

LETTER OF ARISTEAS TO PHILOKRATES

CHAPTER 1

Philostrates, a noteworthy narrative has been compiled of a meeting which we had with Eleazar, the chief-priest of the Judeans, arising from the great importance which you attached to hearing a personal account of our mission, its content and purpose. By detailing each aspect I have tried to present you a clear exposition of it, realizing your love-of-learning, **2** which is a great *quality* in any human who has tried continually to increase his learning and understanding, whether from the histories of *others* or even¹ by actual experience. For it is by this means, by the attainment of the most beautiful ends, that the soul is furnished with a clean disposition; and which, by having fixed its aim on the piety (the highest of all ends), lives by adopting an infallible rule.

3 We have the set purpose, which is devoted to the special study of the things of God, *and* offered ourselves as a body of elders to the previously-mentioned man, whose conduct and glory have won him preeminent-honor in the eyes of both citizens and others alike. And *he* has gained the greatest benefits for those with him and for the citizens in other places, by his interpretation of the divine law, due to it having been written by them on parchments in Hebraic characters.

4 We also undertook this task with enthusiasm, seizing an opportunity with the king in connection with those who were transported to Egypt from Judah by the king his father, who was both the original founder of the city and took over Egypt. It is worthwhile telling you this as well, **5** for I am convinced that because you are more favorably inclined toward the solemnity and the disposition of the humans who live by the solemn law, concerning whom we propose to write, you will gladly listen, since you have paid a fresh visit to us from your island, and wish to hear with us of matters pertaining to edification of *the* soul. **6** Now I had also previously sent you the record of what I regarded as the most noteworthy matters. We received this *record* of the race of the Judeans from the most eloquent chief-priests in eloquent Egypt. **7** For since you have such a love-of-learning concerning things which are beneficial to *the* mind, it is indeed my duty to share this with all like-minded persons, but all the more so with you, *for* you have a kindred inclination, being not only a natural brother in character, *but* instead also in the pursuit of beauty the same as we are. **8** For *the* value of gold or any other treasure among those honored by the empty-headed does not possess the same value, as compared with the pursuit of discipline and the care about these things. But lest we prolong the introduction, indulging in idle chatter, we will proceed to the main part of the narrative.

9 On his appointment as keeper of the king's library, Demetrios of Phaleron undertook many different negotiations aimed at collecting, if possible,² all the books in the inhabited *earth*. And by purchase and translation he brought the king's plan to a successful conclusion, as far as lay in his power.

10 Therefore,³ on one occasion, when we were present, he was asked, "How many tens of thousand books are there?"

He spoke, "Over two hundred thousand, O king. But I shall take urgent steps in the immediate future to increase the total to five hundred thousand. Now a message has been brought to me⁴ that the lawbooks of the Judeans are worthy of translation and inclusion in your royal library."

11 "What is there to prevent you from doing this?" he spoke. "Everything for your needs has been put at your disposal."

But Demetrios spoke, "Translation is needed. For they use letters characteristic of the language of the Judeans, exactly as Egyptians use the formation of their letters in accordance with their own language. *But*⁵ *The Judeans* are assumed to use Syrian language, but this is not so; instead, it is another form of language."

Now the king, in answer to each point, ordered that a letter be written to the Judean chief-priest, so that the previously-mentioned *project* might be carried out.

12 But I thought that a season had *now* come to press the demand which I had often laid before Sosibios of Tarentum and Andreas the chief-bodyguard, concerning the release of those *Judeans* deported from Judah by the king's father. For he had invaded the whole of Coelesyria and Phoinike; *and*, by a combination of success *and* manliness, he had indeed deported some but took others prisoners, bringing everything into subjection by fear. And in the course of this, he had removed up to 100,000 *people* from the country of the Judeans into Egypt, **13** from whom he armed about 30,000 picked men *and* settled them throughout the country in the fortresses. (Indeed, already in earlier times as well a fair number had entered the country with the Persians, and before them other auxiliaries had been dispatched to fight with Psamtik against the king of the Ethiopians; instead, they were not as numerous as those who were brought over by Ptolemaios son of Lagos.) **14** Now as we said previously, he had selected the best, outstanding in youth and strength, fully arming them. But the remaining number, elders and youths, but even women, he had let go into slavery, not so much out of any deliberate-choice of his soul, *but* because he was prevailed upon by his soldiers on account of the services which they had given in the contests of war.

But when we came upon some opportunity for their release, as we have previously shown, we proclaimed the following discourses to the king, **15** "Let it never be unreasonable to be refuted by events themselves, O King. For since the laws have been established for all the Judeans, it is our plan not only to translate, *but* instead to also interpret them. *But* what explanation shall we have for our mission, as long as multitudes of *them* are in subjection in your kingdom? Instead, out of your perfect and abundant soul, release those who are subject to misery. The *same* God who appointed their law, prospers your kingdom, as I have been at pains to show. **16** For these people revere the God, who is overseer and creator of all, and whom all *men* reverence including ourselves. But we, O King, call him by different names, such as Zeus and Dias. Now, consistently with this, our first ancestors demonstrated that the one by whom all live and are created is both *the* leader and Lord of all. But I beg you to set all humans an example of the splendor of your soul by releasing those who are held in slavery."

¹ [Ari1:2] I omits "even"

² [Ari1:9] Eusebius omits "if possible"

³ [Ari1:10] Eusebius / manuscript omits "Therefore"

⁴ [Ari1:10] Eusebius, manuscript (though both are different in tense) / Josephus "Now I have been informed"

⁵ [Ari1:11] Eusebius adds

17 Now he wasted no time, and we prayed⁶ to God from our soul, that he would furnish his mind with the *thought of* releasing of them all. (For the race of the humans are God's creation and are changed and converted by him. This is also the reason why, with many diverse pleas, I besought the Lord with all my heart that he might be prevailed upon to accomplish my request. 18 For I had a great hope, as I presented an account for *the* salvation of humans, that God would execute the fulfillment of my requests. For when humans, from pure motives, plan some action in the way of righteousness and attention to beautiful works, God the Lord of all directs their actions and their intentions.)

19 Now *the king* looked up, and, looking on me with a gracious countenance, declared, "How many thousands do you consider there will be?"

Now Andreas, who was standing by, answered, "A little more than one hundred and ten⁷ thousand."

But he spoke, "It is yet a small request that Aristeeas makes of us."

But Sosibios and some of those present spoke the following, "It is worthy of your magnanimity to offer the release of these men as a thank-offering to the Most High God. For you are highly honored by the Lord of all, and have been glorified beyond your ancestors, so if you make such a great thank-offering, it is befitting of you."

20 Now *the king* was absolutely confounded, and ordered the *soldiers'* salaries to be increased, and the payment of twenty⁸ drachmas for each body *owned by a slave-master*, together with the publication of a command on these matters, but *also* the compilation of a register of *captives* to be attached to it. He⁹ magnificently exercised his eagerness, God having fulfilled our entire purpose, and compelled him to release, not only those who came into his kingdom with his father's army, *but* instead also any others who were there previously or were subsequently taken there. They revealed that the gift amounted to more than 400 talents.

CHAPTER 2

21 But also regarding the copy of the command, I¹⁰ think that its insertion will be not unprofitable. For the king's magnificence will also be more clearly manifested by it, as God gives him strength to bring this salvation to vast multitudes. 22 Now it was as follows:

By order of the king: everyone who served our father's expeditions in the regions of Syria and Phoinike, *and* who, in their advance upon the country of the Judeans, became masters of *any* Judean bodies whom they transported into either the city or the country, or sold to someone else (but also, any such *captives* who were there prior to *the* advance or were subsequently brought in): anyone who holds such *persons* are required to release them at once, receiving twenty drachmas as the price *per individual*. Indeed, in the case of soldiers, such money will be added to their salaries; but in the case of the remainder, from the royal bank.

23 For we believe, that these prisoners were taken contrary to our father's will, and in a manner against all fairness; but, that both the destruction of their country, and the transportation of the Judeans into Egypt, was a hasty *act* of military rashness. For the spoil which fell to the soldiers along the plain was sufficient *for them*. For this reason, the enslavement of these humans is absolutely unreasonable. 24 Therefore, we have a reputation of dispensing righteousness to all humans, but, all the more, to those who are enslaved without good reason; and our overall aim is to promote both the righteousness and the piety in all things. *Therefore*, we have ordered that all Judean bodies in slavery *everywhere* in the kingdom, for whatever reason, shall be released, *and* that their owners receive the payment laid down above, and that no one shall act leisurely in these matters. But within three days following the publication of this command, the owners shall furnish registers¹¹ of *slaves* to those appointed over these matters, and give immediate details of these individuals.¹²

25 For we have also concluded, that it is in the interest of ourselves and our affairs that this matter shall be accomplished. But anyone who wishes may bring a message *to me* concerning those who refuse to be compliant, on the understanding that he will assume the office of the *accused* if found guilty; but the possessions of such *men* shall be appropriated into the royal *bank*.

26 This command was submitted to the king for his perusal. It was identical in all other respects except for the clause, "and any such *captives* who were there prior to *the* advance or were subsequently brought in," which the king added with his own hand, showing his magnificence and magnanimity. He also directed that a generous gift of expenses should be divided among *the* adjutants of the legions¹³ and *the* royal bankers. 27 Once *the matter* was decided, it was implemented in seven days. Now the gift amounted to more than 660¹⁴ talents. For even a large number of children at the breast was set free, together with their mothers. And when the question was raised whether 20¹⁵ drachmas should be given for these, the king directed that this should also be done, thereby completely accomplishing every detail of his decision.

28 Now when this had been completed, he directed Demetrios to report on the transcription of the Judean books. For all measures were taken by these kings by means of ordinances and in great security, and with no trace of negligence nor carelessness. And for this reason I have inserted the copies of the report and of the letters, as well as the number of presents sent and the condition of each, because each of them was outstanding in magnificence and skill. 29 Now the copy of the report is as follows:

Demetrios to *the* Great King,

Your order, O king, concerned the collection of missing books needed to complete the library, and of items which fell short of the requisite condition. And

⁶ literally "vowed"

⁷ [Ari:19] B "I calculate more than one hundred thousand" / Josephus "More than one hundred *and* ten thousand"

⁸ [Ari:20] Josephus "120"

⁹ [Ari:20] Greek, some Josephus / other Josephus "They"

¹⁰ [Ari:21] Greek, some Josephus / other Josephus "they" / other Josephus "he"

¹¹ [Ari:24] manuscript / Josephus "notices"

¹² literally "bodies"

¹³ [Ari:26] manuscript, some Josephus / other Josephus "among the officials of the government"

¹⁴ [Ari:27] Josephus "460"

¹⁵ [Ari:27] Josephus "120"

since I have given highest priority and attention to these matters, I now have the following report to lay before you: **30** Books of the law of the Judeans, together with a few others, are missing *from the library*. For these *works* are written in Hebraic characters and language. But according to the report of the experts, they have been transcribed somewhat carelessly and not as they should be; for they have never been made with *any sort of* royal foresight. **31** Now it is necessary that these *works* should also be made into an accurate *version* for your library, because this legislation, as could be expected from its divine *nature*, is also very philosophical and uncontaminated. For this reason, both writers and poets and the whole multitude of historians have been reluctant to refer to the previously-mentioned books, and to the men who have lived and are living¹⁶ in accordance with them, because their conception of life is *so* pure and solemn, as Hekataios of Abdera declares. **32** Therefore, if you approve, O king, a letter shall be written to the chief-priest at Jerusalem, asking him to dispatch men of the most beautiful lives and who are elders, skilled in matters pertaining to their law, six in number from each tribe, in order that after probing the text agreed by the majority, and having achieved an accurate translation, we may produce an outstanding version in a manner worthy, even of the contents and of your purpose. May you be prosperous in every way!

