

## REWRITING THE SACRED TEXT



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REWRITING THE SACRED TEXT

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Kristin De Troyer

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Dedicated to Professor Robert Hanhart  
and the staff and students of the *Septuaginta Unternehmen* in Göttingen



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## Foreword

Halfway through my year-long sabbatical in 2002–2003, I took off from Göttingen and returned to Claremont, California, for a ten-week period. As I was telling my colleagues Marvin Sweeney and Tammi Schneider all about “my Joshua papyrus,” Marvin asked the following question: “Would it be possible for you to write an easy book in which you explain what the importance of Greek biblical texts for the study of the Hebrew Bible is?” Tammi reminded me of my perspective taken in the article “Fifty Years of Qumran Research: A Different Approach,” published in *Review of Religious Studies* 28 (2002/2): 115–122, namely, “What could we have known about the text of the Hebrew Bible if we had studied sources different from the Dead Sea Scrolls more carefully?” Thus, the idea for this book was born. I actually started writing on it as soon as I hit the ground in Göttingen again.

At the end of this project, I would like to thank Marvin Sweeney and Tammi Schneider not only for giving me a good idea and for being such good colleagues, but also for being fine friends. My sincere thanks also go to Sukkil Yoon, Ph.D. student in Claremont and my research assistant, for his precision, devotion, patience, and genuine care. Dean Fitzmier deserves my gratitude for giving me a year-long sabbatical and for providing me with more than my share of research and teaching assistants. Leigh Andersen gave wise advice regarding making this book camera ready—she already knows where I drop the (American standards) ball. Jimmy Adair, the series editor, became my (Lucian) editor, not only improving the English style, but also correcting towards a better text. Moreover, when our son David came earlier than expected, Jimmy helped me dotting the i’s and crossing the t’s in a gazillion ways. Finally, I would like to thank Rex Matthews for taking this book under the SBL wings, for his constant encouragement, his friendship, and finally, but most importantly, for his big heart.

Claremont, June 2003



## Introduction

*Rewriting the Sacred Text* describes an activity undertaken by the faithful since the time that the words that would become Scripture were first written down. Scholars use the term “Rewritten Scripture” to indicate literature that is based on Scripture but not identical with it. This means that the “Sacred Text”—and more precisely, the canonical biblical text—lies at the base of the rewritten text. The deuterocanonical books (or apocryphal books) have also been subject to rewriting. Calling a text rewritten sets up a dichotomy between biblical and non-biblical texts, between the texts which are being rewritten—the source texts—and the rewritten texts themselves—the (new) final product. This is, in my opinion, a false dichotomy, for the biblical text is often nothing other than a rewritten text itself.

The biblical text is the result of a continuous process of redactional activity. Literature produced by one person, group, or school was reread and rewritten by later readers and writers. Take for instance the Book of Isaiah.<sup>1</sup> It is common knowledge that the “extensive redactional activity . . . expanded the earliest forms of the oracles of Isaiah ben Amoz into a sixty-six-chapter book that contains the work of prophetic writers from the preexilic, exilic and postexilic periods, and presents a theological interpretation of some four hundred years of Judean historical experience and expectations for the future.”<sup>2</sup> Viewpoints offered by one person or by a group of people may or may not have been shared by later writers and readers, and thus they were reinterpreted and transmitted anew.<sup>3</sup> Marvin Sweeney, for instance, states that the Josianic edition of the book of Isaiah “represents a combination of materials that stem from the eighth-century prophet Isaiah ben Amoz and materials that were composed specifically

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<sup>1</sup> For this example and section, I rely heavily on the work of my colleague and friend Marvin Sweeney from the Claremont School of Theology and the School of Religion at the Claremont Graduate University.

<sup>2</sup> Marvin Sweeney, *King Josiah of Judah: The Lost Messiah of Israel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 234.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 235.

for the seventh-century edition of the book.”<sup>4</sup> The purpose of the seventh-century material is double. First, it defines the Josianic agenda, and secondly, it shapes the material handed down in such a way that it can be read in the historical context of Josiah and its hermeneutical perspective.<sup>5</sup>

The Deuteronomistic History (DtrH) offers another example of extensive redactional rewriting of a sacred text. The present form of the Deuteronomistic History stems from the exilic period. It explains the phenomenon of the exile as a reaction of God to the sin of King Manasseh. The sins have prompted God to destroy Jerusalem and Judah.<sup>6</sup> An earlier stage of the DtrH was produced during King Josiah’s time, portraying the latter as the ideal king.<sup>7</sup> An even earlier form came into being during Hezekiah’s reign. This layer put the House of David forward as the righteous rulers of Israel—maybe even suggesting that a Davidic king should rule the North.<sup>8</sup> Finally, Sweeney points to the Book of Deuteronomy as complementing the goals and outlook of the DtrH.<sup>9</sup>

The analyses of the book of Isaiah and the literary corpus called DtrH demonstrate that the redactional processes underlying the development of the biblical texts are nothing else but a rereading and rewriting of sacred texts.

The process of rereading and rewriting further continues in literature that is based on biblical texts. In his chapter entitled “The Bible Rewritten and Expanded,” George W. E. Nickelsburg deals with literature that is “closely related to the biblical texts, expanding and paraphrasing them and implicitly commenting on them.”<sup>10</sup> Nickelsburg deals with different sorts of rewritten and expanded biblical texts, all of which retell in one way or another the events of biblical history.<sup>11</sup> Nickelsburg also sketches the development of the different forms of retold stories, their literary genres, and their different functions. Works such as *Jubilees* and the *Genesis Apocryphon* are running paraphrases of extensive portions of the Pentateuch, whereas the story preserved in *1 Enoch* 6–11 recounts a group of episodes from a brief section of the Bible, namely the Enochic and Noachic traditions.<sup>12</sup> The book of *Biblical Antiquities* is a late paraphrase covering much of the material from Genesis to Samuel.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 236.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 236.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 315.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 315.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 316.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 316.

<sup>10</sup> George W. E. Nickelsburg, “The Bible Rewritten and Expanded,” in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period: Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus* (ed. Michael E. Stone; *Compendia Rerum Iudicarum ad Novum Testamentum*, 2: The Literature of the Jewish People in the Period of the Second Temple Period and the Talmud; Assen/Philadelphia: Van Gorcum/Fortress Press, 1984), 89.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

Nickelsburg points to expansions, which are so typical of many paraphrases. One sort of expansion, the inserting of new material into old texts, he deals with separately—I will come back to this later.<sup>14</sup> In his treatment of *Jubilees*, Nickelsburg notes that the author often reproduces the biblical text verbatim, and that he/she<sup>15</sup> also deletes whatever does not seem useful. Usually, however, the author recasts the narrative or makes additions to it in line with his/her own interest or purpose.<sup>16</sup> Most of the additions seem to be halakhic in nature; the non-halakhic additions are revisions, introduced in order to make a theological point, or exhortations.<sup>17</sup> According to Nickelsburg, all this redactional activity took place in the second century B.C.E.<sup>18</sup>

Nickelsburg labels the *Genesis Apocryphon* a compilation of patriarchal narratives.<sup>19</sup> The author of the book of *Biblical Antiquities* treats the sacred text in various ways. The author summarizes briefly; omits completely; paraphrases; quotes verbatim; revises radically; and interpolates the text with prayers, speeches, or narrative expansions—even inserting whole new stories.<sup>20</sup> This book and its redactional activity Nickelsburg dates to just before or after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 C.E.<sup>21</sup> In his treatment of the relationship between the *Life of Adam and Eve* on the one hand and the *Apocalypse of Moses* on the other, Nickelsburg speaks of a “recensional process.” He says that the *Apocalypse of Moses* is a more original form of the work, whereas the *Life of Adam and Eve* is an expansion of the earlier work.<sup>22</sup> He then states that the Slavonic and Armenian versions are related and that they are “intermediate steps in the recensional process.”<sup>23</sup> The concept of recensional activity is also noted by Eugene Ulrich in his treatment of the various forms of one and the same biblical passage in Qumran.<sup>24</sup>

After having dealt with the works “that interpret biblical stories by retelling and paraphrasing them, often adding new material,”<sup>25</sup> Nickelsburg discusses supplements to biblical books. He defines supplements as “blocks of text interpolated into, or added to the form of the biblical books that is known to us

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<sup>14</sup> Nickelsburg, 130ff.

<sup>15</sup> It has been my decision to label the authors as he and/or she.

<sup>16</sup> Nickelsburg, 97.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>22</sup> Nickelsburg describes this relationship with more precision: *ibid.*, 116.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> Eugene Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Origins of the Bible* (Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature; Grand Rapids, Michigan/Leiden: Eerdmans/Brill, 1999), especially chapter 3 (“Double Literary Editions of the Biblical Narratives and Reflections on Determining the Form to be Translated”) and chapter 6 (“Multiple Literary Editions: Reflections Toward a Theory of the History of the Biblical Text”).

<sup>25</sup> Nickelsburg, 130.

in the canonical Hebrew Bible.”<sup>26</sup> He classifies 1 Esdras, Esther, Jeremiah, and Daniel, as well as “the Song of David” as preserved in the Hebrew Qumran Psalter (11QPs<sup>d</sup>), as supplements. In the context of his discussion of supplements, Nickelsburg makes an important remark: “In this section there is a problem of classification.”<sup>27</sup> He clarifies that most of these supplements could have been dealt with in other parts of the volume to which he contributed. The additions to Daniel, for example, could have been treated under “Psalms, Hymns, and Prayers.”<sup>28</sup> I think that a different sort of classification problem has arisen. All the supplements are dealt with under the heading “The Bible Rewritten and Expanded.” Could some of these supplements, however, not be seen simply as the further literary development of the biblical text itself?

In his contribution on historiography, Harold W. Attridge points to yet another problem of classification.<sup>29</sup> 1 Esdras, for instance, is not only an example of historiography but also of “scriptural paraphrases.”<sup>30</sup> My question would be: “Is 1 Esdras biblical historiography or a paraphrase of biblical historiography?” In both cases the new text is an interpretation of a given text; in both cases it is a rewritten sacred text.

Biblical interpretation has regained center stage among scholars with the discoveries of the texts from the Judean Desert. More specifically, “a more sensitive approach” has been developed “to the interpretative function of Jewish literature of the Hellenistic-Roman period.”<sup>31</sup> Devorah Dimant stresses the need not only for research into various modes of biblical interpretation but also into the function of interpretation in biblical elements.<sup>32</sup> She distinguishes between the expository mode of interpretation, such as that found in the Qumran *pesharim*, and the compositional mode, as found especially in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha.<sup>33</sup> “The device of incorporating biblical texts is used extensively in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, and even in the Bible itself.” She continues, “It is a main feature in narrative works sometimes designated ‘rewritten Bible.’”<sup>34</sup> I fully agree with her distinction of the two modes, but I wonder to what extent we can distinguish between, on the one hand, biblical texts and, on the other hand, Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha. Are the latter not

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> This is chapter 13 of the volume; see David Flusser, “Psalms, Hymns, and Prayers,” in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period*, 551–577.

<sup>29</sup> Harold W. Attridge, “Historiography,” in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period*, 157–184.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 157.

<sup>31</sup> Devorah Dimant, “Literary Typologies and Biblical Interpretation in the Hellenistic-Roman Period,” in *Jewish Civilization in the Hellenistic-Roman Period* (ed. S. Talmon; Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1991), 73.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 74–77.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

also biblical?<sup>35</sup> In my opinion, it is precisely the process of rewriting that links biblical and “extra-biblical” writings and makes them similar to each other—if not entirely the same.

The process of rewriting is also visible in translations. Although used and commented upon in Nickelsburg’s contribution,<sup>36</sup> in this introduction I have not yet focused on this sort of text from the perspective of “rewriting the sacred text.” When it comes to (ancient and modern) translations of the biblical text, two extreme positions can be taken: a translation can be literal and faithful to the source text or free and respectful of the target text.<sup>37</sup> That this opposition is a bit false with regard to old translations has been argued by James Barr in his study entitled *The Typologies of Literalism in Ancient Biblical Translations*.<sup>38</sup> Barr states, “Truly ‘free’ translation, in the sense in which this might be understood by the modern literary public, scarcely existed in the world of the LXX, or indeed of much of ancient biblical translation in general.”<sup>39</sup> Barr also rejects the idea that all translations are interpretations.<sup>40</sup> He prefers an investigation into the degree to which a translation might be an interpretation.<sup>41</sup> He then describes the two sorts of interpretation visible in ancient translations: “The first is a sort of basic syntactic/semantic comprehension of the meaning of the text,” whereas the second regards “matters of content, of reference, or of theological exegesis.”<sup>42</sup> It is precisely the second sort of interpretation that I will explore in this book.

The four chapters of this book represent four different ways of discovering the growth of the biblical text in general by studying Greek biblical texts in particular. In the first chapter, subtitled “On the Help of God in the Old Greek of Esther,” I focus on the Hebrew and the Old Greek texts of the Book of Esther and demonstrate how the Greek biblical story is a rewritten Hebrew biblical

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<sup>35</sup> I acknowledge that the terms refer to collections of texts but would prefer to see the division dismissed with regard to the process of redactional rewriting of texts.

<sup>36</sup> After all, most of the supplements and the interpretative texts mentioned appear in Greek texts that could be considered translations from a Semitic original.

<sup>37</sup> See Kristin De Troyer, “Septuagint and Gender Studies: The Very Beginning of a Promising Liaison,” in *A Feminist Companion to Reading the Bible: Approaches, Methods and Strategies* (ed. A. Brenner and C. Fontaine; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 326–343.

<sup>38</sup> James Barr, *The Typology of Literalism in Ancient Biblical Translations* (Mitteilungen des Septuaginta-Unternehmens 15; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979).

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 17. Barr has developed his ideas about the basic syntactic and semantic comprehension of the meaning of the text in his classic *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961; repr., London/Philadelphia: SCM Press/Trinity Press International, 1991). For examples of “free rewriting,” see also *idem*, *Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968; repr., with additions and corrections, Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1987), 255–259.

story. In the second chapter, subtitled “The Final Touches to an Old Joshua,” I study the Hebrew and Greek texts of the book of Joshua and distill the pre-Masoretic text from below one of the Old Greek manuscripts of the Schøyen Collection. In the third chapter, subtitled “The Final Chapter of the Alpha-Text of Esther,” I work with the Old Greek and the second Greek text of Esther—also called Alpha-Text (AT)—in order to demonstrate how the Greek Bible was itself rewritten. In the fourth chapter, subtitled “A Closer Look at the Temple Builder in 1 Esdras,” I propose to search for the lost Hebrew/Aramaic text underlying 1 Esdras, which is an alternative rewritten biblical text.

In each of the chapters of this book, I will present the data according to the following four-fold outline. First, I will print the texts under discussion in Hebrew and Greek, and I will offer an English translation. Then I will briefly state my thesis; I have developed four different theses, each of which is developed in one chapter. Second, I will list and discuss Witnesses and Opinions about the text under discussion. Third, I will perform an Analysis of the texts, including text-critical and structural examinations. Finally, I will summarize the results of the chapter in a Conclusion. I will elaborate on the content of section two in the paragraphs below.

In the section on “Witnesses and Opinions,” I first offer a survey of witnesses. The term “witness” can be used in two ways. First, the term can refer to hypothetical Hebrew texts that lie behind the ancient translations. The translations offer an “old” perspective on the Hebrew biblical text, in most cases a text similar to or identical with the Masoretic Text (MT), the Hebrew biblical text as printed in most Hebrew Bibles. Very often, the old translations give clues to understanding the Hebrew text. In these cases, the old translations can be helpful not only in the interpretation of the Hebrew text but also in the reconstruction of difficult passages. Current research on the texts discovered in the Judean Desert and elsewhere, however, has called into question the standard belief that the old translations can always be used for the reconstruction and interpretation of the Hebrew biblical text. Some paleo-Hebrew, square Hebrew, and Greek texts from the Judean Desert, as well as some Greek manuscripts from other places, do not reflect the traditional Hebrew biblical text. They presuppose, rather, a Hebrew text that is a bit older than, and sometimes different from, the Masoretic text. These texts are commonly indicated with the term “proto-Masoretic texts.” The proto-Masoretic text is the consonantal Masoretic text, but without the latter’s characteristics, namely the accents and the vocalization. The term “pre-Masoretic text” is used to refer to the stage before the proto-Masoretic text. The pre-Masoretic text differs from the proto-Masoretic text by the absence of words, concepts, phrases, or verses distinctive of the (proto-)Masoretic text (see Chapter II). Other texts cannot be labeled “pre-” or “proto-”Masoretic texts and are thus simply alternative texts. The Greek texts among the pre-Masoretic and alternative biblical texts can of course no longer be called “old translations from the Hebrew biblical text,” for it is no longer clear from precisely which biblical text they are translated. Moreover, it is absolutely clear that the “old translation,” and more precisely, the Septuagint



(LXX)<sup>43</sup> is not a translation of the Masoretic Bible, but of a pre-Masoretic Bible that in most of its text, but not all, is identical with the Masoretic biblical text. Whenever I use the term “old translation” in this book, I refer to the standard old translations, such as the Old Greek (often used as a synonym of the Septuagint), the Old Latin, the (new) Latin (the Vulgate), the Syriac translation (the Peshitta), the Aramaic translations (the Targumim), etc. I no longer presume, however, that these “old translations” were based on the Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible.

The term “witnesses” can also refer to actual existing witnesses, such as the Oxyrhynchus Papyrus of Job; the Great Isaiah Scroll of the Judean Desert; the “Leningrad” Codex of the entire Hebrew Bible (also known as Firkovitch B.19 A); the Chester Beatty papyrus called  $\mathfrak{P}^{967}$  with an Old Greek text of Ezekiel, Daniel, and Esther; the Codex Monacensis 6225 with, among other things, an important Old Latin Exodus; etc. Most of these manuscripts are splendid witnesses of the old translations and the old texts. The manuscripts of the Judean Desert, for instance, have helped scholars to establish the Hebrew biblical texts that were current from the second century B.C.E. to the first century C.E., thus bringing modern readers more than ten centuries closer to the time of composition (comparing the eleventh century Codex Leningradensis with the older witnesses of Qumran). The Chester Beatty Papyri offer a glimpse of the Old Greek text before Origen revised it. Codex Monacensis is crucial for the reconstruction of the Old Latin.

Under the heading “Opinions,” I will summarize the scholarly discussion and focus on the most recent representatives of the different opinions offered. It is not my intention to give an exhaustive historical survey of all opinions regarding the issue at stake. If available and appropriate, I will refer in footnotes to larger surveys or summaries.

It was my intention to write this book in such a way that many people could consult or read it. I could not refrain entirely from using technical terms, but in those cases where I have felt it necessary to use a technical term, I have done my utmost to explain it. In this book I hope to demonstrate that biblical exegesis can no longer be done without studying the other biblical texts, especially the Greek ones, and that books of an exegetical nature which only vaguely refer to the other texts are incomplete.

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<sup>43</sup> In Septuagint scholarship a distinction is made between the Old Greek (OG) text, which is the “first” Greek translation made of a given Hebrew text, and the collection of Greek biblical texts as preserved in the Greek Bible: the Septuagint (LXX).



# Chapter I

## A Rewritten Hebrew Biblical Text: On the Help of God in the Old Greek of Esther

### A. Texts and Thesis

#### 1. Texts MT and LXX Esther 4:13–14<sup>1</sup>

וַיֹּאמֶר מֶרְדֳּכָי לְחָשִׁיב	καὶ εἶπεν Μαρδοχαῖος πρὸς Ἀχραθαῖον Πορεύθητι καὶ εἰπὸν αὐτῇ
אֶל-אַסְתֵּר	Εσθηρ,
אֶל-תְּדַמִּי בִנְפֹשֶׁךְ לְהַמְלִיךְ בֵּית-הַמֶּלֶךְ מִכָּל-הַיְּהוּדִים	μὴ εἴπῃς σεαυτῇ ὅτι σωθήσῃ μόνῃ ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ παρὰ πάντας τοὺς Ἰουδαίους
כִּי אֶסְתַּחֲרֶשׁ תַּחֲרִישִׁי בַּעֲתֵּי- הַזֹּאת	ὥς ὅτι ἐὰν παρακούσῃς ἐν τούτῳ τῷ καιρῷ
רוּחַ וְהִצֵּלָה יַעֲמֹד לַיהוּדִים	ἄλλοθεν

This chapter is based on a lecture that was delivered at the 1998 meeting of the British Society of Old Testament Studies in Nottingham. Another version of this lecture was presented at the Claremont School of Theology, also in 1998.

<sup>1</sup> Although I focus on verse 14, I also include the text of verse 13, for the sake of giving a more complete picture of the important sentence uttered by Mordecai. For the Hebrew text, I have used F. Maass, ed., *Megilloth: Librum Esther* (Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia 13; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1977); for the Greek text, see Robert Hanhart, ed., *Esther* (2d ed.; Septuaginta, Vetus Testamentum Graecum, vol. 8/3; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983).

ממקם אחר	βοήθεια καὶ σκέπη ἔσται τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις
ואת ובית־אביך תאבדו	οὐ δὲ καὶ ὁ οἶκος τοῦ πατρός σου ἀπολεισθε
ומי יודע אס־לעת כזאת	καὶ τίς οἶδεν εἰ εἰς τὸν καιρὸν τοῦτον
הגעת למלכות	ἐβασίλευσας

*NRSV (English translation of the Hebrew text) 4:13–14:*

**13.** Mordecai told them (the intermediaries) to reply to Esther, “Do not think that in the king’s palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. **14.** For if you keep silence at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another quarter, but you and your father’s family will perish. Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this.”

*Adapted from the NRSV (English translation of the Greek LXX text of Esther) 4:13–14:*

**13.** Mordecai told Achrathaio: “go back and say to her, ‘Esther, do not say to yourself that you alone among all the Jews will escape alive. **14.** For if you keep quiet at such a time as this, help and protection will come to the Jews from another quarter, but you and your father’s family will perish, and who knows that you have become queen for (precisely) this time.’”

## 2. Thesis

The words “from another place” are pivotal to the interpretation of the Hebrew book of Esther. The question is whether or not these words refer to God. If the expression “from another place” indeed refers to God, then God is present in the Hebrew story of Esther.<sup>2</sup> Otherwise, the book of Esther, in which the name of God is nowhere mentioned, might be labeled an “a-theistic” biblical

<sup>2</sup> See Keil, Seeligman, and Moore for a religious interpretation: C. F. Keil, *Biblischer Commentar über die Nachexilischen Geschichtsbücher: Chronik, Esra, Nehemiah und Esther* (Biblischer Commentar über das Alte Testament; Leipzig: Dorffling und Franke, 1970); Isac Leo Seeligmann, “Menschliches Heldentum und göttliche Hilfe,” *ThZ* 19 (1963): 385–411; Carey A. Moore, *Esther* (Anchor Bible 7B; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1971).

book.<sup>3</sup> In the Old Greek text of Esther, on the other hand, “God” is explicitly mentioned. I propose that the Greek translator of the Hebrew book of Esther rewrote the Esther story in such a way that God was made part of it.<sup>4</sup> In the Greek, rewritten Hebrew Bible, God plays a prominent role.

## B. Witnesses and Opinions

### 1. Witnesses

Several witnesses offer a text that is very close to the Hebrew text. The Syriac translation,<sup>5</sup> the Vulgate<sup>6</sup> and the Old Latin text<sup>7</sup> all seem to be translated from a text like the current Hebrew text. The Syriac text of the book of Esther translates the Hebrew as follows: “If you (Esther) remain silent at this time, relief and salvation will occur for Judah from somewhere else.” The “Vulgate of the Eastern Church” thus closely follows the Hebrew text; it does not mention God in verse 14. Moreover, in 6:13, another important verse where God is absent from the MT but present in the LXX, the Syriac text again represents the non-religious interpretation of the Hebrew text. The Vulgate, which is the Latin text as produced by Jerome, translates as follows: *Si enim nunc silueris per aliam occassionem liberabuntur Judaei; et tu, et domus patris tui, peribitis. Et*

<sup>3</sup> See Day and Fox for a non-religious interpretation: Linda Day, *Three Faces of a Queen: Characterization in the Books of Esther* (JSOT SS 186; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 56; Michael V. Fox, *Character and Ideology in the Book of Esther* (Studies on the Personalities of the Old Testament 6; Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1991; repr., Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 63.

<sup>4</sup> See also Kristin De Troyer, “‘And God was created . . .’: On Translating Hebrew into Greek,” in *The Bible through Metaphor and Translation: A Cognitive Semantic Perspective* (ed. Kurt Feyaerts; Religions and Discourse, 15; Edinburgh: Lang, 2003), 205-218.

<sup>5</sup> S. Lee, *Vetus Testamentum syriace* (London, 1823); B. Walton, *Biblia Polyglotta* (London: Imprimebat Thomas Roycroft, 1657), with thanks to Etienne D’Hondt, Louvain, who always allowed me to work in his *preciosa*.

<sup>6</sup> Bonifatius Fischer, Robert Weber, and Roger Gryson, ed., *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam versionem*, 2d ed. (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1975).

<sup>7</sup> Petrus Sabatier, *Bibliorum sacrorum latinae versiones antiquae seu Vetus Italica et caeterae quaecumque in codicibus Mss et antiquorum libris reperiri potuerunt: quae cum Vulgata Latina et cum textu graeco comparantur*, vol. 1 (Reims: Apud Reginaldus Florentain, 1743; repr., Turnhout: Brepols, 1991). See also Jean-Claude Haelewyck, “La version latine du livre d’Esther dans le ‘Monacensis’ 6239,” *Revue Bénédictine* 101 (1991): 7-27; 103 (1993): 289-306; *idem*, “La version latine du livre d’Esther dans la première Bible d’Alcalá: avec un appendice sur les citations patristiques vieilles latines,” in *Lectures et relectures de la Bible* (FS. P.-M. Bogaert; ed. J.-M. Auwers and A. Wénin; BETL 144; Leuven: Leuven University Press/Peeters, 1999), 165-193.

*quis novit, utrum idcirco ad regnum veneris, ut in tali temporis parareris.* Similarly, the Vulgate does not mention God in 6:13.

The two Targumim (the Aramaic translations of the book),<sup>8</sup> the second Greek text of the Book of Esther (commonly called the Alpha-Text [AT]),<sup>9</sup> and Josephus (the Jewish storyteller)<sup>10</sup> do, however, have a religious interpretation of verse 14.<sup>11</sup> The Alpha-text, for instance, bluntly states: “but God is for them a helper and a savior.”<sup>12</sup>

It is not only important to have an idea about the old translations, it is also important to look at individual manuscript witnesses, for example, of the Old Greek text. The Old Greek text of  $\mathfrak{P}^{967}$  offers a different reading in verse 13.

<sup>8</sup> Paul de Lagarde, *Hagiographa Chaldaica* (Osnabrück, 1967; Reprographical reprint; Leipzig, 1873); Bernard Grossfeld, *The Two Targums of Esther: Translated with Apparatus and Notes* (The Aramaic Bible 18; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991). Alexander Sperber, *The Hagiographa: Transition from Translation to Midrash* (The Bible in Aramaic IV A; Leiden, 1968). For the discussion on the relationship between the first and the third Targum, cf. Rimon Kasher and Michael L. Klein, “New Fragments of Targum to Esther from the Cairo Genizah,” *HUCA* 61 (1990): 89–124; Th. Legrand, *Les Targums d’Esther: Essai de Comparaison des Targums I et III du livre d’Esther*.

<sup>9</sup> See Hanhart, *Esther: Septuaginta* (Vetus Testamentum graecum auctoritate academiae scientiarum gottingensis editum, Vol. VIII/3; 2nd ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983).

<sup>10</sup> Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*: Books IX–XI (ed. R. Marcus; Loeb Classical Library; London-Cambridge, MA, 1958). Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*: Books XVIII–XX (ed. Louis H. Feldman; Loeb Classical Library; Cambridge, MA; London, 1969).

<sup>11</sup> The Old Latin text, which is the Latin text that predates Jerome’s undertaking, reads in 4:14: *si igitur non praemiseris in hoc tempore aliunde auxilium et defensor Judaeis erit.* Sabatier, the editor of the 1743 edition of the Old and New Latin Bible, quotes the text of Codex Corbeiensis, which is manuscript 130 in the list of Gryson, and manuscript Clm 6239 in the München Bayerische Staatsbibliothek. Cf. Jean-Claude Haelewyck, “La version latine du livre d’Esther dans le Monacensis 6239,” *Revue Bénédictine* 101 (1991): 7–27; 103 (1993): 289–306. Gryson comments: “130 überliefert eine Rezension, die noch nach der griechische Vorlage der Urübersetzung unternommen wurde”; cf. Roger Gryson, *Altlateinische Handschriften: Manuscripts Vieux Latins. Répertoire descriptif. Première partie: Mss 1–275 (d’après un manuscrit inachevé de Hermann Josef Fredeř)* (Vetus Latina: Die Reste der altlateinische Bibel nach Petrus Sabatier neu gesammelt und herausgegeben von der Erzabtei Beuron, 1/2A; Freiburg: Herder, 1999), 227.

In 6:13 the Old Latin has: *et dixerunt ei amici, et uxor ipsius: si de genere Judaeorum est Mardocheus, incipe humiliari in conspectu ejus: non poteris repugnare ei, quia jam propheta est.* It is not clear to me whether the text refers to divine providence, of simply to the Agag-Saul debate. If the translator of the Vetus Latina was comparing the battle between Mordecai and Haman with the battle between Saul and Agag, the Old Latin does not offer a religious text.

<sup>12</sup> In these texts, the other “religious” passage, 6:13, is rendered in religious language. See Kristin De Troyer, “Translation or Interpretation? A Sample from the Books of Esther,” in *X Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies, Oslo 1998* (SCS 51; Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2001), 343–353.

The editor of the LXX Esther wrote this in the apparatus to verse 13: “om πρὸς Αχραθαίος A' 967 71: cf. M.” This short phrase simply states that the Greek words quoted are omitted in Codex A and its relative cursive 311, in P<sup>967</sup>, and in cursive 71; moreover, this omission resembles the Masoretic text. The papyrus, thus, omits the words “(to) Achrathaios.” As Hanhart observes in his note, this omission might be due to the influence of the Hebrew text, which also omits the name Achrathaios (along with the preposition).<sup>13</sup> The Greek text of P<sup>967</sup>, therefore, offers a good perspective on the Old Greek text and maybe also a glimpse at early revisionist activity. Many of the variants in verse 14 pertain to the revision of Origen, who tried to bring the Greek text closer to the Hebrew text. More specifically, the word “another place”<sup>14</sup> is revised in one string of manuscripts that all reflect the revisionist work of Origen.<sup>15</sup> These manuscripts have changed the adverb ἄλλοθεν into ἀλλαχόθεν, both meaning “from another place”; the former is attested in the Greek Bible only in Esther, the latter only in 4 Maccabees 1:7, a fairly late book.<sup>16</sup>

The preceding paragraph needs some extra explanation. Reconstructing the Old Greek text is a rather complex business. There are no manuscripts available with the entire “Old Greek text” of the Bible.<sup>17</sup> I even doubt whether a

<sup>13</sup> In his introduction, however, Hanhart remarks that the possible influence of the Hebrew text does not prove the existence of a pre-Origenic revisionist tradition. Cf. R. Hanhart, *Esther*, 60. In v. 13, the P<sup>967</sup> also omits the words “to herself,” labeled by Hanhart as a typical P<sup>967</sup> “kleinere entbehrliche Satzglieder” (small pieces of sentences). Cf. *ibid.*, 58. For the papyrus, see Frederic G. Kenyon, *The Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri: Descriptions and Texts of the Twelve Manuscripts on Papyrus of the Greek Bible*. Fasc. 7: Ezekiel, Daniel, Esther (London: Walker, 1937 [Text], 1938 [Plates]).

<sup>14</sup> Which is one word in Greek, namely ἄλλοθεν.

<sup>15</sup> The string of manuscripts is labelled *b* and contains cursives: 46-64-98-243-248-381-728-731. The change also occurs in manuscript 311, which is similarly dependent on Origen’s work.

<sup>16</sup> In Trommius’ 1718 concordance, ἀλλαχόθεν is listed, and reference is made to Est 4:13 (and nothing else). This indicates that Trommius used—at least for Esther—hexaplaric sources. Cf. Abraham Trommius, *Concordantiae graecae versionis vulgo dictae LXX interpretum, cujus voces secundum ordinem elementorum sermonis graeci digestae recensentur, contra atque in Opere Kircheriano factum fuerat. Leguntur hic praeterea voces graecae pro hebraicos redditae. Ab antiquis omnibus Veteris Testamenti Interpretibus, quorum nonnisi fragmenta extant, Aquila, Symmacho, Theodotione et aliis quorum maximam partem super in lucem edidit Dominus Bernardus de Montfaucon* (Amsterdam: Sumptibus Societatis, 1718; repr. [in 2 vols.; 25th ed.], Kampen: Voorhoeve, 1992).

<sup>17</sup> Codex Vaticanus, the most famous Greek biblical codex, for instance, does not offer the Old Greek text in some sections of Samuel and Kings (in Greek, the books are entitled “Kingdoms”) and in Judges, but instead has the *kaige* recension of the Greek text. The *kaige* recension is one of the oldest recensions of the Old Greek Bible. Cf. Henry St. John Thackeray, *A Grammar of the Old Testament in Greek According to the Septuagint* (London: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1909; repr., Hildesheim-Zürich-New York: Georg Olms, 1987).

“complete”<sup>18</sup> Greek Bible existed before the second century, before the codex-system was applied to the biblical text.<sup>19</sup> With the arrival of the codex, more books could be combined into one single volume.<sup>20</sup> The oldest codices, however, seem to have been single volumes. The book of Joshua, for instance, was published in one volume.<sup>21</sup>

After the books of the Hebrew Bible—and I deliberately use this term vaguely, for what was the Hebrew Bible in the third, second, and first century B.C.E.?—were first translated into Greek, a round of corrections started. In one round, the Greek was improved; in another round, the text was brought closer to the “original” Hebrew text.<sup>22</sup> One of the famous ‘revisionists’ was Origen. He compared the existing Old Greek translation with the Hebrew biblical text that was available to him in the third century, and with the Greek translations made by Theodotion, Symmachus and Aquila. Origen’s work is called “Hexapla,” for it was organized in six columns.<sup>23</sup> Origen used symbols, such as the asterisk (※)

<sup>18</sup> Meaning: including all the Greek biblical books.

<sup>19</sup> The earliest extant complete Bible in Greek is Codex Vaticanus, dated to the fourth century C.E. A superb facsimile edition has been published by the Vatican under the title: *Codex vaticanus graecus 1209* (Bibliorum sacrorum graecorum; Vatican City: Bibliotheca Apostolicae Vaticanae & Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1999).

<sup>20</sup> The Chester Beatty Papyrus (P<sup>967</sup>) functions as an example. The books of Ezechiel, Daniel, and Esther are part of one papyrus codex. Dated to the third century C.E., this manuscript is the oldest Greek text of Esther that is currently known. Cf. F. G. Kenyon, *The Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri*, vol. 1, 43–49. Another example is the Oxyrhynchus Papyrus of Esther (no. 4443) in *Oxyrhynchus Papyri LXV* (1998), 4–8. See also the lecture by Anna Passoni Dell’Acqua (Università Cattolica del S. Cuore) at the SBL Meeting in Rome, 2001, entitled, “The Liberation Decree of Add. E in Esther LXX: Some Lexical Observations Starting from a New Papyrus.”

<sup>21</sup> I have calculated the length of the papyrus codex MS 2648 and have concluded that the codex only contained the biblical book of Joshua. Cf. Kristin De Troyer, *Joshua*, in *Catalogue of the Schøyen Greek* (ed. R. Pintaudi; The Schøyen Collection, 1; gen. ed. J. Braarvig; Oslo-London, forthcoming). See also Chapter II, below.

<sup>22</sup> Compare the translation history of the English, Spanish, Dutch, and other translations of the Bible.

