
Μακκαβαίων Γ' □ 3RD MACCABEES

INTRODUCTION

The title of the book known as *3rd Maccabees* is a misnomer, for the contents do not deal with the exploits of the Maccabean heroes; but, with many legendary embellishments, the author recounts the struggles of the Egyptian Jews who suffered under Ptolemy IV Philopator (221–203 BCE), half a century prior to the Maccabean period with its persecution of Palestinian Jews under Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175–164 BCE). The book has been transmitted in manuscripts of the *Septuagint* and the *Peshitta*, as well as in most manuscripts of the *Armenian Bible*. It is not, however, included in the *Vulgate*. This may explain why the book has been accorded deuterocanonical status by the Russian and Eastern Orthodox Churches, while both the Roman Catholic and Reformed Churches of the West regard it as apocryphal.

The book was obviously written to console, exhort, and teach Egyptian Jews who, during the 1st Century BCE, were frequently threatened by the efforts of Roman administrators to alter their civic status. The author intends to inspire faith in the providence of God (4:21) by recounting how Jews had been delivered from similar circumstances in the past.

Note that the verse divisions and numbers in the [Slavonic Text](#) of this book are often different from those of the *Septuagint* (Rahlfs, followed here), as noted in the appropriate footnotes.

AUTHORSHIP AND DATES

The work was originally drawn up in Greek by an unknown Alexandrian Jew, sometime between the Battle of Raphia (217 BCE) and the fall of the Jerusalem Temple (70 CE). A likely date, considering its literary affinities with 2nd Maccabees and the Letter of Aristeas, is the early 1st Century BCE.

The style of the book is pseudo-classical, utilising many uncommon and poetical words. Sentences are awkwardly constructed and frequently repetitive. The author's exaggerated rhetoric aims to drive home his message that God remains faithful to his chosen people, to bless and preserve them throughout the vicissitudes of their experiences.

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¹ Ὁ δὲ Φιλοπάτωρ παρὰ τῶν ἀνακομισθέντων μαθὼν τὴν γενομένην τῶν ὑπ' αὐτοῦ κρατουμένων τόπων ἀφαίρεσιν ὑπὸ Ἀντιόχου παραγγείλας ταῖς πάσαις δυνάμεσιν πεζικαῖς τε καὶ ἵππικαῖς καὶ τὴν ἀδελφὴν Ἀρσινόην συμπαραλαβὼν ἐξώρμησεν μέχρι τῶν κατὰ Ῥαφίαν τόπων, ὅπου παρεμβεβλήκεισαν οἱ περὶ Ἀντιόχον. ² Θεόδοτος δὲ τις ἐκπληρῶσαι τὴν ἐπιβουλήν διανοηθεὶς παραλαβὼν τῶν προυποτεταγμένων αὐτῷ ὅπλων Πτολεμαϊκῶν τὰ κράτιστα διεκομίσθη νύκτωρ ἐπὶ τὴν τοῦ Πτολεμαίου σκηνὴν ὡς μόνος κτεῖναι αὐτὸν καὶ ἐν τούτῳ διαλύσαι τὸν πόλεμον. ³ τοῦτον δὲ διαγαγὼν Δοσίθεος ὁ Δριμύλου λεγόμενος, τὸ γένος Ἰουδαῖος, ὕστερον δὲ μεταβαλὼν τὰ νόμιμα καὶ τῶν πατρίων δογμάτων ἀπηλλοτριωμένος, ἄσημόν τινα κατέκλινεν ἐν τῇ σκηνῇ, ὃν συνέβη κομίσασθαι τὴν ἐκείνου κόλασιν. ⁴ γενομένης δὲ καρτερᾶς μάχης καὶ τῶν πραγμάτων μᾶλλον ἐρρωμένων τῷ Ἀντιόχῳ ἱκανῶς ἢ Ἀρσινόῃ ἐπιπορευσαμένη τὰς δυνάμεις παρεκάλει μετὰ οἴκτου καὶ δακρύων τοὺς

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¹ When Philopator learned, from those who had returned, that Antiochus had seized the regions that belonged to him, he gave orders to all his forces, both infantry and cavalry, took with him his sister Arsinoë, and marched to the region of Raphia, where the forces of Antiochus were encamped. ² But a certain Theodotus, who was determined to carry out the plot he had devised, took with him the bravest of the armed men who had been entrusted to him by Ptolemy and came by night to the tent of Ptolemy, intending to kill him single-handedly and so end the war. ³ But Dositheus, called the son of Drimylus, a Jew by birth who later changed his religion and apostatised from the ancestral laws, had led the king away and made an insignificant man sleep in the tent; and so, it turned out that this man incurred the vengeance meant for the king. ⁴ When a bitter fight resulted, and matters were turning out rather in favour of Antiochus, Arsinoë went to the troops with wailing and tears, her locks all dishevelled,

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- ¹ The abruptness with which the book opens and the use of the Greek conjunctive particle (δὲ) indicate that the introduction to 3 Maccabees has not survived (see also #2:25). Antiochus III, later called 'The Great', was king of Syria 223–187 BCE. 'Raphia' is three miles from Gaza and not far from the Egyptian frontier. 'Arsinoë', Ptolemy's sister, who became his wife, was later put to death at the instigation of her husband.
- ² The NRSV has 'Ptolemaic arms that had previously been given to him' in place of 'the armed men who had been entrusted to him by Ptolemy'. 'Theodotus' had been chief commander of the Egyptian forces in Syria, but subsequently became disaffected and deserted to Antiochus III (according to Polybius).
- ³ In place of 'the king', the LXX ends with 'that one'. A 'Dositheus' is mentioned in the *Hibeh Papyri* as a priest of Alexandria in 222 BCE.
- ⁴ A *mina* was a weight equal to 60 shekels.

πλοκάμους λελυμένη βοηθεῖν ἑαυτοῖς τε καὶ τοῖς τέκνοις καὶ γυναιξὶν θαρραλέως ἐπαγγελλομένη δώσειν νικήσασιν ἑκάστῳ δύο μνᾶς χρυσοῦ. ⁵ καὶ οὕτως συνέβη τοὺς ἀντιπάλους ἐν χειρονομίαις διαφραρῆναι, πολλοὺς δὲ καὶ δοριαλώτους συλλημφθῆναι. ⁶ κατακρατήσας δὲ τῆς ἐπιβουλῆς ἔκρινεν τὰς πλησίον πόλεις ἐπελθὼν παρακαλέσαι. ⁷ ποιήσας δὲ τοῦτο καὶ τοῖς τεμένεσι δωρεὰς ἀπονεύμας εὐδαρσεῖς τοὺς ὑποτεταγμένους κατέστησεν.

⁸ Τῶν δὲ Ἰουδαίων διαπεμψαμένων πρὸς αὐτὸν ἀπὸ τῆς γερουσίας καὶ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων τοὺς ἀσπασομένους αὐτὸν καὶ ξένια κομιοῦντας καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς συμβεβηκόσιν χαρισομένους συνέβη μᾶλλον αὐτὸν προθυμηθῆναι ὡς τάχιστα πρὸς αὐτοὺς παραγενέσθαι. ⁹ διακομισθεῖς δὲ εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα καὶ θύσας τῷ μεγίστῳ θεῷ καὶ χάριτας ἀποδοὺς καὶ τῶν ἐξῆς τι τῷ τόπῳ ποιήσας καὶ δὴ παραγενόμενος εἰς τὸν τόπον καὶ τῇ σπουδαιότητι καὶ εὐπρεπείᾳ καταπλαγεῖς, ¹⁰ θαυμάσας δὲ

and exhorted them to defend themselves and their children and wives bravely, promising to give them each two minas of gold if they won the battle. ⁵ So, it came about that the enemy was routed in the action, and many captives were taken. ⁶ Now that he had foiled the plot, Ptolemy decided to visit the neighbouring cities and encourage them. ⁷ By doing this, and by making donations to their temples, he inspired his subjects with confidence.

⁸ Since the Jews had sent some of their council and their elders to greet him, to bring him gifts of welcome, and to congratulate him on what had happened, he was more eager to visit their city as soon as possible. ⁹ After he had arrived in Jerusalem, he offered sacrifice to the Greatest God, made thanks offerings, and did whatever else was fit for the Holy Place. Then, upon entering the Place and being impressed by its excellence and its beauty, ¹⁰ he marvelled at the good

⁵ According to Polybius, Antiochus lost nearly 10,000 infantry, 300 cavalry and 4,000 prisoners in this battle, and Ptolemy lost 1,500 infantry and 700 cavalry.

⁶ In place of 'Ptolemy', the LXX has 'he'.

⁷ For this verse, here following the WEBBE, the NRSV has, "By doing this, and by endowing their sacred enclosures with gifts, he strengthened the morale of his subjects."

⁸ Some translations add 'and to express joy' after 'congratulate him'.

⁹ In place of 'Greatest God', here following the LXX, the NRSV has 'supreme God'; such references (μεγίστῳ θεῷ) occur frequently in 3M (as also in 2M); that the pagan Ptolemy should have offered sacrifice to the God of the Jews was not an unusual practice in this age of religious syncretism. The LXX lacks 'Holy', here following the NRSV.

¹⁰ Ptolemy's eagerness to inspect the Temple may have been motivated by his curiosity concerning its architecture, for he considered himself a connoisseur of the arts.

καὶ τὴν τοῦ ἱεροῦ εὐταξίαν ἐνεθυμήθη βουλεύσασθαι εἰς τὸν ναὸν εἰσελθεῖν. ¹¹ τῶν δὲ εἰπόντων μὴ καθήκειν γίνεσθαι τοῦτο διὰ τὸ μηδὲ τοῖς ἐκ τοῦ ἔθνους ἐξεῖναι εἰσιέναι μηδὲ πᾶσιν τοῖς ἱερεῦσιν, ἀλλ' ἢ μόνῳ τῷ προσηγουμένῳ πάντων ἀρχιερεῖ, καὶ τούτῳ κατ' ἐνιαυτὸν ἅπαξ, ὁ δὲ οὐδαμῶς ἐπέιθετο. ¹² τοῦ τε νόμου παραναγνωσθέντος οὐδ' ὥς ἀπέλιπεν προφερόμενος ἑαυτὸν δεῖν εἰσελθεῖν λέγων Καὶ εἰ ἐκεῖνοι ἐστέρηνται ταύτης τῆς τιμῆς, ἐμὲ δὲ οὐ δεῖ. ¹³ καὶ ἐπυνθάνετο διὰ τίνα αἰτίαν εἰσερχόμενον αὐτὸν εἰς πᾶν τέμενος οὐδεὶς ἐκώλυσε τῶν παρόντων. ¹⁴ καὶ τις ἀπρονοήτως ἔφη κακῶς αὐτὸ τοῦτο τερατεύεσθαι. ¹⁵ γενομένου δέ, φησιν, τούτου διὰ τίνα αἰτίαν, οὐχὶ πάντως εἰσελεύσεσθαι καὶ θελόντων αὐτῶν καὶ μή;

¹⁶ τῶν δὲ ἱερέων ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ἐσθήσεσιν προσπεσόντων καὶ δεομένων τοῦ μεγίστου θεοῦ βοηθεῖν τοῖς ἐνεστῶσιν καὶ τὴν ὁρμὴν τοῦ κακῶς ἐπιβαλλομένου μεταθεῖναι κραυγῆς τε μετὰ δακρύων τὸ ἱερόν ἐμπλησάντων ¹⁷ οἱ κατὰ τὴν πόλιν ἀπολειπόμενοι ταραχθέντες ἐξεπήδησαν ἄδηλον τιθέμενοι τὸ γινόμενον. ¹⁸ αἱ τε κατάκλειστοι παρθέναι ἐν θαλάμοις σὺν

order of the Temple, and conceived a desire to enter the Sanctuary. ¹¹ When they said that this was not permitted, because not even members of their own nation were allowed to enter, not even all of the priests, but only the High Priest who was pre-eminent over all – and he only once a year – the king was not persuaded. ¹² Even after the Law had been read to him, he did not cease to maintain that he ought to enter, saying, “Even if those men are deprived of this honour, I ought not to be.” ¹³ He asked why, when he entered the other temples, no priest had stopped him. ¹⁴ Then someone answered thoughtlessly that it was wrong to take that as a portent. ¹⁵ “But since this has happened,” the king said, “why should not I at least enter, whether they wish it or not?”

¹⁶ Then the priests fell down in their vestments and entreated the Greatest God to aid in time of need and to avert the violence of the evil design, and they filled the Temple with cries and tears; ¹⁷ those who remained behind in the city were agitated and hurried out, not knowing what was happening. ¹⁸ Girls who had been secluded in their chambers rushed out

¹¹ On the annual admission of the High Priest to the Sanctuary, see Ex 30:10, Lv 16:2,11–12,15,34, Heb 9:7).

¹² The Slavonic Text merges vv. 12 & 13.

¹³ An alternative reading for ‘the other temples’ is ‘the Temple precincts’.

¹⁴ An alternative translation of ‘to take this as a portent’ is ‘to boast of this’.

¹⁵ The Slavonic Text merges this and the previous verse, wherein it is v. 13.

¹⁶ See #9. Note that this is v. 14 in the Slavonic Text.

¹⁷ The Slavonic Text merges this with the previous verse.

¹⁸ Some MSS add ‘and ashes’ after ‘dust’.

ταῖς τεκούσαις ἐξώρμησαν καὶ ἀπέδωκαν κόνει τὰς κόμας πασάμεναι γούου τε καὶ στεναγμῶν ἐνεπίμπλων τὰς πλατείας. ¹⁹ αἱ δὲ καὶ προσαρτίως ἐσταλμένοι τούτους πρὸς ἀπάντησιν διατεταγμένους παστοὺς καὶ τὴν ἀρμόζουσιν αἰδῶ παραλείπουσαι δρόμον ἄτακτον ἐν τῇ πόλει συνίσταντο. ²⁰ τὰ δὲ νεογνὰ τῶν τέκνων αἱ πρὸς τούτοις μητέρες καὶ τιθρηνοὶ παραλείπουσαι ἄλλως καὶ ἄλλως, αἱ μὲν κατ' οἴκους, αἱ δὲ κατὰ τὰς ἀγυῖας, ἀνεπιστρέπτως εἰς τὸ πανυπέρτατον ἱερὸν ἠδρροίζοντο. ²¹ ποικίλη δὲ ἦν τῶν εἰς τοῦτο συλλεγέντων ἢ δέησις ἐπὶ τοῖς ἀνοσίως ὑπ' ἐκείνου κατεγχειρουμένοις. ²² σὺν τε τούτοις οἱ περὶ τῶν πολιτῶν θρασυθύνοντες οὐκ ἠνεῖχοντο τέλος αὐτοῦ ἐπικειμένου καὶ τὸ τῆς προθέσεως ἐκπληροῦν διανοομένου, ²³ φωνήσαντες δὲ τὴν ὄρμην ἐπὶ τὰ ὄπλα ποιήσασθαι καὶ θαραλέως ὑπὲρ τοῦ πατρῴου νόμου τελευτῶν ἱκανὴν ἐποίησαν ἐν τῷ τόπῳ τραχύτητα, μόλις δὲ ὑπὸ τε τῶν γεραιῶν καὶ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων ἀποτραπέντες ἐπὶ τὴν αὐτὴν τῆς δεήσεως παρῆσαν στάσιν. ²⁴ καὶ τὸ μὲν πλῆθος ὡς ἔμπροσθεν ἐν τούτοις ἀνεστρέφετο δεόμενον. ²⁵ οἱ δὲ περὶ τὸν βασιλέα

with their mothers, sprinkled their hair with dust, and filled the streets with lamentations. ¹⁹ Women who had recently been arrayed for marriage left their bridal chambers and, neglecting proper modesty, flocked together in the city in a disorderly rush. ²⁰ Mothers and nurses abandoned even newborn children here and there, some in houses and some in the streets and, with an unchecked ardour, crowded together at the Most High Temple. ²¹ Various were the prayers offered by those who were gathered in that place because of what the king was profanely plotting. ²² In addition, the bolder of the citizens would not tolerate the completion of his plans or the fulfilment of his intended purpose. ²³ They shouted to their compatriots to take arms and die courageously for the Ancestral Law, and created a considerable disturbance in the Holy Place; and, being barely restrained by the old men and elders, they were brought back to the station of prayer they had occupied before. ²⁴ During this time, the crowd, as before, continued in their prayers, ²⁵ while the elders who surrounded the king tried, in various ways, to change his

¹⁹ The literal translation for 'bridal chambers' is 'canopies' (see J1 2:16, 2Es 16:33–34, Ba 2:23).

²⁰ The NRSV has 'without a backward look' in place of 'with an unchecked ardour'.

²¹ The NRSV lacks 'offered by', here following the WEBBE.

²² The Slavonic Text merges this and the following verse, wherein it is v. 19.

²³ The LXX lacks 'Holy', here following the NRSV. In place of 'elders', some MSS have 'priests'. On the willingness to die for the 'Ancestral Law', see 1M 2:40, 3:21, 13:3–4, 2M 8:21).

²⁴ Note that this is v. 20 in the Slavonic Text.

²⁵ The NRSV has 'near' in place of 'who surrounded', here following the WEBBE.

