

IOUDITH TO THE READER

EDITION OF THE GREEK TEXT

The NETS translation of the book of Ioudith is based on the edition of R. Hanhart (*Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis editum VIII.4: Iudith* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979]). While I have followed Hanhart's critical text for the most part, there are a few instances in which, to my mind, the Greek manuscript evidence commends an alternative reading as representing the earliest form of the Greek text. These departures from Hanhart are duly noted as they arise. In three places (3.8; 4.9; and 6.6), I am convinced that a copying error must have crept into the text early in its history and that consequently the original reading has been obscured; in these passages, emendation was called for without the support of a Greek manuscript. In each case the reading I have followed does enjoy attestation by the Syriac text, which itself represents an early translation of the Greek.

PLACE OF IOUDITH WITHIN NETS

Although the book of Ioudith is demonstrably the translation of a Semitic work, most likely Hebrew, its parent text vanished sometime in late antiquity. Consequently, the present translation cannot serve the synoptic purpose of NETS with the NRSV. I have nevertheless endeavored to provide a translation which is faithful to the principles and aims of NETS.

TRANSLATION PROFILE OF THE GREEK

General Character

One of the aims of the NETS translator is to capture in English the constitutive character of the Septuagintal text. For much of the corpus, this means that the translator must squarely address the fact that the book he or she is rendering is itself a translation. In this respect, the book of Ioudith is no exception. From its language one can infer with some measure of confidence not only that the text represents the translation of a Hebrew parent, but that it represents a certain kind of translation, namely, one which has rendered its parent in a relatively metaphrastic fashion; this is to say that within the constraints of grammaticality, the Greek of the translation shows every indication of an isomorphic and quantitative fidelity to the language of its source. Implicit in the verbal texture of any translation is its relationship with another text in another language. In an interlinear translation, this relationship is characterized by a high degree of dependence: the Greek of Ioudith reads as it does in large measure because the Hebrew of its parent read as it did. The image NETS has adopted to capture this profile is that of interlinearity, the picture of one text following another, word-for-word, line-by-line. What this image conveys is the relative transparency of the Greek translation to the Semitic discourse it renders.

Semantics

Although upon reading Ioudith one is struck by the peculiar way in which familiar Greek words are used by the translator, it must nevertheless be stressed that idiosyncratic usage is the exception rather than the norm. Yet unconventional usage in Ioudith needs an explanation. In an interlinear translation the frame of reference within which a given word is deployed has been defined almost entirely by the task of translation itself, i.e., the need to provide lexical equivalents. A given word was chosen by the translator precisely because it was deemed an appropriate rendering of the corresponding word in the parent text. Its coherence with the larger verbal context of the target language was not a primary consideration, and so it is that we find Greek words which, at first blush, behave more or less like Semitic ones. This does not mean that they have somehow taken on Semitic meanings; on the contrary, it is upon Greek linguistic convention that the translator erects his interlinear edifice. Conventional Greek meanings had to be presumed if the Greek text was to discharge its constitutive function vis-à-vis its parent, i.e., as an extended series of glosses.

Under the paradigm of interlinearity one can identify various approaches to the task of selecting suitable lexical equivalents. Thus, while certain translations within the Septuagintal corpus exhibit a ten-

dency to stereotypical rendering, where one Greek word is assigned to a Semitic counterpart and then deployed consistently as its equivalent, others will show markedly less reliance on such one-to-one equations. As far as one can tell in the absence of its parent, the book of Ioudith can be characterized by its use of numerous Greek words to render a single Hebrew item, hence by semantic differentiation. Consequently, the book boasts a rich vocabulary. Such differentiation should not be seen to imply, however, that the translator's usage is always felicitous. One senses at times that it is not the context that motivates his word choice so much as the principle of variety itself. Furthermore, he tends to negotiate the meaning of the parent text in an atomistic fashion, if not word-by-word then at least phrase-by-phrase. This follows directly from the premise of interlinearity. It gives rise to many isolate renderings, word choices which reflect the translator's understanding of a corresponding Hebrew item but which have been made at the expense of conventional Greek usage. While the translator may thereby offer his reader considerable interpretive purchase on a small unit of the parent text, the price paid is often as not the overall coherence of the Greek prose.

Although I have noted semantic differentiation within the translation, further qualification is needed. For although the Greek translator employs a large vocabulary, he exhibits a tendency to use his words in accordance with the distribution of their Hebrew counterparts. Greek words are evidently assigned to items in the source language and then deployed according to this equivalency. Put simply, certain Greek words seem to tag along with the Hebrew words they render; this can be inferred from their distribution, which is often distinct from that found in Greek prose of this period. Not surprisingly, there is at times a certain tension between word and context. An example of this is provided by the Greek verb ποιέω ("to make"), the core meaning of which pertains to the production of things external to some agent. This verb was evidently assigned to Hebrew פָּעַל, which in very many cases denotes agency without a view to production. The result is that the translator repeatedly deploys ποιέω in contexts which, while fully appropriate for the Hebrew item, would have undoubtedly occasioned the use of another verb in compositional Greek.

For certain items the translator relaxes his lexical bravado and chooses to convey the repetitive character of the parent text. While his usage may be consistent with contemporary Greek convention, the frequency with which a given word occurs will often arise directly from Hebrew literary style. So for example the translator's use of the verb ἐξέρχομαι ("to go out"), which likely rendered Hebrew יָצָא. It is a fitting equivalent, and the meaning of the Greek is never strained by its use. At the same time, the persistence with which this word occurs lends the translator's prose an unmistakably Hebraic quality.

It is important to emphasize that on many occasions the translator's choice of vocabulary is altogether apt. His penchant for variety even leads him to draw upon literary usage seldom found elsewhere in the translated corpus. At 14.9, for instance, rather than use εὐφρών ("cheerful") to convey the cheerful response of the people to Ioudith's account of her triumph, he supplies the much less common form εὐφρόσυνος (see Esth 9.19), which carries poetic associations altogether fitting to the heightened atmosphere of the scene.

The translator's use of the Greek language, while constrained by his translation technique, remains the product of one whose first language was likely to have been Greek. Coming as it does from the hand of one at home in Hellenistic culture, Ioudith is often best understood against this background. A striking example of this is to be found in Ioudith's song (16.6) where she makes reference to both the υἱοὶ τιτάνων and the γίγαντες. While the translator no doubt had a warrant in the parent text for both of these mytho-poetic figures, the אֱפֹרַתִּים (see Gen 14.5) and the אֱפֹרַתִּים (see Gen 6.4) respectively, instead of providing transliterations of the Hebrew names he chose to introduce comparable figures from Greek mythology.

In sum, if we view the work of the translation in terms of the solution of problems posed by the source language, we can speak of the transmission of such solutions from one translator to another.

Syntax

The most obvious syntactical feature of Ioudith is parataxis. While popular Greek composition of this period tolerated parataxis to a fair degree, the prose of Ioudith often amounts to a seemingly endless march of clauses beginning with the conjunction καί ("and") followed by the finite verb. While in Hebrew such parataxis reflects the canons of classical composition, the interlinear rendering of these sequences in Greek, on the other hand, is decidedly at variance with the style of any period.

The jarring use of prepositions is also worthy of comment. Again, it is less a question of grammaticality than of convention. A preposition will at times be supplied which, while adequate to the translator's purpose of representing the structure of the parent text, sits somewhat uneasily within its Greek context.

In certain instances, it is not the construction itself but its sheer frequency that bespeaks its Semitic origin. One favorite usage of the translator is the so-called telic εἰς. A legitimate construction in Greek, it involves the construal of the preposition with a nominal item so as to carry the sense of purpose or reference. In the book of Ioudith it was evidently used in certain instances to render Hebrew constructions with לְ.

While he is not altogether rigid in his use of translation equivalencies, the translator of Ioudith is fairly consistent in his handling of the syntactical problems posed by the source language. This means that while, on the one hand, a limited range of Greek constructions appears with a certain regularity, others are conspicuous by their absence, as e.g., the genitive absolute. Participles are seldom construed as adverbials (i.e., circumstantials) but most often as adjectivals; conversely, infinitives tend not to be used as out and out substantives. In both cases, therefore, the Greek mimics the Hebrew. By and large, the translator makes minimal use of the resources available in Greek for subordination. The end result of such a selective use of the Greek syntactical repertoire is that the language of the translation reflects a profoundly Hebraic prose style: terse, direct, measured, stately.

