

Similar Persecution, Different Colonizers:
A Look at Addition C of the LXX Esther Through a Decolonial Lens.

The Septuagint translation of Esther has six additions not seen in the main text, including Addition C, or the prayers of Mordecai and Esther. One of the theories for including this prayer is to relate the story to its contemporary audience. The Book of Esther was translated and added to the Septuagint with the Additions during the first century BCE, in the wake of the Seleucid occupation and Maccabean resistance (Miller 2015, 39). These additions were part of an older Hebrew alteration to the Book of Esther, which was translated into Greek around 78-77 BCE (Tov 2008, 518-520). Once translated into Greek, the LXX version of Esther was widely accepted by Jewish communities at the time, showing that it was considered a legitimate translation (Miller 2015, 39). Esther's prayer specifically discusses many issues of living as a religious minority and the pressures that follow.

The religious persecution follows the themes of the original story of Esther, and it is also a contemporary response to religious persecution during the Seleucid occupation. These additions, through the lens of decolonization, show the post-Seleucid Jewish people were concerned with conserving and reinterpreting cultural stories, resisting persecution, and building a sovereign nation where they could worship freely. Purim was already a story of resistance under empire, but the story gained popularity, relevance, and new meaning during the Hellenistic age as Jews looked towards their culture in the wake of new colonizers. In modern day, interpretations of the Book of Esther relate closer to the Septuagint translation despite the current reception of the Septuagint. The struggles of the Jewish community are not new, and a close examination of this text can reveal how these traditions change and remain the same.

Bibliography

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