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# The Named Addressee and the Formation of the Student in Ancient Judaism

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**Abstract**

*The Gospel of Luke, the Letter of Aristeas, and a number of other ancient Jewish texts participate in a peculiar Greco-Roman custom by naming specific addressees at various points in their works. Luke is addressed to a figure known only as Theophilus. The Letter of Aristeas begins with an address to Philocrates. This literary flourish has previously been examined in various ways. However, what remains largely unexamined is the way in which such texts interact with Jewish educational ideals. This chapter asserts that the process can be compared to the ways that Jewish literature depicts and enacts educational situations in its readers. Using a framework introduced by Bruno Latour, I argue that such addresses create a fiction in which the audience is enrolled as an actor in the drama. In this setting they take on the role of the addressees in the script and embody their characteristics so as to realize them outside of the writing. When this occurs, the audience is itself transformed by the fiction. Although this transformation can be temporary, it has real world effects. The audience becomes the addressee and inhabits the fictional world, internalizing its values, and striving for its goals.*

**Keywords**

*Ancient pedagogy; epistolography; fiction; Latour; Aristeas; Gospel of Luke.*

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## 1. Introduction

The Letter of Aristeas begins by directly addressing an otherwise unknown figure named Philocrates.[1] This Philocrates, as addressed in the text, is a rather demanding correspondent.[2] He apparently has been hounding Aristeas, the ostensible author

1 John Bartlett, *Jews in the Hellenistic World: Josephus, Aristeas, the Sibylline Oracles, Eupolemus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 18–19, https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511621307.

2 The genre of the writing has been very heavily discussed. The contemporary discussion begins with Moses Hadas, *Aristeas to Philocrates (Letter of Aristeas)* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1951), 56–57; but continues with Sylvie Honigman, *The Septuagint and Homeric Scholarship in Alexandria: A Study in the Narrative of the* Letter of Aristeas (London: Routledge, 2003), 29–35, https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203498774; Tessa Rajak, *Translation and Survival: The Greek Bible and the Ancient Jewish Diaspora* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 30–32, https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199558674.001.0001; and others.

of the work, for more information about Aristeas's trip to Jerusalem. In Aristeas's telling, it is Philocrates's persistent requests that drive him to write down an account of the trip and the events surrounding it. Aristeas does so because he perceives that Philocrates has the "disposition to love learning."[3] Aristeas goes on to say that this quality is "the greatest thing for a person 'always both to increase learning and make progress,' whether through written accounts or through the actual reality that we experience."[4] Aristeas adds that this inquisitiveness leads to "a pure disposition of mind."[5] From this initial description of Philocrates and the curiosity and drive he is said to possess, it is clear that he is a figure who is not only addressed by Aristeas, but also admired.

Philocrates is not the only such figure in ancient Jewish and early Christian writings. The Gospel of Luke and its apparent sequel, Acts of the Apostles, are both addressed to "[most excellent] Theophilus" ([κράτιστε] Θεόφιλε, Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1), who is apparently a student.[6] Josephus also gets in on the action when he addresses both his *Judean Antiquities* and *Against Apion* to Epaphroditus. He, too, is characterized as "most excellent of men" and a "lover of every kind of learning."[7] Josephus further describes him as an "especially great lover of truth."[8] The eponymous addressee of the second century Epistle to Diognetus is similarly presented as being "very eager to learn about the way the Christians fear god."[9] Somewhat further afield, the prologue to the Greek translation of Ben Sira addresses no named individual, but does address the prologue to "lovers of learning" (τοὺς φιλομαθοῦντας, Sir Pr. 5) and people living abroad who "wish to become learned" (βουλομένοις φιλομαθεῖν, Sir Pr. 34). There are many other examples of such addressees that could be included. The majority of these characters share the same set of qualities that appear to be praised by the speakers. They are eager students who love learning, and they are of excellent character (often as a result of their devotion to learning).

