ESTHER
TO THE READER

Edition of Greek Text
The NETS version of Esther is based on the full critical edition prepared by Robert Hanhart (Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis editum VIII.3: Esther [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966]).

The Two Greek Versions
Esther is one of three books in the Hebrew canon to have survived in two distinct Greek versions. The Göttingen critical edition of Esther prints both Greek texts. The “Septuagint” (Old Greek = OG) version is printed on the top half of the page with the siglum o’. The second Greek version is known as the Alpha-text (AT) and is printed on the bottom of the page with the siglum L, because at the time of its printing, this Greek version was thought to be Lucianic. It is not known with certainty which of the two Greek versions is the older or if one text is a revision of the other. Recent scholarship has challenged the traditional view that the o’ text of Esther was the first Greek translation made of the Hebrew and that the AT was a later revision of it. The o’ text carries a colophon, which, if historically reliable, would allow for three possible dates for the origin of the translation: 114/13 BCE, 78/77 BCE, or 48 BCE. Scholars disagree on which is most likely. Both Greek versions have been translated for NETS. The NRSV translates the o’ text into English with the title “Esther: The Greek Version Containing the Additional Chapters” and includes it within the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books.

Both the o’ text and the AT contain six additional chapters that are found only in the Greek textual tradition. These six additional chapters are almost identical in both Greek versions of Esther, indicating that they were not a part of the original Greek text of either, but were inserted later into both versions, probably being copied from one of the Greek versions of Esther to the other.

There is no manuscript evidence that the six additional chapters found in the Greek versions ever existed in Hebrew or Aramaic. Furthermore, their style and syntax indicates that they were composed in Greek, with the possible exception of addition D. Additions B and E are royal memos and exhibit an overworked style that satirizes the pompous and self-serving character of the king.

The Alpha-Text of Esther (Göttingen L)
The Alpha-text (AT) of Esther is a second Greek version of the story preserved in only four manuscripts. It is a significantly shorter telling of the story than both the Hebrew (MT) and the other Greek version (o’), and its versification differs from both. This translation follows the Göttingen versification.

The siglum L, indicating Lucianic, was assigned to this text in the nineteenth century because it was preserved in manuscripts containing the Lucianic recension of Reigns (Samuel-Kings). Although it is no longer considered Lucianic by most scholars who have examined it, there is no agreement on its origin, its relationship to the Hebrew Esther, or to the other Greek version. Current theories propose that it is (a) a revision of the o’ text, (b) a second, independently made translation of the MT, (c) a translation of another Hebrew text of Esther of uncertain relationship to the MT, or (d) a midrashic re-write of the Esther story.

Translation Profile of the Greek
Apart from the six additional chapters, the syntax and style of both Greek versions of Esther are similar to other books of the Septuagint that have been translated from the Hebrew. Of the two versions, the o’ text of Esther follows the Hebrew MT more closely and, when the six additional chapters are excluded, agrees with it semantically in about 87% of its translation units and formally in about 62% of its translation units. In comparison, the AT, which is about 20% shorter than the MT even including the six additional chapters, exhibits about 81% semantic agreement with the MT and about 52% formal agreement. Hence, the AT is the freer translation of the two, if its Hebrew Vorlage is presumed to have been sufficiently similar to the MT. The AT is also the more lexically diverse of the two versions, using a greater variety of Greek words to render a given Hebrew word than does the o’ text.
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Although the o’ text follows the MT closely in most chapters, it is not an isomorphic translation such that each word of the Hebrew is represented by a word in the Greek, a translation practice that results in Hebraisms that are not idiomatic Greek. Nevertheless, a few Hebraisms can be found, for instance in 6.13 (“you will fall when you fall”) where the Greek syntax reflects a literal rendering of the Hebrew infinitive absolute and, for instance, in 8.3 where the Greek verb προστίθημι expresses the Hebrew idea “to do again” or “keep on doing.” Elements in the Hebrew that are synonymous or redundant are often expressed by only one element in the Greek. Nouns and proper names are often omitted or replaced with a pronoun (and sometimes vice versa). Explanatory phrases are sometimes added, especially to make God’s presence explicit (e.g., 6.13). The o’ text translates about 80% of the text found in the MT.

The second Greek text of Esther, the AT, or L text, is shorter than the o’ text (and the Hebrew MT) by about 20%. It represents only about half the text found in the MT. More often than not, the AT follows the word order of the MT and agrees with it about as often as does the o’ text. The primary difference between the AT and the MT is the many small pluses and minuses, though many of these are due to inherent differences between the Hebrew and Greek languages. Most of the significant pluses and minuses in the AT compared to the MT are found in chapters 8–10 and appear to be caused by a deliberate decision (a) to minimize Esther’s role while magnifying Mardochaios’, (b) to reflect less interest in the origin and celebration of Purim, and (c) to highlight in the AT the role of the Jews (Judeans) as advantageous to the king in the political intrigue of the pagan court with a special interest in the theme of political assassination. Like the o’ text, the AT is not an isomorphic translation and typically preserves the sense but not the form of the Hebrew idioms involving “face,” “hand,” “eyes” and “heart.”

The current consensus of scholarship denies that one Greek version of Esther is a recension of the other, but the o’ text and AT are clearly translations of the same story as extant in the MT because they virtually never agree against the MT (though the AT and MT sometimes agree against the o’ text). Chapters 8–10 of the two Greek versions differ sufficiently to deny a literary dependence between the two and to suggest that both Greek versions were redacted extensively and independently when addition E was introduced into each. Chapter 8 shows the least agreement between the two Greek versions because they share very few of the same syntactic units, but those few that they do share show a high percentage of agreement.

The same six additional chapters found in both Greek versions appear not to have been in the original text of either, with perhaps the exception of addition D interwoven into chapter 5. It is likely that this additional material was added first to one Greek version, whether all at once or over time, and then later copied to the other. Additions A and F clearly function together, being the apocalyptic dream of Mardochaios (A) and its interpretation (F) that frame the events of the Esther story as a fulfillment of restored covenant blessing as predicted in the prophecy against Babylon in Jeremiah 28 (LXX). Additions C and E share sufficient common vocabulary to indicate that E was composed to answer the prayers of Mardochaios and Esther voiced in C, which therefore must have logically, if not chronologically, preceded the composition of E. Moreover, addition C shows influence from the Greek translation of Moyses’ intercessory prayer in Deut 9.26 LXX. Although conflicting evidence allows no consensus about which Greek version is the older, there is some evidence that the AT preserves the older form of additions A, B, C, E, and F. This does not necessarily mean that the additions were first introduced into the AT, only that the texts of these additional chapters have experienced fewer changes since being introduced into the AT than they have in the o’ text. That may be because the o’ text enjoyed a longer and wider transmission history than the AT, which is extant in only four manuscripts.

