

The information structure of the book of Esther in the Septuagint

by

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The opinions expressed in this dissertation do not necessarily reflect the views of the South African Theological Seminary.

DECLARATION

I hereby acknowledge that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted to any academic institution for degree purposes.

Ken Chan

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ABSTRACT

A comparison of studies on the book of Esther shows that there are diverse opinions of what constitutes (a) the purpose, and (b) the discourse boundaries of the book. This is discussed in chapter one.

This study seeks to answer these two questions for the book of Esther in the Septuagint by analyzing its information structure through the perspective of functional linguistics. In particular, this is achieved by employing the concepts of language typology, rules of information flow, topic, focus, thematic clauses, point of departure, topicality, points of view, mainline, offline, background, prominence, coherence, discourse boundaries, and information markedness. The methodology is justified in chapter two.

Chapter three presents the results of this analysis clause-by-clause, along with a literal translation and the labels of the information structure of the text. This is a non-traditional commentary that only addresses the discourse aspects of the text. Similarities and differences with the understanding of the literature are compared and contrasted.

The conclusions of this study are given in chapter four. It is found that the purpose of the book of Esther in the Septuagint concerns the dates of the festival of Purim.

The text itself is divided into 32 major discourse sections (summarized in Table 3 of this study). The structure of the text is based on a plot with (a) an instigating incident, (b) a narrative reversal, and (c) a didactic conclusion. The coding of the study corpus does not justify the existence of chiasms. The unity of the text is justified by the study results.

One implication of this study is that a text-centered reading of the study corpus is preferred over a reader-centered approach.

An accidental finding is that the data overwhelmingly emphasizes the authority of the king.

Translations of three selected portions of the text (taken from the three major genres in the text, namely narrative, hortatory, and didactic) is compared with the translation of this study. This comparison shows that the clarity and the relative emphases of the translation is improved by this research.

Finally, the applicability of this method for bible translation and biblical studies is outlined.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Objectives

The purpose and the discourse sections of the book of Esther in the Septuagint needs clarification. This study will attempt to:

- (1) identify the discourse boundaries of the book of Esther in the Septuagint; and
- (2) identify the purpose of the book of Esther in the Septuagint.

1.2 Background

Both the purpose and the organization of the book of Esther are contested. It is not clear what the main point of the book of Esther is, or whether there is a main point, or several main points in the book. Further, most of the studies on the book of Esther are based on the Masoretic text. Since the Septuagint text is less studied than the Masoretic text, there is even less of a basis to define the structure or the purpose of the book of Esther in the Septuagint. This study seeks to address this gap. It will be shown in this study that both the structure and the purpose of the book of Esther in the Septuagint can be discovered through functional linguistics analysis.

1.2.1 *Studying the Septuagint*

Septuagint is a collective term referring to the translations of the books of the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek (McLay 2003:6).¹ Septuagint portions were translated by different

¹The field of Septuagint research has focused on: (a) the textual criticism of the Septuagint (Pietersma 1985; Cox 1991; Greenspoon and Munnich 1995; Taylor 1997; Tov 1997; 1999; Jobes and Silva 2000; Schenker 2003; Martinez and Vervenne 2005; Kraus and Wooden 2006; Peters 2006), (b) the relationship between the Septuagint and other old texts, such as the Qumran texts (Brooke and Lindars 1992; Greenspoon and Munnich 1995; Shalom 2003; Flint, Tov, and VanderKam 2006), Coptic texts (Cox 1987), or old Latin texts (Haelewyck 2006), (c) the lexicography and syntax of the Septuagint (Gehman 1951; Cox 1987; Muraoka 1990; Olofsson 1990a:149-151; Archer 1991; Cox 1991; Greenspoon and Munnich 1995; Taylor 1997; Tov 1999; Jobes and Silva 2000; Evans 2005:33; Flint, Tov, and VanderKam 2006; Peters 2006), (d) the translation techniques of the

translators at various times. The manuscripts were copied and passed down and some are still extant today. Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotian revised the Septuagint. Copies of their work are called recensioes or revisions. The revisions of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion were finished before the Hexapla, and are preserved in the remnants of the Hexapla, which was compiled by Origen (Baldwin 1984:44; Tov 2001:148). The colophon was preserved in the Hexapla and passed down (Bickerman 1944).

The study of the Septuagint is important because: (a) it is an early translation and interpretation of the Hebrew scriptures (Wevers 1985:38), (b) it served as the Old Testament scriptures for the Greek speaking church, (c) It was the Old Testament of the church fathers who spoke Greek until the time Jerome translated the Hebrew into Latin (Hengel 2002:51-54), and (d) it was used by the New Testament writers.

1.2.2 The purpose of the book of Esther

Most of the works on the book of Esther are based on the Masoretic text, sometimes making occasional references to the Greek texts (Streane 1907; Knight 1955; Kelly 1962; Brockington 1969; Moore 1971; Fuerst 1975; Craig 1995; Bush 1996; Larkin 1996; Levenson 1997; Jobes 1999; Bechtel 2002; Roop 2002; Allen and Laniak 2003). The unstated claim in these works is that the Hebrew text and the Greek texts share substantial similarities. Some works, such as the NJB (1985) and Omanson and Noss (1997) are primarily based on the Hebrew text. Comments on the Greek text are only limited to the Additions and portions of the Greek text that have special significance.

Of these works (Streane 1907, preface xvi; Paton 1908:56; Daube 1946:146; Knight 1955:18; Kelly 1962:42; Bickerman 1967:202; Moore 1971, preface LIII; Humphreys 1973:213; TEV 1976; Keil and Delitzsch 1978:304; Murphy 1981:156; Clines 1984a; NJB 1985:624; Sasson 1987:335; Craig 1995:26-32; Bush 1996:306; Larkin 1996:89; Dorothy 1997:327-9; Levenson 1997:22; Omanson and Noss 1997:3; Jobes 1999:40; Allen and Laniak 2003:172; Berlin 2001b,

Septuagint (Thackeray 1909:13; Gard 1952:92; Rabin 1968; Martin 1974:105; Barr 1979:324; Heater 1982; Tov and Wright 1985; Marquis 1986:83; Cox 1987; 1991; Jellicoe 1989; Olofsson 1990b; Sailhamer 1991; Brooke and Lindars 1992; Aejmelaeus 1993:68; Greenspoon and Munnich 1995; Voityla 1996; Taylor 1997; Tov 1999; Beck 2000:18-28; Jobes and Silva 2000:92; Taylor 2001; Shalom 2003; Martinez and Vervenne 2005; Flint, Tov, and VanderKam 2006; Kraus and Wooden 2006; Peters 2006), and (e) the redactional reasons for the differences between the Septuagint and the Masoretic (Seeligmann 1961; Cox 1987; 1991; Troxel 1993; Greenspoon and Munnich 1995; Jobes and Silva 2000:92; McLay 2003:93-95).

preface xv; Lacocque 2008:14), the most prevalent view is that the book of Esther is written to explain the origin of the Purim festival of the Jews.

There is, however, no shortage of challenges to this view. These include the views that the book of Esther:

- (a) acclaims that God is in sovereign control of the destiny of peoples (Torrey 1944:12, 18, 40; Coggins 1985:113; McConville 1985:152-4; Whitehead 1988:115; Breneman 1993:287-9; Weiland 2001:231);
- (b) is about Mordecai and his victory against Haman (Humphreys 1973:214-5);
- (c) reinforces the communal identity of the Jewish diaspora (Bickerman 1944:360-2; Fuerst 1975:32; Craghan 1982:9-10; Clines 1984a:262-3; Boyd-Taylor 1997:103; de Troyer 2000:399; Bechtel 2002:10-14);
- (d) is about the remarkable life of the woman Esther (NJB 1985:624; Beal 1997, preface x);
- (e) is salvation history told in another form (Larkin 1996:92; Butting 1999:242);
- (f) is a wisdom tale to make the Jewish diaspora wiser (Talmon 1963:29; von Herrmann 2004:43);
- (g) is a rescue novella with a peripetetic structure (Dorothy 1997:338);
- (h) is centered around the theme of honor and shame (Laniak 1998:7-34; Klein 2003:116); and
- (i) is eclectic (Fox 2001:141-152).

1.2.3 The discourse sections of the book of Esther

The lack of agreement on what constitutes the discourse sections of the book of Esther can be seen by comparing the works of various authors laid out chronologically in Table 1.

1.2.3.1 Studies based on the Masoretic text

The works sampled below include translations and commentaries. Some works (Baldwin 1984; NJB 1985; Omanson and Noss 1997) go into great details on the structure; whereas

other works (Knight 1955; Kelly 1962; Radday 1973; Fuerst 1975; Craig 1995; Laniak 1998; Lacocque 2008) are only interested in the broad landscape of the book of Esther as a whole.

Table 1: Discourse units of the book of Esther in the Masoretic text (major divisions, if any, are shown in boldface below)

Author	Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3	Chapter 4	Chapter 5	Chapter 6	Chapter 7	Chapter 8	Chapter 9	Chapter 10
Paton (1908)	1:1-4 1:5-9 1:10-12 1:13-15 1:16-20 1:21-22	2:1-4 2:5-7 2:5-11 2:12-14 2:15-18 2:19-23	3:1-2a 3:2b-5 3:6-7 3:8-11 3:12-15	4:1-3 4:4-9 4:10-14 4:15-17	5:1-2 5:3-5 5:6-8 5:9-14	6:1-3 6:4-10 6:11-13 6:14-7:6	7:7-10	8:1-2 8:3-8 8:9-14a 8:14b-17	9:1-10 9:11-15 9:16-19 9:20-22 9:23-28 9:29-32	10:1-3
Kelly (1962)	1:1-2:23		3:1-6:13			6:14-9:19			9:20-10:3	
Brockington (1969)	1:1-1:9 1:10-12 1:13-22	2:1-4 2:5-11 2:12-14 2:15-18 2:19-23	3:1-6 3:7-11 3:12-15	4:1-17	5:1-8 5:9-14	6:1-11 6:12-14	7:1-10	8:1-17	9:1-32	10:1-3
Moore (1971)	1:1-4 1:5-9 1:10-11 1:12-15 1:16-18 1:19-20 1:21-22	2:1-4 2:5-7 2:8-11 2:12-14 2:15-18 2:19-23	3:1-2a 3:2b-6 3:7-10 3:11 3:12-15	4:1-3 4:4-8 4:9-11 4:12-14 4:15-17	5:1-3 5:4-6 5:7-8 5:9-14	6:1-4a 6:4b-6a 6:6b-9 6:10 6:11-13 6:14-7:2	7:3-4 7:5-8a 7:8b-9a 7:9b-10	8:1-15 8:16-17	9:1-10 9:11-12 9:13 9:14 9:15-19 9:20-23 9:24-26a 9:26b-28 9:29-32	10:1-3
Radday (1973)	1	2-3		4-5		6-7		8-9		10

TEV (1976)	1:1-2:23		3:1-5:14			6:1-7:10		8:1-10:3		
Murphy (1981)	1:1-4 1:5-8 1:9 1:10-12 1:13-15 1:16-20 1:21-22	2:1-4 2:5-11 2:12-20 2:21-23	3:1-2a 3:2b-4 3:5-6 3:7 3:8-9 3:10-11 3:12-15a 3:15b	4:1-3 4:4-17	5:1-3 5:4-5 5:6 5:7-8 5:9-14	6:1-3 6:4-5 6:6-9 6:10-13 6:14-7:1	7:2-4 7:5-7 7:8-10	8:1-2 8:3-6 8:7-8 8:9-14 8:15-17	9:1-4 9:5-10 9:11-15 9:16-19 9:20-28 9:29-32	10:1-3
Baldwin (1984)	1:1-9 1:10-12 1:13-22	2:1-4 2:5-11 2:12-18 2:19-23	3:1-6 3:7-11 3:12-15	4:1-3 4:4-17	5:1-8 5:9-14	6:1-3 6:4-13 6:14-7:10		8:1-2 8:3-14 8:15-17	9:1-19 9:20-32	10:1-3
Clines (1984a)	1:1-9 1:10-12 1:13-22	2:1-4 2:5-7 2:8-11 8:12-14 2:15-18 2:19-23	3:1-7 3:8-15	4:1-3 4:4-17	5:1-8 5:9-14	6:1-14	7:1-10	8:1-8 8:9-14 8:15-17	9:1-19 9:20-28 9:29-32	10:1-3
McConville (1985)	1:1-11 1:12-22	2:1-23	3:1-15	4:1-17	5:1-14	6:1-14	7:1-10	8:1-17	9:1-28 9:29-10:3	
NJB (1985)	1:1a-1l 1:1m-1r 1:1-8 1:9-22	2:1-18 2:19-3:6	3:7-15	4:1-17 4:17a-17i 4:17k-17z	5:1-14	6:1-13 6:14-7:10		8:1-17	9:1-19a 9:20-32	10:1-3k 10:3l
Whitehead (1988)	1:1-9 1:10-22	2:1-18 2:19-23	3:1-15	4:1-17	5:1-8 5:9-14	6:1-14	7:1-6 7:7-8 7:9-10	8:1-17	9:1-15 9:16-32	10:1-3
Breneman	1:1-3	2:1-4	3:1-2	4:1-3		6:1-3	7:1-2	8:1-2	9:1-4	10:1-2

(1993)	1:4-8 1:9 1:10-12 1:13-15 1:16-18 1:19-22	2:5-9 2:10-14 2:15-18 2:19-23	3:3-15	4:4-5:14		6:4-14	7:3-7 7:8-10	8:3-6 8:7-17	9:5-17 9:18-22 9:23-28 9:29-32	10:3
Bush (1996)	1:1-22	2:1-18 2:19-23	3:1-6 3:7-15	4:1-3 4:4-17	5:1-5a 5:5b-8 5:9-14	6:1-11 6:12-14	7:1-6a 7:6b-8b 7:8c-10	8:1-8 8:9-17	9:1-5 9:6-19 9:20-32	10:1-3
NIV (1996)	1	2:1-18 2:19-23	3	4	5	6	7	8	9:1-17 9:18-32	10:1-3
Leven- son (1997)	A:1-17 1:1-9 1:10-12 1:13-22	2:1-4 2:5-7 2:8-20 2:21-23	3:1-6 3:7-11 3:12-13 B:1-7 3:14-15	4:1-11 4:12-17 C:1-11 C:12-30 D:1-16	5:1-8 5:9-14	6:1-14	7:1-10	8:1-8 8:9-12 E:1-24 8:13-14 8:15-17	9:1-19 9:20-32	10:1-3 F:1-10 F:11
Oman- son and Noss (1997)	1:1-9 1:10-22	2:1-18 2:19-23	3:1-7 3:8-15	4:1-17	5:1-8 5:9-14	6:1-13 6:14- 7:10		8:1-2 8:3-17	9:1-10 9:11-19 9:20-28 9:29-32	10:1-3
Laniak (1998)	1	2	3	4-5		6	7	8	9	10
Beal (1999)	1:1-22	2:1-4 2:5-18 2:19-23	3:1-15	4:1-17	5:1-8 5:9-14	6:1-14	7:1-10	8:1-17	9:1-10:3	
Jobes (1999)	1:1-8 1:9-12 1:13-22	2:1-18 2:19-23	3:1-15	4:1-5 4:6-14 4:15-17	5:1-5a 5:5b-7 5:8-14	6:1-3 6:4-9 6:10-14	7:1-2 7:3-7 7:8-10	8:1 8:2 8:3-8	9:1-10 9:11-19 9:20-28	10:1-3

								8:9-17	9:29-32	
Bechtel (2002)	1:1-9 1:10-21	2:1-4 2:5-11 2:12-18 2:19-23	3:1-6 3:7-11 3:12-14	4:1-3 4:4-8 4:9-17	5:1-8 5:9-14	6:1-5 6:6-9 6:10-14	7:1-6 7:7-10	8:1-8 8:9-16	9:1-19 9:20-10:3	
Roop (2002)	1:1-2:20	2:21-3:6	3:7-4:17		5:1-14	6:1-13 6:14-7:10		8:1-17	9:1-32	10:1-3
Lacoc- que (2008)	1:1-9 1:10-22	2:1-4 2:5-14 2:15-18 2:19-23	3:1-6 3:7-15	4:1-17	5:1-8 5:9-14	6:1-14	7:1-10	8:1-2 8:3-17	9:1-15 9:16-19 9:20-32	10:1-3

The authors listed above differ in terms of the quantity of the major and minor discourse sections, as well as the placement of those sections.

It would be tedious to list every difference that exists in Table 1. A more heuristic exercise is to illustrate the fact that there are differences among these works by considering the claim that the discourse structure of the book of Esther is arranged chiastically (Radday 1973:9; Berg 1979:106-113; Baldwin 1984:29-32; Breneman 1993:287-9; Levenson 1997:8-9; Roop 2002:168-9; Allen and Laniak 2003:171).

According to this theory, the entire book pivots around 6:1 (BHS), where the insomnia of the king coincides with the reversal of the fate of the Jews. If this theory is correct, 6:1 (BHS) is necessarily a major discourse boundary. However, this point is not acknowledged in works such as Paton (1908), Brockington (1969), Baldwin (1984), Whitehead (1988), Bush (1996), and Lacocque (2008). These works only list 6:1 (BHS) as a minor discourse boundary; and Kelly (1962) does not list it as any sort of discourse boundary at all.

Proponents of the chiastic theory also differ in terms of what are the symmetrical discourse sections on the opposite sides of 6:1 (BHS):

- (1) Radday believes that (a) chapter 1 (BHS), the opening and the background, is paired with chapter 10, the epilogue, (b) chapters 2-3, the king's first decree, is paired with chapters 8-9, the king's second decree, (c) chapters 4-5, the clash between Haman and Mordecai, is paired with chapters 6-7, Mordecai's triumph over Haman (1973:9);
- (2) Berg (1979:106-113) and Baldwin (1984:29-32) pair chapters 1 to 5 (BHS) (the mortal danger of the Jews) with chapters 6 to 10 (the salvation of the Jews). This is corroborated by the fact that there are three banquets in the first half of the book, and three banquets in the second half;
- (3) Breneman (1993:287-9) agrees with Radday (1973:9), but does not mention the pairing of chapter 1 (BHS) with chapter 10; and
- (4) Levenson offers a much more elaborate proposal, where (a) the greatness of the king (1:1-8 BHS) balances the greatness of the king together with Mordecai (chapter 10), (b) the two banquets of the Persians in 1:1-8 is in balance with the two banquets of the Jews in 9:20-32, (c) Esther identifies herself as a Gentile in 2:10-20 whereas in 8:17, the Gentiles identify themselves as Jews, (d) the elevation of Haman (3:1) is contrasted with the elevation of Mordecai (8:15), (e) the pronouncement of the anti-Jewish edict in 3:12-15 is balanced by the declaration of the pro-Jewish edict in 8:9-14, (f) the fateful exchange between Mordecai and Esther (chapter 4) contrasts with the fateful exchange between the king and Esther (7:1-6), and (g) the first banquet of the king, the queen and Haman in 5:6-8 is balanced by their second banquet in 7:1-6 (1997:8).

Alternatively, Murphy (1981:153) and Bush (1996:300) claim that the book of Esther is controlled by a problem based plot, which follows the pattern of setting, problem, complicating incidents, resolving incidents, resolution, denouement, and conclusion.

Omanson and Noss (1997:6) offer another proposal of the macrostructure of the book of Esther, where the story itself (1:1-9:18, BHS) is followed by a brief conclusion (9:19), a long conclusion (9:20-32), and a final outcome (10:1-3). Hence, it is the concluding sections, rather than the pivot in 6:1, which is the most salient part of the book.

1.2.3.2 Studies based on the Septuagint

The Greek texts of the book of Esther have been studied from the point of view of (a) textual criticism (Clines 1984b; Fox 1991; Jobes 1996; Tov 1997; de Troyer 2003:48; Kahana 2005), and (b) theology (Day 1995; Fountain 2002). But these studies do not discuss its discourse structure. There are only a few works in English (TEV 1976; NRSV 1991; Dorothy 1997; Jobes 2009) that do give some indication of the discourse sections of the Greek texts of the book of Esther. These are listed in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Discourse units of the book of Esther in the Septuagint

Author	Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3	Chapter 4	Chapter 5	Chapter 6	Chapter 7	Chapter 8	Chapter 9	Chapter 10
TEV (1976)	1:1a-1:1l 1:1m-1:1r 1:1-1:22	2:1-2:18 2:19-2:23	3:1-3:13 3:13a-3:15	4:1-4:17 4:17a-4:17i 4:17k-4:17z	5:1-5:14	6:1-6:13 6:14-7:10		8:1-8:12 8:12a-8:17	9:1-9:19 9:20-9:32	10:1-10:3 10:3a-10:3k 10:3l
NRSV (1991)	1:1a-1:1l 1:1m-1:1r 1:1-1:8 1:9 1:10-1:22	2:1-2:4 2:5-2:11 2:12-2:14 2:15-2:18 2:19-2:20 2:21-2:23	3:1-3:6 3:7 3:8-3:11 3:12-3:13 3:13a 3:13b 3:13c-3:13e 3:13f-3:13g 3:14-3:15	4:1-4:6 4:7-4:8 4:9-4:11 4:12-4:17 4:17a-4:17h 4:17i-4:17j 4:17k-4:17p 4:17q-4:17z	5:1-5:1c 5:1d-5:1f 5:2 5:3-5:8 5:9-5:14	6:1-6:13 6:14	7:1-7:6 7:7-7:10	8:1-8:2 8:3-8:8 8:9-8:12 8:12a-8:12b 8:12c-8:12f 8:12g-8:12o 8:12p-8:12q 8:12r 8:12s-8:12t 8:12u-8:12w 8:12x	9:1-9:10 9:11-9:15 9:16-9:19 9:20-9:22 9:23-9:28 9:29-9:32	10:1-10:3 10:3a-10:3k 10:3l

								8:13 8:14-8:17		
Dorothy (1997)	1:1a-1:1l 1:1m-1:1r 1:1-1:3 1:4-9 1:10-12 1:13-20 1:21-22	2:1 2:2-16 2:17-23	3:1-2a 3:2b-5 3:6-15	4:1-17 4:17a-5:8	5:9-14	6:1a 6:1b-5 6:6-12 6:13 6:14-7:10		8:1-14 8:15-17	9:1-15 9:16-9:19 9:20-22 9:23-28 9:29-31	10:1-3
Jobes (2009)	1:1a-1:1l 1:1m-1:1r 1:1-1:8 1:9 1:10-1:22	2:1-2:4 2:5-2:11 2:12-2:14 2:15-2:18 2:19-2:20 2:21-2:23	3:1-3:6 3:7 3:8-3:11 3:12-3:13 3:13a 3:13b 3:13c-3:13e 3:13f-3:13g 3:14-3:15	4:1-4:6 4:7-4:8 4:9-4:11 4:12-4:17 4:17a-4:17h 4:17i-4:17j 4:17k-4:17p 4:17q-4:17z	5:1-5:1c 5:1d-5:1f 5:2 5:3-5:8 5:9-5:14	6:1-6:13 6:14	7:1-7:6 7:7-7:10	8:1-8:2 8:3-8:8 8:9-8:12 8:12a-8:12b 8:12c-8:12f 8:12g-8:12o 8:12p-8:12q 8:12r 8:12s-8:12t 8:12u-8:12w 8:12x 8:13 8:14-8:17	9:1-9:15 9:16-9:19 9:20-9:22 9:23-9:28 9:29-9:32	10:1-10:3 10:3a-10:3i 10:3k 10:3l

A comparison between the discourse sections of the Greek texts (Table 1) and the discourse sections of the Masoretic text (Table 2) again shows differences between the number of the major and minor boundaries, as well as their placements.² This is expected because the book of Esther in the Greek texts is not a literal translation of the Hebrew. The inclusion of the Additions and the frequent mention of God in the Greek texts makes it inevitable for the existence of incongruences between the discourse sections of the Greek and the Hebrew texts.

There are also differences between the works on the Septuagint (see Table 2). For example, Dorothy (1997:44-51, 215) is the only work in this set that views the book of Esther in the Septuagint as being a fulfillment of Mordecai's dream.

The high degree of similarity between the structure of Jobes (2009) and NRSV (1991) is intentional, and is acknowledged by Jobes (2009).

1.3 Value of this study

As discussed by Omanson and Noss (1997), some bible translation committees believe that the translation of the book of Esther into a vernacular language may include the translation of the Septuagint text with the Additions. It is therefore important for the translation exegete working on such a translation to have a firm grasp of the main point, as well as the structure of the Septuagint text.

This study also contributes to the ongoing efforts to improve study tools for Septuagint research (Tov 1986; Cox 1991; Greenspoon and Munnich 1995; Jobes and Silva 2000:311; Flint, Tov, and VanderKam 2006).

Up to now, most of the works on the book of Esther are done from a literary or exegetical point of view (Paton 1908; Gard 1952; Moore 1971; Radday 1973; Murphy 1981; Baldwin 1984; Clines 1984a; Clines 1984b; McConville 1985; Sasson 1987; Bush 1996; Laniak 1998; Beck 2000; Fountain 2002).

²For the Masoretic text, the list of disputed major boundaries alone includes 1:10; 2:1, 5, 19, 21; 3:1, 7, 8; 4:1, 4; 5:1, 9; 6:1, 14; 7:1; 8:1, 3; 9:1, 6, 11, 18, 20, 29; 10:1. The disputed minor boundaries of the Masoretic text for chapter 9 alone includes verses 5, 13, 14, 15, 16, 23, 24, 26a.

For the Septuagint, the list of disputed major boundaries include 1:1m; 1:1, 4; 3:1; 6:1; 8:1; 9:20; 10:1. The disputed minor boundaries of the Septuagint for chapter 9 alone includes verses 11, 16, 23, 29.

The list of disputed boundaries for the Septuagint is shorter than the list for the Masoretic text not because there is more agreement between the authors on the Septuagint text, but because there are far fewer authors on the Septuagint than on the Masoretic text.

The problem with these works is that (a) the definitions of the literary structures are vague, and (b) the text is primarily studied at a syntactical level. The relationship between the structural forms of the text and their extraclausal meanings are ill-defined in these works.

One example is 2:5. This verse in the Septuagint can be described as a major boundary signaled by καί followed by a marked topic shift, serving to introduce the major character Mordecai. On the other hand, the description of this verse in the current scholarship is highly general. Paton, for example, refers to this verse in the Masoretic text as an “abrupt transition” that is “designed to make the new actor in the story more conspicuous” (1908:166-168). Fox is similarly vague in saying that it is a “sudden introduction” which provides the background for the events to follow, and that this passage has a parenthetical character (2001:28-29). These two works illustrate the problem that a good definition for the notions of abruptness or suddenness is lacking in existing works. Other works, such as Keil and Delitzsch, do little more than trace the etymology of the name of Mordecai and do not discuss the discourse significance of the verse at all (1978:334-335).

The lack of discussion on the relationship between structural forms and their discourse functions is evident in other works that are otherwise excellent in their philological and syntactical analyses. For example, the discussion of Moore on 6:1 (BHS) says: the “king could not sleep. Literally ‘the sleep of the king fled’”. The rest of the commentary on this verse goes on to discuss the theme of sleeplessness (1971:62-3). The fact that 6:1 is an important major boundary and a chiasmic hinge in the story is not mentioned at all. Works of a later period (Bos 1986:62; Bush 1996:411; Omanson and Noss 1997:156-7), are equally lacking in this regard. Other works, such as LaSor (1978), and Goldman (1984) do not discuss the discourse issues of the book of Esther at all.

To date, the most comprehensive work on the structure of the book of Esther in the Septuagint (as well as in the Masoretic text, and the Alpha text) is Dorothy (1997). He examined the Hebrew and the Greek texts of the book of Esther in detail from the literary structural perspective. The major weakness of this work is that the linkage between the form and the meaning of the text is not well defined in terms of its methodology. He says:

Grammar is never to be violated, but logic prevails over grammar. In practice that means the researcher must always reflect grammatical

indicators in the schema, but may insist on joining or separating grammatic units under larger or smaller logical groupings (p. 39).

His outline of the micro structure of the book of Esther in the Septuagint and the Alpha text does not indicate what criteria are used to identify the structural divisions. To “insist” (Dorothy 1997:39) on separating grammatical units into various logical groupings without clear guidelines on the mapping between form and function runs into the danger of subjectivism. Dorothy assumes that the plot structure of exposition, complication, resolution, denouement, and conclusion underlies the development of the story in the book of Esther (pp. 34-5). But the definition of what constitutes a “complication” or a “resolution” is an intuitive notion that may yield varying interpretations by different readers.

Omanson and Noss (1997) are to be commended for introducing functional linguistic discourse ideas in its description of the book of Esther. These include the observations that:

- (a) there is an absence of a discourse marker in Esther 2:5 (BHS), which coincides with “the shift in focus” from the king to Mordecai;
- (b) the importance of the role of time;
- (c) the use of repetition, sudden breaks, and shifts for dramatic focus and emphasis;
- (d) the use of καὶ ἰδοὺ to introduce what the dreamer saw; and
- (e) the frequent use of direct speech.

Nevertheless, these observations are brief and sporadic because the stated goal of Omanson and Noss (1997) is not to provide a comprehensive functional linguistic discourse analysis of the book of Esther, but to investigate the “exegetical issues and translation problems” related to the translation of the book of Esther. Another shortcoming of their work is that their methodology and assumptions in analyzing the discourse features of the book of Esther are not explicitly stated.

The value of this study is that it offers a more scientific and rigorous approach to identifying the structure and purpose of the book of Esther in the Septuagint than has yet been provided by the kinds of studies surveyed above.

1.4 Research design and methodology

1.4.1 Research design

The present study falls under the category of literary research. More specifically, this study is a discourse analysis in the area of biblical studies (Mouton 2001, chapter 10). It is analytic in that it discusses each discourse feature in a systematic fashion. It is complementary in that it explores methods of discourse analysis from more than one author. The research questions are primarily descriptive questions, and the logical framework of the thesis is inductive, conclusions are drawn from a detailed observation of the book of Esther.

This research is interdisciplinary. It transects the disciplines of biblical Greek, discourse analysis, and functional linguistics.

1.4.2 The text

The major manuscripts of the book of Esther in Greek are *Codex Vaticanus*; *Codex Sinaiticus*; and *Codex Alexandrinus*. In general, the Septuagint in *Codex Vaticanus* extensively omits words or even phrases from the Masoretic text (Moore 1971; 1977). *Codex Sinaiticus*, for the most part, agrees with *Codex Vaticanus*. *Codex Alexandrinus* is much more influenced by the Hexapla than *Codex Vaticanus* or *Codex Sinaiticus* (Paton 1908:31-4).

Another group of codices that have survived are 19, 93a, 108b, 319, 392. Some call this collection the Alpha text. This text has received a lot of attention from the academic community (Moore 1971, preface LXII-LXIII; Clines 1984b:72; Fox 1991:128-133; Bush 1996:285; Jobes 1996:223-233; Tov 1997; Tov 1999:548; Tov 2001:148; Frolov 2002; de Troyer 2003:48; Dines 2004:103-4; Kahana 2005). This study will not contribute to that discussion.

The researcher will not study the textual basis of the Book of Esther in the Septuagint. Therefore, the question of what the original Greek translation (Old Greek) might have been will not be discussed. It is assumed that Hanhart (1983), Rahlfs (2004), and Rahlfs and Hanhart (2006) provide a source text that is adequate for the purpose of this study. The electronic version adopted for this study is CCAT (2008), whose wording is identical to Rahlfs and Hanhart (2006). The verse numbering of this study is changed, however, to those of Rahlfs and Hanhart (2006). The Septuagint text in Rahlfs and Hanhart (2006) has six

Additions, 107 verses, that are not found in the Masoretic text, and is also about eighty percent longer (Martin 1975; Omanson and Noss 1997).

The researcher will consult the textual apparatus of Rahlfs and Hanhart (2006), but only comment on textual variants that make a difference to the discourse analysis of the Book of Esther.

1.4.3 Delimitations

This study will not be making a contribution to the debate on the historicity of the book of Esther (Streane 1907, preface xiv; Paton 1908:75; Brockington 1969:219; Humphreys 1973; Littman 1975; Gordis 1976:43; Keil and Delitzsch 1978:311; Gordis 1981; Murphy 1981:155-6; Bergey 1984; Bos 1986:41; Wills 1990:189-90; Bush 1996:309; Boyd-Taylor 1997:109-110; Omanson and Noss 1997:2; Berlin 2001a; Weiland 2001; Bechtel 2002:4-6; Roop 2002:169; Lacocque 2008:15).³

Since this is a discourse study, only lexical data that contributes to the discussion on the semantic coherence of thematic units will be discussed. Other lexical issues, such as the use of metaphor, simile, hyperbole, understatement, litotes, irony, personification, metonymy, synecdoche, euphemism, ideophones, hendiadys, and register of speech (Hollenbach 1998), will not be discussed.

1.4.4 Assumptions

1.4.4.1 The unity of the book

This study assumes the unity of the book of Esther in the Septuagint, including the Additions. Other works have assumed the contrary (Moore 1971, preface LIII; Moore 1973:382-3; Martin 1975:65; Moore 1977:160). The book of Esther in the Septuagint is assumed to be coherent at the discourse level, and hence amenable to discourse analysis.

³The historicity of the book is important. This topic is excluded from this research only because it deserves a full treatment.

1.4.4.2 Accents

Information structure refers to the textual structure which encodes discourse function. Information structure is largely coded by accents in speech (Halliday 1967:200-8; Halliday 1977:179; Dooley 1982; Lambrecht 1994; Fon and Johnson 2004; Fery 2007:85). For dead languages, such as biblical Hebrew or biblical Greek, this information is lost and irrecoverable. For biblical Hebrew, the claim that the conjunctive and disjunctive symbols in the Masoretic text may yield phonological clues on the clausal level remains speculative (Lode 1994). But this is also speculative. For the purpose of this study, it is assumed that the determination of information structures has to rely on linguistic categories other than accents.

1.4.4.3 Text centered

The basis of communication theory is the interaction between people. This involves the speaker and the hearer. Literary communication is different in that the exchange of information flows one way from the writer to the reader. The writer tries to communicate some information to the reader based on assumptions about the reader's world. And the reader tries to discern what that information is based on assumptions about the world of the writer. Using the analogy of Johari's window, the outcome of the communication may: (a) succeed, where the writer communicated what was intended, and the reader received what was intended, (b) totally fail, where the writer miscommunicated what was intended, and the reader further misreceived the miscommunicated information, (c) fail on the side of the writer, where the writer miscommunicated what was intended, but the reader received the miscommunicated information exactly as it was miscommunicated, and (d) fail on the side of the reader, where the writer communicated what was intended, but the reader misreceived the information.

There are multiple factors affecting the success or failure of communication. A careless writer or one who does not communicate information coherently is difficult to understand. The writer may misjudge that the intended reader knows certain implicit information needed for overall communication, when the reader actually does not know that implicit information, which results in a partial or total breakdown of communication.

The same things could happen on the side of the reader. A reader who is careless in reading all the information that is available in the text; or one who is unable to make inferences based on the clues provided in the text (Yule 1996:131), or one who is unwilling to enter into the world of the writer that is different from that of the reader, stands little chance of understanding the intended meaning of the writer.

This study has no recourse to checking with the writer about the original intentions independently of the text itself. There is no way, for example, to assess whether certain text boundaries are products of authorial intention, or are unintentional or subconscious by-products (Heurley 1997:195). Therefore, (a) the text is more important than the original writer for present day interpretation (Anderson 1974, preface xvii; Nida 1983:159), and (b) the onus is on the present day reader to enter into the world of the writer.

It is given as a starting point for this study that the writer has written the text with sufficient care and coherence for the reader to decipher its intended meaning. But the reader needs to make an effort to read the text in light of the textual clues that are provided by the writer. This is the best way to reconstruct the explicatures and the implicatures of the textual world as it was intended. It is not possible to prove that the resulting conclusion is exactly as the writer intended because communication always entails more than one possible reading, and sometimes communicative loss is inevitable (Sperber and Wilson 1995:65; Gutt 2000). But the reader's reconstruction of the writer's textual world can at least be demonstrated as reasonable in light of the evidence of the text.

This method of reading the text is contrary to the reader-centered approach (Beaugrande 1997:60-7), where the text is only taken as a starting point, serving to trigger the inspiration of the reader to apply the insights gained from the text in ways that are meaningful for the reader. Although the reader centered approach leads to novel insights about the application of textual meaning, this approach runs the danger that it either (a) does not believe that the original meaning of the text is recoverable at all, or (b) does not believe that the reconstruction of the author's intended meaning of the text should be prior to the reader's hermeneutic task.

1.4.5 Methodology

The term discourse analysis is used in a wide variety of contexts, such as anthropology, archaeology, sociology, political science, philosophy, semiotics, and literary criticism (Beaugrande 1997:60-7). It is given in this study that discourse analysis refers to a branch of biblical studies that examines how a text functions together as an internally coherent system. This is nothing new. The study of rhetoric is a field of uninterrupted study for at least as far back as the time of Aristotle, and the art of persuasion is an important tool in law, government, and scientific endeavors (Perelman 1979:18; Enkvist 1985:15; Guthrie 1994:57; Kroon 1997:24).

The weakness in many of the earlier works on discourse is the vagueness in the methods. For example, Foss (2009) advises that the starting point of determining the objective of a narrative is to come up with a “best guess of what situation or condition the story is addressing”, and to “reflect on the legitimacy or soundness of the objective given what” is known “about the rhetorical situation in which it took place”. The problem with this definition is that the analytical process is not well defined. After making an initial guess, how would one proceed from the “guess” to the actual objective of the narrative? Or, concerning the statement in Berger (2001:393-5): “inner coherence is found out by analysis of the rhetorical aim”, how would one first find the “rhetorical aim” in order to determine the nature of the “inner coherence”?

The definition of the components of a discourse are similarly hazy. For example, theme is defined in Foss (2009) as “a general idea illustrated by the narrative”. What does “illustrated by the narrative” mean? And does “general” mean that the scope of theme is over the entire narrative or only some part of it? Can there be more than one theme in a narrative?

This is where functional linguistics comes into the study of textual discourse. In a nutshell, functional linguistics believes that there is a correlation between structures found in the text and the discourse functions of the text (Dooley 1982:330; Louw 1982:95; Lambrecht 1994; Beaugrande 1997:62; Dik 1997b:414; Longacre 2000:173; Bergen 2009:89). Categories of discourse functions, such as the introduction of a character, the shift to another character, or backgrounding, are coded by certain grammatical structures. The correlation may be asymmetrical, where one structure may code several functions, or one function may be

encoded by several structures. Although there is a certain amount of overlap between structure and function, the relationship between structure and function is definable. The analysis of textual discourse through functional linguistics promises to give clear results.

Hawkins does not believe that there is a pragmatic layer behind the syntactical structure of language (Hawkins 1994:240-1). But, the existence of a “pragmatic layer” is shown to exist by the fact that many languages have multiple ways to encode a proposition of the same semantic content (Schiffrin 1994:21-3; Thompson 1996:8-9; Cumming and Ono 1997:112; Anstey 2004:27). Discourse analysis is a theoretical school that believes that the use of one structure over another structure of the same semantic content is due to discourse factors above sentential syntax.

Functional linguistics provides a partial explanation for the stylistic variation of authors (Enkvist 1985:13; Sandig and Selting 1997:141). But not all phenomena are covered, since the author is not a computer that generates the text from a predetermined set of guidelines, from which no deviation is allowed. Ultimately, an author is a free agent who may choose to use an unique structure for purposes that are beyond theoretical explanation. The existence of anacoluthon, for example, cannot be explained as being coherent with the text that surrounds it. Hence, the goal of this study is to account for most of the linguistic data, while recognizing that there are limits to this theoretical model of koine Greek also.

In concert with Louw (1982:95), Nida (1983:106-7), Lambrecht (1994), Beaugrande (1997:62), and Dik (1997b:414), this study takes it for granted that the clause is the smallest linguistic unit that can convey propositional truth. The clause, then, is the lowest unit of analysis for this study.

Lastly, the correlation between structure and discourse function is variable across languages. It also varies for the same language diachronically (for different authors of the same period), and, to a lesser extent, for the different works of the same author (Hickmann 1997:240; Levinsohn 2000a; 2000b).

The full methodology of functional linguistics discourse analysis will be discussed in chapter two.

1.5 Research thesis

The thesis of this study is: the purpose and the discourse boundaries of the book of Esther in the Septuagint are encoded in the structure of the text. The rest of this study will demonstrate this thesis.

1.6 Overview of research

It is expected that the main audience of this study are not linguists. Hence, the use of linguistic jargon and abbreviations is kept to a minimum possible.

Following this introductory chapter, this study will have three more chapters.

The introductory chapter (chapter one) is a combination of literature review on the research problem, the assumptions of the methodology and other foundational issues of this research.

Chapter two will combine the literature review and methodology on discourse categories that are salient in the discourse analysis of the book of Esther in the Septuagint, namely (a) basic clausal structures, (b) clausal markedness, (c) theme, (d) foreground and nonforeground, (e) prominence above the clause, and (f) discourse boundaries.

Combining the literature review and the discussion of the methodology for each of the topics covered in chapter two is the clearest way to present the material because this will (a) enable the reader to see the connections between what the literature says about each topic and the intended treatment of the topic in this study, and (b) cut down on the redundancy that would be inevitably present if the literature review and the methodology sections were kept separate.

Further, chapter two will provide examples taken from the book of Esther in the Septuagint itself to illustrate the topics covered. This will orient the reader to the terms and concepts used in the discussion of the text in chapter three.

Chapter three will divide the book of Esther in the Septuagint into its discourse sections. The (a) internal coherence, (b) boundaries, (c) prominence above the clause, (d) nonforeground, and (e) clausal markedness for each discourse section will be discussed

section by section. Where appropriate, the differences between the findings of this work and previous works will be discussed.

The Septuagint text of each discourse section will be provided clause by clause. Embedding, such as the occurrence of subordinate clause, direct speech, or backgrounding, will be indicated by indentation. The functional structure of each clause will be provided to enable the reader to see clausal markedness. A literal translation will also be provided for each clause. This translation has a different feel from the more polished translations in previous works. The aim of including this translation is to give the reader a sense of how the clauses functionally cohere.

This is not a traditional commentary, so word studies, syntactical issues within the sentence level, and translation issues between the Greek and the Masoretic text will be kept to a minimum.

Finally, chapter four will refer to the results in chapter three with a view of answering the two research questions. It will be shown for the book of Esther in the Septuagint that:

- (a) the dates of the Purim festival is the main didactic purpose, which is coded in the textual structure; and
- (b) there is a coherent structural basis to account for the discourse sections.

The (a) theological and translation implications of this research, (b) the applicability of this research methodology for other portions of scripture, as well as (c) recommendations for future research will be stated at the end of the chapter.

Chapter 2

Information structure

2.1 Introduction

A house is an aggregate of many systems. It has an electrical system, a plumbing system, an outer structure that prevents exposure from rain or snow. The inner structure of the house allows the inhabitants of the house to fulfill their various needs. Sometimes two or more systems work together. For example, the water piping system brings water into a faucet; and the water drainage system will collect the used water and channel it out of the house. The discourse structure of a text is like the working of a house. It is composed of various textual systems. These systems operate with internal consistency. Some of these systems will interact with each other to produce an overall effect. Together, they enable the text to convey the message that is to be discovered by the reader.

This chapter is a description of the textual systems that are found in the book of Esther in the Septuagint. The description will be illustrated by examples drawn from the study corpus, and the approach taken in this study will be compared with the literature on functional linguistics.

Firstly, the structure of the unmarked clause will be described. This will be followed by a section on mechanisms that indicate the markedness of all or part of the clause. The third section is on the means by which clauses cohere together into a larger unit. Clauses may operate at the level of mainline or nonforeground. The variation between mainline and non-mainline, as well as points of view, will be described in the fourth section of this chapter. In addition to clausal markedness, prominence may take place above the clausal level. The mechanisms of episodic, global, and didactic prominence are described in the fifth section of this chapter. The final section of this chapter discusses the coding of the different types of discourse boundary.

2.2 Unmarked clausal structure

The study of Greek grammar has a long and distinguished tradition. Much of the work in biblical exegesis and biblical theology is based on the grammatical categories outlined in classical Greek grammar.

The weakness of the classical tradition is that its goal of exhaustively mapping form to function at the clausal and sentential level leaves unexplainable gaps (van der Merwe 1994:16-7). The problem is that textual meaning is not only conveyed at the sentence level as an autonomous unit, but is “conditioned by the overall context” (Hopper and Thompson 1980:295; Groom 2003:161). Even if a whole verbal discourse consists of just one utterance, the meaning of that one utterance is conditioned by eye or hand gestures, facial expressions, the tone of voice, the state of relationship between the speaker and the hearer(s), and the events that took place prior to the utterance. Greek grammar written in the classical tradition, such as Conybeare and Stock (1995), does not contain much discussion on the effects of the discourse on sentential meaning.

The study of functional linguistics seeks to address this methodological gap. The distinctives of the discourse analysis of a text from the perspective of functional linguistics is to study a text as a cohesive unit rather than a collection of individual sentences strung together linearly. This does not mean that the sentence is unimportant. On the contrary, the linkage between sentential syntax and discourse conditions cannot be severed. Discourse notions are grounded in sentential syntax, but sentential syntax is also conditioned by discourse notions (Lowery 1985:294; van der Merwe 1994:17). Discourse analysis is a formal discipline that seeks to study this bi-directional relationship between the text considered as a whole, and the text considered at the constituent level.

The advantage of employing the methods of functional linguistics in the study of discourse analysis is that linguistics as a discipline is grounded in both modern and ancient language data from all over the world. The geographical and chronological breadth of this data ensures that the analytical categories that arise from this discipline (a) are widely applicable across languages, and (b) are grounded in cognitive reality. Functional linguistics is also able to define discourse concepts in a way that is more precise than traditional definitions based on word semantics (Grimes 1975:323).

Research in the discourse analysis of the Bible began in the last two decades of the twentieth century.⁴ A major assumption in discourse analysis from the perspective of functional linguistics is that choice implies meaning (Levinsohn 2000a, introduction). If the same propositional content may be coded by more than one form in a particular language, an author's choice of one form over another is not just a whimsical choice of style. Certain choices have pragmatic significance. Specifically, discourse analysis seeks to:

- (a) define the criteria for identifying forms that have a discourse significance;⁵ and
- (b) specify the discourse significance of the forms that are identified.

The flow of information in the clause is governed by the rule of information structure (Lambrecht 1994). The theory of information structure explains the pragmatic function of the clause well because (a) it is grounded in cognitive linguistics, and (b) it is a formal system with precise definitions. It is an improvement over other systems that employ generalized terms such as "emphasis" for anything that is salient (Buth 1995:85).

The encoding of information structure in a text begins with the author of the text. The author and the presumed audience of the text share a mutual communicative context, and the author actively communicates information to the audience based on the assumed mental state of the hearers (Chafe 1976:30-3; Halliday 1985b:278; Lambrecht 1994:3; Dik 1997a:11). The communicative content is coded through lexical semantics and grammatical forms. On the other end of the communicative process, the task of the hearers (or readers) is to make an educated "guess" at the original communicative context of the author, and to decode the semantic and grammatical information through the assumed conceptual grid of the author (Sperber and Wilson 1995). This means that information loss inevitably occurs because the identity of the original author(s) and their original mental states can only be deduced based on available textual, historical, and archaeological artefacts. The lack of complete evidence limits the exegetical task. The fact that communication necessarily

⁴Studies in the New Testament include Porter (1995) and Levinsohn (2000a; 2000b). In the Old Testament area, there are studies by Lowery (1985), Buth (1992a; 1992b), Meier (1992), Bergen (1994), Wendland (1994), Buth (1995), Miller (1996), Heimerdinger (1999), and Heller (2004).

⁵The relationship between morphosyntactic clues and discourse functions exists only if (a) both are independently established, and (b) the correlation between them is statistically significant. In theory, statistical significance can only be established by testing the level of significance of a given discourse variable. In practice, the compilation of the textual data needed for such computation is difficult and almost never done in the literature. Researchers do, however, strive to make claims that have few exceptions. This is an intuitive (and a generally practiced) method of demonstrating the scientific validity of a claim both in functional discourse studies and in narratology.

involves both the activity of the speaker and the hearer prevents the act of communication to be conceived solely as a speaker oriented activity, or a hearer oriented activity.

The prototypical clause has both old information and new information. The newness of a piece of information refers to the availability of that information to the reader at a certain textual location. Information which has not previously occurred in the discourse is new information, whereas information that has occurred previously is old information (Firbas 1992:106; Siewierska 1993; Lambrecht 1994:44-45; Reed 1995:78-9; Firbas 1996:226-7; Gomez 2001:348).

One view says that old information does not have to be “explicitly evoked” (Birner 1994:255), rather, information that can be inferred from the preceding text may also be treated as old information. This view is potentially dangerous for the reader who is trying to reconstruct the authorial intention because every reader will have his or her own view of what constitutes as reasonable inference. It is safer to take the opposing view that a piece of information is old information only if it has a prior mention in the discourse.

In spite of Lambrecht’s (1994:207-210) caution that textual information cannot be divided strictly as “new information” or “old information” as if they could stand in isolation from each other,⁶ this does not mean that it is improper to give information structure labels to particular textual constituents. If pragmatic relationships are relationships between referents, it is necessary and proper to isolate these referents as distinct entities before one can even begin to talk about the relationship between them. This addition to Lambrecht (1994) is in line with the observation by Dik (1997a:402) that constituent domains “prefer not to be interrupted by constituents from other domains”. The structure of information tends to clump in packages that allows the distinction between old information and new information to be made.

The subordinate clause in 4:11,⁷ ὃς εἰσελεύσεται πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα εἰς τὴν αὐλὴν τὴν ἑσωτέραν ἄκλητος, has a prototypical information structure, where the most predictable information is located on the left and the most unpredictable information is on the right. The nominative relative pronoun, ὃς, is old information. It is an anaphoric referent referring to the noun phrase, πᾶς ἄνθρωπος ἡ γυνή, which immediately precedes. τὸν

⁶Lambrecht conceptualizes new information dynamically, where it is a change in the “pragmatic state” of a referent, or a change in the pragmatic relationship between the semantic arguments of a proposition (1994:47-50).

⁷Unless specified otherwise, scriptural references refer to the Septuagint.

βασιλέα is an established character in the narrative that is in focal relationship to the marked topic, ὅς. Both the locative, εἰς τὴν αὐλήν τὴν ἐσωτέραν, and the adverb, ἄκλητος, that stand farthest to the right of the clause are new information that cannot be predicted based on the prior text.

Discourse features may exist at the macro or the micro level. At the micro level, an utterance is the smallest semantic unit that can convey discourse meaning. Normally, an utterance consists of a syntactic clause (Pickering 1978:46; Lowery 1985).⁸ A comparison of nearly 40 modern languages shows that a clause may be conceptualized as consisting of having a nucleus, inner peripheral elements, and outer peripheral elements. The nucleus relates to other nuclei through various semantic relationships; and the nucleus is recursive, meaning that it may embed subordinate elements (Longacre 1970:783-4; Lambrecht 1994; Dik 1997a; Levensohn 2000).

The unmarked clause is expressed by two basic clausal structures (Lambrecht 1994:222), namely (a) the topic (comment) focus clause, and (b) thethetic clause.

The heart of a sentence consists of the main clause, which may be surrounded on the periphery by extraposed clauses or dislocated clauses. Both extraposition and dislocation may occur to the left or to the right of the main clause. Topic tends to be associated with old information, and focus tends to be associated with new information.

The reminder of this section will show that the unmarked pragmatic sentential structure consists of three information components: (a) topic, (b) focus, and (c) extraclausal elements.

2.2.1 Topic

All topic (comment) focus clauses have a topic. This clausal type predominates in the narrative genre. Thethetic clause, on the other hand, functions purely as a focus and does not have a topic.

Topic in the present study refers (primarily) to the old information in a clause that the rest of the clause is concerned about (Davison 1984; Lambrecht 1994:118; Buth 1995:84). For example, in καὶ ἐλυπήθη ὁ βασιλεὺς (1:12), ὁ βασιλεὺς is the topic. The sentence talks about the emotional state of the king.

⁸Louw, an influential figure in this tradition, calls this a “colon” (1982:96-7, 117).

But in contrast to Davison, topic does not need to be fully coded “as a salient noun phrase within the sentence”. Topic often is not explicitly mentioned as a noun phrase, a proper noun, or an independent pronoun. For example, in ἐξηρεύνησεν (1:1n), the topic (Mordecai) is only encoded as a verbal suffix. Lambrecht (1994:55) also disagrees with Davison by saying that topic does not need to receive a full nominal coding, but only needs to “be invoked lexicogrammatically”.

There is a high correlation between the pragmatic topic and the semantic role of subject (Lambrecht 1994; Reed 1995). Because subject is usually animate and agentive (Dik 1980; Givon 1984; Givon 1997; Minkoff 2000:203), the fact that topic is closely associated with subject means that topic is usually animate and agentive. In καὶ πᾶσα ἡ θεραπεία αὐτοῦ παρεκάλει αὐτήν (5:2b[2]), the marked topic, πᾶσα ἡ θεραπεία αὐτοῦ, is both animate and agentive.

But, topic is not equivalent to the subject of a clause (Chafe 1976:48). Topic may be:

- (a) a direct object. For example, in ὃν ἐὰν ποιῇ ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ αὐτοῦ (1:20), the relative pronoun, ὃν, is the topic that refers back to ὁ νόμος of the main clause. It is the syntactical direct object of ποιῇ;⁹
- (b) an indirect object. For example, in 4:11, πλὴν ᾧ ἐκτείνει ὁ βασιλεὺς τὴν χρυσὴν ῥάβδον, the marked topic, πλὴν ᾧ, is syntactically the indirect object of the main verb; and
- (c) a dative. For example, in 5:1a, καὶ τῇ μὲν μιᾷ ἐπηρείδετο ὡς τρυφερευομένη, the dative (τῇ μιᾷ) is the marked topic.

A contentious situation occurs in the case of the topicalization of a non-subject, where it seems that both the topicalized non-subject and the syntactic subject of the clause qualify to be the sentential topic.¹⁰ To give such a label, however, makes the analysis confusing. Hence, contrary to both Davison (1984) and Lambrecht (1994:149), this study posits that there is a maximum of only one topic per clause.¹¹ This means that in the case of a topicalized non-subject, the syntactic subject is analyzed as part of the focus instead.

⁹Other examples include τὸν δὲ ἀρξάμενον ἐφ’ ἡμᾶς (4:17q), ἡμᾶς in 4:17t, ταύτην in 8:12t.

¹⁰Ravelli (1995:224-6) has the same idea when he calls this a revised theme.

¹¹Halliday (1985a:53) makes a similar claim by saying that a sentence may have more than one theme, where Halliday’s definition of theme is similar to Lambrecht’s (1994) definition of topic.

The definition of topic in this study is unlike the concept of theme by Halliday, who defines it as “what the speaker chooses to take as his point of departure” (1985b:278).¹² In his view, theme could be a topic, a topicalization, a locative, an interrogative, an imperatival verb, a vocative, a dummy-it, a conditional clause, an adverbial phrase, an extraposition, or even “the topic sentence of a paragraph” (p. 56). Topic in this study only includes a small subset of the elements included in the definition of theme by Halliday (1967; 1977:178; 1985a:48, 53), Eggins (1994:276-295), or Cummings (1995:276). The advantage of defining topic more specifically is that it results in a more refined analysis of a discourse.

The definition of topic in this study, however, is close to theme as used by the Prague school (Firbas 1992:72; Sgall 2003:165-6).

2.2.2 Focus

Phrased negatively, focus refers to those constituents which cannot be omitted without “depriving the utterance of some information value” (Lambrecht 1994:215, 218, 224). Phrased positively, focus is “that information which is relatively the most important or salient in the given communicative setting” (Lambrecht 1994; Sperber and Wilson 1995:103; Dik 1997b:326, 388; van Dijk 1997; Erteschik-Shir 2007:38). The addition of new information is based on the assumption that the speaker will convey information that is optimally relevant to the communicative context. This implies that the addition of new information will not be entirely unrelated to old information (Sperber and Wilson 1995:109).

Syntactically, focus is a phrasal category (Heimerdinger 1999:165). In an unmarked clause, focus corresponds to anything that is not the topic. Focus consists mostly of new information, but focus may also contain old information.

Items that are on the left side of the clause tend to be the topic, and are more prominent in the paragraph. Conversely, items toward the right side of the clause tend to be the focus, and are more prominent in the clause (Firbas 1992:66-67; Reed 1995:88). This corresponds to the rule of information structure, where information tends to progress from old to new.

Contrary to Goodell (1902:292), who claims that information appearing at the beginning of the clause is the most salient, the final position is more noteworthy than the beginning of the clause in an unmarked clause because information tends to progress from old

¹²Other authors would call theme, in this sense, a topicalization (Leedy 1991:178).

information to new information (Quirk 1972:963; Cummings 1995:304). However, the clause-initial position is more salient in a pragmatically marked clause.

Longer or more complex constituents tend to occur toward the end of a clause (Hawkins 1994:333, 436; van der Merwe, Naude, and Kroeze 1999:§46.1.ii.b). In poetic language, for example, noun phrases are sometimes divided into two parts, where the part which is relatively more noteworthy is placed at the end of the clause (Funk 1961:249; Werth 1984:260).

Contrary to Lambrecht (1994:329-331), who does not allow for the existence of multiple focus within a clause, focus may be separated into more focal and less focal elements in a clause (Halliday 1967:200-8; van der Merwe, Naude, and Kroeze 1999:§47.1.h).

Unmarked focus is divided into predicate focus (also called comment focus) and clausal focus (Lambrecht 1994:222). A comment focus usually follows the topic. For example, in καὶ ἐξήτασεν ὁ βασιλεὺς τοὺς δύο εὐνούχους (1:10), ὁ βασιλεὺς is the topic, and καὶ ἐξήτασεν and τοὺς δύο εὐνούχους together constitute the comment focus.

Comment focus may be a historical event that occurred in the past and is deemed to be new information in the sense that it is new to the discourse. In ἀνθ' ὧν ἔδοξάσαμεν τοὺς θεοὺς αὐτῶν (4:17n), Israel's idolatry is a historical fact. But, it is a comment focus in this text because this is the first instance that it is mentioned in the text.

The second type of unmarked focus is clausal focus (also called thethetic clause) (Lambrecht 1994:138; Heimerdinger 1999:157; Shimasaki 2002:240-244). Comparatively, thethetic clause is less common than the comment focus (Lambrecht 1994:296). Thethetic clause introduces a new element “without linking it to any presupposed proposition” (Lambrecht 1994:144). Thethetic sentence is hence all new, which is a feature that distinguishes it from the comment focus. Contrary to Reed (1995:82), “broad focal domains”, such as thethetic clause, are not “discourse peaks”, nor do they typically occur “at the end of a paragraph”. Rather, event focus is “a summarizing, remote, depersonalized, unwitnessed event” (Hopper 1995:141, 148).

Thethetic clause has two major types. In the event focus, the referent introduced in such a clause often does not continue as a topic in subsequent clauses (Heimerdinger 1999:216). The event focus may occur in clauses involving a dummy subject. For example, 3:8, καὶ οὐ

συμφέρει τῷ βασιλεῖ ἔᾶσαι αὐτούς, is an event focus, where a real topic does not exist. The semantic dative (the king) is neither the syntactic subject nor the pragmatic topic.

The second type of the thetic clause is the presentational focus. Major characters are usually introduced first by a presentational focus, then anaphorically referenced as a topic in subsequent clauses (Dik 1995:229; Shimasaki 2002:243). Contrary to Schmid (1999:64-5), the introduction of major characters is not encoded by the left dislocation.

The clause final position is sometimes the dominant focal element, that is, the “most salient piece of information in the clause” (Heimerdinger 1999:174-6). But, the last constituent of a sentence is not necessarily the dominant focal element. In καὶ ἀτάραχα παρέχουσιν ἡμῖν διὰ τέλους τὰ πράγματα (3:13g), τὰ πράγματα stands last in the clause even though the definite article shows that it is an anaphoric referent. It is not the dominant focal element because it is old information.

In this study, dominant focal element is defined as that part of the focus which (a) is entirely new (Heimerdinger 1999:189), (b) is the least recoverable from the preceding information, and (c) is postposed from its usual position in the focus to the end of the focal domain. It may be an adjunct that occurs at the end of the focal domain. Some dominant focal elements play a critical role in the subsequent development of the narration.

In καὶ ἀπέστειλεν μαθεῖν αὐτῇ παρὰ τοῦ Μαρδοχαίου τὸ ἀκριβές (4:5), for example, τὸ ἀκριβές is the dominant focal element because (a) it is the only piece of new information in the focal domain (both αὐτῇ and παρὰ τοῦ Μαρδοχαίου are old information), (b) semantically, τὸ ἀκριβές is the goal of Esther’s inquiry, and (c) whereas a direct object usually stands in front of the prepositional phrase, τὸ ἀκριβές is postposed to the end of the focal domain.

A verb may function as the dominant focal element of a focal domain when (a) it stands at the end, and (b) the non-verbal constituents that precede it are old information (Levinsohn 1995:69). For example, in ἦν ὁ βασιλεὺς αὐτῷ περιέθηκεν (5:11), all three of the nominal constituents before the verb, ἦν, ὁ βασιλεὺς, αὐτῷ, are old information. The verb, περιέθηκεν, stands at the end of the clause and is new information. This qualifies it as the dominant focal element.

In βοήθησόν μοι τῇ μόνῃ (4:17l), τῇ μόνῃ is an adjectival adjunct at the end of the main clause. Semantically, it highlights the depth of her loneliness, and provides the ground that God should listen to her petition and come to her aid.

In καὶ οὐ προσκυνήσω οὐδένα πλὴν σοῦ τοῦ κυρίου μου (4:17e), the dominant focal element, πλὴν σοῦ τοῦ κυρίου μου, is an adjunct standing at the end of the focal domain. It provides the essential piece of new information that completes the semantic meaning of the clause. It highlights the devotion of Mordecai, since he has reserved his reverence to the God of Israel alone.

A dominant focal element may be preceded by the focal use of καὶ. In ἐσπεύδετο δὲ τὸ πρᾶγμα καὶ εἰς Σουσαν (3:15), καὶ εἰς Σουσαν is the dominant focal element because it (a) is new information, (b) is an adjunct that stands at the end of the focal domain, and (c) is the most salient information in the clause.

Dominant focal element is sometimes indistinguishable from a comment focus. In καὶ κύριος εἶ πάντων (4:17c), πάντων may be interpreted as part of the noun phrase, κύριος πάντων, where κύριος is fronted to the preverbal position. Alternatively, πάντων may be interpreted as an adjunct that is separate from the noun κύριος, in which case, κύριος is still fronted to the preverbal position, but πάντων is a dominant focal element that stands at the end of the focal domain to highlight the extent of God's omnipotence.

2.2.3 *Peripheral elements*

There are three types of extracausal elements: (a) extraposition, (b) dislocation, and (c) point of departure.

Extraposition refers to a peripheral clause that occurs either (a) before the main clause (left extraposition), (b) after the main clause (right extraposition), or (c) within the main clause.

Extraposition is indicated by participles or infinitives. For example, the right extraposition, διὰ παντὸς καταστήσαι βίους τὴν τε βασιλείαν ἡμερον, in 3:13b is signaled by the infinitive καταστήσαι.

The presence of a participle does not automatically indicate an extraposition. For example, in ὅτι οὐκ ἐποίησεν τὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ βασιλέως προσταχθέντα διὰ τῶν εὐνούχων (1:15),

προσταχθέντα is part of a nominal participial phrase (τὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ βασιλέως προσταχθέντα), which functions as the direct object of the main verb ἐποίησεν.

A left extraposition is usually indicated by a nominative participle whose subject is coindexed with the subject of the main clause.¹³ In καὶ δεύτερον τῶν βασιλειῶν γέρας ἀπενηνεγμένος (3:13c), the referent of the nominative participle ἀπενηνεγμένος is the subject of the main clause, Aman. A nominative participial phrase that occurs to the left of the main verb belongs to the sentence (Robertson 1934:431), but not the same clause.

The claim that a participle occurring before the finite verb “tends to refer to antecedent action” generally holds true (Porter 1992:188; Longacre 1999b:178). But the definition of “antecedent” is not always clear cut. For example, the left extraposition, πολλῶν ἐπάρξας ἔθνων καὶ πάσης ἐπικρατήσας οἰκουμένης, in 3:13b refers to the general condition of the king’s great power, while the main clause, ἐβουλήθη μὴ τῷ θράσει τῆς ἐξουσίας ἐπαίρόμενος, refers to the will of the king prior to the issuance of the royal decree. It is difficult to compare the chronology of the two. Levinsohn (2000a:§11.1) agrees that the relative importance of the two often “has to be deduced from the context”.

An extraposed clause may occur intraclausally, although rare. In 8:12c, πολλοὶ τῇ πλείστῃ τῶν εὐεργετούντων χρηστότητι πυκνότερον τιμώμενοι μείζον ἐφρόνησαν, the medial extraposition (τῇ πλείστῃ τῶν εὐεργετούντων χρηστότητι πυκνότερον τιμώμενοι) is wedged between the marked topic (πολλοὶ) and the comment focus (μείζον ἐφρόνησαν). Medial extraposition seems to function as discourse background, although limited data in the study corpus does not permit a firm conclusion.

Contrary to Walser (2001:504-5), the participle phrase is not always “placed before the main verb”. The right extraposition frequently occurs in the text. It “clarifies or modifies some constituent”, especially when “the speaker cannot be certain that the addressee has established the appropriate bridging assumptions” (Dik 1997b:388-400).