Idiom

A particularly telling characteristic of Ioudith is its literal rendering of Hebrew idiomatic expressions. Most prevalent are those which trade on a figurative use of the word “face.” Hebrew פָּנִים occurs in a number of thoroughly conventional prepositional constructions, e.g., לְפָנֶיךָ and עַל פָּנֶיךָ, marking relative spatial position. Here the lexeme פָּנִים is semantically bleached, as it were, its function predominantly structural. In Greek, however, spatial position is not typically marked by expressions which involve the face (although it can be). Hence, the translator’s tendency to render פָּנִים by πρόσωπον results in a proliferation of phrases that, while adequately conveying the prepositional force of their Hebrew counterparts, nevertheless carry some of the semantic content of the word “face” into the context. This lends the Greek prose a certain naiveté. The important point is that this quality does not arise from stylistic motivation; it is a function of interlinearity.

Fixed phrases abounded in the parent text of Ioudith, and their literal rendering contributes to the Hebraic tone of the translation. Two notable expressions not current in standard Greek are πᾶσα σὰρξ (“all flesh” 2.3) and ἀλλήσοι εἰρήνην (“speak peace” 15.8). In the Hebrew, the corresponding expressions would have carried the sense “all people” and “to wish well” respectively. But occurring as they do in a Greek text, where they are by no means idiomatic, they cannot be so glossed. Other stock Hebrew phrases transferred to the Greek include: ὧν οὐκ ἦν ἀριθμὸς (2.17) “which were without number”; μῆνα ἡμερῶν (3.10) “a month of days”; and εἰς γενεάς γενεῶν (8.32) “to generations of generations.”

At various points in the narrative, characters profess an oath using some variant on the formula ζῆ [τις] . . . ὅτι [present indicative verb of the third person] (e.g., 2.12; 11.7; 12.4; 13.16), which, taking a certain amount of liberty with both the Greek and English, might be glossed, “as surely as [x] doth live, so surely will I perform [y].” The idiom is decidedly Hebraic, and, again, a special case of interlinearity.

THE NETS TRANSLATION OF IOUDITH

For its Greco-Jewish readership, Ioudith would thus have seemed at once strange and familiar. Strange because it flew in the face of Greek convention, both popular and literary, yet familiar owing to the fact that it took its place within a growing body of Greco-Jewish translation-literature. The challenge for the NETS translator is then both to convey the strangeness and the familiarity of the text, its beauty as well as its clumsiness. To this end, I have distinguished between source-oriented and target-oriented features of the Greek. Quite simply, a target-oriented feature is one consistent with the conventions of Greek prose; a source-oriented feature is one arising from the premise of interlinearity. On the whole I have rendered target-oriented features in idiomatic English, while allowing the source-oriented features of the prose to stand in tension, as indeed they do in the Greek. In this way I endeavor to convey the Semitic feel of the prose, while at the same time capturing its peculiar brand of literary complexity. My approach, however, remains informal; no hard and fast rules are possible here.

Many source-oriented features of the prose of Ioudith are not easily captured in English. In the case of inter-sentential relations, however, it is often possible to achieve the same effect in English fortuitously present in the Greek. And so I have throughout preserved its parataxis, attributable to the method and aims of the translator. Although parataxis is not entirely foreign to Greek prose style, by reproducing it in English I hope to convey the constitutive character of the translation.

It is axiomatic for NETS that translations are produced for a purpose and that the purpose of a translation will be reflected in its text-linguistic make-up. In the case of Ioudith, almost every verse bespeaks

the mandate of the translator to provide his community with an interlinear text. What we might call the literary style of Ioudith is thus to be accounted for on this premise. At the same time, the translator's prose, while not by any stretch of the imagination adhering to contemporary Greek poetics, does carry a certain charm and resonance of its own. The repetition of certain verbal patterns is obviously a reflex from the Hebrew. Yet it is no less effective a literary feature for all that, investing the text with various sorts of verbal complexity. So too, there are times when the language of Ioudith echoes that of earlier Greco-Jewish translations. The fact that such intertextuality is often a reflex of shared translation technique does not diminish the added dimension of significance it has to offer the reader.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Not unlike the Greco-Jewish translator of Ioudith, I have self-consciously undertaken my one word translation within the context of a literary tradition. For English letters, the Authorized Version is a wellspring from which one is well advised to drink deeply. I made a point of returning to its translation of Ioudith, not so much as a guide to the problems of translation, but rather as a literary departure point. After all, the language of the AV has certain features that invite comparison with the Greek of the Septuagint, not least of all its approximation of Hebrew prose style. Of the relevant secondary literature, I found the textual notes and commentary of Morton S. Enslin and Solomon Zeitlin's *The Book of Judith* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1972) most useful. All English-speaking scholarship on Ioudith is in some manner indebted to A. E. Cowley's "The Book of Judith" (in Charles 1:242–267), and in that respect I am no exception.

My greatest debt is that owed to my academic advisor, friend, and mentor, Albert Pietersma. To read a text with any measure of competence is to have served an apprenticeship of sorts, and here I was trained by one of the most able readers of the Septuagint today, whose considerable learning and astute insight have informed my work from start to finish.

CAMERON BOYD-TAYLOR

1 It was the twelfth year of the reign of Nabouchodonosor, who ruled over the Assyrians from Nineue, the great city. It was in the days of Arphaxad, who ruled over the Medes from Ecbatana² and who had built walls around Ecbatana from stones hewn to a breadth of three cubits^a and to a length of six cubits and made the height of the wall seventy cubits and its breadth fifty cubits³ and raised up its towers at its gates^b one hundred cubits and laid out their foundations to a breadth of sixty cubits⁴ and made its gates, gates rising to a height of seventy cubits and their width being forty cubits for the passage of his army^c of chief men and the ranks of his foot-soldiers.⁵ And it was in those days that King Nabouchodonosor made war against King Arphaxad in the Great Plain, that is, the plain on the frontier of Rhagau.⁶ And there rallied against^d him all the inhabitants of the highlands and all who dwelt by the Euphrates and the Tigris and the Hydaspes and in the plain of Arioch, king of the Elymeans. And a great many nations^e gathered for the battle of the sons of Cheleoud^e.

7 And Nabouchodonosor, king of the Assyrians, had sent to all those who inhabit Persia and to all the inhabitants of the west, the inhabitants of Cilicia and Damascus and Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon and all the inhabitants facing the coast⁸ and those among the nations of Carmel and Galaad and Upper Galilee and the great plain of

Esdreloom⁹ and all those in Samaria and its cities and beyond the Jordan as far as Ierusalem and Batane and Chelous and Kades and the wadi^f of Egypt and Taphnas and Ramesse and all the land of Gesem,¹⁰ until one comes above Tanis and Memphis, and all the inhabitants of Egypt, until one comes to the frontier of Ethiopia.¹¹ And all the inhabitants throughout all^g the land had contempt for the word of Nabouchodonosor, king of the Assyrians, and did not join with him for the war, for they did not fear him; rather, in their eyes he was but one man, and they sent back his messengers empty-handed and shamefaced.

12 And Nabouchodonosor became violently angry at all this land and swore by his throne and by his kingdom that he would punish the entire region of Cilicia and the Damascene and Syria and that he would dispatch with his sword all the inhabitants of the land of Moab and the sons of Ammon and all Judea and all those in Egypt, until one comes to the region of the two seas.

13 And in the seventeenth year, he took the field of battle before his army against King Arphaxad and prevailed in his war. And he turned back the entire army of Arphaxad, all his cavalry and all his chariots,¹⁴ and he seized his cities. And he came as far as Ecbatana and gained possession of the towers and looted its streets, and its honor he turned to its shame.¹⁵ And he overtook Arpha-

^aIn the measurement of stone, the cubit was equivalent to about one and a half feet ^bI.e. the city-gates
^carmies = Ha ^dPerhaps to ^ePerhaps of the sons of Cheleoud gathered for battle ^friver = Ha ^gOm = Ha

xad in the mountains of Rhagau and struck him down with his spears and destroyed him ^aunto that day^a. ¹⁶And he returned with them, he and all his mongrel force, an enormously large body of warriors, and he spent one hundred and twenty days there, he and his army, in idleness and merriment.

