

LXX ESTHER: “MORE” GOD “LESS” THEOLOGY

P. NAGEL

ABSTRACT

This article argues that the Greek translators of the Hebrew version of the Esther narrative did not take its theology seriously. The explicit theological insertions such as “call upon the lord” and “to fear god”, as well as the additions, for example the apocalyptic vision in addition A and the prayers in addition C, are testimonies to this. The Greek translators’ theological reworking of the Hebrew version of Esther is explicit and certain. This article will discuss some of these insertions, while referring to the additions, in an attempt to show that the Greek translators disregarded the narrative, open-ended theology of the Hebrew version of Esther. In conclusion a call will be made for a re-evaluation and appreciation of the Esther narrative in its Hebrew form.

INTRODUCTION

The thesis to be put forward in this article is that the Greek translators of the Hebrew version of the Esther narrative did not take the theology of Esther seriously.¹ It is obvious that not only they, but others as well, felt discomfort with the Esther narrative. The discomfort is highlighted by the fact that the Esther scroll is the only Old Testament document of which no copies were found in the caves of Qumran.² Furthermore, the Esther narrative was amongst the last books to be accepted as part of the canon.³ This discomfort is fuelled by the fact that no reference is made to a god, lord or deity, and there is no explicit reference to religious language. Inserting phrases like φοβεῖσθαι τὸν θεὸν and ἐπικάλῃσαι τὸν κύριον might sound theologically optimistic, but the

¹ See de Troyer’s (2003:11) proposed thesis, where she argues that the Greek translator of the Hebrew book of Esther rewrote the story in such a way that God was made a part of it.

² See Gordis (1981:359-388).

³ See Anderson (1950:32-43), Humphreys (1973:211-223), Gordis (1981:358).

translators removed the vigour with which readers are drawn into the Esther narrative and its theology. The translators crafted Esther and the other characters into mere puppets confined to the strings mastered by God acting as the puppet master. The Greek translators, including their “modern” counterparts, endanger the theological thrust of the text, and this needs to be addressed. This article is an attempt to critically evaluate the theological reworking of the Hebrew version of Esther (MTE), by discussing the theological insertions made to the Hebrew text and the negative impact they pose. The thesis will also show that the Greek translators disregarded the genre of the MTE with these insertions; which in turn undermines the literary objective of the Hebrew text. In conclusion, a call will be made for a re-evaluation and appreciation of the theology of the MTE.

Various historical-critical tools have been implemented to analyse the text presented here; however, the rational approach towards this study and the analytical methods applied was to a great extent influenced by the combination of *a cognitive reception*⁴ – and *a literary theory*. This method of investigation created awareness that as reader of the MTE and LXX, I too interpret the texts from a particular cultural, cognitive and psychological background, and thus apply meaning onto the text. Therefore, a deliberate attempt will be made to be guided by the literary genre introduced by the MTE, out of which one could re-evaluate and appreciate the narrative and open-ended theology of the MTE. This thesis will be dealt with by presenting the theological insertions made to Esther 2:20; 4:8, 14 and 6:1 as evidence for the theological programme of the Greek translators. Reference will also be made to three additions (A, C and D) made to the MTE.⁵ It is not intended to discuss these additions in detail; reference will

⁴ For the theoretical background of this theory visit the following site:
<http://www.uni-tuebingen.de/CoRecT/CoRecTdt.html#Theorie>.

Also see the two articles of Jackson (2000:319-347), (2003:191-205) and the article of Schneider (2001:607-640).

⁵ Cf. de Troyer (2003:21-27), who also regards it necessary to deal with the

be made to them to emphasize the fact that these additions are an explicit theological framework in which the theological insertions have been subtly constructed.⁶ The presentation of the evidence will be conducted in the following sequence:

1. Reference I: Addition (A:1-17).
2. Es 2:20: φοβεῖσθαι τὸν θεόν.
3. Es 4:8: ἐπικάλεσαι τὸν κύριον.
4. Es 4:14: ἄλλοθεν βοήθεια as reference to the God of the Jews.
5. Reference II: Addition C (C:1-30).
6. Reference III: Addition D (D:1-16).
7. Es 6.1: Ὁ δὲ κύριος.

THEOLOGICAL INSERTIONS AND ADDITIONS

REFERENCE I: ADDITION A:1-17

The introduction of the MTE (1:1-22) concerns itself with Ahasuerosh and the lavish banquet held in his palace. The name “Ahasuerosh” appears nine times in Chapter 1 and the term “king” appears twenty-nine times, all referring to Ahasuerosh. Clearly he dominates this scene. Chapter 1 thus sets the stage for the narrative as a whole and has a specific introductory function to the MTE. The Greek translators made sure to alter this focus by presenting an

“Additions” as an attempt to answer the question of how the translator of Es 4:14 interpreted the MT. In her case, she only focuses on 4:14, but she makes it clear that the other additions project a religious character.

⁶ Cf. Clines (1987:112), who calls the content of add. A “a divinely sent dream that frames the whole story the fulfilment of which gives rise to a kind of speech in praise (Addition F)”. The effect of Mordecai’s dream A: 4-9 and its interpretation in F: 1-6 for Levenson (1997:40) is to bracket the book of Esther within the structure of prophecy and fulfilment, while Clines (1987:176) regard these additions as a new interpretive framework.

“apocalyptic” vision; the dream of Mardochoios⁷ (A: 4-11). This apocalyptic vision has an extremely important introductory function for the Greek translators’ theological programme.

καὶ ἐταράχθη δίκαιον πᾶν ἔθνος φοβούμενοι τὰ ἑαυτῶν κακὰ	and every righteous became distressed, while fearing the worst for themselves
καὶ ἠτοιμάσθησαν ἀμολέσθαι	They prepared to die
καὶ ἐβόησαν πρὸς τὸν θεόν	and they called upon God
καὶ διεγερθεὶς Μαρδοχαῖος ὁ ἑωρακῶς τὸ ἐνύπνιον τοῦτο καὶ τί ὁ θεὸς βεβλούλευται ποιῆσαι	When Mardochoios woke up from the vision in his dreams about these things, and what God wants to do...