<sup>23</sup> The six columns contained the following texts: the Hebrew text, a transliteration of the Hebrew text, the Greek translation of the Bible as produced by Aquila, the translation of Symmachus, his own revised Greek text, and finally the Greek text of Theodotion. Cf. Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (2d ed.; Minneapolis/Assen: Fortress/Van Gorcum, 2001), 147–148. See also *idem*, *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research* (2d ed.; Jerusalem: Simor, 1997), 107, 110. The adjective “hexaplaric” is used to indicate especially the fifth column, and thus the new revised standard Greek text of Origen. For a rare trace of the Hexapla, see the Mercati fragments of the Psalms: Giovanni Mercati, *Psalterii Hexapli reliquiae* (Città del Vaticano: Bibliotheca Vaticana, 1958, 1965). See also Adrian Schenker, *Hexaplarische Psalmenbruchstücke* (OBO 8; Freiburg/Göttingen: Universitätsverlag/Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975) and *idem*, *Psalmen in den Hexapla: Erste kritische und vollständige Ausgabe der hexaplarischen Fragmente auf dem Rande der Handschrift Ottobonianus*



and obelus (÷) to indicate which texts he added to the Old Greek and which texts were only available in the Old Greek and not in the Hebrew text. Most of the Greek Bibles were based on or revised towards Origen's "New Revised Standard Version." The change in verse 14, for instance, from ἄλλοθεν "another place" into ἀλλαχόθεν, which also means "from another place," is an Origenic change visible in a string of manuscripts that are clearly "hexaplaric," thus dependent on Origen's text. Unfortunately, most of the signs that Origen used disappeared as texts were copied, so it became extremely difficult to distinguish the Greek text before Origen from the Greek text after Origen. Which text was the unrevised Old Greek? And which text was the text that was brought closer to the Hebrew text? Moreover, it has become clear that the Hebrew text on which the Old Greek was based was different from the Hebrew text that Origen used in the third century. Reconstructing the activity of Origen is one thing; going beyond this giant and reconstructing the Old Greek is another. It is precisely for this endeavor that Old Greek papyri play an important role. The Greek texts such as the one from the Chester Beatty Papyri seem independent of Origen's revisionist activity and hence are crucial in reconstructing the Old Greek from before the time of Origen. After careful research, however, Hanhart concluded that in P<sup>967</sup>, more specifically in the Esther text, there might already be traces visible of some non-systematic corrections to a Hebrew text, such as the omission of "(to) Achrathaios" in verse 13. This only complicates the issue of reconstructing a pre-Origenic Old Greek text of Esther.

Despite the difficulties involved, scholars have produced a text that most consider to be very close to the Old Greek text that predated Origen. The text as printed in the Göttingen edition of Esther (upper side of the page) and as quoted at the beginning of this chapter is close to if not identical with the Old Greek text of Esther.

## 2. Current opinions

The discussion of verse 14 is almost always focused on the absence or presence of God in the Hebrew Bible. Only rarely, for instance in Moore's work,<sup>24</sup> is the Greek Septuagint text of Esther used to argue in favor of or against divine presence and/or providence. There is hardly any discussion regarding the origin of the Greek Septuagint text. The dependence of the Greek translation on the Hebrew book of Esther is presumed.

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*Graecus 398 zu den Ps 24–32* (Studi e Testi 295; Città del Vaticano: Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, 1982).

<sup>24</sup> Moore, *Esther*, 50.

## C. Analysis

### 1. MT

#### a) Structure

The Hebrew story of Esther is truly a good story. Its author knew how to weave the different pieces of a tale together. Very often, the author picks up an element that was told a couple verses or chapters earlier and incorporates it into a new scene. The story has a limited number of characters: the king, the old and the new queen, a hero, an enemy, some helpers, and a group of people witnessing the events. The story starts with a description of the king and his empire. Queen Vashti is removed from her position and a new queen is looked for. The Jewish woman Esther becomes queen. Meanwhile, the enemy Haman has constructed his wicked plan to destroy all the Jews. Mordecai, Esther's uncle, finds out about it and convinces Esther to plead for the king on behalf of her people. The tension between Haman and Mordecai grows, while Esther is preparing for her plea. First, Esther unmasks the villain Haman, and then she asks the king to respond in an appropriate way to the plan of Haman. The king reacts, Mordecai and Esther do what they have to do, the Jews comply with their initiative, and all goes well. At the end of the story, the Jews rejoice, many others convert, Esther and Mordecai write their memoirs, and Esther records the details of the Purim feast. The author ends the story with a brief report on how the king and Mordecai are remembered.

The larger structure of the Hebrew book of Esther is as follows:

- 1:1–2: introduction to the empire of king Ahasuerus
- 1:3–9: report on the parties at the court
- 1:10–22: report on the king's actions against Vashti
  
- 2:1–18: report on the search for and the crowning of Esther
- 2:19–23: report on the discovery of the assassination plot against the king
  
- 3:1–6: report on the why and the how of Haman's planned to kill all Jews
- 3:7–14: report on the creation of the official plan to kill all Jews
  
- 3:15–4:3: report on the reaction from the Jews and the citizens of Susa to Haman's plan
- 4:4–17: report on Esther's reaction to the plan

- 5:1–5a: report on Esther’s going to the king
- 5:5b–8: report on a dinner at Esther’s home
- 5:9–14: report on how Haman deals with conflict
  
- 6:1–11: report on how the king remembers the good deed of Mordecai
- 6:12–14: report on Haman’s and Mordecai’s reactions to the action of the king
  
- 7:1: introduction to a new setting
- 7:2–4: report on a dialogue between Esther and the king
- 7:5–8: report on a second dialogue between Esther and the king
- 7:9–10: report on a dialogue between Harbonah and the king
  
- 8:1–2: introduction to the scene
- 8:3–8: report on a dialogue between Esther and the king
- 8:9–14: report on the creation of the official plan to counterattack Haman’s plan
- 8:15–17: report on an action of Mordecai and the reaction of the city inhabitants
  
- 9:1–19: report on how the Jews defend themselves against their enemies
- 9:20–32: report on how the events were recorded
  
- 10:1–3: conclusion of the book

In chapter four, Mordecai tries to convince Esther to help him to prevent the execution from Haman’s evil plan. Esther is not really keen on helping, for she knows it is risky to go uncalled to the king. Then Mordecai replies—and this is the passage of the story we will be focusing on. Esther might be just the right person at the right time in the right place to do the job and prevent the execution of the plan.

In this encounter, Mordecai and Esther are not speaking to one another directly, but they use some servants as intermediaries. Chapter 4, verses 4–17 offers two reports on two non-direct communications. The second part of chapter four (vv. 4–17) contains a double report. The first report is very short (v. 4). It contains the report of the first reaction of Esther and a brief reaction of Mordecai to Esther’s reaction. The second report is rather lengthy (vv. 5–17). It follows, however, the same structure as the first report. The structure of the double report looks as follows:

- v. 4: report on the first reaction of Esther
  - v. 4a: Esther finds out what Mordecai is doing
  - v. 4b: Esther reacts
  - v. 4c: Mordecai reacts
  
- vv. 5–17: report on the second reaction of Esther
  - vv. 5–8: Esther finds out why Mordecai is acting the way he is
  - vv. 9–16: Esther reacts
  - v. 17: Mordecai reacts

After discovering that Mordecai's problem is not just a matter of clothes, Esther continues her search for the reasons why Mordecai is dressed in sackcloth. Her second reaction is another investigation. The report on the second reaction of Esther is skillfully composed. In verse 5, Esther instructs Hatach, her eunuch, to speak to Mordecai. In verse 6, Hatach goes forth to Mordecai. In verses 7 and 8, Mordecai reports to Hatach what happened. Hatach returns with this message to Esther in verse 9. Again in verse 10, Esther instructs Hatach to speak to Mordecai. Verse 11 contains her message. In verse 12, "they"<sup>25</sup> deliver the message. Mordecai summarizes in verses 13–14 his instructions for Esther. In verse 15, she bids her servants to deliver her reaction to Mordecai. In verse 16, her proposed action and her command to Mordecai are summarized. In verse 17, Mordecai reacts according to Esther's wish. The report on the second reaction of Esther is thus a report on three masked conversations between Esther and Mordecai. I label these conversations "masked," for they involve a go-between person who reports back and forth. Hatach is the go-between in these conversations. The structure of the conversations is as follows:

- v. 5: Esther sends for Hatach
  - v. 6: Hatach goes to Mordecai
    - vv. 7–8: Mordecai explains what he is doing and why
    - v. 9: Hatach returns to Esther and reports
- v. 10: Esther sends again for Hatach
- v. 11: Esther gives her message
  - v. 12: "They" go to Mordecai and deliver her message
  - vv. 13–14: Mordecai suggests what Esther might do
- v. 15: Esther bids "them" to give Mordecai a message
- v. 16: Esther gives her message
  - v. 17: Mordecai obeys

In the second round of this reaction, the author omits the report of Hatach's returning to Esther. This omission creates urgency in the story. In the third

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<sup>25</sup> The plural is rather unexpected.

round, the delivering of the message is also omitted. This again brings the story more alive.

#### b) Analysis

The difficult part in the Hebrew text of Esther 4:14 is the sentence: “for if you keep silence at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another quarter”: רוח והצלה יעמוד ליהודים ממקום אחר. The meaning of the words “from another place” (ממקום אחר) plays a pivotal role. The “place” is often associated with God in the Hebrew Bible. The places of the altar, the holy places, the mountain of God, the place of God, the place where God reveals his/her name, the places of burnt offerings, the places also of the old statues of gods, the temple, the places of idols and their temples, all these “places” are associated with God. On the basis of the word “place,” one could indeed conclude that God is mentioned in the Hebrew text of Esther. Some scholars simply point to a general theology and interpret verse 14 as a reference to God.<sup>26</sup>

Sometimes this sentence is interpreted as referring to God on the basis of elements that stem from the context of this passage. In 4:16, for instance, Esther commands the Jews to fast. When this fasting is seen as religious, the word “place” in 4:14 is read as referring to God. The same is true for the sentence: “who knows that you, Esther, have come to royal dignity for such a time as this?” When this sentence is read as referring to the Divine Providence, 4:14 is read as “God will help.”

None of the elements mentioned in these verses, however, refer exclusively to God or to Esther’s religious life. The phrase “another place,” for instance, is found only three times in the Hebrew Bible. In all three places, the expression refers to cursing or to the exile. In Num 23:13, 27, Balaam is asked to go to

<sup>26</sup> I. L. Seeligmann, “Menschliches Heldentum und göttliche Hilfe,” 385, for instance, writes in his article that “for the people of the Old Testament, history is a category of their faith . . . God is the Lord of history. If God is the Lord of history, then everything what happens is foreseen by God.” Keil translates verse 14 as follows: “if thou wilt venture nothing for its safety, God will bring deliverance,” (*Biblischer Commentar*, 639). Keil admits “though Mordecai neither speaks of God, nor alludes directly to His assistance, he still grounds his hopes of the preservation of his people upon the word and promise of God,” 640. And Moore is also led by “theology,” even if he presents it as a “text-critical and text-historical argument.” He writes, “Did Mordecai have in mind another individual or possibly help from another quarter, such as requested of Rome by Judas Maccabaeus and later by Jonathan? While either view is a possibility, the AT [i.e., the second Greek text of Esther], Josephus, and I and II Targums are certainly correct to see in the Hebrew a veiled allusion to God.” See Moore, *Esther*, 50. A bit further, Moore states, “The writer of Esther is affirming a religious concept, faith in Divine Providence”; see Moore, *Esther*, 50.

“another place” in order to curse. In Ezek 12:3, Ezekiel has to move to “another place”; in this case the expression means into exile. “Another place,” then, does not refer to God in any of these passages.

Moreover, the words “deliverance” and “relief,” which are used in the same phrase as “another place,” are not truly helpful in establishing whether or not the phrase has a religious connotation. The word “deliverance” is found only here in the Hebrew Bible. The verb “to deliver,” however, does sometimes refer to God. More specifically, it refers to God delivering someone, or someone who delivers himself, or it is said that someone can’t deliver him/herself. The word “relief” appears twice in the Hebrew Bible, once meaning “space,” and once—here in Esther—apparently referring to actual relief.

The words from the context might help us in identifying the precise meaning of “another place.” Esther’s command to fast might indicate a religious attitude. Esther says, “Go, gather all the Jews and hold a fast on my behalf, and neither eat nor drink for three days, night and day” (v. 16). This hunger strike is seen as a religious activity, and hence, the mentioning of “another place” can be read as referring to God. Is fasting, however, always a religious activity?

In the Hebrew Bible, people fast because they are mourning. After having burnt the bodies and buried the bones of King Saul, the people of Jabesh fast for seven days (1 Sam 31:13; 1 Chr 10:12). David takes his clothes and tears them, and all the men who are with him do the same. They mourn and weep and fast until evening for Saul, and for his son Jonathan (2 Sam 1:12). The same mourning ritual is found in 2 Sam 3:35. In the book of Nehemiah, Nehemiah sits down, weeps, and mourns for days, fasting and praying, and he does so “before the God of Heaven.” God is explicitly mentioned. However, the question arises whether Nehemiah is sitting, weeping, mourning, and fasting before God, or whether he is only praying before the God of Heaven? In the latter case, the fasting has no religious connotation *per se*.

When mourning is found together with a confession of sin, or at least an awareness of sin—resulting sometimes in penance—then the fasting can be seen as a religious rite. In 2 Sam 12:16, for instance, David is told that the child that was born to him from Uriah’s wife will die. The following sentence (v. 17) is very clear about the religious context: “David therefore pleaded with God for the child; David fasted, and went in and lay all night on the ground.” When Jonah goes into the city of Nineveh to proclaim the message of God that the city would be destroyed, the people of Nineveh believe God, and they proclaim a fast, and everyone, great and small, puts on sackcloth. Again, the context is “religious”: God sends a messenger and the people believe the messenger, and thus believe God.

When Ezra gathers the families who went up from Babylonia together with him, he stops at the river Ahava and proclaims a fast. He does so in order “that we may deny ourselves before our God, to seek from him a safe journey for ourselves.” God is explicitly mentioned in the Ezra story. The fasting is

mentioned in a religious context, and this turns the fasting into a religious activity.<sup>27</sup>

In the book of Daniel, however, it is not clear whether fasting involves a religious perspective. After seeing a vision, Daniel prays to God and makes a confession. His supplication is accompanied by fasting. This fasting could be seen as a religious rite. In the book of Daniel, however, it is not clear why Daniel is fasting. Is fasting the best preparation for seeing visions? Is fasting the condition for visions? The story does not give an answer, but only after the fast does Daniel have a vision.

Our initial question for this section was: is fasting in the book of Esther a religious act or not? Is Esther, for instance, fasting because she is aware of a sin? Alternatively, is she preparing herself for a specific job, and hence, does she fast as a sort of preparation? Is her fasting religious or not? Both interpretations seem possible. The absence or presence of God in the surrounding context makes a religious interpretation more or less plausible. This analysis, however, puts us back to square one, for we do not know whether or not “another place” is referring to God. If one interprets the latter words as referring to God, then the fasting can be regarded as a religious activity. The problem, however, with fasting in the book of Esther is that it cannot be used against or in favor of a religious interpretation of the words “another place,” for using this argument creates a vicious circle. If “another place” refers to God, then “fasting” is a religious activity. If “fasting” is a religious activity, then, “another place” refers to God. If “fasting” is nothing else but a preparation for a difficult job, then it is not religious, and thus, the words “another place” do not necessarily refer to God.

I tend to accept the non-religious interpretation for “another place” and “fasting.” The analysis of the words of verse 14 and the surrounding context does not necessarily point to “God.” Moreover, the narrative itself does not contain any reference at all to religion in the broadest sense. In the Esther story, there is no need for a religious character, like God, to solve the problem of the Jews. If Esther does not help, another person will. Mordecai, however, is convinced that Esther is the right person in the right place at the right moment. He expects her to help and solve the problems. In commanding Mordecai and the Jews to fast, and in fasting herself, Esther has accepted the difficult job ahead. It is precisely because Esther is aware of the difficult task ahead of her that she turns to fasting. Her fasting is her preparation. I therefore conclude that “another place” neither alludes to nor presumes God.

However, how did the first exegetes of MT Esther 4:14 interpret this text? Did the Greek translator of Esther consider the words “another place” as a reference to God or not?

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<sup>27</sup> A religious context is also obvious in Exod 34:28.

## 2. LXX 4:13–14

## a) Structure

The structure of the Septuagint of Esther is very similar to the structure of the Hebrew book. There are, however, some important changes made to the story. First of all, the translator added six larger additions<sup>28</sup> to his/her text.<sup>29</sup> I will refer to the addition as follows: Addition A, or Add. A, Addition B, or Add. B, etc. Second, the translator interpreted the Hebrew text. In some places, she deliberately changed the context. This does not mean that “completely new material” was created and inserted. To the contrary, most if not all the changes are based on the possibilities that are given in the Hebrew text. At the end of the story, for instance, Mordecai is promoted to the successor of the king. In the Hebrew text, Mordecai was the second in command. The translator added a bit of weight to this position and calls Mordecai the successor. The translator also makes a distinction between the hairdo of the men (and the royal horse) and that of the women. Men, and the royal horse, wear crowns, but women only diadems. These are just but a few examples of deliberate changes made by the translator.<sup>30</sup>

The little changes do not change the overall structure of the text; the additions, however, do. The structure of the Septuagint story of Esther looks at follows<sup>31</sup>:

- Add. A:1–3: introduction to Mordecai
- Add. A:4–11: report on his dream
- Add. A:12–17: report on the discovery of the assassination plot against the king
- 1:1–2: introduction to the empire of king Ahasuerus
- 1:3–9: report on the parties at the court
- 1:10–22: report on the king’s actions against Vashti

<sup>28</sup> For a short survey of these additions, their place, and precise references, see Kristin De Troyer, *The End of the Alpha-Text of Esther: Translation Techniques and Narrative Techniques in MT-LXX 8.1–17–AT 7.14–41*, *Septuagint and Cognate Studies*, 48 (Atlanta: SBL, 2000), 9–13. For the Greek text, see Hanhart, *Esther*.

<sup>29</sup> According to the colophon added at the end of the text, the translator was a man. The mentioning of a man’s name, however, might just prove the opposite. Moreover, as several passages are translated from a female perspective, I often refer to the translator of Esther as “she.”

<sup>30</sup> For a complete survey of the changes, I refer the reader to the third part of my commentary on Esther: Kristin De Troyer, *Ester* (Belichting van het Bijbelboek; 's-Hertogenbosch: KBS, forthcoming, Dutch).

<sup>31</sup> In the following survey, I follow the verse numbering from the critical edition of Hanhart.



- 2:1–18: report on the search for and the crowning of Esther  
2:19–23: report on the discovery of the assassination plot against the king
- 3:1–6: report on the why and the how of Haman’s plan to kill all Jews  
3:7–13: report on the creation of the official plan to kill all Jews  
Add. B:1–7: introduction to and text of the decree of the king allowing the Jews to be destroyed  
3:14: continuation of report on the creation of the official plan to kill all Jews
- 3:15–4:3: report on the reaction from the Jews and the citizens of Susa to Haman’s plan  
4:4–17: report on Esther’s reaction to the plan  
Add. C:1–11: introduction and text of the prayer of Mordecai  
Add. C:12–30: introduction and text of the prayer of Esther
- Add. D:1–16: report on Esther’s visit to the king  
5:3–5a: continuation of report on Esther’s visit to the king  
5:5b–8: report on a dinner at Esther’s home  
5:9–14: report on how Haman deals with conflict
- 6:1–11: report on how the king remembers the good deed of Mordecai  
6:12–14: report on Haman and Mordecai’s reactions to the action of the king
- 7:1: introduction to a new setting  
7:2–4: report on a dialogue between Esther and the king  
7:5–8: report on a second dialogue between Esther and the king  
7:9–10: report on a dialogue between Harbonah and the king
- 8:1–2: introduction to the scene  
8:3–8: report on a dialogue between Esther and the king  
8:9–12: report on the creation of the official plan to counterattack Haman’s plan  
Add. E:1–24: introduction to and text of the decree of the king allowing the Jews to live according to their own laws and to defend themselves  
8:13–14: continuation of the report on the creation of the official plan to counterattack Haman’s plan

8:15–17: report on an action of Mordecai and the reaction of the city inhabitants

9:1–19: report on how the Jews defend themselves against their enemies

9:20–32: report on how the events were recorded

10:1–3: conclusion of the book

Add. F:1–10: report on Mordecai's interpretation of the dream

Add. F:11: colophon

As I am dealing with the Greek text of chapter 4, I need to focus on the changes made by the translator in this chapter. The Greek translator of the book of Esther, however, only makes one major change. She adds one long sentence to the text of chapter 4. At the end of verse 8, Esther is asked to compare (literally, to remember) the days of her youth with the (current) days when Haman is sending all the Jews to destruction. Mordecai also implores Esther to go to the king and plead on behalf of the Jews and to save them from death. The translator also has changed the name of the eunuch. His name is no longer Hatach, but Achrathaïos. Moreover, the translator has avoided “the strange plurals” in verses 12 and 15 and has turned them into singulars. Only Achrathaïos, and not an unidentified “they,” is the messenger. For the remainder of the chapter, the translator follows the Hebrew text fairly closely. The structure, thus, resembles that of the Hebrew chapter:

- v. 5: Esther sends for Achrathaïos
- v. 6: Achrathaïos goes to Mordecai
  - vv. 7–8: Mordecai explains what he is doing and why
  - v. 9: Achrathaïos returns to Esther and reports
- v. 10: Esther sends again for Achrathaïos
- v. 11: Esther gives her message
- v. 12: Achrathaïos goes to Mordecai and delivers her message
  - vv. 13–14: Mordecai suggests what Esther might do
- v. 15: Esther bids Achrathaïos to give Mordecai a message
- v. 16: Esther gives her message
- v. 17: Mordecai obeys

Again, the story has gained in liveliness by the omissions of some elements in the second and third conversation rounds.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> See the remarks regarding the structure of the Hebrew text.

## b) Analysis

The Septuagint has rendered the pivotal verse 14 as follows: “For if you keep quiet at such a time as this, help and protection will come to the Jews from another quarter, but you and your father’s family will perish.” The editors of the *Handbook on the Book of Esther* comment, “In the Greek version the words ‘help and protection from another quarter’ clearly refer to Divine help.”<sup>33</sup> My question is whether or not this is indeed the case. I will analyze the words used in verse 14 and in the surrounding sentences.

As already mentioned, the adverb “from another place” only occurs here in the Greek Bible. There are no other passages that can help us in establishing its precise meaning, and more specifically, its religious or a-religious meaning.

The NRSV has translated the words: βοηθῆαι καὶ σκέπη with “help and protection.” The word “help” (βοηθῆαι) is used only once in the book of Esther. The word “help,” however, is very often used outside of the book of Esther. It is used in several contexts, such as help for King David, King David functions as a support, help from God, no help from God, help to oneself, help of the just, brothers and sisters as stand-by, never be in need of help. In the prophets, “help” is said to come from Assyria, from Egypt, from Tyre and Sidon, from the Pharaoh, etc.<sup>34</sup> God too is referred to as “my strength and my help.” In the books of the Maccabees, there is help from heaven, as well as help from the people. Help comes from others or from God; help is given to others, once to God, and there is even help for things. The verb “to help” (βοηθῆω) appears several times in the Greek book of Esther.<sup>35</sup> It refers to the Jews who are allowed to help themselves, to defend themselves, and it refers to God as the one whom Esther implores to help. In Add. C:14, God is identified as “the helper” (βοηθός). The word “helper” is often used in the LXX. The God of my father is my helper, peace for your helpers, woman is a help to man, and the fatherless had no helper. In the prophet Nahum, the Libyans become helpers. In Isaiah, God is helper. In the second book of the Maccabees, the helper is characterized as “he who dwells in heaven. And he has his eyes on that place, and defends it.”<sup>36</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Roger L. Omanson and Philip A. Noss, eds., *A Handbook on the Book of Esther: The Hebrew and Greek Text* (New York: UBS, 1997), 132.

<sup>34</sup> See, for instance: Judg 5:23; 2 Kgs 18:3; 1 Chr 28:21; Isa 8:20; 20:6; 30:5, 6, 32; 31:1, 3; 47:14; Jer 16:19; 29(47):4; 44(37):7.

<sup>35</sup> Add. C:14, 25; 8:11; 9:16.

<sup>36</sup> See Gen 2:18, 20; Ex 15:2; 18:4; Deut 33:7, 26, 29; Judg 5:23; 1 Kgs 22:42; 1 Chr 12:18; Job 8:6 (2 times); Judg 7:25; 9:4, 11; Job 22:25; 29:12; Pss 9:9, 35; 17(18):14; 26(27):9; 17(18):7; 29(30):10; 32(33):20; 39(40):17; 45(46):1; 51(52):7; 58(59):17; 61(62):8; 62(63):7; 69(70):5; 70(71):7; 71(72):12; 77(78):35; 80(81):1; 93(94):22; 113:17(=115:9), 18(=115:10), 19(=115:11); 117 (118):6, 7; 118(119):114; 145(146):5; Sir 36:29(26); 51:2 (2 times); Nah 3:9; Isa 8:13; 17:10; 25:4; 50:7; 63:5; Ezek 12:14; 2 Macc 3:39.

The sister-word for “help” is “protection” (σκέπη). It too is also only found once in the LXX of Esther. In the rest of the LXX, it has different meanings, depending on the one from whom the help is coming: it ranges from protection in the form of the roof of a house, to protection of shadow, of mountains, of different kind of trees, or rocks, or protection of Lady Wisdom, the protection of the rich, of the wicked, of friends, and also of God (in the Psalms and in Ecclus 31[34]:16). God also promises to create a shelter, which is “protection,” in Isaiah, or his hand is a shelter, or he is a shelter. In the books of the Maccabees, we encounter a similar use: Judas receives help and protection from the Lord. Protection can come from God and from others. Each time the source of the protection is specified. It can be protection from heaven as well as protection from someone or something on earth. Regarding the agent of protection, the protector (σκεπαστής), I note tht it is often used in the Greek Bible. Miriam praises the Lord in her song (Exod 15:2) and proclaims God to be her helper and protector. Literally, the text says, “Helper and protector, salvation he was for me. This is my God and I glorify him.” In Greek: βοηθὸς καὶ σκεπαστής ἐγένετό μοι εἰς σωτηρίαν. οὗτός μου θεὸς καὶ δοξάσω αὐτόν. Similarly, in Jdt 9:11, *Odes Sol.* 1:2, and Sir 51:2, one encounters the words “helper” and “protector.” In Deut 32:28 God says, “Where are their gods, which they trusted? Let them rise and come to give you help, let them give you shelter.” Whereas the words from the Hebrew text of Deuteronomy are different from the words in the Hebrew Esther, the words of the Greek Deuteronomy text are very similar to the words of the Greek Esther. In LXX Deuteronomy, the author uses βοηθέω and σκεπαστής, a verb and a noun, “to help” and “the protector.” Precisely the same combination is found in *Odes Sol.* 2:38. The LXX of Esther has yet another element in common with Deuteronomy. Both texts have what could be considered a Greek equivalent of the Hebrew verb “to rise.” “To stand up” (ἀνίστημι) and “to be” (ἔσται) both render the Hebrew עמד “to stand.” The LXX of Esther seems to reflect the LXX of Deuteronomy. One important difference, however, must be taken into account. In LXX Deuteronomy, the words refer to “other gods,” not to the God of Israel. In all the other texts mentioned above, it is the Israelite God who is asked to be the protector of his/her people.

The words used in this passage and the surrounding verses—“another place,” “help,” and “protection”—can be read as referring to human persons and actions, as well to a God and her activities. In the Greek book of Esther, the verb “to help” can be associated with divine support. Whereas in the Greek Bible the word “helper” can be used to indicate a helper from earth as well as a helper from heaven, the LXX of Esther uses the noun “helper” only in reference to God. More specifically, God is identified as “the helper” in Add. C:14. The words used in the Greek text seem to point to a religious interpretation of verse 14.

The only occurrence in the book of Esther of the identification of God as the helper stems from Addition C. Indeed, Addition C strengthens the religious character of the Greek story of Esther. Addition D, however, also adds to the

religious level of the text. Precisely these two additions follow chapter 4. Addition C is divided into two parts: a prayer of Mordecai and a prayer of Esther. The first words uttered by Mordecai are: "O Lord, Lord, you rule as King over all things, for the universe is in your power and there is not one who can oppose you when it is your will to save Israel." Similarly, Esther prays: "O my Lord, you only are our king; help me, who am alone and have no helper but you. . . ." Moreover, the first sentence of Addition D is also religious in tone: "on the third day, when she ended her prayer, she took off the garments in which she had worshipped. . . ." Both Additions C and D are clearly "religious" additions. Moreover, the additions pertain to the question of who will come and save the Jews. Mordecai asks, "O Lord, do not destroy the lips of those who praise you." Esther prays, "O God, whose might is over all, hear the voice of the despairing, and save us from the hands of evildoers. And save me from my fear." In the additions, it is God who is supposed to be the one who saves the Jews.

If one rejects these additions, then the image of God the helper disappears from the picture. The translator, however, made sure "to insert" God in different places of the Greek story. God not only is mentioned in the Additions, she/he also appears in the translation of the rest of the story. In 6:13, for instance, the Hebrew text runs as follows: "If Mordecai, before whom your downfall has begun, is of the Jewish people, you will not prevail against him, but will surely fall before him." The Greek translation of this "canonical" sentence of the Hebrew text contains a reference to God: "If Mordecai is of the Jewish people, and you have begun to be humiliated before him, you will surely fall. You will not be able to defend yourself, because the living God is with him." The translator also refers to God in 2:20; 4:8; and 6:1.

I therefore conclude that the Greek translation of the Hebrew text is clearly a religious text. For the Greek translator, help and protection will come to the Jews from God. The translation of the Hebrew text has led to a text in which God plays a pivotal role. The new text or story of the book of Esther, the Greek story, is a text or story referring to God. This conclusion does not prove that the Hebrew text intended to point to God as the helper of the Jews. It has become clear, however, that the translator interpreted the Hebrew text as referring to God. The question as to whether the translator has interpreted the Hebrew text of verse 14 as referring to God, or whether she deliberately rewrote the Hebrew story and wove a religious component into the text, cannot be answered.

## D. Conclusions

The Greek translator of the Hebrew biblical book of Esther not only translated the book but also interpreted the book. Whereas God seems to be absent in the Hebrew book, the translator created a Greek story in which God plays a prominent role. In the Old Greek of Esther, it is God who will save the Jews. The Greek translator has rewritten the biblical Hebrew book of Esther.

The new reading of the book of Esther can also be traced in some of the younger translations. Some translations, like the Aramaic, and other rewritten texts, like Josephus and the second Greek text of Esther,<sup>37</sup> follow the Greek religious interpretation of the book of Esther, whereas others, like the Syriac and the Vulgate, follow the Hebrew, non-religious story.

The discussion as to whether or not God is absent or present in the story of Esther, however, can still continue.

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<sup>37</sup> For the second Greek text of Esther, see Chapter III.

## Chapter II

### A Pre-Masoretic Biblical Text: The Final Touches to an Old Joshua

#### A. Texts and Thesis

##### 1. Texts: LXX and MT Joshua 10:14–18a<sup>1</sup>

ולא היה כיום ההוא	καὶ οὐκ ἐγένετο ἡμέρα τοιαύτη
לפניו ואחריו	οὐδὲ τὸ πρότερον οὐδὲ τὸ ἔσχατον
לשמע יהוה בקול איש	ὥστε ἑπακουῖσθαι θεὸν ἀνθρώπου·
כי יהוה נלחם לישראל	ὅτι Κύριος συνεπολέμησεν τῷ Ἰσραήλ.
וישב יהושע וכל-ישראל עמו	
אל-המחנה הגלגלה	

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Parts of this chapter have been used in the following contributions: Kristin De Troyer, “Did Joshua Have a Crystal Ball? The Old Greek and the MT of Joshua 10:15,17 and 23,” in *Emanuel: Studies in Hebrew Bible, Septuagint and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honour of Emanuel Tov* (ed. M. P. Shalom, R. A. Kraft, L. H. Schiffmann and W. W. Fields, with the assistance of E. Ben-David; Leiden: Brill), 571–589; *id.*, “Reconstructing the Old Greek of Joshua,” in *The Septuagint in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (ed. W. Kraus & G. Wooden; Septuagint and Cognate Studies; Atlanta: SBL, forthcoming).

<sup>1</sup> The Hebrew text is taken from the BHS, cf. *Josua et Judices* (Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia, 4; ed. R. Meyer, Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1972/77, 1983). For the Greek text, see Alan England Brooke and Norman McLean, *The Old Testament in Greek according to the text of codex Vaticanus supplemented from other uncial manuscripts, with a critical apparatus containing the variants of the chief ancient authorities for the text of the Septuagint*, part 4: Joshua, Judges, and Ruth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1917).

וינסו חמשת המלכים האלה	Καὶ ἔφυγον οἱ πέντε βασιλεῖς οὗτοι,
ויחבאו במערה	καὶ κατεκρύβησαν εἰς τὸ σπήλαιον
במקדה	τὸ ἐν Μακηδά.
ויגד ליהושע לאמר	καὶ ἀπηγγέλη τῷ Ἰησοῦ λέγοντες
נמצאו חמשת המלכים	Εὑρηνται οἱ πέντε βασιλεῖς κεκρυμμένοι
נחבאים	
במערה במקדה	ἐν τῷ σπηλαίῳ τῷ ἐν Μακηδά.
... ויאמר יהושע	καὶ εἶπεν Ἰησοῦς ...

*NRSV (English translation of the Hebrew text):*

**14.** There has never been a day like it before or since, when the Lord heeded a human voice; for the Lord fought for Israel. **15.** Then Joshua returned and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal. **16.** Meanwhile, these five kings fled and hid themselves in the cave at Makkedah. **17.** And it was told Joshua, “The five kings have been found, hidden in the cave at Makkedah.” **18.** Joshua said, ...

*Brenton’s translation of the Greek text of Joshua<sup>2</sup>:*

**14.** And there was not such a day either before or after, so that God should hearken to a man, because the Lord fought on the side of Israel. **16.** And these five kings fled, and hid themselves in a cave that is in Makedah. **17.** And it was told Joshua, saying, the five kings have been found hid in the cave that is in Makedah. **18.** And Joshua said, ...

## 2. Thesis

In verse 15, two events are narrated. First, it is reported that Joshua returns to the camp at Gilgal. Second, the author mentions that all Israel accompanies Joshua. I will focus on the first issue. That Joshua returned to the camp in Gilgal is one of the latest additions to the story of Joshua. The Old Greek is a witness to a pre-Masoretic text of Joshua, in which Gilgal did not play an important role. The place Gilgal, however, became crucial during the second century B.C.E., so it was imported into the Hebrew story of Joshua. Verse 15, the report on

<sup>2</sup> Lancelot Charles Lee Brenton, *The Septuagint Version of the Old Testament and Apocrypha with an English Translation and with Various Readings and Critical Notes* (London: Bagster & Sons, 1851; repr., Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978).



Joshua's returning to the camp at Gilgal—in the company of all Israel—is, thus, a final touch to the text of the book of Joshua. The study of verse 15 will also lead to new insights regarding verses 17 and 43.

## B. Witnesses and Opinions

### 1. Witnesses

The reader might already have noticed that the Greek text has one sentence less than the Hebrew text: verse 15. A brief survey of the old witnesses confirms the presence of the verse in the Hebrew tradition and its absence in the Greek tradition. In the Latin Vulgate, the Syriac Peshitta,<sup>3</sup> and the Aramaic Targum Jonathan,<sup>4</sup> verse 15 is present. Sabatier<sup>5</sup> does not offer the text of the *Vetus Latina*, verses 15 and 16. In the notes to his text, he states that verses 17–25 conform to the Greek text. There is, however, no note about verses 15 and 16.<sup>6</sup> The Lyon manuscript of the *Vetus Latina*<sup>7</sup> does not have verse 15.

Moreover, at first sight there is what appears to be a minor problem connected with the Hebrew text of verse 15. In the Stuttgart edition of the Hebrew text, there is a Masoretic note attached to 10:15, more precisely, to one

<sup>3</sup> Johann E. Erbes, Joshua, in *Leviticus–Numbers–Deuteronomy–Joshua* (eds. D. J. Lane, A. P. Hayman, W. M. van Vliet, J. H. Hosper, H. J. W. Drijvers, and J. E. Erbes; The Old Testament in Syriac according to the Peshitta Version, Part I, fascicle 2; Part II, fascicle 1b; Leiden: Brill, 1991), 26.

<sup>4</sup> Brian Walton, *Biblia Polyglotta, Tomus 2* (London, 1657; repr., Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1964). See also Daniel J. Harrington and Anthony J. Saldarini, *Targum Jonathan of the Former Prophets* (The Aramaic Bible, 10; Edinburgh/Wilmington, DE: T & T Clark/Michael Glazier, 1987), 33–34.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Petrus Sabatier, *Bibliorum sacrorum latinae versiones antiquae seu Vetus Italica et caeterae quaecumque in codicibus Mss et antiquorum libris reperiri potuerunt: quae cum Vulgata Latina et cum textu graeco comparantur* (Vol. 1; Reims, 1743; repr. Turnhout: Brepols, 1991). In the margins, Sabatier notes the manuscripts that he has used. Whenever the critical Beuron edition of a given book was not yet published, I checked the “value” of the manuscripts mentioned in the margins of the Sabatier edition by studying Gryson's notes to the manuscripts as offered in his list of Old Latin Manuscripts. Cf. R. Gryson, *Altlateinische Handschriften–Manuscripts Vieux Latins: Répertoire descriptif: Première partie: Mss 1–275* (Vetus Latina: Die Reste der altlateinische Bibel nach Petrus Sabatier neu gesammelt und herausgegeben von der Erzabtei Beuron, 1/2A; Freiburg: Herder, 1999).

<sup>6</sup> Similarly, Joshua 10:15ff.