The NETS Translation of Esther

The Hebrew MT was the text from which the NRSV English translation was made. Where the Göttingen Greek text agrees with the Hebrew, the NRSV text was allowed to stand in NETS, where acceptable. For the six additional chapters for which there is no extant Hebrew, the Göttingen text was compared to the NRSV English translation of the Greek Esther, which was allowed to stand unless the NRSV violated NETS policy.

Versification

The NETS translations of Esther follow the versification of the Göttingen edition. Numbers in parentheses refer to the parallel text. The six additional chapters are of particular note. Referred to by the letters A–F in the Göttingen edition, and likewise in NETS, they traditionally have been taken out of narrative sequence and numbered as chapters 11–16. Following Jerome’s pattern, they were displaced to the end of the book following chapter 10, making narrative nonsense of the material. These six additional chapters are translated in the NETS edition in the position in which they are found in the Greek versions.

Karen H. Jobes
In the second year when Artaxerxes the Great was king, on the first day of Nisan, Mardochaios the son of Iairos son of Semeias son of Kisaious, from the tribe of Benjamin, saw a dream.

He was a Judean man dwelling in the city of Susa, a great man, serving in the court of the king. Now he was of the group of exiles which Nabouchodonosor, king of Babylon, took captive from Jerusalem with lechonias, the king of Judea. And this was his dream: Look! Shouts and confusion! Thunder and earthquake! Chaos upon the earth! Look! Two great dragons came forward, both ready to fight, and a great noise arose from them! And at their sound every nation prepared for war, to fight against a nation of righteous people. Look! A day of darkness and gloom! Affliction and anguish! Oppression and great chaos upon the earth! And the whole righteous nation was in chaos, fearing the evils that threatened themselves, and they were ready to perish. Then they cried out to God, and from their cry, as though from a small spring, there came a great river, abundant water; light, and the sun rose, and the lowly were exalted, and they were ready to perish. Then they cried out to God, and from their cry, as though from a small spring, there came a great river, abundant water; light, and the sun rose, and the lowly were exalted and devoured those held in esteem. Then when Mardochaios, who had seen this dream and what God had determined to do, awoke, he had it on his heart and sought until nightfall to understand it in every detail.

And Mardochaios took his rest in the courtyard with Gabatha and Tharra, the two eunuchs of the king who guarded the courtyard. He both overheard their deliberations and inquired into their ambitions, and learned that they were preparing to lay hands on Artaxerxes the king, and he told the king about them. Then the king interrogated the two eunuchs, and when they confessed, they were led away. And the king wrote these things in the record, and Mardochaios wrote concerning these things. And the king ordered Mardochaios to serve in the court and gave to him gifts for these things. But Haman son of Hamadathos, a Bougean, was highly esteemed by the king, and he sought to harm Mardochaios and his people because of the two eunuchs of the king.

Now it happened after these things in the days of Artaxerxes—this Artaxerxes controlled one hundred twenty-seven lands from India—to the Persians and Medes and for the rulers of the satrapies. And after these things, after he had displayed to them the great wealth of his kingdom and the glory of the celebration of his wealth for one hundred eighty days and when the days of the wedding feast were completed, the king gave a feast for his friends and for all those found in the city of Susa—for seven days inside the king's palace for all those found in the city of Susa—from great to small—for seven days inside the king's palace.
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wine party for the nations present in the city, for six days, in the courtyard of the house of the king. It had been decorated with linen and cotton curtains hung on cords of linen and purple attached to gold and silver blocks on pillars of marble and other stones. There were couches of gold and silver on a mosaic pavement of emerald, mother-of-pearl and marble. There were gossamer throws in many colors embroidered with roses round about. The goblets were made of gold and silver, and a miniature cup made of ruby was on display that was worth thirty thousand talents. The wine was abundant and sweet, which the king himself drank. Now this wine party was established law, but so the king wanted it, and he ordered his stewards to do as he and his men wanted. And Astin the queen gave a wine party for the women in the royal quarters where King Artaxerxes was.

10 Now on the seventh day, when he was feeling merry, the king told Haman and Bazan and Tharra and Boraze and Zatholiha and Abataza and Tharaba, the seven eunuchs who attended King Artaxerxes, to bring Ouastin the queen into order to proclaim her queen and to place the diadem on her and to show her to the rulers and her beauty to the peoples, because she was beautiful. But Astin the queen did not obey him to come with the eunuchs. The king was angry, and he was enraged! Then he said to his Friends, "This is how Astin spoke, therefore give your ruling and judgment on this." So Arkesaios, Sarsthaioi and Malesear, the rulers of the Persians and Medes who were close to the king and seated first by the king, came to him. And they reported to him what, according to law, must be done with Astin the queen, because she had not done the things ordered by the king through the eunuchs. Then Mouchaios said to the king and the rulers, "Astin the queen has wronged not only the king, but also all the rulers and governors of the king." (For he had reported to them the words of the queen and how she defied the king.) Therefore, just as she defied King Artaxerxes, so this very day the other princesses of the rulers of the Persians and Medes, when they hear what was said to the king by her, will similarly dare to dishonor their husbands. Therefore, if it pleases the king, let him issue a royal order, and let it be written according to the laws of the Medes and Persians, and let it not be applied differently, neither let the queen any longer come to him, and let the king give her royal position to a woman better than she. Let the law declared by the king be heard, whatever law he enacts in his kingdom. And thus all women shall bestow honor on their own husbands, from the poor to the rich. This word pleased the king and the rulers, and the king did as Mouchaios said. He sent word throughout the whole kingdom, to every land in its own language so that they had fear in their homes.

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courtyard, celebrating his deliverance. And there were tapestries of linen and cotton with lavender and scarlet embroidered in flowers and an awning hung by linen and purple cords on silver blocks and pillars of marble and gilded with gold. And there were couches of gold on an emerald pavement and roses round about.