In the MTE the king is the primary agent orchestrating the events. He is the primary role player using a banquet to display his power and wealth; he is at the very centre of events. The guests are welcomed to the comfort of the king’s palace and pampered according to their desires. The guests feast at the king’s goodwill and by doing so his power and majesty are manifested to the multitudes. It seems as if the Greek translators intended to disregard the MTE’s introduction when they added an apocalyptic vision⁸ in which the readers participate in the power and majesty of God, in direct opposition to the lavish banquet. The nail of theological reworking is further driven into the coffin of narrative disregard with the insertion καὶ διεγερθεὶς Μαρδοχαῖος ὁ ἑωρακῶς τὸ ἐνύπνιον τοῦτο καὶ τί ὁ θεὸς βεβλούλευται ποιῆσαι, placing what the God of the Jews will do through the course of events in the centre.⁹ By opposing the Persian king and the lavish banquet, the translators

⁷ In this article the reader will find two different words which refer to a character called Mordecai (Hebrew version) and Mardochoios (Greek version). They refer to one and the same character.

⁸ Cf. Harvey (2003:101), who calls this dream a symbolic-allegorical dream, while referring to Willis in his footnote who, in turn, employs the term mock-apocalyptic as designation for this dream.

⁹ Cf. Moore (1973:386).

ensured that the reader would not expect anybody or anything else other than the God of the Jews, presented in his heavenly domain, as the one controlling the sequence of events. The impact, for Moore, of the inserted dream of Mordecai is that the story of Esther not only reveals a long-standing ethnic rivalry between the Jews and Amalekites, but it also reveals a religious conflict, a cosmic and apocalyptic conflict between the Jews and the rest of the world.¹⁰ As reader of the Hebrew version of the Esther narrative, one’s focus is immediately shifted from the king’s lavish banquet, functioning as platform for the plot of the narrative, to an apocalyptic scene where the God of the Jews is in control of both the abstract reality and of course the salvation of the Jews. It seems as if Addition A was implemented to conform this lavish banquet, where a mortal immoral Persian king is placed at the centre, to the immortal God of the Jews, who requires moral behaviour as is apparent from the phrase ἐβόησαν πρὸς τὸν θεόν.¹¹ The translators’ introductory theological formula is effective in that it explicitly promotes the apocalyptic vision, a “godly” realm, as opposed to the profane realm of a king and a lavish banquet.¹² The reader’s potential to participate in the narrative and theological reflection is jeopardised. For the Greek translators this was only the beginning of their theological reworking of the MTE, as the next insertion will show.

ESTHER 2:20: φοβεῖσθαι τὸν θεόν

The text critical notes on the inserted phrases in Es 2:20, 4:8, 14, and 6:1, presented by both the MTE¹³ and LXX¹⁴ does not provide a clear indication that

¹⁰ Moore (1973:386).

¹¹ Harvey (2003:100-103) would regard Mordecai as the one being portrayed as the leading character in this addition.

¹² Cf. Clines (1987:176).

¹³ The Hebrew text used in the article was taken from the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia: SESB Version* (2003), published by Libronix Digital Library.

¹⁴ Hanhart (1983) was used for text critical considerations of the LXX.

a Hebrew *Vorlage*¹⁵ existed which contained these phrases. The problem regarding the relationship between the Greek Alpha Text, the LXX and the MTE, as well as their independent or dependent developments and redactions, is an ongoing issue.¹⁶ For the purpose of this article it is accepted, based on the critical Greek text of Hanhart, that the insertions were part of the very early stages of the Greek translations. It is furthermore accepted that there is not conclusive evidence which indicates that the insertions can be assigned to a Hebrew or Aramaic *Vorlage*.¹⁷ Returning to the insertion in 2:20, the scene narrated in 2.19-23 is about Mordecai's discovery of a plot to kill the king. He told Esther about it, and she in turn told the king, who gave instructions for it to be written in the annals. As with the other passages that will be dealt with, 2:20 is a key verse not just in this particular scene, but also in the broader framework of the narrative and the underlying tension of the plot.

Inserting a phrase such as φοβεῖσθαι τὸν θεὸν within this context should not be taken lightly. Grammatically it complies with the introductory phrase οὕτως γὰρ, which transforms φοβεῖσθαι τὸν θεὸν as an obvious part of the Greek text. This verse begins with the fact that Esther did not reveal her heritage,¹⁸ followed by the reason why.

¹⁵ See Moore (1967:351-358), who deals with the possibility of a Hebrew *Vorlage*; Cook (1969:369-376) attempts to describe the relationship between the Greek A and B texts. Tov (1982:1-25) investigated the connections between the LXX and the Greek L text in reconstructing a possible Hebrew or Aramaic *Vorlage*; Fried (2000:49-57) is also in pursuit of an "original" Esther text. The extensive work of Kossmann (2000) should be regarded as a base when the earliest Hebrew forms of the Esther narrative, and how it developed, is discussed.

¹⁶ See Clines (1987), Fox (1991a), Dorothy (1997) and de Troyer (2000) for a comprehensive and extensive discussion on the available text versions of the Esther narrative, the developments and their forms.

¹⁷ Cf. Harvey (2003:3-12) who investigated the moral content found in the three distinct versions of the Esther story. Harvey concluded that numerous challenges still face the placement and handling of the Alpha Text of Esther within the development of the Esther story.

¹⁸ Berg (1979:82) regards this act as one important to the narrator.

כְּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּהָ עָלֶיהָ מֶרְדֵּכַי	as Mordecai ordered her
οὕτως γὰρ ἐνετείλατο αὐτῇ Μαρδοχαῖος	as Mardochoaios ordered her
φοβεῖσθαι τὸν θεόν	to fear God
וְאֵת־מַצְוֵי מֶרְדֵּכַי אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה	for Esther did what Mordecai said
καὶ ποιεῖν τὰ προστάγματα αὐτοῦ	and to do what he commanded
כְּאֲשֶׁר הָיְתָה בְּאִמְנָה אִתּוֹ	as when she was with him
καθὼς ἦν μετ’ αὐτοῦ	as when she was with him
καὶ Ἔσθηρ οὐ μετήλλαξεν τὴν ἀγωγὴν	and Esther did not change her custom

The logical sequence of the MTE is simply this:

- a) Esther did not reveal her heritage (situation);
- b) Mordecai ordered her not to reveal it (reason);
- c) Esther always does what Mordecai says (substantiation);

whereas the LXX has a longer and more involved sequence:

- i) Esther did not reveal her heritage (situation);
- ii) Mardochoaios ordered her (reason);
 - (a) To fear God (complement the verb);
 - (i) To do what he commanded (complement the verb);
- iii) As in the past (substantiation);
- iv) Esther did not change her custom (new situation).