The ubiquity of these types of addressees raises questions concerning both the purpose of their existence in these texts and the rhetorical effect their presence has, regardless of intent. Are these figures actual students or sponsors of the works addressed to them? Are the encomiums about their qualities and willingness to learn

3 ἔχεις φιλομαθῆ διάθεσιν, Aristeas §1. All translations unless noted otherwise are from Benjamin G. Wright III, *The Letter of Aristeas: "Aristeas to Philocrates" or "On the Translation of the Law of the Jews,"* CEJL (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015).

4 ὅπερ μέγιστόν ἐστιν ἀνθρώπῳ, προσμανθάνειν ἀεί τι καὶ προσλαμβάνειν, ἤτοι κατὰ τὰς ἱστορίας, ἢ καὶ κατ᾽ αὐτὸ τὸ πρᾶγμα πεπειραμένῳ, Aristeas §2.

5 ψυχῆς καθαρὰ διάθεσις, Aristeas §2.

6 Acts 1:1 lacks the modifier.

7 κράτιστε ἀνδρῶν Ἐπαφρόδιτε, *C. Ap.* 1.1; *Vita* 430. ἰδέαν παιδείας ἠγαπηκώς, *A.J.* 1.8. On the integral relationship between Josephus's *Life* and his *Judean Antiquities* see the well-argued case by Steve Mason, *Life of Josephus: Translation and Commentary*, FJTC 9 (Leiden: Brill, 2001) xiv–xv.

8 μάλιστα τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἀγαπῶντι, *C. Ap.* 2.296.

9 ὑπερεσπουδακότα σε τὴν θεοσέβειαν τῶν Χριστιανῶν μαθεῖν, Diog. 1.1. The author, precise date, and identity of the addressee in the epistle remain largely unknown. See Michael Bird and Kirsten Mackerras, "The *Epistle of Diognetus* and the *Fragment of Quadratus*," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Apostolic Fathers*, ed. Michael Bird and Scott Harrower (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 309–31, esp., 311–12, https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108554992.017.

instances of *captatio benevolentiae*, a means to flatter their readers? How are audiences, the majority of whom are not among those addressed, meant to place themselves in relation to these addressees? Do the named addressees play any role in the formation of these anonymous audiences? Such questions are not new. They have been addressed by a long line of scholars wondering about how these figures work in such texts.

In her attempt to understand the prologues to the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles, Loveday Alexander places the prefaces in the context of Greco-Roman and Hellenistic scientific prefaces. As part of this discussion, she treats the question of Theophilus directly.[10] Alexander begins by identifying the direct address to Theophilus as a dedication, which she notes is "widely recognized literary courtesy by means of which a text is 'personalized' as a gift or communication to one individual."[11] However, beyond this, she further delves into why Luke might choose to use a dedication here, and what that answer might reveal about the social context of the gospel. In short, she uses the direct address as an entree into historical-critical concerns surrounding the composition of the gospel and its first readers. She posits that Theophilus is a historical figure, and not just a fictional character meant to evoke a typical Christ-follower. Alexander adds, based on comparison with other prefaces, that there is too little evidence to decide whether Theophilus is a social superior or patron to the gospel's author.[12] In a similar way, Alexander asserts that it is difficult to draw conclusions about whether Theophilus is a newcomer to the story of Jesus, or is already initiated in some sort of pre-/proto-Christian community.[13] She spends most of her discussion, however, discerning the degree to which Theophilus might have been made responsible for the dissemination of the gospel, whether as patron, colleague, or student.[14] She outlines how any of these roles might be connected to the practice of publication, or at least circulation, of the Gospel's teachings without ever deciding on Theophilus's role. These largely come down to the provision of performance contexts, whether in a library, a professional association, or a school.[15]

While Alexander's observations do the work of identifying the social and historical context of such direct addresses in the ancient context, she leaves the rhetorical effect of the direct address largely unanswered. This is because she treats the depiction of Theophilus as largely descriptive, rather than constructive.[16] She does so, despite acknowledging that such addressees are at times fictional, and so must serve some other purpose.[17] Lutz Doering, in his discussion of ancient Jewish epistolography, does deal with this aspect of addresses. The bulk of Doering's insights on the matter

10 Alexander, *The Preface to Luke's Gospel: Literary Convention and Social Context in Luke 1.1–4 and Acts 1.1*, SNTSMS 78 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 187–200, https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511554827.

