The Letter of the King and the Letter of Mordecai

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For this article, I have selected the passage: MT and LXX 8:9–13 and its AT "parallel" 7:33–38.¹ This passage reflects the complexity of the Esther research. It confronts the reader with several problems: the differences between the MT and the LXX, the presence of Addition E in the LXX and the AT, and, finally, the presence of a text passage in the AT which does not seem to have a counterpart in the LXX or MT and which might point to a different Hebrew Vorlage. In short, this is a typical Esther crux.² I will demonstrate that the differences between the AT and both the MT and LXX have resulted not from alterations of the Hebrew text, but from alterations of the LXX. Moreover, the differences between the AT and the LXX are the result of a redaction by the author of the AT based on the LXX. Finally, I will show that the AT is—although apparently shorter than the LXX—not shorter in content. All events mentioned in the LXX are repeated in the AT. The AT reorganized the LXX and altered some of the contents of the LXX while maintaining its own literary genres and forms.

I will first summarize the research done on the texts and the additions (I). Then, I will justify my method (II). Next, I will list the witnesses and the specific opinions concerning the letter of the king and the letter of Mordecai (MT/LXX 8:9–13 and AT 7:33–38) and analyse the text (III). Then, I will offer some feedback to Tov, Clines, and Fox (IV). I will conclude with some final statements (V).

¹ Whether or not this passage is really a parallel of MT and LXX 8:9–13 remains a question.
² See the list of cruxes from James R. Adair, sent to the TC list on February 1, 1999.

I. A Summary of the Research

The Texts under Discussion

In the eighteenth century, the positions taken earlier by both the Catholic and the Protestant church traditions were represented by two people: De Rossi and Eichhorn. According to Eichhorn, the Hebrew text of Esther was translated into Greek. Someone later added the Additions to the Greek translation. According to De Rossi, the LXX was a translation of an Aramaic text that also contained the Additions. The Aramaic text was not only translated into Greek; it was also abbreviated to a shorter edition, which in turn became the Hebrew text of Esther. Today, nobody accepts either position. The discussion about the Additions in relation to the main text occupied most of the 19th century.

In the second part of the 19th century, attention switched to another peculiar text, namely the second Greek text. When Fritzsche published the two Greek texts of Esther in 1848, the second Greek text became an item of scholarly research. A similar change in research occurred in the 20th century when the Cambridge volume of Esther was published. In 1860, Langen was the first to actually compare the two texts. Fritzsche himself

3 J. G. Eichhorn, Einleitung in die apokryphischen Schriften des alten Testaments (Leipzig, 1795) 483–504.

4 I. B. de Rossi, Specimen variarum lectionum sacri Textus et chaldaica Estheris additamentis cum latina versione ac notis (Roma, 1782).

5 One can still find references to both perspectives as late as 1971 (Poulsen, a Catholic, defending Eichhorn) and 1948 (Soubigou, defending De Rossi; reprinted in 1952). For a summarized survey of the research, see K. De Troyer, Het einde van de Alpha-text van Esther. Vertaal- en verhaaltechniek van MT 8,1–17, LXX 8,1–17 en AT 7,14–41 (Leuven, 1997) 11–25; English translation: 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).

6 O. F. Fritzsche, ΕΣΘΗΡ, Duplicem libri textum ad optimos codices emendavit et cum selecta lectionis varietate edidit (Zürich, 1848).

7 J. Langen, ”Die beiden griechischen Texte des Buches Esther,” TQ 42 (1860) 244–272.
focussed on the additions in his 1851 commentary on the Apocryphal Additions to the text, and only turned to a comparison of the two texts in 1871.\textsuperscript{8} Field and de Lagarde also studied the second Greek text of Esther for their reconstruction of the Lucianic text, which they needed in turn as a basis for—at least according to Field—a critical edition of the hexaplaric text and ultimately the reconstruction of the “original Hebrew text.”\textsuperscript{9} Lists of characteristics were drawn for the second Greek text. Some pieces of the second Greek text, such as the letter of Mordecai, were considered secondary (Langen\textsuperscript{10}) or as reflecting a different text (Jacob).\textsuperscript{11} We do note, however, that there is not yet talk about a different Hebrew Vorlage, but a different text-version (“eine andere Gestalt”)\textsuperscript{12} of the LXX.

During the same period, there was also a debate concerning the original text of the Hebrew book of Esther: Do 9:20–32, or vv. 17 and following, and ch. 10 belong to the original Hebrew book of Esther?\textsuperscript{13} We also note the

\textsuperscript{8} O. F. Fritzsche, Libri Apocryphi Veteri Testamenti Graecae (Leipzig, 1871); cf. also idem, Das dritte Buch Esra, die Zusätze zum Buch Esther und Daniel, das Gebet des Manasse, das Buch Baruch und der Brief des jeremia (Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch zu den Apokryphen des Alten Testaments 1; Leipzig, 1851) 69–108.


\textsuperscript{10} Langen, “Die beiden griechischen Texte.”

\textsuperscript{11} B. Jacob, “Das Buch Esther bei den LXX,” ZAW 10 (1890) 241–298.

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 259.

\textsuperscript{13} The following scholars questioned the originality of parts of chapter 9 and 10: J. D. Michaelis, Deutsche Übersetzung des Alten Testaments mit Anmerkungen für Ungelernte (Göttingen, 1773–1783); A. Bertheau, Die Bücher Esra, Nehemia und Esther (Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament 17; Leipzig, 1st ed., 1862; 2nd ed., 1887) 273–353; E. König, Einleitung in das Alte Testament mit Einschluss der Apokryphen und der Pseudepigraphen Alten Testaments (Sammlung Theologischer Handbücher, Teil 2, Abteilung 1; Bonn, 1893); C. Steuernagel, Lehrbuch der Einleitung in das Alte Testament mit einem Anhang über die Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen (Tübingen, 1912) 433–439, 788–790; R. H. Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament (New York/London, 1941) 732–747. Riehm and Kuenen, however, defend the
contribution of Motzo, who drew the *Vetus Latina* into the research.\textsuperscript{14} He considered the *Vetus Latina* a special witness to the history and origins of the second Greek text. Finally, we should mention the views of Roiron\textsuperscript{15} and Cazelles.\textsuperscript{16} Roiron aimed at reconstructing the original sources of the books of Esther, such as the letters of the king, or the letter of Mordecai and the letter of Esther. Motzo reconstructed two original stories. The reconstruction of the original sources of the book of Esther came again into the debate when the Qumran fragments entered the scene.\textsuperscript{17}


\textsuperscript{14} B. Motzo, "La storia del testo di Ester," *Ricerche Religiose* 3 (1927) 205-208; idem, "I testi greci di Ester," *SMSR* 6 (1930) 223-231.