33 Now on receiving this report, the king directed a letter to be written to Eleazar concerning these matters, also giving an account of the ransom of the *Judean* prisoners. But he also provided 50 talents of gold, and 70 talents of silver,¹⁷ and a large quantity of *precious* stones for the fashioning of both cups, and bowls, and a table, and libation-vessels. He directed the treasurers to allow the artisans to select whatever *materials* they might require *for the purpose*. *He also commanded* that 100 monetary talents be sent to the priest¹⁸ for sacrifices and for other requirements. **34** Now we will show you details concerning the provisions after we have given the copies of the letters.

Now the king's letter was of the following pattern:

35 King Ptolemaios to Eleazar *the* chief-priest, greetings and good health.

It is a fact that many of the Judeans settled in our country after being uprooted from Jerusalem by *the* Persians during the time of their mastery, but even *more* yet came with our father into Egypt as prisoners. **36** He put many of them into the soldiery on larger salaries; but similarly, he, having also judged the veterans to be trustworthy, set up fortresses which he handed over to them, to prevent the Egyptians from feeling any fear¹⁹ on their account. But having also received the kingdom, we adopt a more humane attitude to all our subjects, but more especially to your citizens. **37** We have freed more than a hundred thousand prisoners, paying to their captors the price in silver proportionate to their honor. We also make amends for any damage caused by the

violence of the crowd. We decided to do this as a pious obligation, making it as a thank-offering to the Greatest God, who has preserved the kingdom for us in peace and strongest glory throughout the whole inhabited *earth*. Also, those who are in the prime of their age, we have drafted into the army, but those who are also able to be attached to me, being worthy of trust in our *household*, we have put in charge of *some* positions. **38** But it is our wish to grant favors to them and to all the Judeans throughout the inhabited *earth*, and to future generations.

Therefore, we have decided that your law shall be translated into Hellenic characters from what you call the Hebraic characters, in order that they should also take their place with us in our library with the other royal books. **39** Therefore, you will act beautifully, and in a manner worthy of our eagerness, by selecting and dispatching²⁰ elders of exemplary lives, experienced in the law and who are able to translate it, six from each tribe, so that an agreed version may be found from the large majority, in view of the great importance of the matters under consideration. For we believe that *the* completion of this *project* will win *us* great glory. **40** Now we have sent off on these things:²¹ Andreas the chief-bodyguard and Aristeas,²² *men* whom I hold in honor, to confer with you. And with them, they bring first-fruits of my votive-offerings for the temple, and 100 talents of silver for sacrifices and the other *requirements*.

Now write to us on any matters you wish, and your requests will be gratified; and you will be performing an act worthy of a friendship, *for* what you choose will be carried out with utmost speed. Farewell.

41 In reply to this letter, Eleazar wrote in acceptance as follows:

Eleazar *the* chief-priest sends greetings to his genuine friend King Ptolemaios.

Good health both to you and to your sister Queen Arsinoe, and to your children; if that is so, it would be beautiful, and as we wish. Now we also are in good health. **42** On receipt of your letter we rejoiced greatly because of your purpose and beautiful counsel. And we gathered together the whole multitude, reading it to them, that they might know *about* your piety toward our God. But we also showed them the vessels which you sent, twenty of gold and thirty of silver, five cups, and a table for offering, and 100 talents of silver for the performance of sacrifices and *the* furnishing of the temple requirements. **43** *These gifts were* brought by two *men* held in honor by you, Andreas and Aristeas, men who are beautiful and good, and outstanding in discipline, and worthy in every respect of your conduct and righteousness. And these men communicated your *messages* to us, and they received a reply from me in agreement with what you wrote. **44** For everything which is to your advantage, even if it is unusual, we will carry out; for this is a sign of friendship and love. For

¹⁶ Josephus, Eusebius / others add

¹⁷ manuscript / Josephus omits "and 70 talents of silver"

¹⁸ manuscript / some Josephus add / some Josephus instead add "to the temple"

¹⁹ Josephus Eusebius / manuscript "to cause the Egyptians to fear"

²⁰ manuscript, some Josephus / other Josephus add

²¹ Josephus, Eusebius / manuscript "on this"

²² Josephus, Eusebius(O) "Aristaios"

you have even bestowed great and unexpected benefits upon our citizens in many ways.²³ **45** Therefore, we offered sacrifices without delay for you, and your sister, and your children, and your friends. And the whole multitude prayed,²⁴ that your plans might prosper continually, and that God, the Lord of all, might preserve your kingdom in peace with glory, and that the translation of the holy law might prove advantageous to you and be carried out successfully. **46** Now in the presence of the whole *assembly* we²⁵ selected elders, beautiful and good men, six from each tribe, whom we have sent with the law in their possession. Therefore, once the translation of *the books* is complete, it will be a beautiful-deed, O righteous king, if you order, that these men be restored to us again in safety. Farewell.

47 Now the names of the men are as follows:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| First tribe: | Joseph, Hezekiah, Zechariah, Johanan, Hezekiah, Elisha. |
| Second <i>tribe</i> : | Judah, Simon, Samuel, Adai, Mattithiah, ²⁶ Eschlemiah. ²⁷ |
| Third <i>tribe</i> : | Nehemiah, Joseph, ²⁸ Theodosios, Basaiah, Orniah, Dakis. |
| 48 Fourth <i>tribe</i> : | Jonathan, Abrai, Elisha, Hananiah, Zechariah, Hilkiah. ²⁹ |
| Fifth <i>tribe</i> : | Isaac, Jacob, Jeshua, Shabbethai, Simon, Levi. |
| 49 Sixth <i>tribe</i> : | Judah, Joseph, Simon, Zechariah, Samuel, Shelemiah. |
| Seventh <i>tribe</i> : | Shabbethai, Zedekiah, Jacob, Isaac, Jesiah, Natthai. ³⁰ |
| Eighth <i>tribe</i> : | Theodosios, Jason, Jeshua, Theodotos, Johanan, Jonathan. ³¹ |
| Ninth <i>tribe</i> : | Theophilos, Abram, Arsam, Jason, Endemiah, Daniel; ³² |
| 50 Tenth <i>tribe</i> : | Jeremiah, Eleazar, Zechariah, Benaiah, ³³ Elisha, Dathai. ³⁴ |
| Eleventh <i>tribe</i> : | Samuel, Joseph, Judah, Jonathan, Caleb, ³⁵ Dositheos |
| Twelfth <i>tribe</i> : | Isael, Johanan, Theodosios, |

Seventy-two in all.

And this indeed was the answer given by Eleazar's party in reply to the king's letter.

CHAPTER 3

51 Now since I announced that I would also give full details of the furnishings, I will now do so. For the finished objects were wrought with exceptional artistry. The king made a generous contribution and oversaw the artisans in each case. For this reason, they could not neglect any part of the work or finish it off thoughtlessly. Now first I will describe the details of the table. **52** Therefore, indeed the king's main plan was to make the furnishing an object outstanding in its measurements. Now he ordered inquiries to be made of those of the region, concerning the size of the previous one set up in the temple at Jerusalem. **53** Now when they gave him the measurements he asked a further question, whether he should furnish it to be larger.

Therefore, indeed some of the priests and the others said that there was nothing to prevent this.

But the king spoke, that he was even quite willing to make it even five times as large in size, but he hesitated in case it proved to be useless for the duties. **54** For he said, that he desired that his gifts should not be *merely* placed in that region, but would be much more pleased if the appointed men-on-duty appropriately performed the appropriate *rites* upon the *table* which he had furnished. **55** For lack of gold was not the reason why he had made the measurements of the previously completed offerings small, instead he spoke, "It is plain that there was some reason why they were so constituted with its dimensions. For had the command been given, nothing would have been lacking. But for this reason, we must not overstep nor transpose what is proper."

56 Therefore, he indeed directed that the fullest use should be made of the variety of the arts, his intentions being solemn in every respect, and having naturally a good eye for appreciating how things will look *when finished*. But in cases of unspecified items, he directed that they should make them with an eye to their beauty *not expense*; but in cases of specified items, measurements should be carried out to the letter.

57 For their finished *work* was two and a half³⁶ cubits in length, but one *cubit* in width,³⁷ but one and a half in height. They made it solid all over with genuine solid gold. Now what I am describing is not merely an outer covering of gold, but the whole structure was of massive gold welded together. **58** Now they made *the* crown a palm's radius in size. But the moldings twined, with coiled work in low relief, the relief-work marvelously executed on the three sides. (For it formed a triangle.) **59** And on each side, the shape of the workmanship was identical in arrangement, so that whichever side it was turned, the appearance was identical. But when one side *of the crown* was placed downward, indeed the slope downward to the surface of the table kept its beautiful shape, while the outer *slope* was facing the view of anyone approaching it. **60** For this reason, the prominence of the two sloping-sides stood out sharply, being raised high as we have said, *and* of triangular construction,³⁸ whichever side it was turned.

²³ Eusebius / other omits "ways"

²⁴ literally "vowed"

²⁵ manuscript, some Josephus / other Josephus "I"

²⁶ KA "Matthiah"

²⁷ B "Sechlemiah"

²⁸ B "Josep"

²⁹ Epiphanius / other "Hananiah, Habriah" (omitting one name)

³⁰ some (Greek "Natthaios") / HKA "Matthai" (Greek "Matthaios")

³¹ B / others "Jonathas"

³² TZ "Dani" / C omits altogether

³³ BCTZ (Greek "Banaias") / others "Baneas"

³⁴ most (Greek "Dathaios") / Z "Taddai" (Greek "Thaddaios")

³⁵ Epiphanius / other "Chabeu"

³⁶ manuscript / Josephus adds

³⁷ Josephus, Eusebius / manuscript omits "one *cubit* in width"

³⁸ literally "and triangular furnished"

There were also arrangements of very-expensive stones on it between the patterns of lines: Each interweaved the other, unsurpassed in craftsmanship. **61** But they were all fastened through holes with golden pins for its safety. But at the corners, the clasps closed to keep them together. **62** Now on the molding around the part of the table which slanted upwards to meet the eyes, an ovate pattern had been furnished set with precious stones, [elaborately engraved] with uninterrupted striped reliefs, closely connected with each other around the entire table. **63** Now beneath the relief of the stones which made the *aforesaid* ovate border, the artisans made a crown adorned with all sorts of fruit, preeminently conspicuous with grapes and ears of corn, but even dates, and apples, both olives, and pomegranates, and the like were enclosed.³⁹ Now this was how they fashioned the stones in the shape of the previously-mentioned fruits, in the color appropriate to each type, *and* then attached them with the golden band around the whole design of the table in profile.

64 Now after the disposition of the crown, a similar arrangement had been furnished to match the scheme of the border, and likewise the rest of the fluting and engraving, because the table had been made to be used on both sides, whichever side *the owners* began, so that the position of the moldings and of the crown matched the side where the feet were. **65** For they made a solid metal plate over the whole breadth of the table, four fingers deep, so that the feet might be inserted into it. *For the feet* had fasteners with holes for attaching under the crown; *this was* to ensure that the table might be used, no matter which side *people* preferred. Now this is seen plainly on *the* outside, the construction being visible on both sides.

66 Now on the actual table they made an intricate pattern in relief with very-expensive stones in profusion in the middle, consisting of⁴⁰ both rubies and emeralds, but even onyx, and other kinds of stones conspicuous for their elegance. **67** Now after the arrangement of this winding-pattern, there was superimposed a marvelously contrived web with interstices, which made the central view of *the table* rhomboid in shape. On it, a stone of crystal and what is called amber was put in relief, providing the viewers with a sight beyond compare.