With subtlety, the translators created an ambiguity surrounding αὐτοῦ.¹⁹ This ambiguity suggests that Esther is required to fear God and to do *his* commands; or to fear God and to do what *Mardochoaios* commands. The former is chosen here as the more probable one based on two grounds. 1) Syntactically and

¹⁹ Cf. Day (1995:40).

grammatically it makes better sense connecting καὶ ποιεῖν τὰ προστάγματα αὐτοῦ (infinitive as object, which compliments φοβεῖσθαι) with φοβεῖσθαι τὸν θεὸν (infinitive as object, which compliments ἐνετείλατο) as it would be to interpret it as substance of οὕτως γὰρ ἐνετείλατο αὐτῇ Μαρδοχαῖος. 2) It complies with the theological and moral character of the Greek translators' translation programme with the MTE. Even though this explicit insertion might seem insignificant; positioning it within this scene the Greek translators managed, with literary subtlety and brilliance, to trigger a theological concept with the readers, which of course has an effect on the interpretation of the narrative.²⁰

The author of the MTE structured section 1:1-2:20 in accordance with the principle of chiasmic-reversal; and the idea of the reversal of the destiny and fortunes of characters in the story. Esther and Mordecai are the primary role players in this scene and their actions determine and strengthen the plot of the narrative. The interaction between these two characters, as human agents, determines the sequence of events and through them the reader becomes a part of the story.²¹ Through this verse, the author of the MTE is once again assuring the reader (see 2:10) that Esther has not yet revealed her nationality.²² The significance of the latter is also emphasized by Levenson²³ and discussed by Bush²⁴ on how the two references fit into the textual structure. There is no implicit divine intervention, it is merely two characters; Mordecai the foster father and Esther the foster child acting out their roles as Jews in the narrative.²⁵

²⁰ For Berg (1979:73) the obedience of Esther has a certain function within the narrative, which prepares the audience for Esther's response to Mordecai in 4:16. Cf. Harvey (2003:22-24).

²¹ Refer to footnote 18.

²² See Gerleman (1973:83).

²³ Levenson (1997:61).

²⁴ Bush (1996).

²⁵ The role Mordecai played could be seen as parallel to a person called a *go'el* in ancient Israelite tradition. Esther was not really adopted, but Mordecai took the role as foster-father, because of his responsibility as *go'el*. See de Vaux (1973:21-23).

They both show their loyalty; Esther to Mordecai and Mordecai to the king (2:21-23). Thus, the fact that Esther kept her heritage a secret is not only a key element supporting the plot of the narrative, but it is also a literary device to draw the reader into the text, and by doing so Esther’s secret becomes the reader’s secret.

If what is said about this scene in MTE is true, then the intention and effect of an insertion like φοβεῖσθαι τὸν θεὸν becomes obvious. On the surface the insertion managed to establish an ambiguity surrounding the term αὐτοῦ; with which Mardochoaios’ instruction, and ultimately Esther’s action, has been given an explicit theological character.²⁶ The translators replaced the culturally²⁷ tuned authoritative-submissive relationship²⁸ between Mordecai and Esther with an abstract authoritative-submissive relationship between Esther and the God of the Jews, which is only called to memory by Mardochoaios. On a theological level, (if one would analyze this phrase in isolation) respect for the God of the Jews is a positive virtue no matter how you look at it. But because it is a deliberate insertion by interpreters into a literary context where a human agent (Mardochoaios) orders another human agent (Esther) to act in this way, the implications are much more complicated. Furthermore, if the motive of the one agent (Mardochoaios) is to make sure the other agent (Esther) is doing what she is supposed to do by using the words φοβεῖσθαι τὸν θεόν, it becomes a manipulative tool.

On a narratological level the insertion καὶ Ἐσθηρ οὐ μετήλλαξεν τὴν ἀγωγὴν, neutralizes the tension of the plot, because what is to happen next, is no secret to the reader. This insertion, to a large extent, projects the translators’ insensitivity towards the plot of the narrative, as well as their lack of

²⁶ See Moore (1971:30).

²⁷ See Baird (2004:67).

²⁸ Harvey (2003:23) would disagree with the assumption that the author merely desired to show Mordecai’s patriarchal dominance over Esther in 2:20; contra. Gerleman (1973:83), Paton (1904:189) and Levenson (1997:61).

understanding the objective of the MTE. The “natural-adventurous” responses of readers towards the narrative, and specifically this scene, are transformed into “unnatural-obvious” reactions, which make the narrative thrustless and the possible theological intent powerless. The more anthropological-social approach of the MTE seize the attention of the reader by posing the possibility that Esther might choose to reveal her nationality, which would have disastrous effects for the Jews and the outcome of the narrative. The theological thrust of the MTE is not, and should not be, explicit; it is deliberately confined to the conventions set out by the narrative. This is not different with Es 4:8; the next passage under discussion.

ESTHER 4:8: ἐπικάλεσαι τὸν κύριον

As with the insertion in Es 2:2, the text critical notes illuminate that from a very early stage in the transmission of the Greek versions of the MTE, and other text versions, the phrase ἐπικάλεσαι τὸν κύριον was part of the text. It seems clear that the MTE testifies, from its very early written form, that a copy of the law circulated in Susa which has been given to Hatach by Mordecai who instructs him to give it to Esther and to instruct her in turn to go into the presence of the king and beg for mercy for her people. This event is part of a larger scene (4:1-17) describing the consultation between Mordecai and Esther about the law passed in Susa and Esther’s role in this matter. The MTE and LXX phrases agree with one another to a great extent; except of course for the additional information provided by the LXX.