7 And the golden goblets were each different, and the wine was royal, which the king drinks. And this wine party was according to law, for so the king had ordered that the will of the men be done.

9 And Ouastin the queen gave a great reception for all the women in the court of the king.

10 Now it happened on the seventh day, when the king was feeling good from the wine, the king told his servants to bring Ouastin the queen into the assembled banquet, in her royal diadem, before his army. And Ouastin did not want to do the will of the king through the hand of the eunuchs. Now when the king heard that Ouastin denied his will, he was very angry! Rage burned within him! Then the king asked all the wise men who knew law and justice what to do with the queen, because she had not been willing to do the will of the king. And the rulers of the Persians and Medes and those who see the face of the king and those seated among royalty came to him. And Bougaioi advised him, saying, "Ouastin the queen has wronged not only the king, but also the rulers of the Persians and Medes, and to all the peoples her affront has gone out, because she ignored the ordinance of the king. If, therefore, it pleases our lord and is acceptable to his thinking, let it be written to all the lands and to all the nations, and make it known that Ouastin rejected the word of the king. And let her royal position be given to another, one better than she. And let it be seen that she is obeying the voice of the king, and he will do good for all the kingdoms. And all wives will give honor and glory to their husbands from the poor to the rich." This word was good in the heart of the king, and he acted readily according to this advice.
After these things, the king got over his anger,
and he no longer remembered Astin, recalling
what she had said and how he condemned her.
Then the king’s ministers said, “Let pure girls be
sought for the king, beautiful in appearance. And
the king shall appoint officers in all the lands of
his kingdom and let them select maidenly girls,
beautiful in appearance, into Susa the city, into the
harem, and let them be entrusted to the king’s eu-
nuch, the guard of the women; then let cosmetics
and other care be given. And whichever girl is
pleasing to the king will be queen instead of
Astin.” The advice pleased the king, and he did so.

Now there was a Judean man in Susa the city,
and his name was Mardochaios the son of Iairos son
of Semeias son of Kisaios, from the tribe of Ben-
jamin, who was an exile from Ierousalem, which
Nabouchodonosor, king of Babylon, had taken cap-
tive. And this man had a foster child, a daughter of
Aminadab, his father’s brother, and her name was
Esther. And when her parents died, he trained her
for himself as a wife. And the girl was beautiful in
appearance. So when the king’s ordinance was
heard, many girls were gathered into Susa the city
under the charge of Gai. Esther was also taken to
Gai, the guard of the women. The girl pleased him
and found his favor, and he hastened to provide her
with cosmetics and her portion of food and with
seven girls assigned to her from the palace, and he
provided well for her and her attendants in the
harem. Esther did not reveal her race or her ances-
try, for Mardochaios had commanded her not to
tell. Each day Mardochaios walked around in front
of the harem court, to learn how Esther would fare.

Now time for a girl to go in to the king was
when she had completed twelve months, for the
days of treatment were like this: six months being
rubbed with oil of myrrh and six months with per-
fumes and cosmetics for the women.

And then she would go in to the king. And to
whomever he spoke he would give her to go with him
from the harem to the royal quarters. In the evening
she would go in; then toward day she would depart
into the second harem of which Gai, the king’s eunuch,
was the guard of the women. And she would not go in
to the king again, unless she was summoned by name.

When the time was completed for Esther the
daughter of Aminadab, brother of Mardochaios’s
father, to go in to the king, she turned down noth-
ing of the things the king’s eunuch, the guard of
the women, commanded. For Esther was favored
by all who saw her. Esther went in to Artaxerxes
the king in the twelfth month, which is Adar, in
the seventh year of his reign. And the king fell in
love with Esther, and she found favor beyond all
the virgins; so he set the queen’s diadem on her.
Then the king gave a wine party for all his
Friends and forces for seven days. He celebrated
Esther’s wedding feast and gave rest to all the provinces.

\[\text{Or he}\]
\[\text{Or canceled debts of}\]
Now it happened after these things that King Assyeros promoted Haman son of Hamadathos, a Bougean, and advanced him and set his throne above those of his Friends so that all would bend over and bow themselves on the ground before him. 2Therefore, although everyone would do obeisance to him in accord with the king's ordinance, Mardochaios would not do obeisance before him. 3And the servants of the king saw that Mardochaios was not doing obeisance before Haman, and the servants of the king said to Mardochaios, "Why do you disobey the king and not do obeisance before Haman?" 4So he told them that he was a Judean. And they informed Haman about him. 5Now when Haman heard, he was provoked to jealousy against Mardochaios, and rage burned within him. So he was seeking to destroy Mardochaios and all his people on one day. 6Since Haman was provoked and all his rage was stirred up, he turned red, driving him from his sight. And with a malicious heart, he kept speaking evil to the king about Israel, 8saying, "There is a people scattered throughout all the kingdoms, a people of war and insubordinate, who have different laws from your laws, O King. They do not pay heed though they are known among all nations because they are evil, and they set aside your commands to undermine your glory. 9Therefore, if it pleases the king and this judgment is good in his heart, let this nation be given to me for destruction, and I will pay into the treasury ten thousand talents of silver."

11So the king said to him, "Keep the silver, but treat the nation as you wish." 12Then the king's secretaries were summoned on the thirteenth day of the first month, and they wrote as Haman commanded to the governors and to the rulers of every land—from India to Ethiopia—to one hundred twenty-seven lands and to the rulers of the nations in their own language in the name of Artaxerxes the king. 13It was sent by couriers throughout Artaxerxes' empire, to destroy the race of the Judeans in one day of the twelfth month, which is Adar, and to seize their property.

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aOr hung  bOr on
This is a copy of the letter:

"The Great King Artaxerxes writes as follows to the rulers of the one hundred twenty-seven lands from India to Ethiopia and to the officials among them:

2 "Being the ruler of many nations and master of the whole world, I have determined (not high-mindedly with presumption of authority but always acting in moderation and with kindness) to secure lasting tranquility in the lives of my subjects and, in order to make my kingdom peaceable and open to travel throughout all its extent, to restore the peace desired by all people.