68 Now they made the feet of *the table* with the capitals adorned with lilies, *the lilies* bending back underneath the table; but the inside *parts* which were visible, they made with an upright covering of gold leaves. **69** Now the base of the foot on the ground was adorned with a stone, measuring a hand's *width* on every side; it had the appearance of a boot at the front, but was eight fingers wide. On it was placed all the stress of the foot. **70** Now they furnished an ivy cluster sprouting out of the stone, entwined in acanthus, *and* surrounded *the foot* with a vine which encircled it with clusters of grapes, all fashioned out of stone, as far as the head of *the foot*. Now the same pattern was applied to the four feet; everything was effectively contrived and introduced, uniformly showing the preeminence of experience and art with the emphasis on realism, so that even when the air was stirred by a breath of wind,⁴¹ movement was imparted to the leaves. Everything was modeled for realistic representation.

71 Now they made the mouth⁴² of the table threefold, of three layers as it were, each *layer* fitted to each other with dovetailing joints through the thickness of the piece of *furniture*: they

constructed⁴³ the joints so closely fitting as to be invisible and incapable of detection. But the thickness of the whole table was not less than half a cubit, so that the whole *piece* weighed many talents. **72** For since the king had decided not to increase its dimensions, he *instead* used that expenditure, which would have been required for furnishing *it* with greater *dimensions*, on the table's details; and *so*, in accordance with his purpose, every detail was completed in a marvelous and noteworthy way, and it was unparalleled in its artistry and in its resplendent beauty.

73 Now two of the cups were indeed made of solid gold.⁴⁴ From the base to the center was an overlapping design in relief, and with the stones very artistically joined together in the middle of the coils.⁴⁵ **74** Next, was superimposed above this⁴⁶ a winding-pattern a cubit high, but it was incorporated *into the design* by an intricate work in precious stones, which exhibited the meticulous art combined with elegance. But on it, was fluting intermingled with circular patterns, giving a mesh-like appearance as far as the mouth. **75** Now on the central *part*, small round-shields of stones, one group close to another, *and* of varied types, not less than four fingers in size, complemented the conspicuous beauty of *the whole*. Now the brim of the mouth⁴⁷ was wreathed with the stalks and⁴⁸ shapes of flowering lilies and interwoven clusters of grapes. **76** Therefore, this was indeed the construction of the golden *cups*, which held more than two large-measures.⁴⁹ But the composition of the silver ones was smooth, being a reflector marvelously adapted for this very effect, so that everything brought near it flashed more clearly than in mirrors. **77** But it is not possible to relate the additional details added to give the impression of realism. For when it was finished, *and* the pieces were put one upon another (now, that is to say, a silver cup first, then a gold, then another silver and *another* gold), the overall effect of the sight was entirely beyond description, and even those who approached to view it were unable to tear themselves away from its brilliance and its delightful appearance. **78** For the *living craftsmanship* of the work now made visible was subtly diverse. For as *men* looked at the golden furnishing, their souls were thrilled, coupled with awed amazement, as their thought concentrated on each artifice in turn. And again, when anyone wanted to gaze at the arrangement of the silver, everything reflected all around, no matter where one stood, and caused even greater amazement among the spectators. So that the manifold artistry of the masterpieces was absolutely indescribable.

79 Now they engraved the golden bowls with crowns of grapes in the middle; but around the edges they plaited in relief a crown of both ivy and myrtle, but even olive, into which they inserted very-expensive stones. And of the remaining carvings, each *artisan* wrought in a different pattern, making it a love-of-honor to complete everything in a way worthy of the king's majesty. **80** For there was absolutely no furnishing comparable in extravagance and artistry, either in the royal treasuries or in any other. For the king took no small foresight in *the work*, because of his love-of-glory in the beauty of his designs. **81** For many times he laid aside the public audiences, but sat attentively among the artisans, in order that they might complete the work in a manner consistent with the region to where the work was to be sent off. For this reason, everything was done in solemnity and in

⁴³ literally "furnished"

⁴⁴ Josephus / manuscript omits "of solid gold"

⁴⁵ Josephus / manuscript "scales"

⁴⁶ Josephus adds

⁴⁷ Josephus "drinking-bowl"

⁴⁸ Josephus adds

⁴⁹ manuscript (lit. "metretai") / Josephus "two amphoreis"

³⁹ Josephus adds

⁴⁰ manuscript / Josephus "stones of various forms like stars, such as"

⁴¹ literally "spirit"

⁴² manuscript / Josephus "form"

a manner worthy both of the king, who sent off *the gifts*, and of the chief-priest, who presided over the region. **82** For even the large quantity of the stones was without limit, and they were great in size, not less than 5000 in number. And everything was excellent in artistry, so that the gift of the stones and the actual artistic work was worth five times more than the gold.

Therefore, I assumed that even the description of these details was necessary, so I have narrated it to you.

CHAPTER 4

83 Now what follows embraces the road which we took to Eleazar. Now first I will describe the layout of the whole country. For when we drew near the region, we saw the city built in the middle of the whole *land of the Judeans*, on a mountain which extended to a great height.

84 Now the peak had been furnished with the temple, which is preeminent above all. And there were three enclosing walls, but *they were* over seventy cubits in their magnitude, and the width was proportionate, and the length of the structure of the house was also. Everything was built with a magnificence and expense which excelled in every respect. **85** Now it was also obvious that the expenditure of money had not been spared on the door and the fastenings (which connected to the doorposts), and the stability of the lintels. **86** Also, the configuration of the curtain was thoroughly proportionate to the door *furnishing*, and most of all in view of continuous movement caused to the material by the undercurrent of the wind.⁵⁰ It was continuous because the *undercurrent* started from the bottom *and* the billowing extended to the rippling at the top—the phenomenon making a pleasant and unforgettable spectacle.

87 Also, the sacrificial-altar was constructed in a manner commensurate with the place and the victims consumed in the fire. The ascent *up* to it was on a similar scale. Now because the priests on duty were swathed up to the loins in linen tunics, the site's stairway was designed in a manner consistent with decency. **88** Now the house faces east, but the rear of it faces west. Now the whole foundation was paved with *precious* stones, and had slopes leading to the appropriate places for carrying the water which is *needed* for the cleansing of the blood from the sacrifices. (For tens of thousands of livestock are brought there in the festival days.)

89 Now there is not only an uninterrupted supply of water (because even running-water gushes up naturally from within), but there are also indescribably marvelous underground reservoirs, which are within a radius of five stadia from the foundation⁵¹ of the temple, and each of them has innumerable pipes so that the different streams join together. **90** And all these were covered with lead down to the base and the walls. But on top of them, a thick layer of pitch *was spread*, all done very effectively. There were many mouths at the base *of the altar*, which were completely invisible *to everyone* except to those responsible for their duty, so that the large amounts of blood which were collected from the sacrifices were all cleansed by the downward pressure and momentum. **91** Now also being personally convinced, I will describe the building plan of the reservoirs exactly as I understood it. For they lead me more than four stadia outside the city, and directed me to bend down at a certain place and listen to the noise where the waters met. The

result was that the magnitude of the receptacles became clear to me, as has been demonstrated.

92 Now the duties of the priests were absolutely unsurpassable in their vigor and the arrangement of their well-ordered and silent *service*. For they all work hard of their own accord, with much exertion, and each one looks after his appointed task. And their service is carried on without interruption; indeed some undertaking the carrying of wood, but others oil, but others wheaten flour, but others the sweet spices, others offering the parts of the flesh for holocausts—all of them exerting their strength in different ways. **93** For after they divide the legs of the bullocks with both hands (though they are more than two talents' in weight in almost every case), they, with an upward movement, rip off, with each hand in a marvelous way, a sufficiently large portion with unerring accuracy. Now the sheep and the goats are similarly treated in a marvelous way, despite their weight and *amount of fat*. For those whose concern it is, choose, in every case, select *specimens* which are without blemish and outstanding for their fatness. This was how the previously-stated procedure is carried out. **94** Now they have a place of rest set aside, where those who are resting sit down. But when this happens, some of those who are rested stand up, *but* no one orders the arrangements of their duty. **95** Also, a general silence reigns, so that one might think that there was not a single human in the place although the number of those on duty is more than seven hundred—but there is also a multitude of the assistants who are bringing forward the victims *for sacrifice*. Instead, everything is carried out with fear and also in a manner worthy of great divinity.

96 Now it was an *occasion of* great consternation to us when we saw Eleazar engaged in his duty, with both his vestments and his glory, which was revealed in the tunic in which he was vested and in the stones around him. For golden bells surround the hem *at his feet*, making a very special sound. But alongside each of them are tassels adorned with flowers, which are of marvelous colors. **97** Now he was clad in a resplendent magnificent belt, woven in *the* most beautiful colors. But on his breast he wears what is called an oracle, to which are attached twelve stones of different kinds, set in gold, giving the names of the tribal-chiefs according to their original order, each *stone* flashing its own natural distinctive color—quite indescribable. **98** Now on his head he has what is called the tiara, but on this the inimitable turban, the royal diadem having the name of God in relief on the front in the middle in holy characters on a golden leaf, ineffable in glory. The wearer is considered worthy of *wearing* these *vestments* during the duties. **99** Now the appearance of these things instills one with fear and disorder, so that a *man* would think he had entered the outside world. And I emphatically assert, that every human who comes near the spectacle of what I have described will experience indescribable consternation and marvel, his very mind transformed by *the* holy arrangement on every *single* detail.

100 For in order to inspect the entire scene, we climbed the neighboring citadel⁵² of the city in order to view it from there. Indeed, it is situated on a lofty site, fortified with many towers, which in their turn are built of sizable stones up to *the* very peak, according to our information, for guarding the area around the temple, **101** so that, in case of any attack or revolt or onslaught of foes, no one could force a way into the enclosures which are around the house. And there were sharpened-bolt launchers in

⁵⁰ literally "spirit"

⁵¹ literally "founding"

⁵² may also be translated "summit"

position upon the towers of the citadel⁵³ along with a variety of implements; and this place's peak was higher than the previously-stated enclosures. **102** The towers were, so to speak, guarded by most trustworthy men, and who had given great service to their fatherland. These *men* were not permitted to leave the citadel,⁵⁴ except at the festivals, and then only in portions; nor did they permit any stranger to enter it. **103** But when any order came from the foremost-leader to admit any visitors to inspect the place, as for example in our case, they were very strict. For though we were but two unarmed *men*, they were very reluctant to admit us to observe the proceedings at the sacrifices.

104 Now even such a procedure was, they said, confirmed by oath. For every *man* had sworn that, in the necessary *and* solemn discharge of the matter according to the oath, they would not admit more than five humans at the same time, although they themselves were five hundred in number. For the citadel⁵⁵ provided the entire guard for the temple; and in this way, its founder had secured the advanced-guard for the places which we have described.

105 Now the size of the city is well proportioned, enclosing about 40 stadia, as far as one can estimate. But the setting of its towers looks like a theater, and that of passages, too, which stand out, some set lower down, some higher up, all in the accustomed manner; the same applies to the roads which cross them. For since it is built on a mountain, the layout of the place is sloping. But there are also steps leading to the passages. **106** For indeed, some people make their way above them, but others go underneath them; and their principal aim is to keep away from the main road for the sake of those who are involved in purifications, lest they should touch any illegal object. **107** But it was not irrationally that its first founders furnished the city in due proportions, but their plan was a wise one.

For the country was ample and beautiful; and indeed parts were flat, such as the area around Samaria, as it is called, and the neighbors of the country of the Edomites; but other parts were mountainous, such as the neighbors of Judah. Continuous attention to cultivation and the care of the land is necessary, to also ensure a good yield as a result for the inhabitants. And when this attention is paid, all farming is accompanied by abundant yield on all the previously-stated country. **108** Now in those cities which achieve a large magnitude and have accompanying prosperity, the result is an abundance of population but neglect of the country, because everyone has a soul bent on cultural delights, and all humans have been founded with a prone toward pleasure.