Right extraposition may encode a variety of semantic relationships with the main clause. It may:

- (a) denote a temporal event that has taken place before that of the main clause. For example, the right extraposition, ἀκούσασα τὸ γεγονός, temporally precedes the

¹³Contrary to Halliday (1967; 1985a; 1985b) and Gomez (2001:154), left extraposition, as defined in this study, is not always equated with sentential or episodic theme.

temporality of the main verb, ἐταράχθη in 4:4. Esther is disturbed only after she hears what had happened;

- (b) explain the purpose of the main clause. In 8:14, οἱ μὲν οὖν ἵππεῖς ἐξῆλθον σπεύδοντες τὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ βασιλέως λεγόμενα ἐπιτελεῖν, the right extraposition σπεύδοντες τὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ βασιλέως λεγόμενα ἐπιτελεῖν explains the purpose for the sending out of the horses in the main clause (οἱ μὲν οὖν ἵππεῖς ἐξῆλθον); and
- (c) describe the manner of the main clause. For example, the two right extraposition clauses (ἐστολισμένος τὴν βασιλικὴν στολὴν and καὶ στέφανον ἔχων χρυσοῦν καὶ διάδημα βύσσινον πορφυροῦν) in 8:15 describe the manner that Mordecai was dressed when he went out (ὁ δὲ Μαρδοχαῖος ἐξῆλθεν).

Ambiguity sometimes exists. The right extraposition in 4:17a, μνημονεύων πάντα τὰ ἔργα κυρίου, may be interpreted (a) as an apposition to the main clause (καὶ ἐδεήθη κυρίου), where μνημονεύων is the means by which Mordecai petitions the Lord, or (b) as a precondition to the main clause, where Mordecai's recall of the Lord's mighty acts prompts him to have faith in petitioning the Lord.

The second type of peripheral element is dislocation. A dislocation explicitly identifies the referent of a constituent in the main clause. The relationship between the peripheral clause and the main clause is one of coreferentiality rather than “extraction” or “adjustment” (Dik 1997b:388-400). Since a sentence may not have more than one topic, as defined in this study, left dislocation is not another topic in the sentence, contrary to Lambrecht (1994:149, 182).

Dislocation may occur either to the left or to the right of the main clause (Dik 1995:79). For example, in καὶ τί τὸ ἀξίωμα σου καὶ ἔστω σοι ἕως τοῦ ἡμῖσους τῆς βασιλείας μου (7:2), καὶ τί τὸ ἀξίωμα σου is a left dislocation that qualifies the dummy subject, ἔστω.

A left dislocation may explicate a semantic role other than the subject. In καὶ τί ὁ θεὸς βεβούλευται ποιῆσαι εἶχεν αὐτὸ ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ (1:11), it is the direct object (αὐτὸ) of the main verb that is explicated by the left dislocation (καὶ τί ὁ θεὸς βεβούλευται ποιῆσαι).

A right dislocation is illustrated by ἦν ἐπηγγείλατο Ἀμαν τῷ βασιλεῖ εἰς τὴν γάζαν ταλάντων μυρίων in 4:7, where the identity of the fronted topic, ἦν, is specified by the right dislocation (van der Merwe, Naude, and Kroeze 1999:§46.1; Levinsohn 2000a:§4; Dehe 2002:279; Erteschik-Shir 2007:159), ταλάντων μυρίων.

Another example of a right dislocation is in 8:9, where the identity of the verbal subject (καὶ ἐγγράφη τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις) is provided in the right dislocation that follows (ὅσα ἐνετείλατο τοῖς οἰκονόμοις καὶ τοῖς ἄρχουσιν τῶν σατραπῶν ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰνδικῆς ἕως τῆς Αἰθιοπίας ἑκατὸν εἴκοσι ἑπτὰ σατραπείαις κατὰ χώραν καὶ χώραν κατὰ τὴν ἑαυτῶν λέξιν).

Right dislocation may be used to prevent confusion. In καὶ ἤρρεσεν αὐτῷ (2:9), the identity of the verbal suffix of this clause should be clear in itself because (a) it is the same as the topic of the preceding clause, and (b) the masculine gender of the dative αὐτῷ and the semantics of ἤρρεσεν preclude other possibilities. But just to be clear, the writer adds a right dislocation, τὸ κοράσιον, to prevent a possible ambiguity of the topic identity.

The third type of the peripheral element is the point of departure. A point of departure is usually indicated by an adverb proper or a genitival participle standing before the main clause (Funk 1961:248; Grimes 1975:328; Firbas 1992:50-51, 54; Lambrecht 1994:125; Dik 1995:13; Dik 1997b:388-400; Heimerdinger 1999; Levinsohn 2000a:§2; Shimasaki 2002:245-249).

ἐν τῷ τρίτῳ ἔτει βασιλεύοντος αὐτοῦ, 1:3, is an example of a point of departure signaled by a genitival participle.

The subject of a point of departure involving a genitival participle is usually different from the topic of the main verb (Healey and Healey 1990). For example, the subject of the point of departure in 3:13c, πυθομένου δέ μου τῶν συμβούλων πῶς ἂν ἀχθείη τοῦτο ἐπὶ πέρας, is the king; but the subject of the main clause, Αμαν ἐπέδειξεν ἡμῖν ἐν πάσαις ταῖς κατὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην φυλαῖς ἀναμεμῖχθαι δυσμενῇ λαόν τινα (3:13c-d), is Aman.

Contrary to Halliday (1967:220), a point of departure is neither a sentential theme (topic) nor a focus; rather, it has both a backward looking and a forward looking function (Heimerdinger 1999:205; Levinsohn 2000a:§2). The suggestion of Paducheva (1996:273) to treat time or place adverbials as sentential theme does not work because more than one adverbial can occur before the main clause, which “is incompatible with a unitary concept of theme” (Quirk 1972:947).

There is evidence to suggest that an anarthrous genitival participle that is a point of departure sometimes functions as background to the main clause (Healey and Healey 1990; Levinsohn 2000a:§11.1). For example, in 6:14, ἔτι αὐτῶν λαλούντων παραγίνονται οἱ

εὐνοῦχοι, the point of departure (ἔτι αὐτῶν λαλούντων) is background with respect to the main clause (παράγινονται οἱ εὐνοῦχοι), which is the narrative foreground.

A temporal point of departure may also be indicated by:

- (a) the infinitival phrase. This is shown in ἐν δὲ τῷ ἀναπληροῦσθαι τὸν χρόνον Εσθηρ τῆς θυγατρὸς Αμιναδαβ ἀδελφοῦ πατρὸς Μαρδοχαίου (2:15);
- (b) a finite verb whose subject is different from the subject of the main clause. For example, in 2:8, the subject of the temporal point of departure (καὶ ὅτε ἠκούσθῃ τὸ τοῦ βασιλέως πρόσταγμα) is τὸ τοῦ βασιλέως πρόσταγμα, whereas the subject of the main clause (συνήχθησαν κοράσια πολλὰ εἰς Σουσαν τὴν πόλιν ὑπὸ χεῖρα Γαι) is κοράσια πολλὰ.

A point of departure may be a conditional clause (Dik 1997b:388-400). In 3:9, εἰ δοκεῖ τῷ βασιλεῖ is a conditional peripheral clause that acts as a point of departure. It bridges the previous material with what follows. Here, Aman exhorts the king to exterminate the Jews based on his charge in the preceding clauses that the Jews follow their own law rather than the law of the king.

2.3 Markedness at the clausal level

Markedness may also exist at the clausal level (Pickering 1978:51). This is signaled by three structural devices: (a) fronting, (b) the present aspect, and (c) markers of clausal prominence.¹⁴

2.3.1 *Fronting*

A tenet of functional linguistics is that the structural coding of a language has pragmatic meaning. If the grammar of a language allows the same semantic proposition to be coded in different ways, the different means of coding (allosentences) reflect pragmatic significance (Revell 1989; van der Merwe 1991; Payne 1990; Downing and Noonan 1995; Dik 1997b:326-7; Shlonsky 1997; Shimasaki 2002; Kwong 2005; Lunn 2006). Coding that is pragmatically salient is called marked, and coding that is comparatively less salient is called unmarked.

¹⁴For this study corpus, the marking of local prominence seems to be conditioned by genre type. Local prominence occurs with a higher frequency in the two royal epistles than elsewhere in the text.

The best way to ascertain the difference between marked and unmarked coding in a language is to compare the salience of allosentences (Lambrecht 1994). The investigation of the pragmatic effects of a non-living language, such as biblical Greek, is inherently limited because it is not possible (a) to generate different types of allosentences spontaneously, and (b) to test the pragmatic effects of allosentences on live speakers of that language. Intonational patterns, which is a major method of coding pragmatic meaning, of biblical Greek is also lost to the modern audience. Yet, the investigation of the pragmatics of biblical Greek is still possible because of language typology.

The study of language typology is the study of the general structural properties of languages throughout the world, including both modern and deceased languages. Even though the semantic and structural coding of a particular language, such as Greek, goes through changes with time, languages at particular moments in their history may be classified into language types. Furthermore, the existence of these languages types is a property of human language that has “remained invariable over time” (Song 2001:14-5). A modern language A, for example, may be characterized as a subject-verb-object language, and an ancient language B back in period P was a verb-subject-object language. But, language B may evolve through time into a subject-verb-object language by modern times. This example illustrates that (a) a modern language A and language B (of period P) may belong to different language types, but (b) because the language type of language B changes through time (diachronically) (Leedy 1991:110), (c) language B (by modern times) may belong to the same language type as the modern language A. Yet, the basic existence of the language type “subject-verb-object” and “verb-subject-object” has not changed through time. They are the language structures that languages change from and change into at different times.

The classification of the basic word order of a language at a particular time is important because a deviation from that basic word order is salient. The basic word order corresponds to the unmarked pragmatic usage, and the salient word order corresponds to the marked usage.

The unmarked pattern is determined by counting the relative frequency of occurrence of various word orders. A pattern that dominates in terms of the absolute frequency of occurrence as well as the breadth of syntactical environments is the unmarked construction (Dik 1997a:44).

A pragmatically marked word order, on the other hand, is one where the normal coding of information (such as word order) is disrupted. A marked construction is less expected and “therefore commands more attention when it occurs” (Dik 1997a:41; Foraker and McElree 2007), and “tends to be cognitively more complex” (Givon 1995b:27-8).

Markedness is “often context sensitive” (Givon 1995b:27-8; Batistella 1996:8-14), which means that the concept of markedness may vary across different types of syntactical categories. It is also a relative concept, since a construction that is considered marked in one context may be relatively unmarked when compared to another construction in another context (Lambrecht 1994:29-30; Dik 1997a:45).¹⁵

It is erroneous to believe that biblical Greek does not have a basic word order just because it is said to be a “free word order” language. This is shown by the fact that children who learn free word order languages develop (over time) relatively stable word order preferences for various sentence structures (Schmid 1999:45). This claim does not deny the existence of individual preferences in word order. Rather, this claim asserts that the dominant choice of word order, whatever it may be, of a particular author forms the default pragmatic usage of the author, and deviations from that the default word order is motivated by the desire to mark cognitive saliency.¹⁶

Secondly, the study of information structure also makes the investigation of the pragmatics of biblical Greek possible.

Although researchers differ on their interpretation of the effects of semantics and discourse thematicity on clausal markedness (Tomlin 1986; Siewierska 1988:263), researchers generally agree that “whatever comes first in a clause is relatively more important” (Goodell 1902:291-2; Mithun 1987:325; Larsen 1991a:§2; Dik 1997b:404-9). In the unmarked situation, a constituent appears in the initial position of a clause because it is old information, in which case it may be “processed faster” compared to new information (Goodell 1902:292; Schmid 1999:42-3). In the marked situation, on the other hand, a

¹⁵When a text may be read as marked or as unmarked, the unmarked reading is preferred (Buth 1992b:89).

¹⁶For example, an author who is predisposed to place a prepositional phrase at the beginning of an English sentence is using this word order as the default. The placement of the prepositional phrase in other positions would then be considered marked for that author. Linguistically, this is equivalent to the phenomenon of a dialectal variation, where a subgroup within a language community employs a language variation which is different from the general usage of that language community. If the number of people of that linguistic subgroup grows, then that particular word order convention would shift over time. However, this does not negate the fact that the language community does have a relatively stable language convention at any particular point in time.

constituent that is new information may be fronted to the beginning of the clause to precede old information (Pickering 1978:47; Dik 1980; Andersen 1983; Payne 1987; Leedy 1991:180; Firbas 1992:72; Birner 1994:255; Lambrecht 1994:16-17; Buth 1995; Dik 1995; Downing 1995:16; Payne 1995:479; Reed 1995:78; Rosenbaum 1997; Choi 1999:201; Heimerdinger 1999:187; van der Merwe, Naude, and Kroeze 1999:§47.1.f).¹⁷

Based on the principles of (a) language typology, and (b) information structure, the unmarked word order for biblical Greek is such that (Leedy 1991; Levinsohn 2000a):

- (a) the core constituent precedes the peripheral constituents;
- (b) the verb precedes the indirect object;
- (c) the passive verb precedes the semantic agent of the verb;
- (d) a substantive precedes its genitive case modifier;
- (e) the verb precedes the prepositional phrase that it governs;
- (f) the noun precedes the relative clause that it governs; and
- (g) the main clause precedes the subordinate clause that it governs.

Further, the semantic role of object follows the semantic role of subject in the unmarked situation, whereas the reverse is a marked position (Robertson 1934:417; Leedy 1991:174; Cummings 1995:303-4; Reed 1995:88; Terry 1995:153-4; Dik 1997b:404-9; Reed 1997:383-4; Walser 2001:504-5; Erteschik-Shir 2007:156). This may be explained by the fact that “subjects typically have referents which are related to the discourse topic, and that topical information tends to occur early in the clause” (Cumming and Ono 1997:112).

The unmarked order of the verb for biblical Greek is disputed. Some argue that the unmarked order of the verb is not initial. Instead, the unmarked word order is subject-verb-object, if the subject is expressed other than as a verbal suffix (Goodell 1902:293-4; Machen 1959:26; Porter 1992:293; McKay 1994:6-7; Terry 1995:137; Reed 1997:383-4).

It is however more likely that the unmarked position of the verb in biblical Greek (at least in the Septuagintal period) is initial.

¹⁷Even though Halliday (1967:200-8) would call both an unmarked frontal element or a marked frontal element a “theme”, he admits that sentential theme may be separated into the unmarked and marked.

Firstly, the character of the biblical Greek in the Septuagint is influenced by biblical Hebrew, whose typology is verb-subject-object (Jongeling 1991; Bandstra 1992; Terry 1995:139; Rosenbaum 1997:45, 211; Kruijff 2002:142), rather than subject-verb-object.

Whereas Greek that is written directly in the vernacular has a relatively free word order, “the translation Greek of the Septuagint tends to have a stricter word order” that is similar to “the strictness of biblical Hebrew” (Rife 1933:246-7). Rife demonstrated this proposition by comparing the word order of main declarative sentences (that involve both the subject and the object as substantives) from Greek writings of various periods (p. 250). Whereas some books in the Septuagint, such as Deuteronomy, 1 Kingdoms, Tobit, 1 Maccabees, have a close ratio between the verb-subject-object word order and the subject-verb-object word order, the verb-subject-object word order clearly predominates in Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 3 Kingdoms, 4 Kingdoms, Judith in the Septuagint. A survey of the relative order of a substantive and its adjective also supports the claim that septuagintal Greek is influenced by biblical Hebrew. There is “only one exception” to the Hebrew order of the adjective following the substantive in an analysis of samples from the first ten books of the Septuagint (p. 249). The work of Rife (1933) is admittedly tentative because it was only based on sample passages from each work that was surveyed. But the precision of the analytical methodology is admirable. To date, there is no comparable attempt on comparing the Greek word order from the classical period to the time of the New Testament.

Secondly, it should be noted that researchers (Machen 1959:26; Porter 1992:293; McKay 1994:6-7; Terry 1995:137; Reed 1997:383-4), who do not support the claim that verb initial is the unmarked word order, primarily argue from the New Testament as their research corpus.¹⁸ It is possible that they are right, in so far as their research corpus is concerned, since there is evidence that the subject-verb-object word order predominates in some books of the New Testament, such as John, Mark, Matthew, Luke, and Acts (Rife 1933:246-7). But this does not mean that the basic word order of the Septuagint is the same as the New Testament.

Thirdly, the claim that the unmarked position of the verb in Greek could be initial is supported by researchers such as Moule (1953:166), Funk (1961:248-9), Turner (1963:347-8), Leedy (1991:174), Dik (1995:12), Roberts (1997), Levinsohn (2000a:§3).

¹⁸Similarly, Goodell (1902:293-4) argues the same for classical Greek.

Fourthly, Porter's (1992:293; 1994:295-6) challenge to the claim that "the basic order for koine Greek is verb-subject-object" is not altogether clear because:

- (a) the fact that subject is often coded independently and fronted in "dependent clauses" without signaling markedness does not infer that the fronting of the subject in the main clause is not marked;
- (b) the argument that a subject that is "placed after the predicate or the complement" leads to a decrease in markedness is precisely an admission that the "constituent occupying the initial position" is relatively more marked, since markedness is a relative concept (contrary to Porter's opposite conclusion);
- (c) Porter's (1992) statement that "the most common clausal structure is simple predicate or predicate-complement... followed by complement-predicate and subject-predicate" (p. 293) actually supports the opposite claim that verb initial is the unmarked order;
- (d) Porter (1994) makes a different claim from Porter (1992) by saying that "depending upon the passages, the predicate-complement and complement-predicate structures are often quite close in ratio of usage" (1994:294), even though Porter (1994) does not provide additional data to support the change of the claim in Porter (1992);
- (e) the statement that "when a subject is expressed, it is normal for the subject to be initial in the main clause, whether the clause type is subject-predicate; subject-predicate-complement; or subject-complement-predicate" (1994:294) is false, since the coding of the subject is often after the predicate (or verb phrase); nor does Porter quantify what he means by "normal"; and,
- (f) while he says that trying to ascertain the prototypical word order of biblical Greek based on clauses containing of only a verb and an object "can only skew the results", and an analysis based on all three subject, verb, and object is "also wrong", he goes on to say that other combinations, such as "a verb or a noun phrase with a predicate, or a verb with an object" should be tried. Porter is contradicting himself when he says that a clause involving "a verb with an object" will both "skew the result" and is a combination "should be tried". Equally problematic is the statement that a combination involving both "a verb" and "a predicate" "should be tried", since a verb is necessarily part of the predicate in terms of functional linguistics. Lastly, his

exhortation that the combination “noun phrase with a predicate” “should be tried” in the quest to determine the prototypical koine Greek word order has always been known to other investigators of the Greek word order, such as Leedy (1991:174) and Levinsohn (2000a:§3), who draw the opposite conclusion from Porter.

Porter’s (1992; 1994) conclusion that the prototypical word order of koine Greek is subject-verb-object is hence unconvincing.

The work of Terry (1995:137) is more nuanced and is backed up by more hard data. He makes the case that the typical koine Greek word order is subject-verb-object for the hortatory genre of the book of 1 Corinthians. At the same time, he admits that the narrative genre which was investigated followed the word order of verb-subject-object.

At first sight, Reed (1997:383-4) seems to agree with Porter (1992; 1994) and Terry (1995) when he says that “the unmarked position of the grammatical subject is before the verb if the subject is a main participant and it is new in terms of information status”. But in reality, the occurrence of a subject as “a main participant” or a subject that “is new in terms of information status” typically only covers a minor portion of the total occurrence of all subjects that are coded independently of the verb. Therefore, Reed is right when he goes on to say that if the information status of the subject can be evoked or inferred, “its unmarked position is not clause initial”. Since this constitutes the majority of the instances of the subject, Reed is actually agreeing with the verb-subject-object position.

Fifthly, there is no question that the verb precedes the subject in the book of Esther in the Septuagint. Subject that is coded (other than the verbal suffix) is overwhelmingly postverbal in main clauses that involve intransitive or transitive verbs. The occurrence of the topic in the preverbal slot of a main clause is relatively rare, and is therefore marked.

2.3.1.1 *Marked focus*

Whereas unmarked focus is the occurrence of new information (focus) after old information (topic), marked focus is the fronting of new information before old information (Heimerdinger 1999:170; Shimasaki 2002:121). *παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐγένετο ταῦτα* in 10:3a is an example, where *ταῦτα* is a topic because it is an anaphoric referent. The complement of the stative clause (*παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ*) is a focus because it is new information, and it is marked because it precedes the topic.

Marked and unmarked focus are not mutually exclusive within a clause. A clause may contain both types of focus at the same time. For example, τίνα θέλει ὁ βασιλεὺς δοξάσαι εἰ μὴ ἐμέ in 6:6 has (a) a marked focus (τίνα), (b) an unmarked focus (θέλει δοξάσαι), and (c) a dominant focal element (εἰ μὴ ἐμέ).

Because both the marked focus and the point of departure occur at the beginning of a clause, the two categories sometimes blur. Consider δείλης εἰσπορεύεται (2:14), for example. The temporal, δείλης, could be considered as (a) an adverbial focus standing in the marked position, or (b) a temporal point of departure.

The category of the marked focus may also blur with a left extraposition. For example, in 4:17h, ἵνα ζῶντες ὑμνωμέν σου τὸ ὄνομα κύριε, the left extraposed clause coded by the nominative participle (ζῶντες) may also be interpreted as a type of marked focus because the new information, ζῶντες, is the main point of the clause, highlighting the fact that the survival of the Jews is a precondition that allows them to continue praising the Lord.

Marked focus may occur not only in a topic comment clause, but also in athetic clause. For example, in ἄλλοθεν βοήθεια καὶ σκέπη ἔσται τοῖς Ιουδαίοις of 4:14, the marked focus (ἄλλοθεν βοήθεια καὶ σκέπη) precedes the event focus (ἔσται τοῖς Ιουδαίοις).

The complement of a clause may be coded as a marked Focus. For example, in ὅτι Ιουδαῖός ἐστιν (3:4), the marked focus (Ιουδαῖός) is the complement of the clause.

Interrogative particles (also referred to as the wh-word) nearly always appear in the clause initial position. Although the interrogative particle has been analyzed as if it were an “unmarked” sentential theme (Halliday 1977:182-6; Brown and Miller 1992:367; 373), this is only appropriate for a subject initial language, such as English. For a verb initial language (Utschig 1985:232-3), such as biblical Greek, classifying the interrogative particle as a marked argument focus (Lambrecht 1994:230, 283) is more consistent with the overall analytical scheme of this study.

One example of an interrogative functioning as a marked argument focus is τί παρακούεις τὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ βασιλέως λεγόμενα in 3:3, where τί is the marked focus, the verbal suffix denotes the topic, and the rest of the clause is the comment focus.

However, a negation particle that precedes a main verb is not to be interpreted as a marked argument focus because the position of the negation particle deals with the semantic scope of negation (de Swart 2004:512) rather than pragmatic saliency. If the negation particle

immediately precedes the verb, the scope of the negation “applies to the whole predicate comment” (Levinsohn 2000a:§4). The negation particle may also be placed in other positions to negate individual constituents of the clause.

Another type of marked focus is the focus presupposition clause (Lambrecht 1994). This is a type of the marked argument focus structure (Heimerdinger 1999:162-164). The presupposition is assumed to be known to the “hearer” from the information provided in the preceding text. One example of a focus presupposition clause is οὐ τὸν βασιλέα μόνον ἡδίκησεν Αστιν ἢ βασίλισσα in 1:16, where ἡδίκησεν Αστιν ἢ βασίλισσα is old information that is also the presupposition of the clause, and οὐ τὸν βασιλέα μόνον is the marked argument focus.

The interrogative particle is a type of the marked argument focus in a focus presupposition clause. For example, in τίς ἐν τῇ αὐλῇ (6:4), the interrogative τίς is the marked focus. The fact that the prepositional phrase, ἐν τῇ αὐλῇ, occurred in the previous clause (Ἀμὰν ἐν τῇ αὐλῇ) means that it is a presupposition.

Although rare, the presupposition of a focus presupposition clause may be implied rather than explicitly coded in the preceding text. For example, in τί θέλεις (5:3), θέλεις is technically new information because Esther has not yet made a request in the preceding text. But it is treated in the text as if it were old information because Esther’s desire for a request may be inferred from the previous context, where she sought an audience with the king at the risk of her own life.

Marked argument focus is the primary means of encoding contrastive focus. This may take place within the same clause. For example, in καὶ ἀντὶ τῶν ὑπερηφάνων ἡδυσμάτων σποδοῦ καὶ κοπριῶν ἔπλησεν τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτῆς (4:17k), there are two marked foci in the same clause, where the first marked focus (ἀντὶ τῶν ὑπερηφάνων ἡδυσμάτων) contrasts with the second marked focus (σποδοῦ καὶ κοπριῶν).

Contrastive focus may also occur between the marked argument foci of two consecutive clauses. This is shown in 8:12c, where the marked focus (οὐ μόνον τοὺς ὑποτεταγμένους ἡμῖν) contrasts with the marked focus (τοῖς ἑαυτῶν εὐεργέταις) of the following clause.

But contrastive focus is a broader concept than marked argument focus. Contrastive focus does not have to be argument focus (Lambrecht 1994:286-291). For example, contrastive focus may take place between two dislocations across the sentence boundary. The right

dislocation, τὰ δὲ ἔθνη τὰ ἐπισυναχθέντα ἀπολέσαι τὸ ὄνομα τῶν Ιουδαίων, of 10:3e contrasts with the left dislocation, τὸ δὲ ἔθνος τὸ ἐμόν, of the following sentence in 10:3f. Also, in 1:16, the marked argument focus (οὐ τὸν βασιλέα μόνον) does not contrast with another marked argument focus, but the right extraposition (ἀλλὰ καὶ πάντας τοὺς ἄρχοντας καὶ τοὺς ἡγουμένους τοῦ βασιλέως) of the same clause instead.¹⁹

2.3.1.2 Other types of fronting

Where the fronting of an independent subject before the verb in biblical Greek is marked from a typological view, the same methodology shows that the fronting of other constituent types may indicate markedness.

Firstly, whereas the unmarked word order of a genitive modifier is for it to follow its head noun,²⁰ a genitive modifier that precedes its head noun is usually marked. For example, in 3:13f, πάντας σὺν γυναιξὶ καὶ τέκνοις ἀπολέσαι ὀλορριζεῖ ταῖς τῶν ἐχθρῶν μαχαίραις, the genitival element (τῶν ἐχθρῶν) is marked because it is fronted before its head noun (μαχαίραις). In 3:13b, πολλῶν ἐπάρξας ἐθνῶν καὶ πάσης ἐπικρατήσας οἰκουμένης, the genitive modifiers (πολλῶν and πάσης) are not only fronted before their respective head nouns (ἐθνῶν and οἰκουμένης) but also the governing verbs (ἐπάρξας and ἐπικρατήσας).²¹

While the fronting of a genitive nominal modifier or a genitive adjectival modifier before the noun that it modifies is usually pragmatically marked (Robertson 1934:417-8; Devine and Stephens 2000:31-2), it is sometimes unmarked because:

- (a) a noun is sometimes shifted to the dominant focal element position at the end of the clause (Levinsohn 2000a:§4). The movement of the noun to the right of the clause makes the genitival pronoun falsely appear to have moved to the left; and
 - (b) the referent of a fronted genitival pronoun is mentioned in the preceding text, and is the old information, while the head noun supplies the new information in the clause.
- Fronting is a mechanism to maintain the unmarked information sequence (where old

¹⁹This last example may also be classified as a counterpresuppositional focus because of the οὐ... μόνον formula (Buth 1992b:83; Dik 1995:39).

²⁰πᾶσα ἡ θεραπεία αὐτοῦ of 5:2b is one example. It also occurs in 1:1f; 1:1i; 1:1r; 1:3, 4, 8, 11, 13, 18, 19, 20, 22; 2:3, 7, 9, 10, 16, 18 (twice), 20 (twice); 3:1, 8 (three times), 13; 4:1, 5, 8 (twice), 14, 16, 17d, 17i (twice), 17k (four times), 17m, 17n, 17o, 17q, 17s (three times); 5:1, 1a, 1b (twice), 1c (twice), 1d (twice), 1e (twice), 2, 2b, 3, 4, 7 (twice), 10, 11, 14; 6:1, 13; 7:2 (twice), 3 (four times), 4, 8; 8:3, 5, 6, 8 (twice), 10, 11 (three times); 9:22, 25, 26 (twice), 27, 28, 31 (twice); 10:1, 2 (twice), 3, 3f, 3i (twice), 3k, 3l.

²¹However, the demonstrative use of a pronoun, such as τοῦ αὐτοῦ μηνὸς (9:17) is marked.

information precedes new information). This occurs in 1:1d, 1:1e, 1:1n, 2:7, 3:12, 4:4, 5:3, 6:10, 8:9, 9:16, 10:3b.

Secondly, the fronting of a prepositional phrase is another type of marked fronting. For example, in 3:13a[2], τοῖς ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰνδικῆς ἕως τῆς Αἰθιοπίας ἑκατὸν εἴκοσι ἑπτὰ χωρῶν ἄρχουσι, the prepositional phrase (ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰνδικῆς ἕως τῆς Αἰθιοπίας) is marked because it is fronted before the head verb phrase (ἑκατὸν εἴκοσι ἑπτὰ χωρῶν ἄρχουσι).

Thirdly, the verbal participle occurs a total of 203 times. The fronting of a constituent governed by a participle occurs 64 times,²² which constitutes 32 percent of the total. Hence, the fronting of a constituent governed by a participle is pragmatically marked.

Fourthly, 4:7, ἣν ἐπηγγείλατο Ἀμαν τῷ βασιλεῖ, shows that a verb usually stands at the front of a comment focus (ἐπηγγείλατο Ἀμαν τῷ βασιλεῖ).²³ In 1:7 (ὃν αὐτὸς ὁ βασιλεὺς ἔπινεν), however, αὐτὸς ὁ βασιλεὺς is a (noun phrase) constituent within the comment focus that precedes the verb.²⁴ Comparatively, the fronting of a nonverbal element in a comment focus before the verb is pragmatically marked because it constitutes 26 percent of the construction involving a relative pronoun (functioning as marked topic) followed by a comment focus.

Fifthly, the stative verb εἰμι occurs a total of 69 times. The fronting of a constituent in a comment clause governed by εἰμι occurs 15 times,²⁵ which is 22 percent of the total, and is hence pragmatically marked.²⁶

2.3.1.3 Marked topic

The preverbal position is used to signal (a) marked focus, or (b) marked topic (Buth 1992b:86; Payne 1995:479; Heimerdinger 1999:210; 213-4). The reason that fronting is sometimes not locally prominent (Muraoka 1985; Payne 1995:479; Goldfajn 1998:93; Gross

²²In 1:6 (three times), 7, 10, 14, 15, 18 (twice); 3:3, 4, 8, 13a, 13b (six times), 13c (three times), 13d (twice), 13e (twice), 13g; 4:1, 2, 8, 17b, 17r; 5:1b (twice), 9; 6:13, 14; 7:7, 8; 8:8, 12b, 12c (twice), 12d (three times), 12e (three times), 12f, 12g, 12i (twice), 12k, 12p (three times), 12r (three times), 12s (twice), 12t, 12u, 14, 15; 9:27.

²³The construction of a relative pronoun (functioning as marked topic) followed by a comment focus (that does not contain preverbal constituents) occurs 20 times. It takes place in 1:1; 2:15, 16; 3:7, 13; 4:7; 5:5; 6:10, 14; 7:5, 10; 8:1, 2, 5, 9, 12; 9:1, 20, 22; 10:3.

²⁴The construction of a relative pronoun (functioning as marked topic) followed by a comment focus (that does contain a preverbal constituent) occurs 7 times. Also in 5:11; 6:7, 8 (twice), 9, 11.

²⁵Also in 1:11; 3:4, 14; 4:17b, 17l, 17n; 5:1f, 3, 4; 7:7; 8:12g, 12p, 13; 10:3, 3d.

²⁶The fronting of a constituent in a comment clause governed by another stative verb, γίνομαι, takes place in 1:8; 9:14, 25, 26; 10:3a. An unfronted example is found in 8:16. The paucity of data does not allow a firm conclusion. But, this construction does not appear to be pragmatically marked.

1999:40-45) is because marked topic differs from marked focus. A marked topic is a topic which is fronted before the verb. Marked topic consists of 17 percent of the corpus. Like the marked focus, a marked topic is pragmatically salient (Dik 1980). But unlike the marked focus, a marked topic does not signal local prominence; rather, the marked topic is a structural device that signals discourse boundaries. The exception to this rule is a relative pronoun that stands in the preverbal position of a subordinate clause. This usage merely links the relative clause to its head clause.

Sometimes, both a marked topic and a marked focus may occur in the same clause. For example, in 4:17b, ὅτι ἐν ἐξουσίᾳ σου τὸ πᾶν ἐστίν, ἐν ἐξουσίᾳ σου is a marked topic because it is old information, where the second person pronoun, σου, is anchored to the vocative of the preceding clause. Both the marked topic (ἐν ἐξουσίᾳ σου) and the marked focus complement (τὸ πᾶν) occur in the same stative clause.²⁷

The topic of a subordinate clause is typically coded as marked (Quirk 1972:950; Terry 1995:148). For example, in the subordinate clause, ὃ ἐστίν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς μου ἐν ἡμέραις ὀπτασίας μου, of 4:17w, the indefinite pronoun, ὃ, is a marked topic. However, it is not prominent; rather, it functions as an anaphoric referent back to τὸ σημεῖον τῆς ὑπερηφανίας μου of the previous clause.²⁸ The marked topic of the subordinate clause is attracted to the left of the verb in order to be closer to the main clause constituent which governs it (Buth 1992b:84; Abraham 2007:201).

Another pragmatic function of the marked topic is to highlight a choice among several options. For instance, the marked topic, ἡ γυνή ἣ ἂν ἀρέσῃ τῷ βασιλεῖ, in 2:4 signifies the winner of the selection process for the new queen.²⁹

One of the uses of marked topic is to signal contrastive topics (Dooley 1982; Lambrecht 1994:291-292; Heimerdinger 1999:206; Sgall 2003:174; Erteschik-Shir 2007:51).

Sometimes both elements of a contrastive topic pair are marked. For example, in 3:11, τὸ μὲν ἀργύριον (the first marked topic) contrasts with τῷ δὲ ἔθνει (the second marked topic).³⁰

²⁷This construction is also found in 4:17d, 17g, 17l; 5:1f, 4.

²⁸Other examples include ὣν αὐτῇ ἐνετείλατο ὁ εὐνοῦχος ὁ φύλαξ τῶν γυναικῶν in 2:15, ἣν ἐπηγγείλατο Ἀμὺν τῷ βασιλεῖ in 4:7, ἣν ποιήσω αὐτοῖς in 5:8, ἣν ὁ βασιλεὺς αὐτῷ περιέθηκεν in 5:11.

²⁹Another example is found in 3:2.

³⁰Other examples include the contrast between the marked topics, οἱ δὲ κατοικοῦντες ἐν ταῖς μητροπόλεσιν and οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι οἱ διεσπαρμένοι ἐν πάσῃ χώρᾳ τῇ ἔξω in 9:19.

Contrastive marked topic may be used in a series to denote the rapid change of characters in a narrative. For example, the marked topic occurs successively in 7:6 (Aman); 7:7[1] (the king); 7:7[2] (Aman).

But, contrastive topic does not have to be coded exclusively by marked topics. For example, the marked topic, σὺ δὲ καὶ ὁ οἶκος τοῦ πατρός σου in 4:14, contrasts with the marked focus, ἄλλοθεν βοήθεια καὶ σκέπη, of the preceding clause.

2.3.2 Present and other aspects

A salient word order is not the only means of coding clausal markedness. The second means of coding clausal markedness is a salient verbal aspect (Bhat 1999:97, 180).

A discourse may be separated into the mainline (also known as foreground) and offline. Often, the mainline action of the narrative genre is coded by a default verbal aspect. For biblical Greek, that default aspect in narrative genre is the perfective aspect³¹ (Bhat 1999:180; Levinsohn 2000a:§10.2; Westfall 2005:57-59).³²

Fanning's (1990:420-1) claim that "aspect has nothing inherently to do... with prominence in discourse" is dubious. For example, his view that the present aspect "reflects an internal viewpoint which focuses on its development or progress" does not therefore infer that the present aspect cannot be pragmatically prominent.

Whereas the perfective aspect, such as the aorist tense, is the default verbal aspect for the mainline narration, a verb is marked as prominent by the present aspect in biblical Greek (Boos 1984; Levinsohn 1987:95; Porter 1992:302; Levinsohn 2000a:§12.2; Mathewson 2008). In this study corpus, the relative frequency of the occurrence of the present aspect with respect to the total occurrence of the verb supports this position. The verb occurs a total of 1006 times. The aorist tense occurs 580 times (58% of the total), and is therefore unmarked. On the other hand, the present tense occurs 249 times (25% of the total), and is therefore marked compared to the aorist.

Of the 249 occurrences of the present tense, the present participles (104 occurrences) and the present infinitives (41 occurrences) are located in the sentence peripheries. They are

³¹The terminology of "perfective aspect" is a linguistic term referring to a verbal action that is completed. The Greek aorist is one form of the perfective aspect. Perfective aspect is not to be confused with the perfective tense in the parsing system of the Greek verb.

³²But the default verbal aspect may differ according to the discourse genre (Longacre 1985b:172; Wald 1987:508; Longacre 1995a:351; 1996:21; Long 1999; Levinsohn 2000b).

not considered as pragmatically prominent because peripheral elements are not normally central to the text to begin with.³³

Other forms of the present tense, such as:

- (a) the imperative mood (occurring 6 times), which is 9 percent of all occurrences (67 times) of a verb in the imperative mood;
- (b) the indicative mood (occurring 91 times), which is 16 percent of all occurrences (555 times) of a verb in the indicative mood;
- (c) the subjunctive mood (occurring 7 times), which is 27 percent of all occurrences (26 times) of a verb in the subjunctive mood; and
- (d) the middle voice (occurring 67 times), which is 34 percent of all occurrences (198 times) of a verb in the middle voice

do mark prominence when they occur in a main clause.

Whereas Westfall (2005:57-59) views other aspects, such as the imperfect and perfect, as lying on a cline of aspectual prominence, these tense-aspects appear to code temporal tense or verbal aspect rather than pragmatic prominence in this study corpus.

The imperfect denotes the verbal aspectual meaning of repetitive, habitual, or gnomic action. For example:

- (a) the imperfect tense of περιεπάτει in ὁ Μαρδοχαῖος περιεπάτει κατὰ τὴν αὐλὴν τὴν γυναικείαν (2:11) denotes repetitive action;
- (b) the imperfect tense of προσεκύνουν in καὶ πάντες οἱ ἐν τῇ αὐλῇ προσεκύνουν αὐτῷ (3:2) denotes habitual action; and
- (c) the imperfect tense of ἐταράσσετο in ἐταράσσετο δὲ ἡ πόλις (3:15) signals gnomic action.

The perfect has the meaning of a past tense. For example, in 4:11, κἀγὼ οὐ κέκλημαι εἰσελθεῖν πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα εἰσὶν αὐταὶ ἡμέραι τριάκοντα, κέκλημαι refers to the fact that Esther had not been called in to see the king for a period of 30 days prior to the time of Esther's speech.

³³A peripheral element may however be marked as pragmatically prominent by a discourse particle, such as the usage of δέ as a marker of clausal prominence.

The future indicates future tense. For example, in 3:9, *κἀγὼ διαγράψω εἰς τὸ γαζοφυλάκιον τοῦ βασιλέως ἀργυρίου τάλαντα μύρια, διαγράψω* denotes that Aman is willing to pay 10,000 talents of silver into the king's coffer in the future (if the king consents to his plan to exterminate the Jews).

2.3.3 Markers of clausal prominence

The use of a discourse marker is the third way for marking clausal prominence (Denniston 1934, preface xxxix; Fraenkel 1947:198). The use of particles (Jay 1970:57) was rather loose in the Greek of Homer,³⁴ but the meaning of particles became more definite “in post-Homeric Greek” (Denniston 1932, preface lxv). Although authors do not always use particles consistently (1932, preface lxxviii), patterns of usage are discernable.

Firstly, clausal prominence may be signaled by *δέ* (Reed 1995:90; Cooper 1998:924, 1300). For example, *ὄντας δὲ υἱοὺς τοῦ ὑψίστου μεγίστου ζῶντος θεοῦ* in 8:12q[3] is a second right extraposition of the sentence that is in apposition to the first right extraposition (*δικαιοτάτοις δὲ πολιτευομένους νόμοις*) of 8:12q[2]. Semantically, the second right extraposition reinforces the idea of the first right extraposition. Structurally, this reinforcement of meaning is coded by *δέ*, which shows that the clause (8:12q[3]) is pragmatically prominent.³⁵

δέ does not “indicate background material” (Levinsohn 1987:91; Levinsohn 2000a:§5). Rather, information (including background) “that is significant for the further development of the story” may be highlighted by *δέ*.

Second, clausal prominence may be signaled by the discourse marker *οὐδέ* (Goodwin and Gulich 1930:303; Denniston 1932, preface xx, 196-8; Funk 1961:230),³⁶ which is “the negative form of *καί* as well as *δέ*” (Cooper 2002:3067). 4:17x, *οὐδὲ ἔπιον οἶνον σπονδῶν*, is one example.³⁷

Similarly, the discourse marker, *μηδὲ*, is a pragmatic device that highlights a clausal constituent as prominent. For example, in *καὶ μὴ φάγητε μηδὲ πίνητε ἐπὶ ἡμέρας τρεῖς νύκτα καὶ ἡμέραν* (4:16), *μηδὲ* highlights *πίητε*. Whereas a person may go without eating for three

³⁴A particle in Greek simply means an indeclinable word.

³⁵Other examples include 4:14; *ἰδόντες δὲ οἱ ἐν Σούσοις ἐχάρησαν* (8:15); *τοῖς δὲ Ἰουδαίοις ἐγένετο φῶς καὶ εὐφροσύνη* (8:16).

³⁶*Οὐδέ* is not just a connective in the study corpus (Robertson 1934:1185).

³⁷Other examples include 10:3b.

days without ill, Esther is asking the Jews to endure the greater suffering of going without water for three days and nights.³⁸

Thirdly, one of the functions of the particle *καί* is to signal the markedness of a nominal constituent (Reed 1995:89). For example, in 9:18, Ἦγον δὲ καὶ τὴν πεντεκαδεκάτην μετὰ χαρᾶς καὶ εὐφροσύνης, the position of the noun phrase, τὴν πεντεκαδεκάτην, is in its normal position within the comment focus. But *καί* highlights this constituent as pragmatically salient.³⁹

Fourthly, clausal markedness may be coded by *τοτέ*. Contrary to Arndt and Gingrich (1957:831) and Funk (1961:240), *τοτέ* is not “a connective particle to introduce a subsequent event”. Rather, it highlights the time of the clause as significant (Buth 1982; Levinsohn 2000a:§6.1). In this study corpus, *τοτέ* occurs only three times in the main clause (2:13; 4:16; 7:10), and each instance cooccurs with a salient moment in the narrative. But the use of *τοτέ* in the right extraposition of 9:31, καὶ τότε στήσαντες κατὰ τῆς ὑγιείας αὐτῶν καὶ τὴν βουλήν αὐτῶν, may not signal clausal prominence because it does not refer to a specific instance of time.

Fifthly, clausal markedness is signaled by rhetorical questions (Neeley 1987:§3.2.3; Young 1994:221), which often occurs towards the end of a discourse section (Neeley 1987:§2.4), and provides a link to a following section (Young 1994:223). There are three unambiguous examples of rhetorical question (4:14; 7:8; 8:6) in the study corpus.

The clause τί ἔτι ἐπιζητεῖς in 8:7 is ambiguous because it may be interpreted either as (a) a normal interrogative clause, or (b) a rhetorical question. Read as an interrogative clause, the king is probably talking to himself, where he pauses to think about what the next course of action should be. Read as a rhetorical question, the sense is that the king has already made up his mind at the time of this utterance to annul the original edict that Aman drafted.

A rhetorical question is sometimes further highlighted by the particle *πῶς* (Porter 1994:216). For example, *πῶς* occurs in the rhetorical question in 8:6, πῶς γὰρ δυνήσομαι ἰδεῖν τὴν κάκωσιν τοῦ λαοῦ μου.

³⁸Other examples include 1:19.

³⁹This use of *καί* is also found in (a) 9:19, οἱ δὲ κατοικοῦντες ἐν ταῖς μητροπόλεσιν καὶ τὴν πεντεκαδεκάτην τοῦ Ἀδαρ ἡμέραν εὐφροσύνην ἀγαθὴν ἄγουσιν, where the nominal constituent (τὴν πεντεκαδεκάτην τοῦ Ἀδαρ), which is marked by being fronted before the main verb (ἄγουσιν), is further highlighted by *καί*, and (b) 7:8, ὥστε καὶ τὴν γυναῖκα βιάζῃ ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ μου, where *καί* accentuates the pragmatic salience of the marked focus, τὴν γυναῖκα. Further examples include 10:3k.

Sixthly, clausal markedness may be signaled by a constituent coded in the vocative case (Westfall 2005:66-76). The correlation between the vocative and clausal markedness is evidenced by its rarity. Whereas the noun occurs 1541 times in the study corpus, the vocative case occurs 22 times. The vocative only occurs as part of a dislocation, either in a (a) left, (b) medial, or (c) right dislocation.

When the vocative occurs in the left dislocation, it not only coincides with clausal prominence, but also with foreground. For example, the vocative, *Μαρδοχαῖε*, in the left dislocation of 3:3, *τί παρακούεις τὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ βασιλέως λεγόμενα*, stands at the beginning of a direct speech proper and hence coincides with foreground. At the same time, it coincides with clausal prominence, which is evidenced by the fact that both (a) the interrogative particle, *τί* (a marked focus), and (b) the verb, *παρακούεις* (in the present aspect) in the main clause signal local prominence.⁴⁰

Another example of the convergence of the vocative and other devices of clausal prominence is found in 4:17l, *κύριέ μου ὁ βασιλεὺς ἡμῶν σὺ εἶ μόνος*, where (a) the left extraposed clause, *κύριέ μου*, is a vocative, and (b) the nominal complement in the main clause, *ὁ βασιλεὺς ἡμῶν*, is coded as a marked focus (preceding the marked topic).

A vocative standing in the right dislocation has the same use as a vocative in the left dislocation. For example, in *ἡμᾶς δὲ ῥῦσαι ἐν χειρί σου... κύριε* (4:17t), the vocative in the right dislocation, *κύριε*, (a) coincides with the end of a foreground section, and (b) adds prominence to the sentence.⁴¹

A vocative that occurs in a medial dislocation only signals local prominence, and is not motivated by foreground. For example, the vocative, *κύριε*, in *ὅτι σύ κύριε ἔλαβες τὸν Ἰσραὴλ ἐκ πάντων τῶν ἐθνῶν καὶ τοὺς πατέρας ἡμῶν ἐκ πάντων τῶν προγόνων αὐτῶν εἰς κληρονομίαν αἰώνιον* (4:17m), is pragmatically salient, but occurs in a subordinate clause that is the background.⁴²

Seventhly, clausal markedness may be signaled by a stative clause with a copular verb and a marked focus complement (Dik 1997a:198-9). For example, *Ἰουδαῖός* in 3:4, *ὅτι Ἰουδαῖός ἐστιν*, is a marked focus complement in a stative clause. It is prominent in the discourse because this is the first instance where Mordecai reveals that he is a Jew. His former

⁴⁰The vocative occurs in a left extraposition seven times (3:3; 4:13; three times in 4:17b[1], and 4:17f, 17l).

⁴¹The vocative occurs in a right extraposition 12 times (4:17d, 17h, 17n, 17r[2], 17r[5], 17t, 17y; 5:1f, 2a[5], 3, 6[4]; 7:2[3]).

⁴²The vocative occurs in a medial extraposition three times (4:17m, 17q; 5:2a[2]).

reticence on this issue and his previous insistence on the need for Esther to conceal her identity as a Jew (2:20) can only be guessed. But here, he shows his willingness to risk his personal survival in order to preserve his religious devotion to God.⁴³

Eighthly, clausal markedness may be signaled by the particle ὥστε. For example, in 7:8[5], ὥστε καὶ τὴν γυναῖκα βιάζη ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ μου, the particle ὥστε reinforces the local prominence of the clause which is also signaled by (a) the rhetorical question, and (b) the marked focus, τὴν γυναῖκα.⁴⁴

Ninthly, clausal markedness may be signaled by the particle ὅπως. One example is found in 8:12u[2-3]. It is not possible to interpret ὅπως καὶ νῦν καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα σωτηρία ἦ ἡμῖν καὶ τοῖς εὐνοοῦσιν Πέρσαις simply as a consequence of the preceding sentence (8:12u[1]), καὶ ὑμεῖς οὖν ἐν ταῖς ἐπωνύμοις ὑμῶν ἐορταῖς ἐπίσημον ἡμέραν μετὰ πάσης εὐωχίας ἄγετε. Rather, ὅπως marks the prominence of the clause.⁴⁵

Tenthly, clausal markedness may be signaled by οὖν (Buth 1992a:157; Reed 1995:90). Contrary to Funk (1961:234-5), Neeley (1987:§1.1.2), and Levinsohn (2000a:§17), the presence of οὖν does not automatically signal a return from background to foreground. For instance, in ὡς οὖν ἀντεῖπεν τῷ βασιλεῖ Ἀρταξέρξη (1:17), οὖν occurs in a background clause and does not begin a foreground section. οὖν is used here to signal the local prominence of the clause.

2.4 Coherence

The structure of a text does not only encode pragmatic signals at the clausal level, but also at the level above the clause.

2.4.1 Episodic structure

In a text, clauses work together to form episodic structure. The unity of clauses within an episode is known as coherence (Givon 2007:258-262). Coherence is structured by cognitive processes, such as (a) the “iconic sequencing of time” (Dik 1997b:433-41), (b) the continuity of a narrative location (Gernsbacher 1997:16-8), (c) “cognitively based default ordering such

⁴³The prominent use of the stative clause with a marked focus is also found in 1:11; 4:17b[3]; 5:1f[1], 1f[6], 3[4], 4, 6[3]; 7:2[2]; 8:12u; 10:3.

⁴⁴Other examples include 8:12l, 9:13.

⁴⁵Other examples include 8:12s.

as cause-effect, event-result, condition-consequence, action-purpose” (Dik 1997b:433-41), or (d) the continuity of a set of discourse referents (Givón 2007:258-262). An episode may also be coherent because clauses within the episode share the same situational context. The key is that there is semantic unity (Eggins 1994:87-8), and pragmatic unity in the underlying structure of an episode.

The concept of coherence is difficult to specify because the cognitive categories that contribute to coherence operate independently and simultaneously (Givón 2007:258-262). The unity in one cognitive category may co-exist with the disunity of another cognitive category. For example, a stretch of text in an episode may be unified by an orderly temporal sequence; while, at the same time, the location changes several times within the same stretch of text. Another stretch of text may be unified by the same location, but the cast of characters which is in it may change several times.

Since each cognitive category is coded by cohesion devices, the fact that coherence is an aggregate of the multiple cognitive categories means that coherence is expressed by cohesion devices (Mosenthal and Tierney 1984; Giora 1985). The notion of coherence is rich, and is not simply signaled by the connectives only (van Dijk 1981:273-5).

The fact that coherence correlates with multiple underlying cognitive factors (that are in flux) implies that there is a gradation to coherence. This leads to the question of whether it is proper or possible to define an episode as a unitary entity with definite and recognizable boundaries. Unger (1996) denies this proposition. He says that the paragraph (or episode) “cannot be seen as a structural unit of discourse”.⁴⁶

While Unger’s caution should be kept in mind for the discourse analysis of a text above the clausal level, the opposite school believes that it is possible to break a text down into discernable episodic units (van Dijk 1980:86; Neeley 1987:§2.4; Cotterell 1989:241; Levinsohn 2000a:§17). An episode is defined as a “dominant” or, more likely, a “superordinate proposition” which presides over the clauses within that episode. It is highly unlikely that human cognition treats a text simply as a continuous string, since there is an inherent limit to the number of constituents within a cognitive set that “the mind can easily process”.⁴⁷

⁴⁶Also see Brinton (1996:41-4).

⁴⁷Neuropsychologists place the number at 7 (actually 5-9), i.e. the number of items the brain can store in short-term memory at one time. This number represents 7 isolated “bits” of data. The amount can be increased by means grouping items together.

Hence, the task of discourse analysis is to discover the existence and the boundaries of such episodic groupings in a text (Young 1994:253).

The proposition of an episode is defined as the (topical) theme that superordinates over the episode (Hollenbach 1975; van Dijk 1981:4, 186-191; Louw 1982:98; Callow 1998:§15.1; Chafe 2007:335-6). This is opposed to the definition given by Halliday (1967),⁴⁸ and Firbas (1992) that it is the (sentential) theme of the clause.

The first step in recovering an episodic theme is to identify common patterns that exist between sentences. Episodic thematicity is grounded in the continuity of topics, although this does not mean that a topic continuity may not contain, or be interrupted with, “sentences with a different topic” (van Dijk 1981:177-193).

It is rare for the author of a piece of ancient writing to explicitly encode the theme of an episodic in the same way that one would write a topical sentence or a topical phrase at the beginning of a paragraph in modern texts. But, there are two examples of this phenomenon in this study corpus. One example of this is found in 5:7. The noun phrase, τὸ αἴτημά μου καὶ τὸ ἀξίωμα μου, which appears at the beginning of Esther’s response (in her direct speech) to the king, is not part of a complete clause, but is simply a dangling constituent at the beginning of a sentence. The rest of Esther’s speech refers to this dangling constituent and explicates on her request to the king. Therefore, this constitutes a topical theme that unifies Esther’s entire speech. Another example of this phenomenon occurs in 6:7, where the noun phrase, ἄνθρωπον ὃν ὁ βασιλεὺς θέλει δοξάσαι, which is initial in Aman’s direct speech serves as the topical theme of entire direct speech that follows.

The second step in recovering the episodic theme is by the summary method (van Dijk 1980:46-9, 100-1; Neeley 1987:§3). Extraneous materials, such as “subordinate clauses, illustrations, quotations, and settings”, are first deleted. The rule of “generalization” then attempts to construct a proposition that is able to conceptually encapsulate the semantic details of the episode as a whole. Deletion and generalization operates recursively until the desired level of abstraction is arrived. The more compact the summary, the more conceptually abstract it is.

Whereas the first step can be observed directly from the surface coding of the text, the summary method of the second step is based on cognitive intuition. Therefore:

⁴⁸Halliday (1967:212) reverses the terminology of topic and theme, where his definition of (discourse) topic is the topical theme of this study, and his definition of (sentential) theme is the (sentential) topic of this study.

- (a) the cognitive reality of episodes exists;
- (b) the boundaries of an episode may be identified by structural criteria; but,
- (c) the semantic summary of an episode is open to interpretation because the summary becomes more abstract as it becomes more concise. While methods, such as the mapping of semantic fields (Reed 1997), ensure that the result of the process of abstraction is rooted in the existence of cognitive categories in the data, it is inevitable that the selection of details in the process of abstraction is influenced by multiple options. Practically, this means that whatever episodic theme that is given to a discourse section is a rational and probable interpretation of what that section is about, and is not a definitive label that can be scientifically proven by the rigor of mathematical logic.

A text may be broken down into many episodes, each having its own episodic theme (Pickering 1978:42; Reed 1995:81; Dik 1997b:314-5). Episodes are not only organized sequentially, but also hierarchically (Givon 2007:258-262). This means that “topic continuities” (episodes) may form a continuity at a higher level (Buth 1995).⁴⁹

2.4.2 Cohesion devices

Cohesion in the study corpus is achieved by (a) topicality, (b) the referential system, and (c) markers of semantic relations.

2.4.2.1 Topicality

Topicality is the primary means of achieving textual cohesion. Topicality keeps track of the “introduction of new information” and the continuation of old information (Grimes 1975:113).⁵⁰ It refers to the persistence of the topic in the text (Givon 1983:219; 2007:284), which is one of the primary means by which cohesion is achieved (Fang and others 1995:253; Kroon 1997:25).

The ability of human memory to retain and to recall information about a referent is limited (Kibrik 1999:49), since “only a small amount” of information “can be focused on at any one time” (Lambrecht 1994:93). This system of information recall is also called the activation

⁴⁹Also see Shimasaki (2002:48), Asher (2004:56), Westfall (2005:298).

⁵⁰Also see Halliday (1977:189-92), Dik (1997b:433-41).

status of referents. There are primarily two activation states. A referent is in the active state when it is in the hearer's working memory, and a referent falls into an inactive state through the lack of use.⁵¹

Morphologically, a referent which is in the active state is normally coded by an independent pronoun, a verbal suffix, or zero coding (Givon 1983:219, 241; Mithun 1987:325; Lambrecht 1994:95; Givon 1995a:104; Heimerdinger 1999:124; de Regt 1999b:95; Jelinek and Carnie 2003:266). The active state may also be coded by the linguistic category of definiteness (Lambrecht 1994:79). The active state only lasts for a relatively short textual distance (Taboada 2004:166-7).

In contrast to a referent in the active state, a referent in an inactive state is normally coded by a noun phrase when it is brought from the inactive state back to the active state (Givon 1983:250; Lambrecht 1994:96; Levinsohn 2000a:§8.2). The inactive state may be changed back to the active state even after lying dormant for a long textual distance (Taboada 2004:166-7).

2.4.2.1.1 Topicality in the narrative genre

The encoding of characters in narration is based on the concept of activation states. A referent normally persists in adjacent clauses without requiring the full noun phrase coding in koine Greek (Levinsohn 2000a:§8.2). For example, in 1:12, καὶ ἔλυπήθη ὁ βασιλεὺς. καὶ ὠργίσθη, The nominal coding of the topic, ὁ βασιλεὺς, does not need to reappear in the clause that follows (καὶ ὠργίσθη) because it remains topical in the discourse. This topicality rule is interrupted when (a) the topic shifts to another character, or (b) the topic identity needs to be clarified when other discourse referents come on scene.

The topicality rule normally needs to agree in grammatical person and grammatical number. For example, the topic καὶ ἐταράχθη in 4:4 is not the same as the topic of the preceding clause, καὶ ἀνήγγειλαν αὐτῇ, because the grammatical number of ἐταράχθη and ἀνήγγειλαν do not agree.

The cataphoric persistence of the topic helps to resolve ambiguous situations. For example, ξύλον in 7:9[3], καὶ ξύλον ἡτοίμασεν Ἀμαν Μαρδοχαίῳ τῷ λαλήσαντι περὶ τοῦ βασιλέως, is

⁵¹Lambrecht (1994:99-100) also refers to a semiactive state, which is somewhat in between the active state and the inactive state.

the marked topic rather than a marked focus because the topic of the next clause (7:9[4]), καὶ ὥρθωται ἐν τοῖς Ἀμαν, refers back to ξύλον.

Sometimes, the identification of the referent needs to be resolved by semantic deduction.

Firstly, the semantic principle of animacy helps to clarify the topic identity. In 4:3, σάκκον καὶ σποδὸν ἔστρωσαν ἑαυτοῖς, the identity of the topic (ἔστρωσαν) is unclear because the only preceding main clause is athetic sentence (κραυγὴ καὶ κοπετὸς καὶ πένθος μέγα τοῖς Ιουδαίοις). However, the transitivity of the verb, ἔστρωσαν, together with the reflexive pronoun, ἑαυτοῖς, imply that the topic must be an animate agent. This leads the reader to search for an animate agent in the preceding context. τοῖς Ιουδαίοις is identified as the topic because it is the only possibility.

The reverse of the principle of animacy is the principle of semantic inanimacy. In 3:13, καὶ ἀπεστάλη διὰ βιβλιαφόρων εἰς τὴν Ἀρταξέρξου βασιλείαν, the identity of the topic, ἀπεστάλη, is not clear because the grammatical number of the previous clause, καὶ ἔγραψαν (3:12), does not agree. The prepositional phrase, διὰ βιβλιαφόρων, provides the clue that the thing being sent must be an inanimate object. This allows the reader to decode the identity of the topic as a letter, even though it has been ellipsed from the coding of the clause.

Secondly, the principle of semantic deduction shows that sometimes the topic is the semantic agent of a preceding subordinate clause. For example, at first glance, the topic (ἐποίησεν) in 5:11, καὶ ὥς ἐποίησεν αὐτὸν πρωτεύειν καὶ ἡγεῖσθαι τῆς βασιλείας, agrees with the grammatical number and the grammatical person of the topic of the previous main clause (ὑπέδειξεν), suggesting that Aman is the topic of ἐποίησεν. But, since only the king qualifies to be the semantic agent of ἐποίησεν (when ἐποίησεν is used with the infinitive πρωτεύειν), Aman must be the semantic patient, αὐτὸν, instead. Therefore, the topic of ἐποίησεν is the semantic agent (ὁ βασιλεὺς) of the subordinate clause which immediately precedes.

Thirdly, semantic deduction shows that sometimes the referent of the topic of a clause is contained in the prepositional clause of a previous main clause in the foreground. In 4:17o, καὶ νῦν οὐχ ἱκανώθησαν ἐν πικρασμῷ δουλείας ἡμῶν, the topic, ἱκανώθησαν, is third person plural. The only preceding referent that has the same grammatical number and grammatical person is αὐτῶν in 4:17n. αὐτῶν is in turn an anaphoric referent that points to

the clause καὶ παρέδωκας ἡμᾶς εἰς χεῖρας τῶν ἐχθρῶν ἡμῶν. By semantic deduction, the only third person plural constituent in this clause is τῶν ἐχθρῶν ἡμῶν, hence this constituent is the topic referent.

Fourthly, in 2:9, καὶ ἔσπευσεν αὐτῇ, semantic deduction shows that the topic referent may be found in a prepositional constituent of a main clause in a preceding offline section. The topic, ἔσπευσεν, is not Esther, since Esther is the referent of αὐτῇ. The third person singular of the verb ἔσπευσεν provides a clue to the identity of the topic. Other than Esther, the only other third person singular in the prior text is αὐτοῦ. This shows the reader that the topic referent is also masculine. αὐτοῦ in turn refers to αὐτῷ, which finally refers to a prepositional element of a main clause in a preceding offline section (2:8), Γαί.

The rule of activation is sometimes applicable to the direct object of the clause. For example, the direct object in 2:23, ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς ἤτασεν τοὺς δύο εὐνούχους, is activated as a noun phrase (τοὺς δύο εὐνούχους). It then appears as a pronoun (αὐτούς) the next time that it is mentioned, καὶ ἐκρέμασεν αὐτούς. Similarly, in 3:1[2], ἐδόξασεν ὁ βασιλεὺς Ἀρταξέρξης Ἀμαν Ἀμαδαθου Βουγαῖον, Aman first appears as a direct object that is coded as noun phrase (Ἀμαν Ἀμαδαθου Βουγαῖον). It is then coded as a pronoun in 3:1[3] (αὐτόν), 3:1[4] (αὐτοῦ), and 3:2 (αὐτῷ).

Contrary to Black (1987:187), ellipsis is not only a “stylistic” device. Some constituents that are not considered to be significant at a certain point in the discourse are deleted (as ellipsis). For example, in 8:8, καὶ σφραγίσατε τῷ δακτυλίῳ μου, the thing which is to be sealed (the decree) is coded as a zero because this verbal argument is not important at this juncture of the discourse. In another example, 9:16 (Ἀπώλεσαν γὰρ αὐτῶν μυρίους πεντακισχιλίους τῇ τρισκαιδεκάτῃ τοῦ Ἀδάρ), the referent of αὐτῶν is not made explicit, even though the context is not entirely clear. It is only by the process of elimination that the referent of αὐτῶν is deduced to be the enemies of the Jews. The identity of the referent here is truncated because the emphasis is on the action performed by the Jews (Ἀπώλεσαν) rather than on the destruction of the enemies of the Jews (αὐτῶν).

Setting material that appears in the comment focus of a clause is often deleted (and assumed) in the clause that follows. For example, in 3:10, καὶ περιελόμενος ὁ βασιλεὺς τὸν δακτύλιον, the nominal (τὸν δακτύλιον) is missing from the following clause (ἔδωκεν εἰς χεῖρα τῷ Ἀμαν), since it is the action of giving the ring, rather than the ring itself, that is in view here.

2.4.2.1.2 Topicality and character types

The different types of narrative characters are coded by different topicality devices (Longacre 1989:142; Anderson 1995:33; Levinsohn 2000a:§8.2).

Major characters are usually first introduced by athetic sentence before they are used as a topic in the discourse. For example, the first appearance of Aman in the discourse is in 1:1r, where he is coded by a presentational focus, καὶ ἦν Αμαν Αμαδαθου Βουγαῖος ἔνδοξος ἐνώπιον τοῦ βασιλέως.

The introduction of Mordecai is unique. Like a minor character, he first appears as an unmarked topic in 1:1a[2], ἐνύπνιον εἶδεν Μαρδοχαῖος. But unlike the introduction of a minor character, his geneology and status is then specified in more detail by three right dislocation clauses that follow (1:1a[3]-1:1b[2]). This is followed by 1:1c, which gives further background information on him. Mordecai is introduced anew in 2:5-6. This time, Mordecai receives the coding of the entrance of a major character. The clause καὶ ὄνομα αὐτῷ Μαρδοχαῖος in 2:5 is a presentational focus. The rest of the background information about him is a literal repeat of his first appearance in Addition A.

The reason that Mordecai is introduced a second time is to provide a backdrop for the introduction of Esther. Like other major characters, Esther appears on the discourse in 2:7 in athetic clause, καὶ ἦν τούτῳ παῖς. But, her initial introduction (2:7[1]) is presented in terms of her relationship to Mordecai. She is not formally introduced until 2:7[3], καὶ ὄνομα αὐτῇ Εσθηρ, where she appears in a presentational focus in her own right.

