

## **The Letter of Aristeas to Philocrates**

### **Introduction (§§1–8)**

**1.** Having composed a noteworthy narrative, O Philocrates, about the meeting that we had with Eleazar, the high priest of the Jews, since you place a high value, as you constantly remind (me), on hearing about the details and purpose of our deputation, I have attempted to expound it clearly for you, having realized the disposition you have to love learning. **2.** For indeed it is the greatest thing for a person “always both to increase learning and to make progress,” whether through written accounts or through the actual occurrence(s) that we experience. For thus is a pure disposition of mind constructed, taking up whatever is most beautiful, and having inclined towards the most supreme thing of all, piety, when it is employed, it will provide an unerring standard. **3.** Since we had a predilection for inquisitively looking into religious matters, we volunteered for the embassy to the aforementioned man, who is esteemed by both citizens and foreigners alike for integrity and reputation and who has won the greatest benefit for those around him and for those citizens in other places, for the translation of the divine Law, because it is written among them on parchments in Hebrew letters. **4.** Indeed, I undertook the embassy eagerly, seizing an opportunity with the king concerning those who had been deported from Judea into Egypt by the king’s father, who first had both possessed the city and taken over the government of Egypt. It is worthwhile to explain these things to you as well. **5.** For I am convinced that you, even more, having an inclination toward matters most holy and the disposition of those people who conduct themselves according to the holy legislation, concerning which we propose to explain, that you will listen gladly, having recently come to us from the island, and desiring to hear whatever exists for the restoration of the soul. **6.** And previously I transmitted to you, concerning those things that I considered worthy of mentioning, a record, which we received from the most learned high priests throughout the most learned (land of) Egypt concerning the race of the Jews. **7.** For to you, as one who has an eagerness to learn about matters that can assist understanding, it is necessary that I communicate, on the one hand, most especially with all who are like-minded, and on the other, even more so with you who possesses a genuine purpose, who has been established in character as a brother not just according to descent but also being

the same as we with an eager desire for beauty. **8.** For delight in gold or any other contrivance valued by the vain-glorious does not have the same benefit that the training of education and attention to these things does. But lest we engage in idle chatter, talking at length of introductory matters, we will resume the thread of the narrative.

### **The Library Project (§§9–11)**

**9.** When he was appointed over the king's library, Demetrius of Phalerum was furnished with much money in order to collect, if possible, all the books in the world, and making purchases and transcriptions, he brought to completion, as much as he could, the king's purpose. **10.** Thus, while we were present, he was asked, "How many thousands of books have been obtained?" He said, "More than two-hundred thousand, O King; I will hasten in a short time to fulfill the remainder of five hundred thousand. But it also has been reported to me that the laws of the Jews are worthy of transcription and of inclusion in your library." **11.** "What is there, therefore, to prevent you from doing this?" he said. "For everything that you need has been provided to you." But Demetrius said, "Translation is still required; for in Judea they use their own characters, just as the Egyptians use their own arrangement of letters, inasmuch as they also have their own language. The Jews are supposed to use Syrian. This is not so, but they use another dialect." After being informed of these things, the king proposed to write to the high priest of the Jews so that Demetrius might bring to completion the aforementioned matters.

### **The Liberation of the Jewish Slaves (§§12–27)**

**12.** But I thought that there was an opportune moment concerning matters about which I frequently asked Sosibius of Tarentum and Andreas, the head bodyguards, concerning the deliverance of those deported from Judea by the king's father—for he invaded the whole of Coele-Syria and Phoenicia, exploiting good fortune together with bravery, some he transplanted and others he took captive, making everything subject to fear, while also he deported one hundred thousand from the land of the Jews into Egypt, **13.** from whom he armed about thirty thousand chosen men and settled them in garrisons in the country. Already previously a considerable number had come with the Persian, and before these, other auxiliaries had been sent out in order to fight the king of the Ethiopians with Psammetichus, but these did not number as many as those Ptolemy son of Lagos

deported. **14.** Just as we previously said, selecting the best who excelled in youthful vigor and in strength, he armed them, but the remaining quantity, old and very young, and also women, he let go into servitude, not having so much a personal inclination as being prevailed upon by the soldiers, because of the service that they had rendered in the military actions. But when we had gotten a certain pretext for their release, just as we made clear above, we said these words to the king: **15.** “May it never be unreasonable to be convicted by deeds themselves, O King. For as to the legislation that has been laid down for all the Jews, which we propose not only to transcribe, but also to translate, what rationale do we have for our mission when a considerable multitude exists in servitude in your realm? But with a perfect and bounteous spirit release those confined in hardships, since the god who established the law for them directs the kingdom for you, just as I have discovered through investigation. **16.** These people revere God, the overseer and creator of all things, whom all also, even we worship, O King, using different names, Zeus and Dis/Jove. Not dissimilar to this, the first people pointed to that one through whom all things are endowed with life and come into being as guiding and having lordship over all things. Since you have surpassed all people in magnanimity grant a release for those held fast in servitude.” **17.** The king did not wait a long time, but we prayed to God inwardly to prepare his mind to release all of them—for the race of human beings, since they are a creation of God, are also changed and turned around again by him. Therefore in many and diverse ways I called upon the one who has lordship over the heart, that the king might be compelled, just as I asked, to bring it about. **18.** For I had great hope, having brought forward an argument concerning the salvation of people, that God would effect the fulfillment of those things that I had asked. For whatever people think to do in piety for righteousness and attention to good works, God, who has lordship over all, directs (their) actions and designs. **19.** And raising his head and looking with a gracious countenance, he said, “How many tens of thousands do you presume there will be?” And Andreas, who was standing by, declared, “A little more than one hundred thousand.” And the king said, “It is indeed a small thing that Aristeas asks of us.” Sosibius and certain others present said, “It is also worthy of your generosity that you dedicate the release of these people as a thank-offering to the greatest God. For having been greatly honored by the one who rules all things and being glorified more than your ancestors, it is fitting for

you if you also make very large thank-offerings.” **20.** And being in very good humor, he ordered an addition to the soldiers’ pay, and twenty drachmae provided for each slave, and that an edict be issued about these matters, and that a register be made immediately, acting magnanimously with eagerness, since God fulfilled our entire purpose and constrained him to release not only those who had come with his father’s army, but also anyone already there or those introduced into the kingdom after these events. They declared that the gift was more than four hundred talents. **21.** And I do not consider it unprofitable to place into the record a copy of the edict, for the munificence of the king will be much more evident and distinguishable, since God strengthened him to become a salvation for numerous multitudes. **22.** It was as follows: “As the king has commanded: Everyone who campaigned with our father in the areas of Syria and Phoenicia, invading the country of the Jews, took possession of Jewish slaves and conveyed them into the city and the country or have even sold them to others—and similarly, if any were already present or even afterwards some of these were brought in. Those possessing them should release them immediately, receiving at once for each slave twenty drachmae, the soldiers with the payment of their salaries, the remainder from the royal treasury. **23.** For we consider that these were taken prisoner against the will of our father and against propriety, but it was because of military recklessness to destroy their country and to effect the removal of the Jews into Egypt. For the spoils taken by the soldiers were sufficient, more even than necessary. Therefore, the oppression of the people is completely unreasonable. **24.** Thus, since we are acknowledged to apportion justice to all people, but even more to those who are unreasonably oppressed, and since we strive in everything to attend well to justice and piety in all things, we have decreed that however many Jewish persons are in servitude anywhere in the kingdom for whatever reason, their owners shall release them having received the prescribed payment, and no one shall administer any of these matters with any frivolous delay. But within three days of the day that this decree is published, lists will be produced for those appointed over these matters making known the persons straightaway. **25.** For we have determined that to accomplish this will be a benefit both for us and for state affairs. But anyone who wishes may report about those who have disobeyed, after which the one informing will assume ownership of the guilty.

**26.** When the decree was submitted, as it was read over by the king, it contained everything except for the clause “if any were already present or afterwards some of these were brought in.” The king added this himself, making use of his munificence and generosity. He also commanded that a lump payment of expenses be divided among the staff-officers of the soldiers and the royal bankers. **27.** Thus, after it was decreed, it went into effect in seven days; the payment came to more than six hundred and sixty talents. For many children at the breast were freed along with their mothers. After the matter was raised whether the twenty drachma should be paid for these, the king ordered that it be done, accomplishing completely everything he had resolved.

#### **Demetrius’s Report of the Librarian (§§28–34)**

**28.** Now when these matters had been accomplished, he commanded Demetrius to make a report on the copying of the Jewish books. For these kings used to administer everything through edicts and great caution, and nothing was done negligently or without purpose. Therefore I have also placed in the record a copy of the report and copies of the letters, and the quantity of the objects sent and the condition of each, because each of them excelled in magnificence and artistry. Herewith is a copy of the report. **29.** “To the Great King from Demetrius. By your command, O King, concerning the books that are wanting for the completion of the library, how they are to be collected, and those that have by chance fallen away from proper repair, paying more than incidental attention to these matters, I submit a report to you here. **30.** The books of the law of the Jews along with a few others are wanting. For it happens that they are expressed in Hebrew letters and language, but they have been written rather carelessly and not as is proper, just as it has been reported by the experts. For they do not have royal design. **31.** Now it is necessary that these books, having been made exact, be with you, because this legislation is both very philosophical and uncorrupted, inasmuch as it is divine. Therefore, both writers and poets, as well as the mass of historians, have avoided a mention of the aforesaid books and of the men who have been governed and those that are being governed by them, because what is beheld in them has a certain holiness and reverence, as Hecataeus of Abdera says. **32.** If, therefore, O king, it seems good, it shall be written to the high priest in Jerusalem to send men who have lived exceedingly good lives and are eminent, skilled in matters pertaining to their own law, six from each tribe, so that after

examining the agreement of the majority and obtaining exactitude in the translation, we may place it conspicuously, worthy of the affairs of state and of your purpose. Farewell always.” **33.** Now when this memorandum had been produced, the king commanded that a letter be written to Eleazar concerning these matters, reporting that the release of the captives had been accomplished. He contributed for the construction of the bowls and flagons and a table and libation cups that weighed fifty talents of gold and seventy talents of silver and a considerable quantity of precious stone—now he commanded the treasurers to give the selection to the artisans of those that they might prefer—and coinage for sacrifices and other things up to one hundred talents. **34** Now we will explain the construction for you, as soon as we go through the copies of the letters. Now the letter of the king took this form.

