sup> Lit. “shoulders.”

<sup>7</sup> The text is doubtful: I read δ σημεϊούται.

152 all men. For most other men defile themselves by promiscuous unions, working great unrighteousness, and whole countries and cities pride themselves on these things. For not only do they prostitute their males<sup>1</sup>, but they even defile mothers and daughters. But we are  
 153 expressly kept apart from these things<sup>2</sup>. He has further characterized the possessor of the aforesaid gift of discrimination as possessing also the gift of memory. For "all things which part the hoof and chew  
 154 the cud<sup>3</sup>" to thoughtful minds clearly indicate memory. For the chewing of the cud<sup>4</sup> is nothing else but a calling to mind of one's life and existence<sup>5</sup>: for he considers that life exists by taking food.  
 155 And therefore he gives exhortation by this scripture also where he says thus, "Thou shalt well remember the Lord who wrought in thee the great and wonderful things<sup>6</sup>." For, when clearly perceived, they do appear great and glorious, in the first place the construction of the body, and the means for digesting the food, and the distinction  
 156 between the several members: but much more do the orderly arrangement of the senses, the operation and invisible movement of the mind, and its rapidity in suiting its action to each several occasion and its  
 157 discovery of the arts bear the marks of an infinite wisdom<sup>7</sup>. And therefore he exhorts us to bear in mind, how that the aforesaid things are both created and preserved by the power of God. For he has appointed every time and place for the continual remembrance of  
 158 God, the Almighty and the Preserver. For instance, in our meat and drink he bids us first to offer our sacrifice [of prayer] and not till then to partake of food. In our clothing, too, he has given us a distinctive token to bring [these things] to remembrance<sup>8</sup>. Likewise also he has commanded us to set the oracles upon our gates and doors<sup>9</sup>, that God  
 159 may be had in remembrance; and he expressly orders that the sign be

<sup>1</sup> Or, with Eusebius, "have intercourse with males."

<sup>2</sup> Διαστέλλειν seems here to combine the two senses of "to distinguish" and "to command," with a reference to Lev. xviii. 6 ff. Wendland notes that the Egyptian custom of marriage with a sister is purposely passed over without remark.

<sup>3</sup> Lev. xi. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. with the following allegorical explanation the Epistle of Barnabas 10, 11: Philo, *De Concupiscentia* 5: Theodoret, *Quaest.* in Lev. xi. 189.

<sup>5</sup> Or "constitution," "structure."

<sup>6</sup> A combination of Deut. vii. 18 and x. 21 LXX, ἐν σοὶ of the latter verse being here interpreted as meaning "in thy body." Cf. a similar eulogy of the human anatomy in Clem., *Recog.* VIII, 29 ff.

<sup>7</sup> Literally "contain an infinite manner."

<sup>8</sup> Cf. for these "mementoes" in the dress of an Israelite Schürer<sup>3</sup>, II, 483 ff. (Engl. trans. II, 2, 111 ff.).

<sup>9</sup> Deut. vi. 7 ff.

bound round upon the hands, clearly indicating that every action must be righteously performed with a remembrance of our condition, and above all with a fear of God. And he bids men when lying down 160 and when rising up to meditate on the things which God has created, considering not in speech only but also in thought the change and the impression which passes over them when they fall asleep, and the manner of their waking, and how divine, as it were, and incomprehensible is the interchange of these states<sup>1</sup>. Thou hast now been 161 shown the exceeding wisdom of the saying<sup>2</sup> concerning discrimination and memory, for so we have expounded the parting of the hoof and the chewing of the cud. For the laws have not been made at random and capriciously, but for the sake of truth and to point out where right reason lies. For by his detailed injunctions concerning meat 162 and drink and touch, he bids us do and hear nothing at random, and not by availing ourselves of the overbearing power of speech have recourse to unrighteousness. And in the case of the vermin the same 163 principle may be discovered. For the habits of weasel and mouse<sup>3</sup> and of all the like animals expressly named are injurious. For mice 164 mar and injure everything not only to get themselves food, but also in such a way that anything which they have started injuring becomes utterly useless for man. And the weasel tribe is unique, for beside 165 the aforementioned habit it has a characteristic which defiles<sup>4</sup> it: it conceives through its ears and gives birth through its mouth<sup>5</sup>. And 166 therefore the like habit of men is unclean; that is to say, whenever they have embodied in speech the things which they have received through the ear and involved others in ills, they are guilty of gross uncleanness, and are themselves utterly tainted with the pollution of their impiety. And your king rightly puts such men to death, as we are informed."—And I said, "I suppose that thou speakest of the 167 informers: for them indeed he unfailingly submits to tortures and painful deaths."—And he replied: "Yes, I speak of them. For the practice of lying in wait for men's destruction is unholy. And our law 168 forbids us to injure any whether by word or deed. I have now given a brief summary of these matters, and have shown further how every regulation has been made with a view to righteousness, and nothing

<sup>1</sup> Cf. §§ 213-16 and 3 Macc. v. 11.

<sup>2</sup> We should probably read *εὐλογίας*, taking the word to mean "a good saying" (cf. *εὐλογεῖν* = *εὖ λέγειν*, § 249). Wendland, adopting this reading, would render "reasonableness."

<sup>3</sup> Lev. xi. 29.

<sup>4</sup> Wendland would correct to *μολυντικόν*. But *λυμáινεσθαι* may bear this sense, e. g. in 4 Macc. xviii. 8.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Ep. Barn. X, 8.

has been set down in the scripture at random or of a legendary character<sup>1</sup>, but [all is] to the end that throughout our whole life we may in our actions exercise righteousness towards all men, remembering  
 169 the sovereignty of God. So then every single word concerning meats and the unclean creeping things and vermin tends towards righteousness and righteous dealings between man and man."

170 To my mind, then, he appeared<sup>2</sup> to make an excellent defence in every particular. He added, moreover, with regard to the calves and rams and he-goats that are offered, that men must take these from the herds and flocks and sacrifice tame animals, and nothing that is wild, that so the offerers of the sacrifices may be conscious of no arrogance, while they take to heart the true meaning of the legislator. For he that presents the sacrifice makes an offering of the whole  
 171 disposition of his soul. I consider, then, that his discourse on these matters was worth repeating; and therefore have I been led on, knowing thy love of learning, dear Philocrates, to explain to thee the solemnity and the inner meaning of the law.

#### [RECEPTION OF THE TRANSLATORS AT ALEXANDRIA.]

172 So Eleazar, when he had offered sacrifice and selected the men and made ready many gifts for the king, sent us on our way with a strong  
 173 escort<sup>3</sup>. And when we reached Alexandria, the king was informed of our arrival. And Andreas and I, being admitted to the court, gave friendly greetings to the king and delivered the letter from Eleazar.  
 174 And, since he attached great importance to the reception of the delegates, he gave orders to dismiss all the other officials and to summon  
 175 the men. And this proceeding excited universal surprise, because the custom is that those who come on official business<sup>4</sup> gain access to the king's presence on the fifth day, while envoys from kings or eminent cities were hardly admitted to the court within thirty days. But since he considered the new comers worthy of higher honour, and rightly estimated the eminent position of him who sent them, he dismissed those whom he considered superfluous, and remained walk-  
 176 ing to and fro, waiting to greet them on their arrival. And when they entered with the gifts which had been sent and the precious<sup>5</sup> parchments, whereon was inscribed the law in gold in the Jewish

<sup>1</sup> Read *μυθωδῶς*.