πρεσβύτεροι πολλαχῶς ἐπειρῶντο τὸν ἀγέρωχον αὐτοῦ νοῦν ἐξιστάνειν τῆς ἐντεθυμημένης ἐπιβουλῆς. ²⁶ θρασυνθεὶς δὲ καὶ πάντα παραπέμψας ἤδη καὶ πρόσβασιν ἐποιεῖτο τέλος ἐπιθήσειν δοκῶν τῷ προειρημένῳ. ²⁷ ταῦτα οὖν καὶ οἱ περὶ αὐτὸν ὄντες θεωροῦντες ἐτράπησαν εἰς τὸ σὺν τοῖς ἡμετέροις ἐπικαλεῖσθαι τὸν πᾶν κράτος ἔχοντα τοῖς παροῦσιν ἐπαμῦναι μὴ παριδόντα τὴν ἄνομον καὶ ὑπερήφανον προᾶξιν. ²⁸ ἐκ δὲ τῆς πυκνοτάτης τε καὶ ἐμπόνου τῶν ὄχλων συναγομένης κραυγῆς ἀνείκαστός τις ἦν βοή· ²⁹ δοκεῖν γὰρ ἦν μὴ μόνον τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ τεῖχη καὶ τὸ πᾶν ἔδαφος ἤχεῖν ἅτε δὴ τῶν πάντων τότε θάνατον ἀλλασσομένων ἀντὶ τῆς τοῦ τόπου βεβηλώσεως.

arrogant mind from the plan he had conceived. ²⁶ But he, in his arrogance, was impervious to all persuasion, and began now to approach, determined to conclude the aforementioned plan. ²⁷ When his officers who were around him observed this, even they turned, together with our people, to call upon him who has all power to defend them in the present trouble and not to overlook this unlawful, haughty deed. ²⁸ The continuous, vehement, and concerted cry of the crowds resulted in an immense uproar; ²⁹ for, it seemed that, not only the people, but also the walls and the whole earth around were crying out; because, indeed, all at that time preferred death to the profanation of the Place.

²⁶ In place of 'was impervious to all persuasion', the NRSV has 'took heed of nothing'.

²⁷ The NRSV has 'those' in place of 'his officers', here following the WEBBE.

²⁸ Some MSS lack 'and concerted'.

²⁹ Some MSS lack the phrase, 'at that time'.

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¹ Ὁ μὲν οὖν ἀρχιερεὺς Σιμων ἐξ ἐναντίας τοῦ ναοῦ κάμψας τὰ γόνατα καὶ τὰς χεῖρας προτείνας εὐτάκτως ἐποίησατο τὴν δέησιν τοιαύτην ² Κύριε κύριε, βασιλεῦ τῶν οὐρανῶν καὶ δέσποτα πάσης κτίσεως, ἅγιε ἐν ἁγίοις, μόναρχε, παντοκράτωρ, πρόσχες ἡμῖν καταπονούμενοις ὑπὸ ἀνοσίου καὶ βεβήλου θράσει καὶ σθένει πεφρουαγμένου. ³ σὺ γὰρ ὁ κτίσας τὰ πάντα καὶ τῶν ὄλων ἐπικρατῶν δυνάστης δίκαιος εἶ καὶ τοὺς ὕβρει καὶ ἀγερωχία τι πράσσοντας κρίνεις. ⁴ σὺ τοὺς ἔμπροσθεν ἀδικίαν ποιήσαντας, ἐν οἷς καὶ γίγαντες ἦσαν ῥώμη καὶ θράσει πεποιθότες, διέφθειρας ἐπαγαγῶν αὐτοῖς ἀμέτρητον ὕδωρ. ⁵ σὺ τοὺς ὑπερηφανίαν ἐργαζομένους Σοδομίτας διαδήλους ταῖς κακίαις γενομένους πυρὶ καὶ θείῳ κατέφλεξας παράδειγμα τοῖς ἐπιγινόμενοις καταστήσας. ⁶ σὺ τὸν θρασὺν Φαραῶ καταδουλωσάμενον τὸν λαόν σου τὸν ἅγιον Ἰσραὴλ ποικίλαις καὶ πολλαῖς δοκιμάσας τιμωρίαις ἐγνώρισας τὴν σὴν δύναμιν, ἐφ' οἷς ἐγνώρισας τὸ μέγα σου κράτος. ⁷ καὶ ἐπιδιώξαντα αὐτὸν σὺν ἄρμασιν καὶ ὄχλων

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¹ Then the High Priest Simon, facing the Sanctuary, bending his knees and extending his hands with calm dignity, prayed as follows: ² "Lord, Lord, king of the heavens, and ruler of all creation, holy among the holy, sole Governor, Almighty, give ear to us who are suffering grievously from an impious and profane man, puffed up in his audacity and power. ³ For you, the creator of all things and the Lord of all, are a just Ruler, and judge those who act with pride and insolence. ⁴ You destroyed the former workers of injustice, among whom were even giants who trusted in their strength and boldness, by bringing on them a boundless flood. ⁵ You consumed with fire and sulphur the Sodomites, who acted arrogantly and were notorious for their vices, an example to later generations. ⁶ You made known your mighty power by inflicting many and varied punishments on the audacious Pharaoh, who had enslaved your holy people Israel. ⁷ When he pursued them with chariots and a mass of troops, you

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- ¹ This verse is missing from some MSS. The High Priest was probably Simon II (219 –196 BCE), son of Onias II (see Si 50:1).
- ² This prayer is in a classic Jewish form that, like Eleazar's prayer in 6:1–15, follows the pattern of Ps 105 & 106, in addressing God in terms of his power, glory and great works reflected in historical deliverances of Israel.
- ³ The NRSV ends this verse, here following the WEBBE, with, "have done anything in insolence and arrogance."
- ⁴ On the 'giants', see Jdt 16:7, Ws 14:6, Si 16:7, Ba 3:26, 1En 7:2, 15:8.
- ⁵ In place of 'notorious for', some MSS have 'secret in'. For 'sulphur', the WEBBE has the more traditional 'brimstone'.
- ⁶ On God's 'power', see Ex 9:16, Rm 9:17.
- ⁷ The NRSV has 'carried through safely' in place of 'gave safe passage to', here following the WEBBE.

πλήθει ἐπέκλυσας βάθει θαλάσσης, τοὺς δὲ ἐμπιστεύσαντας ἐπὶ σοὶ τῷ τῆς ἀπάσης κτίσεως δυναστεύοντι σώουσι διεκόμισας, ⁸ οἱ καὶ συνιδόντες ἔργα σῆς χειρὸς ἤνεσάν σε τὸν παντοκράτορα. ⁹ σύ, βασιλεῦ, κτίσας τὴν ἀπέραντον καὶ ἀμέτρητον γῆν ἐξελέξω τὴν πόλιν ταύτην καὶ ἡγίασας τὸν τόπον τοῦτον εἰς ὄνομά σοι τῷ τῶν ἀπάντων ἀπροσδεῖ καὶ παρεδόξασας ἐν ἐπιφανείᾳ μεγαλοπρεπεῖ σύστασιν ποιησάμενος αὐτοῦ πρὸς δόξαν τοῦ μεγάλου καὶ ἐντίμου ὀνόματός σου. ¹⁰ καὶ ἀγαπῶν τὸν οἶκον τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ ἐπηγγείλω διότι, ἐὰν γένηται ἡμῶν ἀποστροφὴ καὶ καταλάβῃ ἡμᾶς στενοχωρία καὶ ἐλθόντες εἰς τὸν τόπον τοῦτον δεηθῶμεν, εἰσακούσῃ τῆς δεήσεως ἡμῶν. ¹¹ καὶ δὴ πιστὸς εἶ καὶ ἀληθινός. ¹² ἐπεὶ δὲ πλεονάκεις θλιβέντων τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν ἐβόηθησας αὐτοῖς ἐν τῇ ταπεινώσει καὶ ἐρρύσω αὐτοὺς ἐκ μεγάλων κακῶν, ¹³ ἰδοὺ δὲ νῦν, ἅγιε βασιλεῦ, διὰ τὰς πολλὰς καὶ μεγάλας ἡμῶν ἁμαρτίας καταπονούμεθα καὶ ὑπετάγημεν τοῖς ἐχθροῖς ἡμῶν καὶ παρείμεθα ἐν ἀδυναμίαις. ¹⁴ ἐν δὲ τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ καταπτώσει ὁ θρασὺς καὶ βέβηλος οὗτος ἐπιτηδεύει καθυβρίσαι τὸν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἀναδεδειγμένον τῷ ὀνόματι τῆς δόξης σου ἅγιον τόπον.

overwhelmed him in the depths of the sea but gave safe passage to those who had put their confidence in you, the Ruler over the whole creation. ⁸ When they had seen the works of your hands, they praise you, the Almighty. ⁹ You, O King, when you had created the boundless and immeasurable earth, chose this city and sanctified this place for your name, though you have no need of anything; and when you had glorified it by your magnificent manifestation, you made it a firm foundation for the glory of your great and honoured name. ¹⁰ Because you love the House of Israel, you promised that, if we should have reverses and tribulation should overtake us, you would listen to our petition when we come to this place and pray. ¹¹ Indeed, you are faithful and true. ¹² Because oftentimes when our fathers were oppressed you helped them in their humiliation, and rescued them from great evils, ¹³ see now, O Holy King, that because of our many and great sins we are crushed with suffering, subjected to our enemies and have become weak and powerless. ¹⁴ In our downfall, this audacious and profane man undertakes to violate the Holy Place on earth dedicated

⁸ The Slavonic Text merges this with v. 7.

⁹ An alternative translation for 'manifestation' is 'epiphany'. On God having 'no need of anything', see Ac 17:25, 2M 14:35-36.

¹⁰ On God's promise to listen to Israel's petition, see Dt 4:30, 30:1-6, 1K 8:33-34, 48-50.

¹¹ The Slavonic text merges this with the following verse, wherein it is v. 10.

¹² The WEBBE ends this verse with, "and delivered them out of great dangers."

¹³ The NRSV ends this verse, here following the WEBBE, with, "and overtaken by a helplessness."

¹⁴ The WEBBE ends with, "to the name of your Majesty."

¹⁵ τὸ μὲν γὰρ κατοικητήριόν σου οὐρανὸς τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἀνέφικτος ἀνθρώποις ἐστίν. ¹⁶ ἀλλὰ ἐπεὶ εὐδοκήσας τὴν δόξαν σου ἐν τῷ λαῷ σου Ἰσραὴλ ἡγάσας τὸν τόπον τοῦτον, ¹⁷ μὴ ἐκδικήσης ἡμᾶς ἐν τῇ τούτων ἀκαθαρσίᾳ μηδὲ εὐθύνης ἡμᾶς ἐν βεβηλώσει, ἵνα μὴ καυχῶνται οἱ παράνομοι ἐν θυμῷ αὐτῶν μηδὲ ἀγαλλιάσονται ἐν ὑπερηφανίᾳ γλώσσης αὐτῶν λέγοντες ¹⁸ Ἡμεῖς κατεπατήσαμεν τὸν οἶκον τοῦ ἁγιασμοῦ, ὡς καταπατοῦνται οἱ οἶκοι τῶν προσοχθισμάτων. ¹⁹ ἀπάλειψον τὰς ἀμαρτίας ἡμῶν καὶ διασκέδασον τὰς ἀμβλακίας ἡμῶν καὶ ἐπίφανον τὸ ἔλεός σου κατὰ τὴν ὥραν ταύτην. ²⁰ ταχὺ προκαταλαβέτωσαν ἡμᾶς οἱ οἰκτιρμοὶ σου, καὶ δὸς αἰνέσεις ἐν τῷ στόματι τῶν καταπεπτωκότων καὶ συντετριμμένων τὰς ψυχὰς ποιήσας ἡμῖν εἰρήνην. ²¹ Ἐνταῦθα ὁ πάντων ἐπόπτης θεὸς καὶ προπάτωρ ἅγιος ἐν ἁγίοις εἰσακούσας τῆς ἐνδέσμου λιτανείας, τὸν ὕβρει καὶ θράσει μεγάλως ἐπηρμένον ἐμάστιξεν αὐτὸν ²² ἔνθεν καὶ ἔνθεν κραδάνας αὐτὸν ὡς κάλαμον ὑπὸ ἀνέμου ὥστε κατ' ἐδάφους ἄπρακτον, ἔτι καὶ τοῖς μέλεσιν παραλελυμένον μηδὲ

to your glorious name. ¹⁵ For your dwelling is the heaven of heavens, unapproachable by human beings; ¹⁶ but, because you graciously bestowed your glory on your people Israel, you sanctified this place. ¹⁷ Do not punish us for the defilement committed by these men, or call us to account for this profanation, otherwise, the transgressors will boast in their wrath and exult in the arrogance of their tongue, saying, ¹⁸ "We have trampled down the House of the Sanctuary as the houses of the abominations are trampled down." ¹⁹ Wipe away our sins and disperse our errors and reveal your mercy at this hour. ²⁰ May your mercies quickly go before us. Grant us peace, that the downcast and broken-hearted may praise you with their mouths."

²¹ Thereupon God, who oversees all things, the first Father of all, holy among the holy ones, having heard the lawful supplication, scourged him who had exalted himself in insolence and audacity. ²² He shook him on this side as a reed is shaken by the wind, so that he lay helpless on the ground

¹⁵ The Slavonic Text merges this with the following verse, wherein it is v. 13.

¹⁶ The WEBBE opens with, "But, since it seemed good to you to exhibit your glory."

¹⁷ The Slavonic Text merges this with the following verse, wherein it is v. 14.

¹⁸ For this verse, the WEBBE reads, "We have trampled upon the holy house, as idolatrous houses are trampled upon."

¹⁹ The Slavonic Text merges this with the following verse, wherein it is v. 15.

²⁰ For this verse, here (loosely) following the WEBBE, the NRSV has, "Speedily let your mercies overtake us and put praises in the mouths of those who are downcast and broken in spirit, and give us peace."

²¹ The Slavonic Text merges this with the following verse, wherein it is v. 16.

²² Some MSS have 'pierced' in place of 'smitten'. Compare this punishment to those of Heliodorus (2M 3:22-30) and Antiochus (2M 9:4-7).

φωνῆσαι δύνασθαι δικαίᾳ περιπεπληγμένον κρίσει. ²³ ὄθεν οἱ τε φίλοι καὶ σωματοφύλακες ὄξειαν ἰδόντες τὴν καταλαβοῦσαν αὐτὸν εὐδυναν φοβούμενοι μὴ καὶ τὸ ζῆν ἐκλείπη, ταχέως αὐτὸν ἐξείλκυσαν ὑπερβάλλοντι καταπεπληγμένοι φόβῳ. ²⁴ ἐν χρόνῳ δὲ ὕστερον ἀναλεξάμενος αὐτὸν οὐδαμῶς εἰς μετάνειαν ἦλθεν ἐπιτιμηθεὶς, ἀπειλὰς δὲ πικρὰς θέμενος ἀνέλυσεν.

²⁵ Διακομισθεὶς δὲ εἰς τὴν Αἴγυπτον καὶ τὰ τῆς κακίας ἐπαύξων διὰ τε τῶν προαποδειγμένων συμποτῶν καὶ ἐταίρων τοῦ παντός δικαίου κευχωρισμένων ²⁶ οὐ μόνον ταῖς ἀναριθμήτοις ἀσελγείαις διηρκέσθη, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐπὶ τοσοῦτον θράσους προῆλθεν ὥστε δυσφημίας ἐν τοῖς τόποις συνίστασθαι καὶ πολλοὺς τῶν φίλων ἀτενίζοντας εἰς τὴν τοῦ βασιλέως πρόθεσιν καὶ αὐτοὺς ἐπεσθαι τῇ ἐκείνου θελήσει. ²⁷ προέθετο δημοσίᾳ κατὰ τοῦ ἔθνους διαδοῦναι ψόγον· ἐπὶ τοῦ κατὰ τὴν αὐλὴν πύργου στήλην ἀναστήσας ἐκόλαψεν γραφὴν ²⁸ μηδένα τῶν μὴ θυόντων εἰς τὰ ἱερὰ αὐτῶν εἰσιέναι, πάντα δὲ τοὺς Ἰουδαίους εἰς λαογραφίαν καὶ οἰκετικὴν διάθεσιν ἀχθῆναι, τοὺς δὲ ἀντιλέγοντας βία

and, besides being paralysed in his limbs, was unable even to speak, since he was smitten by a righteous judgement.

²³ Then, his friends and bodyguards, seeing the swift punishment that had overtaken him and fearing that he would die, quickly dragged him out, panic-stricken in their great fear.

²⁴ After a while, he recovered but did not repent, though he had been punished, but left uttering bitter threats.

²⁵ When he arrived in Egypt, he increased in his deeds of malice, abetted by the previously mentioned drinking companions, who were strangers to everything just. ²⁶ He was not content with his uncounted licentious deeds, but even continued with such audacity that he framed evil reports in the various localities; and many of his friends, intently observing the king's purpose, themselves also followed his will. ²⁷ He proposed to inflict public disgrace on our race and he set up a stone pillar in the courtyard with this inscription: ²⁸ "None who do not sacrifice shall enter their sanctuaries and all Jews shall be subjected to a registration and to the status of slaves. Those who object to this are to be

²³ The NRSV has 'lose his life' in place of 'die', here following the WEBBE.

²⁴ The NRSV here reads, "After a while, he recovered and, though he had been punished, he by no means repented, but went away uttering bitter threats."

²⁵ In as much as these 'companions' have not been 'previously mentioned' in the text of 3M, we have additional evidence that the opening section has been lost (see #1:1).

