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# Additions B and E to Esther Reconsidered

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FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND THEOLOGY | LUND UNIVERSITY





ADDITIONS B AND E TO ESTHER RECONSIDERED



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NIKOLAOS DOMAZAKIS



**LUND**  
UNIVERSITY

Studia Graeca et Latina Lundensia 30

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# CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Additions B and E to Esther

The two extant Greek versions of Esther, the Septuagint (LXX) and the Alpha Text (AT), include six major Additions commonly designated by the letters A to F,<sup>1</sup> which have no equivalent in the Hebrew Masoretic Text (MT).<sup>2</sup> For Additions A, C, D, and F:1–11,<sup>3</sup> it is debated whether they were translated, all or some of them, wholly or in part, from a Semitic original, or whether they were originally written in Greek, with the former possibility being the most commonly supported by Esther scholars.<sup>4</sup> Additions B and E, by contrast, are universally considered to be original Greek compositions penned by the same author.<sup>5</sup> All six Additions are also included, with pluses and

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<sup>1</sup> This labelling was introduced by Swete (*Old Testament*, vii with n. 3) and was adopted, among others, by Hanhart in his critical edition of LXX and AT Esther (Hanhart, *Esther*) for the Göttingen Septuagint series, to which I will be referring throughout this study. Hanhart designates the LXX Esther as *o'* and the AT Esther as *L*. For the verse numeration of the Additions in the AT, I will be using the Arabic numerals employed in Hanhart's edition. Thus, AT Esth 3:14–18=LXX Esth B:1–7, and AT Esth 7:22–32=LXX Esth E:1–24. See Hanhart, *Esther*, 129–30; De Troyer, *End*, 11–13; ead., “Additions,” 398. For the *Vetus Latina* of Esther, I will be referring to the critical edition established by Haelewyck (*Hester*) and will be quoting from the R type of text, as represented by VL MSS 151, 155, and 130, which transmit the oldest, unrevised form of VL Esther.

<sup>2</sup> The Alpha Text features an extra Addition, a short letter of Mordecai (AT Esth 7:33–38), which Motzo, “Testi,” [220] 244, designated as G. The *Vetus Latina* also features an extra Addition, a prayer of the Jews, which Motzo (followed by Haelewyck) designated as H (VL Esth H:1–5, inserted at the end of Chapter 3). Additions G and H are unique to the AT and the VL, respectively.

<sup>3</sup> These Additions, as they appear in the LXX, can be further subdivided as follows: A:1–11 (Mordecai's dream); A:12–17 (Mordecai uncovers the eunuchs' plot); C:1–11 (Mordecai's prayer); C:12–30 (Esther's prayer); D:1–16 (Esther's audience with the king); F:1–10 (the interpretation of Mordecai's dream); LXX Esth F:11 (the so-called colophon, which provides information about the author of the translation of LXX Esther and the date on which this translation was sent from Jerusalem to Egypt; on this colophon, see Bickerman, “Colophon”; Cavalier, “Colophon”; ead., *Esther*, 28–29). Apart from the six major Additions, there are minor ones, such as the plus  $\mu\eta\theta\epsilon\iota\sigma\alpha \dots \epsilon\kappa \theta\alpha\nu\acute{\alpha}\tau\omicron\upsilon$  at the end of LXX Esth 4:8. See Smith and De Troyer, “Additions,” 388 with n. 5.

<sup>4</sup> See Henze, “Additions,” 391–92; De Troyer, “Additions,” 398–402.

<sup>5</sup> See Moore, “Origins,” 384–85; id., *Additions*, 155; id., “Esther,” 630–31; Martin, “Criticism,” 69; Hanhart, *Esther*, 96; Haelewyck, “Texte,” 30 n. 39; Jobes, *Alpha-Text*, 26–27, 172–73; Henze, “Additions,” 392; De Troyer, “Additions,” 401–2.

minuses, in the Old Latin translation of Esther (*Vetus Latina*; VL) and in Jerome's Vulgate (where they are placed in an appendix at the end of the translation of the Hebrew book of Esther), as well as in the Ethiopic, the Coptic (Sahidic), the Armenian, the three Old Georgian, and two of the four Old Church Slavonic versions of Esther.<sup>6</sup> In his rewrite of the Esther story in the eleventh book of his *Jewish Antiquities*, Josephus paraphrases only Additions B, C, D, and E.<sup>7</sup>

In LXX Esther, Additions B and E, which are the focus of this study, are embedded between 3:13 and 3:14 and between 8:12 and 8:13, respectively. The LXX and the AT versions of these two Additions exhibit a high degree of semantic and formal agreement between them,<sup>8</sup> which can most plausibly be explained by assuming that one version copied them from the other. Most scholars consider it likely that they were first inserted into the LXX and were copied therefrom into the AT.<sup>9</sup> However, it has also been suggested that they may have originated in the AT, or the proto-AT,<sup>10</sup> or in the non-extant Greek *Vorlage* of the VL. In the latter version, Additions B and E fit better into their context, avoiding the inconsistencies and the contradictions with the canonical sections, which are attested in the LXX and the AT.<sup>11</sup> Josephus' paraphrase of the two Additions seems to be based on a version that had points of contact with the LXX, the AT, and the Greek *Vorlage* of the VL Esther.<sup>12</sup> The oldest Greek manuscripts preserving parts of Additions B and E are *P.Oxy.* 4443 from the late first or early second century CE and the Chester Beatty Biblical Papyrus IX [=Ra 967] from the second or third century CE. The former, which preserves "the first known copy of a passage from Esther in roll-form," namely, the latter part of Addition E (E:16–24) and the immediately following canonical verses 8:13–17 and 9:2–3, generally follows the

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<sup>6</sup> See Hanhart, *Esther*, 16–36; Moore, "Esther," 629; Henze, "Additions," 394–95.

<sup>7</sup> See Motzo, "Giuseppe," [326–28] 85–87; Hanhart, *Esther*, 36–38.

<sup>8</sup> According to Jobes, *Alpha-Text*, 165, the semantic agreement is 68% for B and 60% for E, and the formal agreement is 43% for B and 38% for E; cf. *ibid.*, 170–76.

<sup>9</sup> See Moore, *Additions*, 165, 194; Clines, *Scroll*, 72, 85, 140, 187–88; Haelewyck, "Texte," 13–14, 40, 43; *id.*, "Relevance," 463; Wynn, *Contexts*, 124, 240; Fox, *Redaction*, 16, 90; *id.*, *Character*, 10, 257; De Troyer, *End*, 349, 365, 397; Doering, *Letters*, 152; cf. Macchi, *Esther*, 29–30 with n. 73.

<sup>10</sup> See Jobes, *Alpha-Text*, 174, 224, 232 (but see n. 67 below); Kottsieper, "Zusätze," 129–30.

<sup>11</sup> See Schildenberger, "Esther," 20 [260]; Haelewyck, "Texte," 8–14; *id.*, *Hester*, 85–87; *id.*, "Relevance," 462–67. On the divergences that Additions B and E in the VL present vis-à-vis the LXX and the AT, see Haelewyck, *Hester*, 80; *id.*, "Additions," 405–6.

<sup>12</sup> See Motzo, "Giuseppe," [326] 85; Hanhart, *Esther*, 36–38; Haelewyck *Hester*, 72–74.

LXX, with rare agreements with the AT and the VL;<sup>13</sup> the latter, which preserves verses B:1–3 and 5–7, follows the LXX.<sup>14</sup>

In LXX Esther, which I will be using as my primary reference text in this study, the canonical verses that precede Additions B and E summarise the content of two letters/decrees that the Persian king Artaxerxes<sup>15</sup> sent to the governors and other officials of all the provinces in his kingdom. The Additions themselves purport to deliver the Greek version of the multilingual royal missives, originally written in Aramaic.<sup>16</sup> The content of these missives is as follows: Having been informed by his

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<sup>13</sup> See Luchner, “Esther,” 4; Haelewyck, “Papyrus,” 268–70; id., *Hester*, 72.

<sup>14</sup> See Kenyon, *Papyri*, v–xii, 40–41, and De Troyer, “Papyri,” 156–60. For the rest of the textual witnesses of the Greek Esther, see Hanhart, *Esther*, 7–16, and Haelewyck, *Hester*, 70–72.

<sup>15</sup> The name of the king varies between the different versions of Esther. In the MT, it is אֲחַשְׁוֵרֶשׁ (Ahasuerus), in the LXX, Ἀρταξέρξης, in the AT, Ἀσσυήρος, in the VL (R text), Artaxerxes (but in A:1, it is Assuerus), and in Josephus’ *Jewish Antiquities*, Ἀρταξέρξης. See Kottsieper, “Zusätze,” 134–35, and Cavalier, *Esther*, 75–83. Milik, “Modèles,” 329, suggests that the designation of Haman as a Macedonian in LXX Esth E:10 and the reference to the threat posed to Persia by the Macedonians in LXX Esth E:14 point to the identification of the Persian king in LXX Esther with Artaxerxes II Mnemon (404–359 BCE) rather than with Artaxerxes I Longimanus (465–423 BCE).

<sup>16</sup> LXX Esth 3:12 states that Haman dictated a letter on behalf of the king to the royal secretaries. This letter was sent to every land of the Persian kingdom in its own language. On the basis of this verse, it is commonly assumed that the letter quoted in Addition B is a copy (LXX Esth B:1: τῆς δὲ ἐπιστολῆς ... τὸ ἀντίγραφον) of the original letter dictated by Haman. Boyd-Taylor, “Haman,” 123, for instance, states that “it is the distinct voice of Israel’s opponent that addresses the Persian realm as a ventriloquist speaking through the mouth of the king.” However, the letter dictated by Haman needs to be distinguished from the one quoted in LXX Addition B, which originates from King Artaxerxes himself. This can be seen from LXX Esth B:6 (cf. LXX Esth E:17), which refers to the missive (ἐν τοῖς γεγραμμένοις ὑπὸ Ἀμάν) that Haman had previously sent to the officials to whom King Artaxerxes addresses his letter. Haman had apparently named in that missive the people that were to be exterminated, namely, the Jews, which explains why the king in his letter in LXX Addition B omits this information, which is essential for the implementation of his order. Doering, *Letters*, 150, rightly points out that “Add Esth B fills in, not the letter written by Haman in Artaxerxes’ name, but rather a confirming letter of the king.” Moreover, on the basis of the plural verbs and pronouns in the canonical verses that precede LXX Addition E (LXX Esth 8:8: γράψατε καὶ ὑμεῖς ἐκ τοῦ ὀνόματός μου ὡς δοκεῖ ὑμῖν), we assume that the king assigned Queen Esther, to whom he addresses himself, to write a letter in collaboration with Mordecai; the latter, however, is not explicitly mentioned in this context, as he is in MT Esth 8:7. The following verse, 8:9, states that a letter was written to the Jews (ἐγράφη τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις), presumably by Esther and Mordecai, that contained the same orders as the letter addressed to the stewards and the chiefs of the satraps (δὲ ἐνετείλατο τοῖς οἰκονόμοις καὶ τοῖς ἀρχουσιν τῶν σατραπῶν); the subject of the verb ἐνετείλατο, “commanded,” in this verse is either the king or Esther, but not Mordecai, who is the subject of the corresponding verb in MT Esth 8:9. The same applies to LXX Esth 8:10, where the translator converts the active construction of the MT (“and he [Mordecai] wrote in the name of King Ahasuerus”) into a passive one (ἐγράφη δὲ διὰ τοῦ βασιλέως). In LXX Esth 8:11, the subject of the verb ἐπέταξεν, “ordered,” is the same as that of the verb ἐνετείλατο in 8:9, namely, either the king or Esther. In these verses, the LXX translator—deliberately, it seems—obscures the identity of the author of the letter to the Jews, which is summarised in LXX Esth 8:11–12. The letter/decreed quoted in LXX Addition E is not the letter to the Jews, which one might expect based on LXX Esth 8:9, but rather the letter addressed to the

second-in-command, Haman, that a certain people among his subject nations—its identity is not spelled out, but it is clear that the Jews are meant—is ill-disposed to his government, disregards his decrees, and threatens the stability of his kingdom through its particular way of life, King Artaxerxes orders that it be massively destroyed in a single day. Following the intervention of the Jew Mordecai, Queen Esther’s adoptive father, and of the queen herself, who exposes Haman’s schemes, the king has a second letter/decreree sent throughout his kingdom. In it, he inveighs against his deceitful vizier, whom he condemned to death for plotting against him and his kingdom, while he eulogises the Jews and their God. He further rescinds his previous extermination order, granting the Jews permission to defend themselves against their gentile enemies and live according to their laws and customs, and establishes a feast for his Persian subjects to commemorate his deliverance and that of his kingdom from Haman’s schemes.

Esther scholars have put forth various reasons to explain why Additions B and E were written and incorporated into the Greek Esther. One reason that has been suggested is that their author wished to highlight key narrative points and contrast the pro- and anti-Jewish arguments of the two opposing parties, Mordecai and Haman; in this, he followed the practice of Greek historiographers and authors of historical novels, who quoted official documents verbatim in their works.<sup>17</sup> Another reason that has been put forward is the intention to enhance the historical verisimilitude, the credibility, and the dramatic interest of the story, as well as to include the religious element (present in Addition E) that is lacking in MT Esther.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, it has been suggested that the addition of the royal letters aimed to align the Esther story with the “Persian histories” in Ezra and Daniel, in which purportedly authentic Persian official documents have been embedded, in order, *inter alia*, to express the impact of

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Persian officials. The content of the letter leaves no doubt that its author was Artaxerxes, not Esther. Esther would not have had the authority to address the administrative officials, nor any reason to institute a feast for the Persians to commemorate the salvation of the king and the kingdom (LXX Esth E:22–23); she would have instead mentioned the feast instituted to commemorate the salvation of her people, the Jews, namely, Purim. In the AT, the letter quoted in 7:22–32 [=Addition E] is undoubtedly written by the king. It is followed by a much shorter letter (7:35–38), not attested in the other versions, which is written by Mordecai. See Kottsieper, “Zusätze,” 119, 151; De Troyer, *End*, 213–15, 225, 235, 348, 378; Tov, “LXX Translation,” 512–13; Doering, *Letters*, 150.

<sup>17</sup> See Bickerman, “Notes,” 253–55, 259.

<sup>18</sup> See Moore, “Origins,” 383–84; *id.*, *Additions*, 153, 156, 159–60; *id.*, “Esther,” 631; Schürer, *History*, 3:2, 718; Dorothy, *Esther*, 347–48.

the Jewish religion and faith upon the Gentiles.<sup>19</sup> Lastly, scholars have argued that the incorporation of the two Additions sought to emphasise the political dimension of the persecution of the Jews from a Jewish apologetic perspective and to provide consolation to Jews living in the Diaspora.<sup>20</sup>

Although the two Additions often take their cue from the canonical sections of LXX Esther,<sup>21</sup> their language and style differ significantly from those of both the canonical sections and the other Additions. The vocabulary of LXX Addition B comprises 143 different words and that of LXX Addition E, 239 different words (proper names included). The two Additions share sixty-nine common words; eight words in Addition B and thirteen words in Addition E are Septuagintal *hapax legomena*;<sup>22</sup> another seven and thirteen words, respectively, occur in only one other book of the Septuagint; three words are neologisms.<sup>23</sup> Their author favours complex, long periods with subordinate clauses and participial constructions. Stein has described them as “classiques, bien tournées, bien construites,”<sup>24</sup> yet their syntax is somewhat quirky, often featuring anacoloutha, which cannot always be attributed to textual corruption.<sup>25</sup> The author’s rhetorical training can be seen from his extensive use of

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<sup>19</sup> See Clines, *Scroll*, 169, 173–74.

<sup>20</sup> See Bardtke, “Zusätze,” 24; Kottsieper, “Zusätze,” 151; Passoni Dell’Acqua, “Terzo libro,” 599; ead., “Decree,” 85–86.

<sup>21</sup> See Moore, “Origins,” 385 with n. 20. See also 5.7, n. 112.

<sup>22</sup> LXX Esth B: ἀκύματος, ἀμέμπως, ἀντιπαραγωγή, ἀπαραλλάκτως, ἡπιότης, ὀλοριζεί, συναρχία, ἐπάρχω; LXX Esth E: ἀκέραιος, ἀναγορεύω, ἀπειράγαθος, ἐπικράτης, ἐπώνυμος, εὐγνωμοσύνη, κατὰξιος, κατοπτεύω, λοιμότης, μισοπόνηρος, προσχράομαι, σταυρώ (also in LXX Esth 7:9), χειρίζω. The AT version of Additions B and E contains six words that do not occur in the Septuagint: 3:16: ἀπαράλλακτος; 3:17: μοναρχία, παραγωγή; 7:23: κακοποιῖα; 7:26: ἐξαλλοτρίωσις; 7:28: προαποστέλλω.

<sup>23</sup> LXX Esth B:6: ὀλοριζεί; E:4: ἀπειράγαθος; E:7: λοιμότης. The adverb ὀλοριζεί is an absolute *hapax legomenon*.

<sup>24</sup> Stein, “Essai,” 110.

<sup>25</sup> See, e.g., LXX Esth B:2: ἐβουλήθησαν ... τοὺς τῶν ὑποτεταγμένων ἀκυμάτους ... καταστήσαι βίους, τὴν τε βασιλείαν ἡμερον ... παρεξόμενος (instead of παρασχεῖν) ἀνανεώσασθαι τε τὴν ... εἰρήνην (see Fritzsche, *Zusätze*, 83; Gregg, “Additions,” 674; Kottsieper, “Zusätze,” 154 n. 139); B:4: λαόν τινα ... παραπέμποντας (instead of παραπέμποντα); E:3: οὐ μόνον ... τὸν τε κόρον (see Fritzsche, *Zusätze*, 99); E:7: οὐ τοσοῦτον ... ὅσα ἐστίν (see Fritzsche, *Zusätze*, 101–2); E:8: προσέχειν εἰς τὰ μετὰ ταῦτα εἰς τὸ ... παρεξόμεθα (instead of ὥστε ... παρέξειν; see Gregg, “Additions,” 681; Hanhart, *Esther*, 88; Muraoka, *Syntax*, 778).



rhetorical figures: asyndeton,<sup>26</sup> hyperbaton,<sup>27</sup> chiasmus,<sup>28</sup> zeugma,<sup>29</sup> hypallage,<sup>30</sup> homoioteleuton,<sup>31</sup> litotes,<sup>32</sup> parechesis, paronomasia and *figura etymologica*,<sup>33</sup> antithesis,<sup>34</sup> triads and climax,<sup>35</sup> personification,<sup>36</sup> metaphor,<sup>37</sup> pleonasm,<sup>38</sup> hyperbole,<sup>39</sup> and irony.<sup>40</sup> Wills notes, not without some exaggeration, that Additions B and E “are quite pretentiously and rhetorically composed in perhaps the highest-level Greek in the entire Greek Bible.”<sup>41</sup>

## 1.2 Authorship, date, and place of composition of Additions B and E

The authorship, date, and place of composition of Additions B and E have been much debated. Some scholars consider them, along with the other Additions, to have been written by Lysimachus, son of Ptolemy, who, according to the so-called colophon at the end of the LXX version (F:11), produced in Jerusalem the Greek translation of the Hebrew book of Esther. This translation was then brought to Egypt by Dositheus, a priest and a Levite, and his son Ptolemy, “in the fourth year of the reign of Ptolemy

<sup>26</sup> E:16: ὑψίστου μεγίστου ζώντος θεοῦ.

<sup>27</sup> E:4: τοῦ τὰ πάντα κατοπεύοντος αἰὲ θεοῦ μισοπόνηρον ὑπολαμβάνουσιν ἐκφεύξεσθαι δίκην.

<sup>28</sup> E:15–16: οὐ κακούργους ὄντας ... ὄντας δὲ υἱούς.

<sup>29</sup> E:24: δόρατι καὶ πυρὶ καταναλωθήσεται.

<sup>30</sup> E:5: αἱμάτων ἀθῶων.

<sup>31</sup> B:3: ἀποδεδειγμένος ... ἀπενηνεγμένος; B:5: μονώτατον ... κείμενον ... παραλλάσσον ... δυσνοοῦν ... συντελοῦν.

<sup>32</sup> E:15: οὐ κακούργους.

<sup>33</sup> B:2–3: πορευτὴν μέχρι περάτων παρεζόμενος; ποθουμένην ... πυθομένου; B:5: παντὶ διὰ παντός; E:5: πολλάκις δὲ καὶ πολλούς; E:6: παραλογισμῷ παραλογισαμένων.

<sup>34</sup> E:21: ἀντ’ ὀλεθρίας ... εὐφροσύνην.

<sup>35</sup> B:3: ὁ σωφροσύνη παρ’ ἡμῖν διενέγκας καὶ ἐν τῇ εὐνοίᾳ ἀπαραλλάκτως ... ἀποδεδειγμένος καὶ δεύτερον τῶν βασιλειῶν γέρας ἀπενηνεγμένος; E:15: οὐ κακούργους ὄντας, δικαιοτάτοις δὲ πολιτευομένους νόμοις, ὄντας δὲ υἱοὺς τοῦ ὑψίστου μεγίστου ζώντος θεοῦ; E:24: δόρατι καὶ πυρὶ καταναλωθήσεται ... οὐ μόνον ἀνθρώποις ἄβατος, ἀλλὰ καὶ θηρίοις καὶ πετεινοῖς εἰς τὸν ἅπαντα χρόνον ἔχθιστος κατασταθήσεται.

<sup>36</sup> E:4: μισοπόνηρον δίκην.

<sup>37</sup> B:2: ἀκυμάτους βίους ... τὴν τε βασιλείαν ἡμερον; B:6: ἀπολέσαι ὀλοριζεῖ; E:7: λοιμότητι.

<sup>38</sup> B:6: πάντας σὺν γυναιξὶν καὶ τέκνοις ἀπολέσαι ὀλοριζεῖ.

<sup>39</sup> E:24: ἀλλὰ καὶ θηρίοις καὶ πετεινοῖς ... ἔχθιστος κατασταθήσεται.

<sup>40</sup> B:2: ἐβουλήθην ... ἀνανεώσασθαι τὴν ποθουμένην τοῖς πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις εἰρήνην; B:6: προστετάχαμεν ... πάντας ... ἀπολέσαι ὀλοριζεῖ.

<sup>41</sup> Wills, *Novel*, 117.

and Cleopatra,” which, according to the prevailing scholarly opinion, corresponds to 78/77 BCE.<sup>42</sup> Other scholars maintain that Additions B and E were written and incorporated into LXX Esther at some later date by someone other than Lysimachus. Still others suggest that the two Additions may have originated in a version other than the LXX. The dates that have been proposed for the composition of the two Additions range from the 160s BCE to the early Roman era. As potential locations for their composition, both Palestine and Egypt have been suggested.

Below, I will survey in chronological order some of the most notable scholarly opinions that have been put forth over the past century regarding where, when, and by whom Additions B and E to Esther were composed.<sup>43</sup>

Friedländer considers Additions B and E to be prominent examples of the Jewish apologetic literature of the second century BCE and situates their composition within a precise historical context, namely, the siege of Jerusalem by Antiochus VII Sidetes in 135/134 BCE. Diodorus Siculus, *Bibl.* 34/35.1–4, and Josephus, *A.J.* 13.242–248, relate that, although the Seleucid king held the advantage, he accepted John Hyrcanus’ request for a truce during the Feast of Tabernacles. Despite the advice of his Friends to annihilate the Jews because of their separatism and misanthropy, Antiochus VII eventually raised the siege, after imposing heavy terms on Hyrcanus. Friedländer draws parallels between the accounts of the aforementioned historians and Additions B and E, suggesting that the mild and pious Antiochus VII was the model for the Artaxerxes of Additions B and E, while the figure of Haman served as a mouthpiece for the anti-Jewish rhetoric of the second century BCE.<sup>44</sup>

Gregg maintains that the six Additions to Esther “originated among the Egyptian Hellenistic Jews” sometime between 125 BCE and 90 CE, and detects a “slightly Egyptian flavour” in the use of such terms as ἀδελφός, “brother/husband” (LXX Esth

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<sup>42</sup> See Bickerman, “Colophon,” 224–25. 78/77 BCE (Bar-Kokhba, cited by Koller, *Esther*, 121 n. 63, corrected the year to 77/76 BCE) was the fourth year of the reign of Ptolemy XII Auletes and Cleopatra V. Two other Ptolemies associated with a Cleopatra in the fourth year of their reign, Ptolemy IX Lathyrus, co-regent with his mother Cleopatra III in 114/113 BCE, and Ptolemy XIII, co-regent with his sister Cleopatra VII in 49/48 BCE, are dismissed by Bickerman. This is because the formula referring to their reigns in contemporary official documents is βασιλευόντων Κλεοπάτρας καὶ Πτολεμαίου, whereas in the documents from the reign of Ptolemy XII Auletes and Cleopatra V, the name of the king precedes that of the queen, similar to LXX Esth F:11. Torrey, Bardtke, Moore, Mittmann-Richert, and Hacham, among other scholars, favour the date 114/113 BCE, without, however, addressing the arguments put forth by Bickerman and, earlier, by Motzo, “Autore,” [242–43] 293–94.

<sup>43</sup> For a survey of the research on all the Additions to Esther, see De Troyer, *End*, 351–63; ead., “Additions,” 398–402; Smith and De Troyer, “Additions.”

<sup>44</sup> Friedländer, *Geschichte*, 114–28.

D:9), φίλοι, “Friends” (LXX Esth E:5), Μακεδών, “Macedonian” (LXX Esth E:10), and ἐκτιθέναι, “exhibit publicly” (LXX Esth E:19). With regard to Additions B and E, in particular, he argues that they “belong undoubtedly to Egypt,” not least because of the verbal similarities that they share with 2 Maccabees, a book which “clearly emanated from Egypt.”<sup>45</sup>

Based on MT Esth 3:12 and 8:9, which state that Ahasuerus’ decrees were written “to every province in its own script and every people in its own language,” Roiron assumes that the versions of these decrees that appear in Greek Esther are none other than the original official documents that the secretaries of the Susa chancery had composed in Greek, among other languages, for the Greek-speaking subjects of the Persian king. These authentic letters, maintains Roiron, existed prior to and independently of the story of Esther, along with a letter of Mordecai to the Jews (the “first letter about Purim”), which recounted Mordecai’s dream and its interpretation, the eunuchs’ plot, Haman’s intrigues and eventual downfall, as well as the institution of a commemorative feast. This letter was followed by the “second letter about Purim” (MT Esth 9:29), which corresponds to the actual Hebrew book of Esther, with the inclusion of the prayers of Mordecai and Esther and the mention of God. The Greek version resulted from the combination of the four aforementioned texts: the Greek translator encapsulated the one “letter about Purim” within the other and additionally inserted the official Greek versions of the two royal letters.<sup>46</sup>

Motzo holds that Additions B and E, along with the other Additions, were an integral part of a free adaptation (“libero rifacimento”) in Greek of the Esther story, whose contamination with a literal translation of the Hebrew Esther served as the basis for the four Greek versions known to us or whose existence we can postulate: the LXX, the Alpha Text, the Greek *Vorlage* of the *Vetus Latina*, and the version used by Josephus. According to the Italian scholar, the author of the *rifacimento greco* of Esther was Lysimachus, son of Ptolemy, an Egyptian Jew, as the name of his father reveals, who had relocated to Jerusalem; there, around 50 BCE, he composed his version, which was destined for the Egyptian Jews. In 48–47 BCE (the date which, according to Motzo, is referred to in the colophon of LXX Esther), Lysimachus’ version was brought to Alexandria, where the aforementioned contamination with the literal translation of the Hebrew Esther took place: the Additions A–F included in the *rifacimento* were added to the literal version. Lysimachus, argues Motzo, composed all the Additions in

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<sup>45</sup> Gregg, “Additions,” 665, 668–69.

<sup>46</sup> Roiron, “Parties.”

Greek, employing a Semitising style for A, C, D, and F, and a style imitating that of the decrees of the Hellenistic kings of Syria and Egypt, as well as that of the two decrees of Ptolemy IV Philopator in 3 Maccabees, for Additions B and E.<sup>47</sup>

Stein asserts that the two letters in Additions B and E are written in the style used by the Hellenistic chanceries, specifically by the Ptolemaic one. He situates their composition in Alexandria sometime between 114 and 30 BCE, more precisely during the period of conflict between Cleopatra III and her son, Ptolemy IX Lathyrus. Cleopatra III had entrusted the command of her troops to two loyal Jews, Helkias and Hananias, a choice that was criticised by some of her courtiers. Additions B and E, contends Stein, aimed at addressing these critiques as well as the anti-Jewish policy of Lathyrus. According to this interpretation, the loyalty of Helkias and Hananias is reflected in the figure of Mordecai, while the anti-Semitic courtier is represented by Haman.<sup>48</sup>

Schildenberger argues that the author of Additions B and E, as well as of the other Additions, was an unknown Jew who, around 100 BCE, composed, most likely in Egypt, the non-extant Greek version of Esther that underlies the *Vetus Latina*. This version, which constitutes the Greek *Urform* of Esther, was a very free translation-cum-adaptation of the original Hebrew version, which included the Additions. Its author composed all the Additions in Greek, varying his style to suit the different genres represented in them (dream, prayer, letter/decreed). Some fifty years later—Schildenberger espouses 48/47 BCE as the date referred to in the colophon of LXX Esther—Lysimachus reworked the Greek *Urform* to align it with the Hebrew version, thus producing the LXX Esther.<sup>49</sup>

Torrey assigns the authorship of Additions B and E to Lysimachus, whom he believes to have been an Egyptian Jew (as indicated by the name of his father, Ptolemy) who resided in Jerusalem. Lysimachus, Torrey argues, translated into Greek an Aramaic version of the Esther story and inserted into it Additions B and E, which he himself composed “in such Greek as was commonly written in Egypt in the second century B.C.” and as is exhibited in 2 and 3 Maccabees, in the *Letter of Aristeas*, and the

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<sup>47</sup> Motzo, “Storia,” [213–14] 205–6; id., “Autore,” [242–48] 293–99; id., “Origine,” [267–68, 270] 263–64, 266; id., “Rifacimento,” [276–77] 269–70; id., “III Maccabei,” [285–88, 300] 274–77, 289.

<sup>48</sup> Stein, “Essai.”

<sup>49</sup> Schildenberger, “Esther,” 3–40 [243–280], esp. 19–22 and 38–39 [260–62 and 278–79].

Ptolemaic papyri. Lysimachus' version, Torrey adds, was destined for the Egyptian Jews and was brought to Egypt in 114 BCE.<sup>50</sup>

Bickerman attributes all the Additions to Lysimachus, placing their authorship in Jerusalem during the time of Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 BCE).<sup>51</sup> With regard to Additions B and E, he asserts that “Lysimachus made a particularly conscious effort at fine writing in composing two royal edicts,” where “he skilfully imitates the heavy bureaucratic prose of his time, with its long sentences, use of rare words, and the high moralizing tone.”<sup>52</sup> Bickerman further contends that “there is no Egyptian flavor in the Greek Esther, as commentators maintain,” and that “traits and terms which are regarded as Ptolemaic are simply Hellenistic.”<sup>53</sup> Three of the technical terms that he cites as examples of words “used in Seleucid administration, but not in Egypt” occur in Additions B and E: διάταγμα (LXX Esth B:4), “a word which never occurs in Ptolemaic documents,” οἱ σύμβουλοι (LXX Esth B:3) “for royal council,” and τοπάρχοι [sic] (LXX Esth B:4), “used again in ‘Seleucid’ and not ‘Ptolemaic’ meaning.”<sup>54</sup> Bickerman also points out that in Addition B, Haman bears the title of the Seleucid “grand vizir” [LXX Esth B:6: τοῦ τεταγμένου ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων], and that in his first letter, Artaxerxes alternates between the first person singular and plural; this style was endorsed by the Hellenistic kings in the third century BCE and later persisted under the Seleucids, whereas the Ptolemies used the plural only.<sup>55</sup>

Bardtke places the Greek reworking and expansion of the Esther story in the period of the Maccabean revolt, more narrowly demarcated by the first victories of Judas Maccabeus in 167 BCE and the establishment of a feast (the “Day of Nicanor”) to commemorate the defeat of the Seleucid general Nicanor on the 13th of Adar, 161 BCE. It was in this period, Bardtke argues, that the figure of Mordecai came to be seen as a personification of the agonistic spirit of the Maccabean wars and that the feast of Purim was transformed into the “Day of Mordecai,” which is mentioned in 2 Macc 15:36 in connection with the “Day of Nicanor.” Bardtke posits a two-stage incorporation of the Additions into LXX Esther: the first stage involved the insertion of Mordecai’s dream and its interpretation (A:1–11 and F:1–10), the exposure of the

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<sup>50</sup> Torrey, “Esther,” 26–28.

<sup>51</sup> See Bickerman, “Colophon,” 233; id., “Notes,” 248–59.

<sup>52</sup> Bickerman, “Notes,” 249.

<sup>53</sup> Bickerman, “Notes,” 250 n. 41.

<sup>54</sup> Bickerman, “Notes,” 250 n. 41.

<sup>55</sup> Bickerman, “Notes,” 249 with n. 40. Cf. Almagor, “Kingdom,” 301, who adopts Bickerman’s arguments to support his contention that the Book of Esther originated within a Seleucid milieu.

eunuchs' conspiracy (A:12–17), and the royal letters in Additions B and E, which give prominence to the figure of Mordecai; at the second stage, the two prayers were inserted, with Esther being given prominence due to her longer and more theologically significant prayer.<sup>56</sup> Bardtke accepts 114 BCE as the date when LXX Esther, including the Additions, was introduced in Egypt, as this date is closer to the Maccabean events than the 78/77 BCE date proposed by Bickerman and others.<sup>57</sup>

Moore opines that it is unlikely that the same author who exhibited a high mastery of Greek in composing Additions B and E would also be responsible for the prosaic Greek used in the translation of the canonical text of Esther and the rest of the Additions. He draws attention to a number of contradictions and inconsistencies between Additions B and E and the canonical sections of Esther, which would likely have been avoided if Lysimachus, the purported translator of the Hebrew book of Esther, had authored the two Greek Additions. Therefore, he posits that Additions B and E were written by an author other than Lysimachus, “in some sophisticated non-Palestinian Jewish center such as Alexandria, Egypt,” sometime after 114 BCE, when, as he believes, Lysimachus' translation was sent to Egypt.<sup>58</sup> Moore suggests that the use of the term *τοπάρχης*, “toparch,” in LXX Esth B:1—a term chiefly known from the papyri—might provide a clue to the provenance of Addition B.<sup>59</sup>

Along the same lines as Moore, Vermes and Goodman, in the revised Schürer, assert that the Additions were likely composed by different authors, either before or after the translation of the Hebrew Esther into Greek. Concerning Additions B and E, they submit that “their sophisticated style would be quite possible for a Jew in many parts of the Mediterranean diaspora,” yet their similarities with 3 Maccabees “make an Alexandrian origin . . . slightly more likely than other places in the Greek-speaking diaspora.”<sup>60</sup>

Taking Moore's thesis a step further, Gardner suggests the possibility that Additions B and E were composed and added to LXX Esther in 78/77 BCE by Dositheus and his son Ptolemy, who, according to the colophon attached to LXX Esther, brought Lysimachus' translation from Jerusalem to Egypt.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Bardtke, “Mardochäustag,” 103–12; cf. id., “Zusätze,” 18, 24–27.

<sup>57</sup> Bardtke, “Mardochäustag,” 103–4 with n. 37; id., “Zusätze,” 27.

<sup>58</sup> Moore, “Origins,” 383–86; id., *Additions*, 161, 165–66; id., “Esther,” 630, 632.

<sup>59</sup> Moore, *Additions*, 191.

<sup>60</sup> Schürer, *History*, 3:2, 719–20 with n. 336.

<sup>61</sup> Gardner, “Relationship,” 3–4.

Hanhart holds that the basis of the Greek Esther tradition is essentially the LXX version, which, following Bickerman, he dates to the first half of the first century BCE. He considers that all the Additions were originally written in Greek and were part of the LXX version from the outset.<sup>62</sup>

Wynn posits that the Esther story developed through a series of distinct recensional stages that reflect diverse socio-historical contexts spanning the Persian, Hellenistic, Maccabean, Hasmonean, and early Roman periods. He identifies seventeen such stages. With regard to the six major Additions, he postulates that they came into existence during the latter two periods and were incorporated into the various developmental forms of Esther piecemeal. Addition A was prefixed to the *Vorlage* of the AT in two stages: first, Mordecai's dream (A:1–11), originally an independent apocalyptic vision, was added; then, the account of the eunuchs' plot (A:12–17), initially part of Chapter 2, was relocated to follow A:11. The entire text of Addition A was subsequently transferred to the *Vorlage* of the LXX, into which the rest of the Semitic Additions (first F:1–10, and then C and D) were incorporated, before it was translated into Greek in Jerusalem by Lysimachus. The latter's translation of the LXX *Vorlage*, which included Additions A, C, D, and F:1–10, was supplemented with the Greek colophon (F:11) in Alexandria in 78/77 BCE, whereas the Greek Additions B and E were added to it at a much later date.<sup>63</sup> More specifically, Wynn assigns them to the period of tension between the Alexandrian Greeks and Jews, which culminated in an anti-Jewish pogrom in 38 CE. However, he is hesitant to propose a date as late as the reign of Caligula, when this pogrom was launched.<sup>64</sup> According to Wynn, the final recension of Esther is represented by the Alpha Text, which emerged within the Alexandrian Diaspora during the first century CE. At that time, the Greek translation of the *Vorlage* of the AT, until then supplemented only with Addition A, incorporated Additions B through F from the LXX text.<sup>65</sup>

Jobs envisages the following scenario for the Greek Esther and its Additions: The older of the two surviving Greek versions of Esther is the Alpha Text. The Semitic *Vorlage* of this version, which was an ancestor of the MT and quite similar to it, was translated into Greek in Egypt in the Ptolemaic period. During the Hasmonean period, a new translation of Esther, the LXX version, was carried out in Jerusalem in either

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<sup>62</sup> Hanhart, *Esther*, 96.

<sup>63</sup> Wynn, *Contexts*, 77–78, 121–24, 211–48.

<sup>64</sup> Wynn, *Contexts*, 239, 248.

<sup>65</sup> Wynn, *Contexts*, 124, 240, 248.

114 or 78 BCE, depending on which Ptolemy and Cleopatra are referred to in its colophon. This version eventually supplanted the Alpha Text in the Jewish Diaspora. At least four of the six Additions (A, C, D, and F) likely originated in the Alpha Text and were copied into the LXX version when it was introduced into Egypt. The Alpha Text preserves an older form of Additions B and E, which is closer to the original autographs than that found in the LXX.<sup>66</sup> This does not necessarily imply that the two Additions originated in the Alpha Text. It could be attributed to the broader transmission of the LXX version, which led to more extensive textual changes in the Additions included in it compared to those in the Alpha Text.<sup>67</sup>

Dorothy puts forth the supposition that Additions B and E, added after C and D, originated in the proto-AT, which was earlier than both the LXX and the MT versions of Esther. Accordingly, he suggests, along the lines of Jobes, that the earlier form of these two Additions is the one preserved in the AT. He dates their introduction into the proto-AT to sometime after 250 BCE, when it became common practice among Hellenistic historiographers to quote official documents verbatim as a means of authenticating their accounts.<sup>68</sup> Dorothy further contends that, although the royal document contained in Addition E exhibits formal affinities with Hellenistic letters, the one in Addition B formally conforms rather to decrees from the Roman period.<sup>69</sup>

According to Kottsieper, Additions B and E, along with Additions A:12–17, D, and F:11, originated in Egypt, whereas Additions A:1–11, C, and F:1–10 originated in Jerusalem. Additions B and E entered the Esther textual tradition when an early form of the Alpha Text (the Proto-A recension), which had emerged in the Hellenistic Diaspora by the early second century BCE at the latest and had developed into two branches, the Egyptian and the Syrian, underwent revision in Egypt during the last decade of the reign of Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II (126–116 BCE). In 78/77 BCE, an early form of the LXX Esther text, based on an Aramaic *Vorlage* that included A:1–11, C, and F:1–10, was promoted to Egypt by the Jerusalem Pharisees. There, it incorporated the

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<sup>66</sup> Jobes, *Alpha-Text*, 5, 162–176, 223–33.

<sup>67</sup> See Jobes, *Alpha-Text*, 174: “The fact that the AT preserves the earlier form of additions B and E does *not* prove the direction of the copy. It means only that since the time when additions B and E were copied, in whichever direction, they have experienced fewer changes in the AT than they have in the LXX. Though this data is consistent with the chronological priority of additions B and E in the AT, it does not prove it”; cf. *ibid.*, 232: “The additions, with perhaps the exception of B and E, probably first appeared in the AT and were copied into the LXX text after its original production.”

<sup>68</sup> Dorothy, *Esther*, 327, 332–34, 347–48, 350.

<sup>69</sup> Dorothy, *Esther*, 98–102, 180, 192.



Egyptian Additions A:12–17, B, D, and E through contamination with the aforementioned revised Proto-A version. The LXX text, as we know it, essentially took its form in Egypt, most likely in Alexandria, around 50 BCE, and from there gradually spread to the rest of the Greek-speaking Diaspora.<sup>70</sup> Kottsieper adduces the following verbal and stylistic evidence to support the Egyptian, and more specifically Alexandrian, origin of Additions B and E, as well as their composition during the reign of Ptolemy VIII: (a) the bombastic, pseudo-classical style of Artaxerxes' letters is reminiscent of the style of the Ptolemaic chancery and of books such as 3 Maccabees, which was written in Alexandria, (b) in LXX Esth B:1 and E:1, Artaxerxes styles himself as "Great King" (βασιλεὺς μέγας), and in LXX Esth E:2–3, he refers to himself as "benefactor" (εὐεργέτης); both designations were, in fact, titles borne by Ptolemy III Euergetes I and Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II, (c) the designation of Artaxerxes as "master of the whole world" (πάσης ἐπικρατήσας οἰκουμένης) in LXX Esth B:2 may hint at Ptolemy VIII, who consciously aligned himself with the legacy of Ptolemy III, the latter having presented himself as a world conqueror in inscriptions, (d) φίλοι, "Friends," used for the royal counsellors, and σωφροσύνη, "judiciousness," denoting a quality that the royal counsellors should possess, are technical terms attested in Hellenistic Alexandria, (e) the two Additions exhibit close parallels with the *Letter of Aristeas*, which was likely composed between 124 and 116 BCE, that is, during the time of Ptolemy VIII, and (f) the epistolary formula καλῶς οὖν ποιήσετε, "you will then do well to...," in LXX Esth E:17, also occurs in Let. Aris. §§ 39 and 46, as well as in letters from the Ptolemaic period, particularly around 120 BCE, that is, during the reign of King Ptolemy VIII.<sup>71</sup>

Haelewyck posits that Additions B and E, along with the other Additions, originated in an early Greek form of Esther (G III or La-Greek III), which appeared between 120 and 100 BCE at the latest.<sup>72</sup> The author of this Greek version did not merely translate the Hebrew text of Esther but extensively remodelled it (omitting, for example, the slaughter of the enemies of the Jews in Chapter 9) and supplemented it with seven Additions, which he composed himself (A:1–10, B, C, D, E, F, plus H:1–5, which is transmitted only through the *Vetus Latina*). This version is no longer extant but is reflected in the *Vetus Latina* of Esther. It provided material for an early form of the

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<sup>70</sup> Kottsieper, "Zusätze," 117–31.

<sup>71</sup> Kottsieper, "Zusätze," 152–55, 188–95.

<sup>72</sup> Haelewyck does not specify the place of origin of this version, but one can infer that he considers it to be Palestine.

Alpha Text (*L*<sup>o</sup>), which appeared in Jerusalem or, more broadly, in Syria-Palestine in the early years of the first century BCE at the latest. This version contained Additions A:1–10, A:11–18 (which was composed by its author), D, and F, but not B, C, and E. G III/La-Greek III also contributed to LXX Esther (G I), which came into existence in 78/77 BCE. The author of the latter aligned G III/La-Greek III with the Hebrew text, retained the six Additions A–F, incorporated Addition H:1–5 into Addition C, and also supplemented his version with elements from *L*<sup>o</sup>, such as A:11–18. When the LXX text began to supplant the other two Greek text forms, *L*<sup>o</sup> was aligned with it, and it was on that occasion that Additions B, C, and E were added to it, resulting in the formation of the current Alpha Text (*L* or GII).<sup>73</sup>

De Troyer considers that at least Addition E is an integral part of LXX Esther (“the LXX never existed without Add. E”).<sup>74</sup> Although she does not express certainty about whether Lysimachus composed Addition E (and, by extension, Addition B) or merely found it in some source and integrated it (along with B) into his translation, she is inclined to accept the former possibility, as it would be “difficult to imagine how Add. E—and thus also Add. B—were in circulation without being anchored in a particular context.”<sup>75</sup> She also follows Bickerman in placing the translation of LXX Esther in Jerusalem during the reign of Alexander Jannaeus and in dating its introduction to Egypt to 78/77 BCE.<sup>76</sup> In her examination of LXX Esth 8:1–17, however, she traces “a number of typically Ptolemaic terms: ‘granting’ in 8:1; the ‘archons of the satraps’ in 8:9; and possibly the ‘street plan’ in 8:15,” which, as she notes, suggest that “the author of the narrative writes from a Ptolemaic background and is not familiar with the Seleucid division of the empire.”<sup>77</sup>

Mittmann-Richert concurs with the *communis opinio* that Additions B and E are original Greek compositions but considers it likely, on the basis of linguistic evidence, that the other Additions, too, were written in Greek. She places the composition of all the Additions in Jerusalem in the late second century BCE, probably before 114 BCE, which is the date that she accepts as alluded to in the colophon of LXX Esther. Regarding the authorship of the Additions, she maintains that they received their current form only in connection with the translation process attributed to

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<sup>73</sup> Haelewyck, “Texte,” 13, 42–44; id., *Hester*, 84–94; id., “Relevance,” 472–73; cf. Bogaert, “Formes.”

<sup>74</sup> De Troyer, *End*, 393, 396; cf. Smith and De Troyer, “Additions,” 391.

<sup>75</sup> De Troyer, *End*, 392, 396.

<sup>76</sup> De Troyer, *End*, 277, 398.

<sup>77</sup> De Troyer, *End*, 278 n. 212; cf. *ibid.*, 180 n. 4, 229–30, 263.

Lysimachus and may even be entirely traced back to him. The linguistic and stylistic differentiation between B and E and the other Additions, often cited as an argument for different authorship, is, according to Mittmann-Richert, well within the range of individual human linguistic capabilities.<sup>78</sup>

Passoni Dell'Acqua asserts that Additions B and E “were definitely included in the Greek Esther during its final drafting” and dates them, on the basis of their language, style, and affinities with 3 Maccabees and the *Letter of Aristeas*, to between the end of the second and the beginning of the first century BCE. She further aligns with the opinion expressed by previous scholars that the Additions in question have an “Egyptian flavour” and attest to “the influence of Ptolemaic administrative terminology.” The terms that she brings forward as evidence for her claim are τοπάρχαι, “toparchs” (LXX Esth B:1), ὁ τεταγμένος ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων, “the overseer of the affairs of the state” (LXX Esth B:6), Μακεδών, “Macedonian” (LXX Esth E:10), and πόλις/χώρα, “city/countryside” (LXX Esth E:24). She also challenges Bickerman’s claim that Additions B and E have a Hellenistic, and more specifically Seleucid, rather than Ptolemaic colouring by offering counterarguments to his points concerning the switch between the first-person singular and plural in Addition B, and the use of the terms διάταγμα, “edict,” and ἔκθεμα, “public notice” (the latter term, however, occurs at 8:17, that is, outside of Additions B and E). Lastly, commenting on P.Oxy. 4443, which preserves the passage E:16–24 with some variants vis-à-vis the LXX text, Passoni dell’Acqua states that “the author of this text has a thorough knowledge of the technical terminology used by the Ptolemaic administration.”<sup>79</sup>

Tov argues for the organic unity of the translation of the canonical text of LXX Esther and the Additions (or “Expansions,” as he thinks more apposite to call them). For Additions/Expansions A, C, D, and F he posits that they originated from the same Hebrew *Vorlage* (a rewritten version of a text similar to MT Esther) as the canonical sections, whereas for B and E, he considers it probable that they were composed by the translator of LXX Esther. With regard to the place and time of composition of the translation, he adheres to the opinion that it was made in Jerusalem, sometime prior to 78/77 BCE, when it was taken to Egypt and had its colophon appended to it at the archive where it was deposited.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Mittmann-Richert, *Einführung*, 68, 99–102.

<sup>79</sup> Passoni Dell’Acqua, “Editti,” 56–61; ead., “Decree,” 75–81.

<sup>80</sup> Tov, “LXX Translation.”

Hacham advances the position that the translation of the Hebrew book of Esther was sent from Jerusalem to Egypt in 114/113 BCE rather than in 78/77 BCE, and that it was probably in Alexandria that this translation “was adapted, edited and entire units appended to it.”<sup>81</sup> He suggests two possible periods during which the “refurbished redaction of the story of LXX Esther,” which apparently included Additions B and E, may have come into existence: the Ptolemaic period, more specifically the later part of 107–81 BCE, or the Roman period, more precisely the reign of Caligula, when anti-Jewish riots broke out in Alexandria. He opts for the former period and argues that the “adaptation and recension” of Esther, as witnessed in the LXX text, reflects the tensions that arose in Ptolemaic Egypt in the second half of the second century BCE and the beginning of the first century BCE. During this time, the elevation of the status of the Jews through their participation in the army and the administration, as well as their involvement in the dynastic conflicts between Cleopatra II and her husband Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II, and Cleopatra III and her sons Ptolemy IX and Ptolemy X, provoked hostility from the Alexandrian Greeks within and outside the court. This hostility manifested itself through accusations of Jewish disloyalty to the regime, similar to those voiced in Addition B.<sup>82</sup> Moreover, Hacham argues for the intertextual dependence of Additions B and E on 3 Maccabees.<sup>83</sup>

Lastly, in an article discussing the place and time of composition of Additions B and E, I linked the two Additions, on the one hand, with Philo’s writings through the concept of the “evil-hating justice” (μισοπόνηρος δίκη), which is used exclusively by the Alexandrian philosopher and the author of LXX Addition E, and, on the other hand, with the letter that the emperor Claudius sent to the Alexandrians in 41 CE to settle the conflict that had broken out between the Greeks and the Jews in 38 CE under Caligula. On the strength of these associations, I tentatively dated the composition or the final redaction of LXX Additions B and E to the early forties of the first century CE.<sup>84</sup>

As shown by the above survey, scholarship has placed Additions B and E within various geographical, chronological, and historical frameworks and has arrived at different assessments regarding their authorship and the process through which they were integrated into the various Greek versions of Esther. The unresolved nature of

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<sup>81</sup> Hacham, “Bigthan,” 352 and 355 n. 91.

<sup>82</sup> Hacham, “Bigthan,” 352–356; cf. id., “Anti-Judaism,” 110–17.

<sup>83</sup> Hacham, “3 Maccabees.”

<sup>84</sup> Domazakis, “Date.”

the conclusions reached by previous inquiries warrants a reassessment of the evidence provided by the two Additions, which I will endeavour to undertake in the present study.

### 1.3 The aim of the present study

The present inquiry takes as its point of departure a footnote in a seminal article in Esther scholarship, “Notes on the Greek Book of Esther,” in which Bickerman refutes the assertion advanced by some scholars that the Greek Esther, including Additions B and E, exhibits an “Egyptian flavour.”<sup>85</sup> In the five chapters to follow, I will revisit the evidence that Bickerman presents in support of his thesis, namely, that Additions B and E exhibit a Seleucid rather than Ptolemaic “flavour,” as well as the evidence brought forward by other scholars mentioned in the preceding section regarding the place and time of composition of Additions B and E. By reassessing the vocabulary, phraseology, style, structure, and epistolary formulae used in the two letters of Artaxerxes, as well as by exploring their intertextual connections with other Septuagintal and extra-Septuagintal texts, I will endeavour to determine where and when Additions B and E were written and to outline the profile of their author.

In Chapter 2, I will examine in detail three of the technical terms cited by Bickerman as attesting to the Seleucid “flavour” of Additions B and E: ὁ ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων, τοπάρχης, and σύμβουλοι. Moreover, I will provide additional evidence supporting his contention that the author of the two Additions was acquainted with the Seleucid administration, court titulature, and epistolary practice.

In Chapter 3, I will explore the Maccabean “flavour” of Additions B and E, discerned through their allusions to historical figures and events associated with the Maccabean revolt against the Seleucid rule in Judaea in the 160s BCE, as well as through the verbal parallels that they share with 2 Maccabees.

In Chapter 4, I will closely investigate an epistolary feature of Addition B, to which Bickerman drew attention: the switch from the first person singular to the plural of majesty. Through an examination of this feature in the extant corpus of authentic Hellenistic royal letters preserved on inscriptions and papyri, as well as in fictitious royal letters contained in literary works, I will seek to determine whether the composer of the two Additions followed a specific chancery style, Seleucid or

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<sup>85</sup> See Bickerman, “Notes,” 250 n. 41 and 1.2 above.

Ptolemaic, or merely imitated the style of the royal letters included in the works that served as his literary models.

In Chapter 5, I will first revisit some of the terms that the proponents of the Egyptian/Ptolemaic origin of Additions B and E have cited in support of their contention. I will then explore the intertextual connections between the two Additions and Jewish-Greek literary works of undeniably Egyptian origin such as 3 Maccabees and the *Letter of Aristeas*. Lastly, I will assess whether the authors connected to Ptolemaic Egypt, who have been proposed for the authorship of Additions B and E, are plausible candidates for having written these texts.

In Chapter 6, I will endeavour to trace whether there is an Egyptian/Roman “flavour” in Additions B and E. First, I will scrutinise Dorothy’s claim that Addition B exhibits formal affinities with Roman edicts rather than with Hellenistic royal letters. Next, I will examine the term διάταγμα, which, according to Bickerman, never occurs in Ptolemaic documents, while it is commonly used to render the Latin term *edictum*. Ultimately, I will revisit my earlier discussion of the concept of the “evil-hating justice” (μισοπόνηρος δίκη), which appears exclusively in LXX Addition E and in the treatises of the first-century CE Alexandrian philosopher Philo.

Finally, in the Conclusion, I will attempt to interpret the presence of the various “flavours” (Seleucid, Maccabean, Ptolemaic, Roman) that seem to co-occur in Additions B and E, propose a time frame and a location for their composition, and put forward my conclusions regarding their authorship.



# CHAPTER 2. THE SELEUCID “FLAVOUR” OF ADDITIONS B AND E TO ESTHER

## 2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will discuss three technical terms that occur in Addition B to Esther and which, according to Bickerman, pertain to the Seleucid rather than the Ptolemaic administration. These terms are ὁ τεταγμένος ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων, “the overseer of the affairs of the state” (2.2), σύμβουλοι, “counsellors” (2.4), and τοπάρχης, “governor of a district” (2.5).<sup>1</sup> In connection with ὁ τεταγμένος ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων, I will also discuss a term not mentioned by Bickerman, namely, the honorific appellation πατήρ, “father,” which occurs in both Additions B and E (2.3). The aim of my investigation will be to determine whether these terms reflect a specific milieu, Seleucid rather than Ptolemaic, as claimed by Bickerman, from which the two Additions presumably arose, or whether their usage in these two texts can be attributed to the influence of literary works, whether Septuagintal or otherwise, to which the author of Additions B and E is indebted. Additionally, I will seek to determine whether the “ruler formula” in the *prooemium* of King Artaxerxes’ letter in Addition B was modelled on that of a Seleucid royal letter, specifically the one preserved on the so-called “Heliodorus stele,” where this formula appears to have emerged as a novelty in Hellenistic royal correspondence (2.6).

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<sup>1</sup> Another term adduced by Bickerman, διάταγμα, will be discussed in 6.3.



## 2.2 ὁ τεταγμένος ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων

In LXX Esth B:6, King Artaxerxes designates Haman as “the one who has been placed in charge of the affairs of the state” (ὁ τεταγμένος ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων).<sup>2</sup> In LXX Esth E:11, the king further states that Haman was “the second person of the royal throne” (τὸ δεύτερον τοῦ βασιλικοῦ θρόνου πρόσωπον), an acknowledgement already made in LXX Esth B:3, where Haman is said to “have gained the second honour in the kingdom” (δευτέρον τῶν βασιλειῶν γέρας ἀπενηνεγμένος). These two verses take their cue from LXX Esth 4:8, where Haman is designated as “the second to the king” (ὁ δευτερεύων τῷ βασιλεῖ).

The attribution of the title ὁ τεταγμένος ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων to an Achaemenid official such as Haman is, of course, an anachronism, as the office of ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων is not attested earlier than the late third century BCE. According to some scholars, it evolved from the office of “chiliarch” (χιλίαρχος), which Alexander instituted in the final years of his reign, in imitation of that of the *hazarapatiš* in Achaemenid Persia.<sup>3</sup> Other scholars, however, have contested the view that the Achaemenid *hazarapatiš* was akin to a “grand vizier,” second only to the Great King, and have argued that his functions were limited to those of the εἰσαγγελεύς, namely, the official who controlled the king’s audiences, and the commander of the thousand elite μηλοφόροι (spearmen who had gold or silver apples or pomegranates at the butt-end of their spears) of the royal bodyguard.<sup>4</sup>

The information that we have for the office of ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων primarily comes from the Seleucid and the Attalid kingdoms, while for the Ptolemaic kingdom the evidence is less clear.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The same term occurs in AT Esth 3:18 and is reflected in VL Esth B:6 (*praeposito in rebus*).

<sup>3</sup> See Corradi, *Studi*, 257 (with reservations expressed on p. 263), and Ehling, “Reichskanzler,” 97.

<sup>4</sup> See Briant, “Sources,” 291–98; cf. Meeus, “Chiliarchy,” 302–6. Meeus, *ibid.*, 303, 310, has further argued that the Achaemenid title of *hazarapatiš* was held by two distinct officials, the commander of the elite royal bodyguard and the commander of the elite cavalry, and that under Alexander and the Diadochi, the chiliarch had no administrative functions but was merely the commander of the cavalry. Of the dozen or so Achaemenid officials proposed by modern scholars as possible holders of the position of *hazarapatiš*/chiliarch, only one, Tithraustes, is designated in ancient sources (Nepos, *Con.* 3.2) as having been the “second to the king.” As Charles, “Chiliarchs,” 300–301, notes, “there is little evidence to support the view that the Chiliarch was second only to the king in power and influence at all times throughout the Achaemenid era ... It may well be that the Greeks, incorrectly assuming that the commander of the guard infantry was normally the second most powerful person in the land, erroneously attributed the position of Chiliarch to powerful men who held other positions within the empire.”

<sup>5</sup> See Corradi, *Studi*, 257, 263, 265, 267; Ehling, “Reichskanzler,” 97 with n. 8.

In the Seleucid kingdom, the title is attested during the period between the reigns of Seleucus III (225–223 BCE) and Antiochus VIII (126/125–96 BCE); however, most of our evidence for it pertains to the first half of the second century BCE.<sup>6</sup> Ehling lists four Seleucid officials who in the literary and epigraphic sources are designated as ὁ (τεταγμένος) ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων: Hermeias under Seleucus III and Antiochus III, Heliodorus under Seleucus IV, Lysias under Antiochus IV and Antiochus V, and Philippus under Antiochus IV; as possible holders of the office, he adds Andronicus under Antiochus IV, Ammonius under Alexander Balas, and Lasthenes under Demetrius II.<sup>7</sup> In her list of Seleucid “viceroys” (ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων), Savalli-Lestrade includes not only those previously mentioned but also the brothers Aristus and Themison under Antiochus II, Zeuxis under Antiochus III, and Heracleon of Beroia under Antiochus VIII, whose uncertain status she denotes with a question mark.<sup>8</sup> Capdetrey additionally lists Bacchides under Demetrius I.<sup>9</sup> Strictly speaking, of the Seleucid high officials just mentioned, only Heliodorus, Lysias, Philippus, and Zeuxis are attested in the first two books of Maccabees and in epigraphic texts as bearing the title ὁ (τεταγμένος) ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων.<sup>10</sup> Apropos of Hermeias, Polybius writes that

<sup>6</sup> See Robert and Robert, *Fouilles*, 177; Ehling, “Reichskanzler,” 98; Capdetrey, *Pouvoir*, 280–81.

<sup>7</sup> See Ehling, “Reichskanzler,” 97–98; cf. Bickerman, *Institutions*, 187.

<sup>8</sup> See Savalli-Lestrade, *Philoï*, 359, with further discussion on pp. 16, 18, 36–38, 44–46, 48, 57–59, 61–62, 80–81, 88.

<sup>9</sup> See Capdetrey, *Pouvoir*, 273–74 with n. 286, and 280 with n. 19. 1 Macc 7:8 designates Bacchides as τῶν φίλων τοῦ βασιλέως κυριεύοντα ἐν τῷ πέραν τοῦ ποταμοῦ καὶ μέγαν ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ, which may be taken to mean that he had been appointed ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων. But see Savalli-Lestrade, *Philoï*, 67.

<sup>10</sup> See 2 Macc 3:7: προχειρισάμενος Ἡλίοδωρον τὸν ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων; IG XI,4 1113 [Delos; 187–175 BCE], ll. 1–2: βασιλεὺς Σέλευκ[ος] Ἡλίοδωρον Αἰσχύλου | τὸν σύντροφον, τετ[αγμ]ένον δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων; cf. IG XI,4 1112, ll. 1–2 and IG XI,4 1114, ll. 1–3; SEG 57-1838 [Maresha; 178 BCE], A/B, ll. 1–2: παρὰ Ἡλίοδώρου | τοῦ ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων; 1 Macc 3:32: καὶ κατέλιπεν Λυσίαν ... ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων τοῦ βασιλέως ἀπὸ τοῦ ποταμοῦ Εὐφράτου καὶ ἕως ὀρίων Αἰγύπτου; 2 Macc 10:11: ἀνέδειξεν ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων Λυσίαν τινά; 2 Macc 11:1: Λυσίας ἐπίτροπος τοῦ βασιλέως καὶ συγγενής καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων; 2 Macc 13:2: Λυσίαν τὸν ἐπίτροπον καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων; 2 Macc 13:23: Φίλιππον ... τὸν ἀπολελειμμένον ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων; cf. 1 Macc 6:14: κατέστησεν αὐτὸν [τὸν Φίλιππον] ἐπὶ πάσης τῆς βασιλείας αὐτοῦ, and Josephus, *A.J.* 12.360: τῆς βασιλείας αὐτὸν [τὸν Φίλιππον] ἐπίτροπον καθίστησιν; Robert, *Amyzon* no. 14 [202 BCE], ll. 7–8: πρὸς Ζεῦξιν τ[ὸν ἐπὶ] | [τῶν] πραγμάτων καθεσταμένο[ν]; Robert, *Amyzon* no. 15 [201 BCE], ll. 8–9: πρὸς Ζεῦξιν τὸν ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων; Robert, *Amyzon* no. 19 [203/193 BCE], l. 4: ὑπὸ Ζεῦξιος τοῦ ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων; Robert, *Amyzon* no. 22 [ca. 190/180 BCE], ll. 4–5: πρὸς Ζεῦξιν τὸν γεινόμενον ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων; SEG 36-973 [Euromos; 198/197 BCE], ll. 3–5: Ζεῦξίς τε ὁ ἀπολελειμμένος ὑπὸ τοῦ βασιλέως Ἀντίοχου ἐπὶ τῶν ἐπιτάδε | τοῦ Ταύρου πραγμάτων; SEG 64-1386 [Limyra; ca. 197–188 BCE], l. 22: [τῷ τεταγμένῳ ἐπὶ | τῶν πραγμάτων. On the identification of the τεταγμένος ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων mentioned in the last-cited inscription with Zeuxis, see Wörrle, “Forschungen,” 380–82, and Virgilio, “Lettera,” 340–41, 358–59. On Zeuxis’ title and position, see Robert and Robert, *Fouilles*, 176–80, Gauthier, *Inscriptions*, 39–42, Ma, *Antiochos III*, 125–30, and Capdetrey,

he was προεστὼς τῶν ὅλων πραγμάτων and that he ἐπέστη δ' ἐπὶ τὰ πράγματα,<sup>11</sup> while other historians use similar expressions with respect to Ammonius and Lasthenes (ὁ τῆς βασιλείας προεστηκώς)<sup>12</sup> and Aristus and Themison (οἱ διοικοῦντες τὴν βασιλείαν).<sup>13</sup>

The officials invested with the title of ὁ ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων were high-ranking courtiers<sup>14</sup> who belonged to the king's intimates, often bearing such honorific kinship titles as “father” (πατήρ), “brother” (ἀδελφός), “foster brother” (σύντροφος), and “kinsman” (συγγενής).<sup>15</sup> It is uncertain whether their office was permanent or whether they assumed it under special circumstances, such as when the king departed Syria for long military expeditions (Hermeias, Andronicus, Lysias), when the heir to the throne was underage (Lysias), or during internal conflicts in the kingdom (Bacchides). The fact that no such office is attested during the reigns of some Seleucid rulers may suggest that it was not an institutionalised one.<sup>16</sup> The responsibilities of the ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων covered the areas of administration, finances, and, from the

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*Pouvoir*, 273, 297–300. Ehling, “Reichskanzler,” 99 n. 27, does not include Zeuxis in his list of the Seleucid “Reichskanzler” because of the geographically limited area (the cis-Tauric Asia Minor) that was under his control: “Zeuxis war nicht ‘Reichskanzler’. Sein voller Titel lautete ὁ ἐπὶ τῶν ἐπιτάδε τοῦ Ταύρου πραγμάτων ... Zeuxis war daher für die Reichsverwaltung Kleinasien zuständig ... Das Amt entspricht in etwa dem des ‘Generalstatthalters des Ostens’, das Timarchos viele Jahre unter Antiochos IV. bekleidete.” Apparently, not all the Seleucid “Reichskanzler” are designated in our extant sources as ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων, and not all those designated as ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων were *stricto sensu* “Reichskanzler.”

<sup>11</sup> Polybius, *Hist.* 5.41.1–2.

<sup>12</sup> Diodorus Siculus, *Bibl.* 33.4.1 (Lasthenes); 33.5.1 (Ammonius).

<sup>13</sup> Phylarchus *apud* Athenaeus, *Deipn.* 10.51.22 (ed. Kaibel).

<sup>14</sup> These very high-ranking grandees should be distinguished from the anonymous officials who, in several inscriptions from the reign of Antiochus III, are collectively designated as οἱ (τασσόμενοι/τεταγμένοι) ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων; the latter were apparently local governors who were in charge of the affairs of the king in the satrapies of the Seleucid kingdom. See Welles, *RC* no. 31 [letter of King Antiochus III to Magnesia-on-the Maeander; ca. 205 BCE], ll. 25–26: γεγράφαμεν δὲ καὶ | τοῖς ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων τεταγμένοις; *SEG* 35-1476 [letter of Ikadion to Anaxarchus; Ikaros (Failaka); 204 BCE], ll. 11–12: ἔγραψαν τοῖς ἐπὶ τῶν | πραγμάτων τᾱ[σσ]ομένοις; *SEG* 60-1127 [letter of Antiochus III to the sanctuary of Sinuri; 203–201 BCE], II, l. 7: γεγράφαμεν δ[ὲ καὶ] | τ[οῖς ἐπὶ] τῶν πραγμάτων τασσόμενοις. See Corradi, *Studi*, 266; Bickerman, *Institutions*, 145 n. 12, 205; Gauger, *Beiträge*, 112 n. 179; Roueché and Sherwin-White, “Aspects,” 29–30. Cf. Virgilio, “Lettera,” 342: “Usato nella forma plurale e senza indicazione dei nomi dei funzionari, il titolo assume il valore generico e collettivo dei funzionari che sono preposti—ciascuno con le proprie competenze e con titolo specifico—ai vari settori della amministrazione locale. I *pragmata* del τεταγμένος ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων sono gli affari generali dello stato e del regno...; i *pragmata* degli anonimi e generici τεταγμένοι ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων sono gli affari locali di competenza della amministrazione locale seleucidica nelle singole sedi nelle quali ciascuno di tali τεταγμένοι esercita il proprio ufficio.”

<sup>15</sup> See Ehling, “Reichskanzler,” 104; Muccioli, “Crisi,” 251–74.

<sup>16</sup> See Corradi, *Studi*, 262–63; Ehling, “Reichskanzler,” 98.

160s BCE, the army, as at least two holders of the office, Lysias and Bacchides, undertook military campaigns.<sup>17</sup>

The office of ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων is also attested in the Attalid kingdom. A series of inscriptions from the Pergamon acropolis provides evidence that a certain Menogenes, son of Menophantus, held this high title during the later part of King Eumenes II's reign (197–159 BCE).<sup>18</sup> Two other inscriptions, one from Pergamon and the other from Pessinous, further reveal that Menogenes had also held the title of νομοφύλαξ or σωματοφύλαξ, and possibly that of συγγενής, under Eumenes II,<sup>19</sup> and that after the latter's death, he was one of the three closest “cabinet ministers” to Attalus II, whom the king summoned to discuss critical matters such as the campaign against the Galatians.<sup>20</sup>

Was there an ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων in Ptolemaic Egypt? The evidence that we have is very scant. Polybius reports that, under Ptolemy IV Philopator (221–204 BCE), two high-ranking officials, Sosibius and Agathocles, were at the head of the kingdom (οἱ προεστώτες τῆς βασιλείας).<sup>21</sup> In 204 BCE, the two of them, through a forged will, were even appointed guardians of the king's son, Ptolemy V Epiphanes.<sup>22</sup> After the death of Sosibius and the murder of Agathocles, Tlepolemus became guardian of the boy king and administrator of the royal affairs of Egypt (ὁ τὰ τῆς βασιλείας τῶν Αἰγυπτίων πράγματα μεταχειριζόμενος).<sup>23</sup> In 201 BCE, due to general discontent with the latter's regency, the *somatophylax* Aristomenes assumed the guardianship of Ptolemy V and took charge of the affairs of the state (ὁ ... ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων γενόμενος).<sup>24</sup> Wörle

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<sup>17</sup> See Corradi, *Studi*, 262–67; Bikerman, *Institutions*, 187–88; Ehling, “Reichskanzler,” 98, 104–5; Capdetrey, *Pouvoir*, 273–74, 280–82.

<sup>18</sup> The title is attested in *I.Pergamon* 1.174, l. 3 (Μηνογένης Μηνοφάν[του], | ὁ ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων) and has been restored in *I.Pergamon* 1.171–173, 175–176, l. 3. See Corradi, *Studi*, 245, 265, 273, 377; Allen, *Kingdom*, 129–30; Thonemann, “State,” 9, 12, 29, 41.

<sup>19</sup> The titles are uncertain due to lacunae in the Pergamon inscription. See *I.Pergamon* 1.176a [197–159 BCE], ll. 2–4: [Μηνογ]ένην Μηνοφάντου, | [συγγενή] βασιλέως Εὐμένου, | [τὸν καὶ νο]μοφύλακα. The readings [συγγενή] and [νο]μοφύλακα are conjectures proposed by Fränkel, the first editor of the inscription; in lieu of [νο]μοφύλακα, Savalli-Lestrade, *Philo*, 135–37, has suggested σωματοφύλακα.

<sup>20</sup> See *I.Pessinous* 7 [letter of Attalus II to Attis; 158–156 BCE], l. 4 with the comments of Welles, *Correspondence*, 250.

<sup>21</sup> Polybius, *Hist.* 5.63.1; cf. 5.35.7: οὗτος γὰρ [sc. ὁ Σωσίβιος] μάλιστα τότε προεστάτει τῶν πραγμάτων; Plutarch, *Cleom.* 34.2: ὁ δὲ τῶν ὄλων προεστηκώς καὶ προβουλευών Σωσίβιος.

<sup>22</sup> Polybius, *Hist.* 15.25.1; 15.25.5.

<sup>23</sup> Polybius, *Hist.* 16.21.1; cf. 16.22.7: διὰ τὸ τὸν Τληπόλεμον καὶ τὰ πράγματα καὶ τὰ χρήματα μὴ ὡς ἐπίτροπον, ἀλλ' ὡς κληρονόμον χειρίζειν.

<sup>24</sup> Polybius, *Hist.* 15.31.6. On Sosibius, Agathocles, and Aristomenes, see Mooren, *Titulature*, 63–66, 67–68, and 76–77, respectively.

argues that Polybius uses the expression ὁ ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων γενόμενος, followed by the similar expressions γενόμενος κύριος τῶν ὅλων πραγμάτων and προστῆναι τοῦ τε βασιλέως καὶ τῆς βασιλείας (*Hist.* 15.31.7), not as a technical term to denote Aristomenes' title and office, but descriptively.<sup>25</sup> He further argues that the concentration of power in the hands of the aforementioned courtiers involved in the guardianship of Ptolemy V does not suggest the presence of an ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων at the top of the Ptolemaic administrative hierarchy, as even the most powerful individual in the kingdom, after the king, was merely the first among the royal *philoí*;<sup>26</sup> the absolutist nature of the Ptolemaic monarchy prevented any top official from overpowering the others.<sup>27</sup>

Equally ambiguous with Polybius' testimony is a passage of Plutarch, which relates that, King Ptolemy XIII being very young, the eunuch Potheinus managed all the affairs of the state (*Pomp.* 77.2: ὁ πάντα διέπων τὰ πράγματα; *Caes.* 48.5: πλεῖστον δυνάμενος; cf. Cassius Dio, *Hist. rom.* 42.36.1: ὁ τὴν διοίκησιν τῶν τοῦ Πτολεμαίου χρημάτων προστεταγμένος; Caesar, *Bell. civ.* 3.108.1: *erat in procuracione regni propter aetatem pueri nutricius eius*). Along with the teacher of rhetoric Theodotus and the Egyptian Achilles, he was one of the top counsellors of the king (*Pomp.* 77.2: κορυφαίωτατοι ... σύμβουλοι); he could convene the royal council, which consisted of the most powerful men, whom he himself had chosen to confer power upon (*Pomp.* 77.2: ἤθροισε βουλὴν τῶν δυνατωτάτων· ἐδύναντο δὲ μέγιστον οὓς ἐκεῖνος ἐβούλετο); in 48 BCE, this council mandated the execution of Pompey, while Potheinus, together

<sup>25</sup> Wörrle, "Forschungen," 383: "Beim fortbestehenden Fehlen jeder authentischen Dokumentation ist man hier allein auf den Sprachgebrauch des Polybios angewiesen, der das Phänomen jedoch mit Varianten umkreist und eben nicht mit einem Terminus technicus trifft: Aristomenes bezeichnet er zwar im Kontext des Untergangs des Agathokles als ὁ μετὰ τινὰ χρόνον ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων γενόμενος, aber das ist kein Zitat eines Titels, sondern eine Positionsbeschreibung."

<sup>26</sup> Wörrle, "Forschungen," 383: "Daß es sich dabei um die Position an der Spitze einer etablierten administrativen Hierarchie handelt und dafür der Titel eines ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων gebraucht wurde, kann allerdings noch immer mit Wilcken und Thomas bestritten werden"; *ibid.*, 384: "Das könnte eher für eine 'gruppensdynamische', politische Konstruktion sprechen, wonach der Erste im Ptolemäereich nach dem König selbst eben der Erste im Kreis der königlichen φίλοι geblieben ist und sich nicht als Inhaber eines administrativen Spitzenamtes verstehen ließ, wie es sich bei den Seleukiden unter Antiochos III. und IV. institutionalisierte." Cf. Wilcken, *Grundzüge*, 7–8: "Die verschiedenen Ressortchefs unterstanden direkt dem König. Die Vermutung, daß es zwischen ihnen und dem König einen Vezir nach Art der persischen Chiliarchen mit dem Titel eines ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων gegeben habe, ist nicht zu erweisen und ist abzulehnen"; *ibid.*, 8 n. 2: "Bei der großen Fülle des Materials ist man hier wohl berechtigt, a silentio zu schließen"; Beloch, *Geschichte*, 386 n. 1: "Im Ptolemäereich wird das Amt Polyb. XV 31, 6 erwähnt, doch handelt es sich dabei um eine Vormundschaftsregierung, und es bleibt ungewiß, ob es auch in normalen Zeiten einen ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων gegeben hat."

<sup>27</sup> See Thomas, "Aspects," 188–89; Walbank, *Commentary*, 2:492.

with Achilles, later contrived a plot against Caesar (Plutarch, *Caes.* 49.4).<sup>28</sup> One can draw an analogy between the position and the deeds of Potheinus and those of Haman in Addition B: like Potheinus, Haman was the most prominent of the king's σύμβουλοι (see LXX Esth B:3); he managed the affairs of the kingdom; he engaged in plotting against his enemies. There is, of course, a difference, namely, that Potheinus was the tutor—*nutricius* in Caesar's words (*Bell. civ.* 3.108.1)—of a thirteen-year-old king, whereas Haman was the ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων of a grown-up king. Yet, the appellation “father” that Artaxerxes reserves for his “prime minister” (LXX Esth B:6; E:11) may be interpreted as implying that Haman had been the tutor, acting *in loco patris*, of the king, when the latter was underage.<sup>29</sup> However that may be, although Potheinus, and before him Sosibius, Agathocles, Tlepolemus, and Aristomenes, were de facto ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων, the terminology used by Polybius, Plutarch, and Cassius Dio does not allow us to assume that the office and the title of ὁ τεταγμένος ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων were current in Ptolemaic Egypt, as they were in the Attalid and the Seleucid kingdoms.

As for the τεταγμένοι ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων, who, along with the *stratego*i of Egypt, are the addressees of Ptolemy IV Philopator's second letter in 3 Maccabees,<sup>30</sup> they were likely officials holding positions below the rank of *strategos*, similar to those mentioned in a series of amnesty decrees issued by Ptolemy VI Philometor (or Ptolemy V Epiphanes),<sup>31</sup> Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II,<sup>32</sup> and Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II,

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<sup>28</sup> See 2.4 below.

<sup>29</sup> See 2.3 below.

<sup>30</sup> 3 Macc 7:1: Βασιλεὺς Πτολεμαῖος Φιλοπάτωρ τοῖς κατ' Αἴγυπτον στρατηγοῖς καὶ πᾶσι τοῖς τεταγμένοις ἐπὶ πραγμάτων. Cf. Polybius, *Hist.* 5.34.4, who states that the same Ptolemy IV Philopator treated with negligence and indifference those who were charged with the external affairs of Egypt (ὀλίγωρον δὲ καὶ ῥάθυμον ὑποδεικνύων τοῖς ἐπὶ τῶν ἔξω πραγμάτων διατεταγμένοις); see Corradi, *Studi*, 266–67, and Walbank, *Commentary*, 1:564. Cf. also SEG 8-466 [Magdola; 95 BCE], an *asylia* petition addressed to Ptolemy X Alexander I, in which the petitioners accuse τοὺς ἐπὶ πραγμάτων τετα[γ]μένους (ll. 20–21) of harassing and extorting from the temple of Heron.

<sup>31</sup> *C.Ord.Ptol.* 34 [163 (or 186) BCE], col. i, l. 7.

<sup>32</sup> *C.Ord.Ptol.* 41 [145/144 BCE], l. 13; 43 [145/144 BCE], l. 20.

Cleopatra II, and Cleopatra III.<sup>33</sup> The same generic plural is attested in Seleucid royal documents<sup>34</sup> and is also used to refer to various types of officials in literary sources.<sup>35</sup>

Apart from the instances of the designation ὁ ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων in 1 and 2 Maccabees, noteworthy in the Septuagint are the expressions καθιστάναι τινὰ ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων/ἐπὶ πάσης τῆς βασιλείας and ἀφηγεῖσθαι τῶν ἐπὶ τῆς βασιλείας πραγμάτων, which occur in LXX Daniel and in 4 Maccabees, respectively. In LXX Dan 2:48, King Nebuchadnezzar rewards Daniel for interpreting his dream by appointing him over the affairs of Babylonia (κατέστησεν ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων τῆς Βαβυλωνίας); in the reign of Darius, Daniel gains ascendancy over the three administrators that the king sets up over the one hundred and twenty seven satraps of his kingdom (6:[3]2–[4]3: Δανιηλ εἷς ἦν τῶν τριῶν ἀνδρῶν ὑπὲρ πάντας ἔχων ἐξουσίαν ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ); the king decides to appoint him over all his kingdom (6:[5]4: ἐβουλεύσατο ὁ βασιλεὺς καταστήσαι τὸν Δανιηλ ἐπὶ πάσης τῆς βασιλείας αὐτοῦ); Daniel does receive this promotion (6:[25]24: καὶ Δανιηλ κατεστάθη ἐπὶ πάσης τῆς βασιλείας Δαρείου), to the detriment of the other triumvirs, but not before triumphantly emerging out of the lions' den where the schemes of his antagonists had sent him. The phraseology here is reminiscent of LXX Gen 44:43, where the Pharaoh appoints Joseph over all the land of Egypt (καὶ κατέστησεν αὐτὸν ἐφ' ὅλης γῆς Αἰγύπτου), and is identical to that employed in 1 Macc 6:14, which relates that King Antiochus IV appointed Philippus over all his kingdom (κατέστησεν αὐτὸν ἐπὶ πάσης τῆς βασιλείας αὐτοῦ), that is, he assigned him to the position of the ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων, as indicated in 2 Macc 13:23, which uses the appropriate technical term.

In 4 Macc 12:5, King Antiochus IV tells the youngest of the seven brothers who refuse to eat meat from pagan sacrifices that, if he complies with his orders, he will become his *philos* ("Friend") and will assume command of the affairs of the kingdom

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<sup>33</sup> *C.Ord.Ptol.* 53 [121/120–118 BCE], col. x, l. 248; 55 [ca. 118 BCE], col. i, ll. 6–7. In the papyri also occur similar generic terms and expressions such as οἱ τῶν πραγμάτων κηδόμενοι (*UPZ* 1.110, ll. 10–11), οἱ πρὸς ταῖς πραγματείαις (*C.Ord.Ptol.* 53, col. vii, ll. 160–61, col. viii, l. 179), and οἱ πραγματικοί (*C.Ord.Ptol.* 52, l. 25). As Philopator's letter in 3 Macc 7:1–9 is a circular one (*entole*), the collective designation οἱ τεταγμένοι ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων, which appears in its prescript, seems to be equivalent to that found in the prescripts of authentic Ptolemaic royal circulars, namely, οἱ τὰ βασιλικά πραγματευόμενοι. See *C.Ord.Ptol.* 47, ll. 4–5; 62, ll. 4–5; cf. *P.Gen.* 3.132, l. 5; *P.Grenf.* 2.37, ll. 4–5; *P.Tebt.* 3.2.904, l. 3.

<sup>34</sup> See n. 14 above.

<sup>35</sup> See, e.g., Demosthenes, *Cor.* 247: διαφθεῖρειν τοὺς ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων; Polybius, *Hist.* 3.12.5; 3.69.4; 5.98.9: τοὺς ἐπὶ πραγμάτων ταττομένους; 8.31.6: τοὺς ἐπιτηδειοτάτους <τῶν> ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων [of Hannibal's military officers]; Philodemus, *Hom.* 9.15 (ed. Dorandi): οἱ ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων; Ps.-Demetrius, *Epist. Charact.* (p) 5 (ed. Weichert): τοῖς ἐπὶ πραγμάτων ταττομένοις.

(φίλος ἔση καὶ τῶν ἐπὶ τῆς βασιλείας ἀφηγήσῃ πραγμάτων). The author here goes a step further than his source text, 2 Macc 7:24, which simply states that the king promised the young man to make him his *philos* and entrust him with public affairs (φίλον ἔξειν καὶ χρείας ἐμπιστεύσειν), and has Antiochus IV promise the seventh brother a position analogous to that of the ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων, which Lysias and Philippus held late in his reign.

The title ὁ ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων is nowhere in our extant ancient Greek sources associated with the “second” position in the royal hierarchy, as it is in Additions B and E to Esther. Let it be noted first that in LXX Esther, Haman is “promoted” to increasingly higher ranks and titles: at 3:1, we are told that he held the first seat among all the king’s “Friends” (ἐπρωτοβάθρει πάντων τῶν φίλων αὐτοῦ; cf. AT Esth 3:1: ἔθηκε [ὁ βασιλεὺς] τὸν θρόνον αὐτοῦ ὑπεράνω τῶν φίλων αὐτοῦ), which in Hellenistic court officialese would likely correspond to a rank above that of τῶν πρώτων (καὶ προτιμωμένων) φίλων, possibly that of συγγενής;<sup>36</sup> at 4:8, he is designated as second—in the sense of immediately inferior—to the king (δευτερέων τῷ βασιλεῖ), and at 5:11 as holding the first place and being at the head of the kingdom (πρωτεύειν καὶ ἡγεῖσθαι τῆς βασιλείας); lastly, in Additions B and E he is said to have obtained the second honour in the kingdom (B:3: δεύτερον τῶν βασιλειῶν γέρας), to be the second father of the king (B:6: δευτέρου πατρός), and the second person of the throne (E:11: τὸ δεύτερον τοῦ βασιλικοῦ θρόνου πρόσωπον), forming a duumvirate with the king (B:4: συναρχίαν).<sup>37</sup> The motif of the “second to the king,” so prominent in the canonical parts of Esther and in Additions B and E,<sup>38</sup> is likely drawn from Jewish-Greek literature, more specifically from books in which a non-royal individual, often a Jew, holds the second rank to a Persian, Assyrian, or Egyptian king, the prototype

<sup>36</sup> Cf. the appellation πατήρ in LXX Esth B:6 and E:11, which will be discussed in 2.3; cf. also 1 Esd 3:7 and 4:42, where the king’s “kinsman” is seated next to him (see n. 39 below), and Xenophon, Cyr. 8.4.3–5.

<sup>37</sup> On the term συναρχία, see 6.5, n. 174.

<sup>38</sup> To the verses already cited, we should add LXX Esth 10:3/AT Esth 7:52: ὁ δὲ Μαρδοχαῖος διεδέχετο τὸν βασιλέα Ἀρταξέρξην/Ασσυήρον. The meaning here is not that Mordecai succeeded Artaxerxes to the throne, but that he acted as substitute/deputy for him. The verb διαδέχομαι was chosen to render the Hebrew noun *mishneh*, “double, copy, second (in order/rank).” In the sense attested in LXX Esth 10:3/AT Esth 7:52, we find it elsewhere in the Septuagint (e.g., in 2 Chr 31:12 and in 2 Macc 4:31) and in the papyri (see Rodríguez Adrados et al., *Diccionario*, s.v., II, 4). See Milik, “Modèles,” 326, and Cavalier, *Esther*, 87–88.



being Joseph, who in Gen 41:43 is symbolically mounted on Pharaoh's second chariot and is appointed over all the land of Egypt.<sup>39</sup>

As can be seen from the preceding discussion, although the author of Additions B and E could have used a descriptive designation similar to those occurring in other Jewish-Greek works (e.g., ὁ κατασταθεὶς ἐπὶ πάσης τῆς βασιλείας/ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων τῆς βασιλείας) to denote Haman's position as "chief minister" or "chancellor," he opted for the technical term ὁ τεταγμένος ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων. In the current state of our knowledge, this term is elsewhere attested, in the singular, with reference to an official of the highest rank, in only two Seleucid inscriptions: in the first it is applied to Heliodorus and in the second (possibly) to Zeuxis. The abbreviated title, ὁ ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων, is attested in both the Seleucid and the Attalid administration, but not later than the mid-second century BCE, while the last Seleucid official who may have been an ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων (although he is not expressly designated as such in our extant sources), Heracleon of Beroia, was the minister of Antiochus VIII around the turn of the second and first centuries BCE.

The author of Additions B and E to Esther seems to have been acquainted with the Seleucid court titulature either first-hand<sup>40</sup> or from literary sources. He may even have intended to draw a parallel between Haman and one of the powerful Seleucid ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων known to us. Haman's character and fate, as depicted in Additions B and E, indeed bear similarities to those of certain Seleucid "grand viziers." The author of Addition B, through the pen of King Artaxerxes, attributes malignity to Haman (LXX Esth E:6: κακοήθεια), as does Polybius to Hermeias (*Hist.* 5.50.5: τῆς Ἑρμείου κακοηθείας). Haman's spite against Mordecai recalls Hermeias' hatred and jealousy of Epigenes, King Antiochus III's honest and reasonable advisor (Polybius, *Hist.* 5.41–42; 5:49–50). Haman is a prominent member of the royal council (LXX Esth B:3), as Hermeias was (Polybius, *Hist.* 5.41.6–5.42.5; 5.49; 5:51). King Artaxerxes appears to

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<sup>39</sup> In 1 Esd 3:7, the winner of the contest of the three bodyguards will sit in the second place, next to King Darius, and will be called his "kinsman" (δεύτερος καθιεῖται Δαρείου ... καὶ συγγενὴς Δαρείου κληθήσεται; cf. 4:42: καὶ ἐχόμενός μου καθήσῃ καὶ συγγενὴς μου κληθήσῃ); in Tob 1:22, the Assyrian king Esarhaddon appoints Ahigar as second to himself (κατέστησεν αὐτὸν ὁ Σαχερδονὸς ἐκ δευτέρου); in Jdt 2:4, Holophernes is second in command after Nebuchadnezzar, King of the Assyrians [sic] (δεύτερον ὄντα μετ' αὐτόν). See Volkmann, "Zweite," 285–97, 311–14, and Milik, "Modèles," 326–27.

<sup>40</sup> Copies of Seleucid royal letters were publicly displayed throughout the Seleucid kingdom. Copies of the dossier recorded in the so-called "Heliodorus Stele," for example, in which Heliodorus is designated as Seleucus IV's ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων, were posted in sanctuaries throughout Coele-Syria and Phoenicia; three of these copies, two from Maresha and one from Byblos, have come down to us. See Yon, "Marisa," 92–94, 97–98; Cotton-Paltiel, Ecker, and Gera, "Juxtaposing," 1–3.

have had a strong personal attachment to Haman, to the extent of addressing him as “father” (LXX Esth B:6; E:11); the same appellation was used by Kings Antiochus III and Demetrius II Nicator for Zeuxis and Lasthenes, respectively.<sup>41</sup> King Artaxerxes accuses Haman of scheming against him, his benefactor (LXX Esth E:3: τοῖς ἑαυτῶν εὐεργέταις ἐπιχειροῦσιν μηχανᾶσθαι), and of attempting to deprive him of his life and transfer the rule of the Persians to the Macedonians (LXX Esth E:12, 14); this reminds us of Heliodorus, who murdered King Seleucus IV (having perhaps taken part in a conspiracy with the Ptolemaic court),<sup>42</sup> and of Heracleon of Beroia, who, as Athenaeus tells us, despite owing his advancement to King Antiochus VIII, almost drove his benefactor from the throne (ὕπὸ τοῦ Γρυποῦ καλουμένου Ἀντιόχου τοῦ βασιλέως προαχθεὶς μικροῦ δεῖν τῆς βασιλείας ἐξέβαλε τὸν εὐεργέτην)<sup>43</sup> and, in 96 BCE, either murdered him or had him murdered in an attempt to seize the Syrian throne.<sup>44</sup> Haman becomes an enemy of the Jews, as did Heliodorus, Andronicus, Lysias, and Bacchides: Heliodorus when he attempted to seize money from the Jerusalem Temple, Andronicus when he murdered the pious Jewish high priest Onias III, and Lysias and Bacchides when they launched military campaigns against Judas Maccabeus in Judea.<sup>45</sup> Haman is condemned to death by King Artaxerxes, as Antiochus III and Antiochus IV had their ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων, Hermeias and Andronicus, respectively, killed;<sup>46</sup> Haman’s wife and sons are executed (LXX Esth E:18; cf. LXX Esth 9:7–10; VL Esth 7:9), just as Hermeias’ wife and sons were stoned by the people of Apameia.<sup>47</sup> Also of note is that in the *Vetus Latina* of Esther, Haman appears to be accompanied by three hundred men, all of whom honour him (VL Esth 5:9: *et trecenti viri cum eo et omnes adoraverunt eum*; cf. 6:4); these men recall the great retinue and the spearmen who, in

<sup>41</sup> See 2.3 below. Cf. also King Seleucus IV’s striking declaration of affection for Heliodorus, which is expressed in Aristotelian terms (cf. *Eth. nic.* 1166a30–31), in *IG XI,4 1113* [Delos; 187–175 BCE], ll. 1–3: βασιλεὺς Σέλευκ[ος] Ἡλιδόωρον Αἰσχύλου | τὸν σύντροφον, τετραγμ[μένον] δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων, | πρὸς ὃν ἔχει τε κ[αὶ] ἔξ[ε]ι ὡς πρὸς ἑαυτόν.