11 Alexander, *Preface to Luke's Gospel*, 187.

12 Alexander, *Preface to Luke's Gospel*, 188–91.

13 Alexander, *Preface to Luke's Gospel*, 193.

14 Alexander, *Preface to Luke's Gospel*, 193–97.

15 Alexander, *Preface to Luke's Gospel*, 197–99.

16 Alexander, *Preface to Luke's Gospel*, 136–37.

17 Alexander, *Preface to Luke's Gospel*, 188.

come in his inquiry into the epistolary character of the Letter of Aristeas.[18] Here, because he recognizes the constructed aspects of both the narrative voice, Aristeas, and the named addressee, Philocrates, he enters into a reflection on how these epistolary features contribute to the rhetoric of the narrative.[19] Doering concludes that the fictional addressee here serves three purposes. First, it allows for the connection between the narrative voice and Aristeas, the character who participates in the events of the text. Because Aristeas addresses Philocrates directly, he now has a plausible reason and occasion for which to share his own experiences in Jerusalem and among the Jewish translators in Egypt. Second, the fictional addressee reinforces the idea that Aristeas's observations and admiration for the Jews is being shared in personal communication between two gentiles. That is, the presence of Philocrates as a counterpart to Aristeas creates a fictional private environment wherein two Hellenes are curious about and laudatory of Judeans and their culture.[20] Third, the presence of the explicit addressee "shapes the reader with respect to literary taste and historical interest."[21] He notes that through the address to Philocrates the reader "is encouraged to identify with some of the traits with which the explicit addressee is invested (e.g., the love of learning, §1; the desire to know, §§5, 7; or the inclination to things that benefit the mind, §322)."[22] Especially this last point is enticing because it seems to move beyond the role of the direct addressee in the Letter of Aristeas and attempt to explain how this type of rhetorical feature functions more broadly.

Although, as the above quotations show, Doering stops short of claiming that the reader is to fully put themself in the position of the named addressee; he points toward the direct address's potential function in the formation of the reader.[23] Doering, however, does not ever elaborate on the process by which the reader might be shaped through this device. Nor, indeed, does he draw connections between the formation of the reader and the pedagogical situation introduced by so many of these direct addresses.[24] These are two areas demanding further attention.

Building on the work of Alexander, Doering, and others, I would like to suggest a different framework for understanding how named addressees function in ancient Jewish and Christian texts: It rests on the concept of fiction. From my point of view, the introduction of a named addressee fabricates a fictional environment in which the transmission of knowledge takes place. With its introduction there is suddenly a sender, a recipient, and a message passing between them, in addition to a number of other possible details that fill out the fictional world. Importantly, this newly estab-

18 Doering, *Ancient Jewish Letters and the Beginning of Christian Epistolography*, WUNT 298 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 220–32, https://doi.org/10.1628/978-3-16-152283-3.

19 Doering, *Ancient Jewish Letters*, 223–24, 232.

20 Doering, *Ancient Jewish Letters*, 223.

21 Doering, *Ancient Jewish Letters*, 232.

22 Doering, *Ancient Jewish Letters*, 224.

23 Honigman also acknowledges this possibility (*Septuagint*, 83).

24 On this tendency in classical epistolography, see D. R. Langslow, "The *Epistula* in Ancient Scientific and Technical Literature, with Special Reference to Medicine," in *Ancient Letters: Classical and Late Antique Epistolography*, ed. Ruth Morello and A. D. Morrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 211–34, esp. 226–27, https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199203956.003.0010.