3 "When I asked my counselors how this might be accomplished, Haman—who excels among us in sound judgment and is distinguished for his unchanging goodwill and steadfast fidelity and has attained the second place in the kingdom—pointed out to us that among all the tribes in the world there is scattered a certain hostile people, who have laws contrary to those of every nation and continually disregard the ordinances of kings so that the joint administration of the kingdom that we honorably intend cannot be achieved. Therefore, whereas we understand that, since this nation stands constantly all alone in opposition to all humanity, perversely following an estranging manner of life due to their laws and since it is ill-disposed to our interests, doing the worst harm and in order that our kingdom may not attain stability.

6 "We therefore have ordered that you utterly destroy those indicated to you in the letters written by Haman, who is in charge of the affairs of state and is our second Father—including women and children—by the daggers of their enemies, without any compassion and restraint, on the fourteenth day of the twelfth month, Adar, of this present year, so that those who have long been hostile and so remain, when they in one day have gone down to Hades by force, may in the time hereafter render the matters of state completely tranquil and untroubled for us."


3 Copies of the letters were posted in every land, and it was ordered all the nations to be ready for this day. The matter proceeded quickly even to Susa. While the king and Haman were sitting down to drink, the city was being thrown into confusion.

Now when Mardochaios learned the outcome, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and sprinkled ashes, and as he rushed through the square of the city, he cried out with a loud voice, "An innocent nation is being destroyed!" He went up to the king's gate and stood there, for it was not permitted to him to enter the courtyard clothed with sackcloth and ashes. And in every land, wherever the letters were posted, there was crying and wailing and great mourning among the Judeans; they put sackcloth and ashes on themselves. The queen's attendants and eunuchs came in and told her, and she was troubled when she heard what had happened.

This is a copy of the letter:

"The Great King Assyros writes as follows to the rulers and satraps of the one hundred and twenty and seven lands from India to Ethiopia:

15(2) "Being the ruler of many nations and master of the whole world, I have determined (not high-mindedly with presumption of authority but always acting in moderation and with kindness) to secure lasting tranquility in the lives of my subjects and, making my kingdom peaceable and open to travel to its full extent, to restore the peace desired by all people.

16(3) "When I was asking my counselors how this might be accomplished, Haman—who has excelled among us in sound judgment, by unchanging goodwill and steadfast fidelity having attained the second place in the kingdom—pointed out to us that there is scattered a certain hostile people, resident among all the tribes in the world who, on the one hand, have laws in opposition to those of every nation and, on the other, continually disregard the command of kings so that the kingdom can never attain stability. Therefore, whereas we understand that, since the nation stands all alone in its way of life which is contrary to every one of humanity on account of an estranging way of life due to their laws and since it is ill-disposed to our commands, it perpetually does the worst harm, in order that we may never be established in the sole-rule directed by us.

18(6) "We therefore have ordered to you that you destroy one and all of those indicated to you in the letters written by Haman, who is in charge of the affairs of state and is our second Father—including women and children—by the daggers of their enemies, without any compassion or restraint, on the fourteenth day of the twelfth month (this is the month of Adar, which is Dystros), in order to eliminate all the Judeans and to take their children as plunder in order that those who have long been hostile and so remain, when they in one day have together gone down to Hades, may in the time hereafter be in a state of tranquility and not ever again furnish us with matters for concern."
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She sent someone to clothe Mardochaios and to take off his sackcloth, but he was not persuaded. 5Then Esther called for Hachrathaios, her eunuch who attended her, and sent him to learn for her from Mardochaios the facts.

7 So Mardochaios told him what had happened, and the promise that Haman had promised to the king of ten thousand talents into the treasury so that he could destroy the Judeans. 8He also gave him the copy that had been posted in Susa to destroy them, to show to Esther, and told him to command her to go and entreat the king and to beg him on behalf of her people: “Remember your humble days when you were brought up by my hand, for Haman, the second to the king, has spoken against us to put us to death. Call upon the Lord, and speak to the king about us, and deliver us from death!”

9 So Hachrathaios went in and told her all these things. 10Then Esther said to Hachrathaios, “Go to Mardochaios, and say, 11‘All the nations of the empire know that every man or woman who shall go to the king inside the inner court uninvited—there is no deliverance for him. Only if the king holds out the golden rod to someone, will that person be safe. And I myself have not been called to go to the king for these thirty days.’”

12 So Hachrathaios reported to Mardochaios everything Esther had said. 13Mardochaios said to Hachrathaios, “Go, and say to her, ‘Esther, do not say to yourself that you alone of all the Judeans in the empire will be safe. 14Because even if you keep silent at this time, from elsewhere help and protection will come to the Judeans, but you and your father’s household will perish. And who knows if for this time you were made queen?’” 15Then Esther sent the messenger who had come to her back to Mardochaios, saying, 16“Go, gather the Judeans that are in Susa, and fast on my behalf, and neither eat nor drink for three days, night and day. I and my attendants will also abstain from food. And then I will go to the king, though it is against the law, even if it be that I perish.” 17And Mardochaios went and did what Esther had commanded him.

Then he petitioned the Lord, remembering all the works of the Lord.

2 And he said, “Lord, Lord, King of all powers, for the universe is subject to your authority, and there is no one who can oppose you when it is your will to save Israel; because you have made heaven and earth and every wonderful thing in what is under heaven. 4You are Lord of all, and there is no one who can withstand you, the Lord. 5You know all things; you know, O Lord, that it was not in insolence nor pride nor for any love of glory that I did this, namely, to refuse to do obeisance to this proudful Haman; 6for I would have been willing to kiss the soles of his feet for Israel’s safety! 7But I did this so that I might not set human glory above

αLacking in Gk

ALPHA

‘Do not turn away from going to the king and flattering his person for the sake of me and my people, remembering your humble days when you were being brought up by my hand, because Haman, who is the second in command, has spoken to the king against us to put us to death. 5Therefore call upon God, and speak about us to the king, and deliver us from death!’”

6(9) So he made known to her the tribulation of Israel. 7(10) And she sent to him saying as follows, 11(12) “You know as well as anyone that whoever goes to the king uninvited, he to whom he does not hold out his golden scepter will be subject to death. 8 And I have not been called to him for thirty days. So how can I go now, not being invited?”

