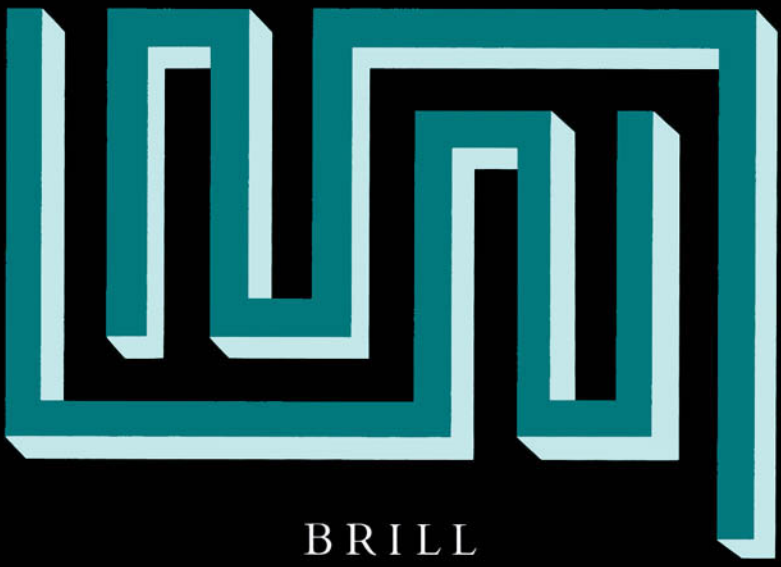
Nina L. Collins

The Library in Alexandria & the Bible in Greek



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THE LIBRARY IN ALEXANDRIA AND THE BIBLE IN GREEK

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TO

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VOLUME LXXXII

THE LIBRARY IN ALEXANDRIA AND THE BIBLE IN GREEK

BY

NINA L. COLLINS

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This book is dedicated to

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רַבּוֹת בָּנוֹת עָשׂוּ חָיִל וְאַתְּ עָלִית עַל כֻּלָּם

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CHAPTER ONE

AN OVERVIEW OF THE THEMES OF THIS BOOK

The translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek was one of the major events in the history of the world. Without the translation, Christianity, the religion which inspired the civilisation of the West, could not have developed in the form that we know. In Judaea and Galilee, when Christianity first emerged in the first century CE, most educated people spoke Greek, and the Bible in Hebrew was the preserve of a few.[1] It seems that even the great Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria, an older contemporary of Jesus of Nazareth, knew little or no Hebrew and used only Greek.[2] Against a background of the turbulent events of the age, but without a translation of the Bible into Greek, who then could have known that the prophecies in the Scriptures had at last come true?[3] The translation of the Bible thus enabled the early Greek-speaking Jews, the founders of Christianity, to use the Jewish scriptures, in order to establish a new base of their own. In the words of one modern scholar, 'All Christian claims for

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[1] Mishnah, Sot.7.1 reflects the different languages of the Jews by listing the prayers which can can be spoken in languages other than Hebrew, trans. Danby (1933). Similarly the Jerusalem Talmud, Meg.2.1 (73a), trans. Neusner (1987), and j.Sot.7.1 (21b); for further, see de Lange (1976), pp. 56–7.

[2] For the question of Philo's knowledge of Hebrew, see Weizman (1999), p. 39, n. 29.

[3] Elliott (1880), pp. 850–71; Swete (1900), pp. 381–405, esp. pp. 403–5, 'In estimating the influence of the LXX. upon the N.T. it must not be forgotten that [in addition to direct quotations] it contains almost innumerable references of a less formal character . . . the careful study of the Gospels and of St Paul is met at every turn by words and phrases which cannot be fully understood without reference to their earlier use in the Greek Old Testament . . . Not the [Hebrew] Old Testament only, but the Alexandrian [= Greek] version of the Old Testament, has left its mark on every part of the New Testament, even in chapters and books where it is not directly cited. *It is not too much to say that in its literary form and expression, the New Testament would have been a widely different book had it been written by authors who knew the Old Testament only in the original, or who knew it in a Greek version other than that of the LXX*'. The use of the Septuagint in the NT has been systematically catalogued by Hübner (1997), replacing Dittmar (1899–1903). Elliott's review of Hübner (1998), p. 102, notes that 'One abiding impression of browsing in this book is how pervasively the richness of LXX imagery and language has permeated the NT, and not only in concentrated areas'.

Christ [in the New Testament] are grounded in verses from the Old Testament; all Christian claims to be the true Israel are underwritten by proof texts drawn from the Pentateuch. . . . Cut the history and the religion of Israel out of the New Testament, and Christianity vanishes'.[4]

But when was the Bible translated into Greek? Why was it translated? And who initiated this seminal event? It seems that the process began when the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible, were translated into Greek in Alexandria, the capital city of Ptolemy II, also called Ptolemy Philadelphus. According to an ancient report called the *Letter of Aristeas*, a proposal for the translation did not come from the Jews, but was made by the Greek politician and philosopher, Demetrius of Phalerum, who was employed by Ptolemy II in the library in Alexandria, and who was seeking to increase the collection of books. Ptolemy II agreed to his suggestion, provided that the translation was written in Alexandria. This would fulfil two objectives in one. Not only would Ptolemy add to his books, but scholars who were experts in Hebrew and Greek would be brought into the city, where the king could tempt them to stay at his court. This would establish Alexandria and its library as a centre of learning, which would reflect the glory of Ptolemy II.

But the account in the *Letter of Aristeas* is thrown into doubt by many details in the story that are difficult to believe. For example, there are several suspicious repetitions of the number seventy-two. Aristeas notes that there were seventy-two translators who were asked seventy-two questions at a seven-day banquet hosted by the king. These seventy-two translators then made a translation of the Pentateuch in seventy-two days. Also described are the huge costs of the translation, including lavish gifts to the translators and to the Temple in Jerusalem, and the monetary redemption of over one hundred thousand Jewish slaves, including trained soldiers.[5] Can these stories be true? Would anyone – even Ptolemy II – spend so much on a book? Would any king free his slaves, including his soldiers, for the sake of a book? It is interesting to note that the freeing of the slaves is

[4] Rivkin (1996), p. 26. See also for example on the same theme Jellicoe (1974), p. XIV. The use of the Septuagint in the NT has been systematically catalogued by Hübner (1997), replacing Dittmar (1899–1903).

[5] LetAris.13,19,27.

reported only by Aristeas and those probably dependent on him, but is not confirmed by an independent source.[6]

Disquiet over the reliability of the account of Aristeas came to a head in 1684, when Humphrey Hody, Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford, published a detailed critique of the *Letter of Aristeas*.[7] Since then many scholars have followed his lead. They claim that although Aristeas states that he intends to describe the translation of the Pentateuch into Greek, and although there may be a kernel of truth in his work, the real intention of Aristeas was not to write history but to provide an apologia for Judaism in the Hellenistic world. It is possible, say these scholars, that a translation of the Pentateuch was made in Alexandria and that Ptolemy II was somehow involved. But most of the detail of Aristeas cannot be correct. In particular, it is claimed, the translation was not produced at the suggestion of the Greeks, although Ptolemy II might have facilitated the work.

The conclusion of these scholars is challenged in this book. They dismiss the evidence of Aristeas who describes, without polemic, that the initiative for the translation came from Demetrius of Phalerum, who was fully supported by Ptolemy II, and offers no hard evidence in its place. Instead, the claim of these scholars is based on a speculative analogy drawn from the history of targum, the early translation of the bible into Aramaic. According to this theory, just as the Jews who returned from Babylon in 438 BCE used an oral Aramaic translation of the Bible because they had forgotten their Hebrew tongue, so also the Jews of Hellenistic Egypt needed a written translation of the Bible in Greek, because they could no longer deal with the Hebrew texts. The latter may be true, but as the discussion in this book will show, is probably irrelevant to the question in hand. Indeed, far from requesting a translation into Greek, there is evidence that the Jews attempted in vain to prevent the work.

This conclusion is supported by the date of the translation, which is deduced in this book. The evidence for this date comes from the Fathers of the Church who preserved eleven relevant dates. These

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[6] Westermann, W. (1929) and (1938), pp. 1–30; see commentary and further refs. in Hadas (1951), pp. 28–32.

[7] Humphrey Hody, *Contra historiam Aristae de LXX interpretibus Dissertatio* (1684). Typical is the comment of Cross & Livingstone in the *New Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (1997), p. 776: '[Hody] *proved* (my italics) that the "Letter of Aristeas" was a forgery'. For further on this topic, see Chapter 5.

cannot have come from Aristeas, who provides no dates. Unfortunately however, none of the Church dates agree. This apparently useless information has thus suffered neglect. In fact, when the dates are standardised and when they are considered in relation to the way that Ptolemy II numbered his regnal years, it can be seen that they refer to the year 280 BCE. Further evidence suggests that the translation was completed by 281 BCE, and was subsequently presented to Ptolemy and the library in 280 BCE.

The method used for establishing this date can also be used to solve other historical problems that were ultimately caused by the manipulation by Ptolemy of the years of his reign, in order to record a maximum length. These include the problem of Demetrius of Phalerum whom Aristeas describes as a trusted servant of the king. Other ancient sources however suggest that Demetrius was murdered by Ptolemy II. Who is correct? The evidence considered here suggests that Aristeas is correct, and that the rumour of the murder of Demetrius arose when an ancient chronologer made a simple mistake.

The date of the translation in 281 BCE will also indicate the identity of the king who established the library in Alexandria, and the identity of the first chief librarian he employed. The short period of time between the beginning of the reign of Ptolemy II and the date of the translation deduced in this book suggests that the library was built by Ptolemy I who appointed Demetrius of Phalerum as the librarian in charge. This is confirmed from a detailed examination of the evidence of Aristeas, and also by a comparison of the relative ages and experiences of Demetrius of Phalerum with the scholar Zenodotus of Epheseus, whom many scholars claim was the first librarian in Alexandria. But there is good evidence that suggests that the claim of Zenodotus is probably incorrect.

It is clear therefore that the early history of the translation of the Bible sheds light on a wider range of topics than might otherwise be thought. The date of the translation illuminates the early history of Alexandria under the first two Ptolemaic kings, particularly in relation to the library – by whom was it founded, and who should be honoured as the first guardian of its books? The motivation for the translation carries considerable implications for the assessment of the *Letter of Aristeas*, for the attitude of early Hellenistic Judaism to the act of translation, and for the understanding of translated text. If the translation was written for Ptolemy II, it must have been

written to appeal to the king. This surely must be relevant to different aspects of the text, and may also account for some of the many later revisions, when the translation was linked with Jewish use. Whatever the case, the translation of the Pentateuch, probably in 281 BCE, marks the time from which, following the example of the Pentateuch, other books of the Bible were translated into Greek. This brought about the wide distribution of written, Jewish Scriptures into the non-Jewish world, which in turn led to the birth of Christianity and the Western civilisation that we know today.

CHAPTER TWO

THE DATE OF THE TRANSLATION OF THE PENTATEUCH INTO GREEK

A Summary of This Chapter

Scholars agree that a written translation of the Hebrew Pentateuch into Greek was made in the third century BCE. This period of time can be further refined to the first half of the third century, and eventually brought down to one single date. This is derived from an analysis of eleven different dates for the translation which have been preserved in Greek by the Fathers of the Church. This chapter will convert these dates into standard Julian calendar dates, allowing also for the way that Ptolemy II numbered the regnal years at the beginning of his reign. It will then be seen that the eleven different dates are 'descended' from one single date. This is the date which marks the date of the translation of the Pentateuch into Greek. This date corresponds with a description in the *Letter of Aristeas* of a celebration for the completion of the translation, which was held before Ptolemy II.[1]

A further date preserved in Jewish sources corresponds with Aristeas' description of an earlier celebration which was held before the Jews.[2]

There are thus two separate dates from two separate traditions, one Jewish and one Greek, which relate to two appropriate and separate events, the ceremony before the Jews and the ceremony before the Greeks. Both these events are described in the *Letter of Aristeas*, whose evidence must be independent from that of the dates, because Aristeas includes no dates. It is surely beyond the bounds of possibility that each of the events he describes should be individually confirmed by independent, relevant sources, unless each is related to a real event, whose dates were recorded when they occurred. The existence and nature of the two dates thus confirm that two corresponding events described by Aristeas actually took place.

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[1] LetAris.312.
[2] LetAris.308–311.

The final section of this chapter will show how the method used for the analysis of the Church Father dates can also solve other historical problems which were ultimately caused by the way that Ptolemy II numbered the years of his reign.

The Translation Was Made in the Third Century BCE

It is generally agreed that the Pentateuch was the first part of the Bible to be translated into Greek, probably as a unit, in Alexandria, in the third century BCE. This conclusion is based on several observations which include: (1) The overall linguistic unity, and Alexandrian style and language of the Greek Pentateuch.[3] (2) The presence of early, third-century Greek.[4] (3) Demetrius the Chronographer (not to be confused with Demetrius of Phalerum) used a Greek version of the Bible in the late third century BCE.[5] (4) A Greek translation of the Pentateuch lies behind the translation of the 'Later Prophets' (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the Twelve) and the Psalms.[6] According to the famous prologue of the grandson of Ben Sira, these biblical books were translated into Greek by the time of his arrival in Alexandria in 132 BCE (or up till the death of Ptolemy VIII Euergetes Physcon in 116 BCE).[7]

The Translation Was Made by 246 BCE

A more specific *terminus* for the date of the translation emerges from the *Letter of Aristeas*, probably the source of the majority of reports on the translation from antiquity, although this text does not include any dates.[8] Aristeas refers to the king in charge of translation as 'Ptolemy'. This is the name of all the Egyptian Hellenistic kings, but there are good reasons for assuming that Aristeas refers to Ptolemy II. According to Aristeas, the father of this Ptolemy was 'Ptolemy

[3] Jellicoe (1968), p. 67.
[4] Wackernagel (1924), pp. 371–97, esp. p. 388.
[5] Holladay (1983), pp. 52–3.
[6] For Isaiah and the Psalms, see Eissfelt (1965), p. 703; for other late prophetic books, see Jellicoe (1968), p. 67.
[7] Caird (1982).
[8] For texts and commentaries on the *Letter of Aristeas*, see Brock, Fritsch and Jellicoe (1973), pp. 44–7; Dogniez (1995), pp. 18–22.

son of Lagos', the name with which antiquity identified the first Ptolemaic king who was the father of Ptolemy II.[9] Ptolemy II is also identified by the references of Aristeas to Arsinoë his wife, the name of both wives of Ptolemy II.[10] Aristeas also notes that the father of the king was the original founder of Alexandria[11] and that he had invaded Coele-Syria and brought Jewish slaves into Egypt.[12] These details – whether or not they are true – can only refer to Ptolemy I. The story of the freeing of the Jewish slaves also helps to confirm that the king of the translation was Ptolemy II, rather than his father Ptolemy I, since it is unlikely that Ptolemy I would have freed the very people that he had enslaved. As Ptolemy II died in 246 BCE, most scholars agree that the translation existed by this time.[13]

Independent confirmation for this timing comes from the Jewish philosopher Aristobulus, although he also provides no dates. Aristobulus probably flourished in the latter half of the second century BCE, although Eusebius, citing the late third century bishop Anatolius, improbably places him in the third century BCE (see the first quotation below). The relevant texts are cited below:

> [Anatolius says that] one can learn it [= the date of the Passover] also from what is said by the excellent Aristobulus, who was enrolled among the seventy who translated the divine Scriptures of the Hebrews for Ptolemy Philadelphus and his father [= Ptolemy I] and who dedicated exegetical books on the law of Moses to the same kings [= Ptolemy I and Ptolemy II].[14]
>
> [Addressing Ptolemy VI]: But [after various earlier translations] the entire translation of all the (books) of the Law (was made) in the time of the king called Philadelphus, your ancestor. He brought greater zeal [to the task than his predecessors], while Demetrius Phalereus managed the undertaking.[15]

Scholars have suggested that Aristobulus was dependent on Aristeas because both sources claim that Demetrius of Phalerum was involved with the translation of the Pentateuch. But if the latter is correct (as

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[9] LetAris.22.

[10] LetAris.41,185. See below on the two Arsinoës.

[11] LetAris.4. Other sources state that Alexandria was founded by Alexander the Great: Arrian 3.1.1 ff; Ps.Call.1.31.2–33; Plut.*Alex*.26.2–6; Strabo 17.1.7; Curt. 4.8.6; Just. 11.11.13; Val.Max.1.4.7. For a general discussion, see Fraser, i, (1972), pp. 1–7, who does not cite Aristeas.

[12] LetAris.12,14.

[13] Jellicoe (1986), p. 67.

[14] Eusebius, HE 7.32.16.

[15] Eusebius, PE 13.12.1–2. For a translation and discussion on the date of Aristobulus see Collins A. Y. (1985), pp. 832–3.

Chapter 3 will suggest), this may be irrelevant because both Aristobulus and Aristeas are simply reporting a common truth.[16]

It is more likely that neither author know the work of the other. Aristobulus refers to the involvement of Ptolemy I, which could not have been derived from Aristeas, who implicates Ptolemy II. Aristobulus also refers to the fact that different translations of the Pentateuch had been made 'by others' before the translation for Ptolemy II, while Aristeas does not clearly, if at all, state this fact.[17] Aristobulus also claims that these translations were used by famous Greeks such as Pythagoras and Plato, thereby suggesting that there was a Greek translation of Hebrew Scripture long before any known, significant, historical contacts between the Jews and the Greeks. Such fantasy is completely absent from Aristeas. The references of Aristeas to specific Greeks are more reasonable in the sense that they may well have lived at the time he describes, such as Hecataeus of Abdera and Menedemus of Eretria.[18] If Aristobulus was dependent on Aristeas, why did he include such mythical claims, rather than the more rational details of Aristeas?[19]

Other arguments used by scholars for the dependence of Aristobulus on Aristeas take little account of these discrepancies or base their argument on the flimsiest of proofs. For example, it has been alleged that when the king asks Aristobulus why the Pentateuch seems to ignore Jewish aversion to the anthropomorphism of God, and describes God with hands, arms, face and feet and walking about, this is an oblique reference to the seven-day banquet in Aristeas when Ptolemy II questions the Jewish translators on different aspects of kingship.[20] In any case, if there is dependence, why was this question not reported by Aristeas? Moreover, since the king in Aristobulus is Ptolemy VI,

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[16] For example, Hadas (1951), pp. 26–7.

[17] Zuntz (1972), 'Aristeas Studies II', esp. pp. 134–5. Whatever significance is attached to LetAris.30, 'But [the biblical books] have been [previously] transcribed (σεσήμανται) somewhat carelessly (ἀμελέστερον) and not as they should be, according to the report of the experts', most scholars today do not consider that there were earlier, written translations from which the present Greek Pentateuch was compiled. One exception is the school of Paul Kahle, whose comments are summarised by Jellicoe (1968), pp. 59–63.

[18] LetAris.31,201. Zuntz (1972), p. 141 (Aristeas Studies II), uses this difference to suggest the priority, and thus the independence, of Aristobulus from Aristeas.

[19] Walter (1964), pp. 100, 146–7, argues that Aristobulus knew Aristeas because the latter presents his material in a more expansive way compared with Aristobulus, but the argument could be made either way. For further discussion, see Meisner (1973), p. 79; Vermes, et al. iii.1 (1986), p. 680, n. 281.

[20] Eusebius, PE 8.10.1, trans. Collins A. Y. (1985). See the discussion of Fraser, i (1972), pp. 694, 700.

not Ptolemy II, why should the conversation of Aristobulus with the king replicate a conversation held three generations before, between the Jewish translators and Ptolemy II? Secondly, there is no indication that the 'questions' in Aristobulus refer to the subject of divine kingship, which is the subject of debate in Aristeas. It is clear, in fact, that the discussion in Aristobulus is connected with specific Jewish belief, while that in Aristeas is concerned with a general theory on kingship.

It seems more likely therefore that the testimony of Aristobulus on the translation is independent of Aristeas. Aristobulus and Aristeas thus both separately confirm that the translation was made under Ptolemy II.

The Translation Was Made by 268 BCE

This *terminus* is indicated by the history of the wives of Ptolemy II, provided the relevent evidence of Aristeas is true. The *Letter of Aristeas* refers to the existence of Arsinoë, who is described as the wife of Ptolemy and the mother of his children.[21] This is correct. Ptolemy II was married twice, both times to an Arsinoë. His first wife is known as Arsinoë I and his second, his older, full sister, as Arsinoë II. The first Arsinoë was the daughter of Lysimachus, king of Thrace, whom he probably married before he became king, at the time of the co-regency.[22] They were later divorced, whereupon Ptolemy married Arsinoë II, probably between 279 and 273. The union was apparently childless, and it is possible that Arsinoë II adopted the children of Ptolemy II from Arsinoë I.[23] Theoretically therefore these children could be the children to whom Aristeas refers. It seems that Arsinoë II died in 268 BCE.[24] The reference of Aristeas to an Arsinoë thus suggests that the translation was completed by 268 BCE.

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[21] LetAris.41,185.

[22] Bouchë-Leclerq, i (1903), p. 94, suggests the marriage took place about the time Ptolemy II become king.

[23] Wendel (1914), scholium to Theocritus, *Idyll.*17.128.

[24] For discussions, see Arnott (1996), p. 687. Hadas (1951), p. 5, suggests 'perhaps as early as 277 BCE'. Fraser, ii (1972), p. 367, n. 228 states that the marriage must have taken place before 274/3, when Arsinoë appears as regnant queen on the Pithom stele, which was rected in the kings '12th year', which Fraser equates to 274/3 BCE.

The Translation Was Made by 273 BCE

The date of the translation may be more accurately indicated by a hitherto unnoticed *terminus ad quem* in 273 BCE. This can be deduced from changes in attitude to the name 'Lagos', which became the official name of Ptolemy I. The rabbis of the second century CE allege that among a number of deliberate changes which were made when the Pentateuch was translated into Greek, the term δασύπους ('hairy-foot') was used as a euphemism for the Hebrew term for 'hare' (ארנבת), at Lev 11:6 (5) and Deut 14:7, instead of the term λαγώς, which is the simple Greek for 'hare'.[25] According to the rabbis of the Babylonian Talmud, this change was made apparently in order to avoid an echo of the name 'Lagos', which was the alleged name of the father of Ptolemy I:

> . . . they [= the translators] wrote for him "the-one-who-is-hairy of-feet" (שעירת רגלים)[26] and they did not write "hare" (ארנבת) since the name of Ptolemy's mother[27] was "hare", that he might not say "the Jews have mocked me (שחקו בי) by putting my mother's name in the Pentateuch".[28]

The Jewish adaptation is significant in view of the extreme sanctity of the individual words of the Torah, which were (and are) considered as the words of God. Philo thus notes: 'Reflecting how great an undertaking it was to make a full version of the laws *given by the Voice of God, where they [= the translators] could not add or take away or transfer anything, but must keep the original form and shape*, they proceeded to look for [a suitable place to work]'.[29] It seems therefore that at the time of the translation, some kind of insult could be intended when the term 'lagos' was used in relation to the mother of Ptolemy I, so that it was prudent in Alexandria to avoid the Greek term for 'hare'.[30]

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[25] Mekilta de-Rabbi Ishmael on Exod 12:40, Lauterbach, i (1933), p. 112. The changes of the translators are discussed by Tov (1984).

[26] Emended from צעירה, see Tov (1984), p. 73.

[27] Emending one letter to read אמה ('mother') for אשה ('wife'), since unless this refers to the fact that Ptolemy I married Berenice 'for love' (Theoc. *Idyll.*17.34–52, Pausan. 1.6.8), no scandal is attached to Berenice, the last wife of Ptolemy I.

[28] Talmud Babli *Megilla* 9a.

[29] Philo, De Mos.II.34.

[30] The insult may be connected to the reputation of Arsinoë as a concubine of Philip II (Curtius, 9.8.22, Pausan. 1.6.2, Aelian, *fr.*285, see Collins, N. (1997), along

In contrast however, the 17th Idyll of Theocritus, composed to celebrate the noble origins and resulting royal qualities of Ptolemy II, notes that Ptolemy II was officially named as 'Lagos' son'.[31] The 17th Idyll was probably written around 273/2 BCE, some ten or so years after the first Ptolemy had died.[32] The year 273/2 BCE is thus the earliest, datable, official use of the patronym 'Lagos' for Ptolemy I.[33] This means that a term discarded by the translators in order to avoid giving offence, was later officially recommended in the Ptolemaic court. This suggests that the translation, which avoids the term 'lagos', was completed before the Idyll was composed. After this time, the term 'lagos' could freely be used.

It is possible that the rabbinic claim of deliberate changes made to the text of Greek Pentateuch is merely an ancient explanation for variants in the Hebrew text. If so, the term δασύπους 'appropriately

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with the negative sexual association connected with the term 'hare' or 'rabbit', possibly the well known fecundity of these animals, although only one brother of Ptolemy I is known, called Menelaos. Aristotle, *Hist.Anim.* 542b, thus notes: 'Most wild animals breed just one a year, except those in which superfetation occurs, as in the hare'; 579b–580a, '[hares] bring forth at all seasons. Superfetation occurs during pregnancy and they bring forth every month . . . The female . . . after bearing will have intercourse immediately'. Also Aelian, *De Anim.* 13.15: 'There is also another kind of Hare . . . called a Rabbit . . . But it is more lustful than the hare . . . which causes it to go raving mad when it goes after the female', trans. Schofield (1959). The fertility of the hare is also graphically described by Athen.IX.400d–401a.

A potentially offensive pun connecting the name 'Lagos' with 'Rabbit' seems be hinted in the translation by Dean (1935) from the Syriac version of *Weights and Measures*, in which Epiphanius apparently refers to Ptolemy I as 'the first Ptolemy, he of the Rabbit (Lagos)' (§53c, p. 28) . . . 'Then ceased the Rabbity (Lagid) kings, the Ptolemies, who were descended from the Rabbit (Lagos) for whom the race course, when built in Alexandria, was called only in the same Alexandria the Rabbity' (p. 28, §53d). But there seems little justification for this translation, and the Syriac can almost totally be explained as a corruption from the Greek. The Greek text reads: Μετὰ γὰρ τὸν πρῶτον Πτολεμαῖον τὸν υἱὸν Λάγου . . . (P.G 43, p. 255) . . . Καὶ ἐπαύσαντο οἱ Λαγίδαι βασιλεύειν, οἱ ἀπὸ τοῦ Λάϊου δηλονότι καταγόμενοι Πτολεμαῖοι, ὃς ἱππικὸν ἐν Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ κατασευάσας, Λάϊον ὠνόμασεν (P.G 43, p. 257). The Syriac may be derived from a Greek text reading Πτολεμαῖον τὸν Λάγου [for Λάγου] . . . A similar corruption, needing a similar emendation has been made for Theopompus FGrH 115 F 29, τὸν Ἀρχέλαον καλοῦσι καὶ Ἀργῖον καὶ Παυσανίαν, 'They call Archelaus both Argeaus and Pausanias'. This clearly does not make sense. But emending Ἀρχελάον to Ἀρχελάου gives 'they call both Argaeus and Pausanias 'the son of Archelaus'', see Hammond and Griffith (1979), p. 175. Further confusion in the Syriac may have arisen from the absence of the term υἱός in the phrase οἱ ἀπὸ τοῦ Λάγου . . .

[31] Theoc. *Idyll.*17.14, Λαγείδας Πτολεμαῖος. For the suffix -(ί)δα' as a patronymic, see Keurentjes (1997).

[32] For the date of composition of the poem, see Gow, i (1950), xvii–xxii; ii, 325–7, 326.

[33] For the earliest evidence for the name 'Lagos', see Collins, N. (1997).

communicates ארנבת . . . and the claim that the translators avoided the term may be only *post factum*' and would negate the argument proposed here.[34] But the rabbis of the second century CE lived at least five centuries after the translation, by which time the name 'Lagos' was universally applied to Ptolemy I.[35] How could they have known of an early negative attitude to the common name of Ptolemy I, unless they were repeating an ancient report?

The Translation Was Made by 280 BCE

Specific Dates from Sources Independent of Aristeas

The paragraphs above discuss general *termini ad quem*. A specific date for the translation is indicated by eleven dates preserved by the Church Fathers, who were interested in the translation because they were aware of its importance for the Church.[36] These dates could not have been derived from Aristeas or Aristobulus, because, as noted above, neither preserves dates.[37] Unfortunately however the dates preserved by the Church are all numerically different. It appears therefore that none of them agree and scholars have tended to ignore them all. The few times they are mentioned, their evidence is effectively dismissed. Comments are made suggesting the unreliability of numbers in ancient texts, especially in prose, particularly when expressed as letters, rather than words.[38] As a result, it is rare to find even references to these dates. The few times they are listed in scholarly works, they are usually unattributed, or else they are mentioned only to be dismissed.[39] One exception this century is the scholar Eberhard

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[34] Tov (1984), p. 89.

[35] For the name 'Lagos', see Collins, N. (1997).

[36] Nestle (1902), p. 437, summarises the attitude of the early Greek Church: 'To the Fathers of the Greek Church [the Greek version of the Hebrew Bible] appeared of such weight that they praised the Septuagint with one accord as a token of the special providence of God, as a link in the Divine dispensation for the salvation of mankind, seeing in it the work of direct inspiration, and placing it in a line with the writings of the prophets and the teachings of the apostles . . .'

[37] This may not be true if scholars could identify and date the victory of Ptolemy II against Antigonus, mentioned at LetAris.180, see Hadas (1951), p. 169.

[38] See for example Jacoby, *Atthis* (1949), p. 379, n. 139 on the 'cowardice' of an editor who does not alter difficult numbers in the *Athenaion Politeia*: 'Cowardice in the treatment of a text never pays'; Skeat (1954), p. 3, on the alleged corrupt numbers in Porphyry. Tarn (1940), pp. 84–9, similarly considered that battle figures given Diodorus, Strabo, Plutarch and other ancient historians were inaccurate.

[39] See for example Harl (1988), pp. 56–7, 'Ces divergences aboutissent frëaquemment à des incohérences'. The dates are not mentioned in such standard works as

Nestle, who objectively listed the dates (although without full attributions) and offered no hint that they should be ignored.[40]

It is of course true that numbers may be corrupted in the transmission of a text. But research has shown that numbers are probably less prone to corruption than any other words, perhaps because scribes took special care over such words. It seems that mistakes with numbers are most likely to occur when numbers are clustered. But this is not a feature of the texts which give a date for the translation of the Pentateuch into Greek. Sample cases of possible numerical mistakes in sections of Herodotus and the *Athenaion Politeia* have thus led one scholar to conclude:

> In general, we have seen that the number of numeral corruptions which occur in the mss of authors we have examined is notably small... Many are simple misreadings, others are not corruptions at all but deliberate corrections. [Numbers are most prone to corruption when they] appear as clusters, but even here we must bear in mind the many such clusters where all numerals are perfectly reproduced. Further, one might suggest that numerals were one aspect of a text which elicited particular care from scribes... It remains the case that the incidence of variants is such that the more corruption you detect in a text, the less likely you are to be correct in all cases. Jacoby's proposition that five out of seven numbers relating to intervals [in the *Athenaion Politeia*] have to be altered gains no support whatever, and, if anything, we have learned how *good* manuscript tradition can be in respect of numerals.[41]

In principle, therefore, it must be more prudent to offer specific reasons for doubting the numbers in a text rather than summarily to dismiss evidence which has been so carefully preserved. Such specific reasons have never been proposed for the Church Father dates.

In fact, the basic cause of the differences in the dates is not difficult to grasp. The dates are preserved in several different calendars, and must therefore be different if they are to agree. Before any judgment can therefore be passed, the dates must be expressed in the same standard terms, most conveniently according to the Julian calendar. For the dates under discussion – dates close to the beginning of the

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Kenyon (1975). The dates are listed with partial attribution by Stambaugh (1966), p. 73; Vattioni, using Stambaugh, (1980), p. 123.

[40] Nestle (1902), p. 439. Swete (1900), makes no mention of the dates although most of them appear in the *testimonia* to Aristeas published in the same year by Wendland (1900).

[41] Develin (1990), pp. 43–4, who also cites his personal experience in which he makes more mistakes with non-numeric words than with numbers.

reign of Ptolemy II – a further adjustment must be made to any date which was affected by the procedure adopted by Ptolemy II to count the years of his reign. These mechanical procedures are outlined below. When they are complete, it will be seen that all eleven dates are essentially the same, but that only two are significant, since nine of these dates are derived from the two. These two dates are two separate records of a single event – the translation of the Pentateuch into Greek – which have been ultimately preserved in the two different calendars used at that time. Each refers to the same Julian date. This single date is the year 280 BCE. This corresponds to an event described by Aristeas, when the completion of the Pentateuch was celebrated before Ptolemy II.

A separate date for the translation has been preserved by the Jews. When evaluated in relation to 280 BCE (the single date which underlies the dates preserved by the Church) this suggests that an earlier event described by Aristeas, which was held in the presence of the Jews, fell at the end of 281 BCE. This is the date that the translation of the Pentateuch was celebrated by the Jews. Since it is unlikely within historical times that even one precise date would be recorded for an event that *never* occurred, the very existence of these dates is compelling evidence that the events they record – events described by Aristeas – actually took place.

These dates will now be discussed.

The Dates Preserved by the Church

Over seventy texts from the Church Fathers, and others connected with the early Church (such as *Chronicon Paschale*) describe how the Pentateuch was translated into Greek under Ptolemy II.[42] Many of these descriptions may be based on Aristeas. They thus merely confirm the text of the *Letter of Aristeas*, rather than the identity of the king himself. But eleven of these texts have also preserved a date for the translation. As noted above, the dates cannot be derived from Aristeas, or even Aristobulus, because neither provides a specific date. These dates from the Church Fathers are listed below. For the sake of completion, a twelfth date preserved by the Church Fathers, John Chrysostom, is also included. This purports to refer to the translation of the Pentateuch, but discussion will show that it actually refers to a later time:

[42] The relevant texts are conveniently cited by Wendland (1900) who cites the Greek version of Epiphanius 'On Weights and Measures'.

AUTHOR & WORK	DATE GIVEN FOR THE TRANSLATION
1. Eusebius of Caesarea, *Chronicle* (Latin)	*in the reign of Philadelphus, the 2nd year of 124th Olympiad.*[43]
2. Epiphanius of Salamis, *Weights & Measures*	*in the 7th year of Philadelphus, more or less.*[44]
3. Cyril of Alexandria, *Contra Iulianum* I 16	*in the 124th Olympiad.*[45]
4. Zacharias of Mitylene, *The Syriac Chronicle*	*280 years and more before the birth of our Lord* (citing Eusebius *Chronicle*)[46]
5. *Chronicon Paschale*	*4th year of the 124th Olympiad*[47]
6. Bar Hebraeus, *The Chronography*	*in the 6th year of Philadelphus.*[48]
7. Eusebius' *Die Chronik* (Armenian and Syrian)	*2nd year of 125th Olympiad, year 1737 of Abraham.*[49]
8. Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle*	*the 5th year of Philadelphus, the 125th Olympiad.*[50]
9. Pseudo-Athanasius, *Synopsis scripturae sanctae 77*	*in the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus, 230 years before the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.*[51]
10. Pseudo-Theodoret, *Tractatus Ineditus*	*before the 31st year of the word of God after the sojourn of the flesh to us.*[52]
11. Nicetas Serranus, of Heraclea, *Catena in psalmos*	*in the 301st year before the sojourn among us in the flesh of the word of God and our Lord Jesus Christ.*[53]
Date Referring to a Later Time:	
12. John Chrysostom, in *Matth. Hom. V 2*	*100 or more years before the coming of Christ*[54]

[43] Helm (1956), p. 129.
[44] From the Syriac version of Epiphanius, Thackeray (1918), p. 115; Dean (1935), §53c.
[45] Trans. Burguiègre (1985), Livre I, §16, p. 337.
[46] English trans. Hamilton and Brooks (1899), p. 325.
[47] Dindorf, i (1832), p. 326.
[48] Budge, i (1932), pp. 39–40.
[49] Karst (1911), p. 200; Wendland pp. 131–132.
[50] Trans. Langlois (1868), p. 78.
[51] Wendland (1900), p. 149.
[52] Wendland (1900), p. 153.
[53] Wendland (1900), p. 159 = PG 69, p. 700.
[54] Trans. Prevost (1843), pp. 68–9; text Wendland (1900), p. 139.

Before these dates are further discussed, they must be converted to the same calendar system, most conveniently the Julian system. For this we must know how the dates were compiled. This will now be described.

Olympiads and Olympiad Regnal Years

The fixed point of reference in this system of chronology was the first Olympic festival in 776 BCE.[55] Each Olympiad year corresponded very closely to a full solar year and began at the first new moon after the summer solstice. For the years with which this discussion is concerned, it can be assumed that the year began on 1 July and ended on 30 June, that is, the year was reckoned from summer to summer.[56] Every Olympiad year thus overlaps half of two consecutive Julian years. Olympiad years were not separately numbered (unlike Julian years), but grouped into four. Each of these quadrennia was known as an Olympiad, and each Olympiad was numbered successively from the first Olympic games. The date of an event thus fell in a numbered Olympiad, and often also included the specific Olympiad year. For example, Eusebius notes that the translation of the Pentateuch was made in 'the 2nd of [the four years] of the 124th Olympiad [after the first Olympic games]'. On the other hand, Cyril of Alexandria states only that the event took place in the 124th Olympiad, but for reasons that will be discussed below, does not identify one of the four Olympiad years.[57]

The need for Olympiad years within the system of Olympiads may have arisen – at least in part – from the difficulty of converting dates into Olympiad chronology from other chronologies if no month was given for a particular event. Without a precise month (or some indication of the time of year), it is impossible to determine if an event occurred before or after the summer solstice. In such a case,

[55] Finegan (1964), §185. For a general discussion on Olympiad chronology, see e.g., Bickerman (1980), pp. 75–6.

[56] Finegan (1964), §114.

[57] A convenient table to convert Olympiad dates into Julian dates is given by Bickerman (1980), pp. 115–22. A simple mechanical method is given on p. 91: 'For the period BC, that is, up through Olympiad 194, the number of the Olympiad is reduced by one, multiplied by four, and the product is subtracted from 776 [the date of the first Olympic games]. This gives the Julian year BC in which the games were held. For example, the Julian year of the 180th Olympiad can be found as follows: 180 – 1 = 179; 179 × 4 = 716; 776 – 716 = 60 BC, or, more precisely, 60/59, the first Julian year of the 180th Olympiad'.

the date cannot be converted to an exact Olympiad year, but can only be placed in a period of two Olympiad years, giving an approximate conversion of a date. This suggests that since the Olympiad date of the translation given by Eusebius gives a precise Olympiad year, it must have been converted from a date which included both the year and the month.

To calculate the regnal years of a king in Olympiad years (that is, the length of his reign in Olympiad years), the time between the accession of a new king and the beginning of the next new Olympiad year was suppressed (not counted). This means that the first Olympiad year in the reign of a king was reckoned from the first full Olympiad year after the king had begun to rule. In practice, therefore, the time between (a) the death of the old king (b) the start of a new Olympiad year, was added to the time of the old king, even though he probably lived for only a part of this last Olympiad year of his reign, and even if the new king was ruling at this time. This will be important in our understanding of the final regnal year of Ptolemy I, who probably died six or so months before the end of an Olympiad year. These months were counted with the final regnal year of Ptolemy I, even though he was alive for only part of this year, and his son Ptolemy II had taken over as king.

The system of Olympiad chronology was probably first perfected and used systematically by Eratosthenes, who was appointed over the archives of the library in Alexandria by Ptolemy III.[58] Eratosthenes arrived in Alexandria after 246 BCE (the year of the death of Ptolemy II) at the invitation of Ptolemy III Euergetes to tutor his son.[59] Olympiad chronology was officially abolished by the emperor Theodosius in 395 CE after 293 cycles, but continued in use among the Byzantine chronographers, for example the authors of *Chronicon Paschale* and by Georgius Syncellus.

Macedonian Regnal Years[60]

Ptolemy I and his son Ptolemy II continued the Macedonian tradition by recording their regnal years in Macedonian years. The fixed point of reference for these Macedonian years began on the date of

[58] For Eratosthenes and the invention of Olympiad chronology, see Mosshammer (1979), pp. 87, 117–18; Bickerman (1980), p. 87; Fraser, i (1972), p. 456 on the *Chronological Tables* of Eratosthenes.

[59] Pfeiffer (1968), p. 153.

[60] These are well documented, e.g., Samuel (1962), p. 12; Pestman (1967), p. 5.

the accession of a king, so that each succeeding regnal year began with the anniversary of his accession. The partial year between the beginning of a regnal year and the death of a king (assuming he did not die on the anniversary of his reign) was counted as a *whole* regnal year. As a result, the total number of Macedonian regnal years gradually exceeded the number of concurrent solar years, or, as far as the Ptolemies were concerned, the number of Olympiad or Egyptian years. For example, if a king ruled for two and a half solar years, he would have ruled for three Macedonian years; subsequently, if the next king ruled for three and a half solar years, he would have ruled for four Macedonian years. A total of seven Macedonian regnal years could thus be counted over a period of six solar years.

The Macedonian year consisted of twelve lunar months, with one month intercalated every alternate Macedonian year. In practice, therefore, the Macedonian year was approximately the same length as a solar (Julian) year.

Egyptian Regnal Years[61]

Ptolemy II recorded his regnal years also in Egyptian chronology. Egyptian civil and regnal years were reckoned from the first day in the month of Thoth to the same day in the following year. For the years 285–280 BCE, Thoth I fell at the beginning of November, that is, near the end of a Julian year.[62] The first Egyptian regnal year of a king began immediately after his accession. His first Egyptian regnal year ended on Thoth I, even though this was only a partial year. Regnal year 2 began on the following Thoth I, the first calendar day of the new Egyptian calendar year.

This means that the period between the death of a king and the following Thoth I was not counted (that is, was 'suppressed') as part of the dead king's reign. As far as the new king was concerned, this 'partial' Egyptian year (the time between the old king's death and the next Thoth I) at the *beginning* of the reign was counted as one whole year, and was added to the beginning of the new king's reign. This contrasts with Olympiad regnal years, for which the partial years were counted for each king at the *end* of his reign.

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[61] These are well documented, e.g., Samuel (1962), p. 4; Pestman (1990), p. 39.

[62] See table in Bickerman (1980), p. 118, re. 124th Olympiad. For the years 285–282 BCE, Thoth I fell on Nov 2; for the years 281–278, on Nov 2.

In common with Olympiad years, the Egyptian system for the count of the regnal years of a king (from Thoth I to Thoth I every year) did not exceed the corresponding number of solar years. This contrasts with Macedonian regnal years which gradually exceeded the number of solar years. The count of Egyptian regnal years thus provides a better indication of true time than a parallel count of Macedonian regnal years. Egyptian chronology was therefore used by Greek writers such as Claudius Ptolemy and Porphyry.[63] Similarly, the Olympiad date of Eusebius for the translation (see below) was based on an Egyptian, rather than Macedonian, date.

Years of Abraham

The first year of Abraham started with the birth of Abraham, in the Hebrew, autumn month of Tishri and each year of Abraham began and ended at the annual anniversary of his birth. The year of Abraham 1240 corresponds with the first year of the first Olympiad 776/5 BCE. The count of regnal years begins with the first full year of Abraham *after* the accession of the king.

The Years before Christ

This system uses Olympiad years and counts backwards from the date assumed for the birth of Christ. (The similar system in use today was introduced by Petavius in 1627 CE). The exact year of a date depends on the year assumed for birth of Christ. This varied from 4 BCE to 1 CE.[64]

The Co-Regency of Ptolemy I and His Son Ptolemy II

One task remains before the dates can be discussed. This concerns the system of numbering used by Ptolemy II to record the co-regency which he shared with his father Ptolemy I. The co-regency ensured an orderly, stable succession after the death of Ptolemy I. At the same time however, as scholars have observed, the co-regency has

[63] The list of kings given by Claudius Ptolemy whose reigns are given in Egyptian regnal years was cited by Theon of Alexandria, see Toomer (1984), pp. 9–12; in *FGrH.*260 F 2 and F 3, Porphyry gives 40 Egyptian regnal years to Ptolemy I, although he died in his 41st Macedonian year, as shown in *PEleph.* 3 and 4. For comments on the differences between Egyptian and Macedonian regnal years, see Hazzard (187), pp. 143–4.

[64] For dates of the birth of Christ in early Christian texts, see Finegan (1964), §361, Table 107.

caused confusion for the dates in the early years of Ptolemy II, which modern research has now explained.[65]

Literary evidence for the co-regency implies that the recognised king was Ptolemy II:

> But while he [= Ptolemy I] was still alive, he gave the rule to his son Ptolemy who was called Philadelphos [= Ptolemy II] and a further two years he lived under the son who now ruled. And so it is not forty years, but thirty-eight years that should be reckoned for the Ptolemy they call Soter [= Ptolemy I].[66]

> . . . the people . . . showed themselves no less indulgent in accepting the son [= Ptolemy II] for their king than the father [Ptolemy I] had proved himself in delivering the kingdom to him. Among the other instances of mutual affection between the father and the son, the following had procured the young man favour from the people, that the father, having publicly resigned the throne to him, had done duty as a private soldier among the guards, thinking it more honour to be the father of a king than to possess any kingdom whatsoever.[67]

This raises the questions concerning the records of the co-regency. How did Ptolemy II count the co-regency years? Did he count from the beginning of the co-regency, when, according to Porphyry and Justin, he was actually king? Or, did he count from the death of his father, after the end of the co-regency? If the latter, did ancient commentators realise this fact, or did they assume that the count began from the start of the co-regency?

As far as ancient commentators are concerned, it seems that they all counted the regnal years of Ptolemy II from the beginning of the co-regency. The length of Ptolemy's reign is thus described as 38 Olympiad or Egyptian years or 39 Macedonian years, and never as 36 Olympiad or Macedonian years.[68] Concerning Ptolemy II himself, both systems were used. During the co-regency, while Ptolemy I

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[65] These problems first surfaced when scholars tried 'to introduce order into the chaos' when attempting to arrange in chronological order a large number of papyri discovered in the Ptolemaic necropolis of El-Hibeh in the spring of 1902, see Grenfell and Hunt, i (1906), pp. 332–67.

[66] Karst (1911), p. 74 = FGrH 260 F 2 (2).

[67] Justin 16.2.7–9, trans. Watson (1886).

[68] The following sources which state that Ptolemy II ruled for 38 years are restricted to those which deal with the translation: Julius Pollux, Wendland (1900), p. 136; Eusebius, *Latin Chronicle*, see Helm (1956), pp. 129–30; Epiphanius, see Dean (1935), §53c; Basil of Seleucia, Wendland (1900), p. 149 (= PG 85, p. 421; Nicephorus, Wendland (1900), p. 129 (= PG 100, p. 1009); Syncellus, §515, Moshammer (1984); Cedrenus, Wendland (1900), p. 135; Leo Grammaticus, Wendland (1900), p. 136;

was still alive, his successor Ptolemy II did not count the years of the co-regency with his own reign. Instead, they were counted with the reign of Ptolemy I. This is shown by contemporary papyri and inscriptions which place events in the reign of Ptolemy I in time which includes the co-regency years. It is also shown by ancient writers who attribute a reign of forty years to Ptolemy I, which must include the co-regency years.[69] But contemporary records show that after the death of Ptolemy I, the regnal years of Ptolemy II sometimes start from the beginning of the co-regency and sometimes from the end.

The records have been explained in several ways. An apparent absence of references to the 17th and 18th Macedonian regnal years of Ptolemy II led A. E. Samuel to suggest that the king reformed his regnal calendar in 267 BCE, when his Macedonian regnal years jumped from 16 to 19. Earlier events were then redated so that events were kept 'in proper sequence and with proper interval'.[70] Subsequent scholars agreed in principle with this view, although when material for the years 16 to 19 was eventually discovered, a different date had to be proposed for the reform.[71] The dates suggested by

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Michel le Syrien, see Chabot (1963), p. 232; Bar Hebraeus, see Budge (1932), pp. 39–40; Solomon, see Budge (1886), p. 120. Josephus, Ant.XII.11 gives 39 Macedonian years.

[69] For contemporary papyri, see Samuel (1962), pp. 25–6; for inscriptions whose dates can be reconciled only by assuming that one is dated from the beginning of the co-regency, and the other from the end, see Grzybek (1990), p. 106. Many literary sources state that Ptolemy I ruled for 40 years. The following eleven are restricted to those which deal with the translation of the Pentateuch: (1) Julius Pollux, see Wendland (1900), p. 136; (2) Eusebius' Latin *Chronicle*, Helm (1956), pp. 129–30, No.8iia; (3) Epiphanius, *Weights and Measures*, see Dean (1935), §53c; (4) Basil of Seleucia, see Wendland (1900), p. 149; (5) Nicephorus, see Wendland (1900), p. 129 (6) Syncellus, §515, Mosshammer (1984), p. 327; (7) Cedrenus, see Wendland (1900), p. 135; (8) Leo Grammaticus, see Bekker (1847), p. 49; (9) Michel le Syrien, see Chabot (1899), p. 232; (10) Bar Hebraeus, see Budge, i, (1932), pp. 39–40. (10) Solomon, *Book of the Bee*, Budge (1886), p. 120; (11) Armenian version of Eusebius' *Chronicle* (the years emended from 28), Joseph Karst (1911), p. 60.20.

Josephus gives the equivalent 41 Macedonian years, Ant.XXII.11) and Basil of Seleucia gives 20 years (PG 85, p. 421). The latter value may be derived from the Parian Chronicle and the *Canon* of Claudius Ptolemaeus, in which the years of Ptolemy I are reckoned from his true accession on 12 January 304 BCE, see Grzybek (1962), p. 171.

[70] Noted in relation to the re-numbering of the early regnal years of Ptolemy II as indicated on the Mendes stele, see Oates, Samuel and Wells (1967), p. 67; Samuel (1962), p. 28. This writer's earlier discussion of the date of the translation, Collins, N. (1992), was based on Samuel's work.

[71] Uebel (1964), p. 311, identified documents which Samuel did not know, and

scholars all however imply that the change took place when Ptolemy II was well established on the throne.