<sup>42</sup> See Holleaux, “Décret,” 261; Ehling, “Reichskanzler,” 100 n. 39. Will, *Histoire*, 2:256, conversely, sees Heliodorus as “l’instrument insouciant” of the machinations of the Attalids and the Romans.

<sup>43</sup> Athenaeus, *Deipn.* 4.38.19–21 (ed. Kaibel).

<sup>44</sup> See Savalli-Lestrade, *Philoi*, 88.

<sup>45</sup> See Ehling, “Reichskanzler,” 100 (Heliodorus) and 101 (Lysias); Savalli-Lestrade, *Philoi*, 48 (Andronicus) and 67 (Bacchides).

<sup>46</sup> See Ehling, “Reichskanzler,” 102–3.

<sup>47</sup> See Polybius, *Hist.* 5.56.15.

2 Maccabees, accompany Heliodorus when he enters the treasury of the Temple (2 Macc 3:28: μετὰ πολλῆς παραδρομῆς καὶ πάσης δορυφορίας).<sup>48</sup>

It is well-nigh impossible to determine which of the above-named Seleucid officials the author of Additions B and E might have intended to allude to by designating Haman as ὁ τεταγμένος ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων. It may be that the fictional Haman embodies the anti-Jewish attitude of more than one Seleucid ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων. It is also possible that for the title discussed here the author of the two Additions drew upon 2 Maccabees (or upon Jason of Cyrene's historiographic work, which 2 Maccabees epitomises). In this book, the title appears five times in reference to three Seleucid "chief ministers," Heliodorus, Lysias, and Philippus. If, as I have argued elsewhere,<sup>49</sup> the adjective τρισαλιτήριος, "thrice impious," used of Haman in LXX Esth E:15, is an allusion to the Seleucid military commander Nicanor, an enemy of the Jews, who is assigned the same rare epithet in 2 Macc 8:34 and 15:3, then Haman's designation as ὁ ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων could also have been intended as an allusion to one of the Seleucid "chief ministers," whose anti-Jewish acts are recounted in 2 Maccabees. Philo provides a relevant parallel: alluding to Gen 41:43, where the Pharaoh appoints Joseph over all the land of Egypt, he uses for Joseph the term ἐπίτροπος Αἰγύπτου, "governor of Egypt,"<sup>50</sup> a term which he elsewhere employs for A. Avillius Flaccus, the Roman prefect of Egypt (32–38 CE), under whom violent anti-Jewish riots took place in Alexandria in 38 CE.<sup>51</sup> Behind this terminological choice, Pelletier sees Philo's intention to present Joseph as a model governor whom the successors of the seditious Flaccus should emulate, and to use Flaccus' example as a cautionary tale.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> See Bikerman, *Institutions*, 197; Ehling, "Reichskanzler," 104. Cf. the 1,000 μηλοφόροι of the Persian royal bodyguard that were under the command of the *hazarapatiš*; see Meeus, "Chiliarchy," 303–4.

<sup>49</sup> Domazakis, *Neologisms*, 236–44. See also 3.6.

<sup>50</sup> Philo, *Somn.* 2.43: εἴτ' ἐπίτροπος ἢ κηδεμὼν Αἰγύπτου πάσης ἀνακηρύττεται, ταῖς τιμαῖς τοῦ βασιλέως οἰσόμενος δευτερεῖα. Cf. *Ios.* 178, 184, 190, 196, 210, 218, 232.

<sup>51</sup> See Philo, *Flacc.* 2: ὁ Φλάκκος ... καθίσταται τῆς Ἀλεξανδρείας καὶ τῆς χώρας ἐπίτροπος; 43: ὁ τῆς χώρας ἐπίτροπος; 152: τῆς Αἰγύπτου καὶ τῆς ὁμόρου Λιβύης ἐπίτροπος; 163: ὁ τῆς εὐδαιμονεστάτης χώρας ἐπίτροπος Αἰγύπτου; *Legat.* 132: τοῦ ἐπιτρόπου τῆς χώρας. The formal Greek rendering of the title *praefectus Aegypti* was ἑπαρχος Αἰγύπτου; less formal but commonly used designations occurring in inscriptions and papyri were ἡγεμὼν, ἡγεμονεύων, and ἡγούμενος. The term ἐπίτροπος was commonly used as the Greek equivalent of *procurator*. See Stein, *Präfecten*, 26, 179–80; Mason, *Terms*, 49, 142–43, 149.

<sup>52</sup> Pelletier, *In Flaccum*, 23; cf. Goodenough, *Politics*, 22–23.

It is also difficult to determine whether the use of the title ὁ τεταγμένος ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων should be regarded as an indication that Additions B and E were composed in the second century BCE, considering that the attestations for the office of ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων that have come down to us are clustered in that century. Such an inference would be based on the assumption that an author writing about a remote time and place, in this case, the Achaemenid Persia, would likely avoid using obsolete technical terms denoting, for example, court and administrative titles, and instead use terms taken from his own time and milieu. In the first century BCE and the first century CE, the readers of Greek Esther would still have been able to understand what the role of Haman as ὁ τεταγμένος ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων was; however, the association of this title with that of the Seleucid “chief ministers” of the second century BCE might have eluded many, especially those living in regions not formerly occupied by the Seleucids. Diodorus Siculus, writing around the mid-first century BCE, uses the designation ὁ προεστικῶς τῆς βασιλείας (*Bibl.* 33.4.1; 33.5.1) to denote the position of Ammonius and Lasthenes, who, as mentioned earlier, were likely holders of the office of ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων under Alexander Balas and Demetrius II, respectively. Likewise Josephus, in the late first century CE, designates Philippus, whom the dying Antiochus IV had appointed to the position previously occupied by Lysias, his ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων, as ἐπίτροπος τῆς βασιλείας (*A.J.* 12.360). In his paraphrase of Add Esth B:6, Josephus omits Haman’s title as ὁ τεταγμένος ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων and retains only the designation of him as the king’s “second father.”

A final comment is warranted regarding Bickerman’s statement that “Haman not only bears the title of the Seleucid grand vizir, he also writes as one.”<sup>53</sup> Bickerman apparently refers to the letter of condemnation (Addition B), which he considers to have been written by Haman on the basis of MT/LXX Esth 3:12, which states that Haman dictated a letter to the royal secretaries in the name of the king. However, as I pointed out in the Introduction, the letter in Addition B is written by Artaxerxes himself as a confirmation of a previous letter sent by Haman.<sup>54</sup> Moreover, regarding Bickerman’s statement, it is unclear which Seleucid “grand vizir” he is referring to and what he means by “he also writes as one.”

Epigraphic and literary sources have transmitted to us very few letters written by Seleucid royal officials known to have held the title of ὁ ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων: half a

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<sup>53</sup> Bickerman, “Notes,” 249.

<sup>54</sup> See 1.1, n. 16.

dozen by Zeuxis,<sup>55</sup> one by Heliodorus,<sup>56</sup> and one by Lysias.<sup>57</sup> Some of the letters of these officials share common features with those written by Seleucid kings, such as the kinship terms used in their prescripts and the royal plural employed in their bodies. However, these features are either absent from Haman's/Artaxerxes' letter in Addition B or used in a different way.

In the prescript of his letter to the *strategos* Dorymenes, Heliodorus uses the same term of address, "brother," that King Seleucus IV uses in the prescript of his letter to Heliodorus in the same dossier;<sup>58</sup> the appellations "brother" and "father" elsewhere occur only in the prescripts of letters addressed by Seleucid kings to persons of very high rank, such as their ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων or other kings.<sup>59</sup> As we will see in the following section (2.3), in Addition B to Esther, Haman is honorifically designated as the king's "father"; however, this designation appears in the body of Artaxerxes' letter, not in its prescript.

Moreover, in their letters, the Seleucid kings, with rare exceptions, use the first person plural (*pluralis maiestatis*).<sup>60</sup> Their ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων employ either the royal plural (Zeuxis and Heliodorus in epigraphic sources) or the first person singular (Lysias in 2 Maccabees), but not a mixed style like that used in Addition B to Esther.<sup>61</sup> The switch from singular to plural exhibited in Addition B is attested almost

<sup>55</sup> See SEG 37-1010, ll. 7-16 [letter of Zeuxis to Philotas; Balikesir; 209 BCE]; SEG 54-1353, ll. 20-24 [letter of Zeuxis to Philomelos; Philomelion; 209 BCE]; SEG 33-870 [fragment of a letter of Zeuxis; Labraunda; ca. 203 BCE; cf. SEG 40-982, no. 46]; SEG 45-1501 [letter of Zeuxis (?) to the Amyzonians; Amyzon; 203 BCE; cf. Welles, RC no. 38; on the attribution of this letter to Zeuxis, see Ma, Derow, and Meadows, "RC 38"]; Robert, *Amyzon* no. 11 [letter of Zeuxis (?) to Amyzon; 203-190 BCE; cf. Welles, RC no. 40]; SEG 33-867 [fragment of a letter of Zeuxis; Kildara; ca. 197 BCE]; SEG 37-859, B, l. 5-D, l. 13 [letter of Zeuxis to Herakleia under Latmos; 196-193 BCE]. The first two of the aforesaid inscriptions contain copies of the same letter addressed to different officials.

<sup>56</sup> See SEG 57-1838, A, ll. 7-12 [letter of Heliodorus to Dorymenes; Maresha; 178 BCE].

<sup>57</sup> See 2 Macc 11:17-21.

<sup>58</sup> SEG 57-1838, A, l. 7: Ἡλιόδωρος Δορυμένει τῷ ἀδελφῷ; A, l. 13: Βασιλεὺς Σέλευκος Ἡλιοδώρῳ τῷ ἀδελφῷ.

<sup>59</sup> See Gera, "Olympiodoros," 144 with nn. 98-100.

<sup>60</sup> See Chapter 4.

<sup>61</sup> Not only Zeuxis and Heliodorus but also other high-ranking Seleucid officials use the first person plural in their letters. As Roueché and Sherwin-White, "Aspects," 31, note, "in these cases 'we' perhaps stands collectively for the authority which that official and his group of subordinates represent in the state as the section responsible for carrying out the king's policy." See also Welles, *Correspondence*, 137; Ma, *Antiochos III*, 271; Gauger, *Authentizität*, 133. Exceptions are the *strategoi* Olympichus in Caria, Philomelus in Phrygia, and Ptolemy, son of Thraseas, in Coele-Syria and Phoenicia, who use the first person singular in correspondence. See Virgilio, "Aspetti," 403-4; id., "Esplorazioni," 316-17.

exclusively<sup>62</sup> in royal letters issued by Attalid, Seleucid, and Ptolemaic kings, as well as by some of the rulers of the minor kingdoms of Asia Minor.<sup>63</sup>

Lastly, neither Zeuxis, nor Heliodorus, nor Lysias writes under the name of a king, as Haman does (assuming, like Bickerman, that Artaxerxes' letter in Addition B was written by Haman); a possible exception may be Lysias, if he is the actual author of the letter that the child-king Antiochus V addresses to him in 2 Macc 11:22–26.

## 2.3 πατήρ

In LXX Esth B:6, King Artaxerxes designates Haman not only as “the one who has been placed in charge of the affairs of the state” (τοῦ τεταγμένου ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων) but also as his “second father” (δευτέρου πατρὸς ἡμῶν);<sup>64</sup> the latter designation recurs in LXX Esth E:11, where the king states that Haman enjoyed such benevolence from him as to be “proclaimed [his] father” (ὥστε ἀναγορεύεσθαι ἡμῶν πατέρα).

The juxtaposition of the title ὁ τεταγμένος ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων with the appellation πατήρ in LXX Esth B:6 does not seem to be accidental. Two Seleucid royal letters preserved in literary sources provide evidence that a high-ranking Seleucid official serving as ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων could be addressed by the king in writing as “father.”

1 Macc 11:30–37 reproduces a copy of a letter from King Demetrius II Nicator to Lasthenes, which is attached to a letter that the king sent to Jonathan Maccabeus. In the prescript of the latter letter, Demetrius addresses Jonathan as “brother” (11:30: Ἰωνᾶθαν τῷ ἀδελφῷ); in the body of the same letter, he refers to Lasthenes as his “kinsman” (11:31: Λασθένει τῷ συγγενεῖ ἡμῶν), while in the prescript of his letter to Lasthenes, he addresses him as “father” (11:32: Λασθένει τῷ πατρί).<sup>65</sup> In 147 BCE, the Cretan Lasthenes provided Demetrius, who was in his early teens, with a body of mercenaries that helped him wrest the Seleucid throne from the usurper Alexander Balas; when Demetrius ascended to the throne, he appointed Lasthenes over the

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<sup>62</sup> The use of both singular and plural in the same letter is also attested in the correspondence of the *strategos* Olympichus with Mylasa. See Virgilio, “Esplorazioni,” 316 with n. 186.

<sup>63</sup> See Chapter 4.

<sup>64</sup> AT Esth 3:18 also reads δευτέρου πατρὸς ἡμῶν, while VL Esth B:6, probably due to a misreading of ἡμῶν to ὑμῶν, reads *sequente patre vestro*, “your next-ranking father” (trans. Bellmann and Portier-Young, “Latin,” 276).

<sup>65</sup> Demetrius II's letter is quoted without strict verbal accuracy by Josephus, *A.J.* 13.127–129, who, however, retains the prescript unchanged.

kingdom. The designation ὁ τῆς βασιλείας προεστηκώς that Diodorus Siculus (*Bibl.* 33.4.1) uses with reference to Lasthenes appears to be equivalent to the title ὁ τεταγμένος ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων.<sup>66</sup> The age difference between Demetrius, who was no more than sixteen when he wrote the letter to Lasthenes (146/145 BCE), and his considerably older chief minister justifies the respectful address of the latter as “father.”<sup>67</sup>

Josephus (*A.J.* 12.148–153) transmits a letter from King Antiochus III to Zeuxis, his ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων in cis-Tauric Asia Minor, written between 212 and 205 BCE. In the prescript of this letter, the king addresses his official as “father” (*A.J.* 12.148: Ζεύξιδι τῷ πατρί). Gauger has questioned the authenticity of this letter, inter alia, on the grounds that: (a) the use of honorific kinship terms such as πατήρ and ἀδελφός in the prescripts of Seleucid royal letters is connected to the use of συγγενής, “kinsman,” as a court title expressing fictive kinship; however, none of these terms were in existence as early as the last decades of the third century BCE; (b) except for Antiochus III’s letter to Zeuxis, there are no other attestations of a ruler addressing in writing one of his high officials as “father” prior to that in Demetrius II’s letter to Lasthenes (see above), whose prescript Gauger believes that Josephus imitated; (c) the age difference between Antiochus III and Zeuxis was not significant enough to justify the appellation “father” on the part of the king; Gauger actually assumes that the king was coetaneous with or slightly older than his official; and (d) between 212 and 205 BCE, Zeuxis did not serve as chief minister to Antiochus III and does not seem to have had any special personal relationship with the king that would have justified being addressed as “father” by him.<sup>68</sup> Gauger also considers it improbable that the letter was written by Antiochus III’s son, who, at that time, was in his early teens.<sup>69</sup> Other scholars, however, consider it likely that Zeuxis was indeed older than Antiochus III. They point out that he held the very high position of representative of the king in Asia Minor for approximately twenty-five years and that he seems to have enjoyed the latter’s complete trust and confidence.<sup>70</sup> As for the argument from silence suggesting that the rank of “kinsman” and the related appellations “brother” and “father,” which appear

<sup>66</sup> See Savalli-Lestrade, *Philoi*, 80; Muccioli, “Crisi,” 264.

<sup>67</sup> See Bikerman, *Institutions*, 43, 193; Gauger, *Beiträge*, 104; Ehling, “Reichskanzler,” 103; Savalli-Lestrade, *Philoi*, 80–81.

<sup>68</sup> Gauger, *Beiträge*, 83–151, 332–33; id., “Formalien,” 66, 69; id., *Authentizität*, 127–29.

<sup>69</sup> Gauger, *Beiträge*, 139–42.

<sup>70</sup> See Gauthier, *Inscriptions*, 39–42 with n. 90, and Savalli-Lestrade, *Philoi*, 37–38; cf. Muccioli, “Crisi,” 256.

in Seleucid royal correspondence, had not yet been established in the late third century BCE, Gauthier notes that it cannot be ruled out that it was Antiochus III who, having been betrayed by kinsmen *ex sanguine* such as Achaïos, created this rank and promoted to it officials of his choice, like Zeuxis, who showed steadfast loyalty to him.<sup>71</sup>

One can also cite here 2 Macc 11:22–26, which quotes a letter of King Antiochus V Eupator to Lysias, who was his guardian (ἐπίτροπος), “kinsman” (συγγενής), and “chief minister” or “chancellor” (ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων).<sup>72</sup> In the prescript of this letter (11:22), which was written in 163 BCE, the king addresses Lysias as “brother” (τῷ ἀδελφῷ Λυσίᾳ). Wellhausen has questioned the authenticity of the letter on the grounds that the nine-year-old Antiochus would be expected to address his much older chief minister as “father.”<sup>73</sup> Gauger has argued that, compared to the “brother” address, the “father” address expressed a special and closer relationship between a younger addresser and an older addressee (evident in the case of King Demetrius II, who was particularly grateful to Lasthenes because he owed his throne to him), which presumably did not exist between Antiochus V and Lysias.<sup>74</sup> Yet, as Gera has pointed out, the fact that, in the line immediately following the prescript, the boy king refers to the recent demise of his natural father (11:23: τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν εἰς θεοὺς μεταστάντος) may have prevented him (or Lysias, who was most likely the actual

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<sup>71</sup> See Gauthier, *Inscriptions*, 42. See also Muccioli, “Crisi,” 255, 257, 261–63, who maintains that the title of συγγενής was introduced into the Seleucid titlature by Antiochus IV or his son Antiochus V Eupator, but dissociates it from the honorific appellation πατήρ, arguing that it should not be assumed that the latter term was the exclusive prerogative of a συγγενής. Regarding the non-attestation of the appellation “father” in any unquestionably authentic royal documents dating from the third century BCE, Savalli-Lestrade, *Philoï*, 80–81, brings into attention three letters of King Philip V of Macedon, written between his eighteenth and twentieth years, in which he refers to Antigonus Doson, his late cousin, stepfather, and tutor after the death of his biological father Demetrius II, as “father” (*I.Labraunda* 5 [letter of Philip V to Mylasa; ca. 220 BCE], ll. 7, 14, 48; *I.Labraunda* 7 [letter of Philip V to Olympichus; ca. 220 BCE], l. 12; Hatzopoulos, *Macedonian Institutions II*, no. 9 [letter of Philip V to Adaios (?) in Amphipolis; 218 BCE], l. 7; cf. Polybius, *Hist.* 4.2.5; 4.24.7). Savalli-Lestrade points out that, since Antigonus Doson was both Philip’s cousin and adoptive father, these letters do not prove that a young prince would refer to an older tutor, who was not a family member, as “father”; nevertheless, she believes that Philip used this appellation to express his respect for Antigonus in his role as tutor rather than as a relative. On this point, see Crampa, *Labraunda*, 32, and Hatzopoulos, “Vies,” 108.

<sup>72</sup> See 2 Macc 11:1.

<sup>73</sup> Wellhausen as cited by Gauger, *Beiträge*, 133.

<sup>74</sup> Gauger, *Beiträge*, 133–34.



author of the letter) from addressing his chief minister as “father,” which would have been more appropriate given their age difference.<sup>75</sup>

In light of the above, in LXX Esth B:6, the designation of Haman as the king’s “second father” implies not only that Artaxerxes was considerably younger than his ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων<sup>76</sup> but also that his relationship with him was characterised by affection, trust, and respect. Moreover, in LXX Esth E:11, the verb ἀναγορεύεσθαι (“to be proclaimed”), conjoined with the verb προσκυνεῖσθαι (“to be offered obeisance”), may imply that the designation “father” had an official character and was used by the king, and likely by all others, as an honorific title. It is unknown what might have earned Haman this appellation/title. The king presents it as a privilege owed not to Haman’s merits but to his own universal φιλανθρωπία (“benevolence,” “munificence expressed by the granting of benefits”). Based on what we know about Seleucid ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων such as Zeuxis, Lysias, and Lasthenes, we may surmise that the author of Additions B and E imagined Haman to have served *in loco parentis*, acting as the guardian, mentor, counsellor, and later perhaps co-ruler (see LXX Esth B:4) of the young and inexperienced king.<sup>77</sup>

Bickerman states that “the title ‘father’ seems to have been employed only by the Seleucid hierarchy.”<sup>78</sup> Indeed, we have no evidence of its being used in the Ptolemaic court. Although in the prescripts of four Ptolemaic royal letters, dating from around 135 to 115 BCE, four *strategoi/epistrategoi*, who were also “kinsmen” of the king and the queen(s), are addressed as “brothers,”<sup>79</sup> no high officials are addressed as or otherwise

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<sup>75</sup> Gera, “Olympiodoros,” 144–45; cf. Gauger, *Beiträge*, 133. It should be noted, however, that the use of πατήρ in both a literal and an extended sense is attested in a few private letters on papyrus from Roman Egypt, which indeed give rise to puzzlement and confusion. See, e.g., *P.Merton* 1.22 [second century CE], ll. 1–2, 15–16: Πτολεμαῖος Ἀπολ[λων]ί[ω]ι πατρὶ χαί[ρ]ε[ι]ν ... ἀσπάζεται σε ὁ πατήρ μου καὶ Σαραπίων; *P.Oxy.* 10.1296 [third century CE], ll. 1–3, 14–15, 18–19: Αὐρήλιος Δῖος Αὐρηλίῳ Ὠρεῖῳ τῷ γλυκυτάτῳ μου πατρὶ πολλὰ χαίρειν ... ἀσπάζομαι τὸν πατέρα μου Μέλανον ... ἀσπάζεται ἡμᾶς πάντες ὁ πατήρ μου Ὠρεῖῳ. See discussion in Dickey, “Kinship.”

<sup>76</sup> Gauger, *Beiträge*, 107, 332, estimates that, in the case of the Seleucid kings and their ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων, who are addressed as “fathers” in official letters, the age difference was at least thirteen to fifteen years.

<sup>77</sup> In a different context, the age factor may be irrelevant, as, for example, in the Joseph story in Genesis, where Joseph is proclaimed “father” of the Pharaoh (45:8) despite being younger than him; see Philo, *Ios.* 242: πᾶσαν μὲν Αἴγυπτον ἐπιτέτραμμαι, τιμὴν δὲ ἔχω τὴν πρώτην παρὰ τῷ βασιλεῖ καὶ μὲ νέον ὄντα πρεσβύτερος ὢν ὡς πατέρα τιμᾶ.

<sup>78</sup> Bickerman, “Question,” 308.

<sup>79</sup> See *C.Ord.Ptol.* 48, l. 3: πρὸς Βόηθον τὸν συγγενῆ; 49, l. 6: [Βοήθῳ τῷ ἀδελφῷ]; 51, l. 7: πρὸς Λόχον τὸν συγγενέα; 52, l. 3: [Λόχῳ τῷ ἀδελφῷ]; 57, l. 3: [Ἐρμοκράτῃ τῷ συγγενεῖ]; 58, l. 5: Ἐρμοκράτῃ τῷ ἀδελφῷ; 59, l. 6: [Φομμοῦτῃ τῷ συγγενεῖ]; 60, l. 12: Φομμοῦτῃ τῷ ἀδελφῷ. See Gauger, *Beiträge*, 104–5.

designated by the appellation “father” anywhere in the corpus of Ptolemaic royal documents.<sup>80</sup> Furthermore, the combination of the title ὁ ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων with the appellation πατήρ is not attested in any literary or documentary sources pertaining to the Ptolemaic kingdom. The closest parallel one can adduce is Aristomenes, King Ptolemy V’s guardian, about whom Polybius (*Hist.* 15.31.6) says that he became ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων, and Diodorus Siculus (*Bibl.* 28.14.1) adds that the young king “loved him like a father” (ἡγάπα καθαπερεὶ πατέρα); yet, it is unknown whether the king used the appellation πατήρ when addressing him, either orally or in writing.<sup>81</sup>

There are, however, attestations of πατήρ used as an honorific title in other Hellenistic kingdoms. Plutarch relates that Metrodorus of Scepsis enjoyed the friendship of Mithridates VI Eupator, King of Pontus, to such a degree that he was called “father of the king.”<sup>82</sup> Metrodorus was a philosopher and rhetorician who became a statesman when he joined the court of Mithridates. According to Strabo (*Geogr.* 13.1.55), the king honoured him exceedingly and appointed him as a sort of Chief Justice, against whose decisions no appeal could be lodged with the king. His hostility towards Rome, which he shared with Mithridates, earned him a nickname (probably *Misoromaïos*, “Roman-hater”).<sup>83</sup> The accounts of his death in 71 BCE differ: Plutarch (*Luc.* 22.4–5) relates that Mithridates had him put to death on the grounds that he had betrayed him, whereas Strabo (*Geogr.* 13.1.55) reports that he revolted from the king while on an embassy to Tigranes, King of Armenia; Tigranes sent him back to Mithridates, but on the way, he was either killed by order of Tigranes or died of illness. If Metrodorus was born around 150 BCE, his appellation “father of the king”

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<sup>80</sup> πατήρ is used in an extended sense in the prescripts of a few private letters on papyrus from the third and the second centuries BCE. See, e.g., *UPZ* 1.65; 1.68; 1.75; 1.93 [159–152 BCE], in the headings of which a certain Apollonios addresses one Ptolemaïos as “father” (Ἀπολλώνιος Πτολεμαίῳ τῷ πατρὶ χαίρειν), although we know from other sources that Ptolemaïos was his eldest brother. See Dickey, “Kinship,” 161.

<sup>81</sup> See Gauger, *Beiträge*, 96. Gauger, *ibid.*, 93, considers the description of Haman as “overseer of the state affairs,” counsellor, and “father” of the king as possibly influenced by late Ptolemaic rather than late Seleucid models, without elaborating on this point.

<sup>82</sup> Plutarch, *Luc.* 22.2: Μητροδόωρος ὁ Σκήψιος ... ἀκμῇ δὲ φιλίας τοσαύτη χρησάμενος, ὥστε πατήρ προσαγορεύεσθαι τοῦ βασιλέως. Metrodorus was apparently one of the *philoi* of King Mithridates; see Savalli-Lestrade, *Philoi*, 182. The Pontic aulic titulature included titles also attested in other Hellenistic courts, such as σύντροφος, τῶν φίλων, τῶν πρώτων φίλων, τῶν τιμωμένων φίλων, as well as the title discussed here, πατήρ. See McGing, *Policy*, 93 with n. 28, and Savalli-Lestrade, *Philoi*, 171–91.

<sup>83</sup> Pliny, *Nat.* 34.34.

would be consistent with the fifteen- to twenty-year age difference between him and Mithridates.<sup>84</sup>

The parallel between Metrodorus of Scepsis and Haman is especially suggestive: both were foreigners—one Greek and the other a “Macedonian” (see LXX Esth E:11)—who placed themselves in the service of “barbarian” kings<sup>85</sup> and attained high-ranking positions; both held pronounced hostility towards a particular people, the Romans in the case of Metrodorus and the Jews in the case of Haman; both were so esteemed by their kings that they established a fictive kinship with them;<sup>86</sup> and both eventually fell from grace and were sentenced to death on charges of treachery.

One is also tempted to draw a parallel between the extermination order issued by Artaxerxes in Addition B and a similar order issued by Mithridates VI Eupator in 88 BCE. According to Appian (*Mithr.* 22), Mithridates “wrote a secret message to all his satraps and city governors ordering them to launch a simultaneous attack, thirty days later, on the Romans and Italians resident with them, including their wives and children, and any freedmen of Italian birth. They were to kill them and throw them out unburied ... He also announced penalties for anyone burying the dead or hiding the living, and rewards for informers and those who killed people in hiding.”<sup>87</sup> Mithridates did not rescind his order as Artaxerxes did, and therefore, on the appointed day, thousands of Romans and Italians residing in the province of Asia were massacred.<sup>88</sup> There is no evidence that Metrodorus played in this case the role that Haman played in the Esther story, namely, that he prompted Mithridates to undertake his murderous scheme. According to Theophanes of Mytilene, it was a Roman

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<sup>84</sup> See Kroll, “Metrodorus,” col. 1481; cf. Gauger, *Beiträge*, 94. Pédech, “Métrocore,” 66, following Jacoby (*FGrHist* 184 [p. 609]), posits that there were two Metrodori: the father, born around 160 BCE, who is mentioned by Cicero, and the son, who served at Mithridates’ court. If this were the case, Metrodorus the son would have been coeval with Mithridates. However, this supposition does not hold. See Briquel, *Regard*, 124 n. 23.

<sup>85</sup> To his eastern subjects, Mithridates presented himself as a Persian king, claiming descent on his father’s side from Cyrus and Darius. See McGing, *Policy*, 94–95, 98–99, 107, 112.

<sup>86</sup> Note the similarity—which is, of course, coincidental—in the phrasing of LXX Esth E:11 (ὥστε ἀναγορεύεσθαι ἡμῶν πατέρα) and Plutarch, *Luc.* 22.2 (ὥστε πατὴρ προσαγορεύεσθαι τοῦ βασιλέως).

<sup>87</sup> Trans. McGing, LCL.

<sup>88</sup> Cicero (*Leg. man.* 5) speaks vaguely of “many thousands of Roman citizens” (*tot milibus civium Romanorum*) that were slaughtered. Memnon (*FGrHist* 434 F 22.9) and Valerius Maximus (*Fact. dict. mem.* 9.2.4, ext. 3) estimate the number of slain Romans at 80,000, while Plutarch (*Sull.* 24.4) raises the figure to 150,000. Both numbers are likely exaggerated. See McGing, *Policy*, 113 n. 119. Compare the number of Persians killed by the Jews on the thirteenth of Adar in the provinces of the Persian kingdom, as given in MT Esth 9:16 (75,000) and AT Esth 9:16 (70,000).

politician and historian, Rutilius Rufus, who, in a speech found by Pompey in Mithridates' private documents, had urged the king to massacre the Romans in Asia.<sup>89</sup> However, given his high position, his personal relationship with the king, and his vehement anti-Roman polemic, it is difficult to imagine that Metrodorus did not influence Mithridates' ideas and deeds.<sup>90</sup>

The possibility that, when composing Additions B and E to Esther, their author had Metrodorus and Mithridates in mind cannot be ruled out. Metrodorus was likely a contemporary of Lysimachus, the alleged translator of LXX Esther. He was a well-known figure not only in Asia but also in Rome (his mnemotechnics were praisingly mentioned by Cicero, and his anti-Roman stance was criticised by Ovid and, allusively, by Dionysius of Halicarnassus<sup>91</sup>). Therefore, it is not impossible that both Lysimachus and the author of Additions B and E (whom I presume to be distinct from Lysimachus) had heard or read about him, about his relation with the king of Pontus, and about the latter's orchestration of the "Asiatic Vespers." Some of the details given in Addition B, such as the appellation "father" assigned to the king's foremost counsellor, the content of the king's letter to the satraps and the provincial governors, the mass murder of thousands of people, including women and children, in a single, prearranged day, and the penalties for those who would dare to hide the proscribed people (cf. VL Esth B:7), could well have been inspired by real, contemporary, or approximately contemporary historical persons and events rather than merely being invented elaborations of the author of this Addition.

Another instance of πατήρ used in all likelihood as an honorific title comes from the kingdom of the Tarcondimotids in Smooth Cilicia. An honorary inscription from Hierapolis Castabala, dating to the late first century BCE, is dedicated to a certain Styrax, who is designated as "father of the kings."<sup>92</sup> The identity of the kings in question is uncertain, yet it is possible that reference is made to Tarcondimotus II

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<sup>89</sup> See Plutarch, *Pomp.* 37; cf. Pédech, "Métrodoire," 71 with n. 31.

<sup>90</sup> An anti-Roman speech of Mithridates, purportedly delivered to his troops in 89 BCE, which has come down to us in the epitome of Pompeius Trogus' *Philippic Histories* made by Justin (38.4–7), and perhaps also a letter of Mithridates to the Parthian king Phraates III, purportedly written in 69/68 BCE and transmitted by Sallust (*Hist.* 4.69M), are thought to echo Metrodorus' ideas. See McGing, *Policy*, 160; Briquel, *Regard*, 136, 143, 145; Whitmarsh, "History," 376–78.

<sup>91</sup> Cicero, *De or.* 2.88, 3.20; *Tusc.* 1.24; Ovid, *Ep. Pont.* 4.14.37–40; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 1.4.3. On Dionysius of Halicarnassus' possible allusive reference to Metrodorus' anti-Roman writings, see Briquel, *Regard*, 117–27, and Whitmarsh, "History," 367–78.

<sup>92</sup> Heberdey-Wilhelm, *Kilikien* 64: Μάρκος Κερκίνιος Τήρης | Στύρακα τὸν πατέρα τῶν | βασιλέων.

Philopator († 17 CE) and his sister Julia I.<sup>93</sup> Since it can be established from other epigraphic evidence that Tarcondimotus II Philopator was the father of Julia II, the possibility that Styrax had married Julia I and fathered Tarcondimotus II and Julia II, as some scholars had surmised in the past, must be ruled out. In the absence of any kinship between Styrax and the members of the Tarcondimotid royal family, we are to assume that πατήρ is used as an honorific title for Styrax, expressing respect towards a high-ranking courtier who was close to the kings and likely older than them.<sup>94</sup> This and other court titles, such as τῶν πρώτων καὶ προτιμωμένων φίλων τοῦ βασιλέως, which is attested in another honorary inscription from Hierapolis Castabala,<sup>95</sup> were perhaps remnants of the old Seleucid occupation of Cilicia.<sup>96</sup>

Lastly, Josephus recounts that the Pharisees, who wanted to remove King Herod from the throne of Judaea and install his brother Pheroras in his place, enticed a certain Bagoas, a eunuch at Herod's court, into believing that he would be named "father" and "benefactor" of the person who, according to their predictions, would be appointed king.<sup>97</sup> Bagoas and the leaders of the Pharisaic conspiracy were executed by Herod in 5 BCE.

In the designation of Haman as the king's "second father," some scholars have seen references to biblical texts, such as Gen 45:8 (God made Joseph a father to Pharaoh, lord of all his house, and ruler over all the land of Egypt), Isa 22:21 (Eliakim will be a father to the people of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah), and 2 Chr 2:13, 4:16 (King Hiram proposes to send to Solomon the craftsman Hiram-abi—abi signifying "my father" or "my master [craftsman]"<sup>98</sup>).<sup>99</sup> The most relevant of these passages is Gen 45:8 (which in the LXX reads καὶ ἐποίησέν με [sc. ὁ θεὸς] ὡς πατέρα Φαραὼ καὶ κύριον παντὸς τοῦ οἴκου αὐτοῦ καὶ ἄρχοντα πάσης γῆς Αἰγύπτου), as Josephus' designation as "father to Pharaoh" and his position as "grand vizier" can readily be paralleled to that

<sup>93</sup> See Dagron and Feissel, *Inscriptions*, 70; Savalli-Lestrade, *Philoï*, 203.

<sup>94</sup> See Dagron and Feissel, *Inscriptions*, 69–70; Savalli-Lestrade, *Philoï*, 203; Wright, "Tarkondimotos," 84; Virgilio, "Esplorazioni," 283.

<sup>95</sup> Heberdey-Wilhelm, *Kilikien* 66, l. 3.

<sup>96</sup> The rank of τῶν πρώτων καὶ προτιμωμένων φίλων is indirectly attested for the Seleucid court; see Bikerman, *Institutions*, 41–42, and Muccioli, "Crisi," 260 with n. 26. The term τοπάρχης, which is attested in connection with King Tarcondimotus I, may also have been inherited from the Seleucid administration; see 2.5 below.

<sup>97</sup> Josephus, *AJ*. 17.45: ἦρτο δὲ ὁ Βαγώας ὑπ' αὐτῶν ὡς πατήρ τε καὶ εὐεργέτης ὀνομασθησόμενος τοῦ ἐπικατασταθησομένου προρρήσει βασιλέως.

<sup>98</sup> See Myers, *II Chronicles*, 10.

<sup>99</sup> See Bardtke, "Zusätze," 39 n. 6b; Kottsieper, "Zusätze," 157.

of Haman.<sup>100</sup> Josephus was promoted to that position because he saved Egypt from famine by interpreting Pharaoh's dream and by offering him his wise counsel. While Haman is praised by Artaxerxes for his sound judgment as a counsellor and for his loyalty (LXX Esth B:3), he neither saved the king's life, as Mordecai had done, nor, as far as we know from the Esther story, did he render any exceptional service to Persia. Considering that the analogies that some scholars have traced between the book of Esther and the story of Joseph in Genesis involve Joseph and Mordecai or Esther,<sup>101</sup> it would be unlikely that the gentile Haman's designation as "father" was intended as an allusion to the patriarch Joseph, unless we are to see it as a contrastive or ironic analogy.<sup>102</sup>

More relevant is the parallel with the sage Ahiqar, a high official in the service of the Assyrian kings Sennacherib and Esarhaddon. In the Aramaic version of the story of this sage, Ahiqar is said to have become "counsellor of all Assyria" and "keeper of the seal" for King Sennacherib. Even after falling from grace due to false accusations by his nephew and successor Nadin of conspiring to overthrow King Esarhaddon, he is addressed by the official Nabusumiskun, who owes him his life, as the "father of all Assyria, on whose counsel King Sennacherib and all the Assyrian army used to rely."<sup>103</sup> Ahiqar also features in the Book of Tobit, albeit in a slightly different guise: he is Tobit's nephew—therefore, a Jew—whom King Esarhaddon appoints as "second to himself" (1:22: κατέστησεν αὐτὸν ὁ Σαχερδονὸς ἐκ δευτέρας). Haman in Addition B to Esther enjoys a status similar to that of Ahiqar: he holds the second place in the kingdom; he is the most highly regarded counsellor of the king; he is honorifically called "father" of the king (though not of all Persia, unlike Ahiqar, who is addressed as "father of all Assyria"). It is noteworthy that in the Vaticanus/Alexandrinus version of Tobit, it is Haman, not Nadin, who frames Ahiqar and is eventually sentenced to death (14:10: ἴδε τί ἐποίησεν Ἀμὴν Ἀχιαχάρῳ ... καὶ Ἀχιάχαρος μὲν ἐσώθη, ἐκείνῳ δὲ τὸ ἀνταπόδομα ἀπεδόθη). This likely intentional twisting of the story indicates that

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<sup>100</sup> Vergote, *Joseph*, 114–15, maintains that the expression "father to Pharaoh" in Gen 45:8 is a transposition to Hebrew of the Egyptian title *it-ntr*, "father of god" (*ntr*, "god," being the king). This honorific is attested in the titlature of many viziers, high-ranking officials, and priests of the New Kingdom, who were assigned a fictive kinship with the king due to their high rank, advanced age, wisdom, or other exceptional qualities. If this interpretation is accepted, notes Vergote, "father of god" is equivalent to "counsellor of the king" and can be compared to the German *Geheimrat*. Cf. Gauger, *Beiträge*, 91–92.

<sup>101</sup> See Grossman, "Analogies," 397–99.

<sup>102</sup> See Grossman, "Analogies," 398–99.

<sup>103</sup> See Lindenberger, "Ahiqar," 494, 497.

the similarities between the court tale of Nadin and Ahiqar and that of Haman and Mordecai did not go unnoticed.

πατήρ is also attested as an honorific appellation given to a person of respect by the members of a community, rather than by a single royal individual. In Greek literary sources, it is used for prominent Persian, Jewish, Greek, and Roman kings, statesmen, and military commanders, and is often combined with the appellations σωτήρ (“saviour”) and/or εὐεργέτης (“benefactor”):<sup>104</sup> Cyrus the Elder was called “father” by the Persians because he cared for the welfare of his subjects;<sup>105</sup> Xenophon was called “father” and “benefactor” by his soldiers when they were in straits;<sup>106</sup> Pelopidas and Sulla were hailed as “fathers” and “saviours” by the citizens of their respective cities, just as L. Siccus Dentatus was by his soldiers;<sup>107</sup> the elder Razis, one of the victims of the Maccabean persecution, was called “father of the Jews” because of his goodwill towards his people.<sup>108</sup> The Latin title *pater/parens patriae*, rendered in Greek as πατήρ πατρίδος, was bestowed upon Cicero in 63 BCE, after he suppressed Catiline’s conspiracy,<sup>109</sup> upon Caesar in 44 BCE, upon Augustus in 2 BCE,<sup>110</sup> and subsequently upon all the Roman emperors who gained military victories and gave benefactions,

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<sup>104</sup> See Skard, “Pater,” 46–48. It may be noted here that all three appellations, πατήρ, σωτήρ, and εὐεργέτης, occur in Additions B and E to Esther but are used for different persons: the first is applied to Haman (LXX Esth B:6, E:11), while the latter two are used for Mordecai (LXX Esth E:13), who had saved the king’s life.

<sup>105</sup> Herodotus, *Hist.* 3.89: λέγουσι Πέρσαι ὡς ... Κῦρος [ἦν] πατήρ ... ὅτι ἡπιός τε καὶ ἀγαθὰ σφι πάντα ἐμχανήσατο; Xenophon, *Cyr.* 8.1.44: οὗτοι αὐτὸν [τὸν Κῦρον] ὥσπερ οἱ ἄριστοι πατέρα ἐκάλουν, ὅτι ἐπεμέλετο αὐτῶν; 8.2.9: τίς δ’ ἄλλος καταστρεψάμενος ἀρχὴν ὑπὸ τῶν ἀρχομένων πατήρ καλούμενος ἀπέθανεν ἢ Κῦρος; Diodorus Siculus, *Bibl.* 9:24.1: Κῦρος, ὡς φασιν, οὐ μόνον ἦν κατὰ τὸν πόλεμον ἀνδρεῖος, ἀλλὰ καὶ πρὸς τοὺς ὑποτεταγμένους εὐγνώμων καὶ φιλάνθρωπος, διόπερ αὐτὸν οἱ Πέρσαι προσηγόρευσαν πατέρα; cf. *ibid.*, 4.30.2. Cyrus is not designated as “father” in any Achaemenid inscription, which indicates that “father” never became an official title in Persia, as *pater patriae* did later in Rome; see Skard, “Pater,” 51 n. 5.

<sup>106</sup> Xenophon, *Anab.* 7.6.38: ὅτε γε ἐν τοῖς ἀπόροις ἦμεν ... πατέρα ἐμὲ ἐκαλεῖτε καὶ αἰεὶ ὡς εὐεργέτου μεμνήσεσθαι ὑποχνεῖσθε.

<sup>107</sup> Plutarch, *Pel.* 33.1: πατέρα καὶ σωτήρα ... ἀποκαλοῦντας ἐκείνον [τὸν Πελοπίδαν]; *Sull.* 34.1: σωτήρα καὶ πατέρα τὸν Σύλλαν ἀποκαλοῦντες; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 10.46.8: πατέρα καὶ σωτήρα καὶ θεὸν καὶ πάντα τὰ τιμώτατα ὀνομάζοντες [τὸν Σίγκιον]; cf. *ibid.*, 4.32.1 and 12.1.8.

<sup>108</sup> 2 Macc 14:37: κατὰ τὴν εὐνοίαν πατήρ τῶν Ἰουδαίων προσαγορευόμενος. Cf. 4 Macc 7:1, 5, 9, where the elderly martyr Eleazar is also designated as “father.” See Domazakis, *Neologisms*, 186–87 with n. 71.

<sup>109</sup> Plutarch, *Cic.* 23.6: ὥστε τιμὰς αὐτῷ [τῷ Κικέρωνι] τῶν πώποτε μεγίστας ψηφίσασθαι καὶ προσαγορεῦσαι πατέρα πατρίδος, πρῶτῳ γὰρ ἐκείνῳ δοκεῖ τοῦθ’ ὑπάρξαι.

<sup>110</sup> *Res gest. divi Aug.* 35: ἢ τε σύνκλητος καὶ τὸ ἱπικὸν τάγμα ὃ τε σύνπας δῆμος τῶν Ῥωμαίων προσηγόρευσέ με πατέρα πατρίδος.

while the Roman senators were from long ago called *patres* (πατέρες).<sup>111</sup> In LXX Esth B:6 and E:11, the plural genitive pronoun ἡμῶν, which modifies the noun πατήρ (δευτέρου πατρός/πατέρα ἡμῶν), is not to be understood as a collective plural—Haman being the “second father” of the Persians after King Artaxerxes, but rather as a plural of majesty.<sup>112</sup> The appellation/title πατήρ was conferred upon Haman by the king himself, who, by condemning his chief minister to death, committed an act of figurative patricide.

In conclusion, while the juxtaposition of the honorific πατήρ with the title ὁ ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων in LXX Esth B:6 suggests that the author of Addition B was acquainted with the Seleucid aulic titulature, it is not possible to identify a specific historical or literary model upon which the fictive Haman might have been based. The epistolary texts, in whose prescripts Zeuxis and Lasthenes are addressed as “fathers” of Kings Antiochus III and Demetrius II, respectively, do not mention the title of ὁ ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων, which, as we know from other sources, these Seleucid high officials bore (Zeuxis with certainty, Lasthenes presumably). Less likely but not to be excluded is the possibility that the author of Additions B and E had in mind a non-Seleucid historical figure, such as Metrodorus of Scepsis, or even a biblical one like Joseph.

## 2.4 σύμβουλοι

Bickerman includes the term οἱ σύμβουλοι, “the counsellors,” among the technical terms occurring in Greek Esther, which, as he argues, are “used in the Seleucid administration, but not in Egypt.” To support his argument, he refers to a letter of King Antiochus IV transmitted by Josephus (A.J. 12.263) and to Corradi’s *Studi ellenistici* (p. 243).<sup>113</sup>

The σύμβουλοι mentioned in LXX Esth B:3<sup>114</sup> are the counsellors whom King Artaxerxes asks for advice on how to promote the security, the peace, and the welfare of his subjects. Their number and names are not specified, but the most prominent

<sup>111</sup> Plutarch, *Rom.* 13.6: ἄχρι νῦν τοὺς ἐν συγκλήτῳ τελοῦντας οἱ μὲν ἔξωθεν ἄνδρας ἡγεμόνας καλοῦσιν, αὐτοὶ δὲ Ῥωμαῖοι πατέρας συγγεγραμμένους ... ἐν ἀρχῇ μὲν οὖν πατέρας αὐτοὺς μόνον, ὕστερον δὲ πλειόνων προσαναλαμβανομένων πατέρας συγγεγραμμένους προσηγόρευσαν. See Skard, “Pater,” 42–45, 62, 66–70.

<sup>112</sup> See 4.1.

<sup>113</sup> Bickerman, “Notes,” 250 n. 41.

<sup>114</sup> The same term occurs in AT Esth 3:16 and is reflected in VL Esth B:3 (*consiliariis*).



among them is said to be Haman, “the second to the king.” In the first chapter of LXX Esther, Haman is not listed among the three (seven in MT Esther) rulers of the Persians and Medes “who were close to the king and were seated first by the king” (1:14: οἱ ἐγγὺς τοῦ βασιλέως, οἱ πρῶτοι παρακαθήμενοι τῷ βασιλεῖ) and served as Artaxerxes’ legal advisors.<sup>115</sup> Later in the narrative, when Haman has been elevated above all the “Friends” of the king and holds the first place in the kingdom (3:1; cf. 5:11), he appears to be Artaxerxes’ most influential counsellor: acting on his own initiative, he advises the king to exterminate all his Jewish subjects (3:8–9), whereas later it is the king who consults him on how to honour Mordecai (6:6–10). Neither the rulers of the Persians and Medes nor Haman are designated as the king’s σύμβουλοι. It seems that the author of Addition B took his cue from the canonical text of LXX Esther for assigning to Haman the role of Artaxerxes’ counsellor but not for designating him as σύμβουλος.

The term σύμβουλος is not infrequent in the Septuagint. It occurs twenty-eight times, in eight of which it is used in conjunction with βασιλεύς, denoting a king’s counsellor.<sup>116</sup> In the Septuagint, more specifically in 1 Esdras, also occur the very rare noun συμβουλευτής and the substantivised present participle of the cognate verb συμβουλεύω, both used with reference to King Artaxerxes’ counsellors.<sup>117</sup> Artaxerxes’ Council of Seven mentioned in his letter to Esdras (Ezra 7:14; 1 Esd 8:11 par. 2 Esd 7:14) recalls the seven noblest Persians (Πέρσας τοὺς ἀρίστους τῶν περὶ αὐτὸν ἑπτὰ) whom, Xenophon (*Anab.* 1.6.4) tells us, Cyrus the Younger summoned as advisors in the trial of Orontas.<sup>118</sup> The septumvir in MT Esth 1:14 probably reflects the same tradition as Ezra 7:14, whereas its reduction to a triumvir in LXX Esth 1:14 may be due to the

<sup>115</sup> In MT Esth 1:14, the list of the princes of Persia and Media includes seven names, some of which are similar to those in the list of the eunuchs who attended the king at 1:10 and later advised him about the choice of a new queen (2:2–4). See Duchesne-Guillemin, “Noms.” In the LXX version of the latter list figures a eunuch named Haman; however, this Haman cannot be the same as the villain of the Esther story, who had begotten ten sons (LXX Esth 9:7–10).

<sup>116</sup> LXX 1 Chr 27:33; LXX 2 Chr 25:16; LXX Isa 19:11; 1 Esd 8:55; 2 Esd 7:14, 7:15, 7:28, 8:25.

<sup>117</sup> 1 Esd 8:11: τοῖς ἑπτὰ φίλοις συμβουλευταῖς; 8:26: ἔναντι τοῦ βασιλέως καὶ τῶν συμβουλευόντων καὶ πάντων τῶν φίλων καὶ μεγιστάνων αὐτοῦ.

<sup>118</sup> Xenophon does not use the term σύμβουλος with respect to the seven Persian nobles, but uses it with respect to the Greek general Clearchus, who was also summoned to attend the trial as an advisor (*Anab.* 1.6.5: Κλέαρχον δὲ ... παρεκάλεσε σύμβουλον; cf. 1.6.9: συμβουλεύω). Cyrus informs the seven nobles and Clearchus that he has summoned them to consult them on the fate of Orontas (*Anab.* 1.6.6: σὺν ὑμῖν βουλευόμενος). See also Herodotus, *Hist.* 5.24, where King Darius I asks Histiaeus, the tyrant of Miletus, to follow him to Susa and become his σύσιτος and σύμβουλος. See Briant, *Histoire*, 141–42, 319.

influence of sources such as 1 Esd 3:9 and LXX Dan 6:(3–4)2–3, which speak of three all-powerful ministers running the Persian kingdom under King Darius.<sup>119</sup>

For the mention of the Persian king's σύμβουλοι, the author of Addition B may be indebted to the second of the two letters of Artaxerxes quoted in 1 Esd 8:9–24 par. 2 Esd 7:12–26.<sup>120</sup> The two Artaxerxes documents quoted in 1 Esdras exhibit notable similarities to the two Artaxerxes documents embedded in LXX Esther and may in fact have influenced their composition.<sup>121</sup> In his letter to the Samaritan officials (1 Esd 2:22–24; 2 Esd 4:18–22), Artaxerxes orders the cessation of Jerusalem's rebuilding because he has received information that the city has long been hostile to foreign kings and that its people are prone to revolts and wars (1 Esd 2:22–23: ἐστὶν ἡ πόλις ἐκείνη ἐξ αἰῶνος βασιλεῦσιν ἀντιπαράτασσοῦσα καὶ οἱ ἄνθρωποι ἀποστάσεις καὶ πολέμους ἐν αὐτῇ συντελοῦντες). Similarly, in Addition B, Artaxerxes implements anti-Jewish measures because he is informed that the Jews, among other issues, constantly disregard the decrees of the kings (B:4: τὰ τῶν βασιλέων παραπέμποντας διηνεκῶς διατάγματα) and are continually hostile to all men (B:5: ἔθνος ... ἐν ἀντιπαγωγῇ παντὶ διὰ παντὸς ἀνθρώπῳ κείμενον). It is noteworthy that, to express the hostile disposition of the Jews, the kings in both letters employ military terms with the same prefixes, ἀντί + παρά (ἀντιπαράτασσω, ἀντιπαγωγῇ).

Artaxerxes' decree in the form of a letter addressed to Esdras in 1 Esd 8:9–24 also exhibits similarities to the royal documents in Additions B and E to Esther. In both the letter to Esdras and Addition E, the attitude of the Persian kings towards the Jews changes from negative to positive. Both kings now grant concessions to the Jews and honour their god, proclaiming him to be the ὑψιστος θεός, "the Most High God" (1 Esd 8:19, 21; LXX Esth E:16); in both letters, the kings emphasise their benevolence (1 Esd 8:10: καὶ τὰ φιλάνθρωπα ἐγὼ κρίνας; LXX Esth E:11: ἧς ἔχομεν ... φιλάνθρωπίας); both letters conclude with sanction clauses that threaten severe penalties for those who would disobey the royal commands. Moreover, in both the letter to Esdras and Addition B, the kings use the same verb of command (1 Esd 8:10, 19: προσέταξα; LXX Esth B:6: προστετάχαμεν)<sup>122</sup> and refer to consulting their counsellors (1 Esd 8:11:

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<sup>119</sup> See Milik, "Modèles," 369.

<sup>120</sup> See 4.2.5.

<sup>121</sup> It is uncertain whether the documents in Ezra 4:17–22/1 Esd 2:22–24 and Ezra 7:12–26/1 Esd 8:9–24 should be attributed to the same King Artaxerxes. Some scholars argue that the first was issued by Artaxerxes I and the second by Artaxerxes II. See 4.2.5, n. 51. On the identity of the King Artaxerxes in LXX Esther, see 1.1, n. 15.

<sup>122</sup> In his letter to the Samaritan officials, Artaxerxes uses the verb ἐπιτάσσω instead (1 Esd 2:22, 24).

καθάπερ δέδοκται ἐμοί τε καὶ τοῖς ἐπτά φίλοις συμβουλευταῖς; LXX Esth B:3: πυθομένου δέ μου τῶν συμβούλων).<sup>123</sup> These similarities suggest that, when composing Additions B and E, their author may have had the Artaxerxes documents in 1 Esdras in mind, if not within reach.

It remains to examine whether Bickerman's claim that the term σύμβουλος in Addition B specifically reflects the Seleucid rather than the Ptolemaic administrative language holds true. The Seleucid document that he cites is a letter from King Antiochus IV to Nicanor from 166 BCE, which is not known outside Josephus. In the study that he devoted to it, Bickerman considers it authentic.<sup>124</sup> In this letter, the king refers to a council that he held with his "Friends": [A.J. 12.263] συμβουλευομένοις ἡμῖν μετὰ τῶν φίλων. Bickerman remarks that "these words would be incomprehensible in an administrative letter written under the Caesars, but they were perfectly natural in a Seleucid text."<sup>125</sup> In his *Institutions des Séleucides*, he further states that "le monarque en référait à ses amis dans toutes les circonstances graves et ne prenait aucune décision importante sans avoir demandé l'avis des amis."<sup>126</sup> Although this is supported by a number of ancient literary sources, it should be noted that in the texts which Bickerman refers to occur the terms οἱ φίλοι, οἱ ἐν τῷ συνεδρίῳ, and the collective terms συνέδριον and διαβούλιον, but nowhere is the term σύμβουλος used with respect to a Seleucid royal *philos*. There occur, however, the cognate terms

<sup>123</sup> The term used in 1 Esd 8:11 (συμβουλευταί) is not the same as that which occurs in LXX Esth B:3 (σύμβουλοι); however, the translator of 1 Esdras elsewhere uses the term σύμβουλοι (8:55) as well as the term οἱ συμβουλευόντες (8:26) with respect to Artaxerxes' counsellors. The translator of 2 Esdras uses only the term σύμβουλοι (7:14, 15, 28; 8:25). In 1 Esdras, the king's counsellors belong to the class of "Friends" (8:11: τοῖς ἐπτά φίλοις συμβουλευταῖς; 8:13: ἐγώ τε καὶ οἱ φίλοι); in Addition B to Esther, the participants in the royal council are designated as σύμβουλοι but not as "Friends"; however, Haman is implicitly designated as one of the king's "Friends" in LXX Esth E:5 and explicitly in LXX Esth 3:1.

<sup>124</sup> Bickerman, "Proclamation," 401–3.

<sup>125</sup> Bickerman, "Proclamation," 384.

<sup>126</sup> Bickerman, *Institutions*, 48; cf. *ibid.*, 188–90.

συμβουλευώ, συμβουλή, and συμβουλία.<sup>127</sup> In a late source not cited by Bickerman, 4 Maccabees, we also find the term συμβούλιον used of Antiochus IV's council.<sup>128</sup>

Bickerman also refers to Corradi's *Studi ellenistici*, a chapter of which is devoted to the *synedrion* of the Hellenistic kings. Corradi emphasises that the *synedrion*, the royal council, was not an exclusively Macedonian and Hellenistic institution, as it is attested at different times and independently of one another in Persia, in Sicily, and in Rome.<sup>129</sup> With regard to the Hellenistic kingdoms, Corradi clarifies that the *synedrion* of the king's *philoï* is attested not only in the Seleucid but also in the Attalid and Ptolemaic kingdoms.<sup>130</sup>

For the kingdom of Pergamum, the Italian scholar cites a letter of Attalus II to the priest Attis (Welles, *RC* no. 61 [158–156 BCE]), in which the king relates that he convened his state council. This council consisted of his cousin (rather than his brother) Athenaeus, his “foster brother” (σύντροφος) Sosander, and Menogenes, who had been the “prime minister” (ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων) of Eumenes II, along with many others of his “familiars” (ἀναγκαῖοι). Among these, a certain Chlorus receives special mention for his counsel (l. 9: συμβουλευόν), which ultimately won the day.<sup>131</sup>

For the Ptolemaic kingdom, Corradi cites Josephus, who relates that during the reign of Ptolemy VI Philometor (180–145 BCE), the Jews and the Samaritans residing in Alexandria asked the king to convene his council of *philoï* to resolve their conflict

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<sup>127</sup> [Reign of Antiochus III] Polybius, *Hist.* 5.41.6–7: ἀθροισθέντος δὲ τοῦ συνεδρίου ... καὶ πρώτου συμβουλευόντος Ἐπιγένους; 5.42.2: φανερόν ἐκ τῆς συμβουλῆς γεγονέναι; 5.49.1–2: πάλιν ἀθροισθέντος τοῦ συνεδρίου ... κατὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ συμβουλίαν; 5.50.7: οἱ μὲν οὖν ἐν τῷ συνεδρίῳ; 5.58.2: [ὁ βασιλεὺς] ἀνέδωκε τοῖς φίλοις διαβούλιον; 8.21.2: καθίσαντος δὲ τοῦ συνεδρίου; 8.23.3: οἱ μὲν οὖν πιστοὶ τῶν φίλων ... συνεβούλευον; 18.50.4: γενομένης συνεδρείας κοινῆς; Diodorus Siculus, *Bibl.* 28.12: εἰσαχθέντες δὲ [οἱ πρέσβεις] εἰς τὸ συνέδριον; Josephus, *A.J.* 12.148: βουλευσαμένῳ μοι μετὰ τῶν φίλων; Livy, *Urb. cond.* 35.17.3: Rex ... *consilium de bello Romano habuit*; [Reign of Antiochus V] 1 Macc 6:28: [ὁ βασιλεὺς] συνήγαγε πάντας τοὺς φίλους αὐτοῦ; [Reign of Demetrius I] 2 Macc 14:5: προσκληθεὶς εἰς συνέδριον ὑπὸ τοῦ Δημητρίου; [Reign of Antiochus VII] Posidonius, *FGH Hist* 87, F 109=Diodorus Siculus, *Bibl.* 34/35.1.1: οἱ δὲ πλείους αὐτῷ τῶν φίλων συνεβούλευον; Diodorus Siculus, *Bibl.* 34/35.16: τῶν τοῦ Ἀντίοχου φίλων παρακαλούντων ... ὁ Ἀντίοχος οὐδενὶ τρόπῳ προσεδέχετο τοὺς λόγους. On the Seleucid royal council, see Corradi, *Studi*, 240–43, 250–51; Mooren, “Kings,” 127, 129–30; Savalli-Lestrade, *Philoï*, 359; Capdetrey, *Pouvoir*, 278–80, 388–89.

<sup>128</sup> 4 Macc 5:1: προκαθίσας γέ τοι μετὰ τῶν συνέδρων ὁ τύραννος Ἀντίοχος; 17:17: αὐτός γέ τοι ὁ τύραννος καὶ ὅλον τὸ συμβούλιον.

<sup>129</sup> See Corradi, *Studi*, 232–35.

<sup>130</sup> See Corradi, *Studi*, 239.

<sup>131</sup> See Corradi, *Studi*, 245–47; Virgilio, *Lancia*, 138–39; Savalli-Lestrade, *Philoï*, 135–37, 138, 146–47, 148; ead., “Élaboration,” 24.

regarding the relative legitimacy of the temples in Jerusalem and on Mt. Gerizim.<sup>132</sup> He also cites Polybius, who reports that in 169 BCE, Philometor's ministers Comanus and Cineas, along with the king, convoked the *synedrion* and decided to summon a council of the most distinguished leaders of the army to deliberate on how to address Antiochus IV's invasion in Egypt.<sup>133</sup> Although there is no explicit mention of the royal *philoï* attending this *synedrion*, Corradi posits that many of those who took part in it were members of that class.<sup>134</sup> In three sources not cited by Corradi, we find the only instances of the term οἱ σύμβουλοι used with reference to the counsellors of two Hellenistic kings, more specifically Ptolemaic ones. Teles tells us of three exiles, the Lacedaemonian Hippomedon, and the Athenian brothers Chremonides and Glaucon, who fled to Egypt and became coadjutors (πάρεδροι) and counsellors (σύμβουλοι) of King Ptolemy II Philadelphus;<sup>135</sup> in the *Letter of Aristeeas*, King Ptolemy II asks a Jewish elder who should be appointed as royal counsellors (§ 264: τίσι δεῖ συμβούλοις χρῆσθαι);<sup>136</sup> and Plutarch (*Pomp.* 77) relates that the eunuch Potheinus, Theodotus of Chios, and Achillas the Egyptian were the chief counsellors (κορυφαιότατοι ... σύμβουλοι) of the boy King Ptolemy XIII, who in a council (βουλή) convened by Potheinus in 48 BCE decided the fate of Pompey.

Lastly, Corradi points out that even the Roman emperors had a political *synedrion* similar to that attested in the Hellenistic monarchies, as can be seen, for instance, from Josephus, who writes that in 4 BCE Augustus convened the council of his *philoï* to give advice on the succession to Herod's throne.<sup>137</sup>

As can be seen from the above, the participants in the Hellenistic royal councils seem to have had no specific designation.<sup>138</sup> In the relevant literary sources, they are

<sup>132</sup> Josephus, *A.J.* 13.75: παρεκάλεσάν τε σὺν τοῖς φίλοις καθίσαντα τὸν βασιλέα τοὺς περὶ τούτων ἀκοῦσαι λόγους; 13.76: ὁ μὲν οὖν βασιλεὺς πολλοὺς τῶν φίλων εἰς συμβουλίαν παραλαβὼν ἐκάθισεν ἀκουσόμενος τῶν λεγόντων. See Corradi, *Studi*, 243–44.

<sup>133</sup> Polybius, *Hist.* 28.19.1: ἔδοξε τοῖς περὶ τὸν Κομανὸν καὶ Κινέαν συνεδρεῦσασιν μετὰ τοῦ βασιλέως κοινοβούλιον καταγράφειν ἐκ τῶν ἐπιφανεστάτων ἡγεμόνων τὸ βουλευσόμενον περὶ τῶν ἐνεστῶτων. See Corradi, *Studi*, 244–45.

<sup>134</sup> Corradi, *Studi*, 245. On the Ptolemaic *synedrion*, see also Polybius, *Hist.* 5.35.7, 16.22.10, 18.53.5, and 18.54.1–3. Savalli-Lestrade, “Élaboration,” 22–23, further cites Welles, *RC* no. 14 [letter of Ptolemy II; 262 BCE], ll. 8–10, and *FGrHist* 160 F 1 [war bulletin of Ptolemy III (?); 246 BCE], col. 4, ll. 10–12.

<sup>135</sup> Teles, fr. 3, p. 23, ll. 11–12 (ed. Hense<sup>2</sup>).

<sup>136</sup> Cf. Let. Aris. § 125: συμβουλευόντων ... τῶν φίλων.

<sup>137</sup> Josephus, *A.J.* 17.229: [ὁ Καῖσαρ] συνῆγεν ἐπὶ παροκωχῇ γνωμῶν τοὺς φίλους ... καὶ κελεύει λέγειν τοῖς βουλομένοις περὶ τῶν ἐνεστηκότων; cf. *A.J.* 16.163 [edict of Augustus renewing privileges granted to the Jews by Julius Caesar; 12 BCE]: ἔδοξε μοι καὶ τῷ ἐμῷ συμβουλίῳ. See Corradi, *Studi*, 248, 255; Pucci Ben Zeev, *Rights*, 240.

<sup>138</sup> See Corradi, *Studi*, 254–55.

referred to simply as οἱ φίλοι, οἱ σύμβουλοι or οἱ ἐν τῷ συνεδρίῳ and, thrice, in a Ptolemaic context, as οἱ σύμβουλοι. The latter term, contra Bickerman, is not specifically associated with the Seleucid court and, therefore, cannot be included among the terms that attest to the Seleucid “flavour” of Additions B and E to Esther.

Another point that has to be stressed is that mentions of councils held by Hellenistic kings are not infrequent in Greek literary sources but are rare in royal epistolary documents transmitted epigraphically or quoted in literary texts. This can be explained by the fact that the deliberations between a king and his counsellors were normally held in private, with the king alone having the final say and making his decision public.<sup>139</sup> The only epigraphically preserved royal letter that mentions a royal council, that of King Attalus II to the priest Attis (Welles, RC no. 61), was part of a secret and confidential correspondence that was inscribed on stone and made public a century and a half after it was exchanged between the parties involved.<sup>140</sup> Apart from the fictional letter of Artaxerxes in Addition B to Esther and the decree of Artaxerxes in 1 Esdras, the only royal letters quoted in literary texts that record the king deliberating with his counsellors are those of Antiochus III to Zeuxis and of Antiochus IV to Nicanor, as reproduced by Josephus (A.J. 12.138–153 and 12.162–163, respectively). Gauger, who has questioned the authenticity of Antiochus III’s letter to Zeuxis,<sup>141</sup> lists the phrase βουλευσαμένῳ μοι μετὰ τῶν φίλων, τί δεῖ ποιεῖν (A.J. 12.149) among the “unproblematische passagen” of this letter.<sup>142</sup> Savalli-Lestrade, on the other hand, considers the mentions of the royal counsellors in both the letter of Antiochus III and that of Antiochus IV to be interpolations.<sup>143</sup> The fact that the aforementioned phrase from the letter of Antiochus III—duplicated in the letter of Antiochus IV, where βουλεύομαι has been replaced by συμβουλεύομαι—occurs

<sup>139</sup> See Bickerman, *Institutions*, 190; Mooren, *Titulature*, 128, 131; Savalli-Lestrade, “Élaboration,” 25–26.

<sup>140</sup> See Welles, *Correspondence*, xli and 247; Mooren, *Titulature*, 132 n. 38; Bencivenni, “Words,” 154. One may also cite the letter of Seleucus II to Miletus (Welles, RC no. 22; 246 BCE), in which the young king refers to a briefing that he received from his father’s *philoi* (l. 9: παραθέντων ἡμῖν τῶν πατρικῶν φίλων), who apparently served as his advisors.

<sup>141</sup> See 2.3 above.

<sup>142</sup> See Gauger, *Beiträge*, 49.

<sup>143</sup> See Savalli-Lestrade, “Élaboration,” 24–25; but see Capdetrey, *Pouvoir*, 387.

frequently in Greek historiographical texts<sup>144</sup> but has no parallel in authentic Seleucid letters<sup>145</sup> lends weight to Savalli-Lestrade's doubts.

The letter of Antiochus III to Zeuxis (209–205 BCE), which deals with the relocation of 2,000 Jewish families from Mesopotamia and Babylonia to Phrygia and Lydia, is especially relevant to our discussion because, like the letter of Artaxerxes to Esdras in 1 Esdras, it has lexical and phraseological points of contact with Additions B and E to Esther. Antiochus addresses Zeuxis, his ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων in cis-Tauric Asia Minor, as “father” (A.J. 12.148); Artaxerxes uses the same appellation for his ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων, Haman (LXX Esth B:6; E:11);<sup>146</sup> Antiochus, adopting a Jewish-friendly policy, allows the Jews to live according to their own laws (A.J. 12.150: νόμοις αὐτοὺς χρῆσθαι τοῖς ἰδίοις); Artaxerxes in his second letter grants the same permission (LXX Esth E:19: ἔαν τοὺς Ἰουδαίους χρῆσθαι τοῖς ἑαυτῶν νομίμοις); both kings emphasise their φιλανθρωπία (A.J. 12.152: τῆς παρ’ ἡμῶν τυγχάνοντες φιλανθρωπίας; LXX Esth E:11: ἔτυχεν ἥς ἔχομεν πρὸς πᾶν ἔθνος φιλανθρωπίας; 1 Esd 8:10: καὶ τὰ φιλάνθρωπα ἐγὼ κρίνας<sup>147</sup>); and both kings refer to their counsellors, designated as φίλοι in the former letter and as σύμβουλοι in the latter. While it cannot be excluded that the author of Additions B and E knew a version of the letter of Antiochus III to Zeuxis,<sup>148</sup> the absence of the term σύμβουλος, or of one of its cognates, in that letter, and the presence of the term συμβουλευτής in the letter of Artaxerxes to Esdras, make the latter letter a stronger candidate for the source from which the author of Additions B and E might have derived the reference to Artaxerxes’ counsellors and the term οἱ σύμβουλοι in LXX Esth B:3.

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<sup>144</sup> See Polybius, *Hist.* 5.2.1: τῷ δὲ βασιλεῖ βουλευομένῳ μετὰ τῶν φίλων; 5.4.13: [ὁ βασιλεὺς] ἐβουλευέτο μετὰ τῶν φίλων; 5.22.8: [ὁ Φίλιππος] βουλευσάμενος μετὰ τῶν φίλων; Diodorus Siculus, *Bibl.* 12.4.4: Ἀρταξέρξης δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς ... βουλευσάμενος μετὰ τῶν φίλων; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 19.13.3: Πύρρος δὲ μετὰ τῶν φίλων βουλευσάμενος; Nicolaus of Damascus, *FGHist* F 130, 11–12: βουλευομένῳ δὲ Καίσαρι μετὰ τῶν φίλων.

<sup>145</sup> The verbs βουλεύω and συμβουλεύω occur only in three Attalid royal letters (Welles, *RC* no. 23, l. 19; no. 29, l. 2; no. 61, ll. 5–6, 9).

<sup>146</sup> See 2.3 above.

<sup>147</sup> This phrase has no counterpart in the MT. The term τὰ φιλάνθρωπα, common in the Hellenistic period, especially in Ptolemaic Egypt, is used anachronistically here as a designation for the benefits that the king confers upon his subjects. See Kortenbeutel, “Philanthropon,” cols. 1032–34.

<sup>148</sup> It is possible that this letter, along with the other two documents of Antiochus III quoted consecutively by Josephus (A.J. 12.138–144, 12.145–146, 12.148–153), formed part of a dossier compiled in the first century BCE. See Eckhardt, “Memories,” 256–57. Honigman, “Decree,” argues that the Persian documents quoted in Ezra-Nehemiah and in 1 Esdras depend on the first of the three documents included in this presumed dossier.

## 2.5 τοπάρχης

The term τοπάρχης occurs in the prescript of the LXX version of Artaxerxes' condemnation letter. The king addresses his letter to two categories of subordinate officials, the rulers of the 127 lands of the Persian kingdom and the toparchs:

LXX Esth B:1: τοῖς ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰνδικῆς ἕως τῆς Αἰθιοπίας ἑκατὸν εἴκοσι ἑπτὰ χωρῶν ἄρχουσιν καὶ τοπάρχαις ὑποτεταγμένοις

In the Alpha Text, the addressees of the royal letter are the rulers of the 127 lands and the satraps:

AT Esth 3:14 [=B:1]: τοῖς ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰνδικῆς ἕως τῆς Αἰθιοπίας ἑκατὸν καὶ εἴκοσι καὶ ἑπτὰ χωρῶν ἄρχουσι καὶ σατράπαις

The prescript of Artaxerxes' letter in the *Vetus Latina* of Esther is more expansive. The addressees are the rulers of the 127 lands and the satraps, those who are truly and properly of the same mind as the king:

VL(R) Esth B:1: *eis qui in India usque Ethiopiam CXXVII regionibus principibus et satrapis* [MS 130 adds here *et locorum praefectis*, which corresponds to the phrase καὶ τοπάρχαις found in the LXX]<sup>149</sup> *subditis hiis qui vere qui proprie sentiunt quae in nos*

In his version of Artaxerxes' letter, Josephus names only the rulers of the 127 satrapies:

A.J. 11.216: τοῖς ἀπὸ Ἰνδικῆς ἕως τῆς Αἰθιοπίας ἑπτὰ καὶ εἴκοσι καὶ ἑκατὸν σατραπειῶν ἄρχουσι

The prescript of LXX Addition B takes its cue from the preceding canonical narrative (LXX Esth 3:12), where it is specified that the addressees of the royal letter are the *strategoí* (τοῖς στρατηγοῖς), the rulers of the 127 lands from India to Ethiopia (τοῖς

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<sup>149</sup> See Motzo, "Versione," [143–44] 285–86; Haelewyck, "Version," 295.



ἄρχουσιν κατὰ πᾶσαν χώραν ἀπὸ Ἰνδικῆς ἕως τῆς Αἰθιοπίας, ταῖς ἑκατὸν εἴκοσι ἑπτὰ χώραις), and the rulers of the nations (τοῖς τε ἄρχουσι τῶν ἐθνῶν).<sup>150</sup> The corresponding verse in the MT mentions the king's satraps, the governors over all the provinces, and the officials of all the peoples.

The prescript of the king's countermanding letter in Addition E mentions the rulers of the lands in the 127 satrapies and those loyal to the government (LXX), the rulers of the 127 lands and the satraps who are loyal to the government (AT), the 127 satraps governing the peoples (VL), but not the toparchs:

LXX Esth E:1: τοῖς ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰνδικῆς ἕως τῆς Αἰθιοπίας ἑκατὸν εἴκοσι ἑπτὰ σατραπείαις χωρῶν ἄρχουσιν καὶ τοῖς τὰ ἡμέτερα φρονοῦσιν AT Esth 7:22 [=E:1]: τοῖς ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰνδικῆς ἕως τῆς Αἰθιοπίας ἑκατὸν καὶ εἴκοσι καὶ ἑπτὰ χωρῶν ἄρχουσι καὶ σατράπαις τοῖς τὰ ἡμέτερα φρονοῦσι VL(R) Esth E:1: *his qui ab India usque Ethiopiam CXXVII satrapis gentium imperantibus*

The canonical narrative that precedes LXX Addition E (LXX Esth 8:9) relates that the royal secretaries wrote to the Jews what the king had commanded to the stewards (τοῖς οἰκονόμοις) and the chiefs of the satraps ... in the 127 satrapies (καὶ τοῖς ἄρχουσιν τῶν σατραπῶν ... ἑκατὸν εἴκοσι ἑπτὰ σατραπείαις).

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<sup>150</sup> This verse has no counterpart in AT Esther.

The table below lists the officials to whom the king's letters are addressed in the different versions of Esther at 3:12, 8:9, B:1, and E:1:

MT Esth 3:12 (trans. NRSV)	to the king's satraps	and to the governors over all the provinces	and to the officials of all the peoples
LXX Esth 3:12	τοῖς στρατηγοῖς	καὶ τοῖς ἄρχουσιν κατὰ πᾶσαν χώραν ἀπὸ Ἰνδικῆς ἕως τῆς Αἰθιοπίας, ταῖς ἑκατὸν εἴκοσι ἑπτὰ χώραις	τοῖς τε ἄρχουσιν τῶν ἐθνῶν
VL (R) Esth 3:12	<i>et scribis et ducibus regis</i>	<i>et principibus per omnem regionem ab India usque in Ethiopiam CXXVII regionibus</i>	<i>uniuscuiusque loci praepositis gentium</i>
LXX Esth B:1		τοῖς ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰνδικῆς ἕως τῆς Αἰθιοπίας ἑκατὸν εἴκοσι ἑπτὰ χωρῶν ἄρχουσιν	καὶ τοπάρχαις ὑποτεταγμένοις
AT Esth 3:14 [=B:1]	καὶ σατράπαις <sup>2</sup>	τοῖς ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰνδικῆς ἕως τῆς Αἰθιοπίας ἑκατὸν καὶ εἴκοσι καὶ ἑπτὰ χωρῶν ἄρχουσι <sup>1</sup> <sup>151</sup>	
VL(R) Esth B:1	<i>et satrapis subditis<sup>2</sup></i>	<i>eis qui in India usque Ethiopiam CXXVII regionibus principibus<sup>1</sup></i>	[MS VL 130: <i>et locorum praeffectis</i> ] <i>hiis qui vere qui proprie sentiant quae in nos<sup>3</sup></i>
MT Esth 8:9 (trans. NRSV)	to the satraps	and the governors and the officials of the provinces from India to Ethiopia, one hundred twenty-seven provinces	
LXX Esth 8:9		καὶ τοῖς ἄρχουσιν τῶν σατραπῶν ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰνδικῆς ἕως τῆς Αἰθιοπίας, ἑκατὸν εἴκοσι ἑπτὰ σατραπείαις κατὰ χώραν καὶ χώραν <sup>2</sup>	τοῖς οἰκονόμοις <sup>1</sup>
VL(R) Esth 8:9		<i>et principibus satrapum ab India usque ad Ethiopiam centum viginti septem satrapis gentium imperantibus<sup>2</sup></i>	<i>actoribus<sup>1</sup></i>
LXX Esth E:1		τοῖς ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰνδικῆς ἕως τῆς Αἰθιοπίας ἑκατὸν εἴκοσι ἑπτὰ σατραπείαις χωρῶν ἄρχουσιν	καὶ τοῖς τὰ ἡμέτερα φρονοῦσιν
AT Esth 7:22 [=E:1]	καὶ σατράπαις τοῖς τὰ ἡμέτερα φρονοῦσι <sup>2</sup>	τοῖς ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰνδικῆς ἕως τῆς Αἰθιοπίας ἑκατὸν καὶ εἴκοσι καὶ ἑπτὰ χωρῶν ἄρχουσι <sup>1</sup>	
VL(R) Esth E:1	<i>CXXVII satrapis gentium imperantibus</i>	<i>his qui ab India usque Ethiopiam</i>	

<sup>151</sup> The superscripts indicate the order in which the official titles are given in the text.

On the basis of this table, the following remarks can be made:

MT Esth 3:12 lists officials of three ranks, from the highest-ranked (satraps) to the lowest-ranked (officials of the peoples, viz. ethnarchs or tribal chieftains).<sup>152</sup> LXX Esth 3:12 also lists three ranks of officials, but instead of the expected σατράπαι uses the term στρατηγοί, while it elaborates on the middle rank: the generic “governors over all the provinces” of the MT becomes the more geographically and numerically precise “rulers of every land from India to Ethiopia, the 127 lands.” LXX Esth B:1 omits the satraps/*strategoi*, retains the “rulers of the 127 lands from India to Ethiopia,” and instead of the “officials of all the peoples/rulers of the nations” mentions the toparchs; the participle ὑποτεταγμένοις modifies either solely the τοπάρχαις (the toparchs are subordinate to the rulers of the 127 lands) or, more likely, both the τοπάρχαις and the τοῖς ... χωρῶν ἄρχουσι (both the toparchs and the rulers of the 127 lands are subordinate to the king).<sup>153</sup> Both AT Esth 3:14 [=B:1] and VL Esth B:1 mention the rulers of the 127 lands and the satraps in the same order: the latter are named after the former. It is only MS VL 130 (*Monacensis* 6239) that at B:1 lists the officials named in LXX Esth B:1, plus the satraps listed in MT Esth 3:12 and in AT Esth 3:14; here, too, the satraps come after the rulers of the 127 lands. Thus, the composers of the Alpha Text and the Greek *Vorlage* of the *Vetus Latina* of Esther appear to have regarded the satraps as occupying a lower rank than the rulers of the 127 lands.

It should be noted here that in the canonical part of LXX Esther, the administrative terminology and the hierarchy of the officials are somewhat blurred. At 1:1 we read that Artaxerxes ruled over 127 “countries/lands” (ἐκατὸν εἴκοσι ἑπτὰ χωρῶν ἐκράτησεν) and at 8:9 that letters were written to the 127 “satrapies” (ἐκατὸν εἴκοσι ἑπτὰ σατραπείαις). We are thus to understand “lands” (χώραι) and “satrapies” (σατραπείαι) as synonymous terms. Accordingly, we would have expected the rulers of the 127 lands/satrapies to be designated as “satraps.” However, at 3:12 we encounter a periphrastic expression instead: τοῖς ἄρχουσιν κατὰ πᾶσαν χώραν ἀπὸ Ἰνδικῆς ἕως Αἰθιοπίας, ταῖς ἐκατὸν εἴκοσι ἑπτὰ χώραις. We can only assume that these ἄρχοντες of the 127 χώραι are satraps. At 1:3, 8:9, and 9:3 we find one more periphrastic term, οἱ ἄρχοντες τῶν σατραπῶν, “the chiefs of the satraps.” On the basis of the above-cited list of officials at 3:12, we may assume that the “chiefs of the

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<sup>152</sup> See Clines, *Scroll*, 46.

<sup>153</sup> Cf. 1 Esd 3:2: Δαρεῖος ἐποίησεν δοχὴν ... πᾶσιν τοῖς σατράπαις καὶ στρατηγοῖς καὶ τοπάρχαις τοῖς ὑπ’ αὐτόν; cf. also Ps.-Callisthenes, *Hist. Alex.* 1.39.8: Βασιλεὺς βασιλέων θεὸς μέγας Δαρεῖος Ὑδάσπῃ καὶ Σπινθῆρι καὶ τοῖς ὑπ’ ἐμὲ σατράπαις χαίρειν. Elsewhere in Additions B and E (B:2; E:3), the substantivised participle οἱ ὑποτεταγμένοι is used to refer to the king’s subjects.

satraps” are the *strategoí*, who in LXX Esth 3:12 are mentioned before the “rulers of the 127 lands,” viz. the satraps, and the “rulers of the nations.” Alternatively, we may surmise that the translator of Esther had in mind some kind of “super-satraps,” like the three “presidents” (ἡγούμενοι) that King Darius set over the 127 satraps of his kingdom.<sup>154</sup> A third possibility is that the 127 “lands” were subdivisions of no more than twenty to thirty satrapies (about which I will talk further below) and that the “chiefs of the satraps” were at the head of these superior administrative units, having the “rulers of the lands” (who were also called “satraps”) as their subordinates. It is more likely, though, that the genitive σατραπῶν in the combination ἄρχοντες τῶν σατραπῶν resulted from a scribal error (the original reading being σατραπειῶν),<sup>155</sup> considering that in all its instances in LXX Esther (1:3; 8:9; 9:3), σατραπῆς renders מְדִינָה (“province”).<sup>156</sup>

The above issue creates a discrepancy between the prescript of LXX Addition E, in which the addressees of the royal letter are termed as “rulers of the lands, in the 127 satrapies,” and the immediately preceding text (LXX Esth 8:9), where the addressees are termed as “chiefs of the satraps, in the 127 satrapies.” Both verses speak of 127 satrapies, but the “chiefs of the satraps” cannot apparently be the same as the “rulers of the lands.” This, together with the fact that both LXX Esth B:1 and E:1 omit, or designate by a different title, officials that are named as addressees of the royal letter in the preceding canonical narrative (στρατηγοί, ἄρχοντες τῶν ἔθνων, οἰκονόμοι) and adds addressees that are not named elsewhere in the canonical narrative (τοπάρχαι and οἱ τὰ ἡμέτερα φρονούντες), may indicate that LXX Additions B and E were not written by the same person who translated the canonical part of LXX Esther or may be the result of subsequent redaction. In the Alpha Text, there are no such inconsistencies, as the same titles of officials (ἄρχοντες χωρῶν and σατράπαι) are mentioned in the same order at both B:1 and E:1 and also elsewhere (7:42: οἱ ἄρχοντες καὶ οἱ τύραννοι καὶ οἱ σατράπαι καὶ οἱ βασιλικοὶ γραμματεῖς). In the *Vetus Latina* of Esther, there is a discrepancy between B:1, which states that the king’s letter is sent

<sup>154</sup> LXX Dan 6:(2)1–(3)2: καὶ Δαρεῖος ... κατέστησε σατράπας ἑκατὸν εἴκοσι ἑπτὰ ἐπὶ πάσης τῆς βασιλείας αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐπ’ αὐτῶν ἄνδρας τρεῖς ἡγουμένους αὐτῶν.

<sup>155</sup> Only MS 71 preserves the reading σαπατριων (*sic*) at 8:9. Cf. Josephus, *A.J.* 11.185, 11.216, 11.272, 11.287.

<sup>156</sup> See Kahana, *Esther*, 4, 11. The combination ἄρχων (τῶν) σατραπῶν elsewhere occurs only in Dan<sup>Th</sup> 2:48: κατέστησεν αὐτὸν [sc. τὸν Δανιηλ] ἐπὶ πάσης χώρας Βαβυλώνης καὶ ἄρχοντα σατραπῶν ἐπὶ πάντας τοὺς σοφοὺς Βαβυλώνης, and in Jos. Asen. 1.3: οὗτος [sc. ὁ Πεντεφρῆς] ἦν ἄρχων πάντων τῶν σατραπῶν καὶ τῶν μεγιστάνων τοῦ Φαραώ.

“to the 127 districts, to the chief-officials, and the subordinate satraps,” and E:1, which has the letter addressed “to the 127 satraps governing the peoples.”<sup>157</sup>

Ancient literary and documentary sources give no support to the book of Esther’s assertion that King Ahasuerus’ [=Xerxes I?]/Artaxerxes’ kingdom consisted of 127 “provinces” (MT Esth 1:1; 8:9; 9:30)/“lands” (LXX Esth 1:1; 3:12; B:1)/“satrapies” (LXX Esth 8:9; E:1), or to 1 Esdras’ and LXX Daniel’s similar claims that King Darius’ kingdom comprised 127 satrapies (1 Esd 3:2), over which he set 127 satraps (LXX Dan 6:[2]1; 6:[4]3).<sup>158</sup> Herodotus (*Hist.* 3.89) states that Darius I divided his empire into twenty administrative units called satrapies (σατραπείαι), to which he appointed governors (ἄρχοντες). The Achaemenid royal inscriptions provide higher, albeit divergent, numbers of the *dahyāva* (lands, countries) subject to Darius I and Xerxes I: the former’s inscriptions at Bisitun (DB §6), Persepolis (DPe §2), Susa (DSe §3), and on his tomb at Naqš-e Rostam (DNa §3) list 23, 25, 27, and 29 lands, respectively, while the latter’s inscription at Persepolis (XPh §3) lists 30 lands.<sup>159</sup> Although these inscriptions speak of *dahyāva* rather than “satrapies,” the lands/countries listed in them largely correspond to those designated as “satrapies” in the Greek sources.<sup>160</sup>

The term σατράπης, as used in Greek literary and epigraphic sources, exhibits imprecision and fluidity. As Jacobs notes, it is applied to officials of different rank and seems to have had the general meaning of “governor”: “a satrap can be defined as the highest official of a particular administrative area, irrespective of its hierarchical level.”<sup>161</sup> Accordingly, we may assume that the governors of the 127 satrapies mentioned in LXX Esther and in 1 Esdras, and the 127 satraps mentioned in LXX Daniel, ruled over “satrapies” that did not belong to the same level in the administrative hierarchy as the twenty to thirty satrapies listed by Herodotus and by the *dahyāva* catalogues of the Achaemenid royal inscriptions. Instead, they belonged to a lower level, although the governors themselves bore the title of “satrap,” just like the governors of the superior administrative units, to which they were subordinate.<sup>162</sup>

As for the term τοπάρχης, which occurs in LXX Esth B:1, its earliest literary attestations are found in the Septuagint. In Gen 41:34, Joseph advises Pharaoh to

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<sup>157</sup> Trans. Bellmann and Portier-Young, “Latin,” 275, 285.

<sup>158</sup> MT Dan and Dan<sup>Th</sup> 6:1 speak of 120 satraps.

<sup>159</sup> See Tavernier, “Peoples,” 42; cf. Jacobs, “Administration,” 837–39.

<sup>160</sup> See Jacobs, “Administration,” 837–39, 845–49.

<sup>161</sup> Jacobs, “Administration,” 836.

<sup>162</sup> See Jacobs, “Satrapies”; cf. id., “Administration,” 836.

appoint toparchs to gather one-fifth of the harvest of the land of Egypt during the seven years of prosperity. Chosen to render  $\overline{\text{תקן}}$ , “overseer,”  $\overline{\text{τοπάρχης}}$  was drawn from the Ptolemaic administrative terminology that was current in Egypt at the time of the translation of the Pentateuch, in the third century BCE.<sup>163</sup> Indeed, in Ptolemaic, and later in Roman Egypt, the toparch was at the head of a second-order administrative division of the *chora*, the toparchy ( $\overline{\text{τοπαρχία/τόπος}}$ ). Two ( $\overline{\text{ἄνω}}$  and  $\overline{\text{κάτω}}$ , the “upper” and the “lower”) or more toparchies constituted a nome ( $\overline{\text{νομός}}$ ), at the head of which was the nomarch ( $\overline{\text{νομάρχης}}$ ), who from the latter half of the third century BCE was supplanted by the *strategos* ( $\overline{\text{στρατηγός}}$ ), an originally military and later civil official. The Arsinoite nome was a special case, as it was divided into three *merides* ( $\overline{\text{μερίδες}}$ ); these were, in turn, subdivided into nomarchies, which were superseded by toparchies in the 230s BCE.<sup>164</sup> Each toparchy consisted of several villages, *komai* ( $\overline{\text{κῶμαι}}$ ), each of which was under a komarch ( $\overline{\text{κωμάρχης}}$ ). At the level of the nome, we also find the offices of the steward ( $\overline{\text{οἰκονόμος}}$ ) and the royal scribe ( $\overline{\text{βασιλικός γραμματεύς}}$ ), and at the level of the toparchy and the *kome*, the offices of the district scribe ( $\overline{\text{τοπογραμματεύς}}$ ) and the village scribe ( $\overline{\text{κωμογραμματεύς}}$ ), respectively.<sup>165</sup> Of the aforementioned offices, four are cited in the canonical part of LXX Esther:  $\overline{\text{στρατηγός}}$  (3:12),  $\overline{\text{οἰκονόμος}}$  (8:9),  $\overline{\text{βασιλικός γραμματεύς}}$  (9:3), and  $\overline{\text{κωμάρχης}}$  (2:3), but only one ( $\overline{\text{βασιλικός γραμματεύς}}$ ) is cited in AT Esther (7:42).

Outside of Egypt, toparchies are attested in Palestine during the Seleucid, Hasmonean, and Roman periods.

From 200 BCE, when it passed from the Ptolemies to the Seleucids, until at least the mid-second century BCE, Coele-Syria and Phoenicia constituted a single satrapy, which was under a “*strategos* and high priest” ( $\overline{\text{στρατηγὸς καὶ ἀρχιερεύς}}$ ).<sup>166</sup> Paralia, Idumaea, Judaea, and Samaria seem to have been subunits of this satrapy. The first two of these subunits are attested as having been under a *strategos*<sup>167</sup> and the other

<sup>163</sup> See Samuel, “Organization,” 227–28; Lee, *Study*, 98.