<sup>7</sup> Ulysse Robert, *Heptateuchi partis posterioris versio latina antiquissima e codice Lugdunensi* (Lyon: Librairie de A.Rey, 1900). This edition actually reads “15–16,” but the text following “15–16” is only the text of verse 16.

particular expression: “and all Israel.” The note reports that this expression appears thirty-five times in the Bible. In the Masoretic notes of the Cairo Codex, however, the number is not thirty-five, but thirty-four.<sup>8</sup> I found it rather curious that there was this little discrepancy between the two notations, especially because the Masoretes are known for their very precise calculations.

Turning to the Greek text, I encountered some stunning problems. If one were to look at the text-critical apparatus of the Cambridge Septuagint edition,<sup>9</sup> one would see the following note to verse 15:<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> The *Masora Parva* read: לֹא רָפָּה דְּכֹהֵן. The Masoretic note, hence, observes that the expression appears thirty-five times at the beginning of a verse, like this. The following passages have the note: Josh 3:17; 7:24; 8:15; 8:21; 10:15; 10:29; 10:31; 10:34; 10:36; 10:38; 10:43; 1 Sam 17:11; 2 Sam 3:37; 4:1; 18:17; 1 Kgs 8:62; 8:65; 11:16; 15:27; 16:17; 2 Kgs 9:14; Ezra 2:70; 8:25; 10:5; Neh 7:72; 1 Chr 11:4; 13:6; 13:8; 2 Chr 7:6; 7:8; 10:3; 12:1; 13:4; 13:15.

Weil, the main editor of the notes of BHS, however, added his famous words “sub loco” in a few instances. This expression “indicates that he corrected an error in the Mp of L, or that the difficulty is due to the absence of a related list in the Mm of L. These instances are discussed fully in our *Massorah Gedolah*, vol. iii.” Cf. Page H. Kelley, Daniel S. Mynatt, and Timothy G. Crawford, *The Masorah of Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia: Introduction and Annotated Glossary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 54, with reference to the BHS Introduction, p. xvii. There is, indeed, no list of the passages in the work of Gérard E. Weil, *Massorah Gedolah iuxta Codicem Leningradensem B 19<sup>a</sup>, Vol. 1. Catalogi* (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1971; repr., 2001). Hence, the note refers to a correction made by Weil. The sub loco note is added to Ezra 2:70; 8:25; 10:5; Neh 7:72; 1 Chr 11:4; 13:8; 2 Chr 10:3; 12:1; 13:4; 13:15; not by accident all these references are from the last part of the Bible. Moreover, the first sub loco note comes at 1 Chr 11:4; this is right after 2 Kings, according to the sequence of books in the Greek Bible. With his note, Weil noted that the number was incorrect. The first appearance of the note indicates that the difference in numbers, and hence, the “error,” should be located somewhere before 1 Chronicles. Indeed, even at 1 Chr 11:4, for instance, the Rabbinic Bible mentions that the discussed expression appears thirty four times. I checked different editions of the Rabbinic Bible, and all have thirty-four in the note to 1 Chr 11:4.

Regarding thirty-four, see F. Pérez Castro, *El Códice de Profetas de El Cairo* (Textos y Estudios “Cardenal Cisneros,” 26; Madrid: Instituto Arias Montano, 1980), 58 (esp. n. b). Pérez Castro notes that in all the places where the Leningrad codex reads thirty-five, the Cairo Codex mentions thirty-four. Pérez Castro repeats this note at Josh 3:17; 7:24; 8:15; 8:21; 10:15; 10:31; 10:34; 10:36; 10:38; 10:43, hence everywhere in Joshua except for 10:29. The editor of the Cairo Codex believes that the case of Deut 21:21 was originally not counted, for it seems to have had a Hebrew text with “and all Israel.” I, however, do not think that Deut 21:21 is to blame, but rather the omission of the note next to 10:29. That the original scribe of the Masoretic notes in the margin of the Cairo Codex did not notice the error is due to the fact that he only worked with “the Prophets,” and not with a complete Hebrew text.

<sup>9</sup> A. E. Brooke and N. McLean, *The Old Testament in Greek according to the text of codex Vaticanus supplemented from other uncial manuscripts, with a critical apparatus*

Καὶ ἐπέστρεψεν ἰησοῦς καὶ πᾶς ἱηλ μετ' αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν  
 παρεμβολὴν εἰς γάλαλα B<sup>mg</sup>F<sup>bmg</sup>GW<sup>11</sup> 18 19 30 38 54 56 58 68 75  
 82 85<sup>mg</sup> 108 120 121<sup>mg</sup> 122 126 129 246 343<sup>mg</sup> 344<sup>mg</sup> 346<sup>mg</sup> 370 376  
 426 458 488 489 628 630 646 669 707 730 ArmEth<sup>f</sup>Syh (sub ÷; in *O*  
 sub \*)<sup>12</sup>

In my edition of the Schøyen Joshua papyrus (MS 2648, Ra 816),<sup>13</sup> I have added a short phrase making the note more complete, more precisely indicating which witnesses have omitted verse 15 and in which witnesses verse 15 is present. The result looks as follows:

Καὶ ἐπέστρεψεν ἰησοῦς καὶ πᾶς ἱηλ μετ' αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν  
 παρεμβολὴν εἰς γάλαλα om<sup>14</sup> in BAF<sup>b</sup>V<sup>15</sup>OldLat<sup>16</sup>Sah<sup>b</sup>Sah<sup>t</sup>; exstat<sup>17</sup>  
 in B<sup>mg</sup>F<sup>bmg</sup>GW 18 19 30 38 54 56 58 68 75 82 85<sup>mg</sup> 108 120 121<sup>mg</sup> 122  
 126 129 246 343<sup>mg</sup> 344<sup>mg</sup> 346<sup>mg</sup> 370 376 426 458 488 489 628 630 646  
 669 707 730 ArmEth<sup>f</sup>Syh (sub ÷; in *O* sub \*)

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containing the variants of the chief ancient authorities for the text of the Septuagint. Part 4. Joshua, Judges and Ruth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1917).

<sup>10</sup> I made some changes to the note of the Cambridge edition for the sake of clarity; all of them will be explained in the following footnotes.

<sup>11</sup> “W” is in the Cambridge edition labelled “Θ,” namely the Washington Codex.

<sup>12</sup> I replaced the letter-labels of the manuscripts with the standard Göttingen numbers. For the letter labels, see the inserted page and the introduction to the Cambridge Old Greek Testament edition and R. Holmes and J. Parsons, *Vetus Testamentum graecum cum variis lectionibus* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1798–1827). For the number-labels, see Alfred Rahfls, *Verzeichnis der griechischen Handschriften des Alten Testaments für das Septuaginta-Unternehmen aufgestellt* (MSU 2; Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1914). For a description of cursive 370 and 799 see John W. Wevers and Udo Quast, *Deuteronomium* (Septuaginta Vetus Testamentum Graecum Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Göttingensis editum, III/2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977). For the exhaustive list of witnesses of Joshua, I am most grateful to Udo Quast of the Septuagint Institute in Göttingen.

<sup>13</sup> Kristin De Troyer, *Joshua*. In Catalogue of the Schøyen Greek Papyri, ed. R. Pintauro; The Schøyen Collection, gen. ed. J. Braarvig, I, Oslo-London, forthcoming.

<sup>14</sup> “Omitted.”

<sup>15</sup> “V” is in the Cambridge edition labelled “N.” This codex consists of two parts. One part of the Codex is kept in the Vatican Library. Its name is “Codex Basiliano-Vaticanus,” Vatican number: gr. (=graece) 2106. The other part is called “Codex Venetus,” hence “V,” and is kept—as the name indicates—in Venice as St. Mark, gr. (=graece) 1.

<sup>16</sup> The editors of the Cambridge edition used Gothic letters to indicate the texts and their translations, I did not use the Gothic letters, but the more current English abbreviated labels, e.g. “OldLat” for “Old Latin.”

<sup>17</sup> Latin for “present.”

Looking at this list of witnesses, I can conclude that verse 15 is clearly a hexaplaric addition to the Old Greek of Joshua. Its omission is definitely not due to homoioteleuton.

What do the preceding note and my conclusion mean? Let me first explain the almost cryptic code, and then turn to my conclusion that this verse is a hexaplaric addition and its omission in the Old Greek is not due to homoioteleuton. The first part of my note runs up to the semi-colon: “Καὶ ἐπέστρεψεν ἰησοῦς καὶ πᾶς ἡλ μετ’ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν παρεμβολὴν εἰς γάλαλα omitted in BAF<sup>b</sup>V OldLatSah<sup>b</sup>Sah<sup>t</sup>.” The text in Greek is the text of verse 15. Where does this text come from, since the text of verse 15 is not printed in the main text of the Greek editions of Joshua? The note indicates that the verse is omitted in Codices B, A, the corrected text of Codex F (indicated with F<sup>b</sup>), and Codex V. Moreover, verse 15 is absent in the Old Latin translation,<sup>18</sup> as well as from the Sahidic translation of the Greek text.<sup>19</sup>

The second part of the note runs as follows: “exstat in B<sup>mg</sup>F<sup>bm</sup>GW 18 19 30 38 54 56 58 68 75 82 85<sup>mg</sup> 108 120 121<sup>mg</sup> 122 126 129 246 343<sup>mg</sup> 344<sup>mg</sup> 346<sup>mg</sup> 370 376 426 458 488 489 628 630 646 669 707 730 ArmEth<sup>t</sup>Syh (sub ÷; in *O* sub ※).” This second part of the note says that verse 15 is present in the margin of Codex B and in the margin of the corrected text as presented by F<sup>b</sup> (= B<sup>mg</sup>F<sup>bm</sup>), and in the standard text of Codices G and W. Moreover, verse 15 is also present in a series of Greek manuscripts written in Greek cursive letters. The editors of the Cambridge edition listed the manuscripts known to them in 1917. I compared this list with the list of the Septuagint Institute in Göttingen. The Septuagint Institute in Göttingen has carefully studied most, if not all, of the Greek witnesses; their handwritten volumes on each biblical book contain all the variants of the Greek text.<sup>20</sup> Verse 15 is present in the following manuscripts: 18 19 30 38 54 56 58 68 75 82 85<sup>mg</sup> 108 120 121<sup>mg</sup> 122 126 129 246 343<sup>mg</sup> 344<sup>mg</sup> 346<sup>mg</sup> 370 376 426 458 488 489 628 630 646 669 707 730. Note that the text of verse 15 is only present in the margins of 85 and 121, and not in the main text.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>18</sup> See above, note 87.

<sup>19</sup> The editors of the Cambridge edition worked with one edition of the Coptic text, namely the one by Herbert Thompson. Currently, however, there are two editions, and I have added the reading from the most recent edition. Hence, I distinguish between the Coptic edition as prepared by Bodmer, indicated with “b,” and the one edited by Thompson, indicated with “t.” Cf. *Bibliotheca Bodmeriana*: Rudolphe Kasser, *Papyrus Bodmer xxi: Josué vi,16–25, vii,6–xi,23, xxii,1–2,19–xxiii,7,15–xxiv,23 en sahidique* (Cologny-Genève; *Bibliotheca Bodmeriana*, 1963); and Herbert Thompson, *A Coptic Palimpsest containing Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Judith and Esther in the Sahidic Dialect* (London: Oxford University Press, 1911).

<sup>20</sup> The volumes are called “Kollationshefte.”

<sup>21</sup> That verse 15 is present in cursives 19, 82, and 108 comes as no surprise to me, since they are Lucianic witnesses; after all, Lucian did try to bring the Greek text closer to the Hebrew text, most probably the MT as it is now. That verse 15 was inserted into the margin of cursive 121 and was not present in the main text of this cursive also comes as

Verse 15 is also present in the Armenian, the Ethiopic, and the Syriac translation of the Hexapla, called the Syro-Hexapla. In the latter, however, the reading is accompanied with an asterisk, indicating that the text of verse 15 stems from Origen, using—most probably—the text of Theodotion.

In Chapter I, I did not mention the old translations like the Sahidic, the Armenian, the Ethiopic, and the Syro-Hexapla. In this chapter, however, these old translations play a pivotal role. The Syro-Hexapla is, as the name indicates, a Syriac translation of the Hexapla. The Hexapla is a synopsis of the biblical text presented in six columns, produced by Origen.<sup>22</sup> At an early time, this giant work was translated into Syriac, and thus it is called the Syro-Hexapla. Later in history, another Syriac Bible was published: the Peshitta.<sup>23</sup> The early Syro-Hexapla is a superb witness to the revisionist work of Origen. In the Syro-Hexapla, many of the editorial signs that Origen used were kept. Consulting the Syro-Hexapla might give us the answer as to whether or not a text is indeed added by Origen or marked as belonging to the Old Greek tradition. The most important witness to the Syro-Hexapla is the Codex (Syrohexaplaris) Ambrosianus, dated to the VIII<sup>th</sup> century C.E.<sup>24</sup> Scholars have published other

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no surprise. Manuscript 121—very often together with 509 and the Ethiopic translation—conserves the Old Greek from before Origen's revision. A later corrector noted the absence of verse 15 and added it in the margin. The presence of verse 15 in the Ethiopic version does come as a surprise, for most of the time the Ethiopic text is a witness—together with B, 121, and 509—to the Old Greek text uncontaminated by the Hexapla. On the other hand, the verse is found in only one of the codices of the Ethiopic text, and not in all of them.

<sup>22</sup> See above, Chapter I.

<sup>23</sup> A lot of research is done on the Hexapla, its Syriac translation, and the Peshitta. See, e.g., Alison Salvesen, ed., *Origen's Hexapla and Fragments* (Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum 58; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998); Bas Ter Haar Romeny, "Techniques of Translation and Transmission in the Earliest Text Forms of the Syriac Version of Genesis," in *The Peshitta as a Translation: Papers Read at the II Peshitta Symposium Held at Leiden 19–21 August 1993* (ed. P. B. Dirksen and A. van der Kooij; Leiden: Brill, 1995), 177–185.

<sup>24</sup> The facsimile edition was published in 1874: H. M. Ceriani, *Codex Syro-Hexaplaris Ambrosianus* (Monumenta sacra et profana, 7; Milan, Impensis Bibliothecae Ambrosianae: 1874). A note at the beginning of the Codex (added late) states that this volume is "Pars Testamenti Veteris Syro stylo iuxta interpretationem Septuaginta," then it lists its contents: Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Sirach, 12 Minor Prophets, Jeremiah, Baruch, Lamentations, Letter of Jeremiah, Daniel (with Susanna and Bel), Ezekiel, and Isaiah. The other part of the codex was lost. Field notes in a footnote that Codex Ambrosianus and the Codex used by Masius may have belonged together (Masii codicem et Mediolanensem at unum idemque totius versionis exemplare olim pertinuisse non improbabiler suspicati sunt VV.DD. de Rossio, Norbergius, Ceriani). Cf. Fridericus Field, *Origenis Hexaplorum quae supersunt; sive veterum interpretum graecorum in totum Vetus Testamentum Fragmenta, Tomus 1: Prolegomena. Genesis–Esther* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1875), lxxvii, n. 1. The lost Syro-Hexapla codex used by Masius contained Joshua, Judges, Kings (1–4), Chronicles, Ezra, Esther, Judith, Tobit,

important witnesses to the Syro-Hexapla as well. A. Vööbus, for instance, published an important Syro-Hexaplaric manuscript in 1975.<sup>25</sup> Baars published other Syro-Hexaplaric texts in 1968.<sup>26</sup> The Göttingen scholar de Lagarde provided the scholarly world with a critical edition of the Syro-Hexapla in 1892;<sup>27</sup> I still use this book.<sup>28</sup> In the Syro-Hexapla, verse 15 is marked with an obelus.<sup>29</sup> This indicates that according to the Syro-Hexaplaric manuscripts, this verse was part of the Old Greek and not part of the Hebrew text. This is, however, precisely the opposite of what the witnesses reveal, for verse 15 is absent in the Greek, but present in the Hebrew. An asterisk can be found, however, in Codex G, the Leiden Codex Vossius, also known as Codex Sarraiani-Colbertini. This codex is one of the best sources for the Origenic symbols used throughout his text.

The summary of the above paragraph is given in the text critical apparatus as follows: Syh (sub ÷; in O sub ✱). Contrary to expectations, then, the Syro-Hexapla seems to state that verse 15 belongs to the Old Greek text. That Codex G, however, has an asterisk seems to indicate that most probably the obelus indication is an error. Priority, indeed, should be given to the witness of Origen's work, Codex G. Thus, verse 15 did not belong to the Old Greek of Joshua.

Both the Armenian translation and one witness to the Ethiopic text,<sup>30</sup> namely Codex F, also include verse 15. The Armenian translation is dependent

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and a major part of Deuteronomy. Andreas Masius published readings from the Codex in his 1574 book entitled: *Josuae Historia* (Antwerp, 1574). Most scholars, however, consult a collection of extracts published under the following title: *Critici sacri: sive Annotata doctissimorum virorum in Vetus ac Novum Testamentum*. As publishers the following list of (impressive) names is given: "Excudunt Henricus & Vida Theodori Boom, Joannes & Aegidius Janssonii à Waesberge, Gerhardus Borstius, Abraham à Someren, Joannes Wolters Amstelaedami Guiljelmus van de Water Ultrajecti, 1698. The original publication, however, might have seen the light in London in 1660, under the title *Critici sacri sive doctissimorum virorum in S.S. Biblia Annotationes et Tractatus* (thanks for this insight go to Gilbert Van Belle from Louvain). Note that some of these publishers—or their descendants—are still active in the publishing world!

<sup>25</sup> Arthur Vööbus, *The Pentateuch in the Version of the Syro-Hexapla: A Facsimile Edition of a Midyat Ms. Discovered 1964* (CSCO 369; Leuven: Peeters, 1975).

<sup>26</sup> W. Baars, *New Syro-Hexaplaric Texts* (Leiden: Brill, 1968).

<sup>27</sup> Paul de Lagarde, *Bibliothecae Syriacae* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1892).

<sup>28</sup> This book is extremely useful when it comes to Masius' indications of hexaplaric material. As the latter are not always reliable, I compare Masius' readings with de Lagarde's.

<sup>29</sup> De Lagarde notes: "Versum XV. totum legit Syrus notatum obelismus [B\* X praebet]. Est ille quidem etiam in Hebraicis libris nunc. Verum, non su, ut videtur loco positus." Cf. P. de Lagarde, *Bibliothecae Syriacae*, 134. Note, however, that the Syro-Hexapla does have an asterisk at v. 43.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Augustus Dillmann, *Veteris testamenti aethiopici: Tomus primus sive octateuchus aethiopicus* (Leipzig: Guil. Vogel, 1853).

on and influenced by the hexaplaric tradition. If the Syro-Hexapla had this verse marked under obeli, then most probably the Armenian version kept verse 15 in its text. That it is present in the Ethiopic text is rather surprising, for normally the Ethiopic text is a prime witness to the Old Greek text. In this case, I point the reader to the fact that the verse is only attested in one codex, namely Codex F. That might raise questions on the presence of this verse in the Ethiopic text as a whole.

The foregoing discussion makes clear that verse 15 in the Greek is an addition to the text made by Origen and that this addition has been preserved in many witnesses. The next line that needs a bit of explanation is the conclusion that this verse is not due to homoioteleuton. When a scribe was copying a text, he or she<sup>31</sup> could sometimes make a mistake. A very common mistake was to jump from one word to another word that had a similar ending. For instance, a scribe copying the second sentence of the paragraph that I just started, could jump from the word “discussion” to the word “conclusion,” for the endings of both words are the same. If the ending (*teleuton*) of a word is the same (*homio*), then the error is called “homoioteleuton.” There are many more errors a copyist can make. Some letters resemble one another and thus can easily be misread. I, for instance, often misread Γ (capital gamma, “G,” closely followed by a capital iota, “I”) for a Π (capital pi, “P”). Of course, one easily finds this mistake when reading the text anew, for the misspelled word very often does not make sense. But the copyists did not seem to proofread their text often. Another error occurs when the scribe is already thinking of the next word, and forgets to finish the word he was writing. It would be like spelling ‘Joshut,’ instead of ‘Joshua the prophet’—an error, though, that is most often immediately corrected by the scribe him- or herself.

In our text, it could have been that the scribe jumped from the beginning of verse 15 to the beginning of verse 16. Both verses start with “and . . .” followed by an imperfect verb. As verbs, however, are mostly placed at the beginning of a verse, and as “and . . .” is the most common start of a narrative, this explanation does not make sense. The omission of verse 15 in the Greek text is thus not due to an error made by a scribe, but to the simple fact that verse 15 was not present in the text that was before the scribe at the time the text was translated.

## 2. Current Opinions

A lot of research has been done on the Greek book of Joshua. Lester Grabbe once wrote me an email asking me whether the ghost of Max Margolis was haunting me in my dreams. Indeed, all Joshua scholars have to work through the immense research done by Margolis on Joshua. He tried to organize and classify

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<sup>31</sup> Most probably “he,” but I do not want to exclude the possibility of female scribes, and hence I refer to he/she.

the witnesses to the Greek text of Joshua and reconstruct the Old Greek text.<sup>32</sup> Many scholars have followed his example and have offered their views on the Old Greek of Joshua. Most of these scholars, however, are Septuagint scholars. So far, the Greek text of Joshua has not played a major role in the research of the Hebrew text. That is rather unfortunate, since the debate about the different redactional layers in the Hebrew book of Joshua, and especially its Deuteronomistic layer, is rather intriguing.<sup>33</sup> The question has also arisen as to when the editorial process of rewriting came to an end. The latter question is linked to the question of when the Hebrew Scriptures came to a point of closure.

The question for me is not only how the Old Greek interpreted the Hebrew story, but also to which Hebrew text the Old Greek witnesses. In the section of witnesses, I have been working with the Greek texts. The Greek biblical manuscripts we have—like the Hebrew biblical manuscripts—are not the original texts as produced by the authors or first translators. We do not have the story of Joshua as finalized by its latest author, nor do we have the autograph of the Greek translator. Autographs are rare pieces. One can, for instance, admire the autograph of Thomas Aquinas in the Apostolic Library of the Vatican.<sup>34</sup> The autographs, however, of the Hebrew Bible and Greek Bible have not been preserved. The oldest copies of a Hebrew text of Joshua can be found among the texts of the Judean Desert.<sup>35</sup> Eugene Ulrich dates 4QJosh<sup>a</sup> to the second half of

<sup>32</sup> Max L. Margolis, *The Book of Joshua in Greek According to the Critically Restored Text with an Apparatus Containing the Variants of the Principal Recensions and of the Individual Witnesses* (Publications of the Alexander Kohut Memorial Foundation), Parts i–iv (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1931–1938), Part 5 (Philadelphia: Annenberg Research Institute, 1992). For corrections to Margolis, I refer to Emanuel Tov, “The Fifth Fascicle of Margolis’ *The Book of Joshua in Greek*,” *JQR* 74 (1984): 397–407, and to Cees den Hertog, “Anmerkungen zu Margolis’ *The Book of Joshua in Greek*,” *BIOSCS* 28 (1995): 51–56.

<sup>33</sup> Martin Noth, *Das Buch Josua* (2d ed.; Handbuch zum Alten Testament, I/7; Tübingen: Mohr, 1953); Rudolf Smend, “Das Gesetz und die Völker: Ein Beitrag zur deuteronomistischen Redaktionsgeschichte,” in *Probleme biblischer Theologie* (ed. H. Wolff; Munich: Kaiser, 1971), 494–504; John Alberto Soggin, *Joshua: A Commentary* (Old Testament Library; Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox, 1972); Timo Veijola, *Die ewige Dynastie: David und die Entstehung seiner Dynastie nach der deuteronomistischen Darstellung* (Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia Toimituksia B, 193; Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1975); Volkmar Fritz, *Das Buch Josua* (Handbuch zum Alten Testament, I/7; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1994); Ed Noort, *Das Buch Josua: Forschungsgeschichte und Problemfelder* (EdF 292; Darmstadt, 1998); Reinhard Kratz, *Die Komposition der erzählenden Bücher des Alten Testaments* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000); Walter Dietrich, *Von David zu den Deuteronomisten: Studien zu den Geschichtsüberlieferungen des Alten Testaments* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2002).

<sup>34</sup> The official name of the library is *Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana*; its abbreviation is BAV.

<sup>35</sup> Eugene Ulrich, Frank Moore Cross, Sidnie White Crawford, J. A. Duncan, Patrick W. Skehan, Emanuel Tov, and Julio Treballe Barrera, *Qumran Cave 4—IX: Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Kings* (DJD XIV; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 143–160.



the second century or the first half of the first century B.C.E.<sup>36</sup> Emanuel Tov dates 4QJosh<sup>b</sup> to the middle of the first century B.C.E.<sup>37</sup> The fragments of 4QJosh<sup>a</sup> contain parts of chapter 10. Fragment 17–18 contains Joshua 10:2–5 and fragments 19–22 contain Joshua 10:8–11. Unfortunately, no fragments with the text of Joshua 10:15 have been found. The oldest copy of the Old Greek Joshua is the Schøyen Papyrus MS 2648 (its Göttingen, Ralfhs' *Verzeichnis* number is 816<sup>38</sup>). The Florentine papyrologist Rosario Pintaudi dates it to the end of the second or the beginning of the third century, more precisely ca. 210–215 C.E.<sup>39</sup> It is clear from the witnesses—more specifically the aforementioned papyrus and Codex Vaticanus<sup>40</sup>—that in the third century C.E. verse 15 was not present in chapter 10 of the Greek book of Joshua. There is also no trace whatsoever that verse 15 was ever present in the Old Greek text of Joshua. I think it is likely that verse 15 was absent from the Hebrew text from which the translator worked. Are there, however, also literary-critical reasons for the absence of verse 15 in the Hebrew text that lay before the eyes of the translator, rather than for its omission in the Greek text? For this, we turn to a literary-critical analysis, and start with an analysis of the structure of the larger context of the passage and the structure of the passage itself.

## C. Analysis

### 1. MT

#### a) Structure

The Hebrew story of Joshua is a story of conquering and dividing the land. After Joshua has been installed as the new leader, he sends out spies to the promised land ahead of him. After being helped by the prostitute Rahab (the

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 143.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 153.

<sup>38</sup> This number does not occur in the 1914 edition of the *Verzeichnis*; cf. Alfred Rahfls, *Verzeichnis der griechischen Handschriften des Alten Testaments für das Septuaginta-Unternehmen aufgestellt* (MSU 2; Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1914). The Göttingen Septuagint Institute, more precisely Detlef Fraenkel, who is working on an updated version of the *Verzeichnis*, has assigned this number to the papyrus codex.

<sup>39</sup> Kristin De Troyer, *Joshua*, in *Catalogue of the Schøyen Greek Papyri* (ed. R. Pintaudi; The Schøyen Collection; gen. ed. J. Braarvig, I, Oslo-London, forthcoming).

<sup>40</sup> See *Codex vaticanus graecus 1209* (Bibliorum sacrorum graecorum; Vatican City: Bibliotheca Apostolicae Vaticanae & Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1999). An accompanying prolegomena to the 1999 facsimile edition of Codex Vaticanus has been written by Paul Canart, Pierre-Marie Bogaert, and Stephen Pisano.

only women in Joshua's life?) he orders the Israelites to cross the Jordan. Upon entering the promised land, the not yet circumcised Israelites are circumcised. They celebrate Passover. Joshua has a brief encounter with (the commander of the army of) the Lord. When Joshua is commanded to take Jericho, he does so. First Jericho is taken, then—after some initial mistakes are made—Ai is conquered. An altar is built at the end of the Ai event. When the kings from beyond the Jordan decide to fight Joshua and the Israelites, they, and more precisely king Adonizedek of Jerusalem, actually start the first huge round of battle.<sup>41</sup> After a deal is made with Gibeon, Joshua fights and destroys the cities of Libnah, Lachish, Eglon, Hebron, and Debir—each time taking care of their kings too. The next round of battle is “started” by Jabin, king of Hazor. When Joshua is a bit older, the remainder of the land is possessed and divided among the Israelites and some of their confederates. The book of Joshua ends with two separate concluding chapters—proof that the last editor wanted to have the final word.

The larger structure of the book of Joshua is as follows:

#### I. Introduction

1:1–9: report on the installation of Joshua, the new leader

1:10–15: report on Joshua's first commands

1:16–18: report on acceptance of Joshua's leadership

#### II. Israel crosses the Jordan and marks the event

2:1–24: story about the spies and Rahab

3:1–4:24: report on Israel's preparation for, actual crossing of, and ritually marking of their crossing of the Jordan

5:1–8: report on circumcision

5:9: comment on location

5:10–12: report on Passover celebration

5:13–15: report on Joshua's brief encounter with God

#### III. Examples of how to live in the land

6:1–27: the Jericho story

7:1–8:29: report on the first and second attempt on taking Ai

8:30–35: report on the building of an altar

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<sup>41</sup> Isn't it fun to note that the author or editor of Joshua blames the other for having started the fight—he started, not me!

## IV. Conquering the land

9:1–10:43: report on the first round of battle against the kings of the land

11:1–12:24: report on the second round of battle against the kings of the land

## V. Conquering the land, phase two

13:1–22:34: report on how the Israelites took possession and divided the land

## VI. Conclusions

23:1–16: first concluding chapter of the book of Joshua

24:1–33: second concluding chapter

In chapter 10, Joshua is dealing with the coalition of five kings, headed by King Adonizedek of Jerusalem. Looking at the destruction of Jericho and Ai, and probably stunned with the voluntary submission of Gibeon, King Adonizedek has become a bit worried about his territory, and asks his colleagues to come and attack Gibeon. Gibeon, though, sends for help and asks Joshua to come and defeat his former allies. Joshua takes the opportunity to fight and leaves Gilgal to attack the five kings. After defeating the coalition, he returns to Gilgal. Later, he deals with the five kings and then sets out to smite their cities. One after the other, the cities are destroyed: Libnah, Lachish, Eglon, Hebron, and Debir. At the end of the chapter, the author offers a summary about Joshua conquering the region. The chapter concludes with a note that Joshua and his troops return to Gilgal. The structure of the passage looks as follows:

## I. First story: the fight against Gibeon

10:1–4: introduction to the initiative of King Adonizedek

10:5: report on fight against Gibeon

10:6: report on call for help from Gibeon

10:7: report on Joshua's response

10:8: report on God's promise

10:9–13: report on the intervention of the fabulous team Joshua-God, topped with notes regarding some miraculous moments

10:14: conclusion of the first story of Joshua 10: statement about what happened

## Rewriting the Sacred Text

10:15: comment on location: the people return to the camp at Gilgal

## II. Second story: dealing with the five kings

10:16: report on new action: the five kings have fled to Makedah and they hide in the cave

10:17: report to Joshua

10:18: immediate reaction of Joshua regarding the kings

10:19–21: additional instruction of Joshua: he directs his people to yet another action — additional story

10:22: report on second, later reaction of Joshua regarding the kings

10:23: report on response of the guards

10:24a: report on action of Joshua

10:24b: report on response of the people

10:25–27: report on final actions of Joshua with the five kings

10:28: report on how Joshua destroys Makedah<sup>42</sup>

## III. Third story: dealing with the destruction of the five cities

10:29–30: report on fight against Libnah

10:31–32: report on fight against Lachish

10:33: report on additional fight against an ally, king Hiram of Gezer

10:34–35: report on fight against Eglon

10:36–37: report on fight against Hebron

10:38–39: report on fight against Debir

## IV. Conclusion

10:40–42: summary on how Joshua smote the area beyond the five kingdoms and took all its kings

10:43: comment on location: Joshua and his troops return to Gilgal

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<sup>42</sup> Why was the city of Makedah destroyed? Was it because it had a cave in which the kings hid?

In this chapter, I will focus on verse 15, and along the way I will also discuss verse 43. Both verses mention Gilgal as Joshua's campground. It is precisely verse 15 (and 43) that is missing from the Old Greek text.

#### b) Analysis

In chapter 10, Gibeon sends for help. Its men have to go to Gilgal in order to catch Joshua, who is in Gilgal (verse 6). Joshua goes up from Gilgal to help the Gibeonites (verse 7). It takes the troops an entire night to go from Gilgal to the battlefield (verse 9). After the battle, Joshua and all the Israelites with him return to Gilgal.<sup>43</sup> 10:43 again reports that Joshua returns, and all the Israelites with him, to the camp at Gilgal. In between, Joshua is in Makedah butchering the kings (Joshua 10:16–28), and in the entire country destroying their cities, and again all over the country dealing with other kings and other cities (10:29–42). This is a survey of Joshua's whereabouts in chapter 10; the centrality of Gilgal surfaces immediately:

Gilgal	battlefield	Makedah	rest of land
10:6			
10:7			
(10:9)	10:10–14		
10:15			
		10:21–28	
			10:29–42
10:43			

In verse 21, Joshua “returns” to Makedah. This is a rather surprising remark, for one would expect the troops to go after the five fleeing kings and, thus precisely, turn to Makedah. There is, however, no need to “return” to Makedah. To the contrary, Joshua and his gang return to Gilgal after the battle. How then can Joshua return to Makedah if he had never been there before? When in the narrative does Joshua move his camp from Gilgal (verse 15) to Makedah (verse 21)?

There is yet another problem that needs to be solved before locating the switch in Joshua's whereabouts. In verse 16, the narrator reports that the five kings flee to Makedah. The reader knows that they are gone. But Joshua, the supreme leader, needs to know, too. Hence, in verse 17, Joshua is informed about the fleeing of the kings. The verse literally states that it was reported to Joshua. By the end of verse 17, both the reader and the leading character in the story seem to know the same fact. Verse 17, however, is not constructed in an

<sup>43</sup> It seems that the entire camp leaves Gilgal and later returns to Gilgal, for the author writes that “all Israel” went with him.

obvious manner: it opens with a hofal “it was told to Joshua;” then, the verse continues with “saying,” followed by a direct quote in the third plural “they have found.” Hence, verse 17 not only reports on the fleeing of the five kings, it also informs Joshua that they were found. Verse 17 offers the necessary facts for the continuation of the story. If it were not for verse 17, how would Joshua have found out and how would the story have been continued? Verse 17 is truly a perfect verse! One could presume that the report about the fleeing kings was made to Joshua when he was in his camp at Gilgal, and Joshua reacts in an appropriate way. In verse 18, he gives orders to roll large stones against the mouth of the cave and to set men by it to guard it. Joshua then orders his soldiers to pursue their enemies till the bitter end (vv. 19–20). In verse 21, the narrator writes: “All the people returned safe to Joshua in the camp at Makedah.” In an instant, as in a dream, the entire camp has moved to Makedah. There is no mention of the camp’s move, or of the duration of the process. This time, it only takes a blink of the eye to move from Gilgal to Makedah. There is no overnight transfer. It just happens. The author uses almost the same sentence as in verse 15. Verse 15 reads: “And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp, to Gilgal.”<sup>44</sup> Verse 21 reads: “And all the people returned to the camp, to Joshua, (to) Makedah,<sup>45</sup> in safety.” The addition of the words “in safety” even creates the impression that the people have come “home,” namely that they have reached their point of departure. The camp, however, is no longer in Gilgal, but in Makedah. The story, then, continues with the events that happen in Makedah.

Looking at the overall structure of chapter 10, the moving from one camp to another seems logical. The Israelites pursue their enemies and go first to Libnah, then to Lachish, Eglon, Hebron, and finally, to Debir. The Hebrew story of chapter 10, however, does end with the same opening note, more or less. Indeed, verse 43 is precisely the same as verse 15. It states: “And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp, to Gilgal.” Gilgal does seem to be the headquarters for Joshua’s troops.

In the book of Joshua, Gilgal is mentioned right after the Israelites have come out of the water of the Jordan (4:19). This is not a surprise, for God had instructed the Israelites to cross there and to utter a blessing on Mount Gerizim from Gilgal and a curse on Mount Ebal. These mountains are located opposite Gilgal, besides the oak of Moreh (Deut 11:28–29). They camp in Gilgal (Josh 4:19), set up stones in Gilgal (4:20), and celebrate Passover in Gilgal (5:10). An etiology for the name Gilgal is given in connection with the stones that the twelve priests, representing the twelve tribes, have to pick up from the Jordan and set as a monument in remembrance of their leaving Egypt. God explains that

<sup>44</sup> In the book of Joshua, the word Gilgal is three times used with a *he-localis*, which indicates the direction towards, for instance, a city or land: Joshua 10:6, 15, 43—each time in connection with Gilgal, hence “to Gilgal.”

<sup>45</sup> The verse seems to be constructed on the analogy of verse 15. The location, Makedah, however, is not constructed with a *he-localis*, neither is it related to “camp” or “Joshua.”

the “rolling stones” represent the rolling away of the disgrace of Egypt (5:9). In “Gilgal,”<sup>46</sup> one indeed hears the rolling stones. Joshua is still in Gilgal in 9:6, as well as in 14:6. A king from Gilgal is mentioned in 12:23. Gilgal is also referred to in describing the local geography: 15:7. In the book of Judges, Gilgal remains an important place (Judg 2:1; 3:19). Samuel frequently visits Gilgal, and Saul turns it into his headquarters as well (1 Sam 7:16; 10:8; 11:14; 13:4, 7, 8, 12, 15; 15:12, 21, 33; 19:16, 41). Even the prophets Elijah and Elisha are connected with Gilgal (2 Kgs 2:1; 4:38). From then onwards, it is downhill with the real estate value of Gilgal, for by the time the minor prophets speak about it, it is only in a context of evil, iniquity, and transgressions (Hos 4:15; 9:15; 12:12; Amos 4:4; 5:5; Mic 6:5). Gilgal is no longer the pivotal place; Jerusalem has taken over.