The Letter of the King

After the publication of the Cambridge edition of Esther,\textsuperscript{18} Esther research took a huge turn. Now all issues that had been studied so far and all possible hypotheses were combined into a new view on the second Greek text. In 1944, two years after reviewing the Cambridge volume on Esther and other books,\textsuperscript{19} Torrey noticed that 2:1 to 8:21 of the second Greek text formed a stronger textual unity than the Hebrew story. He concluded that there must have been an older story of Esther, written in Aramaic.\textsuperscript{20} The older Vorlage of the AT was born. So far, there had only been an Aramaic Vorlage of the LXX; now, there was an Aramaic Vorlage of the second Greek text. Soon, the Aramaic Vorlage was forgotten. In his 1965 Ph.D. dissertation, Moore replaced the Aramaic Vorlage with a Hebrew Vorlage of the AT. The AT became “A Greek Witness to a Different Hebrew Text of Esther.”\textsuperscript{21} The question then arose as to whether or not the Additions were part of the older Esther story and how the LXX got these Additions.\textsuperscript{22} Simultaneously with the publication of the Cambridge volume, in 1940, Schildenberger also gave his opinion about the second Greek text of Esther: the second Greek text is one of the many Greek translations that are based on the same Hebrew text. For Schildenberger, the Vorlage of the Vetus Latina was the most important Greek translation.


\textsuperscript{19} C. C. Torrey, review in JBL 61 (1942) 130-136.

\textsuperscript{20} “It represents a separate Aramaic text only in 2:1-8:21, this corresponding approximately to the first seven chapters of the Hebrew text,” cf. C. C. Torrey, “The Older Book of Esther,” HTR 37 (1944) 1-40, esp. 17.


\textsuperscript{22} Cf. infra for the additions.

\textsuperscript{23} J. Schildenberger, Das Buch Esther (HSAT 4/3; Bonn, 1941) 22.


29 Cf. n. 5.

30 C. V. Dorothy, *The Books of Esther: Structure, Genre and Integrity* (JSOTSup 187; Sheffield, 1997).


32 Many other books on Esther have also been published, such as the volumes by Walfish, Levenson, Laniak, Beal and Berlin. They, however, do not tackle the problem of the origin, history and textual setting of the AT as such. Cf. B. D. Walfish, *Esther in Medieval Carith: Jewish Interpretations of the Book of Esther in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1993); J. D. Levenson, *Esther* (OTL; Louisville, Ky., 1997); T. S. Laniak, *Shame and Honor in the Book of Esther* (SBLDS 165; Atlanta, Ga., 1998); T. K. Beal, *Esther* (Berit Olam: Studies in Hebrew Narrative and Poetry; Collegeville, Minn., 1999); A. Berlin, *Esther* (JPS Bible Commentary; Philadelphia, 2001).
certainly not the translator, for the translator would have avoided the contradictions between the core text and the Additions. A new step in the discussion about Additions was taken when Nöldeke emphasized the variety within the Additions.\(^{36}\) He states that there were two sorts of Additions: those giving religious colouring to the text, and the letters of the king. Nöldeke sees religious colouring in Additions A, C, D and also—but to a lesser extent—in B.\(^{37}\) Roiron also considers the letters of the king to be original documents. He, however, has a peculiar theory that says that the LXX was made out of four existing documents: the two letters of the king, the letter of Mordecai and the letter of Esther, which happens to be the Hebrew book of Esther.\(^{38}\) Until then, the Additions were mainly studied in relation to the LXX. With Torrey, the research on the Additions took a turn. According to Torrey, "four of the six 'expansions,' A, C, D, and F, are plainly translations from Semitic."\(^{39}\) Moreover, Additions C and D were part of the original older Aramaic story.\(^{40}\) The other Additions were attached to the LXX.\(^{41}\) Torrey was the first to define the Additions in


\(^{37}\) We note that in the Vulgate, 15:1-3 is seen as one Addition, namely Addition C. Thus, the Addition C of the LXX becomes Addition D.


\(^{40}\) Ibid., 25.

\(^{41}\) Addition C contains the prayers of both Mordecai and Esther, while Addition D tells the embellished version of Esther's visit to the king. Torrey first states that "All the rest—the material of chapter 8-10, the official letters, Mordecai's dream and its interpretation—has been borrowed from the standard Greek, with just enough verbal variation to obscure the unquestionable fact." He continues a couple lines further: "The material by which the Story has been expanded to the compass of our standard Greek is almost all originally Aramaic, ... . This includes the account of the origin of Purim, and the "Additions" designated by the letters A and F (...)... . The exception is formed by the Additions B and E, which never existed in Aramaic or Hebrew, but only in Greek" (p. 25).
I have organized the research of most of the above mentioned scholars as follows.

- There are those who defend the existence of a Hebrew Vorlage beyond part of or the complete AT. This approach can be divided into three subcategories:
  - Clines acknowledges the existence of a Hebrew text older than and different from the Hebrew text as reflected in the MT.  
  - Fox recognizes a Hebrew text common to both the proto-AT and the MT. Both the proto-AT and the MT offer, however, an independent revision of the common prototype.
  - Tov acknowledges a Hebrew Vorlage different at places from the MT. Tov, however, also acknowledges that the AT is a revision of the LXX.
- There are those who only acknowledge the existing Hebrew text and who do not recognize any other Hebrew text. Both Hanhart and I consider the AT to be a revision ("ein Neubearbeitung") of the LXX.

Focussing on the Additions

There are no existing Greek texts without Additions. According to De Rossi, the Additions were part of the original story. Eichhorn claims that someone added the Additions to the Greek translation. That someone was

33 Jobes can be seen as a variant on Clines' position. Dorothy opts for a shorter text, and follows Clines more or less. He, however, follows Fox when it comes to defending the letter of Mordecai, to which I will come back later. Kossmann can be seen in the line of Clines. She took up the old quest of looking for and reconstructing the original documents of the Esther story and their history from document to final texts.

34 Note that I have not used the word "recension," for technically speaking, a recension implies the recurrence to a Hebrew text. I have proposed to call the AT "a rewritten Greek text." Tov too recognizes that AT is a revision of the LXX.