9(13) So Mardochaios sent to her and said to her, 14(14) “If you ignore your nation and do not help them, then surely God will be to them a helper and deliverance, but you and your father’s household will perish. 15(15) And who knows if for this time you were made queen?” 16(16) Then the queen sent saying, 17(17) “Proclaim a religious service, and petition God earnestly, and I and my girls will do likewise. And I will go to the king uninvited, even if it be necessary that I die.” 18(18) And Mardochaios did so.

Then he petitioned the Lord, remembering his works.

2(19) And he said, 19(19) “Master Almighty, under whose authority are all things and there is no one who can resist you when it is your will to save the house of Israel, 19(20) because you have made heaven and earth and every wonderful thing in what is under heaven, and you rule everything. 20(21) For you know all things and the race of Israel you know. 21(22) It was not in insolence nor for any love of glory that I did not bow down to this uncircumcised Haman, 22(23) since I would have been willing to kiss the soles of his feet for the sake of Israel, but I did this so that I might not set anyone above your glory, Master, and not do obeisance to anyone but you, the True One, and I will not do it even under duress. 23(24) And now, O Lord, you who
divine glory, and I will not do obeisance to anyone but you, my Lord, and I will not do these things in pride. 8And now, O Lord God, King God of Abraam, spare your people, for they are looking to ruin us, and they desired to destroy the inheritance that has been yours from the beginning. 9Do not neglect your portion, which you redeemed for yourself out of the land of Egypt. 10Hear my petition, and have mercy upon your allotment; turn our mourning into feasting, that we may live and sing hymns to your name, O Lord; do not silence the mouth of those who praise you."

11 And all Israel cried out from their strength, because their death was before their eyes.

12 Then Esther the queen fled to the Lord, seized with the agony of death. 13Taking off the garments of her glory, she put on the garments of distress and mourning, and instead of costly perfumes she covered her head with ashes and dung, and she utterly humbled her body; every part that she loved to adorn she covered with her tangled hair. 14Then she petitioned the Lord, God of Israel, and said: "O my Lord, you alone are our king; help me, I who am alone and have no helper except you. 15because my danger is in my hand. 16I have heard from my birth in the tribe of my family that you, O Lord, took Israel out of all the nations and our fathers from among all their forebears, to be an everlasting inheritance, and you did for them all that you said. 17And now we have sinned before you, and you have delivered us into the hand of our enemies, 18because we honor their gods. You are righteous, O Lord! 19And now they were not satisfied that we are in bitter slavery, but they have put their hands into the hands of their idols. 20Put eloquent speech in my mouth before the king, and change his heart to hate the one who fights against us so that there may be an end of him and those who agree with him. 21Put eloquent speech in my mouth before the lion, and turn his heart to hate the one who fights against us so that there may be an end of him and those who agree with him. 22But save us by your hand, and help me, who am alone and have no one except you, O Lord. You have knowledge of everything, and you know that I hate the glory of the lawless and abhor the bed of the uncircumcised and of any alien. 23You know my predicament—that I abhor the sign of my proud}

18(12) Then Esther the queen fled to the Lord, seized with the agony of death. (13)She took off the garments of glory from herself and every sign of her splendor, and she put on distress and mourning, and instead of costly perfumes she covered her head with ashes and dung, and she utterly humbled her body; every sign of her beauty and adornment she covered humbly with her lovely hair. (14)Then she petitioned the Lord and said: "O Lord, King, you alone are a helper; help me, I who am humble and have no helper apart from you, (15)because my danger is in my hand. 20(16)Now I have heard from the book of my heritage that you redeemed Israel out of all the nations and their fathers from among their forebears, appointing Israel over them to be an everlasting inheritance. And you did for them what you said to them and provided whatever they asked. 21(17)We have sinned before you, and you delivered us into the hand of our enemies (18)if we honored their gods. 22You are righteous, O Lord! 19(19)And now they were not satisfied that we are in bitter slavery, but they have put their hands into the hands of their idols, (20)to annul the stipulation of your mouth to destroy your inheritance and to stop the mouths of those who praise you and to extinguish the glory of your house and your altar, (21)and to open the mouths of enemies for the mighty deeds of vain things, and that a mortal king be admired forever.

22 "O Lord, do not surrender your scepter to those who don’t exist, and do not let them laugh at our downfall, but turn their plan against them, and make a public example of him who began this against us. 23Remember, O Lord; make yourself known in a time of our affliction, and embolden me, O King of the gods and Master of all dominion! 24Put eloquent speech in my mouth before the lion, and turn his heart to hate the one who fights against us so that there may be an end of him and those who agree with him. 25But save us by your hand, and help me, who am alone and have no one except you, O Lord. You have knowledge of everything, and you know that I hate the glory of the lawless and abhor the bed of the uncircumcised and of any alien. 26You know my predicament—that I abhor the sign of my proud
And it happened on the third day, as she ceased praying, she took off the garments of service and put on her glory. Then, when she had become majestic, after calling upon the all-seeing God and savior, she took along two of her attendants, on one she leaned gently for support, while the other followed, holding her train. She was radiant with the full flush of her beauty, and her face looked happy as if she were cheerful, but her heart was in anguish from fear. When she had gone through all the doors, she stood before the king. He was seated on the throne of his kingdom, clothed in the full array of his splendor, all covered with gold and precious stones. And he was most terrifying.

And when he raised his face inflamed with glory, he gazed at her in the full flush of anger. The queen staggered, her color turned pale from faintness, and she collapsed on the head of the attendant who went before her. Then God changed the spirit of the king to gentleness, and alarmed, he jumped from his throne and took her in his arms until she was quieted. He kept comforting her with soothing words and said to her, “What is it, Esther? I am your brother. Take heart! You shall not die, for our ordinance is only for the common person. Come here.”

Then he lifted the golden rod and placed it on her neck; he welcomed her and said, “Speak to me.” She said to him, “I saw you, Lord, like a divine angel, and my heart was shaken from fear of your glory. For you are marvelous, lord, and your face is full of grace.” And while she was speaking, she fell from faintness. Then the king and all his servants were troubled, and he reassured her.