#### **Ptolemy II’s Letter to Eleazar (§§35–40)**

**35.** “King Ptolemy to Eleazar the high priest, greetings and good health. Since it has happened that a large number of Jews have settled in our country, whom the Persians took from Jerusalem during the time when they held power and yet who also came with our father into Egypt as prisoners—**36.** of these he assigned a good number to the regular military at higher than mercenary pay, and similarly also those who were already there whom he judged faithful, to them he gave garrisons that he built so that native Egyptians might [not] be afraid of them, but now we, having inherited the kingdom, meet all people in a more benevolent manner, but more so especially your citizens. **37.** We have set free more than one hundred thousand captives, paying to those who held them a cash price commensurate with their value, making good also whatever damage was done by the attacks of the crowds, deciding to do this as a pious act and offering a thank-offering to the Most High God, who has maintained the kingdom for us in peace and in most excellent reputation throughout the entire world. We have appointed to the army those who are at the prime of military age, and we have established over business matters those who are capable enough to attend us, who are worthy of trust by the court. **38.** Now since we desire also to show favor to them and to all the Jews throughout the world and to future generations, we have decided that your Law shall be translated into Greek letters from the Hebrew letters spoken by you, in order that these books of the Law also might be with us in our library along with the other royal books. **39.** You will act well and

worthily of our zeal by selecting elders who have lived exemplary lives, who have experience in the Law and are able to translate, six from each tribe, so that from the majority there may be found agreement, since this is an inquiry that concerns important matters. For we believe that completion of this task will bring great reputation. **40.** Now concerning these matters we have sent Andreas of the chief bodyguards and Aristetas, men held in honor by us, who will confer with you and will bring offerings of first fruits to the Temple and one hundred talents of silver for sacrifices and other things. Now also if you write to us about anything you might wish, it would be welcome, and you will act in a manner worthy of friendship, since whatever you choose will be carried out with alacrity. Farewell.”

#### **Eleazar’s Reply to Ptolemy (§§41–51)**

**41.** To this letter Eleazar replied approvingly in this way: “Eleazar, the high priest, to King Ptolemy, a genuine friend, greetings. May you be in good health as well as the queen, Arsinoë, your sister, and your children. It would be well and as we desire; we ourselves are also in good health. **42.** After receiving the letter from you, we rejoiced greatly because of your plan and noble design, and gathering together the entire multitude, we read it publicly to them in order that they might know what piety you have toward our God. And we displayed the flagons that you sent, twenty of gold and thirty of silver, five bowls, and a table for offering, and for the bringing of sacrifices and the repairs that might be necessary for the Temple, a hundred talents of silver, **43.** which Andreas and Aristetas, who belong to those honored by you, noble and good men who also excel in education, worthy in every respect of your conduct and righteousness, brought. These have also communicated to us the messages from you, about which they have heard from us things that fit well with what you wrote. **44.** For everything that is advantageous to you, even if it is against nature, we will submit to. For this is a sign of friendship and love. For you have also provided great and unforgettable benefactions in many ways for our citizens. **45.** Therefore, we have offered sacrifices immediately on behalf of you, your sister, your children and your friends, and the entire multitude lifted exaltations that things should always happen for you just as you desire and that God who is ruler of all things should preserve the kingdom for you in peace with glory and that the transcription of the holy Law would come about in a manner beneficial to you and with

security. **46.** When everyone was present, we selected elders, noble and good, six from each tribe, whom we have also sent, who have the Law. Therefore, you will do a good deed, O just king, if you order that when the transcription of the books is completed the men might be safely restored to us again. Farewell.” **47.** Now those of the first tribe are: Joseph, Ezekias, Zacharias, John, Ezekias, Elissaios. The second: Judah, Simon, Somoel, Adaiah, Mattathias, Eschlemias. The third: Neemias, Joseph, Theodosios, Baseas, Ornias, Dakis. **48.** The fourth: Jonathan, Abraios, Elissaios, Ananias, Chabrias [#6 is missing]. The fifth: Isaac, Jacob, Jesus, Sabbataios, Simon, Levi. The sixth: Judah, Joseph, Simon, Zacharias, Somoel, Selemias. **49.** The seventh: Sabbataios, Zedekiah, Jacob, Isaac, Jesias, Natthaios. The eighth: Theodosios, Jason, Jesus, Theodotos, John, Jonathan. The ninth: Theophilos, Abram, Arsamos, Jason, Endemias, Daniel. **50.** The tenth: Jeremiah, Eleazar, Zacharias, Baneas, Elissaios, Dathaios. The eleventh: Samuel, Joseph, Judah, Jonathan, Chaleb, Dositheos. The twelfth: Isaelos, John, Theodosios, Arsamos, Abietes, Ezekiel. Seventy two in all. **51.** So these matters got into this reply to the king’s letter due to those who advised Eleazar.

#### **Ptolemy Requisitions Gifts for the Jerusalem Temple (§§51–56)**

[51] As I promised, I will provide an explanation of the furnishings. For the objects were finished, excelling in artistic skill, since the king made a large contribution, and he oversaw the craftsmen for each object. Therefore, they could not overlook anything or finish them indifferently. Now I will describe first those things having to do with the table. **52.** Thus, the king was eager to build the piece of furniture to be colossal in its dimensions. But he ordered inquiries to be made of those in the locality about how large the previous one was that stood in the temple in Jerusalem. **53.** But when they reported the measurements, he asked additionally, if he should build it larger. Thus, some of the priests and others said that there was nothing to prevent this. But he said that he wished even to make it fivefold in size, but he hesitated lest it be useless for the ministrations. **54.** For he was not content simply to place the things that he gave in that place, but rather he would have greater gratification if those appointed duly performed the appointed ministrations on the furniture that he provided. **55.** For it was not due to a lack of gold that he had made the previously completed objects short in measurement, but it is clear for what reason, he said: they had been established thusly in their dimensions. For had

there already been an injunction, they would lack nothing. Therefore he did not overstep or set aside those things that were proper. **56.** Thus, as to the diversity of the arts, he ordered that they be used to the highest degree, intending everything piously and having a good ability for perceiving the appearance of objects. Wherever things were not written down, he ordered them to be made according to beauty; wherever things were written down, he ordered that their measurements be followed.

### **The Table (§§57–72)**

**57.** So they fashioned it two cubits in length <and a cubit in width> and a cubit and a half in height, of pure gold, making the product solid on every side. Now I mean not of gold overlaid around something, but a metal plate was fastened on. **58.** And they made a rim a palm's breadth all around and twisted molding, having a design of ropes in low relief, which had marvelously carved relief on three sides, since it was triangular. **59.** And on each side the full shape of the workmanship had the same arrangement, so that whatever side would turn, the appearance was identical, and when (the twisted molding) rested on the rim, on the one hand, the slope facing the table had a most beautiful shape, but on the other hand, the outer slope faced the view of anyone who approached it. **60.** Therefore, whatever side would turn, it happened that the tip of the two slopes was acute, being situated at the highest spot, since it was constructed as a triangle, as we said earlier. There existed arrangements of precious stones in it in the middle of the ropes; each one interweaving with the other. It was inimitable in its creation. **61.** All were fastened through holes by golden pins to keep them secured. And at the corners clasps bound them firmly together. **62.** From the sides, which slanted upwards toward the view, on the rim all around, a row of eggs was fashioned out of precious stones, being in prominent relief with continuously ribbed low reliefs, which were in place close to one another around the entire table. **63.** Underneath the egg relief made of stones, the craftsmen made a garland of all kinds of fruit, visibly projecting with grape clusters and ears of corn, and in addition dates and apples, olives and pomegranates and the like. And fashioning the stones in the exact shape of the aforementioned fruits, having the color of each kind, they fastened them to the gold horizontally around the entire construction of the table. **64.** Next after the arrangement of the rim, there was work beneath in a similar fashion to the egg construction that had been fabricated and the remainder of the ribbed and low relief

work, because the table was made to be used on both sides, whichever side one chose, so that the positions of the wave molding and of the garland were also downward toward the side of the feet. **65.** Therefore, they made a solid metal plate over the entire breadth of the table four fingers deep, so that the legs could be inserted into it, having pins with fasteners to fasten on the border in order that it might be used from whichever side they chose. In appearance, then, it looked the same, the construction being identical both ways. **66.** On the table itself, they made a winding pattern in relief, which had prominently in the middle precious stones of many kinds, both rubies and emeralds, and also onyx and other types that excelled in extreme beauty. **67.** Next after the arrangement of the winding pattern, there was set an open web, which was amazing, affording a central view that was rhombus-like. Upon it was inlaid crystal stone and what is called amber, affording the viewer an inimitable sight. **68.** They made the legs with capitals having lilies, the lilies having a bend under the table, and the parts seen on the inside had genuine gold-leaf. **69.** The support of the leg on the ground was of ruby, on every side a palm's breadth, in appearance having the shape of a boot and being eight fingers wide, upon which rested the entire plate of the leg. **70.** And they constructed out of stone sprouting ivy entwined with acanthus with a grapevine wrapping around the foot along with its clusters, which were of stone, all the way to the top. And the arrangement was the same for the four legs. Everything had been made effectively and fitted, having the unchangeable superiority of experience and skill to approach reality, so that even when a breeze of air blew, the positioning of the leaves allowed for movement, since the arrangement of everything was modeled on reality. **71.** They made the front of the table out of three parts, as if it were a triptych, joined together to each other by dovetailing with nails according to the thickness of the construction, the fitting together of the joints being constructed to be invisible and undetectable. The thickness of the whole table was not less than half a cubit, so that the entire piece amounted to many talents. **72.** For since the king had decided to add nothing to the size, whatever was necessary to spend on the larger construction, this he dedicated to even more decoration. And according to his decision everything was completed in an amazing and remarkable manner, both with inimitable skill and illustrious beauty.