35 However, the last verse of Addition F, v. 11, is missing in all four AT MSS, except for Ms 19. This was already observed by C. A. Moore in 1965, cf. Moore, "The Greek Text of Esther," 17.
relation to the AT. According to Bickerman, Lysimachus integrated the Additions into the LXX.\footnote{E. Bickerman, “Notes on the Greek Book of Esther,” PAAJR 20 (1950) 101-133, esp. 113-114.} Cook further refines matters by distinguishing a number of segments in Addition A.\footnote{“Verses 1–11,” he maintains, “are clearly of Greek origin, while verses 12–17 are of Hebrew origin.” Cf. H. Cook, “The A Text of the Greek Versions of the Books of Esther,” ZAW 81 (1969) 369-376.} In his 1973 article, Moore discussed the Additions.\footnote{In a private conversation with Carey A. Moore at the Esther 2000 conference, Moore explained that he studied the Additions gradually, and that one should focus on his 1973 article and his 1977 commentary for his final view. I will give a brief outline here of his research concerning the Additions. In 1965, Moore followed Paton, and considered the Additions to have a Greek origin. He studied the thesis of Torrey and noted that “The contradictions between the Additions and the MT constitute the most serious objection to his (Torrey’s, klid) thesis.” He continues: “They could be translations from the Hebrew, but there is no evidence,” cf. Moore, “The Greek Text of Esther,” 12. In his 1967 article, Moore does not go into the issue of the Additions. Cf. “A Greek Witness.” In 1971, he still follows the opinion of Paton and gives a general survey of the views on and the contents of the Additions. Cf. Esther: Introduction, Translation and Notes (AB 7B). Moore’s contributions of 1973 and 1977 are quoted in the text. For the above-mentioned view of Moore, cf. C. A. Moore, “On the Origins of the LXX Additions to the Book of Esther,” JBL 92 (1973) 382-393.} According to him, Addition A (or part thereof, namely vv. 4–10, the dream) and Addition F are (perhaps) Semitic in origin, but they do not belong to the original Hebrew narrative. They were added to the original story before 114 BCE.\footnote{A lot of the discussion about the date of the LXX of Esther is based upon the colophon that is attached at the end of the book. The most influential article about the colophon is E. Bickerman, “The Colophon of the Greek Book of Esther,” JBL 63 (1944) 339–362. Bickerman, however, opts for a later date than Moore. He argues that “the colophon was written between September 12.78 and September 11.77 B.C.” (p. 347).} Additions B and E are of Greek origin. Addition C is also secondary and Semitic in origin. Although Hebrew in character, Addition D is nevertheless Greek in origin. Vv. 11–17 of Addition
A could have been added as late as the second century CE.⁴⁶ Martin puts Moore’s findings to the test with the help of a syntactic analysis of the text and proposes that Additions B and E are indeed Greek, that Addition A, Addition C and Addition D are translations of a Semitic original and that Addition F is either Greek in origin or a very free translation of a Semitic original.⁴⁷ In his 1977 commentary on the Additions of Esther, Moore, first, underlines fully the secondary character of the Additions: “for both the external and internal evidence indisputably indicate that they were not originally a part of the Esther story, but were added later.”⁴⁸ Then he clarifies: “The additions are secondary, i.e., they were supplied after the Book of Esther had been written. But that is not to say that some of them were not a part of a Semitic text of the Book of Esther at a later point.”⁴⁹ While Moore refers to Martin’s article, he adapts his conclusion slightly with respect to Addition F: “these findings concerning Semitic origins of Additions A, C, D and F (as well as the Greek origins of Additions B and E) were confirmed.”⁵⁰ Nickelsburg makes a distinction between Additions A, C, D, and F on the one hand, and Additions B and E on the other hand. His

⁴⁶ Moore, “On the Origins of the LXX Additions,” 388. Moore’s understanding of the history of the book of Esther looks as follows. The dream of Additions A (and most likely also the prelude to it) and F were inserted into an original Hebrew narrative. Additions B and E were attached to the Greek translation. Additions C and D also—whether or not Semitic in origin—were attached to the Esther story, somewhere before 94 CE, the date of Josephus’ text. Cf. ibidem, 385 for Additions B and E and 391–393 for Additions C and D.


⁴⁹ Ibid., 155.

⁵⁰ Martin left the possibility open as to whether or not Addition F was Greek or a free translation.
view of Addition A, however, is quite distinct. Haelewyck holds the opinion that Additions A and F fit better into the Vorlage of the Vetus Latina than in any other text. He also admits, however, that the first part of Addition A was added in the first stage of the AT based on MT 2:21-23. The other Additions fit neither in LXX, nor in the AT. The AT, however, integrated the other Additions later and took them from the LXX. According to Tigay, the author has chosen to believe that Addition A and ch. 2 reflect two different events and, therefore, the LXX omitted the names of the eunuchs in ch. 2. The AT, however, considers them a doublet and, therefore, omits the second story. According to Jobes, the more original form of the Additions is kept in the AT. However, the Additions are inserted in both texts without integration into the LXX or the AT. I argued in 1997 that there was never a LXX without at least Additions B and E, and that the AT knew the LXX with the Additions. The AT, however, has seriously incorporated the Additions into the text. Dorothy also extensively focuses on the Additions. Additions B and E both stem from the Roman period and are thus later insertions. Additions A and F are Semitic and form a unit. They were also added later to the text and function as a framework.

Kossmann also distinguishes between the two parts of Addition A.

51 While he recognizes the distinction between Add. A:12-17 and the remainder of Addition A, he maintains that these verses are an expansion of LXX 2:21-23 and that 2:21-23 was thus adapted. In this phase, the appointment of Mordecai constituted the occasion for the conspiracy against the king. Cf. G. W. E. Nickelsburg, “The Bible Rewritten and Expanded,” in JWSTP, 135-138.


53 Ibid., 41.

54 Ibid., 43.


57 Dorothy, The Books of Esther, passim, esp. 93, 194, 279, and 295.
Contrary to Bardtke, she claims that the AT Add. A:12–16a is the older part of Addition A. It represents the older story about the two eunuchs, which is summarized in LXX 2:21–23. The LXX has, therefore, both the longer story and the summarized text.

Where are Clines, Fox, Tov, and Hanhart on these issues? Clines and Fox are both clear on this: the Additions were added to the LXX, and then transferred to AT during the last stage of its development. Tov suggests that the AT is a rewritten book, that revised the LXX by correcting it to a different Hebrew Vorlage. He states that “the translation of the canonical sections in L (=AT, kdt) and the so-called Additions should be regarded as one organic unit.” He continues: “When the Additions were attached to the canonical sections, there resulted a certain redundancy in content which still shows in the text of the LXX. However, in L this redundancy was avoided by omitting some components of the canonical text.” Tov, then, writes “Presumably, the author of the Hebrew (or Aramaic) Vorlage of L was responsible for these omissions.” He concludes: “Since both the minor additions and the large Additions A, C, D, F were originally composed in Hebrew (or Aramaic), also the omissions vis-à-vis MT derived from that

58 H. Bardtke, Historische und legendarische Erzählungen: Zusätze zu Esther (JSHRZ 1, 1; Gütersloh, 1973) 15–62.


60 Earlier, I noted that Nickelsburg comes exactly to the opposite conclusion. For him, 2:21–23 is the original part and Add. A:12–17 is a further elaboration of the theme.

61 Clines, The Esther Scroll, 69–70 (ch. 6), and Fox, The Redaction of the Books of Esther, 34ff.


63 Ibid., 12.

64 Ibid.
Hebrew (or Aramaic) text, rather than from the Greek translator." It appears that Tov accepts a different Hebrew Vorlage that contained Additions A, C, D and F. Hanhart, on the other hand, takes Bickerman's view a step further and reads, e.g., LXX 8:13 as the final verse of Addition E. Hanhart, thus, integrates the LXX with the Additions.