Major characters tend to persist longer in the discourse than minor characters. For example,

- (a) Aman remains as the topic referent for 16 clauses between 8:12k-8:12o;
- (b) Mordecai persists for 10 clauses between 4:1-2; and
- (c) Esther persists for 61 clauses between 4:17k-5:1a.

The coding of the king is more ambivalent. Like a major character, it persists as the topic for 15 clauses between 5:1e-5:2. But, the king is not introduced by athetic clause. In Addition A, the king is first mentioned in 1:1a as part of a point of departure that orients

the reader to the temporal setting of the narrative.⁵² The king also appears in a temporal point of departure when it is first mentioned in the narrative proper in 1:1.

Topic need not always be a character, but may be the attribute of a character. In καὶ ἔπεσεν ἡ βασίλισσα. καὶ μετέβαλεν τὸ χρῶμα αὐτῆς ἐν ἐκλύσει. καὶ κατεπέκυσεν ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν τῆς ἄβρας τῆς προπορευομένης (5:1d), the topic, τὸ χρῶμα αὐτῆς, refers to the facial color of Esther. The switch from the topic, Esther (coded nominally), to her attribute, and then back to Esther (coded as a verbal suffix) takes place without disruption to the continuity of the topic chain.

In contrast to major characters, setting materials and minor characters may be treated as old information when they first appear in the discourse (Beekman 1968; Erteschik-Shir 2007:17-18). For example, the scribes, as a character class, appears for the first time in the discourse as an unmarked topic in 3:12, καὶ ἐκλήθησαν οἱ γραμματεῖς τοῦ βασιλέως μηνὶ πρῶτῳ τῇ τρισκαιδεκάτῃ.⁵³ In 1:18, αἱ τυραννίδες αἱ λοιπαὶ τῶν ἀρχόντων Περσῶν καὶ Μήδων, the minor character appears first as a marked topic.⁵⁴ Minor characters may also appear for the first time as part of the focus.⁵⁵ Minor characters may also be introduced as a right dislocation. For example, Arkesaios, Sarsathaios and Maleisear (the three counselors of the king) in 1:14 appear on the discourse in a right dislocation, Ἀρκεσαῖος καὶ Σαρσαθαῖος καὶ Μαλησεαρ, which is further specified by three more right dislocations afterwards.

In comparison to major characters, minor characters usually retain the nominal coding in order to receive adequate memory recall from the reader (Givon 1984). This could be attributed to the fact that minor characters, by definition, (a) occur with lower frequency, and (b) rarely occur as a persistent topic.

Most minor characters are created by the discourse and are relevant only with respect to that text. But “well known biblical characters are assumed to be stored in the long term memory of the hearer” (Heimerdinger 1999:165). For example, the author would expect the reader to know that a referent such as κληρονομίαν αἰώνιον in 4:17m refers to the land of Canaan that God promised to give to Israel.

⁵²The king then appears in 1:1b, ἐν τῇ αὐλῇ τοῦ βασιλέως, and 1:1m, τῶν δύο εὐνούχων τοῦ βασιλέως.

⁵³Other examples include Μουχαιος in 1:16, and κοράσια πολλὰ in 2:8.

⁵⁴Other examples include φῶς καὶ ὁ ἥλιος in 1:1k[1], οἱ ταπεινοὶ in 1:1k[2], and ξύλον in 7:9[3].

⁵⁵For example, the Ναβουχοδονοσορ ὁ βασιλεὺς Βαβυλῶνος in 1:1c, πᾶν ἔθνος (1:1f), Γαβαθα καὶ Θαρρα (1:1m), τοὺς ἐνδόξους (1:1k), τοῖς φίλοις καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς ἔθνεσιν καὶ τοῖς Περσῶν καὶ Μήδων ἐνδόξοις καὶ τοῖς ἄρχουσιν τῶν σατραπῶν (1:3), αἱ ἡμέραι τοῦ γάμου (1:5), and τοῖς οἰκονόμοις (1:8).

God, as a character in the narrative, is coded as a minor character. The first mention of God is in the focus comment of 1:1h, καὶ ἐβόησαν πρὸς τὸν θεόν. None of the other instances of the mention of God (1:1l; 2:20; 5:1a, 1e; 6:1[1], 13; 8:12d, 12q[3], 12r, 12t; 10:3a, 3f) are coded as a thetic clause.

Contrary to Levinsohn (2000a:§8.1),⁵⁶ ἰδοῦ⁵⁷ is not used to signal “the onset of a major participant”. Rather, ἰδοῦ is sometimes used to introduce a minor character. For example, in 1:1e, καὶ ἰδοὺ δύο δράκοντες μεγάλοι ἔτοιμοι προῆλθον, ἰδοὺ is used to signal the introduction of the minor character, δύο δράκοντες μεγάλοι, which is coded nominally.⁵⁸

Minor characters or setting materials are also coded by other stative verbs. For example, the stative verb (de Regt 1999a), ὑπάρχει, like ἰδοῦ, is used to introduce minor participants. For example, in ὑπάρχει ἔθνος (3:8), ὑπάρχει introduces the dummy character, ἔθνος. And in 1:1i, the setting material, ποταμὸς μέγας ὕδωρ πολὺ, is introduced by the stative verb ἐγένετο.

2.4.2.1.3 Topicality in reported speech

In a direct speech, the use of the first person usually refers to the speaker of the direct speech, and the use of the second person refers to the addressee. For example, in 1:13, ποιήσατε οὖν περὶ τούτου νόμον καὶ κρίσιν, the identity of the second person imperative refers to the addressees (τοῖς φίλοις αὐτοῦ) that were mentioned in the speech frame (καὶ εἶπεν τοῖς φίλοις αὐτοῦ).

An exception to the rule is found in 3:13f, προστετάχαμεν οὖν τοὺς σηματομένους ὑμῖν ἐν τοῖς γεγραμμένοις ὑπὸ Αμαν, where the first person plural topic, προστετάχαμεν, does not agree with the topic of the speech frame, τάδε γράφει, in 3:13a. Though the speech frame τάδε γράφει leads the hearers of the epistle to initially believe that the royal decree is from the king, the plural in the topic of 3:13f betrays the fact that the authorship of this epistle is not only traceable to the king, but also to Aman.

In 7:9[7], σταυρωθήτω ἐπ’ αὐτοῦ, the identity of the topic, σταυρωθήτω, is not specified. Since this occurs in a direct speech, the fact that the topic is in the third person rules out the king (the speaker) or Bougathan the eunuch (the addressee) as candidates. Going back

⁵⁶Also see van Otterloo (1988) and Young (1994:199).

⁵⁷The discourse marker ἰδοῦ is not to be confused with its verbal form, ἰδόντες, which does not function like ἰδοῦ (8:15[4]).

⁵⁸ἰδοῦ may also introduce a setting. Examples include the entrance of Aman in the king’s court (6:4), the announcement of Aman’s entrance in the king’s court (6:5[2]), and ξύλον (7:9[2]).

one conversation, the marked topic, ξύλον, in 7:9[3], is not the referent because wood is semantically inanimate and cannot be the object of crucifixion. Going back yet one more conversation, the third person singular, Aman, in 7:8[6] is the best candidate as the topic referent.

2.4.2.2 Referential system

The second type of coding for cohesion is the referential system. This refers to the use of deixis, which has the pragmatic function of linking one section of the discourse with other sections.

Firstly, deixis may function as an anaphoric referent. For example,

- (a) οὗτος is used in 1:8, ὁ δὲ πότος οὗτος, refers to the description of the drinking party in the preceding section (1:5-7);
- (b) τοῦτο in πυθομένου δέ μου τῶν συμβούλων πῶς ἂν ἀχθείη τοῦτο ἐπὶ πέρας (3:13c) refers anaphorically to the king's desire to establish peace throughout the kingdom (3:13b);⁵⁹
- (c) ταῦτά in καὶ ταῦτά μοι οὐκ ἀρέσκει (5:13) refers back to the honors that Aman has received from the king (5:11) and the fact that Esther did not call anyone to her banquet except for Aman and the king (5:12);
- (d) τὸ ῥῆμα in 5:14, καὶ ἤρρεσεν τὸ ῥῆμα τῷ Ἀμαν, refers to the entire speech of Aman's wife and his friends in the preceding context;
- (e) τὸ πρᾶγμα in 2:4, καὶ ἤρρεσεν τῷ βασιλεῖ τὸ πρᾶγμα, points back to the entire preceding speech of the king's servants (2:2-4); and
- (f) οὕτως in 2:4 has the same anaphoric referent as τὸ πρᾶγμα in 2:4.

Contrary to Gault (1990), ἐγένετο may not indicate a “change in participants or location”. Rather, in 1:1e, καὶ ἐγένετο αὐτῶν φωνὴ μεγάλη, the stative clause signaled by ἐγένετο has an anaphoric function of describing the attribute of a nominal entity in the preceding clause, δύο δράκοντες μεγάλοι.⁶⁰

⁵⁹Other examples include 4:17d, ὅτι οὐκ ἐν ὕβρει οὐδὲ ἐν ὑπερηφανίᾳ οὐδὲ ἐν φιλοδοξίᾳ ἐποίησα τοῦτο, where τοῦτο points back to the theme of not bowing. The τοῦτο in ἀλλὰ ἐποίησα τοῦτο (4:17e) points anaphorically back to the same theme.

⁶⁰Similarly, in 10:3a, παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐγένετο ταῦτα, the ἐγένετο stative clause is used to signal the anaphoric function of the deixis ταῦτα. In 10:3c, ἡ μικρὰ πηγὴ ἢ ἐγένετο ποταμός, ἡ μικρὰ πηγὴ refers back to 1:1i. In the

Secondly, deixis may function as a cataphoric referent. For example, τάδε in τάδε γράφει (3:13a) is a marked topic that points forward to the rest of the royal epistle.

οὗτος, τοῦτο, and οὕτως may also function as a cataphoric deixis. For example,

- (a) in 2:12, οὗτος δὲ ἦν καιρὸς κορασίου εἰσελθεῖν πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα, οὗτος points forward to the content of the rest of 2:12;
- (b) in 1:1d, καὶ τοῦτο αὐτοῦ τὸ ἐνύπνιον, τοῦτο is a cataphoric demonstrative pronoun pointing to the dream of Mordecai in the rest of Addition A. τοῦτο functions as a topical theme, and αὐτοῦ τὸ ἐνύπνιον is the label of this topical theme;
- (c) like οὗτος of 2:12, οὕτως in 2:12, οὕτως γὰρ ἀναπληροῦνται αἱ ἡμέραι τῆς θεραπείας, also functions cataphorically. Here, the scope of οὕτως is smaller than the scope of οὗτος. Whereas οὗτος refers to the entire period leading up to the time that a young girl goes in to see the king (2:12[1]-[4]), οὕτως only refers to the manner of the beauty treatment that a young girl receives before she sees the king (2:12[3]-[4]).

The marked position of a stative clause may also contain a cataphoric referent. For example, in 3:13a[1], τῆς δὲ ἐπιστολῆς stands in a marked position and cataphorically refers to the rest of the royal epistle in Addition B.⁶¹

A deixis may also function both anaphorically and cataphorically at the same time. For example, οὗτος in 7:5[2], τίς οὗτος, refers (a) back to ὁ διάβολος τῆς αὐλῆς τοῦ βασιλέως in 7:4, and (b) forward to ὅστις ἐτόλμησεν ποιῆσαι τὸ πρᾶγμα τοῦτο (7:5[3]).

οὕτως may refer to a spatial deixis. For example, οὕτως in οὕτως ἔσται παντὶ ἀνθρώπῳ (6:9) refers to the hypothetical scene where the person who is honored by the king is wearing the king's crown and riding the king's horse in public.

2.4.2.3 Markers of semantic relations

Some particles are used for textual cohesion rather than for clausal prominence (Porter and Reed 1991:161; Groom 2003:161).

first part of 1:1i, ἀπὸ δὲ τῆς βοῆς αὐτῶν ἐγένετο ὡσανεὶ, the point of departure in the ἐγένετο stative clause refers to the previous clause, καὶ ἐβόησαν πρὸς τὸν θεόν (1:1h). In 1:1, καὶ ἐγένετο μετὰ τοὺς λόγους τούτους ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις Ἀρταξέρξου, the ἐγένετο stative clause together with τοὺς λόγους τούτους to refer back to Addition A.

⁶¹Other examples include 2:12; 6:9; 8:12a.

Other than marking for clausal prominence, the particle ὥστε may signal semantic purpose (Moule 1953:143-4; Wallace 1996). For example, ὥστε πολεμῆσαι δικαίων ἔθνος in 1:1f denotes the purpose of the main clause (ἡτοιμάσθη πᾶν ἔθνος εἰς πόλεμον).⁶²

ὅπως, like ὥστε, may (a) mark clausal prominence, or (b) signal semantic relationship (Goodell 1902:271; Goodwin and Gulich 1930:288-9; Arndt and Gingrich 1957:580; Young 1994:190; Wallace 1996). ὅπως signals semantic purpose in 3:13g and 5:5.

2.5 Mainline and non-mainline

A text is usually not a uniformly linear progression from the beginning to the end. Texts tend to be differentiated into mainline (foreground) and non-mainline. As the name suggests, a mainline carries the main progression of the text. Non-mainline may be separated into background and offline. Background provides the temporal background to the mainline. Offline is a secondary textual thread that progresses alongside the mainline. Point of view concerns the variation of perspectives between the narrator and the actors in a story.

2.5.1 Background

Background is a common feature of texts. Background is textual content that may be “eliminated without drastically obscuring the main message” (Reed 1995:77; Sperber and Wilson 1995:217). This definition of background assumes that background is explicitly coded in the text. To define background as including implicitly coded information (Dixon 1987:86-7; Erbaugh 1987:127; Hopper 1995) is overly vague because implicitly coded information could include anything and everything which is not in the text.

Background may operate in a hierarchy, where a background section may be embedded in another background section (Reed 1995:81; Talstra 1995:178; Brinton 1996:45-8; Cooper 1998:1285; Levinsohn 2000a:§10). Sequential action may be found in a longer background section as well as in a foreground (Endo 1996:321-2).

The main function of background is to signal non-mainline. But sometimes, a background section may “strengthen some aspect of the previous material” (Levinsohn 2000a:§5.4).⁶³

⁶²Other examples of this type include 1:22; 3:7.

⁶³Also see Dana and Mantey (1955:242-3).

This means that prominence may occur in a background section (Longacre 1996:23). 10:3b, οὐδὲ γὰρ παρήλθεν ἀπ' αὐτῶν λόγος, is an example where a clause, signaled as background by γὰρ, is also signaled as prominent by the discourse marker, οὐδὲ.

The first major indicator of background is the discourse marker, γάρ. For example, the clause ἐπράθημεν γὰρ ἐγώ τε καὶ ὁ λαός μου εἰς ἀπώλειαν καὶ διαρπαγὴν καὶ δουλείαν in 7:4[1] provides the background to the main clause that precedes (Thrall 1962:46-50), δοθήτω ἡ ψυχὴ μου τῷ αἰτήματί μου καὶ ὁ λαός μου τῷ ἀξιωματί μου (7:3). It is because Esther and her people were sold into slavery that prompts Esther to ask the king to spare the lives of her people.⁶⁴

Whereas traditional grammar describes the semantic sense of γάρ as causal or explanatory (Denniston 1932, preface xv; Dana and Mantey 1955:242-3; Arndt and Gingrich 1957:151; Jay 1970:57; Funk 1973:498; Zerwick 1990:159; Porter 1994:207; Wallace 1996; Cooper 1998:1285), the use of γάρ at the discourse level does not simply mean “because”. Otherwise, 9:16, καὶ ἀνεπαύσαντο ἀπὸ τῶν πολέμων Ἀπώλεσαν γὰρ αὐτῶν μυρίους πεντακισχιλίους τῇ τρισκαιδεκάτῃ τοῦ Ἀδάρ, would mean that the Jews outside of the city of Susa stopped from war because they killed 15,000 of their enemies. This interpretation would be absurd, since killing a large number of enemies does not necessarily mean that the killing will cease.

γάρ usually occurs without the presence of other conjunctions (Levinsohn 2000a:§5.4). But sometimes καὶ and γάρ cohere (Denniston 1932, preface lii). One example of this is found in 1:17, καὶ γὰρ διηγῆσατο αὐτοῖς τὰ ῥήματα τῆς βασιλείας.

διὰ γὰρ may also cohere. This occurs in 8:12o, διὰ γὰρ τῶν τρόπων τούτων, where (a) γάρ signals that this clause is background, and (b) the prepositional phrase διὰ τῶν τρόπων τούτων is an anaphoric referent pointing back to the preceding mainline section.

The second major indicator of background is the discourse marker ὥς, as evidenced from the examples cited from classical Greek (Goodell 1902:268-9; Goodwin and Gulich 1930:290; Arndt and Gingrich 1957:907; Cooper 1998:1454), and biblical Greek (Wallace 1996).⁶⁵ For example, ὥς in καὶ ὥς ἐποίησεν αὐτὸν πρωτεύειν καὶ ἡγεῖσθαι τῆς βασιλείας (5:11) signals that the clause functions as background with respect to the preceding main clause, καὶ

⁶⁴Other examples include 7:4[3]; 8:1, 8, 12t; 9:1.

⁶⁵ὥς is also used as a comparative conjunction (Arndt and Gingrich 1957:907; Porter 1994:217; Wallace 1996). Examples include 3:11; 4:17w; 5:1b, 2a[2]; 8:8, 11.

ὑπέδειξεν αὐτοῖς τὸν πλοῦτον αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν δόξαν. It is because the king had formerly exalted Aman that Aman was able to display his wealth to his friends and his wife.⁶⁶

Sometimes, background is signaled by the occurrence of both ὥς and γάρ. This is shown in 8:12k, ὥς γάρ Αμαν Αμαδαθου Μακεδών, for example.

The third indicator of background is the discourse marker διότι, as demonstrated by examples from classical Greek (Goodell 1902:263) and biblical Greek (Wallace 1996).⁶⁷ In 4:8, διότι Αμαν ὁ δευτερεύων τῷ βασιλεῖ ἐλάλησεν καθ' ἡμῶν εἰς θάνατον functions as the background to the clause that follows, ἐπικάλεσαι τὸν κύριον.⁶⁸

The fourth indicator of background is ὅτι. Other than its use as an indicator of a subordinate clause or a complement clause,⁶⁹ ὅτι may also signal a clause as background. For example, in 2:21, the clause ὅτι προήχθη Μαρδοχαῖος is the background to the preceding main clause, καὶ ἐλυπήθησαν οἱ δύο εὐνοῦχοι τοῦ βασιλέως οἱ ἀρχισωματοφύλακες. The advancement of Mordecai is the precondition that caused the two eunuchs to be grieved.⁷⁰

Other than discourse markers, the stative verb may appear in a clause that has a background function (Levinsohn 2000a:§5.3).⁷¹ For example, in 2:15, ἦν γάρ Εσθηρ εὐρίσκουσα χάριν παρὰ πάντων τῶν βλέπόντων αὐτήν, the content of the stative clause is the background to the preceding main clause, οὐδὲν ἠθέτησεν. The reason that she did not set aside anything when she went in to the king was because she found favor before her supervisors in the first harem. The presence of the discourse marker γάρ further highlights the background nature of this stative clause.⁷² A stative clause alone, without the presence of γάρ, may also signal background. For example, in 3:7, the stative subordinating clause, ὅς ἐστιν Αδαρ, is old information that is provided as a background to the preceding main clause.⁷³

Although the subordinate clause may be mainline (Lowery 1985:319; Porter 1992:295), sometimes it functions as the background to the main clause (Longacre 1989:82; Dik

⁶⁶Other examples include 1:15, 17; 2:1; 3:12; 4:8, 14; 5:1, 1a; 6:2; 8:11; 9:25.

⁶⁷Contrary to Porter (1994:209), διότι is not a “subordinating conjunction”.

⁶⁸On the other hand, διότι may also be interpreted as “because” here. The paucity of data in the study corpus does not permit a conclusion on this matter.

⁶⁹For example, ὅτι ἐτοιμάζουσιν τὰς χεῖρας ἐπιβαλεῖν Ἀρταξέρξη τῷ βασιλεῖ (1:1n) is a complement clause of the preceding main clause, ἐξηρεύνησεν καὶ ἔμαθεν.

⁷⁰Other examples include 4:17b, 17i; 9:26.

⁷¹The stative clause is used as the equative nominal complement in 4:17w; 5:1c; 10:3f.

⁷²Another example of this type is 8:8.

⁷³Other examples of this type include 1:1c; 2:6, 20; 3:7, 13; 8:12; 9:1, 22.

1997b:124; Levinsohn 2000a:§16.1). For example, the subordinate clause, ἦν εἶπεν Εσθηρ, in 5:5 is background with respect to the preceding main clause.⁷⁴ A subordinate clause that functions as background often contains old information that is in focal relation to the marked topic.⁷⁵

2.5.2 Offline

Contrary to Buth (1995:88-99), who defines background as “anything not in the foreground”, there is a difference between background and offline. Offline is primarily signaled by the asyndeton. For example, in 4:3, σάκκον καὶ σποδὸν ἔστρωσαν ἑαυτοῖς. This clause is not a background in relationship to the previous clause, κραυγὴ καὶ κοπετὸς καὶ πένθος μέγα τοῖς Ιουδαίοις, since the spreading of sackcloth and ashes is not a precondition to the loud cry and mourning of the Jews.⁷⁶

The distinguishing characteristic of offline is some type of incoherence between the offline material and the mainline. This occurs when the topic changes rapidly (Chamberlain 1960:154), or when the material begun with an asyndeton heads off in a new direction in the text (Smyth 1920:484-5; Cooper 2002:2649).

Although the incoherence of offline has been described by other researchers as vivid (Endo 1996:324), full of “emotional effect” (Denniston 1934, preface xlv-xlvi), climatic (Robertson 1934:428), the use of the asyndeton is in fact pragmatically unmarked (Buth 1992a:157; Reed 1995:89).

Secondly, offline is signaled by the passive voice. For example, in 4:4, καὶ ἐταράχθη, the passive voice of the verb indicates the shift of this clause from the mainline to offline. This claim is supported by the syntax, where (a) the mainline (καὶ ἀνήγγειλαν αὐτῇ) is syntactically transitive (Hopper and Thompson 1980:251; Martin-Asensio 2000:175) and semantically visible, and (b) the offline is syntactically intransitive and semantically invisible and intrapersonal.⁷⁷

⁷⁴Other examples include 4:17m; 8:1, 2, 3.

⁷⁵The subordinate clause in 7:10 is one example.

⁷⁶Other examples include 9:2, 11.

⁷⁷However, a verb that is passive imperative does not signal offline. For example, in 5:14 (καὶ κρεμασθήτω Μαρδοχαῖος ἐπὶ τοῦ ξύλου), the jussive passive imperative verb, κρεμασθήτω, is (a) highly transitive, and (b) is a visible action.

2.5.3 Foreground

Foreground (or mainline) refers to the main portion of a text. For the narrative genre, the mainline refers to the main temporal sequence of the story (Lowery 1985; Neeley 1987:§3; Sperber and Wilson 1995:217; Brinton 1996:45-8; Endo 1996:324).

The return from a non-mainline section back to the mainline is facilitated by certain coding devices (Emmott 1999:23).

Firstly, *vûv* may be used to signal a return from offline to the mainline, which is one of the non-adverbial usages of *vûv*⁷⁸ (Goodell 1902:291; Thrall 1962:30-2; Porter 1994:213; Cooper 2002:3058).⁷⁹ For example, after the asyndeton in 4:17n, *δίκαιος εἶ*, signals a shift from the mainline to offline, and *καὶ vûv* (4:17o) signals a shift from the offline back to the mainline.⁸⁰

The use of *vûv* as a device to signal the return to the mainline often coincides with the occurrence of a noun in the vocative case. This is shown in 4:17f, *καὶ vûv κύριε*, where *κύριε* is vocative. The prominence of the vocative is an attentional device that reinforces the pragmatic function of *vûv*.

Secondly, *ἰδού* may signal the return to the mainline. Contrary to Westfall (2005:66-76), *ἰδού* is not a marker for clausal prominence. For example, in 10:2, *Ἰδού γέγραπται ἐν βιβλίῳ βασιλέων Περσῶν καὶ Μήδων εἰς μνημόσυνον*, *ἰδού* returns the text from the minor break of 10:1 back to the mainline.

The third means of signaling the return to the mainline is the redundant coding of a topic (Tomlin 1987:474-5; Levinsohn 2000a:§8.2; Runge 2007:206). For example, in 2:16, *καὶ εἰσῆλθεν Εσθηρ πρὸς Ἀρταξέρξην τὸν βασιλέα τῷ δωδεκάτῳ μηνί*, the nominal coding of *Εσθηρ* is redundant, since the topic of the previous clause (2:15) is also *Esther*. The identity of the topic in 2:16 would be clear even if the topic were coded by a verbal suffix. The topic is redundantly coded by the nominal to signal a transition from the background back to the foreground.

⁷⁸The non-adverbial use of *vûv* is attested throughout the Septuagint (Gen 27:8, 43; 31:16, 30, 44; 37:20; 41:33; 44:30, 33; 45:5, 7-8; 47:4; Exod 32:32; 1 Kgs 9:13; 10:19; 15:1, 25; 24:22; 25:17), and the New Testament (Luke 11:39; John 15:22; Jas 5:1).

⁷⁹The adverbial usage of *vûv* occurs in 3:13g; 4:17y; 8:12u[2].

⁸⁰Another example is *vûv* in 4:17n.

A topic may also be coded redundantly at a major boundary. For example, in 2:1, καὶ μετὰ τοὺς λόγους τούτους ἐκόπασεν ὁ βασιλεὺς τοῦ θυμοῦ, ὁ βασιλεὺς is redundant, since the topic of the previous clause (1:22) is the same. This redundant coding coincides with the beginning of a major boundary and calls attention to it.⁸¹

Fourthly, the return to the foreground may be signaled by a change in genre, the grammatical person, or the verbal tense aspect mood (Neeley 1987:\$1.1.1; Porter 1992:301). Often, several coding devices occur together to effect the pragmatic signal (Reed 1995:83).

2.5.4 Point of view

Point of view refers to the variations that exist between reported speech and narration in the narrative genre.

Point of view explains the reason that material covered in the narrative is often repeated in a reported speech. For example, the fact that the king gave Aman the power to exterminate the Jews is stated in the narration of 3:10, καὶ περιελόμενος ὁ βασιλεὺς τὸν δακτύλιον ἔδωκεν εἰς χεῖρα τῷ Αμαν σφραγίσαι κατὰ τῶν γεγραμμένων κατὰ τῶν Ιουδαίων. Yet, the pronouncement of this decree in the epistle, προστετάχαμεν οὖν τοὺς σημαινομένους ὑμῖν (3:13f), occurs in a comment focus and is new information to the reader (or hearer) of the royal decree. This creates a double effect where 3:13f is at the same time (a) old information to the reader of the book of Esther, and (b) new information to the reader (or hearer) of the decree.

Another example occurs in 6:9, ὃν ὁ βασιλεὺς δοξάζει, where the comment focus, ὁ βασιλεὺς δοξάζει, is new information to the hearer of the aural proclamation. But this piece of information is old information to the reader of the narrative, since it is mentioned on three prior occasions (6:6[3], 6[6], 7).

Point of view also accounts for what seems to be conflicting data in the text. For example, Aman says that the king had made him first in the kingdom, καὶ ὥς ἐποίησεν αὐτὸν πρωτεύειν καὶ ἡγεῖσθαι τῆς βασιλείας (5:11). This assertion is true in the sense that nobody in the kingdom had more authority than Aman, except for the king himself. But Aman's use

⁸¹The nominal coding of a topic shift in an extraposition may or may not indicate a return to foreground. 1:11, καὶ διεγερθεὶς Μαρδοχαῖος, is an example where the topic shift (Μαρδοχαῖος) in the extraposition coincides with a return to the foreground from the preceding offline section. However, 3:5, καὶ ἐπιγνοὺς Αμαν, is a contrary example where the topic shift (Αμαν) in the extraposition coincides with a shift to offline instead.

of the word πρωτεύειν stressed his own importance; while Mordecai noted more correctly that Aman was only the second in the kingdom, διότι Αμαν ὁ δευτερεύων τῷ βασιλεῖ (4:8), since the king still occupies the highest position in the kingdom.

Point of view creates irony for the reader of the narrative. In 6:1-3, the king is prompted by God to recall the kindness of Mordecai. Since this information is not available to Aman, he walks into the palace expecting that the king will grant him the power to put Mordecai to death (6:4). But the reader of the narrative does not share the expectation of Aman in 6:4, since the reader is already aware of the information contained in 6:1-3.

Also, within the speech of Aman's wife, in 6:13, ὅτι θεὸς ζῶν μετ' αὐτοῦ, Aman's wife is able to discern that "a living god" is with Mordecai. The spiritual perspicuity of Aman's wife at this juncture contrasts with Aman's inability to read the workings of God in human affairs. This is due to his pride, which ultimately caused his downfall.

Point the view is formally coded by reported speech. There are two main types of reported speech, namely direct speech, and indirect speech (Levinsohn 2000a:§16).

The beginning of the direct speech proper (after the speech orienter) is asyndetic. For example, ἀπώλεσαν οἱ Ιουδαῖοι ἐν Σούσοις τῇ πόλει ἄνδρας πεντακοσίους (9:12) is asyndetically connected to the speech frame, εἶπεν δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς πρὸς Εσθηρ.

A direct speech may be embedded by another direct speech. For example, in 4:10, εἶπεν δὲ Εσθηρ πρὸς Αχραθαῖον is the first direct speech frame. This is followed by πορεύθητι πρὸς Μαρδοχαῖον καὶ εἰπὸν ὅτι, which is the second direct speech frame.

In an indirect speech, "the pronominal reference of the quotation and the quotative frame are identical" (Miller 1996:399-407).⁸² Indirect speech is used less frequently than direct speech (Robertson 1934:442). Indirect speech primarily serves as background (Levinsohn 2000a:§16).⁸³ One example of an indirect speech functioning as background is εἰπεῖν τῷ βασιλεῖ (6:4), where Aman comes into the court, intending to ask the king to hang Mordecai, but never got the chance to say it. This indirect speech is sandwiched in between two foreground clauses: (a) 6:4 (where the king asked who was in the court), and (b) 6:5 (where the officials answered the king that Aman was in the court).⁸⁴

⁸²Also see Rohrer (1986:79).

⁸³But, indirect speech that mostly presents sequential information may signal foreground (Lowery 1985).

⁸⁴Other examples of indirect speech that indicate background include 1:10-11; 2:20; 6:1[2]; 8:11; 9:25; 10:31.

An indirect speech may be embedded in a direct speech. For example, in 4:8, καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ ἐντείλασθαι αὐτῇ, Mordecai talks to Esther's servant in a direct speech frame (εἶπεν αὐτῷ), whereas ἐντείλασθαι αὐτῇ that follows is an indirect speech frame referring to the content that the servant is to tell Esther.

More rarely, an indirect speech may switch to a direct speech in the middle of a clause. In 4:8, μνησθεῖσα ἡμερῶν ταπεινώσεώς σου, the feminine singular form of the participle, μνησθεῖσα, accords with the indirect speech frame. But, the following constituent, ἡμερῶν ταπεινώσεώς σου, in the clause relates to the direct speech frame, καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ.⁸⁵

Other rarer forms of reported speech include the hypothetical indirect speech, such as μὴ εἴπῃς σεαυτῇ (4:13), which is not an actual speech performance.

A series of reported speech may function together to form a dialogue. The major characteristic of a dialogue is the conversational exchange between two or more speakers (Bonderia 2006:97). Dialogue has many forms, including simple resolved, simple unresolved, question and answer, proposal and response, remark and evaluation (Longacre 1989:186-191).

An example of a dialogue is found in 6:6[1] to 6:10, where the king asks Aman a question in 6:6[1] (εἶπεν δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς τῷ Αμαν), and Aman answers the king in 6:7 (εἶπεν δὲ πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα). The king then gives Aman an order in 6:10 (εἶπεν δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς τῷ Αμαν).

A more complicated example is the complex dialogue (Longacre 1989:192-7), which is found in 7:2[1] to 7:6. The first exchange of this complex dialogue begins in 7:2[1] (εἶπεν δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς Εσθηρ τῇ δευτέρᾳ ἡμέρᾳ ἐν τῷ πότῳ), where the king elicits information from Esther, to which Esther replies in 7:3 (καὶ ἀποκριθεῖσα εἶπεν). The second exchange of this complex dialogue begins with a question from the king for more specific information in 7:5[1] (εἶπεν δὲ ὁ βασιλεύς). In 7:6 (εἶπεν δὲ Εσθηρ), Esther gives the specific information requested.

Compared to direct speech, which is usually signaled by εἶπεν, ἐκήρυσεν, and ἐλάλησαν in the speech frame,⁸⁶ the speech frame of indirect speech may be signaled by a greater

⁸⁵This reported speech structure is similar to a semi-direct speech “where the personal forms switch to those appropriate to the actual speaker of the matrix sentence, but whose all other traits are like a direct quotation” (Goldenberg 1991:92).

⁸⁶The one instance of ἐλάλησαν in a speech frame occurs in a stand alone direct speech (3:3), rather than a dialogue. The lack of data in the study corpus does not permit an evaluation of the claim that ἔλεγε (or its cognates) is “primarily used in opening discussions” (Dik 1995:136).

variety of speech verbs, including εἶπεν (1:10; 6:1, 4), ἀπήγγειλαν (1:15; 6:2), ἐπέταξεν (8:11), ἐνετείλατο (2:20; 4:8), ὑπέδειξαν (3:4; 4:7), and ἔφη (10:31).

Similar to narration, point of view may be marked. In contrast to the unmarkedness of speech frames that have only one verb (Meier 1992:325; Miller 1996:405), a direct speech that has more than one speech verb in the speech frame is marked. For example,

- (a) the addition of the redundant λέγων at the end of the direct speech frame in 3:8,⁸⁷ καὶ ἐλάλησεν πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα Ἀρταξέρξην λέγων, signals the pragmatic markedness of the accusation of Aman against the Jews;⁸⁸
- (b) the pragmatic markedness of a speech frame may be signaled by the addition of the verb πορεύθητι. For example, 4:13, πορεύθητι καὶ εἰπὸν αὐτῇ, is the second time that Mordecai asked Axrathaion to go and talk to Esther. Compared to the first instance in 4:8, which began as an indirect speech (having a background function), the speech frame in 4:13 signals a marked direct speech. The urgency in the second speech frame is also corroborated by the imperatival mood of the verb πορεύθητι; and
- (c) the pragmatic markedness of a speech frame may be signaled by the addition of the verb ἀποκριθεῖσα or its cognate to the speech frame (Levinsohn 2000a:§14.1). In 7:3, καὶ ἀποκριθεῖσα εἶπεν, the addition of ἀποκριθεῖσα to the speech frame is a means of pragmatically highlighting the answer to a pragmatically salient question. In this case, the question that the king posed to Esther in 7:2[1], εἶπεν δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς Εσθηρ τῇ δευτέρᾳ ἡμέρᾳ ἐν τῷ πότῳ, is highly marked, since (a) the redundant encoding of ὁ βασιλεὺς is marked, (b) the question itself, τί, is coded as a marked focus, and (c) the question is highlighted by vocative, Εσθηρ βασίλισσα.

The markedness of a speech frame is also promoted by the redundant coding of the speaker or the addressee.⁸⁹ Contrary to Longacre (1989:184), the “explicit mention of a speech act participant” is not restricted to specific forms of dialogue, but is related to prominence. For

⁸⁷This does not include cases where λέγων (or its cognate) is the only speech verb in the speech frame, which takes place in 4:15 (λέγουσα), and 9:25.

⁸⁸Other examples of this type include 6:9, καὶ κηρυσσέτω διὰ τῆς πλατείας τῆς πόλεως λέγων (which marks the proclamation that Aman wants the king to bestow on him), and a little later in 6:11, καὶ ἐκήρυσσεν λέγων (when Aman had to proclaim the conferral of the king’s honor on Mordecai instead).

⁸⁹Other examples include πρὸς Εσθηρ in 5:6, πρὸς αὐτὸν (referring to Aman) in 5:14; 6:13; τῷ βασιλεῖ in 9:13. In 8:7, πρὸς Εσθηρ is redundant because the king and Esther are in a closed conversation and the identity of Esther is clear even without the coding of πρὸς Εσθηρ. In an open conversation, on the other hand, the coding of the addressee is not redundant because more than one referent is possible for the identification of the addressee. The coding of the addressee in an open conversation occurs in the speech frames of 1:16; 3:8; 4:10, 13; 6:7.

example, the fact that the coding of both the speaker and the addressee is present in the dialogue from 6:6[1] to 6:10 signals that there is considerable tension at this juncture of the narration (Longacre 1989:178).

2.6 Prominence above the clause

A comparison between texts of the same genre, such as the narrative genre, shows that the sequencing of episodes is often a conscious choice made by the author (van Dijk 1981:4, 186-191; Lambrecht 1994:90; Sanford and Moxey 1995:184; Longacre 1996:310). Narration often follows the pattern of “setting, successive episodes, complications, resolutions, and evaluation” (van Dijk 1980:112-115).⁹⁰ The resolution of the story is often marked by peak structures that are uniquely identifiable.

Other than clausal markedness, prominence may occur above the clausal level (Dik 1997b:388-400). There are classes of prominence above the clause, each having its own “associated operators” (Hengeveld 1989). The three major types of prominence above the clause are: (a) episodic prominence, (b) global prominence, and (c) didactic prominence.

2.6.1 Episodic prominence

Contrary to Lambrecht (1994), athetic clause is not prominent in and of itself (Talstra 1995:178). Rather, event focus is only an “unmarked way of reporting” an event (Hopper 1995:147).

However, a consecutive sequence of clauses that only contain new information (such as thetic clauses) speeds up the action of an episode, and constitutes an episodic prominence. For example, the six consecutive right extrapositions of 4:17ο, (a) ἐξᾶραι ὄρισμὸν στόματός σου, (b) καὶ ἀφανίσαι κληρονομίαν σου, (c) καὶ ἐμφράξαι στόμα αἰνούντων σοι, (d) καὶ σβέσαι δόξαν οἴκου σου καὶ θυσιαστήριόν σου, (e) καὶ ἀνοῖξαι στόμα ἐθνῶν εἰς ἀρετὰς ματαίων, and (f) καὶ θαυμασθῆναι βασιλέα σάρκινον εἰς αἰῶνα, only contain new information. This forms an episodic prominence, highlighting the fact that the enemies of God are doing their utmost to remove the people of God from the face of the earth.⁹¹

⁹⁰Also see Longacre (1999a:140-1).

⁹¹Another example are the three imperative thetic clauses in 5:1f, (a) θάρσει, (b) οὐ μὴ ἀποθάνῃς, and (c) πρόσελθε that occur consecutively to highlight the king’s acceptance of Esther.

2.6.2 Global prominence

Whereas episodic prominence concerns the prominence of a group of clauses in proximity to each other, global prominence deals with the prominence of certain textual elements that are operative throughout the text. The term global means that the scope of global prominence may cross discourse or episodic boundaries. Global prominence is also coded by the structure of the text (van Dijk and Kintsch 1983:203-4; Givon 2007:270-6). The cognitive basis for global prominence is that a “representation” (or a referent) becomes more accessible to a reader’s mind when it occurs more often in the text and is processed more by the reader (Reed 1995:78; Sperber and Wilson 1995:77). The repetition and redundancy of global prominence also contributes to the coherence of a text (Goodell 1902:296; Muraoka 1985:165-6; Young 1994:254; de Regt 1999b:72; Levinsohn 2000a:§17.2; Heimerdinger 2002:37).

The first means of signaling global prominence is the repetition of certain constituent elements or propositions in the text (Goodell 1902:296; Nida 1983:46). For example, the month of Adar is a globally prominent theme because it is a formula that the narrator uses frequently throughout the text. After its first mention in 2:16, ὅς ἐστιν Αδαρ τῷ ἐβδόμῳ ἔτει τῆς βασιλείας αὐτοῦ, it is repeated in 3:7, 13; 8:12; 9:1, 22.⁹²

The downfall of Aman is foreshadowed when Aman, in 6:11, ὃν ὁ βασιλεὺς θέλει δοξάσαι, repeated word for word the same phrase in 6:9. Whereas Aman thought he would be honored, Aman is ordered by the king to honor Mordecai instead.

Even though global prominence usually operates across a long distance across a text, global prominence may also occur across a short span. For example, καὶ αὐριον ποιήσω τὰ αὐτά (5:8) is a repeat of the preceding subordinate clause. The repetition of the marked focus, αὐριον, shows that the second banquet of Esther is a prominent event.

The signaling of global prominence by repetition is not equal to the repeat of any surface form. For example, καὶ οὐδὲν διήρπασαν in 9:16 has exactly the same surface form as 9:15. Yet, the clause in 9:16 is neither a real repeat of 9:15, nor does it signal global prominence because the topic in 9:16 (the Jews outside of Susa) refers to a different group of people from the topic of 9:15 (the Jews in Susa).

⁹²Other examples include (a) the repetition of εὐφροσύνης (8:16) in 8:17; 9:19, 22; 10:3k, (b) ἀγαθὴν in 9:19, 22, and (c) the repetition of God in 10:3f[5], 3f[6].

Focal relation (Lambrecht 1994; Shimasaki 2002) is the second way of signaling global prominence. This occurs when old information stands where new information normally appears (the comment focus position). The old information is in focal relationship to the topic. This is a globally prominent form of pragmatic focus. For example, in 7:10, ὁ ἡτοίμασεν Μαρδοχαίω, ἡτοίμασεν Μαρδοχαίω is old information (mentioned before in 6:4) that is in focal relation to the marked topic, ὁ. It is repeated in the form of a focal relation to highlight a reversal, where the wooden gallows that was designed to kill Mordecai will now be used as the instrument for Aman's own execution.

The third means of signaling global prominence is the redundant coding of a topic (Givón 1983:219; Porter 1992:303). In 8:8, γράψατε καὶ ὑμεῖς ἐκ τοῦ ὀνόματός μου ὡς δοκεῖ ὑμῖν, the independent pronoun (καὶ ὑμεῖς) is redundant because the grammatical number of the verb, γράψατε, already makes clear that the topic refers to Esther. This redundancy marks the topic, Esther, as globally prominent. The prominence of the pronoun, ὑμεῖς, is also highlighted by the καί which precedes it.

In καὶ ἐπέταξεν ὁ βασιλεὺς Μαρδοχαίω θεραπεύειν ἐν τῇ αὐλῇ (1:1q), the nominal coding (ὁ βασιλεὺς) of the topic is redundant because there is no topic shift from the previous clause. This is a signal that the king is a globally prominent topic,⁹³ which highlights his authority.⁹⁴

The global prominence of a redundant topic is often further highlighted by the locally prominent use of δέ.⁹⁵ For example, ὁ βασιλεὺς in 6:6, εἶπεν δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς τῷ Αμάν, is globally prominent because (a) it is a redundant coding of the topic, and (b) it is not used to signal a return to the foreground. At the same time, the function of δέ is to make this speech frame locally prominent in order to further highlight its importance.⁹⁶

Redundancy of a topic may be marked by an adverb. For example, in 5:5, καὶ παραγίνονται ἀμφότεροι εἰς τὴν δοχὴν, the identity of the third person plural topic does not need clarification because the preceding context is clear that it refers to the king and Aman. But the adverb, ἀμφότεροι, is redundantly added to make the topic globally prominent.

⁹³This phenomenon also occurs in 2:23; 3:11.

⁹⁴The prominence of the authority of the king is also signaled by the fronting of a nominal constituent, such as τοῖς τοῦ βασιλέως λόγοις (3:4), before a participle.

⁹⁵This does not mean that all occurrences of the nominal coding, ὁ βασιλεὺς, is redundant. In 8:4, ἐξέτεινεν δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς Εσθηρ τὴν ῥάβδον τὴν χρυσήν, for example, the coding of the nominal, ὁ βασιλεὺς, is necessary in order to make clear that it is the king, rather than Esther, who extended the golden rod.

⁹⁶Other examples include εἶπεν δὲ πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα in 6:7, and εἶπεν δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς Εσθηρ τῇ δευτέρᾳ ἡμέρᾳ ἐν τῷ πότῳ in 7:2.

A non-topic may be marked by redundancy as globally prominent. For instance, the default encoding for Esther in 2:17, καὶ ἡράσθη ὁ βασιλεὺς Εσθηρ, is a feminine pronoun, since Esther is the only feminine referent available in the immediate clausal vicinity. But, the more explicit proper noun is used because the writer wishes to highlight the fact that it is Esther whom the king loves.⁹⁷

Fourthly, global prominence occurs in an inclusio.⁹⁸ In contrast to Wyckoff (2006), an inclusio is defined in this study to be a global structure where a section of material begins and ends with the same surface coding. Contrary to Levinsohn (2000a:§1), inclusio signals global prominence rather than the existence of a discourse boundary. For example, 4:17b[4], καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ ἀντιδοξῶν σοι, begins an inclusio that is ended by καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ὃς ἀντιτάξεται σοι τῷ κυρίῳ (4:17c). The end of this inclusio is globally prominent because it is a repeat of the surface structure of the beginning of the inclusio. But the two ends of an inclusio do not necessarily coincide with a discourse boundary. In this case, the beginning of the inclusio is not a discourse boundary or an episodic boundary, and the end of this inclusio coincides with a transition to an offline of the same discourse section.

2.6.3 Didactic prominence

The plot of a story does not necessarily contain only one peak (Easley 1994:120). But a story may have more than one peak, such as an “action peak” or a “didactic peak”, where each peak is a high point in the story (Longacre 1985b:173). An action peak (Longacre 1985a:96-97; 1999a:143) is coded by episodic prominence or global prominence, whereas a didactic peak is usually near the end of a discourse (Neeley 1987:§2.3; Reed 1995:82) and is coded by special structural devices.

Contrary to Goodwin and Gulich (1930:289), διὰ τοῦτο is not just the semantic “final” of a clause.⁹⁹ Rather, the discourse marker διὰ τοῦτο signals the didactic prominence of a narrative (Reed 1995:90; Longacre 1996:23-47). This is supported by the claim that διὰ τοῦτο

⁹⁷Another example of the redundancy of a non-topic is found in 7:10, καὶ ἐκρεμάσθη Ἀμὼν ἐπὶ τοῦ ξύλου, where τοῦ ξύλου is redundant because ἐπ’ αὐτοῦ of the previous clause already makes clear that the referent is the crucifix.

⁹⁸The literature commonly discusses chiasm and inclusio together (Young 1994:252). The main problem with the usual definition of chiasm is that it is often treated as semantically, where any pair of semantic structure that may be contrasted in a parallel fashion may be considered as a chiasm. The looseness of this definition sometimes causes a reader to assume the existence of a chiasm where none could be proven.

⁹⁹The plural form (διὰ ταῦτα), however, does not signal the didactic peak. Rather, it has a referential function. For example, in 9:26, διὰ ταῦτα καὶ ὅσα αὐτοῖς ἐγένετο, διὰ ταῦτα is an anaphoric referent.

is an intensification (marked form) of οὖν (Westfall 2005:66). For example, in 9:18, διὰ τοῦτο οὖν οἱ Ιουδαῖοι οἱ διεσπαρμένοι ἐν πάσῃ χώρᾳ τῇ ἔξω ἄγουσιν τὴν τεσσαρεσκαίδεκάτην τοῦ Αδὰρ ἡμέραν ἀγαθὴν μετ' εὐφροσύνης, διὰ τοῦτο is used in addition to οὖν to signal didactic prominence.

The certainty that a textual location is the peak of the story is strengthened when multiple devices of textual prominence cooccur, such as when global prominence and local prominence or episodic prominence occur together.

2.7 Discourse boundaries

A text may be separated into sections that are relatively distinct from each other. Although some discourse sections are less distinct than others (Guthrie 1995:38-9; Unger 1996:430), textual boundaries do exist. They are sometimes coded by structural features and may be recovered through textual analysis (Dik 1997b:386).

This view is an improvement upon notions of discourse boundaries that arise from theological insight. This is illustrated by 5:1e, καὶ μετέβαλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ βασιλέως εἰς παραΰτητα, which is supposed to be one of the most important verses in the book of Esther in the Septuagint and is therefore a discourse boundary (Dorothy 1997). This intuition is based on the theological argument that God's intervention at this moment is critical. Without the supernatural agency of God, (a) Esther would be put to death, (b) Esther would not be able to act as an advocate on behalf of the Jews, (c) the plan of Aman would prevail, and (d) the Jewish race would be exterminated. The problem with this analysis (from the perspective of information structure) is that the structure of the text does not support this theological claim. The unmarked topic, ὁ θεός, is a temporary shift of the topic, which indicates a minor break. The fact that God occurs for the first time here in the articular form in the unmarked position is consistent with the onset of a minor character. The most remarkable thing about the structure of this clause is the fact that it is totally unremarkable. Hence, this clause does not signal a discourse boundary.

Information structure leads to an informed judgment on the pragmatic status of καὶ διεγερθεὶς Μαρδοχαῖος in 1:1l. Dorothy's (1997) claim that there is a discourse boundary here because the discourse genre shifts from the apocalyptic to the narrative is tenuous because this claim is not supported by the information structure.

A similar example is found in 1:1m, καὶ ἡσύχασεν Μαρδοχαῖος ἐν τῇ αὐλῇ μετὰ Γαβαθα καὶ Θάρρα, where there seems to be a distinct shift in genre and content at this point that divides Addition A into two parts. The section prior to 1:1m describes the content of Mordecai's dream, and the section beginning at 1:1m is about Mordecai's discovery of the plot of the two eunuchs to kill the king. However, there is no structural evidence that 1:1m is a discourse boundary because (a) there is topic continuity, and (b) the shift in content at this point is not signaled by a temporal or locative indicator, or any discourse markers.

2.7.1 Boundary types

Discourse boundaries often coincide with discontinuities in time, topic (Reed 1995:82), and location (Grimes 1975:82-3, 94-5; van Dijk and Kintsch 1983:44-5, 204; Young 1994:252; Brinton 1996:41-4; Levinsohn 2000a:§1; von Herrmann 2004:172). Of these, the discontinuity of topic is the most important in the study corpus.

2.7.1.1 Major boundaries

A major discourse section is defined in this study as an aggregate of episodes and minor breaks within episodes. Both major boundaries and episodic boundaries are cognitive realities that are coded by textual structure. But a major discourse section superordinates over an episode in cognition. This reality is revealed by the fact that the coding structures of major boundaries occur less frequently, which is therefore more cognitively salient.

Firstly, a major boundary is signaled by a marked topic that is a topic shift. This is an optimal structure to signal discontinuity in the discourse because it seldomly occurs. Hence, it is a cognitively salient signal that there is a major shift in the discourse (Lowery 1985:317; Bandstra 1992; Lambrecht 1994:201-2; Buth 1995:89; de Regt 1999b:95; Schmid 1999:45-6; Floor 2004:352) that persists for some textual distance (Dik 1995:229; Heimerdinger 1999:102). This claim is supported by the crosslinguistic finding that in a “strong verb-subject language” (those having over 60% of the word order as verb-subject), such as septuagintal Greek, “the verb-subject word order is statistically correlated with temporally sequenced clauses” (Myhill 1992b:265), and “the subject-verb word order is correlated with temporally unsequenced clauses”. Since the subject is normally the pragmatic topic, this means that a fronted (marked) topic is a signal for discourse discontinuity. This type of major boundary occurs in locations such as 2:5, 12, 20, 23; 3:13a, 14; 4:1, 7, 17, 17k; 5:1c; 6:12[2]; 8:17[5]; 9:16, 18; 10:3.

Secondly, a major boundary is signaled by a temporal or a locative indicator (Robertson 1934:443-4) that occurs in a point of departure or a left extraposition (Levinsohn 2000a:§17). This claim is supported by cognitive studies that children “as young as 9 years old” use temporality to signal narrative discontinuity (Bestgen and Costermans 1997:213-5). A major boundary signaled by a temporal indicator is found in locations such as 1:1, 5, 10;

2:1, 15; 3:1; 5:1, 2b, 6; 8:1. A major boundary signaled by a locative indicator occurs in places such as 1:1i; 4:3; 9:6.

Thirdly, major discourse sections of the study corpus may be signaled by the use of the asyndeton (Turner 1963:341; Grimes 1975:328; Cooper 1998:924). For example, the beginning of the study corpus in 1:1a as well as the beginning of the epilogue (10:3l) start with an asyndeton.¹⁰⁰

2.7.1.2 Episodic boundaries

In this study, an episode marked by an episodic boundary equates to a stretch of text that is united by some type of textual cohesion. But this does not mean that a discourse section marked by a major boundary is not characterized by textual cohesion. A major boundary or an episodic boundary are just different forms of a cognitive episode. The difference between the two is that (a) compared to the cohesion of an episode, the cohesion of a major boundary may be less tight and unified by fewer cohesion devices, and (b) an episode is hierarchically nested under a major discourse section. Major boundaries are terminologically distinguished from episodic boundaries in order to reflect the reality of this nesting in cognition.

Whereas a topic shift coded as a marked topic signals a major boundary, a topic shift coded as an unmarked topic also signals a discourse boundary. For example, in 1:21, καὶ ἐποίησεν ὁ βασιλεὺς, the unmarked topic, ὁ βασιλεὺς, (a) is a shift from the previous topic, and (b) has cataphoric persistence. But since an unmarked topic is in a structural position that is pragmatically less salient than the marked topic, the discourse boundary that is signaled by the unmarked topic (an episodic boundary) is also less salient than the boundary signaled by the marked topic (a major boundary). Therefore the two function hierarchically, where the episodic boundary is embedded within the major boundary. The fact that the episodic

¹⁰⁰The structural signals of major boundaries may all be objectively mapped to their corresponding narrative realities. A locative indicator (the surface structure) correlates with a certain textual location, which is a textual reality that can be assessed independently from the surface form. Similarly, a temporal indicator correlates with textual time, a marked topic that persists as a topic with an actor in focus, and an asyndeton with a redactional juncture of the text. While any number of other narratological features of the text may be boundary features, this study finds that the three types of major boundary structures listed above are the only ones that show a consistent correlation between form and narratological function.

boundary is less salient than the major boundary is also attested by the fact that it occurs more frequently.¹⁰¹

The second means of signaling a discourse boundary (or transition to something new) is the particle οὖν (Smyth 1920:665; Denniston 1932:425-6; Robertson 1934:1191; Dana and Mantey 1955:252-6; Arndt and Gingrich 1957:597; Reimer 1985; Levinsohn 1987:139; Porter 1994:305; Young 1994:191; Cooper 1998:1408; Levinsohn 2000a:§5.3; Cooper 2002:3082).

In the study corpus, οὖν primarily occurs in reported speech. Semantically, it signals a call to action or states a conclusion at the end of an exhortation (Goodell 1902:291; Denniston 1932, preface xxix; Chamberlain 1960:152; Jay 1970:58; Funk 1973:499). Since, reported speech is subsumed under major boundaries, a discourse boundary signaled by οὖν is necessarily nested under the major boundary. For example, in 3:13f, προστετάχαμεν οὖν τοὺς σηματομένους ὑμῖν ἐν τοῖς γεγραμμένοις ὑπὸ Ἀμάν, the presence of οὖν signals a transition within the epistle from the recognition that the Jews are a threat to the kingdom's stability to the call for their extermination. This transition is an episodic boundary.¹⁰²

Thirdly, the particle δέ may be used to signal a shift in the thematic content within a reported speech. Like οὖν, the use of δέ in this context signals a boundary that is lower than a major boundary. One example is 3:13c, πυθομένου δέ μου τῶν συμβούλων πῶς ἂν ἀχθείη τοῦτο ἐπὶ πέρας, which begins a new stage in the hortatory speech. After going through the epistolary preliminaries, Aman is introduced as being the key person who keeps the administration in running smoothly.¹⁰³

Fourthly, the sections of an epistle are marked by the asyndeton (Funk 1961:240-2). This is another form of the episodic boundary. For example, the royal epistle of Addition E begins with an asyndeton in 8:12a, ὧν ἐστὶν ἀντίγραφον τῆς ἐπιστολῆς τὰ ὑπογεγραμμένα.¹⁰⁴

2.7.1.3 Minor breaks

Either a marked topic or an unmarked topic that is a temporary shift (a shift that does not last beyond the sentence in which it is in) signals a minor break in the discourse. A minor

¹⁰¹It occurs in places such as 1:8, 16, 21; 2:2, 7, 18; 3:3, 11; 4:4, 10, 12, 13, 15; 5:1d, 3, 4, 5, 9; 6:2, 3[1], 3[3], 4, 5[1], 5[3], 10, 11; 7:1, 5, 6, 8, 9[1], 9[6]; 8:2, 7; 9:12[1], 13, 15, 20, 29; 10:3f, 3i.

¹⁰²Other examples include 1:19; 3:13e; 5:4; 8:12r, 12u; 9:12[5], 19.

¹⁰³Other examples include 8:12e, 12g, 12m.

¹⁰⁴Other examples include 4:17l; 6:13; 8:12b[1], 12b[2], 12c.

break is not a discourse boundary, but an interruption or a pause. For example, in 8:13, τὰ δὲ ἀντίγραφα ἐκτιθέσθωσαν ὀφθαλμοφανῶς ἐν πάσῃ τῇ βασιλείᾳ, the marked topic (τὰ ἀντίγραφα) does not last beyond one sentence. The topic of the next sentence in 8:14 shifts and begins an episodic boundary.¹⁰⁵

The previous example shows that a marked topic that is a temporary shift may signal a minor break (Shimasaki 2002:179). But, a minor break is dependent on the temporary shift of the topic rather than the markedness of the topic. This means that a minor break may also be signaled by an unmarked topic that is a temporary shift. This is exemplified by 5:1e, καὶ μετέβαλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ βασιλέως εἰς πραῦτητα, where the unmarked topic (ὁ θεὸς) only lasts for one clause.

2.7.2 δέ and καί

The usage of particles is not only limited to the clausal level (Funk 1961; Hewett 1986; Porter 1992:204-5; Porter 1994:301; Wallace 1996:667-78; Rouchota 1998:121-2). Particles may also indicate the transition between two macropropositions (van Dijk 1980:102-3; Louw 1982:116-7; van Dijk and Kintsch 1983:202-4; Larsen 1991b; Reed 1995:89; Brinton 1996:36-9; Kroon 1997:19). There is not a one to one correspondence between the occurrence of a particle and a paragraph break. Rather, a particle or a discourse particle facilitate the transition “between utterances” where an unusual level of change in context occurs (Schiffrin 1987:320; Unger 1996:431).

Although the use of particles varies across the biblical authors (Levinsohn 2000a:§5), the two major particles that signal discourse boundaries across many biblical authors are δέ and καί.

2.7.2.1 καί

καί has a wide range of usages. In contrast to some particles, the function of καί has remained stable throughout the history of the Greek language (Denniston 1932, preface lv-lvii). καί primarily signals the continuation of a topical theme in a discourse (Robertson

¹⁰⁵Other examples include 1:8, 9; 2:19, 22; 3:2, 7, 15; 4:4, 9, 11, 16, 17i; 5:1e, 2b[1], 2b[2]; 6:1, 4, 12[1]; 7:1, 6, 7[1], 7[2], 8[1], 8[2], 8[6], 10; 8:2, 4[1], 4[2], 12p[1], 12x, 14, 15[1], 15[4], 16; 9:28; 10:3d.

1934:1180-1; Dana and Mantey 1955:250-1; Arndt and Gingrich 1957:392-4; Turner 1963:334-5; Buth 1992a:157; Young 1994:187-8; Levinsohn 2000a:§5). It includes:

- (a) linking “items of equal status” (Funk 1961:227-9);
- (b) confirming an earlier proposition, and functioning like an adverbial clause (Levinsohn 2000a:§6.2);
- (c) conjoining with subordinating conjunctions, such as ὅτι, ἵνα, ὥστε, ὅτε to denote subordinating clauses (Titrud 1991); and even
- (d) having an adversative sense.

The second major usage of καί is to signal the transition of the topical theme in a text (Dana and Mantey 1955:250-1).

Both of these usages of καί are illustrated in 5:1, καὶ ἐγενήθη ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ ὡς ἐπαύσατο προσευχομένη ἐξεδύσατο τὰ ἱμάτια τῆς θεραπείας καὶ περιεβάλετο τὴν δόξαν αὐτῆς, where (a) the first καί marks the discourse boundary that is between the end of Addition C and the beginning of Addition D, and (b) the second καί conjoins περιεβάλετο τὴν δόξαν αὐτῆς and ἐξεδύσατο τὰ ἱμάτια τῆς θεραπείας as two equal comment foci of the same sentence.

2.7.2.2 δέ

The primary discourse usage of δέ is to signal a transition (Smyth 1920:644; Denniston 1932, preface xix, xlviii-xlix; Robertson 1934:1183-5; Dana and Mantey 1955:244; Arndt and Gingrich 1957:170; Chamberlain 1960:150; Jay 1970:56; Zerwick 1990:157; Cooper 1998:924; Cooper 2002:2935), or a shift in the topical theme (Levinsohn 1987:96; Buth 1992a:157; Young 1994:183, 187-8; Reed 1995:89; Levinsohn 1999:333; 2000a:§5.4). This is supported by the fact that δέ is never associated with γάρ (Denniston 1932, preface lii).¹⁰⁶ Contrary evidence offered by Thrall (1962:50-65) are limited to specific incidences from the gospel of Mark (1:30; 6:19; 15:6; 15:16), which merely show that there are a variety of usages for δέ. It, however, does not rule out the possibility that δέ may be used as a transition of the topical theme.

¹⁰⁶καί, on the other hand, is often associated with γάρ.

Secondly, δέ may be used to show contrast between clauses (Arndt and Gingrich 1957:170; Chamberlain 1960:151; Funk 1961:231-2; Turner 1963:331; Funk 1973:497-8). For example, δέ in 8:12p, δικαιοτάτοις δὲ πολιτευομένους νόμοις, signals an oppositional contrast with the preceding clause (οὐ κακούργους ὄντας).¹⁰⁷

Clausal contrast involving δέ is sometimes accompanied by the use of μὲν in the first element of the contrastive pair (Porter 1994:212; Dik 1995:48; Levinsohn 2000a:§10).¹⁰⁸ For example, in 8:14, οἱ μὲν οὖν ἱππεῖς ἐξῆλθον (the first element of the pair) is contrasted with ἐξετέθη δὲ τὸ πρόσταγμα καὶ ἐν Σούσοις (the second element of the pair). The contrast concerns the location of the proclamation. Whereas the proclamation is sent to places far away, it is also publicized in the city of Susa. The importance of the location is also reflected by the fact that καὶ ἐν Σούσοις stands in the position of the dominant focal element.¹⁰⁹

2.7.2.3 Interchangeability of δέ and καί

A shift in the discourse topic that is signaled by δέ is illustrated by 4:10, εἶπεν δὲ Εσθηρ πρὸς Αχραθαῖον, where the unmarked topic (Εσθηρ) signals a topic shift, which is accompanied by the occurrence of δέ.¹¹⁰ But in fact, the usages of καί and δέ overlap (Denniston 1932:162, 173, 199; Porter 1994:208). This is illustrated by the fact that an unmarked topic that is a topic shift may also be signaled by καί, which is shown in 8:2, καὶ κατέστησεν Εσθηρ Μαρδοχαῖον ἐπὶ πάντων τῶν Αμαν.

δέ and καί are often used interchangeably. For example, both are used to signal:

- (a) a major boundary, where the particle δέ¹¹¹ or the particle καί¹¹² may cooccur with a marked topic that is a topic shift;

¹⁰⁷Other examples include (a) ἀπώλεσαν οἱ Ιουδαῖοι ἐν Σούσοις τῇ πόλει ἄνδρας πεντακοσίους (9:12) and the clause that follows, ἐν δὲ τῇ περιχώρῳ πῶς οἶε ἐχρήσαντο, (b) οἱ δὲ Ιουδαῖοι οἱ ἐν Σούσοις τῇ πόλει συνήχθησαν καὶ τῇ τεσσαρεσκαίδεκάτῃ καὶ οὐκ ἀνεπαύσαντο in 9:18 marks a contrast between the actions of the Jews in the city of Susa versus the Jews in the countryside, (c) in 3:13b (ἐπιεικέστερον δὲ καὶ μετὰ ἡπιότητος αἰεὶ), δέ has an extraclausal function of signaling a contrast with the previous clause (ἐβουλήθη μὴ τῷ θράσει τῆς ἐξουσίας ἐπαιρόμενος), (d) in 8:12s, τὸ δὲ ἀντίγραφον τῆς ἐπιστολῆς ταύτης ἐκθέντες ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ μετὰ παρρησίας, δὲ is a signal that this right extraposition contrasts with the first right extraposition, μὴ προσχρησάμενοι τοῖς ὑπὸ Αμαν Αμαδαθου ἀποσταλῆσι γράμμασιν, of the same sentence.

¹⁰⁸Whereas μὲν and δέ “does not occur once in all the books between Deuteronomy and Proverbs nor in Ecclesiastes, the song, the bulk of the Minor Prophets, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel”, it does occur with higher frequency in the book of Esther (Conybeare and Stock 1995:50).

¹⁰⁹Another example is 3:11.

¹¹⁰Other examples include 5:4; 6:2, 3, 4, 10, 11, 12; 7:5, 6, 8, 9; 8:2, 9; 9:12, 20.