²⁶ The Slavonic Text merges this with the previous verse, wherein it is v. 19.

²⁷ In place of 'nation', here following the LXX, the NRSV has 'Jewish community'. The word 'stone' here translates the Greek word 'stèle'.

²⁸ 'Registration' translates a rare Greek word, *λαογραφίαν*, which has been found in Greek papyri from Egypt; it refers to a list of all people of the lower classes and of the slaves. The Slavonic Text merges this with the previous verse, wherein it is v. 20.

φερομένους τοῦ ζῆν μεταστῆσαι, ²⁹ τοὺς τε ἀπογραφομένους χαράσσεσθαι καὶ διὰ πυρὸς εἰς τὸ σῶμα παρασήμῳ Διονύσου κισσοφύλλῳ, οὓς καὶ καταχωρίσαι εἰς τὴν προσυνεσταλμένην αὐθεντίαν. ³⁰ ἵνα δὲ μὴ τοῖς πᾶσιν ἀπεχθόμενος φαίνεται, ὑπέγραψεν Ἐὰν δὲ τινες ἐξ αὐτῶν προαιρῶνται ἐν τοῖς κατὰ τὰς τελετὰς μεμνημένοις ἀναστρέφεσθαι, τούτους ἰσοπολίτας Ἀλεξανδρεῦσιν εἶναι.

³¹ Ἐνιοὶ μὲν οὖν ἐπιπολαίως τὰς τῆς πόλεως εὐσεβείας ἐπιβάθρας στυγοῦντες εὐχερῶς ἑαυτοὺς ἐδίδοσαν ὡς μεγάλης τινὸς κοινωνήσοντες εὐκλείας ἀπὸ τῆς ἐσομένης τῷ βασιλεῖ συναναστροφῆς. ³² οἱ δὲ πλεῖστοι γενναία ψυχῇ ἐνίσχυσαν καὶ οὐ διέστησαν τῆς εὐσεβείας τὰ τε χρήματα περὶ τοῦ ζῆν ἀντικαταλλασσόμενοι ἀδεῶς ἐπειρῶντο ἑαυτοὺς ῥύσασθαι ἐκ τῶν ἀπογραφῶν. ³³ εὐέλπιδές τε καθειστήκεισαν ἀντιλήμφεως τεύξασθαι καὶ τοὺς ἀποχωροῦντας ἐξ αὐτῶν ἐβδελύσσοντο καὶ ὡς πολεμίους τοῦ ἔθνους ἔκρινον καὶ τῆς κοινῆς συναναστροφῆς καὶ εὐχρηστίας ἐστέρουν.

taken by force and put to death; ²⁹ those who are registered are also to be branded on their bodies by fire with the ivy-leaf symbol of Dionysus and they shall also be reduced to their former limited status.” ³⁰ In order that he might not appear to be an enemy of all, he inscribed below: “But if any of them prefer to join those who have been initiated into the rites, they shall have equal rights with the Alexandrians.”

³¹ Now some, with an obvious abhorrence of the price for maintaining the religion of their city, readily gave themselves up and expected to enhance their reputation by their future association with the king. ³² However, the majority acted firmly with a nobler spirit; and, by paying money that they might live, they thought to escape the registration. ³³ They remained resolutely hopeful of obtaining help, and they abhorred those who separated themselves from them, considering them to be enemies of the nation, and depriving them of companionship and mutual help.

²⁹ Such branding in honour of a deity was not uncommon in ancient times (compare Rv 7:3, 13:16–17). According to 2M 6:7, Antiochus introduced the worship of Dionysus into Jerusalem.

³⁰ The NRSV has ‘citizenship’ in place of ‘rights’, here following the WEBBE.

³¹ The meaning of the Greek word, here translated as ‘city’, is uncertain.

³² The NRSV opens with ‘Nevertheless’ in place of ‘However’.

³³ For ‘those who separated themselves from them’, here following the NRSV, the WEBBE has ‘their own apostates’.

Μακκαβαίων Γ' 3

¹ Ἄ καὶ μεταλαμβάνων ὁ δυσσεβὴς ἐπὶ τοσοῦτον ἐξεχώλησεν ὥστε οὐ μόνον τοῖς κατὰ Ἀλεξάνδρειαν διοργίζεσθαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς ἐν τῇ χώρᾳ βαρυτέρως ἐναντιωθῆναι καὶ προστάξαι σπεύσαντας συναγαγεῖν πάντας ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ καὶ χειρίστῳ μόρῳ τοῦ ζῆν μεταστῆσαι. ² τούτων δὲ οἰκονομουμένων φήμη δυσμενῆς ἐξηχεῖτο κατὰ τοῦ γένους ἀνθρώποις συμφρονοῦσιν εἰς κακοποίησιν ἀφορμῆς διδομένης εἰς διάθεσιν ὡς ἂν ἀπὸ τῶν νομίμων αὐτοὺς κωλύοντων. ³ οἱ δὲ Ἰουδαῖοι τὴν μὲν πρὸς τοὺς βασιλεῖς εὐνοίαν καὶ πίστιν ἀδιάστροφον ἦσαν φυλάσσοντες, ⁴ σεβόμενοι δὲ τὸν θεὸν καὶ τῷ τούτου νόμῳ πολιτευόμενοι χωρισμὸν ἐποιοῦν ἐπὶ τῷ κατὰ τὰς τροφάς, δι' ἣν αἰτίαν ἐνίοις ἀπεχθεῖς ἐφαίνοντο. ⁵ τῇ δὲ τῶν δικαίων εὐπραξία κοσμοῦντες τὴν συναναστροφὴν ἅπασιν ἀνθρώποις εὐδόκιμοι καθειστήκεισαν. ⁶ τὴν μὲν οὖν περὶ τοῦ γένους ἐν πᾶσιν θρυλουμένην εὐπραξίαν οἱ ἀλλόφυλοι οὐδαμῶς διηριθμήσαντο, ⁷ τὴν δὲ περὶ τῶν προσκυνήσεων καὶ τροφῶν

3 MACCABEES 3

¹ On discovering this, the wicked king became so infuriated that not only was he angry with Jews in Alexandria but was more bitterly hostile to those in the countryside; and he ordered that all should quickly be gathered into one place and most cruelly put to death. ² While this was going on, a hostile rumour was circulating by men who conspired to harm the Jewish race, a pretext being given that they hindered others from observing the law. ³ Now, the Jews always maintained goodwill and unswerving loyalty toward the kings; ⁴ but, as they worshipped God and observed his Law, they kept apart with respect to foods. So, they appeared hateful to some; ⁵ but since they adorned their style of life with the good deeds of upright people, they kept good favour with everyone. ⁶ Nevertheless, those of other races paid no heed to their good service to their nation, which was common talk among all; ⁷ instead, they gossiped about the

3 MACCABEES 3

- ¹ The distinction between Jews in 'Alexandria' and those in the 'countryside' is made also in 4:11-12.
- ² In place of 'others', here following the NRSV, the LXX has 'them'. The 'rumour' (see Est 3:8) maliciously represents the Jews as hostile to the best interests of the state.
- ³ The Slavonic Text merges vv. 3 - 5 into one verse.
- ⁴ For a defence of the observance of Jewish dietary rules, see the *Letter of Aristeas*, §126-166.
- ⁵ Another reading for 'everyone' is 'the world'.
- ⁶ The Slavonic Text merges this and the following verse, wherein it is v. 4.
- ⁷ For the last sentence, here following the WEBBE, the NRSV has, "Therefore, they attached no ordinary reproach to them."

διάστασιν ἐθρύλουν φάσκοντες μήτε τῷ βασιλεῖ μήτε ταῖς δυνάμεσιν ὁμοσπόνδους τοὺς ἀνθρώπους γίνεσθαι, δυσμενεῖς δὲ εἶναι καὶ μέγα τι τοῖς πράγμασιν ἐναντιουμένους· καὶ οὐ τῷ τυχόντι περιῆψαν ψόγω.

⁸ οἱ δὲ κατὰ τὴν πόλιν Ἕλληνες οὐδὲν ἠδικημένοι ταραχὴν ἀπροσδόκητον περὶ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους θεωροῦντες καὶ συνδρομὰς ἀπροσκόπους γινομένας βοηθεῖν μὲν οὐκ ἔσθενον, τυραννικὴ γὰρ ἦν ἡ διάθεσις, παρεκάλουν δὲ καὶ δυσφόρους εἶχον καὶ μεταπεσεῖσθαι ταῦτα ὑπελάμβανον· ⁹ μὴ γὰρ οὕτω παροραθήσεσθαι τηλικοῦτο σύστημα μηδὲν ἠγνοηκός. ¹⁰ ἤδη δὲ καὶ τινες γείτονές τε καὶ φίλοι καὶ συμπραγματευόμενοι μυστικῶς τινὰς ἐπισπώμενοι πίστει ἐδίδουν συνασπιεῖν καὶ πᾶν ἐκτενὲς προσοίσεσθαι πρὸς ἀντίληψιν.

¹¹ Ἐκεῖνος μὲν οὖν τῇ κατὰ τὸ παρὸν εὐημερίᾳ γεγαυρωμένος καὶ οὐ καθορῶν τὸ τοῦ μεγίστου θεοῦ κράτος, ὑπολαμβάνων δὲ διηνεκῶς ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ διαμενεῖν βουλῇ, ἔγραψε κατ' αὐτῶν ἐπιστολὴν τήνδε

¹² Βασιλεὺς Πτολεμαῖος Φιλοπάτωρ τοῖς κατ' Αἴγυπτον καὶ κατὰ τόπον στρατηγοῖς καὶ στρατιώταις χαίρειν καὶ ἐρῶσθαι·

differences in worship and foods, alleging that these people were loyal neither to the king nor to his authorities, but were hostile and greatly opposed to his government. By this way of speaking, they brought much hatred on them.

⁸ This unexpected uproar and sudden gathering of men was observed by the Greeks in the city, concerning men who had never harmed them. Yet they had no power to help them, since oppression was all around, but they consoled them and expected things to change. ⁹ He who knows all things will not, they said, disregard so many people. ¹⁰ Already, some of their neighbours, friends and business associates had taken some of them aside privately and promised to protect them and to do their utmost to protect them.

¹¹ Then the king, boastful of his present good fortune, and not considering the might of the Greatest God, but assuming that he would persevere constantly in his same purpose, wrote this letter against them:

¹² “King Ptolemy Philopator to his commanders and soldiers in Egypt and all its districts, greetings and good health:

⁸ The ‘Greeks’ were the nobler, cultivated class, in distinction from ‘those of other races’ (v. 6).

⁹ Note that this is v. 6 in the Slavonic Text.

¹⁰ The NRSV ends, “to exert more earnest efforts for their assistance.”

¹¹ In place of ‘Greatest God’, here following the LXX, the NRSV has ‘supreme God’ (see #1:9).

¹² The Slavonic Text merges this with the following verse, wherein it is v. 9.

¹³ ἔρρωμαι δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς ἐγὼ καὶ τὰ πράγματα ἡμῶν.
¹⁴ τῆς εἰς τὴν Ἀσίαν γενομένης ἡμῖν ἐπιστρατείας, ἣς ἴστε καὶ αὐτοί, τῇ τῶν θεῶν ἀπροπτῶτῳ συμμαχίᾳ κατὰ λόγον ἐπὶ τέλος ἀχθείσης ¹⁵ ἠγησάμεθα μὴ βία δόρατος, ἐπεικείᾳ δὲ καὶ πολλῇ φιλανθρωπίᾳ τιθηνήσασθαι τὰ κατοικοῦντα Κοίλην Συρίαν καὶ Φοινίκην ἔδνη εὖ ποιῆσαι τε ἀσμένως. ¹⁶ καὶ τοῖς κατὰ πόλιν ἱεροῖς ἀπονεύμαντες προσόδους πλείστας προήχθημεν καὶ εἰς τὰ Ἱεροσόλυμα ἀναβάντες τιμῆσαι τὸ ἱερόν τῶν ἀλιτηρίων καὶ μηδέποτε ληγόντων τῆς ἀνοίας. ¹⁷ οἱ δὲ λόγῳ μὲν τὴν ἡμετέραν ἀποδεξάμενοι παρουσίαν, τῷ δὲ πράγματι νόθως, προδυμηθέντων ἡμῶν εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὸν ναὸν αὐτῶν καὶ τοῖς ἐκπρεπέσιν καὶ καλλίστοις ἀναθήμασιν τιμῆσαι ¹⁸ τύφοις φερόμενοι παλαιότεροι εἶρξαν ἡμᾶς τῆς εἰσόδου λειπόμενοι τῆς ἡμετέρας ἀλκῆς δι' ἣν ἔχομεν πρὸς ἅπαντας ἀνθρώπους φιλανθρωπίαν. ¹⁹ τὴν δὲ αὐτῶν εἰς ἡμᾶς δυσμένειαν ἔκδηλον καθιστάντες ὡς μονώτατοι τῶν ἐθνῶν βασιλεῦσιν καὶ τοῖς ἑαυτῶν εὐεργέταις ὑψαυχενοῦντες οὐδὲν γνήσιον βούλονται φέρειν.

¹³ "I am doing well, and so are my affairs. ¹⁴ When our expedition took place in Asia, as you yourselves know, it was brought to conclusion, according to plan, by the help of the gods in battle, ¹⁵ and we resolved not to rule those inhabiting Coele-Syria and Phoenicia by the power of the spear but should be their willing benefactors. ¹⁶ When we had granted very great revenues to the temples in the cities, we came on to Jerusalem also and went up to honour the temple of those wicked people, who never cease from their folly. ¹⁷ They received us by word but acted insincerely; because, when we proposed to enter their temple and honour it with magnificent and most beautiful gifts, ¹⁸ they were carried away by their old arrogance, and excluded us from entering; but they were spared the exercise of our power because of the benevolence that we have toward all. ¹⁹ Showing their ill will toward us, they become the only people among all nations who hold their heads high in defiance of kings and their own benefactors and are unwilling to accept any action as sincere.

¹³ For this verse, the NRSV reads, "I myself and our government are faring well."

¹⁴ The Slavonic Text merge this with the following verse, wherein it is v. 10.

¹⁵ 'Benevolence' (Greek *φιλανθρωπία*, see vv. 18, 20) was regarded as a major political virtue during the Hellenistic (and Byzantine) period.

¹⁶ Another reading for 'folly' is ''.

¹⁷ The Slavonic Text merges this with the following verse, wherein it is v. 12.

¹⁸ The NRSV has 'traditional' in place of 'old', here following the WEBBE.

¹⁹ The NRSV opens this verse with, "By maintaining their manifest ill will."

²⁰ ἡμεῖς δὲ τῆς τούτων ἀνοίᾳ συμπεριενεχθέντες καὶ μετὰ νίκης διακομισθέντες εἰς τὴν Αἴγυπτον τοῖς πᾶσιν ἔδνεσιν φιλανθρωπῶς ἀπαντήσαντες καθὼς ἔπρεπεν ἐποιήσαμεν, ²¹ ἐν δὲ τούτοις πρὸς τοὺς ὁμοφύλους αὐτῶν ἀμνησικακίαν ἅπασι γνωρίζοντες· διὰ τε τὴν συμμαχίαν καὶ τὰ πεπιστευμένα μετὰ ἀπλότητος αὐτοῖς ἀρχῆθεν μύρια πράγματα τολμήσαντες ἐξαλλοιῶσαι ἐβουλήθημεν καὶ πολιτείας αὐτοῦς Ἀλεξανδρέων καταξιῶσαι καὶ μετόχους τῶν αἰεὶ ἱερῶν καταστήσαι. ²² οἱ δὲ τούναντίον ἐκδεχόμενοι καὶ τῆς συμφύτῳ κακοηδεῖα τὸ καλὸν ἀπωσάμενοι, διηνεκῶς δὲ εἰς τὸ φαῦλον ἐκνεύοντες ²³ οὐ μόνον ἀπεστρέψαντο τὴν ἀτίμητον πολιτείαν, ἀλλὰ καὶ βδελύσσονται λόγῳ τε καὶ σιγῇ τοὺς ἐν αὐτοῖς ὀλίγους πρὸς ἡμᾶς γνησίως διακειμένους παρ' ἕκαστα ὑφορῶμενοι μετὰ τῆς δυσκλεεστάτης ἐμβιώσεως διὰ τάχους ἡμᾶς καταστρέψαι τὰ πράγματα. ²⁴ διὸ καὶ τεκμηρίοις καλῶς πεπεισμένοι τούτους κατὰ πάντα δυσνοεῖν ἡμῖν τρόπον καὶ προνοούμενοι μήποτε αἰφνιδίου μετέπειτα ταραχῆς ἐνστάσης ἡμῖν τοὺς δυσσεβεῖς τούτους κατὰ νότου

²⁰ "But we, when we arrived in Egypt victorious, accommodated their folly and did as was proper, since we treat all nations with benevolence. ²¹ Accordingly, bearing no ill will toward their compatriots here, both because of their alliance with us and the myriad affairs liberally entrusted to them from the beginning; and we ventured to make a change, by deciding both to deem them worthy of Alexandrian citizenship and to make them participants in our regular religious rites. ²² However, in their innate malice, they took this in a contrary spirit and disdained what is good. Since they incline constantly to evil, ²³ they not only spurn the priceless rights but, both by speech and by silence, they abhor the few among them who are sincerely disposed toward us; in every situation, in accordance with their infamous way of life, they secretly hope that we may soon alter our policy. ²⁴ So, convinced by these signs that they are ill disposed toward us in every way, we have taken precautions so that, if a sudden disorder should arise against us, we shall not have these impious people

²⁰ The NRSV adds 'ourselves to' after 'accommodated'.