II. Method

There are two roads to go in Esther research. The first road tries to explain the AT as completely or partially based on a Hebrew text that is either slightly, very or completely different from the MT. Going down this road requires the reconstruction of a text which has hitherto not been found anywhere. Many scholars have taken this road. I, however, have taken another road. Tov inspired me, although he himself ended up following the first path. In his 1982 article on Esther, he writes: "As it has been established that L (=MT, kdt) is based on the LXX, many deviations of L from MT must have resulted from the translator's free attitude to his Hebrew and/or Greek Vorlage or from a Hebrew Vorlage which is different from MT. However, prior to this decision one should decide whether L had independent access to a Hebrew text different from MT." I am inclined to

65 Ibid.


exhaust the idea of a rather free reworking of the LXX by the author of the AT before I subscribe to the postulation of a hitherto unknown different Hebrew Vorlage. I hold that if one can explain a text as a redactional reworking of another existing text, one should not reconstruct an additional one. In a sense, I apply the rule that if the differences between the two texts can be explained as the result of exegesis, then one should not retrovert the text and use it for the reconstruction of a Hebrew text. Tov stresses this rule in his book on the text critical use of the Septuagint.69

III. Analysis of MT/LXX 8:9-13 and AT 7:33-38

The Witnesses

The MT has neither Addition E nor the letter of Mordecai. The witnesses to the Septuagint do not have the letter of Mordecai; however, they all have Addition E. All witnesses to the AT contain 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 as well as Esther’s personal request that

69 E. Tov, The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint (2nd ed.; Jerusalem, 1997) e.g., 39–40. My choice to stick with this rule results, in a sense, from a larger debate that is currently going on at the borders of both text-criticism and literary criticism. We acknowledge easily the different layers in a text—at least, the redactional reworking of a so-called final text—and we recognize that in some cases the MT text provides a more recent text than the Vorlage of the LXX. Sometimes the text of Qumran or the LXX has preserved an older stage of a biblical book. In those cases, the borderline between text-criticism and literary criticism is no longer clear. The various texts, then, become like oranges and apples and we can no longer use these texts for text-critical purposes. I emphasize the ongoing process of editing texts, and I can see no reason not to accept that this process continues within the different versions of a text, be it in Greek, Syriac, Latin, Coptic or English and Chinese. This statement, hopefully, also makes it clear that I acknowledge the existence of different texts (or text-traditions), but that I will only recur to another text or Vorlage when all exegetical editorial reworking of a text has been taken into consideration, which, in the case of the AT, has yet to take place.
the ten sons of Haman be hanged in AT 7:18–21. Moreover, Josephus contains neither Mordecai’s letter from AT 7:34–38 nor Esther’s request that the ten sons of Haman be hanged from AT 7:18–21. Both the *Vetus Latina* and Josephus reflect Addition E.

**Specific Opinions about the Letter of the King and the Letter of Mordecai**

Torrey does not say anything about the letter of Mordecai. Moore recognizes the Greek origin of both Additions B and E. He, however, states that they were not added by the translator. They were added to the Greek text before “Josephus paraphrased them.” In his section dealing with “omissions in Luc” (=AT, *kdl*), he lists VIII 13. Moore quotes the Greek text


and proceeds to give a one-line argument for the omission: “The content of
the edict had already been stated in Addition E.”73 Moore is then confronted
with the general question: “whether Lucian himself omitted these elements
or whether they were already missing from his text.” He suggests “that
many of these phrases were missing from Lucian’s Greek text. Many of
these ‘omissions’ may very well reflect a Hebrew Vorlage shorter than the
MT” (underlined, Moore).74 Then, Moore analyses the “‘Additions’ Peculiar
to Luc.”75 Among many, he lists VIII 36 and explains: “While it is not
possible to say exactly where the above readings originated, it is most
unlikely that Lucian himself created them, especially those which are
somewhat extended.”76 Comparing the LXX and the AT, Cook notes that “8
13–14 is omitted; instead A has an account of a letter written by Mordecai
giving instruction for a Jewish festival to celebrate their deliverance.”77 This
is an example of an AT addition of a different nature than those before 8:5.
Cook states that normally “these additions tend to improve the story, either
adding to the reasonableness of the developments or heightening the
dramatic effect.”78 Why, then, was the material added? Cook writes: “A
originally ended at 8 5, and ... the rest was added to allow the narrative to
become the legend of Purim, possibly in conformity with a longer Hebrew
story or with a text like that of Codex B.”79 He continues, “The rest of the
book is given only the briefest summary in A, except that MT 8 14 is
replaced by A 8 33–38... [which is] not clearly translation Greek.”
[However,] “The intervention of the larger addition E may have influenced
the style of what follows. It is difficult to determine whether A was using a

73 Ibid., 143.
74 Ibid., 146.
75 Ibid., 147ff.
76 Ibid., 149-150.
78 Ibid., 373.
79 Ibid., 374.
Hebrew summary or not... A 8 33–38 suggests that is was not.”

According to Cook, all Additions were added to the Septuagint when it was made. Tov proposes that 8:7–13 was omitted when the Additions were attached to the canonical sections. This “resulted in a certain redundancy in content which still shows in the text of the LXX.” “Presumably,” Tov continues, “the author of the Hebrew (or Aramaic) Vorlage of L was responsible for these omissions, just as he was responsible for other omissions and additions.”

“The greater part of these verses,” Tov states, “were omitted because they are covered by Add. E, which contains the decree which allowed the Jews to take revenge on their enemies.” Tov supposes that at least Addition E “was probably a secondary addition. A short version of the original text of the letter is found after 8:35 in L (before 8:15 of MT) while an expanded version of that letter (Add. E) is found after 8:12.” This means that the letter of Mordecai from AT 7:35 is more genuine than Addition E and that this letter could have been present in the Hebrew Vorlage of the second Greek text of Esther. According to Clines, MT 8:9–13 is secondary and completely based on AT 8:17. In AT 8:17, the king puts the affairs of the kingdom into Mordecai’s hands. MT 8:9–13 explains what exactly should happen when the king puts the affairs of the kingdom into Mordecai’s

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80 Ibid., 376.

81 Tov, “The ‘Lucianic’ Text,” 12. When the Additions were added, the author of the Hebrew or Aramaic Vorlage of AT adapted his text by omitting some redundant elements. Tov continues, “Since both the minor additions... and the large Additions A, C, D, F were originally composed in Hebrew (or Aramaic), also the omissions vis-à-vis MT derived from that Hebrew (or Aramaic) text, rather than from the Greek translator”, cf. ibid., 12. But how does one explain Additions B and E, which are most probably originally Greek documents? How can these Greek Additions have influenced a Hebrew or Aramaic Vorlage? Tov quotes examples from these two Greek Additions, but gives no overall explanation for this phenomenon. Cf. below.