109 Now the same thing happened with Alexandria, which excelled all the cities in magnitude and prosperity. For the countryfolk migrated to that *city and* remained there, thereby bringing agriculture into decline. **110** So the king, to prevent their settling, ordered that their stay should be no longer than twenty days. And to those in charge of business matters, he gave written articles, that, should it be necessary to summon anyone to attend, the matter should be dealt with in five days. **111** But as an indication of the importance he attached to this, he also appointed money-collectors and their servants by districts, to prevent farmers and high-ranking *men* of the city from engaging in a means-of-gain, thereby diminishing the treasury (now that is to say, the profits of farming). **112** But we have made this

digression because Eleazar had traced out the previously-stated facts for us so well.⁵⁶

For the love-of-labor of the farmers is remarkable. For even their country is thickly covered with large quantities of olive trees and crops of wheat and pulse, but even with vines and abundant honey. Indeed, as for the fruit trees and date palms which they have, no number can be given. **113** Also, they have many livestock of various kinds, with ample pasture for them. So they perceived clearly that the places needed to be well populated, and designed the city and the villages accordingly. **114** Now a large quantity of spices and very-expensive stones and gold is brought to the place by means of the Arabians.

For the country is agricultural and is well furnished for commerce. And the city is the home of many crafts, but there is no lack of goods imported from across the sea. **115** For even its convenient harbors which supply them, such as both Ashkelon, and Japho, and Gaza, but even Ptolemais (which the king founded to hold a central position in comparison to the other previously-stated places), are not too distant from them.

Now the country is well watered everywhere, has everything in abundance, and is greatly secure. **116** Now the Jordan River, as it is called, flows around it, never drying up. Now the country originally measured not less than 60,000,000 acres (but subsequently, neighboring peoples overran⁵⁷ it). 600,000 men were settled upon it, each having 100 acres. Now as the river rises, like the Nile, in the days approaching harvest, it waters much of the land, **117** discharging its waters into another river in the country of Ptolemais, which in turn flows into the sea. But other wadis, as they are called, *also* flow down, covering the parts toward Gaza and the country of Ashdod.

118 Now the *countryside* is surrounded with natural defenses, being difficult to invade and impracticable for multitudes because of the narrow passes, with cliffs and deep ravines, but *with* the rugged surroundings of the entire mountainous regions. **119** But it also used to be said, that copper and iron mines were formerly lying in the neighboring mountains of Arab, but in *the* time of *the* Persian rule they were abandoned because of a slander by the responsible overlords of the time, that their working was unprofitable and very expensive. **120** The purpose of closure was also to prevent the resulting ruination of the country by the working of the previously-stated mines, and *even* perhaps its alienation through their dominations, because they had seized the pretext of moving into the *mining* regions on account of this slander which had been made.

Therefore, I have also explained to you in summary form, brother Philokrates, as much as was needful concerning these matters. But *now* we will expound details of the translation.

CHAPTER 5

121 For the *chief-priest* selected men of the best merit and of excellent discipline due to the distinction of their parentage; they had not only mastered the Judean literature, *but* instead had even made a serious study of the Hellenic *literature*. **122** And for this reason, they were well qualified for being the elders, and brought it to fruition as occasion demanded. And they possessed a great natural-disposition for the negotiations and questions arising from the law, espousing the middle course (for this is always the best⁵⁸ course to pursue). They forsook any rugged and barbarous

⁵³ may also be translated "summit"

⁵⁴ may also be translated "summit"

⁵⁵ may also be translated "summit"

⁵⁶ literally "beautifully"

⁵⁷ two "retired"

⁵⁸ literally "the most beautiful"

attitude of the mind. But in the same way, they also rose above conceit, and never assumed an air of superiority over others; but they engaged in discourse and in listening to and answering each and every one, as is appropriate. And all of them carefully observed these rules, and went further in wishing to excel each other in them. And they were, one and all, worthy of their leader and his outstanding excellence. **123** Now it was possible to perceive how they loved Eleazar by their unwillingness to be torn away from him, and *also* his *love* for them.

And in addition to writing to the king concerning their safe return, he urged Andreas to take many active steps to this end; and asked me, too, to collaborate to the utmost extent of my ability.

124 And although we announced that we would be concerned about these matters, he also declared that he was very apprehensive. For he knew that the king, out of his love-of-good-things, considered it of supreme importance, that whenever he was informed of a man who excelled his contemporaries in outstanding goodness and sensibleness, to have that human brought to his court.

125 For I understand that he made the beautiful saying, that, by having at his court men of righteousness and wisdom, he would provide the greatest protection for his kingdom; this was the unreserved advice given to him by his friends for his benefit. The point is amply confirmed in those whom he sent off.

126 And *Eleazar* affirmed on oath, that he would never permit the humans to leave if it was merely his own personal interest which constituted the impelling motive; but he was *only* dispatching them for the common improvement of all the citizens. **127** “For the beautiful life,” he said, “consists in observing the laws. But this *aim* is achieved by hearing much more than by reading.” Therefore, by these pronouncements and others similar to them, he clearly showed his attitude toward them.

128 Now it is worthwhile to briefly mention the information which he gave in reply to the questions raised through us. For it is my opinion that the majority *of men* shows a certain amount of curiosity for the parts of their legislation concerning both the foods and drinks and creatures considered to be unclean. **129** For example, we inquired, “Why, since there is only one founding *of the world*, are some things considered unclean for eating, but others even for touching?” (For the legislation shows a terror-of-demons⁵⁹ in most *matters*, but it altogether shows a terror-of-demons in these *matters*.)

In reply, he began as follows, **130** “You observe,” he declared, “what an effect our behaviors and our relationships produce upon us, inasmuch as through evil relationships humans become perverted, and are miserable throughout their entire life; but if they *intermix* with wise and sensible companions, they rise above ignorance and achieve progress in their life. **131** Therefore, first, our lawgiver gave express commands relating to the *principles of piety* and righteousness, and issued precise sets of teachings about them, not merely by prohibitions, *but* instead by the use of examples, together with the manifest damages and the visitations sent by God upon the guilty.”

132 For *Eleazar* began first of all by demonstrating, that God is one, and that his power is shown in everything, every place being filled with his domination, and that none of the things on earth which humans do secretly are hidden from him, *but* instead

that all the deeds of any *human* are manifest to him, as well as what is to come to pass *in the future*. **133** Therefore, by establishing these *matters* accurately and setting them out plainly, he demonstrated, that even if a *man* considers doing what is evil, he would not escape, let alone even after the deed is done. For this reason, he indicated the power of God through the entire legislation.

134 Therefore, this was his introduction. And he proceeded to show that all the rest of humans “except ourselves,” as he said, “believe that there are many gods, *even* though *humans* themselves are much more powerful than the *gods* which they vainly revere. **135** For they make statues of stone and wood, declaring them to be images of those who have made some beneficial discovery for their living, bowing down to them, even though they have clear proof that they possess no senses. **136** For if the existence of any god depended on the criterion of invention, it would be absolutely unintelligent. For in that case, the inventors have simply taken certain already-created objects, and by combining them together, demonstrated their usefulness, without themselves being their creators. For this reason, it is profitless and useless to deify equals. **137** For still, even now, there are many who are much more inventive and much more learned than the humans of the past, and *yet*, they would never come to bow down to these *humans*. And those who have invented these fabrications and myths are usually ranked to be the wisest of the Hellenes. **138** For there is surely no need to say anything else about the rest of these infatuated *people*, both *the Egyptians* and those like them, who have put their confidence in beasts, and most of the creepers and creatures, and bow down to them, and sacrifice to them *both* while alive and having passed-away.

139 “Therefore, in his wisdom, the legislator, in a comprehensive survey of each particular part, being furnished by God for the recognition of everything, surrounded us with unbroken palisades and iron walls in order to prevent us from mixing with any of the other nations in any matter, thereby being kept pure in body and soul, preserved from vain glories, revering the only God, and who is omnipotent over the entire creation. **140** From this, the leading priests among the Egyptians, conducting many close investigations and with practical experience of affairs, gave us a title ‘humans of God,’ which is ascribed exclusively to those who revere the true God, *and* instead not to those humans who are concerned with foods and drinks and shelter; **141** for their entire disposition leads them to seek refuge in these things. But such concerns are of no account among our *people*, but throughout the whole of their lives their main objective is concerned with the domination of God. **142** Therefore, to prevent us from being perverted by contact with others or by mixing with base influences, he hedged us in on all sides by rules of purities, and which are connected with foods and drinks and touches and hearing and sight, *all* relating to the law. **143** For overall, everything is similarly constituted in regard to natural rationalization, being managed by one supreme power. And in each particular, everything has a profound rationalization for it, *both* the things from which we abstain in use and those of which we partake. Now for *the* sake of illustration, I will briefly give you one or two examples.

CHAPTER 6

144 “For you must not take the contemptible rationalization, that Moses enacted this legislation because of an excessive

⁵⁹ in the sense that they are terrified not to displease the demons by doing something they dislike (of course, from a Hellenic/Greek perspective, Yahweh God is merely considered another demon to them)

preoccupation with mice⁶⁰ and weasels or suchlike *creatures*. Instead, everything has been solemnly set in order for pure investigation and amendment of conduct for the sake of righteousness. **145** For the birds which we use are all domesticated and of exceptional cleanliness, their food consisting of wheat and pulse—such birds as pigeons, turtledoves, moor-fowls,⁶¹ partridges, but, in addition, geese and others of the same kind. **146** But concerning the birds which are forbidden, you will find both savage and carnivorous kinds, and the rest which dominate *over others* by their own power, and who find their food by preying upon the previously-stated domesticated birds—which is an unrighteous-deed. But not only that, they instead, also seize lambs and kids, but even injure humans both dead and alive.

147 “Therefore, by calling them unclean, he has thereby indicated that it is the solemn binding duty of those, for whom the legislation has been established, to practice righteousness in their soul, and not to lord it over anyone in reliance upon their own power, nor to deprive him of anything. Instead *he has indicated that they are* to steer their lives righteously, in the manner of the domesticated *creatures* among the previously-stated birds, which feed on those plants which grow on the ground and do not exercise a domination leading to the destruction either of those beneath them or⁶² of their own kind. **148** By means of *creatures* like this, the legislator has handed down *the lesson* to be noted by *men* of intelligence, that they should both be righteous, and not achieve anything by force, nor dominate over others in reliance on their own strength. **149** For since it is not even proper to touch any of the previously-stated creatures because of their particular habits, should not all possible precautions be taken to prevent our own courses from degenerating to their level?

150 “Therefore, all the rules granting concession toward these and other livestock has been set out symbolically. For the cloven hoof and *the* separation of *the* claws of *the* hoof, is a sign of setting apart each of our actions for what is good.⁶³ **151** For the strength of the whole body with its activity rests upon the shoulders and the legs. The symbolism conveyed by these things compels us to make a distinction in the performance⁶⁴ of all our acts, with righteousness as our aim. But this also explains why we are distinct from all other humans. **152** For the majority of other humans defile themselves through *promiscuous* intercourse, thereby committing a great unrighteousness; and countries and whole cities take pride in these things. For they not only procure the males; instead, they also defile mothers, but *even* daughters. But we are quite separated from these practices.

153 “Now the *man* who has been separated from the previously-stated way, is the *man* who is characterized as possessing *the gift* of memory. For example, all creatures that are cloven-footed and ruminant represent, to those who perceive it, the *phenomenon* of memory. **154** For the rumination is nothing but the recalling of one’s life and sustenance. For one’s life is usually sustained by food.