For a long time, though, Gilgal was the place to be. It was the place out of which the next stage in the Israelite history could start. The pivotal role played by Gilgal does indeed explain why the author mentioned the troop’s return to Gilgal—both in verse 15 and in verse 43—but why then, did the author never mention that the camp also moved to Makedah? Why was this little inconvenient detail forgotten?

## 2. LXX

### a) Structure

The structure of the Greek text is very similar to the Hebrew. One section, however, has been moved to another place, some verses have been “omitted,” and other verses have been “added.”<sup>47</sup>

#### I. Introduction

1:1–9: report on the installation of Joshua, the new leader

1:10–15: report on Joshua’s first commands

1:16–18: report on acceptance of Joshua’s leadership

#### II. Israel crosses the Jordan and marks the event

2:1–24: story about the spies and Rahab

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<sup>46</sup> I.e., in the Hebrew word.

<sup>47</sup> I have put the words “omitted” and “added” in quotation marks, for I am not sure whether these verses were indeed omitted or added, or whether these verses were never in the original Hebrew text, and thus never translated into Greek.

### Rewriting the Sacred Text

3:1–4:24: report on Israel's preparation for, actual crossing of, and ritually marking of their crossing of the Jordan

5:1–8: report on circumcision

5:9: comment on location

5:10–12: report on Passover celebration

5:13–15: report on Joshua's brief encounter with God

### III. Examples of how to live in the land

6:1–27: the Jericho story

7:1–8:29: report on the first and second attempt to take Ai

### IV. Conquering the land

9:1–2: introduction to the first round of battle

9:2\* additional verses: report on the building of an altar (par. to MT: 8:30–35)

9:3–10:43: report on the first round of battle against the kings of the land

11:1–12:24: report on the second round of battle against the kings of the land

### V. Conquering the land, phase two

13:1–22:34: report on how the Israelites took possession and divided the land

(omission of 20:4–5: the verses on fugitives)

(additional sections in 21:42 regarding Joshua's acquiring of Thamnasachar)

### VI. Conclusions

23:1–16: first concluding chapter of the book of Joshua

24:1–33: second concluding chapter

(additional section in 24:30: Joshua is buried in Thamnasachar)

The overall structure of chapter 10 remains the same as the Hebrew. Two verses, though, are missing in the Greek text: the two verses we focused on above, verses 15 and 43. A more precise analysis of the verses of this chapter reveals many other differences. There is, for instance, a difference in attitude towards the description of carrying out orders. In the Hebrew text, the author stresses that the execution of each command follows precisely the command



itself. The report of the execution of a command very often resembles the report on the command itself. In the Greek text, this is less obvious.<sup>48</sup>

I. First story: the fight against Gibeon

10:1–4: introduction to the initiative of King Adonizedek

10:5: report on fight against Gibeon

10:6: report on call for help from Gibeon

10:7: report on Joshua's response

10:8: report on God's promise

10:9–13: report on the intervention of the fabulous team Joshua-God, topped with notes regarding some miraculous moments

10:14: conclusion of the first story of Joshua 10: statement about what happened

II. Second story: dealing with the five kings

10:16: report on new action: the five kings have fled to Makedah and they hide in the cave

10:17: report to Joshua

10:18: immediate reaction of Joshua regarding the kings

10:19–21: additional instruction of Joshua: he directs his people to yet another action — additional story

10:22: report on second, later reaction of Joshua regarding the kings

10:23: report on response of the guards

10:24a: report on action of Joshua

10:24b: report on response of the people

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<sup>48</sup> For a detailed analysis of the commands and the execution of the commands in the Old Greek and MT of Joshua, see: Kristin De Troyer, "Did Joshua Have a Crystal Ball? The Old Greek and the MT of Joshua 10:15, 17 and 23," in *Emanuel: Studies in Hebrew Bible, Septuagint and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honor of Emanuel Tov* (ed. Shalom M. Paul et al.; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 571–589.

## Rewriting the Sacred Text

10:25–27: report on final actions of Joshua with the five kings

10:28: report on how Joshua destroys Makedah

## III. Third story: dealing with the destruction of the five cities

10:29–30: report on fight against Libnah

10:31–32: report on fight against Lachish

10:33: report on additional fight against an ally, king Horam of Gezer

10:34–35: report on fight against Eglon

10:36–37: report on fight against Hebron

10:38–39: report on fight against Debir

## IV. Conclusion

10:40–42: summary on how Joshua smote the area beyond the five kingdoms and took all its kings

The question for the analysis is obvious: Why is Joshua not returning to Gilgal in verse 15 (and in verse 43)?

## b) Analysis

It is clear that in the Greek text too, Gilgal plays a role. The name Gilgal has been transliterated into Galgala. Joshua is located at Galgala when the Gideonites come to ask for his help (10:6). He sets out in 10:7 to move to the battlefield. It still takes him a long night to walk (10:9) to the battlefield. After the battle, however, he does not return to Galgala. Neither does he go “home” in 10:43. Joshua simply walks from one site to the next. Nowhere in the narrative does he turn back. The survey of Joshua’s whereabouts in the Greek text looks like this:

Galgala battlefield	Makedah	rest of land
10:6		
10:7		
(10:9)	10:10–14	
-		
	10:21–28	
		10:29–42
-		

Joshua, in the Greek text, must have continued from the battlefield to Makedah, for it is said that his troops return to him in Makedah. Indeed, in verse

21, it is said that people return to Joshua at Makedah. In Makedah, Joshua deals with the kings (10:21–27) and finally fights the city (10:28). Then, he moves to take on the cities of the five kings and the rest of the area. As in the Hebrew text, it is not reported when precisely Joshua moved his camp to Makedah. What Joshua does between the battle at the battlefield and his actions against the king is not mentioned. He does not, however, return to Gilgal/Galgala in between his fight and his dealing with the kings. After his battle, Joshua is closer to Makedah than in the Hebrew story.

The “omission” of Gilgal/Galgala makes the story, however, a bit less complicated. Indeed, verse 21 in the Greek text appears less strange than in the Hebrew. Verse 21 just marks the new camp. It is in Makedah. It is the next stop on Joshua’s itinerary. At first sight, verse 21 in both the Hebrew and the Greek text give the same information:

MT: And all the people returned safely<sup>49</sup> to the camp, to Joshua, to Makedah.

LXX: And all the people returned safely to Joshua in Makedah.

וַיָּשְׁבוּ כָל־הָעָם אֶל־הַמַּחֲנֶה אֶל־יְהוֹשֻׁעַ מִקֵּדָה בְּשָׁלוֹם

Καὶ ἀπεστράφη πᾶς ὁ λαὸς πρὸς Ἰησοῦν εἰς Μακηδα ὑγιεῖς.

Only in the Greek text, however, is this information appropriate: after all that happened, Joshua and his compatriots are in Makedah. In the Hebrew text, the reader or audience expects the army to go back to Gilgal, not to Makedah.

The Greek text runs even more smoothly than the Hebrew text. In the Hebrew text, there is a lot of information given at the end of the verse: the people return to the camp, to Joshua, (to) Makedah, in safety. The Greek text, to the contrary, just states that the people return safely to Joshua in Makedah.

I could conclude this analysis by stating that the Greek text has avoided the difficulty by omitting verse 15. Indeed, by omitting verse 15, the translator interpreted the text and made Joshua move to Makedah somewhere before verse 21, so that Joshua was able “to return” to Makedah in verse 21. The Greek text, however, has also omitted the reference to Gilgal at the end of the chapter. Indeed, there is no verse 43 in the Greek text.<sup>50</sup> Removing verse 43, however, does not make the story better, but just a bit different. In the Greek story, Joshua takes on the rest of the land. There is no return to Gilgal. The Greek story,

<sup>49</sup> Literally, “in peace.”

<sup>50</sup> The Cambridge text-critical apparatus reads as follows: καὶ ἀνέστρεψεν ἰησὺ καὶ πᾶς ἰηλ μετ’ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν παρεμβολὴν εἰς γάλαλα Gbcxz(mg)ArmEth<sup>c</sup>Syh. The editor adds that the sentence is indicated with an \* in both G and the Syro-Hexapla. It is clear that this Greek line stems from the Hebrew text. In “das Kollationsheft” from Udo Quast in Göttingen, the following witnesses are listed as having verse 43: G 19 85<sup>ms</sup> 108 376 426 (G sub \*).

however, could also have ended with Joshua's return to Gilgal. So, why did the translator omit verse 43?

The solution for the omission of these two verses from chapter 10 could lie in the free attitude of the translator. Maybe the translator of the book of Joshua felt free to change the story, adapt verses, from time to time omit verses, and even add verses. As I noted in the general structure of the Greek text of Joshua, the translator indeed "moved" section 8:30–35 to LXX 9:2. He or she also "omitted" some verses in chapter 20. Finally, the translator "added" some verses in 21:42 and 24:30. Was the translator, however, a very free translator? A detailed study of the translation technique of the entire book of Joshua could provide the answer to the question. That would be, however, a book in itself. Seppo Sipilä, for instance, wrote a book on one aspect of the translation technique of Joshua.<sup>51</sup> He points to the precarious balance the translator of Joshua kept in his translation. On the one hand, he/she<sup>52</sup> did have the freedom to change some elements, but on the other hand, he/she kept close to the Hebrew text. The translator, therefore, does not omit something because he/she did not like it, or because he/she wanted to change the story. No, the translator does stay close to the Hebrew text, but alters systematically some syntactical constructions in order to create a good Greek text.

My analysis of the commands and their executions points to a similar conclusion.<sup>53</sup> The translator does stay close to the Hebrew text. Comparing the verses in which Gilgal was mentioned in the Hebrew text with their counterparts in the Greek book of Joshua, I note that the translator kept every reference to Gilgal except for verses 15 and 43, where the entire verse is omitted (the translator also omitted the reference to Gilgal in 5:10<sup>54</sup>). Looking at all the "Gilgal" verses, I noted that the translator seems to change the name of the place. Up till chapter 10, the translator renders the Hebrew word "Gilgal" as "Galgala." In the list of captured kings, 12:23, the translator opts for "Galilaias," maybe because "Gilgal" is here mentioned together with king "Goim" or "king of the Goim" of Gilgal—a further unknown king.<sup>55</sup> From chapter 14 onwards, the Hebrew place name is rendered with Galgal, not Galgala. Maybe the translator did not know of a place called "Galgala"? Maybe the place "Galgala"

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<sup>51</sup> S. Sipilä, *Between Literalness and Freedom: Translation Technique in the Septuagint of Joshua and Judges Regarding the Clause Connections Introduced by ו and כ* (Publications of the Finnish Exegetical Society 75; Helsinki: The Finnish Exegetical Society in Helsinki; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999).

<sup>52</sup> "He/she" is my way of referring to the translator of Joshua, not Sipilä's.

<sup>53</sup> See K. De Troyer, "Did Joshua Have a Crystal Ball? The Old Greek and the MT of Joshua 10:15, 17 and 23."

<sup>54</sup> Maybe because it was just mentioned in 5:9?

<sup>55</sup> This rendering may be influenced by Isa 9:1 (8:23 Heb), which refers to "Galilee of the Gentiles" (i.e., "Galilee of the *Goyim*").

was not all that important? Who can tell?<sup>56</sup> What is obvious is that the translator does translate the reference to Gilgal in almost all passages, except 10:15 and 10:43. The question, then, remains: Why is there no verse 15 (and no verse 43) in the Greek text?

Before turning to a solution, I would like to focus on the “perfect” verse 17. In verse 17, Joshua is told that the five kings have fled and that they hide in a cave in Makedah. According to a note in the margins of the Hebrew text—a note added by the Masoretes who not only studied, but also guarded the text of the Hebrew Bible—the expression “and it was told” appears twenty-four times in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>57</sup> Of all these passages, only two repeat elements of the preceding narrative: 1 Kgs 2:29 and Josh 10:17. 1 Kgs 2:29 repeats a part of the previous verse: 2:28 states, “. . . Joab fled to the tent of the Lord and grasped the horns of the altar.” Verse 29 reads, “When it was told King Solomon, ‘Joab has fled to the tent of the Lord, and now is beside the altar’ . . . .”

Schematically:

v. 28:	fled	. . .	grasped horns
v. 29: it was told	fled	. . .	(he was beside the altar)

In Joshua 10:17, another “fleeing-situation” is narrated. Joshua 10:17, however, repeats the second element of the preceding verse 16<sup>58</sup>, emphasizing not the fleeing, but the hiding:

v. 16:	And these five kings fled and they hid in the cave in Makedah		
v. 17:	And it was told to Joshua saying: We have found the five kings who were hiding in the cave of Makedah.		

Schematically:

v. 16:	fled	. . .	hid
v. 17: it was told	(found)	. . .	hiding

In Hebrew:

<sup>56</sup> The translator of the books of Samuel on the other hand renders Gilgal again with Galgala. We acknowledge that the issue of the names in the Greek book of Joshua is a difficult one. See Lea Mazar, “The Septuagint Translation of the Book of Joshua: Its Contribution to the Understanding of the Textual Transmission of the Book and Its Literary and Ideological Development.” Ph.D. Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1994.

<sup>57</sup> Gen 22:20; 27:42; 31:22; 38:13; Exod 4:5; Josh 10:17; Judg 9:25; 9:47; 1 Sam 15:12; 19:19; 23:7; 27:4; 2 Sam 6:12; 10:17; 19:1; 21:11; 1 Kgs 1:51; 2:29; 2:41; 2 Kgs 6:13; 8:7; 1 Chr 19:17; and Isa 7:2.

<sup>58</sup> Note that the participle of verse 17, made of the verb used in verse 16, is a *hapax* in the Hebrew Bible.

v. 16: וינסו חמשת המלכים האלה ויחבאו במערה  
במקדה

v. 17: ויגד ליהושע לאמר נמצאו חמשת המלכים נחבאים  
במערה במקדה

Verse 17 is also of importance for the continuation of the narrative in verse 23:

v. 16: And these five kings fled and they hid in the cave in  
Makedah

v. 23: Bring to me these five kings out of the cave.

v. 16: וינסו חמשת המלכים האלה ויחבאו במערה  
במקדה

v. 23<sup>59</sup>: ויציאו אלי את חמשת המלכים האלה מן-המערה

The author who created verse 17 has taken elements from verse 16 and verse 23 and thus linked the two scenes. The hiding of verse 16 is repeated in verse 17. Precisely this element is reported to Joshua, who can then give the command in verse 23 to bring these kings out of their hiding place to him. Verse 17 fills out a gap left by the report on the five hiding kings (verse 16) and the reaction it provoked (v.18). More so than in the Greek text, in the Hebrew text, Joshua needs to be precisely informed about what happened, for he had already returned to Gilgal in verse 15. The question when verse 17 was created is, in my opinion, linked with the issue of the absence of verses 15 and 43 in the Greek text.

The answer to the problem as to why verse 15 (and 43) is absent from the Greek text might be very simple. It might be that the Hebrew text that was in front of the translator did not have verse 15 (nor verse 43). External support for the absence of verse 15 in the Hebrew text that was in front of the translator comes from the Schøyen Joshua papyrus. Papyrus MS 2648 does not have verse 15. Moreover, there is a strong list of evidence quoted at the beginning of this chapter that supports the absence of verse 15 in the oldest layer of the Greek translation of the book of Joshua. Verse 43, also, is absent from this old manuscript. Again, a list of witnesses buttress my opinion that verse 43 was

<sup>59</sup> Tov also characterizes האלה as secondary. Cf. Emanuel Tov, "The Growth of the Book of Joshua in the Light of the Evidence of the LXX Translation," *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 31 (1986): 321–339 (= *The Greek and the Hebrew Bible: Collected Essays* (VT Suppl 72; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 385–396).

absent from the Old Greek of Joshua.<sup>60</sup> All this points to a Hebrew text in which verses 15 and 43 were not present. Similarly, there is external support for a text without verse 17. Manuscripts 53 125 246 392 799 do not have verse 17. Moreover, the Schøyen Joshua papyrus also does not have verse 17. In my opinion, the Hebrew text underlying the Old Greek text did not yet have verses 15, 17, and 43. Manuscript 2648, the Schøyen Joshua papyrus, is a valuable tool to reconstruct an Old Greek text without verse 15, without verse 17, and without verse 43.

After this long analysis, I have now concluded for the existence of a Hebrew text underlying the Old Greek text that did not have verses 15, 17, and 43. This text is called the pre-Masoretic text. What is now the difference between “pre” and “proto”? The proto-Masoretic text is the predecessor of the Masoretic text. The proto-Masoretic text differs from the Masoretic through its lack of accents and vowels.<sup>61</sup> The consonantal text of the proto-Masoretic text, however, is the same as the Masoretic text. In his book, Tov does not define a “pre-Masoretic text.” From the analogy, however, between the Samaritan text and the pre-Samaritan text,<sup>62</sup> I conclude that when distinctive elements, such as verses 15, 17, and 43, are added to the text, the text turns from pre-Masoretic into proto-Masoretic.

Now the following issue needs to be addressed. Who inserted verses 15 and 43 into the old story of Joshua, and when was it done? Who is responsible for the final touches to the Old Joshua? Who turned the pre-Masoretic text of Joshua into the Masoretic text? Who added the elements I focused on in this chapter to the pre-Masoretic text?

In order to answer this question, I have studied the structure of the Hebrew text once more. I note that the reference to Gilgal has been inserted into two crucial sections: right after the first fight and right after the last fight of the first round. I visualize the insertions with “>>>”:

- I. First story: the fight against Gibeon
  - 10:1–4: introduction to the initiative of King Adonizedek
  - 10:5: report on fight against Gibeon
  - 10:6: report on call for help from Gibeon
  - 10:7: report on Joshua’s response

<sup>60</sup> See my note on the use of the words “additions” and “omissions” in the section dealing with the structure of the Hebrew text, above.

<sup>61</sup> Tov defines the proto-Masoretic texts as “biblical texts that lack the vocalization and accentuation [of the MT],” cf. E. Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 19. See also Siegfried Kreuzer, “Text, Textgeschichte und Textkritik des Alten Testaments: Zum Stand der Forschung an der Wende des Jahrhunderts,” *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 127 (2002): 127–155.

<sup>62</sup> E. Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 97.

## Rewriting the Sacred Text

10:8: report on God's promise

10:9–13: report on the intervention of the fabulous team Joshua-God, topped with notes regarding some miraculous moments

10:14: conclusion of the first story of Joshua 10: statement about what happened

>>> **10:15: comment on location: the people return to the camp at Gilgal**

II. Second story: dealing with the five kings

10:16: report on new action: the five kings have fled to Makedah and they hide in the cave

10:17: report to Joshua

10:18: immediate reaction of Joshua regarding the kings

10:19–21: additional instruction of Joshua: he directs his people to yet another action — additional story

10:22: report on second, later reaction of Joshua regarding the kings

10:23: report on response of the guards

10:24a: report on action of Joshua

10:24b: report on response of the people

10:25–27: report on final actions of Joshua with the five kings

10:28: report on how Joshua destroys Makedah

III. Third story: dealing with the destruction of the five cities

10:29–30: report on fight against Libnah

10:31–32: report on fight against Lachish

10:33: report on additional fight against an ally, king Hiram of Gezer

10:34–35: report on fight against Eglon

10:36–37: report on fight against Hebron

10:38–39: report on fight against Debir



## IV. Conclusion

10:40–42: summary on how Joshua smote the area  
beyond the five kingdoms and took all its  
kings

>>> **10:43: comment on location: Joshua and his  
troops return to Gilgal**

By inserting verses 15 and 43, the author turned “Gilgal” into a structural marker. Gilgal now marks the beginning or end of larger sections. It marks the entrance of Israel’s entrance into the land in chapter 4; it marks the beginning and end of the first round of battle; it also points to the end of the second round—albeit in the strange list of conquered kings—and finally, it points to the beginning of the second stage of the conquest and division of the land.

## I. Introduction

1:1–9: report on the installation of Joshua, the new  
leader

1:10–15: report on Joshua’s first commands

1:16–18: report on acceptance of Joshua’s leadership

## II. Israel crosses the Jordan and marks the event

2:1–24: story about the spies and Rahab

3:1–4:24: report on Israel’s preparation for, actual  
crossing of, and ritually marking of their  
crossing of the Jordan

**4:19–20: camping and celebrating in  
Gilgal**

5:1–8: report on circumcision

**5:9: comment on location, Gilgal**

5:10–12: report on Passover celebration

5:13–15: report on Joshua’s brief encounter with God

## III. Examples of how to live in the land

6:1–27: the Jericho story

7:1–8:29: report on the first and second attempt on  
taking Ai

8:30–35: report on the building of an altar

## IV. Conquering the land

9:1–10:43: report on the first round of battling  
against the kings of the land

9:6: Joshua is still in Gilgal

11:1–12:24: report on the second round of battling  
against the kings of the land

**12:23: Gilgal is mentioned in the list  
of the kings that Joshua  
smote**

#### V. Conquering the land, phase two

13:1–22:34: report on how the Israelites took  
possession and divided the land

**14:6: Joshua is reported to still be in  
Gilgal**

#### VI. Conclusions

23:1–16: first concluding chapter of the book of  
Joshua

24:1–33: second concluding chapter

**Judg 2:1: an angel comes up from  
Gilgal to Bochim**

Indeed, the conclusion of the second phase in the conquering of the land might be found after the double conclusion of the book of Joshua, and after the weird stories in Judg 1–2,<sup>63</sup> namely in Judg 2:1, where an angel comes up from Gilgal to Bochim. Again, a religious event follows, and the next period of Israelite history is put on stage.

In my opinion, then, a late editor inserted a reference to Gilgal in the pre-Masoretic story at two crucial crossroads, namely verse 15 and verse 43, and thus created the final picture of the movements of Joshua.<sup>64</sup> I qualify the editor with “late,” for when the Greek translator made his/her text, a Hebrew story without these final touches was still available to him/her.<sup>65</sup> By inserting Gilgal in 10:15, the editor did create a minor problem, namely the problem as to precisely when Joshua and his camp moved to Makedah. Moreover, the editor needed to create verse 17 to make sure that Joshua was informed about what was going on in Makedah. The insertion of verse 15 begged for the insertion of a report to Joshua about the five kings fleeing to Makedah and hiding in a cave. The editor who inserted the references to Gilgal also created the almost perfect verse 17. The overall impression, though, that Gilgal was indeed the pivotal place out of which a new Israel grew, was buttressed.

<sup>63</sup> Weird, for Joshua dies twice, once in Judg 1:1 and once in 2:8.

<sup>64</sup> Note, however, that the final editor of the book of Joshua also made some other changes. I have focused only on the insertion of Gilgal in this chapter.

<sup>65</sup> I believe that multiple forms of the Bible existed next to one another up till the end of the second century C.E., if not later.

One could now ask who the late editor of the final touches of the book of Joshua was, and to be honest, I do not know. I can, however, point to a time and a situation in the history of Israel when a place like Gilgal again became the place from which a new period in the history of Israel could start. The question is thus, for whom was Gilgal important? And which community was fortified by creating a new Gilgal? In other words, for whom was MT intended? Who was the first audience of the first appearances of the proto-Masoretic Text? Gilgal was an important place up till Jerusalem took over the central role in the cult. Gilgal even received a negative name over the years, for Amos, Micah, and Hosea all have bad things to say about it. Thus, the name and the place were no longer something to mention in a positive sense. When Jerusalem, however, was no longer the religious symbol it used to be, a small town at the outskirts of North West Judea became known: Modi'in/Modein. Judas Maccabeus organized his uprising against Jerusalem and its evil kings from Modi'in/Modein. It was his father, Mattathias, who moved the family to Modi'in/Modein: "In those days Mattathias son of John son of Simeon, a priest of the family of Joarib, moved from Jerusalem and settled in Modein (1 Macc 2:1)." Modi'in/Modein, lies north of Jericho, in the area of Ai—whatever location one chooses—and close to the river Jordan—albeit on the other side of the ridge. Moreover, Modein is known for its caves.<sup>66</sup> Like Joshua, Judas encamps his people in one place and exhorts his people to fight for, among other things, the country. 2 Macc 13:14 reads, "So, committing the decision to the Creator of the world and exhorting his troops to fight bravely to the death for the laws, temple, city, country, and commonwealth, he pitched his camp near Modein." Modi'in/Modein is an alternative Gilgal.<sup>67</sup> It is not the rolling stones from Gilgal that mark the new period in the Israelite history, but the hammering hammers, the Maccabees, from Modein.

## D. Conclusions

### 1. Text-critical and literary-critical conclusions

In the Old Greek of the book of Joshua, there is no verse 15 and no verse 43. I believe that these verses were absent from the Hebrew text underlying the Old Greek. External witnesses support this view. In the Old Greek of the book of Joshua, there was no verse 17. I believe that this verse was absent in the Hebrew text underlying the Old Greek. Again, there are external witnesses that support this idea. In the pre-Masoretic text of Joshua, verses 15, 17, and 43 had

<sup>66</sup> I thank Tammi Schneider for this observation.

<sup>67</sup> In 1 Macc 9:2, the name of Gilgal is mentioned again after ages of silence—from Amos, Micah, and Hosea.

not yet been composed. The MT reflects a text different from the Old Greek of Joshua. At a pretty late stage in the literary development of the book of Joshua, a reviser turned Gilgal into Joshua's headquarters and thus created verse 15. Moreover, this reviser also created verse 43. Finally, the reviser filled out the gap between verses 16 and 18, composing verse 17: Joshua was given a precise report on what had happened.<sup>68</sup>

## 2. Hermeneutical Conclusions

Even in as late a period as the second century B.C.E., the text of Joshua was still undergoing changes. The insertion of the reference to Gilgal into two sections of the book of Joshua sheds light on how the conquering and settling story of Joshua was read in the second century B.C.E. For this late editor, the revolt that came from Modein signified a new beginning of Israel. Israel would reclaim the land and live in the land according to the laws given by God. The new headquarter for this new Israel was no longer Jerusalem, but a quasi-Gilgal,<sup>69</sup> the new Modein.

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<sup>68</sup> Compare with Tov's conclusion: "The Editor of the MT expanded an earlier edition very similar to the *Vorlage* of the LXX." Tov wonders whether the term "edition" is appropriate, for "the differences between the two editions are relatively minor." Cf. E. Tov, "The Growth of the Book of Joshua in the Light of the Evidence of the LXX Translation," 338. See also E. Tov, *The Greek and the Hebrew Bible: Collected Essays on the Septuagint* (VTSuppl 72; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 385–396.

<sup>69</sup> See Michael N. van der Meer, "Formation and Reformulation: The Redaction of the Book of Joshua in the Light of the Oldest Textual Witnesses" (Ph.D. diss., Leiden University, 2001), 65: "Most of these redactional additions were introduced in the MT of Josh. 1–12 for the purpose of presenting the various conquest narratives as a unified Israelite campaign with Gilgal as base for the military operations; hence the contextually intrusive additions in MT-Josh.10:15.43, which are contradicted in verse 21 by the reference to a camp at Makkedah"; this statement contains a reference to L. Mazar, *The Septuagint Translation of the Book of Joshua*, 167–168.

## Chapter III

### A Rewritten Greek Biblical Text: The Final Chapter of AT Esther

#### A. Texts and Thesis

##### 1. Text: AT 7:33b–38<sup>1</sup>

*LXX*:

**33b** καὶ ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐνεχείρισε τῷ Μαρδοχαίῳ γράφειν ὅσα βούλεται.  
**34** ἀπέστειλε δὲ Μαρδοχαῖος διὰ γραμμάτων καὶ ἐσφραγίσατο τῷ τοῦ βασιλέως δακτυλίῳ μένειν τὸ ἔθνος αὐτοῦ κατὰ χώρας ἕκαστον αὐτῶν καὶ ἐορτάζειν τῷ θεῷ. **35** ἡ δὲ ἐπιστολή, ἣν ἀπέστειλεν ὁ Μαρδοχαῖος, ἦν ἔχουσα ταῦτα **36** Ἀμὴν ἀπέστειλεν ὑμῖν γράμματα ἔχοντα οὕτως Ἔθνος Ἰουδαίων ἀπειθεῖς σπουδάσατε ταχέως ἀναπέμψαι μοι εἰς ἀπώλειαν. **37** ἐγὼ δὲ ὁ Μαρδοχαῖος μηνύω ὑμῖν τὸν ταῦτα ἐργασάμενον πρὸς ταῖς Σούσων πύλαις κεκρεμάσθαι καὶ τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ διακεχειρίσθαι· **38** οὗτος γὰρ ἐβούλετο ἀποκτεῖναι ἡμᾶς τῇ τρίτῃ καὶ δεκάτῃ τοῦ μηνός, ὅς ἐστιν Ἀδάρ.

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<sup>1</sup> For the text, see R. Hanhart, *Esther: Septuaginta* (Vetus Testamentum graecum, auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis editum, Vol. VIII/3; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983), 191–196.

*English translation of the Greek text:*

**33b** And the king handed over to Mordecai (the permission) to write whatever he wished. **34** And Mordecai sent, by way of writings, and sealed with the royal seal that his people had to stay each in their own region and feast for God. **35** And the letter, which Mordecai sent, ran as follows: **36** Haman sent you a letter with the following contents: Hurry swiftly and send the recalcitrant people of the Jews (on my behalf) into destruction. **37** I, Mordecai, however, remind you that the one who planned all of this, was hanged at the city gates and that his house(hold) has been handed over. **38** It was he, however, who wanted to kill us on the thirteenth of the month, namely (the month) Adar.

## 2. Thesis

The section dealing with the letter of Mordecai only appears in the second Greek text of the book of Esther, commonly called the Alpha Text (AT). These verses are absent from any other story of the book of Esther. These verses, hence, can be labeled *Sondergut*, material that is typical for this text. I will demonstrate that these verses are based on the Septuagint story of the book of Esther. Moreover, I will argue that these verses are exemplaric of the way the author of the AT has rewritten the Septuagint text.

## B. Witnesses and Opinions

### 1. Witnesses

The Hebrew text of the Book of Esther (MT) does not contain the letter of Mordecai. The witnesses to the Septuagint (LXX), namely the translations derived from the Septuagint: the Coptic-Sahidic, the Ethiopic, and the Armenian translations, as well as the actual LXX manuscripts, do not have this letter. However, the Armenian and the LXX have a letter of the king. This letter of the king can be found in most translations of the Septuagint of Esther under Addition E.<sup>2</sup> The AT, and more precisely all the manuscripts with the AT,<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter I, Structure.

<sup>3</sup> The AT is handed down in four manuscripts: 19, 93, 108, and 319. Regarding 319, see Kristin De Troyer, "The Many Texts of the Esther Story," *Folio: The Newsletter of the*

contain both Addition E and the letter of Mordecai. It should be noted at this point that the *Vetus Latina* lacks the letter of Mordecai from AT 7:34–38.<sup>4</sup> Josephus too omits the letter of Mordecai.<sup>5</sup> Both the *Vetus Latina* and Josephus, however, do have Addition E.

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*Ancient Biblical Manuscript Center* 19 (2002/2): 3, 7–8. Manuscript 93 has some lacunas, but the space taken by the lacunas points to what sort text was actually there. E.g., the manuscript has a lacuna in 7:26, which is Addition E:14. The AT is also partially preserved in the “mixed manuscript” 392. This manuscript offers alternatively the Old Greek Septuagint text and the AT. From chapter 7:10 onwards, it offers the Septuagint text, so it does not function as a witness to the Letter of Mordecai as found in the AT. For a further description, see R. Hanhart, *Esther*, 15–16.

<sup>4</sup> The *Vetus Latina* (V.L.) has long played an important role in the study of the book of Esther. Since Motzo and Schildenberger, the V.L. has been read side by side with the AT and the version of Josephus. Cf. Bernardo Motzo, “La Storia del Testo di Ester,” *Ricerche Religiose* 3 (1927): 205–208; *idem*, “I Testi greci di Ester,” *StMSR* 6 (1930): 223–231; J. Schildenberger and A. Miller, *Die Bücher Tobias, Judith und Esther, übersetzt und erklärt. Vol. III: Das Buch Esther* (Die Heilige Schrift des Alten Testaments 4/3; Bonn, 1940). The finer study of the mutual relationship between the texts will only be possible, however, when the critical edition of the V.L. is ready. Jean-Claude Haelewyck is preparing the edition. It will appear under the title: *Vetus Latina: Die Reste der Altlateinischen Bibel nach Petrus Sabatier neu gesammelt und in Verbindung mit der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften herausgegeben von der Erzabtei Beuron* (Volume 7/3; Freiburg, Herder). Haelewyck has already published a study of the book of Esther in the codex Monacensis. Cf. J.-C. Haelewyck, “La version latine du livre d’Esther dans le ‘Monacensis’ 6239,” *Revue Bénédictine* 101 (1991): 7–27 and 103 (1993): 289–306. See also *idem*, “La version latine du livre d’Esther dans la première Bible d’Alcalá: Avec un appendice sur les citations patristiques vieilles latines,” in *Lectures et relectures de la Bible* (FS. P.-M. Bogaert; ed. J.-M. Auwers and A. Wénin; BETL 144; Leuven: Peeters & University Press, 1999), 165–193.

One can consult the Old Latin text in Petrus Sabatier, *Bibliorum sacrorum latinae versiones antiquae seu Vetus Italica et caeterae quaecumque in codicibus Mss et antiquorum libris reperiri potuerunt: quae cum Vulgata Latina et cum textu graeco comparantur* (Vol. 1; Reims, 1743; repr., Turnhout: Brepols, 1991), 791–825. As I noted in Chapter II, it is important to verify the actual manuscripts Sabatier has used for his text. Cf. R. Gryson, *Altlateinische Handschriften: Manuscripts Vieux Latins. Répertoire descriptif. Première partie: Mss 1–275* (Vetus Latina: Die Reste der altlateinischen Bibel nach Petrus Sabatier neu gesammelt und herausgegeben von der Erzabtei Beuron, 1/2A; Freiburg: Herder, 1999).

<sup>5</sup> Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, books IX–XI (ed. R. Marcus; Loeb Classical Library; Cambridge, MA/London: Harvard University Press, 1958), 402–457.

## 2. Current Opinions

In the AT of the book of Esther, many text-critical and text-historical problems play a role. Since 1940,<sup>6</sup> and again after the first hype in Qumran research, scholars have postulated that the AT is a translation of a hitherto unknown Hebrew book of Esther.<sup>7</sup> Carey Moore,<sup>8</sup> David Clines,<sup>9</sup> Michael Fox,<sup>10</sup> and Karen Jobes<sup>11</sup> all have argued, albeit with differences, for a Hebrew *Vorlage* of the AT of Esther. Then there are some scholars, Hanhart,<sup>12</sup> Tov,<sup>13</sup> and myself, who consider the AT a reworking of the Septuagint text. Tov, however, also claims that the reworking was in the direction of a different Hebrew text, and thus he defends a compromise position.<sup>14</sup> The question is whether the AT is a translation, a recension, or a re-working. The first and the last term are—I hope—known. Regarding the middle term, I use the term “recension” here in its

<sup>6</sup> Charles C. Torrey, “The Older Book of Esther,” *HTR* 37 (1944): 1–40; repr. in *Studies in the Book of Esther*, 448–487 (ed. C. A. Moore; The Library of Biblical Studies; New York: Ktav, 1982). Torrey’s article grew out of his review of the Cambridge Septuagint edition, published in *JBL* 61 (1942): 130–136.

<sup>7</sup> For a long survey of the research, see Kristin De Troyer, *The End of the Alpha-Text of Esther: Translation Techniques and Narrative Techniques in MT-LXX 8.1–17—AT 7.14–41* (SCS Series 48; Atlanta, Georgia: 2000), chapter one. For a summary, see *id.*, “The Letter of the King and the Letter of Mordecai. An analysis of MT & LXX 8.9–13 and AT 7.33–38,” *Textus* 21 (2002): 175–207.

<sup>8</sup> Carey A. Moore, *The Greek Text of Esther* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University, 1965); *idem*, “A Greek Witness to a Different Hebrew Text of Esther,” *ZAW* 79 (1967): 351–358 (= 521–528 in *Studies in the Book of Esther*).

<sup>9</sup> David J. A. Clines, *The Esther Scroll: The Story of The Story* (JSOTSS 30; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984).

<sup>10</sup> Michael V. Fox, *The Redaction of the Books of Esther: On Reading Composite Texts* (Monograph Series 40; Atlanta, GA: Scholar Press, 1991).

<sup>11</sup> Karen H. Jobes, *The Alpha-Text of Esther: Its Character and Relationship to the Masoretic Text* (SBL Dissertation Series 153; Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1996).

<sup>12</sup> R. Hanhart, *Esther*.

<sup>13</sup> E. Tov, “The ‘Lucianic’ Text of the Canonical and Apocryphal Sections of Esther: A Rewritten Biblical Book,” *Textus* 10 (1982): 1–25.

