The five fragments of Aristobulus' work seem to be part of an extended attempt to relate Jewish tradition to hellenistic culture. Fragment 1 deals with astronomical characteristics of the date of Passover. Aristobulus remarks that, at the feast of Passover, both the sun and the moon are passing through an equinoctial sign. Thus, they are in diametrically opposed positions on that day.

Fragment 2 is concerned primarily with the nature of God. Aristobulus explains certain anthropomorphic descriptions of God in the Law, which were offensive to educated people of his time.

In fragment 3, Aristobulus claims that Plato and Pythagoras knew the Jewish Law and borrowed from it. In support of this claim, he states that portions of the Law were translated from Hebrew into Greek long before the well-known Septuagint version.

Fragment 4, like fragment 2, discusses the nature of God. The problem of anthropomorphisms is taken up again. Aristobulus argues that Moses and some Greek philosophers and poets had similar ideas about God. But he is not content merely to point out similarities between the Jewish Law and certain Greek authors. As in fragment 3, he claims that some Greek writers knew the Jewish Law and were dependent on it. Here he claims that Socrates, as well as Plato and Pythagoras, made use of the Law. In this fragment, Aristobulus cites verses from Orpheus and Aratus to show how similar their ideas are to those of Moses. Some of the verses cited are attested elsewhere and are thus genuine non-Jewish works. Others are dubious; some are very likely Jewish compositions (see the notes to the translation below).

In fragment 5, the Jewish observance of the Sabbath is explained in terms of cosmic order. Verses from Homer, Hesiod, and the mythical Linus are cited to show that the Greeks also considered the seventh day holy.

Texts

Fragment 1 has been preserved by Eusebius, *Ecclesiastica Historia*, book 7, chapter 32, sections 16–18. In that passage, Eusebius is not quoting directly from Aristobulus' work but is citing Anatolius, *On the Passover*. The edition used for the translation of fragment 1 is by E. Schwartz.\(^1\) Fragments 2–5 are found in Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica*, book 8, chapter 10, and book 13, chapter 12. Part of fragment 5 is also cited, in book 7, chapter 14. The translation below is based on the edition by K. Mras.\(^2\)

Clement of Alexandria also apparently had access to Aristobulus' work. Since his citations are less reliable than those of Eusebius, they were not used in making the translation presented below. Parallels to parts of fragments 2–5 are found in *Stromata*, books 1, 5, and 6 (for exact references, see the n. to the translation). The text of the fragments of Aristobulus,
including the parallels in Clement's *Stromata*, is given by A.-M. Denis, *Fragmenta pseudepigraphorum quae supersunt graeca.*

Anatolius says that Aristobulus dedicated exegetical books on the Law of Moses to Ptolemy Philadelphus (283–246 B.C.) and his father. In introducing fragment 2, Eusebius says that he quotes from Aristobulus' work (*suggramma*) which was dedicated to "Ptolemy the King." The title in the text of Eusebius preceding fragment 3 indicates that the fragment is "from the books of Aristobulus dedicated to King Ptolemy." Eusebius indicates that fragments 4 and 5 are from the same context as 3. N. Walter argued that fragment 5 is a speculative explanation of Genesis 2:1–4. None of the other fragments is a close exegesis of any one, specific passage. Not enough of Aristobulus' work survives to allow firm conclusions about its genre and extent.

Since the seventeenth century a number of scholars have argued that the fragments of Aristobulus were composed only in the early Christian period and not, as they appear to be, in pre-Christian times by a hellenistic Jew. Walter has made a persuasive case for their authenticity.

**Original language**

There are no indications that the fragments were written originally in a language other than Greek. It is likely that Aristobulus was aware of the allegorical interpretation of Homer and Hesiod practiced by the Stoics and the philological school at Pergamum. Although his approach to the Law is somewhat similar, he does not use the technical terms of allegorical interpretation and he proceeds more cautiously. There is little evidence that Aristobulus knew Hebrew or Aramaic.