2 And in the eighteenth year, on the twenty-second day of the first month^b, there was word in the household of Nabouchodonosor, king of the Assyrians, that he would punish all the land, just as he had said. ²And he summoned together all his attendants and all his nobles and put before them the secret of his purpose. And from his mouth he ^crecounted every vice^c of the land, ³and they decided to destroy all flesh, all who did not heed the word from his mouth.

⁴ And it came to pass, when he had completed his counsel, Nabouchodonosor, king of the Assyrians, called for Olophernes, the field marshal of his army, being second in command after him, and said to him: ⁵"This is what the Great King, Lord of all the earth, says: Behold, you shall go forth from my presence, and you shall take with you men who rely on their strength, as many as one hundred and twenty thousand infantry and a troop of horse with twelve thousand riders. ⁶And you shall go forth to meet all the land to the west, for they disobeyed the word of my mouth, ⁷and you shall instruct them to make ready ^dearth and water^d, for in my fury I will come upon them and cover all the face of the land with the feet of my army and hand them over for their plunder. ⁸And their slain shall fill their ravines, and every ^ewadi and river overflowing^e shall be filled with their dead. ⁹And I will lead them captive to the ends of all the earth. ¹⁰Now when you go forth, you shall occupy in advance all their territory for me, and they shall surrender themselves to you, and you shall watch them closely for me until the day of their censure. ¹¹As for those who refuse to comply, your eye shall not spare to hand them over for slaughter and plunder in each of your lands. ¹²For as I live, and on the might of my kingdom, I have spoken, and I will accomplish these things by my hand. ¹³You too shall not transgress even one of the words of your lord; rather, when you carry them out, you are to carry them out just as I have ordered you and not put off their doing."

¹⁴ And Olophernes set out from the presence of his lord and summoned all the lords and the generals and commanders of the army of Assour, ¹⁵and he numbered chosen men for battle, just as his lord had commanded him, as many as one hundred and twenty thousand and twelve thousand mounted archers, ¹⁶and he formed them up in the way troops are drawn up for war. ¹⁷And he took for their baggage camels and donkeys and mules, a vastly large number, and for their provision sheep and cattle and goats, which were countless, ¹⁸and for every man a store of provisions

aplenty and ever so much gold and silver from the king's household.

¹⁹ And he set out on the march, he and all his army, to go before King Nabouchodonosor and cover all the face of the land to the west with their chariots and knights and picked infantry. ²⁰Great also was the mongrel troop, which grasshopper-like accompanied them; indeed, they were as the sand of the ground, for they were countless owing to their sheer multitude.

²¹ And from Nineue they made a three-day march toward the face of the plain of Bektileth and encamped down from Bektileth near the mountain, which is toward the left^f of upper Cilicia. ²²And he took all his army, infantry and cavalry, and his chariots and departed from there into the highlands. ²³And he broke through Phoud and Loud and plundered all the sons of Rassis and the sons of Ismael, those facing the wilderness toward the south of Cheleon. ²⁴And he went along the Euphrates and through Mesopotamia and razed all the high cities along the wadi Abron until one comes to the sea. ²⁵And he seized the region of Cilicia and cut down all those who resisted him, and he went as far as the frontier of Iapheth, which is toward the southwest facing Arabia. ²⁶And he encircled all the sons of Madiam and set alight their coverts and plundered their sheepfolds. ²⁷And he went down to the plain of Damascus in the days of the wheat harvests and set all their fields ablaze, and he handed over their flocks and herds for destruction and stripped their cities and ravaged their plains, and he struck down with the sword's edge all their young men.

²⁸ And upon those inhabiting the coast, those in Sidon and in Tyre and those inhabiting Sour and Okina and all those inhabiting Iemnaan, there fell a fear and dread of him, and those inhabiting Azotus and Ascalon feared him exceedingly.

3 And they sent envoys to him with a suit for peace, saying: ²"Behold, we the servants of Nabouchodonosor the Great King are at your disposal; treat us as is pleasing in your sight. ³Behold, our dwellings and all our buildings and every plain of wheat and the flocks and the herds and all the sheepfolds of our tents are at your disposal; treat them as it pleases you. ⁴Behold, so too our cities and their inhabitants are your slaves; when you come, meet them as is good in your sight."

⁵ And the men arrived before Olophernes and reported to him according to these very words. ⁶And he descended upon the coast, he and his army, and garrisoned the high cities and conscripted select men for an auxiliary. ⁷And they and all their environs received him with garlands and dances and tambourines. ⁸And he razed all their temples^h and cut down their groves. Indeed, he had been appointed to root out all the gods of the land, that every nation and every tongue

^ai.e. to this day ^bi.e. March/April ^cPerhaps recounted all the vice, i.e. concluded the affliction ^di.e. tokens of submission ^ewadis, and the river overflowing = Ha ^fi.e. Heb = north ^gi.e. early summer ^hthe territory = Ha

should serve Nabouchodonosor and him alone and that their every tribe should invoke him as a god.

9 And he went along the face of Esdrelom near Dotaia, which is opposite the great ridge of Judea, ¹⁰and he encamped between Gaibai and Scythopolis and spent a month of days there in order to assemble all the baggage of his army.

4 And all the sons of Israel who inhabit Judea heard everything that Olophernes, field marshal of Nabouchodonosor, king of the Assyrians, had done to the nations^a and in what manner he had stripped all their sacred precincts and handed them over for destruction. ²And they became most exceedingly frightened by his visage and distressed for Ierusalem and the shrine of the Lord their God, ³for they had recently come up out of captivity, and all the people of Judea had just now been united, and the vessels and the altar and the house^b purified of their desecration. ⁴And they sent to all the territory of Samaria and to Kona and Baithoron and Belmain and Iericho and to Choba and Haisora and to the valley of Salem, ⁵and they occupied in advance all the summits of the high mountains and fortified the villages in them, and they set aside stores for military provisions, for their plains had just recently been harvested.

6 And Ioakeim the great priest^c, who at that time was in Ierusalem, wrote to those inhabiting Baityloua and to Baitomesthaim, which is over against Esdrelom facing the plain near Dothaim, ⁷bid^ding them hold the ascents of the hill country, since the entrance to Judea was through them, and it was easy to hinder those climbing up, the approach being narrow, wide enough for at most two men.

8 And the sons of Israel did as Ioakeim the great priest instructed them—and the senate of all the people of Israel, who were seated in Ierusalem. ⁹And every man of Israel cried out most ardently to God and humbled their spirits with fasting^d. ¹⁰About their waists they wrapped sackcloth, they and their women and their infants and their cattle and all the resident aliens and laborers and their bought slaves. ¹¹And every man and woman and child of Israel living in Ierusalem threw themselves down facing the shrine and ^emade ashen their heads^e and spread out their sackcloth in front of the Lord. ¹²And they draped the altar with sackcloth, and with one accord they ardently called upon the God of Israel not to hand over their infants for plunder and the women for pillage and their ancestral cities to oblivion and their holy precincts to desecration and mocking humiliation amongst the nations.

13 And the Lord listened to their cry and beheld their distress. And for rather many days the people throughout all Judea and Ierusalem continued fasting in front of the holy precincts of the omnipotent Lord. ¹⁴And Ioakeim the great priest

and all those who attend the Lord, priests and ministers of the Lord, their waists girt with sackcloth, offered the perpetual^f whole burnt offering and the vows and the voluntary gifts of the people. ¹⁵And there were ashes upon their turbans, and with all their might they were calling upon the Lord to look after the entire house of Israel for good.

5 And it was reported to Olophernes, field marshal of the army of Assour, that the sons of Israel had prepared for war and that they had blocked the highland passages and fortified all the summits of the high mountains and had set traps in the plains. ²And he grew violently angry with rage and summoned all the rulers of Moab and the generals of Ammon and all the satraps^g of the coast ³and said to them: "Now tell me, sons of Chanaan, who is this people seated in the highlands, and what cities do they inhabit, and what is the number of their army, and in what does their power and strength lie, and who has arisen over them as king, leading their army, ⁴and why have they, of all the inhabitants of the west, disdained to come and meet me?"