<sup>164</sup> See Hölbl, *History*, 59; Falivene, “Geography,” 529; Manning, “Branches,” 108–112.

<sup>165</sup> See Huss, *Verwaltung*, 46–73, 110–21; Manning, “Branches,” 109–111.

<sup>166</sup> See SEG 41-1574 [dossier concerning King Antiochus III and his general Ptolemy, son of Thrases; Scythopolis (area of Hefzibah); 199–195 BCE], B, ll. 5–6, *passim*; OGIS 230 [dedication by Ptolemy, son of Thrases; Soloi; 197 BCE], ll. 2–3. See also Bickerman, *Institutions*, 198–99; Capdetrey, *Pouvoir*, 248–49.

<sup>167</sup> In 165–163 BCE, Gorgias is *strategos* of Idumaea (2 Macc 10:14, 12:32); under Antiochus V, Hegemonides is *strategos* “from Ptolemais to Gerar” (2 Macc 13:24); in 143–142 BCE, Simon Maccabeus is *strategos* “from the Ladder of Tyre to the borders of Egypt” (1 Macc 11:59); under Antiochus VII, Kendeibaos is *epistrategos* of the coast (1 Macc 15:38). See also Capdetrey, *Pouvoir*, 249–50.

two under an official who bore the double, military and civil, title of “*strategos* and *meridarches*” (στρατηγὸς καὶ μεριδάρχης).<sup>168</sup> It is reasonable to assume that these subunits were called *merides* or *meridarchiai*, although *meris/meridarchia* is not attested as an administrative unit elsewhere in the Seleucid Empire (cf., however, the name of the divisions of the Arsinoite nome in Egypt).<sup>169</sup> These *merides/meridarchiai* were presumably the equivalent of the hyparchies (ὕπαρχίαι) attested in other parts of the Seleucid kingdom. For the latter part of the second century BCE, we know from Strabo (*Geogr.* 16.2.4) that Coele-Syria was divided into four satrapies, which likely corresponded to the four above-mentioned *merides/meridarchiai*.<sup>170</sup> According to 1 Maccabees, southern Samaria was subdivided into districts, which the Greek translator of this book calls toparchies (τοπαρχίαι): in 1 Macc 11:28, Jonathan Maccabeus asks King Demetrius II to make Judaea, together with the three toparchies of Samaria (Aphairema, Lydda, and Ramathaim, which seem to have been de facto under Jonathan’s control), tax-free. However, in two royal documents quoted in 1 Maccabees—Demetrius I’s letter to the nation of the Judaeans (152 BCE) and Demetrius II’s letter to Lasthenes, forwarded to Jonathan Maccabeus, which grants the annexation of Aphairema, Lydda, and Ramathaim to Judaea (145 BCE)<sup>171</sup>—these three districts are designated as νομοί. As noted previously, both νομός and τοπαρχία belonged to the administrative terminology of Egypt. Their use in Coele-Syria and Phoenicia may have been a remnant of the period of Ptolemaic occupation of the area (with the difference, of course, that in Egypt the two terms could not be used interchangeably, since the toparchy was a subdivision of the nome).<sup>172</sup> If, as scholars believe, 1 Esdras dates from the second century BCE and reflects the contemporary administrative terminology,<sup>173</sup> it can corroborate the aforementioned evidence: at

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<sup>168</sup> In 167–166 BCE, Apollonius is *strategos* and *meridarches* of Samaria (Josephus, *A.J.* 12.261, 12.264, 12.287) and in 150 BCE, Jonathan Maccabeus is *strategos* and *meridarches* of Judaea (1 Macc 10:65). See Capdetrey, *Pouvoir*, 249–50, 261.

<sup>169</sup> See Capdetrey, *Pouvoir*, 249–50, 261. It should be noted that *meridarchai* are also attested in two first-century BCE inscriptions found in India. See Bengtson, *Strategie*, 26–29; Capdetrey, *Pouvoir*, 261.

<sup>170</sup> See Bikerman, *Institutions*, 200; Capdetrey, *Pouvoir*, 250, 261.

<sup>171</sup> See 1 Macc 10:30, 38 (letter of Demetrius I), 11:34 (letter of Demetrius II); cf. 11:57 (letter of Antiochus VI to Jonathan).

<sup>172</sup> See Bikerman, *Institutions*, 198; Capdetrey, *Pouvoir*, 262.

<sup>173</sup> On the date of translation/composition of 1 Esdras, see Bird, *1 Esdras*, 6 (“somewhere in the (mid)-second century BCE”) and Böhler, *1 Esdras*, 14 (“soon after 130 BCE”). On the use of the term “Coele-Syria and Phoenicia” as a chronological marker for dating 1 Esdras to the second century BCE, see Bikerman, “Coelé-Syrie,” 264–65; cf. Talshir, “Milieu,” 140–42.

4:48, the translator/author of the story of the three bodyguards anachronistically refers to the toparchs in Coele-Syria and Phoenicia and Lebanon, to whom King Darius sends letters of instruction (πᾶσιν τοῖς τοπάρχαις ἐν Κοίλῃ Συρίᾳ καὶ Φοινίκη καὶ τοῖς ἐν τῷ Λιβάνῳ).

Bickerman's statement that τοπάρχης in LXX Esth B:1 is used "in Seleucid meaning" is apparently based on his assumption that LXX Esther, including its Additions, took its form in Jerusalem around 100 BCE and that its composer, Lysimachus, had in mind the contemporary administrative division of Coele-Syria and Phoenicia in four satrapies (which presumably had replaced in the mid-second century BCE the four *merides* of Paralia, Idumaea, Judaea, and Samaria), which were further subdivided into toparchies. However, it should be noted that the author of Addition B avoids to designate the superiors of the toparchs either as satraps or as *strategoí*; this suggests that he was not particularly interested in referring accurately to a specific administrative system, whether Seleucid or other.

For the Roman period, we know from Josephus that Judaea was divided, for administrative and possibly for taxation purposes, into eleven κληρουχίαι or τοπαρχίαι.<sup>174</sup> Pliny the Elder gives a list of ten Judaeian toparchies, which largely overlap with those listed by Josephus.<sup>175</sup> These toparchies were named after the most important or central of the villages of which they were comprised.<sup>176</sup> The Roman toparchy-division known from the aforementioned first-century CE writers must have existed since at least the mid-first century BCE, as in 43 BCE Cassius sold into slavery the inhabitants of Gophna, Emmaus, Lydda, and Thamna, districts included in the toparchy lists of both Josephus and Pliny.<sup>177</sup> The Romans seem to have retained in Judaea the pre-existing toparchy-division system and to have created additional toparchies to accommodate new circumstances. Josephus also mentions toparchies outside Judaea, one in Samareia, two in Peraea, and two in Galilee; the latter four had cities instead of villages as their capitals.<sup>178</sup> The title of the officials who were in charge of the toparchies in Roman Palestine eludes us.<sup>179</sup> Outside Palestine, the title of toparch held by the dynast of Upper Cilicia Tarcondimotus I and his successors in the

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<sup>174</sup> Josephus, *B.J.* 3.54–56. See Schürer, *History*, 2:190–96.

<sup>175</sup> Pliny, *Nat.* 5.15[70]. See Schürer, *History*, 2:191–92.

<sup>176</sup> See Cotton, "Aspects," 84–86.

<sup>177</sup> See Schürer, *History*, 2:196.

<sup>178</sup> Josephus, *B.J.* 2.252; 2.509. See Cotton, "Aspects," 86–88.

<sup>179</sup> See Cotton, "Aspects," 87–89.



first century BCE,<sup>180</sup> as well as by Aias, son of Teukros, high priest of Zeus in Olba, in Rough Cilicia, around 10–15 CE,<sup>181</sup> may have been a remnant of the Seleucid, if not the Ptolemaic, domination of Cilicia.<sup>182</sup>

Whether the toparchy-division system attested in Coele-Syria and Phoenicia was also applied to the rest of the Seleucid Empire is a matter of debate. Bengtson has postulated that the toparchies were the smallest Seleucid administrative units, after the satrapies and the hyparchies, and that this threefold division originated in the time of Alexander the Great. He has argued that the term ὁ τόπος, most often attested in the plural, οἱ τόποι, “the places, the regions,” occurring in epigraphic sources in conjunction with a term denoting an official who was in charge of the τόπος/τόποι,<sup>183</sup> is used as an administrative *terminus technicus* and that the officials associated with the τόποι were toparchs.<sup>184</sup> Bertrand and Gruenais, on the other hand, have argued against the term τόπος having a technical, administrative sense and have treated it instead as a generic term, a “mot outil,” whose meaning is conditioned by the context in which it is used.<sup>185</sup>

The toparchs are listed in the prescripts of a few Ptolemaic royal and non-royal circular letters (*entolai*).<sup>186</sup> In a circular of Ptolemy II Philadelphus, they are mentioned after the nomarchs and before the komarchs and the royal scribes: *C.Ord.Ptol.* 3

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<sup>180</sup> See OGIS 752, ll. 3–4: Ταρκονδίμωτον Στράτω[νος] | υἱὸν τοπάρχην. See also Bengtson, *Strategie*, 22 n. 3; Wright, “Tarkondimotos.”

<sup>181</sup> In late Augustan and Tiberian coins from Olba, Aias is styled as “toparch of the Kennateis and the Lallasseis”: ΑΙΑΝΤΟΣ ΤΕΥΚΡΟΥ ΑΡΧΙΕΡΕΩΣ ΤΟΠΑΡΧΟΥ ΚΕΝΝΑΤΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΛΑΛΑΣΣΕΩΝ. See Hill, *Catalogue*, 119–23.

<sup>182</sup> See Capdetrey, *Pouvoir*, 262.

<sup>183</sup> See, e.g., SEG 47-1739 [Laodikeia on the Lykos; 267 BCE], l. 4: Ἐλένου ἐπιμελητοῦ τοῦ τό[πο]υ, ll. 24–25: Ἀχαιοῖ κυρίῳ τοῦ τό[πο]υ; SEG 41-1574 [Skythopolis (area of Hefzibah); 199–195 BCE], l. 14: [ὁ τοῦ τόπ]ου πρ[ο]εστηκώς, l. 16: [τοὺς ἐ]πὶ τῶν τόπων τεταγμένους.

<sup>184</sup> See Bengtson, *Strategie*, 10–11, 22, 26–29; cf. Ma, *Antiochos III*, 123, 149 n. 145; Aperghis, *Economy*, 270–72.

<sup>185</sup> Bertrand and Gruenais, “Topos,” 75–78; cf. Capdetrey, *Pouvoir*, 262–66. Along similar lines, Allen, *Kingdom*, 94–95, notes, apropos the Attalid kingdom, that “it seems unlikely ... that the word *topoi* as applied to the provinces had any precise or consistent constitutional significance, and it is more likely that it was a convenient generic formula for describing different regional phenomena not precisely expressible in other terms. It cannot be compared with the Seleukid *toparchiai* in Syria, for which a specific official is attested. In the Attalid kingdom the only official associated with the *topoi* for which we have evidence is that of the *strategos* of the whole province.” More recently, Salles, “TOPOI,” has suggested that locutions of the type “preposition + geographical name + τόποι” denote areas that were far from the administrative centre of a province but still subject to the authority of the governor who was in charge of the province. These areas may have been isolated, territorially discontinuous, or of recent acquisition.

<sup>186</sup> On the Ptolemaic “Kollektiv-entole,” see Bickerman, *Institutions*, 194; Bickerman, “Chancellerie,” 251–59; Huss, *Verwaltung*, 46–51.

[275/274? BCE], ll. 14–15: [Βασιλεὺς Πτ]ολεμαῖος τοῖς νομάρ[χαις καὶ] τοῖς τοπάρχαις | καὶ τοῖς κω]μάρχαις κ[αὶ] βασιλικοῖς γραμμα[τεῦσι]. In another circular issued by the same king, they are listed after the military commanders and the nomarchs, and before the *oikonomoi*, the *antigraphais*, the royal scribes, the Libyarchs, and the police officers: *C.Ord.Ptol.* 18 [263 BCE], ll. 1–4: [Βασιλε]ὺς Πτολεμαῖος [τοῖς στ]ρατηγοῖς καὶ τοῖς ἱππάρχαις | [καὶ] τοῖς ἡγεμόσι καὶ το[ῖ]ς νομάρχαις καὶ τοῖς τοπάρχαις καὶ τοῖς | [οἰκ]ονόμοις καὶ τοῖς ἀντιγραφεῦσι καὶ τοῖς βασιλ[ικοῖς] γραμμ[α]τεῦσι | [καὶ] τοῖς λιβυάρχαις καὶ τοῖς ἀρχιφυλακίται[ις πᾶσι χα]ίρειν. In yet another circular letter from an unknown sender, possibly a *dioiketes*, the toparchs are listed after the nome *strategos*, the military and the police officers, the nomarch, the *oikonomos*, the royal scribe, and the *antigraphais*, and before the *topogrammateis*, the komarchs, and other minor officials: *P.Gen.* 3.132 [175–125 BCE], ll. 1–5: τῷ στρατηγῶ[ι τοῦ Ἡρακλεοπολίτου καὶ τῷ φρουράρχῳ καὶ τ]ῷ ἐπιστάτῃ | [τῶν φυ]λακιδῶν καὶ τῷ γ[ομάρχη] καὶ τῷ ἐπὶ τῶν προσόδων καὶ τῷ οἰκονόμῳ | [καὶ] τῷ βασιλικῷ γραμμα[τεῖ] καὶ τῷ ἀντιγραφεῖ καὶ τοῖς τοπάρχαις | καὶ τοπογραμ[μα]τ[εῦσι] καὶ κωμάρχαις καὶ κωμογραμματεῦσι καὶ τῷ ἀρχιφυλακίτ[η] καὶ φυλακίταις | [καὶ] γεωργοῖς καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις τὰ βασιλικά πραγματευομένοις χαίρειν.<sup>187</sup> In all these circulars, the toparchs are listed after the *strategoi* and/or the nomarchs and before the komarchs, that is, in the correct hierarchical order.

In the extant corpus of Seleucid royal correspondence we find no circular letters addressed to civil officials. We do have a single fragmentary circular issued by King Antiochus III, but it is addressed to his military officers, “the generals, the commanders of the cavalry and the infantry, the soldiers, and the rest.”<sup>188</sup> What has

<sup>187</sup> Cf. *SB* 22.15766 [223 or 181 BCE], ll. 2–6, and *P.Rainer Cent.* 45 [197–190 BCE], ll. 2–9. See Samuel, “Organization,” 214–15; Falivene, “Geography,” 526; Huss, *Verwaltung*, 47–50; Manning, “Branches,” 111.

<sup>188</sup> Welles, *RC* no. 39 [Amyzon; ca. 203 BCE], ll. 1–4: Βασιλεὺς Ἀντίοχος στρατηγοῖς, ἱππάρχαις, πεζῶν ἡγεμόσι, στρατ[ι]ώταις, καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις | [χ]αίρε[ι]ν. See Robert and Robert, *Fouilles*, 138–39, and Capdetrey, “Écrit,” 117 n. 61. Bencivenni, “Considerazione,” 141 n. 12, states that, aside from Welles, *RC* no. 39, there is one more Seleucid circular of the Ptolemaic *entole* type: Antiochus III’s *programma* for the Jerusalem Temple, as quoted by Josephus (*AJ.* 12.145–146). However, there is a clear distinction between a *programma* (public proclamation) and an *entole*. A *programma* has no prescript indicating the addressees and begins abruptly with an order (see Bickerman, “Proclamation,” 358); an *entole* can serve as a covering letter for a *programma* (see Bickerman, “Chancellerie,” 257–58). According to Josephus, Antiochus III had his *programma* published throughout his kingdom (*AJ.* 12.145: κατὰ πᾶσαν τὴν βασιλείαν ἐξέθηκεν). However, as Bickerman, “Proclamation,” 372–73, notes, this was likely an erroneous assumption on the part of Josephus; the *programma* in question was probably simply displayed at the gate of Jerusalem. See also Welles, *RC* no. 16 [ca. 260 BCE], a very fragmentary letter of King Eumenes to members

come down to us instead are a few dossiers consisting of letters/*prostagma* issued by Seleucid kings, as well as cover letters from officials forwarding copies of the royal letters down the administrative hierarchy. These dossiers do not provide information about the titles of the lower-level officials who received the royal orders, as it was common practice for the writers of official letters not to mention their own titles or those of their addressees in the prescripts of their missives.<sup>189</sup> Therefore, even if the toparchs were part of the chain of transmission of Seleucid royal letters, they cannot be identified, and scholars can only make informed guesses as to whether a particular recipient of a copy of a royal letter might have been a toparch. The Philomelion dossier (SEG 54-1353; 209 BCE), for example, contains a letter from King Antiochus III to Zeuxis, who, as we know from other sources, was “overseer of state affairs” (ὁ ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων) in cis-Tauric Asia Minor, and four cover letters: a letter from Zeuxis to Philomelos, a letter from Philomelos to Aineas, a letter from Aineas to Demetrius, and a fragmentary letter from Demetrius to an unknown recipient. The titles of the officials under Zeuxis are unknown. Malay, the editor of the *editio princeps* of this dossier, conjectures that Philomelos “would have functioned as the *strategos* of the satrapy of Phrygia,” Aineas “would likely have administrated a hyparchy belonging to the Phrygian satrapy,” Demetrius “would have served as a toparch,” and the unnamed recipient of Demetrius’ letter “could have been a priest or a royal appointee ... responsible for the revenues of a sanctuary.”<sup>190</sup>

A similar dossier from Maresha (SEG 57-1838; 178 BCE) contains a letter from King Seleucus IV, Antiochus III’s son, to Heliodorus, along with two cover letters: one from Heliodorus to Dorymenes, and another from Dorymenes to Diophanes. Heliodorus is well known from other sources, both epigraphic and literary;<sup>191</sup> in 178 BCE, he was King Seleucus IV’s “overseer of state affairs” (ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων). The titles of the other two officials are not known to us, but Gera plausibly conjectures that Dorymenes

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of the army, which has been restored on the basis of the aforesaid Welles, RC no. 39: A, ll. 1–2: [Εὐμένης στρατηγοῖς ἱπάρχαις ἡγεμ]όσι καὶ ἱππεῦσι | [χαίρειν].

<sup>189</sup> See Bickerman, *Institutions*, 193; Bickerman, “Chancellerie,” 255; Cotton and Wörrle, “Seleukos IV,” 195 with n. 20; Gera, “Olympiodoros,” 138.

<sup>190</sup> Malay, “Copy,” 411–13. The letter of Antiochus III to Zeuxis is also preserved in the Pamukçu dossier (SEG 37-1010), which contains only two cover letters: a letter from Zeuxis to Philotas, who was probably the *strategos* of the satrapy of Mysia, and a letter from Philotas to Bithys, who was probably a hyparch in charge of a subdivision of the satrapy. See Malay, “Copy,” 411–12; Capdetrey, “Écrit,” 120, 124; id., *Pouvoir*, 354–55.

<sup>191</sup> See Cotton and Wörrle, “Seleukos IV,” 199 with n. 50, and 2.2 above.

was the *strategos* of the satrapy of Coele-Syria and Phoenicia and Diophanes the *meridarches* of Idumaea.<sup>192</sup>

In light of the foregoing discussion, it is unlikely that the prescript of Addition B to Esther was modelled on that of a Seleucid royal letter. As I have pointed out, no Seleucid circular letter addressed collectively to *civil* officials serving at different administrative levels has yet come to light. This may, of course, be accidental—just as the absence of instances of the term *τοπάρχης* in the Seleucid documents that we know of may also be accidental. Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that the prescripts of the Ptolemaic circular letters, in which the toparchs appear alongside other officials, offer closer parallels to the prescript of the circular letter in Addition B to Esther. This does not necessarily mean that the prescript of Addition B was modelled on that of a Ptolemaic *entole*. If that were the case, one would expect to find the greeting *χαίρειν* at the end of LXX Addition B:1, as it is invariably present in the prescripts of the Ptolemaic *entolai* and, in fact, appears in the prescript of Artaxerxes' letter in Addition E.<sup>193</sup>

If, by way of comparison, we look at the prescripts of Ptolemy IV Philopator's *entolai* in 3 Maccabees,<sup>194</sup> a book of undeniably Egyptian provenance, we find that they do not accurately reflect the prescripts of extant, authentic Ptolemaic circular letters. In the prescript of the first letter (3 Macc 3:12), the king addresses the *strategoi* and the soldiers of all the nomes of Egypt: τοῖς κατ' Αἴγυπτον καὶ κατὰ τόπον στρατηγοῖς καὶ στρατιώταις. No Ptolemaic circular that has come down to us is addressed solely to the *strategoi* and the soldiers.<sup>195</sup> Even the aforementioned Seleucid *entole* issued by Antiochus III in 203 BCE lists other military officers, namely, the commanders of the cavalry and the infantry, between the *strategoi* and the soldiers. The prescript of the second circular (3 Macc 7:1) is addressed to the *strategoi* of Egypt and to all those in charge of the affairs of the state: τοῖς κατ' Αἴγυπτον στρατηγοῖς καὶ πᾶσιν τοῖς τεταγμένοις ἐπὶ πραγμάτων. The designation οἱ τεταγμένοι ἐπὶ πραγμάτων is attested

<sup>192</sup> See Gera, "Olympiodoros," 140, 145, 149.

<sup>193</sup> Only the *Vetus Latina* of Esther preserves the greeting *salutem* at the end of B:1. See 6.2.

<sup>194</sup> The author of 3 Maccabees uses the terms ἐπιστολή (3 Macc 3:11, 25, 30; 6:41; 7:10) and πρόσταγμα (3 Macc 4:1) for these royal missives. Bickerman, "Chancellerie," 258 n. 20, remarks: "Il est remarquable que l'auteur évite le terme technique *entolè*."

<sup>195</sup> Cf. the aforesaid C.*Ord.Ptol.* 18 and C.*Ord.Ptol.* 42 [145/144 BCE], ll. 16–17: Βασιλεὺς Π[τολεμαῖος] ταῖς ἐν] Κύπρῳ τεταγμέναις πεζ[ικαῖς καὶ ἱππικαῖς] | καὶ ναυτικα[ῖς δυνάμεσι χαίρειν]. For Lenger, "Décret," 459, this was "le seul exemple ptolémaïque d'un message du roi à ses troupes," but see now P.*Vind.Tand.* 1 [letter of Ptolemy II Philadelphus; mid-third century BCE], ll. 3–5: [Βασι]λεὺς Π[τολεμαῖος Φιλάδε]λ[φος τοῖς ...] | καὶ τοῖς ἡγεμόσιν καὶ τ[ο]ῖς ἱππεύσιν [- ca. 10 -] | ἐν τ[ῇ Ἡ]ρακλεόπολει τῇ τασσομέν[οις χαίρειν].

in a few Ptolemaic *prostagmata*, but in the prescripts of the *entolai* we commonly find the designation οἱ τὰ βασιλικά πραγματευόμενοι.<sup>196</sup> Lastly, the prescripts of both circulars conclude with the greeting χαίρειν καὶ ἐρρῶσθαι instead of the simple χαίρειν. This expanded greeting, attested in private and a few official letters from the second and first centuries BCE,<sup>197</sup> occurs in only one royal letter, that of Ptolemy Alexander I and Berenice III to the *strategos* Apollodorus dated to 99 BCE.<sup>198</sup> The author of 3 Maccabees seems, however, to have copied this greeting from the prescript of the letter of King Ptolemy II Philadelphus to Eleazar in the *Letter of Aristeas* (§ 35). As I have demonstrated elsewhere, the letter in question is intertextually connected with both 3 Maccabees and Additions B and E to Esther.<sup>199</sup>

The point of the above comment is that the authors of fictitious royal letters did not necessarily seek to reproduce formulae found in authentic royal documents, but instead freely derived epistolary elements from both non-literary and literary sources. To return to Addition B to Esther, the inclusion of the toparchs, along with the governors (satraps) of the 127 lands of the Persian kingdom, among the addressees of King Artaxerxes' letter may have been influenced by the similar inclusion of these officials in lists of invitees and letter addressees of the Persian king Darius and the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar in 1 Esdras (in the story of the three bodyguards) and in LXX Daniel, respectively. As shown in the table below, the toparchs are featured in seven lists within these books, in four of which they are listed along with the satraps and the *strategoī*.

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<sup>196</sup> See nn. 14, 30, 33 above.

<sup>197</sup> Since the formula χαίρειν καὶ ἐρρῶσθαι has been used by some scholars as a chronological marker for dating both 3 Maccabees and the *Letter of Aristeas*, it should be noted that, although the majority of its attestations occur in the last two centuries BCE, it did not disappear “without trace ca. 50 BCE” (so Bickerman, “Pseudo-Aristeas,” 120) or “toward the end of the first century BC” (so Johnson, *Fictions*, 139). The latest attestations that I have traced are found in *P.Erl.* 117 [first century CE], l. 2, in *SB* 18.13614 [second/third century CE], l. 2, and in Pseudo-Ignatius' *Epistle of Maria Cassobolita* (fourth [?] century CE). The extended formula (πεῖιστα) χαίρειν καὶ διὰ παντὸς ἐρρῶσθαι is attested in *BGU* 16.2660 [1 CE], l. 2, in *SB* 6.9017 Nr. 31 [first/second century CE], ll. 2–3, and in *P.Sarap.* 91 [90–133 CE], l. 2. These attestations should be taken into consideration when discussing the *terminus ante quem* for 3 Maccabees.

<sup>198</sup> *C.Ord.Ptol.* 63, l. 2.

<sup>199</sup> See Domazakis, *Esther*, 184–85.

LXX Esth 1:1-3	οὗτος ὁ Ἀρταξέρξης ... δοχὴν ἐποίησεν	τοῖς Περσῶν καὶ Μήδων ἐνδόξοις	καὶ τοῖς ἄρχουσιν τῶν σατραπῶν			
LXX Esth B:1	Ἀρταξέρξης ... τάδε γράφει		τοῖς ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰνδικῆς ἕως τῆς Αἰθιοπίας ἑκατὸν εἴκοσι ἑπτὰ χωρῶν ἄρχουσι	καὶ τοπάρχαις ὑποτεταγμένοις		
1 Esd 3:1-2	Δαρεῖος ἐποίησεν δοχὴν	πᾶσιν τοῖς ὑπ' αὐτὸν καὶ πᾶσιν τοῖς οἰκογενέσιν αὐτοῦ καὶ πᾶσιν τοῖς μεγιστᾶσιν τῆς Μηδίας καὶ τῆς Περσίδος	καὶ πᾶσιν τοῖς σατράπαις καὶ στρατηγοῖς	καὶ τοπάρχαις τοῖς ὑπ' αὐτὸν ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰνδικῆς μέχρι τῆς Αἰθιοπίας ἐν ταῖς ἑκατὸν εἴκοσι ἑπτὰ σατραπείαις		
1 Esd 3:14	[Δαρεῖος] ἐξαποστείλας ἐκάλεσεν	πάντας τοὺς μεγιστᾶνας τῆς Περσίδος καὶ τῆς Μηδίας	καὶ σατράπας καὶ στρατηγοὺς	καὶ τοπάρχας	καὶ ὑπάτους	
1 Esd 4:47	Δαρεῖος ... ἔγραψεν αὐτῷ τὰς ἐπιστολάς		καὶ στρατηγοὺς καὶ σατράπας <sup>3</sup>	καὶ τοπάρχας <sup>2</sup>		πρὸς πάντας οἰκονόμους <sup>1</sup> 200
1 Esd 4:48	[Δαρεῖος] ἔγραψεν ἐπιστολάς			πᾶσιν τοῖς τοπάρχαις ἐν Κοίλῃ Συρίᾳ καὶ Φοινίκῃ καὶ τοῖς ἐν τῷ Λιβάνῳ		
1 Esd 4:49	[Δαρεῖος] ἔγραψεν	πάντα δυνατόν	καὶ σατράπην	καὶ τοπάρχην		καὶ οἰκονόμον
LXX Dan 3:2	Ναβουχοδονοσορ ... ἀπέστειλεν ἐπισυναγαγεῖν		σατράπας καὶ στρατηγοὺς	τοπάρχας	καὶ ὑπάτους	διοικητὰς καὶ τοὺς ἐπ' ἐξουσιῶν κατὰ χώραν
LXX Dan 3:94:	συνήχθησαν		οἱ ἔπαρχοι [88-Syh: ὑπατοὶ]	τοπάρχαι		ἀρχιπατριῶται καὶ οἱ φίλοι τοῦ βασιλέως

<sup>200</sup> The superscripts indicate the order in which the official titles are given in the text.

In 1 Esd 3:14 and in LXX Dan 3:2, the list of officials includes the satraps, the *strategoi*, the toparchs, and the *hypatoi*.<sup>201</sup> Torrey considers that “this coincidence can hardly be accidental” and attributes it either to an intertextual influence of 1 Esdras on LXX Daniel or to the possibility that both books share the same translator.<sup>202</sup> Torrey further argues that 1 Esd 3:1–2 may have influenced Esth 1:1–3.<sup>203</sup>

1 Esdras 3:2 exhibits close verbal similarities to LXX Esth B:1: the σατράπαις καὶ στρατηγοῖς corresponds to the generic ἄρχουσι, which in this context designates the satraps, the τοπάρχαις τοῖς ὑπ’ αὐτόν corresponds to τοπάρχαις ὑποτεταγμένοις,<sup>204</sup> while both verses mention the 127 satrapies/lands from India to Ethiopia. The author of Addition B may thus have been influenced by the lists of Persian officials in the story of the three bodyguards in 1 Esdras (a section of the book that has no extant Semitic *Vorlage*) rather than by the administrative terminology prevalent at the place

<sup>201</sup> The term ὑπάτος has perplexed commentators because, unlike the other terms with which it co-occurs in 1 Esd 3:14 and in LXX Dan 3:2, it was not part of the Ptolemaic or the Seleucid language of administration. From the early second century BCE, it was used, initially in the combination στρατηγός ὑπάτος and, from around 125–100 BCE, as a self-standing technical term, to render the Roman title *consul* (see Mason, *Terms*, 156, 158, 165–68). Even if we accept that ὑπάτος was used here in a loose, non-technical sense (see Muraoka, *Lexicon*, s.v.: “very high-ranking official”), it would still evoke the Roman *consul*, an official of the highest rank. It is thus curious that in both 1 Esd 3:14 and LXX Dan 3:2, the *hypatoi* are listed after the satraps, the *strategoi*, and the toparchs (in Theodotion Daniel they are listed before the *strategoi* and the toparchs [3:2], after the toparchs and before the *strategoi* [3:3], and after the *strategoi* and the satraps and before the toparchs [6:7]). Harvey, “Court,” 183–84, suggests that “we have all six levels [of courtiers of the Ptolemaic court] in the list of five officers in 1 Esd 3:14 plus the *suggenes* [in 3:7]” and that the composer of the story of the three bodyguards “knows that there are six levels but does not know the correct titles for every rank.” This suggestion is unconvincing. It is very unlikely that the composer of this story accurately knew the highest title, συγγενής, ignored the rank of τῶν φίλων, which appears elsewhere in 1 Esdras (8:11, 13, 26), and thought that a relatively modest administrative title like τοπάρχης could be used as a substitute for or be equivalent to a court title. Of the five titles listed in 1 Esd 3:14, two are attested in Ptolemaic Egypt (στρατηγός, τοπάρχης) and three in the Seleucid kingdom (σατράπης, στρατηγός, and τοπάρχης—assuming that the toparchies in Palestine, if not elsewhere, too, were headed by an official called τοπάρχης rather than ὁ τεταγμένος ἐπὶ τῶν τόπων or a similar designation), while the title of συγγενής is attested at both the Ptolemaic and the Seleucid courts, and a similar title existed in the Achaemenid court (see Muccioli “Crisi,” 251–74; Strootman, *Court*, 99, 151). Talshir, *I Esdras*, 132, is more likely correct in suggesting that the translator of 1 Esdras “supplies random titles that he knows from the contemporary official vocabulary” (and, I would add, from literary texts, as seems to be the case with μεγιστάν).

<sup>202</sup> Torrey, *Ezra*, 48, 84–85; cf. Thackeray “Esdras,” 761.

<sup>203</sup> Torrey, *Ezra*, 47–48. Thackeray, “Esdras,” 761, posits that the influence runs from LXX Esth 1:1–3 to 1 Esd 3:1–2.

<sup>204</sup> Talshir, *I Esdras*, 133, conjectures that τοῖς ὑπ’ αὐτόν in 1 Esd 3:2 is “an internal Greek corruption” for τοῖς ὑπάτοις (cf. 1 Esd 3:14); however, this conjecture has no manuscript support. What we have here is a sort of *inclusio* (δοχὴν μεγάλην πᾶσιν τοῖς ὑπ’ αὐτόν ... τοπάρχαις τοῖς ὑπ’ αὐτόν), which emphasises that all the officials invited to the royal feast were mere subordinates to King Darius.

and time in which he lived.<sup>205</sup> The points of contact between 1 Esdras and Addition B that I traced in the previous section (2.4) corroborate this possibility.

## 2.6 The *prooemium* of Artaxerxes' letter in Addition B

LXX Esth B:2 serves as a *prooemium* to Artaxerxes' letter of condemnation. Before stating his decision and the rationale behind it, the king outlines his principles of governance, namely, moderation and kindness, aiming to ensure tranquillity in the lives of his subjects and peace in his kingdom. Such *prooemia*, while very rare, are not absent in the letters of Hellenistic kings. A characteristic example of a letter featuring such a *prooemium* is the one that King Seleucus IV sent in 178 BCE to Heliodorus—who, like Haman in Addition B to Esther, held the office of ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων—concerning the appointment of Olympiodorus as in charge of the sanctuaries of Coele-Syria and Phoenicia.<sup>206</sup> According to Bencivenni, the *prooemium* of this letter constitutes “a compositional novelty,” as the king “adds an extra component to the typical structure of an epistolary *prostagma*, in which he speaks in the first person of virtues and principles that are usually recognized and attributed to him by others (by decrees from cities or through epistolary declarations from members of his family).”<sup>207</sup> In this “ruler formula,”<sup>208</sup> Seleucus IV presents himself as caring for the safety of his subjects and striving to secure the prosperity of his kingdom and the goodwill of the gods.<sup>209</sup> In both the *prooemium* of Seleucus IV's letter and that of Artaxerxes, reference is made

<sup>205</sup> This is not the place to discuss whether the administrative terms that occur in 1 Esdras indicate an Egyptian or Palestinian origin for the book. Claims have been made for both possibilities; see Thackeray, “Esdras,” 762; Bird, *1 Esdras*, 7; Böhler, *1 Esdras*, 14; see also nn. 173 and 201 above.

<sup>206</sup> Seleucus IV's letter is part of a dossier that also includes two cover letters, one by Dorymenes and the other by Heliodorus. See SEG 57-1838. On this inscription, see Cotton and Wörle, “Seleukos IV”; Bencivenni, “Considerazione”; Gera, “Olympiodoros”; Cotton-Paltiel, Ecker, and Gera, “Juxtaposing”; Muccioli, “Stele.”

<sup>207</sup> Bencivenni “Considerazione,” 140, 152: “una novità compositiva”; *ibid.*, 149: “Nell'*incipit* della lettera, gli ingredienti ideologici di cui il re è debitore si mescolano a creare una formula nuova” ... “Il re parla in prima persona di virtù e principi che di solito sono riconosciuti e accreditati al sovrano da altri (per decreto, dalle città ovvero, attraverso dichiarazioni epistolari, da membri della sua famiglia)” ... “Il re aggiunge una parte in più alla struttura tipica della lettera/πρόσταγμα, arricchendone la composizione.”

<sup>208</sup> See 6.2.

<sup>209</sup> SEG 57-1838, ll. 14–20: πλείστην πρόνοιαν ποιούμενοι περὶ τῆς τῶν ὑπο|τεταγμένων ἀσφαλείας καὶ μέγιστον ἀγαθ[ν] | εἶναι νομίζοντες τοῖς πράγμασιν, ὅταν οἱ κατὰ | τὴν βασιλείαν ἀδεῶς τοὺς ἑαυτῶν βίους διοικῶ|σιν, καὶ συνθεωροῦντες, ὡς οὐθὲν δύναται μετα|λαμβάνειν τῆς καθηκούσης εὐδαιμονίας ἄνευ | τῆς τῶν θεῶν εὐμ<ε>νείας. See Boyd-Taylor, “Haman,” 118–19.



to the lives (βίοι) of the kings' subjects, who are designated as οἱ ὑποτεταγμένοι and, in Seleucus IV's letter, also as οἱ κατὰ τὴν βασιλείαν (LXX Esth B:2: τοὺς τῶν ὑποτεταγμένων ἀκυμάτους διὰ παντὸς καταστῆσαι βίους; SEG 57-1838, ll. 14-15: περὶ τῆς τῶν ὑποτεταγμένων ἀσφαλείας; ll. 16-17: ὅταν οἱ κατὰ τὴν βασιλείαν ἀδεῶς τοὺς ἑαυτῶν βίους διοικῶσιν). Another common feature shared by the two *prooemia* is that they are structured using triads, with Seleucus IV's *prooemium* using three participles (ποιούμενοι, νομίζοντες, συνθεωροῦντες) and Artaxerxes' *prooemium* using two infinitives (καταστῆσαι, ἀνανεώσασθαι) and a participle in place of an infinitive (παρεξόμενος in lieu of παρασχεῖν).

Another *prooemium* of a Hellenistic royal letter featuring a “ruler formula” can be found in the letter that the Attalid king Eumenes II sent to the Ionian League in 167/166 BCE.<sup>210</sup> This *prooemium* has verbal and conceptual points of contact with both the *prooemium* of Artaxerxes' letter and that of Seleucus IV' letter. It shares with the former the expression of the king's commitment to establish general peace (LXX Esth B:2: ἀνανεώσασθαι τὴν ποθουμένην τοῖς πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις εἰρήνην; Welles, RC no. 52, ll. 11-13: ὅπως οἱ τὰς Ἑλληνίδας κατοικοῦντες πόλε[ι]ς διὰ παντὸς ἐν εἰρήνῃ ... ὑπάρχωσιν) and with the latter the use of the expression πρόνοιαν ποιεῖσθαι (SEG 57-1838, l. 14: πλείστην πρόνοιαν ποιούμενοι; Welles, RC no. 52, l. 10: ἅπασαν σπουδὴν καὶ πρόνοιαν ποιού[με]νος). The difference from the *prooemium* of Seleucus IV's letter, where the king gives a personal reflection on kingship in his own words, is that Eumenes quotes the praising words of a decree presented to him by the envoys of the Ionian League.<sup>211</sup>

*Prooemia* of the type discussed above are not found in Ptolemaic royal letters. They are, however, attested at a later period in some edicts issued by Roman prefects of Egypt and emperors.<sup>212</sup>

It is impossible to know whether the *prooemium* of Seleucus IV's letter was unique within the corpus of Seleucid royal letters; most likely, it was not. It is also difficult to ascertain whether Artaxerxes' letter in Addition B reflects the “compositional novelty” that is first attested in Seleucus IV's letter or whether the inclusion of a

<sup>210</sup> Welles, RC no. 52, ll. 6-13: τὰς καλλίστας ἀπὸ τῆς | ἀρχῆς ἐλόμενος πράξεις καὶ κοινὸν ἀναδείξας | ἑμαυτὸν εὐεργέτην τῶν Ἑλλήνων πολλοὺς μὲν | καὶ μεγάλους ἀγῶνας ὑπέστην πρὸς τοῦ[ς] | βαρβάρους, ἅπασαν σπουδὴν καὶ πρόνοιαν ποιού[με]νος ὅπως οἱ τὰς Ἑλληνίδας κατοικοῦντες πόλε[ι]ς | διὰ παντὸς ἐν εἰρήνῃ καὶ τῇ βελτίστῃ καταστάσ[ει] | ὑπάρχωσιν.

<sup>211</sup> See Welles, *Correspondence*, 213, 215.

<sup>212</sup> See 6.2.

“ruler formula” in both letters is merely coincidental.<sup>213</sup> Given that the novel type of *prooemium* attested in Seleucus IV’s letter—a letter that must have undergone extensive dissemination, as copies of it were posted in sanctuaries throughout Coele-Syria and Phoenicia<sup>214</sup>—may have established a model, it could have been imitated even by the authors of fictitious royal letters, such as the author of Addition B.

## 2.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I closely scrutinised three technical terms that occur in Addition B to Esther and which, according to Bickerman, relate to the Seleucid rather than the Ptolemaic administration. Of the three terms, only one, the title ὁ ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων can be ascertained to be distinctly Seleucid, given that Haman’s title and position in the Achaemenid court, as presented in Addition B, are equivalent to those of several Seleucid officials of the highest rank who served as “overseers of the affairs of the state” between the late third century and the mid-second century BCE, and possibly as late as the 90s BCE. The full title, as it appears in Addition B, namely, ὁ τεταγμένος ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων, is attested only epigraphically in reference to two high officials in the Seleucid administration, Zeuxis and Heliodorus; in contrast, in Ptolemaic Egypt, the same title is attested only in the plural as a collective designation for lower-ranking officials. I suggested that the author of Addition B may have become acquainted with it either through inscriptional testimonies or through 2 Maccabees, where the abbreviated title ὁ ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων is used for Heliodorus, Lysias, and Philippus, who served as “chief ministers” under Seleucus IV, Antiochus IV, and Antiochus V. If the latter is the case, the use of this title for Haman, the enemy of the Jews, may have been intended to equate him with one or more of these Seleucid officials who engaged in hostile actions against the Jews prior to and during the Maccabean period.

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<sup>213</sup> Muccioli, “Stele,” 62, observes that the reference to the goodwill of the gods in the *prooemium* of Seleucus IV’s letter (l. 20) finds a parallel in the opening lines of Ptolemy IV’s letter in 3 Maccabees (3:14–15), suggesting that this similarity may not be coincidental (“un tema che trova riscontri in 3 Maccabei a proposito di Tolemeo IV, con formulazioni che ricordano da vicino (non casualmente?) quelle della “stele” di Eliodoro”). However, the phrasing in the two texts does not imply any special connection between them, while there is a clear intertextual connection between 3 Macc 3:15 and LXX Esth B:2 (see Domazakis, *Esther*, 147–51).

<sup>214</sup> See n. 40 above.

Regarding the term σύμβουλος, “counsellor,” I established that it does not have any specific Seleucid association. Not only the Seleucid kings, but also the Attalid and the Ptolemaic kings, held councils with their *philoï*, who on such occasions served as their counsellors. The term σύμβουλος does not appear in any literary or documentary texts referring to the Seleucid kings and their counsellors, while it is attested in three different literary sources as a designation for the counsellors of two Ptolemaic kings. For Haman’s designation as King Artaxerxes’ σύμβουλος, I suggested that the author of Addition B may have drawn upon King Artaxerxes’ decree in the form of a letter given to Esdras, which is quoted in 1 Esdras and mentions the Persian king’s seven counsellors.

Concerning the term τοπάρχης, “toparch,” I concluded that it was not intended to allude to the Seleucid administrative hierarchy. Although the toparchies are known to have been administrative units in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt, as well as in Seleucid, Hasmonean, and Roman Palestine, the term τοπάρχης, well-documented in Egypt, does not happen to be attested in any literary or documentary sources referring to the Seleucid administration. Moreover, the prescript of the royal letter in LXX Addition B, in which the term in question occurs, finds parallels in the prescripts of Ptolemaic circular letters, whereas no Seleucid official letter that has come down to us is addressed to or mentions officials bearing the title of toparch. I suggested that the author of Addition B may have drawn the term from one of the lists of King Darius’ invitees and letter addressees in 1 Esdras.

In addition to the three aforementioned terms, I also discussed one not noted by Bickerman, namely, πατήρ, “father.” In both Addition B and E, Haman is said to have been granted by the king this honorific appellation, which in LXX Esth B:6 is conjoined with the title ὁ τεταγμένος ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων. This combination reinforces the evidence supporting the presence of a Seleucid “flavour” in Additions B and E, as the appellation πατήρ appears in the prescripts of two letters addressed by the Seleucid kings Antiochus III and Demetrius II to Zeuxis and Lasthenes, respectively, at least the first of whom bore with certainty the title ὁ τεταγμένος ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων. While the same honorific appellation seems to have been used in the first century BCE by King Mithridates VI and possibly by King Tarcondimotus II for high officials in their courts in Pontus and Cilicia, respectively, there is no similar evidence for its use in the Ptolemaic court.

In light of the above, I consider it likely that the Seleucid “flavour” discernible through the aforementioned terms, which, except for τοπάρχης, occur both in the

LXX and the AT, and are also reflected in VL Esther, was introduced into Addition B mainly through the influence of literary works such as 2 Maccabees and 1 Esdras, rather than through the direct influence of the historical context from which Addition B emerged. The possibility of a direct contact between Addition B and a Seleucid royal document was suggested by the comparison of the *prooemium* of King Artaxerxes' letter of condemnation, where he outlines his governance tenets, with the *prooemium* of the letter that King Seleucus IV sent to Heliodorus in 178 BCE. In this letter, a "ruler formula" similar to that found in Artaxerxes' letter is attested for the first time in Hellenistic royal correspondence. However, despite the suggestive similarities in content and diction between the two *prooemia*, it is difficult to ascertain whether the author of Addition B had first-hand knowledge of Seleucus IV's letter, or of a similar Seleucid letter, or whether he patterned his *prooemium* after an epistolary model that may have been influenced by the prototype set by Seleucus IV or another king.



# CHAPTER 3. THE MACCABEAN “FLAVOUR” OF ADDITIONS B AND E TO ESTHER

## 3.1 Introduction

After examining the evidence suggesting the presence of the Seleucid “flavour” in Additions B and E to Esther, I will seek to trace the presence of the Maccabean “flavour” in them, as it can be discerned through allusions to historical figures and events, as well as to texts associated with the Maccabean revolt in Judaea in 167–160 BCE. First, I will examine the verbal parallels between Additions B and E and (a) the letters of Kings Antiochus IV and Antiochus V in 2 Maccabees (3.2) and (b) the speech of the former high priest Alcimus to King Demetrius I in the same book (3.3). Second, I will explore the Maccabean connotations of the phrase ἐν καιρῷ θλίψεως, “in a time of distress,” which occurs in Addition E (3.4). Third, I will discuss the verbal parallel between LXX Esth E:4 and 2 Macc 7:35, which concerns the concept of the inescapable justice of the all-seeing God (3.5). Fourth, I will examine the pejorative term τρισυλήριος, “thrice impious,” applied to Haman in Addition E to Esther and to the Seleucid military commander Nicanor, one of the three arch-enemies of the Jews, alongside Heliodorus and Antiochus IV, in 2 Maccabees (3.6). Fifth, I will analyse the significance of the thirteenth of Adar, which marks both the date of the Jews’ counterattack against their gentile enemies in LXX Addition E and the date of the defeat of the aforementioned Nicanor by Judas Maccabeus in 2 Maccabees (3.7). Lastly, by comparing Addition E with Jewish festal letters, including those prefixed in 2 Maccabees, I will assess whether Artaxerxes’ second letter, which institutes a Persian feast to be celebrated on the thirteenth of Adar, was intended to serve as a festal-letter-in-disguise for the “Day of Nicanor” celebrated on the same date (3.8). The examination of this evidence aims to address the following questions: Is the presence of the Maccabean “flavour” in Additions B and E attributable to a direct impact of the historical Maccabean events on the composer of these texts, or does it result from the

influence of the Maccabean literature, specifically 2 Maccabees? Is the “flavour” in question traceable in all the versions of Greek Esther? In which version was it originally introduced? What clues can it provide about the time of composition of this version?

### 3.2 Verbal parallels between Additions B and E to Esther and the letters of Antiochus IV and Antiochus V in 2 Maccabees

In LXX Esth B:7, King Artaxerxes asserts that the mass extermination of the Jews will benefit his government by rendering it stable and untroubled (ὅπως ... εὐσταθῇ καὶ ἀτάραχα παρέχωσιν ἡμῖν διὰ τέλους τὰ πράγματα). That political stability is a desideratum for the king can also be seen from LXX Esth B:2, where he expresses his intention to render the lives of his subjects waveless (τοὺς τῶν ὑποτεταγμένων ἀκυμάτους διὰ παντὸς καταστήσαι βίους) and his kingdom tranquil (τὴν τε βασιλείαν ἡμερον), and to restore the peace that all the people long for (ἀνανεώσασθαί τε τὴν ποθουμένην τοῖς πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις εἰρήνην). It is further evident from LXX Esth E:8, where he declares his determination to render his kingdom free from disturbance and peaceful for all its people (εἰς τὸ τὴν βασιλείαν ἀτάραχον τοῖς πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις μετ’ εἰρήνης παρεξόμεθα).

As I have shown elsewhere, the phrase ὅπως ... εὐσταθῇ καὶ ἀτάραχα παρέχωσιν ἡμῖν διὰ τέλους τὰ πράγματα in LXX Esth B:7 is verbally indebted to two verses from 3 Maccabees: one from King Ptolemy IV Philopator’s letter condemning the Jews (3:26: διειλήφμεν εἰς τὸν ἐπίλοιπον χρόνον τελείως ἡμῖν τὰ πράγματα ἐν εὐσταθείᾳ ... κατασταθήσεσθαι) and the other from the same king’s diatribe to his *philoï* (6:28: εὐστάθειαν παρέχει [ὁ θεὸς] τοῖς ἡμετέροις πράγμασιν).<sup>1</sup> All the terms occurring in the aforementioned phrase from LXX Esth B:7 have verbal counterparts in 3 Macc 3:26 and 6:28, except for the adjective ἀτάραχος, which was apparently not derived from 3 Maccabees.

Up to the first century CE, ἀτάραχος, used in a political sense (“free from political agitation,” “not involved in political disturbances”),<sup>2</sup> occurs only in the two fictitious

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<sup>1</sup> See Domazakis, *Esther*, 158–61.

<sup>2</sup> On the use of *ταράσσω* and *ταραχή* in relation to political and social agitation, see Spicq, “*ταράσσω*,” 372–73 with n. 3.

letters of King Artaxerxes in Additions B and E to Esther<sup>3</sup> and in King Antiochus V's letter to Lysias (163 BCE) in 2 Maccabees. In the latter letter, which is generally considered authentic,<sup>4</sup> the nine-year-old king communicates to his ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων (who is likely the actual author of the letter) his decision to revoke the anti-Jewish measures taken by his father, King Antiochus IV, to restore the Temple to the Jews, and to allow them to observe their ancestral customs. The rationale behind this change of policy is that all the subjects of the kingdom, including the nation of the Jews, should live undisturbed (11:23: βουλόμενοι τοὺς ἐκ τῆς βασιλείας ἀταράχους ὄντας; 11:25: αἰρούμενοι οὖν καὶ τοῦτο τὸ ἔθνος ἐκτὸς παραχῆς εἶναι). The juxtaposition of βασιλεία and ἀτάραχος, attested in LXX/AT Esth E:8/7:24, in 2 Macc 11:23, and in no other ancient Greek literary or documentary text,<sup>5</sup> suggests a connection, specifically an influence, between the two Septuagint texts, with the direction of the possible influence moving from Antiochus V's letter granting religious liberty to the Jews to Artaxerxes' countermanding letter, as the opposite possibility, namely, that an authentic royal document drew upon a fictitious one, would be rather unlikely.

This connection is corroborated by another verbal link, this time between Artaxerxes' countermanding letter and Antiochus IV's amnesty letter, which the author of 2 Maccabees quotes—in reverse chronological order—right after the aforementioned letter of Antiochus V. In this document, which is also considered authentic and dates from late 165 or early 164 BCE,<sup>6</sup> King Antiochus IV revokes his decree of 167 BCE, which suppressed the Jewish religious practices, and grants the Jews the freedom to use their own foods [or customs] and laws as before (2 Macc 11:31:

<sup>3</sup> In the AT version of Addition B, the adjective ἀτάραχος is stripped of the political connotation that it carries in LXX Esth B:7, as it does not occur at 3:18 [B:7] but at 3:15 [=B:2], where it modifies βίος, “life” (ἀταράχους ... βίους), instead of the poetic adjective ἀκύματος, “waveless,” used in the corresponding verse in the LXX text (ἀκυμάτους ... βίους). However, in AT Esth 7:24 [=E:8], the adjective is used in the same political sense as in LXX Esth E:8. VL Esther reflects ἀτάραχος at both B:7 (*stabiles et quietes*) and E:8 (*regnum quietem*).

<sup>4</sup> See Habicht, “Documents,” 10, 12; id., *2. Makkabäerbuch*, 179–80; Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 42; Doran, *2 Maccabees*, 227.

<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that ἀτάραχος, used in a political sense, is not attested in any Hellenistic royal document preserved on stone or papyrus. Its cognate noun ἀταραξία, as a political term denoting the absence of political agitation, is attested in a letter of the Bosphoran king Aspurgos to the city of Gorgippia (*SEG* 46-940 [16 CE], I, ll. 3–5: ἐπειδὴ ἔδο[ξ]αν [sc. οἱ Γοργιππεῖς] ἐν πολ[ι]τοῖς μὲν πράγμασιν εὐνοηκέναι μοι, μάλιστα δὲ ἐν τῇ πρὸς τὸν σεβαστὸν | αὐτοκράτορα ἀναβάσει συνετηρηκότες ἑαυτοὺς ἐν πλείστη ἀτα[ρα]ξίᾳ). Cf. the use of the adverb ἀταράχως in Diodorus Siculus, *Bibl.* 17.54.5 and 18.18.6.

<sup>6</sup> See Habicht, “Documents,” 11–12, 15; id., *2. Makkabäerbuch*, 179, 181–82.



χρησθαι τοὺς Ἰουδαίους τοῖς ἑαυτῶν δαπανήμασι [Wilhelm: διαιτήμασι]<sup>7</sup> καὶ νόμοις καθὰ καὶ τὸ πρότερον). In his countermanding letter, King Artaxerxes issues a similar order, using nearly the same phraseology as King Antiochus IV: LXX Esth E:19: ἔἴην τοὺς Ἰουδαίους χρῆσθαι τοῖς ἑαυτῶν νομίμοις. Unlike Antiochus IV, who speaks of the νόμοι (“laws”) of the Jews, Artaxerxes employs the term νόμιμα (“usages,” “customs”). However, the manuscripts waver at this point between the readings νομιμοις and νομοις.<sup>8</sup> When referring to the “laws” of the Jews, LXX Esther consistently uses the term νόμος not only in the canonical sections (3:8; 8:11) but also in Addition B (B:4, 5) and even in Addition E (E:15: δικαιοτάτοις δὲ πολιτευομένους νόμοις). Thus, at E:19, one might be inclined to prefer the reading νομοις over νομιμοις. The variation between οἱ νόμοι and τὰ νόμιμα in relation to the laws/customs of the Jews is also attested in the Alpha Text, where the former term is found in the Additions (3:16 [=B:4]; 3:17 [=B:5]; 7:27 [=E:15]; 7:29 [=E:19]), while the latter term occurs once in the canonical text (3:8).

LXX Esth E:19 has a verbal counterpart in the canonical verses of LXX Esther that immediately precede Addition E and summarise a letter—whose content was apparently similar to that of the letter contained in Addition E—that King Artaxerxes addressed to his Jewish subjects: LXX Esth 8:11: ὡς ἐπέταξεν [sc. ὁ βασιλεὺς]<sup>9</sup> αὐτοῖς [sc. τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις] χρῆσθαι τοῖς νόμοις αὐτῶν ἐν πάσῃ πόλει. The phrase χρῆσθαι τοῖς νόμοις αὐτῶν is a plus vis-à-vis the Masoretic Text. It is absent in the AT but is reflected in VL Esther (8:11: *uti suis legibus*). It was either added to this verse when Addition E was inserted into the LXX text, or it was part of LXX Esth 8:11 from the very beginning, with LXX Esth E:19 taking its cue from it. LXX Esth E:19 is verbally a little closer to 2 Macc 11:31 than to LXX Esth 8:11 (the reflexive pronoun ἑαυτῶν placed between the article and the noun is more emphatic than the post-positioned αὐτῶν). If the author of Addition E took his cue from LXX Esth 8:11, we have to surmise that he slightly modified the latter verse (τοῖς νόμοις αὐτῶν > τοῖς ἑαυτῶν νομίμοις [v.l.

<sup>7</sup> On the reading δαπανήμασι (“foods,” “expenses”) and Wilhelm’s emendation to διαιτήμασι (“customs,” “ways of life”), see Habicht, *2. Makkabäerbuch*, 193, 259 n. 31a; Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 549–50; Doran, *2 Maccabees*, 224.

<sup>8</sup> νομιμοις is the reading attested in the uncial codices Vaticanus and Venetus and in a few minuscules, as well as in P.Oxy. 4443, col. i, ll. 17–18 (restored). Codices Alexandrinus and Sinaiticus read instead νομοις. The Alpha Text (7:29) and Josephus’ version of Esther (A.J. 11.281) also read νόμοις. The *Vetus Latina* of Esther has *legibus*, which reflects a Greek text reading νόμοις rather than νομίμοις. As Pucci Ben Zeev, *Rights*, 287 and 416–17, notes, in the case of the Jews there was, in practice, no real difference between “customs” and “laws,” as the former were regulated by the Jewish Law, the Torah.

<sup>9</sup> On the subject of the verb, see 1.1, n. 16.

νόμοις]) to align it with the wording of Antiochus IV's letter (τοῖς ἑαυτῶν νόμοις).<sup>10</sup> The change of νόμοις to νομίμοις—if change there was—may have been triggered by the use of the term τὰ νόμιμα in the aforementioned letter of Antiochus V, which precedes the letter of his father, Antiochus IV, in Chapter 11 of 2 Maccabees: 11:24: τὴν ἑαυτῶν ἀγωγὴν αἰρετίζοντας [sc. τοὺς Ἰουδαίους] ἀξιοῦν συγχωρηθῆναι αὐτοῖς τὰ νόμιμα. We can further surmise that the term τὰ νόμιμα may have originally been used in the decree of Antiochus IV that initiated the persecution of the Jewish religion in 167 BCE. The translator of 1 Maccabees, who summarises the content of that decree, uses the term;<sup>11</sup> however, it remains unknown whether he had access to the original document.

De Troyer contends that LXX Esther “clearly makes use” of the letters of Antiochus IV and his son in 2 Maccabees, and that these letters “constitute a primary source of inspiration for the LXX translator of Esther,” who, according to this scholar, is the same as the author of Addition E.<sup>12</sup> One might argue, of course, that the formula employed with slight variation in 2 Macc 11:31, in LXX Esth 8:11, and in LXX/AT Esth E:19 was typical of decrees and other official documents granting the Jews the right to live according to their own customs and laws. Josephus in his *Jewish Antiquities* has, in fact, preserved a number of such *acta pro Judaeis*, for the most part issued by Roman authorities.<sup>13</sup> In some of these documents occur formulae such as χρῆσθαι τοῖς ἰδίοις

<sup>10</sup> On the similarity between LXX Esth 8:11 and E:19, see De Troyer, *End*, 386–87.

<sup>11</sup> 1 Macc 1:41–42: ἔγραψεν ὁ βασιλεὺς [sc. Antiochus IV] ... ἐγκαταλιπεῖν ἕκαστον τὰ νόμιμα αὐτοῦ; cf. 1:44: καὶ ἀπέστειλεν ὁ βασιλεὺς βιβλία ... πορευθῆναι ὀπίσω νομίμων ἀλλοτρίων τῆς γῆς. Cf. the words of Lysias, suggesting to King Antiochus V that he repeal the anti-Jewish measures: 1 Macc 6:59: καὶ στήσωμεν αὐτοῖς [sc. τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις] τοῦ πορεύεσθαι τοῖς νομίμοις αὐτῶν ὡς τὸ πρότερον. These words are reflected in the letters of Antiochus IV and Antiochus V in 2 Macc 11:31 and 11:24–25, respectively.

<sup>12</sup> De Troyer, *End*, 237–38, 276, 392, 398.

<sup>13</sup> See Josephus, *AJ*. 12.142 (letter of Antiochus III to his governor Ptolemy; 200–197 BCE): πολιτευέσθωσαν δὲ πάντες οἱ ἐκ τοῦ ἔθνους κατὰ τοὺς πατρίους νόμους; 12.150 (letter of Antiochus III to his governor Zeuxis; 212–205 BCE): βούλομαι ... νόμοις αὐτοὺς χρῆσθαι τοῖς ἰδίοις; 14.213 (letter of a Roman magistrate [Octavian?] to Paros (?); 42–41 BCE): τοῖς πατρίοις ἔθει καὶ ἱεροῖς χρῆσθαι; 14.227 (letter of the Roman proconsul of Syria P. Dolabella to Ephesus; 43 BCE): συγχωρῶ χρῆσθαι τοῖς πατρίοις ἔθισμοις; 14.246 (letter of the proconsul Publius Servilius Galba to Miletus; 46–44 BCE [?]): ἐπέκρινα μὴ κωλύεσθαι Ἰουδαίους τοῖς αὐτῶν ἔθει χρῆσθαι; 14.258 (decree of the Halicarnassians; 47 BCE [?]): δεδόχθαι καὶ ἡμῖν Ἰουδαίων τοὺς βουλομένους ... τὰ τε σάββατα ἄγειν καὶ τὰ ἱερὰ συντελεῖν κατὰ τοὺς Ἰουδαίων νόμους; 14.261 (decree of the Sardians; 47 BCE [?]): συγκεχωρῆσθαι αὐτοῖς ... πράσσειν τὰ κατὰ τοὺς αὐτῶν νόμους; 14.263–264 (decree of the Ephesians; 42 BCE): ὅπως ... πάντα ποιῶσιν κατὰ τὰ πάτρια αὐτῶν ἔθη ... ἐπιτεράφθαι δ' αὐτοῖς πάντα ποιεῖν κατὰ τοὺς ἰδίους αὐτῶν νόμους; 16.163 (edict of Augustus favouring the Jews of Asia; 12 BCE): ἔδοξέ μοι καὶ τῷ ἐμῷ συμβουλίῳ ... τοὺς Ἰουδαίους χρῆσθαι τοῖς ἰδίοις θεσμοῖς [v.l. ἔθισμοις] κατὰ τὸν πάτριον αὐτῶν νόμον; 16.172–173 (letter of Jullus Antonius to the Ephesians; 4 BCE): συγκεχωρηκέναί αὐτοῖς χρῆσθαι τοῖς ἰδίοις νόμοις καὶ ἔθειν

νόμοις, which are similar to but not identical with the ones used in LXX Esther and in 2 Maccabees. In his rewrite of Artaxerxes' second letter, Josephus uses precisely the aforementioned formula rather than the one that occurs in LXX Esth E:19: [A.J. 11.281] τοὺς Ἰουδαίους ἀφεῖναι τοῖς ἰδίοις νόμοις χρωμένους ζῆν μετ' εἰρήνης. While the non-occurrence of the formula χρῆσθαι τοῖς νόμοις αὐτῶν/τοῖς ἑαυτῶν νομίμοις [or νόμοις] in the *acta pro Judaeis* quoted by Josephus does not constitute conclusive evidence,<sup>14</sup> it corroborates the connection between LXX Esth 8:11, LXX Esth E:19, and 2 Macc 11:31.

If the author of Additions B and E did, indeed, draw upon the letters of Antiochus IV and Antiochus V, we have to assume that he accessed them not as stand-alone documents but as integrated within the epitome of 2 Maccabees, or perhaps its *Vorlage*, Jason of Cyrene's historiographic work, and that, like the author of 2 Maccabees, he likely believed that both letters originated from the same king, Antiochus IV.<sup>15</sup> Further verbal similarities between Additions B and E and 2 Maccabees, which will be discussed in the following sections, strengthen the likelihood that the author of the two Additions was familiar with the latter book.

A final point that I want to make before concluding this section is that the permission granted by Artaxerxes to the Jews—note the verb ἑάω, “to permit” (ἑἶν τοὺς Ἰουδαίους), and the prepositional phrase μετὰ παρρησίας, “openly, freely,” in

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... συνεπιτρέπειν αὐτοῖς χρῆσθαι καὶ ποιεῖν κατὰ τὰ πάτρια χωρὶς ἐμποδισμοῦ; 19.285 (edict of Claudius to Alexandria; 41 CE): βούλομαι ... φυλάσσεσθαι δ' αὐτοῖς καὶ τὰ πρότερον δικαιώματα ἐμμένονσι τοῖς ἰδίοις ἔθεσιν; 19.290 (edict of Claudius to the Jews living in the Roman world; 41 CE): καλῶς οὖν ἔχειν καὶ Ἰουδαίους ... τὰ πάτρια ἔθῃ ἀνεπικωλύτως φυλάσσειν ... τοὺς ἰδίους δὲ νόμους φυλάσσειν (cf. *P.Lond.* 6.1912 [letter of Claudius to the Alexandrians; 41 CE], ll. 85–87: ἵνα ... ἑῶσιν αὐτοὺς [τοὺς Ἰουδαίους] τοῖς ἔθεσιν χρῆσθαι ὅς [l. οἷς] καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ θεοῦ Σεβαστοῦ); 19.311 (letter/edict of Publius Petronius, governor of Syria; 41–42 CE): παραγγέλλω ... ἐκάστους τὰ ἴδια ἔθῃ θρησκεύειν. See also Pucci Ben Zeev, *Rights*, 111, 144, 287, 416 with n. 26, and 460–61. In his edict to Alexandria and Syria (Josephus, *A.J.* 19.281), Claudius refers to γράμματα and διατάγματα previously issued by the Ptolemaic kings, which granted civic rights to the Alexandrian Jews; however, these documents have not survived. See Pucci Ben Zeev, *Rights*, 300.

<sup>14</sup> The authenticity and verbal accuracy of the documents pertaining to the Jewish rights that have been transmitted by Josephus is a matter of debate. On the authenticity of the two letters of Antiochus III cited in the preceding footnote, see Doering, *Letters*, 289–91; on the authenticity of the other Greek and Roman documents granting or confirming rights to the Jews, see Pucci Ben Zeev, *Rights*, 6–11 and 361–68.

<sup>15</sup> It is worth noting that the letter of Antiochus IV in 2 Maccabees, which gives amnesty to the Jews and allows them to observe their laws as before, is dated “Xanthicus fifteenth,” which likely corresponds to the 15th of Adar, a day connected with the celebration of Purim. Schneider, “Esther,” 216–17, regards this as a possible point of contact between the Greek Esther and 2 Maccabees. On the basis of a scholium to *Megillat Ta'anit* MS Oxford, it has also been suggested that Antiochus' repeal of his anti-Jewish measures gave rise to a Hasmonean festival celebrated on the 28th of Adar. See Burns, “Purim,” 25 n. 59.

LXX Esth E:19, which do not occur in LXX Esth 8:11—to observe their own customs/laws implies a prior prohibition. However, no such prohibition is recorded in the canonical parts of LXX Esther or in the king’s letter in Addition B. Addressing the king, in LXX Esth 3:8, Haman censures the laws of the Jews as divergent from those of all other nations (οἱ δὲ νόμοι αὐτῶν ἕξαστοι παρὰ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη). The king incorporates this critique in his letter of condemnation (LXX Esth B:4: λαόν τινα τοῖς νόμοις ἀντίθετον πρὸς πᾶν ἔθνος; B:5: ἔθνος ... διαγωγὴν νόμων ξενίζουσιν παραλλάσσον), without, however, imposing any specific restrictions on the Jews regarding the observance of their laws, as, for instance, King Antiochus IV did in his anti-Jewish decree.<sup>16</sup> Esther, on her part, in her prayer in Addition C, alludes to a ban, whether real or feared, that the gentile enemies of the Jews sought to impose on the observance of the commandments of the Torah (C:20: ἐξᾶραι ὁρισμὸν στόματός σου); however, this ban is not mentioned or alluded to elsewhere in the canonical or deuterocanonical parts of Esther.<sup>17</sup> Only AT Esth 7:41 states that, following the repeal of Artaxerxes’ decree, many Jews were circumcised and no one stood against them because they feared them (καὶ πολλοὶ τῶν Ἰουδαίων περιετέμνοντο, καὶ οὐδεὶς ἐπανεῖστη αὐτοῖς ἐφοβοῦντο γὰρ αὐτούς).<sup>18</sup> This suggests a prior prohibition of circumcision similar to that imposed by King Antiochus IV in 167 BCE.<sup>19</sup> These details, I submit, resonate with or allude to the prohibitions on Jewish religious practices imposed by the decree of Antiochus IV in 167 BCE, as well as to the subsequent abrogation of these prohibitions through the decrees of both Antiochus IV and Antiochus V in 165–163 BCE.

### 3.3 Verbal parallels between Alcimus’ speech in 2 Macc 14:6–10 and LXX Esth B:5 and E:11

In 2 Macc 14:5–10, the former high priest Alcimus, one of the Jewish villains in the book, is granted an audience by the newly installed King Demetrius I and his council.

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<sup>16</sup> For these restrictions, see 1 Macc 1:41–50 and 2 Macc 6:1–9.

<sup>17</sup> See 3.4 below.

<sup>18</sup> In LXX/VL Esth 8:17, by contrast, it is the gentiles who circumcise themselves out of fear of the Jews. Schneider, “Esther,” 204 with n. 33, considers the version presented in AT Esth 7:41 to be more “realistic” and possibly more “primitive.”

<sup>19</sup> See 1 Macc 1:48, 60–61; 2 Macc 6:10; Josephus, *AJ*. 12.254.

In the speech that he addresses to them, Alcimus, pretending to speak in the king's interest (14:8: ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀνηκόντων τῷ βασιλεῖ), accuses the Hassideans, a Jewish group whose leader, he claims, is Judas Maccabeus, of being rebellious and not allowing the kingdom to attain stability (14:6: οὐκ ἔωντες [sc. οἱ Ασίδαῖοι] τὴν βασιλείαν εὐσταθείας τυχεῖν). He further asserts that, as long as Judas is alive, peace in the state is impossible to achieve, and he urges Demetrius to attend to his country and the nation of the Jews with the same affable humanity that he shows to all people (14:9: καθ' ἣν ἔχεις πρὸς ἅπαντας εὐαπάντητον φιланθρωπίαν).

Alcimus' audience scene bears similarities to the scene of Haman's audience with the king in LXX Esth 3:8–9. Moreover, there are verbal parallels between Alcimus' speech and Artaxerxes' letters in Additions B and E. Similar to Alcimus, Haman pretends to act in the king's best interest (LXX Esth 3:8: οὐ συμφέρει τῷ βασιλεῖ), urging him to eliminate all the Jews of the kingdom. The author of Addition B envisions Haman's audience with the king taking place in the presence of the royal counsellors (LXX Esth B:3–4), just as Alcimus' did. He has Artaxerxes employ the same argument and phraseology that Alcimus uses in 2 Macc 14:6 to denounce Judas and his people as destabilising the Seleucid kingdom (LXX Esth B:5: πρὸς τὸ μὴ τὴν βασιλείαν εὐσταθείας τυγχάνειν).<sup>20</sup> In Addition E, he even has Artaxerxes adopt the same compliment that Alcimus servilely pays to Demetrius in 2 Macc 14:9 (LXX Esth E:11: ἔτυχεν ἥς ἔχομεν πρὸς πᾶν ἔθνος φιλανθρωπίας). As I have demonstrated elsewhere, the latter phrase seems to have been derived from Alcimus' speech in 2 Maccabees via the first of King Ptolemy IV Philopator's two letters in 3 Maccabees. More specifically, LXX Esth E:11 seems to have amalgamated 3 Macc 3:18 (δι' ἣν ἔχομεν πρὸς ἅπαντας ἀνθρώπους φιλανθρωπίαν) and 3:20 (τοῖς πᾶσιν ἔθνεσι φιλανθρώπως ἀπαντήσαντες). For the former verse, the author of 3 Maccabees seems to be indebted to 2 Macc 14:9, while for the latter, to the letter of King Ptolemy II Philadelphus to the high priest Eleazar in the *Letter of Aristeas* (§ 36: καὶ ἡμεῖς δὲ παραλαβόντες τὴν βασιλείαν φιλανθρωπότερον ἀπαντῶμεν τοῖς πᾶσι).<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> See Gregg, "Additions," 668; Doran, *Propaganda*, 69–70; Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 472; Domazakis, *Esther*, 161.

<sup>21</sup> See Domazakis, *Esther*, 166–68.

### 3.4 “In a time of affliction” (ἐν καιρῷ θλίψεως)

In LXX/AT Esth E:20/7:29, King Artaxerxes asks his officials to assist the Jews so that, on the thirteenth of Adar,<sup>22</sup> they can avenge themselves (ὅπως ... ἀμύνωνται)<sup>23</sup> on those who attacked them (τοὺς ... ἐπιθεμένους αὐτοῖς) in a time of affliction (ἐν καιρῷ θλίψεως). The verb ἐπιτίθεμαι appears only here in LXX Esther; in AT Esther, it also occurs at 4:16 [=C:8], where the praying Mordecai says that the gentiles have attacked the Jews with the intent to destroy them (ἐπιτέθεινται ἡμῖν εἰς καταφθοράν). The typically Septuagintal phrase ἐν καιρῷ θλίψεως occurs once more in LXX/AT Esther, in the prayer of Esther in Addition C.<sup>24</sup> In LXX/AT Esth C:23/4:24, Esther entreats Yahweh to manifest himself and make himself known to the Jews in their time of affliction (ἐπιφάνηθι [AT: ἡμῖν], κύριε, καὶ γνώσθητι ἡμῖν ἐν καιρῷ θλίψεως ἡμῶν). The “time of affliction” for the Jews denotes the period following the publication of Artaxerxes’ decree announcing a pogrom to be launched against them throughout the Persian kingdom. In the verses preceding C:23/4:24, however, Esther refers to threats posed to the Jews by their gentile enemies, which lack any connection with the narrative surrounding her prayer. More specifically, she states that these enemies are determined to abolish the ordinance of Yahweh’s mouth, that is, to suppress the Torah (C:20: ἐξῆραι ὅρισμὸν στόματός σου), to extinguish the glory of His house and altar, that is, to enforce the cessation of the Temple cult (C:20: καὶ σβέσαι δόξαν οἴκου σου καὶ θυσιαστήριόν σου), and to make a king of flesh and blood be admired forever (C:21: καὶ θαυμασθῆναι βασιλέα σάρκινον εἰς αἰῶνα); she also states that, under these circumstances, some Jews were enticed to embrace idolatry (C:18: ἐδοξάσαμεν τοὺς θεοὺς αὐτῶν). As I have pointed out elsewhere, these references likely hint at the period of suppression of the Jewish religious practices in Judea under King Antiochus IV Epiphanes.<sup>25</sup>

The reign of Antiochus IV is also indirectly referred to as a time of θλίψις for the Jews in the first festal letter attached to 2 Maccabees, which quotes a few lines from an earlier festal letter sent by the Jews of Jerusalem to their fellow Jews in Egypt in

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<sup>22</sup> The date is specified only in the LXX, not in the AT.

<sup>23</sup> See n. 48 below.

<sup>24</sup> The phrase occurs thirteen times in the Septuagint; outside the Septuagint, it occurs once in Jos. Asen. 11.10, and then in patristic literature. See Schlier, “θλίβω,” 140–43.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. 1 Macc 1:43: καὶ πολλοὶ ἀπὸ Ἰσραὴλ εὐδόκησαν τῇ λατρείᾳ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἔθυσαν τοῖς εἰδώλοις; 1:45: κωλύσαι ὀλοκαυτώματα καὶ θυσίαν καὶ σπονδὴν ἐκ τοῦ ἁγιάσματος; 1:56: καὶ τὰ βιβλία τοῦ νόμου ... ἐνεπύρισαν ἐν πυρὶ κατασχίσαντες. See Domazakis, *Esther*, 126.

143/142 BCE, exhorting them to celebrate Hanukkah. In the quoted lines (2 Macc 1:7–8), the Jerusalemites refer to the acute affliction that had come upon them (ἐν τῇ θλίψει καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀκμῇ τῇ ἐπελθούσῃ ἡμῖν) during the years from the rebellion of the high priest Jason to the rededication of the Temple by Judas Maccabeus (169–164 BCE). While Antiochus IV’s persecution is not explicitly mentioned in 2 Macc 1:7–8, it was undoubtedly the primary cause of θλίψις for the Jews during the period referred to in the quoted letter.<sup>26</sup>

I suggest that the oppression and persecution experienced by the Jews under Antiochus IV is hinted at by the phrase ἐν καιρῷ θλίψεως in LXX/AT Esth E:20/7:29, just as it is implied by the same phrase in Esther’s prayer and by the phrase ἐν τῇ θλίψει in the festal letter quoted in 2 Maccabees.

### 3.5 Escaping the justice of the all-seeing God

In LXX Esth E:4, King Artaxerxes, implicitly referring to Haman, castigates those ungrateful people who seek to harm their own benefactors, believing that they can escape the evil-hating justice of God who always surveys all things (τοῦ τὰ πάντα κατοπεύοντος αἰὲ θεοῦ μισοπόνηρον ὑπολαμβάνουσιν ἐκφεύξεσθαι δίκην). This verse exhibits close verbal correspondences with 2 Macc 7:35, where the youngest of the seven brothers subjected to torture for defying the orders of King Antiochus IV warns the king that he has not yet escaped the judgment of the almighty, overseeing God (οὐπω γὰρ τὴν τοῦ παντοκράτορος ἐπόπτου θεοῦ κρίσιν ἐκπέφυγας). These are the only instances of the verb ἐκφεύγω used in conjunction with a noun denoting justice/judgment (δίκη/κρίσις) and a divine epithet denoting God’s all-observing/surveying power (κατοπεύων/ἐπόπτης).<sup>27</sup>

Instead of the phrase τοῦ τὰ πάντα κατοπεύοντος αἰὲ θεοῦ, AT Esth 7:23 [=E:4] reads τοῦ τὰ πάντα δυναστεύοντος δικαιοκρίτου. The noun δικαιοκρίτης, “righteous judge,” used as a divine epithet, has only one other instance in the Septuagint, in 2 Macc 12:41, where the fall in battle of those of Judas Maccabeus’ soldiers who carried idols is seen as a just punishment. As I have argued elsewhere,<sup>28</sup> the composer of the

<sup>26</sup> See Bickerman, “Letter,” 412: “The ‘distress’ had come to an end with the dedication of the temple, i.e. in 148 Sel., and the entire passage which begins with these words refers not to the situation under King Demetrius II, but to the persecution by Antiochus IV.” See also *ibid.*, 430–31.

<sup>27</sup> See Domazakis, *Esther*, 182.

<sup>28</sup> See Domazakis, *Neologisms*, 249–66, 274.

Alpha Text likely borrowed this noun from 2 Maccabees, along with the phrase ἔκθυμος δὲ γυνόμενος ὁ βασιλεύς, “the king, becoming enraged” (7:9), which occurs three times in 2 Maccabees (7:3, 39; 14:27) and nowhere else. One of its instances in the latter book is at 14:27, where the former high priest Alcimus incites the anger of King Demetrius I against Nicanor. As we saw previously, in 3.3, Alcimus’ speech to King Demetrius I in 2 Macc 14:6–10 has points of verbal contact with LXX/AT/VL Esth B:4 and E:11. It is, thus, possible that Additions B and E to Esther, in their Septuagint form and in the Alpha Text, are independently indebted to 2 Maccabees.

### 3.6 The “thrice-impious” (τρισαλιτήριος) Haman

In LXX/AT Esth E:15/7:27, King Artaxerxes uses an especially derogatory term, τρισαλιτήριος, “thrice impious,” to refer to Haman. This term, a Septuagintal neologism, is all the more striking, given that it appears in a royal letter, which is expected to convey composure and loftiness. Elsewhere in the Septuagint, τρισαλιτήριος occurs only in 2 Maccabees (8:34; 15:3); outside the Septuagint, it does not recur prior to the fourth century CE. In 2 Macc 8:34, τρισαλιτήριος is applied to the Seleucid official Nicanor, son of Patroclus, who in 165 BCE was sent by the *strategos* of Coele-Syria and Phoenicia to wipe out all the Jews of Judea (2 Macc 8:9). This Nicanor is said to have intended to sell into slavery the Jews that he would capture during his campaign, in order to pay the tribute that King Antiochus IV owed to the Romans (2 Macc 8:10–11). However, defeated by the forces of Judas Maccabeus, he fled to Antioch in humiliation (2 Macc 8:35). In 2 Macc 15:3, τρισαλιτήριος is applied to the same, or perhaps a different, Nicanor,<sup>29</sup> who in 162 BCE was appointed *strategos* of Judea by King Demetrius I and tasked with eliminating Judas Maccabeus and dispersing his men (2 Macc 14:12–13). This Nicanor, who threatened to raze the Jerusalem Temple to the ground and sought to profane the Sabbath (2 Macc 14:33; 15:1–5), was defeated and killed by Judas Maccabeus at the battle of Adasa on the 13th

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<sup>29</sup> See Bar-Kochva, *Judas*, 239, 352; Savalli-Lestrade, *Philo*, 60; Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 9–10, 346, 473–74; Domazakis, *Neologisms*, 236 n. 114. Considering it likely, along with Bar-Kochva and Schwartz, that the author of 2 Maccabees regarded the Nicanor of Chapter 8 (Nicanor I) and the Nicanor of Chapters 14–15 (Nicanor II, who receives the most prominence in 2 Maccabees) to be one and the same person, I will refer to the “Nicanor” character without distinguishing between the two.



of Adar, 161 BCE (2 Macc 15:25–36).<sup>30</sup> To commemorate his defeat on that day, the Jews instituted a feast, which, as the author of 2 Maccabees informs us, was celebrated the day before the “Day of Mordecai” (literally, the “Mordecaic Day,” Μαρδοχαϊκή ἡμέρα), namely, the first of the two days of Purim (2 Macc 15:36).<sup>31</sup> The feast of the 13th of Adar, designated as the “Day of Nicanor” by the “Scroll of Fasting” (*Megillat Ta’anit*),<sup>32</sup> was still observed in the time of Josephus (A.J. 12.412).<sup>33</sup>

The author of 2 Maccabees seems to purposely emphasise the immediate proximity of the “Day of Nicanor” with the “Day of Mordecai,” having previously offered clues for the reader to make the connection between the historical Nicanor and the fictitious Haman, and, by extension, between Judas Maccabeus and Mordecai. Both Nicanor and Haman are officials of a very high rank: the former is one of the “First Friends” of King Antiochus IV (2 Macc 8:9: τῶν πρώτων φίλων); the latter is set above all the “Friends” of King Artaxerxes (LXX Esth 3:1: ἐπρωτοβάθρει πάντων τῶν φίλων αὐτοῦ). Like Haman, Nicanor is portrayed as an enemy and a potential exterminator of the Jewish people (2 Macc 8:9: τὸ σύμπαν τῆς Ἰουδαίας ἐξᾶραι γένος; 14:39: ἦν εἶχε πρὸς τοὺς Ἰουδαίους δυσμένειαν; cf. LXX Esth 3:6: ἐβουλεύσατο ἀφανίσει πάντας τοὺς ὑπὸ τὴν Ἀρταξέρξου βασιλείαν Ἰουδαίους; 7:6: ἄνθρωπος ἐχθρός; 9:10: τοῦ ἐχθροῦ τῶν Ἰουδαίων; 9:24: ἔθετο ψήφισμα καὶ κληῖρον ἀφανίσει αὐτούς). Haman promises to pay ten thousand talents of silver to the king, if the latter issues a decree for the extermination of the Jews (LXX Esth 3:9);<sup>34</sup> Nicanor offers to pay the two thousand talents that King Antiochus IV owed to the Romans by capturing and selling Jews as slaves (2 Macc 8:10–11). When the Jews of the Persian kingdom hear about the king’s

<sup>30</sup> On the date, see Hanhart, “Zeitrechnung,” 68–69 [March 27, 160 BCE], and Bar-Kochva, *Judas*, 374 [March 161 BCE].

<sup>31</sup> Zeitlin, “Megillat,” 290; id., *Second Book*, 23, 247, has pointed out that the author of 2 Maccabees, writing in the Diaspora, was probably unaware that 161 BCE was a leap year, into which a thirteenth month (Adar II), was intercalated after the twelfth month (Adar I). Nicanor was killed on the 13th of Adar I, 161 BCE, whereas the Day of Mordecai was celebrated on the 14th of Adar II, 161 BCE. This may be the reason why the author of 1 Maccabees does not mention the feast established to commemorate the victory of the Maccabees over Nicanor in connection with the Day of Mordecai/Purim. In short years, the two feasts were, of course, celebrated on consecutive days. See also Bar-Kochva, *Judas*, 372–73.

<sup>32</sup> See Zeitlin, “Megillat,” 242.

<sup>33</sup> The name of the holiday of the 13th of Adar is not recorded in any source prior to the *Megillat Ta’anit*. Designating a holiday after the name of a vanquished enemy is unusual, but comparable examples can be found in later history, such as “Guy Fawkes Day.” See Domazakis, *Neologisms*, 270 n. 72.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. LXX Esth 7:4, where Esther states that she and her people were “sold to be destroyed, to be booty, and to be enslaved ... as male and female slaves” (trans. Jobes, NETS).

extermination decree, which was Haman's idea, they weep, mourn, and put on sackcloth and ashes (LXX Esth 4:3); similarly, when the Jews in Judaea hear of Nicanor's impending attack, they sprinkle dust on their heads and pray to God (2 Macc 14:15). Both Nicanor and Haman attempt to entrap their adversaries, Judas Maccabeus and Mordecai, respectively, but ultimately find themselves outmanoeuvred (2 Macc 14:28–31; LXX Esth 5:9–6:13). Both are eventually defeated and killed and their bodies are publicly dishonoured: Nicanor's head is cut off and fastened to the citadel in Jerusalem (2 Macc 15:30–35), while Haman is hanged on a gallows in Susa (LXX Esth 7:9–10). On the 13th of Adar, the Jews are purported to have killed a very large number of enemies at Adasa (35,000, according to 2 Macc 15:27)<sup>35</sup> and throughout the Persian kingdom (500 in Susa and 15,000 in the provinces, according to LXX Esth 9:6, 12, 16).<sup>36</sup> The victories of the Jews over Nicanor and Haman give occasion for celebrations, and annual feasts are instituted to commemorate them on adjacent dates: the "Day of Nicanor" on the 13th (2 Macc 15:36) and "Purim" on the 14th and 15th of Adar (LXX Esth 9:19, 21; F:10), respectively.<sup>37</sup> By juxtaposing them, the author of 2 Maccabees seems to have wanted to equate the feast established to commemorate a significant victory of the Maccabees over their Seleucid overlords with a feast set up to celebrate the victory of the Jews of the Persian kingdom over their gentile enemies within and outside the royal court.<sup>38</sup>

In light of the above, the use of the very rare adjective τρισαλιτήριος in 2 Maccabees and in Addition E to Esther with reference to Nicanor and Haman, respectively, can hardly be coincidental: one of the two texts likely borrowed it from the other. While the author of 2 Maccabees was certainly familiar with the feast of the 14th of Adar and its association with Mordecai, it is hard to establish which particular version of the Esther story he might have known, whether it was in Hebrew or in Greek.<sup>39</sup> I have shown elsewhere that 2 Maccabees shares with the LXX and the AT versions of Esther some lexical and phraseological parallels (τρισαλιτήριος is one of them) that do not occur anywhere else in the Septuagint or even outside it. Considering that the most

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<sup>35</sup> The figure is most likely exaggerated. Josephus, *AJ*. 12.411, relates that only 9,000 Seleucid soldiers took part in the battle at Adasa, none of whom escaped. See Bar-Kochva, *Judas*, 44, 361–63, 368.

<sup>36</sup> MT Esther 9:16 and AT Esth 7:46 raise the number of the gentile casualties to 75,000 and 70,100, respectively.

<sup>37</sup> See Haupt, *Purim*, 4–6; Schneider, "Esther," 209–14; Herst, "Purim," 140–41; Wynn, *Contexts*, 185–86; Burns, "Purim," 15; Macchi, "Instituting," 102–3; id., *Esther*, 44, 62, 258.

<sup>38</sup> See Burns, "Purim," 14–15; Koller, *Esther*, 109–12.

<sup>39</sup> See Domazakis, *Neologisms*, 267–74.

significant of these parallels occur in different chapters in 2 Maccabees but are clustered in Additions B and E in LXX Esther (and in Additions B and E and their close environment in AT Esther), I have argued that it is more likely that it is Addition E that is indebted to the epitome of 2 Maccabees or to its now-lost source text, Jason of Cyrene's Maccabean history.<sup>40</sup> Specifically, the pejorative adjective τρισαλιτήριος can be considered characteristic of 2 Maccabees, which has been described as “a veritable *thesaurus* of Greek vituperation”;<sup>41</sup> it occurs twice in this book, along with the simplex ἀλιτήριος, which occurs three times in it (12:23; 13:4; 14:42).<sup>42</sup> I would further argue that the author of Addition E not only assigned to Haman the adjective τρισαλιτήριος, which 2 Maccabees attributes to Nicanor, but also ascribed to him Nicanor's ethnic origin. Nicanor was of Macedonian descent, as both his name and patronymic are Macedonian;<sup>43</sup> in LXX Esth E:10 and 9:24,<sup>44</sup> Haman is similarly designated as a Macedonian.<sup>45</sup>

### 3.7 The thirteenth of Adar

The suggestion that the adjective τρισαλιτήριος in LXX Esth E:15 may allude to the high Seleucid official Nicanor, as depicted in 2 Maccabees, is supported by the date that LXX Addition E sets for the threatened destruction (LXX Esth E:21: ὀλεθρία) and the eventual salvation and joyous celebration of the Jews (LXX Esth E:21: εὐφροσύνη): this date is the 13th of the twelfth month, Adar (LXX Esth E:20: τῇ τρισκαιδεκάτῃ τοῦ

<sup>40</sup> See Domazakis, *Neologisms*, 241–44; id., *Esther*, 201–9.

<sup>41</sup> So Pfeiffer, *History*, 513.

<sup>42</sup> It is, of course, impossible to establish whether it was the epitomator who coined this adjective or whether he borrowed it from his *Vorlage* or from some other earlier or contemporary source.

<sup>43</sup> See Haupt, *Purim*, 12; Hatzopoulos, *Institutions I*, 212; Carsana, *Dirigenze*, 112: “L'origine macedone del personaggio appare abbastanza certa: sono macedoni infatti sia il nome che il patronimico.” The patronymic (Πάτροκλος) is given only when Nicanor I is introduced (2 Macc 8:9). The fact that the author of 2 Maccabees does not provide a patronymic for Nicanor II (2 Macc 14:12) likely suggests that he identified him with the previously introduced Nicanor I; see n. 29 above.

<sup>44</sup> In MT Esth 9:24, Haman is referred to as an Agagite; AT and VL Esther omit this verse. Haman's designation as a Macedonian in LXX Esth 9:24 is likely a redactional modification made after the insertion of Addition E in LXX Esther, intended to align Mordecai's festal letter with Artaxerxes' letter; see 3.8 below.

<sup>45</sup> With few exceptions (see Edson, “Imperium,” 163–64; Eissfeldt, *Einleitung*, 802), Esther scholars consider the use of the ethnic term “Macedonian” for Haman as evidence of the Egyptian rather than the Seleucid “flavour” of Additions B and E; see Gregg, “Additions,” 665; Kottsieper, “Zusätze,” 192 n. 270, 273; Passoni dell'Acqua, “Decree,” 80–81 n. 51 with further references.

δωδεκάτου μηνὸς Αδαρ τῇ αὐτῇ ἡμέρᾳ), which is the same as the “Day of Nicanor.” In LXX Esth B:6, by contrast, the annihilation of the Jews is decreed to take place on the 14th of Adar. This inconsistency between the two Additions is also reflected in the textual environment into which they have been embedded: LXX Esth B:6 aligns with the preceding LXX Esth 3:7, where the lots cast by Haman to determine the date for the annihilation of the Jews fall on the 14th of Adar. In contrast, LXX Esth E:20 aligns with the preceding LXX Esth 8:12, which states that the king through his countermanding decree allowed the Jews to deal with their enemies as they wished on the 13th of Adar, and the ensuing LXX Esth 9:1–2, where Artaxerxes’ countermanding decree is received by his subjects on the 13th of Adar, the day on which the enemies of the Jews perish.