**Date**

Eusebius and Clement say that Aristobulus' work was dedicated to Ptolemy the King. It is evident from other passages that they both believed Ptolemy VI Philometor (181–145 B.C.) to be the king in question. Anatolius' dating of Aristobulus to the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus must be an error, since Aristobulus refers to Philadelphus as the forefather (*progonos*) of the Ptolemy for whom he wrote (F. 3).

N. Walter is skeptical about the date given by Clement and Eusebius. His skepticism results from a close study of the passages in which Eusebius mentions Aristobulus. Only when he is clearly dependent on Clement (e.g. PrEv 9.6.6) does he mention the eponym Philometor. Elsewhere he simply refers to Ptolemy the King. Since Eusebius is generally faithful to his sources, Walter concludes that the manuscript of Aristobulus used by Eusebius had a superscript which dedicated the work simply to Ptolemy the King. In one of the two places in which Clement dates Aristobulus to the reign of Philometor, he refers to 2 Maccabees 1:10, the prescript of a letter purporting to be from Judas Maccabaeus and the Jews of Judaea to Aristobulus and the Jews of Alexandria. The letter claims to have been written shortly after the death of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (November–December 164 B.C.). Walter follows E. Bickermann in his judgment that the letter is a fabrication dating to about 60 B.C.

Since the letter describes Aristobulus as the teacher of Ptolemy the King (with no eponym), Walter concludes that the fabricator of the letter had a text of Aristobulus with the same dedication Eusebius read. Clement's text, according to Walter, had the same dedication. When he read 2 Maccabees, however, which placed Aristobulus in the time of Judas Maccabaeus, he inferred, on the basis of other chronological information available to

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5 *Thorausleger*, pp. 35–123.
him, that the Ptolemy in question must have been Philometer. Thus, according to Walter, Eusebius' dating is dependent on Clement, and Clement's on 2 Maccabees.

Walter is skeptical about the reliability of this dating, because of his hypothesis that the fabricator of the letter in 2 Maccabees needed a leader of the Jews in Alexandria to serve as an authoritative addressee for his letter. Hence, he arbitrarily chose Aristobulus and placed him in the historical context which suited his purposes.

Against this skeptical position, one can argue that 2 Maccabees 1:10 may reflect a tradition that Aristobulus lived and wrote during the time of Ptolemy VI. It is not unreasonable to assume that the author of 2 Maccabees would have been familiar with such a tradition. Even if the letter is a fabrication dating to about 60 B.C., such a tradition could easily have survived for a century or so.

In any case, the fragments should not be dated much before the middle of the second century B.C., because Aristobulus calls Ptolemy I the forefather of the Ptolemy he is addressing; thus, he must be addressing the grandson of Ptolemy I (who was Ptolemy IV Philopator, 221–204 B.C.) or a later king. But he uses the eponym "Philadephus" for Ptolemy II, and it first came into use in the second century to distinguish him from the other Ptolemies. Thus Ptolemy V Epiphanes (205–180 B.C.) would be the earliest king to come under consideration. Since Aristobulus is already familiar with the legend about the origin of the Septuagint, he should not be dated too close to the third century. Thus, the latter part of the reign of Philometer seems to be the earliest reasonable date for the fragments. If Walter is correct that the evidence of 2 Maccabees is unreliable, a later date is possible.

M. Hengel thinks more weight should be given to the notice of 2 Maccabees 1:10. He argues that the fabricator of the letter addressed it to Aristobulus because it was known that he had written a didactic letter to the young Philometer. He takes seriously the description of Aristobulus as the teacher of Ptolemy and thus dates the work to the early part of the reign of Ptolemy VI. He argues further that, since the work was dedicated to Ptolemy alone, it must have been written while he was sole ruler; this was the case only from 176 to 170 B.C.

