

## THE LXX TRANSLATION OF ESTHER

### A Paraphrastic Translation of MT or a Free Translation of a Rewritten Version?

Emanuel Tov

It can be said that the Septuagint version of Esther (Esth-LXX) has been the stepchild of LXX research over the past half century. While several monographs, some of them book-length, have been devoted to the ‘other’ Greek version, invariably named ‘Lucianic’,<sup>1</sup> ‘A’, ‘alpha’ Text, or AT,<sup>2</sup> little attention has been paid to the main Greek version. To the best of my knowledge, the text-critical value of this translation has not been studied in depth.<sup>3</sup> The present paper is limited to brief

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<sup>1</sup> This version is contained in manuscripts that in other books contain the ‘Lucianic’ revision, but has little to do with that tradition, see R. Hanhart, *Esther, Septuaginta, Vetus Testamentum graecum etc.*, VIII, 3, Göttingen 1983<sup>2</sup>, 87–95.

<sup>2</sup> In chronological sequence: C.A. Moore, ‘A Greek Witness to a Different Hebrew Text of Esther’, *ZAW* 79 (1967), 351–8; H.J. Cook, ‘The A Text of the Greek Versions of the Book of Esther’, *ZAW* 81 (1969), 369–76; E. Tov, ‘The ‘Lucianic’ Text of the Canonical and the Apocryphal Sections of Esther: A Rewritten Biblical Book’, *Textus* 10 (1982), 1–25, Revised version: *The Greek and Hebrew Bible—Collected Essays on the Septuagint* (VTSup 72), Leiden/etc. 1999, 535–48; D.J.A. Clines, *The Esther Scroll—The Story of the Story* (JSOTSup 30), Sheffield 1984; J.-C. Haelewyck, ‘Le texte dit ‘Lucianique’ du livre d’Esther: Son étendue et sa coherence’, *Le Muséon* 98 (1985), 53–95; M.V. Fox, *The Redaction of the Books of Esther* (SBLMS 40), Atlanta GA 1991; K.H. Jobes, *The Alpha-Text of Esther—Its Character and Relationship to the Masoretic Text* (SBLDS 153), Atlanta GA 1996; A. Lacocque, ‘The Different Versions of Esther’, *BI* 7 (1999), 301–22; K. De Troyer, *The End of the Alpha-Text of Esther: Translation and Narrative Technique in MT 8:1–17, LXX 8:1–17 and AT 7:14–41* (SBLSCS 49), Atlanta GA 2000; Idem, ‘Translation or Interpretation? A Sample from the Books of Esther’, in: B.A. Taylor (ed.), *Proceedings of the Xth Congress of the International Organization for the Septuagint and Cognate Studies, Oslo 1998* (SBLSCS 51), Atlanta GA 2001, 343–53; Idem, ‘The Letter of the King and the Letter of Mordecai’, *Textus* 21 (2002), 175–207. For earlier studies see Ch. Torrey, ‘The Older Book of Esther’, *HTR* 37 (1944), 1–40 (the LXX and AT versions of Esther derive from Aramaic originals, from which the text of MT has been abbreviated); H. Howorth, ‘Some Unconventional Views on the Text of the Bible, VIII. The Prayer of Manasses and the Book of Esther’, *PSBA* 31 (1909), 156–68.

<sup>3</sup> Especially valuable are the studies by E. Bickerman, *Studies in Jewish and Christian History* (AGJU IX), Leiden 1976, 225–45 (‘The Colophon of the Greek Book of Esther’), 246–74 (‘Notes on the Greek Book of Esther’); W.H. Brownlee, ‘Le livre grec d’Esther et la royauté divine—corrections orthodoxes au livre d’Esther’, *RB* 73 (1966), 161–85; R.L. Omanson & P.A. Noss, *A Handbook on the Book of Esther: The Hebrew and Greek Texts* (UBS Handbook Series), New York 1997.

remarks on Esth-LXX as a rewritten version of MT, while a major study is still needed.

An evaluation of the differences between Esth-LXX and MT poses many challenges. The LXX is very free and sometimes paraphrastic; it also contains six large narrative expansions (the so-called Additions A–F) that are traditionally considered to be independent units. However, the use of the term ‘Additions’ gives a false impression of their nature and may lead to wrong conclusions. They are better described as Expansions A–F, adding more than 50% to the amount of words in the Greek book.<sup>4</sup>

A correct understanding of Esth-LXX is relevant to the textual and literary analysis of the book. In as far as a consensus exists regarding the textual value of the Greek version of Esther, it is negative.<sup>5</sup> This view is challenged in the present study. We suggest that (1) Esth-LXX is a free translation of its source text, as is shown by an analysis of its translation technique, and (2) that it sometimes paraphrases its Hebrew source. We add a new dimension to the analysis when asserting (3) that some paraphrases were triggered by the translator’s misunderstanding of the Hebrew. We will attempt to establish that (4) Esth-LXX reflects some Hebrew variants in small details, and that (5) Expansions A, C, D, and F were translated from a Hebrew source. This assumption is accompanied by the suggestion of (6) unity of the Greek translation of the canonical text and the expansions. We next turn to the central issues, arguing that (7) Esth-LXX reflects a rewritten version of a composition similar to MT.<sup>6</sup> Finally, we describe (8) the characteristic features of the

<sup>4</sup> Due to the uncertainty pertaining to the *Vorlage* of the LXX, calculations of the size are little more than exercises. According to the calculations of C.V. Dorothy, *The Books of Esther: Structure, Genre, and Textual Integrity* (JSOTSup 187), Sheffield 1997, 16 the LXX added 77%, the AT text 45%, and Josephus 32%.

<sup>5</sup> This judgment was probably best formulated by Clines: ‘Almost everyone agrees, however, that no matter how free the Septuagint translator has been, it is essentially the Masoretic Hebrew text that was his *Vorlage*’ (Clines, *Esther Scroll*, 69). A similar view had been expressed earlier by Th. Nöldeke, in: T.K. Cheyne & J.S. Black (eds), *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, s.v. ‘Esther’, New York 1902, II.1406: ‘The tendency, so common at the present day, to overestimate the importance of the LXX for purposes of textual criticism is nowhere more to be deprecated than in the Book of Esther. It may be doubted whether even in a single passage of the book the Greek manuscripts enable us to emend the Hebrew text’. In recent years, this view was defended at length by H. Kahana, *Esther, Juxtaposition of the Septuagint Translation with the Hebrew Text*, Leuven/etc. 2005, 441–62.