And the king said to her, “What do you want, Esther? What is your request? Even up to half of my kingdom, and it shall be yours.” Then Esther said, “Today is my special day. If, therefore, it pleases the king, let both him and Haman come to the dinner that I will prepare today.” Then the king said, “Bring Haman quickly so that we may do what Esther has said.” So both came to the dinner that Esther had spoken about. During the drinking, the king said to Esther, “What is it, Queen Esther? And it shall be, whatever you ask.” Then she said, “This is my petition and request. If I have found favor before the king, let the king position that is upon my head on days when I appear in public. I abhor it like a menstrual cloth, and I do not wear it on the days when I am in private. And your slave has not eaten at Haman’s table, and I have not honored the king’s banquet nor drunk the wine of libations. Your slave has not rejoiced since the day of my change until now, except in you, O Lord, God of Abraam. O God who has power over all things, hear the voice of those who despair, and save us from the hand of evildoers. And save me from my fear!”
and Haman come again tomorrow to the dinner
that I will prepare for them, and tomorrow I will
do these same things.”

9 So Haman went out from the king very happy
and rejoicing. But when Haman saw Mardochaios
the Judean in the courtyard, he became very angry.

10 So he went home and called his friends and
Zosara his wife, and he announced to them his
riches and the glory that the king had bestowed on
him and how he had made him to be first and to
be leader of the kingdom. 11 Haman said, “The
Queen has not summoned with the king anyone
but me to the dinner. Tomorrow also I have been
invited. 12 Yet all this does not please me when I
see Mardochaios the Judean in the courtyard.”
13 Then his wife Zosara and his friends said to him,
“Let a pole fifty cubits tall be cut for you, and
early in the morning speak to the king and have
Mardochaios hanged on it; then you, go to the
dinner with the king, and celebrate.” This advice
pleased Haman, and he had the pole prepared.

6 But the Lord kept sleep from the king that
night, and he told his teacher to bring the
written daily annals, to read to him. 2 And he
found favor before you, O King, and if it pleases
the king to grant my petition and to do my re-
quest, let the king and Haman come to the dinner
that I will prepare for them again tomorrow. For
again tomorrow I will do likewise.” 19 So the king
said, “Do as you want.”

20(9) And it was reported to Haman likewise,
and he marveled. And the king departed and re-
tired. 21(10) So Haman went into his home and
gathered together his friends, his sons and Zosara
his wife. 12(1) And he boasted saying how the queen
had invited no one on her special day “except
the king and me only. Tomorrow also I have been
invited. 22(13) Yet this alone distresses me: whenever I
see Mardochaios the Judean in the court of the
king, and he does not bow down to me.”
23(14) Then his wife Zosara said to him, “He is from
the race of the Judeans. Since the king has allowed
you to destroy the Judeans and the gods have given
you a day of destruction to take revenge on them,
let a pole fifty cubits high be cut for you and be
set up, and hang him on the pole. And early in the
morning you shall speak to the king about him.
And now go; rejoice with the king.” 24 This pleased
Haman, and he did so.

6 But the Mighty One kept sleep from the king
that night, and he stayed awake. 2 So the read-
ers were called, and the court record was read to
him. 3(2) And there was the record of the eunuchs
and what good deed Mardochaios had done for
the king. 4 And the king thought seriously on that
matter, saying, “Mardochaios is a loyal man for
protecting my life, for he has kept me alive even
until now, and I am sitting on my throne today
and have done nothing for him. I have not done
correctly by him.” 5(3) So the king said to his servants,
“What should we do for Mardochaios, the savior
in these matters?” And after they thought about it,
the young men were envious of him, for fear of
Haman lay in their bowels. 6 And the king under-
stood. And morning came. 4(4) The king asked,
“Who is outside?” And it was Haman. 7 Now Ha-
man had come early to speak to the king so that he
might hang Mardochaios. 8(5) And the king said to
bring him in. 9(6) So as he entered, the king said to
him, “What should we do for the man who honors
the king, whom the king wishes to extol?” 10 So Ha-
man reasoned, saying, “Whom would the king
wish to extol if not me?” 11(7) So Haman replied.
“For the person whom the king wishes to extol,
(8) let a royal robe be brought, and a royal horse
upon which the king rides. (9) And let one of the
king’s most noble Friends take these things and
clothe him, and let him mount him on the horse
and go around the city before him proclaiming,
‘Thus shall be done for the one who honors the
king, whom the king wishes to extol.’” 12(10) So the
king said to Haman, “Run quickly, and take the
horse and robe as you have said, and do so to

4a Or over seventy feet  b Or hung

6a Or over seventy feet

9 Old Greek

10 Old Greek

12 Old Greek

14 Old Greek
Mardochaios the Judean who sits in the gateway. And let not your word transgressed.”

13 Now when Haman realized that it was not he himself who would be extolled, but that it was Mardochaios, his heart was utterly broken, and his spirit became feeble.

14(11) And Haman took the robe and the horse, showing reverence to Mardochaios even on the very same day on which he intended to impale him. 15And he said to Mardochaios, “Tear off the sackcloth.” 16And Mardochaios was distressed as one dying, and with anguish he took off the sackcloth and put on the garments of glory. 17And Mardochaios thought he saw a sign, and his heart was toward the Lord, and he was mystified in silent fear. 18And Haman hastened to put him on horseback. 19And Haman led the horse outside and went before him proclaiming, “Thus shall it be done for the man who honors the king, whom the king wishes to extol.” 20(12)And so Haman went to his place downhearted, and Mardochaios went to his home. 21(13)Haman explained to his wife everything that had happened to him. 22His wife and his wise men said, “Ever since you spoke evil about him, evil things have been coming to you; be quiet, because God is among them.”

23(14) While they were still speaking, someone arrived hurrying him to the wine party. And so he was cheered up, and when he had covered the distance, he reclined with them on time.

7

The king rose from the banquet and went into the garden, but Haman was begging the queen, for he saw himself in deep trouble. 8Then the king returned from the garden. Now Haman had fallen on the couch, entreating the queen. And

7 The king rose from the banquet and went into the garden, but Haman was begging the queen, for he saw himself in deep trouble. 8Then the king returned from the garden. Now Haman had fallen on the couch, entreating the queen. And
the king said, “So then, you even violate my wife in my own house?” When Haman heard this, he covered his face. 9 Then Bougathan, one of the eunuchs attending the king, said, “Look! Haman has even prepared a pole for Mardochaios, who spoke up on behalf of the king, and a pole fifty cubits tall has been erected at Haman’s.” And the king said, “Let him be crucified upon it.” 10 So they hanged Haman on the pole that had been prepared for Mardochaios. Then the king got over his anger.