²¹ Some MSS end this verse with, "partners of our regular priests." For the confidence placed in Jews, see 6:25 and Josephus, (*Ant.*, XIX v 2).

²² The Slavonic text merges this with the following verse, wherein it is v. 16.

²³ The NRSV has 'citizenship' in place of 'rights'.

²⁴ For this verse, the WEBBE reads, "Having then received certain proofs that these Jews bear us every sort of ill will, we must look forward to the possibility of some sudden tumult amongst ourselves when these impious men may turn traitors and barbarous enemies."

προδότας καὶ βαρβάρους ἔχωμεν πολεμίους ²⁵ προσ-
τετάχαμεν ἅμα τῷ προσπεσεῖν τὴν ἐπιστολὴν τήνδε
αὐθωρὶ τοὺς ἐννεμομένους σὺν γυναιξὶ καὶ τέκνοις μετὰ
ὑβρεων καὶ σκυλμῶν ἀποστεῖλαι πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἐν δεσμοῖς
σιδηροῖς πάντοθεν κατακεκλεισμένους, εἰς ἀνήκεστον
καὶ δυσκλεῆ πρόποντα δυσμενέσι φόνον. ²⁶ τούτων γὰρ
ὁμοῦ κολασθέντων διειλήφαμεν εἰς τὸν ἐπίλοιπον χρόνον
τελείως ἡμῶν τὰ πράγματα ἐν εὐσταθείᾳ καὶ τῇ
βελτίστῃ διαδέσει κατασταθήσεσθαι. ²⁷ ὅς δ' ἂν
σκεπάσῃ τινὰ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἀπὸ γεραίου μέχρι νηπίου
καὶ μέχρι τῶν ὑπομαστιδίων, αἰσχίσταις βασάνοις
ἀποτυμπανισθήσεται πανοικία. ²⁸ μηνύειν δὲ τὸν
βουλόμενον, ἐφ' ᾧ τὴν οὐσίαν τοῦ ἐμπίπτοντος ὑπὸ τὴν
εὐθυαν λήμψεται καὶ ἐκ τοῦ βασιλικοῦ ἀργυρίου
δραχμὰς δισχιλίας καὶ τῇ ἐλευθερίᾳ στεφανωθήσεται.
²⁹ πᾶς δὲ τόπος, οὗ ἂν φωραθῇ τὸ σύνολον
σκεπαζόμενος Ἰουδαῖος, ἄβατος καὶ πυριφλεγῆς γινέσθω
καὶ πάση θνητῇ φύσει καθ' ἅπαν ἄχρηστος φανήσεται
εἰς τὸν αἰεὶ χρόνον.

³⁰ Καὶ ὁ μὲν τῆς ἐπιστολῆς τύπος οὕτως ἐγγράπτο.

behind our backs as traitors and barbarous enemies.

²⁵ Therefore, we have given orders that, as soon as this letter arrives, you are to send us those who live among you, with their wives and children, with insulting and harsh treatment and bound securely with iron chains, to suffer the cruel and shameful death that befits enemies.

²⁶ For, when all of these have been punished, we are sure that for the remaining time the government will be established for ourselves in good order and in the best state. ²⁷ But those who shelter any of the Jews, whether old people or children or even infants, will be tortured to death with the most hateful torments, together with their households. ²⁸ Anyone willing to give information will receive the property of those who incur the punishment, and also two thousand drachmae from the royal treasury, and will be awarded their freedom. ²⁹ Every place detected sheltering a Jew is to be made unapproachable and burned with fire and shall become useless for all time to any mortal creature."

³⁰ The letter was written in the above form.

²⁵ The NRSV has 'sure' in place of 'cruel', here following the WEBBE.

²⁶ The WEBBE ends with, "on a firm and satisfactory basis."

²⁷ The NRSV has 'families' in place of 'households'.

²⁸ Another reading of 'awarded their freedom' is 'crowned at the Eleutheria' (#2:29). A drachma was about a day's pay for an agricultural labourer.

²⁹ The WEBBE has 'living being' in place of 'mortal creature', here following the NRSV.

³⁰ The Slavonic Text includes this as part of the previous verse, wherein it is v. 22.

Μακκαβαιων Γ´ 4

¹ Πάντη δέ, ὅπου προσέπιπτεν τοῦτο τὸ πρόσταγμα, δημοτελής συνίστατο τοῖς ἔθνεσιν εὐωχία μετὰ ἀλαλαγμῶν καὶ χαρᾶς ὡς ἂν τῆς προκατεσκιρωμένης αὐτοῖς πάλαι κατὰ διάνοιαν μετὰ παρηρησίας νῦν ἐκφαινομένης ἀπεχθείας. ² τοῖς δὲ Ἰουδαίοις ἄληκτον πένθος ἦν καὶ πανόδυρτος μετὰ δακρῶν βοή στεναγμοῖς πεπυρωμένης πάντοθεν αὐτῶν τῆς καρδίας ὀλοφυρομένων τὴν ἀπροσδόκητον ἐξαίφνης αὐτοῖς ἐπικριθεῖσαν ὀλεθρίαν. ³ τίς νομὸς ἢ πόλις ἢ τίς τὸ σύνολον οἰκητὸς τόπος ἢ τίνες ἀγυιαὶ κοπετοῦ καὶ γόων ἐπ’ αὐτοῖς οὐκ ἐνεπιπλῶντο; ⁴ οὕτως γὰρ μετὰ πικρίας ἀνοίκτου ψυχῆς ὑπὸ τῶν κατὰ πόλιν στρατηγῶν ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἐξαπεστέλλοντο ὥστε ἐπὶ ταῖς ἐξάλλοις τιμωρίαις καὶ τινὰς τῶν ἐχθρῶν λαμβάνοντας πρὸ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν τὸν κοινὸν ἔλεον καὶ λογιζομένους τὴν ἄδηλον τοῦ βίου καταστροφὴν δακρῦειν αὐτῶν τὴν δυσάθλιον ἐξαποστολήν. ⁵ ἤγετο γὰρ γεραιῶν πλήθος πολιᾶ πεπυκασμένων, τὴν ἐκ τοῦ γήρωσ νωθρότητα ποδῶν ἐπίκυφον ἀνατροπῆς ὀρμῆ βιαίας ἀπάσης αἰδοῦς ἄνευ πρὸς ὀξεῖαν καταχρωμένων πορείαν. ⁶ αἱ δὲ ἄρτι πρὸς βίου

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¹ Wherever this decree was received, a feast at public expense was arranged for the Gentiles with shouts and gladness, for the hardened hatred that had long ago been in their minds was now shown openly. ² But the Jews, suffered mourning, lamentation, and tearful cries; everywhere, their hearts were burning, and they groaned because of the sudden destruction which was decreed against them. ³ What district or city, or what habitable place at all, or what streets were not filled with the mourning and wailing for them? ⁴ For, with such a harsh and ruthless spirit were they being sent off, all together, by the generals in the several cities that, at the sight of their unusual punishments, even some of their enemies, perceiving the common object of pity before their eyes, reflected on the uncertainty of life and shed tears at their most miserable expulsion. ⁵ For, a multitude of grey-haired old men, sluggish and bent with age, was being led away, urged onward by the violence with which they were driven shamefully. ⁶ Girls who had entered the bridal chamber to

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- ¹ ‘Enmity’ on the part of native-born Egyptians for the Jews is assumed in 3M; contrast 3:8.
- ² The NRSV ends with, “the unexpected destruction that had suddenly been decreed for them.” Here, we follow the WEBBE.
- ³ The WEBBE has ‘home’ in place of ‘district’.
- ⁴ On the ‘unusual punishments’, see 2M 9:6.
- ⁵ The NRSV has ‘forced to march at a swift pace’ in place of ‘urged onward’.
- ⁶ The literal translation of ‘bridal chamber’ is ‘canopy’. Some MSS end this verse with, “as though torn by heathen whelps.”

κοινωνίαν γαμικὸν ὑπεληλυθυῖαι παστὸν νεάνιδες ἀντὶ
τέρψεως μεταλαβοῦσαι γόους καὶ κόνει τὴν μυροβρεχῆ
πεφυρμένοι κόμην, ἀκαλύπτως δὲ ἀγόμεναι θρήνον ἀνδ'
ὑμεναίων ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἐξῆρχον ὡς ἐσπαραγμένοι σκυλμοῖς
ἀλλοεθνέσιν· ⁷ δέσμιαι δὲ δημοσίᾳ μέχρι τῆς εἰς τὸ πλοῖον
ἐμβολῆς εἴλκοντο μετὰ βίας. ⁸ οἳ τε τούτων συνζυγεῖς βρόχοις
ἀντὶ στεφένων τοὺς αὐχένας περιπεπλεγμένοι μετὰ ἀκμαίας
νεανικῆς ἡλικίας ἀντὶ εὐωχίας καὶ νεωτερικῆς ῥαθυμίας τὰς
ἐπιλοίπους τῶν γάμων ἡμέρας ἐν θρήνοις διῆγον παρὰ πόδας
ἤδη τὸν ἄδην ὀρῶντες κείμενοι. ⁹ κατήχθησαν δὲ θηρίων
τρόπον ἀγόμενοι σιθηροδέσμοις ἀνάγκαις, οἳ μὲν τοῖς ζυγοῖς
τῶν πλοίων προσηλωμένοι τοὺς τραχήλους, οἳ δὲ τοὺς πόδας
ἀρρήκτοις κατησφαλισμένοι πέδαις, ¹⁰ ἔτι καὶ τῷ καθύπερθε
πυκνῷ σανιδώματι διακειμένῳ, ὅπως πάντοθεν ἐσκοτισμένοι
τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἀγωγὴν ἐπιβούλων ἐν παντὶ τῷ κατάπλω
λαμβάνωσιν.

¹¹ Τούτων δὲ ἐπὶ τὴν λεγομένην Σχεδίαν ἀχθέντων καὶ τοῦ
παράπλου περανθέντος, καθὼς ἦν δεδογματισμένον τῷ
βασιλεῖ, προσέταξεν αὐτοὺς ἐν τῷ πρὸ τῆς πόλεως ἵπποδρόμῳ

share married life exchanged joy for wailing, their myrrh-
perfumed hair sprinkled with ashes, and were hurried away
unveiled, altogether raising a lament instead of a wedding
song, as they were torn by the harsh treatment of the heathen.
⁷ In bonds and in public view, they were violently dragged
on board ship. ⁸ Their husbands, in the prime of youth, their
necks encircled with ropes instead of garlands, spent the
remaining days of their marriage festival in lamentation
instead of good cheer and youthful revelry, seeing Hades
already lying at their feet. ⁹ They were brought on board like
wild animals, driven under the constraint of iron bonds;
some were fastened by the neck to the benches of the boats,
others had their feet secured by unbreakable fetters, ¹⁰ and,
further, the planks of the deck above them blocked out the
light and shut out the day on every side, so they were treated
like traitors during the whole voyage.

¹¹ They were carried like this in this vessel, and at the end of
it arrived at Schedia. The king had ordered them to be
enclosed in the hippodrome that had been built with a vast

⁷ The Slavonic Text merges this with the previous verse.

⁸ The WEBBE translates ἄδην ('Hades') as 'the grave'.

⁹ The Slavonic Text merges this with the following verse, wherein it is v. 8.

¹⁰ The NRSV ends this verse, here (loosely) following the WEBBE, with, "in addition, they were confined under a solid deck so that, with their eyes in total darkness, they would undergo treatment befitting traitors during the whole voyage."

¹¹ An alternative reading for the end of the verse is, "... or claim protection of the walls." The meaning of the Greek is uncertain, but the implication is that the Jews living in Alexandria (v. 12) had been thus far unmolested (cf. 3:1). 'Schedia' was a promontory, ~5 Km from Alexandria; the 'hippodrome' was at the East (Canobic) Gate of Alexandria; according to Strabo (XVII 1:10,16), a canal joined Schedia and the Canobic Gate.

παρεμβαλεῖν ἀπλάτῳ καθεστῶτι περιμέτρῳ καὶ πρὸς παραδειγματισμὸν ἄγαν εὐκαιροτάτῳ καθεστῶτι πᾶσι τοῖς καταπορευομένοις εἰς τὴν πόλιν καὶ τοῖς ἐκ τούτων εἰς τὴν χώραν στελλομένοις πρὸς ἐκδημίαν πρὸς τὸ μηδὲ ταῖς δυνάμεσιν αὐτοῦ κοινωνεῖν μηδὲ τὸ σύνολον καταξιῶσαι περιβόλων. ¹² ὡς δὲ τοῦτο ἐγενήθη, ἀκούσας τοὺς ἐκ τῆς πόλεως ὁμοεθνεῖς κρυβῆ ἔκπορευομένους πυκνότερον ἀποδύρεσθαι τὴν ἀκλεῆ τῶν ἀδελφῶν ταλαιπωρίαν ¹³ διοργισθεῖς προσέταξεν καὶ τούτοις ὁμοῦ τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον ἐπιμελῶς ὡς ἐκείνοις ποιῆσαι μὴ λειπομένοις κατὰ μηδένα τρόπον τῆς ἐκείνων τιμωρίας, ¹⁴ ἀπογραφῆναι δὲ πᾶν τὸ φῦλον ἐξ ὀνόματος, οὐκ εἰς τὴν ἔμπροσθεν βραχεῖ προδεδηλωμένην τῶν ἔργων κατάπονον λατρείαν, στρεβλωθέντας δὲ ταῖς παρηγγελμέναις αἰκίαις τὸ τέλος ἀφανίσαι μιᾶς ὑπὸ καιρὸν ἡμέρας. ¹⁵ ἐγένετο μὲν οὖν ἡ τούτων ἀπογραφή μετὰ πικρᾶς σπουδῆς καὶ φιλοτίμου προσεδρείας ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν ἡλίου μέχρι δυσμῶν ἀνήνυτον λαμβάνουσα τὸ τέλος ἐπὶ ἡμέρας τεσσαράκοντα.

¹⁶ Μεγάλως δὲ καὶ διηνεκῶς ὁ βασιλεὺς χαρᾷ πεπληρωμένος συμπόσια ἐπὶ πάντων τῶν εἰδώλων συνιστάμενος πεπλανημένη πόρρω τῆς ἀληθείας φρενὶ καὶ βεβήλῳ στόματι

perimeter wall in front of the city, and that was well suited to make them an obvious spectacle to all coming back into the city and to those of them going out into the country, so that they could neither communicate with the king's forces nor in any way claim to be inside the circuit of the city. ¹² When this had happened, the king, hearing that the Jews' compatriots from the city frequently went out in secret to lament bitterly the ignoble misfortune of their kindred, ¹³ was full of rage, and commanded that they should be carefully subjected to the same – and not one bit milder – treatment. ¹⁴ The entire race was to be registered individually, not for the hard labour that has been briefly mentioned before, but to be tortured with the outrages that had been ordered, and at the end to be destroyed in the space of a single day. ¹⁵ The registration of those people was therefore conducted with bitter haste and zealous intensity from the rising of the sun to its setting, coming to an end after forty days but still uncompleted.

¹⁶ The king was filled with great and constant joy, celebrating feasts in honour of his idols, with a mind far from truth and his profane mouth, praising speechless things, deaf and

¹² The Slavonic Text merges this with the following verse, wherein it is v. 10.

¹³ The NRSV reads, "ordered in his rage that these people be dealt with in precisely the same fashion as the others, not omitting any detail of their punishment."

¹⁴ On the 'hard labour', see 2:28. The registration for poll tax is transformed into an instrument for the execution of the entire race of Jews.

¹⁵ In place of 'with bitter haste and zealous intensity', the WEBBE has 'cruelly, zealously, assiduously'.

¹⁶ In place of 'filled with great and constant joy', the NRSV has 'greatly and continually filled with joy'.

τὰ μὲν κωφὰ καὶ μὴ δυνάμενα αὐτοῖς λαλεῖν ἢ ἀρήγειν ἐπαινωῶν, εἰς δὲ τὸν μέγιστον Θεὸν τὰ μὴ καθήκοντα λαλῶν. ¹⁷ μετὰ δὲ τὸ προειρημένον τοῦ χρόνου διάστημα προσ- ηνέγκαντο οἱ γραμματεῖς τῷ βασιλεῖ μηκέτι ἰσχύειν τὴν τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἀπογραφὴν ποιῆσαι διὰ τὴν ἀμέτρητον αὐτῶν πληθύν ¹⁸ καίπερ ὄντων ἔτι κατὰ τὴν χώραν τῶν πλειόνων, τῶν μὲν κατὰ τὰς οἰκίας ἔτι συνεστηκότων, τῶν δὲ καὶ κατὰ τόπον, ὡς ἀδυνάτου καθεστῶτος πᾶσιν τοῖς ἐπ' Αἴγυπτον στρατηγοῖς. ¹⁹ ἀπειλήσαντος δὲ αὐτοῖς σκληρότερον ὡς δεδωροκοπημένοις εἰς μηχανὴν τῆς ἐκφυγῆς συνέβη σαφῶς αὐτὸν περὶ τούτου πιστωθῆναι ²⁰ λεγόντων μετὰ ἀποδείξεως καὶ τὴν χαρτηρίαν ἤδη καὶ τοὺς γραφικοὺς καλάμους, ἐν οἷς ἐχρῶντο, ἐκλελοιπέναι. ²¹ τοῦτο δὲ ἦν ἐνέργεια τῆς τοῦ βοηθοῦντος τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις ἐξ οὐρανοῦ προνοίας ἀνικλήτου.

incapable of communicating or helping, and uttering improper words against the Greatest God. ¹⁷ But, after the previously mentioned interval of time, the scribes declared to the king that they were no longer able to take the census of the Jews because of their immense number, ¹⁸ though most of them were still in the country, some still residing in their homes, and some at the place; the task was impossible for all the generals in Egypt. ¹⁹ After he had threatened them severely, charging that they had been bribed to contrive a means of escape, he was clearly convinced about the matter ²⁰ when they said and proved that both the paper and the quills that they used for writing had already given out. ²¹ However, this was an act of the invincible providence of him who was aiding the Jews from heaven.