Against Hengel's point of view, it might be said that, while it is conceivable that Jews were participating in the intellectual life of the court at Alexandria in the mid-second century B.C., it is somewhat unlikely that a Jew would have been a teacher of a Ptolemy at that time, especially since no other notice of such a relationship has survived. Walter's suggestion is more plausible: that the author of the letter read Aristobulus and, taking note of the direct address to Ptolemy and the explanatory nature of the writing, surmised that the author had been indeed an instructor of the king. There is no good reason to doubt that Aristobulus wrote during the reign of Ptolemy VI Philometer. But the fact that the work was addressed solely to Ptolemy does not necessarily mean that he was sole ruler at the time. To make this point, Hengel would have to show that it was customary to include the names of the guardian of the king, his wife, or co-ruler in literary dedications as well as in contracts. The latter part of the reign of Philometer (155–145 B.C.) thus seems to be the most likely date for the work of Aristobulus.

Provenance

Aristobulus' direct address to a Ptolemy, a descendant of Philadephus, in fragment 3 makes an Alexandrian provenance for his work likely. This conclusion is supported by Eusebius' and Clement's statements that Aristobulus' work was dedicated to Ptolemy the King and that he lived during the time of Ptolemy Philometer (see the section on Date, above). Those scholars who accept the authenticity of the fragments consider Aristobulus an Alexandrian Jew.

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12 J. Moffatt ("2 Maccabees," APOT, vol. 1, pp. 130f.) argued that the author of 2 Maccabees was an Alexandrian Jew.
Historical importance

The fragments of Aristobulus provide important information about how a Jew in the second century B.C. attempted to reconcile Jewish tradition and hellenistic philosophy. Although there is little evidence that Aristobulus was a member of or founded a school of Jewish philosophy, it is clear that he stands in a particular line of tradition, beginning with the translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek and flowering in the work of Philo. Aristobulus’ work thus helps the historian trace the genesis of Philo’s point of view and methods.

Aristobulus contributes to our knowledge of hellenistic Judaism in that he is the first known Jewish philosopher. The dedication of his work to Ptolemy, the direct address to the king in fragments 2 and 3, and the general tone of an address to outsiders indicate that the work has an apologetic intent. It is likely that the reconciliation of the two cultures was of importance to the self-understanding of Aristobulus and his fellow Jews also.

In fragments 1 and 5 Aristobulus seems to point out that the Jewish feasts (Passover and Sabbath) have cosmic significance. They are observed not only because of particular experiences peculiar to the Jewish people but also because they express aspects of cosmic reality which have universal significance. The Passover is associated with the spring equinox and marked by the positions of both sun and moon (F. 1), and the Sabbath with the sevenfold pattern in the overall structure of the cosmos (F. 5).

Fragment 5 provides important evidence for Jewish use of Pythagorean ideas in the second century B.C. Both Aristobulus and Philo (SpecLeg 2.59) seem to presuppose a traditional, allegorical interpretation of the biblical account of creation. This interpretation made use of Pythagorean reflections on the number seven as a prime number.

Theological importance

Aristobulus is of great interest as the earliest known theologian in the Judeo-Christian tradition engaged in the hermeneutical task. He presupposes that reality is a unified whole and that there cannot be contradictions between the truth of Scripture and the truth of philosophy. Apparent contradictions can be resolved by interpreting Scripture in accordance with the laws of nature (physikos) instead of in a mythological or human way (F. 2:2). Or, to put it another way, one must not read according to the letter but must discern the “elevated” meaning (F. 2:5, 9). In any case, descriptions of God must be interpreted in accordance with “the fitting conception of God” (F. 2:2).