MT Esth 3:7 states that the lots for the destruction of the Jews fell on the twelfth month, Adar, without specifying the exact day. The corresponding verse in LXX Esther specifies the date as the 14th of Adar. In MT Esth 3:13, the date for the destruction of the Jews is expressly given as the 13th of Adar. LXX Esth 3:13, on the other hand, avoids giving a precise date, stating only that the Jews are to be wiped out on a single day in the twelfth month, Adar.

After verse 3:13, there are no discrepancies in the common narrative between MT and LXX Esther regarding the date of the threatened destruction of the Jews, the date of the fighting between Jews and gentiles, and the date of the celebration of Purim: in both MT and LXX Esther, the Jews are given permission to defend themselves and to fight back against the attack of their gentile enemies on the 13th of Adar (8:11–13); in both versions, the Jews of Susa fight their enemies on the 13th and 14th of Adar and rest and celebrate on the 15th, while the Jews in the provinces fight on the 13th and rest and celebrate on the 14th (9:1–18); moreover, in both versions the celebration of Purim is set for the 14th and 15th of Adar (9:19, 21).

In short, in MT Esther, the pre-established date for the destruction of the Jews is the same as the date on which the Jews avenge themselves against their gentile enemies, namely the 13th of Adar; in contrast, in LXX Esther, the Jews are offered the possibility to deal with their enemies a day earlier than the 14th of Adar, which is the pre-established date for their destruction.<sup>46</sup>

The shift from the 14th of Adar in LXX Addition B to the 13th of Adar in LXX Addition E has received different explanations. Some scholars have treated the 14th

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<sup>46</sup> For discussions of the “date problem” in the various versions of Esther, see Fox, *Redaction*, 80–82; De Troyer, *End*, 240–43, 304–7, 370–75; Haelewyck, *Hester*, 87–88.

in LXX Esth B:6 as a “copyist’s error.”<sup>47</sup> Others have posited that, because the royal decree of LXX Addition B ordering the destruction of the Jews on the 14th of Adar was irrevocable, Artaxerxes, in his countermanding decree, had to allow the Jews to avenge themselves on the enemies who had attacked them during their “time of distress”<sup>48</sup> on the day before the 14th; this would render his previous decree de facto ineffective.<sup>49</sup> However ingenious this argument may be, it does not resolve the contradiction, given that LXX Esth E:20–21 leaves no doubt that the king considered the 13th, not the 14th, to be the preordained day for the destruction (ὀλεθρία) of the Jews.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, the irrevocability of the Persian royal decrees is recorded in MT Esth 1:19 and 8:8 but not in the corresponding verses in LXX Esther, where the translator emphasises the notion that the royal laws cannot be applied differently from how they are written and cannot be contested.<sup>51</sup>

Another issue in LXX Addition E is that at E:22 the king ordains that the recipients of his letter celebrate the 13th of Adar as a notable day (καὶ ὑμεῖς οὖν ... ἐπίσημον ἡμέραν ... ἄγετε) among their feasts named after a person or event (ἐν ταῖς ἐπωνύμοις ὑμῶν ἑορταῖς).<sup>52</sup> The recipients of Artaxerxes’ countermanding letter are, of course,

<sup>47</sup> See Moore, *Additions*, 192–93; cf. Bardtke, “Zusätze,” 39.

<sup>48</sup> LXX Esth E:20: ὅπως τοὺς ἐν καιρῷ θλίψεως ἐπιθεμένους αὐτοῖς ἀμύνωνται τῇ τρισκαιδεκάτῃ τοῦ δωδεκάτου μηνὸς Ἀδαρ τῇ αὐτῇ ἡμέρᾳ. The aorist participle ἐπιθεμένους indicates that the author of the letter is not referring to the attack that was to take place on the 13th of Adar, but to an unspecified “time of distress” in the past, when the gentiles had manifested their animosity towards the Jews, possibly in the months following the publication of Artaxerxes’ anti-Jewish decree. See Kottsieper, “Zusätze,” 195. The verb ἀμύνομαι can mean both “to defend oneself” and “to avenge oneself on an enemy”; in this context, the latter meaning is to be preferred, considering that the Jews would be in a defensive position on the 14th but in an offensive position, if given the opportunity to react a day earlier, on the 13th of Adar.

<sup>49</sup> See Barthélemy, *Critique*, 579; Kottsieper, “Zusätze,” 158; cf. Cavalier, *Esther*, 110–11.

<sup>50</sup> LXX Esth E:20–21: τῇ τρισκαιδεκάτῃ τοῦ δωδεκάτου μηνὸς Ἀδαρ τῇ αὐτῇ ἡμέρᾳ ταύτην γὰρ ὁ τὰ πάντα δυναστεύων θεὸς ἀντ’ ὀλεθρίας τοῦ ἐκλεκτοῦ γένους ἐποίησεν αὐτοῖς εὐφροσύνην.

<sup>51</sup> See LXX Esth 1:19: προστάξάτω βασιλικόν, καὶ γραφήτω κατὰ τοὺς νόμους Μήδων καὶ Περσῶν, καὶ μὴ ἄλλως χρῆσάσθω; 8:8: ὅσα γὰρ γράφεται τοῦ βασιλέως ἐπιτάξαντος ... οὐκ ἔστιν αὐτοῖς ἀντειπεῖν. See Haelewyck, “Anéantissement,” 106: “Dans l’hébreu, l’irrévocabilité est mentionnée en 1,19 (dans l’affaire Vasti) et en 8,8. La mention de l’irrévocabilité des édits a disparu en 1,19 dans toute la tradition grecque. La mention de 8,8 n’a un correspondant que dans o’ et dans la *vetus latina* (rien dans L), mais les mots de l’hébreu sont très affaiblis ... Les mots ἀντιλέγω et *contradicere* n’ont pas la même force que l’expression hébraïque; on est loin de l’idée d’irrévocabilité.”

<sup>52</sup> Kottsieper, “Zusätze,” 196, maintains that this verse refers to “nur von einem unbestimmten Tag,” yet the two preceding verses leave no doubt that the date in question is the 13th of Adar. The object of the verb ἄγετε is the pronoun ταύτην occurring in the previous verse, E:21, which refers back to τῇ τρισκαιδεκάτῃ at E:20. If the king did not specify the date of the new holiday, how could the recipients of his letter across the Persian kingdom determine and agree upon when to celebrate it? The second-person plural pronoun ὑμῶν, at E:22, which is transmitted by all

not the Jews<sup>53</sup> but the governors of the lands in the 127 satrapies of the Persian kingdom and those loyal to his regime (LXX Esth E:1). The rationale for the establishment of the holiday that the Persians are commanded to observe on the 13th of Adar is given in LXX Esth E:23: “so that both now and hereafter (ὅπως καὶ νῦν καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα) there may be deliverance (σωτηρία ἥ) [or “there may be a festival of deliverance” (σωτήρια ἥ)]<sup>54</sup> for us (ἡμῖν)<sup>55</sup> and for the favourably disposed Persians (καὶ τοῖς εὐνοοῦσιν Πέρσαις),<sup>56</sup> but for those who plot against us (τοῖς δὲ ἡμῖν ἐπιβουλεύουσιν), a reminder of destruction (μνημόσυνον τῆς ἀπωλείας).” The holiday was thus to commemorate the deliverance of the king (ἡμῖν is a plural of majesty) from an attempt on his life, throne, and kingdom, as well as the destruction of Haman, who presumably planned a coup to overthrow the king and subject the Persians to Macedonian rule (LXX Esth E:12–14). Since it was meant to be included among the ἐπώνυμοι ἑορταί, that is, the holidays bearing a name associated with a person, thing, event, etc., we may surmise that the author of LXX Addition E had in mind either an annual Σωτήρια festival, which would commemorate the Persian king’s salvation,<sup>57</sup> or

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manuscripts except for the minuscule 74<sup>1</sup>, has puzzled commentators (see Fritzsche, *Zusätze*, 105, and Gregg, “Additions,” 682). Bickerman, “Notes,” 261 n. 71, has rightly observed that we should read ἡμῶν instead of ὑμῶν: “And you also keep a notable day among the festivals dedicated to us.” ἡμῶν should be understood as a plural of majesty. The ἐπώνυμοι ἡμέραι or ἡμέραι τοῦ βασιλέως, dedicated to the Hellenistic kings, commemorated either symbolic events, such as the king’s birthday or accession to the throne, or historical events, such as military victories and solemn visits. See Habicht, *Gottmenschentum*, 156, and Savalli-Lestrade, “Rois,” 69–70.

<sup>53</sup> Contra Moore, *Additions*, 237, who maintains that this verse is addressed “only to the Jews.” In the text immediately preceding LXX Addition E, we read that the king asked Esther and Mordecai to write to the Jews what he had commanded “to the stewards and the chiefs of the satraps in the 127 satrapies” (LXX Esth 8:8–9), namely, that they were permitted to live under their own laws and to deal with their enemies as they wished on the 13th of Adar (LXX Esth 8:11–12). LXX Addition E contains the letter that the king sent to his officials, not the one written in his name and sent to the Jews by Esther and Mordecai; see 1.1, n. 16. AT Esth 7:34–38 quotes a letter of Mordecai immediately after the countermanding letter of Artaxerxes, but neither is this letter addressed to the Jews.

<sup>54</sup> In LXX Esth E:23, Fritzsche, *Zusätze*, 105, followed by Fox, *Redaction*, 69 with n. 70, suggests reading σωτήρια (“festival of deliverance”) instead of σωτηρία, while for Gregg, “Additions,” 682, “σωτηρία stands in antithesis to ἀπωλείας, and should therefore have this accent.”

<sup>55</sup> Some manuscripts read ὑμῖν, “for you,” instead of the majority reading ἡμῖν. See Fox, *Redaction*, 69 n. 71.

<sup>56</sup> We should probably understand this phrase as referring to those who are well-disposed towards the Persians (τοῖς εὐνοοῦσιν <τοῖς> Πέρσαις), that is, the Jews. Cf. P.Oxy. 4443, col. i, ll. 29–30: σωτηρ[ι]αν μὲν | [των ευνου]χῶν τοῖς πέρσαις; VL Esth E:23: *salutem quidem beneficientium Persis*; AT Esth 7:31: σωτηρίαν μὲν εὔ ποιοῦσι τοῖς Πέρσαις. By calling the Jews εὐνοοῦντες, the king would make amends for having accused them in his letter of condemnation of being an ill-disposed nation (LXX Esth B:5: δυσνοοῦν ἔθνος).

<sup>57</sup> Cf. AT Esth 1:5, where Artaxerxes hosts a seven-day banquet to celebrate his salvation (ἄγων τὰ σωτήρια αὐτοῦ). On the Σωτήρια, see Domazakis, *Esther*, 92.

a “Day of Haman” (on the model of the “Day of Nicanor”), which would commemorate the destruction of the traitor and regicide manqué. With regard to the latter, it should be noted that the 13th of the twelfth month, Adar, was not the date of Haman’s destruction; Haman had been hanged earlier, on the 17th of the first month, Nisan. According to MT/LXX Esth 9:6–10, 13–14, it was the ten sons of Haman who were killed on the 13th and hanged on the 14th of Adar (although LXX Esth E:18 states that Haman was “crucified” along with his entire household). At the same time, the 13th of Adar was the day of Nicanor’s destruction, which, according to 2 Macc 15:36, was decreed to be commemorated by a holiday named after the Seleucid official, as we know from the *Megillat Ta’anit*. The ἐπίσημος ἡμέρα among the ἐπώνυμοι ἑορταί mentioned in LXX Esth E:21 may thus be a hinted reference to the “Day of Nicanor.”

Bardtke emphasises that the holiday of the 13th of Adar instituted by King Artaxerxes is not to be identified with the Purim observed by the Jews on the 14th and 15th of Adar.<sup>58</sup> Although this is strictly speaking true, we should not lose sight of the fact that both holidays share the same origin, namely, the thwarted pogrom against the Jews on the 13th of Adar. The king expects the 13th to be not only a day of clash between the Jews and their gentile enemies but also a day of rejoicing, εὐφροσύνη (LXX Esth E:21), for the Jews. The terms εὐφροσύνη and εὐφρόσυνος occur later in the canonical text (LXX Esth 9:17–19) in relation to the celebrations on the 14th and 15th of Adar. When the king sends his countermanding letter, he is unaware that there will be a second day of fighting in Susa (the 14th) at the request of Queen Esther, or that the Jews of Susa and the provinces will choose to celebrate and commemorate not the actual day(s) on which they fought against their enemies (the 13th and 14th, and the 13th, respectively) but the day following the fighting (the 15th and the 14th, respectively). Thus, the king anticipates that the 13th of Adar will be the day on which the Jews will commemorate their deliverance from destruction<sup>59</sup> and envisages a dual national holiday, Jewish and Persian; yet, in order to legitimise this day as a pan-Persian holiday in the eyes of his non-Jewish subjects, he stresses its political and

<sup>58</sup> Bardtke, “Zusätze,” 23–24: “Dieser Feiertag ist nicht das Purimfest, denn das ist ein nur jüdisches am 14. bzw. 15. Adar gefeiertes Fest, das die wiedererlangte Ruhe zum Gegenstand hat, während dieses persische Fest, das bezeichnenderweise am 13. Tag des 12. Monats gehalten werden soll, die Errettung des Königs aus einer politischen Verschwörung feiert (E 23). Es fallen die Gegner des persischen Königs.”

<sup>59</sup> Note the use in LXX Esth E:21 of an aorist verb (ἐποίησεν), whose subject is Yahweh: ταύτην γὰρ ὁ τὰ πάντα δυναστεύων θεὸς ... ἐποίησεν αὐτοῖς εὐφροσύνην. This makes the 13th of Adar a divinely predestined day of salvation and celebration for the Jews. On the use of the proleptic aorist “when a future event is vividly represented as having actually occurred,” see Smyth, *Grammar*, 432 [§ 1934].

“patriotic” significance: for the Persians, it will be a memorial of their king’s deliverance from an assassination attempt and a coup, a memorial of the deliverance of their kingdom from an external threat, and a memorial of the elimination of a traitor and his adherents. In short, in Addition E and in the ensuing Chapter 9, LXX Esther, alone of all the versions of Esther, speaks of two holidays, one Persian, instituted by King Artaxerxes, and the other Jewish, instituted by Mordecai and Esther. These holidays are to be celebrated over three consecutive days and commemorate different, yet interrelated aspects of the same event.

In the Alpha Text, the date set by the lots cast by Haman for the destruction of the Jews is the 13th of Adar-Nisan (AT Esth 3:7). Contradicting this verse, AT Esth 7:49 states that the lots fell on the 14th and the 15th, which accounts for the commemoration of Phouraia (Purim) on these specific days.<sup>60</sup> The letter of Mordecai (AT Esth 7:38), which is not found in the other versions of Esther, also states that the 13th of Adar was the date on which Haman planned to exterminate the Jews. In the first royal letter, however, the date set for the destruction of the Jews is the 14th (AT Esth 3:18), while the second royal letter mentions only the dates set by the Jews for the celebration of their salvation, namely, the 14th and 15th of Adar (AT Esth 7:30; cf. 7:47, 59). From AT 7:44–46, we understand that it was on these days that the Jews attacked their gentile enemies in Susa and the provinces. The Alpha Text does not relate what happened on the 13th of Adar. Moreover, in AT Esther, Artaxerxes does not ordain any feast for his Persian subjects; at 7:30, he states that the celebration of the 14th and 15th of Adar was determined by the Jews themselves.<sup>61</sup>

The *Vetus Latina* (R-text) of Esther is consistent throughout: Haman’s lots fall on the 14th of Adar (VL Esth 3:7);<sup>62</sup> the king’s condemnation decree ordains that the Jews are to perish on the 14th (VL Esth B:6), and it is on the same date that the countermanding decree permits the Jews to defend themselves and urges the Persians to celebrate the salvation of the Jews and the destruction of those who plotted against them (VL Esth 8:12; E:20–23). The Purim is to be observed on the 14th and the 15th of Adar because on these days “the Jews rested and were protected from their enemies” (VL Esth 9:21–

<sup>60</sup> AT Esth 7:47–49: στήσαι τὰς ἡμέρας ταύτας ... τὴν τεσσαρεσκαίδεκάτην καὶ τὴν πεντεκαίδεκάτην ... διὰ τοῦτο ἐκλήθησαν αἱ ἡμέραι αὗται Φουραϊα διὰ τοὺς κλήρους τοὺς πεσόντας εἰς τὰς ἡμέρας ταύτας εἰς μνημόσυνον.

<sup>61</sup> AT Esth 7:30: ἐκρίθη δὲ ὑπὸ τῶν κατὰ τὴν βασιλείαν Ἰουδαίων ἄγειν τὴν τεσσαρεσκαίδεκάτην τοῦ μηνός, ... καὶ τῇ πεντεκαίδεκάτῃ ἐορτάσαι.

<sup>62</sup> VL Esth 3:13 states that the Jews were to be annihilated “on the first day (*die primo*) of the twelfth month,” but this is probably a misunderstanding of a Greek *Vorlage* reading ἐν ἡμέρᾳ μιᾷ, “in one day” (cf. the corresponding verse in LXX Esther). See Domazakis, *Esther*, 102.



22). However, the *Vetus Latina* does not elaborate on why the 15th, which is mentioned only once, in VL Esth 9:21, is to be observed as a holiday.<sup>63</sup> Notably, in VL Esther, Artaxerxes does not ordain his satraps to observe a holiday in commemoration of his own salvation and that of his kingdom from Haman's machinations, as one might have expected a Persian despot to do, and as indeed occurs in LXX Esther, but rather to celebrate the deliverance of the Jews.<sup>64</sup> Thus, it is the gentile king who initiates the celebration of a "Persian Purim" on the 14th of Adar, before Mordecai, through his letter to the Jews, initiates the "Jewish Purim" on the 14th and—inexplicably—the 15th of Adar. Mordecai's letter, and Esther's letter, which follows it, seem thus somewhat redundant, given that the king's order to his satraps regarding the celebration of the 14th of Adar would already apply to all his subjects, including the Jews.

From the above I retain the following points regarding the 13th of Adar: VL Esther does not mention it at all; AT Esther mentions it only as the date originally set by Haman for the destruction of the Jews; in MT Esther and in the canonical parts of LXX Esther, the 13th is not only the intended doomsday for the Jews but also the day on which fighting takes place in Susa and the provinces; in LXX Addition E, the 13th is a day of retaliation for the Jews and a notable day (ἐπίσημος ἡμέρα) to be observed as a holiday by the Persians.

The expression ἐπίσημος ἡμέρα, used to refer to the 13th of Adar in LXX Esth E:22, appears elsewhere in the Septuagint only in LXX/AT Esth 5:4/5:14, 21, where it designates the day on which Queen Esther entertained, and in 2 Macc 15:36, where it is used to denote the "Day of Nicanor"; outside the Septuagint, it is very rare.<sup>65</sup> LXX Esth E:22 and 2 Macc 15:36 are the only instances in which ἐπίσημος ἡμέρα is used to refer to a holiday established to commemorate a victory—that of the Jews and of King Artaxerxes over their enemies, and that of Judas Maccabeus over the Seleucid army, respectively—as well as the elimination (LXX Esth E:23: μνημόσυνον τῆς ἀπωλείας) of

<sup>63</sup> From 9:21 onwards, VL Esther wavers between one and two days of celebration. VL Esth 9:27 refers to one day (*et [Mardocheus] diei mentionem fecit*); VL Esth F:10 suggests that Purim is observed on more than one day, but actually mentions only the 14th: *et erunt in illis diebus in mense Adar quartadecima duodecimi mensis dies synagogae cum laetitia et voluptate*.

<sup>64</sup> VL Esth E:22–23: *et vos in celeberrimis notam diem cum omni voluptate agite et nunc et postea salutem quidem benefacientium Persis qui autem his insidiati sunt memoriam perditionis*. Cf. the version of Addition E recorded in P.Oxy. 4443, col. i, l. 26–col. ii, l. 1: [ε]πίσημον ημεραν με[τα πασης ε]νωχι[α]ς ἀγετε και – | [νυν και με]τα ταυτα σωτηρ[η]σαν μεν | [των ευνοο]υγτων τοις περσαις – | [των δε τουτ]οις ε[πι]βουλευσαντων | μνημοσυνην της απωλειας.

<sup>65</sup> See Domazakis, *Neologisms*, 174–75.

an enemy of the Jews, Haman and Nicanor, respectively; both victories happened to occur on the same date, the 13th of Adar, and involved the Jews.

The 13th of Adar, on which the battle of Adasa took place and on which Nicanor's defeat was subsequently celebrated, can be considered a historically credible date, as it is attested in 1 and 2 Maccabees, in Josephus, and in the *Megillat Ta'anit*. On the other hand, the 13th of Adar, as the date randomly chosen by lot on which the Jews of the Persian kingdom were to be annihilated and on which they counterattacked and prevailed against their enemies, according to MT Esther, is fictitious. This has led several scholars to posit that the 13th of Adar was introduced into the Esther story after Judas Maccabeus' victory over Nicanor in 161 BCE. Noteworthy are the following two theories: the first proposed by Macchi and the second by Schneider.

Macchi has argued that the 13th of Adar was chosen by the proto-Masoretic editors of the book of Esther, who worked in the Hasmonean era, to allude to the great victory of Judas Maccabeus over Nicanor on the 13th of Adar, 161 BCE. Confronted with the difficulty of promoting in the Diaspora the recently established "Day of Nicanor," a feast that lacked scriptural support, they invented an equivalent narrative of a battle that occurred in the Diaspora. Thus, they set the celebration of the victory of the Jews in Susa and the rest of the Persian kingdom not on the day of the victory, namely, the 13th of Adar, but on the two following days, the 14th and 15th of Adar, to ensure that the celebration of the fictitious victory (the "Day of Mordecai"/Purim) would not coincide with or replace the celebration of the historical victory (the "Day of Nicanor").<sup>66</sup> The proto-Masoretic redactors, argues Macchi, "may have sought to complete the celebration of the Palestinian feast of the day of Nicanor with festivities from the Diaspora and thus have two or three consecutive days of nationalistic celebration."<sup>67</sup>

Schneider starts from an opposing standpoint: "It is the feast [of Purim] that has occasioned the book [of Esther] rather than vice versa."<sup>68</sup> The feast in question, he argues, originated in the eastern diaspora, where it was celebrated on the 14th of Adar. Introduced in Judea, the Hebrew Esther story associated with this feast underwent an adaptation following the Maccabean victory of the 13th of Adar, 161 BCE. Inspired by the events related to the battle at Adasa, the author of this adaptation

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<sup>66</sup> Macchi, *Esther*, 49, 51–52, 162, 235, 258–59, 266, 270–72; id., "Instituting," 102–5.

<sup>67</sup> Macchi, "Instituting," 103; id., *Esther*, 270–72. See also the theories of Haupt, *Purim*, Del Medico, "Cadre," 263–70, Herst, "Purim," as well as those cited in Schneider, "Esther," 195–97.

<sup>68</sup> Schneider, "Esther," 197.

integrated the 13th of Adar into the Esther story as a day of massacre carried out by the Jews in Susa and the provinces, followed by a second massacre in Susa on the 14th, and the celebration by the village people on the 14th and by the city people on the 15th of Adar. This postulation, argues Schneider, is supported by the narrative of the battle at Adasa and its aftermath, as recounted in 1 Maccabees. 1 Macc 7:43–49 relates that, after the defeat and death of Nicanor on the 13th, the Jews pursued his army from Adasa as far as Gazera, a day’s distance away, and were joined by people from all the surrounding villages of Judea, who decimated the leftovers of the Seleucid forces. After taking the spoils and Nicanor’s head and right arm, the victorious army went to Jerusalem, where they celebrated that day as a day of gladness and established that the 13th of Adar should be observed annually. According to this narrative, the main fight and the ensuing pursuit of the enemy occurred on the 13th and 14th, the celebration of the villagers took place on the 14th, Judas’ army reached Jerusalem late on the 14th, and a full-day celebration was held in Jerusalem on the 15th of Adar. This timeline closely corresponds to that of the Esther Scroll.<sup>69</sup>

A Diasporan author, living in Egypt, or writing for an Egyptian audience, continues Schneider, produced the original Greek version of the Esther story, which is reflected in the *Vetus Latina* of Esther. This author based his version on the Hebrew text as adapted in Judea but supplemented it with the Additions, while omitting the massacre of the gentiles by the Jews. In this version, the doom of the Jews is fixed for the 14th of Adar, and it is on that day (and on the 15th) that their deliverance is set to be celebrated. The author, holds Schneider, restored the Hebrew version “to what he knew from other sources, or a local tradition, was the more pristine form in the eastern diaspora, or even in Judea before its adaptation there.” “May it not be possible,” he wonders, “that the 14th—with the 15th as accessory—was the more original date indicated in the tradition of the decree, and that the historical kernel of the Jews’ deliverance is more accurately preserved in the text of the decrees in the O[ld]L[atin]-Greek tradition than as adapted in the Hebrew?”<sup>70</sup>

Lastly, with regard to the LXX version, Schneider maintains that it is a “mechanical reworking” of the original Greek version, aligned with the Hebrew text. This alignment entailed that Lysimachus retained the 14th in the verses where the Hebrew

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<sup>69</sup> Schneider, “Esther,” 209–12.

<sup>70</sup> Schneider, “Esther,” 206–7.

text lacked a corresponding date, e.g., at 3:7 and B:6 (but not at E:20), but changed it to the 13th in the verses where the Hebrew text featured that date (8:12).<sup>71</sup>

In the context of this chapter's investigation, the aforementioned theory prompts the question of whether the Maccabean "flavour" is present or absent in the version of Additions B and E preserved in the *Vetus Latina* of Esther, and, further, whether these two Additions entered the textual Esther tradition through the Greek *Vorlage* of this version (GVVL), as Schneider and other scholars believe,<sup>72</sup> rather than through the LXX or the AT version. If Additions B and E were composed by the author-translator of the GVVL, we would expect him not only to have omitted any reference to the 13th of Adar and the slaughter that occurred on that day but also, in the first place, to have avoided including any other references or allusions to the Maccabean events of the period 167–160 BCE, or to the texts that recount these events, such as 1 and 2 Maccabees.

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<sup>71</sup> Schneider, "Esther," 203.

<sup>72</sup> See Haelewyck, *Hester*, 93–94.

In the table below, I have listed all the verses of Additions B and E discussed in this chapter, in which I identify the presence of the Maccabean “flavour.”

	<b>LXX Esther</b>	<b>AT Esther</b>	<b>VL Esther</b>
B:5	πρὸς τὸ μὴ τὴν βασιλείαν εὐσταθείας τυγχάνειν	[3:16] πρὸς τὸ μηδέποτε τὴν βασιλείαν εὐσταθείας τυγχάνειν	<i>propter quod regnum firmum non contingere</i>
E:4	τοῦ τὰ πάντα κατοπεύοντος αἰεὶ θεοῦ μισοπόνηρον ὕπολαμβάνουσιν ἐκφεύξεσθαι δίκην	[7:23] τὸ τοῦ πάντα δυναστεύοντος δικαιοκρίτου μισοπόνηρον ἐκφυγεῖν διειληφότες, τὴν δίκην	<i>dei semper omnia conspicientis malignitatem concipientes putant se evadere &lt;iudicium&gt;</i>
E:8	εἰς τὸ τὴν βασιλείαν ἀτάραχον ... παρεξόμεθα	[7:24] τὴν βασιλείαν ἀτάραχον παρέχειν	<i>&lt;ut&gt; regnum quietem ... praebeamus</i>
E:10	Αμαν Αμαδάθου Μακεδών	[7:25] Αμαν Αμαδάθου ὁ Βουγαῖος	<i>Aman Medadatum Macedo</i>
E:11	ἔτυχεν ἥς ἔχομεν πρὸς πᾶν ἔθνος φιλανθρωπίας	[7:25] ἔτυχε τῆς ἐξ ἡμῶν πρὸς πᾶν ἔθνος φιλανθρωπίας	<i>obtinueit eis quam habemus apud omnem gentem humanitatem</i>
E:15	τοῦ τρισαλιτηρίου	[7:27] τοῦ τρισαλιτηρίου	<i>execrabili et impio</i>
E:19	ἐὰν τοὺς Ἰουδαίους χρησθαί τοῖς ἑαυτῶν νομίμοις [v.l. νόμοις]	[7:29] χρησθαί τε τοὺς Ἰουδαίους τοῖς ἑαυτῶν νόμοις	<i>permittere omnes iudeos suis uti legibus</i>
E:20	ἐν καιρῷ θλίψεως	[7:29] ἐν καιρῷ θλίψεως	<i>in necessitate tribulationis</i> <sup>73</sup>
E:20	ὅπως ... ἀμύνωνται τῇ τρισκαιδεκάτῃ	[7:29] ὅπως ... ἀμύνωνται ... ἄγειν τὴν τεσσαρεσκαιδεκάτην	<i>ut ... defendant quartadecima</i>
E:22	καὶ ὑμεῖς οὖν ἐν ταῖς ἐπωνύμοις ὑμῶν ἑορταῖς ἐπίσημον ἡμέραν ... ἄγετε	–	<i>et vos in celeberrimis notam diem ... agite</i>

Beginning with AT Esther, I note that: (a) the 13th of Adar and the designation of the festive day as ἐπίσημος ἡμέρα are missing; (b) at 7:25 [=E:11], the phrase τῆς ἐξ ἡμῶν πρὸς πᾶν ἔθνος φιλανθρωπίας is not as verbally close to 2 Macc 14:9 (καθ’ ἣν ἔχεις πρὸς ἅπαντας ... φιλανθρωπίαν) as LXX and VL Esth E:11 are (ἥς ἔχομεν πρὸς πᾶν ἔθνος φιλανθρωπίας; *quam habemus apud omnem gentem humanitatem*); and (c) at 7:25 [=E:10], Haman is designated as Βουγαῖος rather than as Μακεδών; the absence of the latter ethnic designation is crucial here, as it eliminates the link with AT Esth 7:26 [=E:14], where Haman is accused of having schemed to surrender Persia to the Macedonians. It should be noted, however, that AT Esth 7:23 [=E:4] has a point of verbal contact with 2 Maccabees (δικαιοκρίτης) that is not shared by the other versions, while outside

<sup>73</sup> The Latin text reflects a different combination of nouns than the LXX and the AT, on which cf. LXX Ps 118:143: θλίψις καὶ ἀνάγκη; LXX Job 15:24: ἀνάγκη δὲ καὶ θλίψις; LXX Zeph 1:15: ἡμέρα θλίψεως καὶ ἀνάγκης. I note that in 2 Macc 1:7 (discussed in 3.4 above), instead of ἐν τῇ θλίψει καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀκμῇ, MS 58 reads ἐν τῇ θλίψει καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀναγκῇ.

Additions B and E, the Alpha Text has additional points of verbal contact with 2 Maccabees that are not found in the other versions (e.g., the phrase ἔκθυμος δὲ γενόμενος ὁ βασιλεύς).<sup>74</sup>

Continuing with VL Esther, it is notable that, although the 13th of Adar is not mentioned at all, the Maccabean “flavour” is nevertheless traceable, most notably in the verbal hints to Nicanor (E:10, 15), to the letters of Antiochus IV and Antiochus V (E:8, 19), and to Alcimus’ speech in 2 Maccabees (B:5; E:11).

The LXX version of Additions B and E is the one that most clearly exhibits the Maccabean “flavour,” as, above and beyond the Maccabean elements found in the other versions, it also features the 13th of Adar. It is, therefore, more likely that the Maccabean “flavour” originated in the LXX version, considering that the composer of the GVVl would have had no reason to allude to the Maccabean period and its events, drawing upon 2 Maccabees, if he did not intent to allude to the “Day of Nicanor” celebrated on the 13th of Adar, which is the culminating point of 2 Maccabees. It should also be noted that, while in LXX Esther the Maccabean “flavour” is present not only in Additions B and E but also in the prayer of Esther in Addition C, the latter prayer in VL Esther is devoid of any such “flavour.”<sup>75</sup>

The mention of the 13th of Adar, exclusively in LXX Addition E, as a holiday instituted by a gentile king to commemorate his own salvation, the salvation of his kingdom and his Jewish subjects, as well as the elimination of his and his Jewish subjects’ enemy, Haman, was intended to evoke for the reader the date of the Maccabean victory over Nicanor in 161 BCE, and most likely to promote the celebration of the “Day of Nicanor,” in clear distinction from that of the Purim holiday. The political character that Artaxerxes ascribes to this inherently Jewish holiday, the celebration of which he presents as tantamount to an act of allegiance to his regime (LXX Esth E:23: τοῖς εὐνοοῦσιν Πέρσαις), aimed to facilitate its acceptance by his non-Jewish subjects. It is noteworthy that the strictly Jewish holiday of the 14th and 15th of Adar, namely, Purim, is instituted by the newly appointed second-in-authority within the state’s hierarchy, Mordecai, whereas the Pan-Persian holiday of the 13th, the “Day-of-Nicanor-in-disguise,” is established by the head of state himself. If the author of LXX Addition E wrote against the backdrop of the Hasmonean promotion of the “Day of Nicanor” in the Diaspora, specifically in Egypt, he may have had in mind the precedent of the annual festival established, according to the *Letter of*

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<sup>74</sup> See 3.5 above.

<sup>75</sup> See Domazakis, *Esther*, 121–25.

*Aristeas*, by King Ptolemy II Philadelphus to commemorate the arrival in Alexandria of the seventy-two Jewish scholars tasked with translating the Torah into Greek—a festival superimposed upon that commemorating a naval victory won by Philadelphus over Antigonus Gonatas.<sup>76</sup> Philo, *Mos.* 2.41, states that the translation of the Torah was commemorated yearly up to his day not only by Jews but also by numerous others, apparently gentiles (οὐκ Ἰουδαῖοι μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ παμπληθεῖς ἕτεροι). It should be noted, however, that this festival was not established through an official letter, as was the Persian holiday mentioned in LXX Addition E, and that in Ptolemy IV Philopator’s liberation letter in 3 Maccabees, which served as a model for the author of Addition B, there is no analogous feast inaugurated by the king. This originality aligns Artaxerxes’ letter with a distinct epistolary genre, which will be discussed in the following section.

### 3.8 Addition E as a festal letter

LXX Esth 9:20–28 relates, in reported speech, a letter that Mordecai sent to the Jews throughout the Persian kingdom, urging them to celebrate the 14th and the 15th of Adar as the days of their deliverance from their gentile enemies. Apart from establishing the dates for the celebration of the new feast, Mordecai explained in his letter both the etiology of the feast and the etymology of its name, recounting the role of Haman as the instigator of the pogrom against the Jews and reporting his tit-for-tat punishment (9:24–25). A second letter, jointly written by Esther and Mordecai, was subsequently sent to the Jews to confirm the first letter (9:29–31).

Mordecai’s and Esther’s letters pertain to a genre that has no exact equivalent in Greco-Roman epistolography,<sup>77</sup> the Jewish festal letter, of which other examples include the letters sent by King Hezekiah to all Israel and Judah, urging them to observe the Passover in Jerusalem (2 Chr 30:1–9), the two letters prefixed to 2 Maccabees (1:1–10a and 1:10b–2:18), in which the Jerusalem authorities enjoin their brethren in Egypt to celebrate the feast of the purification of the Temple (later known as Hanukkah), and the so-called “Passover Papyrus” from 419/418 BCE, in which a

<sup>76</sup> Let. Aris. § 180: μεγάλην δὲ τέθειμαι τὴν ἡμέραν ταύτην ... καὶ κατ’ ἐνιαυτὸν ἐπίσημος ἔσται ... συντέτυχε γὰρ καὶ τὰ κατὰ τὴν νίκην ἡμῖν προσπεπωκέναι τῆς πρὸς Ἀντίγονον ναυμαχίας.

<sup>77</sup> See Whitters, “Observations,” 272: “Jewish festal letters do not have any exact parallels among Greco-Roman letter types”; cf. id., *Epistle*, 69 with n. 4: “The festal letter is one of the few truly Semitic contributions to ancient epistolography.” But see Doering, *Letters*, 164, and Doran, *2 Maccabees*, 34–35.

certain Hananiah—perhaps a Jew holding a high position at the Persian court under Darius II—gives instructions to the Jewish garrison on the Nile island of Elephantine regarding the observance of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Mazzoth).<sup>78</sup> Of these festal letters, only the last three are quoted in direct speech.

Artaxerxes' letter in Addition E, which institutes the Persian feast of the 13th of Adar, though not originating from a Jew and not addressed to Jews, contains elements similar to those found in the aforementioned Jewish festal letters.

Like Mordecai's letter, it establishes the date for the new feast and provides an etiology for its celebration, detailing the role of Haman, the enemy of the Jews, and reporting his punishment. More specific links between Artaxerxes' and Mordecai's letters include the reference to Haman's Macedonian origin,<sup>79</sup> the characterisation of the event that gave rise to the feast as marking a dramatic reversal in the fate of the Jews,<sup>80</sup> and the commemorative nature of the feast for future generations, as highlighted by the use of the term *μνημόσυνον* in both letters, which harks back to Yahweh's instructions to Israel concerning the observance of the Feast of Unleavened Bread in LXX Exod 12:14.<sup>81</sup>

As in the letters prefixed to 2 Maccabees, Artaxerxes' letter refers to the period of the Jews' oppression by the gentiles as a time of *θλίψις*,<sup>82</sup> and to the all-powerful Yahweh as the deliverer of His chosen people<sup>83</sup> and the punisher of their enemies.<sup>84</sup> More specifically, in both the second letter prefixed to 2 Maccabees and Artaxerxes' letter, the commemoration concerns the salvation of the Jews, in the former, and of the Jews and the king, in the latter, from a great danger posed by an enemy of the Jews, King Antiochus IV and Haman, respectively,<sup>85</sup> with the death of these enemies

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<sup>78</sup> See Whitters, *Epistle*, 68–85.

<sup>79</sup> E:10, 14 and 9:24 are the only instances in LXX Esther where Haman is assigned such an ethnic. See 3.6 above.

<sup>80</sup> LXX Esth E:21: ἀντ' ὀλεθρίας ... ἐποίησεν αὐτοῖς εὐφροσύνην; LXX Esth 9:22: ἀπὸ πένθους εἰς χαρὰν καὶ ἀπὸ ὀδύνης εἰς ἀγαθὴν ἡμέραν.

<sup>81</sup> LXX Esth E:23: ὅπως καὶ νῦν καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα ... μνημόσυνον; LXX Esth 9:27–28: μνημόσυνον ... εἰς τὸν ἅπαντα χρόνον. Cf. LXX Exod 12:14: καὶ ἔσται ἡ ἡμέρα αὕτη ὑμῖν μνημόσυνον, καὶ ἑορτάσετε αὐτήν ... εἰς τὰς γενεὰς ὑμῶν.

<sup>82</sup> LXX Esth E:20; 2 Macc 1:7. See 3.4 above.

<sup>83</sup> LXX Esth E:18: τοῦ τὰ πάντα ἐπικρατοῦντος θεοῦ; LXX Esth E:21: ὁ τὰ πάντα δυναστεύων θεὸς ἀντ' ὀλεθρίας τοῦ ἐκλεκτοῦ γένους ἐποίησεν αὐτοῖς εὐφροσύνην; 2 Macc 1:25–26: ὁ ... παντοκράτωρ ... ὁ διασώζων τον Ἰσραὴλ ἐκ παντὸς κακοῦ, ὁ ποιήσας τοὺς πατέρας ἐκλεκτοῦς.

<sup>84</sup> LXX Esth E:18: τὴν καταξίαν τοῦ ... θεοῦ διὰ τάχους ἀποδόντος αὐτῷ κρίσιν; 2 Macc 1:12: αὐτὸς [sc. ὁ θεός] ἐξέβρασε τοὺς παραταξαμένους ἐν τῇ ἀγίᾳ πόλει; 1:17: ὁ θεός, ὃς ἔδωκε τοὺς ἀσεβήσαντας.

<sup>85</sup> LXX Esth E:23: ὅπως ... σωτηρία ἦ ἡμῖν; 2 Macc 1:11: ὑπὸ μεγάλων κινδύνων ... σεσωσμένοι.



recounted in each letter.<sup>86</sup> Moreover, both letters contain details that diverge from those in the texts into which they are embedded/prefixed,<sup>87</sup> a feature that, according to Whitters, is characteristic of the Jewish festal letter genre.<sup>88</sup> Lastly, Artaxerxes' letter employs the same hortatory formula found in the two letters prefixed to 2 Maccabees, urging the celebration of the feast.<sup>89</sup>

Unlike Hananiah's letter in the "Passover Papyrus," Artaxerxes' letter does not provide any details or instructions regarding the celebration of the feast of the 13th of Adar. What justifies the comparison between the two letters is that, to legitimise his instructions, Hananiah quotes a decree sent by King Darius II to Arsames, the Persian satrap of Egypt. The text of the decree is regrettably missing due to a lacuna in the papyrus but was undoubtedly very brief, not exceeding around 35 characters (excluding spaces) or five to seven words.<sup>90</sup> Its brevity rules out the possibility that it contained the detailed instructions provided by Hananiah, yet its content must have been relevant to them for Hananiah to quote it. Conjectural reconstructions of the missing text propose that Darius II's decree contained either a general permission regarding the religious practices of the Jews or a more specific one concerning Passover/the Feast of Unleavened Bread: "In the month Tybi let there be a Passover (or a festival) for the Jewish garrison";<sup>91</sup> "Authorize a festival of unleavened bread for the Jewish garrison";<sup>92</sup> "Let the Jews observe the rites of their religion."<sup>93</sup> Artaxerxes' letter in Addition E contains both a general permission regarding the religious

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<sup>86</sup> LXX Esth E:18 (death of Haman); 2 Macc 1:13–16 (death of Antiochus IV).

<sup>87</sup> In Artaxerxes' letter, the details regarding Haman's ethnic origin, his involvement in high treason, and his execution alongside his family differ from those in the canonical text of LXX Esther; see 5.7. In the second letter prefixed to 2 Maccabees, the account of Antiochus IV's death is at variance with that in 2 Macc 9:5–28. Inconsistencies can also be found between the letters of Mordecai in Esth 9:20–28 and the rest of the narrative, on which see Macchi, "Lettres," 54–58.

<sup>88</sup> See Whitters, *Epistle*, 85: "Festal letters may have circulated independently and often display a structure, form and storyline different from the texts to which they are attached." Other features that, according to Whitters, are typical of the genre include: (a) the transmission of festal letters to subsequent generations "as documents attached to larger narratives describing the actual event to be celebrated," (b) the invocation of "identifiable figures and institutions as authorities in support of their directives," and (c) the presence in them of "stylistic features ... elegant literary forms and brief reviews of the history surrounding the festal observance." These features are also found in Artaxerxes' letter in Addition E.

<sup>89</sup> LXX Esth E:22: καὶ ὑμεῖς οὖν ... ἐπίσημον ἡμέραν ... ἄγετε; 2 Macc 1:9: καὶ νῦν ἵνα ἄγητε τὰς ἡμέρας τῆς σκηνοπηγίας; 1:18: ἵνα καὶ αὐτοὶ ἄγητε; 2:16: καλῶς οὖν ποιήσετε ἄγοντες τὰς ἡμέρας.

<sup>90</sup> See Porten, *Papyri*, 126 n. 12; Kottsieper, "Religionspolitik," 151; van der Toorn, "Ezra," 605.

<sup>91</sup> Cowley, *Papyri*, 64.

<sup>92</sup> Whitters, *Epistle*, 79.

<sup>93</sup> van der Toorn, "Ezra," 605. See also Doering, *Letters*, 39.

observances of the Jews (LXX Esth E:19: ἔαν τοὺς Ἰουδαίους χρῆσθαι τοῖς ἑαυτῶν νομίμοις) and a specific clause concerning the institution of the new feast, which, despite its origin in an event closely connected to the Jews, is to be observed by the Persians rather than by the Jews. This latter element strongly differentiates Artaxerxes' letter from both Hananiah's letter and the other aforementioned Jewish festal letters. However, in the light of the discussion in the preceding section, it seems possible that Artaxerxes' letter was intended by its Jewish author to serve as a festal-letter-in-disguise, aiming to subtly bolster the celebration of the "Day of Nicanor" in Egypt.

A relevant example is offered by the second letter prefixed to 2 Maccabees. This letter, deemed inauthentic by scholarly assessment, is thought to have been composed not in 164 BCE, as its setting would make us believe, but around 100 BCE,<sup>94</sup> or possibly around 60 BCE or later.<sup>95</sup> The composition of a fictional festal letter to promote in Egypt the Maccabean feast of Hanukkah, which was instituted in Palestine about half a century, or perhaps even a century, earlier, suggests that it is not unlikely that a similar fictional letter might have been composed around the same time to promote another Maccabean feast, the "Day of Nicanor." The letters prefixed to 2 Maccabees do not refer at all to this feast, which is notable, considering that the epitome concludes with, and climaxes in, the establishment of the "Day of Nicanor." The latter feast, with its military rather than religious character, as opposed to Hanukkah, would have been much more difficult to promote in Egypt. If it had been introduced there in the second century BCE, its observance would likely have diminished over time.<sup>96</sup> To boost the celebration of this feast in Egypt, the author of Addition E ingeniously "invented" a Persian feast instituted by the Great King

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<sup>94</sup> See Goldstein, *II Maccabees*, 25–26, who posits that the second letter was "forged," probably in Egypt, around 103 BCE, in order to "call upon the Jews of Egypt, again sorely troubled, to observe the Days of Dedication," and that sometime after 78/77 BCE, when the Greek Esther was brought to Egypt, it was prefixed, along with the first letter, to the epitome of Jason of Cyrene's work by someone who "wished to give the Jews of Egypt a scroll with narrative and festal letters for the Feast of Dedication analogous to the scroll of Esther for Purim and analogous to Third Maccabees for the Egyptian Jews' own festival of deliverance." See also Doran, *2 Maccabees*, 63, who dates the letter to the time of John Hyrcanus (135/134–104 BCE) or Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 BCE).

<sup>95</sup> So Bickerman, "Letter," 409; cf. id., "Pseudo-Aristeas," 109 n. 5 ("second half of the first century B.C.E.").

<sup>96</sup> We know next to nothing about the celebration of the "Day of Nicanor" in Egypt. Kerkeslager, "Pilgrimage," 214, assumes that it "may have been an important event for Jewish immigrants in Egypt who had themselves fought against the Seleucid general. But it was probably of little interest in Jewish communities in distant upper Egypt that had been established long before the Maccabean revolt."

himself—essentially, a “Day of Haman”—to provide a pseudo-historical counterpart for the historical feast of the “Day of Nicanor.” His intention was to imprint upon the reader that the 13th of Adar was a diachronically pivotal day for the Jews, marking the elimination of their deadly enemies through divine aid. Moreover, by creating verbal links with Mordecai’s letter reported in Chapter 9 of the Book of Esther, he aimed to present the royal letter that he composed as a festal letter, intended to elevate the status of the eve of Purim to that of a festive day on par with it.

### 3.9 Conclusion

The investigation undertaken in this chapter aimed to trace the presence of the Maccabean “flavour” in Additions B and E to Esther, as evidenced by the occurrence in them of allusions to historical figures, events, and literary texts associated with the Maccabean revolt in Judea in 167–160 BCE. In particular, it sought to determine whether the presence of this “flavour” can be attributed to the direct impact of the Maccabean revolt on the author of the two Additions or to the influence that the Maccabean literature had on him, as well as to identify the Greek version of Esther in which this “flavour” originated.

With regard to the first objective of the investigation, I concluded that the author of Additions B and E was not directly influenced by the Maccabean events of the 160s BCE but rather by the literature that emerged from and addressed these events, specifically 2 Maccabees. The influence from this book (or possibly from Jason of Cyrene’s historiographic work that 2 Maccabees epitomises)<sup>97</sup> is traceable predominantly in Addition E and only in one instance in Addition B. The author of the two Additions seems to have integrated into Artaxerxes’ letters the following elements drawn from 2 Maccabees: (a) from the letters of Kings Antiochus IV and Antiochus V, the permission granted to the Jews to observe their own laws as a measure for ensuring the kingdom’s undisturbed tranquillity, (b) from the Jewish villain Alcimus’ speech to king Demetrius I, the accusation that the Jews have a

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<sup>97</sup> If LXX Esth E:4 draws on 2 Macc 7:35, as I have suggested (see 3.5 above), and if Chapter 7 of 2 Maccabees was not part of Jason of Cyrene’s original work but was composed by the epitomator—a supposition based on the fact that the martyrdoms described in Chapter 7 are not mentioned in the epitomator’s prologue, where he summarises the content of Jason’s work (2 Macc 2:19–23)—then it is likely that the author of Additions B and E was familiar with the epitome rather than with Jason’s work.

nefarious effect on the stability of the kingdom, as well as the attribution to the king of benevolence (φιλανθρωπία) towards all nations, and (c) from the speech of one of the Maccabean martyrs to King Antiochus IV, the concept of the inescapable justice administered by the all-seeing God. Two other elements originating in 2 Maccabees are Haman's designation as "thrice-impious" (τρισσαλότηριος), which echoes the epitomator's use of the same rare term for Nicanor, Judas Maccabeus' chief military adversary in 2 Maccabees, and the establishment of the 13th of Adar as a notable day (ἐπίσημος ἡμέρα) for the Persians (only in LXX Addition E) similar to that commemorated by the Jews on the same date to mark Nicanor's defeat by Judas Maccabeus in 161 BCE. One more Maccabean element, drawn not from 2 Maccabees but from the prayer of Esther in LXX Addition C, is the phrase "in a time of distress" (ἐν καιρῷ θλίψεως), which likely alludes to the period of persecution of the Jewish religion under Antiochus IV.

Noteworthy is the fact that, to express the notion of the kingdom's stability (εὐστάθεια), which is allegedly threatened by the existence of the Jews (LXX Esth B:5) and can be secured only by their elimination (LXX Esth B:7), the composer of the two Additions drew on both 2 Maccabees (14:6) and 3 Maccabees (3:26; 6:28), and that the notion of the king's benevolence, originating in 2 Maccabees (14:9), was infused into LXX Esth E:11 through 3 Maccabees (3:18, 20). This indicates that Additions B and E were not written during or soon after the period of the Maccabean revolt, as some scholars have suggested;<sup>98</sup> instead, they postdate not only the narratives recounting these events, such as 2 Maccabees, but also those unrelated to them, such as 3 Maccabees, which were influenced by 2 Maccabees.<sup>99</sup>

Regarding the Greek version of Esther in which the Maccabean "flavour" is most prominent and in which it likely originated, I suggested that it is the LXX rather than the AT or the Greek *Vorlage* of the *Vetus Latina* (GVVL). AT Additions B and E bear the fewest traces of the influence of 2 Maccabees compared to the other versions. The VL version of Additions B and E contains all the Maccabean elements found in the LXX

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<sup>98</sup> See Bardtke, "Zusätze," 27, who dates LXX Esther to 167–161 BCE, and 2 Maccabees to the first century BCE.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. the pertinent comment made by Gera, *Judith*, 40, apropos the Maccabean influence on the book of Judith: "Here we must be careful to distinguish between historical Hasmonean figures and events and their subsequent representation in literature, most notably the books of 1 and 2 Maccabees. The Book of Judith betrays the influence of early Maccabean history as shaped and mediated in 1 and 2 Maccabees. In other words, it is not simply the Maccabean revolt that influenced the writing of our book, but the recounting of these events in later literary works. This means that Judith should be dated after the composition of 1 Maccabees and after either the original version or later epitome of 2 Maccabees."

version, except for the most conspicuous one: the date of the 13th of Adar. If its Greek *Vorlage* was the original Greek version of Esther, as has been claimed, one may wonder why its author-translator would have chosen to draw various verbal elements from 2 Maccabees, most notably the distinctive, abusive adjective τρισαλιτήριοις (reflected in the phrase *execrabili et impio* in VL Esth E:15), originally used of Nicanor, if he did not intend to allude to the “Day of Nicanor,” the establishment of which is the concluding high point of 2 Maccabees. The presence of the full Maccabean “flavour” in LXX Additions B and E, combined with its presence in Esther’s prayer in LXX Addition C, suggests that this “flavour” originated in LXX Esther. GVV Addition E likely drew its Maccabean “flavour” from the LXX, or from their common ancestor, but omitted the reference to the 13th of Adar, either due to an anti-Hasmonean stance or because in the place and time of its origin, the “Day of Nicanor” had not gained popularity or recognition. It retained, however, the element of the feast instituted by King Artaxerxes, albeit setting this feast on the 14th of Adar, thereby establishing a dual Purim, Persian and Jewish, whose initiation is disconcertingly credited to the gentile king rather than to Mordecai and Esther.

By inventing a Persian feast inaugurated by Artaxerxes to be celebrated on the 13th of Adar in commemoration of the salvation of the Jews, the Persians, and Artaxerxes himself from Haman’s schemes, the author of LXX Addition E created a pseudo-historical counterpart to the feast of the “Day of Nicanor.” Moreover, by adopting elements typical of Jewish festal letters—such as the letter of Mordecai in Esther Chapter 9 and the second letter prefixed to 2 Maccabees—into Artaxerxes’ second letter, he framed it as a festal letter, subtly aiming to boost the celebration of the “Day of Nicanor” and elevate its festive status to be at the same standing as Purim, which was celebrated over the following two days, the 14th and 15th of Adar.

In light of the discussion in the preceding and present chapters, it is conceivable that various historical figures and events related to the Maccabean period may have served as models for the author of Additions B and E to Esther. These figures and events span the reigns of four Seleucid kings: Seleucus IV, Antiochus IV, Antiochus V, and Demetrius I.

Haman’s profile in Additions B and E was likely shaped by the profiles of Heliodorus, Lysias, and Nicanor. Haman holds the same office of ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων as Heliodorus and Lysias did. He has a threatening and hostile attitude towards the Jews, similar to Heliodorus and Nicanor. This earns him the same insulting epithet, τρισαλιτήριοις, that the author of 2 Maccabees applies to Nicanor. Moreover, he is said to be of

Macedonian ethnicity, as Nicanor was, as evidenced by his typically Macedonian name and patronymic. He is accused of attempting to murder King Artaxerxes and betraying the Persian kingdom to a foreign nation, similarly to Heliodorus, who murdered King Seleucus IV and was purportedly involved in a conspiracy with the Ptolemaic court. He is eventually overthrown, killed, and hung on a pole, with the 13th of Adar established to commemorate his downfall and the salvation of his intended victims. A similar fate befell Nicanor: he was defeated by Judas Maccabeus, his head was hung from the citadel in Jerusalem, and a feast was established to commemorate his defeat on the 13th of Adar.

King Artaxerxes' profile in Additions B and E has likely been shaped, among other influences, by the profiles of Kings Antiochus IV and Antiochus V, as well as by that of Alcimus, as presented in 2 Maccabees. Similar to Antiochus IV and Antiochus V, Artaxerxes rescinds *per litteras* his previously imposed anti-Jewish measures and grants permission to his Jewish subjects to live according to their laws. He regards Haman, his ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων, as a senior and revered figure, his "second father"; this possibly mirrors the relationship between the young Antiochus V and Lysias, his guardian and ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων. His audience with Haman and his other counsellors likely draws as much upon Artaxerxes' consultation with his σύμβουλοι in 1 Esd 8:11, as suggested in Chapter 2, as upon Alcimus' audience with King Demetrius I and his *synedrion*, as evidenced by his adoption of Alcimus' argumentation and phraseology.

Given the dependence of Additions B and E on 2 Maccabees, the latter work could provide us with a *terminus post quem* for the composition of the two Additions, were it not for the uncertainty over whether their author was acquainted with Jason of Cyrene's Maccabean history or its epitome known to us as 2 Maccabees, and the difficulty of determining the precise date of composition of the latter work.



# CHAPTER 4. The switch from the first person singular to the plural of majesty in Addition B to Esther

## 4.1 Introduction

A notable feature of LXX Addition B to Esther is that King Artaxerxes begins his letter in the first person singular (ἐπάρξας, ἐπικρατήσας, ἐβουλήθην, ἐπαιρόμενος, διεξάγων, παρεξόμενος, πυθομένου δέ μου), but switches to the plural from the middle of B:3 onwards (παρ' ἡμῖν, ἡμῖν, ὑφ' ἡμῶν, διειληφότες, τοῖς ἡμετέροις πράγμασιν, προστετάχαμεν, δευτέρου πατρὸς ἡμῶν, ἡμῖν). In Addition E, he uniformly uses the plural of majesty.<sup>1</sup> Apropos of this feature, Bickerman makes the following observation:

It is remarkable that in the First Edict, speaking of himself, Artaxerxes uses now the singular, now the plural, the latter when referring to “the Crown”. This was the style of Hellenistic monarchs in the third century [...] Later, the Ptolemies seem to have used the plural only in their official letters as the fictitious documents in III Maccabees show. The Seleucids may have continued the older style [...] The Persian Kings always used the singular, even in letters fabricated by Greek rhetors. It is, on the other hand, possible that Lysimachus has re-worked some authentic royal letter of the third century, as Ps. Aristeeas did it [...] Note that in his fictitious letter, the king of Ps. Aristeeas (35–40) also uses both numbers. But it is a personal message.<sup>2</sup>

This statement requires some rectification. To begin with, the switch from the singular to the plural at B:3 occurs at the point where the king refers to his counsellors

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<sup>1</sup> The same is the case with the Alpha Text and the *Vetus Latina* of Esther.

<sup>2</sup> Bickerman, “Notes,” 249 n. 40; cf. Passoni Dell’Acqua, “Decree,” 76–77.



(πυθομένου δέ μου τῶν συμβούλων). The plural pronouns in the phrases παρ' ἡμῖν διενέγκας and ἐπέδειξεν ἡμῖν (B:3–4) include the king, Haman, and the rest of the king's σύμβουλοι; the phrase τὴν ὑφ' ἡμῶν κατευθυνομένην ἀμέμπτως συναρχίαν, “the joint government which is irreproachably led by us” (B:4), is ambiguous, as it may denote a collegial government consisting of the king, Haman, and the other counsellors,<sup>3</sup> or a duumvirate consisting of the king and Haman, who is said to have occupied “the second highest position” (B:3) and to have been “the second person of the royal throne” (E:11).<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, the plural participle διειληφότες (B:5) and the plural verb προστετάχαμεν (B:6), which introduce the rationale for the king's order and the order itself, respectively, are to be understood as plurals of majesty,<sup>5</sup> as they are immediately followed by the king's designation of Haman as “our second father” (B:6: δευτέρου πατρὸς ἡμῶν; cf. E:11: ὥστε ἀναγορεύεσθαι ἡμῶν πατέρα)—a personal comment not involving the counsellors. The king then does not use the plural only “when referring to the ‘Crown’,” but also when referring to himself.

As regards King Ptolemy II Philadelphus' *prostagma* for the liberation of the Jewish slaves and his letter to the high priest Eleazar in the *Letter of Aristeas* (§§ 22–25 and 35–40, respectively), Ps.-Aristeas does not employ “both numbers” but uses the plural of majesty throughout;<sup>6</sup> only Josephus, in his paraphrase of these documents, uses the singular mixed with a few plurals.<sup>7</sup> Elsewhere in the *Letter of Aristeas*, King Ptolemy II does switch from the singular to the plural, but this shift occurs during his oral

<sup>3</sup> See Bickerman, *Books*, 206–7.

<sup>4</sup> See 6.5, n. 174.

<sup>5</sup> Throughout my discussion, I will distinguish between two types of the royal “we,” one that is exclusive and the other that is inclusive/collective: (a) the plural of majesty (*pluralis maiestatis*) used by a sovereign when referring to himself (we=I), and (b) the (as)sociative plural (*pluralis sociativus/societatis*) used by a sovereign when speaking or writing on behalf not only of himself but also of others associated with him (we=I and my family, my “house,” my council, etc.). See Wackernagel, *Lectures*, 136; Zilliacus, *Selbstgefühl*, 8–12; Berge, *Faiblesse*, 13–34, 129–34. Another type of royal self-reference that I will discuss is illeism, in which the sovereign refers to himself in the third person or by using his name or title. See Malone, “Illeism,” 502–3.

<sup>6</sup> I note here that I will only examine the use of “both numbers” in the main body of royal letters. I will not consider the prescripts of these letters, which typically consist of the formula ὁ δεινὰ τῷ δεινὶ χαίρειν. While this formula contains no explicit verb or personal pronoun, a third-person singular present verb of sending, such as ἐπιστέλλω, is implied: ὁ δεινὰ τῷ δεινὶ ἐπιστέλλει χαίρειν. See Sarri, *Aspects*, 40–42. Similarly, I will not consider the prescripts of the “Oriental” type, which include an explicit third-person singular verb (λέγει or, in the case of Addition B, γράφει) in the final position: ὁ δεινὰ τῷ δεινὶ ὥδε/τάδε λέγει (see van den Hout, “Studies,” 29–33).

<sup>7</sup> Josephus, *A.J.* 12.28–31; 12.45–50. See 4.5.6.

address to the Jewish translators.<sup>8</sup> As for the author of 3 Maccabees, he does not use the plural consistently in the two circular letters that he assigns to King Ptolemy IV Philopator (3 Macc 3:12–29; 7:1–9). In the *formula valetudinis* of the first letter, the king uses a first-person singular verb and pronoun when referring to himself as an individual, and a first-person plural pronoun when referring to the affairs of state that he manages (3 Macc 3:13: ἔρρωμαι δὲ καὶ ἐγὼ αὐτὸς καὶ τὰ πράγματα ἡμῶν).<sup>9</sup> Moreover, it should be pointed out that the fictitious royal documents in 3 Maccabees cannot in any conclusive way provide evidence on whether the Ptolemies of the second and first centuries BCE “used the plural only in their official letters,” as Bickerman maintains.

Bickerman’s other statements regarding the use of the singular in Persian royal letters and the use of both the singular and the plural in Hellenistic royal correspondence also require further discussion, which I will undertake in the following sections of this chapter. The aim of this discussion will be to determine whether the author of the letters of King Artaxerxes in Additions B and E to Esther used the plural in Addition E and a mixture of singular and plural in Addition B under the influence of a specific chancery style, Seleucid or Ptolemaic, or whether he imitated the style of fictitious royal letters, Persian, Seleucid, or Ptolemaic, found in Septuagintal or extra-Septuagintal literary works. Firstly, I will examine the grammatical person in which the letters of Persian kings are written in Greek documentary and literary sources, including the Septuagint (4.2). Subsequently, I will investigate the use of the first person singular and plural in the letters written by Alexander III of Macedon (4.3) and the Diadochi (4.4), as well as in those issued by the various chanceries of the Hellenistic kingdoms (4.5), with particular emphasis on letters from the Seleucid (4.5.3) and the Ptolemaic (4.5.5) chanceries. Lastly, I will specifically examine the use of the first person singular and plural in the Seleucid and the Ptolemaic royal letters embedded in Septuagintal and extra-Septuagintal books (4.5.4; 4.5.6).

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<sup>8</sup> Let. Aris. § 180: μεγάλην δὲ τέθειμαι τὴν ἡμέραν ταύτην ... καὶ κατ’ ἐνιαυτὸν ἐπίσημος ἔσται πάντα τὸν τῆς ζωῆς ἡμῶν χρόνον· συντέτυχε γὰρ καὶ τὰ κατὰ τὴν νίκην ἡμῖν προσπεπωκέναι τῆς πρὸς Ἀντίγονον ναυμαχίας. On the use of the royal “I” and “we” in the *Letter of Aristeas*, see Tramontano, *Lettera*, 152–53\*, Meecham, *Letter*, 101–2, and Pelletier, *Flavius Josèphe*, 209–11.

<sup>9</sup> In the *formula valetudinis* of his second letter (3 Macc 7:2), Philopator uses the plural of majesty: ἔρρώμεθα δὲ καὶ αὐτοὶ καὶ τὰ τέκνα ἡμῶν.

## 4.2 Persian royal letters

### 4.2.1 Persian royal letters in documentary sources

Zilliacus asserts that in the epigraphically transmitted decrees and letters of the Achaemenid kings, from the first Cyrus to the last Artaxerxes, there is not a single example of the plural of majesty; instead, there is a pronounced emphasis on the first-person forms.<sup>10</sup> With regard to this assertion, it is important to note that no Achaemenid royal letter of indisputable authenticity has come down to us.<sup>11</sup> As Kuhrt points out, “the only certain instances where we hear the ruler’s voice directly” are the Achaemenid royal inscriptions.<sup>12</sup> The fact that many of these inscriptions feature the phrase “says [royal name],” which may have originated in Neo-Assyrian letter formulae, and that some of their texts were disseminated throughout the Empire, as evidenced by the versions of Darius I’s Bisotun inscription found on a stele in Babylon and on a papyrus scroll on the Elephantine island in Egypt, leads Kuhrt to view them as “fundamentally epistolary.”<sup>13</sup> However, it is only through extrapolation from these authentic epigraphic documents, which are written in the first person singular but are not, technically speaking, letters, that we may deduce that the Achaemenid rulers consistently employed the first person singular in their correspondence, too. The reverse is the case with the so-called “Gadatas letter,” an epigraphic text that is undeniably a letter, but whose Achaemenid provenance is disputed. This letter, inscribed on a stone found between Magnesia-on-the-Maeander and Tralles (*I.Magnesia* 115a), was purportedly written by King Darius I to his official Gadatas. The inscription dates from the first half of the second century CE, but the text of the letter that it preserves is assumed to be a Greek translation of an original composed in Old

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<sup>10</sup> Zilliacus, *Selbstgefühl*, 42.

<sup>11</sup> See Tuplin, “Gadatas,” 157, 171; Kuhrt, “Communications,” 137. A message sent in 419/418 BCE from King Darius II to Arsames, satrap of Egypt, is cited in the “Passover Papyrus” from Elephantine, but, as Porten, *Papyri*, 126 n. 12, notes, this “unique ten-word message does not lend itself to confident reconstruction.” See 3.8.

<sup>12</sup> Kuhrt, “Communications,” 121.

<sup>13</sup> Kuhrt, “Communications,” 121. See, in particular, paragraph 70 of the Bisotun inscription (as quoted in Kuhrt, *Empire*, 149): “Darius the king proclaims: By the favour of Auaramazda, this (is) the form of writing, which I have made, besides in Aryan. Both on clay tablets and on parchment it has been placed [...] And it was written down and read aloud before me. Afterwards, I have sent off this form of writing everywhere into the countries.”

Persian or Aramaic in the 490s BCE. The authenticity of this fragmentary letter, which is written in the first person singular, has been the subject of strong debate.<sup>14</sup>

#### 4.2.2 Persian royal letters in Greek literary sources

Ancient Greek literary works occasionally refer to Persian royal letters, yet only a small number of these are actually quoted, either partially or in full, in *oratio recta*.<sup>15</sup>

Herodotus quotes, or more likely composes, two brief messages purportedly written by King Darius I but actually fabricated by the nobleman Bagaeus, whom the king had charged with entrapping and killing the satrap Oroetes. These messages, which bore all the marks of authenticity, including the royal seal, were written in the third person singular.<sup>16</sup> The boundaries between oral and written communication being often fuzzy in Herodotus,<sup>17</sup> it is unclear whether some other royal messages, such as Darius' message to Histiaeus (*Hist.* 5.24) or Xerxes I's message to Mardonius, which is transmitted to the Athenians through the Macedonian king Alexander I (*Hist.* 8.140), were oral or written ones.<sup>18</sup> Both of these messages are delivered in the first person singular.

Thucydides (*Hist.* 1.129.3) quotes a letter that King Xerxes I sent to the Spartan general Pausanias, who had offered to help him subjugate Greece. The historian may have derived this letter from a source that he deemed reliable, possibly one reproducing a translation of the Persian original or a well-fabricated forgery.<sup>19</sup> Xerxes writes in the first person singular, but when he refers to his palace in Susa, he uses the first person plural possessive pronoun: κείσεται σοι εὐεργεσία ἐν τῷ ἡμετέρῳ

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<sup>14</sup> Van den Hout, "Studies II," 144–52; Gauger, *Authentizität*, 205–12, and Briant, "Lettre," have argued against the authenticity of the letter. Lane Fox, "Gadatas," defends its authenticity, while Tuplin, "Gadatas," expresses reservations.

<sup>15</sup> For a list of the Persian royal letters mentioned, summarised, or quoted verbatim, in part or in full, in Greek literary sources, see Gauger, *Authentizität*, 41–43 and 56–58.

<sup>16</sup> Herodotus, *Hist.* 3.128: Ὁ Πέρσαι, βασιλεὺς Δαρεῖος ἀπαγορεύει ὑμῖν μὴ δορυφορέειν Ὀροίτεα. [...] Βασιλεὺς Δαρεῖος Πέρσησι τοῖσι ἐν Σάρδισι ἐντέλλεται κτείνειν Ὀροίτεα.

<sup>17</sup> See van den Hout, "Studies," 30–33; Ceccarelli, *Letter*, 103, 116, 129; Bowie, "Signs," 72, 80–83; cf. Gera, "Letters," 87 (with regard to Xenophon).

<sup>18</sup> See Ceccarelli, *Letter*, 112, 114; Bowie, "Signs," 80–81.

<sup>19</sup> See Olmstead, "Letter," 157, 160; Westlake, "Thucydides," 102–3; Lane Fox, "Gadatas," 160–61.

οἶκω, “gratitude will lie for you in our house.”<sup>20</sup> Although this plural is commonly thought to be a plural of majesty,<sup>21</sup> it can also be interpreted as an associative plural.<sup>22</sup>

Xenophon, *Cyr.* 4.5.27–33, gives us the text of a lengthy letter that Cyrus the Elder sent to his uncle Cyaxares. At the beginning and end of the letter, Cyrus uses the first person plural, which is inclusive, as he refers not only to himself but also to Cyaxares’ cavalymen who had joined him, whereas in the main part of the letter, he uses the first person singular.<sup>23</sup> A different kind of shift occurs in the text bearing the terms of the peace that Artaxerxes II dictated to the Greek states in 387/386 BCE (*Hell.* 5.1.31). This text was sent as a letter, equipped with the royal seal, and Xenophon designates it as τὰ βασιλέως γράμματα (5.1.32). Although the phrase by which he introduces it (5.1.30: ἀνεγίνωσκε τὰ γεγραμμένα· εἶχε δὲ ὧδε) gives the impression that he is quoting the actual text of the King’s Peace, his version is believed to render the main points of it, without being a verbatim reproduction of the original official document.<sup>24</sup> In it, the king employs the third person singular (Ἀρταξέρξης βασιλεὺς νομίζει δίκαιον τὰς μὲν ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ πόλεις ἑαυτοῦ εἶναι), and only at the end does he switch to the first person singular (τούτοις ἐγὼ πολεμήσω). Xenophon also transmits a single line from the letter by which Darius II appointed his son, Cyrus the Younger, as commander-in-chief in Asia Minor in 407 BCE; this line is written in the first person singular.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> An almost identical phrase occurs in the “Gadatas letter” (*I. Magnesia* 115a, ll. 15–17: [δ]ιὰ ταῦτά σοι κεῖσεται | μεγάλη εὐεργεσία ἐμ βασι|λέως οἴκω). In both passages, the “king’s house” refers to the royal palace, where registers listing the names of the king’s benefactors were kept. See Briant, *Histoire*, 315–16. See also the apocryphal letters of King Artaxerxes to Hystanes (Ps.-Hippocrates, *Ep.* 3, l. 18 [ed. Smith]: οἶκω βασιλέως) and of King Darius to Heraclitus (*Ep.* 1, ll. 15–16 [ed. Malherbe]: βασιλείον οἶκον). Elsewhere, the expression “the king’s house” is used in an extended sense. See Cawkwell, “Peace,” 72 n. 10: “At Hdt. 5.31.4 and 6.9.3, ‘the King’s house’ seems to be a phrase roughly equivalent to ‘the Persian Empire’, and at 4.97.6 ‘my house’ appears to mean ‘in my empire’, rather than ‘home in Susa’ or the like.” Similar expressions are common in Hellenistic royal correspondence, where they denote the “royal house”; see, e.g., Welles, *RC* no. 15 [letter of King Antiochus I or II], l. 7: εἰς τὴν ἡμετέραν οἰκίαν; *SEG* 41-1003 [letter of King Antiochus III], l. 10: πρὸς τὴν οἰκίαν ἡμῶν; Welles, *RC* no. 65 [letter of King Attalus II], l. 22: ἡμῶν τοῦ οἴκου.

<sup>21</sup> See Wackernagel, *Lectures*, 136; Schmid, “Pluralis,” 479; Humbert, *Syntaxe*, 23.

<sup>22</sup> See Zilliacus, *Selbstgefühl*, 33, who, apropos of Xerxes’ phrase, cites Agamemnon’s words in the *Iliad*, 1.30: ἡμετέρω ἐνὶ οἴκω ἐν Ἄργεϊ, “in our house in Argos”; the possessive pronoun here likely refers to the king and his family. See also Gauger, *Authentizität*, 333.

<sup>23</sup> See Gera, “Letters,” 98–103.

<sup>24</sup> See Cawkwell, “Peace,” 71–72, and Ceccarelli, *Letter*, 152–53.

<sup>25</sup> Xenophon, *Hell.* 1.4.3: καταπέμψω Κῦρον κάρανον τῶν εἰς Καστωλὸν ἀθροιζομένων.

The Attic orators do not reproduce any Achaemenid royal documents. Only Aeschines quotes the closing line of a letter sent by Artaxerxes III to the Athenians; the king uses an emphatic first person singular.<sup>26</sup>

Plutarch and the ancient Greek novelists include only a few very brief Persian royal letters in their works: the former quotes two apocryphal letters from King Xerxes I to King Leonidas and to Mount Athos;<sup>27</sup> in his novel *Chaereas and Callirhoe*, Chariton composes two messages that a King Artaxerxes (possibly II Mnemon) sends to his satraps Pharnaces and Mithridates.<sup>28</sup> All these missives are written in the first person singular.

#### 4.2.3 The pseudo-Hippocratic and the pseudo-Heraclitean Persian royal letters

“The [Persian] letters fabricated by Greek rhetors,” of which Bickerman speaks, date from the Hellenistic and the early Roman periods and are found in the collections of pseudepigraphic letters attributed to Hippocrates and Heraclitus, as well as in Ps.-Callisthenes’ *Alexander Romance*, which will be discussed in the next section.

The pseudo-Hippocratic correspondence, which has been dated to between the mid-second century BCE and the second half of the first century BCE,<sup>29</sup> includes three letters written by a King Artaxerxes. In the first letter (*Ep.* 1), which is addressed to the physician Paitus, the king begins by writing in the first person plural: ll. 2–3: νοῦσος προσεπέλασεν ... τοῖς στρατεύμασιν ἡμῶν καὶ πολλὰ ποιησάντων ἡμῶν ἔνδοσιν οὐκ ἔδωκεν, “The disease ... has descended on our army. Though we have done much, it has given no relief.”<sup>30</sup> The plural personal pronouns in this sentence can be understood as associative plurals encompassing the king and his fellow Persians; in the phrase πολλὰ ποιησάντων ἡμῶν, the plural ἡμῶν can also be interpreted as a plural of majesty, assuming that the author intended to present the king as personally

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<sup>26</sup> Aeschines, *Ctes.* 238: ἐγὼ ... ὑμῖν χρυσίον οὐ δώσω· μή με αἰτεῖτε· οὐ γὰρ λήψεσθε.

<sup>27</sup> Plutarch, [*Aporphth. lac.*] 225C: Ξέρξου δὲ γράψαντος αὐτῷ ‘ἔξεστί σοι μὴ θεομαχοῦντι, μετ’ ἐμοῦ δὲ τασσομένῳ τῆς Ἑλλάδος μοναρχεῖν’ ... πάλιν δὲ τοῦ Ξέρξου γράψαντος ‘πέμψον τὰ ὅπλα’; *Cohib. ira* 455D: ὁ δὲ Ξέρξης ... πρὸς τὸ ὄρος ἐξέπεμπεν ἐπιστολάς “Ἄθω δαιμόνιε οὐρανόμηκες, μὴ ποιεῖν ἐν ἐμοῖς ἔργοις λίθους μεγάλους καὶ δυσκατεργάστους· εἰ δὲ μή, τεμῶν ρίψω σ’ αὐτὸν εἰς θάλασσαν.”

<sup>28</sup> Chariton, *Chaer.* 4.6.8: γράφει δὲ καὶ πρὸς Φαρνάκην “Διονύσιον, ἐμὸν δοῦλον, Μιλήσιον, πέμψον” ... πρὸς δὲ Μιθριδάτην “ἦκε ἀπολογησόμενος ὅτι οὐκ ἐπεβούλευσας γάμῳ Διονυσίου.”

<sup>29</sup> Pinault, *Lives*, 43, dates the letters to “between the mid second to mid first century B.C.,” while Sakalis, *Επιστολαί*, 17, 61, 87–89, assigns them to 40–30 BCE.

<sup>30</sup> Greek text and English translation from Smith, *Hippocrates*, 48–54.

involved in the management of the disease. The king then alternates between the first person singular (l. 3: ἀξιῶ; l. 4: παρ' ἐμοῦ) and the first person plural (l. 8: οὐ πολεμοῦντες πολεμούμεθα, ἐχθρὸν ἔχοντες τὸν θῆρα, “We are beaten without striking a blow. Our enemy is a beast”; the plural verb and participles in this sentence are likely associative), and ends the letter in the first person singular (l. 10: οὐ φέρω γνώμην οὐκέτι ἔχω). In the second letter (*Ep.* 3), which he addresses to Hystanes, governor of the Hellespont, he similarly switches from the singular (l. 14: ἐς ἐμέ) to the plural (πέμπε ἐς ἡμέας, “send [sc. Hippocrates] to us”; the plural personal pronoun could be either inclusive or a plural of majesty), while the third letter (*Ep.* 8), which is addressed to the Coans, is written in the first person singular.

Among the pseudo-Heraclitean letters, there are two that purport to have been written by King Darius I. These two letters, which likely come from different authors, are thought to date from between the third century BCE and the first century CE.<sup>31</sup> In the first letter (*Ep.* 1), which he addresses to the Ephesian philosopher, the king uses the first person singular (l. 5: δοκεῖ μοι), then switches to a third-person self-reference (ll. 13–14: βασιλεὺς οὖν Δαρεῖος Ὑστάσπου βούλεται σῆς ἀκροάσεως μεταλαβεῖν), before immediately switching back to the first person singular (l. 15: ἔρχου δὴ συντόμως πρὸς ἐμὴν ὄψιν; l. 19: παρ' ἐμοί). In the second letter (*Ep.* 3), which he addresses to the Ephesians, the king uses the first person singular (l. 16: ἀποστελῶ; l. 21: εὐηργέτησα, τάξας; l. 22: δούς; l. 25: πρὸς με; l. 27: θῶμαι; l. 28: κωλύσω) but also refers to himself illeistically by his title, “the king” (ll. 15–16: εἰ μὲν οὖν διεγνώκατε βασιλεῖ πολεμεῖν δεσπότη; l. 18: βασιλεῖ μεγάλῳ; ll. 23–24: φίλον βασιλέως; l. 29: βασιλεῖ ὑμετέρῳ).<sup>32</sup>

#### 4.2.4 Persian royal letters in the *Alexander Romance*

Ps.-Callisthenes' *Alexander Romance* (*Historia Alexandri Magni*) contains a large number of fictitious royal letters. This work, in its earliest surviving Greek version, MS A, which is considered to be the closest to the archetype (α), is commonly thought to have been composed in Alexandria in the third century CE.<sup>33</sup> Since parts of it seem to have originated in the early Hellenistic period, it has also been suggested that it may

<sup>31</sup> See Fuentes González and López Cruces, “Héraclite (Pseudo-),” 626–27.

<sup>32</sup> I quote the text of the letters after Malherbe, *Epistles*, 186–88.

<sup>33</sup> See Kroll, *Historia*, xv; Merkelbach, *Quellen*, 91, 224; Nawotka, *Romance*, 3–6.

have grown incrementally over time.<sup>34</sup> Of the forty-one letters interspersed within it, eight are purported to have been written by King Darius III to Alexander III of Macedon, to his satraps, to his neighbouring kings, and to the Indian king Porus.<sup>35</sup> Scholars argue that Ps.-Callisthenes derived the Darius-Alexander letters that he quotes from either a single pre-existing work, presumably a *Briefroman* articulated around Alexander and dating back to before or around 100 BCE,<sup>36</sup> or from various collections of both authentic and spurious letters attributed to Alexander and other historical figures.<sup>37</sup> Many of the fictional Darius-Alexander letters that found their way into the *Briefroman* or the letter collections may have originated as compositional exercises produced in schools of rhetoric.<sup>38</sup> Three of the Darius letters included in the *Alexander Romance* are also attested, either wholly or in part, with some textual differences, on two papyri, *P.Hamb.* II 129 from the mid-second century BCE and *PSI* XII 1285 from the first half of the second century CE, and one inscription, *SEG* 33-802 from the age of Tiberius. The aforementioned papyri also include two Darius letters that are not found in the *Alexander Romance*.<sup>39</sup>

In the first of Darius' letters to Alexander (Ps.-Callisthenes, *Hist. Alex.* 1.36.2–5) and in his two letters addressed to his satraps (*Hist. Alex.* 1.39.3–5 [cf. *P.Hamb.* II 129, cols. I, 1–II, 30] and 1.39.8–9), the king employs exclusively the first person singular. In his second letter to Alexander (*Hist. Alex.* 1.40.2–5), Darius begins with a third-person self-reference (1.40.2: σὲ μόνον ἔλαθε τῶν ἐπὶ γῆς τὸ Δαρείου ὄνομα, ὅπερ καὶ οἱ θεοὶ τετιμήκασιν καὶ σύνθρονον ἑαυτῶν ἔκριναν);<sup>40</sup> he then uses the first person singular

<sup>34</sup> Stoneman, *Romanzo*, xvii, considers the recension α of the *Alexander Romance*, as represented by MS A, to be not Roman but “sostanzialmente ellenistica”; cf. *ibid.*, xxviii: “Io propendo piuttosto per l'ipotesi di Ausfeld che il *Romanzo* appartenga nella sua essenza alla prima età ellenistica (300–150 a.C.).” See also Nawotka, *Romance*, 24.

<sup>35</sup> Ancient sources give us in indirect speech the content of the letters that Darius III sent to Alexander on three occasions, but do not quote verbatim any of these letters. See Nawotka, *Romance*, 118–19.

<sup>36</sup> See Merkelbach, *Quellen*, 48–55, 224, 230–52. Merkelbach proposed this date based on *P.Hamb.* II 129, a fragment of an anthology of fictitious letters, some of which closely resemble those found in the *Alexander Romance*. Merkelbach dated this papyrus to the first century BCE. The subsequent redating of the papyrus to the mid-second century BCE (see n. 39 below) would push back the date of the postulated *Briefroman* even further. See Giuliano, “PSI XII 1285,” 218–19.

<sup>37</sup> See Nawotka, *Romance*, 19, 23–24.

<sup>38</sup> See Merkelbach, *Quellen*, 48, 224; Stramaglia, “Consumo,” 106–13; “Stoneman, *Romanzo*, xlv–xlv, liv; Giuliano, “PSI XII 1285,” 219–20. See also 5.8.

<sup>39</sup> For *P.Hamb.* II 129, see Merkelbach, “Anthologie”; for *PSI* XII 1285, see Pieraccioni, “Lettere”; for *SEG* 33-802, see Burstein, “SEG 33.802.” For the dating of the papyri, see Giuliano, “PSI XII 1285,” 209 with n. 10, and 216.

<sup>40</sup> I quote from Kroll's critical edition of MS A of the *Alexander Romance* (Kroll, *Historia*).



(1.40.3: χωρὶς τῆς ἐμῆς ταγῆς ... ἐγὼ ... ἡγοῦμαι ... οὐκ ἐπεζήτησα), before switching to the first person plural, which is likely an inclusive plural (1.40.4: πείθη οὖν καὶ ἡμᾶς [the Persians] τοιούτους ἔσεσθαι ὁποίους ὑπολαμβάνεις;); he continues by intermixing the first person singular with an illeistic reference to himself by name (1.40.4: ἐπ' ἐμὲ ... ὦφειλον; 1.40.5: ἐπεὶ δὲ καὶ ἐς τοῦτό με ἦξας ὥστε καὶ ἐπιστολὴν παρὰ Δαρείου ἐπιζητεῖν, ἔπεμψά σοι ἐλθεῖν καὶ προσκυνεῖν θεῷ Δαρεῖω), and finishes his letter in the first person singular (1.40.5: κολάσομαί σε ... ὄμνυμι). Darius' third letter to Alexander (*Hist. Alex.* 2.10.6–8; cf. *PSI* XII 1285, col. IV, 17–41) is written for the most part in the first person singular (2.10.6: μαρτύρομαι ... με ... δοξάζω; 2.10.7: ἐγὼ οὐ παύσομαι ἐπεκδικῶν ... ἐγράφη γάρ μοι ... εἰς τοὺς ἐμούς ... τὰ πρὸς ἐμὲ ... τοῖς ἐμοῖς ... τῶν ἐμῶν; 2.10.8: με ... μοι), except for its beginning (2.10.6: ἔγραψας ἡμῖν ἐπιστολὴν ὑπερήφανον, δι' ἧς ἡμᾶς ἐπιζητεῖς ἐντυχεῖν σοι) and end (2.10.8: δῆλωσον ἡμῖν, ἵνα εἰδῶμεν), which are written in the first person plural—clearly a plural of majesty. In his fourth letter to Alexander (*Hist. Alex.* 2.17.2–4; cf. *P.Hamb.* II 129, cols. II, 31–III, 56 and *SEG* 33-802, I, 1–4), purportedly written after his defeat at the Battle of Issus, the Persian king shifts back and forth between the first person singular and plural (2.17.2: τῷ ἐμῷ δεσπότη ... Ξέρξης ὁ τὸ φῶς μοι δείξας; 2.17.3: ἅπερ καὶ αὐτὸς παρ' ἡμῖν εἶδες ... οἴκτειρον ἡμᾶς πρὸς σὲ καταπεφευγότας ... τῆς ἄλλης ἐνυπαρχούσης ἡμῖν εὐγενείας ἀπὸ Περσίδος ... ὑπισχνοῦμαί σοι ... οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν ... ἐπέυχομαι). The phrase παρ' ἡμῖν denotes Darius' palace, into which Alexander had sneaked in disguise. The plurals in the phrase ἡμᾶς πρὸς σὲ καταπεφευγότας can be interpreted as plurals of majesty; however, considering the king's state as a humiliated suppliant appealing for pity, they are more likely to be plurals of modesty.<sup>41</sup> This seems also to be the case with the plural ἡμῶν in the phrase οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν and the plural ἡμῖν in the phrase τῆς ἄλλης ἐνυπαρχούσης ἡμῖν εὐγενείας ἀπὸ Περσίδος, “our inherent nobility which comes from Persia.” In *P.Hamb.* II 129, col. III, 53–55, which reads instead συνγενείας τῆς ὑπαρχούσης ἡμῖν ἀπὸ Περσέως, “the kinship existing between us, which originates from Perseus,” the plural ἡμῖν refers to Darius' and Alexander's purported common ancestry.<sup>42</sup> Darius' brief message to his neighbouring kings (*Hist. Alex.* 2.11.6) features a shift from the plural to the singular: μελλόντων ἡμῶν ἰδρῶτας ἀπομάζασθαι ἀγωνίζεσθαι δεῖ <καὶ> ὑμᾶς ... οὐ πείθομαι. The plural ἡμῶν is either a plural of

<sup>41</sup> Cf. the intermix of singular and plural of modesty in a similar supplication context in Euripides, *Herc. fur.* 1207, 1209: ἰκετεύομεν ἀμφὶ γενειάδα καὶ / γόνυ καὶ χεῖρα σὰν προπίπνων. See Smyth, *Grammar*, 271 [§ 1008].

<sup>42</sup> See Merkelbach, “Anthologie,” 58, who considers the reading of *P.Hamb.* II 129 to be the original one, which the author of the *Alexander Romance* misunderstood; see also Whitmarsh, “Power,” 98.

majesty or an inclusive plural denoting the king and his army. Lastly, in his letter to King Porus (*Hist. Alex.* 2.19.2–5), Darius writes in the first person singular, with a single shift to the first person plural when referring to the mutual obligations of the two kings stemming from their ancestral ties (2.19.3: μνησθεῖς τῶν προγονικῶν ἡμῶν δικαίων).

The intermixing of first-person singular and plural forms is also attested in the two letters of King Darius contained in *P.Hamb.* II 129, cols. III, 57–IV, 78, and in *PSI* XII 1285, cols. I, 1–II, 11, which do not appear in the *Alexander Romance*. In the first of these letters, the king employs the first person singular (ll. 58–59: ἐπὶ τὴν [γῆν] τὴν ἐμήν; ll. 63–64: δίκη[ν δέ] μοι δώσεις; ll. 65–66: εἰς ἐμὰς χεῖρας; ll. 66–67: παράδειγμά σε ποιήσω), except for a single intrusion of the plural of majesty (l. 70: ὁ π[άππο]ς ἡμῶν Ἑέρξης) and an illeistic self-reference by title (l. 60: οἶκον τὸν τοῦ σοῦ δεσ[π]ότ[ο]υ). The fragmentary second letter, as restored by Merkelbach,<sup>43</sup> exhibits a mixture of first person singular (l. 1: [ἐμνησικ]άκησα; l. 3: [ἀ]πέλυσα; ll. 26–27: [δε]δόξασμαι καὶ τετίμη[μαι]; l. 28: ἔπαθον; l. 35: ἐδυνάμην; l. 37: [ἐδε]χόμην; l. 40: μετοίσω; l. 43: μοι; l. 44: τείσω ... δυνήσομαι; l. 45: οὐ διαλείψω ... μοι), real plural referring to Darius and Alexander, both of whom are said to have divine descent (l. 30: [δι]ογενεῖς ἐσμεν), plural of majesty (ll. 16–18: πρὸς Κῦρον [καὶ πρὸς ἡμᾶς τοὺς φόρους ἀ]εὶ κατ’ ἐνιαυτὸν ἀπ[έφερον καὶ ὡς δεσπότη]ας προσεκύουν ἡμ[ᾶς]), and illeistic self-reference by name (l. 8: [ἐμὲ τὸν] μέγιστον Διὸς υἱὸν Δαρεῖ[ον]; ll. 20–21: Δαρεῖος πρὸς τινὰς [θεοὺς μεγάλους κατὰ τ]ὸν πόλεμον ἠντία[σεν]; ll. 31–33: ἀτενίσας [δ’ εἰς ἐμὲ λόγισαι ὅτι ἐκ]εῖνος [sc. Darius] ἐστέρηται μη[τρὸς καὶ γυναικὸς] καὶ τέκνων).

#### 4.2.5 Persian royal documents in the Septuagint

Apart from the letters of King Artaxerxes in Additions B and E to Esther, which are original Greek compositions, the Septuagint contains the Greek versions of a few other Persian royal documents, which are recorded in Aramaic (and one in Hebrew) in the book of Ezra. The authenticity of these documents, which are purported to have been issued by three—possibly four—Achaemenid rulers, has been a subject of extensive debate.<sup>44</sup>

From the reign of Cyrus the Elder, there is a decree concerning the return of the Judean exiles from Babylonia to Jerusalem and the rebuilding of the Temple. This

<sup>43</sup> See Merkelbach, *Quellen*, 236–37; cf. Pieraccioni, “Lettere,” 173–75.

<sup>44</sup> See Doering, *Letters*, 122–25.

decree is quoted in Hebrew in Ezra 1:2–4 and, partially, in 2 Chr 36:23. According to Ezra 1:1/2 Chr 36:22, it was promulgated both orally, via heralds, and in writing, likely by being posted on placards.<sup>45</sup> It is introduced by a formula commonly found in royal Achaemenid inscriptions: “Thus says King...”<sup>46</sup> The Greek rendering of this formula in 1 Esd 2:2/LXX 2 Chr 36:23, τάδε λέγει ὁ βασιλεὺς Περσῶν Κύρος/τάδε λέγει Κύρος βασιλεὺς Περσῶν, bears resemblance to the opening line of King Xerxes I’s letter to Pausanias, as quoted by Thucydides (*Hist.* 1.129.3: ὧδε λέγει βασιλεὺς Ξέρξης Πανσανίᾳ), where ὧδε λέγει is also placed in the initial position.<sup>47</sup> In both the Hebrew and the Greek versions of this decree, the king uses the first person singular. Related to this document is a memorandum from Cyrus written in the third person singular, which is quoted in Aramaic in Ezra 6:2–5 (1 Esd 6:23–25 par. 2 Esd 6:2–5).