¹⁷ The Slavonic Text merges this with the following verse, wherein it is v. 14.

¹⁸ Instead of 'at the place', some MSS read 'on the way'.

¹⁹ The Slavonic Text merges this with the following verse, wherein it is v. 15.

²⁰ After 'paper', some translators add 'factory'.

²¹ This act of 'invincible providence' serves as the focal point for the entire narrative.

Μακκαβαίων Γ' 5

¹ Τότε προσκαλεσάμενος Ἑρμωνα τὸν πρὸς τῇ τῶν ἐλεφάντων ἐπιμελείᾳ βαρεῖα μεμεστωμένος ὀργῇ καὶ χόλῳ κατὰ πᾶν ἀμετάθετος ² ἐκέλευσεν ὑπὸ τὴν ἐπερχομένην ἡμέραν δαψιλέσι δράκεσι λιβανωτοῦ καὶ οἴνω πλείονι ἀκράτῳ ἅπαντας τοὺς ἐλέφαντας ποτίσαι ὄντας τὸν ἀριθμὸν πεντακοσίους καὶ ἀγριωθέντας τῇ τοῦ πόματος ἀφθόνῳ χορηγίᾳ εἰσαγαγεῖν πρὸς συνάντησιν τοῦ μέρους τῶν Ἰουδαίων. ³ ὁ μὲν τὰδε προστάσεων ἐτρέπετο πρὸς τὴν εὐωχίαν συναγαγὼν τοὺς μάλιστα τῶν φίλων καὶ τῆς στρατιᾶς ἀπεχθῶς ἔχοντας πρὸς τοὺς Ἰουδαίους. ⁴ ὁ δὲ ἐλεφαντάρχης τὸ προσταγὴν ἀραρότως Ἑρμων συνετέλει. ⁵ οἱ τε πρὸς τούτοις λειτουργοὶ κατὰ τὴν ἐσπέραν ἐξιώντες τὰς τῶν ταλαιπωρούντων ἐδέσμευον χεῖρας τὴν τε λοιπὴν ἐμηχανῶντο περὶ αὐτοὺς ἀσφάλειαν ἔννουχον δόξαντες ὁμοῦ λήμψεσθαι τὸ φῦλον πέρας τῆς ὀλεθρίας. ⁶ οἱ δὲ πάσης σκέπης ἔρημοι δοκοῦντες εἶναι τοῖς ἔθνεσιν Ἰουδαῖοι διὰ τὴν

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¹ Then he summoned Hermon, who was the keeper of the elephants, being completely inflexible and filled with overpowering anger and wrath; ² he and commanded him to drug all the elephants – five hundred in number – with large handfuls of frankincense and plenty of unmixed wine, early on the following day, and to drive them in, maddened by the lavish abundance of drink, so that the Jews might meet their doom. ³ When he had given these orders, he returned to his feasting, together with those of his Friends and of the army who were especially hostile toward the Jews. ⁴ Hermon, keeper of the elephants, proceeded faithfully to carry out the orders. ⁵ The servants in charge of them went out in the evening, bound the hands of the wretched people, and arranged for their continued custody through the night, convinced that the whole nation would experience its final destruction. ⁶ For, to the Gentiles, it appeared that the Jews

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- ¹ The Slavonic Text merges this with the following verse.
- ² 'Five hundred' elephants is an exaggeration; Ptolemy had 73 at the battle of Raphia.
- ³ The Slavonic Text merges this with the following verse, wherein it is v. 2.
- ⁴ The WEBBE here has 'master' in place of 'keeper'.
- ⁵ According to 3:25, they had already been bound securely, but perhaps their hands had been loosened when the Jews were enclosed within the hippodrome (see #49).
- ⁶ The reader here understands that the Jews are constantly aided by divine Providence. The Slavonic Text merges this with the following two verses, wherein it is v. 4.

πάντοθεν περιέχουσιν αὐτοὺς μετὰ δεσμῶν ἀνάγκη ⁷ τὸν παντοκράτορα κύριον καὶ πάσης δυνάμεως δυναστεύοντα, ἐλεήμονα θεὸν αὐτῶν καὶ πατέρα, δυσκαταπαύστῳ βοῇ πάντες μετὰ δακρύων ἐπεκαλέσαντο θεόμενοι ⁸ τὴν κατ' αὐτῶν μεταστρέψαι βουλὴν ἀνοσίαν καὶ ῥύσασθαι αὐτοὺς μετὰ μεγαλομεροῦς ἐπιφανείας ἐκ τοῦ παρὰ πόδας ἐν ἐτοιμίῳ μόρου. ⁹ τούτων μὲν οὖν ἐκτενῶς ἢ λιτανεῖα ἀνέβαινεν εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν.

¹⁰ Ὁ δὲ Ἑρμων τοὺς ἀνηλεεῖς ἐλέφαντας ποτίσας πεπληρωμένους τῆς τοῦ οἴνου πολλῆς χορηγίας καὶ τοῦ λιβάνου μεμεστωμένους ὄρθριος ἐπὶ τὴν αὐλὴν παρῆν περὶ τούτων προσαγγεῖλαι τῷ βασιλεῖ. ¹¹ τὸ δὲ ἀπ' αἰῶνος χρόνου κτίσμα καλὸν ἐν νυκτὶ καὶ ἡμέρᾳ ἐπιβαλλόμενον ὑπὸ τοῦ χαριζομένου πᾶσιν, οἷς ἂν αὐτὸς θελήσῃ, ὕπνου μέρος ἀπέστειλεν εἰς τὸν βασιλέα, ¹² καὶ ἠδίστῳ καὶ βαθεῖ κατεσχέθη τῇ ἐνεργείᾳ τοῦ δεσπότης τῆς ἀδέσμου μὲν προδέσεως πολὺ διεσφαλμένος, τοῦ δὲ ἀμεταδέτου λογιμοῦ μεγάλως διεψευσμένος. ¹³ οἱ τε Ἰουδαῖοι τὴν προσημανθεῖσαν ὥραν διαφυγόντες τὸν ἅγιον ἦνουν θεὸν αὐτῶν καὶ πάλιν

were left without any aid, ⁷ because in their bonds they were forcibly confined on every side. However, with tears and a voice hard to silence, they all called upon the Almighty Lord and Ruler of all power, their merciful God and Father, praying ⁸ that he avert with vengeance the evil plot against them and, in a glorious manifestation, rescue them from the fate now prepared for them. ⁹ Thus, their entreaty ascended favourably to heaven.

¹⁰ But Hermon, when he had drugged the pitiless elephants until they had been filled with a great abundance of wine mixed with frankincense, came to the palace early in the morning to report to the king about these preparations. ¹¹ But the Lord sent upon the king a portion of sleep, the gift which, from the beginning, night and day, is bestowed by him who grants it to whomever he wishes; ¹² and, by the action of the Lord, he was overcome by so pleasant and deep a sleep that he quite failed in his lawless purpose and was completely frustrated in his inflexible plan. ¹³ Then the Jews, having escaped the appointed hour, praised their Holy God and

⁷ The title 'Father' is also given to God in Tb 13:4 and Ws 11:10. See #6 on the Slavonic Text verse division here.

⁸ 'Glorious manifestation' reflects the vocabulary of 2M 2:21.

⁹ The Slavonic Text merges this with the following verse, wherein it is v. 5.

¹⁰ The NRSV has 'presented himself at the courtyard' in place of 'came to the palace', here following the WEBBE.

¹¹ In place of 'the Lord', here following the NRSV, the LXX has 'he'. The divine gift of sleep is extolled in the Latin poets (Seneca, *Hercules Furens* 1066ff, Statius, *Silvae* v. 4); compare Ps 127:2.

¹² After 'sleep', some MSS add 'from evening until the ninth hour'; the NRSV includes the clause as a footnote.

¹³ Another possible reading for 'Gentiles' (throughout this section) is 'pagans'.

ἠξίουσαν τὸν εὐκατάλλακτον δεῖξαι μεγαλοσθενοῦς ἑαυτοῦ χειρὸς κράτος ἔδνεσιν ὑπερηφάνοις.

¹⁴ μεσοῦσης δὲ ἤδη δεκάτης ὥρας σχεδὸν ὁ πρὸς ταῖς κλήσεσιν τεταγμένος ἀδρόους τοὺς κλητοὺς ἰδὼν ἔνυξεν προσελθὼν τὸν βασιλέα. ¹⁵ καὶ μόλις διεγείρας ὑπέδειξε τὸν τῆς συμποσίας καιρὸν ἤδη παρατρέχοντα τὸν περὶ τούτων λόγον ποιούμενος. ¹⁶ ὃν ὁ βασιλεὺς λογιζάμενος καὶ τραπεῖς εἰς τὸν πότον ἐκέλευσεν τοὺς παραγεγονότας ἐπὶ τὴν συμποσίαν ἀντικρυς ἀνακλῖναι αὐτοῦ. ¹⁷ οὗ καὶ γενομένου παρήνει εἰς εὐωχίαν δόντας ἑαυτοὺς τὸ παρὸν τῆς συμποσίας ἐπὶ πολὺ γεραιρομένους εἰς εὐφροσύνην καταδέσθαι μέρος. ¹⁸ ἐπὶ πλεῖον δὲ προβαινούσης τῆς ὁμιλίας τὸν Ἑρμωνα προσκαλεσάμενος ὁ βασιλεὺς μετὰ πικρᾶς ἀπειλῆς ἐπυνθάνετο, τίνας ἔνεκεν αἰτίας εἰάδησαν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι τὴν περιουῶσαν ἡμέραν περιβεβιωκότες. ¹⁹ τοῦ δὲ ὑποδείξαντος ἔτι νυκτὸς τὸ προσταγὲν ἐπὶ τέλος ἀγειοχένοι καὶ τῶν φίλων αὐτῷ προσμαρτυρησάντων ²⁰ τὴν ὠμότητα χεῖρονα Φαλάριδος ἐσχηκῶς ἔφη τῷ τῆς σήμερον ὑπνω χάριν ἔχειν αὐτούς· ἀνυπερθέτως δὲ εἰς τὴν ἐπιτελοῦσαν ἡμέραν κατὰ τὸ

again implored him who is easily reconciled to show the might of his powerful hand to the arrogant Gentiles.

¹⁴ But now, as it was nearly the middle of the tenth hour, the person in charge of the invitations, seeing that the guests assembled, approached the king and nudged him; ¹⁵ and, when he had, with difficulty, roused him, he pointed out that mealtime was slipping by and gave him an account of the situation. ¹⁶ The king, after considering this, returned to his drinking and ordered those present for the banquet to recline opposite him. ¹⁷ This done, he urged them to enjoy revelry and to make the present portion of the banquet joyful by celebrating even more. ¹⁸ After the party had been going on for some time, the king summoned Hermon and, with sharp threats, demanded to know why the Jews had been allowed to survive through the present day. ¹⁹ But when, with the corroboration of his Friends, he pointed out that he had carried out overnight the order given him, ²⁰ the king, possessed by a savagery worse than that of Phalaris, said the Jews benefited from today's sleep, adding, "But tomorrow

¹⁴ The 'middle of the tenth hour' was 3:30 pm. The Slavonic Text merges this with the following 2 verse, wherein it is v. 9.

¹⁵ The NRSV has 'the hour of the banquet' in place of 'mealtime', here following the WEBBE.

¹⁶ The WEBBE has 'sit down' in place of 'recline'.

¹⁷ In place of 'present', some MSS have 'delayed' or 'untimely'.

¹⁸ Note that this is v. 11 in the Slavonic Text.

¹⁹ The Slavonic Text merges this with the part of following verse, wherein it is v. 12.

²⁰ The cruelty of 'Phalaris', tyrant of Agrigentum (570-554 BCE) was proverbial (*Polybius*, XII 25). The Slavonic Text includes the latter part of this verse (from 'But') as a separate verse (v. 13).

ὄμοιον ἐτοίμασον τοὺς ἐλέφαντας ἐπὶ τὸν τῶν ἀθεμίτων
Ιουδαίων ἀφανισμόν. ²¹ εἰπόντος δὲ τοῦ βασιλέως ἀσμένως
πάντες μετὰ χαρᾶς οἱ παρόντες ὁμοῦ συναινέσαντες εἰς τὸν
ἴδιον οἶκον ἕκαστος ἀνέλυσεν. ²² καὶ οὐχ οὕτως εἰς ὕπνον
κατεχρήσαντο τὸν χρόνον τῆς νυκτός, ὡς εἰς τὸ παντοίους
μηχανᾶσθαι τοῖς ταλαιπώροις δοκοῦσιν ἐμπαιγμούς.

²³ Ἄρτι δὲ ἀλεκτροῦν ἐκέκραγεν ὄρθηριος, καὶ τὰ θηρία
καθωπλικῶς ὁ Ἑρμων ἐν τῷ μεγάλῳ περιστύλῳ διεκίνει.
²⁴ τὰ δὲ κατὰ τὴν πόλιν πλήθη συνήθροιστο πρὸς τὴν
οἰκτροτάτην θεωρίαν προσδοκῶντα τὴν πρωίαν μετὰ
σπουδῆς. ²⁵ οἱ δὲ Ἰουδαῖοι κατὰ τὸν ἀμερῆ ψυχουλκούμενοι
χρόνον πολύδακρυν ἰκετείαν ἐν μέλεσιν γοεροῖς τείνοντες τὰς
χεῖρας εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἐδέοντο τοῦ μεγίστου Θεοῦ πάλιν
αὐτοῖς βοηθῆσαι συντόμως. ²⁶ οὕπω δὲ ἡλίου βολαὶ
κατεσπείροντο, καὶ τοῦ βασιλέως τοὺς φίλους ἐκδεχομένου ὁ
Ἑρμων παραστάς ἐκάλει πρὸς τὴν ἔξοδον ὑποδεικνύων τὸ
πρόθυμον τοῦ βασιλέως ἐν ἐτοίμῳ κεῖσθαι. ²⁷ τοῦ δὲ
ἀποδεξαμένου καὶ καταπλαγέντος ἐπὶ τῇ παρανόμῳ ἐξόδῳ
κατὰ πᾶν ἀγνωσίᾳ κεκρατημένος ἐπυνθάνετο, τί τὸ πρᾶγμα,

prepare the elephants, as before, for the destruction of the
lawless Jews!" ²¹ When the king had spoken, all those present
readily and joyfully with one accord gave their approval, and
all went to their own homes; ²² but they did not so much
employ the duration of the night in sleep as in devising all
sorts of insults for those they thought to be doomed.

²³ Then, as soon as the morning cock had crowed, Hermon,
having armed the animals, moved them along in the great
colonnade. ²⁴ The crowds of the city were assembled for this
most pitiful spectacle and were eagerly awaiting daybreak.
²⁵ But the Jews, at their last gasp – since the time had run out
– stretched their hands toward heaven and, with tearful
supplication and mournful dirges, implored the Greatest
God to help them again at once. ²⁶ The rays of the sun were
not yet shed abroad, and while the king was receiving his
Friends, Hermon arrived and invited him to come out,
indicating that what the king desired was ready for action.
²⁷ But, receiving him, he was astonished at his unusual
invitation; overcome by a spirit of oblivion about everything,

²¹ The Slavonic Text merges this with the following verse, wherein it is v. 14.

²² The WEBBE ends the verse with, “*contriving cruel mockeries for those deemed miserable.*”

²³ An alternative translation of ‘armed’ is ‘equipped’. The ‘great colonnade’ was no doubt some well-known place in Alexandria. The Slavonic Text merges this with the following verse, wherein it is v. 15.

²⁴ The NRSV has ‘had been assembled’ in place of ‘were assembled’.

²⁵ The WEBBE lacks the parenthetical clause, ‘since the time had run out’, here following the NRSV.

²⁶ Note that this is v. 17 in the Slavonic Text.

²⁷ The Slavonic Text merges this with the following verse, wherein in it v. 18.