On that very day King Artaxerxes granted to Esther all that belonged to Haman the slanderer, and Mardochaios was summoned by the king, for Esther had revealed that he was related to her. 2 Then the king took the signet ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mardochaios. So Esther appointed Mardochaios over everything of Haman’s.

3 Then she spoke again to the king, and she fell before his feet and pleaded that he revoke the evil of Haman and what he had done to the Judeans. 4 So the king held out the golden rod to Esther, 5 and Esther rose and stood before the king. And Esther said, “If it pleases you and if I have found favor, let an order be dispatched to revoke the letters sent by Haman, which were written to destroy the Judeans who are in your kingdom. 6 For how can I bear to see the suffering of my people? And how can I bear to be saved amidst the destruction of my lineage?” 7 Then the king said to Esther, “If everything belonging to Haman I gave and turned over to you, and him I hanged on the pole, because he plotted to lay hands on the Judeans, what more do you seek? 8 You also write in my name as it pleases you, and seal it with my ring, for whatever is written as the king commands and sealed with my ring cannot be countermanded.”

9 And so the secretaries were summoned in the first month, which is Nisa, on the twenty-third day of the same year, and they wrote to the Judeans what had been commanded to the administrators and rulers of the satrapies from India to Ethiopia, one hundred twenty-seven satrapies country by country, each according to its own language. 10 It was written by the king and sealed with his ring, and they sent the orders by couriers, 11 how he ordered them to live in accordance with their laws in every city, both to help themselves and to deal with their adversaries and their enemies as they wished, 12 on a single day in the whole kingdom of Artaxerxes, on the thirteenth of the twelfth month, which is Adar.

What is written below is a copy of the letter: “The Great King Artaxerxes, to the rulers of the lands from India to Ethiopia, the one hundred twenty-seven satrapies, and to those who are loyal to our interests, greetings.

2 Many people, who are frequently honored...
with the greatest kindness of their benefactors, become the more ambitious and not only seek to harm those subject to us, but not being able to deal with prosperity, they even undertake to scheme against their own benefactors. They not only abolish gratitude from among people, but also, carried away by the boasts of those who are inexperienced in goodness, they even presume to escape the evil-hating divine justice, who always observes everything. Furthermore, many times encouragement has implicated many of those appointed to places of authority, those entrusted to administer the affairs of friends, making them partly responsible for the shedding of innocent blood, and has brought about irreremediable calamities by the malicious lie of an evil disposition of people who misconstrue the sincere goodwill of their sovereigns.

And it is possible to see this not so much from the more ancient records as we handed them down, as it is right at your feet, when you examine things impiously perpetrated by the pestilent behavior of those who hold power unworthily. And it is possible to look out hereafter in order that we may render the kingdom quiet for all people, with peace, utilizing changes and always discerning what comes to our attention with a rather considerable response. Whereas Haman son of Hamadathos (a Macedonian who was in truth a foreigner to the blood of the Persians and quite devoid of our kindness), when he was entertained by us as our guest, obtained so fully the goodwill that we have for every nation to such an extent that he was publicly proclaimed our Father and was continual obeisance to by all as the person second to the royal thrones. But, unable to restrain his arrogance, he undertook to divest us of our rule and our breath and by the crafty deceit of ruses asked to destroy Mardochaios, our savior and constant benefactor, and Esther, the innocent companion of our kingdom, together with their whole nation. For when by these methods he had caught us unawares, he made it his business to deprive us of our rule and our breath and by the crafty deceit of ruses asked to destroy Mardochaios, our savior and constant benefactor, and Esther, the innocent companion of our kingdom, together with their whole nation. For when by these methods he had caught us undefended he thought that he would transfer the power of the Persians to the Macedonians.

But we find that the Judeans, who were consigned to annihilation by this thrice-accursed man, are not criminals but are governed by most righteous laws and are children of the most high, most great, living God, who has directed the kingdom for us and for our ancestors in the most excellent order.

You will therefore do well not to carry out the letters sent by Haman son of Hamadathos, because he who did these things has been crucified at the gates of Susa with his whole household, since the God who prevails over all things has recompensed him quickly with the deserved judgment.

And you will do well to post a copy of this letter publicly in every place and to allow the

_and_
Judeans to live in accordance with their own precepts \(^{20}\) and to join in helping them in order that they might defend themselves against those who attack in the time of oppression, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, Adar, on that same day. \(^{21}\) For God, who rules over all things, has made this day to be a joy for his chosen race instead of a day of destruction for them.

22 Therefore, you also shall celebrate this with all good cheer as a holiday among your commemorative feasts \(^{23}\) so that both now and hereafter it may be deliverance for us and for the well-disposed Persians, but for those who plot against us, a memorial of destruction.

24 “Every city and country, without exception, that does not do according to this by spear and fire shall be consumed with wrath. It shall be made not only impassable for people, but also most hostile to wild animals and birds for all time.

Now in the twelfth month, on the thirteenth day of the month that is Adar, the letter written by the king arrived. \(^{2}\) On that same day the opponents of the Judeans perished, for no one resisted, because they feared them. \(^{3}\) For the rulers of the satraps and the tyrants and the royal secretaries esteemed the Judeans, for the fear of Mardochaios weighed upon them. \(^{4}\) For it turned out that the king's ordinance was referred to by name throughout all the kingdom. \(^{5}\) And in the city of Susa the Judeans killed five hundred men, \(^{7}\) including Pharsannestain, Delphon, Phasga \(^{8}\) and Phardatha and Izathouth (10) and the ten sons of Haman son of Hamadathos, a Bougean, the enemy of the Judeans, and they plundered \(^{11}\) on that same day. The number of those killed in Susa was reported to the king. \(^{12}\) The king said to Esther, “The Judeans have killed in the city of Susa five hundred men. In the surrounding countryside how do you suppose they have fared? Therefore, what more do you ask? It shall be

31(23) “And now hereafter they shall rightly spell deliverance for the Persians but a memorial of destruction for those who plotted against them.

32(24) “Every city and country that does not do according to this by spear and fire shall be consumed with wrath. And it shall be stretched out not only impassable for people but also for wild animals and birds.”