μνησθεῖσα ἡμερῶν ταπεινώσεώς σου ὡς ἐτρέφης ἐν χειρὶ μου	Remember the days of low estate, how you were raised by my hand
διότι Αμαν ὁ δευτερεύων τῷ βασιλεῖ ἐλάλησεν καθ’ ἡμῶν εἰς θάνατον	because Haman, the second to the king, asked for our death
ἐπικάλεσαι τὸν κύριον	call upon the Lord
καὶ λάλησον τῷ βασιλεῖ περὶ ἡμῶν καὶ ῥυσαι ἡμᾶς ἐκ θανάτου	and to ask the king about us, to save us from death

Significant is the insertion ἐπικάλεσαι τὸν κύριον; with this insertion the theological programme of the translators is kept intact. The reader could, without effort, establish a literary and conceptual link between ἐβόησαν πρὸς τὸν θεόν (Add. A: 8), φοβεῖσθαι τὸν θεόν (2:20) and ἐπικάλεσαι τὸν κύριον (4:8). The theological sequence is: Israel and other nations call out to the God of the Jews (A: 8), Esther did not make her nationality known, because of φοβεῖσθαι τὸν θεόν (2:20) and she cannot go to the king without ἐπικάλεσαι τὸν κύριον (4:8). Michael Fox (1991b:271) has this to say about appropriate Jewish action:

The task of Jewish protagonists demands proper attitude no less than appropriate action. Thus they turn to God in prayer, in which they must justify their motivations and behaviour as well as asking for divine help (4:8b: Additions C-D). National existence even at the moment of crisis is not truly in jeopardy, for Israel’s deliverance is written into the cosmic script.

Fox makes a valid statement, and this is definitely the case with the protagonists in the Greek version of Esther and other characters in the Old Testament (OT); but what is the effect of the so-called “appropriate actions” when it is forced onto a text? The phrase ἐπικάλεσαι τὸν κύριον is such an attempt. It is implemented here in almost the same fashion as φοβεῖσθαι τὸν θεόν in 2:20. Here the infinitive is also used as an object which receives the action of the predicate (main verb). The predicate in 4:8 (MTE) יָתַן is followed by a few infinitive verbs; one building on the other. The infinitives preceding וְלְצַוֹת “to instruct” are: לָבוֹא “to go into”, לְהַתְחַנֵּן-לוֹ “to plea for grace from him” and שְׂכַחֵם “to seek”. Thus the latter three infinitives are the objects of וְלְצַוֹת, which is then technically the main verb. According to the LXX, Esther is also ordered to go into the presence of the king [ἐλσελθούση], to beg

[παραιτήσασθαι], to make worthy [ἀξιῶσαι], while remembering [μνησθεῖσα], and of course to call [ἐπικάλεσαι]²⁹, followed by an imperative λάλησον “ask”. The Greek translators follow the MTE’s infinitive syntax while delicately adding ἐπικάλεσαι with τὸν κύριον through which a whole new dimension is allocated to 4:8.

I agree with Day,³⁰ who views Esther’s actions in 4:8 (MTE) as more independent and autonomous compared to the LXX; and with what she says about the intensity of the scene, which could be ascribed to two factors; one being that the life of her (Esther’s) people is at stake. Secondly, she (Esther) has to go to the king, and the law forbids anyone going to the king without being summoned.³¹ Day’s comments emphasize the simplicity and directness of the MTE;³² it merely states that the copy of the law circulated in Susa has been given to Esther and she is ordered to go into the presence of the king and beg for mercy for her people.³³ This scene is dominated by the interaction of characters and the objective of this interaction is for Esther to go into the presence of the king, and to make sure the Jews are not destroyed.³⁴

The Greek translators had a different idea; for them Esther should not just go to the king to achieve the primary objective (saving her people from certain death), but she also has to call upon the Lord. Thus, the interaction between the trio (Mordecai, Esther and the king) is altered to form a foursome: Mardocheios (instructing), Esther (going to the king), the king (implied actor), and the Lord

²⁹ BGD s.v. ἐπικάλεω, comments that one of the meanings of ἐπικάλεω is to call out a divinity, and this meaning has been used in such a manner since the time of Herodotus (5th century BCE).

³⁰ Day (1995:53).

³¹ Day (1995:54).

³² Cf. Berg (1979:75), who says that the exchange between Mordecai and Esther is relatively simple through a third-person narration, while Fox (1991b:188) says that Mordecai’s order was not manipulative, but direct and dangerously blunt.

³³ Cf. Berg (1979:75).

³⁴ Cf. Gerleman (1973:105).

(through submission to the Lord), who will make deliverance possible as he has done in the past. The ability of the characters to achieve the objective has been limited. The authority of Mordecai’s instruction based on cultural accepted codes (MTE), has been given a moral character (LXX), which presents itself as a manipulative tool to “motivate” or “force” Esther to go into the presence of the king. With the insertion of ἐπικάλεσαι τὸν κύριον the Greek translators created another ambiguity. It could, on the one hand, be interpreted as an indication of Mardocheios’ and Esther’s moral inclination (this would be the most obvious deduction); but on the other hand it could function as a psychological tool, which not only effects how readers view Esther’s action, but it also influence them to act accordingly. The theological core of the inserted phrase could be nothing else but a pious virtue that might appear to hold empowering prospects for Esther and for the readers, but the ability of the plot to empower the characters and the readers fall short due to the theological mental processes the insertion triggers.³⁵

The theology of submission made explicit by the insertion ἐπικάλεσαι τὸν κύριον does not serve the theology of the Esther narrative nor does it assist the reader to identify with Esther as character; but it does shift the reader’s focus to a cosmic³⁶ drama in which God is the primary actor.³⁷ Although the explicit submission to the Lord might sound theologically proper, it unfortunately disconnects one from the story line, because a phrase like ἐπικάλεσαι τὸν κύριον recalls an abstract meta-narrative to mind.³⁸ This insertion and others

³⁵ Goldingay (2003:783) states that the story of Esther is a story of deliverance like the exodus story but with a difference. The survival of the Jews in a foreign country is a result of their own actions.

³⁶ Cf. Fox (1991b:271).

³⁷ Levenson (1997:79), while referring to Ex 7:1-5, says that Moses and Aaron failed in their quest because of God’s predetermination; but Mordecai and Esther succeeds through their own wit and courage; and for him this might reflect divine action.

³⁸ Vanhoozer (2002:209) will say that such an interpretation (like that of the LXX) is theological because it is based on the belief that there is something that “transcends” the play of language in literature.

alike, overburdens the text with explicit information which does not take the Esther narrative, as narrative and theological text, seriously. This insertion not only made aspects explicit which was not intended, but it also produced a platform from where readers would interpret the next scene. This insertion complicates the narrative which only serves the theological programme of the Greek translators.

