
ARISTEAS THE EXEGETE

INTRODUCTION

Aristeas the Exegete (or 'Aristeas the Historian) was a Jewish author who flourished prior to the mid-1st Century BCE. His work ('*On the Jews*') bears no relation to the *Letter of Aristeas*, although the author of the letter very probably borrows his name from the historian.

The one surviving Greek fragment of *Aristeas the Exegete* is a single citation found in Eusebius, *Praeparatorio Evangelica* 9.25.1-4; the citation appears to be copied by Eusebius from Alexander Polyhistor (see the opening and closing statements). The Greek text presented here is from, "Eusebius: Eusebii Caesariensis Opera," Volume 1-2. Dindorf, Ludwig, editor. Leipzig: Teubner, 1867 and the English text is based on the translation by Edwin H. Gifford (1903).

AUTHORSHIP AND DATES

Aristeas' era must be placed between the time of the translation of Job and the epoch of Alexander Polyhistor (*circa* 50 BCE), probably, therefore, in the 2nd Century BCE. His clear use of the Septuagint version of the Book of Job indicates he lived in a Greek-speaking area (possibly Alexandrian) but we cannot be precise.

FRAGMENT 1

EUSEBIUS, PRAEPARATIO EVANGELICA, XXX

κε'. ΑΡΙΣΤΕΟΥ ΠΕΡΙ ΤΟΥ ΙΩΒ ΟΜΟΙΩΣ

¹ Ἀκουε δὲ οἶα καὶ περὶ τοῦ Ἰὼβ ὁ αὐτὸς ἴστορεῖ· Ἀριστέας δέ φησιν ἐν τῷ περὶ Ἰουδαίων τὸν Ἡσαῦ γῆμαντα Βασσάραν ἐν Ἐδὼμ γεννῆσαι Ἰὼβ· κατοικεῖν δὲ τοῦτον ἐν τῇ Αὐσίτιδι χώρᾳ, ἐπὶ τοῖς ὅροις τῆς Ἰδουμαίας καὶ Ἀραβίας. ² γενέσθαι δ' αὐτὸν δίκαιον καὶ πολύκτηνον· κτήσασθαι γὰρ αὐτὸν πρόβατα μὲν ἐπτακισχίλια, καμήλους δὲ τρισχιλίας, ζεύγη βοῶν πεντακόσια, ὄνους θηλείας νομάδας πεντακοσίας· εἶχε δὲ καὶ γεωργίας ἴκανάς. ³ τοῦτον δὲ τὸν Ἰὼβ πρότερον Ἰωβὰβ ὄνομάζεσθαι. πειράζοντα δ' αὐτὸν τὸν θεὸν ἐμμεῖναι, μεγάλαις δὲ περιβαλεῖν αὐτὸν ἀτυχίαις. πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ αὐτοῦ τούς τε ὄνους καὶ τοὺς βοῦς ὑπὸ ληστῶν ἀπελαθῆναι, εἶτα τὰ πρόβατα ὑπὸ πυρὸς ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ πεσόντος κατακαῆναι σὺν τοῖς ποιμέσι· μετ' οὐ πολὺ δὲ καὶ τὰς καμήλους ὑπὸ ληστῶν ἀπελαθῆναι· εἶτα τὰ τέκνα αὐτοῦ ἀποθανεῖν, πεσούσης τῆς οἰκίας· αὐθῆμερὸν δὲ αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸ σῶμα ἐλκῶσαι. ⁴ φαύλως δὲ αὐτοῦ διακειμένου ἐλθεῖν εἰς ἐπίσκεψιν Ἐλίφαν τὸν Θαιδιακειμένου μανιτῶν βασιλέα καὶ Βαλδὰδ τὸν Σαυχαίων τύραννον καὶ Σωφάρ τὸν Μινναίων βασιλέα, ἐλθεῖν δὲ καὶ Ἐλιοῦν τὸν Βαραχιὴλ τὸν Ζωβίτην. παρακαλούμενον δὲ φάναι καὶ χωρὶς παρακλήσεως ἐμμενεῖν αὐτὸν ἐν τε τῇ εὐσεβείᾳ καὶ τοῖς δεινοῖς. τὸν δὲ θεὸν ἀγασθέντα τὴν εὐψυχίαν αὐτοῦ τῆς τε νόσου αὐτὸν ἀπολῦσαι καὶ πολλῶν κύριον ὑπάρξεων ποιῆσαι. Τοσαῦτα καὶ περὶ τούτων ὁ Πολυhistor.

XXV. ARISTEAS CONCERNING JOB

¹ But hear also what the same author tells concerning Job: Aristeas says, in his book, 'Concerning the Jews', that Esau married Bassara in Edom and fathered Job. This man dwelt in the land of Uz, on the borders of Idumaea and Arabia. ² He was a just man, and rich in cattle; for, he had acquired 'seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred she-asses at pasture'; and he had also much arable land. ³ Now, this Job was formerly called Jobab; and God continually tried him and invoked him in great misfortunes. For, first his asses and oxen were driven off by robbers; then the sheep, together with their shepherds, were burned up by fire that fell from heaven; and, not long after, the camels also were driven off by robbers; then his children died, from the house falling *down* on them; and, the same day, his own body also was covered with ulcers. ⁴ And, while he was in evil such predicament, there came to visit him Eliphaz the king of the Temanites, and Bildad the tyrant of the Shuhites, and Zophar the king of the Minnaei, and there came also Elihu the son of Barachiel the Zobite. But, when they tried to exhort him, he said that even without exhortation he should continue steadfast in piety even in his sufferings. And God, being pleased with his good courage, relieved him from his disease and made him master of great possessions. So much says Polyhistor on this subject.