More recently it has been suggested that at the beginning of his reign, Ptolemy II used two different methods for counting his regnal years, one for his Macedonian regnal years and the other for his Egyptian regnal years. The Macedonian years of his reign were reckoned from the beginning of the co-regency, which was itself counted as a whole number of years. These years were then added to the count of the regnal years after the co-regency (from the time of the death of Ptolemy I, when Ptolemy II ruled as sole king). This means that the count of the Macedonian years of Ptolemy II did not begin from the time of the death of Ptolemy I – as might be assumed – but were increased by the number of whole, Macedonian regnal years that measured the duration of the co-regency years. R. A. Hazzard has thus suggested that after the death of Ptolemy I (at the end of the co-regency), the regnal year ending in January 281 BCE was labelled as the 4th regnal year of Ptolemy II, and the years numbered consecutively from this time.[72] This means that the co-regency was counted as three whole Macedonian years. If so, it seems that from the very beginning of his sole reign, Ptolemy II lengthened the Macedonian years of his reign by the period of time of the co-regency years. This procedure at the moment of his accession as sole king ensured that his reign would always receive the longest possible number of years, no matter when he died.

The work of Hazzard has been confirmed by E. Grzybek, who noted an absence of contemporary evidence for the first three Macedonian regnal years of Ptolemy II, and concluded that the Macedonian regnal years of his reign after the death of Ptolemy I were counted from year 4.[73] According to Grzybek, at the beginning of his reign, the Macedonian regnal years of Ptolemy II were reckoned from the Macedonian month of Daisios, following the accession date of his father Ptolemy I who had chosen Daisos because

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suggested the backdating took place in the 13th year of Ptolemy II, 270 BCE, concurring with Fraser, ii (1972), pp. 364–65, n. 208; similarly Cadell (1966), pp. 43–4. Pestman (1967), p. 18, dated the change to 29th October 267 BCE; Koenen (1977), pp. 43–5, before 279/8 BCE (the Greek text on which Koenen's argument is based is translated by Austin (1981), No. 234); Wörrle (1978), pp. 212–5, proposed a date between 272 and 264 BCE; Clarysse, W. and Van der Veken (1983), p. 5 on Nos 17–21, dated the reform to before 274/3 BCE.

[72] Hazzard (1987), p. 155.

[73] Grzybek (1990), pp. 124–34.

Alexander died in this month (which fell in June), from which time Ptolemy I considered himself king, although this was not strictly the case.[74] The co-regency was probably established on the 27th of Dystros (corresponding with the 1st of December) in 285 BCE and Ptolemy I died in Dystros 382 BCE. Since Daisios fell approximately in June, and Dystros approximately in November, this means that the co-regency overlapped three Macedonian regnal years of Ptolemy I, although only the second of these (Daisos 284 BCE to Daisos 283 BCE) was a whole regnal year. Assuming that these partial years are counted as two whole years, this means that after the death of Ptolemy I, Ptolemy II started the count of his Macedonian regnal years with his regnal year 4 and the yearly anniversary of his reign (when his regnal year increased by one unit) occurred on 27th Dystros.[75]

In contrast, the Egyptian regnal years of Ptolemy II were counted from the death of his father, that is, from the end of the co-regency. It seems however that the Egyptian years were eventually backdated to the start of the co-regency. This may have happened in 267 BCE, when the count of Egyptian years jumped from sixteen to nineteen. This means that according to Egyptian chronology, the co-regency lasted for two Egyptian years.[76]

Although the above discussion has necessitated some detailed description, there are effectively only two facts which are relevant here: (1) At the end of the co-regency, the count of the *Egyptian* regnal years of Ptolemy II were counted from the time of the death of Ptolemy I, and *not* from the beginning of the co-regency. This is important in relation to the date of Eusebius. (2) The count of the *Macedonian* regnal years of Ptolemy II began with year 4 from the end of the co-regency, that is, from the death of his predecessor and father Ptolemy I. This is important in relation to the date of Epiphanius.

It is now possible to evaluate the different dates preserved by the Church Fathers.

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[74] The regnal years of Ptolemy II were later reckoned from Dystros to Dystros, Grzybek (1990), p. 131, who suggests p. 134 that the adjustment was probably made after the death of Arsinoë II. Alexander died 10th June 323 BCE, corresponding to the 28th Daisos of that year.

[75] Grzybek (1990), pp. 124–9.

[76] Hazzard (1987), pp. 147, 148. The back-dating of the Egyptian regnal years of Ptolemy II took place well after the date of the translation of the Pentateuch, and so is not strictly relevant to the discussion here.

The Date of the Translation Recorded by Eusebius of Caesarea

The Latin version of the *Chronicle* of Eusebius was prepared by Jerome, and completed before 392 CE, forty years (at the most) after Eusebius had died.[77] The Latin *Chronicle* states that a translation of the Pentateuch was made 'when Philadelphus was king', in 'the second year of the 124th Olympiad'. The name 'Philadelphus' refers to Ptolemy II.[78] Using the method of conversion described above, the Olympiad date recorded originally by Eusebius lies between summer 283 and summer 282 BCE.

On what kind of chronology is this date based, and how does it relate to the co-regency? Since Olympiad chronology was probably invented by Eratosthenes who arrived in Alexandria after 246 BCE (when Ptolemy II died), the date of Eusebius must have been ultimately based on a record which was stated in either Macedonian or Egyptian regnal years, the two systems of chronology used by Ptolemy II. It is reasonable to assume that the date was based on Egyptian chronology, because (as noted above) this is a more reliable indicator of true time than Macedonian chronology. If so, the true date was reckoned from the end of the co-regency. But since all ancient commentators who refer to the number of the years of the reign of Ptolemy II mention a figure which includes the years of the co-regency in his reign, the chronologer who converted the date to Olympiad chronology would probably have assumed that Ptolemy II began the count of his regnal years (both Macedonian and Egyptian) from the beginning of the co-regency rather than the end. It is possible therefore that the Olympiad date of Eusebius was based on the work of a chronologer who assumed that a date expressed in Egyptian regnal years should be reckoned from the *beginning* of the co-regency, whereas it was in fact expressed by Ptolemy II from the *end* of this time.

With this in mind, the Olympiad year indicated by the date of Eusebius must first be evaluated *in relation to the beginning of the co-regency*. This will overlap with two partial Egyptian regnal years. One

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[77] Eusebius lived *c.*260–339 CE. A list of the books written before 392 CE is recorded by Jerome in *De Viris Illustribus* 135.

[78] Volkmann, *RE* 23, s.v. 'Ptolemais', col. 1645, citing Athen. 1.45c, who notes that Polybius (fl. 2nd cent. BCE) referred to Ptolemy II as 'Philadelphus'. The name Philadelphus for Arsinoë II first appears on a coin produced in her honour by Ptolemy II after she died, see Mørkholm (1991), p. 102, and Polybius supplies the earliest, literary record. See also Fraser, ii (1972), p. 366 n. 227.

of these years marks the date noted by the chronologer when he converted the date into a specific Olympiad year. The numbered Egyptian regnal years must then be reckoned *from the end of the co-regency when Ptolemy II began his sole rule*, from which time (unknown to the chronologer who converted this date to Olympiad years) the date was originally reckoned. This will reveal the corresponding Julian year which indicate the true date of the translation suggested by the date of Eusebius. This process is completed in the two stages below.

Stage One:

The Olympiad date of Eusebius – the 2nd year of the 124th Olympiad – corresponds with the year summer 283 to summer 282 BCE. The corresponding Egyptian regnal years of Ptolemy II, when these are reckoned from the *beginning* of the co-regency, are indicated in the diagram below:

Eusebius' stated date in relation to the regnal years of Ptolemy II:

YEARS BCE:	285 July	284 July	283 July	282 July	281	
Olympiad regnal years	C	11111	11111	*22222*	*22222* 33333	3
True Egyptian regnal years	TC	T		TD	11111 111T2	2
Egyptian regnal years from start of the co-regency:	TC	111111111T2	22222	*22T3D*	*33333* 333T4	4

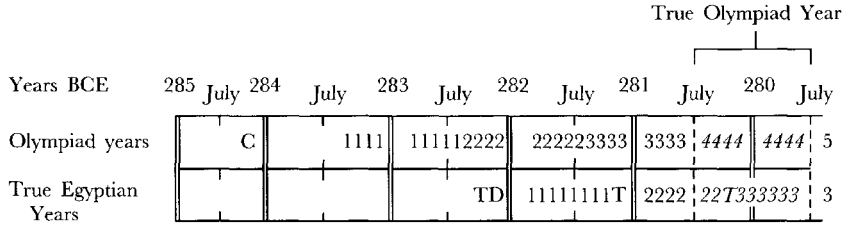
C, beginning of the co-regency on 1st December 285 BCE
T, Thoth 1, the start of the Egyptian year at the beginning of November
D, the death of Ptolemy I on 23rd November 283 BCE

The diagram above suggests that the date of Eusebius – summer 283 to summer 282 BCE – corresponds with the 2nd and 3rd (false) Egyptian regnal years of Ptolemy II, when these are reckoned from the *beginning* of the co-regency. It can be assumed that the record of one of these Egyptian regnal years was seen by the chronologer, who converted it to an Olympiad year.

Stage Two:

We must now reckon the above Egyptian years from the end of the co-regency (that is, from the death of Ptolemy I), when they were originally recorded in the reign of Ptolemy II. The corre-

sponding Olympiad and Julian years can be seen in the diagram below:



D, Death or Ptolemy I on 23rd November 283 BCE the end of the co-regency
T, Thoth 1, the beginning of the Egyptian New Year on 5th November

The 2nd and 3rd Egyptian years when they are reckoned from the end of the co-regency correspond with the 4th Olympiad regnal year of Ptolemy II, that is, from summer 281 to summer 280 BCE. This is the date that should have been recorded by the chronologer when he converted the original Egyptian date into Olympiad years for the date eventually used by Eusebius.

We must now convert this date into Macedonian regnal years. As will be apparent from the discussion below, the date preserved by Epiphanius is recorded in Macedonian regnal years. It is thus useful to know how the date of Eusebius is similarly expressed, so they can be directly compared.

As noted above, the records of the reign of Ptolemy II suggest that he counted the length of the co-regency as three Macedonian regnal years. Thereafter,

> the 4th Macedonian regnal year ended on or around 24th January 281;
> the 5th Macedonian regnal year extended from 24th January 281 to 11 February 280;
> the 6th Macedonian regnal year extended from 11th February 280 to 31st January 279.[79]

This means that the Olympiad year summer 281 to summer 280 overlaps parts of the 5th and 6th Macedonian regnal year of Ptolemy II. It seems that the translation was finished in one of these years. The

[79] Hazzard (1967), p. 155.

precise year will emerge from the following discussion of the date of Epiphanius.

The Date of the Translation Recorded by Epiphanius

Epiphanius (*c.*315–403) states that the translation was completed 'in his (= Ptolemy II's) seventh [regnal] year, more or less'.[80] What is the meaning of the phrase 'more or less'.

While discussing the ministry of Jesus, Justin Martyr (who flourished around the dates 100–165 CE) states that Jesus 'waited for 30 years, 'more or less', until John appeared'.[81] Evidence from other sources suggests that in the context of the life of Jesus, the phrase 'more or less' indicates that Jesus had not yet completed thirty, full calendar years. This means that when John appeared, Jesus was less than thirty years old, that is, he was twenty-nine years old.[82] This suggests that the statement of Epiphanius that Ptolemy II was in his seventh [regnal] year 'more or less' indicates that the king had not yet completed seven years of his reign. This means that he was still in his sixth, regnal year. This agrees with the date of Eusebius (discussed above) that the translation was completed in either the fifth or the sixth Macedonian regnal year of the king, and indicates that the correct regnal year is the sixth.

This understanding is confirmed by the later, 13th century scholar Bar Hebraeus (1226–1286), who notes that the translation took place in the sixth year of Ptolemy II.[83] It is likely that Bar Hebraeus took this information from Epiphanius, removing the difficult phrase 'more or less' but preserving the meaning of his source, for his readers, who lived almost a thousand years later and may not have been

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[80] According to Dean (1935), p. 28, n. 99, the phrase 'more or less' occurs in the Syriac version of Epiphanius' *Weights and Measures*, but not in the Greek. This is correct for Epiphanius, PG 43, p. 256. But the phrase πλεῖον ἢ ἔλασσον appears in the Greek version of Wendland (1900), p. 148, and in the English translation of Thackeray (1918), p. 115.

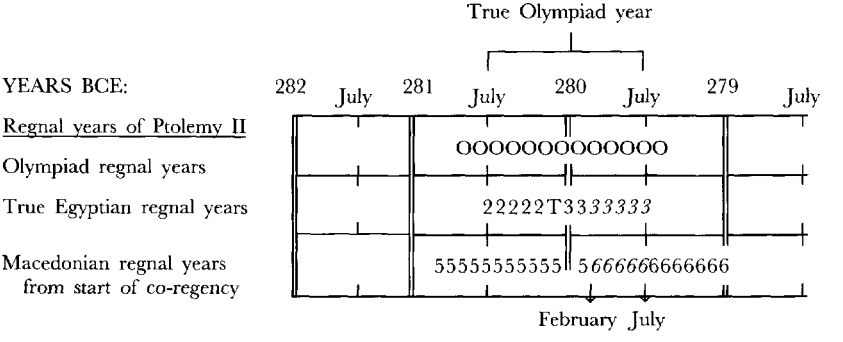
[81] Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 88.

[82] Observed by Finegan (1964), p. 274, §427, citing: (1) Lk 3:23, 'Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about (ὡσει) thirty years of age'; (2) Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer* II 22,5, 'For when [Jesus] came to be baptized, he had not yet competed his 30th year, but was beginning to be about thirty years of age'; (3) Epiphanius, *Panarion haer.* 51,16,2. ed. Holl (1922), p. 270–1, '[Jesus was] beginning to be about [ὡς] thirty years of age'. Epiphanius puts the baptism on Nov 8, sixty days before the 30th birthday of Jesus on Jan 6, 2 BCE, see Finegan (1964), pp. 251–2.

[83] Budge, i (1932), pp. 39–40.

familiar with the idiom. Elsewhere Bar Hebraeus specifically acknowledges his debt to Epiphanius.[84]

Epiphanius thus states that the translation was made in the sixth regnal year of Ptolemy II. This fell between 11 February 280 BCE and 31 January 279.[85] The date of Eusebius however suggests that the translation was completed some time in the year summer 281 to summer 280, in either the second or the third true Egyptian year of the king. The diagram shows that the date of Epiphanius – 11 February 280 BCE to 31 January 279 – overlaps the third (true) Egyptian regnal year of Ptolemy II. The overlap occurs between 11th February 280 and summer 280 BCE (the end of the Olympiad year). The translation was thus completed during this time.



The date of Epiphanius cannot have been derived from the date of Eusebius. If Epiphanius had used Eusebius for the date of the accession of Ptolemy II in 285/4, and was unaware that Ptolemy II had allowed three Macedonian years for the co-regency, he would then have reckoned that the 6th Macedonian year of Ptolemy II fell in 279/8 BCE. This is considerably later than the date given by Eusebius for the translation, whether this is reckoned from the beginning of the co-regency or from the end. The dates of Epiphanius and Eusebius not only thus appear to confirm the same date, but are derived from two independent sources.

The nine other Greek versions of the date of the translation, all in sources later than Eusebius and Epiphanius, will now be examined.

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[84] For the dependence of Bar Hebreus on Epiphanius, see Budge (1932), p. 20, where Epiphanius is cited in the section entitled *Kings of the Hebrews*. Sprengling & Graham (1931), p. vii, describe Bar Hebraeus as 'by far the greatest writer in the entire history of Syriac literature'.

[85] Hazzard (1987), p. 155.

This will show that their dates are derived either from Eusebius, or from Epiphanius, or from them both. They do not therefore provide independent evidence for the date of the translation, but must be discussed to find this out.

Dates From the Later Church Fathers

A Date from Epiphanius: *Bar Hebraeus*

The 13th century scholar Bar Hebraeus states that the translation was made in the 6th year of Ptolemy II.[86] Elsewhere in the same work, he states his dependence on Epiphanius. The latter gives the date of the translation as 'the seventh year, more or less of Ptolemy II'. As noted above, the phrase 'more or less' refers to an incomplete year, whose numerical value is one unit less than the year mentioned in the date.[87] This is confusing. It seems that Bar Hebraeus clarified the date of his source.

Dates Derived from Eusebius: *Zacharias of Mytilene & Pseudo-Athanasius*

Zacharias of Mytilene Zacharias declares his dependence on Eusebius for the date of the translation with the declaration that the translation took place 'as the Chronicle of Eusebius of Caesarea declares, 280 years *and more* before the birth of Christ'. The Armenian *Chronicle* of Eusebius gives a difference of 278 years between the translation in the 1,737th Abrahamic year and the birth of Christ in the 2,015th Abrahamic year. On the other hand, the Latin version of the *Chronicle* states that Christ was born in the 3rd year of the 194th Olympiad.[88] As there are four years in each Olympiad, the date of the translation given by Eusebius precedes the birth of Christ by 281 years. The date of Zacharias is thus based on the Latin *Chronicle* of Eusebius. The phrase 'and more' shows that his date is approximated, in this case to the nearest ten. Similar approximations are made by this writer in other contexts. For example, '*about* the space of 130 years after [Ptolemy II], Ptolemy Philometer . . . exerted himself . . . to write down . . . the limits of the lands under their sway'.[89]

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[86] Budge, i (1932), pp. 39–40.

[87] See on Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 88, above.

[88] Helm (1956), p. 169, see discussion by Finegan (1964), §286, §354, on the differences between Jerome's *Church History* and the *Chronicle.*

[89] Chabot (1899), pp. XXV–XXVI.

Pseudo-Athanasius Pseudo-Athanasius dates the translation '230 years before the birth of Christ'.[90] Although therefore he also links Ptolemy Philadelphus with the translation, his date falls in the reign of Ptolemy III (246–222 BCE). Although therefore errors in the transmission of numbers in ancient texts may be less common than is usually alleged (see above), since one of these facts must be correct, it is not unreasonable to assume here that a scribal error arose because the date in the manuscript was originally written in letters rather than words, with the result that λ′ (the symbol for 30) was confused for π′ (which symbolised 80). This mistake could easily have occurred.[91] If so, the number 280 was read incorrectly as 230. Pseudo-Athenasius thus follows the date of Zacharias of Mitylene.

The Date From *Chronicon Paschale*

This early 7th century text states that the Pentateuch was translated in the '4th year of the 124th Olympiad', in the second Olympiad year of Ptolemy II.[92] The *Chronicon Paschale* is based on several different sources, including Eusebius.[93] The similarity of this date with that of Eusebius (who gives the '2nd year of the 124th Olympiad') makes it reasonable to assume that it was taken from Eusebius. The difference between the date of the two sources can be explained by the fact that the *Chronicon* ends the reign of Ptolemy I two years later than Eusebius, so that the reign of Ptolemy II in the *Chronicon* begins two Olympiad years later than the date given by Eusebius. The *Chronicon* has thus placed the translation in the same relative (second) year of the reign of Ptolemy II as Eusebius.

A Date From Eusebius & Epiphanius: *Cyril of Alexandria*

Cyril of Alexandria records that the translation was made in the 124th Olympiad, which is the same Olympiad indicated by Eusebius,

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[90] *Synopsis scripturae sanctae 77*, cited Wendland (1900), p. 149 (= PG 28, p. 433). Quasten, iii (1960), p. 39, dissociates this text from Athanasius. The date of Syncellus refers to the foundation of the library in Alexandria, alleging that this took place in the 132nd Olympiad (= 252–249 BCE), not to the date of the translation, as noted in Collins, N. (1992), pp. 407, 471–2. For text, see §518 Mosshammer (1984), p. 329, lines 3–7.

[91] Compare the written λ and π of 585 AD in Pestman (1990), pp. 61–2. The rarity of errors in the transmission of numbers in ancient texts, including the use of alphabetic numerals, is discussed by Develin (1990), pp. 31–45.

[92] Dindorf, i (1832), p. 326. The years of the king are numbered consecutively with Greek letters. Year β′ corresponds with the 4th year of the 124th Olympiad.

[93] Whitby and Whitby (1989), pp. ix, xv.

summer 284 to summer 280 BCE.[94] Cyril's date may be derived from his contemporary Eusebius, or from the Latin version of Eusebius' *Chronicle* that was presented as a showpiece to the Roman Synod in 382 CE.[95] But unlike Eusebius, Cyril does not give a specific Olympiad year. This may indicate that Cyril was also aware of the date transmitted by his other contemporary Epiphanius (the 6th Macedonian year of Ptolemy II) which (according to Eusebius) fell in the 2nd year of the 125th Olympiad, corresponding with the year summer 279 to summer 278.[96] His possible margin of error was thereby reduced if he referred only to a specific Olympiad, rather than to a particular Olympiad year.

A Date From Epiphanius: *The Armenian Chronicle of Eusebius*

It is well known that dates in the Armenian *Chronicle* differ from those of Jerome.[97] Not only is there a difference in the absolute dates, for example, the dates of the accession of Ptolemy II and the translation of the Law, but these times also differ in relation to each other – in Jerome, the translation falls in Ptolemy's 2nd Olympic year, but in the Armenian *Chronicle*, it occurs in his 5th regnal year, indicated by years of Abraham. It is obvious that these years are not reckoned from the same relative passage of time. The discussion here is not concerned with the cause of specific differences between the Latin and Armenian versions,[98] but will consider the date of the translation in the Armenian *Chronicle* in relation to the date that it claims for the start of the reign of Philadelphus, as the evaluation of the date in the *Chronicon Paschale* (see above).

The Armenian *Chronicle* indicates that Philadelphus became king in the year of Abraham 1732/3 and that the translation was made five Abrahamic years later, in the year of Abraham 1737/8, which corresponds with autumn 279 to autumn 278 BCE. The Abrahamic, regnal years of a king were counted from a fixed point in autumn

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[94] St. Cyril of Jerusalem (*c.*315–386 CE), *Catechetical Lectures* IV 34, cited Wendland (1900), p. 138, trans. Burguière (1985), Livre I, §16, p. 337.

[95] Mosshammer (1979), p. 29. On Cyril's use of Eusebius' *Chronicle*, see Mosshammer, p. 325, n. 52.

[96] Helm (1956), p. 130.

[97] Mosshammer (1979), p. 78. The reliability of the Armenian and Syriac versions of the *Chronicle* are compared with the Latin version on pp. 65, 74, 78, 81.

[98] For the well known reasons for the difference, see Mosshammer (1979), pp. 73–9.

after the reign of a king had begun, suppressing the time up to this point. In contrast, the Macedonian regnal years of a king began from the start of his reign. In theory therefore the Macedonian years of a king were one regnal year ahead of his Abrahamic years, until autumn of each year. This means that if an event took place after the start of a Macedonian regnal year and before autumn in (say) the 5th Abrahamic, regnal year, the date of this event fell in the 6th Macedonian regnal year.

This indicates that the date of the translation given by Epiphanius was used for the date in the Armenian *Chronicle*, and expressed in Abrahamic years. This was reckoned in relation to the beginning of the start of the reign of Ptolemy II, on the reasonable (but mistaken) assumption that the kings' Macedonian years were calculated in a straight forward way from the beginning of the co-regency, rather than, as it appears, the co-regency itself was considered as three whole Macedonian years, and year four marked the start of the king's sole reign.

It is thought that the Armenian *Chronicle* was derived from the work of the early fifth century monks, Panodorus and Annanius, who prepared a Greek version of this work, perhaps just over a quarter of a century after the Latin version of Jerome.[99] The Armenian version is thus ultimately based on Eusebius, but was modified by the introduction of the chronological system of years of Abraham. The present work may be derived from a single manuscript prepared by these monks, which was produced about a thousand years after Eusebius.[100] Syncellus states that Panodorus and Annanius both flourished in the time of Theophilus, bishop of Alexandria in 388–416 CE. Panodorus also lived in the time of the emperor Arcadius, 383–408 CE. It was thus around 400 CE that Panodorus may have re-edited the *Chronicle*. It is possible that Panodorus published his work before 408 and Annanius between 408 and 416 CE.[101] As Epiphanius lived *c.*315–*c.*403 CE, Panodorus and Annanius could have consulted his work.[102] It seems therefore that they used the date of Epiphanius to 'correct' the date of Jerome when they re-edited the *Chronicle* of Eusebius.

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[99] Mosshammer (1979), pp. 77–9. According to *De Viris Illustribus* 135, Jerome's version of Eusebius' *Chronicle* was prepared before 392 CE.

[100] Mosshammer (1979), p. 74.

[101] Mosshammer (1979), pp. 77–9.

[102] Mosshammer (1979), pp. 78, 324, n. 48.

A Date From Eusebius' Armenian Chronicle: *Michael the Syrian*
This author states that the translation was made in the 5th year of Philadelphus, in the 125th Olympiad.[103] The source of this work can be traced to the *Chronicle* of Eusebius, probably through the Armenian version.[104] This is confirmed by the date of the translation which falls in the 5th Abrahamic year after the start of the reign of Ptolemy I.

A Date From The Armenian Chronicle & Epiphanius:
Pseudo-Theodoret and Nicetas Serranus, Archbishop of Heraclea
According to the text of Pseudo-Theodoret printed by Wendland, the Pentateuch was translated 'before the 31st year (πρὸ τριακοστοῦ πρώτου ἔτους) of the word of God after the sojourn [ἐπιδημία] of the flesh of the word of God for us'.[105] If this means '31 years before the birth of Christ', the date is suspect because no other source places the translation of the Pentateuch so late – the date of Ben Sira for the Pentateuch and the prophets falls, at the latest, in 132 BCE. Accordingly, it is proposed here to read τριακοσιοστοῦ for τριακοστοῦ, that is 300 for 30. The date of Pseudo-Theodoret then coincides with that of Nicetas Serrenus, who states that the translation was made 'before 301 years of the sojourn [ἐπιδημία] of the Saviour'.[106]

The date of Pseudo-Theodoret and Nicetas (who flourished in the eleventh century CE) appears to fall well *before* the reign of Ptolemy II, in the reign of Ptolemy I. This contradicts the note of both authors that the translation was made under Ptolemy II.[107] Only one of these facts can be correct.

The date may be based on the information cited by the Armenian *Chronicle* of Eusebius which claims that Christ 'appeared (*erschien*) in the life of men' in the 4th year of Olympiad 201.[108] This corresponds with the year 28/29 CE, a time around the beginning of the ministry or resurrection of Jesus. The term *erschien* indicates either of these times (rather than the death of Jesus) and this reveals the

[103] Langlois (1868), p. 78.
[104] Chabot (1899), pp. XXV–XXVI.
[105] Wendland (1900), p. 153.
[106] Wendland (1900), p. 159.
[107] Wendland (1900), pp. 152, 159.
[108] Karst (1911), p. 61, 'Nach Augustos regierte über die Römer Tiberios; dessen fünfzehntes Jahr war es, da erschien unser Herr Jesus des Gesalbte Gottes in der Menschen Leben, im vierten Jahre der 201. Olympiade'.

meaning of the term ἐπιδημία in both Pseudo-Theodoret and Nicetas. Since these authors both state that the translation was made 301 years before the sojourn (ministry or resurrection) of Jesus, the date of the translation falls in 274 BCE (this is one year more than simple arithmetic suggests, because in the system BCE/CE, there is no year '0').

The *Chronicle* further notes that Alexander died in the 2nd year of Olympiad 114, and that Ptolemy I became satrap in the following year, that is, the 3rd year of Olympiad 114, which corresponds with 322/1 BCE.[109] According to the *Chronicle*, he was effectively satrap and king for 40 years, which indicates his death in 282/1 BCE.[110] With these figures, Ptolemy II started to rule in 280 BCE.

According to the understanding of Bar Hebraeus of the date of Epiphanius, the translation was made in the 6th year of Ptolemy II (see above). If Ptolemy II began to rule in 280 BCE, this brings us to 274 BCE, which is '301 years before the sojourn' of Christ. The dates for the translation given by Pseudo-Theodoret and Nicetas may thus be based on the source used by the Armenian Chronicle of Eusebius for the date of the resurrection, using the date of the translation given by Epiphanius.

The Date Referring to a Later Time: John Chrysostom

As noted above, the date of the translation of the Pentateuch preserved by John Chrysostom refers to a much later time. His date is worth discussing however, if only to remove the possibility that he could be correct.

Chrysostom, who flourished *c.*347–407, records that the translation was made '100 years or more before the birth of Christ'. This date cannot be derived from the dates of Eusebius or Epiphanius since it falls well after the reign of Ptolemy II. This is confirmed by the context of his reference which shows that Chrysostom is referring to the Greek translation of the book of Isaiah, which took place after the translation of the Pentateuch:

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[109] Karst (1911), p. 74.

[110] Karst (1911), p. 60. Porphyry's comment in the *Chronicle* that the reign of Ptolemy I lasted thirty-eight years (Karst (1911), p. 74, cited in the main text above) is logical, arising from Porphyry's remarks on the co-regency, and is not relevant here.

> But what then saith this oracle, *Behold, a Virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son and they shall call his name Emmanuel.*
>
> How was it then, one may say, that His name was not called Emmanuel, but Jesus Christ? Because he said not, "thou shalt call," but *they shall call*, that is, the multitude and the issue of events . . .
>
> But if Jews are obstinate, we will ask them, when was the child called, *Make speed to the spoil, hasten the prey*? Why, they could not say . . .
>
> But if when their [= the Jews'] mouths are stopped on this point, they should seek another [objection], namely what is said touching Mary's virginity, and should object to us other translators, saying, that they used not the term "Virgin" but "young woman". In the first place we will say this, that the Seventy [translators] were justly entitled to confidence among all the others. For these [later translators] made their translation after Christ's coming, continuing to be Jews, and may justly be suspected as having spoken rather in enmity, and as darkening the prophecies on purpose; but the Seventy [translators], as having entered upon this work as a hundred or more years before the coming of Christ, stand clear from all such suspicion, and on account of the date, and of their number, and of their agreement, would have a better right to be trusted.[111]

The date of Chrysostom is linked to a Christian interpretation of the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14, *Behold, a Virgin shall be with child* . . . According to Chrysostom, the translation of 'the Seventy', that is, the Pentateuch, used the word 'virgin', and this text is more reliable than the work of later translators who lived after Christ, who used the term 'young woman'. Chrysostom claims that the reliability of 'the Seventy' is guaranteed because they were not influenced by the later anti-Christian polemic of the Jews and because they all individually arrived at the same translation (as Philo notes, see Chapter 5). Chrysostom thus implies that 'the Seventy' translated the book of Isaiah. In fact, all that is known concerning the translation of this text is that it was completed some time between the translation of the Pentateuch and 132–17 BCE, by which time, according to the prologue of Ben Sira, the Hebrew Bible had been translated into Greek. Chrysostom thus refers to the translation of the Hebrew Bible as it existed towards the beginning of the first century BCE. He links the translation of Isaiah with the translation of the Pentateuch in order to claim that just as the latter was truthfully translated, so also was the book of Isaiah. It is interesting to note that Chrysostom fol-

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[111] *Matth.Hom.V 2*, cited Wendland (1900), p. 139 (= PG 57, p. 77); trans. Prevost (1843), pp. 68–9.

lows Eusebius and Epiphanius (his contemporary) when he associates a translation of Jewish texts with Ptolemy II, although these texts are not named, and are identified only as 'Jewish writings which treated of God and the ideal state'.[112]

The date of Chrysostom thus refers to a later time and event, and does not challenge the Greek date for the translation of the Pentateuch deduced above.

The Jewish Date Preserved in Megillat Taanit

In addition to the eleven relevant dates preserved by the Church, a date for the translation was preserved by the Jews. This states that the translation was finished by the 8th of Tevet.[113] No year is given for the event. The date appears in the Hebrew commentary on the *Megillat Taanit* ('The Scroll of Fasting'). This has been dated to the first or second century CE, and deals with the days of the year on which fasting is forbidden in recollection of a specific joyful event.

What season of the year is linked with Tevet? From ancient times, the months of the Jewish calendar have followed the phases of the moon, regulated in relation to the solar year. This means that there are either twelve or thirteen months in the year, so that a specific month always falls at the same season of the year. The month of Nisan (the month of the Passover) thus always falls in the spring. This means that the month of Tevet, which precedes Nisan by three or four lunar months (depending on whether there is an extra month in the year), always falls in winter, around December or January. It seems that the extra month in the Jewish calendar was inserted before Nisan. This means that the date of the translation stated in the *Megillat Taanit* fell at a time corresponding with December or (after intercalation) in January. As the date occurs around the end of the first week of Tevet, this suggests that the *latest* possible month of the translation was early in January.

But the date for the translation deduced from Eusebius and Epiphanius falls between 11th February 280 and summer 280 BCE. This period cannot include the winter month of Tevet. The Jewish date must refer to a different event.

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[112] *Discourses against Judaizing Christians* I VI; trans. Harkins (1979), p. 21.

[113] Neubauer (1895), p. 24. A varient mss. gives 7th of Tevet. For further on this text, see Vermes, i (1973), pp. 114–5.

This event exists. Aristeas describes two events which commemorated the translation. The first took place on the island of the Pharos in the presence of the Jews.[114] The second was a sumptuous event held in Alexandria, at the court of Ptolemy II. The latter corresponds with the date 280 BCE.[115] The Jewish ceremony must thus refer to a date before 280 BCE. As the Jewish date corresponds with December or early in January, this brings us to the end of 281 BCE, perhaps on the 28th or 29th December in 281.[116] Although therefore the two different dates preserved by the Greek and Jewish texts are wholly independent of Aristeas, it is Aristeas who provides the reason for the existence of the two dates, and the order in which these dates should be placed. Were it not for Aristeas, who is the only true source for a reference to the Jewish ceremony (since the report of Josephus is based on Aristeas), it would probably be impossible to explain why there are two different dates for a single event.

The translation was therefore actually completed in the 5th Macedonian regnal year of Ptolemy II, although it was celebrated in his 6th Macedonian regnal year. Olympiad chronology embraces both the Jewish and Greek dates, which both fall in the 4th year of the 124th Olympiad. It appears moreover that as with many other ancient, literary remains, its date of composition emerges from records which are external to the text.[117]

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[114] LetAris.308.

[115] The year 280 BCE may also be confirmed by the date of the naval battle to which Aristeas refers at LetAris.180, when Ptolemy II claims that he had just defeated Antigonus. The battle had apparently just taken place when the translators arrived in Alexandria. Hadas (1951), pp. 7, 169–70 states that Aristeas could not refer here to a sea battle between Ptolemy and Antigonus at Cos, *c.*258 BCE, because the Egyptians were defeated. It may however refer to a later battle at Andros, which took place just before the death of Ptolemy II, *c.*245 BCE, when a Ptolemy fought an Antigonus. But the latter is an anachronism if the translation was completed by 280 BCE. Bickermann (1930), p. 282 (= Bickerman (1976), p. 110), has suggested that an error in the archetype of the *Letter of Aristeas* has replaced 'Antiochus' with 'Antigonus'. Antiochus fought a naval battle with with Ptolemy II in 280 BCE. This coincides with the date of the translation of Eusebius and Epiphanius, although the translators probably arrived in the Julian year before the completion of the translation, if allowance is made for the seventy-two working days of the translators.

[116] According to the Akavia (5736–1975), pp. 292–3, 8th of Tevet fell on Tuesday, 28th of December 281 BCE, in the Jewish year 3581. But this may not be accurate because the Jewish calendar was not officially fixed till the 4th cent. CE. If the year was intercalated, the date may fall in early January 280 BCE.

[117] For example, the plays of Euripides.

To Which Arsinoë Does Aristeas Refer?

The date of the translation deduced above indicates the identity of the queen in the *Letter of Aristeas*, whose name was Arsinoë.[118] It is often assumed that this refers to the queen whom historians now call Arsinoë II.[119] Aristeas may then be charged with fabricating evidence because he refers to the children of this Arsinoë as if they were also the children of Ptolemy II, although Arsinoë II was not the mother of the children of Ptolemy II.[120] But the charge is unjustified. It is unlikely that Aristeas refers to Arsinoë II. In 281 or 280 BCE, the dates of the translation deduced above, Arsinoë II was probably not even in Egypt. She was instead in Macedonia, securely married to the second of her three husbands, Ptolemy Keraunos (her half-brother and older half-brother of Ptolemy II), following the death of her first husband Lysimachus, king of Thrace. This Arsinoë was the mother of three sons to Lysimachus, of whom two were apparently murdered by Ptolemy Keraunos.[121] It was only after the death of Ptolemy Keraunos that she returned to Egypt where she married for the third time, becoming a second wife to her full brother, Ptolemy II, probably in 279 BCE. She apparently did not bear any children to Ptolemy II, but is said to have adopted his three children by his previous wife, known in history as Arsinoë I.[122]

Arsinoë I must be the wife to whom Aristeas refers. This Arsinoë was the only wife who bore children to Ptolemy II. The discussion has become confused by the hint that Arisnoë II, the second wife of Ptolemy II, adopted the children of Arsinoë I. If the latter married Ptolemy II in 285 BCE, she could have had at least two children by the time that Eleazer the Jewish High Priest wrote to her in two official greetings noted by Aristeas, perhaps in 282 BCE (one year before the date of the translation, deduced above).[123] Although this first Arsinoë was not a biological relation of her husband, evidence from the time of Ptolemy III shows that it was not unusual to refer to the wife of a Ptolemy as a 'sister' although this was not biologically true. This can be seen from two decrees in honour of

[118] LetAris.41,185.
[119] For example, Hadas (1951), p. 116.
[120] Wendland (1903), p. 92, suggests this shows the non-historic nature of Aristeas.
[121] Justin, 24.3.7; Beloch (1927), p. 130.
[122] Wendel (1914), scholium to Theocritus, *Idyll.*17.128; see Macurdy (1932).
[123] Beloch (1927), p. 130, suggests that Arsinoë I married Ptolemy II about 285.

the son of Ptolemy II, Ptolemy III Euergetes and his wife Berenice, which refer to Berenice as a 'sister and wife'.[124] In fact, this Berenice was not the king's wife. She was the daughter of Magas, who was the son of (another) Berenice, the fourth and last wife of Ptolemy I. The first husband of the latter Berenice was called Philip, and Magas was their son. This means that the grand-daughter of the Berenice who was the wife of Ptolemy I, married her grand-son.[125] Nevertheless, Berenice, the wife of Ptolemy III, is described as the sister of her husband Ptolemy III.

The action of Ptolemy II in marrying his own full sister may suggest that the custom of referring to a wife as a sister can be backdated to his time. On the other hand, Aristeas may have imposed a custom of later times on Ptolemy II by referring to Arsinoë I as his 'sister-wife'.[126] This queen was subsequently confused with the true sister-wife of the same name, who married Ptolemy II some time after the translation of the Pentateuch into Greek.

Ptolemy I or Ptolemy II?

A. *The Chronological Error behind the Confusion*

If the translation was completed in 280 BCE, when Ptolemy II was king, why do five ancient sources link the translation with Ptolemy I, of which two refer to both of these kings? The following discussion will suggest that this may be due to a simple mistake. The relevant texts are listed below. The references to 'Ptolemy after Alexander' and to 'Ptolemy Lagos' are both to Ptolemy I:

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[124] *OGIS* 56,8, decree of Egyptian priests in honour of Ptolemy III and Berenice in 238 BCE, βασιλεὺς Πτολεμαῖος . . . καὶ βασίλισσα βερενίκη ἡ ἀδελφὴ αὐτοῦ καὶ γυνή; *OGIS*.60.3, an inscription in honour of Ptolemy and Berenice in a temple of Osiris, βασιλεὺς Πτολεμαῖος . . . καὶ βασσίλισσα βερινίκη ἡ ἀδελφὴ καὶ γυνὴ αὐτοῦ; see Bevan (1927), p. 202; similarly, *OGIS* 61,2 and 65,3–4. This terminology may also appear in the Greek A-Text story of Esther, which may have an Egyptian origin, in which the Persian king Ahasuerus calls himself 'brother' in relation to his wife Esther, see Collins, N. (1993), with text in Clines (1984), Esth 6.8.

[125] The relationship was not even as close as this description suggests. These grandchildren had only one grandparent in common, namely Berenice. Since this Berenice was married first to Philip and then to Ptolemy I, the grand-parents on the paternal side of the Berenice who was the wife of Ptolemy III, were Berenice and Philip; whereas the grand-parents on the paternal side of Ptolemy III were Berenice and Ptolemy I.

[126] See Chapter 5 for evidence of different layers in *The Letter of Aristeas*.

1. Aristobulus (fl *c.*155–125 BCE) implicates both Ptolemy I and Ptolemy II:

> He [= Aristobulus] was reckoned among the seventy who translated the sacred and divine Scriptures of the Hebrews for Ptolemy Philadelphus and his father; and he dedicated books exegetical of the Law of Moses to the same kings.[127]

2. Irenaeus (*c.*130–200 CE), implicates only Ptolemy I:

> For before the Romans established their government, while the Macedonians still possessed Asia, Ptolemy, the son of Lagus [= Ptolemy I], being very anxious to the library which he had founded in Alexandria, with all the best extant writings of all men, asked from the inhabitants of Jerusalem to have their Scriptures translated into Greek. They, for they were all at that time still subject to the Macedonians, sent to Ptolemy seventy elders, the most experienced they had in the Scriptures and in both languages, and God thus wrought what he willed.[128]

3. Clement of Alexandria (*c.*150–211/16 CE), gives both kings:

> It is said that the Scriptures both of the law and the prophets were translated from the dialect of the Hebrews into the Greek language in the reign of Ptolemy the son of Lagos, or, according to others, of Ptolemy surnamed Philadelphus.[129]

4. St. Filaster (or, 'Philaster', died *c.*397 CE), implicates only Ptolemy I:

> This, that is to say the interpretation of the seventy-two, was published to everyone under Ptolemy the king of the Egyptians after Alexander of Macedon [= Ptolemy I], and was entrusted to the Jewish people in Jerusalem although not many Jews were living there, as they had already been placed in subjection to the Egyptian king. And they [= the Jews in Jerusalem] were asked by Ptolemy himself that interpreters should be sent to Alexandria. And when the seventy-two wise and educated men came as interpreters, having translated the Hebrew language into Greek speech on the orders of the king, they published it in Greek; and it was done so. And when Ptolemy the king of Egypt received them, wishing to test whether the writing which the Jews were reading was divine, he ordered each of them to be shut up individually in a little room, and to see nobody else apart from a scribe who was to listen to the translation as he spoke. . . . .[130]

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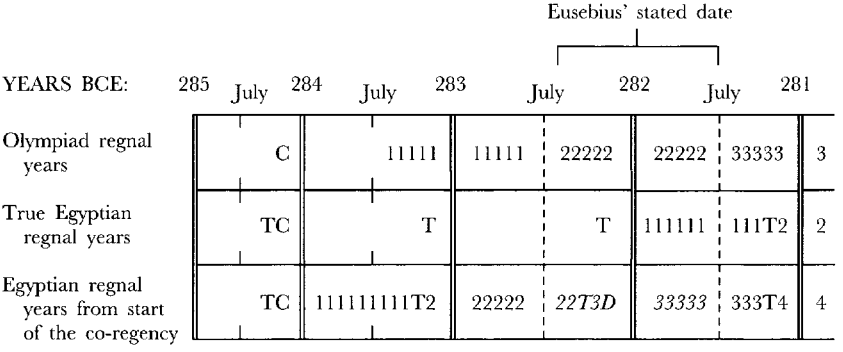
[127] Eusebius, HE.7.32.16, trans. Lake (1959).
[128] Eusebius, HE.5.8.11–12, trans. Oulton and Lawler (1957).
[129] Clement of Alexandria, Strom.1.22.148, trans. Wilson (1867).
[130] Filaster, *Diversarum Hereseon Liber CXLII*, cited Wendland (1900), pp. 160–1.

5. Theodoret of Cyrus (or Cyrrhus, *c.*393–*c.*466 CE), implicates only Ptolemy I:

> It seems to me rash to upset the writings which were transmitted long ago in the time of Ptolemy, who was king of Egypt after Alexander [= Ptolemy I], which all the seventy elders translated into the Greek language just as they also translated the other divine writing . . . .[131]

The link between the translation and Ptolemy I can be attributed directly to the mistake of the chronographer who converted the original (true) Egyptian date of the translation into an Olympiad date. As noted above and can be seen in the diagram below, this date was reckoned in relation to the *beginning* of the co-regency, rather than to its *end*, and the resulting incorrect date – the 2nd year of the 124th Olympiad, corresponding with summer 283 to summer 282 BCE – was subsequently used by Eusebius for the translation of the Pentateuch into Greek.



C, beginning of the co-regency on 1st December 285 BCE
T, Thoth 1, the start of the Egyptian year at the beginning of November
D, the death of Ptolemy I on 23rd November 283 BCE

But by an accident of fate, this *incorrect* Olympiad year – summer 283 to summer 282 – happens to include the *correct* date of the death of Ptolemy I on 23rd November 283 BCE.[132] We can assume that this date was known in antiquity, since the relevant records have been preserved and others can been assumed.[133] It is also the date

[131] *Praef. in psal.*, Wendland (1900), pp. 148–9 (= PG 80, p. 864). For dates of the life of Theodoret, see Quasten, iii (1960), pp. 536,537. For three other, probably doubtful sources which may implicate Ptolemy I, see appendix.
[132] Grzybek (1990), p. 171.
[133] Samuel (1965), p. 30.

that emerges if we assume, along with many commentators of antiquity, that after Alexander died on 10th June 323 BCE, in the 1st year of the 114th Olympiad, Ptolemy I immediately assumed power, so that his first regnal year fell in the 2nd year of the 114th Olympiad, June 323 to June 322 BCE.[134] Then, counting the length of the reign of Ptolemy I as 40 Olympiad years (the traditional length of his reign), the king died in the 2nd year of the 124th Olympiad, the alleged date of the translation of the Pentateuch into Greek.

This chronological coincidence gave the impression that the translation was completed in the same year as the death of Ptolemy I. It could thus be assumed that the translation was organised under Ptolemy I. A link between the death of Ptolemy I and the translation would not have been discouraged by the use of Olympiad years which (unlike Macedonian years) do not link an event with a specific king, for example, 'the 40th year *of Ptolemy*'. This is because Olympiad years are continuous (from the first Olympiad in 776 BCE), and so cannot be identified with a year of the reign of a specific king. The change to Olympiad years thus resulted in a loss of the link between Ptolemy II and the translation which (it can be assumed) was noted in the original record of the event, and could not have helped to counter the impression that the death of Ptolemy I and the date of the translation now fell in the same year.

This suggests that the five sources who implicate Ptolemy I (cited above) were ultimately dependent on an Olympiad *Chronicle* which showed a co-incidence of two dates, the date of the death of Ptolemy I and the date of the translation. Dependence was either direct or indirect – direct when it arose directly from consulting a chronology; and indirect when it arose from an oral or literary source which interpreted the misleading coincident dates in a chronology to mean that the translation was made under Ptolemy I.

It is paradoxical, therefore, that since the link between the translation and Ptolemy I is actually a link between the translation and Ptolemy II, sources alleging that the translation was made under Ptolemy I actually confirm Aristeas when he places the translation under Ptolemy II (although Aristeas could not of course have used the chronology assumed above).

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[134] For example, Eusebius *Chronicle*, Helm (1956), pp. 124–5; *Chronicon Paschale*, Dindorfi (1832), p. 322.

With such a background, it is hardly surprising that some of the earliest sources who associate the translation with a specific king, link the translation with Ptolemy I. Why then does Eusebius link the translation with Ptolemy II? This can be deduced from Eusebius himself. Eusebius places the first regnal year of Ptolemy II in the 1st year of the 124th Olympiad, summer 284 to summer 283.[135] It can thus be assumed that Ptolemy I died in the final, fourth year of the 123rd Olympiad, between summer 285 and summer 284. This means that the year of the translation – the 2nd year of the 124th Olympiad, summer 283 to summer 282 – now falls well *after* the death and end of the reign of Ptolemy I, and well *within* the reign of Ptolemy II. The translation must thus be associated with Ptolemy II.

How did Eusebius fix the date of the death of Ptolemy I? The answer to this question appears to stem from the simple co-incidence that the period of time between the death of Alexander and the accession of Ptolemy III is exactly equivalent to the length of the reigns of the intervening kings, Ptolemy I and Ptolemy II, when their reigns run consecutively for their traditional lengths, 40 Olympiad years for Ptolemy I and 38 years for Ptolemy II. Eusebius thus assumed that Alexander died in the 1st year of the 114th Olympiad (324/3 BCE), which he makes the first Olympiad, regnal year of the 40-year reign of Ptolemy I.[136] The reign of Ptolemy I would thus have ended in the 4th year of the 123rd Olympiad, 286/5 BCE, when he died. This year is not marked in the *Chronicle* but can be deduced from the record of the beginning of the reign of Ptolemy II, in the 1st year of the 124th Olympiad 284/3 BCE.[137] Thereafter, Ptolemy II ruled for 38 Olympiad years, ending his reign in 247/6, the 2nd year of the 133rd Olympiad, so that the rule of Ptolemy II Euergetes began the following Olympiad year.[138] The death of the old king (here, Ptolemy II) is also not marked in the *Chronicle*, but must be deduced from the first regnal year of Ptolemy III. Eusebius thus assumes: (1) that Ptolemy I came to power in the same year as the death of Alexander the Great; (2) that the years as the co-regency did not in any way conflict with the fact that Ptolemy I ruled for 40 years and Ptolemy II for 38. The co-regency is not

[135] Helm (1956), p. 129.
[136] Helm (1956), pp. 124–5.
[137] Helm (1956), p. 129.
[138] Helm (1956), p. 132.

indicated in the *Chronicle*, although from his reading of Porphyry, Eusebius must have known that it occurred.[139] As a result, the death of Ptolemy I falls before the date of the translation, which leads to the natural assumption that the translation was made under Ptolemy II.