From the reign of Darius I, there is a decree in epistolary form issued in response to a letter written to the king by Tattenai, Shethar-bozenai, and their associates concerning the rebuilding of the Temple. This document is quoted in Aramaic in Ezra 6:6–12, immediately following the aforementioned memorandum of King Cyrus, which Darius retrieved from the Ecbatana archives. Whether Cyrus’ memorandum is part of Darius’ decree is unclear.<sup>48</sup> The opening of the latter document, either it stood before the quoted memorandum of Cyrus or before 6:6, appears to have been lost. As a result, the body of the decree begins abruptly at 6:6 with the transition marker “now” and a second-person plural address (“Now you, Tattenai ... Shethar-bozenai, and you, their associates...”). In the rest of the decree, the king employs the first person singular (6:8: “I make a decree”; 6:11: “I decree that...”; 6:12: “I, Darius, make a decree” [trans. NRSV]). In 1 Esdras, the decree is introduced by a third-person singular verb (6:26: προσέταξεν δὲ [sc. ὁ Δαρεῖος]), whereas 2 Esdras renders more closely its *Vorlage* (6:6: νῦν δώσετε, ἑπαρχοί). The text then shifts to direct discourse in 1 Esd 6:27, featuring a first-person singular verb (καὶ ἐγὼ δὲ ἐπέταξα), and to a passive construction with a first-person singular pronoun as the agent in 2 Esd 6:8 (καὶ ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ γνώμη ἐτέθη). In both Greek versions, the decree closes with an emphatic first-person singular statement (1 Esd 6:33: ἐγὼ βασιλεὺς Δαρεῖος δεδογμάτικα; 2 Esd 6:12:

<sup>45</sup> See Doering, *Letters*, 100 n. 16, 113, 116 n. 105, 245, 496, who rightly notes that this document “is not clearly epistolary.” I include it in the discussion of Persian royal letters following van den Hout, “Studies II,” 141, 143–44, and Gauger, *Authentizität*, 56.

<sup>46</sup> See Olmstead, “Letter,” 157–58, and 4.2.1 above.

<sup>47</sup> See van den Hout, “Studies II,” 144.

<sup>48</sup> See Doering, *Letters*, 120.

ἐγὼ Δαρεῖος ἔθηνκα γνώμην).<sup>49</sup> Both the Aramaic and the Greek versions feature an instance of illeism (Ezra 6:10: “so that they may ... pray for the life of the king and his children”; 1 Esd 6:30: ὅπως προσφέρωνται σπονδαὶ ... ὑπὲρ τοῦ βασιλέως καὶ τῶν παίδων; 2 Esd 6:10: ἵνα ... προσεύχωνται εἰς ζωὴν τοῦ βασιλέως καὶ τῶν υἱῶν αὐτοῦ).<sup>50</sup>

Lastly, there are two documents attributed to a King Artaxerxes, possibly issued by two different kings of the same name.<sup>51</sup> The first is a letter that the king addresses to Rehum, to Shimsai, and their associates, ordering the cessation of the rebuilding of Jerusalem and its walls. This letter, quoted in Aramaic in Ezra 4:17–22, is written in the first person singular (4:19: “I made a decree”; 4:21: “until I make a decree” [trans. NRSV]), with one occurrence of the first person plural (4:18: “the letter that you sent to us has been read in translation before me”) and one instance of illeism (4:22: “why should damage grow to the hurt of the king?”). Some scholars have taken the plural “to us” in Ezra 4:18 to be a plural of majesty. Clines, however, maintains that “more probably ‘us’ means ‘my government’ or ‘my court’, and ‘me’ equals ‘me personally’, so in fact ‘us’ is here not really a plural of majesty.”<sup>52</sup> The mention of the king’s counsellors in the second letter of Artaxerxes, which is quoted in Ezra 7 (see further below), corroborates this view.

In its Greek version in 1 Esd 2:22–24, Artaxerxes’ letter is couched in the first person singular throughout (2:22: ἀνέγων τὴν ἐπιστολήν, ἣν πεπόμφατε πρὸς με. ἐπέταξα οὖν...; 2:24: νῦν οὖν ἐπέταξα...), with a single instance of illeism/allusive plural (2:24: εἰς τὸ βασιλεῖς ἐνοχλῆσαι). The parallel text in 2 Esd 4:18–22 displays an alternation between the first person singular and plural (4:18: ὁ φορολόγος, ὃν ἀπεστείλατε πρὸς ἡμᾶς, ἐκλήθη ἔμπροσθεν ἐμοῦ. [4:19] καὶ παρ’ ἐμοῦ ἐτέθη γνώμη καὶ ἐπεσεψάμεθα καὶ εὗρομεν ὅτι...). In his use of the plural πρὸς ἡμᾶς (“to us”), the Greek translator of

<sup>49</sup> Be it noted that in 1 Esd 6:31, the manuscripts read καὶ προσέταξεν, “and he [sc. Darius] ordered,” marking a switch from the first to the third person singular, except for Codex Vaticanus, which reads καὶ προστάξει, an infinitive dependent on the preceding first-person singular verb ἐπέταξα. Rahlfs and Hanhart, *Septuaginta*, 1:891, have adopted the former reading, whereas Hanhart, in his Göttingen edition of 1 Esdras, has opted for the latter.

<sup>50</sup> Letters of King Darius I addressed to various officials concerning the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the reconstruction of the Temple are also referenced in 1 Esd 4:47–57; the content of these letters is summarised in indirect speech. A letter of “Darius the Mede” to all the nations and countries urging them to worship the god of Daniel is quoted in LXX Dan 6:[27]26–[28]27. This Darius, said to have been succeeded by King Cyrus (LXX Dan 6:[29]28), cannot be identified with any historical king. His letter is written in the first person singular.

<sup>51</sup> It is a subject of debate whether both documents should be attributed to Artaxerxes I Longimanus (see Clines, *Ezra*, 16–23) or whether the second document was issued by Artaxerxes II Mnemon (see Eissfeldt, *Einleitung*, 750–53; Böhler, *1 Esdras*, 15).

<sup>52</sup> Clines, “Humanity,” 460.

2 Esdras follows Ezra 4:18; the plurals ἐπεσκεψάμεθα καὶ εὑρομεν (“we investigated and found out”), on the other hand, have not been prompted by the Aramaic text, where the verbs are not in the first but in the third person plural (“and they searched and they found”). Ezra/2 Esd 4:19 is a response to Rehum and his associates’ request to the king to look in the book of the record of his fathers and find information about Jerusalem. In 2 Esdras, this request is couched in a combination of third- and second-person singular references to the king, which does not involve persons of his entourage (4:14: διὰ τοῦτο ἐπέμψαμεν καὶ ἐγνωρίσαμεν τῷ βασιλεῖ, [4:15] ἵνα ἐπισκέψηται ἐν βιβλίῳ ὑπομνηματισμοῦ τῶν πατέρων σου, καὶ εὐρήσεις καὶ γνώσῃ ὅτι...). One possibility is that the first-person plural verbs and pronouns used by the king in 2 Esd 4:18–19 were intended as plurals of majesty. The translator may have had Artaxerxes respond to the combination of third- and second-person singular in Rehum’s letter with a combination of first-person singular and plural in his own letter. Similar shifts between the first person singular and the plural of majesty, occurring within a single sentence, are attested in Josephus’ paraphrase of Artaxerxes’ letters in Additions B and E to Esther,<sup>53</sup> which is chronologically close to the translation of 2 Esdras.<sup>54</sup> A more likely possibility is that the plurals in 2 Esd 4:18–19 are inclusive, proleptically referring to the king and his counsellors mentioned in the second Artaxerxes document (2 Esd 7:14–15). The instance of illeism in Ezra 4:22 is reproduced in 2 Esd 4:22, combined (as in 1 Esd 2:24) with the use of the allusive plural: εἰς κακοποίησιν βασιλεῦσιν. The same type of plural occurs in the letter of Artaxerxes in Addition E to Esther.<sup>55</sup>

The second Artaxerxes document is a decree in epistolary form, quoted in Aramaic in Ezra 7:12–26, which the king addresses to Ezra the priest. The king writes in the first person singular, occasionally referring to himself in the third person (7:13: “I decree that ...”; 7:14: “for you are sent by the king and his seven counsellors ... [7:15] to convey the silver and gold that the king and his counsellors have freely offered to the God of Israel”; 7:21: “I, King Artaxerxes, decree...”; 7:23: “or wrath will come upon the realm of the king and his heirs” [trans. NRSV]). At 7:24, however, the king employs the first

<sup>53</sup> See 4.2.6 below.

<sup>54</sup> For the dating of the translation of 2 Esdras (second century CE), see Wooden, “2 Esdras,” 196.

<sup>55</sup> See LXX Esth E:2: πολλοὶ τῇ πλείσῃ τῶν εὐεργετούντων χρηστότητι πυκνότερον τιμώμενοι μείζον ἐφρόνησαν [E:3] καὶ οὐ μόνον τοὺς ὑποτεταγμένους ἡμῖν ζητοῦσιν κακοποιεῖν, τὸν τε κόρον οὐ δυνάμενοι φέρειν καὶ τοῖς ἑαυτῶν εὐεργέταις ἐπιχειροῦσιν μηχανᾶσθαι. The plurals πολλοί/τοῖς ἑαυτῶν and εὐεργετοῦντες/εὐεργέται refer allusively to Haman and King Artaxerxes, respectively. In the same sentence, the king also uses the plural of majesty (ἡμῖν) to refer to himself. On the allusive plural, see Smyth, *Grammar*, 270–71 [§ 1007].

person plural (“We also notify you that...”), which apparently encompasses himself and his seven counsellors.

The Greek version of this document in 1 Esdras (8:9–24) is written in the first person singular (8:10: ἐγὼ κρίνας προσέταξα; 8:19: καὶ ἐγὼ δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς Ἀρταξέρξης προσέταξα), with a single instance of illeism (8:21: ἔνεκεν τοῦ μὴ γενέσθαι ὀργὴν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ βασιλέως καὶ τῶν υἱῶν). When referring to himself and his counsellors, the king does not use an associative plural (8:11: καθάπερ δέδοκται ἐμοί τε καὶ τοῖς ἑπτὰ φίλοις συμβουλευταῖς; 8:13: ἃ ἡυξάμην ἐγὼ τε καὶ οἱ φίλοι). However, at 8:10, he uses the first-person plural possessive pronoun (ἐν τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ βασιλείᾳ, “in our kingdom”), which is not prompted by the Aramaic text in Ezra 7:13 (“in my kingdom”). The same plural pronoun occurs in the phrase ἐν τῷ ἡμετέρῳ οἴκῳ, which we encountered in the letter of King Xerxes to Pausanias in Thucydides (*Hist.* 1.129.3).<sup>56</sup> It can be interpreted either as a plural of majesty or, more likely, as an associative, “dynastic” plural (“the kingdom of me and my sons” [cf. 1 Esd 8:21]).

The parallel version in 2 Esdras (7:12–26) is also written in the first person singular (7:13: ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ ἐτέθη γνώμη ... ἐν βασιλείᾳ μου; 7:21: καὶ ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ, ἐγὼ Ἀρθασασθὰ βασιλεὺς, ἔθηκα γνώμην), with occasional shifts to illeism (7:14: ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ βασιλέως καὶ τῶν ἑπτὰ συμβούλων; 7:15: ὁ ὁ βασιλεὺς καὶ οἱ σύμβουλοι ἡκουσίσθησαν τῷ θεῷ τοῦ Ἰσραήλ; 7:23: μήποτε γένηται ὀργὴ ἐπὶ τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ βασιλέως καὶ τῶν υἱῶν αὐτοῦ).

#### 4.2.6 Persian royal documents in Josephus

In his *Jewish Antiquities*, Josephus rewrites the Persian royal documents quoted in Ezra on the basis of a Greek version that seems to have been similar, albeit not identical, to 1 Esdras.<sup>57</sup> More specifically, he quotes in *oratio recta* the following documents: (a) a written proclamation sent by King Cyrus to all Asia (*A.J.* 11.3–4; cf. 1 Esd 2:3–4), (b) a letter sent by King Cyrus to the satraps of Syria (*A.J.* 11.12–17; cf. 1 Esd 6:23–33), (c) a letter from King Cambyses to Rathymos [=Rehum] et al. (*A.J.* 11.26–28; cf. 1 Esd 2:22–24, where the sender of the letter is King Artaxerxes), (d) a “covering letter” from King Darius to Sisines et al. (*A.J.* 11.104; cf. 1 Esd 6:26), (e) a letter from King Darius to the

<sup>56</sup> See 4.2.2 above. The corresponding verse in 2 Esd 7:13 has a singular possessive pronoun: ἐν βασιλείᾳ μου, “in my kingdom”; this phrase occurs in other royal letters in the Septuagint: LXX Dan 6:[27]26 (King Darius the Mede): οἱ ὄντες ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ μου; 1 Macc 10:34 (King Demetrius I): τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ μου; 1 Macc 15:4 (King Antiochus VII): ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ μου.

<sup>57</sup> See Doering, *Letters*, 280–85.

eparchs and the council of Samaria (A.J. 11.118–119; no counterpart in 1 Esdras or Ezra), and (f) a letter from King Xerxes to Ezra for the satraps of Syria (A.J. 11.123–130; cf. 1 Esd 8:9–24, where the sender of the letter is King Artaxerxes).

Josephus has the authors of these letters consistently use the first person singular, with two exceptions: in (c), the plural verb *ἔγνωμεν* (A.J. 11.27) occurs, which has no counterpart in 1 Esd 2:22–24 but is similar to the plural verbs *ἐπεσκεψάμεθα* καὶ *εὔρομεν* in 2 Esd 4:19, and in (f), the phrase *ἐν τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ βασιλείᾳ* (A.J. 11.123) occurs, which is taken verbatim from 1 Esd 8:10 and can be interpreted as an associative, “dynastic” plural. Josephus does not reproduce the illeism occurring in his *Vorlage*, converting the king’s third-person self-reference in 1 Esd 8:21 (*ἔνεκεν τοῦ μὴ γενέσθαι ὀργὴν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ βασιλέως καὶ τῶν υἱῶν*) to a first-person one (A.J. 11.127: *ὅπως δὲ μηδεμίαν ὀργὴν ἐπ’ ἐμὲ λάβῃ τὸ θεῖον ἢ τοὺς ἐμοὺς ἐκγόνους*).

Josephus also paraphrases the two letters of King Artaxerxes found in Additions B and E to Esther. In his version of the first letter (A.J. 11.216–219), he has the king predominantly use the first person singular, with three instances of plural: in A.J. 11.217, the phrase *τοῖς ἡμετέροις πράγμασι*, “our state affairs,” is taken from LXX Esth B:5, where *ἡμετέροις* is a plural of majesty, while in A.J. 11.219, the plural personal pronouns in the phrases *οἱ πανταχόθεν ἡμῖν πολέμιοι*, “our enemies on all sides,” and *ὅπως ... μετ’ εἰρήνης ἡμῖν τὸν βίον διάγειν παρέχωσι*, “so that they [sc. the Jews] let us lead our lives in peace,” are inclusive, encompassing the king and the subjects of his kingdom. In the second letter of Artaxerxes (A.J. 11.273–283), Josephus has the king alternate between the first person singular and the plural of majesty, even within the same sentence: A.J. 11.277: *Ἀμάνης ... ἐπιξενωθεὶς ἡμῖν ἀπέλαυσε τῆς πρὸς ἅπαντας χρηστότητος ἐπὶ τοσοῦτον ὥς πατέρα μου τὸ λοιπὸν προσαγορεύεσθαι καὶ προσκυνούμενον διατελεῖν καὶ μεθ’ ἡμᾶς τὰ δεύτερα τῆς βασιλικῆς παρὰ πάντων τιμῆς ἀποφέρεισθαι*; 11.278: *τὸν εὐεργέτην μου καὶ σωτῆρα Μαρδοχαῖον καὶ τὴν κοινωνὸν ἡμῖν τοῦ τε βίου καὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς Ἑσθῆρα*; 11.279: *ὃς ἐμοί τε καὶ τοῖς προγόνοις ἡμῶν τὴν βασιλείαν διεφύλαξεν*). The mixture of the first person singular and the plural of majesty in the second letter of Artaxerxes is not prompted by Josephus’ *Vorlage*, namely, Addition E to Esther, which is uniformly written in the plural of majesty. Moreover, it does not seem to follow a discernible pattern. For instance, when referring to Haman’s second place in the government, Josephus uses the singular in the king’s first letter (A.J. 11.217: *μετ’ ἐμοῦ δευτέρου*) and the plural of majesty in the king’s second letter (A.J. 11.277: *μεθ’ ἡμᾶς τὰ δεύτερα τῆς βασιλικῆς ... τιμῆς ἀποφέρεισθαι*).

#### 4.2.7 Assessment of the evidence from the Persian royal letters

The preceding survey of around forty fictitious or questionably authentic Persian royal epistolary texts, as found in Greek literary and documentary sources, provides a more nuanced understanding of the use of the first person singular and plural than that suggested by Bickerman. Less than half of these texts are written entirely in the first person singular. Two are written in the third person singular (Herodotus, *Hist.* 3.128). The rest feature various types of person and self-reference variation, such as: (a) first person singular + inclusive plural (e.g., the letter of Cyrus the Elder in Xenophon, *Cyr.* 4.5.27–33); (b) first person singular + plural of majesty (e.g., the third letter of Darius III to Alexander in Ps.-Callisthenes, *Hist. Alex.* 2.10.6–8); (c) first person singular + illeism (e.g., the letter of Artaxerxes II in Xenophon, *Hell.* 5.1.31, and the first of the two letters of Darius I in the pseudo-Heraclitean epistolary corpus; (d) first person singular + inclusive plural + illeism (e.g., the second letter of Darius to Alexander in Ps.-Callisthenes, *Hist. Alex.* 1.40.2–5); (e) first person singular + plural of majesty + illeism (e.g., the letter of Darius III in *P.Hamb.* II 129, cols. III, 57–IV, 78).

Regarding the use of the first person plural, it is important to note that distinguishing between the inclusive/associative and the exclusive royal “we” can be difficult. The epistolary texts that exhibit unambiguous instances of the latter plural are few. The switch from the first person singular to the plural of majesty that is featured in Addition B to Esther is elsewhere best exemplified in the Darius letters included in or related to the *Alexander Romance*, e.g., in Ps.-Callisthenes, *Hist. Alex.* 2.10.6–8/*PSI* XII 1285, col. IV, 17–41. In the Persian royal documents found in the Septuagint there is no unambiguous instance of the plural of majesty. Thus, it is unlikely that the aforementioned switch featured in the letter of Artaxerxes in Addition B to Esther was prompted by a similar switch in any of the royal Persian letters found in the Septuagint. Moreover, none of the epistolary texts that I examined is entirely written in the plural of majesty, as is the case with Addition E to Esther. This suggests that the author of Addition E did not model this epistolary feature on any fictitious Persian royal letter.



### 4.3 The letters of Alexander

According to Gauger, the initiator of the plural of majesty in Hellenistic royal correspondence was Alexander III of Macedon, who introduced this feature in his letter-writing in the last year of his life. Gauger sees no identifiable precedents, Oriental/Persian or other, for this innovation and assumes that Alexander conceived of it as another means of enhancing his royal stature. Not only did he use it himself, but he also allowed members of his closest circle, such as Hephaestion, to use it.<sup>58</sup> Unfortunately, our understanding of Alexander's epistolary style and its evolution is limited due to the scarce evidence available from epigraphic and literary sources.

The epigraphic evidence includes two letters to the Chians and a decree to Priene.<sup>59</sup> The first letter to the Chians (Syll.<sup>3</sup> 283), dating to 334 or 332 BCE, has been preserved in its entirety. It seems to have been initially composed in the first person singular and subsequently converted into indirect speech, as evidenced, for example, by the two third-person references to Alexander (l. 7: πρὸς Ἀλέξανδρον; ll. 17–18: πα<ρ> | Ἀλε[ξ]άνδρου τοῦ βασιλέως), which, in the original letter, must have been phrased in the first person singular (πρὸς ἐμέ; παρ' ἐμοῦ). However, two first-person plural pronouns from the original text remained unchanged in the engraved document: ll. 9–10: μέχρι ἂν καὶ τὸ ἄλλο ναυτικὸν τὸ τῶν Ἑλλήνων μεθ' ἡμῶν συμπληῖ; ll. 16–17: κρίνεσθαι περὶ τοῦτο αὐτοὺς πα[ρ'] ἡμῖν. Scholars have interpreted these plurals as referring to the Chians, to Alexander and the Macedonian admiral Alcimachus or Hegelochus, to Alexander himself (as plurals of majesty), or, more likely, to Alexander and his Macedonian forces and officials.<sup>60</sup> The inscription preserving Alexander's second letter to the Chians, which dates to around 330 BCE, is mutilated. Its surviving

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<sup>58</sup> See Gauger, *Authentizität*, 131–32. Already in Homer, Achilles, Alexander's role model, uses the plural when referring to himself in *Il.* 22.393: ἡράμεθα μέγα κῦδος ἐπέφρομεν Ἑκτορα δῖον, "we have won us great glory; we have slain noble Hector" (trans. Murray-Wyatt, LCL). This kind of plural may have evolved from an inclusive plural commonly used by military leaders when referring to activities that they have undertaken together with their men. See Wackernagel, *Lectures*, 134–35.

<sup>59</sup> Typologically speaking, these documents are not easily classifiable. The first letter to the Chians (Syll.<sup>3</sup> 283), in the form in which it has reached us, may be a *diagramma* or a *diapraphe*. See Bickerman, "Lettre," 25–26 with n. 5, and Bencivenni, *Progetti*, 15–38. The Priene document has been variously designated as "edict," "letter," and *diagramma*; see Sherwin-White, "Edict," 82.

<sup>60</sup> See Heisserer, *Alexander*, 88–91; Prandi, "Alessandro," 25–26. Bencivenni, *Progetti*, 27–28, argues that the original text written by Alexander was not a letter but a *diagramma*, in which he used both the first person plural to refer to himself and the Macedonians (ll. 10, 17) and a third-person self-reference (ll. 7, 18).

parts contain first-person singular verbs and pronouns.<sup>61</sup> The same holds for the fragmentary decree to Priene (334 BCE or later).<sup>62</sup>

Diodorus Siculus, Plutarch, and Arrian quote in *oratio recta* three letters and ten excerpts from letters of Alexander, the authenticity and verbal accuracy of which have been variously assessed by modern scholars.<sup>63</sup> Of these, seven are written in the first person singular,<sup>64</sup> two in the plural of majesty,<sup>65</sup> three mix first person singular and first person plural,<sup>66</sup> and one excerpt of a letter is couched in the imperative and contains no first-person verbs or pronouns.<sup>67</sup> The longest fully quoted letter is the one addressed to King Darius III, as transmitted by Arrian (*Anab.* 2.14.4–9). Throughout this letter, Alexander employs the first person singular, except for two inclusive plural pronouns (ἡμᾶς/ἡμεῖς, referring to the Macedonians). In an excerpt from a letter of Alexander to his tutor Leonidas, quoted by Plutarch in his *Life of Alexander* (25.8), the Macedonian king uses the plural of majesty (ἀπεστάλκαμέν σοι λιβανωτὸν ... ὅπως παύσῃ πρὸς τοὺς θεοὺς μικρολογούμενος). The same excerpt is quoted in the possibly spurious *Regum et imperatorum apophthegmata* (179E), where, however, the king switches from the first person singular to a plural that is either inclusive or majestic (ἀπέσταλκά σοι τάλαντα λιβανωτοῦ ... ἵνα μηκέτι μικρολογῇ πρὸς τοὺς θεοὺς, εἰδὼς ὅτι καὶ τῆς ἀρωματοφόρου κρατοῦμεν). A brief letter that Alexander addresses to Aristotle, fully quoted by Plutarch, features a shift from the plural of majesty to the first person singular (*Alex.* 7.7: τίνι γὰρ δὴ διοίσομεν ἡμεῖς τῶν ἄλλων ... καθ' οὗς ἐπαιδεύθημεν λόγους ... ἐγὼ δὲ βουλοίμην ἄν). Alexander consistently uses the plural of majesty in the brief letter concerning the return of exiles to Greek cities (324 BCE), as quoted in full by Diodorus Siculus (*Bibl.* 18.8.40). It is worth noting that the same Diodorus preserves a letter of Hephaestion to Olympias (*Bibl.* 17.114.3), in which

<sup>61</sup> See SEG 35-925, l. 13: ἐμός τε φίλος; ll. 28-30: χαρ[ιζοῖσ]θ[ε] καὶ ἐ[μ]οὶ καὶ εἵ τ[ι] | ἐμοῦ δέοισθ[ε] ἔτι | προ[θυμ]ότερον ἂν ὑμῖν ὑπηρετοίην.

<sup>62</sup> See *I.Priene B - M* 1, ll. 10-11: χώραγ | [γ]ινώσκω ἐμὴν εἶναι; l. 14: ἀφίημι. Sherwin-White, "Edict," 84 with n. 120, following Heisserer's reading [-] δ' ἡμᾶ[ς] [-] at line 21, identifies a shift in this document between the first person singular and the royal "we." However, upon re-examination of the stone, Crowther, "I. Priene 8," 203 with n. 32, proposed the reading [-] ἐγκλημα[-], which was subsequently adopted in *I.Priene B - M* 1.

<sup>63</sup> See Pearson, "Diary," 443-50; Monti, "Lettere." Here, I cite only the letters of Alexander transmitted through Greek sources.

<sup>64</sup> Plutarch, *Alex.* 22.5; 28.2; 55.7; *Alex. fort.* 333A; 341C; *Amat.* 760C; Arrian, *Anab.* 7.23.8.

<sup>65</sup> Plutarch, *Alex.* 25.8; Diodorus Siculus, *Bibl.* 18.8.4.

<sup>66</sup> Plutarch, *Alex.* 7.7 (the same letter is quoted in Greek in Gellius, *Noct. Att.* 20.5.11); [*Reg. imp. apophth.*] 179E; Arrian, *Anab.* 2.14.4-9.

<sup>67</sup> Plutarch, *Alex.* 41.4.

Alexander's general also uses the plural of majesty, presumably under the influence of the epistolary style of his king.<sup>68</sup>

The previously discussed *Alexander Romance* (MS A)<sup>69</sup> contains twenty documents, quoted in *oratio recta*, which are attributed to Alexander: eighteen letters,<sup>70</sup> a decree to the Persians (*Hist. Alex.* 2.21.3–22), and the king's last will in the form of a letter to the Rhodians (*Hist. Alex.* 3.33.2–25). Also related to the *Alexander Romance* are two letters from Alexander to Darius III, preserved in papyrus PSI XII 1285 from the first half of the second century CE.<sup>71</sup> All these documents are considered apocryphal.<sup>72</sup> In none of them does Alexander exclusively employ the plural of majesty. In only five does he write in the first person singular;<sup>73</sup> in the rest, he mixes first person singular and plural. In some of the latter letters, the first person plural is clearly inclusive, referring to Alexander and another person, or to Alexander and the Macedonians/Greeks, or to Alexander and his army,<sup>74</sup> while in others it is a plural of majesty.<sup>75</sup> Distinguishing between the inclusive plural and the plural of majesty in these letters is not always easy. The *Wunderbriefe* to Aristotle and to Olympias combine first person singular, inclusive plural, and a few instances of the plural of majesty,<sup>76</sup> while Alexander's last will, his decree to the Persians, and a couple of other letters combine first person singular, plural of majesty and/or inclusive plural, and illeistic

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<sup>68</sup> See Gauger, *Authentizität*, 131–32.

<sup>69</sup> See 4.2.4 above.

<sup>70</sup> Ps.-Callisthenes, *Hist. Alex.* 1.35.5; 1.38.2–7; 1.42.3; 2.1.8–11; 2.2.3–4; 2.5.3–11; 2.6.3–4; 2.10.9–10; 2.11.2–3; 2.22.2–6; 2.22.12; 2.22.14–16; 3.2.8–11; 3.17; 3.18.3–4; 3.25.3–4; 3.26.1–4; 3.27.2–3.28.12.

<sup>71</sup> See PSI XII 1285, col. IV, 42–48, which corresponds to Ps.-Callisthenes, *Hist. Alex.* 2.10.9–10; the second letter from Alexander to Darius (PSI XII 1285, cols. III, 8–IV, 16) has no counterpart in the *Alexander Romance*.

<sup>72</sup> See Nawotka, *Romance*, 117, 119, 144, 146, 167, 185, 188, 201, 244–45.

<sup>73</sup> Ps.-Callisthenes, *Hist. Alex.* 1.35.5 (to the Tyrians); 2.1.8–11 (to the Athenians); 2.6.3–4 (to the Lacedaemonians); 2.11.2–3 (to the satraps); 2.22.12 (to Rhodogune and Stateira).

<sup>74</sup> See, e.g., Ps.-Callisthenes, *Hist. Alex.* 2.22.14 (to Rhoxane): γράφων Ὀλυμπίαδι τῇ μητρί μου περὶ ἄλλων τινῶν ἀνηκόντων ἡμῖν (sc. to me and my mother); 3.2.8–9 (to King Porus): ἔτι προθυμότερους ἡμᾶς ἐποίησας εἰς μάχην σοι ὀτρυνθῆναι, λέγων τὴν Ἑλλάδα μηδὲν ἄξιον ἔχειν τῆς Ἰνδῶν χώρας ... ἐπεὶ οὖν οἱ Ἕλληνες ταῦτα οὐκ ἔχομεν ... ἐπιθυμοῦντες τῶν κρειττόνων οἱ Ἕλληνες ἤλθομεν ἀφ' ὧμων αὐτὰ κεκτησθαι.

<sup>75</sup> See, e.g., Ps.-Callisthenes, *Hist. Alex.* 2.10.10 (to Darius): οὐδὲ ἐλπίζων ἐλευσεσθαί σε ἐκολάκευσα, ἵνα παραγενόμενος εὐχαριστήσης ἡμῖν.

<sup>76</sup> See, e.g., Ps.-Callisthenes, *Hist. Alex.* 3.17.3, 25 (to Aristotle): ὁρμήσαντός μου σὺν ὀλίγοις ἐπὶ τὸ προειρημένον [καὶ] καταμαθόντες εὗρομεν ... καὶ πυνθανομένου μου περὶ τῶν τόπων ἐσήμαναν ἡμῖν νῆσον, ἣν πάντες ἐωρῶμεν ... περὶ ᾧ ἡμῖν γέγραπται; 3.27.2, 5, 6; 3.28.5 (to Olympias): ὑπὲρ μὲν τῶν ἐν ἀρχῇ κατασταθέντων ἡμῖν ἕως τῶν κατὰ τὴν Ἀσίαν πραγμάτων πέπεισμαί σε εἰδέναι ἐκ τῶν παρ' ἡμῶν γραφέντων ... ἐντεῦθεν δὲ ἀναζευγνύω ... ἐβαδίζομεν δὲ ... εἴτα εὗραμεν σκότος ἔδοξε δέ μοι πάλιν θῆσαι τῷ Ἠλίῳ.

self-reference.<sup>77</sup> The same is the case with the letter of Alexander to Darius in *PSI XII* 1285, cols. III, 8–IV, 16, which has no counterpart in the *Alexander Romance*.<sup>78</sup> In all these letters, the alternation between first-person singular and first-person plural self-reference does not follow any discernible pattern; it appears to be purely arbitrary.

## 4.4 The letters of the Diadochi

In Welles' *Royal Correspondence in the Hellenistic Period*, we find eight letters issued by three of Alexander's successors: four by Antigonos I, two by Seleucus I, and two by Lysimachus. The long letter that Antigonos I addressed to the city of Scepsis in 311 BCE (Welles, *RC* no. 1) is written in the plural, but is interspersed with three singular verb and personal pronoun forms (l. 25: οἶμαι; l. 65: καλῶς δὴ μοι δοκεῖ ἔχειν; ll. 69–70: μοι | ἐδόκει). According to Welles, these singular forms are meant to bring into relief the king's personal opinion, whereas the plural indicates that the king speaks as the representative of the state.<sup>79</sup> However, the alternation between singular and plural forms of the same doxastic verb, οἶμαι (ll. 14–15: ἀναγ|[κ]αῖον ὤμεθα εἶναι; l. 22: ὤμεθα δεῖν; ll. 24–25: φανε|ρὸν οἶμαι ἔσεσθαι; l. 45: ὤμεθα καλῶς ἔχειν), seems rather arbitrary. The fragmentary letter of the same king to Eresus (Welles, *RC* no. 2;

<sup>77</sup> See Ps.-Callisthenes, *Hist. Alex.* 2.5.6, 8, 10 (to the Athenians): δίκαια τὰ ἀντιμίσθια ἀπελάβομεν παρ' ὑμῶν, ἀνθ' ὧν ἡμεῖς (sc. the Macedonians) ὑμῖν ἐποιήσαμεν ... Ἀλέξανδρον μέμφεσθε ἔνεκα Στασαγόρα στρατηγοῦ ἀδικήσαντός με καὶ ὑμᾶς ... ἀποδεχόμεθα δὲ τὴν τῶν ῥητόρων πρὸς ὑμᾶς συνηγορίαν; 3.33.3, 4, 6, 9, 10, 16, 19, 23, 24 (last will): ἡμεῖς τὰς πρὸς Ἡρακλέους τοῦ προγόνου ἡμῶν στήλας ὀρισθείσας <ὑπερβαλόντες> ... ἐκρίναμεν ... ἐγνώκαμεν ... ἐγράψαμεν ... συντετάχαμεν ... συγχωροῦμεν ... ἐντετάλαμεθα ... πέπεισμαι ... δεδείχαμεν ... προστάσσω ... βούλομαι ... καταλείπω ... ἀποδεικνύει βασιλεὺς Ἀλέξανδρος ... δίδωσι ... ἀναθέτω; 2.21.4, 14, 19 (decree to the Persians): γινώσκετε οὖν με καθεστακέναι σατράπας εἰς ὑμᾶς ... ἵνα μηδὲ εἰδῆτε ἕτερον βασιλέα εἰ μὴ Ἀλέξανδρον νεώτερον ... ἐὰν πολῖτις ἢ ἡμετέρα ... οἱ ἡμέτεροι Ἀλεξανδρεῖς.

<sup>78</sup> *PSI XII* 1285 col. III, ll. 28–29: τοὺς προσκυνήσαντας ἡμᾶ[ς] εὐεργέτησα, τοὺς δ' ἀν<τι>τείνοντας ἡμυνόμεν; ll. 33–37: νῦν με βασ[ιλέ]α προσ<ο>νομάζεις καὶ ἐρωτᾷς ἅπει[ρο]ν χρ[υσο]ν ἡμεῖν διδούς, ἵνα, ὅταν ἀπο[δέξω]μαι, ἐμὲ ληστὴν προσονομάζης; ll. 43–45: εἰ δὲ βούλει μητέρα κ[αὶ] τέκνα λαβεῖν, ἐλθὼν σύντυχέ μοι; col. IV, ll. 4–6: εἰ δὲ οὐ βούλει ἡμεῖν [συν]τυγχάνειν ... γινώσκεις σε θέλω ὅ[τι] ...; ll. 12–15: εἰ δὲ βουλευθείης ἔρχεσθαι πρὸς ἡμᾶς, δίδωμί σοι δεξιὰν ἐγὼ μὴ ἀδικήσῃν σε ... προπέμψω δέ σε ὡς Ἀλεξάνδρῳ πρέπον.

<sup>79</sup> Welles, *Correspondence*, 10. Cf. Zilliacus, *Selbstgefühl*, 38: “In der Regel gebraucht er [sc. Antigonos I] einen klaren Pluralis maiestatis, und zwar immer, wenn er die Autorität seiner königlichen Machtstellung bekundet. In solchen Fällen jedoch, wo er eine rein persönliche Meinung oder Stellungnahme vertritt, genügt ihm der Singular. Die Numeri wechseln in einem und demselben Satze ... Von strikter logischer Konsequenz kann aber keine Rede sein.” See also Berge, *Faiblesse*, 130 n. 208.

ca. 306 BCE) and his two letters to Teos (Welles, *RC* nos. 3 and 4; ca. 303 BCE) are written in the plural, as are the letters of Lysimachus to Priene and to Samos (Welles, *RC* nos. 6 and 7; ca. 285 and 283/282 BCE, respectively). The letter of Seleucus I to Miletus (Welles, *RC* no. 5; 288/287 BCE) is written in the plural (l. 2: ἀφεστάλκαμεν; ll. 10–11: ὑγιαίνοντων ἡμῶν καὶ εὐτυχούντων; 15: συντετάχαμεν), except for two first-person singular verbs (ll. 11–12: ὡς ἐγὼ βούλομαι; l. 18: ὑπογέγραφα). Apropos of the letter of Seleucus I, Welles again remarks that “although the writer uses the plural of himself in ll. 2, 10, and 15, he uses the singular here [sc. ll. 11–12] and below in l. 18. As Laqueur observed, this would never have been done by a later Seleucid. The distinction observed here is that between the king as an individual and as the representative of a state.”<sup>80</sup> However, this distinction is not entirely tenable, as the king’s reference to his personal good health and fortune is couched in the plural (ὑγιαίνοντων ἡμῶν καὶ εὐτυχούντων), whereas the verbs denoting official acts of the king alternate between the plural (ἀφεστάλκαμεν, συντετάχαμεν) and the singular (ὑπογέγραφα).<sup>81</sup> Moreover, it can be argued that the plurals in ll. 2, 10–11, and 15 are inclusive, referring not only to Seleucus but also to his son and co-regent Antiochus. Although the latter is not mentioned in the letter’s prescript, the note preceding the letter on the stele on which it was inscribed states that the offerings listed in the letter were dedicated by both “kings” (ll. 7–9: τάδε ἀνέθηκαν βασιλεῖς Σέλευκος καὶ Ἀντίοχος τὰ ἐν τῇ ἐπιστολῇ γεγραμμένα).<sup>82</sup> The plurals in the letter that Seleucus I and Antiochus jointly address to Sopatros (Welles, *RC* no. 9; 281 BCE) are, of course, unquestionably associative.

<sup>80</sup> Welles, *Correspondence*, 38; cf. Zilliacus, *Selbstgefühl*, 39.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. the comment made by Welles, *Correspondence*, 124, apropos of the letter of the Bithynian king Ziaelas (Welles, *RC* no. 25): “Up to the last phrase the king has used only the plural. Then with an emphatic collocation he shifts to the singular, ἡβουλόμεθα ἐντέταλμαι. The use is parallel to that of the Attalids. Hitherto the king has spoken as a ruler, now he speaks as an individual.” It is hard to see how the king, by using the singular verb of command ἐντέταλμαι, “I have ordered,” speaks as an individual rather than as a ruler.

<sup>82</sup> See Guarducci, *Epigrafia*, 113, and Holton, “Ideology,” 112.

## 4.5 Letters of Hellenistic kings

### 4.5.1 Antigonid royal letters

The extant letters of the Antigonid kings are written in the first person singular, with only rare instances of first person plural verbs and pronouns.<sup>83</sup> “Macedonian kings or their representatives, contrary to the Seleucid ones, practically never use the ‘pluriel de majesté’, the one and only exception being Antigonus Gonatas’ letter to Agasikles,” states Hatzopoulos.<sup>84</sup> In the last-mentioned letter (*SEG* 48-783; ca. 277–239 BCE), the plural on l. 15 (τὴν | παρ’ ἡμῶν ἐπι[στο]|λήν) is undoubtedly a plural of majesty. Since no other letters from Antigonus Gonatas have survived, we are not in the position to know if this king used the plural in his letters on other occasions.<sup>85</sup> Plurals crop up, though, in other Antigonid letters. The letter of King Antigonus Doson to Megalocles (*SEG* 60-585; 222 BCE) is written in the singular (l. 3: ἐφρόντιζον; l. 4: κρίνων; l. 8: ἐμέ; ll. 9–10: νομίζω ... ἐμαυτῶ; l. 16: πέπομφα; l. 20: αἴσθωμαι; l. 22: ἐπιτρέψω ... ζητήσω; l. 31: γέγραφα), except for a plural personal pronoun on l. 26: ἄς [sc. δωρεὰς] πρότερον εἶχεν παρ’ ἡμῶν ὁ Νίκαρχος. Tziafalias and Helly explain this plural by positing that the person named here, the otherwise unknown Nicarchus, possibly one of the king’s *philoï*, had served under at least two kings, Antigonus Doson and his predecessor Demetrius II, and received grants from both of them. Thus, the phrase παρ’ ἡμῶν is “l’expression et l’affirmation d’une continuité dynastique.”<sup>86</sup> While this conjecture is

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<sup>83</sup> I have examined the following documents: (a) a letter of Demetrius I Poliorcetes (*SEG* 56-703 [Dion; 291 BCE]; French translation by Hatzopoulos of the unpublished Greek inscription); (b) two copies of a letter from Antigonus II Gonatas to Agasicles (*SEG* 48-783 [Dion; ca. 277–239 BCE] and 51-796 [Apollonia (Mygdonia); ca. 277–239 BCE]); (c) four letters of Demetrius II (*SEG* 43-379 [Beroia; 248/247 BCE] and 60-605 [Pythion; ca. 231–229 BCE]); (d) four letters of Antigonus III Doson (*SEG* 46-729 [Beroia; 223 ? BCE], 60-585 [Azoros; 222 BCE], 60-586 [Azoros; 222/221 BCE]); (e) thirteen letters of Philip V of Macedon (ten letters cited in Hatzopoulos, “Vies,” 107–15, plus Philip V’s letter to the Athenians of Hephaistia on Lemnos [*SEG* 12-399; ca. 200 BCE] and the very fragmentary letters cited in *SEG* 48-818 [Pella; ca. 221–197 BCE] and in Hatzopoulos, *Institutions II*, [no. 18] 42 [221–179 BCE]); (f) a letter that has been ascribed to either Philip II or Philip V (*SEG* 45-764 [Oleveni; 345 or 207/206 BCE]); (g) the fragment of a circular letter ascribed to Perseus (Hatzopoulos, *Institutions II*, [no. 19] 43). On the letters of the Antigonid kings, see Hatzopoulos, *Macédoine*, 84–92, and id., “Documents”; Mari, “Powers,” and ead., “Attività.”

<sup>84</sup> Hatzopoulos, “Documents,” 51; cf. Mari, “Powers,” 130; ead., “Attività,” 290 n. 24.

<sup>85</sup> Rigsby, *Asylia* [no. 10], 118, considers the possibility that a fragmentary royal letter to Cos, which Welles, *RC* no. 27, assigns to Ptolemy III, may have been written by Antigonus Gonatas; cf. Mari, “Powers,” 129 n. 31. This letter mixes singular and plural.

<sup>86</sup> Tziafalias and Helly, “Inscriptions,” 82, 102.

plausible, it does not preclude the possibility that the plural παρ' ἡμῶν is a plural of majesty, as it is in the aforementioned letter of Gonatas.

In the thirteen letters of Philip V that have come down to us either in their entirety or as fragments, the king uses the first person singular, except in three instances where he employs the first person plural: (a) on l. 6 of the first of his two letters to the citizens of Larisa (Syll.<sup>3</sup> 543 [=IG IX,2 517]; 217 BCE): ἕως ἂν οὖν καὶ ἐτέ|ρους ἐπινοήσωμεν ἀξίους; apropos of the plural ἐπινοήσωμεν, Hatzopoulos argues that it is not a plural of majesty and that the king uses it to attenuate the royal “I” and include the Lariseans in his reflection;<sup>87</sup> (b) on l. 3 of Philip’s letter to the Nisyreans (Syll.<sup>3</sup> 572 [=IG XII,3 91]; ca. 201 BCE): ἀφέσταλκα Καλλίαν πρὸς | ὑμᾶς, ὄντα καὶ ἡμῖν συνήθη καὶ ὑ|μέτερον πολίτην; Hatzopoulos argues that the plural ἡμῖν “has probably nothing to do with the ‘pluriel de majesté’, since the rest of the letter is in the first person singular”;<sup>88</sup> (c) on l. 16 of the king’s letter to the Athenians of Hephaistia on Lemnos (SEG 12-399; 202–197 BCE): ἦν ἔχω εὐσέβεια[ν πρὸς] | τοὺς κρείσσονας καὶ ὑ|περά|νω ἡμῶν θεοὺς Ἄγ[ακας]; ἡμῶν here is an inclusive plural denoting “all of us mortals.” Although Hatzopoulos’ argument concerning (a) is absolutely plausible, his argument concerning (b) is less convincing. As we will see in the following sections, the intermixing of first-person singular and plural forms is not uncommon in the letters of other contemporary Hellenistic kings, and we have no reason to assume that the Antigonid kings were unique in not adhering to this practice. The plural personal pronoun used in Philip’s designation of Callias as ἡμῖν συνήθη, “a friend of ours,” can, thus, very well be a plural of majesty. The small number of surviving Antigonid royal letters, their often fragmentary nature, and the established notion that Antigonid kings always use the first person singular may lead us to overlook some instances of the plural of majesty that occur in these letters.

#### 4.5.2 Attalid royal letters

Of the thirty-eight letters of Attalid kings listed in Bencivenni’s “Catalogue of the Sources for the Seleukid and Attalid State Correspondences,”<sup>89</sup> dating from the 270s to the 130s BCE, ten are written in the first person singular,<sup>90</sup> eleven in the first person

<sup>87</sup> Hatzopoulos, “Vies,” 111 with n. 74.

<sup>88</sup> Hatzopoulos, “Documents,” 51 n. 24.

<sup>89</sup> See Bencivenni, “Words,” 169–71.

<sup>90</sup> A4 [=Welles, RC no. 24]; A5 [=Welles, RC no. 34]; A6 [=Welles, RC no. 48]; A7 [=Welles, RC no. 51]; A14 [=Virgilio, *Lancia*, no. 32]; A19a–c [=Welles, RC nos. 55–57]; A23 [=Welles, RC no. 62]; A28 [=Welles,

plural,<sup>91</sup> sixteen mix singular and plural,<sup>92</sup> and one, due to its fragmentary nature, does not reveal whether the king wrote in the singular or the plural.<sup>93</sup> While the first three kings of the dynasty, in the very few letters that we have from them, consistently use one style—Philetairus and Eumenes I the plural, Attalus I the singular—the subsequent kings use two or even three different styles. Eumenes II uses the singular in Bencivenni A6, A14, and A19a–c, the plural in A8, A9b, A12, and A13, and mixes singular and plural in A9a, A15, A16, A17, and A18a; Attalus II, first as a minister of his brother and later as a co-regent and king, uses the plural in A20, A21a, and A26, and both singular and plural in A19d–g, A21b, A22, A24, and A27a, while his nephew, Attalus III, uses the singular in A28 and mixes singular and plural in A27b–c.

The use of the plural in the letters of the mixed type often reflects the fact that the government of the Pergamene state was a “family affair,” as Welles has called it.<sup>94</sup> In a letter to his cousin Athenaeus (Bencivenni A27a [=Welles, RC no. 65]; 142 BCE), for instance, King Attalus II uses the plural of majesty to refer to himself individually (ll. 1–2: Σωσάνδρου | τοῦ συντρόφου ἡμῶν; ll. 7–8: τὰς μὲν θυσίας συ[v]τελεῖμ μεθ’ ἡμῶν; ll. 9–10: ἐκρίν[α|μ]εμ) and in relation to his long-dead brother, King Eumenes II (l. 5: προσφιλῶς δὲ τῷ τε ἀδελφῷ καὶ ἡμῖν); the “dynastic” plural to refer to the Attalid royal house (l. 18: ἡμῶν τοῦ οἴκου); the inclusive plural to associate his nephew, the future King Attalus III, with his decision-making (l. 14: κεκρίκαμεν γὰρ καὶ Ἄττ[α]λος ὁ τὰδελφοῦ υἱός; ll. 16–17: ὑπολαμβ[ά]νοντες; l. 19: περιτεθείκαμεν τῇ[v] τιμῇ); and the first person singular to present the decision to send the letter to his cousin as his own (l. 20: ἔκρινον ἐπιστεῖλαί σοι).

It is notable that the alternation between singular and plural in the Attalid royal letters most often does not reflect any distinction between the king as an individual and as the representative of the state. In the first of the three letters of the Toriaion dossier (Bencivenni A9a [=SEG 47-1745]; probably very soon after 188 BCE), for instance, King Eumenes II uses the plural of majesty when referring to the

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RC no. 69]. It is important to note that the fragmentary state of most Attalid royal letters makes it difficult, if not impossible, to determine whether the authors of the letters cited in this and the following footnote employed the singular and the plural, respectively, throughout.

<sup>91</sup> A1 [=SEG 50-1195]; A2 [=Welles, RC no. 16]; A3 [=Welles, RC no. 23]; A8 [=I.Kaunos 2]; A9b [=SEG 47-1745, ll. 39–48]; A11 [=Welles, RC no. 47]; A12 [=Welles, RC no. 49]; A13 [=Welles, RC no. 50]; A20 [=SEG 64-1296]; A21a [=Denkmäler Lykaonien 74, I]; A26 [=SEG 26-1239].

<sup>92</sup> A9a [=SEG 47-1745, ll. 2–38]; A15 [=Welles, RC no. 52]; A16 [=Welles, RC no. 53]; A17 [=SEG 57-1109]; A18a [=SEG 57-1150]; A19d–g [=Welles, RC nos. 58–61]; A21b [=Welles, RC no. 54]; A22 [=Denkmäler Lykaonien 75, III]; A24 [=SEG 44-1108]; A25 [=SEG 48-1532]; A27a–c [=Welles, RC nos. 65–67].

<sup>93</sup> A9c [=SEG 47-1745, ll. 49–51].

<sup>94</sup> See Welles, *Correspondence*, 268; cf. Berge, *Faiblesse*, 132 n. 213.



congratulations that he received on his military successes and his good health (ll. 4–6: ὅς ἐπέμψατε συνησθησομένους μὲν ἡμῖν ἐπὶ τῷ καταπεπραχότας πάντα παρεῖναι ὑγι|αίνοντας εἰς τὸν τόπον); a plural, which can be either majestic or associative, when referring to his government (ll. 8–9: δι’ ἣν εἰς τὰ ἡμέτερα πρά|γματα ἔχετε εὖνοιαν; l. 13: τὰ συμφέροντα ἡμῖν; ll. 24–25: διὰ τὴν εὖν[οι]αν ἣν ἔχετε πρὸς ἡμᾶς; l. 30: ἐναντίον τοῖς ἡμῖν συμφέρουσιν); the singular when referring to the expressions of gratitude extended to him by the people of the Toriaion (ll. 14–15: χάριτας γὰρ τὰς ἐμοὶ προσηκού|σας) and the favour bestowed upon them by him (l. 20: παρ’ ἐμοῦ δο[θ]εῖσα [χάρις]), as well as when presenting the rationale for his decision (l. 17: ἐγὼ δὲ ἐθεώρουμ); and a combination of singular and plural (majestic or associative) when pronouncing his decision (l. 26: συνχωρῶ; l. 29: ὅπως ἐπικρίνωμε[ν]; l. 31: δώσομεν τοὺς ἐπιτηδεῖους [νόμους]; ll. 34–35: αὐ|τὸς ἐν τῇ ἐτέραι ἐπιστολῇ καταρξά[μ]ενος π[ρ]οσ[τ]εφώνηκ[α]).<sup>95</sup> In the second letter of the dossier (Bencivenni A9b [=SEG 47-1745]), which was written and sent alongside the first, Eumenes II employs the plural of majesty throughout, applying it even to the verb συγχωρῶ, “to grant,” which he used in the singular in the preceding letter (l. 40: συνεχωρήκαμεν; l. 41: βουλόμεθα; l. 42: συναύξοντες ... διδομεν; ll. 47–48: [τὴν] | πρὸς ἡμᾶς εὖνοιαν).<sup>96</sup> A possible explanation for the consistency in number and person in the second letter, as opposed to the inconsistency in the first letter, could be that the king had the second letter composed by his chancery office, whereas he either dictated the first letter, or wrote it himself, or reworked a draft prepared by his chancery.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>95</sup> Jonnes and Riel, “Inscription,” 17, argue that “the plural forms in lines 4–6, 13, 25, 29, 31 do not necessarily have to refer to the king as the representative of the state but can encompass his brother Attalus and his other associates, too.” I find it unlikely that the participles καταπεπραχότας and ὑγι|αίνοντας in ll. 5–6 encompass the king’s brother, who—if the letter was written not long after 188 BCE—may not have yet assumed the functions that he later took on. According to Avram and Tsetskhladze, “Letter,” 161, in his capacity as a minister of Eumenes II, Attalus “had written official letters since as early as 185 B.C.” and “since 181/0 B.C. was involved in decisions at the highest level as well as in important missions.” The plural personal pronouns in the phrases τὰ συμφέροντα ἡμῖν (l. 13) and ἐναντίον τοῖς ἡμῖν συμφέρουσιν (l. 30) may refer to the king and his government. However, compare the singular pronoun in the synonymous phrase τῶν λυσιτελῶν ἐμοί (l. 16); it seems that the interests of the state coincide with those of the king. As for the plurals ἐπικρίνωμε[ν] and δώσομεν τοὺς ἐπιτηδεῖους [νόμους] in ll. 29 and 31, they can be interpreted as plurals of majesty on the basis of ll. 36–37, where the privileges bestowed upon the Toriaion—both present and, as can be inferred, future ones, such as the laws that the newly established polis might need—are said to emanate from the king: τηλικούτων τετευχότες παρ’ ἐμ[ο]ῦ τιμί[ω]ν.

<sup>96</sup> Cf. Bencivenni A18a [=SEG 57-1150; 165/164 BCE], where Eumenes II uses the verb συγχωρῶ in the singular in ll. 12 (συνεχώρησα) and 16 (συγχωρῶ) and in the plural in ll. 18–19 (συν[ε]χωρήσαμεν).

<sup>97</sup> On the personal tone exhibited in the first of the three letters included in the Toriaion dossier, as well as in other Attalid royal letters, see Virgilio, “Correspondance,” 109–11. For the difficulty in

### 4.5.3 Seleucid royal letters

Welles asserts that, with the exception of the first king of the dynasty, Seleucus I, who in his letter to Miletus (Bencivenni S1 [=Welles, RC no. 5]; 288/287 BCE) switches from the plural to the singular, and a late, unidentified Antiochus, who uses the singular in a memorandum from the royal journal attached to a letter to an official (S68 [=Welles, RC no. 70]; late second century BCE), the Seleucids consistently use the *pluralis maiestatis*.<sup>98</sup> Already before Welles, Laqueur had argued categorically that “Reges Syriae, ipsi de se commemorantes, semper numero plurali utuntur.”<sup>99</sup> These assertions have been challenged by Virgilio, who has pointed out that a few Seleucid royal letters that have come to light after the publication of Welles’ authoritative *Royal Correspondence in the Hellenistic Period* defy the rule of the “Seleucid plural.”<sup>100</sup>

The aforementioned “Catalogue” drawn up by Bencivenni contains sixty-five letters written by or ascribed to Seleucid kings, queens, and heirs to the throne,<sup>101</sup> which date from 288 to 109 BCE. Of the forty-nine letters that are substantially preserved and allow us to discern whether their respective authors employ the first person singular or plural,<sup>102</sup> forty are written in the first person plural,<sup>103</sup> five in the first person singular, and four mix singular and plural forms. Let us take a closer look at the nine latter letters:

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distinguishing between royal letters dictated or written by the kings themselves and those composed by their chancery secretaries, see Avram and Tsatskheladze, “Letter,” 159–60.

<sup>98</sup> Welles, *Correspondence*, 38, 137, 285.

<sup>99</sup> Laqueur, *Quaestiones*, 99; cf. *ibid.*, 103.

<sup>100</sup> See Virgilio, “Aspetti,” 402–4; *id.*, “Correspondance,” 119–22; *id.*, *Roi*, 75, 224–30.

<sup>101</sup> See Bencivenni, “Words,” 165–69. Apart from the letters written by Seleucid kings and their family members, this catalogue also includes letters written by Seleucid officials, which I have not considered here. Of the sixty-five royal letters listed in the catalogue, the very fragmentary S21, S22, S23 [=I.Mylasa 24, 25, 26], and S27 [=SEG 39-1286] are of “unknown sender”; of dubious Seleucid provenance are S45 [=Welles, RC no. 30], which has been attributed to Antiochus III or to a Ptolemy (IV?), S60 [=Welles, RC no. 64], which has been attributed to various kings (Antiochus III, Seleucus IV, Antiochus IV, Eumenes II, Mithridates VI), and S63 [=SEG 29-1516], which has been attributed to Antiochus III, or Eumenes II, or a royal official. I also note that some of the documents in the catalogue appear in doublets (S11, S12; S32, S33; S49c, e) or triplets (S55, S56, S57).

<sup>102</sup> Documents S22, S23, S25b, S27, S28, S29, S30, S31, S36, S37, S39, S48b, S49b, S59, S62, S67 are too fragmentary to provide clues about whether their authors wrote in the singular or the plural. I have not considered the parts of these documents that have been very conjecturally restored by various epigraphists.

<sup>103</sup> In one of these letters, S3 [=Welles, RC no. 9], the plural is inclusive because there are two senders named in its prescript: King Seleucus I and his son and co-regent Antiochus.

In her letter to Iasos (S51=*I.Iasos* 4; ca. 196 BCE), Queen Laodice III uses the first person singular (l. 4: ἀκούουσα; l. 11: προαιρουμένη δὴ καὶ ἐγώ; l. 15: γεγράφεικα; l. 28: πειράσομαι ... ἐπινοῶ; ll. 29–30: προ[[αίρου]μένη ... κατανοῶ), with a single shift to the “dynastic” plural when she refers to the royal house to which she belongs (l. 26: τὸν οἶκον ἡμῶν). In her very fragmentarily preserved letter to Teos (S48a=SEG 41-1005; 197/196 BCE), the phrase “I and my ‘brother’/husband [sc. Antiochus III]” (l. 9: ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ ἀδ[ελφός]) occurs, which must have been followed by a plural verb. In contrast, in her letter to Sardis (S25=SEG 39-1284; 213 BCE), written some fifteen to twenty years before the other two, she uses the plural of majesty throughout (ll. 13–15: ὑπὲρ τῆς τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ | ἡμῶν βασιλέως Ἀντιόχου καὶ τῆς ἡμετέρας καὶ τῶν παιδίων | σωτηρίας; ll. 16–17: ἀποδε[[δ]έγμεθα; ll. 17–18: ἐπαινοῦμεν | [καὶ πειρασό]μεθα). Moreover, a fragment of a letter which a queen Laodice (probably III) addresses to Colophon preserves a first-person singular pronoun (l. 7: περὶ ἐμοῦ).<sup>104</sup>

Laodice III’s and Antiochus III’s eldest son, Antiochus, uses the singular in a letter addressed to Magnesia-on-the-Maeander (S35=Welles, RC no. 32; 205 BCE). Laqueur attributes the use of the singular to the fifteen-year-old Antiochus junior’s status as a co-regent, drawing a parallel with a letter written by Marcus Aurelius to the Guild of Dionysus Briseus in 147 CE (*Syll.*<sup>3</sup> 851). At that time, Marcus held the title of Caesar and was invested with tribunician power but had not yet ascended to the position of emperor. Marcus concludes his letter not with the greeting εὐτυχεῖτε commonly used by emperors but with ἐρρωσθαι ὑμᾶς βούλομαι.<sup>105</sup> The same Antiochus, rather than his father Antiochus III,<sup>106</sup> uses the singular in a very fragmentary letter addressed to Teos, dating to ca. 196 BCE (S47a=SEG 41-1004, ll. 1–13; see l. 6: ἐμοί). The equally fragmentary letter that follows it consecutively on the same stone (S47b=SEG 41-1004, ll. 14–34; ca. 196 BCE) preserves two plural verbs (ll. 24–25: προσδεδέγμε[[θα]; l. 25: [ἐπαινο]ῦμεν), which are preceded by a reference to the royal person authoring the letter and his “sister”/wife (ll. 16–17: καὶ ἐμὲ καὶ τὴν ἀ[[δελφήν]). Piejko believes that both this letter and the one that precedes it were written by Antiochus III, who was here “compelled to employ the singular by the exigencies of the situation. It was so because he was speaking also for the queen, but wished to keep his own identity separate.”<sup>107</sup> Ma considers it likely that the second letter, like the one that precedes it,

<sup>104</sup> This letter is not included in Bencivenni’s catalogue; see Debord, “Colophon,” 14–17. The editor notes (p. 17) that the reading of the first two letters of the personal pronoun is uncertain.

<sup>105</sup> See Laqueur, *Quaestiones*, 101–2.

<sup>106</sup> See Ma, *Antiochos III*, 320–21.

<sup>107</sup> Piejko, “Antiochus III,” 56–57.

was written by Antiochus the son, who had married his sister Laodice in 196/195 BCE.<sup>108</sup>

Two other royal letters, in which the singular is employed, are of uncertain Seleucid provenance. Welles and Lenger consider S45 (=Welles, *RC* no. 30; *C.Ord.Ptol.* 84; *SEG* 61-1316), found at Soloi in Cilicia, to have been written by a Ptolemy (IV?), Ma attributes it to a Ptolemy or a Ptolemaic official, Virgilio has suggested Antiochus III as its author, while Käppel has argued that the letter may have been issued by an official rather than by a king.<sup>109</sup> The letter contains a single singular verb type, οἶμαι, on l. 10, which leads Welles to rule out its authorship by a Seleucid king because “no Seleucid king after Seleucus I speaks of himself in the singular until the last days of the dynasty, when it was strongly under Egyptian influence,” whereas in Egypt, “at least down to the time of Ptolemy IV, the kings used the singular freely.”<sup>110</sup> Apropos of this statement, Virgilio points out that Welles: (a) did not take into consideration the letter of Antiochus the Younger to Magnesia-on-the-Maeander (S35=Welles, *RC* no. 32), which is written in the singular; (b) did not know of the two letters of Antiochus III included in the Teos dossier (S47a-b=*SEG* 41-1004),<sup>111</sup> which were discovered after the publication of the *Royal Correspondence*; as we saw, the first letter uses the singular, while the second mixes singular and plural; (c) did not know of the letters of Queen Laodice, who uses now the singular, now the plural; and (d) did not consider the letters of Antiochus III to Zeuxis and to the *strategos* Ptolemy, son of Thraseas, as quoted by Josephus (see 4.5.4 below), which mix singular and plural, or the letters of the high Seleucid officials Olympichus, Philomelus, and Ptolemy, son of Thraseas, which use the singular.<sup>112</sup> Virgilio concludes that the singular οἶμαι in the letter found at Soloi can rightfully be considered to be one of those verbal expressions in the singular, like βούλομαι, συνεβούλευσα, θέλων, ἐπινοῶ, κατανοῶ, πυνθανόμενος, πέπεισμαι, οἶδα, ἔκρινα, etc., the use of which is well-documented in the Seleucid chancery. He further argues that Laqueur’s and Welles’ rule about the strict use of the *pluralis maiestatis* in this chancery is clearly outdated, as the use of the singular is not an isolated exception. Lastly, he conjectures that Antiochus III may have addressed the letter

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<sup>108</sup> Ma, *Antiochos III*, 320–21.

<sup>109</sup> See Welles, *Correspondence*, 137–38; Lenger, *Corpus*, 226–27; Ma, *Antiochos III*, 271; Virgilio, “Esplorazioni,” 328–32; Käppel, *Protagmata*, 61–66.

<sup>110</sup> Welles, *Correspondence*, 137. See discussion of this claim in 4.5.5 below.

<sup>111</sup> Virgilio ascribes both letters to Antiochus III.

<sup>112</sup> See Virgilio, “Aspetti,” 402–4; id., *Roi*, 224–30; id., “Esplorazioni,” 313–17.

found at Soloi to one of his sons who was in charge of the army. In this case, the singular οἶμαι would indicate the familiarity between the king and his son.<sup>113</sup>

With respect to these comments, it should be noted that Laqueur's and Welles' "rule" applies to the reigning Seleucid kings, not to members of the royal family, including the crown prince and co-regent, or to high officials.<sup>114</sup> Virgilio's argument about the use of the singular by Antiochus III relies on the attribution of the two letters from the Teos dossier to him. However, these letters are too fragmentary to provide certainty about whether their author was Antiochus III or Antiochus the son. Virgilio's argument also rests on the belief that Josephus renders more or less accurately the content and style of the two letters of Antiochus III that he quotes. However, as seen previously,<sup>115</sup> Josephus tampers with the royal documents that he quotes and has a clear preference for the mixed style: for instance, the letter of King Ptolemy II to the high priest Eleazar in *Let. Aris.* §§ 35–40 is written in the plural of majesty, whereas in Josephus' version (*A.J.* 12.45–50) it is predominantly couched in the singular; similarly, Artaxerxes' letter in *Addition E to Esther* is written entirely in the plural of majesty, while in Josephus' paraphrase (*A.J.* 11.273–283) singular and plural alternate. As we will see in the following section, Josephus also uses the mixed style when quoting two letters of Alexander Balas and Demetrius II Nicator, which, in his *Vorlage*, 1 Maccabees, are couched in the plural of majesty.<sup>116</sup>

The second letter of uncertain Seleucid provenance is S60 (=Welles, RC no. 64), a royal letter to Nysa, which has been ascribed to various kings (Antiochus III, Seleucus IV, Antiochus IV, Eumenes II, Mithridates VI). This letter is written in the first person singular (l. 3: ἀπέδωκάν μοι; l. 8: βουλόμενος; l. 9: ἀποδειχθέντων μοι; l. 11: συνεχώρησα; l. 14: ἐπιτρέπω ... π[ει]ράσομαι), with two instances of plural (l. 9: [τὴν πρὸς] ἡμᾶς φιλ[ίαν]; l. 13: οἱ πρὸς ἡμῶν βασιλεῖς). Ma notes that the first person singular used by its author "does not suggest Antiochos III."<sup>117</sup>

There remain the already mentioned letter of Seleucus I, which, as we saw,<sup>118</sup> mixes the plural (associative or majestic) with the first person singular, and the

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<sup>113</sup> Virgilio, "Esplorazioni," 317, 332.

<sup>114</sup> Cf. Ma, "Compte rendu," 501: "V[irgilio] s'attache à établir que les souverains séleucides ont parfois utilisé la première personne du singulier plutôt que le 'nous' royal: cependant, j'ai soutenu que ces exemples de 'je' royal pouvaient s'expliquer comme l'apanage du prince héritier, Antiochos le fils, plutôt que comme des exemples de variations dans l'usage."

<sup>115</sup> See 4.1 and 4.2.6 above.

<sup>116</sup> See Bickerman, "Question," 306 n. 23, and Gauger, *Beiträge*, 15–22.

<sup>117</sup> Ma, *Antiochos III*, 270.

<sup>118</sup> See 4.4 above.

memorandum attached to the covering letter of the unidentified Antiochus (S68 [=Welles, RC no. 70]). In the fourteen lines of the memorandum (ὑπομνηματισμός), which concerns the allocation of grants to the temple of Zeus of Baetocaece, the king refers to himself only once, at the beginning, using the singular (l. 4: προσενηχθέντος μοι). Welles notes that “use of the singular, μοι, is curious for a Seleucid, though as B. Keil pointed out, epistolary rules would not necessarily extend to entries in the journal. It may be, however, that in the later days of the dynasty, when it was under Egyptian influence, the rule may have been relaxed; in [Welles, RC] 30, for example, Ptolemy IV uses the singular.”<sup>119</sup> It should be noted, however, that the use of the singular in this memorandum can hardly be attributed to “Egyptian influence,” as the Ptolemaic monarchs of the second and first centuries BCE, who ruled without co-regents, did not favour the singular at all, as evidenced by the half a dozen letters that we have from them.<sup>120</sup>

As can be seen, with the exception of the letters of Seleucus I and the late, unidentified Antiochus, the use of the singular and the mixture of singular and plural in the extant corpus of Seleucid royal correspondence is restricted to the letters written by Antiochus III’s wife, Queen Laodice III, and his eldest son Antiochus in his capacity as co-regent, to two letters from the Teos dossier, whose attribution varies among scholars, with some ascribing them to Antiochus III and others to his son, and to two other letters, which may or may not be Seleucid, with one of them possibly not even written by a king. This evidence can be interpreted in two ways: either Antiochus III, from whom we have more letters than from any other Hellenistic ruler and who seems to have been a consistent user of the plural of majesty,<sup>121</sup> occasionally slipped to the singular, as other Hellenistic kings did, or the plural of majesty was indeed *de rigueur* for the reigning Seleucid kings in their official correspondence, as Laqueur and Welles posited, but not for the members of the royal family or the high officials.

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<sup>119</sup> Welles, *Correspondence*, 285; cf. *ibid.*, 137.

<sup>120</sup> See 4.5.5 below.

<sup>121</sup> The only document emanating from Antiochus III that is written entirely in the first person singular is his oath in his treaty with Lysimacheia (ca. 196 BCE). See Piejko, “Treaty,” 151–52, and *id.*, “Antiochus III,” 57.

#### 4.5.4 Seleucid royal letters in the Septuagint, in Josephus, and in Athenaeus

A few Seleucid royal letters, some presumed to be authentic and others whose authenticity is contested, are recorded in 1 and 2 Maccabees, in Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities*, and in Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae*.

Following the chronological sequence of the Seleucid kings, I will begin with the royal letters included in 2 Maccabees. Of the two letters of Antiochus IV Epiphanes quoted in this book, the first (2 Macc 11:27–33; 165/164 BCE), considered authentic,<sup>122</sup> is written in the plural of majesty except for a single singular verb (2 Macc 11:32: πέπομφα), while the second (2 Macc 9:19–27; 164 BCE), considered a forgery,<sup>123</sup> is written in the singular throughout. A letter of Antiochus IV's son and successor, Antiochus V Eupator (2 Macc 11:23–26; 163 BCE), deemed authentic,<sup>124</sup> is written in the plural of majesty. An authentic letter of Eupator, preserved on an inscription found in the ancient Jamnia-on-the-Sea, is unfortunately too brief and fragmentary to reveal the grammatical person in which the king wrote.<sup>125</sup>

The author of 1 Maccabees explicitly quotes six Seleucid royal letters and reproduces in direct speech the content of three Seleucid royal messages. The latter are introduced by the phrase ἀπέστειλεν/ἔγραψεν X to Y λέγων but lack the standard prescript formula “King X to Y, greetings,” which is attested in the six letters that are fully quoted in 1 Maccabees.<sup>126</sup> The royal letters, most of which are probably authentic, have reached us through a multiple translation process: the Greek originals, likely sourced from Hasmonean archives, were translated into Hebrew by the author of 1 Maccabees, and their Hebrew versions were subsequently translated back into Greek by the translator of this book.<sup>127</sup> In their extant form, they exhibit considerable variation in the use of the singular and the plural.

In his letter to Jonathan Maccabeus (1 Macc 10:18–20; 152 BCE), Alexander Balas uses the plural of majesty, whereas in his message to King Ptolemy VI Philometor (1 Macc 10:52–54) he uses both the singular and the plural, even interchangeably (1 Macc 10:52: ἐκάθισα ἐπὶ θρόνου πατέρων μου; 10:53: ἐκάθισαμεν ἐπὶ θρόνου βασιλείας αὐτοῦ). The letter of Demetrius I Soter to the nation of the Judeans (1 Macc 10:25–45;

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<sup>122</sup> See Habicht, “Documents,” 12.

<sup>123</sup> See Habicht, “Documents,” 5–7.

<sup>124</sup> See Habicht, “Documents,” 12.

<sup>125</sup> See Bencivenni S67 [=SEG 41-1556].

<sup>126</sup> See Doering, *Letters*, 132, 139–40.

<sup>127</sup> See Doering, *Letters*, 14, 141; Schwartz, *1 Maccabees*, 14.

152 BCE), which has raised doubts about its authenticity,<sup>128</sup> begins in the plural of majesty (1 Macc 10:26: τὰς πρὸς ἡμᾶς συνθήκας ... τῇ φιλίᾳ ἡμῶν ... τοῖς ἐχθροῖς ἡμῶν ... ἠκούσαμεν καὶ ἐχάρημεν; 10:27: πρὸς ἡμᾶς πίστιν ... ἀνταποδώσομεν ... μεθ' ἡμῶν). The two verbs by which the king promises to offer concessions and gifts to the Judeans are also in the plural (1 Macc 10:28: ἀφήσομεν ... δώσομεν), but in the ensuing enumeration of these concessions and gifts, Demetrius uses them in the singular (1 Macc 10:29, 30, 32, 33: ἀφίημι; 10:32, 40: δίδωμι; 10:39: δέδωκα). The three letters of Demetrius II Nicator, the first to Jonathan Maccabeus (1 Macc 11:30–31; 145 BCE), the second, attached to the former, to Lasthenes (1 Macc 11:32–37), and the third to Simon Maccabeus, the elders, and the nation of the Judeans (1 Macc 13:36–40; 142 BCE) are written in the plural. However, the message sent by this king to Jonathan Maccabeus (1 Macc 11:42–43) is written in the singular, as is the message sent to Jonathan by Antiochus VI (1 Macc 11:57). Lastly, in the letter of Antiochus VII Sidetes to Simon Maccabeus and the nation of the Judeans (1 Macc 15:2–9; 140/139 BCE) the singular alternates with the plural (1 Macc 15:3: τῆς βασιλείας τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν ... βούλομαι ... ἐξευλόγησα ... κατεσκεύασα; 15:4: τὴν χώραν ἡμῶν ... ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ μου; 15:5: ἴστημι ... οἱ πρὸ ἐμοῦ; 15:6: ἐπέτρεψα; 15:9: ὡς δ' ἂν καταστήσωμεν τὴν βασιλείαν ἡμῶν, δοξάσομέν σε).

Four of the aforementioned documents are also quoted in Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities*: the letter of Alexander Balas to Jonathan Maccabeus (A.J. 13.45), the letter of Demetrius I to the nation of the Judeans (A.J. 13.48–57), and the letters of Demetrius II to Jonathan Maccabaeus and Lasthenes (A.J. 13.126–128). Josephus' source for these letters was likely a Greek rather than a Hebrew version of 1 Maccabees.<sup>129</sup> While in 1 Maccabees, two of the three kings—Alexander Balas and Demetrius II—use the plural of majesty, in Josephus' version, all three kings mix singular and plural.

Josephus also quotes three Seleucid royal letters—two from Antiochus III and one from Antiochus IV—that are not known from other sources. The authenticity of these documents has been variously assessed.<sup>130</sup> Of the two letters of Antiochus III, the first is addressed to Ptolemy, son of Thraseas, the *strategos* of Coele-Syria and Phoenicia (A.J. 12.138–144; 200–197 BCE), and the second is addressed to the *strategos* Zeuxis (A.J. 12.148–153; 212–205 BCE). Both letters mix singular and plural, a feature not attested

<sup>128</sup> See Schwartz, *1 Maccabees*, 14 and 408.

<sup>129</sup> See Doering, *Letters*, 295–96.

<sup>130</sup> See Doering, *Letters*, 289–91, 297–99.



in the unquestionably authentic letters of Antiochus III to Ptolemy, son of Thraseas, and to Zeuxis that have come down to us epigraphically.<sup>131</sup>

The letter to Ptolemy is written in the plural, except for a cluster of three singular verbs (A.J. 12.141: βούλομαι, ἐπέσταλκα; 12.143: δίδωμι) embedded in the middle of the letter. Bickerman, who defends the authenticity of this document, notes that “the clauses in the singular interrupt the flow of ideas” and suggests that “perhaps the sovereign made additions to the rough draft produced by his chancellery, and these were for some reason reproduced word for word in the definitive text.”<sup>132</sup> Gauger, on the other hand, argues that paragraphs 141–143, where the singular verb forms occur, do not originate with Antiochus III but are later interpolations.<sup>133</sup>

The letter to Zeuxis is written in the singular, with two shifts to the plural (A.J. 12.150: τῶν ἡμετέρων φύλακας; 12.152: ἵνα τῆς παρ’ ἡμῶν τυγχάνοντες φιλανθρωπίας ... περὶ τὰ ἡμέτερα). Defending its authenticity, Bickerman submits that Josephus, or his secretary, or his source may have adapted or “modernised” its style.<sup>134</sup> Gauger considers it to be a Jewish forgery made in the second century BCE at the earliest. He dismisses other possibilities, including the hypothesis that the letter was written by Antiochus III’s eldest son, Antiochus, who was proclaimed βασιλεύς and co-regent by his father in 210/209 BCE, when he was around ten-years-old; as noted previously, Antiochus the Younger used the “I-style” in the letter that he sent to Magnesia-on-the-Maeander (Welles, RC no. 32) around 205 BCE.<sup>135</sup> Considering that Josephus consistently favours the mixed style over the plural of majesty when rewriting royal documents derived from literary sources,<sup>136</sup> it is more plausible that it was he rather than Antiochus III—assuming that the letters are authentic—who chose to mix singular and plural in the letters to Ptolemy, son of Thraseas, and Zeuxis quoted in the *Jewish Antiquities*. As for the letter from Antiochus IV Epiphanes to Nicanor (A.J. 12.262–263; 160s BCE), which Bickerman deems authentic,<sup>137</sup> it is written in the plural.

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<sup>131</sup> See Bencivenni S49a [=SEG 29-1613], for the letter to Ptolemy, and S32 [=SEG 37-1010] and S33 [=SEG 54-1353], for the letter to Zeuxis. The letter to Ptolemy in the Scythopolis (Hefzibah) dossier is very fragmentary, and the plurals restored in l. 2 ([ἡμ?]ᾶς) and l. 3 ([γεγραφαμε]ν) are conjectural. However, in the other letters of the same dossier, Antiochus III uses the plural of majesty.

<sup>132</sup> Bickerman, “Charter,” 336.

<sup>133</sup> Gauger, *Authentizität*, 200–4.

<sup>134</sup> Bickerman, “Question,” 306 with n. 23.

<sup>135</sup> Gauger, *Beiträge*, 136–47, 333–34. See also 4.5.3 above and 2.4, n. 148.

<sup>136</sup> See 4.1 and 4.2.6 above and 4.5.6 below.

<sup>137</sup> See Bickerman, “Document.”

Also unknown from other sources is a Seleucid letter transmitted to us by Athenaeus (*Deipn.* 12.68 [ed. Kaibel]). In it, a King Antiochus orders a certain Phanias to ensure that all the philosophers are expelled from his kingdom. The usually hyper-skeptical Gauger has declared this letter authentic, suggesting it could be the very last Seleucid letter that we have, likely written by one of the dynasty's last kings.<sup>138</sup> Muccioli, instead, proposes that the author is Antiochus VI, the son of Alexander Balas.<sup>139</sup> The letter is written in the plural of majesty.

#### 4.5.5 Ptolemaic royal letters

With regard to the Ptolemies, Welles makes the following comment: “In Egypt [...], at least down to the time of Ptolemy IV, the kings used the singular freely.”<sup>140</sup> And Zilliacus adds that “auf ägyptischem Boden hat sich der Pluralis maiestatis nie völlig durchgesetzt; das wird, nicht zum mindesten, durch die Papyrusspezimina veranschaulicht.”<sup>141</sup> However, a close examination of the available evidence calls for a rectification of these statements.

Of the forty-seven Ptolemaic royal letters and epistolary *protagmata* preserved on papyri and inscriptions that I examined,<sup>142</sup> nineteen involve more than one sender (a king or a queen and his/her co-regent[s]), thus requiring them to be written in the

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<sup>138</sup> Gauger, *Authentizität*, 187–93.

<sup>139</sup> Muccioli, “Antiocho,” 193–95.

<sup>140</sup> Welles, *Correspondence*, 137.

<sup>141</sup> Zilliacus, *Selbstgefühl*, 40.

<sup>142</sup> Apart from the letters to cities and the epistolary *protagmata* to a single addressee or multiple addressees, which feature the typical prescript formula “βασιλεὺς (or βασίλισσα) Α [and, in cases of co-regency, “βασιλεὺς (or βασίλισσα) Α καὶ βασίλισσα (or βασιλεὺς) Β,” or even “βασιλεὺς Α καὶ βασίλισσα Β καὶ βασίλισσα Γ”] to Δ (or to various officials designated by their titles, or to the authorities of a city) χαίρειν,” I have included in my corpus the following documents with variant prescripts: (a) *C.Ord.Ptol.* 64, whose prescript features only the name of the king in the nominative (βασιλεὺς Πτολεμαῖος ὃς καὶ Ἀλέξανδρος): Lenger, *Corpus*, 186, regards it as a letter which would have had the recipient's name and the greeting truncated; Rigsby, *Asyria* [no. 219], 548, considers it to be a memorandum; Käppel, *Protagmata*, 409, notes that, although the text appears at first glance to be a proclamation, the concluding formula, γινέσθω οὖν ἀκολούθως, reveals that it was originally an epistolary order, perhaps an internal memo; and (b) *C.Ord.Ptol.* 67 and 76, whose prescripts feature solely the name of the addressee in the dative (Θέωνι). However, I have not included *C.Ord.Ptol.* 36–40, 65–66, 69–70, and 72, whose prescripts feature only the name of the addressee in the dative, but which contain a very brief, often monolectic order, thus not revealing whether their authors used the first person singular or plural.

plural,<sup>143</sup> four are from an unidentified Ptolemaic king,<sup>144</sup> two are of doubtful Ptolemaic provenance,<sup>145</sup> and twenty-two have a single sender. The latter, dating from 279 to 96 BCE, are written by seven different kings and one queen: ten by Ptolemy II Philadelphus,<sup>146</sup> three by Ptolemy III Euergetes,<sup>147</sup> one by Berenice II Euergetis,<sup>148</sup> two by Ptolemy IV Philopator,<sup>149</sup> two by Ptolemy V Epiphanes,<sup>150</sup> two by Ptolemy VI Philometor,<sup>151</sup> one by Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II,<sup>152</sup> and one by Ptolemy X Alexander I.<sup>153</sup> Five of these letters, three by Ptolemy II, one by Ptolemy III, and one by Ptolemy IV,<sup>154</sup> are so fragmentary that it is not possible to determine whether their authors used the first person singular or plural. Of the remaining seventeen letters, twelve are written in the first person plural. These include all the letters by Ptolemy II, except the one addressed to Miletus (Welles, RC no. 14), as well as the letters written by Ptolemy V, Ptolemy VI, Ptolemy VIII, and Ptolemy X Alexander I. Let us take a closer look at the five letters that are not written in the plural.

<sup>143</sup> *C.Ord.Ptol.* 45; 47; 48; 49; 51; 52; 57; 58; 59; 60; 62; 63; 75; 76; 88; 89; Rigsby, *Asylia* no. 226 [= *C.Ord.Ptol.* 67], which attributes this document to Ptolemy XII Auletes]; *P.Yale* 1.56 [= *C.Ord.Ptol.* 90]; *P.Bingen* 45. I follow Käppel, *Prostagma*, 383, 444–45, in assuming that Rigsby, *Asylia* no. 226 [= *C.Ord.Ptol.* 67] and *C.Ord.Ptol.* 76, whose prescripts feature only the name of the addressee (Θέωνι), were issued by Cleopatra VII and Ptolemy XIV, and Cleopatra VII and Ptolemy XV, respectively. Likewise, I follow Käppel, *Prostagma*, 390–91, 445–50, who argues that *P.Bingen* 45, whose prescript is missing, was issued by Cleopatra VII and Ptolemy XV (Caesarion), as opposed to van Minnen, “Act,” 33, who contends that the plural used in this document is a *pluralis maiestatis* (“‘We’ in the text also means just Cleopatra”).

<sup>144</sup> *C.Ord.Ptol.* 79, 86, 87, and *SEG* 60–1536. *C.Ord.Ptol.* 79, which has been attributed to Ptolemy II, Ptolemy III, or Ptolemy IV, contains a plural verb form; *SEG* 60–1536, which has been attributed to Ptolemy II or Ptolemy III, is written in the plural; *C.Ord.Ptol.* 86 and 87 are too fragmentary to allow for determining whether their authors used the first person singular or plural.

<sup>145</sup> The fragmentary Welles, RC no. 27, which Welles ascribes to Ptolemy III but which Rigsby, *Asylia* [no. 10], 117–18, attributes to an “unknown king,” possibly Antigonos Gonatas, and Welles, RC no. 30 [= *C.Ord.Ptol.* 84; *SEG* 61–1316], which Welles, Lenger, and Ma regard as Ptolemaic, while Virgilio considers it Seleucid (see 4.5.3 above). The former letter is written in the plural of majesty (with a potential singular on l. 4), while the latter letter features a first-person singular verb on l. 10.

<sup>146</sup> *SEG* 28–1224 [279 BCE]; *C.Ord.Ptol.* 3 [275/274 ? BCE], 10 [273–262 BCE], 17 [263 BCE], 18 [263 BCE], 23 [259 BCE], 24 [mid-third century BCE]; Welles, RC no. 14 [262/261 BCE] and no. 21 [bef. 250 BCE] (Rigsby, *Asylia* [no. 13], 126, attributes the latter letter to Ptolemy III); *P.Vind.Tand.* 1 [mid-third century BCE].

<sup>147</sup> *SEG* 47–1315 [245/244 BCE]; *SEG* 36–1218 [243/242 BCE]; *SEG* 53–855 [242 BCE] (cf. Rigsby, *Asylia* no. 8; Welles, RC no. 28, had previously attributed this letter to Attalus I).

<sup>148</sup> See Adak, “Teos,” 248.

<sup>149</sup> *I.Thespies* 153 [210–208 BCE]; Welles, RC no. 33 [208/207 BCE].

<sup>150</sup> *C.Ord.Ptol.* 30 [184/183 BCE], 31 [184/183 BCE].

<sup>151</sup> *C.Ord.Ptol.* 33 [163 BCE], 35 [163 BCE].

<sup>152</sup> *C.Ord.Ptol.* 42 [145/144 BCE].

<sup>153</sup> *C.Ord.Ptol.* 64 [96 BCE]; see n. 142 above.

<sup>154</sup> *C.Ord.Ptol.* 3, 17; *P.Vind.Tand.* 1; *SEG* 47–1315; *I.Thespies* 153.

The first two lines following the prescript of the letter of Ptolemy II to Miletus (Welles, *RC* no. 14; ca. 262/261 BCE) are written in the first person singular (ll. 2–3: τῆμ παῖσαν ἐποιούμην σπουδὴν ὑπὲρ τῆς πόλεως ὑμῶν | καὶ χώραν διδούς καὶ ἐν τοῖς λοιποῖς ἐπιμελούμενος), while lines 4 to 15 are written in the plural of majesty (l. 4: τὸμ πατέρα τὸν ἡμέτερον; ll. 7–8: τῆμ πρὸς ἡμᾶς [φ]ιλίαν; l. 10: τῆς πρὸς ἡμᾶς εὐνοίας; ll. 10–11: καὶ αὐτοὶ παρακολουθοῦν|τες ἐπαινοῦμεν; l. 11: πειρασόμεθα; l. 12: παρακαλοῦμεν; l. 13: πρὸς ἡμᾶς ... ἡμεῖς; l. 14: ἵνα ... ποιῶμεθα ... συντετάχαμεν; l. 15: παρ' ἡμῶν), interrupted by a parenthetical remark phrased in a mix of singular and plural (ll. 8–10: γέγραφε γάρ | μοι ὁ τε υἱὸς καὶ Καλλικράτης ... ἦν ἀπόδειξιν πεποίθησε τῆς πρὸς ἡμᾶς εὐνοίας). The use of the singular in the preamble of the letter may have been intended to emphasise the king's personal involvement and concern for the welfare of the Miletians, while the parenthetical remark, which includes a reference to the king's son, could be a personal addendum inserted by Ptolemy himself into the draft drawn up by the chancery secretary. Admittedly, however, as Welles has rightly observed, the intermixing of the first person singular and plural in this letter does not mark any distinction between the king as an individual and as the representative of the state, but “seems purely arbitrary.”<sup>155</sup>

The letter of Ptolemy III to the city of Xanthos (*SEG* 36-1218; 243/242 BCE) is written in the plural of majesty (l. 13: ἡμᾶς ἐτιμήσατε; l. 17: ὑφ' ἡμῶν; ll. 19–20: ἐπαι|νοῦμεν; l. 24: παρακαλοῦμεν; l. 26: παρ' ἡμῶν); however, the king uses the singular when referring to himself in conjunction with other members of the royal house, such as his wife (ll. 11–12: καὶ ἐμὲ καὶ τὴν ἀδελ|φὴν Βερενίκην ἐστεφανώσατε) and his father and grandfather (ll. 23–24: καὶ ὑπ' ἐμοῦ καὶ ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ | τοῦ πάππου). In his letter recognising the *asylia* of the Asclepieion of Cos (*SEG* 53-855; 242 BCE), the same king uses the first person plural in one instance (ll. 14–15: τὴν τοῦ ἱεροῦ ἀσυλί|[αν δε]χόμεθα) and the first person singular in another, at the very end of the letter (ll. 18–19: τὸν ἀγῶνα, ὃν τί|[θη]μι).<sup>156</sup>

The few legible segments of a letter that Queen Berenice II Euergetis, Ptolemy III's wife, addressed to Teos, likely in the early phase of the Laodicean war (246/245 BCE)

<sup>155</sup> Welles, *Correspondence*, 74; cf. Zilliacus, *Selbstgefühl*, 40.

<sup>156</sup> See also the “bulletin from the Third Syrian War” preserved in the Gurob papyrus (*P.Petrie* II, 45; III, 144=*FGrHist* 160 F 1), which is thought to have been dictated by Ptolemy III. Throughout this document, whose epistolary character is emphasised by Jacoby, *FGrHist* 2D, *Kommentar*, p. 590, the king writes in the first person plural. This plural is inclusive, but in col. IV, ll. 8–13, the king uses the plural of majesty. See Holleaux, “Remarques,” 342 n. 1.

during her husband's absence in Syria and Mesopotamia, feature a first-person singular verb (l. 11: εὔνοιαν ὑμῶν ἐπαινῶ),<sup>157</sup>

The fragmentary letter of Ptolemy IV to Magnesia-on-the-Maeander (Welles, *RC* no. 33; ca. 205 BCE) mixes singular (l. 14: καὶ ἐγώ; ll. 21–22: ἀπο[[δέ]δεγμαι) and plural (l. 16: ἡμῖν). As noted in the previous section, Welles, albeit with some hesitation, attributed one more letter, Welles, *RC* no. 30 [= *C.Ord.Ptol.* 84; *SEG* 61-1316], to Ptolemy IV. In the surviving fragment of this letter, a first-person singular verb form occurs (l. 10: οἶμαι). Welles proposed this attribution, among other reasons, based on the belief that the singular style was not employed by the Seleucid kings after Seleucus I but was “used freely” by the Ptolemies till the late third century BCE. The preceding survey does not really justify this assertion, as the Ptolemaic kings of the third century BCE, from whom surviving epistolary texts exist, do, indeed, use the singular but always in combination with the plural. Moreover, on the basis of extant evidence, it is only in their letters to cities outside Egypt that these kings permit themselves to alternate between the first person singular and plural, whereas in their epistolary *prostagmata* to subordinate officials they invariably use the plural of majesty. If Welles, *RC* no. 30 were written by Ptolemy IV, it would be the only extant Ptolemaic royal letter—along with the aforementioned letter of Queen Berenice II, of which, however, only a few phrases are legible—in which the author does not use the first person plural at all, assuming, of course, that no first-person plural verbs or pronouns were present in the non-surviving parts of the letter. It would also be the only Ptolemaic royal letter addressed to a subordinate official in which the king did not use the plural of majesty.