5 And Achior, leader of all the sons of Ammon, said to him: "Only suffer my lord to hear a word from the mouth of your slave, and I will tell you the truth concerning this people who inhabit these highlands next to where you are residing, and no falsehood shall be forthcoming from the mouth of your slave. ⁶These people are descendants of the Chaldeans. ⁷And in former times they sojourned in Mesopotamia, for they had no wish to follow the gods of their fathers, who were in the land of the Chaldeans. ⁸And they had departed from the ways of their forebears and did obeisance to the God of heaven, ^ha god they had come to acknowledge^h, and their forebears had driven them from the sight of their gods, and they had fled into Mesopotamia and sojourned there for many days. ⁹And their God told them to go forth from their sojourning and to go into the land of Chanaan, and they settled there and abounded in gold and silver and in exceedingly many cattle. ¹⁰And they descended into Egypt, for famine covered the face of the land of Chanaan, and they sojourned there until they throveⁱ. And there they grew to a very large number, and their race was countless. ¹¹And the king of Egypt outwitted them, and they^j befooled them; with clay^k and brick they abased them and reduced them to slaves. ¹²And they cried out to their God, and he struck all the land of Egypt with plagues, from which there was no cure, and the Egyptians drove them from their presence.

¹³And their God dried up the Red Sea before them ¹⁴and led them toward the way of Sina and Kades Barne. And they drove out all the inhabitants of the wilderness ¹⁵and dwelt in the land of the Amorrites, and with their strength they destroyed all the Hesebonites. And when they crossed the

^ai.e. foreign nations ^bi.e. temple ^ci.e. High Priest ^dmost ardently = Ha ^ei.e. cast ashes upon their heads ^fi.e. daily
^gi.e. governors ^hPossibly the god they knew ⁱPerhaps as long as they were sustained ^ji.e. the Egyptians ^ktoil = Ha

Jordan they inherited all the highlands¹⁶ and drove from their sight the Chananite and the Pherezite and the Iebousite and Sychem and all the Gergesites, and they inhabited them for many days.

17 "And as long as they did not sin in the sight of their God, good fortune was with them, for with them is a God who hates injustice.¹⁸ But when they revolted from the way which he had decreed for them, they were completely and utterly destroyed in numerous wars and taken captive into a land not their own, and the shrine of their God was razed to the ground, and their cities were conquered by their enemies.¹⁹ And now, having turned back to their God, they have come up out of the dispersion, there where they were dispersed and have occupied Ierusalem, where their holy precinct is, and have settled in the highlands, for they were deserted.

20 "And now, O lord and master, if there is in fact negligence amongst this people, and they are sinning against their God, we will also mark this offense which is amongst them, and we will go up and make war on them.²¹ But if there is no lawlessness in their nation, then let my lord pass them by, rather than have their Lord and their God shield them. And we shall be disgraced before all the earth!"

22 And it came to pass, when Achior had finished speaking these words, that all the people encircling the tent and standing around muttered, and the nobles of Olophernes and all those inhabiting the coast and Moab demanded that he be thrashed:²³ "For we will not flee from the sons of Israel, for behold, they are a people in whom there is neither the power nor the strength for a hard battle;²⁴ surely then we will go up, and they shall be fodder for all your army, Master Olophernes."

6 And when the uproar of the men around the council had ceased, Olophernes, field marshal of the army of Assour, said to Achior and to all the sons of Moab before the entire commons of allophytes:

2 "And who are you, Achior and the mercenaries of Ephraim, to prophesy amongst us as you have done today and to tell us not to wage war against the race of Israel, because their God will shield them? And who is god if not Nabouchodonosor? This very one will dispatch his might and wipe them from the face of the earth. And their God will not rescue them,³ but we his^a slaves shall strike them down as a single person, and they will not withstand the might of our horses,⁴ for with them we shall incinerate^b them. And their mountains will be drenched with their blood, and their plains filled with their dead, and not a trace of their feet will stand in our way, but they will perish amidst the devastation, says King Nabouchodonosor, lord of all the earth, for he has spoken^c; the words of his declaration will not be in vain.

5 "But you, Achior, mercenary of Ammon, who have spoken these words in the day of your injustice, from this day forth you shall not see my face again until I punish the race of those out of Egypt.⁶ And when I return, the blade of my army and the spears^d of my attendants shall then thrust through your sides, and you shall fall amongst their wounded.⁷ And now my slaves shall restore you to the highlands and place you in one of the cities of the ascents,⁸ and you shall not perish until such time as you are utterly destroyed with them.⁹ And if you are hoping in your heart that they will not be taken, don't let your face drop; I have spoken, and none of my words will fail."

10 And Olophernes ordered his slaves, who were standing by in his tent, to seize Achior and restore him to Baityloua and to give him into the hands of the sons of Israel.¹¹ And his slaves seized him and led him outside of the camp into the plain, and they made their way from the middle of the flatlands into the high country and arrived at the springs, which were beneath Baityloua.¹² And when the men of the city saw them in quest of the mountain's summit, they took up their arms and went off outside the city to the mountain's summit, and every man armed with a sling checked their ascent and kept pelting them with rocks.¹³ And having slipped away beneath the mountain, they bound Achior and left him flung against the foot of the mountain and were gone to their lord.

14 The sons of Israel, coming down from their city, approached him, and upon releasing him, they led him off to Baityloua and presented him to the rulers of their city,¹⁵ who in those days were Ozias, Micha's son from the tribe of Symeon, and Chabris, Gothoniel's son, and Charmis son of Melchiel.¹⁶ And they summoned together all the elders of the city, and all their youth and the women rushed together for the assembly, and they stood Achior in the middle of all their people, and Ozias questioned him as to what had happened.¹⁷ And in reply he reported the words of the council of Olophernes to them, and all that he had said before the rulers of the sons of Assour, every word, and all that Olophernes had boasted regarding the house of Israel.¹⁸ And throwing themselves down, the people did obeisance to God and cried out, saying:

19 "Lord, God of heaven, behold their arrogance, and have pity on the lowliness of our race, and look this day upon the face of those who are dedicated to you."

20 And they sent for Achior and commended him heartily,²¹ and Ozias took him along from the assembly to his house and gave a drinking bout for the elders, and all that night they called upon the God of Israel for help.

7 Now on the following day, Olophernes gave orders to all his army and his entire people, who were at hand for his alliance, to move off against Baityloua and to occupy in advance the as-

^aI.e. of Nabouchodonosor ^bwash away = Ha ^cPossibly he has said that ^dpeople = Ha

cents of the highlands and to make war on the sons of Israel. ²And every chief man of their number moved off that day, and their army of warriors was one hundred and seventy thousand infantry and twelve thousand cavalry, not to mention the baggage and the men who were on foot with them, a vastly large number. ³And they encamped at the spring in the ravine near Baityloua and stretched out to a breadth over Dothaim as far as Belbaim and to a length from Baityloua as far as Bean-field, which is opposite Esdrelom.

⁴ Now when they saw their number, the sons of Israel were greatly alarmed, and each man said to the one next to him: "These ones will now lick up the face of all the land, and neither the high mountains nor the ravines nor the hills will withstand their weight." ⁵And each man, taking up their battle gear and lighting fires upon their towers, remained on guard all that night.

⁶ On the second day, Olophernes led out all his horse to face the sons of Israel, who were in Baityloua, ⁷and he surveyed the ascents of their city, and he inspected their^a springs of water and occupied them in advance and stationed detachments of warriors near them, and he himself departed for his people.

⁸ And all the^a rulers of the sons of Esau and all the leaders of the people of Moab and the generals of the coast, approaching him, said: ⁹"Do but let our master hear a word, that there be no fracture within your army; ¹⁰for this people of the sons of Israel do not rely upon their spears but upon the heights of the mountains, wherein they themselves dwell, for it is not easy to ascend the summits of their mountains. ¹¹And now, O Master, do not wage war against them as a military force is wont to do in regular battle, and not a single man of your people will fall. ¹²Remain at your camp, preserving every man of your army, and let your servants hold the spring of water, which issues forth from the foot of the mountain, ¹³for all those who inhabit Baityloua draw their water from there, and the thirst will kill them, and they will surrender their city. And we and our people shall climb up to the neighboring summits of the mountains and encamp upon them for an advanced guard, that not a single man set out from the city. ¹⁴And they will waste away in their famine, they and their women and their children, and before the sword comes upon them they will be laid out in the streets of their dwelling place. ¹⁵And you will pay them back a painful repayment, because they broke out in rebellion and did not meet your face in peace."