It was probably Eusebius who arranged the dates in this way. This is indicated by the decreasing tendency of the sources to associate the translation with Ptolemy I, when these are considered in relation to the life of Eusebius. Before the time of Eusebius (*c.*260–339 CE), opinions are divided regarding the king in power when the translation was made, although the weight of opinion is for Ptolemy II, perhaps because this is when the event occurred, and also perhaps due to the influence of the *Letter of Aristeas*. Accordingly, Aristobulus, Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria, perhaps relying on the coincidence in dates discussed above, assert that the translation was made under Ptolemy I, while two of these writers, Aristobulus and Clement of Alexandria, also refer to Ptolemy II. On the other hand, five sources, notably Aristeas, Philo, Josephus, Justin, Pollux and Tertullian implicate Ptolemy II alone.[140] During the life of Eusebius, only Filaster links the translation with Ptolemy I. The work of Filaster was probably dependent on Epiphanius and Irenaeus.[141] For the king under whom the translation was made, Filaster chose to follow Irenaeus, who links the translation to Ptolemy I. On the other hand, other contemporaries of Eusebius who may have used the latter as a source – Epiphanius, Athanasius, and St. Cyril of Jerusalem – all link the translation with Ptolemy II.[142]

After the death of Eusebius in 339 CE, there is an almost unanimous belief that the translation was made under Ptolemy II.[143] This is asserted by twenty-five sources. Only Theodoret of Cyrus, who flourished from around 423 CE (when he became bishop of Cyrus, near Antioch), about one hundred years after Eusebius died, asserts that the translation was made under Ptolemy I. This near unanimity of the sources can reasonably be attributed to the influence of Eusebius, whose *Chronicle* was spread by the tireless efforts of Jerome.[144]

A comparison of the number of sources who state a link with

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[139] For Porphyry, see Müller, *Fragmenta Graeca Historica*, 260 F 2 (3).

[140] For these and other sources who link the translation with one or other of the kings in relation to the life of Eusebius, see the appendix.

[141] Berardino (1988), p. 131.

[142] St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures* IV 34.

[143] For details, see appendix.

[144] Mosshammer (1979), p. 38. Eusebius died 339 CE, and Jerome *c.*342–420 CE.

Ptolemy I or Ptolemy II, in relation to the life of Eusebius, are summarised in the list below:

	KING LINKED WITH TRANSLATION		
	PTOLEMY I	BOTH KINGS	PTOLEMY II
Sources before Eusebius	1	2	6
Contemporary with Eusebius	1	0	3
Sources after Eusebius	1	0	25[145]

It seems that the lower number of sources which attribute the translation to Ptolemy I is due less to a body of opinion that supported Ptolemy II, than to a simple accident of fate which decreed that more of the extant sources who dealt with the translation lived after than before Eusebius. The fact that a larger number of sources implicate Ptolemy II cannot therefore be used as proof that the latter was king when the translation was made, although this is probably the case, as is shown from the evidence of the Church Father dates.

B. *When Could the Error of Chronology Have Occurred?*

When could the error in chronology have occurred which dated the translation in the same year as the death of Ptolemy I, and led to a false link between these two events?

The Olympiad date transmitted by Eusebius could not have existed before the invention of Olympiad dates, probably by Eratosthenes who may have arrived in Alexandria after 246 BCE (the year of the death of Ptolemy II) at the invitation of Ptolemy III Euergetes, to tutor his son.[146] But it is unlikely that Eratosthenes was responsible for the mistake. The history composed by Eratosthenes probably extended only to the death of Alexander the Great.[147] Moreover, the mistake must have arisen by a chronologer who was unaware of the adjustment that Ptolemy II had made to his Egyptian regnal years. Eratosthenes arrived in Alexandria only about twenty or so years after Ptolemy II back-dated the Egyptian years of his reign (if this took place in 267 BCE), which is probably too close in time to the reign of Ptolemy II for Eratosthenes to be unaware of what had taken place. This suggests that if Eratosthenes himself had converted the date of the translation, he would have correctly reckoned its date

[145] These sources are listed in the appendix.
[146] Pfeiffer (1968), p. 153.
[147] FGrH 241 F 1.

from the *end* of the co-regency, rather than from the *beginning* of this time. On balance therefore, although the life of Eratosthenes acts as a *terminus a quo*, the date of the translation eventually used by Eusebius was probably established by a chronologer who lived after his time.

The mistake must have been made by the time of the Alexandrian philosopher Aristobulus, since Aristobulus, who probably lived in the second half of the 2nd century BCE, is the earliest source who links the translation with Ptolemy I. The fact that Aristobulus also claims that the translation was made for Ptolemy II thus suggests that he was dependent on two, separate sources, a chronology which included the error that identified the translation with Ptolemy I, and a factual, perhaps literary tradition which claimed (as was the case) that the king responsible for the translation was Ptolemy II.

We thus have two *termini* for the error in chronology, a theoretical, but probably too early *terminus a quo* in 246 BCE, when Eratosthenes arrived in Alexandria, and a *terminus ad quem* marked by the floruit of Aristobulus in the second half of the 2nd century BCE. The chronologer responsible for the error must have lived between these times. This points to Apollodorus of Athens, who lived from around 180 till after 120 BCE. Apollodorus may have had access to the original record of the date of the translation in Alexandria, when he visited Alexandria where he collaborated with Aristarchus, leaving the city around 146 BCE.[148] We know that he wrote a *Chronicle* which probably extended to 110/9 BCE (well after the translation). We know also that he converted Olympiad dates to a system based on the Athenian archon dates, so that the date of the translation that he saw in Alexandria may have been expressed in this way.[149] Apollodorus may therefore be responsible for the original mistake which placed the translation two Egyptian regnal years earlier than the actual event. If so, the *Chronicle* of Apollodorus was used by Aristobulus, either directly or indirectly – directly, if Aristobulus himself consulted the *Chronicle* or indirectly, if Aristobulus relied on a literary interpretation of the data in such a *Chronicle*.

Athenian archon dates of Apollodorus were eventually converted to Olympiad chronology. This probably began in the lifetime of

[148] For details of Apollodorus, see Fraser, i (1972), p. 471.

[149] Pfeiffer (1968), pp. 255–6; Mosshammer (1979), p. 158. The Athenian archon in 283/2 BCE may have been Euthios, who is otherwise unknown, see Samuel (1972), p. 213.

Apollodorus. Various people have been linked with such work. Perhaps it was the contemporary of Apollodorus, Sosicrates, perhaps from Rhodes, who wrote a chronicle used by Diogenes Laertius which expressed dates according to the Olympiad system and the appropriate Athenian archon.[150] Or else it was a source frequently cited by Diogenes Laertius as *Apollodorus in the Chronicle*, which also expressed the dates according to the Olympiad system, specifying an exact Olympiad year.[151] A further source of Diogenes who transmitted Apollodoran dates in Olympiad chronology, and who may have shared the style of Eusebius cannot be named.[152] Or else, it was Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who converted the Apollodoran dates. Dionysius lived in the time of Augustus, and united the chronology of Greece and Asia Minor in his work περὶ χρόνων.[153] But the most likely chronologer is Castor of Rhodes, who lived in the late 1st century BCE and dealt with the period from Ninus of Assyria (2123 BCE) to the ratification of the Pompeian organisation of Asia in 61 BCE.[154] Castor harmonised earlier chronological eponymous lists with Olympiad chronology, including the dates of Ptolemaic events in the time of Ptolemy I.[155] He is also cited extensively by Eusebius, is thus the most likely source for the date finally used by Eusebius in the 4th century CE.[156]

A chain of events can thus be assumed. The original Egyptian date of the translation was preserved in Alexandria where it was seen by Apollodorus in the first half of the 2nd century BCE. Apollodorus converted the Egyptian year of the translation into a chronology based on the list of Athenian archons. The date that he saw must also have included the month of the event, which made it possible

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[150] For example, D.L. 1.101; see Mosshammer (1979), p. 159.

[151] For example, D.L. 2.2.3.

[152] For example, D.L. 1.98; see Mosshammer (1979), p. 159.

[153] For the chronological work of Dionysios of Halicarnassus, FGrH 251.

[154] FGrH 250 T 2; Mosshammer (1979), p. 131. The citation of Castor by Apollodorus (*c.*180-after 120 BCE), FGrH 250 F 8 = Apol.Bibl.2.1.3 cannot be correct, as Castor refers to events after the second century BCE, but see e.g., Smith (1853), s.v., Castor. Scholars now accept the later date, e.g, Mosshammer, ibid.; Trapp (1996).

[155] Josephus, Con.Ap.1.184 = FGrH 205 F 12, '[Hecateaus] mentions the battle near Gaza between Ptolemy and Demetrius, which, as Castor narrates, was fought eleven years after the death of Alexander, in the 117th Olympiad. For under the head of this Olympiad he says, "In this period, Ptolemy son of Lagus, defeated in a battle at Gaza Demetrius, son of Antigonus, surnamed Poliorcetes."' For further on the use of Olympiads by Castor, see FGrH F 4, F 6, F 7. For a survey of the Greek chronographic tradition, see Mosshammer (1979), esp. p. 100.

[156] For the *Chronicle*, see Helm (1956), p. 27b, 45a, 64a; FGrH 250.

to assign an exact archon year. But the converted date was two years too early, because Apollodorus did not know of the adjustment that Ptolemy II had made to his Egyptian regnal years. Apollodorus thus counted these years from the beginning of the co-regency, and not from the end. The chronology of Apollodorus was subsequently used by Aristobulus when he stated that the translation was made under Ptolemy I. The archon date of Apollodorus was subsequently converted to Olympiad chronology, probably by Castor of Rhodes in the first century BCE, and this date was later used by Eusebius.

The evidence thus exists for specific chronological activity in literary texts, which can be identified with the work of specific chronologers, who lived at times which can be predicted from the dates of composition of the relevant literary texts. This does not prove the theory proposed here. It shows however that the formative elements of this theory were in existence at the right places and times, so that unless a better theory is proposed which fits all the facts, the obvious conclusion is difficult to avoid.

The history of the Macedonian date of the translation is more difficult to trace. The earliest extant record of this date is transmitted by Epiphanius. The phrase he attaches to the date 'more or less' indicates that he saw a record of this date which also included the month of the event. It is possible therefore that Epiphanius saw the original Macedonian record itself. This may have been obtained from Christians from Alexandria who came to the monastery that he founded in Judaea, or who came to Salamis, where Epiphanius was bishop in the fourth century CE.[157]

C. *Could the Translation Have Been Planned by Ptolemy I?*

Although an evaluation of the Church Father dates suggest that the translation was finished under Ptolemy II, the process described by Aristeas may have taken two or more years to plan and bring to fruition, so that it is possible that the project *began* under Ptolemy I. This means that even if it was finished in December 281 BCE under Ptolemy II, planning could have begun before November 283 BCE (when Ptolemy I probably died), which means that the project was initiated by Ptolemy I. If so, the translation should be linked with Ptolemy I, rather than Ptolemy II.

According to the present version of the *Letter of Aristeas* the translation

[157] See Cross and Livingstone (1997) for a brief biography of Epiphanius.

itself was composed in seventy-two days.[158] This is the only indication given by Aristeas of the length of time taken, and so is the only number with which we can work. Although therefore the number 'seventy-two' is more likely to be fictitious than historically correct (see Chapter 5), it is interesting to see how the dates work out when this number is used. One fact is certain. The number seventy-two cannot refer to consecutive days. The Jewish translators were religiously observant, with a strict concern for Jewish law.[159] The seventy-two days must therefore refer only to their working days, and not to their time overall. This is because writing – surely a part of the process of translating the Pentateuch – is an example of 'work' defined by Jewish oral law, which was prohibited on holy days, including the sabbath. The earliest, specific written prohibition of this type of 'work' in the oral law is found in a text edited in the 2nd century CE.[160] Aristeas however refers in general to the familiarity of the translators with the oral law, noting that they had 'a tremendous natural facility for the negotiations and questions arising from the Law'.[161] The respect of the translators for the oral law is also apparent from the deference of the king to their religious beliefs when he replaced his usual religious ritual before official meals with a request to the Jewish priest Eleazar to offer a prayer.[162] Aristeas also remarks that the translators adhered to the Jewish dietary laws including their 'customs in matters of drink',[163] and before the work of the translation, when they would have been in contact with the Hebrew Pentateuchal text, 'washed their hands in the sea in the course of their prayers to God' 'following the custom of all the Jews'.[164] It is thus reasonable to assume that the translators would not have 'worked' even orally on the sabbath or on any other holy day.[165]

Aristeas states that the translators worked till the 'ninth hour'.[166]

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[158] LetAris.307.
[159] LetAris.182–6, 305–6.
[160] Mishnah, Shabbat 7.2.
[161] LetAris.122.
[162] LetAris.184.
[163] LetAris.182,186.
[164] LetAris.305, see note of Hadas (1951), p. 219.
[165] LetAris 127, 'The good life, he [= the Jewish High Priest] said, consisted of observing the laws, and this aim was achieved *by hearing* [i.e., through the oral law] much more than by reading'. In addition to the Jewish oral law observed by the translators, Aristeas also refers to the Jewish dietary laws (§128–166), laws of dress (§158–159), ritual of the Jewish morning prayer (§159–160) and ritual in the Temple (§92–104).
[166] LetAris.303.

Whether this is calculated from 6 a.m., according to the Romans, or by Jewish method which divides the daylight into twelve hours, this means that the translators worked only during the day, as we might expect. If we allow half a day for preparation for the Sabbath, and a full day for the Sabbath itself, the *working* week of the translators consisted of a maximum period of 5½ days. Seventy-two working days is then equivalent to just over 13 weeks (72 divided by 5½).

We must now make allowance for other festival days. Let us assume: (1) the ceremony on the Pharos was held *immediately* after the completion of the translation; (2) no 'work' was done over the 7 days of Tabernacles, on the day of the New Moon, or the day before a major festival, the latter to allow time for preparation; (3) the New Year was celebrated for one day; (4) the translators worked on the nine days between the New Year and the Day of Atonement; and (5) there were 30 days in Kislev, 29 days in Marheshvan, 30 days in Tishri, 29 days in Ellul. If we then allow (a) a week for the 7-day banquet that Ptolemy held for his guests[167] and (b) 3 days between the end of the banquet and the start of their task,[168] then, assuming that the translators 'worked' over a period of 13 weeks, we can count *backwards* from the 8th of Tevet and calculate the approximate date they arrived in Alexandria:

Dates	Days counted	Cumulative Total of Days counted
Tevet, 7th to 2nd	6 days	6 days
Tevet 1st	No work (New Moon)	
Kislev 30th to 2nd	29 days	35 days
Kislev 1st	No work (New Moon)	
Marheshvan 29th to 2nd	28 days	63 days
Marheshvan 1st	No work (New Moon)	
Tishri 30th to 24th	7 days	70 days
Tishri 23rd to 15th	No work, *Succoth* + 1 day[169]	
Tishri 14th to 11th	4 days	74 days
Tishri 10th to 9th	No work, *Yom Kippur* + 1 day	
Tishri 8th to 2nd	7 days	80 days
Tishri 1st to Ellul 29th	No work, *Rosh haShanah* + 1 day	
Total:		
Ellul 28th to 20th	9 days	90 DAYS = Almost 13 WEEKS
Ellul 19th to 10th	allowing for a 7-day banquet plus 3 days	

[167] LetAris.187–294.

[168] LetAris.301.

[169] This period will include one of the Sabbaths already counted in the thirteen weeks.

On this basis, the translators arrived in Alexandria around the second week in Ellul, in the late summer of 281 BCE. The date is earlier if the translators did not work during the nine days between the New Year and the Day of Atonement, or if further days are disallowed for work. This gives an adequate period for a caravan to prepare and complete the journey from 'Coele-Syria' to Alexandria, if the group set out after the 6th of Sivan, the date of the festival of Weeks.[170]

According to Aristeas, the earlier, probably time-consuming events which took place before the translators arrived in Alexandria include: freeing of the Jewish slaves, if this indeed occurred (§12–27); a letter from the king sent to Jerusalem (§35–40); a reply from Jerusalem (§41–51); making of gifts for the Temple (§51–83), which was personally and frequently (§81) supervised by the king; transport of the gifts to Jerusalem (§83–171); the journey of the translators to Alexandria (§172). There is no reason to doubt that these events could have taken place over a year, perhaps over a year and a half. This being the case, if the number of seventy-two days has any foundation in truth, it seems that the project to translate the Pentateuch into Greek began after the death of Ptolemy I at the end of November 283 BCE, so that all the activity connected with the translation took place in the reign of Ptolemy II. The data given in the present ver-

[170] Travel by land is suggested by Hadas (1951), p. 167, n. 172. If so, the translators perhaps used the *Via Maris* from Rafia to El-Kantareh, see Gardiner (1920), pp. 99–113. How then did the caravan cross the delta region to Alexandria? But the extreme difficulties of travel in Sinai during summer are graphically described by Engels (1978), p. 60. Moreover, Aristeas hints that the group arriving in Alexandria was heavily laden, LetAris.172. The translators were certainly loaded when they returned, LetAris.319–20. Their luggage included the complete furnishing of a dining room and 10 silver footed couches with all accessories, LetAris.319–320. Engels (1978), p. 27, notes that sea and river transport were always more efficient than land transport in antiquity. Thus, in the march from Gaza to Pelusium in October, the fleet sailed alongside Alexander's army travelling on the coast, to supply food and water, Arrian *Anabasis* 3.1.1. Perhaps the translators travelled to Alexandria by boat along the coast. For sailing vessels which plied the coasts, see Casson (1971), pp. 337–8, who notes on p. 159 n.7, a papyrus that refers to a coastal vessel named an *akatos*, which sailed between Ascalon and Alexandria (*Sammelb.* 957.6, 2nd CE). Engels (1978) p. 59, notes that the march of Alexander between from Gaza to Pelusium (east of the Nile Delta, approximately half way to Alexandria) took 7 days. This can be compared with a voyage from Alexandria to Cyprus with unfavourable winds took only 6' days, see Casson (1971), p. 289. It seems that it was preferable to travel from Judaea to Alexandria by sea than by land.

sion of the *Letter of Aristeas* does not therefore conflict with the date of the translation deduced above.

This discussion thus suggests that the translation was one of the earliest events planned by Ptolemy II, after he became sole king. This hints at a further reason for the translation which is not mentioned by Aristeas. Ptolemy II planned this splendid extravaganza as a glorious symbol of the beginning of his reign.

Was Eratosthenes 80 or 82 When He Died?

The discussion above suggests that conversion of a date recorded in Egyptian regnal years to an incorrect Olympiad date (because the chronologer did not know how Ptolemy II numbered the Egyptian years at the beginning of his reign), accounts for the fact that some sources link the translation with Ptolemy I. The same mistake may also account for the different values given to the age of Eratosthenes when he died. According to Lucian, he was eighty-two.[171] But according to the Suda, he was eighty years old. The Suda also adds that he was born in the 126th Olympiad, that is, sometime between the end of June in 276 and the end of June in 272 BCE.[172] The 3rd century Roman grammarian Censorinus gives an age of 81, an average of these years.[173]

All agree that Eratosthenes was born before 267 BCE. This is the year that Ptolemy II may have back-dated the Egyptian years of his reign. It is possible therefore that the confusion in his dates may be connected to a lack of knowledge of the adjustment made by Ptolemy II to his Egyptian regnal years. It can be assumed therefore that the notice of his birth in Egyptian chronology was *originally* reckoned from the *end* of the co-regency. On the other hand, Eratosthenes died well after the backdating of the reign of Ptolemy II. It can be assumed therefore that the date of his death was always correctly reckoned from the *beginning* of the co-regeny.

The discrepancies can be explained if the date given by Lucian is dependent on a chronologer who bases himself ultimately on a source which cites only the dates of the birth and death of Eratosthenes,

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[171] Lucian *Macrob.*27.
[172] Westermann (1964), p. 367, FGrH 241 T 1.
[173] FGrH 241 T 5.

without giving his final age. The date of his birth was given in Egyptian chronology in the reign of Ptolemy II and this was converted into an Olympiad date which was reckoned from the beginning of the co-regency, because the chronologer was not aware that it should be reckoned from the end. On the other hand, the Egyptian date of his death was correctly converted to Olympiad chronology. This gave a date of birth which was two years too early and a date of death which was correct. Lucian thus gives the final age of Eratosthenes as eighty-two years, although his true age was eighty.

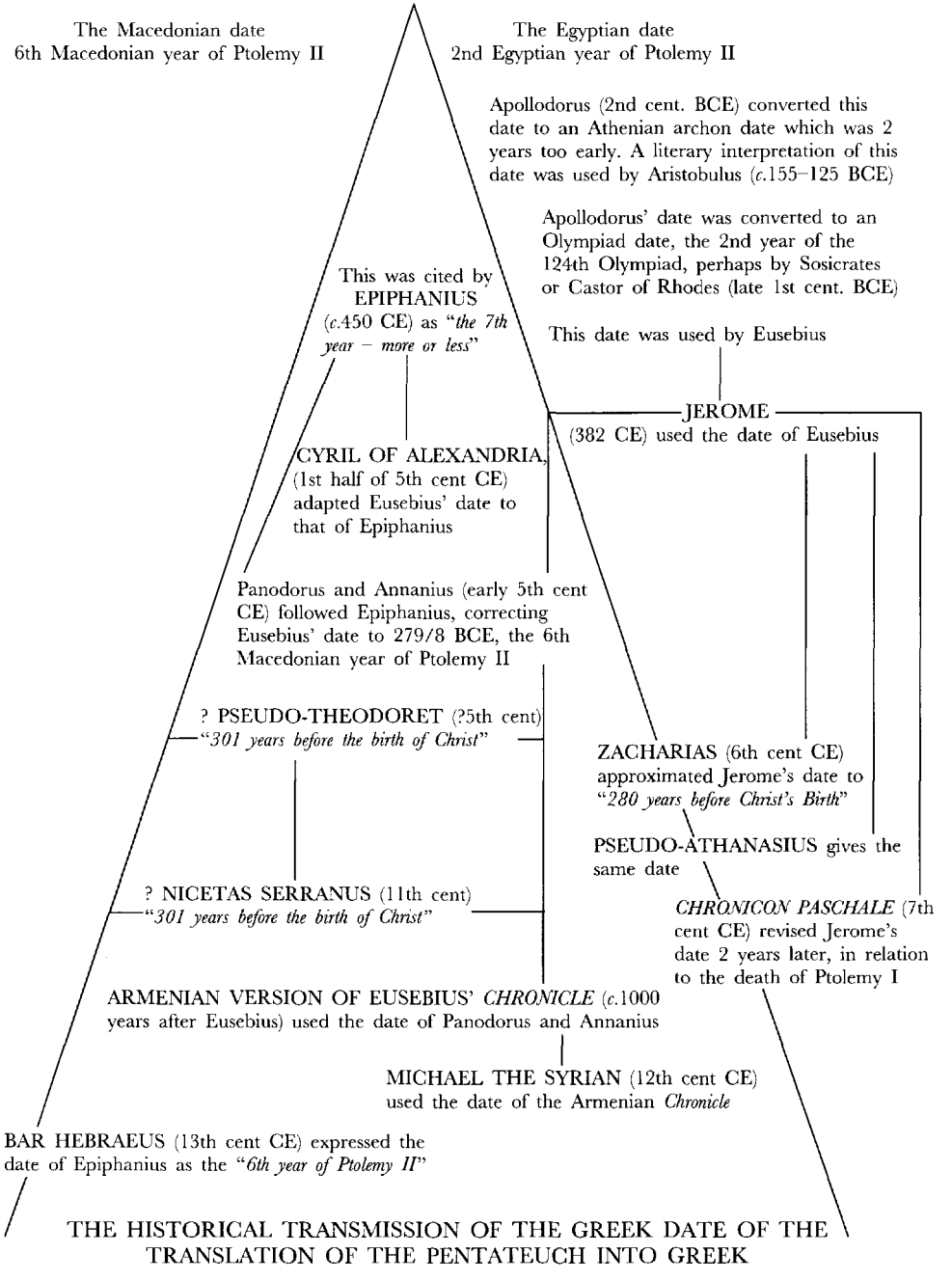
This age is stated in the Suda, which also gives an Olympiad date of the birth of Eratosthenes, which corresponds to a time between summer 278 and 272 BCE, but does not state the exact year within this group of four. It is possible therefore that the Suda is based on two sources. One source stated the true age of Eratosthenes at his death and a second gave the Olympiad dates of his birth and death, giving specific Olympiad years, perhaps the same source on which Lucian was based. But as both these sources did not agree (because the latter resulted in an age of 82), the Suda cites only the stated age of Eratosthenes and gives a whole Olympiad (corresponding to a period of four years) for his birth, thus including both of the theoretically possible years when Eratosthenes was born, i.e., if he was 82 when he died, he was born in 275/4 BCE, but if he was eighty, he was born in 273/2 BCE. It is possible that Censorinus saw a source that was ultimately dependent on the same source of Lucian and also the source for the true age of Eratosthenes seen by the Suda, and decided to give an average age.

A Diagram of the History of the Date of the Translation

The diagram below illustrates the historical transmission of the dates for the translation preserved by the Church. Three main lines can be traced, from Epiphanius, from Eusebius, and from them both. As might be expected, the complexity of transmission increases with time.

The diagram is not drawn to scale. Earlier sources are placed above later sources. Capital letters are used for extant authors or sources.

The translation was completed some time between 11th February and the start of summer in 280 BCE, the 2nd Egyptian regnal year or the 6th Macedonian year of Ptolemy II



Conclusions

The general consensus that the translation is a product of the third century BCE is confirmed by eleven dates for the translation preserved by the Church, which indicate the date 280 BCE. The dates of Eusebius and Epiphanius are the most significant of these dates, since the nine other dates are derived from these two. The accurate transmission of the dates of Eusebius and Epiphanius in their present manuscripts is confirmed by the later dates. That of Epiphanius is directly confirmed by Bar Hebraeus.

The accuracy of the dates of Eusebius and Epiphanius in relation to the event which they record is confirmed by the fact that they ultimately agree and because their differences can be explained by historical facts which are directly relevant to the time of the original record of these dates. This may help appease the natural reluctance of scholars to trust any date which first appears in a source composed approximately seven hundred years after the event, particularly a date from Eusebius' *Chronicle*, whose history of transmission poses doubt about the reliability of its facts.[174]

When the date preserved in a Jewish text is evaluated against the date deduced from Eusebius and Epiphanius, and in accordance with information from the *Letter of Aristeas*, it seems that the translation was completed towards the end of 281 BCE. As it is unlikely within historical times that a date would be recorded for an event which never took place, it is even more improbable that two separate but related events (the ceremony before the Jews and the ceremony before the Greeks) should be linked with the two separate and independent dates (the Jewish date and the date of the Greeks) unless they refer to events which occurred. If each of these dates were not recorded to commemorate a specific event, it must be assumed that they were retrospectively and independently invented in order to prove that a specific event took place, which is difficult to believe. The dates preserved by the Jewish and Christian texts are thus strong indications that the completion of the translation was a real event which involved both the Jews and the Greeks in the time of Ptolemy II, as Aristeas relates, and which took place in 281 and 280 BCE. The fact that

[174] See the comments of Helm (1956), p. XLV.

these dates fall so early after the death of Ptolemy I, may also suggest that his son, Ptolemy II planned the translation with such ostentation as a spectacle to open the years of his reign.

The analysis of the dates of the Church Fathers may not use the most attractive material, and may not be considered the easiest of tasks. But when evidence is scarce, scholars are bound to consider what is there. The method used to analyse the dates has produced a date for the translation which accords with all other more general periods that have been suggested in the past. Moreover the technique used to evaluate the dates, particularly those of Eusebius and Epiphanius, which took account the way that Ptolemy II numbered his regnal years, also offers sensible explanations for other historical problems which were similarly caused by the numbering of these years. These include the differences in the sources regarding the identity of the king when the translation was made, and the age of Eratosthenes when he died.

The same approach will be used in Chapter 3 to evaluate the evidence regarding final years of Demetrius of Phalerum. Was he murdered by Ptolemy II, or did he work for the king as Aristeas states? It will seen once again that evidence independent of Aristeas suggests that the description of Demetrius by Aristeas is probably correct.

CHAPTER THREE

DEMETRIUS OF PHALERUM WAS A TRUSTED EMPLOYEE OF PTOLEMY II

A Summary of this Chapter

According to Aristeas, Demetrius of Phalerum was the personal librarian of Ptolemy II. Other ancient sources however suggest that Demetrius never worked for Ptolemy II, and may even have been murdered by the king. If so, he could not have inspired or organised the translation, as Aristeas states, and in view of the major role of Demetrius in Aristeas, doubt is also cast on Aristeas as a whole.

The claim of enmity between Demetrius of Phalerum and Ptolemy II is based on a report that Demetrius gave advice to Ptolemy I, the father of Ptolemy II, which would have deprived the future Ptolemy II of his throne. When Ptolemy II subsequently became king, he apparently took revenge by removing Demetrius from his court. But a close examination of Demetrius' advice suggests that it was the most sensible advice he could have given at the time, and need not have enraged the future king. It seems that the alleged fateful advice of Demetrius of Phalerum was merely a logical explanation for a rumour that Demetrius of Phalerum never worked in the court of Ptolemy II. The discussion below suggests that this rumour arose from a error in chronology, which implied that Demetrius left court when Ptolemy I died.

If this is correct, there is little reason to doubt that Demetrius was employed by Ptolemy II and was therefore responsible for translation of the Pentateuch into Greek, as Aristeas states.

Sources Which Link Demetrius of Phalerum with Ptolemy II

There are four, probably independent sources which link Demetrius of Phalerum with Ptolemy II: (1) Aristeas and those sources probably dependent on Aristeas; (2) Aristobulus; (3) Epiphanius, who may have used Aristeas, but who also consulted at least one other source,

and (4) Johannes Tzetzes, who appears not to have used Aristeas at all. These sources are examined below.

1. *Aristeas and Sources Dependent on Aristeas*

According to Aristeas, Demetrius was definitely employed by Ptolemy II for whom he supervised the library with a particular interest in the books that were acquired. It was Demetrius who suggested that Ptolemy should acquire a written translation of the Pentateuch in Greek, and it was Demetrius who supervised the work from beginning to end. Demetrius also played a prominent role in the two final ceremonies that took place. In the first ceremony which took place before the translators and important Alexandrian Jews, Demetrius read the translation out loud. In the second lavish ceremony before Ptolemy II, Demetrius discussed with the king the neglect by poets and historians of stories from the Hebrew text. The basic facts of Aristeas are echoed by eleven other sources.[1] Their testimony may however simply repeat the main facts of Aristeas, and since their accounts are much shorter, their descriptions of Demetrius are appropriately curtailed.

2. *Aristobulus*

Another ancient witness for the involvement of Demetrius with Ptolemy II is the Jewish philosopher Aristobulus, who probably lived in the second century BCE. The relevant text is translated below:

> But [after various earlier translations] the entire translation of all the (books) of the Law (was made) in the time of the king called Philadelphus, your ancestor [= Ptolemy VI]. He brought greater zeal [to the task than his predecessors], while Demetrius Phalereus managed the undertaking.[2]

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[1] In addition to Aristeas, Let.Aris.11, 12 etc., those linking Demetrius with the translation are: (1) Aristobulus, Eusebius, PE.13.12.2; (2) Josephus, Ant.XII 12; C.A.2.44; (3) Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.*I.22.148; (4) Tertullian, *Apolog.*18; (5) Eusebius, when based on Aristeas, PE.13.12.2, although there is no hint of Demetrius in the *Chronicle*, see Helm (1956), p. 129 or in HE.5.8.11–15, where Eusebius cites Irenaeus; (6) Epiphanius, *On Weights and Measures* §52b, Wendland (1900), pp. 139–48, translated by Dean (1935), pp. 25–7, from the Syriac; (7) St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures* IV 34; (8) Cosmas Indicopleustas, Wendland (1900), pp. 156–7, assuming that Demetrius is called 'Tryphon of Phalerium'; (9) Georgius Syncellus, Wendland (1900), pp. 133–5 §517, Mosshammer (1984), pp. 327–8; (10) Georgius Cedrenus, Becker (1938), p. 290; (11) Leo Grammaticus, Bekker (1842), p. 50.

[2] Eusebius, PE.13.12.1. For trans. and date of Aristobulus see Collins A. Y. (1985), pp. 832–3.

The independence of Aristobulus from Aristeas has been discussed in Chapter 2. The above text of Aristobulus thus confirms the role of Demetrius in the translation of the Pentateuch into Greek.

3. *Epiphanius*

The independence of the fourth century Epiphanius from Aristeas is indicated by the fact that Epiphanius, like Tzetzes, gives details of the library that are not found in Aristeas. Some of these details may be derived from Philo (on whom, see further below), such as the separate cells in which the translators worked.[3] Others, for example, the fact that there were two libraries in Alexandria (which Tzetzes also confirms) and the number and the name of the twelve tribes to which each of the translators was said to belong (Aristeas refers to these tribes by their number, rather than name) suggests that if Epiphanius consulted Aristeas, he also consulted other sources.[4]

The reference of Epiphanius to the role of Demetrius in the translation of the Pentateuch into Greek, under (significantly) Ptolemy II thus independently confirms Aristeas.[5] In this respect, Epiphanius was not influenced by Philo whom he almost certainly consulted. In the opinion of Epiphanius therefore, there was little doubt that Demetrius of Phalerum was employed in the court of Ptolemy II.

4. *Johannes Tzetzes*

The excerpts below from the 12th century scholar, Johannes Tzetzes, note that Demetrius was employed by 'Philadelphus', the name which was later attached Ptolemy II:

> Pb§*19*: Let it be known that Alexander of Aetolia and Lycophron of Chalcis, having been instructed by Ptolemy Philadelphus, edited (διώρθωσαν) the books on drama, Lycophron the comedies and Alexander the tragedies, as well as the satires.
>
> §*20*: For Ptolemy, being an admirer of learning, through the agency of Demetrius of Phalerum and other notable men, gathered together books at the royal expense into Alexandria from all places, and deposited these books in two libraries, of which the number in the outer was 42,800, and the number within the palace, 400,00 rolls compiled from more than one author and 90,000 roles with single authors and single volumes, of which Callimachus later wrote catalogues. . . .

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[3] Epiphanius, Dean (1935), §48c–49c.
[4] Epiphanius, Dean (1935), §53c.
[5] Epiphanius, Dean (1935), §48*c*, 51*d*, §52*b*.

> Mb§*31*: But then, once all the books of the Greeks, those of every the nations, along with the books of the Hebrews had been collected together, that unsparing king, being a river of gold and pouring out of seven mouths, he translated to the Greek script and language the foreign books by means of wise men who shared their language and who accurately knew Greek, as also he had translated the Hebrew books by the seventy-two wise Hebrew translators who were learned in each tongue. That is how he [Ptolemy] had the foreign books translated.[6]

Tzetzes' reference to the translation is so different from that of Aristeas that it is unlikely that he consulted Aristeas. Apart from the brevity of his account, and the omission of any reference to Demetrius of Phalerum in connection with the translation, Tzetzes includes details about the library in Alexandria that could not have been derived from Aristeas, such as the names of people who worked in the library (for example, Alexander of Aetolia and Lycophron of Chalcis), and the existence of two libraries of Alexandria, while Aristeas describes only one.[7] It is possible that Tzetzes' omission of Demetrius in relation to the translation was influenced by his reading of Philo. Nevertheless, Tzetzes clearly states, and without polemic, that Demetrius was employed in the library by Ptolemy II.

Sources Which Seem to Deny that Demetrius was Employed by Ptolemy II

These can be divided into three: sources which are probably dependent on Aristeas, sources which have nothing to do with the translation but give details of the life of Demetrius, and finally a single source that uses the alleged murder of Demetrius as a metaphor for the tyranny of the ruler, but seems to imply that Demetrius was employed by Ptolemy II. If the hints in these sources are based on truth, it is unlikely that Demetrius was employed by Ptolemy II, as Aristeas claims.

1. *Sources Probably Dependent on Aristeas*

The majority of these sources seem to deny a link between Demetrius and Ptolemy II simply by omitting Demetrius from their report of

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[6] Johannes Tzetzes from his preface to the *Plutus* of Aristophanes, from the Codex Ambrosianus 222, see Kaibel (1899), pp. 19–20 and pp. 31–3, Scholium Pb§19,20, Mb§31. The scholium is translated more fully in Chapter 4.

[7] Σ Pb§19; Σ Mb.§29, compare Let.Aris.9,10,29,38.

the translation, while they follow Aristeas in other respects, including the fact that they place the translation in the reign of Ptolemy II. Philo is perhaps the most notable of these.[8] Unlike the shorter accounts of Aristeas (mentioned above), Philo's omission of Demetrius is unlikely to be the result of compression, since he includes many details that are not found in Aristeas, such as the individual cells of the translators and the commemoratory celebrations on the Pharos. His probably deliberate motivation for the exclusion of Demetrius is discussed in Chapter 5. Other accounts of the translation which resemble Philo in their probable dependence on Aristeas, and which also refer to Ptolemy II, but which do not mention Demetrius, include Justin Martyr (who cites Josephus, in whose account Ptolemy II and Demetrius appear), Julius Pollux, Athanasius, John Chrysostom, Cyril of Alexandria and the *Chronicon Paschale.* It could be argued that these sources omit Demetrius because their accounts are quite short.[9] On the other hand, if they used Aristeas, it is odd that so major a character in their source is completely omitted from all their reports. It is possible therefore that these sources followed Aristeas when he links the translation with Ptolemy II, but chose to deny Aristeas as far as Demetrius was concerned, although this is not stated explicitly in their work. Whatever the case, their evidence is inconclusive. Even if their omission of Demetrius was based on a rumour that Demetrius was excluded from the court of Ptolemy II, the absence of Demetrius from their accounts does not hint at the source of that rumour, nor does it indicate whether it is correct.

2. *Diogenes Laertius and the Suda*

Diogenes Laertius, an author from the 3rd century CE, wrote an account of the life of Demetrius, in which he seems to imply that

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[8] For Ptolemy II, Philo, De Mos.II.29,30.

[9] The lengths of the these accounts can be roughly compared by the space they occupy in Wendland (1900), thus: (1) Philo, De Mos.II.25–44, pp. 90–95, over 6 pages. (2) Justin: (i) *Apology* 1.31, p. 121, less than a page; (ii) *Dialogue with Trypho* 71; not cited by Wendland, but see trans. of Falls (1948), in which the reference to the translation takes only two lines; (iii) Pseudo-Justin, *Exhortations to the Greeks* 13, pp. 121–3, just over two pages. (3) Julius Pollux (2nd cent. CE), pp. 136–7, less than a page. (4) (Pseudo-)Athanasius (fl. *c.*295–373 CE), *Synopsis Scripturae Sanctae* 77, p. 149, under half a page. (5) John Chrysostom (fl. *c.*347–407 CE): (i) *Discourses against Judaizing Christians* IV I; (ii) *Homilies on Genesis* IV 4; (iii) *Homilies on St. Matthew* V 2, pp. 138–9, one page. (6) Cyril of Alexandria (fl. *c.*390–d. 444 CE), *Contre Julien*, Livre I,16, p. 148, under half a page. (7) *Chronicon Paschale*, p. 132, one page.

when Ptolemy II came to the throne, he banished Demetrius of Phalerum from his court. Demetrius then died, possibly murdered on the orders of the king. This is also related in the Suda, a lexicon compiled at the end of the tenth century CE.[10] The similarity in their accounts indicates that the Suda used Diogenes as a source. The discussion here will thus concentrate on the report of Diogenes.

As noted above, this suggests that after the death of Ptolemy I, Demetrius was banished by Ptolemy II and may even have been murdered by the king. Diogenes implies that this was due to the enmity that arose between Demetrius and the future Ptolemy II when Demetrius advised his father Ptolemy I to choose one of the sons of his wife Eurydice as his heir. Ptolemy I ignored this advice and instead appointed the son of his wife Berenice as successor to the throne. As a result, when Ptolemy II finally became king, the latter took revenge on Demetrius (whose advice would have deprived him of the crown) and immediately removed the philosopher from court. Many scholars today accept the hints of Diogenes, stating that when Ptolemy II finally became king, he banished Demetrius and may even have been responsible for his death.[11] If this is true, and if the translation was made when Ptolemy II was king (as the previous chapter in this book has deduced), Demetrius could not have been involved. This naturally suggests that as far as Demetrius is concerned, the account of Aristeas is false, and since Demetrius plays so large a role in Aristeas, the whole account of Aristeas is open to doubt. But if Aristeas is correct, then Diogenes is wrong. How can this ancient dilemma be resolved?

It should first be noted that the story relayed by Diogenes is ambiguous and does not explicitly state that Demetrius was either expelled or murdered by Ptolemy II. Rather, this story is implied by using the selective testimony of two witnesses, Hermippus, a follower of Callimachus in Alexandria in the 3rd century BCE and Heraclides Lembos of Callatis (or Alexandria), an Egyptian civil servant at Oxyrhynchus. Heraclides lived in Alexandria in the first half of the second century BCE, during the reign of Ptolemy VI Philometer,

[10] D.L.V.75–83; Suda, Westermann (1964), pp. 414–5.

[11] Those who accept Diogenes that Demetrius was banished from the court of Ptolemy II include: Swete (1900), pp. 18–19; Pauly-Wissowa (1901), s.v. Demetrios 85, col. 2822; Hadas (1951), p. 7; Pfeiffer (1968), p. 96: Vermes, iii (1987), p. 475, 680; Fraser, i (1972), p. 267; Canfora (1987), p. 19; Dorival (1987), p. 23; Harl (1988), pp. 57–8; Green (1990), p. 88; Dawson (1992), p. 271.

181/0–145 BCE, about a century after Hermippus.[12] The evidence of these witnesses as cited by Diogenes follows below:

> (1) Hermippus tells us that upon the death of Casander, being in fear of Antigonus, he [= Demetrius of Phalerum] fled to Ptolemy Soter [= Ptolemy I]. There he spent a considerable time and advised Ptolemy, among other things, to invest with sovereign power his children by Eurydice. To this, Ptolemy would not agree, but bestowed the diadem on his son [= the future Ptolemy II] by Berenice, who, after Ptolemy's [= Ptolemy I] death, thought fit to detain Demetrius as a prisoner in the country (παραφυλάττεσθαι ἐν τῃ χώρᾳ), until some decision should be taken concerning him. There he lived in great dejection, and somehow (πως), in his sleep, received an asp-bite on the hand, which proved fatal. He is buried in the district of Busiris near Diospolis.
>
> Here are my lines on him:
>
> A venomous asp was the death of the wise Demetrius, an asp withal of sticky venom, darting, not light from its eyes, but black death.
>
> (2) Heraclides in his epitome of Sotion's *Successions of Philosophers* says that Ptolemy [= I] himself wished to transmit the kingdom to Philadelphus, but that Demetrius tried to dissuade him, saying, "If you give it to another, you will not have it for yourself (ἂν ἄλλῳ δῶς, σὺ οὐχ ἕξεις)".[13]

The conversations cited by Diogenes concern different aspects of the succession to the throne. It is of no surprise that Ptolemy I should have discussed this subject with his favourite courtier Demetrius of Phalerum.[14] As one scholar notes: 'The choosing of a successor was a hazardous moment in the history of the Macedonian State. To choose a minor in unsettled times was almost a recipe for disaster . . .'[15]

According to Heraclides (the second of the witnesses cited above), the subject of the discussion between Demetrius and Ptolemy I was the wish of Ptolemy I to pass the throne to the future Ptolemy II by means of a co-regency. Hence the references to 'Philadelphus' and the remark of Demetrius that if Ptolemy I gave away his throne, he would not have it himself, *If you give it to another, you will not have it for yourself.* There is however no hint in this text that Demetrius was challenging Ptolemy's choice of successor. It seems that Demetrius objected to the co-regency, not because he was personally opposed to the choice of the future Ptolemy II, but because this would deprive

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[12] Ross (1970), s.v. Heraclides (3) Lembus.
[13] D.L.V.78–9, trans. Hicks (1925), LCL.
[14] Plut.Mor.601F states that Demetrius was 'the first of the friends' of Ptolemy I.
[15] Hammond (1989), p. 137.

Ptolemy I of power. The fact that Demetrius and Ptolemy had passed from discussion on the identity of the succession to the method of succession even suggests that Demetrius had accepted the former, and was discussing with Ptolemy I the best way in which the succession could be ensured, which was not, according to Demetrius, by a co-regency. It seems moreover, that the objection of Demetrius was taken seriously and was met by counting the Macedonian years of the co-regency both with the regnal years of Ptolemy I and Ptolemy II, the procedure which caused such difficulties with the dates of events early in the reign of Ptolemy II.[16] Thereby Ptolemy I continued his reign at least in name, and did not reduce the maximum possible length of his reign by ceasing to count his regnal years before he died. It is possible therefore that the conversation between Demetrius and Ptolemy I reported by Heraclides took place before this arrangement for counting the regnal years of the co-regency had been made. In any case, the advice of Demetrius was obviously given in the best interests of his patron, Ptolemy I, as would be expected of a loyal courtier, and there is no hint of enmity between Demetrius and the future Ptolemy II. If the report of Heraclides is proof of the enmity of Demetrius for the future Ptolemy II, it is poor evidence indeed.

The report of Hermippus appears to be more supportive of the claim of Diogenes of enmity between Demetrius and the future Ptolemy II, but close scrutiny again disproves such a fact. This conversation highlights not the method of the succession (as Heraclides) but the identity of the successor. It seems that Demetrius suggested that one of the children of Eurydice, the first wife in Egypt of Ptolemy I, should inherit the throne, thus implying his opposition to the son of Berenice, the youngest son of Ptolemy I, the future Ptolemy II. This might be understood to indicate enmity of some kind between Ptolemy II and Demetrius of Phalerum. But this is not stated. It is more likely in fact that the advice of Demetrius was not directed against the future Ptolemy II, but was the most sensible advice that Demetrius could have given to the king.

An ancient preference for seniority regarding the successor to the throne can be seen from the several remarks in antiquity which openly criticise Ptolemy I for passing the crown to his youngest son.[17]

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[16] See Chapter 2.

[17] Pausan.1.6.8, '... when his [Ptolemy's] end drew near he left the kingdom of Egypt to Ptolemy ... being the son of Berenice and not [the son of] the daughter

The candidacy of the eldest of his sons born in Egypt seems also to have been the original preference of Ptolemy I, whose eldest son was called 'Ptolemy' (also called 'Keraunos' by the ancient historians). This suggests that Ptolemy son of Eurydice was originally destined as Ptolemy's heir, since, of all the Hellenistic dynasties, only the Ptolemaic dynasty used the same name – the name of the founder of the dynasty – for all the kings. There is also some evidence that Ptolemy I groomed Argeus, another of his older sons, for high office, since it was to Argaeus that Ptolemy I gave the honour of bringing the corpse of Alexander from Memphis to Alexandria, surely an echo of the famous journey of Alexander, the chosen heir of his father Philip II, when Alexander travelled to Athens with the ashes of the Athenians after Chaeronea.[18] The deaths of two of the older brothers of Ptolemy II and the flight of a third may also indicate that the throne of Ptolemy II was far from secure while his more eligible, older brothers were available or alive. Argaeus and a brother who is unnamed were executed by Ptolemy II for alleged conspiracy, and Ptolemy Keraunos, the eldest of Ptolemy's sons' in Egypt, fled from Egypt 'in fear' when Ptolemy I decided to leave his kingdom 'to his youngest son' and was apparently joined by his brother Meleager.[19]

Respect for the hereditary rights of the first born son is also clear from the other followers of Alexander who also became kings – Antigonus, Kassander, Lysimachus and Seleucus. The first to take the title of 'king' was Antigonus, who proclaimed an instant co-regency with Demetrius, the older of his two sons, 306 BCE.[20] This prevented Philip, the able, younger son of Antigonus, from claiming the throne although, as it happened, the precaution was unnecessary as Philip was killed later that year.[21] Similarly, it was another

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of Antipater', i.e., Ptolemy should have left his kingdom to Keraunos, rather than to Philadelphus. Just. 9.2.7, '[Ptolemy I acted] 'contra ius gentium'. Appian, *Syr.*62, [Ptolemy Keraunos] had left Egypt from fear, because his father had decided to leave he kingdom to his youngest son. Seleucus received him as the unfortunate son of his friend . . .', i.e., the impression is given that Seleucus sympathised with Keraunos over his rejection. For other examples of this traditional theme: Hom. *Il.* 19.95–124; Plut. *Artax.*2.3; Ov. *Met.*273.

[18] Pausan. I.7.1.

[19] App.Syr.62. For Meleager: Eusebius' Armenian Chronicle, pp. 111,114,116, ed. Karst (1911); for Syncellus, see Mosshammer (1984), 322,5; 326,3.

[20] Plut. *Demet.*18.1; Billows (1990), pp. 155–60.

[21] The relative chronology is indicated by the fact that after declaring himself and his son king (Plut. *Demet.*18.1) Antigonus recalled Demetrius from Cyprus (Plut. *Demet.*19.1). This means that after declaring Demetrius as king, the latter went to

Philip, the eldest of the three sons of Kassander, who inherited the throne after the death of Kassander in 298/7 BCE.[22] Plutarch and Pausanias both stress the seniority of this Philip with the adjective πρεσβύτατος, 'oldest', and Pausanias continues the theme by stating that Antipater, son of Kassander, was the next in line, followed by Alexander, the youngest son. Lysimachus too attempted to pass the throne to his eldest son Agathocles, and was thwarted only by his murder around 283/2 BCE.[23] Similarly, in 292 BCE, Seleucus appointed his eldest son Antiochus as king, and this was the norm in later times.[24] Of these early Hellenistic kings, only Ptolemy I actually disinherited his oldest son. The letter that Keraunos wrote to his brother after he became king in Macedon also confirms that he had expected to inherit the throne. According to Justin, Keraunos claimed that he had '*laid aside all feelings of resentment at being deprived of his father's kingdom, and would no longer ask that from a brother that which he had more honourably obtained from his father's enemy*'.[25] Although therefore the accession of Ptolemy II shows that it was possible to circumvent the principle of primogeniture, the fact that sources in antiquity decried his accession and that it was not customary among other rulers of the diadochi, suggest that the discouragement of Demetrius was reasonable and not motivated by enmity against the future Ptolemy II.