¹¹¹In 2:12, 20, 23; 3:13a, 14; 4:1, 7; 6:12[2]; 9:16, 18; 10:3.

¹¹²In 2:5; 4:17, 17k; 5:1c; 8:17[5].

- (b) a major boundary, where the particle δέ¹¹³ or the particle καί¹¹⁴ may cooccur with a locative indicator;
- (c) a major boundary, where the particle δέ¹¹⁵ or the particle καί¹¹⁶ may cooccur with a temporal indicator;
- (d) an episodic boundary, where the particle δέ¹¹⁷ or the particle καί¹¹⁸ may cooccur with an unmarked topic that is a topic shift; and
- (e) a minor break, where the particle δέ¹¹⁹ or the particle καί¹²⁰ may cooccur with a marked or an unmarked topic that is a temporary shift.

This confirms the claim that many usages of δέ and καί overlap, even though δέ retains its distinctive in marking (a) clausal contrast, and (b) episodic boundary in reported speech. The textual variants (Rahlfs and Hanhart 2006) also show that there is a tendency to flatten the discourse contour by converting δέ to καί in *Codex Alexandrinus*. This change is observed in the conversion of:

- (a) καθ' ἑκάστην δε το καὶ καθ' ἑκάστην in 2:11;
- (b) οὗτος δε ἦν το καὶ ὅταν ἦ in 2:12;
- (c) εἶπεν δε το καὶ εἶπεν in 7:2;
- (d) ἐξετείνεν δε το καὶ ἐξετείνεν in 8:4; and
- (e) ἐγγραφὴ δε το καὶ ἐγγραφὴ in 8:10.

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter showed that the pragmatic functions of discourse are coded by information structure. At the clausal level, this is separated into (a) the topic, (b) the focus, and (c) the peripheral elements. Based on typological comparisons, the positioning of nominal constituents before the verb is judged to be cognitively marked. This phenomenon occurs

¹¹³In 1:1i.

¹¹⁴In 4:3; 9:6.

¹¹⁵In 1:5, 10; 2:15; 3:1; 5:2b, 6.

¹¹⁶In 1:1; 2:1; 5:1; 8:1.

¹¹⁷In 1:8; 5:4; 6:2, 3[1], 4, 10, 11; 7:1, 5, 6, 8, 9[1], 9[6]; 9:12[1], 20.

¹¹⁸In 1:16, 21; 2:2, 7, 18; 3:3, 11; 4:4, 10, 12, 13, 15; 5:1d, 3, 5, 9; 6:3[3], 5[1], 5[3]; 8:2, 7; 9:13, 15, 29; 10:3f, 3i.

¹¹⁹In 1:8; 2:19; 3:2, 15; 4:4, 9, 16; 6:1, 4, 12[1]; 7:6, 7[1], 7[2], 8[1], 8[2], 8[6]; 8:2, 4[1], 4[2], 12p[1], 12x, 13, 14, 15[1], 15[4], 16; 10:3d.

¹²⁰In 1:9; 2:22; 3:2, 7; 4:11, 17i; 5:1e, 2b[1], 2b[2]; 7:10; 9:28.

at different clausal levels, such as main clauses, subordinate clause, as well as participial extrapositions. In addition, a clause may be marked by (a) the present tense, as well as (b) other discourse markers of clausal prominence. The marked topic is comparatively more salient than the unmarked topic, which leads to the differentiation of a major discourse boundary as opposed to an episodic discourse boundary. Contrastive topic is sometimes coded by markedness in topic, although this is not always the case.

Clauses cohere together to form episodes within the discourse. One episode differs from another episode in that there is a high level of coherence within an episode. Coherence in turn is achieved through the coding of cohesion devices. The cataphoric persistence of a topic is the most important means of achieving cohesion in an episode. The tracing of the topic referent is aided by the principles of topic animacy, grammatical number, grammatical person, and semantic deduction. In reported speech, the first and second grammatical persons correspond to the speaker and the addressee respectively. Major and minor characters are coded by distinct coding devices. Episodic cohesion is also achieved by the referential system and markers of semantic relations.

Episodes are not all on the temporal sequence of a narration. The mainline of a narration is on the temporal sequence. But the mainline may branch off into non-sequential sections that are offline or background with respect to the mainline. Alternatively, a non-mainline clause, such as an offline or a background, may return to the mainline. There are structural mechanisms that signal these changes. Point of view refers to the variation of perspectives between narration and reported speech. The speech frame of reported speech may be marked by redundancy or the coding of the speaker or the addressee.

Other than local prominence at the clausal level, episodes or sections of the discourse may be judged to be (a) episodically, (b) globally, and/or (c) didactically prominent. This provides the basis for evaluating the main purpose for the authorship of the study corpus.

The last section of chapter two provides a classification of the different boundary types that exist in the study corpus. It is discovered that a major boundary is highly correlated with (a) a marked topic that is a topic shift, (b) a temporal or locative indicator, and (c) asyndeton that relates to the main narration. An episodic boundary is signaled by (a) an unmarked topic that is a topic shift, (b) the particle οὐν or δέ within reported speech (or an epistolary genre), and (c) an asyndeton in a reported speech (or an epistolary genre). A minor break is signaled by a temporary topic shift. Although the particle δέ signals one of

the subtypes of an episodic boundary, *καί* and *δέ* overlap in terms of their cooccurrence with the various boundary types. The ability to classify discourse boundaries through a clear typology enables the researcher to identify the discourse boundaries of the study corpus intelligibly and unambiguously.

In chapter three, the application of these methodological results on the study corpus leads to (a) a consistent evaluation of the discourse structure, and (b) a clear translation of the study corpus.

Chapter 3

The book of Esther in the Septuagint and information structure

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the theory of information structure outlined in chapter two will be systematically applied to the book of Esther in the Septuagint. This will result in:

- (a) a break down of the study corpus into its clausal information components;
- (b) a clarification of the translation of the study corpus into English;
- (c) a clear delineation of the textual boundaries;
- (d) the identification of marked clausal information;
- (e) the identification of global, episodic, and didactic prominence; and
- (f) the differentiation of the study corpus into mainline and non-mainline sections.

3.2 The coding conventions

The following conventions are observed in the coding of chapter three.

Each clause of the study corpus consists of three lines: (a) the first is the Septuagint text, (b) the second is a literal translation in English, and (c) the third contains the information structure labels. The clausal hierarchy is indicated by block indentation, where a clause that is lower in the clausal hierarchy is indented to the right of its head clause.

Comments on the location of a major textual boundary is given immediately below the major boundary heading. Other types of comments usually follow the text that is being commented.

In addition,

- (a) local prominence is indicated by underlining;
- (b) global prominence is indicated by boldface;
- (c) the three indicators of a major boundary (a marked topic which is also a topic shift, a temporal indicator, or a locative indicator) are indicated by italics;¹²¹
- (d) the end of a sentence is indicated by a period;
- (e) the end of a chunk of information (except for the end of a sentence) is indicated by the slash. The placement of the slash is sometimes problematic for the Greek text because (1) the verbal suffix alone may be the topic, in which case it is not possible to structurally separate the topic from the comment with a slash, and (2) the unmarked topic follows the verb, in which case putting a slash between the verb and the unmarked topic interrupts the continuity of the comment focus. The slash is therefore omitted in both these instances in the Greek text;
- (f) a passive verb is indicated by the dashed underline;
- (g) minor boundary breaks, such as offline, background, and minor break are indicated by three dashes;
- (h) major boundary breaks are indicated by three equal signs;
- (i) episodic boundary breaks are indicated by three tilde signs;
- (j) brackets are used in the English translation to indicate the implicit information of the Greek text;
- (k) the square bracket beside a verse indicates the clausal numbering within a verse; and
- (l) a double underline is placed beneath a textual signal that indicates a return from non-mainline material back to the mainline.

Unless specified, all scriptural references in chapter three refer to the Septuagint.¹²²

This translation strives to be literal in order to show the pragmatic structure of the Greek text. But on occasions, idiomatic expressions that would make no sense when translated literally are converted to their dynamic equivalents. This allowance is intentional and

¹²¹A major boundary may also begin asyndetically. But an asyndeton may not be italicized, since it is an absence of surface feature.

¹²²Every textual variant that occurs at a boundary or a minor break is indicated in the text.

avoids imposing unnecessary semantic ambiguities in the translation which might distract the reader from trying to understand the pragmatic structure of the text.

3.3 The information structure of the book of Esther in the Septuagint

Altogether, there are 32 major discourse sections.

3.3.1 Discourse section 1:1a-1:1h

The first discourse section is 1:1a-1:1h of Addition A. Structurally, Addition A opens with an asyndeton and a point of departure of time. The theme of this discourse section can be summarized as Mordecai's dream of the struggle between two dragons.¹²³

===[MAJOR BOUNDARY]===

ASYNDETON 1:1a[1] ἔτους δευτέρου βασιλεύοντος Ἀρταξέρξου τοῦ μεγάλου τῇ
μὲν τοῦ Νισα/

In the second year of the reign of Artaxerxes the great, on the first (of the
month) of Nisa/

POINT OF DEPARTURE/

1:1a[2] ἐνύπνιον/ εἶδεν Μαρδοχαῖος/

a dream/¹²⁴ Mordecai/ saw/

FOCUS[MARKED]/TOPIC/COMMENT/

The content of the dream does not begin until 1:1d. Here, ἐνύπνιον is a cataphoric referent. It is placed in the marked preverbal position to signal that this dream is a salient theme in this discourse section. The introduction of the very important participant, Mordecai,

¹²³A theme may be given to the different levels of textual coherence, namely, a theme may be assigned to (a) a major discourse section, or (b) an episode. For this study, only the themes of the major discourse sections are given in this study.

With the exceptions of 5:7 and 6:7 (where the theme of a reported speech is explicitly stated), theme is normally implicit. The implicit themes of the study corpus are based on the researcher's intuition. A more rigorous approach of arriving at the themes should result from mapping the semantic fields of all the words in each thematic section. This could be a study all by itself. But, this is not within the scope of this study.

¹²⁴Mordecai's dream resembles apocalyptic literature (Omanson and Noss 1997, introduction).

occurs here for the first time in the text. The three following right dislocation clauses explicate his origin and situate him in the text.

1:1a[3] ὁ τοῦ Ιαΐρου τοῦ Σεμείου τοῦ Κισαίου ἐκ φυλῆς Βενιαμιν/

the one (born) of Iairou of Semeiou of Kisaïou, from the tribe of Benjamin/

RIGHT DISLOCATION/

1:1b[1] ἄνθρωπος Ιουδαῖος οἰκῶν ἐν Σούσοις τῇ πόλει/

a male, a Jew, living in the city Susa/

RIGHT DISLOCATION/

1:1b[2] ἄνθρωπος μέγας θεραπεύων ἐν τῇ αὐλῇ τοῦ βασιλέως.

a great man serving in the court of the king.

RIGHT DISLOCATION.

1:1c ἦν δὲ ἐκ τῆς αἰχμαλωσίας/

(Even though) he/ was among the captives/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

This clause is in contrast with the preceding right dislocation clause. Mordecai's humble origin highlights the extent of his greatness in the kingdom. Structurally, this contrast is indicated by δέ.

1:1c ἦς/ ἡχμαλώτευσεν Ναβουχοδονοσορ ὁ βασιλεὺς Βαβυλωνος ἐξ
Ιερουσαλημ μετὰ Ιεχονίου τοῦ βασιλέως τῆς Ιουδαίας.

whom/ Nabuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, captured from
Jerusalem with Jeconiah, the king of Judah.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

1:1d καὶ τοῦτο/ αὐτοῦ τὸ ἐνύπνιον.

And this/ (is) his dream.

COMMENT/TOPIC.

τὸ ἐνύπνιον is topic because it is old information that was activated in 1:1a[2]. The comment, τοῦτο, cataphorically refers to the content of the dream that immediately follows.

1:1d καὶ ἰδοὺ φωναὶ καὶ θόρυβος βρονταὶ καὶ σεισμός ταραχος ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.

Behold, voices and thundering noises and trembling earthquake (were) upon the earth.

PRESENTATIONAL FOCUS.

ἰδοῦ is often used in speech events to give a sense of vivacity to the event, and to invite the reader to engage more intimately with the speaker. This device is used multiple times in the recounting of Mordecai's dream. It enumerates a list of the things that Mordecai saw in his dream.

1:1e καὶ ἰδοὺ δύο δράκοντες μεγάλοι ἔτοιμοι/ προῆλθον/

And behold, two large dragons (that were) posed/ came forward/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

The minor characters, δύο δράκοντες μεγάλοι, are coded as a marked topic. The identity of the two dragons (namely Mordecai and Aman) is not revealed until the end of the book in 10:3d.

1:1e ἀμφοτέρω παλαίειν.

they (were) struggling (with each other).

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

1:1e καὶ ἐγένετο αὐτῶν φωνὴ μεγάλη.

And their voices/ were great.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

The pronoun αὐτῶν is fronted before its head noun φωνή because the identity of the genitive pronoun is taken as a given. The head noun φωνή and the nominal complement μεγάλη is postposed to the end of the comment focus. This information is the most irrecoverable and, hence, of most interest to the reader.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The passive voice of the verb shifts the mainline to offline. The minor character, *πάν ἔθνος*, is introduced by athetic focus.

1:1f καὶ τῇ φωνῇ αὐτῶν/ ἡτοιμάσθη *πάν ἔθνος* εἰς πόλεμον/

At their voices/ every nation was prepared for war/

POINT OF DEPARTURE/ PRESENTATIONAL FOCUS/

1:1f ὥστε πολεμῆσαι δικαίων *ἔθνος*.

in order to war with a righteous nation.

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The particle *ἰδοῦ* is used here primarily to indicate a shift from offline back to the mainline.

1:1g καὶ ἰδοῦ ἡμέρα σκότους καὶ γνόφου θλίψις καὶ στενοχωρία κάκωσις καὶ
τάραχος μέγας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.

Behold, dark days, gloomy affliction, grave suffering and great commotion
(were) upon the earth.

PRESENTATIONAL FOCUS.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The passive voice of the finite verb, *ἐταράχθη*, indicates a shift from the mainline to offline.

1:1h καὶ ἐταράχθη δίκαιον *πάν ἔθνος*/

And the entire righteous nation/ was troubled/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

1:1h φοβούμενοι τὰ ἑαυτῶν κακὰ.

fearing their own suffering.

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

1:1h καὶ ἡτοιμάσθησαν ἀπολέσθαι.

And they/ expected to die.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

The use of the passive voice of the finite verb for non-mainline, and the use of the particle ἰδοῦ to shift the non-mainline back to the mainline allows the author to keep mainline and non-mainline distinct. In this case, the mainline is about the two dragons, and the non-mainline concerns the reaction of the righteous nation towards the imminent war that will be waged against it.

1:1h καὶ ἐβόησαν πρὸς τὸν θεόν.

And they/ cried to God for help.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

3.3.2 Discourse section 1:1i-1:1r

There is a major boundary here. Structurally, it is signaled by a locative indicator, ἀπὸ δὲ τῆς βοῆς αὐτῶν, in a point of departure. This point of departure may be classified as a locative indicator because τῆς βοῆς αὐτῶν is metaphorically likened, ὥσανεἰ, to a small spring; and it is from the location of this small spring that a great river flows. Although the semantic structure of this locative point of departure is unusual, its usage is acceptable within the norms of the apocalyptic genre. The theme of this section is the initial presentation of the two dragons, namely Mordecai and Aman. Mordecai is introduced again in the body of the narration in 2:5, and Aman in 3:1.

===[MAJOR BOUNDARY]===

1:1i ἀπὸ δὲ τῆς βοῆς αὐτῶν/ ἐγένετο ὥσανεἰ ἀπὸ μικρᾶς πηγῆς ποταμὸς μέγας ὕδωρ πολύ.

And from their voices/ it was like there was, from a small spring, a great river of much water.

POINT OF DEPARTURE/ PRESENTATIONAL FOCUS.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The asyndeton signals an offline here. This is reinforced by the passive voice of the verb ὑψώθησαν in the clause that follows. The clause begins with καὶ in *Codex Alexandrinus*, which would delay the start of this minor break to the beginning of 1:1k[2].

ASYNDETON 1:1k[1] φῶς καὶ ὁ ἥλιος/ ἀνέτειλεν.

Light and the sun/ arose.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

1:1k[2] καὶ οἱ ταπεινοὶ/ ὑψώθησαν.

And the humble/ were lifted up.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

1:1k[3] καὶ κατέφαγον τοὺς ἐνδόξους.

And they/ devoured the nobles.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

1:1l καὶ διεγερθεὶς Μαρδοχαῖος/

Then Mordecai woke up/

EXTRAPOSITION/

The word *διεγερθεὶς* signals that there is a switch here from the content of the dream to the narrative genre. This corresponds to a shift from the preceding offline section back to the mainline. The coding of the proper noun, *Μαρδοχαῖος*, is used here because Mordecai is an inactive participant at this point, and he is being reactivated as the main topic.

1:1l ὁ/ ἑώρακὼς τὸ ἐνύπνιον τοῦτο/

the one/ who saw this dream/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

1:1l καὶ τί ὁ θεὸς βεβούλευται ποιῆσαι/

and what God purposed to do/

DISLOCATION/

This dislocation clause specifies the content of the direct object, *αὐτὸ*, in the main clause. The interrogative pronoun, *τί*, in this dislocation is preverbal and therefore locally prominent. The dislocation clause cataphorically points to the rest of the narrative as being the fulfillment of what God had purposed to do.

1:1l εἶχεν αὐτὸ ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ.

he/ had it in (his) heart.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

1:11 καὶ ἐν παντὶ λόγῳ/¹²⁵

Concerning the whole matter/

DISLOCATION/

1:11 ἤθελεν ἐπιγνῶναι αὐτὸ/ ἕως τῆς νυκτός.

he/ tried to understand it/ until the night.

TOPIC/COMMENT/DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT.

The structure of this sentence mimics that of the previous sentence. It repeats and reinforces the fact that Mordecai was mulling over the meaning of the dream. This repetition is globally prominent. The only piece of new information in the main clause is ἕως τῆς νυκτός, which is placed in the position of the dominant focal element.

1:1m καὶ ἡσύχασεν **Μαρδοχαῖος** ἐν τῇ αὐλῇ μετὰ Γαβαθα καὶ Θαρρα/

Mordecai / stayed in the court with Gabatha and Tharra/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

Structurally, a boundary does not exist between 1:11 and 1:1m because there is no topic shift. On the other hand, there might be some kind of a break here (TEV 1976; NRSV 1991, apocrypha 55; Dorothy 1997:52; Jobes 2009),¹²⁶ since the coding of the proper name, Mordecai, is redundant. Nonstructural evidences supporting this possibility include the fact that (a) the time changes from the night of Mordecai's dream to Mordecai's investigation of the two eunuchs' treachery, (b) the location changes from the place of Mordecai's dream (probably his bedroom) to his presence in the king's court, (c) the change of genre from the apocalyptic dream to narrative, and (d) the introduction of two new minor characters (Gabatha and Tharra).¹²⁷

¹²⁵It appears that the definition of old information needs to be relaxed sometimes. Whereas the assumption in chapter two is that old information needs to be a repeat of previous information, καὶ ἐν παντὶ λόγῳ and its main clause in 1:11 seems to be considered as old information, even though it is not a literal repeat of the preceding sentence. The focus presupposition clause in 1:16 is another example.

¹²⁶TEV (1976) and Jobes (2009) are electronic resources. Hence, page numbers are not cited.

¹²⁷If 1:1m were taken to be a major boundary, it would be an exception. But that does not detract from the central claim that the text can be broken down into discrete sections based on the objective criteria of matching form and function for the rest of the text. One weakness of narratology in practice is that it lacks an overall definition for what constitutes a discourse boundary. Narratology presupposes that a text may be divided by the convergence of any number of narratological factors, which means that discourse boundary is

1:1n τῶν δύο εὐνούχων τοῦ βασιλέως τῶν φυλασσόντων τὴν αὐλήν.

the two eunuchs of the king who were guarding the court.

RIGHT DISLOCATION.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

Asyndeton is used to begin both this clause and the next to signal this section as offline. This offline section concerns the internal state of Mordecai as he investigated the two eunuchs who were plotting to kill the king. τε is replaced by γαρ in *Codex Alexandrinus*, which would make this a background section instead.

ASYNDETON 1:1n ἤκουσέν τε αὐτῶν/ τοὺς λογισμοὺς καὶ τὰς μερίμνας αὐτῶν.

He/ heard them/ (both) their reckonings and their sorrows.

TOPIC/COMMENT/DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT.

ASYNDETON 1:1n ἐξηρεύνησεν καὶ ἔμαθεν/

He/ searched and learned/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

1:1n ὅτι ἐτοιμάζουσιν τὰς χεῖρας ἐπιβαλεῖν Ἀρταξέρξη τῷ βασιλεῖ.

that they/ prepared to lay hands on Artaxerxes the king.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

1:1n καὶ ὑπέδειξεν τῷ βασιλεῖ περὶ αὐτῶν.

And he/ made known to the king concerning them.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The unmarked topic, ὁ βασιλεὺς, that is a temporary topic shift signals a minor break. In this case, this minor break corresponds to a shift from the offline back to the mainline.

1:1o[1] καὶ ἐξήτασεν ὁ βασιλεὺς τοὺς δύο εὐνούχους.

seen as a wave concept rather than a discrete concept. This in turn implies that it is virtually impossible to divide a (biblical) text into paragraphs or sections, or to give headings to them, since any attempt would yield multiple solutions, according to how one subjectively weighs the relative importance of the narratological factors involved.

And the king/ searched the two eunuchs.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The passive voice of the main verb signals a shift from the mainline to offline.

1:10[2] καὶ ὁμολογήσαντες/

Having confessed/

EXTRAPOSITION/

1:10[3] ἀπήχθησαν.

they/ were led away.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The redundant coding of the king signals a shift from the offline back to the mainline.

1:10[4] καὶ ἔγραψεν ὁ βασιλεὺς τοὺς λόγους τούτους εἰς μνημόσυνον/

And the king/ wrote these words in (the) chronicles/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

1:10[5] καὶ Μαρδοχαῖος.

(that which pertains) to Mordecai.

RIGHT DISLOCATION.¹²⁸

The right dislocation explicates the referent of τοὺς λόγους τούτους of the main clause.

1:1p ἔγραψεν περὶ **τῶν λόγων τούτων**.

He/ wrote about these matters.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

¹²⁸The suggestion that καὶ Μαρδοχαῖος may be the subject of the following clause is structurally possible. In this scenario, Μαρδοχαῖος would be a marked topic that indicates a minor break (1:1p), and the mainline topic (the king) is resumed in 1:1q.

However, this is semantically improbable because this interpretation assumes that the king writes “these words” concerning the assassination plot through the agency of Mordecai (1:1p), and Mordecai does so (1:1p) before he is formally commissioned by the king to serve in the court in 1:1q.

The current interpretation mitigates this problem. Here, it is assumed that the scribes in the king’s court are given the task of recording the deeds concerning Mordecai in the chronicles.

The phrase τῶν λόγων τούτων is a repeat of τοὺς λόγους τούτους of the preceding clause. This is globally prominent. It is this account which will be read to the king when God caused him to be sleepless (6:1-2).

1:1q καὶ ἐπέταξεν ὁ βασιλεὺς Μαρδοχαίῳ θεραπεύειν ἐν τῇ αὐλῇ.

And the king/ ordered Mordecai to serve in the court.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

The nominal coding for the topic, ὁ βασιλεὺς, is redundant here. The global prominence of the king highlights his authority. There is no contradiction between the fact that the king orders Mordecai to serve in the court here, even though he was in the court with the two eunuchs back in 1:1m. The word ἡσυχάζω in 1:1m only means “to be quiet”, or “to be at rest” (Liddell and Scott 1996),¹²⁹ and does not infer that Mordecai already had an official appointment in the king’s court.

1:1q καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ δόματα περὶ τούτων.

And he/ gave him decrees concerning these (matters).

TOPIC/COMMENT.

1:1r καὶ ἦν Ἀμαν Ἀμαδαθου Βουγαῖος ἔνδοξος ἐνώπιον τοῦ βασιλέως.

And Aman, of Amadathou of Bougaios (was) honored before the king.

PRESENTATIONAL FOCUS.

The introduction of Aman, is signaled by a thetic focus. Here, in Addition A, the two dragons are initially presented prior to their re-presentation in the main narration.

1:1r καὶ ἐζήτησεν κακοποιῆσαι τὸν Μαρδοχαῖον καὶ τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ ὑπὲρ τῶν δύο εὐνούχων τοῦ βασιλέως.

And he/ sought to mistreat Mordecai and his people on behalf of the two (deceased) eunuchs of the king.¹³⁰

TOPIC/COMMENT.

¹²⁹Liddell and Scott (1996) is used as the main dictionary for identifying the lexical usages of the book of Esther in the Septuagint. This lexicon is superior to other lexicons, such as BAGD (1957), due to its wider coverage of Greek sources and finer distinctions in the shades of meaning.

¹³⁰Aman’s desire to take revenge may be due to the fact that he was allied with these two eunuchs.

3.3.3 Discourse section 1:1-1:9

There is a major boundary here between the end of Addition A above and the main body of the narration. This is signaled by a temporal indicator coded as a point of departure. TEV (1976), NRSV (1991, apocrypha 55), Dorothy (1997:58), and Jobes (2009) agree that this is a discourse boundary. The theme of this discourse section is the great banquet given by Artaxerxes, and the drinking party that is for the Gentiles.

===[MAJOR BOUNDARY]===

1:1 καὶ ἐγένετο μετὰ τοὺς λόγους τούτους ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις Ἀρταξέρξου/

And after this matter, in the days of Artaxerxes/

POINT OF DEPARTURE/

1:1 οὗτος/ ὁ Ἀρταξέρξης ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰνδικῆς/

this/ (is) the Artaxerxes from Indikei/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

1:1 ἐκατὸν εἴκοσι ἑπτὰ χωρῶν/ ἐκράτησεν.

over 127 regions/ he/ ruled.

FOCUS[MARKED]/TOPIC/COMMENT.

The local prominence of the marked focus, ἐκατὸν εἴκοσι ἑπτὰ χωρῶν, highlights the authority of the king.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

Here, the use of the asyndeton in the two point of departure clauses and the use of the passive voice for the verb ἐθρονίσθη shifts the mainline to offline. The redundancy of the nominal coding, ὁ βασιλεὺς, for the king here is globally prominent and highlights his authority.

ASYNDETON 1:2 ἐν αὐταῖς ταῖς ἡμέραις ὅτε ἐθρονίσθη ὁ βασιλεὺς
Ἀρταξέρξης ἐν Σούσοις τῇ πόλει/

In the days when king Artaxerxes was enthroned in the city of Susa/

POINT OF DEPARTURE/

ASYNDETON 1:3 ἐν τῷ τρίτῳ ἔτει βασιλεύοντος αὐτοῦ/¹³¹

in the third year of his reign/

POINT OF DEPARTURE/

1:3 δοχὴν/ ἐποίησεν τοῖς φίλοις καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς ἔθνεσιν καὶ τοῖς Περσῶν καὶ
Μήδων ἐνδόξοις καὶ τοῖς ἄρχουσιν τῶν σατραπῶν/

a banquet/ he/ gave to (his) friends, the other nations, and to the nobles of
Persia and Medes, and to the rulers of the armies/

FOCUS[MARKED]/TOPIC/COMMENT/

The banquet is coded as locally prominent because it is a theme of this discourse section. The banquet material is intentionally placed in an offline section to contrast the banquet as being not as important as the drinking party (which is on the mainline). It is during the drinking party, rather than the banquet, that Astin the queen provokes the king to anger. This leads to the need to elect a new queen, a role which Esther assumes.

1:4 καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα μετὰ τὸ δεῖξαι αὐτοῖς τὸν πλοῦτον τῆς βασιλείας αὐτοῦ
καὶ τὴν δόξαν τῆς εὐφροσύνης τοῦ πλούτου αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ ἡμέρας ἑκατὸν
ὀγδοήκοντα.

and after these, (he) showed them the wealth of his kingdom and the
exultant glory of his wealth for 180 days.

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

In contrast to Dorothy's (1997:61), 1:4 is not a discourse boundary. 1:4 is in fact a right extraposition of the main clause in 1:3, and belongs to the same sentence as 1:3. The king's display of his wealth in 1:4 is merely the postlude to the great banquet.

1:5[1] ὅτε δὲ ἀνεπληρώθησαν αἱ ἡμέραι τοῦ γάμου/

When the days of the wedding feast¹³² ended/

POINT OF DEPARTURE/

¹³¹Since the first asyndeton of an offline section already signals offline, the function of a second or a third asyndeton in the same offline section is not clear. It could be a device that highlights the presence of offline.

¹³²The fact that this is a wedding feast is more certain when a comparison is made between 1:5 and 2:18. Elements that are in common between both the wedding feast of Astin and of Esther include the words: (a) γάμου, and (b) ἐποίησεν ὁ βασιλεὺς πότον.

The passive voice of the verb ἀνεπληρώθησαν is a continuation of the offline section began in 1:2. The contrast between the non-mainline of the feast and the mainline of the drinking party (beginning at 1:5[2]) cuts across this sentence.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The redundant coding of the king, ὁ βασιλεὺς, signals a switch from the offline of the preceding clause (the point of departure) back to the mainline of the main clause.

1:5[2] ἐποίησεν ὁ βασιλεὺς πότον τοῖς ἔθνεσιν τοῖς εὐρεθεῖσιν εἰς τὴν πόλιν ἐπὶ ἡμέρας ἕξ ἐν αὐλῇ οἴκου τοῦ βασιλέως/

the king/ threw a drinking party for the gentiles, who were found in the city, for six days in the court of the king's palace/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

1:6 κεκοσμημένη βυσσίνοις καὶ καρπασίνοις τεταμένοις ἐπὶ σχοινίοις βυσσίνοις καὶ πορφυροῖς ἐπὶ κύβοις χρυσοῖς καὶ ἀργυροῖς ἐπὶ στύλοις παρίνοις καὶ λιθίνοις/

which was decorated with fine linen, even fine flax was laid out at the edge of the fine linen; and with purple on golden cubes; and with silver on marble and stone pillars/

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION/

κλῖναι χρυσαῖ καὶ ἀργυραῖ ἐπὶ λιθοστρώτου σμαραγδίου λίθου καὶ πιννίνου καὶ παρίνου λίθου καὶ στρωμναὶ διαφανεῖς ποικίλως διηνηθισμέναι κύκλω ῥόδα πεπασμένα/

golden and silver couches on (which are) tessellated emerald, even pearl and marble; strewned with beddings of various (shades of) transparency, that are embroidered with roses all around/

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION/

1:7 ποτήρια χρυσᾶ καὶ ἀργυρᾶ καὶ ἀνθράκινον κυλίκιον προκείμενον ἀπὸ ταλάντων τρισμυρίων οἶνος πολὺς καὶ ἡδύς/

golden and silver cups, and smaller carbuncle cups lying before 30,000 talents of wine,¹³³ a great quantity and sweet/

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION/

1:7 ὃν/ αὐτὸς ὁ βασιλεὺς ἔπινεν.

which/ the king himself drank.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

The usage of the words in 1:6-7 is consistent with usage in the early Hellenistic period (Liddell and Scott 1996). προκείμενον plus the genitive (ἀπὸ τάλαντων τρισμυρίων) means “to lie in front of” (s.v. II). The nominative noun phrase οἶνος πολὺς καὶ ἡδύς is a right dislocation of the right extraposition. καὶ ἡδύς is in the dominant focal element position of that right dislocation. The clause that follows is a subordinate clause explaining that the quality of the wine which was served to the guests was of the highest quality, such that even the king himself drank from it. This fact is highlighted structurally by (a) the use of the reflexive pronoun αὐτὸς, and (b) the fronting of the nominal phrase in the comment before the verb.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

This marked topic that is a temporary shift signals a minor break.

1:8 ὁ δὲ πότος οὗτος/ οὐ κατὰ προκείμενον νόμον ἐγένετο.

And this drinking party/ is not according to (the) existing law.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

This unmarked topic that is a topic shift signals an episodic boundary. The γὰρ reading in *Codex Alexandrinus* would instead remove this episodic boundary. This textual variant is probable because οὕτως is a cohesion device that anaphorically points to the preceding clause and pairs the two clauses together. In this reading, the use of δέ here is contrastive. It asserts that the authority of the king is even greater than the law itself.

1:8 οὕτως/ δὲ ἠθέλησεν ὁ βασιλεὺς.

<sup>133</sup>The use of τάλαντων as a general unit of measurement for weight (other than for gold or silver) is attested by Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. II) for post-Homeric Greek.

But thus/ the king/ desired.

POINT OF DEPARTURE/TOPIC/COMMENT.

1:8 καὶ ἐπέταξεν τοῖς οἰκονόμοις ποιῆσαι τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ καὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων.

And he/ ordered the servants to do his will and (that) of the people.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

This marked topic that is a temporary shift indicates a minor break. Contrary to NRSV (1991) and Jobes (2009), this is not a discourse boundary.

1:9 καὶ Ἀστιν ἡ βασίλισσα/ ἐποίησε πότον ταῖς γυναῖξιν ἐν τοῖς βασιλείοις/

And Astin the queen/ hosted a drinking party for the women in the palace/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

1:9 ὅπου/ ὁ βασιλεὺς Ἀρταξέρξης.

where/ king Artaxerxes (was).

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

### 3.3.4 Discourse section 1:10-1:22

===[MAJOR BOUNDARY]===

This is a major boundary (NRSV 1991, apocrypha 56; Dorothy 1997:62; Jobes 2009) signaled by (a) a temporal indicator in a point of departure, and (b) the marked topic, ὁ βασιλεὺς, which is the primary topic of this discourse section. The theme of this discourse section is the king's punishment of queen Astin because of her refusal to attend the king's drinking party.

1:10 ἐν δὲ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἐβδόμῃ/

And on the seventh day/

POINT OF DEPARTURE/

ἡδέως γενόμενος/

being (very) glad/

EXTRAPOSITION/

The fronting of ἡδέως before the (stative) verb makes it marked. Not only is the king glad, the pragmatic structure shows that he is very glad.

1:10 ὁ βασιλεὺς/ εἶπεν τῷ Αμαν καὶ Βαζαν καὶ Θαρρα καὶ Βωραζη καὶ  
Ζαθολθα καὶ Αβαταζα καὶ Θαραβα τοῖς ἑπτὰ εὐνούχοις τοῖς διακόνοις τοῦ  
βασιλέως Ἀρταξέρξου/

the king/ said to Aman and Bazan and Tharra and Borazei and Zatholtha and  
Abataza and Tharaba, the seven eunuchs who were the servants of king  
Artaxerxes/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

This is a speech frame that opens an indirect speech, which is coded by a series of right extraposed clauses. The indirect speech begins with an asyndeton.

ASYNDETON 1:11 εἰσαγαγεῖν τὴν βασίλισσαν πρὸς αὐτὸν/

to bring in the queen to him/

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION/

1:11 βασιλεύειν αὐτὴν καὶ περιθεῖναι αὐτῇ τὸ διάδημα/

to give her reign and to place the crown on her/

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION/

In light of the fact that the banquet preceding the drinking party was a wedding party, the statement here means that Astin, who is referred to as queen in 1:9, has not yet been granted the formal symbols of her queenhood publicly. The drinking party may be designed purposely for such an occasion.

1:11 καὶ δεῖξαι αὐτὴν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἄρχουσιν καὶ τοῖς ἔθνεσιν τὸ κάλλος αὐτῆς/

to display her to all the rulers and the nations, (namely) her beauty/

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION/

Within this right extraposition, τὸ κάλλος αὐτῆς, is the dominant focal element. The subordinate clause that follows reinforces this information, as signaled by the fronting of the marked comment.

1:11 ὅτι καλὴ/ ἦν.

for beautiful/ she was.

COMMENT'/<sup>134</sup> TOPIC.

1:12 καὶ οὐκ εἰσήκουσεν αὐτοῦ/

And she/ did not listen to him/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

The identity of the topic is postponed to the right dislocation. The lack of the nominal phrase in the main clause to indicate the switch of the topic from the king to Astin means that this topic switch is not significant.

Αστιν ἡ βασίλισσα/

Astin the queen/

RIGHT DISLOCATION/

1:12 ἐλθεῖν μετὰ τῶν εὐνούχων.

to come with the eunuchs.

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The shift from the mainline to offline is signaled by the passive voice.

1:12 καὶ ἐλυπήθη ὁ βασιλεὺς.

And the king/ was grieved.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

1:12 καὶ ὠργίσθη.

And he/ was angry.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

<sup>134</sup>Comment which is pragmatically marked is coded as “COMMENT” in the text.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The offline section returns to the mainline, where the king is the main topic. This is not a discourse boundary (Dorothy 1997:63), but a minor break. εἶπεν is followed by ο βασιλεὺς in *Codex Alexandrinus* and the Hexapla.<sup>135</sup> This would be a redundant coding that explicitly signals the return to the mainline.

1:13 καὶ εἶπεν τοῖς φίλοις αὐτοῦ.

And he/ said to his friends.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

This clause begins a direct speech frame. The direct speech begins with an asyndeton.

ASYNDETON 1:13 κατὰ ταῦτα/

In relation to these things/<sup>136</sup>

POINT OF DEPARTURE/

ἐλάλησεν Ἀστίν/

(that) Astin/ said/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

This subordinate clause lacks a subordinating conjunction. It is asyndetically connected, which may mean that it is parenthetical.

1:13 ποιήσατε οὖν περὶ τούτου/ νόμον καὶ κρίσιν.

take action concerning this/ (according to) law and court.<sup>137</sup>

EVENT FOCUS/DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT.

οὖν in the main clause signals a call for action. τούτου precedes the nouns which it modifies, νόμον καὶ κρίσιν, not because it is marked, but because it is anaphorically referential to κατὰ ταῦτα in the point of departure.

1:14 καὶ προσῆλθεν αὐτῷ/

They/ came to him/

---

<sup>135</sup>All textual variants that are cited are without the accent marking because the original manuscripts (codices) do not contain them.

<sup>136</sup>The usage of κατὰ with the accusative case conforms with Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. IV.2).

<sup>137</sup>See BAGD (1957: s.v. 2).

TOPIC/COMMENT/

The switch from the direct speech back to the narration is indicated by the switch from the second person of the direct speech to the use of the third person here. The postponement of the identity of the topic to the right dislocation avoids making this an episodic boundary.

Αρκεσαίος καὶ Σαρσαθαίος καὶ Μαλησεαρ/

Arkesaios, Sarsathaios and Maleisear/

RIGHT DISLOCATION/

1:14 οἱ ἄρχοντες Περσῶν καὶ Μήδων/

the rulers of Persia and Medes/

RIGHT DISLOCATION/

1:14 οἱ ἐγγὺς τοῦ βασιλέως/

the confidants of the king/

RIGHT DISLOCATION/<sup>138</sup>

1:14 οἱ πρῶτοι παρακαθήμενοι τῷ βασιλεῖ.

the leaders seated beside the king.

RIGHT DISLOCATION.

1:15 καὶ ἀπήγγειλαν αὐτῷ κατὰ τοὺς νόμους/ ὥς δεῖ ποιῆσαι Ἀστὶν τῇ βασιλίσσῃ/

And they/ announced to him in relation to the laws/ of (what) is required to do to Astin the queen/

TOPIC/COMMENT/DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT/

The coding of δεῖ in the present tense highlights the determination of the high officials to depose Astin from her position as queen.

1:15 ὅτι οὐκ ἐποίησεν τὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ βασιλέως προσταχθέντα διὰ τῶν εὐνούχων.

<sup>138</sup>The translation of οἱ ἐγγὺς as “confidants” is supported by the idiomatic sense of “those who are near” cited in BAGD (1957: s.v. 3).

because she/ did not do the things ordered by the king through the eunuchs.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

The fronting of the prepositional phrase, ὑπὸ τοῦ βασιλέως, before the head nominal phrase makes the prepositional phrase marked and raises the issue that the king's authority is being affronted by queen Astin. This is a psychological tool used by the officials to prod the king to punish Astin severely.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

The shift of the topic to the unmarked topic, ὁ Μουχαιος, makes this an episodic boundary.

1:16 καὶ εἶπεν ὁ Μουχαιος πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα καὶ τοὺς ἄρχοντας.

And Mouxaïos/ said to the king and the rulers.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

This is a direct speech frame. The content of the speech belongs to the hortatory genre. The speech begins with an asyndeton.

ASYNDETON 1:16 οὐ τὸν βασιλέα μόνον/ **ἠδίκησεν Αστιν ἢ βασίλισσα/**

(It is) not only the king/ (that) queen Astin injured/¹³⁹

FOCUS[MARKED]/PRESUPPOSITION/

The construction of this sentence is highly marked. This is a focus presupposition clause. The end of the main clause, ἠδίκησεν Αστιν ἢ βασίλισσα, is the presupposition. It signals global prominence because it is a repeat of old information. The front part of the main clause is a marked focus. This is being contrasted with the content of the right extraposition.

1:16 ἀλλὰ καὶ πάντας τοὺς ἄρχοντας καὶ τοὺς ἡγουμένους τοῦ βασιλέως.

but also all the rulers and those leading the kingdom.

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

¹³⁹The translation of ἠδίκησεν as “injured” is supported by BAGD (1957: s.v. 2.b). This is hence not a dynamic equivalent translation.

The particle γάρ signals a shift from the mainline to a background section. γάρ is deleted in *Codex Alexandrinus* and the Hexapla, which would make this an offline section instead.

1:17 καὶ γὰρ διηγήσατο αὐτοῖς/

For it is described fully to them/

EVENT FOCUS/

τὰ ῥήματα τῆς βασιλίσσης.

the words of the queen.

RIGHT DISLOCATION.

1:17 καὶ ὥς ἀντεῖπεν τῷ βασιλεῖ.

(Since) she/ contradicted the king.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

Ὡς, which is another device that signals background, occurs twice to refer back to the deeds of Astin.

1:17 ὥς οὖν ἀντεῖπεν τῷ βασιλεῖ Ἀρταξέρξη.

She/ contradicted king Artaxerxes.

TOPIC/OLD.

This clause is globally prominent because the phrase ἀντεῖπεν τῷ βασιλεῖ of the previous clause is repeated here. The name of the king Ἀρταξέρξη is not required to identify the king. Its presence is therefore redundant and locally prominent. The particle οὖν is added here to enhance the level of prominence in this clause. Like the previous speakers, the three rulers of Persia and Medes, Mouxaios emphasizes the insubordination of Astin in order to persuade the king to punish her.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

Here, the marked topic that is a temporary shift signals a minor break, which coincides with a shift from background to mainline.

1:18 οὕτως σήμερον/

Thus, today/

POINT OF DEPARTURE/

1:18 αἱ τυραννίδες αἱ λοιπαὶ τῶν ἀρχόντων Περσῶν καὶ Μήδων/

the rest of the baronesses of the rulers of Persia and Medes/

TOPIC[MARKED]/

ἀκούσασαι τὰ τῷ βασιλεῖ λεχθέντα ὑπ' αὐτῆς/

hearing the things spoken by her to the king/

MEDIAL EXTRAPOSITION/

The fronting of the indirect object, τῷ βασιλεῖ, before the governing nominal participle makes it marked. This again highlights the authority of the king.

1:18 τολμήσουσιν ὁμοίως ἀτιμάσαι τοὺς ἄνδρας αὐτῶν.

shall dare likewise to dishonor their husbands.

COMMENT.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

Here, οὖν signals the switch to the exhortation proper of a hortatory speech. This constitutes an episodic boundary. The present tense of the verb δοκεῖ further highlights the importance of this clause.

1:19 εἰ οὖν δοκεῖ τῷ βασιλεῖ/

So, if it pleases the king/

EXTRAPOSITION/

1:19 προσταξάτω βασιλικόν.

let him order a royal decree.

EVENT FOCUS.

This series of event focus clauses introduces new information onto the discourse at a high rate. This is episodically prominent.

1:19 καὶ γραφήτω κατὰ τοὺς νόμους Μήδων καὶ Περσῶν.

And let it be written according to the laws of Medes and Persia.

EVENT FOCUS.

1:19 καὶ μὴ ἄλλως/ χρησάσθω.

And in a different way/ let it not be inquired.<sup>140</sup>

FOCUS[MARKED]/EVENT FOCUS.

This is an exhortation to write the royal decree unambiguously, so that there should not be any loopholes. The marked focus reinforces this sense.

1:19 μὴδὲ εἰσελθάτω ἔτι ἡ βασίλισσα πρὸς αὐτόν.

And let the queen no longer come into him.<sup>141</sup>

EVENT FOCUS.

The particle μὴδέ makes this clause prominent negatively. This is the main request asked of the king in this exhortation section.

1:19 καὶ τὴν βασιλείαν αὐτῆς/ δότω ὁ βασιλεὺς γυναικὶ κρείττονι αὐτῆς.

As for her queenhood/ let the king give (it) to a woman (who is) better than her.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

1:20 καὶ ἀκουσθήτω ὁ νόμος/ ὁ ὑπὸ τοῦ βασιλέως/

And let the law be heard/ that which is by the king/

EVENT FOCUS/DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT/

The dominant focal element stresses that law is issued by the authority of the king.

1:20 ὃν/ ἐὰν ποιῇ ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ αὐτοῦ.

whatever/ he should do in his kingdom.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

This subordinate clause further highlights the king's power. The law is whatever the king wants to do in his kingdom.

<sup>140</sup>The middle voice of χρησάσθω means “to be inquired” like one would seek for a divine revelation from an oracle (Liddell and Scott 1996: s.v. C.A.III).

<sup>141</sup>The rapid flow of information due to the consecutive use ofthetic clauses occurs in 1:19; 2:3; 4:8, 16; and 6:8-9. (Although 4:8 is not globally prominent, since there is no literal repeat, the semantic ideas of the consecutivethetic clauses are close to each other.) The labeling of these locations as episodic prominence is supported by (a) the local prominence of 1:19 (μὴδὲ εἰσελθάτω ἔτι ἡ βασίλισσα πρὸς αὐτόν), 4:16 (μὴδὲ πίητε ἐπὶ ἡμέρας τρεῖς νύκτα καὶ ἡμέραν), 6:9[5] (κηρυσσέτω), and (b) the global prominence of 2:3 (ἐπιλεξάτωσαν κοράσια παρθενικὰ καλὰ τῷ εἶδει).

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The anaphoric referent, οὕτως, is a cohesion device to link what is discussed so far in the exhortation with the result envisaged from the advised course of action. The marked coding of the topic, πᾶσαι αἱ γυναῖκες, in the main clause is a temporary shift and signals a minor break.

1:20 καὶ οὕτως/

Thus/

POINT OF DEPARTURE/<sup>142</sup>

πᾶσαι αἱ γυναῖκες/ περιθήσουσιν τιμὴν τοῖς ἀνδράσιν ἑαυτῶν/ ἀπὸ πτωχοῦ  
ἕως πλουσίου.

all women/ shall bestow honor to their husbands/ from the poor to the rich.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

Contrary to Dorothy (1997:64), this is not a discourse boundary. This is a minor break signaled by an unmarked topic that is a temporary shift.

1:21 καὶ ἤρεσεν ὁ λόγος τῷ βασιλεῖ καὶ τοῖς ἄρχουσι.

And this word/ pleased the king and the rulers.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

There is an episodic boundary here, since there is an unmarked topic shift to ὁ βασιλεὺς.

1:21 καὶ ἐποίησεν ὁ βασιλεὺς καθὰ ἐλάλησεν ὁ Μουχαιος.

And the king/ did just as Mouxaios said.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

1:22 καὶ ἀπέστειλεν εἰς πᾶσαν τὴν βασιλείαν κατὰ χώραν/ κατὰ τὴν λέξιν
αὐτῶν/

¹⁴²A cohesion device, such as καὶ οὕτως in 1:20, may stand in a point of departure. The incongruity between the terminology of cohesion and point of departure is a problem. Perhaps a new pragmatic label should be created for a cohesion device that stands in a left extraposition.

And he/ sent (the decree) to all the kingdom according to their regions/
according to their dialects/

TOPIC/COMMENT/DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT/

1:22 ὥστε εἶναι φόβον αὐτοῖς ἐν ταῖς οἰκίαις αὐτῶν.

so that there should be respect for them in their households.

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

3.3.5 Discourse section 2:1-2:4

===[MAJOR BOUNDARY]===

This is a discourse boundary (TEV 1976; NRSV 1991, apocrypha 57; Jobes 2009) that is signaled by a temporal indicator in a point of departure. The theme of this discourse section is that the king decides to find a new queen.

2:1 καὶ μετὰ τοὺς λόγους τούτους/¹⁴³

And after these matters/

POINT OF DEPARTURE/¹⁴⁴

ἐκόπασεν ὁ βασιλεὺς τοῦ θυμοῦ.

the fury of the king/ subsided.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

¹⁴³As indicated in §3.2, the coding device that indicates the beginning of a major boundary is italicized.

¹⁴⁴The textual indicators normally allow the reader to conclude rightly even when there is a deviation from the normal discourse boundary typology. 1:2, for example, is not a major discourse boundary even though the temporal indicator, ἐν αὐταῖς ταῖς ἡμέραις, occurs in a point of departure because (a) the asyndetons in this and the next point of departures, and (b) the passive voice of ἐθρονίσθη clearly indicate a shift from the mainline to offline. The continuance of the topic, ὁ βασιλεὺς, also supports this conclusion.

Sometimes, however, there is a true conflict between the signals of a discourse boundary. For example, 2:1 is considered to be a major boundary because of the temporal indicator in a point of departure. On the other hand, the continuance of the topic, ὁ βασιλεὺς, indicates that this is not a discourse boundary of any type. Likewise, it is difficult to determine whether the asyndeton in 4:17d[1] (a) indicates an episodic boundary in a reported speech, or (b) signals the start of an offline section. (In this case, the asyndeton in 4:17d[2] signals the continuance of the offline begun in 4:17d[1].)

Only the consideration of a wider corpus of materials both in the Septuagint and in the New Testament can enable the researcher to resolve these issues.

This type of ambiguity may be unraveled in future research by refining the relative weight of the discourse boundary indicators. This might also help to resolve the issue of whether 1:1m, καὶ ἡσύχασεν Μαρδοχαῖος ἐν τῇ αὐλῇ μετὰ Γαβαθα καὶ Θαρρα, qualifies as a major discourse boundary or not.

The presence of a discourse boundary is further highlighted by the redundant nominal coding of the king, ὁ βασιλεὺς.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The foreground shifts to offline here. Structurally, this is coded by the passive voice of the verb ἐμνήσθη, and the presence of the particle ὥς, which is another device that signals non-mainline. και ουκετι to the end of the verse is replaced by εμνησθη γαρ της αστιν καθα εποιησεν και οσα αυτη κατεκριθη in *Codex Alexandrinus*, which would mean that this section is background instead.

2:1 καὶ οὐκέτι ἐμνήσθη τῆς Αστιν/

And he/ was no longer mindful of Astin/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

2:1 μνημονεύων οἶα ἐλάλησεν.

remembering whatever (wrong that) she said.

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

The identity of the subject of this right extraposition is ambiguous. The act of speaking, ἐλάλησεν, could either (a) refer to the king's decree, or (b) refer to the queen's refusal to respond to the king's request. The latter is more probable, since the very next clause refers to the king's decree. This assumes that the flow of information is iconic to the original sequence in the narration.

2:1 καὶ ὥς κατέκρινεν αὐτήν.

And (how) he/ condemned her.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

This is an episodic boundary indicated by an unmarked topic shift. The offline also returns to foreground here, picking up from where ἐκόπασεν ὁ βασιλεὺς τοῦ θυμοῦ (2:1) left off.

2:2 καὶ εἶπαν οἱ διάκονοι τοῦ βασιλέως.

The servants of the king/ said.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

This is the direct speech frame of a hortatory speech. The beginning of the direct speech proper starts with an asyndeton.

ASYNDETON 2:2 ζητηθήτω τῷ βασιλεῖ/

Let it be sought out for the king/

EVENT FOCUS/

This series of event focus clauses constitutes an episodically prominent section.

κοράσια ἄφθορα καλὰ τῷ εἶδει.

young virgins (who are) good looking.

RIGHT DISLOCATION.

2:3 καὶ καταστήσει ὁ βασιλεὺς κωμάρχας ἐν πάσαις ταῖς χώραις τῆς βασιλείας αὐτοῦ.

And the king shall set village chiefs in all the regions of his kingdom.

EVENT FOCUS.

2:3 καὶ ἐπιλεξάτωσαν κοράσια παρθενικὰ καλὰ τῷ εἶδει εἰς Σουσαν τὴν πόλιν/ εἰς τὸν γυναικῶνα.

And let young virgins (who are) good looking be selected for the city Susa/ into the harem.

OLD/DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT.

The selection of young virgins is a rewording of 2:2. This constitutes old information and is globally prominence. This foreshadows the importance of Esther's eventual ascension as queen.

2:3 καὶ παραδοθήτωσαν τῷ εὐνούχῳ τοῦ βασιλέως τῷ φύλακι τῶν γυναικῶν.

And let them be entrusted to the eunuch of the king, the guardian of the harem.

EVENT FOCUS.

2:3 καὶ δοθήτω σμῆγμα καὶ ἡ λοιπὴ ἐπιμέλεια.

And let soap and other attentiveness be given (to them).

EVENT FOCUS.

2:4 καὶ ἡ γυνή/

And the woman/

TOPIC[MARKED]/

ἥ/ ἃν ἀρέσῃ τῷ βασιλεῖ/

who/ pleases the king/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

βασιλεύσει ἀντὶ Ασιν.

shall reign in place of Astin.

COMMENT.

The direct speech of the king's servants stops here.

2:4 καὶ ἤρεσεν τῷ βασιλεῖ/

And it/ pleased the king/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

This is not an episodic boundary even though there is a topic change because the topic is pushed down to the right dislocation.

τὸ πρᾶγμα.

this matter.

RIGHT DISLOCATION.

Both τὸ πρᾶγμα (of this clause) and οὕτως (of the following clause) are cohesion devices that are used to tie the exhortation of the direct speech to the result of the direct speech.

2:4 καὶ ἐποίησεν<sup>145</sup> οὕτως.

And he/ did thus.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

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<sup>145</sup>The topic of ἐποίησεν refers to the animate verbal argument of the preceding clause, τῷ βασιλεῖ, rather than the implicit subject of the verb ἤρεσεν.

This is not an episodic boundary even though there is a topic change, since no nominal coding is used here.

### 3.3.6 Discourse section 2:5-2:11

===[MAJOR BOUNDARY]===[

This is a major boundary (NRSV 1991, apocrypha 57; Jobes 2009) because of the presence of a marked topic that is not a temporary shift. While 2:5 may be called a “flashback” (Dorothy 1997:65) because the chronology of 2:5 precedes that of the previous discourse section, the structural coding indicates that this is a major boundary rather than an offline section. The theme of this discourse section is that Esther, the foster daughter of Mordecai, enters the harem.

2:5 καὶ ἄνθρωπος/ ἦν/

A man/ there was/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

Mordecai needs to be reintroduced here, even though he was already introduced in 1:1a, because the attentional status of the participant Mordecai has become inactive and needs to be reactivated. This is not a redundant introduction of Mordecai.

Ιουδαῖος ἐν Σούσοις τῇ πόλει.

a Jew in the city of Susa.

RIGHT DISLOCATION.

Much of the semantic content of 2:5-2:6 parallels 1:1a-1:1c. This constitutes global prominence, which is another structural device used to highlight the importance of Mordecai in the narration.

2:5 καὶ ὄνομα αὐτῷ Μαρδοχαῖος.

And his name was Mordecai.

PRESENTATIONAL FOCUS.

ὁ/ τοῦ Ιαΐρου τοῦ Σεμεΐου τοῦ Κισαίου ἐκ φυλῆς Βενιαμιν/

The one/ (born) of Iairou of Semeiou of Kisaïou, from the tribe of Benjamin/

TOPIC/OLD/

2:6 ὅς/ ἦν αἰχμάλωτος ἐξ Ἱερουσαλημ/

who/ was a captive from Jerusalem/

TOPIC[MARKED]/OLD/

2:6 ἦν/ ἥχμαλώτευσεν Ναβουχοδονοσορ βασιλεὺς  
Βαβυλῶνος.

whom/ Nabuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, took captive.

TOPIC[MARKED]/OLD.

2:7[1] καὶ ἦν τούτῳ παῖς/

And there was to him a girl/

PRESENTATIONAL FOCUS/

Another reason for repeating the biographical information of Mordecai is that the author wishes to introduce Esther as being a foster daughter of Mordecai. So the author has to first remind the reader about who Mordecai is before going on to talk about the ancestry of Esther.

2:7[2] θρεπτὴ θυγάτηρ Αμινάδαβ ἀδελφοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ.

a foster daughter (born) of Aminadab, the brother of his father.

RIGHT DISLOCATION.

2:7[3] καὶ ὄνομα αὐτῇ Εσθηρ.

Her name (was) Esther.

PRESENTATIONAL FOCUS.

2:7[4] ἐν δὲ τῷ μεταλλάξαι αὐτῆς τοὺς γονεῖς/<sup>146</sup>

And when her parents died/

POINT OF DEPARTURE/

<sup>146</sup>The word μεταλλάξαι means “to die” (Liddell and Scott 1996: s.v. II.2). It could also mean to be “transferred” (s.v. IV), as in being transferred by the Babylonian empire to another location, hence being separated from Mordecai and Esther. But this second meaning is less likely because the only example cited by Liddell and Scott involves τινὰ εἰς, which is lacking in this clause.

2:7[5] ἐπαίδευσεν αὐτὴν ἑαυτῷ εἰς γυναικα.<sup>147</sup>

he/ raised her up by himself into adulthood.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

The episodic boundary is signaled by an unmarked topic that is a topic shift. The topic is continued at the beginning of 2:9, after the intervening offline section.

2:7[6] καὶ ἦν τὸ κοράσιον καλὸν τῷ εἶδει.

And the girl/ was good looking.

TOPIC/OLD.

The fact that Esther is beautiful echoes the selection criteria for the new queen (2:3).

---[MINOR BREAK]---

This series of three verbs in the passive voice signals a shift from mainline to offline.

2:8 καὶ ὅτε ἠκούσθη τὸ τοῦ βασιλέως πρόσταγμα/

When the declaration of the king was heard/

POINT OF DEPARTURE/

The genitive modifier τοῦ βασιλέως is fronted before the head noun πρόσταγμα. This makes the modifier locally prominent and highlights that the king is authoritative and respected.

2:8 συνήχθησαν κοράσια πολλὰ εἰς Σουσάν τὴν πόλιν ὑπὸ χεῖρα Γαι.

many young girls/ were gathered into the city of Susa by the hand of Gai.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

2:8 καὶ ἤχθη Εσθηρ πρὸς Γαι τὸν φύλακα τῶν γυναικῶν.

And Esther/ was taken to Gai, the guardian of the harem.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

¹⁴⁷The reflexive pronoun ἑαυτῷ implies that Mordecai was either a single man or a widower. Nobody helped him when he raised Esther.

The shift of the verbal voice from the passive to the active signals the return of the offline section back to the mainline. The topic of the last foreground clause, Esther, continues as the topic of this clause. The nominal coding of Esther is delayed to the right dislocation to alert the reader that there is no topic shift in the return to the mainline.

2:9 καὶ ἤρεσεν αὐτῷ/

And she/ pleased him/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

τὸ κοράσιον.

the young girl.

RIGHT DISLOCATION.

2:9 καὶ εὗρεν χάριν ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ.

And she/ found favor before him.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

2:9 καὶ ἔσπευσεν αὐτῇ δοῦναι τὸ σμῆγμα καὶ τὴν μερίδα καὶ τὰ ἑπτὰ κοράσια
τὰ ἀποδεδειγμένα αὐτῇ ἐκ βασιλικοῦ.

And he/ hastened to her to give the soap and the allotted portion and the
seven girls assigned to her from the king.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

The topic shift here from Esther to Gai is not coded by a nominal because the author does not want to make this an episodic boundary.

2:9 καὶ ἐχρήσατο αὐτῇ καλῶς/ καὶ ταῖς ἄβραις αὐτῆς ἐν τῷ γυναικῶνι.

And he/ treated her well/ also to her maids in the harem.

TOPIC/COMMENT/DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT.

The dominant focal element highlights the degree to which Esther was favored by Gai.

2:10 καὶ οὐχ ὑπέδειξεν Εσθηρ τὸ γένος αὐτῆς οὐδὲ τὴν πατρίδα.

And Esther/ did not reveal her race nor her natiaveland.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

The nominal coding of Esther indicates a return to the main topic, after a brief section where the topic deviated from Esther to Gai. This is not a chronological “flashback” (Dorothy 1997:66); rather, this is a narrator’s comment on the character of Esther during her time in the harem. Here, the placement of οὐδὲ just before τὴν πατρίδα means that οὐδὲ is signaling the local prominence of only this last noun phrase constituent. This means that Esther not only refrained from telling others about her ancestry, but she did not even reveal her nativeland, which is a piece of information that might allow others to deduce her ancestry.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The particle γάρ indicates a shift to background. This explains Esther’s behavior in the previous clause.

2:10 ὁ γὰρ Μαρδοχαῖος/ ἐνετείλατο αὐτῇ μὴ ἀπαγγεῖλαι.

Since Mordecai/ ordered her to not tell.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The background shifts to offline. This is indicated by an asyndeton. The temporal phrase καθ’ ἐκάστην ἡμέραν is not a boundary indicator. Rather, it has an aspectual function, strengthening the habitual sense of the imperfect aspect of the main verb περιεπάτει. The deletion of δέ, and the addition of και at the beginning of this clause in *Codex Alexandrinus*, 58, and 93 would make this a minor break instead.

ASYNDETON 2:11 καθ’ ἐκάστην δὲ ἡμέραν/

Day after day/

POINT OF DEPARTURE/

ὁ Μαρδοχαῖος/ περιεπάτει κατὰ τὴν αὐλὴν τὴν γυναικείαν/

Mordecai/ was walking near the court of the harem/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

The translation of κατὰ as “near” is supported by Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. B.I.3). This preposition could also mean “opposite to” (s.v. B.I.3), or “down to” (s.v. B.I.1). κατὰ does not necessarily mean that Mordecai has already assumed his service in the court.

2:11 ἐπισκοπῶν τί Εσθηρ συμβήσεται.

watching what will happen to Esther.

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

3.3.7 Discourse section 2:12-2:14

===[MAJOR BOUNDARY]===

This is a major boundary (NRSV 1991, apocrypha 57; Jobes 2009) signaled by a marked topic that is a topic shift. The replacement of οὗτος δὲ ἦν with και οταν η in *Codex Alexandrinus* would change this clause into a temporal indicator in a point of departure, which would still be a major boundary signal. This discourse section is unique because the marked topic, οὗτος, is a cataphoric referent, rather than a topic that persists cataphorically. The time when a girl in the harem is ready to go to see the king is the theme of this discourse section. This is not a “flashback” (Dorothy 1997:66); rather, this general description of the beauty treatment process tells the reader what Esther has to go through before she sees the king.

2:12[1] οὗτος/ δὲ ἦν καιρὸς κορασίου εἰσελθεῖν πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα/

And this/ was the time of a girl to go to the king/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

2:12[2] ὅταν ἀναπληρώσῃ μῆνας δέκα δύο.

when a twelve month (period) was completed.

RIGHT DISLOCATION.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The foreground switches to the background. This is signaled by the particle γάρ.

2:12[3] οὕτως/ γὰρ ἀναπληροῦνται αἱ ἡμέραι τῆς θεραπείας/

Thus/ are the days of therapy completed/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

This discourse section is unique in that the present middle verbal form occurs five times. This codes the gnomic aspect of the description of the beauty treatment procedure.

2:12[4] μῆνας ἕξ ἀλειφόμεναι ἐν σμυρνίνῳ ἐλαίῳ καὶ μῆνας ἕξ ἐν τοῖς ἄρώμασιν καὶ ἐν τοῖς σμήγμασιν τῶν γυναικῶν.

six months anointed in oil of myrrh, and six months in the scents and soaps of women.

RIGHT DISLOCATION.

2:13 καὶ τότε εἰσπορεύεται πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα.

Then, she/ goes to the king.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

2:13 καὶ ὃ ἐὰν εἴπῃ/ παραδώσει αὐτῇ/

and whatever she says/ he will handover to her/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

2:13 συνεισέρχεσθαι αὐτῇ ἀπὸ τοῦ γυναικῶνος ἕως τῶν βασιλείων.

to go with her from the harem to the king's residence.

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The asyndeton signals a switch from the background to offline.

ASYNDETON 2:14 δείλης/

In the evening/

POINT OF DEPARTURE/

εἰσπορεύεται.

she/ goes in.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

2:14 καὶ πρὸς ἡμέραν/

And towards daybreak/

POINT OF DEPARTURE/

ἀποτρέχει εἰς τὸν γυναικῶνα τὸν δεύτερον/

she/ goes off to the second harem/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

2:14 οὐ/ Γαι ὁ εὐνοῦχος τοῦ βασιλέως ὁ φύλαξ τῶν γυναικῶν.

where/ Gai, the eunuch of the king, the guardian of the harem (is).

TOPIC/COMMENT.

This means that Gai is the guardian of both the first harem (outside the king's residence) and the second harem (inside the king's residence). But he himself resides in the second harem.

2:14 καὶ οὐκέτι εἰσπορεύεται πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα/ ἔαν μὴ κληθῇ ὀνόματι.

And she/ no longer goes to the king/ unless called by name.

TOPIC/COMMENT/DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT.