In discussing the “standing” of God (F. 2:9–12), Aristobulus used the allegorical method of interpretation which the Stoics had applied to Homer and which later Philo also applied to the Bible. According to Aristobulus, one can assume that the writer at times used words relating to outward appearances in order to express something about the arrangements of nature and the constitutions of great matters (F. 2:3). Another method he uses is to point out that the biblical writer has made use of a metaphor; he does this in interpreting references to God’s “hands” (F. 2:7–9). Elsewhere, in speaking of wisdom as the source of light (F. 5:10), Aristobulus himself deliberately and consciously makes use of a metaphor in his interpretation (F. 5:10). Even in a case in which Aristobulus wants to affirm the text as a description of an actual event, he moves on from a discussion of what happened to why. The descent of God upon Sinai is thus interpreted symbolically as an expression of divine activity in its omnipresent majesty (F. 2:17).

Aristobulus is notable, as has been shown, because of his concern to develop a hermeneutical method. His work is also of interest as an early and simple example of a theology which unites Jewish reflections on wisdom with hellenistic ideas about the Logos. A. Schlatter and P. Dalbert claimed too much by construing Aristobulus’ use of logos as an expression of a divine hypostasis. In fragment 4, Aristobulus discusses God’s creation by the spoken
word, alluding to Genesis 1. The method of interpretation used in this passage seems to be the same used with regard to God's "standing" (F. 2:9–12). There he says that the elevated meaning is the establishment of the cosmos. Here he says that the "voice" of God means the establishment of things (F. 4:3). The passage shows that it is the attribution of speech generally to God (expressed in various ways) which is to be interpreted allegorically, not his word (logos) as such. The variation in vocabulary and the tentative, nontechnical character of the method show that Aristobulus represents an early stage in the development both of the allegorical method and of theological reflection on the Logos.

In fragment 5, wisdom is associated with the seventh day (F. 5:9f.). The seventh day, in turn, is associated with the sevenfold principle (logos), the sevenfold structure of all things (F. 5:12). Thus wisdom and Logos have similar functions. Wisdom is the source of light in which all things are contemplated. Through the sevenfold principle, we have knowledge of human and divine matters. Aristobulus is a pioneer in this kind of reflection; this is shown by the explicit remark that he is speaking metaphorically (F. 5:10). These reflections of Aristobulus are important for anyone seeking to understand the role of the Logos in Philo's thought or in the Gospel of John.

Relation to canonical books

Exodus 12 probably influenced Aristobulus' discussion of the date of Passover. Various passages in Exodus, Deuteronomy, Genesis, and Numbers are quoted or alluded to in the treatment of anthropomorphisms in fragments 2 and 4 (see the margins of the translation for references). The Acts of the Apostles refers to the same passage of Aratus quoted in fragment 4. Titus 2:12 also lists two of the three virtues mentioned in fragment 4:8 (piety and justice). The author of the letter to Titus may have drawn directly upon hellenistic ethical teaching, or may be dependent upon hellenistic Judaism at this point. Genesis 1–2 stands behind the discussion of the Sabbath in fragment 5. Other biblical passages seem to be behind other parts of fragment 5 (see the margins of the translation).

Aristobulus seems to be interested primarily in interpreting the Torah (Pentateuch). On one occasion at least (F. 5:11), he alludes to the Writings, probably to Proverbs 8. The quotations in fragments 2 and 4 seem to derive from the Septuagint, which is what one would expect, given the explicit mention of it in fragment 3.

Relation to apocryphal books and to later literature

The relationship between the fragments of Aristobulus and 2 Maccabees has already been discussed in the section on Date.

E. Schürer argued that Aristobulus cited the poem attributed to Orpheus and the verses on the seventh day from Pseudo-Hecataeus' book on Abraham. Others argued that Aristobulus is indirectly dependent upon another work attributed to Hecataeus, Concerning Jews. Neither conclusion is warranted.

The fragments of Aristobulus and the Letter of Aristeas share a number of features. Both refer to the legend about the translation of the Jewish Law made under Ptolemy Philadelphus and Demetrius Phalereus. Since the Letter of Aristeas gives the legend in detail and Aristobulus mentions it only in passing, many scholars, including E. Schürer and W. Boussot, concluded that Aristobulus was literarily dependent upon the Letter. It has been argued, however, that the author of the Letter did not invent the legend, but only used it for his own purposes. If this theory is correct, the two authors could have known the legend independently. There are also a number of verbal similarities, but not enough to indicate literary dependence in either direction.