<sup>2</sup> Reading *ἐνομίζετο*: the MSS. have *ἐνόμιζε*, "he thought."

<sup>3</sup> Literally "with much security."

<sup>4</sup> Reading *χρηματισμόν*.

<sup>5</sup> Possibly *διαφόροις* has come into the text through dittography of *διφθέρας*. Josephus has no equivalent for it.

characters, the material being wonderfully prepared, and the joining of the several leaves being rendered imperceptible, the king, when he saw the men, made inquiry concerning the books. And when they 177 had taken the rolls out of their coverings and unrolled the leaves, the king after pausing for a long while and making obeisance some seven times, said, "I thank you, friends, and him that sent you still more, but most of all do I thank God, whose oracles these are." And when 178 all with one accord and with one voice, both the new comers and the bystanders, exclaimed, "Well spoken, O king," he was moved to tears out of the fullness of his joy. For the tension of mind and the exceeding greatness of the honour where our achievements are successful constrain to tears. And when he had ordered them to put the 179 rolls<sup>1</sup> back in their places, then at length did he greet the men and say, "It was right, O God-fearing men, first to pay due homage to those treasures, for the sake of which I sent for you, and thereafter to extend the right hand to you: for that reason have I done this first. But I have regarded this day of your arrival as a great day, 180 and from year to year shall it be held in honour all our life long<sup>2</sup>. Moreover it happens that our naval victory over Antigonus fell on the same day<sup>3</sup>. And therefore also it shall be my pleasure to sup with you to-day. And all things (he added) of which your customs allow 181 you to partake shall be duly prepared for you, and for me with you." And when they had expressed their gratitude, he ordered that the best chambers should be given to them in the neighbourhood of the citadel, and the banquet made ready.

So Nicanor, the lord high steward<sup>4</sup>, summoned Dorotheus, who had 182

<sup>1</sup> Apparently five rolls or volumes (τεύχη), each containing one book of the Pentateuch.

<sup>2</sup> Philo tells us (*de vita Mos.* II, 7, 140 M.) that in his day there was an annual festival on the island of Pharos to commemorate the translation.

<sup>3</sup> Ptolemy Philadelphus was defeated by Antigonus Gonatas in the naval battle of Cos (circa 260 B.C.), and Egypt lost the command of the sea for several years until Ptolemy defeated Antigonus at Andros about the year 245 B.C. See Mahaffy, *Emp. of the Ptolemies*, pp. 150, 171, 490; Droysen, *Hist. de l'Hellénisme*, III, 390. Wendland thinks that the defeat of Ptolemy at Cos has been transformed by Aristeas into a victory. More probably the victory of Andros is referred to. See *J. Q. R.*, XIV, 336. Both battles took place long after the death of Demetrius Phalereus.

<sup>4</sup> Reading ἀρχεδαρπος for ἀρχήτρος, a conjecture made by Letronne. Josephus has ὁ ἐπὶ τῆς τῶν ξένων ἀποδοχῆς τεταγμένος. The word ἀρχεδαρπος is found on an inscription (*C. I. G.*, 4678); the title ἐδαρπος, originally borne by an official who tasted the dishes before the king, was borrowed by Alexander from Persia. See Lumbroso, *Recherches sur l'économie polit. de l'Égypte*, 205.

- the charge of guests from this nation, and ordered him to make preparation for everything. For such was the arrangement decreed by the king, and it may still be seen in operation. To every state which has its special usages in matters of drink and meat and in its mode of reclining, was there a corresponding official in charge: and then, whenever any persons visited the reigning king, preparations were made in accordance with their customs, in order that they might experience no discomfort but live at their ease. And this happened
- 183 in the case of these men. For Dorotheus, the patron of visitors from this nation, was a most attentive man. He laid out all the coverings for the couches which were in his keeping and were set apart for receptions of this kind. And he placed the couches in two rows, according to the king's direction: for he had ordered him to make half of the men recline at his [right] hand, and the remainder behind<sup>1</sup> his own couch, neglecting no means of showing them honour.
- 184 And when they had taken their places, he ordered Dorotheus to perform the customary rites of all his visitors from Judaea. So he dispensed with the services of the sacred heralds and ministers of the sacrifices and the others who usually offered the prayers, and requested one of our number, Elisha<sup>2</sup>, a priest advanced in years, to offer a prayer. And he, upstanding, uttered this noteworthy prayer:
- 185 "May the Almighty God give thee thy fill, O king, of all the good things which he has created, and may he grant thee and thy wife and children and them that live in harmony with thee unfailling
- 186 enjoyment of them all throughout life!" At these words there was a burst of applause with shouting and jubilation lasting for some while: and thereafter they betook themselves to the enjoyment of the feast spread out before them. All the attendance at table was undertaken by the staff of Dorotheus, among whom were royal pages<sup>3</sup> and some of those who held places of honour at the king's court.

## [THE WISE ANSWERS OF THE TRANSLATORS.]

- 187 And after an interval, when an opportunity presented itself, he asked him who occupied the first place at table (they had been arranged according to age<sup>4</sup>), how he should preserve his kingdom

<sup>1</sup> As Wendland points out, a person reclining on his left arm would turn his back on those who were placed on his left.

<sup>2</sup> The true reading is preserved by Josephus. The Aristeas MSS. call him Eleazar.

<sup>3</sup> See Lumbroso, *op. cit.*, 207 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Gen. xliii. 33, and Josephus, *Ant.*, XII, 4, 9 (of a guest at the table of Ptolemy Epiphanes) ὑποκατακλίνεται . . . , καταφρονηθεὶς ὡς παῖς ἔτι τὴν ἡλικίαν ὑπὸ τῶν τοῦς τύπους κατὰ τὴν ἀξίαν διανεμόντων.

unimpaired to the last. And he, after a brief pause, replied, "In this 188 way wilt thou best direct it aright, by imitating the never-ceasing forbearance of God. For if thou usest longsuffering and punishest such as deserve punishment with greater forbearance than <sup>1</sup> is due to them, thou wilt turn them from wickedness and lead them to repentance."

And the king praised his reply, and asked the next one how 189 he should behave in all his actions<sup>2</sup>. And he replied that if he observed justice towards all men, he would act in all things for his best interest, with the conviction that every thought is clear to God, and that by beginning with the fear of God, he would never be disappointed.

To him too he gave a cordial recognition, and asked another how 190 he could keep his friends like-minded with himself. And he said, "If they see thee taking great forethought for thy subjects: and this thou wilt do by observing how God does good to the human race, in that he provides them with health and food and all else in due season <sup>3</sup>."

He signified his assent and asked the next, how when he held 191 his audiences and sat in judgment, he might obtain a good report even from such as failed in their suits. And he said, "If thou showest impartiality to all in thy words, and takest no action against the offenders in an overbearing or tyrannical spirit. And this thou wilt 192 do if thou beholdest the ordering of God's ways. The deserving have their supplications fulfilled, while to such as fail to obtain them the harmful nature of their requests is made known through dreams or actions, and God does not smite them according to their sins nor according to the greatness of his might, but uses forbearance."

And after highly commending him, he asked his neighbour how he 193 might be invincible in warfare. And he said, "If he did not put his trust in numbers or forces, but always entreated God to direct his enterprises, while he conducted all in a spirit of justice."

He approved his reply, and asked the next one how he might 194 inspire terror into his enemies. And he said, "If while possessing an abundant supply of arms and forces, he recognized that these were powerless to produce any lasting and conclusive result: for God also,

<sup>1</sup> Reading, with Schmidt, ἡ καθώς. The word translated "punish" properly means to feel or pinch birds to see whether they are worth buying (Aristoph., *Av.*, 530). With the last words of the section cf. Rom. ii. 4 τὸ χρηστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς μετάνοιαν σε ἄγει.