83 Ibid., 14, n. 14.

84 Note that the numeration of Clines is different from Hanhart’s critical edition. AT 8:17 is AT 7:17 in Hanhart.
hands. Clines thus considers MT 8:9-13 to be a redactional piece in which the author further develops “how the story ought to proceed.” The letter of Mordecai in AT 7:33-38 is also secondary, according to Clines. Clines, however, underlines that “this passage must have belonged to AT before the insertion of Addition E ascribing the letter of cancellation to the king.” At first, this seems to contradict the first statement. However, it does not, for Clines considers the proto-AT to be a text without the so-called Appendix and the Additions. The “clumsy” redactor added the Appendix to the proto-AT to form the AT. In AT 8:35-38, the clumsy redactor was “using material corresponding to MT 8:9-14 except that the contents of the letter are entirely different.” He, then, stresses the oddities of vv. 33-38. First, he mentions that it is “addressed to the provincial governors, but that its present place in AT is introduced by a clause that suggests it is envisaged as addressed to the Jews.” Secondly, Clines states that the letter of Mordecai “fails to make the pressing point, namely that Haman’s decree is now annulled.” “Finally,” he continues, “this letter of Mordecai is at odds with the body of the narrative in claiming that Haman’s body has been hung at the gates of Susa (AT 8:37), since according to AT 8:12f. (MT 7:9f.) Haman had been hung on the gallows of his own courtyard.” Haelewyck labels the letter of Mordecai the “petite lettre.” He claims that the presence of vv. 85 In v. 8 the king gives permission to Mordecai to write to the Jews; in v. 9 the letter is written and (v. 10) dispatched; and in vv. 11-12 its contents are given in summary form.

85 Clines, The Esther Scroll, 79.

86 Ibid., p. 79. Needless to say that once we accept the text, which ends in AT 8:17, we have a shorter text than both the MT and the LXX. Consequently, the letter of Mordecai is secondary.

88 Ibid., 73-74.

89 Ibid., 74.

90 Ibid., 81.

91 Haelewyck, “Le texte dit ”lucianique,”” 34.
16–21 before the letter of Mordecai proves the letter to be original. Then, Haelewyck lists words that are typical for the AT and that appear in the letter. His final argument is that the date of the massacre given in the letter is the same as the one given in ch. 3. He also notes how Addition E interrupts the flow of the narrative: “Le second édit trouble cette harmonie.” Earlier in his article, Haelewyck had given his opinion on Addition (B and) E: “Dans l’état actuel du texte ‘lucianique’, le second édit est mal placé, inutile, et sa tonalité ne s’harmonise pas avec ce qui l’entoure.” In his conclusion, he points once more to the originality of the letter of Mordecai: “la ‘petite lettre’ (7,33b–38), véritable édit de réhabilitation du texte L.” He labels the letter as “Sondergut du texte ‘lucianique’ primitif.” According to Fox, AT 7:18–21 and 7:33–38 belong to the original AT story. He writes: “These passages belong to the proto-AT and are not the work of the redactor.” Fox offers three arguments for his thesis. First, he points to the slight similarities in language and detail between LXX/MT 8:11–13, 9:20–25 and Mordecai’s letter. Second, he sees no reason for a later scribe to invent them, for “they do not reinforce the religious dimension, nor do they tone down the brutality, contribute to the etiology of Purim, or enhance liturgical instructions.” In sum, the letter shows no evidence of being a later addition. Finally, Fox offers a rebuttal of all Clines’ arguments in favour of the secondary character of the ending of the AT.

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93 Haelewyck, “Le texte dit ‘lucianique,’” 35.

94 Ibid., 10.

95 Ibid., 41.

96 Note that I follow Hanhart’s numbering, and not that of Fox or Clines.

97 Fox, The Redaction of the Books of Esther, 38–42.

98 Ibid., 39.

99 Ibid., 39.
Concerning the letter of Mordecai, Clines pointed to the contradiction regarding the addressees: were they Jews (v. 34) or provincial governors (vv. 36–38)? Fox writes: “On the contrary: the letter... is addressed to every one in the empire... not only to the Jews.”\(^{100}\) This contradiction is “internal... and would not prove it to be secondary.”\(^{101}\) The letter, thus, is an original part of the second Greek text. That also implies that “All of 8,8–14a is absent from the AT.”\(^{102}\) Fox contends that “the ‘omitted’ material may have been absent from the proto-AT.”\(^{103}\) When the proto-AT was adapted to the LXX and Addition E was inserted, the AT changed 8:13a into 8:22a: καὶ ἔγραψε τὴν ὑποτεταγμένην ἐπιστολὴν. The AT thus reformulates the introduction of Addition E.\(^{104}\) Jobes believes that both Additions B and E “were inserted without integration into the LXX and AT.” Addition E, however, has its most primitive form in the AT.\(^{105}\) The insertion of Addition E, however, seriously changed the text. Jobes states that the letter of Mordecai is “not at all redundant with the king’s decree.” She points to the different addressees of the letter and the decree and to the different “authors”: the king and Mordecai.\(^{106}\) Dorothy also opts for the originality of the letter. His argument runs as follows: “L’s text (=AT, kdt) with the two writings, one from the king and a lesser one from Mordecai, shows signs of being prior to o’, since it is more difficult to explain an original Mordecai decree being watered down to two writings, the most important or

\(^{100}\) Ibid., 41.

\(^{101}\) Ibid., 41.

\(^{102}\) Ibid., 36, n. 40, paragraph f.

\(^{103}\) Ibid., 35.

\(^{104}\) Ibid., 52. It is strange, however, that Fox places 8:22 parallel to LXX 8:13a, the latter indicating that the decree is posted publicly, the former that the decree is written.


\(^{106}\) Ibid., 214–215.
dominant of which is now the king’s.”

It should be clear by now that there is indeed a variety of opinions concerning the letter of the king and the letter of Mordecai.

A Contextual Reading of MT/LXX 8:9–13 and AT 7:33–38

In ch. 8, the king gives permission to Mordecai and Esther to write a letter to the Jews on his behalf. It says that the king’s secretaries are called, that the edict is written, sealed and sent. In this edict, permission is granted to the Jews to defend themselves and to kill their enemies. We will focus on the addressees of this edict, then examine the contents of the edict, and finally analyse v. 8 and reread the king’s command as a kind of test.

1. MT 8:9

The Addressees

The king’s secretaries are summoned and they write everything which was ordered by Mordecai to the Jews and to the satraps, the officials of the city and the governors of the provinces. The letter is sent to two categories of people: the Jews, on the one hand, and the satraps, officials and governors on the other hand. This is clear from the syntactical structure and the semantic organisation.

Moreover, at the end of v. 9 it is said that these

107 Dorothy, The Books of Esther, 178. Dorothy also mentions the lack of a feast name in the letter of Mordecai as proof of originality. Moreover, he sees the stress on Mordecai in the MT as a result of the letter of Mordecai in the original text. Cf. ibid., 179–180.