<sup>14</sup> Hanhart also points to a couple of cases where the AT might have integrated different material. A different Hebrew *Vorlage* is in theory possible in places where the AT, independently of the Septuagint text, goes hand in hand with MT. More precisely, this is possible where the AT stands alone, or has a parallel in Origen’s revised text, and also where the AT is joined by the Old Latin and Josephus, or maybe where one could reconstruct a different Hebrew *Vorlage*—here Hanhart actually refers to one example, but adds a question mark—or, finally, where the AT and the Old Latin or Josephus, offer a text different from MT. Hanhart, however, does not point to a different Hebrew *Vorlage*—except for the one example just mentioned—but to material which has been transmitted independently of the Old Greek: “. . . vom o-Text unabhängigen Überlieferungsgutes . . .”, cf. R. Hanhart, *Esther*, 91.



strict technical meaning, namely: a revision of the Old Greek towards a Hebrew *Vorlage*.

These issues should be put into their text-historical context. As I have already noted in Chapter I, the most prominent amidst the revisionists and recensionists of the Old Greek is Origen. In the fifth column of his Hexapla, he added and marked those readings that he found only in the Hebrew text (he especially used the translation of Theodotion for this purpose<sup>15</sup>) and similarly marked those reading that he only found in the Old Greek text. It is known that Origen used an Esther text that contained at least Additions B, C, and E.<sup>16</sup> There is hardly anything left from the other Greek translations that Origen used, Aquila and Symmachus. A few words might stem from Aquila, but no more is handed down.<sup>17</sup>

Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion rendered the Hebrew text anew in Greek. Aquila in particular translated very literally.<sup>18</sup> They were apparently not entirely satisfied with the Old Greek text and thus decided to revise it and create their own translations.<sup>19</sup> With the discoveries in the Judean Desert, and more specifically, the discovery of the Greek Twelve Minor Prophets scroll from Nahal Hever, it has become clear that from a very early time onwards, the Greek biblical text was corrected.<sup>20</sup> In simple words, not only Origen, but also Aquila had predecessors!<sup>21</sup>

Origen also had followers. As late as the fourth century, people are known to have corrected the Greek biblical text. Lucian, for instance, corrected the Old Greek and made use of Origen's work. He, however, had a preference for Symmachus, whereas Origen preferred to use Theodotion for his rendering of the Hebrew text in Greek.<sup>22</sup> Scholars nowadays still use the name "Lucian,"

<sup>15</sup> Manuscript 93 has preserved six asterisked passages, indicating that Origen corrected the Old Greek text towards a Hebrew text: 2:6, 7; 8:3, 11; 9:2, 4.

<sup>16</sup> This does not mean that Origen did not have the other Additions, but he only quotes the Additions mentioned.

<sup>17</sup> R. Hanhart, *Esther*, 63.

<sup>18</sup> This does not mean that his translation was not understandable, to the contrary. See James Barr, *Typologies of Literalism in Ancient Biblical Translations* (MSU 15; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979).

<sup>19</sup> Compare with the translations of the Bible: after every first translation into a language, there follows a round of corrections of the language and/or a correction towards the original text.

<sup>20</sup> Dominique Barthélemy, *Les devanciers d'Aquila* (VTSuppl 10; Leiden: Brill, 1963); Emanuel Tov, *The Greek Minor Prophets Scroll from Nahal Hever (8HevXIIgr)* (with the collaboration of Robert A. Kraft and a contribution of P. J. Parsons; The Seiyâl Collection I; Discoveries in the Judaean Desert VIII; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).

<sup>21</sup> Hence the title of the work by Barthélemy: "Les devanciers d'Aquila" (the predecessors of Aquila).

<sup>22</sup> Alison Salvesen, *Symmachus in the Pentateuch* (JSS Monogr. 15; Manchester: Victoria University of Manchester, 1991); *idem*, "Symmachus Readings in the Pentateuch," in: *Origen's Hexapla and Fragments* (ed. A. Salvesen *et al.*; Texte und Studien zum Antiken

although it has become clear that the “real” Lucian most probably did not do the work. “Lucian,” however, must be seen as the people—for instance church fathers—of the Antiochian area who seem to have used the Greek text “according to Lucian.”<sup>23</sup>

In the Judean Desert, both Hebrew and Greek texts were found which pointed to these different “recensions.” The Greek text with which “Lucian” worked, for instance, is very similar to the Hebrew text of 4QSam<sup>a</sup>.<sup>24</sup> Given the fact that 4QSam<sup>a</sup> stems from the second half of the century B.C.E.,<sup>25</sup> it looks like the “oldest layer” of “Lucian”—also called proto-Lucian—was a pretty old layer.<sup>26</sup> As already stated, the text of the Twelve Minor Prophets scroll from Nahal Hever offers an old correction of the Greek text—commonly called *kaige* recension, after the typical rendering καὶ γε, for Hebrew כִּי וְגַם. Not only do we find proof for recensional activity at Qumran, one actually also encounters Hebrew *Vorlagen* of Old Greek biblical texts. 4QJer<sup>a,c</sup>, for instance, can be seen as Hebrew parallels to the Old Greek Jeremiah text. In the latter case, the Old Greek was based on a Hebrew text that was older and at places different from

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Judentum 58; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1988), 177–198, esp., 183–190; José Ramón Busto Saiz, “El texto teodocionico de Daniel y la traducción de Símaco,” *Sef* 40 (1980): 41–55.

<sup>23</sup> Natalio Fernández Marcos and José Ramón Busto Saiz, *El texto antioqueño de la Biblia griega, I, 1–2 Samuel*, with the collaboration of Victoria Spottorno Díaz-Caro and S. Peter Cowe (Textos y Estudios Cardinal Cisneros, 50; Madrid, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas: 1989); *II, 1–2 Reyes*, with the collaboration of Victoria Spottorno Díaz-Caro (Madrid, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas: 1992); *III, 1–2 Crónicas*, with the collaboration of Victoria Spottorno Díaz-Caro and S. Peter Cowe (Madrid, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas: 1996); Sebastian P. Brock, “The Recensions of the Septuagint Version of I Samuel” (Ph.D. diss., Oxford, 1966; Corso San Maurizio Silvio Zamorani Editore, 1996).

<sup>24</sup> Frank Moore Cross, “A New Qumran Biblical Fragment Related to the Original Hebrew Underlying the Septuagint (4QSam<sup>a</sup>),” *BASOR* 132 (1953): 15–26; *idem*, “The History of the Biblical Text in the Light of Discoveries of in the Judaean Desert,” *HTR* 57 (1964): 281–299 (reprinted in Frank Moore Cross and Shemaryahu Talmon, *Qumran and the History of the Biblical Text*, [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975], 171–195); Eugene Ulrich, *The Qumran Text of Samuel and Josephus* (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1978).

<sup>25</sup> F. M. Cross, “A New Qumran Biblical Fragment,” 23–25.

<sup>26</sup> There is ongoing discussion as to whether or not the “proto-Lucianic” text is the Old Greek text itself, or just one of the Old Greek texts, or an already reworked text (corrected towards a Hebrew text). See Anneli Aejmelaeus, “The Septuagint of I Samuel,” in *VIII Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies* (ed. L. Greenspoon and O. Munnich; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 109–129; E. Tov, “The Lucianic Text of the Canonical the Apocryphal Sections of Esther: A Rewritten Biblical Book,” *Textus* 10 (1982): 1–25; *idem*, “Lucian and Proto-Lucian,” *RB* 79 (1972): 101–113; Natalio Fernández Marcos, *The Septuagint in Context: Introduction to the Greek Version of the Bible* (trans. W. Watson; Leiden: Brill, 2000), especially chapter 14, “The Lucian Recension,” 223–238.

what became later the “majority-text,” namely MT.<sup>27</sup> This leads me to the following issue.

It has become commonplace to state that the “standardization” of the Hebrew consonantal text happened in the first and second century C.E.<sup>28</sup> Indeed, the recensional activity which I have just described confirms this tendency to correct towards—and thus also to help establish—a so-called standard Hebrew text. At the same time, however, one needs to recognize that literary development of the biblical text continued for a long time, and I would argue for a longer time than is usually accepted.<sup>29</sup> In the debate about when the Hebrew biblical text came to a standstill—if ever—different opinions reign. Some scholars argue that there was a sort of Bible when the exiled Jews returned from Babylon. Other scholars recognize that there was still literary development, even serious literary development in the Hellenistic period. It is precisely here that Qumran and Septuagint manuscripts are important. The fact that texts like the different Jeremiah text—different from the MT, for instance, in its sequence of chapters—is present in Qumran shows, on the one hand, that there were at least different texts of biblical books still available in the period of Qumran. The Septuagint translation—the different biblical books translated somewhere between the third and the first century B.C.E.—on the other hand, similarly points to the existence of a different biblical Hebrew text, at least for some books, existing at the time of the translation of the various books into Greek. As I have demonstrated in the second chapter, the Old Greek of Joshua is a witness to an older stage of the book of Joshua. The final touches to the Hebrew book of Joshua were only made after the Old Greek translation came into being. In chapter four, I will deal with another possible scenario of literary development of a Hebrew text. In this chapter, however, I would like to argue for the literary development at the Greek level.

With regard to the AT, the question is not only what precisely this text is—translation, recension, or reworking?—but also how it fits into the history of the standardization on the one hand and the history of the literary development of a text on the other hand.

The biblical story according to Josephus and to the Old Latin translation also play an important role in the history of the text of Esther. It has become

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<sup>27</sup> MT indeed has become the main biblical text. One needs not to forget, however, that Falasjas still use the Septuagint as their main biblical text. See, for instance: Joseph Longton, *Uit Abraham Geboren: Jodendom, Christendom, Islam en hun vertakkingen* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1990), 87–90.

<sup>28</sup> See, for instance: James A. Sanders, “Text and Canon: Concepts and Method,” *JBL* 98 (1979): 5–30.

<sup>29</sup> See Kristin De Troyer, “Fifty Years of Qumran Research: A Different Approach,” *RSR* 28 (2002/2): 15–22.

clear that both Josephus and the “author”<sup>30</sup> of the *Vetus Latina* did know the AT of Esther. The text of Josephus, indeed, contains some typical AT readings.<sup>31</sup> Similarly, the *Vetus Latina* also has variants in common with the AT. From a text-historical perspective, these two dependencies are important. It means, for instance, that the AT must have existed prior to the composition of Josephus’ *Antiquities*. Similarly, the AT was already there when the *Vetus Latina* was created. The AT, therefore, was extant in the first century C.E. According to Pierre-Marie Bogaert, a famous *Vetus Latina* and LXX scholar, the *Vetus Latina* should be judged a prime witness for the Hebrew biblical text.<sup>32</sup> According to Jean-Claude Haelewyck, passages where the AT and the *Vetus Latina* share the same text are passages where an old Hebrew text of the book of Esther becomes visible.<sup>33</sup> These passages are, indeed, very important, albeit in my opinion not for the Old Hebrew but rather for the Old Greek text.

A complicating factor in the textual character of the AT and its text history is the presence of the so-called Additions to the Greek text. All the witnesses of the AT contain the Additions to the Book of Esther. There is no single witness of this text that does not have the additions. This is now rather problematic, for the question arises as to how and when the Additions made it from the LXX into the AT.<sup>34</sup> Clines and Fox both agree that the Additions were added to the AT in a later, second stage, when the AT was made to conform to the Septuagint text.<sup>35</sup> Because the Additions are intrinsically related to the rest of the text of the Septuagint, it becomes difficult to distillate a text without the Additions and without the editorial changes that were made to the Old Greek in order to fit in the additions.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> I am not a specialist in the area of the *Vetus Latina*, so I have put “the author” in quotation marks, for it is not clear to me whether or not there is such a thing as “the” author of the *Vetus Latina*.

<sup>31</sup> Christopher Begg, *Josephus’ Account of the Early Divided Monarch* (AJ 8, 212–420): *Rewriting the Bible* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1993); *idem*, *Josephus’ Story of the Later Monarchy* (AJ 9, 1–10, 185) (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2000).

<sup>32</sup> Marc Vervenne, ed., *Studies in the Book of Exodus: Redaction, Reception, Interpretation* (BETL 126; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1996); Pierre-Marie Bogaert, *Septante et Versions Grecques*, in J. Briand and E. Cothenet, *Supplément au Dictionnaire de la Bible* (Paris, 1993, Fasc. 68, c), 536–692.

<sup>33</sup> Jean-Claude Haelewyck, “Le texte dit ‘Lucianique’ du livre d’Esther: Son étendue et sa cohérence,” *Le Muséon* 98 (1985): 5–44.

<sup>34</sup> Jobes, for instance, argues for the AT as the original “home” of at least one addition. This is, however, highly questionable. K. H. Jobes, *The Alpha-Text of Esther* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 193.

<sup>35</sup> D. J. A. Clines, *The Esther Scroll: The Story of the Story* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984), 85–92; M. V. Fox, *The Redaction of the Books of Esther: On Reading Composite Texts* (SBL Monograph Series, 40; Atlanta: Scholar Press, 1991), 16–17.

<sup>36</sup> I will return to this issue.

## C. Analysis

## 1. Structure

AT 7:33–38, the letter of Mordecai, is part of the final chapter of the AT of Esther. As I noted at the beginning of this chapter, the letter of Mordecai only appears in the AT. Neither MT nor LXX have this section. Moreover, MT and LXX have a division into ten chapters, whereas AT only has seven chapters. Most of the MT/LXX is represented. I will give the structure of the three texts, first MT-LXX, then LXX-AT, and point to some of the pregnant issues in the structure of LXX and AT.

<i>MT</i>		<i>LXX</i>	
7:1–10	Haman's evil revealed	7:1–10	=
8:1–8	King's command to write	8:1–8	=
8:9–14	Esther and Mordecai's letter	8:9–13	Esther and Mordecai's letter
		Add E 8:14	The king's letter Sending out the letters
8:15–17	Mordecai leaves the palace	8:15–17	=
9:1–18	The killing fields	9:1–18	=
9:19	Final note about the feast days	9:19	=
9:20–28	Letter of Mordecai	9:20–28	=
9:29–32	Letter of Esther	9:29–32	=
10:1–3	Narrative conclusion	10:1–3	=
		Add F	Explanation of the Dream of Addition A
		F:11	Colophon of the Greek translation

The Septuagint has translated every unit of the Hebrew text. It has, however, also made explicit what was implicit in chapter 8, namely that there

are two letters necessary to inform both the persons in charge of the empire and the threatened victims, the Jews. In the Hebrew story, Mordecai and Esther write on behalf of the king to the officers in charge and at the same time to the Jews. Both groups need to be informed about the new situation and the negation of Haman's plan. In the Hebrew text, this is accomplished with one letter. The letter itself is not quoted in full, but a summary is given (vv. 11–13). The Septuagint translator has inserted a letter of the king, namely Addition E, addressed to the officials of the kingdom. The translator has also turned the brief summary into a letter to the Jews written by Mordecai and Esther. Now, both parties involved receive a letter: the Jews from Mordecai and Esther and the officials from the king. The insertion of the letter of the king also influenced the rendering of the short summary of the letter of Mordecai and Esther. Instead of just informing the Jews that they had permission to defend themselves against their enemies, as in the Hebrew text, the Septuagint summary now offers a positive message as well: the Jews are allowed to live according to their own laws. This positive element is also quoted in the letter of the king in Addition E. This change in the text is one of the places where the Septuagint has adapted the original Hebrew text in order to make the insertion of a new element more fluent and fitting within the context. The Septuagint also adds an interpretation of the dream at the end of the book, Addition F. The interpretation of the dream in Addition F matches the dream presented in Addition A. Finally, a colophon regarding the origins of the Greek translation is added at the end of the book. This colophon is the only colophon added to a biblical book. Thanks to this colophon, the Old Greek text of Esther can be dated to the first century B.C.E., namely to 78–77 B.C.E.<sup>37</sup> The Septuagint has thus, on the one hand, made some rather important changes to the narrative of the book of Esther, while staying, on the other hand, close to the Hebrew (consonantal) text of the Hebrew story.<sup>38</sup>

The structure of the AT looks as follows:

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<sup>37</sup> See esp. Elias Bickerman, "The Colophon of the Greek Book of Esther," *JBL* 63 (1944): 339–362. Most scholars have accepted his interpretation of the colophon and, thus, his dating of the Septuagint of Esther.

<sup>38</sup> For a detailed analysis of the translation and narrative technique of MT 8:1–17, LXX 8:1–17, see K. De Troyer, *The End of the Alpha Text of Esther*, Chapters 2 and 3.

<i>LXX</i>		<i>AT</i> <sup>39</sup>	
7:1–10	Haman's evil revealed	7:1–13	=
8:1–8	King's command to write	7:14–21	Mordecai's request to the king to write and Esther's to kill their enemies
8:9–13	Esther and Mordecai's letter		see below, 7:33b–38
Add E	The king's letter	7:22–32 7:33a 7:33b–38	The king's letter Sending out the letter Mordecai's letter
8:14	Sending out the letters		see above, 7:33a
8:15–17	Mordecai leaves the palace	7:39–41	Mordecai leaves the palace
9:1–18	The killing fields	7:42–46	The killing fields, part two
9:19	Note on the feasts	- <sup>40</sup>	
9:20–28	Mordecai's letter	7:47–49	Mordecai's letter
9:29–32	Esther's letter	-	
10:1–3	Narrative conclusion	7:50	Narrative conclusion
Add. F	Interpretation of Add. A	Add. F	Interpretation of Add. A
F:11	Colophon of Greek translator	- <sup>41</sup>	

<sup>39</sup> In some editions, like the Cambridge Old Greek Testament and in the translation provided by Clines in his famous 1984 book, Addition A is counted as chapter 1, and thus, the book ends up with 8 chapters, instead of seven. This has, however, resulted in serious misunderstandings, for many scholars have not checked references. See K. De Troyer, *The End of the Alpha Text*, 9–13; *id.* "Esther in Text- and Literary Critical Paradise," in *The Book of Esther in Modern Research* (eds. L. Greenspoon and S. White Crawford; JSOT SS 380; Sheffield, forthcoming).

<sup>40</sup> But see 7:49.

The AT has almost all the units of the Septuagint, except for the letter of Esther. Given the minimal interest of the AT in the role of Esther, the omission of the letter of Esther does not come as a surprise.<sup>42</sup> Typical for the AT is its reorganization of the material of the Septuagint. This reorganization can be observed with regard to the letters.<sup>43</sup> After Mordecai's request that the king address the issue of the evil plan of Haman, the king writes his letter.<sup>44</sup> The king writes first to the officials in charge of the empire. Only then, does Mordecai write regarding the same issue.

<i>LXX</i>		<i>AT</i>	
8:9–13	Esther and Mordecai's letter	7:22–32	The king's letter
Add E	The king's letter	7:33b–38	Mordecai's letter

This sequence in the AT is in a sense more logical than the sequence of the LXX: first the king, then Mordecai,<sup>45</sup> and not the other way around! In the AT, it is Mordecai who writes the letter, while Esther takes care of their enemies. In the LXX, the first part of chapter nine dealt with all the enemies. In the AT, this section is chopped into two parts: after Esther's request to kill her enemies, she immediately jumps to the occasion and smites multitudes of enemies: 7:20–21. After the latter business, she again asks for permission to kill some more enemies. Again, permission is granted and the author briefly reports on the number of people killed: 70,100 men (7:45–46). Although much shorter in

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<sup>41</sup> The colophon is of course omitted in the AT, for it was not created in the same period. Moreover, the AT already knows and uses the concept of "monarchy," and this does not fit with the "two reigning characters" mentioned in the colophon.

<sup>42</sup> For the AT, Mordecai is the person who "saves" the Jews, not Esther. See Kristin De Troyer, "An Eastern Beauty Parlour: An Analysis of the Hebrew and the Two Greek Texts of Esther 2:8–18," in *Judith, Esther, and Susannah* (ed. Athalya Brenner; A Feminist Companion to the Bible, Vol 7; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 47–70.

<sup>43</sup> For a detailed analysis, see Kristin De Troyer, "The Letter of the King and the Letter of Mordecai: An Analysis of MT & LXX 8.9–13 and AT 7.33–38," *Textus* 21 (2002): 175–207.

<sup>44</sup> I admit that Esther's request to smite her enemies, together with the report on her killing the enemies, is inserted between Mordecai's request and the king's complying with his request. Although this somehow distorts the structure of the narrative, it also confirms that the author has a keen interest in having the requests immediately carried out.

<sup>45</sup> Yes, Esther is taken out of the loop.



report, the AT follows a structure similar to the LXX: Esther twice gets a license to kill.<sup>46</sup>

Regarding the two letters themselves, they have different contents in the two different versions of the story. Again, this is not a surprise, for the LXX interpreter already changed the summary of the Hebrew text of 8:10–12. The AT follows this example and changes the contents of the letters, making them more appropriate to the context.

The analysis of the structure of the AT already points to some major changes in the text of the Septuagint. I have not yet proven, however, that AT is indeed a reworking of the LXX. To this issue, I now turn.

## 2. Analysis<sup>47</sup>

In this section, I will analyze the letter of Mordecai by answering three questions:

Is the AT a Lucianic text?

Is the AT a translation of a hitherto unknown Hebrew original?

Did the AT rework the Old Greek or correct it towards a (different) Hebrew text?

These questions will help to determine whether the AT is a translation, a recension, or a reworking. They will also help to establish the period in which the AT came into being.

### *Is the AT a Lucianic text?*<sup>48</sup>

The so-called Lucianic Recension (abbreviated with “L”; a better name is the Antiochian text<sup>49</sup>) is found primarily in the manuscripts  $\text{boc}_2\text{e}_2$ . The sigla  $\text{b}$  actually represents the common reading of two related manuscripts,  $\text{b}'$  and  $\text{b}$ ;  $\text{o}$  and  $\text{c}_2$  do not contain Esther. One other manuscript, called  $\gamma$  by Rahlfs, also

<sup>46</sup> It is needless to remark that Esther has become a woman thirsty for blood in the AT, whereas she was a fainting queen in the LXX.

<sup>47</sup> A part of this section was presented at the Muenster-Bonner Hebrew Bible scholars meeting in June 2002.

<sup>48</sup> For a summary about the Lucian Text, see Kristin De Troyer, “Der lukianische Text. Mit einem Beitrag zum sogenannten lukianischen Text des Estherbuches,” in *Die Septuaginta. Studien zur Entstehung und Bedeutung der griechischen Bibel* (ed. S. Kreuzer und J. Lesch; BWANT; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, forthcoming).

<sup>49</sup> See Natalio Fernández Marcos, *Scribes and Translators: Septuagint and Old Latin in the Books of Kings* (VTSuppl. LIV; Leiden: Brill, 1994), chapter three: “The Antiochene Text of the Greek Bible: A Revised and Edited Text.”

contains the AT. In the list of manuscripts containing the AT below, I first give the label of the manuscripts as used in the Cambridge text edition, then I offer the Göttingen number—also called the *Rahlfs Verzeichnis* number, according to the annotated index of manuscripts published by Rahlfs—followed by the city and the library in which the manuscript is currently held, its shelf number, its content, and finally, the date of the manuscript.<sup>50</sup>

$$b = b' + b$$

b' = 19 Rome, Chigi, R VI 38: Oct Reg Par Esd Idt Est (AT) I–III Macc (XII)<sup>51</sup>

b = 108 Rome, BAV, Vat. Gr. 330: Oct Reg Par Esd Idt Est (LXX and AT) Tob (XIII)

e<sub>2</sub> = 93 London, British Museum, Royal D II: Ruth Reg Par Esd II Est (AT), I–III Macc, Est (LXX) Is (XIII)

y = 319 Mt. Athos, Vatop. 600: Est (AT) Tob Idt (1021)

The text of Esther is transmitted in these manuscripts; more specifically, both the Old Greek Septuagint and the AT appear in manuscripts 108 and 93. On top of that, the AT also is present in manuscript 19. That means that three of the four (five if one also counts the mixed manuscript 392<sup>52</sup>) AT manuscripts appear in manuscripts which are known for offering a Lucianic text. That this second Greek text was labeled Lucianic is thus understandable. I point, however, to the important fact that in both manuscripts 93 and 108, not only the AT of Esther appears, but also the standard Septuagint text. Esther is the only book for which two texts are copied. For all the other books, only one text appears, and this text is then later on identified with the Antiochian text.<sup>53</sup> The double

<sup>50</sup> See the foreword of the Cambridge edition: A. E. Brooke, N. McLean, and H. St. J. Thackeray, *Esther, Judith, Tobit: The Old Testament in Greek, III/1* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1940), as well as A. Rahlfs, *Verzeichnis*.

<sup>51</sup> This line should be read as follows: manuscript b' in the Cambridge edition is manuscript 19 in the Göttingen list of manuscripts. It can be consulted in Rome. It belongs to the Chigi collection, and its shelf number is R VI 38. This collection is kept in the Vatican library, whose official name is Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana (=BAV). The manuscript contains the following books: the Octateuch, the books of Samuel and Kings (which are in the Greek Bible 1–4 Kingdoms), Chronicles, 1 Esdras, Judith, Esther, and 1–3 Maccabees. The manuscript is dated to the twelfth century.

<sup>52</sup> See section on “witnesses.”

<sup>53</sup> Note that although the Pentateuch occurs in the so-called Lucianic manuscripts, no Lucianic text has been identified for the Pentateuch! See J. W. Wevers, *Deuteronomium* (Septuaginta Vetus Testamentum Graecum Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis editum, III/2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977). See also Natalio Fernández Marcos, “Some Reflections on the Antiochian Text of the Septuagint,” in *Studien zur Septuaginta-Robert Hanhart zu Ehren: Aus Anlaß seines 65. Geburtstages*

appearance of the book of Esther in these manuscripts, might indicate that the scribe was aware of a double tradition but that he/she was not sure about which one to copy.

The Lucianic text has a set of characteristics. “Lucian” corrected the Old Greek in two ways. First, he corrected the text towards the Hebrew text. For his recensional activity, he used Origen’s Hexapla,<sup>54</sup> and especially the text of Symmachus.<sup>55</sup> “Lucian” also revised the Greek and produced better Greek. He made the text easier to listen to by inserting the article, pronouns, proper names, short explanations or additions; by offering synonyms; and by improving its syntax.<sup>56</sup>

The AT also demonstrates “better” Greek and seems at times closer to the Hebrew text, a reason that this text is sometimes considered “Lucianic.” The AT at times inserts proper names for the sake of clarity. It uses synonyms for various reasons, not always as a matter of style. The AT also inserts short explanations. The names of the months Adar and Nisan, for instance, are related to the Seleucid month names. Jobes has suggested that this equalization of the months in question could only have taken place between 15/16 C.E. and 176 C.E.<sup>57</sup> and that this argues for a final reworking of the AT during this period.<sup>58</sup> I believe these dates are indeed important for dating the AT; more precisely, I think that the AT was *created* between 15/16 and 176 C.E.<sup>59</sup> The AT also contains additions, the letter of Mordecai being a prime example. The addition

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(ed. D. Fraenkel, U. Quast, and J. Wm. Wevers; *Mitteilungen des Septuaginta-Unternehmens* 20, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990), 219–229.

<sup>54</sup> Note, however, that both Brock and Fernández Marcos also acknowledge pre-hexaplaric and non-hexaplaric recensionist activity in the first layer of the Lucian text, hence their distinction between the Old Greek and the so-called Proto-Lucian. It is precisely this Proto-Lucian text that matches the 4QSam<sup>a,c</sup> text! See F. M. Cross, “The History of the Biblical Text in the Light of Discoveries of in the Judaean Desert,” *HTR* 57 (1964): 281–299 (reprinted in F. M. Cross and S. Talmon, *Qumran and the History of the Biblical Text*, [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975], 171–195); E. Ulrich, *The Qumran Text of Samuel and Josephus* (Harvard Semitic Monographs 19; Chico, CA, Scholars Press, 1978); *idem*, *Josephus’ Biblical Text for the Books of Samuel*, in *Josephus, the Bible, and History* (eds. L. H. Feldman and G. Hata; Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989), 81–96. This is reprinted in E. Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Origins of the Bible* (Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature; Leiden/Grand Rapids, Michigan: Brill/Eerdmans, 1999), 184–201.

<sup>55</sup> See Chapter I, Witnesses, and this chapter, Current Opinions.

<sup>56</sup> For a detailed, fundamental study, see S. P. Brock, *The Recensions of the Septuagint Version of 1 Samuel* (With a foreword by Natalio Fernández Marcos; Quaderni di Henoch 9; Torino: Silvio Zamorani editore, 1996; Oxford dissertation, 1966), esp. 224–299.

<sup>57</sup> Jobes, *The Alpha-Text of Esther*, 191.

<sup>58</sup> Jobes, *The Alpha-Text of Esther*, 227.

<sup>59</sup> In *The End of the Alpha Text*, I have argued for 40–41 C.E. as the probable date for the AT. I will return to this date later.

of the letter of Mordecai is far too large in comparison with the Lucianic additions to be considered typically Lucianic. Moreover, the AT's omissions of, for instance, the letter of Esther also does not fit into the pattern of Lucian's omissions. The characteristics of the AT, then, do not entirely match those of the Lucianic text.

In order for a text to qualify as "Antiochian," or "Lucianic," it should also be quoted by church fathers who are known to have lived and/or worked in the Antiochian area. Chrysostom, for instance, is one of the Antiochian church fathers. Chrysostom, indeed, quotes the book of Esther—unfortunately only once—<sup>60</sup> but in its AT variant text! This is proof that the AT was known to at least Chrysostom, but it surely does not prove that the Lucianic text of the book of Esther was widely used in the area. To the contrary! Calling the AT "Lucianic" or "Antiochian" on the basis of a single citation of Chrysostom is thus unwarranted.

Finally, it is known that "Lucian" used Origen's Hexapla. But, then, how could Origen use the AT, or a text that was similar to this so-called Lucianic text? In his characterization of the text of Origen, Hanhart lists all the texts in which the text of Origen corrects towards a Hebrew text and where this correction is similar to the AT.<sup>61</sup> This is the ultimate proof that Origen indeed knew and used the AT, and that therefore the AT predates the "Antiochian" or "Lucian" text. This is not only the case for the "text" of Esther—as opposed to its Additions—but also for its Additions. The AT that was available to Origen certainly contained the Additions. Why, then, did Origen in his correction towards the Hebrew not insert the letter of Mordecai somewhere in the text? An obvious reason could be that the narrative of the AT seriously changes the sequence and, to a lesser extent, also the contents of the LXX<sup>62</sup> and that it thus was almost impossible to fit in a section like the letter of Mordecai. Origen did at times put another verb next to an "original" Greek verb, just to make sure that he did justice to both the Old Hebrew and the Old Greek, but creating two letters next to one another might have been too great a stretch! Origen did take over many of the smaller changes of the AT, changes which look very similar to the stylistic changes introduced to other books by Lucian: adding names, pronouns, articles, and conjunctions. In some cases, the AT, and Origen in its footsteps, has readings in common with the Hebrew text. These variants are not stylistic. They do not improve the Greek, but rather may point to the AT's correcting to a Hebrew text. Like Aquila, Theodotion, and Symmachus, the AT seems to correct the Old Greek towards the Hebrew text. Two questions need to be asked here: Does the AT belong a tradition (or group) of revisionist recensionist texts? The second question is: To which text does the AT correct—if it corrects!

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<sup>60</sup> And he is the only Antiochian church father to quote the book of Esther; it seems that the book was not popular at all! See R. Hanhart, *Esther*, 93.

<sup>61</sup> R. Hanhart, *Esther*, 69–77.

<sup>62</sup> Altering, for instance, the character of the main players of the story.

According to Emanuel Tov, the AT is a recension of the Septuagint text towards a different Hebrew *Vorlage*.

This question is an important one and deserves serious consideration. When studying this issue, I was particularly interested in all the variants of the Septuagint, especially those variants that Origen has in common with the AT and the MT. Origen corrected towards a Hebrew text, most probably towards the consonantal text as we have it now in the MT. In adding text to his own text in his fifth column, he relied on the three famous translators Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion. For his work on Esther, he used the AT. After inserting a text which he thought belonged to the Hebrew tradition, he marked the text with an asterisk. Those readings are thus readings that point to a Hebrew text. Hence, Origen's final text was similar to both the AT and the MT. All these variants are different from the Old Greek, for they are marked as being added from the Hebrew. In his edition, Hanhart notes all these variants in the text-critical apparatus. In LXX 7:9, for example, the text reads in translation: "Mordecai, who spoke regarding the king" (Μαρδοχαίῳ τῷ λαλήσαντι περὶ τοῦ βασιλέως). The AT reads in 7:12 (which is parallel to 7:9): "Mordecai, who spoke well regarding the king" (Μαρδοχαῖον τὸν λαλήσαντα ἀγαθὰ περὶ τοῦ βασιλέως). If one now turns to the text-critical apparatus under the upper Septuagint text, one reads in the section regarding verse 9:

τῷ λαλήσαντι ] + ἀγαθὰ  $O^{93}$ -S<sup>c</sup> 249' = L  $\mathfrak{M}$

This line is a sort of shorthand; it reads: The lemma "who spoke" has a variant (this is indicated by the square bracket), it has a plus (the plus sign), namely the word "good." This variant is found in the group of manuscripts that usually contains the Origenic text, hence the capital cursive *O*. For the book of Esther, the following manuscripts represent the text of Origen: 58, 93, and 583. The only manuscript that does not have the variant, the exception for this group, is manuscript 93. That this is an exception is indicated with an upper minus sign followed by the number of the manuscript. Next to this group indication,  $O^{93}$ , stands a hyphen. This means that the following manuscript, namely the corrected text of Codex Sinaiticus, belongs to the same group. Moreover, another small group has the reading: 249'; this is not one manuscript, but a small group of manuscripts, for 249' (249 prime) stands for two manuscripts, namely 249 and 670. In Esther, these manuscripts are mixed manuscripts; their text can thus belong to different groups. After these groups of manuscripts, the editor noted that the variant reading found in these manuscripts is equal to the reading found in the Lucianic text and the Masoretic text. In the critical edition of Esther, the AT is indicated with the label *L* that indicates the so-called Lucianic text. The  $\mathfrak{M}$  indicates the Masoretic text.

These sorts of readings are interesting, for how can one explain that both the AT and Origen have the same reading as MT? I have made a list of all the

readings in the Septuagint of Esther, where variants to the LXX are shared by the Origenic text, the AT, and the MT, thus where  $LXX \neq (O = AT = MT)$ .<sup>63</sup> All but three readings can be explained by referring to small changes that might have produced the variant, to parallel places somewhere else in the AT, to words characteristic to AT, and so forth. So far, I have only three cases where a similarity between O, AT, and MT might point to influence of the MT on the AT. And precisely here, I touch a pivotal issue. These variants, in my opinion, may<sup>64</sup> point to influence of the MT on AT, but not to influence of a text different from MT on AT! The variants to the Septuagint— $LXX \neq (O = AT = MT)$ —point to the MT. They do not point to a hitherto unknown Hebrew *Vorlage*. I explain these variant readings as pre-hexaplaric corrections towards the MT, similar to the pre-hexaplaric corrections found in  $\mathfrak{P}^{967}$ .<sup>65</sup>

Summarizing the results of this section: the AT cannot be labeled a “Lucianic” or “Antiochian” text. Origen used the AT in his correction of the Old Greek. I could now turn to the question whether or not the AT is one of the old recensions of the Old Greek text. Before turning to this matter, however, I need to characterize the AT further. Is there any chance that it is a translation of a lost Hebrew original?

*Is the AT a translation of a hitherto unknown Hebrew original?*

When one looks at the letter of Mordecai in 7:33–38, for instance, the question arises: Was this section originally written in Greek, or was it translated from Hebrew into Greek? Raymond A. Martin developed a method to distinguish between “translational” Greek and “compositional” Greek, the latter referring to documents originally written in Greek.<sup>66</sup> Emanuel Tov and Karen Jobes have refined the method.<sup>67</sup> This method uses syntax especially to distinguish translational from compositional Greek. It is clear, for instance, that the Hebrew “ב” (ב), which stands for a variety of concepts, is mostly translated with “en” (ἐν), whereas in an original Greek composition, other prepositions might have been used, depending on the context. The so-called “Hebraisms,”

<sup>63</sup> I have followed Hanhart pretty closely. When he notes, for instance, “cf” instead of “=,” I disregarded the reading, for Hanhart’s “cf” already indicates that the variant is not precisely the same.

<sup>64</sup> Maybe 1:5, 5:8, and 7:9 can be explained differently?

<sup>65</sup> With “pre-hexaplaric” changes, I mean corrections that were made towards the MT before Origen started working on his Hexapla. There are also some places where AT and Old Latin have an omission in comparison to the LXX and to Origen—this too might indicate a pre-hexaplaric correction of AT towards MT. An example of the latter sort is the omission of “Mardochoaios” in AT, Old Latin, and MT in 3:3.

<sup>66</sup> Raymond A. Martin, “Syntax Criticism of the LXX Additions to the Book of Esther,” *JBL* 94 (1975): 65–72.