<sup>2</sup> Or, reading ἕκαστα κάλλιστα with Wendland, "do everything for the best."

<sup>3</sup> Cf. § 259: also Ps. cxlv. 15, civ. 27, Acts xiv. 17, xvii. 25.

by granting a reprieve and making but a display of his sovereignty<sup>1</sup>, instils terror into every breast."

- 195 He praised him, and inquired of the next what would be the best thing for his life. And he replied, "To recognize that God is supreme over all, and that in our best actions it is not we ourselves who direct our resolves aright, but God in his sovereignty perfects and guides the actions of us all."
- 196 He admitted the wisdom of his words, and asked the next one how he could preserve all his possessions unimpaired, and finally deliver them to his descendants in the same condition. And he said, "By continual prayer to God to give thee good designs in thy undertakings, and by warning thy descendants not to be dazzled by their high station or wealth, since it is God who bestows these gifts, and it is not on their own account that they have pre-eminence over all."
- 197 He gave his assent thereto, and inquired of him who followed how he should bear what befell with equanimity. And he replied, "By taking thought that all men are fashioned by God to partake of the greatest evils, as well as good things, and it is not possible for a *man* to escape from experiencing them. But God gives a good courage, and one must beseech him [for the same]."
- 198 He gave him cordial thanks, and said that all their answers had been good. "And when I have questioned yet one more I will cease for the present, in order that we may turn to enjoyment and take our ease. And in the following six days I will gain some further knowledge from each in turn of those who remain." Thereupon he asked the man, "What is the true aim of courage?" And he said, "To execute in the hour of danger, in accordance with one's plan, resolutions that have been rightly formed. But thy resolutions, O king, are good, and are all through God's grace fulfilled to thy profit."
- 200 And when they had all signified their assent with loud applause, the king said to the philosophers, many of whom were present, "I think that the virtue of these men is extraordinary and their wisdom profound, seeing that, with such questions propounded to them, they have on the spur of the moment given suitable replies,
- 201 while they all take God for the starting-point of their words." And Menedemus, the philosopher of Eretria<sup>2</sup>, said, "True, O king: for,

<sup>1</sup> Reading τὰ τῆς δυναστείας with Wendland. He suggests that the want of exactness in the parallel between human and divine relations, here and elsewhere, may be due to the writer having before him some older collection of sayings, to each of which he has appended, not always very skilfully, a theological termination. Cf. with the section Wisdom xii. 16-18.

<sup>2</sup> Menedemus is said to have died at the court of Antigonus Gonatas



since the universe is ruled by providence, and these men are right in holding that man is a creature of God, it follows that all power and beauty of speech has its beginning in God."

The king assented thereto, and the speeches came to a close, 203 festivity taking their place. And when evening drew in, the banquet broke up.

On the following day the guests again took their places, and the 203 banquet proceeded in the same order. And, when the king thought that the time had come to put some inquiries to the men, he questioned those who were placed next to the answerers of the previous day. He began the discussion with the eleventh (ten having been questioned 204 on the previous day), and when silence was established, inquired how he could continue to be rich. And after a brief interval he to whom 205 the question was addressed said, "If he did nothing unworthy of his empire or wantonly, and did not expend money on empty and vain things, but<sup>1</sup> by acts of kindness drew his subjects to wish him well: for God is the cause of good to all men, and his example must be followed."

The king commended him, and asked of another how he should 206 adhere to the truth. To this he replied, "By recognizing that lying brings great disgrace to all men, but chiefly to kings. For as they have power to do what they will, what object have they for falsehood? And thou must further take to heart, O king, that God is a lover of the truth."

He gave this reply his hearty approval, and turning his gaze 207 [to another] said, "What is the teaching of wisdom?" And the next one replied, "As thou desirest that evils should not befall thee<sup>2</sup>, but to partake of all that is good, thou shouldst act in this spirit to thy subjects and to offenders, and shouldst more gently admonish such as are virtuous: for God leads all men by gentleness."

He commended him, and asked of his neighbour how he might 208 be humane. And he said, "By considering after how long a time and through what great sufferings the human race comes to maturity, aye and to the birth. And therefore it is wrong to punish with slight provocation, or to subject men to injuries, while one recognizes that human life consists of pains and penalties. Thou wilt therefore, on reviewing everything, be disposed to mercy: for God also is merciful."

about 277 B. C. It is not known that he ever visited Egypt, and what is here recorded of him is doubtless fictitious.

<sup>1</sup> Reading τοὺς δὲ ὑποστραγμένους, and δαπάνην just before.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the Jewish (negative) form of the golden rule (Matt. vii. 12) e. g. in the Didache, i. 2 ὅσα ἐὰν θελήσῃς μὴ γίνεσθαί σοι, καὶ σὺ ἄλλω μὴ ποίει.

- 209 With a word of approval to him he inquired of the next in order, "What is the most essential characteristic of kingship?" "To keep oneself incorruptible," he replied; "to be sober for the greater part of one's life, to hold righteousness in high esteem, and to make persons with these qualities one's friends: for God also is a lover of righteousness."
- 210 He applauded him, and said to the next, "Wherein does piety consist?" And he said, "In the conviction that God is working in, and has knowledge of all things at all times, and that no unrighteous deed or evil action of man can escape his eye: for as God doeth good to the whole world, so wouldst thou, by imitating him, be void of offence."
- 211 He signified his assent, and said to the next, "What is the end at which kingship should aim?" And he said, "To govern oneself aright, and not to be led by wealth and rank to entertain proud and unseemly desires, if thou wouldst reason aright<sup>1</sup>. For thou hast all things at command, and they are as nothing<sup>2</sup>: but God has need of nothing and is gentle withal. And let thy thoughts be as becomes a man, and aim not at many things, but at those which suffice for thy kingly office."
- 212 He commended him, and asked the next one how his deliberations might be for the best. And he replied, "If in everything he continually set justice before him, and considered injustice to be the annihilation of life: for God also always promises the greatest blessings to the just."
- 213 He praised him, and inquired of the next in order how he might be free from disturbing thoughts in sleep. And he said, "Thy question is hard to answer. For in sleep we cannot bring our true selves into play, but are therein at the mercy of sensations in which reason has
- 214 no part. For we have an impression on our minds that we see the things which pass before us, but we are unreasoning in supposing that we are on ship-board and ranging over the sea, or flying through the air and passing to other climes, and doing other such things, which
- 215 we then suppose to be really taking place<sup>3</sup>. But my decision, so far as I may form one, is this. Thou shouldst by every means, O king, bring thy words and actions to the test of piety, that so thou mayst be conscious that in adhering to the path of virtue thou art not deliberately conferring any favour in defiance of reason, nor setting
- 216 justice aside by a misuse of thy power. For every man's mind moves in sleep among the same things in which his waking hours are chiefly

<sup>1</sup> The last words are perhaps corrupt.

<sup>2</sup> Wendland conjectures "of which thou hast need" (*ὅσα δέον*).

<sup>3</sup> The text is corrupt. I read *ἀ κατὰ ταῖθ' ὑπολαμβάνομεν καθεστάναι*.

spent, but God directs every thought and action which aims at the highest both in waking hours and in sleep<sup>1</sup>. And therefore art thou always encompassed with tranquillity."