<sup>6</sup> The possibility that the LXX reflects a different book has been mentioned in the past. Four studies refer much to the LXX: L. Day, *Three Faces of a Queen: Characterization in the Books of Esther*, Sheffield 1995; Dorothy, *The Books of Esther*; R. Kossmann, *Die*

Hebrew source of the LXX, we turn to (9) a comparison of Esth-LXX with other rewritten compositions from Qumran and elsewhere, and lastly (10) to canonical issues.

1. *Esth-LXX is a Free Translation of Its Source Text*

Scholars are in agreement that Esth-LXX reflects a free translation, and therefore a few examples will suffice. However, we should constantly be open to the possibility that many such renderings may be explained differently as representing a slightly deviating *Vorlage*, on which see §§4–7. In the examples below, the first item is the NJPS translation of MT,<sup>7</sup> and the second one, in italics, represents the NETS translation of the LXX.<sup>8</sup>

a. *Unusual equivalents*

1:3 MT ‘for all the officials and courtiers’—(*he gave a feast*) *for his Friends, and for the other nations*. The term ‘Friends,’ which is capitalized in the translation, is an official title used at the Ptolemaic court for the king’s close associates. The same term is used in v. 13 for the king’s ‘sages learned in procedure’ (MT).

8:1 MT ‘Haman’s household’ (literally: ‘Haman’s house’)—*everything of Haman’s*. A similar translation occurs in v. 7.

*Esthernovelle: Vom erzählten zur Erzählung* (VTSup 79), Leiden/etc, 2000; C.D. Harvey, *Finding Morality in the Diaspora? Moral Ambiguity and Transformed Morality in the Books of Esther* (BZAW 328), Berlin/New York 2003. All four monographs compare the content of the two Greek versions with MT and the other sources without analyzing the Greek versions first regarding their internal merits. Disregarding the internal dynamics of the LXX and the A-Text, these authors compare the Greek evidence with the content of the other sources without distinguishing between elements deriving from the translator, his parent text, and possible scribal developments. In our view, in each individual case the ancient sources need to be contrasted in order that meaningful conclusions be drawn from the differences among them. In order to evaluate the A-Text we are also in need of a detailed analysis of its relation to the LXX, since the A-Text may have derived from the LXX, as several scholars believe. If that is the case, the A-Text cannot be examined as an independent witness. Therefore, the approach of these studies makes them less relevant to the present analysis. L.M. Wills, *The Jew in the Court of the Foreign King* (HDR 26), Minneapolis 1990, 153–91 reconstructs the early history of the Esther novella without reference to the LXX (see the conclusion on p. 197 there). The studies of the A-Text (see n. 2 above) occasionally also refer to the LXX.

<sup>7</sup> *JPS Hebrew-English Tanakh: The Traditional Hebrew Text and the New JPS Translation*, Philadelphia 1999<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> A. Pietersma & B.G. Wright (eds), *A New English Translation of the Septuagint and the Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included Under That Title*, Oxford 2007.

b. *Variation in equivalence*

The translator only rarely uses the same Greek equivalent twice when representing a Hebrew word.<sup>9</sup>

c. *Contextual renderings*

2:11 *שְׁלוֹם אֶסְתֵּר וּמָה יַעֲשֶׂה בָּהּ* (how Esther was faring and what was happening to her) τί Ἐσθηρ συμβήσεται—(*what will happen to Esther*); 4:5 *מָה זֶה וְעַל מָה זֶה* (the why and wherefore of it all)—τὸ ἄκριβές (*the facts*); 8:3 MT ‘the plot that he had devised against the Jews’—*what he had done to the Jews*.

d. *Omission of words and phrases*

Some words and phrases were removed as superfluous in the context.<sup>10</sup> The elements omitted are placed in parenthesis: *Names*: 1:13 ‘And (the king) said’; 1:15, 8:7, 10 ‘King (Ahasuerus)’; 8:1 ‘(Queen) Esther’; 8:2 ‘(Esther)’; 8:3 ‘Haman (the Agagite)’; 8:5 ‘(Haman) son of Hammedatha the Agagite’; 8:7 ‘to (Queen Esther and) Mordecai the Jew’; *Other words*: 1:4 ‘For (no fewer than) a hundred and eighty days’; 1:5 ‘(high and low alike)’; 1:5 ‘in the court of the king’s palace (garden)’; 1:12 ‘was (greatly) incensed’; 3:2 ‘All (the king’s courtiers)’; 3:2 ‘at the (king’s) gate [NRSV]’; 8:3 ‘falling at his feet (and weeping)’.

Some such omissions involve larger elements:

1:22 MT ‘to all the provinces of the king, to every province in its own script and to every nation in its own language’—*throughout the whole kingdom, to every land in its own language*. The translator may have considered the mentioning of script to be superfluous, being closely connected with ‘language’.

3:6 (MT ‘But he disdained to lay hands on Mordecai alone; having been told who Mordecai’s people were’.)

3:12 MT ‘The orders were issued in the name of King Ahasuerus (and sealed with the king’s signet)’.

3:13 MT ‘all the Jews, (young and old, children and women)’

8:10 ‘couriers (riding steeds used in the king’s service, bred of the royal stud)’.

<sup>9</sup> For examples, see B. Jacob, ‘Das Buch Esther’, *ZAW* 10 (1890), 241–98, esp. 266–70.

<sup>10</sup> See Kahana, *Esther*, 446.

e. *Omission of parallel words*

3:2 MT ‘would not (kneel or) bow low’. See v. 5 for a similar reduction.

3:8 MT ‘scattered (and dispersed)’.

3:13 MT ‘to destroy, (massacre, and exterminate)’.

8:5 MT ‘If it please your majesty, and if I have won your favor and the proposal seems right to your majesty, and if I am pleasing to you...’—*If it pleases you, and if I have found favor.*

f. *Small additions*<sup>11</sup>

1:6 MT ‘silver rods’—*gold and silver blocks.*

1:7 MT ‘golden beakers’—*the goblets were made of gold and silver.*

1:18 MT ‘the ladies of Persia and Media’—*the other princesses of the rulers of the Persians and Medes.*

3:3 MT ‘said to Mordecai, Why do you disobey the king’s order?’—*the king spoke to Mardochaios, ‘Mardochaios, why do you disobey what the king says?’*

g. *Clarifications*

1:5 MT ‘At the end of this period...’—*and when the days of the wedding feast were completed.* The LXX gives the general description of MT (‘this period’ [literally: ‘these days’]) a very specific twist by describing the ‘banquet’ of MT as a ‘wedding feast’, against all other sources. This understanding of the banquet runs parallel to the wedding banquet the king arranged for Esther (2:18), likewise called a ‘wedding feast’ in the LXX. In a similar vein, in the LXX of v. 11, the king calls upon Vashti for her coronation ceremony.