The dominant focal element in the clause below is the main point of the clause, telling the reader that the girl has a chance to see the king again. But, the passive voice of the subjunctive verb, oddly, backgrounds this phrasal element. This hints that the chance for a girl to see the king again is actually slight. This explains why Esther is apprehensive of approaching the king when she is asked by Mordecai to do so in 4:11.

3.3.8 Discourse section 2:15-2:19

===[MAJOR BOUNDARY]==

This major boundary (NRSV 1991, apocrypha 58; Jobes 2009) is coded by a temporal indicator in a point of departure. This is not a “flashback” (Dorothy 1997:66). The sequencing of the previous discourse section and the present one is iconic because the author first tells the reader the general case of what happens to all the girls before the author proceeds to the specific instance of what happens to Esther. The theme of this section is the selection of Esther as the queen.

2:15 ἐν δὲ τῷ ἀναπληροῦσθαι τὸν χρόνον Εσθηρ τῆς θυγατρὸς Αμιναδαβ ἀδελφοῦ
πατρὸς Μαρδοχαίου εἰσελθεῖν πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα/¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁸τῆς θυγατρὸς Αμιναδαβ ἀδελφοῦ πατρὸς Μαρδοχαίου is missing in *Codex Sinaiticus*.

And when the time was up for Esther, the daughter of Aminadab, the brother of Mordecai's father, to go in to the king/

POINT OF DEPARTURE/

2:15 οὐδὲν/ ἡθέτησεν/

nothing/ she/ set aside/

FOCUS[MARKED]/TOPIC/COMMENT/

The markedness of οὐδὲν probably stresses the uniqueness of Esther among the girls in the harem in that she is not greedy.

2:15 ὦν/ αὐτῇ ἐνετείλατο ὁ εὐνοῦχος ὁ φύλαξ τῶν γυναικῶν.

which/ to her the eunuch, the guardian of the harem, instructed.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

The fronting of αὐτῇ follows the rule of information flow, where old information precedes new information. The fronting of αὐτῇ does not signal local prominence in this case.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The use of γάρ shifts the foreground to the background.

2:15 ἦν γὰρ **Εσθηρ**¹⁴⁹ εὐρίσκουσα χάριν παρὰ πάντων τῶν βλέπόντων αὐτήν.

Esther/ found favor from all who were watching her.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The redundancy of the proper noun, Εσθηρ, indicates a shift from the background section above to the foreground below.

2:16 καὶ εἰσῆλθεν **Εσθηρ** πρὸς Ἀρταξέρξην τὸν βασιλέα τῷ δωδεκάτῳ μηνί/

Then Esther/ went in to Artaxerxes the king on the twelfth month/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

2:16 ὅς/ ἐστὶν Ἀδὰρ τῷ ἑβδόμῳ ἔτει τῆς βασιλείας αὐτοῦ.

¹⁴⁹The redundancy of the proper noun Εσθηρ is unusual. This is probably motivated by the desire to avoid the ambiguity in the identity of the third person singular stative verb ἦν, which by itself could be interpreted to refer to Gai the eunuch instead of Esther.

which/ is the (month of) Adar, on the seventh year of his reign.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The use of the passive voice for the verb signals a shift to offline.

2:17 καὶ ἠράσθη ὁ βασιλεὺς **Εσθηρ**.

The king/ loved Esther.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

Esther is again redundant, since using an accusative feminine pronoun would grammatically suffice. This again highlights the centrality of Esther in this discourse section.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The offline returns to the foreground here. Because the topic here is a continuation of the topic of the previous foreground section, namely Esther, no nominal coding is required.

2:17 καὶ εὗρεν χάριν παρὰ πάσας τὰς παρθένους.

She/ found favor above all the virgins.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

2:17 καὶ ἐπέθηκεν αὐτῇ τὸ διάδημα τὸ γυναικεῖον.

And he/ placed on her the queen's crown.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

The topic shift from Esther to the king is not coded nominally in this clause because there is not a minor break here.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

The presence of the nominal coding ὁ βασιλεὺς is delayed to this clause in order to make this the beginning of an episodic boundary.

2:18 καὶ ἐποίησεν **ὁ βασιλεὺς** πότον πᾶσι τοῖς φίλοις αὐτοῦ καὶ ταῖς δυνάμεσιν ἐπὶ ἡμέρας ἑπτὰ.

And the king/ made a drinking party for all his friends and the high officials for seven days.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

2:18 καὶ ὕψωσεν τοὺς γάμους Εσθηρ.

And he/ exalted the wedding feast of Esther.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

2:18 καὶ ἄφεσιν/ ἐποίησεν τοῖς ὑπὸ τὴν βασιλείαν αὐτοῦ.

And an amnesty/ he/ granted to those under his kingdom.

FOCUS[MARKED]/TOPIC/COMMENT.

The prominence of the marked focus, ἄφεσιν, means that the granting of an amnesty is not a frequent event in the kingdom.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The marked topic that is a temporary shift signals a minor break. Contrary to Dorothy (1997:67), this is not a “digression”. Both 2:18 and 2:19 denote the consequences of Esther’s ascension as queen: (a) the king gives a party, and (b) Mordecai gets to serve in the court.

2:19 ὁ δὲ Μαρδοχαῖος/ ἐθεράπευεν ἐν τῇ αὐλῇ.

And Mordecai/ served at the court.<sup>150</sup>

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

### 3.3.9 Discourse section 2:20-2:22

===[MAJOR BOUNDARY]===

This is a major boundary (TEV 1976; NRSV 1991, apocrypha 58; Jobes 2009) signaled by a marked topic that is not a temporary shift. The theme of this discourse section is that Esther (and Mordecai) thwarts the plot of two eunuchs to assassinate the king. Since this event is on the narrative mainline, this is not a “digression” (contrary to Dorothy 1997:67).

2:20 ἡ δὲ Εσθηρ/ οὐχ ὑπέδειξεν τὴν πατρίδα αὐτῆς.

<sup>150</sup>Whereas Mordecai was given the decree to serve in the court in 1:1q, there is no indication in the text that he actually did so until here.

And Esther/ did not disclose her nativelyland.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The particle γάρ signals the shift from the foreground to background. οὕτως is both an anaphoric referent (pointing to the previous clause) and a cataphoric referent (pointing to the right extraposition).

2:20 οὕτως/ γὰρ ἐνετείλατο αὐτῇ/

For thus/ he instructed her/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

Μαρδοχαῖος/

Mordecai/

RIGHT DISLOCATION/

2:20 φοβεῖσθαι τὸν θεὸν καὶ ποιεῖν τὰ προστάγματα αὐτοῦ/

to fear God and to do his commandments/

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION/

2:20 καθὼς ἦν μετ' αὐτοῦ.

just as she/ was with him.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The nominal coding of the marked topic signals the shift from the background to the foreground.

καὶ Ἐσθηρ/ οὐ μετήλλαξεν τὴν ἀγωγὴν αὐτῆς.

And Esther/ did not change her upbringing.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The foreground shifts back to offline (Dorothy 1997:67). This shift is signaled by the series of three passive voice verbs. Contrary to NRSV (1991) and Jobes (2009), this is not a discourse section boundary.

2:21 καὶ ἐλυπήθησαν οἱ δύο εὐνοῦχοι τοῦ βασιλέως οἱ ἀρχισωματοφύλακες/

And the two eunuchs of the king, the chief bodyguards/ were grieved/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

These two eunuchs are different from the two eunuchs mentioned in 1:1n. The incident here occurs when Esther is already in the court (2:22), whereas Esther could not have been in the court during the incident of 1:1n, since 1:1 (μετὰ τοὺς λόγους τούτους) chronologically follows 1:1n and is chronologically prior to the deposing of queen Astin, and the search for the new queen.

2:21 ὅτι προήχθη Μαρδοχαῖος.

because Mordecai/ was advanced.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

2:21 καὶ ἐζήτουν ἀποκτεῖναι Ἀρταξέρξην τὸν βασιλέα.

And they/ sought (several times) to kill Artaxerxes the king.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

2:22 καὶ ἐδηλώθη Μαρδοχαίῳ/

And It was made known to Mordecai/

EVENT FOCUS/

ὁ λόγος.

this matter.

RIGHT DISLOCATION.

2:22 καὶ ἐσήμανεν Εσθηρ.

And he/ notified Esther.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The fronting of the independent pronoun provides a temporary topic shift back to the main topic of the discourse section, Esther. This constitutes a minor break.

2:22 καὶ αὐτὴ/ ἐνεφάνισεν τῷ βασιλεῖ τὰ τῆς ἐπιβουλῆς.

And she/ revealed to the king the matter of the conspiracy.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

Together, the three foreground clauses in this discourse section (a) ἡ δὲ Εσθηρ οὐχ ὑπέδειξεν τὴν πατρίδα αὐτῆς, (b) καὶ Εσθηρ οὐ μετήλλαξεν τὴν ἀγωγὴν αὐτῆς, and (c) the current clause under discussion, give the reader a window into the psyche as well as the action of Esther after she became queen.

### 3.3.10 Discourse section 2:23

===[MAJOR BOUNDARY]===

This major boundary is signaled by a marked topic that is not a temporary shift. The theme of this short discourse section is that the king records the deeds of Mordecai in the imperial records.

2:23 ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς/ ἤτασεν τοὺς δύο εὐνούχους.

And the king/ examined the two eunuchs.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

2:23 καὶ ἐκρέμασεν αὐτούς.

And he/ hung them.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

2:23 καὶ προσέταξεν ὁ βασιλεὺς καταχωρίσαι εἰς μνημόσυνον ἐν τῇ βασιλικῇ βιβλιοθήκῃ ὑπὲρ τῆς εὐνοίας Μαρδοχαίου/ ἐν ἐγκωμίῳ.

And the king/ ordered to register in remembrance, in the king's library, concerning the goodwill of Mordecai/ in praise.

TOPIC/COMMENT/DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT.

The redundant coding of ὁ βασιλεὺς highlights the centrality of the role of the king in this discourse section.

### 3.3.11 Discourse section 3:1-3:13a[2]

===[MAJOR BOUNDARY]===

*Codex Alexandrinus* appears to be uncertain whether this is a discourse boundary. This is evidenced by the textual variant of the omission of δέ. However, this major boundary does exist (TEV 1976; NRSV 1991, apocrypha 58; Jobes 2009). It is signaled by the temporal indicator in a point of departure. This is reinforced by the redundant nominal coding, ὁ βασιλεὺς. There is a change in the cast of characters in this discourse section. Whereas the previous discourse section involved the king and Mordecai, this discourse section is primarily about the king and Aman. The theme of this discourse section is that the king allows Aman to exterminate the Jews.

3:1[1] μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα/

After these events/

POINT OF DEPARTURE/

3:1[2] ἐδόξασεν ὁ βασιλεὺς Ἄρταξέρξης Ἀμαν Ἀμαδαθου Βουγαῖον.

king Artaxerxes/ exalted Aman of Amadathou of Bougaion.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

3:1[3] καὶ ὕψωσεν αὐτόν.

And he/ exalted him.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

3:1[4] καὶ ἐπρωτοβάθρει πάντων τῶν φίλων αὐτοῦ.

And he/ placed (Aman's seat) above all his friends.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The marked topic that is a temporary shift signals a minor break.

3:2 καὶ πάντες οἱ ἐν τῇ αὐλῇ/ προσεκύνουν αὐτῷ.

And all those in the court/ would bow to him.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The particle γάρ signals a shift from foreground to background. The marked topic, οὕτως, is an anaphoric referent.

3:2 οὕτως/ γὰρ προσέταξεν ὁ βασιλεὺς ποιῆσαι.

For thus/ the king ordered to do.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The marked topic that is a temporary topic shift signals a minor break. The marked topics in the two minor breaks are in contrast with each other. The response of Mordecai (a marked topic) to Aman contrasts with the response of the others serving in the court (also a marked topic) to Aman.

3:2 ὁ δὲ Μαρδοχαῖος/ οὐ προσεκύνει αὐτῷ.

(But) Mordecai/ would not bow to him.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

This episodic boundary is signaled by an unmarked topic that is a topic shift.

3:3[1] καὶ ἐλάλησαν οἱ ἐν τῇ αὐλῇ τοῦ βασιλέως τῷ Μαρδοχαίῳ.

And those in the court of the king/ spoke to Mordecai.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

This clause is a direct speech frame. The direct speech proper begins with an asyndeton and the local prominence of the vocative, Μαρδοχαῖε.

ASYNDETON 3:3[2] Μαρδοχαῖε /

Mordecai/

DISLOCATION/

3:3[3] τί/παρακούεις τὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ βασιλέως λεγόμενα.

why/ do you disobey the statutes ordered by the king.

FOCUS[MARKED]/TOPIC/COMMENT.

The markedness of the interrogative particle is normal usage. The present tense of the verb παρακούεις is locally prominent and highlights that the courtiers are surprised by Mordecai's refusal to act like them. The local prominence of the fronted prepositional phrase ὑπὸ τοῦ βασιλέως highlights the authority of the king.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The asyndeton of the following clause signals offline. The point of departure has an aspectual function, strengthening the habitual sense of the imperfect aspect of the main verb ἐλάλουν.

ASYNDETON 3:4 καθ' ἐκάστην ἡμέραν/

And everyday/

POINT OF DEPARTURE/

ἐλάλουν αὐτῷ.

they/ spoke to him.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

3:4 καὶ οὐχ ὑπήκουεν αὐτῶν.

But he/ would not obey them.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The offline returns to the foreground. The courtiers resume as the topic, but the topic is not coded nominally to avoid making this an episodic boundary.

3:4 καὶ ὑπέδειξαν τῷ Αμαν Μαρδοχαῖον τοῖς τοῦ βασιλέως λόγοις
ἀντιτασσόμενον.

And they/ showed to Aman that Mordecai was rebelling against the words of the king.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

The indirect object, τῷ Αμαν, is not fronted. Rather, the longer direct object clause has been postposed in accordance with the principle that more complex information stands at the end of a clause. The dative phrase, τοῖς τοῦ βασιλέως λόγοις, is locally prominent by

being fronted within the direct object phrase. This highlights that Mordecai is disobeying none other than the king himself.

3:4 καὶ ὑπέδειξεν αὐτοῖς/

And he/ showed them/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

ὁ Μαρδοχαῖος/

Mordecai/

RIGHT DISLOCATION/

3:4 ὅτι Ιουδαῖός/ ἐστίν.

that a Jew/ he is.

COMMENT'/TOPIC.

The revelation that he is a Jew is signaled by the preverbal position of the complement, which is locally prominent. This is a profound revelation because this triggers Aman's anger toward the Jewish race and his desire to exterminate them. In addition, this revelation is a surprise to the reader because this act is opposite to Mordecai's previous instruction to Esther that she should not reveal the identity of her natiaveland (2:10, 20).

---[MINOR BREAK]---

There is a shift from foreground to offline here. This is signaled by the passive voice of the verb ἐθυμώθη in the main clause.

3:5 καὶ ἐπιγνοὺς Ἀμαν/

And Aman knew/

EXTRAPOSITION/

3:5 ὅτι οὐ προσκυνεῖ αὐτῷ/

that he/ did not bow to him/

TOPIC/OLD/

The content of this subordinate clause is a repeat of 3:2. This is globally prominent. This global prominence is further highlighted by the present tense of προσκυνεῖ. This structure shows that Aman is highly displeased at the disrespect shown to him by Mordecai.

Μαρδοχαῖος/

Mordecai/

RIGHT DISLOCATION/

3:5 Ἐθυμώθη σφόδρα.

he/ was exceedingly furious.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

3:6 καὶ ἐβουλεύσατο ἀφανίσει πάντας τοὺς ὑπὸ τὴν Ἀρταξέρξου βασιλείαν
Ιουδαίους.

And he/ wanted to get rid of all the Jews in the kingdom of Artaxerxes.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

The middle voice of the verb ἐβουλεύσατο continues to discuss the inner disposition of Aman. This clause, therefore, does not belong to the foreground. The fronting of the prepositional phrase ὑπὸ τὴν Ἀρταξέρξου βασιλείαν before the head noun Ιουδαίους is locally prominent. This highlights that the genocide envisioned by Aman is extensive and is to cover all the Jews within the jurisdiction of the king. Further, the genitive Ἀρταξέρξου is fronted within the noun phrase within the prepositional phrase. This highlights the authority of the king.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The shift of the verbal voice from the passive (and the middle) to the active means that the background section returns to the foreground here. But, the beginning of 3:7 is not a discourse boundary (NRSV 1991, apocrypha 58; Jobes 2009).¹⁵¹

¹⁵¹When a non-mainline section returns to the mainline, the topic may (a) continue from the non-mainline, or (b) return to the topic referent of the mainline (prior to the intervening non-mainline section).

On the one hand, the topic of a return to the mainline may continue from the preceding non-mainline section. For example, in 3:7, καὶ ἐποίησεν ψήφισμα ἐν ἔτει δωδεκάτῳ τῆς βασιλείας Ἀρταξέρξου, continues from the topic Ἀμάν of the preceding offline section. The same phenomenon occurs in 3:12 (the scribes), and in 3:13 and 3:13a[1] (the letter).

On the other hand, the topic of a return to the mainline may pick up from where the mainline left off (prior to the intervening non-mainline section). For example, the topic of καὶ ἐλάλησεν πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα Ἀρταξέρξην λέγων (3:8) does not refer to the topic (ὁ κληρὸς) of the immediately preceding clause, which is offline; rather, the identity of the topic is found in the last clause of the foreground prior to the minor break, namely Aman. This phenomenon is also found in 2:17, where the identity of the verbal suffix of εὗρεν does not refer to the topic (ὁ βασιλεὺς) of the preceding clause (καὶ ἠράσθη ὁ βασιλεὺς Εὐθηρ), which is offline. Rather, the identity of εὗρεν continues from the last clause of the foreground (καὶ εἰσῆλθεν Εὐθηρ πρὸς Ἀρταξέρξην τὸν βασιλέα τῷ δωδεκάτῳ μηνί in 2:16) prior to the offline.

There is also a third possibility. In 5:1e, where the topic of καὶ ἀγωνιάσας ἀνεπήδησεν ἀπὸ τοῦ θρόνου αὐτοῦ refers neither (a) to the topic of the minor break (ὁ θεὸς), nor (b) to the topic of the last clause

3:7 καὶ ἐποίησεν ψήφισμα ἐν ἔτει δωδεκάτῳ τῆς βασιλείας Ἀρταξέρξου.

And he/ made a (legislative) motion in the twelfth year of king Artaxerxes.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

3:7 καὶ ἔβαλεν κλήρους ἡμέραν ἐξ ἡμέρας καὶ μῆνα ἐκ μηνὸς/

And he/ cast lots (to choose) a day and a month/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

3:7 ὥστε ἀπολέσαι ἐν μιᾷ ἡμέρᾳ τὸ γένος Μαρδοχαίου.

in order to wipe out, on one day, the race of Mordecai.

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

Here, the temporary shift to the unmarked topic, ὁ κλῆρος, indicates a minor break in the foreground.

3:7 καὶ ἔπεσεν ὁ κλῆρος εἰς τὴν τεσσαρεσκαίδεκάτην τοῦ μηνός/

The lot/ fell on the fourteenth of the month/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

3:7 ὅς/ ἐστὶν **Ἀδαρ**.

which/ is (the month) of Adar.

TOPIC[MARKED]/OLD.

Esther went in to see the king in the month of Adar (2:16). The repeat of this piece of old information is globally prominent and signals that the timing of the lot is significant in the narrative.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

prior to the minor break (κατεπέκυψεν), namely Esther. Rather, it refers to the first topic of the discourse section, namely the king. This interpretation is supported by the textual information. The topic does not refer to Esther because the noun phrase, τοῦ θρόνου αὐτοῦ, is coreferential with the topic, ἀνεπήδησεν, and the pronoun αὐτοῦ is masculine in gender. The topic also does not refer to “God” because τοῦ θρόνου refers to a physical throne from which the topic struggles to get up. This leaves the king as the only viable alternative as the identity of the topic. Similarly, the topic in 6:1[2], καὶ εἶπεν τῷ διδασκάλῳ αὐτοῦ, refers to the first topic of the discourse section. In 2:7, ἐπαίδευσεν αὐτὴν ἑαυτῷ εἰς γυναῖκα, the identity of the topic ἐπαίδευσεν refers to the first topic of the discourse section, namely Mordecai, which takes precedence over the referent introduced in the immediately preceding clause, καὶ ὄνομα αὐτῇ Εσθηρ.

The topic resumes to the topic, Aman, of the foreground before the minor break. This is not a major or an episodic boundary (NRSV 1991, apocrypha 59; Jobes 2009).

3:8[1] καὶ ἐλάλησεν πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα Ἀρταξέρξην λέγων.

And he/ said to king Artaxerxes, saying.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

The direct speech frame is locally prominent. This is signaled by the addition of the redundant λέγων. The content of the speech proper begins with an asyndeton.

ASYNDETON 3:8[2] ὑπάρχει ἔθνος/

There is a nation/

PRESENTATIONAL FOCUS/

3:8[3] διεσπαρμένον ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἐν πάσῃ τῇ βασιλείᾳ σου.

scattered among the nations in all of your kingdom.

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

3:8[4] οἱ δὲ νόμοι αὐτῶν/ ἕξαστοι παρὰ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη.

Their laws/ (are) quite different from all the nations.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

The δέ of this clause and the next signal a contrast pair. The topic of this clause contrasts with the marked focus of the following clause.

3:8[5] τῶν δὲ νόμων τοῦ βασιλέως/ παρακούουσιν/

The laws of the king/ they/ disregard.

FOCUS[MARKED]/TOPIC/COMMENT.

The marked focus as well as the present tense of the verb signal the local prominence of this clause. Here, Aman presses his main charge against the Jews that they are a danger to the king because they are not law-abiding.

3:8[6] καὶ οὐ συμφέρει τῷ βασιλεῖ ἔασαι αὐτούς.

So it is not advantageous for the king to tolerate them.

EVENT FOCUS.

The present tense of the main verb in this clause highlights the allegation that the disobedience of the Jews as being harmful to the king.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

This asyndeton is used in a reported speech to mark a minor break. Here, it coincides with the beginning of the main exhortation of this hortatory speech.

ASYNDETON 3:9 εἰ δοκεῖ¹⁵² τῷ βασιλεῖ/¹⁵³

If it seems good to the king/

EXTRAPOSITION/

The present tense of *δοκεῖ* highlights the commencement of this main exhortation.

3:9 δογματισάτω ἀπολέσαι αὐτούς.

let him make a decree to get rid of them.

EVENT FOCUS.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The marked topic that is a temporary topic shift signals a minor break at the end of this direct speech.

3:9 κἀγὼ/ διαγράψω εἰς τὸ γαζοφυλάκιον τοῦ βασιλέως ἀργυρίου τάλαντα μύρια.

And I/ shall pay a debt into the treasury of the king ten thousand talents of silver.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The transition from the end of the direct speech to the narrative is signaled by a shift of topic from Aman to the king. But since the nominal coding of the topic appears in the extraposition rather than in the main clause, this clause does not signal an episodic boundary.

3:10 καὶ περιελόμενος ὁ βασιλεὺς τὸν δακτύλιον/

¹⁵²The verb *δοκεῖ* means “to seem good to” (Liddell and Scott 1996: s.v. II.3).

¹⁵³This clause reads as *εἰ οὖν τῷ βασιλεῖ δοκεῖ* in Codex 58 and Codex 93, *εἰ οὖν δοκεῖ τῷ βασιλεῖ* in the corrector of *Codex Sinaiticus*, and *εἰ δοκεῖ οὖν τῷ βασιλεῖ* in *Codex Alexandrinus*.

And the king, taking off the ring/

EXTRAPOSITION/

3:10 ἔδωκεν εἰς χεῖρα τῷ Αμαν/

he/ gave (it) into the hands of Aman/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

3:10 σφραγίσαι κατὰ τῶν γεγραμμένων κατὰ τῶν Ιουδαίων.

to seal what has been written against the Jews.

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

3:11 καὶ εἶπεν ὁ βασιλεὺς τῷ Αμαν.

The king/ said to Aman.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

This is a direct speech frame. The content of the direct speech begins with an asyndeton. The nominal coding of the king is redundant is stresses that the king is in control of this situation. The king is not being manipulated against his will.

ASYNDETON 3:11 τὸ μὲν ἀργύριον/ ἔχε.

The silver/ you have (it).

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

The marked topics are being contrasted in the μέν... δέ clause pair.

3:11 τῷ δὲ ἔθνει / χρῶ ὡς βούλει.¹⁵⁴

This nation/ treat as you wish.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

A shift from the foreground to offline is signaled by the passive voice of the main verb ἐκλήθησαν. Contrary to NRSV (1991: apocrypha 59), and Jobes (2009), this is not a discourse boundary.

¹⁵⁴The interpretation of χρῶ as meaning “to treat” follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. C.III).

3:12 καὶ ἐκλήθησαν οἱ γραμματεῖς τοῦ βασιλέως μηνὶ πρώτῳ τῇ τρισκαιδεκάτῃ.

And the scribes of the king/ were assembled on the first month, on the thirteenth (day).

TOPIC/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The shift of the verbal voice from the passive to the active corresponds to the shift from offline back to the foreground.

3:12 καὶ ἔγραψαν/

And they/ wrote/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

3:12 ὥς ἐπέταξεν Ἀμαν τοῖς στρατηγοῖς καὶ τοῖς ἄρχουσιν κατὰ πᾶσαν χώραν ἀπὸ Ἰνδικῆς ἕως τῆς Αἰθιοπίας, ταῖς ἑκατὸν εἴκοσι ἑπτὰ χώραις, τοῖς τε ἄρχουσι τῶν ἐθνῶν κατὰ τὴν αὐτῶν λέξιν δι' Ἀρταξέρξου τοῦ βασιλέως.

as Aman/ ordered the generals and the rulers of all the regions, from Indikei to Ethiopia, to the 127 regions, and to the rulers of the nations according to their languages, through Artaxerxes the king.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The verbal voice shifts from the active to the passive. This corresponds to a shift from the foreground to offline. There is an implicit topic shift here (to the letter), which is not explicitly coded by a nominal. Ellipsis is used here because the letter being issued is not a character in the narration, but only a setting device.

3:13 καὶ ἀπεστάλη διὰ βιβλιαφόρων εἰς τὴν Ἀρταξέρξου βασιλείαν/

And it/ was sent through the letter carriers to the kingdom of Artaxerxes/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

The authority of the king is highlighted by the fronting of Ἀρταξέρξου before its head noun. This shows that the king is not a puppet of Aman. This decree is proclaimed because he agrees with Aman. The king wants to do this. The kingdom is still his.

3:13 ἀφανίσαι τὸ γένος τῶν Ιουδαίων ἐν ἡμέρᾳ μιᾷ μηνὸς
δωδεκάτου/

to wipe out the Jewish race in one day of the twelfth month/

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION/

This right extraposition is a repeat of 3:7 and is globally prominent.

3:13 ὅς / ἐστὶν Ἀδαρ/

which is/ (the month) of Adar/

TOPIC[MARKED]/OLD/

3:13 καὶ διαρπάσαι τὰ ὑπάρχοντα αὐτῶν.

and to plunder their possessions.

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

Addition B begins here. Since the referent of τῆς ἐπιστολῆς is the same as the subject of the previous main clause, ἀπεστάλη, there is no topic shift here. Therefore, this is not a discourse boundary, contrary to TEV (1976), NRSV (1991, apocrypha 59), and Jobes (2009), nor is this an offline (JB 1966:644). Rather, the nominal coding is used to signal a return from the offline back to the mainline.

3:13a[1] τῆς δὲ ἐπιστολῆς/ ἐστὶν τὸ ἀντίγραφον.

Of the (original) letter/ is this copy.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The temporary shift of topic to the king signals a minor break at the end of this discourse section.

3:13a[2] τόδε βασιλεὺς μέγας Ἀρταξέρξης/ τοῖς ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰνδικῆς ἕως τῆς Αἰθιοπίας ἑκατὸν εἴκοσι ἑπτὰ χωρῶν ἄρχουσι καὶ τοπάρχαις ὑποτεταγμένοις.¹⁵⁵

The great king Artaxerxes/ to the rulers and prefects who have been appointed over the 127 regions from Indikei to Ethiopia.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

The two adjunct phrases (ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰνδικῆς ἕως τῆς Αἰθιοπίας, and ἑκατὸν εἴκοσι ἑπτὰ χωρῶν) are both preposed before their head nouns, and hence locally prominent. They highlight the vast extent of the empire of king Artaxerxes.

3.3.12 Discourse section 3:13a[3]-3:13g

===[MAJOR BOUNDARY]===

The placement of the cataphoric referent, τάδε, in the marked position is a signal for the beginning of a major discourse boundary. The theme of this discourse section is the content of the royal epistle.

3:13a[3] τάδε/ γράφει.¹⁵⁶

These things/ he writes.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

This is an epistolary frame, similar to a speech frame. The local prominence signaled by the present tense of the main verb γράφει highlights that this epistle is authoritative because it comes from the king himself.

ASYNDETON 3:13b πολλῶν ἐπάρξας ἔθνων καὶ πάσης ἐπικρατήσας οἰκουμένης/

(Though) governing many nations and prevailing over all the world/¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵το in τόδε is deleted in *Codex Sinaiticus*.

¹⁵⁶Although the subject of this clause is the same as that of the previous clause, the subject of this clause belongs to the pragmatic comment. Hence, there is no topic continuity for “the king” between this clause and the previous clause at the pragmatic level.

¹⁵⁷The use of “though” in the parenthesis of the translation indicates that the extraposition is in contrast to the proposition of the main clause. Here, it is saying that the king is reluctant to exercise the full extent of his power even though he controls all nations. This contrast is a textual device which highlights the king’s benevolence.

EXTRAPOSITION/

This clause begins the content proper of the epistle. Contrary to NRSV (1991, apocrypha 59), and Jobes (2009), 3:13b is not a discourse boundary. The epistle proper begins asyndetically, similar to the beginning of a speech proper. The adjectives πολλῶν and πάσης are fronted before their respective governing verbs. The fronting signals local prominence and highlights the absolute power and political dominance of the empire over other nations.

3:13b ἐβουλήθην¹⁵⁸ μὴ τῷ θράσει τῆς ἐξουσίας ἐπαιρόμενος/

I/ resolved to not lift up power in rashness/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

The fronting of τῷ θράσει and τῆς ἐξουσίας as locally prominent anticipates the objection from the reader of the epistle that the king's treatment of the Jews is too heavy-handed.

3:13b ἐπιεικέστερον δὲ καὶ μετὰ ἡπιότητος ἀεὶ διεξάγων τοὺς τῶν
ὑποτεταγμένων ἀκυμάτους/

but striving for, always reasonably and with gentleness, the wavelessness of
those who have been subjugated/

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION/

The particle δέ signals a contrast between this clause and the main clause. Local prominence is signaled by (a) the fronting of the adjuncts ἐπιεικέστερον and μετὰ ἡπιότητος ἀεὶ, and (b) the fronting of τῶν ὑποτεταγμένων before its head noun.

3:13b διὰ παντὸς καταστήσαι βίους τὴν τε βασιλείαν ἡμέρον/

to establish forever a way of life and a civilized kingdom/

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION/

The fronting of διὰ παντὸς foreshadows that the reform which the king seeks is to be long lasting.

3:13b καὶ πορευτὴν μέχρι περάτων παρεξόμενος/

and to provide a passable (way) until the edge (of the kingdom)/

¹⁵⁸The parsing of ἐβουλήθην may be interpreted as middle as it is used by Herodotus (Liddell and Scott 1996: s.v. B).

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION/

The fronting of πορευτήν μέχρι περάτων again highlights the good intention of the king to provide security throughout the entire kingdom.

3:13b ἀνανεώσασθαι τε τὴν ποθουμένην τοῖς πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις εἰρήνην.

and to renew the longed-for peace for all men.

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

The fronting of τοῖς πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις highlights that the beneficiaries of the reform will be all people.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

This episodic boundary (NRSV 1991, apocrypha 59; Jobes 2009) within the epistle is signaled by δέ and a change in the episodic theme.

3:13c πυθομένου δέ μου τῶν συμβούλων πῶς ἂν ἀχθείη τοῦτο ἐπὶ πέρας/

While I consulted my advisors how this might be undertaken to the ends (of the kingdom)/

#### POINT OF DEPARTURE/

3:13c σωφροσύνη παρ' ἡμῖν διενέγκας/

one excelling in wisdom among us/

#### EXTRAPOSITION/

The main topic, Aman, is preceded by three dislocations. The nominal participles of all three dislocations are postposed to the end. This functions to prepose the rest of the clauses as locally prominent. These preposed elements list the qualities of Aman that are to be admired. This is Aman's way of self-aggrandizement as he dictated this epistle himself.

3:13c καὶ ἐν τῇ εὐνοίᾳ ἀπαράλλάκτως καὶ βεβαίᾳ πίστει ἀποδεδειγμένος/

and one who has exhibited unchangeable goodwill and steadfast trustworthiness/<sup>159</sup>

#### EXTRAPOSITION/

3:13c καὶ δεύτερον τῶν βασιλειῶν γέρας ἀπενηνεγμένος/

<sup>159</sup>The interpretation of πίστει as "trustworthiness" follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. I.2).

and one who has obtained the second rank in the kingdom/

EXTRAPOSITION/

3:13c Αμαν/ 3:13d ἐπέδειξεν ἡμῖν ἐν πάσαις ταῖς κατὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην  
φυλαῖς ἀναμεμῖχθαι δυσμενῇ λαόν τινα/

Aman/ showed us that among all the tribes throughout the world is mixed in  
a certain hostile people/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

The fronting of κατὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην has the same function as before of highlighting the scope of the problem confronting the kingdom. This main clause is followed by two subordinate clauses that describe the nature of this hostile people.

τοῖς νόμοις ἀντίθετον πρὸς πᾶν ἔθνος/

(whose) laws (are) opposed to every nation/

(TOPIC)/COMMENT/

The fronted element, τοῖς νόμοις, of the first subordinate clause is contrasted with the fronted element, τὰ τῶν βασιλέων, of the second subordinate clause. Aman insidiously persuades the audience that the two are pitted against each other.

3:13d τὰ τε τῶν βασιλέων παραπέμποντας διηνεκῶς διατάγματα/

and (who) continually dismiss the edicts of the kingdoms/

(TOPIC)/COMMENT/

3:13d πρὸς τὸ μὴ κατατίθεσθαι τὴν ὑφ' ἡμῶν κατευθυνομένην  
ἀμέμπτως συναρχίαν.

so as to not lay in memory the administration that has been  
made blamelessly straight by us.<sup>160</sup>

EVENT FOCUS.

The fronting of ὑφ' ἡμῶν is another instance of Aman's self-aggrandizement.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

¹⁶⁰The interpretation of κατατίθεσθαι as “to lay in memory” follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. II.6).

This is not just a “transition” (Dorothy 1997:94). This is an episodic boundary (JB 1966:644), which is signaled by οὖν.

3:13e διειληφότες οὖν τόδε τὸ ἔθνος/

So, having recognized this race/

EXTRAPOSITION/

3:13e μονώτατον ἐν ἀντιπαγωγῇ παντὶ διὰ παντὸς ἀνθρώπῳ/

(which) is unique in (its) hostility to all man always/

(TOPIC)/COMMENT/

The (a) fronting of the adjunct διὰ παντὸς, and (b) the use of preverbal elements (κείμενον διαγωγὴν νόμων and τὰ χερίστα) in these four subordinate clauses are locally prominent and highlight the extent of the problem facing the empire.

3:13e κείμενον διαγωγὴν νόμων/ ξενίζουσιν/

(who) consider the established ways of law as strange/

COMMENT'/TOPIC/

3:13e παραλλάσσον καὶ δυσνοοῦν τοῖς ἡμετέροις πράγμασιν/

avoiding and ill-affecting¹⁶¹ our public affairs/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

3:13e τὰ χερίστα/ συντελοῦν κακὰ/ καὶ πρὸς τὸ μὴ τὴν βασιλείαν
εὐσταθείας τυγχάνειν/

perpetrating the worse evil/ so that the kingdom may not obtain
stability/

FOCUS[MARKED]/TOPIC/COMMENT/DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT/

It is unlikely that πρὸς τὸ μὴ τὴν βασιλείαν εὐσταθείας τυγχάνειν is a subordinate clause because the καί which precedes it signals that it is a dominant focal element.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

This forms the main part of the sentence begun in 3:13e. This, the main part of the sentence, is signaled by a second οὖν because (a) the actual exhortation takes place in this

<sup>161</sup>The interpretation of παραλλάσσον as meaning “to avoid” follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. I.3).

episode, and (b) there is long intervening textual distance from the first οὖν to this location.<sup>162</sup> This is not just a “transition” (Dorothy 1997:94), but is another episodic boundary (JB 1966:644; NRSV 1991, apocrypha 59; Jobes 2009).

3:13f προστετάχαμεν οὖν τοὺς σημαιομένους ὑμῖν/ ἐν τοῖς γεγραμμένοις  
ὑπὸ Αμαν/<sup>163</sup>

(So,) we/ have decreed the things being announced to you/ in what has been  
written by Aman/

TOPIC/COMMENT/DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT/

3:13f τοῦ τεταγμένου ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων/ καὶ δευτέρου πατρὸς  
ἡμῶν/

who has been appointed over this affair/ (who is) our second father/

(TOPIC)/COMMENT/DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT/

The repeat of Aman’s title of being the second-in-command of the kingdom is globally prominent.<sup>164</sup> The use of the dominant focal element in the main clause and the subordinate clause, consecutively, highlights the importance of Aman in the kingdom.

3:13f πάντας σὺν γυναιξὶ καὶ τέκνοις ἀπολέσαι ὁλορριζεῖ ταῖς τῶν ἐχθρῶν  
μαχαίραις ἄνευ παντὸς οἴκτου καὶ φειδοῦς τῇ τεσσαρεσκαίδεκάτῃ τοῦ  
δωδεκάτου μηνὸς **Αδαρ** τοῦ ἐνεστῶτος ἔτους.

to wipe out entirely all, with women and children, by swords of enmity,  
without any sympathy or sparing, on the fourteenth of the twelfth month,  
(the month of) Adar, of this year.

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

The fronting of πάντας σὺν γυναιξὶ καὶ τέκνοις indicates that the destruction is to be without any survivors. Under this scheme, the Jews will not have any chance of revival. The fronting of τῶν ἐχθρῶν highlights that this destruction is to be executed with force. The mention of Adar is old information and is globally prominent. The name of the nation that

<sup>162</sup>The first οὖν is in 3:13e.

<sup>163</sup>The lengthy sentence in 3:13e-f is divided between two episodic sections, each signaled by οὖν. Whereas 3:13e belongs to the extraposition part of the sentence, 3:13f contains the main clause and the right peripherals. This supports the assumption of this study that the syntactic notion of a sentence and the pragmatic notion of discourse vary from each other. But this finding needs to be confirmed by the consideration of a larger corpus.

<sup>164</sup>The first instance is in 3:13c.

is to be exterminated, namely the Jews, is never mentioned in this speech. This is a way of playing down the atrocity of the proposed holocaust.

3:13g ὅπως οἱ πάλαι καὶ νῦν δυσμενεῖς ἐν ἡμέρᾳ μιᾷ βιαίως εἰς τὸν ᾅδην.  
κατελθόντες/

So that those who formerly and are even now (our) enemies, on one day, by force, descending into Hades/

EXTRAPOSITION/

The particle ὅπως signals the extraposition as locally prominent. This is not a “transition” (Dorothy 1997:95) in the sense of a major or an episodic boundary.

εἰς τὸν μετέπειτα χρόνον εὐσταθῇ.

(there is) quiet thereafter.

EVENT FOCUS.

3:13g καὶ ἀτάραχα/ παρέχωσιν ἡμῖν διὰ τέλους/

And it would afford us the lack of disturbance forever/

FOCUS[MARKED]/EVENT FOCUS/

Aman highlights the desired result of this royal decree by a marked focus and the present tense of the verb.

τὰ πράγματα.

these affairs.

RIGHT DISLOCATION.

### 3.3.13 Discourse section 3:14-3:15

===[MAJOR BOUNDARY]===

This major boundary (NRSV 1991, apocrypha 60; Jobes 2009) is signaled by a marked topic that is not a temporary shift. The theme of this discourse section is regarding the reception of this decree.

3:14 τὰ δὲ ἀντίγραφα τῶν ἐπιστολῶν/ ἐξετίθετο κατὰ χώραν.

The copies of the letter/ was published throughout the regions.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The passive voice of the verb in the following clause signals a shift from the foreground to offline.<sup>165</sup>

3:14 καὶ προσεῖπεν πᾶσι τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἐτοιμοὺς εἶναι εἰς τὴν ἡμέραν ταύτην.

And it was commanded to all the nations to be ready for that day.

EVENT FOCUS.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

Contrary to BLM (1999), the parsing of ἐσπεύδετο could be middle as well as passive. Therefore, this clause does not belong to the offline section. τὸ πρᾶγμα is not a topic shift. It is an anaphoric referent to the main topic, which signals a shift from offline back to the foreground.

3:15 ἐσπεύδετο δὲ τὸ πρᾶγμα/ καὶ εἰς Σουσαν.

And this matter/ was hastened/ even in Susa.

TOPIC/COMMENT/DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The marked topic that is a temporary shift signals a minor break.

3:15 ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς καὶ Ἀμαν/ ἐκωθωνίζοντο.

The king and Aman/ were getting drunk.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

3:15 ἐταράσσετο δὲ ἡ πόλις.

(Meanwhile) the city/ was in turmoil.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

The δέ signals a contrast between this clause and the previous clause. The recipients of the royal decree were in turmoil, while the originators of the decree were enjoying themselves.

<sup>165</sup>The shift from the mainline to offline is usually accompanied by a topic shift. But this is not necessarily the case. For example, there is topic continuity in 3:14 when the mainline changes to offline.

Alternatively, this could be a minor break signaled by an unmarked topic that is a temporary shift.

### 3.3.14 Discourse section 4:1-4:2

===[MAJOR BOUNDARY]===

This major boundary (JB 1966:644; TEV 1976; NRSV 1991, apocrypha 60; Jobes 2009) is signaled by a marked topic that is not a temporary shift. The theme of this discourse section is Mordecai's mourning.

4:1 ὁ δὲ Μαρδοχαῖος/

And Mordecai/

TOPIC[MARKED]/

ἐπιγνούς τὸ συντελούμενον/

knowing what was happening/

MEDIAL EXTRAPOSITION/

4:1 διέρρηξεν τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ.

ripped his clothes.

COMMENT.

4:1 καὶ ἐνεδύσατο σάκκον.

And he/ put on sackcloth.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

4:1 καὶ κατεπάσατο σποδὸν.

And he/ sprinkled ashes.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

4:1 καὶ ἐκπηδήσας διὰ τῆς πλατείας τῆς πόλεως/

And running wildly through the (main) street of the city/<sup>166</sup>

<sup>166</sup>The interpretation of ἐκπηδήσας as running wildly is based on the meaning of “to leap” in Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. 1). Leaping is not used here because it has a connotation in English of being joyful, which is the opposite of the meaning here.

EXTRAPOSITION/

4:1 ἐβόα φωνῇ μεγάλῃ.

he/ cried out (repeatedly) in a loud voice.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

This is a direct speech frame for the shortest direct speech in this book. The direct speech is preceded by an asyndeton. Just as the royal edict drafted by Aman is filled with phrases that highlight the pernicious nature of the Jews, Mordecai fronts μηδέν here to make the opposite point that the Jews have not done a thing wrong.

ASYNDETON 4:1 αἶρεται ἔθνος μηδέν ἡδίκηκός.

A nation that has done nothing wrong is destroyed.

EVENT FOCUS.

The end of the direct speech and the beginning of the narration is signaled by the shift of the verbal aspect from present to the aorist, which is the default aspect of narration.

4:2 καὶ ἦλθεν ἕως τῆς πύλης τοῦ βασιλέως.

And he/ came until the gate of the king.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

4:2 καὶ ἔστη.

And he/ stood.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The particle γάρ signals a shift from the foreground to background.

4:2 οὐ γὰρ ἦν ἐξὸν αὐτῷ εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν αὐλήν/

For it was not permitted for him to go into the court/

PRESENTATIONAL FOCUS/

4:2 σάκκον ἔχοντι καὶ σποδόν.

having sackcloth and ashes (on).

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

The fronting of σάκκον identifies the exact reason that Mordecai could not enter the court.

### 3.3.15 Discourse section 4:3-4:5

===[MAJOR BOUNDARY]===

This major boundary is signaled by a locative indicator in a point of departure. The theme of this discourse section is that Esther wants to know the cause of Mordecai's mourning.

4:3 καὶ ἐν πάσῃ χώρᾳ/

And in all the regions/

POINT OF DEPARTURE/

4:3 οὐ̇/ ἐξετίθετο τὰ γράμματα/<sup>167</sup>

where/ the decrees had been publicized/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

4:3 κραυγὴ καὶ κοπετὸς καὶ πένθος μέγα τοῖς Ιουδαίοις.

(there were) cries, and beating of the breast in lamentation, and great sorrow for the Jews.

PRESENTATIONAL FOCUS.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The asyndeton signals a shift from the mainline to offline.

ASYNDETON 4:3 σάκκον καὶ σποδὸν/ ἔστρωσαν ἑαυτοῖς.

Sackcloth and ashes/ they/ spread on themselves.

FOCUS[MARKED]/TOPIC/COMMENT.

The marked focus highlights the extant of the Jew's mourning upon hearing this news.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

This episodic boundary is signaled by an unmarked topic that is a topic shift.

4:4 καὶ εἰσῆλθον αἱ ἄβραι καὶ οἱ εὐνοῦχοι τῆς βασιλίσσης.

¹⁶⁷The passive voice of the verb in this subordinate clause makes it offline. This is not shown in the text itself to avoid clutter.

And the trusted maids and the eunuchs of the queen/ went in.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

4:4 καὶ ἀνήγγειλαν αὐτῇ.

And they/ announced (this) to her.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The passive voice of the verb indicates a shift from the foreground to offline. The grammatical number of the verb indicates a switch of topic from the maids and eunuchs to Esther.

4:4 καὶ ἐταράχθη/

And she was troubled/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

4:4 ἀκούσασα τὸ γεγονὸς,

hearing what had happened.

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The switch from the passive voice to the active signals a switch from the offline back to the foreground.

4:4 καὶ ἀπέστειλεν στολίσαι τὸν Μαρδοχαῖον καὶ ἀφελέσθαι αὐτοῦ τὸν σάκκον.

And she/ sent to clothe Mordecai and to remove his sackcloth.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

αὐτοῦ is fronted so that τὸν σάκκον is pushed to the end of the comment focus. αὐτοῦ is therefore not locally prominent.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The marked topic that is a temporary shift signals a minor break. The passive voice signals that this minor break is a switch from the foreground to offline.

4:4 ὁ/ δὲ οὐκ ἐπέσθη.

But he/ was not willing.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The marked topic that is a temporary shift signals a minor break. The switch from the passive voice to the active signals a switch from offline back to the foreground.

4:5 ἡ δὲ Εσθηρ/ προσεκαλέσατο Αχραθαῖον τὸν εὐνοῦχον αὐτῆς/

And Esther/ summoned Axrathaion, her eunuch/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

4:5 ὃς/ παρειστήκει αὐτῇ.

who/ attended her.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

4:5 καὶ ἀπέστειλεν μαθεῖν αὐτῇ παρὰ τοῦ Μαρδοχαίου/ τὸ ἀκριβές.

And she/ sent (him) to learn for her from Mordecai/ the details.

TOPIC/COMMENT/DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT.

The order of τὸ ἀκριβές has been postposed to the dominant focal element since it is the most unpredictable element of the sentence.

3.3.16 Discourse section 4:7-4:16

===[MAJOR BOUNDARY]===

This is a major boundary (NRSV 1991, apocrypha 60; Jobes 2009) signaled by a marked topic that is not a temporary shift. The theme of this discourse section is that Mordecai convinces Esther to see the king for a repeal of the decree.

4:7 ὁ δὲ Μαρδοχαῖος/ ὑπέδειξεν αὐτῷ τὸ γεγονός καὶ τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν/

And Mordecai/ revealed to him what had happened and the promise/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

4:7 ἦν/ ἐπηγγείλατο Ἀμαν τῷ βασιλεῖ/

which/ Aman promised to the king/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

εἰς τὴν γάζαν ταλάντων μυρίων/

into the treasury, ten thousand talents/

RIGHT DISLOCATION/

4:7 ἵνα ἀπολέσῃ τοὺς Ιουδαίους.

so that he/ should wipe out the Jews.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The marked topic that is a temporary shift indicates a minor break.

4:8 καὶ τὸ ἀντίγραφον τὸ ἐν Σούσοις ἐκτεθὲν ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἀπολέσθαι αὐτοὺς/
ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ δεῖξαι τῇ Εσθηρ.

And the copy which was publicized in Susa concerning their destruction/ he
gave to him to show Esther.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

Since the topic returns to Mordecai here, the narrative also returns to the mainline.

4:8 καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ ἐντείλασθαι αὐτῇ/

And he/ said to him to tell her/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

4:8 εἰσελθούσῃ παραιτήσασθαι τὸν βασιλέα καὶ ἀξιῶσαι αὐτὸν περὶ τοῦ λαοῦ.

to go in to beg the king and to plead with him on behalf of the people.¹⁶⁸

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

¹⁶⁸The causative interpretation of ἀξιῶσαι is based on the meaning of “to demand that” (Liddell and Scott 1996: s.v. II.2).

There is a shift to the offline here, which is signaled by (a) the asyndeton, and (b) a main verb in the passive voice.

ASYNDETON 4:8 μνησθεῖσα ἡμερῶν ταπεινώσεώς σου/

Remembering the days of your lowliness/

EXTRAPOSITION/

4:8 ὥς ἐτράφης/ ἐν χειρί μου.

as you/ were raised in my hand(s).

TOPIC/COMMENT.

4:8 διότι Αμαν ὁ δευτερεύων τῷ βασιλεῖ/ ἐλάλησεν καθ' ἡμῶν εἰς θάνατον.

Because Aman, the second to the king/ spoke against us onto death.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

The particle διότι is understood in a causal sense (δια τι) by *Codex Alexandrinus*.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The background shifts to the foreground. This is signaled by a shift of the verbal mood to the imperative.

4:8 ἐπικάλεσαι τὸν κύριον.

Call on the Lord.

EVENT FOCUS.

This series of event foci has a high rate of the presentation of new information, making these clauses episodically prominent.

4:8 καὶ λάλησον τῷ βασιλεῖ περὶ ἡμῶν.

Speak to the king on behalf of us.

EVENT FOCUS.

4:8 καὶ ῥύσαι ἡμᾶς ἐκ θανάτου.

And deliver us from death.

EVENT FOCUS.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The marked topic that is a temporary shift indicates a minor break. This is not a discourse boundary (NRSV 1991, apocrypha 60; Jobes 2009).

4:9 εἰσελθὼν δὲ/

So going away/

EXTRAPOSITION/

ὁ Αχραθαῖος/ ἐλάλησεν αὐτῇ πάντας τοὺς λόγους τούτους.

Axrathaios/ spoke to her all these words.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

This is an episodic boundary signaled by an unmarked topic that is a topic shift.

4:10 εἶπεν δὲ Εσθηρ πρὸς Αχραθαῖον.

And Esther/ said to Axrathaion.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

This is a direct speech frame. The direct speech proper begins with an asyndeton.

ASYNDETON 4:10 πορεύθητι πρὸς Μαρδοχαῖον.

Go to Mordecai.

EVENT FOCUS.

4:10 καὶ εἰπὼν ὅτι.

And say.

EVENT FOCUS.

This is an embedded speech frame within the first speech frame. The embedded speech proper also begins with an asyndeton.

ASYNDETON 4:11 τὰ ἔθνη πάντα τῆς βασιλείας/ γινώσκει ὅτι/

All the nations of the king/ know that/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

The present tense of the main verb highlights the content of this sentence as being common knowledge. This may be interpreted as Esther's refusal to follow Mordecai's request because it is tantamount to committing suicide.

πᾶς ἄνθρωπος ἢ γυνή/

any man or woman/

TOPIC[MARKED]/

4:11 ὃς/ εἰσελεύσεται πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα εἰς τὴν αὐλὴν τὴν  
ἐσωτέραν ἄκλητος/

who/ will go to the king, into the inner court, without being  
called/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

4:11 οὐκ ἔστιν αὐτῷ σωτηρία.

has no salvation (for him/her).

COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The asyndeton with a marked topic that is a temporary shift signals a shift from the mainline to offline within the embedded reported speech in Esther's direct speech.

ASYNDETON 4:11 πλὴν ᾧ/ ἐκτείνει ὁ βασιλεὺς τὴν χρυσοῦν ῥάβδον/

Only to whom/ the king extends the golden scepter/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

This marked topic is contrastive with the previous marked topic, πᾶς ἄνθρωπος ἢ γυνή. The present tense of ἐκτείνει highlights this sentence. Presumably, it is rare for the king to grant such amnesty to those who would dare to infringe on his privacy, which is the cause of Esther's fear.

4:11 οὗτος/ σωθήσεται.

this one/ will be saved.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

4:11 κἀγὼ/ οὐ κέκλημαι εἰσελθεῖν πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα εἰσὶν αὐται ἡμέραι  
τριάκοντα.

And I/ have not been called to go to the king these thirty days.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

The marked topic κἀγὼ is in contrast with the previous marked topic, πλὴν ᾧ. Based on the evidence that Esther has not been called by the king for a month, there is no reason for her to assume that the king will show favor to her if she were to barge in.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

Contrary to NRSV (1991, apocrypha 60) and Jobes (2009), this is not a discourse boundary. The unmarked topic that is a temporary shift indicates a minor break.

4:12 καὶ ἀπήγγειλεν Αχραθαῖος Μαρδοχαίῳ πάντας τοὺς λόγους Εσθηρ.

And Axrathaios/ told Mordecai all these words of Esther.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

This episodic boundary is signaled by an unmarked topic that is a topic shift.

4:13 καὶ εἶπεν Μαρδοχαῖος πρὸς Αχραθαῖον.

And Mordecai/ said to Axrathaion.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

This is a direct speech frame. The direct speech proper begins with an asyndeton.

ASYNDETON 4:13 πορεύθητι.

Go.

EVENT FOCUS.

καὶ εἰπὸν αὐτῇ.

And say to her.

EVENT FOCUS.

The embedded speech frame parallels Esther's embedded speech frame, except that this embedded speech frame does not have a ὅτι. The embedded speech proper begins with an asyndeton and a proper noun in the vocative case, which is locally prominent.

ASYNDETON 4:13 Εσθηρ/

Esther/

DISLOCATION/

4:13 μὴ εἴπῃς σεαυτῇ/

you should not say to yourself/

EVENT FOCUS/

ὅτι σωθήσῃ μόνη ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ παρὰ πάντας τοὺς Ιουδαίους.

that you alone will be saved in the kingdom, above all the Jews.

EVENT FOCUS.

4:14 ὥς ὅτι ἐὰν παρακούσῃς ἐν τούτῳ τῷ καιρῷ/

(Since), even if you should take no heed of this occasion/

EXTRAPOSITION/

The consecutive use of the particle ὅτι indicates that this extraposition is on the same clausal level as the previous ὅτι clause. Both ὅτι clauses relate to Esther's presumed intrapersonal state.

4:14 ἄλλοθεν βοήθεια καὶ σκέπη/ ἔσται τοῖς Ιουδαίοις.

there shall be help and protection from elsewhere for the Jews.

FOCUS[MARKED]/EVENT FOCUS.

The marked focus shows Mordecai's confidence (in God) that even if Esther does not rise up to act on behalf of the Jews, the Jews will be delivered through another agency.

4:14 σὺ δὲ καὶ ὁ οἶκος τοῦ πατρός σου/ ἀπολείσθῃ.

But you and your father's house/ will perish.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

The use of δέ indicates a contrast between this clause and the previous clause. If Esther does not act in the interest of the Jews, the Jews would still be saved, but she and her household will perish (as a punishment for her disobedience to the will of God). The contrast between this clause and the previous clause is further strengthened by the insertion of δέ after ἄλλοθεν of the previous clause in *Codex Alexandrinus*.

4:14 καὶ τίς οἶδεν εἰ εἰς τὸν καιρὸν τοῦτον ἐβασίλευσας.

And who knows if for such an occasion you became queen?

EVENT FOCUS.

The use of the rhetorical question is locally prominent. This is a strong exhortation for Esther to rise to action. It causes Esther to ponder on the fact that God has appointed her to rescue the Jews, even though the Jews would be saved by another agency were she to refuse.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

This episodic boundary is signaled by an unmarked topic that is a topic shift.

4:15 καὶ ἐξαπέστειλεν Εσθηρ τὸν ἥκοντα πρὸς αὐτήν πρὸς Μαρδοχαῖον λέγουσα.

And Esther/ sent the attendant who has come to her to (go to) Mordecai saying.<sup>169</sup>

TOPIC/COMMENT.

This is a direct speech frame. The direct speech proper begins with an asyndeton.

ASYNDETON 4:16 βαδίσας/

Go/

EXTRAPOSITION/

4:16 ἐκκλησίασον τοὺς Ιουδαίους τοὺς ἐν Σούσοις.

Assemble the Jews in Susa.

EVENT FOCUS.

The succession of event foci here constitutes an episodic prominence.

<sup>169</sup>The nominal participle τὸν ἥκοντα literally means “the one coming to her”. This has been translated as a dynamic equivalent “attendant” to increase the intelligibility of the translation.

4:16 καὶ νηστεύσατε ἐπ' ἐμοὶ.

And fast on behalf of me.

EVENT FOCUS.

4:16 καὶ μὴ φάγητε.

And you should not eat.

EVENT FOCUS.

μηδὲ πίνητε ἐπὶ ἡμέρας τρεῖς/ νύκτα καὶ ἡμέραν.

Nor should you drink for three days/ night and day.

EVENT FOCUS/DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT.

Although fasting does not do serious damage to the body, not drinking for three days and nights tests the extreme limits of the human body. The local prominence of this clause, indicated by *μηδέ*, stresses that the Jews are to show utmost seriousness when they are praying for Esther.

4:16 καὶ γὰρ δὲ καὶ αἱ ἄβραι μου/ ἀσιτήσομεν.

(Meanwhile) I and my trusted maids/ will go without eating.<sup>170</sup>

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

The use of the particle *δέ* and the marked topic indicates a contrast between what Esther will do on her end and what she asks Mordecai (and the Jews) to do on their end.

4:16 καὶ τότε εἰσελεύσομαι πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα παρὰ τὸν νόμον.

Then I/ shall go to the king in contravention of the law.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

The local prominence of the clause, indicated by *τότε*, is noteworthy because this is the first indication in the narrative that Esther decides to go in to see the king.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The fronting of *ἐὰν* before *καί* creates an asyndeton, which signals a shift from the mainline to offline. This may indicate an intrapersonal speech of Esther.

<sup>170</sup>The use of *ἀσιτήσομεν* as a verb is without parallel. But it is probably derived from *ἡ ἀσιτία* (lack of appetite) or *ἄσιτος* (without eating, or fasting), which have the same lexical stem (BAGD 1957).

ASYNDETON 4:16 ἐὰν καὶ ἀπολέσθαι με/

And if I perish/

EXTRAPOSITION/

4:16 ἦ.

let it be.

EVENT FOCUS.

### 3.3.17 Discourse section 4:17-4:17i

===[MAJOR BOUNDARY]===

This major boundary is signaled by a marked topic that is not a temporary shift. The theme of this section is that Mordecai and Israel entreats the Lord for deliverance. The fact that Addition C (4:17a) begins with a pronominal form for the main topic is a sign that Addition C was originally part of the composition of the Septuagint.

4:17 καὶ βαδίσας/

And going forth/

EXTRAPOSITION/

Μαρδοχαῖος/ ἐποίησεν ὅσα ἐνετείλατο αὐτῷ/

Mordecai/ did whatever she told him/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

Εσθηρ.

Esther.

RIGHT DISLOCATION.

[Addition C]

Contrary to JB (1966:645), TEV (1976), NRSV (1991, apocrypha 61), Jobes (2009), the beginning of Addition C is not a discourse boundary.<sup>171</sup>

<sup>171</sup>The alternate reading of Μαρδοχαῖος preceding ἐδεήθη (as witnessed in *Codex Alexandrinus* and the Hexapla) would only emphasize the presence of the discourse boundary at 4:17, but would not create another discourse boundary.

4:17a καὶ ἐδεήθη<sup>172</sup> κυρίου/

And he/ begged the Lord/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

μνημονεύων πάντα τὰ ἔργα κυρίου.

remembering all the works of the Lord.

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

4:17a καὶ εἶπεν.

And he/ said.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

This is a direct speech frame. The speech proper begins with an asyndeton.

ASYNDETON 4:17b[1] κύριε κύριε βασιλεῦ/

Lord, Lord, King/

DISLOCATION/

The series of vocatives is locally prominent.

4:17b[2] πάντων κρατῶν/

everything controlling/

EXTRAPOSITION/<sup>173</sup>

4:17b[3] ὅτι ἐν ἐξουσίᾳ σου/ τὸ πᾶν ἐστιν.

because in your power/ everything is.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

The fronting of πάντων and τὸ πᾶν are locally prominent and highlights the theme of God's omnipotence.

4:17b[4] καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ ἀντιδοξῶν σοι/

And there is none who shall oppose you/

<sup>172</sup>ἐδεήθη is a deponent, and does not signal a shift to offline.

<sup>173</sup>This extraposition could be interpreted to be a periphrastic construction where the finite stative verb is ellipsed, which would make this the main clause of the sentence.

#### PRESENTATIONAL FOCUS/

This clause is the beginning of an inclusio.

4:17b[5] ἐν τῷ θέλειν σε σῶσαι τὸν Ἰσραὴλ/

when you desire to save Israel/

#### RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION/

4:17c ὅτι **σύ**/ ἐποίησας τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ πᾶν  
θαυμαζόμενον ἐν τῇ ὑπ' οὐρανὸν.<sup>174</sup>

because you/ made the heaven and the earth and all that is wondrous  
under the heaven.

#### TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

Contrary to JB (1966:645), it is unlikely that 4:17c begins a discourse boundary because (a) this is a subordinate clause, and (b) this clause is within an inclusio. The independent pronoun, **σύ**, is redundant and signals global prominence. It highlights the importance of God as the central character in this prayer.

4:17c καὶ κύριος/εἰ πάντων.

And Lord/ you/ are of everything.

#### FOCUS[MARKED]/TOPIC/COMMENT.

The importance of God is again highlighted by the marked focus, **κύριος**, which is locally prominent.

4:17c καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ὃς ἀντιτάξεται σοι/ τῷ κυρίῳ.

And there is none who shall resist you/ Lord.

#### OLD/ DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT.

This is the end of the inclusio. This clause is a repeat of the beginning of the inclusio, καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ὃς ἀντιδοξῶν σοι (4:17b[4]), and is globally prominent. The dominant focal element is also globally prominent, since it is old information. It is placed at the end of the inclusio because it summarizes the main point: that God is Lord of everything.

<sup>174</sup>The markedness of a redundant topic is a coding device that signals the centrality of a character. This occurs in Addition C for God (4:17c, 17d[1], 17d[2], 17l, 17m, 17w), and Esther (4:17m), and adds to the intensity of the prayers of Mordecai and Esther.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

The asyndeton signals an episodic boundary within a reported speech.

The marked topic, *σύ*, does not signal the beginning of a major discourse boundary because there is no topic discontinuity. The redundant marked topics, *σύ*, in 4:17d[1-2] are globally prominent, which indicate that God continues to be a central character here.

ASYNDETON 4:17d[1] *σὺ* / *πάντα γινώσκεις*.

You/ know everything.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

This clause is locally prominent because (a) *πάντα* is preverbal, and (b) the main verb *γινώσκεις* is in the present tense. This highlights the omniscience of God.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

This asyndeton signals the shift from the mainline to offline.

ASYNDETON 4:17d[2] *σὺ* / *οἶδας* /

You/ know/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

4:17d[3] *κύριε* /

Lord/

RIGHT DISLOCATION/

The local prominence of the vocative noun in the right extraposition adds to the urgency of Mordecai's prayer.

4:17d[4] *ὅτι οὐκ ἐν ὕβρει οὐδὲ ἐν ὑπερηφανίᾳ οὐδὲ ἐν φιλοδοξίᾳ* /
ἐποίησα τοῦτο /

that not in insolence, nor pride, nor vainglory/ did I/ do this/

FOCUS[MARKED]/TOPIC/COMMENT/

The topic shifts from the second person (God) to the first person (Mordecai). The marked focus in this subordinate clause states the humility of Mordecai, which is the main point of this offline section. The double use of *οὐδέ* adds to this local prominence.

4:17d[5] τὸ μὴ προσκυνεῖν τὸν ὑπερήφανον Αμαν/

(namely), to not bow (before) the arrogance of Aman/

RIGHT DISLOCATION/

4:17d[6] ὅτι ἠὺδόκουν φιλεῖν πέλματα ποδῶν αὐτοῦ πρὸς σωτηρίαν
Ισραηλ.

(you know) that I/ would agree to kiss the soles of his feet for the
salvation of Israel.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

This second ὅτι clause parallels the first ὅτι clause. Both are complement clauses of σὺ οἶδας.

4:17e ἀλλὰ ἐποίησα τοῦτο/

But I/ did this/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

ἀλλὰ continues the offline section and states the piety of Mordecai.

4:17e ἵνα μὴ θῶ δόξαν ἀνθρώπου ὑπεράνω δόξης θεοῦ.

so that I should not place the glory of man above God's glory.

EVENT FOCUS.

4:17e καὶ οὐ προσκυνήσω οὐδένα/ πλὴν σοῦ τοῦ κυρίου μου.