The preceding survey also does not justify Zilliacus' assertion that the plural of majesty never fully established itself in Egypt. Of the thirteen royal letters and epistolary *prostagmata* from the third century BCE that have a single sender and have been preserved in a state allowing us to determine whether the sender used the first person singular or the plural—I include *C.Ord.Ptol.* 79 and *SEG* 60-1536, which are written by a non-identified Ptolemaic king—eight are written in the plural of majesty. Furthermore, all five letters with a single sender from the second century BCE, as well as the letter/memorandum of Ptolemy X Alexander I from the first century BCE, are also written in the plural of majesty. Admittedly, however, the very small number of extant Ptolemaic royal letters and epistolary *prostagmata* written by a single king, their uneven distribution—there is only one from the first century BCE!—and the

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<sup>157</sup> See Adak, “Teos,” 247–48.

fragmentary condition of many of them make any conclusions regarding the use of the plural of majesty by the Ptolemies tenuous.

#### 4.5.6 Ptolemaic royal letters in the *Letter of Aristeas*, in 1 and 3 Maccabees, and in Josephus

I will now return to the apocryphal Ptolemaic royal documents that I discussed at the beginning of this survey in relation to Bickerman's statement regarding the shift from singular to plural in Addition B to Esther. The *prostagma* and the letter of Ptolemy II Philadelphus in Let. Aris. §§ 22–25 and 35–40, respectively, are written in the plural of majesty. This aligns with the plural used in six of the seven authentic extant epistolary documents that we have from Ptolemy II, which enable us to discern whether their author used the first person singular or plural. However, in his version of Ptolemy II's documents embedded in the *Letter of Aristeas*, Josephus (A.J. 12.28–31; 12.45–50) opts for the singular instead, occasionally interspersing a few first-person plural personal pronouns.<sup>158</sup>

The two letters of Ptolemy IV Philopator in 3 Macc 3:12–29 and 7:1–9, respectively, are also written in the plural of majesty, with the exception of the health-wish in the former letter, which combines singular and plural forms (3 Macc 3:13: ἔρωμαι δὲ καὶ ἐγὼ αὐτὸς καὶ τὰ πράγματα ἡμῶν). This contrasts with the singular that Ptolemy IV predominantly employs in his fragmentary letter to Magnesia-on-the-Maeander (Welles, RC no. 33). If we consider the previously noted distinction between epistolary *prostagmata* addressed to subordinate officials and letters addressed to cities, the singular in 3 Macc 3:13 is an anomaly in a letter purporting to be a Ptolemaic *entole*. But then, the very inclusion of a health-wish in this letter is an anomaly, as no authentic Ptolemaic royal letter or epistolary *prostagma* contains a *formula valetudinis*.

To the above, we should add the two messages sent by Ptolemy VI to Alexander Balas and to Demetrius II in 1 Macc 10:55–56 and 11:9–10, respectively. These messages, which lack typical epistolary features and for whose phrasing the author of

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<sup>158</sup> See Pelletier, *Flavius Josèphe*, 210. Apart from the fictitious letter of King Ptolemy II to the Jewish high priest Eleazar, which is included in the *Letter of Aristeas* and paraphrased by Josephus, there are two similar fictitious letters of Ptolemy II addressed to the “teachers of the Jews” and the “teachers of religion” in Jerusalem, which are transmitted by Epiphanius of Salamis in his treatise *On Weights and Measures* (ca. 392 CE). Of these letters, the first (*Mens.* ll. 281–98 [ed. Moutsoulas]) is written predominantly in the first person singular, while the second (*Mens.* ll. 309–15) is written in the first person plural. For the relationship between these letters and the one in Let. Aris. §§ 35–40, see van Esbroeck, “Forme.”

1 Maccabees is likely responsible, are written in the first person singular,<sup>159</sup> in contrast to the plural of majesty used in the two authentic letters of this king that have come down to us on stone and papyrus, respectively.<sup>160</sup>

#### 4.5.7 Letters written by the kings of the minor kingdoms of Asia Minor and by the early Roman emperors

The few surviving letters issued by the chanceries of the minor kingdoms of Asia Minor are written in the plural,<sup>161</sup> predominantly in the plural,<sup>162</sup> predominantly in the singular,<sup>163</sup> or mix singular and plural forms in equal measure.<sup>164</sup> In their letters written in Greek, the early Roman emperors, with rare exceptions,<sup>165</sup> employ the first person singular.

### 4.6 Conclusion

The findings of the preceding survey, which aimed to investigate the use of the epistolary “I” and “we” in Additions B and E to Esther, can now be summarised.

Additions B and E contain two fictitious Persian royal letters purportedly written by a King Artaxerxes. The second letter (Addition E) is written in the first person

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<sup>159</sup> See Doering, *Letters*, 132, 139, 240 n. 128.

<sup>160</sup> An apocryphal letter attributed to Ptolemy VI is quoted by Josephus in *AJ.* 13.70–71. As it emanates not only from this king but also from Cleopatra II, it is written in the plural.

<sup>161</sup> See the letters of the Cappadocian king Orophernes (Welles, *RC* no. 63; ca. 157 BCE), of the Bithynian king Nicomedes IV (?) (*L.Aphrodisias and Rome* 4; late second or early first century BCE), and of the Parthian king Artaban III (Welles, *RC* no. 75; 21 CE).

<sup>162</sup> See the letter of a Spartocid (?) king (Rigsby, *Asyria* no. 12; 242 BCE), which is written in the plural except for the phrase ἐγὼ δὲ καὶ ἡ ἀδελφ[ή] μ[ου] on line 20, and the letter of the Bithynian King Ziaelas (Rigsby, *Asyria* no. 11=Welles, *RC* no. 25; ca. 240 BCE), which is written in the plural except for the verb ἐντέταλμαι on l. 49.

<sup>163</sup> See the letter of the Bosporan king Aspurgos (*SEG* 46-940; 16 CE), which is written in the singular with a single shift to the plural on l. 11: τὴν ἡμετέραν κρίσιν.

<sup>164</sup> See the two letters of Mithridates VI Eupator, king of Pontus (Welles, *RC* nos. 73/74; 88/87 BCE).

<sup>165</sup> It is commonly stated that the first Roman emperor to use the plural of majesty was Gordian III (238–244 CE). See Sasse, *De numero*, 7–8, 52–53. However, there seem to be some earlier instances of this type of plural in Roman imperial documents, e.g., in the letter of Nero to Menophilus, where the emperor mixes singular and plural forms. See Oliver, *Greek Constitutions* no. 35 [Aizanoi; 54–68 CE], ll. 3–6: οἱ υἱοὶ σου ἐλθόντες πρὸς με ἅπαντα ἐδήλωσαν ὅσα τε αὐτὸς | ἐφιλοτιμήθης πρὸς ἡμᾶς καὶ ὅσα εἰσηγήσω τῇ | πόλει περιέχοντα τὰς ἡμετέρας τιμὰς; l. 12: ἡ περὶ ἡμᾶς φιλοτιμία. See further Schmid, “Pluralis,” 479; Zilliacus, *Selbstgefühl*, 50; Corcoran, *Empire*, 318–23.

plural (plural of majesty), whereas the first letter (Addition B) exhibits a shift from the first person singular to the inclusive plural, and then further to the plural of majesty. As I showed, it is unlikely that the author of the two Additions used one of the Persian royal letters found in Greek literary sources as a model for this epistolary style, since most of these letters are written in the first person singular and none employ the plural of majesty throughout. However, there are a few fictitious Persian royal letters that exhibit an alternation between the first person singular and the plural of majesty, with the most notable examples being some of the letters of King Darius III included in Ps.-Callisthenes' *Alexander Romance*, the earliest versions of which date back to the second century BCE. The fact that these letters likely originated in schools of rhetoric indicates that the alternation between the first person singular and the first person plural was an acceptable stylistic feature in compositions produced by these schools.

Bickerman's statement, which served as the starting point for the present investigation, namely, that the Hellenistic kings of the third century BCE commonly mixed singular and plural in their letters, and that this style may have persisted among the Seleucid kings in the second century BCE, whereas the Ptolemies seem to have adhered exclusively to the plural, suggested two other possibilities: that the author of Additions B and E may have imitated an authentic royal letter of the third century BCE or a Seleucid royal letter of the second century BCE.

The examination of the surviving Hellenistic royal letters from the third century BCE showed that the Antigonid kings use the singular, with very rare instances of the plural of majesty, that the Attalid kings use either the singular or the plural of majesty, but not a mixed style, and that the Seleucid kings consistently use the plural, with two exceptions: Seleucus I, who in his letter to Miletus (Welles, RC no. 5) alternates between the singular and a plural that is either associative or majestic, and Antiochus, the son of Antiochus III, who in his letter to Magnesia-on-the-Maeander (Welles, RC no. 32) employs the first person singular in his capacity as co-regent. The mixed style is endorsed only by the Ptolemies (II, III, IV), who use it along with the plural of majesty in their letters to cities in Asia Minor, while in their epistolary *prostagmata* to their subordinates they invariably use the plural of majesty. If, indeed, the author of Additions B and E imitated a royal letter from the third century BCE, as hypothesised by Bickerman, then, based on the extant evidence, it is unlikely that it was a Ptolemaic letter, since Addition B, which has the form of an epistolary *prostagma* of the *entole*



type, addressed to subordinate officials of different ranks, mixes first person singular and plural of majesty.

In the second century BCE, the kings who are especially versatile with regard to the use of the singular, the plural, and the mixed style to refer to themselves in their letters, and who particularly favour the mixed style, are the Attalids. In contrast, all the second- and first-century BCE Ptolemaic letters issued by a single king are written in the plural, as are the second-century BCE Seleucid royal letters, with only very few written in the singular or in a mixed style. As I pointed out, some of the latter letters are written by members of the royal family, such as Antiochus, the son and co-regent of Antiochus III, and his mother, Queen Laodice III, whereas others leave doubt as to whether their author was Antiochus III or his son, or whether they are genuinely of Seleucid origin. As for the first-person singular pronoun used by a late, unidentified Antiochus in Welles, RC no. 70, it occurs not in the royal letter itself but in a memorandum from the royal journal attached to this letter. In short, it remains uncertain whether any reigning Seleucid king of the second century BCE used the first-person singular or the mixed style to refer to himself in his letters. On the basis of this evidence, it seems unlikely that the author of Additions B and E modelled the mixed style used by King Artaxerxes in Addition B on any authentic Ptolemaic or Seleucid royal letter from the second century BCE, as neither the Ptolemies nor the Seleucids (with the caveat noted above) favoured this style.

There remain the Ptolemaic and Seleucid royal letters included in the *Letter of Aristeas* and in 1–3 Maccabees. The *prostagma* and the letter of Ptolemy II Philadelphus to Eleazar in the *Letter of Aristeas*, and the two letters of Ptolemy IV Philopator in 3 Maccabees, which share notable verbal similarities and are intertextually connected with Additions B and E to Esther,<sup>166</sup> are all written in the plural, except for the first letter of Philopator, which features a shift from using both the first person singular and plural in its *formula valetudinis* (3 Macc 3:13) to employing the plural of majesty in its main body. Of the two letters of Antiochus IV in 2 Maccabees, the first is written in the singular and the second in the plural, with a single shift to the singular in its closing line, while the letter of his son Antiochus V in the same book is written in the plural. As I argue in Chapter 3, the letter of Antiochus IV that exhibits the plural-to-singular shift was likely known to the author of Additions B and E.<sup>167</sup> Of the six Seleucid royal letters and the three Seleucid royal messages quoted in 1 Maccabees, four letters

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<sup>166</sup> See 5.6.

<sup>167</sup> See 3.2.

are written in the plural, two messages in the singular, and two letters and one message mix singular and plural; the latter do not merely contain a single singular verb, as is the case with the aforementioned letter of Antiochus IV in 2 Maccabees, but feature an ample interchange of singular and plural verb and pronoun forms. This mixed style, which does not align with that known from the authentic letters of Seleucid kings preserved on stone, proves to be not infrequent in Seleucid royal letters embedded in literary works. Aside from the letters and messages of Alexander Balas, Demetrius I, and Antiochus VII in 1 Maccabees, it is also attested in two letters of Antiochus III quoted by Josephus, which are not known from other sources. My point here is not that the author of Addition B was acquainted with these specific letters, but rather that he would likely not have deemed it stylistically inappropriate to have King Artaxerxes write part of his letter in the singular and part in the plural of majesty, since other roughly contemporary Jewish-Greek writers who integrated authentic, or purportedly authentic, royal letters in their works did not shy away from such a variation.

To sum up: I consider it unlikely that the author of Addition B imitated an authentic royal letter from the third century BCE, as suggested by Bickerman. What I consider likely, instead, is that he originally intended to write a “Persian” royal letter, as evidenced by the prescript formula that he uses.<sup>168</sup> Thus, he had King Artaxerxes begin his letter in the first person singular, which is typical of the “Persian” royal letters found in Greek literary sources, including the Septuagint. A possible model for the use of the first person singular in the first three verses of Artaxerxes’ letter in Addition B may have been the letter of Artaxerxes in 1 Esd 8:9–24, which is written in the singular except for the phrase ἐν τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ βασιλείᾳ at 8:10. What connects Addition B with this letter is not only that they are both written by a King Artaxerxes but also, along with other similarities, that they both mention the king’s counsellors (LXX Esth B:3: τῶν συμβούλων; 1 Esd 8:11: τοῖς ἐπτά φίλοις συμβουλευταῖς).<sup>169</sup> Unlike the letter of Artaxerxes in 1 Esdras, where the king does not use an associative plural but distinguishes himself from his counsellors (8:11: ἐμοί τε καὶ τοῖς ἐπτά φίλοις συμβουλευταῖς 8:13: ἐγώ τε καὶ οἱ φίλοι), Artaxerxes in Addition B uses an inclusive plural encompassing himself and his counsellors (LXX Esth B:3: παρ’ ἡμῖν διενέγκας; B:4: ἐπέδειξεν ἡμῖν). The transition to the plural of majesty in LXX Esth B:5 (διειληφότες ... τοῖς ἡμετέροις πράγμασιν) and B:6 (προσσετάχαμεν ... πατὴρ ἡμῶν) is

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<sup>168</sup> See 6.2.

<sup>169</sup> See 2.4.

due to the dependence of the author of Additions B and E, in these verses, on the letters of King Ptolemy IV Philopator in 3 Maccabees (3:25; 7:8: προστετάχαμεν; 3:26: διειλήφαμεν), which in turn depend on the *prostagma* of King Ptolemy II Philadelphus (§ 24: προστετάχαμεν; § 25: διειλήφαμεν) and his letter to Eleazar (§ 37: διειληφότες) in the *Letter of Aristeas*.<sup>170</sup> Following the practice of the Ptolemaic chancery, both the *prostagma* of Philadelphus and the letters of Philopator have the royal command, expressed through the verb προστάσσω, couched in the first person plural perfect: προστετάχαμεν, “we have ordered.” In authentic Ptolemaic epistolary *prostigmata* issued by a single king, this verb never occurs in the first person singular perfect, προστέταχα.<sup>171</sup> The adoption of this Ptolemaic formula obliged the author of the “Persian” letter in Addition B to shift to the plural of majesty in the rest of Artaxerxes’ first letter. His further dependence on the letters of King Ptolemy IV Philopator in 3 Maccabees, when composing the second letter of Artaxerxes,<sup>172</sup> led him to adopt the plural of majesty throughout Addition E.

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<sup>170</sup> See 5.6 and Domazakis, *Esther*, 152–63.

<sup>171</sup> See Pelletier, *Flavius Josèphe*, 61, 280–81.

<sup>172</sup> See 5.6 and Domazakis, *Esther*, 69–88.

# CHAPTER 5. THE EGYPTIAN (PTOLEMAIC) “FLAVOUR” OF ADDITIONS B AND E

## 5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will discuss the claim made in previous Esther studies that Additions B and E exhibit an Egyptian, more specifically Ptolemaic, “flavour.” I will begin by examining some honorific titles and designations, as well as some technical terms, that these studies have presented as suggestive of this “flavour”: King Artaxerxes’ designation as “Great King” (μέγας βασιλεύς), “master over the entire inhabited world” (πάσης ἐπικρατήσας οἰκουμένης), and restorer of peace (ἀνανεώσασθαι τὴν εἰρήνην) (5.2); the epithets “saviour” (σωτήρ) and “benefactor” (εὐεργέτης) attributed to Mordecai (5.2); the court title “Friend” (φίλος) and the quality of σωφροσύνη (“soundness of judgment”) ascribed to Haman (5.3); the epistolary formula καλῶς οὖν ποιήσετε, “you will then do well to...,” featured in Artaxerxes’ second letter (5.3), the verb ἐκτίθημι denoting the posting of public notices (5.3), and the terms “city” (πόλις) and “countryside” (χώρα) claimed to reflect the distinction made in Egypt between Alexandria and the *chora* (5.4). Additionally, I will examine further lexical evidence that has not been brought forward in previous studies (5.5). Next, I will discuss the relationship between Additions B and E and two books originating from Egypt, namely, 3 Maccabees and the *Letter of Aristeas* (5.6). Lastly, I will discuss the claim that Additions B and E were composed by Lysimachus, the translator of LXX Esther, a Jerusalemite with presumably Egyptian affiliations (5.7), as well as the possibility that the two Additions were composed by the author of 3 Maccabees (5.8). The aim of this chapter’s inquiry will ultimately be to determine whether Additions B and E were written in an Egyptian, more specifically Ptolemaic, milieu, the imprint of which they bear, or whether they reflect the influence of literary and documentary texts written in Ptolemaic Egypt, with which the author of the two Additions was acquainted, even if the Additions themselves were not written in Egypt.

## 5.2 βασιλεὺς μέγας, πάσης ἐπικρατήσας οἰκουμένης, σωτὴρ καὶ εὐεργέτης, ἀνανεώσασθαι τὴν εἰρήνην

(a) Kottsieper has argued that the designation of Artaxerxes as “Great King” (LXX Esth B:1; E:1: βασιλεὺς μέγας) and, indirectly, as “Benefactor” (LXX Esth E:2: εὐεργετούντων; E:3: εὐεργέταις) provides a clue for dating Additions B and E to the reign of Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II, who bore the titles of “Great King” and “Euergetes.”<sup>1</sup> Kottsieper further suggests that Artaxerxes’ claims of “having mastered the entire inhabited world” and “renewed the peace” (LXX Esth B:2: πάσης ἐπικρατήσας οἰκουμένης ... ἀνανεώσασθαι τε τὴν ... εἰρήνην) may also allude to Ptolemy VIII, who viewed himself as a successor of equal standing to his ancestor Ptolemy III—a monarch who depicted himself in inscriptions as a world conqueror—and who had to confront civil unrest before consolidating his rule.<sup>2</sup>

To begin with, the title “Great King” and its “twin brother,” as Strootman calls it, “King of Kings” are attested in the languages of several Near Eastern monarchies (Sumerian, Babylonian, Elamite, Old and Middle Persian).<sup>3</sup> They were borne, among others, by the Achaemenid kings, a fact also reflected in Greek literary and epigraphic texts, where Darius I, Xerxes I, Artaxerxes I, and Artaxerxes II are styled as μέγας βασιλεύς or βασιλεὺς βασιλέων.<sup>4</sup> The title μέγας βασιλεύς was adopted by some Ptolemaic and Seleucid monarchs from the third to the first centuries BCE, as well as by rulers of minor Hellenistic kingdoms from the mid-second century BCE onwards.<sup>5</sup> The first Hellenistic kings for whom the title is attested in Greek are Ptolemy III, around 240 BCE,<sup>6</sup> and Antiochus III, after 200 BCE;<sup>7</sup> however, Antiochus I and

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<sup>1</sup> Kottsieper, “Zusätze,” 152–54, 189.

<sup>2</sup> Kottsieper, “Zusätze,” 154.

<sup>3</sup> See Strootman, “Kings,” 127, 130.

<sup>4</sup> See *I.Magnesia* 115a, ll. 1–3: βασιλεὺς [βα]σιλέων Δαρεῖος ὁ Ὑστάσπεω (Darius I); *IGLS* 1.14, ll. 7–8: βασιλέα βασιλέων μέγαν | Δαρεῖον τὸν Ὑστάσπ[ου] (Darius I); Aeschylus, *Pers.* 24: βασιλῆς βασιλέως ὕποχοι μεγάλου (Xerxes I); Aristophanes, *Ach.* 65: βασιλέα τὸν μέγα (Artaxerxes I); Xenophon, *Anab.* 1.2.8: μεγάλου βασιλέως βασιλεία (Artaxerxes II). See further references in Pelletier, *Flavius Josephus*, 288–92, and in Lerouge-Cohen, *Souvenirs*, 317 n. 10.

<sup>5</sup> See Muccioli, *Epiteti*, 395–417; Strootman, “Kings,” 123–27, 151–56; Lerouge-Cohen, *Souvenirs*, 320–57.

<sup>6</sup> See *OGIS* 54 [Adulis; 240 BCE], l. 1: βασιλεὺς μέγας Πτολεμαῖος. See also *PSI* 5.541, l. 1, where a petitioner addresses the king, most likely Ptolemy III, as [βα]σιλεῖ μ[εγ]άλω Πτολεμαίωι. See Lerouge-Cohen, *Souvenirs*, 323. Ptolemy III’s father, Ptolemy II Philadelphus, is addressed as “Great King” in the *Letter of Aristaeas* (§§ 29, 290; cf. §§ 261, 280: μέγιστε βασιλεῦ).

<sup>7</sup> See Ma, *Antiochos III*, 272–76; Strootman, “Kings,” 145–47; Lerouge-Cohen, *Souvenirs*, 324, 335–40.

Antiochus II are already assigned the title of “Great King” (*lugal galú*) in Babylonian documents.<sup>8</sup> Ptolemy IV in the Raphia Decree (217 BCE)<sup>9</sup> and, nearly a century later, Antiochus VII Sidetes<sup>10</sup> are similarly styled in inscriptions and on coins. Ptolemy XII is the last Ptolemy to be designated as “Great King” in inscriptions.<sup>11</sup> It should be noted that the title “Great King” appears in honorific inscriptions for the Ptolemaic and Seleucid kings, but never in documents issued by these kings themselves.<sup>12</sup>

Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II is assigned the title μέγας βασιλεύς in two papyri recording the titles of the eponymous priests at Ptolemais in 127/126 and 123 BCE.<sup>13</sup> However, as Nadig remarks, it cannot be determined with certainty whether Ptolemy VIII officially held this title or whether it was only propagated within the dynastic cult of Ptolemais.<sup>14</sup> A reference to the μέγιστοι βασιλεῖς in a papyrus from 117 BCE related to the “Hermias Case” suggests that the title may have been used in the context of a formal address or reference.<sup>15</sup>

During the reign of Ptolemy VIII as King of Egypt (145–116 BCE), four other kings are known to have been called “Great King”: the aforementioned Seleucid king Antiochus VII Sidetes and the Arsacid kings Mithradates I, Phraates II, and Artabanus

<sup>8</sup> See Strootman, “Kings,” 138–40; Lerouge-Cohen, *Souvenirs*, 320–21.

<sup>9</sup> See SEG 8-504a [217 BCE], l. 5: μεγάλου βασιλέως τῶν τε ἄνω καὶ τῶν κάτω χωρῶν; cf. SEG 20-467 [Jorppa; 217 BCE], ll. 1–2: Βασιλέα μέγαν Πτολεμαῖον | θεὸν φιλοπάτορα. Ptolemy IV’s son, Ptolemy V, is also assigned the title of μέγας in OGIS 94 [197–194/193 BCE], ll. 1–2: ὑπὲρ βασιλέως Πτολεμαίου | θεοῦ Ἐπιφανοῦς, μεγάλου, Εὐχαρίστου; however, in this inscription, μέγας is not conjoined with βασιλεύς.

<sup>10</sup> See SEG 19-904 [Ptolemais; 130/129 BCE], ll. 1–2: ὑπὲρ βασιλέως μεγάλου Ἀγχιό[χου] Σω[τῆρος(?)] | Εὐεργέτου Καλλινίκου; *I.Delos* 1547 [Delos; 129–127 BCE], ll. 2–3: Ἀντιόχου Φιλοπάτορος τοῦ ἐγ βασιλέως | Μεγάλου Ἀντιόχου; *I.Delos* 1548 [Delos; 129–127 BCE], ll. 1–2: Ἀντιόχον Φιλοπάτορα βασιλέως Μεγάλου | Ἀντιόχου υἱόν. A gold stater minted by Sidetes and dated to 134/133 BCE bears the legend: ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ | ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΕΥΕΡΓΕΤΟΥ; cf. Justin, *Epit.* 38.10.6: *Antiochus tribus proeliis victor cum Babyloniam occupasset, Magnus haberi coepit*. See Muccioli, *Epiteti*, 401–2; Strootman, “Kings,” 147–48; Lerouge-Cohen, *Souvenirs*, 327–28, 338–39.

<sup>11</sup> See SEG 8-468 [59 BCE], ll. 1–3: Βασιλέα μέγαν Πτολεμαῖον θεὸν | νέον Διόνυσσον Φιλοπάτορα καὶ | Φιλιά[δε]λφον, and *I.Fayoum* 1:12 [58 BCE], ll. 1–2: ὑπὲρ βασιλέως μεγάλου | Πτολεμαίου θεοῦ Νέου Διονύσου.

<sup>12</sup> See Lerouge-Cohen, *Souvenirs*, 342–43.

<sup>13</sup> See *Stud.Pal.* 4.1 [127/126 BCE], ll. 5–7: ἐν δὲ Πτ[ολεμαίδι τῆς Θηβαίδος, ἐφ’ ἱερέων Πτολεμαίου Σωτῆρος καὶ βασιλέως] | Πτολεμαίου θεοῦ Εὐε[ργ]έτου καὶ Σωτῆρος Ἐπιφανοῦς Εὐχαρίστου καὶ τοῦ βήματος Διονύσου τοῦ μεγάλου θεοῦ Σωτῆρος(?) | Εὐεργέτου τοῦ μεγάλου βασιλέως Ἐπιφανοῦς Εὐχαρίστου]; *P.Lond.* 3.879 [123 BCE], ll. 10–12: ἐν δὲ Πτολεμαίδι τῆς Θηβαίδος ἐφ’ ἱερείων Πτολεμαίου μὲν Σωτῆρος καὶ βασιλέως | Πτολεμαίου θεοῦ Εὐεργέτου καὶ Σωτῆρος ἑαυτῶν Εὐχαρίστου, τοῦ δὲ βήματος τοῦ χρυσοῦ τοῦ βασιλέως Πτολεμαίου θεοῦ Εὐεργέτου τοῦ μεγάλου βασιλέως ἑαυτῶν Εὐχαρίστου.

<sup>14</sup> See Nadig, *König*, 52; cf. Lerouge-Cohen, *Souvenirs*, 339 n. 95.

<sup>15</sup> *P.Tor.Choach.* 12, col. 7, l. 13. See Nadig, *König*, 52.

I.<sup>16</sup> Like Ptolemy VIII, Antiochus VII also bore the title of “Euergetes” (and possibly that of “Soter”), as attested by inscriptions and coins.<sup>17</sup>

In the Septuagint, the Artaxerxes of LXX Esther—his identification with one of the Achaemenid kings of this name is debated<sup>18</sup>—is not the only king styled as μέγας βασιλεύς. The title is also used of the Assyrian King Sennacherib (4 Kgdms 18:19, 28; Isa 36:4, 13), of the Neo-Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar (Jdt 2:5; 3:2; in the book of Judith, Nebuchadnezzar is referred to as King of Assyria), and of the Seleucid King Antiochus III (1 Macc 8:6), while in 2 Esd 7:12, King Arthasastha (Artaxerxes) is titled βασιλεὺς βασιλέων.<sup>19</sup>

Similar to the Artaxerxes of Additions B and E to Esther, the Artaxerxes of the pseudo-Hippocratic epistles bears the title βασιλεὺς μέγας (*Ep.* 4, l. 3 [ed. Smith]) as well as βασιλεὺς βασιλέων (*Ep.* 7, l. 1) and βασιλεὺς βασιλέων μέγας (*Ep.* 1, l. 1; 2, l. 1; 3, l. 1; 8, l. 1). The latter title is assigned to Artaxerxes II in an inscription from the East Terrace of Mount Nemrud Dagi.<sup>20</sup>

(b) While Ptolemy VIII may have imitated the titulature of his ancestor Ptolemy III Euergetes I, who assumed the title of μέγας βασιλεύς after invading Asia during the Third Syrian War, it is unlikely that he would have portrayed himself as the “master of the whole world,” as Ptolemy III did in the inscription on the victory stele that he erected at Adulis. In this inscription, Ptolemy III presents an impressive, though exaggerated, list of his Asian conquests.<sup>21</sup> Ptolemy III’s claim to global hegemony is also reflected in a petition, where a man named Aigyptos addresses him not only as “Great King” but also as “reigning over the whole inhabited world.”<sup>22</sup> King Ptolemy VI Philometor, Ptolemy VIII’s older brother and predecessor in the throne of Egypt, may have harboured similar ambitions, as can be inferred from a number of petitions addressed to him and his sister-wife Cleopatra II, which express wishes for world

<sup>16</sup> See Strootman, “Kings,” 147–48, 151–53 with n. 70; Lerouge-Cohen, *Souvenirs*, 326–27.

<sup>17</sup> See n. 10 above.

<sup>18</sup> See 1.1, n. 15.

<sup>19</sup> See Doering, *Letters*, 237–38.

<sup>20</sup> See *IGLS* 1.3, ll. 12–15: τὴν βασιλείᾳς | [βα]σιλέων μεγάλου Ἀρτα]ξέρξου τοῦ κ[αὶ Ἀρσάκου(?)] | θυγατέρα.

<sup>21</sup> See *OGIS* 54 [240 BCE], ll. 13–24.

<sup>22</sup> See *PSI* 5.541 [263–229 BCE], l. 1: [β]ασιλεῖ μ[εγ]άλῳ Πτολεμαίῳ; ll. 7–8: σοῦ τῆς οἰκουμένης πάσης | βασιλεύοντος. Cf. also Ptolemy II Philadelphus’ claim, in the letter to Eleazar ascribed to him by Ps.-Aristeas (Let. Aris. § 37), that his kingdom encompasses the whole world (ὅς [sc. θεὸς] ἡμῖν τὴν βασιλείαν ἐν εἰρήνῃ καὶ δόξῃ κρατίστη παρ’ ὅλην τὴν οἰκουμένην διατετήρηκεν), as well as Apollo’s *vaticinium*, in Callimachus, *Hymn. Del.* 166–70, predicting that Ptolemy II’s kingdom will extend “on both continents.”

domination. In one of these documents, the petitioner, Ptolemy son of Glaukios, notably addresses Ptolemy VI as the “Sun King” and wishes that the gods grant him dominion over every land under the sun.<sup>23</sup>

In the case of Ptolemy VIII, there is no literary or documentary evidence suggesting that he ever entertained, or that his subjects ascribed to him, aspirations for worldwide rule. Under his reign, the Ptolemaic kingdom included only Egypt, the northern part of Lower Nubia, Cyrenaica, Cyprus, and a few strongholds in the Red Sea.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, it seems improbable that the author of Addition B had him in mind when designating Artaxerxes as πάσης ἐπικρατήσας οἰκουμένης. The latter expression may simply have been patterned after similar expressions used in Septuagintal and extra-Septuagintal texts in relation to Near Eastern kings such as Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus II, and Darius III.<sup>25</sup>

(c) It is also difficult to view Artaxerxes’ reference to himself as Haman’s benefactor in LXX Esth E:2–3 as an allusion to Ptolemy VIII’s title of Euergetes. The latter title was also assigned to other rulers contemporary with Ptolemy VIII, such as Antiochus VII Sidetes and Mithradates I. Moreover, LXX Esth E:3 (τοῖς ἑαυτῶν εὐεργέταις ἐπιχειροῦσιν μηχανᾶσθαι) is intertextually dependent on 3 Macc 3:19 (καὶ τοῖς ἑαυτῶν εὐεργέταις ὑψαυχενοῦντες) and 6:24 (καὶ ἐμὲ αὐτὸν τὸν ὑμῶν εὐεργέτην ἐπιχειρεῖτε τῆς ἀρχῆς ἥδη καὶ τοῦ πνεύματος μεθιστᾶν λάθρα μηχανώμενοι τὰ μὴ συμφέροντα τῇ βασιλείᾳ), where King Ptolemy IV Philopator makes similar allegations against the Jews and his *philoι*, respectively, as those made by King Artaxerxes.<sup>26</sup> It is only if we assume that the author of 3 Maccabees transposed events from the reign of Ptolemy

<sup>23</sup> See UPZ 1.20 [163 BCE], ll. 63–64: ὃς [sc. Σάραπης] διδοίη σοι μετὰ τῆς Ἰσίου νίκην κράτος τῆς οἰκουμένης ἀπάσης; UPZ 1.42 [162 BCE], ll. 51–52: ὑμῖν δὲ γίνοιτο κρατεῖν πάσης ἥς ἂν αἰρήσθε χώρας; UPZ 1.16 [156 BCE], l. 22: Ἦλιε βασιλεῦ; ll. 30–32: σοὶ δὲ ἡ Ἰσις καὶ ὁ Σάραπης ... δώϊησαν κυριεύειν] πάσης χώρας ἥς ὁ Ἦλιος ἐφορᾷ; cf. UPZ 1.9, l. 15; 1.14, ll. 29–30; 1.15, ll. 42–47. See Otto, *Geschichte*, 95 with nn. 6 and 7.

<sup>24</sup> See Hölbl, *History*, 195.

<sup>25</sup> See 1 Esd 2:3: ἐμὲ [sc. King Cyrus II] ἀνέδειξεν βασιλέα τῆς οἰκουμένης ὁ κύριος τοῦ Ἰσραήλ; cf. LXX 2 Chr 36:23: πάσης τὰς βασιλείας τῆς γῆς ἔδωκέν μοι [sc. to King Cyrus II] κύριος; Jdt 2:5: τάδε λέγει ὁ βασιλεὺς ὁ μέγας, ὁ κύριος πάσης τῆς γῆς [sc. Nebuchadnezzar]; LXX Dan 3:2: Ναβουχοδονοσορ βασιλεὺς βασιλέων καὶ κυριεύων τῆς οἰκουμένης ὅλης; PSI XII 1285 [fictitious letter of King Darius III to Alexander], col. I, ll. 6–7: συν[έ]σ[τησα εἰς ἓν πᾶσαν τ]ὴν οἰκουμένην. For the Persian king as master of the whole world, see also Aeschines, *Ctes.* 132: ὁ μὲν τῶν Περσῶν βασιλεὺς ... ὁ τολμῶν ἐν ταῖς ἐπιστολαῖς γράφειν ὅτι δεσπότης ἐστὶν ἀπάντων ἀνθρώπων ἀφ’ ἡλίου ἀνιόντος μέχρι δυσμένου.

<sup>26</sup> See Domazakis, *Esther*, 27, 205–6.



VIII to that of Ptolemy IV Philopator, as some scholars have argued,<sup>27</sup> that we can indirectly link LXX Esth E:2–3 with Ptolemy VIII.<sup>28</sup>

Furthermore, it is difficult to contend, as Stein does, that in LXX Esth E:13 the epithets σωτήρ καὶ εὐεργέτης, “benefactor and saviour,” allude to the surnames of Hellenistic and, in particular, Ptolemaic rulers.<sup>29</sup> In the verse in question, the epithets are not attributed to King Artaxerxes but to Mordecai. This usage likely reflects the expanded application of the honorific titles σωτήρ καὶ εὐεργέτης, originally reserved for Hellenistic monarchs, to encompass non-royal Greek and Roman benefactors.<sup>30</sup>

(d) Lastly, the evidence suggesting that the phrase ἀνανεώσασθαι τὴν εἰρήνην in LXX Esth B:2 might allude to Ptolemy VIII’s restoration of peace in Egypt after years of internal strife is rather scant. Most of the amnesty decrees that have come down to us from the reign of this king were not issued individually by him but rather jointly with his two wives, Cleopatra II and Cleopatra III,<sup>31</sup> suggesting that the endeavour to promote peace and social tranquillity stemmed from the unusual reigning trio rather than from Ptolemy VIII alone. In a *prostagma* issued by Ptolemy VIII and Cleopatra III between 131 and 125 BCE, we encounter the term εὐδία, meaning “good weather” and metaphorically “calm, tranquillity,”<sup>32</sup> which evokes the term ἀκύματος, “waveless,” also used metaphorically in LXX Esth B:2. However, as we can infer from the lacunary

<sup>27</sup> See Tcherikover, “Third Book,” 7–8; Croy, 3 *Maccabees*, xiv–xv.

<sup>28</sup> Miller, *Jews*, 37–44, 62–68, has also referred to the reign of Ptolemy VIII in connection with the Greek Esther, arguing that LXX Esther, including its Additions, was written between 164 and 142 BCE, with the latter being the date when the book was sent to Alexandria. Miller’s thesis is based on the assumption that the “fourth year of the reign of Ptolemy and Cleopatra” mentioned in LXX Esth F:11 corresponds to 142 BCE and that the Ptolemy in question is Ptolemy VIII. This possibility has rightly been dismissed by Jacob, “Esther,” 278–79, and Motzo, “Autore,” 242, who have pointed out that when Ptolemy VIII acceded to the throne of Egypt in 145 BCE, he did not commence a new regnal year count but continued the numbering initiated in 170/169 BCE, when he began his joint rule with his siblings. See Domazakis, *Neologisms*, 239 n. 130.

<sup>29</sup> Stein, “Essai,” 117. On the epithets σωτήρ and εὐεργέτης, see Nock, “Soter.”

<sup>30</sup> See, e.g., Robert, *Amyzon* no. 62 [ca. 160 BCE], ll. 3–5: [...] Μελαινέως | [γ]ενόμενον εὐε[ργέτην] | [κ]αὶ σωτήρα; TAM V,1 543 [Maionia; 136/135 or 157/156 BCE], ll. 3–6: Ἰόλλαν | Μητροδώρου Σαρδιανόν, | τὸν ἑαυτῶν εὐεργέτην καὶ σωτήρα; *I.Délos* 1723 [Delos; ca. 100 BCE], ll. 4–7: Διόδοτος Ἀντιπά[τ]ρ[ου] | Ἀσκαλωνίτης | τὸν ἑαυτοῦ θεῖον καὶ τροφέα | [κ]αὶ σωτήρα καὶ εὐεργέτην; TAM V,2 918 [Thyateira; 87/86–80 BCE], ll. 2–5: Λεύκιον Λικίνιο[ν] Λευκίου υἱόν | Λεύκολλον τὸν ἀντι[ταμίαν] Ἀσίας | σωτήρα καὶ εὐεργέτην καὶ κτ[ίστην] | τοῦ δήμου; IG XII,5 627 [Ceos; ca. 67 BCE], ll. 2–3: Γναῖον Πομπήιον Γναίου υἱὸν Μάγνον | τὸν εὐεργέτην καὶ σωτήρα; *MDAI(A)* 33 (1908) 410,44 [Pergamon; 48–44 BCE], l. 5: [Γάιον] Ἰούλιον Γαίου υἱὸν Καίσαρα | τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἀπάντων σωτήρα καὶ εὐεργέτην; TAM V,2 1229 [Apollonis; 28/27 BCE], ll. 10–13: Ἀ[τ]ταλον Ἀπολλωνίου τὸν διὰ γένους | ἱερέα τοῦ Διὸς καὶ κοινὸν σωτήρα | καὶ εὐεργέτην. See Nock, “Soter,” 727, 729; Habicht, “Zeit,” 86–87, 97; Passoni Dell’Acqua, “Euergetes,” 180–81; Muccioli, *Epiteti*, 175.

<sup>31</sup> See *C.Ord.Ptol.* 41–42, 43, 53, 53bis–53ter, 54, 55.

<sup>32</sup> See *C.Ord.Ptol.* 50, l. 13: [...] οὔμενοι εἰς εὐδίαν πάντας ἀπο[...].

text of the *prostagma* in question, εὐδία in this context denotes “prosperity,” as it does in a decree honouring Ptolemy VIII’s father, Ptolemy V Epiphanes, preserved on the Rosetta Stone.<sup>33</sup> For comparison, the Canopus Decree, honouring Ptolemy VIII’s ancestor, Ptolemy III, explicitly states that the king maintained peace in the country.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, decrees and royal letters from other Hellenistic kingdoms provide clear evidence of kings being praised by others, or portraying themselves, as maintainers of peace.<sup>35</sup>

### 5.3 σωφροσύνη, καλῶς οὖν ποιήσετε, ἐκτίθημι, φίλοι

Some other terms that have been put forth in support of the claim that Additions B and E have an Egyptian “flavour” are σωφροσύνη, “soundness of judgment,” καλῶς οὖν ποιήσετε, “you will then do well to...,” ἐκτίθημι, “exhibit publicly,” and φίλοι, “Friends.” However, none of these terms is exclusive to Ptolemaic Egypt.

(a) According to Kottsieper, the term σωφροσύνη, attributed to Haman in his capacity as Artaxerxes’ counsellor (LXX Esth B:3: ὁ σωφροσύνη παρ’ ἡμῖν διενέγκας), aligns well with an origin of Additions B and E in Hellenistic Alexandria, given a parallel offered by the *Letter of Aristaeas* (§ 125), where king Ptolemy II Philadelphus is said to have been eager to be surrounded by δίκαιοι and σώφρονες counsellors.<sup>36</sup> Yet, already in Xenophon, σωφροσύνη appears to be a virtue appreciated by the Persian kings and their circle. In *Cyropaedia* 8.6.10, Cyrus the Elder sends his newly appointed satraps to the provinces with the order to imitate him in everything, including

<sup>33</sup> See OGIS 90,A [196 BCE], l. 11: δαπάνας πολλὰς ὑπομεμένηκεν [sc. King Ptolemy V] ἔνεκα τοῦ τὴν Αἴγυπτον εἰς εὐδίαν ἀγαγεῖν.

<sup>34</sup> See OGIS 56 [238 BCE], ll. 11–12: ὁ βασιλεὺς ... τὴν τε | χώραν ἐν εἰρήνῃ διατετήρηκεν.

<sup>35</sup> See OGIS 219 [decree of Ilion honouring Antiochus I (after 281 BCE) or Antiochus III (216 or 203 BCE)], ll. 4–6: [βασιλεὺς Ἀντίοχος] ἐζήτησε τὰς μὲν πόλεις τὰς κα(τὰ) τὴν Σελευκίδα, περιεχομένας ὑπὸ καιρῶν δυσχερῶν διὰ τοὺς ἀποστάντας | τῶν πραγμάτων, εἰς εἰρήνην καὶ τὴν ἀρχαίαν εὐδαιμονίαν καταστήσαι; ll. 11–12: τὰς τε πόλεις εἰς εἰρήνην καὶ τὴν βασιλείαν εἰς τὴν ἀρχαίαν διάθεσιν | κατέστησεν; OGIS 234 [Amphictionic decree carved on the base of a statue of Antiochus III; 201 BCE], ll. 19–22: περὶ βασιλέως | Ἀντίοχου τοῦ εὐεργέτα Ἀντιοχέων εὐλόγηκε εὐχαριστῶν | αὐτῷ διότι τὴν δαμοκρατίαν καὶ τὴν εἰρήναν <αν> τοῖς Ἀντιοχεῦσιν | διαφυλάσσει; *Iliados* 4 [honorary decree for Antiochus III and Laodice III; 195–190 BCE], ll. 41–42: ἐπειδὴ βασιλέως μεγάλου Ἀντιόχου προγονικὴν αἵρσιν διατηροῦντος εἰς πάντα | [το]ῦς Ἕλληνας καὶ τοῖς μὲν τὴν εἰρήνην παρέχοντος; Welles, RC no. 52 [letter of Eumenes II; 167/166 BCE], ll. 7–13: κοινὸν ἀναδείξας | ἑμαυτὸν εὐεργέτην τῶν Ἑλλήνων πολλοὺς μὲν | καὶ μεγάλους ἀγῶνας ὑπέστην πρὸς τοῦ[ς] | βαρβάρους ... | ὅπως οἱ τὰς Ἑλληνίδας κατοικοῦντες πόλει[ς] | διὰ παντὸς ἐν εἰρήνῃ καὶ τῇ βελτίστῃ καταστάσ[ει] | ὑπάρχωσιν. See Préaux, *Monde*, 194–95, 201.

<sup>36</sup> Kottsieper, “Zusätze,” 155 n. 144.

requiring those who received lands and official residences from them to attend their courts and, by exercising σωφροσύνη, to put themselves at their disposal.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, the combination διαφέρω, “to excel” + σωφροσύνη that occurs in LXX Esth B:3 is not uncommon in Hellenistic honorific decrees.<sup>38</sup>

(b) Kottsieper also points out that the polite epistolary formula καλῶς οὖν ποιήσετε, “you will then do well to...,” which occurs in Artaxerxes’ second letter (LXX Esth E:17), appears, among other instances, in Egypt, particularly around 120 BCE, that is, during the time of Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II, to which this scholar dates Additions B and E, as well in the *Letter of Aristeas* (§§ 39, 46), which also likely dates from the same period.<sup>39</sup> Apart from its many instances in private correspondence, the formula καλῶς οὖν ποιήσεις/ποιήσετε occurs, indeed, in three Ptolemaic royal letters: *C.Ord.Ptol.* 49, l. 7 [135 BCE]; 52, l. 16 [124–116 BCE]; and 60, l. 15 [115 BCE]; the first two were issued by Ptolemy VIII, Cleopatra II, and Cleopatra III, while the third was issued by Cleopatra III and Ptolemy Soter II. However, the same formula and its variants also appear in royal letters written by kings of other Hellenistic kingdoms, as well as in fictitious royal letters found in Septuagintal and extra-Septuagintal texts.<sup>40</sup> The most relevant of the latter letters are those found in the *Letter of Aristeas*: King Ptolemy II’s letter to the high priest Eleazar and the latter’s reply to the king, in both of which the formula καλῶς οὖν ποιήσεις appears, in §§ 39 and 46, respectively. The intertextual links that can be identified between these two letters, the letters of King Ptolemy IV in 3 Maccabees, and the letters of Artaxerxes in Additions B and E raise the possibility that the formula καλῶς οὖν ποιήσετε in LXX Esth E:17 is an intertextual borrowing from the two letters composed by Ps.-Aristeas, specifically the one ascribed to Ptolemy II.<sup>41</sup> This would constitute a direct borrowing from the *Letter of Aristeas*, as the formula καλῶς οὖν ποιήσεις/ποιήσετε does not appear in the royal letters in 3 Maccabees. The existence of a direct intertextual connection between the *Letter of Aristeas* and

<sup>37</sup> Xenophon, *Cyr.* 8.6.10: ὁπόσοι δ’ ἂν γῆν καὶ ἀρχεῖα λάβωσιν, ἀναγκάζειν τούτους ἐπὶ θύρας ἰέναι καὶ σωφροσύνης ἐπιμελομένους παρέχειν ἑαυτοὺς τῷ σατράπῃ χρῆσθαι, ἦν τι δέηται.

<sup>38</sup> See *SEG* 53-1357 [Silandos; second/first century BCE], ll. 8–9: σωφροσύνη πολὺ διήνεγκεν τῶν ἄλλων; *IG* XII,6 1:360 [Samos; ca. 50–1 BCE], ll. 3–5: ἀρετῇ | καὶ σωφροσύνῃ διαφέρουσαν; *I.Magnesia* 131 [Magnesia-on-the-Maeander; first century CE], ll. 3–4: ἀρετῇ καὶ σωφροσύνῃ | διενένκαντα; *MAMA* 8, 470 [Aphrodisias; Roman], ll. 8–9: σωφροσύνη καὶ σε|μνότητι διενένκασαν. Cf. Diodorus Siculus, *Bibl.* 3.58.2 et passim. See Robert, “Études,” 104–5, who notes that expressions consisting of the verb διαφέρω and the dative of a noun denoting a quality become current in the epigraphic literature from the mid-second century BCE onwards.

<sup>39</sup> See Kottsieper, “Zusätze,” 194.

<sup>40</sup> See Domazakis, *Esther*, 164–65 with n. 63.

<sup>41</sup> See Domazakis, *Esther*, 165–66 and 5.6 below.

Additions B and E would, of course, not entail that the two Additions were contemporary with the *Letter* or that they date from the time of Ptolemy VIII; rather, it would merely establish the time of composition of the *Letter* as a *terminus post quem* for the composition of the Additions.

(c) Jacob has termed the verb ἐκτίθημι, which occurs in LXX Esth E:19 (τὸ ἀντίγραφον τῆς ἐπιστολῆς ταύτης ἐκθέντες) in the sense “to display in public, to publish,” “ein speciell ägyptisch-griechisches Wort” or “Aegyptiacismus.”<sup>42</sup> However, the consultation of an up-to-date Greek lexicon shows that this assertion does not hold.<sup>43</sup> LXX Esth E:19 adopts the phraseology of the canonical verse 3:14, which is the only place in LXX Esther where the combination ἐκτίθημι + ἀντίγραφον + ἐπιστολή occurs. The combinations ἐκτίθημι + ἀντίγραφον (4:8; 8:13), ἐκτίθημι + γράμματα (4:3), ἐκτίθημι + πρόσταγμα (8:14, 17), and ἐκτίθημι + ἔκθεμα (8:17) occur elsewhere in LXX Esther. In the *Corpus des Ordonnances des Ptolémées*, the combinations ἐκτίθημι + πρόσταγμα<sup>44</sup> and ἐκτίθημι + ἀντίγραφον + πρόσταγμα<sup>45</sup> occur, but ἐκτίθημι + ἀντίγραφον + ἐπιστολή does not. However, the latter combination does appear in a Seleucid royal document.<sup>46</sup>

(d) As for the king’s *philoi* (LXX Esth E:5),<sup>47</sup> their presence is documented not only at the Ptolemaic court but also at the Antigonid, Attalid, Seleucid, and other Hellenistic courts.<sup>48</sup>

## 5.4 πόλις and χώρα

The phrase πᾶσα δὲ πόλις ἢ χώρα, “every city or land” (LXX Esth E:24), has been adduced as evidence for the Egyptian “flavour” of Addition E on the grounds that it refers to “the city of Susa and to the rest of the country (χώρα),” expressing “a twofold

<sup>42</sup> Jacob, “Esther,” 282, 287; cf. Gregg, “Additions,” 665; Passoni Dell’Acqua, “Decree,” 74–75, 78.

<sup>43</sup> See Rodríguez Adrados et al., *Diccionario*, s.v., A, 2.II.

<sup>44</sup> *C.Ord.Ptol.* 21, ll. 3, 8; 22, l. 8; 50, l. 24; 75, l. 6; 82, ll. 13, 14.

<sup>45</sup> *C.Ord.Ptol.* 94; see *BGU* 8.1730, ll. 18–19.

<sup>46</sup> See SEG 37-1010 [letter of Antiochus III to Zeuxis; 209 BCE], ll. 46–50: τῆς | ἐπιστολῆς τὸ ἀντίγραφον ἀνα|γράψαντας εἰς στήλας λιθίνας | ἐκθεῖναι ἐν τοῖς ἐπιφανεστάτοις ἱεροῖς. It should be noted, however, that the term commonly occurring in Seleucid documents is ἀνατίθημι. See Welles, *RC* no. 36, l. 24; no. 37, l. 9; no. 44, l. 42.

<sup>47</sup> See Jacob, “Esther,” 283, 287; Gregg, “Additions,” 665; Kottsieper, “Zusätze,” 190.

<sup>48</sup> See Corradi, *Studi*, 318–43; Le Bohec, “*Philoi*”; Savalli-Lestrade, *Philoi*, 215–394; Capdetrey, *Pouvoir*, 278–80, 384–94; Lerouge-Cohen, *Souvenirs*, 121–23.

reality that reflects the situation in Egypt: Alexandria, the πόλις, contrasts with the rest of the country, the *chôra*.<sup>49</sup> It should be noted, however, that the phrase πᾶσα δὲ πόλις in this verse does not refer to a single city, namely, Susa, but to every city in the Persian kingdom that might dare disobey the king's orders; similarly, the term χώρα does not refer to "the rest of the country" but to each of the hundred twenty-seven "lands" comprising Artaxerxes' kingdom.<sup>50</sup> The composer of Addition E takes his cue here from the translation of the canonical parts of Esther, where reference is made to the cities and lands of the Persian kingdom.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, although not relevant here, the distinction between πόλις, "city," and χώρα, "countryside," is also attested in non-Egyptian contexts.<sup>52</sup>

## 5.5 Further evidence for the Egyptian "flavour" of Additions B and E

In this section, I will add some further evidence for the Egyptian "flavour" of Additions B and E, which has not been brought forward in previous studies. This evidence is suggestive but by no means conclusive.

(a) The phrase ὁ τὰ πάντα κατοπτρεύων, "he who closely observes everything," used in LXX Esth E:4 as a modifier of Yahweh, elsewhere occurs in connection with a deity only in the third of Isidorus' hymns to Isis-Hermouthis, which are engraved at the gates of the sanctuary of the goddess in Narmouthis (Medinet Madi in the Fayoum) and date to the early first century BCE at the latest.<sup>53</sup>

(b) In LXX Esth B:3, King Artaxerxes states that Haman had obtained τὸ δεύτερον τῶν βασιλειῶν γέρας. Depending on whether we accent the penultima (τῶν βασιλείων) or the ultima (τῶν βασιλειῶν), the genitive plural τῶν βασιλ-είων/-ειῶν

<sup>49</sup> Passoni Dell'Acqua, "Decree," 75 n. 19; cf. ead., "Editti," 61.

<sup>50</sup> See 2.5.

<sup>51</sup> See LXX Esth 3:12: κατὰ πᾶσαν χώραν ... ταῖς ἑκατὸν εἴκοσι ἑπτὰ χώραις; 8:11: χρῆσθαι τοῖς νόμοις αὐτῶν ἐν πάσῃ πόλει; 8:17: κατὰ πόλιν καὶ χώραν, οὗ ἂν ἐξετέθη τὸ πρόσταγμα; 9:27: πόλιν καὶ πατριὰν καὶ χώραν. Cf. 1:1, 22; 2:3; 3:12; B:1; 3:14; 8:9; E:1.

<sup>52</sup> See, e.g., 1 Esd 5:45 and 9:37: ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ καὶ [ἐν] τῇ χώρᾳ (see Talshir, "Milieu," 139–40), 2 Macc 1:1: οἱ ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ οἱ ἐν τῇ χώρᾳ τῆς Ἰουδαίας, and the following line from the letter of an unspecified King Antiochus to Phnias, as transmitted by Athenaeus (*Deipn.* 12.68 [ed. Kaibel]): ἐγράψαμεν ὑμῖν καὶ πρότερον ὅπως μηδεὶς ἢ φιλόσοφος ἐν τῇ πόλει μηδ' ἐν τῇ χώρᾳ.

<sup>53</sup> *L'Egypte métriques* 175, III, l. 26: κατοπτρεύουσ' ἅπαντα | ἔργ' ἀνδρῶν. See Domazakis, *Esther*, 179 n. 101.

might be understood as pertaining to either τὸ βασίλειον, “the palace,” or ἡ βασιλεία, “the kingdom.”<sup>54</sup> However, the noun ἡ βασιλεία can also denote a royal diadem, and it is in this sense that it appears in Ptolemaic contexts, such as in the Rosetta Decree, where Ptolemy V is titled “lord of the diadems” and is said to have entered the temple of Memphis wearing the *pschent* (βασιλεία Ψχέντ), the Pharaonic double crown, which combined the crown of Upper Egypt with that of Lower Egypt.<sup>55</sup>

(c) In Addition E, King Artaxerxes refers twice to his goodness, using the term χρηστότης (E:2: τῇ ... τῶν εὐεργετούντων χρηστότητι; E:10: τῆς ἡμετέρας χρηστότητος). The noun χρηστότης and its cognate adjective χρηστός are not often used in relation to kings.<sup>56</sup> However, they are applied to two Ptolemies in two different literary sources. Diodorus Siculus relates that Ptolemy I was renowned for his goodness (χρηστότης), benevolence (τὸ φιλάνθρωπον), and fairness (ἐπιείκεια).<sup>57</sup> These qualities are also attributed to King Artaxerxes by the author of Additions B and E.<sup>58</sup> Moreover, in his first mimiamb, Herodas, enumerating the marvels of Egypt, includes the “good king” (l. 30: ὁ βασιλεὺς χρηστός). The king referred to in this text is either Ptolemy II or Ptolemy III;<sup>59</sup> χρηστός could be an adjective frequently used to describe him.

(d) The prescripts of the letters of Artaxerxes in Additions B and E to Esther list the administrative officials to whom the letters are addressed: in LXX Esth B:1, the addressees are the rulers of the 127 lands of the Persian kingdom (τοῖς ... ἑκατὸν εἴκοσι ἑπτὰ χωρῶν ἄρχουσιν) and the subordinate toparchs (τοπάρχαις ὑποτεταγμένοις), while in LXX Esth E:1, the addressees include the rulers of the lands in the 127 satrapies (τοῖς ... ἑκατὸν εἴκοσι ἑπτὰ σατραπείαις χωρῶν ἄρχουσιν) and those loyal to the government (τοῖς τὰ ἡμέτερα φρονοῦσιν). The officials listed in the prescript of

<sup>54</sup> See Fritzsche, *Zusätze*, 84.

<sup>55</sup> See OGIS 90 [196 BCE], l. 1: κυρίου βασιλειῶν; ll. 43–45: τὰς τοῦ βασιλέως χρυσᾶς βασιλείας δέκα ... | ἔσται δ' αὐτῶν ἐν τῷ μέσῳ ἡ καλουμένη βασιλεία Ψχέντ, ἣν περιθέμενος εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὸ ἐν Μέμφει | ἱερὸν, ὅπως ἐν αὐτῷ συν|τελεσθῇ τὰ νομιζόμενα τῇ παραλήψει τῆς βασιλείας; cf. Diodorus Siculus, *Bibl.* 1.47.5: ἔχουσιν [sc. the statue of Osymandyas' mother] δὲ τρεῖς βασιλείας ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς, ἃς διασημαίνειν ὅτι καὶ θυγάτηρ καὶ γυνὴ καὶ μήτηρ βασιλέως ὑπῆρξε. See Bernand, *Prose*, 39–40, 53–54. The neuter τὸ βασίλειον is also used in this sense (see Rodríguez Adrados et al., *Diccionario*, s.v. βασίλειος, 4), inter alia, in 2 Kgdms 1:10 and in Wis 5:16.

<sup>56</sup> See Spicq, “χρηστεύομαι,” 512–13.

<sup>57</sup> Diodorus Siculus, *Bibl.* 18.14.1: συνέτρεχε δὲ καὶ φίλων πλῆθος πρὸς αὐτὸν διὰ τὴν ἐπιείκειαν; 18.33.3: ὁ δὲ Πτολεμαῖος ... εὐεργετικὸς καὶ ἐπιεικής; 19.55.5: διεβεβόητο γὰρ ἡ τοῦτου χρηστότης καὶ τὸ πρὸς τοὺς καταφυγόντας ἐπ' αὐτὸν ἔκτενές καὶ φιλάνθρωπον.

<sup>58</sup> See LXX Esth B:2; E:2; E:9; E:10; E:11.

<sup>59</sup> See Di Gregorio, *Mimiambi*, 72–74.

the first letter clearly occupy different tiers in the administrative hierarchy. Circular letters of this type, featuring the toparchs in their prescripts, are not attested outside Ptolemaic Egypt. However, as I argued in Chapter 2,<sup>60</sup> the list of addressees in LXX Esth B:1 seems to have been modelled after one of the lists of invitees and letter addressees of King Darius and King Nebuchadnezzar in 1 Esdras and LXX Daniel, respectively. Thus, it may not reflect first-hand the Ptolemaic epistolary practice.

(e) The intertextual connections between Additions B and E and Septuagint books written or translated in Egypt could lend support to the supposition that the two Additions are also of Egyptian provenance. Apart from 3 Maccabees and the *Letter of Aristeas*, which will be discussed in detail in the following section, Additions B and E seem to be intertextually dependent on the aforementioned 1 Esdras and/or LXX Daniel,<sup>61</sup> on LXX Isaiah,<sup>62</sup> on LXX Job or LXX Proverbs,<sup>63</sup> and possibly on LXX Jeremiah,<sup>64</sup> books for which an Egyptian origin is considered likely.<sup>65</sup>

## 5.6 Additions B and E, 3 Maccabees, and the *Letter of Aristeas*

As noted in the Introduction, scholarship has identified affinities between Additions B and E to Esther and two books of undeniable Egyptian provenance: 3 Maccabees and the *Letter of Aristeas*.<sup>66</sup> Having discussed the relationship between these texts in detail elsewhere,<sup>67</sup> I will here only summarise my conclusions.

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<sup>60</sup> See 2.5.

<sup>61</sup> See 2.4, 2.5, and 4.6.

<sup>62</sup> The phrase τὸ ἐκλεκτὸν γένος, denoting the Jews, in LXX Esth E:21, is taken from LXX Isa 43:20. See Domazakis, *Esther*, 183 n. 114.

<sup>63</sup> The *hapax legomenon* ὀλορίζει, “root and branch,” combined with the verb ἀπόλλυμι, “to destroy,” in LXX Esth B:6 (ἀπολέσαι ὀλορίζει) harks back to either LXX Job 4:7 (ὀλόρριζοι ἀπώλοντο) or LXX Prov 15:6 (ὀλόρριζοι ἐκ γῆς ὀλοῦνται). It is a neologism of the author of LXX Addition B. AT Esth 3:18 [B:6] employs the same adjective, ὀλόριζος (ὀλορίζους ἀπολέσαι), that occurs in LXX Job 4:7. Note also the combination αἱμάτων μέτοχοι, which occurs exclusively in LXX Esth E:5 and in LXX Prov 29:10.

<sup>64</sup> See LXX Esth B:6: πάντας οὖν γυναιξίν καὶ τέκνοις ἀπολέσαι ... ταῖς τῶν ἐχθρῶν μαχαίραις ἄνευ παντὸς οἴκτου καὶ φειδοῦς; cf. LXX Jer 21:7: δώσω ... τὸν λαὸν ... εἰς χεῖρας ἐχθρῶν ... καὶ κατακόψουσιν αὐτοὺς ἐν στόματι μαχαίρας· οὐ φείσομαι ἐπ’ αὐτοῖς καὶ οὐ μὴ οἰκτιρήσω αὐτούς. See Domazakis, *Esther*, 155 n. 38.

<sup>65</sup> See Aitken, *Companion*, 183, 343–44, 388, 457–58, 473, 546; Kreuzer, *Einleitung*, 263, 380, 415, 565–66, 585, 644–45.

<sup>66</sup> See 1.2. On the place and date of composition of these books, see Domazakis, *Esther*, 16–17 and 143.

<sup>67</sup> See Domazakis, *Esther*.

All the verses of Addition B, except for B:1, the letter's prescript, bear the imprint of the verbal influence of 3 Maccabees. The author of Addition B has primarily drawn on the two letters of King Ptolemy IV Philopator (3 Macc 3:12–29 and 7:1–9) but also on a few other verses of 3 Maccabees (2:21; 3:3, 7; 5:31; 6:4, 28). More specifically, he has drawn the following verbal elements from this book:

(a) the adjective *δυσμενής*, “hostile,”<sup>68</sup> the combination *μονώτατον ἔθνος*,<sup>69</sup> “the sole nation,” the verb *δυσνοέω*, “to be ill-disposed,”<sup>70</sup> and the adverb *διηνεκῶς*, “persistently,”<sup>71</sup> which are part of Philopator's anti-Jewish discourse;

(b) the nouns *εὐνοια*, “goodwill,” and (*βεβαία*) *πίστις*, “(steadfast) loyalty,” which are part of 3 Maccabees' pro-Jewish discourse; in Addition B, the same nouns are surprisingly used in reference to Haman;<sup>72</sup>

(c) the noun *εὐστάθεια*, used in reference to the stability of Philopator's government (*τὰ πράγματα*), which is allegedly undermined by the Jews;<sup>73</sup>

(d) the verb *βούλομαι*, “to wish, desire,” in the aorist passive, expressing the royal will;<sup>74</sup>

(e) the verb *διαλαμβάνω*, “to perceive, comprehend,” in the perfect tense, which introduces the purpose behind the king's decision to eradicate the Jews;<sup>75</sup>

(f) the verb *προστάσσω* in the first person plural of the perfect tense (*προστετάχαμεν*), which introduces the king's decision concerning the extermination of the Jews;<sup>76</sup>

<sup>68</sup> 3 Macc 3:7: *δυσμενεῖς*; 3:25: *δυσμενεῖσι*; cf. 3:19: *τὴν δὲ αὐτῶν εἰς ἡμᾶς δυσμένειαν*; 7:4: *δι' ἣν ἔχουσιν οὗτοι πρὸς τὰ πάντα ἔθνη δυσμένειαν*; LXX Esth B:4: *δυσμενὴ λαόν*; B:7: *δυσμενεῖς*.

<sup>69</sup> 3 Macc 3:19: *μονώτατοι τῶν ἐθνῶν*; LXX Esth B:5: *τόδε τὸ ἔθνος μονώτατον*.

<sup>70</sup> 3 Macc 3:24: *δυσνοεῖν ἡμῖν*; cf. 7:11: *μηδέποτε εὐνοήσῃν μηδὲ τοῖς τοῦ βασιλέως πράγμασιν*; LXX Esth B:5: *δυσνοοῦν τοῖς ἡμετέροις πράγμασιν*.

<sup>71</sup> 3 Macc 3:22: *διηνεκῶς δὲ εἰς τὸ φαῦλον ἐκνεύοντες*; LXX Esth B:4: *τά τε τῶν βασιλέων παραπέμποντας διηνεκῶς διατάγματα*.

<sup>72</sup> 3 Macc 3:3: *τὴν μὲν πρὸς τοὺς βασιλεῖς εὐνοίαν καὶ πίστιν ἀδιάστροφον ἦσαν διαφυλάσσοντες*; 5:31: *ἀποδεδειγμένων ὁλοσχερῇ βεβαίαν πίστιν*; 7:7: *ἣν ἔχουσι βεβαίαν ... εὐνοίαν*; LXX Esth B:3: *ἐν τῇ εὐνοίᾳ ἀπαραλλάκτως καὶ βεβαία πίστει ἀποδεδειγμένους*.

<sup>73</sup> 3 Macc 3:26: *τὰ πράγματα ἐν εὐσταθείᾳ ... κατασταθήσεσθαι*; 6:28: *εὐστάθειαν παρέχει [ὁ θεὸς] τοῖς ἡμετέροις πράγμασιν*; 7:4: *μήποτε εὐσταθήσιν τὰ πράγματα ἡμῶν*; LXX Esth B:5: *πρὸς τὸ μὴ τὴν βασιλείαν εὐσταθείας τυγχάνειν*; cf. B:7: *ὥπως ... εὐσταθῇ ... παρέχωσιν ἡμῖν ... τὰ πράγματα*.

<sup>74</sup> 3 Macc 3:21: *ἐβουλήθημεν ... καταστήσαι*; LXX Esth B:2: *ἐβουλήθην ... καταστήσαι*.

<sup>75</sup> 3 Macc 3:26: *διειληφάμεν εἰς τὸν ἐπίλοιπον χρόνον τελείως ἡμῖν τὰ πράγματα ἐν εὐσταθείᾳ ... κατασταθήσεσθαι*; LXX Esth B:5–7: *διειληφότες ... εἰς τὸν μετέπειτα χρόνον εὐσταθῇ ... παρέχωσιν ἡμῖν διὰ τέλους τὰ πράγματα*.

<sup>76</sup> 3 Macc 3:25: *προστετάχαμεν ... τὴν ἐπιστολὴν τήνδε ... σὺν γυναιξὶ καὶ τέκνοις ... ἀποστεῖλαι ... εἰς ... φόνον*; 7:8: *προστετάχαμεν*; LXX Esth B:6: *προστετάχαμεν ... ἐν τοῖς γεγραμμένοις ... ἀπολέσαι*.



(g) the phrase ἐπαίρομαι θράσει, “to be puffed up because of insolence,” which is used in reference to two rulers of Egypt, the Pharaoh of the Exodus and Ptolemy IV Philopator, who persecuted the Jews; in Addition B, King Artaxerxes uses it to refer to himself, but by adding a negation, he transforms it into a statement of modesty;<sup>77</sup>

(h) constructions such as μή + dative of a noun denoting a negative quality, antithetically conjoined with two nouns denoting positive qualities,<sup>78</sup> ἄνευ + πᾶς + two nouns,<sup>79</sup> and ἀντι- + κείμαι + διὰ παντός,<sup>80</sup>

Addition E has also drawn on the two letters of Philopator (much more on the first than on the second) as well as on verses from Chapters 2, 5, 6, and 7 of 3 Maccabees. The verbal elements that the author of this Addition has borrowed from 3 Maccabees are as follows:

(a) the noun κακοήθεια, “bad character/disposition,” used of the Jews in the first letter of Philopator and of the king’s *philoï* (Friends) in the second letter; in Addition E, κακοήθεια is first attributed to King Artaxerxes’ *philoï* in general, and then specifically to Haman;<sup>81</sup>

(b) the comparative adverb πυκνότερον, used with an elative sense, “very often,” as a modifier of the participle παρακείμενοι, which refers to the king’s *philoï*;<sup>82</sup>

(c) the combination εὐεργέτης + ἐπιχειρέω + μηχανάομαι + ἀρχή + πνεῦμα used in reference to the king’s *philoï*, who turned against their benefactor, even scheming to deprive him of his life and throne;<sup>83</sup>

(d) the adverb πανοικίᾳ, “with all the household,” which modifies a verb denoting execution; in Philopator’s letter, this combination designates the mode of capital

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<sup>77</sup> 3 Macc 2:21: θράσει ... ἐπηρμένον; 6:4: ἐπαρθέντα ἀνόμῳ θράσει; LXX Esth B:2: μὴ τῷ θράσει ... ἐπαιρόμενος.

<sup>78</sup> 3 Macc 3:15: μὴ βίᾳ δόρατος, ἐπικεῖα δὲ καὶ πολλῇ φιλανθρωπίᾳ; LXX Esth B:2: μὴ τῷ θράσει τῆς ἐξουσίας ... ἐπικεκότερον δὲ καὶ μετὰ ἡπιότητος.

<sup>79</sup> 3 Macc 7:5: ἄνευ πάσης ἀνακρίσεως καὶ ἐξετάσεως; LXX Esth B:6: ἄνευ παντός οἴκτου καὶ φειδοῦς.

<sup>80</sup> 3 Macc 7:9: ἀντικείμενον ... διὰ παντός; LXX Esth B:5: ἐν ἀντιπαραγωγῇ ... διὰ παντός ... κείμενον.

<sup>81</sup> 3 Macc 3:22: τῇ συμφύτῳ κακοηθείᾳ; 7:3: τῶν φίλων τινὲς κακοηθείᾳ; LXX Esth E:5-6: τῶν πιστευθέντων χειρίζειν φίλων τὰ πράγματα ... τῷ τῆς κακοηθείας ... παραλογισμῷ παραλογισαμένων.

<sup>82</sup> 3 Macc 7:3: πυκνότερον ἡμῖν παρακείμενοι; LXX Esth E:2: πυκνότερον τιμώμενοι.

<sup>83</sup> 3 Macc 3:19: καὶ τοῖς αὐτῶν εὐεργέταις ὑψαυχενοῦντες; 6:24: καὶ ἐμὲ αὐτὸν τὸν ὑμῶν εὐεργέτην ἐπιχειρεῖτε τῆς ἀρχῆς ἤδη καὶ τοῦ πνεύματος μεθιστᾶν λάθρα μηχανώμενοι; LXX Esth E:3: καὶ τοῖς αὐτῶν εὐεργέταις ἐπιχειροῦσιν μηχανᾶσθαι; E:12: ἐπετήδευσεν τῆς ἀρχῆς στερῆσαι ἡμᾶς καὶ τοῦ πνεύματος.

punishment intended for those who would defy the king's order concerning the Jews, while in the letter of Artaxerxes, it describes the mode of execution of Haman;<sup>84</sup>

(e) the combination ἀφανισμός + Ἰουδαῖοι, referring to the extermination of the Jews;<sup>85</sup>

(f) the neologism ὀλεθρία, “destruction,” and the antithetical juxtaposition of its cognate noun ὀλεθρος with the noun εὐφροσύνη, “joy, merry-making”;<sup>86</sup>

(g) the combination υἱοὶ θεοῦ ζῶντος + κατευθύνω τὰ πράγματα + πρόγονοι, through which Philopator conveys his acknowledgment that the Jews are the children of the living god, namely, Yahweh, who has been directing the affairs of his kingdom since the times of his ancestors;<sup>87</sup>

(h) the phrase καθώς προαιρούμεθα, “as we desire,” which expresses the king's conviction that the guidance provided by Yahweh is in line with his aspirations and the best interests of his government; this phrase turns up only in the version of Addition E preserved in P.Oxy. 4443 and is reflected in VL Esther;<sup>88</sup>

(i) the expression ἐν τῇ βελτίστῃ διαθέσει, “in the most excellent condition,” used with reference to the affairs of the state; in Addition E, the superlative βελτίστη is replaced by καλλίστη;<sup>89</sup>

(j) the combination φιланθρωπία/φιланθρώπως + πᾶν ἔθνος, which expresses the king's benevolence towards all the nations of his kingdom;<sup>90</sup>

(k) the combination πᾶς + geographical term + τὸ σύνολον + ἄβατος + πυριφλεγής + εἰς τὸν αἰὲ χρόνον, which is part of the sanction clause of Philopator's letter, threatening destruction by fire upon any places that would disobey the royal order, leaving them desolate for ever, together with the combination πυρὶ καὶ δόρατι + εἰς

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<sup>84</sup> 3 Macc 3:27: ἀποτυμπανισθήσεται πανοικία; LXX Esth E:18: ἐσταυρῶσθαι σὺν τῇ πανοικίᾳ.

<sup>85</sup> 3 Macc 5:20, 38: ἐπὶ τὸν τῶν ... Ἰουδαίων ἀφανισμόν; LXX Esth E:15: τοὺς ... παραδεδομένους εἰς ἀφανισμόν Ἰουδαίους.

<sup>86</sup> 3 Macc 4:2: ἐπικριθεῖσαν ὀλεθρίαν; 5:5: πέρας τῆς ὀλεθρίας; 6:30: τὸν ὀλεθρον ... ἐν εὐφροσύνῃ; LXX Esth E:21: ἀντ' ὀλεθρίας ... εὐφροσύνην.

<sup>87</sup> 3 Macc 6:28: τοὺς υἱοὺς τοῦ παντοκράτορος ἐπουρανίου θεοῦ ζῶντος, ὃς ἀφ' ἡμετέρων μέχρι τοῦ νῦν προγόνων ... εὐστάθειαν παρέχει τοῖς ἡμετέροις πράγμασιν; 7:2: κατευθύνοντος ἡμῖν τοῦ μεγάλου θεοῦ τὰ πράγματα; LXX Esth E:16: υἱοὺς τοῦ ὑψίστου μεγίστου ζῶντος θεοῦ, τοῦ κατευθύνοντος ἡμῖν τε καὶ τοῖς προγόνοις ἡμῶν τὴν βασιλείαν.

<sup>88</sup> 3 Macc 7:2: καθώς προαιρούμεθα; P.Oxy. 4443, col. i, l. 4: καθάπερ προαιρούμεθα; VL Esth E:16: *sicut volumus*.

<sup>89</sup> 3 Macc 3:26: τὰ πράγματα ἐν ... τῇ βελτίστῃ διαθέσει; LXX Esth E:16: τὴν βασιλείαν ἐν τῇ καλλίστῃ διαθέσει.

<sup>90</sup> 3 Macc 3:18: δι' ἣν ἔχομεν πρὸς ἅπαντας ἀνθρώπους φιλανθρωπίαν; cf. 3:20: τοῖς πᾶσιν ἔθνεσι φιλανθρώπως ἀπαντήσαντες; LXX Esth E:11: ἔτυχεν ἡς ἔχομεν πρὸς πᾶν ἔθνος φιλανθρωπίας.

τὸν ἅπαντα χρόνον + καθίστημι, which is used by Philopator when threatening to destroy Judea by fire and spear and burn down the Temple, leaving it desolate for ever;<sup>91</sup>

(l) the combination πᾶς τόπος + μετὰ παρρησίας, which in 3 Maccabees is used in the context of the permission granted by the king to the Jews to freely kill the Jewish apostates anywhere in his kingdom; in Addition E, the same combination is used in a different context, relating to the king granting permission to the Jews to live freely according to their customs in every place;<sup>92</sup>

(m) the divine epithets ὁ ἐπικρατῶν and ὁ δυναστεύων, which the high priest Simon uses in his prayer to refer to Yahweh's supremacy over all things;<sup>93</sup>

(n) the combination καθίστημι + μέτοχος, “make someone partaker of”;<sup>94</sup>

(o) the combination τύραννος, “tyrant” + ὠμότης, “cruelty,” which in Addition E is transformed into the quasi-synonymous combination δυναστεύων, “powerholder” + λοιμότης [AT: ὠμότης], “harmful behaviour.”<sup>95</sup>

Apart from these verbal elements that Additions B and E have derived from 3 Maccabees, it is worth noting that both the two Additions and 3 Maccabees seem to have independently drawn on the same intertexts, most notably nearby verses of the same chapters of 2 Maccabees.<sup>96</sup> They also both allude to one of the chief enemies of

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<sup>91</sup> 3 Macc 3:29: πᾶς δὲ τόπος ... τὸ σύνολον ... ἄβατος καὶ πυριφλεγῆς γινέσθω καὶ ... ἄχρηστος φανήσεται εἰς τὸν αἰὶ χρόνον; 5:43: ἰσόπεδον πυρὶ καὶ δόρατι θήσεσθαι ... εἰς τὸν ἅπαντα χρόνον καταστήσειν; LXX Esth E:24: πᾶσα δὲ πόλις ἢ χώρα τὸ σύνολον ... δόρατι καὶ πυρὶ καταναλωθήσεται ... οὐ μόνον ἀνθρώποις ἄβατος, ἀλλὰ καὶ θηρίοις καὶ πετεινοῖς εἰς τὸν ἅπαντα χρόνον ἔχθιστος κατασταθήσεται.

<sup>92</sup> 3 Macc 7:12: ὅπως ... ἐξολεθρεύσωσι κατὰ πάντα τὸν ὑπὸ τὴν βασιλείαν αὐτοῦ τόπον μετὰ παρρησίας; LXX Esth E:19: ἐκθέντες [sc. τὸ ἀντίγραφον τῆς ἐπιστολῆς] ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ μετὰ παρρησίας ἕαν τοὺς Ἰουδαίους χρῆσθαι τοῖς ἑαυτῶν νομίμοις. Many translators interpret the latter verse as indicating that the king's letter was to be displayed publicly in every place, as stated in LXX Esth 8:13: τὰ δὲ ἀντίγραφα ἐκτιθέσθωσαν ὀφθαλμοφανῶς ἐν πάσῃ τῇ βασιλείᾳ. However, it would make more sense if μετὰ παρρησίας was taken to modify the phrase χρῆσθαι τοῖς ἑαυτῶν νομίμοις, “to observe their own customs freely” (see Muraoka, *Lexicon*, s.v. παρρησία). The placement of μετὰ παρρησίας, instead of ὀφθαλμοφανῶς or a similar adverb, next to ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ may have been influenced by the juxtaposition of the same prepositional phrase with κατὰ πάντα τὸν ... τόπον in 3 Macc 7:12.

<sup>93</sup> 3 Macc 2:3: τῶν ὅλων ἐπικρατῶν; 2:7: τῷ τῆς ἀπάσης κτίσεως δυναστεύοντι; 5:7: πάσης δυνάμεως δυναστεύοντα; LXX Esth E:18: τοῦ τὰ πάντα ἐπικρατοῦντος θεοῦ; E:21: ὁ τὰ πάντα δυναστεύων θεός.

<sup>94</sup> 3 Macc 3:21: μετόχους τῶν αἰὶ ἱερέων καταστήσαι; LXX Esth E:5: μετόχους αἱμάτων ἀθῶων καταστήσασα.

<sup>95</sup> 3 Macc 6:24: τυράννους ὑπερβεβήκατε ὠμότητι; LXX Esth E:7: τῇ τῶν ἀνάξια δυναστευόντων λοιμότητι.

<sup>96</sup> See Domazakis, *Esther*, 183, 185–86.

the Jews in 2 Maccabees, the Seleucid military commander Nicanor, the former through the adjective τρισαλιτήριος (LXX Esth E:15; cf. 2 Macc 8:34; 15:3)<sup>97</sup> and the latter through Ptolemy IV's threat to destroy the Jerusalem Temple (3 Macc 5:43; cf. 2 Macc 14:33; 1 Macc 7:35).

It is also noteworthy that the author of the two Additions favours the same constructions and stylistic features as the author of 3 Maccabees.<sup>98</sup>

The version of Additions B and E that bears a more marked verbal influence of 3 Maccabees than the others is the LXX. The AT has fewer verbal correspondences with 3 Maccabees. Most notably:

(a) at 3:16 [=B:3], it omits the participle ἀποδεδειγμένος, which occurs in LXX Esth B:3 (βεβαία πίστει ἀποδεδειγμένος) and in 3 Macc 5:31 (ἀποδεδειγμένων ... βεβαίαν πίστιν);

(b) at 3:18 [=B:7], instead of the combinations εὐσταθῇ ... τὰ πράγματα (LXX Esth B:7) and τὰ πράγματα ἐν εὐσταθείᾳ (3 Macc 3:26), which denote the stability of the government, it uses the verb εὐσταθέω in relation to the Jews (ἵνα οἱ πάλοι δυσμενεῖς ... εὐσταθήσωσιν) and the term τὰ πράγματα in connection with the verb παρέχω (ἵνα ... μὴ ... παρέχωσιν ἡμῖν πράγματα), a combination that denotes “to cause troubles”;

(c) at 7:23 [=E:6], instead of the noun κακοήθεια, which occurs in LXX Esth E:6 and in 3 Macc 3:22, it uses the noun κακοποιία;

(d) at 7:25 [=E:11], it uses the construction ἔτυχε τῆς ἐξ ἡμῶν πρὸς πᾶν ἔθνος φιλανθρωπίας instead of the construction ἔτυχεν ἥς ἔχομεν πρὸς πᾶν ἔθνος φιλανθρωπίας occurring in LXX Esth E:11, which parallels 3 Macc 3:18: δι' ἣν ἔχομεν πρὸς ἅπαντας ἀνθρώπους φιλανθρωπίαν;

(e) at 7:27 [=E:16], it omits the reference to the ancestors (πρόγονοι), which is made in LXX Esth E:16 and in 3 Macc 6:28;

(f) at 7:28 [=E:18], it omits the adverbial πανοικίᾳ, which modifies a verb designating a mode of execution in both LXX Esth E:18 and 3 Macc 3:27;

(g) at 7:29 [=E:19], it omits the prepositional phrase μετὰ παρρησίας, which is positioned next to the prepositional phrases ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ in LXX Esth E:19 and κατὰ πάντα τὸν ... τόπον in 3 Macc 7:12;

(h) at 7:30 [=E:21], instead of the antithesis ὀλεθρία / εὐφροσύνη (cf. LXX Esth E:21 and 3 Macc 4:2; 5:5; 6:30), it uses the combination σωτηρία + εὐφροσύνη;

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<sup>97</sup> See 3.6 and 3.7.

<sup>98</sup> See Domazakis, *Esther*, 156 n. 44.

(i) at 7:32 [=E:24], it omits the adjective *πᾶς*, the adverbial *τὸ σύνολον*, and the prepositional phrase *εἰς τὸν ἅπαντα χρόνον*, which occur in LXX Esth E:24 and in 3 Macc 3:29.

The VL version of Additions B and E also has fewer verbal correspondences with 3 Maccabees compared to the LXX version. For example, the participle *διειληφότες* and the phrase *δυσνοοῦν τοῖς ἡμετέροις πράγμασιν* (LXX Esth B:5), the adverb *πυκνότερον* (LXX Esth E:2), the participle *ζώντος* (LXX Esth E:16), and the prepositional phrases *ἐν τῇ καλλίστῃ διαθέσει* (LXX Esth E:16) and *μετὰ παρρησίας* (LXX Esth E:19) have no counterparts in VL Esther, while the verb *addimus*<sup>99</sup> in VL Esth B:6 reflects a different verb from the *προσπετάχαμεν* that appears in LXX Esth B:6. It is, however, difficult to make a fair assessment of the relationship between the VL version of Additions B and E and 3 Maccabees, on the one hand, because the Greek *Vorlage* of the *Vetus Latina* of Esther is not available to us, and, on the other hand, because of the abstruseness of the Latin translation, stemming from the inability of the translator to cope with the daunting challenges posed by the language and style of his Greek *Vorlage*.

In connection with the above, it is worth noting that both the AT and the VL versions of Additions B and E exhibit a few points of verbal contact with 3 Maccabees that are absent in the LXX. In AT Esth 7:26 [=E:12], for instance, the verb *μεθίστημι* (*τῆς ἀρχῆς καὶ τοῦ πνεύματος μεταστῆσαι*) appears, which is found in 3 Macc 6:24 (*τῆς ἀρχῆς ἤδη καὶ τοῦ πνεύματος μεθιστᾶν*) but not in LXX Esth E:12, where the verb *στερέω* is used instead (*τῆς ἀρχῆς στερεῖσαι ἡμᾶς καὶ τοῦ πνεύματος*); in AT Esth 7:27 [=E:16], the prepositional phrase *μέχρι τοῦ νῦν* appears, which is used in a similar context in 3 Macc 6:28 but is absent in LXX/VL Esth E:16; in VL Esth B:7, a sanction clause parallel to that in 3 Macc 3:27–29 occurs, which is absent in the LXX and AT versions;<sup>100</sup> in VL Esth E:16 and in *P.Oxy.* 4443, col. i, l. 4, the phrase *sicut volumus/καθάπερ προαιρούμεθα* appears, which originates in 3 Macc 7:2 but is absent in LXX/AT Esth E:16/7:27. Instead of suggesting that the LXX, the AT, and the Greek *Vorlage* of the *Vetus Latina* of Esther independently drew upon 3 Maccabees, we can posit that the various verbal elements for which these versions are indebted to 3 Maccabees trace back to a common ancestor shared by all three. The extant version

<sup>99</sup> See Domazakis, *Esther*, 152 n. 27.

<sup>100</sup> 3 Macc 27–29: *ὃς δ' ἂν σκεπάσῃ τινὰ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ... πυριφλεγῆς γινέσθω καὶ πάσῃ θνητῇ φύσει κατὰ πᾶν ἄχρηστος φανήσεται*; VL Esth B:7: *qui autem celaverit genus Iudaeorum inhabitabilis non solum inter homines sed nec inter aves et igni sancto comburetur*.

of Additions B and E that is closest to this hypothesised prototype is undoubtedly the LXX.<sup>101</sup>

As regards the *Letter of Aristeas*, it is involved in an intertextual relationship with Additions B and E through the mediation of 3 Maccabees. More specifically:

(a) the participle διειληφότες and the verb προστετάχαμεν in LXX Esth B:5–6 are drawn from 3 Macc 3:25–26 and 7:8, which in turn are indebted to Let. Aris. §§ 24–25 (*prostagma* of King Ptolemy II Philadelphus) and § 37 (letter of King Ptolemy II to the Jewish high priest Eleazar);<sup>102</sup>

(b) the genitive absolute construction τοῦ ... θεοῦ, τοῦ κατευθύνοντος ... τὴν βασιλείαν in LXX Esth E:16 is derived from 3 Macc 7:2 (κατευθύνοντος ... τοῦ ... θεοῦ τὰ πράγματα), which had previously borrowed it from Aristeas' oral appeal to King Ptolemy II to liberate the Jewish slaves in Egypt in Let. Aris. § 15 (κατευθύνοντός σου τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ ... θεοῦ). The phrase καθάπερ προαιρούμεθα, attested in the same verse of Addition E but only in P.Oxy. 4443 and in VL Esther, was similarly derived from 3 Macc 7:2, which had previously borrowed it from the letter of the high priest Eleazar to King Ptolemy II in Let. Aris. § 45.<sup>103</sup>

In some instances of intertextual contact between Additions B and E to Esther, 3 Maccabees, and the *Letter of Aristeas*, Additions B and E are verbally closer to the *Letter of Aristeas* than to 3 Maccabees. This may suggest a direct acquaintance of the author of the two Additions with the *Letter of Aristeas*.<sup>104</sup>

There is thus an intertextual thread connecting the following fictitious royal documents embedded in the aforementioned texts:

(a) the *prostagma* of King Ptolemy II Philadelphus in the *Letter of Aristeas* ordering the liberation of the Jewish slaves in Egypt;

(b) the letter of King Ptolemy II to the high priest Eleazar in the *Letter of Aristeas*, especially § 37 referring to the liberation of the Jewish slaves in Egypt;

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<sup>101</sup> See Domazakis, *Esther*, 74 with n. 98, 75, 88.

<sup>102</sup> See Domazakis, *Esther*, 152–63.

<sup>103</sup> See Domazakis, *Esther*, 69–76.

<sup>104</sup> See, e.g., LXX Esth B:5: διειληφότες, Let. Aris. § 37: διειληφότες, 3 Macc 3:26: διελήφαμεν; VL Esth B:7: *et substantia eius in regnum conferetur*, Let. Aris. § 25: τὰ δὲ ὑπάρχοντα τῶν τοιούτων εἰς τὸ βασιλικὸν ἀναληφθήσεται, 3 Macc 3:28: τὴν οὐσίαν ... λήμψεται καὶ ἐκ τοῦ βασιλικοῦ ἀργυρίου δραχμὰς δισχιλίας; LXX Esth E:16: κατευθύνοντος ... τὴν βασιλείαν, Let. Aris. § 15: κατευθύνοντος ... τὴν βασιλείαν, 3 Macc 7:2: κατευθύνοντος ... τὰ πράγματα; LXX Esth E:21: ὁ τὰ πάντα δυναστεύων, Let. Aris. § 195: θεὸς δυναστεύει τῶν ἀπάντων, 3 Macc 2:7: τῆς ἀπάσης κτίσεως δυναστεύοντι, 3 Macc 5:7: πάσης δυνάμεως δυναστεύοντα. The use of the epistolary formula καλῶς οὖν ποιήσετε in LXX Esth E:17 may also be a direct borrowing from Let. Aris. § 39, as suggested in 5.3 above.

(c) the two circular letters of King Ptolemy IV Philopator in 3 Maccabees, the first condemning the Egyptian Jews to mass destruction and the second setting them free;

(d) the two letters of King Artaxerxes in Additions B and E to Esther, the first condemning the Jews of the Persian kingdom to mass annihilation and the second sparing their lives and granting them religious freedom.

Due to this intertextual connection, the political profile of King Artaxerxes, as presented in Additions B and E, namely, his political credo and policy, his opinions on his *philoï*, on the Jews and their role in his kingdom, as well as on the god of the Jews, is informed by that of King Ptolemy IV Philopator in 3 Maccabees and, through the latter, by the profile of King Ptolemy II Philadelphus in the *Letter of Aristeas*. In fact, the Artaxerxes of Additions B and E appears as a literary doppelgänger of King Ptolemy IV, as he is depicted in 3 Maccabees. Artaxerxes even uses the typically Ptolemaic formula of command προστετάχαμεν, “we (plural of majesty) have ordered,” that Ptolemy II employs in his *prostagma* in the *Letter of Aristeas* and Ptolemy IV in both his epistolary *prostigmata* in 3 Maccabees.<sup>105</sup> In the case of the *prostagma* and the letters of these Ptolemaic kings, the use of any other verb of command would have appeared incongruous, but in a Persian royal letter like that of Artaxerxes, alternative verbs of command might have been conceivable, while the use of the first person singular instead of the plural of majesty would have been a more anticipated choice.<sup>106</sup> The προστετάχαμεν formula allows us to date Additions B and E to no later than the Ptolemaic period, assuming that the author of the Additions, similar to the authors of the *Letter of Aristeas* and 3 Maccabees, used a formula that was current in

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<sup>105</sup> On this formula, see Domazakis, *Esther*, 153 with n. 32.