2:7 MT ‘He was foster father to Hadassah—that is, Esther—his uncle’s daughter’—*And this man had a foster child, a daughter of Aminadab, his father’s brother, and her name was Esther.* The name of Esther’s father, given later in the story in 2:15 (MT ‘Abihail,’ LXX *Aminadab*), is introduced in the LXX already in this verse.

2:23 MT ‘This was recorded in the book of annals at the instance of the king’—*Then the king commanded to record a memorial in the royal archive in praise of Mardochaios’s loyalty.* The LXX was more specific than MT in connecting this event to the continuation of the story.

<sup>11</sup> See Kahana, *Esther*, 449.

## 2. *Esth-LXX Paraphrases its Hebrew Source*

Esth-LXX goes far beyond freedom, variation, addition and omission of details as described above. It sometimes adds new ideas and restructures sentences in such a way that it is almost impossible to indicate the word-for-word equivalence between the Hebrew and the translation, as in 2:7 and 3:12. While at least some of these paraphrastic renderings go back to the Hebrew source of Esth-LXX (see §§4–7), the following examples characterize the paraphrastic rendering of the canonical sections:

1:6 MT ‘alabaster, mother-of-pearl, and mosaics’—*mother-of-pearl, and marble. There were gossamer throws in many colors embroidered with roses all around.* Although not all the technical terms are clear in either language, the LXX expanded MT with details reflecting the display of riches, possibly at wedding feasts of the wealthy, in Hellenistic times (see v. 5). Indeed, from various historical sources it is known that great opulence was displayed in the Persian cities of Susa and Persepolis. Earlier in the verse, the ‘silver rods’ of MT were expanded in the LXX to ‘gold and silver blocks’ (just as ‘golden beakers’ were expanded to ‘gold and silver’ in the LXX of v. 7) and the ‘alabaster columns’ to ‘pillars of marble and other stones’.

1:7 MT ‘beakers of varied design’—*and a miniature cup made of ruby was on display that was worth thirty thousand talents.* The cup described in Esth-LXX was worth an enormous amount of money.

8:6 MT ‘And how can I bear to see the destruction of my kindred!’—*And how can I be saved during the destruction of my kindred?* In the second part of the sentence, in MT Esther expresses concern for her relatives, while in the LXX she is concerned about her own safety. This interpretation in the LXX is probably directly related to Mordecai’s warning in 4:3 ‘Do not imagine that you, of all the Jews, will escape with your life by being in the king’s palace’.

8:7 MT ‘and they have hanged him’ (NRSV)—*and I hanged him.* In the LXX, the king has a more active role in the hanging than in MT. Likewise, in 2:23 LXX, the king plays an active part in the hanging of the two eunuchs: ‘So the king interrogated the two eunuchs and hanged them’ (MT: ‘The matter was investigated and found to be so, and the two were impaled on stakes’).

8:9 MT ‘and letters were written, at Mordecai’s dictation to the Jews...’—*and they wrote to the Jews what had been commanded.* According to MT, the king allowed Mordecai to formulate a letter in his name

and to send it as a royal edict to the Jews. In the Greek version of the edict, Mordecai's name was omitted, possibly in order to lend the royal edict more credence. More importantly, in the rephrased Greek version, the letter was sent only to the Jews, quoting commands that had been given earlier to the 'administrators and rulers of the satrapies'. MT, on the other hand, explicitly mentions separate dispatches of the letter to the 'Jews and to the satraps, the governors and the officials'. In the rewriting in the LXX, the king first sent a letter to the Jews (v. 9). This was Mordecai's letter, sent in the name of the king (see v. 8 in the LXX). The contents of a second letter, to the satrapies, implied by the wording of the Greek v. 9, is contained in the long Expansion E after v. 12. That letter represents a novelty in the story and is phrased along the lines of contemporary royal Hellenistic edicts. It skillfully imitates the heavy bureaucratic prose of the time with its long sentences, use of rare words, and highly moralizing tone.

8:11 MT 'to assemble and defend their lives, to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate any armed force of any people or province' (NRSV)—*and to deal with their adversaries and their enemies as they wished*. The Greek version, probably meant not only for Jews but also for Gentiles, mitigates the harsh language of the revenge by the Jews in MT, for example in the LXX's omission of the killing of 'women and children' and of the command to 'plunder their possessions'. At the same time, the killing of Jewish 'children and women', as instructed in Haman's edict in 3:13, is likewise lacking in the LXX.

### 3. *Some Paraphrases were Triggered by the Translator's Misunderstanding of the Hebrew*

Sometimes the paraphrasing of Esth-LXX was probably triggered by the translator's difficulties in understanding his *Vorlage*. In such cases, the translator sometimes changed the whole context.<sup>12</sup>

1:8 MT literally 'and the drinking was according to the convention, no one compelled [the guests to drink]'—*Now this wine party was not by established law*. The description of the drinking practice in the LXX,

<sup>12</sup> This phenomenon is also known in other translation units, though not to the same extent. See my monograph *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research*, Second Edition, Revised and Enlarged (Jerusalem Biblical Studies 8), Jerusalem 1997, 168–71. Likewise, G. Gerleman, *Esther* (BK), Neukirchen-Vluyn 1973, 72 ascribes several renderings of the LXX, Peshitta, and Vulgate to misunderstanding of the Hebrew.

according to which the drinking at the banquet differed from the normal custom (probably, the customary restrictions), is diametrically opposed to that of MT. These words in MT need to be viewed in light of those following, ‘to comply with each man’s wishes’, which are understood in the same way by the LXX. Usually the king determined the amount imbibed; when he drank, everybody drank. However, at this banquet ‘no one compelled’ the guests to drink. The background of the LXX rendering is probably the translator’s misunderstanding of the words ‘according to the convention, no one compelled’ that led him to add a negative (*no*).

1:14 ‘...His closest advisers were...’—*So Arkesaios...approached him.* In vv. 14–15, the LXX created an action and dialogue instead of the parenthetical remark in MT on the content of v. 13. MT lists the names of those who were *close* to the king, while in the LXX they *approached* him. The LXX probably misunderstood the consonants of MT, reading *we-ha-qarov* (‘and the one who was closest [to the king]’) as *we-hiqriv* (‘and he approached’).