¹⁶ And their words were pleasing in the eyes of Olophernes and in the eyes of all his attendants, and he instructed them to do just as they had said. ¹⁷And the detachment of the sons of Ammon departed, and with them five thousand of the sons of Assour, and they encamped in the valley and occupied in advance the waters and the springs of water of the sons of Israel. ¹⁸And the sons of Esau and sons of Ammon went up and encamped in the

highlands opposite Dothaim. And they sent from among them to the ^bsouth and east^b opposite Egrebel, which is near Chous, which is on the Wadi Mochmour. And the remainder of the Assyrian army encamped in the plain and covered all the face of the land, and their tents and baggage were in a great mass, and they amounted to a vastly large number.

¹⁹ And the sons of Israel cried out to the Lord their God, for their spirit was fainthearted, for all their enemies encircled them^a, and there was no escape from their midst. ²⁰And the entire assemblage of Assour, the infantry and the chariots and the horsemen of them, remained round about them for thirty-four days. And all their vessels of water failed all the inhabitants of Baityloua, ²¹and the cisterns were emptied out, and they were unable to drink their fill of water for a single day, for they were giving them to drink in measure. ²²And their infants lost heart, and the women and the young men failed from thirst, and they were falling in the streets of the city and in the passages of the gates, and there was no longer strength in them.

²³ And all the people had been gathered to Ozias and the rulers of the city, the young men and the women and the children, and they cried with a loud voice and said before all the elders: ²⁴"May God judge between you and us, for you have done in our presence a great injustice not speaking peaceably with the sons of Assour. ²⁵And now there is no helper for us, but God has sold us into their hands, to be laid low before them with thirst and great destruction. ²⁶And now, call upon them and surrender the whole city to the people of Olophernes and to all his army for pillage. ²⁷For it is better for us to become their plunder, for we shall become slaves, and our spirit will live, and we shall not see the death of our infants with our eyes, and our women and children quitting their spirits. ²⁸Against you we call to witness heaven and earth and our God and the^a Lord of our fathers, who punishes us according to our transgressions and according to the transgressions of our fathers, lest he^f act according to these words on this very day."

²⁹ And in the midst of their assembly, a loud wailing arose with one accord from everyone, and they cried out to the Lord God with a loud voice. ³⁰And Ozias said to them: "Take courage, brothers, let us hold out five days yet, within which our Lord God will turn his mercy towards us, for he will not forsake us completely, ³¹but if they should pass and help not come upon us, I shall do according to your words."

³² And he dispersed the people ^aeach one^a to his detachment, and they went off to the walls and the towers of their city, and they sent the women and children to their homes, and in the city they were in a very low state.

8 And in those days Ioudith heard, the daughter of Merari son of Ox son of Ioseph son of Oziel son of Helkia son of Hananias son of Gedeon son

^aOm = Ha ^bI.e. southeast ^cI.e. God

of Raphain son of Akitho son of Elias son of Chelkias son of Eliab son of Nathanael son of Salamiel son of Sarasadai son of Israel. ²And her husband was Manasses of her tribe and of her clan. And he had died in the days of the barley harvest;³ for he had been in charge of the ones binding sheaves in the plain, and the burning heat had been upon his head, and he had fallen upon his bed and come to an end in Baityloua his city, and they had buried him with his fathers in the field which is between Dothaim and Balamon. ⁴And Ioudith had lived in her house as a widow for three years and four months. ⁵And she had made herself a tent upon the roof of her house and placed sackcloth about her waist, and upon her were the garments of her widowhood. ⁶And she had been fasting^b all the days of her widowhood, apart from pre-sabbaths and sabbaths and pre-new moons and new moons and feasts and rejoicings of the house of Israel. ⁷And she was beautiful in appearance and quite lovely to see. And Manasses her husband had left her gold and silver and male and female servants and cattle and fields, and she remained over them. ⁸And there was no one who brought a malicious word against her, for she feared God exceedingly.

⁹ And she heard the malicious words of the people against the ruler, because they were faint-hearted due to the lack of water, and Ioudith heard all the words which Ozias had said to them, how he swore to them that after five days he would give the city over to the Assyrians. ¹⁰And sending her favorite slave, the one in charge of all her possessions, she summoned^c Chabris and Charmis, the elders of her city, ¹¹and they came to her, and she said to them:

"Now listen to me, rulers of the inhabitants of Baityloua, for your word, which you have spoken in the presence of the people in this day, is not right, and you have placed this oath, which you have spoken between God and you and have said that unless the Lord turn his assistance to you^d within them^e, you will hand over the city to our enemies. ¹²And who now are you, you who on this very day have tried God, and stand^f on God's behalf^f amongst the sons of men? ¹³And now you question the omnipotent Lord, and you will never know anything at all. ¹⁴For you will not fathom the depth of man's heart, nor will you encompass the matter of his thought. How indeed will you seek out God, who made all these things? How will you come to discern his mind, and how will you understand his reasoning? On no account, brothers, are you to continue provoking the Lord, our God, to anger. ¹⁵For unless he be willing to come to our aid within the five days, he has the power, within the course of the days he wishes, either to shield or destroy us before the eyes of our enemies. ¹⁶As for you, do not hold to account the purposes of the Lord, our God, for God is not to be threatened like a man, nor is he to be put upon

like a son of man. ¹⁷For this reason, while we are awaiting deliverance from him, let us call upon him for our rescue, and if it please him, he will listen to our cry.

¹⁸ "For there has not appeared among our generations, nor is there in this day, either a tribe or a clan or a district or a city from among us, who do obeisance to handmade gods, as happened in former days, ¹⁹on account of which our fathers were handed over for the sword and for plunder and suffered a great fall before our enemies. ²⁰We however have known no other God except him, for which reason we hope that he will not disregard us nor any of our race. ²¹For in the event that we be taken, also all Judea will fall, and our holy precincts will be plundered, and he will require its desecration by our bloods, ²²and among the nations he will bring upon our head the murder of our brothers and the captivity of the land and the waste of our inheritance, where, if there we be enslaved, we shall also become an offense and a disgrace before our owners. ²³For our bondage will not be directed to favor, but rather the Lord, our God, will reckon it for dishonor.

²⁴ "And now, brothers, let us prove to our brothers that their life hangs upon us and that the holy precincts and the house and the altar rest upon us. ²⁵On account of all these things, let us give thanks to the Lord, our God, who tries us, just as our fathers also. ²⁶Remember all that he accomplished with Abraam and how much he tried Isaak and all that happened to Iakob in Mesopotamia of Syria, while he was tending the sheep of Laban his mother's brother. ²⁷For just as he did not try them by fire for a test of their heart, he also has not punished us, but the Lord whips those who draw near to him for a warning."

²⁸ And Ozias said to her: "Everything, all that you have said, you have spoken with a true heart, and there is no one who will oppose your words; ²⁹for your wisdom is evident not just today, but all the people have known of your sagacity from the beginning of your days, because what is shaped by your heart is good. ³⁰But the people thirst exceedingly, and they have compelled us to act in accordance with what we said to them and have urged an oath upon us, which we will not transgress. ³¹And now, plead for us, for you are a pious woman, and the Lord will send rain for the filling of our cisterns, and we shall not fail yet."

³² And Ioudith said to them: "Listen to me, and I will accomplish a deed which shall reach generations of generations amongst sons of our race. ³³Stand upon the gate this night, and I will set forth with my favorite slave, and within the days after which you said you would surrender the city to our enemies, the Lord will look after Israel by my hand, ³⁴but you shall not inquire after my deed, for I will not tell you until the things which I shall do are accomplished." ³⁵And Ozias said to her and the rulers: "Go in peace, and the Lord God

^ai.e. prior to the wheat harvest, hence in April/May ^bfasted = Ha ^c+ Ozias and = Ha ^dus = Ha ^ei.e. the aforementioned five day period ^fPerhaps instead of God ^gmouth = Ha

before you for the vengeance of our enemies.”
³⁶And turning away from the tent, they went to their posts.