ἐφ' οὗ τοῦτο αὐτῷ μετὰ σπουδῆς τετέλεσται.²⁸ τοῦτο δὲ ἦν ἡ ἐνέργεια τοῦ πάντα δεσποτεύοντος Θεοῦ τῶν πρὶν αὐτῷ μεμηχανημένων λήθην κατὰ διάνοιαν ἐντεθεικός.²⁹ ὑπεδείκνυεν ὁ Ἑρμων καὶ πάντες οἱ φίλοι τὰ θηρία καὶ τὰς δυνάμεις ἡτοιμάσθαι, βασιλεῦ, κατὰ τὴν σὴν ἐκτενῆ πρόθεσιν.³⁰ ὁ δὲ ἐπὶ τοῖς ῥηθεῖσιν πληρωθεὶς βαρεῖ χόλω διὰ τὸ περὶ τούτων προνοία Θεοῦ διεσκεδάσθαι πᾶν αὐτοῦ τὸ νόημα ἐνατενίσας μετὰ ἀπειλῆς εἶπεν.³¹ Ὅσοι γονεῖς παρῆσαν ἢ παιδῶν γόνιοι, τήνδε θηρσὶν ἀγρίοις ἐσκεύασα ἂν δαψιλῆ δοῖναν ἀντὶ τῶν ἀνεγκλήτων ἐμοὶ καὶ προγόνοις ἐμοῖς ἀποδεδειγμένων ὀλοσχερῆ βεβαίαν πίστιν ἐξόχως Ἰουδαίων.³² καίπερ εἰ μὴ διὰ τὴν τῆς συντροφίας στοργὴν καὶ τῆς χρείας, τὸ ζῆν ἀντὶ τούτων ἐστερήθης.³³ οὕτως ὁ Ἑρμων ἀπροσδόκητον ἐπικίνδυνον ὑπήνεγκεν ἀπειλὴν καὶ τῇ ὀράσει καὶ τῷ προσώπῳ συνεστάλη.³⁴ ὁ καθεὶς δὲ τῶν φίλων σκυθρωπῶς ὑπεκρέων τοὺς συνηθροισμένους ἀπέλυσαν ἕκαστον ἐπὶ τὴν ἰδίαν ἀσχολίαν.³⁵ οἱ τε Ἰουδαῖοι τὰ παρὰ τοῦ βασιλέως ἀκούσαντες τὸν ἐπιφανῆ Θεὸν κύριον βασιλέα

he enquired about the purpose of this haste.²⁸ This was the act of God, who rules over all things; for, he had made his mind forge the things he had previously devised.²⁹ Then Hermon and the Friends explained, saying, "O king, the animals and the troops are ready, according to your strict order."³⁰ But, at these words, he was filled with a fierce anger; for, by the providence of God, his mind was confused about these things; and, with a threatening look, he said,³¹ "If your parents or children were present, they would have made a rich feast for the savage animals, not these innocent Jews, who have loyally served me and my fathers."³² In fact, you would have been deprived of life instead of these, if it were not for an affection arising from familiar friendship and your office."³³ Thus, Hermon suffered an unexpected and dangerous threat, and his eyes wavered and his face fell.³⁴ The king's Friends one by one quietly slipped away and dismissed the assembled people to their own occupations.³⁵ Then the Jews, on hearing what the king had said, praised

²⁸ The NRSV ends with, "he had implanted in his mind a forgetfulness of the things he had previously devised."

²⁹ The NRSV adds 'king's' before 'Friends'. Some MSS end this verse with, "... pointed to the beasts and the armed forces, saying, "They are ready, O king, according to your eager purpose."" An interpolation in several Greek MSS indicates that, though Ptolemy was moved by compassion and determined to release the Jews, Hermon influenced him to proceed with his plans to destroy them.

³⁰ The NRSV has 'overpowering wrath' in place of 'fierce anger'.

³¹ The Slavonic Text merges this with the following verse, wherein it is v. 21.

³² The NRSV ends with, "our nurture in common and your usefulness."

³³ The Slavonic Text merges this with the following verse, wherein it is v. 22.

³⁴ The WEBBE has 'stole out' in place of 'quietly slipped away'.

³⁵ In place of 'mighty Lord God', the WEBBE has 'glorious God'.

τῶν βασιλέων ἦνουν καὶ τῆσδε τῆς βοηθείας αὐτοῦ τετευχότες.

³⁶ Κατὰ δὲ τοὺς αὐτοὺς νόμους ὁ βασιλεὺς συστησάμενος πᾶν τὸ συμπόσιον εἰς εὐφροσύνην τραπῆναι παρεκάλει. ³⁷ τὸν δὲ Ἔρμωνα προσκαλεσάμενος μετὰ ἀπειλῆς εἶπεν Ποσάκις δὲ δεῖ σοι περὶ τούτων αὐτῶν προστάττειν, ἀθλιώτατε; ³⁸ τοὺς ἐλέφαντας ἔτι καὶ νῦν καθόπισσον εἰς τὴν αὔριον ἐπὶ τὸν τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἀφανισμόν. ³⁹ οἱ δὲ συνανακείμενοι συγγενεῖς τὴν ἀσταθῆ διάνοιαν αὐτοῦ θαυμάζοντες προεφέροντο τάδε ⁴⁰ Βασιλεῦ, μέχρι τίνος ὡς ἀλόγους ἡμᾶς διαπειράζεις προστάσων ἤδη τρίτον αὐτοὺς ἀφανίσαι καὶ πάλιν ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων ἐκ μεταβολῆς ἀναλύων τὰ σοι δεδομένα; ⁴¹ ὦν χάριν ἢ πόλις διὰ τὴν προσδοκίαν ὀχλεῖ καὶ πληθύουσα συστροφαῖς ἤδη καὶ κινδυνεύει πολλάκις διαρπασθῆναι.

⁴² ὄθεν ὁ κατὰ πάντα Φάλαρις βασιλεὺς ἐμπληθυνθεὶς ἀλογιστίας καὶ τὰς γινομένας πρὸς ἐπισκοπὴν τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐν αὐτῷ μεταβολὰς τῆς ψυχῆς παρ' οὐδὲν ἠγούμενος ἀτελέστατον βεβαίως ὄρκον ὀρισάμενος τούτους μὲν

the mighty Lord God, King of Kings, since this also was his aid that they had received.

³⁶ Then the king arranged another party in the same manner and urged the guests to celebrate. ³⁷ He summoned Hermon and said, with threats, "How many times, you wretch, must I give you orders about these things? ³⁸ Arm the elephants once more for the destruction of the Jews tomorrow!" ³⁹ But his relatives reclining with him, wondering at his instability of mind, remonstrated as follows: ⁴⁰ "O king, how long will you put us to the test, as though we are idiots, ordering now for a third time that they be destroyed, and again revoking your decree in the matter? ⁴¹ As a result, the city is in a tumult because of its expectation; it is crowded with masses of people and in constant danger of being plundered."

⁴² At this, the king, a Phalaris in everything and filled with madness, took no account of the changes of mind that had come about within him for the protection of the Jews, and he firmly swore an irrevocable oath that he would send them to

³⁶ The Slavonic Text merges this with the following 2 verses, wherein it is v. 24.

³⁷ The NRSV has 'in a threatening voice' in place of 'with threats'.

³⁸ An alternative translation for 'arm' is 'equip'.

³⁹ The Slavonic Text merges this with the following verse, wherein it is v. 25.

⁴⁰ Instead of, 'and again revoking your decree in the matter', some MSS have 'when the matter is in hand'. For this verse, the WEBBE reads, "O king, how long do you test us, as of men bereft of reason? This is the third time that you have ordered their destruction. When the thing is to be done, you change your mind and recall your instructions."

⁴¹ The revolutionary character of the Alexandrians in ancient times is well known.

⁴² The Slavonic Text splits this and the following verse (wherein they are vv. 27 & 28) after 'protection of the Jews'.

ἀνυπερθέτως πέμψειν εἰς ἄδην ἐν γόνασιν καὶ ποσὶν θηρίων ἠκισμένους, ⁴³ ἐπιστρατεύσαντα δὲ ἐπὶ τὴν Ἰουδαίαν ἰσόπεδον πυρὶ καὶ δόρατι θήσεσθαι διὰ τάχους καὶ τὸν ἄβατον ἡμῶν αὐτῶν ναὸν πυρὶ προηέα ἐν τάχει τῶν συντελούντων ἐκεῖ θυσίας ἔρημον εἰς τὸν ἅπαντα χρόνον καταστήσειν. ⁴⁴ τότε περιχαρεῖς ἀναλύσαντες οἱ φίλοι καὶ συγγενεῖς μετὰ πίστεως διέτασσον τὰς δυνάμεις ἐπὶ τοὺς εὐκαιροτάτους τόπους τῆς πόλεως πρὸς τὴν τήρησιν.

⁴⁵ ὁ δὲ ἐλεφαντάρχης τὰ θηρία σχεδὸν ὡς εἶπεῖν εἰς κατάστημα μανιῶδες ἀγριοχῶς εὐωδιστατοῖς πόμασιν οἴνου λελιβανωμένου φοβερῶς κεκοσμημένα κατασκευαῖς ⁴⁶ περὶ τὴν ἕω τῆς πόλεως ἤδη πλήθεσιν ἀναριθμητοῖς κατὰ τοῦ ἵπποδρόμου καταμεμεστωμένης εἰσελθὼν εἰς τὴν αὐλὴν ἐπὶ τὸ προκείμενον ὤτρυνε τὸν βασιλέα. ⁴⁷ ὁ δὲ ὀργῇ βαρεῖα γεμίσας δυσσεβῆ φρένα παντὶ τῷ βάρει σὺν τοῖς θηρίοις ἐξώρμησε βουλόμενος ἀτρώτῳ καρδίᾳ καὶ κόραις ὀφθαλμῶν θεάσασθαι τὴν ἐπίπονον καὶ ταλαίπωρον τῶν προσεσημαμένων καταστροφὴν.

⁴⁸ ὡς δὲ τῶν ἐλεφάντων ἐξιόντων περὶ πύλην καὶ τῆς συνεπομένης ἐνόπλου δυνάμεως τῆς τε τοῦ πλήθους πορείας

Hades without delay, mangled by the knees and feet of the animals, ⁴³ and would also march against Judaea and rapidly level it to the ground with fire and spear, and by burning to the ground the Temple inaccessible to him would quickly render it forever empty of those who offered sacrifices there. ⁴⁴ Then the Friends and officers departed with great joy, and they confidently posted the armed forces at the places in the city most favourable for keeping guard.

⁴⁵ Then the elephant keeper roused the animals to a state of madness, drenching them with incense and wine and arming them with frightful devices. ⁴⁶ About dawn, when the city was full of countless masses of people crowding into the hippodrome, he entered the palace and urged the king on to the matter at hand. ⁴⁷ So he, when he had filled his impious mind with a deep rage, rushed out in full force along with the animals, wishing to witness, with invulnerable heart and with his own eyes, the grievous and pitiful destruction of the aforementioned people.

⁴⁸ When the Jews saw the dust raised by the elephants and the troops going out at the gate, as well as by the crowd, and

⁴³ The LXX has 'inaccessible to us' in place of 'inaccessible to him', here following the NRSV.

⁴⁴ Note that this is v. 29 in the Slavonic Text.

⁴⁵ The 'frightful devices' were probably scythes, knives and other military equipment attached to the different parts of the elephants' bodies.

⁴⁶ The NRSV has 'courtyard' in place of 'palace'.

⁴⁷ The WEBBE has 'Jews' in place of 'people'.

⁴⁸ Note that this is v. 32 in the Slavonic Text.

κονιορτὸν ἰδόντες καὶ βαρυηχῆ θόρυβον ἀκούσαντες οἱ
Ιουδαῖοι ⁴⁹ ὑστάτην βίου ῥοπήν αὐτοῖς ἐκείνην δόξαντες εἶναι
τὸ τέλος τῆς ἀθλιωτάτης προσδοκίας εἰς οἶκτον καὶ γόους
τραπέντες κατεφίλουν ἀλλήλους περιπλεκόμενοι τοῖς
συγγενέσιν ἐπὶ τοὺς τραχήλους ἐπιπίπτοντες, γονεῖς παισὶν
καὶ μητέρες νεάνισιν, ἕτεροι δὲ νεογνὰ πρὸς μαστοὺς ἔχουσαι
βρέφη τελευταῖον ἔλκοντα γάλα. ⁵⁰ οὐ μὴν δὲ ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰς
ἔμπροσθεν αὐτῶν γεγενημένας ἀντιλήψεις ἐξ οὐρανοῦ
συνιδόντες πρηνεῖς ὁμοθυμαδὸν ῥίψαντες ἑαυτοὺς καὶ τὰ
νήπια χωρίσαντες τῶν μαστῶν ⁵¹ ἀνεβόησαν φωνῇ μεγάλη
σφόδρα τὸν τῆς ἀπάσης δυνάμεως δυνάστην ἱκετεύοντες
οἰκτιῖραι μετὰ ἐπιφανείας αὐτοὺς ἤδη πρὸς πύλαις ᾄδου
καθεστῶτας.

heard the loud and tumultuous noise, ⁴⁹ they thought that
this was their last moment of life, the end of their most
miserable suspense and, giving way to lamentation and
groans, they kissed each other, embracing relatives and
falling into one another's arms – parents and children,
mothers and daughters, and others with babies at their
breasts who were drawing their last milk. ⁵⁰ Not only this,
but when they considered the help that they had received
before from heaven, they prostrated themselves with one
accord on the ground, removing the babies from their
breasts, ⁵¹ and cried out in a very loud voice, imploring the
Ruler over every power to manifest himself and be merciful
to them, as they stood now at the gates of Hades.

⁴⁹ According to 6:27, the Jews are still bound.

⁵⁰ The author continues to build up his thesis that God was the only resort for the captives, and that their hope would not be frustrated.

⁵¹ The NRSV has 'death' in place of 'Hades', here following the LXX (see Ps 9:13, 107:18).

Μακκαβαιων Γ' 6

¹ *Ελεαζαρος δέ τις ἀνὴρ ἐπίσημος τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς χώρας ἱερέων, ἐν πρεσβείῳ τὴν ἡλικίαν ἤδη λελογχῶς καὶ πάσῃ τῇ κατὰ τὸν βίον ἀρετῇ κεκοσμημένος, τοὺς περὶ αὐτὸν καταστείλας πρεσβυτέρους ἐπικαλεῖσθαι τὸν ἅγιον θεὸν προσηύξατο τάδε*
² *Βασιλεῦ μεγαλοκράτωρ, ὕψιστε παντοκράτωρ θεὲ τὴν πᾶσαν διακυβερνῶν ἐν οἰκτιρμοῖς κτίσιν, ³ ἐπίδε ἐπὶ Ἀβρααμ σπέρμα, ἐπὶ ἡγιασμένου τέκνα Ἰακωβ, μερίδος ἡγιασμένης σου λαὸν ἐν ξένη γῆ ξένον ἀδίκως ἀπολλύμενον, πάτερ. ⁴ σὺ Φαραῶ πληθύνοντα ἄρμασιν, τὸν πρὶν Αἰγύπτου ταύτης δυνάστην, ἐπαρθέντα ἀνόμῳ θράσει καὶ γλώσση μεγαλορρήμονι, σὺν τῇ ὑπερηφάνῳ στρατιᾷ ποντοβρόχους ἀπώλεσας φέγγος ἐπιφάνας ἐλέους Ἰσραηλ γένει. ⁵ σὺ τὸν ἀναριθμητοῖς δυνάμεσιν γαυρωθέντα Σενναχηριμ, βαρὺν Ἀσσυρίων βασιλέα, δόρατι τὴν πᾶσαν ὑποχείριον ἤδη λαβόντα γῆν καὶ μετεωρισθέντα ἐπὶ τὴν ἁγίαν σου πόλιν, βαρέα λαλοῦντα κόμπῳ καὶ θράσει σὺ, δέσποτα, ἔθραυσας*

3 MACCABEES 6

¹ Then a Eleazar, a famous priests of the country, who had attained a ripe old age and throughout his life had been adorned with every virtue, directed the elders around him to stop calling upon the Holy God, and he prayed as follows:
² "Great King, Almighty God Most High, governing all creation with mercy, ³ look at the seed of Abraham, O Father, at the children of the sainted Jacob, your consecrated portion who are wrongfully perishing as foreigners in a foreign land.
⁴ You destroyed Pharaoh, with his army of chariots, the ruler of this Egypt, exalted with lawless daring and loud tongue, with his proud army, drowning them in the sea, shining the light of your mercy on the nation of Israel. ⁵ When the cruel king of Assyria, Sennacherib, exulting in his countless army, who had already gained control of the whole world by the spear and was lifted up against your holy city, speaking grievous words with boasting and insolence, you, O Lord,

3 MACCABEES 6

- ¹ 'Eleazar' is a favourite name for Jewish heroes (2M 6:18). The 'priests' were perhaps those of the Jewish temple at Leontopolis in Egypt.
- ² Eleazar's prayer, like that of Simon in 2:1-20, is plainly Jewish in form and style, containing doxology, thanksgiving for God's earlier interventions in Israel's history, and petition for a new miracle. The emphasis is on the exclusiveness of Israel before God (v. 3). Eleazar expects God's intervention, not because of Israel's virtues or merits, but because of divine mercy. The Slavonic Text merges this with the following verse.
- ³ The NRSV has 'descendants' in place of 'seed', here following the WEBBE. The NRSV lacks 'wrongfully'.
- ⁴ In place of 'daring', the NRSV has 'insolence'.
- ⁵ The NRSV has 'broke in pieces' in place of 'demolished'.