lished fiction is not inert. It serves as a script that presents the roles of narrator and addressee, and defines the way in which they will interact. This script then imposes itself upon the reader, enrolling them as the addressee through the form of second person address. The reader transforms themself into the named figure, if only while they read or listen to the account. The reader thereby becomes the addressee, taking on the role, as an actor does in a drama. This transformation both compels the reader to mimic the virtues and values of the addressee, and through this act of mimicry instills in them the qualities necessary to be a good student. Readers are thereby compelled into mimesis of pedagogical ideals as they read the text. The result is that a reader is not only better informed through the reading experience, but potentially better formed as a student and person. That is, these paradigmatic addressees are the means by which the message of the text participates in the formation of the student.

In order to make this case, I will first provide some theoretical framework for understanding the situation introduced by the inclusion of the named addressee as a type of fiction. For this I will enter into dialogue with the concept of fiction as explored by Bruno Latour (§2). After this, I will take several examples from these fictions to show how the transformation I am theorizing is enacted (§3). Finally, I shall conclude with a brief examination of the values shared through these fictional characters, and place them in the context of ancient pedagogy (§4).

## 2. Latour and Fiction

When I use the terminology of fiction, I am interacting with a concept introduced by Latour in his book *An Inquiry into the Modes of Existence*.[25] The term as Latour uses it differs somewhat from its more common use in literary discussions. As the title of his work suggests, Latour argues that there are multiple ontologies, or modes of existence, through which the world and its constituent parts are made real. In the book, he embarks on an ethnographic study that attempts to uncover the various interactions that produce what we conceive of as reality. In this way, he pursues a constructivist project. However, different from many other constructivists, he does not posit an unconstructed reality behind that which can be perceived. Rather, Latour suggests that the very act of construction is what produces reality.[26] In short, everything real is constructed. All constructions are real.[27] Importantly, however, Latour does not

25 Bruno Latour, *An Inquiry into the Modes of Existence: An Anthropology of the Moderns*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013).

26 Latour argues that the inadequacy of constructivism is in failing to recognize that the idols it seeks to destroy are not hiding reality, but constitute it (*Inquiry*, 168). See also the critical discussion of Dave Elder-Vass, who discusses how actor-network theorists make claims that both endorse the existence of the external world and argue for its construction by scientific observation. Elder-Vass, "Disassembling Actor-network Theory," *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 45 (2014): 100–121, esp. 103, https://doi.org/10.1177/0048393114525858.

27 Latour discusses how the distinctions between fact and fetish are illusory. Bruno Latour, *On the Modern Cult of the Factish Gods*, trans. Catherine Porter and Heather MacLean, Science and Cultural Theory (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 21–24.

understand reality to be composed by only one mode of construction. Instead, he recognizes that there are different ways in which it is produced.[28] These are not, for Latour, merely different perspectives on reality. They are fully distinct modes of interaction through which we and our environments are realized and validated.

This is where Latour's concept of fiction becomes relevant as one of his modes of existence.[29] For Latour, fiction refers to any entity that appears in any kind of imaginative or artistic production, from storytelling, to film, sculpture, and beyond. It is not just a designation applied to stories and characters appearing in literature.[30] It can refer even to the speculative entities created when speaking about ourselves or others conditionally or counterfactually.[31] Importantly, when he describes fiction as a mode of existence, he does not deny the reality of fictional beings. On the contrary, he asserts their existence, but maintains that they have their own process of being authenticated. This verification is distinct from the empirical proofs most recognized in the modern postenlightenment world of science.[32] Latour argues that beings of fiction are realized primarily by the transformations they cause in others.[33] They become real when they impose themselves on authors to write their stories, and captivate audiences to attend to their biographies. Fictional entities are further realized when they draw those they encounter into their audiences so that they become interpreters, commentators, and actors who embody them outside of the media within which they are first encountered. For example, the speculative versions of ourselves whom we create to make plans are realized when they compel us to change our behavior, modifying our routines to conform to them. The fictional versions of our ancestors become real when their statements and behavior succeed in becoming an inheritance that we seek to preserve and emulate. These examples illustrate that beings of fiction only exist as long as they and the stories that they are involved in are reprised by others. They depend upon being verified by the transformations that they bring about in other actors. So, when they are not being reproduced, not being commented upon, not being