8:7 Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther and Mordecai the Jew, ‘(*Hinneh*) I have given Haman’s property to Esther, and he has been impaled on the stake for scheming against the Jews’—*Then the king said to Esther, ‘If everything belonging to Haman I gave and turned over to you, and I hanged him on the pole, because he plotted to lay hands on the Jews, what more do you (sg) seek?’* Turning to Esther, the king points out to her that he has done everything that could be done. The addition in the LXX at the end of the verse may imply a mild rebuke to Esther. These words were probably added in the LXX because the translator misunderstood the syntax of the verse. In the beginning of the sentence, the translator took *hinneh* (‘behold’) as ‘if’ (cf. Aramaic and sometimes also Hebrew *hen*). Therefore, the independent sentence (‘Behold...’) has become a subordinate clause (‘If...’), necessitating the addition of a supplementary phrase. The supplement in the LXX may have been influenced by 7:2 ‘What is your wish, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to half the kingdom, it shall be fulfilled.’

#### 4. *Esth-LXX Reflects Some Variants in Small Details*

That Esth-LXX reflects Hebrew variants in small details hardly needs any proof, since all books of the LXX reflect such variants. Nevertheless, this point needs to be established since most scholars assert that

this translation is of little use for text-critical purposes (see n. 5). *BHQ*<sup>13</sup> rarely reconstructs any such variants from the LXX, ascribing most of the deviations of the LXX to the translator's exegesis or not recording them at all.<sup>14</sup> However, the LXX does reflect variants.<sup>15</sup>

In addition, Hebraisms in the LXX undeniably show the Hebrew background of that translation:

#### 1. Hebraisms in the translation of MT

1:2 and 9:12 בְּשׁוֹן הַבִּירָה—ἐν Σούσοις τῇ πόλει (non-Greek sequence)<sup>16</sup>

3:17 מִיּוֹם לְיוֹם וּמִחֹדֶשׁ לְחֹדֶשׁ—ἡμέραν ἐξ ἡμέρας καὶ μῆνα ἐκ μῆνος (contrast the good Greek rendering in v. 4 יוֹם—יּוֹם—καθ' ἐκάστην ἡμέραν as well as in 2:11).

8:9 מְדִינָה וּמְדִינָה—κατὰ χῶραν καὶ χῶραν (κατὰ χῶρας or κατὰ [πᾶσαν] χῶραν as in 3:12, 14; 4:3; 8:17 would have sufficed)

6:13 נְפֹל תְּפֹל—πεσὼν πεσῆ<sup>17</sup>

#### 2. Hebraisms in the translation of variants

1:1 καὶ ἐγένετο μετὰ τοὺς λόγους τούτους = וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה. This typical Hebrew phrase is needed in the Greek version after the long section of text added in Expansion A prior to this verse. This addition shows more than anything else that Esth-LXX is based on a Semitic *Vorlage*.

<sup>13</sup> *Biblia Hebraica Quinta*, Stuttgart, 2004–, Part 18: *General Introduction and Megilloth*; ed. P.B. Dirksen *et alii*; 2004.

<sup>14</sup> Thus the deviations in 1:13 are not even mentioned in *BHQ*.

<sup>15</sup> The LXX reflects several scribal transmission variants, in *BHQ* usually ascribed to the translator. In addition to the variants mentioned in the next paragraphs, see 1:14 ('lib-synt'; the note of *BHS* in 1:14 is preferable); 2:6 (the possibility of a variant is accepted in the commentary, p. 139\*); 2:7 ('explic'); 2:14 ('substit'); 3:7 ('assim-cultur'); 6:1 ('theol'), etc. MT also contains an occasional homoioteleuton as compared with the LXX (3:7), thus also *BHQ* (see the commentary on pp. 141\*–42\*). In addition, the LXX reflects many variations from MT that could have derived from a variety of reasons: scribal mistake, a different Hebrew *Vorlage*, or the translator's freedom (see further below). In chapter 1, for example, note 1:2 MT 'in those days' omitted in the LXX (*BHQ*: 'ampl'); 1:4 MT 'many days' omitted in the LXX ('facil-styl'); 1:10 *Mehuman* represented in the LXX as *Haman* (*BHQ*: 'err-hist'). See further n. 33.

<sup>16</sup> This sequence reflects late biblical Hebrew. See B.K. Waltke & M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, Winona Lake IN 1990, 277–79; E. Qimron, *The Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (HSS 29), Atlanta GA 1986, 85–6.

<sup>17</sup> On the other hand, the infinitive absolute in 4:14 is not represented in the LXX.

1:5 ἡμέρας ἕξ = 'מים ששה' ('days six') instead of 'שבעת ימים' ('seven days') in MT.<sup>18</sup>

2:16, 21; 3:12 MT 'King Artaxerxes'—'Artaxerxes the king' (non-Greek sequence LXX ≠ MT)

### 5. Expansions A, C, D, and F were Translated from a Hebrew Source

Most scholars believe that the original language of Expansions A, C, D, and F was Hebrew or Aramaic,<sup>19</sup> and that Expansions B and E were composed in Greek.<sup>20</sup> The linguistic study of Martin who identified the original language of Expansions A, C, D, and F as Greek with the aid of seventeen syntactical features used as criteria to distinguish between 'Greek-original' and 'translation Greek' is especially valuable.<sup>21</sup> In addition, καὶ ἰδοὺ = 'והנה' in A 4, 5, 7 and the wording of A 3,<sup>22</sup> 17 also indicate that the expansions were based on a Hebrew text.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>18</sup> This detail is interpreted differently in *BHQ* ('theol') and the different sequence is disregarded in the commentary on p. 138\*. The sequence of the LXX (substantive before numeral) reflects late Hebrew usage, see W. Gesenius – E. Kautzsch, *Hebrew Grammar*, Oxford 1910<sup>2</sup>, § 134c; R. Polzin, *Late Biblical Hebrew: Toward an Historical Typology of Biblical Hebrew Prose* (HSM 12), Missoula, 58–60.

<sup>19</sup> See J. Langen, 'Die beiden griechischen Texte des Buches Esther', *Tübinger Theologische Quartalschrift* 42 (1860), 244–72, esp. 264–66; A. Scholz, *Commentar über das Buch 'Esther' mit seinen 'Zusätzen' und über 'Susanna'*, Würzburg 1892, xxi–xxiii; C.A. Moore, 'On the Origins of the LXX Additions to the Book of Esther', *JBL* 92 (1973), 382–93; Idem, *Daniel, Esther, and Jeremiah: The Additions* (AB), Garden City 1977, 155. Some scholars maintain that the Expansions were written in Greek, without providing detailed philological arguments. Thus S. Jellicoe, *The Septuagint and Modern Study*, Oxford 1968, 295 asserts 'It is generally agreed that the additions to Esther are based on no Hebrew or Aramaic original, but are additions in the interests of piety'.

<sup>20</sup> These two Expansions are close in style and content to 3 Maccabees. See Moore, *Daniel, Esther, and Jeremiah*, 195–99.