<sup>106</sup> The verb προστάσσω does not occur in Seleucid royal documents, with the single exception of a *prostagma* issued by King Antiochus IV during his brief reign in Egypt (*C.Ord.Ptol.* 32 [169 BCE], l. 1: Βασιλέως Ἀντιόχου προστάξαντος). It is also not found in Antigonid and Attalid royal letters (two instances, in Welles, *RC* no. 51, l. 22 and no. 54, l. 12, are uncertain). The Seleucid kings often use the verb συντάσσω in the plural of majesty (*SEG* 39-1285, l. 5: συνετάξαμεν; Welles, *RC* no. 5, l. 15; no. 11, l. 24; no. 18, ll. 19–20; *SEG* 36-1087, l. 7: συνετάχαμεν). King Philip V of Macedon and King Ziaelas of Bithynia use the verb ἐντέλλομαι (*IG* XII,3 91, l. 7: ἐντέταλμαι; Welles, *RC* no. 25, l. 49: ἐντέταλμαι). In the letters attributed to a King Artaxerxes (or possibly two different kings bearing this name) in 1 Esdras, we encounter the verbs ἐπιτάσσω (2:22, 24: ἐπέταξα) and προστάσσω (8:10, 19: προσέταξα) in the first person singular (on the use of the first person singular and plural in Persian royal letters included in Greek literary sources, see 4.2). Outside of the royal letters, both ἐπιτάσσω (5x) and προστάσσω (5x) occur in LXX Esther. Notably, at 8:8, the translator uses the genitive absolute construction τοῦ βασιλέως ἐπιτάξαντος instead of the standard formula of the Ptolemaic *prostigmata* τοῦ βασιλέως προστάξαντος, which one might have expected if the translation of LXX Esther had been made in Egypt.

his time.<sup>107</sup> This formula occurs in only two extant Ptolemaic royal documents issued by a single monarch: *C.Ord.Ptol.* 33 [163 BCE], a letter written by Ptolemy VI Philometor, and *C.Ord.Ptol.* 64 [96 BCE], a letter or memorandum written by Ptolemy X Alexander I. The last extant Ptolemaic royal document featuring προστετάχαμεν is *C.Ord.Ptol.* 76 [41 BCE], which, however, was issued by Cleopatra VII and her co-regent Ptolemy XV. In his version of Additions B and E, Josephus employs instead the verb κελεύω, which was current in the imperial edicts of his time.<sup>108</sup>

Given the direction of the intertextual relationship between Additions B and E to Esther and 3 Maccabees, the latter book sets a *terminus post quem* for the composition of the former texts. Now, the date of 3 Maccabees cannot be pinpointed with precision. It is commonly assigned to between 100 and 30 BCE.<sup>109</sup> It is within this range, more specifically between 78/77 BCE, when the Greek Esther presumably arrived in Egypt,<sup>110</sup> and 30 BCE (the use of the plural of majesty προστετάχαμεν does not allow us to go far beyond the end of the Ptolemaic era), that the original composition of Additions B and E is likely to be dated.

## 5.7 Was Lysimachus the composer of Additions B and E?

The above-discussed relationship between Additions B and E and 3 Maccabees may support the supposition that Egypt was the place of composition of the two Additions. However, other possibilities can also be envisaged. The author's familiarity with 3 Maccabees and with the *Letter of Aristeas*—whether through direct engagement with the latter or, more likely, through 3 Maccabees—may be attributed to his Egyptian background and culture, his writing for an Egyptian audience, or both. Given the information from LXX Esther's colophon (F:11) that Dositheus and his son Ptolemy brought Lysimachus' Esther translation from Jerusalem to Egypt, it is reasonable to infer the reverse direction of transport, namely, that books written in Egypt, like 3 Maccabees and the *Letter of Aristeas*, could have been transported to Jerusalem and made available to the literati living there. This would potentially make Lysimachus,

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<sup>107</sup> See Bickerman, "Document," 388, who points out "the remarkable fact that forgers in antiquity normally employed the official formulae of their own period when they produced their texts."

<sup>108</sup> Josephus, *A.J.* 11.218; 11.281. See Domazakis, *Esther*, 154.

<sup>109</sup> See Domazakis, *Esther*, 17, and 6.5, nn. 195–96.

<sup>110</sup> For this date, see 1.2, n. 42.



the translator of the Hebrew book of Esther according to the aforementioned colophon of LXX Esther, a candidate for the authorship of Additions B and E, as has already been suggested by several scholars.

The name of Lysimachus' father, Ptolemy, along with the designation τῶν ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ (LXX Esth F:11), suggests that Lysimachus was a resident of Jerusalem with Egyptian ancestry.<sup>111</sup> His translation activity in Jerusalem is to be dated to before 78/77 BCE, when his Greek version of the book of Esther was taken to Egypt. In favour of attributing the authorship of the two Additions to a person with connections to both Palestine and Egypt, such as Lysimachus, are: (a) the Seleucid and Maccabean “flavour” of the two Additions; (b) the verbal similarities that these Additions share with 3 Maccabees and the *Letter of Aristeas*, which were written in Egypt; and (c) the verbal points of contact between Additions B and E and the canonical parts of LXX Esther, the translation of which is attributed to Lysimachus.

Regarding point (c), it should be noted that the instances of verbal contact between Additions B and E and the rest of LXX Esther are relatively few, compared to those shared between the two Additions and 3 Maccabees. These instances show, at best, that the author of the two Additions took his cue from the text into which his compositions were eventually integrated.<sup>112</sup> This text seems to have included not only

<sup>111</sup> See Moore, *Additions*, 161 nn. 17 and 252.

<sup>112</sup> See LXX B:1: τῆς δὲ ἐπιστολῆς ... τὸ ἀντίγραφον; E:1, 19: ἀντίγραφον τῆς ἐπιστολῆς; cf. 3:14: τὰ δὲ ἀντίγραφα τῶν ἐπιστολῶν; B:1; E:1: Βασιλεὺς μέγας Ἀρταξέρξης; cf. A:1: βασιλεύοντος Ἀρταξέρξου τοῦ μεγάλου; B:1; E:1: τοῖς ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰνδικῆς ἕως τῆς Αἰθιοπίας ἑκατὸν εἴκοσι ἑπτὰ [σατραπείαις] χωρῶν ἄρχουσιν; cf. 3:12: τοῖς ἄρχουσιν κατὰ πᾶσαν χώραν ἀπὸ Ἰνδικῆς ἕως τῆς Αἰθιοπίας, ταῖς ἑκατὸν εἴκοσι ἑπτὰ χώραις; 8:9: τοῖς ἄρχουσιν τῶν σατραπῶν ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰνδικῆς ἕως τῆς Αἰθιοπίας, ἑκατὸν εἴκοσι ἑπτὰ σατραπείαις κατὰ χώραν καὶ χώραν; B:3: δεύτερον τῶν βασιλειῶν γέρας; E:11: τὸ δεύτερον τοῦ βασιλικοῦ θρόνου πρόσωπον; cf. 4:8: ὁ δευτερεύων τῷ βασιλεῖ; B:4: ἐν πάσαις ταῖς κατὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην φυλαῖς ἀναμεμῖχθαι δυσμενῇ λαόν τινα τοῖς νόμοις ἀντίθετον πρὸς πᾶν ἔθνος; cf. 3:8: ἔθνος διεσπαρμένον ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἐν πάσῃ τῇ βασιλείᾳ σου, οἱ δὲ νόμοι αὐτῶν ἑξαλλοὶ παρὰ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη; B:4: τὰ τε τῶν βασιλέων παραπέμποντας ... διατάγματα; cf. 3:8: τῶν δὲ νόμων τοῦ βασιλέως παρακούουσιν; B:6: τῇ τεσσαρεσκαίδεκάτῃ τοῦ δωδεκάτου μηνὸς Ἀδαρ; cf. 3:7: τὴν τεσσαρεσκαίδεκάτῃ τοῦ μηνός, ὅς ἐστιν Ἀδαρ; B:7: ἐν ἡμέρᾳ μιᾷ; cf. 3:7, 13; 8:12: ἐν μιᾷ ἡμέρᾳ/ἐν ἡμέρᾳ μιᾷ; E:2: ζητοῦσιν κακοποιεῖν; A:17: ἐζήτησεν κακοποιῆσαι; E:10: Ἀμαν Ἀμαδάθου Μακεδών; cf. 9:24: Ἀμαν Ἀμαδάθου ὁ Μακεδών; E:11: προσκυνούμενον ὑπὸ πάντων; cf. 3:2: πάντες ... προσεκύνουν αὐτῷ; E:16: ζῶντος θεοῦ; cf. 6:13: θεὸς ζῶν; E:17: τοῖς ὑπὸ Ἀμαν Ἀμαδάθου ἀποσταλεῖσιν γράμμασιν; cf. 8:5: τὰ γράμματα τὰ ἀπεσταλμένα ὑπὸ Ἀμαν; E:18: ἐσταυρώσθαι; cf. 7:9: σταυρωθῆτω; E:19: χρῆσθαι τοῖς ἑαυτῶν νομίμοις; cf. 8:11: χρῆσθαι τοῖς νόμοις αὐτῶν; E:19: τὸ δὲ ἀντίγραφον τῆς ἐπιστολῆς ταύτης ἐκθέντες; cf. 3:14: τὰ δὲ ἀντίγραφα τῶν ἐπιστολῶν ἐξετίθετο; 4:8: τὸ ἀντίγραφον τὸ ... ἐκτεθέν; 8:13: τὰ δὲ ἀντίγραφα ἐκτιθέσθωσαν; E:20: ἐν καιρῷ θλίψεως; cf. C:23: ἐν καιρῷ θλίψεως; E:20: τῇ τρισκαίδεκάτῃ τοῦ δωδεκάτου μηνός Ἀδαρ; cf. 8:12: τῇ τρισκαίδεκάτῃ τοῦ δωδεκάτου μηνός, ὅς ἐστιν Ἀδαρ; 9:1: τῷ δωδεκάτῳ μηνὶ τρισκαίδεκάτῃ τοῦ μηνός, ὅς ἐστιν Ἀδαρ; E:22–23: ἐπίσημον ἡμέραν ... μνημόσυνον; cf. 9:27: αἱ δὲ ἡμέραι αὗται μνημόσυνον; 9:28: τὸ μνημόσυνον αὐτῶν [sc. τῶν ἡμερῶν].

the canonical parts of LXX Esther (or a version close to it) but also Addition A (if LXX Esth B:1, βασιλεὺς μέγας Ἀρταξέρξης, and LXX Esth E:3, τοὺς ὑποτεταγμένους ἡμῖν ζητοῦσιν κακοποιεῖν, hark back to LXX Esth A:1, βασιλεύοντος Ἀρταξέρξου τοῦ μεγάλου, and LXX Esth A:17, ἐζήτησεν κακοποιῆσαι τὸν Μαρδοχαῖον, respectively, rather than the other way around, and if the allegation that Haman attempted a coup against the king in LXX Esth E:12 takes its cue from LXX Esth A:17) and possibly also Addition C (if LXX Esth E:20, ἐν καιρῷ θλίψεως, is a nod to LXX Esth C:23). Moreover, there are notable discrepancies between Additions B and E and the canonical LXX Esther. For example, the addressees in the prescripts of the two letters of Artaxerxes (B:1; E:1) differ from those cited in the canonical text that immediately precedes them (LXX Esth 3:12; 8:9);<sup>113</sup> the letter contained in Addition E is addressed to Artaxerxes' administrative officials (LXX Esth E:1) rather than to the Jews, as LXX Esth 8:9–12 leads us to anticipate;<sup>114</sup> LXX Esth 3:13 states that the king's letter decreed not only the extermination of the Jews in a single day but also the plundering of their properties, yet LXX Addition B makes no mention of plundering; LXX Esth E:18 states that Haman was crucified together with his household, while the preceding LXX Esth 7:10 is silent about the fate of Haman's family, and the ensuing LXX Esth 9:7–10 reports that the Jews killed Haman's ten sons on the thirteenth of Adar, nine months after the execution of their father; in LXX Esth E:10, Haman is designated as Macedonian, while in the preceding narrative he is referred to as Bougaios (LXX Esth A:17; 3:1); LXX Esth E:20–23 mentions a holiday established by King Artaxerxes for the Persians to celebrate on the thirteenth of Adar, distinct from the feast of Purim, established by Mordecai and Esther in LXX Esth 9:19–32 to be celebrated by the Jews on the fourteenth and fifteenth of Adar.<sup>115</sup>

Some of these discrepancies may have resulted from a conscious choice on the part of the composer of Additions B and E to take liberties with the canonical text, or from redaction that occurred subsequent to the original composition of the two Additions. Others, however, such as the blatant one concerning the execution of Haman together with his household, might have been expected to be avoided, had the two Additions been composed by the person who translated the Hebrew Esther.

The high-flown language in which the two Additions are written also raises doubts about whether it can be attributed to the translator of the canonical LXX Esther.

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<sup>113</sup> See 2.5.

<sup>114</sup> See 1.1, n. 16.

<sup>115</sup> See further Haelewyck, *Hester*, 85–86.

Although Motzo, Bickerman, and Mittmann-Richert, among others, have entertained the possibility that Lysimachus was capable of varying his style,<sup>116</sup> it is difficult to believe that the literary mastery exhibited in the two Additions would not have been showcased in the translation of the canonical parts of LXX Esther.

The most compelling reason for not attributing the composition of Additions B and E to the same person who translated the canonical Esther lies in the relationship between LXX Esther and 3 Maccabees. If my analysis of the intertextual relationship between these texts holds true, the author of 3 Maccabees was familiar with and drew upon a Greek version of Esther that was close to the LXX version and included not only the latter's canonical parts but also Addition C.<sup>117</sup> If that Greek version was Lysimachus' version, it did not include Additions B and E, which postdate the composition of 3 Maccabees and bear its influence. Moreover, if Lysimachus had composed not only the two letters of Artaxerxes in Additions B and E but also the prayers of Esther and Mordecai in Addition C, one would expect the latter to show the influence of the prayers of Simon and Eleazar in 3 Maccabees, just as the letters of Artaxerxes are influenced by the letters of Ptolemy IV in 3 Maccabees. However, the influence seems rather to flow from the prayers in LXX Addition C to the prayers in 3 Maccabees.<sup>118</sup> Hence, the author of Additions B and E was not the Lysimachus who allegedly translated the Hebrew book of Esther in Jerusalem and possibly also translated or composed LXX Addition C.

## 5.8 Did the author of 3 Maccabees compose Additions B and E?

In my study titled *Greek Esther, 3 Maccabees, and the Letter of Aristeas: An Intertextual Examination*, I considered the possibility that Additions B and E were written by the author of 3 Maccabees. This supposition was based on the fact that the author of the two Additions draws substantially on 3 Maccabees: not only is approximately 20% of the phraseology in Addition B and 15% in Addition E drawn verbatim from that book, but the same grammatical constructions and stylistic features used in 3 Maccabees also appear in Additions B and E. Moreover, the author of the two Additions draws on

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<sup>116</sup> See 1.2.

<sup>117</sup> See Domazakis, *Esther*, 184–87.

<sup>118</sup> See Domazakis, *Esther*, 109–34.

the same intertexts as the author of 3 Maccabees, most notably 2 Maccabees.<sup>119</sup> The osmosis between the two works is all the more striking, given that 3 Maccabees does not seem to have influenced other contemporary literary works or to have had a *Nachleben*.<sup>120</sup> Considering that the author of the letters of King Artaxerxes was evidently capable of writing in the same remarkably high literary style as the author of the letters of King Ptolemy IV Philopator, there would be no reason for him to produce a *pastiche* of the latter, appropriating their author's diction and literary influences. Conversely, the author of 3 Maccabees could conceivably have composed the letters of King Artaxerxes by "recycling" the ideas and the wording that he used in the letters of King Ptolemy IV Philopator and in other parts of his work.

To the above considerations, one can oppose the following points. The author of 3 Maccabees seems to have composed his work under the influence of a Greek version of Esther (Lysimachus' version?) that included the book's canonical parts, likely supplemented with Addition C. 3 Maccabees' compositional "novelty" vis-à-vis this Greek version of Esther was the incorporation of the two royal letters. Having produced in Egypt a local counterpart to the Greek Esther that was imported from Palestine, the author of 3 Maccabees would have had no reason to introduce his "novelty" into the work that served as his model and was potentially antagonistic to his own. More importantly, having promoted in his work a local festival celebrating the deliverance of the Egyptian Jews, he would have had no reason to promote, be it allusively, a feast originating in Palestine such as the "Day of Nicanor," as seems to be the case with LXX Addition E.

In light of the discussion in this and the other chapters of this study, I consider the following possibility to be the most likely.

The author of Additions B and E was different from the author of 3 Maccabees but was intimately familiar with the latter's work. He perceived that 3 Maccabees was influenced by the Greek version of Esther that was in circulation in Egypt at the time of its composition, and he wrote the two letters of Artaxerxes that could provide this version with the equivalent of the two letters of Ptolemy IV included in 3 Maccabees. Given that his extensive appropriation of the wording and style of 3 Maccabees could hardly have passed unnoticed by a knowing reader familiar with the latter work, it seems that he intentionally aimed to prompt his readers to associate his epistolary compositions with those in 3 Maccabees.

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<sup>119</sup> See 5.6 above.

<sup>120</sup> See Knöppler, 3. *Makkabäerbuch*, 859–60.

The combination of Ptolemaic, Seleucid, and Maccabean “flavours” with which Additions B and E are infused shows that their author had affiliations with both Egypt and Palestine and perhaps aimed at an “international” audience for his work. His subtle allusions to the events pertaining to the Maccabean revolt of 167–160 BCE, culminating in the landmark victory of Judas Maccabeus over Nicanor in 161 BCE and the establishment of an annual commemoration on the 13th of Adar, as well as to the literature recounting these events (2 Maccabees), suggest that he aimed to promote the Hasmonean agenda. If this is the case, he likely wrote the two Additions before the fall of the Hasmonean dynasty in 63 BCE and its end in 37 BCE. A Palestinian origin for this author is likely, and a Palestinian locale for the composition of the two Additions cannot be excluded outright, although Egypt is a more evident likelihood.

Whether the author of Additions B and E composed the two letters of Artaxerxes with the express intention of incorporating them into a Greek version of Esther that was in circulation at the time, or whether he wrote them as independent compositions that were subsequently introduced into that Greek version by someone else, is open to conjecture. De Troyer states that “it [is] difficult to imagine how Add. E—and thus also Add. B—were in circulation without being anchored in a particular context.”<sup>121</sup> Macchi, on the other hand, considers it possible that “Esther’s prayers and the contents of the decrees (Add. C, B, and E) could have first circulated as independent works that made allusions and references to the Esther narrative.”<sup>122</sup> A possibility that we may seriously consider is that Additions B and E were written as rhetorical exercises within the framework of a school of rhetoric. One of the most common types of “preliminary exercises” (*progymnasmata*) practised in the schools of rhetoric in Egypt and elsewhere in the Hellenistic and Roman periods was the *prosopopoiia* or *ethopoiia*, in which the student was tasked with writing what a mythological, literary, or historical character would have said or written in a given situation.<sup>123</sup> Aelius Theon, likely a first-century CE Alexandrian rhetorician who left us the earliest extant handbook of *progymnasmata*, informs us that the *prosopopoiia* could take the form of an epistolary composition.<sup>124</sup> Such epistolary *prosopopoiiai* contributed to the

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<sup>121</sup> See De Troyer, *End*, 392.

<sup>122</sup> See Macchi, *Esther*, 29 with n. 67. Macchi cites as examples the “Prayer of Manasseh” and the “Letter of Jeremiah,” which were written independently of the books of Chronicles and Jeremiah, respectively.

<sup>123</sup> See Stramaglia, “Consumo,” 101–5; Cribiore, *Gymnastics*, 228.

<sup>124</sup> Theon, *Prog.* 115.20–22 (ed. Patillon): ὑπὸ δὲ τοῦτο τὸ γένος τῆς γυμνασίας [sc. the *prosopopoiia*] πίπτει καὶ τὸ τῶν πανηγυρικῶν λόγων εἶδος, καὶ τὸ τῶν προτρεπτικῶν, καὶ τὸ τῶν ἐπιστολικῶν.

development of a genre that flourished between the first century BCE and the second century CE, namely, the *Briefroman* (epistolary novel) centred on a famous person.<sup>125</sup> We saw in the previous chapter that Ps.-Callisthenes' *Alexander Romance* incorporated, inter alia, fictitious letters exchanged between Alexander III of Macedon and King Darius III, which likely originated in a *Briefroman* centred on Alexander or in collections of letters attributed to Alexander and other historical figures. The earliest attestation of the Darius letters that eventually made their way into Ps.-Callisthenes' work is found in a papyrus (*P.Hamb.* II 129) dating to the mid-second century BCE. This papyrus contained an anthology of 170 fictitious letters of famous persons, only nine of which have been preserved. The anthology was likely compiled by a teacher of rhetoric, who submitted the letters included in it to his students as *exempla* before assigning them the task of composing a progymnasmatic *prosopopoiia/ethopoiia* in epistolary form.<sup>126</sup> We also saw that two fictitious letters of King Darius I and three of a King Artaxerxes are included in the pseudo-Heraclitean and the pseudo-Hippocratic epistolary corpora, respectively, which date from the third century BCE to the first century CE.<sup>127</sup>

It is possible that the two letters of Artaxerxes embedded in the Greek Esther were originally composed either by a Jewish teacher of rhetoric as *exempla* for his students or by an advanced and especially talented Jewish student of rhetoric.<sup>128</sup> Indeed, the scenario where the author of 3 Maccabees was a teacher of rhetoric<sup>129</sup> and the author of Additions B and E one of his students, or a former student who became a rhetorician himself, would explain the latter's intimate familiarity with the former's work. It would also allow us to see his indebtedness to 3 Maccabees as an attempt at *imitatio* and *emulatio* rather than as plagiarism.

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<sup>125</sup> See Stramaglia, "Consumo," 107.

<sup>126</sup> See 4.2.4; cf. Stramaglia, "Consumo," 107–13.

<sup>127</sup> See 4.2.3.

<sup>128</sup> The rhetorical training of the author of Additions B and E is evident from his ample use of rhetorical figures (see 1.1) and from the rhetorical features that exhibit the *prooemia* of the two letters of Artaxerxes (see 6.2, nn. 38 and 70).

<sup>129</sup> Alexander, "3 Maccabees," 331, suggests that the author of 3 Maccabees may have been a "country schoolmaster" and not "one of the Alexandrian sophisticates," which I think does injustice to him.

## 5.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, I reviewed the evidence put forward by various scholars to support the supposition that Additions B and E exhibit an Egyptian/Ptolemaic “flavour” and were therefore composed in Ptolemaic Egypt. My examination showed that the titles, technical terms, and other phraseology adduced by previous scholarship as suggestive of this “flavour” do not in any conclusive way support this supposition, as they cannot be linked exclusively with Egypt. Neither can such titles and designations as “Great King,” “benefactor,” “master of the whole world,” and “restorer of peace,” attributed to King Artaxerxes in Addition B, be conclusively linked with Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II, as has been suggested. That said, the titles and qualities attributed to Artaxerxes in Addition B, taken together, can be traced back to some of the early kings of the Ptolemaic dynasty, specifically Ptolemy I (known for his ἐπιείκεια, χρηστότης, and φιλανθρωπία) and Ptolemy III (designated in inscriptions as βασιλεὺς μέγας and εὐεργέτης, and praised for his Asian conquests and his maintenance of peace). It is, however, doubtful whether the author of Addition B consciously portrayed Artaxerxes along the lines of one of the great kings of the Ptolemaic heyday or simply assigned to him some typical titles and attributes ascribed to more than one Hellenistic king.

What cannot be doubted, however, is that the presence of the Egyptian/Ptolemaic “flavour” in Additions B and E is due to their intertextual dependence on literary works of Egyptian provenance, such as 3 Maccabees and, through it, the *Letter of Aristeas*. The author of the two Additions has drawn extensively on 3 Maccabees, not only on the two letters of King Ptolemy IV Philopator but also on other parts of this book. His borrowings include individual lexical elements, phrase units, grammatical constructions, and stylistic features that the author of 3 Maccabees favours. He either uses these borrowings in a similar context as in 3 Maccabees, or recontextualises them, or replaces them with verbal equivalents and synonyms. Furthermore, he draws on the same intertexts as the author of 3 Maccabees, the most notable of which is 2 Maccabees.

The version of the two Additions that most markedly reflects the influence of 3 Maccabees is the LXX. The AT and the VL versions occasionally depart from the verbal agreements between the LXX version and 3 Maccabees. However, both the AT and the VL have points of verbal contact with 3 Maccabees that are absent in the LXX text. I explained this by positing that the LXX, the AT, and the VL (via its non-extant Greek

*Vorlage*) versions of Additions B and E stemmed from an *Urtext*, which had more points of verbal contact with 3 Maccabees than any of the individual versions derived from it, with each version retaining different amounts of the verbal elements originating in 3 Maccabees compared to the others.

The influence of the *Letter of Aristeas* on Additions B and E is channelled through 3 Maccabees, although direct contact between the *Letter* and the Additions cannot be excluded. There are intertextual links that connect the pseudo-Ptolemaic royal documents included in the *Letter of Aristeas*, namely, the *prostagma* of King Ptolemy II Philadelphus concerning the liberation of the Jewish slaves in Egypt and the letter of the same king to the high priest Eleazar, with the two fictitious letters of King Ptolemy IV Philopator in 3 Maccabees and the letters of King Artaxerxes in the Additions to Esther. Due to these links, Artaxerxes' Janus'-like profile, as sketched in Additions B and E, is shaped by the literary representations of two Ptolemaic kings, the one (Ptolemy II) friendly and the other (Ptolemy IV) hostile to the Jews. The verb of command προστετάχαμεν, "we have ordered," relayed in Addition B from the *prostagma* of Ptolemy II in the *Letter of Aristeas* via the letters of Ptolemy IV in 3 Maccabees, most prominently showcases the Ptolemaic "flavour" of this Addition, as it assimilates Artaxerxes' Persian letter to a Ptolemaic epistolary *prostagma*.

The author of Additions B and E seems also to have been acquainted with books believed to have been composed or translated in Egypt, such as 1 Esdras, LXX Isaiah, and LXX Job or LXX Proverbs. While these literary affiliations make Egypt a likely place for their composition, it cannot be ruled out that the two Additions were written outside of Egypt by an author with an Egyptian "cultural baggage." This could have been the case with Lysimachus, who translated the book of Esther in Jerusalem, being himself, as far as we can tell from his patronymic, of Egyptian origin. However, the possibility that Lysimachus composed Additions B and E along with his translation of the Hebrew Esther, before this translation was taken to Egypt, has to be dismissed, since there is evidence that a version of Esther that was close to the LXX and included Addition C was known to the author of 3 Maccabees. If that was Lysimachus' version, it could not have included Additions B and E, which were composed under the influence of 3 Maccabees.

Regarding the postulated *Urtext* of Additions B and E, the hypothesis that I advanced in this chapter is that it was written in Egypt rather than in Palestine by a person who had affiliations with both lands and was intimately familiar with 3 Maccabees. This author seems to have aimed to subtly promote, bolster, or rekindle the celebration in



Egypt of the “Day of Nicanor,” which was observed the day before the feast of Purim. The *Urtext* of the two Additions may have been produced in a scholastic milieu as a *prosopopoiia/ethopoiia* in epistolary form, written by a teacher or an advanced student of rhetoric, similar to other fictitious “Persian” letters from the last two centuries BCE, which were either part of epistolary novels, or standalone compositions, some of which were later integrated into pseudo-historical narratives, such as the *Alexander Romance*. Its composition and subsequent integration into the Greek version of Esther that had served as a model for the author of 3 Maccabees can tentatively be dated to the last half-century of Ptolemaic rule in Egypt.

# CHAPTER 6. THE EGYPTIAN (ROMAN) “FLAVOUR” OF ADDITIONS B AND E

## 6.1 Introduction

In this last chapter, I will examine the evidence for the Roman “flavour” that previous studies have identified in Additions B and E to Esther. Firstly, I will discuss Dorothy’s assertion that Artaxerxes’ letter in Addition B exhibits affinities with Roman decrees rather than with Hellenistic letters. I will compare the typical format of a Roman edict with that of Artaxerxes’ letters and assess whether there are specific similarities that may support the supposition that the letters in Additions B and E were modelled upon Roman edicts (6.2). Secondly, I will examine the term διάταγμα, for which it has been argued not only that it “never occurs in Ptolemaic documents”<sup>1</sup> but also that “it is not part of the Greek diplomatic language.”<sup>2</sup> Given that this term is the most common Greek equivalent of the Latin *edictum*, I will endeavour to establish whether its usage in Addition B provides evidence that this Addition was written, or redacted into the form in which we know it, in the period following the establishment of the equivalence between *edictum* and διάταγμα (6.3). Lastly, I will discuss the concept of the “evil-hating justice” (μισοπόνηρος δίκη), which appears exclusively in LXX Addition E to Esther and in Philo’s writings. I will seek to determine whether the former is indebted to the latter for this concept, and, if so, whether this suggests that

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<sup>1</sup> So Bickerman, “Notes,” 250 n. 41.

<sup>2</sup> See Giovannini and Hirt, “Inscription,” 112: “Le mot διάταγμα ne fait pas partie du langage diplomatique grec, qui désigne des termes διάγραμμα ou πρόσταγμα les ordonnances des rois hellénistiques.” Cf. Wilcken, “Zu den Edikten,” 129: “διάταγμα die einzige unter den obigen Bezeichnungen ist, die nicht schon in der Ptolemäerzeit für eine königliche Verfügung gebraucht ist, also in der Kaiserzeit neu auftritt. Mir ist wenigstens ein ptolemäisches oder auch ein hellenistisches διάταγμα aus urkundlicher Überlieferung nicht erinnerlich.” See also Welles, *Correspondence*, 326; Modrzejewski, “Πρόσταγμα,” 201, 205–6.

LXX Addition E was composed or underwent redaction following the publication of the Philonic treatises in which this concept occurs (6.4–5).<sup>3</sup>

## 6.2 Is Addition B modelled upon a Roman edict?

In his study titled *The Books of Esther: Structure, Genre, and Textual Integrity*, Dorothy repeats on three instances his assertion that Artaxerxes' letter in Addition B to Esther is formally closer to a Roman decree rather than to a Hellenistic letter:

EG [Esther Greek] section B texts can be labelled 'Royal Decrees' but they do not conform to Persian decrees (cf. Ezra 1; 7; Behistun) and do not seem to be as close to Hellenistic decrees as they do to decrees in the Roman period.

Although both 'decrees' are labelled letters in the text, the first epistole (section B) shows more affinity with decrees known from the Roman period. Contrastingly, this contrapositive 'decree' [Addition E] more closely follows the form of a Hellenistic letter.

In the discussion of B it was demonstrated that the form there evidences more affinities with a Roman decree than with a Hellenistic letter.<sup>4</sup>

Dorothy points out that the prescript of Addition B lacks the typical greeting word of a letter, namely, the infinitive χαίρειν, which, he argues, "in the case of known [Roman] decrees disappears and a third-person indicative verb—usually λέγει—serves as the only finite action of the opening."<sup>5</sup> "In ο' and L [=AT]," he continues, "γράφει substitutes for the normal 'official' verb 'says' [λέγει]." Adducing as examples the prescripts of two edicts of Germanicus and a "proclamation or decree" of Lucius Aemilius Rectus, he states that "λέγει belongs with a decree, edict or proclamation."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Sections 6.4–5 are a revised version of Domazakis, "Date."

<sup>4</sup> Dorothy, *Esther*, 101, 180, and 192.

<sup>5</sup> Dorothy, *Esther*, 98.

<sup>6</sup> Dorothy, *Esther*, 98–99.

In the following, I will examine whether Dorothy's claims hold true.

Adopting the terminology of medieval diplomatics employed by Fridh in his study of Cassiodorus' *Variae*,<sup>7</sup> Benner distinguishes the following elements in the structure of a Roman edict: (a) *praescriptio*; (b) *exordium*, *arenga*, *prooemium*; (c) *notificatio*, *promulgatio*; (d) *narratio*, *expositio*; (e) *dispositio*; and (f) *sanctio* and *corroboratio*. Of course, not every edict includes all these elements.<sup>8</sup>

(a) The *praescriptio*, "the only formal characteristic which always occurs," consists of "the title(s) and name(s) of the issuing magistrate(s) followed by *dicit/dicunt*." ... "*Dicit* in the *praescriptio* is always translated by λέγει."<sup>9</sup> The *praescriptio* does not mention any addressees, as the edict is directed to "the whole people";<sup>10</sup> moreover, it does not contain any words of greeting.<sup>11</sup>

In the prescript of Addition B (LXX and AT), we find the title and name of the king (βασιλεὺς μέγας Ἀρταξέρξης/Ἀσσυήρος), followed by the titles of his addressees (τοῖς ... ἑκατὸν [καὶ] εἴκοσι [καὶ] ἑπτὰ χωρῶν ἄρχουσι καὶ τοπάρχαις/σατράπαις) and the formula τάδε γράφει. There is no greeting; only the *Vetus Latina* (R-text), at the end of B:1 reads *salutem* (χαίρειν) instead of *haec scribit*, which would have translated the Greek τάδε γράφει.<sup>12</sup> This prescript obviously does not conform to that of a Roman edict, as it mentions the addressees, who are subordinate officials and not the populace at large, and uses the formula τάδε γράφει instead of the simple λέγει. Moreover, it does not align with the prescripts of Hellenistic royal letters or with those of official letters written in Greek by Roman magistrates during the Republican and Imperial periods, as these prescripts feature the name of the sender and the addressee(s) along with the infinitive χαίρειν.<sup>13</sup>

The prescript of Artaxerxes' letter is akin to some of the prescripts of the "Persian" royal letters found in Greek literary and documentary texts, as well as in the Septuagint. In these letters, the following formulae occur, as listed by van den Hout:

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<sup>7</sup> Fridh, *Terminologie*, 9–10.

<sup>8</sup> Benner, *Emperor*, 17; cf. Katzoff, "Sources," 820.

<sup>9</sup> Benner *Emperor*, 26–27.

<sup>10</sup> Benner, *Emperor*, 30.

<sup>11</sup> Katzoff, "Sources," 820.

<sup>12</sup> It should be noted, however, that MS VL 130 (*Monacensis* 6239), at the end of B:1, instead of *salutem* reads *haec dicit* [τάδε λέγει]. See Motzo, "Versione," [144] 286, who argues that this MS preserves the original reading: "non si esiterebbe ad affermare che ... la lettura originaria sia data soltanto dal codice M ... τάδε γράφει non è lezione primitiva"; see also Haelewyck, "Version," 295; id., *Hester*, 49–50.

<sup>13</sup> See Ceccarelli, *Letter*, 300; ead., "Image," 235–36; Sherk, *Documents*, 189–90.

ὥδε λέγει ὁ δεῖνα τῷ δεῖνι (letter of Xerxes in Thucydides, *Hist.* 1.129.3); τάδε λέγει ὁ δεῖνα (letter [decree] of Cyrus in 2 Chr 36:23 and in 1 Esd 2:3; cf. 2 Esd 1:2: οὕτως εἶπεν Κύρος); ὁ δεῖνα τῷ δεῖνι τάδε λέγει (letter of Cambyses in Josephus, *A.J.* 11.26; letter of Darius I in *I.Magnesia* 115a, ll. 1–4; letter of Artaxerxes in Ps.-Hippocrates, *Ep.* 8, ll. 1–2; letter of Darius III in Ps.-Callisthenes, *Hist. Alex.* 1.40.2 and in *P.Hamb.* II 129, col. III, ll. 57–58); ὁ δεῖνα τὸν δεῖνα προσαγορεύει (letter of Darius I in Ps.-Heraclitus, *Ep.* 1, ll. 1–2; same formula + χαίρειν in the letter of Darius I in Diogenes Laertius, *Vit. philos.* 9.13 [ed. Dorandi]); ὁ δεῖνα τῷ δεῖνι (letter of Darius I in Ps.-Heraclitus, *Ep.* 3, l. 1; letter of Darius I in Josephus, *A.J.* 11.118; letter of Artaxerxes in 2 Esd 7:12); and ὁ δεῖνα τῷ δεῖνι χαίρειν (letters of Cyrus and Darius I in Josephus, *A.J.* 11.12 and 11.104, respectively; letter of Xerxes in Josephus, *A.J.* 11.123; letters of Artaxerxes in Ps.-Hippocrates, *Ep.* 1, ll. 1–2, and 3, ll. 1–2, in 1 Esd 8:9, in LXX/AT Esth E:1, and in Josephus, *A.J.* 11.273).<sup>14</sup>

van den Hout notes that the epistolary formulae τάδε λέγει ὁ δεῖνα and ὁ δεῖνα τῷ δεῖνι τάδε λέγει “seem to be of Persian origin,” whereas the formula ὁ δεῖνα τῷ δεῖνι χαίρειν is “typically Greek.”<sup>15</sup> The formula τάδε/ὥδε λέγει is attested as early as Herodotus, who uses it in the prescript of a letter sent by the Egyptian Pharaoh Amasis to Polycrates, as well as in the opening lines of oral messages sent by Persian kings and satraps.<sup>16</sup> This introductory formula can be compared to that occurring in Achaemenid inscriptions and in earlier Urartian royal texts, namely, “(thus) says [name of the king],” which is thought to have originated in Neo-Assyrian letter-formulae.<sup>17</sup> In the Septuagint, τάδε λέγει occurs 353 times; in 331 instances, it has κύριος as subject and introduces divine utterances (“thus says the Lord”), while in 13 other instances, it has βασιλεύς as subject and introduces oral or written messages sent by kings of Israel, Persia, and Assyria.<sup>18</sup>

The prescript βασιλεὺς μέγας Ἀρταξέρξης ... τάδε γράφει in Addition B to Esther does not adhere to the formula τάδε λέγει ὁ δεῖνα that we find in the Septuagint, in the decree of Cyrus in 2 Chr 36:23 and in 1 Esd 2:3.<sup>19</sup> Instead, it conforms to the formula ὁ δεῖνα τῷ δεῖνι τάδε λέγει, which appears in “Persian” royal letters written in Greek or translated into Greek, such as the epigraphically attested “Letter of Darius I to

<sup>14</sup> See van den Hout, “Studies II,” 141–44.

<sup>15</sup> van den Hout, “Studies II,” 143–44.

<sup>16</sup> Herodotus, *Hist.* 3.40.4 (Amasis); 3.122.14 (Oroetes); 5.24.4 (Darius); 7.150.6 (Xerxes); 8.140a.3 (Mardonius). See van den Hout, “Studies,” 29–33.

<sup>17</sup> See Kuhrt, “Communications,” 121.

<sup>18</sup> See Rudberg, “Sendschreiben,” 173–74; Aune, “Form,” 187–89.

<sup>19</sup> See Rudberg, “Sendschreiben,” 175; van den Hout, “Studies II,” 144.

Gadatas" (*I. Magnesia* 115a, ll. 1–4), the letter of Cambyses in Josephus (*A.J.* 11.26), the letter of Artaxerxes to the Coans in the pseudo-Hippocratic epistolary corpus (*Ep.* 8, ll. 1–2), one of the letters of Darius III to Alexander in Ps.-Callisthenes' *Alexander Romance* (*Hist. Alex.* 1.40.2), and a letter of Darius III to Alexander preserved in *P. Hamb.* II 129 (col. III, ll. 57–58). The difference is that it uses the verb γράφει instead of λέγει, which is the standard verb used in this type of prescript. Conversely, the prescript in Addition E adheres to the "typically Greek" epistolary formula ὁ δεῖνα τῷ δεῖνι χαίρειν. The difference in the prescripts of the two Additions is not unparalleled in the "Persian" royal letters attested in ancient Greek literature.<sup>20</sup>

The formula τάδε γράφει/γράφει τάδε is often used by writers such as Galen and Athenaeus to introduce quotations from other authors. The formula τάδε γέγραπται/ἐγγράπτο is occasionally used to introduce a quoted letter, but in such a case it precedes the prescript.<sup>21</sup> The prescript formula ὁ δεῖνα τῷ δεῖνι τάδε γράφει does not occur in any Greek literary or documentary letter except in that of Artaxerxes in LXX/AT Addition B to Esther and in its paraphrase by Josephus (*A.J.* 11.216).<sup>22</sup> Willi has adduced this formula to support his tentative reconstruction of the Old Persian original of Pseudartabas' puzzling line ἱαρταμανεξαρχαναπισσονασατρα in Aristophanes' *Acharnians* 100, which he has translated into Greek as ὁ εὐμένης Ξέρξης (κατ)έγραψε τάδε ἐνταῦθα.<sup>23</sup> Willi posits that this line serves as an introduction to

<sup>20</sup> See, e.g., the Persian letters in the pseudo-Hippocratic epistolary corpus and in the *Alexander Romance* (recensio α), where both the ὁ δεῖνα τῷ δεῖνι χαίρειν and ὁ δεῖνα τῷ δεῖνι τάδε λέγει types of prescripts occur: Ps.-Hippocrates, *Ep.* 1, ll. 1–2: Βασιλεὺς βασιλέων μέγας Ἀρταξέρξης Παίτῳ χαίρειν; *Ep.* 8, ll. 1–2: Βασιλεὺς βασιλέων μέγας Ἀρταξέρξης Κῳις τάδε λέγει; Ps.-Callisthenes, *Hist. Alex.* 1.39.3: Βασιλεὺς Δαρεῖος τοῖς ἐπέκεινα τοῦ Ταύρου <σατράπαις> χαίρειν; 1.40.2: Βασιλεὺς βασιλέων θεὸς μέγας Δαρεῖος ... Ἀλεξάνδρῳ τάδε λέγει; 2.17.2: Δαρεῖος βασιλεὺς Ἀλεξάνδρῳ ... χαίρειν. Bickerman, "Notes," 253, cogently observes that "the variation [exhibited in the prescripts of Additions B and E to Esther] is intentional: writing against the Jews, the king uses the style of the Persian despot. Intervening on behalf of the Jews, he employs polite language of Hellenistic chancelleries." Cf. Kottsieper, "Zusätze," 153.

<sup>21</sup> See 1 Macc 15:15: ἐπιστολὰς ... ἐν αἷς ἐγγράπτο τάδε; 2 Esd 5:7: ῥῆσιν ἀπέστειλαν πρὸς αὐτόν, καὶ τάδε γέγραπται ἐν αὐτῷ; Achilles Tatius, *Leuc. Clit.* 5.18.2: ἐγνώρισα γὰρ Λευκίππης τὰ γράμματα. ἐγγράπτο δὲ τάδε; cf. Josephus, *A.J.* 11.26: καὶ γράφει τάδε λέγων.

<sup>22</sup> The formula γράφει (without τάδε) occurs in a couple of prescripts of letters contained in works of late date: 4 Bar 6:17 [19]: Βαροὺχ ὁ δοῦλος τοῦ θεοῦ γράφει τῷ Ἱερεμίᾳ; Ps.-Callisthenes, *Hist. Alex.* 2.6.3: Ἀλέξανδρος Λακεδαιμονίοις γράφει. Cf. the following prescript of a letter preserved on a Coptic ostrakon from Egypt (ca. 600 CE), as quoted by Deissmann, *Light*, 211: "I, Samuel, and Jacob and Aaron, we write to our holy father Apa Abraham, the bishop." See Doering, *Letters*, 257–58. See also Gonis, "Prescripts," 41–44, who regards the prescript formula ἐγὼ + name in nominative + γράφω + name in dative, found in Greek papyrus letters from late antique Egypt, as a "Copticism."

<sup>23</sup> Willi, "Persian," 673, 678. Surprisingly, Willi does not refer to the prescript of Artaxerxes' letter in Addition B to Esther but to the "anonymous Greek author" who "phrased the beginning of his

Pseudartabas' reading of a letter that the Persian king (Artaxerxes I, at the time of the production of the *Acharnians*) sent to the Athenian assembly.<sup>24</sup> The association of this introductory line with the prescript of LXX/AT Addition B would, of course, be pertinent, if either of the two were authentic. Yet, neither Willi's reconstruction of the Aristophanic line is beyond question nor is there any guarantee of authenticity for the prescript of Artaxerxes' fictional letter in Addition B to Esther.

The author of Addition B seems to have been familiar with the "Persian" prescript formula ὁ δεῖνα τῷ δεῖνι τάδε λέγει, although he chose to replace the verb λέγει with the otherwise unexampled γράφει.<sup>25</sup> It is worth considering whether one of the aforementioned "Persian" letters featuring the τάδε λέγει formula could have served as a model for him.

The "Letter of Darius I to Gadatas" is preserved in an inscription found near Magnesia-on-the-Maeander (*I.Magnesia* 115a), dating to the first half of the second century CE. It purports to be the copy of a much older text, rendering into Greek a letter of King Darius I originally written in Old Persian or Aramaic.<sup>26</sup> Its prescript reads: βασιλεὺς [βα]σιλέων Δαρεῖος ὁ Ὑστάσπεω Γαδάται δούλῳ τάδε λέγε[ι]. Scholarship, with some notable exceptions,<sup>27</sup> does not consider this letter to be a forgery. However, it is rather unlikely that the author of Addition B to Esther, who likely wrote in Egypt or Palestine, had seen this inscription or a similar one with the same prescript formula.<sup>28</sup>

The letter of Cambyses in Josephus (*AJ.* 11.26–28) is a rewriting of the letter of Artaxerxes in 1 Esd 2:20–24. Josephus changed the name of the king from Artaxerxes

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first *Letter of Artaxerxes* (Hercher, *Epistolographi*, 175): βασιλεὺς μέγας Ἀρταξέρξης ... τάδε γράφει." The *Letters of Artaxerxes* included in Hercher's edition are, of course, merely replicas of Josephus' paraphrase of the two letters of Artaxerxes embedded in the Greek Esther.

<sup>24</sup> Willi, "Persian," 674–76.

<sup>25</sup> The avoidance of the formula τάδε λέγει, which suggests a spoken utterance, may have been motivated by the fact that in the canonical part of LXX Esther the verb γράφω is often used in relation to letters written by the king or in the name of the king: 8:8 γράψατε καὶ ὑμεῖς ἐκ τοῦ ὀνόματός μου ... ὅσα γὰρ γράφεται τοῦ βασιλέως ἐπιτάξαντος; 8:10 ἐγράφη δὲ διὰ τοῦ βασιλέως; 9:1 τὰ γράμματα τὰ γραφέντα ὑπὸ τοῦ βασιλέως; 10:1 ἔγραψεν δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐπὶ τὴν βασιλείαν τῆς γῆς καὶ τῆς θαλάσσης. Since LXX Esth B:1 takes its cue from LXX Esth 3:12 (καὶ ἔγραψαν [οἱ γραμματεῖς τοῦ βασιλέως] ὡς ἐπέταξεν Ἀμάν), it seems likely that the τάδε γράφει used in it reflects the ἔγραψαν found at 3:12. It is also possible that τάδε γράφει was intended to validate the textual accuracy of the *written copy* of the king's letter (B:1: τῆς δὲ ἐπιστολῆς ἐστὶν τὸ ἀντίγραφον τόδε).

<sup>26</sup> See 4.2.1.

<sup>27</sup> See 4.2.1, n. 14.

<sup>28</sup> See, however, Rudberg, "Sendschreiben," 178–79, who assumes that several inscriptions bearing Persian royal documents were displayed in cities across Asia Minor.

to Cambyses, because he dated the letter of the former to the reign of the latter, and added a prescript (Βασιλεὺς Καμβύσης Ῥαθύμῳ ... τάδε λέγει)—missing in his source text—which, as Doering notes, “appears to imitate the (perceived) style of grand oriental kings.”<sup>29</sup> The author of Addition B to Esther cannot have adopted this formula either from the chronologically posterior Josephus or from the latter’s source, which lacks it.

The pseudo-Hippocratic letters of Artaxerxes, similarly to the letters in Additions B and E to Esther, use two different prescript formulae: one ending with τάδε λέγει (Ep. 8: Βασιλεὺς βασιλέων μέγας Ἀρταξέρξης Κῳοις τάδε λέγει) and another ending with χαίρειν (Ep. 1 and 3). These letters have been dated to between the mid-second and mid-first centuries BCE,<sup>30</sup> or to the mid-first century CE,<sup>31</sup> with a date around the mid-first century BCE being the most likely.<sup>32</sup> The author of Additions B and E, whom many scholars place not far from that period, may have been familiar, if not specifically with these pseudepigraphic letters, then with similar ones purporting to emanate from Artaxerxes or other Persian kings.

In Ps.-Callisthenes’ *Alexander Romance* (in the α recension, which is thought to be closest to the archetype), the τάδε λέγει formula appears in the prescript of one of the seven letters that King Darius III addresses to Alexander, his satraps, and the Indian king Porus. The letter in question (*Hist. Alex.* 1.40.2–5) begins as follows: Βασιλεὺς βασιλέων θεὸς μέγας Δαρεῖος καὶ ἔθνῶν ρκ΄ κύριος Ἀλεξάνδρῳ τάδε λέγει. In this prescript, Darius is titled “lord of 120 peoples,” in the same way that Artaxerxes in LXX/AT Esth B:1 is said to rule over 127 countries. In the other letters of Darius, the prescripts end with τάδε προστάσω καὶ κελεύω σοι (*Hist. Alex.* 1.36.2), with a plain λέγει (*Hist. Alex.* 2.10.6), and with χαίρειν (*Hist. Alex.* 1.39.3; 1.39.8; 2.17.2; 2.19.2). While the *Alexander Romance* is commonly dated to around 300 CE, it seems that some of the letters of Darius and Alexander found within it circulated independently of this work at a much earlier date.<sup>33</sup> *P.Hamb.* II 129, dating to the mid-second century BCE,

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<sup>29</sup> Doering, *Letters*, 281.

<sup>30</sup> See Pinault, *Lives*, 43.

<sup>31</sup> See Sakalis, *Επιστολαί*, 84–87, for a review of the studies that have dated the letters to the first century CE.

<sup>32</sup> Sakalis, *Επιστολαί*, 17, 61, 87–89, argues for a date of composition in the decade from 40 to 30 BCE. See also 4.2.3.

<sup>33</sup> See 4.2.4.



preserves a letter from Darius to Alexander that is not included in the *Alexander Romance*. The prescript of this letter features the formula ὁ δεῖνα τῷ δεῖνι τάδε λέγει.<sup>34</sup>

To sum up, although the prescript formula of Roman edicts written in Greek or translated into Greek resembles that found in letters of Persian kings attested in Greek literary and epigraphic sources—both formulae contain the verb λέγει<sup>35</sup>—for its prescript formula, Addition B to Esther seems to be indebted to the latter rather than to the former, from which it clearly differs, as it uses γράφει, instead of λέγει, preceded by τάδε. The author of Addition B likely modelled the prescript of Artaxerxes' letter on the prescript of a fictional "Persian" letter similar to those included in various apocryphal correspondences that have come down to us. Considering that some of these correspondences seem to have originated in schools of rhetoric,<sup>36</sup> it is possible that Addition B was produced in a similar context and adhered to the typological features typical of the products from these schools, although it treated them with some liberty, as evidenced by the use of τάδε γράφει instead of the standard τάδε λέγει.

(b) The *exordium/arenga/prooemium* is "a general introduction which aims at producing benevolence and interest in the addressee."<sup>37</sup> Some *prooemia* of the *ab nostra persona* ("from one's own person") type,<sup>38</sup> consist of what Benner, following Fridh, calls the "ruler formula" ("formule de souverain"),<sup>39</sup> that is, "a general motivation based on the moral qualities of the promulgating emperor/magistrate," who "is represented as providing for the common good and the benefit of the subjects."<sup>40</sup> Such *prooemia* can be found in the edicts of the proconsul Paullus Fabius Persicus (*I.Ephesos* 17; ca. 44 CE), the *praefectus Aegypti* Tiberius Julius Alexander (*OGIS* 669; 68 CE),<sup>41</sup> and

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<sup>34</sup> *P.Hamb.* II 129, col. III, ll. 57–58: Δ[α]ρεῖος Ἀλεξάνδρῳ [τάδε] | λέγει.

<sup>35</sup> Wilcken, "Zu den Edikten," 132–33, considers the *dicit* prescript formula to be "Urrömisches," tracing its origins to the oral announcement of an edict by a herald, rather than as an imitation of the Achaemenid formula "thus says King...," as Dittenberger (followed by Rudberg, "Sendschreiben," 176–77) had previously argued.

<sup>36</sup> See 4.2.3 and 4.2.4.

<sup>37</sup> Benner, *Emperor*, 17; cf. *ibid.*, 23.

<sup>38</sup> See *Rhet. Her.* 1.4.8: *Benivolos auditores facere quattuor modis possumus: ab nostra, ab adversariorum nostrorum, ab auditorum persona, et ab rebus ipsis*; *ibid.*, 1.5.8: *Ab nostra persona benivolentiam contrahemus si nostrum officium sine adrogantia laudabimus, atque in rem publicam quales fuerimus, aut in parentes, aut in amicos, aut in eos qui audiunt aperiemus*. Cf. Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1415a26 and Cicero, *Inv.* 1.22.

<sup>39</sup> See Benner, *Emperor*, 23–24; cf. Fridh, *Terminologie*, 32.

<sup>40</sup> Benner, *Emperor*, 181; cf. *ibid.*, 108–10, 130.

<sup>41</sup> On this *prooemium*, see Chalon, *Édit*, 96–100.

the Emperor Nerva (quoted in Pliny the Younger, *Ep.* 10.58.7–9). Addition B to Esther begins with a *prooemium* of precisely the “ruler formula” type, located in verse 2, in which the king showcases his virtues (ἐπιείκεια, ἡπιότης, lack of θράσος) and his concern for the welfare of his subjects and the establishment of peace throughout his kingdom.

As we saw in Chapter 2, similar *prooemia* containing “ruler formulae” are infrequent in, but not absent from, Hellenistic royal documents.<sup>42</sup> The letter that Seleucus IV sent to Heliodorus in 178 BCE (*SEG* 57-1838) and the one that King Eumenes II sent to the Ionian League in 167/166 BCE (Welles, *RC* no. 52) feature such *prooemia*, which even happen to share common phraseology with those of Roman edicts. For example, the phrase πρόνοιαν ποιεῖσθαι, which opens Seleucus IV’s letter, also occurs in the *prooemium* of King Eumenes II’s letter (l. 10), as well as in that of the aforementioned edict of Tiberius Julius Alexander (l. 3).<sup>43</sup>

One might be tempted to situate the *prooemium* of Addition B to Esther in a Roman context and see the οἰκουμένη, over which Artaxerxes rules, as the *orbis Romanus*, and the peace, the serenity, and the security that he wishes to establish (B:2: βασιλείαν ἡμερον καὶ πορευτὴν μέχρι περάτων ... ἀνανεώσασθαι εἰρήνην) as the *securitas* and *tranquillitas* resulting from the *pax Romana*.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, one might see in the reference to Artaxerxes’ ἐπιείκεια, ἡπιότης, and lack of θράσος an allusion to the imperial virtues of *clementia* and *moderatio*.<sup>45</sup> However, it should not be forgotten that some of these elements, such as the concern for the peace and security of the subjects, are also present in the aforementioned *prooemia* of the letters of Kings Seleucus IV and Eumenes II. This can be attributed to the commonalities shared by the Hellenistic royal discourse and that of the Roman emperors.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> See 2.6.

<sup>43</sup> For an exhaustive list of instances of this formula, see Mourgues, “Préambule,” 431–34.

<sup>44</sup> As early as 63/62 BCE, Pompey is praised in an inscription from Ilion for having “restored peace and security over land and sea” (*SEG* 46-1565, ll. 7–8: ἀποκαθεστακότα δὲ | [τὴν εἰρ]ήνην καὶ τὴν ἀσφάλειαν καὶ κατὰ γῆν καὶ κατὰ θάλασσαν).

<sup>45</sup> Artaxerxes’ self-designation as ἐπιεικής and ἥπιος in the *prooemium* of his letter is entirely at odds with the order that he gives to his officials, namely, to exterminate the Jews; it only serves the rhetorical purpose of the *captatio benevolentiae*. This is reminiscent of the practice of the Emperor Domitian, who, according to Suetonius (*Dom.* 11.2), “to abuse men’s patience the more insolently, he never pronounced an unusually dreadful sentence without a preliminary declaration of clemency, so that there came to be no more certain indication of a cruel death than the leniency of his preamble” (trans. Rolfe, LCL). See Benner, *Emperor*, 148–49, and Mourgues, “Préambule,” 415–16 n. 1.

<sup>46</sup> See Hurlet, “Pouvoirs,” 131–32.

(c) The *narratio/expositio* is “a relation of the facts which have caused the enactment.”<sup>47</sup> It is “frequently a causal clause or a participle with causal force, or a main clause, relating the circumstances and motives that have caused the ordinance. It may be a report of a request ... or the emperor’s or magistrate’s own summary of the situation ... Its aim is to represent the decision as based on plausible and reasonable considerations.”<sup>48</sup>

In Addition B, the *narratio* encompasses verses 3–4, where Artaxerxes states that it was his counsellor, Haman, who reported to him the seditious activity of the Jews, which undermines his rule, and verses 5 and 7, where the king, adopting Haman’s accusations, presents the rationale for his decision. The rationale comprises two parts: the first consisting of a causal participial construction (v. 5: διεληφότες οὖν...) and the second consisting of a purpose clause (v. 7: ὅπως...).

As Benner notes, the *narratio* often has the form of “reported information.” In the relevant edicts that she cites, the *narratio* is introduced by participles such as ἐπιγνούς, αἰτησαμένων με, πυθόμενος, and, in the Latin edicts, by phrases such as *scripserint mihi, renuntiatum est nobis*, etc.<sup>49</sup> In the *narratio* of an edict issued by Hadrian in 136 CE,<sup>50</sup> the same second aorist participle, πυθόμενος, occurs, as it does at the beginning of the *narratio* in Addition B (B:3: πυθομένου δέ μου τῶν συμβούλων). The verb πυνθάνομαι does not appear in the royal letters included in the *Corpus des Ordonnances des Ptolémées* and is found only twice in Welles’ corpus of Hellenistic royal letters. In both instances, its subject is not the king who writes the letter—Attalus II (Welles, RC no. 59) and Mithridates VI (Welles, RC no. 74)—but another individual.<sup>51</sup> It does, however, appear at the beginning of the “Letter of Darius I to Gadatas” (*I. Magnesia* 115a, l. 5) and in the opening lines of fictitious, literary letters.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Benner, *Emperor*, 17; cf. *ibid.*, 24.

<sup>48</sup> Benner, *Emperor*, 180.

<sup>49</sup> Benner, *Emperor*, 37, 105, 161, 163.

<sup>50</sup> See Smallwood, *Documents*, 171 [no. 462, l. 5]. Cf. Benner, *Emperor*, 161, 163. The verb πυνθάνομαι also appears in the first person singular of the present tense in the *narratio* of a second-century CE edict by an unknown emperor (*SEG* 19-854, l. 8).

<sup>51</sup> The verb πυνθάνομαι occurs in a Seleucid letter, that of Antiochus III to Zeuxis, as transmitted by Josephus (*A.J.* 12.149: πυνθανόμενος [the subject of the participle is the king]). The authenticity of this letter has been called into question (see 4.5.4).

<sup>52</sup> See Herodotus, *Hist.* 3.122.14; Ps.-Heraclitus, *Ep.* 7, l. 1; Phalaris, *Ep.* 56, l. 1 and 109, l. 1; Diogenes Laertius, *Vit. philos.* 1.431. See also Aune, “Form,” 219 with n. 36, and 230.

(d) The *notificatio/promulgatio* is “a publishing phrase which in one form or other expresses the meaning ‘I make known that ...’.”<sup>53</sup> It may be located at the beginning of edicts that have no introduction or between the introduction and the *dispositio*.<sup>54</sup> Addition B lacks such a phrase.

(e) The *dispositio*, as Benner defines it, is “the central part of the document, expressing the decision. It is closely connected with the *narratio*, with which its relation is one of consequence or summing up.” “It appears as a conclusion of the general motivation in the *prooemium* and the special motivation of the *narratio*.”<sup>55</sup> In the Augustan edicts, the verbs used to express the decision/order include ἀρέσκει (*placet*), κελεύω, θέλω, ὀφείλει, et al., while post-Augustan edicts predominantly use verbs in the first person singular, such as κελεύω, διακελεύομαι, βούλομαι, παραγγέλλω, κωλύω, et al.<sup>56</sup>

In Addition B, the *dispositio* is located in verse 6, where the king delivers his decision/order. The ordaining verb is προστάσω, used in the first person plural (*pluralis maiestatis*) of the perfect tense: προστετάχαμεν. This verb is typical of Ptolemaic royal documents<sup>57</sup> but is not attested in Roman edicts. In his paraphrase of Artaxerxes’ extermination decree, Josephus replaces the προστετάχαμεν found in his source text with κελεύω, followed by βούλομαι, verbs typical of the Roman edicts of his time.<sup>58</sup>

(f) The *sanctio* and *corroboratio* are “end clauses, aiming at bringing about observance of the enactment.”<sup>59</sup> LXX/AT/VL Addition E ends with a *sanctio* clause, threatening total destruction upon the cities and lands of the Persian kingdom that will not comply with the king’s orders. The LXX and AT versions of Addition B have no *sanctio* clause, unlike the VL version, which at B:7 adds a penalty clause stating that anyone who should hide the Jews will be destroyed and his property confiscated by the royal treasury.<sup>60</sup> Similar clauses occur in Roman edicts: the triumphal proscription edict (43 BCE) prescribes that anyone who should harbour, conceal, or aid those

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<sup>53</sup> Benner, *Emperor*, 17.

<sup>54</sup> Benner, *Emperor*, 182–83.

<sup>55</sup> Benner, *Emperor*, 17; cf. *ibid.*, 25, 183.

<sup>56</sup> Benner, *Emperor*, 183–85; cf. Wilcken, “Zu den Edikten,” 141 n. 2; Pelletier, *Flavius Josèphe*, 284–86; Katzoff, “Sources,” 820.

<sup>57</sup> See 5.6.

<sup>58</sup> Josephus, *A.J.* 11.218–219. See Pucci Ben Zeev, *Rights*, 36, 42, 144, 204, 246, 264, 303.

<sup>59</sup> Benner, *Emperor*, 17; cf. Katzoff, “Sources,” 820. The *corroboratio*, which mentions various formalities and specifies the means of validation (see Fridh, *Terminologie*, 14), is not relevant here.

<sup>60</sup> See Domazakis, *Esther*, 78–84.

proscribed by the triumvirs will himself be put on the list of the proscribed;<sup>61</sup> an edict of Augustus (12 BCE) ordains that the property of anyone caught stealing the sacred books or monies of the Jews will be confiscated to the public treasury of the Romans.<sup>62</sup> Sanction clauses prescribing capital punishment and confiscation of property for various transgressions are also found in several Ptolemaic *prostagmata*.<sup>63</sup> Moreover, royal documents embedded in the deuterocanonical books of the Bible and the pseudepigrapha conclude with similar clauses. In 1 Esdras, Cyrus' decree and Artaxerxes' decree in epistolary form addressed to Ezra the priest threaten transgressors, the former with death by hanging and confiscation of property, and the latter with capital punishment or financial penalty;<sup>64</sup> in 3 Macc 3:27–29, a *sanctio* expressed in terms similar to those in VL Esth B:7 occurs in the first letter of Ptolemy IV Philopator;<sup>65</sup> and in the *Letter of Aristeas* (§§ 22–25), the *prostagma* of Ptolemy II Philadelphus concludes with a confiscation clause.<sup>66</sup>

(g) An edict “ends abruptly with no word of greeting.”<sup>67</sup> The LXX and AT versions of Addition B to Esther conclude without any greeting, whereas the VL version ends with *vale* (ἔρρωσο). Addition E in the Greek versions has no final greeting either; only the VL version concludes with *valete* (ἔρρωσθε). Hellenistic royal letters that are epigraphically attested typically, but not always, include a final ἔρρωσο/ἔρρωσθε.<sup>68</sup> This final greeting, by which the king validated the original letter, was often omitted by the scribes who prepared the copies to be dispatched to the various recipients.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Appian, *Bell. civ.* 4.11: τῶν ὑπογεγραμμένων τῷδε τῷ διαγράμματι μηδεὶς δεχέσθω μηδένα μηδὲ κρυπτέτω ... ὃς δ' ἂν ἢ σώσας ἢ ἐπικουρήσας ἢ συνειδῶς φανῇ, τοῦτον ἡμεῖς ... ἐν τοῖς προγεγραμμένοις τιθέμεθα.

<sup>62</sup> Josephus, *A.J.* 16.164–165: ἐὰν δέ τις φωραθῇ κλέπτων τὰς ἱερὰς βίβλους αὐτῶν ἢ τὰ ἱερὰ χρήματα ... τὸν βίον αὐτοῦ ἐνεχθῆναι εἰς τὸ δημόσιον τῶν Ῥωμαίων. On this and other *sanctio* clauses in edicts, see Pucci Ben Zeev, *Rights*, 244, 247–48; cf. Chalon, *Édit*, 82 n. 74.

<sup>63</sup> See *C.Ord.Ptol.* 13, l. 19; 23, ll. 8–9; 41, l. 14; 43, l. 21; 50, l. 28; 53, l. 92; 73, l. 8; 74, ll. 6–7; 90–91, l. 13. See also Käppel, *Prostagmata*, 417–31.

<sup>64</sup> 1 Esd 6:31: καὶ προστάξαι ἵνα ὅσοι ἐὰν παραβῶσιν τι τῶν προειρημένων ... λημφθῆναι ξύλον ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐπὶ τούτου κρεμασθῆναι καὶ τὰ ὑπάρχοντα αὐτοῦ εἶναι βασιλικά; cf. 2 Esd 6:11; 1 Esd 8:24: πάντες, ὅσοι ἐὰν παραβάνωσιν καὶ τὸν νόμον τοῦ θεοῦ σου καὶ τὸν βασιλικόν, ἐπιμελῶς κολασθήσονται, ἐὰν τε καὶ θανάτῳ ἐὰν τε καὶ τιμωρίᾳ ἢ ἀργυρικῇ ζημίᾳ ἢ ἀπαγωγῇ; cf. 2 Esd 7:26. See also 1 Macc 1:50 (letter of Antiochus IV): καὶ ὃς ἂν μὴ ποιήσῃ κατὰ τὸν λόγον τοῦ βασιλέως ἀποθανεῖται.

<sup>65</sup> See Domazakis, *Esther*, 78–84.

<sup>66</sup> *Let. Aris.* § 25: τὰ δὲ ὑπάρχοντα τῶν τοιούτων εἰς τὸ βασιλικὸν ἀναληφθήσεται.

<sup>67</sup> Katzoff, “Sources,” 820.

<sup>68</sup> See Larfeld, *Epigraphik*, 428–30; Guarducci, *Epigrafia*, 109.

<sup>69</sup> See Bickerman, *Institutions*, 194 n. 3; Bickerman, “Question,” 380.

The omission of the farewell formula in the letters of Artaxerxes in Additions B and E, which purport to be copies of the original royal letters (B:1: τῆς δὲ ἐπιστολῆς ἐστὶν τὸ ἀντίγραφον τόδε; cf. E:1), may reflect this practice. The rest of the “Persian” letters included in the Septuagint also lack a final greeting. The same applies to the royal letters in 1 and 2 Maccabees, except for the letters of the chancellor Lysias to the community of the Jews and of Antiochus IV Epiphanes to the *gerousia* of the Jews, which bear a final ἔρρωσθε (2 Macc 11:21 and 11:33, respectively). In 3 Maccabees, of the two fictitious letters of King Ptolemy IV Philopator, which exhibit strong intertextual connections with those in Additions B and E to Esther, only the second bears a final greeting (3 Macc 7:9: ἔρρωσθε). Another royal letter that is intertextually connected with those embedded in 3 Maccabees and in Greek Esther, that of King Ptolemy II Philadelphus to the high priest Eleazar in the *Letter of Aristeas*, ends with an ἔρρωσο (Let. Aris. § 40).

Addition E to Esther has a structure similar to that of Addition B: it consists of a long *prooemium* (vv. 2–9)—this time of the *ab adversariorum persona* type—in which the king accuses Haman (without naming him) of being ungrateful, arrogant, treacherous, and malevolent,<sup>70</sup> followed by a *narratio* (vv. 10–16), a *dispositio* (vv. 17–23) introduced by the courteous ordaining phrase καλῶς οὖν ποιήσετε,<sup>71</sup> and a *sanctio* (v. 24) threatening the destruction of the cities and countries that will not obey the royal order.<sup>72</sup>

At first glance, the structure of Additions B and E to Esther appears to resemble that of a Roman edict, arguably more closely than the structure of the Proclamations to the Seven Churches (Rev 2–3), for which similar claims have been made:<sup>73</sup> *praescriptio*, *prooemium*, *narratio*, *dispositio*, and *sanctio*—the basic constituent elements of a Roman edict are present in Artaxerxes’ letters. However, most of these elements are not

<sup>70</sup> See n. 38 above and cf. *Rhet. Her.* 1.5.8: *Ab adversariorum persona benivolentia captabitur si eos in odium, in invidiam, in contempnionem adducemus. In odium rapiemus si quid eorum spurce, superbe, perfidiose, crudeliter, confidenter, malitiose, flagitiose factum proferemus.*

<sup>71</sup> This phrase does not occur in Roman edicts written in Greek or translated into Greek. However, the *dispositio* of Augustus’ first Cyrene edict is introduced by a similar phrase: δοκοῦσί μοι καλῶς καὶ προσηκόντως ποιήσιν (l. 13); cf. ll. 35–36: ὀρθῶς καὶ προσηκόντως μοι δοκοῦσιν ποιή[σιν]. See Benner, *Emperor*, 57–58.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. the *sanctio* of the pseudo-Hippocratic letter of Artaxerxes to the Coans, in which the king threatens to lay their city waste and make their island sink into the sea (*Ep.* 8, ll. 5–8: δηϊώσας γὰρ τὴν ὑμετέρεην πόλιν καὶ νῆσον καταπάσας εἰς πέλαγος, ποιήσω μηδὲ ἐς τὸν ἐπίλοιπον χρόνον γνῶναι, εἰ ἢ ἐπὶ τούτῳ τῷ τόπῳ νῆσος ἢ πόλις κῶ).

<sup>73</sup> See Aune, “Form,” 198–204.

absent from Hellenistic royal letters.<sup>74</sup> Moreover, there are significant features in Additions B and E that are not found in Roman edicts, and vice versa. As I pointed out earlier, the *praescriptiones* of the two Additions are not addressed to the populace at large, as the edicts are, but to specific categories of subordinate officials; they also do not include the distinctive verb λέγει. The *praescriptio* of Addition B is a variant of the prescript of a “Persian” royal letter, which has the form ὁ δεῖνα τῷ δεῖνι τάδε λέγει, rather than a variant of the prescript of a Roman edict, which has the form ὁ δεῖνα λέγει. In contrast, Addition E features a typical epistolary prescript ending with χαίρειν. The ordaining verbs and phrases used in the two Additions, namely, προστετάχαμεν and καλῶς οὖν ποιήσετε, do not appear in Roman edicts written in Greek or translated into Greek. The highly rhetorical style of Additions B and E is unlike that of the Roman edicts preserved in Greek, which “avoid rhetorical affectation.”<sup>75</sup> Lastly, the plural of majesty, which King Artaxerxes uses in Addition B in combination with the first person singular, is amply attested in Hellenistic royal letters but, with at least one exception, is not found in the edicts or the letters of the early Roman emperors.<sup>76</sup>

Additions B and E are fictitious letters composed of elements drawn from different types of authentic and fictitious Hellenistic official documents, as well as from fictitious “Persian” royal letters. One cannot dismiss the possibility that their author was acquainted with Roman edicts from either the Republican or the early Imperial period (depending on the accepted date of composition for the two Additions); however, a more plausible explanation is that the similarities in structure and form between Additions B and E and Roman edicts are due to the formal commonalities shared between the latter and the royal documents issued by the chanceries of the Hellenistic kingdoms.

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<sup>74</sup> The typical format of a Hellenistic royal letter, as outlined by Hofmann, “Communications,” 147–51, consists of: (a) prescript; (b) mode of and reason for contact; (c) reasoning underlying the decision; (d) decision proper; (e) prospective (administrative) regulations; and (f) farewell formula. Parts (a), (b)–(c), and (d) correspond to the *praescriptio*, the *narratio*, and the *dispositio* of a Roman edict. Cf. Welles, *Correspondence*, xliii–xliv; Ceccarelli, *Letter*, 300; ead., “Image,” 235.

<sup>75</sup> See Katzoff, “Sources,” 820; cf. Chalon, *Édit*, 79–80, 97.

<sup>76</sup> See 4.5.7 with n. 165.

## 6.3 διάταγμα

The term διάταγμα occurs three times in the Septuagint: in LXX Esth B:4, where the Jews are said to constantly disregard the ordinances of the kings (τά τε τῶν βασιλέων παραπέμποντας διηνεκῶς διατάγματα); in Wis 11:7, where Pharaoh's order in Exod 1:22, which commanded that all male Jewish newborns be thrown into the Nile, is designated as the “infanticide decree” (νηπιοκτόνον διάταγμα);<sup>77</sup> and in 2 Esd 7:11, where it refers to a decree given by King Arthasastha (Artaxerxes) to Esdras the priest (αὕτη ἡ διασάφησις τοῦ διατάγματος).<sup>78</sup> The date of composition or translation of these texts is uncertain: the Wisdom of Solomon has been dated to either the last century BCE or the first century CE,<sup>79</sup> 2 Esdras to between the end of the second century BCE and the beginning of the first century BCE,<sup>80</sup> or to the second century CE,<sup>81</sup> while various dates have been proposed for Additions B and E to Esther, ranging from the second century BCE to the first century CE.<sup>82</sup>

In extra-Septuagintal literature, διάταγμα is attested from around the mid-first century BCE onwards. It has single instances in Philodemus (*P.Herc.* 467, fr. 13b, ll. 12–13), in Diodorus Siculus (*Bibl.* 18.64.5), in Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Ant. rom.* 4.10.3), in Strabo (*Geogr.* 10.4.22), and occurs frequently in Philo (26x) and in Josephus (19x). With the exception of *P.Herc.* 467, which preserves fragments of the third book of Philodemus' *On Rhetoric*, all the papyrological attestations of the term date to the Common Era.

The pre-Common era epigraphic attestations of διάταγμα are both earlier and more numerous than the literary ones. The Packard Humanities Institute (PHI) and the *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* (SEG) databases list four inscriptions from the third century BCE, five from the second century BCE, and seven from the first century

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<sup>77</sup> For the same order, Philo (*Mos.* 1.15) uses the expression τοῦ βασιλέως τὸ πρόσταγμα, whereas the author of Hebrews (11:23) uses the expression τὸ διάταγμα τοῦ βασιλέως (this is the only instance of διάταγμα in the New Testament).

<sup>78</sup> In the parallel text of 1 Esd 8:8, this edict is termed πρόσταγμα (προσπεσόντος δὲ τοῦ γραφέντος προστάγματος). διάταγμα also occurs in Symmachus' rendering of Isa 8:16: σφράγισον νόμον ἐν τοῖς διατάγμασί μου.

<sup>79</sup> See Aitken, “Wisdom,” 402–4.

<sup>80</sup> See Janz, *Esdra*, 163. In a previous publication, Janz, “Clef,” 110, had dated the translator of 2 Esdras to the first century CE.

<sup>81</sup> See Wooden, “2 Esdras,” 196.

<sup>82</sup> See 1.2.



BCE, in which this term occurs. The earliest of these inscriptions,<sup>83</sup> a decree from Kassandreia confirming the *asylia* of the Asclepieion of Cos (243 BCE), preserves the formula δοῦναι ... ξένιον τὸ διάταγμα τὸ ἐκ τοῦ νόμου, “to give [to the envoys] ... as gift of hospitality the disposition prescribed by the law.”<sup>84</sup> A variant of this formula (δοῦναι/ἀποστεῖλαι ξένια ... κατὰ τὸ διάταγμα) occurs in five *senatus consulta* dating from the last third of the second century BCE to the first third of the first century BCE.<sup>85</sup> In one of them, the bilingual *senatus consultum de Asclepiade* of 78 BCE,<sup>86</sup> the phrase ξένια ... κατὰ τὸ διάταγμα in the Greek version (ll. 25–26) corresponds to the phrase *munus ... ex formula* in the Latin version (l. 18)—the terms κατὰ τὸ διάταγμα/*ex formula* indicating that the gifts of hospitality (ξένια/*munus*) were to be provided to the honoured guests according to the established regulation—and the phrase εἰς τὸ τῶν φίλων διάταγμα in the former (l. 24) corresponds to the phrase *in amecorum formulam* in the latter (l. 17), with the *formula amicorum* being the official list of “the friends of the Roman people.”

Barring these *senatus consulta*, in which it equates to *formula*, and a few inscriptions from the end of the third century to the last third of the second century BCE, whose fragmentary state prevents us from determining the nature of the διατάγματα mentioned in them,<sup>87</sup> διάταγμα is used from the second half of the first century BCE

<sup>83</sup> There is an early third-century BCE inscription from Calymna (*Tit. Calymnii* 7) that mentions a decree of Demetrius Poliorcetes, but it remains uncertain whether the word denoting “decree” in l. 12 of this inscription is πρόσταγμα or διάταγμα. In the *editio princeps*, Segre, “Processo,” 11, restores ll. 11–12 as follows: [κα]τὰ τὸ βασιλέως [πρόστ]αγμα Δαματρί[ου], noting that “sull’orlo di frattura della pietra, spezzata proprio in quel punto, si vede ben chiaramente la parte bassa delle lettere ΑΓΜΑ: bisognerà dunque integrare [πρόστ]αγμα, termine ben comune nelle cancellerie ellenistiche” (p. 14) and that the segment [κα]τὰ τὸ βασιλέως [πρόστ]αγμα “è assolutamente sicuro” (p. 15 n. 1). However, in a subsequent publication, Segre, “Tituli,” 47, opts for διάταγμα instead ([κα]τὰ τὸ βασιλέως [διάτ]αγμα Δαματρ[ίου]), “spatii necessitates considerans,” although in a similar restoration elsewhere in the same corpus he opts for ποτίταγμα, Doric form of πρόσταγμα (*Tit. Calymnii* 79A, ll. 11–12: [κατὰ τὸ] | [παρὰ βασιλέως Δαματρίου ποτίταγμα]). See his comments *ibid.*, pp. 47 and 103.

<sup>84</sup> *IG* XII, 4, 1:220, ll. 14–15; cf. *IG* XII, 4, 1:216, ll. 16–17. See Hatzopoulos, *Institutions I*, 143–44, 146, and Rigsby, *Asylia* [no. 25], 136–37; the latter scholar, citing Klaffenbach, notes that the phrase τὸ διάταγμα τὸ ἐκ τοῦ νόμου is equivalent to ὁ ἐν τῷ νόμῳ διατέτακται.

<sup>85</sup> *I.Smyrna* 589 [129/101 BCE], l. 18; *F.Delphes* III, 2:70 [Delphi; 112/111 BCE], l. 64; *IG* XII, 3, 173 [Astypalaea; 105 BCE], l. 10; *OGIS* 441 [Lagina; prob. 81 BCE], l. 88; *SEG* 51-1427 [Rome; 78 BCE], ll. 25–26.

<sup>86</sup> *SEG* 51-1427 [Rome].

<sup>87</sup> *Tit. Calymnii* 64A [Calymna; 205–202 BCE], l. 14: [ἐ]πάμιλ[λαι] διατάγμασι; *MDAI(A)* 32 (1907) 285, 12 [Pergamon; last third of the second century BCE], l. 3: [κατὰ τὸ] | πεμφθὲν καὶ ἀναγνωσθὲν διάτ[αγμα]; *SEG* 62-367 [Doliche; ca. 130–100 BCE], l. 10: [γε][γρ]αμμένον διατάματος.

onwards as the main Greek equivalent of the Latin *edictum*.<sup>88</sup> Apart from διάταγμα, Greek literary and documentary sources feature a few other terms that designate the *edicta* issued by Roman officials: δελτογράφημα, διάγραμμα, διαγραφή, δόγμα, ἔκθεμα, ἐπίταγμα, παράγγελμα, πρόγραμμα, προγραφή, and πρόσταγμα.<sup>89</sup> The most common of these terms, διάγραμμα and πρόσταγμα, were previously used to designate documents issued by the Hellenistic royal chanceries:<sup>90</sup> διαγράμματα were issued by the Macedonian,<sup>91</sup> the Ptolemaic,<sup>92</sup> and probably the Seleucid kings,<sup>93</sup> and προτάγματα by the Attalids,<sup>94</sup> the Ptolemies,<sup>95</sup> and the Seleucids.<sup>96</sup> The term διάγραμμα is used as an equivalent of *edictum* already by Polybius in the second century BCE.<sup>97</sup> The term πρόσταγμα is attested in reference to Roman *edicta* from the first century CE and is subsequently used in this sense interchangeably with διάταγμα.<sup>98</sup> The most common, “precise and technical,” equivalent of *edictum* is, however, the term διάταγμα, which is used to designate edicts issued by “officials of all levels; tribunes; *praefecti* of Egypt; proconsuls; and the emperor.”<sup>99</sup>

In some of its previously cited extra-Septuagintal literary attestations, διάταγμα does indeed designate a Roman edict. However, it is also attested as a designation of

<sup>88</sup> The earliest inscription in which διάταγμα is used as an equivalent of *edictum* is SEG 56-1219 [Ephesos; just after 42 BCE], ll. 9, 13, 20.

<sup>89</sup> See Wilcken, “Zu den Edikten,” 128–29; Mason, *Terms*, 127–28, 131; Katsoff, “Sources,” 819–20. Benner, *Emperor*, 26–27, 62, adds the term ἐπίκριμα.

<sup>90</sup> For the less common terms ἔκθεμα, πρόγραμμα, and παράγγελμα, which were used to designate documents issued by the Ptolemaic chancery, see Wilcken, “Zu den Edikten,” 129; Lenger, *Corpus*, xx–xxi.

<sup>91</sup> See Hatzopoulos, *Institutions I*, 398, 405–11; Mari, “Activité,” 210–12. The Macedonian kings issued no *prostagmata*.

<sup>92</sup> See Bickerman, “Διάγραμμα,” 304–8; Lenger, *Corpus*, xx–xxi; Modrzejewski, “Note,” 366–78.

<sup>93</sup> See Capdetrey, *Pouvoir*, 337–38; Bencivenni, “Considerazione,” 143 n. 22, 144; ead., “Words,” 145; Ceccarelli, “Image,” 234.

<sup>94</sup> See Allen, *Kingdom*, 104, 175–76; Virgilio, “Forme,” 211–15; Bencivenni, “Words,” 145.

<sup>95</sup> See Lenger, “Prostagmata,” 122–32; ead., “Ptolémées,” 7–10; ead., *Corpus*, xvii–xxiv; Modrzejewski, “Πρόσταγμα,” 187–206.

<sup>96</sup> It should be noted that the documents through which the Seleucid kings transmitted their orders are invariably called “letters” (ἐπιστολαί) by their authors but are occasionally referred to as “ordinances” (προτάγματα) by their recipients. There is a single Seleucid document, issued by King Antiochus IV (*C.Ord.Ptol.* 32), which has the *incipit* of a Ptolemaic πρόσταγμα: βασιλέως Ἀντιόχου προστάξαντος. See Capdetrey, *Pouvoir*, 336–37; Bencivenni, “Considerazione,” 140–46; ead., “Words,” 145, 151; Ceccarelli, “Image,” 234–35, 244 n. 17.

<sup>97</sup> Polybius, *Hist.* 22.10.6: περὶ τὸ τοῦ Τίτου διάγραμμα; cf. Plutarch, *Marc.* 24.13: καὶ γὰρ τὰ διαγράμματα τῶν ἀρχόντων Ἕλληνες <μέν> διατάγματα, Ῥωμαῖοι δ’ ἔδικτα προσαγορεύουσιν. See Bickerman, “Διάγραμμα,” 311; Walbank, *Commentary*, 3:193.

<sup>98</sup> See Modrzejewski, “Πρόσταγμα,” 201, 205–6; cf. Lenger, “Vestiges,” 72–73.

<sup>99</sup> Mason, *Terms*, 127.

other types of official documents or used in a non-technical sense. Philodemus states that the rhetor should be acquainted with laws, decrees, and the other διατάγματα (*P.Herc.* 467, fr. 13b, ll. 10–13: [ἐμ]πειρον εἶναι δεῖ νόμων, ψηφισμ[άτ]ων, τῶν ἄλλων διαταγ[μά]των). The latter term seems to refer to some type of official documents, *pace* Bickerman, who notes that διάταγμα here “signifie simplement ‘l’ordre’ de toute espèce.”<sup>100</sup> With respect to the διάγραμμα that the Macedonian regent Polyperchon issued in 319/318 BCE, Diodorus Siculus consecutively uses the terms δόγμα (*Bibl.* 18.55.4), διάγραμμα (*Bibl.* 18.55.4; 18.57.1; 18.64.3), and διάταγμα (*Bibl.* 18.64.5). Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Ant. rom.* 4.10.3) speaks of a “royal edict” (διάταγμα βασιλικόν) issued by Servius Tullius, the sixth king of Rome. Strabo (*Geogr.* 10.4.22) states that in Roman Crete the administration was carried out through the edicts of the Romans (τοῖς Ῥωμαίων διατάγμασι). Philo consistently employs διάταγμα to denote the ordinances of the Torah, and only once (*Legat.* 301) for an imperial edict. Josephus uses διάταγμα for edicts issued by Julius Caesar (*A.J.* 14.198; 14.215), Mark Antony (*A.J.* 14.305; 14.319; 14.321; 14.322), Augustus (*A.J.* 16.165), and Claudius (*A.J.* 19.285; 19.286; 19.291; 19.292; 19.304; 19.306; 19.307; 19.310; *B.J.* 2.216).<sup>101</sup> He also uses διάταγμα interchangeably with πρόσταγμα to designate Haman’s extermination decree (*A.J.* 11.215; 11.220) as well as the dying Herod’s decree ordering all notable Jews to assemble in Jericho (*A.J.* 17.174). Noteworthy is Claudius’ reference in his edict to Alexandria, as quoted by Josephus, to “letters and edicts” (*A.J.* 19.282: ἐκ τῶν γραμμάτων ... καὶ τῶν διαταγμάτων) by which the Alexandrian Jews had in the past been granted civic rights “from the kings” (παρὰ τῶν βασιλέων), namely, the Ptolemies.<sup>102</sup> This instance aside, in which the term διατάγματα is used anachronistically with reference to the Ptolemaic προστάγματα, διάταγμα, as noted by Bickerman and other scholars,<sup>103</sup> is nowhere else used as a designation for an official document issued by the Ptolemaic chancery.

Commenting specifically on Bickerman’s observation that διάταγμα “never occurs in Ptolemaic documents,” Passoni Dell’Acqua states the following:

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<sup>100</sup> Bickerman, “Διάγραμμα,” 311 n. 2.

<sup>101</sup> See Pucci Ben Zeev, *Rights*, 62, 246, 332.

<sup>102</sup> See Pucci Ben Zeev, *Rights*, 300–1.

<sup>103</sup> See nn. 1 and 2 above.

This term [διάταγμα], which often occurs in the singular, takes on technical connotations for imperial decrees during the Roman age: during the Ptolemaic period it appears in the papyri with the sense of “provision, order, decree” and does not seem to be used to officially designate a royal decree. However, in the context under consideration, the use of the plural leads one to consider it in a more general sense, as not expressly referring to the edict in question.<sup>104</sup>

Regarding the attestation of διάταγμα in the Ptolemaic papyri, Passoni Dell’Acqua cites the *Wörterbuch der griechischen Papyrusurkunden*, vol. 1 (ed. Preisigke), vol. 4 (ed. Kiessling), and *Supplement 1* (ed. Kiessling).<sup>105</sup> In vol. 4, s.v. διάταγμα, the *WGPU* provides the definition: “Anordnung, Erlass, Entscheidung (Edikt, Reskript)” and cites attestations of the term in papyri dating from the Common Era. The papyri cited in *Supplement 1*, s.v., are also from the Common Era. Only in vol. 1, s.v. διάταγμα 1, do we read: “kgl Erlass (ptol). *Teb* 5,9 [IIV].” Now *P.Teb.* I, 5 contains a series of *prostagmata* issued in 121/120–118 BCE by Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II, Cleopatra II, and Cleopatra III. Preisigke restores the missing last part of line 9 of this text as follows: [τὰ] ἔτι ὑπάρ[χοντα] ἄπρατα ἀπὸ τῶν διαταγμάτων τούτων.<sup>106</sup> In her edition of the same text, Lenger restores line 9 on the basis of a previously unpublished copy of the papyrus in question (*C.Ord.Ptol.* 53<sup>ter</sup>) as follows: [τὰ] ἔτι ὑπάρ[χοντα] ἄπρατα ἀπὸ τῶν διὰ τ[ῶν] ἡνεχυρασμένων.<sup>107</sup> Thus, there is no attestation of the word διάταγμα in *P. Teb.* I, 5, or in any other Ptolemaic document.

Regarding the second point made by Passoni Dell’Acqua, there is no doubt that King Artaxerxes refers in a general manner to the royal ordinances that the Jews are said to perpetually disregard. The written accusation that he makes in his first letter echoes an earlier oral accusation made to him by Haman, namely, that the Jews disobey the king’s laws (LXX *Esth* 3:8: τῶν δὲ νόμων τοῦ βασιλέως παρακούουσιν; cf. AT *Esth* 3:8: τοῖς δὲ νομίμοις σοῦ, βασιλεῦ, οὐ προσέχουσι ... καὶ τὰ προστάγματα σου ἀθετοῦσι). The author of Addition B likely took his cue from the canonical verse 3:8, but instead of the verb παρακούω (or προσέχω or ἀθετῶ) and the noun νόμοι (or νόμιμα or προστάγματα) that occurred in the Greek version available to him, he used

<sup>104</sup> Passoni Dell’Acqua, “Decree,” 77; cf. ead., “Editti,” 59.

<sup>105</sup> Passoni Dell’Acqua, “Decree,” 77 n. 32.

<sup>106</sup> Preisigke, “Friedenskundgebung,” 304.

<sup>107</sup> Lenger, *Corpus*, 133 [*C.Ord.Ptol.* 53].

the verb παραπέμπω and the noun διατάγματα (or possibly προτάγματα, as discussed further below), respectively.

The question is whether the term διάταγμα (or πρόσταγμα, if that was the original reading) in LXX Esth B:4 should be understood in the technical sense of “decree, edict having the force of law” or in the general sense of “command, order.” The use of the combination πρόσταγμα τοῦ βασιλέως in the Septuagint can provide insights into this question. In seven instances it denotes a royal ordinance, which, as understood from the context, is promulgated through letters,<sup>108</sup> while in two instances it is used in the general sense of “command.”<sup>109</sup>

As noted previously, in the Septuagint (Wis 11:7) and the New Testament (Heb 11:23), the order given by the Pharaoh, “the king of the Egyptians,” in the book of Exodus, first to the midwives (LXX Exod 1:15: καὶ εἶπεν ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Αἰγυπτίων ταῖς μαίαις τῶν Ἑβραίων) and then to all his people (LXX Exod 1:22: συνέταξεν δὲ Φαραὼ παντὶ τῷ λαῷ αὐτοῦ), to kill the male Hebrew newborns is termed διάταγμα. It is likely that the authors of the Wisdom of Solomon and of Hebrews intended to present the Pharaoh as delivering his orders in the same way that the highest political authority of their time, the Roman Emperor, promulgated his, namely, through an edict. 4 Macc 4:26 and Acts 17:7 provide parallels to LXX Esth B:4, which involve another term used in Greek to designate the Roman *edictum*, δόγμα. The author of 4 Maccabees, who was likely roughly contemporary with the author of Acts, anachronistically uses this term, which was current in his time, to refer to the decrees of the Seleucid King Antiochus IV, which “were despised by the [Jewish] people” (τὰ δόγματα αὐτοῦ κατεφρονεῖτο ὑπὸ τοῦ λαοῦ). In Acts 17:7, Paul and his companions are accused by the Thessalonian Jews of acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar (καὶ οὗτοι πάντες ἀπέναντι τῶν δογμάτων Καίσαρος πράσσουσιν); here (as in Luke 2:1: ἐξῆλθεν δόγμα παρὰ Καίσαρος Αὐγούστου), the author uses the term δόγμα to designate an imperial edict.<sup>110</sup> Similarly, the text of Esther in the Chester Beatty Biblical Papyrus IX [=Ra 967] from the first half of the third century CE, at B:5 uses the term δόγμα, when referring to King Artaxerxes’ decrees (δυσνοοῦν [τοις ημετεροις] δογμασιν),<sup>111</sup> instead of the term πρᾶγμα in the LXX version and πρόσταγμα in the AT, while in the First Targum to

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<sup>108</sup> 2 Chr 30:6, 12; cf. 2 Chr 30:1–10; 1 Macc 2:18, 23; cf. 1 Macc 1:41–51; LXX Esth 2:8; cf. LXX Esth 1:19–2:4; LXX Esth 9:4; 1 Esd 8:64.