155 “For this reason, we are exhorted through the writings by the one who says the following, ‘You shall remember *the* Lord, who did great and marvelous deeds in you.’ For when they are *properly* understood they are manifestly great and glorious.

Indeed, first, there is the construction of the body, and the digestion of the food, and the specific function connected with each limb. **156** But much more, the orderly arrangement of the senses, the operation and unseen activity of *the* mind, and the speed of its reaction to each stimulus and its discovery of arts involves an infinite variety of methods. **157** For this reason, he exhorts us to remember how the previously-started *blessings* are preserved by a divine power under his preparation. For he has ordained every time and place to be a continual reminder of the God who is ruler and preserver *of all*.

158 “For even in the matter of foods and drinks he directs *men* to offer first-fruits and to consume them there straightaway. And even in our clothes, he has given us a distinguishing mark as a reminder, but similarly on our gates and doors he has indeed commanded us to set up the oracles, so as to be a reminder of God. **159** And he strictly directs that the sign shall be worn on our hands, clearly indicating that we ought to perform every activity in righteousness, remembering our own condition, but above all the fear of God. **160** But he also directs, that when going to bed and rising up, *men* should meditate on the constitutions of God, not only in rationalization, *but* instead by diligently observing the movement and impression produced upon themselves when they go to sleep; and *also* in their waking, what a divine and incomprehensible change there is between these states.

161 “Now I have already demonstrated to you the extraordinary nature of the rationalization behind our distinctive characteristic of memory when we expounded the cloven hoof and the rumination. For it is no chance accident that it has been ordained as a part of our very soul; but it is bound up with truth and the expression of a correct rationalization. **162** For after prescribing each set of regulations concerning foods and drinks and matters relating to touch, he directs us neither to do, nor to listen to anything without a purpose, and that no use should be made of the power of rationalization to incline toward unrighteousness.

163 “Now the same principle can also be found in the case of creatures. For the character of weasels, and mice, and all creatures like those that have been described is mischievous. **164** For mice ruin and damage everything not only for their own nourishment, *but* instead even to the extent of rendering absolutely useless for humans everything which comes their way to damage.

165 “Also, the species of the weasel is unique. For apart from the previously-stated characteristic, it has another polluting feature. For it conceives through its ears but bears *its* children through its mouth. **166** And for this reason, any similar feature in humans is unclean. For *men* who hear anything and give physical expression to it by their discourse, thereby embroiling other *people* in evil, commit no ordinary act of uncleanness, and are themselves completely stained with the taint of impiety. But your king’s action in doing away with such *people*—*for* so we are informed—is good.”⁶⁵

167 Now I spoke, “You refer to informers, I suppose. For he even systematically imposes upon them torments and painful deaths.”

“Yes, for I do refer to them,” he said. “For being on the lookout for destruction of humans is unsacred. **168** But our law directs us not to harm anyone in speech⁶⁶ nor in deed. Therefore I

⁶⁰ Eusebius “flies”

⁶¹ Eusebius / others “locusts”

⁶² Eusebius adds

⁶³ literally “beautiful”

⁶⁴ Eusebius “By the signification given by these, we must perform”

⁶⁵ literally “beautiful”

⁶⁶ may also be translated “account” or “rationalization”

have also given a brief resume concerning these matters, indicating further to you, that all the regulations have been made with a view to righteousness, and that no ordinances have been made in the writing without purpose nor fancifully, *but* instead to the intent that through the whole of our lives we may also practice righteousness before all humans in our acts, remembering the all-powerful God. **169** Therefore, concerning foods, and the unclean creepers and creatures, the whole underlying rationalization is directed toward righteousness and the righteous relationships between the humans.”

170 Therefore, indeed, in my view, he habitually made out a fair⁶⁷ case for each separate category. For example, even in the case of *victims* offered, both calves, and rams, and male-goats, he stated that it was necessary to take them from the herds of cattle and flocks, thereby sacrificing domestic *animals*, and not a savage one, that the offerers of the sacrifices might understand the symbol of their legislator *and* not be under the influence of an arrogant self-consciousness. For the *man* who offers the sacrifice, makes an offering of every facet of his own soul. **171** And I consider, that these particulars, with regard to our discussion, are worth discoursing about. It is for this reason, Philokrates, in view of your love-of-learning, that I have been induced to expound to you the solemnity and characteristic outlook of the law.

CHAPTER 7

172 Now Eleazar offered a sacrifice, and selected the men, and furnished an abundance of gifts for the king. He *then* sent us forth on our journey with a large escort. **173** Now when we reached Alexandria, a message of our arrival was given to the king. But on being introduced to the court, both Andreas and I paid our affections to the king, and presented the letters from Eleazar. **174** Now the king, anxious to meet the *men* who had been sent, directed that all the other court officials be dismissed, and that these humans be summoned. **175** The unprecedented nature of this step was very clear to all, because it was an established procedure that important useful visitors should be granted an audience with the king on the fifth *day* after their arrival, while those *sent* from kings or important cities, only with difficulty, secure admission to the court within thirty *days*. But he deemed the present arrivals to be worthy of greater honor, and he held the one who sent them *to him* in high regard. *So* he dismissed all the officials whose presence he considered superfluous, *and* remained walking *among the elders* until he had greeted all of *them*.

176 Therefore, they arrived with the gifts which had been sent with them, and with the fine skins on which the legislation had been written in gold in Judean characters. The parchment had been marvelously prepared, and their joining together was constructed⁶⁸ so as to be imperceptible. As soon as the king saw the men, he proceeded to ask questions about the books. **177** Now when they had removed the parchments out of their coverings and unrolled them, he paused for a long time, bowed down about seven times, *and* spoke, “Men, I indeed offer my thanks to you, but even more to him who sent you, but most of all to the God whose oracles these are.”

178 Now all of them, both visitors and the others who were present, spoke together with one voice, “*God save the king!*”

At this *the king* was moved to tears, so deeply was he filled with joy. For the intensity of the soul and the overwhelming of

the honor received, do force *men* to tears in the moment of *good* fortune. **179** Now *the king*, after directing the materials to be put back in their places, immediately greeted the men, saying, “It is right, O God-revering men, first to grant favor to the *documents* for whose sake I have summoned you here, *and*, after that, to extend to you the right hand *of friendship*. This explains my first action. **180** Now I regard this day of your arrival as of great importance, and it shall be specially marked year by year throughout *my* life, for by a happy chance it coincides with *the anniversary* of the victory of the sea-battle against Antigonos. And for this reason, it will be my wish to dine with you this day. **181** Now everything of which you partake,” he spoke, “will be served in compliance with your habits; it will be served to me as well as to you.”

Now after they expressed their pleasure, the king directed the most beautiful apartments to be given them near the citadel,⁶⁹ and the preparations for the drinking-party to be made.

182 Now the chief-seneschal⁷⁰ Nikanor summoned Dorotheos, who was appointed in charge of these matters, directing him to make the necessary preparations for each *guest*. “For these are the king’s commands; indeed, some of them you still see even now.”

For the number of prominent *elders* corresponds to *the* number of cities, all having the same customs in matters of drink and food and bedding. And all preparations were made in accordance with these customs, so that when they came in the presence of the kings, the enjoyment of the visit would not be disturbed by any discomfort. And this was their experience. **183** For Dorotheos, who had the charge of such matters, was a most punctilious human.⁷¹ Now he arranged all the furniture of which he had charge, all reserved for this type of reception. He also set out the couches in two lines, in accordance with the king’s order. For *the king* had directed that half should sit at his right hand, but the rest behind him, not omitting any *form of honor being done* to these men.

184 Now when they had taken their places, he directed Dorotheos to carry out everything in accordance with the customs practiced by all his *visitors* from Judah. For this reason, *Dorotheos* passed over the sacrificial-preachers, and the sacrificers and the others whose habitual role was to make the earnest-prayers. But he invited Elisha,⁷² “the eldest of the priests, our guests,” to make an earnest-prayer. *Then* he, standing, spoke this noteworthy *prayer*, **185** “May the almighty God fill you, O king, with all the good-things which he has created. And may he grant you, and *your* wife and children, and those at harmony with you, to enjoy all blessings, with no interruption, all the time of your life.”

186 Now at these words, thunderous applause broke out with cries and sound-minded joy, lasting a long time. And then they straightaway turned to the enjoyment provided by the foods which had been made ready, all the service being carried out through the organization of Dorotheos. And among *the attendants*, were the royal boys and the king’s honored *guests*.

187 Now taking an opportunity afforded by a pause, *the king* asked the occupant of the first couch (for they were seated according to age), “How can a *man* keep his kingdom unimpaired to the end?”

⁶⁹ may also be translated “summit”

⁷⁰ Emendation / Josephus “the officer in charge of the reception of guests” / manuscripts “physician”

⁷¹ manuscript / Josephus “matters because of his exactness in the details of living.”

⁷² Josephus / manuscript “Eleazar”

⁶⁷ literally “beautiful”

⁶⁸ literally “furnished”

188 Now after pondering a moment, he spoke, “You would administer it best by imitating the unceasing gentleness of God. For by exhibiting longsuffering and by treating those who merit *punishment* more leniently than they deserve, you will convert them from evil and bring them to have a change-of-mind.”

189 Now the king, after commending the answer, asked the next *guest*, “How should a *man* act in each case?”

Now he replied, “If he practiced a righteous dealing toward everyone, he will always act fairly⁷³ on every occasion, remembering that every thought is manifest before God. But if you take *the* fear of God as your guiding principle, you will not fail in anything.”

190 Now *the king*, after also receiving him warmly, asked another, “How can a *man* make his friends like himself?”

He spoke, “If *your friends* saw that you showed intense foresight for the crowds whom you govern. But this you will do by observing how God blesses the race of the humans, giving them health and food and all the other gifts in their season.”

191 Now *the king*, after commending him, asked the next *guest*, “How in giving audiences and judgments can a man obtain a good-report even by those who lose their cases?”

Now he spoke, “If you are fair to everyone in what you say, and if you never act arrogantly, nor in your own strength, against the sinners. **192** But this you will achieve if you have regard to the method of God. For the petitions of the worthy are fulfilled, while those who fail are informed, either through dreams or acts, what is harmful to them. *For* God does not strike them in proportion to their sins, nor by the greatness of his strength, instead he exercises gentleness.”

193 Now *the king*, also highly approving this *guest*, asked the next, “How then *can* a man be invincible in the necessities of war?”

Now he spoke, “If he did not place his confidence in his crowds nor in his forces, *but* instead continually invoked God to direct his enterprises aright, while he himself discharged all his duties in righteousness.”

194 Now *the king*, after also commending this *guest*, asked another, “How can a man be feared by his enemies?”

Now he spoke, “If in spite of deploying his great array of arms and forces, he knew that these things are powerless to achieve a permanent *and* conclusive result. For even God implants fear into the minds of *men* by granting a truce; thereby demonstrating the greatness of his power.”

195 Now *the king*, after also commending this *guest*, spoke to the next, “What would be, for a *man*, the supreme beauty of a life?”

He declared, “To know that God holds power over everything, and, that in our most beautiful achievements, it is not we who counsel success, but it is God who brings to completion the affairs of all *men* and leads *them* with *his* power.”

196 Now *the king*, after also acknowledging to this *guest* that he spoke well, asked the next *guest*, “Supposing a *man* observed all *these principles* in their entirety, how can he, in the end, hand them down to his successors in the same condition?”

Now he spoke, “By always praying⁷⁴ to God, that his undertakings may be prompted by good-designs, and by warning his descendants not to be dazzled by glory nor by riches. For the bestower of these things is God himself, and *men* never have excess of anything through their own merits.”

197 Now *the king*, after commending these *sentiments*, inquired of the next *guest*, “How can a *man* endure with equanimity whatever befalls him?”