### **The Bowls (§§73–82)**

**73.** Of the drinking bowls, two were gold in construction, having scales in relief from the base up to the middle of the piece and with great skill having a colligation of stones in the middle of the scales. **74.** Then there was superimposed a winding pattern, a cubit in height, and there was relief work out of variegated stones, displaying the loving labor of artistry along with beauty. Upon this was fluting, upon which was an intermixing of lozenges, having the appearance of net-work up to the mouth. **75.** And in the middle, bosses of stones, one next to the other, arranged alternately by their types, no less than four fingers, made up the manifest beauty. On the crown of the mouth a pattern of lilies with their blossoms and clusters of grapes were represented all around. **76.** These drinking bowls possessed such a construction of gold, holding more than two measures. And the silver ones had a smooth preparation, indeed being like a mirror, remarkably having the same quality as one, so that everything that was brought close beamed forth more clearly than in actual mirrors. **77.** But it is not possible to describe their true appearance when they were finished. For when they were completed, being placed one beside the other—I mean first a silver bowl, then a gold one, again a silver one and a gold one—the appearance of the arrangement was completely indescribable, and when people drew near to the sight, they could not tear themselves away due to the illumination and the pleasure of the sight. **78.** For the dynamism of the appearance was varied. For when one looked at the gold construction by itself, a certain fascination accompanied amazement, the mind continually being drawn to each work of art. And again when anyone wanted to look at the arrangement of the silver vessels, everything gleamed all around, however one stood, and caused even greater merriment among the spectators, so that the artistic skill of those pieces that had been executed was completely indescribable.

**79.** They engraved the golden broad bowls with garlands of grape vines in the middle, and around the lip they entwined in relief a garland of ivy and myrtle and olive, setting precious stones in it. And they completed the rest of the relief work in different ways, striving eagerly to make everything for the preeminence of the king's glory. **80.** In general, neither in the king's treasuries nor in any other was there such work either in artistry or in lavish expense. For the king devoted not a little forethought to them, loving the fame accrued for things having such beauty. **81.** For often he would disregard public business and carefully attend the artisans so that they might execute them in a manner

appropriate to the place to which the works were being sent. Therefore, everything was accomplished solemnly and in a manner worthy both of the king who was sending them and of the high priest who presided over the place. **82.** For the number of the stones was bounteous and great in size, being no less than five thousand. And everything was so superior in workmanship that the contribution of the stones and the artistry of the artisans was more than five times the value of the gold.

### **Jerusalem and its Environs (§§83–120)**

**83.** Therefore I have explained these things to you, assuming that a description of them was necessary. What follows comprises the journey that we made to Eleazar, but first I will explain the setting of the entire country. For when we arrived at the places, we saw the city situated in the middle of the entirety of Judea upon a mountain that rose to a great height.

### **The Temple (§§84–87)**

**84.** The Temple, which had great splendor, was built upon the summit. And there were three enclosure walls; each wall was more than seventy cubits in size, and the width corresponded accordingly as did the length of the construction of the building, everything being built with a lavishness and expense that excelled in all respects. **85.** And from the doorway and the fasteners upon it to the doorjambs and the secure nature of the lintels, it was plain that the money spent had been extravagant. **86.** And the configuration of the curtain was very much like the door in every respect, and especially, when the fabric was seized by unceasing movement due to the current of the wind, because the current came from the bottom billowing up to the taut part at the top, the object had a certain pleasantness and the sight was hard to look away from. **87.** The construction of the altar was of commensurate size to the place, and the sacrifices that were consumed by the fire were commensurate with the structure. And the ascent was likewise, in accordance with decency. The incline of the place was proper for the ministering priests, who were covered to the ankles with robes of fine linen.

### **The Temple's Water System (§§88–91)**

**88.** The building faces to the east, and the back of it faces to the west. The entire floor is set with stones, and the slopes are to the appropriate places for the carrying of water, which is for the washing of the blood from the sacrifices. For many thousands of beasts

are brought during the days of the festivals. **89.** The supply of water is inexhaustible, since there is a strong, natural spring flowing continually inside and furthermore there are marvelous and indescribable reservoirs under the ground, just as was explained, five stadia around the foundation of the Temple, and each of them has innumerable pipes, so that the channels connect together on each side. **90.** And [as was explained] all of them were covered with lead down to the floors and the walls, and above them was poured a great amount of plaster so that everything became fit for service. And there were many outlets at the base of the altar, invisible to all except to those whose ministry it was, so that, by the downward incline and slope, the multitudinous collected blood of the sacrifices might be entirely cleansed. **91.** Having learned this myself, I will explain the construction of the reservoirs just as I know it. For they led me more than four stadia out of the city, and at a particular place they urged me to bend down and listen to the noise made by the meeting of the waters. Thus, the size of the receptacles was made clear to me, just as I have explained.

#### **The Priests and Their Ministrations (§§92–95)**

**92.** Now the service of the priests is not to be surpassed by anything in physical strength or in its state of decorum and silence. For all, of their own accord, work diligently at a greatly laborious task, and each is concerned with what has been assigned. And they serve unceasingly, some the wood, others the oil, others the fine flour, others things having to do with the spices, yet others things having to do with the complete burning of the flesh, making extraordinary use of strength. **93.** For grasping the legs of the calves with both hands, most of them being almost two talents each, amazingly with each hand they throw them up to a considerable height, and they do not miss the proper position. And similarly, the legs of the sheep and the goats are remarkable for their weight and fat. For with respect to all of them, those whose charge it is select the flawless and the ones with excessive fat, then they discharge the aforementioned task. **94.** But there is a specially assigned place for rest, where those who are resting sit. And when this happens, some of those who had had an interval of rest rise willingly; no one gives any orders for the acts of service. **95.** But complete silence is instituted so that it might be supposed that not a single person is present in the place, even though those who are ministering is close

to seven hundred—and also the great number who bring the sacrifices to be offered—but also they discharge everything with reverence in a manner worthy of great divinity.

### **The High Priest's Vestments (§§96–99)**

**96.** We were greatly astonished when we beheld Eleazar at his service, both at the matters of his dress and his glory, which was exhibited by his attire of which he wore a robe and the precious stones surrounding it. For there are golden bells surrounding its hem, giving forth a unique musical sound. And next to each of these are pomegranates embroidered with brilliant colors remarkable in hue. **97.** And he was girded with a distinctive and striking girdle, woven with the most beautiful colors. And upon his breast he wore the so-called “oracle” in which are set twelve stones, differing in kinds, attached with gold, the names of the tribal leaders according to what would have been the original order, each one flashing forth an indescribable natural color individual to itself. **98.** And upon his head was the so-called tiara, and upon that the inimitable mitre, the sacred diadem, engraven upon gold leaf with holy letters the name of God, between his eyebrows, filled with glory. He is thought worthy of these in his ministrations. **99.** The appearance of these things produces awe and confusion, so that one might think that he had gone out of this world into another. And I insist that any person who comes near to the sight of those things that I have previously recounted will come into amazement and indescribable wonder, turning his mind to the sacred construction of each thing.

### **The Citadel (§§100–104)**

**100.** In order to get a thorough knowledge of everything, we ascended the citadel of the city, which lies close by, and looked. It is situated upon the most lofty place, fortified with many towers, which have been built of tall stones up to the very top, just as we were informed, for protection of the areas around the Temple **101.** so that, if there occurred any kind of attack or revolt or assault of enemies, none would be able to make their way into the sacred precincts surrounding the house. Placed upon the towers of the citadel were catapults and various implements, and the place was at the very summit of the aforementioned precincts. **102.** As it were, men who were most trustworthy and who had provided great proofs to their native land protected the towers. These could not leave the citadel, except for festivals, and then only a part of them, nor could anyone enter. **103.** They took very great care, even if there might be some order by the leader for someone to

enter in order to observe, even as occurred with us. For being unarmed and two in number, they scarcely admitted us so that we could view the proceedings of the sacrifices. **104.** And they said that this matter was confirmed by oaths. For they had all sworn, from necessity discharging by divine providence the obligation of the oath, that even though they were five hundred, not to let in more than five people at the same time. For the citadel was the entire protection for the temple. And the one who founded it thus secured the preservation of the things about which we have spoken.

#### **The City and Its Streets (§§105–106)**

**105.** The size of the city is suitably proportioned, having a circumference of forty stadia, as far as one can conjecture. The position of its towers is like that of a theater, and the thoroughfares appear—some above and some below—in the accustomed manner, and pathways [appear] through them. For the terrain of the place has a slope, since the city was built on a mountain. **106.** There are stairs to the thoroughfares. Some make their way at a high level and others do so below them, and they mostly keep separate on the way, because of those who are in a state of purity, since they will touch nothing that is forbidden.