And a public notice containing these things was posted also in Susa. And the king authorized Mardochaios to write whatever he wished. \(^{34}\) So Mardochaios sent out letters and sealed them with the king's signet ring, saying that his people should each remain in their own land and celebrate a feast to God. \(^{35}\) And the letter which Mardochaios sent contained these things:

36 “Haman sent to you letters containing thus, 'Hasten quickly to send the disobedient nation of the Judeans to me for destruction.' \(^{37}\) But I, Mardochaios, inform you that the one who did this has been hung at the gates of Susa, and his household has been despatched. \(^{38}\) For this one wished to kill us on the thirteenth of the month that is Adar.”

39(15) Then Mardochaios went out wearing the royal clothing and a diadem of purple linen, \(^{40}\) and when the people in Susa saw him they rejoiced. \(^{16}\) For the Judeans there was light and gladness; \(^{17}\) in every city and country wherever the ordinance was posted, wherever the proclamation was made, there was gladness and joy among the Judeans, a feast and mirth. And many of the nations were circumcised and became Judeans out of fear of the Judeans.

42(3) Now the rulers and the tyrants and the satraps and the royal secretaries esteemed the Judeans; for the fear of Mardochaios weighed upon them. \(^{43}\) And in Susa it turned out that Haman was referred to by name and so were the opponents throughout the whole kingdom.

44(6) In Susa the Judeans killed seven hundred men \(^{7}\) as well as Pharsan and his brother and Pharna \(^{8}\) and Gagapahradhata \(^{9}\) and Marmasaima and Izathouth \(^{10}\) and the ten sons of Haman son of Hamadathos, the Bougean, the enemy of the Judeans, and they plundered all they owned. \(^{45}\) And the king said to Esther, “How have your people here and in the surrounding countryside fared?” \(^{46}\) And Esther said, “Let it be granted to the Judeans to destroy and plunder whomever

I.e. the 14th and 15th of Adar
17 And so Esther said to the king, "Let it be granted to the Judeans to do likewise tomorrow so that they may hang the ten sons of Haman." 18 So he thus permitted it to be done and handed over to the Judeans of the city the bodies of Haman’s sons to hang. 19 The Judeans in Susa gathered also on the fourteenth day of the month of Adar, and they killed three hundred men, but they did not plunder.

16 Now the rest of the Judeans who were in the kingdom also gathered and defended themselves and gained relief from their adversaries. For they killed fifteen thousand of them on the thirteenth of Adar, but they plundered nothing. 17 And they rested on the fourteenth of the same month and celebrated it as a day of rest with joy and gladness.

18 But the Judeans in the city of Susa gathered together also on the fourteenth and did not rest. They celebrated also the fifteenth with joy and gladness. 19 Therefore for this reason, the Judeans who are scattered in every land outside celebrate the fourteenth day of Adar as a holiday with gladness, each sending portions to those nearby. But those living in the large cities also celebrate the fifteenth of Adar as a joyful holiday, sending portions to those nearby.

20 Now Mardochaios recorded these things in a book and sent it to the Judeans—as many as were in the kingdom of Artaxerxes, to those near and far, 21 to keep these days, the fourteenth and fifteenth of Adar— 22 for on these days the Judeans gained relief from their enemies—and the whole month, which was Adar, in which matters had been turned for them from sorrow into joy and from mourning into a holiday, to celebrate it as days of feasting and gladness, sending portions to their friends and to the poor.

23 So the Judeans accepted just what Mardochaios had written to them— 24 how Haman son of Hamadathos, the Macedonian, had warred against them, inasmuch as he had proclaimed a decision and had cast the lot to destroy them, 25 and how he went in to the king, telling him to hang Mardochaios, but as much evil as he had devised to bring upon the Judeans came upon him, and he himself and his children were hanged.

26 Because of this, these days are called Phourai, because of the lots (because in their language they are called Phourai), because of the words of this letter, and as much as they had suffered because of these things, and as much as had happened to them. 27 He established them, and the Judeans accepted them for themselves and their descendants and all who had joined them and surely not to do otherwise. And these days are a memorial, kept from generation to generation, by city, family and country. 28 These days of Phourai shall be celebrated for all time, and the commemoration of them shall never cease among their generations.

47(20) So Mardochaios recorded these things in a book and sent it to the Judeans who were in the kingdom of Assyeros—both far and near— 21 to keep these days for hymns and rejoicing in the place of pain and grief, the fourteenth and fifteenth. 48(22) And he sent portions to the poor, 27 and they welcomed them. 49 Because of this these days are called Phourai, because of the lots that fell on these days as a memorial.
Then Esther the queen daughter of Ami-
nadab, along with Mardochaios, the Judean, wrote
what they had done, and the confirmation of
the letter about Phrourai. 
And Mardochaios and Es-
ther the queen established these things for them-
selves on their own initiative, then also having es-
tablished them by their own well-being and
counsel. 
And Esther established the matter by
ordinance forever, and it was written for a memo-
rial.

The king recorded during his rule over both
land and sea both his strength and brav-
ery, both the wealth and the glory of his kingdom;
note that they have been recorded in the book of
the kings of the Persians and the Medes as a me-
morial. 
And Mardochaios took over from King
Artaxerxes, and he was great in the kingdom and
extolled by the Judeans. And being loved, he spent
his life for his whole nation.

And Mardochaios said, "From God these
things have come. 
For I remember about the
dream that I saw concerning these matters, for not
even a word of them has failed to be fulfilled.
The little spring that became a river, and
there was light and sun and abundant water; 
Esther is the river, whom the king married and made
queen. 
The two dragons are I myself and Haman. 
The nations are those that gathered to destroy the
name of the Judeans. 
And my nation, this is Isra-
el, who cried out to God and were saved. The Lord
has saved his people, and the Lord has rescued us
from all these evils, and God has done signs and
great wonders that have not happened among the
nations. 
And God remembered his
covenant with our fathers! Amen!"

And these days in the month of Adar, on
the fourteenth and fifteenth of that same month,
will be observed by them with a gathering and joy
and rejoicing before God, from generation to gen-
eration forever among his people Israel.

aGk uncertain  bPossibly succeeded  cOr made righteous
Possibly was authentic  aPossibly succeeded  bOr made righteous