28 Latour introduces the modes of existence for which his project is named (*Inquiry*, 177–78).

29 Latour extensively elucidates fiction as an ontology, and describes the ways in which beings can exist as fictional entities (*Inquiry*, 233–57).

30 On this understanding of the mode of fiction see the elaborate argument of Patrice Manglier, "Art as Fiction: Can Latour's Ontology of Art Be Ratified by Art Lovers?" *New Literary History* 47 (2016): 419–38, https://doi.org/10.1353/nlh.2016.0021.

31 Latour gives the example of the entities two friends speak of when they make plans in the future. The friends speak of themselves, but not as they are, rather as they envision them. These, too, are fictional beings in Latour's thesis (*Inquiry*, 390–92).

32 Rita Felski rightly notes that Latour understands this belief in perfect reproduction of knowledge through observation to be a modernist construction. Felski, "Comparison and Translation: A Perspective from Actor-network Theory," *Comparative Literature Studies* 53 (2016): 747–65, esp. 752, 762, https://doi.org/10.5325/complitstudies.53.4.0747. Though, it is not without its forerunners. Latour introduces the primacy of empiricism, which he terms *double click*, as a pathology of modernism against which actors must learn to protect themselves (*Inquiry*, 93–95).

33 Latour describes how the layers of repeated transformation produced by fictions testify to their existence (*Inquiry*, 245–47).

speculated about, there is no evidence of their existence.[34] They have not succeeded in becoming real because they have not affected others.

When Latour uses this language of agency for fictional entities, he affirms their reality as actors. They enlist those they encounter in their own reproduction.[35] They set in motion mouths that speak, hands that write, and bodies that contort, all in an effort to realize the beings of fiction anew in various media. In this way, beings of fiction create networks that verify their own existence.[36] These fictional entities are not only ink, or paint, or paper, or stone, or the expression of air from an instrument. They depend on that ink to be shaped into words, those words into sentences, those sentences into narratives. They need that paint to be spread, that paper to be inscribed, that stone chiseled, and that expression of air to become a note. It is this disturbance of media that signals that the fictional being has dispatched the actor on a mission to give it shape. This is no less true when we create fictional versions of ourselves in the future. We create them, perhaps as a way to set goals, but then they turn around and put us to work in order to reprise them at some future time. They command us to change our behavior so that we can meet our friend for coffee, or so we can buy some groceries, or go for a walk. They insist on us going to the gym to keep our New Year's resolution. The being of fiction for Latour is thus both an entity that is created and one that has the capacity to create by drawing actors in as observers, and then sending them out again to maintain the existence of the fictional entity elsewhere.[37]

It is in this sense of fiction that I am examining the named addressees in these ancient texts and the situations of which they are a part. These figures, whether they have historical counterparts or not, are fictions in the Latourian sense. They are characters (re-)created in the literary spaces in which they appear. These addressees are not sustained by their ability to be proven to have received the writings addressed to them. They are not even realized by showing that they ever actually lived. Rather, entities like Theophilus, Philocrates, Epaphroditus, and Diognetus can be shown to exist because of the transformations they cause in their environments. They maintain their presence because they cause further disturbances in media. Their presence transforms the narrator from a near-anonymous disembodied figure to an embodied correspondent with a biography all their own. They transform the body of the text from a general treatise, or biography, or historical work into a personally addressed message between correspondents. And, perhaps most importantly these figures transform the reader, so that they no longer enjoy the freedom of anonymity, but are identified and described with various qualities and values. Because the addressee is named and directly addressed, readers are compelled through their act of reading

34 Rita Felski notes as an example, "that Emma Bovary was made by Gustave Flaubert and a subsequent stream of critics, translators, commentators, filmmakers, and audiences does not decrease or diminish her reality, but makes it possible." Felski, "Latour and Literary Studies," *PMLA* 130 (2015): 737–42, esp. 739–40, https://doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2015.130.3.737.