Now he declared, “Only if you adopted as a basic principle that all humans have been created by God to share the greatest evils, but also the greatest good-things; and that it is impossible, being a human, to be exempt from these. But God, to whom we must approach as a suppliant, gives us good-courage to endure.”

198 Now *the king*, also delighted with this *guest*, spoke that everyone gave good⁷⁵ answers. “Now I will question yet one more, after which I will cease for the time being, so that we can turn our attention to enjoying *the drinking-party* and pass the time pleasantly. But in the next six days following I will also learn a little more from the others in turn.” **199** Then he asked the man, “What is the true aim of manliness?”

Now he spoke, “If the intent were rightly carried out as counseled in acts involving danger. But if your counsels are good,⁷⁶ O king, everything is brought to pass advantageously for you by God.”

200 Now everyone acclaimed and applauded loudly, *and* the king spoke to the philosophers (for there were not a few of them present), “It is my opinion that these men excel in excellence and possess extraordinary intelligence, because when asked questions on the spur of the moment, they give appropriate answers, all making God the basis of their rationalization.”

201 Now the philosopher Menedemos of Eretria said, “True, O King. For since everything is administered by foresight, and since we correctly perceive that a human is a creature of God, it follows that all power and beauty of rationalization have their origin in God.”

202 Now the king nodded his ascent, *and* this questioning ceased. But they turned to the gladness of *the feast*. But when the evening had come, the drinking-party came to an end.

CHAPTER 8

203 Now on the following *day*, the seating and drinking arrangements were again carried out in the same order. But when the king considered it opportune to put some questions to the men, he proceeded to ask the neighbors of those who had answered on the previous day. **204** Now he began to communicate with the eleventh. (For on the previous day ten had been questioned.) Now when silence reigned he inquired, “How can a *man* remain rich?”

205 Now after a short pause the *guest* who had been asked spoke, “If he did nothing outrageous or unsolemn in his government, nor ever lavished expense on empty and vain pursuits, while, at the same time by good-works, made all his subjects have goodwill toward himself. For even the cause of good-things to everyone is God himself, who must be followed.”

206 Now the king, after commending this *man*, asked another, “How can a *man* maintain the truth?”

Now in reply to this *question*, he *said*, “By realizing that the lie brings great disgrace upon every human, but much more so upon the kings. For if they have *the* authority to do whatever they wish, what reason would they have for resorting to lies? But in addition to this, O king, you must always remember that God is a lover-of-truth.”

⁷³ literally “beautifully”

⁷⁴ literally “vowing”

⁷⁵ literally “beautiful”

⁷⁶ literally “beautiful”

207 Now *the king*, after warmly approving this man, and looking closely at another spoke, “What is the teaching of wisdom?”

Now this next *guest* replied, “In as far as you do not wish the evils to come upon you, but *rather* to partake of every good-thing: you should act on this same principle toward your subjects, as well as *toward* the sinners; *and* you should gently admonish the fair⁷⁷ and good humans. For even God approaches all humans in gentleness.”

208 *The king*, after commending him, spoke to the *guest* after him, “How might a man be humane?”

He declared, “By observing that the race of the humans increases and is created over many years and also in painful suffering. For this reason, you must neither inflict chastisements easily nor to submit *men* to torments, knowing that the life of the humans is constituted in both pain and retribution. Therefore, if you understand each *set of facts*, you will be inclined to this mercy; for even God is merciful.”

209 Now *the king*, after welcoming this *man’s* answer, inquired of the next *guest*, “What is the most essential characteristic of kingship?”

He spoke, “That *the king* should keep himself incorruptible, and practice sobriety throughout all his life, and respect righteousness beyond all else, and cultivate such *men* as friends. For even God himself is a lover-of-righteousness.”

210 *The king*, after also commending this *guest*, spoke to another, “What is the essence of piety?”

Now he declared, “The realization that God is continually at work in everything and is omniscient, and that a human cannot hide from him an unrighteous-deed or an evil work. For, as God is a benefactor to the whole world, so you, by imitating him, would be without offense.”

211 Now *the king*, agreeing with him, spoke to another, “What is the definition of the kingship?”

Now he declared, “To govern oneself well⁷⁸ and not to be led away by the wealth and the glory, nor having, as a result, overweening and unworthy ambitions—*this would be kingship* if you rationalized well.⁷⁹ For you have everything you need *at hand*. But God is free from need and yet is gentle. And you must think like a human, and not desire too much, but only what is sufficient for the kingship.”

212 Now *the king*, after complimenting him, asked another, “How would a man’s rationalizations be most beautiful?”

Now he replied, “By setting what is righteous before him continually in everything, and thinking that what is unrighteous is the deprivation of his life. For even God always signifies beforehand the greatest good-things for the righteous.”

213 Now *the king*, after commending this *guest*, spoke to the next, “How can a *man* sleep free from disturbing thoughts?”

Now he declared, “You have asked a question on a matter which is difficult to answer. For in this *realm of* sleep, it is not possible to bring our true selves into play. Instead, we are confined in *this realm* by sensations which are irrational. **214** For *during sleep*, our soul responds to the things which enter into our consciousness with the *same sensations* as if these things were actually seen. But we are irrational insofar as we imagine that we are *actually sailing* in an open-sea and in boats, or that we are carried aloft on wings and fly to other places, and other things

such as this; and we think that this is really happening. **215** I have *stated* this as clearly as I can. In every respect, O king, I also beg you to lift up what you say and your actions by *the rule of* piety, so that your conscience may be quite clear that you are following the *path of* excellence. Do not deliberately show favors without rationalization, nor destroy what is righteous in your exercise of authority. **216** For most of the time, the things which occupy each *man* in his waking hours are also those on which the mind dwells in sleep. But *God* directs a *man’s* every rationalization and action, even awake and asleep, when aimed at the most beautiful ends. And this is the reason for the stability which continually surrounds you.”

217 Now *the king*, after also complimenting this *guest*, spoke to another, “Since you are the tenth *one* to reply we will turn our attention to dinner after this question.” **218** Now he asked him, “How can we avoid doing anything unworthy of ourselves?”

Now he spoke, “Always have an eye to your glory and your prominence, so that you may say and think what is consistent with it, knowing that all your subjects also have you in mind and utter *things about* you. **219** For you must not be the least among the actors! For *actors* observe the character which they are required to portray, doing all their actions consistently with it. But yours is no acting-role, instead you are really a king, God having granted you the leadership as your manner deserves.”

220 Now the king responded with prolonged loud *and* friendly applause, after which they invited the humans to sleep. And indeed when he had finished entertaining them, they turned *their* attention to the next *day’s* arrangements for the drinking-party.

CHAPTER 9

221 Now on the following *day*, the same arrangement was made, and when the king deemed it an appropriate time to ask the men questions, he asked the first of those who had been left over for subsequent questioning, “What is the strongest form of government?”

222 Now he declared, “Control of oneself, and not being carried away by one’s impulses. For all humans possess a certain natural bent of their mind in one direction *or another*. **223** Indeed, the majority *of men* are likely to incline toward food and drink and pleasure, but the kings toward acquisition of a country, depending on the greatness of their glory. Yet, in everyone, moderation is a beautiful thing. But what God gives you, take *and keep*; but do not covet what is beyond your reach.”

224 Now *the king*, pleased with this reply, spoke to the next *guest*, “How could a man be free from envy?”

Now after a pause, he declared, “First of all, by realizing that God assigns both glory and greatness of wealth to the kings, each and every one, and no one is a king by his own power. For all *men* wish to share this glory, *but* instead they cannot—for it is a gift of God.”

225 Now *the king*, after giving a long commendation to this *guest*, asked another, “How can a man despise his enemies?”

Now he spoke, “By practicing goodwill to all humans and by forming friendships, you would owe no obligation to anyone. But to have gratitude with all humans, and to receive a handsome gift from God—this is one of *the strongest gifts*.”

226 Now *the king*, after approving these *words*, directed the next *guest* to answer, speaking to him, “How can a man maintain the glory he received?”

Now he spoke, “If by his earnestness and his favors he showed munificence and great-generosity toward others, he would never

⁷⁷ literally “beautiful”

⁷⁸ literally “beautifully”

⁷⁹ literally “beautifully”

lack glory. But if you wish for these previously-mentioned qualities to abide with you, you must call on God continually.”

227 Now *the king*, after speaking-well of him, asked the next *guest*, “To whom must a *man* show love-of-honor?”

Now he declared, “It is a *man’s* duty to show a love-of-honor toward those who are amicably disposed to us. That is the overall opinion. But I think that we must show the same keen love-of-honor to our opponents, so that in this manner, we may convert them to what is proper and fitting for them. But *if you want* these things to happen, you must entreat God, for he rules every mind.”

228 Now *the king*, after consenting to these words, directed the sixth *guest* to answer. His question was, “To whom must a *man* show favor?”

Now he replied, “To his parents, always; for even God’s very great instruction concerns the honor due to parents. But in the next place, he reckons the honor due of friend toward friend; *for* he speaks of a friend who is like your own soul. But you shall do well if you bring all humans into friendship with yourself.”

229 Now *the king*, after also commending this *guest*, inquired of the next one, “What is worthy of being regarded as beauty?”

Now he spoke, “Piety, for even this is a preeminent form of beauty. But its power is love. For this is a divine gift. And you have acquired it, along with all of its good-things.”

230 Now *the king*, after applauding him very affectionately, spoke to another, “How can a man, after a misstep, recover once more the same degree of glory?”

Now he declared, “Indeed, for you, a misstep is impossible. For you have sown in all *men* seeds of gratitude, which produce a harvest of goodwill; *and* this, because it is stronger than the greatest of weapons, produces the greatest security. **231** But if a *man* does have a misstep, he must never repeat the things which caused this *misstep*; instead he must form friendships, *and* act righteously. But it is a gift of God to be a doer of good works and not of the opposite.”

232 Now *the king*, pleased with these *words*, spoke to the next *guest*, “How can a *man* be free from grief?”

Now he declared, “By pursuing righteousness, doing no harm to anyone but helping everyone. For the fruits of *righteousness* produce⁸⁰ freedom from grief. **233** But we must plead with God that unexpected harms may not come upon us and injure us—such as both death and disease, and pain, and *anything else* such as these. But as for you, since you are devoted to piety, none of these *misfortunes* will befall you.”

234 Now *the king*, after praising him handsomely, asked the tenth *guest*, “What is the greatest form of glory?”

Now he spoke, “Honoring God. But this is not done with gifts nor sacrifices; instead, *it is done* with a soul *that is* clean and of a disposition *that is* sacred, since everything is furnished by God, and administered in accordance with his wish. This is also your attitude, evidence of which can be seen by everyone from your past and present achievements.”

235 Now when the king, with a loud voice, complimented and encouraged them all, those who were present expressed their approval, but especially the philosophers. For even these *guests* were far superior to *the philosophers*, both in their conduct and their rationalization, their starting point being God himself. But after this, the king led the way in showing affection to them in the drinkings.

CHAPTER 10

236 Now on the following *day*, the arrangements for the drinking-party were the same as before. When it seemed suitable to the king, he began to ask the *guests* next to those who had already replied. Now he spoke to the first, “Can mindfulness be taught?”

Now he spoke, “The soul has been constituted so that it is able, by a power of God, to accept everything of beauty, but to reject *its* opposite.”

237 Now *the king*, concurring, proceeded to ask the next *guest*, “What makes the greatest contribution to health?”

Now he declared, “Soundness-of-mind. But it is impossible to achieve this unless God furnishes the mind toward it.”

238 Now *the king*, after exhorting this *man*, declared to another, “How can a man pay his parents the debt of gratitude which they are worthy of?”

Now he spoke, “By never causing them pain—which is impossible unless God leads the mind toward the most beautiful ends.”