<sup>67</sup> See Jobes with summary of Tov’s research, 195–202.

constructions that look like Hebrew ones and are unlike Greek constructions, also play an important role in distinguishing the two types of Greek texts. Any classicist who reads the Septuagint knows what I am talking about, for Septuagint Greek is definitely non-classical. It is like my English: it is easy to recognize that I am not a native English speaker, for some of my typical Flemish constructions appear in my writing. Similarly, my accent points to my native language!

In the letter of Mordecai, verse 34 could have been put in better Greek. Instead of writing “And Mordecai sent, by way of scribes, and sealed with the royal seal, that his people had to stay each in their own region and feast for God,” the author could have first mentioned the sealing with a participial construction and then continued with the sending, for instance: “After Mordecai had sealed the letter with the royal seal, he sent it . . .” I think it is very difficult to decide whether a text was translated out of another language—Greek out of Hebrew—or written by a person who knows both languages—Greek written by a person who also knows Hebrew. Was the current book originally written in Flemish and later translated into English? Or was it written in English by this Flemish author? Now, I acknowledge that no analogy is perfect, for the first language of the person who translated Esther into Greek might have been Greek. I wonder, however, in how far this Semitic way of writing Greek was part of the Jewish-Hellenistic culture from second and first centuries B.C.E. After all, the Greek Pentateuch, and maybe also the Prophets, were available in those days, and they were written in this rather strange, non-classical, but “Semitic Greek.”<sup>68</sup>

Was the letter of Mordecai originally written in Greek or in Hebrew? This issue is related to the question of whether or not this section belongs to the hitherto unknown Hebrew *Vorlage* of the AT. Many authors claim that the letter of Mordecai, indeed, belongs to the original Hebrew *Vorlage* of the AT, which is different from the MT.<sup>69</sup> Tov and Fox state that the letter of Mordecai is an original section of the original (Hebrew) story.<sup>70</sup> Haelewyck claims that it

<sup>68</sup> In his study of the Old Greek of Joshua, Emanuel Tov dismisses “Septuagintese”: “Translators did not create these Hebraisms while writing ‘Septuagintese,’ an imaginary translation language. These are faithful Greek translations of actual Hebrew phrases.” See E. Tov, “The Growth of the Book of Joshua in the Light of the Evidence of the LXX Translation,” *Scripta Hierosolymitana* XXXI (1986): 321–339, esp. 328; *idem*, *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research* (Jerusalem Biblical Studies 3; Jerusalem: Simor, 1981), 133–135.

<sup>69</sup> For a detailed analysis, see K. De Troyer. “The Letter of the King and the Letter of Mordecai: An Analysis of MT & LXX 8.9–13 and AT 7.33–38,” *Textus* 21 (2002): 175–207.

<sup>70</sup> E. Tov, “The ‘Lucianic’ Text,” 12; M. V. Fox, *The Redaction of the Books of Esther: On Reading Composite Texts* (Monograph Series 40; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), 38–42.

belongs to the original material of the primitive Lucianic text.<sup>71</sup> So does Moore.<sup>72</sup> Clines, on the other hand, labels the letter of Mordecai secondary, but asserts that it was inserted into the AT before Addition E, the edict of the king.<sup>73</sup> Addition E, too, plays a role here, for Tov states that the original letter of Mordecai was later replaced by the edict in Addition E.<sup>74</sup> Cook, however, is not sure whether the Greek of the letter of Mordecai is translation Greek.<sup>75</sup> The question, thus, remains: Is the letter of Mordecai an original Hebrew piece that belonged to the Hebrew text underlying the AT? Or is it secondary, and could it originally have been written in Greek?

The letter of Mordecai is also a tough piece to handle, for it is located in the so-called final chapter of the AT. According to the “inventor” of the Semitic (Aramaic) *Vorlage* theory of the AT, Charles C. Torrey,<sup>76</sup> there was an unknown *Vorlage* hidden behind 2:1–8:21.<sup>77</sup> As Torrey quoted the Cambridge edition,<sup>78</sup> his numbering of the chapters and verses of the AT was based on the numbering of the LXX.<sup>79</sup> 8:21 is thus 7:21 in the Hanhart edition. 7:21 is parallel to LXX 8:3–6 or 8:3–8. Torrey saw 8:21 parallel to LXX 8:2. “AT II<sub>1</sub>–VIII<sub>21</sub>” refers in Torrey’s own words to “approximately . . . the first seven chapters of the Hebrew text.”<sup>80</sup> Indeed, 8:2 is a turning point when it comes to the precise parallels between LXX/MT and AT. As the structure of the context of the letter of Mordecai shows, the AT seems to diverge from the MT and LXX from 8:2 onwards:

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<sup>71</sup> J.-C. Haelewyck, “Le texte dit ‘Lucianique’ du livre d’Esther: Son étendue et sa cohérence” *Le Muséon* 98 (1985): 35.

<sup>72</sup> C. A. Moore, *The Greek Text of Esther* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1965), 12–13.

<sup>73</sup> D. J. A. Clines, *The Esther Scroll: The Story of the Story* (JSOTSS 30; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1984), 73–74.

<sup>74</sup> E. Tov, “The ‘Lucianic’ Text,” 14.

<sup>75</sup> H. Cook, “The A Text of the Greek Versions of the Books of Esther,” *ZAW* 81 (1969): 376.

<sup>76</sup> C. C. Torrey, “The Older Book of Esther,” *HTR* 37 (1944): 1–40.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 7–8.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>79</sup> This had led to quite some confusion, to say the least. Dorothy, for instance, has interpreted Clines’ 8:15–17 as referring to LXX 8:15–17 instead of 7:15–17, which is parallel to LXX 8:1–2. Cf. Charles V. Dorothy, *The Books of Esther: Structure, Genre and Integrity* (JSOTSS 187; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 194–195, nn. 60 and 61.

<sup>80</sup> Torrey, “The Older Book of Esther,” 1–40, esp. 17.



<i>LXX</i>		<i>AT</i>	
7:1–10	Haman's evil revealed	7:1–13	
8:1–8	King's command to write	7:14–19	Mordecai's request to the king to write
		7:20–21	Esther's killing fields, part one
8:9–13	Esther and Mordecai's letter		see below, 7:33b–38
Add E	The king's letter	7:22–32	The king's letter
		7:33a	Sending out the letter
		7:33b–38	Mordecai's letter
8:14	Sending out the letters		see above, 7:33a

A closer look at the second section (8:1–8) reveals the following:

<i>LXX</i>		<i>AT</i>	
8:1–2	Esther and the king Mordecai too is called	7:14–15	Esther and the king Mordecai too is called
		7:16–17	Dialogue between the king and Mordecai
8:3–8	Dialogue between the king and Esther	7:18–21	Dialogue between the king and Esther

The AT has inserted a dialogue between the king and Mordecai. Actually, the dialogue between the king and Mordecai in the AT is parallel to the one between the king and Esther in the LXX. In the LXX, it is Esther who asks the king to undo the letters of Haman; in the AT, it is Mordecai who asks for it. LXX 8:3–8 is thus parallel to AT 7:16–17, 18–21:

<i>LXX</i>		<i>AT</i>	
8:1–2	Esther and the king Mordecai too is called	7:14–15	Esther and the king Mordecai too is called
8:3–8	Dialogue between the king and Esther	7:16–17	Dialogue between the king and Mordecai
		7:18–21	Dialogue between the king and Esther

It does take a little exercise to realize which AT section is parallel to which LXX section. Hence, the structure and narrative of the AT starts to diverge from the LXX (and the MT) from beyond LXX//MT 8:2, and that is precisely what Torrey meant.

Now, it may have become clear why the discussion about the letter of Mordecai is so important. Is it part of the original AT story or not? The discussions of Clines, Fox, Tov, and so many others focus on the precise ending of the AT. For some, the letter of Mordecai is still in, for others it is not. I think that there was never an AT without the letter of Mordecai. In this sense, the letter belongs to the original AT. I do not, however, think that this original AT was a Hebrew story, which existed next to the Hebrew biblical story of Esther. The Greek used in the AT seems at times to be “Septuagint Greek” and at times to be “compositional” Greek.

Moreover, if the AT was a translation from a lost Hebrew original, then why is this translation so similar to the translation of the Old Greek? Anyone translating the AT into a modern language can use a (modern) translation of the LXX as a starting point. Many of its differences can be labeled stylistic improvements of the Old Greek text, precisely the reason why this text was once characterized as “Lucianic.” These improvements can be observed in the main text as well as in the Additions. There is no change in style between the changes made by the AT in its text vis-à-vis the LXX text and the changes made by the AT in the Additions.

The quest for the precise ending of the AT—for instance, with or without the letter of Mordecai—has also influenced the reconstruction of the text history of the book of Esther. After all, if one accepts a shorter Hebrew text behind the AT, one has to explain how this shorter text developed into the current AT and into the MT. Clines,<sup>81</sup> Fox,<sup>82</sup> Kossmann,<sup>83</sup> and Dorothy<sup>84</sup> have described the different stages in the evolution from a short AT to the common AT, and finally to the common MT. These different stages are linked with the precise ending of the book. If MT 8:2 is the original ending, then how, when, and why was the rest of the text added? Why was the piece on the unraveling of the plan of Haman inserted—with or without its so-called irrevocability<sup>85</sup> (MT/LXX 8:3–14)?

<sup>81</sup> D. J. A. Clines, *The Esther Scroll: The Story of The Story* (JSOTSS 30; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984).

<sup>82</sup> M. V. Fox, *The Redaction of the Books of Esther: On Reading Composite Texts* (SBL Monograph Series 40; Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1991).

<sup>83</sup> Ruth Kossmann, *Die Esthernovelle: vom Erzählten zur Erzählung* (VTSup 79; Leiden: Brill, 1999).

<sup>84</sup> C. V. Dorothy, *The Books of Esther: Structure, Genre and Integrity* (JSOTSS 187; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997).

<sup>85</sup> “So-called,” for I question the issue of irrevocability. I do not see the irrevocability either in the MT or in the LXX. See K. De Troyer, *The End of the Alpha Text*, 128–133, 200–201, 218–220, 297–298.

When did the bloody chapter 9 get into the narrative? When was this story linked to the current Purim feast (MT 9:19, for instance)? When and why were the letters of both Mordecai and Esther added? Similar questions ought to be asked about the Additions. When and why were the Additions inserted? Where were they first inserted? Which one was inserted first? A redactional development of the “old Hebrew story” into the current MT and AT also has to explain why the MT became a “God-less” story, whereas the AT “inserted” God, or in the other scenario, did not “remove” God.<sup>86</sup> The question that must be kept in mind is whether or not the so-called original story was a real story, challenging enough to attract readers or to keep an audience from falling asleep. If one cuts out the blood, the feasts, the difficulties in obstructing the plan of Haman, and the problematic absence of God, then what sort of story is left? Maybe there remains a story about two competitive men (Mordecai and Haman), or about two women (Vashti who refused and Esther who did not), but these stories seem very short and very boring.

Again, I do not see how (part of) the AT might be a translation of a shorter Hebrew *Vorlage*. Fortunately, for me, there is also no external evidence to buttress this hypothesis. Hence, it is time to take the last step and focus on the question of whether the AT re-worked the LXX or corrected it to a Hebrew *Vorlage*, which was at times different from the current MT.

*Did the AT rework the Old Greek or correct it towards a (different) Hebrew text?*

I will start with the second part of the question: does the AT correct to a Hebrew text different from the MT? In the first section of the analysis, I have pointed to the fact that AT may correct to the MT—the so-called pre-hexaplaric corrections. The question here is whether or not the AT corrects to a Hebrew text different from the MT. In order to answer this question, I have to study all the instances where the AT differs both from the Septuagint and the MT and at the same time is equal to the Greek text of Josephus and/or to the Latin text of the Vetus Latina. Let me comment on this set of prerequisites. Josephus and the Old Latin have many readings in common with the AT but different from the Septuagint text. When these readings—the AT joined by the Old Latin and/or the text according to Josephus—also differ from the MT, they may be witnesses to a different Hebrew *Vorlage*.<sup>87</sup> Problematic for this investigation is that the critical text of the Vetus Latina of Esther has still not been published.<sup>88</sup>

<sup>86</sup> See Chapter I for a comparison between MT and LXX.

<sup>87</sup> Like the readings of the Old Greek of Joshua that witness to a pre-MT text; see Chapter II.

<sup>88</sup> See the notes to the section “witnesses” in this chapter.

Hanhart has published lists of variants of the Old Latin text in comparison with the Septuagint or AT.<sup>89</sup> These lists are not complete. As I went through the lists, I noted one example where the Old Latin, and more precisely one manuscript of the *Vetus Latina*, was equal to the AT and different from both the Septuagint and the MT: 1:6. The Old Latin and the AT read: “there were golden couches,” whereas the MT and the LXX read: “there were golden and silver couches.” In this case, the question is whether or not the reading without “and silver” witnesses to a Hebrew text without these words. I have to admit that verse 6 is a rather complex verse. The NRSV translates the Hebrew verse 6 as follows: “There were white cotton curtains and blue hangings tied with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings and marble pillars. There were couches of gold and silver on a mosaic pavement of porphyry, marble, mother-of-pearl, and colored stones.” In the LXX, the court of the garden is described as follows: “[the court] was adorned with hangings of fine linen and flax on cords of fine linen and purple, fastened to golden and silver studs, on pillars of Parian marble and stone: there were golden and silver couches on a pavement of emerald stone, and of pearl, and of Parian stone, and open-worked coverings variously flowered, having roses worked round about” (translation from Brenton).<sup>90</sup> The same court has changed just a little bit in the AT. The AT first reorganizes the hangings and the cords into a beautiful combination of different hanging materials and violet and scarlet colored ropes that keep the “hangings” together. Then, it creates a tent on top of the “cubicle”—the more literal translation of “studs”—and the pillars, fastened with the ropes. The Old Latin, however, does not read “tent.” Only one manuscript, La<sup>X</sup>, has *tavernaculum*. Moreover, Josephus reads: σκηνώμα, “tent”—related to but different from the word used in the AT.<sup>91</sup> Have both the AT and (one manuscript of) the Old Latin preserved the Old Hebrew text here? This would point to the Old Latin having direct access to a different Hebrew text. Or did the Old Latin follow the AT in this case? I think that the AT reorganized the LXX and that the Old Latin took its reading from the AT. The AT added, for instance, “the tent.” A similar word is extant in the Old Latin. This points, in my opinion, not to influence of a different Hebrew *Vorlage* on AT and the Old Latin but rather to influence of the AT on the Old Latin. It therefore appears that the AT reworked the LXX. The Old Latin followed suit.

Hanhart also offers a couple of examples of variants between the Septuagint of Esther and the text of Josephus.<sup>92</sup> In 1:11, for instance, Josephus reads with AT: “into the (drinking-)party,” whereas neither the Septuagint nor the MT have this element. Similar questions like the ones regarding the Old Latin can be

<sup>89</sup> R. Hanhart, *Esther*, 21–23.

<sup>90</sup> L. C. L. Brenton, *The Septuagint Version of the Old Testament and Apocrypha with an English Translation and with Various Readings and Critical Notes* (London: Bagster & Sons, 1851; repr., Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978).

<sup>91</sup> Josephus, *Antiquities* XI, 187. See R. Hanhart, *Esther*, 22.

<sup>92</sup> R. Hanhart, *Esther*, 36–38.

asked regarding Josephus. Did Josephus follow the AT, or did he take this reading from a different Hebrew *Vorlage*. Again, I would opt for the first possibility.

I tend to see an influence of the AT on both the Old Latin and Josephus, not the other way around. These few cases need further study, though, for they might throw light on the relation between the AT and the Old Latin and Josephus, as well as on the relation between these three texts and the Hebrew text. A study of these cases also needs to take into account the very rare cases where the Old Latin, Origen, and MT go hand in hand, like 2:17. The latter cases are truly difficult, but precisely these cases may point to the influence of the MT on the Old Latin. They do *not*, however, point to an influence of the MT on the AT.

With regard to the letter of Mordecai, it suffices to remind the reader that neither the AT, nor the Old Latin, nor Josephus contain this letter. It surely does give me the impression that this section of the text was not part of an original Hebrew text and that the letter was more likely to have been composed in Greek, even if it were “Septuagint Greek.”

The letter of Mordecai not only is written in “Septuagint Greek,” it also looks like the reworking of the Septuagint contents. As already noted, the overall structure of the AT fits with that of the LXX:

<i>LXX</i>		<i>AT</i>	
8:1–8	King’s command to write	7:14–19	Mordecai’s request to the king to write
		7:20–21	Esther’s killing fields, part one
8:9–13	Esther and Mordecai’s letter		see below, 7:33b–38
Add E	The king’s letter	7:22–32	The king’s letter
		7:33a	Sending out the letter
		7:33b–38	Mordecai’s letter
8:14	Sending out the letters		see above, 7:33a
8:15–17	Mordecai leaves the palace	7:39–41	Mordecai leaves the palace

Moreover, the literary forms of LXX chapter 8 match those of the final chapter of the AT. In chapter 8, the LXX especially uses dialogues, reports, and letters. In verses 1–2, a report is given about the king rewarding Esther and Esther rewarding Mordecai. In verses 3–8 a report containing a dialogue between Esther and the king is given. In chapter 7, from verse 14 onwards, the same forms are used: dialogues, reports, and letters. In verse 14, the king talks to

Esther; in verse 15, a report is given on how Mordecai comes on the scene. It is Mordecai, and not Esther, who dialogues with the king in verses 16–17. In verses 18–21, Esther and the king are talking. Verses 22–32 are parallel to Addition E, the letter of the king. The dispatching of the letter of the king is dealt with in verse 33a. After the king's letter, Mordecai's letter follows in verses 33b–38. In verses 39–41, Mordecai's exit and the reactions of the Jews and the inhabitants of Susa are reported. The forms used in the AT are precisely the same forms as the ones used in LXX. However, The AT has changed the contents of the dialogue between Esther and the king. This is logical, though, for in AT it is Mordecai who asks the king for an answer, whereas Esther is left with the organization of the battle fields, as was reported in LXX chapter 9. Moreover, the AT has inserted the dialogue between Mordecai and the king regarding the solution to the problem in the spot where the LXX was reporting on how Esther got closer to the king, and the king came closer to Esther, two elements in which the AT has not shown any interest to this point in the story.

<i>LXX</i>		<i>AT</i>	
Introduction		Introduction	
8:1–2	Putting Esther and Mordecai on the scene with the king	=7:14–15	(with focus on Mordecai)
Request and Command		Request	
8:3	Esther's move towards the king	-	
8:4	The king's move towards Esther	-	
		7:16-17	Dialogue between Mordecai and king
8:5-6	Questions by Esther	7:18-21	Dialogue between Esther and king
8:7-8	Response by the king, including command	- <sup>93</sup>	
Execution of Command		Request Granted	
8:9-10	Actions taken to write letters	- <sup>94</sup>	

<sup>93</sup> Note, however, that the writing of the letter is a direct response to Mordecai's request to the king to solve the problem.

8:11-12	Contents of the letter of Mordecai and Esther	7:22-32	Letter of the king
Add. E	Contents of the letter of the king	7:33b-38	Letter of Mordecai
8:13	Command related to the two letters	-	
8:14	Actions taken to dispatch the letters	7:33a	Letter of the king dispatched
Conclusion		Conclusion	
8:15-17	Exit Mordecai; the Jews and inhabitants of Susa rejoice; reaction of people	7:39-41	Exit Mordecai; the Jews and inhabitants of Susa rejoice; reaction of people

The AT retains the same forms; it summarizes parts of the content of LXX chapter 9 in 7:18–21; and, finally, it omits some elements that no longer fit with the new emphasis on Mordecai, the savior of the Jews.

The letter of Mordecai in AT emphasizes the new role of Mordecai. The letter is composed of words which are typical of the AT or typical of the manner in which the AT reworked the LXX. A short analysis of the words and expressions used in the letter of Mordecai will prove that this section is, indeed, constructed with material either characteristic of the AT or with material from the Septuagint. Rather than give an exhaustive analysis of the entire section, I will point to the pregnant expressions and words.<sup>95</sup>

In verse 33b, the king allows Mordecai to write whatever he wants. The author uses a word that literally means “to put in the hands of” or “to hand over” (ἐνχειρίζω). This verb appears nowhere in the Septuagint; combinations like “to handle” (χειρίζω) or to attempt (ἐπιχειρίζω) only occur rarely, the former verb once in LXX Esther Add. E:5, and the latter also in LXX Esther Add. E:3 and 9:25.<sup>96</sup> The AT uses the same verbs in its parallels, except for 9:25, which is missing in the AT. Combinations with “hands” are thus at least known to the author of the AT. Moreover, the AT has already used this verb once before: AT 7:17, where the king appointed Mordecai over the affairs of the kingdom. The verb “to hand over” is thus a typical AT word.

<sup>94</sup> Part of the preparation of the letter is told in verse 34.

<sup>95</sup> For a detailed study, see K. De Troyer, *The End of the Alpha Text of Esther*, Chapter 4.

<sup>96</sup> As well as in LXX 2 Chr 20:11; LXX Ezra 7:23; and a couple times in 2 and 4 Maccabees.

After receiving permission, Mordecai sets out to write. In verse 34b, the content of his writing is revealed: Mordecai's people are free to remain in their own land and to celebrate a feast for God. While the verb "to feast" (ἐορτάζω) also occurs in AT 7:30, it is not found in LXX Esther.<sup>97</sup> On the other hand, the noun ἐορτή occurs in LXX Add. E:22. The AT appears to have found its source of inspiration in LXX Add. E:22. In LXX Add. E:22, the king invites his population (the non-Jews) to include a specific day among their feast days. The AT employs the verb on two occasions: in AT 7:30 and here in AT 7:34. This verb is thus again a typical AT verb. It is, however, akin to a word used in the LXX, and thus, I propose that even for this verb, the author looked at the LXX. The content of the letter is further described in verses 36–38.

In his letter—and thus also in verses 36–37—Mordecai also reminds the addressees of what Haman wrote to them. Haman used a specific term in order to refer to the Jewish people: the recalcitrant Jews (ἔθνος Ἰουδαίων ἀπειθές). The qualification "recalcitrant" (ἀπειθής) can also be found in Haman's description of the people in AT 3:8. In AT 3:8, the Jews are called a (war-)fighting and recalcitrant people. The latter qualification is a plus with respect to its parallel passage in LXX 3:8, and as such it can be understood as typical for the AT.<sup>98</sup>

Haman's addressees are urged to bring the stubborn Jewish people to "a swift end" (σπουδάσατε ταχέως). The adverb "swift" (ταχέως) only occurs here in the AT. It is also not used in the LXX of Esther.<sup>99</sup> The word "speed" (τάχος), however, can be found in LXX Add. E:18: Haman gets the punishment he deserves without delay (with speed). It would appear that the AT is building on an element from Add. E. The AT also uses a related term in AT 6:12.<sup>100</sup> The AT exhibits a striking reversal: instead of stating that God punishes swiftly (LXX Add. E:18), the AT presents Haman as setting out to do his work with haste and goes on to conclude in AT 7:28 (the parallel to LXX Add. E:18) that God gives a quick and thus an appropriate punishment—if of course one considers "hanging" a quick death!

The verb "to make haste" or "to hurry" (σπουδάζω) is found in AT 6:23 and 7:36. This verb is very close to another verb used to indicate "to make

<sup>97</sup> The verb is used in the LXX to refer to the celebration of a feast for God, in the majority of instances, as an exhortation to the Jews to celebrate a feast for their God. Although the LXX of Esther states, for example, that the Jews celebrated a feast, the terminology employed is different (LXX 8:16). The parallel text to LXX 8:16 is AT 7:40.

<sup>98</sup> The verb is used to indicate "recalcitrant" behavior. In combination with the substantive "people," however, it is only found in Sir 16:6. In LXX Isa 30:9 it occurs in combination with "people," reference being made in this instance to the disobedient and stubborn people of Israel.

<sup>99</sup> The adverb does occur, however, in 2 Macc 2:18; 4:48; 6:23; 7:10; 8:9; 14:27, 44; 3 Macc 2:23; 4 Macc 4:22; 10:21; 12:9; 14:10; and in LXX Dan 2:16.

<sup>100</sup> In 2 Macc 7:37 the seventh son implores that God will "swiftly have mercy on our people."



haste” (σπεύδω); the latter verb occurs in AT 2:9 (// LXX 2:9); AT 3:13 (// LXX 3:15); AT 6:18 (// LXX -),<sup>101</sup> and LXX 8:14 (// AT -). It would appear that swiftness is typical of Haman’s *modus operandi*: he quickly sends his letters and quickly helps Mordecai onto his horse in AT 6:18. Such “speediness” on the part of Haman is always to be found in a plus with respect to the LXX. The fact that he then issues a command to others that they should act with haste is thus hardly surprising. The additional fact that he urges his addressees to make haste twice over, as it were, namely by using the verb “to make haste” and the adverb “swiftly,” only intensifies the impression that his command is indeed a typically “Haman-command.”

Haman’s letter unequivocally insists that the disobedient Jewish people deserve to be annihilated<sup>102</sup>: “Send them on my behalf to destruction” (ἀναπέμψαι μοι εἰς ἀπώλειαν)<sup>103</sup> Haman’s words precisely match his request in AT 3:9: “Give me the people for destruction” (δοθήτω μοι τὸ ἔθνος εἰς ἀπώλειαν).

In his letter, AT 7:33–38, and more specifically, in his recalling of the letter of Haman, Mordecai quotes the words of Haman from AT 3:8–9. Elements from AT 3:8–9 include: “the disobedient people,” “the speedy dispatch” of the letters, and the command “to annihilate.”

In verse 38, Mordecai draws the attention of his audience to the fact that the one who was planning to have the Jews annihilated has been hanged. Haman is portrayed as “the one who was nurturing such a plan” (τὸν ταῦτα ἐργασάμενον). The verb “nurturing (a plan)” (ἐργάζομαι) can be found in one more place in the AT, namely in AT 7:28. This verb looks again like a typical AT verb. Its inspiration, however, might again be the LXX, and more precisely LXX Esther Add. E:18. The AT splits the passage from LXX Add. E:18 in two and uses it in two places: once in the parallel text to Add. E:18 (AT 7:28) and once here in AT 7:37. The fact that the AT relates the same thing twice (that the one who was planning the annihilation of the Jews was hanged) comes as something of a surprise. Under normal circumstances, the AT tends to avoid doublets, which have their roots in the sometimes-parallel text of the LXX and the Additions. In the present context, however, the AT employs a different verb to LXX Add. E:18 and AT 7:28 in its reference to what actually happened to

<sup>101</sup> The AT has delicately expanded the scene from the LXX at this juncture, employing data from the LXX

<sup>102</sup> Destruction (ἀπώλεια) occurs elsewhere in AT 7:26 (// LXX Add. E:13, with εἰς !) and AT 7:31 (// LXX Add. E:23), as well as in LXX 7:4 (// AT 7:4, but cf. the remark which follows), and LXX 8:6 (// AT?). In AT 7:4 the AT does not opt for the parallel term from LXX 7:4 but rather for the second and third word of LXX 7:4 as the first and second words of AT 7:4. The option made by the AT, therefore, is clearly not “against” the term “destruction.”

<sup>103</sup> While the verb “to send” (ἀναπέμπω) does not occur in the LXX, it does occur in classical literature and in a few texts from the New Testament period, such as *Test. Job* 48:3, as well as even later texts.

Haman: “Haman was hanged at the gates of Susa” (πρὸς ταῖς Σούσων πύλαις κεκρεμάσθαι). Instead of “to crucify” (σταυρόω)—as in Add. E:18—the AT uses “to hang” (κρεμάζω). This same verb is employed in LXX 8:7, a passage which also calls to mind the hanging of Haman and the confiscation of his house. Moreover, it would appear that the AT prefers the verb “to hang” to the verb “to crucify.”<sup>104</sup> In addition, I have observed that the LXX makes a distinction between “killing” and “hanging on display.”<sup>105</sup> The reference to the hanging of Haman is thus in line with both the LXX and the AT itself.<sup>106</sup> It is only possible for the reader to know that he was hanged at the city gates of Susa on the basis of LXX Add. E:18 and AT 7:28. Clearly, therefore, the AT was familiar with LXX Add. E:18, which it used once again at this point in the text.

I hope that the analysis of words and expressions has proven not only that the AT re-uses the vocabulary of the Septuagint of Esther, but also, more importantly, that the AT has reworked the LXX of Esther.

#### D. Conclusions

The second Greek text of Esther, the AT, is quite an old text. It stands in the tradition of the Old Greek. Origen used the AT. Josephus and the Old Latin knew the AT as well, so the AT must have existed before the latter two. However, there is no evidence for the AT being a translation of a hitherto unknown Hebrew story of the book of Esther. Proof that the AT was corrected towards, and thus directly influenced by, the MT still needs to be given, but it has been demonstrated that the AT is a reworking of the Old Greek, LXX text of Esther. As such, the AT is an example of a rewritten Greek Bible.

First in 1997, and again (in English) in 2000, I have proposed to no longer use the title “Alpha Text” for the second Greek text of Esther but to name

<sup>104</sup> AT 7:12 (2x), 13, 14.

<sup>105</sup> Cf. K. De Troyer, *The End of the Alpha Text of Esther*, Chapter 4, and *idem*, “Once More the So-Called Esther Fragments of Cave 4,” *Revue de Qumran* 75/19 (2000): 401–422.

<sup>106</sup> The hanging of Haman is recalled in a number of places in the LXX: 8:7 and 9:25:

LXX 8:7: καὶ αὐτὸν ἐκρέμασα ἐπὶ ξύλου

AT: ?

LXX 9:25: καὶ ἐκρεμάσθη αὐτὸς καὶ τὰ τέκνα αὐτοῦ

AT 7:19 (with respect to the children)

That Haman was hanged is beyond dispute. The LXX refers to the hanging of the children, more specifically, to their being “hung” on display. Does LXX 9:25 intend to say the same with respect to Haman? If the answer is yes, then it is possible that LXX 9:25 also served as a source of inspiration for AT 7:37. The reader should also take note of the fact the LXX 9:24 can likewise serve as a source for AT 7:37. It is hardly accidental that these verses (LXX 9:24–25), among others, do not have a parallel in the AT.

it the “Agrippa Text,” for I believe that the AT was created around 40–41 C.E. in Rome, when Philo tried to convince Agrippa to give the Jewish Alexandrians permission to live according to their own laws.<sup>107</sup>

That is also why I have consistently used the abbreviation AT in this chapter. Dating the text to 40–41 C.E., and locating it in Rome, I can easily explain the influence of the AT on Josephus and Philo and further buttress the AT’s root in the Old Greek text of Esther, created in 78–77 B.C.E.

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<sup>107</sup> See K. De Troyer, *The End of the Alpha Text of Esther*, Chapter 6.



## Chapter IV

### A Lost Hebrew *Vorlage*? A Closer Look at the Temple Builder in 1 Esdras

#### A. Texts and Thesis

##### 1. Texts

<i>LXX 1 Esdras 2:25</i> <sup>1</sup>	<i>MT Ezra 4:24</i>	<i>LXX 2 Esdras 4:24</i>
Καὶ ἤργει	בִּאֲדִין בַּטֶּלַח	τότε ἤργησεν
ἢ οἰκοδομὴ τοῦ ἱεροῦ	עֲבִידָה	τὸ ἔργον
τοῦ ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ	בֵּית־אֱלֹהִים	οἴκου τοῦ θεοῦ
μέχρι	דִּי בִירוּשָׁלַם	τὸ ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ
τοῦ δευτέρου ἔτους	וְהָיָה בַטֶּלַח	καὶ ἦν ἀγροῦν
τῆς βασιλείας	עַד	ἕως
Δαρείου	שָׁנָה תְּרִיתִין	δευτέρου ἔτους
τοῦ Περσῶν βασιλέως	לְמַלְכוּת דְּרִישׁ	τῆς βασιλείας
	מֶלֶךְ־פֶּרֶס מֶלֶךְ־פֶּרֶס	Δαρείου
		τοῦ βασιλέως Περσῶν

<sup>1</sup> For the text of 1 Esdras, see Robert Hanhart, *Esdrae Liber I.* (Septuaginta, Vetus Testamentum graecum, auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis editum, Vol. VIII/1; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1974); for 2 Esdras, see Robert Hanhart, *Esdrae Liber II.* (Septuaginta, Vetus Testamentum graecum, auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis editum, Vol. VIII/2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993); for the Hebrew text, see *Megilloth: Librum Esther* (ed. F. Maass; Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia 13; reprint Stuttgart, 1977).

<i>NRSV 1 Esdras 2:30</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>NRSV Ezra 4:24</i>	<i>Brenton 2 Esdras 4:24</i>
And	At that time	Then
the building of	the work on	ceased
the temple	the house of God	the work of
in Jerusalem	in Jerusalem	the house of God
stopped	stopped	in Jerusalem
until	and was discontinued	and it was at a stand
the second year	until	until
of the reign	the second year מלך-פרס	the second year
of King Darius	of the reign	of the reign
of the Persians	of King Darius	of Darius, king
	of Persia	of the Persians

## 2. Thesis

The Greek 1 Esdras<sup>3</sup> text is a witness to a lost Hebrew-Aramaic rewritten story of Ezra-Nehemiah and other temple-building stories such as Haggai and Zechariah. Esdras aims at reinforcing the role of Zerubbabel as the builder of the

<sup>2</sup> The numbering of the verses also varies per Bible. In most English Bibles, for instance, 2:25 of the Greek text is 2:30. In this chapter, I have followed the numbering of the NRSV.

<sup>3</sup> There are quite a few (biblical) books with the name Esdras. The following survey might be helpful:

<i>MT</i>	<i>LXX</i>	<i>Slavonic</i>	<i>Vg (Clementine edition)</i>
	Esdras A' (= 1 Esdras)	2 Esdras	3 Esdras
Ezra Nehemia	Esdras B' (= 2 Esdras)	1 Esdras	1 Esdras 2 Esdras
		3 Esdras	4 Esdras

Also note that in some (English) Bibles 2 Esdras indicates Vg 4 Esdras, chapters 3–14 = Apocalypse of Ezra.

Second Temple. Moreover, 1 Esdras makes the period in which the building started—the second year of king Darius—more plausible. In 1 Esdras 2:30, the better literary timing as well as the better literary fit for a figure like Zerubbabel becomes visible.

The thesis of this chapter is different from that of the previous chapter, where I argued against a Hebrew *Vorlage* for AT Esther. Indeed, in this chapter, I will plead for a Hebrew-Aramaic *Vorlage* of 1 Esdras that is different from MT.

## B. Witnesses and Opinions

### 1. Witnesses

A few biblical books are handed down in more than one Greek version. Daniel and Esther, for instance, are known in more than just the Old Greek text. The Greek book of Daniel can be read in its Theodotonic version and in its Old Greek text, both of which are printed in the edition of Rahlfs.<sup>4</sup> As discussed in Chapter III, the Greek book of Esther also comes in two Greek forms, namely the Septuagint text and the Alpha-Text of Esther. There are also two Greek texts of the book of Ezra-Nehemiah, albeit only of the “Ezra” part.<sup>5</sup> The Septuagint translation of the book is known as Esdras B’; the other Greek text is labeled Esdras A’, or, more commonly, 1 Esdras. The book 1 Esdras has always been a part of the Greek Bible, for the book is present in most of the oldest codices. Moreover, cursives 19 and 108 witness to the fact that the Old Greek as reworked by Lucian also contained 1 Esdras.<sup>6</sup> In Codex Vaticanus, 1 Esdras

<sup>4</sup> Alfred Rahlfs, *Septuagint: Id est Vetus Testamentum graece iuxta LXX interpretes. Vol. II: Libri poetici et prophetici* (Stuttgart: Privilegierte Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1935), 870–936.

<sup>5</sup> I do believe, however, that both the translator of the Septuagint text and the author of the other Greek text knew both the Ezra and the Nehemiah parts of the book Ezra-Nehemiah.

<sup>6</sup> Lucian’s hand is clearly visible in some changes. For instance, he changes the Greek word μέχρι (until) into ἕως, precisely the word that the Septuagint translator has used in its rendering of the Hebrew text (see right column, above). This might indicate that Lucian used 2 Esdras to correct 1 Esdras. That Lucian was a fine exegete also becomes apparent when he avoids using the same verb in 1:50 and 5:2. In the first passage, the Jews are taken into exile; in the second, they are going back to Jerusalem. Lucian chose two different tenses, instead of one and the same, avoiding the implication that going into exile resembles returning. In quite a few places, Lucianic readings coincide with the Old Latin. This might indicate that Lucian kept the Old Greek readings. If this is the case, then the chain of influence should be reversed, and thus, one might state that 2 Esdras is corrected towards 1 Esdras. I will not comment on this issue, for it is rather complex. See

follows the books of Chronicles. After 1 Esdras—a later scribe has added the title Εσδρας α̃ on top of the text—the Septuagint translation of the Hebrew book of Ezra-Nehemiah is copied.