35 Latour, *Inquiry*, 247.

36 Latour, *Inquiry*, 248–49. See also Felski, "Latour and Literary Studies," 740.

37 William Warner notes how fictions are both created and have the capacity to create by sending actors toward and away from media. Warner, "Reality and the Novel: Latour and the Uses of Fiction," *Eighteenth Century* 57 (2016): 267–79, esp. 273–74, https://doi.org/10.1353/ecy.2016.0017.

to inhabit this role. As they actively read the texts, there is no choice but to become characters within the texts, even if their roles are minimal. They must act, at least for the moment of reading, as if they were Theophilus, Philocrates, Epaphroditus, or Diognetus. Because of the compulsion to take on the role of addressee, the description of each of these characters is thereby transformed into a script for the reader to follow while they realize the character in the course of this interaction. The script governs the way in which the reader is to interact with the narrator, the text, and ultimately how they are to understand themself. These beings of fiction thus escape the medium in which they are introduced, and enter into the reader. When such a transformation occurs, they succeed in sustaining themselves yet again.

## 3. Named Addressees as Beings of Fiction

Let us now turn our attention to the specifics of the named addressee, using Philocrates and the Letter of Aristeas as an example. The Letter of Aristeas begins with a first person address from an, as of yet, unnamed narrator. Right from the start, this narrator identifies their addressee with a vocative, "O Philocrates" (§1) This address is quickly followed up with three appearances of pronouns and verb forms in the second person singular. The first of these, an accusative pronoun, describes Philocrates by bringing up his past actions. The narrator states that "for *you* place a high value … on hearing about the details and purpose of our deputation" (διὰ τὸ σὲ περὶ πολλοῦ πεποιῆσθαι … συνακοῦσαι περὶ ὧν ἀπεστάλημεν καὶ διὰ τί, §1, emphasis added). The second is another pronoun, this time a dative, that identifies Philocrates as the intended audience of the account the narrator has drawn up. Aristeas plainly states, "I have attempted to expound it clearly *for you*" (πεπείραμαι σαφῶς ἐκθέσθαι σοι, §1, emphasis added). The third appearance of the second person is as a verb form, and describes the reason for which Aristeas is writing the account: "having realized the disposition *you have* to love learning" (κατειληφὼς ἣν ἔχεις φιλομαθῆ διάθεσιν, §1, emphasis added).

The importance of the first person voice and second person address in an instructional writing should not be lost. In her article, "Woman and the Discourse of Patriarchal Wisdom," Carol Newsom has pointed out how the use of the first person pronoun by the speaker and the second person pronoun for the addressee sets up a "minimal fiction" that establishes the pedagogical setting of Prov 1–9.[38] Although, in her case, the fictional setting is that of a commanding patriarch addressing his silent and obedient son, the fiction and the relationship that it establishes can be compared. The first person speaker in both cases bears knowledge that the second person addressee desires or needs. The second person addressee is subjected to this knowledge and is compelled to receive it in a certain mode. There is no neutral relationship between narrator/speaker and addressee in either case. Their attitudes

38 Newsom, "Woman and the Discourse of Patriarchal Wisdom," in *Reading Bibles, Writing Bodies: Identity and the Book*, ed. Timothy Beal and David Gunn (London: Routledge, 1997), 116–31, esp. 116.

toward each other, and by extension, toward the shared knowledge are shaped by the setting of the fiction. When the reader comes to this fictional setting, they have little choice in their position in the story. They have been called upon by the "you" and compelled to conform to the expectations placed on the "you."[39] There is no way they might turn to the "I," both because they have not uttered it, and because they lack the control over the sharing of knowledge necessary to assume that role. Indeed, the very account has been shaped "for you," so the only choice is to conform as best one is able.