108 The term “contextual reading” was first used by A. van der Kooij in the Septuagint Study group of the University of Leiden, which is a part of the LISOR, the Leids Institute for the Study of Religions.

109 This passage is a very good example of the reworking of material from ch. 3. In ch. 3 an edict was sent to three categories of people. All the elements of the three
two categories of people received the edict written in their own language and script:

מרדכי המדריד סוסיא
עון עתמן בלשון
ואל היהודים בשפתן ובלשון

In other words, to every province in its own script, and to all peoples in their own languages and to the Jews in their script and their language.\textsuperscript{110}

\textsuperscript{110} The script and language are used twice, once in association with the provinces and the peoples and a second time with regard to the Jews.

categories (the categories and their description) are repeated in ch. 8, but presented as one category, syntactically bound together.

3:12:
אל אחשדדני המלך
ואל המוחת המשי המדריד
אל שרי עם תעם
8:9:
אל היהודים
ואל אחשדדני המוחת משי המדריד
אשר מוהי וגר כה שבע אברים ומא המדריד

In 3:12 the first category, אחשדדני המלך, the second category, ואל המוחת המשי המדריד, by the אשר על מין המדריד, and the third category has a further minimal description: שרי עם תעם. The three categories are the addressees and they are all introduced by אל. In ch. 8 one category of addressees is added, but אל is used less, instead of more. The Jews are addressed first, אל היהודים, and then, the three categories from ch. 3, taken together withัวו, and introduced by one אל: ואל אחשדדני המוחת משי המדריד. The first category in ch. 8 is not further described, the reference to the king thus omitted; neither is the second category further described, and thus, the references to the provinces are left out. The third category, however, is determined and even introduced by an אשר-clause. The provinces are not only mentioned in this relative clause, but are used for the representation of the kingdom, and, thus, all elements which were at first sight omitted seem to be present in the last part of 8:9!
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The contents of the letter are given in vv. 11–12. The letter is reported. It reads: “The king granted permission to the Jews who were in every city to assemble and defend their lives, to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate any armed force of any people or province that might attack them, their children and women, and to plunder their goods on a single day, on the thirteenth of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar.” In v. 13, it is said what should be done with the letter and what its exact goal is. We believe that v. 13 continues to be part of the king’s command. It runs as follows: “a copy of the letter should be issued as a decree in all provinces and published to all people, and the Jews were to be ready on that day to take revenge on their enemies.” So, in vv. 11–12, permission is granted to the Jews to kill their enemies who attack them, and in v. 13 it is said that they, the Jews, can take revenge.

The King’s Command

What Mordecai writes is the direct result of the command given by the king in v. 8: “You may write to the Jews, in the name of the king, and you may seal it with the king’s ring; for such an edict cannot be revoked.” Thus, Mordecai writes. The strange thing is that when Esther asks the king in 8:3–6 to revoke the letter of Haman, the king gives permission to Esther and Mordecai to write. However, only Mordecai is mentioned in vv. 9ff. Mordecai orders the contents of the letter that the royal scribes write in vv. 9ff. Moreover, the letter is written in the name of the king and sealed with his ring. The writing is according to the stipulations of the king. Mordecai

111 Although we do not agree with all the arguments from Gordis, we do believe his thesis is correct: children and women are the ones who are being attacked by their enemies; cf. R. Gordis, “Studies in the Esther Narrative,” JBL 95 (1976) 43–58.

112 The infinitive with ḫ can be understood as “must, have to,” cf. Jotin §124 (l). Moreover, the parallel with 3:14 is also important and points toward an inclusion in the king’s decree.
writes to the Jews, allowing them to kill those who attack them and to take revenge. This message is sent to the officials also.

2. LXX 8:9

The Addressees

In v. 9, the royal scribes are summoned. They write to the Jews what Mordecai commanded the administrators and the governors of the satrapies to do. In Greek: καὶ ἐγράφη τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις ὡς ἐνέτειλεν τοῖς ὁικονόμοις καὶ τοῖς ἄρχουσιν τῶν σατραπῶν. What these people have been ordered to do, is passed on in writing to the Jews. The LXX clearly distinguishes two categories of addressees, as did the MT. However, in addition to the two categories, the LXX also distinguishes two issues: that which the administrators and the governors of the satrapies had been ordered to do and that which had been written and sent to the Jews. Strictly speaking, there is only one writing mentioned in v. 9: namely the writing to the Jews. It is, therefore, no surprise that at the end of v. 9, it is only said once that the writing was written κατὰ τὴν ἰσαρίαν λέξιν. In the Hebrew text, the language and script were mentioned twice. In the Septuagint, language and script are only mentioned once and the text does not retain the second part of the end of v. 9.\(^{113}\)

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In the LXX Mordecai writes to the Jews and orders them “to observe their own laws, to defend themselves and to act as they wished against their opponents and enemies on a certain day, the thirteenth of the twelfth month which is Adar.” In v. 13, it is said that the Jews should be ready to fight

\(^{113}\) The LXX even uses only one word for language and script.

\(^{114}\) I have to admit that it is not easy to decide whether the Jews or the governors received something in their own language. Were the Jews written to in their language? Or is it said of the governors that the orders given were in their own language?
against their enemies. One notices immediately the vast difference between vv. 11-12 and v. 13: it moves from doing what they want with their enemies (χρῆσθαι τοῖς ἀντιδίκοις αὐτῶν καὶ τοῖς ἀντικειμένοις αὐτῶν ὡς βουλοῦνται) to fighting their enemies (ἐτοίμους τε ἐίναι πάντας τοὺς ἱουδαίους εἰς ταύτην τὴν ἡμέραν πολεμῆσαι αὐτῶν τοὺς ὑπεναντίους). Comparing the LXX with the MT in v. 11, two major changes become clear. First, "the killing, destroying and annihilating of the enemies" in the MT has been replaced by "acting against their enemies as they wish." Second, the LXX has added a positive item to the decree: the Jews are allowed to follow their own laws (χρῆσθαι τοῖς νόμοις ἐν πᾶσι πόλει). This positive element is not found in the MT. However, it is stipulated in Addition E inserted between vv. 11-12 and v. 13. Add. E:19-20 reads as follows: "permit the Jews to live under their own laws, and give them reinforcements so that they defend themselves against all who attack them." Exactly the same content is quoted, given in exactly the same order as in the text of ch. 8: first living according to the laws, then allowing self-defense. The difference between vv. 11-12 and Addition E is that the former is written to the Jews and the latter written to the governors of the provinces. Also, v. 13 in the LXX is more specific than its counterpart in the MT. The MT speaks about "revenge," the LXX about "fighting." It appears that in v. 13, the LXX has compensated for what it had altered in vv. 11-12. In other words, the killing, destroying and the annihilating of the enemies are summarized in v. 13 by: "fighting."  