ἔκδηλον δεικνὺς ἔθνεσιν πολλοῖς τὸ σὸν κράτος. ⁶ σὺ τοὺς κατὰ τὴν Βαβυλωνίαν τρεῖς ἑταίρους πυρὶ τὴν ψυχὴν αὐθαιρέτως δεδωκότας εἰς τὸ μὴ λατρεῦσαι τοῖς κενοῖς διάπυρον δροσίσας κάμινον ἐρρύσω μέχρι τριχὸς ἀπημάντους φλόγα πᾶσιν ἐπιπέμφας τοῖς ὑπεναντίοις. ⁷ σὺ τὸν διαβολαῖς φθόνου λέουσι κατὰ γῆς ῥιφέντα θηροσὶν βορὰν Δαυνηλ εἰς φῶς ἀνήγαγες ἀσινῆ. ⁸ τὸν τε βυθοτρεφοῦς ἐν γαστρὶ κήτους Ἰωαννὰ τηκόμενον ἀφιδὼν ἀπήμαντον πᾶσιν οἰκείοις ἀνέδειξας, πάτερ. ⁹ καὶ νῦν, μίσυβρι πολυέλεε τῶν ὄλων σκεπαστά, τὸ τάχος ἐπιφάνηθι τοῖς ἀπὸ Ἰσραηλ γένους ὑπὸ ἐβδελυγμένων ἀνόμων ἐθνῶν ὑβρίζομένοις.

¹⁰ εἰ δὲ ἀσεβείαις κατὰ τὴν ἀποικίαν ὁ βίος ἡμῶν ἐνέσχηται, ῥυσάμενος ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ ἐχθρῶν χειρός, ᾧ προαιρῆ, δέσποτα, ἀπόλεσον ἡμᾶς μόρω. ¹¹ μὴ τοῖς ματαίοις οἱ ματαιόφρονες εὐλογησάτωσαν ἐπὶ τῇ τῶν ἡγαπημένων σου ἀπωλείᾳ λέγοντες Οὐδὲ ὁ θεὸς αὐτῶν ἐρρύσατο αὐτούς. ¹² σὺ δέ, ὁ πᾶσαν ἀλκὴν καὶ δυναστείαν ἔχων ἅπασαν αἰώνιε, νῦν ἔπιθε· ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς τοὺς καθ' ὑβριν ἀνόμων ἀλόγιστον ἐκ τοῦ ζῆν μεδισταμένους ἐν ἐπιβούλων τρόπῳ. ¹³ πτηξάτω δὲ ἔθνη σὴν

demolished him, showing your power to many nations. ⁶ When the three youths in Babylon voluntarily gave up their lives to the flames so as not to serve vain things, you sent a cool dew to the fiery furnace and brought the fire on all their enemies. ⁷ Daniel, who through envious slanders was thrown down below as prey for the lions, you brought up to the light unharmed. ⁸ You, Father, when Jonah was wasting away in the belly of the sea-born monster, watched and restored him unharmed to all his own. ⁹ Now, you who hate insolence, merciful protector of all, appear quickly to the race of Israel who are insulted by the vile and lawless Gentiles.

¹⁰ "If our life in exile has become stained with iniquity, rescue us from the hand of the enemy, and destroy us, Lord, by whatever fate you choose. ¹¹ Let not the vain-minded praise their idols at the destruction of your beloved people, saying, "Their god has not rescued them." ¹² But you, O Eternal One, who have all might and all power, behold! Have mercy on us who by the senseless insolence of the lawless are being deprived of life like traitors. ¹³ Let the Gentiles cower today

⁶ The NRSV has 'surrendered' in place of 'gave up'.

⁷ The Slavonic Text merges this with the following verse, wherein it is v. 6.

⁸ Some MSS add 'rescued and' before 'restored'.

⁹ In place of 'the race of Israel', some MSS have 'the saints of Israel'.

¹⁰ An alternative reading for 'praise their vanities' is 'bless their vain gods'.

¹¹ The NRSV has 'vanities' in place of 'idols'.

¹² The Slavonic Text splits this verse (wherein it comprises vv. 10 & 11) before 'have mercy'.

¹³ The WEBBE has 'heathen' in place of 'Gentiles'.

δύναμιν ἀνίκητον σήμερον, ἔντιμε δύναμιν ἔχων ἐπὶ σωτηρίᾳ
Ιακωβ γένους. ¹⁴ ἰκετεύει σε τὸ πᾶν πλήθος τῶν νηπίων καὶ
οἱ τούτων γονεῖς μετὰ δακρύων. ¹⁵ δειχθήτω πᾶσιν ἔδνεσιν
ὅτι μεθ' ἡμῶν εἶ, κύριε, καὶ οὐκ ἀπέστρεψας τὸ πρόσωπόν
σου ἀφ' ἡμῶν, ἀλλὰ καθὼς εἶπας ὅτι Οὐδὲ ἐν τῇ γῆ τῶν
ἐχθρῶν αὐτῶν ὄντων ὑπερεῖδον αὐτούς, οὕτως ἐπιτέλεσον,
κύριε.

¹⁶ Τοῦ δὲ Ελεαζαρου λήγοντος ἄρτι τῆς προσευχῆς ὁ βασιλεὺς
σὺν τοῖς θηρίοις καὶ παντὶ τῷ τῆς δυνάμεως φρουράγματι κατὰ
τὸν ἵππόδρομον παρεῆγεν. ¹⁷ καὶ θεωρήσαντες οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι μέγα
εἰς οὐρανὸν ἀνέκραξαν ὥστε καὶ τοὺς παρακειμένους αὐλῶνας
συνηχήσαντας ἀκατάσχετον πτόνη ποιῆσαι παντὶ τῷ στρα-
τοπέδῳ. ¹⁸ τότε ὁ μεγαλόδοξος παντοκράτωρ καὶ ἀληθινὸς
θεὸς ἐπιφάνας τὸ ἅγιον αὐτοῦ πρόσωπον ἠνέωξεν τὰς
οὐρανίους πύλας, ἐξ ὧν δεδοξασμένοι δύο φοβεροειδεῖς ἄγγελοι
κατέβησαν φανεροὶ πᾶσιν πλην τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις ¹⁹ καὶ ἀντέσ-
τησαν καὶ τὴν δύναμιν τῶν ὑπεναντίων ἐπλήρωσαν ταραχῆς
καὶ δειλίας καὶ ἀκινήτους ἔδθησαν πέδαις. ²⁰ καὶ ὑπόφρικον καὶ
τὸ τοῦ βασιλέως σῶμα ἐγενήθη, καὶ λήθη τὸ θράσος αὐτοῦ

in fear of your invincible might, O Honoured One, who have
power to save the race of Jacob. ¹⁴ The whole throng of infants
and their parents entreat you with tears. ¹⁵ Let it be shown to
all the Gentiles that you are with us, O Lord, and have not
turned your face from us; but, just as you have said, "Even
when they were in the land of their enemies, I did not neglect
them." So, do it, Lord."

¹⁶ Now, just as Eleazar was ending his prayer, the king
arrived at the hippodrome with the wild animals and all the
arrogance of his forces. ¹⁷ When the Jews observed this, they
raised great cries to heaven so that even the nearby valleys
resounded with them and brought an uncontrollable terror
throughout the whole army. ¹⁸ Then the most glorious,
almighty and true God revealed his Holy Face and opened
the heavenly gates, from which two glorious angels of fearful
aspect descended, visible to everyone except the Jews. ¹⁹ They
opposed the forces of the enemy and filled them with
confusion and terror, binding them with immovable
shackles. ²⁰ Even the king began to shudder bodily, and he

¹⁴ For this verse, here following the NRSV, the WEBBE reads, "The whole band of infants and their parents ask you with tears."

¹⁵ The Slavonic Text starts this verse (wherein it is v. 14) at "But as you have said."

¹⁶ The NRSV lacks 'wild' before 'animals'.

¹⁷ The NSRV ends with, "upon the whole army."

¹⁸ 'Most glorious' translates the Greek μεγαλόδοξος (cf. 1En 14:20, where God is called 'the Great Glory'). For similar apparitions to the 'angels of fearful aspect', see Ws 17:3,15, 18:17, 2M 3:25-29, 10:29. On their being 'visible to everyone except the Jews', see Dn 10:7, Ac 9:7, 22:6-9.

¹⁹ The Slavonic Text merges this with the following verse, wherein it is v. 18.

²⁰ The WEBBE ends with, "and oblivion paralysed the vehemence of his spirit."

τὸ βαρύθυμον ἔλαβεν. ²¹ καὶ ἀπέστρεψαν τὰ θηρία ἐπὶ τὰς συνεπομένας ἐνόπλους δυνάμεις καὶ κατεπάτουν αὐτὰς καὶ ὠλέθρευον.

²² Καὶ μετεστράφη τοῦ βασιλέως ἡ ὀργὴ εἰς οἶκτον καὶ δάκρυα ὑπὲρ τῶν ἔμπροσθεν αὐτῷ μεμηχανευμένων.

²³ ἀκούσας γὰρ τῆς κραυγῆς καὶ συνιδῶν πρηγεῖς ἅπαντας εἰς τὴν ἀπώλειαν δακρύσας μετ' ὀργῆς τοῖς φίλοις διηπειλεῖτο λέγων ²⁴ Παραβασιλεύετε καὶ τυράννους ὑπερβεβήκατε ὠμότητι καὶ ἐμὲ αὐτὸν τὸν ὑμῶν εὐεργέτην ἐπιχειρεῖτε τῆς ἀρχῆς ἥδη καὶ τοῦ πνεύματος μεδιστᾶν λάθρα μηχανώμενοι τὰ μὴ συμφέροντα τῇ βασιλείᾳ. ²⁵ τίς τοὺς κρατήσαντας ἡμῶν ἐν πίστει τὰ τῆς χώρας ὀχυρώματα τῆς οἰκίας ἀποστήσας ἕκαστον ἀλόγως ἠθροισεν ἐνθάδε; ²⁶ τίς τοὺς ἐξ ἀρχῆς εὐνοία πρὸς ἡμᾶς κατὰ πάντα διαφέροντας πάντων ἐθνῶν καὶ τοὺς χειρίστους πλεονάκεις ἀνθρώπων ἐπιδεδεγμένους κινδύνους οὕτως ἀδέσμως περιέβαλεν αἰκίαις; ²⁷ λύσατε ἐκλύσατε ἄδικα δεσμά· εἰς τὰ ἴδια μετ' εἰρήνης ἐξαποστείλατε τὰ προπεπραγμένα παραιτησάμενοι. ²⁸ ἀπολύσατε τοὺς υἱοὺς τοῦ παντοκράτορος ἐπουρανίου θεοῦ

forgot his sullen insolence. ²¹ The animals turned back upon the armed forces, following them, and began trampling and destroying them.

²² Then the king's anger was turned to pity and tears for the things that he had devised beforehand. ²³ For, when he heard the shouting and saw them all fallen to destruction, he wept and angrily threatened his Friends, saying, ²⁴ "You are committing treason and surpassing tyrants in cruelty; and even me, your benefactor, you are now attempting to deprive of dominion and life by secretly devising acts of no advantage to the kingdom. ²⁵ Who has driven from their homes those who faithfully kept our country's fortresses, and foolishly gathered every one of them here? ²⁶ Who is it that has so lawlessly encompassed with outrageous treatment those who, from the beginning, differed from all nations in their goodwill toward us and often have accepted willingly the worst of human dangers? ²⁷ Loose and untie their unjust bonds! Send them back to their homes in peace, begging pardon for what has been done! ²⁸ Release the sons of the

²¹ The turning of the elephants upon the king's forces is found also in Josephus' account (*Against Apion*, ii 5); cf. Ps 7:15-16, 9:15-16, 35:8, 57:6.

²² The WEBBE lacks 'beforehand'.

²³ After 'fallen', the NRSV adds 'headlong'.

²⁴ The WEBBE ends with, "by secretly devising measures injurious to the kingdom."

²⁵ Compare the king's words here with the vocabulary of 3:24.

²⁶ An alternative rendition of 'differed from' is 'excelled above'.

²⁷ The Slavonic Text merges this with the following verse, wherein it is v. 25.

²⁸ The NRSV has 'children' in place of 'sons'.

ζῶντος, ὃς ἀφ' ἡμετέρων μέχρι τοῦ νῦν προγόνων ἀπαραπόδιστον μετὰ δόξης εὐστάθειαν παρέχει τοῖς ἡμετέροις πράγμασιν. ²⁹ ὁ μὲν οὖν ταῦτα ἔλεξεν· οἱ δὲ ἐν ἀμερεῖ χρόνῳ λυθέντες τὸν ἅγιον σωτῆρα θεὸν αὐτῶν εὐλόγουν ἄρτι τὸν θάνατον ἐκπεφευγότες.

³⁰ Εἶτα ὁ βασιλεὺς εἰς τὴν πόλιν ἀπαλλαγείς τὸν ἐπὶ τῶν προσόδων προσκαλεσάμενος ἐκέλευσεν οἴνους τε καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ πρὸς εὐωχίαν ἐπιτήδεια τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις χορηγεῖν ἐπὶ ἡμέρας ἑπτὰ κρίνας αὐτοὺς ἐν ᾧ τόπῳ ἔδοξαν τὸν ὄλεθρον ἀναλαμβάνειν, ἐν τούτῳ ἐν εὐφροσύνῃ πάσῃ σωτήρια ἀγαγεῖν. ³¹ τότε οἱ τὸ πρὶν ἐπονείδιστοι καὶ πλησίον τοῦ ᾄδου, μᾶλλον δὲ ἐπ' αὐτῷ βεβηκότες ἀντὶ πικροῦ καὶ δυσαιάκτου μόρου κώδωνα σωτήριον συστησάμενοι τὸν εἰς πτώσιν αὐτοῖς καὶ τάφον ἠτοιμασμένον τόπον κλισίαις κατεμερίσαντο πλήρεις χαρμονῆς. ³² καταλήξαντες δὲ θρήνων πανόδουρον μέλος ἀνέλαβον ᾠδὴν πάτριον τὸν σωτῆρα καὶ τερατοποιὸν αἰνοῦντες θεόν· οἰμωγὴν τε πᾶσαν καὶ κωκυτὸν ἀπωσάμενοι χοροὺς συνίσταντο εὐφροσύνῃς εἰρηνικῆς σημείων. ³³ ὡσαύτως δὲ καὶ ὁ βασιλεὺς περὶ τούτων συμπόσιον βαρὺ συναγαγὼν ἀδιαλείπτως εἰς οὐρανὸν ἀνθωμολογεῖτο μεγαλομερῶς ἐπὶ τῇ

Almighty and living God of heaven who, from our ancestors' times until now has granted an unimpeded and notable stability to our government." ²⁹ These then were the things he said; and the Jews, immediately released, having now escaped death, praised their Holy God and Saviour.

³⁰ The king had then returned to the city, called his financier, and ordered him to provide the Jews with seven days' supply of wine and other required thing for a festival, deciding that they should celebrate their rescue with all joyfulness in the same place they had expected to meet their death. ³¹ Thus, those disgracefully treated and near to Hades, who stood at its gates, arranged for a banquet of deliverance instead of a bitter and lamentable death and, full of joy, they apportioned to celebrants the place that had been prepared for their death and burial. ³² They stopped chanting dirges and took up the song of their fathers, praising God, their Saviour and worker of wonders. Putting an end to all mourning and wailing, they formed choruses as a sign of peaceful joy. ³³ Likewise, the king organised a great banquet to celebrate these events and gave unceasing and lavish thanks to heaven for the un-

²⁹ The NRSV has the clause, 'since they had now escaped death', at the end of the verse.

³⁰ In place of 'his financier', the NRSV has 'the official in charge of his revenues'.

³¹ The literal translation of 'stood at its gates' is 'descending into it'.

³² Some MSS end the 1st sentence with, "... praising Israel and the wonder-working God." An alternative translation for 'choruses' is 'dances'. The 'song of their ancestors' is perhaps Ps 136, which was used earlier as a hymn of thanksgiving (1Ch 16:41, 2Ch 5:13, 7:3, Ezr 3:11).

³³ Most English translation end the verse with 'them' but the pronoun in the Greek text (αὐτῷ) is singular.

παραδόξῳ γενηθείσῃ αὐτῷ σωτηρία. ³⁴ οἱ τε πρὶν εἰς ὄλεθρον καὶ οἰωνοβρώτους αὐτοὺς ἔσεσθαι τιθέμενοι καὶ μετὰ χαρᾶς ἀπογραφάμενοι κατεστέναξαν αἰσχύνῃν ἐφ' ἑαυτοῖς περιβαλλόμενοι καὶ τὴν πυρόπνου τόλμαν ἀκλεῶς ἐσβεσμένοι.

³⁵ οἱ τε Ἰουδαῖοι, καθὼς προειρήκαμεν, συστησάμενοι τὸν προειρημένον χορὸν μετ' εὐωχίας ἐν ἐξομολογήσειν ἰλαραῖς καὶ ψαλμοῖς διηγῶν. ³⁶ καὶ κοινὸν ὀρισάμενοι περὶ τούτων δεσμὸν ἐπὶ πᾶσαν τὴν παροικίαν αὐτῶν εἰς γενεὰς τὰς προειρημένας ἡμέρας ἄγειν ἔστησαν εὐφροσύνους, οὐ πότου χάριν καὶ λιχνείας, σωτηρίας δὲ τῆς διὰ θεὸν γενομένης αὐτοῖς. ³⁷ ἐνέτυχον δὲ τῷ βασιλεῖ τὴν ἀπόλυσιν αὐτῶν εἰς τὰ ἴδια αἰτούμενοι. ³⁸ ἀπογράφονται δὲ αὐτοὺς ἀπὸ πέμπτης καὶ εἰκάδος τοῦ Παχων ἕως τῆς τετάρτης τοῦ Επιφι ἐπὶ ἡμέρας τεσσαράκοντα, συνίστανται δὲ αὐτῶν τὴν ἀπώλειαν ἀπὸ πέμπτης τοῦ Επιφι ἕως ἐβδόμης ἡμέραις τρισίν, ³⁹ ἐν αἷς καὶ μεγαλοδόξως ἐπιφάνας τὸ ἔλεος αὐτοῦ ὁ τῶν πάντων δυνάστης ἀπταίστους αὐτοὺς ἐρρύσατο ὁμοθυμαδόν. ⁴⁰ εὐωχοῦντο δὲ πάνθ' ὑπὸ τοῦ βασιλέως χορηγούμενοι μέχρι τῆς τεσσαρεσκαιδεκάτης, ἐν ἧ καὶ τὴν ἐντυχίαν ἐποιήσαντο

expected rescue afforded him. ³⁴ Those who had believed that they would be destroyed and become food for birds, and had joyfully registered them, groaned and were overcome by disgrace and the fire of their rage was ingloriously quenched.