ESTHER 4:14: ἄλλοθεν βοήθεια AS REFERENCE TO THE GOD OF THE JEWS

As counter argument to the critique against the Greek translators' theological reworking of the MTE presented in this article; this verse might be regarded as perfect for such an attempt. As a result, it is necessary to include this verse as part of the discussion. Ironically Es 4:14 is a text about which more was written than any other verse when it comes to the theology or religiosity of the Esther narrative, or the lack thereof.³⁹ It is part of a larger textual unit (4:1-17) dealing with the imminent destruction of the Jews and Esther's role in saving them. In the attempt to save her people, Esther is motivated to reveal her destiny; to disobey the king's law – putting her life in danger. Esther takes centre stage. She is the primary subject, the key to the deliverance of the Jews. Strangely enough, the Greek translators did not take the opportunity, provided by 4:14, to insert a theologically explicit phrase, which will fit into their translation programme.⁴⁰ Modern scholars⁴¹ on the other hand rummaged 4:14 to “recover” the theological integrity of the Esther narrative.

³⁹ Wiebe (1991:409-425), Morris and Lampeter (1930/1931:124-128), Cohen (1974:87-94), Meinhold (1978:321-333), Loader (1978:417-421), Littman (1974/75:145-155), Huey (1990:36-39), Segal (1989:247-256), to mention only a few.

⁴⁰ Cf. Harvey (2003:30).

⁴¹ Cf. Paton (1904:227), who notes that the author goes out of his way to avoid mentioning God in 4:14, and although God is not mentioned, there is little doubt that the author thinks of the ancient promise that Israel shall never perish. Also see Gerleman (1973:106-107) and Moore (1971:50).

At first glance it might seem as if the Greek translators did not deem it necessary to mould this scene into a more explicit theological framework. One is given the impression that they left it up to the readers to interpret where the alternative rescue and deliverance [ἄλλοθεν βοήθεια] will come from. However, when 4:14 is investigated within its literary context, one finds the opposite to be true.⁴²

The sequence of the literary theological programme or framework, as deduced here, is:

- a) Add. A: 8, ἐβόησαν πρὸς τὸν θεόν;
- b) Explicit insertion, φοβεῖσθαι τὸν θεόν (2:20);
- c) Explicit insertion, ἐπικάλεσαι τὸν κύριον (4:8);
- d) Non-explicit insertion, ἄλλοθεν βοήθεια (4:14);
- e) Addition C:1-2: *see extract below*

And the memories of the Lord, all his works, was grouped by him (Mardochaios), and he said: ‘Lord, Lord, King of everything created, so that your authority is above all, he who opposes your glory is not above that you wish to save Israel ...’

Therefore, one has to consider the function of 4:14 within the theological programme of the Greek translators by considering addition C.

REFERENCE II: ADDITION C:1-17

The function of this addition is primarily to frame the process of fasting (4:16) into an “improved” theological framework, and secondary to limit the interpretative options as posed by the phrase ἄλλοθεν βοήθεια καὶ σκέπη ἔσται τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις (4:14) to a “more theologically sound” interpretation. The scene in the MTE merely states that Esther ordered Mordecai to gather the

⁴² Cf. Meinhold (1978:321-333); Crenshaw (1986:274-288); Fox, N (1990:183-187); Wahl (2001:1-22); Meinhold (1983:435-445), among others, for pro and contra views with regard to the religiosity of 4:14.

Jews to fast for three days, as she will be doing with her maids. The sequence of events in 4:15-16 (MTE) is:

- a) Esther instructs Mordecai to call all the Jews in Susa to fast with her;
- b) She and her servants will also fast;
- c) Esther must go into the presence of the king and it is against the law.

Add. C contains two prayers, one of Mardochoaios (C:1-11) and one of Esther (C:12-30) and if the fasting is interpreted as a “religious” event, then the translators of the LXX went to the extreme by adding two extensive prayers of the two main characters in the Esther narrative. Mardochoaios is not just instructed to fast with the Jews (4:15-16), but he also supplicates to the Lord, binding himself to focus on what the Lord has done in the past. The LXX builds up to a climax presented by the words “And now Lord, God, the King, the God of Abraham, spare your people” [καὶ νῦν, κύριε ὁ θεὸς ὁ βασιλεὺς ὁ θεὸς Ἀβραάμ, φεῖσαι τοῦ λαοῦ σου], (C: 6); followed by “My Lord, our king, you are the only one” [Κύριέ μου ὁ βασιλεὺς ἡμῶν, σὺ εἶ μόνος], (C: 12). The theme of God having dominion over all and being ruler of all the nations is repeated in the prayer of Esther. In opposition to Moore who says that these prayers increase the story’s interest and drama by making both Mordecai and Esther more flesh and blood characters;⁴³ the opinion upheld here is that the opposite is achieved. However one has to agree with Moore that this addition strengthens the religious elements of the Greek Esther by allowing its author to give full expression to his own theological beliefs.⁴⁴

The content of these prayers ensures that the God of the Jews is the primary

⁴³ Moore (1973:391).

⁴⁴ Moore (1973:391). Cf. Levenson (1997:86), who says that the effect of these prayers is to make a theologically ambiguous story into a clear and unequivocal example of the power of conventional piety.

agent in the deliverance of the Jews from their enemies. The three days fasting (4:16) called out by Esther is transformed into two extensive prayers on the glory, dominion and power of the Jewish God. Through these prayers their God is placed at the very core of the salvation act bestowed on them. The reader is thus unconsciously and with subtlety influenced to interpret ἄλλοθεν βοήθεια as referring to the God of the Jews as is made apparent in Add. C: 2, Κύριε κύριε βασιλεῦ πάντων κρατῶν, ὅτι ἐν ἐξουσίᾳ σου τὸ πᾶν ἐστίν, καὶ ἔστιν ὁ ἀντιδοξῶν σοι ἐν τῷ θέλειν σε σῶσαι τὸν Ἰσραηλ.

REFERENCE III: ADDITION D:1-16

The Greek translators propelled their theological programme even further. The scene (5:1-8) is introduced by Esther entering the king’s domain although it was forbidden by law. In 5:1-2 (MTE) Esther changed her robe and went to the king without being called. When he sees her, he is taken by her beauty and she wins his favour; thereafter he extends his sceptre to her as a sign that he accepts her presence and that she is pardoned by him. The translators added two phrases which are of importance: καὶ γενηθεῖσα ἐπιφανῆς ἐπικαλεσαμένη τὸν πάντων ἐπόπτην θεὸς and καὶ μετέβαλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ βασιλέως εἰς πραύτητα.