<sup>21</sup> R.A. Martin, 'Syntax Criticism of the LXX Additions to the Book of Esther', *JBL* 94 (1975), 65–72.

<sup>22</sup> A 3 'Now he was one of the exiles whom Nabouchodonosor king of Babylon took captive from Ierousalem with Iechonias, the king of Judea'. This verse is based on the MT of the canonical verse 2:6: 'who was an exile from Ierousalem, that Nabouchodonosor king of Babylon had taken captive'. The LXX deviates from MT there ('...had been exiled from Jerusalem in the group that was carried into exile along with King Jeconiah of Judah, which had been driven into exile by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon'). The wording of A 3 reflects MT in Esth 2:6 because it mentions Jeconiah, and its structure is preferable to that of the LXX where the feminine pronoun ἦν ('that') must reflect an earlier text referring to an antecedent αἰχμαλωσίαν that had been omitted.

<sup>23</sup> In other instances the assumption of Hebrew diction is less convincing since the wording could also have been influenced by the canonical sections: A 1 ἐκ φυλῆς

6. *Unity of the Greek Translation of the Canonical Text and the Expansions*

Determining the relation between the Greek versions of the canonical sections and the Greek Expansions is crucial to our understanding of Esth-LXX. Since Expansions A, C, D, and F were originally written in Hebrew, one's first intuition would be that they belonged to the same composition as the canonical sections. The segments originally written in Greek (Expansions B, E) were probably created by the translator.<sup>24</sup>

There is no reason to distrust the ancient evidence according to which all of Esth-LXX indeed represents one integral unit. We should not be influenced by Jerome's removal of Expansions A–F from their context, thereby mutilating the translation.<sup>25</sup> His action was arbitrary and inconsistent since by the same token one could excise equally large segments from the Greek translation of 3 Kingdoms (for example, 3 Kingdoms 2:35a–o, 46, a–l; 12:24a–z) and place them at the end of the book.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, the canonical segments and the expansions are intertwined in an organic way in chapters 4 and 5, making it impossible to mark an uninterrupted group of verses as constituting 'Expansion D'.<sup>27</sup> The unity of the canonical text and the expansions

Βενιαμιν (= משבט בנימין) equals the description of Mordecai in 2:5 LXX as opposed to MT איש ימיני, a Benjaminite. Presumably LXX 2:5 reflects the same reading as A 1. A 2 ἐν Σούσις τῆ πάλαι = בשושן הבירה and A 13 'Artaxerxes the king', see above, § 4.

<sup>24</sup> Moore, *Daniel, Esther, and Jeremiah*, 166 recognizes the Hebrew background of most of the expansions, but treats them as an entity separate from the translation of the canonical segments. Moore does not discuss evidence such as adduced in this paragraph, so that the possibility that the expansions derive from the translator himself is not even mentioned by him.

<sup>25</sup> The term is used by Brownlee, 'Le livre grec', 162. After the translation of 10:3 Jerome noted that he rendered the Hebrew text with 'complete fidelity', while placing the Latin version of these Greek segments after 10:3.

<sup>26</sup> By doing so one would 'improve' the Greek translation of 3 Kgdms, since these sections are secondary in the context. See my paper 'The LXX of 1 Kings' (n. 38).

<sup>27</sup> The scope of D is presented in different ways in the text editions. The edition of A. Rahlfs, *Septuaginta, Id est Vetus Testamentum graece iuxta LXX interpretes* (Stuttgart 1935) indicates the different origin of the sixteen verses of Expansion D by distinguishing in its numbering system between the canonical text and Expansion D. On the other hand, the Göttingen edition (see n. 1) and the NETS translation (see n. 7) present these verses in the traditional way as 'Addition D', and by doing so they conceal the canonical status of 5:1–2 that form part of that Expansion. These two editions present the text following 4:17 as Addition C ('Prayers of Mordecai and Esther') immediately continued with Addition D ('Esther's Audience with the King') including the canonical verses 5:1–2. In these two editions 5:1 is named D 1 (that is, the first verse in the 'apocryphal' Addition D), and 5:2 is named D 12 located in the middle of an expansion counting 16 verses. These complications come to light even more so in the Vulgate

is further supported by several close connections in content between the two segments:<sup>28</sup>

(1) The LXX translation of 2:20 includes the following short addition to MT in Mordecai's instructions to Esther, 'to fear God and to keep his commands... So Esther did not change her way of life'. This instruction runs parallel to Esther's prayer in C 14–30.

(2) 8:9 as analyzed in § 2.

(3) Mordecai's words to Esther in 4:8 that are additional to MT, 'Remember your humble days when you were brought up by my hand, for Haman, the second to the king, has spoken against us to put us to death. Call upon the Lord, and speak to the king about us and deliver us from death' run parallel to Esther's prayer in Expansion C. The medium-sized addition in 4:8 and the longer one in Expansion C were probably inserted by the same hand.<sup>29</sup>

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where these verses are duplicated. The main text of V translates the Hebrew, including 5:1–2, while these verses are repeated in the so-called Additions (based on the LXX) that are placed at the end of the book. Addition D is named here 'chapter 15'. The verses are thus indicated as follows in the editions: Canonical verse 5:1 Rahlfs = D 1 Göttingen. Added verses 1:a–f Rahlfs = D 2–11 Göttingen. Canonical verse 5:2 Rahlfs = D 12 Göttingen. Added verses 2a–b Rahlfs = D 13–15 Göttingen. Canonical verse 5:3 Rahlfs = 5:3 Göttingen.

<sup>28</sup> The translation of Daniel includes several long additions now considered 'apocryphal'. However, those additions do not form an integral part of the story, as in Esther. Furthermore it is unclear whether there ever existed an expanded Semitic book of Daniel on which the Greek translation would have been based. By the same token, there never existed an expanded Semitic book of Jeremiah that included Baruch even though one translator rendered both Jeremiah and Baruch. See Tov, *The Septuagint Translation of Jeremiah and Baruch*.

<sup>29</sup> Other agreements between the translation of the canonical sections and the apocryphal sections do not provide conclusive evidence for the identity of the Greek translator and the Additions since the latter could have been influenced by the former. Thus both units are characterized by the addition of a religious background to the original story (2:20; 4:8; A 9–11; C 1–30). In both segments Haman is named a Macedonian (9:24 and E 10) as well as *Bougaïos* (a 'Bougaian?') (3:1; 9:10 and A 17). The wording of A 16 *θεραπεύειν ἐν τῇ ἀύλῃ* reflects the special rendering 2:19 *ἐθεράπευσεν ἐν τῇ ἀύλῃ* (6:10 similarly) differing from MT *ומרדכי יושב בשער המלך*.