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22 This possibility is implied by M. Dibelius and H. Conzelmann in The Pastoral Epistles (Philadelphia, 1972) p. 142.
23 Walter, Thorausleger, pp. 32f.; Walter, JSHRZ 3.2 (1975) 264.
24 Thorausleger, pp. 87f.
25 Thorausleger, p. 91, n. 3.
26 Thorausleger, pp. 88–103. Walter argues cautiously that at some points Aristobulus seems to be prior. There does not seem to be enough evidence to establish such a conclusion.
A. Elter and P. Wendland argued that the fragments of Aristobulus are dependent upon Philo and thus a forgery from Christian times. Walter has shown persuasively that such dependence is very unlikely. Aristobulus is more primitive in vocabulary and method; this primitiveness would be hard to explain after Philo. The technical vocabulary of allegorical interpretation is absent in Aristobulus (allēgoria, tropikōs, hyponoia) and his interpretations are more self-conscious and cautious.

The extant fragments of Aristobulus' work survive only because early Christian writers were interested in them. His cosmic reflections on the date of the Passover were cited by Anatolius in support of his view that Easter ought to be celebrated on the same day as the Passover. Clement and Eusebius cited from his work because its allegorical method was useful to them in interpreting the "Scripture" (graphas). His claim that many great Greek thinkers and poets were dependent upon Moses supported their own apologetic concerns.

Cultural importance

The issues discussed above with regard to historical and theological importance are significant also for those concerned with the history of culture. Further, Aristobulus is of note for the history of philosophy. H. Wolfson suggested that Western philosophy may be divided into three epochs: ancient philosophy, which did not know Scripture; medieval philosophy, which began with Scripture as revelation; and modern philosophy, which had its inception in an attempt to free itself from Scripture. According to Wolfson, the fundamental departure from ancient philosophy involved a new theory of knowledge by introducing a new source of knowledge. This fundamental change appears first in hellenistic Judaism, where it attains its systematic formulation in Philo. Aristobulus is Philo's most important known forerunner in this regard.

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27 Thoraausleger, pp. 58–86.
TRANSLATION

Fragment 1  Eusebius, “Ecclesiastica Historia” 7.32.16–18

On the date of the Passover

16 And this is not our own reckoning, but it was known to the Jews long ago even before Christ and it was carefully observed by them. One can learn it from what is said by Philo, Josephus, (and) Musaeus, and not only by these, but also by both of the Agathobuli, who are still more ancient and are surnamed the teachers. One can learn it also from what is said by the excellent Aristobulus, who was enrolled among the seventy who translated the sacred and divine Scriptures of the Hebrews for Ptolemy Philadelphus and his father and who dedicated exegetical books on the law of Moses to the same kings.

17 When these (writers) explain questions concerning the Exodus, they say that it is necessary that all alike sacrifice the Passover after the vernal equinox, in the middle of the first month; and this occurs when the sun passes through the first sector of the solar, or as some of them called (it), the zodiacal circle.

And Aristobulus adds that on the feast of the Passover of necessity not only the sun will be passing through an equinoctial sector, but the moon also.

18 For, since there are two equinoctial sections, the vernal and the autumnal, and since they are diametrically opposite one another, and since the day of the Passover was assigned to the fourteenth of the month after evening, the moon will stand in the position opposite and over against the sun, just as one can see (it) at the seasons of full moon. (So) the one, the sun, will be in the sector of the vernal equinox, and the other, the moon, of necessity will be in (the sector of) the autumnal equinox).