Levenson comments that add. D heightens, in baroque fashion, the drama of Esther’s uninvited approach to the king.⁴⁵ For him, the effect of this addition is two-fold. Firstly, it puts the *megillah* into an explicit theistic framework, ascribing to God events that are therein never explicitly interpreted in theological fashion.⁴⁶ Secondly, it enhances the image of Esther by concentrating on the magnitude of the challenge she faces.⁴⁷ The translators added καὶ γενηθεῖσα ἐπιφανῆς ἐπικαλεσαμένη τὸν πάντων ἐπόπτην

⁴⁵ Levenson (1997:87).

⁴⁶ Levenson (1997:87).

⁴⁷ Levenson (1997:87). Cf. Harvey (2003:132).

θεός through which the God of the Jews is once again exalted; and what nearly seemed impossible in the hands of Esther (MTE, 4:17-5:1-2), has been altered to be made possible because μετέβαλεν ὁ θεός τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ βασιλέως εἰς πραΰτητα “God changed the spirit of the king into gentleness”. Once again the reason why the events occur as they do is being assigned to the God of the Jews. He is the active agent who replaces Esther as the primary character. She only becomes an extension of what God is going to accomplish.

ES 6.1: ὁ δὲ κύριος

The events described in 6.1-13 are also very significant with regard to the plot of the Esther narrative. It will soon become apparent how the Greek translators utilized its significance for their theological programme.

בְּלַיְלָהַ הַהִוא נִדְּרָהּ	Through that night he (the king) lost his sleep
Ὁ δὲ κύριος ἀπέστησεν τὸν ὕπνον ἀπὸ τοῦ βασιλέως τὴν νύκτα ἐκείνην	The Lord took away the king’s sleep that night

These verses introduce the section of the narrative dealing with the honouring of Mordecai [6.1-13], and of course the dishonouring of Haman. The king lost his sleep and he asked that the book of days be read to him. The order was adhered to and it was read to the king. Typical to the open-endedness of the MTE, the reason why the king could not sleep is not revealed by the narrator. The narrator is deliberate to the point, stating that the king could not sleep; he asked for the book of days to be read to him, and it was done. As with 2:20 and 4:8, 14, Es 6:1 enforces the fact that every character is implemented to nurture the tension of the plot, that is particularly why the narrator goes out of his way to avoid mentioning God.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Cf. Paton (1904:244).

Not only did the Greek translators interpret the event in 6.1 in terms of the Lord as the responsible agent, but so did most “modern” scholars. Paton, as an example, said that the LXX corrected the “defect” that God was not mentioned in the MTE.⁴⁹ Clines says that the coincidence such as is found in 6:1 is the workings of providence.⁵⁰ According to him, for any religious believer, such as the Greek translators, “chance” is a name for God.⁵¹ For Fox the general impact of the theological insertions made by the LXX is to show that God controls history.⁵² He also mentions that God sometimes works quietly, because we are told by the LXX that it was he who gave the king insomnia.⁵³ Although Moore refers to Driver who suggests that the term “fled”, according to his translation “the sleep of the king has fled”, should be read as containing the abbreviation for YHWH, “Lord”.⁵⁴ He says that Driver’s suggestion is unconvincing. For Gerleman, the cause of sleeplessness could be found in wisdom literature,⁵⁵ while Goldman⁵⁶ interprets the king’s lack of sleep as rhetorical irony.⁵⁷ Fox goes to the extreme by stating that he is absolutely sure of God’s involvement in taking away the king’s sleep.⁵⁸ The so-called coincidences found in the Esther narrative are for Levenson the very core of the theology of Esther.⁵⁹

Clearly, some modern scholars, like the Greek translators, had the desire to theologically reform the MTE. It is not that their interpretation is absolutely false, but the critique against such theological explicit interpretations is that it does not allow the full potential of the MTE to be appreciated. The MTE wants

⁴⁹ Paton (1904:244).

⁵⁰ Clines (1997:153).

⁵¹ Clines (1997:153).

⁵² Fox (1991b:270).

⁵³ Fox (1991b:270).

⁵⁴ Moore (1971:64).

⁵⁵ Gerleman (1973:115).

⁵⁶ Goldman (1990:15-31).

⁵⁷ Goldman (1990:17).

⁵⁸ Fox (1990:185).

⁵⁹ Levenson (1997:95).

the readers to view the king as the responsible party for the fact that he could not sleep. It might be that he was worried about what Esther will request at the next banquet; in fact any attempt to reconstruct the possible cause of the king's sleeplessness is mere speculation. As a reader of the MTE, one starts guessing; wondering why the king's sleep was disturbed at such a crucial point in the narrative. The uncertainty draws one into the narrative. The possibility that God could be involved, without the reader being certain, is effective in that one wants to keep track of the events to find out how the narrative turns out.

The insertion Ὁ δὲ κύριος places the Lord of the Jews once again in the centre of the events. He is the one responsible for the king's insomnia. The explicitness of Ὁ δὲ κύριος shifts the focus of the reader to numerous other concepts and thoughts linked to God. The suspense and adventure in discovering God through the outcome of the narrative is neutralized and made obvious by the theological reworking of the translators. Their theological understanding of how the king lost his sleep influences the reader's understanding of the events; how one reflects on it; and also how God is involved in "modern" human history. If the crisis at hand is the complete destruction of the Jews, then the readers of the MTE would find comfort not in the explicit involvement of God, but in the process of discovering that God is still in control. The reason for their comfort in the process is because they are involved; Esther's story becomes their story. They become a character of this narrative and they have the opportunity, like Mordecai and Esther, to discover God's involvement in their situation to make sense of it.⁶⁰

CONCLUSION

As part of the concluding remarks, a call will be made for the re-evaluation and

⁶⁰ Cf. Senekal (2005:66).

appreciation of the MTE’s theological possibilities, opportunities and significance. The theological insertions made by the Greek translators were done in a very subtle, though deliberate, manner. One could rightfully deduce that the subtleness of these changes was due to the integrity of the authors not only as ancient scholars, but as people of faith, translating and interpreting a religious text for a faith community. Their deliberateness could most probably be assigned to their knowledge of the Old Testament theological themes which in a sense constituted the very essence of existence for a Jewish believer.⁶¹ Themes such as those constructed from the *hexateuch*,⁶² and others such as “the God that preserves”,⁶³ “wisdom theology”,⁶⁴ a “new theology”⁶⁵ for a shattered nation in a foreign land that finds hope⁶⁶ and is being restored. The Greek translators could think of the Jewish God only as part and parcel of their collective memory of Israelite religion,⁶⁷ and they tried to make that which had been “forgotten”⁶⁸ more explicit. These theological themes are not at fault, but projecting them onto the MTE without considering the narrative’s own theological integrity and objectives is not responsible, even though some of these themes might be implicitly embedded in the text.⁶⁹

The theological significance of the Esther narrative cannot be

⁶¹ When Preuß (1991:158-283) says that it is no secret for the Jews that *Yahweh* is viewed in the OT as the responsible subject who could deliver his people if the need arose.