In his foreword to his Latin edition, Jerome proclaims the unity of the book Ezra-Nehemiah, and labels “1 Esdras” “3 Esdras.”<sup>7</sup> Later on, in the Clementine edition of the Vulgate,<sup>8</sup> the book Ezra-Nehemiah was divided into the book Ezra and the book Nehemiah. The “third” book of Ezra is printed in an appendix to the Vulgate, more precisely an appendix following the New Testament.<sup>9</sup> The question now arises which one of the two Greek texts is the translation of the Hebrew book of Ezra-Nehemiah. The answer to this question is easy, for it is very obvious that the Septuagint is the Old Greek translation of the Hebrew story. Indeed, the Septuagint text of Ezra-Nehemiah follows the Hebrew text rather slavishly.<sup>10</sup> 1 Esdras, on the contrary, is characterized by its differences from the Hebrew text and can hardly be called a translation of the Hebrew (and at times Aramaic) story of Ezra-Nehemiah. In my investigation, therefore, I will

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Robert Hanhart, *Text und Textgeschichte des 1. Esrabuches* (MSU XII; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1974), 11–18, 47–52; Anna Kharanauli, “Ein Chanmeti-fragment der georgischen Übersetzung von Esra I (Fragen der Authentizität, Vorlage und Übersetzungstechnik),” *Le Muséon* 2002 (1/2) (forthcoming).

<sup>7</sup> See foreword (“incipit prologus eusebii hieronymi in libro ezrae”) as printed in Robert Weber, OSB, ed., *Biblia Sacra: iuxta vulgatam versionem*, vol. 1: *Genesis–Psalmi* (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1969), 638–639. See also Pierre-Marie Bogaert, *Prolegomena to Codex Vaticanus B: Codex vaticanus graecus 1209* (Bibliorum sacrorum graecorum; Vatican City: Bibliotheca Apostolicae Vaticanae & Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1999), 20.

<sup>8</sup> The Clementine edition is itself a “re-print” of the earlier Sixtine edition. The Roman edition—for both names refer to names of Roman Catholic popes—of the Septuagint was not the first printed edition. The Complutensian Polyglot from 1514–1517 and the Aldine edition from 1518 were the earliest printed editions of the Septuagint. The Roman edition from 1587, however, is the first that claims to be based on a single uncial codex (Codex B). Its full title is *Vetus testamentum, iuxta septuaginta, ex auctoritate Sixti V. Pont. Max. editum*. Romae: Francisci Zanetti, 1587. See Henry Barclay Swete, *The Old Testament in Greek, according to the Septuagint*, vol. 1: *Genesis–IV Kings* (Cambridge: CUP, 1901), v–vii. See also Pierre-Marie Bogaert, *Prolegomena to Codex Vaticanus B. Codex vaticanus graecus 1209* (Bibliorum sacrorum graecorum; Vatican City: Bibliotheca Apostolicae Vaticanae & Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1999), 11–15. A later edition of the 1587 work became the standard Vulgate of the Roman Catholic church. Its full title is: *(Sixto-) Clementina. Biblia Sacra Vulgatae Editionis Sixti Quinti iussu recognita (et auctoritate Clementis Octavi edita)*; Roma, 1592, 1593, and 1598). See Robert Weber, OSB, ed., *Biblia Sacra: iuxta vulgatam versionem*, vol. 1: *Genesis–Psalmi* (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1969), xxvii.

<sup>9</sup> Robert Weber, OSB, ed., *Biblia Sacra iuxta vulgatam versionem*, vol. 2: *Proverbia–Apocalypsis, Appendix* (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1969).

<sup>10</sup> Pierre-Marie Bogaert, *Prolegomena to Codex Vaticanus B: Codex vaticanus graecus 1209* (Bibliorum sacrorum graecorum; Vatican City: Bibliotheca Apostolicae Vaticanae & Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1999), 20.



focus on 1 Esdras and the Hebrew-Aramaic Ezra-Nehemiah text. If 1 Esdras is not a translation of the biblical story, what is it then?

## 2. Current opinions

Pohlmann grouped the main scholars who deal with the question into two categories.<sup>11</sup> The scholars favoring the “fragment hypothesis” claim that 1 Esdras is a fragment of a larger work that contained all of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah, and that 1 Esdras offers an earlier redaction than the biblical, canonical text. Those who defend the “compilations hypothesis” state that the author of 1 Esdras knew the canonical books of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah, and that he/she compiled his/her book using material from these books. In the first hypothesis, the *Vorlage* of 1 Esdras is thus older than Ezra-Nehemiah; in the second it is later. A good survey of the research done from 1783 till 1965 can be found in Pohlmann’s 1970 book.<sup>12</sup> A more recent survey of 1 Esdras research can be found in *Currents of Biblical Studies* 2002.<sup>13</sup>

Grabbe’s view can’t be classified among the theories just mentioned, for he believes that 1 Esdras reflects a Semitic text that is older than and slightly different from the canonical Ezra-Nehemiah text.<sup>14</sup> So far, I can concur with his view. However, he argues for a late insertion of 3:1–5:3, which is the so-called “Three Youths Story”<sup>15</sup> or “The story of Darius’ Bodyguards.”<sup>16</sup> Zipora Talshir turns the latter issue upside down. According to her, the story of the Three Youths is the pivotal piece of 1 Esdras. 1 Esdras is composed to give a

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<sup>11</sup> Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann, *Studien zum dritten Esra: Ein Beitrag zur Frage nach dem ursprünglichen Schluß des chronistischen Geschichtswerks* (FRLANT 104; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht: 1970), 14; *idem*, *3 Esra-Buch: Historische und legendarische Erzählungen* (JSHRZ 1; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlaghaus/ Gerd Mohn, 1980).

<sup>12</sup> Pohlmann, *Studien zum dritten Esra*, 14–26.

<sup>13</sup> This is the new name of the journal formerly called *Currents in Research: Biblical Studies*. See Kristin De Troyer, “Zerubbabel and Ezra: A Revived and Revised Solomon and Josiah? A Survey of Current 1 Esdras Research,” *Currents of Biblical Research* (2002): 30–61.

<sup>14</sup> Lester Grabbe, *Ezra-Nehemiah* (Old Testament Readings; London/New York: Routledge, 1998).

<sup>15</sup> Zipora Talshir, *1 Esdras: From Origin to Translation* (SBLSCS 47; Atlanta, GA: SBL, 1999).

<sup>16</sup> George W. E. Nickelsburg, “The Bible Rewritten and Expanded,” in Michael E. Stone, ed., *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period: Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus* (CRINT II; The Literature of the Jewish People in the Period of the Second Temple and the Talmud, Assen: Van Gorcum; Philadelphia: Fortress: 1984), 89–156, esp. 131–135.

framework to this story: “It is a section deliberately cut out from Chr-Ezr-Neh, to form a framework for the Story of the Youths.”<sup>17</sup>

## C. Analysis

### 1. MT Ezra

#### A) Structure

The Hebrew-Aramaic story of Ezra-Nehemiah contains three larger parts. In the first part, Ezra 1–6, the exiles return to Jerusalem, lay the foundation of the altar, and start and finish building the Temple. The second part, Ezra 7–10, concentrates on the figure Ezra and how he pulls the strings in order to make the people live according to the Law. The third part consists of the book of Nehemiah, which in its turn can be divided into different parts. It is strange to see Ezra popping up (again) in the middle of the book of Nehemiah, namely in chapter 8. In this chapter of my book I will focus on the first part of the story, namely on chapters 1 to 6. These chapters deal with the period from the moment the exiles return to Jerusalem under King Cyrus of Persia till the time of Darius. From chapter 7 onwards, the text deals with the time of King Artaxerxes.<sup>18</sup> In the overall structure of chapters 1–6, given below, I have focused on the events related to the building of the Second Temple. Chapters 1–6 contain a literary report in which different literary forms, such as letters, list, dialogues, and dedication and feast reports, are used.

1:1–11: King Cyrus commands to build the Temple

2:1–70: List of the returnees to Jerusalem

3:1–13: Foundation of the altar and Feast of Booths

4:1–3: “Enemies”<sup>19</sup> arise to participate; they are rejected

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<sup>17</sup> Z. Talshir, *I Esdras*, 6.

<sup>18</sup> That this chronological division of the book of Ezra is not without problems will become obvious from the analysis.

<sup>19</sup> I still have difficulties seeing these people as “enemies.” After all, do they not worship the same God and do they not offer to help rebuild the Temple? I question the presumption that all people from the North were non-Israelites, people displaced after the Assyrian Conquest. The Israelites that remained were JHWH worshippers, and thus, they had good reasons to participate in the rebuilding of the Temple. See James D. Purvis,

- 4:4–6: “Enemies” hinder the building project
- 4:7–22: “Enemies” write a the letter to King Artaxerxes
- 4:23–24: Result of the letter writing: the building project is stopped
  
- 5:1–2: Prophesying of Haggai and Zechariah regarding the building of the Temple
- 5:3–5: Inquiry of Tattenai and Shethar-bozenai about the building project
- 5:6–17: Copy of letter of Tattenai and Shethar-bozenai to King Darius
- 6:1–12: King Darius orders to search the archives and commands to build
- 6:13–15: The building of the Temple is continued and finished
- 6:16–18: Dedication of the Temple
- 6:19–22: Celebration of Passover

The sentence which I will study in detail is Ezra 4:24. It is the last sentence of a rather complex chapter 4. Chapter 4 has some strange irregularities. After “the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin” have offered their services in the reconstruction of the Temple, Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the rest of the heads of families in Israel bluntly reject them. The latter answer to “the enemies”: “You shall have no part with us in building a house to our God; but we alone will build to the Lord, the God of Israel, as King Cyrus of Persia has commanded us” (see 4:1–3). In the next verses, the people of Judah (i.e., the returned exiles) are in many ways discouraged from building the Temple. Their enemies bribe officials to frustrate the plans. These enemies are labeled “the people of the land” in verses 4 and 5. These people hinder the building project “throughout the reign of King Cyrus of Persia and until the reign of King Darius of Persia” (verse 5b). In verse 6, the description of the hindrance is continued: “In the reign of Ahasuerus, in his accession year, they wrote an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem.” Not only has the description of the Temple builders changed—from the long list in verse 2, “the people of Judah,” to “the people of Judah and Jerusalem”—the king’s name has also changed: the author has switched to Ahasuerus.<sup>20</sup> In verse 7, another group of “enemies” is writing a long letter to King Artaxerxes (and I wonder: what is this king doing here?). The enemies are now “Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel, and the rest of their associates.”

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“Exile and Return: From the Babylonian Destruction to the Reconstruction of the Jewish State,” in *Ancient Israel: From Abraham to the Roman Destruction of the Temple* (rev. Eric M. Meyers; ed. Hershel Shanks; Washington, DC: Biblical Archaeological Society; Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1999), 201–229. That the scribe of the Ezra-Nehemiah book labeled these people “enemies” says more about the ideology of the scribe than about that of the so-called enemies.

<sup>20</sup> This name will play a role in the discussion below.

As if the problem with the enemies is not yet large enough, the author of the story has added another couple of names in verse 8: Rehum, the royal deputy, and Shimshai, the scribe. These two write to the same king as mentioned in verse 7: King Artaxerxes. In verses 9 and 10, the two last names are accompanied by a list of others who all seem to join in the accusation against the builders of the Temple.

As a matter of fact, Rehum and Shimshai do not write against the builders, but “against Jerusalem” (verse 8). And that is precisely the problem related to the second part of chapter 4: What is the point of the letter? Not the building of the Temple, but the rebuilding of Jerusalem! Indeed, from verse 7, and certainly from verse 8, onwards, the text no longer deals with the building of the Temple but with the restoration of the city. The “enemies” report to King Artaxerxes that their “enemies” “are rebuilding that rebellious and wicked city” and that “they are finishing the walls and repairing the foundations” and that all this is not good for the king, for this city is known to act against its kings. King Artaxerxes realizes the danger and issues an order “that this city not be rebuilt” (verse 21). With this message in their pockets, Rehum, Shimshai and their colleagues rush to Jerusalem, more precisely, to the Jews—the name “Jews” only occurs in the letter and in the conclusion of the story, verse 23—and make them cease their venture. The letter of the “enemies,” the response of the king, and the narrative conclusion of this section, verse 23, deal with the city.

Verse 24, however, picks up the issues from the first verses of the chapter and deals with the building of the Temple: “At that time the work on the house of God in Jerusalem stopped and was discontinued until the second year of the reign of King Darius of Persia.” Schematically, chapter 4 looks as follows:

	<i>enemies</i>	<i>against</i>	<i>about</i>	<i>when</i>
4:1-3	adversaries of Judah and Benjamin	Zerubbabel, Joshua, and heads of families	Temple	Cyrus and Darius
4:4-5	people of the land	people of Judah		
4:6	“they”	inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem	?	Ahasuerus
4:7	Bishlam, Mithredath, and Tabeel	-	-	Artaxerxes
4:8	Rehum, Shimshai, and colleagues	against Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Artaxerxes
4:9-10	former three + long list	-	-	Artaxerxes
4:11-16			Jerusalem	Artaxerxes

4:17-22			Jerusalem	Artaxerxes
4:23	Rehum, Shimshai, and colleagues	Jews in Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Artaxerxes
4:24			Temple	till Darius

As the letter of Bishlam, Mithredath, and Tabeel starts in verse 7, I have taken verse 7 as the opening verse and verse 23 as the closing verse of the section about the city of Jerusalem.

4:7: intro  
 4:8–11a: second (added?) intro  
     4:11b–16: letter of accusation  
     4:17–22: answer of the king  
 4:23: exit

The section on the city, verses 7–23, can be neatly divided into an introduction, an additional introduction, a letter to the king, a letter from the king, and a closing statement. The section on the Temple contains a narrative introduction with two embedded dialogues (verses 1–2a; verse 2b; verse 3) and a closing narrative report (verse 24). The structure and the contents as well as the forms used in chapter 4 make it clear that only the opening verses and the final verse of chapter 4 deal with the building of the Temple, whereas the rest regards the building of the city:

4:1–6: Temple  
     4:7–23: City  
 4:24: Temple

## B) Analysis

In chapter 4, four kings are mentioned. In verse 5, King Cyrus and King Darius are mentioned; in verse 6, King Ahasuerus; in verses 7–23, King Artaxerxes; and finally, in verse 24, again King Darius. Chapter 4 ruins the chronological sequence of the first part of Ezra.<sup>21</sup> The historical sequence of kings from this period is as follows:

<sup>21</sup> King Artaxerxes also appears in chapter 7 and following. There, however, he might fit chronologically.

Cyrus (559–529)  
 Cambyses (529–522)  
 Darius I (521–486)  
 Xerxes I (486–465)  
 Artaxerxes I (465–424)<sup>22</sup>

The kings are mentioned in the following verses of chapter 1–6:

Cyrus: 1:1, 2, 7, 8; 4:3 (reference to the past); 4:5; 5:14, 17  
 (references to the past); 6:3, 14 (references to the  
 past)  
 Darius: 4:5, 24; 5:6, 7; 6:1, 12, 13, 14, 15  
 Xerxes/Ahasuerus: 4:6  
 Artaxerxes: 4:7, 8, 11, 23; 6:14 (references to the past)

If we put these verses in a narrative sequence and compare with the “actual” chronology, the following problem verses arise:

Cyrus (chapter 1) → . . . → Darius (chapters 4–6)  
 Xerxes/Ahasuerus: intruder in 4:6  
 Artaxerxes: intruder in 4:7–23

There is, however, one more verse in which Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes are all mentioned, namely 6:14. In 6:14, the author has collected not only the names of all the kings who are possibly connected with the building of the Temple, but also of the supreme God responsible for the building: “They finished their building by command of the God of Israel and by decree of Cyrus, Darius and King Artaxerxes of Persia.”<sup>23</sup> The presence of the names of three kings, as well as the presence of God, in this verse, can be explained as a literary summary expressing the importance of and the authorities responsible for finishing the Temple.

It is worth noting that in the English translation Ahasuerus is mentioned with his Greek name, and not with his Hebrew name. In the Hebrew text, the following names are used; I have added for comparison the transcription of the names made by the Old Greek translator:

<sup>22</sup> See Helga Weippert, *Palästina in vorhellenistische Zeit* (Handbuch der Archäologie II, Band I; Munich: C. H. Beck, 1988), 689.

<sup>23</sup> Note that only the latter one receives the title of king in this verse! Does this also hint at the actual time of composition of chapters 1–6, namely under Artaxerxes II (404–359/8)?

	<i>MT</i>	<i>LXX</i>
4:5	Kores and Darius	Kores and Darius
4:6	Ahasueros	Assueros
4:7-23	Arthasashta	Arthasastha
4:24	Darius	Darius

In English, Kores is rendered with Cyrus, and Arthasashta is rendered with Artaxerxes. Indeed, the English and Greek translation of Arthasashta is Artaxerxes.

The latter identification—to which I will return—however, has often been missed.<sup>24</sup> The standard translation of Ahasueros, when it is translated, is Xerxes. The sequence Cyrus, Darius is good; the insertion of Artaxerxes in verses 7–23, however, as well as the mentioning of Xerxes in verse 6, ruins the chronology. Moreover, as the verses 7–23 deal with the building of the city and not of the Temple, it seems that this piece is inserted into the narrative at this point in order to make a comparison between the hindrance that the Jews experienced when building the walls of the city (Nehemiah 4 and 6) and the hindrance that they experienced when building the Temple. Hanhart was the first to point to this possibility. According to him, verse 24 needs to be rendered as follows: “Then, also—under Darius—was the work of the Temple stopped.”<sup>25</sup> I think that not only verse 24, but the entire section dealing with the letter to and from Artaxerxes, is a comparison between the problems which arose during the time of the building of the second Temple and the restoration of Jerusalem.<sup>26</sup> This comparison explains the presence of Artaxerxes in the “problem-verses” of chapter 4, namely 4:7–23. It does not, however, render the presence of Xerxes/Ahasuerus in 4:6 plausible. I believe, however, that the author was aware of the fact that there was one king between Cyrus and Darius. As the author had just used Artaxerxes for comparison, it could not be the latter one. Hence, the author inserted another king, King Ahasuerus—unfortunately not the “right”

<sup>24</sup> See below.

<sup>25</sup> Robert Hanhart, *Ein Unbekannter Text zur griechischen Esra-Überlieferung: Lothar Perlitt zum 65. Geburtstag am 2. Mai 1995* (MSU XXII: Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995).

<sup>26</sup> If one accepts that Nehemiah came to Jerusalem in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes I, then one could posit Ezra under Artaxerxes II, and the composition of the story about the building of the temple during the time of Darius II (423–404) or Artaxerxes II (404–359/8). This date for the composition of at least the first six chapters of the book of Ezra is close to the time period of the requested rebuilding of the Temple in Elephantine. I think that the author was at least inspired by the Elephantine crisis and by the literary material it produced. The author, however, projected the building of the temple back in time and reversed the order of the events. Instead of Nehemiah, Ezra, and the building of the temple, the story started with the temple, then Ezra, and finally, Nehemiah.

king, for Ahasuerus is the king who reigned *after* Darius. The text, however, seems to point to a king who reigned between Cyrus and Darius, for verse 5 refers to both the latter kings, while verse 6 and following deal with the opposition to the building project “throughout the reign of King Cyrus of Persia and until the reign of King Darius of Persia.” I have no explanation for the presence of the name of Ahasuerus in this section of the book of Ezra, except maybe that this is a king that is known in the Bible, for instance, in the story of the book of Esther, which deals with exiles in Persia.

The insertion of Artaxerxes in chapter 4 can thus be explained from a literary perspective: the author compared this section with the section on the building of the city (walls). Ahasuerus’ presence is less easy to explain.<sup>27</sup>

Before turning to 1 Esdras, I want to focus on the person who, in Ezra 1–6, is actually responsible for the building of the Temple. In chapter 1, Cyrus commands Sheshbazzar to go to Jerusalem. That he is the one who was supposed to take care of the building of the Temple can be presumed, though the text does not explicitly state this. Sheshbazzar is once more mentioned in chapter 5. In verse 14, he is characterized as the person appointed by King Cyrus to be the governor (of Judah). In 5:16, it is Sheshbazzar who is said to be the builder of (the foundation of) the Temple. Thus, Sheshbazzar is only referred to in the context of the initial command of King Cyrus. It is Zerubbabel, on the other hand, who takes the lead from chapter 2 onwards.<sup>28</sup> Zerubbabel, together with Joshua, sets out to build the altar in chapter 3. They appoint Levites and charge them with the building of the house of God. In chapter 4, the “enemies” turn to Zerubbabel and Joshua and ask them permission to collaborate with the builders of the Temple. Zerubbabel *cum suis* refuses. After the trouble in chapter 4, and pushed by Haggai and Zechariah, Zerubbabel again sets out to build the Temple in chapter 5. By the time Tattenai and Shethar-bozenai make their inquiries about the legitimacy of the building project (5:3ff.), Zerubbabel has disappeared from the narrative. His name is no longer mentioned. Instead, Sheshbazzar seems to be remembered (5:14, 16). In 6:13–15, the verses that deal with the finishing of the Temple, neither Sheshbazzar nor Zerubbabel are mentioned. The elders of the Jews are now the ones who finish the project, supported by Haggai and Zechariah.

In the Hebrew Bible, Haggai and Zechariah have been intimately associated with the building of the Temple. It is the word of God, via Haggai, that comes to Zerubbabel and encourages him to start building the Temple: “In the second year of King Darius, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the Lord came by the prophet Haggai to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel,

<sup>27</sup> I am inclined to think that in the Hebrew Bible Ahasuerus has been connected with the writing of letters against or regarding the Jews—such as in the Esther story—and thus was a likely candidate to be mentioned in the context of the letter writing in Ezra 4.

<sup>28</sup> Some people have proposed that Zerubbabel and Sheshbazzar are one and the same person. See Johan Lust, “The Identification of Zerubbabel with Sheshbazzar,” *ETL* 63 (1987/1): 90–95. This idea, however, has not found many supporters.



governor of Judah, and to Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest” (Hag 1:1). The word must have been powerful, for Zerubabbel, Joshua, and the remnant of the people set out to build the Temple: “And the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubabbel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and worked on the house of the Lord of hosts, their God” (Hag 1:14). According to the book of Haggai, Zerubabbel is the servant of the Lord and the chosen one (Hag 2:23). In the book of Zechariah, Zerubabbel is identified with the one who started the building of the Temple: “The hands of Zerubabbel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also complete it” (Zech 4:9). In Zech 6:9–14, Zerubabbel and Joshua are linked to one another. Zerubabbel will be the branch that wears the crown and builds the Temple; Joshua will be his high priest. Haggai and Zechariah also appear in the book of Ezra, both in the opening verse of chapter 5 (5:1) and in the verse that deals with the conclusion of the Temple building story in chapter 6 (6:14a). The two prophets mark the renewed beginning and the completion of the building of the Temple. They are both active during the reign of King Darius. They encourage the people to start building in the second year of Darius. This seems to be “predicted” in 4:24, where it is reported that the work on the house of God stopped and was discontinued until the second year of the reign of King Darius of Persia.

Although at times difficult, the first chapters of the book of Ezra deal with the return of the exiles and the beginning and completion of the building of the Second Temple. Who precisely initiated the building of the Temple, Sheshbazzar or Zerubabbel, is not at all clear. Both characters, however, disappear towards the completion of the Temple. Verse 24, of chapter 4, marks the conclusion of the first period of building and refers to the onset of the second period and its conclusion.

## 2. LXX 1 Esdras

### A) Structure

The Greek book 1 Esdras is different from the Hebrew book Ezra-Nehemiah as well as from the latter’s Greek (Septuagint) translation. In chapters 2 to 9, except for 3 to 5, one reads a text very similar to Ezra 1–10. The book 1 Esdras, however, hardly contains anything from the book of Nehemiah. Except for chapter 8 (vv. 1–12), the story of Nehemiah is not “retold”<sup>29</sup> but is “omitted.” Nehemiah 8:1–12, Ezra’s reading of the law, however, is “added” as the final

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<sup>29</sup> The question remains whether or not 1 Esdras is a retelling of a given Ezra-Nehemiah text. See below.

part of 1 Esdras. 1 Esdras mainly distinguishes itself from the Ezra(-Nehemiah) narrative by the following larger additions.

- 1:1–55: from Josiah till the fall of Jerusalem
  - 1:1–22: Josiah celebrates Passover in Jerusalem
  - 1:23–24: summary about Josiah
  - 1:25–33: the end of Josiah
  - 1:34–58: history from Josiah till the fall of Jerusalem
- 3:1–5:3: a story about three young men, bodyguards of Darius
- 9:37–55: Ezra reads the law (= Neh 8:1–12 with changes<sup>30</sup>).

Moreover, 1 Esdras has “reorganized”<sup>31</sup> some of the material. The list of returnees, the foundation of the altar, the Feast of Booths, the “enemies” approaching Zerubbabel, and finally, the hindering of the Temple building, all these sections have been moved to the section after the “inserted” story of the three young men. As I focus on the first six chapters of the book of Ezra and its parallel in the book of 1 Esdras, namely 1 Esdras 2:1–7:15, I offer a comparative synopsis of these sections. On the left is the sequence of the book of 1 Esdras, on the right the sequence of Ezra. The equal sign (=) marks a similar passage in Ezra.<sup>32</sup> The “re-organized material” is printed in italics:

<i>1 Esdras</i>		<i>Ezra</i>	
2:1–15	Cyrus commands to build the Temple	= 1:1– 11	Cyrus commands to build the Temple
		2:1–70	<i>List of the returnees to Jerusalem</i>
		3:1–13	<i>Foundation of altar and Feast of Booths</i>
		4:1–3	<i>“Enemies” appear and are rejected</i>
		4:4–6	<i>“Enemies” hinder the building project</i>
2:16–29	“Enemies” write to King Artaxerxes	= 4:7– 22	“Enemies” write to King Artaxerxes

<sup>30</sup> In 1 Esdras 8:49, for instance, it is not Nehemiah who speaks to Ezra, but an unknown Attharates. This seems logical, for Nehemiah has not yet turned up in the history and text of 1 Esdras.

<sup>31</sup> As with my use of the words “omissions” or “additions” I do not know yet which text organized which text, or who retold what, and hence, I have put “reorganized” in quotation marks.

<sup>32</sup> Minor changes, though, I have not marked.

2:30	The building project is stopped	= 4:23–24	The building project is stopped
3:1–5:3	Darius' feast (three bodyguards)		
5:4–46	<i>List of the returnees to Jerusalem</i>		
5:47–65	<i>Foundation of altar and Feast of Booths</i>		
5:66–71	<i>"Enemies" appear and are rejected</i>		
5:72–73	<i>"Enemies" hinder the building project</i>		
6:1–2	Prophesying of Haggai and Zechariah	= 5:1–2	Prophesying of Haggai and Zechariah
6:3–6	Inquiry of Sisinnus and Sathrabuzanes	= 5:3–5	Inquiry of Tattenai and Shethar-bozenai
6:7–22	Copy of letter to King Darius	= 5:6–17	Copy of letter to King Darius
6:23–34	King Darius' orders	= 6:1–12	King Darius' orders
7:1–5	The building is continued and finished	= 6:13–15	The building is continued and finished
7:6–9	Dedication of the Temple	= 6:16–18	Dedication of the Temple
7:10–15	Celebration of Passover	= 6:19–22	Celebration of Passover

From this survey, it becomes clear that one large section, consisting of 4 smaller units, has been moved to a different place in the story of 1 Esdras. The text of 1 Esdras 2:1–7:15 can be neatly divided into the following larger sections:

Part one: Cyrus instructs the Jews to return to Jerusalem and build the Temple

2:1–15: Cyrus commands to build the Temple

Part two: A first group of “enemies” stops the building project

2:16–29: “Enemies” write to King Artaxerxes

2:30: The building project is stopped

Part three: How the building starts again

3:1–5:3: Darius’ feast (three bodyguards)

5:4–46: List of the returnees to Jerusalem

Part four: The second period of building the Temple

5:47–65: Foundation of the altar and Feast of Booths

5:66–71: “Enemies” appear and are rejected

5:72–73: “Enemies” hinder the building project

Part five: Even now, problems arise, but Darius orders a decree to continue the project

6:1–2: Prophesying of Haggai and Zechariah

6:3–6: Inquiry of Sisinnes and Sathrabuzanes

6:7–22: Copy of letter to King Darius

6:23–34: King Darius’ orders

7:1–5: The building is continued and finished

Part six: The Temple is dedicated and Passover is celebrated

7:6–9: Dedication of the Temple

7:10–15: Celebration of Passover

In this edition of the text, the verse in which I am especially interested is located at the end of the second part (i.e., at the end of chapter two), namely at the end of the first building period. Chapter 2 of 1 Esdras has a rather simple structure. It consists of only two parts. Part one, verses 1–15, deals with the instruction of Cyrus. Part two, verses 16–30, deals with the first series of attacks on the building project and the king’s decision to stop the construction. The enemies are listed in verse 16. The copy of the letter is given in verses 17–24. In verse 25, one reads the introduction to the answer of King Artaxerxes, followed by a copy of his letter in verses 26–29. Verse 30 reports how the “enemies” receive the instructions of the king and how they rush to Jerusalem to stop the building project.

Part one: Cyrus instructs the Jews to return to Jerusalem and build the Temple

2:1–15: Cyrus commands to build the Temple:

- Part two: A first group of “enemies” stops the building project  
 2:16–29: “Enemies” write to King Artaxerxes  
     2:16: list of “enemies”  
     2:17–24: letter to Artaxerxes  
     2:25: narrative introduction to the answer of Artaxerxes  
     2:26–29: letter of Artaxerxes  
 2:30 : The building project is stopped  
     2:30a: The “enemies” get the news  
     2:30b: They rush to Jerusalem to stop the building project

## B) Analysis

The first “enemies” which appear on scene in 1 Esdras, form a serious coalition. In 2:16 the following people appear: “Bishlam, Mithridates, Tabeel, Rehum, Beltethmus, the scribe Shimshai, and the rest of their associates, living in Samaria and other places.” All of these are active “in the time of King Artaxerxes of the Persians.” They write the latter “the following letter, against those who were living in Judea and Jerusalem.” 1 Esdras 2:16 seems to collect material from several verses from Ezra 4, namely from verses 7, 8, 9, and 10:

<i>Ezra</i>	<i>1 Esdras 2:16</i>
4:7	
In the time of King Artaxerxes	In the days of King Artaxerxes of the Persians
Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel	Bishlam, Mithridates, Tabeel
(write)	wrote <sup>33</sup>
to King Artaxerxes	him

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<sup>33</sup> The verb and the addressee follow at the end of the verse.

4:8	Rehum, the royal deputy, Shimshai, the scribe (write) against Jerusalem  to King Artaxerxes	Rehum, Beltethmus, <sup>34</sup> the scribe Shimhai  <i>against those living in Judea and Jerusalem</i>
4:9	Rehum, Shimshai, and the rest of their associates, the judges, envoys, officials, the Persians, Erechians, Babylonians, Susanites	and the rest of their associates
4:10	the rest of the nations who settled in Samaria and the rest of the province	living in Samaria  and other places

1 Esdras composes one long list of authors of the letter to King Artaxerxes, using an Aramaic-Hebrew text similar to,<sup>35</sup> if not exactly like, Ezra 4:7–10. In 1 Esdras 2:16, all authors of the letter to Artaxerxes are introduced. This is similar, if not identical, to Ezra 4:7–10 where the authors of the letter to Artaxerxes are mentioned:

4:7	Bishlam, Mithredath and Tabeel	-
4:8	Rehum, Shimshai and colleagues	against Jerusalem
4:9-10	former three + long list	-

<sup>34</sup> This is one of the places where it becomes obvious that 1 Esdras has worked with a Semitic *Vorlage*, in this case, Ezra 4:8, which is Aramaic. The Greek translator thought that “B<sup>o</sup>em-t<sup>e</sup>em” was a name, and not a noun. The Aramaic reads “Rehum, the commander-in-chief.” The Greek 1 Esdras transliterated the word “commander-in-chief” and created “Beelteemos,” unfortunately rendered in the NRSV: “Belthethmum.”

<sup>35</sup> From this remark, it may already be clear that I think that 1 Esdras is a translation of a Hebrew/Aramaic *Vorlage* that is using the Hebrew/Aramaic book of Ezra, among other sources.

The authors write a letter “against Jerusalem.” In Ezra 4, I distinguished between writing against the city Jerusalem and against the building of the Temple.

4:1-3	“enemies”	about the Temple
4:4-5	the people of the land	against the Temple
4:6	“they”	?
4:7	Bishlam, Mithredath and Tabeel	-
4:8	Rehum, Shimshai and colleagues	against Jerusalem
4:9-10	former three + long list	-
4:11-23		against the city of Jerusalem
4:24		against the Temple

I noted—with others—that the opening verses and closing verse of the chapter (4:1–6, 24) deal with the Temple and that the section in between (4:7–23) deals with the “rebellious and wicked city.” Like the middle section of Ezra 4, 1 Esdras 2:17–30a seems to deal with the city:

- 2:16: list of authors of letter
- 2:17–24: letter regarding the city
- 2:25: narrative introduction to the answer of Artaxerxes
- 2:26–29: letter of Artaxerxes regarding the city
- 2:30a: conclusion of the “city”-narrative
- 2:30b: regarding the building of the Temple

It is not clear whether or not verse 16 deals with the city, for it only states that the people wrote against those who were living in Judea and Jerusalem. As verse 16, however, is the introduction to the letter about the city, I presume that verse 16 too belongs to the city-unit. Verse 30a is the conclusion of the letter-affair, and hence, the reference to the builders must be understood as a reference to the builders of the city. Verse 30b, on the other hand, again mentions the building of the Temple.

According to Adrian Schenker, 1 Esdras, on the one hand, indeed deals both with the city and the Temple, but verse 24, on the other hand, only refers to the

ceasing of the Temple construction project.<sup>36</sup> Schenker, thus, interprets the text of chapter 2 as dealing with both building projects, one of which, namely the Temple, is being stopped by the king.<sup>37</sup>

The author of 1 Esdras, however, must have noticed the problem related to the distinction between the city and the Temple, for in verses 20–21a the author has added a reference to the building of the Temple: “Since the building of the Temple is now going on, we think it best not to neglect such a matter, but to speak to our lord the king. . . .” This verse is very similar to the somewhat difficult verse 4:14: “Now because we share the salt of the palace and it is not fitting for us to witness the king’s dishonor, therefore we send and inform the king.” The sharing of the salt has been replaced by a direct reference to the ongoing building of the Temple. With this reference, the entire text of verses 16–13 becomes a text about both the Temple and the city. Precisely because the author added a reference to the Temple in the middle of the text about the city, I believe the conclusion of Schenker to be wrong. By adding a reference to the Temple, the author has reworked the piece about the city into a piece about the Temple. This becomes even more obvious in verse 18. The parallel text of Ezra 4:12 reads: “. . . They are rebuilding that rebellious and wicked city; they are finishing the walls and repairing the foundations.” 1 Esdras 2:18 slightly rephrases this verse into: “[the Jews] are building that rebellious and wicked city, repairing its market places and walls and laying the foundations for a Temple.” Literally the Greek text reads: “. . . and attempted (to build) the Temple.” The construction of the Temple is like the last element that triggers the “enemies” to write to the king. And that is precisely what verse 20 indicates: “Since the building of the Temple is now going on . . . .” The author really focuses on the Temple; that the city is also built plays a minor role, if any, in this text.<sup>38</sup> From a section in Ezra 4, in which the events that occurred during the time of the building of the Temple are compared with those of the city, the text is transformed into a section especially about the Temple. Its conclusion, verse 30b, fits perfectly: “. . . The building of the Temple of Jerusalem stopped until the second year of the reign of King Darius of the Persians.”

Before turning to a closer investigation of the phrase “until the second year,” I note that the author of 1 Esdras has not used one particular verse from its parallel text Ezra 4, namely verse 6.

<sup>36</sup> Adrian Schenker, “La Relation d’Esdras A au texte massorétique d’Esdras-Néhémie,” in *Tradition of the Text: Studies offered to Dominique Barthélemy in Celebration of His 70th Birthday* (ed. G. J. Norton and S. Pisano; OBO 109; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991), 218–248.

<sup>37</sup> A. Schenker, 221–241.

<sup>38</sup> The question whether 1 Esdras presupposes the presence of a (restored) city—as described in the book of Nehemiah—is an important question. I believe, however, that 1 Esdras deals in its entirety with the returnees and their dual activity: the building of the Temple (1 Esdras 2–7) and the trying to live according to the Law (1 Esdras 8–9). The introduction puts this narrative into a historical context (1 Esdras 1).