I/ shall not bow to anything/ except for you, my Lord.

TOPIC/COMMENT/DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT.

4:17e καὶ οὐ ποιήσω αὐτὰ ἐν ὑπερηφανίᾳ.

And I/ shall not do these (things) in arrogance.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

νῦν signals a return from offline back to the mainline. Contrary to JB (1966:646), this is not a discourse boundary.

4:17f καὶ νῦν κύριε/

And now Lord/

DISLOCATION/

The vocative, which is locally prominent, coincides with the shift to the mainline.

4:17f ὁ θεὸς ὁ βασιλεὺς ὁ θεὸς Ἀβραάμ/¹⁷⁵

the Lord, the King, the God of Abraham/¹⁷⁶

EXTRAPOSITION/

ὁ βασιλεὺς was mentioned in 4:17b, and is globally prominent. The scope of this extraposition extends over the next two event focus clauses.

4:17f φεῖσαι τοῦ λαοῦ σου/

spare your people/

EVENT FOCUS/

4:17f ὅτι ἐπιβλέπουσιν ἡμῖν εἰς καταφθοράν/

for they/ are keeping an eye on us for destruction/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

4:17f καὶ ἐπεθύμησαν ἀπολέσαι τὴν ἐξ ἀρχῆς κληρονομίαν σου/

and they/ desire to wipe out your ancient inheritance/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

4:17g μὴ ὑπερίδῃς τὴν μερίδα σου/

Do not neglect your portion/

EVENT FOCUS/

4:17g ἦν/ σεαυτῷ ἐλυτρώσω ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου.

¹⁷⁵The title ὁ θεὸς Ἀβραάμ probably derives from God's covenant with Abraham to make him into a father of nations (Gen 12:2-3).

¹⁷⁶The suggestion that this clause is vocative (in continuity with the vocative case in the previous clause) is possible because the declension of vocative (in Attic Greek) is mostly identical with the nominative case (Funk 1973:711; JACT 1978:322). However, it is unlikely that the three consecutive noun phrases in this clause are vocative because:

(1) in the singular masculine vocative, the final sigma of the -ος stem often becomes -ε (Funk 1973:157; JACT 1978:322; Carson 1985:29), such as θεέ in 2Sam 7:25; Ezek 4:14, which is not the case here;

(2) βασιλεὺς becomes βασιλεῦ (Funk 1973:158), such as in Acts 26:2 (UBS), which is not the case here; and

(3) the vocative is often preceded by ὦ in Attic Greek (Funk 1973:711; JACT 1978:322). This is also found in the New Testament, such as ὦ ἄνθρωπε (Rom 2:1, UBS) or ὦ θεόφιλε (Acts 1:1).

which/ you ransomed for yourself from Egypt.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

The local prominence signaled by the present tense of ἐπιβλέπουσιν and the fronting of ἐξ ἀρχῆς and σεαυτῷ highlights the will of the enemies to destroy the Jews on one hand, and the fact that God had redeemed the Jews as His own people on the other.

4:17h ἐπάκουσον τῆς δεήσεώς μου.

Hear my supplication.

EVENT FOCUS.

4:17h καὶ ἰλάσθητι τῷ κλήρῳ σου.

And be gracious to your portion.

EVENT FOCUS.

4:17h καὶ στρέψον τὸ πένθος ἡμῶν εἰς εὐωχίαν/

And turn our mourning into feasting/

EVENT FOCUS/

4:17h ἵνα ζῶντες/

so that living/

EXTRAPOSITION/

ὑμνῶμέν σου τὸ ὄνομα/

we/ may praise your name/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

κύριε.

Lord.

RIGHT DISLOCATION.

The local prominence of the fronted pronoun, σου, and the vocative, κύριε, agains highlights the sincerity of Mordecai's prayer.

4:17h καὶ μὴ ἀφανίσης στόμα αἰνούντων σοι.

And do not remove the mouths of those praising you.

EVENT FOCUS.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The marked topic, πᾶς Ἰσραηλ, that is a temporary shift signals a minor break. In this case, this minor break coincides with a switch from the direct speech back to the narrative genre. But this is not a discourse boundary, contrary to JB (1966:646), NRSV (1991, apocrypha 61), and Jobes (2009).

4:17i καὶ πᾶς Ἰσραηλ/ ἐκέκραξαν ἐξ ἰσχύος αὐτῶν/

And all Israel/ cried out with all their strength/

TOPIC[MARKED]/ COMMENT/

4:17i ὅτι θάνατος αὐτῶν/ ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς αὐτῶν.

because their death/ (was) before their eyes.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

3.3.18 Discourse section 4:17k-4:17z

===[MAJOR BOUNDARY]===

This discourse boundary (JB 1966:646; TEV 1976; NRSV 1991, apocrypha 61; Jobes 2009) is signaled by a marked topic that is not a temporary shift. The theme of this discourse section is that Esther makes her plea before the Lord.

4:17k καὶ Εσθηρ ἡ βασίλισσα/ κατέφυγεν ἐπὶ τὸν κύριον ἐν ἀγῶνι θανάτου.

And Esther, the queen/ fled to the Lord in deadly anguish.

TOPIC[MARKED]/ COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The asyndeton signals a switch from the foreground to background.

ASYNDETON 4:17k κατειλημμένη καὶ ἀφελομένη τὰ ἱμάτια τῆς δόξης αὐτῆς/

Having taken and removed the garments of her glory/

EXTRAPOSITION/

4:17k ἐνεδύσατο ἱμάτια στενοχωρίας καὶ πένθους.

she/ put on garments of distress and sorrow.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

4:17k καὶ ἀντὶ τῶν ὑπερηφάνων ἡδυσμάτων/ σποδοῦ καὶ κοπριῶν/ ἔπλησεν τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτῆς .

And instead of arrogant spices/ with ashes and dung/ she/ filled her head.

FOCUS[MARKED]/FOCUS[MARKED]/TOPIC/COMMENT.

The first marked focus contrasts with the second marked focus. These are coded as locally prominent because of the contraexpectation.

4:17k καὶ τὸ σῶμα αὐτῆς/ ἐταπείνωσεν σφόδρα.

And her body/ humbled exceedingly.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

4:17k καὶ πάντα τόπον κόσμου ἀγαλλιήματος αὐτῆς/ ἔπλησε στρεπτῶν τριχῶν αὐτῆς.

And all the places of her delightful ornaments/ she filled with the twists of her hair.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The switch from offline back to the mainline is signaled by the change of the verbal aspect from the aorist to the imperfect.

4:17k καὶ ἐδεῖτο κυρίου/ θεοῦ Ἰσραὴλ.

And she/ (kept on) pleading (with) the Lord/ (the) God of Israel.

TOPIC/COMMENT/DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT.

4:17k καὶ εἶπεν.

And she/ said.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

This clause is a direct speech frame. The speech proper begins with an asyndeton. Contrary to JB (1966:646), this is not a discourse boundary.

ASYNDETON 4:17l κύριέ μου/

My Lord/

DISLOCATION/

ὁ βασιλεὺς ἡμῶν/ σύ/ εἶ/ μόνος.

our King/ you/ are/ alone.

FOCUS[MARKED]/TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/DOMINANT FOCAL
ELEMENT.

The centrality of God in this reported speech is highlighted by (a) the vocative, κύριέ μου, in the dislocation, (b) the redundant marked topic, σύ, and (c) the marked focus complement, ὁ βασιλεὺς ἡμῶν.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

The asyndeton signals an episodic boundary within a direct speech. This is also the beginning of an inclusio, which ends in 4:17t.

ASYNDETON 4:17l βοήθησόν μοι/ τῇ μόνῃ/<sup>177</sup>

Help me/ (who is) alone/

EVENT FOCUS/DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT/

4:17l καὶ μὴ ἔχούσῃ βοηθὸν εἰ μὴ σέ/

(who) has no help except you/

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION/

4:17l ὅτι κίνδυνός μου/ ἐν χειρί μου.

Because my danger/ (is) at hand.<sup>178</sup>

TOPIC/COMMENT.

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<sup>177</sup>τῇ μόνῃ should be interpreted as modifying μοι (rather than the addressee, God) because both are dative. The point is not that God alone is the deliverer, but that Esther (μοι) is lonely and helpless, which is further reinforced in the right extraposition that follows.

<sup>178</sup>ἐν χειρί μου translates literally as “in my hand”. But this is most probably an idiom signifying the imminence of the danger, which is the cause for the urgency of the imperative in the main clause, βοήθησόν μοι. This is the reason for making a switch from a literal translation to a dynamic equivalence.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The (a) asyndeton, and (b) the shift from the second person to the first person signal a switch from the mainline to offline. Contrary to JB (1966:646), this is not a discourse boundary.

ASYNDETON 4:17m ἐγὼ/ ἤκουον ἐκ γενετῆς μου ἐν φυλῇ πατριᾶς μου/

I/ have (repeatedly) heard from my birth in my father's tribe/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

Both the first person, ἐγὼ, in the main clause, and the second person, σύ, in the subordinate clause are coded as redundant marked topic. This shows that this offline section concerns both Esther's petition and God's ability to respond.<sup>179</sup>

4:17m ὅτι σύ/ κύριε/ ἔλαβες τὸν Ἰσραὴλ ἐκ πάντων τῶν ἐθνῶν καὶ τοὺς πατέρας ἡμῶν ἐκ πάντων τῶν προγόνων αὐτῶν εἰς κληρονομίαν αἰώνιον/

that you/ Lord/ took Israel from all the nations and our forefathers from all their ancestors to an eternal inheritance/

TOPIC[MARKED]/MEDIAL DISLOCATION/COMMENT[PART1]/

4:17m καὶ ἐποίησας αὐτοῖς ὅσα ἐλάλησας.

and you did whatever you said to them.

COMMENT[PART2].

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The switch from the offline back to the mainline is signaled by νῦν. Contrary to JB (1966:646), this is not a discourse boundary.

4:17n[1] καὶ νῦν/<sup>180</sup>

And behold/<sup>181</sup>

EXTRAPOSITION/

<sup>179</sup>As well as the vocative in the medial dislocation.

<sup>180</sup>This clause is changed to οὕτως in *Codex Alexandrinus*, and is deleted in *Codex 58* and *Codex 93*.

<sup>181</sup>The translation of νῦν as "behold" has the pragmatic effect of calling the attention of the reader to this clause, which matches the switch from the offline back to the mainline of the Greek text. Although one of the semantic meanings of νῦν is "now", it is clear that this is not in view because the Israelites sinned before the Lord (4:17n[2]) long before this time.

4:17n[2] ἡμάρτομεν ἐνώπιόν σου.

we/ sinned before you.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

4:17n[3] καὶ παρέδωκας ἡμᾶς εἰς χεῖρας τῶν ἐχθρῶν ἡμῶν/

And you/ delivered us into the hands of our enemies/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

4:17n[4] ἀνθ' ὧν ἐδοξάσαμεν τοὺς θεοὺς αὐτῶν.

because we exalted their gods.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The asyndeton indicates a switch from the mainline to offline.

ASYNDETON 4:17n[5] δίκαιος/ εἶ/

Righteous/ are you/

COMMENT'/TOPIC/

4:17n[6] κύριε.

Lord.

RIGHT DISLOCATION.

The history of Israel proves that God is faithful to His promises. The present plight of the Jews is due to their idolatry (4:17n[4]), rather than the fault of God. The marked complement, δίκαιος, and the vocative in the right dislocation highlight that God is just.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The switch from the offline back to the mainline is signaled by ὅυν. Contrary to JB (1966:646), this is not a discourse boundary.

4:17o καὶ ὅυν/

And behold/

EXTRAPOSITION/

οὐχ ἱκανώθησαν ἐν πικρασμῷ δουλείας ἡμῶν.

they/ are not satisfied with the bitterness of our servitude.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

The topic of this clause refers to “our enemies” in 4:17n[3] because it is nearest third person plural in the preceding text.

4:17ο ἀλλὰ ἔθηκαν τὰς χεῖρας αὐτῶν ἐπὶ τὰς χεῖρας τῶν εἰδώλων αὐτῶν/

But they/ placed their hands on the hands of their idols/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

This presumably refers to some pagan ritual.

4:17ο ἐξᾶραι ὄρισμὸν στόματός σου/

to remove the boundaries of your month/

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION/

4:17ο καὶ ἀφανίσαι κληρονομίαν σου/

and to wipe out your inheritance/

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION/

4:17ο καὶ ἐμφράξαι στόμα αἰνούντων σοι/

and to block the mouths of those who are praising you/

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION/

4:17ο καὶ σβέσαι δόξαν οἴκου σου καὶ θυσιαστήριόν σου/

and to snuff out the glory of your house and your altar/

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION/

4:17ρ καὶ ἀνοῖξαι στόμα ἐθνῶν εἰς ἀρετὰς ματαίων/

and to open the mouth of nations for vain valor/<sup>182</sup>

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION/

4:17ρ καὶ θαυμασθῆναι βασιλέα σάρκινον εἰς αἰῶνα.

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<sup>182</sup>The interpretation of ἀρετὰς as “valor” follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. I.1).

and so that mortal kings be glorified forever.

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

The asyndeton signals an episodic boundary in a reported speech here (JB 1966:647; NRSV 1991, apocrypha 62; Jobes 2009).

ASYNDETON 4:17q μὴ παραδῶς/ κύριε/ τὸ σκῆπτρόν σου τοῖς μὴ οὐσιν.

Do not hand over/ Lord/ your kingly power to those who are nothing.

EVENT FOCUS/ MEDIAL DISLOCATION.

4:17q καὶ μὴ καταγελασάτωσαν ἐν τῇ πτώσει ἡμῶν.

And let them not laugh at our fall.

EVENT FOCUS.

4:17q ἀλλὰ στρέψον τὴν βουλήν αὐτῶν ἐπ' αὐτούς.

But turn their scheme (back) on them.

EVENT FOCUS.

4:17q τὸν δὲ ἀρξάμενον ἐφ' ἡμᾶς/ παραδειγμάτισον.

Those who rule over us/ put to shame.

TOPIC[MARKED]/ COMMENT.

The particle δέ marks this clause as locally prominent. This is Esther's main request of God.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

Asyndeton is used here to signal an episodic boundary in a reported speech.

ASYNDETON 4:17r[1] μνήσθητι/

Remember/

EVENT FOCUS/

4:17r[2] κύριε.

Lord.

RIGHT DISLOCATION.

The vocative in the right dislocation highlights the urgency of the prayer.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

The asyndeton indicates an episodic boundary within a direct speech.

ASYNDETON 4:17r[3] γνώσθητι ἐν καιρῷ θλίψεως ἡμῶν.

Recognize the time of our affliction.

EVENT FOCUS.

4:17r[4] καὶ ἐμὲ/ θάρσυνον.

And me/ encourage.

FOCUS[MARKED]/EVENT FOCUS.

Esther calls attention to her own need by the use of the marked focus.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

The asyndeton signals an episodic boundary in a reported speech.

ASYNDETON 4:17r[5] βασιλεῦ τῶν θεῶν/

King of the gods/

DISLOCATION/

4:17r[6] καὶ πάσης ἀρχῆς ἐπικρατῶν/

and prevailing over all powers/

EXTRAPOSITION/

4:17s δὸς λόγον εὐρυθμον εἰς τὸ στόμα μου ἐνώπιον τοῦ λέοντος.

give a fitting word in my mouth before the lion.

EVENT FOCUS.

4:17s καὶ μετάθες τὴν καρδίαν αὐτοῦ εἰς μῖσος/

And change the heart of him (who) is in hatred/

EVENT FOCUS/

τοῦ πολεμοῦντος ἡμᾶς εἰς συντέλειαν αὐτοῦ/

the one warring against us in his confederacy/<sup>183</sup>

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION/

καὶ τῶν ὁμονοούντων αὐτῷ.

with those who are in one mind with him.

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

4:17t ἡμᾶς/ δὲ ῥῦσαι ἐν χειρὶ σου.

(As for) us/ deliver by your hand.

FOCUS[MARKED]/EVENT FOCUS.

Contrary to JB (1966:647), this clause is not a discourse boundary. Rather, δέ signals a contrast between the requested fate of the direct object (Aman) of the previous main verb, μετάθες, and that of the direct object (ἡμᾶς) of this main verb.

4:17t καὶ βοήθησόν μοι τῇ μόνη/

And help me (who) is alone/

OLD/

4:17t καὶ μὴ ἐχούσῃ εἰ μὴ σέ/

(who) has nothing except you/

OLD/

κύριε.

Lord.

RIGHT DISLOCATION.

This sentence is the end of the inclusio, which begins in 4:17l. This sentence is globally prominent because it is a literal repeat of 4:17l. The vocative in the right extraposition reinforces this prominence.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

The asyndeton signals an episodic boundary within a reported speech.

ASYNDETON 4:17u πάντων γινώσιν/ ἔχεις.

¹⁸³The interpretation of συντέλειαν as “confederacy” follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. II.3).

Of all knowledge/ you/ have.

FOCUS[MARKED]/TOPIC/COMMENT.

The importance of God is signaled by the local prominence of the present tense of the main verb and the marked focus.

4:17u καὶ οἶδας/

And you/ know/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

4:17u ὅτι ἐμίσησα δόξαν ἀνόμων.

that I/ hate the splendor of the wicked.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

4:17u καὶ βδελύσσομαι κοίτην ἀπεριτμήτων καὶ παντὸς ἀλλοτρίου.

And I/ despise the bed of the uncircumcized and of every enemy country.¹⁸⁴

TOPIC/COMMENT.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

The asyndeton signals an episodic boundary within a reported speech. The temporary shift of the topic from the first person (Esther) to the second person (God) is signaled by the marked topic. The global prominence of the redundant marked topic highlights the role of God as the hearer of Esther's prayer.

ASYNDETON 4:17w σὺ/ οἶδας τὴν ἀνάγκην μου/

You/ know my anguish/

TOPIC[MARKED]/ COMMENT/

4:17w ὅτι **βδελύσσομαι** τὸ σημεῖον τῆς ὑπερηφανίας μου/

that I/ despise the sign of my exaltation/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

The repeat of βδελύσσομαι is globally prominent and highlights that Esther genuinely despises the impurity of the foreigners and even objects that are associated with them.

<sup>184</sup>The interpretation of ἀλλοτρίου as “enemy country” follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. II.2).

4:17w ὅ/ ἐστὶν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς μου ἐν ἡμέραις ὀπτασίας μου.

which/ is on my head on the days of my (public)  
appearance.<sup>185</sup>

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

The asyndeton signals the presence of an episodic boundary within a reported speech. The repeat of βδελύσσομαι is again globally prominent.

4:17w ASYNDETON βδελύσσομαι αὐτὸ ὡς ῥάκος καταμηνίων.

I / despise it as menstrual cloth.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

4:17w καὶ οὐ φορῶ αὐτὸ ἐν ἡμέραις ἡσυχίας μου.

And I/ do not carry it in the days of my leisure.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

4:17x καὶ οὐκ ἔφαγεν ἡ δούλη σου τράπεζαν Αμαν.

And your servant/ does not eat (at the) table of Aman.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

4:17x καὶ οὐκ ἐδόξασα συμπόσιον βασιλέως.

And I/ do not revel in the king's party.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

4:17x οὐδὲ ἔπιον οἶνον σπονδῶν.

Neither do I/ drink wine offered to the gods.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

οὐδέ signals the local prominence of this clause.

4:17y καὶ οὐκ ἠυφράνθη ἡ δούλη σου ἂφ' ἡμέρας μεταβολῆς μου μέχρι νῦν/
πλήν ἐπὶ σοί.

¹⁸⁵ ὀπτασίας is a late form of ὄψις. The interpretation of ὀπτασίας as “appearance” follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. I.1).

And your servant/ does not rejoice from the day of my (status) change until now/ except with regard to you.

TOPIC/COMMENT/ DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

The asyndeton signals an episodic boundary within a reported speech. This coincides with the local prominence of the vocative.

ASYNDETON 4:17y κύριε ὁ θεὸς Ἀβραάμ ὁ θεὸς ὁ ἰσχύων ἐπὶ πάντα/<sup>186</sup>

Lord, the God of Abraham, the God who prevails over all/

DISLOCATION/

4:17z εἰσάκουσον φωνὴν ἀπηλπισμένων.

listen to the voice of those who have been bereft of hope.

EVENT FOCUS.

4:17z καὶ ῥύσαι ἡμᾶς ἐκ χειρὸς τῶν πονηρευομένων.

And deliver us from the hand(s) of those acting wickedly.

EVENT FOCUS.

4:17z καὶ ῥύσαί με ἐκ τοῦ φόβου μου.

And deliver me from my fear.

EVENT FOCUS.

Esther's fear explains the reason for her prayer in Addition C. The word "fear" at the end of Addition C also functions as a hook word to alert the reader that fear (in 5:1b, for example) will become the theme for the next discourse unit (Addition D).

### 3.3.19 Discourse section 5:1-5:1b

===[MAJOR BOUNDARY]===

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<sup>186</sup>See footnote in 4:17f.

This major boundary (JB 1966:647; TEV 1976; NRSV 1991, apocrypha 62; Jobes 2009) is signaled by a temporal marker in a point of departure. The theme of this discourse section is that Esther prepares herself to see the king.

5:1 καὶ ἐγενήθη ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ/

And on the third day/

POINT OF DEPARTURE/

ὡς ἐπαύσατο προσευχομένη/

when she finished praying/

EXTRAPOSITION/

ἐξεδύσατο τὰ ἱμάτια τῆς θεραπείας καὶ περιέβαλετο τὴν δόξαν αὐτῆς.

she/ took off the clothes of worship (to God), and she put on (the clothes) of her glory.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

[Addition D]

5:1a καὶ γενηθεῖσα ἐπιφανῆς/

And on a notable (day)/<sup>187</sup>

EXTRAPOSITION/

ἐπικαλεσαμένη τὸν πάντων ἐπόπτην θεὸν καὶ σωτῆρα/

calling on the all seeing God and deliverer/

EXTRAPOSITION/

παρέλαβεν τὰς δύο ἄβρας.

she/ took two trusted maids.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

5:1a καὶ τῇ μὲν μιᾷ/ ἐπηρείδετο/

On one/ she leaned on/

TOPIC[MARKED]/ COMMENT/

---

<sup>187</sup>The interpretation of ἐπιφανῆς as “notable” follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. II.1).

ὥς τρυφερευομένη.

since she was delicate.

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

The particle ὥς signals that the right extraposition is background to the main clause.

5:1a ἡ δὲ ἑτέρα/ ἐπηκολούθει/

And the second (one)/ followed/

TOPIC[MARKED]/ COMMENT/

The δέ here is contrastive with the former μέν clause.

κουφίζουσα τὴν ἔνδυσιν αὐτῆς.

lightening her dress.

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

5:1b καὶ αὐτὴ ἐρυθριῶσα ἀκμῇ κάλλους αὐτῆς/

And she (put on) make-up to the best of her beauty/

EXTRAPOSITION/

5:1b καὶ τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτῆς/ ἰλαρὸν/ ὥς προσφιλές.

and her face/ (was) cheerful/ as if (she was) well-disposed.

TOPIC/COMMENT/ DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT.

5:1b ἡ δὲ καρδιά αὐτῆς ἀπεστενωμένη ἀπὸ τοῦ φόβου/

But her heart was blocked up from fear/

EXTRAPOSITION/

The δέ here is contrastive with the previous clause.

5:1c καὶ εἰσελθοῦσα πάσας τὰς θύρας/

and coming in (through) all the doors/

EXTRAPOSITION/

κατέστη ἐνώπιον τοῦ βασιλέως.

she/ stood before the king.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

### 3.3.20 Discourse section 5:1c-5:2a

===[MAJOR BOUNDARY]===

This discourse boundary is signaled by a marked topic that is not a temporary shift. The theme of this discourse section is that the king grants amnesty to Esther.

5:1c καὶ αὐτὸς/ ἐκάθητο ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς βασιλείας αὐτοῦ.

And he/ was sitting on the throne of his kingdom.

TOPIC[MARKED]/ COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The temporary topic shift signals a minor break.

5:1c καὶ πᾶσαν στολὴν τῆς ἐπιφανείας αὐτοῦ/ ἐνεεδύκει/ ὅλος διὰ χρυσοῦ  
καὶ λίθων πολυτελῶν.

And the entire garment of his (public) appearance/ he wore/ (made) entirely  
of gold and precious gems.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/ DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT.

The temporary shift of topic to the description of the king's splendor highlights the atmosphere of awe at the court, which ultimately caused Esther to faint (5:1d, 2b).

5:1c καὶ ἦν φοβερὸς σφόδρα.

And it/ was exceedingly frightful.<sup>188</sup>

TOPIC/COMMENT.<sup>189</sup>

---[MINOR BREAK]---

Here, the topic returns to the main topic, the king. But this is not a discourse boundary, contrary to NRSV (1991, apocrypha 62) and Jobes (2009).

5:1d καὶ ἄρας τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ πεπυρωμένον δόξῃ ἐν ἀκμῇ θυμοῦ/<sup>190</sup>

<sup>188</sup>The interpretation of φοβερὸς as “frightful” follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. I.1).

<sup>189</sup>The topic in 5:1c lasts for two clauses. Yet, it is considered as a temporary shift rather than a topic shift. This is an exception, and is possibly accounted by the fact that the second clause is stative.

<sup>190</sup>*Codex Alexandrinus* does not have δόξῃ in its text, which is in collocational clash with θυμοῦ.

And lifting his face that was inflamed with splendor, with utmost anger/

EXTRAPOSITION/

ἔβλεψεν.

he/ watched.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

This episodic boundary is signaled by an unmarked topic that is a topic shift.

5:1d καὶ ἔπεσεν ἡ βασίλισσα.

And the queen/ fell.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

5:1d καὶ μετέβαλεν τὸ χρῶμα αὐτῆς ἐν ἐκλύσει.

And her colors/ changed in faintness.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

5:1d καὶ κατεπέκυσεν ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν τῆς ἄβρας τῆς προπορευομένης.

And she/ bent down on the head of the trusted maid who went before (her).

TOPIC/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The unmarked topic that is a temporary topic shift signals a minor break. Although there is no doubt that this is an important juncture in the narration theologically, the structure of the text does not signal this clause as being a “crisis minor” (Dorothy 1997:121).¹⁹¹

5:1e καὶ μετέβαλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ βασιλέως εἰς πραΰτητα.

And God/ changed the spirit of the king to mildness.

¹⁹¹In narratological analysis (Barth 1996; Bal 1997; Herman 2009; Jesch and Stein 2009; Rabatel 2009), the character God would be seen as a major character because the omnipotence of God is emphasized in 5:1a (τὸν πάντων ἐπόπτην θεὸν καὶ σωτῆρα). Also, the intervention of God is a demonstration of His power, which makes this moment a crucial turning point in the development of the narration. On the other hand, God is not a major character from the structural perspective (based on the criteria listed in §2.4.2.1.2). The divergence between these two schools of thought arises from their differing presuppositions. Narratology believes that the message of a text is best reconstructed by analyzing its surface or deep semantics. Discourse analysis from the perspective of functional linguistics tries to achieve the same goal by giving priority to the structural features of the text. This study tries to present the case of the latter.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The minor break returns to the mainline, where the king continues as the main topic of this discourse section.

5:1e καὶ ἀγωνιάσας/

And struggling/

EXTRAPOSITION/

ἀνεπήδησεν ἀπὸ τοῦ θρόνου αὐτοῦ.

he/ got up from his throne.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

5:1e καὶ ἀνέλαβεν αὐτὴν ἐπὶ τὰς ἀγκάλας αὐτοῦ/

And he/ took her into his arms/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

5:1e μέχρις οὗ κατέστη.

until she/ stood.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

5:1e καὶ παρεκάλει αὐτὴν λόγοις εἰρηνικοῖς.

And he/ (kept) comforting her with peaceful words.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

5:1e καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῇ.

And he/ said to her.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

This is a direct speech frame. The speech proper begins with an asyndeton.

ASYNDETON 5:1f[1] τί/ ἐστίν/

What/ is (it)/

FOCUS[MARKED]/EVENT FOCUS/

5:1f[2] Εσθηρ.

Esther.

RIGHT DISLOCATION.

The urgency of the king's question is highlighted by the marked focus of the interrogative particle and the vocative of the right dislocation. This shows that the king is genuinely concerned about Esther and her request.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

The asyndeton signals an episodic boundary within a reported speech. The rapid succession of episodic boundaries probably indicates that each episode has been reduced to a snapshot of the original speech.

ASYNDETON 5:1f[3] ἐγὼ/ ὁ ἀδελφός σου.

I/ (am) your brother.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

The asyndeton indicates an episodic boundary within a direct speech.

ASYNDETON 5:1f[4] θάρσει.

Cheerup.

EVENT FOCUS.

The present tense of the imperative verb is locally prominent, which highlights the fact that the king wants Esther to relax.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

The asyndeton indicates an episodic boundary within a direct speech.

ASYNDETON 5:1f[5] οὐ μὴ ἀποθάνης/

You shall not die/

EVENT FOCUS/

5:1f[6] ὅτι κοινὸν/ τὸ πρόσταγμα ἡμῶν ἐστίν.

because impartial/<sup>192</sup> is our law.

COMMENT'/TOPIC[MARKED].

The king is saying that the law code, which allows him to provide amnesty by extending the scepter, applies to her as well. She does not have to die even though she came into the court without the king's invitation.

The nominal complement structure should equate τὸ πρόσταγμα ἡμῶν and κοινὸν at some level. The translation provided by Jobes (2009), which reads “for our ordinance is only for the common person”, is therefore improbable because “the common person” has no semantic equivalency with “ordinance” in this translation. Instead, reading κοινὸν as an adjective of the head noun phrase, τὸ πρόσταγμα ἡμῶν, is more likely, since the nominal complement would then function as a semantic attribute of the head noun phrase.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

The asyndeton indicates an episodic boundary within a direct speech.

ASYNDETON 5:1f[7] πρόσελθε.¹⁹³

Come in.

EVENT FOCUS.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The shift from the series of second grammatical person of the direct speech to the third grammatical person indicates a switch from the direct speech back to the narration. But, the structure does not mark this as a discourse boundary, contrary to NRSV (1991, apocrypha 63) or Jobes (2009).

5:2 καὶ ἄρας τὴν χρυσοῦν ῥάβδον/

So taking the golden scepter/

EXTRAPOSITION/

ἐπέθηκεν ἐπὶ τὸν τράχηλον αὐτῆς.

he/ placed (it) on her neck.

¹⁹²The interpretation of κοινὸν as “impartial” follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. IV.3).

¹⁹³5:1f[4-7] illustrates another usage of consecutivethetic clauses. It appears that eachthetic clause in this series is a summary of a chunk of the original speech.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

5:2 καὶ ἠσπάσατο αὐτήν.

And he/ greeted her.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

5:2 καὶ εἶπεν.

And he/ said.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

This clause is a direct speech frame. The direct speech proper begins with an asyndeton.

ASYNDETON 5:2 λάλησόν μοι.

Speak to me.

EVENT FOCUS.

5:2a[1] καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ.

And she/ to him.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

The shift of topic from the king to Esther is not indicated structurally here. This clause is a direct speech frame. The direct speech proper begins with an asyndeton.

ASYNDETON 5:2a[2] εἶδόν σε /κύριε/ ὡς ἄγγελον θεοῦ.

I/ see you, lord, as an angel of God.

TOPIC/COMMENT/MEDIAL DISLOCATION.

The vocative of the medial dislocation is locally prominent, which indicates the respect that Esther has towards the king.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The passive voice of the verb signals a switch from the mainline to offline, which indicates the intrapersonal state of Esther.

5:2a[3] καὶ ~~ἐταράχθη~~ ἡ καρδία μου ἀπὸ φόβου τῆς δόξης σου/

And my heart/ was stirred from fear of your glory/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The use of (a) local prominence, and (b) the shift from Esther back to the king signifies a return from offline back to the mainline.

5:2a[4] ὅτι θαυμαστός/ εἶ/

because wonderful/ you are/

COMMENT'/TOPIC/

5:2a[5] κύριε.

lord.

RIGHT DISLOCATION.

The fronting of the comment, θαυμαστός, and the vocative of the right dislocation are further signals of Esther's respect of the king.

5:2a[6] καὶ τὸ πρόσωπόν σου/ χαρίτων μεστόν.

And your face/ (is) full of favor.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

3.3.21 Discourse section 5:2b-5:5

===[MAJOR BOUNDARY]===

This is a major boundary signaled by a temporal indicator in a point of departure. The theme is that Esther persuades the king and Aman to attend her first banquet.

5:2b ἐν δὲ τῷ διαλέγεσθαι αὐτήν/

While she was talking/

POINT OF DEPARTURE/

ἔπεσεν ἀπὸ ἐκλύσεως αὐτῆς.

she/ fell from her faintness.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The marked topic that is a temporary shift signals a minor break.

5:2b[1] καὶ ὁ βασιλεὺς/ ἐταράσσετο.

And the king/ was stirred.

TOPIC[MARKED]/ COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The marked topic that is a temporary shift signals a minor break.

5:2b[2] καὶ πᾶσα ἡ θεραπεία αὐτοῦ/ παρεκάλει αὐτήν.

And all his officials/ kept comforting her.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

καὶ πᾶσα ἡ θεραπεία αὐτοῦ could alternatively be read as the dominant focal element of the previous clause, which would make this clause read παρεκάλει αὐτήν. The identity of the third grammatical person would then point to the king. But it is more likely that the officials, rather than the king, resuscitated Esther from her fainting spell.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

The unmarked topic that is a topic shift indicates an episodic boundary (NRSV 1991, apocrypha 63; Jobes 2009).

5:3[1] καὶ εἶπεν ὁ βασιλεὺς.

And the king/ said.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

This clause is a direct speech frame. The speech proper begins with an asyndeton.

ASYNDETON 5:3[2] τί/ θέλεις/

What/ do you want/

FOCUS[MARKED]/PRESUPPOSITION/

Θέλεις is a presupposition, since it is unlikely that anyone would risk their lives to see the king without a good reason.

5:3[3] Εσθηρ.

Esther.

RIGHT DISLOCATION.

The (a) interrogative particle, (b) the present tense of the verb, and (c) the vocative of the right dislocation are locally prominent. This raises the tension at this point in the story.

5:3[4] καὶ τί/ σοῦ ἐστὶν τὸ ἀξίωμα.

And what/ is your request?

FOCUS[MARKED]/EVENT FOCUS.

σοῦ is preposed because it is old information. This has the effect of postposing the new information, τὸ ἀξίωμα, to the end of the clause.

5:3[5] ἕως τοῦ ἡμίσους τῆς βασιλείας μου/

Up to half of my kingdom/

DISLOCATION/

5:3[6] καὶ ἔσται σοι.

it shall be yours.

EVENT FOCUS.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

The unmarked topic that is a topic shift indicates an episodic boundary. δέ is used instead of καί to deliberately signal the contrast between the king's question and Esther's response.

5:4 εἶπεν δὲ Εσθηρ.

And Esther/ said.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

This is a direct speech frame. The speech proper begins with an asyndeton.

ASYNDETON 5:4 ἡμέρα μου/ ἐπίσημος σήμερόν ἐστίν.

My day/ is notable today.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

The fronting of the complement, ἐπίσημος σήμερόν, is locally prominent, and highlights the content of the comment focus.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

οὖν signals the call for action within a speech and an episodic boundary.

5:4 εἰ οὖν δοκεῖ τῷ βασιλεῖ/<sup>194</sup>

If it pleases the king/<sup>195</sup>

EXTRAPOSITION/

ἐλθάτω καὶ αὐτὸς καὶ Αμαν εἰς τὴν δοχὴν/

let he himself and Aman come to the banquet/

EVENT FOCUS/

5:4 ἥν/ ποιήσω σήμερον.

which/ I shall make today.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

The unmarked topic that is a topic shift signals an episodic boundary.

5:5 καὶ εἶπεν ὁ βασιλεύς.

And the king/ said.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

This is a direct speech frame. The speech proper begins with an asyndeton.

ASYNDETON 5:5 κατασπεύσατε Αμαν/

Rush Aman along/

EVENT FOCUS/

5:5 ὅπως ποιήσωμεν τὸν λόγον Εσθηρ.

so that we/ should follow the word of Esther.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

5:5 καὶ παραγίνονται **ἀμφότεροι** εἰς τὴν δοχὴν/

¹⁹⁴The οὖν is missing in *Codex Sinaiticus*.

¹⁹⁵The present tense verb does not appear to be locally prominent when,
(a) it is stative (ἔξεστιν, 8:12g; ἔχομεν, 8:12l); and
(b) it is volitional and is in a conditional clause, such as δοκεῖ in 5:4; 8:5.

And they/ both came to the banquet/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

The adverb ἀμφότεροι is redundant and signals the shift from the direct speech to narration.

5:5 ἦν/ εἶπεν Εσθηρ.

which/ Esther said.

TOPIC[MARKED]/OLD.

3.3.22 Discourse section 5:6-6:3

===[MAJOR BOUNDARY]===

This major boundary is signaled by a temporal indicator in a point of departure. The theme of this discourse section is that God caused the king to remember the deeds of Mordecai.

5:6[1] ἐν δὲ τῷ πότῳ/

During the party/

POINT OF DEPARTURE/

5:6[2] εἶπεν ὁ βασιλεὺς πρὸς Εσθηρ.

the king/ said to Esther.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

This clause is a direct speech frame. The speech proper begins with an asyndeton.

ASYNDETON 5:6[3] τί/ ἐστίν/

What/ is it/

FOCUS[MARKED]/EVENT FOCUS/

5:6[4] βασίλισσα Εσθηρ.

Queen Esther.

RIGHT DISLOCATION.

The local prominence of the interrogative particle and the vocative in the right dislocation highlight the sincerity of the king's question.

5:6[5] καὶ ἔσται σοι/

And it shall be yours/

EVENT FOCUS/

5:6[6] ὅσα ἄξιόις.

whatever you are asking.

RIGHT DISLOCATION.

5:7 καὶ εἶπεν.

And she/ said.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

Here the change of topic from the king to Esther is not indicated by any structural features. This is a direct speech frame. The speech proper begins with an asyndeton.

ASYNDETON 5:7 τὸ αἴτημά μου καὶ τὸ ἀξίωμα μου/

My request and my petition (is)/

THEME/

This clause is the local theme of Esther's entire speech to the king.

5:8 εἰ εὖρον χάριν ἐνώπιον τοῦ βασιλέως/

if I find favor before the king/

EXTRAPOSITION/

ἐλθάτω ὁ βασιλεὺς καὶ Αμαν ἐπὶ τὴν αὔριον/ εἰς τὴν δοχὴν/

let the king and Aman come tomorrow/ to the banquet/

EVENT FOCUS/DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT/

εἰς τὴν δοχὴν is postposed to the position of the dominant focal element in anticipation of the relative clause that follows.

5:8 ἦν/ ποιήσω αὐτοῖς.

which/ I shall make for them.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

5:8 καὶ αὐριον ποιήσω τὰ αὐτά.

Even tomorrow, I shall do the same things.

OLD.

This clause is a repeat of the previous clause. It is old information and is globally prominent. Both *Codex Sinaiticus* and *Codex Alexandrinus* have γὰρ following the second αὐριον of 5:8. This may be motivated by the desire to indicate the close semantic relationship between these two αὐριον clauses.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

This episodic boundary (NRSV 1991, apocrypha 63; Jobes 2009) is marked by an unmarked topic that is a topic shift.

5:9 καὶ ἐξῆλθεν ὁ Αμαν ἀπὸ τοῦ βασιλέως/

And Aman/ went out from the king/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

ὑπερχαρῆς εὐφραινόμενος.

exceedingly happy.

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

The fronting of the adverb ὑπερχαρῆς highlights Aman's joy of being invited to Esther's banquet with the king.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The passive voice of the main verb signals a switch from the mainline to offline. The temporal marker in a point of departure does not signal a major boundary in such a case.

5:9 ἐν δὲ τῷ ἰδεῖν Αμαν Μαρδοχαῖον τὸν Ιουδαῖον ἐν τῇ αὐλῇ/

And when Aman saw Mordecai the Jew in the court/

POINT OF DEPARTURE/

ἐθυμώθη σφόδρα.

he/ was very angry.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The shift of the verbal voice from the passive to the active signals a switch from the offline back to the foreground.

5:10 καὶ εἰσελθὼν εἰς τὰ ἴδια/

And arriving at his own premise/

EXTRAPOSITION/

ἐκάλεσεν τοὺς φίλους καὶ Ζωσαραν/ τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ.

he/ called (his) friends and Zosaran/ his wife.

TOPIC/COMMENT/DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT.

5:11 καὶ ὑπέδειξεν αὐτοῖς τὸν πλοῦτον αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν δόξαν/

And he/ showed them his wealth, and the glory/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

5:11 ἦν/ ὁ βασιλεὺς αὐτῷ/ περιέθηκεν.

which/ the king bestowed on him.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT.

The fronting of ὁ βασιλεὺς αὐτῷ is not prominent. It has the effect of postposing the only piece of new information, περιέθηκεν, to the position of the dominant focal element.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The particle ὥς signals a shift from the foreground to background.

5:11 καὶ ὥς ἐποίησεν αὐτὸν πρωτεύειν καὶ ἡγεῖσθαι τῆς βασιλείας.

Since he/ made him to be the first and to rule the kingdom.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

The former text, καὶ δεύτερον τῶν βασιλειῶν γέρας ἀπενηνεγμένος (3:13c) and καὶ δευτέρου πατρὸς ἡμῶν (3:13f), referred to him as the second in the kingdom. But here

Aman says that the king made him first in the kingdom. This depicts the progression of Aman's self-aggrandizement.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The return to the main topic (Aman) is coded nominally. This shifts the background back to the foreground.

5:12 καὶ εἶπεν Ἀμάν.

And Aman/ said.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

This is a direct speech frame. The speech proper begins with an asyndeton.

ASYNDETON 5:12 οὐ κέκληκεν ἡ βασίλισσα μετὰ τοῦ βασιλέως οὐδένα εἰς τὴν  
δοχὴν/ ἀλλ' ἢ ἐμέ.

The queen/ did not call anyone with the king to the banquet/ except me.

TOPIC/COMMENT/DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT.

The order of μετὰ τοῦ βασιλέως is fronted to highlight the authority of the king.

5:12 καὶ εἰς τὴν αὔριον/ κέκλημαι.

And for tomorrow/ I/ have been called.

FOCUS[MARKED]/TOPIC/COMMENT.

The shift from the queen to the first person is not signaled structurally. The fronting of the prepositional phrase, εἰς τὴν αὔριον, is marked as locally prominent to raise the reader's expectation of what will happen at the second banquet.

5:13 καὶ ταῦτά/ μοι οὐκ ἀρέσκει/

But these things/ did not please me/

TOPIC[MARKED]/ COMMENT/

The marked topic, ταῦτά, is anaphorically referential and indicates a temporary topic shift. The ordering of μοι prior to οὐκ ἀρέσκει follows the rule of information flow where old information precedes new information. This has the effect of postposing the verb ἀρέσκει to the end of the comment focus, which is the most salient position for unmarked focus.

The present tense of ἀρέσκει also makes it locally prominent. This highlights Aman's displeasure at Mordecai.

5:13 ὅταν ἴδω Μαρδοχαῖον τὸν Ιουδαῖον ἐν τῇ αὐλῇ.

whenever I/ see Mordecai, the Jew, in the court.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

5:14 καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτὸν/

Then she/ said to him/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

The shift of topic from Aman to his wife (and his friends) is not coded nominally in the main clause. The identity of the topic is delayed to the right dislocation to avoid making this an episodic boundary.

Ζωσαρα ἡ γυνὴ αὐτοῦ καὶ οἱ φίλοι.

Zosara his wife, and his friends.

RIGHT DISLOCATION.

This is a direct speech frame. The speech proper begins with an asyndeton.

ASYNDETON 5:14 κοπήτω σοι ξύλον πενήκοντα.

Cut for yourself a plank that is fifty cubits.

EVENT FOCUS.

5:14 ὄρθρου δὲ/

At dawn/

POINT OF DEPARTURE/

The temporal indicator in a point of departure does not signal a major discourse boundary here because there is topic continuity.

εἰπὸν τῷ βασιλεῖ.

speak to the king.

EVENT FOCUS.

5:14 καὶ κρεμασθήτω Μαρδοχαῖος ἐπὶ τοῦ ξύλου.

Let Mordecai be hung on the plank.

EVENT FOCUS.

Aman is portrayed as the semantic agent (in charge, taking action, commanding, requesting) up to this point in the narrative. This is the first time he receives an order from another, coded as a series of imperatives from his wife (and his friends), which immediately precedes his downfall in the next two chapters.

5:14 σὺ/ δὲ εἴσελθε εἰς τὴν δοχὴν σὺν τῷ βασιλεῖ.

You (on the other hand)/ go to the banquet with the king.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

The particle δέ with a marked topic is contrastive with the presumed fate of Mordecai.

5:14 καὶ εὐφραίνου.

And have fun.

EVENT FOCUS.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The temporary shift of topic to the anaphoric referent, τὸ ῥῆμα, indicates a minor break and a shift from the direct speech to the narration.

5:14 καὶ ἤρεσεν τὸ ῥῆμα τῷ Αμαν.

And the word/ pleased Aman.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The passive voice of the verb signals a shift from the mainline to offline.

5:14 καὶ ἡτοιμάσθη τὸ ξύλον.

And the plank/ was prepared.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

The word ἡτοιμάσθη (and other forms of this word) only occurs six times, and describes the actions of Aman and Esther. Whereas Aman “prepared” the gallows to destroy Mordecai (5:14; 7:9, 10), Esther “prepared” the banquet to save Mordecai and the Jews (6:14).

---[MINOR BREAK]---

This is a minor break, where the offline goes back to the mainline. This is signaled by a marked topic that is a temporary topic shift. Contrary to TEV (1976), NRSV (1991, apocrypha 63), Jobes (2009), this is not a discourse boundary because this topic does not continue cataphorically; and contrary to Dorothy (1997:146), the structure of this verse does not mark it as a “pivot” or a “crisis major”.

6:1[1] ὁ δὲ κύριος/ ἀπέστησεν τὸν ὕπνον ἀπὸ τοῦ βασιλέως τὴν νύκτα  
ἐκείνην.

The Lord/ took sleep away from the king that night.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

6:1[2] καὶ εἶπεν τῷ διδασκάλῳ αὐτοῦ/

And he/ said to his teacher/<sup>196</sup>

TOPIC/COMMENT/

This is an indirect speech frame. The indirect speech proper is coded as right extrapositions of the main clause.

The topic switch from the Lord to the king is not coded nominally to avoid making this an episodic boundary. The identity of the topic, the suffix of εἶπεν, refers to the king rather than the previous topics (ὁ κύριος or Ζωσαρά). Since (a) the topic is a human agent, and (b) only the king has the authority to bring in the chroniclers, semantic deduction makes it clear that the topic must be the king.

6:1[3] εἰσφέρειν γράμματα μνημόσυνα τῶν ἡμερῶν/

to bring in the chroniclers/

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION/

6:1[4] ἀναγινώσκειν αὐτῷ.

to read to him.

EVENT FOCUS.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

¹⁹⁶The word διδασκάλῳ has a narrow range of meaning. Interpreting it as “teacher” follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. I), referring perhaps to his former school teacher who lives near the king’s palace.

This episodic boundary is signaled by an unmarked topic that is a topic shift.

6:2[1] εὗρεν δὲ τὰ γράμματα τὰ γραφέντα περὶ Μαρδοχαίου.

And the scribes/ found the things written concerning Mordecai.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The particle ὥς signals a shift from the mainline to background. It means that the scribes found the account about Mordecai as they were reading the chronicles. 6:2[1] (the mainline) is chronologically embedded in 6:2[2-3].

6:2[2] ὥς ἀπήγγειλεν τῷ βασιλεῖ περὶ τῶν δύο εὐνούχων τοῦ βασιλέως/

As (they)/ reported to the king concerning the two eunuchs of the king/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

6:2[3] ἐν τῷ φυλάσσειν αὐτοὺς καὶ ζητῆσαι ἐπιβαλεῖν τὰς χεῖρας
Ἄρταξέρξη.

when they were on guard and sought to lay hands on Artaxerxes.

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

The right extraposition is globally prominent because it is similar to ἐτοιμάζουσιν τὰς χεῖρας ἐπιβαλεῖν Ἄρταξέρξη τῷ βασιλεῖ of 1:1n. It is less likely, therefore, that this clause refers to the incident involving the other two eunuchs recorded in 2:21.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

This episodic boundary is signaled by an unmarked topic that is a topic shift.

6:3[1] εἶπεν δὲ ὁ βασιλεύς.

And the king/ said.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

This is a direct speech frame. The direct speech proper begins with an asyndeton.

ASYNDETON 6:3[2] τίνα δόξαν ἢ χάριν/ ἐποιήσαμεν τῷ Μαρδοχαίῳ.

What honor or favor/ did we grant to Mordecai?

FOCUS[MARKED]/PRESUPPOSITION.

The king's presupposition that he granted favor to Mordecai, when he actually did nothing, is reflective of the king's forgetfulness.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

This episodic boundary is signaled by an unmarked topic that is a topic shift.

6:3[3] καὶ εἶπαν οἱ διάκονοι τοῦ βασιλέως.

And the servants of the king/ said.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

This is a direct speech frame. The direct speech proper begins with an asyndeton.

ASYNDETON 6:3[4] οὐκ ἐποίησας αὐτῷ οὐδέν.

You/ did nothing for him.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

3.3.23 Discourse section 6:4-6:12[1]

===[MAJOR BOUNDARY]===

Contrary to Dorothy (1997:146), this is not an offline. The temporal indicator in a point of departure signals a major boundary. ἰδοῦ signals the reintroduction of Aman into the discourse. The theme of this discourse section is that Mordecai is honored instead of Aman.

6:4 ἐν δὲ τῷ πυνθάνεσθαι τὸν βασιλέα περὶ τῆς εὐνοίας Μαρδοχαίου/

While the king inquired about the favour (shown to) Mordecai/

POINT OF DEPARTURE/

ἰδοῦ Αμαν/ ἐν τῇ αὐλῇ.

behold Aman/ (was) in the court.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

This episodic boundary is signaled by an unmarked topic that is a topic shift.

6:4 εἶπεν δὲ ὁ βασιλεύς.

And the king/ said.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

This is a direct speech frame. The speech proper begins with an asyndeton.

ASYNDETON 6:4 τίς/ ἐν τῇ αὐλῇ.

Who/ (is) in the court?<sup>197</sup>

FOCUS/PRESUPPOSITION.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

This marked topic is a temporary topic shift that signals a minor break. This marked topic returns to the main topic (Aman) introduced at the beginning of 6:4. Therefore, this is not a “flashback” (Dorothy 1997:147).

6:4 ὁ δὲ Αμάν/ εἰσῆλθεν/

Aman/ came in/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

6:4 εἰπεῖν τῷ βασιλεῖ/

to say to the king/

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION/

6:4 κρεμάσαι τὸν Μαρδοχαῖον ἐπὶ τῷ ξύλῳ/

to hang Mordecai on the plank/

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION/

6:4 ὃν/ ἡτοίμασεν.

which/ he prepared.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

This episodic boundary is signaled by an unmarked topic that is a topic shift.

6:5[1] καὶ εἶπαν οἱ διάκονοι τοῦ βασιλέως.

¹⁹⁷The fact that the king knows somebody is in the court, but does not know who that person is implies that a system is in place to inform the king of anyone's approach.

And the servants of the king/ said.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

This is a direct speech frame.

6:5[2] ἰδοὺ Ἀμαν/ ἔστηκεν ἐν τῇ αὐλῇ.

Behold, Aman/ stands in the court.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

Whereas ἰδοὺ at the beginning of 6:4 reintroduces Aman to the narration, here ἰδοὺ introduces the presence of Aman to the king. The dual use of ἰδοὺ reflects the difference of point of view between (a) the reader as the audience, and (b) the king as the audience.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

This episodic boundary is signaled by an unmarked topic that is a topic shift.

6:5[3] καὶ εἶπεν ὁ βασιλεὺς.

And the king/ said.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

This is a direct speech frame. The direct speech proper begins with an asyndeton.

ASYNDETON 6:5[4] καλέσατε αὐτόν.

Call him.

EVENT FOCUS.

6:6[1] εἶπεν δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς τῷ Ἀμαν.<sup>198</sup>

And the king/ said to Aman.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

This is another direct speech frame. The speech proper begins with an asyndeton.

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<sup>198</sup>The literature is divided concerning the relative importance of narrative and reported speech. While some researchers believe that reported speech is less important than the narrative action (Grimes 1975:69; Levinsohn 2000a:§13), others believe that reported speech is on par with narration and is a means of developing the overall argument of the story (Lowery 1985; Neeley 1987:§3.1; Dawson 1994:215; de Regt 1995:160; Miller 1996:403; Longacre 1999a:144).

This study leans toward the latter position, which is supported by the fact that:

(a) the prominence of “emphatic forms” (Muraoka 1985:165-6), such as vocatives, does occur with higher frequency in reported speech; and  
(b) the narrative reversal occurs in the form of a reported speech in 6:6-9.

The coding of the topic, ὁ βασιλεὺς, is globally prominent because it is redundant. The particle δέ highlights this direct frame as locally prominent. The co-occurrence of local and global prominence makes this speech frame (and the king's question within this speech) as one of the climax in this narrative because this is the beginning of a reversal of expectation. It is Mordecai, instead of Aman, who is honored by the king. The multiple occurrences of local prominence, global prominence, or both, in this discourse section continue to sustain this narrative climax.

ASYNDETON 6:6[2] τί / ποιήσω τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ/

What/ should I do for the man/

FOCUS[MARKED]/EVENT FOCUS/

6:6[3] ὃν / ἐγὼ θέλω δοξάσαι.

whom/ I want to honor.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

ἐγὼ θέλω is locally prominent because (a) ἐγὼ is both redundant and fronted, and (b) θέλω is fronted and is coded in the present tense. This highlights the authority of the king. It shows that he is capable of taking action that will influence the outcome of the narrative.

6:6[4] εἶπεν δὲ ἐν ἑαυτῷ/

And he/ said to himself/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

δέ is contrastive here, signifying a shift of topic from the king to Aman. The delay of Aman to the right dislocation is a structural technique to avoid making this an episodic boundary. Contrary to Dorothy (1997:153), this is not a “digression”, nor is this a minor break or a discourse boundary.

6:6[5] Ἀμαν.

Aman.

RIGHT DISLOCATION.

This is an intrapersonal speech frame. The intrapersonal speech proper begins with an asyndeton.

ASYNDETON 6:6[6] τίνα/ θέλει ὁ βασιλεὺς δοξάσαι/ εἰ μὴ ἐμέ.

Whom/ does the king/ wants to honor/ except for me.

FOCUS[MARKED]/TOPIC/COMMENT/ DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT.

The topic and comment phrase, θέλει ὁ βασιλεὺς δοξάσαι, is globally prominent because it is a literal repeat of the king's words earlier in 6:6[3]. Further, (a) the present tense of θέλει, and (b) the fronting of τίνα are locally prominent. In this clause, the prominence of τίνα θέλει ὁ βασιλεὺς δοξάσαι contrasts with the falsity of Aman's response to his own question in the dominant focal element, εἰ μὴ ἐμέ.

6:7 εἶπεν δὲ πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα.

And he/ said to the king.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

This is a direct speech frame of a procedural speech. The speech proper begins with an asyndeton. The particle δέ makes Aman's formal response to the king locally prominent.

ASYNDETON 6:7 ἄνθρωπον ὃν ὁ βασιλεὺς θέλει δοξάσαι/

The man whom the king wants to honor/

THEME/

The words of the king are quoted again, which are globally prominent. The (a) fronting of ὁ βασιλεὺς, and (b) the present tense of θέλει are also locally prominent, which continue to highlight the authority of the king. Further, this clause functions as the local theme of Aman's hortatory speech.

6:8[1] ἐνεγκάτωσαν οἱ παῖδες τοῦ βασιλέως στολὴν βυσσίνην/

let the servants of the king bring a fine linen robe/

EVENT FOCUS/

6:8[2] ἣν/ ὁ βασιλεὺς περιβάλλεται/

which/ the king (usually) wears/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

The fronting of ὁ βασιλεὺς is locally prominent and highlights the authority of the king.

6:8[3] καὶ ἵππον/

and (let them bring) a horse/

EVENT FOCUS/

6:8[4] ἐφ' ὃν/ ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐπιβαίνει.

on which/ the king is riding.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

The (a) present tense of the verb, and (b) the fronting of ὁ βασιλεὺς are locally prominent.

6:9[1] καὶ δότω ἐνὶ τῶν φίλων τοῦ βασιλέως/ τῶν ἐνδόξων.

And let him<sup>199</sup> grant permission<sup>200</sup> to one of the friends of the king/ among the nobles.

EVENT FOCUS/DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT.

The successive use of thethetic focus means that this episode has a high rate of information, which makes it episodically prominent.

6:9[2] καὶ στολισάτω τὸν ἄνθρωπον/

And let that man clothe the man/

EVENT FOCUS/

6:9[3] ὃν/ ὁ βασιλεὺς ἀγαπᾷ.

whom/ the king loves.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

The (a) present tense of the verb, and (b) the fronting of ὁ βασιλεὺς are locally prominent.

6:9[4] καὶ ἀναβιβασάτω αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὸν ἵππον.

And let that man mount him on the horse.

EVENT FOCUS.

6:9[5] καὶ κηρυσσέτω διὰ τῆς πλατείας τῆς πόλεως/

Let him proclaim through the (main) street of the city/

<sup>199</sup>The third person singular here is an indirect reference to the king.

<sup>200</sup>The interpretation of δότω as “to grant permission” follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. I.2).

#### EVENT FOCUS/

This is a direct speech frame. This speech frame is made (a) locally prominent by the present tense of the main verb κηρυσσέτω, and (b) globally prominent by the redundant λέγων in the right extraposition. This constitutes the climax within Aman's speech.

6:9[6] λέγων.

saying.

#### RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

The direct speech proper begins with an asyndeton.

ASYNDETON 6:9[7] οὕτως/ ἔσται παντὶ ἀνθρώπῳ/

Thus/ (it) shall be for every man/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

The marked topic is a deictic referent referring to the live scene that Aman is imagining.

6:9[8] ὃν / ὁ βασιλεὺς δοξάζει.

whom/ the king honors.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

The focus comment is a repeat of 6:7 and is globally prominent. At the same time, the (a) fronting of ὁ βασιλεὺς, and (b) the present tense of δοξάζει are locally prominent. This coding is highly salient. It sustains the dramatic tension in this discourse section, and highlights the unexpectedness of the king's response to Aman.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

This episodic boundary is signaled by an unmarked topic that is a topic shift.

6:10 εἶπεν δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς τῷ Αμαν.

And the king/ said to Aman.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

This is a direct speech frame. The direct speech proper begins with an asyndeton. The anti-climax of the king's unexpected response to Aman is not marked by any salient structural coding.

ASYNDETON 6:10 καθὼς ἐλάλησας/

Just as you said/

EXTRAPOSITION/

οὕτως/ ποιήσον τῷ Μαρδοχαίῳ τῷ Ιουδαίῳ τῷ θεραπεύοντι ἐν τῇ αὐλῇ.

thus/ do to Mordecai the Jew who is serving in the court.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

This marked topic is an anaphoric referent.

6:10 καὶ μὴ παραπεσάτω σου λόγος/

And do not let your words fall away/

EVENT FOCUS/

The noun λόγος is postposed to the end of the event focus because it is the head of the marked topic of the following subordinate clause.

6:10 ὧν/ ἐλάλησας.

(that) which/ you spoke.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

This episodic boundary is signaled by an unmarked topic that is a topic shift.

6:11 ἔλαβεν δὲ Αμαν τὴν στολὴν καὶ τὸν ἵππον.

So, Aman/ took the robe and the horse.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

6:11 καὶ ἐστόλισεν τὸν Μαρδοχαῖον.

And he/ robed Mordecai.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

6:11 καὶ ἀνεβίβασεν αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὸν ἵππον.

And he/ mounted him on the horse.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

6:11 καὶ διήλθεν διὰ τῆς πλατείας τῆς πόλεως.

And he/ went through the (main) street of the city.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

6:11 καὶ ἐκήρυσσεν/

And he/ cried out/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

**λέγων.**

saying.

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

This is a direct speech frame. The direct speech proper begins with an asyndeton. The redundancy of λέγων in the right extraposition makes this speech globally prominent. Whereas 6:9[6] has the same coding, 6:9[6] referred to the honor that Aman imagined would be conferred to him, but here, the actual honor is conferred on Mordecai instead.

ASYNDETON 6:11 οὕτως/ ἔσται παντὶ ἀνθρώπῳ/

Thus/ (it) shall be for every man/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

This marked topic is a spatial deixis.

6:11 ὃν / ὁ βασιλεὺς θέλει δοξάσαι.

whom/ the king desires to honor.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

This proclamation is a literal repeat of 6:9[7-8]. Here, the global prominence alerts the reader that there is a reversal of expectations. Aman, instead of being the one honored, is now the one ordered by the king to honor Mordecai, his enemy.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The unmarked topic that is a temporary shift signals a minor break.

6:12[1] ἐπέστρεψεν δὲ ὁ Μαρδοχαῖος εἰς τὴν αὐλήν.

And Mordecai/ returned to the court.

TOPIC/COMMENT.<sup>201</sup>

### 3.3.24 Discourse section 6:12[2]-7:10[2]

===[MAJOR BOUNDARY]===

This major boundary is signaled by the marked topic that is not a temporary shift. The theme of this discourse section is that Aman is executed by the king.<sup>202</sup>

6:12[2] Αμαν δὲ/ ὑπέστρεψεν εἰς τὰ ἴδια/

Aman/ returned home/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

λυπούμενος κατὰ κεφαλῆς.

grieved over the head.<sup>203</sup>

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

6:13 καὶ διηγήσατο **Αμαν** τὰ συμβεβηκότα αὐτῷ Ζωσαρα τῇ γυναικὶ αὐτοῦ  
καὶ τοῖς φίλοις.

And Aman/ described what had happened to him in detail to Zosara, his  
wife, and to (his) friends.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

The redundancy of Αμαν is globally prominent and reinforces the fact that Aman is the central character in this discourse section.

6:13 καὶ εἶπαν πρὸς αὐτόν/

And they/ said to him/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

The topic shifts from Aman to his wife (and his friends). But the nominal coding of this topic is delayed to the right dislocation to avoid making this an episodic boundary.

<sup>201</sup>Either a marked or an unmarked topic that is a temporary shift may signal a minor break. This means that it is the temporary shift of the topic that signals a minor break in the discourse. But the function of the topic markedness is not clear in such a situation.

<sup>202</sup>Semantically, 6:12[2] could be interpreted as being contrastive with 6:12[1]. But structural coding takes precedence in the determination of a major boundary.

<sup>203</sup>The interpretation of κατὰ κεφαλῆς as “over the head” follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. I.1.a). Together λυπούμενος κατὰ κεφαλῆς is probably an idiom meaning “exceedingly sorrowful”.

οἱ φίλοι καὶ ἡ γυνή.

(his) friends and (his) wife.

RIGHT DISLOCATION.

This is a direct speech frame. The speech proper begins with an asyndeton.

ASYNDETON 6:13 εἰ ἐκ γένους Ιουδαίων Μαρδοχαῖος/

Since Mordecai (is) from the Jewish race/

EXTRAPOSITION/

6:13 ἤρξαι ταπεινοῦσθαι ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ/

(having) begun to be lowered before him/

EXTRAPOSITION/

6:13 πεσὼν πεσῇ.

you/ shall surely fall.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

The construction of this sentence is probably influenced by the syntax of biblical Hebrew. The usage of εἰ in the protasis means “if” or “since”, which is similar to the particle  $\text{אִם}$  of biblical Hebrew. The use of the participle and the future tense together for the main verb is semantically emphatic, and is probably influenced by the infinitive absolute construction of biblical Hebrew.<sup>204</sup>

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

The asyndeton signals an episodic boundary within this reported speech.

ASYNDETON 6:13 οὐ μὴ δύνῃ αὐτὸν ἀμύνασθαι/

You/ are not able to repel him/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

6:13 ὅτι θεὸς ζῶν μετ' αὐτοῦ.

because a living god (is) with him.

PRESENTATIONAL FOCUS.

²⁰⁴This construction also occurs in Gen 15:13; Deut 6:17; 2King 15:8; 3King 2:37; Jer 32:28; 33:15; 49:19.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

This is the end of the direct speech. The asyndeton signals a shift from the mainline to offline.²⁰⁵ Contrary to TEV (1976), NRSV (1991, apocrypha 64), and Jobes (2009), this is not a discourse boundary.

ASYNDETON 6:14 ἔτι αὐτῶν λαλούντων/

While they were still speaking/

POINT OF DEPARTURE/

παραγίνονται οἱ εὐνοῦχοι/

the eunuchs/ arrived/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

6:14 ἐπισπεύδοντες τὸν Αμαν ἐπὶ τὸν πότον/

hurrying Aman to the (drinking) party/

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION/

ὃν/ ἡτοίμασεν Εσθηρ.

which/ Esther prepared.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

This unmarked topic is a topic shift and signals an episodic boundary (Jobes 2009). Whereas Levenson (1997:8) claims that there is a balanced chiasmic structure between (a) “the fateful exchange between Mordecai and Esther” in chapter 4 (BHS) with “the fateful exchange between the king and Esther” in 7:1-6 (BHS), and between (b) the “first banquet of the threesome” (the king, Esther, and Aman) in 5:6-8 (BHS) with “the second banquet of the threesome” in 7:1-6 (BHS), this is only partially reflected in the Septuagint. Whereas both (a) 4:1 (LXX), and (b) 5:6 (LXX) are major discourse boundaries, 7:1 (LXX) is the beginning of an episodic boundary.

