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The Septuagint and Homeric Scholarship in Alexandria: A Study in the Narrative of the 'Letter of Aristeas'

Sylvie Honigman

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The Septuagint and Homeric Scholarship in Alexandria: A Study in the Narrative of the 'Letter of Aristeas' Sylvie Honigman
The *Letter of Aristeas* tells the story of how Ptolemy Philadelphus of Egypt commissioned seventy scholars to translate the Hebrew Bible into Greek.
Long accepted as a straightforward historical account of a cultural enterprise in Ptolemaic Alexandria, the *Letter* nevertheless poses serious interpretative problems. Sylvie Honigman argues that the *Letter* should not be regarded as history, but as a charter myth for diaspora Judaism. She expounds its generic affinities with other works on Jewish history from Ptolemaic Alexandria, and argues that the process of translation was simultaneously a process of establishing an authoritative text, comparable to the work on the text of Homer being carried out by contemporary Greek scholars.
The *Letter of Aristeas* is among the most intriguing literary productions of Ptolemaic Alexandria, and this is the first book-length study to be devoted to it.

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