9 Now Ioudith fell face down, and she placed ashes upon her head and stripped off the sackcloth that she wore, and just then in Ierou-salem the incense^a for that evening was being carried into the house of God, and with a loud voice Ioudith cried out to the Lord and said:

2 “O Lord, God of my father Symeon, to whom you gave a sword in hand for vengeance on aliens, the ones who ravaged the virgin’s vulva for defilement and stripped naked the thigh for shame and polluted the vulva for disgrace, for you said: ‘It shall not be thus,’ and they did; ³therefore you handed over their rulers for slaughter, and their bed which, deceived, felt ashamed at their deceit, for blood, and you struck down slaves with lords and lords upon their thrones, ⁴and you handed over their wives for pillage and their daughters for captivity and all their spoils for division among the sons loved by you, who also were zealous in zeal for you and detested the defilement of their blood and called upon you as helper. O God, my God, also listen to me, the widow.

5 “For you accomplished the things previous and those at hand and those thereafter and at present, and those of the future you contemplated, and what you conceived of came to pass, ⁶and what you had resolved stood by and said: ‘Behold, we are here.’ For all your ways are prepared, and your judgment is with foreknowledge.

7 “For behold, the Assyrians were increased in their power; they were exalted by horse and rider; they took pride in the arm of infantry; they put their hope in shield and javelin and bow and sling and did not realize that you are the Lord who crushes wars; ⁸the Lord is your name. Dash down their might with your power, and bring down their strength with your fury, for they have resolved to pollute your holy precincts, to defile the covert of the resting place of the name of your glory, to strike down with the blade the horn of your altar. ⁹Look upon their arrogance; dispatch your anger for their heads; place in the hand of me, the widow, the strength that I have contemplated. ¹⁰By the lips of my deceit^b strike down the slave with the ruler and the ruler with his attendant; shatter their stature by the hand of a female.

11 “For your strength is not in numbers, nor is your dominance in those who are fit, but you are a God of the lowly; you are the helper of the inferior, the supporter of the weak, the shelterer of the desperate, the savior of the hopeless. ¹²Yes, yes, God of my father and God of the inheritance of Israel, master of the heavens and earth, creator of the waters, king of all your creation, hear you my entreaty, ¹³and grant ^cmy word and deceit^c for their wound and welt, who have resolved hard things against your covenant and your hallowed house

and the summit of Sion and the house of your sons’ possession. ¹⁴And ^damong every nation and every tribe^d bring about the knowledge to realize that you are God, God^e of all power and strength, and that there is no one other than you shielding the race of Israel.”

10 And it came to pass, when she had ceased crying out to the God of Israel and had finished all these words, ²and she rose from falling and summoned her favorite slave and went down into the house, wherein she remained in the days of the sabbaths and in her feasts, ³and removed the sackcloth which she wore and stripped off the clothing of her widowhood, and she washed herself, all around the body, with water and anointed herself with thick ointment and fixed^f the hair of her head and placed a turban upon it and put on the clothing of her merriment with which she was accustomed to dress in the days of the life of her husband Manasses, ⁴and she took sandals for her feet and put on the anklets and the bracelets and the rings and the earrings and her every ornament, and she made herself up provocatively for the charming of the eyes of men, all who would cast eyes upon her. ⁵And she gave her favorite slave a skin of wine and cruse of oil, and she filled a bag with barley meal and fig cake and pure bread, and she packed all her vessels and placed them upon her.

6 And they set forth for the gate of the city of Baityloua, and they found Ozias standing at it and the elders of the city, Chabris and Charmis; ⁷now when they saw her and her face was altered and her dress changed, they were then completely and utterly astounded by her beauty and said to her: ⁸“May the God of our fathers ^ggive you as a favor, and may you accomplish your mission, for the pride of the sons of Israel and the exaltation of Ierou-salem.” And she^h did obeisance to God.

9 And she said to them: “Give orders to open the gate of the city for me, and I shall go forth for the accomplishment of the words which you have spoken to me.” And they instructed the young men to open it for her as she said. ¹⁰And so they did. And Ioudith set forth, she and her slave girl with her. The men of the city continued watching her until she went down the mountain, until she passed through the ravine and they no longer saw her.

11 And they continued going straight ahead in the ravine, and the advance guard of the Assyrians met her. ¹²And they seized her and asked: “Of whomⁱ are you, and where do you come from, and where are you going?” And she said: “I am a daughter of the Hebrews, and I am running away from their presence, for they are about to be handed over to you for fodder, ¹³and I am entering into the presence of Olophernes field marshal of your force in order to relate words of truth, and before his presence I will point out the path on which he

^ai.e. incense offering ^bi.e. by the deceit of my lips ^ci.e. my deceitful word ^dto your entire nation and all the tribes = Ha
^eOm = Ha ^fput in order = Ha ^gi.e. make you a cause for gratitude ^hthey = Ha ⁱi.e. which nation

shall go and seize all the highlands, and of his men not a single body or breath of life shall be lost."

14 Now when the men heard her words and considered her face, and before them it was wonderful beyond measure in beauty, they also said to her: ¹⁵"Hastening to come down to face our lord, you have saved your life. And now, approach his tent, and some of us will escort you until they pass you into his hands. ¹⁶Now if you should stand before him, do not be afraid in your heart, but rather report according to your words, and he will treat you well."

17 And they chose a hundred men from among them and set them alongside her and her favorite slave, and they led them to the tent of Olophernes. ¹⁸And a surging throng arose in all the encampment, for her arrival in the coverts was the talk of all, and they came and were wheeling around her, while she stood outside the tent of Olophernes, until they brought news to him concerning her. ¹⁹And they remained awestruck by her beauty, and in awe of the sons of Israel on account of her, and each said to the one near him: "Who will despise this people, who keep such women to themselves? For it is not good that a single man be left surviving from their number, who upon their release will be able to outwit all the earth."

20 And they came out, those who slept beside Olophernes, and all his attendants, and they led her into the tent. ²¹And Olophernes was resting on his bed in the mosquito netting, which was of purple^a and gold and emerald and costly stones interwoven. ²²And they reported to him concerning her, and he came out to the anteroom, and silver torches were leading his way. ²³Now when Ioudith came before the face of him and of his attendants, they were all awestruck by the beauty of her face, and falling face forward, she did obeisance to him, and his slaves raised her up.

11 And Olophernes said to her: "Take courage woman; do not be afraid in your heart, for I have not hurt any person who has chosen to be subject to the king of all the earth, Nabouchodonosor. ²And now, as for your people who inhabit the highlands, if they had not shown me contempt, I would not have taken up my spear against them, but they have done these things to themselves. ³And now, tell me why you ran away from them and came to us, for you have come to safety. Be of courage; you shall live in this night and the future; ⁴for there is no one who will harm you, but rather will treat you well, as is done with the slaves of my lord, King Nabouchodonosor."

5 And Ioudith said to him: "Accept the words of your slave, and let your girl speak to your face, and I will not report falsehood to my lord in this night. ⁶And should you follow the words of your girl, God will see the matter through with you entirely, and my lord will not fail in his mission. ⁷For Nabouchodonosor, king of all the earth, lives, and his might lives, he who sent you for the correction

of every soul; not only will^b people be^b subject to him on account of you, but also through your strength the beasts of the field and the cattle and the birds of the sky will live for Nabouchodonosor and all his house. ⁸For we have heard tell of your wisdom and of the cunning ways of your spirit, and it has been reported before all the land that in all the kingdom you alone are noble and pre-eminent in experience and prodigious in the campaigns of war.

9 "And now, as for the word which Achior spoke in your council, we have heard his words, for the men of Baityloua saved him, and he reported to them everything that he had said before you. ¹⁰For which reason, O lord and master, do not disregard his word but rather lay it up in your heart, for it is true, for he does not punish our race, nor does a sword prevail against them, unless they sin against their God.

11 "And now, lest my lord be spent and idle, death will also fall upon their face, and transgression has overcome them by which they will provoke their God to anger, at such time as they are guilty of deviance. ¹²When their foodstuffs had failed them and all water become scarce, they resolved to set upon their livestock, and they elected to use up everything, all that God in his laws enjoined them not to eat. ¹³And the first fruits of grain and the tithes of wine and of oil, which they preserved, consecrating them for the priests who stand in the presence of our God in Ierousalem, which it is not proper for any of the common people to touch with their hands, they have decided to consume entirely. ¹⁴And to Ierousalem, for there too the inhabitants did these things, they have sent envoys ^cto convey^c dispensation to them from the senate. ¹⁵And it shall be that as soon as they report to them and they go ahead, they will be given to you for destruction in that day.