7:1 εἰσῆλθεν δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς/

And the king/ came in/

---

<sup>205</sup>The temporal indicator in the point of departure does not signal a major boundary in such a case.

TOPIC/COMMENT/

7:1 καὶ Ἀμαν συμπιεῖν τῇ βασιλίσση.

Aman was drinking with the queen.

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

7:2[1] εἶπεν δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς Εσθηρ τῇ δευτέρᾳ ἡμέρᾳ ἐν τῷ πότῳ.

The king/ said to Esther on the second day of the (drinking) party.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

This is a direct speech frame. The speech proper begins with an asyndeton. The textual variant of καί in *Codex Alexandrinus* removes the possible misinterpretation that the particle δέ marks the clause as locally prominent. The coding of ὁ βασιλεὺς is not redundant. Rather, it clarifies that the topic identity is neither Aman nor Esther.

ASYNDETON 7:2[2] τί/ ἐστίν/

What/ is it/

FOCUS[MARKED]/EVENT FOCUS/

7:2[3] Εσθηρ βασίλισσα.

queen Esther.

RIGHT DISLOCATION.

The local prominence of (a) the marked focus, and (b) the vocative in the right dislocation highlights the sincerity of the king's question.

7:2[4] καὶ τί/ τὸ αἴτημά σου.

And what/ (is) your request?

TOPIC/COMMENT.

7:2[5] καὶ τί τὸ ἀξίωμα σου/

And what(ever) (is) your request/

DISLOCATION/

7:2[6] καὶ ἔστω σοι/ ἕως τοῦ ἡμίσεος τῆς βασιλείας μου.

it shall be yours/ up to half of my kingdom.

EVENT FOCUS/DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT.

7:3 καὶ ἀποκριθεῖσα/

And answering/

EXTRAPOSITION/

The switch of the topic from the king to Esther is only indicated by the feminine form of the participle in the extraposition. The topic switch is not coded nominally in order to avoid making this an episodic boundary.

This is the only instance of ἀποκρίνομαι in the study corpus. It is redundant and signals the significance of Esther's response. Here, Esther finally presents her formal request to the king to deliver the Jews from Aman's evil scheme.

7:3 εἶπεν.

she/ said.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

This is a direct speech frame. The speech proper begins with an asyndeton.

ASYNDETON 7:3 εἰ εὖρον χάριν ἐνώπιον τοῦ βασιλέως/

If I (have) found favor before the king/

EXTRAPOSITION/

7:3 δοθήτω ἡ ψυχὴ μου τῷ αἰτήματί μου καὶ ὁ λαός μου τῷ ἀξιώματί μου.

let my life be granted through my request, and my people through my petition.<sup>206</sup>

EVENT FOCUS.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The particle γάρ signals a shift from the mainline to background.

7:4[1] ἐπράθημεν γὰρ ἐγώ τε καὶ ὁ λαός μου εἰς ἀπώλειαν καὶ διαρπαγὴν καὶ δουλείαν/ ἡμεῖς καὶ τὰ τέκνα ἡμῶν εἰς παῖδας καὶ παιδίσκας.

For both I and my people/ were sold into destruction and plunder and servitude/ we and our children as male slaves and female slaves.

<sup>206</sup>The interpretation of ἀξιώματι as "petition" follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. II.3).

TOPIC/COMMENT/DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT.

7:4[2] καὶ παρήκουσα/

And I/ paid no attention/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

7:4[3] οὐ γὰρ ἄξιος/ ὁ διάβολος/ τῆς αὐλῆς τοῦ βασιλέως.

because not worthy/ (is) the slanderer/ (of the attention) of the court  
of the king.

COMMENT/TOPIC/DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT.

This verse could be interpreted to mean (a) the enemy of the court of the king is not worthy (of attention), where τῆς αὐλῆς τοῦ βασιλέως is part of ὁ διάβολος, or (b) τῆς αὐλῆς τοῦ βασιλέως is a dominant focal element that qualifies the comment, οὐ ἄξιος. Both interpretations are possible. This study leans towards the latter position.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The nominal coding ὁ βασιλεύς signals the return from background back to the mainline. It belongs to the same episode begun in 7:1.

7:5[1] εἶπεν δὲ ὁ βασιλεύς.

And the king/ said.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

This is a direct speech frame. The speech proper begins with an asyndeton.

ASYNDETON 7:5[2] τίς/ οὗτος/

Who/ (is) this/

COMMENT/TOPIC/

The topic (a) refers anaphorically to ὁ διάβολος, and (b) cataphorically to the identity of ὅστις in the subordinate clause.

7:5[3] ὅστις/ ἐτόλμησεν ποιῆσαι τὸ πρᾶγμα τοῦτο.

who/ dares to do this thing.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

This episodic boundary is signaled by an unmarked topic that is a topic shift.

7:6 εἶπεν δὲ Εσθηρ.

And Esther/ said.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

This is a direct speech frame. The speech proper begins with an asyndeton.

ASYNDETON 7:6 ἄνθρωπος ἐχθρὸς Αμαν ὁ πονηρὸς/ οὗτος.

A man, an enemy, Aman, the wicked/ (is) this one.

COMMENT/TOPIC.²⁰⁷

---[MINOR BREAK]---

This marked topic that is a temporary shift signals a minor break.

7:6 Αμαν/²⁰⁸ δὲ ἐταράχθη ἀπὸ τοῦ βασιλέως καὶ τῆς βασιλίσσης.

Aman/ was troubled because of the king and the queen.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

This marked topic that is a temporary shift signals a minor break. Contrary to NRSV (1991, apocrypha 65) and Jobes (2009), this is not a discourse boundary.

7:7[1] ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς/ ἐξάνεστη ἐκ τοῦ συμποσίου εἰς τὸν κήπον.

The king/ went away from the party to the garden.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

This marked topic that is a temporary shift signals a minor break.

7:7[2] ὁ δὲ Αμαν/ παρητεῖτο τὴν βασίλισσαν/

²⁰⁷It seems that the fronting of a comment before the topic in a verbless clause is locally prominent. For example, in 7:6, there is no doubt that the comment, ἄνθρωπος ἐχθρὸς Αμαν ὁ πονηρὸς, which is fronted before the topic οὗτος, is pragmatically marked.

²⁰⁸The topic is fronted before the verb for the series of clauses in 7:5-9 (BHS) (Buth 1992b). There is no one-to-one correspondence between the Septuagint and the Hebrew text on topic fronting, although 7:5-9 (LXX) may have tried to highlight the rapid shift of topic with ten instances of δέ.

Aman/ (kept) begging the queen/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

7:7 ἑώρα γὰρ ἑαυτὸν ἐν κακοῖς ὄντα.

because he/ saw that he was in a bad (situation).

TOPIC/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

This unmarked topic that is a temporary shift signals a minor break.

7:8[1] ἐπέστρεψεν δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐκ τοῦ κήπου.

The king/ returned from the garden.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The marked topic that is a temporary shift signals a minor break.

7:8[2] Ἀμαν/ δὲ ἐπιπεπτώκει ἐπὶ τὴν κλίνην/

Aman/ fell over on the bed/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

7:8[3] ἀξιῶν τὴν βασίλισσαν.

imploing the queen.

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

This episodic boundary is signaled by an unmarked topic that is a topic shift.

7:8[4] εἶπεν δὲ ὁ βασιλεύς.

Then, the king/ said.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

This is a direct speech frame. The speech is locally prominent because (a) the clause is a rhetorical question, (b) the marked focus is fronted, and (c) the usage of the particle ὥστε.

7:8[5] ὥστε καὶ τὴν γυναῖκα/ βιάζει ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ μου.

Even this women/ you/ are grabbing in my house?

FOCUS[MARKED]/TOPIC/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

This marked topic that is a temporary topic shift signals a minor break.

7:8[6] Αμαν δὲ/ ἀκούσας/ διετράπη τῷ προσώπῳ.

Aman/ hearing (this)/ (was) confounded in countenance.<sup>209</sup>

TOPIC[MARKED]/MEDIAL EXTRAPOSITION/COMMENT.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

The presence of an unmarked topic that is a topic shift signals an episodic boundary.

7:9[1] εἶπεν δὲ Βουγαθαν εἷς τῶν εὐνούχων πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα.

Then, Bougathan, one of the eunuchs/ said to the king.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

This is a direct speech frame. The speech proper uncharacteristically begins with ἰδοῦ instead of the usual asyndeton. Here, ἰδοῦ introduces the setting material, ξύλον. This raises the story to its climax because this is the instrument by which Aman is to be executed.

7:9[2] ἰδοὺ καὶ ξύλον/ ἡτοίμασεν Αμαν Μαρδοχαίῳ τῷ λαλήσαντι περὶ τοῦ βασιλέως.

Behold, a cross/ (which) Aman prepared for Mordecai, (the one) who spoke for (the benefit of) the king.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

7:9[3] καὶ ὥρθωται ἐν τοῖς Αμαν/

And it/ has been set up on the (premise) of Aman/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

7:9[4] ξύλον πηχῶν πεντήκοντα.

a plank, (that is) fifty cubits.

²⁰⁹The interpretation of προσώπῳ as “countenance” follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. II). This is probably a colloquial expression for having one’s face turn white.

RIGHT DISLOCATION.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

This episodic boundary is signaled by an unmarked topic that is a topic shift.

7:9[5] εἶπεν δὲ ὁ βασιλεύς.

And the king/ said.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

This is a direct speech frame. The speech proper begins with an asyndeton.

ASYNDETON 7:9[6] σταυρωθήτω ἐπ' αὐτοῦ.

Let him be crucified on it.

EVENT FOCUS.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The passive voice of the main verb signals a shift from the mainline to offline.

7:10[1] καὶ ἐκρεμάσθη Αμαν ἐπὶ τοῦ ξύλου/

And Aman/ was hung on the plank/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

7:10[2] ὃ / ἡτοίμασεν Μαρδοχαίῳ.

which/ he prepared for Mordecai.

TOPIC[MARKED]/OLD.

Here, the old information that was previously mentioned in 5:14 and 7:9[2] is globally prominent. This highlights the irony that the instrument which Aman prepared for the destruction of Mordecai is now used to kill Aman himself.

### 3.3.25 Discourse section 7:10[3]-8:12

===[MAJOR BOUNDARY]===

The marked topic that is a topic shift indicates a major boundary.<sup>210</sup> The theme of this discourse section is that the king reverses the edict of Aman.

7:10[3] καὶ τότε ὁ βασιλεὺς/ ἐκόπασεν τοῦ θυμοῦ.

And the king/ abated from anger.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

This entire clause is marked as locally prominent by the particle τότε.

8:1 καὶ ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ/

And on that very day/

POINT OF DEPARTURE/

Contrary to TEV (1976), NRSV (1991, apocrypha 65), Jobes (2009), the beginning of 8:1 is not a major discourse boundary. Here, the temporal indicator in the point of departure has the function of a verbal aspect. It emphasizes the continuity of the king's action from the time he stopped being angry (7:10[3]) and the time he gave Esther everything that belonged to Aman (8:1) as being on the same day.

8:1 ὁ βασιλεὺς Ἀρταξέρξης/ ἔδωρήσατο Εσθηρ ὅσα ὑπῆρχεν Ἀμαν τῷ διαβόλῳ.

king Artaxerxes/ granted to Esther whatever belonged to Aman, the slanderer.

TOPIC[MARKED]/ COMMENT.

The use of the full nominal coding for the king (the marked topic) is redundant. This global prominence highlights the king as being a central character here.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The passive voice of the verb signals a switch from the mainline to offline.

8:1 καὶ Μαρδοχαῖος/ προσεκλήθη ὑπὸ τοῦ βασιλέως.<sup>211</sup>

And Mordecai/ was called by the king.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

<sup>210</sup>The transposition of ὁ βασιλεὺς and ἐκόπασεν in *Codex Alexandrinus*, however, would make this into an episodic boundary instead.

<sup>211</sup>καὶ is deleted and replaced by δε in the postpositive position in *Codex Alexandrinus*, which would not affect this analysis.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The γάρ signals a switch from offline to background.

8:1 ὑπέδειξεν γὰρ Εσθηρ ὅτι ἐνοικεῖται αὐτῇ.

For Esther/ (had) revealed (to the king) that he was related to her.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The unmarked topic that is a continuation of the main topic (the king) signals a return from offline (and background) back to the mainline.

8:2 ἔλαβεν δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς τὸν δακτύλιον/

The king/ took the ring/

TOPIC/COMMENT[PART1]/

8:2 ὃν/ ἀφείλατο Ἀμαν/

that/ he took off from Aman/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

8:2 καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτὸν Μαρδοχαίου.

And gave it to Mordecai.

COMMENT[PART2].

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

This episodic boundary is signaled by an unmarked topic that is a topic shift. Contrary to Jobes (2009), this is not a major discourse boundary.

8:2 καὶ κατέστησεν Εσθηρ Μαρδοχαῖον ἐπὶ πάντων τῶν Ἀμαν.

And Esther/ set Mordecai over all (that was) Aman's.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

8:3 καὶ προσθεῖσα/

And in addition/

EXTRAPOSITION/

ἐλάλησεν πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα.

she/ spoke to the king.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

8:3 καὶ προσέπεσεν πρὸς τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ.

And she/ prostrated towards his feet.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

8:3 καὶ ἡξίου ἀφελεῖν τὴν Αμαν κακίαν/ καὶ ὅσα ἐποίησεν τοῖς Ιουδαίοις.

And she/ (kept) asking to take away the evil of Aman/ even whatsoever he did to the Jews.

TOPIC/COMMENT/DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The unmarked topic that is a temporary shift signals a minor break.²¹²

8:4[1] ἐξέτεινεν δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς Εσθηρ τὴν ῥάβδον τὴν χρυσοῦν.

And the king/ extended to Esther the golden rod.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

The unmarked topic that is a topic shift signals an episodic boundary.

8:4[2] ἐξηγέρθη δὲ Εσθηρ παρεστηκέναι τῷ βασιλεῖ.

And Esther/ got up to stand by the king.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

8:5 καὶ εἶπεν **Εσθηρ**.

And Esther/ said.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

This is a direct speech frame. The speech proper begins with an asyndeton. The redundant coding of Esther is globally prominent and signals that the locus of attention shifts from the king to Esther here.

<sup>212</sup>The textual variant καὶ in *Codex Alexandrinus* does not affect this interpretation.

ASYNDETON 8:5 εἰ δοκεῖ σοι καὶ εὖρον χάριν/

If it pleases you, and I find favor (before you)/

EXTRAPOSITION/

8:5 πεμφθήτω ἀποστραφῆναι τὰ γράμματα τὰ ἀπεσταλμένα ὑπὸ Αμαν/

let it be ordered to turn back the writings that had been sent by Aman/

EVENT FOCUS/

8:5 τὰ γραφέντα ἀπολέσθαι τοὺς Ἰουδαίους οἳ εἰσιν ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ σου.

the things written (so that) the Jews who are in your kingdom be wiped out.

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The particle γάρ signals a shift from the mainline to background.

8:6 πῶς γὰρ δυνήσομαι ἰδεῖν τὴν κάκωσιν τοῦ λαοῦ μου.

For how am I able to see the distress of my people?

EVENT FOCUS.

8:6 καὶ πῶς δυνήσομαι σωθῆναι ἐν τῇ ἀπωλείᾳ τῆς πατρίδος μου.

And how can I be saved during the destruction of my homeland?<sup>213</sup>

EVENT FOCUS.

The two rhetorical questions are locally prominent and highlights the urgency of Esther's request.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

The unmarked topic that is a topic shift signals an episodic boundary.

8:7 καὶ εἶπεν ὁ βασιλεὺς **πρὸς Εσθηρ.**

And the king/ said to Esther.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

This is a direct speech frame. The speech proper begins with an asyndeton. Here, the direct object, πρὸς Εσθηρ, of the speech frame is redundant because the direct object is normally

²¹³The interpretation of πατρίδος as “homeland” follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. I).

not indicated in a dialogue where the character set is closed. This is a signal that the ascendance of the pragmatic importance of Esther in 8:5 is continued here.

ASYNDETON 8:7 εἰ πάντα τὰ ὑπάρχοντα Αμαν ἔδωκα καὶ ἐχαρισάμην σοι καὶ αὐτὸν ἐκρέμασα ἐπὶ ξύλου/²¹⁴

If everything that belongs to Aman I freely gave you, and him I hung on the plank/

POINT OF DEPARTURE/

8:7 ὅτι τὰς χεῖρας/ ἐπήνεγκε τοῖς Ιουδαίοις/

because (his) hands/ he laid on the Jews/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

8:7 τί ἔτι/ ἐπιζητεῖς.

what more/ do you/ seek?

FOCUS[MARKED]/TOPIC/COMMENT.

The king's question is locally prominent. This is signaled by (a) the marked focus, and (b) the present tense of the main verb.

8:8 γράψατε καὶ ὑμεῖς ἐκ τοῦ ὀνόματός μου ὡς δοκεῖ ὑμῖν.

Write in my name as it pleases you.

EVENT FOCUS.

The independent pronoun, ὑμεῖς, is redundant and hence globally prominent. Like the global prominence used in 8:5 and 8:7, the redundant ὑμεῖς (supported by καί) signals that Esther is the central character here.

8:8 καὶ σφραγίσατε τῷ δακτυλίῳ μου.

And seal (it) by my ring.

EVENT FOCUS.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The particle γάρ signals a switch from the mainline to background.²¹⁵

²¹⁴This point of departure consists of two marked topic plus comment phrases. This first marked topic is πάντα τὰ ὑπάρχοντα Αμαν, and the second is αὐτὸν.

²¹⁵The passive voice is used for six verbs in the background section and the offline section of 8:8-10.

8:8 ὅσα γὰρ γράφεται τοῦ βασιλέως ἐπιτάξαντος/

(For) whatsoever is written by order of the king/

DISLOCATION/

The fronting of βασιλέως highlights the authority of the king.

8:8 καὶ σφραγισθῇ τῷ δακτυλίῳ μου/

and (whatsoever) is sealed by my ring/

DISLOCATION/

8:8 οὐκ ἔστιν αὐτοῖς ἀντειπεῖν.

there is no opposing (it).

PRESENTATIONAL FOCUS.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

Contrary to NRSV (1991, apocrypha 65) and Jobes (2009), this is not a discourse boundary.

Rather, this is a shift from the background to offline.

The parallelism between 3:12-15 (BHS) (anti-Jewish edict) and 8:9-14 (pro-Jewish edict), as described in Levenson (1997:8), is attested by the structure of the Septuagint. Both 3:12 and 8:9 (LXX) belong to an offline section signaled by the passive verbal voice. However, it is doubtful that this is a “bilateral chiasmic structure” (Levenson 1997:8), since chiasm is normally defined as a more specific kind of structural device, which signals the macrostructure of a narrative.

8:9 ἐκλήθησαν δὲ οἱ γραμματεῖς ἐν τῷ πρώτῳ μηνί/

The scribes/ were called on the first month/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

8:9 ὅς/ ἐστὶ Νισα/

which/ is Nisa/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

8:9 τρίτῃ καὶ εἰκάδι τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἔτους.

on the twenty third (day) of that year.

DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT.

8:9 καὶ ἐγράφη τοῖς Ιουδαίοις/

And it/ was written concerning the Jews/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

ὅσα ἐνετείλατο τοῖς οἰκονόμοις καὶ τοῖς ἄρχουσιν τῶν σατραπῶν ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰνδικῆς ἕως τῆς Αἰθιοπίας ἑκατὸν εἴκοσι ἑπτὰ σατραπείαις κατὰ χώραν καὶ χώραν κατὰ τὴν ἑαυτῶν λέξιν.

whatsoever she ordered the administrators, and the rulers of the *satraps* from Indikei to Ethiopia, 127 *satraps*, region by region, according to their dialects.

RIGHT DISLOCATION.

The identity of the subject of ἐνετείλατο, though unspecified, refers to Esther because she is the major character in this section of the discourse.

8:10 ἐγράφη δὲ διὰ τοῦ βασιλέως.

And it/ was written by the (authority of the) king.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

The translation “it was written by the king” (Jobes 2009) is improbable because the king explicitly tells Esther in 8:8 (γράψατε καὶ ὑμεῖς ἐκ τοῦ ὀνόματός μου ὡς δοκεῖ ὑμῖν) to write using the name of the king. The preposition διὰ plus the genitive here should therefore be translated as secondary agency rather than primary (direct) agency.

The particle δέ signals this clause as locally prominent. This is a significant event because it is the issuance of this edict which provides the actual deliverance for the Jews. The textual variant, καί, in *Codex Alexandrinus*, however, removes this local prominence and downplays the salience of this event.

8:10 καὶ ἐσφραγίσθη τῷ δακτυλίῳ αὐτοῦ.

And it/ was sealed by his ring.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The shift of the verbal voice from the passive to the active signals a switch from the offline back to the foreground.

8:10 καὶ ἐξάπέστειλαν τὰ γράμματα διὰ βιβλιαφόρων.²¹⁶

And they/ sent the letters out through the letter carriers.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The particle ὥς here indicates a shift from the foreground to background. This background section is a summary of what Esther instructs the scribes to write. Addition E, which follows this sentence, contains the details of the decree.

8:11 ὥς ἐπέταξεν αὐτοῖς/

She/ instructed them/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

The reference of αὐτοῖς is cataphoric (referring to the Jews), rather than anaphoric (the subject of the main clause).

χρηῖσθαι τοῖς νόμοις αὐτῶν ἐν πάσῃ πόλει/

to make use of their laws in all the cities/²¹⁷

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION/

8:11 βοηθῆσαί τε αὐτοῖς/

and to help each other/

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION/

8:11 καὶ χρηῖσθαι τοῖς ἀντιδίκους αὐτῶν καὶ τοῖς ἀντικειμένοις αὐτῶν ὥς βούλονται ἐν ἡμέρᾳ μιᾷ ἐν πάσῃ τῇ βασιλείᾳ Ἀρταξέρξου τῇ τρισκαιδεκάτῃ τοῦ δωδεκάτου μηνός/

and to treat their opponents, even those opposing them, as they wish on one day, in all the kingdom of Artaxerxes, on the thirteenth (day) of the twelfth month/²¹⁸

²¹⁶τὰ γράμματα is the direct object referring to the letters (Liddell and Scott 1996: s.v. II). It does not mean the scribes.

²¹⁷The interpretation of χρηῖσθαι as “to make use of” follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. III.3).

²¹⁸The interpretation of χρηῖσθαι as “to treat” follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. III.1).

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION/

8:12 ὅς/ ἔστιν Αδαρ.

which/ is Adar.

TOPIC[MARKED]/OLD.

The old information of this clause previously occurred in 3:13 and is globally prominent.²¹⁹

3.3.26 Discourse section 8:12a-8:17[4]

==[MAJOR BOUNDARY]==

The use of the asyndeton here signals an epistolary section of the book of Esther, similar to the epilogue in 10:3l. Hence, this is a major discourse boundary (JB 1966:650; TEV 1976; NRSV 1991, apocrypha 66; Jobes 2009). The theme of this major discourse section is that the new royal epistle is joyfully received by the Jews.

[Addition E]

ASYNDETON 8:12a ὧν/ ἔστιν ἀντίγραφον τῆς ἐπιστολῆς/

Of such (things)/ is a copy of the letter/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

τὰ ὑπογεγραμμένα.

the things written below.

RIGHT DISLOCATION.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

The asyndeton signals the beginning of an epistolary section.

ASYNDETON 8:12b[1] βασιλεὺς μέγας Ἀρταξέρξης/ τοῖς ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰνδικῆς ἕως  
τῆς Αἰθιοπίας ἑκατὸν εἴκοσι ἑπτὰ σατραπείαις χωρῶν ἄρχουσι/

The great king, Artaxerxes/ to those ruling from Indikei to Ethiopia, 127  
satrap regions/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

<sup>219</sup>Here, the Septuagint does not speak of the cruelty of the Jews. Contrary to Bush (1996:322), Esther does not instruct them to slaughter their enemies, but to “repel those who seek to kill” them (Gordis 1976).

καὶ τοῖς τὰ ἡμέτερα φρονοῦσι.  
to those mindful of our (affairs).

DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

The asyndeton signals the beginning of an epistolary section.

ASYNDETON 8:12b[2] Χαίρειν.

Peace (to you).

EVENT FOCUS.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

The asyndeton signals the beginning of an epistolary section. This could also be seen as a major boundary (NRSV 1991, apocrypha 66; Jobes 2009) within the epistle because this clause contains a marked topic that is a topic shift.

ASYNDETON 8:12c πολλοὶ/ τῇ πλείσῃ τῶν εὐεργετούντων χρηστότητι  
πυκνότερον τιμώμενοι/ μεῖζον ἐφρόνησαν.

Many/ being frequently honored by the utmost kindness of those who are  
kind/ become more conceited.

TOPIC[MARKED]/ MEDIAL EXTRAPOSITION/ COMMENT.

The fronting of the two adverbs, πυκνότερον and μεῖζον, highlights the contra-expectation that the increase of honor leads to the increase of conceit.

8:12c καὶ οὐ μόνον τοὺς ὑποτεταγμένους ἡμῖν/ ζητοῦσι κακοποιεῖν.

Not only those who have been subjected to us/ do they/ seek to harm.

FOCUS[MARKED]/TOPIC/COMMENT.

8:12c τόν τε κόρον οὐ δυνάμενοι φέρειν/

And not being able to bear (their) fill/<sup>220</sup>

EXTRAPOSITION/

<sup>220</sup>The interpretation of κόρον as “one’s fill” follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. A.1). φέρειν might be interpreted as “to pay (tax)” (s.v. IV.5). The problem is that it would have to collocate with κόρον as meaning “cor (a Hebrew dry measure)” (s.v. D).

8:12c καὶ τοῖς ἑαυτῶν εὐεργέταις/ ἐπιχειροῦσι μηχανᾶσθαι/

and (even) against those who are kind to them/ do they/ attempt to contrive/<sup>221</sup>

FOCUS[MARKED]/TOPIC/COMMENT/

The marked focus here (τοῖς ἑαυτῶν εὐεργέταις) is contrastive with the marked focus of the previous sentence (οὐ μόνον τοὺς ὑποτεταγμένους ἡμῖν).<sup>222</sup> These people not only seek to harm the citizens of the kingdom but also their benefactors.

8:12d καὶ τὴν εὐχαριστίαν οὐ μόνον ἐκ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀνταναιροῦντες/

and not only negating thankfulness from mankind/

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION/

8:12d ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς τῶν ἀπειραγάθων κόμποις ἐπαρθέντες.

but also lifting up the boast of those unacquainted with goodness.

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

The fronting of the verbal arguments in the two right extraposition clauses also form a contrast pair. It highlights the perversity of these people in that they promote evil and snuff out goodness in the kingdom.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The asyndeton signals a shift from the mainline to offline.

ASYNDETON 8:12d τοῦ τὰ πάντα κατοπτέοντος ἀεὶ θεοῦ μισοπόνηρον/ ὑπολαμβάνουσιν ἐκφεύξεσθαι δίκην.

God who always observes everything, a hater of wickedness/ they/ assume (they may) be acquitted (from the) penalty (of).<sup>223</sup>

FOCUS[MARKED]/TOPIC/COMMENT.

The marked focus highlights the authority of God.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

²²¹The interpretation of μηχανᾶσθαι as “to contrive (against)” follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. A.I.2).

²²²This contrastive pair may be classified as a counter-presuppositional focus (Dik 1995:39).

²²³The interpretation of δίκην as “penalty” follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. IV.3).

The particle δέ here signals an episodic boundary within this epistle. Contrary to Dorothy (1997:182), there is no evidence to suggest that the presence of πολλάκις or καί operate at the discourse level.

8:12e πολλάκις δὲ καὶ πολλοὺς τῶν ἐπ' ἐξουσίαις τεταγμένων τῶν πιστευθέντων χειρίζειν φίλων τὰ πράγματα παραμυθία μεταιτίους αἱμάτων ἀθῶων καταστήσασα/

Often times, many of those who have been appointed by the authorities, of those entrusted to handle the affairs of (the) beloved (citizens), persuasion has rendered (as) accessories to innocent blood/

EXTRAPOSITION/

This clause is difficult to understand because the order of the syntax is direct object, subject, direct object complement, verb, which is unique in the book of Esther. The translation of Levenson (1997:111), “the encouragement of friends entrusted with the management of affairs has made many of those placed in positions of authority accessories to the shedding of innocent blood”, assumes that the information follows the order:

πολλάκις δὲ καὶ (7) πολλοὺς τῶν ἐπ' ἐξουσίαις τεταγμένων (3) τῶν πιστευθέντων (4) χειρίζειν (2) φίλων (5) τὰ πράγματα (1) παραμυθία (8) μεταιτίους αἱμάτων ἀθῶων (6) καταστήσασα

This translation is attractive because it provides an animate agent (φίλων) for the transitive verb, καταστήσασα.

The present translation assumes the following information order instead:

πολλάκις δὲ καὶ (3) πολλοὺς τῶν ἐπ' ἐξουσίαις τεταγμένων (4) τῶν πιστευθέντων χειρίζειν (6) φίλων (5) τὰ πράγματα (1) παραμυθία (7) μεταιτίους αἱμάτων ἀθῶων (2) καταστήσασα

Contrary to Levenson (1997), neither the semantics or the syntactic structure requires the identity of πολλοὺς τῶν ἐπ' ἐξουσίαις τεταγμένων to be different from the identity of τῶν πιστευθέντων χειρίζειν φίλων τὰ πράγματα παραμυθία. The present interpretation assumes that (a) πολλοὺς τῶν ἐπ' ἐξουσίαις τεταγμένων is in apposition to τῶν πιστευθέντων χειρίζειν φίλων τὰ πράγματα, which implies that (b) φίλων modifies τὰ πράγματα, instead of παραμυθία, which further implies that (c) φίλων is part of the direct object phrase of the

infinitive, and is not part of the subject of παραμυθία, and (d) παραμυθία itself is the subject (and semantic agent) of the participle καταστήσασα. This means that the long direct object noun phrase beginning with πολλούς refers to the officials of the land. φίλων refers to the beloved citizens of the land. And the implied agent of the subject παραμυθία is Aman.

This interpretation reads the structure of the direct object phrase as (a) a direct object phrase (πολλούς τῶν ἐπ' ἐξουσίαις τεταγμένων) followed by (b) an appositional direct object phrase (τῶν πιστευθέντων χειρίζειν φίλων τὰ πράγματα). The appositional direct object phrase itself is divided into (a) a subject (τῶν πιστευθέντων), (b) a verb (χειρίζειν), and (c) a direct object (φίλων τὰ πράγματα).

The difficulty of Levenson (1997:111-4) is that it interprets the subject noun phrase (τῶν πιστευθέντων χειρίζειν φίλων τὰ πράγματα παραμυθία) as consisting of (a) an adjectival verb phrase (τῶν πιστευθέντων χειρίζειν), followed by (b) a genitive modifier of the subject (φίλων), (c) the direct object of the adjectival verb phrase (τὰ πράγματα), and (d) the main subject (παραμυθία). While the flexibility of the Greek word order allows this word order, the fronting of the direct object of the adjectival verb phrase (τὰ πράγματα) before the subject does not signal local prominence and is therefore unexplainable, since τὰ πράγματα is an obligatory verbal argument that only plays a secondary role within the subject noun phrase. Hence, the interpretation of Levenson (1997:111-4) is less preferred.

πολλούς in 8:12e is not a redundancy of πολλοὶ in 8:12c. Rather, they refer to two groups of people. πολλοὶ in 8:12c are the main perpetrators of crime against the state, πολλούς in 8:12e are those who become the co-conspirators through the persuasion of the former.

8:12e περιέβαλε συμφοραῖς ἀνηκέστοις 8:12f τῷ τῆς κακοηθείας ψευδεῖ
 παραλογισμῷ παραλογισαμένων τὴν τῶν ἐπικρατούντων ἀκέραιον
 εὐγνωμοσύνην.

it/ involved (them) in irreparable mishap,²²⁴ by the false deception of the bad
 habits of those cheating the unmixed goodness of those who have power.²²⁵

TOPIC/COMMENT.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

The particle δέ signals an episodic boundary (NRSV 1991, apocrypha 66; Jobes 2009).

<sup>224</sup>The interpretation of περιέβαλε as “to involve” follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. II).

<sup>225</sup>The interpretation of κακοηθείας as “bad habits” follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. II).

8:12g σκοπεῖν δὲ ἔξεστιν οὐ τοσοῦτον ἐκ τῶν παλαιοτέρων/

It is possible to see such a one, not far from the past/<sup>226</sup>

EVENT FOCUS/

8:12g ὧν/ παρεδώκαμεν ἱστοριῶν.

which/ we transmit through history.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The asyndeton signals a shift from mainline to offline.

ASYNDETON 8:12g ὅσα/ ἐστὶν παρὰ πόδας ὑμᾶς/

Such people/ is (right) beside your feet/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

8:12g ἐκζητοῦντας<sup>227</sup> ἀνοσίως συντετελεσμένα τῇ τῶν ἀνάξια<sup>228</sup>  
δυναστευόντων λοιμότητι.

godlessly seeking out what was contributed,<sup>229</sup> by the pestilence of those who  
rule over those undeserving of evil.<sup>230</sup>

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

This is an implicit charge that Aman stole from the state coffers. The prepositional clause, τῇ τῶν ἀνάξια δυναστευόντων λοιμότητι, likens Aman to a tyrant who impose unjust taxation on good citizens.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The change of the topic from ὅσα to the first person plural subject signals a shift from offline back to the mainline. This switch, however, is not coded nominally to avoid making this an episodic boundary.

<sup>226</sup> A dynamic equivalent translation of the clause is “one does not need to look far in the past”.

<sup>227</sup> ἐκζητοῦντας refers to ὅσα. ὅσα should be parsed as a nominative in the main clause because the main clause is stative. But the fact that ὅσα may also be parsed as accusative may provide a possible explanation that ἐκζητοῦντας is in the accusative.

<sup>228</sup> ἀνάξια is an accusative noun that functions as the direct object of the participle δυναστευόντων.

<sup>229</sup> The interpretation of συντετελεσμένα as “that which is contributed” follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. II.2).

<sup>230</sup> The interpretation of ἀνάξια as “undeserving of evil” follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. I.3).

8:12h καὶ προσέχειν εἰς τὰ μετὰ ταῦτα εἰς τὸ τὴν βασιλείαν ἀτάραχον/

And to give heed from now on to an untroubled kingdom/

EXTRAPOSITION/

8:12h τοῖς πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις μετ' εἰρήνης/ παρεξόμεθα/

to all men, with peace/ we/ shall offer/

FOCUS[MARKED]/TOPIC/COMMENT/

The marked focus indicates the sweeping extent of the change that is being proposed.

8:12i χρώμενοι ταῖς μεταβολαῖς/

bringing about change/<sup>231</sup>

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION/

8:12i τὰ δὲ ὑπὸ τὴν ὄψιν ἐρχόμενα διακρίνοντες ἀεὶ μετ' ἐπιεικεστέρας  
ἀπαντήσεως.

always distinguishing what takes place under the surface, with a fair reply.

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

This is not merely a “transition” (Dorothy 1997:183), the particles ὥς and γὰρ signal that this is a shift from the mainline to background, which lasts until the end of 8:12o.

8:12k ὥς γὰρ Αμαν Αμαδαθου Μακεδὼν ταῖς ἀληθείαις ἀλλότριος τοῦ τῶν  
Περσῶν αἵματος/

Aman of Amadathou of Makedon, a stranger to the truth of the blood of the  
Persians/

DISLOCATION/

8:12k καὶ πολὺ διεστηκὼς τῆς ἡμετέρας χρηστότητος/

much at variance from our kindness/

EXTRAPOSITION/

8:12k ἐπιξενωθεὶς ἡμῖν/

<sup>231</sup>The interpretation of χρώμενοι as “to bring about” follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. B.C.II).

entertained as a guest by us/

EXTRAPOSITION/

8:12l ἔτυχεν ἧς ἔχομεν πρὸς πᾶν ἔθνος/

he/ obtained what we have for every nation/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

φιλανθρωπίας ἐπὶ τοσοῦτον/

(which is) great kindness on such a one/

RIGHT DISLOCATION/

8:12l ὥστε ἀναγορεύεσθαι ἡμῶν πατέρα/

such that (he was) proclaimed our fathers/

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION/

The particle ὥστε signals the local prominence of this clause. It is extraordinary for a foreigner to obtain such a high position in the Persian empire.

8:12l καὶ προσκυνούμενον ὑπὸ πάντων/

(who) is bowed down by all/

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION/

8:12l τὸ δεύτερον τοῦ βασιλικοῦ θρόνου πρόσωπον διατελεῖν.

being the second face of the royal throne.<sup>232</sup>

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

8:12m οὐκ ἐνέγκας δὲ τὴν ὑπερηφανίαν/

(But) not bearing with arrogance/

EXTRAPOSITION/

The particle δέ signals a contrast between the exalted status of Aman and the misuse of his power.

8:12m ἐπετήδευσεν τῆς ἀρχῆς στερῆσαι ἡμᾶς καὶ τοῦ πνεύματος

<sup>232</sup>διατελεῖν means “to accomplish” (Liddell and Scott 1996: s.v. I). But, because this does not fit the syntax of the English translation, the present translation states the end result of the accomplishment instead.

8:12η τόν τε ἡμέτερον σωτῆρα καὶ διὰ παντὸς εὐεργέτην Μαρδοχαῖον

καὶ τὴν ἄμεμπτον τῆς βασιλείας κοινωνὸν Εσθηρ

σὺν παντὶ τῷ τούτων ἔθνει

πολυπλόκοις μεθόδων παραλογισμοῖς/

he/ pursued from the beginning to deprive us, even of life,<sup>233</sup>

and our savior and constant benefactor, Mordecai,

and the blameless companion of the king, Esther,

with the entire nation of these ones,

by studied complex deceptions/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

8:12η αἰτησάμενος εἰς ἀπώλειαν.

going after destruction.

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

8:12ο διὰ γὰρ τῶν τρόπων τούτων/

For through these means/

EXTRAPOSITION/

This background section is sustained by the particle γάρ.

8:12ο ὥθήθη/

he/ expected/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

8:12ο λαβὼν ἡμᾶς ἐρήμους/

catching us destitute/

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION/

8:12ο τὴν τῶν Περσῶν ἐπικράτησιν εἰς τοὺς Μακεδόνas μετάξαι.

to transfer the sovereignty of the Persians to the Macedonians.

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<sup>233</sup>The interpretation of πνεύματος as “life” follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. II.4).

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

This is neither just a “transition” (Dorothy 1997:184) nor a discourse boundary (JB 1966:651; NRSV 1991, apocrypha 66; Jobes 2009); rather, this marked topic, which is a temporary shift, signals a minor break.<sup>234</sup>

8:12p[1] ἡμεῖς/ δὲ τοὺς ὑπὸ τοῦ τρισαλιτηρίου παραδεδομένους εἰς  
ἀφανισμόν Ιουδαίους εὐρίσκομεν οὐ κακούργους ὄντας/

We/ find the Jews who have been handed over to destruction by this thrice-  
sinful-one not harmful/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/<sup>235</sup>

The noun phrase, τοὺς ὑπὸ τοῦ τρισαλιτηρίου παραδεδομένους εἰς ἀφανισμόν Ιουδαίους, is fronted before the main verb. Although this fronted noun phrase is not the formal topic, it functions as a topic, since it is the locus of attention of the right extrapositions. The local prominence of the fronted constituent is reinforced by the present tense of the main verb, εὐρίσκομεν, which is also locally prominent.

8:12p[2] δικαιοτάτοις δὲ πολιτευομένους νόμοις/

but observing the most righteous laws/<sup>236</sup>

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION/

The particle δέ signals a contrast between this right extraposition with the preceding main clause.

8:12q[3] ὄντας δὲ υἱοὺς τοῦ ὑψίστου μεγίστου ζῶντος θεοῦ/

being sons of the most high, mighty, living God/

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION/

<sup>234</sup>The topic switches from the third person singular (Aman) of the preceding background section back to the first person plural (the authors of this epistle) of the mainline. But the topic coding conceptualizes this clause not simply as a return to the mainline, but as a minor break before the beginning of the next episode (8:12r).

<sup>235</sup>In 8:12p[1], the fronted object noun phrase, τοὺς ὑπὸ τοῦ τρισαλιτηρίου παραδεδομένους εἰς ἀφανισμόν Ιουδαίους is treated like the clausal topic because it, instead of the topic ἡμεῖς, is qualified by the right extrapositions. This may be a special device that is used when the nontopic is pragmatically more salient than the topic (and when the author does not wish to raise the nontopic to the topic position via passivization).

<sup>236</sup>The holiness of the laws of the Jews is highlighted by the local prominence of δικαιοτάτοις, which is fronted before its governing participle.

The idea of this right extraposition reinforces that of the first right extraposition. The local prominence of this clause is signaled by the particle δέ.

8:12q[4] τοῦ κατευθύνοντος ἡμῖν τε καὶ τοῖς προγόνοις ἡμῶν τὴν βασιλείαν ἐν τῇ καλλίστῃ διαθέσει.

(who)/ guides the kingdom for us and for our ancestors in the most beautiful arrangement.

(TOPIC)/COMMENT.

This subordinate clause provides a comment focus on θεοῦ.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

The particle οὖν signals an episodic boundary (NRSV 1991, apocrypha 66; Jobes 2009) within a reported speech. This is reinforced by (a) the change from the first person plural topic to the second person plural (Dorothy 1997:184), and (b) the marked focus, καλῶς, which begins the clause.

8:12r καλῶς/ οὖν ποιήσετε/

Therefore, well/ you/ shall do/

FOCUS[MARKED]/TOPIC/COMMENT/

μὴ προσχρησάμενοι τοῖς ὑπὸ Αμαν Αμαδαθου ἀποσταλεῖσι γράμμασιν/

not making use (of) the documents sent out by Aman of Amadathou/

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION/

The fronting of ὑπὸ Αμαν Αμαδαθου reminds the reader that Aman is the enemy of the state (8:12k-o). His documents should therefore not be followed.

8:12r διὰ τὸ αὐτὸν τὸν ταῦτα ἐξεργασάμενον πρὸς ταῖς Σούσων πύλαις ἐσταυρῶσθαι σὺν τῇ πανοικίᾳ/

because he who worked out these things was crucified at the gates of Susa with (his) entire household/

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION/

8:12r τὴν καταξίαν τοῦ τὰ πάντα ἐπικρατοῦντος θεοῦ/

(which is)/ (a) highly worthy (sentence) by the God who
prevails over all/

(TOPIC)/COMMENT/

8:12r διὰ τάχους ἀποδόντος αὐτῷ κρίσιν/

(who)/ quickly renders a sentence to him/

(TOPIC)/COMMENT/

The speed of retribution from God is highlighted by the fronting of διὰ τάχους.

8:12s τὸ δὲ ἀντίγραφον τῆς ἐπιστολῆς ταύτης ἐκθέντες ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ μετὰ
παρρησίας.

but, publicly display the copy of this letter in every place with openness.

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

Contrary to NRSV (1991, apocrypha 67) and Jobes (2009), this is not a discourse boundary. The particle δέ indicates that this right extraposition contrasts with the first right extraposition, μὴ προσχρησάμενοι τοῖς ὑπὸ Ἀμαν Ἀμαδαθου ἀποσταλεῖσι γράμμασιν. This is reinforced by the fronting of the direct object, τὸ δὲ ἀντίγραφον τῆς ἐπιστολῆς ταύτης, before the participle. This is an exhortation to put aside the document issued by Aman and to replace it with this decree instead.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

This asyndeton signals the beginning of an epistolary section, which is an episodic boundary.

ASYNDETON 8:12s ἔαν τοὺς Ἰουδαίους χρῆσθαι τοῖς ἑαυτῶν νομίμοις/

If the Jews adhere to their own laws/<sup>237</sup>

EXTRAPOSITION/

καὶ συνεπισχύειν αὐτοῖς/

and uphold them/<sup>238</sup>

<sup>237</sup>The interpretation of χρῆσθαι as “to adhere to” follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. C.III.1).

<sup>238</sup>The interpretation of συνεπισχύειν as “to uphold” is derived from “to join in support” of Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. 1). Here the dative αὐτοῖς is interpreted to refer to νομίμοις of the preceding extraposition. The second extraposition is not the apodosis of the first extraposition. Even though δέ may be used to signal an apodosis in classical Greek (Conybeare and Stock 1995:52), this usage is “rare” in the Septuagint. Moreover, there is no textual variant δέ here.

EXTRAPOSITION/

8:12s ὅπως τοὺς ἐν καιρῷ θλίψεως ἐπιθεμένους αὐτοῖς/ ἀμύνωνται τῇ  
τρισκαιδεκάτῃ τοῦ δωδεκάτου μηνὸς Αἰαρ/ τῇ αὐτῇ ἡμέρᾳ.<sup>239</sup>

those who attack them in a time of trouble/<sup>240</sup> they should repel on the  
thirteenth of the twelfth month, (which is) Adar/ on that day.

TOPIC[MARKED]/ COMMENT/ DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The particle γάρ shifts the offline to background.<sup>241</sup>

8:12t ταύτην/ γὰρ ὁ πάντα δυναστεύων θεὸς ἀντ' ὀλεθρίας τοῦ ἐκλεκτοῦ  
γένους ἐποίησεν αὐτοῖς/

For this/ the God who rules over everything, instead of (the) destruction of  
the chosen race, gave them/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

ταύτην is coidential with εὐφροσύνην. Interpreting ταύτην as the marked topic fits the  
typical information rule where a (right) dislocation provides the explicit referent of the  
topic.<sup>242</sup> The fronting of ὁ πάντα δυναστεύων θεὸς highlights the authority of God.

εὐφροσύνην.

joy.

RIGHT DISLOCATION.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

This is not just a “transition” (Dorothy 1997:185); rather, this is an episodic boundary
(NRSV 1991, apocrypha 67; Jobes 2009) signaled by the particle οὖν.

8:12u[1] καὶ ὑμεῖς/ οὖν ἐν ταῖς ἐπωνύμοις ὑμῶν ἑορταῖς ἐπίσημον ἡμέραν
μετὰ πάσης εὐωχίας ἄγετε.

²³⁹ Αὐτοῖς and the subject of ἀμύνωνται are interpreted to be coidential with τοὺς Ιουδαίους, even though it is possible that the αὐτοῖς here (like the use of αὐτοῖς in the second extraposition) continues to refer to νομίμοις.

²⁴⁰ The interpretation of ἐπιθεμένους as “to attack” follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. B.III.2).

²⁴¹ The γάρ is deleted in *Codex Sinaiticus*, which would make this an offline section instead.

²⁴² If “God” were taken to be the marked topic, ταύτην would then be a marked focus.

And you/ should observe among your named feasts a notable day with all good cheer.²⁴³

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

This episodic boundary coincides with the marked topic (the second person plural independent pronoun) that is a temporary shift. The previous occurrence of the second grammatical person is ποιήσετε of 8:12r, which refers to the Persians (who are the main recipients of this letter). Therefore, this clause is an exhortation for the Persians to add a festival to their calendar. The urgency and importance of this exhortation is signaled by the local prominence of (a) the present tense of the main verb, and (b) the fronting of the entire comment focus.

8:12u[2] ὅπως καὶ νῦν καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα/

(Such that) now and after these (events)/

POINT OF DEPARTURE/

The local prominence of this clause is signaled by the particle ὅπως.

8:12u[3] σωτηρία ἢ ἡμῖν καὶ τοῖς εὐνοοῦσιν Πέρσαις.²⁴⁴

(there should be) safety for us and for those who are favorable to the Persians.

PRESENTATIONAL FOCUS.

The emphasis of the royal decree contained in this epistle is on the Persians rather than on the Jews. It is the Persians who will benefit the most by permitting the Jews to defend themselves.

8:12u[4] τοῖς δὲ ἡμῖν ἐπιβουλεύουσιν/ μνημόσυνον τῆς ἀπωλείας.

To those plotting against us/ (is) a memorial of destruction.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

The particle δέ contrasts the fate of the enemies of Persia (of this clause) with the citizens of Persia (of the preceding clause).

---[MINOR BREAK]---

²⁴³The interpretation of ἄγετε as “to observe” follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. A.IV.3).

²⁴⁴ἡμῖν refers to the Persians.

This is not just a “transition” (Dorothy 1997:186), this is a minor break signaled by the marked topic that is a temporary shift. Contrary to JB (1966:651), NRSV (1991, apocrypha 67), and Jobes (2009), this is not a discourse boundary.

8:12x πάσα δὲ πόλις ἢ χώρα τὸ σύνολον/

Every city or region, in (its) entirety/

TOPIC[MARKED]/

ἥτις/ κατὰ ταῦτα μὴ ποιήσῃ/

which/ does not act according to these (instructions)/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

δόρατι καὶ πυρὶ καταναλωθήσεται μετ’ ὀργῆς/ οὐ μόνον ἀνθρώποις ἄβρατος
ἀλλὰ καὶ θηρίοις καὶ πετεινοῖς.

shall be consumed by spear and fire, with wrath/ not only inaccessible for
men, but also for beasts and birds.

COMMENT[PART1]/ DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT.

The fronting of δόρατι καὶ πυρὶ highlights the terror which awaits those who disobey the instructions of this epistle. The use of the contrastive formula οὐ μόνον... ἀλλὰ is a structural device which emphasizes the extent of destruction for those who disobey.

8:12x εἰς τὸν ἅπαντα χρόνον ἔχθιστος κατασταθήσεται.

For all times, it shall be ordained as hated.²⁴⁵

COMMENT[PART2].

The fronting of (a) the prepositional phrase, εἰς τὸν ἅπαντα χρόνον, and (b) ἔχθιστος further highlight the seriousness of this instruction.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

Contrary to JB (1966:651), NRSV (1991, apocrypha 67), and Jobes (2009), this is not a discourse boundary. This is a minor break signaled by a marked topic which is a temporary shift. The comment focus of this clause is a repeat of 8:12s and is hence globally prominent.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁵The interpretation of κατασταθήσεται as “to ordain” follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. A.II.2).

²⁴⁶The passive verb does not signal a shift to background because its mood is imperative.

8:13 τὰ δὲ ἀντίγραφα/ ἐκτιθέσθωσαν ὀφθαλμοφανῶς ἐν πάσῃ τῇ βασιλείᾳ/

Let the copies/ be displayed prominently throughout the kingdom/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

8:13 ἐτοίμους τε εἶναι πάντας τοὺς Ἰουδαίους εἰς ταύτην τὴν ἡμέραν/²⁴⁷

and all the Jews be ready for that day/

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION/

The fronting of ἐτοίμους highlights the urgency of this instruction.

8:13 πολεμήσαι αὐτῶν τοὺς ὑπεναντίους.

to fight those who are against them.

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

The particle οὖν signals an episodic boundary (NRSV 1991, apocrypha 67; Jobes 2009). The epistle ends and switches to narration.

8:14 οἱ μὲν οὖν ἵππεῖς/ ἐξῆλθον/

Horses/ went out/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

8:14 σπεύδοντες τὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ βασιλέως λεγόμενα ἐπιτελεῖν.

rushing to fulfill the things spoken by the king.

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

The fronting of ὑπὸ τοῦ βασιλέως highlights the authority of the king.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The unmarked topic that is a temporary shift signals a minor break.

8:14 ἐξετέθη δὲ τὸ πρόσταγμα/ καὶ ἐν Σούσοις.

And the command/ was displayed publicly/ even in Susa.

<sup>247</sup>The textual variant of δέ instead of τε in *Codex Alexandrinus* would make the right extraposition contrast with the main clause.

TOPIC/COMMENT/ DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The marked topic that is a temporary shift signals a minor break. Levenson's (1997:8) claim that the "elevation of Haman" (3:1, BHS) and the "elevation of Mordecai" (8:15, BHS) form a chiasmic pair is not reflected in the structure of the Septuagint. Whereas 3:1 (LXX) is a major boundary, 8:15 (LXX) is only a minor boundary.

8:15[1] ὁ δὲ Μαρδοχαῖος/ ἐξῆλθεν/

And Mordecai/ went out/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

8:15[2] ἐστολισμένος τὴν βασιλικὴν στολὴν/

robed with the royal robe/

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION/

8:15[3] καὶ στέφανον ἔχων χρυσοῦν καὶ διάδημα βύσσινον πορφυροῦν.

and having a golden crown and a band of fine purple linen (around the tiara).<sup>248</sup>

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

The fronting of στέφανον highlights the extant of the exaltation of Mordecai.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The marked topic that is a temporary shift signals a minor break.

8:15[4] ἰδόντες δὲ/

Seeing (this)/

EXTRAPOSITION/

8:15[5] οἱ ἐν Σούσοις/ ἐχάρησαν.

those in Susa/ rejoiced.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

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<sup>248</sup>The interpretation of διάδημα as "a band around the tiara" follows Liddell and Scott (1996).

The marked topic that is a temporary shift signals a minor break.<sup>249</sup>

8:16 τοῖς δὲ Ἰουδαίοις/ ἐγένετο φῶς καὶ εὐφροσύνη.

For the Jews/ there was light and joy.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

The marked topic in 8:15[1] (Mordecai), 8:15[5] (those in Susa), and here (the Jews) are contrastive with each other.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The asyndeton signals the shift from mainline to offline.

ASYNDETON 8:17[1] κατὰ πόλιν καὶ χώραν/

In towns and the countryside/

POINT OF DEPARTURE/

8:17[2] οὐ ἄν/ ἐξετέθη τὸ πρόσταγμα/

wherever/ the ordinance was publicly displayed/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

8:17[3] οὐ ἄν/ ἐξετέθη τὸ ἔκθεμα/

wherever/ the edict was publicly displayed/

TOPIC[MARKED]/OLD/

The global prominence of ἐξετέθη τὸ ἔκθεμα highlights the fact that the instruction to publicly display the royal edict was heeded by the citizens of the Persian empire.

8:17[4] χαρὰ καὶ εὐφροσύνη τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις/ κώθων καὶ εὐφροσύνη.

(there was) great joy for the Jews/ a drinking party and a festivity.

PRESENTATIONAL FOCUS/ DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT.

The frequent mention of εὐφροσύνη is old information and is globally prominent.

---

<sup>249</sup>The textual variant *οτι τοις* in *Codex Alexandrinus* would make this a subordinate clause and remove this minor break.

### 3.3.27 Discourse section 8:17[5]-9:4

===[MAJOR BOUNDARY]===

The marked topic that is a topic shift signals a major discourse boundary. The theme of this discourse section is that those who were originally opposed to the Jews become fearful of them. Levenson's (1997:8) claim that "Esther identifies as a Gentile" (2:10-20, BHS) and the "Gentiles identify as Jews" (8:17, BHS) forms a chiastic pair is not reflected in the structure of the Septuagint. Whereas 2:10 (LXX) is not a discourse boundary of any type, 8:17[5] (LXX) is a major boundary.

8:17[5] καὶ πολλοὶ τῶν ἐθνῶν/ περιετέμοντο.

Many of the Gentiles/ circumcized.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

8:17[6] καὶ ιουδαίζον διὰ τὸν φόβον τῶν Ιουδαίων.

And they/ lived like the Jews because of the fear of the Jews.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The particle γάρ shifts the mainline to background. Contrary to Dorothy (1997:197), this is not a "transition", nor is this a discourse boundary (TEV 1976; NRSV 1991, apocrypha 67; Jobes 2009). The gentiles were circumcized and imitated the Jews (8:17[5-6]) after the royal declarations had arrived (9:1).

9:1 ἐν γὰρ τῷ δωδεκάτῳ μηνὶ τρισκαιδεκάτῃ τοῦ μηνός/

For on the twelfth month, on the thirteenth (day) of the month/

POINT OF DEPARTURE/

9:1 ὅς/ ἐστὶν **Αδαρ**/

which is Adar/

TOPIC[MARKED]/OLD/

9:1 παρῆν τὰ γράμματα τὰ γραφέντα ὑπὸ τοῦ βασιλέως.

the letters written by the king/ arrived.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The asyndeton signals the switch from background to offline.

ASYNDETON 9:2 ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ/

On that day/

POINT OF DEPARTURE/

This temporal indicator in a point of departure does not signal a major discourse boundary because it is used to signal a punctiliar verbal aspect.

ἀπώλοντο οἱ ἀντικείμενοι τοῖς Ιουδαίοις.

those opposing the Jews/ were ruined.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The particle γάρ signals a shift from offline to background. Each of the four succeeding sentences begins with the particle γάρ and is background to the sentence preceding it.

The logic (starting from the last γάρ) is that the Jews had no more enemies because (a) the royal decree had come, (b) hence, the fear of Mordecai, the originator of the royal decree, came to them, (c) this made the local authorities honor the Jews, and hence (d) people feared the Jews and no one dared to stand against them.

9:2 οὐδεὶς / γὰρ ἀντέστη/

For no one/ set up opposition/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

9:2 φοβούμενος αὐτούς.

fearing them.

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

9:3 οἱ γὰρ ἄρχοντες τῶν σατραπῶν καὶ οἱ τύραννοι καὶ οἱ βασιλικοὶ  
γραμματεῖς/ ἐτίμων τοὺς Ιουδαίους.

For the rulers of the *satraps* and the sovereign powers and the royal secretaries/ honored the Jews.

TOPIC[MARKED]/ COMMENT.

9:3 ὁ γὰρ φόβος Μαρδοχαίου/ ἐνέκειτο αὐτοῖς.

For the fear of Mordecai/ pressed upon them.

TOPIC[MARKED]/ COMMENT.

9:4 προσέπεσεν γὰρ τὸ πρόσταγμα τοῦ βασιλέως/

For the ordinance of the king/ came suddenly/<sup>250</sup>

TOPIC/COMMENT/

9:4 ὀνομασθῆναι ἐν πάσῃ τῇ βασιλείᾳ.

to be proclaimed in all the kingdom.

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

### 3.3.28 Discourse section 9:6-9:15

===[MAJOR BOUNDARY]===

This major boundary is marked by the locative indicator in a point of departure. The theme of this discourse section is that the Jews in Susa gather on the fourteenth of the month as well as on the thirteenth.

9:6 καὶ ἐν Σούσοις τῇ πόλει/

And in the city of Susa/

POINT OF DEPARTURE/

ἀπέκτειναν οἱ Ιουδαῖοι ἄνδρας πεντακοσίους, 9:7 τὸν τε Φαρσαννεστειν καὶ Δελφῶν καὶ Φασγά 9:8 καὶ Φαρδαθα καὶ Βαρεα καὶ Σαρβαχα 9:9 καὶ Μαρμασιμα καὶ Αρουφαιον καὶ Αρσαιον καὶ Ζαβουθαιθαν/

the Jews/ killed 500 men, and Pharsanestain, and Delphon, and Phasga, and Phardatha, and Barea, and Sarbaxa, and Marmasima, and Arouphaion, and Arsaion, and Zabouthaithan/

<sup>250</sup>The interpretation of προσέπεσεν as “to come suddenly” follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. II.1).

TOPIC/COMMENT/

9:10 τοὺς δέκα υἱοὺς Αμαν Αμαδαθου Βουγαίου/

the ten sons of Aman of Amadathou of Bougaiou/

DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT/

τοῦ ἐχθροῦ τῶν Ιουδαίων.

(who is)/ the enemy of the Jews.

(TOPIC)/COMMENT.

9:10 καὶ διήρπασαν.

And they/ plundered.

TOPIC/ COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

Contrary to NRSV (1991, apocrypha 67), this is not a discourse boundary. The asyndeton signals a shift from the mainline to offline. This is reinforced by the passive voice of the main verb.

ASYNDETON 9:11 ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ/

On that day/

POINT OF DEPARTURE/

This temporal indicator in a point of departure does not signal a major discourse boundary because it is used to signal a punctiliar verbal aspect.

ἐπεδόθη ὁ ἀριθμὸς τῷ βασιλεῖ/ τῶν ἀπολωλότων ἐν Σούσοις.

the number was given to the king/ concerning those who perished in Susa.

EVENT FOCUS/DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

This episodic boundary is signaled by the unmarked topic that is a topic shift.

9:12[1] εἶπεν δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς πρὸς Εσθηρ.

And the king/ said to Esther.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

This is a direct speech frame. The speech proper begins with an asyndeton.

ASYNDETON 9:12[2] ἀπώλεσαν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἐν Σούσοις τῇ πόλει ἄνδρας
πεντακοσίους.

The Jews/ killed 500 men in Susa, the city.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

9:12[3] ἐν δὲ τῇ περιχώρῳ/

(As for) the surrounding countryside/

POINT OF DEPARTURE/

The particle δέ is contrastive with the location of the previous clause.

9:12[4] πῶς/ οἷε ἐχρήσαντο.

what/ do you suppose they seek (from the king)?²⁵¹

FOCUS[MARKED]/EVENT FOCUS.

The interrogative begins with a marked focus. The king is asking Esther to guess what the Jews in the countryside want.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

The particle οὖν signals an episodic boundary within the reported speech.<sup>252</sup>

9:12[5] τί οὖν ἄξιός ἔστι/

What else you ask for/

DISLOCATION/

9:12(6) καὶ ἔσται σοι.

and it shall be yours.

EVENT FOCUS.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

This episodic boundary is signaled by the unmarked topic that is a topic shift.

²⁵¹The interpretation of ἐχρήσαντο as “to seek” follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. C.III.2).

²⁵²τί οὖν is replaced by καὶ τι in *Codex Alexandrinus* and *Codex 93*, which would remove this episodic boundary.

9:13 καὶ εἶπεν Εσθηρ τῷ βασιλεῖ.

And Esther/ said to the king.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

This is a direct speech frame. The speech proper begins with an asyndeton. The coding of the addressee, τῷ βασιλεῖ, is redundant because this is a closed conversation between Esther and the king. This global prominence highlights the authority of the king.

ASYNDETON 9:13 δοθήτω τοῖς Ιουδαίοις χρήσθαι ὡσαύτως τὴν αὔριον/

Let the Jews be furnished the same (privilege) tomorrow/²⁵³

EVENT FOCUS/

9:13 ὥστε τοὺς δέκα υἱοὺς κρεμάσαι Αμαν.

to hang the ten sons of Aman.

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

The sons of Aman are already dead by this time. This is a request to publicly display their corpse. This request (in the right extraposition) is made locally prominent by the particle ὥστε.

9:14 καὶ ἐπέτρεψεν οὕτως γενέσθαι.

And he/ permitted to be thus.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

9:14 καὶ ἐξέθηκε τοῖς Ιουδαίοις τῆς πόλεως τὰ σώματα τῶν υἱῶν Αμαν κρεμάσαι.

And he/ placed the bodies of the sons of Aman outside for the Jews of the city to hang.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

This episodic boundary is signaled by the unmarked topic that is a topic shift.

9:15 καὶ συνήχθησαν οἱ Ιουδαῖοι ἐν Σούσοις τῇ τεσσαρεσκαίδεκάτῃ τοῦ Αδαρ.

<sup>253</sup>The interpretation of χρήσθαι in this context as “to be furnished” follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. C.B.I).

And the Jews/ were gathered in Susa on the fourteenth (day) of (the month) of Adar.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

Even though the king's original question concerned the Jews in the outlying regions, Esther's reply was phrased in such a way that the king's permission could be interpreted as allowing the Jews in Susa to do the same thing on the fourteenth of the month.

9:15 καὶ ἀπέκτειναν ἄνδρας τριακοσίους.

And they/ killed 300 men.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

9:15 καὶ οὐδέν/ διήρπασαν.

And nothing/ they/ plundered.

FOCUS[MARKED]/TOPIC/COMMENT.

The local prominence of the marked focus highlights that the Jews in the city of Susa stopped plundering on the fourteenth day of the month.

### 3.3.29 Discourse section 9:16-9:17

===[MAJOR BOUNDARY]===

This major boundary (NRSV 1991, apocrypha 68; Jobes 2009) is signaled by the marked topic that is not a temporary shift. The theme of this discourse section is that the Jews outside of Susa celebrate on the fourteenth of the month. Dorothy (1997:199) calls this the beginning of “epilog 2” based on theological judgment. However, this is not indicated by the structure of the text itself.

9:16 οἱ δὲ λοιποὶ τῶν Ιουδαίων οἱ ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ/ συνήχθησαν.

And the rest of the Jews in the kingdom/ gathered together.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

9:16 καὶ ἐαυτοῖς/ ἐβοήθουν.

And they assisted each other.<sup>254</sup>

FOCUS[MARKED]/TOPIC/COMMENT.

The local prominence of the marked focus highlights that the Jews were selfless. Not only did they defend themselves and also helped other Jews.

9:16 καὶ ἀνεπαύσαντο ἀπὸ τῶν πολέμιων.

And they/ halted from war.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The particle γάρ signals a shift from the mainline to background.

9:16 Ἀπώλεσαν γὰρ αὐτῶν μυρίους πεντακισχιλίους τῇ τρισκαιδεκάτῃ τοῦ Αδάρ.

For they/ killed 15,000 of them on the thirteenth (day of the month) of Adar.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

9:16 καὶ οὐδὲν/ διήρπασαν.

And nothing/ they/ plundered.

FOCUS[MARKED]/TOPIC/COMMENT.

The local prominence of the marked focus highlights that the Jews outside the city of Susa did not plunder at all.<sup>255</sup>

9:17 καὶ ἀνεπαύσαντο τῇ τεσσαρεσκαίδεκάτῃ τοῦ αὐτοῦ μηνός.