In light of the preceding analysis, we suggest that the *Vorlage* of Esth-LXX included the Expansions A, C, D, and F.<sup>30</sup> The royal edicts in Expansions B and E were probably added by the translator himself.<sup>31</sup>

7. *Esth-LXX Reflects a Rewritten Version of a Hebrew Composition  
Similar to MT*

If the premises of §§1–6 are correct, the *Vorlage* of Esth-LXX reflects a Hebrew<sup>32</sup> composition that rewrote a book similar to MT.<sup>33</sup> Conflicting features recognized in the translation complicate the reconstruction of the parent text of Esth-LXX:

<sup>30</sup> The basic unity of the translation and the ‘apocryphal’ Additions is maintained also by Bickerman, ‘Notes’, 246, but for him this unity pertained to the book in its Greek shape: ‘The Greek Esther, of which the “Rest Chapters” are integral and essential parts, is not the *Megillath Esther*, couched in Greek language and letters, but its adaptation designed for the Diaspora’. The following two critical commentaries of the Hebrew book of Esther incorporate the six Expansions of the LXX in their natural contexts so as to cater to different audiences: L.B. Paton, *The Book of Esther* (ICC), Edinburgh 1908; J.D. Levenson, *Esther: A Commentary* (OTL), London 1997 (see p. 28).

<sup>31</sup> Therefore, the view of Moore, *Daniel, Esther, and Jeremiah*, 155 ‘All six of the Additions to Esther are secondary, i.e. they were supplied after the Book of Esther had been written’ cannot be substantiated. This view, shared by many scholars, is probably influenced by the position of the Expansions at the end of the book (see n. 25 above). By the same token, the suggestion that these Expansions, or some of them, were rendered from Aramaic is without base since it is based on the assumption that the Expansions had a separate existence. For this suggestion, see A. Sundberg, *The Old Testament of the Early Church* (HTS 20), Cambridge/London 1964, 62; Moore, ‘Origins’, 393 (regarding Expansion C). Clines, who describes the development of the various texts in a diagram (p. 140), suggests that the original translation of Esther was made from a Hebrew original that did not contain the Expansions. However, elsewhere (p. 186, n. 3 relating to p. 71) he admits, ‘I must confess that I cannot prove this nor can I reconstruct the process by which the LXX acquired Additions from two sources’.

<sup>32</sup> Bickerman considers Esth-LXX a *Greek Midrash*, but in spite of the thoroughness of his study ‘Notes’, he does not prove the following statements: ‘...the translation reflects an adaptation designed for the Diaspora’ (p. 246)... ‘Further, being read in the Synagogue and describing the origin of a feast, the story of Esther naturally attracted haggadic embellishments’ (p. 255)... ‘The Hebrew Esther being no sacred writing, Lysimachus <i.e. the name of the translator of Esth-LXX according to the colophon of the book, E. T.> was free to adapt the original to the needs and requirements of the Greek-speaking Jews’ (p. 257).

<sup>33</sup> A similar conclusion regarding Esth 4:13–14 was reached by K. de Troyer, *Rewriting the Sacred Text* (SBL Text-Critical Studies 4), Atlanta 2003, 9–28.

- a. Esth-LXX reflects a free translation of its source text (§§1–2).
- b. The source text reflects a Hebrew composition different from MT (§§4–6).

These features may require the revision of some of our earlier assumptions:

- i. It is not impossible that some of the features ascribed to the free translation character of Esth-LXX in §§1–2 derived from its deviating Hebrew *Vorlage*. Thus, some short readings of the LXX vis-à-vis MT that differ in small details as well as some of the presumed contextual clarifications could have derived from a different *Vorlage*.

- ii. By the same token, some of the features ascribed to the translator's deviating parent text could be assigned to his free translation style.<sup>34</sup>

It seems to me that we can still maintain the view that the translation is free, while at the same time embarking on the reconstruction of some elements in the Hebrew parent text of the translation. My point of departure is that the Greek translation forms an integral unity, that its Additions (Expansions) A, C, D, and F are based on a Hebrew source, and that this composition reworked MT rather than *vice versa*. The reverse process is not likely, the main argument being the revisional tendencies visible in Esth-LXX, such as the addition to the story in the LXX of a religious background that is also known from the Midrash. We assume that this composition inserted the phrase *wa-yehi ahar ha-debarim ha-'eleh* in v. 1 to accommodate for the addition of Mordecai's dream (Expansion A) before the beginning of the canonical book.

Returning to the question posed in the title, we regard Esth-LXX as a free translation of a rewritten version of MT rather than a paraphrastic translation.

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<sup>34</sup> *BHQ* ascribes many instances to the freedom of the translator that in our view reflect Hebraistic renderings or Hebrew variants (see n. 15). Among other things, most instances described in *BHQ* as 'abbr' probably reflect a shorter Hebrew parent text. For example, 1:1 'to Nubia', 1:13 'learned in procedure', 2:6 'in the group that was carried into exile along with King Jeconiah of Judah', 2:19 'when the virgins were assembled a second time', 2:21 'Bigthan and Teresh', 3:10 'son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the foe of the Jews', 3:13 'on the thirteenth day', 6:8 'and on whose head a royal diadem has been set', 8:7 'and to the Jew Mordecai', etc. See further n. 15.

8. *Characteristic Features of the Hebrew Source of the LXX*

The following features characterize the rewriting of a text like Esth-MT in the Hebrew source of Esth-LXX:

1. Addition of large *narrative expansions* at key points in the story, A and F before the beginning and after the end ('Mordecai's Dream' and its 'Interpretation'), C ('Prayers of Mordecai and Esther') and D ('Esther's Audience with the King') after the last verse of chapter 4.

2. Probably the most characteristic feature of the LXX is the addition of a *religious background* to the earlier MT version that lacks the mentioning of God's name. Such details are added not only in the large expansions but also in small pluses such as 2:20; 4:8; 6:13. Likewise, God's involvement is mentioned everywhere in the Midrash.<sup>35</sup>

3. Addition of *new ideas* in small details. For example, the identification of Ahashuerus as Artaxerxes; description of the first banquet as a wedding feast for Vashti (1:5, 11); length of the second banquet (1:5); description of the opulence at the banquets (1:5–6); identification of Mehuman as Haman (1:10); the king's active participation in the hanging of the two eunuchs (2:23) and of Haman (8:7); the king's placing the ring on Haman's hand (3:10); naming of Haman as a Macedonian (E 10; 9:24); Esther's concern for her own safety (8:6).