In addition to their claim by virtue of seniority, the brothers of the future Ptolemy II had a far better pedigree than the brother by whom they were ultimately displaced. The respect for ancestry can be seen from the many marriages that the successors of Alexander arranged among themselves.[26] The older sons of Ptolemy I were the children of Eurydice, the daughter of Antipater the Regent, who was one of the most successful generals, administrators and ambassadors of Philip II.[27] After the death of Alexander, Antipater emerged as an independent commander of a Macedonian force over the European part of Alexander's empire, with his prestige at least equal to that

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Cyprus. According to D.S.20.73.1, Antigonus buried Philip before he summoned Demetrius from Cyprus; see Billows (1990), pp. 160, 419–21.

[22] Just. 15.4.24; Plut. *Demet.*36.1; Pausan. 9.7.2; Eusebius, *Die Chronik*, ed. Karst (1911), p. 110.5; Syncellus, §504, §513, ed. Mosshammer (1984), pp. 320.11, 325.23.

[23] Lund (1992), p. 186.

[24] For details on Antiochus, see Sherwin-White (1993), pp. 23–4.

[25] Justin, 17.2.9.

[26] Cohen (1974).

[27] Plut. *Mor.*179b; Just. 9.4.5; Hypereides F 80, B1.

of Perdiccas.[28] Mutual recognition of both his authority and that of Ptolemy I occurred when Ptolemy married his daughter Eurydice – other daughters of Antipater had married the generals Craterus and Perdiccas – probably at the conference at Triparadeisos in 320 BCE. Antipater died in 319 BCE, and his authority eventually fell on his eldest son, the ruthless and able Cassander, a brother of Eurydice, who bettered the achievement of Ptolemy I by managing to marry a sister of Alexander the Great (her name was Thessalonica).[29] Subsequently, the family of Antipater faded from history. There is little doubt however that a direct descendant of Antipater – here, his grandson Ptolemy Keraunos, or one of his brothers – would have been accepted as king with far more approval than the future Ptolemy II, the son of a woman from an obscure family.

In contrast with Keraunos, Ptolemy II could claim no maternal ancestors of note. Unlike his first marriage to Eurydice, the second marriage in Egypt of Ptolemy I had no political aim. According to Pausanias, Ptolemy married Berenice only for love.[30] Pausanias also remarks that the first husband of Berenice was a man 'of no note and of lowly origin'.[31] This helps to confirm that the ancestors of Berenice were not from noble stock, since in that age of dynastic marriages, it is unlikely that a gifted[32] beautiful[33] daughter from a prestigious family would have been 'wasted' by marriage to a husband of little or no influence in the Hellenistic world. Berenice's lack of illustrious parents is also hinted by Theocritus, who can mention only the name of her mother (Antigone) in his encomium on the glorious antecedents of Ptolemy II.[34]

This is also indicated by a scholium on the seventeenth Idyll of

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[28] Arrian Succ.1a.3.

[29] See refs. and discussion in Green (1990), pp. 31, 748 n. 58.

[30] Pausan. 1.6.8. The scholium on Theocritus' *Idyll.*xvii.61, Wendel (1914), claims that Berenice was 'the daughter of Antigone, who was [the daughter] of Cassander, the brother of Antipater', ἡ γὰρ Βερενίκη ἐστὶ θυγάτηρ Ἀντιγόνης τῆς Κασσάνδρου τοῦ Ἀντιπάτρου ἀδελφοῦ. But it is odd that this noble ancestry is not noted by Theocritus. Also, as far as Cassander (the son of Antipater the Regent) is concerned, no other source gives him (i) a daughter (whether or not called Antigone) or (ii) a brother called Antipater – Pausan. 9.7.3 mentions only a *son* of Cassander called Antipater, and two other sons, Philip and Alexander. Could the scholiast refer to a Cassander who was other than the son of Antipater the Regent?

[31] Pausan. 1.7.1.

[32] Plut. *Pyr.*4.

[33] Theoc. *Idyll.*17.36.

[34] Theoc. *Idyll.*17.61, see Gow (1950), ii, p. 332, on *Idyll.*17.34.

Theocritus which claims that Berenice was born into the third generation of the family of Antipater the Regent.[35] A glance at the genealogies of the great Hellenistic families – the Ptolemies, the Attalids (founded by Philetaerus), the Antigonids, the Seleucids, the kings of Epirus, and the families of Antipater the Regent and Lysimachus – shows that by the third generation it was customary within direct lines (that is, apart from those who married into the families, especially wives), to re-use names from earlier generations, especially those which were specifically associated with the family concerned.[36] This conservatism even excludes the use of mythical names, even if they had been used by earlier members of the family. For example, the mythical name Eurydice was used by three prominent women in the family of Alexander up to the time of Alexander the Great, and was so greatly revered that two of these women apparently adopted this name in place of their own.[37] This name was also used in the second generation (counting from those who surrounded Alexander the Great) for (i) a daughter of Lysimachus (who married Antipater, a son of Cassander) and for (ii) a daughter of Antipater the Regent (the wife of Ptolemy I). Yet the name Eurydice is not apparently used for the women born directly into the later generations of even those descended from Ptolemy I or Antipater.[38] Since mythical names were common

[35] Theoc. *Idyll.*17.61.

[36] Exceptions can be justified, as when the son of Pyrrhus king of Epirus was called Ptolemy, in honour of his father-in-law Ptolemy I, Plut. *Pyr.*6.1; 9.1.

[37] Eurydices before Ptolemy I are: (1) the wife of Amyntas II, King of Macedon, and mother of Philip II, (the latter was the father of Alexander). (2) one of the wives of Philip of Macedon, the mother of Cyanane, who apparently changed her name from Audata to Eurydice (Dicaearchus, in Athen.XIII.557c). (3) a daughter of Amyntas and Cynane, whose real name was Adea (Arrian, in Phot.70b), who later married Philip Arrhidaeus, the brother of Alexander the Great.

[38] Eurydice, one of the several wives of Demetrius Poliorcetes, was a descendant of Miltiades of Athens, and presumably this noble birth facilitated her marriage to Ophelas, ruler of Cyrene (Plut. *Demet.*14.1). But she was not a member of one of the great Macedonian dynasties. Another rare example of a mythical name in a Hellenistic dynasty is 'Helenus', a son of Pyrrhus king of Epirus, which was presumably justified by its Homeric associations with the mythical Pyrrhus the son of Achilles – Helenus was a soothsayer in Troy and was allotted to Pyrrhus after the fall of Troy; after the death of Pyrrhus, Helenus ruled over part of Epirus. But it appears that this mythical name was less desirable than a dynastic name – whereas Helenus was only the youngest of at least three sons of Pyrrhus, and thus the least likely to inherit, the older sons of Pyrrhus bore the dynastic names Ptolemy (named after the father-in-law of Pyrrhus, although Ptolemy was not the father by blood of Antigone his wife) and Alexander, a most desirable Hellenistic name, Plut. *Demet.*9.1.

in the Greek world, presumably the great Hellenistic dynasties wanted non-mythical names to create new myths of their own. If therefore Berenice was a direct descendant in the third generation of one of the great Hellenistic dynasties, although her name is Macedonian in origin, the newness of her name within the Ptolemaic ruling family suggests that she was not directly related to the main family line. The Macedonian name Berenice first appears in Greek records only in the third century BCE.[39]

It can be concluded that the advice of Demetrius of Phalerum to Ptolemy I that he should appoint a son of Eurydice to the throne, rather than his youngest child of a later wife, was the soundest advice that Ptolemy could have received. Although therefore Ptolemy II may have claimed that Demetrius had not supported his bid for the throne, he could not have faulted the courtier's advice. Even if Demetrius initially failed to support the new king, he would have had time to make amends and ensure that his loyalty was known. His conversation with Ptolemy I must have taken place at the latest before the start of the co-regency, so that there would have been more than two years (the length of the co-regency) to build bridges with the future Ptolemy II. Only actions of Demetrius subsequent to his reported conversation with Ptolemy I would have suggested that his advice was treasonable (as far as Ptolemy II was concerned), and of such actions there is absolutely no trace. This means that in order to prove the perfidy of Demetrius, Diogenes Laertius can offer only a truncated conversation which included the excellent counsel of a most trusted courtier of the king.

The evidence of Diogenes thus operates by hints, and there are no direct statements which explicitly state that there was enmity between Demetrius and Ptolemy II. This is further apparent in Diogenes account of the final fate of Demetrius. It seems that after the death of Ptolemy I, Demetrius was '*guarded closely*' or '*observed narrowly*' (παραφυλάσσω) by the new king Ptolemy II, who sent him to '*the country*' where Demetrius lived '*in great dejection*' and was finally killed by an asp. These words imply – but never actually state – that as a result of his advice to Ptolemy I, Demetrius was immedi-

[39] Fraser and Matthews (1987), s.v. Βερενίκη, which records a 3rd century Berenice from Cyprus, in addition to the name of the wife of Ptolemy I. Ptolemy I acquired Cyprus by 321 BCE, lost it to Demetrius Poliorcetes in 306 BCE, and recovered it again by 295 BCE.

ately expelled from court. Diogenes even hints that Demetrius was '*somehow*' (πως) murdered by Ptolemy II. It is possible however that Demetrius retired early in the reign of Ptolemy II. By then he was old, about seventy-four (see below for the age of Demetrius at this time) and was 'guarded' simply because he was ill, and subsequently died, perhaps accidentally.

It may thus be significant that the burial place of Demetrius was known, as this is often the mark of an honoured man. Diogenes and the Suda state that Demetrius was buried '*in the district of Busiris near Diospolis*', the Suda adding '*in the marshes*'.[40] These names refer to an 'estate of Osiris' and 'city of Amun'. The exact spot remains unknown and a number of places could be meant. For example, a Busiris exists in the central Delta, and a Diospolis at Tell el-Balamun in the northernmost central Delta, a significant town in Ptolemaic times in the area of the marshes.[41] Whatever the case, it is surely significant that a record was made of Demetrius' grave. Would this be the case if Demetrius had been treated as a common criminal or even murdered by the king? The display of Alexander's corpse in the Sema, along with the tombs of the Ptolemaic kings shows that burial places were recorded so that homage might be paid to the noble deceased.[42] There are many examples from the Hellenistic world. For example, the graves of Philip Arrhidaeus, his wife Eurydice, and Cynna (or Cynane) were remembered in Aegae,[43] that of Lysimachus between the village of Cardia and Pactye,[44] and the grave of Seleucus at Seleucia-by-the-Sea.[45] Similarly the alleged tombs of Achilles, Ajax and other Greek heroes were visited by Alexander the Great.[46] The fact that the resting place of Demetrius of Phalerum, a mere statesman-philosopher (rather than a ruler of some kind) was remembered, may thus suggest that Demetrius was held in honour at his death. If so, it is unlikely that he was disgraced or murdered by Ptolemy II.

The evidence of Diogenes regarding enmity between Demetrius of Phalerum and Ptolemy II is thus unproven, and his evidence of

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[40] D.L.V.78; for the Suda, see Westermann (1845/1964), pp. 413–4.

[41] These facts were kindly conveyed in a letter from Dr J. R. Baines, from the Oriental Institute at the University of Oxford, in May 1995.

[42] Strabo, 17.1.8 and Zenobius, iii.94 refers to the burial placed of Alexander and the kings, see Fraser, i (1972), pp. 15–6.

[43] D.S.19.5.5.

[44] Pausan.1.10.5.

[45] App.*Syr.*63.

[46] D.S.17.16.3; Just.11.5.12; Plut. *Alex.*15.4; Arr.1.11.7.

the tomb of Demetrius may even suggest that the opposite is true. It seems moreover that Demetrius gave sensible advice to Ptolemy I and that his objection to the co-regency, given for the benefit of his patron, was taken seriously and steps taken to meet his observation that the co-regency would disadvantage Ptolemy I. It seems that Diogenes Laertius attempted to show enmity between Demetrius of Phalerum and Ptolemy II, but did not find any direct proof of this claim. The most likely reason for such a lack is that no proof existed, because, as discussion below will suggest, the premise is false.

3. *Evidence from Cicero, Published in 54 BCE*

The relevant section from Cicero's defence of Gaius Rabirius Postumus is translated below:

> 9.23 But am I to make to a man of moderate attainments like [my client] Postumus no allowance for an error into which I see that the very wisest have fallen? We are told that Plato, who was easily the wisest man in all Greece, was by the wickedness of Dionysius, tyrant of Syracuse, to whom he had entrusted himself, exposed to the gravest danger and treachery; that the wise Callisthenes, companion of Alexander the Great, was by Alexander slain; that Demetrius, a citizen of a free state which he had administered excellently, eminent and famous for his learning – Demetrius of Phalerum, I mean – was in this same kingdom of Egypt deprived of his life by having an asp applied to his body.[47]

Cicero's speech defended Gaius Rabirius Postumus, who was chief treasurer in Alexandria. He lent money to his employer Ptolemy XII Auletes and was subsequently arrested by the king. Postumus escaped to Rome and was charged with financial malpractice. In the course of his defence, Cicero compares the treatment of Postumus with that of other men who were honoured with positions of trust, but who were later harmed – even murdered – by the ruler for whom they worked. Thus Plato was sold into slavery by Dionysius of Syraceuse, Callisthenes was executed by Alexander the Great and Demetrius of Phalerum was murdered by 'the ruler of Egypt', using an asp. Cicero does not mention why Demetrius was treated in this way. But since the affair took place 'in the kingdom of Egypt', and since there are no surviving stories which suggest enmity between Demetrius of

[47] Trans. Watts (1931), LCL.

Phalerum and Ptolemy I (the only other possible candidate symbolised by the 'kingdom of Egypt' apart from Ptolemy II), it is reasonable to suppose that Cicero was aware of the only other known story which fits these facts, namely the story later implied by Diogenes Laertius that Demetrius was murdered by Ptolemy II.

But this fact is nuanced. Since the other examples of Cicero refer to men who were employed or entertained by a ruler before they were later removed – Postumus was the treasurer of Ptolemy XII, Plato was the guest of Dionysius of Syracuse, and Callisthenes was the historian of Alexander the Great – the analogy with Demetrius makes complete sense only if Demetrius was also similarly employed by Ptolemy II, as Aristeas states, and perhaps only later fell foul of the king.

It is possible therefore that Cicero was aware of two traditions – Demetrius was both employed and murdered by Ptolemy II. This suggests that if Demetrius was murdered, his murder was only subsequent to his employment by the king. This confirms the conclusions reached above, that the advice of Demetrius to Ptolemy I regarding the succession did not antagonise the future Ptolemy II.

Summary of Evidence for the Relationship of Demetrius and Ptolemy II

The evidence concerning the true nature of the relationship between Demetrius of Phalerum and Ptolemy II is clearer than many scholars admit. On the one hand, there are firm accounts of an excellent relationship between Demetrius and Ptolemy II. These come from four, probably independent reports, Aristeas, Aristobulus and Tzetzes and also from Epiphanius, who though he may have consulted Aristeas, also probably took note of Philo, who omits Demetrius from his report. Epiphanius was not however influenced by Philo to do the same.

This positive evidence is countered only with hints. Apart for the omission of Demetrius in the accounts of Philo and the Church fathers, the only evidence against a relationship between Demetrius of Phalerum and Ptolemy II occurs in the reports of Cicero and Diogenes Laertius. Confusingly however, both Cicero and Demetrius seem to offer evidence which conflicts with their negative hints. Cicero may imply that Demetrius was at first employed by Ptolemy II,

although he was subsequently ill-treated in some dreadful way. Similarly, when Diogenes Laertius, along with the Suda, notes that Demetrius was buried in a grave that was marked, this may suggest that Demetrius was honoured by Ptolemy II.

The clear evidence of co-operation between Demetrius of Phalerum and Ptolemy II is therefore countered merely with contradictory hints. The obvious verdict on this evidence in any court of law gains credence from the following proposal, which suggests a reason behind the innuendoes of enmity between Demetrius of Phalerum and Ptolemy II.

The Cause of the Reports of Enmity between Demetrius of Phalerum and Ptolemy II

1. *The Chronological Error*

Since there is no evidence that Demetrius was active after the translation of the Pentateuch, it is reasonable to assume that he withdrew from court around the time he had completed this task. This makes sense in view of the fact that when Ptolemy II came to the throne, Demetrius was already an old man. His dates can be deduced from the minimum age required by the Athenians for a public life being thirty,[48] and the fact that Demetrius '*entered politics*' in 324 BCE, when Harpalus fled from Alexander and came to Athens.[49] This suggests that Demetrius was born by 354 BCE.[50] In 280 BCE, when the translation was complete, he was thus an old man of about 74 years, which was surely a reasonable age to retire. He may have been ill at the time and retired to the country (as Diogenes relates) where he was 'closely guarded', that is 'nursed', and eventually died, perhaps bitten by an asp.

Although no record now exists, it is reasonable to suppose that retirement of Demetrius was originally dated in relation to the

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[48] Rhodes (1985), p. 510. Athenian citizens could attend the assembly possibly from the age of 18, and certainly from 20, ibid., p. 703.

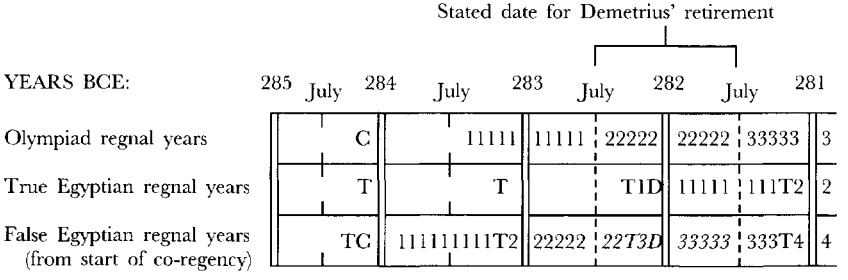
[49] For the flight of Harpalus, see D.L.V.75, and for the date of this event see Heckel (1992), p. 219.

[50] According to Ferguson (1911), p. 39, n. 1 and Wehrli (1949), p. 49, Demetrius was born in 350 BCE; no reason is given for rounding the date. Some support for a lower date is given by Rhodes (1985), p. 401, who notes, citing *Ath.Pol.*31.ii with commentary, that 'men under thirty may not have been excluded in the 'immediate' constitution of 411', and Men. *Sam.*15 where Moschion claims to have served as a phylarch while young.

Egyptian and Macedonian regnal years of Ptolemy II. We know that records were kept of payments to the scholars in the court of Ptolemy II, so that it is not unlikely that the date of a resignation of a long-standing servant of the king was also preserved.[51] If this occurred soon after the completion of the translation, this record would have noted that Demetrius left court in the 3rd Egyptian regnal year or the 6th Macedonian regnal year of Ptolemy II, along with the month.

When the date of the retirement of Demetrius was later converted into Olympiad chronology, for use in an Olympiad Chronicle, the conversion was based on the record in Egyptian regnal years, just as the Olympiad date for the translation of the Pentateuch which Eusebius eventually used. The record of the month of the event in relation to the summer solstice would have enabled the chronologer to identify an exact Olympiad year.

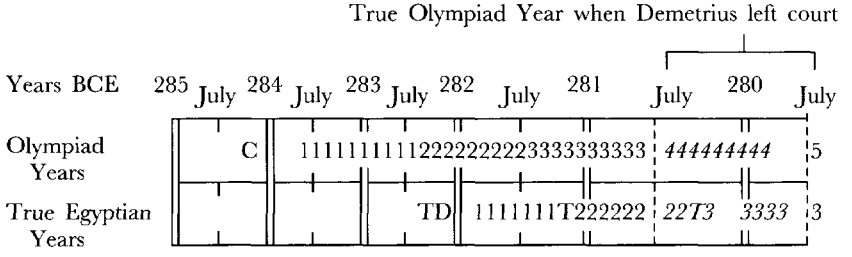
However, just as for the date of the translation used by Eusebius, the Olympiad chronologer who converted the date mistakenly reckoned the Egyptian, regnal years of Ptolemy II from the beginning of the co-regency, rather than the end. This meant that the date of the retirement of Demetrius overlapped the alleged second or third Egyptian regnal year of Ptolemy II, as can be seen in the diagram below. This suggests that Demetrius left court in the second Olympiad year of the 124th Olympiad, which is the Julian year July 283 to July 282 BCE. It can also be seen that this Olympiad year included the true year of the death of Ptolemy I, which occurred towards the end of 283 BCE:



C, beginning of the co-regency on 1st December 285 BCE
T, Thoth 1, the start of the Egyptian year at the beginning of November
D, the death of Ptolemy I on 23rd November 283 BCE

[51] Athen.11.494a.

The *true* date of the retirement of Demetrius emerges however from the Olympiad and Julian dates which correspond to the *true* 2nd and 3rd Egyptian regnal year of Ptolemy I. As can be seen from the diagram below, this lies some time between July 281 and July 280 BCE:



Key:
D, Death or Ptolemy I on 23rd November, the end of the co-regency
T, Thoth 1, the beginning of the Egyptian New Year on 5th November

The conflict in the sources regarding the final days of Demetrius of Phalerum can therefore be explained by a mistake in the Olympiad date of an event which took place in the early years of Ptolemy II. Assuming that Demetrius retired within the first three years of the beginning of the reign of Ptolemy II (the length of time reckoned by Ptolemy II for his co-regency), perhaps soon after the completion of the translation, the mistake arose when the Egyptian record of the date of this event was converted to Olympiad years. The chronologer who made the conversion reckoned the Egyptian years of Ptolemy II from the beginning of the co-regency, and not from the end. As a result, the Olympiad year of this event appeared to coincide with the year of the death of Ptolemy I. The apparent coincidence of these events may account for the way in which Diogenes records the departure of Demetrius, which is noted in relation to the death of Ptolemy I, rather than in relation to the enthronement of Ptolemy II: '[Ptolemy I] bestowed the diadem on his son by Berenice, who *after Ptolemy's death* thought fit to detain Demetrius as a prisoner in the country'.[52] The mistake in chronology thus gave the impression that Demetrius never worked for Ptolemy II.

It was no doubt surprising that in view of the well known, trusting relationship between Demetrius of Phalerum and Ptolemy I, the date of the retirement of Demetrius suggests that he left the court

[52] D.L.V.78.

when Ptolemy I died.[53] To explain this difficulty, a plausible theory was advanced, which also took account of a scandal of the age, namely, the promotion of the youngest and most dynastically unsuitable of all the sons of Ptolemy I as future king. The theory assumed – not unreasonably – that Demetrius had tried to prevent the succession of this king. But in spite of his opposition, the most unsuitable candidate (from a dynastic point of view) had indeed became co-regent with his father, and this led to Demetrius' expulsion from court when Ptolemy II finally inherited the throne and ruled as sole king. The possible cause of the death of Demetrius – through the bite of an asp – could only but add fuel to the charge that he had suffered at the hands of Ptolemy II.

Diogenes Laertius may therefore have truly believed that Demetrius had never worked for Ptolemy II, and searched for confirmation to back his case. But this he could not find because Ptolemy II had not expelled Demetrius from his court and therefore no proof existed for such an event. Diogenes thus resorted to a careful selection of excerpts from earlier sources which might imply enmity between Demetrius of Phalerum and Ptolemy II. This accounts for the ambiguity of his report. The hints in the sources that Demetrius of Phalerum was expelled and even murdered by Ptolemy II should thus be treated as mere hints, which should not be accepted without further, positive evidence, especially in view of contrary proof.

2. *Philo's Use of a Chronicle*

Philo's omission of Demetrius in his account of the translation may therefore have been caused at least in part by his knowledge of a chronicle which mistakenly placed the retirement (or death) of Demetrius in the same Olympiad year as the death of Ptolemy I and such an entry may have been combined with a literary explanation. Confirmation that Philo used a chronicle comes from a further mistake in his work that can also be attributed to a chronological report. This occurs in his preface to his story of the translation, when he states that '*Ptolemy, surnamed Philadelphus, was the third in succession to Alexander, the conqueror of Egypt*'.[54] This information is not correct.

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[53] Plut.Mor.601F states that Demetrius was the 'first of the friends' of Ptolemy I. For the importance of 'friends', see Mooren (1975) and Herman (1980–1), p. 112.

[54] De Mos.II.29.

After the death of Alexander in 323 BCE, there were three rulers of Egypt, and Ptolemy II was the fourth. First after Alexander was Philip Arrhidaeus, a half-brother of Alexander who became king of Egypt after Alexander, and was killed in 317.[55] The second was Alexander IV, the son by Roxane of Alexander the Great, who was declared king, but was murdered, probably in 310/9 BCE. Meanwhile, the future Ptolemy I had became satrap of Egypt after Alexander had died, and finally became king in 304 BCE.[56] He was succeeded by his son Ptolemy II.[57] The three rulers between Alexander and Ptolemy II are listed in the *Canon* of Claudius Ptolemaeus (who flourished in the second century CE) and in other chronicles.[58] The statement of Philo however agrees with Porphyry (from the second half of the 3rd century CE), whose length of the satrapy of the future Ptolemy 1 and other reigns show that he was based on an Olympiad Chronicle. Porphyry does not refer to Alexander IV.[59] According to Porphyry, the future Ptolemy I became satrap in Egypt the year after Philip Arrhidaeus became king, and ruled as a satrap for seventeen years.[60] Porphyry thus gives the impression that there was no king of Egypt between Philip Arrhidaeus and Ptolemy I, and this agrees with the information that Philo transmits. Philo may thus have used an Olympiad Chronicle of the kind used by Porphyry which (like that of Porphyry) omitted the rule of Alexander IV (implying that Ptolemy II was the third king of Egypt) and which placed the date of the removal of Demetrius of Phalerum in the last Olympiad year of Ptolemy I.

For further on Philo's omission of Demetrius, see Chapter 5.

3. *By whom and when was the error made?*

The discussion above suggests that although Hermippus and Heraclides were used by Diogenes in order to support his belief that Demetrius of Phalerum was badly treated by Ptolemy II, neither of these authorities transmitted such a fact. This means that the earliest source to imply any friction between Demetrius and Ptolemy II is Cicero

[55] For refs., Green (1990), p. 19.
[56] Grzybek (1900), p. 171.
[57] Samuel (1962), pp. 3–4.
[58] See Parker and Dubberstein (1956), pp. 19–20.
[59] FGrH 260 F 2. For the Canon and contemporary acknowledgement of the reign of Alexander IV, see Samuel (1962), pp. 4–5.
[60] FGrH 260, F 2 (2).

(106–43 BCE) who states that Demetrius was murdered in Egypt through the bite of an asp, presumably through the initiative of Ptolemy II. The allegation of Cicero appears in the oration *On Behalf of Gaius Rabirius Postumus*, composed in 54 BCE.[61] This date thus indicates the latest possible date for the mistake in chronology which lies behind the claim that Demetrius did not work for Ptolemy II.

On the other hand, the earliest date for this mistake can be deduced from the life of Aristobulus, who – apart perhaps form Aristeas – is the closest in time of the sources before Cicero to state that Demetrius of Phalerum worked for Ptolemy II, '*the king called Philadelphus*'. Aristobulus betrays no hint of any difficulty that his statement might cause. It is possible therefore that the Olympiad chronicle which reported an incorrect date for the retirement or death of Demetrius was composed after his time. Since Aristobulus dedicated his work to Ptolemy VI Philometer, who ruled from 181 to 145 BCE, the earliest date for such a chronicle lies in the second half of the second century BCE.

The mistake was probably not made by Apollodorus of Athens, although he may have been responsible for the chronological error that implicated Ptolemy I in the translation, rather than his son, Ptolemy II (see Chapter 2). If the chronicle of Apollodorus had also indicated that Demetrius of Phalerum had left court in the same year as the death of Ptolemy I, this 'fact' may have been have been reflected in Aristobulus' account of the translation. As it is, Aristobulus clearly states that Demetrius was employed by Ptolemy II: '*But the entire translation of all the (book) of the Law (was made) in the time of the king called Philadelphus, your ancestor. . . . while Demetrius Phalereus managed the undertaking*'.[62]

The chronicle which may have misrepresented the date of the retirement of Demetrius of Phalerum was thus produced after the life of Aristobulus in the second century BCE, but before the speech of Cicero in 54 BCE. This points neatly to the *Chronicle* of Castor of Rhodes, a scholar from the first century BCE, whose chronology extended from the mythical Belus and Ninus to the period of the ratification of the Pompey's organisation of Asia in 61 BCE.[63] Castor

[61] Watts (1931), pp. 363–5.
[62] Eusebius, PE.13.12.2.
[63] FGrH 250 T 2, F 5 shows that the Chronicle of Castor ended with the consulship of Piso and Messalla in the fourth year of the 179th Olympiad (61/60 BCE),

harmonised earlier chronological eponymous lists with Olympiad chronology, including – significantly for this discussion – the dates of events under Ptolemy I.[64] It is possible therefore that Castor of Rhodes should be blamed for placing the year of the withdrawal of Demetrius from court in the same Olympiad year as the death of Ptolemy I.

We can thus attribute two separate mistakes to two separate chronologers. Apollodorus of Athens made the error which implicated Ptolemy I in the translation, and Castor of Rhodes the mistake that led to rumours of enmity between Demetrius of Phalerum and Ptolemy II. Each error arose from the way that Ptolemy II counted his Egyptian regnal years at the beginning of his reign. Both Apollodorus and Castor assumed that the count of these years began from the beginning of his reign (the beginning of the co-regency), when in fact this was not the case. Apollodorus thus placed the date of the translation in the same year as the death of Ptolemy I, making it possible to assume that the project was completed under two kings. This is reflected in the work of Aristobulus and Irenaeus. But by the time of Eusebius, the date of the death of Ptolemy I had been adjusted so that the date of the translation now fell in the time of Ptolemy II. This was the view of Eusebius, and the majority of later sources followed his lead.

The second mistake arose when Castor of Rhodes included in his *Chronology* the date of the retirement of Demetrius of Phalerum. According to Castor, this fell in the same year as the death of Ptolemy I. This 'fact' was 'explained' by the apparently rational story that Demetrius of Phalerum was removed from court by Ptolemy II and may even have been murdered by the king, as Cicero reports. The same 'fact' is reflected in the complete absence of Demetrius from

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see Mosshammer (1979), pp. 130, 144. Castor's chronology began with Ninus of Assyria (2123 BCE), FGrH 250 T 2. The citation of Castor by Apollodorus (*c.*180-after 120 BCE, FGrH 250 F 8 = Apol. *Bibl.*2.1.3) cannot be correct, as Castor refers to events after the second century BCE, but see e.g., Smith (1853), s.v. Castor. Scholars today accept a later date, e.g, Mosshammer, ibid.; Trapp (1996).

[64] Joseph. C.A.1.184 = FGrH 205 F 12: '[Hecateaus] mentions the battle near Gaza between Ptolemy and Demetrius, which, as Castor narrates, was fought eleven years after the death of Alexander, in the 117th Olympiad. For under the head of this Olympiad he says, "In this period, Ptolemy son of Lagus, defeated in a battle at Gaza Demetrius, son of Antigonus, surnamed Poliorcetes."'. For further use of Olympiads by Castor, see FGrH F 4, F 6, F 7. For a survey of the Greek chronographic tradition, see Mosshammer (1979), esp. p. 100.

Philo's and other accounts of the translation, although all of these sources place the event under Ptolemy II.

Some sources however ignored the implication of Castor's report, perhaps because of the strength of the literary tradition linking Demetrius of Phalerum with the translation of the Pentateuch (perhaps a tradition established by Aristeas). These sources thus continued to transmit the tradition that Demetrius of Phalerum was involved with the translation while he was employed by Ptolemy II. Cicero may transmit both this tradition and the new report. As noted above, his reference to Demetrius could be interpreted to mean that Demetrius worked for Ptolemy II before he was murdered by the king.

Aristeas Flourished Before the 1st Century BCE

The discussion above indicates a *terminus ad quem* for the composition of the *Letter of Aristeas*. If Castor was responsible for the mistake in the date of the retirement of Demetrius from court, then, the life of Castor in the first century BCE may indicate the latest date that the *Letter* was composed. It is difficult to believe that Aristeas could have produced a composition in which Demetrius sits so prominently and comfortably in the court of Ptolemy II after this time. This is especially the case if a consensus of informed, ancient scholarly opinion (perhaps represented by Philo) tended to rely on the information of an apparently objective date in a chronicle which Castor had composed. We know that chronologies became very popular in the first century BCE, especially after the work of Apollodorus was superseded by Castor of Rhodes. At the very latest therefore, if Philo reedited Aristeas using information based ultimately on a mistaken date published by Castor of Rhodes, then the composition of Aristeas was written before Castor's *Chronicle* was produced.

It can however be assumed that the strength of the literary tradition of Demetrius' involvement with Ptolemy II persuaded later sources to disregard the chronological proof. This literary tradition may be derived from Aristeas, although the literary account of Eusebius (the role of Demetrius is not reported in the *Chronicle*) undoubtedly played an influential role.

The dating of the *Letter of Aristeas* is further discussed in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER FOUR

DEMETRIUS OF PHALERUM, LIBRARIAN IN THE LIBRARY OF PTOLEMY I

Why the Identity of the First Librarian is Important Here

Who was the first librarian in the Library at Alexandria? According to Aristeas, Demetrius of Phalerum was in charge of the library under Ptolemy II.[1] But there are others who argue that Zenodotus of Ephesus first held this post under Ptolemy II. The question is important for the discussion here. Since Demetrius was considerably older than Zenodotus (their relative ages are discussed below), if Zenodotus was the first librarian under Ptolemy II, Demetrius is unlikely to have occupied this post. Aristeas is then probably incorrect when he states that Demetrius was employed by Ptolemy II. On the other hand, if Demetrius was the first librarian in Alexandria, he was probably appointed by Ptolemy I and then continued to work for Ptolemy II. Aristeas could then be historically correct. It would also follow from such timing that the library was founded by Ptolemy I.

This chapter will examine the evidence in relation to the known historical facts concerning Demetrius and Zenodotus, and the textual evidence which is said to promote the claim of Zenodotus. It will be shown that the historical facts support the claim of Demetrius, and the textual evidence not only fails to support Zenodotus, but actually promotes Demetrius in this role.

The Ages of Demetrius and Zenodotus Compared

Both Demetrius of Phalerum and Zenodotus of Ephesus lived in Alexandria under the rule of Ptolemy I. Demetrius of Phalerum arrived in Alexandria after the death of Kassander in 298/7 BCE, soon after Ptolemy I officially became king of Egypt on 12th January 304 BCE, and lived in Alexandria at least until the death of Ptolemy,

[1] LetAris.9, καταστα̃θεὶς ἐπὶ τη̃ς τοῦ βασιλέως βιβλιοθήκης . . .

twenty-three years later on 23rd November 283 BCE.[2] Similarly, it is known that Zenodotus studied in Alexandria with the scholar Philitas, who was employed as a tutor by Ptolemy I, a role which eventually Zenodotus assumed.[3] But although they were contemporaries in Alexandria at the time when the Library must have been built (whether under Ptolemy I or Ptolemy II), there was a considerable disparity in their ages.

The age of Demetrius in Alexandria can be deduced from the fact that he 'entered politics' in Athens when Harpalus fled from Alexander to Athens in 324 BCE.[4] The phrase 'entered politics' probably refers to the start of a public career.[5] Since thirty was the minimum age required in Athens for such a role, Demetrius was about thirty years old in 324 BCE.[6] Demetrius was thus born by 354 BCE.[7] This date of birth is compatible with events in his life. Demetrius was therefore about thirty-nine years old in 315 BCE, when he became tyrant of Athens, under the patronage of Kassander.[8] According to several sources, Demetrius ruled in Athens for ten years.[9] After his expulsion in 308/7 BCE,[10] he fled to Thebes (in Greece), where

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[2] D.L.V.78. Dates for Ptolemy I according to Grzybek (1990), p. 171.

[3] The Life, cited Westermann (1945), p. 369.

[4] For Demetrius in public life in Athens, D.L.V.75, ἄρξασθαι δ' αὐτὸν τῆς πολιτείας . . .; for Harpalus' flight, see Heckel (1992), p. 219.

[5] The simplicity of Diogenes' account means that it is unlikely that 'entering politics' refers to the involvement of Demetrius in a private prosecution against Harpalus, which could have occurred at a younger age, e.g., at the age of 21, the orator Demosthenes was involved in a private prosecution against Aphobus and Onetor.

[6] Rhodes (1985), p. 510. There are no specific references to a lower age. But Athenian citizens could attend the assembly perhaps from the age of 18, and certainly from 20, Rhodes, p. 703.

[7] Wehrli (1949), p. 49 and Ferguson (1911), p. 39, n. 1 give 350 BCE; neither justifies rounding up the date. Some support for the lower date is given by Rhodes (1981), p. 401, who notes that 'men under thirty may not have been excluded in the 'immediate' constitution of 411', citing Ath.Pol.31.ii and Men.Sam.15 where Moschion claims to have served as a phylarch while young.

[8] D.S.18.74.3; Pausan.1.25.6; Athen.XII 542e; D.S.19.68.3; Polyaenus, Strat. IV 7,6; Plut.Dem.8.3; D.S.20.45.1–2; Strabo 9.1.20; Polybius 12.13.8–11; see Ferguson (1911), p. 40.

[9] D.L.V.75; D.S.20.45.4; Strabo 9.1.20.

[10] D.S.20.45.4; Plut., Dem.9.2; Plut., Mor. 69c; see Ferguson (1911), p. 124. D.L.V.78, Strabo 9.1.20, Syncellus §521, Mosshammer (1984), p. 331.6–7 and Cicero, De Fin. V.19.53 link the flight of Demetrius to Egypt rather than Thebes; Syncell. §521, p. 331.6 refers to Demetrius in Egypt with no reference to Kassander or Thebes.

he lived for ten years. Subsequently, following the death of Kassander in 298/7 BCE, he fled to Alexandria. His departure from Thebes at this time is credible in view of the death of Kassander, which would have signalled the end to any hope that Kassander would protect Demetrius from Antigonus and help him to return to Athens. Demetrius thus fled to Egypt, perhaps invited by Ptolemy through the influence Eurydice, a sister of Kassander, who was then married to Ptolemy I, and who may have taken up the cause of Demetrius in memory of her brother.[11] It seems therefore that Demetrius was about fifty-seven years old when he arrived in Alexandria to work for Ptolemy I, and a well attested tradition confirms his link with the king. According to Diogenes Laertius, he died after 283 BCE (the year of the death of Ptolemy I).[12] If he died in this year, he would have been about seventy-two. If he died in 280 BCE (as is suggested in Chapter 3), he would have been about seventy-four.[13]

Dates in the life of Zenodotus are less easy to define. According to his *Life* (quoted below) Zenodotus lived in Alexandria at the time of Ptolemy I, where he was a pupil of the scholar Philitas, who was a tutor of the son of Ptolemy I, the future Ptolemy II.[14] Zenodotus also became tutor to both the children of the king. But he was not appointed directly after the retirement of his teacher Philitas, although, if he was a student of Philitas, he was probably in Alexandria at this time. Instead, this prestigious role was given to the physicist Straton of Lampsacus.[15] This relationship with Straton is confirmed

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[11] Nagy (1996), p. 198. In addition to Aristeas, the presence of Demetrius of Phalerum in Egypt is attested by: D.S. 20.45.4; Philodemus Rhetorica, Col. CI 2, 3ff I, p. 377 Sudh.; Plut.Mor.601F, which notes that 'Demetrius was after his banishment first among the friends of Ptolemy at Alexandria . . .'; Cicero, De Fin. V 19, 53; Plut.Mor.189D (Stobaeus, Eccl. IV 7,27); Euseb., Heironymus Chronicon ol.118, 1, = 308/7 BCE (Helm, p. 127); Aelian V.H. 3.17; Josephus, C.A. 2.45; D.L.V.78; Suda Δ 429; Tertullian, *Apolog.* 18.5. For the fragments of Demetrius, see Wehrli (1949). For the historical fragments, see FGrH 228.

[12] D.L.V.78.

[13] For a possible date of the death of Demetrius of Phalerum, see Chapter 3.

[14] For Philitas, see the Life, cited by Westermann (1845), p. 116, which states that Philitas tutored the future Ptolemy II, Φιλητᾶς Κῶος . . . ἐγένετο δὲ καὶ διδάσκαλος τοῦ δευτέρου Πτολεμαίου. It seems that Philitas tutored only the future Ptolemy II, but that both tutors after Philitas (Straton and Zenodotus) also tutored Arsinoëu, the full sister of Ptolemy II.

[15] D.L.V.58; Life, Westermann (1845), p. 440 on Straton, καθηγήσατο δὲ καὶ Πτολεμαίου τοῦ ἐπικληθέντος Φιλαδέλφου, see Fraser, i (1972), p. 322, Pfeiffer (1968), p. 92.

indirectly by the demonstrations of affection between Straton and the children of Ptolemy I. The letters written by Straton to Arsinoë, the older full sister and future wife of the future Ptolemy II, were later collected together in a book; and a bond between Straton and Ptolemy II is in accord with the fact that Ptolemy sent eighty talents to his tutor, presumably after the death of Ptolemy I.[16] After Straton resigned in the 123rd Olympiad (between 288 and 284 BCE) in order to return to Athens as head of the Lyceum, Zenodotus finally became tutor to the children of the king.[17] This indicates his age at this time.

When Zenodotus became tutor to the future Ptolemy II, the latter was then twenty to twenty-four years old.[18] According to Athenian custom, the tutor of a youth of about twenty – called a 'sophronistes' – was required to be at least forty years old since at this time of life, he was considered sufficiently mature for such a post and unlikely to corrupt his charge.[19] The supervision of young men was 'considered to demand skill or moral fitness as well as loyalty to the state, and could also be regarded as a quasi-military duty; hence, the supervisors and instructors, like all military officials, were appointed not by lot but by election'.[20]

Although we cannot be certain if Ptolemy I followed Athenian tradition in this respect, some degree of conformity may be assumed from the fact that he shows a similar concern for qualification by age in another public sphere. This can be seen in an inscription which may have been composed by Ptolemy himself in 321 BCE, when he was satrap in Egypt, which states the following requirements of age for the rulers of Cyrene: elders, generals, and ephors, at least 50 years; members of the Council, at least 50 years old, or if there were insufficient members, at least 40 years old; priests, at least 50 years old; a body of citizens from whom were chosen assessors, at

[16] D.L.V.60.

[17] D.L.V.58, 'According to Apollodorus in his *Chronology*, he [= Straton] became head of the school [= the Lycaeum in Athens] in the 123rd Olympiad.'

[18] Ptolemy II was born in 308 BCE, see Pfeiffer (1968), p. 92; Fraser, i (1972), p. 307, gives 309 BCE. For the calculation of this date, see Skeat (1954), p. 29, §5.

[19] For this age, see Rhodes (1981), p. 504, on *Ath.Pol.*42.ii. The sentiment is expressed by Aeschin. *Tim.*187, 'What use is there in keeping attendants for our children, or setting trainers and teachers over them, when those who have been entrusted with the laws allow themselves to be turned into crooked paths of shame?' (trans. edn. Loeb).

[20] Rhodes, (1981), p. 504.

least 30 years old.[21] Similarly, according to Aristotle, who probably met Ptolemy in Macedon where Aristotle stayed from 342 to 335 BCE, men over 30 years old were eligible for the council[22] and for jury service;[23] commissioners, sophronistes and choregi (trainers for boy's choruses) were required to be at least 40 years old:[24] arbiters were required to be at least 60.[25] It is thus reasonable to assume that Ptolemy followed Athenian policy for the required age of a tutor, and that Zenodotus was at least forty years old when he became tutor to the future Ptolemy II between the years 288 and 284 BCE.

This accounts for the fact that Zenodotus was not appointed as tutor when Philitas retired. If Zenodotus was forty by 288–284 BCE, he could have been well under forty when Philitas retired, and thus too young to be appointed as tutor. Hence Straton was appointed and Zenodotus took over when Straton retired. The assumption that he was forty by 288–284 BCE also allows a reasonable gap of years between the tutor and his royal charge – as noted above, when Zenodotus became his tutor, the future Ptolemy II was 20 to 24 years old. Worthy of note in this respect is the fact that Aristotle (born in 384 BCE) was just over forty years old when he arrived in Macedon in 342 BCE as tutor to the future Alexander the Great, when Alexander was only thirteen years old.[26]

This line of reasoning is confirmed by the Suda (quoted below page 96), which states that Zenodotus reached his *akme* (γεγονώς) under Ptolemy I. The term probably refers to the height of a man's power, which was reckoned to occur at the age of forty years.[27] Zenodotus was thus forty years old before the end of 283 BCE, when Ptolemy I died. If we assume that tutors were not appointed to a successor to the throne when the latter actually became king, this date can be lowered to a time before 285 BCE, when the co-regency began between Ptolemy I and Ptolemy II. Zenodotus was thus forty years old by 285 BCE, a date which is in accord with the years between 288 to 284 BCE, when Straton returned to the

[21] SEG IX.I.
[22] *Ath.Pol* 4.iii, 30.ii, 31.i.
[23] *Ath.Pol* 63.iii.
[24] *Ath.Pol* 29.ii, cf. 42.ii; for the age of choregi, 56.iii.
[25] *Ath.Pol* 53.iv.
[26] Plut., *Alex.*7.2; Quintil.i.1.23.
[27] Rohde, (1878), pp. 161–220, esp. p. 163. The concept is accepted by Pfeiffer (1968), pp. 107, 256.

Lycaeum, and his role as tutor to the children of Ptolemy I was given to Zenodotus. It appears therefore that Zenodotus was about forty years old between 288 and 285 BCE, so that, at the earliest, he was born in 328 BCE.

This may be confirmed from information on the life of Aristophanes of Byzantium. According to his *Life*, Aristophanes was a pupil of Zenodotus while still a 'boy', that is, probably between seven and fourteen years old.[28] The text also states that Aristophanes became head of the library when he was sixty-two, probably between 196 and 193 BCE when Eratosthenes died.[29] If so, Aristophanes was born between 258 and 255 BCE, and was seven years old between 265 and 262 BCE. If Zenodotus was born around 328 BCE (as suggested above), he was about sixty-three to sixty-six when Aristophanes was a 'boy'. His role as a tutor at this relatively advanced age then accounts for the fact that his relationship with Aristophanes was limited to the time when the latter was a 'boy', rather than a 'neos', the term used in the *Life* for the next stage of a boy's life, when (according to the *Life*) Aristophanes was taught by Callimachus. This evidence thus suggests that Zenodotus was at least forty years old between 288 and 285 BCE, so that he was born between 328 and 325 BCE.

This suggests that if Demetrius was born by 354 BCE (see above), there was a difference of just over twenty-five years between them both. The difference decreases if Zenodotus was older than forty by 288 BCE. Zenodotus was thus only in his middle twenties when Demetrius arrived in Alexandria aged about fifty-six years old, probably in good health, since he went on to live for another eighteen or so years. A mature Demetrius therefore arrived in Alexandria at a time when Zenodotus was growing up. His age alone thus qualified Demetrius for work in the library, if the latter was built by Ptolemy I.

Scholarship and Activity Compared

The suitability of his age is not however the only qualification needed for the task of the first librarian. He must also be intelligent, well educated, and possess an interest in books. On this basis, there seems little to choose between the two candidates for the post.

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[28] For the *Life* on Aristophanes, see Westermann, (1845), p. 362. For the meaning of 'boy' (παῖς), see Aristotle, *Pol.*VII.17.6,11 and Rendall (1907), p. 53.

[29] See Pfeiffer (1968), pp. 171–2.

Demetrius of Phalerum was one of the peripatetic philosophers,[30] and said to be the most outstanding pupil of the great Theophrastus,[31] who lectured at the Lyceum in Athens.[32] According to the biographer Diogenes Laertius, Demetrius surpassed all other contemporary philosophers in his learning, versatility, the number of his books and their total length, and a list of twenty-seven titles are furnished as proof. Other books not listed by Diogenes include the chronographic list of Athenian archons,[33] and the *Memoirs* which recorded his experiences as ruler of Athens for ten years.[34] In the description in the Suda (which may depend partly on Diogenes) the wide ranging nature of his work is described as philosophy, history, rhetoric, politics and poetry.[35] Citations of the works of Demetrius (none of which have independently survived), confirm how highly he was regarded and how widely he was read.[36] We are also told that Demetrius composed paeans which were sung in Alexandria over a period of more than six hundred years.[37] Clearly, with his experience at the Lyceum and the qualities which underlie his academic skills, Demetrius would have been most suitable for the post of chief librarian in Alexandria.

The academic career of Zenodotus is also renowned.[38] According to his *Life*, Zenodotus was a pupil of Philitas, himself the author of a book of glosses so famous in antiquity that it was familiar even to those who attended Greek comedy.[39] His study with Philitas would thus have prepared Zenodotus for the task as first editor of the Homeric texts, as his *Life* states (the entry is quoted in full below). The *Life* itself summarises the achievement of Zenodotus as '*epic poet and grammarian*'. Unfortunately, his poetry has been lost, but the exten-

[30] D.L.V.80.

[31] D.L.V.75; also Cicero, De Fin. V.19.53; Brut.9.37. See also: Strabo 9.1.20; Cicero, De Leg.III.6.14; De Offic.I.1.3. The fact is repeated in the Suda, Westermann (1845), p. 413.

[32] D.L.V.36–7. For an account in English of the life of Demetrius in Athens, see Ferguson (1911), pp. 38–94. An idealised portrait of Demetrius is given by Parsons (1952), pp. 124–38.

[33] FGrH 228 F 10 (= D.L.1.22; Marchellinus, *Vit.Thuk.*32).

[34] Strabo, 9.1.20.

[35] Westermann (1854), p. 413.

[36] The fragments of Wehrli (1948) include 45 named authors in addition to the scholia and inscriptions.

[37] D.L.V.76.

[38] For Zenodotus, see: Van der Valk, ii (1964), pp. 1–83, with earlier refs. on p. 1, n. 1; Pfeiffer, Chapter II (1968); Fraser, i (1972), pp. 450ff.