Him too he extolled, and said to the next one, "As thou art the 217 tenth to answer, when thy reply has been given, we will betake ourselves to the banquet." And he asked, "How might we do nothing unworthy of ourselves?" And he said, "Look ever to thy dignity 218 and eminence, in order that thy words and thoughts may be in keeping therewith, knowing that the thoughts and conversation of all thy subjects are concerned with thee. For thou must not appear as 219 the least of<sup>2</sup> the actors, for they look to the part which they must assume and suit all their actions thereto: but thou art not acting a part, but art king indeed, God having given thee the governorship of which thy character renders thee worthy."

And when the king had graciously applauded loud and long, they 220 exhorted the men to take some rest<sup>3</sup>. And when the turn of these men was ended, they betook themselves to the next portion in the order of the banquet.

On the following day the same order was observed, and when 221 the king thought that the time was come to put some inquiries to the men, he asked the first of those who yet remained to be questioned, "What is the highest form of sovereignty?" And 222 he replied, "To be master of oneself and not to be carried away by one's impulses. For all men's minds have some innate proclivity; 223 most men are naturally inclined to eating and drinking and pleasure, while kings in virtue of their high station are bent on the acquisition of territory<sup>4</sup>. But moderation in all things is good. Take what God gives and keep it, but desire not what is unattainable."

He was pleased with his words, and asked his neighbour how he 224 might be free from envy. And he, after a pause, said, "Chiefly by considering how it is God who apportions to all kings their glory and great wealth, and that no one by his own power<sup>5</sup> is king: for all men desire to partake of this glory, but they cannot, since it is a gift of God."

<sup>1</sup> I should now read *θεὸς δέ* (in place of *ὁς δέ* of the MSS.) and *ἐγγρηγορός*. The divine name is never wanting in the concluding words of each speaker, and *κατευθύνειν* elsewhere is used actively and generally of the guiding hand of God (cf. § 18 a very similar passage).

<sup>2</sup> Or "inferior to the actors."

<sup>3</sup> Lit. "to sleep." Possibly there has been some dislocation in the text.

<sup>4</sup> Perhaps (reading *καί* for *κατά* with Wendland) "while kings are bent on the acquisition of territory and great renown."

<sup>5</sup> Probably *παρ' ἑαυτὸν* should be read with Wendland.

- 225 He commended the speaker at some length, and asked the next one how he should despise his foes. And he replied, "If thou hast exercised goodwill towards all men and formed friendships, thou hast no need to fear any man. But to be in high favour with all men is the very best of good gifts to receive from God<sup>1</sup>."
- 226 He assented thereto, and called upon the next one for a reply to the question, how he might retain his glory. And he said, "If by kindness and gracious acts thou showest thyself liberal and bountiful to others, thou wilt never have lack of glory; but that the aforesaid graces may continue to be thine, thou must always entreat God."
- 227 After a kindly word of praise to him he asked another, "To whom<sup>2</sup> should we show a studied generosity?" And he replied, "All men think that such should be shown to those who are well disposed to us, but I am of opinion that a keen and open-handed generosity is owing to those who dissent from us, that by these means we may bring them over to the path of duty and of their own interest. But one must entreat God that this end may be attained, since he rules the minds of all men."
- 228 He assented thereto, and called upon the sixth man for a reply to the inquiry, "To whom should gratitude<sup>3</sup> be shown?" And he replied, "To parents at all times, since God has given a very great commandment concerning the honour due to parents<sup>4</sup>. And in the second place he sets the relations of friend with friend, calling a friend as precious as a man's own soul<sup>5</sup>. But thou dost well in making all men thy friends."
- 229 He gave him a word of commendation, and inquired of the following one, "What is of like value with beauty?" And he said, "Piety: for this is a beauty of the first quality. And its power is love, for this is a gift of God. And this dost thou possess, and therein thou hast all blessings comprised."
- 230 He applauded his answer very warmly, and asked of the next, how, after a failure, he should regain the esteem which he enjoyed before. And he replied, "Failure for thee is impossible, as thou hast sown thy favours broadcast, and these cause goodwill to spring up, which is mightier than the strongest armour and affords the greatest protection. But should any fail, they should no longer do those things which occasion their failure, but form friendships and act righteously. But to be a doer of good deeds and not of the reverse is a gift of God."

<sup>1</sup> The text appears to be corrupt. I suggest tentatively *καὶ καλῶν δῶρων*.

<sup>2</sup> Reading *πρὸς τίνα* with Wendland.

<sup>3</sup> Or "kindness," "consideration."

<sup>4</sup> Exod. xx. 12.

<sup>5</sup> Deut. xiii. 6 (7 Heb.).

Well pleased therewith he asked of the next one, how he might be 232  
free from grief. And he replied, "By injuring no one, doing good to  
all, and following after righteousness, since its fruits produce freedom  
from grief. But supplication must be made to God, that unforeseen 233  
accidents may not spring up to our injury, I mean such as deaths,  
diseases, pains, and the like. But, as thou art pious, doubtless no such  
accident will befall thee."

He commended him highly, and asked the tenth man, "What is the 234  
greatest glory?" And he said, "To honour God, and that not with  
gifts or sacrifices, but with purity in the soul and in the devout con-  
viction that all things are fashioned and directed by God in accord-  
ance with his will. And thou art ever of this mind, as all may see  
from thy actions in the past and in the present."

Thereupon the king with a loud voice gave them all a hearty 235  
welcome and a word of praise, the other guests, especially the  
philosophers, joining in the applause. For these men in their con-  
duct and speech far excelled the philosophers, in that they took God  
for their starting-point. And after this the king proceeded graciously  
to drink their healths.

On the following day the order of the banquet was as before, and 236  
when the time seemed opportune to the king, he questioned those  
who came next to the men who had already given replies. Of the  
first he asked, "Can wisdom be taught?" And he replied, "The  
soul is through God's power so adapted as to accept all that is good  
and to reject what is contrary thereto."

He assented, and inquired of the next one, "What contributes most 237  
to health?" And he said, "Temperance." But this cannot be  
attained unless God dispose the mind thereto."

He gave him a kindly word, and asked of the next, how he should 238  
pay his debts of gratitude to his parents. And he replied, "By giving  
them no pain. But this is impossible unless God guides the mind to  
what is best."

To him also he gave his assent, and inquired of the next in order, 239  
how he should become an eager listener. And he replied, "By  
recognizing that it is to thy profit to know all things, so that by  
selecting some one of the things which thou hast heard, and bringing  
it to bear on an emergency, thou mayst counteract the events of  
critical times<sup>1</sup> with God's guidance: for the fulfilment of men's actions  
rests with him."

He commended him, and inquired of the next how he should avoid 240  
any action contrary to law. He replied thereto, "If thou wilt recog-

<sup>1</sup> Text and meaning are doubtful.