And they/ stopped on the fourteenth (day) of that month.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

Although Dorothy (1997:199) calls the beginning of 9:17 “etiology 1”, this is not indicated by any special textual structure.

9:17 καὶ ἦγον αὐτὴν ἡμέραν ἀναπαύσεως μετὰ χαρᾶς καὶ εὐφροσύνης.

And they/ celebrated that day of rest with exceeding joy.

<sup>254</sup>The interpretation of ἑαυτοῖς in the reciprocal sense follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. III). This traditional interpretation of ἑαυτοῖς as reflexive is also possible.

<sup>255</sup>The Masoretic text also emphasizes “the ethical superiority of the Jews when they refrained from taking plunder” (Fountain 2002:217).

TOPIC/COMMENT.

The recurrence of χαρᾶς καὶ εὐφροσύνης is globally prominent and continues to highlight the exceeding joy of the celebration of the Jews.

### 3.3.30 Discourse section 9:18-10:2

===[MAJOR BOUNDARY]===

This major boundary is signaled by the marked topic that is a topic shift. The theme of this discourse section is the institution of the festival of Purim.

The particle δέ makes a contrast between the Jews in the city of Susa (who celebrated on the fifteenth day of the month) and the Jews in the countryside (who celebrated on the fourteenth) instead.

9:18 οἱ δὲ Ἰουδαῖοι οἱ ἐν Σούσοις τῇ πόλει/ συνήχθησαν/ καὶ τῇ τεσσαρεσκαίδεκάτῃ.

And the Jews in the city Susa/ gathered together/ even on the fourteenth (day).

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT.

9:18 καὶ οὐκ ἀνεπαύσαντο.

And they/ did not stop.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

9:18 Ἦγον δὲ καὶ τὴν πεντεκαίδεκάτῃν μετὰ χαρᾶς καὶ εὐφροσύνης.

And they/ celebrated the fifteenth (of the month) with exceeding joy.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

The particle δέ marks the clause as locally prominent. This highlights the fact that the Jews in the city of Susa celebrate one day later than the Jews in the countryside. The cooccurrence of this local prominence with the global prominence of χαρᾶς καὶ εὐφροσύνης again emphasizes the exceeding joy of the Jews.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

Dorothy's (1997:200) description that this is the beginning of "etiology 2" is vague. More specifically, the particle οὖν signals that this is an episodic boundary, and διὰ τοῦτο is a textual marker which indicates that this clause is locally prominent and constitutes the didactic peak of the book. This is reinforced by the local prominence of the verb in the present tense, ἄγουσιν.

The (a) replacement of διὰ τοῦτο οὖν by δια γαρ τουτο in *Codex Alexandrinus* and the Hexapla, and (b) the deletion of οὖν in *Codex Sinaiticus* would, however, make this a background or an offline section instead.

9:19 διὰ τοῦτο οὖν οἱ Ιουδαῖοι οἱ διεσπαρμένοι ἐν πάσῃ χώρᾳ τῇ ἔξω/
ἄγουσιν τὴν τεσσαρεσκαίδεκάτην τοῦ Ἀδαρ ἡμέραν ἀγαθὴν μετ'
εὐφροσύνης/

So, the Jews who have been dispersed in all the regions outside/ celebrate
the fourteenth (day of the month) of Adar (as) a good day with rejoicing/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

The comment focus, τὴν τεσσαρεσκαίδεκάτην τοῦ Ἀδαρ ἡμέραν ἀγαθὴν μετ' εὐφροσύνης, is (a) locally prominent because it is the content of the didactic prominence, and (b) globally prominent because it is a repeat of previous information.

9:19 ἀποστέλλοντες μερίδας ἕκαστος τῷ πλησίον.

sending portions, each (person) to the one nearby.

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

9:19 οἱ δὲ κατοικοῦντες ἐν ταῖς μητροπόλεσιν/ καὶ τὴν πεντεκαίδεκάτην
τοῦ Ἀδαρ ἡμέραν εὐφροσύνην ἀγαθὴν ἄγουσιν/

Those residing in the capitol city/²⁵⁶ celebrate the fifteenth (day of the
month) of Adar (as) a good day of rejoicing/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

This marked topic does not signal a minor break. Rather, the particle δέ signals the contrast between the marked topic of this sentence with that of the previous sentence. The main verb, ἄγουσιν, is locally prominent because it is in the present tense. Like the comment focus of the previous sentence, here, καὶ τὴν πεντεκαίδεκάτην τοῦ Ἀδαρ ἡμέραν

²⁵⁶The interpretation of μητροπόλεσιν as "capitol city" follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. III).

εὐφροσύνην ἀγαθὴν, is (a) locally prominent because it is fronted before its governing verb, and (b) globally prominent because it is a repeat of previous information. The co-occurrence of both local and global prominence in these two sentences shows that the different dates for the celebration of the festival is a major purpose for the authorship of this book.

9:19 ἔξαποστέλλοντες μερίδας τοῖς πλησίον.

sending portions to those nearby.

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

The unmarked topic that is a topic shift signals an episodic boundary (TEV 1976; NRSV 1991, apocrypha 68; Jobes 2009).

Levenson's (1997:8) claim that the "two banquets of the Persians" (1:1-8, BHS) and the "two banquets of the Jews" (9:20-32, BHS) form a chiasmic pair is not reflected in the Septuagint. In the Septuagint, there is only one (wedding) banquet for the Persians (1:3, LXX). The party for the Gentiles in 1:5 (LXX) is not a wedding banquet but a drinking party. Moreover, as opposed to 1:1 (LXX), which is a major discourse boundary, 9:20 is an episodic boundary instead.

9:20 ἔγραψεν δὲ Μαρδοχαῖος τοὺς λόγους τούτους εἰς βιβλίον.

And Mordecai/ wrote these words in a parchment.<sup>257</sup>

TOPIC/COMMENT.

9:20 καὶ ἐξάπεστειλεν τοῖς Ιουδαίοις/

And he/ sent (it) out to the Jews/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

ὅσοι/ ἦσαν ἐν τῇ Ἀρταξέρξου βασιλείᾳ/ τοῖς ἐγγύς καὶ τοῖς μακράν/

those/ (who) were in the kingdom of Artaxerxes/ to those near and far/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT/

<sup>257</sup>The interpretation of βιβλίον as "parchment" follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. I.2).

9:21 στῆσαι τὰς ἡμέρας ταύτας ἀγαθὰς/

to establish these good days/

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION/

9:21 ἄγειν τε τὴν τεσσαρεσκαίδεκάτην καὶ τὴν πεντεκαίδεκάτην  
τοῦ Ἀδαρ.

and to celebrate both the fourteenth (day) and the fifteenth (day of the  
month) of Adar.

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

The repeat of previous information in the right extrapositions is globally prominent and highlights the importance of the institution of this festival.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The particle γάρ signals a shift from the mainline to background.

9:22 ἐν γὰρ ταύταις ταῖς ἡμέραις/

For on those days/

POINT OF DEPARTURE/

ἀνεπαύσαντο οἱ Ιουδαῖοι ἀπὸ τῶν ἐχθρῶν αὐτῶν.

the Jews/ rested from their enemies.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

9:22 καὶ τὸν μῆνα/ ἐν ᾧ ἐστράφη αὐτοῖς/

And the month/ when it turned about for them/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

ὃς/ ἦν Ἀδαρ/

it/ was Adar/

TOPIC[MARKED]/ OLD/

The global prominence of Ἀδαρ again points to the importance of the time of the festival.

ἀπὸ πένθους εἰς χαρὰν καὶ ἀπὸ ὀδύνης εἰς ἀγαθὴν ἡμέραν/

from mourning to joy, and from pain to a good day/

DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT/

9:22 ἄγειν ὅλον ἀγαθὰς ἡμέρας γάμων καὶ εὐφροσύνης/

to whole-(heartedly) celebrate good days of lavish feasts and joyfulness/<sup>258</sup>

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION/

9:22 ἔξαποστέλλοντας μερίδας τοῖς φίλοις καὶ τοῖς πτωχοῖς.

sending portions to friends and to the poor.

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

The global prominence in the dominant focal element and the two right extrapositions highlight the exceeding joy of the celebration of the Jews, which is the cause for the institution of this celebration afterwards by Mordecai.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The unmarked topic that is a temporary shift signals a minor break. This is also a return from the background to the mainline. Contrary to NRSV (1991, apocrypha 68) and Jobes (2009), this is not an episodic boundary.

9:23 καὶ προσεδέξαντο οἱ Ιουδαῖοι.

And the Jews/ welcomed (it).

TOPIC/COMMENT.

9:23 καθὼς ἔγραψεν αὐτοῖς/

Just as he/ wrote to them/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

The topic shift from οἱ Ιουδαῖοι to Mordecai is not coded nominally in the main clause to avoid making this an episodic boundary.

ὁ Μαρδοχαῖος.

Mordecai.

RIGHT DISLOCATION.

---

<sup>258</sup>γάμων here probably does not literally mean a wedding feast, but metaphorically signify that the lavishness of the feast is like a real wedding feast.

This is an indirect reported speech frame. Contrary to Dorothy (1997:206), this is not a boundary “transition”.

9:24 πῶς Αμαν Αμαδαθου ὁ Μακεδὼν/ ἐπολέμει αὐτούς.

(How) Aman of Amadathou, the Macedonian/ (continually) made war on them.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

Both πῶς (of this clause) and καθὼς (of the next) refer to the content of the indirect reported speech.

9:24 καθὼς ἔθετο ψήφισμα καὶ κληῖρον ἀφανίσαι αὐτούς.

(How) he/ laid (down) a legislative motion and a lot to exterminate them.<sup>259</sup>

TOPIC/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

Contrary to Dorothy (1997:207), this is not just a “transition”. The particle ὥς signals a shift from the mainline to background.

9:25 καὶ ὥς εἰσῆλθεν πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα/

And he/ came in to the king/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

λέγων/

saying/

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION/

This is an indirect speech frame embedded in Mordecai’s indirect speech frame. This embedded indirect speech proper begins with an asyndeton.

ASYNDETON 9:25 κρεμάσαι τὸν Μαρδοχαῖον.

to hang Mordecai.

OLD.

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<sup>259</sup>The interpretation of ἔθετο as “to lay (down)” follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. A.II.5).

This embedded indirect speech is a report of Aman’s original intention in 6:4. The global prominence reminds the reader of the grave danger that was posed to the Jews by Aman.

9:25 ὅσα δὲ ἐπεχείρησεν ἐπάξαι ἐπὶ τοὺς Ἰουδαίους κακά/ ἐπ’ αὐτὸν ἐγένοντο.

But whatever evil he attempted to bring upon the Jews/happened upon him.

TOPIC[MARKED]/ COMMENT.

This is not a “transition” signaled by ὅσα (Dorothy 1997:207); rather, the particle δέ signals this clause as contrastive with the preceding clauses that describe Aman’s diabolical intentions.<sup>260</sup> The local prominence of the fronting of ἐπ’ αὐτὸν highlights the irony that Aman himself was destroyed, even though he originally planned to destroy the Jews.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The passive voice of the verb signals a shift from the mainline to offline.<sup>261</sup>

9:25 καὶ ἐκρεμάσθη αὐτὸς καὶ τὰ τέκνα αὐτοῦ.

And he/ was hung/ he and his children.

TOPIC/COMMENT/DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

To call this a “transition” is over general (Dorothy 1997:207). This is (a) the end of the indirect speech of Mordecai, and (b) the end of the reference to Aman as the third person singular. Also, the topic switches from Mordecai to αἱ ἡμέραι αὐταί. The temporary shift of the unmarked topic signals a minor break. The passive voice of ἐπεκλήθησαν continues the offline of the preceding clause.

Contrary to Dorothy (1997:207), διὰ τοῦτο does not signal a transition. Rather, διὰ τοῦτο signals a didactic peak. The local prominence of a didactic peak may occur in an offline section because the point of view of a narrative teaching point differs from that of the narrative action. A didactic peak therefore need not occur on the mainline action sequence.<sup>262</sup>

<sup>260</sup>The textual variant, τε, in the Hexapla would instead connect this clause with the end of 9:24. The deletion of δὲ in *Codex Alexandrinus* would signify a shift from the mainline to offline.

<sup>261</sup>The καὶ that begins this clause is deleted in *Codex Alexandrinus*, resulting in an asyndeton that would strengthen the offline.

<sup>262</sup>The occurrence of the didactic peak of 9:26 in an offline section shows that the definition of offline is not the lack of prominence (as opposed to the prominence of the mainline). Rather, offline (in the narrative genre) refers to any material (prominent, or otherwise) which is not on the narrative mainline. The local prominence of δοχὴν in 1:3 (which is offline) is another example.

9:26 διὰ τοῦτο ἐπεκλήθησαν αἱ ἡμέραι αὗται Φρουραι/

So, these days/ are called Purim/

TOPIC/COMMENT[PART1]/

The structural coding of this clause as a didactic peak indicates that the origin of the festival of Purim is a central concern.

διὰ τοὺς κλήρους/

because of the lots/

COMMENT[PART2]/

Contrary to Dorothy (1997:208), the διὰ here is not an “anacoluthon”. Rather, it functions as the first of three causal subordinate clauses.<sup>263</sup>

9:26 ὅτι τῇ διαλέκτῳ αὐτῶν/ καλοῦνται Φρουραι/

(which) in their dialect/ are called Purim/

FOCUS[MARKED]/TOPIC/COMMENT/

The local prominence of the third person pronoun, αὐτῶν, refers to the Persians. The use of this Persian word (as opposed to a Hebrew word) for this festival suggests that this festival was officially added to the Persian calendar, even though it commemorates the deliverance of the Jews.

9:26 διὰ τοὺς λόγους τῆς ἐπιστολῆς ταύτης/ καὶ ὅσα πεπόνθασιν/

because of the words of this letter/ even whatsoever they suffered/

COMMENT[PART3]/DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT/

9:26 διὰ ταῦτα/ καὶ ὅσα αὐτοῖς ἐγένετο.

because of these things/ even whatsoever happened to them.

COMMENT[PART4]/DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT.

9:27[1] καὶ ἔστησεν.

---

Similarly, the fact that the locally prominent clause in 8:12l, ὥστε ἀναγορεύεσθαι ἡμῶν πατέρα, occurs in a background section shows that the concept of background does not mean pragmatically less significant, but not chronologically or logically posterior. The local prominence of the two rhetorical questions in 8:6, which is a background section, is another example.

<sup>263</sup>διὰ ταῦτα is not the plural of διὰ τοῦτο and does not signal a didactic peak. Rather, ταῦτα is an anaphoric referent.

And it/<sup>264</sup> stood.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

The unmarked topic that is a topic shift indicates an episodic boundary.

9:27[2] καὶ προσεδέχοντο οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἐφ' ἑαυτοῖς καὶ ἐπὶ τῷ σπέρματι αὐτῶν καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς προστεθειμένοις ἐπ' αὐτῶν.²⁶⁵

And the Jews/ received for themselves and their descendants and those who were added to them.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

9:27[3] οὐδὲ μὴν ἄλλως/ χρήσονται.

No other month/ they/ shall consult.²⁶⁶

FOCUS[MARKED]/TOPIC/COMMENT.

The particle οὐδὲ signals the local prominence of the clause. This is reinforced by the marked focus. It highlights that the celebration of Purim is to be a regulated event.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

The shift of the topic back to αἱ ἡμέραι αὐταὶ signals an episodic boundary.

9:27[4] αἱ δὲ ἡμέραι αὐταὶ/ μνημόσυνον/

These days/ (are) a memorial/

TOPIC/OLD/

This is old information from 8:12u, and constitutes global prominence. The particle δέ marks the clause as locally prominent. The double coding of local and global prominence indicates that the commemoration of the deliverance of the Jews is the purpose of the book.

9:27[5] ἐπιτελούμενον κατὰ γενεὰν καὶ γενεὰν καὶ πόλιν καὶ πατριὰν καὶ χώραν.

(which)/ is to be fulfilled in every generation, city, clan, and region.

<sup>264</sup>Referring to the topic αἱ ἡμέραι αὐταὶ.

<sup>265</sup>This may refer to the foreigners who became Jews.

<sup>266</sup>The interpretation of χρήσονται as “to consult” follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. C.A.III).

(TOPIC)/COMMENT.

9:28 αἱ δὲ ἡμέραι αὐταὶ τῶν Φρουραὶ/ ἀχθήσονται εἰς τὸν ἅπαντα χρόνον.

These days of Purim/ shall be continued into eternity.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

The redundant coding of the marked topic is globally prominent. The particle δέ marks this semantically redundant clause as locally prominent. The double coding of the local and global prominence of “these days” again shows that the time of the festival is central to the book.

9:28 καὶ τὸ μνημόσυνον αὐτῶν/ οὐ μὴ ἐκλίπη ἐκ τῶν γενεῶν.

And their memory/ should not cease from the generations.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

τὸ μνημόσυνον αὐτῶν is a subtopic of αἱ δὲ ἡμέραι αὐταὶ. Its coding as a nominal is therefore redundant and globally prominent. The global prominence of the marked topics in this and the previous clauses highlights them as having central importance in the discourse.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

The unmarked topic that is a topic shift signals an episodic boundary (NRSV 1991, apocrypha 68; Jobes 2009).

9:29 καὶ ἔγραψεν Εσθηρ/

And Esther/ wrote/

TOPIC[PART1]/COMMENT[PART1]/

9:29 ἡ βασίλισσα θυγάτηρ Αμιναδαβ/

the queen, a daughter of Aminadab/

EXTRAPOSITION MIDDLE/

9:29 καὶ Μαρδοχαῖος ὁ Ιουδαῖος/

and Mordecai, the Jew/

TOPIC[PART2]/

Whereas Esther was only introduced as the foster daughter of Mordecai in 2:7[1]. She achieves equal status with Mordecai by the end of the story. The placement of the name of Mordecai after the name of Esther in this sentence indicates an elevation of the status of Esther by the end of the narration. “She no longer treats Mordecai as a father but relates to him as a coworker” (Day 1995:188-99). This shift of balance between two major characters coincides with the didactic peak of this story (Longacre 1996:23-47).

9:29 ὅσα ἐποίησαν τό τε στερέωμα τῆς ἐπιστολῆς τῶν Φρουραι.

whatsoever they did and the foundation of the letter of Purim.

COMMENT[PART2].

9:31 καὶ **Μαρδοχαῖος καὶ Εσθηρ ἡ βασίλισσα**/ ἔστησαν ἑαυτοῖς καθ’
ἑαυτῶν/

And Mordecai and Esther the queen/ supported each other/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

The redundancy of the marked topic noun phrase is globally prominent and highlights that Mordecai and Esther are central characters in the discourse.

9:31 καὶ τότε στήσαντες κατὰ τῆς ὑγιείας αὐτῶν καὶ τὴν βουλὴν αὐτῶν.

standing firm in relation to their health and according to their
determination.²⁶⁷

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

The particle *τοτέ* signals this right extraposition as locally prominent, highlighting the virtues of Mordecai and Esther.²⁶⁸

9:32 καὶ **Εσθηρ**/ λόγῳ ἔστησεν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.²⁶⁹

And Esther/ by word, stands forever.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

Εσθηρ is a subtopic of the compound topic, Mordecai and Esther, and is therefore considered redundant. The global prominence of this marked topic signals that Esther is

²⁶⁷The interpretation of *στήσαντες* as “standing firm” follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. B.II.2).

²⁶⁸Contrary to Bush (1996:319), God did use both Esther and Mordecai as human agents to deliver the Jews from annihilation (Fountain 2002:217).

²⁶⁹The deletion of *καί* in *Codex Sinaiticus*, *Codex Alexandrinus*, and *codex 93* would make this offline instead, which would mean that the subject of *γέγραπται* in 10:2 cannot be Esther.

the central character at this point in the discourse. The local prominence of the fronted λόγῳ highlights the fact that the deeds of Esther are honored in history.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The passive voice of the main verb signals a shift from the mainline to offline.

9:32 καὶ ἐγράφη εἰς μνημόσυνον.

And she/ is written in memorial.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

Contrary to TEV (1976), NRSV (1991, apocrypha 69), Jobes (2009), this is not a discourse boundary. The unmarked topic that is a temporary shift indicates a minor break,²⁷⁰ and the shift of the verbal voice from the passive to the active indicates a return to the mainline.

10:1 ἔγραψεν δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς τέλη ἐπὶ τὴν βασιλείαν τῆς τε γῆς καὶ τῆς θαλάσσης/ 10:2a καὶ τὴν ἰσχὺν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀνδραγαθίαν πλοῦτόν τε καὶ δόξαν τῆς βασιλείας αὐτοῦ.

And the king/ wrote to the magistrates (who were) over the kingdom of both the earth and the sea/ even his might and bravery, both (the) riches and (the) glory of his kingdom.²⁷¹

TOPIC/COMMENT/DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The particle ἰδοὺ normally signals (a) a shift from an interruption in the mainline back to a previous section of the mainline, or (b) a return to a previously introduced character, rather than indicating the continuity of a character in the preceding clause. Therefore, although it is entirely possible to read the third person singular subject of γέγραπται as referring to the king, it is more likely that the subject refers to Esther instead.

10:2b Ἴδου γέγραπται ἐν βιβλίῳ βασιλέων Περσῶν καὶ Μήδων εἰς μνημόσυνον.

²⁷⁰The textual variant, γάρ, in *Codex Alexandrinus* would instead make this a shift from offline to background.

²⁷¹The interpretation of τέλη as “the magistrates” follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. III.2). The interpretation of ἐπὶ as “over” follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. C.I.5).

Behold, she stands written in (the) book of the kings of Persia and Medes in memorial.²⁷²

EVENT FOCUS.

3.3.31 Discourse section 10:3-10:3k

===[MAJOR BOUNDARY]===

The marked topic that is a topic shift signals a major boundary.²⁷³ The theme of this discourse section is Mordecai's explanation that God's faithfulness is the ultimate basis for the festival of Purim.

Levenson's (1997:8) claim that "the greatness of Ahasuerus" (1:1-8, BHS) and "the greatness of the king and Mordecai" (10:1-3, BHS) form a chiasmic pair is not reflected in the structure of the Septuagint. Whereas 1:1 (LXX) is a major boundary, the statement about the greatness of the king is found in 10:1, which is not a discourse boundary. Furthermore, the discussion of the greatness of Mordecai is separated from that of the king by the major boundary at 10:3. One could claim, however, that there is a parallelism between the greatness of the king at the beginning of the narrative (1:1) and the greatness of Mordecai by the end of the narrative (10:3).

10:3 ὁ δὲ Μαρδοχαῖος/ διεδέχετο τὸν βασιλέα Ἀρταξέρξην.²⁷⁴

And Mordecai/ succeeded king Artaxerxes.²⁷⁵

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

10:3 καὶ μέγας/ ἦν ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ/

And great/ he/ was in the kingdom/

FOCUS[MARKED]/TOPIC/COMMENT/

The local prominence of the marked focus highlights the extant of Mordecai's greatness.

10:3 καὶ δεδοξασμένος ὑπὸ τῶν Ιουδαίων/

²⁷²The interpretation of βιβλίῳ as "a book" follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. II.1).

²⁷³There is some uncertainty about this discourse boundary because *Codex Sinaiticus* has the textual variant τε, and *Codex Alexandrinus* has the textual variant γαρ.

²⁷⁴It has been reported that "intersentential conjunctions follow a markedness hierarchy" (Westfall 2005:66). For example, the unmarked particle for adversative is δέ, whereas the marked adversative particles follow the scale of ἀλλά, πλὴν, μὲν οὖν, μενοῦν, μέντοι, τουναντίον. This study has not been able to confirm this claim.

²⁷⁵The interpretation of διεδέχετο as "to succeed" follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. I.2).

magnified by the Jews/

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION/

10:3 καὶ φιλούμενος.

and loved.

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The asyndeton signals a shift from the mainline to offline.

ASYNDETON 10:3 Διηγείτο τὴν ἀγωγὴν παντὶ τῷ ἔθνει αὐτοῦ.

He / described in full the guiding (of God) to all his ethnic race.²⁷⁶

TOPIC/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The redundant nominal coding of Mordecai signals a shift from the offline back to the mainline. Contrary to JB (1966:653), TEV (1976), NRSV (1991, apocrypha 69), Jobes (2009), this is not a discourse boundary.

[Addition F]

10:3a καὶ εἶπεν Μαρδοχαῖος.

And Mordecai/ said.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

This is a direct speech frame. The speech proper begins with an asyndeton.

ASYNDETON 10:3a παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ/ ἐγένετο ταῦτα.

From God/ these things are.

COMMENT'/TOPIC.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The particle γάρ (both in this sentence and the next) signals a shift from the mainline to background.²⁷⁷ Contrary to Dorothy (1997:217), the function of γάρ of this sentence is not

²⁷⁶The interpretation of ἀγωγὴν as “guiding” follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. II.2). The agency of the guidance is presumably God.

causal because the remembrance of a dream does not result in a conclusion that these things are from God.²⁷⁸

10:3b ἐμνήσθην γὰρ περὶ τοῦ ἐνυπνίου/

I/ recall concerning the dream/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

10:3b οὐ/ εἶδον/ περὶ τῶν λόγων τούτων.

that/ I saw/ concerning these words.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT.

10:3b οὐδὲ γὰρ παρήλθεν ἀπ' αὐτῶν λόγος.

Nothing passed by from a word of them.

EVENT FOCUS.

The particle οὐδὲ signals the local prominence of the clause.²⁷⁹

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

The asyndeton signals an episodic boundary within a direct speech.

ASYNDETON 10:3c ἡ μικρὰ πηγή ἣ ἐγένετο ποταμός/

The little spring which became a river/

DISLOCATION/

καὶ ἦν φῶς καὶ ἥλιος καὶ ὕδωρ πολὺ.

it/ was a light, a sun, a might water.<sup>280</sup>

TOPIC/COMMENT.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

The asyndeton signals an episodic boundary within a direct speech.

ASYNDETON 10:3c Ἐσθηρ/ ἐστὶν ὁ ποταμός/

Esther/ is the river/

²⁷⁷The γὰρ of this clause is deleted in *Codex Alexandrinus* and the Hexapla, which would make this an offline instead.

²⁷⁸The γάρ of the next sentence, however, could be interpreted in a causal sense.

²⁷⁹οὐδέ is replaced by οὐ in *Codex Sinaiticus*, in which case the clause would not be locally prominent.

²⁸⁰The interpretation of πολὺ as “mighty” follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. I.2).

FOCUS[MARKED]/ PRESUPPOSITION/

10:3c ἦν/ ἐγάμησεν ὁ βασιλεὺς καὶ ἐποίησεν βασίλισσαν.

whom/ the king married and made queen.²⁸¹

TOPIC[MARKED]/OLD.

The global prominence of the old information highlights the significance of Esther being chosen as queen. On the human level, this is the precondition that empowers her to deliver the Jews from genocide.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The marked topic that is a temporary topic shift signals a minor break.

10:3d οἱ δὲ δύο δράκοντες/ ἐγὼ εἰμι καὶ Αμαν/

And the two dragons/ (are) I and Aman/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

The (a) present tense of εἰμι, and (b) the fronting of the first person pronoun before the copula highlights the relative importance of Mordecai over Aman in the book.

10:3e τὰ δὲ ἔθνη τὰ ἐπισυναχθέντα ἀπολέσαι τὸ ὄνομα τῶν Ιουδαίων/

(namely,) the nations gathered to wipe out the name of the Jews/

RIGHT DISLOCATION/

The particle δέ in this right dislocation is contrastive with the next right dislocation, which is also signaled by δέ.

10:3f[1] τὸ δὲ ἔθνος τὸ ἐμόν/

and my nation/

RIGHT DISLOCATION/

10:3f[2] οὗτός/ ἐστὶν Ἰσραηλ/

that/ is Israel/

TOPIC[MARKED]/OLD/

²⁸¹ Ἐποίησεν is interpreted here as verbally transitive.

The global prominence of the old information, Ἰσραηλ, highlights the fact that the Jews are preserved as a race at the end of these affairs.

10:3f[3] οἱ βοήσαντες πρὸς τὸν θεὸν καὶ σωθέντες.

those who cried out to God and were saved.

(TOPIC)/COMMENT.

~~~[EPISODIC BOUNDARY]~~~

The unmarked topic that is a topic shift signals an episodic boundary.

10:3f[4] καὶ ἔσωσεν κύριος τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ.

And the Lord/ saved his people.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

10:3f[5] καὶ ἐρρύσατο **κύριος** ἡμᾶς ἐκ πάντων τῶν κακῶν τούτων.

And the Lord/ delivered us from all these evil.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

The nominal coding in this clause (κύριος) and in the next clause (ὁ θεός) is redundant and highlights God as the agent of the deliverance of the Jews.

10:3f[6] καὶ ἐποίησεν **ὁ θεός** τὰ σημεῖα καὶ τὰ τέρατα τὰ μεγάλα/

And God/ made signs and great wonders/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

10:3f[7] ἃ/ οὐ γέγονεν ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν.

which/ had not happened in the nations.

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT.

10:3g διὰ τοῦτο ἐποίησεν κλήρους δύο/ ἓνα τῷ λαῷ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἓνα πᾶσι τοῖς ἔθνεσιν.

That is, he/ made two inheritances/ one for the people of God and one for all the nations.<sup>282</sup>

<sup>282</sup>The Hebrew root for “lot”, גורל, is found 67 times in the BHS. It is translated as κλήρος 52 times in the Septuagint (Lev 16:8, 9, 10; Num 26:55, 56; 33:54; 34:13; 36:2, 3; Jos 14:2; 17:14, 17; 18:6, 8, 10, 11; 19:1, 10, 17, 24, 32, 40, 51; 21:4, 10; Jdg 1:3; 20:9; 1 Chr 6:39, 46, 48, 50; 24:5, 7, 31; 25:8, 9; 26:13, 14; Neh 10:35; 11:1; Est 3:7; 9:24; Prov 1:14; 18:18; Isa 34:17; 57:6; Jer 13:25; Ezek 24:6; Mic 2:5; Joel 4:3; Obad 1:11; Jon 1:7; Nah 3:10). The

TOPIC/COMMENT/ DOMINANT FOCAL ELEMENT.

Contrary to JB (1966:653), this is not a discourse boundary. Nor is this a “transition” (Dorothy 1997:218), since the topic does not change here. διὰ τοῦτο signals a didactic peak. God is the one who controls the destiny of peoples. This is the ultimate reason behind the festival of Purim.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The unmarked topic that is a temporary shift signals a minor break.<sup>283</sup>

10:3h[1] καὶ ἦλθον οἱ δύο κληροί/

And the two destinies/ came/

TOPIC/COMMENT/

10:3h[2] οὗτοι/ εἰς ὥραν καὶ καιρὸν καὶ εἰς ἡμέραν κρίσεως ἐνώπιον  
τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς ἔθνεσιν.

these/ (were) for an hour, a critical time, and for a day of judgment  
before God, in all the nations.<sup>284</sup>

TOPIC/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

The unmarked topic is a resumption of the topic before the minor break.

10:3i καὶ ἐμνήσθη ὁ θεὸς τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ.

And God/ remembered his people.

TOPIC/COMMENT.

10:3i καὶ ἐδικαίωσεν τὴν κληρονομίαν αὐτοῦ.

And he/ vindicated his inheritance.<sup>285</sup>

TOPIC/COMMENT.

---[MINOR BREAK]---

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predominant meaning of κληρος, like the Hebrew, means “to cast a lot” (such as Mic 2:5; Prov 18:18, LXX). But κληρος may also mean (a) an “inheritance” (Isa 34:17; 57:6), or (b) “destiny” (Jer 13:25). The current translation accords with of Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. II).

<sup>283</sup>Codex Vaticanus does not contain 10:3h.

<sup>284</sup>The interpretation of εἰς as denoting purpose follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. V.2).

<sup>285</sup>The interpretation of ἐδικαίωσεν as “to vindicate” follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. III.2).

The unmarked topic that is a temporary shift signals a minor break. Contrary to Jobes (2009), this is not a discourse boundary.

10:3k καὶ ἔσονται αὐτοῖς αἱ ἡμέραι αὗται ἐν μηνὶ Ἀδαρ τῇ τεσσαρεσκαίδεκάτῃ καὶ τῇ πεντεκαίδεκάτῃ τοῦ αὐτοῦ μηνὸς μετὰ συναγωγῆς καὶ χαρᾶς καὶ εὐφροσύνης ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ κατὰ γενεὰς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ἐν τῷ λαῷ αὐτοῦ Ἰσραὴλ.

And these days/ shall be for them in the month of Adar, on the fourteenth (day) and the fifteenth (day) of the month, with assembly and exceeding joy before God, for each generation, forever, among his people, Israel.

TOPIC/OLD.

The global prominence of the old information of this clause refers to the didactic peaks in 9:19 and 9:26. This is (a) the end of the narration, and (b) the final conclusion of the book.

### 3.3.32 Discourse section 10:3l

===[MAJOR BOUNDARY]===

The asyndeton signals an epistolary section (JB 1966:653; TEV 1976; NRSV 1991, apocrypha 69; Jobes 2009) in the book of Esther. This is an epilogue.

ASYNDETON 10:3l ἔτους τετάρτου βασιλεύοντος Πτολεμαίου καὶ Κλεοπάτρας/

(During) the fourth year of the reign of Ptolemy and Kleopatra/

POINT OF DEPARTURE/

εἰσήνεγκεν Δωσίθεος/

Dositheos/ brought in/

TOPIC[PART1]/COMMENT[PART1]/

10:3l ὃς/ ἔφη/

the one/ (who) said/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

This is an indirect speech frame. The indirect speech proper begins with an asyndeton.

ASYNDETON 10:31 εἶναι ἱερεὺς καὶ Λευίτης/

(he was) a priest and a Levite/

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION/

10:31 καὶ Πτολεμαῖος ὁ υἱὸς αὐτοῦ/ τὴν προκειμένην ἐπιστολὴν τῶν  
Φρουρῶν/

and Ptolemy his son/ the preceding letter of Purim/<sup>286</sup>

TOPIC[PART2]/COMMENT[PART2]/

10:31 ἣν/ ἔφασαν/

which/ they said/

TOPIC[MARKED]/COMMENT/

This is an indirect speech frame. The indirect speech proper begins with an asyndeton.

ASYNDETON 10:31 εἶναι καὶ ἐρμηνευκέναι Λυσίμαχον Πτολεμαίου  
τῶν ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ.

Lusimaxon of Ptolemy, of those in Jerusalem, had translated.

RIGHT EXTRAPOSITION.

### 3.4 Conclusion

This chapter presented the details of the information structure of the book of Esther in the Septuagint. A literal clause-by-clause translation into English, which is substantially different from existing English translations, is provided. The text is broken down into mainline and non-mainline sections. The significance of (a) marked clausal information, and (b) global, episodic, and didactic prominence are identified and explained. Furthermore, the locations of the discourse boundaries are provided based on the theoretical criteria addressed in chapter two. The findings of this chapter enable the researcher to answer the two main research questions raised in chapter one.

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<sup>286</sup>The interpretation of προκειμένην as “preceding” follows Liddell and Scott (1996: s.v. III).

## Chapter 4

### Conclusions

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter is a conclusion tied to the problems, objectives, and the hypotheses of the study. It answers the question of (a) what are the discourse boundaries of the book of Esther in the Septuagint, and (b) what is the authorial intention in this study corpus.

This concluding chapter will also discuss (a) the relationships between the various discourse sections, and (b) the advantages of understanding scripture from the perspective of functional linguistics in general, and that of information structure in particular.

#### 4.2 The major discourse boundaries

In this study corpus, it is found that discourse boundaries operate hierarchically. At the top of the hierarchy are the major discourse boundaries. Subsumed within it are episodic boundaries. At the lowest level are minor breaks.

##### 4.2.1 *Summary of major boundary criteria*

To recap §2.7.1.1, the structural features of major boundaries are as follows:<sup>287</sup>

- (1) a marked topic that is a topic shift;
- (2) a temporal or a locative indicator that occurs in a point of departure or a left extraposition; and
- (3) one of the functional usages of the asyndeton.

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<sup>287</sup>The structural features of episodic boundaries and minor breaks are not listed here because they do not bear on the discussion.

#### 4.2.2 Presentation of the major discourse boundaries

Based on the criteria of information structure, this study has determined that the book of Esther in the Septuagint is divided into 32 major discourse sections. These are given in Table 3 below.

Table 3: The major discourse sections of the book of Esther in the Septuagint

| Verses         | Theme                                                                                           | Textual signal                                                                                                  |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1:1a-1:1h      | Mordecai's dream of the struggle between two dragons                                            | ἔτους δευτέρου βασιλεύοντος Ἀρταξέρξου τοῦ μεγάλου τῇ μιᾷ τοῦ Νισα                                              |
| 1:1i-1:1r      | The initial presentation of the two dragons                                                     | ἀπὸ τῆς βοῆς αὐτῶν                                                                                              |
| 1:1-1:9        | The great banquet given by Artaxerxes, and the drinking party for the Gentiles                  | ἐγένετο μετὰ τοὺς λόγους τούτους ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις Ἀρταξέρξου                                                     |
| 1:10-1:22      | The king's punishment of queen Astin because of her refusal to attend the king's drinking party | ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἑβδόμῃ                                                                                           |
| 2:1-2:4        | The king decides to find a new queen                                                            | μετὰ τοὺς λόγους τούτους                                                                                        |
| 2:5-2:11       | Esther, the foster daughter of Mordecai, enters the harem                                       | ἄνθρωπος                                                                                                        |
| 2:12-2:14      | The time when a girl in the harem is ready to go to see the king                                | οὗτος                                                                                                           |
| 2:15-2:19      | The selection of Esther as the queen                                                            | ἐν τῷ ἀναπληροῦσθαι τὸν χρόνον Εσθηρ τῆς θυγατρὸς Αμιναδαβ ἀδελφοῦ πατρὸς Μαρδοχαίου εἰσελθεῖν πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα |
| 2:20-2:22      | Esther (and Mordecai) thwarts the plot of two eunuchs to assassinate the king                   | ἡ Εσθηρ                                                                                                         |
| 2:23           | The king records the deeds of Mordecai in the imperial records                                  | ὁ βασιλεὺς                                                                                                      |
| 3:1-3:13a[2]   | The king allows Aman to exterminate the Jews                                                    | μετὰ ταῦτα                                                                                                      |
| 3:13a[3]-3:13g | The content of the royal epistle                                                                | τάδε                                                                                                            |
| 3:14-3:15      | The reception of this decree                                                                    | τὰ ἀντίγραφα τῶν ἐπιστολῶν                                                                                      |
| 4:1-4:2        | Mordecai's mourning                                                                             | ὁ Μαρδοχαῖος                                                                                                    |
| 4:3-4:5        | Esther wants to know the cause of Mordecai's mourning                                           | ἐν πάσῃ χώρᾳ                                                                                                    |
| 4:7-4:16       | Mordecai convinces Esther to see the king for a repeal of the decree                            | ὁ Μαρδοχαῖος                                                                                                    |
| 4:17-          | Mordecai and Israel entreat the Lord for deliverance                                            | Μαρδοχαῖος                                                                                                      |

|                 |                                                                                                |                                                           |
|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| 4:17i           |                                                                                                |                                                           |
| 4:17k-4:17z     | Esther makes her plea before the Lord                                                          | Εσθηρ ἡ βασίλισσα                                         |
| 5:1-5:1b        | Esther prepares herself to see the king                                                        | ἐγενήθη ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ                              |
| 5:1c-5:2a       | The king grants amnesty to Esther                                                              | αὐτὸς                                                     |
| 5:2b-5:5        | Esther persuades the king and Aman to attend her first banquet                                 | ἐν τῷ διαλέγεσθαι αὐτήν                                   |
| 5:6-6:3         | God causes the king to remember the deeds of Mordecai                                          | ἐν τῷ πότῳ                                                |
| 6:4-6:12[1]     | Mordecai is honored instead of Aman                                                            | ἐν τῷ πυνθάνεσθαι τὸν βασιλέα περὶ τῆς εὐνοίας Μαρδοχαίου |
| 6:12[2]-7:10[2] | Aman is executed by the king                                                                   | Ἀμαν                                                      |
| 7:10[3]-8:12    | The king reverses the edict of Aman                                                            | ὁ βασιλεὺς                                                |
| 8:12a-8:17[4]   | The new royal epistle is joyfully received by the Jews                                         | ASYNDETON                                                 |
| 8:17[5]-9:4     | Those who were originally opposed to the Jews become fearful of them                           | πολλοὶ τῶν ἐθνῶν                                          |
| 9:6-9:15        | The Jews in Susa gather on the fourteenth of the month as well as on the thirteenth            | ἐν Σούσοις τῇ πόλει                                       |
| 9:16-9:17       | The Jews outside of Susa celebrate on the fourteenth of the month                              | οἱ λοιποὶ τῶν Ιουδαίων οἱ ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ                  |
| 9:18-10:2       | The institution of the festival of Purim                                                       | οἱ Ιουδαῖοι οἱ ἐν Σούσοις τῇ πόλει                        |
| 10:3-10:3k      | Mordecai's explanation that God's faithfulness is the ultimate basis for the festival of Purim | ὁ Μαρδοχαῖος                                              |
| 10:3l           | Epilogue                                                                                       | ASYNDETON                                                 |

This claim lies in the locations of the major discourse boundaries. In contrast to the typical theological/exegetical study, the theme (or the overall idea) of each major discourse section is not within the scope of this study because a proper study of the thematic content of each discourse section from the linguistics point of view requires a thorough analysis of the semantic field and the hierarchical relationships between these semantic fields.<sup>288</sup> The

<sup>288</sup>To do this properly probably requires coding the semantic function of every word in the study corpus, inputting them into the computer and analyzing various statistical correlations between the individual words and phrases in order to identify significant patterns. This would be the first step. This process needs to be performed iteratively in successively higher levels of phrasal aggregation. The result (the output) of the highest level would then be the theme of the discourse section.

reason a theme is listed in the table above is only to enable the reader to locate the material more easily and to facilitate the discussion.

### 4.3 The relationship between the major discourse sections

Whereas structural features uniquely identify the location of major discourse boundaries, it is harder to determine the relationships between the discourse sections.

#### 4.3.1 *The arrangement of the discourse sections as a plot*

It is a common understanding that the book of Esther is arranged chiastically (Radday 1973:9; Berg 1979:106-113; Baldwin 1984:29-32; Breneman 1993:287-9; Roop 2002:168-9; Allen and Laniak 2003:171). Since chiasm sometimes connotes a strong claim as to the degree of parallelism between the two parts of a text, this claim has been modified (and softened) by Levenson (1997:8-9), who defines chiasm as similarity of content between the two parts of a bipartite structure in the study corpus.

It is true that there is a significant reversal of events in the narrative, which leads to the notion that events preceding the reversal and those that come after find correspondence with each other. What is not clear is the claim that the matching of these bipartite pairs is intentional encoded as such by the author.

This study confutes this last notion for the book of Esther in the Septuagint. Every claim from the previous literature to this effect has been analyzed, and it has been found that the so called bipartite structures do not correspond with each other in terms of their structural features (which was discussed extensively in §3.3). This shows that authorial intention in this regard may exist at the semantic level, but does not exist at the structural level.<sup>289</sup>

Hence, any correlate claim of the chiastic theory (§1.2.3.1) that the book pivots around 6:1 (BHS), where God intervenes on behalf of the Jews by causing the king to suffer insomnia cannot be proven for the study corpus.

This study does show, however, that there is a reversal in the narrative. This is intentionally coded as such by the author through the simultaneous use of local and global prominence. This takes place at the beginning of the king's speech with Aman in 6:6[1],

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<sup>289</sup>Inclusio, one form of chiasm, is however used as a micro structural device in (a) 4:17b[4] (paired with 4:17c), and (b) 4:17l (paired with 4:17t).

which is signaled by the local prominence of the clause and the global prominence of the redundant nominal coding of ὁ βασιλεὺς.<sup>290</sup> The reversal of Aman's fortune (and that of Mordecai) takes place when Aman is about to ask the king to hang Mordecai.<sup>291</sup> This evidence supports the theory of Murphy (1981:153) and Bush (1996:300) that the organization of the book of Esther (in the Septuagint) is a "problem based plot" that involves a "resolution".<sup>292</sup>

Therefore, the plot of the study corpus as indicated by the structure of the text is as follows:

- (1) instigating incident in 1:17;
- (2) narrative reversal starting in 6:6[1]; and
- (3) narrative and didactic peak (as discussed in §4.4).

#### **4.3.2 The unity of the study corpus**

The unity of the study corpus is an issue raised in §1.4.4.1. There is no doubt that there is a certain level of redaction as reflected in the Septuagint text which we have today. This has been claimed at a lexicographic and syntactic level by Moore (1971, preface LXIII-LXIV; 1973:382-3; 1977:160) and Martin (1975:65). The existence of the epilogue in 10:3l also demonstrates this point.

The analysis of the structural features, however, does not permit the researcher to separate the underlying layers of redaction. It is not possible, for example, to say that the use of the asyndeton as a major discourse boundary indicator is a redactive feature that automatically correlates with the commencement of a form pericope. Though the asyndeton is found (a) at the commencement of the epilogue, and (b) at the beginning of Addition E (8:12a), it should at the same time be noted that 10:3l (the epilogue) is in the middle (and not the beginning) of Addition F,<sup>293</sup> and none of the other beginnings of the Additions employ the use of the asyndeton.

<sup>290</sup>This coding is again used in 6:7, 9[8], 11 to sustain the reversal in this dialogue.

<sup>291</sup>6:1, on the other hand, is not structurally coded.

<sup>292</sup>Similarly, the cooccurrence of local and global prominence in 1:17, ὡς οὖν ἀντεῖπεν τῷ βασιλεῖ Ἀρταξέρξης, makes the refusal of queen Astin to comply with the king's wishes an instigating incident in the narrative.

<sup>293</sup>Unless one wants to hypothesize that Addition F is an amalgamation of Addition F proper and Addition F' (the epilogue).

As it stands, the present study corpus is coherent and legitimately stands as a text for discourse study. Omanson and Noss (1997:6) and Dorothy (1997:44-51, 215) also implicitly assume this point (§1.2.3.1 and §1.2.3.2).

The apparent doublet of the introduction of Mordecai does not detract from this claim. It is not a hole (or a mistake) in the final redaction. Rather, it serves a specific discourse purpose. The first introduction of Mordecai in 1:1a-1:1h is the formal introduction. Whereas almost the same information is provided a second time in 2:5-11, Mordecai is not really being introduced again. Rather, his biographical data is repeated to remind the reader of who he is, and to set the stage for the introduction of Esther, his adopted daughter (2:7). Here, the information about him is only important because it anchors the textual identity of Esther (§3.3.6).

#### **4.4 The purpose**

There has been diverse claims concerning the purpose of the study corpus (see §1.2.2). This has led to the research question of what really is/are the purpose(s) of the study corpus, and how may it be ascertained. Contrary to the reader-centered approach of communication (§1.4.4.3), which brushes this question aside as irrelevant, the text-centered approach has been adopted in this study. This approach assumes that the original authorial intention is coded in the text, and the structural coding of the text itself tells the careful reader of what the original authorial intention actually is. The micro-analysis of the study corpus (§3.3) demonstrates the validity of this assumption and shows that there is a main purpose in the study corpus (contrary to Fox 2001:141-152).

##### ***4.4.1 The festival of Purim/God***

The information structure clearly indicates that the teaching point of the book of Esther in the Septuagint concerns the dates of the festival of Purim.

Firstly,

- (a) the first didactic peak (in 9:19) deals with the date when Jews outside the city of Susa celebrate the Purim;<sup>294</sup> and

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<sup>294</sup>Namely, on the fourteenth of the month.

- (b) the second didactic peak (in 9:26) points to the importance of ἐπεκλήθησαν αἱ ἡμέραι αὗται φρουραι, where “these days are called Purim”.

Secondly, the cooccurrence of global and local prominence occurs in:

- (a) 9:18 and 9:19, which deal with the dates when Jews inside and outside the city Susa celebrate the Purim; and
- (b) 9:27[4]; 9:28, and refer to αἱ ἡμέραι αὗται.<sup>295</sup>

Thirdly, the final clause of the narration proper is globally prominent and refers yet again to αἱ ἡμέραι αὗται and the dates when Jews inside and outside the city Susa are to celebrate the Purim.

Secondarily, the book of Esther in the Septuagint explains that God is instrumental in ordaining the destiny of peoples. This is indicated by the third didactic peak in 10:3g. Therefore, the festival of Purim is also a festival of/from God.

In one sense, this is nothing new, since many works in the past (§1.2.2) have made the same claim for the Hebrew text of Esther. However, the conclusion of this study is unique because:

- (1) it is one of the few studies (§1.2.3.2) that explicitly focus on the Septuagint text (or any one of the Greek texts) making this claim; and
- (2) whereas all previous studies justified their conclusions based on theological or semantic grounds, this is the only study that is able to show the methods from which this conclusion is derived and, hence, how it may be verified. The accuracy of this result removes doubt as to the original authorial intention.

#### **4.4.2 Other views**

This conclusion is in opposition to some of the views detailed in §1.2.2. While Esther, Aman, and Mordecai are all important (main) characters, the structural coding of the text does not make any indication that they, in and of themselves, are to be understood as being the purpose of the text (contrary to Humphreys 1973:214-5; NJB 1985:624; Beal 1997, preface x).

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<sup>295</sup>The manner with which Purim is to be celebrated, as one of exceeding joy, is also highlighted by the concurrent coding of local and global prominence (9:18, 19).

The claim by Laniak (1998:7-34) and Klein (2003:116) that the book of Esther concerns honor and shame is based solely on theological arguments. And their conclusion is not attested by the structure of the study corpus. Similarly, the issue of whether the study corpus may conform to the form of salvation history, found in other portions of scripture, belongs better to form criticism, or canonical criticism, than to the investigation of the purpose of a book in and of itself (Larkin 1996:92; Butting 1999:242).

The study corpus does refer to the communal identity of the Jewish people as one of its themes. But whether the book was written (a) to reinforce the communal identity of the Jewish diaspora (Bickerman 1944:360-2; Fuerst 1975:32; Craghan 1982:9-10; Clines 1984a:262-3; Boyd-Taylor 1997:103; de Troyer 2000:399; Bechtel 2002:10-14), or (b) to make the Jewish diaspora wiser (Talmon 1963:29; von Herrmann 2004:43), can only be a subject of speculation, since the structural coding of the book itself does not point to wisdom or communality as the purpose of the book.

Dorothy's (1997:329) conclusion suffers in its eclecticism. Firstly, his suggestion that the book is a rescue novella at the lowest level is true only for the form of the narrative portion of the text.<sup>296</sup> Secondly, while God's rescue of his people is indicated by the third didactic peak (§4.4.1), it has nothing to do with the king's insomnia caused by God in 6:1 (contrary to p. 146). Thirdly, while the claim that the sandwiching of the narrative between Mordecai's opening dream in Addition A and his closing explanation (Addition F) of the initial dream does open the possibility that the book is a "fulfilled message of salvation" (p. 328), it misses the emphasis of the book's structural coding, which concerns God as the author of salvation rather than the Jews as being the objects of deliverance. Fourthly, and most importantly, while Dorothy does acknowledge that the book concerns the festival etiology of Purim, his placement of this purpose underneath that of God rescuing his people (p. 328) is opposite to the conclusion indicated by the coding of the study corpus.

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<sup>296</sup>Whether the book is historical or not (novella) is not the scope of the present study.

## 4.5 The advantages of understanding the information structure of scripture

The contribution of analyzing the discourse structure of scripture by functional linguistics in general, and information structure in particular, is best shown by three examples taken from the three major discourse genres that are embedded in the study corpus.

### 4.5.1 Illustrations from three different genres

The three genres to be considered are (a) narrative, (b) hortatory, and (c) didactic.<sup>297</sup> The understanding of the present study will be compared with the translations in NJB (1985), NRSV (2007), and Jobes (2009).

#### 4.5.1.1 Narrative

The narrative passage that is being considered is the discourse section 1:1-9. The knowledge that is gained in the present study (§3.3.3), which is not reflected in the other translations being compared, includes the following.

(1) The fact that the king ruled over 127 regions is highlighted by local prominence. This emphasizes his great power and authority. This fact is not acknowledged in NJB (1985:660), or NRSV (2007, apocrypha 55).<sup>298</sup> This information is set-off with an em-dash in Jobes (2009), and it is not clear whether this indicates an emphasis or a de-emphasis.

(2) The passage from the beginning of 1:2 to the beginning of 1:5 (when the days of the wedding feast ended) is an offline section, this fact is not acknowledged in the three translations being compared.

(3) Whereas the banquet is offline, the drinking party (1:5-9) is on the mainline. This is the main thing that the author is talking about because the instigating incident (Astin's refusal to obey the king) happens in the context of the drinking party rather than the banquet. NRSV (2007, apocrypha 55-6) and Jobes (2009) do not acknowledge this fact at all. NJB

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<sup>297</sup> Another genre is indirect speech. But this has not been included because indirect speech in this study corpus tend to be short, and this does not illustrate the power of this method of discourse analysis well. The apocalyptic genre (1:1a-h) does not have much to be commented. The direct speech genre is much like the hortatory genre in the study corpus.

<sup>298</sup> A traditional translation suffers many typesetting constraints. But perhaps highlighted information may be shown in boldface or be acknowledged as a footnote or an endnote.

(1985:660) does set-off 1:5 into a new paragraph, thus indicating a difference between the drinking party from the banquet, but their relative importance in this discourse section is not acknowledged.<sup>299</sup>

(4) The local prominence of fine flax (καρπασίνους), beddings of various (shades of) transparency (στρωμαὶ διαφανεῖς ποικίλως), roses all around (κύκλῳ ῥόδα) in 1:6, and golden and silver cups, and smaller carbuncle cups (ποτήρια χρυσᾶ καὶ ἀργυρᾶ καὶ ἀνθράκινον κυλίκιον) in 1:7 highlight the luxuriousness of the environment of the drinking party. This is not reflected in the three translations being compared.

(5) The narrator's statement that the drinking party is not according to (the) existing law in 1:8 is highlighted by local prominence. This emphasis is not reflected in Jobes (2009).<sup>300</sup> NJB (1985:660) understands this verse as about the freedom that the king gives to those who do not wish to drink during the drinking party ("the royal edict did not, however, make drinking obligatory, the king having instructed the officials of his household to treat each guest according to the guest's own wishes"). The understanding of this study and that of Jobes (2009) is that this verse is an offline comment on the illegality of this event. As opposed to NJB (1985:660), this drinking party may have been granted in response to the desire of the gentiles (1:5[2]) to participate in the joy of the king's marriage. If the king wanted the people to keep sober, he would not have needed to throw a drinking party for the common gentiles to begin with, since the king's wedding proper was already celebrated by the banquet for the upper class inside the palace. Therefore, the urgency expressed by the verbs ἠθέλησεν and ἐπέταξεν refers to the king's desire to allow the gentiles to share in his joy by drinking with him. The intended meaning of "fixed rule" in NRSV (2007, apocrypha 56) is not clear. Hence, it is not possible to determine whether it would agree with the first or the second of the two interpretations outlined above.

(6) The minor break in 1:9 (the comment about the fact that Astin threw her own drinking party for the women in the palace) is reflected well by NRSV (2007, apocrypha 56), which indicates this by "meanwhile". It appears that Jobes (2009) has the same thing in mind by setting off this verse into its own little paragraph. NJB (1985:660) on the other hand neglects this point and lumps it in with 1:10. This is certainly wrong, since 1:10 is the beginning of the next major discourse section.

<sup>299</sup>This fact could perhaps be recognized as a footnote.

<sup>300</sup>The use of the English particle "now" acknowledges the minor break here. But this particle does not highlight the emphatic nature of this clause.

#### 4.5.1.2 Hortatory speech

The hortatory passage considered is the discourse section 3:13a[3]-3:13g. The advantages of the present translation over the other translations include the following.

(1) The exhortation of Aman to destroy the Jews is replete with emphatic phrases such as:

(a) the local prominence of (i) πολλῶν, πάσης, τῷ θράσει τῆς ἐξουσίας (3:13b), which emphasize the king's power, (ii) ἐπιεικέστερον, μετὰ ἡπιότητος αἰεὶ, τῶν ὑποτεταγμένων, διὰ παντὸς, πορευτὴν μέχρι περάτων, τοῖς πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις (3:13b), which highlights the king's benevolence towards his subjects, (iii) σωφροσύνη παρ' ἡμῖν, ἐν τῇ εὐνοίᾳ ἀπαραλλάκτως καὶ βεβαίᾳ πίστει, δεύτερον τῶν βασιλειῶν γέρας (3:13c), which is Aman's (the real author of the letter) way of flattering himself, (iv) κατὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην, τοῖς νόμοις, τά τε τῶν βασιλέων, ὑφ' ἡμῶν (3:13d), and διὰ παντὸς, κείμενον διαγωγὴν νόμων, τὰ χεীরιστα (3:13e), which emphasizes the degree of the wickedness of the Jews, and (v) πάντας σὺν γυναιξὶ καὶ τέκνοις, τῶν ἐχθρῶν (3:13f), ὅπως οἱ πάλαι καὶ νῦν δυσμενεῖς ἐν ἡμέρᾳ μιᾷ βιαίως εἰς τὸν ἄλῃν, ἀτάραχα παρέχωσιν (3:13g), which highlights that the Jews are to be destroyed forcefully, entirely, and without pity;

(b) the global prominence of (i) δευτέρου πατρὸς (3:13f), which emphasizes the honor of Aman, and (ii) Ἀδαρ (3:13f), which highlights the time (month) when the slaughter is to be carried out. None of these phrases are reflected in the three translation being compared.

(2) The letter formally begins at 3:13a[3] by the cataphorically marked topic τάδε, which serves as the epistolary frame for the content of the epistle (that begins in 3:13b). 3:13a[2], on the other hand, is a minor break that belongs to the end of the previous major discourse section (§3.3.11). All three of the translations being compared reverse these two pieces of information. This is unfortunately, since the English translation would be more faithful to the Greek text (and still flow well) if Jobes (2009), for example, were translated as “the Great King Artaxerxes... This is a copy of the letter: ‘Being the ruler...’ ”.

(3) The episodic boundary at the beginning of 3:13c is noted by Jobes (2009), and NRSV (2007, apocrypha 59), but not by NJB (1985:663).

(4) The long sentence in 3:13e and 3:13f contains two occurrences of οὖν. Whereas each is the beginning of an episodic boundary, it is the second οὖν (3:13f) that signals the main exhortation of the letter. Jobes (2009) has this almost perfectly right, except that 3:13e (which she labels as B.5) should also begin a new paragraph. NRSV (2007, apocrypha 59) has the same shortcoming. In addition, it should add a “whereas” at the beginning of 3:13e to indicate that this is secondary to 3:13f. NJB (1985:663) is to be commended for getting this completely correct by (a) setting both 3:13e and 3:13f as new paragraphs, (b) adding “considering” at the start of 3:13e to signal the subservient nature of 3:13e with respect to 3:13f, and (c) making the main exhortation in 3:13f boldface.

#### 4.5.1.3 *Didactic*

The didactic passage being considered is the portion following 9:26 in the discourse section 9:18-10:2. The advancement of knowledge in this study over the three translations being compared are as follows.

(1) The information devices that signal (a) the didactic peak of the book (as mentioned in §4.4.1), (b) the global prominence of τὸ μνημόσυνον αὐτῶν (9:28), and (c) the local prominence of οὐδὲ μὴν ἄλλως χρήσονται (9:27[3]) are not reflected in the three translations being compared.

(2) The same is true for the other comments of the narrator, such as the local prominence of τῇ διαλέκτῳ αὐτῶν (9:26), καὶ τότε στήσαντες κατὰ τῆς ὑγιείας αὐτῶν καὶ τὴν βουλήν αὐτῶν (9:31), λόγῳ (9:32).

(3) The use of the redundant marked topics, τὸ μνημόσυνον αὐτῶν (9:28), Μαρδοχαῖος καὶ Εσθηρ ἡ βασίλισσα (9:31), and Εσθηρ (9:32), to shift the attention of the reader to these characters is a special information device. These are not indicated in the three translations being considered.

(4) The start of 9:26 is the beginning of the narrator’s didactic section (which continues to the end of 10:31). Therefore 9:26 is an important juncture that should be indicated at least by a paragraph break (and preferably a new section heading). But this has not been done in any of the three translations being compared.

(5) Where the information structure indicates that the emphasis of 9:32-10:2 is on Esther and the record of her fame in the chronicles (especially the use of ἰδοὺ in 10:2b to indicate a

return to Esther as the main character of this stretch of text), the recording of the king's own fame in 10:1-2a is in a minor break all by itself, and should be de-emphasized with respect to Esther, probably by making it a small paragraph in itself. This means that 10:2 should end with "Behold, she (Esther) stands written...", rather than with the king because Esther, and not the king, is the heroine at the end of this major discourse section. This is not reflected in any of the three translations being compared, which all end 10:2 with the king as being the main character.

#### 4.5.2 A surprise finding (the king)

Although not part of the two original objectives of this research, it needs to be mentioned that the coding of the king overwhelmingly depicts him as one having great authority. This is another example of the benefits that may be gained by analyzing the information structure of scripture.

The king, as a nominal entity, frequently occurs in the book of Esther in the Septuagint. It is mainly coded as unmarked (1:1b[2], 1n, 1o[1], 1o[4], 1r, 1, 5[2], 8, 12, 14, 16, 19, 20, 21; 2:2, 3, 4, 12[1], 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 21, 22; 3:2, 3[1], 7, 8[1], 8[6], 9, 10; 4:2, 7, 8, 11, 16, 17x; 5:1c, 1e, 3[1], 4, 5, 6[2], 8, 9, 12, 14; 6:1[1], 2[2], 3[1], 3[3], 4, 5[1], 5[3], 8[1], 9[1], 10; 7:1, 2[1], 3, 4[3], 5[1], 6, 8[1], 8[4], 9[1], 9[2], 9[5]; 8:1, 2, 3, 4[1], 4[2], 7, 10; 9:1, 4, 11, 12[1]; 10:1, 3, 3c).<sup>301</sup>

However, the king is often coded as prominent to highlight his authority. For example, the king is coded as:

(a) globally prominent in 1:1q, 2; 2:1, 23; 3:1[2], 11, 12; 9:13; and

(b) locally prominent (due to constituent fronting) in 1:7,<sup>302</sup> 15, 18; 2:8; 3:3[3], 4, 8[5], 13,<sup>303</sup> 6:6[3],<sup>304</sup> 8[2], 8[4], 9[3]; 8:8, 12n, 14.<sup>305</sup>

For example, the pragmatic markness of "the king" in the narrative reversal (from 6:6[3] to 6:9[8]) shows that the king is a semantic agent who has the power to glorify whomever he

<sup>301</sup>This list does not include the use of the king as a marked topic, which is necessarily coded as a fronted nominal element.

<sup>302</sup>This local prominence is reinforced by the reflexive pronoun αὐτός.

<sup>303</sup>The name of the king, Ἀπαξέρου, is fronted.

<sup>304</sup>The local prominence is coded as a first person independent pronoun.

<sup>305</sup>God is also coded as "king" in a locally prominent position (4:17l). This suggests that the author is highlighting not just the authority of the king himself, but the existence of hierarchical authority itself. But the paucity of data on this point does not permit firm conclusion.

wishes. The king is in charge of the kingdom. Even though Aman wields great power, it is power that is ultimately conferred by the king.

While there is no doubt that the natural disposition of the king is flawed (Fox 1991:132-3; Harvey 2003:227), the findings of this study is contrary to (a) the claim by Harvey that the king lacks the ability to “run the affairs of the kingdom” (2003:227), or (b) the claim by Bush (1996:314-7) and Fountain (2002:217) that the “Persian law and authority figures” are ridiculed in the Masoretic text.

#### ***4.5.3 Applicability of this approach for other portions of scripture***

The study of the information structure of scripture from the perspective of functional linguistics is demonstrated to have significant pay-off for the scholarly understanding of the translation, discourse divisions, purpose, and emphases of the book of Esther in the Septuagint.

By extension, employing the same method may be equally useful for discovering the internal discourse structure and purpose of other narrative books or passages of scripture. The details of the analysis for this study would have to be adjusted for each biblical author because people use language differently due to (a) individual preferences, and (b) language period (such as the early or late Hellenistic). Nevertheless, the principles detailed in this study remain the same. The central contention is that whatever author/redactor of a piece of work will employ language in a consistent way that makes it possible for the underlying linguistic patterns to be discovered.

As discussed in §4.5.1, this method is also able to find discourse patterns in other genres, such as the hortatory or didactic genres that are embedded in the narrative of the book of Esther. It will be interesting to see how a consistent application of these principles to the book of Romans, for example, might help the student of the bible to gain a deeper appreciation of the internal thought patterns of Paul, and hence the divine message which was conveyed through him to succeeding generations.

One may do comparative studies of books that appear to be similar in terms of their content, in order to discover similarities and differences of authorial intentions and emphases. An application to the Gospels (for example) would be similar to redactive

criticism, except that making a comparison using this method is better grounded in linguistics principles, which greatly lessens the degree of ambiguity in the results.

The comparison of the Septuagint and the Hebraic versions of all the books of the Old Testament are also amenable to this process, as well as any comparison between the manuscripts of the same book.

For bible translation, an understanding of the discourse patterns of the source language (of the bible) and the target language will enable the exegetical/translation consultants to better evaluate whether a vernacular translation has conveyed not only the literal words of the scriptural page, but also the underlying thought patterns of the textual event itself.

Finally, a consistent and an intentional accumulation of scholarly research of the information structure of scriptural materials, regardless of the source languages, will help Bible translators and the recipients of the Bible to better understand the intent of the biblical authors.

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