On anthropomorphisms

9.38 It is time to listen to what sorts of things Aristobulus recounted concerning elements in the sacred books which are currently understood to refer to God’s limbs. Aristobulus was familiar with Aristotelian philosophy in addition to that of his ancestors. (He is the one whom the second book of the Maccabees mentions in the beginning of the book.) And in his work (dedicated) to Ptolemy the King this man also explains this method:

When, however, enough had been said in response to the questions set forth, you...
also, O King, exclaimed (questioning) why indications are given of hands and arms and face and feet and walking about throughout our Law with respect to the divine power. These things will receive a proper discussion and they will not contradict in any way what was said by us beforehand.

And I wish to exhort you to receive the interpretations according to the laws of nature and to grasp the fitting conception of God and not to fall into the mythical and human way of thinking about God.

For our lawgiver Moses proclaims arrangements of nature and preparations for great events by expressing that which he wishes to say in many ways, by using words that refer to other matters (I mean matters relating to outward appearances). Therefore, those who are able to think well marvel at his wisdom and at the divine spirit in accordance with which he has been proclaimed as a prophet also. Among these are the philosophers already mentioned and many others, including poets, who took significant material from him and are admired accordingly.

But to those who have no share of power and understanding, but who are devoted to the letter alone, he does not seem to explain anything elevated.

I shall begin then to take up each thing signified in turn, to the extent that I am able. But if I miss the point or fail to be persuasive, attribute the lack of reason not to the lawgiver but to my inability to interpret his thoughts.

Now “hands” are clearly thought of even in our own time in a more general way. For when you, being king, send out forces, wishing to accomplish something, we say, “The king has a mighty hand,” and the hearers are referred to the power which you have.

Now Moses indicates this also in our Law when he speaks thus: “God brought you out of Egypt with a mighty hand,” and again he says that God said to him, “I will send forth my hand and I will strike the Egyptians.” And with respect to the death which came upon the cattle and the others he speaks to the king of the Egyptians, saying, “Behold, the hand of the Lord shall be upon your cattle and a great death shall be upon all that are in the fields,” so that it is necessary that the hands be explained as the power of God. For it is possible for people speaking metaphorically to consider that the entire strength of human beings and their active powers are in their hands.

Therefore, the lawgiver has employed a metaphor well for the purpose of saying something elevated, when he says that the accomplishments of God are his hands. And the establishment of the cosmos might well be called divine “standing” in accordance with the elevated (level of meaning).

For indeed God is over all things and all things have been subordinated (to him) and have received their “standing” (from him), with the result that human beings comprehend that these things are unalterable. I mean something like this, that heaven has never become earth and earth heaven, nor has sun become shining moon, nor moon again sun, nor rivers sea, nor sea rivers.

And again with regard to living beings, there is the same rule. For a human being will not become beast nor a beast a human being. And the same thing applies also to the rest, to plants and the others. They are not interchangeable, but the members of each group change and are destroyed in the same way.

In these respects, therefore, divine “standing” might be spoken of, because all things are subjected to God.

It is said too in the book of the Law that there was a descent of God upon the mountain, at the time when he was giving the Law, in order that all might see the action of God. For this descent was manifest; therefore, anyone wishing to guard the account about God should interpret these things in the following way.

For it is set forth that “the mountain was burning with fire,” so says the Law.
on account of God's coming down. It also says that there were trumpet blasts and
the fire blazing without substance.

14 For even though the whole multitude of not less than a hundred myriads (one
million), not counting minors, was assembled round about the mountain and
even though the making of a circuit around it would take not less than five days,
the fire was seen blazing from every point of view around them all where they
were camped.

Therefore, the descent was not local; for God is everywhere. Rather he (the
lawgiver) showed that the power of fire, which is marvelous beyond all things
because it consumes all things, blazes without substance and consumes nothing,
unless the power from God (to consume) is added to it.