³⁵ The Jews, as we have said, arranged the aforementioned choral group and passed the time in feasting, joyous thanksgiving, and psalms. ³⁶ When they had ordained a public rite for these things in their whole community and for their descendants, they instituted the previously mentioned days as a festival, not for drinking and gluttony, but because of the deliverance that had come to them through God. ³⁷ Then they petitioned the king, asking for dismissal to their homes. ³⁸ Thus, their registration was carried out from the twenty-fifth of Pachon to the fourth of Epeiph, for forty days and their destruction was set for the fifth to the seventh of Epeiph, the three days ³⁹ on which the Lord of all most gloriously revealed his mercy and rescued them all together and unharmed. ⁴⁰ Then they feasted, being provided with everything by the king, until the fourteenth day, on which

³⁴ On 'food for birds', see Gn 40:19, Ezk 39:4, 2M 9:15. Some MSS have 'completely' in place of 'ignominiously'.

³⁵ An alternative reading for 'choral group' is 'dance'.

³⁶ The institution of Jewish festivals is a common feature of this period (compare Est 9:15, 1M 4:56, 7:49, 13:51, 2M 10:6, 15:36).

³⁷ For this verse, the WEBBE reads, "They requested the king to send them back to their homes."

³⁸ The 1st period is July 7th – August 15th; the 2nd is August 16th–18th.

³⁹ The Slavonic Text merges this with the previous verse, wherein it is v. 35.

⁴⁰ The date corresponds to August 25th.

περὶ τῆς ἀπολύσεως αὐτῶν. ⁴¹ συναινέσας δὲ αὐτοῖς ὁ βασιλεὺς ἔγραψεν αὐτοῖς τὴν ὑπογεγραμμένην ἐπιστολὴν πρὸς τοὺς κατὰ πόλιν στρατηγούς μεγαλοψύχως τὴν ἐκτενίαν ἔχουσαν

they also made petition for their dismissal. ⁴¹ The king granted their request at once and wrote the following letter for them to the generals in the cities, magnanimously expressing his concern:

⁴¹ The *WEBBE* has ‘*commanders*’ in place of ‘*generals*’.

Μακκαβαίων Γ' 7

¹ Βασιλεὺς Πτολεμαῖος Φιλοπάτωρ τοῖς κατ' Αἴγυπτον στρατηγοῖς καὶ πᾶσιν τοῖς τεταγμένοις ἐπὶ πραγμάτων χαίρειν καὶ ἐρρῶσθαι·

² ἐρρῶμεθα δὲ καὶ αὐτοὶ καὶ τὰ τέκνα ἡμῶν κατευθύναντος ἡμῖν τοῦ μεγάλου θεοῦ τὰ πράγματα, καθὼς προαιρούμεθα. ³ τῶν φίλων τινὲς κατὰ κακοήθειαν πυκνότερον ἡμῖν παρακείμενοι συνέπεισαν ἡμᾶς εἰς τὸ τοὺς ὑπὸ τὴν βασιλείαν Ἰουδαίους συναθροίσαντας σύστημα κολάσασθαι ξενιζούσαις ἀποστατῶν τιμωραῖς ⁴ προφερόμενοι μηδέποτε εὐσταθήσειν τὰ πράγματα ἡμῶν δι' ἣν ἔχουσιν οὗτοι πρὸς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη δυσμένειαν, μέχρι ἂν συντελεσθῇ τοῦτο. ⁵ οἱ καὶ δεσμίους καταγαγόντες αὐτοὺς μετὰ σκυλμῶν ὡς ἀνδράποδα, μᾶλλον δὲ ὡς ἐπιβούλους, ἄνευ πάσης ἀνακρίσεως καὶ ἐξετάσεως ἐπεχείρησαν ἀνελεῖν νόμου Σκυθῶν ἀγριωτέραν ἐμπεπορημένοι ὠμότητα. ⁶ ἡμεῖς δὲ ἐπὶ τούτοις σκληρότερον διαπειλησάμενοι

3 MACCABEES 7

¹ “King Ptolemy Philopator to the generals throughout Egypt and all in authority in his government, greetings and good health:

² “We ourselves and our children are faring well, the great God guiding our affairs according to our desire.

³ Certain of our friends, frequently urging us with malicious intent, persuaded us to gather together the Jews of the kingdom in a body and to punish them with barbarous penalties as traitors; ⁴ for, they declared that our government would never be firmly established until this was accomplished, because of the ill will that these people have toward all nations. ⁵ They also led them out with harsh treatment as slaves, or rather as traitors; and, girding themselves with a cruelty more savage than that of Scythian custom, they tried without any inquiry or examination to put them to death. ⁶ But we very severely threatened them for these acts and, in

3 MACCABEES 7

¹ The Slavonic Text merges this with the following verse.

² Philopator had only one legitimate son, born in 209–8 BCE, who reigned later as Ptolemy V Epiphanes (203–181 BCE). Either the author had no knowledge of Philopator’s family life, or the king is referring in general terms to include all members of his court.

³ The king seeks to exonerate himself, blaming others. The WEBBE lacks the words, ‘as traitors’.

⁴ The WEBBE has ‘the Jews’ in place of ‘these people’.

⁵ On ‘Scythian custom’, see 2M 4:47.

⁶ The Slavonic Text merges this with the following verse, wherein it is v. 5.

καθ' ἣν ἔχομεν πρὸς ἅπαντας ἀνθρώπους ἐπιείκειαν μόγις τὸ ζῆν αὐτοῖς χαρισάμενοι καὶ τὸν ἐπουράνιον Θεὸν ἐγνωκότες ἀσφαλῶς ὑπερησπικότα τῶν Ἰουδαίων ὡς πατέρα ὑπὲρ υἱῶν διὰ παντὸς συμμαχοῦντα ⁷ τὴν τε τοῦ φίλου ἣν ἔχουσιν βεβαίαν πρὸς ἡμᾶς καὶ τοὺς προγόνους ἡμῶν εὐνοίαν ἀναλογισάμενοι δικαίως ἀπολελύκαμεν πάσης καθ' ὄντινον αἰτίας τρόπον ⁸ καὶ προστετάχαμεν ἐκάστῳ πάντας εἰς τὰ ἴδια ἐπιστρέφειν ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ μηθενὸς αὐτοῦς τὸ σύνολον καταβλάπτοντος μήτε ὀνειδίξειν περὶ τῶν γεγενημένων παρὰ λόγον. ⁹ γινώσκετε γὰρ ὅτι κατὰ τούτων ἐάν τι κακοτεχνήσωμεν πονηρὸν ἢ ἐπιλυπήσωμεν αὐτοῦς τὸ σύνολον, οὐκ ἄνθρωπον, ἀλλὰ τὸν πάσης δεσπόζοντα δυνάμεως Θεὸν ὑψιστον ἀντικείμενον ἡμῖν ἐπ' ἐκδικήσει τῶν πραγμάτων κατὰ πᾶν ἀφεύκτως διὰ παντὸς ἔξομεν. ἔρρωσθε.

¹⁰ Λαβόντες δὲ τὴν ἐπιστολὴν ταύτην οὐκ ἐσπούδασαν εὐθέως γενέσθαι περὶ τὴν ἄφοδον, ἀλλὰ τὸν βασιλέα προσηξίωσαν τοὺς ἐκ τοῦ γένους τῶν Ἰουδαίων τὸν ἅγιον Θεὸν αὐδαιρέτως παραβεβηκότας καὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ τὸν νόμον τυχεῖν δι' αὐτῶν τῆς ὀφειλομένης κολάσεως ¹¹ προφερόμενοι τοὺς

accordance with the clemency that we have toward all people, we barely spared their lives. Since we have come to realise that the God of heaven surely defends the Jews, always taking their part as a father does for his sons; ⁷ and, since we have taken into consideration the friendly and firm goodwill that they had toward us and our ancestors, we have justly acquitted them of every charge of whatever kind. ⁸ We also have ordered all people to return to their own homes, with no one in any place doing them harm at all or reproaching them for the irrational things that have happened. ⁹ For, know that if we devise any evil against them or cause them any grief at all, we always shall have not a mortal but the Ruler over every power, the Most High God, in everything and inescapably as an antagonist to avenge such acts. Farewell.”

¹⁰ On receiving this letter, they did not immediately hurry to make their departure but they requested of the king that, at their own hands, those of the Jewish nation who had wilfully transgressed against the Holy God and the Law of God should receive fitting punishment. ¹¹ They added that those

⁷ In place of ‘the friendly and firm goodwill’ the WEBBE has ‘their constancy and fidelity’.

⁸ Instead of ‘place’, some MSS have ‘way’.

⁹ The NRSV adds ‘you should’ before ‘know’.

¹⁰ The Jews were obliged to seek permission from their rulers to execute laws pertaining to capital punishment (Dt 13:6–18, Est 8:8–11, Jn 18:31).

¹¹ In place of ‘faithful to’, the NRSV has ‘faithfully disposed towards’.

γαστροῦ ἕνεκεν τὰ θεῖα παραβεβηκότας προστάγματα μηδέποτε εὐνοήσῃν μηδὲ τοῖς τοῦ βασιλέως πράγμασιν. ¹² ὁ δὲ τάλληθες αὐτοὺς λέγειν παραδεξάμενος καὶ παραινέσας ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἄδειαν πάντων, ὅπως τοὺς παραβεβηκότας τοῦ θεοῦ τὸν νόμον ἐξολοθρεύσωσιν κατὰ πάντα τὸν ὑπὸ τὴν βασιλείαν αὐτοῦ τόπον μετὰ παρρησίας ἄνευ πάσης βασιλικῆς ἐξουσίας καὶ ἐπισκέψεως. ¹³ τότε κατευφημήσαντες αὐτόν, ὡς πρόπον ἦν, οἱ τούτων ἱερεῖς καὶ πᾶν τὸ πλῆθος ἐπιφωνήσαντες τὸ ἀλληλουια μετὰ χαρᾶς ἀνέλυσαν. ¹⁴ οὕτως τε τὸν ἐμπεσόντα τῶν μεμιαμμένων ὁμοεθνῆ κατὰ τὴν ὁδὸν ἐκολάζοντο καὶ μετὰ παραδειγματισμῶν ἀνήρουν. ¹⁵ ἐκείνη δὲ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἀνεῖλον ὑπὲρ τοὺς τριακοσίους ἄνδρας, ἦν καὶ ἠγάγον εὐφροσύνην μετὰ χαρᾶς βεβήλους χειρωσάμενοι. ¹⁶ αὐτοὶ δὲ οἱ μέχρι θανάτου τὸν θεὸν ἐσχηκότες παντελῆ σωτηρίας ἀπόλαυσιν εἰληφότες ἀνέξευξαν ἐκ τῆς πόλεως παντοίοις εὐωδισταῖς ἄνδρασι κατεστεμμένοι μετ' εὐφροσύνης καὶ βοῆς ἐν αἴνοις καὶ παμμελέσιν ὕμνοις εὐχαριστοῦντες τῷ θεῷ τῶν πατέρων αὐτῶν αἰωνίῳ σωτῆρι τοῦ Ἰσραηλ. ¹⁷ Παραγεννηθέντες δὲ εἰς Πτολεμαίδα τὴν ὀνομαζομένην διὰ τὴν τοῦ τόπου ἰδιότητα ῥοδοφόρον, ἐν ἣ προσέμεινεν αὐτοὺς

who, for the belly's sake, had transgressed the divine commandments would never be faithful to the king's government. ¹² The king admitted the truth of what they said, approved, and granted them full power to freely, and without royal authority or supervision, they might destroy those everywhere in his kingdom who had transgressed the Law of God. ¹³ When they had saluted him in fitting manner, their priests and the whole multitude sang "Hallelujah" and joyfully departed. ¹⁴ Thus, on their way, they punished and put to a public and shameful death any whom they met of their compatriots who had become defiled. ¹⁵ On that day, they put to death more than three hundred men; and they kept the day as a joyful festival, since they had destroyed the profaners. ¹⁶ But those who had held fast to God even to death and had received the full enjoyment of deliverance began their departure from the city, crowned with all sorts of very fragrant flowers, joyfully and loudly giving thanks, in words of praise and melodious hymns, to the One God of their ancestors, the Eternal Saviour of Israel.

¹⁷ When they had arrived at Ptolemais, called 'rose-bearing' because of a speciality of the place, the fleet waited for them,

¹² The NRSV has 'a general licence' in place of 'full power'.

¹³ In place of 'sang', the NRSV has 'shouted' and places a definite article before "Hallelujah."

¹⁴ The WEBBE ends with 'any polluted Jew' in place of 'any of their compatriots who had become defiled'.

¹⁵ The WEBBE & NRSV open with 'In' in place of 'On'.

¹⁶ In place of 'Eternal Saviour', some MSS read 'Holy Saviour' or 'the Holy One'.

¹⁷ The title, 'rose-bearing' (ῥοδοφόρον), is not elsewhere applied to Ptolemais.

ὁ στόλος κατὰ κοινήν αὐτῶν βουλήν ἡμέρας ἑπτὰ, ¹⁸ ἐκεῖ ἐποίησαν πότον σωτήριον τοῦ βασιλέως χορηγήσαντος αὐτοῖς εὐψύχως τὰ πρὸς τὴν ἄφιξιν πάντα ἐκάστω ἕως εἰς τὴν ἰδίαν οἰκίαν. ¹⁹ καταχθέντες δὲ μετ' εἰρήνης ἐν ταῖς πρεπούσαις ἐξομολογήσεσιν ὡσαύτως κἀκεῖ ἔστησαν καὶ ταύτας ἄγειν τὰς ἡμέρας ἐπὶ τὸν τῆς παροικίας αὐτῶν χρόνον εὐφροσύνους. ²⁰ ἃς καὶ ἀνιερώσαντες ἐν στήλῃ κατὰ τὸν τῆς συμποσίας τόπον προσευχῆς καθιδρύσαντες ἀνέλυσαν ἀσινεῖς, ἐλεύθεροι, ὑπερχαρεῖς, διὰ τε γῆς καὶ θαλάσσης καὶ ποταμοῦ ἀνασωζόμενοι τῇ τοῦ βασιλέως ἐπιταγῇ, ἕκαστος εἰς τὴν ἰδίαν, ²¹ καὶ πλείστην ἢ ἔμπροσθεν ἐν τοῖς ἐχθροῖς ἐξουσίαν ἐσχηκότες μετὰ δόξης καὶ φόβου, τὸ σύνολον ὑπὸ μηδενὸς διασεισθέντες τῶν ὑπαρχόντων. ²² καὶ πάντα τὰ ἑαυτῶν πάντες ἐκομίσαντο ἐξ ἀπογραφῆς ὥστε τοὺς ἔχοντάς τι μετὰ φόβου μεγίστου ἀποδοῦναι αὐτοῖς, τὰ μεγαλεῖα τοῦ μεγίστου θεοῦ ποιήσαντος τελείως ἐπὶ σωτηρίᾳ αὐτῶν. ²³ εὐλογητὸς ὁ ῥύστης Ἰσραηλ εἰς τοὺς αἰεὶ χρόνους. αμην.

by common agreement, for seven days. ¹⁸ There, they celebrated their deliverance; for, the king had generously provided all required means for their journey to their own houses. ¹⁹ When they arrived in peace, there too, with appropriate thanksgiving, in like manner, they decided to observe these days as a joyous festival during their stay. ²⁰ Then, after inscribing them as holy on a pillar and dedicating a place of prayer at the site of the festival, they departed unharmed, free, and overjoyed, since at the king's command they had been brought safely by land, by sea, and river to their own homes. ²¹ They now had greater prestige among their enemies, being held in honour and awe; and nobody robbed them of their belongings. ²² And they all recovered their property, according to the registration, those who held any of it gave it up with extreme fear. For, the Supreme God made perfect wonders for their deliverance. ²³ Blessed be the Deliverer of Israel forever! Amen

¹⁸ The literal translation for 'celebrated their deliverance' is 'made a cup of deliverance'.

¹⁹ The NRSV has 'had all landed' in place of 'arrived'.

²⁰ Actually, there was no 'sea' to cross in Egypt.

²¹ The Slavonic Text merges this with the previous verse, wherein it is v. 19.

²² Some MSS end the first sentence with, "... with a very large supplement."

²³ The book closes with a benediction to the 'Supreme God ... Deliverer'; this suggests that it may have been read liturgically to celebrate the Alexandrian festival described in 6:30–36.