#### **The Surrounding Countryside and Comparison to Alexandria (§§107–111)**

**107.** It was not without reason that the first settlers constructed the city with fitting proportions, and they planned wisely. For the country is broad and beautiful, and some parts are flat, such as those in what is called Samaria and those bordering the country of the Idumaeans, and some are mountainous, such as those parts in the middle, where it is necessary to be unremitting in the cultivation and attention to the land so that by doing so the inhabitants might have an abundance of fruitfulness. Since this happens, everything is cultivated with much abundance in the entirety of the aforementioned country. **108.** But in those cities that have great size and an accompanying prosperity, an abundance of population results, but the countryside is neglected, everyone inclined towards individual enjoyment, all people being in constitution prone towards pleasure. **109.** This is what happened to Alexandria, which surpassed all other cities in size and prosperity. For those from the country who dwelled abroad there and stayed for a long time brought matters of trade into decline. **110.** Hence, the king, so that they might not remain, commanded that no one could sojourn for more than twenty days. And to those who were in charge of business

matters he similarly issued orders in writing that if it became necessary to summon any, a decision must be rendered within five days. **111.** Considering it very important, he ordered judges and their staffs into the districts, so that the farmers and agents who were pursuing making money might not diminish the city's storehouses—I mean the income from agriculture.

### **Palestine and its Resources (§§112–118)**

**112.** We have made this digression because of the aforementioned things that we received so excellently from Eleazar. For the industry of those who do agriculture is great. Also their country is plentifully wooded with olive trees and cereal crops and pulse, with grapevines and much honey as well. Other fruit trees and date palms are without number among them. And there are both many sorts of cattle and plentiful pastures for them. **113.** Therefore they recognized well that the district required a high population, and they set out the construction of the city and the villages proportionally. **114.** The Arabs transport into the area a great amount of spices and precious stones and gold. The country is fully suited to agriculture and to commerce. The city has many crafts, and it does not want for anything imported by sea. **115.** For it possesses convenient harbors that furnish these goods, the one at Ashkelon and Joppa and Gaza, and similarly also at Ptolemaïs, which the king founded. But it is situated centrally to the aforementioned areas, not being very far away. The country has everything in abundance, being well watered everywhere and having great security. **116.** Around it flows the river that is called Jordan, which never stops flowing. The country had no less than six million aroura at the beginning—but afterwards neighboring peoples advanced upon it—and six hundred thousand men settled one hundred aroura lots. The river, which fills up just like the Nile in the days of the harvest, irrigates much of the land. **117.** This stream empties into another river in the country of the people of Ptolemaïs, and it goes out to the sea. Other torrents, as they are called, flow down, encompassing parts of Gaza and the country of Azotus. **118.** It is surrounded by natural defenses, being difficult to invade and impregnable to large numbers, because the passages are narrow, flanked with steep cliffs and deep ravines. Still the entire mountain range that surrounds the entire country is rugged.

### **The Mines of Arabia (§§119–120)**

**119.** And iron and copper mines previously also existed in the nearby mountains of Arabia. But these were deserted during the time when the Persians held power, when officials of the time made a false report that working them was unprofitable and expensive **120.** so that through the working of the aforesaid mines the country might not be despoiled and be all but alienated by the sovereignty of the Persians, who seized upon a pretence for entry into these areas. Therefore they made this false report.

So, what was necessary concerning these matters I have indicated to you in a summary, O Philocrates, my brother. I will next explain the facts about the translation.

### **Eleazar's Farewell to the Translators (§§121–127)**

**121.** Thus, Eleazar selected excellent men who excelled in education, inasmuch as indeed they were the product of parents of high distinction. These had not only acquired experience in the literature of the Jews, but also not incidentally they had given heed to preparation in Greek literature. **122.** Therefore they were well suited to be appointed to embassies, and they accomplished them whenever it became necessary. They possessed great natural genius for conversations and questions about the Law, being zealous for the middle way—for this is the best state—and avoiding course and rude thought. And similarly they rose above being conceited and believing that they could despise others, but they engaged in conversation both listening and answering each question appropriately. They all strictly observed these matters, and they even desired to surpass each other in them. All were worthy of their leader and the excellence that he possessed. **123.** It was evident, given the difficulty that they had leaving, how they loved Eleazar and he them. Besides writing to the king about their restoration, he appealed to Andreas to do as much as possible, urging that we help to accomplish this, inasmuch as we were able. **124.** Even when we promised to pay careful attention to these things, he said that he was exceedingly distressed. For he knew that the king, who was a lover of goodness, considered it the best of all things to send for any person from whatever place he might be identified who excelled others in training and intelligence. **125.** For I have come into possession of something he said well, that having around himself just and prudent men would provide the best protection for the kingdom, since friends who give frank advice are beneficial. This is indeed the case with those whom Eleazar sent. **126.** And he established by an oath that he would not let the men go, if there were some other pressing need impelling him for his own

circumstances, but for the common improvement of all the citizens he was sending them off. **127.** For living well consists of keeping the laws, and this is accomplished by hearing much more than by reading. Therefore, by setting forth these matters and others similar to them, he made clear what his disposition was to them.

#### **Eleazar's Apologia for the Law (§§128–171)**

**128.** It is worthwhile to mention briefly the explanations that he gave to those things we asked of him. For I consider that most people have some curiosity about those matters in their legislation concerning food and drink and those beasts considered unclean. **129.** For when we inquired why, since creation is one, on the one hand certain things are considered unclean for food, and on the other hand, certain things are also unclean to touch—the legislation regards most things religiously, in these doubly religiously—about these questions, he began thusly: **130.** “You observe,” he said, “what kind of result is produced by conduct and associations, since people who associate with evildoers become perverted, and they are miserable in the whole of life. But if they live together with wise and prudent people, out of ignorance they meet with improvement in their manner of living. **131.** Therefore, our lawgiver first defined matters concerning piety and justice, explaining each in detail, not only prohibitively, but probatively, showing plainly damages and punishments brought by God upon the guilty. **132.** For first of all he demonstrated that God is only one and that his power is made manifest in everything, every place being full of his sovereignty, and that nothing that human beings do secretly on the earth escapes his notice, but whatever anyone does becomes manifest to him, as are those things yet to occur. **133.** Therefore, after working these things out accurately and making them clear, he showed that even if someone might think to accomplish evil, let alone actually do it, he/she would not escape notice, giving proof throughout the entire legislation of God's power.”

#### **Eleazar Criticizes Gentile Idol Worship (§§133–139)**

**134.** Therefore, having made this beginning, he also demonstrated that “all the rest of humanity, except ourselves, thinks that there are many gods, being themselves more powerful by far than those gods whom they revere in vain. **135.** For they make statues out of stone and wood, asserting that the images are of those who have made certain inventions useful for them for living, which they worship, whose lack of consciousness is close at hand. **136.** For that anyone should be divinized in that way, due to an invention, is

completely silly. For such people, taking certain things that were in creation, put them together and showed further their usefulness. They themselves did not create their condition. **137.** Thus, it is empty and vain to deify those who are the same as themselves. For yet even now there are many who are more inventive and more learned than people of old, but they would not be quick to worship them. And those who form these things and invent fables, they consider them to be the wisest of the Greeks. **138.** Is it even necessary to speak of certain other quite vain people, like the Egyptians and those like them, who rely upon wild beasts and most serpents and animals, and they worship these, and they sacrifice to them, both alive and dead? **139.** Therefore the lawgiver, who was wise, contemplated each thing, being prepared by God for knowledge of all things, and he fenced us around with unbroken palisades and with iron walls so that we might not intermingle at all with any other nations, being pure in both body and soul, having been set free from vain opinions, revering the only and powerful God above all of the entire creation.”

#### **Eleazar’s Introduction to Kosher Law (§§140–143)**

**140.** “Whence the priests who guide the Egyptians, who carefully investigated many things and who comprehend matters, have given us the name ‘men of God,’ one not belonging to any others, but only to someone who reveres the true God. But the rest of humanity are people of food, drink and shelter. **141.** For their entire disposition has recourse to these things. But for our people these things have been considered as nothing, but throughout the whole of life their reflection is on the sovereignty of God. **142.** Therefore, so that we might not become perverted, being captured by nothing or associating with worthless people, he fenced us around on every side by purifications and through food and drink and touch and hearing and sight that depend on laws. **143.** For in general all things are to natural reason similar, being managed by a single power, and for each single thing there is a profound reason that we abstain from the use of some them and that we avail ourselves of others. And for the purpose of illustration, running over one or two things, I will explain to you.”

#### **Kosher Laws Explained Allegorically (§§144–157)**

**144.** “Do not come to the contemptible conclusion that Moses legislated these matters on account of a curiosity with mice and weasels or similar creatures. But all these have been set in order solemnly for pure investigation and the outfitting of character for the sake of justice. **145.** For of the birds that we use, all are tame and distinguished by extreme

cleanliness, having for food grains and pulse: pigeons, doves, locusts, partridges and also geese and all similar kinds. **146.** Concerning those birds that are forbidden, you will find wild ones and carnivorous ones and ones that oppress the others with the strength that they have, and with injustice they get food by consumption of the tame ones mentioned above. And not only these, but they snatch up lambs and kids, and they even harm humans, both dead and alive. **147.** Therefore through these he established a sign, giving them the designation “unclean,” that it is binding on that person for whom the legislation has been ordained to avail him/herself of justice and to oppress no one, relying on his/her own strength, nor to rob anyone, but to govern his/her life by justice, just as the tame ones of the aforementioned birds by nature consume the pulses upon the earth and do not oppress to the destruction of their kind. **148.** Therefore, through these the lawgiver has granted a sign to those who are intelligent, to be just and to accomplish nothing with force, nor to oppress others, relying on their own strength. **149.** For whereas it is not permitted to touch the aforementioned animals because of each one’s disposition, how can one not guard absolutely against reducing one’s habits to that condition? **150.** Therefore, everything of which we avail ourselves concerning these and the beasts has been set out allegorically. For the dividing of the hoof and separating the nails of the hoof is a symbol for separating each of our actions that they might turn out well. **151.** For the strength of entire bodies along with their operation rests upon the shoulders and legs. Therefore by signifying through these things, he compels us to accomplish all things with a view toward justice with discretion. And yet are we thus distinct from all people. **152.** For most of the rest of humankind defile themselves when they have associations, committing great injustice, and countries and entire cities exalt themselves by them. For not only do they procure males, but also they defile mothers and even still daughters. We, however, have been kept apart from these things. **153.** And the one who has the aforementioned character of being separated also has been characterized as having memory. For all those things that are cloven-hoofed and chew the cud clearly exhibit the quality of memory to those who are perceptive. **154.** For chewing the cud is nothing other than the recollection of life and existence. For living is thought to endure through food. **155.** Therefore, he exhorts also through the scripture when he says, “With remembrance remember the Lord who has done great and amazing things in you.” For when understood, they appear to be great and

glorious. For first, there is the fashioning of the body and the digesting of food and the distinct nature of each member. **156.** But much more, the arrangement of the senses, the operation and unseen movement of thought, the quickness to act in any circumstance, and the invention of arts encompass a boundless character. **157.** Therefore he has exhorted us to keep in remembrance that the aforementioned things are preserved by divine power along with their constitution. For every time and place he has appointed in order to call to mind always the ruling and preserving nature of God.”

