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Article Aristobulus 9. of Rome

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the Nile in which Aristides takes earlier authors like the historians Herodotus and Ephorus to task. In the end he ascribes the fact that so many mysteries and miracles are connected with the Nile and its water to the workings of a divinity who knows what is best for mankind.

Finally, a rather substantial part of Aristides' writings are 10 hymns (in prose) dedicated to various gods or godlike phenomena (*Or.* 37–46; one may also add the fragmentary *Or.* 53). Some of them (*Or.* 37–41 and 53) were by the time of the rhetorician Menander (later 3rd cent. CE) known as “commanded by prophecy” (μαντευτοί); in fact, Aristides himself claimed that dreams had instructed him to write these hymns (see also *Or.* 50.25). A number of them praise gods who are more or less traditional Greek deities (*Or.* 37: Athena; 40: Heracles; 41: Dionysus; 42: Asclepius; 43: Zeus; 45: Sarapis; 46: Poseidon), but who are often here depicted as embracing the powers and attributes of other gods as well, thus making them appear as overarching, almost henotheistic divinities. This is well shown by the end of *Or.* 45 (§ 33), where Sarapis is virtually identified with an all-powerful sun-god:

O universal light of all mankind, / who didst appear to me in splendour but the other day, / when, as the sea surged and rose high all around me, / and nothing could be seen / save impending and almost present doom, / thou didst raise thy hand / and disclose the hidden heavens / and grant us sight of land and anchorage, / so far beyond all hope / that when we trod the ground we could not believe it. / All thanks to thee for this, O thou much honoured; / do not desert me now, but make me truly safe; / accept with graciousness the hymn now made, / as a thank-offering for the past / and a supplication and invocation for the future, / that it may be happier and better than the present. (trans. D. Russell)

The extensive programmatic introduction of this hymn (§§1–14) seems to suggest that Aristides even claims to be the very inventor of the prose-hymn. This is manifestly not correct, as already Quintilian, *Inst.* iii.7.7–8, two generations earlier succinctly formulates rules for this genre, but as the quoted passage shows, Aristides – not the least because of his personal religious experiences – applied his considerable rhetorical powers to it and thus infused it with new life.

Aristides was one of the foremost exponents of literary Atticism in his age, and he belongs to the very small number of Greek writers whose output even today is to a large degree still extant. In Byzantium he continued to hold an important position in higher education; Byzantium's fall, however, put an end to his supreme and long-lasting influence as a model for elaborate rhetorical writing.

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Heinz-Günther Nesselrath

Aristobulus

1. Of Alexandria (The Philosopher)

This Aristobulus was a Jewish Peripatetic philosopher (a follower of the school of Aristotle) and biblical commentator, probably in Alexandria in the 2nd century BCE. His writings have not been preserved intact, but we have extensive quotations in the two patristic writers, Eusebius of Caesarea and Clement of Alexandria. Aristobulus' date is based on the dedication of his work to “King Ptolemy” (as quoted in Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 8.9.38). Indeed, according to the traditions preserved about him, he was teacher of Ptolemy VI (180–145 BCE); this dating has been widely accepted, which would place him in the middle of the 2nd century BCE. Whether he was literally the teacher of Ptolemy VI as alleged seems unlikely, but he may well have dedicated a work to the young Ptolemy that would give him the designation of “teacher of the king” (Holladay 1995: 46, 75, 78 n. 4). That Aristobulus was from Alexandria is not certain but is a reasonable inference from all we know about him. (Alexandria was often thought to be a greater literary and cultural center in the Hellenistic period than even Athens).

The preserved fragments of Aristobulus are greatly reminiscent of Philo of Alexandria (ca. 20 BCE to ca. 50 CE). Philo is famed as an allegorist, but Aristobulus provides a clear example of the use of allegory by a Jewish commentator before Philo. Our knowledge of Jewish allegorical interpretation of the Bible is best known from Hellenistic Jewish literature. Philo is our best example, but Aristobulus illustrates the application of this sort of exegesis already two centuries or more before Philo. Although a few examples of allegory are known from the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Ezek 16 and 23), the use of

allegory as a method of exegesis seems ultimately to be borrowed from the Greeks (Grabbe 1988: 49–87). It is clear that Jewish allegory of the Bible and Greek allegory of Homer, which preceded it, shared many of the same intellectual characteristics. We find nothing comparable in Hebrew literature, certainly nothing this early.