⁶² See von Rad (1975). Also see the themes presented by Goldingay: God’s promise (1990:193-277), the God that delivers (1990:288-360), and the God that seals (1990:369-437); cf. Birch et al. (1999:35-174).

⁶³ Goldingay (1990:696-779).

⁶⁴ Birch (1999:373-416).

⁶⁵ Brueggemann (1992:183-203).

⁶⁶ Brueggemann (1992:319-372).

⁶⁷ Smith (2002:631-651).

⁶⁸ Smith (2002:649-650).

⁶⁹ Birch (1999:32) emphasize that Esther’s implicit theological dimension is part of the continuity of the diverse theological voices of the Old Testament. For them, Esther serves as an authoritative voice to legitimize the Purim feast that originated in a foreign land.

underestimated, especially in the context of the twenty-first century. This individualized, creative, relative and cultural-religious sensitive society needs a theology as is portrayed by the MTE. One could call the theology suggested by the MTE a theology of possibilities; an open-ended narrative theology. It could also be referred to as a theology of adventure through which the reader is taken up into the story of Esther. While the reader encounters the emotions and thoughts the characters are facing, the tension of the plot and the beauty of every scene, he/she gets the opportunity to discover a “hidden” character. This character is never revealed, but the hope, potential and creativity this character is exploiting within the reader is never forced, nor explicitly suggested. The author portrays this character with a theological tool I refer to as a “theology of open-endedness”.⁷⁰ A “theology of open-endedness” invites the reader to discover his/her creative potential that opens numerous possibilities and endless opportunities. Such a theology, as is portrayed by the Esther narrative, could be helpful on various levels on which faith communities function. The Esther narrative and its underlying theologies could also assist with the ecumenical dialogue between faith communities, as well as with inter-religious and cultural discussions, because the Esther narrative is not exclusive, but inclusive.

The translators of the biblical texts should find a balance between being source-orientated and target-orientated.⁷¹ Du Plooy⁷² makes a valuable statement when she says that within a text there is an open area, blank spaces that need to be filled.⁷³ These open spaces are filled by interpreters, and through the interpretation the meaning of the text is reformulated.⁷⁴ In opposition to what du Plooy is saying, it should be made clear that if filling these blank spaces means altering the theological core of a text, then it could no longer be

⁷⁰ Cf. Breugemann (1997:110).

⁷¹ Breugemann (1992:59).

⁷² Du Plooy (2002:273).

⁷³ Du Plooy (2002:267).

⁷⁴ Du Plooy (2002:267).

considered as filling blank spaces, but altering the meaning of the text. Du Plooy also says that one should keep in mind the open-ended character of language by accepting that no interpretation can be absolutely correct,⁷⁵ which is of specific significance for the MTE.⁷⁶ Weber’s⁷⁷ sketch of the so-called “Relevance theory” demonstrates that interpretation involves a vast amount of implicit information.⁷⁸ He says that that which is explicit could be made implicit when the following is considered:

- a. That the over-arching principle is relevant: “If we make explicit certain information that the reader does not need, causing the reader to expend more processing effort, then the hearer should seek greater interpretive compensation”.⁷⁹ (This certainly applies to the theological insertions of the LXX. The explicitness of the translation does not cause more processing effort for the reader, but less, whereas the narrative requires more processing effort);
- b. The Relevance theory’s distinction between explicature and implicature is also useful. The former is a thought or proposition; it is to assist the reader to compute that which is implicit on a “form-based” linguistic. This type of assistance is generally acceptable, but caution is necessary when explicating to help the reader to compute implicatures. Added material is likely to trigger all sorts of interference.⁸⁰

Weber calls for a translation approach that enriches the mutual cognitive

⁷⁵ Du Plooy (2002:274).

⁷⁶ See Wright III (2002:3-18), who critically evaluates ἐρμηνεύς, as a reference to a “translator” or “interpreter” involved in the translation of the Septuagint; Rensburg (2002:179-194), in turn investigates how Hebrew terms have been translated and the effect thereof, after which he calls for a better translation than merely a literal one.

⁷⁷ Weber (2005:35-74).

⁷⁸ Weber (2005:54).

⁷⁹ Weber (2005:54).

⁸⁰ Weber (2005:54).

environment.⁸¹ In the case of the MTE the intention and meaning embedded in a text should not be made explicit by the translators. The translation of the text should give the reader enough information to enrich the cognitive environment of the text, but it should also respect the cognitive environment of the reader. In sum, one has to at least accept that with the theological explicit insertions; the Greek translators underestimated the impact of the theological implicitness of the Esther narrative. The theological nature and value of the MTE is embroidered into the *genre* of the text with more theological potential than what has been considered possible in the past.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Anderson, B W 1950. The place of the Book of Esther in the Christian Bible, *JR* 30:32-43.
- Baird, C A 2004. 'n Sosiaal-wetenskaplike analise van die boek Ester. University of Pretoria: Unpublished MA mini-dissertation.
- Bauer, W W, Arndt, W F, Gingrich, F W & Danker, F W 1979. *A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature*. Second edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Berg, S B 1979. *The Book of Esther*. Society of Biblical Literature, Dissertation Series 44; Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press.
- Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia: SESB Version 2003*. Stuttgart: Libronix Digital Library.
- Birch, B C et al. 1999. *A theological introduction to the Old Testament*. Nashville: Abingdon Press.
- Brueggemann, W 1992. *Old Testament theology – essay on structure, theme and text*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- _____. 1997. *Theology of the Old Testament*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- Bush, F W 1996. *Ruth, Esther*. WBC 9. Dallas: Word Books.
- Clines, J A 1987. *The Esther Scroll – the story of the story*. Sheffield: JSOT Press.
- Cohen, A D 1974. 'Hu Ha-goral': The religious significance of Esther, *JSJ* 23:87-94.
- Cook, H J 1969. The A Text of the Greek version of the Book of Esther, *ZAW* 81:369-376.
- CoRecT (Cognitive Reception Theory Project). University of Tuebingen. Available online at: <http://www.uni-tuebingen.de/CoRecT/CoRecTdt.html#Theorie>
- Crenshaw, J L 1986. The expression 'MI YODEA' in the Hebrew Bible, *VT* 36:274-

⁸¹ Weber (2005:55).