- nize that God gave the lawgivers their ideas to the end that men's lives might be preserved, thou wilt let thyself be led by them."
- 241 He approved his reply, and said to another, "What advantage does kinship<sup>1</sup> bring?" And he replied, "The strength of kinship is apparent if we consider that we are the losers by the misfortunes
- 242 which befall [our kin], and if we suffer as they do (and by such conduct we shall win their esteem and a higher place in their regard, for a kindly sympathy<sup>2</sup> forms of itself an indissoluble [bond] whate'er befall), while in their prosperity we should require nothing of theirs, but entreat God to give them every blessing."
- 243 He extended a like approval to him as to the others, and asked another man, "How is fearlessness produced?" And he said, "When the mind is conscious of no wrong-doing, and God directs it so that all its counsels are good."
- 244 With a word of assent to him, he inquired of another how he might have right reasoning at command. He replied, "If he constantly kept the misfortunes of men before his eyes, and marked how God takes away their prosperity and advances others to glory and honour."
- 245 He gave him his hearty approval, and requested his neighbour for a reply to the question, how he might avoid falling into sloth or a life of pleasure. He replied, "By bearing in mind that thou art ruler of a great kingdom and governor of vast multitudes, and so thy mind must not be occupied with anything else, but devote its attention to their welfare. But thou must ask God that none of thy duties may be neglected."
- 246 Him too he commended, and asked the tenth man how he might detect persons who were acting deceitfully towards him. To this he replied, "By observing whether the behaviour of those about thy person is gentlemanly, and whether an orderly conduct is preserved at receptions and councils and in general intercourse, and by seeing that the bounds of propriety are in no way exceeded in congratulations
- 247 and in their whole behaviour. But God will guide thy mind, O king, to what is best." The king applauded and praised them all one by one, the other guests doing likewise, and they began to make merry<sup>3</sup>.
- 248 On the following day he waited for the right moment and asked the next in order, "What is the grossest negligence?" To this he replied, "When a man is careless of his children, and does not devote every effort to their education. For our prayers to God are

<sup>1</sup> For the *συγγενείς* or relatives of the king (a court title) see Lumbroso, *Recherches sur l'économie pol. de l'Égypte*, 189 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Reading *συνεργές*.

<sup>3</sup> Or perhaps the literal meaning of *μέλπειν* "to sing" is intended: cf. *Ecclus.* xlix. 1 (*ὡς μουσικά ἐν συμποσίῳ οἴνου*), xl. 20.

always not so much for ourselves as for our offspring, that every blessing may be theirs. But the desire that our children<sup>1</sup> may be endued with discretion comes through the power of God."

He said that he had spoken well, and asked another how he might<sup>249</sup> be a lover of his country. "By keeping in mind," he replied, "that it is good to live and die in one's own land. But to live in a foreign country<sup>2</sup> brings contempt for the poor man, and disgrace for the rich, who are suspected of being in exile on account of their misdeeds. If, then, thou doest good to all men (as is thy constant habit, since God grants thee graciousness towards all) thou wilt prove thyself a lover of thy country."

After hearing him he inquired of the next one, how he might live<sup>250</sup> amicably with a wife. "By bearing in mind," he replied, "that the female sex is rash<sup>3</sup> and energetic in pursuing its desires, and subject to sudden changes of opinion through fallacious reasoning, and weak by nature: and one must treat them in a rational way and not by opposing provoke a quarrel. For life is then guided aright, when the<sup>251</sup> steersman knows the port to which he must direct his course. But, if God's help be invoked, life itself is in all things steered aright."

He admitted the wisdom of his words, and asked the next one how<sup>252</sup> he might be kept free from error. And he said, "By doing every action gravely<sup>4</sup> and with deliberation, and not giving credence to slanders, but testing for thyself what is told thee, and pronouncing thy own judgment on the petitions submitted, and being guided by thy own judgment in granting them, so wouldst thou be free from error, O king. But to be of this mind and to live this life is a work which demands divine power."

He was delighted with these words, and asked the next one how he<sup>253</sup> might avoid anger. To this he replied, "By bearing in mind that thou hast power to do all things, even to inflict sentence of death if thou art angry<sup>5</sup>: and this were unprofitable and grievous that thou shouldst deprive many of life because thou art their lord. And where<sup>254</sup> all are thy subjects and none resists thee, to what end shouldst thou be angry? And thou must know that God orders the whole world with gracious kindness and without wrath at all, and thou," said he, "must follow his example, O king."

<sup>1</sup> Reading *παιδία* with Wendland. Perhaps we should adopt his further correction *τὸ δὲ ἐπιδέσθαι παιδία κ.τ.λ.*, "But to live to see our children endued with discretion (or 'temperance') is a gift which comes" &c.

<sup>2</sup> *Ἡ δὲ ξεντεία* Wendland. Cf. the description of the humiliating life of "the sojourner" in *Eccclus. xxix. 22-28.*

<sup>3</sup> Or "impetuous."

<sup>4</sup> Adopting Mendelssohn's correction *ἔφη Σεμνῶς* in place of *ἔφησεν* 'Ως.

<sup>5</sup> Reading *ἐπιφέρειν*.

- 255 He said that he had answered well, and inquired of him who came next, "Wherein does sound judgment consist?" "In doing all things aright with deliberation," he replied, "and while forming our decisions not neglecting to weigh<sup>1</sup> the injurious effects of following the opposite view, that so after considering every point we may be well advised and our purpose may be fulfilled. But, what is more important than all, every resolution of thy will, through the sovereign power of God, find accomplishment, since thou dost practise piety."
- 256 He said that he too had answered rightly, and asked another, "What is philosophy?" "It is to deliberate well over all contingencies," he replied, "and not to be carried away by one's impulses, but to ponder the injuries which are the outcome of the passions, and to do the duty of the moment as it should be done, keeping one's passions under restraint. But we must pray to God that we may give our attention to these things."
- 257 Him too he applauded, and asked another how he might meet with approbation when living in a foreign country<sup>2</sup>. "By treating all men as thy equals," he said, "and behaving rather as the inferior than as superior to those among whom thou sojournest. For God accepts the lowly disposition, and the human race likewise<sup>3</sup> deals kindly with the humble."
- 258 He gave his assent thereto, and asked another how the structures which he raised might endure hereafter. To this he replied "[that they would do so] if his creations were on a great and magnificent scale, so that beholders would spare them for their beauty, and if he neglected no one who produced such works, and did not compel others
- 259 to carry out his requirements without pay. For if he considered how God shows great consideration for the human race, supplying them with health and keenness of perception and his other gifts<sup>4</sup>, he too would act in a way corresponding somewhat thereto, by giving men the due reward for their labours. For it is the works which are done in righteousness which also endure."
- 260 He said that he too had spoken well, and asked the tenth, "What is the fruit of wisdom?" And he replied, "To be conscious of no
- 261 wrong-doing, and to live a life of sincerity. For from these things thou gainest the highest joy and a tranquillity of soul, most mighty king, aye, and good hopes in God, while thou dost govern thy kingdom in piety."

<sup>1</sup> Literally "comparing," i. e. with the advantages of the course adopted.

<sup>2</sup> Reading *ἐν ξενιτείᾳ* with Mendelssohn.

<sup>3</sup> *κοινῶς*. Or "For it is commonly found that God" &c. Wendland (Addenda) suggests *καθῶς*.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. § 190.



And all [the company] after hearing them, expressed their approval with loud applause. Thereupon the king in the fullness of his joy turned to the drinking of healths.

On the following day the banquet proceeded in the same order as 262 before, and when the time was come the king questioned those who yet remained. And to the first he said, "How should one keep oneself from pride?" And he answered, "By preserving an impartial 263 attitude and reminding himself constantly that he was a man as well as a leader of men. And God putteth down the proud but exalteth the meek and humble<sup>1</sup>."

After a kindly word to him he asked the next in order, "Whom 264 should one take for one's counsellors?" "Those," he replied, "who have been tried in many matters, and preserve a sincere loyalty to thee, and all who share thy principles. But, that these ends may be attained, God manifests himself to those who are worthy."

He commended him, and asked another, "What is the most neces- 265 sary possession for a king?" "The good wishes and love of his subjects," he replied. "For by these there is formed an indissoluble bond of loyalty. But it is God who causes these things to fall out as thou wouldst have them."