Like Philo and some other Jewish writers, Aristobulus is anxious to show that Jewish religious practices are reasonable and respectable. This is (or so he argues) because they share a great deal with Greek worship: even the sabbath was recognized by the Greeks, not least by early and important figures like Homer, Hesiod, and Solon (*apud* Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* xiii.12.13–16; xiii.13.34–35; Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* v.14.107.1–4; v.14.108.1; vi.16.144.3). Bearing in mind that the sabbath was one of the most frequent Jewish customs criticized by non-Jews (e.g., by Aristarchus of Cnidus, *apud* Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 1.22 §§210–11), Aristobulus was implying that the Jews are right to maintain these traditions and reject any negative comments. He also makes the point that sabbath is not a day of idleness (as Greco-Roman writers often alleged). He even asserts that Pythagoras, Socrates, and Plato followed Moses, via the Greek translation of the Bible (*apud* Eusebius, *Praep. Ev.* xiii.12.4; xiii.13.21; Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* v.14.99.3).

Aristobulus' "evidence" for Greek intellectual acknowledgment of Jewish customs includes supposed quotations from Greek writings. Some of these appear to have come via Jewish media such as the verses of Pseudo-Orpheus (on this Jewish writing, in several recensions, see Holladay 1996). One citation from Hesiod (*apud* Eusebius, *Praep. Ev.* xiii.12.13, first quotation) is accurate, though Aristobulus has misinterpreted it. A second quote from Hesiod (second quote in *Praep. Ev.* xiii.12.13) is not attested in the extant text of Hesiod, though it has "Hesiodic echoes." His quotations from Homer (*apud* Eusebius, *Praep. Ev.* xiii.12.14) are more problematic: one appears based on Homer (*Odyssey* 5.262), though Aristobulus has 'seven' where Homer seems to have had 'four'; the others are unknown in Homer but may not necessarily be Jewish inventions (Holladay 1995: 235–36 nn. 155–58). Also, Aristobulus quotes the beginning of Aratus' poem, *Phaenomena* (lines 1–18), again accurately (except for his acknowledged changing of "Zeus" to "God" [θεός]).

Because we have only a portion of Aristobulus' writings, it is difficult to infer his complete philosophical or theological system. But some other points arising from the extant fragments are the following. One long fragment explains how anthropomorphisms applied to the deity are only figurative (*apud* Eusebius, *Praep. Ev.* viii.9.38–10.18; Clement, *Strom.* vi.3.32.3–33.3). Thus, God could not have descended onto Mt. Sinai because he is

everywhere. References to God's "arms" and "legs" are only metaphors for God's power. Aristobulus also apparently discussed the heavenly bodies in relation to the Passover (*apud* Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* vii.32.17–18). In sum, although Aristobulus' knowledge of Greek literature should not be pressed (since he may have got some of it second-hand through Jewish sources), all the information that we have on him suggests a well educated man who had a knowledge of Greek literature and culture, as well as of Jewish tradition and writings.

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2. Jewish Priest

Another Aristobulus, member of a high priestly family named as recipient of one of the letters prefacing 2 Macc 1: 10, is often identified with Aristobulus the philosopher.

3. Aristobulus I

Aristobulus I (104–103 BCE) succeeded his father John Hyrcanus I as high priestly leader of Judah (Josephus, *J.W.* i.3.1–6 §§70–84; *Ant.* xiii.11.1–3 §§301–19), though Josephus says he was the first Hasmonean ruler to have taken the title of king. He is said to have conquered Iturea, an Arab tribe settled in the northern Galilee area, which suggests that he continued with the policy of expanding Judah's borders that John Hyrcanus had begun. He also forced them to convert to Judaism, as Hyrcanus had forced the Idumeans. Josephus states in the *Antiquities* that he was a Philhellene, suggesting a pro-Greek policy of some sort; however, this allegation is not found in the *War* and no other evidence to support it seems to be known so far, leaving us to wonder what he would have done to gain the title. Josephus says that he not only imprisoned his brother (Alexander Jannaeus), but even starved his mother to death – again, without explanation. More spectacular was his murder of his brother Antigonos, because of suspicion of plotting against him, and his death from internal bleeding, supposedly out of remorse. In spite of this, Josephus labels him as a modest individual possessing a kingly nature, supporting this assertion with a quotation from Strabo. Thus, his short reign leaves us with a number of puzzles. It was once thought that the "Aristobulus coins" were all minted under his

grandson, but now it seems likely that we have some of Aristobulus I's coins.