4. *Removal* of some phrases that may have been considered verbose or less important (e.g. 3:12, 13; 5:6) as well as the *addition* of some clarifications. Admittedly, it is hard to distinguish between changes made at the Hebrew level and similar changes made by the Greek translator.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Thus Esther's concern for dietary laws in C 27–28 should be compared with b.Meg 13a, *Targum Rishon*, and *Targum Sheni* 2:20. See B. Grossfeld, *The Two Targums of Esther: Translated with Apparatus and Notes* (The Aramaic Bible, Vol. 18), Collegeville 1991. For LXX Esth 2:7 'he trained her for himself as a wife' (MT 'Mordecai adopted her <Esther> as his own daughter') cf. b.Meg 13a 'A Tanna taught in the name of R. Meir: Read not "for a daughter" [*le-bat*], but "for a house" [*le-bayit*] <that is, a wife>'. For a different view on the relation between the LXX and the Midrash, see M. Zipor, 'When Midrash Met Septuagint: The Case of Esther 2, 7', *ZAW* 118 (2006), 82–92.

<sup>36</sup> Interestingly enough, also the Vulgate adds and omits many segments in Esther, more than in the other books of V, almost all without connection to the LXX. For examples, see Paton, *Esther*, 24–8.

9. *Comparison with Rewritten Bible Compositions in Hebrew*

The technique used by the Hebrew source of Esther is that of rewriting an earlier composition. Within the LXX the closest parallel for this assumed technique are the translations of 3 Kingdoms and Daniel 4–6.

The Hebrew sources of the translations of these three books freely rewrote their source texts in a manner resembling other rewritten Bible compositions. It remains unclear why these three books were singled out for reworking. The Hebrew/Aramaic versions of Esther and Daniel share certain features at the content and language level,<sup>37</sup> but these features are not shared with 1 Kings. One possible reason may be the similar milieu in which these translations were created. Another possibility would be the assumption that the three translations were created at a later stage than most other Greek translations. At that time such rewritten Hebrew/Aramaic books were circulating, and less so in earlier periods. The resemblances between the three Greek books have been analyzed elsewhere.<sup>38</sup>

We now expand our observations to other rewritten Hebrew Bible compositions as found among the Qumran scrolls and in the Samaritan Pentateuch.

The Samaritan version of the Torah rewrote a composition like MT. The rewriting is partial, as all rewriting, but it is manifest. The rewriting in the SP does not bear a Samaritan character, since earlier non-sectarian texts from Qumran (named pre-Samaritan)<sup>39</sup> carry the exact same content as the SP with the exception of the Samaritan sectarian readings. Together these texts are named the ‘SP group’.

Some of the Qumran compositions likewise resemble the rewriting in the LXX books, even more so than the SP group. The best preserved rewritten Bible texts<sup>40</sup> from Qumran are 11QT<sup>a</sup> cols. LI–LXVI, 4QRP

<sup>37</sup> See Collins, *Daniel*, 40.

<sup>38</sup> ‘Three Strange Books of the LXX: 1 Kings, Esther, and Daniel Compared with Similar Rewritten Compositions from Qumran and Elsewhere’—Die Septuaginta—Texte, Kontexte, Lebenswelten (ed. M. Karrer & W. Kraus; WUNT; Tübingen 2008), forthcoming.

<sup>39</sup> Esp. 4QpaleoExod<sup>m</sup> and 4QNum<sup>b</sup>; see Tov, ‘Rewritten Bible Compositions’.

<sup>40</sup> For the evidence and an analysis, see G.J. Brooke, ‘Rewritten Bible’, in: L.H. Schiffman & J.C. VanderKam (eds), *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Oxford/New York 2000, 2:777–81; E. Tov, ‘Biblical Texts as Reworked in Some Qumran Manuscripts with Special Attention to 4QRP and 4QParaGen-Exod’, in: E. Ulrich & J. VanderKam (eds), *The Community of the Renewed Covenant: The Notre Dame Symposium on*

(4Q158, 4Q364–367), the Genesis Apocryphon (1Q20), and Jubilees.<sup>41</sup> These parallels strengthen our aforementioned assertions relating to the rewriting in some LXX books and reversely the LXX helps us in clarifying the canonical status of the Qumran compositions.

The main feature these compositions have in common with the reconstructed sources of the LXX translations relates to the interaction between Scripture text and exegetical additions. All these Qumran compositions present long stretches of Scripture text, interspersed with long or short exegetical additions, especially 4QRP (4QReworked Pentateuch). Among the Qumran rewritten Bible compositions this text exhibits the longest stretches of uninterrupted text that may be classified as Scripture as found in either MT or the pre-Samaritan text. As far as we can tell, it has a relatively small number of extensive additions. The exegetical character of this composition is especially evident from several pluses comprising 1–2 lines and in some cases more than 8 lines.<sup>42</sup> This composition also rearranges some Torah pericopes.<sup>43</sup> 11QT<sup>a</sup> cols. LI–LXVI (constituting a paraphrase of the legal chapters of Deuteronomy)<sup>44</sup> changes the text sequence more frequently than 4QRP and also adds several completely new sections (for example, cols.

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*the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity Series 10), Notre Dame 1994, 111–34; M. Segal, 'Between Bible and Rewritten Bible', in: M. Henze (ed.), *Biblical Interpretation at Qumran* (Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature), Grand Rapids/Cambridge 2005, 10–29; Harrington, 'Palestinian Adaptations'.

<sup>41</sup> Pseudo-Philo's *Biblical Antiquities* and Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities* also provide valuable parallels, but they are less relevant since they make no claim to sacred status.

<sup>42</sup> The most clear-cut examples of this technique are the expanded 'Song of Miriam' in 4Q365 (4QRP<sup>a</sup>), frgs. 6a, col. ii and 6c counting at least 7 lines. By the same token, the added text in 4Q158 (4QRP<sup>a</sup>), fig. 14 counts at least 9 lines. 4Q365 (4QRP<sup>c</sup>), fig. 23 contains at least ten lines of added text devoted to festival offerings, including the Festival of the New Oil and the Wood Festival. Further, if 4Q365a, published as '4QTemple?', is nevertheless part of 4Q365 (4QRP), that copy of 4QRP would have contained even more non-biblical material (festivals, structure of the Temple) than was previously thought.

<sup>43</sup> In one instance, a fragment juxtaposing a section from Numbers and Deuteronomy (4Q364 23a–b i: Num 20:17–18; Deut 2:8–14) probably derives from the rewritten text of Deuteronomy, since a similar sequence is found in SP. In the case of juxtaposed laws on a common topic (*Sukkot*) in 4Q366 4 i (Num 29:32–30:1; Deut 16:13–14), one does not know where in 4QRP this fragment would have been positioned, in Numbers, as the fragment is presented in *DJD* XIII, or in Deuteronomy.