2:16	List of “enemies”	= Ezra 4:1-3
5:72-73	<i>Hindering of the enemies</i> <sup>39</sup>	= <i>Ezra 4:4-5</i>
-		Ezra 4:6
2:17-24	Letter to Artaxerxes	= Ezra 4:7-16
2:25	Narrative introduction to the answer of Artaxerxes	= Ezra 4:17a
2:26-29	Letter of Artaxerxes	Letter of Artaxerxes
2:30a	The “enemies” get the news	= Ezra 4:23
2:30b	They rush to Jerusalem to stop the building project	= Ezra 4:24

Verse 4:6 is the strange verse in which King Ahasuerus is suddenly mentioned. King Ahasuerus, and the entire verse, is “omitted” from the parallel text in 1 Esdras. The question is why? Maybe the translator of 1 Esdras mistakenly identified the Hebrew name Ahasuerus with Artaxerxes instead of Xerxes and thus thought that in 4:6 the author referred to the same king as mentioned in Ezra 4:7ff., namely Artaxerxes. In this case, the “omission” might have occurred on the Greek level, for the Hebrew names of the kings are easily distinguished (compare Ahasueros and Arthasashta). Another argument in favor of the mistaken identification of Ahasuerus with Artaxerxes might be that the former is known for writing letters against or about Jewish issues makes him an acceptable candidate for the “enemies”-supporting king between Cyrus and Darius.<sup>40</sup> It is precisely in the Greek Septuagint book of Esther that the Hebrew name Ahasueros is rendered with Artaxerxes, whereas the second Greek text of Esther uses the transcription Asueros. Josephus too identifies Asueros with Artaxerxes.<sup>41</sup> The omission, however, could also have happened on the Hebrew/Aramaic level. Maybe it is due to the author, who did not want to have two separate kings dealing with the same issue, namely Ahasueros/Xerxes in 4:6 and Arthasashta/Artaxerxes in 4:7ff. I tend to credit the Hebrew/Aramaic scribe for the omission of verse 6, for nowhere else is an entire verse omitted from the narrative. I acknowledge, however, that it remains difficult to decide on which level this omission happened.

The time indication “until the second year of the reign of King Darius of the Persians” also needs some more attention. A reference to “a second year” can be found in the following verses of 1 Esdras:

<sup>39</sup> This section again is, in comparison with Ezra 4, out of sequence, and thus printed in italics. See below.

<sup>40</sup> Again, I refer to the book of Esther. See below.

<sup>41</sup> See Josephus, *Ant.* XI. 184.

- 2:30 And the building of the temple in Jerusalem was stopped until the second year of the reign of King Darius of the Persians.
- 5:56 In the second year after their coming to the temple, they laid the foundation of the temple
- 5:73 And by plots and demagoguery and uprisings they prevented the completion of the building as long as King Cyrus lived. They were kept from building for two years, until the reign of Darius.
- 6:1 Now in the second year of the reign of Darius, the prophets Haggai and Zechariah . . . prophesied . . .

The parallel sections in Ezra are the following:

- |                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| 4:24 (// 1 Esdras 2:30) | At that time the work on the house of God in Jerusalem stopped and was discontinued until the second year of the reign of King Darius of Persia. |
| 3:8 (// 1 Esdras 5:56)  | In the second year after their arrival . . . they made a beginning (with the foundation)   |
| 4:5 (// 1 Esdras 5:73)  | And they bribed officials to frustrate their plan throughout the reign of King Cyrus of Persia and until the reign of King Darius of Persia.     |
| 5:1 (// 1 Esdras 6:1)   | Now, the prophets, Haggai and Zechariah . . . prophesied . . .   |

Immediately, some differences strike the eye. In 1 Esdras 6:1, the phrase “in the second year of the reign of King Darius” is absent in its parallel Ezra 5:1. This is certainly not an “omission” from the Hebrew text, but an “addition” to the Greek text, for in the Hebrew story, 5:1 follows directly after 4:24, in which the second year of the reign of King Darius is just mentioned. In the Hebrew text, the author concludes chapter 4 with the statement that the building was stopped till the second year. In the next verse, 5:1, the prophets encourage the people to start building. From the context, it is clear that the second year of 5:73 has started. In 1 Esdras 6:1, the author clarifies the “now” by inserting “in the second year of the reign of Darius.”

Another striking difference is the minor plus in 5:73. Between the references to the reign of Cyrus and Darius, the author has inserted the following note: “They were kept from building for two years.” Compare:

1 Esdras 5:73	Ezra 4:5
... as long as ... Cyrus lived.	... throughout the reign of ...
	Cyrus and
They were kept from building for	-
two years	
until the reign of Darius.	until the reign of ... Darius ...

Why was this phrase added to the parallel text? The answer can be gleaned from looking at the overall structure of 1 Esdras 2–6:

Part two: A first group of “enemies” stops the building project  
 2:16–29: “Enemies” write to King Artaxerxes  
 2:30: The building project is stopped  
*until the second year of Darius*

Part three: How the building starts again  
 3:1–5:3: Darius’ feast (three bodyguards)  
 5:4–46: List of the returnees to Jerusalem

Part four: The second period of building the Temple  
 5:47–65: Foundation of the altar and Feast of Booths  
*(5:56) in the second year after their coming to ... Jerusalem*

5:66–71: “Enemies” arise and are rejected  
 5:72–73: “Enemies” hinder the building project  
*... as long as Cyrus lived ... for two years, until the reign of Darius*

Part five: Even now, problems arise, but Darius orders a decree to continue the project  
*now in the second year of Darius*  
 6:1–2: Prophesying of Haggai and Zechariah  
 6:3–6: Inquiry of Sisinnus and Sathrabuzanes  
 6:7–22: Copy of letter to King Darius  
 6:23–34: King Darius’ orders  
 7:1–5: The building is continued and finished

In 1 Esdras 2:30, a reference is made to the second year of Darius. In the next verse, however, Darius is already on stage, for he is giving a party: 1 Esdras 3:1. In 5:56, it is said that the returnees make a beginning with the foundation of the altar. Soon however, “enemies,” arise (5:66–71) and prevent them from building (5:72–73). The author refers to the problems that the building project experienced during the time of Cyrus and then adds that the second series of

difficulties lasted for two years, namely the (first) two years of Darius' reign. In 5:73, therefore, the extra phrase was inserted because in 1 Esdras the time of Darius was already running. Moreover, the extra phrase of 5:73 is only understandable in the context of the new structure of the Temple building story, and more precisely, in the second period of the construction of the Temple. In 6:1, it is already the second year of Darius. Then, the prophets prophesy. In 1 Esdras, the expression "until the second year of Darius" has a double meaning. First, the author states that the building of the temple that was hindered a first time under Cyrus, will be continued in the second year of Darius. Second, the author refers to the two years of trouble that the building project experienced after Darius had given permission to start building. These problems, though, will also be solved in the second year of Darius. Ultimately, the building project, started a long time ago, will be finished in the second year of Darius.<sup>42</sup>

The story of 1 Esdras deals, then, with two periods of building and two periods of hindering of the building.

#### **PERIOD ONE**

Part two: A first group of "enemies" stops the building project

2:16–29: "Enemies" write to King Artaxerxes

##### **FIRST HINDERING**

2:30: The building project is stopped

#### **PERIOD TWO**

Part three: How the building starts again

3:1–5:3: Darius' feast (three bodyguards)

5:4–46: List of the returnees to Jerusalem

Part four: The second period of building the Temple

5:47–65: Foundation of the altar and Feast of Booths

5:66–71: "Enemies" arise and are rejected

5:72–73: "Enemies" hinder the building project

##### **SECOND HINDERING**

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<sup>42</sup> Normally, one presumes that the text deals with Darius I, but I have already pointed to the possibility that at least the Hebrew/Aramaic first six chapters of Ezra could have been composed during the reign of Darius II or Artaxerxes II. Does this mean that the second Temple was not finished in 515 (the sixth year of Darius I), but only in 418 (the sixth year of Darius II)? The latter date brings the story very close to the problems and issues of the temple in Elephantine. I believe that the composition of Ezra 1–6 was inspired by the Elephantine material and thus that Ezra 1–6 dates to a post-Elephantine period.

Part five: Even now, problems arise, but Darius orders a decree to continue the project  
 6:1–2: Prophesying of Haggai and Zechariah  
 6:3–6: Inquiry of Sisinnos and Sathrabuzanes  
 6:7–22: Copy of letter to King Darius  
 6:23–34: King Darius' orders  
 7:1–5: The building is continued and finished

After two series of hindering, the building of the Temple is again started. The prophets Haggai and Zechariah get the credit for giving the final impetus (1 Esdras 6:1–2). This final stage of Temple building is again questioned. This time, Sisinnos and Sathrabuzanes inquire about the validity of the building project. These two gentlemen are the equivalents of the men mentioned in Ezra 5:3, namely Tattenai and Shethar-bozenai. As the latter two, the former ask the Jews who gave permission to build. The two series of men write to King Darius and propose him to search the archives. King Darius replies in both Ezra 5 and 1 Esdras 6. These men receive the same answer, namely that the Temple needs to be built and that they have to support the building project. These names are, again, a clear indication that the text of 1 Esdras is independent from the Septuagint translation of the book of Ezra, namely 2 Esdras—hereunder indicated as LXX Ezra 6:3—for the names are rendered differently. Compare:

<i>Ezra 5:3 (Aramaic)</i>	<i>LXX Ezra 5:3</i>	<i>LXX 1 Esdr 6:3</i>
Tattenai	Thaththanai	Sisinnos <sup>43</sup>
Shetar-bozenai	Satharbouzanai	Sathrabuzanes.

With the two prophets and the inquiry of the two officials and their associates, the final stage of the building of the Temple has dawned.

Moreover, with 6:1, the author brings the story back on track, and more specifically, back in line with its parallel text Ezra 5:1. From there onwards, both story lines mirror one another:

<sup>43</sup> Note also that the description of the function of Tattenai differs in the two Greek texts. In LXX Ezra 5:3, he is “governor of this side of the river,” whereas in 1 Esdras 6:3 he is “governor of Syria and Phoenicia.” This description might be due to the translator of the Hebrew/Aramaic *Vorlage* of 1 Esdras, who adapted the name of the province to a current name. The name of the governor is in Hebrew Tattenai. In the Old Greek of Ezra-Nehemiah, this is rendered with Thaththanai. In 1 Esdras 6:3.7; 7:1, however, the governor is named Sissines. The switch from “t/d” into “s”-sounds is typical for Hebrew; did the author want to adapt the name to the “Hebrew” context? See Gotthelf Bergsträsser, *Introduction to the Semitic Languages: Text Specimens and grammatical Sketches* (Trans. Peter T. Daniels; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 26–27, 50, 78. See also Edward Lipiński, *Semitic Languages: Outlines of a Comparative Grammar* (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta; Leuven: Peeters---Departement Oosterse Studies, 1997), 117–118.

6:1–2	Propheying of Haggai and Zechariah	= 5:1–2	Propheying of Haggai and Zechariah
6:3–6	Inquiry of Tattenai and Shethar-bozenai	= 5:3–5	Inquiry of Tattenai and Shethar-bozenai
6:7–22	Copy of letter to King Darius	= 5:6–17	Copy of letter to King Darius
6:23–34	King Darius' orders	= 6:1–12	King Darius' orders
7:1–5	The building is continued and finished	= 6:13–15	The building is continued and finished
7:6–9	Dedication of the Temple	= 6:16–18	Dedication of the Temple
7:10–15	Celebration of Passover	= 6:19–22	Celebration of Passover

1 Esdras finely distinguishes between the different periods of the construction of the Temple. King Cyrus is the one who originally gave permission to build the Temple (part one). The project is stopped by a group of “enemies” who write against the project to King Artaxerxes (part two). When Darius becomes king, he grants Zerubbabel—who had won the wisdom contest—the right to build the Temple. Zerubbabel heads a division of returning exiles (part three). They start building the Temple, but are stopped by enemies (part four). Encouraged by Haggai and Zechariah, the Jews return to building the Temple. Some officials question the legitimacy of the project, but King Darius gives his approval and the project is finished (part five). Finally, the Temple is dedicated and Passover is celebrated (part six). Schematically:

Part one: 2:1–15	Cyrus instructs the Jews to return to Jerusalem and build the Temple
Part two: 2:16–30	A first group of “enemies” stops the building project
Part three: 3:1–5:46	Appointment of Zerubbabel, list of returnees
Part four: 5:66–73	Building projects starts and is stopped by “enemies”
Part five: 6:1–7:5	More problems, but the project is finished, the Temple built.
Part six: 7:6–15	The Temple is dedicated and Passover is celebrated

1 Esdras might have inherited the flaw of having Artaxerxes in the middle of Cyrus and Darius from its Hebrew/Aramaic *Vorlage*. Like the composer of Ezra(-Nehemiah), the author of (the Hebrew/Aramaic *Vorlage* of) 1 Esdras needed to have a king between Cyrus and Darius. The option of Artaxerxes was obvious, for this king was mentioned in connection with the hindering of the Temple building project. Hence, King Artaxerxes ended up in the middle of Cyrus and Darius and became the king during whose reign the first round of enemies hindered the project.

Closely connected with the issue of the kings is the one regarding the leaders of the Jews and the supervisor for the Temple building project. In the book of Ezra, the following kings and supervisors<sup>44</sup> form teams regarding the building of the Temple:<sup>45</sup>

1:8, 11	Cyrus and Sheshbazzar
2:2	(Cyrus?) and Zerubabbel
3:2, 7, 8	Cyrus and Zerubabbel
4:2, 3, 7, 8, 11, 23	Artaxerxes and Zerubabbel <sup>46</sup>
5:1–3	(Darius?) and Zerubabbel (during the days of Haggai and Zechariah)
5:4–6:12	Darius and “they” <sup>47</sup> (during the investigation and the decree of Darius)
6:13–15	Darius and the elders of the Jews (at the completion of the Temple)

The first appointee of Cyrus is Sheshbazzar. Then Zerubabbel takes over. In Ezra, it is rather problematic to see that Zerubabbel is active during the reign of two kings—Cyrus and “Artaxerxes”<sup>48</sup>—if not three—Cyrus, “Artaxerxes,” and Darius. That is quite a remarkable, and for those days almost impossibly, long time to be active.<sup>49</sup> As we noted already, however, Zerubabbel is no longer active when the completion of the temple is drawing near.<sup>50</sup>

In 1 Esdras, the survey looks slightly different:

<sup>44</sup> For this particular section, I have disregarded the function of the high priest.

<sup>45</sup> See above.

<sup>46</sup> In this section, I also disregarded the references to the past kings, such as Cyrus.

<sup>47</sup> In 6:7, a “governor of the Jews” is mentioned, together with the elders of Jews. Unfortunately, no further indication is given regarding the governor. Moreover, Sheshbazzar is mentioned in 5:14, 16 in connection with the original decree given by Cyrus.

<sup>48</sup> I have put Artaxerxes in quotation marks, for he figures as the king between Cyrus and Darius.

<sup>49</sup> Say from 539, when Cyrus allowed the Jews to go to Jerusalem, till somewhere before 486, the year Darius died.

<sup>50</sup> The question why Zerubabbel “suddenly” disappears might not be all that difficult to answer! Maybe he simply died? Peace at last?

2:1, 2, 3, 10, 12, 15	Cyrus and Sheshbazzar
2:16, 17, 30	Artaxerxes and ?
2:30b; 3:1–5:3	Darius and Zerubabbel <sup>51</sup>
5:4, 6, 8	Darius and Zerubabbel
5:48, 56	(Darius?) and Zerubabbel
5:68, 70	(Darius?) and Zerubabbel <sup>52</sup>
6:2	Darius and Zerubabbel (during the days of Haggai and Zechariah)
6:6, 7, 8, 23, 27, 29	Darius and Zerubabbel <sup>53</sup> (during the investigation and the decree of Darius)
7:1, 2, 4, 5	Darius and the elders of the Jews (at the completion of the temple)

In 1 Esdras, Zerubabbel is only associated with King Darius—no wonder, for Darius granted him a favor after Zerubabbel had won the wisdom contest. King Cyrus deals with Sheshbazzar. It is not known with whom King “Artaxerxes” was dealing. Most probably it was Sheshbazzar. As in Ezra, Zerubabbel is no longer active when the building project comes to an end. By then, “the elders of the Jews” have taken over.

Zerubabbel is thus the one who initiates the second and final period of the building of the second Temple. The word of Haggai, that the Lord has stirred up the spirit of Zerubabbel (among others) so that he has come and worked on the house of the Lord of hosts (Hag 1:14) has become true in 1 Esdras. The first part

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<sup>51</sup> I have to admit that Zerubabbel is only mentioned once, namely in 4:13. In this verse, the name of Zerubabbel, if not the entire identification, might have been added. Verse 13 reads: “Then the third, who had spoken of women and truth (and this was Zerubabbel), began to speak.” It looks like the phrase “and this was Zerubabbel” was added to the story of the three youths, and namely on order to adapt a common story—a story about three men at the court of Darius—into a story about Zerubabbel. I hence, strongly believe that there was a story such as the story of the three young men, but that the author of the *Vorlage* of 1 Esdras re-used this story and turned it into a story about Zerubabbel. Evidence for stories like the three young men story can be found in, for instance, 4Q550, the so-called Aramaic proto-Esther text from Qumran. See De Troyer, “Once More the so-called Esther fragments of Cave 4,” *Revue de Qumran* 75/19 (2000): 401–422 and *id.*, “4Q550 in the Context of the Darius Traditions: The Need for Integration of Different Tools,” in *Bible and Computer: The Stellenbosch AIBI-6 Conference, Proceedings of Association Internationale Biblique et Informatique, “Alpha to Byte”* (ed., J. Cook; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 573–581. Strong caution against the existence of such a story was uttered by Hanhart. See R. Hanhart, *Text und Textgeschichte des 1. Esrabuches* (MSU XII; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1974), 12.

<sup>52</sup> Again, I disregard in this section the references to the past.

<sup>53</sup> As in Ezra, I do not mention the references to King Cyrus and Sheshbazzar in 6:17, 18, 20, 22.



of the word of Zechariah, that “the hands of Zerubabbel have laid the foundation of the house” has also become true, albeit purely through the reorganization of the story. The second part of the word of Zechariah, that “his hands shall also complete it” (Zech 4:8), has still not happened, either in Ezra or in 1 Esdras. Zerubabbel has, however, gained in importance in 1 Esdras.

In 1 Esdras, Zerubabbel plays a pivotal role. He is the *summum* of wisdom. With him, the building of the second Temple becomes possible. Zerubabbel functions in 1 Esdras like Solomon in 1 Kings 7. Whereas Solomon built the first Temple, Zerubabbel now undertakes to build the second one. 1 Esdras 2:1–7:15 is the narrative about the building of the second Temple.

The rest of the book of 1 Esdras, namely 1 Esdras 8:1–9:55, describes Ezra’s coming to Jerusalem and his attempts to make the Jews live according to the Law. The author of the *Vorlage* of 1 Esdras reworked for this section Ezra 7:1–10:44 and Nehemiah 8:1–12.<sup>54</sup> That the author of 1 Esdras deliberately wanted to end the story with a section on “reading and living according to the Law” comes as no surprise to me. I believe the last chapters of 1 Esdras form an *inclusio* with the first chapter. In chapter one, a series of kings does everything but live according to the Law. Over and over again, it is said that such and such a king did evil in the sight of the Lord (1:39, 44, 47). Among other things, the “many acts of sacrilege and lawlessness” of even the priests leads to the final destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. This lawlessness also plays an important part in the life and mission of Ezra. It is Ezra who fights the (so-called) horrible situation of exiles having married alien or foreign women. The lawlessness in the final chapters is contrasted with the final reading of the Law. All Israel agrees with the Law, “and the multitude answered, ‘Amen’” (1 Esdras 9:47).

This dedication to the Law is precisely what is mentioned in chapter 1. Josiah is remembered not for his lawlessness, but for his godliness: “And the deeds of Josiah were upright in the sight of the Lord, for his heart was full of godliness” (1 Esdras 1:23). Immediately after Josiah, things take a turn for the worse. But Josiah is “cool,” namely, full of godliness.

Finally, 1 Esdras opens with the celebration of Passover (1 Esdras 1:1–22). Josiah, the (almost) perfect king celebrates Passover.<sup>55</sup> The author even compares this Passover with the one celebrated in the days of Samuel: “No Passover like it had been kept in Israel since the times of the prophet Samuel” (1 Esdras 1:20).<sup>56</sup> The book of 1 Esdras closes with a party. The day of the

<sup>54</sup> As this statement shows, I fully support those scholars who regard 1 Esdras as a compilation of Ezra-Nehemiah and other material.

<sup>55</sup> As Sweeney has indicated, Josiah can actually be called a “failure,” for according to the second layer of DtrH, he cannot avoid the total destruction of Jerusalem and Judah. See M. Sweeney, *King Josiah of Judah: The Lost Messiah of Israel* (Oxford: OUP, 2001), 317–318.

<sup>56</sup> Did the author want to make Josiah better than Solomon, better than a king who had married foreign women?

reading of the Law and the people's acceptance of it is pronounced a holy day. Instructions are given as to "go your way, eat the fat and drink the sweet, and send portions to those who have none, for the day is holy to the Lord, and do not be sorrowful, for the Lord will exalt you" (1 Esdras 9:51–52). The conclusion of the book of 1 Esdras is short and good: "They all went their way . . ., because they were inspired by the words which they had been taught and (because) they had come together"<sup>57</sup> Again, the opening and the closing of the book form an *inclusio*, and thus the book comes to a full circle. Schematically:

- 1:1–22: Passover
- 1:23: Godliness of Josiah
- 1:34–58: Lawlessness
- 8:68–9:36: Lawlessness of the returned exiles
- 9:37–48: All Israel adheres to the Law
- 9:49–55: Holy day

As I have compared Zerubbabel with Solomon, I now compare Ezra with Josiah. In 1 Esdras, Zerubbabel continues the work of Solomon. Ezra continues, improves, and completes the work of Josiah.<sup>58</sup> Ezra stresses the importance of the Law, he reforms the community, and he celebrates a holy day. With Zerubbabel and Ezra, a new Temple has been built and a new community has been established. The Second Temple period and community can begin.

The author of (the Hebrew/Aramaic *Vorlage* of) 1 Esdras rewrote the biblical story of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles. The goal of the story was twofold: focusing on Zerubbabel as the builder of the second Temple and on Ezra as the re-enforcer of the Law. For 1 Esdras 8:1–9:55, the author of the *Vorlage* of 1 Esdras used material from Chronicles and maybe Kings.<sup>59</sup> For 1 Esdras 2:1–7:15, the author used Ezra 7:1–10:44. 1 Esdras 1 is a compilation; the author reorganized the material from Ezra 1:1–6:22, inserted some editorial notes, and added a story about the three youths, the latter story being slightly reworked to fit Zerubbabel. All of this reworking and adding of material happened, I believe, on the Hebrew-Aramaic level of the story and not on the Greek level. I acknowledge that the translator did change a couple of minor elements, such as the adaptation of "governor of the province beyond the River"

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Arie van der Kooij, "On the Ending of the Book of 1 Esdras," in *VII Congress of the IOSCS-Leuven 1989* (ed. Claude Cox; SBLSCS 31; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), 31–49.

<sup>58</sup> Not only has the Temple taken its central role but the people, too, adhere to the Law. The mission of Josiah is in a sense now completed. See also Sweeney, *King Josiah*, 322–323.

<sup>59</sup> See Arie van der Kooij, "Zur Frage des Anfangs des 1. Esrabuches," *ZAW* 103 (1991): 239–252, and also: K. De Troyer, "Zerubbabel and Ezra: A Revived and Revised Solomon and Josiah? A Survey of Current 1 Esdras Research," *Currents of Biblical Research* (2002): 30–61.

to “governor of Syria and Phoenicia.” The main changes, however, happened on the Semitic level of the story, called throughout this chapter the “*Vorlage*” of 1 Esdras. Is there any proof that such a story ever existed in Hebrew/Aramaic? I have to admit that no witness points to the existence of the entire narrative in Hebrew/Aramaic. The parallel texts of Ezra-Nehemiah, 2 Chronicles, 2 Kings, and the Darius stories found in Qumran,<sup>60</sup> do make its existence, however, plausible. Moreover, a final comparison of the structure of the first part of 1 Esdras and Ezra will not only make the author’s changes to the parallel story of Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles (and Kings) visible, but it will also buttress my opinion that all of these changes happened on the level of the *Vorlage*.

<i>1 Esdras</i>		<i>Ezra</i>	
1:1–58	Josiah and his successors	<sup>61</sup>	
2:1–15	Cyrus commands to build the Temple	= 1:1–11	Cyrus commands to build the Temple
		2:1–70	<i>List of the returnees to Jerusalem</i>
		3:1–13	<i>Foundation of the altar and Feast of Booths</i>
		4:1–3	<i>“Enemies” arise and are rejected</i>
		4:4–6	<i>“Enemies” hinder the building project</i>
2:16–29	“Enemies” write to King Artaxerxes	= 4:7–22	“Enemies” write to King Artaxerxes
2:30	The building project is stopped	= 4:23–24	The building project is stopped

<sup>60</sup> Josef T. Milik, “Les modèles araméens du livre d’Esther dans la grotte 4 de Qumran,” *RevQ* 59 (1992): 321–406; Klaus Beyer, *Die Aramäische Texte vom Toten Meer: Ergänzungsband* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994), 113–117; Sidnie White Crawford, “Has *Esther* been found at Qumran? 4QProto-Esther and the *Esther* Corpus,” *RevQ* 65–68 (1996): 307–325; R. Kossmann, *Die Esthernovelle: Vom Erzählten zur Erzählung* (VTSuppl 79; Leiden: Brill, 1999); Florentino García Martínez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated: The Qumran Texts in English* (trans. W. G. E. Watson; Leiden: Brill, 1994; first published Spanish, then in Dutch, 1994–1995); see also *idem*, “Biblical Borderlines,” in *The People of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their Writings, Beliefs and Practices* (ed. Florentino García Martínez and Julio Trebolle Barrera; Brill: Leiden, 1995), 123–138, esp. 130–136; Kristin De Troyer, “Once More the So-Called Esther Fragments of Cave 4,” *RevQ* 75/19 (2000): 401–422.

<sup>61</sup> But see 2 Chr 35–36 and 2 Kings 22.

3:1–	Darius’ feast (three	- <sup>62</sup>	
5:3	bodyguards)		
5:4–46	<i>List of the returnees to Jerusalem</i>		
5:47–	<i>Foundation of the altar</i>		
65	<i>and Feast of Booths</i>		
5:66–	<i>“Enemies” arise and</i>		
71	<i>are rejected</i>		
5:72–	<i>“Enemies” hinder the</i>		
73	<i>building project</i>		
6:1–2	Propheying of Haggai and Zechariah	= 5:1–2	Propheying of Haggai and Zechariah
6:3–6	Inquiry of Sisinnes and Sathrabuzanes	= 5:3–5	Inquiry of Tattenai and Shethar-bozenai
6:7–22	Copy of letter to King Darius	= 5:6–17	Copy of letter to King Darius
6:23–	King Darius’ orders	= 6:1–	King Darius’ orders
34		12	
7:1–5	The building is continued and finished	= 6:13–15	The building is continued and finished
7:6–9	Dedication of the Temple	= 6:16–18	Dedication of the Temple
7:10–	Celebration of Passover	= 6:19–	Celebration of Passover
15		22	

I have focused on 2:30. This verse is the concluding verse of the section 2:16–30. This section, and its final verse, is a turning point regarding the sequence of the two books. The four smaller units from “before” this section, namely Ezra 2:1–4:5(6), have been transposed to “beyond” this section, namely 1 Esdras 5:44–5:73. Not only was the switch in sequence necessary for the new story line of 1 Esdras, it also fits perfectly with another crucial issue in the book of Ezra-Nehemiah. In 4:7, the language of the story changes from Hebrew to Aramaic. 4:7 reads: “And in the days of Artaxerxes, Bishlam and Mithredath and Tabeel and the rest of their associates wrote to King Artaxerxes of Persia; *the letter was written in Aramaic and translated (in Aramaic).*” The story then continues in Aramaic till 6:12. In 6:19, the language changes again into Hebrew.

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<sup>62</sup> But see 4Q550.

By altering the sequence, the section 1 Esdras 2:16–30 (// Ezra 4:7–24) also became the logical context for the insertion of the story of the Three Youths which was most probably originally written in Aramaic.<sup>63</sup> The author has deliberately changed the sequence of the narrative in order to fit in the story of the Three Bodyguards. More precisely, the Aramaic section of “enemies” writing to the king has become the narrative introduction to the Aramaic story of the Three Bodyguards:

<i>Aramaic Vorlage of 1 Esdras</i>	<i>Aramaic Vorlage of Ezra</i>
2:16– “Enemies” write to	= 4:7– “Enemies” write to
29 King Artaxerxes	22 King Artaxerxes
2:30 The building project is	= 4:23– The building project is
stopped	24 stopped
3:1–5:3 Darius’ feast (three	-
bodyguards)	

From 1 Esdras 2:16 to 5:3 the story was written in Aramaic. Then again, in 1 Esdras 6:1–7:9 (// Ezra 5:1–6:18), the language is Aramaic; in between, however, in 1 Esdras 5:4–7:3 (// Ezra 2:1–4:5[6]), the language is again Hebrew. The final piece, 1 Esdras 7:10–15 (// Ezra 6:19–22) is also in Hebrew. In the following schema, the Hebrew sections are printed in Roman script, whereas the Aramaic sections are printed in italics.

<i>1 Esdras</i>	<i>Ezra</i>
1:1–58 Josiah and his	-
successors	
2:1–15 Cyrus commands to	= 1:1–11 Cyrus commands to
build the Temple	build the Temple
	2:1–70 List of the returnees
	to Jerusalem
	3:1–13 Foundation of the
	altar and Feast of
	Booths
	4:1–3 “Enemies” arise and
	are rejected

<sup>63</sup> This issue needs to be studied further. I am especially curious as to how Origen, the Syro-Hexapla, and Lucian dealt with this section. An investigation into the recensionist and stylistic work of Lucian, especially a comparison between the Three Youths story and the rest of the text, might give an insight into the nature of Lucian’s work.

		4:4–6	“Enemies” hinder the building project
2:16–29	“Enemies” write to King Artaxerxes	= 4:7–22	“Enemies” write to King Artaxerxes
2:30	The building project is stopped	= 4:23–24	The building project is stopped
3:1–5:3	Darius’ feast (three bodyguards)	-	
5:4–46	List of the returnees to Jerusalem		
5:47–65	Foundation of the altar and Feast of Booths		
5:66–71	“Enemies” arise and are rejected	5:72–73	“Enemies” hinder the building project
6:1–2	Prophesying of Haggai and Zechariah	= 5:1–2	Prophesying of Haggai and Zechariah
6:3–6	Inquiry of Sisinnus and Sathrabuzanes	= 5:3–5	Inquiry of Tattenai and Shethar-bozenai
6:7–22	Copy of letter to King Darius	= 5:6–17	Copy of letter to King Darius
6:23–34	King Darius’ orders	= 6:1–12	King Darius’ orders
7:1–5	The building is continued and finished	= 6:13–15	The building is continued and finished
7:6–9	Dedication of the Temple	= 6:16–18	Dedication of the Temple
7:10–15	Celebration of Passover	= 6:19–22	Celebration of Passover

The complete picture of the variation in language offers an additional important ideological element. The book Ezra-Nehemiah opens and closes in Hebrew; in between, the narrative comes in Aramaic. Sara Japhet correctly

observed that “the transition from one language to another . . . [is] an indication that the author was completely bilingual . . . .”<sup>64</sup> I fully agree with this statement. In 1 Esdras, however, the switch in languages serves yet another purpose. The first period of the building project and the hindering of it by the “enemies” is presented in Aramaic. The second period of the building project and its hindering comes in Hebrew. The final round of problems and their solution—the completion of the Temple building and its dedication—is again offered in Aramaic. Finally, the section about Passover is given in Hebrew. Schematically:

#### ARAMAIC

Part two: A first group of “enemies” stops the building project  
 2:16–29: “Enemies” write to King Artaxerxes  
 2:30: The building project is stopped

Part three: How the building starts again  
 3:1–5:3: Darius’ feast (three bodyguards)

#### HEBREW

5:4–46: List of the returnees to Jerusalem

Part four: The second period of building the Temple  
 5:47–65: Foundation of the altar and Feast of Booths  
 5:66–71: “Enemies” arise and are rejected  
 5:72–73: “Enemies” hinder the building project

#### ARAMAIC

Part five: Even now, problems arise, but Darius orders a decree to continue the project  
 6:1–2: Prophesying of Haggai and Zechariah  
 6:3–6: Inquiry of Sisinnus and Sathrabuzanes  
 6:7–22: Copy of letter to King Darius  
 6:23–34: King Darius’ orders  
 7:1–5: The building is continued and finished

Part six: The Temple is dedicated and Passover is celebrated  
 7:6–9 Dedication of the Temple

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<sup>64</sup> Sara Japhet, “‘History’ and ‘Literature’ in the Persian Period: The Restoration of the Temple,” in *Ah, Assyria: Studies in Assyrian History and Ancient Near Eastern Historiography Presented to Hayim Tadmor*, (ed. Mordechai Cogan and Israel Eph'al; Scripta Hierosolymitana XXXIII; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1991), 174–188, esp. 185.

**HEBREW**

## 7:10–15 Celebration of Passover

Whether this alternating use of Aramaic and Hebrew is entirely accidental, a lucky side effect of the reorganization, or consciously created by the author, I do not know. But it surely does visually create the image that the enemies are everywhere, on the “Aramaic” as well as on the “Hebrew side.” Since the first chapter, however, is written in Hebrew, the protectors of the Temple, too, can be found on both sides of the language border, on the “Aramaic side” and on the “Hebrew side.” King Cyrus writes “in Hebrew”—at least in this story—and King Darius writes “in Aramaic.”

This analysis leads me to conclude that the reorganization of the text, including the insertion of the story of the Three Bodyguards, happened on the level of the Aramaic/Hebrew *Vorlage*. Other elements, such as the transliteration of the function of one of the complaining persons, Rehum, the royal deputy, also point to a Hebrew/Aramaic *Vorlage*.

**D. Conclusions**

The Greek 1 Esdras text is a witness to a lost Hebrew-Aramaic *Vorlage*. This now lost *Vorlage* was a rewritten story about the construction of the Second Temple. It aimed at stressing the role of Zerubbabel as the supervisor of the Temple building project. As such, Zerubbabel has become a new—and better—Solomon. The author of the Hebrew/Aramaic alternative building story has used material from the books of Ezra-Nehemiah and 2 Chronicles, and possibly also from 2 Kings. Moreover, the author has added the Aramaic story about the Three Youths and slightly reworked it into a hero story about Zerubbabel. That all this editorial reworking happened on the level of the Hebrew/Aramaic *Vorlage*<sup>65</sup> also explains why there is no difference in style in the Greek 1 Esdras between passages which were originally written in Hebrew and those written in Aramaic.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Maybe I have become a bit less skeptical about retroverting the entire text of 1 Esdras into Hebrew/Aramaic. See K. De Troyer, “Zerubbabel and Ezra: A Revived and Revised Solomon and Josiah? A Survey of Current 1 Esdras Research,” *Currents of Biblical Research* (2002): 30–61.

<sup>66</sup> R. Hanhart, *Text und Textgeschichte des 1. Esrabuches* (MSU XII; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1974), 12.



## Conclusions

The four chapters of this book illustrate four different ways in which the biblical text grew. I dealt with the Septuagint text of Esther in Chapter I, and I demonstrated how the Greek Septuagint can be seen as a rewritten Hebrew text. The Greek translator of the Hebrew book of Esther not only translated but also rewrote the sacred Hebrew text. The Old Greek text of Joshua was the subject of our investigation in the second chapter. The Old Greek text of Joshua reflects what the Hebrew text of Joshua looked like in its penultimate, pre-Masoretic stage. The Hebrew text of Joshua—more precisely the Masoretic text, the one printed in most Bibles—can thus be seen as a late rewritten version of an older text that is “visible” through the Old Greek. The Masoretic text is thus a rewritten sacred text. Rewriting also happens once a book has been translated into Greek. Precisely this type of rewriting was studied in the third chapter. The AT of Esther proves to be a rewritten Greek sacred text. Finally, in the fourth chapter, we examined the ways in which the Greek text of 1 Esdras offers an insight into how the Hebrew text of Ezra-Nehemiah was once rewritten and turned into an alternative story to the Hebrew text itself. The Greek text 1 Esdras is the only witness to the now lost Hebrew-Aramaic rewritten text. In these four chapters I hope to have demonstrated that the process of rewriting sacred text is one important insight that can be gleaned from studying Old Greek biblical texts.

The biblical books dealt with in this study are Esther, Joshua, and 1 Esdras. Rewriting not only happens in apocryphal books and pseudepigrapha but also in so-called “core” books of the Hebrew Bible like Joshua. The process of rewriting happens with all sorts of biblical texts, and it happens continually. This process is widely recognized in Hebrew Bible scholarship, as I have pointed out in the introduction of this book. Witnesses to the Hebrew text, like the Old Greek biblical texts, should, however, be studied together with the Hebrew Masoretic Text. The study of the witnesses can no longer be dissociated from the study of the literary development of the Hebrew Bible. In other words, literary criticism and redaction criticism should take into account the results of a renewed text criticism.

The four chapters of this book are intended as examples of how to combine a renewed text criticism with literary and redaction criticism. They

demonstrate how Greek biblical texts contribute to our understanding of the literary growth of the Hebrew Bible by illustrating the processes by which the sacred text was rewritten.

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