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4. Aristobulus II

Aristobulus II, son of Alexander Jannaeus and Alexandra Salome, was a rival to his elder brother Hyrcanus II for the throne of Judah in the period 67–63 BCE (*J.W.* i.6.1–7.7 §§120–58; *Ant.* xiv.1.2–4.5 §§4–79). As soon as his mother died, Aristobulus launched a military attack on Hyrcanus, and forced him to abdicate in his favor. Hyrcanus was allowed to live as a private citizen, but then with the help of Antipater (whose father had been governor of Idumea) he fled to the Arab ruler Aretus III and returned with an army. He was besieging Aristobulus in Jerusalem when Scaurus, the lieutenant of the Roman general Pompey, forced him to lift the siege. When Pompey arrived on the scene, both the Jewish brothers offered him bribes. Pompey prevaricated, and Aristobulus finally left. Pompey came after him with a large army. Aristobulus surrendered to him, but some of his followers shut the gates of Jerusalem on the Romans. When the city fell in 63 BCE, Aristobulus was taken prisoner to Rome. Later, Aristobulus escaped and led a revolt but was defeated and returned to captivity in Rome. Once civil war broke out in Rome between Caesar and Pompey in 49 BCE, Caesar released Aristobulus with the aim of using him against Pompey, but Pompey's followers got there first and poisoned him.

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5. Aristobulus III

Jonathan Aristobulus was the brother of Mariamme, wife of Herod the Great, and son of Alexander and grandson of Aristobulus II (Josephus, *Ant.* xv.3.3 §§51–56). He was thus a Hasmonean and also appointed high priest by Herod. When he officiated at the Festival of Tabernacles, he was acclaimed by the people because he reminded them of his grandfather. Afterwards, when the youth drowned in a swimming pool in Herod's Jericho residence, Herod was suspected of ordering his murder.

6. Aristobulus IV

Aristobulus was son of Herod the Great by Mariamme and father of Agrippa I (Josephus, *J.W.* 1 §§445–551). Having married his cousin, the daughter of Salome, Herod's sister, he and his brother Alexander were accused of treason before Augustus by Herod. Augustus reconciled father and sons, but this did not last because of continued slanders by

their half-brother Antipater and also bad relations with his mother-in-law Salome. Eventually Aristobulus was tried alongside Alexander and executed ca. 6 BCE.

7. Grandson of Herod the Great

Aristobulus was son of Aristobulus, son of Herod, and Bernice, daughter of Salome, Herod's sister (*J.W.* i.28.1 §552). Although he had executed his father, Herod showed great solicitude for Aristobulus and his siblings (*Ant.* xvii.1.2 §§12–13; xviii.5.4 §§133–35). For some reason, Aristobulus was on bad terms with his brother Agrippa I and involved him in a quarrel with the Roman governor Flaccus (*Ant.* xviii.6.3 §§151–54). Yet Aristobulus joined with others in appealing to Petronius not to have the statue of Caligula set up in the Jerusalem temple (*Ant.* xviii.8.4 §§173–76).

8. Son of Herod of Chalcis

We know little of Aristobulus, younger son of Herod of Chalcis (brother of Agrippa I), except that he married the infamous Salome of the John the Baptist incident (*J.W.* ii.11.6 §221; *Ant.* xviii.5.4 §137). Nero appointed him king over Armenia Minor (Tacitus, *Ann.* 18.7; Josephus, *J.W.* ii.13.2; *Ant.* xx.8.4 §158).