He commended him highly, and inquired of another, "What is the 266 aim of oratory?" And he said, "To persuade one's opponent, pointing out his errors by means of the chain of arguments which he has formulated<sup>2</sup>. For in this way wilt thou win over thy hearer, not by direct contradiction, but by showing appreciation withal, in order to convince him. But persuasion is attained through God's working."

He said that he had spoken well, and asked another how, in view 267 of the mixture of races within his kingdom, he should live amicably with them. "By adapting thy manner to suit each man," was his reply, "taking righteousness for thy guide, even as thou dost, since God grants thee right judgment."

He gave him his cordial thanks, and said to the next one, "For 268 what things should one be grieved?" To this he replied, "For our friends' misfortunes, when we watch their long continuance and hopelessness; for reason does not permit us to be grieved for such as are dead and released from ills. Yet all men when they are grieved think only of themselves and their own advantage. But to escape from every ill is possible only through the power of God."

He said that he had answered aright, and addressed another with 269 the words, "How does ill-repute arise?" And he replied, "When

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 1 Sam. ii. 7 f. ; Prov. iii. 34 ; Luke i. 51 f.

<sup>2</sup> The meaning is a little doubtful. Wendland translates "by a skilful arrangement of the arguments."

pride and unbounded self-confidence lead the way, dishonour and ruined reputation follow close on their heels. But all reputation is at God's disposal, who assigns it where he will."

270 His reply also he endorsed, and asked of the next in order, to whom he should entrust himself. "To those," he replied, "who attend upon thee out of goodwill, and not from fear or self-interest<sup>1</sup>, making gain their sole motive. For the former manner is a token of love, but the other of illwill and time-serving: for the man who is bent on<sup>2</sup> advancing his own interests has a treacherous nature. But thou hast the goodwill of all men, since God gives thee good counsel."

271 He said that he had answered wisely, and said to another, "What preserves a kingdom?" To this he replied, "Care and watchfulness to see that no injury is inflicted by those who are set over the people in official positions. And such is thy practice, since God grants thee the gift of grave reflection."

272 He corroborated his words, and asked another, "What keeps favour and honour secure?" And he said, "Virtue, for it is the fulfilment of good works, and rejects what is base: and even so thou dost preserve thy perfect bearing towards all—a gift which thou hast from God."

273 He received his reply graciously, and asked the eleventh (for their number exceeded seventy by two), how even in warfare he might maintain a peaceful tranquillity of soul. And he gave his opinion thus: "If thou canst reflect that no harm has been done to any of thy subjects, and that all will fight for the glory of rendering thee service, knowing that even though they lay down their lives thou dost care for their welfare. For thou never failest to make good the losses of all men, such is the kindheartedness which God has given thee."

He loudly applauded and expressed his hearty approval to them all, and then drank a long draught to the health of each and gave the reins to enjoyment<sup>3</sup>, sharing the men's society with merriment and high elation.

275 And on the seventh of the days the banquet was prepared on a larger scale, as many other visitors from the cities<sup>4</sup> were admitted, for a great number of ambassadors were in attendance. And when the time came the king asked the first of those who had not yet answered, 276 how he might avoid being deceived. And he said, "By scrutinizing the speaker and his words and the subject of his speech, and by taking time and asking the same questions in different forms. But the pos-

<sup>1</sup> Literally "consideration," either for their own interests, or, it may be, "to gain thy consideration."

<sup>2</sup> Mendelssohn's conjecture *ὀρμᾶται* for *ὀρᾶται* is probably right.

<sup>3</sup> Insert *ἐτραπή* after *τερφθῆναι*.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. § 175.

session of a keen understanding and the power of passing judgment in every case is a good gift of God : and this dost thou possess, O king."

The king loudly applauded, and asked another, "Why do most men 277 not embrace virtue?" "Because," he replied, "all men are by nature intemperate, and hanker after their pleasures, by reason of which things comes unrighteousness and a sea of covetousness. But the 278 virtuous state checks those who are drifting into a life of self-indulgence, and bids them prefer temperance and righteousness. But all this is under the direction of God."

The king said that he had answered well, and asked the next one<sup>1</sup>, 279 "Whose guidance should kings follow?" And he said, "The guidance of the laws, that so by righteous dealings they may restore the happiness of men's lives, even as thou by such action hast made an everlasting memorial for thyself, through following the divine commandment."

He said that he also had spoken well, and asked the next, "Whom 280 should one appoint chief magistrates<sup>2</sup>?" And he said, "Those who have a hatred of wrong and do what is just, imitating thy conduct, to the intent that they may ever be in good repute : even as thou dost," he added, "most mighty king, as God has given thee a crown of righteousness<sup>3</sup>."

He loudly signified his approval, and turned his face to the next one 281 and said, "What persons should one place in command of the forces?" And he replied, "Those who are distinguished for bravery and justice, and are more anxious for the safety of their men than to gain a victory while risking their lives in rash enterprises. For as God does good to all, so dost thou, making him thy example, do good to thy subjects."

He said that his answer was good, and asked another, "What man is 282 deserving of admiration?" And he said, "He that is endowed with glory and riches and power and yet inwardly regards himself as on an equality with all men, even as thou by such action art worthily admired, since God grants thee to take heed to these things."

To him also he gave his assent, and said to the next, "Upon what 283 matters should kings spend most of their time?" And he said, "In reading, and in studying the records of official journeys<sup>4</sup>, which are

<sup>1</sup> Reading τὸν μετ' αὐτὸν ἡρώτα.

<sup>2</sup> The reply and the succeeding question show that στρατηγός is here used of a civilian official (the governor of a district of Egypt). See Lumbroso, *op. cit.*, 260 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. 2 Tim. iv. 8 : the nearest parallel in the LXX is Ecclus. vi. 31 στέφανον ἀγαλλιάματος.

<sup>4</sup> The papyri afford examples of the diaries or *acta diurna* which officials in Egypt had to keep. See an article on "Υπομνηματισμοί" by Wilcken in *Philologus*, LIII, 80 ff., to which Wendland refers, and cf. § 298 of this

drawn up for the good of kingdoms<sup>1</sup>, with a view to improving and securing the existence of the subjects. And by so doing thou hast won a renown which to others is unattainable, since God fulfils thy desires.”

284 To him too he expressed his keen approval, and asked another what he should take for his pastimes in his hours of relaxation and recreation. And he said, “To watch plays which are played with propriety and to set before one’s eyes scenes from life enacted with  
285 decency and restraint is profitable to one’s life and seemly<sup>2</sup>. For even in these matters some instruction is contained, since often by the very least of things some desirable lesson is conveyed. But thou hast practised all restraint and carriest thy philosophy into thy actions, while thou art honoured by God for thy perfect virtue.”

286 He was well pleased with these words, and said to the ninth, “What should be one’s conduct at banquets?” And he said, “Thou shouldst invite such as are lovers of learning and able to suggest what may be useful to the kingdom and to the lives of thy subjects<sup>3</sup>. No more  
287 harmonious or sweeter music couldst thou find. For these are beloved of God, as they have trained their minds in all that is best. And such indeed is thy practice, since all thy actions are directed by God.”