#### **Tefillin and Mezuzot (§§158–160)**

**158.** “For also with food and drink, he has commanded those who have offered first fruits to avail themselves of them right away. And indeed also he has given us a symbolic reminder on our clothes, just as also on doors and gates he has prescribed that we set up the sayings to serve as a reminder of God. **159.** And also he has commanded us expressly ‘to fasten the sign upon our hands,’ showing clearly that every activity must be accomplished with justice, keeping in mind our own constitution and above all the fear of God. **160.** And he has also commanded that ‘when sleeping and rising’ that we study God’s provisions, not only in word, but also in judgment, observing their own movement and impression when they go to sleep and when they wake, that there is a certain divine and incomprehensible interchange between them. **161.** Now the extraordinary nature of the bounty concerning separation and remembrance has been shown to you, since we have explained the dividing of the hoof and the chewing of the cud. For it was not legislated at random or by an intrusion into the mind, but it was legislated with a view toward truth and a visible sign of proper reason.”

#### **Kosher Laws Continued (§§162–171)**

**162.** “For by making prescriptions concerning food and drink and other things concerning touching, he commanded us to do or to hear nothing without purpose, nor to turn to injustice by utilizing the power of reason. **163.** And about animals the same principle is found. For the habit of the weasel and mice and those similar to them, which have been described, is injurious. **164.** For mice damage and injure everything, not only for their own food, but also whatever they at some moment fall upon to injure becomes completely useless for humans. **165.** And the species of weasel is peculiar. For besides the aforementioned, it has another ruinous behavior. For it conceives through its ears, and it

gives birth by mouth. **166.** And for this reason this habit of human beings is unclean. For by receiving anything through hearing and embodying these things in speech, they surround others with evils and they perform uncleanness in no ordinary way, staining themselves completely with the taint of impiety. Your king does well to remove such people, just as we are informed.” **167.** And I said, “I suppose that you are speaking of informers, for he unremittingly encompasses them with torments and painful deaths.” And he said, “For indeed I do speak of these, since watching for the destruction of people is unholy.” **168.** “And our law commands that we injure no one either through word or deed. Therefore, concerning these things, which we briefly recounted, we have shown you that all these things have been regulated with a view toward justice, and nothing has been set down through scripture purposelessly nor mythically, but so that through the whole of life and in our actions we practice justice to all people, remembering the God who holds sovereignty. **169.** Therefore, every word concerning foods and unclean reptiles and beasts is offered for justice and just intercourse among people.” **170.** Therefore, he seemed to me to make an excellent defense for each of these things. For about those things brought for sacrifice, calves, rams and he-goats, he said that it is necessary to sacrifice out of herds and flocks, taking the tame ones, and nothing wild, so that those who bring the sacrifices are conscious of nothing arrogant in themselves, regarding them as a symbol by the one who appointed them. For the one who brings a sacrifice makes an offering of the entire constitution of his soul. **171.** Therefore concerning these things also I consider it worthy to set down an account of those things related to our conversation. Thus I am persuaded, O Philocrates, to clarify for you, because of the love of learning that you possess, the utmost dignity and natural reasonableness of the Law.

### **The Translators’ Reception at Alexandria (§§172–186)**

**172.** So Eleazar, after he made a sacrifice, selected the men, and prepared many gifts for the king, sent us off with great safety. **173.** And when we arrived at Alexandria, an announcement of our arrival was made to the king. And when Andreas and I were present at the court, we gave a friendly greeting to the king and delivered the letters from Eleazar. **174.** So, considering it of great value to meet with the men who had been sent, he ordered all the remaining officials to leave and to summon the men. **175.** This seemed incredible to all, because the usual custom was that those who arrived for state business came into the

king's presence on the fifth day, and those who were from kings or prominent cities scarcely were present in the court within thirty days—but deeming those who had come worthy of greater honor and judging the prominence of the one who sent them, he dismissed those whom he considered superfluous, and he stayed behind, walking around until he had greeted those who had arrived. **176.** And they came with the gifts that had been sent and the remarkable parchments on which the legislation had been written in golden writing in Jewish characters, the surface being worked amazingly and the common joints constructed to be imperceptible. When the king saw the men, he inquired about the books. **177.** And when they uncovered them rolled up and they unrolled the parchments, pausing for a long time and doing obeisance about seven times, the king said, “I thank you, O men, and even more the one who sent you, but mostly the God whose oracles these are.” **178.** And when with one accord all, both those who had arrived and those who were present, said with one voice, “Well done, O king,” he was so filled with joy that he was brought to tears. For the tension of the soul and the great strain of honor compel shedding tears on the occasion of success. **179.** And exhorting them to put away the rolls into their place, he then greeted the men and said, “It is right, O god-fearing men, to pay homage first to those things for whose sake I sent for you and after that to hold out the right hand to you. Therefore I have done that first. **180.** So I regard as great this day in which you have arrived, and it will be marked every year for my entire lifetime. For it also happens that it has fallen on the occasion of our victory over Antigonus in the naval battle. Therefore I desire this day also to dine with you.” **181.** “And everything,” he said, “will be readied for you in accordance with those things of which you avail yourselves and for me along with you. And when they showed satisfaction, he commanded that the best lodgings near the citadel be given to them and that the matters relating to the banquet be prepared. **182.** And the chief steward Nicanor, summoning Dorotheos, who was appointed over the translators, ordered that he complete the preparations for each one. For thus the king established a practice that you can see continuing even now. For however many cities have their own customs for drink and food and bedding, that number was also assigned to them. And so things were prepared according to these customs whenever someone might come before the king so that being, disturbed by nothing, they would pass the time cheerfully. This also occurred for these visitors. **183.** Since he was attentive, the man Dorotheos had stewardship

of these things. He spread out all the things that he administered that had been set aside for such hospitality. He made the couches into two parts, just as the king had commanded, for he ordered that half should recline at his right hand and half after his own couch, neglecting nothing for the honor of the men. **184.** And when they had reclined, he ordered Dorotheos to fulfill thusly the customs that all those who had come before him from Judea practiced. Therefore, he excused the sacred heralds and those who sacrificed and the others, for whom it was customary to offer prayers, and of those who arrived with us, he summoned Elissaios, who was the eldest of the priests, to offer a prayer. He stood and said these notable words, **185.** “May the Almighty God, O King, fill you with all the good things that he has created, and may he grant that you, your wife and children and those who are like-minded possess all these things unfailingly for your entire life.” **186.** And after this man had said these things, applause broke out along with shouting and joyous cheer for a long time. And at that time they turned to enjoying the things that had been prepared, all of the service being completed due to Dorotheos’s organization, among whom were also the royal servants and those honored by the king.

### **The Symposia (§§187–300)**

#### **The First Symposium (§§187–202)**

**187.** And when, after an interval, he got an opportunity, he asked the one occupying the first couch—for they were reclining according to age—“How can one maintain his kingdom intact until the end?” **188.** And after pausing briefly, he said, “You would thus administer it best by imitating the continuing lenience of God. For by using long-suffering and punishing those who deserve it more leniently than they deserve, you will turn them from evil and lead them to repentance.” **189.** The king praised him and asked the next one, “How should one achieve each of these?” And he answered, “If he observed justice toward all, he would achieve each thing well for himself, comprehending that every idea is clear to God, and by taking the fear of God as the starting point you will fail at nothing.” **190.** And this one also he received very well, and he asked another, “How might one have friends who are favorable to him?” That one said, “If they observe you having much foresight concerning the multitudes you rule. And you will do this by looking attentively at how God, who provides health and nourishment and all remaining things at their proper time, shows kindness to the race of humans.” **191.** Approving of this person, he asked the next

one, “How, in audiences and judgments, might one obtain a good reputation even from those who have not been successful?” And he said, “If in every word you are impartial, and if you do not act arrogantly or with your own strength against those who do wrong. **192.** You will do this if you have regard for the method of God. For supplications are fulfilled for the worthy, and for those who have not succeeded, the harmfulness of their supplications is signaled to them through dreams or actions. He does not strike them according to their wrongdoing or according to the greatness of (his?) strength, but God exercises lenience.” **193.** And commending this one well, he asked the next one in order, “How might one be unconquerable in military engagements?” And he said, “If he does not trust in multitudes or in forces, but he always appeals to God, so that God might direct his enterprises for him as the king administers everything justly.” **194.** And approving of this one also, he asked another, “How might one be regarded with fear by one’s enemies?” And he said, “If, while furnishing with much provision of arms and forces, he would know that these are fruitless over a long period of time in producing any conclusion, for God, by granting a truce and exhibiting things connected with his sovereignty, prepares fear in every mind.” **195.** And praising this one he said to the next, “What for him would be the most beautiful/excellent thing for living?” That one said, “To know that God has power over all things and that we ourselves in our most beautiful deeds do not direct our plans. But God completes the affairs of all, and the one who has power guides.” **196.** And assenting that this one also had spoken well, he asked another, “How, when one maintains all these things inviolate, might he transmit the same disposition to his descendents at the end?” And he said, “By always praying to God to receive good plans for acting on future matters, and by exhorting one’s descendents not to be struck by fame or wealth. For God is the one who bestows these things, and not because of themselves do they have an excess of all things.” **197.** And confirming these things, he inquired of the one who came next, “How might one bear whatever comes to pass with equanimity?” And that one said, “If you accept the preconception that all human beings come into being because of God in order to share in the greatest evils as well as the greatest good, and it is not possible to be human without a mixture of these. But God, whom we must supplicate, grants good courage.” **198.** And also showing this one favor, he said that all had declared their opinions well. “And after asking yet one more, I will finish for now, so that turning towards enjoying ourselves