16 "Therefore, having witnessed all these things, I your slave ran away from their presence, and God sent me to accomplish with you deeds at which all the earth will be amazed, all who hear them. ¹⁷For your slave is devout and serving the God of heaven night and day, and now I shall remain with you, my lord, and your slave will set forth into the ravine each night, and I shall pray to God, and he will tell me when they have committed their transgressions. ¹⁸And when I come I shall bring back^d to you, and you will march forth with all your army, and there is not one of them who will withstand you. ¹⁹And I shall lead you through the midst of Judea until you come before Ierousalem, and I shall set your seat in its midst, and you will lead them as sheep for whom there is no shepherd, and no dog will grumble against you with his tongue, for these things were spoken to me according to my foreknowledge, and they were related to me, and I was sent to announce^e them to you."

20 And her words were pleasing before Olophernes and before all his attendants, and they

^ai.e. purple cloth ^bare ^cwho conveyed = Ha ^di.e. the news ^erelate = Ha

were awestruck by her wisdom and said: ²¹"In beauty of face and sagacity of words there is not such a woman from one end of the earth to the other." ²²And Olophernes said to her: "God did well sending you before the people, that might should be in our hands, but destruction amongst those who showed contempt to my lord. ²³And now, you are charming in your appearance and virtuous in your words, for, if you do as you have said, your God shall be my God, and you shall be seated in the house of King Nabouchodonosor, and you shall be famous more than the entire earth."

12 And he ordered to lead her in to where his silver service was being set, and he instructed ^ato spread for her some of his finest foods^a and some of his wine to drink. ²And Ioudith said: "I shall not eat from them, lest there be offense, but it will be supplied from the things which have accompanied me." ³And Olophernes said to her: "But should the things being with you fail, from where shall we produce things like them to give you? For there is none from your race with us." ⁴And Ioudith said to him: "Your spirit lives, my lord, that^b your slave will not exhaust the things with me until the lord has accomplished by my hand what he has resolved."

⁵ And the attendants of Olophernes led her into the tent. And she slept until it was the middle of the night and arose toward the morning watch. ⁶And she sent to Olophernes, saying: "Let my lord now give the order to permit your slave to set forth for prayer." ⁷And Olophernes ordered the bodyguards not to hinder her. And she remained in the camp for three days, and she went out each night into the ravine of Baityloua and bathed at the spring of water^c. ⁸And when she came up, she would plead the Lord, God of Israel, to direct her path for the grandeur of the sons of his^d people. ⁹And entering clean, she would remain in the tent until she took her food toward evening.

¹⁰ And it came to pass, Olophernes gave a drinking bout on the fourth day for his slaves alone and did not summon to^e the invitation any of those engaged in duties. ¹¹And he said to Bagoas, the eunuch who was in charge of all his things: "Go now, and persuade the Hebrew woman who is with you to come to us and eat and drink with us. ¹²For behold, if we allow such a woman to pass by without having intercourse with her, it will be a source of shame for our face, for if we fail to gain this one, she will mock us."

¹³ And Bagoas set forth from the presence of Olophernes, and he went in to her and said: "Do not let this beautiful girl hesitate now to come to my lord and be honored before his presence and ^fto drink^f wine with us for merriment and to become in this day like a daughter of the sons of Assour, who attend in the house of Nabouchodonosor." ¹⁴And Ioudith said to him: "Who in-

deed am I to speak against my lord? For I shall hurry and do everything which will be pleasing in his eyes, and this will be a joy to me until the day of my death." ¹⁵And standing up, she was furnished with raiment and every feminine adornment. And her slave girl approached and on the ground before Olophernes spread out the fleece for her, which they^g had taken from Bagoas for her daily use so that she might eat reclining upon it.

¹⁶ And Ioudith entered and reclined, and Olophernes' heart was beside itself for her, and his spirit reeled, and he was filled with a violent lust to lie with her. And he had been watching for a time to seduce her from the day he saw her. ¹⁷And Olophernes said to her: "Now drink, and be merry with us." ¹⁸And Ioudith said: "I shall drink now, my^h lord, for today my life has been exalted within me ⁱbeyond all the days of my birthⁱ." ¹⁹And she took, and she ate and drank before him what her slave had prepared. ²⁰And Olophernes was delighted by her and drank a vast amount of wine, more than he had ever before drunk in a single day from the time he was born.

13 Now when it was evening, his slaves were eager to depart. And Bagoas shut the tent from the outside and dismissed the attendants from the presence of his lord, and they departed for their beds, for they were all tired, as the drinking bout had lasted so long. ²Ioudith was left alone in the tent—and Olophernes, having collapsed upon his bed, for the wine had overcome him.

³ And Ioudith had told her slave girl to stand outside of iher bedchamberⁱ and watch out for her departure, just as each day, for she said she would be setting forth for her prayer, and she had spoken to Bagoas according to these words. ⁴And everyone departed from sight, and no one was left behind in the bedchamber from small to great, and standing by his bed, Ioudith said within her heart: "Lord, God of all power, in this hour look upon the works of my hands for the exaltation of Ierousalem; ⁵for now is the time to defend your inheritance and to accomplish my mission for the wreck of the enemies who rose up against us."

⁶ And approaching the bedpost that was near Olophernes' head, she took down his scimitar from it, ⁷and drawing near to the bed she took hold of the hair of his head and said: "Strengthen me, Lord, God of Israel, in this day." ⁸And she struck at his neck twice with her strength and took his head from him. ⁹And she rolled his body from the mattress and took the mosquito netting from the posts. And she set forth shortly afterward and handed the head of Olophernes over to her favorite slave, ¹⁰and she threw it into her bag of provisions.

And the two went forth together as was their custom for prayer, and passing through the camp they circled that ravine and climbed the mountain

^athat some of his finest foods be spread for her = Ha ^bI.e. I assure you that ^c+ in the camp = Ha ^dher = Ha ^eI.e. by you shall drink = Ha ^fshe = Ha ^gOm = Ha ^hI.e. since my birth ⁱI.e. Olophernes' bedchamber

of Baityloua and came to its gates. ¹¹And from afar Ioudith said to the guards on the gates: "Open, open the gate immediately! God, our God, is with us to rouse again strength in Israel and power against the enemies, just as also he did today."

¹² And it came to pass, when the men of her city heard her voice, they were eager to get down to the gate of their city and called together the elders of the city. ¹³And they all ran together, from the small to the great for it was remarkable to them that she had come, and they opened the gate and welcomed them, and lighting a fire for light they formed a circle about them. ¹⁴She then said to them in a loud voice: "Praise God, give praise! Praise God, who did not withdraw his mercy from the house of Israel, but who in this night shattered our enemies through my hand."

¹⁵ And producing the head from the bag, she displayed it and said to them: "Behold, the head of Olophernes, field marshal of the army of Assour, and behold, the mosquito netting in which he was lying in his drunkenness, and the Lord struck him by the hand of a female. ¹⁶And the Lord lives, who preserved me in my way in which I went, that^a my face deceived him for his destruction and that he caused no transgression with me for defilement and shame."

¹⁷ And all the people were utterly amazed, and bending forwards they did obeisance to God and said with one accord: "Blessed are you, our God who in this very day showed contempt for the enemies of your people."

¹⁸ And Ozias said to her: "Blessed are you, daughter, to God Most High, above all women upon the earth, and blessed is the Lord God, who created the heavens and the earth, who guided you for a wound to the head of our enemies' commander; ¹⁹for your hope will never desert the hearts of people who remember divine strength. ²⁰And may God do these things to you as a perpetual exaltation, so to visit you with blessings, since you did not spare your life on account of the lowliness of our race but proceeded against our fallen state traveling straight before our God." And all the people said: "So be it, so be it!"

14 And Ioudith said to them: "Now hear me, brothers, and take this head, and hang it upon the battlement of your wall. ²And it shall be, when daybreak dawns and the sun sets forth over the land, you are to take up your battle gear, each one of you, and march forth out of the city, every able man, and you shall set a leader over them, for going down to the plain to the advance guard of the sons of Assour. And you shall not go down. ³And taking up their armor they^b will go into their camp and rouse the generals of the army of Assour, and they will run together to the tent of Olophernes and will not find him, and fear will fall upon them, and they will flee from your presence. ⁴And taking pursuit you are to lay them low in their path, you and all the inhabitants of the entire

territory of Israel. ⁵But before doing these things, summon Achior the Ammanite to me so that seeing he might identify the one who despised the house of Israel and sent him to us, as unto death."