For, although the regions were blazing mightily, (the fire) consumed nothing of
the growing things throughout the mountain, but the foliage of all of them remained
untouched by fire. The trumpet blasts were quite strongly audible at the same time
as the exhibition of the lightning-like fire, although no such instruments were
present nor any to sound them, but all things happened by divine arrangement.

Therefore, it is clear that the divine descent occurred for these reasons: in order
that the viewers might comprehend each of these things in a revelatory way—not
that the fire consumed nothing, as has been said, nor that the trumpet blasts came
into being without human activity or the use of instruments, but that God, without
any aid, manifested his own majesty, which is throughout all things.

Fragment 3  Eusebius, 13.12.1f.

Greek dependence on the Jewish Law

(Title) That also Aristobulus, who lived before us and was of the Hebrew people,
the peripatetic (philosopher), agreed that the Greeks begin from the philosophy of
the Hebrews; from the (books) of Aristobulus dedicated to King Ptolemy:

It is evident that Plato imitated our legislation and that he had investigated
thoroughly each of the elements in it. For it had been translated by others before
Demetrius Phalereus, before the conquests of Alexander and the Persians. The
parts concerning the exodus of the Hebrews, our fellow countrymen, out of Egypt,
the fame of all the things that happened to them, the conquest of the land, and
the detailed account of the entire legislation (were translated). So it is very clear
that the philosopher mentioned above took many things (from it). For he was very
learned, as was Pythagoras, who transferred many of our doctrines and integrated
them into his own system of beliefs.

But the entire translation of all the (books) of the Law (was made) in the time of
the king called Philadelphus, your ancestor. He brought greater zeal (to the task
than his predecessors), while Demetrius Phalereus managed the undertaking.
Anthropomorphisms and Greek dependence on the Law

3 Then, having said some things in between, he continues, saying:

For it is necessary to take the divine "voice" not as a spoken word, but as the establishment of things. Just so has Moses called the whole genesis of the world words of God in our Law. For he continually says in each case, "And God spoke and it came to pass."

4 And it seems to me that Pythagoras, Socrates, and Plato with great care follow him in all respects. They copy him when they say that they hear the voice of God, when they contemplate the arrangement of the universe, so carefully made and so unceasingly held together by God. And further, Orpheus also imitates Moses in verses from his (books) on the Hieros Logos. He expresses himself thus concerning the maintaining of all things by divine power, their being generated and God's being over all things. And he speaks so:

5 I will sing for those for whom it is lawful, but you uninitiate, close your doors, Charged under the laws of the Righteous ones, for the Divine has legislated For all alike. But you, son of the light-bearing moon, Musaeus, listen, for I proclaim the Truth. Let not what you formerly felt lose for you a happy eternity, But look to the divine word, study it closely, [So] guiding your heart, that knowing vessel. Set out firmly On the path, and look only at the undying shaper of the universe. There is an ancient saying about him: "He is one"—self-completing, and all things completed by him, In them he himself circulates. But no one has seen him With the souls mortals have, he is seen [only] by Mind. He does not take good things and make them into evil For people, but he comes in company with love and hate, "And war and plague and weeping pain"— "And there is no other." You would understand everything If you were to see him. But before that, here on earth, sometimes, My son, I will point it out to you, whenever I notice his footsteps, And the strong hand of the mighty God. But I do not see him, because around [him] a cloud is set up, A thin one for me, but tenfold for all [other] people. For all mortals have mortal pupils in their eyes, [Too] small, since flesh and bones have produced them, [Too] weak to see Zeus, the ruler of all. And no one has seen the ruler of mortal men, Except a certain unique man, an offshoot from far back of the race Of the Chaldeans. For he was knowledgeable about the path of the Star, And how the movement of the Sphere goes around the earth, Both in circular fashion, but each on its own axis. He rides in spirit through the air and through the water Of the stream. A comet makes manifest these events—he had a mighty birth. Yes, he after this is established in the great heaven On a golden throne. He stands with his feet on the earth. He stretches out his right hand to the ends of the ocean. The foundation of the mountains trembles within at [his] anger,
And the depths of the gray sparkling sea.
They cannot endure the mighty power. He is entirely
Heavenly, and he brings everything to completion on earth,
Being "the beginning, the middle, and the end."