239 Now *the king*, after nodding approval of this *man*, asked the next, “How can a *man* be an attentive listener?”

Now he spoke, “By perceiving that all knowledge is of value; so that in a time of emergency, a *man* is enabled to select one of the lessons he has heard, counteract the immediate crisis, *and* so remedy it with guidance of God. But the efforts of *men* are fulfilled through him.”

240 Now *the king*, after commending this *man*, spoke to the next, “How can a man avoid doing anything lawless?”

He declared, “By realizing that it is God who has placed into the hearts of legislators the thoughts of saving the livelihoods of the humans, you would follow them.”

241 Now *the king*, approving of this *man*, spoke to the next, “What is the value of kinship?”

Now he answered, “If we, considering that we ourselves are indeed afflicted by misfortunes, even let their sufferings become our own, the great strength of the kinship is apparent at once. **242** But it is only when such feeling is shown, that we will win glory and esteem in the eyes of such *men*. For this cooperation, when linked with good-disposition is of itself an indestructible bond in the face of everything. But in the day of *their* prosperity, we must not crave their possessions. Instead, we must beseech God to bestow every good-thing *upon them*.”

243 Now *the king*, after giving him the same welcome as the others, asked another *guest*, “How does a man attain freedom from fear?”

Now he spoke, “When the mind is conscious that it has done no evil, *for* God guides *men* toward beautiful counsels on everything.”

244 Now *the king*, after approving this *man*, spoke to another, “How can a *man* *always* have the correct rationalization at hand?”

Now he spoke, “By always setting before his eyes the misfortunes of the humans, knowing that it is God who takes away prosperity, while glorying others by promoting them to receive honor.”

245 Now *the king*, after also handsomely approving this *man*, asked the next *guest* to answer, “How can a *man* avoid having recourse without taking things easily, and without pleasures?”

Now he spoke, “By keeping *the thought* at hand, that he governs a great kingdom and leads many crowds; and *that* his mind should not be centered on anything else, but to *always* be

⁸⁰ literally “furnish”

mindful of how to best promote their welfare. But he must *ask* God that not one of his obligations *would* be omitted.”

246 Now *the king*, after also commending this *man*, asked the tenth *guest*, “How can a man recognize those who are acting with deceit toward him?”

Now he answered this *question*, “By observing whether their conduct was generous, and whether their orderly behavior persisted in the greetings and counsels and the rest of the social life of those with him; and *seeing that* they do not go beyond the proper limit in their hospitalities and the other features of their conduct. **247** But God will direct your mind, O king, to the most beautiful ends.”

The king applauded them all, congratulating them by name, and those who were present followed suit. *Then* they turned to celebrating.

CHAPTER 11

248 Now on the following day, *the king* seized the opportunity, asking the next *guest*, “What is the worst *type of* neglect?”

He declared, “If a man is neglectful of his children, and does not devote every endeavor to bringing them up. For we continually pray⁸¹ to God for ourselves as for our descendents, that every good-thing may rest upon them. But our petition that our little-ones may have some soundness-of-mind is something which comes to pass only by a power of God.”

249 Now *the king*, after declaring that he had spoken well,⁸² asked another *guest*, “How can a man be a lover-of-his-fatherland?”

He spoke, “By adopting the view that it is a beautiful thing to live and to pass-away in one’s own *country*. But residence abroad indeed produces contempt upon the poor, but disgrace upon the rich, as though they had been exiled for evilness. Therefore, by doing good to all, while you continually carry out this policy, you will undoubtedly be a lover-of-your-fatherland, God giving you favor in the sight of all.”

250 Now *the king*, after hearing this *man*, asked the next in order, “How can a man reach agreement with a woman?”

He declared, “Indeed, by recognizing that the female gender is insolent, and drastic in the pursuit of what they wish *to have*, and *that they are* easily liable to sudden changes of opinion through fallacious-rationalization, and their nature is furnished without strength. But it is necessary to have dealings with them in a sound way, and not to seek provocation which may lead to rivalry. **251** For life prospers when the helmsman knows the goal toward which he ought to direct his course. But it is only by calling on the help of God that a man can steer a true course of life at all times.”

252 Now *the king*, after giving assent to this *man*, asked the next *guest*, “How can a *man* be free from sin?”

Now he declared, “By also doing everything with rationalization, and by not being persuaded by slanders. Instead, *you must* be your own examiner of what is said, and by your own judgment, decide the appeals which are made to you, and through your judgment bringing them to pass—that is how you would be free from sin, O king. But to have these intentions and to conduct oneself in the light of them is a work involving a divine power.”

253 Now *the king*, being cheered by what was stated, asked another *guest*, “How can a man be free from fury?”

He spoke in reply to the question, “By realizing that he has absolute power, even to inflict death upon them, should he give way to fury, *and*, that it is a useless and painful thing to do if many are deprived of their life simply because he is the lord. But if all are obedient and there is no opposition, what will be the point of becoming furious? **254** Now it is necessary to know that God administers the whole universe in goodwill and without any anger. But you, O king, must follow him,” he declared.

255 Now *the king*, after declaring that he had given a beautiful answer, inquired of the next *guest*, “What is good-counsel?”

“Doing everything fair⁸³ *at all times* with due reflection,” he explained, “comparing *what is advantageous* to your own counsel with the harmless effects which would result from adopting the opposite rationalization, in order, that after weighing each detail, we may be well counseled, and our purpose achieved. But most important of all, it is by a power of God that your every counsel will be accomplished, if you practice the piety.”

256 Now *the king*, after speaking that this *man* had also done well, he asked another, “What is philosophy?”

“To have a fair⁸⁴ rationalized assessment of each occurrence,” he explained, “and not to be carried away by impulses, *but* instead to study carefully the harmful consequences of the desires, and by exercising proper and necessary restraint in carrying out what the circumstances demand. But in order to have due care for these things, it is necessary to serve God.”

257 Now *the king*, after applauding this *man*, asked another, “How can a *man* find welcome abroad among strangers?”

“By treating everyone equal,” he declared, “and by appearing inferior rather than superior to those among whom he is a stranger. For it is commonly *known*, that God, by his very nature, welcomes the humble, and the race of the humans deals kindly with those who willingly put themselves into subjection.”

258 Now *the king*, after testifying to these *sentiments*, asked another *guest*, “How will the *structure which a man* furnishes survive in the future as well?”

He spoke *in answer* to the question, “If his creations are great and solemn, so that those who see them would spare them because of their beauty; and if he never neglects a single one of those who carry out such works, nor ever compels the rest to contribute to his needs without receiving reward. **259** For by considering how God cares for the race of the humans in providing them with health and discernment and the rest of *these things*, he will himself follow this example by paying some compensation for their arduous labor. For it is the deeds which are performed out of righteousness—and these *are the ones which* are permanent.”

260 Now *the king*, after declaring that this man had spoken well, asked the tenth *guest*, “What is the fruit of wisdom?”

Now he spoke, “The clear conscience of having done no evil, but of living one’s life in truth. **261** For from these come to you the greatest joy and a stable soul, O mighty King, and beautiful hopes in God as you rule the government with piety.”

Now when they heard this, everyone voiced their approval with a loud applause. And after this, the king, filled with joy, proceeded to drink to their health.

CHAPTER 12

262 Now on the next day, the arrangement for the details of the drinking-party was the same as before, but when an opportunity

⁸¹ literally “vow”

⁸² literally “that he had blest”

⁸³ literally “beautiful”

⁸⁴ literally “beautiful”

presented itself the king began to question those who remained. Now to the first, he declared, “How can a *man* keep himself from arrogance?”

263 Now he replied, “By maintaining impartiality; and by reminding himself, in the case of each *individual*, that he leads humans, *yet* is still a human himself. And God brings down the arrogant, but exalts the gentle and humble.”

264 Now *the king*, after commending him, asked the next *guest*, “Of whom must a *man* select as his counselors?”

He declared, “Those who have been tested in many affairs and who still maintain an uncontaminated goodwill toward him and to all who share his ways. God manifests himself to those who are worthy to attain these ends.”

265 Now *the king*, after congratulating him, asked another *guest*, “What is the possession most essential for a king?”

“The humaneness⁸⁵ and affection of his subjects,” he replied. “For by these means, the bond of goodwill is unbreakable. But as for the realization of these aims, God fulfills them according to his resolution.”

266 Now *the king*, after commending him, inquired of another *guest*, “What is the purpose of speaking?”

Now he declared, “To persuade your opponent-in-debate by pointing out his errors in a well-ordered array. For in this way you will win over your listener, not by opposing him, but by using some commendation to persuade him. But it is by an operation of God that persuasion succeeds.”

267 Now *the king*, after saying that he spoke well, asked another *guest*, “In view of the heterogeneous crowds in the kingdom, how can a man be in harmony with them?”

“By adopting the role appropriate to each one,” he spoke, “with righteousness as your guide—and this is currently your practice, God granting you *sound* rationalization.”

268 Now *the king*, being delighted with this *man*, spoke to another *guest*, “At what things ought a man to suffer grief?”

He replied, “At the misfortunes which befall our friends, when we see them long-drawn-out and incurable. For indeed, the *proper* rationalization does not allow for us to grieve *even* for those who have passed-away and *are* released from evils. Instead, all humans do grieve *over them*, because they think only of themselves and their own advantage. But it is by the power of God alone that we can escape every evil.”

269 Now *the king*, after declaring that this *man* had replied as was fitting, spoke to another *guest*, “How does ill-repute arise?”

Now he declared, “When arrogance and ceaseless *self*-confidence lead the way, dishonor ensues as well as a doing away with of glory. But God controls all glory, turning it *in whatever direction* he wishes.”

270 Now *the king*, after also confirming this man’s reply, asked the next *guest*, “To whom must *men* entrust themselves?”

“To those who are drawn to you by loyalty,” he spoke, “and not through fear nor self-interest, or with *personal* gain as their only objective. For indeed, the *first* is a sign of affection, but the *other* is a *mark* of ill-will and expediency. For the *man* whose aim is mere success is a natural traitor. But as for you, you have *the* goodwill of all, as God bestows upon you beautiful counsels.”

271 Now *the king*, after speaking that this *man*’s reply was wise, spoke to another *guest*, “What preserves a kingdom?”

To this *question*, he declared, “Care and concern that no evil shall come upon the crowds through those who have been

specially assigned to serve their needs. This is your policy, God bestowing upon you such solemn intent.”

272 Now *the king*, after encouraging this *man*, asked another *guest*, “What maintains favor and honor?”

Now he spoke, “Excellence. For it is a creator of good works, but renounces evil; even as you keep your noble integrity toward everyone, having this gift from God.”

273 Now *the king*, after also accepting this *reply*, asked the eleventh *guest* (there were two more than the seventy), “How can a man maintain a peaceable soul, even in the *time of war*?”

Now he replied, “By the knowledge that no evil has been committed upon any of your subjects, but that all *of them* are contending for the prize of the blessings which they have received, knowing that even if they give their lives, you will take care of their lives. For you never cease helping everyone, *since* God has given you the gift of kindness.”

274 Now *the king* loudly applauded them all, greeting them with great kindness. And he drank to the health of each one, turning his attention to enjoying *the feast*, mingling among the men with gladness and much joy.

CHAPTER 13

275 Now on the seventh day, after much preparation, there was among them an additional company of many others from the cities (for there was a large number of elders). When a suitable opportunity arose, the king asked the first of those who had not yet been questioned, “How can a *man* avoid being deceived?”

276 Now he declared, “By also testing the speaker, and his speech, and what he is speaking; and by making the same inquiries over a longer period by different means. But the possession of an acute mind and the ability to discern everything, that is a beautiful gift from God, which you do possess, O king.”