The patriarchal setting of Prov 1–9 provides an institutional frame that itself instructs readers-cum-addressees in how to approach the text. Fathers teach. Sons listen, at least according to ancient ideals.[40] In taking up the role of the "you" in such a script, the reader knows their place. Philocrates, on the other hand, benefits from no such institutional frame. Even as the reader is supposed to inhabit the role of Philocrates, it is not immediately apparent from his name alone what that role is.[41] However, the fiction in the Letter of Aristeas is not quite as minimal as that of Prov 1–9. Philocrates is called a brother by Aristeas (§§7, 120), both "in character" (κατὰ … τὸν τρόπον, §7), and "according to descent" (κατὰ τὸ συγγενές, §7). While there is not a specific pedagogical relationship implied concerning brothers in ancient Judaism, this description does demand a certain sustained closeness and sympathy between Philocrates and the narrator.[42] This impression is supported by several other descriptions in this direct address: "as you constantly mention" (παρ᾽ ἕκαστα ὑπομιμνήσκων, §1), "previously I transmitted to you" (καὶ πρότερον δὲ διεπεμψάμην σοι, §6), and "you are inclined toward intense attention to matters that are capable of benefitting the mind, and in these you spend much time."[43] All of these imply that Aristeas and the addressee have a past and that the Aristeas has intimate knowledge of them.[44]

With this close relationship to Aristeas established, the reader is more thoroughly informed of their own subjectivity in the text and is better able to reprise the role of Philocrates in the act of reading. They are to read with the type of charity they might extend to a longtime friend, relation, or correspondent. But, especially in this use of a named addressee, the character is even more exhaustively outlined. Here, the effect

39 Newsom, "Woman," 117.

40 Newsom, "Woman," 117–18. On this point, see also O. Larry Yarbrough, "Parents and Children in the Jewish Family of Antiquity," in *The Jewish Family in Antiquity*, ed. Shaye J. D. Cohen, BJS 289 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), 39–59, esp. 49–50, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvzgb9cp.6; and Benjamin G. Wright III, "From Generation to Generation: The Sage as Father in Early Jewish Literature," in *Biblical Traditions in Transmission: Essays in Honour of Michael Knibb*, ed. Charlotte Hempel and Judith Lieu, JSJSup 111 (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 309–32, esp. 310, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789047405979_018.

41 Wright, *Letter of Aristeas*, 105; Dries De Crom, "The Letter of Aristeas and the Authority of the Septuagint," *JSP* 17 (2008): 141–60, esp. 157, https://doi.org/10.1177/0951820707087066.

42 Wright, *Letter of Aristeas*, 104.

43 νένευκας γὰρ πρὸς περιεργίαν τῶν δυναμένων ὠφελεῖν διάνοιαν, καὶ ἐν τούτοις τὸν πλείονα χρόνον διατελεῖς, §322.

44 Wright, *Letter of Aristeas*, 101.

is that the reader's own comportment toward the text is firmly set in place. As already noted, Philocrates has requested this account, perhaps even a little too eagerly (§§1, 7, 300). In order to fulfill their role, the reader should therefore take in the account as one who has longed for it, and is finally receiving a long-awaited report. In addition, the various descriptions of Philocrates's interests and qualities both guide readers to appreciate the narrative, and what to appreciate about it. These descriptions instruct readers that they are supposed to have a disposition to love learning (§§1, 7, 171, 300), which involves continually increasing their learning and making progress in knowledge (§2). Moreover, readers are to have "a predilection toward matters most holy and toward the disposition of those people who conduct themselves according to the holy legislation," so that they "will listen gladly," and desire "to hear whatever exists for the restoration of the soul."[45] These descriptions of Philocrates place the reader in the role of attentive student, while also directing their attention toward the theme of piety, which has been recognized by others as a prominent subject throughout the Letter of Aristeas.[46]