We conclude that the LXX has altered vv. 11-12 by adapting them to the inserted Addition E, and that LXX 8:13 is the summary of MT 8:11-12. We note, however, the large difference between Addition E and vv. 11-12. Namely, the former is written to the governors of the satrapies and the latter to the Jews. There are two writings and two categories of addressees in ch. 8 of the LXX, whereas in the MT, there were two categories of addressees, but only one sort of writing is explicitly mentioned.

115 The element of "revenge and self-defense" is to a certain extent retained in the concept of "to fight."
The King’s Command

What did the king command Esther and Mordecai in LXX 8:8? Λάβατε καὶ ὑμεῖς ἐκ τοῦ ὄνοματός μου ὡς δοκεῖ ὑμῖν. The NRSV translates: “Write in my name what you think best”. We would propose the following translation: “Write you also in my name what you think best”, translating and stressing the καὶ ὑμεῖς. The king does not say that he will not write, to the contrary, he commands Esther and Mordecai to write also. The LXX has literally not added anything to the Hebrew text; all elements of the Hebrew are translated:

the second writing, the former from Mordecai and the latter from the king; the former to the Jews, the latter to the officials.116

3. AT 7:33

The Addressees

In AT 7:34 Mordecai sends a letter which is sealed with the king’s ring and which grants permission to his people to stay each in his own region and to observe a festival to God. From the following verses, it is clear that the letter of Mordecai is written to the non-Jews. Mordecai writes to the same category of people as Haman, the governors. He writes: “Haman has sent to you letters as follow: ‘Hasten to send to destruction the disobedient race of the Jews.’ But, I, Mordecai, advise you that the man who did this has been hung at the gates of Susa, and his family has been slain. For he planned to kill us on the thirteenth of Adar.” Mordecai refers to the letter of Haman, which was sent to the governors.

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What Mordecai writes to the governors is very different from what Mordecai writes in the LXX to the Jews. Instead of allowing the Jews to live according to their own laws and to defend themselves, Mordecai writes that “they should remain each in his own place and that they should celebrate a festival to God.” This is given as a sort of summary. Then, the letter from Mordecai continues in the following way. It offers the contents of the letter of Haman: “Haman has sent to you letters as follow.” At this point, Mordecai informs the governors why they should not pay attention to the letter of Haman: “the man (Haman) has been hung at the gates of Susa and

116 An attentive reader may wonder why I have left out v. 13. I consider v. 13 as the translation of MT 8:11–12 and thus functioning as a part of the letter to the Jews. At the same time I consider v. 13 as the last verse of the Addition E, and thus forming the last part of the official letter of the king. Cf. De Troyer, Het einde van de Alpha-tekst van Esther, 182–190 and ch. 5; English translation: The End of the Alpha-text of Esther, 243–252 and ch. 5.
his family has been slain.” This letter is different from the letter in LXX 8:11–12. However, its elements can be found in Addition E. First, the fact that Haman is hung at the gates of Susa can be read in AT 7:28 and in its parallel, LXX Add. E:18. Second, that his family is slain, can be found in AT 7:19—at the special request of Esther—and in LXX Add. E:18. Third, Mordecai’s informing the governors that the Jews are allowed to keep a festival for God refers to the king’s permission given in AT 7:30, and AT 7:30 is in its turn a parallel to LXX Add. E:22. In short, the letter of Mordecai to the governors is based on the narrative of the AT and on LXX Addition E. Moreover, Addition E is an indispensable part of the narrative of the AT.117

The permission to live according to their own laws, the right to defend themselves and the advice that the people should help the Jews in their self-defense can be read in AT 7:29, which is parallel to LXX Add. E:19-20. In the AT, the governors are informed twice: once by the king through a royal decree, and once by the viceroy, Mordecai. In the AT, however, first the royal decree is given and then the letter of Mordecai: the order of the LXX is simply reversed.

The King’s Command

Why this reversal in order? Why does the AT first mention the royal decree and then quote the letter of Mordecai? This time, the answer does not lie in the king’s command, for the king’s command is only given to Mordecai after the royal decree. Only in AT 7:33 does the king grant permission to Mordecai to write whatever he wishes: καὶ ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐνέχειρίσε τῷ Μαρδοχαίῳ γράφειν ὅσα βούλεται. Although here only Mordecai is addressed and not Mordecai and Esther, this verse is the exact parallel of LXX 8:8, in which the king gives permission to both Mordecai and Esther to write: “write you also in my name what you think best.” The difference

117 Jobes is correct in stating that Addition E is better integrated into the AT than in the LXX. However, we see this as the result of a careful process of editing. The author of AT has not only copied Addition E from the LXX into the AT, he/she also used words or ideas from the Addition E elsewhere in the AT.
with the LXX is first the singular pronoun and second, and more important, the place in the narrative of this sentence, that is, after the royal decree.

The answer to our question regarding the problem of the reversed order of the royal decree and the letter of Mordecai is given in AT 7:16. In 7:16 the king asks Mordecai: "what do you want, and I will do it." Mordecai answers briefly: ὅπως ἀνέλης τὴν ἐπιστολὴν τοῦ Ἀμαχ (that you should revoke the letter of Haman). The reaction of the king follows in AT 7:22–32, where the narrator states: καὶ ἔγραψε τὴν ὑποταγμένην ἐπιστολὴν (and he wrote the following letter). The royal edict itself is the answer from the king to the request of Mordecai. Last, but not least, note that the AT had to adapt the introductory formula to the decree, the introduction of the LXX (衿 ἔστιν ἀντίγραφον τῆς ἐπιστολῆς τά ὑπογεγραμμένα) not being suitable.

In conclusion, the AT has adapted the LXX to its new narrative. Mordecai asks to revoke the letter of Haman. The king writes the royal decree. This, as in the LXX, is addressed to the governors. The AT, however, does not disregard Mordecai's own letter described in LXX 8:9ff. The AT retains the literary form of a letter and a summary, but changes the contents. As Haman wrote to the officials, now Mordecai addresses the officials. The contents of his letter are based on AT 7:22–32, being the parallel of Addition E. By quoting material from Addition E, the AT follows the example of the LXX which borrowed from Addition E material for the summary in verses 11–12. LXX 8:11–12 comes from Add. E:19. The AT follows this idea and uses the verses before and after Add. E:19. AT 7:37 is based on Add. E:18, and AT 7:34 is based on Add. E:20 (in its AT form).

The AT has reorganised the narrative of the LXX, adapting it to its own new story. In its reorganisation, the AT was inspired by the LXX. The LXX also reorganised elements of the MT and made explicit what was left implicit in the MT.