we might spend the time pleasantly. But in the upcoming six days in succession, I will learn something more from the rest in turn.” **199.** Then he asked the man, “What is the **aim** of courage?” And he said, “If one accomplishes what one resolves rightly and according to purpose in actions that are dangerous. So everything is brought about profitably for you, O King, when you deliberate well.” **200.** And when all had assented and indicated it with applause, the king said to the philosophers—for not a few were present among them—“I think that these men excel in virtue, and they understand a great deal. When they receive questions such as these unexpectedly, they answer as is proper, all of them making God the starting point of their logic/reasoning.” **201.** And the philosopher Menedemos of Eritrea said, “Indeed, O King. For since all things are governed by providence, and assuming this correctly, that human beings are created by God, it follows that all sovereignty and beautiful speech have a starting point in God.” **202.** And after the king expressed approval, these matters ceased and they turned to merriment. And when evening fell the symposium broke up.

### **The Second Symposium (§§203–220)**

**203.** And on the day after these things took place the matters of the reclining and the symposium were carried out again according to the same arrangement. When the king thought that it was a good time to put questions to some of the men, he asked some of those next in order to those who had replied on the previous day. **204.** So with the eleventh he began to have a conversation. For on the previous day there were ten who had been questioned. And when there was silence, he inquired, “How might one remain rich?” **205.** And after pausing briefly, the one who received the question said, “If he does nothing unworthy of his rule or licentious, or make expenditures for empty and vain things, but by benefaction he might lead his subjects to have good will toward himself. For also the cause of good things for everyone is God whom one must follow. **206.** After the king praised this one, he asked another, “How might one maintain the truth?” To this he answered, “By knowing that lying brings great shame to all people, and much more to kings. For since they have power to do what they want, on what account should they lie? For this you must take hold, O King, because God is a lover of truth.” **207.** And he approved this one also very well and looking attentively at another, he said, “What is the teaching of wisdom?” And he answered, “Just as you do not wish evil things to come upon yourself, but you wish

to have a share of all good things, so you should behave this way toward your subjects and those who do wrong. So you should admonish virtuous and good people most equitably. For God also leads all people with equity.” **208.** Praising him, he said to the one after him, “How might one be benevolent?” And that one said, “By observing that the race of humans both grows and is even born over much time and in great sufferings. Whence it is necessary that one not punish easily nor inflict injuries, knowing that the life of people is established with both pains and penalties. Therefore perceiving each of these things, you will turn toward mercy. For also God is merciful.” **209.** Approving of this one, he inquired of the next in order, “What is the most necessary habit of kingship?” “To keep himself incorruptible,” he said, “And to be sober for the greater part of life, to esteem justice and to make friends of such people. For also God is a lover of justice.” **210.** And showing his approval of this one, he said to another, “What is the state of piety?” And he declared, “To grasp that God continually effects and knows all things, and no person who performs injustice or works evil escapes his notice. For as God gives benefactions to the whole world, so also, by imitating him, you should give no offence.” **211.** And agreeing with this one, he said to another, “What is the aim of kingship?” And he declared, “To rule oneself well, and not being carried away by wealth and fame to desire anything overweening and unseemly, if you would reason well. For everything that is necessary is here (or, is possible) for you. But God is one who needs nothing and is equitable. And you think in he manner that a human being does. Do not reach after many things, but for those things sufficient for kingship.” **212.** And commending him, he asked another, “How might one take full account of the most beautiful things?” And that one answered, “If he would continually put forth justice in everything, and he would consider injustice to be the same as the loss of life. For also God always proclaims the greatest good for the just.” **213.** And after praising this one, he said to the next in order, “How can one be undisturbed in sleep?” And he declared, “You have asked about a matter that is hard to answer. For we cannot carry ourselves along in these matters of sleep, but we are encompassed by lack of reason according to immediate sensation. **214.** For we experience according to our mind the things that occur just as they would be seen. But we are unreasonable inasmuch as we suppose that we are going about upon the sea or in boats or that we are carried away in flight and are lifted up to other places, and other such things, which also we thus suppose to occur.

**215.** Save insofar as it is accessible to me, so I have discussed it. In every manner, you, O King, should bring back to piety what you say and what you do so that you yourself may be conscious that, preserving virtue, you do not choose to grant favors against reason nor while exercising power you set aside justice. **216.** For even more, in those matters that each person passes the time while awake, the mind returns to those same things while asleep. But God directs the mind, which turns every consideration and action to the most beautiful things, whether awake or asleep. Therefore also around you there is always stability.” **217.** The king applauded this one also and said to another, “Since you are the tenth one to answer, when you have given your opinion, we will turn to the meal.” And he asked, “How can we avoid anything unworthy of ourselves?” **218.** And he said, “Always look to your own reputation and preeminence in order that you might say and think in accordance with them, knowing that all those whom you rule will think and talk about you. **219.** For you must not appear the smallest of the actors. For the role that is necessary for them to play, observing it, they will perform everything that accords with it. You, however, are not an actor, but you actually reign, since God has given to you leadership worthy of your character.” **220.** After the king had applauded very kindly with cheerfulness for a long time, he exhorted the men to sleep. And when those matters concerning these men had finished, they turned to the next arrangement of the banquet.

### **The Third Symposium (§§221–235)**

**221.** And on the next day, while the same arrangement was being followed, when the king determined that it was an appropriate time to ask some questions of the men, he asked the first of those who were left over for the next session of questioning. “What constitutes the most excellent rule?” **222.** And that one declared, “To master oneself and not to get carried away by impulses. For it is natural for all people to incline thought toward something. **223.** Thus, for the majority it is likely that they have a bent toward food and drink and pleasure, but for kings it is the acquisition of territory in pursuit of great fame. Yet moderation in all things is virtuous. So, whatever God gives, receive, and keep them. But do not desire things that are out of reach.” **224.** And the king, pleased with the things that were spoken, said to the next one, “How might one avoid envy?” After a time, that one declared, “First, if he would consider that God apportions both fame and great wealth to all kings, and no one becomes a king on his own. For everyone wants to have a share of this fame, but they are

not able, since it is a gift from God.” **225.** And after praising the man with many words, he asked another, “How might one despise his enemies?” And he said, “By exercising goodwill toward all people and by acquiring friends, you would have no reason for anyone to be an enemy. And to show favor to all people and to receive an excellent gift from God, that is the best thing.” **226.** And agreeing with these things, he exhorted the next one in order to answer, saying to him, “How might one continue being held in honor?” And he said, “By giving freely and being munificent to others with willingness and favor, he will never want for fame. And in order that the things that have been said continue with you, beseech God always.” **227.** And speaking well of this one, he asked another, “To whom must one be lavish?” And that one said, “To those who are friendly to us—everyone thinks that is it necessary to be lavish toward these. But I suppose that it is necessary to have a bounteous generosity to those of contrary opinions so that in this way we might bring them over to what is proper and beneficial for them. For it is necessary to entreat God in order that these things be accomplished, since he rules over the minds of all.” **228.** And consenting to these things, he bade the sixth one to give his opinion, asking, “To whom is it necessary to show favor?” And that one answered, “Always to parents, since also God has given the greatest commandment concerning honor of one’s parents. And next he reckons the disposition of friends, calling the friend the equal of himself. And you do well to establish all people in friendship with yourself.” **229.** And exhorting this one also he inquired of the one who came next, “What is worth as much as beauty?” And he said, “Piety—for this beauty is what holds first place. And its power is love. For love is the gift of God, which also you possess, embracing all good things in it.” **230.** And applauding very kindly, he said to another, “How, after failing, might one lay hold of the same fame again?” And he declared, “It is not possible for you to fail, for in all have you sown favor, which sprouts forth goodwill, which, overpowering the greatest of weapons, embraces the greatest security. **231.** And if some do fail, they must no longer do those things by which they have failed, but while making friends, they must practice justice. So being a worker of good things and not the opposite is a gift of God.” **232.** And being pleased by these things, he said to another, “How might one avoid grief?” And he said, “If he would harm no one and help everyone, following justice. For its fruits furnish freedom from grief. **233.** But it is necessary to supplicate God, so that things popping up contrary to our purpose might not

harm us. Indeed, I mean things like death, diseases, pains, and such things. But to you, being grounded in piety, none of these things might approach.” **234**. And also praising this one warmly, he asked the tenth, “What is the greatest form of fame?” And he said, “To honor God. And this is not with gifts and sacrifices, but in purity of soul and out of the holy discernment that everything has been prepared by God and administered according to his will. This belief also you continue to hold, by which it is signaled to all by the things you have accomplished and those you will accomplish.” **235**. And with a louder voice the king greeted and exhorted them all, those present, and especially the philosophers, together joining the approbation. For also they, in their conduct and speech, surpassed the philosophers by a lot, since they made God their starting point. And after these things, the king led the way in showing kindness through toasts.