As the saying of the ancients, as the one water-born has described it,
The one who received [revelations] from God in aphorisms, in the form of a
double law.
It is unlawful to say anything else. My body is trembling.
In Mind, from above, he rules over everything according to an order.
My son, approach him with your Mind,
And do not betray, but guard the divine message in your heart.

And Aratus also speaks about the same things thus:
Let us begin with God, whom men never leave unspoken; full of God are the
streets, and all the marketplaces of humanity, and full the sea and the harbors;
and we are all in need of God everywhere. We are all his children; and he gently
to humanity gives good omens, and rouses people to work, reminding (them) of
sustenance; and he tells when the soil is best for cattle and for pickaxes, and he
tells when seasons are favorable both for planting trees and for sowing all seeds.
I believe that it has been clearly shown how the power of God is throughout all
things. And we have given the true sense, as one must, by removing the (name)
Zeus throughout the verses. For their (the verses') intention refers to God, therefore
it was so expressed by us. We have presented these things therefore in a way not
unsuited to the things being discussed.

For it is agreed by all the philosophers that it is necessary to hold holy opinions
concerning God, a point our philosophical school makes particularly well. And
the whole constitution of our Law is arranged with reference to piety and justice
and temperance and the rest of the things that are truly good.

Fragment 5  Eusebius, 13.12.9–16

On the sabbath

Following these things, after other (remarks), he adds:
And connected (with this) is (the fact) that God, who established the whole
cosmos, also gave us the seventh day as a rest, because life is laborious for all. According to the laws of nature, the seventh day might be called first also, as the genesis of light in which all things are contemplated.

And the same thing might be said metaphorically about wisdom also. For all light has its origin in it. And some of those belonging to the Peripatetic school have said that wisdom holds the place of a lantern; for as long as they follow it unremittingly, they will be calm through their whole life.

And one of our ancestors, Solomon, said more clearly and better that wisdom existed before heaven and earth; which indeed agrees with what has been said.

And it is plainly said by our legislation that God rested on the seventh day. This does not mean, as some interpret, that God no longer does anything. It means...
that, after he had finished ordering all things, he so orders them for all time.

For the legislation signifies that in six days he made heaven and earth and all things which are in them in order that he might make manifest the times and foreordain what precedes what with respect to order. For, having set all things in order, he maintains and alters them so (in accordance with that order). And the legislation has shown plainly that the seventh day is legally binding for us as a sign of the sevenfold principle which is established around us, by which we have knowledge of human and divine matters.

And indeed all the cosmos of all living beings and growing things revolves in series of sevens. Its being called "sabbath" is translated as "rest." And both Homer and Hesiod, having taken information from our books, say clearly that the seventh day is holy. Hesiod (speaks) so:

To begin with, (the) first, (the) fourth and (the) seventh, (each) a holy day;

And again he says:

And on the seventh day (is) again the bright light of the sun. And Homer speaks so:

And then indeed the seventh day returned, a holy day;

Then was the holy seventh day;

and again:

It was the seventh day and on it all things had been completed;

and:

And on the seventh morning we left the stream of Acheron.

He (Homer) thereby signifying that away from the forgetfulness and evil of the soul, by means of the sevenfold principle in accordance with the truth, the things mentioned before are left behind and we receive knowledge of the truth, as has been said above.

And Linus speaks so:

And on the seventh morning all things were made complete;

and again:

(The) seventh (day) is of good quality and (the) seventh (day) is birth;

and:

(The) seventh (day) is among the prime (numbers) and (the) seventh (day) is perfect;

And all seven (heavenly bodies) have been created in the starry heaven, Shining in their orbits in the revolving years.

Such then are the remarks of Aristobulus.