[39] See Pfeiffer (1968), pp. 90–1.

sive citations of Zenodotus in the Homeric scholia clearly testify to the appreciation of other scholars of his work.[40]

The Organisational Skill of the First Librarian

Greek learning of any significance in Egypt arrived only with Alexander in 322 BCE. The city of Alexandria was virtually new, established soon after Alexander's arrival in Egypt (322/1 BCE) on a tract of land where there existed a few unfortified villages and perhaps a Pharaonic military post.[41] The bulk of the books needed for the library in Alexandria would therefore have to be brought into the city from abroad, and would have to be organised in a systematic and professional way. It is possible that by the time Ptolemy I established Alexandria as his capital, there were enough books in Alexandria for the personal needs of the early scholars. But this does not account for the explosion in numbers that the city later housed, as is evident from the existence of the library itself. This increase can only be attributed to a large-scale importation of books, which must surely have been the very first task that the first librarian undertook. The mere size of such a task in time, expertise and expense – Aristeas states that the library possessed over two hundred thousand 'books'[42] – indicates the services of a well experienced, practical man, ideally with contacts in the Hellenistic world. Which of the candidates – Demetrius of Phalerum or Zenodotus of Ephesus – would have best filled this role?

Although the earlier career of Demetrius in Athens is associated with politics and academic pursuits (see above), Demetrius in Alexandria is specifically linked with the very activity in which the first librarian would need to be involved, namely, the procurement of books. This is extensively described in the *Letter of Aristeas*, which was probably composed before the first century BCE.[43] Aristeas claims specifically that Demetrius was 'in charge of the library of the king', and provides incidental, corroborative details which are wholly consistent

[40] Translations of 15 ancient references to Zenodotus, including eleven from scholia on the *Iliad* and one from the scholia on the *Odyssey* have been made by Heath (1996), s.v. index, 'Zenodotus'. I am grateful to Professor Heath for allowing me to cite his work.

[41] Fraser, i (1972), 1–7.

[42] LetAris.10.

[43] See Chapter 3, *Aristeas Flourished Before the 1st Century BCE*, p. 81.

with such work. Demetrius was thus 'assigned large sums of money with a view to collecting if possible, all the books in the world . . . by arranging purchases and transcriptions'.[44] Aristeas also notes that Demetrius kept a record of the number of books already in the library and that he advised the king on new books to buy.[45] This is confirmed by the itemised, written proposal which Demetrius submitted to the king after his oral recommendation that the king should acquire the Hebrew Pentateuch in Greek, including advice on how the Hebrew text should be translated into Greek.[46] Aristeas also notes that Demetrius supervised details of the work of the translation and actively participated in the two final ceremonies to mark the completion of the work, as would be appropriate for the man who had inspired and initiated the project, and had supervised the task from beginning to end.[47] Demetrius could even anticipate (although apparently unasked) the number of books that the library would soon possess.[48] Surely only a man who is preoccupied with his task is likely to volunteer such a fact. The consistency of these details over a large area of text gives the impression that they are historically correct. For what other reason would Demetrius, a historical character, be presented in this way? At the very least therefore it is apparent that Aristeas' description of Demetrius does not mitigate against the possibility that Aristeas is reporting historical facts and if further independent witnesses can be found who support Aristeas, it would difficult to avoid the conclusion that this indeed is the case.

Two witnesses exist, Josephus and Johanes Tzetzes. Although Josephus repeats the account of Aristeas to a large extent, he also makes additions and changes which suggests that he may also have used another source.[49] An addition of interest on the subject of Demetrius refers to the fact that Demetrius was 'very much devoted to the art of book collecting'.[50] This fact is not noted by Aristeas.

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[44] LetAris 9, trans. Hadas (1951). There is much discussion on this passage which may be translated in several ways, e.g., Shutt (1985) translates ἐχρηματίσθη πολλὰ διάφορα, 'undertook many different negotiations' rather than 'assigned large sums of money and 'translations' instead of 'transcriptions' for μεταγραφάς. See also the discussion on LetAris 9 by Zuntz (1972), pp. 133–9.

[45] LetAris.10.

[46] LetAris.29–30.

[47] LetAris 301,308,302.

[48] LetAris.10.

[49] Josephus, Ant.XII.11–118. A brief survey of the differences between Aristeas and Josephus is given by Hadas (1951), pp. 18–21.

[50] Josephus, Ant.XII.12, μάλιστα γὰρ περὶ τὴν συλλογὴν τῶν βιβλίων εἶχε

Josephus thus indicates the existence of a further, independent source which provides a detail on Demetrius that is in harmony with those supplied by Aristeas.

The book-gathering activity of Demetrius is again described by Tzetzes in the Plautine Scholium, whose description of Demetrius is very different from that of Aristeas and Josephus.[51] Whereas the latter both tell a story, Tzetzes simply describes the work of the library, listing the scholars and others who were involved and the kind of work that was done. For Tzetzes, Demetrius is simply the one named collector among several other 'well-esteemed (or, 'responsible') men'.[52] Tzetzes also notes the names of editors and the authors on whose texts they worked and that Eratosthenes was entrusted with the royal archives.[53] On the other hand, for Aristeas and Josephus, Demetrius is the sole person mentioned whose work related directly to the Library. There is also a difference in terminology between Tzetzes and Aristeas (along with Josephus) regarding the work of Demetrius. Whereas Aristeas uses the verb συνάγω to refer to the book-collecting of Demetrius, Tzetzes uses ἀθροίζω.[54] Tzetzes also notes that more than one library – two in fact – existed in Alexandria, whereas Aristeas refers only to one.[55] The significant terms in the scholium of Tzetzes are italicised below:

> Pb§20 For Ptolemy, being an admirer of learning, through the agency of Demetrius of Phalerum and other notable men, *gathered together* (συνήθροισεν) books at the royal expense into Alexandria from all places, and deposited these books *in two libraries*, of which the number in the outer was 42,800, and the number within the palace, 400,00 rolls compiled from more than one author and 90,000 rolls with single authors and single volumes, of which Callimachus later wrote catalogues.
>
> Pb§21 The archives of the many books described were entrusted by the king to Eratosthenes, a contemporary of Callimachus. The *assembled*

φιλοκάλως. The list of the most famous book-collectors in the ancient world collected by Athenaus (Athen.I.3b), does not mention Demetrius but includes his contemporaries. Athenaeus cites: Larensis of Rome, Polycrates of Samos, Peisistratus tyrant of Athens, Eucleides of Athens, Nicocrates of Cyprus, the kings of Pergamun, Euripides the poet, Aristotle the philosopher, Theophrastus (the philosopher) and Neleus (the philosopher), who sold his books to Ptolemy II.

[51] The scholium is preserved in the Codex Ambrosianus 222, and printed by Kaibel (1899), pp. 31–3, pp. 19–20.

[52] Pb §20, ἑτέρων ἐλλογίμων; Mb §28 γερουσίων ἀνδρῶν.

[53] For the editors, Pb §19; Mb §28; for Eratosthenes, Pb §21; Mb §30.1.

[54] LetAris.9.

[55] LetAris.9. For further on the number of libraries, see below, *The Library was Founded by Ptolemy I, and Probably Enlarged by Ptolemy II*, p. 110.

(συνηθροισμένα) books were not only from the Greeks, but also from all the other nations and furthermore the Hebrews themselves . . .

Mb§29 For the aforementioned king Ptolemy . . . through the agency of Demetrius of Phalerum and other responsible men, *gathered* (ἤροισε) literary works from everywhere to Alexandria at royal expense, he deposited them *in two libraries* . . .

Mb§30 Eratosthenes, his (= Callimachus') contemporary, was entrusted by the king with the archives of this very large collection. Now the work of Callimachus and that Eratosthenes after a short time became concerned with the *grouping/classification* (συναγωγῆς) of the books . . .

Mb§31 But then, once all the books of the Greeks, those of every the nations, along with the books of the Hebrews had been *collected together* (συνηθηροισμένων), that unsparing king . . . translated to the Greek script and language the foreign books by means of wise men who shared their language . . .[56]

These differences suggest that Tzetzes was not dependent on Aristeas or Josephus, but derived his information from some other source. This being the case, in spite of the fact that the many scholars cast doubt on the reliability of his accounts, there seems no good reason reject his evidence on the Library.[57] Why should he have invented such facts? The information of Tzetzes may thus independently confirm that Demetrius was responsible for the procurement of books. If so, there are then three, independent ancient sources that assert this fact.

Past General Experience of Demetrius and Zenodotus

In addition to the qualities outlined above, the past experiences of Demetrius would also have fitted him for the post of first librarian. Whatever the final verdict of historians on his private life, including his possible excesses and mistakes while in public office, there is little doubt that in addition to his scholarly abilities, Demetrius of Phalerum was a most able and practical man.[58] The evidence of Diogenes Laertius, which is echoed in other sources, states that after

[56] Kaibel (1899), pp. 19–20 and pp. 31–3. The scholium is translated fully in the main text below, and excerpts appear here for the sake of convenience.

[57] For example, *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, Hornblower and Spawforth eds. (1996) describes Tzetzes as 'a copious, careless, quarrelsome Byzantine polymath'. For a review of the considerable achievements of Tzetzes see Wilson (1983), pp. 190–6.

[58] D.S.20.45.1–5 describes the failure of Demetrius to anticipate the attack on Athens by Demetrius Poliorcetes.

his academic training with Theophrastus, Demetrius became 'tyrant' of Athens, where he ruled for ten years, 'enriching the city with revenues and buildings . . .'.[59] This is demonstrated by his provision for Theophrastus which included 'the walk and the houses adjoining the garden' that Theophrastus later bequeathed for the 'study literature and philosophy'.[60] The property was acquired by Theophrastus through the influence of Demetrius, in spite of the fact that Theophrastus was a metic, and thus disqualified from owning property in Athens.[61] The success of Demetrius in this matter must be attributed to his powers of persuasion and his influence in the state. There is little doubt that such attributes also underlie his revision of Athenian law. The latter earned Demetrius the rare tribute from his contemporaries of the noble title of 'nomothetes', which placed him (and no other) on the same, rarefied pedestal of the legendary Theseus (or Draco) and Solon.[62] Before he became ruler of Athens, Demetrius also presided over war with Antigonus, which though unsuccessful (Athens lost control of Lemnos, Imbros and Delos), finally ended in peace, and Demetrius appears to have ruled well in the following years.[63] According to Diodorus Siculus, when Demetrius 'became overseer [of Athens] he ruled the city peacefully, and with goodwill (φιλανθρώπως) towards the citizens'.[64] Among his achievements was the first recorded census in the history of Greece.[65] Other innovations took place in the arts, surely a suitable sphere of activity for a potential future librarian in Alexandria. It is said that Demetrius introduced 'Homerists' into the theatre[66] and reformed the financial arrangements for staging the national festivals, so that they were paid from public funds rather than by individuals, although, owing to a

[59] D.L.V.75.

[60] D.L.V.52. This complex of buildings and garden was probably the Peripatos, where Theophrastus taught philosophy, see Ferguson (1911), p. 61.

[61] D.L.V.39; Ferguson (1911), p. 60.

[62] Syncellus §521, which he repeats in his account of the translation of the Pentateuch, *Ecloga Chronologaphica* §518, Mosshammer (1984), p. 329,4; p. 331,6; for commentary, see Ferguson (1911), p. 40, n. 3; for an unqualified reference to Demetrius as a legislator, see FGrH 228 T 3d. The legislation of Demetrius is summarised by Gottschalk (1998).

[63] Strabo 9.1.20; Plut. *Dem.*8.3; D.S.18.74.3.

[64] D.S.18.74.3.

[65] Athen VI.272C. Davies (1984), p. 265, claims this event was 'unparalleled'. There are examples of censuses in the Pentateuch (Exod 40:17, Num 1:1, Num 26:2,51) and other biblical literature, e.g., 2 Sam 24.

[66] Athen.XIV.620b.

diversion of revenue (from the upkeep of the navy), no extra taxation was imposed.[67] No doubt his rhetorical skills helped to persuade the acceptance of his plans. Although therefore there exist some very negative descriptions of Demetrius concerning gourmandising, misappropriation of state funds, sexual lechery and other personal indulgences,[68] even if such accusations are partially true, they do not detract from his success as far as public duties were concerned. It is also a fact that Demetrius was universally praised by the great ancient academicians – according to Quintilian, Demetrius was the last of the great Attic orators, according to Cicero, the most learned, and according to Pausanius, Demetrius had '*a reputation for wisdom*'.[69] So great was his standing that when Athens was conquered in 307 BCE by Demetrius Poliorcetes, the latter provided his adversary Demetrius, the nominee of Poliorcetes' defeated enemy Kassander, with a safe escort to Thebes 'out of regard for the man's good reputation and excellence'.[70]

Demetrius finally arrived in Alexandria where he was welcomed by Ptolemy I, with whom his personal relationship became very close. Plutarch claims that Demetrius was the 'first among the "Friends" of Ptolemy in Alexandria'.[71] The Greek term for 'friend' ('philos') dates at least to the time of Xenophon and Aristotle.[72] From the time of Alexander the Great it refers in inscriptions to 'a well-differentiated class of men holding high and privileged positions next to the kings . . . The private tie of friendship had in these cases acquired an institutional significance in the public realm . . . the philoi of the early monarchies were . . . coopted by the rulers on criteria of achievement, skill and loyalty. Ascriptive attributes do not seem to have played any role in their selection'.[73] The custom of "Friends" thus enabled the king to choose his own, closest advisors from among those who were 'not of noble birth', as Diogenes Laertius notes of Demetrius of Phalerum.[74] Moreover, 'first' is a unique ascription in relation to 'Friends', and the fact that Demetrius was the 'first' of

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[67] Ferguson (1911), pp. 55–8.

[68] Athen.XII.542c–543a; Aelian V.H.9.9.

[69] Quintilian, *Inst.Orat.*10.1.80; Cicero, *Brut.*9.37 (cf. *De Orat.*23.95; De Re Publica II.1.2); Pausan.1.25.6.

[70] Plut.Dem.9.2.

[71] Plut.Mor.601F, πρῶτος ὢν τῶν Πτολεμαίου φίλων . . .

[72] Xenoph. *Cyrop.*V.v.44; VII.iii.1; VII.v.1; Arist. *Ath.Pol.*22.4.

[73] Herman (1980–1), pp. 113, 115.

[74] D.L.V.75, οὐκ εὐγενὴς ὤν. For the close access of friends to the king, Curt.

the Friends of Ptolemy I indicates that Demetrius was most important of the advisors of the king.

The life history of Demetrius thus suggests that by the time that he arrived in Alexandria, he was man of maturity, wide experience, excellent education and great energy and innovation. He was also a successful politician, administrator and builder who was able to convince others to implement his ideas, and was highly trusted by Ptolemy I. It is clear that such a man could have inspired the idea of a library and that his help would be invaluable for the practical work needed to gather '*all the books in the world*' into a land in which Greek civilisation had never penetrated before.[75] In contrast, the only known details on the life of Zenodotus are confined to his academic activities in Alexandria itself. As mentioned above, these are his contact with Philitas, his work as editor of the Homeric and other poetic texts, his authorship of several books, and, according to his *Life*, his tutorship of the children of Ptolemy I, and his role as chief librarian in Alexandria. It seems that Zenodotus was an excellent scholar in his field and that he, like Demetrius, was trusted by Ptolemy I. It is also possible that the earlier experiences of Zenodotus echoed those of Demetrius. But this we do not know. If the role of chief librarian is discounted, there is no record that Zenodotus ever entered public life, even after he was eligible when he was forty years old at the end of the reign of Ptolemy I. As far as is known, the career of Zenodotus was thus limited to academic activity, which would have rendered him far less suitable than Demetrius of Phalerum for the entrepreneurial-type role needed for the first librarian. Could Zenodotus have organised the finding, the buying and the transport to Egypt of around half a million books? Perhaps he could – but there is no proof to suggest that he was equal to the task. The facts that we know suggest that although the academic abilities of both Demetrius and Zenodotus made them equally suitable for the post of first librarian, only Demetrius had the extra experience and organisational skills that would have been needed to establish the most famous library in the ancient world.

6.7.11, see Hammond and Griffith (1979), p. 159: 'those who waited on the king, for instance when he was ill, were his "Friends", a select group of his "Companions", and they alone had immediate access to him'.

[75] For a brief review of the Greeks in Egypt before Alexander, see Cook (1954), p. 110.

Misreading of Ancient Texts Concerning Zenodotus

The claim of scholars that Zenodotus was the first librarian under Ptolemy II has been specifically based on three ancient texts: the Suda's biography of Zenodotus, a list of librarians in an Oxyrhynchus Papyrus, *POxy.*1241, and the Plautine scholium of Johanes Tzetzes. These will now be discussed.

1. *The Suda's Biography of Zenodotus*

The entry on Zenodotus in the Suda is cited and translated in full below. The main terms to be discussed are italicised:

> Ζηνόδοτος Ἐφέσιος ἐποποιὸς καὶ γραμματικὸς μαθητὴς τοῦ Φιλητᾶ ἐπὶ Πτολεμαίου γεγονὼς τοῦ πρώτου ὃς καὶ πρῶτος τῶν Ὁμήρου διορθωτὴς ἐγένετο καὶ τῶν ἐν Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ βιβλιοθηκῶν προῦστη καὶ τοὺς παῖδας Πτολεμαίου ἐπαίδευσεν.[76]
>
> Zenodotus of Ephesus, epic poet and grammarian, pupil of Philitas, *reaching the age that marks the height of a man's powers* (γεγονώς) in the time of Ptolemy *[the] first*, who *both* (καὶ) became the first editor of the works of Homer, *and* (καὶ) was appointed head over the libraries in Alexandria, *and* (καὶ) tutored the children of Ptolemy.

The Lives mentions three men in all who were appointed as librarians in Alexandria: (1) Zenodotus of Ephesus, whose entry is cited above; (2) Apollonius Rhodius and (3) Aristophanes of Byzantium.[77] Their relative chronology is indicated by the name of the king for whom they each worked, although not necessarily as librarian: – Zenodotus for Ptolemy I, Apollonius for Ptolemy III (Euergetes) and Aristophanes for Ptolemy IV (Philopator). Zenodotus is thus the earliest librarian described.

But this does not mean that Zenodotus was the first librarian ever to be appointed for the library, even though he worked for Ptolemy I. The latter role was fulfilled by his work as tutor to the children of Ptolemy I and there is no indication whatsoever in any ancient text, that Zenodotus was *not* preceded by anyone else. Those who would argue to the contrary seem to have misread the text of the

[76] Westermann (1945), p. 369.

[77] Westermann (1845), for Zenodotus, p. 369, for Apollonius Rhodius, p. 51, and for Aristophanes Byzantios, p. 362.

Suda cited above.[78] The facts are stated, first in an introductory clause, and then in three consecutive clauses, each linked by 'and' (καὶ), a standard use of this term.[79] The introductory clause states that Zenodotus reached the height of his powers under Ptolemy I (the meaning of γεγονώς is discussed above). The next three consecutive clauses give three facts about Zenodotus: (1) he was the *first* editor of Homer; (2) he was appointed head of the libraries in Alexandria; (3) he tutored the children of the king. In these clauses, the word 'first' (πρῶτος) appears first within the clause referring to the editorial work of Zenodotus on Homer. This means that according to the Suda, Zenodotus was the *first* only in this field. In other words, the term *first* has nothing to do with the clause describing the appointment of Zenodotus as librarian.[80] Confusion appears to have arisen over the two uses of 'first'. This is used initially to the identity of the Ptolemaic king, and subsequently to indicate that Zenodotus was the first editor of Homer. According to the Suda, therefore, Zenodotus was first *only in this editorial role.* It is clear, therefore, that since the term 'first' does not appear in the clause that refers to the position of Zenodotus in the library, there is no indication in this text that he was the first librarian in Alexandria.

In any case, the Suda itself witnesses that this is unlikely because it refers to the fact that Zenodotus was appointed over more than one library (βιβλιοθηκῶν). It is reasonable to assume that when the library was first established, it was housed in one building, and thus known as 'the library'. This is implied by the statement of Irenaeus, who uses a singular noun when he refers to the founding of the library by Ptolemy I.[81] Confirmation for a single original library is provided Epiphanius who states that a second library was built 'later' (ἔτι δὲ ὕστερον) than the first.[82] The statement that Zenodotus presided

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[78] For example, Pfeiffer (1968), p. 104, n. 2; Fraser, i (1972), p. 330 with ii, p. 476, n. 115, repeated on i, p. 450 with ii, p. 650, n. 20; Green (1990), p. 758, n. 47.

[79] LSJ (1940), s.v. καί, A.

[80] Also noted by Klaus Nickau 'Zenodotus von Ephesos, *RE* Reihe 2, Halbbd. 19 (1972) 23–45, Col. 26 and Blum (1991), p. 117, n. 31.

[81] Eusebius, HE 5.8.11 = Irenaeus *Adv.Haer.* III 21.2, Rousseau (1974), Πτολεμαῖος ὁ Λάγου φιγοτιμούμενος τὴν ὑπ' αὐτοῦ κατεσκευασμένην βιβλιοθήκην . . .

[82] Epiphanius, *On Weights and Measures* 11, Greek edn., cited Wendland (1900), p. 147, see variant in the text. For further on the two libraries, see below, *The Library was Founded by Ptolemy I, Although It Was Enlarged by Ptolemy II*, p. 110.

over more than one library thus implies that he was appointed well after the first library was established, when a second branch of the library had been created, perhaps because the collection books had grown too large for its original home. This is not likely to have happened when the library began. It seems that as the Suda states, Zenodotus was 'first' only as far the editing of Homer was concerned.

Why then, it might be asked, does the Suda not mention that Demetrius of Phalerum was the first librarian? The answer is very simple. The Suda's entry on Demetrius of Phalerum is based on the entry of Diogenes Laertius in the *Lives*, which, for reasons discussed in the previous chapter of this book, does not mention that Demetrius of Phalerum worked in the library under Ptolemy II. The Suda does not enquire further, to find out if he was appointed by Ptolemy I. In the absence of any other evidence, this latter fact can be concluded only after we know the relative ages of Demetrius and Zenodotus, and we know that Demetrius was employed by Ptolemy II. Without knowledge of the latter or even its denial, the age of Demetrius is irrelevant, and it seems most likely that Demetrius did not work in the Library under Ptolemy I. The Suda may thus have been influenced chiefly by the entry of Diogenes Laertius on which omits the role of Demetrius in the library.

2. *The List of Librarians in the Oxyrhynchus Papyrus, POxy.1241*

The misunderstanding of the text in the Suda may have inspired an imaginative reading of a second century papyrus found early this century at Oxyrhynchus, *POxy.*1241. The second column of this papyrus lists the chief librarians from the time of Apollonius Rhodius.[83] Unfortunately the preceding, first column of papyrus which *might* have mentioned Zenodotus among the librarians before Apollonius, is almost completely destroyed. Only the opening lines at the top of the column have been partly preserved, while the final lines, which might have included the previous librarian's name are lost. The relevant section thus begins with a catalogue of famous sculptors, statuaries, painters and grammarians. The next eight lines are lost, and the following five lines only partially preserved. Column ii then begins according to the translation below:

[83] For details, see Grenfell and Hunt (1914), pp. 99–112.

> . . . Apollonius son of Silleus, of Alexandria, called the Rhodian, the disciple of Callimachus; he was also the teacher of the third king. He was succeeded by Eratosthenes, after whom came Aristosthenes son of Apelles of Byzantium. then Apollonius of Alexandria the so-called Classifier, and after him Aristarchus son of Aristarchus, of Alexandria, but originally of Samothrace; he became also the teacher of Philometor. He was followed by Cydas of the spearmen, and under the ninth king there flourished Ammonius, Zenodotus, Diocles, and Apollodorus the grammarian.[84]

Although there is no reference to Zenodotus of Epheseus, it has been assumed by many modern scholars that the name which preceded Apollonius Rhodius was that of Zenodotus. This may be correct in view of the historical evidence outlined above. But the further assumption that *no* name preceded the name of Zenodotus, so that Zenodotus was the first librarian in Alexandria, is unwarranted.[85] The material is too damaged to hazard a guess. There is thus no evidence in this papyrus which either discredits or promotes the case of either Zenodotus or Demetrius as first librarian. In short, in view of the damage to its crucial first page, this papyrus offers no evidence concerning the identity of the first librarian in Alexandria.

3. *The Role of Zenodotus in the Suda and Tzetzes' Scholium*

The Suda describes work undertaken by Zenodotus with the noun 'diorthotes' (διορθωτής). Since the basic meaning of the verb from the same root means 'to set straight, 'to raise upright', it has been argued that 'diorthotes' refers to 'one who sets up', or 'one who establishes'.[86] This could imply that Zenodotus 'set up' or 'established' the library in Alexandria, that is, Zenodotus was the first librarian. Similarly, if διορθόω is taken to mean 'to set right', 'to restore to order', a 'diorthotes' could refer to one who 'puts straight', or who 'puts in the right order'. In relation to a collection of books, this could also imply that Zenodotus was the first librarian, since it is natural to assume that one of the tasks of the first librarian would be to bring some

[84] Trans. Grenfell and Hunt (1914), pp. 107–8.

[85] Scholars who assume the name of Zenodotus include: Grenfell and Hunt (1914), p. 100; similarly, Green (1990), p. 204, whose caption beneath a clear photograph of *POxy.*1241 (Fig. 77) specifically lists Zenodotus among the names of the librarians *written* on the papyrus, although the name cannot be seen.

[86] These include: Sandys, i (1921), p. 121, 'responsible for classification'; Barber (1970), s.v. Lycopron. Pfeiffer (1968), p. 106, argues for 'to edit'. For the meaning of the term, see Liddell et al. (1968), s.v. ὀρθόω, I.

kind of order to the books that the library acquired so that they could be retrieved by the readers, even if this task was only partially completed, as the later catalogues of Callimachus might suggest.[87]

But the case for Zenodotus as the first librarian begins to weaken once the true meaning of διορθωτής is recognised and applied. The basic meaning 'to edit' rather than the meanings suggested above is confirmed not only by the direct evidence of the activity of Zenodotus in the Homeric scholia (on which more below), but also directly by the 'Plautine Scholium', which, as noted above, was probably the work of Johannes Tzetzes in the twelfth century CE. This text repeatedly uses the term διορθόω or its corresponding noun διορθωτής, along with other similar terms, for the activities of several groups of scholars in the library at Alexandria, both named and unnamed, who are linked either with types of literature, or with a particular author. Some of these scholars lived well before the library was set up and others lived well after the event. The whole scholium is translated below, and the terms relevant to this discussion are italicised in the text [88]

The Book of Aristophanes with Tzetzes as Commentator

Pb§19 Let it be known that Alexander of Aetolia and Lycophron of Chalcis, having been instructed by Ptolemy Philadelphus, *edited* (διώρθωσαν) the books on drama, Lycophron the comedies and Alexander the tragedies, as well as the satires.

Pb§20 For Ptolemy, being an admirer of learning, through the agency of Demetrius of Phalerum and other notable men, gathered together books at the royal expense into Alexandria from all places, and deposited these books in two libraries, of which the number in the outer was 42,800, and the number within the palace, 400,00 rolls compiled from more than one author and 90,000 roles with single authors and single volumes, of which Callimachus later wrote catalogues.

Pb§21 The archives of the many books described were entrusted by the king to Eratosthenes, a contemporary of Callimachus. The assembled books were not only from the Greeks, but also from all the other nations and furthermore the Hebrews themselves. As for the books of all other nations, having entrusted the books of each nation to learned men from each nation who were well acquainted with both their own language and that of the Greeks, he thus had them translated into the Greek tongue. As I said before, both Alexander and Lycophron *edited* (διωρθώσαντο) the plays, while first Zenodotus and then Aristarchus *edited* (διωρθώσαντο) them.

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[87] Pfeiffer (1968), pp. 106–7.

[88] This is a *preliminary* translation of Tzetzes' scholium. The translation of Parsons (1952), pp. 108–9, is based on a Latin text of scholium Mb.

Pb§22 And further, seventy-two scholars in the time of Pisistratos, who ruled Athens arranged the books of Homer which up to that point had been scattered. And about the same time they were revised by Aristarchus and Zenodotus, whereas those who *edited* (διορθωσάντων) them in the time of Ptolemy were different.[89] They ascribe to some four *editors* (διόρθωσιν) in the time of Pisistratos, Orpheus of Croton, Zopyrus of Heraclea, Onomacritus of Athens and Epicongylos.

Pb§23 Later, numerous people wrote commentaries on these poetic books, Didymos, Tryphon, Apollonios, Herodian, Ptolemy Askalonites, and the philosophers Porphyry, Plutarch, and Proclos, as Aristotle had done before them.

Another Beginning
The Book of Aristophanes with Tzetzes as Commentator

Mb§28 Alexander the Aetolian and Lycophron of Chalcis as well as Zenodotus of Ephesus under the royal compulsion *edited* (διώρθωσαν) for Ptolemy Philadelphus, Alexander the works of tragedy, Lycophron the comedies and Zenodotus the Homeric texts and the rest of the poets.

Mb§29 For the aforementioned king Ptolemy, whose divine soul truly loved wisdom, and who was an enthusiast for every fine sight, action and word, when he had, through the agency of Demetrius of Phalerum and other responsible men, gathered literary works from everywhere to Alexandria at royal expense, he deposited them in two libraries, of which the outer contained 42,800 scrolls, and the one within the palace of the king contained 400,000 scrolls of collected works, and 90,000 scrolls of single-authored works, as Callimachus, a young courtier at the court, notes, who after their *restoration* (ἀνόρθωσιν), composed catalogues.

Mb§30 Eratosthenes, his (Callimachus') contemporary, was entrusted by the king with the archives of this very large collection. Now the work of Callimachus and that Eratosthenes after a short time became concerned with the grouping/classification of the books, as I said, and their *editing* (διορθώσεως), even in the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus himself.

Mb§31 But then, once all the books of the Greeks, those of every the nations, along with the books of the Hebrews had been collected together, that unsparing king, being a river of gold and pouring out of seven mouths, he translated to the Greek script and language the foreign books by means of wise men who shared their language and who accurately knew Greek, as also he had translated the Hebrew books by the seventy-two wise Hebrew translators who were learned in each tongue. That is how he [Ptolemy] had the foreign books translated.

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[89] It seems that Tzetzes refers here to a false tradition spread by Heliodorus that Zenodotus and Aristarchus merely 'revised' rather than 'edited' the works of Homer, which he suggests in his other preface.

Mb§32 Of the Greek books, as I said before, the tragedies were *edited* (διώρθωσε) by Alexander the Aetolian, the comedies by Lycophron and the rest of the poets by Zenodotus of Ephesus, in particular, the Homeric books, which, over two hundred years before Ptolemy Philadelphus and the *editing* (διορθώσεως) of Zenodotus, had been put together through the enthusiasm of Pisistratus by these four wise men, Epicongylos, Onomacritus of Athens, Zopyrus of Heraclea and Orpheus of Croton.

Mb§33 Thus, in the time of Pisistratus the Homeric works, which were circulating in episodes [in an oral tradition (?)], were put together by these four wise men and became written-scrolls. And in the time of Philadelphus, as I said, they were *edited* (ὀρθωθησαν) by Zenodotus, and after Zenodotus, they were *edited* (ὠρθώθησαν) again by Aristarchus, who came fourth or fifth after Zenodotus.

Mb§34 And even if the confused and objectionable Heliodorus unaware that he is talking rubbish, confuses everything and mismatches information, producing, as it were, a pile of dung rather than a posset of soothing herbs, talking nonsense that Homer was put together and *edited* (ὀρθωθῆναι) by the seventy-two (translators) whereas the collecting and *editing* (διόρθωσιν) of Zenodotus and Aristarchus was a revision of all (the works of Homer), and persuaded to his view us when we were still quite young and growing our first beards when we were expounding on Homer, in the same manner as other certain empty speakers who do not keep their feet on the ground. But if I trusted them without examination, even letting one statement slip though, and did not check the truth in accordance with the established traditions about the ancient work, I would clearly talk nonsense, just as those people; but having experienced this more than once, I said to myself when I was a boy 'learning comes from experience'[90]

Mb§35 And I have adopted the view that these men are wafflers, with their heads in the clouds, whereas I myself, like some busy bee, gather into a hive whatever I can from the established flowers of works (of literature) and I believe that I also nourish many people with the honey. And if some low born-drones, in so far as they are unable to settle either on Attic honey or any (other) honey, nevertheless, flying about secretly with their like-minded fellows, pour out unheard nonsense – but I must, having digressed for so long, take up the main theme of my discourse again.

The scholars mentioned by Tzetzes in relation to the term διορθόω are: Zenodotus of Ephesus and Aristarchus of Samothrace, who are linked with Homer and the poets;[91] Lycophron of Chalcis and Alexander the Aetolian, who worked on tragedy and satire;[92] Callimachus,

[90] Aesch. Ag.177.
[91] Pb §21; Mb §28, §32.
[92] Pb §19, §21 x2; Mb.§28, §32 x2, §33 x2, §34.

who also wrote catalogues, and Eratosthenes who was also in charge of the archives;[93] finally, the four editors of Homer in the time of Pisistratus, Orpheus of Croton, Zopyrus of Heraclea, Onomacritus of Athens and Epicongylos.[94] The fact that the same verb is used for the work of all these men indicates that the main sphere of their activity was essentially the same. But if the term διορθόω means basically 'to set up' or 'to restore', then, clearly, there were many scholars who first set up the library, including those who lived three hundred years before it was conceived and others who lived well after the event. As this is impossible, the term διορθόω in the context of the scholium can only mean 'to edit'. One modern scholar thus notes:

> The reference to Aristarchus [in the Plautine Scholium] proves conclusively that this is what the Prolegomena mean; they do not refer to the collection or arranging of books in the library. No distinction is made between Zenodotus' work and that of Alexander Aetolus and Lycophron; they are said to have done the same for the scenic poets as he had done for epic (and lyric) poets, διώρθωσαν (or διωρθώσαντο), that is, they made critical editions'.[95]

Evidence for the publication of such editions emerges from a story that the early third century poet Aratus sought a 'reliable' (ἀσφαλῆ) text of Homer. In reply Aratus was told, 'You can, if you get hold of the ancient copies (ἀρχαίοις ἀντιγράφοις), and not the edited copies (διωρθωμένοις) of our day'.[96] The dates of the life of Aratus (*c.*315 to before 240 BCE) show that he was a contemporary of Zenodotus. This suggests that the edited copy which he was told to reject was edited by Zenodotus himself, who is known to have edited the Homeric texts.

How then did Zenodotus edit a text? The question is important because some scholars have argued that if the work of Zenodotus was based on the collation of different versions of the Homeric works (just as an edition of Homer today), these versions must have been previously gathered in Alexandria *by someone else.* This presupposes that the books used by Zenodotus would have taken time to acquire and it is unlikely (it is supposed) that Zenodotus would have had

[93] Mb §30.

[94] Pb §22. At Mb §34, Tzetzes notes scornfully the claim of Heliodorus that Homer was edited (ὀρθωθῆναι) by the seventy-two translators.

[95] Pfeiffer (1968), p. 106.

[96] D.L.IX.113, see comment of Fraser, i (1972) p. 450; ii, p. 650, n. 22.

time to pursue his extensive research (which can be seen from the many references to his work in the Homeric scholia) if he was additionally concerned with the gathering of books. This is especially the case if we consider all that this entails, including the classification and arrangement of the books in the library, which must have preceded – partially at least – the study of these works. In short, if Zenodotus reached his conclusions by the careful consultation of a library of books, it is unlikely that he was responsible for the collecting of these books. If so, he was not the first librarian. On the other hand, if his conclusions were based mainly on personal judgment with minimal evidence from other versions of the text, it is unlikely that a collection of books was established in the library before Zenodotus completed his research. If this is the case, Zenodotus may well have been responsible for the collection of books. If so, it is possible that he was the first librarian in Alexandria.

The underlying assumption in this scholarly debate is that Zenodotus would have used different versions of the text, if they had been available to him; or, if he did not use different versions of the text, these versions were not available for his use. Whether or not this is the case, it is difficult to believe that before the arrival of Zenodotus in Alexandria, the city was virtually bereft of books. This is particularly the case in relation to the Homeric works. In addition to the archeological evidence of Homeric papyri from early Ptolemaic times, we know that scholars lived in Alexandria before the time of Zenodotus. Philitas of Cos, the tutor of Zenodotus (see above) probably came to Alexandria in the last third of the fourth century, and was known both as a poet and a scholar.[97] The latter classification suggests a study of books which he physically owned. This is also inferred from his collection of glosses, since, unless we assume a probably remarkable feat of memory, such a list is dependent on access to a selection of books. The latter must have included the Homeric works, since the glosses of Philitas include rare Homeric terms.[98] It is also difficult to believe that Philitas did not possess in Alexandria copies of the poems of Hermesianax of Colophon, who was his friend.[99] Similarly, Simias of Rhodes, a contemporary of Philitas, who lived in Alexandria under Ptolemy I, is classified in his *Life* only as a

[97] Strabo 14.2.19, ποιητὴς ἅμα καὶ κριτικός.
[98] Pfeiffer (1968), p. 91, see Athen. 9.382b–383b.
[99] Scholium Nic. *Ther.*3 (= test. 20 Kuch).

'grammarian', although the latter also refers to his poems, of which the three 'technographica' are still extant.[100] The three books of glosses that he wrote, of which examples are cited by Athenaeus, could not have been produced without access to texts, probably including Anacreon, whom Simias quotes.[101] This can also be assumed from his poetry, and the poetry of Philitas, which must have been based on an intimate knowledge of earlier poet's work. It is thus reasonable to assume that such earlier works could be handled in Alexandria, even if their number was small.[102] As we know from the histories of scholars throughout the ages, the latter tend to surround themselves with books, especially when they stay for some time in one place.[103] If this were not so, we would have to assume that before the library was established in Alexandria, Philitas taught Zenodotus and the children of Ptolemy I without the benefit of books or that Straton, known in antiquity from Polybius onwards as 'the physicist',[104] agreed to come to Alexandria from Athens, and to work as a tutor to the children of the king and as the teacher of the scientist Aristarchus of Samos,[105] without copies of texts from which he could teach, in addition those that he needed for his extensive personal work.[106] Although therefore modern scholarly opinion is divided concerning the use by Zenodotus of evidence from different versions

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[100] Strabo, 14.2.13, γραμματικός. The *Life* (Westermann (1895) p. 377) states that Simias was a grammarian, and wrote three books of glosses and four books of poems.

[101] *Life*, s.v. Simias (Westermann (1845), p. 377); Athen.vii.327f, a gloss on the Cretan word for 'bream'; xi.472e, citing Anacreon; xi.479c, glossing a word κοτύλη as ἄλεισον, cup or goblet – it is possible that this word was discussed in the library, because Zenodotus also offers a gloss, Athen.vii.478e; xi.491c, on the Peleiai; xv.677c, on the meaning of *Isthmian*.

[102] Pfeiffer (1968), pp. 89, 90, 'Philitas was regarded [by the later Alexandrian scholar-poets] as the first of the new poets to aim at artistic perfection in a limited space . . . [but] the new poetical technique could not be successfully practised without the constant help of the old masters'.

[103] For the existence of libraries in the ancient world, see Parsons (1996). The use of written information, rather than simple reliance on memory, can be seen in the remark of Galen that he regularly consulted the commentary of Zeuxis: 'The things I am about to say were said by Zeuxis in the first of his commentaries on this book and perhaps it would have been better to send those who wish to know this history to that book (ἀναπέμψαι τοὺς βουλομένους τὴν ἱστορίαν ταύτην γνῶναι πρὸς ἐκεῖνο τὸ βιβλίον), as I have been accustomed to do in such circumstances (ὥσπερ εἴωθα ποιεῖν ἐς τοῖς τοιούτοις), *Comm. in Hipp. Epidem.* iii.2,4, from Kühn (1965), p. 605.

[104] Polyb.12.25 c 3, ὁ φυσικός.

[105] Stobaeus, *Ecl.*i 16.I, cited by Fraser, ii (1972), p. 573, n. 151.

[106] Forty-six of his works are listed by D.L.V.59–60.

of a work,[107] this question is largely a distraction in relation to the identity of the first librarian. It can be assumed that some books were available in Alexandria when Zenodotus arrived, even if only a few. It is probably no accident, moreover, that Zenodotus focused his attention on Homer, since Homer was the most widely disseminated author in the Hellenistic world. The argument that he was responsible for the gathering of books – and should therefore be honoured as the first librarian – might carry more weight if he were not mainly associated with Homer,[108] whose works would have been the most readily available in Alexandria even before the library was built.[109] The popularity of Homer may even have contributed to the fact that of all the ancient works collected in the library, only the works of Homer have left traces of the headings used for their classification – it seems that editions were identified from their city of origin, by their approval (sometimes even preparation) by specific scholars or those designated as 'popular'.[110] It is unlikely therefore Alexandria was virtually empty of books before the library was established and this cannot be used as an argument that Zenodotus was the first librarian.

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[107] Pfeiffer, (1968) pp. 110–4 argues that the work of Zenodotus were based on his personal collation of different texts. He defends his opinion that Zenodotus both organised the gathering of books for the library, and also had time and sufficient access to consult earlier versions of the Homeric texts by suggesting that his studies on the latter were made *before* he became chief librarian (see p. 107). If so, texts were available to Zenodotus *before* they were collected for the library (which is argued here). This suggests that the use by Zenodotus of different versions of the text has nothing to do with the question of his position as the first librarian. Nevertheless Pfeiffer claims that Zenodotus 'presumably took part in [the] formidable enterprise [of] collecting and storing of books in Alexandria, as the king chose him to be his first librarian', p. 105. Van der Valk, ii (1964), Chapt. 10, argues that the opinions of Zenodotus were not based on written evidence from other versions of the text and summarises the opinions of earlier scholars on p. 10. For a brief evaluation of the methodology of Zenodotus, see Fraser, i (1972), pp. 450–1.

[108] Zenodotus also worked on other epic and lyric poetry, including Hesiod's *Theogony*, Pindar's *Olympian Odes*, a glossary, a *Life* of Homer and a treatise on the number of days in the Iliad, see Pfeiffer (1968), pp. 115–7.

[109] See Fraser, i (1972), p. 476; ii, p. 690, n. 277.

[110] (1) αἱ κατὰ πόλεις, αἱ πολιτικαί, e.g., ἡ Χία; (2) by scholar, e.g., ἡ Ζηνοδότειος; (3) αἱ καιναί, αἱ δημώδεις, αἱ εἰκαιότεραι. For a list of discussions on different editions of Homer, see Fraser, ii (1972), 483, n. 163.

The Work of Demetrius and Zenodotus Compared

Tzetzes is the only authority who juxtaposes the activities of Zenodotus and Demetrius in Alexandria, and thus implicitly contrasts their roles. Although he reverses the natural order of these activities in his text (Tzetzes begins with a list of the editors of the library, which is interrupted by a reference to the earlier collection of books by Demetrius), the general implication is clear – as far as beginning a library is concerned, the gathering and classification of books (even if the latter is only partially achieved) must precede an analysis of the texts. As one modern scholar significantly notes:

> Modern scholars [who assume that Zenodotus was the first librarian] have been generally startled by the remark [of Tzetzes that Zenodotus, Alexander of Aetolia and Lycophron were editors of text], and that is quite understandable; the "logical" procedure would have been to put the mass of collected books in order, to sort them out, classify and catalogue them and then to compare the manuscripts and revise the texts, not to start immediately with a treatment of the difficult tragic and comic poets. . . . We can appreciate Zenodotus' problem when we realise that he was confronted with . . . a great number of more or less differing copies. . . . Many copies [of Homer] from cities all over the Greek world were assembled in the royal library, even from Massilia in the west and Sinope in the north-east. It is not impossible that Zenodotus, examining manuscripts in the library, selected one [of the many texts] of Homer, which seemed to him to be superior to any other one, as his main guide; its deficiencies he may have corrected from better readings in other manuscripts as well as by his own conjecture. It is hard to imagine any other way. The Italian humanists had to face a similar situation when numerous manuscripts of Latin classics were recovered and they had to prepare their editions; they used to pick out one "codex pervetustus" which they followed and occasionally emended by comparison with other codices as well as their own conjectures.[111]

In view of the nature of the work of Zenodotus, it can be concluded he was not as suitable for the post of first librarian, and that as far as the identity of the latter is concerned, some kind of Demetrius would have to be invented if happily he did not already exist.

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[111] Pfeiffer (1968), pp. 106, 110. But in spite of the logic of his own argument, Pfeiffer claims that Zenodotus was the first librarian, see p. 2 with n. 2.

This accounts for the claim of Tzetzes that whereas Zenodotus and other scholars were associated with scholarly activity linked with the study of specific authors or particular literary genres (for example, Zenodotus is connected with Homeric texts), Demetrius is linked only with the collecting of books. The nature of his work can be seen in ancient snippets of information which show that although certain books were specifically acquired for the library (such as the plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, whose texts were taken from Athens[112]), most books were acquired virtually by chance. For example, in the reign of Ptolemy Euergetes, books that happened to arrive on ships that docked in Alexandria were seized and copied (and only the copies were returned).[113] Similarly, the contents of whole (πάντα) libraries were bought from Athens and Rhodes.[114] By such means, therefore, the library in Alexandria attempted to collect, if possible, 'all the books in the world'.[115] The work of Callimachus in his preparation of 'Catalogues' ('Pinakes') also presupposes a pre-existing collection of a wide, random variety of uncatalogued books. In short, the librarian who 'set up' or 'established' the library would certainly not have limited his collection to particular kinds of composition, or to the works of a single man. Tzetzes does not therefore link Demetrius with a specific author or type of literary work. The wide scope of his work – indicated in the sources by such details as the large sums of money given to Demetrius by the king,[116] and by the two hundred thousand books said to be acquired by Demetrius, which he intended to more than double, making five hundred thousand books in all[117] – would surely have left little time for the kind of painstaking, editorial activity shown by the work of Zenodotus in the scholia. It follows therefore that the very activity of Zenodotus – his editorial work in particular, but also his authorship of original books – also indicates that Zenodotus was unlikely to be the first librarian

[112] Galen, *Commen. in Hipp.Epidem.*iii.2,4.

[113] Galen, *Commen. in Hipp.Epidem.*iii.2,4, cited in Greek by Fraser, i (1972), p. 325; ii, p. 480.

[114] Athen.I.3b. This is placed by Athenaeus in the reign of Ptolemy II, but due to the ancient belief that Ptolemy II founded the library, and not, as is probable, Ptolemy I (see below in the main text), this may be a mistake for Ptolemy I.

[115] Said of Ptolemy II by Aristeas, LetAris.9. Irenaeus, *Adv.Haer.*III.21.2, Rousseau (1974) (= Eusebius, HE.5.8.11), makes this comment of Ptolemy I, with the subtle modification that only the 'best' books should be procured.

[116] LetAris.9.

[117] LetAris.10.

in charge of setting up the library in Alexandria. Although therefore the collecting of books continued long after the time the library was established, it is reasonable to assume that a large number the books (later catalogued by Callimachus) were first acquired by Demetrius. This suggests that it was Demetrius who laid the foundation for the collection in the library, on which others later worked.[118]

Summary of the Evidence

The claim that Zenodotus was the first librarian in Alexandria is based on a misunderstanding of the Suda's entry on Zenodotus, on an unfounded claim based on a second century papyrus, *POxy.*1241, on a confusion concerning a key term in the Suda and Tzetzes' scholium, and a reluctance to accept the implied evidence of Tzetzes when he compares the work of Demetrius and Zenodotus. This has led to the myth that Zenodotus was the first librarian in Alexandria. But proper examination of the texts does not substantiate this claim. It can be concluded that no ancient witness supports the argument that Zenodotus was the first librarian in Alexandria.

In fact two of these texts, the Suda and Tzetzes' Scholium, suggest a contrary view. Both describe Zenodotus as a 'diorthotes' in a context which can only refer to an editor of texts. Simple logic suggests that the main task of the first librarian of a new library was to collect the books, while only the second generation of librarians would be able to devote themselves mainly to editing these books. The Suda also notes that Zenodotus was in charge of more than one library, and we are told (by Epiphanius) that a second library was built after the first. Simple logic again suggests the librarian who was in charge of the earliest branch of the library preceded the

[118] There appears to have been no official title for either Demetrius or Zenodotus, so that the appearance of a title cannot be used as an indication of the primacy of one over the other, or – as is more likely in this case – the development of the post of chief librarian. According to LetAris.9, Demetrius was simply καταστα θεὶς ἐπὶ τῆς τοῦ Βασιλέως βιβλιοθήκης 'put in charge of the library'. Similarly, Josephus states that he was ἐπὶ τῶν βιβλιοθηκῶν τοῦ βασιλέως, 'put in charge of the king's libraries' (there being more than one library, as far as Josephus was concerned). Likewise, according to the Suda, Zenodotus has no official title, but was merely τῶν ἐν Ἀλεχανδρείᾳ βιβλιοθηκῶν προῦστη (Westermann (1845), p. 369). It seems that the first title was given to Apollonius, who was called προστασία τῆς Βιβλιοθήκης (Westermann (1845), p. 51 γ); for further comment, see Fraser, i (1972), p. 322.

librarian in charge of two. According to Irenaeus, only one library was established when the library was founded by Ptolemy I.

This leaves Demetrius as the candidate for first librarian. According to Aristeas, Demetrius was involved with a single library. Moroever, according to the possibly independent testimony of Aristeas, Josephus and Tzetzes, he was a collector of books, the very activity that we would expect the first librarian of the library to pursue. Tzetzes also states that other worthy men were involved, but names only Demetrius, presumably because he was the most important. The evidence of Tzetzes cannot be rejected because of his unreliability in other respects. In this case, his description of Demetrius is confirmed by sources which Tzetzes did not use – Aristeas and Josephus (who may not have been dependent on Aristeas in this respect). The work of Tzetzes is especially useful because he is the only author who compares – by implication – the roles of Zenodotus and Demetrius in the library, and thus helps to confirm their respective pursuits.