Lester L. Grabbe

9. Of Rome

In Rom 16: 10, the Christians in the house of Aristobulus (οἱ ἐκ τῶν Ἀριστοβούλου) receive greetings from Paul. Because the house-owner is not named directly by the Apostle, Aristobulus is likely not a Christian himself. According to some commentators "there is certainly a strong plausibility" (Dunn: 896) that this man carrying a name which is rare in Rome and much used in the Hasmonean dynasty and Herodian family (Cranfield: 791–92; Lampe: 136) is Herod the Great's grandson (cf. Matt 2: 16–18), brother of King Agrippa I (Acts 12: 1–4, 19–23), and uncle of Drusilla (24: 24–26), Agrippa II, and Berenice (25: 13–26: 32). Aristobulus never held a public office (Josephus, *J.W.* 2.221: ἰδιώτης). If the identification with this member of the Herodian family is correct, the Aristobulus of Rom 16: 10 probably passed away some years before the Pauline letter was written. His household staff would have retained its identity even after it was integrated into another household. Some of the slaves and freedman, not all of them (cf. οἱ ἐκ τῶν Ἀριστοβούλου instead of οἱ Ἀριστοβούλου) became Christians – maybe already in the east of the Roman Empire, maybe after arriving in Rome.

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■ P. Lampe, *Die stadtrömischen Christen in den ersten beiden Jahrhunderten* (WUNT 2.18; Tübingen 2¹⁹⁸⁹).

Eva Ebel

Aristophanes

Aristophanes (ca. 450–ca. 385 BCE) was one of the leading comic dramatists in the Athens of his day, and has since been regarded as the outstanding representative of the so-called “old comedy.” About 40 of his plays were known to scholars of the Hellenistic period, of which 11 survive today. Like his contemporaries, Aristophanes regularly engaged with issues of current controversy in the areas of war and peace (*Acharnians*, *Peace*, *Lysistrata*), politics (*Knights*, *Wasps*), wealth and poverty (*Assemblywomen*, *Wealth*), the thinking of intellectuals (*Clouds*, ostensibly an attack on Socrates) and the theatre itself (*Women at the Thesmophoria*, *Frogs*).



Fig. 17 W. Müller, Socrates in the Basket (1792; after Aristophanes' *The Clouds*)

His plots are regularly built around a fantasy scheme for extricating an individual, a community, or even the whole of humanity from some distress-

ing predicament, and plays like *Birds* and *Assemblywomen* are the oldest utopian texts to survive in western literature. In *Peace*, *Birds* and *Wealth* the hero, in alliance with dissident gods, defeats or even deposes Zeus himself. Owing to their topicality, and perhaps also to their cheerful obscenity, Aristophanes' plays did not hold the stage in subsequent generations; however they have proved extremely congenial (often in adapted form) to the Zeitgeist of the late 20th and 21st centuries, particularly in left-wing and pacifist circles – though on closer examination the plays seem to reveal an Aristophanes who was opposed to war only if Sparta was the enemy, and who was deeply suspicious of politicians who relied on the support of the poor.

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Alan Sommerstein

Aristotle

- I. General
- II. Role in Biblical Interpretation

I. General

The Greek philosopher and scientist Aristotle (384–322 BCE) was the most important of Plato's pupils. Together with Plato, who called him “reason,” he founded European philosophy. He died in exile and (though the case is disputed) his philosophical influence was probably fairly reduced and mainly indirect during the first 300 years after his death. Since then his influence has been major: on philosophy and natural science in late antiquity and the middle ages and on philosophy until the present.

1. Life. Aristotle's life explains the two main interests in his intellectual profile, the concrete and empirical and the abstract and philosophical. He was born in Stagira in the peninsula of Chalkidike in northern Greece as son of a doctor who served the Macedonian king. Thus from an early age he acquired an interest in the natural world. At the age of 17 (367 BCE) he became a pupil of Plato's in the Academy in Athens, where he acquired a speculative interest in articulating the fundamental explanatory principles of the natural world. Shortly after Plato's death (347 BCE) he returned to northern Greece, where he partly continued his philosophical work and engaged in the scientific collection of botanical and zoological data (together with his pupil and successor, Theophrastus), and partly worked as a teacher to Alexander the Great. In about 335 BCE Aristotle returned to Athens, where