IV. Some Feedback for Tov, Clines and Fox

Tov suggests that 8:7–13 was omitted when Addition E was attached. However, Tov also regards 7:35–38 as "the short version of the original text
of the letter." Addition E is the expanded version of the letter of Mordecai. We believe, however, that there is a difference between the letter of Mordecai in 7:35-38 and the letter in Addition E and that both elements, Addition E and the letter of Mordecai, are indispensable elements of the AT. First, we acknowledge that verses 7:35-38 fit very well into the AT. Indeed, they contain "typical" AT features. However, these features and the fitting of the passage within the AT context do not prove necessarily that AT 7:35-38 is more original in the AT than in the LXX, nor that Addition E is secondary. It simply means that the author or redactor has embedded verses 7:35-38 very well into their context. In our view, both the letter of Mordecai and the letter of the king (Addition E) are necessary elements of the AT. We acknowledge that vv. 37-38 have a counterpart in Addition E. Indeed, there is an overlap between Addition E and 7:37-38. However, we cannot conclude from this overlap that Addition E is secondary, nor that AT 7:35-38 is more original. I think that v. 36 can help us in determining the relationship between the AT and the LXX. The analysis of v. 36 might even point towards the dependence of the AT on the LXX. At first sight, v. 36 does not contain typical AT features. Moreover, v. 36 has one element which is based on the LXX Addition E. The word ταχύς does not appear in the rest of the AT, nor does it appear in the Septuagint. However, the word ταχύς is attested in LXX Add. E:18, where it is said that Haman quickly receives the punishment he deserved. It seems that AT 7:36 is using an idea from the LXX Addition E. Moreover, the AT uses ταχύ in an additional redactional element of ch. 6: Haman is ordered to run quickly. The AT not only uses the concept of the LXX; it expands it. "God who

119 E.g., the description of the Jewish people with the adjective ἀπειθής can also be found in AT 3:8 where Haman describes the Jewish people. This qualification is a plus vis-à-vis the LXX text. The AT in ch. 7 refers to an aforementioned fact and uses the same words. The "disobedient race of the Jews" should be sent "to destruction": ἀναπέμπατε ἐν ἀπολέσαι. This is exactly what Haman is asking for in ch. 3: δοθήτω μοι τὸ ἔθνος ἐν ἀπολέσαι. Again the LXX text is adapted: δογματισάτω ἀπολέσαι αὐτοῦς. Chs. 3 and 7 have the same words.
punishes Haman quickly" in LXX Add. E:18 becomes "Haman who runs quickly" in AT 6:12 and "God giving him a fitting punishment" in AT 7:28. The idea that Haman normally acts hastily is also expressed in AT 7:36 by the verb σπουδάζω. Haman commands "to hasten with all speed." The verb σπεύδω is attested in AT 6:18 where Haman hastened to mount Mordecai upon the horse. This last element is a plus vis-à-vis the LXX and can be seen as a typical AT passage: Haman acts quickly. The combination in AT 7:36 σπουδάσατε ταχέως is therefore typical AT, but based on the LXX, including especially Addition E. We conclude that AT 7:35-38 is not more original than Addition E, but on the contrary, 7:35-38 presupposes Addition E.

Second, if 8:9-13 was omitted from the Vorlage, what would the Vorlage look like containing the verses (MT) 8:9-13 and the letter of Mordecai? The text would include two letters. A first letter of Mordecai sent to the Jews and to the officials gives the Jews permission to assemble, defend, destroy, kill, annihilate and plunder. There would also be a second letter that is also sent to the officials, informing them that the Jews were given permission to remain in their cities and to keep festivals. These two letters could result in some chaos. I think that the incompatibility of the two letters has led Tov to his nuanced statement that the letter of Mordecai is "a short version of the original letter."  

Concerning Clines' view, he suggests that MT 8:9-13 is the basis of AT 7:17. I wonder whether AT 7:33b would not better be based on MT 8:9-13. For, in AT 7:33b Mordecai is given permission to write, whereas in 7:17

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120 The LXX has this element of "haste" in LXX 2:9 (// AT 2:9) and in LXX 3:15 (// AT 3:13; but, consider the parallel in its context: LXX 3:13 // AT 3:13 and LXX 3:15 // AT 3:19). The LXX has this element also in LXX 8:14, but the AT omits it in its parallel. Could this be because it cannot associate "haste" with Mordecai?

121 This means that the AT is dependent on the LXX, and not on a Hebrew text. But in Tov’s view, 8:14 is not omitted from the Hebrew Vorlage, the verb possibly being a translation of the Hebrew.

Mordecai receives the affairs of the kingdom. Moreover, these “affairs of the kingdom” have been more or less given to Mordecai at the beginning of the story. In AT Add. A:17, Haman is given to Mordecai. However, in AT 3:1 Haman is promoted and the tension between Mordecai and Haman is further developed. In AT 7:17 it is again Mordecai who is the second in rank in the kingdom. These “affairs of the kingdom” are less important in the LXX. Although the two things are related, the “affairs of the kingdom” are not to be confused with the permission to write.

For Fox, 8:8–14a may have been absent from the proto-AT. Moreover, at the moment when Addition E was inserted, the author changed 8:13 into AT 7:22a. The verses 7:18–21 and 7:33–38 are original AT verses. Fox also accepts a slight similarity between AT 7:33–38 and LXX 8:11–13 and 9:20–25,123 but stresses the genuineness of AT 7:33–38, which “belongs to the proto-AT and [is] not the work of the redactor” (who adapted the AT to the LXX). First, I would like to suggest to Fox that he rewrite his statement concerning the alteration of 8:13 into AT 7:22a: “The R-AT adapted the introduction of Addition E, i.e. the first line of Addition E”. It is the introductory line of Addition E that has been changed and not LXX 8:13a, which is more or less the conclusion of Addition E. Albeit with this suggestion I am left with the question of whether it would not have been easier to insert Addition E after Mordecai had received the permission to write, thus after 7:33b. Why was Addition E inserted before this permission? Second, if permission was given to Mordecai to write, why does Addition E begin with: “and the king wrote”? Next, Fox does not address the issue of why the MT would have dropped the letter of Mordecai and why MT would have created 8:8–14. Finally, according to Fox, AT 7:33–38 is slightly similar to LXX 8:11–13. How do we explain this similarity? Has the LXX retained some elements from the AT? Then, how do we explain that LXX

8:11-13 is completely different from the MT 8:11-13, which is in its turn supposed to be closer to the original proto-Alpha text? Alternatively, has the AT simply been influenced by the LXX?

It is my hope that by explaining the AT as “some kind of a Neubearbeitung of the LXX,” the above mentioned questions asked of the defenders of the Vorlage-hypothesis have been answered. It is needless to say that what is left regarding my opponents and friends, is my gratitude and my respect. They afforded me the opportunity to reflect and write.

V. Final Statements

The AT was aware of the LXX with Addition E.
The LXX never existed without Addition E.
The AT is not shorter than the LXX.
The AT reorganised the LXX material.
The AT is a rewritten Greek Esther story.
This is the Omega of the Alpha, the End of the Alpha-text of Esther.