Using evidence independent of Aristeas, the earlier chapters of this book suggest that Aristeas is correct when he places the translation of the Pentateuch in the reign of Ptolemy II. He is also probably correct when he claims that Demetrius worked for Ptolemy II, as the evidence against such a relationship is based on a rumour, the reason for whose existence can be deduced. It is thus difficult to avoid the conclusion that Demetrius of Phalerum was in charge of the library under Ptolemy II. If so, the significant disparity in the ages of Demetrius and Zenodotus suggest that Demetrius was appointed to this task by Ptolemy I. In any case, in comparison with Zenodotus, Demetrius of Phalerum was better suited for this role.

The Library Was Founded by Ptolemy I, and Probably Enlarged by Ptolemy II

The first librarian must have been appointed by the king in power when the library was set up. The evidence discussed in the paragraph above suggests that the first librarian was Demetrius of Phalerum and that he was appointed to this task by Ptolemy I. If so, it was Ptolemy I who established the library in Alexandria.

Alternative scenarios make little sense. If Ptolemy II built the library in Alexandria, he would not have first appointed Zenodotus and then Demetrius, since if this were the case, Zenodotus would

have been succeeded by man who was about twenty-five years his senior (see above for the relative ages of Demetrius and Zenodotus), perhaps within the first two years of Ptolemy's reign (according to the conclusions of Chapter 3). Moreover, since Zenodotus undoubtedly spent a considerable time in the library under Ptolemy II, this would mean that he was then re-appointed after Demetrius left. This would suggest that Zenodotus was dismissed after only a short time and then re-appointed, which makes little sense.

Alternatively, assuming (for the sake of argument) that Ptolemy II built the library, then, if Demetrius of Phalerum was a the first librarian, he must have been appointed by Ptolemy II. But this is unlikely to be the case if Demetrius was over seventy years old when Ptolemy II came to the throne.

The evidence can however be reconciled if Demetrius was appointed as first chief librarian for the library established by Ptolemy I. This would be in accord with the age of Demetrius compared to that of Zenodotus, with his past experience as a scholar and politician even before he came to Alexandria – his proven, all-round ability and experience in scholarly and political activities in Athens, where he was a student at the Lycaeum and later governor of the city – and with his close relationship with Ptolemy I.

The claim that Ptolemy I was the founder of the library also confirms the testimony of Irenaeus, the only source who attributes Ptolemy I in this role:

> Ptolemy, the son of Lagus, being very anxious to adorn the library, which he had founded in Alexandria, with all the best extant writings of all men. . . .[119]

This evidence makes sense against the background of peripatetic influence in many aspects of intellectual activity in Alexandria. Such influence is visible particularly in the founding of the Mouseion by Ptolemy I where, according to Strabo, 'men of learning' were housed.[120] It is possible therefore that the library was later established by Ptolemy I, in order to provide material for the literary activities of the 'men of learning' of the Mouseion. We can thus assume that the advice of Demetrius that the king should 'buy and read the books dealing

[119] Eusebius, *HE* 5.8.11 = Irenaeus *Adv. Haer.* III 21.2, Rousseau (1974).

[120] Plut., *Non Posse suaviter vivi secundum Epicurum* 13 = Mor.1095D; Strabo, 17.1.8, μετεχόντων τοῦ Μουσείου φιλολόγων ἀνδρών.

with the office of king a ruler' was given to Ptolemy I before the work of establishing the library had begun.[121]

But if Irenaeus is correct, how do we evaluate the statements of Epiphanius and Syncellus, who claim that the library was established by Ptolemy II? This is also implied by Tzetzes in the Plautine scholium. The relevant texts are cited below:

> *Epiphanius*: After the first Ptolemy, the second who reigned in Alexandria, the Ptolemy called Philadelphus, as has been said was a lover of the beautiful and a lover of learning. He built a library in the same city of Alexandria, in the part called the Bruchion; this is a quarter of the city today lying waste. And he put in charge of the library a certain Demetrius, from Phaleron . . .[122]

> *Syncellus*: Thus Ptolemy Philadelphus, having brought together every book from everywhere in the inhabited world, so to speak, at the instigation of Demetrius of Phalerum, the third law-giver in Athens, an energetic man among the Greeks, among which [books] he also [collected] the writing of the Hebrews (as noted above), established the library in Alexandria in the 132nd Olympiad; [and] when this Olympiad was completed, he [= Ptolemy II] died.[123]

The statement that the library was established by Ptolemy II may be due to confusion in the sources between the building in Alexandria where the library was first housed, and a second building at a different site, where a second branch of the library was stored. The existence of the latter in the time of Ptolemy II is specifically noted in two sources, Epiphanius and Tzetzes, and less specifically in other sources which use a simple plural for the term 'library'.[124] Epiphanius thus states that the first library was housed in the Bruchion and the second was later placed in the Serapeum.[125] Archaeological evidence suggests that the Serapeum in Alexandria was built by Ptolemy III Euergetes and incorporated an earlier Ptolemaic Temple, which may have been built by Ptolemy II, and which may have housed the second branch of the library to which Epiphanius refers.[126] Tzetzes also locates two libraries inside and outside the palace, but does not give

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[121] Plut., *Regum et imperatorum apophthegmata* = Mor.189D.

[122] Epiphanius, *On Weights and Measures*, trans. Dean (1935) §518, 52b (Greek version, §9).

[123] Syncellus §518, Mosshammer (1984), p. 329, lines 3–7.

[124] The evidence is reviewed by Butler (1978), pp. 406–12.

[125] Epiphanius, *On Weights and Measures*. 11, cited Wendland (1900), p. 147; also the Syriac version, see Dean (1935), §53c. Only the Greek text states that the second library was 'later' (ὕστερον) than the first.

[126] Rowe and Rees (1956), pp. 451–2, 505.

any names.[127] Josephus, the Suda and other sources refer to more than one library by using the plural term for 'library', which, in view of Epiphanius and Tzetzes, probably means two.[128] Three of these sources – Epiphanius, Josephus and Tzetzes – associate the two libraries with the time of Demetrius of Phalerum. This directly contradicts the testimony of Aristeas, who refers twice to only one single library, where Demetrius was in charge.[129] It seems that Aristeas refers correctly to a time before the second library was built, when, as Irenaeus records, there was a single library founded by Ptolemy I.[130] The existence of only one library in the time of Demetrius is also implied by the Suda, which links the second library with Zenodotus without mentioning Demetrius.[131] This makes sense if the second branch of the library was built during the time that Zenodotus was in charge, that is, after the early years of the reign of Ptolemy II, probably after the retirement or death of Demetrius of Phalerum. This conclusion is not negated by the contradiction in the Suda which links Apollonius, probably the successor of Zenodotus in Alexandria, with only one library. This may be a mistake which is corrected in the *Life* of Apollonius, which uses the plural term for 'library', thus suggesting that Apollonius was in charge of at least two.[132] There is thus little doubt that a second branch of the library was built, probably under Ptolemy II. This in itself implies that a single branch of the library existed at an earlier time.

It is possible that the earliest branch was housed within the building previously constructed for the Mouseion, whereas the second branch was placed in a separate building, probably the Serapeum.[133] This would account for the confusion in the sources. Since the building that housed the Mouseion was called 'the Mouseion', the fact that it also housed the library might have been obscured.[134] On the other hand, the building which housed the second, later branch of

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[127] Plautine Scholium, Pb §20, Mb §29.

[128] Josephus, Ant.XII.12, the Loeb translation suggests only one library; for the Suda on Zenodotus, Westermann (1945), p. 369; Tzetzes, Scholia Pb §20, Mb §29.

[129] LetAris.9, καταστα θεὶς ἐπὶ τῆς τοῦ βασιλέως βιβλιοθήκης . . .; §29, τὴν συμπλήρωσιν τῆς βιβλιοθήκης βιβλίων . . .

[130] For Irenaeus, Eusebius, HE.5.8.11.

[131] Westermann (1945), p. 369, cited above.

[132] Westermann (1845) p. 51 β′, the Life of Apollonius (βίος Ἀπολλωνίου): ὡς καὶ τῶν βιβλιοθηκῶν τοῦ Μουσείου ἀξιωθῆναι αὐτὸν. . . .

[133] See Fraser, i (1972), pp. 324–5.

[134] The name of the building is noted by Herodas, *Mim.*i.31.

the library might well have been noted by a more distinctive name. If the latter was associated with Ptolemy II, then, this king could have been credited with founding the library. It could then correctly be said that whereas the library was founded by Ptolemy I, in fact it was built by Ptolemy II.

However the literary confusion is explained, the evidence considered here suggests that, as Irenaeus states, the library was established by Ptolemy I. This is in line with the possibility deduced in Chapter 2 that a decision to translate the Pentateuch was one of the earliest decisions in the reign of Ptolemy II. It is unlikely that such a dicision could have been taken if the library was not already established by Ptolemy I.

Conclusion

The earlier chapters of this book have used the dates of the Church Fathers to show that Aristeas correctly places the translation in the time of Ptolemy II, and that it was probably only a simple mistake in chronology that has cast doubt on his claim that Demetrius of Phalerum was employed as librarian in the court of Ptolemy II. The discussion above has confirmed the role of Demetrius described by Aristeas, and has disproved the suggestion that Zenodotus of Ephesus was the first chief librarian. Two of the texts which have been used by scholars to champion the claim of Zenodotus do not even argue his case (one has been misinterpreted and the other damaged beyond repair), while two other texts promote the claim of Demetrius for this role. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Demetrius, rather than Zenodotus, was appointed as the first, chief librarian by Ptolemy I, and that after the death of Ptolemy I, Demetrius worked for his successor Ptolemy II. It seems that Demetrius retired, perhaps soon after the completion of his project to translate the Hebrew Pentateuch into Greek, and was succeeded by Zenodotus.

If Demetrius was the first librarian of the Library, he must have been appointed by Ptolemy I. Moreover, since the king who appointed the first librarian must be the king by whom the library was established, it follows that the library in Alexandria was established by Ptolemy I.

CHAPTER FIVE

WHO WANTED A TRANSLATION OF THE PENTATEUCH IN GREEK?

Who wanted a translation of the Pentateuch in Greek? This question may seem superfluous in view of the many references in this book to the *Letter of Aristeas*, which notes that Demetrius of Phalerum advised Ptolemy II to commission a translation of the Hebrew Pentateuch to Greek.[1] According to Aristeas, Ptolemy accepted this suggestion, not only to increase his library, but also, if Aristeas can again be believed, in order to win great renown and attract scholars to his court.[2] This means that the initiative for a translation came from the Greeks. This explanation was accepted and repeated in the seventy or so accounts of the history of the translation written in ancient times.[3]

But the last two hundred or so years a new theory emerged, in which the account in Aristeas plays little part. This arose mainly from the work of the Oxford Regius Professor of Greek, Humphrey Hody, who rejected the historicity of Aristeas in his book *Contra Historiam LXX Interpretum Aristeae nomine inscriptuam Dissertatio*, published in 1684.[4] As a result of this work, many scholars now assert that the translation arose from the needs of the Jews, and has little to do with a request from the Greeks. It is claimed that a large majority of Jews of Egypt could not understand Hebrew, and therefore requested a written translation of the Bible in Greek, particularly for liturgical use.[5] The apparent involvement of Ptolemy II has been

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[1] For a list of texts and studies on Aristeas, see Brock et al. (1973), pp. 44–7; Dogniez (1955), pp. 18–22.

[2] LetAris.39 μεγάλην δόξαν, 318,321.

[3] The accounts are listed by Collins, N. (1992), pp. 479–84.

[4] It seems that the earliest challenges to Aristeas were made by Luis Vives, on St Augustine's, *Dei Civitate Dei*, pp. xviii, 42 (1522), and Joseph Scalinger, 'Animadversiones in Chronological Eusebii', para. 1734, in *Thesaurus Temporum Eusebii Pamphili* (Leyden, 1606).

[5] Many scholars have rejected the account of Aristeas, e.g., Harvey (1857), p. 112; Swete (1900), p. 20; Kahle (1959), p. 209, whose argument is based on Hody and the fact that 'the Jewish Communities in Egypt . . . no longer understood

explained in several ways. For example, Aristeas may be partly correct when he claims that Ptolemy wanted to increase his collection of books. Or else Ptolemy may feature as a symbol of Hellenistic approval for the literature of the Jews.[6] Or perhaps Ptolemy needed to know the laws of the Jewish subjects that he ruled.[7] Whatever the case, this theory asserts that the translation had little to do with the demands of the Greeks, but was made to satisfy the needs of the Jews.

Hebrew'; Jellicoe (1968), p. 55; Smallwood (1976), p. 123; NTTRU, 5 (1977), p. 47. The comment of Walter (1989) p. 385, is typical: 'The Jews of the Diaspora, especially in Egypt, felt the need of a Greek translation of their Holy Scripture, because *obviously* (sic!) only a minority of Jews in that Greek-speaking environment were still capable of reading and understanding Hebrew'. Similarly, Gastner (1925) pp. 112ff, who suggests that the request of an Egyptian king for a copy of the Jewish Law for an enrichment of his library must be assigned 'to the domain of legend'. It is an example of the 'apologetic tendency so characteristic of the whole of Hellenistic literature'. Dorival (1987), pp. 9–26, rejects Aristeas on the grounds that there is no evidence that pagan authors consulted the Septuagint, and the few references in pagan literature to Jewish biblical texts come from an oral source. Therefore the translation could not have been put into the library. But this is an argument from silence. It is possible that the relevant literature has not survived. According to Aristeas, Demetrius of Phalerum read aloud the translation (LetAris.308) and it is possible that he refered to its contents in one of his many works which have been lost – according to Diogenes Laertius, Demetrius surpassed all the contemporary peripatetics in the number of his works and their total length (D.L.V.80), but only a few fragments of his books have survived. Some of the titles recorded by Diogenes Laertius suggest that they might have incorporated material from the translation, e.g., *On Laws, On Customs*. Alternatively, the silence of pagan literature suggests that although the translation was in the library, it was not consulted by many non-Jews, in spite of the publicity surrounding its making, perhaps because the literature is so different from the classical Greek works, and was therefore unattractive. It can also be argued that if the translation was produced for the benefit of the Jews, there would probably have been many references in pagan literature. This is because there is evidence of significant contact between Jews and sympathetic pagans, who might have cited the Greek Jewish Scriptures in a positive way, if they had been exposed to them. According to Philo, many non-Jews took part in the celebration on the Pharos (De Mos.II.41), which suggests that they must have heard at least parts of the translation, which must surely have been read at this celebration, and some may have written works that have been lost. Philo also notes contact between Jews and Gentiles (Quaestiones in Exodum 2.2, see the comment of Treblico (1991), p. 149). In the first century CE, the presence of non-Jews in Jewish congregations is noted four times in *Acts*, Acts 2:11–12, 6:5, 13:43, 14:1. The lack of citations in pagan literature may thus be taken as proof that the translation was *not* made for the Jews.

Those who support Aristeas, that the translation was made through the initiative of the Greeks, include: Bickerman (1976), pp. 142–3, 167–9; Modrzejewski (1955), pp. 101, 103–5; Barthélemy (1974); Schürer, Vol 3 (1986), 475; For recent surveys of Septuagint research see Dogniez (1995), pp. 7–8

[6] For example, Foakes and Lake (1920), p. 153; Orlinsky (1989), pp. 141–2.

[7] Modrzejewski (1955), pp. 104–11.

This answer to the question of 'why?' has become almost a credo of faith among many scholars today. It is however only supposition. Apart from the fact that it almost completely denies Aristeas, who may be the closest of our sources to the time of the translation, it is completely without specific textual support, even from Jewish sources such as Philo and Josephus. The theory is based solely on an assumed analogy with targum, the ancient translation of the Bible in Aramaic, that became established after the Jewish return from Babylon in 438 BCE. But whereas the Jewish sources were happy enough to record that the lack of Hebrew inspired the Aramaic targum, nowhere is this stated for the Bible in Greek.[8] There is no doubt of course that many Jews of Egypt in the third century BCE had little understanding of the sacred Hebrew text. But as the following discussion will show, this is irrelevant to the question in hand. The evidence that exists, and which will be considered below, suggests not only that Jewish ignorance of Hebrew was peripheral at the most, but that the Jews were actively opposed to the plan.

Details From Aristeas Which Imply a Greek Initiative for the Translation

The main theme in Aristeas must be completely rejected if the translation was initiated through a proposal of the Jews. In particular, the translation could not have been inspired by Demetrius of Phalerum, acting with the support of Ptolemy II. The earlier dicussion in this book has shown that, in theory at least, they could have taken part. The date of the translation in 281 BCE falls within the reign of Ptolemy II, as Aristeas states, and the ancient rumour which removes Demetrius of Phalerum from his court flies in the face of much positive, independent evidence, both direct and indirect.

There are also several, incidental details in the *Letter of Aristeas* which do not make sense unless the translation was originally a project of the Greeks. They could all be dismissed as fabrications of Aristeas. But this still leaves the problem of why they are there. Why for example should Aristeas show how Demetrius of Phalerum supervised the translation, unless this took place? How does this show the approval of the Greeks, or reveal any of the motives that modern

[8] Ezra 4:7.

scholars have ascribed to the *Letter of Aristeas*? Surely such details cannot be dismissed merely on an intuitive feeling that they never took place.

1. *The Detail of Demetrius*

It is has often been observed that many details in Aristeas are irrelevant to the story of the translation, and others may be historically incorrect. But it is also important to observe that these details do not detract from the main theme of his tale, the translation of the Hebrew Pentateuch into Greek. In any case, a mixture of fact, fantasy and irrelevancy is not unknown in ancient texts, for example, the Greek apocryphal books of Esdras I and II, and need not testify that the main story is untrue, however prominent and outrageous they seem. For example, it is not important to the story of the translation told by Aristeas whether or not the alleged victory at Cos of Ptolemy II was actually a defeat, or if the presence of Menedemus is an anachronism, or that the historian Theopompus and the tragedian Theodectus relate stories which are difficult to believe.[9] This also applies to such events as the seven-day banquet and the speech of the High priest regarding the Jewish dietary laws, although they take up more space in the *Letter* than the story of the translation which merits only about seven of the 322 paragraphs of the text. The imbalance was noted by Aristeas himself: 'If I have dwelt at length on these matters, Philocrates [the brother of Aristeas, to whom the document is addressed], I beg your pardon'.[10] In other words, the many irrelevant, and possibly unhistorical details in the *Letter of Aristeas* do not prove that the main story of Aristeas is not correct.

There is one detail however that is likely to be true. This is the 'detail' of Demetrius of Phalerum, who plays a major role in Aristeas, but could easily be omitted without leaving a trace. Philo for example completely omits Demetrius and refers only to the person of Ptolemy II.[11] For Aristeas however Demetrius is pivotal. He appears in all the scenes which take place in Alexandria – the *Letter of Aristeas* is virtually a diary of Demetrius – while Ptolemy II is merely a bene-

[9] LetAris.180, 200, 318. For a fuller list of objections to the historicity of Aristeas, see Wendland (1903), pp. 92–3.

[10] LetAris.295.

[11] Philo, De Mos.II.31–44.

factor for his deeds. Unless therefore the inclusion of Demetrius was an historical fact, it is difficult to explain why he features at all. It has been argued that Aristeas uses Demetrius merely as a symbol of Hellenistic approval for the literature of the Jews.[12] But this does not explain, for example, why his role eclipses that of the king, or even why Aristeas needs two Hellenistic approvers, Demetrius of Phalerum and Ptolemy II. The inclusion of Demetrius only lends weight to the evidence of Aristeas that the translation was made at his request.

2. *The Roles of Demetrius in the Translation*

This conclusion is strengthened when we analyse his roles in relation to the translation. Why should Aristeas have given him such tasks if the translation resulted from a request of the Jews?

One of the most astonishing of Demetrius' roles occurs during the ceremony on the Pharos, when he read the translation to 'the community of the Jews', at the event to celebrate the completion of the text. According to Aristeas, his audience included the senior officials of the Jews, including the priests, the translators, the politeuma, and the leaders of the people, in order to celebrate the translated text:

> When it [= the translation] was completed Demetrius assembled the company of the Jews in the place where the task of the translation had been finished and read it to all, in the presence of the translators . . . the priests, elders of the translators, . . . the politeuma and the leaders of the people . . .[13]

If the translation was composed for synagogue use – probably the only reason that the Jews would have asked for a translation in the third century BCE – the ceremony on the Pharos must have sanctified the text, and the reading of the translation was integral to this aim. But Demetrius of Phalerum was an active worshipper of Sarapis, for whom he composed hymns.[14] It is thus difficult to explain why the a pagan was given the honour of reading the translation, if a religious ceremony took place. If a religious ceremony took place, it must have somehow sanctified the text. But what religious system

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[12] For example, Foakes and Lake (1920), p. 153; Orlinsky (1989), pp. 141–2.

[13] LetAris.308–10.

[14] According to Diogenes Laertius, Demetrius composed to paeons to Sarapis, D.L.V.76.

would permit a complete outsider to sanctify a religious text? The fact that Demetrius was allowed such a role can only means that as far as the Jews were concerned, the ceremony on the Pharos was not religious in any way. This suggests that at the time that the translation was composed, it was not intended for liturgical use. It is even possible that the Jews exploited a natural wish of Demetrius to play a major role at this ceremonial event, in order to underline this fact.

Similarly, it is difficult to accept that any religious group would allow an outsider a role in the composition of a religious text. This is described for Demetrius when he co-ordinated the version that the translators had agreed.

> The result of their [= the translators'] agreement was thus made into writing under the direction of Demetrius.[15]

This role of Demetrius is confirmed twice more by Aristeas, in the letter of Demetrius to Ptolemy II, and in the letter of Ptolemy II to the Jewish High Priest:

> If you approve, O King, a letter shall be written to the high priest at Jerusalem, asking him to dispatch men of most exemplary lives and mature experience, skilled in matter pertaining to their Law, six in number from each tribe, in order that *after the examination of the text agreed by the majority and the achievement of accuracy in the translation* we may produce an outstanding version in a manner worthy both of the contents and of your [= Ptolemy II] purpose.[16]

> You will therefore act well, and in a manner worthy of our zeal, by selecting elders of exemplary lives, with experience of the Law and the ability to translate it, six from each tribe, *so that an agreed version might be found from the large majority* in view of the great importance of the matters under consideration.[17]

It could perhaps be argued that the involvement of Demetrius reveals Ptolemy's price for his co-operation with the Jews. But if this assumption is made, all kinds of speculative questions are raised. For example, why should Demetrius be involved in a translation that the Jews wanted for themselves? Is it likely that the Jews would have proceeded with the task of the translation under such conditions? Such

[15] LetAris.302.
[16] LetAris.32.
[17] LetAris.39.

enquiries may have value, but is seems more reasonable to accept the text as it stands, especially when the evidence is confirmed in other sections in Aristeas, as will be seen in the paragraphs below. The role of Demetrius in this aspect of the translation is thus a further indication that at the time of the translation there was no Jewish intention to use the text, which means – once again – that the translation could not have arisen from the needs of the Jews.

It is also astonishing – if indeed the request for a translation came from the Jews – that those of the Jews who wanted the text of the translation asked Demetrius to provide a copy of the text.[18] It was well known in the ancient world that a copy of a text was inferior to the original because of the changes, both deliberate and accidental, that the process of copying almost inevitably incurred. Such changes were avoided by Ptolemy III by keeping the original manuscripts of the classical Greek plays, and returning only the copies.[19] The Jews had their own system for preventing alterations in a religious text.[20] If they had wanted a copy of the translation, it must be assumed therefore that they themselves would have supervised the production, rather than delegating the task to a non-Jewish Greek.

It is also revealing in this respect that Demetrius of Phalerum was asked to provide a copy of the translation for the 'leaders' of the Jews:

> [Having given an ovation to the translators] likewise they gave an ovation to Demetrius and asked him, now that he had transcribed the whole Law, to give a copy to their leaders.[21]

This detail confirms the Jewish custom that the authority for a Jewish text came, as might be expected, from the 'leaders' of the community. Rabban Gamaliel from the first century CE thus rejected a copy of the Targum of Job.[22] But Demetrius can hardly be described as a leader of the Jews. Why then was he asked to prepare a copy of a text for the Jewish leaders, unless this text was not considered by the leaders as sacred or holy in any way?

The picture of Demetrius is wholly consistent. All the way through, it is Demetrius in charge. How could the Jews have allowed him

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[18] The term λραψάντα means 'copy' in the context of LetAris.309.
[19] Galen, *Comm. in Hipp.Epidem.iii*, reprinted by Fraser, ii (1972), pp. 480–1.
[20] Babylonian Talmud: b.Sof.1–10, b.Meg.18b.
[21] LetAris.309.
[22] At b.Shab.115a.

such authority if the translation was intended for religious use? The only explanation that makes sense is that the translation was not intended for religious use. But if this is the case, the Jews could not have requested that a translation be made.

3. *The Translation was Destined for a Non-Jewish Source*

Aristeas and Josephus both suggest that the translation was destined for the library of Alexandria and Epiphanius specifically notes this fact.[23] This clearly indicates that the translation could not have been made for the use of the Jews.

The library was part of the Temple of the Muses, a religious institution in the eyes of the Greeks.[24] For the Jews however, it could only have been considered a most heathen place. Even if a copy of the translation in the library was the price extracted by Ptolemy for his help, it is difficult to believe that the Jews would have proceeded with a project in which a carefully prepared version of this most sacred Jewish text which included numerous references to the name of God, would be housed in a building which promoted practices and ideas totally abhorrent to Judaism, and which would be handled in a way that could not reflect Jewish veneration and belief. If the translation was made expressly for the library, it is unlikely that the project itself was conceived by the Jews.[25]

Evidence for Jewish Opposition to the Translation

In addition to the details examined above, a careful evaluation of some of the events described by Aristeas suggests not only that the project of the translation was initiated by the Greeks, but that the Jews attempted to thwart the plan. The Jewish opposition recorded by Aristeas seems not to have been noted by scholars in the past. But the evidence of Aristeas cannot be dismissed unless a reasonable explanations for the following problems are found.

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[23] LetAris.10; Josephus, Ant.XII.36,48; Epiphanius, in Dean (1935), §53c.

[24] Pfeiffer (1968), p. 98.

[25] Tertullian, *c.*160–225, alleges that 'to this day in the temple of Serapis, Ptolemy's library is displayed with the Hebrew originals', Apolog.18.8. Even if this is true, this depicts a situation about five hundred years after the translation.

1. *The Letter of the High Priest*

Writing in response to Ptolemy's command to translate the Hebrew Pentateuch into Greek, the High Priest Eleazar notes that the translation was: (1) 'unnatural', (2) that the Jews would co-operate only to fulfil Ptolemy's 'desire' and (3) that the translation would be made in the way that Ptolemy proposed – or, as stated by Aristeas, the way that was 'expedient' to him – that is, not in the way that the Jews would have liked. The relevant sections are numbered below:

> Everything which is to your advantage, (1) even if it is unnatural (εἰ παρὰ φύσιν ἐστίν), we will carry out . . . The whole multitude [of the Jews] made supplication that it should come to pass (2) for you entirely as you desire (σοι γένηται καθὼς προαιρῇ) . . . and that the translation of the sacred Law should come to pass (3) in a manner expedient to you (σοι συμφερόντως).[26]

It could be argued that the lack of warmth in these phrases is merely a reflection of diplomatic politeness in a letter from the priest to the king. Or else it could be claimed that the High Priest was opposed to the method of translation requested by the king, rather than opposed to the principle itself. Whatever the case, although the speech of the priest also includes diplomatic, adulatory comments towards Ptolemy II, the thoughts detailed above hardly express the positive delight which could be expected if Ptolemy was asking for the very translation that – as many scholars assume – the Jews wanted for themselves. Even if the project was carried out according to the wishes of the king rather than those of the Jews, perhaps as the price of the cooperation of the king, why should the translation be described in this way? As one scholar admits '*we may see [here] a hint of misgivings at the prospect of translating Scriptures into an alien language*'.[27] But why should misgivings be voiced by the Jews?

2. *The Freeing of the Jewish Slaves*

Perhaps the clearest piece of evidence that the Jews did not want a written translation of the Pentateuch in Greek can be seen in the story of the freeing of the Jewish slaves. According to Aristeas, Ptolemy asked the Jews to make a translation, to which the Jews agreed on

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[26] LetAris.44–45.

[27] Hadas (1951), p. 117, in relation to 'even if it is unnatural'.

condition that the king would free his Jewish slaves.[28] But if the original request for a translation came from the Jews (as it is fashionable to allege) it is then totally inexplicable that having gained at least a hint of royal co-operation for the translation, the Jews then made a second demand – that the king should free his slaves. It is especially curious when we take into account that this Jewish demand *had been refused several times in the past*, and was thus likely to be refused yet again:

> Now I [= Aristeas] thought was the opportune moment for proffering the matter concerning which *I had often petitioned* Sosibius of Tarentum and Andreas, chiefs of the body guard, namely the emancipation of those who had been carried away from Judaea by the king's father.[29]

The reluctance of Ptolemy to free his Jewish slaves is no surprise. No ruler can be expected to free his slaves, especially when the number is huge, in this case over one hundred thousand including thirty thousand trained, working soldiers, who had originally been captured from 'Coele-Syria and Phoenicia' by Ptolemy I.[30] In the event, the action cost Ptolemy six hundred and sixty talents.[31] But if a request for the translation arose from the Jews, it was surely unwise to seek the help of the king in making the translation, to accept his help, and then to make a further, outrageous demand whose very request might surely endanger the king's earlier pledge, especially in view of its refusal in the past. It seems that Ptolemy's agreement to the Jewish request to free the Jewish slaves was a condition for the co-operation of the Jews in a project that they had initiated themselves. This is complete nonsense. Those who ask favours do not place conditions of acceptance on the person from whom the favour is asked. However these events are viewed, they do not make sense if the request for the translation came from the Jews.

The only logical explanation for the Jewish request must be deduced from the facts that Aristeas states: Ptolemy II asked the Jews to translate their holy text. The Jews of Alexandria, a minority people with

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[28] LetAris.12–27.

[29] LetAris.12.

[30] LetAris.12–27. Hadas (1951), pp. 28–32, 104, suggests that the decree of Ptolemy II, LetAris.22–5 may be based on P. Rainier 24,552. Philo's omission of this request (Mos.II.25–44) is discussed below in the main text.

[31] LetAris.27. For an estimated total cost, see Westermann (1929), p. 40. The cost of a slave is noted in *PMich.*6947, see Koenen (1984).

probably no citizenship rights, wanted to refuse, but could not refuse in an obvious way.[32] What could be done? Before responding, they asked Ptolemy a favour in return. The favour they asked was one of great magnitude, which Ptolemy had already refused several times in the past. His anticipated further refusal would provide an excellent excuse for Jews to dissociate themselves from the royal request. Ptolemy however unexpectedly agreed, and the Jews were obliged to agree in return. The Jewish appeal for the freedom of the slaves was thus a subtle attempt to refuse Ptolemy's command.

The Jewish demand for the freedom of the slaves thus reveals the strength of Jewish opposition to Ptolemy's request. It is not important to know whether or not this request was ever made. Extensive discussion on this aspect of the tale has diverted attention from the equally important question of the underlying reason for the Jewish demand in the context of the story that Aristeas relates.[33] It is safe to say that the reason proposed here is the only reason that makes sense in the context. It suggests at the very least that the Jews did not want to take part in Ptolemy's scheme to translate their holiest text into Greek.

3. *A Mixed Jewish Reception to the Completed Translation*

According to Aristeas, when the translation was complete, a group of Jewish people (τὸ πλῆθος) asked Demetrius to provide their leaders with a copy of the text:

> And they [τὸ πλῆθος][34] asked him [= Demetrius] to have a transcription [μεταλάψαντα] of the entire Law made and to present it to their leaders [τοῖς ἡγουμένοις].[35]

This request has several layers of significance. None bolster the argument that the translation was made at the request of the Jews. Most obviously it indicates that when the translation was complete, the Jews did not possess a copy of their own. This is strange if motivation for the translation came from the needs of Jews, and having made a translation, they had none themselves.[36] But if the translation was

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[32] Fraser, i (1972), pp. 56–7; Smallwood (1976), pp. 227–30.

[33] Hadas (1951), pp. 28–32, suggests that the the decree of Ptolemy II, LetAris.22–5, may be based on P. Rainier 24,552.

[34] LetAris.308.

[35] LetAris.309.

[36] Hadas (1951), p. 221, exuses the anomaly with a speculation: 'On the assumption

made as the result of a Jewish request, why should special permission be needed? The permission of the king could surely not be taken for granted. It is reasonable to assume that a copy for the Jews would have been part of the original agreement with Ptolemy II. Moreover, the lack of a copy was no accident. This can be seen from the fact that the request for a copy did not come from the Jewish leaders, but from those named by Aristeas as τὸ πλῆθος, 'the multitude'. It can only be concluded that the Jewish leaders themselves were not interested to own a copy of their own.

It is also surprising that those who wanted a translation did not ask the Jewish leaders, but went to Demetrius, asking him to present the Jewish leaders with a copy of the text. This must indicate strong official Jewish opposition to the translation. If there were people more influential in Alexandria on Jewish matters than the Jewish leaders, surely this request would have been addressed to them, rather than the non-Jewish Demetrius, who can have had little influence with the Jews on religious concerns. A similar, unlikely situation might be visualised today if the Pope were asked by lay members of the Jewish community to recommend to the Jewish leaders a translation of the Bible which he himself had helped produce. Such a desperate request could only be made if all other avenues within Judaism were closed. There is little escape from the conclusion that the Jewish leaders were firmly opposed to owning a copy of the translation. While this may not mean that they opposed the translation of the Pentateuch into Greek, it scarcely suggests that the Jews enthusiastically asked for this book.

The identity of those who opposed the translation is implied by Aristeas' description of the ceremony on the Pharos. According to Aristeas, only '*some of* (τῶν ἀπὸ) the corporate body and the leaders of the people' joined 'the priests and the elders of the translators', to make a declaration for the preservation of the text:

> When the rolls had been read the priests and the elders of the translators and *some of* the corporate body and the leaders of the people rose up and said . . .[37]

Those Jewish officials who refused to take part must surely be associated with those who had originally opposed the translation and

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that the work was in fact done for the king, it becomes necessary for a special request to be made that a copy be made for their rulers, i.e., the heads of the Jewish community'.

[37] LetAris.310.

had suggested the elaborate, counter stratagem for the freedom of the slaves, but who were eventually overruled. That this detail is significant is confirmed by Josephus who, for his own purpose, replaces the phrase 'some of', with 'all' (see below). Although therefore some of the Jews may have recognised the potential, practical use of the translation at the time it was composed, and were driven to ask Demetrius for a copy of the work, others from the 'corporate body' and the leaders in Alexandria were opposed to the translation to such an extent that, even though present at the relevant ceremony, they refused to support an official declaration for the preservation of the text.

In short, if the Jewish leaders did not keep a copy of the text, had no intention of owning a text, and some would not even declare in public that the text should be preserved, it can hardly be claimed that the motivation for the translation came from the Jews.

4. *Different Jewish attitudes to the translation*
Two layers in the Letter of Aristeas §308–§311

The initiative of Ptolemy rather than the Jews is also indicated by a comparison of the two Jewish declarations which are cited in the present *Letter of Aristeas* in the description of the ceremony on the Pharos, which marked the completion of the translation into Greek.

The discussion above indicates that the Jewish leaders of Jerusalem and Alexandria were initially reluctant to comply with Ptolemy's request. Nevertheless, the presence of the translators and the Jewish priests and other dignitaries of Alexandria at the ceremony on the Pharos suggests that the final translation aroused a certain respect. But this official Jewish presence cannot be taken to mean that the translation was intended for official, Jewish use, or that it was considered as holy in any way. This has been deduced from the fact that the ceremony was held on the Pharos, 'in the place where the translation had been finished', rather than in the more convenient situation of Alexandria.[38] This would have avoided the need for a large number of people to cross the Heptasadion and to proceed to the northern place where the translation was made.[39] According to this theory, holding the ceremony on the Pharos follows Jewish tradition that the canonisation of a text should take place on the spot

[38] LetAris.308.
[39] LetAris.301.

where the text was received, just as the ceremony for the acceptance of the Hebrew Pentateuch, which was conducted where it was received at Sinai.[40] But surely the Torah was canonised at Sinai simply because the Jews were at Sinai when the Torah was received? In any case, the impression that some kind of religious ceremony took place on the Pharos cannot be correct in view of the fact that the non-Jewish Demetrius of Phalerum read the translation to the assembled crowd. As noted above, it is difficult to believe that an ancient and conservative religious system such as Judaism would organise a religious ceremony in which a pagan outsider took a leading role, especially when, at this event, he read aloud the very text that was the focus of the ceremony itself. The participation of Demetrius proves almost certainly that no Jewish, religious ceremony took place. This means that the event on the Pharos can not have sanctified the translation. At the most, therefore, it was a ceremony of respect and recognition for a unique achievement, probably the first written translation of the holiest Jewish text, which had been produced with such great effort and expense.[41] This was appreciated by those who asked Demetrius for a copy of the text.

It is against this background that the first declaration of the Jews at the ceremony on the Pharos must be evaluated. This is italicised in the section below:

> When the rolls had been read, the priests and the elders of the translators and some of the corporate body and the leaders of the people rose up and said, "*Since the translation has been well and piously interpreted* (καλῶς καὶ ὁσίως διηρμνήνευται) *and is in every respect accurate* (ἠκριβωμένως), *it is right that it should remain in its present form* (καλῶς ἔχον ἐστίν) *and that no revision should take place* (μὴ γένηται μηδεμία διασκευή)". When all had assented to what had been said, he bade [ἐκέλευσε] that an imprecation be pronounced, according to their custom upon anyone who should revise the text . . .[42]

The underlying assumption of this declaration is that the text would be copied. Its specific words declare respect for the integrity of the text, and expressing the hope that deliberate changes should not be made when copying the text. It is hardly necessary to note, espe-

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[40] LetAris.308, Exod 24:1ff; compare Exod 19:1ff; this is suggested by Orlinsky (1989), pp. 543–4.

[41] On the unique event of the translation, see Brock (1969), no page number, reprinted (1974), p. 542, cited below.

[42] LetAris.310–11.

cially for students of the *Septuagint*, that this makes sense. A special danger of *deliberate* change surely existed for the new translation. However much respect or honour it might receive, such a work could only have been considered as a pale echo and mere offshoot of a more illustrious work, rather than a text with an authority of its own. The people involved in the translation were surely too close to the practical difficulties of the production, such as the negotiations to bring over the translators, and the days when Philo could claim that each of seventy-two translators had separately composed an identical text were many years away.[43] At this stage therefore, the words of the translation were entirely dependent on specific interpretations of its Hebrew source. It is thus reasonable to expect, as this declaration confirms, that before the translation at achieved an authoritative status of its own, it was prone to as many deliberate changes as there were differences of opinion on the meanings of its source.[44] The first Jewish declaration reported by Aristeas thus reveals nothing more than a recognition of the dangers that awaited the new text whenever it was copied, along perhaps with respect for the translation as an achievement which should be preserved. There is no indication at this stage in its history that the translation was intended for liturgical use, or was given divine status of any kind.

This accounts for the fact that it was Demetrius, not the Jews, who ordered that a curse should be uttered against anyone who revised the text. The instigator of this curse is usually obscured in editions of *The Letter of Aristeas* on the assumption that the curse was commanded by the Jews, although there is no evidence that the Jews ever followed such a procedure in anticipation of a change in the biblical text. The manuscript εκελευσεν is thus read as εκελευσαν by editors of the text, citing Josephus in support.[45] But this argument is weak. Josephus indeed uses this verb in the plural, he makes no reference to a curse, so that the term ἐκέλευσαν appears in a different context, and only superficial similarities exist:

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[43] Philo, De Mos.II.37. The relative chronologies of Aristeas and Philo is discussed below.

[44] Evidence of early differences of opinion are collected by Bickerman (1976), pp. 145–6, 151. Katz (1950), p. 5 notes that 'the LXX with misunderstandings of all kinds'. Philo refers to the difficulties in the Pentateuch at Som.II.127 as μὴ τρανές, and presumably refers to the Greek translation.

[45] Also by Eusebius. See for example the note in Hadas (1951), p. 221, who cites Josephus, Ant.XII.109. For the significance of this alleged 'alteration' by Josephus, see below.

Aristeas, §311	Josephus, Ant.XII.109
There was general approval of what they said,	Accordingly, when all had approved of this idea,
and *he commanded* (ἐκελέυσεν) that a curse should be laid as was their custom [καθὼς ἔθος αὐτοῖς ἐστιν]	*they ordered* (ἐκέλευσαν) that
on anyone who altered the version by any addition or change to any part of the written text or any deletion either. Josephus.	if anyone saw any further addition made to the text of the law, of anything omitted, from it,
	he should examine it, and made it known and correct it.

The common modern editorial emendation is not contraindicated by the plural possessive adjective in the Aristean phrase 'according to *their* αὐτοῖς custom'. In the context, Demetrius merely gives the order on behalf of those for whom he worked.[46]

If the translation was made for the benefit of the Greeks – as is argued here – it makes sense that the Greeks – here represented by Demetrius – should ensure that no changes should be made to the text. The well-intentioned emendation of editors has thus contributed to the general distrust of Aristeas, and has obscured an important detail in Aristeas' text.

Let us now turn to the second declaration of the Jews cited in the *Letter of Aristeas*. This appears merely to elaborate the first, and when comments are made, is interpreted in this way.[47] But in the light of Jewish commentaries and belief, the second declaration is more significant than might appear. Unlike the first declaration, the second declaration specifies precisely that there should be no 'addition', transposition' or 'excision' of the translated Greek text:

> [The Jewish community forbade] adding or transposing anything whatever in what had been written down, or by making any excision.[48]

As scholars have noted, these words echo the text of Deut 4:2 and Deut 12:32, 'Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you,

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[46] A similar thought is voiced in Rev 22:18–19.
[47] See for example, Kahle (1959), p. 211; Bickerman (1976), p. 143.
[48] LetAris.311.

neither shall you diminish it . . .'. Within Jewish tradition this edict is understood as an absolute command to preserve the integrity of the Hebrew Pentateuch which (according to traditional Jewish belief) records the original words of God.[49] In typical rabbinic style which proved practical examples rather than theoretical principles, the tannaitic commentary on Deuteronomy thus notes:

> Whence do we learn that if one has already commenced to recite the priestly blessing, he should not say, Since I have already commenced the blessing, I will go on to say, The Lord, God of you fathers, make you a thousand times (so many more as ye are, and bless you) [Deut 1:11]? From the expression "this word" [at Deut 4:2] [which means] do not add even one word.[50]

The application of this principle to the text of the Pentateuch is manifest particularly in the strict precautions which are taken to preserve the text. Philo thus notes in his comment on Deut 12:32,

> . . . all the laws originally ordained [in the Pentateuch] should be kept unaltered just as they were. For what actually happens, as we clearly see, is that it is the unjust which is added and the just which is taken away, for the wise legislator has omitted nothing [from the Pentateuch] which can give possession of justice whole and complete.[51]

The reference in Aristeas to the Hebrew verse in Greek thus indicates a belief that both the Hebrew and Greek texts should be venerated in the same way.[52] This can only mean that in the opinion of the author of this section in the *Letter of Aristeas*, the Greek translation was divinely inspired, in a way similar to the Hebrew Pentateuch itself.

This view is not negated by the fact that this declaration does not follow the precise wording of the Greek Pentateuch, and therefore seems to break the very rule that it states. Philo, who certainly believed in the divinity of the translation (see below) also expresses the same prohibitions as Aristeas, in words which appear to change the Pentateuchal text, using similar biblical-type terminology, although in a different order. The addition of the prohibition of 'transposition', along with the different order of prohibitions by Philo and Aristeas

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[49] See Hadas (1951), p. 221, and the rabbinic references to Deut 4:2 at m.Zeb.8.10, t.Zeb.8.22, b.Eruv.96a, 100a; b.RH.28b; to Deut 12:32 at Sifre (Deut.), Piska 82.

[50] Sifre (Deut), Piska 82, trans. Hammer (1984).

[51] Philo, Spec.IV.143.

[52] See Hadas (1951), p. 69.

(see below) may suggest that both Aristeas and Philo are citing versions of an oral Jewish Greek, post-biblical commentary on Deut 4:2. The comparative evidence is set out below:

> Deut 4:2: οὐ προσθήσετε πρὸς τὸ ῥῆμα, ὃ ἐγὼ ἐντέλλομαι ὑμῖν, καὶ οὐκ ἀφελεῖτε ἀπ' αὐτοῦ·
> Deut 12:32: οὐ προσθήσεις ἐπ' αὐτὸ οὐδὲ ἀφελεῖς ἀπ' αὐτοῦ.
>
> LetAris.312:
> [they forbade the] adding [προστιθεὶς] or transposing [μεταφέρων τι] or by making an excision [ἀφαίρεσιν] in what had been written down . . .
>
> Philo, De Mos.II.34:
> Reflecting how great an understanding it was to make a full version of the laws given by the Voice of God, where they could not take away [μήτ' ἀφελεῖν τι] or add [μήτε προσθεῖναι] or transfer anything [μεταθεῖναι] but must keep the original form and shape . . .

Key Words	adding	removing	transposing
LXX Deut 4:2, 12:32	οὐ προσθήσετε	οὐκ ἀφελεῖτε	
LetAris.312	προστιθεὶς	ἀφαίρεσιν	μεταφέρων τι
Philo, De Mos.II.34	μήτε προσθεῖναι	μήτ' ἀφελεῖν τι	μεταθεῖναι
The order of key words in the texts above:			
LXX Deut 4:2, 12:32	add	remove	
LetAris.312	add	transpose	remove
Philo, De Mos.II.34	remove	add	transpose

The allusion in the *Letter of Aristeas* to key Pentateuchal verses in the second Jewish declaration at the ceremony on the Pharos thus implies that the translation was now regarded with similar awe and respect as the Hebrew text from which it was derived. This can only mean that the translation was somehow considered as divine.

It seems therefore that the ceremony on the Pharos in the present *Letter of Aristeas* includes two incompatible beliefs, presented as if they existed at the time that the translation was composed. On the one hand, there is polite respect for the translation, expressed in the first Jewish declaration. On the other, there is a positive belief that the translation was divinely inspired. It is unlikely that both such attitudes existed when the translation was first made. It seems therfore that the present text of the *Letter of Aristeas* indicates two periods of time. This suggests that the second belief that the translation was divinely inspired, expressed in the second Jewish declaration, has been interpolated into an earlier account.[53]

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[53] Kahle (1959), p. 211, was thus *partly* correct when he notes: When we know

Furthermore, if the second declaration implies that the Greek translation was considered as divine, it could only have been added to attest such a fact. It is possible therefore that the insertion was made by an author who believed in the sanctity of the Greek text. The specific form taken to show this belief – the second declaration of the Jews – may have been adopted because this author was replying to criticism from those within the Jewish community who denied the divinity of the translation because (among other objections) the original declaration made on the Pharos was not expressed in a way in which Judaism would have recognised as a specific prohibition against change in a divinely inspired, Jewish text.

Such an objection is not without cause, since the second declaration is significantly different from the first. The first declaration expresses the good intention of the authors of the translation, and the accuracy of the interpretation (διερμηνεύω) of the text, along with the hope that it should be preserved verbatim, and that no revision should take place. In contrast, the terms from Deuteronomy in the second declaration includes no reference to the intention of its authors or to the accuracy of the text. These are both understandable omissions if God is assumed to be the author of the text. Nor do the Deuteronomic terms include a reference to 'interpretation', which also precludes a text created by God. Finally, unlike the first declaration which includes the hope that 'the text should remain in its present form' the corresponding verses in the Hebrew Pentateuch take this for granted, and express all prohibitions against change in a negative way. Why should there be need to express any hope that a divinely expressed text would be permanently preserved? – it was only reasonable to ensure that it would never be changed. The significant differences between the two declarations are set out below:

The First Declaration, LetAris.310

(1) The translation has been well and piously made [καλῶς καὶ ὁσίως διημήνευνται]
(2) and is in every respect accurate [πᾶν ἠκριβωμένως],
(3) it is right that it should remain in its present form [διαμείνῃ] and

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the date of the letter [of Aristeas], we know that of the translation. But his remark relates to the date of the first declaration, but not to the second. The interpolation was designed to suggests that both declarations were made at the same time.

(4) [it is right] that no revision should take place [μὴ γένηται μηδεμία διασκευή].[54]

The Second Declaration, LetAris.312:
[they prohibited]
(1) adding προστιθεὶς
(2) or transposing ἢ μεταφέρων
(3) or by making an excision ἢ ποίουμενος ἀφαίρεσιν in what had been written down.

The assumption that the second declaration is a later interpolation in the *Letter of Aristeas* explains several puzzling features in this section of the text. Most obviously, it accounts for the fact that there are two, ostensibly similar declarations to preserve the integrity of the translation, when one, probably the second, more elaborate declaration, would have sufficed. It also explains why the two declarations are neither continuous in delivery nor similar in style. The first is given in reported speech. This is followed by a short break (italicised in the citation below) which refers briefly to the agreement of the people and the announcement of a curse. Then comes the second declaration, which is noted in reported speech (underlined below), and which repeats the overall intent of the first declaration, but is more negatively expressed. The contrasts in style and the break in delivery can clearly be seen when both declarations are compared below. The first declaration is printed in small capital letters, while the second is italicised:

> When the rolls [of the translation] had been read the priests and the elders of the translators and some of the corporate body and the leaders of the people rose up and said, "INASMUCH AS THE TRANSLATION HAS BEEN WELL AND PIOUSLY MADE AND IS IN EVERY RESPECT ACCURATE, IT IS RIGHT THAT IT SHOULD REMAIN IN ITS PRESENT FORM AND THAT NO REVISION TAKE PLACE". When all assented to what had been said, he [= Demetrius] bade that a curse be pronounced, according to their custom, upon any who should revise the text *by addition or transposing anything whatever in what had been written down, or by making any excision*; and in this they did well, so that the work might be preserved imperishable and unchanged always.[55]

[54] For further on this phrase, see below.
[55] LetAris.310–311.