288 He was delighted at his words, and inquired of the next one, “Which is the best for the people, that a commoner should be set over them<sup>4</sup> as king, or one born of royal blood?” And he said, “[It is best that] the man<sup>5</sup> of the noblest nature [should be king].  
289 For kings born of royal blood are inhuman and harsh towards their subjects: and much more is this the case with commoners, some of whom after experiencing misery and poverty have come into power, and proved themselves more cruel than the unholy  
290 tyrants. But, as I said before, a good disposition which has had the advantage of culture is fitted to bear rule, even as thou art a great king, not so much because of the pre-eminence given thee by the glory of thy rule and by thy wealth, as because thou hast outstripped

letter. Cf. also Plutarch, *Apophthegm. Reg. et Imp.*, 189 E Δημήτριος ὁ Φαληρεὺς Πτολεμαίῳ τῷ βασιλεῖ παρῆνει τὰ περὶ βασιλείας καὶ ἡγεμονίας βιβλία κτᾶσθαι καὶ ἀναγινώσκειν· ἃ γὰρ οἱ φίλοι τοῖς βασιλεῦσιν οὐ θερροῦσι παραινέειν, ταῦτα ἐν τοῖς βιβλίοις γέγραπται.

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps “for kings,” reading τοὺς βασιλεῖς with Mendelssohn.

<sup>2</sup> Adopting Mendelssohn’s admirable restoration of the text, βίῳ συμφέρον καὶ καθήκον.

<sup>3</sup> Τὸ χρήσιμα τῇ βασιλείᾳ καὶ τοῖς τῶν ἀρχ. βίοις, corrected by Mendelssohn. Cf. on the same topic Ecclus. ix. 16, xxxi (xxxiv). 12 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Reading ἐπ’ with Mendelssohn. The MSS. have ὑπ’, “appointed by them,” which may be right.

<sup>5</sup> Τὸν must, I think, be read.

all men in gentleness and kindness, since God has conferred these gifts upon thee."

He commended him at some length<sup>1</sup>, and asked him who was last of 291 all, "What is the greatest achievement in the office of a king?" To this he replied, "If his subjects enjoy continual peace and get speedy justice done them when their cases are tried. And these results 292 follow when the governor is a hater of evil and a lover of good, and regards the saving of a man's life as a matter of high importance, even as thou regardest unrighteousness as the greatest of evils, and by thy just government in all things hast made for thyself an imperishable renown, since God vouchsafes to give thee a pure mind without any taint of evil."

When his speech was ended, there was a burst of applause with 293 shouting and jubilation lasting for a good while. And when this ceased, the king took a goblet and drank a toast<sup>2</sup> in honour of all his guests and the speeches which they had delivered. And in conclusion he said, "You have brought me the greatest of blessings by your coming, for I have derived great benefit from the doctrine which you 294 have laid down to guide me in my kingly office." And he commanded that to each should be given three talents of silver and the slave who should hand it to him. And when all [the rest] had unanimously expressed their approbation, the banquet became a scene of rejoicing, and the king gave himself up to unstinted festivity.

Now, if I have been too prolix<sup>3</sup>, dear Philocrates, I pray thee 295 to excuse this fault. For I admired beyond measure the way in which the men on the spur of the moment were ready with their replies which required much meditation<sup>4</sup>, and seeing that their interrogator 296 had carefully thought out each question, while the respondents one after the other had the task of replying thereto, they did indeed appear to me and to those who were present, but chiefly to the philosophers, to deserve our admiration. And I believe that to all into whose hands this narrative may come it will appear incredible. But to be untruthful in matters which are recorded in public registers 297 is not meet: were I even to pass over anything, it would be an act of impiety where such matters are concerned: no, we describe just what took place, scrupulously keeping clear of all error. And to this end,

<sup>1</sup> Possibly the words "during a long time" should be attached to the preceding speech.

<sup>2</sup> Lit. "had it filled."

<sup>3</sup> Another excellent emendation of Mendelssohn, *εἰ πεπλέονακα τούτοις*.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. the story told by Diogenes Laertius (II, 111) of Diodorus Cronus, who is said to have been given the surname of Cronus by Ptolemy Soter because he failed to solve at once a dialectic problem proposed by Stilpo when the two philosophers were dining with the king.

after hearing with approval at their own mouth<sup>1</sup> their powers of speech, I endeavoured to obtain information from those persons who record in detail all that takes place at the king's audiences and entertainments<sup>2</sup>.

298 For it is the custom, as thou art aware, to have a record kept of all that is said and done from the hour<sup>3</sup> when the king begins to give audience until he retires to rest, and the practice is a good and useful  
299 one. The next day, before any audience is given, the minutes of the doings and sayings of the previous day are read through, and any  
300 irregularity which has occurred is corrected. We have, then, as we said, obtained accurate information on all points from the keepers of the public records<sup>4</sup>, and have set it down here in writing, knowing as we did thy love of useful learning.

[THE TRANSLATION AND ITS RECEPTION.]

301 Now after three days Demetrius took the men with him, and passed over the break-water<sup>5</sup> of seven stadia in length to the island, and crossing the bridge proceeded to the northern quarter. There he held a session in a house which had been prepared by the sea-shore, magnificently built in a situation of perfect stillness, and bade the men carry out their work of translation, since all appliances necessary  
302 for the task had been well provided. And so they proceeded to carry it out, arriving at an agreement on each point by comparing each others' work: and the appropriate rendering agreed on was then  
303 transcribed by Demetrius. And the session used to last until the ninth hour, and thereafter they would depart to attend to their bodily  
304 comforts, all their wants being plentifully supplied. Moreover, Dorotheus<sup>6</sup> used every day to make the same arrangements for them as were made for the king, for he had the king's order to do so. And every morning they would come to the court, make their salutation

<sup>1</sup> Such seems to be the force of the emphatic position of *αὐτῶν*.

<sup>2</sup> For these court journals see the article of Wilcken mentioned in the note on § 283.

<sup>3</sup> MSS. *ἀφ' ἧς ἀν ἡμέρας*; Wendland reads *ἀφ' ἧς ἀν ἡμέρας* (*ῶρας*), Mendelssohn corrects *ἡμέρας* to *ῶρας*. Probably the original text ran *ἀφ' ἧς ἀν ὁ βασις ἀρξῆται*, with an ellipse of *ῶρας* (cf. Luke vii. 45 and Blass, *Grammar of N. T. Greek*, § 44, 1), and *ἡμέρας* is an interpolation.

<sup>4</sup> Correcting *πάντων ἀναγεγραμμένων*, with Wendland, to *παρὰ τῶν ἀναγεγραμμένων*.

<sup>5</sup> For the island of Pharos and the *ἑπταστάδιον χῶμα*, which formed a bridge (*γέφυρα*) between the mainland and the island, see the description in Strabo, XVII, 6, 792.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. § 182.

to the king, and depart to their own place. And when, as is the 305  
 custom of all the Jews<sup>1</sup>, they had washed their hands in the sea, and  
 had offered a prayer to God<sup>2</sup>, they betook themselves to the reading  
 and interpretation of each passage. And I also propounded this 306  
 question, "Why do they wash their hands before praying?" And  
 they explained that it was in token that they had done no wrong,  
 since the hands are the means by which every action takes place<sup>3</sup>:  
 in such a beautiful and pious spirit do they make all things symbols  
 of righteousness and truth. And so, as we have said already, they 307  
 assembled every day in this spot, which the stillness and brilliant  
 light rendered so delightful, and carried on their appointed task.  
 And so it came about that the translation<sup>4</sup> was accomplished in  
 seventy-two days, as though this coincidence had been intended.  
 And when the work was ended Demetrius assembled the Jewish 308  
 people in the spot where the translation had been made and read  
 it through to the whole assembly in the presence of the translators,  
 who received another<sup>5</sup> great ovation from the people in recognition of  
 the great services which they had rendered. And they gave a similar 309  
 reception to Demetrius, and requested him to deliver a copy of the  
 whole law to their rulers. And after the reading of the rolls the 310  
 priests and the oldest of the translators and some members of the  
 [Jewish] community<sup>6</sup> and the rulers of the people stood up and said,  
 "Forasmuch as the translation has been well and piously executed  
 and with perfect accuracy, it is right that it should remain in its  
 present form, and that no revision should take place." And when 311