The direct address, then, establishes who the addressee is, how they relate to the narrative voice, their attitude toward the work, and even touches on the values with which they approach education and the acquisition of knowledge. The reader, forced into the role of addressee through their very engagement with the work, participates in this fictional exchange of knowledge by observing Philocrates and mimicking him, at least within the drama of the story. Internal attitude of the reader aside, they are compelled by this script into complying with their transformation into Philocrates.

## 4. Conclusion: Pedagogical Values and the Direct Addressee

The argument sustained throughout this chapter has been that named addressees in ancient Jewish and Christian writings are beings of fiction, who, even as they may be literary creations, exert real force over readers. Through the use of second person address these figures become the characters with whom readers must identify, and whom the readers embody. They transform the readers into the addressee, and thereby realize themselves. To the extent that the named addressees are fleshed out with descriptions of their biography, skills, and values, they instruct the reader in both their approach to the work, and in the qualities that make an eager student. In this sense, they are vital actors in the ancient pedagogical setting. Through mimesis, readers are guided in clearing the hurdle between their own subjective position and that of a fully realized and capable student. As Philocrates, they can take on the attributes and ideals that make for a good student of the narrator.[47]

45 σε μᾶλλον ἔχοντα πρόσκλισιν πρὸς τὴν σεμνότητα καὶ τὴν τῶν ἀνθρώπων διάθεσιν τῶν κατὰ τὴν σεμνὴν νομοθεσίαν διεξαγόντων, §5; cf. §171. ἀσμένως σε ἀκούσεσθαι, §5. καὶ βουλόμενον συνακούειν ὅσα πρὸς ἐπισκευὴν ψυχῆς ὑπάρχει, §§5, 322.

46 Wright, *Letter of Aristeas*, 104; De Crom, "Letter of Aristeas," 157.

47 This is similar to how Wright envisions the transition from student to sage taking place in Second Temple Jewish texts employing direct address ("From Generation to Generation," 331–32).

If one reflects on how this insight might be brought into contact with a twenty-first century educational milieu, several important conclusions emerge. First, the focus on formation, which is central in ancient pedagogy, is often lacking in contemporary education. There is far more concentration on knowledge and skills than on the person who is formed by receiving an education. This likely is owed to how modernity imagines knowledge as objective and universally transferable. Yet, as postmodernity has protested over the last several decades, objective and universal knowledge without subjects is not in evidence, and can often lead to misanthropic results. Therefore, in line with postmodernity's reemphasis of the subject in the creation of knowledge, the ancient pedagogical desire to form the subject may provide a useful and lively conversation partner.

Second, the specific emphasis on paradigmatic figures in the formation of the subject in ancient education is something that, while used in informal educational settings in modernity (classrooms, familial education, social media) rarely finds its way into formal educational settings like print media. Textbooks and research monographs, directed as they are to mass audiences, actively avoid the specificity of a given figure or their behavior as a model for how to acquire or apply knowledge. Rather, they attempt to share the knowledge in as objective and universal a way as possible. If one compares that to the ancient pedagogical model examined here, readers and students lose an exemplar for what the sum of all their newly acquired knowledge looks like. The story of a paradigmatic figure transfers knowledge from a basket of contents into a biography where students and readers can observe how and under what circumstances the knowledge that they acquire is applied.

Third and finally, the use of direct address as a means to create a paradigm, and to compel readers and students to act like the paradigm through the act of reading, which is central to the texts under examination here, is all but lost in contemporary research literature. Considering its popularity in ancient literature, and in concert with the renewed emphasis on the subject, it may well be time to reapply this tool. If contemporary educators wish to engage in the formation of their students, they would do well to consider the methods that were used in the past.

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