⁶ And they summoned Achior from the house of Ozias, but when he came and saw the head of Olophernes in the hand of one man in the assembly of the people, he fell face down, and his breathing failed. ⁷When they had revived him, he fell at the feet of Ioudith and did obeisance to her face and said: "You are praised in every covert of Ioudas and in every nation; whosoever hears your name will be distressed. ⁸And now, report to me all that you have done in these days."

And Ioudith related everything to him in the midst of the people, all that she had done from the day on which she had gone forth until she was speaking to them. ⁹Now when she had stopped speaking, the people shouted with a loud voice and gave a rousing cry in their city. ¹⁰Now seeing everything, all that the God of Israel had accomplished, Achior came to believe utterly in God and had the flesh of his foreskin circumcised, and he has been added to the house of Israel until this day.

¹¹ Now when the dawn rose, then they hung the head of Olophernes from the wall, and every man took up his arms and went forth by groups to the mountain passes. ¹²Now the sons of Assour, when they saw them, sent off for their leaders; they went to the generals and officers of thousands and to their every ruler. ¹³And they came to the tent of Olophernes and said to the one who was in charge of all his things: "Awaken our lord immediately, for the slaves have dared to come down upon us for battle, so that they might be completely and utterly destroyed."

¹⁴ And Bagoas went in and knocked on the curtain of the tent, for he supposed him to be sleeping with Ioudith. ¹⁵But when no one paid heed, he drew them apart and went into the bed-chamber and found him thrown dead upon the footstool, and his head had been severed from him. ¹⁶And he cried out in a loud voice with wailing and groaning and with a mighty cry, and he tore his clothes. ¹⁷And he went into the tent, where Ioudith was staying, and he did not find her, and he leaped out to the people and shouted: ¹⁸"The slaves have broken faith; one woman of the Hebrews has brought about disgrace for the house of King Nabouchodonosor, for behold, Olophernes is on the ground, and his head is not upon him."

¹⁹ Now when the rulers of the army of Assour heard these words, they tore their tunics, and their spirit was extremely distressed, and there arose from them screaming and an extremely loud cry in the midst of the camp.

15 And when those who were in their coverts heard, they were shocked at what had happened, ²and fear and trembling fell upon them,

^aI.e. I swear that ^bI.e. the Assyrian sentries

and there was not a person still remaining to face his neighbor, but rushing out they proceeded to flee^a with one accord for every path of the plain and the highlands, ³and those encamped in the highlands around Baityloua also^b turned to flight. And then the sons of Israel, every warrior of them, rushed upon them. ⁴And to Baitomasthaim and Bebai^b and Chobai and Kola and to all the territory of Israel Ozias dispatched ones carrying reports about the things which had unfolded, and in order that all should rush against the enemies for their annihilation. ⁵Now when the sons of Israel heard, they all with one accord fell upon them and beat them back as far as Choba. And just as those from Ierousalem were present, so too were those from all the highlands, for they had reported to them what had happened to the camp of their enemies. And those in Galaad and those in Galilee outflanked them in a great defeat, until they came to Damascus and its territory. ⁶But the remaining inhabitants of Baityloua fell upon the camp of Assour, and they looted them and became enormously rich. ⁷Now when they returned from the slaughter, the sons of Israel seized the rest, and the villages and hamlets in the highlands and the plain laid hold of much plunder, for there was an enormously large mass.

⁸ And Ioakeim the great priest and the senate of the sons of Israel, those residing in Ierousalem, came in order to view the good things which the Lord had accomplished for Israel and to see Ioudith and to speak peace with her. ⁹Now when they came to her, they all blessed her with one accord, and they said to her: "You are the exaltation of Ierousalem; you are the great pride of Israel; you are the great boast of our race. ¹⁰You accomplished all these things by your hand; you accomplished good things with Israel, and God was pleased on account of them. Be blessed before the omnipotent Lord for all time." And all the people said: "So be it."

¹¹ And all the people looted the camp for thirty days, and they gave Ioudith the tent of Olophernes and all the silver service and the couches and the basins and all his furniture, and she took and placed them upon her mule, and she hitched her carts and heaped them upon them.

¹² And every woman of Israel rushed together so as to see her, and they blessed her, and some of them performed a choral dance for her, and she took wands^c in her hands and gave them to the women who were with her. ¹³And they crowned themselves with olive, she and those with her, and she went before all the people leading all the women in dancing, and every man of Israel, vested in armor, was following along with crowns, and they were singing hymns with their mouth.

¹⁴ And Ioudith began this confession in the midst of all Israel, and all the people were singing out this praise.

16 And Ioudith said:
Address my God with tambourines;
sing to the^d Lord with cymbals.

Adapt a tune and a song of praise for him;
exalt and invoke his name.

² For the Lord is a God who crushes wars;
for into his camps, in the midst of the
people,
he plucked me from the hand of those in
pursuit of me.

³ Assour came out of the mountains from the
north;
he came in the myriads of his army,
of whom their multitude clogged wadis
and their horse covered hills.

⁴ He said he would set my territory ablaze
and dispatch my young men with the
sword
and put my sucklings to the ground
and hand my infants over for pillage
and plunder my young women.

⁵ The omnipotent Lord set them aside
with the hand of a female.

⁶ For their mighty one did not capitulate to
young men,
nor did sons of the Titans strike him,
nor did towering Giants set upon him,
but Ioudith the daughter of Merari
undid him with the beauty of her face.

⁷ For she stripped off the dress of her
widowhood
for the eminence of those who are weary^e
in Israel.

⁸ She daubed her face with an anointing,
and she put up her hair in a turban,
and she took a linen stole for the
seduction of him.

⁹ Her sandal caught his eye,
and her beauty captivated his soul;
the scimitar passed through his throat.

¹⁰ The Persians shuddered at her daring,
and the Medes were alarmed at her
boldness.

¹¹ Then my lowly ones raised the war cry,
and my weak ones shouted. And they
were terrified;
they raised their cry and turned to flight.

¹² Sons of girls pierced them through
and, like children of deserters, continued
to wound them.
They vanished from the battle line of my
Lord^f.

¹³ I will sing to my God a new hymn:
O Lord, you are great and glorious,
prodigious in strength, unsurpassable.

¹⁴ Let your entire creation be subject to you;
for you spoke, and they came into
being.

You sent your spirit, and it built them up,
and there is no one who will withstand
your voice.

^afled = Ha ^bOm = Ha ^cMade of olive branches wreathed with ivy ^dmy = Ha ^ePerhaps *distressed* ^f + God = Ha

IOUDITH 16

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- 15 For the mountains will be shaken from their foundations together with the waters,
while the rocks will melt away like wax from your presence.
But yet^a to those who fear you,
you will be most gracious to them.
- 16 For every offering is a little thing for an odor of fragrance,
and all suet is insignificant for a whole burnt offering to you,
but the one fearing the Lord is great forever.
- 17 Woe to the nations who plot against my race;
the omnipotent Lord will punish them in the day of judgment,
to send fire and worms for their flesh,
and they will wail in full consciousness forever.

18 When they came into Ierousalem, they did obeisance to God, and when the people were purified, they offered up their whole burnt offerings and their voluntary offerings and the gifts. ¹⁹And

Ioudith dedicated all the baggage of Olophernes, all that the people had given her, and the mosquito netting, which she herself had taken from his bedroom, she gave to God as a dedication. ²⁰And the people continued celebrating in Ierousalem in front of the holy precincts for three months, and Ioudith remained there with them.

²¹ After these days each returned to his inheritance, and Ioudith departed for Baityloua and remained there on her property, and in her time she was renowned in all the land. ²²And many desired her, and no man ^bknew her^b in all the days of her life since the day Manasses her husband had died and was added to his people. ²³And she kept increasing in stature, and she grew old in the house of her husband, one hundred and five years. And she set free her favorite slave. And she died in Baityloua, and they buried her in the cave of her husband Manasses, ²⁴and the house of Israel mourned her for seven days. And before she died she divided her possessions among all the nearest of Manasses her husband and the nearest of her race. ²⁵And there was not again one who terrified the sons of Israel in the days of Ioudith and for many days after she had died.

^afor = Ha ^bi.e. had sexual relations with her

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