<sup>1</sup> See Schürer<sup>3</sup>, II, 481 ff. (Engl. Trans., II, 2, 109), Edersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus*, II, 9 ff. That the Jews in Egypt had the same scruples on the subject of hand-washing in the second century B. C. as their Palestinian brethren had at a later time is attested by the Sibylline Oracles, III, 591 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Reading *ὡς ἂν εὐξωνται*, in accordance with the usage of *ὡς ἂν* elsewhere in this book.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Aristobulus (ap. Euseb., *P. E.*, VIII, 10, 377 a) "Ὄστε αἱ χεῖρες ἐπὶ δυνάμειος νοοῦνται θεοῦ. καὶ γὰρ ἔστι νοῆσαι τὴν πᾶσαν ἰσχὺν τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ τὰς ἐνεργείας ἐν ταῖς χερσὶν εἶναι."

<sup>4</sup> Literally "transcription."

<sup>5</sup> *Καί* seems to refer back to the reception previously accorded to them by the king.

<sup>6</sup> "Although the Jews who lived here [at Alexandria] enjoyed the rights of citizenship . . . they nevertheless formed an independent municipal community within or co-ordinate with the rest of the city, precisely as in the case of Cyrene" (Schürer<sup>3</sup>, III, 40, Engl. Trans., II, 2, 244). A Cyrenaic inscription of 13 B. C., quoted by Schürer, contains the phrase *τοῖς ἐκ τοῦ πολιτεύματος ἡμῶν Ἰουδαίοις*.

all had assented to these words, they<sup>1</sup> bade them, in accordance with their custom, pronounce an imprecation upon any who should revise the text by adding to or altering in any way whatsoever or omitting anything from what had been written<sup>2</sup>; and herein they did well, to the intent that the work might for ever be preserved imperishable and unchanged.

- 312 And when word of this also was brought to the king, he greatly rejoiced, for it seemed that his purpose had been securely attained. And the whole work was read through to him, and he was amazed exceedingly at the mind of the lawgiver. And he said to Demetrius, "How is it that when such great things have been achieved none of  
313 the historians or poets ever thought of mentioning them?" And he said, "Because the law is holy and has been given by God: and some of those who attempted to do so were smitten of God and desisted  
314 from their attempt." For he said that he had heard Theopompus<sup>3</sup> tell how when he was too rashly<sup>4</sup> intending to introduce into his history some of the incidents from the law which had previously been translated, his mind was deranged for more than thirty days. And when the disorder abated he besought God that the cause of the  
315 mischance might be made plain to him. And when it was shown him in a dream that his desire to disclose the things of God to common men was misguided, he desisted, and thereupon recovered his reason.  
316 "And I have also been informed by Theodectes<sup>5</sup>, the tragic poet, that when he was intending to introduce into one of his plays something

<sup>1</sup> Or, "he (Demetrius) bade them." So the MSS. of Aristeas and Eusebius read.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Deut. iv. 2, xii. 32, and for the imprecation Rev. xxii. 18 f.

<sup>3</sup> Theopompus, the historian, a pupil of Isocrates, lived from about 378 to 300 B. C. About 305 B. C. he came to Egypt, but was not in favour with Ptolemy I, who would have put him to death as a dangerous busybody (*ὡς πολυπράγμονα*), had not his friends interceded for his life (Phot. Cod. 176). The epithet *πολυπράγμων* is interesting in view of the statement in Aristeas as to his meddling with divine matters (*περιεργασάμενος* § 315), although the incident has probably no foundation in fact.

<sup>4</sup> *Ἐπισηφαλέστερον*: cf. Demetrius, *de Elocut.*, 80 (ed. Roberts) *διὸ καὶ Πλάτων ἐπισηφαλές τι δοκεῖ ποιεῖν μεταφοραῖς μᾶλλον χρώμενος*, it is "a risky feature in his style." Wendland renders "when he was intending to introduce . . . some of the incidents from the law which had previously been translated in a somewhat misleading way." The reference is to the earlier and less careful translation of portions of Scripture which is said to have been in existence before the LXX (see on § 30 *ἀμελέστερον* . . . *σεσήμενται*).

<sup>5</sup> Theodectes, a rhetorician and tragic poet, a contemporary and on one occasion a rival of Theopompus, circa 375-334 B. C.



recorded in the Book<sup>1</sup>, he was afflicted with cataract of the eyes: and suspecting that this was the reason for his mishap, he besought God's mercy, and after many days recovered his sight."

The king, when he heard the explanation which Demetrius gave of 317 this matter, as above narrated, made obeisance, and ordered that great care should be taken of the books, and that they should be guarded with proper awe. He further besought the translators that after 318 their return to Judaea they would visit him very often. It was but right, he added, that they should now be let go, but should they visit him, he would in bounden duty treat them as friends, and they would meet with the utmost consideration<sup>2</sup> at his hands. And he ordered 319 preparations to be made for their sending off, and treated the men munificently. For to each one he gave three of the finest changes of raiment, and two talents of gold, and a side-board<sup>3</sup> of a talent [in weight], and a complete set of cushions for the three couches of a dining-room. To Eleazar also he sent by the hands of their escort 320 ten couches with legs of silver and all the appurtenances thereof and a side-board of thirty talents and ten changes of raiment and a purple robe and a magnificent crown and a hundred pieces of fine linen cloth and vials<sup>4</sup> and dishes<sup>5</sup> and two golden bowls as a dedicatory offering. And he wrote a letter also requesting him that if any of 321 the men should choose to return to him he would not prevent them from so doing: for he highly valued the company of educated men, and preferred a lavish expenditure of his wealth on such persons to squandering it on vain things.

There, Philocrates, thou hast the whole story which I promised thee. 322 And indeed I believe that thou findest greater pleasure in these matters than in the books of the romancers: for thou hast a natural inclination to the study of those things which can profit the mind, and art at most times occupied therewith. And I will make a further attempt to record whatever else is worthy of narration, in order that in the perusal thereof thou mayst win the fairest reward for thy zealous desire.

<sup>1</sup> This seems to be the earliest use of ἡ βίβλος for a collection of sacred writings. We have elsewhere βίβλος or βιβλίον διαθήκης (Eccles. xxiv. 23; 1 Macc. i. 57), τὰ βιβλία τοῦ νόμου (1 Macc. i. 56), αἱ ἱεραὶ βίβλοι (Jos.). See Ryle, *Canon of O. T.*, 290.

<sup>2</sup> Read πολυαρίας, Mahaffy's correction of πολυδαρίας, and ἔξειν for ἔξει.

<sup>3</sup> Κυλίκιον, which is used here and in § 320, ordinarily means "a cup," while κυλικεῖον, which Wendland reads in both places, means "a side-board." The form κυλίκιον, however, occurs in 1 Macc. xv. 32, where a piece of furniture for supporting vessels is clearly intended, and that is probably the meaning here.

<sup>4</sup> Or "saucers."

<sup>5</sup> Or "cups."

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