277 Now the king, after loudly applauding, asked another *guest*, “Why is it that the majority of the humans do not recognize excellence?”

“Because all *men* are by nature intemperate,” he spoke, “and inclined to pleasures. As a result of these, unrighteousness springs up along with an outpouring of greediness. **278** But the excellent disposition restrains those who are attracted to the rule of pleasure, but it directs them to respect self-restraint and righteousness more highly. But it is God who leads all these matters.”

279 Now the king, after affirming that this *man* had given a good answer, asked, “Whose guidance must the kings follow?”

Now he declared, “The laws, so that by practicing righteousness they may improve the livelihoods of the humans. In the same way that you, by doing this, have established an everlasting memory of yourself, following a divine commandment.”

280 Now *the king*, after saying that this man also gave a beautiful answer, asked the next *guest*, “Whom ought a man appoint as generals?”

Now he spoke, “*Men* who hate wickedness, and, by imitating his conduct, act righteously, so as to earn themselves good-glory continually. This is what you do, O mighty king,” he said. “It is God who has bestowed upon you a crown of righteousness.”

281 Now *the king*, after loudly approving him, looked toward the next *guest*, speaking, “Whom must a *man* appoint as chiefs of his forces?”

Now he explained, “The men of outstanding bravery and righteousness, and who are more anxious to save men’s *lives* than

⁸⁵ literally “love-of-humans”

to gain the victory by the reckless risking of these *men's* lives. For as God showers blessings upon all *men*, so you too, in imitation of him, are a benefactor to your subjects.”

282 Now *the king*, after declaring that he had given a good answer, asked another *guest*, “What human is worthy of being marveled at?”

Now he declared, “The *man* endowed with glory and wealth and power, and who possesses a soul that is the equal of everyone; exactly as you, by your conduct, are worthy of being marveled at, God giving you the gift of caring for these things.”

283 Now *the king*, after also commending this man, spoke to another *guest*, “To what affairs should the kings devote most of their time?”

Now he spoke, “On reading and on the registers of travels, which have been written in dedication to the kingdoms for the correction and preservation of humans. This is what you do, thereby winning glory beyond the reach of others, through the help of God who fulfills your wishes.”

284 Now *the king*, after also warmly commending this man, asked another *guest*, “How ought a man to conduct himself during *the times of relaxation and leisure*?”

Now he declared, “Be a spectator of entertainments which exercise restraint, and keep before your eyes things in your life which are done with decency and reservation—that is suitable and appropriate to life. For there is even some edification to be found in these things, **285** For often, even from the smallest items, something worthwhile stands out. But you practice reservation in all your actions, showing that you are a lover-of-wisdom, *and are* honored by God because of your conduct.”

286 Now *the king*, being well-pleased with what had been previously-stated, spoke to the ninth *guest*, “How ought a *man* to conduct himself at drinking-parties?”

Now he declared, “By inviting those who are lovers-of-learning, and who are able to remind him of matters useful to the kingdom and to the lives of his subjects. **287** You will never find anything more in tune or *more* musical than these. For these *types of men* are God-loved, having disciplined their minds for the most beautiful ends. And this is your practice, all of your plans being directed by God.”

288 Now *the king*, delighted at these words, stated to the next *guest*, “What is best for the crowd, to have a king set over them who was once a commoner, or a king *born of a king*?”

Now he declared, “*The alternative*: He who is best by nature. **289** For even some kings *born of kings* show themselves both savage and severe to their subjects; but much worse, even some *kings of common origin*, even with their experience of evil and their share of poverty, when they govern crowds, have turned out to be more difficult to deal with than the unsacred tyrants. **290** Instead, as I previously-said, a wholesome character, and *one which* has a share of *proper* discipline, is capable of governing. You are a great king, distinguished not so much by the outstanding glory of your government and your wealth, *but* because you excel all humans in your gentleness and humaneness⁸⁶—God having endowed you with these *qualities*.”

291 *The king*, after also applauding this *man* for *some* time, asked the last *guest* of all, “What is the most important feature in a kingdom?”

He spoke, “To establish the subjects continually at peace, and guarantee that the righteousness should be speedily administered

in the judgments. **292** But the leader brings about these aims when he hates-wickedness and loves-good, and devotes his energies to saving souls of humans. And it is in this way that you consider the unrighteousness to be a greatest evil, but by your righteous steering in all things have furnished for yourself an everlasting glory—God granting you to have your mind pure and unmixed by any evil.”

293 Now when he had finished *speaking*, there was a loud clapping and a joyful sound for a long time. But when it subsided, the king grabbed a drinking-cup and gave a toast to all of the guests and to the statements which they had spoken. Now he spoke to them all in this way, “The greatest good-things have fallen on me by *being in* your presence. **294** For I have profited much through the essential teaching which you have given me on the kingship.”

But he ordered that three talents of silver should be given to each *one*, and *that* one of his boys should hand it over to *them*. Now with everyone joining together to make acclamation, the drinking-party was filled with joy, *and* the king turned his attention to gladness without intermission.

295 Now if I have dwelt at length on these matters, Philokrates, I beg your pardon. For I marveled at these men tremendously, the way in which, on the spur of the moment, they gave answers which *should have* needed a long time to *ponder*. **296** And indeed, the questioner gave great thought to each particular question, but those who answered gave *their answers* to the questions one after another. *Therefore*, they were manifestly worthy of being marveled at by me and the audience, but especially by the philosophers. Now everyone who will also receive this narrative from *me*, will, I think, find it incredible. **297** Therefore, indeed to lie about matters which are being written for the public is not proper; but even if I were to make a single error, it would be not be sacred in such matters. Instead, we narrate things as they happened, acquitting *myself* from any sin. For this very reason, I made an attempt to accept the force of their rationalization, trying to write down for the public the details of events both at the audiences with the king and at the drinking-parties. **298** For it is, as you also know, the custom that, from the beginning of the king's audiences until he retires to bed, everything which is said and done is written down for the public. *This* is a beautiful and profitable procedure. **299** For on the next day, before the audience begins, everything which was done and spoken *the previous day* is read out; and, if any action needs it, it is corrected. **300** Therefore, as I have said, we have produced this entire account by accurate reference to the public-writings, knowing how great your love-of-learning is to obtain what is useful.

CHAPTER 14

301 Now three days afterward, Demetrios took the *men* with him. And they traversed the seven stadia-long dam across the sea toward the island, and crossed the bridge, and went into the northern districts. There he gathered them in a house which had been duly furnished near the beach. It was a distinguished *building* and in a secluded situation. *He* invited the men to carry out the work of translation. Everything they would need was handsomely provided. **302** Now they set to completing their several tasks, reaching agreement among themselves on each by comparing versions. Now this was how the result of their agreement was made into a suitable copy by Demetrios. **303** And, indeed their session lasted until the ninth hour. But after this, they

⁸⁶ literally “love-of-humans”

were released for the care of their bodies. Everything they desired was furnished for them on a lavish scale. **304** But even apart from all this, Dorotheos also provided for them the same preparations as were made for the king himself—for this was an order which he had received from the king. Now daily, in the early *morning*, they attended the court; and after making their salutations to the king, they retired to their own region.

305 Now following the custom of all the Judeans, they washed their hands in the sea, as they made vows to God. *Then* they devoted themselves to the reading and the translation of each *passage*.

306 Now I also asked this *question*, “What is their purpose in washing their hands before making vows?”

Now they explained, that it is evidence that they have done no evil, for all activity is done by means of the hands. This is how they beautifully and sacredly refer everything to the righteousness and the truth.

307 Now, as we have previously-stated, they met together daily in their region (which was pleasantly situated for its calmness and brightness), proceeding to fulfill their prescribed task. But the outcome was such that in seventy-two days the translation work was completed, as if such a result was achieved by some predetermination. **308** But when it was completed, Demetrios gathered together the multitude of the Judeans in the region where the translation had also been finished. He read it publicly to everyone, and in the presence of the translators, who also received a great reception from the multitude, because of *the* great good-things which they had conferred *upon them*. **309** But they also bestowed warm praise upon Demetrios, beseeching him, now that he had transcribed the whole law, to present a copy to their leaders.

310 Now after the scrolls had been recognized, the priests stood up, along with the elders from among the translators and from the representatives of the body of citizens, and with the leaders of the multitude, speaking, “Since this version has been made beautifully and sacredly, and in every respect accurately, it is *only fair*⁸⁷ that this should remain exactly as it is, and that there should be no revision.”

311 Now after everyone approved of what they stated, they⁸⁸ directed that a curse should be pronounced, as was their custom, on anyone who should revise it by any addition, or by change to any part of the written text, or by any deletion either. This was a very beautiful precaution, to ensure that *the words* be preserved unchanged for all the future time.

312 Now when the events were also reported to the king, he rejoiced greatly. For it seemed that the purpose which he shared had been safely accomplished. Now the entire version was also read by him, and he marveled profoundly at the mind of the lawgiver. And he spoke to Demetrios, “How is it that none of the historians or poets have ever thought it was worth their while to allude to such a wonderful *work*?”

313 Now he declared, “Because the legislation is solemn and of divine origin. And because some of those who made the attempt were struck by God, they refrained from their design.”

314 For he *said that he* even heard Theopompos declare that, at the very moment when he was about to quote *in his history* some of the previously translated passages from the law, *but* in a misleading way, he was seized by a disorder in his mind for more than thirty days. But at its abatement, he propitiated God to make

clear to him why this *misfortune* had befallen him. **315** But it was indicated to him in a dream, that it was because, in his meddling, he wished to disclose the things of God to common humans. But when he ceased, he recovered. **316** But I have also received *a report* from⁸⁹ Theodektos the tragic-poet, that when he was about to include in a drama a passage from what is publicly written in the book, he was afflicted with a cataract of the eyes. And he suspected that this was why the affliction had befallen him, so, after he propitiated God for many days, he recovered.

317 Now when the king had received Demetrios’ *account* on these matters (as I previously-told), he bowed down to them,⁹⁰ directing for great care to be taken of the books and to keep them pure. **318** But he also invited the translators to visit him often after their return to Judah. “For it was only right,” he spoke, “that they should now be sent home.” But when they returned, he would, as was proper, treat them as friends, and they would receive the greatest gifts from⁹¹ him. **319** Now he directed preparations to be made for their departure, *and* treated the men magnificently. For he presented to each one: three robes of the finest materials, and two talents of gold, and a small-cup⁹² *worth* a talent, and all *the* furnishings for *a set* of three couches.

320 But he also sent to Eleazar, along with their luggage, ten silver-footed couches, and all their necessary accessories, and a small-cup⁹³ *worth* thirty talents, and ten robes, and purple *cloth*, and a resplendent crown, and one hundred pieces of finest linen, and bowls, and dishes, and two golden cups for a votive-offering. **321** But he also wrote an invitation *stating*, that if any of the men desired to return to him, there would be no impediment, *for* he counted it a great privilege to enjoy the society of such disciplined *men*, and he would rather invest his wealth generously in such *men*, and not on vanities.

322 Now there you have my narrative, Philokrates, as I announced. For I think that these matters will delight you more than the books of the mythologists. For you are devoted to the study of those things which are able to benefit *the* mind, and to them you devote the greater time. But I will also attempt to write down the remainder of what is worthwhile, in order that in going through it you may achieve the very beautiful reward of your purpose.

⁸⁹ Josephus “Demetrius also informed him that”

⁹⁰ Josephus adds

⁹¹ manuscript, Josephus / possible emendation “the most liberal hospitality at”

⁹² manuscript, Josephus / possible emendation “sideboard”

⁹³ manuscript, Josephus / possible emendation “sideboard”

⁸⁷ literally “beautiful”

⁸⁸ Josephus, Eusebius / manuscript “he”