This layered history of the *Letter of Aristeas* accounts for some of the difficulties in this section of the text. One of these concerns the assent and the curse between the two declarations – to which declaration do they belong? Logically, the assent and the curse should apply to both, and thus should either preface or follow the declarations. But because the second declaration has been inserted following the reference to the curse, the assent and the curse have become a bridge between the two, and it is thus unclear to which either refers.

The two layers of text also accounts for the illogical sequence of events in Aristeas' description of the ceremony on the Pharos. The topics appear in the following order:

(1) Demetrius reads the translation aloud.
(2) Aristeas refers to the translators, and to 'the great blessings' which they have brought, for which they receive a great ovation.
(3) Demetrius receives a similar ovation.

Simple logic suggests that the ovation to Demetrius should follow directly after his reading of the text and that an ovation to the translators should not interrupt the ovation to Demetrius. This can again be explained by an interpolation, in this case the interpolation of section (2) into an earlier account. The motive of the interpolator is not difficult to suggest. It detracts attention from Demetrius, and thus implies that whatever his contribution, it was the Jewish translators, rather than Demetrius, who were responsible for the work. It is obvious that the translators are a far more appropriate source of origin for a Jewish holy book than the pagan Demetrius. Hence the interpolation also notes that the translators were the agents of 'great blessings' (μεγάλων ἀγαθῶν).[56] The interpolation is thus an aspect of an argument among the Jews that attempts to minimise the Greek contribution to the making of the translation (which is so prominent in Philo's account of the history of the text, see below) and thus to promote a belief in the divinity of the text.

A tentative division of the textual layers in the description of the ceremony on the Pharos given in in the present version of the *Letter of Aristeas* is indicated below. The underlying, earlier text is printed in small capitals, and the later interpolations in normal type. It is

[56] LetAris.308.

possible that the interpolator has inserted his material with minimal removal or disturbance of the underlying text. The interpolation relating to the first declaration could have been added merely with the addition of 'And likewise' (ὡσαύτως δέ). It is also possible that the phrase at the end of the declaration 'and no revision take place' καὶ μὴ γένηται μηδεμία διασκευή is also interpolated, since it is superfluous after the pledge that the translation should remain in its present form and because the term διασκευή is used with a meaning which is significantly different compared with the five other instances of its use by Aristeas. In this context it means 'revision, whereas in the others it means 'work'.[57] It is also notable that unlike the rest of the sentence, and in accord with Jewish practice in relation to the overall, biblical directives prohibiting change to the Pentateuchal text, the phrase is negatively expressed. The insertion of the second declaration may have been effected merely by the removal of a full stop, and the subsequent extension of the original sentence. The interpolations themselves are not easy to detect, and this success of the interpolator pays tribute to his technique. But the inconsistencies and illogicalities that the changes have produced are indelible indications of the existence of two layers:

> §308: WHEN IT [= THE TRANSLATION] WAS COMPLETED DEMETRIUS ASSEMBLED HE COMPANY OF THE JEWS IN THE PLACE WHERE THE TASK OF THE TRANSLATION HAD BEEN FINISHED AND READ IT TO ALL, in the presence of the translators, [the latter] who received a great ovation from the crowded audience for being responsible for great blessings. §309: And likewise (ὡσαύτως δέ) ALSO/AND THEY GAVE AN OVATION TO DEMETRIUS AND ASKED HIM, NOW THAT HE HAD TRANSCRIBED THE WHOLE LAW, TO GIVE A COPY TO THEIR LEADERS. §310: WHEN THE ROLLS [OF THE TRANSLATION] HAD BEEN READ THE PRIESTS AND THE ELDERS OF THE TRANSLATORS AND SOME OF THE CORPORATE BODY AND THE LEADERS OF THE PEOPLE ROSE UP AND SAID, "INASMUCH AS THE TRANSLATION HAS BEEN WELL AND PIOUSLY MADE AND IS IN EVERY RESPECT ACCURATE, IT IS RIGHT THAT IT SHOULD REMAIN IN ITS PRESENT FORM and that no revision take place". §311: WHEN ALL ASSENTED TO WHAT HAD BEEN SAID, HE [= DEMETRIUS] BADE THAT A CURSE BE PRONOUNCED, ACCORDING TO THEIR CUSTOM, UPON ANY WHO SHOULD REVISE THE TEXT(.) by addition or trans-

[57] LetAris.64,71,73,76,84, διασκευή means 'work'. The change in meaning in §310 is noted by Meecham (1935), p. 306. The assumption that this phrase is also an interpolation does not affect the basic argument that the first declaration belongs to an earlier account of the translation on which a later interpolator imposed his ideas.

> posing anything whatever in what had been written down, or by making any excision; and in this they did well, so that the work might be preserved imperishable and unchanged always.

It seems therefore that there was a fundamental change in attitude towards the translation which changed from simple respect to clear belief in the divine nature of this work. What brought this about? Within the context of Judaism, a perceived quality of divinity can only have arisen through use. In relation to the translation, such use could only relate to use in the synagogue, and perhaps also private, group study.[58] Whatever the case, this suggests that such uses were not envisaged when the translation was first made – otherwise, why would the text be *later* considered as divine? This can only mean that the translation was not originally made for Jewish use. This further suggests that it was not requested by the Jews.

5. *Further Interpolations in Aristeas: The Three Seventy-Twos*

The above discussion has suggested that the original author of the *Letter of Aristeas* gave a factual history of the ceremony on the Pharos which did not include material which might imply that the translation was divine. Such 'proof' of divinity was later inserted into the text. Can any other such interpolated proofs be detected in the present version of the *Letter of Aristeas*? One of the most striking of proofs for the divinity of the translation must focus on the unlikely coincidences of three seventy-twos – seventy-two translators who addressed seventy-two questions to the king, and spent seventy-two days in translating the text. The frequency of this number in different contexts obviously contributes to the feeling of awe which surrounds the translation, which in turn lends credence to the alleged divinity of the translation. Is there any evidence that these numbers are also interpolations into Aristeas?

The answer to this question must certainly be 'yes'. The most obvious of these addition concerns the seventy-two translators, because this number is contradicted by Aristeas himself. Although the number seventy-two is stated by Aristeas, and can also be deduced from the fact that Ptolemy asked for 'six translators from each tribe' (the

[58] Philo hints at private study: 'And will you sit in your conventicles and assemble your regular company and read in security your holy books, expounding any obscure point and in leisurely comfort, discussing at length your ancestral philosophy?', Som.II.127.

number of tribes is not mentioned in the text), there are only seventy-one names in the list of the translators and their alleged tribes that Aristeas records.[59] The discrepancy occurs in the fourth tribe, which has only five names, Jonathan, Abraios, Elisha, Hananiah and Habrias. It is difficult to believe that the missing name is due to scribal error. If the scribe who was copying this text knew that there were seventy-two names – as is stated specifically and implied three times – he would surely have corrected the number in his list.[60] The possibility that the names of the translators was almost certainly part of an contemporary account of the translation has been confirmed by scholars who have shown that the list of names in the *Letter of Aristeas* may well have come from Judaea at the time of the translation.[61]

The logic of Ptolemy's request for an equal number of translators from each tribe is also difficult to explain. Why did the king require a fixed number of men, divided equally among ancient tribes that he probably knew little about? At least ten of the tribes of Israel had ceased to exist many centuries before.[62] In any case, why should the family origins of the translators have mattered to Demetrius or Ptolemy II? Even if the tribes still survived in some form, it is surely beyond coincidence that exactly six, equally skilled translators could be drawn from each. Why should the linguistic ability of a translator be related to his tribe, even if the latter were known? If Ptolemy and Demetrius were concerned with the quality of the translation – as apparently they were – this cannot have been a sound way to proceed.

These problems can however be explained by the desire to impose on the text of Aristeas an impression that the translation was somehow divine. The phrase 'six elders from each tribe' echoes the equal involvement of the twelve tribes of Israel when the Pentateuch was given by God at Sinai.[63] In the same way that an allusion to the words of Deuteronomy conveyed an impression of the divinity of the text on the ceremony on the Pharos (discussed above), the present text of the *Letter of Aristeas* thus both alludes to and specifies the

[59] 'Six elders from each tribe', LetAris.32,39,51; 'seventy-two translators', LetAris.47–51.

[60] LetAris.50. The veracity of the names has been confirmed, see Isserlin (1973).

[61] Isserlin (1973); Cohen (1984).

[62] The loss of the ten tribes is dated from 722 BCE, on the basis of 2 Kings 17:6. See Hadas (1951), pp. 118–9.

[63] Exod 24:4.

religiously significant number seventy-two, which was interpolated into an earlier version of the history of the translation. This accounts for the fact that none of the references to the number seventy-two in the present *Letter of Aristeas* are integral to the text, since each could be removed with apparent harm. In contrast, the references of Josephus are locked into their sentences. The give the impression that they are part of the basic knowledge of the writer, and obviously could not be removed without damaging the text. The relevant sections are cited below:

Aristeas:
If you approve, O King, a letter shall be written to the high priest at Jerusalem, asking him to dispatch men of most exemplary lives and mature experience, skilled in matter pertaining to their Law, *six in number from each tribe*, in order that after the examination of the text agreed by the majority, and the achievement of accuracy in the translation . . .[64]

You will therefore act well, and in a manner worthy of our zeal, by selecting elders of exemplary lives, with experience of the Law and the ability to translate it, *six from each tribe*, so that an agreed version might be found . . .[65]

[Aristeas provides a list of seventy-one names of the translators, according to their numbered tribes]. *Seventy-two in all.*[66]

Josephus:
If then, O King, it be your pleasure, write to the high priest of the Jews to send *six elders from each tribe* who are most versed in the laws . . .[67]

You will therefore do well to select *from each tribe six good men of advanced age* who by reason of their age are well versed in the laws . . .[68]

We have also chosen *six elders from each tribe* and have sent them along with the Law.[69]

But I have not thought it necessary to repeat the names of *the seventy elders* who were sent by Eleazer . . .[70]

And when they came to Alexandria, and Ptolemy heard of their arrival and of the coming of *the seventy elders*, he at once . . .[71]

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[64] LetAris.32.
[65] LetAris.39.
[66] LetAris.51.
[67] Ant.XII.39.
[68] Ant.XII.49.
[70] Ant.XII.57.
[71] Ant.XII.86.

It seems therefore that the near equivalence of seventy-one and seventy-two was exploited by a later interpolator, in order to convey an echo of the equal involvement of the twelve tribes of Israel when the Pentateuch was given by God at Sinai. As a result, references to the seventy-two translators, one specific and two allusions, were added to an earlier text of Aristeas. This gave the impression that the translation had similar origins as the Hebrew Pentateuch, so that both must be similarly divinely inspired.[72] The specific declaration that there were seventy-two men in the face of a list of only seventy-one is in accord with a principle of minimal disturbance to the underlying text that can be observed in the interpolations in the ceremony on the Pharos (analysed above), even though the new material was in conflict with existing facts in the text. It must be further assumed that the distribution of the names of the translators among twelve numbered tribes was also an invention of later times, perhaps adopted to avoid naming the tribes who no longer survived.[73]

In addition to the conflicting 'seventy-one' and 'seventy-two' translators in the present version of the *Letter of Aristeas*, another variation in the number of translators occurs in Josephus, who offers the conflicting numbers, seventy and seventy-two. He thus claims that there were 'six elders from each tribe' (without stating the number that follows from this fact) and refers twice to seventy translators (who are unnamed).[74] The dependence of Josephus on Aristeas suggests that the number seventy-two is derived from Aristeas, and may thus be dismissed as far as factual history is concerned. Similarly suspicious is the number seventy, which implies the divinity of the translation by replicating the number of seventy elders at Sinai who were co-opted by God to help Moses to administer the Law.[75] But why does Josephus cite both seventy and seventy-two? It is unlikely that these numbers are simple alternatives, since no similar options of this type has been discovered in any Hellenistic, Roman or Jewish

[72] Many commentators argue for the artificiality of seventy-two, e.g., Meecham (1932), pp. 168–72; Haddas (1951), pp. 39,72; Wevers (1962), p. 273; Orlinsky (1989), p. 544.

[73] This was 'corrected' by Epiphanius, who divides the names of the translators among 12 named tribes, §9 Wendland (1900), pp. 142–3.

[74] Ant.XII.39,49,56, 'six men from each tribe'. Ant.XII.57,86 for 'seventy elders'. The claim that *Massechet Soferim* 1.8 refers to only five translators has been disproved on the basis that the Hebrew letter *Hey* does not mean 'five', but is a definite article spearated from its noun, see Jellicoe (1968), p. 56.

[75] Exod 24:1,9; Num 11:16.

texts.[76] It seems therefore that by the time of Josephus, the numbers 'seventy' and 'seventy-two' were both independently linked with the story of the translation, so that Josephus felt obliged to include them both.

How many translators were there in fact? And, which is the oldest of these numbers – seventy, seventy-one or seventy-two? Since seventy and seventy-two are probably associated with attempts to suggest the divinity of the translation (because both are significant numbers in the history of the Hebrew Pentateuch), which is probably a feature of the history of the translation that developed some time after it made, it is unlikely either was included in the earliest version of the *Letter of Aristeas*. Neither is therefore likely to record the true number of translators. This leaves the number seventy-one, the number of names given by Aristeas, as the most likely to relate to historical truth.[77]

Which number is older, seventy or seventy-two? The earliest extant reference to the number 'seventy-two' occurs in the emended version of the *Letter of Aristeas* which was used by Josephus. The number 'seventy' first appears in Josephus. But since this number is linked to the alleged sanctity of the translation, it is unlikely to have been invented by Josephus, for whom the translation was a non-divine text (see below). The number 'seventy' may also be connected with the traditional name of the translation, 'The Translation of the Seventy', although this detail is provided by sources which are later than Josephus, and by codices dated to the fourth century.[78] It is possible moreover that Josephus favoured this number over seventy-two, since he only alludes to seventy-two, whereas he specifically mentions the seventy.[79]

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[76] Orlinsky (1989), p. 359.

[77] This number may correspond with with the seventy-one large golden seats in the synagogue of Alexandria, which were set up in honour of the 'seventy-one elders', according to the Tosefta, t.Suk 4.6: שבעים ואחת קתדראות היו בה של זהב כנגד שבעים ואחת זקנים . . . . But the Babylonian Talmud, b.Suk.51b refers to these 'elders' as members of the Sanhedrin, rather than the 'elders' who made the translation.

[78] Justin Martyr (*c.*100–165), Dialogue with Trypho 68; Irenaeus in Eusebius, HE.5.8.11; Clement of Alexandria, Strom.1.22.148; Origen (*c.*185–254), ad Africanum.5, Mt XV.14; Eusebius, citing Anatolius (died *c.*282), HE.7.32.16; Chrysostom (*c.*347–407), in Matth. Hom.V 2; Augustin (354–430), de Civit.Dei.xviii.42. This list is not exhaustive. For the codices, see Nestle (1902), Vol IV, p. 438.

[79] Allusions to seventy-two: Ant.XII.39,49,56; specific reference to seventy: Ant.XII.57,86, cited in the main text above.

It is possible also that the number seventy is based on an older tradition compared with the tradition for 'seventy-two'. This may be indicated by the fact that in relation to links between the translation and its alleged divinity, the number 'seventy-two' can be considered an improvement on 'seventy' because it includes both the seventy elders at Sinai and also the twelve tribes who were present when the Law was received. The number 'seventy-two' thus presents a stronger claim for the divinity of the translation than the number 'seventy'. It is possible therefore that the myth of seventy translators predates the later myth of seventy-two.

This competing mythology may account for the fact that the interpolator of the *Letter of Aristeas* strengthened his claim for 'seventy-two' by offering further coincidences of this number, namely, the fact that the translation was completed in seventy-two days and seventy-two questions were posed by the king. Both numbers have been doubted by commentators as far as historical accuracy is concerned.[80] A strong indication of the secondary nature of the seventy-two days can be deduced from the fact that if the origins of the translation truly echoed those of the Hebrew Pentateuch – as is alleged – a more convincing number of days for its composition would be forty, after the forty days and forty nights that Moses spent on Sinai.[81] The number of 'seventy-two' for the days taken to complete the translation thus merely reinforces the number of the seventy-two translators. This means that if the former is interpolated, so the latter must be. In any case, since the *Letter of Aristeas* does not state when the translators began, or when they finished, the number of days that they worked is impossible to prove. Whatever their number, the pious Jewish translators cannot have worked for seventy-two consecutive days, as the interpolation suggests (see Chapter 2). The number seventy-two is thus a midrashic-type description of the number of translators and the length of time that they spent, which differs significantly from the detailed, factual references of other sections of Aristeas. This difference in style is an additional indication that both these examples of seventy-two are later interpolations into an older version of the *Letter of Aristeas*.[82]

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[80] For example, Orlinsky (1989), p. 540.

[81] Exod 24:18, 34:28; Deut 9:9,11,18,25; 10:10.

[82] See Chapter 2 for a discussion on the possible working days of the translators, based on the number seventy-two, although this may have no relation to historical fact. For the religious observance of the translators, see e.g., LetAris.182,184, 305–306.

Similar observations can be made for the seven-day banquet. According to Aristeas, each banquet followed the same format and ended at sunset.[83] One of the meals must therefore have taken place on the evening before the Sabbath. But this coincides with the time when it is traditional within Judaism to prepare for the Sabbath, so that the first Sabbath meal is eaten *after* the Sabbath begins, which is after sunset.[84] We know however that the translators were religiously observant Jews. This banquet cannot therefore have occurred in the way described in the present text of Aristeas. It is thus likely that, rather than a reflection of historical truth and like the other examples of 'seventy-two' discussed above, the extended symposium is a midrashic symbol, standing perhaps for the beginning of the work of the translators, just as the seven days of creation begins the Pentateuch itself. If so, the seventy-two questions addressed to the king are also more symbolic than real, and were interpolated into an early version of the *Letter of Aristeas*. It is suspicious that there is nothing in the text that suggests the inevitability of seventy-two. The questions are not even addressed to named translators. In any case, as many scholars have remarked, if indeed the king entertained the translators, it is unlikely that he entertained them in the way described here. Even Aristeas admits that the symposium was 'incredible', while at the same time he protests that he is telling the truth.[85] It is interesting that Philo refers only in general terms to the banquet and gives the impression that it was over in a day.[86]

It is possible therefore that the references and allusions to the number seventy-two in the present *Letter of Aristeas* have been interpolated into an earlier version of this text, along with associated material such as a part of the seven-day symposium and the sentence which notes that the translation was completed in seventy-two days.[87] This would account for the introductory phrase of the latter, συνέτυχε ὅυτως, ὥστε . . ., which is unique in Aristeas.[88] This helps to confirm that the alleged divinity of the translation is a feature of

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[83] LetAris.202,203,220,236,262.

[84] Mishnah, Shab.7.1.

[85] LetAris.296, ἄπιστον. Zuntz (1972), p. 124, comments, 'the situation imagined by Aristeas could have had analogies in reality and perhaps even in literature'. See also Hadas (1951), p. 42, for references to similar symposia from early and later Hellenistic times.

[86] De Mos.II.33.

[87] LetAris.187–294; LetAris.307.

[88] The only other occurrence of συντυγχάνω in Aristeas occurs with accusative and infinitive construction at LetAris.180.

the history of the text that developed after the time of its completion. Once again, it must be remarked, this further suggests that the Jews could not have asked for the translation, because if such a feature of the translation developed after the time of its completion, it could only have developed in association with later use. In other words, the translation was used by the Jews some time after its completion, and so could not have been originally requested for this function by the Jews. Since there is no other function for which a request could be made, the translation could not have arisen from a request of the Jews.

This conclusion is confirmed by an analysis of the account of Philo, although his history of the translation is very different from that of Aristeas.

Philo's Account of the Translation

As will be seen from the analysis below, Philo's account of the translation is dominated by his attempt to prove the divinity of the text, with the result that the logic of his history leaves much to be desired.[89] Philo, along with Josephus, also tries to answer the question posed here – *Why was the translation made by the Jews?* Both writers offer different explanations, but neither confirms the modern claim that the translation was originally made to meet Jewish religious needs. According to Philo, the translation was made to teach Judaism to the Greeks. Philo thus asserts that the translation reveals how 'the greater part, or even the whole of the human race might be profited and led to a better life by continuing to observe such wise and truly admirable ordinances'.[90] It is curious however and not a little suspicious that this also reflects the interests of Philo, the great apologist of Judaism, whose work was devoted to the dispersal of Jewish ideas among the Greeks. But even if such an outward promotion of Judaism could have taken place at the time that translation was composed, probably early in the third century BCE, it is difficult to see how such an aim could have been effected by means of a Jewish holy book, even if the book was written in Greek. From a Jewish

[89] Philo's religious attitude to the Septuagint has often been noted, e.g Schwarz (1974), pp. 114–8,

[90] De Mos.II.36 with 32.

point of view, a work that was divinely inspired – as Philo claims for the Pentateuch in Greek – would almost certainly be used during worship, presumably in a building which functioned as a synagogue. But if this were the case, how could the translation then become a light to the nations (as envisaged by Philo), unless perhaps this synagogue was full of non-Jews, which is difficult to credit in the third century BCE. On the other hand, if the translation was made at Ptolemy's request, and deposited in the library, it would certainly be accessible to the outside world. Philo's reason for the translation only makes sense if the translation was made at Ptolemy's request, and this must surely have been known to Philo himself. But even if not, Philo himself thus inadvertently confirms that the translation was requested by Ptolemy II, and *not* by the Jews. Only through Ptolemy could it have fulfilled the role for which Philo claims that it was made.

Philo's declared reason for the translation however anticipates the two self-imposed constraints on his history of this work. First, if indeed the Pentateuch was divinely inspired, as Philo believed, Philo must suggest that the Jews were always fully committed to the task. It makes little sense that an alleged divinely inspired work was only reluctantly composed or acquired by the very people by whom it was regarded as divine.

Secondly, if the translation was a divinely inspired Jewish work, it is unlikely to have been inspired by an outside source. If therefore the work of the translation was commissioned by the Jews in order to show the light of Judaism to the pagan Greek world (as Philo claims), a history of the text must minimise as far as possible the role of the Greeks. Otherwise, Philo's reason for the translation does not make sense. The Greeks would hardly have requested the translation in order to influence their own way of life. In any case, it is unlikely that Ptolemy II wished to bring about the adoption of Jewish ordinances in his realm (the reason offered by Philo for the translation into Greek). Why then refer to Ptolemy at all? Philo's answer to this question anticipates the answer of modern scholars today. He assumes that the basic history of the translation took place roughly in the way that Aristeas describes, so that it is not possible completely to remove the presence of the Greeks. Why else for example would Ptolemy have brought translators from Jerusalem, whom he housed at Alexandria at great expense? Why was the translation not made in Judaea, the centre of Jewish life, thus avoiding the journey

of the translators to Alexandria? Surely this would led to simpler and less costly arrangements for the task. These questions alone suggest that Ptolemy II was in some way significantly involved and must therefore feature in an answer to the question, 'Why was the Pentateuch translated into Greek?'. The recent suggestion of scholars that Ptolemy utilised a Jewish request for the translation as an opportunity to discover the Jewish laws of his subjects is an ingenious way of uniting the possible needs of the Jews with the presence of the king. Unfortunately however this ignores the fact that while the Pentateuch may have inspired Jewish law, most practical, every-day Jewish law existed (and exists today) outside the Pentateuch, in oral form. A translation of the Pentateuch would thus give little idea of basic Jewish law. In any case, since only tenuous hints of Pentateuchal law have been found in documents from Ptolemaic Egypt in which Jewish litigants are involved, it seems that the Jewish inhabitants of Hellenistic Egypt were happy to follow the law of the land.[91] It is thus unlikely that the translation was made mainly to illuminate Jewish law for the Greeks, although this may have been one of the peripheral reasons for supporting the plan.

A history of the translation must therefore somehow include Ptolemy II. But if Philo's explanation for the origin of the text carries any conviction, the Greek contribution must be minimal in extent. There is little point in an argument that Ptolemy cooperated with the Jewish request and was not aware of their underlying intent. If the overwhelming motivation of the Jews was the spread of their ideas, they are unlikely to have wanted a book for use in the synagogue, which by its very nature, was not accessible to the outside world, even for

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[91] On the basis of a coincidence of vocabulary in a few words, Modrzejewski (1955), p. 110 suggests that 'a comparison of the Septuagint with the Greek translation of the Egyptian Case Book leads us to the conclusion that the Greek Torah obtained its official consecration by its insertion into the Ptolemaic judiciary system'. But legal language is limited, and a few examples of the same word in the Greek Septuagint as in a Case book of laws (which may be attributed to Ptolemy II, but is only extant in a copy form the second century CE), is not proof that the translation was made so that Ptolemy would know the laws of the Jews. If this were the case, why did the Romans not translate the Pentateuch into Latin, surely a useful exercise, even if many of the Romans in Judaea and Galilee spoke Greek? Even if the litigants in the legal cases cited by Modrzejewski, pp. 114–116, used Pentateuchal law (which is not clear except in relation to interest on loans), this does not prove the use of Jewish law. As Modrzejewski himself summarises on p. 119, for the Jews of Egypt, 'the law of the land is the law'.

Ptolemaic use. Alternatively, if Ptolemy wanted a translation for himself, accessible to the Greeks through the Library in Alexandria, then, although more accessible to the outside world, it would be treated as any secular book. This would conflict with the ancient customs of the Jews on the production and treatment of such holy books. The two ideas are therefore incompatible – either the Jews produced the translation for themselves, or Ptolemy produced a translation for the Greeks. In order to promote the former idea, the latter must be shown as minimal in extent.

It is interesting to note that those scholars of today who claim that the translation was made on the initiative of the Jews, also need to reduce the contribution of the Greeks. A recent explanation which attempts to harmonise the involvement of Ptolemy with this alleged Jewish plan thus notes: *The translation was an official undertaking, initiated by Jewish rather than Egyptian authority, though it might have been undertaken with the good will, and conceivably the good offices of Philadelphus.*[92] The comment could well have been written by Philo himself.

1. *How Philo shows total Jewish commitment to the translation*

The first of Philo's constraints – to show the consistent enthusiasm of the Jews – is the most challenging of his two requirements, especially in view of the several negative indications in Aristeas (discussed above). Philo deals with this problem in several ways. For example, he claims that the high priest of Jerusalem at the time of the translation supported the project from the very first. Apparently, he was 'naturally pleased' at Ptolemy's request, and 'thinking that God's guiding care must have led the king to busy himself in such an undertaking', sought out the best translators whom he 'joyfully' sent to the king.[93] This contrasts sharply with the muted criticism and lack of enthusiasm in some of the remarks of the High Priest in Aristeas (discussed above). Philo also omits the Jewish request to free the slaves, probably the clearest indication of the reluctance of the Jews to translate their holy text. In view of the popularity of this story in the many ancient accounts, there is little doubt that Philo knew the story of the slaves. It is likely therefore that his omission

[92] Jellicoe, (1968), p. 55.
[93] Mos.II.32.

was deliberate, inspired by his understanding of the true significance of the event. It was not in his interests to include this tale. What could be more damaging to Philo's claim that the Jews wanted the translation than a reference to an incident which showed the opposite to be true?

Similarly, Aristeas' description of the ceremony on the Pharos posed a problem for Philo. Assuming that Philo was familiar with the uninterpolated version of Aristeas (the chronological relationship of Philo and Aristeas is discussed below), although the ceremony on the Pharos accords with Philo's desire to show a positive Jewish attitude towards the translation, the presence of Demetrius of Phalerum suggests that the project of the translation was an enterprise of the Greeks. This again is not in Philo's interests to show. Philo thus omits the ceremony completely from his work. It is possible also that Philo was confirmed in this decision by his knowledge of a *Chronicle* in which it appeared that Demetrius of Phalerum left the Ptolemaic court after the death of Ptolemy I (see Chapter 3).

Moreover, the fact that a declaration against change, which was expressed in Jewish religious terms, was eventually interpolated into the *Letter of Aristeas* (see above on Aristeas §308–§311) suggests a background of Jewish debate which rejected the divinity of the translation on the basis of the absence of such a declaration in an early history of text. To meet this objection, Philo included in his account of the translation a pledge which included key terms from Deut 4:2 and Deut 12:32. He placed this declaration into the minds of the translators, even before the work was begun. Having omitted the incident on the Pharos, there was probably no other place in Philo's account where this pledge could be placed. Philo thus claims that when the translators planned their translation, they anticipated that their text would be preserved with the same strict prohibitions as the Hebrew Pentateuch itself. By transference of this thought to the unwritten translation, their role became prophetic so that a divinely inspired text was inevitably produced. This aspect of the translation is strengthened by Philo's description of the geography of the place where the translation was made, which was apparently similar to the terrain at Sinai. These details of Philo's account can clearly be seen in the quotation below. This is continuous in its context, but has been divided here into sections which relate to the separate topics discussed:

Declaration against change for a divinely inspired work:

Reflecting [λογισάμενοι] how great an undertaking it was to make a full version of the laws given by the Voice of God, where they could *not add or take away or transfer anything*, but must keep the original form and shape, they [= the translators] proceeded to look for

The geography of the place where the translation was made:

the most open and unoccupied spot in the neighbourhood outside the city. For, within the walls, it was full of every kind of living creatures, and consequently the prevalence of diseases and deaths and the impure conduct of the healthy inhabitants made them suspicious of it. In front of Alexandria lies the island of Pharos, stretching with its narrow strip of land towards the city, and enclosed by a sea not deep but mostly consisting of shoals, so that the loud din and booming of the surging waves grows faint through the long distance before it reaches the land . . .

Justification for the divine nature of the translation:

[The resulting Greek translation was so close to the underlying Hebrew text that] people speak of the authors not as translators but as prophets and priests of the mysteries, whose sincerity and singleness of thought has enabled them to go hand in hand with the purest of spirits, the spirit of Moses.[94]

Philo's reference to the search of the translators for 'most open and unoccupied spot' is a clear allusion to the traditional Jewish justification for the fact that the Jews received the Pentateuch from God in the open desert of Sinai (rather than in the promised land). It thus implies Philo's belief that the Greek translation was similarly inspired and therefore divine. For Philo, the question 'Why was the Torah received in Sinai?' has become, 'Why was the Greek Pentateuch received on the Pharos?', and the answer to the first question provided the answer to both. The anonymous tannaitic commentary from the school of Rabbi Ishmael thus notes:

Exod 19:2 – *They encamped in the wilderness . . .*
(This means that) the Torah was given in public, openly in a place free for all. For if the Torah had been given in the land of Israel, the Israelites could have said to the nations of the world, "You have no share in it". But it was given in the wilderness, publicly and openly, in a place that is free for all, everyone wishing to accept it could come and accept it.[95]

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[94] De Mos.II.34,40.
[95] Lauterbach, Vol 2 (1976), p. 198, Bahodesh 1, commentary on Exod 19:2.

But unfortunately for Philo, although fulfilling the requirement of an 'open, unoccupied and healthy place', the place where the translators made their translation was on an island, 'close to the shore'.[96] This feature is important in Aristeas because it enabled the translators to perform the necessary ritual of washing their hands before they started their work.[97] But the coastal area on the Pharos where the translators 'received' their text was a very different country to the dry, waterless desert of Sinai. As can be seen in the quotation above, Philo attempts to minimise this discrepancy by noting that the sea was 'not deep but mostly consisting of shoals', and the translators were far enough from the water so that only a faint sound of the waves reached the place where the translators worked. Philo's desire to prove the divinity of the translation from the similarity of locations of the Pharos and Sinai is thus totally contrived. It is even contradicted by Philo himself when he later notes that a yearly festival held on the Pharos to celebrate the translation, which was located at 'the place in which the light of that version first shone out', was at 'the seaside' and on 'the sandy beach', since 'the shore' was 'a more magnificent lodging than the fine mansions in the royal precincts'.[98] The ludicrous attempt to claim that non-identical locations possessed identical traits however reveals the intensity of Philo's efforts to prove the divinity of the Greek biblical text.

Similarly illogical is the fact that the translators prohibited any changes to their translation, even before it was composed. The thoughts of the translators show only how those who regarded the existing translation as holy, took precautions to ensure that its text was preserved; but they can have no significance for a nonexistent text. The prohibitions against change are moreover expressed merely as 'reflections' in the minds of the translators. This means that the declaration was not stated orally, and did not receive communal assent. Yet Philo's reference to the thought of the translators clearly alludes to those situations in Judaism which require oral, communal assent. This goes back to Sinai itself: 'And Moses came and called for the elders of the people and set before them all these words which the Lord had commanded him. And *all the people* answered *together* and said: All that the Lord has spoken we will do . . . And

[96] LetAris.301.
[97] LetAris.306.
[98] LetAris.301; Philo, De Mos.II.41–2.

Moses took the book of the covenant and read it in the hearing of the people, and they said, 'All that the Lord has spoken will we do and obey.'[99] A similar event is recorded in the book of Nehemiah when a formal reading was ratified by the assembly of the people with the words 'Amen, Amen'.[100] The Pentateuch also records that it was the people who orally confirmed the twelve curses read out by the Levites.[101] Similarly, in second Temple times, it was the people who confirmed the ritual for the ceremony for reaping the first barley (the Omer), by shouting aloud 'Yes' three times to each of three separate questions, each posed three times, spoken aloud by the Jewish officials. Two further questions which were asked when the day of the festival fell on the Sabbath were again publicly and orally confirmed.[102] But Philo has no convenient episode in his account in which the people could orally declare a prohibition against change, and therefore places the idea in the minds of his translators, even before they have begun their work.

Philo's belief in the divinity of the translation comes to a climax when he describes the translators at the completion of their task:

> Sitting here in seclusion with none present save the elements of nature, earth, water, air, heaven, the genesis [γενέσεως] of which was to be the first theme of their sacred revelation, for the laws begin with the story of the world's creation [κοσμοποιία γὰρ ἡ τῶν νόμων ἐστὶν ἀρχή], they [= the translators] became as it were possessed, and, under inspiration, wrote, each one something different, but the same word for word, as though dictated [ἐνηχοῦντος] to each by an invisible prompter.[103]

At this point in his account, Philo refers to Jewish traditional beliefs that God created the world, and also the Pentateuch which Moses received at Sinai. According to Philo, both these events were echoed when the Pentateuch was translated into Greek. The idea of the translation as a divine creation is conveyed by Philo's claim that each of the men involved with the translation emerged with the same translation, as though 'dictated to each [translator] by an invisible prompter', that is, by God. Philo thus answers a possible damaging

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[99] Deut 19:7, 24:7.
[100] Neh 8:1–6.
[101] Deut 27:15–28.
[102] m.Men.10.3. Even today the weekly reading from the Torah is followed by a public affirmation that the reading comes from the Torah given to Moses on Sinai, see e.g. Singer (1962), p. 198.
[103] De Mos.II.37.

refutation of the divinity of the text, namely, that it could not be sacred because, as Aristeas describes three times (see above), the final version of the translation was settled by discussion among the translators. This description implies that there were differences of opinion among the translators regarding the final text, and that these were settled by a consensual debate. But this is hardly a feature of a divinely inspired text. For Philo however the divinity of the translation was a basic fact, which could not be challenged by the factual history of the text. He therefore suggested that the final version of the translation was never in dispute because each separate translator produced the same text. In other words, according to Philo, the consensus of different opinions described by Aristeas did not occur. Philo thus answers the description of Aristeas which inadvertently suggests that the translation was not divinely inspired.

It is significant moreover that Philo never refers directly to the translators as 'translators', and never even refers to their facility in Greek. The closest they come to any such role is when Ptolemy II asks the High priest to send men who 'expound [διερμνηεύσοντας] the [Jewish] law'.[104] For Philo the translators are simply an anonymous 'they' or 'their', the latter implicit in the person of the verb or number of the participle or noun. In the one example of the term 'translators' (ἑρμηνέας) which Philo uses in his account of the translation, he claims that such men should be regarded 'as prophets and priests of the mysteries, whose sincerity and singleness of thought has enabled them to go hand in hand with the purest of spirits, the spirit of Moses'.[105] For Philo therefore each of the translators was a type of Moses, who is classified by Philo as a 'prophet' of the Jews.[106] It is clear that Philo wishes to avoid the thought that the translation was achieved though human agents by means of a relatively mechanical action of translation, but stresses that it arose through the intervention of the Divine, so that the translation itself was divine. Aristeas, by contrast, refers to the translators as 'translators' and praises their ability in Hebrew and Greek.[107]

The second of the creations of God – the creation of the world – is evoked by Philo's reference to 'the elements of nature, earth, water,

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[104] De Mos.II.31. The Loeb translation is inaccurate here, giving 'persons to make a full rendering of the Law into Greek'.

[105] De Mos.II.40, cited above in the main text.

[106] De Mos.II.292.

[107] LetAris.310, τῶν ἑρμηνέων; LetAris.32, 121.

air, heaven', and by the term 'genesis', the Greek name for the first book of the Pentateuch. Philo also equates the Greek translation with the Hebrew text by his allusion to the traditional Jewish belief that the Hebrew Pentateuch was given 'by the voice of God' to which nothing could be added or subtracted.[108] This is indicated by the verb ἐνηχεῖν, 'to teach by word of mouth'.[109]

Finally, it is interesting to note that Philo justifies his belief in the divinity of the translation with a reference to the yearly 'festival and assembly', which he claims had been established by the Jews to celebrate the translation. His description of the festival is placed in a context which links the divinity of the translation with the festival, thus implying that the festival celebrated the divine status of the work. The text cited below is continuous, but has been divided into sections relating to the aspects discussed:

> *Philo's Introduction to his description of the festival on the Pharos, which states his belief in the divine nature of the translation*:
>
> The clearest proof of this [= the divine nature of the translation] is that, if Chaldeans have learned Greek, or Greeks Chaldean, and read both versions, the Chaldean [= the Hebrew Pentateuch] and the Greek [= the translation], they regard them with awe and reverence as sisters, or rather one and the same, both in matter and in words, and speak of the authors not as translators but as prophets and priests of the mysteries, whose sincerity and singleness of thought has enables them to go hand in hand with the purest of spirits, the spirit of Moses.
>
> *A description of the celebrations on the Pharos*:
>
> Therefore even (διὸ καὶ) to the present day, there is held every year a feast and general assembly in the island of Pharos, whither not only Jews but also [110] multitudes of others (ἀλλὰ καὶ παμπληθεῖς ἕτεροι) cross the water, both to do honor to the place in which the light of that version first shone out, and also to thank God for the good gift so old and yet ever young. But after the prayers and the thanksgivings some fixing tents on the seaside and others reclining on the sandy beach in the open air feast with their relations and friends, counting that shore for the time a more magnificent lodging than the fine mansions in the royal precincts.

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[108] Philo, De Mos II.34; also De Migr.130, which cites LXX Deut 33:3–4 ἐδέχατο ἀπὸ τῶν λόγων αὐτοῦ νόμον, suggesting that the laws of God were received through 'His words'.

[109] LSJ (1940), s.v. ἐνηχεῖν.

[110] 'Also' is not translated in the Loeb edn., thus detracting from the celebration of the translation by 'hundreds of non-Jews'.

Final conclusion reaffirming the divine status of the translation:

Thus the laws are shewn to be desirable and precious in the eyes of all.[111]

Philo thus describes that not only Jews 'but also multitudes of others [ἀλλὰ καὶ παμπληθεῖς ἕτεροι] cross the water to do honour to the place in which the light of that version first shone out'. But who exactly are these 'multitudes of others' and why did such non-Jewish numbers take part in a Jewish event? Why indeed does Philo mention this non-Jewish support? Whatever the case, it seems that Philo's proof of the divinity of the translation rests mainly on numerical strength – the Greek translation must be divine because a large number of people considered it divine. The weakness of this argument hints at dissent among the Jews regarding the divinity of the translation, which is further hinted by Philo's description of the festival itself. While it could be claimed that it was appropriate to hold the ceremony for the celebration of the completion of the translation on the Pharos where the translation was made, this argument is less convincing for a yearly festival which commemorated the translation of the Pentateuch into Greek.[112] There seems no reason to doubt Philo's facts. One modern scholar who has serious reservations about the historicity of Aristeas nevertheless notes that 'Philo's report about an annual feast celebrated on the Pharos in commemoration of the translation seems genuine and points to an ancient tradition'.[113] But Philo's reference to the 'prayers and thanksgivings' suggests a religious festival of some kind with a liturgy (which may have included the second Jewish declaration mentioned by Aristeas at the ceremony on the Pharos).

Apart from the fact that the creation of an extra-Pentateuchal Jewish festival was a remarkable event – Channukah and Purim are the exceptions which prove the rule – no regular festival in mainstream Judaism – not even Channukah or Purim – is celebrated entirely outside the synagogue or outside the home, in the way Philo notes for the festival he describes. We know that synagogues, called 'prayer houses' existed in the time of Philo, and it is reasonable to suppose that they were used for 'prayers and thanksgivings' in the same way that Josephus later describes for the 'synagogues', and as

[111] De Mos.II.40–43, trans. Colson (1966), with emendment.
[112] De Mos.II.41.
[113] Zuntz (1972), p. 142.

is again implied in the Jewish festivals described in the tannaitic texts.[114] It is thus difficult to understand why the celebration for the translation did not take place in a 'prayer house', especially if the translation was destined for use at such a gathering, as is commonly claimed.

The location of the festival can however be explained against a background of Jewish opposition to the translation. As detailed above, the *Letter of Aristeas* indicates that such opposition began from the time that the project was first proposed, and was manifest again at the final ceremony on the Pharos, when some of the Jews refused to endorse a wish that the text should not be changed, and the senior Jewish officials were not even interested in keeping a copy of the text. It is possible therefore that official Jewish opposition to the translation still existed in the time of Philo. Philo may even hint at the arguments they used. For example, Philo's strange comment that the celebration on the Pharos gave thanks for the 'good gift' of the translation, 'so old yet ever young' (παλαιᾶς . . . ἀεὶ νεαζούσης) may hint at criticism of the relative youth of the translation in comparison with the ancient text from which it was derived, which Philo dismissed on the grounds that the close relationship between both books gave the newer creation a flavour of the old.[115] Philo's reference to the Deuteronomic prohibitions may also have answered the criticism that the original declaration of the Jews was not expressed in a way that implies the sanctity of the Greek text.

Whatever arguments were used, the fact that the religious ceremony for the celebration of the translation was not held in an official place of Jewish worship may suggest that official permission to use such a place for this purpose was refused. As a result, those who believed in the sanctity of the Greek Pentateuch were driven to chose an alternative place, and decided to celebrate on the Pharos instead. The location of the festival may thus hint at continuing dissent within the Jewish community regarding the translation of the Pentateuch into Greek. There may even be a note of defiance in Philo's remark that the celebration on beach of the Pharos was 'more magnificent than furniture in royal precincts'.[116]

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[114] Vermes et al. (1986), pp. 424–7.
[115] Philo, De Mos.II.41.
[116] De Mos.II.42.

2. *How Philo minimises the role of the Greeks*

As noted above, if the basic facts of the *Letter of Aristeas* are correct, the involvement of Ptolemy is impossible to avoid. Philo must therefore accept this fact. But if the translation arose from an initiative of the Jews, the Greeks must play a minimal role. Philo thus removed Demetrius of Phalerum completely and attributed the undeniable role of the Greeks solely to Ptolemy II. This reference to the king is in line with biblical historiography and common sense, which assumes that a king is responsible for events in his reign, whether or not he was actually involved. Philo's exclusion of Demetrius may have been confirmed by his knowledge of a rumour that Demetrius never worked for Ptolemy II, since there is evidence that Philo was familiar with a *Chronology* from which this conclusion could be drawn (see Chapter 3).

The removal of Demetrius also facilitated Philo's exclusion of the final ceremony held on the Pharos when Demetrius read aloud the translation before the Alexandrian Jews. The omission of this ceremony (which the Jewish date for the translation discussed in Chapter 2 suggests almost certainly took place) is otherwise strange in view of Philo's reference to the annual festivities on the Pharos, of which the ceremony on the Pharos could have served as the first. But the participation of Demetrius of Phalerum would have conflicted with the claim that the ceremony on the Pharos was religious in some way. On the other hand, if the ceremony on the Pharos was not religious in some way, it is unlikely that the translation was made for the Jews, which is a conclusion that Philo would have wished to avoid. For similar reasons Philo does not refer to the library in Alexandria. The Jews would hardly have wanted deliberately to produce a divinely inspired work that was destined to be handled by non-Jews and housed in a pagan place. In any case, it is ridiculous to suggest that Ptolemy II would have wished to house a work that was intended to display the superiority of Judaism, which is the motive for the translation that Philo suggests.

All in all therefore, Philo's account of the translation is completely distorted by his overriding desire to convince his reader of the sanctity of the text.

The Attitude of Josephus to the Translation

Josephus declares that his account of the translation is based on the *Letter of Aristeas*. His text thus includes references to the divinity of the translation. Josephus however rejected this idea. His account of the translation therefore made changes to Aristeas that remove as far as possible all allusions to the divinity of the text. Those he could not remove, perhaps because they had become traditional details of the tale, he diluted as far as he could.

In contrast with Philo, Josephus thus repeats the bulk of Aristeas. This includes details referring to the Greeks, such as the role of Demetrius and references to the library, the place destined for the translation, since these details do not suggest that the Greek translation was divinely inspired.[117] Josephus even increases the role of Ptolemy II by suggesting that the king took part in a twelve-day banquet with the translators, rather than the comparatively modest seven-day banquet of Aristeas.[118] One of the few details on the Greeks omitted by Josephus is the claim of Aristeas that Demetrius coordinated the work of the translators while they were working on their text.[119] This is surprising in view of the fact that the involvement of Demetrius shows the non-divine status of the translation, which Josephus seeks to promote. But perhaps even Josephus was reluctant to admit that the pagan Demetrius had helped the Jewish sages in this way. Or perhaps Josephus disputed this method of translation because it was different from the practice he adopted himself.[120] Whatever the case, this omission of Josephus is more than adequately redressed, and the pivotal role of Demetrius more than adequately restored, when he is praised by Josephus as the man who 'conceived the idea [of the translation] through which he [= Demetrius] had become the originator of great benefits to them'.[121] This comment answers the reference in the present version of the *Letter of Aristeas* to the praise of the translators 'who received a great ovation from the crowded audience [on the Pharos] for being responsible for great

[117] Ant.XII.36,49.
[118] Ant.XII.99; LetAris.275.
[119] LetAris.303.
[120] For a brief discussion on Josephus and translation, see Rajak (1983), pp. 176–7.
[121] Ant.XII.108.

blessings'.[122] As indicated above, this remark suggests that it was the Jewish translators who were responsible for the translation rather than Demetrius, because the sanctity of the text is difficult to argue if a pagan was in charge when the text was produced. Since Josephus wished to stress that the text was not divine, he transferred the praise which Aristeas heaped on the translators to Demetrius instead.

Like Aristeas, Josephus also conveys the initial reluctance of the Jews of Jerusalem to Ptolemy's request through the speech of the High Priest. But whereas Aristeas offers reasons for the non-compliance of the Jews – the process of translation is 'unnatural' and it would not be carried out in a way chosen by the Jews – Josephus offers a positive explanation for the Jewish agreement to Ptolemy's request – they wanted to prove that they had nothing to hide. Josephus thus suggests that external pressure on the Jews ('*Why do you refuse to translate the text if you have nothing to hide?*') forced compliance with a request they would have otherwise have declined. These differences between Josephus and Aristeas do not however disguise the fact that the overall intention of both authors is the same – in the opinion of both Josephus and the author of the earliest version of the *Letter of Aristeas*, the Jews did not want a translation of the Hebrew Pentateuch into Greek. For Josephus this fact must also have confirmed that the translation could not be divine in any way:

> Eleazar, who yielded in virtue to none of our high priests, did not scruple to grant the monarch [= Ptolemy II] the enjoyment of a benefit, *which he would certainly have refused* (πάντως ἀντειπὼς ἄν) *had it not been our traditional custom to make nothing of what is good into a secret.*[123]

Predictably also, Josephus retains the story of the liberation of the Jewish slaves, along with the detail that a request for their freedom had 'often' been made.[124] There is little doubt that the incident would have confirmed the fact that the Jews did not want to make the translation and that (as suggested above) their outrageous request was made in the hope that a refusal from the king would enable them diplomatically to refuse in return.[125]

As far as concerns allusions to the divinity of the translation, Josephus chose not to eliminate them completely, perhaps because

[122] LetAris.309.
[123] Ant.XII.11.
[124] LetAris.12; Ant.XII.17.
[125] Ant.XII.11.

they had become traditional features of the tale. Instead, he diluted their effect as far as he could. Josephus thus weakened the potentially awesome impression of the coincidences of seventy-two by confusing the issue when he refers specifically to seventy translators and alluding (three times) to seventy-two.[126] The reader is left wondering which number is correct. (The same argument cannot be applied to the interpolator of Aristeas because he is attempting to introduce divine portents into the story of the translation, rather than dilute the ones that exist, and have been accepted over a passage of time).

Josephus also retains a reference to the seventy-two days.[127] The popularity of this detail in the ancient accounts suggest that it had become an essential detail of the story, so that Josephus had no choice but to mention it himself. But Josephus the coincidence of this number is weakened because Josephus only alludes to the number seventy-two in relation to the translators. Concerning the number of questions, Josephus does not even hint at this number, merely referring his reader to Aristeas for more information on this particular event.[128] The fewer coincidences for 'seventy-two', both stated and implied, and a confusing reference to seventy translators thus helps remove mystery from seventy-two.

For this reason again, Josephus makes changes to the ceremony on the Pharos.[129] He is still however loaded with the heritage of Aristeas and so reproduces the same illogical order of subjects, so that a reference to the translators comes between Demetrius and the ovation, although the latter should logically follow after the reading of Demetrius.[130] Josephus however states unequivocally that it was Demetrius who provided the 'great blessings' (μεγάλων ἀγαθῶν) of the translation (rather than the translators) and thereby links the Greeks with the translation, which helps to discredit an argument for the divinity of the text.