<sup>109</sup> 2 Macc 7:30; LXX Dan 3:22.

<sup>110</sup> See Mason, *Terms*, 39, 128.

<sup>111</sup> See Kenyon, *Papyri*, 41.

Esther (3:14), διάταγμα is attested as a Greek loanword used with reference to Ahasuerus' condemnation decree.<sup>112</sup>

Passoni Dell'Acqua also points out that in LXX Esth B:4,

the cod. B [Vaticanus] gives προστάγματα in the first draft, with the προ[σ]-erased and δια written over the erasure: this can be explained by the fact that, when the correctors were at work, the most common term was διάταγμα, and πρόσταγμα might have seemed rather unusual and to be avoided.<sup>113</sup>

With regard to this point, it should be noted that, with the exception of the uncertain *scriptio inferior* in the Vaticanus and the minuscule 249, all the textual witnesses of LXX Esther read διατάγματα. Moreover, had the correctors of the Vaticanus deemed the term πρόσταγμα in LXX Esth B:4 “unusual and to be avoided,” they would have replaced it with διάταγμα throughout the rest of LXX Esther, where it occurs in both the canonical and the deuterocanonical sections that precede and follow Addition B.<sup>114</sup> However, this is not the case. It appears more probable that the original scribe of the Vaticanus, in the fourth century CE, regarded the term διατάγματα in LXX Esth B:4 as “unusual” and substituted it with προστάγματα because elsewhere in LXX Esther the royal ordinances are designated as προστάγματα.<sup>115</sup> Subsequently, the first of the two correctors, who is thought to have been contemporary with the scribe (possibly the *diorthotes* of the scriptorium), upon comparison with the master copy, reinstated διατάγματα in place of προστάγματα—a correction retained by the corrector who re-linked the Codex in the tenth or eleventh century.<sup>116</sup>

At B:4, the Alpha Text and the *Vetus Latina* of Esther support the reading προστάγματα: AT Esth 3:16 [=B:4] reads παραπέμποντα διηνεκῶς προστάγματα and, in

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<sup>112</sup> See Tropper, “Contexts,” 210.

<sup>113</sup> Passoni Dell'Acqua, “Decree,” 77; cf. ead., “Editti,” 59.

<sup>114</sup> See LXX Esth 2:8: τὸ τοῦ βασιλέως πρόσταγμα [two MSS of the Hexaplaric recension, following the MT, which uses two terms, add here: καὶ δογμα (MS 58: τὰ δογματα) αὐτοῦ]; 2:20: ποιεῖν τὰ προστάγματα αὐτοῦ [sc. τοῦ θεοῦ]; LXX Esth D:10: κοινὸν τὸ πρόσταγμα ἡμῶν ἐστίν; 8:14, 17: ἐξετέθη τὸ πρόσταγμα; 9:4: τὸ πρόσταγμα τοῦ βασιλέως.

<sup>115</sup> See Hanhart, *Esther*, 47 n. 1: “Eine Vorliebe von B für πρόσταγμα scheint auch B<sub>4</sub> (s. App.) zu zeigen.” That the scribe of the Vaticanus had a fondness for πρόσταγμα can also be seen from LXX Esth 2:4, where the reading of the *prima manus* is καὶ ἤρεσεν τῷ βασιλεῖ τὸ πρόσταγμα. The corrector intervened here as well, and changed πρόσταγμα to πρᾶγμα—the reading found in all the other manuscripts—by placing expunging dots above the letters OCT.

<sup>116</sup> On the correctors of Codex Vaticanus, see Metzger, *Manuscripts*, 74; Parker, “Codex,” 1074; Versace, *Marginalia*, 10–23.

the following verse, δυσνοοῦν τοῖς ἡμετέροις προστάγμασιν (the corresponding verse in LXX Esther [B:5] reads δυσνοοῦν τοῖς ἡμετέροις πράγμασιν);<sup>117</sup> VL Esth (R-text) B:4 reads *regum autem praetermittentes supervacue ad res nam ante*,<sup>118</sup> “acting unnecessarily neglectfully regarding matters of kings previously.”<sup>119</sup> De Bruyne suggests that the Latin translator may have misread διηνεκῶς as διακένως, and rendered it by *supervacue*, and προστάγματα (the reading that we find in the Alpha Text) as πρὸς πράγματα, and rendered it by *ad res*.<sup>120</sup> In his version of the Esther story, Josephus designates Artaxerxes’ extermination decree first as διάταγμα (A.J. 11.215) and later as πρόσταγμα (A.J. 11.220), while in his paraphrase of B:4 he has Artaxerxes state that the Jews are disobedient to the kings, omitting the reference to the royal orders/ordinances (A.J. 11.217: ἔθνος ... τοῖς βασιλεῦσιν ἀνυπότακτον).

The instance of the term διάταγμα exclusively in LXX Addition B, the use of the term πρόσταγμα throughout the rest of LXX Esther, and the absence of the term διάταγμα in the Alpha Text (and most likely in the Greek *Vorlage* of VL Addition B) may be explained in two ways. Either LXX Addition B was written much later than the rest of LXX Esther, at a time when διάταγμα had become current as an equivalent of πρόσταγμα, or LXX Addition B went through (at least) two stages of composition and redaction: initially, at B:4, it read προστάγματα, and this reading was retained in the Alpha Text, which copied the text of LXX Addition B—unless it was present in the common *Urtext* of both versions; in a later redaction of LXX Addition B, along with other changes, προστάγματα was replaced with διατάγματα, and this reading persisted in the textual tradition of LXX Esther up to the time of Codex Vaticanus. The latter explanation takes into consideration the view of Dorothy and Jobs that the Alpha Text may preserve an earlier form of Additions B and E, which underwent fewer

<sup>117</sup> Throughout the Alpha Text (1:16; 3:2, 8, 16, 17, 19), the term used for a royal decree is πρόσταγμα. This is also the case for the canonical parts of LXX Esther (2:8; 8:14, 17; 9:4), as well as for LXX Esth D:10. In LXX Esth 2:20, πρόσταγμα is used in the plural to denote Yahweh’s commands.

<sup>118</sup> According to Haelewyck, *Hester*, 68, the R-text preserves the oldest and least revised form of the Old Latin translation of Esther. The I-text, which, though close to the R-text, shows traces of revision, reads in this verse: *regum vero praetermittentes iugiter praecepta supervacua*. Elsewhere in the *Vetus Latina*, the term *praeceptum*, “order, command,” renders the Greek term πρόσταγμα, which occurs in the LXX and the AT. See AT Esth 3:8: καὶ τὰ προστάγματά σου ἠθετοῦσι; VL Esth (R) 3:8: *praecepta tua spernunt*; LXX Esth D:10: κοινὸν τὸ πρόσταγμα ἡμῶν ἐστίν; VL Esth (R) D:10: *praeceptum commune est nostrum*; LXX Esth 9:4: προσέπεσεν γὰρ τὸ πρόσταγμα; VL Esth (R) 9:4: *praeceptum enim erat*.

<sup>119</sup> Trans. Bellmann and Portier-Young, “Latin,” 276.

<sup>120</sup> Cited in Haelewyck, “Version,” 296–98; cf. id., *Hester*, 42.

changes compared to that attested in the LXX version.<sup>121</sup> This explanation also assumes that the postulated redaction affected particular portions of LXX Esther, specifically Addition B, rather than the entire text.

Conclusively, if we accept that the term διάταγμα in LXX Esth B:4 is used in a technical sense—which is a valid possibility—and if the term originally employed in the *Urtext* of Addition B in this verse was πρόσταγμα, later substituted with διάταγμα in the LXX, then the redaction of Addition B, through which this substitution was made, most likely took place during the Roman Imperial period. It was in that period that διάταγμα was commonly used to designate edicts issued by the supreme political authority in the Roman Empire, the emperor, but also by other high Roman officials, such as the *praefectus Aegypti*. In the following section, I will provide further evidence supporting this hypothesis.

## 6.4 The “evil-hating justice” (μισοπόννηρος δίκη) in LXX Addition E and in Philo

In LXX Esth E:4, King Artaxerxes speaks of those wicked schemers—a hinted reference to Haman—who, puffed up by the boasts of those who are inexperienced in goodness (τοῖς τῶν ἀπειραγάνων κόμπους ἐπαρθέντες), assume that they will escape the evil-hating justice of God, who always observes everything (τοῦ τὰ πάντα κατοπτέοντος αἰὲ θεοῦ μισοπόννηρον ὑπολαμβάνουσιν ἐκφεύξεσθαι δίκην). Of especial interest in this verse is the combination μισοπόννηρος δίκη, “evil-hating justice,” which is not found in the other Greek versions of Esther. In the Alpha Text, the two elements that make up this combination are not coupled together,<sup>122</sup> while one of the two elements,

<sup>121</sup> See Dorothy, *Esther*, 350; Jobs, *Alpha-Text*, 174, 224–25, 232.

<sup>122</sup> At 7:23, the Alpha Text reads: ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς τῶν ἀπειραγάνων κόμπους παρελθόντες τὸ τοῦ πάντα δυναστεύοντος δικαιοκρίτου μισοπόννηρον ἐκφυγεῖν διειληφότες, τὴν δίκην. The adjective μισοπόννηρος is here substantivised: τὸ μισοπόννηρον (=ἡ μισοπονηρία, “the hatred of evil”) is to be taken either as the object of the infinitive ἐκφυγεῖν, in which case τὴν δίκην is the object of the participle παρελθόντες (see the French translation by Cavalier, *Esther*, 213–14: “mais aussi, négligeant la justice à cause des vantardises de ceux qui ignorent le bien et décidés à fuir la haine des méchants du juste juge qui dirige tout”), or, given the distance that separates παρελθόντες from τὴν δίκην, as the object of the participle παρελθόντες, in which case τὴν δίκην is the object of the infinitive ἐκφυγεῖν (see the German translation by De Troyer and Wacker [in Kraus and Karrer, *Septuaginta*, 612]: “sondern im stolzen Prahlen derer, die vom Guten nichts wissen, sind sie auch noch davon überzeugt, sie könnten an dem Hass auf das Böse, der von dem alles gerecht beurteilenden Mächtigen (ausgeht), vorbeikommen und dem Gericht entfliehen”).



the adjective μισοπόνηρος, seems not to have occurred in the Greek *Vorlage* of the *Vetus Latina* of Esther and is missing in Josephus' paraphrase of Esther.<sup>123</sup> In fact, the combination μισοπόνηρος δίκη is not attested anywhere else in ancient Greek literature except in six works of Philo<sup>124</sup> and in a few late Byzantine authors.<sup>125</sup>

In his works, Philo uses, apart from μισοπόνηρος, several other adjectives, nouns, and participles as modifiers of δίκη, the personified Justice: ἀδέκαστος (1x), ἀειπάρθενος (1x), ἀμείλικτος καὶ ἀδικουμένων ἀρωγὸς ἀπαραίτητος (1x),<sup>126</sup> βοηθὸς καὶ ὑπέρμαχος τῶν ἀδικηθέντων (1x), ἐφεδρεύουσα (1x), ἔφορος τῶν ἀνθρωπείων/ἀνθρωπίνων πραγμάτων (7x), ἐφορῶσα τὰ ἀνθρώπεια (1x), θεήλατος (1x), ὁπαδὸς τοῦ θεοῦ (1x), πάρεδρος τοῦ θεοῦ/τῷ θεῷ (5x), τιμωρὸς (6x), ὑπέρμαχος καὶ παραστάτις ἀδικουμένων (1x), φιλάρετος (1x). All except three of these modifiers (ἀπαραίτητος, πάρεδρος, and τιμωρὸς) are not previously attested in conjunction with δίκη,<sup>127</sup> which makes it likely that at least some of the combinations in which they occur in Philo's works, unless they originate from literary works now lost to us, are originally Philonic.

<sup>123</sup> At E:4, the *Vetus Latina* of Esther reads: *dei semper omnia conspicientis malignitatem concipientes putant se evadere <iudicium>* ("when they design an evil plan they think they will avoid the judgment of the god who always sees everything" [trans. Bellmann and Portier-Young, "Latin," 285]). Its *Vorlage*, instead of τὸ μισοπόνηρον, likely read τὸ πονηρόν/τὴν πονηρίαν, which the translator rendered by *malignitatem*. Cf. 3 Macc 7:9: ἔάν τι κακοτεχνήσωμεν πονηρόν ... τὸν πάσης δεσπόζοντα δυνάμεως θεὸν ... ἀντικείμενον ἡμῖν ἐπ' ἐκδικήσει τῶν πραγμάτων ... ἀφεύκτως ... ἔξομεν. In MS VL 151, which is thought to be closest to the oldest, unrevised form of the *Vetus Latina* of Esther, the infinitive *evadere* lacks a complement; *iudicium* was supplied by the modern editor on the basis of the revised MSS VL 123 and 109. See Haelewyck, *Hester*, 43. Josephus' paraphrase (A.J. 11.275) reads: λήσασθαι τὸ θεῖον ἐπὶ τούτοις νομίζουσι καὶ τὴν ἐξ αὐτοῦ διαφεύξασθαι δίκην. The different versions of this verse in the LXX, the AT, the VL, and in Josephus make it impossible to determine which one is closest to the original.

<sup>124</sup> Philo, *Conf.* 128; *Migr.* 225; *Mos.* 2.53; *Decal.* 177; *Spec.* 3.140; *Flacc.* 107.

<sup>125</sup> Ignatius Diaconus, *Vit. Niceph.*, pp. 146, l. 4, and 205, l. 7 (ed. de Boor); Philagathus, *Hom.*, 22.6 (ed. Rossi Taibbi); Demetrius Cydonēs, *Ep.*, p. 436, l. 30 (ed. Loenertz); cf. Theophanes Confessor, *Chron.*, p. 255, l. 9 (ed. de Boor): ἡ μισοπόνηρος δικαιοσύνη τοῦ θεοῦ. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 9.7.2, likely draws on Philo, when he writes that Justice with its "sleepless hatred of wickedness" followed close on the heels of Maximinus, a persecutor of the Church: τῆς παρὰ πόδας αὐτὸν μετελθούσης ἱερᾶς δίκης ἡ ἄπνοος κατὰ τῶν ἀσεβῶν μισοπονῆρία.

<sup>126</sup> The combination ἀπαραίτητος δίκη occurs six times in Philo's works but it is only in *Migr.* 225 that δίκη is personified.

<sup>127</sup> The combination ἀπαραίτητος Δίκη first occurs in Demosthenes (1 *Aristog.* 11) and in a tragic *adespota* (Kannicht and Snell, *TrGF*, F 495); also in a tragic *adespota* (Kannicht and Snell, *TrGF*, F 655, ll. 19–20) we first encounter πάρεδρος as a modifier of Δίκη; the combination τιμωρὸς δίκη first occurs in Euripides (*El.* 676) and in Plato (*Leg.* 716a, 872e; [*Epin.*] 988e).

The occurrence of μισοπόνηρος δίκη exclusively in LXX Addition E and in Philo prompts us to consider whether Philo might have drawn the combination from LXX Addition E. This does not seem very likely for several reasons:

(a) μισοπόνηρος is one of Philo's favourite adjectives;<sup>128</sup> he uses it twenty-four times,<sup>129</sup> more than any other ancient author, whereas in the Septuagint it occurs only once, in LXX Esth E:4.

(b) As the juxtaposition of synonyms or antonyms is a favourite stylistic feature of Philo,<sup>130</sup> he uses not only μισοπόνηρος in conjunction with δίκη but also φιλάρετος, "he who loves virtue" (*Conf.* 128: ἡ φιλάρετός τε καὶ μισοπόνηρος δίκη), which is another adjective that he has a fondness for, occurring sixty-four times in his works. He also uses the antonym of μισοπόνηρος, φιλοπόνηρος (2x).

(c) Philo has a liking for the μισο- compounds; apart from μισοπόνηρος, he uses eleven such words.<sup>131</sup> Five of them—μισάρετος, μισογύναιος, μισόκαλος, μισοπονία, and μισοτεκνία—are not previously attested (though this does not mean that they were coined by Philo).<sup>132</sup>

(d) All except three of the previously cited δίκη-combinations that Philo uses are, as far as can be determined from the extant ancient Greek sources, not borrowings from profane Greek or Jewish-Greek literature. The three δίκη-combinations that are previously attested originate in profane Greek and not in Jewish-Greek literature, Septuagintal or otherwise.

(e) Apart from μισοπόνηρος δίκη, the other two μισοπόνηρος-combinations that Philo has a liking for—μισοπόνηρος φύσει, "evil-hating by one's nature" (6x) and μισοπόνηρον πάθος, "evil-hating emotion" (7x)—are also previously unattested. The same applies to some other combinations consisting of a μισο- compound adjective and a noun, such as μισόκαλος φθόνος, "good-hating envy" (3x) and μισάρετος φθόνος, "virtue-hating envy" (1x).

(f) The use of a μισο-/φιλο- compound adjective as a modifier of a personified abstract concept is typical of Philo, as attested by such combinations as φιλάρετος καὶ

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<sup>128</sup> See van der Horst, *Flaccus*, 194.

<sup>129</sup> Philo, *Sacr.* 28; *Conf.* 46, 49, 128, 131; *Migr.* 225; *Mut.* 108; *Mos.* 1.47, 1.149, 1.328; *Mos.* 2.9, 2.53, 2.167, 2.279; *Decal.* 87, 177; *Spec.* 1.55, 3.31, 3.75, 3.126, 3.140, 4.9; *Flacc.* 107; *Legat.* 193.

<sup>130</sup> See Siegfried, *Philo*, 132–35.

<sup>131</sup> μισάδελφος (1x), μισάλληλος (1x), μισανθρωπία (12x), μισάνθρωπος (3x), μισάρετος (8x), μισογύναιος (1x), μισόκαλος (4x), μισόπολις (1x), μισοπονηρία (1x), μισοπονία (1x), μισοτεκνία (1x).

<sup>132</sup> See Runia, "Verba," 313–14.

μισοπόνηρος δίκη, μισάρετος καὶ μισόκαλος φθόνος, μισάρετος καὶ φιλοπαθῆς νοῦς/φύσις, φιλοσώματος καὶ φιλοπαθῆς νοῦς, etc.

(g) In his extant works, Philo neither quotes from nor alludes to the book of Esther.<sup>133</sup>

(h) The concept expressed by the combination μισοπόνηρος δίκη is congruent with Philo's theology, as we will see further on.

It thus seems more likely that it was LXX Addition E, a text marked by many intertextual borrowings,<sup>134</sup> that drew the combination μισοπόνηρος δίκη from one of Philo's treatises. That said, we cannot exclude two other possibilities: that Philo may have known the Greek Esther and its Additions in their LXX version but, with the exception of μισοπόνηρος δίκη, did not quote from, allude to, or otherwise engage with them, as Josephus did about half a century later;<sup>135</sup> or, that both Philo and the author of LXX Addition E drew the combination μισοπόνηρος δίκη independently from a source unknown to us.<sup>136</sup>

Pursuing further the hypothesis that LXX Esth E:4 is indebted to Philo for the expression μισοπόνηρος δίκη, we may attempt to date the Philonic instances of this

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<sup>133</sup> See Ryle, *Quotations*, xxvii, xxxi–xxxiii; Sterling, “Recherché,” 12 n. 58: “There is no evidence that he [Philo] knew Esther, Ruth, Cant, Lam, or 2 Macc.” Neither Leisegang, “Index,” nor Earp, “Index,” list any reference or allusion in Philo's works to the book of Esther. According to the more recent Index of Philo's quotations from and allusions to the Old Testament (Allenbach et al., *Biblia*, 90), *Spec.* 3.140, where μισοπόνηρος δίκη occurs, contains an allusion to Esth 8:13 (sic) [read: 8:12<sup>d</sup> ed. Rahlfs/LXX Esth E:4 ed. Hanhart]. However, as I suggest above, the direction of the allusion most likely goes from Philo to LXX Addition E to Esther rather than the other way around.

<sup>134</sup> See Hacham, “3 Maccabees,” 772–80; Domazakis, *Esther*, 69–86, 166–68, 174–77.

<sup>135</sup> See Cohen, *Citations*, 7 n. 21: “The fact that neither Philo, nor very many other Hellenistic authors, mention either Purim or the Book of Esther cannot be taken as proof that it was unknown to them—just that it was not relevant to the subjects of their extant writings.” See also Sterling, “Recherché,” 12: “His [Philo's] silence should not automatically be interpreted as ignorance since he rarely cited any text outside of the Torah.” The absence of God and of the religious element in the canonical Esther is a strong reason why Philo may have ignored it. See Bond, *Pilate*, 30 n. 28.

<sup>136</sup> Prior to Philo, the adjective μισοπόνηρος and its cognates are used in relation to Yahweh only in LXX Esth E:4 and in 2 Macc 8:4: ἐπεκαλοῦντο τὸν κύριον ... μισοπονηρῆσαι. The members of the μισοπονηρ- word group, attested as early as the Attic orators, were likely adopted into the religious domain from Ptolemaic judicial terminology, as they frequently occur in petitions from the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, in which individuals appeal to the justice and the “hatred of wickedness” of a *strategos*, of the king and the queen, or of the *praefectus Aegypti*. See, e.g., *P.Tarich.* 13 [188–187 BCE], ll. 28–30: ἔσομα[ι] | τοῦ δικαίου καὶ τῆς σῆς [μισο]πονηρίας τετευχώς; *BGU* 8.1824 [60–55 BCE], ll. 29–31: [ἀξιῶ σε] περὶ αὐτῶν διαλαβεῖν μισο[πο]νήρως, ἵν' ὧ τετευχώς τῆς σῆς δικαιοσύνης; *P.Ryl.* 2.113 [133 CE], ll. 30–37: τοῦ οὖν | πράγματος δεομένου τῆς σῆς | μειζοπονηρίας | ἀξιῶ σε τὸν κύριον | καὶ δικαιοκρίτην | ἀκοῦσαί μου πρὸς | αὐτούς; *PSI* 13.1323 [147–148 CE], l. 3: τῆς σῆς ἐπάρ[χου] δικαίου μισοπονηρίας δεόμενος. See Veisse, “Toi,” 21–31.

expression to establish a *terminus post quem* for its integration into LXX Addition E. On the basis of Cohn's tentative classification and chronology of Philo's works, two of the treatises in which μισοπόνηρος δίκη occurs (*De confusione linguarum* and *De migratione Abrahami*) are part of the Allegorical Commentary, two (*De decalogo* and *De specialibus legibus* 3) belong to the Exposition of the Law, and two (*In Flaccum* and *De vita Mosis* 2) belong to the Historical-Apologetic group of Philo's writings. Cohn argues that *De specialibus legibus* 3, *In Flaccum*, and likely *De vita Mosis* were written in the aftermath of the anti-Jewish disturbances that broke out in Alexandria in 38 CE during the reign of Gaius Caligula, whereas the first sections of the Exposition of the Law, preceded by the Allegorical Commentary, were written at an earlier period.<sup>137</sup> If this chronology is valid, the earliest instances of μισοπόνηρος δίκη in Philo's extant works seem to be found in the two treatises of the Allegorical Commentary, *De confusione linguarum* and *De migratione Abrahami*, which were likely written between the first and third decades of the first century CE.<sup>138</sup>

Of the six instances of μισοπόνηρος δίκη in Philo, those that are closest to LXX Esth E:4 are *Mos.* 2.53, *Decal.* 177, and *Flacc.* 107.<sup>139</sup> In *Mos.* 2.53, Justice is the evil-hating assessor of God (ἡ πάρεδρος τῷ θεῷ μισοπόνηρος δίκη), who punishes those who engage in knavery, injustice, and other vices, although God has bestowed upon them an abundance of gifts such as good health, wealth, and glory; in LXX Esth E:4, the evil-hating justice of God punishes those who, like Haman, show ingratitude towards and scheme against their benefactors, despite the honours that these benefactors have generously showered upon them. In *Decal.* 177, Justice is presented as God's assessor (πάρεδρος), endowed with an inborn hatred of evil (φύσει μισοπόνηρος), who surveys human affairs (τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων ἔφορος πραγμάτων) and punishes wrongdoers and sinners; in LXX Esth E:4, the evil-hating justice is an attribute of God, who himself closely observes everything (τοῦ τὰ πάντα κατοπτέοντος θεοῦ)<sup>140</sup> and inflicts the deserved punishment on transgressors like Haman (LXX Esth E:18: τὴν καταξίαν τοῦ

<sup>137</sup> See Cohn, "Chronologie," 389, 421–24, 426–27, 433–34. See also Royse, "Works," 59–62, and Niehoff, *Philo*, 3–11 and 245–46.

<sup>138</sup> See Niehoff, *Philo*, 245–46, who dates the Allegorical Commentary to ca. 10–35 CE and the Exposition of the Law and the Historical Writings to ca. 40–49 CE.

<sup>139</sup> In *Conf.* 128, *Migr.* 225, and *Spec.* 3.140, the μισοπόνηρος δίκη acts on her own authority and is not associated with God, as she is in LXX Esth E:4.

<sup>140</sup> The combination of the two attributes that God and his justice possess in LXX Esth E:4—"all-observing" and "evil-hating," respectively—is found elsewhere only in a third-century CE binding spell from North Africa: Audollent, *Defixiones* 271, ll. 35–36: τοῦ Κυρίου | αἰ[ι]ω[νίου] ἀθανάτου παντεφόπτου μείσοπονήρου.

τὰ πάντα ἐπικρατοῦντος θεοῦ διὰ τάχους ἀποδόντος αὐτῷ κρίσιν). In *Flacc.* 107, the evil-hating Justice advances to meet Flaccus, the Roman prefect of Egypt (Φλάκκῳ δὲ ... προὑπήντησε ἡ μισοπόνηρος δίκη), who, like Haman in the book of Esther, was an enemy and persecutor of the Jews. As in *Conf.* 128, *Migr.* 225, and *Spec.* 3.140, and in contrast to LXX Esth E:4, the evil-hating Justice in *Flacc.* 107 is a self-standing, personified hypostasis. Elsewhere in *In Flaccum* (104; 189), the personified Justice is also self-subsistent and independent of God, yet in *Flacc.* 146 she is assigned the same attribute, “overseer of human affairs” (τὴν ἑφορον τῶν ἀνθρωπείων δίκην), that God has in *Flacc.* 121 (τὸν ἑφορον θεὸν τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων πραγμάτων). As van der Horst remarks, “‘Justice’ is here, as elsewhere in Philo, nothing but a personified function of God.”<sup>141</sup>

The two earliest preserved instances of μισοπόνηρος δίκη in the Philonic corpus, which, as previously noted, seem to be found in *Conf.* 128 and in *Migr.* 225, do not exhibit any strong intertextual links with LXX Esth E:4, unlike most of those found in later works: in these two instances, the evil-hating justice is not presented as an assessor or an attribute of God, does not watch over human affairs, and does not punish a persecutor of the Jews. It thus seems unlikely that, the first time he used the concept of μισοπόνηρος δίκη, Philo was inspired by or intended to allude to LXX Esth E:4.

Philo’s concept of personified Justice draws upon representations of the Greek mythological deity Dike, daughter of Zeus and Themis, in Hesiod, in Sophocles, in Plato, and in the Orphic hymn 62 (addressed to Dike),<sup>142</sup> while also being informed by Jewish conceptions of divine justice and the contemporary circumstances of the Jewish community in Alexandria.<sup>143</sup> Foster points out that, in the Exposition of the Law, Philo presents Dike as the defender of the Law and the punisher of its transgressors, whereas in the Allegorical Commentary and the Historical-Apologetic works, Dike has the role of the avenger of the people of the Law and the punisher of its enemies and persecutors.<sup>144</sup> According to Foster, this shift reflects Philo’s response

<sup>141</sup> van der Horst, *Flaccus*, 219–20. Cf. *ibid.*, 191–92 and esp. 194: “Since in §102 and elsewhere it is God himself who takes revenge on Flaccus for his misdeeds, it is clear that in fact Dikê is nothing but God in his capacity of pursuer of justice.” See also Borgen, “Prayers,” 308.

<sup>142</sup> See Foster, *Dike*, 141–44, 176–89; Boyancé, “Écho,” 173–78.

<sup>143</sup> Elsewhere in the Septuagint, justice is personified in two deuterocanonical books, the Wisdom of Solomon (1:8; 11:20–22), which is of Alexandrian origin, and 4 Maccabees (4:13, *passim*). See Foster, *Dike*, 150–61.

<sup>144</sup> Foster, *Dike*, 120–21, 148, 162. It should be noted here that Foster considers the Allegorical Commentary to be chronologically posterior to the Exposition of the Law.

to the anxieties and tribulations of the Alexandrian Jews at a time when their *modus vivendi* with the Greeks and the Romans was nearing collapse. Philo may have conceptualised the exercise of judicial functions by God in tandem with the personified Dike as a counterpart to the judicial authority exercised by the Roman emperor and his prefect in Egypt:

Philo grasped this Greek hypostasis [sc. Dike] and used it to express a hope in the kingship and rule of God; no matter how difficult life had become for the Alexandrian Jews he could advise them to hope with certainty in God's care and in Dike's vengeance.<sup>145</sup> ... Philo constructed a theology that was parallel to the political power structure in Roman Egypt precisely because he and his community were not a part of that power structure. Philo used a Greek mythological personification of justice because it fit that system and made clear the hope he held of vindication against such an awesome opponent as the emperor.<sup>146</sup>

Scholarship has noted that Philo's *In Flaccum* shares with Esther and 2 Maccabees the motif of the just and retributive punishment of those who attack God and his people. When Flaccus is executed at Caligula's command, Philo comments that "it was the will of justice that the butcheries which she wrought on his single body should be as numerous as the number of the Jews whom he unlawfully put to death" (*Flacc.* 189 [trans. Colson, LCL]).<sup>147</sup> Likewise, Haman is hanged on the pole that he had prepared for Mordecai (Esth 7:10), and King Antiochus IV is stricken with severe intestinal pains, "and that very justly, for he had tortured the bowels of others with many and strange inflictions" (2 Macc 9:6 [trans. Schaper, NETS]). According to Pelletier, the aforementioned books share three common themes typical of the aretalogical genre: misfortune (e.g., illness or persecution), divine intervention that reverses the situation, and recognition by humans of God's intervention. In the case of persecution, the third theme is further developed into three phases: the defeated persecutor is not spared, although he acknowledges his just punishment; those who are saved from persecution sing hymns of thanksgiving to God; and, in some cases, they observe an

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<sup>145</sup> Foster, *Dike*, 136.

<sup>146</sup> Foster, *Dike*, 148. Other scholars (Goodenough, *Light*, 59–63; Boyancé, "Écho," 175; Mendelson, "Dialectic," 114, 121) point out that Philo introduces Dike as an agent of punishment to exempt God from the responsibility of punishing and administering vengeance himself, since God is good and can only be the cause of good.

<sup>147</sup> See Pelletier, *Flavius Josèphe*, 16–18; Borgen, "Prayers," 302–3, 307–8; id., "Flaccus," 45, 53–54.

annual feast commemorating their victory (the latter element is missing in *In Flaccum*).<sup>148</sup> Meiser and Borgen have identified further similarities between *In Flaccum* and 2 Maccabees, such as the pursuit of a pathopoeic effect, the depiction of a character's inner thoughts by the omniscient author (both of which, according to Meiser, are characteristic of the "mimetic" historiography), the inclusion of a fictitious *ante mortem* speech and prayer (Flaccus) or vow and letter of repentance (King Antiochus IV) by the persecutor, and the emphasis on theodicy and on God's providence for his people.<sup>149</sup>

The scholars mentioned above do not claim, based on the similarities that they trace between these works, that Philo was acquainted with either Esther or 2 Maccabees, although such claims have been made by other scholars.<sup>150</sup> Given the reasons that I previously presented, I consider it unlikely that Philo borrowed the expression *μισοπόνηρος δίκη* from LXX Addition E. Instead, I consider it likely that Addition E derived this expression from Philo, specifically from *In Flaccum*. This direction of influence presupposes a redactional intervention in LXX Addition E that presumably occurred after several significant events: the anti-Jewish pogrom launched in Alexandria in the summer of 38 CE during Flaccus' prefectship; Flaccus' execution in 39 CE; the armed Jewish uprising in Alexandria following Caligula's death in January 41 CE; and the publication of Philo's *In Flaccum* (40 or 41 CE)<sup>151</sup> and the emperor Claudius' "Letter to the Alexandrians" (probably written in October 41 CE and published in Alexandria on November 10, 41 CE),<sup>152</sup> which aimed to settle the unrest in the city. In the following section, I will elaborate on the historical circumstances that may have prompted the above-positated redactional intervention in LXX Addition E.

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<sup>148</sup> See Pelletier, *In Flaccum*, 16–19; Borgen, "Prayers," 303; id., "Flaccus," 53.

<sup>149</sup> See Meiser, "Gattung," 421–22, 427; Borgen, "Flaccus," 53–54.

<sup>150</sup> For example, Zeitlin, "Agrippa," 29, argues that "Philo was influenced, no doubt, by the biblical book of Esther, by the books of Judith, and the Second and Third Maccabees. Philo makes Flaccus to repent in the end just as the author of the Second Maccabees makes Antiochus Epiphanes do." Bond, *Pilate*, 30–31, suggests that the portrait of Caligula in Philo's *Legatio ad Gaium* may have been modelled after that of King Antiochus IV in 2 Maccabees. See further references in Domazakis, *Neologisms*, 402–3.

<sup>151</sup> See van der Horst, *Flaccus*, 4.

<sup>152</sup> For the date of the letter, see Tcherikover, Fuks, and Stern, *Corpus*, 2:44.

## 6.5 A suggested *Sitz im Leben* for the final (?) redaction of LXX Addition E

There are strong analogies between the persecution of the Jews in the Persian kingdom under Artaxerxes, instigated by Haman, as described in the book of Esther, and the persecution of the Alexandrian Jews under Flaccus during the reign of Caligula. Furthermore, analogies can be drawn between King Artaxerxes and the emperor Claudius, Caligula's successor. Below, I note the most suggestive of these analogies, as they emerge from a parallel reading of LXX Additions B and E to Esther, Philo's *In Flaccum*, the edict (διάγραμμα/διάταγμα) that the emperor Claudius sent to Alexandria and Syria in the spring of 41 CE (Josephus, *AJ.* 19.280–285) and the one that he sent shortly after “to the rest of the world” (Josephus, *AJ.* 19.287–291),<sup>153</sup> and the letter (ἐπιστολή) that the same emperor sent to the Alexandrians in the autumn of 41 CE (*P.Lond.* 6.1912).

(a) In Additions B and E to Esther, King Artaxerxes appears particularly concerned with establishing peace and stability in his kingdom and avoiding disturbances and unrest (LXX *Esth* B:2: τοὺς τῶν ὑποτεταγμένων ἀκυμάτους διὰ παντὸς καταστήσαι βίους, τὴν τε βασιλείαν ἡμερον ... παρεξόμενος ἀνανεώσασθαι τε τὴν ποθουμένην τοῖς πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις εἰρήνην; LXX *Esth* B:7: ὅπως ... εὐσταθῇ καὶ ἀτάραχα παρέχωσιν ἡμῖν ... τὰ πράγματα; LXX *Esth* E:8: τὴν βασιλείαν ἀτάραχον τοῖς πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις μετ' εἰρήνης παρεξόμεθα). Likewise, in his edict and his letter to Alexandria, the emperor Claudius appears determined to ensure that no further disturbances arise (Josephus, *AJ.* 19.285: ὅπως μηδεμία ταραχὴ γένηται) and that his Alexandrian subjects live with mutual forbearance and human kindness (*P.Lond.* 6.1912, ll. 100–102: ἐὰν | ... μετὰ πραότητος | καὶ φιλανθρω[=ω]πείας τῆς πρὸς ἀλλήλους ζῆν ἐθελήσητε). In his letter to the Alexandrians, he even refers to a golden statue of the Pax Augusta Claudiana (*P.Lond.* 6.1912, l. 35: Κλαυδιανῆς Εἰρήνης Σεβαστῆς) that the people of the city voted to be erected in his honour and which he preferred instead to be set up in Rome. In the same year that he wrote this letter, the figure of Pax appeared on the reverse of his *aurei*, illustrating one of the central principles of his commencing reign, “Peace with gods and men.”<sup>154</sup>

<sup>153</sup> The authenticity of the edicts of Claudius transmitted by Josephus is a much-debated issue. See Pucci Ben Zeev, *Rights*, 303, 305–26, 333.

<sup>154</sup> See Tcherikover, Fuks, and Stern, *Corpus*, 2:45–46. Rostovtzeff, “Pax,” 25–28, argues that the figure depicted on the imperial coins was that of Pax-Nemesis, as was that of the golden statue that the Alexandrians wanted to erect in honour of Claudius. According to this scholar, the statue was



(b) Both Artaxerxes and Claudius present themselves as benevolent (φιλάνθρωποι) rulers (LXX Esth E:11: ἤς ἔχομεν πρὸς πᾶν ἔθνος φιλανθρωπίας; *P.Lond.* 6.1912, l. 81: ἡγεμῶν φιλάνθρω[ω]πος; Josephus, *A.J.* 19.290: ταύτῃ τῇ φιλανθρωπία).

(c) In LXX Esth B:5, King Artaxerxes accuses the Jews of having an undermining effect on the stability of the Persian kingdom (πρὸς τὸ μὴ τὴν βασιλείαν εὐσταθείας τυγχάνειν); in *Flacc.* 94, Philo's rhetorical questions, emphasising the peaceful character of the Jews and their contribution to the political stability of Alexandria, seem to echo a similar allegation (πότε δ' οὐκ εἰρηνικοὶ πᾶσιν ἐνομίσθημεν; τὰ δ' ἐπιτηδεύματα, οἷς καθ' ἑκάστην ἡμέραν χρώμεθα, ... οὐ συντείνοντα πρὸς εὐνομίαν πόλεως καὶ εὐστάθειαν).<sup>155</sup>

(d) In their respective letters and edicts, Artaxerxes and Claudius permit the Jews to observe their laws and customs (LXX Esth E:19: ἔάν τοὺς Ἰουδαίους χρῆσθαι τοῖς ἑαυτῶν νομίμοις; *P.Lond.* 6.1912, ll. 86–87: ἀλλὰ ἐῷσιν αὐτοὺς τοῖς ἔθεσιν | χρῆσθαι ὅς [=οἷς] καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ θεοῦ Σεβαστοῦ; Josephus, *A.J.* 19.285: ἐμμένουσι τοῖς ἰδίοις ἔθεσιν; 19.290: καλῶς οὖν ἔχειν καὶ Ἰουδαίους τοὺς ἐν παντὶ τῷ ὑφ' ἡμᾶς κόσμῳ τὰ πάτρια ἔθῃ ἀνεπικωλύτως φυλάσσειν).

(e) Haman was one of the “Friends” of King Artaxerxes (LXX Esth E:5; cf. LXX Esth 3:1); Flaccus was one of the “Friends” of the emperor Tiberius (*Flacc.* 2; 158).<sup>156</sup> Haman was “second to the king” (LXX Esth B:3; E:11) in the Persian kingdom; Flaccus, as *praefectus Aegypti* (*Flacc.* 152; 163), was second in authority to the emperor in one of

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intended to commemorate the peace that Claudius re-established in Alexandria by suppressing the riot in the city instigated by the Jews after the death of Caligula. Concerned that erecting such a statue might kindle new disturbances among the Jews, as it would imply that their *hybris* was punished by Nemesis, Claudius requested that it be set up in Rome instead of Alexandria. For a critique of this suggestion, see Tcherikover, Fuks, and Stern, *Corpus*, 2:45–46. See also Hornum, *Nemesis*, 15–17.

<sup>155</sup> Cf. Claudius' warning in his letter to the Alexandrians that if the Jews do not obey his order not to bring in other Jews from Syria or Egypt, he will punish them for “fomenting a common plague for the whole world” (*P.Lond.* 6.1912, ll. 99–100: καθάπερ κοινήν | τεῖ[=ι]να τῆς οἰκουμένης νόσον ἐξεγείροντας). “Plague” (νόσος) is to be understood here as “rebellion.” See van der Horst, *Flaccus*, 184. Cf. also a fragment of the *Acta Isidori et Lamponis* (Tcherikover, Fuks, and Stern, *Corpus*, vol. 2, no. 156c), which contains a discussion that presumably took place in 41 CE between Isidorus, gymnasiarch of Alexandria and one of the leaders of the anti-Jewish faction, T. Claudius Barbillus, and the Jewish king Agrippa I. In it, Isidorus accuses the Jews of attempting to stir up riots in the entire world: col. II, ll. 22–24: ἐν[κ]αλῶ αὐτοῖς [sc. τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις] | [ὅτι κ]αὶ ὅλην τὴν οἰκουμένην [ἐπιχειροῦσιν] | [ταράσ]σειν. Lastly, see *Legat.* 161, where Philo cites the instructions that Tiberius sent to the governors throughout the Roman Empire following the death of Sejanus, the purportedly anti-Semitic prefect of the praetorian guard, in 31 CE. These instructions stated that the governors were to regard the Jews as being of peaceful disposition and their laws as conducive to political stability (τούς τε ἄνδρας ὡς εἰρηνικοὺς τὰς φύσεις καὶ τὰ νόμιμα ὡς ἀλείφοντα πρὸς εὐστάθειαν).

<sup>156</sup> See Box, *In Flaccum*, 69; van der Horst, *Flaccus*, 91–92.

the most important provinces of the Roman Empire.<sup>157</sup> Haman planned to destroy all the Jews in Artaxerxes' kingdom (LXX Esth E:15: τοὺς παραδεδομένους εἰς ἀφανισμόν Ἰουδαίους; cf. LXX Esth 3:6, 13); Flaccus, according to Philo, intended to utterly destroy the Jews of Alexandria (*Flacc.* 116: οὓς [Ἰουδαίους] ἄρδην ἀφανίσαι διεγνώκει).

(f) Haman is characterised as insolent (LXX Esth E:2: μεῖζον ἐφρόνησαν; E:3: τὸν κόρον οὐ δυνάμενοι φέρειν; E:12: ὑπερηφανία), which is also the case with Flaccus (*Flacc.* 124; 152: μέγα πνέοντα; cf. 41: δοξομανής). Moreover, Haman is said to have been puffed up by the boasts of those who are inexperienced in goodness (LXX Esth E:4: τοῖς τῶν ἀπειραγάθων κόμποις ἐπαρθέντες). This statement has no correspondence with the canonical text of Esther, unless the author of Addition E intended to insinuate that Haman was misled by the two chief bodyguards who sought to kill King Artaxerxes (LXX Esth 2:21; cf. LXX Esth A:17). A parallel can be drawn with Flaccus, who, according to Philo, was carried away by his former enemies, Dionysius, Isidorus, and Lampo, leaders of the Greek anti-Jewish party and “devisers of evil things” (*Flacc.* 20: κακῶν εὐρεταί), who won him over through flattery (*Flacc.* 126: Ἰσίδωρος τε καὶ Λάμπων, οἱ ... δεσπότην καὶ εὐεργέτην καὶ σωτήρα καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα ἀνακαλοῦντες; 172: πλῆθος ἀσύντακτον καὶ πεφορημένον, ὅφ' οὗ κολακευόμενος ὁ δυστυχῆς ἡπατώμην). Furthermore, in LXX Esth E:5, King Artaxerxes states that many rulers, duped by the persuasiveness of the “Friends” to whom they entrust the affairs of state (τῶν πιστευθέντων χειρίζειν φίλων τὰ πράγματα), become involved in irremediable misfortunes (ἀνηκέστοις συμφοραῖς). In *Flacc.* 105, Philo expresses a similar idea in similar terms: during the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius, some provincial governors (ἐνιοὶ γὰρ καὶ ἐπὶ Τιβερίου καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ Καίσαρος τῶν διεπόντων τὰς ἐπικρατείας) filled their countries with irremediable ills (τὰς χώρας ἐνέπλησαν κακῶν ἀνηκέστων).

Parallels can be readily drawn not only between Haman, as depicted in LXX Additions B and E to Esther, and Flaccus, but also between Haman and another Roman high official, Sejanus, who is said to have taken anti-Jewish measures prior to Flaccus.

Sejanus had an astonishingly rapid rise to power during the second and third decades of the first century CE.<sup>158</sup> In 15 CE, he was appointed praetorian prefect by Tiberius. In 26 CE, he saved the emperor's life and gained his unreserved trust. When Tiberius moved to Capri a year later, he became the most powerful man in Rome and

<sup>157</sup> See van der Horst, *Flaccus*, 92.

<sup>158</sup> On the rise and fall of Sejanus, see Bird, “Sejanus,” and Champlin, “Sejanus.”

was treated as if he were the *princeps*.<sup>159</sup> The emperor made him counsellor and assistant in all matters,<sup>160</sup> dubbing him his “partner in toil” (*socius laborum*) and “assistant in power” (*adiutor imperii*).<sup>161</sup> In 31 CE, Sejanus was named consul together with Tiberius (*consulatus socius*) and was even promised to share the *tribunicia potestas* with the emperor, which would make him co-ruler of the Empire and Tiberius’ successor.<sup>162</sup> The honours that he received included the erection of numerous statues of him, making his face “number two in the whole world.”<sup>163</sup> At the height of his power, he was accused by Tiberius of plotting a conspiracy against him and was executed in October 31 CE. His children and adherents met the same fate. His name and memory were blackened, as evidenced by an inscription from Umbria that calls him a “most pernicious enemy of the Roman people.”<sup>164</sup>

Josephus, Tacitus, Suetonius, and Cassius Dio inform us about a number of anti-Jewish measures that Tiberius took in Rome in 19 CE: he abolished the Jewish rites and obliged the Jews to burn their religious vestments and other accessories; he expelled the Jewish community from the city and drafted four thousand Jews for military service in Sardinia; he threatened those who refused to obey with such a heavy punishment as enslavement.<sup>165</sup> The aim of these measures, the inspiration for which some scholars attribute to Sejanus,<sup>166</sup> was probably to halt the growing proselytism of Roman citizens to the Jewish faith.<sup>167</sup> Philo accuses Sejanus of attacking the Jews of Rome with “false slanders” and of orchestrating a persecution of the Jews in the provinces, which he did not have the time to carry out, shortly before 31 CE.<sup>168</sup> His

<sup>159</sup> See Cassius Dio, *Hist. rom.* 58.5.1: ὁ δὲ Σεῖανός τοσοῦτος ἦν τῇ τε ὑπεροχῇ τοῦ φρονήματος καὶ τῷ μεγέθει τῆς ἐξουσίας ὥστε συνελόντι εἰπεῖν αὐτὸν μὲν αὐτοκράτορα τὸν δὲ Τιβέριον νησιάρχον τινα εἶναι δοκεῖν.

<sup>160</sup> See Cassius Dio, *Hist. rom.* 57.19.7: σύμβουλον καὶ ὑπηρέτην πρὸς πάντα ἐποιεῖτο.

<sup>161</sup> See Tacitus, *Ann.* 4.2 and 4.7; cf. Cassius Dio, *Hist. rom.* 58.4.3: κοινωνὸν τῶν φροντίδων ὠνόμαζε.

<sup>162</sup> See Maier, “Sejanus,” 10–11; Champlin, “Seianus,” 364.

<sup>163</sup> Juvenal, *Sat.* 10.63: *facie toto orbe secunda*. See Champlin, “Seianus,” 373.

<sup>164</sup> ILS 157 [32 CE]: *Providentiae Ti. Caesaris Augusti nati ad aeternitatem | Romani nominis, sublato hoste perniciosissimo p. R.*

<sup>165</sup> Suetonius, *Tib.* 36; Tacitus, *Ann.* 85; Josephus, *A.J.* 18.83–84; Cassius Dio, *Hist. rom.* 57.18.5a. Unlike the other historians, Josephus dates these anti-Jewish measures to ca. 30 CE—erroneously, it seems. See Smallwood, “Notes,” 314–15, 326.

<sup>166</sup> See Box, *In Flaccum*, 68. But see Smallwood, “Notes,” 324–25; ead., *Legatio*, 243–44.

<sup>167</sup> See Smallwood, “Notes,” 319–22.

<sup>168</sup> Philo, *Legat.* 159–160: “And indeed it was the same under Tiberius though matters in Italy became troublesome when Sejanus was organizing his onslaughts (ἐσκενῶρει τὴν ἐπίθεσιν). ... For Tiberius knew the truth, he knew at once after Sejanus’s death that the accusations made against

persecution, asserts Philo, aimed at destroying the entire Jewish nation—a grave accusation not supported by sources other than Eusebius, who, however, is dependent on Philo.<sup>169</sup> The Alexandrian philosopher even considers Flaccus—who was appointed *praefectus Aegypti* by Tiberius a year after the execution of the *praefectus praetorio*—as the continuator of Sejanus’ anti-Jewish policy,<sup>170</sup> and recounted the latter’s persecution in a non-extant prequel to his treatise *In Flaccum*.<sup>171</sup>

Tiberius’ anti-Jewish policy changed drastically once Sejanus was removed from the political scene. Philo again informs us that, after Sejanus’ execution in 31 CE, Tiberius

charged his procurators in every place to which they were appointed to speak comfortably to the members of our nation in the different cities, assuring them that the penal measures did not extend to all but only to the guilty, who were few, and to disturb none of the established customs but even to regard them as a trust committed to their care, the people as naturally peaceable (εἰρηνικούς τὰς φύσεις), and the institutions as an influence promoting orderly conduct (εὐστάθειαν).<sup>172</sup>

One can easily draw correspondences between the aforementioned persons and events and those featured in LXX Additions B and E. Sejanus was the emperor’s counsellor and, having saved his life, enjoyed his complete confidence. Similarly, in LXX Esth B:3, Haman is said to have been one of the king’s counsellors (πυθομένου δέ

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the Jewish inhabitants of Rome were false slanders, invented by him (ψευδεῖς ἦσαν διαβολαί, πλάσματα Σηιανοῦ)” (trans. Colson, LCL). See Smallwood, “Notes,” 323.

<sup>169</sup> Philo, *Flacc.* 1: σύμπαν μὲν ἀδικῆσαι τὸ ἔθνος; *Legat.* 160: Σηιανοῦ τὸ ἔθνος ἀναρπάσαι θέλοντος. Cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 2.5.7: Σηιανὸν ... ἄρδην τὸ πᾶν ἔθνος ἀπολέσθαι σπουδὴν εἰσαγοχέναι; id., *Chron.* p. 176 (ed. Helm): *Seianus praefectus Tiberii, qui apud eum plurimum poterat, instantissime cohortatur ut gentem Iudaeorum deleat.* In the same context, Eusebius mentions Pontius Pilate’s attack on the Jews in Judaea during the latter part of the second decade of the first century CE, which could suggest that Pilate was implementing Sejanus’ anti-Jewish policy. See discussion in Smallwood, “Notes,” 324, 326–28; Maier, “Sejanus,” 9–10; Hennig, *Seianus*, 160–69; van der Horst, *Flaccus*, 89–90.

<sup>170</sup> Philo, *Flacc.* 1: δεύτερος μετὰ Σηιανὸν Φλάκκος Ἀουίλλιος διαδέχεται τὴν κατὰ Ἰουδαίων ἐπιβουλήν.

<sup>171</sup> On whether this prequel was one of the five books of Philo’s treatise *On Virtues* (Περὶ ἀρετῶν), which dealt with the fortunes of the Jews under Gaius Caligula and also included the *Legatio ad Gaium*, or a now-lost section of *In Flaccum* that preceded the text that has come down to us, see Box, *In Flaccum*, xxxiii–xxxvii; Smallwood, *Legatio*, 38–43; Hennig, *Seianus*, 164–69; van der Horst, *Flaccus*, 5–6, 50.

<sup>172</sup> Philo, *Legat.* 161 (trans. Colson, LCL).

μου τῶν συμβούλων)<sup>173</sup> and to have proven his firm loyalty to him (βεβαία πίστει ἀποδεδειγμένος). Sejanus became Tiberius' second-in-command, his face was second in the whole world (*facie toto orbe secunda*), and he was practically the emperor's co-ruler, much like Haman, in Additions B and E, is described as second to the king (LXX Esth B:3: δεύτερον τῶν βασιλειῶν γέρας ἀπενηνεγμένος), as the second "face"/person of the royal throne (LXX Esth E:11: τὸ δεύτερον τοῦ βασιλικοῦ θρόνου πρόσωπον διατελεῖν), and even as having ruled the Persian kingdom jointly with Artaxerxes (LXX Esth B:4: τὴν ὑφ' ἡμῶν κατευθυνομένην ... συναρχίαν).<sup>174</sup> Sejanus, according to Cassius Dio, was puffed up by his power, much like Haman was, according to Addition E.<sup>175</sup> Moreover, like the biblical villain, Sejanus was an enemy and potential

<sup>173</sup> In the canonical parts of LXX Esther, a Haman is named among the seven eunuchs who attended the king (1:10) but not among his counsellors (1:14). This Haman is rather not to be identified with the villain of the book of Esther. See 2.4, n. 115.

<sup>174</sup> It is notable that the term συναρχία, "joint government," occurs only in the LXX version of Addition B. The corresponding verse in the Alpha Text uses the term μοναρχία, "monarchy" (3:17: τῇ ὑφ' ἡμῶν κατευθυνομένη μοναρχίᾳ), as does Josephus in his paraphrase of Esther (A.J. 11.217: ἔθνος [sc. the Jews] ... τὴν μοναρχίαν μισοῦν). The *Vetus Latina* of Esther at B:4 reads: *quod a nobis regitur*, "what is decreed by us" (trans. Bellmann and Portier-Young, "Latin," 276). The plural personal pronoun ἡμῶν in the phrase τὴν ὑφ' ἡμῶν κατευθυνομένην ... συναρχίαν is ambiguous, as it may denote either the king (plural of majesty), or the king and the immediately previously mentioned Haman, or the king, Haman, and the other royal counsellors (see 4.1). The term συναρχία is also ambiguous. In its instances in literary texts and in inscriptions from cities in Greece and in Asia Minor from the fourth century BCE up to the Roman Imperial period, it usually occurs in the plural and denotes a college of magistrates (see Corradi, *Studi*, 362). In the papyri it occurs once with reference to a college of magistrates in Antioch (*Chr. Wilck.* 1 ["Gurob Papyrus," ca. 246 BCE], 3, l. 21: αἱ συναρχίαι). Cassius Dio, *Hist. rom.* 47.7.3 and 53.2.5, uses it in the singular to designate the triumvirate formed by Octavian, Antony, and Lepidus. Its use in relation to an Achaemenid king is puzzling. Although assertions have been made regarding Achaemenid co-regency of father and son (see Calmeyer, "Synarchie," 68–95), it is generally accepted that the Achaemenid despots did not share power (see Holton, "Ideology," 127 n. 51, and Meeus, "Chiliarchus," 304). Joint kingship is attested for the Attalids, the Seleucids, and the Ptolemies (see Holton, "Ideology," 102, 106); however, the monarchs of these dynasties did not co-rule with anyone other than a family member, nor is there any testimony indicating that they designated the members of their councils as σύναρχοι/συνάρχοντες. Considering Haman's designation as the "second person of the royal throne" (LXX Esth E:11) and as the king's "second father" (LXX B:6), I deem it possible that the rare term συναρχία in LXX Esth B:4, if referring to the king and Haman, denotes a diarchy, similar, *mutatis mutandis*, to the joint father-son kingships attested in the Seleucid and the Ptolemaic kingdoms, or to the type of rulership exemplified by the aforementioned Second Triumvirate or by Tiberius and Sejanus. If this is so, the use of the "somewhat surprising" term συναρχία does not "suggest a display of modesty on the king's part," as Fox, *Redaction*, 53, maintains, but may be intended to allude to a form of rulership contemporary to the original author or a later redactor of LXX Esther. It should also be noted that the συναρχία in question does not involve Queen Esther, who, nevertheless, is designated as "partner in the reign" (τῆς βασιλείας κοινωνός) in LXX Esth E:13, and as "successor and partner in the reign" (*succedanea et consors regni mei*) in VL Esth 5:3.

<sup>175</sup> Cassius Dio, *Hist. rom.* 57.22.1: ἐπὶ τε τῇ ἰσχύϊ καὶ ἐπὶ τῷ ἀξιώματι ὑπερμαζήσας τὰ τε ἄλλα ὑπέρογκος ἦν; LXX Esth E:2: μεῖζον ἐφρόνησαν; LXX Esth E:12 ὑπερηφανίαν.

exterminator of the Jews (cf. LXX Esth B:6: ἀπολέσαι [τοὺς Ἰουδαίους] ὁλορίζει), who, through fabricated lies (cf. LXX Esth E:6: τῷ τῆς κακοηθείας ψευδεῖ παραλογισμῷ and LXX Esth B:4, which enumerates the slanders against the Jews that Haman imparted to King Artaxerxes), launched an attack on the Jews of the Roman Empire, perhaps by issuing anti-Jewish decrees that were thwarted by his arrest and subsequent execution, or were later overturned<sup>176</sup> (cf. LXX Esth E:17, which refers to the letters calling for the extermination of the Jews that Haman sent to the satrapies of the Persian kingdom). In *Legat.* 160, Philo suggests, rather implausibly, that Sejanus' slanders aimed to alienate Tiberius from the Jews, who would be his sole defenders, should he fall victim to his praetorian prefect's plots and treachery.<sup>177</sup> Similarly, in LXX Esth E:13–14, King Artaxerxes states that, by scheming against the Jews, Esther, and Mordecai, Haman aimed at isolating him (λαβὼν ἡμᾶς ἐρήμους) in order to treacherously achieve the subjugation of the Persians to the Macedonians.<sup>178</sup> Furthermore, Sejanus was accused, perhaps without incontestable proof,<sup>179</sup> of conspiring to overthrow and assassinate Tiberius,<sup>180</sup> much like Haman was accused of plotting to topple and assassinate Artaxerxes (LXX Esth E:3: τοῖς ἑαυτῶν εὐεργέταις ἐπιχειροῦσιν μηχανᾶσθαι; LXX Esth E:12: ἐπετήδευσεν τῆς ἀρχῆς στερεῖν ἡμᾶς καὶ τοῦ πνεύματος).<sup>181</sup> Sejanus was executed, and his sons and associates were also put to death shortly thereafter, while he was declared a *hostis perniciosissimus*. Such was the fate met by Haman, too, who in LXX Esth E:18 is said to have been crucified along with all his household (ἐσταυρῶσθαι σὺν τῇ πανοικίᾳ),<sup>182</sup> and in LXX Esth E:15 is branded by the king as “thrice-impious” (τρισαλιτήριος). After Sejanus' execution, Tiberius

<sup>176</sup> See Box, *In Flaccum*, 68: “According to this passage [Philo, *Legat.* 159–161] accusations had already been brought against the Dispersion in Rome, and apparently decrees of a drastic nature were about to be promulgated in all the provinces when Sejanus fell.”

<sup>177</sup> “He [Sejanus] wished to make away with the nation [of the Jews], knowing that it would take the sole or the principal part in opposing his unholy plots and actions, and would defend the emperor when in danger of becoming the victim of treachery” (trans. Colson, LCL).

<sup>178</sup> See Stein, “Essai,” 112 n. 4.

<sup>179</sup> See Bird, “Seianus,” 88–92; Hennig, *Seianus*, 144–56; Champlin, “Seianus,” 366 n. 13.

<sup>180</sup> On Sejanus' alleged plan to murder Tiberius, see Tacitus, *Ann.* 6.8: *consilia caedis adversum imperatorem*. Valerius Maximus, a contemporary writer, speaks of Sejanus' attempted “parricide” (*Fact. dict. mem.* 9.11, ext. 4: *parricidii cogitatione*).

<sup>181</sup> It has to be pointed out that the author of Addition E borrowed this dramatic element almost verbatim from 3 Macc 6:24, where King Ptolemy IV Philopator accuses his “Friends” of scheming to overthrow and kill him: ἐπιχειρεῖτε τῆς ἀρχῆς ἥδη καὶ τοῦ πνεύματος μεθιστᾶν λάθρᾳ μηχανώμενοι τὰ μὴ συμφέροντα τῇ βασιλείᾳ. See Domazakis, *Esther*, 74 n. 98, and 5.6.

<sup>182</sup> This verse conflicts with LXX Esth 9:7–10, where the Jews kill Haman's sons nine months after their father.

adopted a non-aggressive policy towards the Jews and sent letters to his procurators throughout the Empire, instructing them to show proper regard for the Jewish laws, as they promoted the stability of the state. Likewise, after Haman's execution, King Artaxerxes communicated to his satraps his new pro-Jewish policy, which absolved the Jews from the accusations laid against them and allowed them to live in accordance with their laws and customs (LXX Esth E:15: τοὺς Ἰουδαίους εὐρίσκομεν οὐ κακούργους ὄντας, δικαιοτάτοις δὲ πολιτευομένους νόμοις; LXX Esth E:19: ἔἴαν τοὺς Ἰουδαίους χρῆσθαι τοῖς ἑαυτῶν νομίμοις).

If Philo's full account of Sejanus' anti-Jewish activity had been preserved, and if the full text of Tiberius' letter to his provincial governors (which Philo summarises in *Legat.* 161) had survived, as was fortunately the case for Claudius' letter to the Alexandrians, we would be in a better position to assess whether Additions B and E contain any echoes of a universal threat posed to and overcome by the Jews between 28 and 31 CE.

In his doctoral dissertation entitled "The socio-historical contexts of the recensions of Esther" (1990), Wynn assigned Additions B and E to the Roman era, specifically to the period of tension between the Alexandrian Greeks and Jews that culminated in the anti-Jewish pogrom in 38 CE, without, however, connecting them with Flaccus and with Philo's historical treatises. Wynn remarks that "Ahasuerus may be seen in parallel to the Roman emperor, Haman to the citizens of Alexandria, and Mordecai and Esther to the Alexandrian Jews"<sup>183</sup> and that "the temptation is to draw a parallel between Addition E and the letter of Claudius to the Alexandrians written in 41 C.E." He adds, however, that "some hesitancy must be held in regards to dating this recensional stage of Esther to such a late date"<sup>184</sup> and in his conclusion he confines himself to cautiously stating that "this text [the version of Esther which included the Additions B and E] probably reflects the conditions of the early Roman era but probably not as late as the persecution documented by Philo during the reigns of Gaius and Claudius (37 C.E.) [*sic*]."<sup>185</sup>

Hacham, too, has considered the possibility that the redaction that produced the "refurbished" version of LXX Esther was carried out in Egypt after its annexation as a Roman province in 30 BCE, possibly during the reign of the emperor Caligula, when the aforementioned riots between Greeks and Jews broke out in Alexandria. However,

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<sup>183</sup> Wynn, *Contexts*, 238.

<sup>184</sup> Wynn, *Contexts*, 239.

<sup>185</sup> Wynn, *Contexts*, 248.

he has dismissed this possibility, noting that, while LXX Esther features a conflict between Haman the Macedonian and Mordecai the Jew, there were no high-ranking Greek or Jewish court officials during the reign of Caligula, nor was there any other struggle between Greeks and Jews within the court of this emperor. Moreover, Hacham maintains that the references to the “kingdom” (B:5: βασιλεία) and the “royal throne” (E:11: βασιλικῷ θρόνῳ) preclude a Roman dating and instead point to the period of the Ptolemaic monarchy.<sup>186</sup> According to this scholar, the most plausible time frame for the redaction of LXX Esther is between 107 and 81 BCE.<sup>187</sup>

De Troyer is another scholar who has referred to the period discussed above in relation to Greek Esther—though not the LXX version but the Alpha Text. She aligns with Bickerman in asserting that the translation of LXX Esther was made by Lysimachus in Jerusalem during the reign of Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 BCE) and that it included Addition E (and B); however, she cannot establish with certainty whether Lysimachus composed these Additions, as Bickerman believes, or merely inserted them into his translation. She argues that this version served as the *Vorlage* for the Alpha Text, which was produced in Rome in 40–41 CE, when a Jewish author, who may have been Philo,<sup>188</sup> rewrote Lysimachus’ version—Addition E included.<sup>189</sup> According to De Troyer, in composing the Alpha Text, its author had “one specific person in mind,” Herod Agrippa I, grandson of Herod the Great.<sup>190</sup> Herod Agrippa I intervened with Caligula on behalf of the Alexandrian Jews, when they suffered under Flaccus, and on behalf of the Jerusalem Jews, when Caligula threatened to erect his statue in the Temple; he also urged Claudius to issue edicts in favour of the Jews in Alexandria, Syria, and the rest of the Roman Empire.<sup>191</sup> De Troyer holds that “Mordecai is to be identified with Agrippa I, Haman with Flaccus, the unstable

<sup>186</sup> It should be noted, however, that as early as the first century CE, the title βασιλεύς and its cognates were used in reference to the Roman emperor. See Wifstrand, “Autokrator,” 531–35, and Wickert, “Princeps,” cols. 2113–2114. In the papyri, the use of βασιλεύς to refer to the emperor is not attested before the third century CE. See Amelotti, Bingen, and Lenger, “Προστάγματα,” 318–22.

<sup>187</sup> See 1.2.

<sup>188</sup> If Philo were the composer of the Alpha Text, he would likely not have missed the opportunity to use μισοπύνηρος δίκη, a favourite expression of his, at 7:23.

<sup>189</sup> De Troyer, *End*, 393, 396–98, 402.

<sup>190</sup> De Troyer, *End*, 401.

<sup>191</sup> See Philo, *Flacc.* 103; *Legat.* 179, 276–329; Josephus, *A.J.* 18.289–303, 19.278–291. Agrippa also protested to Petronius, the Roman governor of Syria, against a number of Greek youths who set up an image of Claudius in the synagogue of the Phoenician city Dora; Petronius severely reprimanded the leaders of the city and ordered that the perpetrators be brought before him to account for their actions (see Josephus, *A.J.* 19.300–311).



governor of Alexandria, and king Ahasuerus with emperor Claudius” and that “the identity of the figure of Esther is not so easily established.”<sup>192</sup> In recognition of the importance of the figure of Agrippa, she even proposes that the Alpha Text be called “the Agrippa Text.”<sup>193</sup>

In an article dedicated to discussing the date of composition of LXX Additions B and E,<sup>194</sup> I suggested that the period shortly after 41 CE is the most likely time for their creation. The scenario that I proposed there was that the author of Additions B and E was an Alexandrian contemporary of Philo, who lived through the plotted and the attempted persecutions of the Jews in Alexandria and elsewhere under Tiberius and Caligula, between around 28 and 38 CE, and composed the two royal letters of Artaxerxes not long after Claudius sent his letter to the Alexandrians in late 41 CE. This author, I submitted, was acquainted with the treatises written by Philo concerning the persecutions of Sejanus and Flaccus and composed the two Additions so that his contemporaries could readily draw analogies between Haman, the villainous persecutor of the Jews in the Esther story, and the two Roman high officials. With regard to the expression μισοπόνηρος δίκη, I argued that the author of LXX Addition E borrowed it from Philo’s *In Flaccum*, or possibly from the lost prequel to this treatise dedicated to Sejanus, where it may also have occurred.

Nevertheless, I did not rule out the possibility that Additions B and E were incorporated into LXX Esther sometime after the composition of 3 Maccabees, to which they are indebted, and were subsequently retouched and recontextualised in the early 40s CE by a redactor who intended to allude to contemporary persons and events. The date of 3 Maccabees, which could establish the *terminus post quem* for the composition of the two Additions, cannot, however, be pinpointed with certainty. The book is generally dated to between 100 and 30 BCE, although later dates have also been proposed,<sup>195</sup> including the time of the emperor Caligula.<sup>196</sup>

In light of the discussion in the preceding chapters, I can no longer support the first of the two possibilities mentioned above, namely, that Additions B and E were originally composed during the Roman period. I am inclined, instead, to support the

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<sup>192</sup> De Troyer, *End*, 402.

<sup>193</sup> De Troyer, *End*, 403.

<sup>194</sup> See Domazakis, “Date.”

<sup>195</sup> See Johnson, *Fictions*, 129–41.

<sup>196</sup> See Grimm, *Zusätze*, 220–21; Kopidakis, *Γ’ Μακκαβαίων*, 31–34; Collins, *Identity*, 124–26; Honigman, “History,” 137–40; ead., “Definition,” 125, 140–41. For arguments against dating the book to this period, see Barclay, *Jews*, 203, and Johnson, *Fictions*, 132–34.

second possibility, namely, that the two Additions, as preserved in the LXX version of Esther, underwent slight redaction, most likely in Alexandria, in the early 40s CE. Evidence of this redaction includes the reference to the *μισοπόνηρος δίκη*, the use of the term *διάταγμα*, and possibly the reference to the *συναρχία*, which are absent in the other versions of Esther. The question prompted by the above hypothesis is whether the postulated redaction affected only Additions B and E or other parts of LXX Esther as well. I must admit that I am unable to find any lexical hints pointing to the Roman period in either the canonical parts of LXX Esther or in the rest of its Additions, unlike those occurring, for instance, in the Alpha Text, where the equation of the months Adar-Nissan of the Jewish calendar with the months Dystros-Xanthikos of the Macedonian calendar (AT Esth A:1; cf. 3:18 [=B:6]) suggests that the Alpha Text was redacted into its present form sometime between 15/16 and 176 CE, when this correspondence was valid.<sup>197</sup> This may indicate that the postulated redaction aimed specifically to highlight the royal letters in Additions B and E, which were most amenable to interpretation in light of events contemporary to the redactor.

## 6.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I revisited the evidence adduced in previous studies concerning the presence of a Roman “flavour” in Additions B and E to Esther. I first discussed Dorothy’s assertion that the royal letter in Addition B exhibits similarities to Roman decrees rather than to Hellenistic letters. I established that this assertion, based on the absence in the prescript of Artaxerxes’ condemnation letter of the greeting *χαίρειν*, typical of Hellenistic royal letters, and the presence of the verb *γράφει*, which presumably substitutes for the verb *λέγει*, typical of the prescripts of Roman edicts, does not hold. The prescripts of Roman edicts have the form *ὁ δεῖνα λέγει*, whereas the prescript of Artaxerxes’ letter has the form *ὁ δεῖνα τῷ δεῖνι τάδε γράφει*, which is a variant of the prescript formula *ὁ δεῖνα τῷ δεῖνι τάδε λέγει* found in the “Persian” royal letters known to us from Greek literary sources and from the epigraphically attested “Letter of Darius I to Gadatas.” As regards the structural similarities between the letters of Artaxerxes and Roman edicts, these are not exclusive, as they are also present in Hellenistic royal letters. Moreover, the letters of Artaxerxes exhibit

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<sup>197</sup> See Jobes, *Alpha-Text*, 225–26, 231; Kottsieper, “Zusätze,” 126.

features that are not found in Roman edicts written in Greek or translated into Greek, such as the ordaining verb προστετάχμεν and the plural of majesty.

I also examined the term διάταγμα to determine whether or not it is “part of the Greek diplomatic language” (Seleucid, Ptolemaic, or other). My examination confirmed Bickerman’s assertion that the term in question does not appear in any Ptolemaic documents and, therefore, cannot be adduced as evidence of the Ptolemaic/Egyptian “flavour” of Additions B and E to Esther. Contrary to what Bickerman implies, the term is also not found in any Seleucid documents. Although it is epigraphically attested as early as the second century BCE as the Greek rendering of the Latin term *formula*, it is from the second half of the first century BCE that it appears in documentary and literary texts as the Greek equivalent of the Latin term *edictum*. Given that the term πρόσταγμα is the standard term for “decree” throughout LXX and AT Esther, I attributed the occurrence of διάταγμα in LXX Esth B:4 to a redactional intervention in LXX Additions B and E that likely took place in the early Roman Imperial period, when King Artaxerxes’ decrees could be paralleled to the edicts issued by the Roman emperors.

Lastly, I revisited the expression “evil-hating justice” (μισοπόνηρος δίκη), which occurs exclusively in LXX Addition E and in Philo’s treatises, where it is, in fact, a favourite expression of the Alexandrian philosopher. I argued that it reflects the influence of Philo not on the original author of Addition E but on a later redactor, and that it attests to this redactor’s response to a contemporary historical situation, specifically the persecution and subsequent re-establishment of the Jewish community in Alexandria between 38 and 41 CE. The same historical situation prompted Philo’s treatise *In Flaccum*, whose anti-Jewish protagonist is punished by the same “evil-hating” divine justice that chastises Haman, the villainous persecutor of the Jews, in LXX Addition E to Esther. By using the expression μισοπόνηρος δίκη, the presumed redactor, who appears to have been acquainted with Philo’s treatises—could he have been a member of his intellectual circle, or even a member of the Jewish embassy to Caligula headed by the Alexandrian philosopher?—intended to prompt the reader to draw an analogy between the figure of Haman and contemporary historical personalities: not only Flaccus, the Roman prefect of Egypt under Tiberius and Caligula, but possibly also Sejanus, the all-powerful prefect of the praetorian guard under Tiberius, both of whom Philo, in his historical treatises, excoriates for persecuting the Jews. The postulated redaction likely took place shortly after 41 CE,

when the emperor Claudius sent to Alexandria a letter confirming the religious rights of the Jews.

In conclusion of the investigation conducted in this chapter, I propose that the expression μισοπόνηρος δίκη, along with the term διάταγμα, and possibly also the term συναρχία, “joint government,” which may have been intended to draw a parallel between the duumvirate formed by Artaxerxes and Haman in LXX Addition B and that formed by Tiberius and Sejanus, belong to the same late, possibly final, redactional stage of LXX Esther. In contrast, the verses in which the aforementioned terms occur in the Alpha Text seem to reflect an earlier compositional stage.



## CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSION

The investigation undertaken in this study aimed to revisit two of the six Additions to LXX Esther—Additions B and E—which were originally composed in Greek and contain two fictitious letters attributed to a King Artaxerxes: the first condemning the Jews of the Persian kingdom to mass extermination on the suggestion of the chief minister Haman, and the second sparing them from doom and acknowledging their right to observe their laws and customs. The main objectives of the investigation into these two Additions were: (a) to explain the presence of the different “flavours” (Seleucid, Maccabean, Ptolemaic, Roman) that previous scholarship has identified in them; (b) to elucidate their idiosyncratic epistolary characteristics; (c) to explore their literary affiliations and intertextual connections; and (d) to determine their authorship and specify the place and time of their composition.

Taking as my starting point Elias Bickerman’s assertion that Greek Esther lacks any Ptolemaic “flavour” while exhibiting a Seleucid one, I identified in Additions B and E two related “flavours,” the Seleucid and the Maccabean, which connect them with Palestine, as well as a third “flavour” that links them to Egypt during two different historical periods, the Ptolemaic and the Roman.

The Seleucid “flavour” of Additions B and E is detectable in Haman’s title as ὁ τεταγμένος ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων, “the overseer of the affairs of the state,” and in his honorific designation as the king’s “father” (πατήρ). The former was the title borne by a few Seleucid high officials known from literary and epigraphic sources to have served as “chief ministers” in the late third and in the second century BCE, while the latter is attested for two of these officials.

Alongside the Seleucid “flavour,” one can also detect a Maccabean “flavour” in the two Additions, traceable in the allusions to persons and events related to the Maccabean revolt of 167–160 BCE, as represented in literary sources, specifically 2 Maccabees. The author of Additions B and E has drawn upon the letters of Kings Antiochus IV and Antiochus V embedded in 2 Macc 11:23–33, which concern the restoration of the ancestral laws of the Jews that were abrogated by Antiochus IV, as

well as upon the speech of the Jewish villain Alcimus to King Demetrius I in 2 Macc 14:6–10. Furthermore, he applies to Haman the same rare adjective, τρισαλιτήριος, “thrice-impious,” that the author of 2 Maccabees uses for one of the arch-enemies of the Jews in this book, the Seleucid military commander Nicanor. Significantly, King Artaxerxes’ proclamation in LXX Addition E of the thirteenth of Adar, the day preceding Purim, as a day of pan-Persian celebration commemorating the thwarting of Haman’s schemes against the Jews, the king, and the kingdom, mirrors the establishment of the same date as a holiday commemorating the defeat of Nicanor by Judas Maccabeus at Adasa in 161 BCE, as recorded in 1 and 2 Maccabees. The most likely source from which the two Additions derived the components of both their Seleucid and Maccabean “flavours” is 2 Maccabees, either the epitome that has come down to us or its source text, Jason of Cyrene’s historiographic work.

Even more pronounced than the Seleucid and Maccabean “flavours” is the Egyptian “flavour” present in LXX Additions B and E, which intriguingly spans two different periods, the Ptolemaic and the Roman.

The Egyptian/Ptolemaic “flavour” of the two Additions chiefly stems from their intertextual dependence on two books of Egyptian provenance, 3 Maccabees and the *Letter of Aristeas*, both of which—the latter with more certainty than the former—date from the last century of Ptolemaic rule in Egypt (130–30 BCE). The influence of 3 Maccabees permeates the two letters of King Artaxerxes in Additions B and E, which rely extensively, both conceptually and verbally, on the two fictitious letters of King Ptolemy IV Philopator in 3 Maccabees, as well as on other parts of this book. The influence of the *Letter of Aristeas*, more specifically the courtier Aristeas’ entreaty to King Ptolemy II Philadelphus to liberate the Jewish slaves in Egypt, the latter king’s *prostagma* enacting their liberation, and his letter to the Jewish high priest Eleazar, is mediated through 3 Maccabees, which had previously drawn on these sections of the *Letter*.

As for the Egyptian/Roman “flavour” of the two Additions, it can be traced to the term διάταγμα, used in LXX Esth B:4, which became current as the Greek equivalent of the Latin term *edictum* from around the mid-first century BCE onwards, and to the expression μισοπόνηρος δίκη, “evil-hating justice,” which, aside from LXX Esth E:4, occurs only in six treatises of Philo of Alexandria written between the first and the fourth decades of the first century CE. Of these treatises, *In Flaccum* (41 CE) is the one in which the expression in question shares the most contextual similarities with LXX Esth E:4, and it is likely from this treatise that Addition E drew the expression.

In addition to the literary sources cited above, which have imbued them with the various “flavours” that they exhibit, the two Additions are also likely indebted to 1 Esdras, LXX Isaiah, and LXX Job or LXX Proverbs. The influence of 1 Esdras, more specifically of the sections containing the story of the three bodyguards and the letters of King Artaxerxes, can be traced in the inclusion of the toparchs among the addressees of the royal letter in LXX Esth B:1 and in the reference to Artaxerxes’ counsellors in LXX Esth B:3. From LXX Isaiah and LXX Job or LXX Proverbs, the author of the two Additions has drawn distinctive expressions that do not occur elsewhere in the Septuagint.

The version of Additions B and E that most comprehensively showcases all of the aforementioned “flavours” is the LXX. One of the most distinctive components of the Maccabean “flavour,” the holiday of the thirteenth of Adar alluding to the “Day of Nicanor,” as well as both components of the Egyptian/Roman “flavour” mentioned earlier, are missing in the Alpha Text and the *Vetus Latina* versions of the two Additions, which, however, include other components of the Seleucid and Maccabean “flavours.” Moreover, there are fewer verbal agreements between the latter two versions and 3 Maccabees compared to those shared between the LXX version and 3 Maccabees. Given that the latter book provided the building blocks upon which Additions B and E were constructed, it is reasonable to assume that the version in which the influence of 3 Maccabees is most extensively preserved, namely, the LXX, is the one that is closest to the *Urtext* of the two Additions. That said, both the Alpha Text and the *Vetus Latina* versions of Additions B and E (the latter through its non-extant Greek *Vorlage*) have retained elements from the posited *Urtext* that are missing in the LXX.

The *mixtum compositum* nature of Additions B and E is especially evident in LXX Addition B, which is a hybrid epistolary text combining elements drawn from various fictitious rather than authentic official documents. Its prescript draws upon the canonical sections of LXX Esther (3:12) and the list of King Darius’ banquet invitees in 1 Esdras (3:1–2) for the designation of the geographical extent of King Artaxerxes’ realm and the titles of the addressees of his letter; the latter occupy different echelons in the administrative hierarchy, similar to the addressees listed in the prescripts of authentic Ptolemaic circular letters. The prescript concludes with the formula *τάδε γράφει*, a variant of the formula *τάδε λέγει* typical of the prescripts of Persian royal letters and decrees, whether fictitious or of contested authenticity, transmitted through the Septuagint or through extra-Septuagintal literary and epigraphic texts.



Differing from the prescripts of the Persian royal documents found in the Septuagint, such as Cyrus' decree in 1 Esd 2:3, where this formula is in the initial position, the prescript of Artaxerxes' letter in Addition B places the formula at the end, consistent with the prescripts of extra-Septuagintal Persian royal letters. Following the prescript, Addition B features a *prooemium* containing a "ruler formula," similar to those found in a couple of authentic Hellenistic royal letters, with the prototype being the *prooemium* of the letter of King Seleucus IV to Heliodorus. The verb of command featured in Addition B, προστετάχαμεν, is drawn from the letters of King Ptolemy IV in 3 Maccabees, which themselves borrowed it from the *prostagma* of King Ptolemy II Philadelphus in the *Letter of Aristeeas*. Being a typically Ptolemaic formula of command, not used by the chanceries of other Hellenistic kingdoms, it turns a missive purporting to be an Achaemenid royal letter into a Ptolemaic epistolary *prostagma*. The alignment of Addition B with two different types of royal letters, pseudo-Persian and pseudo-Ptolemaic, is further evidenced by its shift from the first person singular, typical of fictitious Persian royal letters, to the plural of majesty, characteristic of both authentic and fictitious Ptolemaic royal letters and epistolary *prostigmata*. In LXX Addition E, the institution by Artaxerxes of a feast to be commemorated by his subjects on the thirteenth of Adar in remembrance of the salvation of the Jews, the king, and the Persian kingdom from the treacherous schemes of Haman—a guise for the "Day of Nicanor," as I argue—aligns Artaxerxes' letter with the Jewish festal letter genre, as exemplified by the letters of Mordecai and Esther reported in LXX Esther Chapter 9 and the letters prefixed to 2 Maccabees.

For the characterisation of Haman and King Artaxerxes, the author of Additions B and E has drawn, respectively, upon Seleucid/Maccabean and Ptolemaic models. Haman's designation as ὁ ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων, τρισαλτήριος, and Μακεδών, combined with his portrayal as a persecutor of the Jews and a regicide plotter, likely takes cues from Seleucid historical figures depicted in 2 Maccabees, such as Heliodorus and especially Nicanor. Artaxerxes' portrayal involves even more diverse and often contrasting components. He is assigned the typical grandiloquent titles ("Great King," "master of the world") that Persian and, more generally, Oriental kings are bestowed with in profane Greek literature and in the Septuagint. However, he projects a weak public image of himself, as he appears to be under the tutelage of a father-like chief minister and a group of counsellors, similar to some underage Hellenistic kings. In LXX Addition B, he even describes his form of government as a "synarchy" instead of as a monarchy, something unheard of for an Oriental despot.

His political discourse amalgamates elements borrowed from the rhetoric of the kings featured in the *Letter of Aristeas*, in 2 Maccabees, and especially in 3 Maccabees. The positive qualities that he wishes to project (φιλανθρωπία and ἐπιείκεια) sound as incongruous and fake as they do under the pen of King Ptolemy IV in 3 Maccabees, from which they are borrowed, whereas they ring true for the enlightened King Ptolemy II in the *Letter of Aristeas*, the ultimate source from which they are drawn. His anti-Jewish diatribe in Addition B echoes that of King Ptolemy IV in 3 Maccabees, while his recognition of the Jews' right to observe their laws and customs in Addition E mirrors the similar recognition granted by Kings Antiochus IV and Antiochus V in 2 Maccabees. His acknowledgment of Yahweh as the supreme governing power in his kingdom is patterned after that of the similarly "converted" King Ptolemy IV in 3 Maccabees; this acknowledgment, in turn, harks back to the *Letter of Aristeas*, where the courtier Aristeas, appealing to King Ptolemy II to set free the Jewish slaves in Egypt, points out to him that Zeus, the God who directs his kingdom, is the same as Yahweh, whom the Jews revere. Far from demonstrating any real originality, the author of the two Additions proves to be a skilful copyist and adapter of his literary models, which are texts addressing the persecution and deliverance of the Jewish people under various historical or pseudo-historical circumstances.

Apart from identifying his literary influences, we have few other clues to outline the profile of the author of the two Additions. The possibility that he was identical to Lysimachus, who, according to the colophon of LXX Esther, translated the Hebrew book of Esther into Greek, is weak. If Lysimachus were capable of writing in the elevated Greek into which the two Additions are couched, he would have demonstrated this ability in his translation as well, in order to maintain a relatively consistent style across his entire work, similar to his literary models. Yet, neither in 3 Maccabees, nor in the *Letter of Aristeas*, nor in 1 Esdras does the style of the embedded royal letters stand out as markedly above that of the rest of these books as it does in Additions B and E to Esther, and this is not because the authors or translators of these books were uninterested in or incapable of achieving stylistic variation. Moreover, if 3 Maccabees was acquainted with and influenced by a Greek version of Esther that was close to the LXX, as I have argued, and if that version was the one produced by Lysimachus, then it could not have included Additions B and E, which were composed subsequent to 3 Maccabees and under its influence.

Given that the two Additions manifest considerable rhetorical skill in their structure and diction, I put forward the hypothesis that their author was an advanced

student or teacher of rhetoric, who composed the two letters of Artaxerxes as rhetorical exercises of the *prosopopoiia/ethopoiia* type. Similar fictitious Persian royal letters included in *Briefromanen* or pseudo-historical narratives such as the *Alexander Romance* likely originated as independent epistolary *prosopopoiiai*. The close connection between the letters of Artaxerxes and those of Ptolemy IV in 3 Maccabees may suggest that their respective authors belonged to the same scholastic milieu or literary circle, and that the author of the former took the latter as *exempla* to imitate or emulate. Whether it was the originator of Additions B and E who incorporated them into the Greek version of Esther that was in circulation in his time and place, or whether someone else integrated them at a later time, making the necessary adjustments, is impossible to determine.

The precise location where the author of the two Additions wrote them cannot be established with any certainty. However, his literary influences and the use of an unmistakably Ptolemaic verb of command (προσπετάχαμεν) suggest that his intended audience was Egyptian, and Egypt might very well have been where Additions B and E originated. The Seleucid and Maccabean “flavours” that he infused into his compositions, along with the emphasis that he placed on the commemoration of the thirteenth of Adar, may further suggest that the author of the two Additions subtly advocated for the celebration of the “Day of Nicanor” in Egypt. This, in turn, might indicate that he had a Palestinian origin, background, or affiliation.

As regards the time of composition of Additions B and E, if the dates of 2 Maccabees and even more so of 3 Maccabees were certain, they could provide a reliable *terminus post quem* for their authorship. Unfortunately, this is not the case. First, it is uncertain whether the author of the two Additions was acquainted with Jason of Cyrene’s history of the Maccabean Revolt or with its epitome that has come down to us. Second, the dating of both these works, as well as that of 3 Maccabees, which is the major source of inspiration for the two Additions, is debated. As the most likely time frame for the composition of both 3 Maccabees and the *Urtext* of Additions B and E, I would tentatively suggest 70–30 BCE, assuming the following premises hold true: (a) the date referred to in the colophon of LXX Esther is 78/77 BCE, (b) the Greek version of Esther introduced on that date in Egypt was close to the LXX, including Addition C and likely Addition A, but excluding Additions B and E, (c) 3 Maccabees was composed after the introduction of this Greek version in Egypt and was influenced by it, and (d) Additions B and E were composed under the influence of 3 Maccabees sometime after the emergence of this book in Egypt and were incorporated into the aforementioned

version of Esther, which had already been supplemented with the other Additions, including the colophon.

A date of composition of 3 Maccabees between 78/77 BCE and 70 BCE at the earliest would place the composition of Additions B and E after the 70s BCE but not later than 30 BCE. A clue for the latter *terminus* is provided by the ordaining formula προστετάχαμεν (plural of majesty), which is not attested in either authentic or fictitious royal or other official letters after the Ptolemaic period. The premise here is that, had the *Urtext* of the two Additions emerged during the Roman Imperial period, their author would likely have avoided using obsolete technical terms and formulae such as ὁ τεταγμένος ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων—the last possible holder of this office was Heracleon of Beroia in the early 90s BCE—and προστετάχαμεν. Josephus provides evidence of this when paraphrasing the *prostagma* of Ptolemy II Philadelphus in the *Letter of Aristeas* and the letters of Artaxerxes in Additions B and E to Esther; he omits the Seleucid title altogether and, instead of the Ptolemaic verb of command, he employs a verb commonly used in imperial edicts of his time, κελεύω. Moreover, if the posited allusion in LXX Addition E to the celebration of the “Day of Nicanor” served the Hasmonean agenda of promoting the Hasmonean feasts in Egypt, then a plausible date of composition for the two Additions would be prior to the collapse of the Hasmonean dynasty in 63 BCE and its end in 37 BCE.

Additions B and E seem to have taken cues from historical events of the past, as recounted in literary sources, rather than from contemporary historical circumstances (although it cannot be excluded that they resonate with roughly contemporary events, such as the Asiatic Vespers of 88 BCE). During the time frame suggested above, as well as in the immediately preceding period, there is no attestation of any major persecution of the Jews, which, through a reversal of fortune, ended with a positive outcome for them, including the elimination of their persecutor and the confirmation of their rights, similar to the *peripeteia* evoked in Additions B and E. However, in a not-so-uncommon case of “life imitating fiction,” Additions B and E appear to have anticipated events that were realised less than a century after the time of their composition, as postulated above. These events involved the persecution of the Alexandrian Jews under the Roman prefect Flaccus in 38 CE, the latter’s removal from office and execution in 39 CE, and the eventual reaffirmation of the rights of the Alexandrian Jews through an edict and a letter sent to Alexandria by the Emperor Claudius in 41 CE. In the last chapter of the present study, I argued that in the aftermath of these events, in the early 40s CE, a small-scale redactional intervention

occurred in LXX Additions B and E, as evidenced by the Egyptian/Roman “flavour” that they exhibit. This posited intervention aimed to prompt the readers of LXX Esther to identify parallels between the protagonists of the events of 38–41 CE and the fictional characters of the book of Esther, particularly Haman, who in LXX Addition B is punished by the same “evil-hating justice” that castigated the Roman prefect Flaccus in Philo’s *In Flaccum*.

The Egyptian/Roman “flavour” is absent in the AT version of Additions B and E, which, however, shows traces of first-century CE redaction, as evidenced by the correlation of the Jewish month Adar with the Macedonian month Dystros (AT Esth 3:18 [=B:6]), introduced sometime between 15/16 CE and 46/47 CE. In the absence of the Greek *Vorlage* of the *Vetus Latina* of Esther and due to the deficiencies in the Old Latin translation, it is impossible to draw secure conclusions, based on linguistic grounds, about the presence or absence of the aforementioned “flavours” in the Greek text underlying the VL version of Additions B and E, as well as about the latter’s genetic relationship to the LXX and the AT versions of these Additions. These constraints notwithstanding, the findings of this study, as well as those previously reported in *Greek Esther*, *3 Maccabees*, and *the Letter of Aristeas*, lead me to suggest that Additions B and E were not copied from one version to another, as is often argued, but rather originated from a common *Urtext* and developed independently over time, alongside the versions into which they were incorporated.

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Abbreviations of the titles of biblical books and other ancient works generally follow those set forth in *The SBL Handbook of Style*, 2nd ed. (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2014); abbreviations for inscriptions follow the *Liste des abréviations des éditions et ouvrages de référence pour l'épigraphie grecque alphabétique* (<https://aiegl.org/grepiabbr.html>); abbreviations for papyri follow the *Checklist of Editions of Greek, Latin, Demotic, and Coptic Papyri, Ostraca, and Tablets* (<https://papyri.info/docs/checklist>).

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