#### **The Fourth Symposium (§§236–247)**

**236**. And on the following day the symposium took place according to the same arrangement so that when there was a good time for the king, he asked the next in order to the ones who had previously answered. And he said to the first, “Is it possible to teach being prudent?” And he said, “It is constitution of the soul through divine power to accept everything that is good and to turn away what is contrary.” **237**. And having assented, he asked the next one, “What tends most towards health?” And that one declared, “Moderation. But this cannot happen unless God prepares the mind for it.” **238**. And exhorting this one, he said to another, “How can one render proper gratitude to parents?” And he said, “Do not cause them any pain. But this is not possible unless God becomes a guide for the mind towards the **highest/most beautiful** things.” **239**. And after assenting to this, he asked the next one, “How might one be fond of hearing?” And that one said, “By determining that everything is advantageous to know so that, for whatever happens, choosing something from what has been heard, **applying it as a principle to the circumstances of the times, he might counteract it, with the guiding hand of God**. And it is the case that consummation of actions is from him.” **240**. And after praising this one, he said to another, “How can one avoid acting contrary to the Law?” To this he replied, “By knowing that God has given to lawgivers intelligence in order to preserve human life, you ought to follow them.” **241**. And approving of him, he said to another, “What is the advantage of family?” And he answered, “If we consider that we are worse off because of

the misfortunes that occur to them, and we suffer ill as they do, how strong family is becomes clear—**242**. and when these things are over, both glory and prosperity will accrue before them. For cooperation that occurs with kindness is of itself indissoluble in all circumstances. But with success there is no additional need of them, but it is necessary to pray to God to grant every good thing.” **243**. And when he approved of this one as he had the others, he asked another, “How does fearlessness come about?” And he said, “When the mind is conscious that it has done nothing evil, God **directs** it to deliberate all things well.” **244**. And agreeing with this one, he said to another, “How might one have right reason at hand?” And he said, “If he would continually observe the misfortunes of people, knowing that God takes away good times from some, but glorifying others, he promotes them to receive honor.” **245**. And when he had warmly approved this one as well, he invited the next one to answer, “How does one avoid turning to laziness and pleasures?” “By keeping at hand,” he said, “ that he governs a large kingdom and he leads many multitudes, and he must not think about anything else but consider their care. So he should beseech God that he not neglect any of his duties.” **246**. And when he praised this one also he asked the tenth, “How might one recognize when someone acts with treachery towards him?” He replied to this question, “If he observe carefully that conduct is liberal and good order is maintained in the greetings and counsels and the rest of the social dealings of those with him and that they do not exceed what is proper in showing favors and the remainder of matters of conduct. **247**. Bur God will bring understanding to you, O king, **of** the best things.” So the king applauded and praised them all by name as did all those who were present, and they turned to celebrating.

#### **The Fifth Symposium (§§248–261)**

**248**. On the following day, seizing the opportunity, he asked the next one, “What is the greatest negligence?” To this he replied, “If he took no heed of his children, and he did not strive in every way to raise them. For we always pray to God, not so much for ourselves as for our offspring so that they might have all good things. Yet to desire that children possess good sense, this comes by the power of God.” **249**. After declaring that he had spoken well, he asked another, “How is one a lover of his country?” “By setting as a goal,” he said, “that it is good to live and die in one’s own country. Being an alien brings contempt to the poor and shame to the rich, as though they were exiled due to wickedness. Therefore, showing

kindness to all, just as you always do—God granting you favor before all—you will appear as a lover of your country.” **250.** So after hearing this one, he inquired of the next, “How does one fit well with a woman?” “Knowing that women are rash,” he said, “and energetic about what they desire, and they change their minds easily because of fallacious reasoning, and by nature they have a weak constitution. So it is necessary to have dealings with them soundly and in order not to provoke strife. **251.** For life is set right when the pilot knows to which mark it is necessary to direct his route. So he will invoke God and his life will be piloted in all things.” **252.** After joining in agreement with this one, he asked the next, “How might one be faultless?” And he said, “By constantly doing everything both with consideration and not being persuaded by slanders but by examining for oneself things that are said and with judgment setting right matters of petitions and through judgment completing them, you will be faultless, O king,” he said. “But to intend these things and to engage in them is a work of divine power.” **253.** He was delighted by what was said, and he asked the next one, “How can one be beyond wrath?” To this he said, “By knowing that he has authority over everything and if he resorted to wrath, he would bring about death. Yet it would be unprofitable and painful if life is taken away from many, because he has lordly authority. **254.** So if everyone obeys and no one opposes, of what use is it to become wrathful? But it is necessary to recognize that **God** governs the entire cosmos with good will and without any anger. And you, O king, must follow this example,” he said. **255.** The king said that he had answered well, and he inquired of the next one, “What is good counsel?” “To do all things well,” he declared, “with consideration, in your deliberation comparing also the injurious aspects in the opposite side of the argument in order that after considering each one, we might be well counseled and our purpose accomplished. But, moreover, most significant is that by the power of God every deliberation of yours will have fulfillment when you practice piety.” **256.** After he said that this one had been correct, he asked another, “What is philosophy?” “To consider well each contingency,” he declared, “and not to be carried off by impulses but to study carefully the damage that results from the passions, and to act properly at the right moment, moderating one’s passions. So in order that we acquire attention to these things, it is necessary to serve God.” **257.** After approving of this one also he asked another, “How can one find **experience acceptance** while living abroad?” “By being to all as an equal,” he said, “appearing as inferior rather

than as superior to those among whom he sojourns. For God by nature accepts what is humble, and the human race treats kindly those who are made subject.” **258**. And after he bore witness to these things, he asked another, “How might one build and have it endure into the future?” To this he said, “If he would complete by his actions great and majestic things, in order that those who view them spare them because of their beauty and if he were to pass over none of those who constructed such things nor compel others to finish their **components of the service** without pay. **259**. For if he considered that God treats the human race with great care, providing them health and sensibility and other like things, he himself would do something accordingly, rendering the reward for sufferings. For things accomplished out of righteousness—these things also will endure.” **260**. And when he said that this one had spoken well, he asked the tenth one, “What is the fruit of wisdom?” And he said, “Not to be conscious within himself of having done evil, and to lead one’s life in truth. **261**. From these will be for you, O mighty king, greatest joy, tranquility of soul, and fine hopes in God as you hold sway over your realm piously.” And when they heard it together, all assented with multitudinous applause. And after these things, the king, filled with joy, turned to drinking to their health.

#### **The Sixth Symposium (§§262–274)**

**262**. So on the next day, the arrangement of the details for the banquet were as before, and when an opportune moment came, the king asked those who were left. To the first he said, “How can one avoid turning to arrogance?” **263**. And he answered, “If he would hold on to impartiality and he would remind himself at each matter that he leads human beings, being human at the same time. And God pulls down the arrogant, and he exalts the gentle and the humble.” **264**. And exhorting him, he asked another, “Who should be employed as counselors?” “Those who have proved themselves through many affairs,” he said, “and those who have kept their good will to him uncontaminated and those who have the same habits as he. And there is a **manifestation** of God for such matters to those who are worthy.” **265**. So after praising him, he asked another, “What possession is most essential for a king?” “The kindness and love of his subjects,” he replied. “For through these an unbreakable bond of good will occurs. And God accomplishes these things so that they happen according to **(your?)** purpose.” **266**. And after complimenting him, he inquired of another, “What is the aim of speech?” And that one said, “To persuade your opponent by

demonstrating errors through an orderly **argument**. For you will win over your listener not by being contradictory, but by employing praise in order to persuade. So persuasion succeeds through the activity of God.” **267**. He said that he had spoken well, and he asked another, “How, since the multitudes in the kingdom were so diverse, can one govern them?” “By assuming the role that is proper for each,” he said, “taking justice as a guide. And thus you do, since God grants that you reason soundly.” **268**. And after showing favor to this one, he said to another, “Over what things should one grieve?” To this he replied, “The things that happen to our friends when we see that they are long lasting and inescapable. But yet for those who have died and who are set free from misfortunes, reason indicates no grief. But all humans grieve, reflecting upon themselves and what benefits them. Yet to escape from every misfortune comes by the power of God.” **269**. And saying that his answer was as it should be, he said to another, “How does disgrace come about?” And that one said, “When arrogance and unceasing impudence lead, dishonor and destruction of reputation cling closely. But God rules all reputation, inclining where he will.” **270**. And when he had confirmed the elements of this one’s answer, he asked the next, “To whom should one entrust oneself?” “To those who associate with you due to good will,” he said, “and not due to fear or obsequiousness, who refer everything back to deriving some profit. For one is a sign of love, the other, a sign of ill-will and opportunism. For whoever is motivated to claim a larger share than is due is by nature a traitor. But you have the good will of all, since God has granted you excellent counsel.” **271**. And saying that this one had answered wisely, he said to another, “What maintains a kingdom?” To this he said, “Care and attention, so that no evil is done through those who are appointed over the people for their needs—just as you do, since God has granted you noble purpose.” **272**. And after encouraging this one, he asked another, “What protects favor and honor?” And he said, “Virtue. For it is the consummation of good deeds, and it rejects evil, just as you maintain goodness towards all, having this gift from God.” **273**. And showing favor and accepting this one also, he asked the eleventh—for there were two more than seventy—“How might one be disposed peaceably within himself even in the midst of wars?” And he responded, “By determining that nothing evil has been done to any of your subjects and that everyone will struggle for benefactions received, knowing that even if they give their lives, you are the one in charge of their livelihood. **274**. For you do not cease restoring

everyone, since God has granted to you graciousness.” And expressing approval with applause, he received them all with great friendliness, and drinking to the health of each even more, he turned to making merry, joining with the men with gladness and much joy.