Josephus also makes it clear that it was the people, not the translators who were most interested in ensuring that a copy of the translation was available for the Jews. The opposite impression is given by the present version of the *Letter of Aristeas* because of the way that

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[126] Josephus' refers to 'six [translators] from each [of twelve] tribe[s]', Ant. XII.39,56,57; 'seventy translators:' Ant.XII.107.

[127] Ant.XII.107.

[128] LetAris.100.

[129] LetAris.309, Josephus, Ant.XII.108.

[130] Ant.XII.107–108.

the text has been interpolated. This is because the reference to the translators is made in a phrase which has been added on to what may originally have been the end of a sentence about the people, with the result that 'the people' are separated from their request for the translation. Although it is likely that the original intention of the interpolation was to ensure that the translators received credit for the translation, rather than Demetrius (see the discussion above), the impression is also incidentally given that it was the honoured translators who wanted a copy of the text – because they were wise enough to appreciate its divine importance – rather than the Jewish people as a whole. Only a careful reading of the present version of the *Letter of Aristeas* shows that the translators were merely part of the audience, while it was 'the people' who give an ovation to Demetrius, and then ask him for a copy of the text. This can be seen in the section below in which the assumed interpolation is italicised:

> When it [= the translation] was completed Demetrius assembled he company of the Jews (τὸ πλῆθος τῶν Ἰουδαίων) in the place where the task of the translation had been finished and read it to all (παρανέγνω πᾶσι), *in the presence of the translators, [the latter] who received a great ovation from the crowded audience for being responsible for great blessings. Likewise also* they (= τὸ πλῆθος) gave an ovation to Demetrius and asked him, now that he had transcribed the whole Law, to give a copy to their leaders.[131]

In order to remove the impression that the wise translators, rather than the comparatively simple people, recognised the value of the translation, Josephus interchanges the Aristean phrases 'the translators being present' and 'read them aloud'. This is indicated in the columns below with the letters (A) and (B). This makes it clear that according to Josephus, it was the unanimous decision of the Jewish people as a whole who expressed interest in a non-divine text, since this is the nature of the text that Josephus describes. Part of an interpolation ('in the presence of the translators . . .') into a straightforward text (the earliest version of the *Letter of Aristeas*) has thus been emended by a later editor (Josephus), with the result that the original text has been returned to its meaning, although the interpolation itself is still largely in place. Such may be the complexity of an ancient text.

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[131] Let.Aris.308–309.

Josephus also notes that 'the (Jewish) people' (τὸ πλῆθος) urged Demetrius to give the translation to their leaders to read, rather than possess the text, as in Aristeas.[132] The act of possession is thus replaced with a more neutral request. The contrived nature of this detail, which indicates its polemic, is however evident from the fact that 'the leaders' are asked to read a text that they had only just been read to them. Like his retention of references to the number 'seventy-two', the request of the people may another of the details which were retained by Josephus because they had become traditional details of the tale. Josephus however states that 'all' the Jewish people declared their approval that the translation should be preserved, rather than 'some of' the people, as in Aristeas. Since Josephus describes the history of a non-divine creation, this again suggests that, according to Josephus, Jewish opinion was unanimous regarding the non-divine nature of the translation, this being the type of text he describes.

These details from Aristeas and Josephus can be compared in the parallel arrangement below:

Aristeas, §308–§310	Josephus, Ant.XII.107–108
When the work was completed, Demetrius assembled the community of Jews [τὸ πλῆθος τῶν Ἰουδαίων]	Demetrius assembled all the Jews
in the same place where the task of the translation had been finished	at the same place where the laws had been rendered,
(A) and read it out to the entire gathering,	(B) and in the presence of the translators [παρόντων καὶ τῶν ἑρμηνέων]
(B) the translators too being present [παρόντων καὶ τῶν διερμηνευσάντων].	(B) read them aloud.
These received a great ovation from the community also in recognition of the great service for which they were responsible.	Thereupon the people [τὸ πλῆθος] expressed their approval of the elders who had interpreted the Law
And they (= τὸ πλῆθος) accorded Demetrius	and also praised Demetrius

[132] Ant.XII.108.

(*cont.*)

Aristeas, §308–§310	Josephus, Ant.XII.107–108
a similar reception	for conceiving the idea through which he had become the originator of great benefits to them
and requested him to have a transcription of the entire Law made up and to present it to their rulers . . .	and they urged him as well to give their leaders the Law to read

Other changes made by Josephus to Aristeas' description of the ceremony on the Pharos confirm his determination to remove any idea of the divinity of the text. This is particularly evident in the changes that he makes to the second declaration of the Jews. The relevant sections are discussed, following their comparison in the columns below:

Aristeas, §310–§311	Josephus, Ant.XII.108–109
Introduction:	*Introduction*:
When the rolls had been read	
the priests and the elders of the translators and *some of* [καὶ τῶς ἀπὸ] the corporate body and the leaders of the people rose up and said,	and *all* [πάντες] of them, including the priests and the elders of the translators, and the chief officers of the community requested that
1st Declaration:	*1st Declaration*:
'Inasmuch as the translation has been well [καλῶς]	since the translation had been so successfully completed [καλῶς, ἀπήρτισται],
and piously expounded [καὶ ὁσίως διηρμήνευται]	
and is in every respect accurate,	
it is right that it should remain [διαμείνῃ] in its present form	it should remain [διαμεῖναι] as it was
and that no revision of any sort take place [μὴ γένηται μηδεμία διασκευή]'.	and not be altered [μὴ μετακινεῖν].
Bridge between the Two Declarations:	*Bridge between the Two Declarations*:
When all had assented to what had been said, he bade an	Accordingly, when all had approved this idea, he ordered that

(*cont.*)

Aristeas, §310–§311	Josephus, Ant.XII.108–109
imprecation be pronounced, according to their custom,	
2nd Declaration:	*2nd Declaration*:
upon any one who should revise the text by adding [προστιθεὶς]	if any one saw any further addition [περισσόν τι] made to the text of the Law
or transposing [μεταφέρων] anything whatever in what had been written down,	
or by making any excision [ἀφαίρεσιν];	or anything omitted from it [λεῖπον], he should examine it and make it known and correct it;
Reason for the 2nd Declaration:	*Reason for the 2nd Declaration*:
and they did this well,	in this they acted wisely,
so that the work might be preserved imperishable and unchanged always.	that what had once been judged good [τὸ κριθὲν ἅπαξ καλῶς] might remain for ever.

For Josephus, the first declaration is made in reported speech, which conveys a more neutral tone compared with the direct speech of Aristeas. Josephus retains the two hopes that the translation should be kept in its present form, and without revision, which he states with similar vocabulary as Aristeas. But he omits the adulatory comments of Aristeas that the translation was 'piously expounded' and 'in every respect accurate', and more reservedly states that it was 'successfully made'. For obvious reasons, Josephus does not wish to stress the excellent qualities of the text, and particularly not that it was 'piously' made.

The bridge section between the two declarations and also the second declaration show significant change. Aristeas records a strident prohibition against deliberate tampering with the text, which if ignored, would activate a curse. As noted above the curse was probably attached to the first declaration, but the interpolation of the second declaration gives the impression that the curse may apply to both. For Josephus however, the tone of the second declaration is mild. The latter has become merely a routine request for reports of observed, accidental changes to the text, which might perhaps arise through errors of memory or the errors of a scribe, and which the

reader might note. These are not the kind of prohibitions that apply to a text that is divine. This accounts for the fact that in contrast with Philo and Aristeas, Josephus does not use biblical-type vocabulary and he makes no reference to the transposition of the text, a term which may have been used in oral commentary on Deut 4:1 and Deut 12:32 (see above):

	Philo	Aristeas	Josephus
excision	ἀφελεῖν	ἀφαίρεσιν	λεῖπον
addition	προσθεῖναι	προστιθεὶς	περισσόν τι
transposition	μεταθεῖναι	μεταφέρων	—

Josephus also omits the curse. Presumably, it would be unreasonable to invoke a curse for the type of accidental changes he implies. Finally, Josephus justifies his judgment of the translation with a remark that suggests that he is merely transmitting the opinion of those who first evaluated the text. Since the originators of the translation did not consider it divine (an assumption to be made from Josephus' report) the opinion of Josephus is based on firm ground.

Josephus gives a version of Aristeas which tells the astonishing story of the translation, while removing – as far as possible – the idea that it was divinely inspired. Josephus thus modifies his version of the *Letter of Aristeas*. For Josephus therefore, the translation was made on the initiative of the Greeks, and no hint can be seen of a request from the Jews.

A Relative Chronology for Aristeas, Philo and Josephus

This discussion begins with a summary of the conclusions reached above, which will bring together the relevant facts.

It seems that the document now known as the *Letter of Aristeas* is based on an early, factual history of the making of the translation of the Pentateuch into Greek. This described how prominent Jews of Jerusalem and Alexandria disapproved of the proposal of Ptolemy II, made on the suggestion of Demetrius of Phalerum, that they should translate their holiest book, and tried to evade this request. It also recorded that although they felt obliged to cooperate with Ptolemy, and the work of translation proceeded in an apparently harmonious way, official Jewish opposition continued in Alexandria even after the work of translation was actually complete. This is

revealed when some of the Jewish officials who attended a final ceremony of celebration on the Pharos, did not join in a communal verbal declaration for the preservation of the text. In any case, the Jewish leaders themselves were – at the very least – apathetic about the translation, and did not even plan to keep a copy of the text. It seems that only a non-official group of Jews expressed further interest in the translation, and asked Demetrius to present a copy to the Jewish leaders. They may have realised the potential use of the translation. But their action should not be understood as an expression of belief in the sanctity of this new version of the Hebrew text.

Philo's history of the Pentateuch was written to stress the sanctity of the text. For this reason Philo minimised the involvement of the Greeks, removed all references to the library, and included details which imply similarities between the translation and the Hebrew Pentateuch itself. This was supported with the claim of imaginary geographical similarities between the coast on the Pharos, where the translation was produced, and the desert of Sinai, where the Hebrew text was received. Philo also described the miraculous agreement of those responsible for the translation, whom he calls 'prophets' rather than 'translators', thereby alluding to the single, divinely inspired Pentateuch received by the 'prophet' Moses at Sinai, in which all the translators emerged with identical texts. Philo thus corrected the allegation in Aristeas that the translators had used a consensual method of composition, under the leadership of Demetrius of Phalerum. Philo further records an unexpressed thought in the minds of his 'prophets' which prohibited change to their as yet unwritten text in words which implied the divinity of this text. In other words, the translators expected to produce a work that was divine. This is clearly contrived. Also puzzling is the fact that Philo, who loves the symbolism of numbers, does not mention the symbolic seventy-two, which is so prominent a feature in the present version of the *Letter of Aristeas*, and conveys an impression of the divinity of the text.[133]

These problems in Philo can however be explained by two events. First, the emergence of a belief in the divinity of the translation. Second, by the timing of interpolations in the document now known as the *Letter of Aristeas* which alluded to the divinity of the translation,

[133] For Philo on numbers, see for example De Dec.20–29, De Mos I.96, II.79–84.

namely, the second Jewish declaration at the ceremony on the Pharos, and the references and allusions to the number seventy-two. If the translation was not considered as divine when it was first produced, it is unlikely that such references were present in an early version of the text. It seems that Philo was familiar with such an early version of the *Letter of Aristeas* which did not include these 'proofs'. In particular, it did not include any references to the number seventy-two, and the declaration to preserve the integrity of the text was not expressed in Jewish religious terms. In the course of his attempt to prove the divinity of the translation, Philo added this latter detail to his history of the text, but did not invent or have knowledge of the traditions of seventy or seventy-two translators. The latter were added to an early version of the *Letter of Aristeas* after Philo had written his own account. Philo's description of the banquet that took place in the presence of the translators and Ptolemy II, which does not mention any number, is thus likely to be closer to an account in an earlier version of the *Letter of Aristeas* that he used, than the seven-day version in the present text.[134] In view of Philo's policy of minimal reference to the Greek role in the translation, there is however little doubt that the event was noted in an early version of Aristeas, since it is unlikely that Philo would have made this reference to Ptolemy II unless the banquet had become part of the traditional story of the translation which Philo felt obliged to repeat. This helps to confirm Philo's lack of knowledge of a tradition of 'seventy-two' in relation to the translators, since having been obliged to mention the banquet, he did not exploit the opportunity with references to 'seventy-two'. This discussion thus further refines the evidence discussed in Chapter 3 which suggests that some form of *Letter of Aristeas* was current before the first century BCE, before the time of Castor of Rhodes.

Why did Philo introduce into his account a reference to the divinity of the translation by his allusion to Deut 4:1 and Deut 12:32? The persistence and intensity of Philo's insistence to prove the divinity of the translated text, which led to such illogical claims in his account, may suggest that he lived at a time when the divinity of the text was a passionate topic of debate among the Jews in Alexandria. It is possible therefore that when Philo wrote his history of the trans-

[134] De Mos.II.33.

lation, one of the arguments used against a claim for the divinity of the text was that the original Jewish declaration for the preservation of the words of the translation was not made in Jewish religious terms. Philo thus included this biblical reference into his account. Or perhaps it was Philo himself, a passionate believer in the divinity of the translation, who decided to promote this idea by such a biblical allusion to the Hebrew text. Whatever the case, Philo placed this Pentateuchal allusion in the minds of the translators even before they had begun their work. It is possible however that if he had known of the more rational, alternative solution in the present *Letter of Aristeas*, in which the declaration is placed in the ceremony on the Pharos, Philo too might have found a more sensible position to place this thought.

This suggests that the interpolation of this religiously phrased declaration in the present *Letter of Aristeas* post-dates the work of Philo, as far as regards its position in the text. But it seems that Philo was the first to place this idea into the story of the translation.

This understanding of the religious value of the second Jewish declaration in the present version of the *Letter of Aristeas* is confirmed by the account of Josephus. As noted above, Josephus did not believe that the Greek translation was divine in any way. He thus substituted non-biblical terms for the key expressions in this passage, in order to remove the religious implications of the terminology used in his version of the *Letter of Aristeas*.

It can be concluded therefore that Philo's account of the translation was based on an early version of the *Letter of Aristeas*. The latter was a factual report of the translation, which highlighted Jewish opposition to the translation. But it contained no suggestions of the divinity of the text, simply because this was not an issue at the time it was composed. There is probably no other explanation for the significance of the fact that Philo's account does not add any further historical information to that of Aristeas, and all the differences between his account and that of Aristeas suit the aims of Philo in 'proving' the divinity of the translation, and cause such illogicalities in his own version of events. Many of these changes are almost predictable, once we are familiar with Philo's basic aims. It seems that rather than rethinking the history of the translation, Philo was content to use an earlier account – an early version of *The Letter of Aristeas* – as a base on which his own beliefs could be imposed.

References to the divinity of the translation – the numbers seventy-two, and the second declaration of the Jews at the ceremony on the Pharos – were however present in the version of the *Letter of Aristeas* which was used by Josephus when he wrote his version of the history of the translation in the *Antiquities*, which was probably composed in 93/94 CE. It seems moreover that before Josephus wrote the *Antiquities* (but after Philo had written his text) there also arose the tradition of 'seventy translators' (see above for a relative chronology of these numbers), so that Josephus alludes to both numbers in his work. If Philo died soon after his visit to Caligula in 40 CE, this gives an adequate minimum of around fifty years for these interpolations into the *Letter of Aristeas* to be composed and to become part of the tradition associated with the history of the event.[135]

A tentative scheme for the relative chronology of the accounts of Philo, Aristeas and Josephus thus suggests that:

(1) An early version of the *Letter of Aristeas*, called here *Proto-Aristeas*, related a factual history of the translation, including the opposition of influential Jews. There were no allusions to a belief in the divinity of the translation.

(2) Philo believed passionately in the divinity of the translation. He adapted *Proto-Aristeas* as the basis for his own account, almost completely excluding the role of the Greeks, and introducing many allusions and 'proofs' of the divinity of the translation, including references to the key terms of Deut 4:1 and Deut 12:32.

(3) Between the time of Philo's composition of *De Vita Mosis* and the *Antiquities* of Josephus around 93 CE, there arose a myth that seventy translators had taken part in the translation, which further promoted the idea of the divinity of this text.

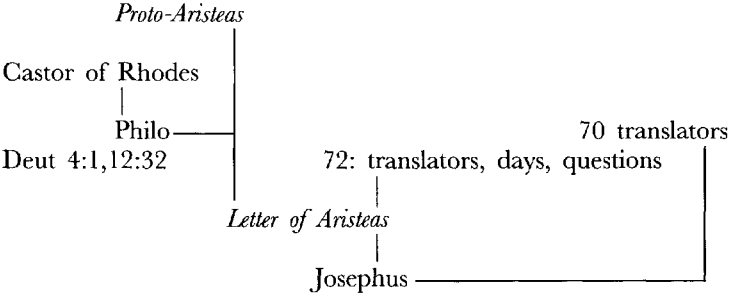
(4) The symbolism of seventy translators was 'improved' by a later author with the number 'seventy-two', and this number was interpolated into *Proto-Aristeas*. It was further supported with the myths that the translation was made in seventy-two days and that seventy-two questions had been addressed to the translators at a seven-day banquet held by Ptolemy II. Also interpolated were the key terms from the Greek text of Deut 4:1 and Deut 12:32. It is possible that the author of these interpolations was familiar with the account of Philo, from where he derived this latter idea. These interpolations along with their supportive text (and probably others that wait to

[135] Philo, De Leg.1,182.

be identified by scholars) produced the *Letter of Aristeas* that we know today.

(5) Josephus did not believe in the divinity of the translation. The therefore re-edited the interpolated version of the *Letter of Aristeas* (presumably he had no access to *Proto-Aristeas*), removing some allusions and 'proofs' or the divinity of the translation and minimising the impact of others that had become traditional details, which Josephus felt he could not remove.

The process of changes is illustrated below:



Do Philo and Josephus illuminate the factual history of the translation?

What then can be learnt about the factual history of the translation from Philo and Josephus? The answer is probably nothing or very little. The discussion above has shown that the accounts of the translation by Philo and Josephus are based on Aristeas, and that changes made by each author to Aristeas are a reflection of their opinion on the divinity the text. This means that any extra detail that one author may offer, or any changes that are made, must first be evaluated for its intention to emphasise the divine or non-divine status of the translation, rather than considered as historical fact. When therefore Philo suggests that all the translators emerged independently with verbatim translations of the holy text, this is not historical information, but a 'correction' of the description in *Proto-Aristeas*, which describes a non-divine consensual process of the translators under the leadership of Demetrius of Phalerum. As a result Philo promotes his opinion of the divinity of the text.[136] Similarly, when

[136] LetAris.302. Philo, De Mos II.37.

the translators vow to preserve the text with allusions to Deut 4:1 and Deut 12:32, Philo is attempting to strengthen this belief, rather than providing historical fact. Likewise, when Philo completely removes any evidence of the opposition of the Jews to the translation (such as their daring request to free the Jewish slaves), and when he removes almost all traces of the Greeks, this does not mean that the translation was made through the efforts of the Jews and with only minimal help from the Greeks. It means instead that Philo is attempting to reconcile his belief in the divinity of the text with a history that suggests that this allegedly holy Jewish book was not produced on the initiative of the Jews, but resulted from the efforts of pagans, and despite Jewish opposition to the plan. The latter is surely the strangest of origins for a holy book, and hardly promotes Philo's belief in the divinity of the text.

Philo's attitude may have resulted at least partly from his education in Greek-speaking Alexandria and his probable lack of Hebrew. None of these factors could have affected Josephus, who was a priest from Jerusalem, and whose religious education must have ensured mastery of all the Hebrew texts.[137] It is thus hardly surprising that although he does not express disapproval of the translated text – it is interesting to note that works of Josephus were translated from Aramaic into Greek[138] – Josephus denies by implication any suggestion that the Greek translation was divinely inspired. He thus repeats the basic story of Aristeas, but removes as far as possible any hints of divinity in the version of the *Letter of Aristeas* that he used. When therefore, Josephus 'corrects' Aristeas by attributing the 'many blessings' which result from the translation to Demetrius rather than to the translators (as in Aristeas), it is unlikely that Demetrius was honoured in this way.[139] Josephus is merely stating his belief that the translation could not be divinely inspired, since it was written and produced through the efforts of the Greeks. The prolongation by Josephus of the days of the banquets from seven to twelve stresses the role of Ptolemy II. One possible exception to this general rule is his reference to the fact that Demetrius of Phalerum 'would buy any book worthy of study'.[140] This detail has no connection with the

[137] Josephus, Vit.1–2.
[138] Rajak (1983), p. 176.
[139] LetAris.308; Josephus, Ant.XII.108.
[140] Josephus, Ant.XII.12.

alleged divinity of the translation, and thus may reflect knowledge of Josephus of a source other than Aristeas. When therefore Josephus retains details relating to the alleged divinity of the translation, such as a reference to the 'six translators from each tribe' and his claim that the work was completed in seventy-two days, this does not reflect his own belief, but suggests that the story of the translation story had acquired such details over a period of time. It is interesting however that Josephus attempted to modify the cumulative, awesome effect of 'seventy-two' in the *Letter of Aristeas* by his additional confusing reference to seventy translators, which is the only number he specifically cites.

The accounts of both Philo and Josephus thus suggest that they are part of a persistent debate within Hellenistic Judaism concerning the question of the sanctity of the Pentateuch in Greek, of which Philo provides the earliest proof.[141] This is manifest first in the work of Philo, but the intensity of Philo's belief suggests it began well before his time. The debate continued at least till 93/94 CE, when Josephus wrote the *Antiquities*, which includes his account of the translation, and thus continued for at least fifty years after Philo died.[142] The topics of argument within this debate included the question of the historical involvement of the Greeks, the reluctance of the Jews to take part in the translation, and the Jewish declaration for the preservation of the text which was not expressed in religious terms. Those who believed that the translation was divine also used evidence of miraculous activity, such as the incredible agreement of all the individual translators concerning the translated text, and the coincidences of the number seventy-two. As a result, these wonderful 'facts' became part of the history of the translation, and were even repeated by those, such as Josephus, who denied the divinity of the text.

From the time of Proto-Aristeas, therefore, discussion on the translation among the Jews focused on the question of the divinity of the text. This means that as far as the factual, early history of the translation is concerned, Philo and Josephus are unlikely to help. Through his efforts to discuss the divinity of the translation, Philo distorted the history of this text. Josephus was lucky to base his account on a source which basically, though inadvertently, agreed with his view.

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[141] The conclusion, on different grounds, of Tcherikover (1958) or (1974).

[142] For the date of the *Antiquities*, see Rajak (1983), p. 237, citing Ant.XX.267.

His history is thus mainly accurate, apart from his inclusion of relics of the debate on the divinity of the translation which had become traditional details of the history of the text. The most reliable source for the history of the translation is thus the earliest version of the *Letter of Aristeas* that Philo used, and which future scholarly research must define.

Later Jewish Attitudes to the Translation

The neutral attitude of Josephus was later followed by the bitter resentment of later Jews against the very existence of the translation. The document *Megillat Taanit* (written in the 1st or 2nd century CE) thus states that after the completion of the translation, '*darkness came upon the world for three days*'.[143] As there is no evidence of such a heavenly portent in earlier Greek accounts of the translation, including that of Aristeas, and no evidence an eclipse of the sun over Alexandria in the years 281/0 BCE (the dates assumed for the translation in Chapter 2 of this book), it appears that these three days of darkness were used as a symbol for the future suffering of the Jews at Christian hands.[144] It is indeed ironic that a holy book composed and preserved by the Jews, which was regarded as divinely inspired, and which the Jews themselves (through the orders of Ptolemy II) had been persuaded to open to the scrutiny of the world, was later turned in evidence against them and used for their harm. Likewise, the rabbis after the fourth century CE noted that the translation of the Law was as '*ominous for Israel as the day on which the golden calf was made, since the Torah could not be accurately translated*'.[145] This is clearly articulated in Albīrūnī's *The Chronology of the Ancient Nations*, written around 1000 CE:

> The Jews, however, give a quite different account [of the reason for the translation compared with Aristeas], viz. that they made the translation under compulsion and that they yielded to the king's demand

[143] Neubauer (1895), p. 24.

[144] No eclipse of the sun of significant magnitude, visible from Alexandria, is reported around 280 BCE, see Fotheringham (1921), on p. 111. Similarly, there is no eclipse for Babylon or Palestine in 281 (astronomical year −281), see Oppolzer (1962). But a total eclipse took place over Babylon in 280 BCE. Could this have been remembered in connection with the translation?

[145] Masseket Sophrim.1.7.

> only from fear of violence and maltreatment, and not before having agreed upon inverting and confounding the text of the book.[146]

This very negative attitude of the Jews to the translation is of a different order of intensity, and was undoubtedly provoked by historical circumstances which could never have been imagined by those who were originally opposed to making the translation and who refused even to express a simple, non-religious wish for the preservation of the text. These later compositions can therefore have little relevance to the question of why the Pentateuch was translated into Greek. It is nevertheless interesting to note that, as far as concerns the history of the Jews, the original Jewish opposition to the Greek translation of the Pentateuch was fully vindicated in later times.

Evidence for the Lack of Jewish Desire for the Translation Outside Aristeas

Pre-Septuagint Translation of Jewish Sacred Texts

The persistence of the theory that the Jews needed a translation because the majority could no longer read and understand the Pentateuch in Hebrew is undoubtedly due at least partly to the fact that the latter is true. As is well known, after their return from Babylon and the time of Ezra in the fifth century BCE, a large number of Jews spoke Aramaic and could not understand Hebrew, and this situation naturally continued in Hellenistic times. Unfortunately however for those who maintain that the Greek translation was inspired by this fact, the loss of Hebrew among the Jews is almost irrelevant to the question of the translation, and does not account for the production of a literal, written translation of the Hebrew Pentateuch into Greek.

The return from Babylon in 538 BCE, when a large majority of Jews no longer spoke or understood Hebrew, was followed by the development of the Aramaic Targum. This is clearly noted in the biblical text.[147] But this was not a written translation in the sense of the translation of the Hebrew Pentateuch into Greek, which is more in line with modern ideas, that generally attempts to stay close to the underlying text. Unlike the Greek Pentateuch, which was a written,

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[146] Albīrūnī, trans. Sachau (1979), p. 24.
[147] Ezra 4:7.

literal translation composed in Greek, the earliest targum was oral, discursive, and composed in Aramaic. The latter was thus used in a way which would be impossible or inappropriate for a fixed, written text. The occasion and procedure of the Aramaic translation is described in the Mishnah, in possibly one of the oldest sections of this work.[148] At the appropriate time in the synagogue, the reader would read aloud one verse from the Hebrew Pentateuch – or three verses from the Prophets – after which the translator would give an oral version in Aramaic, apparently spontaneously, without recourse to any written text. The prohibition against a written text is expressly stated, although in later times: *That which has been expressed orally [must be transmitted] orally and that which has been expressed in writing [must be transmitted] in writing.*[149] Moreover, certain sections of the Bible were not translated at all. These included portions from the Pentateuch, Gen 35:22 (the story of Reuben), Exod 32:21–5, 35, the second story of the golden calf, and Num 6:24–26, the blessing of the priests.[150] This prohibition against even oral translations of specified sections of the Pentateuch must be earlier than any of the extant written Aramaic targums of Genesis, Exodus and Numbers, since all of them include written versions of the alleged banned sections of the Pentateuch, as does the Greek Pentateuchal text. The latter thus includes sections of the Pentateuch which may not have been even officially translated into discursive, oral Aramaic at the time when the Pentateuch was translated into Greek. It is interesting to note that the Jews never concealed the origin and use the Aramaic Targum, whose history has inspired the modern speculative theory of the origin of the Greek Pentateuch.

As is well known, at least some targumim were eventually written down, but this happened well after the translation of the Hebrew Pentateuch into Greek. The origins of the targumim of Onkelos and Neophyti cannot be dated before the second century CE.[151] The Targum of Job discovered at Qumran is the earliest, written text we possess today, and has been dated to the late second century BCE. There are also fragments of a targum from the Pentateuch, which may be dated to the first century CE.[152] Josephus living in the first

[148] m.Meg.4.4, see Déaut (1989), p. 567.
[149] j.Meg.4.1 74d, repeated b.Git 60b, b.Tem 14b.
[150] m.Meg 4.10.
[151] Déaut (1989), pp. 576.
[152] 11Qtg Job, see Déaut (1989), pp. 570, 571.

century CE, may have used a written targum.[153] This means therefore that if the translation of the Pentateuch into Greek took place in the third century BCE – probably in 280 BCE, as demonstrated in Chapter two – the Greek translation was made before any other written translation of the Pentateuch, and certainly before any other *literal* translation of the Pentateuchal text.

The Greek translation was thus the first of its kind and fundamentally different from translations in the past. As one scholar has noted:

> The Jewish scriptures were the only oriental writings to achieve the distinction of translation into Greek. This is all the more surprising when one considers the great interest taken by Greeks and Greek speakers in, for example, Zoroaster: a vast pseudepigraphical literature was composed in Greek in Zoroaster's name, yet no one ever considered going back to the original and translating *Gathas*. If one looks beyond the Greco-Roman world there are at least some precedents for the translation of religious texts. For example, among the multitude of works collected in the library of that Assyrian bibliophile Asshurbanipal (7th century BC) is a bilingual (Akkadian/Sumerian) hymn to the moon god Sin. There are indeed quite a number of Akkadian translations of Sumerian works of religious character – hardly a surprising situation, considering the large debt of the Babylonians and the Assyrians to the Sumerians in the sphere of religion. But the translators who produced the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament can hardly have been aware of all this; and in the Greek world there is no precedent at all.[154]

It is little wonder therefore that the translation was given the respect of a majority of the Jews when they attended the ceremony on the Pharos, as Aristeas describes (discussed above). But this should not detract from the fact that the emergence of this translation does not show a development of Jewish practice – a well developed and sophisticated religion (even from the account of Aristeas), deeply conservative and rooted in its past – but marks a totally complete and fundamental change. Whereas Targum was oral, the translation was written down; whereas the Targum was non-literal, the translation stayed close to its underlying text. It is thus reasonable to assume that such a change did not arise from internal pressures within Judaism, but was imposed from without. If the Jews of Egypt in Hellenistic times had wanted to understand the Bible in Greek, it is

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[153] Déaut (1989), p. 574.
[154] Brock (1969), no page number, reprinted (1974), p. 542.

more likely that they would have prepared an oral Greek version on the pattern of Targum – a genre already established for over one hundred years – rather than the translation that was actually produced – a written scroll, with a literal translation, which was deposited in a pagan building for the use of non-Jews. This again indicates that the motivation for a translation did not come from the Jews.

The popularity of the claim that the Jews needed a translation because a substantial number no longer understood their holy tongue is thus based on a fact which is true but irrelevant to the question in hand. The translation was produced because the Greeks, rather than the Jews, did not understand the Hebrew words of the Pentateuchal text.

The Language of the Jews in Early Ptolemaic Times

The improbability of a Jewish initiative for the translation is also apparent when we consider the history and language of the majority of Jews in Egypt from the sixth century BCE, particularly in relation to the date of the translation deduced in this book. We know that many Jews fled to Egypt in the thirty year period between the accession of king Jehoiakim in Jerusalem in 609 BCE and the assassination of the Gedaliah, the governor set up by Nebucadnezzar. Jeremiah implies that the size of the Jewish community in Egypt in his time was similar to the size of the remnant in Jerusalem and in the rest of Judaea.[155] Until the invasion of Alexander, these Jews were exposed to the culture of Egyptians, Ethiopians and Persians and as far as is known, they spoke Aramaic.[156] It is hardly necessary to note that they would not have needed a biblical version in Greek and it must be assumed that they continued to use the Aramaic targum.

A theoretical need for a Greek version of the Pentateuch could only have arisen after Alexander invaded Egypt in 332/1 BCE. A substantial influx of Jews probably occurred in 312 BCE, when Ptolemy I brought over the Jewish captives (who, according to Aristeas, his son later released).[157] These Jewish immigrants into Egypt used

[155] Jer 24:8. For further, see Porten (1968) pp. 13–4; Thompson (1988), p. 85.
[156] Porten (1968), p. 16.
[157] LetAris.12; D.S.19.80–86 For the date 312 rather than 320 BCE, when Ptolemy was also involved in Judaea, see Hadas (1951), pp. 98–9.

Aramaic in their everyday life, although many knew Hebrew as well. The first authentic evidence of Jews in Alexandria in early Ptolemaic times appears in Greek and Aramaic inscriptions probably from the reign of Ptolemy II. However, the use of Aramaic by the Jews continued '*during the entire third century, and perhaps the first half of the second, [when] Egyptian Jews continued to speak Aramaic, as is shown by papyri and ostraka in that language*'.[158] Subsequently, for many centuries, no Aramaic documents are found.[159] This accounts for the fact that many modern commentators place the date of the translation around the year 50 BCE, about thirty years later than the year indicated by the Church Father dates. For if a majority of Jews still continued to speak Aramaic under the early Ptolemaic kings, why would they have demanded a translation of the Pentateuch into Greek?

Further confirmation of the intitiative of the Greeks (rather than the Jews), especially if the translation was made in in relatively early Ptolemaic times may also be deduced from the history of the Egyptian Jews. It seems probable that a large majority of the Jews who settled in Alexandria with Ptolemy I were drawn from among the one hundred thousand people whom he deported to Egypt in 312 BCE.[160] This means that if the translation was completed in 281 BCE, there was a maximum of thirty years between the arrival of these Jews in Egypt and their request for a translation. This allows for one new generation. Observation suggests – and this is confirmed by the archeological records of Aramaic described above – that the first generation of immigrants are familiar with the language of their parents, in this case Aramaic. Without even considering the different nature of the written, literal Greek translation compared with the discursive, oral Targum, it must be asked how likely it was that this first generation, or their parents, many of whom could have still been alive, clamoured for a translation of the Pentateuch into Greek because they had forgotten their native tongue?

But it is moreover important to remember that although the initial effects of the translation are probably over stressed, the very existence of the translation must have encouraged the use of Greek

[158] Tcherikover and Fuks (1957), p. 3 with n. 8, p. 30.
[159] Tcherikover and Fuks (1957), pp. 25ff, esp. p. 30.
[160] LetAris.12 with Josephus, C.A.1.186, see comments of Hadas (1951), p. 98.

among the Jews in relation to their holy texts.[161] But the anticipated demand for a product before it is produced may bear no relation to the demand after it appears. Modern history is littered with examples of modern inventions whose widespread use could never have been anticipated by their inventors. Similarly with the first, written, literal translation of the Pentateuch – how could the Jews of Egypt have realised the impact the translation before such a work had ever been produced?

Conclusion

The discussion in the chapter challenges the attractive, but misleading myth – prevalent only in the last two hundred or so years – that the translation of the Hebrew Pentateuch into Greek arose on the initiative of the Jews, because (as scholars so often state) the Jews had forgotten their holy tongue. The latter is correct, but essentially irrelevant to the question in hand. Rather, the historical facts established earlier in this book – the date of the translation in 291 BCE and the likely fact that Demetrius of Phalerum worked in the court of Ptolemy II – combined with a detailed examination of the *Letter of Aristeas*, suggest that the translation was made basically in the way that Aristeas describes. This is confirmed by the accounts of Philo and Josephus in the sense that they do not provide alternative histories of the translation, but used different versions of the *Letter of Aristeas* to write a history of the translation which proved the divinity or otherwise of the translated text. This is also the intention of the author who edited an early version of the *Letter of Aristeas* so that it now contained allusions to the divinity of the text.

If these references to divinity are removed, we are left with a version of the *Letter of Aristeas* which described how a translation of the Pentateuch into Greek was brought about through the energy of the Greeks and despite the opposition of the Jews. The original idea was promoted by Demetrius of Phalerum, who suggested that his employer Ptolemy II should acquire a translation, in order to increase the king's collection of books. But only the Jews could perform such a

[161] Such statements as: '*From the moment of translation* [of the Pentateuch] the study of Hebrew became obsolete, and since it was not (as was Aramaic) a language of everyday use, it disappeared wholly from Jewish life in Egypt', in Tcherikover and Fuks (1957), p. 31, are surely an exaggeration.

task. The Jews were thus faced with Ptolemy's request to translate their holiest work into Greek. But neither the Jews of Jerusalem nor those in Alexandria wanted to assist. This can be seen from the negatively-toned letter of the Jerusalem High Priest to Ptolemy II and from the counter request of the Jewish leaders in Alexandria for the king to free the Jewish slaves. The latter attempted to create a situation in which the Jews could decline Ptolemy's request in a diplomatic way. But the subterfuge failed. Ptolemy unexpectedly freed the Jewish slaves, and the Jews were obliged to fulfil his demand. Having promised cooperation, it seems that the project was given full Jewish support. This extended even to the final ceremony to commemorate the completion of the translation, when all the Jewish leaders of Alexandria, even those who were not in sympathy with the making of the translation, attended the event. The mixed attitude of the Jews was however revealed by the lack of verbal participation by some of the Jewish officials at the ceremony, who did not join in the general declaration for the preservation of the text. This was important at a time when all written documents were liable to alteration, both deliberate and accidental, especially a text which had arisen as a translation and whose wording was therefore dependent on the meaning of an underlying work which could be understood in many different ways. Moreover although a majority of the Jewish leaders were prepared to take part in the declaration against change, they were not sufficiently interested in the translation even to keep a copy of the work. Some Jews however seem to have attached some value to the translation, and going over the heads of their leaders, asked Demetrius to make a copy and to present it to the Jewish authorities. But there is no indication at this stage in its history that the translation was intended for religious use or that it was honoured in any way as divine. It was simply one book among many that were deposited in the library of Ptolemy II.

On to this story was grafted evidence of a later belief in the divinity of the text. This probably happened early in the first century CE, some time after Philo had written *De Vita Mosis* and well before Josephus had composed the *Antiquities* around 93 CE. The extra material can be seen in the second declaration of the Jews, ostensibly delivered at the ceremony on the Pharos, and in the three references to 'seventy-two'. It is obvious however that the agent of these changes would have preferred a basic history of the text which showed that, from the very beginning, the Jews wanted a translation

and considered the translation was divinely inspired. He would also have preferred an account in which the role of the Greeks was much reduced. What religious group would freely admit to the possession of a holy book that was inspired and financed by a pagan outsider to that religion, and which was reluctantly compiled by the religious group itself? Whoever was responsible for the additions was however content to accept the basic structure and text of the history he received, and to solve the problem of the lack of evidence for divinity of the translation merely by interpolations in the text. Thereby evidence remained of earlier, conflicting ideas. These suggested that the translation was made though the energy of the Greeks, and in the face of sophisticated opposition from the Jews.

The use of Aramaic translations by the Jews before the second century BCE, and the Jewish knowledge of Aramaic (rather than Greek) in early Ptolemaic times does not offer evidence that conflicts with this view, and also suggests that it may well be correct. When compared with the non-literal and oral Aramaic Targum, it can be seen that the translation does not reflect a development from within Judaism, but shows a definite change, which is most likely to have been imposed from without. This evidence alone suggests that it can safely be concluded that the Jewish leaders of early Ptolemaic times would not have wanted a written, literal translation of the Pentateuch in Greek. The evidence for the prevalence of Aramaic among the Jews of this time also suggests that the Jews did not need a translation into Greek.

Apart from the question of historical fact and a full reappraisal of the *Letter of Aristeas*, this understanding of origin of the translation must profoundly affect the way it is viewed. If the earliest Greek bible was composed by Jewish translators working reluctantly in Alexandria in the third century BCE, for the benefit of the Greeks rather than the Jews, then, the translation must be regarded primarily as a document in which, for the first time, the inner sanctum of Judaism was exposed to the curious, and possibly unfriendly gaze of the outside world.[162] Such self-exposure could not have been easy for a religious system whose many social rituals tend to keep it apart. The deeply religious Jewish translators must also have grappled with the awesome task of deciding how God would have deliv-

[162] Josephus cites the antisemitic comments of he early third century Egyptian priest Mantho, C.A.I.228–236.

ered the Pentateuch in Greek. How did this influence the type of language they used? How did the Jews justify a complete break with Jewish tradition, when they produced a written, literal translation of their holiest text? Such problems alone would account for the Jewish reluctance to obey Ptolemy's demand, to translate the Hebrew Pentateuch into Greek. This is confirmed by a careful reading of Aristeas which reveals how they tried in vain to decline his request.

There is little doubt therefore that the Aramaic speaking Jews of Hellenistic Egypt in the early third century BCE, did not want or need a translation of the Hebrew Pentateuch into Greek. As Aristeas hints at the beginning of his account, and as he also suggests at the end, the translation was made despite Jewish opposition because Ptolemy II wanted to further his reputation by enlarging his library and attracting scholars to his court.[163] The dates which mark the completion of the translation – in 281 BCE according to the Jews and in 280 BCE according to the Greeks – also suggest that the project was planned on a magnificent scale to mark the end of the co-regency and the beginning of the glorious reign of Ptolemy II.

[163] LetAris.39,318,321.

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APPENDIX

Sources Which Link the Translation with Ptolemy I and/or Ptolemy II, Listed Chronologically in Relation to the Life of Eusebius

Some sources specifically identify the king involved in the translation. Others merely allude to a Ptolemy. For example, Justin Martyr refers simply to 'Ptolemy' but his references to Philo and Josephus suggests that he means Ptolemy II. The identity of the king is also indicated by an author's reference to the length of his regnal years – the traditional length of the reign of Ptolemy I was forty years, while Ptolemy II ruled for thirty-eight years. The reference of Pollux to a Ptolemy who reigned for thirty-eight years thus indicates Ptolemy II. Eusebius was born in the early 260's and died in 339 CE.
Unless otherwise noted, page numbers refer to Wendland (1900).

Before Eusebius

Sources Before Eusebius Who Involve Only Ptolemy I:

(1) Irenaeus, *c.*130–200 CE, Eusebius, HE 5.8.11.

Sources Before Eusebius who Involve both Ptolemy I and Ptolemy II:

(1) Aristobulus, fl *c.*155–125 BCE, Eusebius HE 7.32.16.
(2) Clement of Alexandria, *c.*150–211/16 CE, Strom.1.22.148.

Sources Before Eusebius Who Involve Only Ptolemy II:

(1) Aristeas, *The Letter of Aristeas.*
(2) Philo, *c.*30 BCE–45 CE: De Mos.II 25–44.
(3) Josephus, b.37/8CE–died *c.*100: (i) *Ant.*I.10; (ii) *Ant.* 12.11–118; (iii) *CA* 2.44–5.
(4) Justin Martyr, *c.*100–165 CE: (i) *Apology* 1.31; (ii) *Dialogue with Trypho* 71, see trans. of Falls (1948), p. 262; (iii) *Exhortation to the Greeks* 13 (Pseudo-Justin).
(5) Tertullian, *c.*160–240 CE, *Apology* 18.
(6) Iulius Pollux, 2nd cent. CE: cited Wendland (1900), pp. 136–7.

Eusebius and Sources Contemporary With Eusebius

Eusebius Who Implicates Ptolemy II

Die Chronik (Latin *Chronicle*), Helm, p. 129
Die Chronik (Armenian *Chronicle*), trans. Karst, p. 200
Syriac *Chronicle* of Dioysius Tell-Mahre, Wendland, pp. 131–132
HE.5.8.11–15
PE.8.1.5
PE.13.12.1–2

Sources Contemporary With Eusebius Who Involve Only Ptolemy I:

(1) St. Filaster (also, 'Philaster'), died *c.*397, *Diversarum Hereseon Liber CXLII*, cited Wendland (1900), 160–1.

Sources Contemporary With Eusebius Who Involve both Ptolemy I and II

None

Sources Contemporary With Eusebius Who Involve Only Ptolemy II:

(1) Epiphanius, *c.*315–403, *On Weights and Measures*, Dean (1935), §52b, §52c, §53c.
(2) Pseudo Athanasius, *c.*295–373, *Synopsis Scripturae Sacrae*, cited Wendland (1900), p. 149.
(3) St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *c.*318–386 CE, *Catechetical Lectures* IV 34, cited Wendland (1900), p. 138.

Sources After the Time of Eusebius

Sources After Eusebius Who Involve Ptolemy I

(1) Theodoret, bishop of Cyrus (or Cyrrhus), *c.*393–*c.*466 CE, *Praef. in psal.*, Wendland (1900), pp. 148–9 = *P.G.* 80, p. 864. (For dates, see *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, iii (1991), p. 2049).

Sources After Eusebius Who Involve both Ptolemy I and Ptolemy II

None

Sources After Eusebius Who Involve Ptolemy II

(1) Chrysostom John, *c.*347–407 CE, pp. 138–9, *Discourses against Judaizing Christians* IV I; *Homilies on Genesis* IV 4; *Homilies on St. Matthew* V 2.
(2) Jerome (Hieronymus), *c.*342–420 CE, pp. 162–3, *Praef. in Penti.* (*PL* XXVIII, p. 181); *Comm. in Ezeck.*5,12; *Comm. in Mich.*2,9.
(3) Augustine, St., of Hippo, 354–430 CE: *De Civ. Dei.*XVIII 42, pp. 163–4; *De Mirabilibus Sacrae Scripturae* I,9, pp. 164–5.
(4) Cyril of Alexandria, died 444 CE: *Contra Iulianum* I 16, p. 148, trans. Burguière (1985), Livre I, §16, p. 337.
(5) St. Isidore, died *c.*440 CE: *Etymologiae* VI 3,5, p. 165.
(6) Pseudo-Theodoret: *tractatus ineditus*, cited Wendland (1900), pp. 150–5, perhaps identified with Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *c.*393–466 CE.
(7) Basil of Seleucia, died *c.*459 CE, p. 149 (*PG* 85, pp. 421–2).
(8) Cosmas Indicopleustas, fl. mid 6th cent. CE: *Topogr. Christ.* XII, pp. 156–7.
(9) Zacharias of Mitylene (known also as Zacharias Scholasticus and Zacharias Rhetor), died after 536 CE, see Pelletier (1962), p. 95.
(10) Malalas Johannes, late 6th cent. CE, p. 132.
(11) *Chronicon Paschale* I, compiled early 7th cent. CE, ed. Dindorfius, 1932, p. 326 (also Wendland, pp. 132–3).
(12) Nicephorus, *c.*758–829 CE, pp. 129–30 (*PG.*100, p. 1009, *Chronographia Brevis*).
(13) Syncellus Georgius, fl. 8th century, §§ 516–518.
(14) Athār-Ul-Bākiya of Albīrūnī, fl. 10th century CE, *The Chronology of the Ancient Nations*, translated Sachau (1979), p. 24.
(15) Cedrenus Georgius, fl. 11th cent. CE, cited Wendland (1900), p. 135.
(16) Nicetas Serrarus, Bishop of Heraclea, fl. 11th cent., *Catena in psalmos*, cited Wendland (1900), p. 159.
(17) Leo Grammaticus, cited Wendland (1900), p. 136.
(18) Zigabenus Euthymius, fl. early 12th cent.: *In Psalmos*, cited Wendland (1900) p. 155.
(19) Zonaras Johannes I, fl. 12th cent., cited Wendland (1900), p. 136.
(20) Iosephi Hypomnesticum, cited Wendland (1900), pp. 155–6.
(21) Lydus Johannes: (i) *De Magistratibus*, cited Wendland (1900), p. 157; (ii) *De Mensibus*, cited Wendland (1900), p. 157.

(22) Michel le Syrien, Patriarche Jacobite d'Antioch, 1166–1199: see Chabot (1963), p. 123.
(23) Bar Hebraeus, 1226–1286 CE: see Budge (1932), pp. 39–40.
(24) Solomon, fl. 1222 CE: *The Book of the Bee*, see Budge (1886), p. 120.
(25) Johannes Tzetzes, 12th cent. CE, *The Plautine Scholium*, Kaibel (Berlin, 1899).

Note: *Doubtful Sources Which May Link the Translation with Ptolemy I*

(1) Zosimus Panopolitanus, see Nestle (1902), p. 439, quoting from *de Zythorum confectione*, ed. Gruner, 1814, p. 5, 'Simon the high priest of Jerusalem sent Hermes to Ptolemy Lagi, [and Hermes] translated all the Hebrew [work] for the Greeks and Egyptians . . .' (Also said by Nestle to be cited by Constantine Oikonomos, Περὶ τῶν ο′ ἑρμηνεύτων τῆς Παλαιᾶς Θείας Γραφῆς, Vol II (Athens, 1845), p. 328).

(2) Eutychius, p. 296 cited Wendland (1900), p. 131, 'After him [= Alexander], Ptolemy surnamed Alexander, whose family name was Galeb-Ur, [ruled] for 27 (or, 21) years. In his 20th year, having sent a message to Jerusalem, arranged for the bringing thence to Alexandria seventy Jews . . .'.

After the death of Alexander, Philip Arrhidaeus was declared king, and ruled for seven years. This is not stated by Eutychius. Subsequently, Ptolemy I ruled in Egypt, not Ptolemy Alexander, as Eutychius apparently states. In fact, a Ptolemy Alexander ruled Egypt in 106–88 BCE. It is thus possible that Eutychius is confusing Ptolemy I with this king. If so, Eutychius appears to suggest that the translation of the Law occurred in the 20th year of Ptolemy I. But the traditional length of the reign of Ptolemy I was 40 years, and not 27 or 21. Moreover, Ptolemy I was commonly known as the 'son of Lagos', and the family of 'Galeb-Ur' is otherwise unknown. In short, it is difficult to decide which king is linked with the translation in this text.

(3) *Excerpta Latina Barbari*, cited Wendland (1900) pp. 130–1. As with Eutychius, the translation is linked with Ptolemy Alexander, which may mean Ptolemy I: 'post Philippum autem regnavit Alexander Ptolemeus quem et ipse consiliaris Alexandri annos XII . . . isdam temporibus illi septuaginta Ebrei sapientes illam legem interpraetaverunt Greco sermone'.

INDEX OF MODERN AUTHORS

INDEX OF ANCIENT SOURCES

For the sake of convenience, many of the texts listed below are referenced to the standard collections of these works, or to the most easily obtainable source.

INDEX OF SUBJECTS

References below to an otherwise unidentified date refer to the date of the translation of the Pentateuch into Greek. Similarly, those to Demetrius are to Demetrius of Phalerum.