<sup>44</sup> The close relation between that scroll and Hebrew Scripture is reflected in the name given to the scroll by B.Z. Wacholder & M. Abegg, 'The Fragmentary Remains of 11QT<sup>a</sup> Torah (Temple Scroll)', *HUCA* 62 (1991) 1–116.

LVII:1–LIX:21, providing the statutes of the king).<sup>45</sup> The SP group likewise inserts a number of extensive additions.<sup>46</sup>

The recognition of a group of rewritten Bible compositions at Qumran and elsewhere is accepted among scholars, even though they disagree with regard to the characterization of specific compositions and the terminology used for the group as a whole.<sup>47</sup>

In the past, the LXX translations were not associated with the Qumran rewritten Bible texts. When making this link, we recognize the similarity in the rewriting style of Scripture books. More specifically, the LXX translations meet some of the characterizing criteria that Segal set for rewritten Bible compositions: new narrative frame, expansion together with abridgement, and tendentious editorial layer.<sup>48</sup> In all these matters, 1 Kings, Esther, and Daniel in the LXX resemble several rewritten Bible texts from Qumran and elsewhere, including the SP:

The Hebrew source of Esth-LXX rewrote a composition very similar to MT. The most salient technique used in the course of the rewriting is the addition of the large Expansions A, C, D, and F. These Expansions give a special twist to the story and to the meaning of the book. The interaction of previously accepted Bible text and long expansions may be compared with the Qumran rewritten Bible compositions. These compositions exercise freedom towards their underlying text by adding large expansions wherever their authors wished.<sup>49</sup>

### 10. *Canonical Issues*

The recognition that the Greek versions of 1 Kings, Esther, and Daniel represent rewritten versions of MT has important implications for our understanding of the canonical status of these books and of canonical issues in general. All three Greek books were considered to be authoritative by ancient Judaism and Christianity alike. In due course,

<sup>45</sup> For additional material supplementary to the Pentateuchal laws, see the list in Y. Yadin, *The Temple Scroll*, Vols. 1–3, Jerusalem 1983, 1.46–70.

<sup>46</sup> For a detailed analysis, see Tov, 'Rewritten Bible Compositions'.

<sup>47</sup> See Bernstein, 'Rewritten Bible'.

<sup>48</sup> Segal, 'Between Bible and Rewritten Bible', 20–6.

<sup>49</sup> For a comparison of the other two rewritten LXX books (1 Kings, Daniel) with the Qumran compositions, see Tov, 'Three Strange Books'.

they were rejected within Judaism, but for Christianity they remained authoritative in different ways.

It is no coincidence that two of the three books (Esther, Daniel) suffered a similar fate within the Christian canon, since they have much in common. They share large expansions that were considered disturbing and therefore were ultimately removed from the running text in the case of Esther. The large expansions of Esth-LXX now have a deuterocanonical status in the Catholic Church even though they never existed separately. At the same time, the medium-sized expansions were left in the text. The medium-sized expansions of Daniel were likewise left in the text (4:17a, 33a–b, 37a–c). However, two book-sized appendixes were placed at the beginning or end of the book (Susanna, Bel and the Serpent), while the large expansion named the ‘Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Young Men’<sup>50</sup> was left in the text between 3:23 and 3:24 but given deuterocanonical status. 3 Kingdoms could have undergone the same fate, but all the expansions including the large ones in chapters 2 and 12 were left in the text.

When the LXX translation was produced, the Hebrew source of 3 Kingdoms was considered to be as authoritative as 1 Kings, at least in some circles. Otherwise it would not have been rendered into Greek. This pertains also to the assumed Hebrew (Aramaic?) sources of Esther and Daniel.<sup>51</sup> The Greek translators and the Alexandrian Jewish community considered the original Hebrew and Aramaic versions, as well as their Greek translations, as authoritative as Baruch<sup>52</sup> or any other book included in those collections.

Several scholars assume that the canonical conceptions behind the ‘Alexandrian canon’ reflect the views of the mother community in Palestine.<sup>53</sup> The link with Palestine is even closer for Esther, as there is strong evidence that this book was translated in that country.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Although placed in the text itself, this added text is usually believed to have enjoyed a separate existence. This Addition is composed of three or four separate compositions: the Prayer of Azariah (vv. 1–22), the prose narrative (vv. 23–28), the Ode (vv. 29–34), and the Psalm (vv. 35–68). See Moore, *Daniel, Esther, and Jeremiah*, 40–76.

<sup>51</sup> See Collins, *Daniel*, 195–207, 405–39.

<sup>52</sup> The book was translated by the same translator who rendered Jeremiah into Greek and was revised by the same reviser who revised at least the second part of the LXX of Jeremiah. See my study *The Septuagint Translation of Jeremiah and Baruch*.

<sup>53</sup> Esp. Sundberg, *The Old Testament*, 60–5.

<sup>54</sup> The main manuscripts of the LXX contain a note at the end of the book, the only such note in the LXX, translated by Bickerman, ‘Notes’, 245 as follows: ‘In the fourth year of the reign of Ptolemy and Cleopatra <78–77 BCE>, Dositheus—who

The Greek canon includes 3 Kingdoms, Esther, and Daniel, constituting rewritten versions of earlier books such as now included in MT. The rewritten books were considered authoritative in their Semitic as well as Greek forms, although by different communities. The SP, likewise a rewritten version of MT, as well as its pre-Samaritan forerunners, enjoyed similar authority. Rewritten versions, as well as the earlier versions on which they were based (for example, the MT of 1 Kings, Esther, and Daniel), were considered equally authoritative, by different communities and in different periods.<sup>55</sup>

In sum, we regard Esth-LXX as a free translation of a rewritten version of MT rather than a paraphrastic translation. We described the characteristic features of this rewritten composition, especially its large expansions, and suggested that these expansions formed an integral part of the original composition underlying the LXX. Finally, we compared this composition with other rewritten compositions from Qumran and elsewhere, and turned to matters of text and canon.

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said he was a priest,—and Levitas, and Ptolemy his son deposited the preceding Letter of Purim, which they said really exists and had been translated by Lysimachus (son of) Ptolemy, (a member) of the Jerusalem community'. The implication of this note is that the Greek version of Esther was produced in Jerusalem and deposited (*eispherō*) in the year 78–77 BCE in an archive in Egypt.

<sup>55</sup> For a further analysis of the canonical status of the Qumran rewritten compositions, see Tov, 'Three Strange Books'.