- 288.
- Day, L 1995. *Three faces of a queen: characterization in the books of Esther*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- De Troyer, K 2000. *LXX: The end of the Alpha Text of Esther: translation and narrative technique in MT 8:1-17, LXX 8:1-17, and AT 7:14-41*. SBL - SCS. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature.
- _____. 2003. *Rewriting the sacred text. What the Old Greek texts tell us about the literary growth of the Bible*. Leiden, Boston: Brill.
- De Vaux, R 1973. *Ancient Israel. Its life and institutions*. London: Darton, Longman & Todd.
- Dorothy, C V 1997. *The Books of Esther – structure, genre and textual integrity*. JSOTSS 187. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- Du Plooy, H 2002. Listening to the wind in the trees: meaning, interpretation and literary theory, in Naude & van der Merwe 2002:266-279.
- Fox, M V 1991a. *The redaction of the books of Esther*. SBL Monograph Series. Georgia: Scholars Press.
- _____. 1991b. *Character and ideology in the Book of Esther*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press.
- Fox, N S 1990. In the spirit of Purim: the hidden hand of God, *JBQ* 18:183-187.
- Fried, L S 2000. Towards the Ur-Text of Esther, *JSOT* 88:49-57.
- Gerleman, G 1973. *Esther*. BKAT 21, Neukirchener Verlag: Neukirchener Verlag.
- Goldingay, J 2003. *Old Testament theology – Israel’s gospel*. Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press.
- Goldman, S 1990. Narrative and ethical ironies in Esther, *JSOT* 47:15-31.
- Gordis, R 1981. Religion, wisdom and history in the Book of Esther: a new solution to an ancient crux, *JBL* 100:359-388.
- Hanhart, R 1983. *Septuaginta – Vetus Testamentum Graecum Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis editum*. Second, edited version. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht: Göttingen.
- Harvey, C D 2003. *Finding morality in the Diaspora? Moral ambiguity and transformed morality in the books of Esther*. Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co.
- Huey, F B 1990. Irony as the key to understanding the Book of Esther, *SJT* 32:36-39.
- Humphreys, W L 1973. A life-style for Diaspora: a study of the tales of Esther and Daniel, *JBL* 92:211-223.
- Jackson, T E 2000. Questioning Interdisciplinarity: Cognitive science, evolutionary psychology, and literary criticism, *Poetics Today* 21:319-347.
- _____. 2003. “Literary interpretation” and cognitive literary studies, *Poetics Today* 24:191-205.
- Knobloch, F W (ed) 2002. *Biblical translation in context*. Maryland: University Press of Maryland.
- Kossmann, R 2000. *Die Esthernovelle vom Erzählten zur Erzählung – Studien zur Traditions- und Redaktionsgeschichte des Esterbuches*. Leiden, Boston, Köln: Brill.

- Levenson, J D 1997. *Esther – a commentary*. London: SCM Press Ltd.
- Littman, R J 1974/1975. The religious policy of Xerxes and the Book of Esther, *The Jewish Quarterly Review* lxxv:145-155.
- Loader, J A 1978. Esther as a novel with different levels of meaning, *ZAW* 90:417-421.
- Meinhold, A 1978. Theologische Erwägungen zum Buch Esther, *TZ* 34:321-333.
- _____ 1983. Zur Aufbau und Mitte des Estherbuches, *VT* 33:435-445.
- Moore, C A 1967. A Greek witness to a different Hebrew text of Esther, *ZAW* 79:351-358.
- _____ 1971. *Esther. Introduction, translation, and notes*. AB. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc.
- _____ 1973. On the origins of the LXX Additions to the Book of Esther, *JBL* 92:382-393.
- Morris, A E & Lampeter, M A 1930/1931. The purpose of the book of Esther, *ET* 42:124-128.
- Naude, J A & van der Merwe, C H J (eds.) 2002. *Contemporary translation studies and Bible translation: A South African perspective*. AT Sup 2. Bloemfontein: Publication Office of the University of the Free State.
- Paton, L B 1904. *The Book of Esther*. ICC. Edinburgh: T & T Clark.
- Preuß, H D 1991. *Theologie des Alten Testaments*. Band 1. Stuttgart, Berlin, Köln: Verlag W. Kohlhammer.
- Rensburg, G A 2002. *The literary approach to the Bible and finding a good translation*, in Knobloch 2002:179-194.
- Schneider, R 2001. Toward a cognitive theory of literary character: the dynamics of mental-model construction, *Style* 35/4:607-640.
- Segal, E 1989. Human anger and divine intervention in Esther, *Prooftexts* 9:247-256.
- Senekal, D P 2005. Die funksionering van Bybel inhoude in 'n narratief-pastorale gesprek. Unpublished PhD dissertation: University of Pretoria.
- Smith, M S 2002. Remembering God: collective memory in Israelite religion, *CBQ* 64:631-651.
- Tov, E 1982. The Lucianic text of the canonical and apocryphal sections of Esther: a rewritten biblical book, *Textus* 10:1-25.
- Vanhoozer, K J 2002. *First theology – God, Scripture & hermeneutics*. Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press.
- Von Rad, G 1975. *Old Testament theology*. Volume One – Study edition. London: SCM Press.
- Wahl, H M 2001. Jahwe, wo bist Du? Gott, Glaube und Gemeinde in Esther, *JSJ* 31:1-22.
- Weber, D J 2005. A tale of two translation theories, *JT* 1:35-74.
- Wiebe, J M 1991. Will relief and deliverance arise for the Jews from another place?, *CBQ* 53:409-415.
- Wright, B G (III) 2002. The Septuagint in the context of ancient translation activity, in Knobloch 2002: 3-18.

Peter Nagel
Department of New Testament Studies
University of Pretoria
Pretoria
e-mail: peter.nagel@up.ac.za