### **The Seventh Symposium (§§275–292)**

**275.** And on the seventh day, after much preparation had been made, since a great many others had arrived from the cities—for a considerable number of ambassadors was present—the king, when an opportune moment came, asked a question of the first of those who remained. “How can one be undeceived?” **276.** And that one said, “By examining the one speaking and what is said and the subject of it, and over much time asking the same things in other ways. But having a sharp mind and being able to discern each matter is an excellent gift of God—since you possess this gift, O king.” **277.** And when he had expressed his approval with applause, the king asked another, “Why do most people not accept virtue?” “Because by nature,” he said, “all have become intemperate and inclined toward pleasure. For this reason injustice has grown and the immense quantity of greed. **278.** But the state of virtue checks those being threatened by a state of pleasure, and it urges self-control and a preference for justice. Yet God guides all of these things.” **279.** After he declared that this one had answered well, the king asked the one after him, “What is **it** necessary for kings to follow?” And he said, “The laws, so that those who act honestly might restore the lives of people. Just as you, when you do this, establish for yourself an everlasting memorial, by following the divine ordinance.” **280.** And when he had said that this one had spoken well, he asked the next one, “Whom is it necessary to appoint as chief magistrates?” And this one said, “Whoever has a hatred for evil and imitates the ruler’s conduct, so that they might always have a good reputation, by doing just things. Just as you accomplish this, O mighty King, since God has granted you a crown of justice.” **281.** And voicing his acceptance of this one, he looked at the next and said, “Who is it necessary to install as commanders over the armies?” And he replied, “Those who excel in courage and justice, and those who make more of saving their men than of having victory, rashly risking life. For just as God benefits all, also you, imitating him, benefit those under you.” **282.** He said that he had answered well, and he asked another, “What person is worthy of admiration?” And he said, “The one furnished with reputation, wealth and power and who is in spirit just like all people. Just as you, who **does this**, is worthy of admiration, since

God has granted to you diligence about these things.” **283.** And when he had agreed also with this one, he said to another, “With what matters is it necessary for kings to spend most of their time?” And he said, “In reading and in busying oneself with accounts of journeys, which, having been written for kings, are intended for the improvement and preservation of humankind. By doing this, you achieve glory out of the reach of others, since God fulfills your intentions.” **284.** And he addressed this one energetically as well and asked another, “What must one’s conduct be in recreation and relaxation?” And he said, “To watch whatever entertains with restraint and to put before one’s eyes things that happen in life with decorum and moderation is profitable and proper. For even in these things there is a certain edification. **285.** For often out of the slightest things some desirable things are brought to light. And you have exercised every restraint through the activities of philosophy, being honored by God through noble character.” **286.** Being well pleased by the things that had previously been spoken, he said to the ninth, “How should one conduct oneself at banquets?” And he said, “By inviting those who love learning and those who can suggest what is useful to the kingdom and to the lives of those who are ruled—nothing more harmonious and more **accomplished/musical** would you find. **287.** For these are loved by God, since they have trained their minds toward matters of excellence—just as you do this, since all things are guided rightly for you by God.” **288.** He was delighted by what was said and inquired of the one following, “Which is best for the multitudes, to have established for them a king from who is a commoner or a king who is of royal descent?” And that one said, “**The best by nature.** **289.** For kings have been established who are from royalty and who have been both savage and cruel to their subjects. But much more also have certain commoners, who have been put to the test by evils and who have shared poverty, when they rule multitudes, turn out to be more hard to bear than unholy tyrants. **290.** But as I said before, a good character that has also had a share of education is capable of ruling. Just as you also are a great king, not by being eminent at this in the glory of your rule or in wealth, as much as surpassing all people in fairness and humanity, since God has given you these gifts.” **291.** He praised this one for a long time. Then he asked the last one of all, “What is the greatest thing of a kingdom?” To this he said, “To establish its subjects always in peace, and to provide for justice quickly in their disputes. **292.** But these things happen because of the ruler, when he is the one who hates evil, loves good and considers it

important to save a human life. Just as also you hold injustice to be the greatest evil and by governing all things justly, you have prepared for yourself an everlasting reputation, since **God** has granted that you have a mind pure and unsullied by any evil.” **293**. And when this one had finished, applause burst out with shouts and cheers for a long time. And when it ceased, the king took a cup and poured a toast for all those present and for the words that had been spoken. And finally he said, “The greatest of good things has happened to me because you have come here. **294**. For I have benefited greatly by the teaching that you have set down about kingship.” And to each he ordered that three talents of silver be given **along with** the slave who delivered it. And when everyone together had spoken approval, the banquet was filled with joy, since the king turned to festivity unremittingly.

#### **Aristeas’s Praise of the Translators (§§295–300)**

**295**. So if I have gone on at length about these matter, O Philocrates, forgive me. For I have marveled at the men beyond what is fitting, since on the spur of the moment they gave answers that required a great deal of time, **296**. and also since the one who asked thought carefully about each one, but those who answered made their responses one after the other. They were clearly worthy of admiration from me and from those present, and especially from the philosophers. And I suppose that to those who receive the narrative it will appear unbelievable. **297**. But to lie about things that are being narrated is not right. And if I were to pass over anything in these matters, it would be impious. But, just as it happened, we have set it out clearly, being acquitted of any error. Therefore, accepting the power of their speech, I have tried to **get of** every detail of what happened both in the king’s audiences and in the symposia from those things that were recorded. **298**. For it is the custom, just as you know, to record everything that is said and done from the time when the king begins to give audiences until the time he goes to sleep, something good and beneficial to do. **299**. For on the next day before any audiences take place, the things that were done and spoken previously are read, and if something is not correct, that matter gets set aright. **300**. Therefore, we have set everything down, having gotten everything accurately from those things that were recorded, since I know that you have a love of learning for things that are useful.

#### **The Execution of the Translation (§§301–307)**

**301.** After three days, Demetrius took them, and passing over the breakwater, which was seven stadia long, to the island, and crossing the bridge, he went towards the northern sections, convening a meeting in a house prepared by the beach, which was magnificent and in a very quiet location. He called upon the men to complete the work of the translation, since everything that they needed had been well provided. **302.** And they accomplished it, making each detail agree by comparisons with each other. And that which came out of the agreement Demetrius thus suitably set in writing. **303.** The work of their sessions would last until the ninth hour, and afterwards they disbanded to look after the care of their bodies, everything that they preferred having been supplied plentifully for them. **304.** And apart from this, each day Dorotheus also supplied for them the same things that he prepared for the king. For this was the order that the king gave to him. And each day at the first hour they came into the court, and when they had made salutation to the king, they departed to their own place. **305.** And as is the custom of all the Jews, when they had washed their hands in the sea and they offered prayer to God, they turned to reading and explication of each detail. **306.** And I asked them also about this, why they washed their hands at the time they offered prayer. And they explained that it is a testimony that they have done no wrong. For every action happens by the hands. So excellently and piously they refer everything to righteousness and truth. **307.** So just as we have said previously, that each day they gathered together at this spot, which was most delightful due to its quietness and brightness, in order to complete their appointed task. And thus it happened that the work of transcription was completed in seventy-two days, appearing as if this circumstance happened by some plan.

#### **The Proclamation of the Translation (§§308–316)**

**308.** And when it was complete, Demetrius assembled the company of the Jews at the place where the translation had been executed, read it aloud to all, since the translators were also there. These got great approbation from the multitude, since they were the cause of great good. **309.** So they also approved of Demetrius and requested that he give their leaders a copy, since he had transcribed the entire Law. **310.** And when the **rolls/books** were read, the priests and the elders of the translators and some from the government and the leaders of the company stood and said, “Since the exposition has been made well, piously and accurately in every respect, it is good that it remain just as it is and there be no revision at

all. **311.** And then all assented to what had been said. They ordered that there be a curse, just as is their custom, upon anyone who might revise by adding or changing anything at all of what had been written or by making a deletion. They did this well so that it would always be preserved everlastingly and permanently. **312.** And when these matters were announced to the king, he rejoiced greatly. For he supposed that his plan had been securely completed. And everything was also read to him, and he marveled greatly at the mind of the lawgiver. And he said to Demetrius, “How have none of the historians and poets undertaken to make mention of these enormous achievements?” **313.** And that one said, “Because the legislation is holy and has come about through God, and God smote some of those who did undertake it, and they ceased the attempt. **314.** For also he had heard Theopompus say that when he was about to narrate some things that had been translated previously, misleadingly, from the Law, he received a confusion of his mind for more than thirty days. And after it abated, he propitiated God to make clear to him why this event had occurred. **315.** And when it was indicated in a dream that it was his meddlesome desire to bring divine matters to common people, he desisted and thus recovered. **316.** And also of Theodektes, the tragic poet, I have received that he was about to cite something that had been recorded in the book in a play, and he suffered cataracts in his eyes. And having a suspicion that this was why the calamity had happened, he propitiated God for many days and recovered.

### **The Departure of the Translators (§§317–321)**

**317.** And when the king received the report from Demetrius concerning these matters, as I have said already, he bowed and ordered that great care be taken of the books and that they be preserved reverently. **318.** And he invited the translators to visit him often when they had been restored to Judea—for he said it was just that they be sent back. But when they visited, as was right, he would have them as friends, and they would receive from him the greatest generosity. **319.** And he ordered that the preparations for their departure be attended to, treating the men magnificently. For he gave to each one three robes of the best material, two talents of gold, a cup worth a talent and complete carpeting for a dining room. **320.** And he also sent to Eleazar along with them on their departure ten silver-legged couches and everything that goes with them, a thirty-talent sideboard, ten robes, purple cloth, a distinguished crown, a hundred bolts of fine woven linen, broad

bowls, bowls, and two golden drinking bowls, as an offering. **321.** And he wrote also urging that, if any of the men chose to return to him, that Eleazar would not prevent it, since the king valued greatly being in the company of educated men, and on such as these he would spend his wealth abundantly and not on vanities.

**Epilogue (§322)**

**322.** And you have the narrative, just as I promised, O Philocrates. For I suppose that these matters will satisfy you more than the **books** of the tellers of legends. For you are inclined toward intense attention to matters that are capable of benefiting the mind, and in these you spend much time. And I will also attempt to write down the remainder of those things worth saying so that, by going through them, you might attend to the most excellent prize of your desire.